Guide to the use of the AW32 Gond file

[There are approximately three million people in India who are either members of Gond tribes or Gondi-speaking groups. These groups are spread over much of Central India, including Central Provinces and Bastar State. The Gond refers to himself as Koi or Koitor, but over most of the area the Hindu term "Gond" is used by outsiders. Where the Gonds have become relatively Hinduized and are accepted as separate Hindu castes, such names as these occur: Raj-Gond, Raj-Korku, Raja-Muria, Naik Gond, Pit-Bhattra.

The Bastar State census lists the following Gond groups: Bhattra, Gond, Maria, Muria, Koya, and Parja. Elwin divides the Maria into the Hill Maria and the Bison Horn Maria. The Muria are more acculturated than the Maria, and the term Muria is employed by Maria groups trying to advance socially.

4: Furer-Haimendorf gives the researcher a general view of Gond culture and an idea of the distribution of non-Bastar Gonds. Inasmuch as this file is limited to the relatively unacculturated Bison Horn Maria, Hill Maria, and Muria, such distributional information may be necessary.

Guide to the use of the AW32 Gond file

The basic source for this file is 1: Grigson. This source deals with the Bison Horn and Hill Maria, and gives a well-rounded ethnographic description of the groups, covering social structure, life cycle, religion, economic life, etc.

2: Elwin concentrates on the Muria, particularly the institution of the communal adolescent dwelling. A general description of Muria culture is given in the first part of the work, as background to the study of the ghotul.

3: Elwin deals with the Bison Horn Maria. It covers the reasons underlying murder and suicide in Gond culture, and includes data on such topics as witchcraft, ingroup hostility, property disputes, etc.

Data on the ghotul (communal adolescent dwelling) will be found in category 883. Data on administrative divisions have been filed in category 632.]

Processed in 1958

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

CHAPTER III

THE ETHNOLOGICAL SETTING; THE PRIMITIVE RACES OF BASTAR

IT remains in this chapter, before passing on to the main subject of this book, to outline the distribution of races in Bastar and to some extent in adjacent districts; the major political divisions of India seldom correspond to racial divisions, and each of the main races of Bastar overflows into other provinces or States. This discord between political and racial divisions has not made it easier for students to understand the ethnography of this part of India. An area mainly peopled by primitive Mundari or Dravidian speaking tribes of similar customs, rites and manners extends from the Santal country on the borders of Bengal and Bihar, through Chhota Nagpur and the Orissa States into the Central Provinces and the old Central Provinces States, of which Bastar was the chief, into the Jeypore zamindari now included in the new Orissa province, the East Godavari Agency of Madras, and beyond the Godavari into Hyderabad State. Hitherto the area has been divided administratively between the local governments of four provinces and one major State, Bengal, Madras, the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, and Hyderabad; the many Orissa and Central Provinces States were under the control of the governments of Bihar and Orissa, and of the Central Provinces, so that the student has been spared separate census reports and ethnographic surveys for them. Even so, there have been four census reports and three provincial publications on tribes and castes from which to glean the required information; perhaps the formation of the new Eastern States Agency and the separate province of Orissa will mean two more census reports in 1941. To make matters worse, there is confusion of names; the Parja of Bastar becomes Poroja in Madras official language, and the Bhattra becomes Bottada. The Gond, wherever he speaks his own language, from Central India to the Eastern Ghats and Hyderabad, calls himself Koi or Koitor; yet only in Madras and Hyderabad reports is he called by a name approaching this in sound, Koya, and in the literature of the Central Provinces there has therefore been a tendency to restrict this name to Teluguized members of the race. Everywhere it is more usual to call primitive tribes by the local Hindu name for them, and not by their own name for themselves. So over much of India the prevailing Hindu name Gond, and not Koi, is used; and with his usual passion for standardization the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

official in India has tried gradually to call all the Koitor race Gonds, whatever the name by which they call themselves or the local vernacular name for them, and even to include under the generic term Gond other races or tribes who are not Koitor but only resemble them more or less in their customs. All the Koitor of Bastar have thus been officially classed as Gonds, though the name Gond is still hardly known in Bastar and is regarded by most Koitor of every local variety as an insult, except by Hinduized Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh. If official and ethnographer would always use the names by which tribesmen call themselves when speaking their own language, we should possibly find many of the so-called branches of the primitive races not branches at all but merely classified as such in the past owing to unintelligent failure to realize that in different tracts different Hindus have used different names for the same race or tribe.

The difficulty is accentuated by the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names. So arise such names as Raj-Gond, Raj-Korku, Raja-Muria, Naik Gond, Pit-Bhattra; and it will be seen below how this process has worked in Bastar.

Almost a reverse process is also at work, by which the remnants of forgotten tribes or old confederations of tribes not necessarily akin or speaking the same language have long been known under the common name applied to the whole confederation. The links that used to hold them together disappear, and those sections of the confederation that are socially or culturally more advanced object to being dragged down to the same level in popular esteem as the backward sections, and so prefer to abandon the name given to the confederation in favour of the original or some new name of their own section. The Parjas are a clear example of this, as beyond the Jeypore border they include at least seven different tribes, some speaking Munda, some Dravidian and some Aryan dialects, which differ widely in customs and degree of advancement: the Bastar Parjas except, it is said, the few wilder ones beyond the Kolab-Sabari in Sukma zamindari and around Mount Tulsidongri in Sukma and Jagdalpur tahsil, now invariably call themselves Dhurwa and resent being called Parja. The name Parja appears to be only a corruption of the Aryan term '*praja*' applied to subjects as distinct from the '*raja*' or ruler.

It is difficult to give figures for the growth or decline of the tribes of Bastar, as the 1931 census was the first since 1891 in which almost all the primitive races of Bastar were not lumped together

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

by separate vernacular designations. The Jagdalpur group is detribalized by palace contacts and the proximity of Halbi and Uriya speaking elements both in Bastar and in Jeypore.[1] The Jhoria group are probably Hill Marias settled in the plains. The Gotul Murias have definite traditions of immigration from Raipur and the north. 'Muria' is a term coined by non-Koitor for those Koitor who are somewhat less un-Hinduized than the primitive Marias, and is used by any section of Marias as soon as it wishes to claim social advancement. The Bastar official applies it not only to the three sections of Murias classified above, but also to the Koyas and some of the Doria Koyas of the south, and to the more advanced Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara and Bijapur. The census figures of Murias therefore contain various Koitor from Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris and from Konta and Bijapur tahsils who should have been enumerated as Koyas or Marias.

On the latter account perhaps about 15,000 should be deducted from the census total of 124,993 Bastar Murias, leaving a round figure of 110,000. About 32,000 of these are Jagdalpur Murias, 17,000 Jhorias and 61,000 Gotul Murias. These are very approximate figures, roughly calculated from the total populations of the different charges into which each tahsil or zamindari was divided for census purposes.

The Marias—General

It has more than once been indicated in the preceding pages that I divide the so-called Marias into two divisions, the Hill Marias of the Abujhmar mountains, and the Bison-horn Marias. The former call their land Metabhum or 'Highlands', and call themselves (and are called by their neighbours on the plains and plateaux of Antagarh, Kondagaon, Jagdalpur, Dantewara and Bijapur) Meta Koitor, the Highland Koitor. To avoid confusion in the mind of any later investigator, it should be observed that this name is also given to themselves by the Bison-horn Marias living on the high edges of the Jagdalpur and the Dantewara tahsils in contrast to their brethren below in Dantewara or Sukma and Sukma or Konta respectively. If, however, a native name is needed for the Marias of the Abujhmar mountains, Meta Koitor could well be adopted; the general level of their villages is far higher than that of any other villages in Bastar. Hill Marias, however, is the term which I shall use, the word Maria being now familiar in ethnographic literature. By the Hill Maria the men of the plains, be they Muria, Jhoria or Bison-horn Maria, are called Dor Koitor, Hatiya Koitor or Kalpatti

[1] Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao in an article on the Gonds of the Eastern Ghauts, India, published in *Anthropos*, 1907, says that the Gonds of parts of Jeypore are known as Murias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 Koitor, all meaning Lowland Koitor, and the plains below are either Dorbhum, Hatiyabhum or Kalpatti; Dor Koitor and Dorbhum, the terms most commonly used, are probably the source of the expression Dhur Koitor said to be used fairly generally in the Central Provinces to designate the ordinary Gond as distinct from the one who gives himself social airs as a Raj-Gond; a Gondi word has been assimilated to the Hindi '*dhur*' or '*dhul*' meaning 'dust', and the Gond commoner referred to as the 'Dust' Gond. Hatiya-bhum is simply the land of the *hat* or bazaar. *Kalpatti* is the ordinary Halbi term for lowlands, which we have already seen applied as the name of two *parganas* in Antagarh. Hatiya is similarly the name of a *pargana* in the north of Kondagaon.

161 The Hill Maria tracts are shown by the letter E in the ethnographic map. An account of their country and distribution has been given already in Chapter II, pages 26-8. The estimate of 11,500 population is fairly accurate; I examined the actual census returns of all the Hill Maria villages except the five included in the outlying Mangnar *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam zamindari, and obtained a total of 11,361 (5,702 males and 5,659 females). There can only be 140 or 150 persons at the most in the Mangnar villages. Since the census, many Hill Marias have come back to the Abujhmar, chiefly from the Ahiri zamindari; it was found when the poll-tax settlement was effected in 1932 that 240 able-bodied males had so returned; probably, therefore, the Hill Maria population is now just over 12,000 in Bastar. There had in the past been a considerable exodus of Marias from the old Paralkot zamindari, owing to the zamindar's oppression. As they consider the new conditions in Bastar better than those in Ahiri, more may be expected to drift back into Bastar.

Hill Marias

The tract is extremely homogeneous. In 22 Hill Maria villages in Kutru with 1,443 Hill Marias the only non-Marias are 38 Rawats and 1 Halba; in 9 Hill Maria villages in Dantewara there are 879 Marias to 3 Telanga, 98 Rawats and 19 Mahras. The Rawats are only in the villages near the plains where they are employed by Marias to tend cattle and are beginning to teach them the use of the plough and the milking of cattle; they speak Maria as fluently as Halbi, and in outward appearance are scarcely distinguishable from Marias. Most of the Hill Maria villages are in Antagarh, and have hardly any outsiders except occasional Rawats or liquor contractors. The few blacksmiths are really Marias, knowing no 564 other language than Maria, having the same clans as the Marias and still occasionally marrying Maria girls; though, as among other tribes, there is always a tendency to look down on the blacksmith,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and to make him live by himself on the outskirts of the village, so that in the end he becomes almost a separate low caste. This, however, has not gone nearly as far among the Hill Marias as among the Bison-horn.

To the south, along the Indrawati valley, the Hill Marias are influenced strongly by the Bison-horn Marias, and the area concerned is marked on the map by the letter H. The influence of the Bison-horn Marias gets less as you go west down the valley towards Kutru, and beyond Kutru is replaced by that of the Telugu-influenced Koitor of the riverain tract, known generally in those parts as Dorlas. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of most of these villages near the river were once Hill Marias. They seem to have been enumerated as Murias in the 1931 census, and are included in the 15,000 persons whom I have indicated at the end of my account of the Murias as wrongly enumerated at census as Murias. Where the Hill Marias are the immediate neighbours of the Bison-horn Marias, the influence of the latter is strong. In theory, according to local legend the Mander, a tributary running more or less east to west and joining the Indrawati on its *southern* bank near Barsur, is the boundary between the two kinds of Marias, with the Indrawati as the boundary west of the confluence. Here the Hill Marias know the Bison-horn Marias as Dandami Koitor; but the name is not universal in Bastar, and I have therefore preferred to call them Bison-horn because the wearing of bison-horns by their male dancers is so obvious a peculiarity of the tribe. Formerly, the legend says, Pat Raja, the log-god of Mornar in the Mangnar *pargana* who is regarded almost as the overlord of all the log-gods of the Hill Marias, and his wife's brother Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan at Ghotpal, a large Bison-horn village south of the Indrawati, between Barsur and Gidam, divided up the Hill and Bison-horn Marias into *dadabhai* and *akomama* clans (brother-clans and wife-clans), and in those days the Hill Marias used to intermarry with the Bison-horn, and each used to attend the other's festivals. One day, as the Gumelor clan of Hill Marias, which occupies a group of villages in Bhairamgarh Mar, Dantewara Mar and Mangnar, was trooping to Ghotpal to dance at the Koqsar festival there, carrying their axes on their shoulders, a Gume with his axe accidentally severed the *sem* bean vine of the Old Widow (*Kuram Mutta'i*), who thereupon put a curse on all the Hill Marias and forbade them ever again to come south of the Mander river for social or religious purposes. Since then, according to the Hill Marias, intermarriage and participation in each other's festivals has ceased. On the other

Hill Marias of Indrawati valley, influenced by Bison-horn Marias or Dorla Koitor

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

582 hand some Hill Marias say that there is no theoretic obstacle to intermarriage, but that actually 'it isn't done', though they occasionally take part in each other's festivals. The Bison-horn 177 style of dancing with long *dol* drums is gradually spreading among 535 the lower villages just north of the Indrawati. Hudala Karka, for example, some eight miles from Barsur and on the northern bank of the river, now dances entirely in Bison-horn style, and claims to be a Bison-horn village, the claim being admitted by the Bison-horn Maria *pargana* headman in theory, and in practice by intermarriage with undoubted Bison-horn villages; but in several houses I found old Hill Maria dancing shields (*moghi*) and buttock-bells, and the older men admitted that when they were young they 177 danced in the Hill Maria style. Another sign of this is that Hurra [176] Gunda, the log-god of the Tamo clan at Tumirgunda, near Hudala Karka, is also the log-god of the Atami clan of Hudala Karka and of two other Atami villages south of the Indrawati. The clan-priest of the god is a Tamo, and the Tamo villages of Tumirgunda and Padmeta still dance in Hill Maria style. In a few years, therefore, the Bison-horn Marias will have adopted the valley villages north of the Indrawati; the *pargana* headman already virtually claims them as such, since they are under his direct jurisdiction and not that of the Hill Maria *chalki* or assistant appointed to help him [197] manage the eight Hill Maria villages of his *pargana*. In speech, too, they are approximating more and more to the Bison-horn Marias, as there is a marked absence of the harsh guttural sounds so characteristic of the Hill Maria language, and they use the Bison-horn technical social and religious terms.

● 101 Westward along the valley, as observed above, Bison-horn Maria influence gets less. For a few miles, roughly from Nelasnar 177 to Jegur on the Matawara-Kutru road, and in the village of Ketulnar beyond Jegur, the people are now known as Murias but are really Hill Maria stock, and still dance in Hill Maria style. Ketulnar still intermarries with the hill villages of the Kutru Mar *pargana*. The villagers of Bheriabhum, on the south bank opposite their former village of Pali, five or six miles north of Bhairamgarh, are of the Hill Farsal clan, and cannot be distinguished from Farsalor of the hills. In the hill villages above the valley I verified occasional marriages with girls from the valley villages and vice versa.

101 The tract west and south-west of Kutru, marked by the letter L on the ethnographic map, contains a very scanty population, which appears to be Hill Maria in origin, much modified by contact with the Telugu-influenced Dorla Koitor from the south, who are shown by the letter K. These mixed elements also were returned

[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

as Muria at the census, while the actual Dorla Koitor appear to have been shown under Gond.

The census total of Marias was 146,070. I estimated at the end of my account of the Murias that 15,000 Marias and Koyas had been wrongly enumerated as Murias. This raises the total of Marias to 161,070, counting all the 15,000 whether Koyas or not as Marias, for reasons which will appear below. My adjusted census figure for the Hill Marias was 11,500. The mixed Hill-Bison-horn villages except Tumirgunda were excluded from this, and for demographic purposes may be regarded as Bison-horn. The valley villages occupied by Hill Maria stock and the villages of mixed Hill Maria and Dorla stock at the most have 3,500 inhabitants, though spread over a large area. Excluding them and the 11,500 pure Hill Marias from the 161,070, we get a balance of 146,070 as the strength of the Bison-horn Marias. To this I would add the 9,988 returned at census as Koyas, giving a total of 156,058 Bison-horn Marias. Of these, about 50,000 are in Jagdalpur, 60,000 in Dantewara, 7,000 in Konta, 3,000 in Kutru, 1,000 in Bhopalpatnam, 26,000 in Sukma, and 9,000 in Bijapur.

Bison-horn Marias, Koyas and Dorlas

The southern borders of this race are fairly clear when enquiry is made on the spot, but very difficult to ascertain from previous literature owing to the lack of precision of nomenclature. Much trouble has arisen from the word Koya. Glasfurd did not define Koyas or give their habitat in the report already quoted. In a report on the ethnography of the old Upper Godavari District including Bastar, printed in a collection of papers for a Central Provinces ethnographic exhibition in the sixties, he wrote :—

> 'Along the southern boundary we find the Telingas tolerably pure, but with a large mixture of intermediate castes, such as the Koys and Naikwars, which last the late Mr. Hislop classed among the Gonds. Proceeding inward we find the Telingas cease, and the Koys and Gottawars become the sole inhabitants. The former belong also to the Gond family; but from their vicinity to the Telingas they have acquired many of their words, and as the latter are the superior race, the Koys ape their manners a good deal. The Gottawars are inferior to the Koys in caste; but not so in appearance nor in physical conformation. Where they live close to Telingas, they also have acquired many of the Telugoo words; but they do not, as the Koys, ape Telinga manners.
>
> 'Proceeding still farther towards the interior, we find the Gottawars the prevailing class, and in the centre they appear merely to change their name; for the Maria is in no wise different from the Gottawar.'

In the classified list of races annexed to his report he gives as habitat for Koys the 'banks of the Godavery, Pranheeta and Savery rivers, and the Beejee, Potukul, Kotapilly, Veejapore, Soonkoom and Bhopalputnum Talooks of Bustar'; for Gottawars

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

●101 'Seroncha Talook and Bhopalputnum, Veejapore, Chintulnar, Dunteewara, Kootroo and Barsoor Talooks of Bustar'; and for Marias 'Kootroo, Chintulnar, Dunteewara and Veejapore Talooks of Bustar, and also that part of Bustar called Ulrugmad[1]'. He notes that the Gotta language is nearly allied to the Maria. He uses [103] Telugu versions of Bastar place names, just as the Survey of India did in the old topographical survey maps; by Savery, Beejee, Potukul, Kotapilly, Veejapore and Soonkoom he meant Kolab-Sabari, Bhiji, Phutkel, Pamer-Kotapalli, Bijapur and Sukma. Bhiji is the old name of the south-eastern part of Konta tahsil; Phutkel is a former zamindari in the Talper riverain tract of Bijapur tahsil, while Chintulnar is now in Konta tahsil, occupying the tract at the foot of the Aranpur pass. Except, therefore, for his inclusion of Sukma in the region of the Koyas, his distribution of the 'Koys, Gottawars and Marias' corresponds very closely with the areas shown in the ethnographic map for Dorlas, mixed Maria-Dorla, and Marias; in his Report on the Dependency of Bastar he had stated that Marias constituted 90 per cent. of the population of Sukma.

114 Various articles were published between 1876 and 1881 on the Koyas, whom he rightly calls Kois, by the Rev. John Cain, for many years a C.M.S. missionary at Dummagudem on the Godavari in the Bhadrachalam taluq of the East Godavari Agency, and only a few miles from the south-western corner of the Konta tahsil. These articles were the basis of the article on the Koyas in Thurston's *Tribes and Castes of Southern India*[2]. He wrote in the first of these :—

> 'I propose to notice first the Kois, a tribe already partially described in Captain Glasfurd's reports and Colonel Haig's report of his visit to Jagdalpur, and also in the Census Report for 1871 of the Madras Presidency. These people are to be found in the country extending from the banks of the Indravati, Bastar, down to the neighbourhood of Kammammet in the Nizam's country. All those in the plains have a tradition that about 200 years ago they were driven down from the plateau in the Bastar country by famine and disputes, and this relationship is also acknowledged by the Gutta Kois, i.e. the hill Kois who live in the highlands of Bastar. Up to the present (1876) time I have had but little intercourse with the Gutta Kois, and the manners and customs described in this paper will be those of the Kois dwelling in the Bhadrachallam taluka.'

Elsewhere he writes that the Gutta Koi of the Bastar plateau 'look down with some degree of contempt on the lowland Koi', who are

[1] An obvious misprint for 'Ubujmard', Glasfurd's spelling of Abujhmar.
[2] Cain's articles are :—'The Bhadrachallam Taluka, Godavari District, S. India', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1876, p. 357 et seq.; 'The Bhadrachallam and Kekapalli Taluqas', *ibidem*, Vol. VIII, 1879, p. 33 et seq., and p. 219 et seq.; Vol. X, 1881, p. 221 et seq.; 'The Koi, a Southern Tribe of the Gond', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal*, Vol. XIII, 1881, p. 410 et seq. There were others in certain missionary journals, which I could not trace.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

called Gommu Koi, or Koi of the river bank, *gommu* being a Telugu word for horn or tusk, used in the Upper Godavari district to mean the banks of the Godavari. He says that the Gutta Koi also generally refer to the lowlanders as '*mayalotilu* or rogues' and say that long ago their ancestors lived with them on the Bastar plateau, but went once to visit a zamindar in the plains, and so liked his country that they settled there and persuaded many others to follow them, and thereafter often harried the plateau in secret marauding expeditions. He refers to the lowlanders as calling themselves Doralu, from the Telugu honorific *Dora* or 'lord', and being called by the Telugus Koi Doralu. The specimens he gives of their language show it to be a Gond dialect very greatly corrupted by Telugu influences, not only the vocabulary but even verb and noun inflexions being Teluguized.

In the *Godavari District Gazetteer* the article on Koyas clearly deals with the lowlanders only, and speaks of the self-importance with which they know that their title *Dora* means 'lord' and insist on being given it, tolerating the alternative '*Mama*' (maternal uncle) from other castes, but disliking being called Koyas.

The designation Gottor is now common among the Telugus and Telugu Koyas of south Bastar for the Marias of the plateaux and the 'Koyas' at the foot of the plateau in Konta tahsil and Sukma zamindari. No one need worry about it as indicating any special race; it is simply a Telugu term for Hill Koitor. Glasfurd, though he wrongly spoke of the Gottor as a separate division, yet righted matters by pointing out that there was no real difference between them and the Marias of Dantewara. Naturally, Bison-horn Marias living on both sides of the southern edges of the plateau would be more influenced by the Telugus than those in the centre and north of the plateaux.

But there remains a real distinction between the Bison-horn Marias, even those who live along the southern fringes of their country, below the passes, and the Koyas of the plains. The latter are known as Dorla, but this is obviously a corruption of Dor Koitor, their lands being to the Bison-horn Marias of the Dantewara and Jagdalpur plateaux, Dorbhum or lowlands. Your Telugu or Englishman writing in Telugu surroundings may say that the social status of the lowland Koya is greater than that of the Hill Koya; but your hill man will always look down with a healthy contempt on the plains man. Cain indeed realized this, but perhaps hardly understood the foulness of the abusive Chhattisgarhi term *mailotia* which he gives with a capital initial letter as the Hill Koya's name for the lowland Koya. The latter knew he was despised by the highlander, and with the self-assertiveness that is the typical fruit

101 ● 186

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 of the inferiority complex palmed off his name Dor Koi or Lowland Koi on the ignorant Telugu as Dora Koi, and has proceeded to 186 object to the name Koi and demand always the name Dora or Dorla, simultaneously impressing on the Telugu how superior he is to the Highlander.

I have verified these points by personal investigation supple- 361 mented by reliable information from assistants directed to make enquiries on specified lines. When the traveller descends the Aranpur pass, he finds the villagers at the foot of the pass in such villages as Gumadasaka, Bikrampalli, Kondasaoli, Kamargudem, Kodmair, Karrigudem, Bayampalli, Kundair, Ursangal, Durandarbha, Michiguda, Vadri, Silger, Mandimarka, Singaram, Tarlaguda Banjepalli and Durma inhabited by people indistinguishable from the Bison-horn Marias above the pass, or by Maria Lohars. The only difference is a noticeable Telugu influence on their Maria dialect. At Jaggergonda, six or seven miles beyond the foot of the pass, he meets the first Telugu-speaking non-Koitor village, and just beyond this comes to the first Dorla villages, Rajpenta, Achkat and Kamaram. Southwards in the country covered by the new Ordnance Survey one-inch maps, on sheet 65 F/3, Singaram in square B1, Puvarti, Junaguda and Rayagudem in A2, Chimili, Surpanguda, Kistaram and Morpalli in B2, all the villages in A3, and Tadmetla, the only village in B3, are Dorla villages. Generally speaking, all the riverain tracts of Bhopalpatnam zamindari, Bijapur tahsil, Kotapalli-Pamer zamindari and southern Konta tahsil are Dorla villages, though here and there will be found Gottor Koya, i.e. Bison-horn Maria villages in Konta Dorla country such as Tokanpalli, Burkapalli and Chintaguppa (in map 65 F/3, square C3).

These Dorla at census refused to call themselves Koya, and 162 were not returned as such but as Gonds; and they are the principal element in the 19,426 professing tribal religion out of the 24,407 Bastaris returned as Gonds in the 1931 census. The 4,981 Hindu Gonds returned are mostly Dorlas from the Lingagiri *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam and the adjacent parts of Bijapur, who have become Lingayats, wearing a *rudraksha* bead in a silver box or a Shiva *lingam* slung on a thread.

It will be clear, therefore, that the 9,988 persons returned at the census as Koyas are not the Dorla or lowland Koyas returned as Koyas in the East Godavari Agency. They are the Bison-horn Marias living at the foot of the passes in Konta and Sukma and slightly influenced by Telugu contacts. Of the Koya dialect of Gondi returned in 1931 as spoken by 6,172 persons in Bastar, however, it is probable that it represents the speech of the Dorla

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

invasion by land-hungry Hindus of the highlands and backwoods, with its accompaniment of money-lenders, cloth pedlars, lawyers' touts, landlords and forest contractors.

The terms of reference for my aboriginal enquiry directed my special attention to the conditions in the tribal tracts which had been declared Partially Excluded Areas under the Government of India Act of 1935. Those are the tracts, speaking generally, where the tribes still constitute a majority of the population and by thus being able to preserve much of their own traditional way of life can still present something of a united front to the invasion of new settlers and new ideas.[1] The Partially Excluded Areas of Chanda district include the huge Ahiri zamindari of Sironcha tahsil and the Garchiroli tahsil zamindaris of Dhanora, Dudhmala, Jharapapara, Khutgaon, Kotgal, Muramgaon, Palasgarh, Rangi, Sirsundi, Sonsari, Chandala, Gilgaon, Pai-Muranda, Potegaon and Gewardha. My enquiries therefore gave me a long desired chance of seeing the Marias of Chanda. These zamindaris have a total area of 4,013 square miles, mostly of hill and forest, and had in 1941 a population of 115,031; this figure included 70,821 'aboriginals', so that out of every 1,000 persons, 607 were tribal. In the 1931 census 34,776 of the Gonds of these zamindaris were returned as Marias, against a total of 34,986[2] Marias for all the British districts of the Central Provinces, leaving only some 210 Marias for the *khalsa* areas of Chanda district and the zamindaris of the Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district. The total strength of the Maria tribe in the British districts of the province is given in the 1941 census summary as 39,553,[3] district figures not being shown. Almost all of these will have been returned from the Chanda Partially Excluded Areas.

It has been indicated in this book how vague are the terms 'Maria' and 'Muria',[4] and how all the tribes thus vaguely designated speak of themselves as Koitor or Koi, distinguishing between one group and another by such terms as Highland Koitor, or Lowland or Plains Koitor. Let it be remembered that the word Maria is not a Gondi word and that *all* Gondi-speaking Gonds throughout the Central Provinces and Berar and Hyderabad State speak of themselves as Koitor; then it will be realized how unprecise, unscientific a term 'Maria' really is. Here in these Chanda zamindaris it is

[1] Any investigator of tribal conditions soon realizes that the tribesmen inside the Partially Excluded Areas are not yet in as bad a plight as their kinsmen outside those areas, in the more 'advanced' districts, where they are steadily losing such land as is left to them and sinking to the status of landless labourers in the service of those who have expropriated them.

[2] and [3] *Census of India*, 1941, Vol. I, Part I, Table XIV, p. 112.

[4] See pp. 35-6, 42, 44, 46-50.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 often difficult to say where the Koitor begin or cease to be Maria. Much depends on the idiosyncrasies of the census enumerators. Moreover just as in Bastar there is really no hard and fast ethnological boundary line between Hill Maria and the tribes generally referred to as 'Muria', so in Chanda to the north and west of the zamindaris many now classed as Gond would undoubtedly at one time have been regarded as Maria, while where Chanda district borders on the west of the Narainpur (Antagarh) tahsil of Bastar the villagers are ethnically identical on both sides of the border, but on the Chanda side are called Maria and on the Bastar side Muria: of this I had a remarkable instance on my journey north from Surjagarh[1] in Ahiri zamindari to Jarawandi,[2] where the forest track crosses the two small west-protruding tongues of Bastar shown near the north-west corner of Bastar in the ethnographic map on page 40, near the Antagarh villages of Udcha[3] and Irpanar[4] in the southern tongue and Markanar[5] in the northern tongue; men of one clan living in the tongues called themselves Muria while their fellow-clansmen in the adjacent Ahiri villages called themselves Maria.

101 Drug district, Chanda district and Bastar State all meet at the north-west corner of Bastar, as the map on page 40 makes clear. At 161 this corner of Drug are the Drug Partially Excluded Areas, the zamindaris of Aundhi, Koracha, Panabaras and Ambagarh-Chauki transferred to Drug from Chanda in 1907. These zamindaris had in 1941 a population of 82,202, of whom aboriginals numbered 51,452, or 626 in every thousand. Of the latter some 16,750 were returned as practising the tribal religion, and the bulk of these must have been Gond. No 'Maria's' were returned. Yet again, especially in Aundhi and Koracha, there is no racial difference between those returned there as 'Gond', their Chanda neighbours returned as 'Maria' and their Bastar neighbours returned as 'Muria'. Reference to land revenue and settlement records even in Panabaras zamindari[6] shows that down to the great famines at the end of the nineteenth century and even later the local headmen and ryots were frequently recorded as Maria by tribe.

101 All that in fact can safely be predicated of the country covered 131 by my tour in the Chanda and Drug zamindaris is that according to

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Qr. Inch Sheet 5A. ref. MV4774.
[2] Ibidem, ref. MQ5121.
[3] Ibidem, ref. MV4898.
[4] Ibidem, ref. MV5298.
[5] Ibidem, ref. MQ5314.
[6] See for examples Grigson, *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar* (Nagpur, 1944), pp. 79-81.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Central Provinces terminology it was Maria country, or had till recently been thus considered; according to modern Bastar terminology it would be considered Muria country. To this there is one exception. The map on page 20 shows a projection westward into Chanda district of the Abujhmar Mountains between the western border of the State and the Kotri River, north of the Indrawati, just west of the junction of the Behra Mar, Jatwada and Farsal *parganas* of Narainpur (Antagarh tahsil) shown in the sketch-map on page 33. On this projection of the hills there are, speaking from memory, seven or eight villages which are definitely Hill Maria like the adjacent Abujhmar villages of Bastar, completely Hill Maria in culture, peopled by tribesmen who, like the Hill Maria of Bastar, call themselves Meta (Highland) Koitor, and despise the Maria of Lahiri and the other plains villages of Ahiri zamindari below their fastnesses.

I was able to make a rapid tour through much of this Chanda and Drug country in December 1940, and January 1941; certain preliminary investigations before my visit were made for me in Chanda by Mr. J. D. Kerawala of the Central Provinces and Berar Civil Service, who was then the Sub-divisional Officer, and he was with me throughout my tour. Some of the administrative and economic notes made on this tour were incorporated in various chapters of my book *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar*[1] to which I shall refer hereafter as *The Aboriginal Problem*, for the sake of brevity. I also filled a thick note-book with ethnographic and anthropological material, and had intended to use that material for this Note. Unfortunately the note-book perished when my house at Hyderabad was burnt down in a sudden senseless riot on the Ides of March 1946, along with almost all my Chanda photographs, the note-books, manuscripts and photographs of twenty-five years in India, and the whole of my library. No doubt this has simplified packing to quit India, but so far as this Note is concerned it has meant depriving it of what would have made it most valuable. It has therefore to be written from memory, and references in *The Aboriginal Problem*.

Let me now describe the tour generally, mentioning the places visited and the persons and things seen. My first halt was at Allapilli[2] in Sironcha tahsil, the site of the teak saw-mills of the provincial Forest Department, a few miles from Ahiri,[3] the headquarters of the Ahiri zamindari, which I visited from Allapilli.

[1] Nagpur, Government Printing, Central Provinces and Berar, 1944.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV0852.
[3] Ibidem, ref. MV0149.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Gond element had been scheduled, and many others omitted. It was unsound also to confine the privilege to Marias and Gonds, for there are many other aboriginal or semi-aboriginal tribes, such as Pardhan, Halba, Nagarchi, Thoti and Ojha, and artisan, grazier and untouchable castes living in close symbiosis with the Marias, who should get this concession; such an extension would reduce cases of illegal tapping, possession, sale and transfer, and minimize excise subordinate officials' opportunities for harassment and extortion. One of the worst agents of exploitation in aboriginal areas has been the Kalar excise contractor. The Maria here, thanks to this toddy and sago-palm concession, and the availability therefore in his village of this free source of mild intoxicant and the yeast vitamin, has long been far freer of economic thraldom to the Kalar than the other aboriginals in the province who have not had this concession. Moreover the Maria does not seriously abuse this privilege, except perhaps by occasionally selling or giving toddy to non-Marias. I strongly opposed a Nagpur proposal that 'a beginning should be made in the direction of regulating the drinking of toddy by the Marias of Sironcha' who, it was said, 'literally subsist on toddy for some months of the year and are drunk most of the time'. There may be some truth in this theory of drunkenness in regard to the teluguized plains, villages of Sironcha outside the zamindari, as noted of similar South Bastar villages on page 168. But of the Ahiri Marias it is quite false. For one thing the morning and evening climb of the palm-trees by rough bamboo ladders calls for nerve, and would be impossible for a drunkard. All through this tour I never saw a Maria drunk on toddy. Nor in the average Maria village are there enough tappable trees available to cause a tenth of this alleged general intoxication.

Just near Bhamragarh in one village bitter weeping came from a woman whose husband had been hauled off that morning for illicit tapping of toddy in an excise raid. As usual the main lament was not so much against this being treated—to my mind needlessly—as an offence, as against the social consequences of being handcuffed and imprisoned. Here we were close to the Kasansogh Togh or Kasansur Turri and other islands of the Indrawati formerly the subject of a boundary dispute between Chanda and Bastar, which I had settled in my voyage down the Indrawati from Kutru in 1927; across the river lay Pharasnar, headquarters of a sub-zamindari of Kutru zamindari, where I had then camped. The ethnographic map on page 40 marks the population of the Bastar bank here as mixed Dorla and Hill Maria, or Hill Maria who have almost become Dorla; and on page 52 I have noted that though on both sides of the river the villagers seem to be of Hill Maria origin and still exchange

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

brides, yet in the census of Bastar they were recorded as Murias.

Bhamragarh village itself had few Maria residents. Celebrated though it is as a beauty spot, to my mind the junction of the three rivers there can only be appreciated in its full beauty from the Bastar shore or, better still, from midstream, as I saw it first in 1927. This time we stayed in a forest rest-house on the Indrawati bank, and the Zamindar who had motored out to join me talked under the moon till late at night on tribal problems.

Yaws has long been a scourge of the Marias, in Chanda as in Bastar, but whereas the campaigns against yaws, begun when I was in Bastar and carried on with unremitting energy ever since by Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, have now almost eradicated the disease in Bastar save for fresh infection from contacts with Chanda Marias or Hyderabad Gonds and Koyas, in Chanda it is still very rife. Bhamragarh gave us an example typical of the difficulties which may beset schemes for helping the aboriginal in the absence of constant supervision of local minor officials. In 1936 the Government had opened a dispensary at Bhamragarh, primarily with the idea that it would become a centre for yaws treatment. Mr. Kerawala visiting Bhamragarh just before my tour, finding that hardly any yaws or other patients attended the dispensary, inquired why, and was told that the Assistant Medical Officer posted there was demanding a fowl and eggs from every Maria as a fee for each injection. His plea was that he had extreme difficulty in getting supplies, so that unless he could 'live on' the Marias he often had to go back by cart the 38 miles of forest track to Allapilli to get supplies, which meant closing the dispensary for nearly a week at a time. One of many things into which I was looking during this tour was the progress in Chanda of the first year of an anti-yaws campaign financed from a Government of India grant. Before that campaign began such anti-yaws work as had been attempted had been haphazard and unplanned, and nothing had been done to ensure that each patient took the full number of injections needed for a permanent cure. At all my camps in the Marias country patients streamed in for treatment, and as the Sub-assistant Health Officer deputed to accompany me for yaws work travelled in my lorry and had to stop in every village on our way to treat yaws patients, our arrival in camp was generally long after dark. The incidence of yaws seemed far greater than the Public Health Department had imagined. We had cases, as I have said, at every camp, perhaps especially among the Hill Marias at Kuvakodi, in Lahiri, and in all the villages between Pirmeli and Surjagarh, and thence on into Aundhi zamindari in Drug district;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

are excellent, and there are few places to which a bullock-cart and even a car cannot be taken with a little care.

Although the Muria area is divided officially into the two tahsils I have described, the people themselves think much more in terms of the smaller administrative unit, the pargana, the Manjhi or Chief of which is the court of appeal in all tribal disputes. The parganas of Narayanpur are clearly defined blocks of territory with considerable homogeneity of custom and fashion within their borders. But in Kondagaon, the parganas are very broken up. The Keskal, Kongur, Chalka and Mardapal Parganas are well defined, but the Hatiya and Sonawal Parganas, to name no others, are scattered all over the tahsil, and it must be hard for the Pargana Manjhi to exercise any sort of control over the area in his charge.

It has always been a tradition of the State to allow the village panchayats, which we may call judicial committees of village elders, to have jurisdiction over most tribal offences with a final appeal to the Maharaja. Since 1932 the jurisdiction of the village courts has been greatly extended to include cases of simple hurt and assault, minor thefts, mischief, trespass, adultery and enticement. They can also settle civil claims up to a value of twenty-five rupees. The Pargana Manjhi are not personally members of these courts, but to them lies any appeal from their findings. These men, who have the privilege of wearing red turbans, are a useful link between the aboriginals and the Administration. Though some of them abuse their position and tend to divert fines to their own use, they are on the whole a first-rate body of men, and their friendship is invaluable to the investigator.

The tradition of local self-government, so firmly established in the State, is an important factor in the conditions that make the ghotul and its organization and discipline possible.

II. The Tribal Population of Bastar

The tribal population of Bastar is varied and interesting. In order to simplify my description I will adopt the names given to the tribes by Grigson, though it must be remembered that, convenient though these often are, they are not always the names used by the people themselves.

The Hill Maria are the least influenced by the outside world and have retained most of their religious and cultural institutions. They live in the Abujhmar Mountains and there were 11,500 of them in 1931, and probably some 13,000 now. They are both shy and friendly, an attractive people, cultivating their desolate and lonely hills with axe and fire; their life and customs have been fully described by Grigson.

The Bison-horn Maria, a great tribe of some 175,000 persons, live south of the Indrawati in the Dantewara, Konta, Jagdalpur and Bijapur Tahsils and in the Sukma Zamindari. Grigson has studied them in less detail than the Hill Maria.[1] They have very little contact with the Muria of the north, except that they meet parties of them coming down from the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas to dance at the great Marhai at Ghotpal. Their characteristic dance is the marriage dance with a splendid bison-horn headdress. A megalithic culture survives among them, and there are traces of a ghotul system long since moribund.

[1] A detailed study of one aspect of their life will be found in my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); some of their folk-tales are given in my *Folk-Tales of Mahakosal* (Bombay, 1944).

INTRODUCTION

The Bhattra. In 1931 the Bhattra numbered 36,611 in Bastar, but there are many more of them in Jeypore and Kalahandi. In Bastar they are strongest in the north-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil, but a 'Bhattra movement' is spreading

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINAL TRIBES IN BASTAR STATE

among the Muria of Kondagaon. Its main features are the wearing of a sacred thread and the abolition of the ghotul. They are said to have come with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal, and they are rapidly becoming a Hindu caste like the Raj Gond, to whom they are probably related.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

101 *The Dhurwa*, or Parja, live in the south-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari. In Bastar there are about 20,000 of them, but there are many more of the allied Poroja across the border in Orissa. Their dancing is distinctive, but many of its elements can be paralleled among the Muria.

The Gadaba. There are very few of these left in Bastar. In 1931 only 398 were returned. The Bastar Gadaba have retained little that is characteristic of their tribe. They have no connexion with the Muria of the north.

The Halba. This is a powerful and important near-Hindu caste, probably descended from the old military garrisons stationed in the larger villages. There were 18,427 of them in 1941, of whom 4599 were in the Narayanpur and 3149 in the Kondagaon Tahsil. Their language, Halbi, is used throughout the State; many of the Gondi-speaking Muria use it as a second language, though Chhattisgarhi is now competing with it. The best folk-poetry there is in Bastar is composed in Halbi. The Halba sometimes serve as priests of the Anga clan-gods in the Muria country and the caste has its own Anga similar to those of the Muria.

The Dhakar is a new caste—9596 strong—recruited from the offspring of mixed Halba and Kshattri unions. Many of its members, by their intelligence and ability, have won good positions in the State.

The Jagdalpur Muria, or Raja Muria, are in my opinion the least attractive people in Bastar. Like the Raj Gond, they consider themselves superior to the Maria or Muria of the north; like the Raj Gond they have lost most of their own culture without assimilating that of the Hindus. It is possible that the Raja Muria are civilized Bison-horn Maria rather than civilized Muria, but it is impossible to be sure. They have been greatly exposed to external influence, from the Palace, from Orissa, from the cult of Danteshwari; many of their villages are leased to outsiders. Grigson estimated that there were about 32,000 Raja Muria in 1931; there may be some 40,000 now.

Of these tribes the most important in their influence on the Muria are the Hill Maria. The Bhattra and Raja Muria exercise a disintegrating effect upon them in the south. The Halba live in scattered little communities throughout the Muria area and influence those who live in their immediate neighbourhood.

Other castes living among the Muria are the Rawat, the Mahara, the Kalar, the Lohar, the Ghasia, the Ganda, the Nahar and the Pardhan.

The Rawat are the cowherds living in almost every village. They are also known as Ahir or Kopa. Their children are usually admitted to membership of the ghotul. The Rawat's association with the cow ensures him a good social position. As Eha says, 'His family having been connected for many generations with the sacred animal, the cow, he enjoys a certain consciousness of moral respectability, like a man whose uncles are deans or canons'.

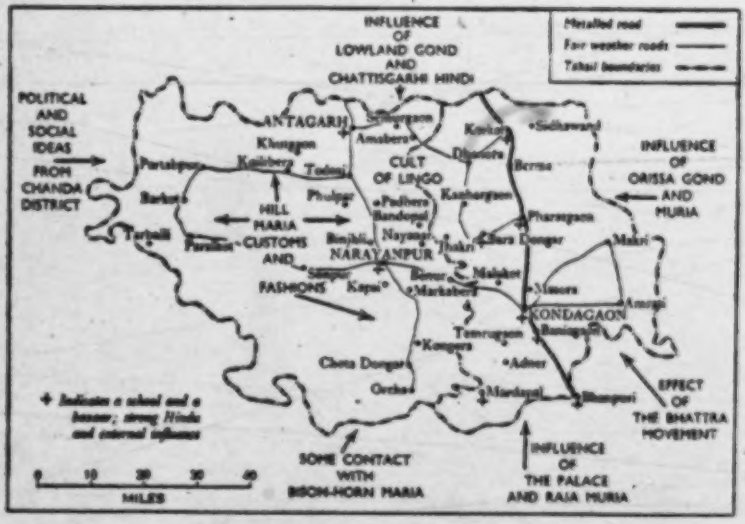
The Mahara, who numbered 32,787 in 1941, the *Ganda* (7130) and the *Panka* (4178), on the other hand, have officially a very low status. No one is 'untouchable' in a Muria village, but children of these castes are not usually welcomed in the ghotul and a liaison or marriage with a Mahara or Ganda is regarded as unforgivable. Once at Lamkhanar I met a Muria, Duaru, who went out of his mind because his wife eloped with a Ganda. On the other hand, these people have an important place in tribal life. They are the spinners and weavers of the countryside and supply the Muria with much of their cloth. They generally provide the village watchman or Kotwar and they thus have the duty of reposting Muria births and deaths. Mahara musicians attend the more sophisticated Muria weddings. More important still, they are famous for their powers of divination as Siraha. Scores of Mahara mediums appear at the greater Muria festivals and at the Dassera

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

celebrations in Jagdalpur. Many—but not all—of these people are aboriginal in everything but name; in feature, colour, dress and manners they are hardly to be distinguished from their Muria neighbours.

The Lohar living in Muria villages are generally tribal Lohar, not members of the great Hindu caste that bears this name. Muria and Maria who take to iron-work are separated from the rest of the tribe and have now been formed into an endogamous community of their own. The Muria generally regard the Muria-Lohar as somewhat inferior, but their antagonism does not go so far as to ban Lohar boys and girls from the ghotul. In 1941 there were 7877 Lohar in the whole State and 2718 in the two Muria tahsils.



SKETCH-MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCES AFFECTING THE LIFE AND CUSTOMS OF THE MURIA

Many *Kalar* are obviously aboriginals who have taken to the liquor business. Well-to-do Muria occasionally take contracts for distilling and selling mahua spirit. There are 13,451 Kalar in the whole State.

The Ghasia, of whom there are only 1704, are regarded with considerable scorn by the aboriginals who suspect them of desecrating their graves to obtain the 'grave-furniture' buried with the corpses. Yet they owe much to this caste, which is responsible for making, by the *cire-perdue* process, the brass images and horns used in Muria worship, buttock-bells for dancing and ladles for serving liquor.

The Pardhan. There are only a few members of this most interesting tribe, allied to but distinct from the Gond, in Bastar. But there is a Pardhan

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Pujari for the shrine of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon and Pardhan minstrels and priests are to be found in some Muria villages. Pardhan boys and girls are admitted to membership of the ghotul.

I found *Nahar* at Kuntpadar and at Kabonga and neighbouring villages. Their boys and girls had joined the ghotul and were taking a leading part in its affairs. Elsewhere this tribe has a very low position: it is mainly to be found in the west Central Provinces and Berar and is regarded as derived from a mixture of Bhil and Korku.

III. The Muria

Kariya mur ke manse ãn. We are the dark people.—Muria saying

The word 'Muria' is used in Bastar to mean, generally, an aboriginal. In this sense it has long been applied by State officials to all the primitive tribes except the Maria of the Abujhmar. In recent years the people themselves have also widely adopted it. Throughout the Dantewara Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari, the tribe which Grigson calls 'Bison-horn Maria' returned themselves as 'Muria' at the 1941 Census. There are also the Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil. There is thus a good deal of confusion about the proper classification of the Bastar aboriginals. Let me therefore say at once that when I use the term 'Muria' in this book, I apply it to the aboriginals of the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils whose culture centres round the ghotul. Grigson estimated that there were some 78,000 of these in 1931; there are about 100,000 now.

The name Muria has been derived from *mur*, the palas tree, or from *mur*, a root.[1] There is no apparent reason why the Muria should be named after the palas tree, which is neither a totem, nor specially honoured by them, nor even common in their territory. But the derivation of the word from *mur*, a root, has much to commend it. *Mur* may also mean 'permanent', as in *mur podor*, a permanent or regular name as opposed to a nickname: the Muria, in contrast to the Hill Maria, have permanent settlements and dwellings.

Early writers were impressed by the industry and cleanliness of the Muria. They are good cultivators, said Sir Benjamin Robertson in 1891, 'active, hardy and well-behaved and their villages are generally clean and comfortable'.[2] Hislop describes them as more civilized than the Maria, forming 'the bulk of the agricultural population in the north and centre'. Beyond the eastern frontier, however, 'where they mix with the Khonds in Patna, Kharond and Jeypur, they are somewhat wilder and devoted to the chase'.[3]

We must now survey these Muria of the north, for they are not all of one family, and the differences between them are interesting and significant. I will begin with the western parganas, lying to the west and north of the great mass of the Abujhmar Hills. It is in these hills that the key to many a Muria custom will be found. The people of these parganas seem to be Hill Maria who first settled in the plains and then came under strong alien

[1] R. V. Russell and R. B. Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), Vol. III, p. 64.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 186.
[3] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces* (Nagpur, 1866), Part I, p. 21.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

influence from across the Chanda border. Their villages are a compromise between the communalism of the Maria and the individualism of the Gond; the houses are arranged in streets and open on to one another, but they have substantial independent gardens behind. The women often dress in almost Maria fashion, exposing the breasts, but wearing few ornaments, and the men imitate the fashions of the Chanda border. Ten years ago, at the time of a Satyagraha agitation, many of them bought Gandhi caps. These are still worn, but pulled out of all shape to make them politically respectable. The ghotul is used mainly by boys and men; in Maria fashion it is the centre of the male life of the village, a tendency which the external influences across the border tend to strengthen.

In the northern parganas, the Muria have many links with their fellows in Kanker State and the Drug District. There are ghotul in both these areas, but in Drug ghotul life has become furtive and obscene, strumpeted by the contagion of the plains. The people in these northern parganas look and dress like the Gond of the Central Provinces; they have no affinities with the Maria of the neighbouring Padalibhum, whom they regard with amused astonishment. But they have the ghotul system very fully developed, although some of them vehemently deny the fact at a first conversation.

To the east, the Antagarh and Amabera Parganas are very similar—the people in dress and manners akin to the Gond of the Central Provinces. Here the cult of Lingo is at its strongest, and the Muria appear to be immigrants from the north. Although the ghotul flourishes, the people here are perhaps the least attractive of the Muria, for they are suspicious, timid and ill-mannered.

There is a striking contrast between these drab and sullen northern Muria and the people south of Narayanpur. This is the country of the best, most beautiful, most charming of all the peoples of Bastar, the so-called Jhoria Muria. These Muria are, according to their own account, Maria of the Abujhmar who have settled in the plains. They have retained a great deal of their original Maria culture but, where they have altered, they have improved and developed it—an astonishing variant of the normal result of culture-change.

In Bastar, says Hislop, 'the Madias are also called Jhorias, probably from *jhodi*, a brook'.[1] Dalton, deriving the word Maria from the Gondi term for a tree, *mara*, says the Maria 'are also called Jhoria, from *jhodi*, a brook. This is the name given to the gold-washers in Chutia Nagpur, who are in all probability Gonds likewise'. The word Jharia is found as the name of the wilder sub-divisions of several tribes in the Central Provinces,[2] and there is a section of the Poroja of Orissa called Jhoria.[3] I visited some Jhoria villages in Koraput District in 1944. They are an attractive people, with a fully developed megalithic culture and the village dormitory, but they bear no resemblance to the Bastar Jhoria.

The first to describe these 'Jhoorias' was Glasfurd who, writing in 1862, says that they 'are found principally in the north-western parts about Narayenpoor and Partabpore, and extend towards Kakeir; they are a numerous

[1] Hislop, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 7.

[2] P. N. Bose gives Kottur or Jharia among his classes of Gond, 'to which class', he says, 'the hill Gonds belong almost exclusively. Jharia literally means "jungly".'—P. N. Bose, 'Chattisgur: Notes on its tribes, sects and castes' in *JASB.*, Vol. LIX (1890), Part I, p. 283.

[3] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 197. A note by M. W. M. Yeatts on the Porojas and Saoras. See also G. Ramadas, 'Porojas', *Man in India*, Vol. XI, p. 247, and E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), Vol. VI, pp. 209ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Muria

existence among the Muria of the Ghotul or village dormitory, in which the boys and girls of the tribe grow up from childhood under a high degree of discipline and are trained in the tribal virtues. A system of what is practically pre-nuptial sexual communism teaches them from an early age the impropriety of jealousy. The habit of sharing everything all through childhood and youth in the dormitory weakens their individualistic attachment to personal property. The result is that several of the main causes of murder only lightly press upon them. The Bison-horn Maria probably had a similar dormitory club at one period and traces of it may still be found today. But it no longer exists as a social force, and the result is that the Maria—compared to their northern neighbours—grow up passionate and jealous, strongly attached to individual goods, undisciplined and revengeful. The Muria do not seem to consume any less alcohol than the Maria. Indeed the consumption of mahua spirit per head in the Muria area is higher than in the south. The Maria, however, drink more rice-beer, and there are many more cases of illicit distillation detected among them.

When my friend Mr A. N. Mitchell was Administrator of Bastar, he was troubled by this problem, and one day in conversation about it, one of us—I forget which—suggested that I might make some sort of survey of Maria homicides from my own independent angle. Mr Mitchell, with his unique zeal for everything affecting the life and welfare of aboriginals, gave me all possible facilities for my enquiry, and I was thus able not only to study official documents but also to visit the jail and discuss matters with many criminals.

The first task in my enquiry was to get at the records. I decided to confine myself to the exclusive study of the Bison-horn Maria, and here we were immediately faced by our first difficulty which was to decide who were to be included under this name. The name has come to be used in Bastar and in anthropology as a result of Mr W. V. Grigson's memorable book, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*. But it is not, of course, a word that is used by the people of themselves. Many of them now do not call themselves Maria at all. At the 1941 Census, thousands of Maria returned themselves as Maria, because they thought it sounded more respectable. Many others in the south have for some time

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

past taken the title of Dorla. Others again are known as Koya, and a few call themselves Gond. When I was in Konta, the very wild Maria there said, 'We are not Maria. That is the name of the uncivilized fellows in Dantewara'. When I was in Dantewara, the equally wild Maria there indignantly rejected the old name which, they said, was only properly given to the savages of Konta. The expression 'Bison-horn Maria' is an obvious linguistic makeshift. Another name for the tribe is Dandami Maria. But I have never heard this used by the people themselves, and many do not know what it means. The name 'Bison-horn Maria' is derived from the tribe's custom of using a magnificent head-dress of bison-horns for their marriage dances, and possibly 'Tallaguda Maria' or even 'Sing Maria' (an expression in actual use) would preserve both the descriptiveness of the title and linguistic propriety. But for the time being I have continued to use the very convenient term, Bison-horn Maria, and throughout this book it will be understood that, wherever the word 'Maria' is used without qualification, it is to the Bison-horn and not the Hill variety of the tribe that I refer.

It will be evident, however, that official records, which are not concerned with scientific classification, were not likely to preserve these nice distinctions between one tribe and another, and I was at first provided with a very large number of files, many of which had nothing to do with the Bison-horn Maria at all. I think it is not unlikely that the bad reputation of this tribe for violence is, to some extent, due to the fact that a number of people who do not belong to it are included when statistics are compiled. However, at last, after much sifting and sorting, I found that I had a collection of 103 records of Bison-horn Maria homicides covering the years 1921 to 1941. During this period there must have been nearly 250 such cases altogether, but some of the files had been eliminated and others for one reason or another were not available. However, 103 was a very fair sample. For convenience I omitted the last 3 cases, and was thus left with a set of 100 taken entirely at random, distributed throughout the period under review and taken from every part of the area.

It was rather more difficult to get records of suicide, for

INTRODUCTION

101 NO aboriginal people of India has attained greater prominence on the political scene of past centuries than the large group of tribes commonly known by the generic term Gond. When the mist that still veils long periods in the history of the Deccan finally lifts, Gonds appear not only as the main population of wide areas in the very heart of India, described after them as Gondwana, but also as a ruling race equal in power and material status to many contemporary Hindu princes. Lacking unity and leadership the Gond states collapsed before the successive onslaughts of Moghul and Maratha armies, but the Gond populations remained, the old feudal system continued to function in [21] many remote tracts and several Gond rajas enjoy up to this day the status of ruling chiefs. But besides the advanced sections of the Gonds who vied with Hindus in the fields of war and statesmanship, there were and still are the great masses of primitive peasants and forest dwellers on a cultural level no higher than that of other aboriginal populations in the Central Indian zone. Of their economics, social organization and religion, historical sources tell us next to nothing, and the study of Gond culture, as a distinct element in the culture pattern of India, falls to the anthropologist, who finds an almost overwhelming wealth of material among the many vigorous branches of the Gond family.

184 101 [19] Spread over an area considerably larger than the British Isles and extending from the Godavari gorges in the south to the Vindhya Mountains in the north, the Gonds are neither racially, nor culturally, nor linguistically a homogeneous population. So great are the differences in custom and material circumstances between many of the widely scattered tribal groups that one may well wonder what causes them to be considered, and indeed to consider themselves, as members of the same race. Wherever we find Gonds, unless they are totally detribalized and merged with Hindu populations, they describe themselves as Gond or, if speaking Gondi, as Koitur, the universal equivalent of that name in all Gondi dialects. Were it not for those large groups of eastern Gonds, who speak Chhattisgarhi Hindi, the Gonds in the north-west of the Central Provinces, who speak western Hindi and the far smaller groups of Telugu speaking Gonds, better known as Koyas, in Hyderabad and Madras Presidency, it would probably be most satisfactory to replace, at least in ethnological usage, the general name "Gond" by the term "Gondi speaking populations," thus leaving it open whether there exists such an entity as a Gond people or only a group of peoples who to-day speak related languages. Indeed, I believe that we shall fail in

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

our approach to the Gond problem—one of the cardinal problems of Deccan ethnology—unless we envisage the possibility that the tribes now known as Gonds, far from being the dispersed off-shoots of a once homogeneous people, attained a certain and very limited measure of cultural uniformity only when they came under the sway of the same dominant linguistic influence.

Gondi with its many local dialects is a Dravidian language of the so-called intermediate group, and stands, according to Grierson, closer to Tamil and Kanarese than to Telugu. But it seems highly improbable that the Dravidian tongues, which were no doubt associated with the representatives of the pre-Aryan high-civilizations of Southern India, should have been the original languages of tribal populations as primitive in racial and cultural make-up as the Hill Marias of Bastar and certain Koyas of Hyderabad. Just as such widely separated aboriginal tribes as the Chenchus of the Nallamallai Hills, the Hill Reddis of the Eastern Ghats and some, though not all, Naikpods and Kolams in the hills of Adilabad have adopted Telugu to the exclusion of any other tongue, without anyone considering Telugu as their original language[1] or claiming the present linguistic uniformity as proof of a genetic connection between all those tribes, so the peoples now speaking Gondi may, in times past, have abandoned older tribal tongues in favour of a Dravidian language spoken by neighbouring populations or the members of a ruling class. J. H. Hutton believes that by a similar process the Oraons of Chota Nagpur have adopted their present Dravidian tongue[2] in place of a Munda language, and I fully agree with his assumption that a large-scale Dravidianization of aboriginal tribes occurred partly previous and partly parallel to the Aryanization of which we are still witnesses.[3]

The idea that Dravidian Gondi represents a comparatively recent element in the linguistic pattern of the Central Indian belt has already been voiced by R. V. Russell, who put forward the theory of a Gond incursion into the Central Provinces from the south between the ninth and the thirteenth century A.D. This probably goes too far and is not supported by ethnological evidence; in solving the language problem it is not even necessary to assume a wholesale migration of all the Gond tribes from Dravidian lands south of the Godavari to the Central Provinces and the hill-tracts of Bastar. It is sufficient to postulate the invasion of a people limited in numbers but superior to the older tribal folks in organization and material equipment, and the subsequent spread of its Dravidian language and perhaps certain elements of its culture among the tribes previously speaking one or several older tongues. Indian history provides numerous examples of such an imposition of a foreign

1. In the case of Naikpods and Kolams an older tribal language is still spoken by other groups.
2. Oraon belongs to the same intermediate group as Gondi.
3. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Part I, p. 358.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

language on aboriginal populations, and it seems more probable that such tribes as the Muria Gonds, with their close cultural and racial affinities to the Austroasiatic Gadabas of Orissa, were subject to a change of language than that they immigrated from distant parts of Southern India.

We are not yet in a position to surmise which population may have been responsible for the spread of Gondi or which pre-Dravidian languages Gondi may have replaced. Both questions will perhaps remain for ever unanswered, but linguistic research among the Gondi speaking peoples, the still entirely mysterious Khonds, and the neighbouring Austroasiatic tribes may still lead to surprising results. Since the days of Grierson's Linguistic Survey few trained linguists have done fieldwork among the tribal populations of Peninsular India, and the most admirable descriptive works of amateurs cannot compensate for the absence of comparative studies by experts.[1]

The replacement of an older language by one of more recent introduction, is an accomplished fact among many of the eastern and northern Gonds, who speak now the Chhattisgarhi dialect of Hindi and various other local dialects. But there can be no doubt that these Aryan languages were adopted from neighbouring Hindu populations instead of tribal tongues, and certain place-names are to-day the only evidence that the languages previously spoken were related to the Gondi spoken by other sections of the Gond family.

According to the Census of India the total number of Gonds in 1931[2] was 3,063,753. With their strong tribal consciousness they are the premier aboriginal race of India, exceeding by more than one million the number of Bhils and dwarfing such tribes as Oraons, Mundas, Hos and Santals.

The majority of Gonds—2,261,138 in 1931—are found in the Central Provinces and Berar, which contain practically all the territories known to the early Moghul writers as Gondwana. Except for Buldana in the extreme south-west, there is no district in the Central Provinces

1. The limited value of linguistic material contained in the writings of anthropologists is to none more obvious than to the authors; such texts, for instance, as given in this volume may facilitate the linguist's approach to an unwritten language, but they are insufficient as a basis for linguistic conclusions. For very relevant phonetic peculiarities may entirely escape the attention of the untrained observer, or defeat his attempts at recording them. In linguistics as in anthropology there is no substitute for field work. The dearth of authoritative works on the tribal languages of India was lamented by J. H. Hutton in his Census report: "There is, however, a serious void in our knowledge in that no intensive work appears to have been done on the tribal dialects of southern India, so that it is impossible to say whether the Munda languages ever penetrated to the extreme south of India or not. The linguistic survey unfortunately did not include southern India in its scope, and there is therefore a crying need for an intensive study of the dialects spoken by such tribes as the Kadar, Kurumans, Paliyans, Panians and Thanda Pulayans, with the object of discovering whether or no any Munda survivals are to be found." (Op. cit., p. 158). Hutton's call to linguists has, to my knowledge, remained largely unheeded. M. B. Emeneau who worked among the Todas being a laudable exception. But equally urgent as the study of the tribal dialects of South India is intensive work on the tribal language of the Central belt.

2. No later figures for individual tribes are available, the Census operations of 1941 having been curtailed for reasons of economy.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

101 without a considerable Gond population, but the main strongholds of
162 the Gonds are to-day the Satpura plateau including the districts of Betul,
197 Chhindwara and Seoni, where the western type of Gondi is spoken, Mandla and Chhattisgarh in the east, where the Gonds have adopted the local dialect of eastern Hindi but retained their tribal identity, and in the south Chanda and the neighbouring Yeotmal, where the language is Gondi, but of a dialect somewhat different from the Gondi of Betul.

101 To the north-west the Gonds extend across the Narbada River into
691 Central India, and are particularly numerous in Indore State; to the
197 east of the Central Provinces lie the states of Gond princes, such as
[619] Kawardha, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, to-day known as the Chhattisgarh States. Although neither these Gond rajas, nor indeed the Gonds among their subjects speak Gondi, they are fully conscious of their tribal associations and the high status of the ruling princes adds no doubt to tribal prestige in the whole of Chhattisgarh.

Further south, bordering on Chanda, Drug and Raipur, extend the two States of Kanker and Bastar, where Gonds constitute the majority of the population. Bastar in particular is the home of three important groups of Gonds: the Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias, all of which differ in language and custom very considerably from the Gonds of the Central Provinces.[1] Their colourful and complex cul-
[174] tures are representative of ancient aboriginal India and show obvious affinities with the Austroasiatic cultures of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Bastar has also part in the Koyas or Dorlas of the Godavari area, the most southern branch of the Gond family occurring in considerable strength in Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State and stretching across the barrier of the Eastern Ghats into the vicinity of Rajahmundry. Most Koyas still speak a dialect of Gondi, but those surrounded by Telugu populations, have changed over to Telugu.

Another substantial group of Gonds, closely akin to the Gonds of Yeotmal and Chanda, is found in the hilly country between the Godavari and the Penganga Rivers constituting the Adilabad District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, and it is these Gonds who form the subject of the present work.

101 All the Gonds of Adilabad, except for an insignificant overflow of
186 Dhurwe Gonds from Chanda, consider themselves Raj Gonds, and this brings us to the still somewhat problematic division between Raj Gonds and Dhur or Dhurwe Gonds, which runs through the greater part of the Gond population within the Central Provinces. There seems to be no uniformity in the principles ruling this division; in Chhattisgarh only the members of ruling or formerly ruling families are described as Raj Gond, while in other parts most of the land-holding Gonds aspire to this denomination. In recent times the name Raj Gond has also been
[668] claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status by

1. The Hill Marias extend into the hills of the neighbouring Chanda District.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

compliance with Hindu customs, and "Raj-Gond" reform movements have made their appearance in the Central Provinces.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the distinction between Raj Gonds and the other sections of the Gond peoples. C. B. Lucie-Smith writing of the Raj Gonds of Chanda suggested that either "the epithet Raj was originally applied to royal and noble Gond families, from which the distinction spread to their followers and the governing class generally; or it may describe the leading Gond tribe which in ancient days conquered the land from other aboriginal clans."[1] But Captain Forsyth believed that Raj Gonds are in many cases the descendants of alliances between Rajput adventurers and Gonds, and R. V. Russell quotes this view with qualified approval.[2]

W. V. Grigson on the other hand lays emphasis rather on the social than the historical causes for the distinction and suggests that such names as Raj Gond arose from "the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names.[3] The situation in Adilabad seems rather to accord with the second suggestion advanced by Lucie-Smith; for here the Raj Gonds do not form a ruling class or even a class of privileged economic status, but an entire tribal group comprising all strata of society from the feudal chiefs down to the poorest labourer. We will see in a later chapter that the once powerful Gond Kings of Chanda belonged to this group, and their kinsmen in the Adilabad hills were as early as the 17th century referred to as Raj Gonds in patents of the Emperor Aurangzeb.

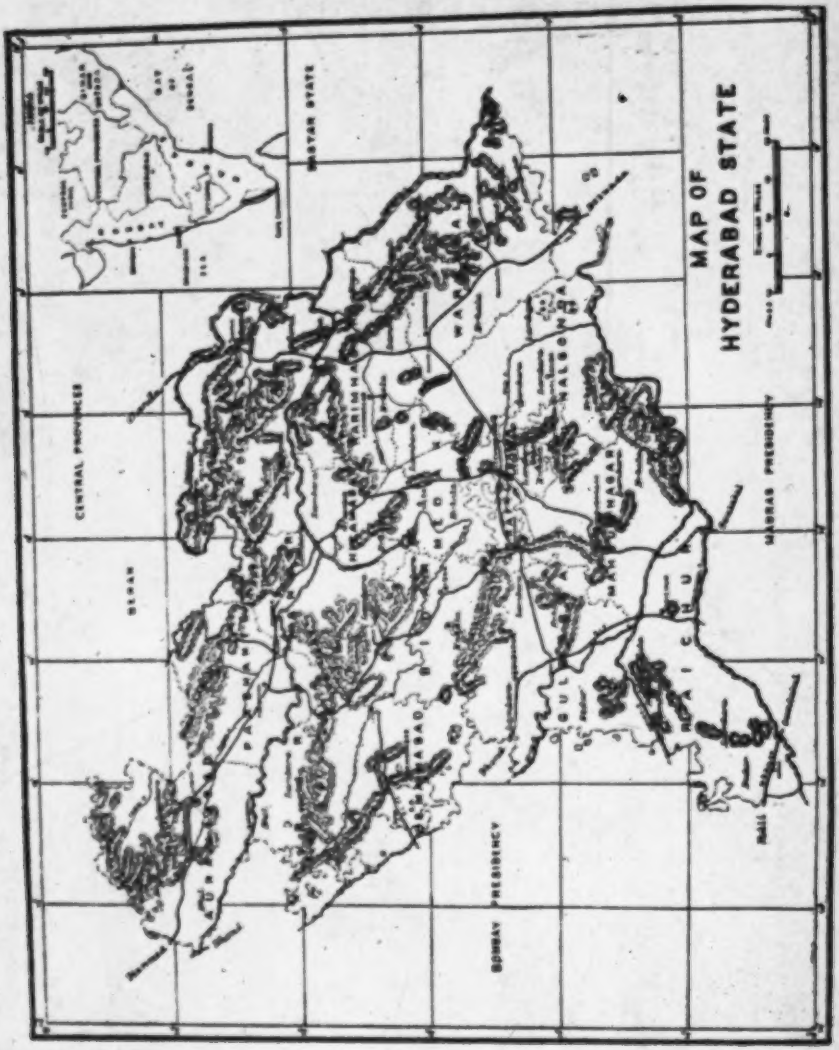
Here the Raj Gonds, far from aspiring to inclusion in the Hindu fold, consider themselves the true exponents of Gond culture and Gond language, and above all of the traditional Gond religion which involves the sacrifice of cows at the rites for the clan-gods. Many of them have never met a Dhurwe Gond, but those who have come in contact with the few groups of Dhurwe Gonds who have recently drifted across the Chanda border, look down upon them as speaking a corrupt form of Gondi intermixed with much Marathi, and as following different customs; somewhat sweepingly and apparently unjustly they assert that the Dhurwe Gonds have no cult of clan deities "only worshipping Bhimana like Kolams."

It seems indeed that the Raj Gonds of Adilabad, who have lived for almost a century and a half under Muslim rule, and have in consequence been less exposed to the influence of the more intolerant exponents of Hinduism, have retained more of their old culture than

1. *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Chanda District. Central Provinces.* 1869. Nagpur 1870, p. 46.
2. *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India.* London 1916. Vol. III. p. 63.
3. W. V. Grigson. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar.* London. 1938 p. 36.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

●102



[Facing p. 4]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

133 For the rest of its course from Chitrakot to its junction with the Godavari near Bhadrakali in Bhopalpatnam zamindari on the western border it is typical of any great river draining mountainous country. It loses its rusty colour at Chitrakot, and becomes a series of rapids and deep pools, giving way to fresh rapids wherever it passes over sheets of rock or pierces through successive mountain barriers in wild gorges. The pools are often great land-locked lakes, with deeply wooded islands, the haunts of tiger, sambar and wild buffalo. It receives various tributaries, of which the chief Bastar rivers are the Gudra, the Nei Bherat[1] and the Kotri on the north bank, and on the south bank the Dantewara, the Berudi and the Bhopalpatnam Chintawag. The Gudra and the Nei Bherat take most of the drainage of the wild tangle of the Abujhmar hills, save for smaller mountain torrents, such as the Goinder that descends from Hikul over the magnificent Handawada falls (not marked on the maps), and the Komra that for much of its length forms the Bastar-Central Provinces (Chanda) boundary. The Gudra drains the Tulagotal, Farsigotal, Farsal, Bardal and Chudala (Chhota) Dongar *parganas* of the Abujhmar mountains and other adjacent *parganas* of the Antagarh tahsil; the gorge near Chhota Dongar where it leaves the Abujhmar mountains in a narrow loch between forested peaks, its banks deep in bamboo, *Osmunda regalis* and other ferns, is beautiful. The Nei Bherat rises near Narainpur in the Kurangal *pargana* of Antagarh, the north-western tahsil, and flows due west past Sonpur and through the Nurbhum Maria *pargana*; then turning south-west through the Tapalibhum (Chhotemar) and Behramar (Baremar) Maria *parganas* of Antagarh, it crosses the south-east corner of the Ahiri zamindari in Chanda district to join the Indrawati and the Kotri or Paralkot river in a trijunction of unforgettable beauty 'beneath the fortified rock of Bhamragarh, in a wild expanse of hill and forest unbroken by a single clearing'.[2] Besides the Maria *parganas* of Antagarh already mentioned, it drains the Hukkagotal and Jatawada and parts of the Bardal and Farsal Maria *parganas* of Antagarh, and the portion of the Abujhmar mountains that extends beyond Bastar

●[103]

[1] Wrongly marked 'Nibra' on the old Topographical Survey maps of the sixties, slightly revised modern editions of which are still the only maps available of most of Bastar. 'Nei Bherat' means in the Maria dialect 'Dog River', so called after the numbers of otters in the river.

The names on these old maps are often wrong, and represent the efforts of Telugu or Bengali surveyors to reproduce the difficult guttural and other sounds of Maria. The maps are full of other inaccuracies, and seem often to have been drawn from the imagination of surveyors afraid of fever, tigers and aboriginal magic.

[2] Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report, para. 56. He calls the Nibra River by the name 'Pamla Ghootum'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 'Seroncha Talook and Bhopalputnum, Veejapore, Chintulnar, Dunteewara, Kootroo and Barsoor Talooks of Bustar'; and for Marias 'Kootroo, Chintulnar, Dunteewara and Veejapore Talooks of Bustar, and also that part of Bustar called Ulrugmad[1]'. He notes that the Gotta language is nearly allied to the Maria. He uses
●[103] Telugu versions of Bastar place names, just as the Survey of India did in the old topographical survey maps; by Savery, Peejee, Potukul, Kotapilly, Veejapore and Soonkoom he meant Kolab-Sabari, Bhiji, Phutkel, Pamer-Kotapalli, Bijapur and Sukma. Bhiji is the old name of the south-eastern part of Konta tahsil; Phutkel is a former zamindari in the Talper riverain tract of Bijapur tahsil, while Chintulnar is now in Konta tahsil, occupying the tract at the foot of the Aranpur pass. Except, therefore, for his inclusion of Sukma in the region of the Koyas, his distribution of the 'Koys, Gottawars and Marias' corresponds very closely with the areas shown in the ethnographic map for Dorlas, mixed Maria-Dorla, and Marias; in his Report on the Dependency of Bastar he had stated that Marias constituted 90 per cent. of the population of Sukma.

114 Various articles were published between 1876 and 1881 on the Koyas, whom he rightly calls Kois, by the Rev. John Cain, for many years a C.M.S. missionary at Dummagudem on the Godavari in the Bhadrachalam taluq of the East Godavari Agency, and only a few miles from the south-western corner of the Konta tahsil. These articles were the basis of the article on the Koyas in Thurston's *Tribes and Castes of Southern India*[2]. He wrote in the first of these:—

> 'I propose to notice first the Kois, a tribe already partially described in Captain Glasfurd's reports and Colonel Haig's report of his visit to Jagdalpur, and also in the Census Report for 1871 of the Madras Presidency. These people are to be found in the country extending from the banks of the Indravati, Bastar, down to the neighbourhood of Kammammet in the Nizam's country. All those in the plains have a tradition that about 200 years ago they were driven down from the plateau in the Bastar country by famine and disputes, and this relationship is also acknowledged by the Gutta Kois, i.e. the hill Kois who live in the highlands of Bastar. Up to the present (1876) time I have had but little intercourse with the Gutta Kois, and the manners and customs described in this paper will be those of the Kois dwelling in the Bhadrachallam taluka.'

Elsewhere he writes that the Gutta Koi of the Bastar plateau 'look down with some degree of contempt on the lowland Koi', who are

[1] An obvious misprint for 'Ubujmard', Glasfurd's spelling of Abujhmar.

[2] Cain's articles are:—'The Bhadrachallam Taluka, Godavari District, S. India', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1876, p. 357 et seq.; 'The Bhadrachallam and Rekapalli Taluqas', *ibidem*, Vol. VIII, 1879, p. 33 et seq., and p. 219 et seq.; Vol. X, 1881, p. 221 et seq.; 'The Koi, a Southern Tribe of the Gond', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal*, Vol. XIII, 1881, p. 410 et seq. There were others in certain missionary journals, which I could not trace.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

I have tried in the specimens below and in transcribing the vernacular words used in the text of the book to follow the same orthography as the *Linguistic Survey*, with modifications as noted above. When no long or short sign is printed above a vowel, it is pronounced as an ordinary short vowel, not clipped. As a rough guide to pronunciation :—

Pronounce short a as the final a in America
" long a as in fast
" short e as in when
" long e as the ea in great
" short i as in bit
" long i as ee in meet
" short o as the first o in bottom
" long o as in pope
" short u as in put
" long u as the oo in foot
" ai as the English affirmative ay
" au as the ow in cow

When a small a is printed above the line between two consonants, it is generally little more than a pause between syllables, the check already mentioned; when it is so printed at the end of a word, it represents the short a sound without which, for example, it is almost impossible to pronounce a final consonantal y.

Cerebral t, d and r are printed with a dot below them, and nasal n with a long sign above it. The following points observed at pp. 4-5 of Volume I of Mr. C. G. Chenevix Trench's *Grammar of Gondi* apply to the Hill Maria dialect of Gondi also :—

(a) 'The -r is frequently rolled in Gondi as in English, and even before a consonant. . . . To avoid the appearance of affectation, single -r is written in the latter contingency. Thus, . . . though the -r in Dôrtônâ, = I am tired, first person singular perfect tense of Dôrrânâ, = to be tired, is strongly rolled, it is written single. This tripping -r is characteristic of the language.'

(b) In all southern dialects of Gondi there is a tendency to cerebralize all -r's, i.e. to pronounce r as ṛ. (The Hill Maria goes further, and gutturalises ṛ to *ghaṛa*.)

(c) 'Similarly, in the oblique cases of nouns, d and ḍ are often interchanged and t and ṭ sometimes.'

(d) 'It is often impossible to say whether a vowel should be marked long or short.'

(e) It is doubtful whether initial o or e exist in the language. 'There is always a faint w sound before the o, and generally a half-uttered y precedes the e. Thus the Gond betrays his affinity to the Madrasi butler who pronounces "eight" "Yeight."'

(f) 'A similar "Madrasi" tendency is the addition of û to final t, ṭ, d, ḍ and l. Âdû is often heard for âd, ôlû for ôl, âmmâtû for âmmât, tâkâlû for tâkâl, the third person neuter singular of the future of tâkânâ, to walk.' Compare Hill Maria *maṛsu* for Gondi mâṛs, = axe, himatu for himat as second person plural of the imperative of *hiṛânâ*, to go, in my specimens

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

104

Appendix VII

Glossary of Vernacular Terms

[Abbreviations: BHM. = Bison-horn Maria dialect; Chh. = Chhattisgarhi Hindi; G. = Gondi; H. = Hindi; Ha. = Halbi; HM. = Hill Maria dialect; U. = Urdu.]

Aghā (HM.) Husband's living and sleeping room.

ājkī (HM., BHM.) A hole in the floor, used as a mortar in which grain is pounded with a wooden husker or pestle.

ākōmkmā (HM., BHM.) See p. 199. A man may marry only from an *akomaxa* clan. In this work I have sometimes translated it as 'wife-clan', though, when a woman speaks of her *akomaxa* relatives, the right term would be 'husband-clan'; sometimes I have used of such relatives the term 'affines', using 'kindred' for relatives of *dadabhai* or brother class, union with a girl of which is considered incest.

algi (HM.) Veranda.

alpanji (HM.) A sleeping-platform.

angithi (HM.) Women's kitchen and sleeping room.

ārā (HM.) A bull-roarer.

Bānḍā (Ha.) A knife or bill, shaped like a dab.

bāṛī (G.) A garden enclosure, generally behind the dwelling called *lōn-mulung* or 'house-enclosure' by the BHM.

barnā (Chh.) Bride-price. The BHM. use this borrowed term, or else the Hindi word *karcha*, meaning expenses.

begār (H., Ha., U.) Forced labour; the corvée.

Bhaṛī Pen (G.) The 'Great' or Supreme God; originally, for the Gond of British India, the clan-god kept at the *pen-kara* or Holy Circle, as distinct from the *chuddur penk* (small gods) kept in the house of the head of each family.

bhūm (Sanskrit and G.) Earth or land; the earth-god.

bhūm-gaita, or bhūmiā Among HM. generally an alternative designation of the *kaiyap-gaita* or religious headman, but in a few HM. villages he is a separate functionary whose function is to lead the elders in deputation to the clan-god at the chief village of the clan. Among BHM., an alternative designation of the *pernā*, or religious headman of the village.

bhūm-jāgā (BHM.) The sacred plot of land set apart in the field of the *pernā* or religious headman for certain religious ceremonies generally at the *pandum* festivals.

bhūtha (Ha.) Supplies requisitioned by State officials from cultivators. An old Sanskrit term for the twentieth part of the harvest, traditionally reserved for the pay of officers of the king.

bīāṛ (Chh.) The puddling of rice-fields with a flat log drawn by oxen, to thin the young rice plants.

birjō-dōl (BHM.) The large double-membrane drum used by Bison-horn dancers.

bohorkal (Ha.) A disease-riddance ceremony.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

● 104

Chalki (Ha.) An assistant of the *pargana* headman, generally hereditary.

chipti (Ha.) A lidded box, made of leaves on a framework of cane.

chuddur penk (G.) The 'small gods' or penates of the Gonds of some districts of the Central Provinces.

Dādibhāi (HM., BHM., G.) The term used for 'brother-clans'; see '*ahomama*' above.

Dahi (Ha.) A form of cultivation in which boughs and brushwood are brought from the forests and burnt on old fallow fields so that the ashes may serve as fertilizers. HM. and BHM. call it *parka*.

ḍeḍā'lnō (HM.) A leaf shield worn on the shoulders as a protection against rain.

Deo (H.) A god.

Deo-kot (Ha.) The sacred grove of a clan-god.

dhūmā (Ha.) The ghost of a dead man; used by Halbi-speaking BhM. as equivalent of BHM. and HM. term *kandl*.

dippā (HM.) Flat forest lands, patches of which are used in rotation for growing crops in the ashes of the felled and burned forest growth. The BHM. term is *erkā*, and the Ha. term *markām*.

ḍōḍī (HM.) A field-house.

dolā-lon (HM.) A menstruation hut.

Dor-bhūm 'Lowlands'; HM. use this name for the country of BHM. and Murias, and BHM. for that of the 'Doria' tribe of South Bastar and the Godavari valley. The Doria derives his appellation from the Telugu *dora*, meaning 'lord'.

dōdi (Ha.) A small earthen pot.

Erkā (BHM.) See *dippa*.

Gaitā (HM., Muria.) A headman.

Gāon (H.) A village.

garh (H.) A fort, or a feudal division of country.

gattā (HM.) A dish-shaped brass gong.

ghāṭ (H.) A mountain pass; used in Anglo-Indian speech of a chain of mountains such as the Eastern Ghats.

ghāṭō (HM., BHM.) A thick porridge of rice or other grain, called in H. *bhāt*.

gerlā (HM., BHM.) A bridge pier consisting of a cylindrical bamboo basket filled with boulders.

gotal (HM., Muria.) A communal village dormitory, used mainly by bachelors, but at times by all the males of the village, and used also almost as a men's club.

gotrā (H., Ha.) A sub-division of a Hindu caste. It is used by Halbi speakers for the Maria clan.

gudapal (HM., BHM., G.) Literally, 'tribe-milk', the term applied to the marriage of cross-cousins, and to the cross-cousins themselves. A in one generation marries B, the sister of C. The son of C regards the daughter of A and B as his *gudapal*, and is entitled to demand her hand in marriage or to demand compensation if she is married to someone else. By C's son marrying A's daughter, C's clan is repaid the 'milk' debt which A's clan incurred when A took B to wife from C's clan.

gudārī (HM.) A hoe or mattock, called *hargudār* by the BHM.

guḍī (Ha.) A hedge-temple.

gunīā (Ha.) One versed in *guni*, or magic spells.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hilli (HM.) A menstruation room in a house.

hondi (HM., BHM.) A past participial form of the verb *hondānā*, to go, used of the Departed, or of the ghost of a dead man which is to be propitiated by appropriate ceremonies, and finally laid by the erection of a menhir. 104

hondi-gatti (BHM.) Priest of the Departed.

hondi-gatti Wooden posts erected at the grave of a dead person.

hondi-garyā 'Ghost-throne'; the small cromlech set up at the base of a *hondi-gatta* or a menhir.

handi (H., Ha.) A large earthen pot.

harā-tindānā (BHM.) 'Remains-eating'; the feast to which all friends and relatives are invited on the day after the *pandum* ceremonies which only members of the family may attend.

Jāgir (U.) A Crown grant of land or of the right of collecting land revenue, generally as a reward for service rendered or to be rendered.

jarman (Ha., HM., BHM.) 'German'; the word used for the aluminium alloy of which many bazaar ornaments, ear-picks, etc., are manufactured.

jāwā (G.) The thin grain gruel called *pej* in H., Ha. and Chh.

jīvā (G.) Personality, life, that which survives after death and is not malignant like the *hondi*.

jīyā-hitti (HM.) The heir of a dead man.

Kich-tondor (BHM.) A jews-harp. (*Kach* means 'iron'.)

kadri (BHM.) Knife (HM. *kasyeq*).

kadri-berā (BHM.) 'Knife-field'; a piece of land in the field of the religious headman (*pormā* or *kadri-gattā*) set apart for certain religious ceremonies and sacrifices. It is also known as *bhūm-jāgā*.

kadri-gattā (BHM.) An alternative name for the *pormā* or religious headman, corresponding to the HM. term *kasyeq-gattā*.

kāghai (HM.) An area set apart for *ponda* cultivation when left fallow for a term of years to allow the forest growth to recuperate. It is called *kave* by BHM.

kal-barria (BHM.) Wine-ladle.

kar'nu (HM.) A threshing-floor.

kasyeq (HM.) The knife carried in the loin-cloth in a wooden sheath.

kasyeq-gatti (HM.) The 'knife-headman' or religious headman of the HM. village, and *ex-officio* priest of the Village Mother. The word 'knife' refers to his sacrificial functions.

katti (BHM.) Clan. HM. and Gonds generally use the term *pāri*.

katul (HM., BHM.) A field-shed.

khandi (H.) A measure of capacity, containing (in Bastar) 40 *pailī* or 160 *seli*. A *seli* contains rice weighing 40 *tola* or slightly more than 1 lb. The *khandi* of rice thus weighs about 164 lb.

kochi (HM.) A man's dancing-skirt.

Kōpār (HM.) The final harvest festival of the Hill Marias, in honour of the earth and the clan-god.

Koi, (plural Koior) (G.) Name used generally by all speakers of Gondi dialects of Hindus. Marias apply it generally to strangers.

Koi-gotal (HM.) The strangers' rest-house, set apart in HM. villages for lodging State officials and other strangers who are not Koitor.

kosri (Ha.) The grain *kutki* (*Panicum miliaceum*).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

104

kastkāl (HM.) The menhirs set up by the roadside to the Departed.
kupā-kalk (BHM.) The knot into which a man ties his crown-tuft of hair.
kurmā-lon (HM.) A menstruation hut.
kutki (H.) The grain *Panicum miliaceum* called **kokelā** by Marias and Gonds, and *kosra* in Halbi.
kutmām (BHM.) Phratry or group of clans, also called *tārv*.
Lamanā'i (G.) A youth serving his future father-in-law for his daughter's hand when he cannot afford the usual bride-price.
lāndā (Ha., BHM.) An intoxicating gruel, made from rice and *Eleusine coracana*.
leski (HM.) A medium, employed as assistant by **waddai** or clan-priest.
lingam (H.) A phallus.
lon (HM., BHM.) House; the northern Gonds say **ron**.
lonā (HM.) The inner room of the house, used for the cult of the Departed and as a store-room.
lotā (H.) A small brass pot.

Machān (H.) An elevated platform, set up in trees for shooting at big game, or in fields for watching crops.
mahuā (H.) The tree *Bassia latifolia*. Its flowers are distilled to produce the chief intoxicating spirit of Central India.
mājhi (Ha.) Headman.
mandā (Ha.) Granary.
mandiā (HM., BHM.) The grain *Eleusine coracana*.
mantram (H.) A spell or religious formula.
māqqawidang (HM.) Small brass wire rings worn in the helix of the ear.
māqsi (HM.) An axe, called *marai* by BHM.
marhān (Ha.) See *dippa*.
marmi (HM.) Marriage, by the normal ceremony.
masni (Ha.) A grass sleeping-mat.
melo (BHM.) Taboo; the HM. term is *polo*.
Metābhūm (G.) Highlands (*matā* (G.) means mountain); both HM. and BHM. call their country Metabhum and themselves Meta Koitor.
modul-waddā'i (BHM.) A clan-priest.
moghi (HM.) A dancing-shield.
mudang (HM.) A garment worn by women, consisting of a square patch of cloth passed between the legs, and attached behind and in front to a cord or bamboo hooped around the waist and threaded through numerous brass rings.
mundā (Ha.) A small irrigation tank.
mungyā (BHM.) Bead-necklaces.
musal (HM.) A club-shaped wooden husker or pestle, by which grain is pounded and husked in the **dāhi** hole in the floor. BHM. call it **usphl**.
muyang (HM.) Pellet-bells.

Nār or **nāgh** (BHM., HM.) A village.
narmā-lon (BHM.) Room in which women and infants sleep.
Nāgh-Talughi or **Nār-Taluri** The Village Mother goddess of the HM.; BHM. generally use the Hinduized form Gaon Devi.

O'lāal (G.) Hearth.
o kā (Ha.) A gourd ladle.
oser (BHM.) The veranda of a house.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

114

Padar (Ha.) See *pāghal*. The term *Padar-ēdj* applied by BHM. to the open well-settled country of the Jagdalpur tahsil may simply mean 'village-realm'.

pāghāl or pāgh (HM.) A village site, one of the alternative sites in parishes where there is much shifting cultivation. BHM. use the Ha. *padar*, and Murias and some HM. *pāra*.

pagḥla (HM.) A gourd ladle.

pagri (H.) A turban.

paik (Ha.) Originally a soldier of the medieval feudal militia of all the states of Orissa and Chhattisgarh; used in the *lingua franca* of Bastar of police constables, etc.

panchāyat (H., Ha.) The council of village or caste elders, traditionally five (*pānch*) in number.

pandum (BHM.) A first-fruits or new-eating ceremony.

pārad (Ha.) See *wata*.

parganā (H.) A sub-division of a tahsil or zamindari, corresponding roughly to the ancient *gark*.

pāri (G.) The word used by almost all Gondi speakers for the clan; BHM., however, call it *katta*.

pāriḍg (HM.) Bride-price.

parkā (HM., BHM.) See *dahi*.

patwāri (H.) Village accountant-surveyor, employed by State to maintain village assessment records and on settlement work.

pāyā (BHM.) Parting of the hair.

pedā (BHM.) Secular headman of village, corresponding to HM. *gaita*. The term is occasionally used by HM. also.

pedāwō'ghāl (HM.) A menstruation hut or room.

pen (G.) God. As used by HM. and BHM. refers to the clan-god.

pendā (HM., BHM.) The chief form of cultivation among Marias. The method is that described for *dippa*, but *penda* lands are always steep hill-slopes, and generally have far longer fallow periods than *dippa* lands.

pendul (BHM.) Regular marriage.

pen-gidwā (G.) The clan-priest of the Gonds of the Nagpur and adjacent Central Provinces districts, who is the custodian of the *Bhera Pen* and the *pen-kardi*, or Holy Circle.

pen-riwar (HM.) The clan-god's shrine or hedge-temple, generally called *dongudi* (Ha.) by BHM.

pen-waddāl (HM.) The priest-medium of the clan-god.

permā (BHM.) The religious headman of the village. See also *bhum-gaita* and *kadri-gaita*.

pharsi (Ha.) A kind of axe.

pirā-mānshā (HM.) A disease-riddance ceremony, called *bahordel* in Ha., and *rog-barrid* by BHM.

pole (HM.) Taboo.

pōrsheng (HM.) Rings or pings worn in the lobe of the ear.

pūjāri (H.) One who performs the *pūjā* or worship of gods.

pūpal (G.) The pulse *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus*).

Rau (Ha., BHM.) Demons, chiefly of mountains and high places.

roking (HM.) A large leaf hat used as protection against rain.

sāja (H.) The tree *Terminalia tomentosa*, held sacred by Marias and all Gonds. (G., *mard-marrā*.)

sāl (H.) The tree *Shorea robusta*.

salphi (Ha.) The sago-palm (*Caryota urens*) called *gargā marrā* by Marias.

sāri-bori (Ha.) Village subscriptions of labour, supplies or money for communal or State objects; a corruption of an Arabic technical term.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

siārī (Ha.) The elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*, much used for making cord.

sūṛā (HM.) Iron hoops worn by women around their necks.

Tāghāli (HM.) A raincoat made of strips of retted bark of the tree *Kydia calycina*, sometimes used also as a dancing-skirt for men.

tahsil (U.) A large sub-division of a district or State, administered by a *tahsildar*.

tallāgullā (BHM.) The plumed bison-horn dancing head-dress of men.

talq-dā'inā (HM.) Literally, 'going to ask'; used of the formal visit of a youth's parents to a girl's parents to ask for the girl's hand for their son. The BHM. call this *tālpānā*, or 'asking'.

talutār (BHM.) A patterned brass snood, worn over women's hair.

tārr (BHM.) = *kulmām*, a phratry or group of clans.

thekadār (H.) One who holds a village on *thekā* or lease from the State or a zamindār.

til (H.) The oil-seed *Sesamum indicum*.

tirdudī (BHM.) Woman's bamboo dancing staff, adorned with iron pellet-bells.

tiyā (BHM.) Iron neck ring.

tokānā (BHM.) Used of consulting the earth-god as to what sacrifice he demands by placing wet rice on the ground before a cock and reciting names of possible victims till the cock pecks up the rice; the god is held to want the victim last-mentioned.

tōpī (H.) A hat; used by HM. of their dancing head-dress.

tōqā (HM.) Tail; used of the end of the loin-cloth left to hang over the right buttock.

torī (Ha.) The Muria hunting-horn.

tum (HM.) A form of grass fencing.

turam (HM.) A kettle-drum.

Uddam-garya (HM.) The religious headman's seat of honour.

urad (H.) See *pupal*.

uras-kal (BHM.) = HM. *kolokal*, q.v. (from *urasnā*, to bury, and *kal*, a stone).

uspāl (BHM.) See *musal*.

utārī (BHM.) A brass fillet worn over women's hair.

Wetā (BHM.) A ceremonial hunt, or *pārad* (Ha.); the most important is the *wijja-wetā*, or 'seed-hunt', preceding the sowing of the new harvest.

wijja (G.) Seed; the Hindi *bīj*.

wijja-dodi (HM.) A long-granary.

wijj-erhu (BHM.) 'Seed-*mahua*'; an alternative name for the *bhum-jaga* or *kadri-bera* plot in the *perma's* field set apart for religious ceremonies, which has generally on it a sacred *mahua* tree.

wijja-lon (BHM.) Room in dwelling-house used as granary and for cult of the Departed.

wittō (BHM.) A fringe of hair, left along the forehead.

zamindari (U.) The estate of a zamindar, who in Bastar (as in the Central Provinces generally) is a subordinate chief, a survival of the medieval feudal chiefs subordinate to the Maharaja, holding a large estate on payment of tribute to the Maharaja or the Government, as the case may be.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

Words without reference are Gondi, words in brackets, without reference, are Halbi.
G = Gondi, GN = Gondi of Narayanpur, GK = Gondi of Kondagaon, Ha = Halbi, H = Hindi, SKT = Sanskrit.

104

In order to make the book as easy as possible for the general reader, I have omitted in the text the majority of Gondi or Halbi-Chhattisgarhi words. But since many of these are interesting in themselves and necessary to complete our picture of the Muria, I have added a number of them here, classified according to subject. Words explained in the text are not usually included. It must be remembered that these are words used by the Muria, whose Halbi is uncertain and whose Gondi is often corrupt and takes different forms from place to place.

ADMINISTRATIVE

athpahariya (Ha) — The village drudge, who is on duty for 'all eight watches', often a Rawat or Kopa cowherd, from whose hands all visitors can take water.

chāliki (H) — Manjhi's assistant. Also called **Garhi** (GN), **Chalau** (H), and sometimes **Jhoria** in the north.

dorbhum — (H. **khālpati**). The Lowlands.

garh (H) — An ancient feudal division.

hāt, atum — A bazaar.

kāndki (H) — Mukkadam's assistant.

khām, khalsa (H) — Villages under the direct control of the State, paying their revenue direct and not through an intermediary.

kosur, paik (Ha) — Words used for outsiders and strangers. **Paik** is most commonly applied to chaprasis and constables. **Paik**, originally 'foot soldier' in Hindi, from *pair*, a foot. Cf. *paijama* in Persian = leg-clothes.

kotwār (H) — The village watchman, often—but not always—a Ganda or Mahara.

mānjhi (H) — A pargana chieftain. A pure Hindi word meaning 'skipper of a ship'.

metabhum — The Hill country, especially the Abujhmar Hills, also called **mār, māri,** and **patār. Mār** is a word of wide distribution and is almost certainly identical with Oriya **māl. Mār** and its variants in Gondi means 'tree' and thus, as applied to a countryside probably means 'wooded uplands'. 'Uplands' is a relative term and in Orissa the word **māl** applies to areas, inhabited by aboriginals, which are forested but not always very high. Of course the fertile plains are rarely in possession of aboriginals (A.N.M.).

mukaddam (H) — A village headman. Also called **thākur** and **mokor** (GN).

nār (G), **gaon** (H) — A village.

pādarāj — Land without forest; used by the northern Muria for the flat rice-lands of Jagdalpur Tahsil.

panchāyat (H) — A judicial committee normally of five persons. Also called **bhumkāl udna** (GN).

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104

pār, paghai	A word (H. **birān**) meaning an empty or deserted village site.
pāra (H)	A hamlet or group of houses forming part of a village. Another word commonly used is **tola**. Both words are widely distributed in India.
pargana (H)	The sub-division of a tahsil.
tāhsil (H)	An administrative sub-division of the State, in charge of a **tahsildar**.
thekadāri (H)	A village farmed out to a landlord who is generally in Bastar called a **thekadar**, but is known elsewhere in the Central Provinces as **malguzar** or **mokasa**.
yer gāttum	A bathing place.
zamindāri (H)	An hereditary estate held on privileged tenure by local chiefs.

Articles of Daily Life and Use

dera	A spinning-wheel or **takli** (H) used for making cord from hemp.
dholangi	A bamboo bin for storing grain.
heti, yet	The winnowing-fan, **supa** (H).
hirkānj, irkās (GN)	The **aikka** cords depending from a carrying-pole, and in which the load is tied.
hoydel	Cooking-hearth of earth. When made of stones, **daying**.
hukur	Spoon.
kuri, kuring	Leaf-plate or **patri**, made of **aking** leaves.
hurul	Leaf-cup for drinking **jāwa**. An ordinary leaf-cup is **dopa**, or **doni** in Halbi.
katul	The country-cot, or **katiya**, now fairly common among Muria, but never used in the ghotul.
kāwar, bāyinga (GN)	A pole used for carrying loads.
malla, arka	The words most often used in Gondi for a pot. **Kila** or **gor** is a very large earthen pot, and **yer gāgir** is often used for a water-pot. Small pots are **kopa, kondel, toksi**.
mora, jol (GN)	A shield of leaves inserted into a bamboo framework, used as a protection against rain.
orka, bokka (GN)	A gourd ladle, also called **buriya**. A brass variety made by the Ghasia by the *cire-perdue* process is now often used for serving liquor.
rek, kālo	The leaf-hat used during the rains.
tepāri	A rectangular lidded basket, also called **pera**. The Muria use a number of different baskets, including the common **jhāpi** which they call by its Hindi name; the **warria**, a square open basket also known as **takra, buti** or **gappa**, and the small leaf-basket called **hipti** or **hipota** (GN).
usmāl, uspāl	Rice-husker, the **musal** (H).

Articles of Iron

bāndal kaser or **bānda**	A knife.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

godel	The ordinary serviceable axe. Also **marask** (GN) or **tayinga** (tangiya).
gorka	A spear.
hatăr, yetăr	A sickle (**hasiya**).
kach	Iron. It is generally smelted and worked into tools by the Muria Lohar.
kadra	A long-bladed knife for killing animals.
kaser	Knife, specially the sacrificial knife used in worship, whence **kaser-gaita** or Knife Priest.
kunj	The shouldered digging-stick called **pulu** in the Abujhmar and **kus** in Halbi. It is sometimes used for husking grain.
kurăr	A hoe.
majiya	A razor.
pharsa (H)	The 'battle-axe' often used in ceremonial dances.
tatti	A sort of plane, **bărsa** (HA).
yerk	A knife, for cutting grass and brushwood, with a long wooden handle, also called **harru, sura găgra**, or **bhălu găgra**, according to shape.

Astronomy

adi-bhum	Below the earth.
adurk	Hail.
bhimul-weel	Rainbow, 'the bow of Bhimul', the rain-giver.
bhum-gurjălta	Thunder (Mitchell gives **idrita**).
hand-gariyăl-lopta	Eclipse.
kukum, mirko	The stars (in Betul, **sukkum**).
lenj	The moon.
nadum-bhum	The earth.
pir	Rain. (The same word is used in Betul, but Mitchell gives **museur** as used by the Bison-horn Maria).
porad	The sun. (Trench says the Betul Gond have no word for sun.)
perro-bhum	The sky.
pus-gurum	Lightning (Mitchell gives **mirkăna**).

Cock-fighting

kăti	The knife attached to the cock's foot.
kork-wăhchăna (kurka laral)	Cock-fighting.
măhchăna kor (larăito kukra)	A fighting-cock.
nul (sut)	The thread with which the knife is tied.
thaila (Ha)	Purse to hold a set of knives.

Cultivation

asur	A wooden implement for carrying branches from the forest to the fields for **parka**. In Halbi **bharni**.
dippa	Also **erka** or **marhăn** (Ha). Level forest land burnt and cultivated in rotation.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104 **harpunj** — Sandals of sambhar-hide worn while treading the hot fields of axe-cultivation. **Katwāk** are wooden clogs.

kara — The **kothār** or threshing-floor.

ketul — A field-hut, **lāri** (Ha).

kopir (ragra) — A soil-leveller.

kor-lāt — Also **balla** (GN) and **dhosna** (Ha). A rake used to spread the ashes evenly about a clearing or field.

koyāna (katai) — Reaping.

mariyāna (duhrayi) — The second ploughing.

mer-gutta — The winnowing-pole.

munda (Ha) — An artificial pond. In GN called **neling** and **katta**.

nangel (nāngar) — Plough.

pāhāna (khapai) — The first ploughing. This and similar Gondi words are the infinitives of verbs.

parha ursāna (ropa) — Transplanting.

parka — Also **dahi** (H). Brushwood is brought and spread over the fields, then burnt and the ashes are ploughed into the ground.

pārum (phār) — Ploughshare.

pehchna (biyāsi) — Puddling.

penda — The hillside axe-cultivation of the Marka and wilder Muria.

tondi, tond — A **mācha**-platform for watching the crops.

weda, bera (Ha) — A field.

wisāna (mindai) — Threshing.

witāna (bunai) — Sowing.

Daily Programme

104 805 **ād pāhar (adhu-pāhar)** — 'Shade time.' Late afternoon.

bāhat erta — 'It is bent.' Afternoon.

gai gohdi bera (Ha) — 'Time of the return of the cows,' or **godroki** (Ha) 'Time of tying up the cattle'.

gānda lote bera (Ha) — 'Time when the Ganda goes to his wife.'

hikāt (bhainsa and-hiyar) — Dark, 'dark as a buffalo'.

hirri pord — When green parrots fly to the fields and the women come home.

jāwa pord, pite karu pāhar (pej bera) — Time for **jāwa**, 'time when the birds are hungry'. 10 a.m.

jāwa undāna pahār — Time for drinking gruel.

kaimal huskār, gudin pahār — Time of the first sleep.

korkusāna pāhar (kukrabasi) — Cock-crow.

mulpe — Sunset.

nadum narka (manjhar rāti) — Midnight.

narki pāhar (bara bihān) — Early morning. 6 a.m.

neknitit pord, taila pord (munde bera) — 'Sun-standing' or 'head-time'. Noon.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

palvi viyinta, wiytu (raja karan bera)	Dawn: the time when Raja Karan rose and bathed.
pharphar bera	The flight of darkness.
phulsundri (Ha)	Evening when the flowers give out their fragrance.
tirtir pord	The sun rises **tir-tir** into the sky.
yer pord (panihāri bera)	Time for fetching water. 8 a.m.

Dancing Dress

chāpi, mogiya	Dancing-shield.
gathurta, karhāna	Cloth tied criss-cross over the chest.
gheri	Skirt, called **kochi** by the Hill Maria.
guba	Tuft of feathers.
irna, ghāti	Buttock-bells.
jela	Streamers attached to the cap.
kauda-hār, koya-kaudāng	Cowrie decorations.
kokti	Wooden 'horse' carried on shoulder.
lolita, puring, toka	Different parts of the 'horse'.
muyang, ghulghuli, ghungru	Small bells worn on arms or ankles.
topi (H)	Dancing-cap.

Death

bagmeri bhut (Ha)	Ghost of a man killed by a tiger.
bisrān itāna	The ceremony of touching a dead fish at the end of a funeral. In Halbi **bisram** means the bad smell of a dead fish.
burkāl pāta	Song sung when a man is killed by a tiger.
erramtogh	A wife's elder brother or younger sister's husband, who have special duties at a funeral.
hanāl, muriyalor (duma)	The dead, the departed. *Hanāl* is a past participial form of the verb **handāna**, to go; and thus 'the departed' is a literal translation (W.V.G.).
hanāl gaita	Priest of the Departed.
hanāl gariya	Pot of the Departed.
hanāl gata (khama)	Wooden memorial pillar.
hāt hamur (marni)	Funeral.
hātur dhol (marni dhol)	The drum for the dead.
jiwa (Ha)	The soul.
jiwa tatāna, yer niyāna (dasnāhan)	Ceremonies on the tenth day.
jiya bitāl	Any relative, but not a *saga*, of the deceased.
kal ursana, kamk ursana	To erect a menhir.
kutukal, ursakal	Memorial menhir, from Gondi **kal**, a stone and **ursana**, to bury.
kishiyāna (agi deto)	Cremation.
nelānj jurāl, nelānjur	Ghost of a motiari.
nirkor kotāna (tijnāhan)	Ceremonies on the third day.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104

ondar muttal, surel, orohrande, churin	The ghost of a woman dying in pregnancy or child-birth.
uriya bhut, mirchuk, matiya, kunwaria duma (Ha)	Expressions to describe the ghost of a chelik.
wich	A dead man.
wich bati (marā-bhāta, dumakot)	Disposal place for the dead.

Dreams

barre māltor (baramtor)	Talking in sleep.
bhāk katār (thua)	Ceremony to prevent bad dreams. **Bhāk** means 'a promise', **katār** a 'throwing away'.
jiwa (Ha)	The 'soul' that sees the dream.
kaniskna	Dream.
urkanor	*Nocturna eneuresis.*

Economic Relationships

adiya, adi (Ha)	The practice of lending bullocks or seed in consideration of receiving half the crop in return.
bāka (Ha)	The practice of loaning bullocks for a fixed amount of grain, say six khandi a year apiece.
begār (H)	The practice of taking free, and generally forced, labour from the villagers.
bisāha (H)	A very old Sanskrit expression for the custom that reserved the twentieth part of the harvest for the Raja's officials.
biyaj (Ha)	Interest. It is noticeable that there is no Gondi word for this.
dat	The annual cash payment to a farm-hand.
jewar, kurai	Either a servant's monthly wage in kind, or the contribution of a whole village to a Lohar, Rawat, or Kotwar for his services.
kābār, kābāri	The pledging of a man's services for a period of time in consideration of an advance of grain or money. **Kābār** is work done for someone else as opposed to **pari** (G) work done for oneself. **Kābāri** probably means 'one who carries a **kāwār**-load'.
karra (udhar, karja)	A loan.
wite (bethiya)	Wages.

Ethics

arro	Taboo: used chiefly of food.
arwit-tu, pāisotu (GN)	Adultery. In Halbi **udaliya**.
bonde nohakāna, penda karsana (cherka gotna, chotli khel)	Masturbation.
dharom (Ha)	Virtue, a borrowing from Hinduism.
dong	Theft.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

eting getwal	Bestio-sexuality. There is no general word, but **getwāl** 'copulation with' is added to the name of the animal.
halwark, wititu	Elopement. **Witāna** means 'to run'.
hawakāna	Murder.
jabardasti getna (Ha)	Rape. There is no Gondi word for this.
kondār-murt (bokra-basiya)	Incest: behaviour like a bull—in Gondi, or like a goat—in Halbi.
kusk-birtur, kusk-hātur	Suicide. **Kusk** means 'of one's own accord'; **birtur** is 'hanging'; **hātur** is 'death'.
melo	Taboo: used of places, actions and relatives.
pāpu (Ha)	Sin, an idea for which there is no special Gondi word.
polo	Taboo: a general word.
tupunj getwāl	Homosexuality.

Evening in the Ghotul

dhuyinga, pogho (surti)	Tobacco.
gāra pich, tora pend	Oil-waste of *bassia latifolia* often used for massage.
gik (maani)	Mat of **marrām (botha)** grass.
hichār	Bamboo comb.
hunjna dera	Sleeping-place.
irāna	To comb the hair.
johār bhumkāl	Greeting to a company of boys.
johārni (Ha)	Act of salutation.
nohkāna	To massage.
paniya (Ha)	Wooden comb.
pitis pitis kotāna	To delouse the hair.
tarka, chāp (tāti)	Bamboo mat.
werak morhāna, kāyi morhina (GN)	To crack the fingers.

Falconry

hachār	The hawk (**chhachān**).
hachār-murka (chhachān-dhuti)	The basket for the hawk's food.
hachār payāna tola	A goat-skin glove to protect the hand from scratches.
paula, pawela	The elaborate wooden peg attached to the bird's cords to prevent them tangling.
uting parhāna	The bunch of palm leaves with which the boys drive the birds.

Festivals

bāsi punnang (bāsi tihār)	The 'stale' day after a festival marked by various observances. *Bāsi* is food left over from a meal and served up again.
jatra (SKT)	A festival, generally a clan-festival.
kut pehchāna, nārtāte kiyāna	Purifying the village.
marhai (H)	A commercial festival.

pandum	Festival.
penkarsana, karsār (deo khelnī)	'The games of the gods' at the clan festivals.
pohchāni, bohorāni	Ceremony for removing evil from the village.
polhāna (jogāni)	The offering of first-fruits.
punāng tindāna (nāwa khāni)	New Eating Ceremony.
singoti, sela	The fringe of ears of grain tied over doors at festivals, especially Diwali.

FIRE-MAKING

hāhak	The 'hearth' of a fire-drill.
khanda	The saw. In Hindi this word means 'sword'.
khanda-achāna	Making fire by a saw.
nogho-kodiya, ate	The 'hearth' of a saw.
nur-āchāna	Making fire by a drill.
nurkis	Fire made by a drill.
usmal	The drill.
wadur kis	Fire made in a hearth.

FOOD

alainj (chapora)	Red ants.
gāto	The ordinary **bhāt** or boiled rice.
gondka	'Crab's eyes' or **kekra ankhi**.
gorānj, gorra	**Mandia** (*eleusine coracana*).
guge (batar kira)	Edible flying ants.
hāring	The ordinary wheat-cake or chapatti.
harsum	**Sarson** oil-seed, the profitable crop *sinapis alba rape*.
hind porak (chhind kira)	Edible grubs living in the *phoenix sylvestris* palm.
jandrān	**Jondra** maize (*zea mays*).
jata	Beans (*dolichos lablab*).
jāwa	A gruel, called elsewhere **pej**, the staple food of the aboriginals of central India, made of rice or millet.
kāng, ārk	*Setaria italica*. Also called **koliya lengri**.
kohola, kosra (Ha)	These are words applied rather widely to the small millets beloved of the aboriginals. **Kosra** applies most particularly perhaps to **kutki**, *panicum miliaceum*. Other popular small grains are— **mai kohola** or **bara kosra** **turo kohola** **os kosra** **mach** or **hudala kosra** **koda** (*paspalum scrobiculatum*) **rende, hamu, gatka** or **sawa** (*panicum frumentaceum*) **ragda, dusa, kapni**, wild rice. **chikma** or **turiya kohola** (*panicum miliare*).
kore (harwa)	The pulse *glycine hispida*.
kotum kuhk	A mushroom (*kuhk* is an umbrella). The Muria distinguish several varieties, such as the **bodāng**, the **pud-kukh** which grows on an ant-hill, the

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

mundur-kukh which appears at Dassera time, and the **hichra-kukh**, a small fungus generally growing on an ant-hill. 104 262

kusir — **Sāg** or curry.

māti — Roots. A great many of these are eaten; common among them are the **kāndul māti** or sweet potato, the **hind māti** or root of the *phoenix sylvestris*, the **bhurka** or **bhains deti māti.**

auka — Husked rice.

nung — Oil from the seed of *til, sesamum indicum.*

pande, panne — Frog.

pesel (mung) — The pulse *phaseolus mungo.*

pupul (urad) — The pulse *phaseolus radiatus.*

rahar (arhar) — The pulse *cajanus indicus.*

toskār māt (tikur) — The wild arrowroot, *curcuma angustifolia.*

wark — Parched rice, also **wakuhāk** (GN) and **chiura** (H), the poor man's delicacy eaten between meals.

wanji — **Dhān** or rice.

yete — Crab.

Ghotul Buildings

104

bāndra — The fence round the ghotul enclosure.

dinda rāj (Ha) — 'The kingdom of the Unmarried.'

ghotul — The village dormitory.

ghotul racha (khor duār) — The dancing ground.

kirki bukān (kāna polka, bhulka) — Holes in the walls for storing tobacco and small possessions.

kodasār — The stable.

kupāhi ghotul — The outer room of the dormitory.

kutul (pirha) — A wooden pillow.

mandak — The open shed in the ghotul court.

murwis harai (mongri deri) — The central pillar of the building.

nata harai (oena deri) — The side pillars.

parmāngkor ghotul — 'The dormitory beautiful as a bison's horns.'

romi (akori) — A long bamboo with a catch on one end, used by chelik to pull down fruit and often kept in the ghotul.

sojāhi ghotul — The inner room.

walkor (akosa) — Wooden bracket for hanging drums.

wark bād (dāru mācha) — The wood stack.

Hair-dressing

bang-māhana (pāti) — Parting, either for boy or girl.

bechāng (tapra) — Boy's fringe.

julpin — The hair on either side of the parting.

kalgi khopa, kunjār — Method by which girls tie their hair in a bun.

kunjār balla — Wooden block under the hair kept in place by wooden hair pins.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

104 **kunjār koto** Wooden hair pins.
kupar (jura) Top-knot.

HONEY

poring, puk-por Honey-comb.
puk Honey.
ukhi Burning grass tied to the end of a bamboo and used to smoke out a hive.
wising or **puk-wising** Bees. In Halbi, **ondār māchhi.**

HUNTING

dohola A club arrow-head. In Halbi, **dokena.**
gunel A pellet-bow which has a **gunel-moras,** or string, a **phata,** or sling, **koda,** or wooden pegs in the sling, in which **gulla,** or small stone balls, are slung.
kārin, kār An arrow, of which the various parts are
kārin The head.
marrai The shaft.
kār-hachhar The shaft-nock.
kanāng The barb.
hulum The tang fitting head to shaft.
mal-tohk The feathers.
korpanj (onha) A trap-pit dug in a corner of a forest clearing.
lākāna, lākānj (dand-detor) The sacrifice after a successful hunt.
mitwanj, ahela A cage-trap for porcupine and hares.
mololi-wad, mololi-bāgur (lamha-jāl) A trap for hares.
nirāl-tonga A cage-trap for panthers.
pitwanj (dang-phanda) A spring-trap.
wadi (jiyād-bāgur) A trap for large animals.
wali dāyna, weta walina (GN) To go hunting. **Parad,** a Halbi word from Oriya, is used specially of the ceremonial hunt.
weel A bow, of which the various parts are
weel The stave.
hawend The string.
kitsi The horns.
wijja-weta (bij-parād) The annual ceremonial hunt before sowing.

HOUSE AND VILLAGE

atana-lon The kitchen. In Halbi, **randha-ghar.**
awār, charak (GN) The garden, or **bāri,** the precious, treasured fenced-in field near the house, which is carefully manured and where the most valued crops are sown.
bohla, bira The verandah. A very important part of the building, where visitors stay and women are segregated during their periods. Also called **bhaunti** (Ha).
bohla-hunjāna Menstruation-hut or verandah-space. Also **aska-lon, witār, kurma** (GN) and **chhua-kuriya** (Ha).
dheki lon The room where grain is husked.
hamur-lon A house in which a corpse is lying. **Marni-ghar** (Ha).

hanāl-lon The small hut for the placation or tendance of the dead found chiefly in the western areas. In Halbi, **dumaghar**.

kor-guda Hen-roost.

lon, ghar (H), kuriya (CH) A house.

lopa ahpi Inner room.

nadum ahpi Outer room. Also **parsār** (Ha).

pad-guda Pig-sty.

racha Courtyard. Also **angna** and **duār** (Ha).

sār, mandap (Ha) Covered space in front of the house, where people sit to talk and work. On the roof, which is flat, grains and tobacco are dried. Called **chhauni** and **baithak** in Chhattisgarh.

thāli-korka Cowshed. Halbi, **kotha**.

wijja-dholi Granary. Also **dhāba** (GK) and **kothi-gadiya** (Ha).

Liquor

burka (tuma) Gourd to contain the sap of the sago palm.

gāra (tora) The seed of the *bassia latifolia* tree.

gāra pich (tora pend) Oil-cakes made after the oil has been expressed from the *bassia latifolia* seed. The oily waste is used by the motiari for massaging.

gorga dārango (salpi ras or mand) The refreshing juice of the sago palm.

gorga goriya The cut peduncle of the sago palm.

gorga marra (salpi rukh) The palm *caryota urens*, Linn.

gotānj, bikor (akosa) The bamboo hook that holds the ladder in place.

hāja (thāpa or dāng) Bamboo ladder for climbing the palm.

hendur, tukil (chariya) The basket which keeps the pot in place.

hind dārango The fermented juice of the chhind palm (*phoenix sylvestris*).

hochāna (matwār holo) To be intoxicated. A drunkard is **hoche (matwār)**. Trench gives **jhakkum**, to be dead drunk.

hurām, surām A drink made by soaking mahua flowers in water.

iruh puyi, irpu pungār, irpu kuching The corolla of the tree *bassia latifolia*.

irum, iruh, irpu (H. mahua) The tree *bassia latifolia*, Roxb.

jib The inverted bamboo cone used to strain beer.

landa, barkār (GN) The highly intoxicating beer, made of **gorra, gorānj** (GN) or **mandia** (Ha) *eleusine coracana*., **nuka**, rice, **kohola** or **kosra**, *panicum miliaceum*, or other small millets.

mala, arka (tandi) Pot placed permanently in position to catch the sap of the sago palm.

māri (tāti) Matting that protects the pot from wind and the droppings of birds.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

●104 **parās, kai-buriya (orki)** A small gourd ladle kept in the pot.
siti (kari or katki) The leaf-pipe that directs the juice into the pot.

Love and Love-making

[192] The Muria are inarticulate on this subject. There seem to be few, if any, Gondi words to express emotional or abstract conceptions. They borrow from Halbi or Chhattisgarhi when they wish to do so.

bichār wātu (man, bane) Desire.
girda ātor To be in love.
girda kiyāna To make love. *Girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'.
jugti bikti, mohini (H) A love-charm. **Jugti** suggests an invisible being adept at playing conjuring-tricks, **yukti**, in the cause of love.
maya kiyāna To love.
maya pirit, perem (H) Love.

Marriage Ceremonies

beni pehchāna (beni guthto) Tying the plaits.
bohala, chaura Earthen platform below the booth.
dulha, dulhi (Ha) The bridegroom and bride. It is curious that there are no Gondi words for this.
ghari wersāna, chawk Pattern drawn on the **chaura** platform.
harpān pārin (samdhin bhet) Formal greeting between mothers-in-law.
kalsa (Ha) A decorated pot with a **diwa** lamp above it.
lagin, lagir The final ceremony, the essential binding part of the rite.
mānda (Ha) Marriage booth.
marmi, marming (bihao) Marriage.
neyi rehāna (tel utrāto) Anointing with oil from head to feet; making the oil come down.
neyi tarhāna (tel chaghāto) Anointing with oil from feet to head; making the oil climb up.
pargeh, pargāw (Ha) Ceremonial bringing in of the marriage party.
pārin johār (samdhi bhet) Formal greeting between fathers-in-law.
pungār mihchna The betrothal, lit. 'Plucking the Flower'. Also called **talk dāyna** or 'Going to Beg' and **pungār kurki** or 'Seeing the Flower'. In Halbi **mahala** or **sagai**.
rupiyān payāna, karch yetāna To pay or take the bride-price.
sikla karsana, tori usna (chikal mundi) Bride and groom play in the mud together.
tika (H) Ritual greeting of bride and groom by placing a mark on their foreheads.
torun (Ha) String of mango leaves tied round the booth.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

RELATIONSHIPS

akomāma — Member of a different clan with whom a marriage can be contracted.

alda-balda, adal-badal (ulat-pulat) — The custom of changing one's ghotul partner frequently.

ange-nona, ange-harandu-nāt — The relation between **dewar** and **bhauji**, a youth and his elder brother's wife.

dādābhai, tamur-dādal (bhai-band) — Those who are related in the same clan, with whom it is not possible to marry.

gudamoi, gudapāl — The cross-cousin marriage. **Guda** means 'nest', **mola** means 'price', and **pāl** means 'milk'. Thus the bride-price is kept inside the nest; the 'milk' that is given in one generation is repaid in the next.

jodidār — The tradition of ghotul fidelity.

kawāna māne, kawtik māne (hansi nāta) — The 'joking' relationship.

muriyāl nehāna — 'The elder must not touch.' The 'avoidance' relationship.

pāri, biring, birid, pār (barag-bas or gotl) — A clan-sept.

saga, samdhi-samdhin — The relationship between the parents of married persons. **Samdhi** is a contraction from Hindi **sambandhi**, connexion.

RELIGION

Adibhum (kālepur or tarpur) — The Lower World, not to be confused with Hell.

anga (pat deo) — A clan-god of special construction often employed for divination.

chutki (Ha) — To make magic by snapping the fingers.

deo (H) — A word of very wide application applied to any god or godling who interferes in human affairs.

dhur-bān (Ha) — A magic formula, a **mantra**.

doli (Ha) — A litter for carrying a god to festivals. Danteshwari Mai is usually represented in a litter.

gariya — Sacred stone.

guniā (H) — A magician with a knowledge of **guni**, magic charms. He may also be called **panjiyār**.

gutāl — A bamboo pole with peacock feathers.

gutta, khamām — Stakes to support flag-poles.

hanāl-gaita or hanagunda — Priest of the Departed.

hesa kiyāna — 'To make an egg-shell', to perform a **thua**, a ceremony which concentrates a disease or other evil into a moveable object which can then be removed from the village or house.

heth hurāna (supa dekhna) — To divine with a winnowing-fan.

hode (panganha) — A warlock, practitioner of black magic.

hode hanār (panganāhin) — A witch.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104 **jhara phukna**	To blow away evil or danger.
jol ungāna (jhulna jhulto)	Divination by swinging.
kanyang (kaniya)	A 'Maiden' or naiad believed to inhabit woods and streams.
kapād (Ha)	A 'magic door' made to trouble an enemy.
kāri hurāna, katiya hurāna	To divine with a broom.
kaser-gaita or **māti-gaita**	The Knife Priest or Earth Priest, also called **nal-gaita, bhum-gaita** or **mātiyār**, in attendance on the Village Mother.
lāt (Ha)	A flag-pole, to which is attached the emblem of the clan or village god.
mahapurub	Probably incorrectly derived on p. 180. The word must be the same as **mahaprabhu** (SKT), which means 'Great Master' and in Orissa is widely used as a title not only of the Supreme Being but of any leading deity.
mātal	A 'Mother', generally the Village Mother.
mat hiyāna	To give medicine.
mudiyal, muittor (dokara, dokari)	These words which mean Old Man or Old Woman are usually added to the names of the clan-gods. Thus the *form* of Lingo Pen is that of an Anga, and he himself is referred to as Lingo Mudiyal or Lingo Dokara.
Nadumbhum (mānjpur)	The Middle World, or Earth.
pālo	Sacred cloth.
pāti	A forest god.
pen	A god, generally clan-god.
pen-dhurwa	A priest in special attendance on an Anga. If he is expert in magic he may be called **pen-waddai**.
pen-pujāri or **pen-gaita**	A clan-priest.
pentishta	According to Glasfurd, two posts of unequal size near the road, erected before beginning anything new and meaning 'the first, the consecration'.
pitkur (Ha)	Sacrifice of blood from one's finger to a god.
Porrobhum (uparpur)	The Upper World, not to be confused with Heaven.
rau (Ha)	A hill demon.
rawar (gudi)	A shrine. **Pen-rawar** is a shrine of a clan-god. Shrines are often furnished with **hukur**, wooden spoons, **hepur gutta**, fans of wood or feathers, **kaser**, knives, **pen-kunda**, pots for cooking sacrificial meals, **chhatar** (H), umbrellas, **sawur** (ox-tail used as fan) and **tirsul**, a trident.
siraha or **leski**	A medium capable of being inspired by a god and of thus revealing his messages to mankind.
talla melihāna (jhupna)	To shake the head in trance.
Tallur Muttal	Mother Earth.
tokāna	Divination by giving rice to chickens.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

Songs and Dances

buting-ting	A mask dance.
dāka	Dance-step.
endanna	Dance.
hatto	Riddle.
kahka	Proverb.
kolān mudiyāl, kolān guru, gāyān, jokta	Leaders of the Pus Kolang dances.
lakna	Theme of a song.
lang	Tune.
pār	Drum-rhythm.
pāta	Song.
pāta oywāl	Singers.
pito	Story.
roche	Chorus, generally a variation on the **relo** motif.

Stilt-festival

bād	Pile of old stilts placed over the stone of Bhimul.
dito	Stilts.
dito-dandi	Stilt-pole.
dito-palk	Foot-rests attached to the stilt-poles.
jabān	Wooden pegs to keep the foot-rests in place.

Synonyms

aking-making	An 'echo-word' on **aking**, leaves; meaning any kind of jungle produce.
iruh-na-yer	'Water of mahua' for liquor.
kota sāmbar	'The long-tailed one' is used for **thāli**, a cow.
morna	'A rope' is used instead of **tās**, a snake.
warreatn	'The fear' is used for **burkāl**, a tiger.

Tattooing

hale hawar (saliya dana)	Resin of *boswellia serrata* sometimes used to make the ink.
huji, uji	Needles.
jaddān perek (jāda bija)	Castor seed used to make the ink.
kājar	Black tattoo ink.
khopa (kondi or thoka)	The small pot to hold the ink.
sung neyi (tilli tel)	Oil of *sesamum indicum*, also used to make the ink.
singār kodia, anjela, dondka (H, godna)	Tattoo.

Trees, Shrubs and Creepers

sia (sulai)	*Boswellia serrata*, Roxb. The Muria use the fragrant gum-resin as an incense in sacrifice.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

104
834

amarbel (Ha) — *Cuscuta reflexa*, Roxb. In Hindi, **akāshbel**, a clinging creeper used as an emblem of close friendship.

berel (bar) — The banyan, *ficus bengalensis*, Linn.

bor-renga (bhoir) — *Zizyphus jujuba*, Lamk. The Muria use its wood for fuel and sometimes to make agricultural implements. The thorny branches are used for fencing. The fleshy drupe is eaten. Hence the riddle—'The daughter is beautiful, but the mother bites'.

chil, hikum — *Acacia concinna*.

dumel bito (polai) — *Alstonia veneriata*. The bark and roots are used to poison animals.

dundipipar — A variety of *ficus religiosa*, Linn.

garānj (karanji) — *Pongamia glabra*, Vent. Oil for lighting is expressed from the seeds; the waste is used in the ghotul for massage. The fruit is rather like a comb, whence the riddle—'A tree full of combs'.

gorga (salpi) — *Caryota urens*, Linn. For a full account, see pp. 53ff.

gunj (H) — *Abrus precatorius*, Linn. The bright red seeds are used as beads and as goldsmith's weights; crushed, they poison arrows.

harangi (sargi, sal) — *Shorea robusta*, Gaertn. The splendid **sāl**, one of the most valuable of India's timber trees, used everywhere for building, railway sleepers, tools. The Muria earn money by sawing and carting the wood. They eat the seeds and young leaves and use its resin as incense.

hindi (chhind) — The wild date-palm, *phoenix sylvestris*, Roxb. The leaves are used for mats and baskets, and for marriage-crowns. The fermented sugary sap is drunk.

iru, irpu (mahua) — *Bassia latifolia*, Roxb. See p. 33.

ita (imli) — *Tamarindus indica*, Linn. The pods are used in making condiments.

jadda (aranda) — *Ricinus communis*.

kadam, kāreka (H) — *Anthocephalus cadumba*, Miq. The fruit is eaten by human beings as well as by birds and cattle.

kaka (harra) — *Terminalia chebula*, Retz. The myrabolams are used for tanning and many Muria get work collecting and preparing them for contractors.

kaner — *Nerium odorum*, the oleander, a poisonous shrub. The seeds were used to murder an unwanted husband in southern Bastar in 1940.

karandi (mokha) — *Schrebera swiedenioides*, Roxb.

karāt (kāru) — *Sterculia urens*, Roxb. The ghost tree, so called because of its gaunt white trunk with branches leafless half the year.

kasi (khasal) — *Bridelia retusa*, Spreng.

kehla (dhāman) — *Grewia tilliaefolia*, Vahl. The tough elastic wood is used by the Muria for their carrying-poles and bows.

khairi, khair kota (Ha) — *Acacia catechu*, Willd.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

kluğeri (harsingri)	*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*, Linn. Widely used in medicine by the aboriginals. Buffaloes like scratching themselves against the scabrous leaves. The fragrant flowers are popular with the motiari.
kohoka (bhilwan)	*Semecarpus anacardium*, L.F. The marking-nut tree. The Muria eat the seeds. For the use of the juice as a counter-irritant see Codrington.
kumur (kumi)	*Celastrus paniculata*, Willd.
kurru, kalmodia (kuriu)	*Gardenia latifolia*, Ait. A small shrub of xerophytic habit.
kursi (siuna)	*Gmelina arborea*, Linn. The fruit, a succulent ovoid drupe, is eaten by chelik and motiari.
mahka (bel)	*Aegle marmelos*, Correa. The tree is sacred to Hindus. The Muria use the fruit ceremonially as a substitute for the coconut.
mang (kahu)	*Terminalia arjuna*, Bedd.
mard (adan, saja)	*Terminalia tomentosa*, W. & A. The tree sacred to the Gond throughout central India.
marka (ām)	*Mangifera indica*, Linn. The mango.
mughori (palās or pharsa)	*Butea frondosa*, Roxb. The 'Flame of the Forest'. Rope is spun from its root fibres; plates and cups are made from the leaves; important in the lac industry.
mli (aonra)	*Phyllanthus emblica*, Linn. The handsome wax-like fruit, which is very astringent, is valued as a stomach medicine. The leaves and branches are important demon-scarers.
sanum (shisham)	*Dalbergia latifolia*, Roxb. Indian rosewood.
ondi (jāmun)	*Eugenia jambolana*, Lam. The black plum.
palur (sālrī)	*Bauhinia vahlii*, W. & A. The camel's-foot creeper. The large leaves of this gigantic creeper are used as plates and for thatching. The Muria make rope from the fibre.
phundar	*Calotropis gigantea*, R.Br. A shrub with a milky juice.
pipir, ali (pipar)	*Ficus religiosa*, Linn. The most sacred tree in India, but not specially honoured by the Muria.
reka (chār)	*Buchanania lanzan*, Spreng. The fruit, which is like a plum, is coated with sugar and sold as the chironji sweet.
rmalita (Ha)	*Cassia fistula*, Linn. A beautiful tree bearing clusters of golden flowers.
ka (behera)	*Terminalia belerica*, Roxb. The fruit is rapidly devoured by animals.
ğga (Ha)	*Tectona grandis*, Linn. The teak, the most important timber tree in India, famous in ship construction and for many other uses.
rka (milkar tendu, mendu)	*Diospyros embryopteris*, Pers. The fruit, which is rich in tannin, is eaten by monkeys.
rya (dumar)	*Ficus glomerata*, Roxb. The wild fig.
ndr (tendru, tendu)	*Diospyros melanoxylon*, Roxb. The ebony tree, important in magic. The berries are a useful food.
rmora, tengmadia (tilai)	*Wendlandia exserta*, D.C.

104 ●
824

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

104
824

vedur (bâns) The bamboo, *dendrocalamus strictus*, Ness. The young shoots are a great delicacy. The seeds are also eaten and the pith, **vedur-jiwa** or 'soul of the bamboo', is valued.

walek (semur) *Bombax malabaricum*, D.C. The cotton tree, used ceremonially by many tribes in peninsular India.

wengor (bija) *Pterocarpus marsupium*, Roxb. The Samskrit **asana** tree. Very important for timber. The red gum resin is mentioned in the Lingo legend.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

GLOSSARY

109 **Bhut**	..	A ghost or evil spirit
Danyakal	..	A cromlech, a flat stone put by certain clans for the tendance of the Dead
Gaita	..	The priest and religious headman of a village.
Ghotul	..	The village dormitory of the Muria of northern Bastar
Gunia	..	A magician
Jawa	..	A gruel, called also pej, which is the staple food of the Maria
Jiwa	..	The soul
Kosra	..	A small millet, *panicum miliaceum*
Lamhada	..	A youth who serves a period of years for his wife
Landa	..	Rice-beer
Mahua	..	*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb, the corolla of which is used for making liquor
Mandia	..	A grain, *eleusine coracana*, used in the brewing of rice-beer
Manjhi	..	The petty chief or headman of a group of villages
Mirchuk	..	The ghost of a suicide, an executed murderer or a man killed by human violence
Paita	..	A girl who comes of her own accord to cohabit with a man
Panchayat	..	A court of village elders
Pandum	..	A festival, usually celebrating the gathering and first eating of a crop.
Pada	..	A village headman
Pen	..	A clan-god
Salphi	..	The Halbi word for the sago palm, *Caryota urens*, Linn.
Siraha	..	A medicine-man and diviner
Tahsil	..	A territorial division of a State or District, in charge of a Magistrate at whose headquarters post-mortems are conducted and who commits prisoners for trial at Sessions
Urankal	..	A menhir set upright for the tendance of the Dead
Waddai	..	A clan-priest and medicine-man

[p. 254]

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

of a timid and resigned outlook in place of the manly spirit of old. Finally I propose to discuss the results of the more liberal policy towards the aboriginals which H.E.H. the Nizam's Government has pursued since 1944, and to outline the principles and the first stages of the Gond Education Scheme, which is designed to help the Gonds in the struggle for existence and to restore to them self-respect and pride in their own ancient culture.

In an account of a culture as rich and complex as that of the Raj Gonds the anthropologist must needs concentrate on certain aspects, and in this book I have given first place to the Gonds' mythology and their complex ritual, sanctioned and sustained in almost every phase by mythical precedents. This part of Gond culture is rapidly disintegrating and its study, still possible in the hills of Utnur and Asifabad Taluqs, would come too late in the more open parts of the District. Problems of psychology and the more intimate matters of the individual's life, on the other hand, are only fleetingly touched upon, but I believe that changes in this sphere are not as rapid and the time left for their study is consequently far less limited.

Although this book is not a treatise on linguistics, Gondi texts of some length have found a place in many chapters. I noted them when collecting my material and as they are the first recorded specimens of the peculiar Gondi spoken in Adilabad, I do not feel justified in withholding them from the student of Indian languages. All have been checked and rechecked with several informants, but this is no guarantee of absolute accuracy, for Gonds, like the speakers of most unwritten languages, are often careless about rules of grammar and not very sensitive to slight slips in a text read out to them. The recording, moreover, is not in accordance with the exigent demands of modern phonetics, which only the trained linguist can fulfil. Consonants are used with their values in English, and vowels with their values in Italian, long and short signs being added only where confusion might otherwise arise between two words of similar sound. Diacritical signs have been used only in the consonants ṭ, ṛ and ḥ. While the dental t, rendered by the Nagri character त, is transcribed by simple t, the cerebral t rendered in Nagri by ट, is transcribed by ṭ. Similarly the soft r, र in Nagri, is transcribed r, and the hard r, ड़ in Nagri, as ṛ. The letter ḥ stands for a sound closely resembling the German ch in Bach (pronounced like the composer). This sound occurs mainly in words of Marathi origin, and in such words most Gonds not familiar with Marathi pronounce it not as sh, but h; examples are *goḥti* (word, speech) and *paḥti* (favour) pronounced in pure Marathi as *goshti* and *pashti*; but I have transcribed these and similar words as pronounced by the Gonds in the hills.

Following the spelling of the Linguistic Survey and Trench's Grammar, I have used *w* for all *v*-sounds, except in proper names occurring in the English text, and in words borrowed from Hindi in which *v* is

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

more familiar. Deviating from Trench, who employs double-consonants to indicate the shortness of the preceding vowels, thus spelling *wittana* (to run) in contrast to *witana* (to sow), I have dispensed with double-consonants; in words such as *wattana* (to put) the two consonants represent different sounds. Diacritical signs are confined to the Gondi texts, and are not used when an italicized Gondi word occurs in the English text.[1]

Those familiar with Gondi will notice that the language spoken by the Raj Gonds of Adilabad differs both from the Betul Gondi of Trench's Grammar and the Gondi spoken in South Chanda outlined by the Rev. S. B. Patwardhan.[2] A distinctive feature of Adilabad Gondi is the frequent substitution of an initial *s* for the initial *h* of both the Betul and the Chanda dialects. Thus the Adilabad Gond pronounces *surana* (to see) instead of *hurana*, and 'no' is *sile* in Adilabad but *halle* in Betul. While in the nominative the Gonds of Betul usually drop the initial *n* inherent in the first and second person of the personal pronoun and say *ana* (I) and *imma* (thou) the Gonds of Adilabad use the full form *nana* (I) and *nime* (thou).

The Gondi of southern Chanda described by Patwardhan, follows in the choice of the initial *s* and *h* the Betul usage, but has often *l* where both Adilabad and Betul Gonds pronounce *r*. Thus the Chanda Gond, like the Hill Maria says *lon* (house), while the Adilabad Gond pronounces the word clearly with *r*, *ron*.

Further comparisons between the three dialects would be beyond the scope of this work, but although Betul Gondi contains a good many words not familiar to the Gonds of Adilabad and probably *vice-versa*, and the language of South Chanda is strongly influenced by Telugu, speakers of the three dialects have on the whole no great difficulty in understanding each other.

Raj Gonds of Adilabad on the other hand find it almost impossible to understand or make themselves understood to Hill Marias of Chanda but in going through the texts given in Grigson's *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* I found that with a knowledge of Adilabad Gondi it is easy to recognize many Maria words, some being identical and most very similar in both dialects. The pronunciation and intonation seem however, to be so divergent that to those familiar with the Adilabad idiom Maria is more easily understood written than spoken. Ethnologically it would be extremely important to ascertain the affinities of those words in the Bastar dialects which do not occur in the Gondi of the Central Provinces

1. The student of Dravidian languages will find an extensive selection of Gondi texts in Nagri script in the series "Hyderabad Gondi Literature," which I am editing in collaboration with Mr. S. B. Jogalekar for use in Gond schools. So far the following numbers have been published: *Hyderabad Gondi Reading Chart for Adults* 1, 2, and 3 (Hyderabad, 1943); *First Reader for Adults* containing stories and Riddles (Hyderabad 1944); *Gondi Primer* (Hyderabad 1944); *First Gondi Reader* (Hyderabad 1946); *Three Epic Poems* (Hyderabad 1946); *The Legend of the Serpa Folk* (Hyderabad 1947); *The Myth of Manko* (Hyderabad 1946).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

114 and Parja, and it is therefore easy first of all to describe their
161 distribution; only the briefest of general remarks will be made about them; I hope at a later date to publish a separate account, at least of the Parjas.

161 In the ethnographic map on page 40 the Bhattras are shown by the letter A and the Parjas by the letter B. The former
197 alone among the races of Bastar have abandoned whatever Munda or Dravidian tongue they may have once spoken, and now use a corrupt Uriya dialect. In Bastar, except for one or two villages at the south-east corner of the Kondagaon tahsil, the Bhattras are confined to the north-east corner of Jagdalpur, along the Jeypore border, across which they overflow in large numbers into Jeypore and, beyond, Kalahandi State. Their Bastar number in 1891 was 21,477. The use of their language is spreading to other tribes, chiefly the Parjas; it was spoken by 45,830 persons in 1931, which means that 9,219 non-Bhattras speak it. The spread of its use among the Parjas is shown by the fact that only 12,363 Parji-speakers were returned out of 17,568 Parjas. Actually, as Sir George Grierson has admitted, Bhattri might as well be classified as one of the many forms of Halbi as a dialect of Uriya; to the outward ear they sound very similar, and the two languages are mutually intelligible. Halbi always varies according to its proximity to Chhattisgarhi, Telugu or Gondi; and to me Bhattri seems only Halbi influenced by its proximity to Uriya-speaking tracts. Nor are local census enumerators by any means to be relied upon effectively to distinguish Halbi and Bhattri. Grierson's remark of Gondi dialects that the names indicate tribal rather than linguistic differences is true of Halbi and Bhattri at all events.

Bhattras and Parjas

● 105 The Bhattras live in open country with miles of good rice cultivation. They are gradually giving up even their very modified form of *dahya* or shifting cultivation, consisting now mainly of the occasional cutting and carting to their rice fields of forest undergrowth, and burning it there as manure. All but twenty-six of them were returned in 1931 as following their tribal religion; and this is really the correct account, though they are considerably more Hinduized than any other tribe classed as primitive in 1931 except the Halbas. The latter, whose religion preserves only slightly less of the tribal element than the Bhattra, are, however, in contrast, all but thirty-six recorded as Hindu. No anthropometric work has been done among the Bastar Bhattras; and there are no data for accepting or rejecting on physical grounds the Central Provinces habit of classifying them as a branch of the Gond race. Traditionally they came with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal, while over

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

the border in Jeypore, according to the *Vizagapatam Gazetteer*, the '50,000 Bottadas' say they came from Bastar, and their Uriya dialect is called 'Bastari'. Many of them wear the sacred thread, the right to do so having been purchased in years past by their ancestors from the Raja of Bastar, whose State revenues used once to include regular receipts from such items. They have totemistic divisions, and social and religious customs not unlike those of the Koitor, but with certain marked differences. The tribe is becoming a Hindu caste, with sub-castes differentiated by the purity of their blood; the highest group, or 'Pit' Bhattras, distinguishes itself from the Amnait or Madhya group, on the ground that the Amnaits took women in marriage from other tribes, while the Amnaits similarly held themselves purer in blood than the San group. The Amnait has in the last thirty years gone farther than the Pit, and claims now to be a separate race, far superior to Bhattras. The San group is hardly distinguishable from the ordinary 'Murias' of Jagdalpur.

105●

Of the Bastar Parjas it has already been noted that they now call themselves Dhurwa and resent the designation Parja. The majority of them live in the south-east of the Jagdalpur tahsil, north and south of the Kanker Forest Reserve; there is a further group of them in the Kolab-Sabari valley in Sukma zamindari, between Sukma and the Jagdalpur border, extending at one point across the Kolab-Sabari. The northernmost Parjas are more advanced than those south of the Kanker Forest and below the plateau. In the Bhattra villages around Jagdalpur there are isolated families of Parjas, and a Parja designated the village Dhurwa is often the priest of the *Gaon Devi* or Village Mother goddess, besides having to arbitrate in boundary disputes; the indication is that the Parja is the original settler displaced later by Bhattras. So also at the ceremonies preceding the great *pargana* ceremonial hunts through the jungles near Darba, at the head of the pass descending from the Jagdalpur plateau into Sukma, though most of the villages attending are Bison-horn Maria villages, the *pujaris* who officiate at the altar of bows and arrows are Parjas. The Peng Parjas are said to have come with the first Raja from Warangal, but seem now to be confined to the Jeypore zamindari, though it must be remembered that Jeypore contains large tracts of Bastar *irredenta*. The Tugara Parjas mentioned by Glasfurd (para. 82) seem almost all to have left Bastar, though Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath stated that there were some in Bastar twenty-eight years ago. Their language is described by Grierson as a local and very corrupt variation of Gondi, considerably mixed with Hindi forms. Yet it is an extremely difficult language, unintelligible to

[text continues on p. 41]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
A W32 Gond A W32

Bison-horn Maria and Muria neighbours, and seldom learnt even by those State officials who are excellent interpreters in other dialects; and I fancy that the Hindi admixture is considerably less in ordinary use than in the specimens collected for the Linguistic Survey. It is certainly untrue of Parji that the name indicates rather a tribal than a linguistic difference from Gondi proper. The most marked difference of customs is their style of dancing, which resembles that of the small remnant of the Munda tribe of Gadbas still surviving in two or three villages between them and the Bhattras; they dance in rollicking circles accompanied by their own whistling or by wooden flutes, in a manner reminiscent of certain figures of the 'Lancers', and as different as their dancing dress from the Bison-horn dances of their Maria neighbours, and pleasanter to see and hear than any other dances of Bastar except the Gadba.

105

KEY TO PLATE IV

State or Provincial Boundary
Tribal Boundary .....
Roads, Forest
Tahsil Headquarters ■
Bhattras A
Halbas C
Marias, Abujhmar or Hill E
"Jhorias" or Murias probably once Hill Marias, now lowlanders G
Koitor of the riverain tract or Dorlas J

Tahsil or Zamindari Boundary
Roads, P.W.D.
Reserved Forests
Zamindari Headquarters A
Parjas B
Murias D
Marias, Bison-horn or Dandami F
Hill Marias influenced by Bison-horn Marias H
Mixed Dorla & Bison-horn Maria, or latter exposed to Telugu influence K

Mixed Dorla & Hill Maria, or Hill Maria who have almost become Dorla L

131
162

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

●105

Gadbas

The Gadbas are not shown in the ethnographic map. Their three villages used to have the duty and privilege of supplying bearers for the Raja of Bastar's palanquin. They are gradually dying out; their numbers have fallen from 721 in 1901 to 398 in 1931, though the latter figure may be wrong, as 451 speakers of the Gadbi languages in Bastar were returned in 1931. This is probably the only Munda language spoken in Bastar. They are losing their distinctive dress, customs and language; usually the only villagers who remember it are the old women, and the census enumerators have almost certainly wrongly recorded most of them as speaking Gadbi merely because they are Gadbas. One cause of their decline is that some years back alien Hindus were made lessees of two of their three villages and proceeded to introduce non-Gadbas and to allot them Gadba land; the community was too small to offer the resistance made to similar processes by the larger primitive races of Bastar.

Halbas

The Halbas are shown by the letter C in the ethnographic map, scattered in small patches over most of north and central Bastar. I have above, in Chapter I, suggested as a reason for this distribution that they are the descendants of the old *paik* militia garrisons of the headquarter villages of the old *garhs*. Their Bastar number has risen from 13,865 in 1891 to 16,152 in 1931, while the steady growth of the use of their language as the *lingua franca* of Bastar is shown by the increase of the number of persons speaking Halbi as their mother tongue from 127,047 in 1911 to 171,293 in 1931, while 54,798 Gondi-speakers spoke Halbi as a secondary language. Of them it need only be observed here that the one point in which they most resemble their Maria and Muria neighbours is their worship of log-gods exactly similar in form to the tribal gods of the Abujhmar hills and elsewhere, consisting of parallel pairs of oiled and polished logs joined by cross-pieces and adorned with bunches of peacock feathers.

Murias—General

We come now to the remaining bulk of the Gondi-speaking people of Bastar, recorded in the census as Gonds, Koyas, Murias and Marias. Unfortunately none of these designations is scientific, and the figures published in the 1931 census as they stand are of little value to the ethnographer.

Whatever the derivation of the words Maria and Muria, they are not Gondi words. It has been suggested that Muria is formed from a word meaning root, the term meaning 'aboriginal', and that Maria means merely 'man of the woods'. Glasfurd (para. 80) describes the Murias of his time thus:—

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

'These people inhabit the more cultivated plains around Jugdulpore, and extend on the west from Nagatoka to the boundary of Jeypore, and from Seetapore to about thirty or forty miles north of the Indrawatty. They are skilful cultivators, their dress is a waist-cloth or lungotee, with but seldom any covering on the head; their villages are generally clean and comfortable; they have necklaces of red beads and small brass ear-rings; are active, hardy, and well behaved; they eat everything except the flesh of the cow, and keep great numbers of pigs.' 105

Nagatoka is a little west of Chitrakot falls; if the country east from there to the Jeypore border was then Muria, the Bhattras must have advanced westwards since then into most of their present habitat, or else many who are now San Bhattras were then considered to be Murias. The northward extension thirty or forty miles beyond the Indrawati takes us roughly speaking to the line from Kondagaon east to Amrati in the Makri Forest Reserve, in which there were then several villages. The southward extension to Chitapur (Seetapore) comes practically to the spot where the ethnographic map shows Murias as now beginning south-west of Jagdalpur.

Jagdalpur Murias

The Murias of this tract are very different in various ways from those of Kondagaon and Antagarh tahsils, to whom they consider themselves superior; they say they do not intermarry with them, though this is certainly untrue along the Kondagaon-Jagdalpur border. In Jagdalpur tahsil the Murias have been very exposed to foreign influence, living close to the capital of the State and the Jeypore border; the *parganas* near Jagdalpur itself have had hereditary domestic duties to perform at the palace, and have far more villages leased to foreigners than other parts of Bastar; in the whole tahsil the proportion of persons no longer speaking Gondi as their mother-tongue is higher than elsewhere in the State. Their dancing and music are more akin to those of the Parjas and Bhattras. The signs of totemistic organization are weaker, and the old rules of exogamy are breaking down. Whether or not the Jagdalpur Murias are distinct racially from those of the north it is difficult to say; there is not much apparent physical difference, save in so far as the Muria of the thickly populated open tracts of the 'Padar Raj', as the open country round Jagdalpur is often called, is weedier than the Muria of the north and the Marias of the Abujhmar and Dantewara. Those who no longer speak a dialect of Gondi may easily be descended from Parjas, San Bhattras, or Bison-horn Marias, or from the Murias of the north according to their geographical position, and have lost their distinctive cultural features through being fused together in the detribalizing melting-pot of Jagdalpur; but there may be a substantial 'Muria' nucleus representing an

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

105 earlier wave of migration southwards than that which peopled north Kondagaon and Antagarh. It is noticeable that in the Jagdalpur country you do not find the *gotul* or boys' (sometimes boys' and girls') dormitory organization that is so distinctive a feature of Kondagaon and Antagarh. It will be seen later that this exists only in embryo in the Abujhmar mountains except at their northernmost extension, and is altogether absent among the Bison-horn Marias and the Koyas of the south. It is tempting to suggest that as the Jhorias of Antagarh tahsil represent Marias who have descended from the Abujhmar mountains, so the Jagdalpur Murias are civilized Bison-horn Marias; but the latter are very distinct from the Jagdalpur Murias, and indeed to some extent antagonistic to them; for the religious or social occasions on which they have to provide a feast of beef they will engage the village thief and send him to steal a cow or calf from the nearest Muria village. A Muria considers himself in Jagdalpur superior to the beef-eating Bison-horn Maria, and does not intermarry.

Jhoria Murias

Coming then to the Murias of Kondagaon and Antagarh, the term as now used for all non-Maria Koitor has again to be condemned as unscientific. Glasfurd rightly excluded from it those whom he described as 'Jhoorias', of whom he says (para. 86):—

'The Jhoorias are found principally in the north-western parts about Narayenpoor and Purtabpore, and extend towards Kakeir (Kanker); they are a numerous class, and subsist partly by cultivation and partly by hunting, and on the fruits of the forest. Their dress resembles that of the following caste, the Marias, with whom they may be said to constitute about a third or more of the population of the Bustar Dependency, and whom they resemble in customs and appearance.'

By Marias he meant primarily those whom this book terms the Bison-horn Marias, from whom he rightly distinguished the Marias of the Abujhmar mountains, whom he designated 'Marees'. His remarks on the Jhorias are fairly true if it is borne in mind that it is the Abujhmar Marias whom they resemble, not the Bison-horn, and that he is wrong in extending their country to include north Antagarh around Partabpur as well as the country round Narainpur. The name Jhorias is not now ordinarily used in conversation, since all Koitor in Bastar who have raised themselves socially above the Maria standard nowadays call themselves Murias. Here it is revived as a convenient term for that very distinct type of 'Muria' living around Narainpur and Benur, and the lower valley of the Gudra from a little north of Chhota Dongar to the Indrawati. It strictly speaking applies to the inhabitants of the *parganas* of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Jhorian and Ghat Jhorian (see the *pargana* map of Antagarh tahsil at p. 33); but almost all of Ghat Jhorian was depopulated when the bulk of the *pargana* was included in the Matla Forest Reserve. I should now define as Jhoria Murias or Jhorias the Koitor inhabiting the south of the Kolur *pargana*, the Ghat Jhorian, Jhorian, Baragaon, Narainpur, Dugal, Kurangal and Benur *parganas*, the plains villages of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* of Antagarh, and the Mardapal *pargana* of Kondagaon, which lies to the east of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*. On the ethnographic map all Murias have been shown by the letter D, and the Jhorias by the letter G; in my view the Jhorias are really Marias who have descended from the hills and come into contact with Koitor from the north, the 'Murias' of northern Bastar. There is very little in the outward appearance of the Jhorias to distinguish them from the Hill Marias; their fashions in beads and other ornaments, their coiffures, their physical features, are all similar. They have clans and clan-gods similar to the Hill Marias; the clans have often their own definite territory, the Dugal and Kurangal *parganas* for example being the lands of the Dugalor and the Kurangalor clans; their *pandum* or festivals correspond to those of the Abujhmar; they erect *kotokal* or monoliths to their dead. The northern Jhorias have now learned to dance in 'Muria' style; but to the south and especially in the Mardapal *pargana* of Kondagaon they dance in the traditional *pata-ondanna* or 'song-and-dance' style of the Abujhmar, and the dancers are somewhat overdressed in the typical Abujhmar way, with flowing draperies, dancing hats ('*topi*') ornamented with the feathers of the peacock, racket-tailed drongo (*Dissemurus paradiseus*) or other birds, dancing shields (*moghi*) with plumes of peacock feathers and streamers of cloth, and bunches of bells slung over the buttocks of the dancers, though without the strips of cloth tied rib-fashion over the torso till very recently characteristic of the Abujhmar. On the other hand, they[1] have in their villages the full *gotul* or dormitory organization of northern Murias, though they deny that girls share the dormitories with boys as around Kondagaon, and their agriculture is far more advanced than that of the Hill Marias, in that they have ploughs and permanent fields. The Dugalor and Kurangalor clans do indeed admit that some of the hill clans are their *dalabhai* or brother-clans, and that some are their *akomama* or clans with which they may intermarry; but such intermarriage practically never occurs, owing to the distance of the hill villages from those of the lowlands.

[1] I am not sure whether this applies to the Mardapal *pargana* and the adjacent part of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*.

[See ref. 116, p. 418.—Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

●105 The remaining 'Murias' are those of the Paralkot-Kalpatti, Bandadesh, Kirangal, Kalpatti, Surebahi, Bhomra, Antagarh and Amabera *parganas* and the larger part of the Kolar *pargana* of Antagarh tahsil, and of all Kondagaon tahsil except the Mardapal *pargana* and that portion between Kondagaon and the Jagdalpur border already mentioned as peopled by Koitor of the Jagdalpur Muria type. All these Murias have traditions of migration into Bastar from the north, from the ancient kingdom of Dhamda, on the downfall of which their god Bhera Pen (Hinduized, Budha Deo) led them in safety from the modern Raipur district into Bastar; the latter story is told in Kondagaon tahsil, but I have not heard it in Antagarh, though Antagarh certainly knows Bhera Pen, the ordinary Great God[1] of the Gonds throughout the British districts of the Central Provinces. In the Amabera *pargana* alone in Bastar is recorded the knowledge of the great Lingo epic of the Gond race, from the Bastar version of which certain extracts were printed by Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, pp. 49, 61-2). It is likely that north Kondagaon, Amabera, and north Antagarh represent separate streams of migration, and that north Antagarh contains a larger strain of the previous inhabitants, very likely the same stock as that now living in the Abujhmar hills. The Koitor inhabitants of the Kanker State that borders Antagarh and Kondagaon tahsils on the north, though called Gonds in the 1931 census report, are of exactly the same kind, intermarrying still with their Bastar Muria neighbours, and often called Murias by Hindu residents of Kanker; thus it is observed in para. 76 of the *Chhattisgarh Feudatory States Gazetteer*:—

Gotul Murias, or Murias of north Kondagaon and Antagarh

> 'The aboriginal population live in much the same style and have much the same customs as the aborigines of the adjoining State of Bastar, but it is said that they are gradually coming into line with their Hindu neighbours and abandoning their old beliefs. At present, however, in the more remote villages the Gonds adhere to the worship of godlings and to their old social customs. The girls and boys have their separate sleeping barracks outside the village, and meet near them nightly to play and dance and sing.'

Nearly all of the 80,003 Gonds returned from Kanker State at the 1931 census must be of the same stock as the Murias of north Bastar.

If any particular feature is to be singled out as the distinguishing mark of this 'Muria' group of the Koitor of north Bastar and Kanker, it must be their *gotul* system for the training of the young. The *gotul* is much the same as the Bachelors' House found in

[176] [1] Even in British districts I believe the *Bhera Pen* to be merely the 3-, 4-, 5-, 6- or 7-fold god of the clan as distinct from the 3, 4–8, 6 or 7 *Chuddur Pens* or small gods kept by each family.

[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Russell]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Indonesia and, in India, among the Oraons and others in Chhota Nagpur and among the Nagas of Assam. In Bastár the Murias and Jhorias of Antagarh have sleeping dormitories for boys only, and repudiate with heat any suggestion that boys and girls share the same dormitory, as is the case among the Murias of north Kondagaon.[1] Nevertheless, the girls assemble every evening by the boys' *gotul*, to join in song, dance and games, and not infrequently in sexual games, and, like the boys, have *gotul* names and ranks some of which involve special duties and responsibilities. The elder boys and girls are almost prefects, charged with the duty of teaching the young the elements of the tribal culture, while all the youth have certain definite fagging to do for the whole village. The Marias of the Abujhmar have a *gotul* in every village, but it is little more than a real dormitory where all unmarried males over the age of ten or so sleep; and, except in the Padalbhum *pargana* and portions of adjacent Maria country abutting on the plain of north-western Antagarh, the distinctive and specialized *gotul* system of training for the young of both sexes is absent. It seems almost completely absent among the Bison-horn Marias and Koyas of Bastar. Lucie-Smith does not mention it in the account of the Marias and other Gonds of Chanda district in the 1869 Settlement Report (one of the indications that the 'Marias' described by him were Koitor of the plains and foot-hills of the Ahiri and other zamindaris, not the Hill Marias of the portion of the Abujhmar mountains that overflows into south-east Chanda). It is only briefly mentioned by Russell and Hiralal in para. 71 of their article 'Gond', where it is said that 'many Gond villages in Chhattisgarh and the Feudatory States' have these '*gotalghar*' (*sic*). There is no definite record of the distribution of the *gotul* outside Bastar in the Central Provinces and the old Central Provinces States. In the *States Gazetteer* it is recorded only in Bastar and Kanker States among the 'Gonds'. I doubt whether it exists anywhere among the Gonds[1] of the Satpura mountains and other parts of the Central Provinces, including Chhattisgarh. It is a possible indication of the existence among these Muria, Jhoria and Hill Maria Koitor of Antagarh and Kondagaon Tahsils who now speak dialects of Dravidian Gondi of a strong element of pre-Dravidian or Austro-Asiatic culture; but it is contrary to expectation, if this be the case, that the *gotul* exists in embryo only among the very primitive Hill

[1] Enquiry among the Gonds along the Nagpur-Chhindwara border showed no sign of anything resembling a *gotul*; I was told, however, by an intelligent Gond that he had heard many years ago that some such thing existed somewhere beyond Deogarh in Chhindwara District. This is unverified. There is no mention of the *gotul* in any published grammars and vocabularies of Central Provinces Gondi dialects.

[see cat. 116, p. 418. - Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

105 Marias but fully developed among the comparatively advanced Murias and Jhorias of Antagarh and Kondagaon. I propose to refer to these northern Murias as the Gotul Murias, though it must be remembered that the *gotul* system is equally strong among the Jhorias.

Physically the Gotul Murias conform more to the standard type of Central Provinces Gond than any other Koitor in Bastar; they are short in stature, but well-proportioned, with roundish heads, flat noses, distended nostrils, ugly features, straight black hair and scanty beard and moustache. Eickstedt measured several Murias at Kondagaon in January 1929 and, I gather, found little difference between them and the Hill Marias whom he measured at Handawada on the Indrawati edge of the Abujhmar hills; the Hill Marias are generally in better physical condition, apart from the ravages of yaws and the prevalence of hydrocele, than Gotul or Jagdalpur Murias. So, too, Ramesh Chandra Roy in measuring Hill and Bison-horn Marias during my March 1933 expedition found little physical difference. Yet after living in Bastar for a time one is soon able to distinguish between a Muria and a Hill or Bison-horn Maria, by something in their facial appearance, not merely by differences of dress, though one will often confuse a Hill Maria and a Jhoria. The Maria of both types has a proportion of almost leptorrhine faces and of skins pale copper in hue, while heights of 5 ft. 9 in. are not unknown among them.[1]

Murias—Summary

To summarize the account of the so-called Murias before proceeding to discuss the Marias and Koyas, they fall into three main groups, the Jagdalpur Murias of the Jagdalpur tahsil and the south of Kondagaon tahsil; the Jhoria Murias of the foot-hills of the Abujhmar mountains in south-west Kondagaon and in Antagarh tahsils; and the Gotul Murias of north Antagarh and most of Kondagaon. These divisions are roughly endogamous, though not now recognized

[1] Cf. Hutton, India Census Report, 1931, p. 446:—'The vague suggestion of the mongoloid, which is so often given by the appearance of the hillmen of Chhota Nagpur, of Bastar State in the Central Provinces and of the Madras Agency Tracts, may be due to a strain of Pareoean blood which hascome in by sea from the coast. One is insistently reminded in these areas of the Assam hill tribes, and both Haddon and Buxton have drawn attention to this strain, which struck the present writer quite independently and contrary to his expectations; and the admitted proto-australoid element in these tribes is no obstacle to this, since it must have extended at some period throughout what is now the archipelago to the Australian mainland, apart from the probability of its absorption on the mainland. Haddon says (*Races of Man*, p. 108), "there is something in the facial appearance of many Kolarians which enables an observer to pick out a typical inhabitant of Chhota Nagpur from a crowd of southern Dravidians, and among some (Munda, etc.) there is often a reminiscence of Mongoloid traits", and the truth of this is incontestable.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

by separate vernacular designations. The Jagdalpur group is detribalized by palace contacts and the proximity of Halbi and Uriya speaking elements both in Bastar and in Jeypore.[1] The Jhoria group are probably Hill Marias settled in the plains. The Gotul Murias have definite traditions of immigration from Raipur and the north. 'Muria' is a term coined by non-Koitor for those Koitor who are somewhat less un-Hinduized than the primitive Marias, and is used by any section of Marias as soon as it wishes to claim social advancement. The Bastar official applies it not only to the three sections of Murias classified above, but also to the Koyas and some of the Dorla Koyas of the south, and to the more advanced Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara and Bijapur. The census figures of Murias therefore contain various Koitor from Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris and from Konta and Bijapur tahsils who should have been enumerated as Koyas or Marias.

On the latter account perhaps about 15,000 should be deducted from the census total of 124,993 Bastar Murias, leaving a round figure of 110,000. About 32,000 of these are Jagdalpur Murias, 17,000 Jhorias and 61,000 Gotul Murias. These are very approximate figures, roughly calculated from the total populations of the different charges into which each tahsil or zamindari was divided for census purposes.

The Marias—General

It has more than once been indicated in the preceding pages that I divide the so-called Marias into two divisions, the Hill Marias of the Abujhmar mountains, and the Bison-horn Marias. The former call their land Metabhum or 'Highlands', and call themselves (and are called by their neighbours on the plains and plateaux of Antagarh, Kondagaon, Jagdalpur, Dantewara and Bijapur) Meta Koitor, the Highland Koitor. To avoid confusion in the mind of any later investigator, it should be observed that this name is also given to themselves by the Bison-horn Marias living on the high edges of the Jagdalpur and the Dantewara tahsils in contrast to their brethren below in Dantewara or Sukma and Sukma or Konta respectively. If, however, a native name is needed for the Marias of the Abujhmar mountains, Meta Koitor could well be adopted; the general level of their villages is far higher than that of any other villages in Bastar. Hill Marias, however, is the term which I shall use, the word Maria being now familiar in ethnographic literature. By the Hill Maria the men of the plains, be they Muria, Jhoria or Bison-horn Maria, are called Dor Koitor, Hatiya Koitor or Kalpatti

[1] Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao in an article on the Gonds of the Eastern Ghauts, India, published in *Anthropos*, 1907, says that the Gonds of parts of Jeypore are known as Murias.

1: Grigson, Wilfrid Vernon. The Maria Gonds of Bastar. With an Introduction by J.H. Hutton. Reissued in 1949 /first published in 1938/ with a Supplement containing 80 pages of additional matter and 39 illustrations by the author and Verrier Elwin. London: Oxford University Press, 1949.

Pp. xxii, 427; 24 plates; 8 text figures, including 4 maps; Supplement includes pp. 351-427 and 32 end plates.

Yale: Nkd72 137 938Gb

/This excellent ethnography, by a former member of the Indian Civil Service, describes the culture of two subgroups of the widespread Gond peoples, the relatively unacculturated Hill Marias and the more acculturated Bison Horn Marias, both of Bastar State. The book is divided into five main sections: Introductory, giving the geographical, ethnographical and historical setting of the Maria Gonds; Personal Appearance and Characteristics; Domestic Life and Economy, which includes villages, houses and their contents, agriculture, procuring of food and drink, and domestic life; Religion and Magic, which includes the gods, annual religious ceremonies, and the cult of the departed; and Social Organization and Custom, which includes marriage, birth and childhood and death and funeral ceremonies. A number

1: Grigson, Wilfrid Vernon.

of appendices are included on administrative divisions, clan lists, terms of relationship, names, anthropometry, language, and glossary. Throughout the book, the culture of the Hill Marias is described first, then that of the Bison Horn Marias, with indications as to how the two cultures differ. The Supplement contains a comment by Elwin which includes additional information, mainly on Hill Maria culture; notes on the Maria Gonds of Chanda and Drug District by Grigson; and notes by Elwin on the original edition supplementing or correcting Grigson's material. Data on the gotul, the adolescents' and bachelors' dormitory, will be found in category 883. Data on the zamindar, sendhia, and taluq, all administrative divisions, have been filed in category 632. --Analyst/

Field date: 1927-1934, 1940-1941
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Government Official-5
Processed in 1958

2: Elwin, Verrier. The Muria and their Ghotul. Bombay: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1947.

Yale: Nkd10 947E

Pp. xxxii, 730; 154 plates; 146 text figures; 9 maps; preface; index; glossary.

[The first part of the book deals with Muria culture generally, as a context in which to set the ghotul. There are descriptive sections on food-getting, kinship, the life-cycle, religion, legend, etc. The second portion of the book deals with the communal dwelling where the young people of the Gond villages live, the ghotul. Inasmuch as this portion constitutes a large block of material, most of which falls within category 883 (Adolescent Activities), it had been asterisked, and the reader is referred to category 116, pp. 269-682. The author describes the buildings, membership, and the activities of the ghotul, including sex, ceremonial participation, dances, games, and other recreation. There is a short appendix by A. N. Mitchell on the language of the Muria, and four other appendices treating ghotul titles, census data, a list of ghotul villages, and a summary of marriage data presented throughout the work. --Analyst]

Field date: 1935-1942 Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Analyst: James Leary Processed in 1958

3: Elwin, Verrier. Maria Murder and Suicide. With a Foreward by W. V. Grigson. Bombay: Published for Man in India by Oxford University Press (Humphrey Milford), 1943.

Pp. xxx, 259; 35 plates; 17 text figures; 21 tables; 2 maps

Yale: Nkd72 I37 943e

/This book, by a British social anthropologist who is one of the foremost experts on tribal India, is an analysis and discussion of Bison Horn Maria murder and suicide based on court records of the cases and discussion with participants, when available, and with relatives and neighbors. The Bison Horn Maria have a very high percentage of murder and suicide when compared to neighboring peoples and to western society. Elwin tries to work out motives in terms of Maria culture - the main ones he discerns being witchcraft and magic, marital infidelity, the desire to eliminate people, property disputes, revenge, fatigue, familial antagonisms, alcohol and lunacy. The book closes with Elwin's recommendations concerning the handling of cases, criminals, and prisons. There are two appendices: a table of 100 Maria homicides; and a table of 50 Maria suicides.--Analyst/

Field date: 1935-1942
Analyst: Timothy J. O'Leary

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 5
Processed in 1958

4: Fürer-Haimendorf, Christoph von. The Raj Gonds of Adilabad. Vol. 3, Bk. 1, in, The Raj Gonds of Adilabad. London: Macmillan, 1948.

Pp. xviii, 449; 90 Illustrations; 4 maps.

Yale: Nkd72 I39 +943f 3/1

Not processed for this file, since they deal with the acculturated Raj Gond; pp. 21-449.

[The introduction to this book, the only part of the work reproduced here, gives a general view of Gond culture. The author, a trained anthropologist and Indian tribal specialist, makes extensive comments on the other works published on the Gond. This section was intended as an introduction to the regional study of non-Bastar Gonds undertaken in the rest of Book 1. Book II covers the historical development of the Gonds of Hyderabad and the central provinces, and deals with the social and economic effects of opening Adilabad district to settlement in the past 100 years. This source was

4: Fürer-Haimendorf, Christoph von.

processed to give the researcher orientation to the various Gond groups since this file in the main covers only the relatively unacculturated Bison Horn, Hill and Maria Gond. --Analyst]

Field date: 1942-1945
Analyst: Leslie L. Clark

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1958

Elwin, Verrier. Funerary Customs in Bastar State. Man in India, Vol. 25, pp. 87-133. Chotanagpur: 1945.

Yale: NK10 M32 24-25

[This account is duplicated in a reorganized form in 2: Elwin, this file. --Analyst]

Elwin, Verrier. Primitive Ideas of Menstruation and the Climacteric in the East Central Provinces of India. Essays in Anthropology presented to R. B. Chandra Roy, pp. 141-157. Lucknow, 1942.

[This source contains nothing on the Maria or Bison Horn Gond and very little on any of the acculturated Gond groups. --Analyst]

Elwin, Verrier. Leaves from the Jungle: Life in a Gond Village. London: John Murry, 1936.

[This is a diary based on Elwin's experiences in a Gond village in Mandla District, Central Provinces (not Bastar) during 1932-1936, when he was helping to run a local dispensary and school. It contains incidental ethnographic information. --Analyst]

Elwin, Verrier. The Attitude of Indian Aboriginals towards Sexual Impotence. Man in India, Vol. 23, pp. 127-146. Ranchi: 1943.

Yale: NK10 M32 22-23

[This source contains very little information on the Gond. In addition, Elwin does not specify which Gond group is being referred to. Data on this subject is available in 2: Elwin, this file. --Analyst]

Grigson, W. V. A detailed description of Muria dormitory system. Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces. Census of India, Vol. I, Part III, Section B. 1931.

[This source was not processed, since the subject is covered in great detail by a later source, 2: Elwin, this file. --Analyst]

Russell, R. V., with R. B. Hiralal. Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India. Vol. 3, pp. 39-143. London: MacNullay & Co., Ltd., 1916.

[This source contains a single chapter on the Gond. Grigson says that it is not too valuable, the data being largely gleaned from papers and reports of administrative officials. "Mistakes were inevitable." Fürer-Haimendorf says Russell's article was the most complete thing on the Gond up to its time. "It suffers to some extent from the faults of any such compilation...full of interesting details but fails to draw a clear distinction among the individual Gond tribes."--Analyst]

Singh, Indrajit. The Gondwana and the Gonds. With a Foreword by Prof. Radhakamal Mukerjee. Lucknow: The Universal Publishers Ltd., 1944.

Pp. ii, iii, ix, 201; 15 plates; glossary

Yale: Nkd72 I37 944s

[This monograph, a doctoral dissertation, is a socio-economic survey, based on field work, of various Gond groups in the Central Provinces and Bastar State. The author is frequently not clear concerning which Gond group he is talking about. Most of the information in this book concerning the Gonds of Bastar State is duplicated in the studies by Grigson and Elwin. For these reasons Singh's monograph has not been processed for the AW32 Gond file. --Analyst]

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

APPENDIX VIII

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113

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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

113

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

those days he tended perhaps to give more credence to the reports of his subordinates, to accept more readily the denials of villagers, and to generalize more frequently than he would to-day.

Yet these are but toys; the massive structure stands and will mark an epoch in the development of anthropological research in middle India. Burma and Assam, which have given us many good monographs are, for ethnographical purposes, largely separate from the rest of the sub-continent. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*[1] is the first Indian book in the new manner which reaches modern standards of enquiry and documentation, which can compare with publications on America and the Pacific. It is not, of course, all due to Grigson, but it is an instructive exercise to examine the books on peninsular India published before 1938 and those that have appeared since.

No one has known and explored Bastar as Grigson has, and his real book is written on the face of the countryside he loved so completely. He started a tradition in Bastar and still to-day there is peace, freedom and happiness in hundreds of villages as a result of the principles he established. A whole legend has grown up round the name of 'Grikson Diwan', for if Grigson loved the Marias and Murias they certainly reciprocated his affection. It is rare for aboriginals to know, still less to remember, the names of administrators, yet I found in 1940 and the following years that Grigson's name was known in the remotest villages of the State, and old men who had no idea that there was a war believed that somewhere or other Grikson Diwan was caring for their interests. At the top of the beautiful Raughat the villagers will show you a great rock from which, they say, Mr. and Mrs. Grigson, enraptured by the loveliness of the scene, once leapt fully clad into the waters of the pool far below. The Murias of Koilibera were still chuckling ten years afterwards at their recollections of Grigson's chase of a man-eater, when the Marias of the south whom he brought with him ate every monkey in the hills and stripped all the trees of the forest of red ants—Grigson himself being by no means backward in sharing the fantastic diet. In one high lonely clearing

[1] So far as I know, Mr. Grigson has published the following since *The Maria Gonds of Bastar: Reports—Notes on the Aboriginal Problem in the Mandla District* (Nagpur, 1940); *The Aboriginal Problem in the Balaghat District* (Nagpur, 1941); *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar* (Nagpur, 1944). *Forewords*—to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Bombay, 1943), to Verrier Elwin, *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943), to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Tribal Hyderabad* (Hyderabad, 1945). Translations of Muria Songs in *New Verse*, Feb.-March 1937. Review of Elwin, *The Baiga* in *Man*, Vol. XLI, p. 38. Letter on 'Cowrie Shells in the Central Provinces of India' in *Man*, Vol. XL, p. 159. Note on 'Human Sacrifice in Hyderabad' in *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, p. 68. *The Aboriginal in the Future India* (London, Royal Anthropological Institute, 1945): Presidential Address, Deccan History Association (Hyderabad, 1945).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of the Abujhmar, I was told, Grigson once encountered an ancient woman completely naked. She had never seen a white face before and, believing the visitor to be a Rakshasa, fell at his feet begging to be allowed to go for a few moments to her village to bid farewell to her little grandson, after which she would return to be devoured. 114

There is no end to these stories, many of them tales of generosity and kindness that would embarrass Grigson to have repeated. The result has been that Bastar is a very pleasant place to tour in. I have had trouble enough in Provinces and States, where there has been no one like Grigson to precede me, to realize vividly the difference that he has made. He is not the only one; Bastar has long been fortunate in her officers; but he set the pace.

When it was decided to issue an Indian edition of this book and Grigson asked me to write a sort of Comment to go with it, I was puzzled to know what to put in. I have done a certain amount of writing[1] about Bastar and the Bison-horn Marias, among whom I spent a good deal of time, and I did not want to repeat here what I had already written. In the end, at the risk of being very scrappy, I decided to give all my unpublished notes on the Marias, rather on the principle of the Abbot's order at the sack of Beziers: 'Kill them all; God will know his own.'.

I deal first, therefore, with a few larger subjects, where my material supplements Grigson's, such as magic and the tragedies to which its practice leads, Bison-horn Maria ideas and taboos with regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, the dormitory and funerary customs. It seemed worth while to describe in some detail a marriage ceremony and the Ghotpal Marhai which I had witnessed personally. After that I proceed to give brief notes on points in the book which appear to need amplification. Short of reprinting a large amount of already published material, I do not know what other plan was possible.

II

Do the Marias believe in a Supreme Being? Grigson was not able to assemble any very definite evidence on this point. 'Only around Orcha', he says, 'and a few neighbouring Chhota 776

[1] For convenience of reference I shall give a list of my publications on Bastar and the Murias or Marias. 'Ceremonial Cross-Dressing among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 163; 'Suicide among the Aboriginals of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 207; 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII, p. 121; 'The Sago Palm in Bastar State', *J.R.A.S. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 69; 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, p. 97; *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); 'Stilt-Walking among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLIV, p. 38; *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944); *The Muria and their Ghotul* (Bombay, 1947); 'Funerary Customs in Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXV. [113]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 Dongar Pargana Hill Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural, who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip.' Koppers, who is perhaps a little too obviously anxious to discover belief in a Supreme Deity everywhere for the demands of strict science, protests at this vagueness. 'In the light of the many facts known to-day', he says, 'this effort at explanation is not satisfactory. Apart from other difficulties it seems more than improbable that aboriginals would in such a case quickly and easily find a new word to express a meaning which (according to Grigson's assumption) would be foreign to their mental vocabulary. The word Ispural appears to be genuinely Dravidian.'[1] But Grigson could hardly be expected to improve on his evidence, and actually nothing is more characteristic of the aboriginal ecstatics than their invention of new words. I too have heard vague references to Ispural—far away from Chhota Dongar in the east of Kondagaon as well as in the Jhoria foothills. In a Muria song, Ispural is described as having daughters, the youngest of whom is Phulsundri Rani. In a Burkal Pata, a song used when a man has been killed by a tiger, Ispural appears as one of many gods who is accused of having caused the tragedy. Among the Bondos of Jeypore (who do not speak a Dravidian language), I found Ispur as the name of a sky god who is invoked at the time of winnowing the grain if there is no wind to blow away the chaff. This, and the fact that he has daughters, suggests that Ispural is a variant of Indra or Indal, a sky god who sends the rain and whose daughters often visit the earth. The actual word 'Ispural' may have been born in trance. A wizard hears the names Ishwar, Indal, Purub (Lord); they sink into his mind and are forgotten; then one day as he is raving in trance a new word comes into his head, and a new god is made.

But although Ispural is only doubtfully a name of the Supreme Being, the evidence appears to me overwhelming that all the aboriginals of central India and Orissa believe in some sort of Creator or Supreme Deity. Some of them, identifying him with the Sun, call him by a special tribal name and very generally they use the honorific terms Bhagavan or Mahapurub[2] and their dialectical variants. The most convincing proof that this belief is not a

[113]

[1] W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV and XXXVI, p. 307.

[2] Bhagavan is the classical Hindu term for the adorable object of *Bhakti* worship; Mahapurub or Mahaprabhu is a Sanskrit word meaning 'great master' and may be applied to any eminent person, human or divine; in Bengal it is specially used of Chaitanya

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Hill Maria
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INTRODUCTION

● 114 It is very remarkable that Indian administrators and British anthropologists should have had to wait a century for any detailed authoritative account of the Gonds of Central India. It may also be said to have been very unfortunate that we should have had to wait so long, though that misfortune is much mitigated by the excellence of the monographs that we have just received from Verrier Elwin and, in particular, from Mr. Grigson. What one regrets most is that an earlier study of the Gonds might have prevented much suffering and many misfortunes, at least, that is, if it had led to the taking of measures in their interests such as Mr. Grigson was able to initiate in Bastar State during the term of his office there as Administrator and Diwan.

It is hardly necessary for me to say anything of Mr. Grigson's qualifications for writing of the Maria Gonds of that State: those qualifications will be self-evident to the discerning reader of the book which follows. But it should be placed on record that Mr. Grigson has succeeded in initiating measures to restore the jurisdiction of village *panchayats*, to restrict the alienation of villages to foreigners from outside by abolishing the *thekadari* system, to put an end to oppressive and vexatious interference by police and other petty officials with the life of the Maria village. For it is the very high privilege of that altogether too rare individual the anthropologically-minded administrative officer, that he can often bring practical benefits to the subjects of his studies as well as informative benefits to the readers he instructs.

It is obvious that this monograph on the Gonds of Bastar reveals a fusion of cultures which has not only taken place in the past but is going on in the present. The author himself draws attention to the difference between the cultures of the Bison-horn and of the Abujhmar Marias, and ascribes them to successive waves of Gond immigrants, as well as to the more recent encroachments of Hinduism. But this is not the whole of the picture, and without 000 offering any attempt at an analysis of the Bastar cultures it is perhaps permissible to point out certain parallels and to suggest an inference or two. Mr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, dealing in Appendix V with the physical side of the Gond problem, suggests the existence of three elements, a pre-Dravidian element conveniently labelled 'proto-australoid' by Sewell and Veddaic by others—Eickstedt calls it 'Veddid'—which is dolichocephalic, prognathous and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PREFACE

THE Administration of Bastar State has generously subsidized the publication of this book, and for this practical sympathy I must thank Colonel Meek, the Agent to the Governor-General for the Eastern States, and Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., Administrator of Bastar State. I hope that it will not be the last book to be written about the Marias. More systematic field-work will without doubt correct and supplement many of my statements; I shall be content if my book tempts any trained worker to visit the ethnologically unexplored lands of Bastar and Jeypore.

My four years as Administrator of Bastar State kept me busy in camp and office with administrative problems of all kinds. The primary object of my enquiries was to ascertain grievances, especially those caused by the adoption in a primitive State of criminal, civil and revenue laws framed for British Indian districts some centuries more 'advanced'. In getting the aboriginal to show me his house and his possessions, in watching his domestic and agricultural routine, and in attending his simple social and religious ceremonies I found the readiest path to his confidence and to appreciation of his real feelings about the administration. Question begat counter-question, and attempts to explain the domestic life of the English to Marias were interesting and amusing. If because I was primarily an administrator I have sometimes dwelt at length on administrative problems, I do not repent: for, despite such views as those advanced by Mr. N. M. Joshi and Mr. M. S. Aney in the Indian Legislative Assembly debate of February 18th, 1936, on the areas to be wholly or partially excluded under the recent Government of India Act, when they heartily damned all anthropologists as wishing to keep the primitive races of India 'uncivilized' and 'in a state of barbarism' as raw material for their science and 'in order to add to their blessed stock of scientific knowledge', anthropology has a very practical value to all charged with the administration of other races if it can discover the thoughts and need of those races. The results of the divorce of administration from anthropology as seen in the system of land revenue, police and judicial administration applied to the Maria tracts of Bastar have been as strikingly revealed on a larger scale by the post-1919 attempts in Bombay and the Central Provinces to force prohibition upon the Bhil, the Gond and the Korku.

Few now are the regions of India where the white man is unknown, and fewer still those in which the Hindu has not yet

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

settled. The Hill Maria and part of the Bison-horn Maria country are such regions; and often in our stay in Bastar my wife and I were able to recapture something of the surprise and variety of experience that our pioneer ancestors knew so much more than their descendants of these humdrum and standardized days. This alone would justify some record of what we saw.

For encouragement to attempt such a record I must first thank His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler, K.C.S.I., C.B., C.I.E., C.V.O., C.B.E., now Lieutenant-Governor of the Isle of Man, for nine years Governor of the Central Provinces and in political charge of the Central Provinces States, to whom I owed my appointment as Administrator of Bastar, and who was the wisest and most helpful of chiefs and the best and most stimulating of friends. Mr. R. A. Wilson, who was then Chief Secretary to the Government of the Central Provinces, wrote to me suggesting a study of the Marias even before I went to Bastar. I am very grateful also for the advice and encouragement of three friends: Dr. J. H. Hutton, C.I.E., I.C.S., the last Census Commissioner for India, who has put me further in his debt by reading through my manuscript and contributing so interesting an Introduction; Baron Egon von Eickstedt, Professor of Ethnology at Breslau University, who visited Bastar while I was there and has kindly allowed me to reproduce some of his excellent photographs; and the Right Reverend Alex Wood, D.D., O.B.E., Lord Bishop of Nagpur, the doyen of Gondi scholars and sanest of critics. My interest in the Gond, first aroused by contact with him in the Nagpur, Seoni and Hoshangabad districts, was stimulated by early talks with Mr. C. G. Chenevix Trench, C.I.E., then serving in the Central Provinces Commission, the author of a fascinating Gondi grammar and of certain contributions to Blackwood which vividly portray the Indian aboriginal, and by that mine of ethnological material, Russell and Hiralal's *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*. I have in the succeeding pages often disagreed with their statements on Marias in their article 'Gond'; but theirs was a pioneer work, being largely a compilation of statements gleaned from a mass of papers contributed by officials, pleaders and others, supplemented by the personal enquiries of the authors and their wide knowledge of almost all that had been previously written on their subjects. Mistakes and mis-statements were thus inevitable; but their great book is remarkable for its general reliability, its sustained interest and its power of stimulating further investigation.

I must state how I made my enquiries. Throughout my time in Bastar I kept notes and took photographs of what I heard or saw. Between 1927 and 1931 I made four long tours among the Hill

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias, and paid several shorter visits to the fringes of their hills; since 1931 I have three times revisited Bastar, seeing some Marias each time, and spending March 1934 in revisiting the Abujhmar hills villages seen in my 1929-31 tours, and the Bison-horn Maria villages above and below the Aranpur pass. I had similarly often toured before across the Bison-horn Maria country, and made many friends among the villages around the Bailadila hills, which, in return for a reduced assessment of land revenue, had the duty of sending relays of men up to the hills during the summer recess there of the Ruling Chief and leading State officials.

Notes and Queries on Anthropology, published by the Royal Anthropological Institute, was of constant value, even though, as explained in Chapter XIII, the poor memories of the Marias prevented me from getting the results expected from the geneological method. My work made it impossible for me to be in Maria villages at all seasons and to see all Maria ceremonies, and therefore I supplemented my enquiries by getting detailed reports from selected State officials whom I tried to train roughly for this by taking them with me during my personal enquiries on tour. I have almost always checked their reports by personal investigation; and in the few cases where I could not so check them, I have repeated nothing reported by them unless it was confirmed by the independent reports of two or more other reliable observers. These enquiries did impose much extra work on them, but gave them a much-needed knowledge of the aboriginal and did much to raise the morale and co-operation of the enquirers and to raise the standard of the administration. I could not have had a happier and friendlier family of colleagues than those of all ranks who served under me my last two years in the State. All were helpful, but especially Pandit Ghasiram Dane, then a subdivisional officer, the late Mr. H. N. Dutt, then tahsildar of Dantewara, since a victim of blackwater fever, Mr. Niranjan Singh, then tahsildar of Bijapur and manager of Kutru, now Assistant Administrator, Mr. Sant Prasad, formerly tahsildar of Konta, Circle Inspector Manbahal Singh of the State Police, and Mr. Dikshitulu of the State Medical Service, who did remarkable anti-yaws work in the Abujhmar hills in my second tour and in later independent tours.

Language was always a difficulty. Halbi is the *lingua franca* of Bastar. The differences between Maria dialects are great, and the very guttural hill dialect is so unintelligible to the Bison-horn Marias that at their rare meetings they communicate with Hill Marias through those of them who understand Halbi. And there are many variations of both the Hill and the Bison-horn Maria dialects. Of Halbi, everyone serving in Bastar must acquire some

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Bastar, and learned later from the Maratha *amil* of Deolmari that he had retired only just in time, as word had been passed from zamindar to zamindar in Bastar to combine to plunder his party. Unless there has been since then a wide displacement of population—which is quite possible in view of the chronic mismanagement of the Bhopalpatnam and Kutru zamindaris of Bastar—it is unlikely that his assailants were Abujhmar or Bison-horn Marias or Koyas; they were probably members of the gangs of ruffians at that time maintained by all the petty chieftains of the Godavari valley, or else Gonds of the type known in that part of Bastar to the Telugus as Dorla, probably Bison-horn Marias who, on descending to the Godavari valley, had come into contact with the outside world. This Maratha Amil, in congratulating Blunt on his escape from the mountains and jungles in which several of the Amil's men had been lost, added some remarks about the men of the jungle which rightly gave the wandering Banjara the credit of being the first civilizing influence in Bastar; his remarks, with the necessary modifications, are certainly true of a later period in the Abujhmar hills and the wilder parts of Central Bastar. He represented the Banjaras as having done much to conciliate and partially civilize the 'Gonds', 'for the traffic which they carry on among them, particularly in salt and sugar, had introduced a taste for luxuries, which many of them now could not easily dispense with. This had also induced them to be more industrious in collecting the produce of their jungles, such as lac, iron ore, and other articles for barter, and had necessitated their affording protection to the Brinjaries (*sic*). In the course of this traffic, which had now lasted about twenty-five years, the desire of the Goands (*sic*) for salt and sugar had considerably increased, and tended more to their civilization than any other means: for before they had tasted or acquired a relish for these articles, no man could venture among them; and he assured me that it had a more powerful effect than the whole force of the Mahratta arms in rendering them obedient to their government.'

The first Europeans actually to visit Bastar seem to have been Captain Fenwick in 1850 and Mr. Take in 1855; they made only short trips up a portion of the Kolab-Sabari river that forms for many miles the eastern boundary of Bastar. I have not seen their reports. Captain MacVicar's brief visit early in 1855 and the important visit of Colonel (then Lieut.) C. Elliot, the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur, later that year have been mentioned above in the footnote on human sacrifice. Elliot's report was reprinted in 1861 as 'Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. XXX. Report on the Bustar and Kharonde Dependencies of the Raepore District'. He

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175
●114

entered Bastar from Sihawa in the south of the Raipur district, near the trijunction of Raipur, Kanker and Bastar, marched south-east to Jagdalpur and thence to Dantewara, leaving all the zamindari country south of Dantewara and the Abujhmar hills and the present Antagarh tahsil untouched. His report gives some details of the races in the State, much of which, however, repeats obvious *omne ignotum pro magnifico* tales of local Hindus; but he saw nothing of the Abujhmar hills, and, though he visited Dantewara, little of the Bison-horn Marias of that tahsil. He was, on the whole, more interested in the economic and administrative problems of Bastar than in its people. There was also a visit at about this time by Captain Stewart, Explorer of Forests, while in 1855 and 1856 respectively Lieut. Goddard and Lieut. (afterwards Major-General) F. T. Haig explored the Godavari valley in the investigation of Sir A. Cotton's ambitious but largely abortive scheme for making the Godavari and its affluent the Wardha river navigable from Wardha to the sea. Haig's Report on the Navigability of the River Godavari was published at Madras in 1856; I have found also at p. 357 of the *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1876, an allusion to a report of a visit by him, when a Colonel, to Jagdalpur; but I have been unable to obtain copies of either report, though both are said to contain ethnographic notes.

The most valuable and thorough of the early reports, especially from the ethnographic point of view, is that of Captain C. L. R. Glasfurd, Deputy Commissioner of the former Sironcha District and Political Agent for Bastar, published in 1863 in No. XXXIX of *Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department*. He spent much of the touring seasons of 1861 and 1862 in Bastar, and was probably the first European to visit the then numerous zamindaris of the south, certainly the first to explore any part of the Abujhmar hills. His report is the entire source of the article on Bastar in Grant's 1870 *Central Provinces Gazetteer*, and many of his statements are repeated, unfortunately not always in their true context, in the article 'Gond' in Russell and Hiralal, Vol. III. In February 1930 I found his name still remembered as Gilaspat Sahib in two Abujhmar villages which did not appear to have been visited in the interval by any other European. An example of his accuracy is that he noted the distinction between the Marias of the Abujhmar, whom he termed Marees, and the Marias of Jagdalpur, Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils, whom he termed Marias, but who are known to some of the Abujhmar Marias as Dandami Marias and are generally referred to in this book as Bison-horn Marias. His visit laid the lines of the future policy of the Central Provinces Administration in Bastar State, and it is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927.-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

worth while to reproduce some of his concluding remarks in paragraph 175 of the report :— 175 114

'In most English Maps "unexplored territory" is inscribed on the very centre of the Dependency; while the best Indian Map by Colonel Scott, Quarter-Master General of the Madras Presidency, gives but few details, and those few incorrect. The country, it will be perceived, is an interminable forest, with the exception of a small cultivated tract around Jugdalpore, intersected by high mountain ranges, which present serious obstacles to traffic. Its insalubrity is proverbial; the inhabitants are composed of rude, uncivilised tribes of Gonds; in some parts almost savages, who shun contact with strangers, have but few wants which they cannot supply themselves; honest and interesting to the Ethnologist perhaps, but a race who prefer the solitude of forests to the bustle of towns, and the freedom of the savage to all the allurements and comforts of civilization. With such a country and such inhabitants, rapid progress and improvement cannot be looked for; and any efforts to open out the Dependency, with the hope of immediately stimulating trade, or rather creating it where it never existed, would end in disappointment. Our efforts for the present should be to open up a few important lines on which traffic already exists, and to ameliorate the condition of the people by the introduction of a better system of criminal and judicial procedure than that at present in force at Jugdalpore, and, above all, by opening up the Sironcha District, which intervenes between Bustar and the Godavery. The opening up of this river will do more to improve the condition of the Bustar Dependency than the most elaborate system of roads would without it. A demand would be created, which would send traders into parts they never ventured before, and the inhabitants would receive cloth, salt, tobacco and other articles in exchange for their rice, lakh, wax, etc., in the interior. The fact is that the Dependency must be civilised, and the improvement to be material and lasting must have the navigable Godavery and the districts on its banks as its base line; the former once open, and the latter profiting by the facilities of communication with the coast, the bars to civilization in Bustar will soon be broken down, and that from the direction of the Godavery. In the meantime, however, the road carried on by the Madras Government as far as Jeypore should be opened out to Jugdalpore, and eventually thence to Sironcha; and the great Brinjara route from the southern portions of the Raepore District, which passes through a part of Bustar, should also be cleared. These, with vaccination and the introduction of copper coin, might be at once commenced, and subsequently other steps as they suggest themselves. The Police now distributed over the Dependency will also be of great use in gradually accustoming the people to us, and the location of a news-writer at Jugdalpore would be attended with equally good results.'

As the Maratha Amil sixty-seven years before, so now the Victorian Englishman; develop trade, and civilization would follow. The isolation of centuries was to end, Bastar to be opened to the world by land and by water, and its 'savages' to exchange their freedom for 'the allurements and comforts of civilization', trade and traders, clothes, tobacco, a better system of criminal and judicial procedure, vaccination and copper coin. Did, and do, the ghosts of the old builders of the ruins of Barsur, Bhairamgarh and Kuruspal smile to hear a newer race decree that 'Bastar must be civilized!'?

A land free from rules and regulations and a race that had no use for copper coin did not square with that passion for uniformity

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Chapter III

The Ethnological Setting; the Primitive Races of Bastar

It remains in this chapter, before passing on to the main subject of this book, to outline the distribution of races in Bastar and to some extent in adjacent districts; the major political divisions of India seldom correspond to racial divisions, and each of the main races of Bastar overflows into other provinces or States. This discord between political and racial divisions has not made it easier for students to understand the ethnography of this part of India. An area mainly peopled by primitive Mundari or Dravidian speaking tribes of similar customs, rites and manners extends from the Santal country on the borders of Bengal and Bihar, through Chhota Nagpur and the Orissa States into the Central Provinces and the old Central Provinces States, of which Bastar was the chief, into the Jeypore zamindari now included in the new Orissa province, the East Godavari Agency of Madras, and beyond the Godavari into Hyderabad State. Hitherto the area has been divided administratively between the local governments of four provinces and one major State, Bengal, Madras, the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, and Hyderabad; the many Orissa and Central Provinces States were under the control of the governments of Bihar and Orissa, and of the Central Provinces, so that the student has been spared separate census reports and ethnographic surveys for them. Even so, there have been four census reports and three provincial publications on tribes and castes from which to glean the required information; perhaps the formation of the new Eastern States Agency and the separate province of Orissa will mean two more census reports in 1941. To make matters worse, there is confusion of names; the Parja of Bastar becomes Poroja in Madras official language, and the Bhattra becomes Bottada. The Gond, wherever he speaks his own language, from Central India to the Eastern Ghats and Hyderabad, calls himself Koi or Koitor; yet only in Madras and Hyderabad reports is he called by a name approaching this in sound, Koya, and in the literature of the Central Provinces there has therefore been a tendency to restrict this name to Teluguized members of the race. Everywhere it is more usual to call primitive tribes by the local Hindu name for them, and not by their own name for themselves. So over much of India the prevailing Hindu name Gond, and not Koi, is used; and with his usual passion for standardization the

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

114 official in India has tried gradually to call all the Koitor race Gonds, whatever the name by which they call themselves or the local vernacular name for them, and even to include under the generic term Gond other races or tribes who are not Koitor but only resemble them more or less in their customs. All the Koitor of Bastar have thus been officially classed as Gonds, though the name Gond is still hardly known in Bastar and is regarded by most Koitor of every local variety as an insult, except by Hinduized Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh. If official and ethnographer would always use the names by which tribesmen call themselves when speaking their own language, we should possibly find many of the so-called branches of the primitive races not branches at all, but merely classified as such in the past owing to unintelligent failure to realize that in different tracts different Hindus have used different names for the same race or tribe.

101

The difficulty is accentuated by the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names. So arise such names as Raj-Gond, Raj-Korku, Raja-Muria, Naik Gond, Pit-Bhattra; and it will be seen below how this process has worked in Bastar.

Almost a reverse process is also at work, by which the remnants of forgotten tribes or old confederations of tribes not necessarily akin or speaking the same language have long been known under the common name applied to the whole confederation. The links that used to hold them together disappear, and those sections of the confederation that are socially or culturally more advanced object to being dragged down to the same level in popular esteem as the backward sections, and so prefer to abandon the name given to the confederation in favour of the original or some new name of their own section. The Parjas are a clear example of this, as beyond the Jeypore border they include at least seven different tribes, some speaking Munda, some Dravidian and some Aryan dialects, which differ widely in customs and degree of advancement: the Bastar Parjas except, it is said, the few wilder ones beyond the Kolab-Sabari in Sukma zamindari and around Mount Tulsidongri in Sukma and Jagdalpur tahsil, now invariably call themselves Dhurwa and resent being called Parja. The name Parja appears to be only a corruption of the Aryan term '*praja*' applied to subjects as distinct from the '*raja*' or ruler.

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It is difficult to give figures for the growth or decline of the tribes of Bastar, as the 1931 census was the first since 1891 in which almost all the primitive races of Bastar were not lumped together

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

under the generic name Gond. In 1931 the tribes enumerated as Gonds in the previous three censuses were separately enumerated under the names Bhattra, Gond, Maria, Muria, Koya and Parja. The totals for these must be added both for 1931 and 1891 in order to see how far the primitive races of Bastar have been increasing. The 1921 figure for Gonds was only 107,503 persons, compared with 285,519 in 1911, and was obviously wrong; the 113,100 persons enumerated in 1921 under Minor Castes should be added to the 107,503 Gonds, though even then the total of 220,603 is below the correct figure. Excluding the Halbas and certain minor aboriginal tribes, the comparative figures are then :—

Year	Gonds
1891	128,442
1901	204,641
1911	285,519
1921	220,603
1931	359,637

The increase in forty years has been 181 per cent. In the same period the total population rose by 69 per cent. from 310,884 to 524,721. The primitive population is more than holding its own.

Halbas were also classified at the census, not altogether rightly, as primitive, and with them and certain other minor primitive tribes added, the primitive population rises to 379,082. Even this does not tell the full tale. Large numbers of the persons returned as members of the Hindu functional castes, the graziers, potters, fishermen, weavers (Mahras), blacksmiths and others, are in reality members of primitive tribes speaking their languages and only differentiated from them by their occupation. There is nothing in outward appearance to distinguish these persons from other aboriginals; they follow their tribal religions whether enumerated as such or as Hindus. I consider that on this account the 1931 primitive total can safely be regarded as 400,000, or 76 per cent.; the census report puts the percentage at 73·6.

The totals given for the tribes formerly treated as Gonds but separately enumerated in 1931 are :—

Bhattra	36,611
Gond	24,407
Maria	146,070
Muria	124,923
Koya	9,988
Parja	17,568

Unfortunately even now, as will be shown later, the classification has been over-simplified, and is of little use for scientific purposes. The only categories about which no doubt can arise are Bhattra

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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and Parja, and it is therefore easy first of all to describe their distribution; only the briefest of general remarks will be made about them; I hope at a later date to publish a separate account, at least of the Parjas.

In the ethnographic map on page 40 the Bhattras are shown by the letter A and the Parjas by the letter B. The former

Bhattras and Parjas

alone among the races of Bastar have abandoned whatever Munda or Dravidian tongue they may have once spoken, and now use a corrupt Uriya dialect. In Bastar, except for one or two villages at the south-east corner of the Kondagaon tahsil, the Bhattras are confined to the north-east corner of Jagdalpur, along the Jeypore border, across which they overflow in large numbers into Jeypore and, beyond, Kalahandi State. Their Bastar number in 1891 was 21,477. The use of their language is spreading to other tribes, chiefly the Parjas; it was spoken by 45,830 persons in 1931, which means that 9,219 non-Bhattras speak it. The spread of its use among the Parjas is shown by the fact that only 12,363 Parji-speakers were returned out of 17,568 Parjas. Actually, as Sir George Grierson has admitted, Bhattri might as well be classified as one of the many forms of Halbi as a dialect of Uriya; to the outward ear they sound very similar, and the two languages are mutually intelligible. Halbi always varies according to its proximity to Chhattisgarhi, Telugu or Gondi; and to me Bhattri seems only Halbi influenced by its proximity to Uriya-speaking tracts. Nor are local census enumerators by any means to be relied upon effectively to distinguish Halbi and Bhattri. Grierson's remark of Gondi dialects that the names indicate tribal rather than linguistic differences is true of Halbi and Bhattri at all events.

The Bhattras live in open country with miles of good rice cultivation. They are gradually giving up even their very modified form of *dahya* or shifting cultivation, consisting now mainly of the occasional cutting and carting to their rice fields of forest undergrowth, and burning it there as manure. All but twenty-six of them were returned in 1931 as following their tribal religion; and this is really the correct account, though they are considerably more Hinduized than any other tribe classed as primitive in 1931 except the Halbas. The latter, whose religion preserves only slightly less of the tribal element than the Bhattra, are, however, in contrast, all but thirty-six recorded as Hindu. No anthropometric work has been done among the Bastar Bhattras; and there are no data for accepting or rejecting on physical grounds the Central Provinces habit of classifying them as a branch of the Gond race. Traditionally they came with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal, while over

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 'Seroncha Talook and Bhopalputnum, Veejapore, Chintulnar, Dunteewara, Kootroo and Barsoor Talooks of Bustar'; and for Marias 'Kootroo, Chintulnar, Dunteewara and Veejapore Talooks of Bustar, and also that part of Bustar called Ulrugmad[1]'. He notes that the Gotta language is nearly allied to the Maria. He uses [103] Telugu versions of Bastar place names, just as the Survey of India did in the old topographical survey maps; by Savery, Beejee, Potukul, Kotapilly, Veejapore and Soonkoom he meant Kolab-Sabari, Bhiji, Phutkel, Pamer-Kotapalli, Bijapur and Sukma. Bhiji is the old name of the south-eastern part of Konta tahsil; Phutkel is a former zamindari in the Talper riverain tract of Bijapur tahsil, while Chintulnar is now in Konta tahsil, occupying the tract at the foot of the Aranpur pass. Except, therefore, for his inclusion of Sukma in the region of the Koyas, his distribution of the 'Koys, Gottawars and Marias' corresponds very closely with the areas shown in the ethnographic map for Dorlas, mixed Maria-Dorla, and Marias; in his Report on the Dependency of Bastar he had stated that Marias constituted 90 per cent. of the population of Sukma.

●114 Various articles were published between 1876 and 1881 on the Koyas, whom he rightly calls Kois, by the Rev. John Cain, for many years a C.M.S. missionary at Dummagudem on the Godavari in the Bhadrachalam taluq of the East Godavari Agency, and only a few miles from the south-western corner of the Konta tahsil. These articles were the basis of the article on the Koyas in Thurston's *Tribes and Castes of Southern India*[2]. He wrote in the first of these:—

> 'I propose to notice first the Kois, a tribe already partially described in Captain Glasfurd's reports and Colonel Haig's report of his visit to Jagdalpur, and also in the Census Report for 1871 of the Madras Presidency. These people are to be found in the country extending from the banks of the Indravati, Bastar, down to the neighbourhood of Kammammet in the Nizam's country. All those in the plains have a tradition that about 100 years ago they were driven down from the plateau in the Bastar country by famine and disputes, and this relationship is also acknowledged by the Gutta Kois, i.e. the hill Kois who live in the highlands of Bastar. Up to the present (1876) time I have had but little intercourse with the Gutta Kois, and the manners and customs described in this paper will be those of the Kois dwelling in the Bhadrachallam taluka.'

Elsewhere he writes that the Gutta Koi of the Bastar plateau 'look down with some degree of contempt on the lowland Koi', who are

[1] An obvious misprint for 'Ubujmand', Glasfurd's spelling of Abujhmar.

[2] Cain's articles are:—'The Bhadrachallam Taluka, Godavari District, S. India', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1876, p. 357 et seq.; 'The Bhadrachallam and Rekapalli Talugas', *ibidem*, Vol. VIII, 1879, p. 33 et seq., and p. 219 et seq.; Vol. X, 1881, p. 221 et seq.; 'The Koi, a Southern Tribe of the Gond', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal*, Vol. XIII, 1881, p. 410 et seq. There were others in certain missionary journals, which I could not trace.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XIII

Social Organization; the Phratries and Clans

114 The investigations that have resulted in the materials for this book have had perforce to be made piecemeal in the intervals of a busy administrative task. Here the professional ethnologist who is able to make a prolonged stay among the subjects of his studies has a profound advantage over the administrator; and in no direction is this advantage more pronounced than in tracing the ramifications of a system of social organization. Even where the genealogical method of enquiry can be profitably employed it is useless for this wide purpose, unless the collection of pedigrees and of information on laws and customs based upon them can be spread over as wide a field as possible. Apart from the lack of leisure from which an official administering a State so large and with such a tradition of personal rule as Bastar must suffer, there is a further difficulty [153] about genealogical enquiries, namely the poor memories of the Marias as to their ancestors, sometimes even as to their own parents and uncles. It is very seldom that anyone can remember the names of ancestors earlier than his grandparents; many cannot even remember their grandmother's name, much less her clan, unless the family has regularly followed the tradition of cross-cousin marriage. When, as among the Hill Marias, there is so little individual property to pass by inheritance, land being the property of the clan, cattle being scarce, and the contents of the houses being either food or not made of durable materials, some of which have to be buried with their owner or destroyed at his death, the genealogical method may not lead the enquirer very far. Very old men and women are, moreover, not common. The only pedigree covering more than three generations that I was able to collect is printed in Appendix II after the lists of clans. Two circumstances favoured it. There were two very old but intelligent men, Usendi Baiyya and Usendi Dangi, living when the pedigree was first taken in 1930; their nephew Usendi Moda, a man of unusual intelligence, was then about fifty, and all three had a good memory of the clans and villages with which the family had intermarried for three generations; even then Baiyya and Dangi could not remember their paternal grandmother's name or the clan and village from which

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

she came. The second circumstance was the fact that, to some extent, I could spur their memories from the record of a 1916 Sessions case in which Moda and two other members of the family had been sentenced to imprisonment for life for the murder of a fourth member, Usendi Bhosa. The family was, moreover, one of considerable social importance. It has the hereditary right of providing the secular headman of both the village of Orcha and the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, while the Usendi clan is one of the strongest in the Abujhmar hills, and the Koqsar festivals of its god Wikir Hunga attract people from far and wide. In most families it is impossible to get beyond the paternal grandfather, if indeed beyond the father and mother; but though the names are forgotten, obligations are not; and many, if not all, Marias remember the clans and families with which they have cross-cousin marriage alliances. Of 105 Hill Maria marriages investigated, fifty-seven were marriages between cross-cousins; it is not so easy to check the remaining 46 per cent. in which the marriage marked the start of new affinities, at least as between the two contracting families, if not as between the clans.

On the other hand, a man touring as the administrative head of the State has the advantage of always having many Marias from different clans and villages assembling at his camps, and so of ascertaining their matrimonial alliances and testing practically any clan lists which he may have made or obtained elsewhere. But here a further difficulty crops up. Communications among the Hill Marias are very bad, and it by no means follows that an Usendi living, let us say, on the southern edge of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* has the same views on the clans from which it is permissible to seek a bride as an Usendi in the Chanda part of the Abujhmar hills or in the northernmost Maria *pargana* of the Antagarh tahsil. There is always a tendency to limit clan jurisdiction to the administrative division; though investigation will reveal much intermarriage between one *pargana* and the next, even though one should be in one tahsil and the other in another, in a zamindari or even in British territory, yet the investigator will be assured that 'we do not take wives from that clan or village because it is not in our *pargana*' or 'our raj'; and it has already been seen that when members of a clan migrate from their clan-area to colonize lands deserted by other clans outside the *pargana* they no longer consider themselves under any obligation to attend their original clan-god's festivals.

This much has been said by way of introduction, and of apology if, as I fear, this chapter is the least satisfactory and the least final in its conclusions.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The only writers who seem to have touched on the social organization of the Bastar Marias before are Russell and Hiralal, who said (III, pp. 64-6) :— A/A

Russell and Hiralal, on the social organization of the Bastar Marias

'The Gond rules of exogamy appear to preserve traces of the system found in Australia, by which the whole tribe is split into two or four main divisions, and every man in one or two of them must marry a woman in the other one or two. . . .

'Among the Gonds, however, the subdivision into small exogamous sects has been also carried out, and the class system, if the surmise that it once existed be correct, remains only in the form of a survival, prohibiting marriage between agnates, like an ordinary sept. In one part of Bastar all the septs of the Maria Gonds are divided into two great classes. There are ninety septs in A Class and sixty-nine in B Class, though the list may be incomplete. All the septs in A Class say that they are Bhaiband or Dadabhai to each other, that is in the relation of brothers, or cousins being the sons of brothers. No man of Class A can marry a woman of any sept in Class A. The septs of Class A stand in the relation of Mamabhai or Akomama to those of Class B. Mamabhai means a maternal uncle's son, and Akomama apparently signifies having the same maternal grandfather. Any man of a sept in Class A can marry any woman of a sept in Class B. It will thus be seen that the smaller septs seem to serve no purpose for regulating marriage, and are no more than family names. The tribe might just as well be divided into two great exogamous clans only. Marriage is prohibited between persons related only through males; but according to the exogamous arrangement there is no other prohibition, and a man could marry any maternal relative. Separate rules, however, prohibit his marriage with certain female relatives, and these will be given subsequently (ibid., p. 72). It is possible that the small septs may serve some purpose which has not been elicited, though the inquiry made by Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath[1] was most careful and painstaking.

'In another part of Bastar there were found to be five classes, and each class had a small number of septs in it. The people who supplied this information could not give the names of many septs. Thus Class A had six septs,[2] Class B five, Classes C and D one each, Class E four, and Class F two. A man could not marry a woman of any sept belonging to his own class.

'The Muria Gonds of Bastar have a few large exogamous septs or clans named in Hindi after animals, and each of these clans contains several subsepts with Gondi names. Thus the *Bakarsenu* or Goat race contains the Garde, Kurjami, Karrami and Vadde septs. The *Kachhimsenu* or Tortoise race has the Netami, Kawachi, Usendi and Tekami septs. The *Nagsenu* or Cobra race includes the Maravi, Potari, Karanga, Nurethi, Dhurwa and others. Other exogamous races are the Sodi (or tiger), Behainsa (buffalo), Netam (dog in Gondi), Chamchidai (bat) and one or two more. In this case the exogamous clans with Hindi names would appear to be a late division, and have perhaps been adopted because the meaning of the old Gondi names had been forgotten, or the septs were too numerous to be remembered.'

As will be seen in this chapter, the part of Bastar where five 'classes' were found was presumably the Bison-horn country and its cultural extension, the Dorla country, where there are definitely five phratries each containing varying numbers of clans. The tract in which, according to Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath's enquiry, the

[1] Diwan of Bastar for many years.

[2] Six classes, A to F, are given, though the text speaks of five, the actual number among both Bison-horn Marias and Dorlas. But so few 'septs' are mentioned, nineteen as compared to the fifty in my list of phratries, that the enquiry must have been incomplete.

A/A [See cat. 116, p. 424. — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Marias were divided into two moieties containing ninety and sixty-nine 'septs' (for which this book uses the term 'clans') can only have been the country of the Hill Marias.

The clan organization of the Hill Marias

Unfortunately the records of the Rai Bahadur's enquiry are not forthcoming. But he appears never to have entered the Abujhmar hills, and his enquiries were probably based on questions put to Hill Marias at camps to which they came to see him in the plains. The list of hill clans in the appendix shows only fifty clans. My enquiries so far as possible covered even those Hill Maria *parganas* which I did not visit, and though my list is, no doubt, incomplete, the great difference between his 159 and my 50 clans must mean that he included many areas which are not Hill Maria areas, probably all Kutru zamindari, and all Antagarh tahsil.

As we have seen, the clans are not merely little more than surnames; quite apart from questions of exogamy, they are, in the Abujhmar hills, practically political units, each, at least of the flourishing clans, with its own clan-area; and each clan had a *panchayat* system for dealing with everyday offences. Clans may feel themselves closer to some clans in kindred or affinity, as the case may be, than to others; but on the whole it is the social solidarity of the clan and its members, its '*bhumkal*' as the Marias say, that keeps the Hill Marias together. Had it not been for the strong feeling of the clan for its own *bhum* (earth) the mistaken and oppressive land revenue system in vogue till recently and the gross mismanagement of at least the Bastar zamindaris would have resulted in wholesale migration to Chanda District. As it was, many went, but generally a nucleus of the clans remained, and now that things are better in Bastar many of the emigrants are returning.

I started my enquiries strongly influenced by the passage quoted from Russell and Hiralal, and expecting that the hill clans would fall naturally into two moieties. So for long they did. I began with the great Usendi clan of Orcha and the Chhota Dongar hill *pargana*. So far as that *pargana* is concerned, the clans in it do fall into two moieties, the Usendi clan having six clans related to it as *dadabhai* (brother-clan) and fourteen as *akomema* (wife-clan); not only did each of the clans concerned agree that it stood in the relation shown to the Usendi clan, but their statements were confirmed by the actual marriages examined. But the first major difficulty arose in the adjacent Barsur Mar and Mangnar *pargana*. There is no doubt about the Usendi freely intermarrying with the important Gume clan which practically monopolizes Barsur Mar; the pedigree in the appendix, for example, shows four such marriages

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER XIV

MARRIAGE

582 618 WHATEVER the origin of the clans and phratries, they serve as a means of regulating the marriages of Hill and Bison-horn Marias; in the case of the latter, among whom the clan is no longer a territorial as well as a social unit, one might say that the primary function of the clan and phratry organization is the regulation of marriage. A child is born into the clan of its father, and, if a son, must remain in that clan all its life; but, if a daughter, passes on marriage to the clan of the husband, and on re-marriage from his clan to that of the second husband. A son must not take a wife, or a daughter a husband, from the father's clan or from any clan that is brother-clan or *dadabhai* to it: he must marry a wife from, and she must marry into, some clan that is a wife-clan or *akomama* of their father's clan. It has been seen that the phratry system of the Bison-horn Marias gives them a wider field of selection of wives and husbands than the more inchoate group system of Hill Maria clans. A widow, however, must not marry as second husband a man whose clan is brother to her father's clan, even though through being in a phratry other than that of her first husband's clan the second husband's clan would be wife-clan to the first husband's. In a word, throughout a woman's life all her marriages are regulated by the clan into which she was born.

Exogamy

601 114 Appendix III gives a list of the Hill Maria terms of relationship so far as I could ascertain them; they were collected in Orcha and adjacent villages by the genealogical method, and verified in other parts of the Abujhmar hills. They were collected as terms of reference, though some are used also as terms of address, e.g. *mama*, *dada*, *kaka*. I was unable in the time at my disposal to make a similar collection of the Bison-horn Maria terms; but so far as my observation went their terms are the same but for dialectical differences. This applies also, it may be added, in a considerable degree to the terms used by the Gonds of the Nagpur District, and, to judge from the incomplete list given in Trench's *Grammar*, Volume I, to those of the Betul Gonds. It may be added that when [551] a son has been born to him, a Hill or Bison-horn Maria is often addressed by his family and neighbours as the father of his son, e.g. '*Rajin-toppe*', meaning 'Father of Raje'.

601 *Dadabhai*, the word used to designate kindred or brother-clans, is a combination of *dada*, the Gondi term for an elder brother, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Appendix V

Anthropometric Analysis of the Hill and Bison-horn Marias

By Mr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, M.Sc., B.L.,
Joint Editor, *Man in India*

I accompanied Mr. W. V. Grigson in his March 193[illegible] tour in the Hill and Bison-horn Maria country of the Bastar State, and was able to measure 100 Hill Maria and 50 Bison-horn Maria males; a severe attack of fever unfortunately prevented me from measuring as many Bison-horn as Hill Marias. I measured the Hill Marias in the Abujhmar hills camps at Orcha, Adeq, Itulnar, Hikul and Handawada from these and adjacent Hill villages in the *parganas* of Chhota Dongar Mar, Kutru Mar, Bhairamgarh Mar, and Barsur (Dantewara) Mar. The Bison-horn Marias were nearly all measured in the camp at Aranpur in Dantewara tahsil, near the head of the pass leading down from the Dantewara plateau to the Dorla country of the Konta tahsil; the men were mostly from Aranpur and Chameli *parganas*. I append tables summarizing the results of my measurements; space has forbidden the reproduction here of the long tables of individual measurements, which I hope subsequently to publish elsewhere. I have followed R. Martin's anthropometric technique.

General description

Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias are generally of medium stature, though tall and short individuals are not uncommon. The mean heights of those measured were 162·7 cm. Hill, and 161·7 cm. Bison-horn Maria. They are very well built, with well-proportioned body and limbs. Their skin colour varies from pale wheat to light black (the actual figures were: out of 100 Hill Marias, 9 light brown, 60 brown, 16 dark brown and 15 light black; out of 50 Bison-horn Marias, 3 pale wheat, 5 light brown, 26 brown, 9 dark brown and 7 light black). They have a thick growth of hair on the head, but often cut it short or even shave it in front and round the peripheral region of the head, leaving a long crown-tuft. They have very little facial and body hair, and even those who can grow sparse beards and moustaches often have them clean shaved. The hair is black or dark brown, and is wavy or curly.

Their foreheads are retreating, but straight foreheads are not rare; of 100 Hill Maria foreheads 16 were straight, 57 slightly

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

APPENDIX VI

LANGUAGE

IN Volume IV of the *Linguistic Survey of India*, Maria is somewhat briefly discussed and considered to be a mere local dialect of Gondi, 'almost identical with the ordinary Gondi of the district'. The only authority on the language mentioned in the *Survey* is Glasfurd's *Report on the Dependency of Bastar* (Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. XXXIX, Calcutta, 1863); Appendix II of the report contains a 'Maria' vocabulary. But as Glasfurd called the Hill Maria 'Maree', his vocabulary obviously was not collected in the Abujhmar hills, but probably among the Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils. The specimen printed in the survey seems to me to be one from the Bison-horn Maria country, while the sketch of the Maria dialect at pp. 532-3 of Vol. IV of the *Linguistic Survey* deals obviously with the Bison-horn Maria dialect. In fact, I do not think that it has before anywhere been stated that there is a marked difference between the two dialects, so marked, indeed, that, as I have observed before, a Hill Maria and a Bison-horn Maria cannot understand each other's mother-tongue and have to communicate in Halbi. I am not qualified to speak in any detail of the differences between the two dialects. A collection of words will often show very marked similarities or identities, but the same word will often be very differently pronounced by a Hill and by a Bison-horn Maria. Inflexions are different, those of the Hill Maria being more similar to those used by the Gond of the plateaux of the Central Provinces, though much gutturalized, while those of the Bison-horn Marias are, presumably, influenced by Telugu contacts. And in general towards the north of Bastar the Hill Maria and the Muria indent on Hindi for words wanting in their mother-tongue, while the farther south you go the more you find the Bison-horn Maria indenting upon Telugu, though he also draws considerably on Halbi. The Bison-horn Maria's speech seems far more guttural than standard Central Provinces Gondi, but even he is amazed at the difficulty of the Hill Maria gutturals, and always compares Hill Maria speech to that of crows.

The volume of transcriptions and translations of Gramophone Records of Languages and Dialects spoken in the Central Provinces and Berar, edited by the late Rai Bahadur Hiralal and published

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in 1920 at the Madras Government Press, gives two Maria records, which appear to me to be Hill Maria, probably from the south of the Abujhmar hills. They are full of the gutturals *gh*, *kh* and *q* (of which the sounds are similar to the corresponding Arabic gutturals), but do not clearly distinguish the short, almost clipped short, sound of the vowel o (sometimes a also) which I have transliterated in the Glossary and elsewhere as ŏ and ă respectively, as in *ghatŏ* and *pāghai*; unfortunately, there are few examples of these in my specimens below, though they certainly occurred in the speech of the storytellers; but my Hindi scribe had no sign to distinguish short o from long o, or this clipped ă from the ordinary short a which is understood between two consonants in Devanagari script. Undoubtedly, also, the vowel e is sometimes short and sometimes long in Maria, as in all Gondi, but it is almost invariably shown as long both in the gramophone record transcriptions and in my specimens.

The *Linguistic Survey* does not mention the only Maria grammar which then existed, *A Manual of the Mardia Language* by A. A. Lind, published in 1913 at the Mukti Mission Press, Kedgaon. This is a useful work in Bastar, but often exasperating in its deficiencies; the vocabularies and inflexions were collected in different parts among different tribes, and thus are often of little use when most needed. It does, however, attempt to record the gutturals of Hill Maria, and whenever the vocabulary gives alternative forms, one with a guttural and one without, the gutturalized form may be taken to be the Hill Maria form, and the other probably the Bison-horn Maria. The author rightly points out that the guttural Hill *gh* and *kh*, corresponding to Arabic *ghain* and *khe*, are often 'interchanged with ' r and y respectively, meaning that where the Hill Maria e.g. calls his bark cloak ta*gh*āli, the Bison-horn Maria will say *tarāli*. He points out also the existence of a gutturalized h, which is pronounced almost like *kh*; for example the verb *vēhnā*, to say, is by many Hill Marias pronounced practically as *vēkh*nā, and I have so transcribed it in my specimens.

No authority has, so far as I recollect, pointed out one peculiarity that to some extent affects all Gondi speech, but is most marked in the pronunciation of Hill and Bison-horn Maria. That is the check, almost click, so common in the middle of long words, especially between the root of a verb and its inflexion. Sometimes I have indicated this by inserting a small a above and between two consonants; I think that an apostrophe in the same position would be sounder.

Towards the south, the Hill Maria often drops an initial h, and softens his gutturals nearly as much as his Bison-horn neighbour.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

COMMENT

114 In a remarkable defence of scholarship and science, the late Baron von Hügel enumerated the intellectual virtues which find but a scanty development outside the life of the mind—'candour, moral courage, intellectual honesty, scrupulous accuracy, chivalrous fairness, endless docility to facts, disinterested collaboration, unconquerable hopefulness and perseverance, manly renunciation of popularity and easy honours, love of bracing labour and strengthening solitude'.[1] These qualities, which the anthropologist needs even more than the theologian, can be recognized in all the work to which Mr. W. V. Grigson has set his hand: in this book there is specially revealed his 'endless docility to facts', in this preface his genius for disinterested collaboration. For it is not altogether a light thing to turn another investigator loose in one's own special pastures with full freedom to kick up his heels and do and say what he will.

I have perhaps two qualifications for entering those pastures: the first is that I have been over the ground—ten years later, it is true—but largely in Grigson's footsteps, as it was by his inspiration: the second is that I have read this book more frequently—I am willing to bet—than any other human being now living on this planet. I was once stranded on a three weeks' tour in Orissa with no other literary nourishment than Lord Wavell's *Other Men's Flowers*, and I estimate that I read (for I read quickly) that estimable anthology through no less than a dozen times. I must have read *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* even more often than that, for during several touring seasons it was never out of my hands, as I followed its guidance and used its great array of facts as a basis for further research. It is not an easy book, but it wears well. Three years' testing left me with a profound respect for its accuracy, admiration for the style and manner and a deep affection for the author who could write with such understanding of poor and ignorant folk. Naturally there are points where I disagree, where my judgement or information differs from Grigson's, even where I would, after much enquiry, go so far as to say that he was mistaken. He collected much of his material fifteen years ago, and wrote most of it not long afterwards; in

[1] F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion* (London, 1927), Vol. I, p. 79.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

those days he tended perhaps to give more credence to the reports of his subordinates, to accept more readily the denials of villagers, and to generalize more frequently than he would to-day.

Yet these are but toys; the massive structure stands and will mark an epoch in the development of anthropological research in middle India. Burma and Assam, which have given us many good monographs are, for ethnographical purposes, largely separate from the rest of the sub-continent. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*[1] is the first Indian book in the new manner which reaches modern standards of enquiry and documentation, which can compare with publications on America and the Pacific. It is not, of course, all due to Grigson, but it is an instructive exercise to examine the books on peninsular India published before 1938 and those that have appeared since.

No one has known and explored Bastar as Grigson has, and his real book is written on the face of the countryside he loved so completely. He started a tradition in Bastar and still to-day there is peace, freedom and happiness in hundreds of villages as a result of the principles he established. A whole legend has grown up round the name of 'Grikson Diwan', for if Grigson loved the Marias and Murias they certainly reciprocated his affection. It is rare for aboriginals to know, still less to remember, the names of administrators, yet I found in 1940 and the following years that Grigson's name was known in the remotest villages of the State, and old men who had no idea that there was a war believed that somewhere or other Grikson Diwan was caring for their interests. At the top of the beautiful Raughat the villagers will show you a great rock from which, they say, Mr. and Mrs. Grigson, enraptured by the loveliness of the scene, once leapt fully clad into the waters of the pool far below. The Murias of Koilibera were still chuckling ten years afterwards at their recollections of Grigson's chase of a man-eater, when the Marias of the south whom he brought with him ate every monkey in the hills and stripped all the trees of the forest of red ants—Grigson himself being by no means backward in sharing the fantastic diet. In one high lonely clearing

[1] So far as I know, Mr. Grigson has published the following since *The Maria Gonds of Bastar: Reports—Notes on the Aboriginal Problem in the Mandla District* (Nagpur, 1940); *The Aboriginal Problem in the Balaghat District* (Nagpur, 1941); *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar* (Nagpur, 1944). *Forewords*—to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Bombay, 1943), to Verrier Elwin, *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943), to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Tribal Hyderabad* (Hyderabad, 1945). Translations of Muria Songs in *New Verse*, Feb.-March 1937. Review of Elwin, *The Baiga* in *Man*, Vol. XLI, p. 38. Letter on 'Cowrie Shells in the Central Provinces of India' in *Man*, Vol. XL, p. 159. Note on 'Human Sacrifice in Hyderabad' in *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, p. 68. *The Aboriginal in the Future India* (London, Royal Anthropological Institute, 1945): Presidential Address, Deccan History Association (Hyderabad, 1945).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of the Abujhmar, I was told, Grigson once encountered an ancient woman completely naked. She had never seen a white face before and, believing the visitor to be a Rakshasa, fell at his feet begging to be allowed to go for a few moments to her village to bid farewell to her little grandson, after which she would return to be devoured. 114

There is no end to these stories, many of them tales of generosity and kindness that would embarrass Grigson to have repeated. The result has been that Bastar is a very pleasant place to tour in. I have had trouble enough in Provinces and States, where there has been no one like Grigson to precede me, to realize vividly the difference that he has made. He is not the only one; Bastar has long been fortunate in her officers; but he set the pace.

When it was decided to issue an Indian edition of this book and Grigson asked me to write a sort of Comment to go with it, I was puzzled to know what to put in. I have done a certain amount of writing[1] about Bastar and the Bison-horn Marias, among whom I spent a good deal of time, and I did not want to repeat here what I had already written. In the end, at the risk of being very scrappy, I decided to give all my unpublished notes on the Marias, rather on the principle of the Abbot's order at the sack of Beziers: 'Kill them all; God will know his own.'

I deal first, therefore, with a few larger subjects, where my material supplements Grigson's, such as magic and the tragedies to which its practice leads, Bison-horn Maria ideas and taboos with regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, the dormitory and funerary customs. It seemed worth while to describe in some detail a marriage ceremony and the Ghotpal Marhai which I had witnessed personally. After that I proceed to give brief notes on points in the book which appear to need amplification. Short of reprinting a large amount of already published material, I do not know what other plan was possible.

II

Do the Marias believe in a Supreme Being? Grigson was not able to assemble any very definite evidence on this point. 'Only around Orcha', he says, 'and a few neighbouring Chhota 176

[1] For convenience of reference I shall give a list of my publications on Bastar and the Marias or Marias. 'Ceremonial Cross-Dressing among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 163; 'Suicide among the Aboriginals of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 207; 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII, p. 121; 'The Sago Palm in Bastar State', *J.R.A.S. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 69; 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, p. 97; *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); 'Stilt-Walking among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLIV, p. 38; *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944); *The Muria and their Ghotul* (Bombay, 1947); 'Funerary Customs in Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXV. [113]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

764 532

porcupines, peacocks, fish and tigers. The carpenter had put in a representation of Hanuman, but the Marias, knowing little of him, supposed it was a policeman included to emphasize Kopa's dignity.

The pillar also has, or had, pigeons on the top and there was a trident, though the Marias were ignorant of its meaning. 'It is the pole's turban,' they said. 'It is made of iron to save us the trouble of renewing it.'

It is obviously impossible to describe all these pillars[1]; in 1942 they were to be found near Chitrakot, near Killepal, at Lalaguda, near Sirisguda, at Taragaon, at Kumalnar and at Garda. I saw a very simple one at Chingner in honour of an important member of the Lekhami clan. It was standing out in the jungle by itself; there were three rows of lozenges cut in the wood near the top and a single carved pigeon above. It was still red with oil mixed with *geru*. At its foot was a flat stone supported on two others, the *kanal-garya*. From the top there hung a strip of cloth, possibly a bit of the dead man's dancing dress.

It is important to note that these pillars are closely associated with the megalithic culture of the Marias. Sometimes both a menhir and pillar are erected for the same man; sometimes the pillar stands at the end of a row of stone monuments. It is not, therefore, in any sense a substitute for the *wraskal* but a supplement to it. I have noticed a similar combination of stone and wooden monuments among the Lanjhia Saoras who have come under Kond influence.

[171]

It is tempting to suppose that the various animals and birds carved on the pillar have some totemic significance, but I doubt if this is so. In the first place, every pillar has a wide variety of animals portrayed upon it; in the second the people themselves say that these animals simply represent the ordinary objects of the chase and are carved to indicate some of the interests of the dead man. Each pillar in fact attempts to be a biography in wood of the deceased.

114

These notes are desultory enough, but they do at least give me an opportunity of paying some tribute to the man whose endless docility to facts has enabled him to make so striking a contribution to science and whose great-hearted affection for the aboriginals has led him to propose a policy and establish principles which, if adopted by the National Governments of the future, will preserve freedom and happiness in the hills and forests of India. There is much that is tedious in anthropology, much that hardly seems worth while,

[1] The pillar of Marvi Oyami Mava, the homicide, is described in detail in *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 201.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

much that cannot conceivably be turned to practical advantage. It needs a mind like Mr. Grigson's which can see the whole, grasp the meaning of the culture, love it and use it. He is one of the few who, in Blake's words, has 'the power to make the inside of the Cave seem Infinite'. 114

VERRIER ELWIN

Patangarh Village.
Mandla District
August 17th, 1945

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A NOTE ON THE MARIA GONDS OF CHANDA AND DRUG DISTRICTS

114 I HAD planned for this Indian edition of *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* a long note on the Marias of the zamindaris of the Chanda and Drug districts which border on the country of the Hill Marias of Bastar, and the Muria country of the former Paralkot zamindari and the Antagarh (now the Narainpur) tahsil of Bastar. From 1940 to 1942 I held various secretariat appointments at Nagpur, but was also simultaneously entrusted with the duty of investigating the conditions, throughout the Central Provinces and Berar, of the so-called aboriginal tribes. Thus, unlike most occupants of secretariat pews, I was occasionally able to escape from the tedium of that distressing and almost universal complaint, the files (as they were once described in a witty farewell speech by a great provincial administrator), to the backwoods, their green and mountainy valleys, and their scattered Korku, Baiga or Gond tribes, still so little outwardly changed from the state in which Sir Richard Temple, the first Chief Commissioner of the newly formed Central Provinces had seen them eighty years before, when, as Forsyth[1] wrote :—

> 'Then were seen strange sights in that unknown land; when distant valleys and mountain gorges, that had heard no other sound than the woodman's axe, echoed to the horse-hoofs of the tireless Chief, and his small knot of often weary followers; when the solitary Gond or Byga clearing his patch of millet on the remote hillside, was astonished by the apparition, on some commanding hill-top, of that veritable 'Government' (Sirkar) in the flesh, which to him and his for several generations had been an abstraction.'

Alas, with every year seeing new additions to the statute book of India and of the provinces, each adding more and more to the burden of files and desk-work, it has long been increasingly rare for the Gond or Baiga to see the Sirkar or any of its minions in the flesh, and rare for the district officer to be able to tour off the beaten track in the backward, forest parts of his district. Hence the growth of the aboriginal problem, the task of enabling the tribesman to preserve his own culture and values, even the very acres which he won from the jungle or inherited from his father, against the

[1] Captain J. Forsyth, *The Highlands of Central India* (London, 1889), pp. 17-18.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

invasion by land-hungry Hindus of the highlands and backwoods, with its accompaniment of money-lenders, cloth pedlars, lawyers' touts, landlords and forest contractors.

The terms of reference for my aboriginal enquiry directed my special attention to the conditions in the tribal tracts which had been declared Partially Excluded Areas under the Government of India Act of 1935. Those are the tracts, speaking generally, where the tribes still constitute a majority of the population and by thus being able to preserve much of their own traditional way of life can still present something of a united front to the invasion of new settlers and new ideas.[1] The Partially Excluded Areas of Chanda district include the huge Ahiri zamindari of Sironcha tahsil and the Garchiroli tahsil zamindaris of Dhanora, Dudhmala, Jharapapara, Khutgaon, Kotgal, Muramgaon, Palasgarh, Rangi, Sirsundi, Sonsari, Chandala, Gilgaon, Pai-Muranda, Potegaon and Gewardha. My enquiries therefore gave me a long desired chance of seeing the Marias of Chanda. These zamindaris have a total area of 4,013 square miles, mostly of hill and forest, and had in 1941 a population of 115,031; this figure included 70,821 'aboriginals', so that out of every 1,000 persons, 607 were tribal. In the 1931 census 34,776 of the Gonds of these zamindaris were returned as Marias, against a total of 34,986[2] Marias for all the British districts of the Central Provinces, leaving only some 210 Marias for the khalsa areas of Chanda district and the zamindaris of the Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district. The total strength of the Maria tribe in the British districts of the province is given in the 1941 census summary as 39,553.[3] district figures not being shown. Almost all of these will have been returned from the Chanda Partially Excluded Areas.

It has been indicated in this book how vague are the terms 'Maria' and 'Muria',[4] and how all the tribes thus vaguely designated speak of themselves as Koitor or Koi, distinguishing between one group and another by such terms as Highland Koitor, or Lowland or Plains Koitor. Let it be remembered that the word Maria is not a Gondi word and that *all* Gondi-speaking Gonds throughout the Central Provinces and Berar and Hyderabad State speak of themselves as Koitor; then it will be realized how unprecise, unscientific a term 'Maria' really is. Here in these Chanda zamindaris it is

[1] Any investigator of tribal conditions soon realizes that the tribesmen inside the Partially Excluded Areas are not yet in as bad a plight as their kinsmen outside those areas, in the more 'advanced' districts, where they are steadily losing such land as is left to them and sinking to the status of landless labourers in the service of those who have expropriated them.

[2] and [3] *Census of India*, 1941, Vol. I, Part I, Table XIV, p. 118.

[4] See pp. 33-6, 42, 44, 46-50.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Central Provinces terminology it was Maria country, or had till recently been thus considered; according to modern Bastar terminology it would be considered Muria country. To this there is one exception. The map on page 20 shows a projection westward into Chanda district of the Abujhmar Mountains between the western border of the State and the Kotri River, north of the Indrawati, just west of the junction of the Behra Mar, Jatwada and Farsal *parganas* of Narainpur (Antagarh tahsil) shown in the sketch-map on page 33. On this projection of the hills there are, speaking from memory, seven or eight villages which are definitely Hill Maria like the adjacent Abujhmar villages of Bastar, completely Hill Maria in culture, peopled by tribesmen who, like the Hill Maria of Bastar, call themselves Meta (Highland) Koitor, and despise the Maria of Lahiri and the other plains villages of Ahiri zamindari below their fastnesses.

I was able to make a rapid tour through much of this Chanda and Drug country in December 1940, and January 1941; certain preliminary investigations before my visit were made for me in Chanda by Mr. J. D. Kerawala of the Central Provinces and Berar Civil Service, who was then the Sub-divisional Officer, and he was with me throughout my tour. Some of the administrative and economic notes made on this tour were incorporated in various chapters of my book *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar*[1] to which I shall refer hereafter as *The Aboriginal Problem*, for the sake of brevity. I also filled a thick note-book with ethnographic and anthropological material, and had intended to use that material for this Note. Unfortunately the note-book perished when my house at Hyderabad was burnt down in a sudden senseless riot on the Ides of March 1946, along with almost all my Chanda photographs, the note-books, manuscripts and photographs of twenty-five years in India, and the whole of my library. No doubt this has simplified packing to quit India, but so far as this Note is concerned it has meant depriving it of what would have made it most valuable. It has therefore to be written from memory, and references in *The Aboriginal Problem*.

Let me now describe the tour generally, mentioning the places visited and the persons and things seen. My first halt was at Allapilli[2] in Sironcha tahsil, the site of the teak saw-mills of the provincial Forest Department, a few miles from Ahiri,[3] the headquarters of the Ahiri zamindari, which I visited from Allapilli.

[1] Nagpur, Government Printing, Central Provinces and Berar, 1944.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV0852.
[3] Ibidem, ref. MV9149.

1: Grigson G-S (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Such iron knives or spurs as were tied on to the cock's legs were very small, and a Lahiri Maria criticized the usual theory that this way of increasing a cock's natural armament is cruel on the ground that if it meant a quicker death for the defeated cock it was merciful. All the headmen promised that if the ban on cock-fights were lifted they would frown on cash or grain betting, and, if we so desired, on the use of iron spurs and knives. Thoughtless officiousness such as that which stopped this favourite tribal pastime is only too typical of the lack of imagination with which officials, great and small, are apt to interfere with all that lends colour to aboriginal life.

Lahiri was one of the chief camps where I questioned the local Marias as to their clan organization, particularly the grouping of clans into phratries according to the number of *Chuddur penk* or Little Gods. I mentioned on pages 194-5 my doubts as to the traditional accounts of this god-grouping among the Chanda Marias. But these accounts go back to Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report. A somewhat confusing summary of his account, on page 101 of the *Gazetteer*, seems to imply that there is little difference between the god-grouping of the Raj-Gond, the other Gond tribes of Chanda. Lucie-Smith divided the Raj-Gonds into a four-god group, with the tortoise and crocodile totems, a five-god group with the iguana totem, a six-god group with the tiger totem, and a seven-god group with the porcupine totem: these groups were divided into what the *Gazetteer* calls 'houses or families, distinguished by their family name or *padi*', i.e. into what in this book have been called clans (*pari*), which numbered 28 among the Raj-Gonds, 24 among the Marias and 17 among the Dhurve Gond. Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, p. 66) say that in Chanda :—

> 'There are four main groups worshipping seven, six, five and four gods respectively, and each group contains ten to fifteen septs. A man cannot marry a woman of any sept which worships the same number of gods as himself. Each group has a sacred animal which the members revere, that of the seven-god worshippers being a porcupine, of the six-god worshippers, a tiger, of the five-god worshippers, the *saras* crane, and of the four-god worshippers, a tortoise. As a rule the members of the different groups do not know the names of their gods, and in practice it is doubtful whether they restrict themselves to the proper number of gods of their own group. Formerly there were three-, two-, and one-god worshippers, but in each of these classes it is said that there were only one or two septs, and they found that they were much inconvenienced by the paucity of their numbers, perhaps for the purposes of communal worship and feasting, and hence they got themselves enrolled in the larger groups. In reality it would appear that the classification according to the number of gods worshipped is being forgotten and the three lowest groups have disappeared.'

They suggested that this conjecture was supported by the fact that in Chhindwara and other localities only two large six-god and seven-god groups remained.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615
618
114

The accounts over-simplify scattered data collected without concentrated field-enquiry. Even the *Gazetteer*, in a footnote to the passage quoted above from page 101, speaks of a group of three-god Marias having lately been verified in Lahiri. Shoobert[1] quotes the late Bishop Wood as having verified the existence of a group of three-god Marias in the Chanda villages of Lahiri and Beni-Gunda near the Bastar border of Chanda district, and enquiries which the Bishop had made for me in 1929 by the Rev. S. G. Patwardhan, the well-known Indian missionary priest of the Scottish Episcopal Church Mission at Ahiri, went further, as indicated on page 195, and established definitely that the Chanda Marias of Bidri, Yemla, Burgi,[2] Uddera and Kandodi had one three-god clan, six four-god, eight five-god, eight six-god and eight seven-god clans (31 clans against Lucie-Smith's 24). Russell and Hiralal are wrong even of Chhindwara district, where I verified some three-god clans (as in Nagpur district) and even a one-god and a no-god clan. Baron C. von Fürer-Haimendorf's forthcoming book on the Raj-Gonds of the Adilabad plateaux of Hyderabad will deal exhaustively with the god-grouping[3] of the Adilabad Gonds, whose social system is based on a system of four phratries (*saga*), the seven-god, six-god, five-god and four-god phratries. His conclusions there have been to some extent foreshadowed in his interesting article 'The Cult of the Clan Gods among the Raj-Gonds of Hyderabad', published in *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, 1945, pages 149-86. His field-work has been far more detailed and closer than any previous work among Raj-Gonds, and the whole body of myths which he has recorded as to these phratries or god-groups throws altogether new light on the origins and facts of Gond social organization. It badly needs to be supplemented rapidly by similar enquiries among all the sections of the Gonds not only in Chanda district, but also in all the Central Provinces and Berar districts and States where this god-grouping still persists. One is apt to assume that it is dying out or deteriorating rapidly in areas formerly known as British India, in contrast to areas such as Adilabad, which has never been under British rule, and has been till recently free from the detribalizing, hinduizing work of the schoolmaster, or as most of the Chanda Maria country. But the difference may be rather that the Gond of the more

[1] *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*, 1931, p. 334.

[2] I checked this at Burgi (*Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV38.29) and discussed the whole question with Rev. Patwardhan at Ahiri: the 31 clans may be far from exhaustive.

[3] Haimendorf prefers to speak of 'seven-brother', 'six-brother' phratries, holding that his Raj-Gonds speak of a classification by the number not so much of *penk* (gods) as of *Wenk*, an almost untranslatable term meaning 'heroes', or 'divine ancestors'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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advanced ' areas further north, faced by Brahman ridicule of his culture, has more and more withdrawn into his shell and learnt to conceal the more intimate features of his tribal religion and culture.

Until we have before us the records of such systematized and widespread field-work it is impossible to form any reliable general theory of the origin of this god-grouping. My tentative view, so far as the Chanda Marias are concerned, for what it is worth, is that the god-grouping is a comparatively recent importation from their northern and western Gond (especially Raj-Gond) neighbours. As I have pointed out on pages 194-5, the Bastar Marias and Murias have neither god-grouping nor *chuddur penk*. I added that none of the Chanda Marias who had come to my camps in Bastar had these institutions. This may appear inconsistent with the definite proof of the existence at least of god-grouping among the Chanda Marias, as recorded from Lucie-Smith's time onwards, and verified by Bishop Wood and Rev. Patwardhan and in this tour of mine. But here again one must distinguish between the Chanda Marias of the hills above Lahiri and those of the plains and foothills. Those who came to my Bastar camps were all Chanda Hill Marias: those among whom god-grouping was verified were plains Marias. I camped for four days at Kuvakodi, a hill village high above Lahiri, and visited other hill villages close by, both in Chanda and in Bastar. The Chanda Hill Marias are identical in culture with the Bastar Hill Marias, and like them had, at least at Christmas 1940, no god-grouping and no *chuddur penk*. The Hill Marias of Chanda in fact appear to be what the *Gazetteer*[1] describes as the Gaita sub-tribe of Gonds, and the speakers of the dialect referred to by it[2] and in the *Linguistic Survey* as Gattu, the language of the 'Kois or Gonds of the hills, especially in Sironcha', who 'are known as Gattu or Gotte Kois'; for it speaks of the Gaita Gonds as being 'almost alone in retaining the old Gondi custom, once universal, of building their village in two long barracks lying east and west facing each other about eighty feet apart' in which the married people dwell, while the bachelors, and in some villages unmarried girls also, have separate barracks. This description clearly fits the Hill Marias of Kuvakodi and adjacent hill villages, as it would do the villages of the neighbouring Hill Maria *parganas* of Bastar.

So we start with these, the most primitive of the Marias of Chanda, and find among them no trace of god-grouping or *chuddur penk*. Down the hill we come to Lahiri, and we find god-grouping (which, however, includes a three-god group absent among the Chanda and Adilabad Raj-Gonds), but, so far as I could ascertain, no *chuddur*

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 97, 98.
[2] Ibidem, p. 75.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

874
[875] too, no caste Hindu had been forthcoming and the authorities had had to draw on the Depressed Classes to find a *guru*, who was a town-bred Mahar, knew no language but his Marathi mother-tongue and was utterly ignorant of aboriginal life and customs, though twenty-two of his thirty-three boys were Maria-speaking aboriginals. The boys were doing some listless spinning, a useless craft in an area where no cotton is grown. The raw cotton for spinning has to be carted from Chanda, miles away: not one of the boys will spin in after-life. I asked if they could sing: the *guru* switched them from spinning on to droning out in a dreary, nasal tone a Marathi song which meant nothing to them. Helped by their parents, I tried to get the boys to sing a Maria song and dance a Maria dance, but their spontaneity had been so quenched by the alien ideas of the *Vidya Mandir* that even with their parents' help they were too shy or shamefaced to attempt their own wonderful tribal songs and dances. There was nothing in their whole curriculum which bore any relation to their tribal culture or appealed to the tribal imagination. Even the *Vidya Mandir* fields were so far from the village that the boys never visited them or learnt modern agricultural methods from the *jamadar* in charge, who merely grew rice to meet the cost of this useless institution. It was worse than useless, for it was detribalizing the boys, making them ashamed of their own way of life, and giving them nothing in return: it was no surprise that in this village all were peculiarly reticent as to the existence of a *gotul*, and that the latter was a moribund affair.

● 1114 This completes the picture of my tour to Chanda Maria country, so far it has been possible to reconstruct it from the printed record of *The Aboriginal Problem* and from memory. Ethnologically the Note is somewhat meagre in its information. The impression, however, that I carry in my mind of the Chanda Marias is of a tribal culture still vigorous in its institutions and its arts, still knitting together the ways of life of a vigorous tribe closely akin on the one side to the Marias and Murias of Bastar, on the other side to the Raj-Gond and other tribes of northern and western Chanda, and of Milabad. What differences there are between the Chanda Marias and the Hill and other Marias of Bastar and the Murias of north Bastar and Kanker, only detailed field-work can define. It is an admirable theatre for such field-work, and the time for it is running short, since the Marias of Chanda are exposed, in a way that no Bastar tribes are exposed, to the impacts of modern Indian civilization. Of particular interest would be an investigation of my theory that the social organization of the plains Marias of Chanda was fundamentally similar to that of the Hill Marias and Murias of Bastar but has been overlaid with god-grouping and other ideas inherent in the social organization of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the later waves of Gonds and Raj-Gonds which set up the kingdom of the Gond Maharajas of Chanda. It would be very interesting also to see whether anything survives of the peculiarly Hill Maria and Muria cult of the clan-god as distinct from the more developed religious system of the Raj-Gonds, with its wonderful foundation of myth, the full richness and religious and cultural significance of which the world will begin to realize when Haimendorf's epoch-making book on the Raj-Gonds of Adilabad is published in the near future, and when it is followed up by similar detailed investigation of Gond life and custom in all parts of Gondwana. How far there is any common mythological basis of Raj-Gond and Maria culture would be a factor of great significance. I am conscious that the weakest side of this book has been its failure to probe into the mythology and folk-songs of the Bastar Marias. I do not believe Hill Maria culture to be nearly as rich in that respect as Muria culture is shown to be by Verrier Elwin's book, *The Muria and their Ghotul*. Yet there must be more to be said of the folk-tales and mythology of the Marias of Bastar than has appeared in the first edition of this book; indeed the second section of Elwin's Comment in this edition gives some indication of the wealth of Maria myth awaiting record in Bastar.

Another question clearly needing investigation is the extent to which the *gotul* as an institution is a real factor in Chanda Maria life. I have implied in this Note that it survives, but is gradually being relegated into obscurity as a result of the impact of Hindu ideas and of Hindu ridicule. That would, however, apply more in the northern zamindaris than in the country along the Bastar border from the River Indrawati north to Bharapapra. This part of Ahiri zamindari is landlocked and largely protected from the influx of Hindu ideas save in so far as these are brought in by zamindari and government subordinates. The fact moreover that the *Sendhia* and *patti panchayat* organization is still vigorous in Ahiri zamindari should be an indication that there has been no psychological inhibition on these Marias preserving their tribal life and cultural inheritance unimpaired. It would be interesting, however, to trace the outer boundaries of the *gotul* system and to see what has happened to it, when, and why, in these outer fringes.

This Note is stronger in its picture of economic conditions. Here the most significant fact has been the banning of *jalapod* or shifting cultivation during and after the Great War of 1914-18. One would like, given the time and opportunity, to get at the psychological reaction of the Maria to this as expressed in his folk-songs; one would like also to be able to go through the records of criminal

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

114 and civil litigation in which Maria parties have been involved since this interference with their way of life, and to see also if it has had any 241 bearing on suicide. Quite clearly, however, it has had a tremendous and adverse effect on their economics. It has accentuated their transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy and, by virtually forcing them to grow rice, a commercial food crop, as their principal crop, it has played into the hands of the *bania* and the money-lender who naturally desire to buy up rice for export. It may be suspected also that this has had an adverse effect on the diet and physique of the Maria. The small millets, which are the characteristic and favourite food of the Marias and were best grown in the *podu* clearings, are dietetically of higher value than rice. Their market value was small, but so long as the Marias' granary had ample stores of these millets, he had not to depend upon the money-lender for seed or cattle, nor to bother about marketing his produce. 114 The only partial remedy so far provided for the economic ills caused by the stopping of *podu* has been the departmental forest work at 313 Allapilli. Here the Maria, doing work of a type for which his life in the forest suits him and receiving fair and prompt cash payment for his labour, has been able to earn money which could keep him out of the clutches of the money-lender and the bribe-taker. But this too has had its detribalizing effect, accustoming him to working far from his home village and in close contact with an alien civilization and culture.

114 The next difficulties that the Maria has to solve in assimilating himself to the life of modern India are the problems resulting from the impact of political India with its steady tendency to seek to reduce all things and all institutions throughout India to a drab uniformity. There is no doubt that the Maria is not ready to exercise the vote. It is equally clear that he has his own vigorous tribal organization and that his *patti panchayat* could easily be entrusted with the same powers that have been given to the village and *pargana panchayats* in Bastar. It seems obvious also that on these *panchayats* could be based some sort of system whereby Marias could handle the problems of local self-government in their country. These *panchayats*, for example, if entrusted with the selection of local Marias for a zamindari *panchayat*, could produce a body in real touch with tribal life in all its facets. Tribal village life is still naturally co-operative, even though in the plains individualism is now stronger than in the largely collective villages of the Hills. In fact the whole *podu* system was an incentive to the co-operation of all the villagers; rice cultivation, in contrast, drives villagers into individualism and ideas of private property as indeed does the whole land revenue system which has been

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

gradually foisted from the developed lands of Hindustan upon all the tribal areas of India. Yet the Co-operative Department does no work among the Chanda Marias. Such work would indeed be useless if stereotyped as usual. What is needed is a deliberate attempt to implant amongst the Marias co-operative organization of forest labour, whether for working at Allapilli or for taking coupes or contracts for minor produce in other zamindari or Government forests. Village grain-banks could be made to flourish, for after all, the existing granary in a Maria village, even if in these days the ultimate owner of the surplus is the Teli money-lender, is essentially a village grain-bank from which the villager can help himself to seed or even to grain for food if he observes the implicit obligation of replacing it with 25 or 50 per cent. interest out of his next harvest; but grain-banks should be the property of the village and not of alien exploiters. If the Maria is to be educated so as to hold his own in the modern world, his education can best come in the first instance from the fostering of such co-operative enterprise, accompanied by protection from the alien money-lender, subordinate officials and other exploiters. Out of this economic self-government can spring the elements of political self-government.

Education is advocated generally as a means of protection. But the standardized 'education' gained in the ordinary village school has not protected the plains villager from the money-lender, and is something entirely alien to the living culture of the tribes. One of the worst features of the spasmodic attempts to provide education in the Maria villages has been the impossibility of getting town-bred teachers of good social standing to resign themselves to exile in the forest. This, as we have seen, has led to the importation of teachers from the Depressed Classes with their habitual inferiority complex. A Maria or a Gond is not an untouchable, and it is wrong to set a man of 'untouchable mentality' to teach and exercise a teacher's authority over him. The only hope of meeting the growing desire for education in a sound way is to impart education through teachers drawn from the tribe itself, knowing the tribal language and tribal lore, and thoroughly at home with tribal villagers. Both Verrier Elwin and I have on various occasions set forth our general ideas as to the soundest approach to the problem of aboriginal education; there is a synthesis of our ideas in Chapter 14 of *The Aboriginal Problem*. But the most effective experiment in this direction within my knowledge has been the Marlavai work initiated by the Haimendorfs amongst the Gonds of the central plateaux of Adilabad District in the Nizam's Dominions. Gond youths were selected from surrounding villages, where there was a demand for education, and put through a course of training in a

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

114 village training centre where all the buildings were built of local materials in precisely the same style as the existing village houses but with improved dimensions, light and ventilation. The Gondi language is used as the medium of instruction, Laubach Gondi charts having been prepared, and Gondi primers with Gondi folk-songs, tales and myths: the teachers were also trained to teach Marathi and Urdu.[1] Model grain-banks and co-operative stores and an agricultural farm have been based on this centre which has also trained Gonds and Kolams in the work of the *patel* and the *patwari*. When he passes out, the new schoolmaster goes back to his village and with a small grant of cash and free timber has to get a rough school building constructed. These schools are visited regularly by the head of the Marlavai training centre, and there are periodic rallies at Marlavai. These methods have rapidly expanded educational facilities among the Adilabad Gonds, and the schools are kept in close touch with the vigorous tribal life; tribal games, songs and dances are an essential part of the school curriculum. What is more, the tribal headmen and elders are kept in close touch with Marlavai and its offshoots, and are consulted freely on all new ideas as to curricula and other developments. Classes for adults are also held in Marlavai and some of the village schools.

If the Maria *gotul* life is at all vigorous it should not be impossible to link it with such modern education. For the *gotul* is essentially a children's commonwealth in which the youths are instructed in the tribal way of life. If that way of life is to be supplemented by education enabling the Maria to read official documents, village records, and money-lenders' accounts and the accounts of his own co-operative societies, it would be natural in some way to link the new education with the *gotul*, and to adopt for the reading and writing curricula the songs and stories which are sung and told to the *gotul* gatherings.

000 The task of dealing with these problems has almost finally passed from British hands, and it has become the unshared responsibility of the educated Hindu or Muslim to do his best to protect the aboriginal and bring him forward to contribute to the India of the future his characteristic joy of life and his tradition of co-operating with his fellow men. Nothing will be gained by puritanical opposition to liquor, music and dancing. Much of very great value will be lost if any distinctive elements of tribal cultures are frowned upon or ridiculed. The whole problem of the future of the tribes bristles with difficulties with which we have failed to cope in the historically short period of our connexion with India; Indians themselves

[1] In Chanda or Drug there would be no such trilingual difficulty as it would be necessary only to use either Marathi or Hindi in addition to Gondi.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

128 up to reprobation, but simply to describe and understand. To them, the union of the sexes is on the same plane as eating and drinking, to be indulged in without stint on every possible occasion.[1]

Among the Muria, where sex is regarded as something much higher than eating and drinking and the technique of love has been developed to an almost ideal level, it is obviously still more necessary that we should study this subject. To such a study we may also apply wise words of Malinowski.

> In anthropology the essential facts of life must be stated simply and fully, though in scientific language, and such a plain statement cannot really offend the most delicately minded nor the most prejudiced reader; nor can it be of any use to the seeker after pornography; least of all can it entice the unripe interest of the young. For pruriency consists in oblique day-dreaming and not in simple and direct statement. The reader will find that the natives treat sex in the long run not only as a source of pleasure, but, indeed, as a thing serious and even sacred. Nor do their customs and ideas eliminate from sex its power to transform crude material fact into wonderful spiritual experience, to throw the romantic glamour of love over the technicalities of love-making.[2]

●114 The neglect of the village dormitory as a subject of research, not only in Bastar but throughout the world, is astonishing.[3] In English, Hutton Webster's *Primitive Secret Societies* deals only with the men's houses from which women are rigorously omitted. In German there is the standard work by Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde* on age-groups and men's societies, a study by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Das Junggesellenhaus im Westlichen Hinterindien*,[4] on the social functions of the dormitories in Further India, and a chapter in *Völker und Kulturen* by Schmidt and Koppers which deals with age-grades and the social functions of the dormitories. For the institution as maintained by specific tribes, we have hints and scattered details in many books, but full-dress accounts are rare. In India the most detailed are C. von Fürer-Haimendorf's on the Konyak Naga and S. C. Roy's on the Uraon. In Africa Leakey has given some valuable information about the intimate life in the *manyatta* of the Masai, and Malinowski has an illuminating account of the Trobriand *bukumatula*. But compared to what might have been written on so fascinating and important a subject comparatively little has yet been attempted.

Moreover the great museums of ethnographic fact also ignore the subject. There is only a passing reference in Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage* to the institution, though one would have thought it highly relevant to his discussion of the hypothesis of primitive promiscuity. Briffault is equally silent, so is Frazer. Nor does Unwin, in a book largely devoted to a study of pre-nuptial chastity, *Sex and Culture*, pay any attention to the evidence (scanty enough, yet of great importance) from the village dormitory. Hambly, in his *Origins of Education among Primitive People*, mentions the dormitory, but hardly accords it its rightful place as one of the most powerful agents of

[1] E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 36.

[2] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages* (London, 1932), p. xlv.

[3] Long ago Peal noticed the same thing. 'The paucity of references to the Morong in many standard works relating to the Indo-Pacific region, is most extraordinary.'—S. E. Peal, 'On the Morong as possibly a Relic of Pre-marriage Communism', *JAI*, Vol. XXII (1893), p. 255.

[4] In *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, Vol. I (1930). I owe the references to the continental literature to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PREFACE

primitive education. Havelock Ellis would, I think, have found much to interest him in the sexual relations of the boys and girls of primitive societies, but he too seems to have considered the existing literature as lacking in detail and authority. 114

Yet—as a glance at this book will show—the ghotul, and presumably the village dormitory elsewhere, provides the most important evidence for any discussion on group-marriage, group-concubinage, pre-nuptial chastity, pre-nuptial infertility, experimental marriage, the union of near kin and the value of the rules of exogamy. For the general reader, uninterested in technical anthropological problems, the ghotul raises equally interesting questions about co-education, the influence of punishment, the expediency of marriage between those who have grown up together, the relegation of parental responsibility, the relation of discipline and freedom, and the elimination of jealousy. It opens up the widest problems of sex and marriage; and even though Muria society may not provide solutions, it does at least put the questions.

The ghotul does not yield up its secrets readily. It is easy enough to obtain a superficial knowledge of its organization, but the Muria have no conscience at all about misleading the inquirer, and it is almost routine for them to give incorrect information at first. They invariably deny—if you ask them questions—that chelik and motiari have intimate relations; they told Grigson that girls never slept in the ghotul of the Narayanpur Tahsil; I have often been wearied by their lies. Every statement must be weighed and checked; the anthropologist has to be both a detective and a magistrate; he must be ready to follow the slightest clue, but he must test with the greatest care the evidence that is put before him. 123

We must not blame the Muria for their reticence. It is the natural and proper barrier set up against prying eyes; it is their ultimate refuge against the inroads of civilization. Moreover chelik and motiari are bound to secrecy, to conceal everything not only from the stranger but from their own relatives, when they are admitted to the ghotul fellowship.

How then was it possible to gather the vast amount of detailed information presented in this book? The answer is simple; the Muria cannot resist affection. They are the most friendly people in the world—once you have learnt how to set about them. They immediately respond to respect. For years they have been scolded, peered at, ridiculed by every visitor to their villages; their first reaction to a newcomer is naturally to throw up a barrier of reticence and falsehood. But directly they find that the visitor knows something about them and likes what he knows, there is a wonderful change and he is overwhelmed with intimacies.

I first visited the Muria country in 1935, and repeated my visits for several years till 1942. In 1940 I was appointed Census Officer of Bastar State and a little later Honorary Ethnographer with the status of a Head of a Department—a position that greatly facilitated my inquiries. In an Appendix I give a list of all the ghotul in the State, and note those that I visited personally and what I saw. I have also recorded those which I was not able to visit myself, but about which I believe I have exact and authentic information—information collected by more than one of my colleagues and which has stood the test of check and counter-check. It seems to me essential that an ethnographer should present his credentials in as precise a manner as possible and should confess his failures. I must admit, for example, that I have not lived in the Muria area during the rains. I have personally witnessed, however, at least samples of everything described in the book, and the total number of ghotul visited comes to no fewer than 347. 14

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

FOREWORD

It is a privilege to me to write this foreword to Verrier Elwin's book *Maria Murder and Suicide* and to be associated in this way with a man whose great work for the aboriginal of Middle India has made his name known wherever two or three are gathered together to think of India's duty towards her oldest inhabitants, the men of the malaria-belt, the forests and the hills. To his social and philanthropic work he has now added sympathetic and revealing anthropological work of the first order, recording while there is yet time to do so the still distinctive ways of life and culture of many sections of India's twenty-five and a half million tribal population. His researches are providing a scientific basis not merely for social work among the tribes, but above all for the great and complex task of administering the tribal areas in the tribesman's interests. The programme of any wise administration for these areas should be not only to enable the tribesman to hold his own in the world without losing his way of life, his virtues, his dancing, his songs and his laughter, but also, once he has been secured freedom from fear, from want, and from interference, to make his own special contribution to the free India that is to be. That contribution may well be a restoration to the drab village life of the plains of freedom from the puritan and the kill-joy, and the revival of what Mr Elwin in his pamphlet *The Aboriginals*[1] has referred to as the 'art of recreation, an art which is lamentably absent from the ordinary Indian village'. That pamphlet is commended to all who desire to get a clear and sane picture of the whole tribal problem; it states both the creed of one of the finest and best-equipped minds now at work upon the problem, and the case for the scientific approach to it.

To one who has served in Bastar State it must always be a pleasure to read or write anything that will carry his mind back to that beautiful land and its peoples or

[1] *Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs*, No. 14 (Bombay, 1943).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

114 contribute to the greater understanding of them. 'Pleasure' may seem inappropriate of a book whose title contains the words 'murder' and 'suicide': but it is the fundamental purpose of the book that should be borne in mind, its desire to reveal the psychology underlying the 'crimes' of violence committed by one of the finest and least spoiled of Indian tribes, and the circumstances that drive its men and women to suicide. Such work can only lead to a wiser handling of the aboriginal accused by the judge or magistrate; and it raises acutely the question of punishment and the prison treatment of tribal convicts. The opening thirty-six pages of the book moreover give a vivid summary of Maria life, even in so short a compass revealing various facets that escaped me in the field-work and enquiries which preceded the writing of my book *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*.[1] In my preface to that book I expressed the hope that other books would be written about the Maria, correcting and supplementing my statements by more systematic field-work and that my book would tempt trained workers to visit the ethnologically unexplored lands of Bastar and Jeypore. Mr Elwin will agree, I think, that it was talks with me that moved him to visit Bastar, where like many others he has fallen a victim to the beauty and interest of that State.

This short book is the firstfruits of his Bastar researches; although, its subject being what it is, it cannot compare for delight and scientific thrill with his forthcoming *magnum opus, The Muria and their Ghotul*, to me it is of particular interest, both because I was myself the Sessions Judge who tried twelve[2] of the hundred cases summarized in the Appendix and because the book is founded, independently, on an idea I long entertained of a similar book based on an examination of all available sessions trial and other records available from 1915 to 1930. I still have the notes which I prepared on some of these cases, including all those dealt with in this book for the years 1920-30 and fourteen others; and I summarized my general experiences of murder in Bastar in pages 94-5 and 226 of *The Maria Gonds*

[1] Oxford University Press, 1938.

[2] Nos 6, 7, 12, 26, 27, 38, 39, 45, 57, 62, 78 and 83; the murder in No 69 also took place in my time but the trial came after I had left Bastar as the accused had absconded.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

of Bastar. To this study of previous records I was led by my realization, after a year's experience of original and appellate work in Bastar, of the great difficulty of applying to the decision of charges against tribal offenders the general practice as to the appreciation of evidence, court procedure, the assessment of guilt and the imposition of penalties laid down in the commentaries on the Evidence Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Penal Code, all of which had been imposed on the tribal and other areas of Bastar, as of the whole Central Provinces (in which Bastar State was then included), without any thought that any section in these enactments, framed for sophisticated India on European models, might perhaps not suit every part of India. I should have been saved many moments of anxiety as to the justice of my decisions and as to the whole trend of criminal justice in the State had I had at my command so full a study of murder and suicide as Mr Elwin's book, which not only analyses so many actual cases but also links up the results with the conclusions of standard works on crime, penology, psychology and ethnology.

I can almost completely endorse Mr Elwin's analysis of the general causes of Maria murders, though the concept in Chapter XI of fatigue as a cause of crime is one of those things that is startlingly revealing, but has only to be stated to be appreciated as true. Moreover I should perhaps plead guilty to having given currency to what he speaks of (p. 42) as 'the myth that landa rice-beer is the most important cause of homicide', by writing that 'about half the Bison-horn murders are committed in landa intoxication'.[1] His figures on page 139 show that only 13 of his 100 murder cases were influenced by landa and 6 by other intoxicant liquors. In the further 14 cases of which I still have notes landa intoxication caused 2 murders, and other intoxicants 3. In the earlier years of Bastar's political association with the Central Provinces drunkenness was probably an even more frequent cause of crime, or perhaps a symptom rather than a cause, since often landa or liquor was taken by persons brooding over grievances, and thinking of violent action. It may be of interest to classify these 14 murders

[1] *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, p. 94.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

114 674 according to Mr Elwin's categories. Apart from the five intoxication murders, two were prompted by belief that crops had been bewitched, one was a fatigue crime and one was caused by a dispute as to property, one by resentment over being dunned for a debt of one anna and one by a quarrel over failure to repair the skins of a drum broken by a friend who had borrowed it, while three were the result of conjugal infidelity. There were three cases in which the villagers agreed to conceal the crime to avoid the trouble of police and court investigation. The means employed included assault with an axe, a sword, a fencing pole, a stick, a wooden stool and fists, kicking, throttling, shooting with bow and arrow, twisting of neck and stabbing with a knife. In one case the accused committed suicide to avoid the disgrace attendant on the revival of an old scandal caused by his son's association with a blacksmith girl whose murder he and the villagers had hushed up for three years.

114 776 754 Of witchcraft and magic as factors in crime Mr Elwin has written fully in Chapter V, and has illustrated at page 61 a typical clan-god, Anga Pen or Pat Deo (log-god), sometimes used to detect witches in the manner described at page 17, while at pages 185-6 he deals with the Maria view that a witch or a sorcerer should be killed. That view is undoubtedly widely held outside tribal circles, and the power of tribal log-gods to detect black magic is equally strongly believed in by Hindu and Muslim subjects of the State. The reaction of tribal beliefs and practices on the local Hindu rites and ceremonies is very marked, and an example of this is the way in which Raja Bhairon Deo, the great-grandfather of the present Maharaja of Bastar, installed in Jagdalpur a log-god which was either a copy of a famous log-god from Narayanpur in the north-west of the State, or, according to its present Halba Pujari, was brought by a former ruler from Dongar, the old capital, to Narayanpur, and shifted thence by Raja Bhairon Deo. This god is now the Pat Deo of Bastar *par excellence*, and four ceremonies are held in his honour during the Maharaja's Dassara celebrations. His witch-finding function strongly survives, and I well remember my amused astonishment when in 1927 during an inspection of the accounts of the Jagdalpur Temples managed by the State Court of Wards I found

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

that the villagers around Jagdalpur frequently requisitioned his services for this purpose, paying for them a fee of Rs 5 into the State Treasury. When I wondered whether by lending the log-god the Court of Wards had not been accessory to the killing or beating of witches, the Pujari thus explained the god's conformity to modern law: 'Pat Deo is worshipped to save men from *bhut* and *pret*, and detects *bhut*, *churel* and witches. If a village needs his detective services, the villagers pay into the Treasury a fee of Rs 5, and then the Manager lets me take the god out. I walk behind Pat Deo, who is carried on the shoulders of four men, none of whom must come from the village which needs his help. Starting from the east side, we take him round the village widdershins, and then enter the village, Pat Deo himself impelling the bearers and then knocking against the house where the evil is hidden or against the actual magician. He will not leave the house till the guilty one comes out. Then in these days the offender kneels before Pat Deo and cries for forgiveness, which is given before Pat Deo goes home; he is not even outcasted now. In my grandfather's time he would have been set on an ass with his face towards the tail and taken in procession round the village; his head would then have been shaved, his front teeth pulled out by a Ghasia, and his hair and teeth buried in an ant-hill, while he would have been excommunicated and driven out of his village. They pulled out his teeth to stop him using them to suck blood and because without them he could not pronounce his spells.' One may be pardoned for scepticism as to the affair even in modern days being closed with Pat Deo kindly forgiving the magician!

This fear of magic as the source of illness and all troubles is strong in many parts of India. Here in Hyderabad belief in the power of *bhanamatti* or black magic is widespread, even among some persons of the highest education and social standing. A detailed investigation was made in 1916 by Mr L. B. Goad, an experienced officer of the Indian Police, then in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department. His conclusion was that *bhanamatti* was so absolute a scourge in parts of Hyderabad and so utilized as a form of blackmail by its practitioners that special measures were

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

needed to root them out. The evils which he found to have been inflicted on the victims in a series of cases investigated included loss of consciousness, barking and howling like jackals, appearance of black marks on various parts of the body, giddiness with great abdominal pain, setting of the jaws whilst the victim beat the air and ground with hands and feet, immodest and uncontrollable dancing like a prostitute, ape-like antics, violent laughing and hysteria, clothes dropping off the body, vomiting and spitting out of stones, gravel, marking-nuts, needles, thorns and lemons, food turning into excreta, loss of speech, cessation of menstrual periods or their continuance for weeks and months on end, and many others. His report concluded: 'I trust that this report of mine may have the desired effect of proving that the existing state of affairs in those tracts in which *bhanamatti* is prevalent requires special measures to deal with the present evil. If this is not done the populace will take the law into their own hands, as they have done in more than one instance in the recent past, and as they threatened to do when the District Magistrate of Bidar took action in Bidar City with a commendably strong and firm hand last autumn. Having personally witnessed the dreadful trials which women and girls have to suffer under the scourge of *bhanamatti*, I should not hesitate, did the power lie in my hands, to extend the operations of the Criminal Tribes Act to every cowardly blackguard who was known to practise the vile cult of *bhanamatti*.' Even now the Hyderabad District Police retain the services of an official versed in the art of treating the victims of *bhanamatti*. Most of its practitioners are persons of the untouchable castes, but the victims in the 1916 Bidar 'epidemic' of *bhanamatti* included persons of all ranks and professions, even lawyers. Murders of suspected practitioners[1] continue in Hyderabad. Is it to be wondered at that this fear of magic is so common a cause of murder amongst the Maria? It is after all not so long since in Great Britain an Act of Parliament passed in 1736 finally stopped prosecutions for alleged witchcraft.[2] Mr Elwin has pointed out on page 80

[1] Two were reported in the *Times of India* of 5 May 1933.
[2] A useful brief summary of British witchcraft history and folklore is given in Chapter X of *English Folklore* by Christina Hole (London, 1940).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

that the European superstitions as to crime go far beyond the superstitions of the Maria, and mentions in particular the 'Hand of Glory' ideas; it may be of interest to reproduce an English recipe for making, using and counteracting a Hand of Glory given by Francis Grose in *A Provincial Glossary, with a collection of Local Proverbs and Popular Superstitions*, published in 1787[1]:—

> Take the hand left or right of a person hanged, and exposed on the highway; wrap it up in a piece of a shroud, or winding-sheet, in which let it be well squeezed, to get out any small quantity of blood that may have remained in it; then put it into an earthen vessel, with zimat, saltpetre, salt, and long pepper, the whole well powdered; leave it fifteen days in that vessel; afterwards take it out, and expose it to the noon-tide sun in the dog-days, till it is thoroughly dry: and if the sun is not sufficient, put it into an oven heated with fern and vervain: then compose a kind of candle with the fat of a hanged man, virgin wax, and sisame of Lapland. The Hand of Glory is used as a candlestick, to hold this candle when lighted. Its properties are, that whersoever anyone goes with this dreadful instrument, the persons to whom it is presented will be deprived of all power of motion. . . . The Hand of Glory would cease to take effect, and thieves could not make use of it, if the threshold of the door of the house by which they might enter, were anointed with an unguent composed of the gall of a black cat, the fat of a white hen, and the blood of a screech-owl; which mixture must necessarily be prepared during the dog-days.

Particular attention should be paid to what Mr Elwin has to say in Chapter XVII about the aboriginal prisoner. Whether in Bastar, the Central Provinces or in Hyderabad, I have never felt happy over the subjection of the aboriginal convict to ordinary jail life. Seventeen of the persons convicted in the hundred cases of the Appendix are shown as having died in jail, though, as jails in India go, the Jagdalpur jail was always good. Mr Elwin has summarized the reasons for the Maria's hatred of jail life, and all who have to handle the aboriginal convict should read, mark, learn and inwardly

[1] I owe the quotation to my brother Geoffrey Grigson's anthology *The Romantics* (London, 1942). p. 95.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

digest his words. I have always felt that Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code, which prescribes the penalty for murder, is inadequate in the case of aboriginals, in its recognition of degrees of murder; transportation for life, i.e. life imprisonment, even as reduced by modern practice as to the periodic review of sentences and earned remission, is an intolerable punishment for the average Maria murderer whose crime is committed in a sudden fit of anger and is unpremeditated. Fortunately in the old days such Sessions sentences had to be confirmed by the Political Agent who could also act on the Judge's recommendation to reduce the sentences in the exercise of the royal clemency; this accounts for the frequent reductions of sentences shown in the Appendix as having been ordered in appeal. Let us hope that the new combined High Court for the Eastern States will take as realistic and humane a view of this as the political officers have done, and in their handling of the aboriginal criminal shed the preconceptions and prejudices of the bar and bench of 'civilized' India. The same approach to the imprisonment of the aboriginal is needed in less heinous cases also, and the principle should be, whenever possible, not to send the aboriginal to jail—at least until there are special jails for aboriginals; too often used the Central Provinces jails to be full of unfortunate aboriginal illicit distillers or smugglers. The Central Provinces courts have now begun to realize the undesirability of jailing aboriginals and the need of discretion in inflicting fines proportionate to their slender means; but few policemen and magistrates realize the social cost to the released convict or the acquitted prisoner of the *hathkari dand* (handcuff penalty), and the cost of the ceremony for purging him from the defilement of the jail or lock-up described in pages 195-9. I have always regretted that I was never able in Bastar to experiment with the idea that came to me towards the end of my service there, of a village or camp jail, such as is suggested in the concluding chapter of this book. I see nothing impossible in this, nor in letting the aboriginal prisoner have his singing and dancing, observe his festivals and propitiate his gods; even after a time he might, on promotion to a separate personal hut and holding, be allowed the company of his wife. Agriculture and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

horticulture would be the ideal occupations in such a jail village, for the average aboriginal remains an agricultural novice.

As to the death sentence there is little to add to Mr Elwin's remarks in Chapter XVIII. Murder and violence were far more frequent in Bastar in the past than they have been since 1910, the Rebellion year, and at one time executions were carried out publicly in Pargana headquarters for deterrent reasons. This possibly had some effect on the vendetta and the bully. My own practice was to impose the death sentence only in cases of premeditated murder or murder with robbery. The very formidable and steady increase of murders and attempted murders in Hyderabad State ever since the virtual suspension of capital punishment is a warning against removal of the fear of death. And though death may be asked for by an occasional Maria in preference to long years of prison, its finality and grimness are realized even by them, and recognized at times as the only appropriate penalty. This happened when I sentenced Marvi Aita of Paknar (H. Case No 45) to death. The whole trial was impressive. I held it at Paknar, travelling there in the first motor car to use a newly made forest road and followed by a bus bringing assessors, counsel, accused and police escort; we were held up in the few villages through which we passed so that the *perma* and elders might sacrifice cocks and sprinkle blood on the car and bus wheels. The accused had been the village bully, and after the trial, which had added drama from taking place on the actual spot where Aita had deliberately shot Kamlu Masa dead with an arrow as he and his helper neighbours were bringing home his kodon harvest, when I had pronounced sentence, the entire village filed before me to touch my feet in gratitude for freeing them from the perpetual menace of Aita's bullying, and it was then only that I learnt that he had been wrongly acquitted by a former Diwan on a previous murder charge and had been guilty also of yet another killing which the village had been afraid to report.

Let me conclude this Foreword by warmly recommending the book to all whose duties bring them into contact with the aboriginal, though it is so to speak only a study

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

127 these were not kept at the headquarters of the State, but
121 distributed in the police stations and many of them had been eliminated. But the State Superintendent of Police called in as many aboriginal files as could be found, and again after much sifting I found myself with exactly 50 unselected Bison-horn Maria suicide records. These extended over a period of 10 years.

114 Between 1935 and 1942 I made many tours in this enchanting land among these enchanting people. On the earlier tours I was accompanied by my friend Mr Shamrao Hivale whose amazing sympathy and insight helped me to catch my first vision of Maria culture. Later I had the support of my wife who, being herself a Gond, was able to get quickly in touch with the people and immediately established a friendly atmosphere. Particularly in the later tours I tried to see as many scenes of violence as possible, to talk to released convicts and to discover the general attitude of a village towards any crime that had been committed within its boundaries. In Aranpur I stood beside the still warm ashes of the ritually-cremated clothes of Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged in jail. At Khutepal, I watched Oyami Masa's children playing on the very floor once stained by the blood of his murdered wife. In the forest near Jabeli [211] I had a clearing made so that I could photograph the carved pillar erected in memory of a famous murderer. In Rewali I was visited by a ferocious-looking youth who had twice stood on trial for his life and had twice preserved it. Here too I talked with Hemla Bakka who killed his wife for infidelity and was now unable to get another. In Doriras I saw the grave of the murdered Boti which had been desecrated by [164] Ghasia for the sake of the purse of money which had been buried to help the dead man on his journey to the other world. In the same village I visited the home of Kawasi Borga then serving a life sentence, and talked to his fine sons and his sad pathetic wife.

124 Later I spent many hours in the Jagdalpur Jail talking to Maria who were serving terms of life-imprisonment for homicide. Some of them were as informative as the limits of their psychology allowed, for it must always be remembered that aboriginals are not accustomed to discussing those matters which are of special interest to anthropologists. Other

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

prisoners clearly suspected some trick and told me very little. On the whole I was impressed by the great sadness of their life, even though in the jail they are well and kindly treated. Most of them, I think, felt that an inexplicable tragedy had befallen them. They did not feel like criminals. Their lives had been destroyed by a capricious destiny.

It was naturally more difficult to get information about the suicides, for, in the nature of the case, the person of most interest could not be present to tell his story. Relatives also and the villagers were more reticent, I thought, in discussing this subject, possibly because they feared that any revelations might lead to further police investigation. But even so I was able to get a certain amount of information about the Maria's attitude to self-murder.

But enquiries among the Maria are never easy. The people say that, as a result of Mr Grigson's investigations when he was writing his book on the tribe, their villages have suffered an invasion of man-eating tigers. In one village where I myself took photographs it was declared afterwards that I had made all the women barren. The Maria are friendly people, and I was able to make many friends among them. But particularly on matters which have a police reference they are naturally inclined to be secretive and prefer to claim ignorance rather than by confiding in the investigator perhaps expose themselves to later difficulties. Moreover, there is undoubtedly throughout aboriginal India a belief that talking about tribal affairs may anger the ancestors of the clan or disturb some godling's peace of mind. It is said of Korava children, members of a criminal tribe in Mysore, that they are taught from infancy to say 'I do not know' in reply to questions put to them.[1] Many Maria adopt the same attitude.

The presence of my wife, whom everyone (incorrectly) regarded as a Maria but who has a Maria name, was of great assistance in removing suspicion, as was the fortunate chance that I always go barefoot in the villages. I learnt later that the Maria believe that one reason why the crops are so poor nowadays is that officials defile Mother Earth by trampling on her with their shoes. 'At first,' they said, 'when anyone

[1] L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes* (Mysore, 1930), Vol. III, p. 612.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

crossed a field in shoes a tiger ate him, but now the god which possessed the tiger only ruins our crops.' Even though I made the human women barren, therefore, I did not injure the fertility of Mother Earth!

I do not suggest that in this book I have discovered anything new. But the transition from a social order where everything was settled by the tribe to a state of affairs where everything is settled by outsiders and nothing at all by the tribe, is of obvious interest. The tragedies described here throw light on many aspects of tribal life, and are specially valuable as indicating what things are emotionally disturbing to the Maria mind. When we read a monograph on a tribe, its whole life is laid out before us. Some things are interesting and exciting to the reader, but it is not always easy to discover what is interesting to the people themselves. Supplementary studies like this help us to appreciate the actual realities of, for example, a polygamous household or the real difficulties of the serving-marriage. The impact of witchcraft on the minds of the people, the extent of their attachment to property, their jealousy and desire for revenge are vividly illustrated here.

The value of such a study as this is not, however, only for the student. As the tribal areas are opened up, and as the aboriginals come more and more into touch with the outside world, it will become ever more essential for administrators and magistrates to understand tribal mentality. It is hard enough sometimes to understand any kind of aboriginal action. There is nothing more baffling than aboriginal crime. The Courts are all too ready to save time and energy by accepting a plea of drunkenness as an explanation of what seems incomprehensible. Undoubtedly a proportion of aboriginal crime, like the crime of civilized people, is due to alcohol. But I do not believe the proportion is large and there is reason to suppose that the plea of drunkenness so frequently put forward is often suggested to the accused by his advisers.

The importance of anthropological knowledge for the proper evaluation of aboriginal crime hardly needs illustration. One of the most difficult things that a Court has to decide in a case of homicide is whether the deed that it is evaluating comes under any of the Exceptions to Section 300 of the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I.P.C. Was the crime premeditated? Was it provoked by a serious and unbearable insult? The difficulty here, which every Sessions Judge admits, is that what seems an extreme provocation to him or the Assessors may hardly be noticed by the aboriginal, and incidents that seem quite trifling to the 'civilized' mind may rouse the Maria or Naga to a fit of homicidal rage. The matter is complicated by the fact that the tribes vary greatly from one to another. The Bison-horn Maria, for example, are passionately concerned about female chastity, and a wife's infidelity is constantly a cause of murder. But in this their Gond and Baiga neighbours to the north have a much lower standard. Love is comparatively free. Divorce is easy and a wife's betrayal is readily compensated by the payment of a small fine. It is obvious, therefore, that a Gond or Baiga who suspects his wife of infidelity is not put to anything like the same degree of provocation as that suffered by a Bison-horn Maria under similar circumstances.

Premeditation may be indicated by tribal customs. The Bison-horn Maria express the spirit of implacable revenge by certain dramatic symbols. They pull out their pubic hairs; they remove a few handfuls of grass from an enemy's roof; they whistle loudly the dreaded *sui* whistle. In any case where an accused is proved to have indulged in one or other of these acts, it may be assumed that his crime was premeditated.

A Bastar tragedy, the murder of Tati Hirme by her deceased husband's younger brother Doga, provides an interesting example of how a knowledge of local custom can explain an otherwise meaningless crime. According to tribal practice a younger brother has a right over his elder brother's widow, a right which extends not only to her person, but to her property. This right Tati Hirme refused to Doga, and there is evidence that for a long time the youth bitterly resented her behaviour. On the day of the tragedy he went to her house and asked her for some tobacco. She refused, and he murdered her.

At first sight here is precisely one of those motiveless crimes which have so often puzzled outside observers. It is true that there was hostility between the parties, but the refusal of a small gift of tobacco was hardly sufficient for so disastrous a result. But in Maria practice to ask a woman

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWO

THE BISON-HORN MARIA

I

The so-called Maria of Bastar fall naturally into two divisions distinguished by many details of culture and tradition, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains and the Bison-horn Maria living to the south of the Indrawati River. A full account of both these tribes has been given by W. V. Grigson, and his book should be read by those who wish to have a fuller background of Maria life than the present volume can supply. In this chapter I will only give a brief summary of the life and customs of the Bison-horn Maria.

The Bison-horn Maria, who are distinguished from the other aboriginals of Bastar by the splendid head-dress they use for their marriage dances, numbered about 156,000 in 1931, and I estimate their present strength at about 175,000. They are distributed all over southern Bastar, among the entrancing hills of Dantewara, in the dry forests of Bijapur, among the hot but lovely lowlands of Konta, in the remote Sukma and Kutru Zamindaris. On the borders of the main Maria stock are a number of communities which really belong to it, the Koya of the extreme south, the Dorla who claim to be a superior caste and the mixed population along the banks of the Indrawati and reaching up towards the Muria country beyond Barsur. The Dorla and Koya dance in Bison-horn Maria fashion; the mixed people to the north combine the customs of the Hill Maria with their own. In the neighbourhood of Jagdalpur, the Maria gradually lose their distinctiveness as they approach the town and merge into the southern Muria.

There are few people in India more attractive than the Bison-horn Maria, physically charming, of good stature, perfect figure, finely featured with carefully tended hair, often a lovely golden-brown in colour. Both men and women are very strong; the men can carry heavy loads great distances, endure long and arduous hunting expeditions and dance all night bearing their great drums. Their health is fairly good, but they are afflicted with yaws, though the work of the

[P. 11]

4: Führer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

compliance with Hindu customs, and "Raj-Gond" reform movements have made their appearance in the Central Provinces.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the distinction between Raj Gonds and the other sections of the Gond peoples. C. B. Lucie-Smith writing of the Raj Gonds of Chanda suggested that either "the epithet Raj was originally applied to royal and noble Gond families, from which the distinction spread to their followers and the governing class generally; or it may describe the leading Gond tribe which in ancient days conquered the land from other aboriginal clans."[1] But Captain Forsyth believed that Raj Gonds are in many cases the descendants of alliances between Rajput adventurers and Gonds, and R. V. Russell quotes this view with qualified approval.[2]

W. V. Grigson on the other hand lays emphasis rather on the social than the historical causes for the distinction and suggests that such names as Raj Gond arose from "the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names."[3] The situation in Adilabad seems rather to accord with the second suggestion advanced by Lucie-Smith; for here the Raj Gonds do not form a ruling class or even a class of privileged economic status, but an entire tribal group comprising all strata of society from the feudal chiefs down to the poorest labourer. We will see in a later chapter that the once powerful Gond Kings of Chanda belonged to this group, and their kinsmen in the Adilabad hills were as early as the 17th century referred to as Raj Gonds in patents of the Emperor Aurangzeb.

Here the Raj Gonds, far from aspiring to inclusion in the Hindu fold, consider themselves the true exponents of Gond culture and Gond language, and above all of the traditional Gond religion which involves the sacrifice of cows at the rites for the clan-gods. Many of them have never met a Dhurwe Gond, but those who have come in contact with the few groups of Dhurwe Gonds who have recently drifted across the Chanda border, look down upon them as speaking a corrupt form of Gondi intermixed with much Marathi, and as following different customs; somewhat sweepingly and apparently unjustly they assert that the Dhurwe Gonds have no cult of clan deities "only worshipping Bhimana like Kolams."

It seems indeed that the Raj Gonds of Adilabad, who have lived for almost a century and a half under Muslim rule, and have in consequence been less exposed to the influence of the more intolerant exponents of Hinduism, have retained more of their old culture than

1. *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Chanda District. Central Provinces.* 1869. Nagpur 1870, p. 46.
2. *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India.* London 1916. Vol. III. p. 63.
3. W. V. Grigson. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar.* London. 1938 p. 36.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

175 on the economic and social position of the Gonds were far reaching, and the repercussions attendant on the opening up of the District will be discussed in Book II,[4] while reference to the newly established culture-contacts with non-aboriginal immigrants from both Telingana and Marathwara are contained in Chapter III.

162 In 1941 the Gonds of Hyderabad numbered 141,335, which is only a fraction of India's entire Gond population of more than 3,000,000. If we remember that this is about ten times the strength of the aboriginal population of the Australian continent at the time of discovery, and far exceeds in numbers the Red Indians in North America, it is indeed surprising to find only a slender volume of literature on this remarkable group of peoples.

114 The first reference to the Gonds in scientific literature is perhaps the small list of Gondi words communicated in 1844 by Dr. Voysey to the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.[2] A somewhat larger one, together with a few grammatical notes was given in 1847 by Dr. O. Manager,[2] and the following year B. H. Hodgson published in the same journal a comparative vocabulary of Dravidian dialects containing among others Gondi and Oraon words.[3] Fuller, though by no means complete, are the grammar and vocabulary of the Gondi spoken in the Chindwara District, compiled by the Rev. James Dawson in 1872.[4]

But the earliest ethnological account of the Gonds is contained in the Rev. Stephen Hislop's remarkable *Papers on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*, edited by Sir R. Temple in 1866.[5] This book, though somewhat confusing in the presentation of material, is a mine of information for the initiated, and will be of permanent value for its very full version of a cycle of Gond myths both in Gondi and English. Fairly lengthy notes on various sections of Gonds are found in the administrative reports and papers of several of Hislop's contemporaries, notably Captain C. I. R. Glasfurd,[6] Major C. B. Lucie-Smith,[7] Sir R. Temple,[8] Sir C. Grant,[9] and Col. Ward,[10] but the information contained in these is of very uneven character. The next impor-

1. Vol. XIII. p. 19.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI. p. 286.
3. "The Aborigines of Central India," *ibid.*, Vol. XVII, Part I, pp. 550—558.
4. *Ibid.* Vol. XXXIX, pp. 108—117, 172—198.
5. Nagpur 1866.
6. *Report on the Dependency of Bastar*. 1862, Selection from Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department No. XXXIX, Calcutta 1863.—*Report on Land Revenue Settlement of Upper Godavari District*, Nagpur 1868.
7. *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Chanda District*, Nagpur 1870.
8. *Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces up to August 1862*. (Reprint) Nagpur 1923.—*Report on the Zamindaris and other Petty Chiefdoms in the Central Provinces in 1863* (Reprint) Nagpur 1923.
9. *Gazetteer of the Central Provinces*, Nagpur 1876.
10. Mandla Settlement Report 1868.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

tant contribution to the ethnology of the Gonds were the articles by the Rev. J. Cain, who spent a lifetime among the Koyas of the Godavari valley and published reliable, though limited information on their culture and their peculiar dialect, which is strongly influenced by Telugu.[1]

After the publication of these pioneer works interest in the Gonds waned and except for some useful notes in Captain J. Forsyth's *The Highlands of Central India*,[2] the usual paragraphs on population in various District Gazetteers published in the early years of the 20th century, and in the Census of India, 1901, little of any relevance was written on the tribe during the next fifty years. Then followed the publication of Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, which contains in Volume IV,[3] a discussion of the position of Gondi among the Dravidian languages, and of E. Thurston's *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*[4] with a useful article on the Koyas. More complete than any previous account of Gonds is R. V. Russell's article 'Gond' in *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*[5] but even this suffers to some extent from the faults of all such compilations, and, though full of interesting details, fails to draw a clear distinction between the individual Gond tribes.

C. G. Chevenix Trench's *Grammar of Gondi*,[6] on the other hand, is a work of great thoroughness and is as yet the most systematic description of a Gondi dialect. While confined to the language of Betul and the surrounding area, it is also a useful guide to the study of other Gondi dialects, and its collection of legends, stories and songs lends it considerable ethnological value.

Another approach to the Gond problem was made by C. U. Wills, the author of *The Raj-Gond Maharajas of the Satpura Hills*[7] and the *Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Mediaeval Chattisgarh*.[8] Wills' writings are mainly based on early Mohammedan sources, and throughout his history of the Gond states of the Central Provinces, he relies only on the authority of written documents, excluding, as it would seem consciously, all ethnological material. His book on the Raj-Gond Maharajas, while an excellent compilation of old records, suffers there-

1. "The Bhadrachalam Taluka, Godavari District, S. India." *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V. 1876.—"The Bhadrachalam and Rekapalli Talukas." *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. VIII. 1879, and Vol. X. 1881.—"The Koi a Southern Tribe of the Gond." *Journal Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Vol. XIII. 1881.

2. New edition, London 1889.—Forsyth gives in this book a poetical version of the Lingo myth which is based on Hislop's text.

3. *Munda and Dravidian Languages*. Calcutta 1906.

4. Madras 1909.

5. London 1916. Vol. III, pp. 39-143.

6. Madras 1919.

7. Nagpur 1913.

8. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Vol. XV. 1919, pp. 197-262.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

fore from a certain one-sidedness; it does not, for instance, give even the clan-names of the Gond rajas of Garha-Mandla, Deogarh and Chanda.

The Census reports of 1931 contain various useful notes on the Gonds,[1] and among them a detailed description of the Muria's dormitory-system by W. V. Grigson. But it was not until 1938 that the same author gave us with his book *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*[2] the first full-scale monograph on any section of the Gond race. In the Introduction to this important volume, which puts the Bastar Gonds at last on the ethnographic map, J. H. Hutton expresses astonishment " that Indian administrators and British anthropologists should have had to wait a century for any detailed authoritative account of the Gonds of Central India." This sentiment must be shared by all who consider that during that same century numerous ethnological and anthropological expeditions passed the shores of India on their way to the Malayan Archipelago, the South Sea Islands and Australia, all of which are to-day ethnologically far better known than the mainland of India. " What one regrets most," continues Professor Hutton, " is that an early study of the Gonds might have prevented much suffering and many misfortunes, at least, that is, if it had led to the taking of measures in their interests such as Mr. Grigson was able to initiate in Bastar State during the term of his office there as Administrator and Diwan."

Grigson's book stimulated further research among Gonds both inside and outside Bastar, and recent years have seen the publication of various articles and papers by D. N. Majumdar[3] and M. P. Buradkar[4] and of an excellent grammar of the Maria language by A. N. Mitchell.[5] But by far the most important contribution to Gond studies since the publication of Grigson's monograph has come from Verrier Elwin. Already his earlier popular books[6] have given us a vivid picture of the Gonds of the Central Provinces, while his monographs *The Baiga* and *The Agaria*[7] contain many references to Gond custom. *Maria Murder and Suicide*[8] is a fascinating account of Gond life and death in Bastar,

1. 'Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces,' *Census of India* 1931, Vol. I, Part III, Section B.—W. H. Shoobert, *ibidem*, Vol. XII, Central Provinces and Berar, Part I, Report.

2. London, 1938.

3. *Tribal Cultures and Acculturation*, Presidential Address, Anthropology Section of the Indian Science Congress, 1939.—'Racial Affiliations of the Gonds of the Central Provinces,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal*, Vol. VII, 1941, pp. 35-56.

4. 'Totemism among the Gonds.' *Man in India*, Vol. XX, 1940, pp. 114-143, 268-289.—Kinship among the Gonds,' *Nagpur University Journal*, 1940, No. 6, pp. 147-160.

5. *A Grammar of Maria Gondi*, Jagdalpur 1942.

6. *Leaves from the Jungle*, London 1936;—*Phulmat of the Hills, a tale of the Gonds*, London 1937;—*A Cloud that's Dragonish*, London 1938.

7. Bombay 1942.

8. Bombay 1943.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

and many of Elwin's recent articles deal partly or entirely with Gonds.[1] Numerous specimens of the oral literature of Gondwana are recorded in Elwin's excellent collections *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* and *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*[2] and Shamrao Hivale, the co-author of the latter book, has made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Gond culture by his monograph *The Parāthans of the Upper Narbhada Valley*.[3] But the most important work so far written on any Gond tribe is Verrier Elwin's monumental volume, *The Muria and their Gotul*.[4]

Grigson's and Elwin's great monographs both deal with the Gonds of Bastar, and no comparable account exists of the Raj Gonds of the Central Provinces and Hyderabad.[5] While perhaps less colourful than the hill-folks of Bastar, they occupy so important and central a position among the Gondi speaking tribes that lacking a detailed knowledge of Raj Gond culture and tradition we seem far from a solution of the Gond problem.

It was this idea which first led me to the study of the Raj Gonds in the country between the Godavari and the Penganga. When I had completed my work among the Hill Reddis of the Eastern Ghats it might have seemed logical to embark on a study of the Koyas, who are the immediate neighbours of the Reddis both on the Hyderabad and on the British side of the Godavari. For this would have rounded off the work among those aboriginal tribes of the Nizam's Dominions which lie entirely within the Telugu sphere. But judging from my limited experience of Koyas, both Gondi and Telugu speaking, I felt that it would be difficult to understand their cultural life without some knowledge of Gond culture in an area less exposed to the influence of a dominant alien civilization. So I turned northwards to where the Adilabad District, with its more than 70,000 Gonds, promised a rich field for ethnological research. I hoped that a study of these Gonds would lead more directly to the heart of the Gond problem than work among the Koyas on the periphery of the Gondi speaking area.

In December 1941 my wife and I arrived in Asifabad and undertook an informative tour through the three taluqs Asifabad, Utnur and Rajura. Travelling on foot westwards through the Pedda Vagu valley as far as Kerimeri we gained a first impression of villages where Gonds

1. 'I married a Gond,' *Man in India*, Vol. XX, 1940, pp. 228-255;—'Primitive Ideas on Menstruation and the Climacteric in Central India,' in *Essays in Anthropology presented to R. B. Sarat Chandra Roy*, Lucknow 1942, pp. 141—157.—'Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Bengal*, Vol. IX., 1943, pp. 99-148.—'The Attitude of Indian Aboriginals to Sexual Impotence,' *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII, 1943, pp. 127-146—'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods,' *Man*, Vol. XLIII, 1943, pp. 97-104.—'Stilt-Walking among the Murias of Bastar State,' *Man* Vol. XLIV, 1944, pp. 38-41.

2. Bombay 1944.

3. Bombay 1945.

4. Bombay 1947.

5. Syed Siraj-ul-Hasan's *The Castes and Tribes of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions* (Bombay 1920) contains only a brief article on the Raj Gonds of Adilabad District, pp. 216-232.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

114 live side by side with Kolams as well as with non-aboriginal settlers, then climbed to the higher plateau and were fortunate enough to watch a clan-god feast at Pangri. On our way from Pangri to Utnur we passed Marlavai and decided on this village as our future base-camp. Early [54] in February we went to the Kolapur Jatra, a great Gond feast and fair, held annually fifteen miles north-west of Utnur. From there we turned north and then east into Rajura Taluq, where we visited tht famous fort of Manikgarh, now deserted and overgrown by jungle. Camping in [126] various villages of the higher plateau we gathered piecemeal information from both Gonds and Kolams, and by the end of our tour realized that a study of the aboriginals of Adilabad might lead to the very heart of the Gond problem.

123 A slightly embarrassing circumstance during our first tour was the rapidly spreading rumour that I was a recruiting officer and had come to take young Gonds to the war. The general excitement following the Japanese invasion of Malaya, had reached even the Gonds and they interpreted my taking of notes and photographs as a preliminary selection of all the fittest men. And when at the same time the Director-General of Revenue visited Adilabad and Utnur, they took our tours for a concerted movement and thought the lorries with his camp-kit were meant to carry off the recruits. Many hid in the forest and the fields when we passed by and in the villages it was difficult to establish confidence.

But once settled in Marlavai in a house built in Gond style just outside the village, we were soon faced by a difficulty of exactly the opposite nature. For now rumour ran that I was a revenue officer, specially sent to the District to investigate the grievances of Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods, and to give land to all those whom the influx of new settlers had rendered landless. All through the hot weather and the greater part of the rains aboriginals from all parts of the district, some in delegations of thirty and forty, flocked to Marlavai, all wanting their difficulties heard and remedied. Unable to give them any concrete assistance, I had at least to listen to their tales of woe, and many a day passed when the only anthropological information swelling my note-books was the distressingly monotonous account of a culture-contact resulting invariably in the expropriation and economic enslavement of the aboriginal.[1]

114 From March to the middle of December Marlavai was our headquarters, but several tours led us to the surrounding villages and ultimately to the Tilani area as far as Rompalli and Mangi. We left the district at Christmas and returned again early in March 1943, when we toured the taluqs of Both, Kinwat and Adilabad, reaching Marlavai in the middle of April. While in Hyderabad I had succeeded in obtaining the sanction of H.E.H. the Nizam's Government for a Gond Education

1. A full account of the conditions then prevailing in the Adilabad District is contained in my reports and diaries published under the title *Tribal Hyderabad* by the Revenue Department, Government of H.E.H. the Nizam, Hyderabad 1945.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

Scheme under which instruction in reading and writing Gondi and later Marathi and Urdu was to be provided for both children and adults. On my return to Marlavai we started work on a small scale with a school where adult Gonds were to be trained as teachers and village-officers. The work on this Scheme kept us in Marlavai until the end of January 1944, and it was there that most of the chapters contained in Book I were written. After an absence of five months in Assam, we returned in the rains for a short period and this gave me the opportunity of checking my Gondi texts with the help of the Headmaster of the Marlavai Training Centre Mr. S. B. Jogalkar and the Gond teachers, some of whom had meanwhile opened schools in their own villages.[1]

The division of the present work into two books was necessitated by its bulk and by the fact that a sudden opportunity for two expeditions into one of the least known tribal areas of the North-East Frontier prevented us from concentrating on the completion of the second part.

In the presentation of facts we have departed from the usual order of a straight monograph; instead of grouping them under such headings as material culture, agriculture, or religion, we have attempted an arrangement which, we hope, will give a better idea of Gond life as an organic entity. After the introductory chapters, which describe the physical and cultural environment, we have set a section outlining the mythical background of Gond culture and the cult of the clan-deities; for in this cult and the sacred myths lies the mainspring of the social order. Then follows a section describing the economic and ritual activities of a village community throughout the cycle of the year, and the three chapters of this section contain also most of the information on agriculture, the basis of Gond economics. Book II will open with an account of the phases of life, from childhood to death, and this will set the stage for a general discussion of the social organization and the principles of Gond religion, all details of ritual having been described already in their proper setting. The old feudal system looms still in the background of the social order, and I am attempting a reconstruction based on the existing remnants and local traditions contained mainly in the stories and songs of Pardhans. Read together with Wills' history of the Gond States of the Central Provinces this will perhaps give a certain idea of political and social life prevailing in Gondwana throughout the greater part of mediæval times.

The final chapters of the book will be concerned with the developments of the last fifty years, when increased contact with other populations broke up the Gonds' feudal organization and land-hungry immigrants drove many families from the lands where they had lived since the times of their ancestors. It is a dismal tale of the decline of a once proud and happy people, the loss of economic freedom, and the birth

[1] Cf. my article 'Aboriginal Education in Hyderabad.' *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. V, 1944.

513, 575, 561

Gond AW32

/Information concerning the ghotul or gotul, the bachelors' and adolescents' dormitory, will be found in category 883, Adolescent Activities./

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~~Bison Horn Maria~~

000 THE MARIA GONDS OF BASTAR

By

SIR WILFRID GRIGSON

With an Introduction by

J. H. HUTTON, C.I.E., D.Sc.

Professor of Social Anthropology in the University of Cambridge

REISSUED IN 1949
with a Supplement containing 80 pages
of additional matter and 39 illustrations
by the Author and Verrier Elwin

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HILL MARIA YOUTH AND GIRL
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*

[Facing p. iii]

Frontispiece

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~~Hill~~ Maria
~~Bison Horn~~ Maria

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TO THE PEOPLES OF BASTAR
AND
TO MY COMPANIONS IN BASTAR
1927-31

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~~Hill Maria~~
~~Bison Horn Maria~~

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION xi

PREFACE xv

PART I

INTRODUCTORY

BASTAR STATE AND ITS PEOPLES: THE HISTORICAL, GEOGRAPHIC AND ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING OF THE MARIAS 1

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING IN TIME; THE HISTORICAL ISOLATION OF BASTAR 3

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING IN SPACE; THE PHYSICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE GEOGRAPHY OF BASTAR 21

CHAPTER III

THE ETHNOLOGICAL SETTING; THE PRIMITIVE RACES OF BASTAR .. 35

PART II

PERSONAL APPEARANCE AND CHARACTERISTICS

CHAPTER IV

PERSONAL APPEARANCE; PHYSICAL POWERS AND ENDURANCE; BODILY ATTITUDES; CLEANLINESS; HAIR-DRESSING; DRESS AND ORNAMENTS OF (A) HILL, (B) BISON-HORN MARIAS; WEAPONS AND TOOLS 61

CHAPTER V

CHARACTER 91

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
~~Hill Maria~~
~~Bison-Horn Maria~~
000

CONTENTS

PART III

DOMESTIC LIFE AND ECONOMY

CHAPTER VI

PAGE

VILLAGES, HOUSES AND THEIR CONTENTS 101
A. HILL MARIAS 101
B. BISON-HORN MARIAS 118

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE 125

CHAPTER VIII

PROCURING OF OTHER FOOD AND DRINK 151
A. FOOD GATHERING 151
B. HUNTING AND TRAPPING 154
C. DOMESTICATION OF ANIMALS 161
D. FISHING 163
E. INTOXICANTS AND OTHER DRINKS 168

CHAPTER IX

DOMESTIC LIFE; MISCELLANEOUS 172
A. TREATMENT OF SICKNESS 172
B. MANUFACTURES 174
C. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS 181
D. DANCING. 1. HILL MARIA 183
2. BISON-HORN MARIA 185
E. OTHER AMUSEMENTS 186
F. RECKONING TIME 187
G. DAILY ROUTINE 188
H. FIRE-MAKING 189

PART IV

RELIGION AND MAGIC

CHAPTER X

THE EARTH, THE CLAN-GOD AND THE VILLAGE MOTHER 193

CHAPTER XI

THE ANNUAL RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES OF THE BISON-HORN MARIAS .. 208

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
~~Bison-Horn Maria~~
000

CONTENTS

Chapter XII

PAGE
The Cult of the Departed; Magic and Witchcraft; Omens; Beliefs about the Phenomena of Nature 222

PART V

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION, LAW AND CUSTOM

Chapter XIII

Social Organization; the Phratries and Clans 233

Chapter XIV

Marriage 244

Chapter XV

Birth and Childhood 263
A. Hill Marias 263
B. Bison-horn Marias 269

Chapter XVI

Death and Funeral Ceremonies 271
A. Hill Marias 271
B. Bison-horn Marias 279

Chapter XVII

Village, Clan and Pargana Authorities and Panchayats; their Executive Authority; their Judicial Authority and Methods; Property and Inheritance; Position of Women; the Recent State Orders Restoring Judicial Authority to Panchayats .. 284

APPENDIXES

I. Administrative Divisions of Bastar State 299
II. Lists of Hill Maria Clans and Bison-horn Maria Clans and Phratries, and Pedigree of the Hill Maria Family holding the Hereditary Headmanship of Chhota Dongar Pargana and Orcha Village 300
III. Hill Maria Terms of Relationship 308
IV. Names of Men and Women 310
V. Anthropometric Analysis of the Hill and Bison-horn Marias, by Mr. R. C. Roy 312
VI. Language 319
VII. Glossary of Vernacular Terms 331
VIII. Bibliography 337

[p. x is blank]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
~~Hill Maria~~
~~Bison-Horn Maria~~

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE		PAGE
	Hill Maria Youth and Girl	*frontispiece*
I	Map of Bastar State—Natural Divisions ..	20
II	(1) The Chitrakot Falls of the River Indrawati	
	(2) Confluence of Rivers Indrawati and Kombra, Border of Bastar and Chanda	
	(3) The Aranpur Pass	*facing* 22
III	Map of Bastar State—Political Divisions ..	29
IV	Bastar State Ethnographic Map	40
V	(1) and (2) A Hill Maria, of the Gond Type. Usendi Muka of Orcha	
	(3) Group of Hill Maria Girls	*facing* 62
VI	(1) Full-face, Jugho Chero, of Itulnar	
	(2) Hill Maria of Handawada	
	(3) Kutru Mar Youths, wearing Taghali Bark Overcoats	*facing* 70
VII	(1) and (2) Hill Maria Dancers; (2) shows the use of Bark Rain-coat as Dancing Skirt	
	(3) Hill Maria Dancers, showing Dancing-Shields and Bunches of Pellet-Bells worn over the rump	
	(4) A Hill Maria of Kurmer, using his Rain-Hat and Rain-Shield, as he works with his Gudari Digging Hoe	*facing* 74
VIII	Bison-Horn Maria Dancers	*facing* 78
IX	Bison-Horn Maria Dancers at Bailadila:	
	Above, Four Men	
	Below, Women, showing the Clothes, the Masses of Ornaments, and the Tirdudi Bamboo Dancing-Staves	*facing* 80
X	(1) The Village Mother's Shrine at Orcha	
	(2) The Village Mother at Handawada ..	*facing* 110
XI	(1) Hill Maria Women carrying Gourds of Water	
	(2) Hill Maria Woman carrying a Leaf-Box of Grain	
	(3) Bison-Horn Maria Village Street, Telam, near Katakalian	*facing* 118
XII	Plans of Bison-Horn Maria Village and House	121
XIII	Hill Maria Penda Field, just Harvested, Dudmarka, Kutru Mar	*facing* 132

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
~~Hill Maria~~
~~Bison-Horn Maria~~
600

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE		PAGE
XIV	TONDAWADA, HILL MARIA DAM FOR RICE CULTIVATION: *Above*, DOWNSTREAM FACE *Below*, UPSTREAM FACE	*facing* 146
XV	(1) HILL MARIA DANCERS (2) HILL MARIA DOMESTIC LIFE. FETCHING WATER FROM RIVER	*facing* 184
XVI	THE SACRIFICE BEFORE THE WIJJ-WETA. THE OFFERINGS BEFORE THE ALTAR OF BOWS	*facing* 211
XVII	HILL MARIA TYPES: *Above*, ARKI BAIYYA OF KORAWAYA; GECHA POLA OF CHUDALA TONDAWADA *Below*, JUGHO BUKE OF ITULNAR; GUMA EWADO OF GOTI	*facing* 226
XVIII	BISON-HORN MARIA TYPES: *Above*, MARKAMI HARMA OF BURGUM: MARKAMI JOGA, HEADMAN OF BURGUM *Below*, MASE, WIFE OF MARKAMI MUKA OF KAKADI	*facing* 240
XIX	(1) THE POURING OF WATER OVER THE BRIDEGROOM AND BRIDE AT THE BISON-HORN MARIA WEDDING DESCRIBED AT PAGE 258 (2) AN OLD BISON-HORN MARIA FROM GUDRA, BETWEEN KATAKALIAN AND KUAKONDA	*facing* 254
XX	HILL MARIA DEATH CEREMONIES: (1) MOURNING OVER A CORPSE, HANDAWADA (2) KEENING FOR A DEAD WOMAN, BHERA TONDAWADA (3) BURIAL GRAVE AT NUGUR, KUTRU MAR	*facing* 274
XXI	BISON-HORN MARIA MEMORIALS TO THE DEAD: (1) URAS-GATTA POST, NEAR CHITRAKOT FALLS (2) DANTA-KAL AND URAS-KAL STONES, ARANPUR	*facing* 280
XXII	URAS-KAL STONES ON DANTEWARA-BAILA DILA ROAD	*facing* 282
XXIII	HILL MARIA PANCHAYAT, ITULNAR, SHOWING RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR HEADMEN SEATED ON STONE UDAM-GARVA SEATS	*facing* 290

FIGURE		PAGE
1	ANTAGARH TAHSIL, DIVIDED INTO PARGANAS	33
2	HILL MARIA ARROWS	86
3	HILL MARIA BOWMAN, SHOWING METHOD OF RELEASE	87
4	HILL MARIA AXE, HOE AND DIGGING IRON; BISON HORN MARIA HOE	89
5	MAP OF KARANGUL VILLAGE OF THE PARLIO HILL MARIA CLAN	103
6	PARISH MAP OF HANDAWADA	*facing* 108
7	GROUND PLAN OF THREE HILL MARIA HOUSES	111
8	HILL MARIA PANTHER-TRAP, HANDAWADA	137

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

INTRODUCTION

114 It is very remarkable that Indian administrators and British anthropologists should have had to wait a century for any detailed authoritative account of the Gonds of Central India. It may also be said to have been very unfortunate that we should have had to wait so long, though that misfortune is much mitigated by the excellence of the monographs that we have just received from Verrier Elwin and, in particular, from Mr. Grigson. What one regrets most is that an earlier study of the Gonds might have prevented much suffering and many misfortunes, at least, that is, if it had led to the taking of measures in their interests such as Mr. Grigson was able to initiate in Bastar State during the term of his office there as Administrator and Diwan.

It is hardly necessary for me to say anything of Mr. Grigson's qualifications for writing of the Maria Gonds of that State: those qualifications will be self-evident to the discerning reader of the book which follows. But it should be placed on record that Mr. Grigson has succeeded in initiating measures to restore the jurisdiction of village *panchayats*, to restrict the alienation of villages to foreigners from outside by abolishing the *thekadari* system, to put an end to oppressive and vexatious interference by police and other petty officials with the life of the Maria village. For it is the very high privilege of that altogether too rare individual the anthropologically-minded administrative officer, that he can often bring practical benefits to the subjects of his studies as well as informative benefits to the readers he instructs.

It is obvious that this monograph on the Gonds of Bastar reveals a fusion of cultures which has not only taken place in the past but is going on in the present. The author himself draws attention to the difference between the cultures of the Bison-horn and of the Abujhmar Marias, and ascribes them to successive waves of Gond immigrants, as well as to the more recent encroachments of Hinduism. But this is not the whole of the picture, and without offering any attempt at an analysis of the Bastar cultures it is perhaps permissible to point out certain parallels and to suggest an inference or two. Mr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, dealing in Appendix V with the physical side of the Gond problem, suggests the existence of three elements, a pre-Dravidian element conveniently labelled 'proto-australoid' by Sewell and Veddaic by others—Eickstedt calls it 'Veddid'—which is dolichocephalic, prognathous and

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

platyrrhine; a Dravidian element, which some would prefer to call Mediterranean—dolichocephalic leptorrhine; and a slight brachycephalic element, which Mr. Roy is clearly inclined to ascribe to an alpine or palaeo-alpine source rather than a mongoloid one. He states that, although he found instances of oblique eyes, he never found a case of the epicanthic fold in Bastar. Personally, I am still unconvinced. My own impression of the Marias is that there is a slight but definite mongoloid element. Of course, these impressions are merely the result of optical observation, and unsupported by any sort of scientific measurement, and it is possible that I have been prejudiced by a certain psychological resemblance between the Marias and their neighbours and the submongoloid hillmen of Assam.

Culturally, the parallels afforded by the Maria Gonds are often interesting and suggestive, though it is possible here to mention only a few. Some of them are definitely reminiscent of tribes farther south in the peninsula. Thus the use of separate huts or shelters for the segregation of menstruating women is a custom shared with several of the Travancore hill tribes, while the objection to performing the sexual act inside a dwelling is shared with the Kadar of Cochin State, and probably with other tribes. It may perhaps be referred to a period when, as with the Andamanese to-day, the only permanent dwelling-house was an unpartitioned communal hut.

Other traits there are which recall tribes of Munda affinities. The association of peacocks with the dead and the use of kettle-drums and dish-shaped gongs are shared with the Munda-speaking Sawara of the Madras Agency Tracts, and the use of the multiple cord belts for women with the Bondo Parja of the same area and with the Chagyik Konyak of the Naga hills in Assam, items of culture, of course, which may just as well have passed from west to east as vice versa, or which may merely have been drawn by various tribes from a common source. The practices of erecting a dolmen as a seat for a village elder, for the 'Village Mother' or for the ghost of a dead person to sit on, a circle of stones for the village *panchayat* and a memorial menhir in the village of ancestral origin, together with a belief in a collective clan soul and what amounts to a form of ancestor-worship recall very strongly the Sawara, Munda and Khasi cultures, while they link up with other similar practices of the megalithic cultures farther east, e.g. in the Naga hills, Mentawi, Farther Asia generally and even the Pacific. The same group of cultures is again suggested by the use of a communal bachelors' hall, of the sago palm and of grass rain-coats, by stilt-walking and by the making of fire by means of a fire-saw instead of a drill. This

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

particular fire-saw used by Mr. Grigson's Marias would seem to be much nearer the original implement than the saw-thong form used in Assam or (e.g.) Borneo, for the Maria fire-saw needs three men to manipulate it, while one Naga or Kayan can make fire with a thong worked by his two hands under a hearth held in place by one foot, the Mikir and Nicobarese types, usually worked by two men, forming links between the Maria and the Naga types. On the other hand, Maria ceremonial fire *must* apparently be obtained from an existing household fire; the Naga tribes, on the contrary, must employ thong-ignited need-fire, while their neighbours the Kuki tribes, who seldom use such an apparatus, may obtain it from flint and steel, but not from matches. One is tempted to infer a reminiscence of a time when the making of fire was unknown in the Abujhmar hills, as in the Andaman islands, and the importation of a primitive form of the fire-saw which has developed elsewhere into a simpler and more useful apparatus. In contrast to the fire-saw the Maria blacksmith's bellows have South Indian and African rather than Indonesian affinities, while the bamboo ideochord is not played by the Maria, as by the Thado or the Kayan, by plucking the raised bark 'strings' but by tapping them, making the instrument in their hands rather a xylophone than a guitar.

Reference has already been made to the megalithic culture of the Maria, now apparently rapidly decaying. Here again, much is suggestive of various Assam and Indonesian cultures. Menhirs are transported as by Lhota Nagas and erected as by the Angami, while stone cists are put up by the village path. Seed is fertilized with blood, suggesting not only the Khond *meriah* sacrifice, but also the general theory underlying the head-hunting practices of Naga, Wa, Kayan, Igorot or Taigal from Assam to Formosa. A water-dwelling snake-demon like that of the Maria pervades Thado superstition; shooting stars are 'star dung' alike to the Sema Naga and the Maria; like the Maria, the Ao Naga dances with bells on his buttocks. That incest and other breaches of taboo are visited on the offenders or their kin by man-eating tigers is a typical Naga belief, and the inheritance of his father's house by the youngest son a common Naga practice, though Mr. Grigson's account of it among his Gonds suggests that the reason is to be found in the small value of the building and site, which would certainly not hold good for the Angami. The capture of fish by beating noxious or intoxicating plant juices into the river, like the use of beetle grubs for food, is a very widespread practice indeed, but there is something particularly suggestive of Tibeto-Burmese affinities in the termination of so many Maria clan names in *-mi*, which in Naga or Kuki languages means 'men'. Indeed, several of these Maria clan names, e.g.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Wachami, are so like those of Naga clans as to tempt one to infer a connexion from a similarity or even identity which is probably merely fortuitous.

More than enough has probably been said to indicate to the reader the interest and importance of the work that follows. It is only to be regretted that no written word, even of Mr. Grigson himself nor yet even his admirable illustrations, can convey the peculiar attraction the Maria has for the stranger that enters into his gates, an attraction sensible at once even to a casual visitor among them, such as I have been, and obviously felt very strongly by the author of the monograph that follows. Let him now speak for himself.

J. H. HUTTON

Cambridge

October 11*th*, 1936

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PREFACE

THE Administration of Bastar State has generously subsidized the publication of this book, and for this practical sympathy I must thank Colonel Meek, the Agent to the Governor-General for the Eastern States, and Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., Administrator of Bastar State. I hope that it will not be the last book to be written about the Marias. More systematic field-work will without doubt correct and supplement many of my statements; I shall be content if my book tempts any trained worker to visit the ethnologically unexplored lands of Bastar and Jeypore.

My four years as Administrator of Bastar State kept me busy in camp and office with administrative problems of all kinds. The primary object of my enquiries was to ascertain grievances, especially those caused by the adoption in a primitive State of criminal, civil and revenue laws framed for British Indian districts some centuries more 'advanced'. In getting the aboriginal to show me his house and his possessions, in watching his domestic and agricultural routine, and in attending his simple social and religious ceremonies I found the readiest path to his confidence and to appreciation of his real feelings about the administration. Question begat counter-question, and attempts to explain the domestic life of the English to Marias were interesting and amusing. If because I was primarily an administrator I have sometimes dwelt at length on administrative problems, I do not repent: for, despite such views as those advanced by Mr. N. M. Joshi and Mr. M. S. Aney in the Indian Legislative Assembly debate of February 18th, 1936, on the areas to be wholly or partially excluded under the recent Government of India Act, when they heartily damned all anthropologists as wishing to keep the primitive races of India 'uncivilized' and 'in a state of barbarism' as raw material for their science and 'in order to add to their blessed stock of scientific knowledge', anthropology has a very practical value to all charged with the administration of other races if it can discover the thoughts and need of those races. The results of the divorce of administration from anthropology as seen in the system of land revenue, police and judicial administration applied to the Maria tracts of Bastar have been as strikingly revealed on a larger scale by the post-1919 attempts in Bombay and the Central Provinces to force prohibition upon the Bhil, the Gond and the Korku.

Few now are the regions of India where the white man is unknown, and fewer still those in which the Hindu has not yet

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

114 settled. The Hill Maria and part of the Bison-horn Maria country are such regions; and often in our stay in Bastar my wife and I were able to recapture something of the surprise and variety of experience that our pioneer ancestors knew so much more than their descendants of these humdrum and standardized days. This alone would justify some record of what we saw.

000 For encouragement to attempt such a record I must first thank His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler, K.C.S.I., C.B., C.I.E., C.V.O., C.B.E., now Lieutenant-Governor of the Isle of Man, for nine years Governor of the Central Provinces and in political charge of the Central Provinces States, to whom I owed my appointment as Administrator of Bastar, and who was the wisest and most helpful of chiefs and the best and most stimulating of friends. Mr. R. A. Wilson, who was then Chief Secretary to the Government of the Central Provinces, wrote to me suggesting a study of the Marias even before I went to Bastar. I am very grateful also for the advice and encouragement of three friends: Dr. J. H. Hutton, C.I.E., I.C.S., the last Census Commissioner for India, who has put me further in his debt by reading through my manuscript and contributing so interesting an Introduction; Baron Egon von Eickstedt, Professor of Ethnology at Breslau University, who visited Bastar while I was there and has kindly allowed me to reproduce some of his excellent photographs; and the Right Reverend Alex Wood, D.D., O.B.E., Lord Bishop of Nagpur, the doyen of Gondi scholars and sanest of critics. My interest in the Gond, first aroused by contact with him in the Nagpur, Seoni and Hoshangabad districts, was stimulated by early talks with Mr. C. G. Chenevix Trench, C.I.E., then serving in the Central Provinces Commission, the author of a fascinating Gondi grammar and of certain contributions to Blackwood which vividly portray the Indian aboriginal, and by that mine of ethnological material, Russell and Hiralal's *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*. I have in the succeeding pages often disagreed with their statements on Marias in their article 'Gond'; but theirs was a pioneer work, being largely a compilation of statements gleaned from a mass of papers contributed by officials, pleaders and others, supplemented by the personal enquiries of the authors and their wide knowledge of almost all that had been previously written on their subjects. Mistakes and mis-statements were thus inevitable; but their great book is remarkable for its general reliability, its sustained interest and its power of stimulating further investigation.

[126] 114 I must state how I made my enquiries. Throughout my time in Bastar I kept notes and took photographs of what I heard or saw. Between 1927 and 1931 I made four long tours among the Hill

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias, and paid several shorter visits to the fringes of their hills; since 1931 I have three times revisited Bastar, seeing some Marias each time, and spending March 1934 in revisiting the Abujhmar hills villages seen in my 1929-31 tours, and the Bison-horn Maria villages above and below the Aranpur pass. I had similarly often toured before across the Bison-horn Maria country, and made many friends among the villages around the Bailadila hills, which, in return for a reduced assessment of land revenue, had the duty of sending relays of men up to the hills during the summer recess there of the Ruling Chief and leading State officials.

Notes and Queries on Anthropology, published by the Royal Anthropological Institute, was of constant value, even though, as explained in Chapter XIII, the poor memories of the Marias prevented me from getting the results expected from the geneological method. My work made it impossible for me to be in Maria villages at all seasons and to see all Maria ceremonies, and therefore I supplemented my enquiries by getting detailed reports from selected State officials whom I tried to train roughly for this by taking them with me during my personal enquiries on tour. I have almost always checked their reports by personal investigation; and in the few cases where I could not so check them, I have repeated nothing reported by them unless it was confirmed by the independent reports of two or more other reliable observers. These enquiries did impose much extra work on them, but gave them a much-needed knowledge of the aboriginal and did much to raise the morale and co-operation of the enquirers and to raise the standard of the administration. I could not have had a happier and friendlier family of colleagues than those of all ranks who served under me my last two years in the State. All were helpful, but especially Pandit Ghasiram Dane, then a subdivisional officer, the late Mr. H. N. Dutt, then tahsildar of Dantewara, since a victim of black-water fever, Mr. Niranjan Singh, then tahsildar of Bijapur and manager of Kutru, now Assistant Administrator, Mr. Sant Prasad, formerly tahsildar of Konta, Circle Inspector Manbahal Singh of the State Police, and Mr. Dikshitulu of the State Medical Service, who did remarkable anti-yaws work in the Abujhmar hills in my second tour and in later independent tours.

Language was always a difficulty. Halbi is the *lingua franca* of Bastar. The differences between Maria dialects are great, and the very guttural hill dialect is so unintelligible to the Bison-horn Marias that at their rare meetings they communicate with Hill Marias through those of them who understand Halbi. And there are many variations of both the Hill and the Bison-horn Maria dialects. Of Halbi, everyone serving in Bastar must acquire some

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

197 understanding. Of Gondi as spoken in the plateaux of the Central Provinces I had a smattering, but the Maria dialects were as different from it as Spanish and Portuguese from Italian, and the Hill Maria gutturals are beyond the compass of an English voice. Yet one cannot but acquire a considerable vocabulary and power of 124 following the gist of a speech from constant hearing of witnesses in court and association with tribesmen in village and camp; and thus, though never able to dispense with an interpreter, I could check his interpretation of replies, and see that he put my questions in my own way, and not in a leading form. Nothing needs more care than the training of interpreters. I am especially grateful for the 000 help, as interpreter and as enquirer, of the late Circle Inspector Chaitan Singh, of the State Police, a Bastar Rajput with all the traditional virtues of the Rajput. Descended from an ancestor who had once narrowly escaped being sacrificed as a Meriah victim in Jeypore (Orissa), he was passionately interested in the aboriginal, knew all the '36' languages of Bastar, was a mine of information about Bastar customs, religions, songs, dances and games, and was, because he never did an injustice but was simple and reliable in all his ways, loved by the wild tribes of Bastar. His sense of humour, broad like that of the tribesmen, of whom at heart he was one, would overcome disappointment or the short temper bred of heat and exhaustion in gales of laughter; nor was it a respecter of persons, for his tales would chide the follies alike of raja or ryot, political agent or diwan. His sudden death soon after I left Bastar meant the loss of a dear friend, and of an Indian of a type more fitted to a past age but unlikely to be bettered in any succeeding generation. They say that in the forests around Kondagaon, where he shot so many man-eating tigers and organized so many successful tiger beats, the Murias already revere him as Chaitan Deo, a god of good hunting without whose favour no beat will yield game. Nothing could have appealed more to his sense of humour. Wherever he may be, may he have boon companions to laugh at his rhymes and tales, to drink from his silver glass, to take betel from his silver box, and to handle the hunting-knife and the silver-mounted cane given him by successive Governors, and may he live long in the folk memories of Bastar!

For other help I must thank Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S., Political Agent for the Central Provinces States when I went to Bastar, who has also kindly allowed me to reproduce some of his Bastar photographs; Mr. D. R. Rutnam, I.C.S., my successor as Administrator, who was my host in Bastar twice in 1932 and greatly facilitated my 1934 tour in various ways; Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, M.B.E., for more than twenty years Chief Medical Officer

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of the State, the best of companions in Jagdalpur and in camp, and contributor of an interesting account of a Maria fishing beat; Khan Sahib S. R. Daver, Chief Forest Officer, for much information, help in arranging tours, identification of flora and constant interest; Mr. D. J. Plumley, State Engineer, and his most hospitable wife for much help and kindness, especially in my 1934 tour, and for much information gathered in their long experience of Bastar; Mr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, Joint Editor with his distinguished father Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy, M.L.C., of *Man in India*, who at his father's request kindly went with me in my 1934 tour and took the anthropometric measurements on which he based the useful Appendix V. I have also had much help from Mr. K. B. L. Shrivastava and Mr. B. P. Dube, my Bastar stenographer and reader respectively; from Mr. Sampat Singh, interpreter in 1932 and again in 1934, and from Mr. Kosre, my Nagpur stenographer, who kindly devoted a month's leave to helping Mr. R. C. Roy and me in March 1934. My mother-in-law, Mrs. Boyes, kindly drew for me the panther trap reproduced on page 157.

I owe thanks and apologies to many Maria friends and acquaintances, who have endured my probing curiosity and helped me to secure victims for measurement and photography, especially Kama Peda of Dugeli, for constant help at Bailadila; Kalmu Boda of Pharaspal, *pargana* headman of Barsur, to whose steadiness some of us present in the tiger-beat described in Chapter VIII, Part B, may well owe our lives; and to Usendi Moda of Orcha, whose reprieve by Sir Benjamin Robertson from sentence of death and subsequent virtual headmanship of Chhota Dongar Mar are excellent arguments against capital punishment; I have had few more moving sights than the tears of pleasure on the smiling faces of him and his clansmen when they welcomed me back to Orcha in 1934 after an absence of four years.

I had hoped to offer this book to that charming lady, the Maharani Prafulla Kumari Devi of Bastar. But her untimely death has just deprived the State of one whom to know was to love. *Requiescat!*

W. V. GRIGSON

Polperro
September 19th, 1936

Postscript. I have also to thank the Government of the Central Provinces for a recent honorarium, thanks to which this book is more fully illustrated than it would otherwise have been.

Jubbulpore W.V.G.
March 1st, 1937

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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080

PART I

Introductory. Bastar State and its Peoples; the Historical, Geographic and Ethnographic Setting of the Marias

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CHAPTER I

THE SETTING IN TIME; THE HISTORICAL ISOLATION OF BASTAR

[3] BASTAR STATE lies at the extreme south-east corner of the Central Provinces of India, between 17° 46′ and 20° 14′ north, and 80° 15′ and 82° 1′ east. Its area, according to the recently revised Survey of India figures, of 13,725 square miles makes it the tenth state in India in size, larger than Belgium and nearly as large as Holland. It is far larger than any of the old Central Provinces and Orissa States, with which it has recently been brought into the new Eastern States Agency. But it is one of the most sparsely peopled tracts of [161] India, the 1931 population of 524,721 giving a density of only 34 to the square mile. If any part of India is still *terra incognita* to nearly all British officials and travellers, it is the vast tract covered by Bastar and the huge Jeypore zamindari recently transferred from the Vizagapatam Agency of Madras to the new province of Orissa.

[8] To the ordinary Indian of neighbouring districts, even to many of the few immigrant Hindu and Mussalman traders, this remains a land of savages, seeking still for human victims to sacrifice to their fetishes, skilled in herbs and simples, and potent practitioners of magic and witchcraft. Their view is little changed from that held 110 years ago by Maratha officials who described the Marias of the Abujhmar mountains to Sir Richard Jenkins, then Resident at the Court of Nagpur, as 'naked savages, living on roots and sprigs, and hunting for strangers to sacrifice'.

[15] Bastar has in fact always been an almost unknown backwater of the river of Indian history. The late Chief, Maharani Prafulla Kumari Devi, at her accession in 1924 was the last legitimate survivor of one of the most ancient royal families of southern India, the Kakatiya, which reigned at Warangal from about A.D. 1150 to 1425, first possibly as feudatories of the Chalukya kings and then independently. In Bastar folk-song, Annam Deo, the first to reign in Bastar, is spoken of as 'Chalkibans Raja', which may be a corruption of 'Chalukya-bans' and indicate that the Kakatiya family was a cadet branch of the Chalukya. Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175 been an outlying and loosely-held group of feudal dependencies of Warangal. For inscriptions show that before this, in the eleventh century, a Telugu line of Nagvansi kings ruled at Barsur in Dantewara tahsil and at Kuruspal near the Chitrakot falls of the river Indrawati in Jagdalpur tahsil over central Bastar, then known as Chakrakot ; there are also clear signs of another chiefship comprising the Sukma zamindari and the former zamindaris of Chintalnar and Bhiji, now in the Konta tahsil ; the late zamindar of Sukma always claimed that Chintalnar and Bhiji had been given to cadet branches of his family by his ancestors and that his family, though dependent on Warangal, was established in Bastar at Sukma before Annam Deo left Warangal. There are traditions of a Karna king in northern Bastar and of a Karnatak king at Jagdalpur ; and legend still speaks of rajas of Kuakonda and Katakalian in Dantewara tahsil, of the tailed rajas of Tirathgarh in Jagdalpur tahsil, and of Annam Deo fighting to subdue the chiefs of Paralkot, Bhairamgarh and Barsur. The so-called Koyas of southern Bastar still have traditions of visiting King Pratap Rudra's court at Warangal. Till 200 years ago or less, Bastar retained several zamindaris south of the Godavari and in the present East Godavari Agency of Madras, while lists survive of the numerous petty garhs and taluqs, each loosely administered for the Chief of Bastar by Diwans, or alienated to the various zamindars or sub-chiefs, of whom only Bhopalpatnam, Sukma, Kutru and Kotapalli-Pamer now remain. In Kutru, moreover, there remain three or four sub-zamindars holding under the zamindar. All these facts indicate that before Annam Deo's arrival there was a nominal suzerainty of Warangal over most of Bastar, the real authority resting with local chiefs or in the heads of the old tribal organization that was so marked a feature of the medieval kingdoms of the eastern Central Provinces and some of the Chhota Nagpur and the Orissa States. This organization has been ably outlined by Mr. C. U. Wills, I.C.S., in his monograph on 'The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chhattisgarh', published at pp. 197-262 of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, new series, Vol. XV, 1919.

The ruined temples at Barsur, Bhairamgarh, Dantewara, Kuruspal and elsewhere indicate an advanced Hindu civilization in the areas directly administered by the Telugu Nagvansi chiefs of Chakrakot. It was a country worth invading in quite early times ; inscriptions tell of many raids between A.D. 844 and 1150 by Eastern Chalukya, Chola, Western Chalukya and Hoysala princes. There must have been a strong early Telugu infiltration, lasting till the Mohammedan conquest of Warangal and Annam Deo's flight into Bastar, after which the curtain fell upon the country till

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

1853, when it came into direct political relations with the British on the escheat of the Bhonsla Maratha kingdom, to which it had become nominally tributary. Of that infiltration the strongest remaining signs are the groups of Telanga villages that still survive like islands in the heart of Bison-horn Maria and Koya tracts, chiefly in and around the administrative or religious centres of the old Telugu kingdoms such as Dantewara, Barsur, Bhairamgarh, Bijapur and Jaggergonda. They were cut off from Telingana when the south of the state was abandoned to Maria and Koya tribes as a barrier against the Mohammedan. They have forgotten Telugu, and speak Gondi or Halbi; they observe most of the Maria customs and festivals; in fact there is little to distinguish them from their Maria and Koya neighbours, and they are rightly known as the Jhadi (i.e. jungly) Telanga caste, under which name they are described in the article at pp. 238-42 of Russell and Hiralal's *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*, Vol. III.[1] But they still provide the priests and servitors of the tutelary deities of the old dynasties, such as Manikeshwari at Barsur and even Danteshwari and Pedamma at Dantewara, and keep up the old ritual in a degraded form. The Marias of the Abujhmar hills seem to be the most primitive and isolated 'aboriginal' race of the Central Provinces; yet only a few miles of mountain and forest separate their habitat from these old centres of Telugu civilization.

The present Maharaja is the twentieth of his line to reign in Bastar. History has little to relate of his predecessors, as their actions had practically no effect upon the outer world. They tended always at first to move farther northward, probably to put as many miles as possible between them and the Mohammedan conquerors, who indeed in 1610 made an abortive raid into Bastar, to be defeated by heavy rain, the difficulty of communications and dearth of provisions in this heavily forested and thinly-peopled tract rather than by the arms of Raja Pratap Raj Deo (Briggs' *Ferishta*, Vol. III, p. 481). To the north they came into contact with the Rajput kingdoms of Raipur and Ratanpur (Chhattisgarh) and Kanker, from the last of which they conquered eighteen *garhs* or *parganas* around Bare Dongar in the present Kondagaon tahsil; and they extended their territory to Sihawa and the borders of Chhattisgarh. To this expansion was probably due the substitution of Hindi or Halbi influences for Telugu. The *garhs* around Bare Dongar are a stronghold of the Halba tribe, whose *Kutumb-Naik* or headman and chief log-god Kachchua Deo live at Chingnur, near Bare Dongar. The tribe has special privileges in the adjacent Kanker State, where a Halba invests each new chief with the royal

[1] Referred to subsequently as 'Russell and Hiralal'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175 robes and affixes the *tika* or sign of office on his forehead. Probably on the conquest of the Bare Dongar country many of them entered the Bastar Raja's service, and supplied most of his troops or militia. The chief Halba villages of the North, such as Bare Dongar, Chhota Dongar, Kolur, Sonpur, Antagarh, Partabpur and Narainpur, are the headquarters of old *garhs* or modern *parganas*, and are islanded in a surrounding sea of 'Muria' or 'Maria' tribes like the Jhadi Telanga villages of the south; the Halba villagers seem to be the descendants of the old garrisons of *paik* militia. To this day the Halbas admit outsiders into their community, while the modern Hindu immigrants commonly take women of the country. The Halbas are thus a mixture, probably, of foreign and aboriginal blood. Their language is the *lingua franca* of Bastar, and, whether classed as a dialect of Marathi with Grierson or of Eastern Hindi with Sten Konow, is at all events an Aryan dialect, and a principal agent in the modification of aboriginal habits and thought; at [141] the 1931 census it was found that 207 *per mille* of the 262,988 Bastaris speaking Gondi dialects as their mother-tongue also spoke Halbi. Its influence is far greater than that of Telugu, which was spoken only by 36·4 out of every thousand speakers of Gondi. Actually there were only 11,662 with Telugu as mother-tongue, against 171,293 with Halbi and 25,774 with Hindustani, Chhattisgarhi and Rajasthani. Hindi influence from Chhattisgarh and the north is now the main foreign influence at work in Bastar.

The State had few dealings with the outer world from 1450 to 1860. A Maratha army under Nilu Pandit intervened on behalf of Raja Dalpat Deo's younger brother in about 1750 and captured Bastar, the old capital, only to be surprised and cut to pieces by Dalpat Deo, Nilu Pandit escaping with the help of a Banjara who sewed him up in a sack and carried him out of Bastar on his pack bullock. But in 1780 Dalpat Deo's son and successor Daryao Deo had to seek Maratha aid against his brother Ajmir Singh, and bound himself to pay a small annual tribute of Rs. 4,000 to the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur. The Bastar chiefs, however, retained full local independence and powers of life and death, and there was no direct interference in the routine management of the State by the Nagpur authorities. Such interference as there was was either to settle the frequent quarrels between Raja Bhopal Deo and his brother and Diwan, Lal Dalganjan Singh, or was dictated by the Government of India in furtherance of their policy of suppressing Meriah or ritual human sacrifice. The history of the measures taken to suppress this practice in Orissa, especially among the Khonds of Gumsur and Kalahandi, and in Jeypore zamindari, is well known. From 1837 onwards hearsay reports were collected

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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

either by Madras Presidency officials or by the special staff deputed for this purpose to the Orissa hill tracts of the prevalence of this practice in Bastar. In consequence, at the instance of the British Resident at Nagpur Lal Dalganjan Singh was summoned to Nagpur in 1842 and examined, and a guard of Nagpur Raj police was stationed at Dantewara to prevent human sacrifices in the temple of the State goddess Danteshwari. But it was never proved that such sacrifices had ever taken place. Writing in 1862 after a prolonged tour in Bastar and after special enquiries into this matter in both Kalahandi and Bastar States, of which as Deputy Commissioner of Sironcha he was then in political charge, Captain C. Glasfurd stated that the guard had continued to be posted at Dantewara ever since 1842, and that ' even if the abominable rite ever existed, which is doubtful, it has altogether fallen into disuse '. The matter is not really relevant to the subject of this book, save that to these suspicions were due the first visits of British officials to the State, and the ultimate decision to insist on Raja Bhairon Deo accepting officials from British India as his Diwans. I personally doubt whether such sacrifices ever took place ; if they did they were semi-State ceremonies connected with the Raja's yearly Dasehra celebrations, the celebrants were Telangas, and the Marias had nothing to do with them.[1] In actual fact, despite many past

[1] It is so commonly asserted that these sacrifices were prevalent in Bastar at Dantewara that it is of interest to note the evidence. The 1842 action of the Nagpur Raj was based merely on a few hearsay reports collected through the Agency for the Orissa Hill Tracts, to the effect that victims were kidnapped from outside Bastar, that in Bastar often twenty men were sacrificed at a time, the worst case being said to have been the sacrifice in 1826 of twenty-five or twenty-seven men by the Bastar Raja before setting out on a visit to His Highness the Raja of Nagpur, which was still referred to in 1838 as ' the great sacrifice ' ; the latter report, however, goes on in the usual *omne ignotum pro magnifico* strain that then and now distinguishes outside Hindu statements about the ' wild jungles ' of ' Kankeri-Bastar ', to suggest that the practice was rife also in Kanker and adjoining tracts north of Bastar, and that ' in some of the wilder jungles bordering on Chhattisgarh the Gonds add cannibalism to this horrid deed and eat the flesh by sacrifice '. Captain J. MacVicar, the Agent in the Orissa Hill Tracts, in 1855 visited Bastar, saw the Raja and the Lal and visited Dantewara to test the truth of various reports. Beyond the grovelling terror which the goddess Danteshwari inspired throughout the parts visited by him, and the assertions of a man in his camp that sacrificers had recently tried to kidnap him, and of a woman that six years before a man had been sacrificed during some disturbances by the Lal Sahib's orders, he left nothing on record to justify his conclusion that it was beyond all doubt that human sacrifices had never ceased to be offered in spite of the orders of the Nagpur Darbar and successive British Residents at Nagpur. Had he found any real evidence, it is scarcely conceivable that action would not have been taken against the Raja and the Lal Sahib. Actually, all that was done was a visit late that year from Lieut. C. Elliot, the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur, who made no further enquiries, but substituted for the old police guard guards of entirely Mussalman police at Jagdalpur and Dantewara, and straitly warned the Raja that he must do his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175 assertions to the contrary, and although it was almost an article of faith with the Political Department of the Central Provinces that Danteshwari was the chief and most dreaded goddess of all the peoples of Bastar and that her high priest the Jia of Dantewara was the one man who could influence the 'wild Maria tribes', yet she is almost unknown to the Marias of the Abujhmar hills save in a village or two on the Dantewara edge of the hills, while even the more sophisticated Bison-horn Marias of the Dantewara tahsil pay only nominal respect to the goddess in villages where a thatched temple has been erected in her name by non-Maria settlers. The Jia may have influence over the Jhari Telanga and Halba residents of Dantewara tahsil; over the Marias he has none. Hindu State

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182 utmost to suppress the rite and to establish a more just system of administration. In 1859 the same officer, now Captain Elliot, informed the Raja of the intention of the Commissioner of the Nagpur Province to recommend the extension to Bastar of the operations of the Agent for the Orissa Hill Tracts for enquiring into the prevalence of human sacrifice; but the Raja protested again, as always before, that no such thing had ever occurred; and Captain Elliot stated that he had never had any report of any sacrifice, nor had anything ever come to his notice by rumour or otherwise to lead him to believe that such a thing had happened since the province had come under British rule. No action seems to have been taken, and in 1862 Captain Glasfurd, whose personal opinion has been quoted above to the effect that it was doubtful if such sacrifices had ever taken place, reported that no special agency was necessary for this purpose in Bastar beyond the temple guard. Even this police guard was discontinued in 1863, and five years later the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces reported to the Government of India that there had been no practice of human sacrifice in the Central Provinces 'of late years, if indeed within the memory of man'.

There was thus never a single authenticated instance of human sacrifice in Bastar. Nearly all the stories emanated from Jeypore, the Maharaja of which was at bitter enmity with the Chief of Bastar. In fact, the latter frequently protested that the Jeypore Maharaja was the source of these slanders.

In 1885-6 the whole question was revived in consequence of alarming reports emanating from the Madras police in Jeypore of gangs of Bastar kidnappers being abroad in Jeypore looking for victims for sacrifice at Dantewara. Initial enquiries by Sardar Rattan Singh, the Raipur District Superintendent of Police, suggested that the reports were fabrications and that there was not the slightest particle of evidence to implicate the Bastar authorities. While the enquiries were in progress, the Madras authorities were scared by a further report that an excise peon had been kidnapped near the Bastar border, and urged the immediate despatch of police and troops into Bastar. The Jeypore District Superintendent of Police with some Jeypore police, and the Political Agent of the Chhattisgarh States with fifty military police, proceeded at once to Bastar. Masses of statements were taken implying the existence of a regular organization to kidnap victims and keep them in various hiding-places till wanted for sacrifice; it was suggested that in twelve villages the ryots held their land free of land revenue for the service of kidnapping victims. No proof could be obtained of these allegations, and not one of the alleged hiding-places was traced. Though Raja Bhairon Deo was removed from the State during the enquiry, nothing was found to implicate him. There was not any evidence of Bastar having caused the disappearance of the persons alleged to have been kidnapped from Jeypore. In consequence of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

officials incline to claim the aboriginals as Hindus and to deprecate census classification of their religion as animistic or tribal. It has always been easy for such persons to identify the Maria's cult of the Earth or *Bhum* in its aryanized form Mati Deo with Mata or Mai, of whom Danteshwari is the Bastar incarnation; and another source of confusion has been the presence in every aboriginal village of a *gudi* (hedge-temple) or other rough shrine of the *Nar Taluri* ('Village Mother'), known to the Hindus as Gāon Devī, and easily identified with Mata Devi or Maoli. Actually the Marias, whether of the Abujhmar hills or Bison-horn, do not even know Dantewara by that name, but by its older and pre-Danteshwari name of Jatawada.

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various statements made, Shamsundar, the Jia or hereditary high priest of the Dantewara temple, the representative of a Rajput family that by tradition had come from Warangal with Raja Annam Deo, was committed for trial on a charge of murdering a Parja who was proved to have disappeared from a Bastar village in 1883, and it was alleged that the Jia had confessed that he had sacrificed him. The Commissioner of Chhattisgarh, Mr. Chisholm, tried the case as Sessions Judge. The Jia had all along refused to sign the confession and stated that he had only said what he did to avoid the indignity of handcuffs. The other witnesses alleged that the statements made in the enquiry had been false, and inspired by fear of the Jeypore police, who had grossly ill-treated them. The Judge held that the witnesses had deliberately made false and tutored statements under the influence of threats, and that the prosecution case completely failed. The Jia was therefore acquitted. In his report to the Chief Commissioner, he said that he considered that the Raja had been wrongly accused, that there was no proof that any human sacrifices had been offered in recent years in Bastar, and that there was scarcely anything tangible enough to justify even suspicion. This view was accepted by the Chief Commissioner, though he was still doubtful about the Jia's confession, which had contained new details of the alleged sacrifice not given by other witnesses, since he considered the Jia too intelligent to be thrown off his balance by a threat of being handcuffed. The kidnapping scare, he pointed out, could be paralleled by various examples in other parts of India, and it was natural for popular rumour to attribute the several disappearances to agents kidnapping victims for Danteshwari because of the old tradition of such sacrifices, while there was nothing strange about disappearances in a country swarming like Bastar with tiger; but there was bound to remain some suspicion over the purpose of attempts that were proved to have been made to kidnap various persons.

In Dantewara they will still show you where the police dug in vain near the temples for the skeletons of the alleged victims, but found not a bone to substantiate the stories of the informers. There were no villages held revenue-free, and no cages for the destined victims. So far as the older inhabitants remember the enquiry, they think the Raja was badly treated. There is no one who even now can give any information about human sacrifices in former days; they deny that there ever were any. Certainly the Meriah rite was never celebrated in Bastar.

Old rumours die hard; in 1913 the Madras police interested themselves in the matter once again, when an Inspector reported his personal belief that the sacrifices still took place at the occasional visits of the late Raja Rudra Pratap Deo to Dantewara, and that a sacrifice was likely at his then impending visit, as he had no son to succeed him! This was at a time when the Raja had lost his powers after the 1910 rebellion and had to follow the advice of a resident European Diwan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175 The earliest recorded attempt of any European to enter Bastar was made by Captain Blunt in 1795, when journeying from Chunarghur in the United Provinces to Yertnagudam in the 'Ellore Circar' of Madras. His report, which has recently been reprinted in a Central Provinces Government publication, 'Early English Travellers in the Nagpur Territories', was referred to as late as 1853 by Sir Erskine Perry, addressing the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, as still giving almost all the information then known not only about Bastar, but of many other parts of Gondwana (the modern Central Provinces), the highlands and jungles of which then comprised 'such a large tract of unexplored country that they form quite an oasis in our maps'. Before his attempt he was warned by both Ittul Pandit, the Maratha governor of Chhattisgarh, and by the Raja of Kanker that he would find it difficult if not impossible to march across Bastar from Kanker to Jeypore, the country being wild and mountainous and the Gond inhabitants very savage. The people were said to be naturally quiet; but the Marathas had never succeeded in doing more than persuade Bastar to pay an occasional small tribute. At that time this had been withheld for four or five years, and the Marathas had only just made the Bastar Chief pay Rs. 5,000 after a series of raids on Bastar territory, which they had persuaded the various 'Gond zemeendars' and neighbours of Bastar to make in order to wrest from him as much territory as possible; in the course of these raids many villages along the Kanker-Jagdalpur-Jeypore road had been plundered, and even the Banjara carriers had abandoned that route to Jeypore. In retaliation, raiding parties from Bastar often descended to plunder the plains villages.[1] Captain Blunt therefore turned west and marched through the zamindaris of the present Drug and Chanda districts, but ultimately attempted to pass from the Ahiri zamindari in the far south-east of the Chanda district across the Indrawati river into the Bhopalpatnam zamindari of Bastar, some miles upstream from the confluence of the Indrawati and the Godavari. He was fiercely attacked by the 'Bastar Gonds' both by day and night, and though their bows, arrows and axes were no match for his firearms, he abandoned the attempt to enter

[18] [1] Compare the following extract from Firminger's Edition of the Fifth Report on East India Affairs, 1812, Vol. III, page 109 et seq., referring to the people of Bastar, Rampa and Kalahandi:—

'The people in general, although rude and barbarous, may yet be denominated warlike, as they have always distinguished themselves as bold persevering champions of the great law of nature. Being driven to their wild unwholesome fastnesses among the mountains, they frequently descend in harvest time into the lowlands, to dispute the produce of their ancient rightful inheritance with the present possessors, but their incursions are desultory and simply impelled by the pressing want of subsistence.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Bastar, and learned later from the Maratha *amil* of Deolmari that he had retired only just in time, as word had been passed from zamindar to zamindar in Bastar to combine to plunder his party. Unless there has been since then a wide displacement of population—which is quite possible in view of the chronic mismanagement of the Bhopalpatnam and Kutru zamindaris of Bastar—it is unlikely that his assailants were Abujhmar or Bison-horn Marias or Koyas; they were probably members of the gangs of ruffians at that time maintained by all the petty chieftains of the Godavari valley, or else Gonds of the type known in that part of Bastar to the Telugus as Dorla, probably Bison-horn Marias who, on descending to the Godavari valley, had come into contact with the outside world. This Maratha Amil, in congratulating Blunt on his escape from the mountains and jungles in which several of the Amil's men had been lost, added some remarks about the men of the jungle which rightly gave the wandering Banjara the credit of being the first civilizing influence in Bastar; his remarks, with the necessary modifications, are certainly true of a later period in the Abujhmar hills and the wilder parts of Central Bastar. He represented the Banjaras as having done much to conciliate and partially civilize the 'Gonds', 'for the traffic which they carry on among them, particularly in salt and sugar, had introduced a taste for luxuries, which many of them now could not easily dispense with. This had also induced them to be more industrious in collecting the produce of their jungles, such as lac, iron ore, and other articles for barter, and had necessitated their affording protection to the Brinjaries (*sic*). In the course of this traffic, which had now lasted about twenty-five years, the desire of the Goands (*sic*) for salt and sugar had considerably increased, and tended more to their civilization than any other means: for before they had tasted or acquired a relish for these articles, no man could venture among them; and he assured me that it had a more powerful effect than the whole force of the Mahratta arms in rendering them obedient to their government.'

The first Europeans actually to visit Bastar seem to have been Captain Fenwick in 1850 and Mr. Take in 1855; they made only short trips up a portion of the Kolab-Sabari river that forms for many miles the eastern boundary of Bastar. I have not seen their reports. Captain MacVicar's brief visit early in 1855 and the important visit of Colonel (then Lieut.) C. Elliot, the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur, later that year have been mentioned above in the footnote on human sacrifice. Elliot's report was reprinted in 1861 as 'Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. XXX. Report on the Bustar and Kharonde Dependencies of the Raepore District'. He

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175
114

entered Bastar from Sihawa in the south of the Raipur district, near the trijunction of Raipur, Kanker and Bastar, marched south-east to Jagdalpur and thence to Dantewara, leaving all the zamindari country south of Dantewara and the Abujhmar hills and the present Antagarh tahsil untouched. His report gives some details of the races in the State, much of which, however, repeats obvious *omne ignotum pro magnifico* tales of local Hindus; but he saw nothing of the Abujhmar hills, and, though he visited Dantewara, little of the Bison-horn Marias of that tahsil. He was, on the whole, more interested in the economic and administrative problems of Bastar than in its people. There was also a visit at about this time by Captain Stewart, Explorer of Forests, while in 1855 and 1856 respectively Lieut. Goddard and Lieut. (afterwards Major-General) F. T. Haig explored the Godavari valley in the investigation of Sir A. Cotton's ambitious but largely abortive scheme for making the Godavari and its affluent the Wardha river navigable from Wardha to the sea. Haig's Report on the Navigability of the River Godavari was published at Madras in 1856; I have found also at p. 357 of the *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1876, an allusion to a report of a visit by him, when a Colonel, to Jagdalpur; but I have been unable to obtain copies of either report, though both are said to contain ethnographic notes.

The most valuable and thorough of the early reports, especially from the ethnographic point of view, is that of Captain C. L. R. Glasfurd, Deputy Commissioner of the former Sironcha District and Political Agent for Bastar, published in 1863 in No. XXXIX of *Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department*. He spent much of the touring seasons of 1861 and 1862 in Bastar, and was probably the first European to visit the then numerous zamindaris of the south, certainly the first to explore any part of the Abujhmar hills. His report is the entire source of the article on Bastar in Grant's 1870 *Central Provinces Gazetteer*, and many of his statements are repeated, unfortunately not always in their true context, in the article 'Gond' in Russell and Hiralal, Vol. III. In February 1930 I found his name still remembered as Gilaspat Sahib in two Abujhmar villages which did not appear to have been visited in the interval by any other European. An example of his accuracy is that he noted the distinction between the Marias of the Abujhmar, whom he termed Marees, and the Marias of Jagdalpur, Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils, whom he termed Marias, but who are known to some of the Abujhmar Marias as Dandami Marias and are generally referred to in this book as Bison-horn Marias. His visit laid the lines of the future policy of the Central Provinces Administration in Bastar State, and it is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

worth while to reproduce some of his concluding remarks in paragraph 175 of the report :— 175 114

'In most English Maps " unexplored territory " is inscribed on the very centre of the Dependency ; while the best Indian Map by Colonel Scott, Quarter-Master General of the Madras Presidency, gives but few details, and those few incorrect. The country, it will be perceived, is an interminable forest, with the exception of a small cultivated tract around Jugdalpore, intersected by high mountain ranges, which present serious obstacles to traffic. Its insalubrity is proverbial ; the inhabitants are composed of rude, uncivilized tribes of Gonds ; in some parts almost savages, who shun contact with strangers, have but few wants which they cannot supply themselves ; honest and interesting to the Ethnologist perhaps, but a race who prefer the solitude of forests to the bustle of towns, and the freedom of the savage to all the allurements and comforts of civilization. With such a country and such inhabitants, rapid progress and improvement cannot be looked for ; and any efforts to open out the Dependency, with the hope of immediately stimulating trade, or rather creating it where it never existed, would end in disappointment. Our efforts for the present should be to open up a few important lines on which traffic already exists, and to ameliorate the condition of the people by the introduction of a better system of criminal and judicial procedure than that at present in force at Jugdalpore, and, above all, by opening up the Sironcha District, which intervenes between Bustar and the Godavery. The opening up of this river will do more to improve the condition of the Bustar Dependency than the most elaborate system of roads would without it. A demand would be created, which would send traders into parts they never ventured before, and the inhabitants would receive cloth, salt, tobacco and other articles in exchange for their rice, lakh, wax, etc., in the interior. The fact is that the Dependency must be civilized, and the improvement to be material and lasting must have the navigable Godavery and the districts on its banks as its base line ; the former once open, and the latter profiting by the facilities of communication with the coast, the bars to civilization in Bustar will soon be broken down, and that from the direction of the Godavery. In the meantime, however, the road carried on by the Madras Government as far as Jeypore should be opened out to Jugdalpore, and eventually thence to Sironcha ; and the great Brinjara route from the southern portions of the Raepore District, which passes through a part of Bustar, should also be cleared. These, with vaccination and the introduction of copper coin, might be at once commenced, and subsequently other steps as they suggest themselves. The Police now distributed over the Dependency will also be of great use in gradually accustoming the people to us, and the location of a news-writer at Jugdalpore would be attended with equally good results.'

As the Maratha Amil sixty-seven years before, so now the Victorian Englishman ; develop trade, and civilization would follow. The isolation of centuries was to end, Bastar to be opened to the world by land and by water, and its 'savages' to exchange their freedom for 'the allurements and comforts of civilization', trade and traders, clothes, tobacco, a better system of criminal and judicial procedure, vaccination and copper coin. Did, and do, the ghosts of the old builders of the ruins of Barsur, Bhairamgarh and Kuruspal smile to hear a newer race decree that 'Bastar must be civilized!'? 000

A land free from rules and regulations and a race that had no use for copper coin did not square with that passion for uniformity

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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that characterized the Victorian rulers of India and still marks the framers of constitutions for the India of to-day. It could not be seen that there must have been some institutions or system in this apparently unordered Bastar to have kept her together and free from Mohammedan or Maratha interference for all those centuries.

175
648

So from Glasfurd onwards Political Agents, Commissioners and Chief Commissioners sought to modernize the economics and the administration of this lovely and still lonely land. An alien police from 'civilized' India was soon followed along the gradually expanding lines of communication by Bania and Rohilla tradesmen, and by low-paid esurient subordinate officials 'lent' to the State, who regarded service in a native state only as a means to the rapid acquisition of wealth. Cultivation was to be expanded by the formation of new villages by alien immigrants; instead, the aliens were given long established Bhattra, Muria, Parja or Maria villages, nominally as lessees, over the heads of the traditional village headmen; and the lessees at once proceeded as fast as possible to get the best land into their own hands, to make the headmen's lives a burden by their repeated demands for forced labour and supplies, to ignore the use and wont of village life, especially the *sari-bori* or co-operation in supplies and labour for village bread-winning and village festivals, to introduce Hindu and Mussalman settlers, and to turn the natives of Bastar into bondservants little better than slaves by advancing them money, on terms which made repayment practically impossible, in return for their labour or that of their sons. Every immigrant trader even considered it his right to demand the labour of half a dozen 'Murias' to carry his wares for him. Consequent risings in 1876 and trouble in succeeding years led to the virtual supersession of the old Raja Bhairam Deo in 1886, and the State passed under full management on his death in 1891. From 1886 to 1891 and for the first few years of the long (1891-1908) minority of Raja Rudra Pratap Deo, a series of subordinate officials was lent as Diwans to the State, and a further evil arose in the growing array of minor State officials, few of whom were natives and none aboriginals of Bastar, abusing the ancient custom of *bisaha*, or the payment by villagers of a twentieth of their crops for the feeding of the Raja's servants, by interpreting it as a right to commandeer any aboriginal's produce at an arbitrarily fixed and often nominal price, and generally forgetting to pay even that. The newly-cleared roads soon seemed to run through wildernesses, for on villagers of roadside villages the burden of *begar*, or forced labour, and *bisaha* fell with especial severity. Being 184 miles from Raipur, the headquarters of the Commissioner and the Political Agent, Bastar was seldom visited, and the people were far too much

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

at the mercy of the incompetency or knavery of the local officials. The latter meanwhile were carrying on the prescribed policy of opening communications, introducing the criminal police and judicial system of British India, and exploiting the forests (again by forced labour). Though with the growth of trade there was much to be said for applying the Penal, Criminal Procedure and Civil Procedure Codes and the Evidence Act of British India to the open parts of the Jagdalpur tahsil and northern Bastar, they were far too advanced for most of the tribes, and remain so to this day. No notice was taken of the old system of caste or tribal or *pargana* panchayats presided over by the caste or *pargana* headman appointed by the Chief or the zamindar, which had for centuries administered rough and ready justice far more to the liking of the people than the troubles of a long investigation by a corrupt police, followed by a cumbersome magisterial enquiry and perhaps then the protracted agony of a sessions trial, to their minds unnecessary and unintelligible, with the farcical addition of assessors, chosen, so as to fulfil the requirements of a procedure code designed for a British India at least 1,000 years further advanced in civilization, from a few obsequious immigrants with no knowledge of aboriginal life or psychology. A similar attempt was made to improve on the old excise arrangements by which the local Kalar or Sundi was a village or *pargana* servant kept to distil liquor when needed for social or religious festivities, and remunerated in grain by the villagers every harvest; a system of auctioning outstills was introduced, the letter but not the spirit of arrangements in British India being copied, and the result was a number of contractors and sub-contractors all distilling and hawking liquor, and drunkenness on a scale previously unknown in Bastar and with few parallels in India. Of course trade was increasing, and more land was being cleared, *pari passu* with these growing abuses; but the moral effect of the changes was not good, and there can be few more striking examples of policy sound in motives but utterly wrong because of the divorce of administration from anthropology.

Sir Andrew Fraser, then Commissioner, in an able inspection note written after a long tour of the State in 1892, spotted much of the evil, particularly the State officials' utter ignorance of all but the villages adjacent to Jagdalpur and their headquarters, and their complete lack of touch with the people. He of course strongly advocated the policy of opening up the State, but saw that a just and active administration was necessary if the policy was to succeed. This was ultimately secured by the appointment in 1896 of Colonel (later Major-General) Fagan as Administrator. During his three years of rough and ready justice he toured the length and breadth

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175
698

of the State, and he and his wife are still remembered with affection. The aboriginal, if he had to work on the new roads, yet saw that everyone else had to; but he no longer had to work for the alien trader and village-lessee, and he could get redress for oppression. Under Colonel Fagan and his successor, Mr. G. W. Gayer of the Indian Police, though roads were built and regular land revenue settlements effected on simplified Central Provinces lines, efficient administration kept the tribes satisfied; and for the first time medical relief and vaccination were organized in the State by Surgeon-Major Mitchell. But Mr. Gayer was succeeded by an Indian Superintendent, who held charge for the last few years of the minority and then continued till 1910 as Raja Rudra Pratap Deo's Diwan. He had served successfully as Diwan of Kalahandi State, and his intentions were admirable. Unfortunately he was unable to control his subordinates or to see that his excellent orders were enforced. The old abuses crept back into the swept and garnished State. He was responsible also for two unpopular innovations. The first was a policy of planting new primary schools all over the State, the masters being assisted by attendance peons who bullied the ryots into sending their children to school, while masters and peons levied forced labour and supplies freely. The second was the reservation of large areas as State forests, a measure very necessary as a check to the wholesale destruction of valuable timber by the aboriginals practising shifting cultivation, but bound by its very nature and its interference with long-cherished rights to arouse suspicion. It called, therefore, for great tact, and the people should have been carefully prepared for the measure, and protected from any avoidable hardship in its execution. Instead, it was carried out abruptly. Every village in the reserved areas was destroyed, though provision ought to have been made for forest villages as a source of forest labour, and if this had been done few of the villages need have been disturbed; the old village lands still often remain treeless in the forests, and in recent years it has been necessary to try and tempt settlers back to found much-needed forest villages. Oppression by State officials and by immigrant settlers, excessive levy of forced labour and supplies, unpopular new measures, and the apparent blindness of the Raja and his Diwan to popular grievances produced keen discontent, which was worked up by Lal Kalendra Singh, the first cousin and former Diwan of Raja Bhairam Deo, in the hope of securing the succession for himself. The Murias, Bhattras, and Parjas of Jagdalpur tahsil and some of the Bison-horn Marias and others in Dantewara tahsil and farther south broke into rebellion, in which the Murias of Antagarh and Kondagaon tahsils joined, only the zamindaris and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the Marias of the Abujhmar hills abstaining. The tribes converged on Jagdalpur, the Diwan who had been touring in the South fleeing into the Chanda district. A half battalion of regular Panjabi troops and large detachments of armed Central Provinces police soon suppressed and disarmed the rebels. A few ringleaders who had been guilty of cruel murders of isolated State officials were hanged, and several hundred men flogged, a punishment really more humane for such primitive men than imprisonment. Lal Kalendra Singh and a few of his associates were banished. The Raja was deprived of his powers, and an experienced Englishman, Mr. James May, appointed Diwan. The rebellion had been marked by keen hostility towards the immigrant exploiters, and a movement to keep Bastar for Bastaris. *Pari passu* with the punishment of the rebels, full enquiry was made into their undoubted grievances, and stern action taken against their oppressors. From 1910 till the Raja's death in 1921 the State was under virtual Government management; it has since then been under direct management, owing to the minority and the subsequent illness of the late Maharani.[1]

Save, therefore, for the short period 1908-10 the State has virtually been under Government management since 1886. Great progress has been made in developing communications. The Godavari navigation scheme referred to in the quotation above from Glasfurd's report was abandoned in 1871 after the works on the first barrier at Dummagudem in the present East Godavari district of Madras had been completed and much money had been spent on the works at the second barrier, where the river forms the boundary between Bastar and Hyderabad. This must be one of the very few great engineering works abandoned uncompleted by the British in India, defeated by the fever and sweltering heat of the valley, the difficulty of recruiting labour, lack of funds and the improbability of an adequate return for the great cost; and there are few more desolate sights than the vast ruins of the half-finished anicut, lock-gates and guard-walls that still resist the annual floods of this mighty river, and in the dry weather stand gaunt and futile in the baking wilderness of rocks and sands in which the united Godavari and Indrawati there lose themselves. With the transference of the Political Agency for Bastar from Sironcha to Raipur, all idea of the Godavari as the base-line for its communications was abandoned. Emphasis was placed on linking the north of the State with the main Nagpur-Calcutta railway line by roads from Raipur and Rajnandgaon to Jagdalpur, and the Vizagapatam Agency road from Salur

[1] The hereditary title of the Ruling Chief of Bastar was raised from Raja to Maharaja in 1932.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

175 rail-head below the Eastern Ghat mountains to Jeypore and the Bastar border was continued thence to Jagdalpur; subsequently
491 roads have gradually been driven westward to Dantewara, Bijapur, Kutru and Bhopalpatnam, and southward to Sukma and Konta; the most recent development has been many miles of forest roads, constructed either as feeder roads to the Raipur and Rajnandgaon roads, or to link up the forests of Dantewara and the south with the Godavari at Tarlagudam, Cherla and Dummagudam or the Kolab-Sabari at Mismagudam and Konta. The Raipur road is now motorable throughout the year, and there is a daily mail and passenger service by it to Kanker and Dhamtari. A railway connexion with the new Raipur-Vizianagram line has been surveyed, and would have been under construction but for the world-wide financial depression. The revenue of the State [651] has risen from about Rs. 30,000 in 1855, then received in kind or in cowry shells at a rate of 2,880 to the rupee, to well over a million rupees.

177 So the old order is doomed; and with the motor-bus abroad in the land and scores of aboriginals every month seeking work on the public works of the State in the Assam tea gardens or in the towns of the Godavari valley, with the railway administration feeling this last great blank of 300 miles from Raipur to Salur by 250 from Titlagarh in Kalahandi State to Singareni in Hyderabad a slur to be removed as soon as funds permit, change comes ever faster. My successors and I, like our predecessors, are guilty of accelerating change; but we can on the one hand plead that when we came a return to the old isolation was not practical politics, and on the other that we have tried before it was too late to strengthen and revive the old tribal *panchayat* organization and restore its jurisdiction in civil and in all but serious criminal offences, to check the drunkenness made rampant by a bad excise system, to prevent the further bestowal of aboriginal villages on alien *thekadars* (lessees) and to make the post of village headman one of honour and responsibility instead of one to be held reluctantly by some dummy with no influence in the village, to abolish *bisaha*, to deprive village lessees of the right of taking forced labour, to minimize the right of officials to take it and to regulate the still necessary State demands for road and other labour so as to inconvenience the cultivator as little as possible, to see that it is paid for, and to abolish bondservice. Much of great interest could be written on the effects and reactions of the administrative measures of the last fifty years sketched in these last few pages. But the purpose of this book is to place on
121 record while there is yet time an account of the way of life prevalent among the Maria tribes of Bastar, perhaps now the most primitive

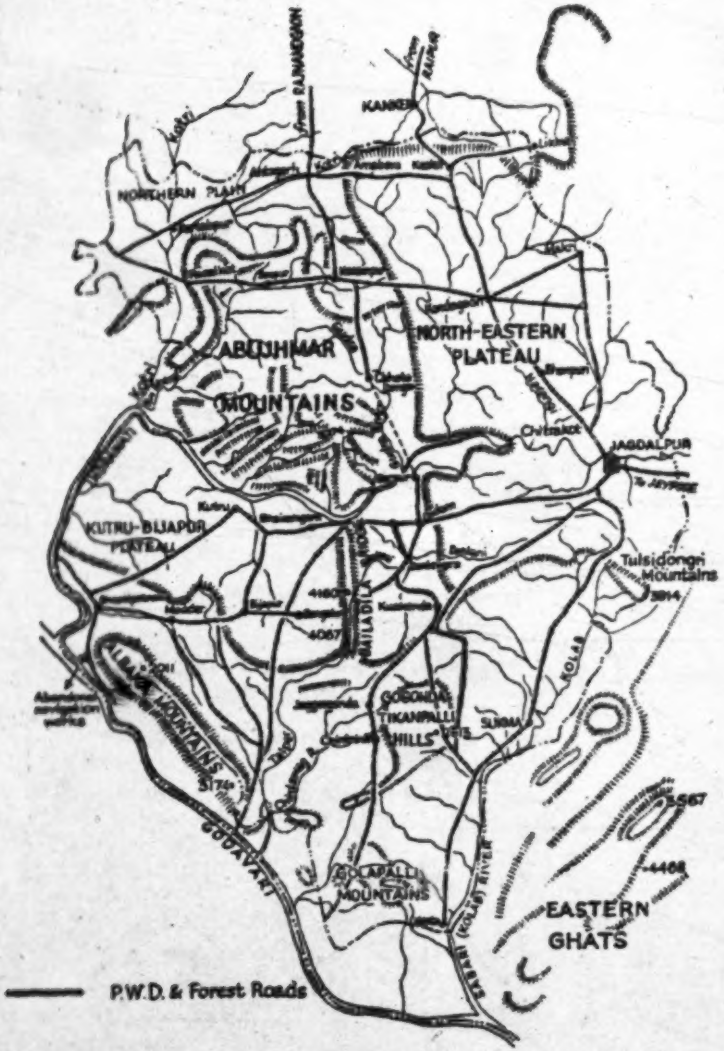
1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

tribes between the Godavari and the Ganges. Little has been written about them, or indeed about the great Gond race as a whole. My experience has been in going from the backwoods of Bastar to a modern Indian district like Nagpur that even there there is a great substratum of primitive thought, religion and practice which has been illuminated for me by what I learnt in Bastar.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE I

131
133
491



BASTAR STATE—NATURAL DIVISIONS
Scale (approx.): 1 inch = 32 miles

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Chapter II

The Setting in Space; the Physical and Administrative Geography of Bastar

Before dealing with the Maria Gonds, I propose to describe in this and the following chapter the main features of the physical and administrative geography and the ethnography of Bastar. The political divisions frequently are founded on the old tribal organization of the country, to which I have alluded in the first chapter; and in discussing the distribution of the tribes it is impossible to avoid constantly referring to them.

The great river Indrawati, which flows across the centre of the State from east to west with a winding course within the State of about 240 miles, almost bisects the State, and is its main geographical feature. It rises near Rampur Thuamul in Kalahandi, one of the former Orissa States, whence it flows south-west some thirty miles till, after forming the boundary between Kalahandi and the Orissa Province for eight or nine miles, it crosses the south-east corner of the Naurangpur taluq of the latter, and then for a winding course of some sixty miles divides the Naurangpur from the Jeypore taluq of Jeypore zamindari, till it enters the Jagdalpur tahsil of Bastar near the confluence of the Bhaskel tributary, thirteen miles above Jagdalpur. At Chitrakot, twenty-four miles by road and thirty-five by river below Jagdalpur, the Indrawati plunges off the edge of the great 2,000 feet plateau of north-east Bastar and northern Jeypore in a beautiful horseshoe fall ninety-four feet high, followed by a series of wild rapids down a valley rapidly descending between high cliff ramparts. In its course across Jeypore zamindari and Jagdalpur tahsil it is a deep sluggish river winding along in great S-bends through field and evergreen sal forest, and always more or less rusty in colour from flowing over deep beds of red laterite or *murram*. It receives no large tributaries from the south above Chitrakot, as here it flows close to the watershed dividing it from the Kolab-Sabari, the great tributary of the Godavari that rises in the Eastern Ghats above Jeypore and for many miles forms the eastern boundary of Bastar; at one point a tributary of the Kolab is less than a mile from the main current of the Indrawati. But just above Chitrakot falls it is joined by the Narangi, and about ten miles below the falls by the Baordig, which drain most of north-east Bastar (the Kondagaon tahsil).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

133 For the rest of its course from Chitrakot to its junction with the Godavari near Bhadrakali in Bhopalpatnam zamindari on the western border it is typical of any great river draining mountainous country. It loses its rusty colour at Chitrakot, and becomes a series of rapids and deep pools, giving way to fresh rapids wherever it passes over sheets of rock or pierces through successive mountain barriers in wild gorges. The pools are often great land-locked lakes, with deeply wooded islands, the haunts of tiger, sambar and wild buffalo. It receives various tributaries, of which the chief Bastar rivers are the Gudra, the Nei Bherat[1] and the Kotri on the north bank, and on the south bank the Dantewara, the Berudi and the Bhopalpatnam Chintawag. The Gudra and the Nei Bherat take most of the drainage of the wild tangle of the Abujhmar hills, save for smaller mountain torrents, such as the Goinder that descends from Hikul over the magnificent Handawada falls (not marked on the maps), and the Komra that for much of its length forms the Bastar-Central Provinces (Chanda) boundary. The Gudra drains the Tulagotal, Farsigotal, Farsal, Bardal and Chudala (Chhota) Dongar *parganas* of the Abujhmar mountains and other adjacent *parganas* of the Antagarh tahsil; the gorge near Chhota Dongar where it leaves the Abujhmar mountains in a narrow loch between forested peaks, its banks deep in bamboo, *Osmunda regalis* and other ferns, is beautiful. The Nei Bherat rises near Narainpur in the Kurangal *pargana* of Antagarh, the north-western tahsil, and flows due west past Sonpur and through the Nurbhum Maria *pargana*; then turning south-west through the Tapalibhum (Chhotemar) and Behramar (Baremar) Maria *parganas* of Antagarh, it crosses the south-east corner of the Ahiri zamindari in Chanda district to join the Indrawati and the Kotri or Paralkot river in a trijunction of unforgettable beauty 'beneath the fortified rock of Bhamragarh, in a wild expanse of hill and forest unbroken by a single clearing'.[2] Besides the Maria *parganas* of Antagarh already mentioned, it drains the Hukkagotal and Jatawada and parts of the Bardal and Farsal Maria *parganas* of Antagarh, and the portion of the Abujhmar mountains that extends beyond Bastar

[103]

[1] Wrongly marked 'Nibra' on the old Topographical Survey maps of the sixties, slightly revised modern editions of which are still the only maps available of most of Bastar. 'Nei Bherat' means in the Maria dialect 'Dog River', so called after the numbers of otters in the river.

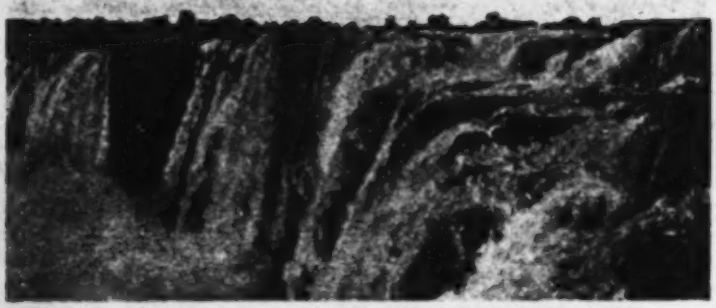
The names on these old maps are often wrong, and represent the efforts of Telugu or Bengali surveyors to reproduce the difficult guttural and other sounds of Maria. The maps are full of other inaccuracies, and seem often to have been drawn from the imagination of surveyors afraid of fever, tigers and aboriginal magic.

[2] Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report, para. 56. He calls the Nibra River by the name 'Pamla Ghootum'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

PLATE II

133



THE CHITRAKOT FALLS OF THE RIVER INDRAWATI

CONFLUENCE OF RIVERS INDRAWATI AND KOMRA,
BORDER OF BASTAR AND CHANDA

THE ARANPUR PASS

[facing p. 22]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

183 into the south-east corner of Chanda district and is inhabited by the same hill Marias as the Bastar *parganas* in these mountains. The Kotri is far the largest of the tributaries of the Indrawati. Its main stream rises far north, in the Pannabaras zamindari of Drug district; it is joined at Gudumpara in Kanker State by the Kandra which drains the Sambalpur tahsil of Kanker; below Partabpur in the north-west corner of Bastar by a large branch also called the Kotri which rises from two main sources in the Matlaghat and Raoghat mountains and drains all the north of Antagarh tahsil, including the Maria *parganas* of Padalbhum (Pataldesh), Tapalibhum and Behramar; and by another large stream a little west of Paralkot. It then crosses south-east Chanda to the west of the Nei Bherat, to meet the latter and the Indrawati at Bhamragarh.

As these northern tributaries between them drain the country of the Abujhmar Maria, so the southern tributaries drain the northern lands of the Bison-horn or Dandami Maria, the Indrawati and its small tributary near Barsur, the Mander, being roughly the boundary between them. The chief southern tributary is the Dantewara, made up of the Sankani and the Dankani, which unite just by the famous Dantewara temple. The Sankani rises near the lofty (4,067 feet) Nandiraj peak of the Bailadila mountains, and drains the Aranpur, Bacheli and Dugeli *parganas* of Dantewara tahsil, while the Dankani rises from the Tangri Dongri ghats on the south edge of the great north-eastern plateau, from sources near Killepal and Paknar, and drains the Katakalian and Kuakonda tracts of Dantewara tahsil. The other southern tributaries of the Indrawati do not call for remark here; except the Dantewara, the Berudi and the Bhopalpatnam Chintawag, they are as small as the southern tributaries above the Chitrakot falls, the Indrawati being close to the watersheds that separate it from the Kolab-Sabari and the main Godavari except in the areas drained by the three tributaries named above.

Apart from a few streams in the north-east of Bastar which flow off the northern slopes of the Telinghat hills near Keskal into the Mahanadi system, and in the south-west the Talper-Chintawag system draining the western slopes of the Bailadila mountains and the Bijapur tahsil directly into the Godavari, the only other important river-system is that of the Kolab-Sabari (the river is known in Jeypore and in most of Bastar as the Kolab, and as the Sabari or Savari in the Konta tahsil of Bastar and the adjacent taluqs of the Jeypore and East Godavari Agencies). Rising on the 3,000 feet Korapat plateau of the Eastern Ghats between Jeypore and Korapat, it cascades down on to the Jeypore-Bastar plateau, flows north a few miles to its junction with the Jaura near the Bastar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

133 Irredenta town of Kotapad, and then south to Korokpur. Thence for eighteen miles it divides the Kanker State Forest of Bastar from the Jeypore taluq, but from the confluence of the Kanker river it turns south away from the Bastar border into the Malkangiri taluq of Jeypore and then west past the Bastar Irredenta *pargana* of Salmigarh for about twenty-six miles; it flows west then for another five miles, as the Bastar border, as far as the confluence of the Kumakoleng and Thakawada rivers. For the next thirty-five miles, as far as Sukma, it enters the Sukma zamindari of Bastar, and from Sukma southwards for ten miles it is the Sukma-Malkangiri boundary, and thence still on the whole southwards for forty-four miles as far as Konta it divides the Konta tahsil of Bastar from Malkangiri. Just below Konta, after its junction with the Sileru, it enters the Bhadrachalam taluq of the East Godavari Agency of Madras, and after another twenty miles of southward course flows into the Godavari at Kunavaram. Konta is a river port accessible to small steamers from the rainy season till January. The trade of south-east Bastar therefore passes through it, and it is a focus of Telugu influence. The Kolab-Sabari is altogether about 202 miles in length, for seventy-seven of which it forms the Bastar boundary, and for thirty-five of which it flows inside the State, while in another thirty or thirty-five miles of its course it receives the drainage of parts of Bastar. Where it falls from the 2,000 foot plateau to Salmigarh beneath the heights of Tulsidongri (3,915 feet) it resembles the Indrawati in its wild beauty; the two rivers, indeed, are much alike in their scenery and the levels through which they pass. On its right bank it receives all the drainage of the Parja country in the south-east of Jagdalpur tahsil and the north of Sukma zamindari; that of the Bison-horn Maria country of the adjacent parts of Jagdalpur, a small portion of Dantewara, and western Sukma; and all that of the 'Koya' and Bison-horn Maria country in Konta tahsil east of the Gogonda-Tikanpalli hills (2,000 to 2,600 feet) and the Golapalli hills (1,200 to 2,800 feet).

With the river-systems thus outlined, it is easy to demonstrate the main physical and administrative divisions of the country. First there is the great north-eastern plateau, stretching from the Telinghat hills about 2,500 feet high and a few miles south of the northern border to the Tangri Dongri and Tulsidongri ranges that divide Jagdalpur tahsil from Sukma zamindari and Dantewara tahsil. The plateau extends eastward into Jeypore and Kalahandi, while on the west the Matlaghat hills and the hills that run roughly south from Benur on the Kondagaon-Antagarh-Rajnandgaon road to Kankot on the Indrawati below the Chitrakot Falls divide the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

plateau from Antagarh tahsil. The northern half of this north-eastern plateau is Kondagaon tahsil, and the southern Jagdalpur. The height of the plateau varies from 2,500 or 2,400 feet at its northern and southern edges to about 1,800 feet near Jagdalpur. It is a region of evergreen forests, with the beautiful sal (*Shorea robusta*) as its characteristic tree. The temperature seldom exceeds 104° in the summer, and at Jagdalpur descends to 40° in the winter, while hoar frosts are not uncommon in the forests. Kondagaon tahsil is under-developed and jungly, much of it and Antagarh having been comparatively recently settled by Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh. Jagdalpur, on the other hand, has miles of excellent rice cultivation in its extensive open plains, and is the only heavily populated part of the State, except adjacent parts of Dantewara. On its south-eastern and southern edges, however, it has hilly country heavily forested or inhabited by primitive Parjas and Bison-horn Marias.

The north-west corner of the State is the Antagarh tahsil. The north of this is a continuation of the Chhattisgarh-Kanker plain 800 or 900 feet above sea-level, bounded on the west and north by the Chanda and Drug districts of the Central Provinces and by Kanker State. This plain, the second main natural division of Bastar, is reached from Keskal and north Kondagaon through the Amabera *pargana*, which, though on the 2,000 feet plateau, is in Antagarh, by a forest road descending the steep Matlaghat by a recently re-aligned and easily-graded descent. The main road from Jagdalpur and Kondagaon through Antagarh to Rajnandgaon rail-head enters the tahsil in the Benur *pargana* on the 2,000 feet plateau and descends 200 or 300 feet to Narainpur which, with the adjacent *parganas* of Kurangal, Dugal, Baragaon, Ghat Jhorian and Bare Jhorian, as well as Benur and the lowland or 'Kalpatti' villages of Chhote Dongar *pargana*, are an intermediate stage between the true 2,000 feet plateau and the plain of north Antagarh. The inhabitants are mostly what were called by Glasfurd and other early writers Jhorias, in appearance scarcely distinguishable from the Marias of the Abujhmar hills, with similar dancing dress, and customs similar, but considerably modified by sojourn in the lowlands and contact with other tribes. From Narainpur a forest road runs westward along the Nei Bherat valley to Sonpur, with an extension thence to Paralkot and Maroda, where it meets another forest road that comes westward from Taroki on the Narainpur-Antagarh road across the north Antagarh plain. The Sonpur, Paralkot and Paralkot-Kalpatti *parganas* are really lowland *parganas* in the middle of highland Maria *parganas*, and the two latter belong properly speaking to the north Antagarh plain. The

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

133 Sonpur *pargana*, however, has many Hill Maria villages, and a sprinkling of Halbas and 'Jhorias'.

[491] The road from Narainpur to Antagarh descends the Raoghat near Aturbera village between a spur of the Abujhmar mass of hills 2,938 feet in height and the Matlaghat hills, down the sal-clad valley of a stream that drains into the Kotri river. The Antagarh plain has the 'Muria' *parganas* of Antagarh, Kolar, Surebahi, Bomra, Kirangal, Kalpatti, and Bandadesh, besides Paralkot and Paralkot-Kalpatti already mentioned.

The third great natural division of the State is the Abujhmar mountain mass. Roughly speaking, this is composed of all the wild hill country bounded on the south by the Indrawati, on the north by the Antagarh plain, on the east by the Jhoria country described above and the Gudra valley from Chhota Dongar to Mangnar near the Indrawati and Barsur, and on the west by the Kotri river from Partabpur to its junction with the Indrawati at Bhamragarh in the Ahiri zamindari of the Chanda district. This tangle of hills is roughly rectangular, but at its north-eastern corner throws two great spurs into the Antagarh plain by Raoghat (already mentioned) and Kolar, and at its north-western corner projects a bastion of hill almost to the Kotri valley between Partabpur and Koilibera. The north-eastern spurs are now in the Matla State Forest, but the north-western bastion has as its northern face the Padalibhum *pargana*, with the Tapalibhum and Nurbhum *parganas* to the side and south of this, all three occupied by Hill Marias. The hill mass is so cracked and seamed with valleys running in all directions, that it is not possible to point out any main hill systems; the only clues that help to a conception of its features are the watersheds. The northern slopes drain into the Bastar branch of the Kotri, and the north-western into the main Kotri after the junction of the Drug-Kanker and Bastar branches. Below this, the great trough of the Nei Bherat valley cleaves the mountains from Narainpur on the north-eastern edge westward for thirty-five miles through Sonpur into the Nurbhum *pargana*, where it turns south-west through the Behramar *pargana* and the Chanda Hill Maria country to Bhamragarh. The watershed dividing this from the streams that flow into the Gudra runs roughly south-west from the north-western corner of the Hukkagotal *pargana* just south of the Nei Bherat valley along a line of crests to Kutul village in Bardal *pargana*, thence south to Dhurbera, the village of the headman of the Farsal *pargana*, and slightly east of south from there to Adeq in Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*. From the hills between Dhurbera and Adeq some smaller streams flow south-west direct into the Indrawati. From the crests running first eastwards

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from Adeq and then south-eastwards towards the Maria villages of Mangnar *pargana*, streams flow southwards or south-westwards into the Indrawati. 133

Though this block of hills is a homogeneous tract, peopled entirely by Hill Marias, it unfortunately is split up administratively. The south-western corner above Bhamragarh and Lahir is British territory, part of the Ahiri zamindari of Chanda district. All the *parganas* north of the watershed between the Nei Bherat and Indrawati on the one hand and the Gudra on the other are in Antagarh tahsil. The slopes draining into the Indrawati from the Chanda border eastwards to a line running north from the confluence of the Indrawati and the Dantewara form the Kutru Mar and the Bhairamgarh Mar *parganas*, of Kutru zamindari; the Hikul-Toinar-Handawada group of eight hill villages east of this is part of Dantewara tahsil, and the few hill villages at the south-east corner are part of the outlying Mangnar *pargana* of the Bhopalpatnam zamindari.

The peaks of the Abujhmar vary in height from 2,050 feet on the northern fringes to 3,322, the highest point near Tadanar in Mangnar *pargana*. Fourteen peaks exceed 3,000 feet in height. Except the Marias themselves, few persons in Bastar know the tract at all; and before I visited it, all the old tales served up to Glasfurd in the sixties were again cooked up for my benefit; the country was so rugged that I should have to climb on my hands and knees; it was impossible for elephants and quite out of the question for horses; I should be unable to get bearers for my camp kit; fever was rampant; distances were enormous; and so on. Some of the marches are difficult; but then a car can be taken now up to Orcha, the chief village of Chhota Dongar Mar; the people are friendly in the extreme, and if properly treated and reimbursed in salt, beads, mirrors, cloth and pork, and allowed to dance at every camp, they will turn out in numbers to carry all necessary equipment. It is not difficult to arrange camps at distances at once reasonable for the walker and far enough apart to make it unnecessary to detain bearers from the previous camp to carry luggage on to the next camp. There are no cart tracks and no carts; and there are many steep ascents and descents on the hill tracks. Good water is everywhere available from clear perennial springs. The hills are far freer from mosquitoes and fever than the plains below; but the traveller who brings a medical assistant and simple medicines with him will find the Marias in great need of elementary medical relief and very grateful for it. [489]

The scenery varies. On the edges of the hills there are often fine views of the plains below, while on the northern and eastern

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 slopes and in the Mangnar and Dantewara Mar villages there are often fine patches of sal and other evergreen trees. On the hill-tops and on slopes exhausted by shifting cultivation, high grass and stunted trees make the country monotonous to the eye and tiring through lack of shade. Where the slopes are newly cleared and have once been burnt for shifting *penda* cultivation, often a small grove of trees is left on the summit, like nothing so much as the top-knot of hair on the crown of a Maria's otherwise roughly-shaved head. But the moment you descend off the rocky plateaux you meet green glades and hurrying streams, or may feel the sudden amaze of a prospect such as that of the blue apex of the lofty Bailadila ridge seen beyond the haze of the Indrawati valley down the valley of a stream that far below the ridge between Itulnar and Hikul races due south to the Indrawati.

161 There are only between 150 and 160 villages inhabited in all this area of about 1,500 square miles, and there are only 11,500 361 Hill Marias. This means one village in every ten square miles, and less than eight persons to the square mile. In few places can you lose yourself in such solitudes.

635 North Bastar thus consists administratively of the Antagarh, Kondagaon and Jagdalpur tahsils, half of the Jagdalpur tahsil being south of the Indrawati, and of the portions of the Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris and the Dantewara tahsil north of the Indrawati.

635 In South Bastar there are the Dantewara, Bijapur and Konta tahsils, and the Sukma, Kutru, Bhopalpatnam and Kotapalli-491 Pamer zamindaris; these four zamindaris alone survive out of the seventeen or eighteen of old times. A great western road runs 134 miles from Jagdalpur through Gidam, Karli, Matawara, Bijapur and Bhopalpatnam to Timer on the Indrawati, opposite Patagudam in Chanda district, whence there is a forest road to Sironcha; branches south from Gidam and Karli run to Dantewara, with a further extension to Kameli at the foot of the Bailadila hills; north from Gidam to Barsur, and from Matawara to Kutru; and south from Bhopalpatnam to Tarlagudam on the Godavari and thence over the Latpatkandi pass into the Nugur and Albaka taluqs of Madras. A great southern road runs 114 miles from Jagdalpur to Sukma and Konta. A network of forest roads of recent construction links these roads together between Tirathgarh in Jagdalpur tahsil, Katakalian, Kuakonda and Dantewara, or southward from Kuakonda to the Kolab-Sabari at Misma on the Konta road, and to Konta via the Aranpur pass, Jaggergonda and Golapalli; while Bijapur is linked to Cherla and Jaggergonda to Dummagudam, both on the Godavari. With these and other

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE III

635

BASTAR STATE—POLITICAL DIVISIONS
Scale (approx.): 1 inch = 32 miles

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

635 491 forest roads there are now few places in south Bastar out of reach of a motor-car, in the fair weather.

133 Dantewara tahsil is a horseshoe plain between the Tangri Dongri ghats at the edge of Jagdalpur tahsil on the east, the Abujhmar mountains on the north, and the great sword-blade north and south ridge of Bailadila on the west. Its general level is about 400 feet below that of the Jagdalpur tahsil, and it is an intermediate step between the north-eastern plateau and the great plains of South Bastar. The main road descends steeply to it from Killepal and Bastanar. This Dantewara valley may almost be regarded as the fourth natural division of Bastar; though small portions of the east of Kutru zamindari and the north of Bijapur tahsil are on the same level, there is between them and Dantewara tahsil the great barrier of the Bailadila ridge, except where the narrow Indrawati valley separates the northern end of the ridge from the Abujhmar mountains.

The rest of Bastar is sometimes described as one great southern plain varying in level from 600 to 300 feet according to the proximity of the Godavari. Actually, however, there is yet another plateau to be crossed on the western road (and on its forest branches that strike off towards the Godavari) before the traveller descends on to the real Godavari plain. Its level varies from 1,100 to 900 feet (leaving out of account, in this as in all the plateaux and plains of Bastar, the frequent spurs and isolated hills). On the southern road to Konta, and on the forest roads descending from Dantewara to Konta tahsil and Sukma zamindari by the Aranpur, Koriras and Mokpal passes, on the other hand, the traveller gets at once off the northern 2,000 feet plateau, in the case of the southern road, and off the Dantewara valley level in those of the forest roads, to the Godavari or southern plain. This intermediate western plateau may be regarded as the fifth natural division, and called the Kutru-Bijapur plateau. On the north and north-west the Indrawati is its boundary, so far as Bastar is concerned, as far as the hills which begin north of Desli in Sironcha tahsil and cross the Indrawati into Bastar to form the boundary of the Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris; the gorge in which the Indrawati boils through these hills, the last barrier to its union with the Godavari, is sinister in its magnificence. The hills run thence south-west along the border of the two zamindaris, cross the western road a little west of Bijapur village and continue south-west to the Isalnar pass on the Nelasnar-Cherla forest road, and thence westward till they merge with the foot-hills at the southern end of the Bailadila ridge, a little north of the Aranpur pass.

This Kutru-Bijapur plateau comprises all Kutru zamindari

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

except the two Hill Maria *parganas* north of the Indrawati already mentioned; the isolated Mirthul *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam zamindari sandwiched between the Dantewara tahsil and the south-eastern corner of Kutru zamindari along the western slopes of the Bailadila ridge; and the northern and greater portion of Bijapur tahsil. 133

The riverain tract spoken of above as the Godavari plain may be treated as the sixth and last natural division. 'Riverain region' would be a better name, as it is not all plain or Godavari valley; there are high hill ranges and other important river valleys. It falls into three sub-divisions. The first and northern is the area drained by the Bhopalpatnam Chintawag, which joins the Indrawati a little south of Bhopalpatnam, and the Indrawati and Godavari valleys from the Kutru-Bhopalpatnam boundary on the north to the tri-junction of Bastar, Hyderabad and Madras near Kothagudam on the Godavari in the south. All of this area except the upper valleys of the Chintawag is in the main territory of the Bhopalpatnam zamindari; the upper valleys are part of Bijapur tahsil. A lofty range of hills begins from the confluence of the Indrawati and Chintawag and runs south-east thence parallel to and at a distance of a few miles from the Godavari as far as the Talper valley; the Bastar-Madras boundary runs along the crests of this range. Its highest peaks are more than 3,000 feet above sea-level. This barrier effectively shuts southern Bijapur off from the Godavari.

The second sub-division is the area drained by the Talper and its tributary the Chintalnar Chintawag. The Talper rises in the highest valley of the Bailadila ridge, almost from the 4,000 feet level, and within a few hundred yards of the source of the Sankani. Thence it flows slightly west of south to join the Godavari a few miles below Cherla. It drains the south of the Bailadila hills and of the hills at the southern edge of the Kutru-Bijapur plateau; the Chintawag takes the drainage of the Aranpur pass and the eastern slopes of the Gogonda-Tikanpalli hills (p. 24 *supra*) and of the Golapalli hills. This sub-division comprises the remainder of southern Bijapur, the outlying Lingagiri block of Bhopalpatnam, the whole of the Kotapalli-Pamer zamindari, and, of the Konta tahsil, that western portion which was once the Chintalnar zamindari. Much of this region is extremely sparsely populated, and wide areas are marked in the new maps as 'dense forest and bamboos' or 'high grass'. The Kotapalli-Pamer zamindari has been almost depopulated by the maladministration of its zamindar, and is therefore now under management by the State; as at one point it is barely three miles from the Godavari at Sirur it has natural advantages which would have attracted settlers from

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 Madras if it had been reasonably managed. The few 'Dorla' villages are the most miserable in Bastar.

The third sub-division is the Kolab-Sabari valley from the southern slopes of the hills at the edge of the 2,000 feet plateau and the Dantewara valley plateau to the border of the Bhadrachalam taluq of Madras on the south. The northern portion of this, the Sukma zamindari, is a punchbowl ringed by the high edges of the Jagdalpur and Dantewara plateaux from Tulsidongri in the north-east counter-clockwise to a point in the south-west of the zamindari where the foot-hills of the Gogonda-Tikanpalli hills approach the Kolab-Sabari near Chikpalli; the hills are continued across the river and the Bastar border still counter-clockwise towards Malkangiri, and thence back to Tulsidongri. There are two small detached portions of Jagdalpur tahsil in the north of the zamindari, around Kukanar and the lower waters of the Thakawara and Kumakoleng rivers respectively. South of Sukma zamindari the valley opens out again to form the main block of Konta tahsil, including the former Bhiji zamindari, the level of which falls nearly to 250 feet above the sea by Konta at its south-east corner; here the Bastar portion of the valley is very narrow, as nearly all the south of Konta tahsil is occupied by the ranges of the Golapalli mountains which at one point reach a height of more than 2,800 feet.

132 In contrast with north Bastar, with its evergreen moist forests, cool climate, abundant water-supply and often thick population,
133 south Sukma, almost all Konta, the Pamer-Kotapalli zamindari
137 and much of south Bijapur are hot dry regions of deciduous forests, deficient water and sparse population. The rivers are short stony torrents rushing down in the monsoon to the adjacent Godavari, Talper or Kolab-Sabari, and drying up often before January. Teak is the characteristic timber tree.

135 There will be found in Appendix I a statement of the areas and populations of the six tahsils and four zamindaris into which modern
162 Bastar is divided. Each of these administrative units is called after the name of its headquarters; except Jagdalpur with a (1931) population of 10,128, the other headquarters are only villages, and not always large villages; in 1931, of the 2,442 villages in Bastar only five had populations between 2,000 and 2,500, and forty-two populations between 1,000 and 2,000.

634 Frequent mention was made in this chapter of the smaller *pargana* unit. The first use that I can find of this word is in Appendix IX of Glasfurd's 1862 report, in which, of the forty-three non-zamindari sub-divisions of Bastar, seventeen are called *parganas* and twenty-six *garhs*. In Elliot's 1855 report the names are given of forty-eight *garhs* and nine taluqs into which the non-zamindari

1: Grigson. G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

634

part of the State was said once to have been sub-divided, and of the twenty-seven *garhs* and nine taluqs remaining after some had passed by conquest or other arrangement to Jeypore, Kanker, Bindra-Nawagarh and Nagpur or as *mokasa* grants to Bastar zamindars. The two lists do not correspond, though it seems that what Elliot called taluqs and independent village groups, Glasfurd called *pargunas*. There is nothing to show what distinguished a *pargana* or taluq from a *garh*. Reference may again be made to Wills's

FIGURE 1

ANTAGARH TAHSIL, DIVIDED INTO *PARGANAS*

Scale roughly 17 miles = 1 inch. The small patch marked C.D is a detached portion of CHHOTA DONGAR *pargana*. The boundary crossing the *pargana* divides the Hill Maria and Jhoria villages of the *pargana*.

monograph on *The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chhattisgarh*, in which he summarizes the system of the division of kingdoms into conventional numbers of *garhs* or *chaurasis*, themselves sub-divided into taluqs or *barhons* each containing twelve villages, with the heads of the *garhs* and taluqs working with the advice of *panchayats* or committees of village headmen, as 'a system of feudalism superimposed on an earlier tribal organization', the 'feudal element' being largely the conventionalization

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

634 of the size of the divisions and the formal linking of them together in subordination to the head of the State and of the heads of the intermediate divisions, and its authority being held in constant check by the democratic tendencies of the tribe. The word *pargana* is familiar in the west of the Central Provinces and in Berar as a unit of the Mussalman organization of the Deccan, and as more and more Indian officials were lent to Bastar from the Central Provinces it probably displaced gradually the less familiar terms *garh* and taluq. I deal below with the tribal organization of the [614] Hill Marias. Their clan-units were and are smaller than the conventional *garh* and often than the *barhon* or taluq; yet in the Abujhmar hills tract of the Antagarh tahsil these clan-units of land are now designated *parganas*. The modern list of *parganas* is considerably larger than those of Elliot and Glasfurd, who described all the Abujhmar country as one taluq or *pargana* named Marian; there are now nine Abujhmar *parganas* in Antagarh tahsil alone, besides others of obvious tribal origin below the hills, and there are twenty-nine *parganas* in all in Antagarh tahsil. These are shown in the map on page 33. It was pointed out in the 1911 Central Provinces Census Report, Part I, p. 239, that the Hill Marias of the Ahiri zamindari are similarly divided into (probably clan) units called *pattis*. The *parganas* of modern Bastar include some obvious former *garhs*, some obvious *barhons* (e.g. Baragaon *pargana* in Antagarh), and some obvious old tribal clan-units, while some have been created in my time; and the word *pargana* is now used of any sub-division of a tahsil or zamindari in which villages are grouped under a group headman or '*pargana majhi*'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Chapter III

The Ethnological Setting; the Primitive Races of Bastar

It remains in this chapter, before passing on to the main subject of this book, to outline the distribution of races in Bastar and to some extent in adjacent districts; the major political divisions of India seldom correspond to racial divisions, and each of the main races of Bastar overflows into other provinces or States. This discord between political and racial divisions has not made it easier for students to understand the ethnography of this part of India. An area mainly peopled by primitive Mundari or Dravidian speaking tribes of similar customs, rites and manners extends from the Santal country on the borders of Bengal and Bihar, through Chhota Nagpur and the Orissa States into the Central Provinces and the old Central Provinces States, of which Bastar was the chief, into the Jeypore zamindari now included in the new Orissa province, the East Godavari Agency of Madras, and beyond the Godavari into Hyderabad State. Hitherto the area has been divided administratively between the local governments of four provinces and one major State, Bengal, Madras, the Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, and Hyderabad; the many Orissa and Central Provinces States were under the control of the governments of Bihar and Orissa, and of the Central Provinces, so that the student has been spared separate census reports and ethnographic surveys for them. Even so, there have been four census reports and three provincial publications on tribes and castes from which to glean the required information; perhaps the formation of the new Eastern States Agency and the separate province of Orissa will mean two more census reports in 1941. To make matters worse, there is confusion of names; the Parja of Bastar becomes Poroja in Madras official language, and the Bhattra becomes Bottada. The Gond, wherever he speaks his own language, from Central India to the Eastern Ghats and Hyderabad, calls himself Koi or Koitor; yet only in Madras and Hyderabad reports is he called by a name approaching this in sound, Koya, and in the literature of the Central Provinces there has therefore been a tendency to restrict this name to Teluguized members of the race. Everywhere it is more usual to call primitive tribes by the local Hindu name for them, and not by their own name for themselves. So over much of India the prevailing Hindu name Gond, and not Koi, is used; and with his usual passion for standardization the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

114 official in India has tried gradually to call all the Koitor race Gonds,
101 whatever the name by which they call themselves or the local vernacular name for them, and even to include under the generic term Gond other races or tribes who are not Koitor but only resemble them more or less in their customs. All the Koitor of Bastar have thus been officially classed as Gonds, though the name Gond is still hardly known in Bastar and is regarded by most Koitor of every local variety as an insult, except by Hinduized Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh. If official and ethnographer would always use the names by which tribesmen call themselves when speaking their own language, we should possibly find many of the so-called branches of the primitive races not branches at all, but merely classified as such in the past owing to unintelligent failure to realize that in different tracts different Hindus have used different names for the same race or tribe.

The difficulty is accentuated by the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names. So arise such names as Raj-Gond, Raj-Korku, Raja-Muria, Naik Gond, Pit-Bhattra; and it will be seen below how this process has worked in Bastar.

Almost a reverse process is also at work, by which the remnants of forgotten tribes or old confederations of tribes not necessarily akin or speaking the same language have long been known under the common name applied to the whole confederation. The links that used to hold them together disappear, and those sections of the confederation that are socially or culturally more advanced object to being dragged down to the same level in popular esteem as the backward sections, and so prefer to abandon the name given to the confederation in favour of the original or some new name of their own section. The Parjas are a clear example of this, as beyond the Jeypore border they include at least seven different tribes, some speaking Munda, some Dravidian and some Aryan dialects, which differ widely in customs and degree of advancement: the Bastar Parjas except, it is said, the few wilder ones beyond the Kolab-Sabari in Sukma zamindari and around Mount Tulsidongri in Sukma and Jagdalpur tahsil, now invariably call themselves Dhurwa and resent being called Parja. The name Parja appears to be only a corruption of the Aryan term '*praja*' applied to subjects as distinct from the '*raja*' or ruler.

114 It is difficult to give figures for the growth or decline of the
659 tribes of Bastar, as the 1931 census was the first since 1891 in which almost all the primitive races of Bastar were not lumped together

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

under the generic name Gond. In 1931 the tribes enumerated as Gonds in the previous three censuses were separately enumerated under the names Bhattra, Gond, Maria, Muria, Koya and Parja. The totals for these must be added both for 1931 and 1891 in order to see how far the primitive races of Bastar have been increasing. The 1921 figure for Gonds was only 107,503 persons, compared with 285,519 in 1911, and was obviously wrong; the 113,100 persons enumerated in 1921 under Minor Castes should be added to the 107,503 Gonds, though even then the total of 220,603 is below the correct figure. Excluding the Halbas and certain minor aboriginal tribes, the comparative figures are then :—

Year	Gonds
1891	128,442
1901	204,641
1911	285,519
1921	220,603
1931	359,637

The increase in forty years has been 181 per cent. In the same period the total population rose by 69 per cent. from 310,884 to 524,721. The primitive population is more than holding its own.

Halbas were also classified at the census, not altogether rightly, as primitive, and with them and certain other minor primitive tribes added, the primitive population rises to 379,082. Even this does not tell the full tale. Large numbers of the persons returned as members of the Hindu functional castes,[1] the graziers, potters, fishermen, weavers (Mahras), blacksmiths and others, are in reality members of primitive tribes speaking their languages and only differentiated from them by their occupation. There is nothing in outward appearance to distinguish these persons from other aboriginals; they follow their tribal religions whether enumerated as such or as Hindus. I consider that on this account the 1931 primitive total can safely be regarded as 400,000, or 76 per cent.; the census report puts the percentage at 73·6.

The totals given for the tribes formerly treated as Gonds but separately enumerated in 1931 are :—

Bhattra	36,611
Gond	24,407
Maria	146,070
Muria	124,993
Koya	9,988
Parja	17,568

Unfortunately even now, as will be shown later, the classification has been over-simplified, and is of little use for scientific purposes. The only categories about which no doubt can arise are Bhattra

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

and Parja, and it is therefore easy first of all to describe their distribution; only the briefest of general remarks will be made about them; I hope at a later date to publish a separate account, at least of the Parjas.

In the ethnographic map on page 40 the Bhattras are shown by the letter A and the Parjas by the letter B. The former

Bhattras and Parjas

alone among the races of Bastar have abandoned whatever Munda or Dravidian tongue they may have once spoken, and now use a corrupt Uriya dialect. In Bastar, except for one or two villages at the south-east corner of the Kondagaon tahsil, the Bhattras are confined to the north-east corner of Jagdalpur, along the Jeypore border, across which they overflow in large numbers into Jeypore and, beyond, Kalahandi State. Their Bastar number in 1891 was 21,477. The use of their language is spreading to other tribes, chiefly the Parjas; it was spoken by 45,830 persons in 1931, which means that 9,219 non-Bhattras speak it. The spread of its use among the Parjas is shown by the fact that only 12,363 Parji-speakers were returned out of 17,568 Parjas. Actually, as Sir George Grierson has admitted, Bhattri might as well be classified as one of the many forms of Halbi as a dialect of Uriya; to the outward ear they sound very similar, and the two languages are mutually intelligible. Halbi always varies according to its proximity to Chhattisgarhi, Telugu or Gondi; and to me Bhattri seems only Halbi influenced by its proximity to Uriya-speaking tracts. Nor are local census enumerators by any means to be relied upon effectively to distinguish Halbi and Bhattri. Grierson's remark of Gondi dialects that the names indicate tribal rather than linguistic differences is true of Halbi and Bhattri at all events.

The Bhattras live in open country with miles of good rice cultivation. They are gradually giving up even their very modified form of *dahya* or shifting cultivation, consisting now mainly of the occasional cutting and carting to their rice fields of forest undergrowth, and burning it there as manure. All but twenty-six of them were returned in 1931 as following their tribal religion; and this is really the correct account, though they are considerably more Hinduized than any other tribe classed as primitive in 1931 except the Halbas. The latter, whose religion preserves only slightly less of the tribal element than the Bhattra, are, however, in contrast, all but thirty-six recorded as Hindu. No anthropometric work has been done among the Bastar Bhattras; and there are no data for accepting or rejecting on physical grounds the Central Provinces habit of classifying them as a branch of the Gond race. Traditionally they came with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal, while over

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

the border in Jeypore, according to the *Vizagapatam Gazetteer*, the '50,000 Bottadas' say they came from Bastar, and their Uriya dialect is called 'Bastari'. Many of them wear the sacred thread, the right to do so having been purchased in years past by their ancestors from the Raja of Bastar, whose State revenues used once to include regular receipts from such items. They have totemistic divisions, and social and religious customs not unlike those of the Koitor, but with certain marked differences. The tribe is becoming a Hindu caste, with sub-castes differentiated by the purity of their blood; the highest group, or 'Pit' Bhattras, distinguishes itself from the Amnait or Madhya group, on the ground that the Amnaits took women in marriage from other tribes, while the Amnaits similarly held themselves purer in blood than the San group. The Amnait has in the last thirty years gone farther than the Pit, and claims now to be a separate race, far superior to Bhattras. The San group is hardly distinguishable from the ordinary 'Murias' of Jagdalpur.

105

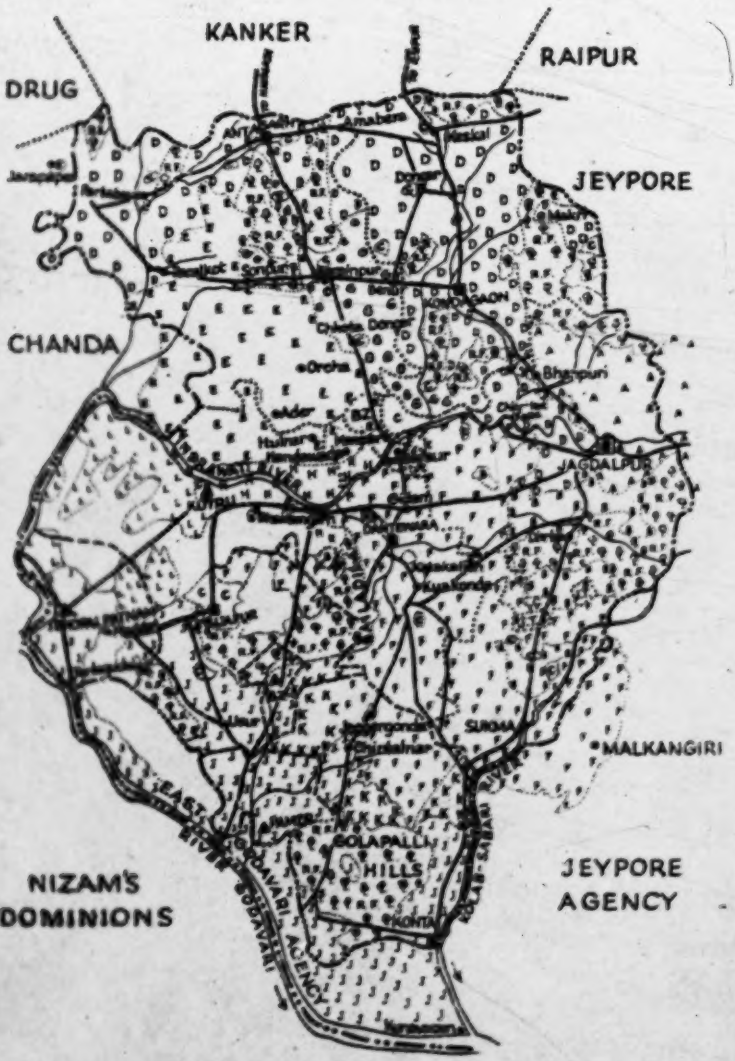
Of the Bastar Parjas it has already been noted that they now call themselves Dhurwa and resent the designation Parja. The majority of them live in the south-east of the Jagdalpur tahsil, north and south of the Kanker Forest Reserve; there is a further group of them in the Kolab-Sabari valley in Sukma zamindari, between Sukma and the Jagdalpur border, extending at one point across the Kolab-Sabari. The northernmost Parjas are more advanced than those south of the Kanker Forest and below the plateau. In the Bhattra villages around Jagdalpur there are isolated families of Parjas, and a Parja designated the village Dhurwa is often the priest of the *Gaon Devi* or Village Mother goddess, besides having to arbitrate in boundary disputes; the indication is that the Parja is the original settler displaced later by Bhattras. So also at the ceremonies preceding the great *pargana* ceremonial hunts through the jungles near Darba, at the head of the pass descending from the Jagdalpur plateau into Sukma, though most of the villages attending are Bison-horn Maria villages, the *pujaris* who officiate at the altar of bows and arrows are Parjas. The Peng Parjas are said to have come with the first Raja from Warangal, but seem now to be confined to the Jeypore zamindari, though it must be remembered that Jeypore contains large tracts of Bastar *irredenta*. The Tugara Parjas mentioned by Glasfurd (para. 82) seem almost all to have left Bastar, though Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath stated that there were some in Bastar twenty-eight years ago. Their language is described by Grierson as a local and very corrupt variation of Gondi, considerably mixed with Hindi forms. Yet it is an extremely difficult language, unintelligible to

[text continues on p. 41]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

131
162

PLATE IV



BASTAR STATE ETHNOGRAPHIC MAP
Scale (approx.) : 1 inch = 32 miles

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
A W32 Gond A W32

Bison-horn Maria and Muria neighbours, and seldom learnt even by those State officials who are excellent interpreters in other dialects; and I fancy that the Hindi admixture is considerably less in ordinary use than in the specimens collected for the Linguistic Survey. It is certainly untrue of Parji that the name indicates rather a tribal than a linguistic difference from Gondi proper. The most marked difference of customs is their style of dancing, which resembles that of the small remnant of the Munda tribe of Gadbas still surviving in two or three villages between them and the Bhattras; they dance in rollicking circles accompanied by their own whistling or by wooden flutes, in a manner reminiscent of certain figures of the 'Lancers', and as different as their dancing dress from the Bison-horn dances of their Maria neighbours, and pleasanter to see and hear than any other dances of Bastar except the Gadba.

105

KEY TO PLATE IV

State or Provincial Boundary ———
Tribal Boundary .....
Roads, Forest ———
Tahsil Headquarters ■
Bhattras A
Halbas C
Marias, Abujhmar or Hill E
"Dhorias" or Murias probably once Hill Marias, now lowlanders G
Koitor of the riverain tract or Dorlas J

Tahsil or Zamindari Boundary - - - -
Roads, P.W.D. ———
Reserved Forests
Zamindari Headquarters A
Parjas B
Murias D
Marias, Bison-horn or Dandami F
Hill Marias influenced by Bison-horn Marias H
Mixed Dorla & Bison-horn Maria, or latter exposed to Telugu influence K

Mixed Dorla & Hill Maria, or Hill Maria who have almost become Dorla L

131
162

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

105 The Gadbas are not shown in the ethnographic map. Their three villages used to have the duty and privilege of supplying bearers for the Raja of Bastar's palanquin. They are gradually dying out; their numbers have fallen from 721 in 1901 to 398 in 1931, though the latter figure may be wrong, as 451 speakers of the Gadbi languages in Bastar were returned in 1931. This is probably the only Munda language spoken in Bastar. They are losing their distinctive dress, customs and language; usually the only villagers who remember it are the old women, and the census enumerators have almost certainly wrongly recorded most of them as speaking Gadbi merely because they are Gadbas. One cause of their decline is that some years back alien Hindus were made lessees of two of their three villages and proceeded to introduce non-Gadbas and to allot them Gadba land; the community was too small to offer the resistance made to similar processes by the larger primitive races of Bastar.

Gadbas

The Halbas are shown by the letter C in the ethnographic map, scattered in small patches over most of north and central Bastar. I have above, in Chapter I, suggested as a reason for this distribution that they are the descendants of the old *paik* militia garrisons of the headquarter villages of the old *garhs*. Their Bastar number has risen from 13,865 in 1891 to 16,152 in 1931, while the steady growth of the use of their language as the *lingua franca* of Bastar is shown by the increase of the number of persons speaking Halbi as their mother tongue from 127,047 in 1911 to 171,293 in 1931, while 54,798 Gondi-speakers spoke Halbi as a secondary language. Of them it need only be observed here that the one point in which they most resemble their Maria and Muria neighbours is their worship of log-gods exactly similar in form to the tribal gods of the Abujhmar hills and elsewhere, consisting of parallel pairs of oiled and polished logs joined by cross-pieces and adorned with bunches of peacock feathers.

Halbas

We come now to the remaining bulk of the Gondi-speaking people of Bastar, recorded in the census as Gonds, Koyas, Murias and Marias. Unfortunately none of these designations is scientific, and the figures published in the 1931 census as they stand are of little value to the ethnographer.

Murias—General

Whatever the derivation of the words Maria and Muria, they are not Gondi words. It has been suggested that Muria is formed from a word meaning root, the term meaning 'aboriginal', and that Maria means merely 'man of the woods'. Glasfurd (para. 80) describes the Murias of his time thus :—

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

'These people inhabit the more cultivated plains around Jugdulpore, and extend on the west from Nagatoka to the boundary of Jeypore, and from Seetapore to about thirty or forty miles north of the Indrawatty. They are skilful cultivators, their dress is a waist-cloth or lungotee, with but seldom any covering on the head; their villages are generally clean and comfortable; they have necklaces of red beads and small brass ear-rings; are active, hardy, and well behaved; they eat everything except the flesh of the cow, and keep great numbers of pigs.' 105

Nagatoka is a little west of Chitrakot falls; if the country east from there to the Jeypore border was then Muria, the Bhattras must have advanced westwards since then into most of their present habitat, or else many who are now San Bhattras were then considered to be Murias. The northward extension thirty or forty miles beyond the Indrawati takes us roughly speaking to the line from Kondagaon east to Amrati in the Makri Forest Reserve, in which there were then several villages. The southward extension to Chitapur (Seetapore) comes practically to the spot where the ethnographic map shows Murias as now beginning south-west of Jagdalpur.

Jagdalpur Murias

The Murias of this tract are very different in various ways from those of Kondagaon and Antagarh tahsils, to whom they consider themselves superior; they say they do not intermarry with them, though this is certainly untrue along the Kondagaon-Jagdalpur border. In Jagdalpur tahsil the Murias have been very exposed to foreign influence, living close to the capital of the State and the Jeypore border; the *parganas* near Jagdalpur itself have had hereditary domestic duties to perform at the palace, and have far more villages leased to foreigners than other parts of Bastar; in the whole tahsil the proportion of persons no longer speaking Gondi as their mother-tongue is higher than elsewhere in the State. Their dancing and music are more akin to those of the Parjas and Bhattras. The signs of totemistic organization are weaker, and the old rules of exogamy are breaking down. Whether or not the Jagdalpur Murias are distinct racially from those of the north it is difficult to say; there is not much apparent physical difference, save in so far as the Muria of the thickly populated open tracts of the 'Padar Raj', as the open country round Jagdalpur is often called, is weedier than the Muria of the north and the Marias of the Abujhmar and Dantewara. Those who no longer speak a dialect of Gondi may easily be descended from Parjas, San Bhattras, or Bison-horn Marias, or from the Murias of the north according to their geographical position, and have lost their distinctive cultural features through being fused together in the detribalizing melting-pot of Jagdalpur; but there may be a substantial 'Muria' nucleus representing an

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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105 earlier wave of migration southwards than that which peopled north Kondagaon and Antagarh. It is noticeable that in the Jagdalpur country you do not find the *gotul* or boys' (sometimes boys' and girls') dormitory organization that is so distinctive a feature of Kondagaon and Antagarh. It will be seen later that this exists only in embryo in the Abujhmar mountains except at their northernmost extension, and is altogether absent among the Bison-horn Marias and the Koyas of the south. It is tempting to suggest that as the Jhorias of Antagarh tahsil represent Marias who have descended from the Abujhmar mountains, so the Jagdalpur Murias are civilized Bison-horn Marias; but the latter are very distinct from the Jagdalpur Murias, and indeed to some extent antagonistic to them; for the religious or social occasions on which they have to provide a feast of beef they will engage the village thief and send him to steal a cow or calf from the nearest Muria village. A Muria considers himself in Jagdalpur superior to the beef-eating Bison-horn Maria, and does not intermarry.

Coming then to the Murias of Kondagaon and Antagarh, the term as now used for all non-Maria Koitor has again to be condemned as unscientific. Glasfurd rightly excluded from it those whom he described as 'Jhoorias', of whom he says (para. 86):—

Jhoria Murias

'The Jhoorias are found principally in the north-western parts about Narayenpoor and Purtabpore, and extend towards Kakeir (Kanker); they are a numerous class, and subsist partly by cultivation and partly by hunting, and on the fruits of the forest. Their dress resembles that of the following caste, the Marias, with whom they may be said to constitute about a third or more of the population of the Bustar Dependency, and whom they resemble in customs and appearance.'

By Marias he meant primarily those whom this book terms the Bison-horn Marias, from whom he rightly distinguished the Marias of the Abujhmar mountains, whom he designated 'Marees'. His remarks on the Jhorias are fairly true if it is borne in mind that it is the Abujhmar Marias whom they resemble, not the Bison-horn, and that he is wrong in extending their country to include north Antagarh around Partabpur as well as the country round Narainpur. The name Jhorias is not now ordinarily used in conversation, since all Koitor in Bastar who have raised themselves socially above the Maria standard nowadays call themselves Murias. Here it is revived as a convenient term for that very distinct type of 'Muria' living around Narainpur and Benur, and the lower valley of the Gudra from a little north of Chhota Dongar to the Indrawati. It strictly speaking applies to the inhabitants of the *parganas* of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Jhorian and Ghat Jhorian (see the *pargana* map of Antagarh tahsil at p. 33); but almost all of Ghat Jhorian was depopulated when the bulk of the *pargana* was included in the Matla Forest Reserve. I should now define as Jhoria Murias or Jhorias the Koitor inhabiting the south of the Kolur *pargana*, the Ghat Jhorian, Jhorian, Baragaon, Narainpur, Dugal, Kurangal and Benur *parganas*, the plains villages of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* of Antagarh, and the Mardapal *pargana* of Kondagaon, which lies to the east of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*. On the ethnographic map all Murias have been shown by the letter D, and the Jhorias by the letter G; in my view the Jhorias are really Marias who have descended from the hills and come into contact with Koitor from the north, the 'Murias' of northern Bastar. There is very little in the outward appearance of the Jhorias to distinguish them from the Hill Marias; their fashions in beads and other ornaments, their coiffures, their physical features, are all similar. They have clans and clan-gods similar to the Hill Marias; the clans have often their own definite territory, the Dugal and Kurangal *parganas* for example being the lands of the Dugalor and the Kurangalor clans; their *pandum* or festivals correspond to those of the Abujhmar; they erect *kotokal* or monoliths to their dead. The northern Jhorias have now learned to dance in 'Muria' style; but to the south and especially in the Mardapal *pargana* of Kondagaon they dance in the traditional *pata-endanna* or 'song-and-dance' style of the Abujhmar, and the dancers are somewhat overdressed in the typical Abujhmar way, with flowing draperies, dancing hats ('*topi*') ornamented with the feathers of the peacock, racket-tailed drongo (*Dissemurus paradiseus*) or other birds, dancing shields (*meghi*) with plumes of peacock feathers and streamers of cloth, and bunches of bells slung over the buttocks of the dancers, though without the strips of cloth tied rib-fashion over the torso till very recently characteristic of the Abujhmar. On the other hand, they[1] have in their villages the full *gotul* or dormitory organization of northern Murias, though they deny that girls share the dormitories with boys as around Kondagaon, and their agriculture is far more advanced than that of the Hill Marias, in that they have ploughs and permanent fields. The Dugalor and Kurangalor clans do indeed admit that some of the hill clans are their *dadabhai* or brother-clans, and that some are their *akomama* or clans with which they may intermarry; but such intermarriage practically never occurs, owing to the distance of the hill villages from those of the lowlands.

[1] I am not sure whether this applies to the Mardapal *pargana* and the adjacent part of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

105 The remaining 'Murias' are those of the Paralkot-Kalpatti, Bandadesh, Kirangal, Kalpatti, Surebahi, Bhomra, Antagarh and Amabera *parganas* and the larger part of the Kolar *pargana* of Antagarh tahsil, and of all Kondagaon tahsil except the Mardapal *pargana* and that portion between Kondagaon and the Jagdalpur border already mentioned as peopled by Koitor of the Jagdalpur Muria type. All these Murias have traditions of migration into Bastar from the north, from the ancient kingdom of Dhamda, on the downfall of which their god Bhera Pen (Hinduized, Budha Deo) led them in safety from the modern Raipur district into Bastar; the latter story is told in Kondagaon tahsil, but I have not heard it in Antagarh, though Antagarh certainly knows Bhera Pen, the ordinary Great God[1] of the Gonds throughout the British districts of the Central Provinces. In the Amabera *pargana* alone in Bastar is recorded the knowledge of the great Lingo epic of the Gond race, from the Bastar version of which certain extracts were printed by Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, pp. 49, 61-2). It is likely that north Kondagaon, Amabera, and north Antagarh represent separate streams of migration, and that north Antagarh contains a larger strain of the previous inhabitants, very likely the same stock as that now living in the Abujhmar hills. The Koitor inhabitants of the Kanker State that borders Antagarh and Kondagaon tahsils on the north, though called Gonds in the 1931 census report, are of exactly the same kind, intermarrying still with their Bastar Muria neighbours, and often called Murias by Hindu residents of Kanker; thus it is observed in para. 76 of the *Chhattisgarh Feudatory States Gazetteer*:—

Gotul Murias, or Murias of north Kondagaon and Antagarh

> 'The aboriginal population live in much the same style and have much the same customs as the aborigines of the adjoining State of Bastar, but it is said that they are gradually coming into line with their Hindu neighbours and abandoning their old beliefs. At present, however, in the more remote villages the Gonds adhere to the worship of godlings and to their old social customs. The girls and boys have their separate sleeping barracks outside the village, and meet near them nightly to play and dance and sing.'

Nearly all of the 80,003 Gonds returned from Kanker State at the 1931 census must be of the same stock as the Murias of north Bastar.

If any particular feature is to be singled out as the distinguishing mark of this 'Muria' group of the Koitor of north Bastar and Kanker, it must be their *gotul* system for the training of the young. The *gotul* is much the same as the Bachelors' House found in

[776] [1] Even in British districts I believe the *Bhera Pen* to be merely the 3-, 4-, 5-, 6- or 7-fold god of the clan as distinct from the 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 *Chuddur Penk* or small gods kept by each family.

9/3 [See cat. 116, p. 419. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Indonesia and, in India, among the Oraons and others in Chhota Nagpur and among the Nagas of Assam. In Bastar the Murias and Jhorias of Antagarh have sleeping dormitories for boys only, and repudiate with heat any suggestion that boys and girls share the same dormitory, as is the case among the Murias of north Kondagaon.[A] Nevertheless, the girls assemble every evening by the boys' *gotul*, to join in song, dance and games, and not infrequently in sexual games, and, like the boys, have *gotul* names and ranks some of which involve special duties and responsibilities. The elder boys and girls are almost prefects, charged with the duty of teaching the young the elements of the tribal culture, while all the youth have certain definite fagging to do for the whole village. The Marias of the Abujhmar have a *gotul* in every village, but it is little more than a real dormitory where all unmarried males over the age of ten or so sleep; and, except in the Padalbhum *pargana* and portions of adjacent Maria country abutting on the plain of north-western Antagarh, the distinctive and specialized *gotul* system of training for the young of both sexes is absent. It seems almost completely absent among the Bison-horn Marias and Koyas of Bastar. Lucie-Smith does not mention it in the account of the Marias and other Gonds of Chanda district in the 1869 Settlement Report (one of the indications that the 'Marias' described by him were Koitor of the plains and foot-hills of the Ahiri and other zamindaris, not the Hill Marias of the portion of the Abujhmar mountains that overflows into south-east Chanda). It is only briefly mentioned by Russell and Hiralal in para. 71 of their article 'Gond', where it is said that 'many Gond villages in Chhattisgarh and the Feudatory States' have these '*gotalghar*' (*sic*). There is no definite record of the distribution of the *gotul* outside Bastar in the Central Provinces and the old Central Provinces States. In the *States Gazetteer* it is recorded only in Bastar and Kanker States among the 'Gonds'. I doubt whether it exists anywhere among the Gonds[1] of the Satpura mountains and other parts of the Central Provinces, including Chhattisgarh. It is a possible indication of the existence among these Muria, Jhoria and Hill Maria Koitor of Antagarh and Kondagaon Tahsils who now speak dialects of Dravidian Gondi of a strong element of pre-Dravidian or Austro-Asiatic culture; but it is contrary to expectation, if this be the case, that the *gotul* exists in embryo only among the very primitive Hill

[1] Enquiry among the Gonds along the Nagpur-Chhindwara border showed no sign of anything resembling a *gotul*; I was told, however, by an intelligent Gond that he had heard many years ago that some such thing existed somewhere beyond Deogarh in Chhindwara District. This is unverified. There is no mention of the *gotul* in any published grammars and vocabularies of Central Provinces Gondi dialects.

[A] [see cat. 116, p. 418. - Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

105 Marias but fully developed among the comparatively advanced Murias and Jhorias of Antagarh and Kondagaon. I propose to refer to these northern Murias as the Gotul Murias, though it must be remembered that the *gotul* system is equally strong among the Jhorias.

Physically the Gotul Murias conform more to the standard type of Central Provinces Gond than any other Koitor in Bastar; they are short in stature, but well-proportioned, with roundish heads, flat noses, distended nostrils, ugly features, straight black hair and scanty beard and moustache. Eickstedt measured several Murias at Kondagaon in January 1929 and, I gather, found little difference between them and the Hill Marias whom he measured at Handawada on the Indrawati edge of the Abujhmar hills; the Hill Marias are generally in better physical condition, apart from the ravages of yaws and the prevalence of hydrocele, than Gotul or Jagdalpur Murias. So, too, Ramesh Chandra Roy in measuring Hill and Bison-horn Marias during my March 1933 expedition found little physical difference. Yet after living in Bastar for a time one is soon able to distinguish between a Muria and a Hill or Bison-horn Maria, by something in their facial appearance, not merely by differences of dress, though one will often confuse a Hill Maria and a Jhoria. The Maria of both types has a proportion of almost leptorrhine faces and of skins pale copper in hue, while heights of 5 ft. 9 in. are not unknown among them.[1]

Murias—Summary

To summarize the account of the so-called Murias before proceeding to discuss the Marias and Koyas, they fall into three main groups, the Jagdalpur Murias of the Jagdalpur tahsil and the south of Kondagaon tahsil; the Jhoria Murias of the foot-hills of the Abujhmar mountains in south-west Kondagaon and in Antagarh tahsils; and the Gotul Murias of north Antagarh and most of Kondagaon. These divisions are roughly endogamous, though not now recognized

[1] Cf. Hutton, India Census Report, 1931, p. 446:—'The vague suggestion of the mongoloid, which is so often given by the appearance of the hillmen of Chhota Nagpur, of Bastar State in the Central Provinces and of the Madras Agency Tracts, may be due to a strain of Pareoean blood which has come in by sea from the coast. One is insistently reminded in these areas of the Assam hill tribes, and both Haddon and Buxton have drawn attention to this strain, which struck the present writer quite independently and contrary to his expectations; and the admitted proto-australoid element in these tribes is no obstacle to this, since it must have extended at some period throughout what is now the archipelago to the Australian mainland, apart from the probability of its absorption on the mainland. Haddon says (*Races of Man*, p. 108), "there is something in the facial appearance of many Kolarians which enables an observer to pick out a typical inhabitant of Chhota Nagpur from a crowd of southern Dravidians and among some (Munda, etc.) there is often a reminiscence of Mongoloid traits", and the truth of this is incontestable.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

by separate vernacular designations. The Jagdalpur group is detribalized by palace contacts and the proximity of Halbi and Uriya speaking elements both in Bastar and in Jeypore.[1] The Jhoria group are probably Hill Marias settled in the plains. The Gotul Murias have definite traditions of immigration from Raipur and the north. 'Muria' is a term coined by non-Koitor for those Koitor who are somewhat less un-Hinduized than the primitive Marias, and is used by any section of Marias as soon as it wishes to claim social advancement. The Bastar official applies it not only to the three sections of Murias classified above, but also to the Koyas and some of the Doria Koyas of the south, and to the more advanced Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara and Bijapur. The census figures of Murias therefore contain various Koitor from Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris and from Konta and Bijapur tahsils who should have been enumerated as Koyas or Marias.

On the latter account perhaps about 15,000 should be deducted from the census total of 124,993 Bastar Murias, leaving a round figure of 110,000. About 32,000 of these are Jagdalpur Murias, 17,000 Jhorias and 61,000 Gotul Murias. These are very approximate figures, roughly calculated from the total populations of the different charges into which each tahsil or zamindari was divided for census purposes.

The Marias—General

It has more than once been indicated in the preceding pages that I divide the so-called Marias into two divisions, the Hill Marias of the Abujhmar mountains, and the Bison-horn Marias. The former call their land Metabhum or 'Highlands', and call themselves (and are called by their neighbours on the plains and plateaux of Antagarh, Kondagaon, Jagdalpur, Dantewara and Bijapur) Meta Koitor, the Highland Koitor. To avoid confusion in the mind of any later investigator, it should be observed that this name is also given to themselves by the Bison-horn Marias living on the high edges of the Jagdalpur and the Dantewara tahsils in contrast to their brethren below in Dantewara or Sukma and Sukma or Konta respectively. If, however, a native name is needed for the Marias of the Abujhmar mountains, Meta Koitor could well be adopted; the general level of their villages is far higher than that of any other villages in Bastar. Hill Marias, however, is the term which I shall use, the word Maria being now familiar in ethnographic literature. By the Hill Maria the men of the plains, be they Muria, Jhoria or Bison-horn Maria, are called Dor Koitor, Hatiya Koitor or Kalpatti

[1] Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao in an article on the Gonds of the Eastern Ghauts, India, published in *Anthropos*, 1907, says that the Gonds of parts of Jeypore are known as Murias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 Koitor, all meaning Lowland Koitor, and the plains below are either Dorbhum, Hatiyabhum or Kalpatti; Dor Koitor and Dorbhum, the terms most commonly used, are probably the source of the expression Dhur Koitor said to be used fairly generally in the Central Provinces to designate the ordinary Gond as distinct from the one who gives himself social airs as a Raj-Gond; a Gondi word has been assimilated to the Hindi '*dhur*' or '*dhul*' meaning 'dust', and the Gond commoner referred to as the 'Dust' Gond. Hatiya-bhum is simply the land of the *hat* or bazaar. *Kalpatti* is the ordinary Halbi term for lowlands, which we have already seen applied as the name of two *parganas* in Antagarh. Hatiya is similarly the name of a *pargana* in the north of Kondagaon.

161 The Hill Maria tracts are shown by the letter E in the ethnographic map. An account of their country and distribution has been given already in Chapter II, pages 26-8. The estimate of 11,500 population is fairly accurate; I examined the actual census returns of all the Hill Maria villages except the five included in the outlying Mangnar *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam zamindari, and obtained a total of 11,361 (5,702 males and 5,659 females). There can only be 140 or 150 persons at the most in the Mangnar villages. Since the census, many Hill Marias have come back to the Abujhmar, chiefly from the Ahiri zamindari; it was found when the poll-tax settlement was effected in 1932 that 240 able-bodied males had so returned; probably, therefore, the Hill Maria population is now just over 12,000 in Bastar. There had in the past been a considerable exodus of Marias from the old Paralkot zamindari, owing to the zamindar's oppression. As they consider the new conditions in Bastar better than those in Ahiri, more may be expected to drift back into Bastar.

Hill Marias

The tract is extremely homogeneous. In 22 Hill Maria villages in Kutru with 1,443 Hill Marias the only non-Marias are 38 Rawats and 1 Halba; in 9 Hill Maria villages in Dantewara there are 879 Marias to 3 Telanga, 98 Rawats and 19 Mahras. The Rawats are only in the villages near the plains where they are employed by Marias to tend cattle and are beginning to teach them the use of the plough and the milking of cattle; they speak Maria as fluently as Halbi, and in outward appearance are scarcely distinguishable from Marias. Most of the Hill Maria villages are in Antagarh, and have hardly any outsiders except occasional Rawats or liquor contractors. The few blacksmiths are really Marias, knowing no 564 other language than Maria, having the same clans as the Marias and still occasionally marrying Maria girls; though, as among other tribes, there is always a tendency to look down on the blacksmith,

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and to make him live by himself on the outskirts of the village, so that in the end he becomes almost a separate low caste. This, however, has not gone nearly as far among the Hill Marias as among the Bison-horn.

To the south, along the Indrawati valley, the Hill Marias are influenced strongly by the Bison-horn Marias, and the area concerned is marked on the map by the letter H. The influence of the Bison-horn Marias gets less as you go west down the valley towards Kutru, and beyond Kutru is replaced by that of the Telugu-influenced Koitor of the riverain tract, known generally in those parts as Dorlas. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of most of these villages near the river were once Hill Marias. They seem to have been enumerated as Murias in the 1931 census, and are included in the 15,000 persons whom I have indicated at the end of my account of the Murias as wrongly enumerated at census as Murias. Where the Hill Marias are the immediate neighbours of the Bison-horn Marias, the influence of the latter is strong. In theory, according to local legend the Mander, a tributary running more or less east to west and joining the Indrawati on its *southern* bank near Barsur, is the boundary between the two kinds of Marias, with the Indrawati as the boundary west of the confluence. Here the Hill Marias know the Bison-horn Marias as Dandami Koitor; but the name is not universal in Bastar, and I have therefore preferred to call them Bison-horn because the wearing of bison-horns by their male dancers is so obvious a peculiarity of the tribe. Formerly, the legend says, Pat Raja, the log-god of Mornar in the Mangnar *pargana* who is regarded almost as the overlord of all the log-gods of the Hill Marias, and his wife's brother Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan at Ghotpal, a large Bison-horn village south of the Indrawati, between Barsur and Gidam, divided up the Hill and Bison-horn Marias into *dadabhai* and *ahomama* clans (brother-clans and wife-clans), and in those days the Hill Marias used to intermarry with the Bison-horn, and each used to attend the other's festivals. One day, as the Gumelor clan of Hill Marias, which occupies a group of villages in Bhairamgarh Mar, Dantewara Mar and Mangnar, was trooping to Ghotpal to dance at the Koqsar festival there, carrying their axes on their shoulders, a Gume with his axe accidentally severed the *sem* bean vine of the Old Widow (*Kuram Mutta'i*), who thereupon put a curse on all the Hill Marias and forbade them ever again to come south of the Mander river for social or religious purposes. Since then, according to the Hill Marias, intermarriage and participation in each other's festivals has ceased. On the other

Hill Marias of Indrawati valley, influenced by Bison-horn Marias or Dorla Koitor

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

582 hand some Hill Marias say that there is no theoretic obstacle to intermarriage, but that actually 'it isn't done', though they occasionally take part in each other's festivals. The Bison-horn 177 style of dancing with long *dol* drums is gradually spreading among 535 the lower villages just north of the Indrawati. Hudala Karka, for example, some eight miles from Barsur and on the northern bank of the river, now dances entirely in Bison-horn style, and claims to be a Bison-horn village, the claim being admitted by the Bison-horn Maria *pargana* headman in theory, and in practice by intermarriage with undoubted Bison-horn villages; but in several houses I found old Hill Maria dancing shields (*moghi*) and buttock-bells, and the older men admitted that when they were young they 177 danced in the Hill Maria style. Another sign of this is that Hurra Gunda, the log-god of the Tamo clan at Tumirgunda, near Hudala [176] Karka, is also the log-god of the Atami clan of Hudala Karka and of two other Atami villages south of the Indrawati. The clan-priest of the god is a Tamo, and the Tamo villages of Tumirgunda and Padmeta still dance in Hill Maria style. In a few years, therefore, the Bison-horn Marias will have adopted the valley villages north of the Indrawati; the *pargana* headman already virtually claims them as such, since they are under his direct jurisdiction and not that of the Hill Maria *chalki* or assistant appointed to help him [197] manage the eight Hill Maria villages of his *pargana*. In speech, too, they are approximating more and more to the Bison-horn Marias, as there is a marked absence of the harsh guttural sounds so characteristic of the Hill Maria language, and they use the Bison-horn technical social and religious terms.

101 Westward along the valley, as observed above, Bison-horn Maria influence gets less. For a few miles, roughly from Nelasnar 177 to Jegur on the Matawara-Kutru road, and in the village of Ketulnar beyond Jegur, the people are now known as Murias but are really Hill Maria stock, and still dance in Hill Maria style. Ketulnar still intermarries with the hill villages of the Kutru Mar *pargana*. The villagers of Bheriabhum, on the south bank opposite their former village of Pali, five or six miles north of Bhairamgarh, are of the Hill Farsal clan, and cannot be distinguished from Farsalor of the hills. In the hill villages above the valley I verified occasional marriages with girls from the valley villages and vice versa.

101 The tract west and south-west of Kutru, marked by the letter L on the ethnographic map, contains a very scanty population, which appears to be Hill Maria in origin, much modified by contact with the Telugu-influenced Dorla Koitor from the south, who are shown by the letter K. These mixed elements also were returned

2 [See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

as Muria at the census, while the actual Dorla Koitor appear to have been shown under Gond. 101

The census total of Marias was 146,070. I estimated at the end of my account of the Murias that 15,000 Marias and Koyas had been wrongly enumerated as Murias. This raises the total of Marias to 161,070, counting all the 15,000 whether Koyas or not as Marias, for reasons which will appear below. My adjusted census figure for the Hill Marias was 11,500. The mixed Hill-Bison-horn villages except Tumirgunda were excluded from this, and for demographic purposes may be regarded as Bison-horn. The valley villages occupied by Hill Maria stock and the villages of mixed Hill Maria and Dorla stock at the most have 3,500 inhabitants, though spread over a large area. Excluding them and the 11,500 pure Hill Marias from the 161,070, we get a balance of 146,070 as the strength of the Bison-horn Marias. To this I would add the 9,988 returned at census as Koyas, giving a total of 156,058 Bison-horn Marias. Of these, about 50,000 are in Jagdalpur, 60,000 in Dantewara, 7,000 in Konta, 3,000 in Kutru, 1,000 in Bhopalpatnam, 26,000 in Sukma, and 9,000 in Bijapur. 161

Bison-horn Marias, Koyas and Dorlas

The southern borders of this race are fairly clear when enquiry is made on the spot, but very difficult to ascertain from previous literature owing to the lack of precision of nomenclature. Much trouble has arisen from the word Koya. Glasfurd did not define Koyas or give their habitat in the report already quoted. In a report on the ethnography of the old Upper Godavari District including Bastar, printed in a collection of papers for a Central Provinces ethnographic exhibition in the sixties, he wrote :— 101

> 'Along the southern boundary we find the Telingas tolerably pure, but with a large mixture of intermediate castes, such as the Koys and Naikwars, which last the late Mr. Hislop classed among the Gonds. Proceeding inward we find the Telingas cease, and the Koys and Gottawars become the sole inhabitants. The former belong also to the Gond family; but from their vicinity to the Telingas they have acquired many of their words, and as the latter are the superior race, the Koys ape their manners a good deal. The Gottawars are inferior to the Koys in caste; but not so in appearance nor in physical conformation. Where they live close to Telingas, they also have acquired many of the Telugoo words; but they do not, as the Koys, ape Telinga manners.
>
> 'Proceeding still farther towards the interior, we find the Gottawars the prevailing class, and in the centre they appear merely to change their name; for the Maria is in no wise different from the Gottawar.'

In the classified list of races annexed to his report he gives as habitat for Koys the 'banks of the Godavery, Pranheeta and Savery rivers, and the Beejee, Potukul, Kotapilly, Veejapore, Soonkoom and Bhopalputnum Talooks of Bustar'; for Gottawars

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 'Seroncha Talook and Bhopalputnum, Veejapore, Chintulnar, Dunteewara, Kootroo and Barsoor Talooks of Bustar'; and for Marias 'Kootroo, Chintulnar, Dunteewara and Veejapore Talooks of Bustar, and also that part of Bustar called Ulrugmad[1]'. He notes that the Gotta language is nearly allied to the Maria. He uses [103] Telugu versions of Bastar place names, just as the Survey of India did in the old topographical survey maps; by Savery, Beejee, Potukul, Kotapilly, Veejapore and Soonkoom he meant Kolab-Sabari, Bhiji, Phutkel, Pamer-Kotapalli, Bijapur and Sukma. Bhiji is the old name of the south-eastern part of Konta tahsil; Phutkel is a former zamindari in the Talper riverain tract of Bijapur tahsil, while Chintulnar is now in Konta tahsil, occupying the tract at the foot of the Aranpur pass. Except, therefore, for his inclusion of Sukma in the region of the Koyas, his distribution of the 'Koys, Gottawars and Marias' corresponds very closely with the areas shown in the ethnographic map for Dorlas, mixed Maria-Dorla, and Marias; in his Report on the Dependency of Bastar he had stated that Marias constituted 90 per cent. of the population of Sukma.

114 Various articles were published between 1876 and 1881 on the Koyas, whom he rightly calls Kois, by the Rev. John Cain, for many years a C.M.S. missionary at Dummagudem on the Godavari in the Bhadrachalam taluq of the East Godavari Agency, and only a few miles from the south-western corner of the Konta tahsil. These articles were the basis of the article on the Koyas in Thurston's *Tribes and Castes of Southern India*[3]. He wrote in the first of these:—

'I propose to notice first the Kois, a tribe already partially described in Captain Glasfurd's reports and Colonel Haig's report of his visit to Jagdalpur, and also in the Census Report for 1871 of the Madras Presidency. These people are to be found in the country extending from the banks of the Indravati, Bastar, down to the neighbourhood of Kammammet in the Nizam's country. All those in the plains have a tradition that about 200 years ago they were driven down from the plateau in the Bastar country by famine and disputes, and this relationship is also acknowledged by the Gutta Kois, i.e. the hill Kois who live in the highlands of Bastar. Up to the present (1876) time I have had but little intercourse with the Gutta Kois, and the manners and customs described in this paper will be those of the Kois dwelling in the Bhadrachallam taluka.'

Elsewhere he writes that the Gutta Koi of the Bastar plateau 'look down with some degree of contempt on the lowland Koi', who are

[1] An obvious misprint for 'Ubujmard', Glasfurd's spelling of Abujhmar.
[2] Cain's articles are:—'The Bhadrachallam Taluka, Godavari District, S. India', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1876, p. 357 et seq.; 'The Bhadrachallam and Rekapalli Taluqas', *ibidem*, Vol. VIII, 1879, p. 33 et seq., and p. 219 et seq.; Vol. X, 1881, p. 221 et seq.; 'The Koi, a Southern Tribe of the Gond', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal*, Vol. XIII, 1881, p. 410 et seq. There were others in certain missionary journals, which I could not trace.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

called Gommu Koi, or Koi of the river bank, *gommu* being a Telugu word for horn or tusk, used in the Upper Godavari district to mean the banks of the Godavari. He says that the Gutta Koi also generally refer to the lowlanders as '*mayalotilu* or rogues' and say that long ago their ancestors lived with them on the Bastar plateau, but went once to visit a zamindar in the plains, and so liked his country that they settled there and persuaded many others to follow them, and thereafter often harried the plateau in secret marauding expeditions. He refers to the lowlanders as calling themselves Doralu, from the Telugu honorific *Dora* or 'lord', and being called by the Telugus Koi Doralu. The specimens he gives of their language show it to be a Gond dialect very greatly corrupted by Telugu influences, not only the vocabulary but even verb and noun inflexions being Teluguized.

In the *Godavari District Gazetteer* the article on Koyas clearly deals with the lowlanders only, and speaks of the self-importance with which they know that their title *Dora* means 'lord' and insist on being given it, tolerating the alternative '*Mama*' (maternal uncle) from other castes, but disliking being called Koyas.

The designation Gottor is now common among the Telugus and Telugu Koyas of south Bastar for the Marias of the plateaux and the 'Koyas' at the foot of the plateau in Konta tahsil and Sukma zamindari. No one need worry about it as indicating any special race; it is simply a Telugu term for Hill Koitor. Glasfurd, though he wrongly spoke of the Gottor as a separate division, yet righted matters by pointing out that there was no real difference between them and the Marias of Dantewara. Naturally, Bison-horn Marias living on both sides of the southern edges of the plateau would be more influenced by the Telugus than those in the centre and north of the plateaux.

But there remains a real distinction between the Bison-horn Marias, even those who live along the southern fringes of their country, below the passes, and the Koyas of the plains. The latter are known as Dorla, but this is obviously a corruption of Dor Koitor, their lands being to the Bison-horn Marias of the Dantewara and Jagdalpur plateaux, Dorbhum or lowlands. Your Telugu or Englishman writing in Telugu surroundings may say that the social status of the lowland Koya is greater than that of the Hill Koya; but your hill man will always look down with a healthy contempt on the plains man. Cain indeed realized this, but perhaps hardly understood the foulness of the abusive Chhattisgarhi term *mailotia* which he gives with a capital initial letter as the Hill Koya's name for the lowland Koya. The latter knew he was despised by the highlander, and with the self-assertiveness that is the typical fruit

101
186

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of the inferiority complex palmed off his name Dor Koi or Lowland Koi on the ignorant Telugu as Dora Koi, and has proceeded to object to the name Koi and demand always the name Dora or Dorla, simultaneously impressing on the Telugu how superior he is to the Highlander.

I have verified these points by personal investigation supplemented by reliable information from assistants directed to make enquiries on specified lines. When the traveller descends the Aranpur pass, he finds the villagers at the foot of the pass in such villages as Gumadasaka, Bikrampalli, Kondasaoli, Kamargudem, Kodmair, Karrigudem, Bayampalli, Kundair, Ursangal, Durandarbha, Michiguda, Vadri, Silger, Mandimarka, Singaram, Tarlaguda Banjepalli and Durma inhabited by people indistinguishable from the Bison-horn Marias above the pass, or by Maria Lohars. The only difference is a noticeable Telugu influence on their Maria dialect. At Jaggergonda, six or seven miles beyond the foot of the pass, he meets the first Telugu-speaking non-Koitor village, and just beyond this comes to the first Dorla villages, Rajpenta, Achkat and Kamaram. Southwards in the country covered by the new Ordnance Survey one-inch maps, on sheet 65 F/3, Singaram in square B1, Puvarti, Junaguda and Rayagudem in A2, Chimili, Surpanguda, Kistaram and Morpalli in B2, all the villages in A3, and Tadmetla, the only village in B3, are Dorla villages. Generally speaking, all the riverain tracts of Bhopalpatnam zamindari, Bijapur tahsil, Kotapalli-Pamer zamindari and southern Konta tahsil are Dorla villages, though here and there will be found Gottor Koya, i.e. Bison-horn Maria villages in Konta Dorla country such as Tokanpalli, Burkapalli and Chintaguppa (in map 65 F/3, square C3).

These Dorla at census refused to call themselves Koya, and were not returned as such but as Gonds; and they are the principal element in the 19,426 professing tribal religion out of the 24,407 Bastaris returned as Gonds in the 1931 census. The 4,981 Hindu Gonds returned are mostly Dorlas from the Lingagiri *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam and the adjacent parts of Bijapur, who have become Lingayats, wearing a *rudraksha* bead in a silver box or a Shiva *lingam* slung on a thread.

It will be clear, therefore, that the 9,988 persons returned at the census as Koyas are not the Dorla or lowland Koyas returned as Koyas in the East Godavari Agency. They are the Bison-horn Marias living at the foot of the passes in Konta and Sukma and slightly influenced by Telugu contacts. Of the Koya dialect of Gondi returned in 1931 as spoken by 6,172 persons in Bastar, however, it is probable that it represents the speech of the Dorla

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

Koyas, since it alone, being greatly corrupted by Telugu, presents any marked difference from the Maria and Muria dialects. 162

Intermarriage is frequent between the Bison-horn Marias of the plateaux and those at the foot of the passes, but now never occurs between them and the Dorla, the latter having become a true endogamous group.[1] 582

The Koyas of the Malkangiri taluq of Jeypore, across the Bastar border from the Sukma zamindari and north-east Konta, seem on the contrary to be Bison-horn Marias.[2] Intermarriage still takes place between the Marias of Sukma and the 'Koyas' of Malkangiri; and these same Sukma clans intermarry with the clans on the Dantewara and Jagdalpur plateaux. In fact, intermarriage is not unknown between Dantewara and Malkangiri clans, and it is not unusual for a man wanted by the police in Dantewara to abscond to his fellow-tribesmen, possibly relatives, in Malkangiri. The headmen of Edpal and Dodpal on the Dantewara-Sukma border stated that the Koitor of Malkangiri had migrated there some generations back from the Bailadila mountains, and named relatives among them belonging to the Sodi clan. Bailadila had in fact been practically deserted long before its inclusion in the Bailadila Forest Reserve; and some superstition attaches to it which prevents surrounding Maria clans from settling there, though more than one attempt has been made to found permanent forest villages so as to obviate the labour now entailed on the villages below when the Maharaja and his officials go there for the hot weather. The most tempting offers fail to attract settlers; even as labourers the Marias profess fear of staying on the hills unless accompanied by a European, over whom Elma Pen, the god of the mountain, has no power. The only chance, they say, of re-settling the place is to get hold of a descendant of the original inhabitant, preferably of the clan-priest (*modul-waddai*), who knows the godlings and demons of the hills. 166

[p.58 is blank]

[1] Glasfurd in the ethnological papers already quoted commented thus on physical differences between the lowlanders and highlanders of South Bastar. 'The Koya are very dark, quite as much so as the Telingas; while the Gottawars and Marias are generally copper-coloured, some being quite fair. Their faces are rather broad than long, and they have small eyes, which, with the almost entire absence of hair on the face, gives these altogether a strongly marked Tartar-like physiognomy.' [142]

[2] It is important to remember that the Dorla also use bison-horn or buffalo-horn dancing head-dresses, and in other ways also show that they were once the same people as those whom I term Bison-horn Marias, as indeed the traditions of both peoples have been seen to assert.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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PART II

Personal Appearance and Characteristics

[p. 59]

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter IV

Personal Appearance; Physical Powers and Endurance; Bodily Attitudes; Cleanliness; Hair-dressing; Dress and Ornaments of (a) Hill, (b) Bison-horn Marias; Weapons and Tools

142 To the amateur observer few things are so hard as correctly to record the physical appearance of tribes, and I must leave the reader to draw his own conclusions from the illustrations of individuals in Plates I, V to VII, XI, XV, XVII to XIX and XXIII, and the Appendix on anthropometric measurements by Mr. R. C. Roy. Certain very general remarks may, however, be made. In stature Marias of both types seem greater than the average Central Provinces Gond; though the general average for men may not exceed 5 ft. 5 in., yet tall individuals are by no means unknown, especially among the Bison-horn Marias of the Dantewara valley and the adjacent parts of the Jagdalpur tahsil; there were two convict warders undergoing twelve years' sentences for murder in Jagdalpur Jail until recently from near Palnar, between Kuakonda and Aranpur, who were fine physical specimens and nearly 6 ft. in height. Among the Hill Marias it is perhaps rare to see anyone more than 5 ft. 8 in. high.

Appearance

141

142 The ordinary Gond type, dark-skinned, with straight, coarse, black hair, little or no beard and moustache, platyrrhine nose, prognathous, wide, downward-curving mouth with thick lips, in fact 'india-rubber faced', with squat but fairly proportioned body, is not unknown among the Marias, especially the Hill Marias towards the fringes of the hills, and the Bison-horn Marias in contact with the Telugu in the south. But the absence of facial hair has been exaggerated by past observers, possibly because at least in the Abujhmar mountains it is usually the unmarried youths on the verge of manhood who are deputed by the villages as camp followers; men with moustaches or small pointed beards are not uncommon. The growth of hair is much less than that of the European, and a shave is not a frequent necessity. Possibly the Bison-horn Maria grows more than the Hill Maria. Flat noses are not as common as among the Central Provinces Gonds, and at times an almost aquiline nose will be met. The nostrils are, however, always distended, and presumably most Marias of both types would be mesorrhine, tending to platyrrhine with a few leptorrhine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. [302] Some young 'bloods' among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. [304] The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 479 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk [462] take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhanrai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE V

142
291
301
516

A HILL MARIA, OF THE GOND TYPE
Usendi Muka of Orcha

GROUP OF HILL MARIA GIRLS
(Photograph by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.)

[facing p. 62]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills, and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 42°. But he feels the cold, and at night, when walking, may be met
513 carrying a glowing ember held close to his navel for warmth, while
374 in camp he sleeps on the ground between two fires, and in house, field-hut or village dormitory sleeps generally on a platform of criss-crossed bamboos or creeper rope with a fire beneath it. He
513 has usually also a sleeping mat or *masni* (Halbi) made of a special grass, which is easily rolled up and carried about when he visits Jagdalpur or a touring officer's camp; or he may use instead of it his *taghali* or bark rain coat. He sleeps generally on his side with his head resting on his arm, the other arm resting on the ground in front with the elbow bent; and he will shift from side to side. It is *polo*, that is taboo, for a woman to sleep on a cot or platform, and she must sleep on the ground in her room in the house.

Bodily attitudes

The Bison-horn Maria has generally a cot to sleep on, and even his wife often has one. In such matters he is getting more and more like the ordinary Hindu villager.

516 For eating or social conversation or resting, the Hill Maria often sits with his buttocks on the ground and his knees drawn up, though he sometimes uses the familiar Indian squatting position, and his women usually squat in this way for mourning at funerals or singing at weddings. The men have also little wooden stools to
[352] sit on, or sit on a stone, as at the commensal feasts; while in the villages where there is the custom of the *gaita* or headman and the *kasyeq-gaita* or Village Mother priest sitting on an *uddamgarya* or seat of honour to preside over meetings of the elders, it is often a flat stone resting on stone legs, on which he sits in ordinary sitting posture. In any group of Hill Marias resting after a meal or on a march you will see almost every attitude that might be adopted by English schoolboys except lying prone on back or stomach. If standing, a favourite position of all the tribes in Bastar is to stand on one foot, the other knee being bent so that the sole of the foot may rest against the outer side of the standing leg, the arm on the same side as the bent knee catching hold of a bough or something for steadiness. Another favourite position is to stand with the left leg braced, the right slightly flexed so that the left hip is extended sideways; the left wrist or knuckles rest on this hip, while the right hand rests on the left shoulder, the right arm being bent at the elbow to look like a V over the chest; or else the right arm is hung loosely at the side, or held in that of the next youth. For fire-
[372] making, they kneel on their knees. They stand to urinate and squat to defecate.

[514] The Bison-horn Maria uses mostly the same positions, but is more prone to imitate Hindu habits; he squats to urinate.*
*[See cat. 116 p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Cleanliness

It is generally asserted that all Marias are dirty, and object to washing. It is true that Maria women dancing late at night after lying on ground covered with the ashes of camp-fires, or men and women in the *penda* fields or after a long march, are dirty; and anyone who has tried to dress a Maria's wounds knows how dirt-encrusted they can be. Sleeping between fires, or over fires in an enclosed and low-roofed hut, does not promote cleanliness. But the real reason for the idea is the fact that the Hill Maria seldom washes his loin-cloth. On this, Russell and Hiralal say (III, p. 124):— 515

> 'In Bastar they seldom wash their clothes, as they think this impious, or else that the cloth would wear out too quickly if it were often washed. Here they set great store by their piece of cloth, and a woman will take it off before she cleans up her house, and do her work naked. It is probable that these wild Gonds, who could not weave, regarded the cloth as something miraculous and sacred, and, as already seen, the god Palo is a piece of cloth.'

This passage is all wrong. Palo is unknown to Maria or Muria Murias and Bison-horn Marias wash their clothes, and there are occasions when even a Hill Maria is bound to do so. He may not weave, himself, but he makes nets and baskets and twine, and always accepts the manufacturing processes of Kumhar potters, Kammar blacksmiths, Gharwa brass founders or Mahra weavers in a commonsense, rational way; he sees the work done quite often, and indeed there are many Marias who, in jail for homicide, have themselves become expert weavers of cloth or carpets. The reasoning processes of the savage are not unlike our own, and it is always safe to reject any such explanation as that he does not wash his cloth because he regards it as impious to wash something so sacred and miraculous, when there is available the commonsense economic explanation that he himself gives, that cloth costs money, of which he has never much, and that the oftener it is washed the sooner it wears out. So ordinarily, when a Hill Maria has his dip in a pool or river he takes off his filthy and inadequate loin-cloth and hangs it on a bush or rock while he washes his limbs, fastening it again all dirty on his clean body when he emerges. The women remove their loin-cloth, but not their *mudang*[1] and the cloth attached to it. Both husband and wife, however, must bathe in the morning after sexual intercourse and wash their loin-cloths; and a woman must invariably bathe and wash her loin-cloth, beating it out well on a stone, on leaving the menstruation hut or room at the end of her courses and of the four weeks following the birth of a child. Generally men and women wash or bathe every morning, and more often than not in the evening also. There are separate pools in [285 286] [833] [841 846]

[1] The *mudang* is explained below, under dress.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

515 the streams for the sexes, and they never bathe together. But the Hill Maria does not know the use of soap; occasionally his women follow the practice of the plains women and scour their hair with a plaster of black earth well rinsed out later. His nails are generally long and very dirty. The infant and the toddler are occasionally washed with water from a gourd. Where there is no stream near or water is scarce, the daily ablutions are often [415] performed with water dipped from an earthen water-pot with a gourd ladle, called *paghas* by the Hill Marias and *orka* in the plains, made from a gourd shaped like a large European smoking pipe; the straight stem is hollow and holed at the end; the stem is held near the bowl between the chin and collar-bone or shoulder and water tilted down from the bowl on to the body by dropping the other shoulder, while the hands rub the limb thus wetted. Needless to say, ablutions thus performed are not very effective.

The Bison-horn Maria also on occasion 'washes' with the ladle, but generally is cleaner than the Hill Maria, and is beginning to buy cheap soap in the bazaars. He will wash his hands before a meal, unlike the hill man. He has his daily dip, but generally in the evening only; and the women definitely bathe only in the evening on their way back from the fields. Both bathe naked, but they wash their clothes far more readily than the Hill Maria, living indeed in the 'bazaar' plains with several Mahra weavers in their midst.

514 The Hill Maria, unlike the Hindu, does not wash after defeca-
515 tion, but wipes himself with leaves. The plainsman is learning the Hindu habit. Neither a Hill nor a Bison-horn village is ever as noisome as the average Hindu village of so 'advanced' a tract as the Maratha country of Nagpur or Berar, where at night the village streets are used as a public latrine and it is difficult to pass clean-shod in the morning. The Hill Maria generally retires into the jungle to ease himself, and the Bison-horn either does the same or uses the *bari* or vegetable garden at the back of his house.

356 A Hill Maria's house is really clean only for the first month or
361 two after it is made, and there is no regular re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung and mud. The interior is rapidly grimed with smoke and dust; and if the Maria has any article he wishes to keep clean he stores it up a tree or in his granary. But his house seldom has to last him more than four or five years, after which, his *penda* slope being exhausted, he and the other villagers move their houses to one of the alternative village sites, and his old house is ultimately burnt, either deliberately or as a matter of course in the annual firing of the forest grasses. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is now a dweller in permanent habitations, save for an occasional shift for superstitious reasons. His houses are therefore

[see CA1.116 pp. 418-419. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *penda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiua* and making it useless for any magic.

Hair-dressing

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *willo* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

302 and 5 cm. over the ears; this runs right round the head except just below the hair-knot. It is not the natural edge of the hair, as a little is shaved over the centre of the forehead and a good deal over the temples. From a parting (*paya*) just above this the hair is drawn back, like a European's hair brushed straight back from the forehead over the crown, into a top-knot knotted at the back of the head to hang down considerably lower than the Hill Maria crown-tuft knot. The knot is called *kupa-kelk*. The vernacular words used in describing this coiffure are from the Bison-horn dialect used around Aranpur. I have not seen Bison-horn Marias having their hair trimmed; but they say they use razors in the same way as the Hill Marias.

Women's hair is never cut. The hill women all part their hair in front in the centre and bring it back and down over their ears, the whole of which is left visible, into a great pendulous bunch at the back, like bobbed hair, but with the ends not trimmed off but apparently brought over some kind of stuffing and tucked under it.
301 They wear wooden combs made by the young men and often
302 ornamented above the teeth with patterns worked with criss-cross strands of *kosa* silk. These are sometimes as high as Spanish combs, but never as broad. So, too, the man often wears a comb in his crown-tuft. The Bison-horn Maria women do their hair similarly, but frequently wear round the centre of the forehead and the back of the head a horizontal fillet of plain, thin, polished brass about 2 cm. wide, called *utari*, and over this a snood, almost a tiara, of brass, patterned in relief with hammered suns and moons, vertical and oblique hatching lines, saltires, etc., of which the broadest portion fits closely over the skull between the crown and the forehead, the tapering sides descending obliquely over the *utari*, passing behind the ears and ending in cusps which are linked together under the bun. This is called a *talutar*; it, too, is brightly polished. At its greatest width, where it passes over the top of the head, it is 9 or 10 cm. wide. Some women do not wear both *utari* and *talutar*, but either one or the other; the *talutar* can often be seen hung up on the veranda when the woman is busy in the fields; but in the warm spring and hot weather months when you meet bands of women gathering forest fruits, most of them are wearing their *talutar*.

291 Before I visited the Abujhmar hills I was regaled with the tale told to Glasfurd in 1862 that many of the Hill Marias wore leaves, being too poor to buy any cloth. It was even then a fable; Glasfurd states that he made enquiries about this and was told by the Marias invariably that they had never seen or heard of any people so poor that they covered themselves with teak leaves; however poor they

Dress and ornaments: (a) Hill Maria

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

might be, they could always obtain a small cloth. Of the men, Glasfurd observed only that they were certainly more scantily clad than any he had hitherto seen; of the women, that their clothing, like that of the men, was scantier than that of other Maria women, consisting only 'of a very small cloth wrapped once round the loins', while 'some of the elder women and children wore only a square patch of cloth, suspended on a cord fastened round the waist, upon which bamboo rings were strung'. 291

The Hill Marias are now gradually learning to dress in the same fashion as the Jhorias and Murias of Antagarh or the Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara, and are wearing their loin-cloths, turbans and ornaments. But in the villages of the interior, and everywhere among the older inhabitants, the old fashions still survive. The loin-cloth is little more than a length of cloth a foot or fourteen inches broad, twisted or rolled so that it makes a strip round the waist about five inches wide or sometimes much less, passed between the legs tightly, so that in front it seems like a bag for the private parts and that behind it disappears between the buttocks, brought out and wound again round the waist, the end being passed through the waist fold and allowed to hang down over the right buttock; this end is called *toqa* (tail), and in the case of small boys reaches nearly to their ankles, getting shorter as the wearer ages. Above this there should be a girdle of cowry shells, worn so close to the loin-cloth as to be partly concealed by it; but cowries have become unobtainable, now that for forty years or more they have ceased to be currency, and the wearing of the cowry girdle is, as they admit, dying out, though old girdles are jealously preserved. Some wear just a cord instead of the girdle. Glasfurd says that in 1862 Marias sometimes wore, instead of the cowry girdle, a girdle of about ten or fifteen cords of the same form but smaller than those worn then by Gadba women, which he described thus:— [301]

'The girdle is somewhat singular; it is composed of forty to fifty separate cords of about eighteen or twenty inches in length, which are lashed at the ends; it is fastened in front. From the number and size of the cords, this girdle gives the wearer a strange appearance.'

I have not seen anything of this kind among the Hill or Bison-horn Marias of to-day. Sometimes cloth is so short that there is only a cord round the waist supporting a strip of cloth passing between the legs with a flap hanging down over the cord in front and behind. But generally now there is a tendency to widen the loin-cloth, and not to wear much of a *toqa*; it used to fulfil the useful purpose of a bag for receiving grain allotted for food at harvest and feasts, and indeed, the end of the loin-cloth is still so used. The Tokalor clan of Erpanar in Mangnar *pargana* is said to have obtained its [415]

[second ed. 116, p. 411. - Analysis]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

name because its founder and members, whenever grain was being
291 given out, were found always to have extra long tail flaps (here pronounced *toka*) to their loin-cloths. A broader-woven cloth makes it possible for it to be taken once round the waist in its full unfolded width, so as to cover the buttocks and private parts. The *toga* hangs sometimes over the left buttock, and, in the south of the hills, sometimes in front of the body in the Godavari fashion.

Tucked into the girdle or the loin-cloth are knives with or without wooden sheaths, razors (as already seen), hollow bamboo
[415] tubes filled with tobacco, or little tobacco boxes of carved wood or tree-seeds, or of basketry (the last kind is sometimes worn on the left shoulder on a cord passing round the neck and under the left arm-pit); a comb may hang over the buttock from a cord; and occasionally on the Dantewara side a larger knife approximating to the *landa* or dao used by the Bison-horn Marias and Parjas.

The older Marias wear no cloth on their heads, and no ornaments in their hair. But it is general now to wear an apology for a *pagri* or turban consisting of one folded Mahra cloth wound round the forehead and tied at the back of the head. Youths wear
[301] between this and the back or side of their heads tail feathers of jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo (which they stick into their crown-tuft knots if they have no *pagri*). This head-cloth is often dirty and worn, and looks suspiciously like all that is left of an old friend of a loin-cloth.

Men and women almost invariably go unshod; but occasionally a pair of very coarse sandals of untanned cowskin with a thong over the big toe and another over the four small toes is worn, generally only when there is a cut or a heel-crack to be protected from the ground.

Short of complete nakedness, man could hardly wear less than the Hill Maria in his most primitive state. His scanty frontal covering often leaves little to the imagination in its utter inadequacy.
[164] But it is to the fact that he wears so little that he owes it that he is far freer from scabies, itch and ringworm than the Bison-horn Maria, and the Murias and others of the plains, who more and more are imitating Hindu clothes, but are too poor to afford either much washing or spare suits. At the numerous State dispensaries these are the commonest complaints, and treatment is useless because the patients will not leave off the dirty, infected clothing. Luckily,
292 coat and 'waskat' are still rarities in the hills; Bardal Chamru of Kutul, the headman or *majhi* of Bardal *pargana*, and his brother Bardal Boranga, who used to accompany me when I toured near their villages, always arrived coated and waistcoated above their loin-cloths, but would discard the obnoxious and unnecessary

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
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Full-face, Jugho Chero, of Itulnar

Hill Maria of Handawada
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)

Kutru Mar youths, wearing *taghali* bark overcoats

[Facing p. 70]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

292 garments as soon as possible. In their youth they had been sent with a party of men and women as exhibits to the Allahabad Exhibition, where Boranga had celebrated his marriage *coram publico Indico*; they brought back with them from Allahabad a bigger suspicion of the *Kosor*, as they, like Gonds all over the Central Provinces, call all Hindus, a coat and waistcoat and blankets, and a taste for *kappu* or opium which luckily was not inherited by Baranga's son, the present headman, or any of the villagers.

291 As in Glasfurd's day, the women go with breasts uncovered. Very old women occasionally hobble about inside their huts completely naked. The square patch of cloth suspended between the legs from a waist-cord on which bamboo rings were strung, which Glasfurd saw as the sole garment of some children and elderly women, is the garment known as *mudang*, worn only by females. It is to-day definitely intimate underwear, to be seen by no one save the husband, except in the case of very little girls who, when six or so, wear it for the first time as their only garment. Brass rings made by the Ghasia (Gharwa) brass-workers in bazaar places in the plains such as Gidam, Dhaurai and Narainpur, have replaced the bamboo rings of Glasfurd's time. The cord on which they are strung is sometimes a thin piece of cane. A mother buys a few rings for her little girls whenever she has a pice or two to spare at her visits to the markets; and the cord becomes nearly full of rings when the girl is nubile. The *mudang* cord is never removed, even at child-birth. The cloth attached to it is usually a strip of old rag torn off a worn-out loin-cloth. It has already been stated that women keep it on when bathing. The *mudang* is buried or burned with the woman.

The cord full of rings is obvious under the top of every woman's loin-cloth, as a sort of ridge. The cloth itself is folded over the rings, and hangs down all round over the loins and buttocks, without being passed between the legs. It is therefore not revealing like the men's cloth. Occasionally women wear a small sheet thrown [117] carelessly across the breasts and over the left shoulder in imitation of the custom gradually spreading in the Bison-horn country; and [854] a cloth of this kind is used for supporting a baby, who rides on his mother's right or left hip with the cloth drawn tight over his little buttocks and up to his armpits and thence fastened over her other shoulder. Even for dancing a woman has no other clothes.

301 Glasfurd noted in 1862 that few of the Hill Marias possessed the beads that other Marias liked so much. The older men still wear little of this kind; a few have a single necklet of dirty yellow beads made of small chopped sections of pea-fowl's lower leg-bone about 5 mm. in length. Occasionally

Ornaments

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

301 they have similar necklets of little sections of wood or of seeds. The middle-aged and particularly the young have now made up for any former lack of beads by going to the opposite extreme in the profusion and variety of their ornaments. They have borrowed [177] freely from the fashions of the Jhorias and Murias on the one side and on the other from the Bison-horn Marias, but in an eclectic way, and showing marked individual taste. They have no use for the humming-top shaped greenish-yellow glass or the tubular scarlet beads so popular with the Bison-horn Maria, nor for the small speckled beads which Czecho-Slovakia is now sending to the bazaars of the north; they like small primary coloured beads of the old 'hundreds and thousands' type, but large enough to be threaded with ease, while their women still prefer the large, almost cylindrical but rounded-edge pure white beads of uneven size that seventy years ago were the fashion among the Marias of the plains. On the whole the women have borrowed mostly from the Bison-horn fashions, and the men from those of the north, particularly the Jhorias. On their arms the men have tight-fitting armlets of brass or 'jarman' (an aluminium alloy) just above their elbows, from one to five in number. Round their necks they have up to six collars of coloured beads sometimes six-deep, arranged according to individual colour tastes, but generally in vertical bars of colour with alternate bars of white. From large ear-rings 4 or 5 cm. in [304] diameter worn in a slit-hole pierced in the cartilage just below the helix and above the front upper insertion point of the auricle, hang nearly to the shoulders tassels made of three or four strings of beads threaded singly with a similar colour arrangement, ending with little tufts of bright wool; and fillets of the same bead-work are worn either loosely over the forehead and temples, or higher round the crest of the head, or looped from ears to hair-tuft. The intricacy and symmetry of the bright bead-work produces very pleasing patterns; the 'girl friend' usually arranges the beads for the youth. Older men more often wear small brass chains round the ears and hair-tuft than bead fillets. The large ring already referred to is first made in the form of a crescent blade of aluminium alloy, one of the tapered ends being passed through the slit-hole in the cartilage and hooked into the loop formed by bending the other tapered end to form a little eyelet, the remaining metal being then whipped spirally round the metal from which it tapered. Sometimes smaller rings of the same type are made of brass, a blue or red glass bead being threaded just inside the eyelet, and worn in a hole in the 304 tragus of the ear, or the antitragus. Innumerable holes are pierced 301 through the fold of the helix, in which are worn little rings of thin, plain brass wire; there may even be a double row of these right

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

round the whole helix, giving a total of over forty for the ear, and making it green with verdigris. These are called *maqqawadang*. The lobe is pierced and a plug of wood or a rolled leaf worn in it by those who cannot afford something more ornate or are old-fashioned; others fit on to the wooden plugs, by means of a hollow brass socket-stalk, brass circles about 15 mm. in diameter made by the Ghasias by *cire-perdue* process, ornamented with spiral whorls or concentric circles, or like little shields bossed at the centre. Some wear, instead of these, a ring of thick brass or even silver or gold, heavy and fitting closely around the end of the lobe. Lobe ear-rings or plug ornaments are generally called *porsheng*. The effect of these is greatly to distend the lobe. A few rings are worn on the fingers, generally a treble spiral of brass, or a plain aluminium band; the Jhorias are fond of Ghasia-made rings with small brass pellet-bells, but few Hill Marias wear these rings, though many hill women wear strings of such bells round their necks; they also are made by *cire perdue*. It is amusing to see the Hill Maria women haggling with Ghasia women for these bells and other brass ornaments at Dhaurai bazaar. A comb or two, and perhaps a cheap Japanese mirror, stuck in his hair, complete the finery of a young Hill Maria.

The woman wears perhaps one or two bead collars, and sometimes seven or eight bead fillets, as well as bead tassels depending from the lobes of her ears, or from a smaller cartilage-ring of the type already described. She has also ear-plugs with small brass circular plate heads in her lobes, and sometimes little plugs in one or both of her nostrils. She, like the men, wears *maqqawadang* wire rings in the helices of her ears. Round her neck she has ropes of the large white uneven beads already referred to, sometimes ending in a short single string of beads with one or two brass pellet-bells at the bottom. The ropes vary in length, the longest reaching her navel. Over these and the coloured bead collars she has large iron neck hoops or *sutu* in Bison-horn Maria style, on which brass rings may be threaded of any number up to 100 or more. She is fond also of necklets of brass circles made by *cire perdue* with spiral whorls like the ear-plug caps; a few plain iron and aluminium hoops may complete her neckware. The beads hang between her breasts, but partially cover them when worn in profusion. On her wrists she has a number of loose bracelets of cylindrical aluminium and brass, and, when she dances, dancing anklets on both legs, arched over her ankle-bones. Her carved and ornamented combs at the top or side of her hair bun add to her finery. Needless to say, much of this ironmongery and brassware is left in the house when she is working in the fields, but she would not be without any of it when she sets off on her long treks to the markets in the plains. Seen

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

301 from behind, it makes her appear very thick-, in fact bull-necked, and creates a false impression of her often slender build.

304 What beauty the girls have they mar to Western eyes by excessive tattooing over all the face and forehead, and often the breasts also. Mothers begin to tattoo their daughters when they are eight or nine years old, using lengths of the brass wire used for the rings in the helix of the ear, sharpened into rough needles, and black charcoal powder. The girl lies on her side with one cheek flat on the ground while the mother operates on the other cheek. Sometimes only one breast is tattooed, often neither. They seem never to tattoo legs or arms, though Glasfurd speaks of their arms and thighs being covered with tattooing. A swastika with the corners slightly rounded and not right-angled, and a pair of very small parallel vertical lines between each arm is a common motive, on face and breast. On the centre of the forehead, vertically one below the other, are usually tattooed a circle with a dot in the centre, for the sun, a circle and a crescent for the full and crescent moon respectively. Thence fairly symmetrically vertical hatching alternates with horizontal round and round the face, becoming oblique at the corners and down the sides of the nose; and over the corners of the cheekbones three dots are made triangle-wise. This is only one common pattern. The only tattooing on men is single, double or treble horizontal rows of dots, varying in number from three to nine, over the glabella. I did not ascertain at what age or by whom these marks are made. There are no special tattoo marks for the different clans. There seems to be no significance behind tattooing; it is considered merely an adornment. The Nagpur Gonds speak of tattooing as marks by which ancestors and clan-gods can identify [775] persons in the next world; but the Marias have no formulated idea of another world.

292 The dancing dress of the Hill Maria men is completely different from that of the Bison-horn Marias and most other tribes. The 535 women have no special dancing dress. The young men wear on their heads either red and white turbans; or, more often, curious Chinese fig-box head-dresses which they call by the Hindi word *topi*, covered with red or blue cloth, and piped at the edges and centre with peacock feather quills. Often a peacock, jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo's feather is stuck in the *topi*, or spiral coils of feather quill fastened on both sides of a stick; or scarlet 'Scissors' cigarette packets found empty at the bazaars, lead seals from petrol tins, old brass cog-wheels from watches, little tins, cheap mirrors, the round of bright tin-foil cut out when an airtight cigarette tin is opened; dried snipe or woodcock neck and skull; or anything bright-coloured or interesting to the Maria.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE VII

292
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Hill Maria dancers. Note, in 2, the use of bark rain-coat as dancing skirt
(*Photographs by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.*)

Hill Maria dancers, showing dancing-shields and bunches of pellet-bells worn over the instep

A Hill Maria of Kurmar, using his rain-hat and rain-shield, as he works with his godavi digging hoe

[facing p. 74]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 Sometimes the 'fig-box' is made of a lattice of split bamboo strips.
535 Generally a streamer or two of red or blue cloth hangs down from the back of the *topi* or turban. Over the chest a sort of sleeveless vest of red cloth is worn, almost neck-high, and over this from breast to waist, strands of white cloth are twisted, back and front, so as to produce a rib-like effect, the ribs radiating from a central double plait of cloth running vertically from navel to breast, then passing on either side of the neck and repeating the pattern in the rear. The 'ribs' vary from five to nine in number, according to the means or taste of the dancer. This cloth arrangement is known as *gatikar-hana*. Below is worn a long skirt of red-edged white or dark blue cotton, called a *kochi*, with a white or coloured sash round the waist over the bottom of the 'ribs' and the top of the skirt; the sash is called *poriya*. Over the sash round the waist runs a cord, from which is suspended over the rump a great bunch of large and small pellet-bells (*muyang*), in the middle of which two or three large clapper-bells often are prominent. From the neck is hung over the back of the shoulders a basketry dancing-shield or *moghi*, made to slant downwards away from the back by two hoops of bamboo protruding underneath. Over the top of the shield either streamers of coloured cloth reaching nearly to the ground, or peacock's tails
292 are looped. The shield is made of two targes of twined basketry
535 joined together so that the rough edges are in the middle; the warps are flat slices of bamboo about 13 mm. wide, radiating from
285 the centre of the targes, and the wefts, the twining of which begins from the centre, are for the most part thin rods of bamboo pared to the thickness of a straw; but at intervals bands of red are made on the targes by using red yarn from the markets as wefts for three or four rounds of twining; flakes of shining mica are worked into this yarn, and over the outermost red band often cowry shells are sewn. The ends of the bamboo hoops are forced through the joined targes and held either by horizontal pieces of bamboo tied across them, or by ornamental studs of *cire-perdue* brass-work. When not
292 in use, the dancing-shield is never kept inside the house, but either
535 sewn up in leaves and hung high in the boughs of a tree, or on the outer wall of the *manda* or granary under the eaves; this is to protect it from smoke, sun and rain. Each dancer makes his own dancing head-dress and shield. Formerly every dancer held in his left hand the handle of an axe, of which the head, decked with coloured cloth streamers, protruded behind his back; and the axe was a *pharsi* with blade shaped like vulture wings. Now even the ordinary Maria workaday axe is ceasing to be used, a twisted tree-root, or plume of peacock feathers with the stalks plaited together in a basketry pattern, or a stick, taking its place.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 This dress was in regular use in every village in Metabhum until a year or two ago. At my last visit in March 1934, I was 535 amazed to find that, almost as in obedience to some decree that had gone forth, the youth of the hills had abandoned the rib-dress, the 178 shield and the gaily-coloured head-dress and skirt, sometimes wearing in lieu cheap bazaar singlets and a *dhoti*, retaining, however, the buttock-bells, the songs and the dance-steps. The older men all said that it was a spontaneous decision of the younger generation, decided upon because of the cost of buying the expensive yards of cloth needed for the dress; but this would not account for the abandonment of the shield, which they make themselves, and for which peacock tails are better than cloth streamers. Many have actually thrown away their cloth and shields. But some still think it necessary to hang them up round fresh graves, and I found that all the youths still know how to make them, and were willing to make them in camp. In 1932 a rumour went through all the tribes 203 of Jeypore and spread thence into Bastar that a god had descended 784 on one of the mountains of the Eastern Ghats and commanded all men to give up keeping black poultry and goats, wearing clothes or 178 using umbrellas or blankets with any black in them, and using beads or articles made of aluminium alloy. The message was rapidly bruited abroad, and everywhere villages had '*bohorani*' ceremonies for purifying themselves from disease, and cast out black goats, cocks, hens, umbrellas, blankets, 'waskats', beads, aluminium ornaments and domestic utensils on the village boundary. Mohammedans began to make a good thing out of slaughtering the goats or exporting them. Strenuous propaganda by the State soon stopped this impoverishing rumour, and some of the villagers in the end recovered much of their property from the police, who had been ordered to take charge of it. At the time, the Bison-horn Marias seemed to have been only a little affected and the Hill Marias not at all; possibly this sudden abandonment of the most picturesque features of their dancing costume may be a late repercussion. Such sudden moves amongst Indian primitive tribes are not uncommon; the Gonds of Nagpur and adjacent districts a few years ago suddenly decided to give up keeping poultry and pigs as a measure of social uplift.

292 The *taghali* or bark cloak used by the Hill Maria for warmth or, primarily, protection against heavy dew and rain, has already been mentioned as deputizing occasionally for the sleeping-mat. Hutton speaks of the Angami Nagas making 'a large hat of leaves and basket work . . . as well as a rain-coat of plaited grass, the ends of which hang out loose, to

Rain-clothes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

keep off the water'.[1] The Maria cloak is made from long, thin strips of the bark of the *wara marra* (*Kydia calycina*); when this bark has been well retted in a stream it is pounded, and the long strips peel off like blades of a broad dry grass. They are gathered round the neck into a close plaited yoke over twine strings used for tying it in front, under the chin, and the ends hang loose. It is known as *tarali* to the Bison-horn Marias, some of the remoter of whom also use it. Besides these, the Hill Maria has a large hat of a very flat conical shape, like the Annamese headgear, made of leaves on a bamboo framework, called *reking* (it is almost an umbrella, with the head used as the stick, rather than a hat), and a similar leaf waterproof shield called *deda'into* for his back and shoulders, in shape like an elongated winnowing fan, or an English dustpan, the enclosed end resting on his shoulders. Similar rain-hats and shields are worn by Gonds and others in various parts of the Central Provinces, though the Maria shapes are distinctive.

The account in paragraph 87 of Glasfurd's report obviously refers more to the Marias living 'in the wilder and more unfrequented parts, such as among the valleys of the Baila Deelas and towards the Indrawutty and Kootroo Talook' than to the Bison-horn Marias of the Jagdalpur and Dantewara plateaux; the description which follows the words quoted applies far more to the Hill Maria styles of dress and ornamentation than to those in vogue among the Bison-horn Marias either now, or when the *Gazetteer* was prepared in 1907-9, or at the time of certain earlier photographs taken at the end of the nineties when Colonel Fagan was administering the State. Even so far as Glasfurd's remarks apply to Kutru and the Indrawati valley, they strengthen the contention already advanced in this book of the steady spread of Bison-horn culture among villages in the valley once Hill Maria in culture. He notes, however, that towards Bhopalpatnam and Bijapur the Bison-horn Marias are better clad, but gives no details.

Dress and ornaments: (b) Bison-horn Maria

Their loin-cloth is more ample than that worn in the Abujhmar, and, except when girded up for hunting or work in jungle and field, completely covers their buttocks. It is gathered up into a knot just below the navel, and usually a fold is left, varying in length, to hang down over the piece that has, as with the Hill Marias, been passed tightly over their private parts and between their legs. There is no *toga* or tail behind, consequently, as in the Abujhmar. Towards the Godavari valley the front flap gets very long. The Bison-horn Maria of to-day often wears a mill-made singlet of cotton mesh or gauze, or a '*waskat*', and a coat of some cheap

[1] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 26.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

291 cotton material cut in European style; or instead of these has at least an extra round or two of his loin-cloth which he can throw loosely over his shoulder, or a small cotton sheet to answer the same purpose.

The women's loin-cloth is worn like that of their men, but in front is not knotted in such a way as to make a long flap necessary to cover the front of their thighs; it looks, therefore, like a short skirt from their waists to just above their knees. In the fields and jungles and in their own homes they still go with their breasts uncovered save for their masses of ornaments; but they have become somewhat self-conscious, owing to misguided officials suggesting that it was improper for them to appear like this before their Chief or at high officials' camps; and they frequently, when going to a bazaar or festival, or to dance at a wedding or camp, start off with their breasts loosely covered with a cotton sheet or one or two folds of their loin-cloth wrapped loosely from one hip over the opposite shoulder, their beads and finery resting on top of this cloth. Generally, however, the cloth is too small or too loosely thrown over the body really to conceal the breasts. They have this favourite riddle :— [538]

'Bara patte lote koven konda podo',

meaning, 'What is the pair of bullocks that cannot be confined within the byre of the twelve parts of the body?' to which the answer is '*Dūdo*', or 'Woman's breasts'. They explained this as referring to the refusal of the breasts to be concealed by any wrap. Moreover, as soon as women warm to the dance they rapidly divest themselves of the unwonted wrap.

Most men now wear a *pagri* or turban, tied in the usual fashion of the Hindu population of the adjacent Chhattisgarh districts, and far more ample than the rag worn by the Hill Marias. They do not adorn it with feathers; nor do they wear bead chains or 301 fillets on their heads like the Hill Marias. They use far fewer ornaments; they do not wear the brass wire *mayyavalang* rings in 304 the helix of the ear, but sometimes a single small ring like the tasselled ring of the Hill Marias, but worn in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, from which a small gilt chain depends. In the lobe a small ear plug of gold or gilded brass, often with a little red or green stone or glass set in it, may anchor two or three gilt chains fastened at the top to a similar plug vertically above it in the helix. 301 Most men content themselves with one or two small bead necklaces (*mungya*) round their necks, the beads being all of one shape, scarlet or royal blue tubular glass, or pale green humming-top-shaped, both kinds considerably larger than the Hill Marias'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

534
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292

BISON-HORN MARIA DANCERS

PLATE VIII

[Facing p. 78]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

301 favourite beads. They are fond also of necklaces of small, brightly gilded beads, which they call *mirako-mungya*. They may wear one or two armlets (*danda-bhata*) on one arm above the elbow, or a pair of bracelets on one wrist (*ka'i-bara*), of silver, brass, or aluminium, and similar in type to those bought by the Hill Marias. They wear a plain waist-cord (*para-nori*) instead of the cowry-cord of the hills for carrying knives and tobacco boxes. A comb is attached to this, for regular use. They may have hanging from a fastener of aluminium wire, shaped like the eye of the hooks-and-eyes of ladies' dresses, two thin aluminium toothpicks, and an aluminium ear-scoop; the Hill Marias also use these. They hang like a pendant on the chest.

The women's hair ornaments have been described along with their hair-dressing; it need only be added here that occasionally, instead of the polished brass fillet there mentioned, they wear bead fillets like those of the Hill Maria women. Armlets and wristlets are worn on the same arm, and are similar to those of the hill women. Instead of the white-bead ropes and the coloured-bead collars worn by the hill women, they wear long ropes of red, red and green, or gamboge beads; and over these they wear a vast number of the iron and brass rings of the type already described as borrowed by the hill women from them; they here call the iron neck-rings *liya*, not *suta* as in the hills. Their ear plugs are similar to those
301 used in the hills, but from the lobe plug to a ring worn, as by their
304 men, in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, is often fastened a cord on which is threaded between two blue or green beads a slightly oblong, cube-shaped bead of brass or aluminium. The nose is symmetrically adorned by two gold or gilt rings in the wing of each nostril, and, between them, hanging from a small ring in the septum, a small gold or gilt ornament like a leaf pointing downwards, sometimes with a piece of red glass set in the middle.

297 I have taken the wearing of the Bison-horn dancing head-dress as the most obvious distinction between the two kinds of 'Marias'.
535 Dancing-dress This is known as a *tallagulla*. I had one made from horns and peacock feathers supplied by me. After my head had been measured round the plane of the temples, a basketry 'cap' was made, fitting loosely round the brows, and sloping backwards and upwards into a low peak. It is made loose,
297 as it has to support the horns and the plume of feathers, as well as strings of cowries and many folds and streamers of cloth of various colours, which subsequently tighten it and make it fit snugly round the head. The basketry is of twilled bamboo strips running diagonally from the edge that fits over the brows. The bison-horns were pared with a sharp knife to remove outer dirt or callosities and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

294 reveal their true colour and beauty; they were then rubbed smooth with sand and polished with mustard oil. The edges of the horns where they had originally sprung on their cores from the bison's head were cut down and trimmed clean and straight, so that they would fit closely on to the sides of the basketry cap, a little to the front of and above the ears. Holes were bored at regular intervals about an inch from the rim of the horns with a piece of heated brass wire, and widened with the point of a knife used as a drill by rolling the wooden handle between the palms of the hands. Palm [283] fibre twine[1] was stitched through these holes and the basketry, the end of the twine being then whipped three or four times round the end of the horn, passed through the basketry again and knotted inside the cap to the other end. Meanwhile the peacock's tail-feathers had had all their lower feathering trimmed off and had been gathered into a tight round bunch of the eyed ends, all round and below which were added great numbers of the tail-feathers of the red jungle-cock or his domesticated cousin. The stalks were then plaited together with horizontal twilled wefts of thin slices of green bamboo rind, the ends being cut flush, and bound round twice with bamboo rind. The plume so made was fastened vertically to the peak of the basketry cap by a bamboo rod passing through the peak and running into the bunched feather stems, and by stitches of twine. The further adornment of the *tallagulla* depends largely on means and taste. The stem of the plume of feathers is wound round with coloured cloth, the ends of which hang as streamers down to the centre of the back. *Pagri* cloth of bright colours is criss-crossed tightly over the basketry cap and the brow ends of the horns, and often ends of this are left as streamers behind the head. Ideally, a brow piece of red or blue cloth, with a fringe, single or double, of closely-stitched cowries along its lower edge, and from five to ten tassels of strings of cowries hanging from it over the face, is tied over the lower rim of the head-dress; the brow piece is often further adorned in the centre or edges with flakes of mica, or groups of cowries, or brass studs, or a pattern of small pieces of cloth of contrasting colours. Now cowries being unobtainable, often this brow-piece is replaced by extra folds of *pagri* cloth.

136 Bison must in the old days have been very plentiful; this was, indeed, recorded as the case by Glasfurd in 1862, but his son Colonel A. I. R. Glasfurd, in the fascinating chapter on a shoot in Bastar in his *Musings of an Old Shikari*,[2] states that he took his father's old diaries with him to Bastar and found no game at all in

[1] 'Twine' is used in its technical sense.
[2] pp. 127-48 (London, The Bodley Head, 1928).

[See cat. 116, p. 48. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE IX

535
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292
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BISON-HORN MARIA DANCERS AT BAILADILA

Above Four men. *(Photograph by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.)*

Below Women. Note the clothes, the masses of ornaments, and the *tirdudi* bamboo dancing-staves

[FACING p. 80]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

many of the places where game of all kinds was plentiful in his father's time. Every Maria has his bow and arrow, the population has multiplied, and miles of jungle have been beaten annually for game in the great spring hunts. Wild buffalo and bison had been so reduced in numbers that they were declared protected thirty years ago, and heavy fines have been imposed for shooting them. The supply of bison-horns is thus not equal to the demand, and the head-dress is therefore a highly prized hereditary possession. No one should try to buy them from their owners; if a specimen is needed, the collector should provide the horns and other materials and see it made up for him. Bison-horns being now rare, and obtainable only from a bison found dead or by purchase from the State Forest Department, various substitutes are being used, such as domestic bullocks' or small buffaloes' horns, wild boars' tushes, the long beaks of the hornbill, and, occasionally, the antlers of the spotted deer (*Cervus axis*). The most interesting substitutes are brass patterned horns, of the shape and size of bison-horns, made by the *cire-perdue* process by the local Gharwa (Ghasia) brass workers.

Except occasional dancing anklets of hollow iron with pebbles inside, the Bison-horn Maria wears no special dancing dress; in fact he girds up his loin-cloth higher than usual and generally discards his singlet or '*waskat*', so as to leave himself as free as possible for his antics, while the heavy drum that he carries slung from his right shoulder across his abdomen necessitates as much freedom as possible.

The women wear no special dancing dress, but put on every available ornament, and carry in their right hands *tirdudi* or bamboo staves to which are fastened bunches of iron pellet-bells, shaped something like short but plump pea-pods, which they clash in time with the drums as they dance by striking their butts on the ground. Similar bells sometimes adorn the drum-stick with which the left hand of the male dancer beats the cowskin membrane at the left end of his drum.

Weapons and tools

The universal *sine qua non* of the Hill Marias is the knife or *kaiyaq* carried tucked into the loin-cloth, with or without a wooden sheath. Of this, as of all weapons and tools used by Hill or Bison-horn Marias, it has to be remembered that they are not always made by blacksmiths working exclusively for Marias, but often by blacksmiths in or near the bazaar villages of the plains who cater for Murias, Halbas and other tribes also. The most distinctive types are possibly, in the case of the Hill Marias, those made by the few blacksmiths living in their hills; but there are only slight differences, often of mere

[see cat. 116 p. 419]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 size, from those used in the plains. The plains blacksmith does recognize the Hill Maria's individual taste in such matters, but that
326 taste is always being modified by the sight, occasional use and occasional purchase of plains types, particularly if, when a new weapon is wanted in a hurry, only the latter are immediately available.

411 The blade of the average Maria knife measures 13 to 15 cm. from the point to the beginning of the tang. It is about 2·5 cm. broad where the tang begins, and from there the cutting edge curves inwards for a quarter or a fifth of its length, thence tapering with a slight convex curve to the point, which is 2 or 3 cm. to the side of the axis of the handle. The reverse edge is about 3 mm. thick in the tang, the thickness gradually diminishing towards the point. The tang is a continuation of the thick side of the blade, about 8 mm. wide where it leaves the blade and tapering for about 3·5 or 4 cm. to a pointed end. Except where it is continued in this tang, the blade has a horizontal bottom. The tang is heated and so burned into the wooden handle; the blacksmith, with this as all iron tools and weapons, supplies only the iron, and the buyer makes his own handle. The edge is produced in the first place by hammering on each side, followed by rubbing down a whet-stone. Being made of soft iron smelted from local ore, these knives can be given an extremely sharp point and fine edge. They are not usually
[442] taken back to the smith to be sharpened, but are whetted on a stone; there is often a flat, black, polished, communal whet-stone outside the men's dormitory (*gotal*) in a hill village.

411 Besides fitting the tang into a short, cylindrical, wooden handle, about 6·5 to 7·5 cm. long, and in diameter 2 cm. at the base and
322 somewhat thinner where the tang enters it, the Hill Maria makes a wooden sheath of two flat pieces of wood trimmed roughly to the shape of the blade, each of which has on one side a low flange slightly more than half as thick as the thick edge of the blade. The two flat pieces are laid on each other, the flanged edges together, and are joined by whipping of twine, *kesa* silk or millimetre-wide thin thongs of hide at the broad top, over a groove round the centre
[531] of the sheath, and near its point. The sheath is often carved, favourite designs being rough lozenges in relief on a bar, or a bar indented, or bands of three parallel lines.

411 This knife the Maria uses for slicing bamboo and all ordinary cutting purposes; holding the handle loosely in his hand he uses its full weight for chopping with the concave portion of the blade pieces of wood up to 3 cm. in diameter, getting a surprisingly straight cross-section; he usually chops all round the circumference to a depth of a third of the diameter, then breaks off the portion to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be severed, trimming the break with the knife held and used in the normal cutting position; he carves patterns in relief with the sharp point, or, holding the knife vertically, rolls the handle between the flat palms of his hand so as to drill holes with the point, trimming the edges of the holes with a burning ember.

The Bison-horn Maria uses a similar knife, often much larger, and seldom with a sheath. His *banda* is like a dao, but it is really a glorified and enlarged knife, with a thick end, and sometimes a pronounced bend or angle in the centre of the cutting edge; he uses this for lopping thick saplings or bamboo culms. But the use of the *banda* is not universal, and may be borrowed from Parjas or other tribes to the east. Similar weapons, but socketed on to long shafts of bamboo, and known as *gagra*, are used by the northern Murias and Jhorias, occasionally by Hill Marias, as weapons of offence and defence or billhooks for bamboo and saplings; the ordinary *gagra* has a concavely curved edge and a point, the *chhuri gagra* a convex edge and no point, while the *bhalu gagra* has an edge curving concavely from the top to a bend about half way along its length, and thence concavely to the socket.

The Hill Maria calls his axe *maq'su*, which is the hill gutturalized version of the ordinary Gondi word *maras* used all over the Central Provinces. The Bison-horn Maria uses a totally different word for his axe of this shape, *godel*. The Halbi word is *tangya*. Like the Naga axe, the *maq'su* or *godel*[1] is an iron blade, decidedly suggestive of a long stone celt in form[1]; but unlike that axe, the butt of the blade ends in a socket for the haft, not in a tang inserted in a hole in the haft. The cutting edge of the blade among the Hill Marias seldom exceeds 7 cm. width, and 15 cm. is the maximum length of the blade from the cutting edge to the socket, which encloses a haft 4 or 5 cm. in diameter. It has a pronounced 'waist' just before the socket, but this is far more marked on the longer Muria *maras* than on *maq'su* or *godel*. The *godel* is usually rather more massive than the *maq'su*. The blacksmith, when giving an axe its first edge or a new edge to a blunt axe, heats the axe well in his forge, and thoroughly hammers the actual edge. He then heats it again, and hammers it flat on each side till he forms a new edge. He repeats the heating, and grinds down the edge by rubbing each side down a lump of stone. After a further slight heating he dips it in cold water to temper the edge, which is then ready for use. The haft is set at slightly less than a right-angle to the blade, the thick socket being wedged with a thin slip of wood.

A type of axe found still sometimes in the hill villages, where it is known as *pata endanna maq'su* (the song-and-dance axe, because

[1] Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, p. 63.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

412 535 when the old men of to-day were young it was the decorated axe carried by all Hill Maria men dancers), is similar to the *pharsi* battle-axe of the plains tribes. The blade is crescent-shaped, the concave being the cutting edge, and the convex outer edge being socketed in the centre to receive the haft, which fits in the same vertical plane as the cutting edge. I have seen one of these axes measuring 41 cm. between the horns of the crescent.

411 The Hill Marias use small throwing spears made in one piece of iron, of the same type as the much larger solid spears used by the Murias of Amabera and north Kondagaon. They have leaf-shaped but very long blades, shafts with a knob counterpoise and, below the knob, spiked butts about a foot long. They are not nowadays very skilled throwers, there being scarcely any game in the hills. The thrower stands at a right incline to his target, and, holding the spear by the point of balance, uses much the same action as the javelin thrower of modern athletics.

411 224 The Bison-horn Maria uses a long and powerful stabbing spear for killing the big game, including tiger and panther, that his beaters drive into his nets. This is about 8½ to 9 feet (2·6 to 2·8 metres) long, and consists of an iron head socketed on to a long bamboo shaft. The head consists of a blade about 30 cm. long and 7 cm. wide at the greatest width just above the shank, whence the wings taper with a slight convexity to the point; a shank nearly as long, slightly thinner where it leaves the blade than where it ends in the socket; and a socket about 22 cm. long, generally with one or more iron or brass rings which are forced down over the socket from the shank when the shaft has been inserted, to tighten the grip of the socket on the shaft. The socket below these rings often forms a convenient grip for the right hand, when the huntsman leans on his upright spear with his right upper arm extended horizontally from his elbow, and the elbow bent for the hand to grip the spear above the plane of the crown of the head. When the quarry is netted, the spear has its point lowered to the front pointing slightly downwards, the left arm is bent for the hand to grasp the spear well below the socket, while the right hand grasps it about a foot from the butt-end of the shaft, and the spearman sprints forward and stabs the quarry with a smart two-handed downward thrust.

411 The last weapons to be described are bows and arrows. The Hill Marias call the bow *villu*, and the Bison-horn Marias *ville*; the word, strictly speaking, means the stave only, the cord being *ha'undi* in the former and *panti* in the latter language. The stave is nearly always of bamboo, but the Bison-horn Marias, who generally use more powerful weapons than the hill men, sometimes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

use very powerful staves of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood, the bow when strung measuring 6 feet from horn to horn. Of the Hill Maria staves measured by me, the thickest circumference varied from 6·5 to 9 cm. All the bows which I have seen are plain bows, used for spear-arrows and club-arrows; I have never seen any compound, composite or pellet bows. The back of the stave is the natural curved exterior of the bamboo; the belly is pared flat. The string is a carefully sliced piece of the outside of a green bamboo cut with a portion of the natural knots at each end trimmed into knobs, round which loops of twine[1] made from the fibre of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper are tied in notches (*kiddi* in both dialects) 25 to 40 mm. from the tips of the horns. One loop is permanently bound to the notch of the lower horn, the free loop being only sprung into the upper notch when the bowman strings the bow by resting the lower horn on the ground and bending the stave by holding his knee in its belly and pulling the upper horn towards him. The *lower* horn is called *modol* or *talla*, i.e. head, and the *upper* horn *kodi* ('point') or *toga* ('tail').

In the Abujhmar mountains the longest bowstring which I measured was 135 cm. from notch to notch, and the shortest, a child's bow, 110 cm. The greatest distance from the belly of the stave to the string of a bow strung but not drawn was 10 cm.

Arrows are called *kandi* by the Hill and *kar* by the Bison-horn Marias; this refers to spear-arrows only. *Kar* strictly means the arrow-head only, the Bison-horn Marias having no separate word for the whole arrow. The other terms used are:—

Term	Hill Maria	Bison-horn Maria
Arrow-head	*kani*	*kar*
Barb	*kuru*	*kew*
Shaft	*kand-meri*	*kara*
Shaft-nock	*iksal*	*pisel*
Feathering	*kand-loposku*	*kar-gerring*
Club-arrow	*bito*	*mitom-kara*
Head of club-arrow	*bonka*	*mitom*

The Hill Maria spear-arrows have a total length of 56 to 59 cm., that of their club-arrows varying from 51 to 64 cm. The Bison-horn arrows are longer in shaft and head, like their bows. Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, Figure 2, on page 86, are full-size representations of typical Abujhmar arrow-heads. The wings curve convexly or concavely from point to tips of barbs. The Bison-horn Maria arrows are similar in shape, but are far larger, often measuring 15 cm. or more from the point of the blade to the head of the tang, have longer barbs, and are therefore slenderer in both blade and barb. All

[1] Used in the technical sense of the word.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 spear arrow-heads have, whether seen from the obverse or the reverse, a groove in the thickness of the right wing starting deep between the tang and the barb, and becoming shallower as it tapers upwards to a point a little below the point of the blade. No. 2, Figure 2 below shows a bare arrow-head with typical pointed tang, which is heated and then worked like a gimlet into the head of the shaft almost to its full length. It is then pulled out of the hollowed

FIGURE 2

shaft, and melted lac, if available, is poured into the hollow as packing before the tang is finally re-inserted; a little piece of rag is used when lac is not to be had. The shaft is then whipped with floss silk or thin strips of hide as shown in No. 1. The head of a typical club-arrow is shown in No. 3; it is a natural bamboo knot tapered with a knife from the natural thickness at SS' to that at PP'. The head of the shaft is fitted at PP' into the natural

[see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

hollow of the knot, and packed in one of the ways already explained. 411
Club-arrows are used to kill small birds, and to teach boys to shoot. The blacksmith will charge 1 anna or a pound of *kathi* grain for a spear arrow-head.

Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias use only peacock or peahen tail-feathers to feather their arrows. No. 4, Figure 2, shows the method. First the nock M is made by splitting the end of the shaft and removing a little wood and pith; the nock and the shaft

FIGURE 3

are then whipped with *kosa* silk or thin hide strips as far as the point SS' inside the feathering. Seven or nine pieces of peafowl's brown feather are then whipped by the quill around the shaft at X, so that the trimmed edges of the feathers protrude fanwise from the shaft. The quills are also tied round the shaft at SS' with cotton thread.

The release is shown in the drawing above. The bow is held a little out of the perpendicular, the upper horn being canted a little

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 to the marksman's right. He stands obliquely to his target, with feet slightly apart and body bending forward over the left hip. The nock in the arrow shaft is held to the string of the bow, in the Abujhmar hills by the index and middle fingers only of the right hand unless the marksman is not strong enough not to use his third finger also; the Bison-horn Marias always use all three. The left thumb rests perpendicularly along the inner edge of the belly of the stave, the arrow resting, on the left of the stave, in the arch between the left thumb and index finger. The latter is laid lightly along the top of the shaft and pointed as a sight towards the target. The other left fingers are brought round the back of the stave. The string is then drawn to the rear by the right hand and released. No ring or other protector is worn on the thumb, though it is sometimes cut on the inner side a little above the knuckle.

Glasfurd, in para. 87 of his report, thus describes another form of release:—

> 'All the Marias . . . often use the feet in bending the bow, while they pull the string with both hands. An arrow discharged in this manner, it is said, would almost pass through the body of a man or deer: this method is only had recourse to in elevated positions, such as from the tops of rocks, hills, and precipices, upon any object below.'

Despite many enquiries, I never found a modern hill or plain Maria who could use this method. A few old men said it was used by wandering 'Nahal' hunters, now very rarely met in Bastar; none could remember it ever being used by Marias.

415 No quivers are used by any Marias. Arrows are carried in the hand, or by fixing the point of a barb in the hair-tuft, or in a cord tied round the head if bald.

534 No Marias appear ever to use a musical bow on a winnowing-fan
171 over a pot of water as is done by low Hindu castes and Murias around Kondagaon for the *Tija* festival in the month of Bhadon.

151 The Hill Maria slays a very occasional panther or barking-deer with his bow, but is not a good shot. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is often a deadly shot up to forty or fifty yards. A young man in a village just below the Aranpur pass, with a powerful bow of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood at fifty paces range sent an arrow through the bullseye of a target which I set up for him against a *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) tree; it penetrated 4 cm. into the very hard wood of that tree.

411 No other actual weapons are used by Marias, save for an occasional old sword of one of the traditional Indian *talwar* patterns which has survived the general disarming after the 1910 rebellion. But it is as well to describe here the few digging hand-tools used.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The chief agricultural implement of the Hill Marias, with which he hacks up the surface of his *penda* slopes and his occasional patches of permanent cultivation, is his *gudari*, known to the Bison-horn Marias as *bargudar*, and in the Halbi language as *bhalu kuhi* or 'bear hoe'. This, like the *maq'su* axe, is an iron blade in form suggestive of a long stone celt. It is in form very like the *maq'su* axe, but the socket is reversed so that the long handle is fixed in the same way as the handle of an adze, at an angle of about 80° to the blade when laid flat on the ground. The blade is rather bigger than that of

Bison (see Figure 4)

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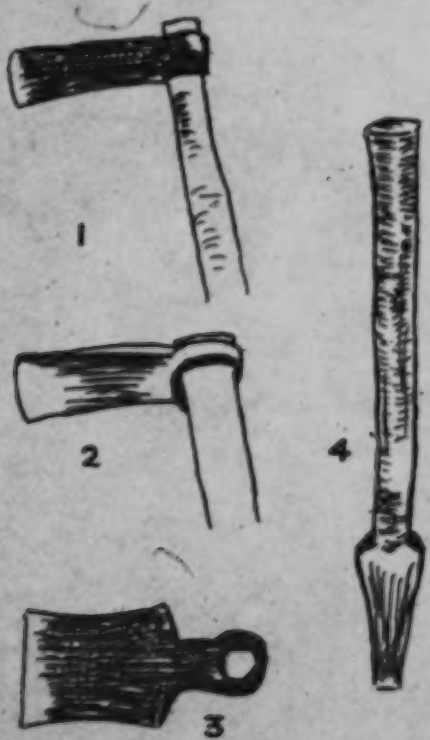

FIGURE 4.
1. Hill Maria axe (maq'su).
2. Hill Maria hoe (gudari).
3. Bison-horn hoe (kurki).
4. Hill Maria digging iron (pulu).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 the ordinary axe, and there is little or no 'waist' by the socket. It is, on a smaller scale, like the Cornish biddox.

Though this is used by some Bison-horn Marias in the remoter tracts, its use is now definitely a sign of the Hill Maria. The Bison-horn Maria uses the ordinary *korki* of the plains, which the Hill Maria calls *koṭ-gudari*; the villages on the edge of the Abujhmar hills are beginning to use it instead of the *gudari*, but it is never seen in the villages in the interior of the hills. This is a shouldered iron hoe, the blade from the shoulders to the digging edge being almost square, the sides being only slightly longer than the edge. It scores over the *gudari* because it can also be used to scoop and shovel earth.

Last must be mentioned the solid iron crowbar or digging-stick, found in all Maria houses, and throughout Bastar. But in the Abujhmar hills it is interesting to find that it is sometimes shouldered [171] and is in form very like the Madras Sawaras' shouldered iron hoe illustrated at p. 361 of Hutton's *India Census Report* (1931). This is known to the Hill Marias as *pulu*. I have seen similar shouldered specimens occasionally among the Bison-horn Marias, and was told that they had been imported from the Malkangiri taluq of the Jeypore Agency; but there is no coming and going between that Agency and the Abujhmar hills. Of all the Marias' iron weapons [435] and implements the *pulu* is the dearest, owing to the weight of iron used. The blacksmiths charge a rupee, the price of three *gudari* or two axes. It is generally about a metre long, and the shouldered portion is about a quarter of the total length. Plain unshouldered specimens are more common. Its chief use is for digging up the various yams and jungle roots in the rains that form so important a part of the diet of all Bastar Koitor. Or it is useful for digging holes for the posts of houses, or grubbing up stumps, etc.; it never is used as a hoe.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER V

CHARACTER

'Without exception they are the most cheerful, light-hearted people I have met with, always laughing and joking among themselves. Seldom does a Maria village resound with quarrels or wrangling among either sex: and in this respect they present a marked contrast to those in more civilised tracts. They, in common with many other wild races, bear a singular character for truthfulness and honesty, and when once they get over the feeling of shyness, which is natural to them, they are exceedingly frank and communicative. Curious as all savages, the commonest article of domestic use is to them an object of interest; they are quick to observe and to learn.'—Glasfurd's 1862 Report, para. 89.

'In their own hills they are a bold and hardy race, industrious as cultivators, and truthful to a proverb; and, though shy and timid with those they do not know, are quickly won over by kindness. They form, indeed, not only one of the most interesting, but one of the most improvable of the aboriginal tribes of India.'—Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report, para. 111.

MERCIFULLY the Hill Marias and, to a less extent, the Bison-horn Marias have been spared the attention of the improver, and hitherto have been left fairly free to develop on their own lines and to adjust themselves to the increasing impact of modern India on the surrounding lowlands. The shyness already mentioned is still very marked in the hills, and also among the remoter villages not only of Bison-horn Marias and Koyas, but also of Parjas and Murias. But the ordinary Bison-horn Maria of the open tracts, with the steady expansion of communications and frequent visits by the Chief and the Diwan to the Bailadila hills, has come more and more into contact with the outer world; he often comes into Jagdalpur for Dasehra or market or to work on the public works, or even to show his children the sights of the '*sahar*' or 'city', especially the power-house and the pumps of the new waterworks.

In the Abujhmar hills all is well if visitors are expected. Otherwise, as in Glasfurd's day, all the inhabitants are liable to rush off into the jungle on the sudden appearance of an unusual number of persons or a white man. When marching from Orcha to Adeq (Ader) in Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* in February 1930, I left the main path to see the village of Tondawada. I was not expected in the village, and though I had with me a number of Maria youths from Orcha well known to several women of Tondawada, yet my approach was the signal for a general *sauve-qui-peut*; the dogs barked, the few cattle were hastily driven off into the hills, and women and boys fled helter-skelter to the hills, even including

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

609 a large party of women who had assembled to keen over an old
woman who had just died. Pigs also were driven off, and a youth,
157 who was caught lurking near us to 'rescue' three stray cows and
brought to me, advanced to me as delicately as Agag, with his knife
unsheathed and held in readiness to defend his life. This lad was
quickly reassured and shouted out, whereupon to our surprise four
or five other lads came down from trees around us, where they had
taken shelter, their curiosity being on the whole stronger than
their fear. Ultimately the women felt that the corpse could not
be left unmourned any longer, and came back in twos and threes
to be reassured by the boys. They were then in two minds whether
to resume keening or to see as much as possible of the queer ways
of so unheard-of an apparition as a white man. When I came to
see the keening it was altogether too much, and they at once left
the body and crowded round me; when I had it explained that I
wanted to see how funerals were conducted and to photograph
them, they very obligingly squatted down in their original places,
and began even more doleful keenings than before. It seemed only
proper to remove my distracting presence as soon as I could, but
the keeners were with difficulty dissuaded from seeing me on my
way to Adeq.

Timidity of thir kind is unusual among the Bison-horn Marias;
but there are many villages among them where few women can have
seen a white man. To appear on foot or on a car along a forest
road where groups of women are gathering forest fruits is usually
the signal for them to rush off into the thickets, leaving their baskets
and gear: but if you return that way later after having spent an
hour or two in neighbouring villages, they will come timidly out
to you on the road, and gradually lose their earlier fears.

152 The highlanders and lowlanders alike are extremely curious.
In the Abujhmar hills I have frequently had parties of men, youths
and girls coming into my tent or hut to see my strange ways of
getting up, shaving and dressing, and their curiosity has been
embarrassing when they have tried to watch even the performance
of natural functions. I have had to brush my hair a dozen times
over to satisfy those who had not seen me do it the first time, and
to demonstrate the use of every article on my dressing or office
tables. They will sit for hours watching a typewriter, and specu-
lating on how it works. A motor-car is a source of endless delight,
whether it be the distorted reflections seen in the polished radiator,
or the noises of the bulb and electric horns. They thump it to test
its materials, or crawl underneath to be fascinated by the strange
sights that reward their trouble. But it takes time to get them to
agree to try a ride inside, and when they do, they start off with

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a fearful pride, but soon lose their fear, and try to crowd into the seats; their women, however, are as reluctant to risk entering a car as any old village woman in Cornwall thirty-five years ago. It was a pleasure later in the day to see the bold adventurers of the morning who watched the white man's toilet operations conducting parties of sight-seers into the tent and pantomiming the use of brush, razor and everything there. The Bison-horn Maria is more sophisticated, and will not intrude without being asked, nor is he so curious about small things; but a motor-car is as great a draw to him as to the hill men. Both are very interested in seeing a carburettor stripped and assembled or a tyre changed, or any mechanical repairs; they show quick intelligence, and could soon be taught. In the spate of bridge building on the State roads in recent years they have been quick to grasp methods of sinking piles or getting great beams into position, and have not been slow to offer suggestions that have sometimes been practicable. The newly built road bridge over the Indrawati at Jagdalpur is really built according to the same method as the bridges which even Hill Marias construct across their rivers, with modern and stronger materials and other improvements.

My inquisitiveness about their houses, habits, possessions, agriculture and customs in their eyes must seem much like their curiosity about my ways. Actually their mental processes are not unlike ours, when allowance is made for their centuries of isolation; they are certainly more receptive than the ordinary villager of British India, whose thought has for generations been stunted by the cumbrous wrappings of caste and debased Hinduism. A striking instance of this is the comparative ease with which vaccination was made compulsory years ago throughout the State and is welcomed by the Marias, in strong contrast to the keen opposition to it even in the cities of British India and to the caution venturing on timidity with which provincial Governments make tentative advances in the direction of universal compulsion. Not only is vaccination really universal even in the hill villages, but the Marias are keenly alive to the advantages of inoculation for cholera and yaws, and, in fact, are inclined to demand '*tika*' or inoculation for every ailment, those of them, that is, who have seen for themselves cholera checked or yaws cured by injections; for till recently no medical relief other than vaccination had reached the hills.

In natural cheerfulness few races can surpass the Hill Marias, who, like all Gonds, are quick to see the fun of things, whether it be something that spontaneously appeals to their sense of humour, or a joke put to them by some outsider. Their humour is apt to be broad. Very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

674 very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a
murder is extremely rare and due usually to some suspicion of
572 black magic. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is subject to sudden fits of blind rage, especially after he has been taking large quantities of his intoxicating gruel, *landa*, which is anathema to the Hill Marias. In that state he will seize any weapon that comes to hand, whether it be his wife's heavy rice pestle, a log of wood, an axe or a bow and arrow, and murder for the most trivial of reasons; the State Jail at Jagdalpur has always a high percentage of Bison-horn Marias doing time for homicide. He also is capable of nursing his revenge for a long time; a recent example was given by a strapping Bison-horn Maria from Palnar, who, after serving twelve years of a commuted death sentence, soon after his release took the first chance of picking a quarrel with a man whom he considered deliberately to have let him down by not giving evidence in his defence twelve years before, and battered his head in with a heavy bamboo stick. The Bison-horn Maria will in his fury declare an implacable enmity by stalking round his foe's house three times, either plucking straws from the thatch, or whistling the peculiar *su'i* whistle, or throwing some of his own pubic hairs at the house; and murder is the inevitable result. There were twenty-seven murder trials in Bastar between 1917 and 1923, and in eighteen of them the murderers were Bison-horn Marias, but only two of the murders were committed by Hill Marias. About half the Bison-horn Maria murders are committed in *landa* intoxication, and almost the same proportion in sudden fits of rage about nothing; for example, wives often are killed when the husband dislikes his food or it is not ready for him; one even lost her life for refusing to cook for her husband when he woke up hungry in the middle of the night. But there are on record Bison-horn Maria murders committed for all the ordinary sordid and criminal murder motives; the Bison-horn Maria is a man of far stronger feelings
[158] than the Hill Maria. The former actually runs amuck on occasion like the Malay; in two such cases the offender pleaded that he suffered from fits and ran amuck under the delusion, in the one case, of pursuit and, in the other, of possession by evil spirits and of the
628 imminence of a new rebellion. Cain indeed wrote in 1876 that 'blood revenge' had hardly died out in the Godavari valley, and was said to be 'in full exercise' in Bastar. The only apparent case of a hereditary vendetta of which I am aware occurred in Orcha, a Hill Maria village, where a grandfather and his son were murdered at long intervals for suspected witchcraft, while the grandson conveniently fell off a sago-palm tree as soon as he was old enough to claim the hereditary post of *pargana* headman.
692 There is a strong feeling everywhere of an eye for an eye and a tooth

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

for a tooth; but nowadays this is generally satisfied by invoking the police and the courts. But distances are great in Bastar, and in the rains, when the early hill grains are ripe, communications are bad; often the villagers conspire to hush up a murder or leave it to those affected to take their own direct action, rather than disorganise agricultural work by the troubles of a long police enquiry followed by committal proceedings and a sessions trial. 692

It is a relief to return from this darker side of the Bison-horn Maria's character to the light-heartedness of all Marias, but especially the Hill Maria. An engaging feature of this is his readiness to burlesque himself. A village *gaita* (headman) at Tondawada set the whole camp in fits of laughter by his description of his first vain attempts to use a pair of bullocks in the plough, mimicking himself pulled hither and thither by these wild-cat animals; at Hikul I was treated to a similar comic representation of what would happen if a Maria attempted to milk a cow. They are quick to seize on any foibles or peculiarities of individuals, without respect of persons, and have a happy knack of inventing apposite nicknames; this trait is common throughout the State, where there are nicknames for almost every State official current among all the primitive tribes, while few of the leading Hindu and Mohammedan settlers are referred to by their true names. 157 522 551

Frankness and honesty are still as characteristic as ever of the hill men and the wilder Bison-horn Marias, and many a man arraigned for homicide will state in court perfectly frankly why it was essential to kill his victim and how it was done. I have very seldom found any hesitate to answer any questions, even about the most intimate domestic matters. The Bison-horn Maria, however, being, at least in the open tracts, more sophisticated, is inclined to be suspicious; and he certainly is learning the ways of the courts, and how to defeat a justice administered on the evidence and not according to the facts; many know, for example, that the death penalty may be escaped if you can convince your judge that you murdered your victim because you believed him to be bewitching you. But in general a Maria witness can still be relied upon to speak the truth, although it involve his dearest relatives or himself in trouble; and the occasional pleader from British India is soon hopelessly at sea if he tries his usual methods of cross-examination even on a Bison-horn Maria who knows Halbi. Fortunately, the restoration of the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the village and *pargana* panchayats will considerably reduce Maria experience of the law courts. The Hill Maria never has had much recourse to them, petty theft being almost unknown and murder rare. His attitude may to some extent be gauged by the following example. 157 577 [674] 695

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

695 There was a disputed boundary between the village of Kurmer in the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* and the adjacent Kutru Mar village of Jatalur; the Jata clan asserted possession over a strip of land belonging to the Parlio clan of Kurmer. I suggested, on the strength of a tale I had heard of former Chiefs' methods of justice, that the head of each village should come with a cock to the land, and that the land should go to the clan whose cock crowed first. This was hailed by both sides as a sound solution, and off we went to the land; but just before we reached it the Jata headman began to hang back, and finally backed out of the test; I awarded the land to the Parlio clan to the approval of men present from other clans, and on going over the land found that it contained a *pagk'ai* or alternative village site of the Parlio clan besides the cromlech left to mark the site of the Village Mother's 'temple', the *kasyeq-gaita's udam-garia* or seat of honour, and the *kotokal* or line of menhirs erected in the name of the Parlio dead. Here the Jata clan finally abandoned their claim when challenged by the Parlio *kasyeq-gaita* to eat earth from under the Village Mother's cromlech.

181 To be left to live the free life of the hills, untrammelled by restrictions on his user of forest, earth and water or his right to shift his village and his *penda* cultivation, is the unconscious ideal of the Hill Maria. If he is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls; and few of them or of the wilder Bison-horn Marias survive long imprisonment.

517 The Hill Maria shows great artistry in his bead-work, and is never at fault in his discrimination between colours and shades, [522] though he uses for all shades of green and blue the one word *kajarondla*. He has general terms also for red, white, black and yellow, but none for intermediate shades. In his houses he draws 532 rude cup-marking patterns, *swastikas* and strange creatures in white earth on his mud plaster, or makes rough clay representations of women's breasts. His songs are low and rather melancholic in 533 sound, the youths' voices verging on contralto; but they are far easier for an English ear to understand than Hindu music, and have often a haunting refrain. Both he and the Bison-horn Maria love to hear European records on a gramophone, especially a good soprano or contralto, sea shanties, and violins or trios and quartets playing light chamber music; but operatic fireworks merely provoke laughter, Chaliapin singing the 'Song of Prince Igor' making them [534] ache with laughter, but being often encored. The Marias as a whole have no musical instruments except drums. Though the 517 Bison-horn Maria does not show the Hill Maria's artistry and 153

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

colour sense in bead-work, it is noticeable that the best carpet weavers in Jagdalpur Jail are almost invariably Bison-horn Marias. They are quick to grasp intricacies of pattern, and there is hardly any pattern that they cannot copy. For years the chief instructor in the jail was the double murderer from Palnar already mentioned in this chapter.

The Marias of both kinds are very hospitable. On entering a Hill Maria village you are met by the elders and offered little gifts, an uncouth yam, or dried tobacco leaves and forest fruits. The whole village co-operates to get your camp ready, and to entertain you at night with song and dance. The occasional stranger from other Koitor villages or minor State official is housed and fed, provided he does not outstay his welcome or attempt to be exacting in his demands. Co-operation, in service to the State, in village festivals, in felling of forest for *penda* cultivation, in allotment of *penda* areas, in sowing, reaping, winnowing and storing of grain, in fishing and hunting, is the key to the social life of the Hill Maria, who is a natural communist; his hospitality is perhaps mainly an expression of his ingrained co-operation, though he is genuinely glad to see you after a long absence, and will greet you with tears of joy. The Bison-horn Maria is more of an individualist, or, rather, less of a communist, than the hill man, but he likes to entertain for a wedding or to celebrate the completion of a new *munda* (small rice irrigation tank) and similar occasions on a lavish scale, keeping open house. All Marias are extremely grateful for any benefit received and for sympathy and interest.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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PART III

Domestic Life and Economy

'What have your wastes to do
With the earth-treader, the earth-tiller; this frail
Body of man; the sower, whom the green shoot gladdens;
Hewer of trees; the builder, who houses him from the bleak winds,
And whom awaits at last long peace beneath the grass
In soil his fathers knew?'—Laurence Binyon, 'The Sirens'.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter VI

Villages, Houses and their Contents

A. Hill Maria Villages, Houses and their Contents

361 The site of the Hill Maria village is in these days almost entirely determined by its convenience as a centre from which to cultivate the *penda* slopes of the year. Peace has reigned in the Abujhmar hills from time immemorial, and no question of defence arises [347] when a village is built. A possible relic of former unsettled times is the custom of building stone cairns and seats as look-outs at the head of passes or the summits of hills on the paths leading to villages; but these are convenient watching places for herdsmen when their cattle are grazing around the hill-tops, and serve also to mark the line of the paths which, in the rains, are overgrown with rank grass, or fall into disuse when villages or *penda* slopes 487 are abandoned for alternative sites. Certain well-defined tracks through the hills are cleared annually by the villagers; these often avoid the actual village sites, to which side tracks connect them. There are no carts in the hills, and therefore the tracks are only foot-paths, generally wide enough only for a party to walk in single file, though at the periodic clearings the grass is cut down to a width of two or three feet on each side of the path. The village 361 boundary is usually marked by a cairn of stones, in the centre of which may be planted a pole ornamented at the top with bunches of grass or peacock or jungle-cock feathers, the pole being further adorned by peeling off bands of bark at intervals throughout its length. The boundary itself is usually a stream, and the cairns of the two villages are usually twenty or thirty yards apart, so that [783] when the annual *pira-mansha* (called by the Bison-horn Marias *rig-burria* and by Halbi-speakers *boharani*) ceremony of ridding the village of disease takes place, the old winnowing-fans with the sweepings of each house can be hung up beyond the boundary on this no-man's-land without leaving them on the lands of the neighbouring village.

487 These paths cross streams by stepping-stones, by logs felled 491 across the stream, by small raised embankments pierced by hollowed tree trunk pipes for the passage of the water and revetted with horizontally laid logs, or by bridges consisting of a plank supported by bamboo wicker-work cylinders filled with boulders resting on

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the bed of the stream; these are held in position between upright poles set V-wise in the boulders, to which are fastened horizontal bamboo poles as railings. As they have no saws, the 'plank' is a tree trunk with one side trimmed flat with the axe. Even more elaborate bridges are sometimes made at high levels over streams liable to flood, from tree-fork to tree-fork on opposite banks.

Though, as has been said above, agricultural conditions nowadays determine village sites, hill-tops or rocky slopes remain favourite sites, and become commoner as you penetrate farther into the Abujhmar hills. The traditional arrangement is a street some twenty-five yards wide between parallel lines of long-houses; at one end of the street is the *gotul-lon* or village dormitory, generally within a rounded bamboo fence, and sometimes in front of this dormitory will be seen the *udam-garia* or seat of honour of the *kasyeq-gaita* and possibly also of the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*), as well as the stones on which the other village elders sit around with them in conclave; but the *udam-garia* custom is not found in all parts of the hills. Sometimes the shrine of the *Nar-Talughi* or Village Mother is actually inside the dormitory fencing, and she is often housed there for a while when a village is being shifted. There are, as a rule, no *bari* (vegetable gardens) attached to each house as amongst most Gonds, including the Bison-horn Marias and the Murias of Bastar; but sometimes the *kasyeq-gaita* has a small tobacco *bari* attached to the dormitory in the centre of the main street. The *Gazetteer* (p. 50) speaks of the 'common granary' as standing in the broad street; but with one partial exception, Nugur village in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, I have never seen this. The villagers generally construct a row of granaries (*manda* or *wijja-dodi*) on piles at the side or rear of the main village street, sometimes nearer the *ponda* fields than the village; this row can hardly be called a 'common granary', as each villager has his own granary in the row for his own private food and seed store, the granaries being built together only for convenience, as they can then be watched at night by one watchman for the whole village, sleeping in a special hut at the side of the granaries or under a granary. At Nugur there were big matting bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored; but here the village had come under the economic thraldom of some Teli tradesmen, who for years had advanced rice to the cultivators. The bins were left in the collective charge of the headman and elders, and any villager could help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest he would replace it with 50 per cent. interest, the Teli owners being also free to remove the surplus from time to time.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

This traditional arrangement of the Hill Maria villages is far from being always observed. I have seen a village constructed in this way on one of its traditional sites (*pagh* or *pagha'i*; Murias say *pare*, while Bison-horn Marias generally use the Halbi word *padar*), and then four years later found it reconstructed on one of the alternative sites with little sign of the traditional grouping; and I have also seen the converse occur. In fact, the configuration of the site may make the traditional arrangement difficult. It is also being gradually abandoned in the villages on the edges of the hills into which the individualism of surrounding plains villages is creeping, and in the few villages such as Orcha and Hikul which have good permanent rice cultivation; in the latter villages there is a growing tendency not to shift the sites when the surrounding *ponda* slopes are exhausted, but to cultivate even remote slopes from the village site in the vicinity of the permanent rice fields. As the old feeling of village community weakens, houses are no longer built as long-houses, each containing groups of three or four houses occupied by brothers or near paternal cousins, but are built detached, each with its own granary close to it, instead of the householder having one compartment in the long granary row; even then, however, the detached houses tend to group themselves roughly into lines flanking a central open space, at one end of which is the village dormitory (*gotul-lon*), in its usual position. Even when a village site is becoming permanent, as at Orcha and Hikul, any sudden calamity, such as crop failure, epidemic or epizootic, will probably induce the villagers to shift. In several villages the *kasyap-gaita* always keeps a hen sitting on eggs inside his house, and the addling of an undue proportion of these is frequently a signal for the shifting of the village; but a wise *gaita* does not let his eggs get addled unless there is really sound economic or religious reason for shifting, when the omens can be made to suit the occasion.

Behind each line of houses will be found rows of pig-sties, at least one for each house; and the pigs often seem better housed than their masters. Where, as around Orcha, sal (*Shorea robusta*) or other timber is plentiful, the pig-sties are generally made of sections of tree trunk or large boughs laid horizontally between vertical stays, with an opening in front which can be closed by dropping vertical posts over it between horizontal stays at the top and bottom of the opening. These sties are sheltered from the sun by grass-thatched roofs sloping back from two or more vertical posts about 6 feet high to similar posts about 4 feet high in the rear. Dug-out troughs of sal wood are kept outside or just inside the sties for water and food for the pigs; the commonest food is a mash made from the chaff or husks of *kosra* (*kutki*; *Panicum miliaceum*) and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 other minor grains. Where timber is not available, these sties are
231 made from bamboos, or even from stones. Similar but, of course, far smaller structures are made to serve as hen-coops, resting generally against the side or front of the houses.

778 The shrine of the Village Mother, as has been stated above,
361 is sometimes actually inside the village dormitory, sometimes just outside it, and sometimes at a considerable distance from the actual
[824] village, in a grove, if possible of *saja* (*Terminalia tomentosa*—everywhere the sacred tree of the Gond) trees. Sometimes there is also in the village, often at the end of the street opposite the dormitory, the hut-temple of the *pen* or clan-god, containing the log-frame image of the god. This will normally be found only in the village of the *pen-wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god; but sometimes, where the villages of the clan are far apart, there may be two copies of the clan-god, or the god may go to visit other villages, and have a resting-shed in each; or he may have begotten a son to deputize for him in the distant village; I have seen in a *pen-rawar* (clan-god's temple) both the *pen* himself and an embryo 'son' in the second of his three years' 'gestation'. The *pen* is always covered by a shed; but the Village Mother sometimes is just a cairn or a basket-cylinder filled with stones, or a low table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree, and close by there is a small shed of grass thatch with open sides in which are kept the cooking pots, ladles and sacrificial knife used at ceremonial feasts. The sacred grove may in very rare cases, in villages near the edge of the lowlands, have also a hut-temple of Danteshwari Mai or Maolai, the most revered or feared Hindu deities of Bastar.

There will be found well apart from the houses and the rest of
343 the village a menstruation hut in many villages, known as *padawo'-*
841 *gha'i* to the Hill Marias, or sometimes as *dola-low*. Here all menstruating women are secluded from the village for a week every month. Sometimes the hut has a single room, about 6 by 5 feet, with walls 3 feet high, with no windows and only a small door little bigger than the entrance to an English kennel; sometimes there are two rooms separated from each other by a partition, so that when a girl is afraid of being secluded by herself a duenna may sleep within sound of her without actual contact. The door of the seclusion room always opens away from the village, so that the affected woman may get out at night to answer the call of nature without overlooking the village or being visible to any villager. Special cooking pots and utensils are kept in the seclusion room, or else the woman's food is cooked outside and left by her door for her.
[589 The roof is often covered with seed-bearing twigs of castor-oil plants,
824] in all parts of India regarded as very efficacious against magic.

[text continues on p. 106]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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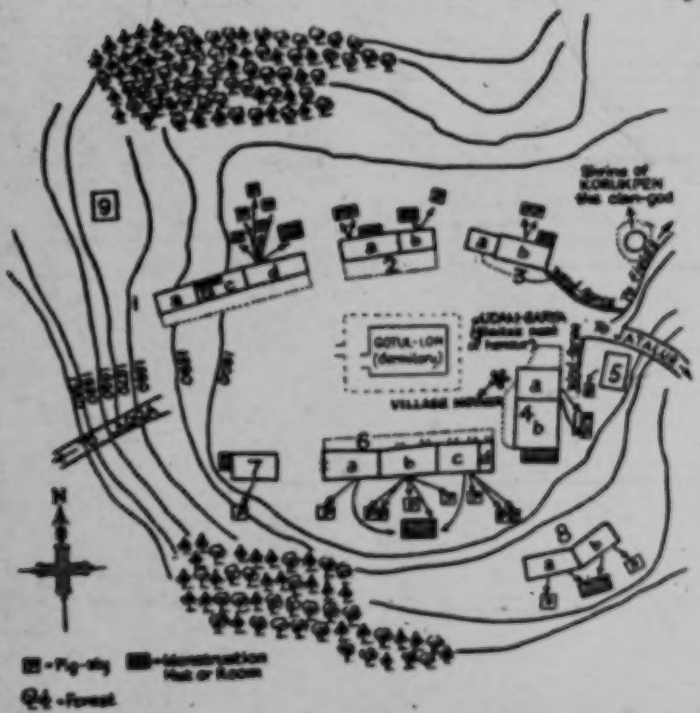

FIGURE 5

MAP OF KARANGAL VILLAGE OF THE PARLLO HILL MARIA CLAN, as occupied in February 1930. (Contours approximate.)

House-group 1 (*a*) Empty; built for Deda HUNGA, when serving for MURRA's niece; since marrying her, lives in KURMER. (*b*) P. BAIYYA's mother. (*c*) P. BAIYYA, wife and son. (*d*) P. MURRA, brother of BAIYYA, his wife, his son P. BANDE, wife and daughter.

2. (*a*) P. DOGA and wife. (*b*) P. KUTTA, wife, son. DOGA and KUTTA are elder and younger brothers, but separate in cultivation.
3. (*a*) Empty, since death of P. MURRA's elder brother's widow. (*b*) P. MURRA and wife.
4. (*a*) P. BAIYYA, kasveq-gaita, and wife. (*b*) his son P. GURRA, wife and son.
5. Ruined house of P. KUTTO, who had left village.
6. (*a*) P. MURKA and wife. (*b*) P. KUTA, 2 wives, 1 son. (*c*) P. KEVE, wife and 2 sons. (*d*) KEVE's mother. KUTA, MURKA and KEVE regard themselves as brothers, KUTA being the eldest; they are paternal third cousins. Their fields and pigs are separate, but menstruation hut common.
7. P. PANDA, wife, 1 son, 2 daughters, widowed mother.
8. (*a*) P. HEODA, wife and son. (*b*) P. MASA (his wife had eloped). HEODA is the elder, MASA the younger brother.
9. The house of a Rawat (herdsman), well apart from Maria houses.

The wind-fence is a stockade of thick poles.
The dotted lines are bamboo wickerwork fences.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

But in many villages instead of a communal *pedawo'gha'i* there is a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *pedawo'gha'i* room known generally as *kala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *kala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable attached.

The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *haryeq-gaita's* house, near the latter's *udam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-rawar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parllo clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street;

[1] Or *ala*; the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

and every Maria house was occupied by members of the Parllo clan, the only partial exception being the empty house (no. 1-a) which had till recently been occupied by a youth of the Deda clan, which may intermarry with the Parllo clan, serving as *lamana's* to win the niece of Parllo Murra, occupant of house no. 1-d. It will be observed that some long-houses have a joint menstruation hut at the rear of the house, while in some there is a separate *kala* for each house in the long-house. The *kasyeq-gaita's* house is at the dormitory end of the street, a very usual position.

The shifting of villages

It has already been implied that though a village site may be abandoned for superstitious reasons, the predominant reason is economic, the exhaustion of the *penda* slopes that can be conveniently cultivated from the existing village. If three or more *kaghai* (*penda* sites) can be dealt with from one *paghai* or village site, then the village may remain on that site for seven or eight years, even though there are other *paghai* in the other *penda* sites cultivated from it; or if any portion of the last *penda* site to be cultivated is very remote from it, then a few houses may be shifted there. What makes the old topographical survey maps so useless for finding a modern village is that they mark only the village site occupied in the sixties, generally, too, by the particular name of that site, not by the general name of the village. The big village of Orcha, for example, is not marked as such, but by the name of its *paghai* Hoinar. A reference to the sketch map of the parish (to use a term more suitable than 'village') of Handawada in Dantewara Mar (opposite p. 108) will make the position clear. The parish has ten alternative *kaghai* cultivation sites, viz.:—

1. Kawar *kaghai*, 1st half.
2. Ditto, 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta *kaghai*.
4. Hitangpal *kaghai*.
5. Kurmelnar *kaghai*.
6. Rekarai *kaghai*.
7. Handawada *kaghai*, 1st half.
8. Ditto, 2nd half.
9. Ahekele *kaghai*, 1st half.
10. Ditto, 2nd half.

Of these, nos. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 only contained *paghai* village sites. In February 1930 the main village was still settled in no. 9, but the *penda* slopes in nos. 9 and 10 had been exhausted, and those in no. 1 had been partly cultivated for the first year and were being reaped. Nos. 9 and 10 had lasted for six years and, though the villagers had started to cultivate no. 1 a long way below the village site in no. 9 and on the other side of the Goinder river, they were only then at harvest time starting to shift the village to the *paghai* in no. 2; in fact, the labour of the first year's work of clearing and cultivating a fresh *penda* slope is so heavy that the shifting of the village itself is, when necessitated by the distance of the existing site

[text continues on p. 109]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Key to Figure 6

361
241
621
427

Kaghai Names (see p. 107).

1. Kawar, 1st half.
2. Do., 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta.
4. Hitangpal.
5. Kurmelnar.
6. Rekarai.
7. Handawada, 1st half.
8. Do., 2nd half.
9. Ahekele, 1st half.
10. Do., 2nd half.

The letters against fields in nos. 2 and 3 and houses and granaries in nos. 1, 3, 9 and 10 refer to the tenants in the list below. Tenants A to N are Gume by clan; O to Q, Tamo.

(*Abbreviations.*—M = mother, W = wife, S = grown-up son, b = boy child, g = girl child, D = marriageable daughter.)

Letter	*Tenant*	*Family*	*Area in acres*	*Rent* Rs. a.
A	Modi s/o Malla	M., cousin's widow	5·00	2 4
B	Lalu s/o Banda, Bhum-gaita	W., 1 b.	4·50	1 12
C	Banda s/o Bursai	W., 2 g.	6·25	3 8
D	Horra s/o Musra	W., 1 g.	3·50	2 4
E	Masa s/o Kule, gaita	W., 1 S., 1 g.	7·50	4 12
F	Pido s/o Doga	W., 1 b.	3·50	2 0
G	Irpa s/o Karanje	W.	1·50	1 8
H	Rama s/o Peda Junga s/o Rama	W., 1 S., 2 g.	4·50	2 4 1 8
I	Kohla s/o Pahandi	W., 1 D., 1 man serving to win daughter's hand	4·00	1 8
J	Doga s/o Wijja	W., 1 b., 1 g.	4·00	1 12
K	Kuma s/o Boda	W., 1 g.	4·50	1 4
L	Juga s/o Wijja	M.	1·50	2 0
M	Malla s/o Gorra, Kasyeq-gaita	W., 1 S., 1 b., 1 g.	5·50	2 4
N	Pahandi s/o Karanje	W., M.	2·50	2 12
O	Hara s/o Pandu	W.	3·00	2 4
P	Bandi s/o Kuli	W., M., 2 b.	3·00	2 12
Q	Musra s/o Pandu	W.	2·25	2 4
		Total Acres	68·50	Rs.40 12

There was also in Ahekele Kaghai no. 9 a house shared by a Rawat and a Telugu with a small tobacco plot paying 4 annas rent 4

Rs. 41 0

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

361
241
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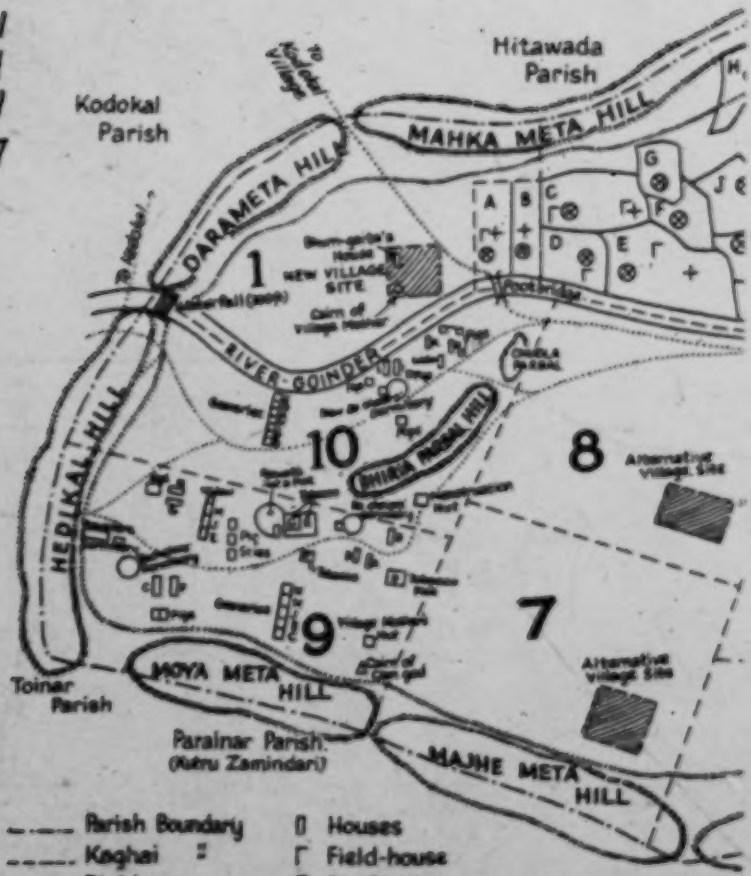


The buildings etc in Kaghai Nos 9 & 10 are of course drawn too large in comparison to the areas of the Fields in Nos 2 & 5; actually they left ample room for Fields in Nos 9 & 10, but had become more scattered when those Fields became exhausted

FIGURE 6
PARISH MAP OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(A)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

361
241
621
427

OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from the fresh cultivation site, postponed till after the first harvest has been raised on the latter. This is inconvenient only to the women, as from the time when the new *kosra* comes into ear till the harvest is over all the men sleep apart from their wives in their fields, while their womenfolk have to sleep in the village, it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to have sexual intercourse during this period. As it was inconvenient for the bachelors to sleep in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) on the hill-top village in Ahekele *paghai*, a temporary dormitory had been made near the river, actually in Ahekele *kaghai* no. 10, but close to the bridge by which the villagers crossed the river to their *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai*; and there were also four houses there, and a row of granaries, that site having been more convenient for some of the villagers whose fields had been on the lower slopes of *kaghai* no. 10 when that was being cultivated. Handawada is a village of the Gume clan; and all the houses in the village on Ahekele *paghai*, those by the river in *kaghai* no. 10, and the one advance-guard house in Kawar *paghai*, as well as all the *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1, belonged to members of the Gume clan: but in the small Irpmeta *kaghai* no. 3 three families of the Tamo clan, with which the Gume clan may intermarry, had been allowed to have *penda* cultivation and to build houses and granaries; the wives had all been Gume girls. In the new village site, Kawar *paghai*, one villager had already built his house, to which I referred above as the advance-guard house, because he had been sent to make an experimental *penda* field in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1 a year in advance of the rest of the villagers, in accordance with custom; on the success of this experimental cultivation depends the villagers' decision whether to migrate *en masse* in the following year. There was also a newly made cairn close by where a ceremony in honour of the Village Mother had been performed as an essential preliminary to the shifting of the village. When I next camped in the parish in March 1934, the villagers had for three years occupied Kawar *paghai*, and the houses were dirty and smoke-blackened; the villagers had found the site feverish and unhealthy owing to its proximity to the river, there had been several deaths, and Kawar *kaghai* nos. 1 and 2 had each been exhausted in two years. Their Tamo relatives had exhausted Irpmeta *kaghai* and left the parish. The *Bhum-gaita* and another villager had been sent ahead to make experimental *penda* plots in Hitangpal *kaghai* (no. 4), and the villagers proposed to shift the village during 1935 to the village site in that *kaghai* or the adjacent Kurmelnar *kaghai* (no. 5); the experiments in Hitangpal had succeeded, and the villagers were to start their *penda* felling in a few days.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

166 361 787 791 778 When shifting is to begin, all the parish lands being lands of the clan, the *wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god is usually consulted; he is generally himself the *leshi* or medium whom the god possesses, and if the god through him directs that the village should be shifted, he leads the villagers to the new site; sometimes the *wadda'i* himself is not a medium, but keeps a *leshi* as an assistant. At the new site the *hasyaq-gaita* clears a small patch of ground in honour of the Village Mother, and on this offers an egg, some grain and flowers in her name, over which he places stones in a basketry cylinder or as a cairn. This will remain as her shrine in the new village, sometimes, as we have seen, inside the dormitory fencing, sometimes outside it but in the main village street, or sometimes right outside the village in a grove, a shed being erected over it. The removal of the cairn would be an omen of disaster, only to be avoided by shifting the village. The Orcha villagers had only a small table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree in a grove to mark their Village Mother. Handawada, besides a cairn, had a forked stick of *saja* wood oiled and polished, and whipped round the fork with *kosa* silk whipping, with a leaning thatched roof to protect her from the elements. Whatever form her shrine or representation may take, it is left behind when the village is deserted, and not shifted to the new village; for it is regarded as valuable evidence of the clan or parish property in the land. The only things removed are the pots in which grain, etc., is cooked at the Mother's feasts, the cooking utensils and the knives, which the *hasyaq-gaita* or religious headman must himself carry under his arm, *not* on his head, which is taboo, to the shed erected to house them near the Mother's shrine in the new village.

[184]

361 166 In the villages which I have seen being shifted, the earliest buildings to be erected have been the village dormitory, the houses of the 'advance guard', the religious and the secular headmen, and the menstruation hut. Villagers often put up their pig-sties before their own houses. A temporary dormitory is often put up to house the bachelors, and replaced after the houses have been built by a more permanent and elaborate structure.

The villagers remove all their utensils and household goods from their old to their new houses when the village is shifted. But they move no building materials; they leave the deserted houses to the mercy of the elements, which means that they are soon choked in the mass of high grass and scrub jungle that immediately springs up on the deserted site, and probably burnt down when the forest undergrowth is fired in the following spring.

[text continues on p. 112]

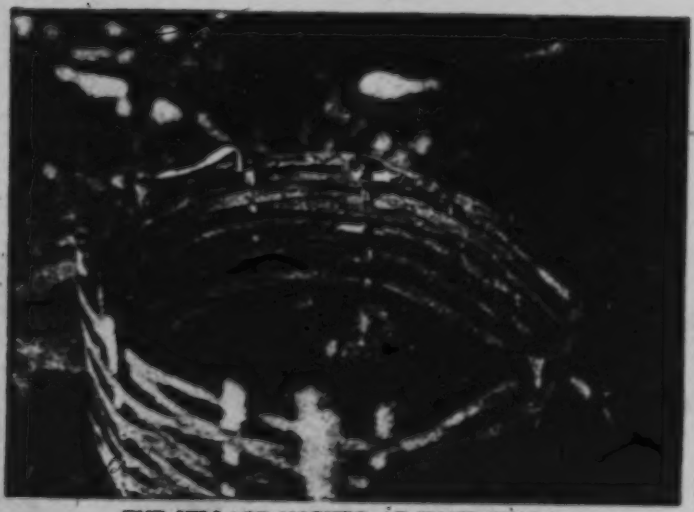
1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE X

778
343

THE VILLAGE MOTHER'S SHRINE AT ORCHA

The stone at the foot of the *saja* tree trunk on the right is the Village Mother; the shed contains her cooking pots, utensils, etc.



THE VILLAGE MOTHER AT HANDAWADA

consisting of an oiled forked *saja* stick, bound with *kota* silk. The lean-to thatched roof was removed to enable the photograph to be taken

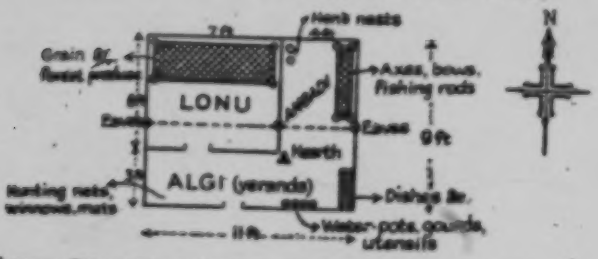
[FACING p. 110]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

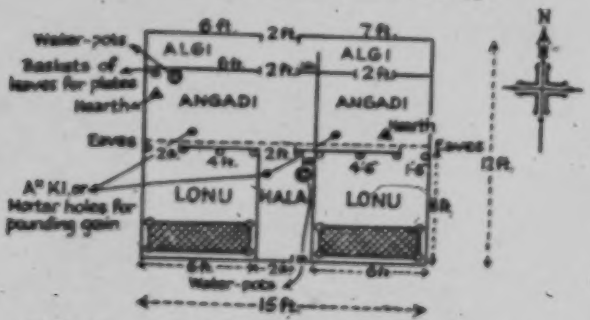
342

HILL MARIA HOUSES

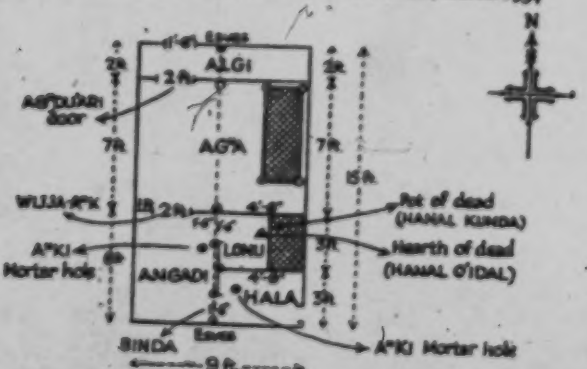
(a) Nugur, Kutru Mar, Kasyoq-gaita's house, Nov. 1927



(b) Kurmer, Chhota Dongar Mar, house of Dadha Kaye, wife, 2 children, and extra rooms for widowed mother, Feb. 1930



(c) Handawada, Dantewara Mar, Feda's house, March 1934



The shaded portions are cots (ALFANJI). The dotted lines represent line of roof-tree

FIGURE 7

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

342 Rough ground-plans of three typical Hill Maria houses are given in the illustration on page 111. The Nugur house was the end house of a long-house, and faced south on to the main village street. It differs from the other two in having no partition wall between the veranda (*algi*) and the *angadi*, or women's kitchen and sleeping room; the *angadi* in this case is in fact almost a continuation of the veranda round the eastern side of the *lowa*. The husband actually slept in the veranda and his wife in the *angadi* in warm weather, but in the *lowa* in winter and rains. This house had no *kala* or menstruation room, because the village had a communal menstruation hut; so also the house had no back door.

Houses

The Kurmer house faced north on to the main street, and was the central house of a long-house of three houses; its western and eastern walls were thus only partitions separating it from the other two houses. It was itself almost two houses, as the widowed mother [592] of Dedha Keye, the occupant, had the eastern *algi*, *angadi* and *lowa* for her exclusive use; but there was no door between her portion of the *algi* and Keye's portion, only a partial continuation across the veranda of the partition wall between her and Keye's rooms. The widow was too old to need a *kala*, and so there was only one for Keye's wife in his part of the house, and this had a back door. Like the Nugur house, this house had no *agha* room.

The Handawada secular headman's (*pala's*) house was at the north end of a long-house containing three houses and facing west on to the village street; the other two houses had their verandas (*algi*) and entrances on the street side, facing west. His *algi* was therefore very small, and only nominally walled off from the open [351] ground to the north of the house by a bamboo wicker-work fence about 3½ feet high, being thus useless for keeping property. Where, as in the other houses illustrated, the veranda is in front of the house and parallel to the roof-tree, it is easy to construct a front wall as high as the roof, which is there barely 3½ feet above the ground.

342 The *agha* is the husband's living and sleeping room, and it is
513 taboo (*pala*) for his wife, a mature daughter or any woman to sleep
784 in it; but boys too small to sleep in the bachelors' dormitory and immature daughters may sleep there. In hot weather the males of the family often sleep under the granary, which is built on piles, and when houses have no *agha* this is the usual sleeping place at all times for the men of the family, and for male guests except when the latter can be accommodated in the village dormitory
342 (*gotal-lowa*). It is strictly taboo for any female to enter a granary,
513 or to sleep under one. Every *agha* has a large *alpanji* or sleeping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*akki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[1] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see ca1.116, p.420.– Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

are made either of similar but lighter pole stockading, or of what the Hill Marias call *tum*, that is, fencing of grass fastened in vertical bundles between pairs of horizontal bamboo struts, which themselves are fastened at intervals to poles planted in the ground. The floors, walls and partitions are plastered with mud, the walls on the inside, and the partitions on both sides; the women do the plastering, while their men look on. They often do not plaster the veranda wall at all. They sometimes make the side walls of bamboo wattlework instead of pole stockading. They do not char or otherwise treat the bases of the poles before fixing them in the ground. The first post of the house is almost always of the sacred *saja* tree; I have not seen this adorned with bundles of thatching grass in the manner of other Gonds (cf. Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 122), but I have seen two *saja* trees near a house under construction so adorned. The youths sometimes paint the plastered partitions in white with rows of dots, with swastikas like those tattooed on girls' faces (see p. 74 above), or with crude crocodiles or tigers; I have seen women's breasts represented in relief.

The grass (rarely palm) thatch rests on bamboos tied across the roof beams, and is secured against wind by bamboos criss-crossed outside the thatch. The grass generally used is *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) which appears in the *penda* fields after the first harvest has been reaped, and in the second or third year covers them so thickly that they have to be abandoned. In March, after the harvest has been finished, you will see near all the recently abandoned *penda* clearings extensive *dab* cuttings, the grass being stacked on rough log platforms about a foot and a half above the ground in readiness for re-thatching the houses just before the break of the monsoon. The men re-thatch houses, granaries, pig-sties and temples every year.

The usual form of door is a rectangle of split bamboo wickerwork sliding between two pairs of upright wooden posts. The doorway has often a wicker-work threshold from one to two feet high, over which the sliding door fits. There are always doors in the doorways leading from outside into the veranda, from the veranda to the *angadi*, and at the back of the menstruation room; generally also in the doorways leading into the *lonu*; but I have never seen a door in the front doorway of the menstruation room. Sometimes the whole of this room is not taboo to men, the *binda* or mud threshold that marks the limit of the tabooed ground (see p. 106) being constructed across the floor of the room some two feet beyond the front entrance. Occasionally more elaborate doors will be seen, made of a small hewn wooden plank with tangs of wood left

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

342 projecting about two inches at the top and bottom of the inner edge, to work in the eyes of staples cut out of wood and fastened into the door-post; the other end has a roughly squared strip of wood six inches long, which rests in a slot in the opposite door-post and is fastened to it by a horizontal peg passing through holes in the door-post and the strip of wood.

422 The contents of the Kurmer house represented in ground-plan (b) on page 111 were typical of Hill Maria houses; the list that follows enumerates the contents only of the rooms occupied by Dedha Keye himself, his wife and children; his mother had her own property in her own *angadi* and *lonu*:—

VERANDA
1 sambar horn used as a peg.
1 *tagkali* bark overcoat.
4 bundles of firewood.
[824] 1 broom of *phulbehari* (*Thysanolaena agrostis*) grass.

ANGADI
2 earthen cooking pots.
10 gourd ladles.
5 gourds for making bottles.
2 earthen pots full of drinking water.
1 bow.
2 arrows.
3 axes.
1 broken axe.
1 bamboo tobacco tube.
1 pair wooden clogs.
3 small wooden sitting stools.
4 coils of dried *siari* bark for twisting into twine.
1 bundle of peacock's feathers, and 2 cock feathers.
4 *rsking* bamboo and leaf rain-hats.
1 *dada'ino* leaf rain-shield for the back.
3 small iron sickles.
2 baskets of leaves for plates, etc.
29 baskets of various types, mostly empty, but some containing meal, grain and forest fruits.

MENSTRUATION ROOM
(a) *Outside the taboo limit*
2 *uspal*, or grain pestles.
2 winnows.
1 shouldered digging iron (*pulu*).
1 *gudari* hoe.
2 arrows.

(b) *Inside the taboo limit*
1 hearth.
1 cooking pot.
1 axe.
1 *uspal*.
2 gourd water-bottles.
1 *phulbehari* broom.
2 bamboo tubes of oil.
6 baskets of different sizes, used for storing food, leaves, etc., when the room is in occupation.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Loss
1 *alpéwji* platform for storing produce.
10 large baskets, containing grain and forest fruits.
1 blue dancing skirt or *kechi*.
5 gourd bottles.
1 axe.
2 sickles.
4 large earthenware pots.
1 ditto, used as *Hanal Kunda*.
1 hearth, used as *Hanal O'idal*.
3 very small earthenware pots of pigs' fat.
6 thick bamboo oil-tubes.

422

Most houses have, besides these, a number of drums, more bows and arrows, fishing-rods, lines and hooks, snares, nets of varying mesh for fish, birds and animals, throwing spears, fibre for making string and rope, hemp or grass for the same purpose, sandals of raw cow-hide, thongs of cow-hide, and *korr-gudu*, or funnel-shaped hen's nests on bamboo posts about two feet high. They keep the bulk of their grain and forest fruits in their granaries, and the baskets in the house contain only what has been removed from the granary for current consumption; there are generally to be found quantities of new baskets made for sale at the bazaar. The baskets are of all shapes and sizes, and amongst other items include flat baskets something like winnows for use as platters, which they hold up full of food to their mouths.

[251]

[285]

343

Granaries

The granaries, whether built singly or in a long row, are almost invariably built on piles, the floor being 3 or 3½ feet above the ground. This not only protects the grain and dried fruit stored in the granary from damp and white ants, but, as already remarked, provides an extra sleeping place for the males of the family and any male guests. There are three rows of piles, the two outer ones being tree trunks, seven or eight feet high, cut with a piece of a bough forking off at the floor height and trimmed short as a rest for the horizontal beams which support the flooring; the central piles have similar forks turned inwards at floor-height to support the floor beams, but are two or three feet higher above the floor than the outer piles, as they have to support the roof-tree. The upper ends of these long piles are either naturally forked or else notched to support the horizontal roof beams, which bear a thatched roof constructed in the same way as the roofs of dwelling-houses. Planks are laid across the floor beams at the points where these rest on the lower forks of the piles, and a flooring of bamboo wicker-work is laid on them. The walls are made of bamboo check wicker-work, the wefts being carried on around each corner of the building, where a thin pole resting on a floor plank forms the corner warp; the other warps are unsplit bamboos, but

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 the wefts are of split bamboo. The corners of the walls are further secured by cords stitched through the two wicker walls round the corner warp and the corner pile. Wherever beams cross, they are [283] lashed with *siari* twine or thicker rope. The door of a single granary is usually a sliding piece of bamboo wicker-work; but in the long granaries it is a section of *tuss* grass fence or bamboo wicker-work fastened in position by obliquely crossing bamboos.

251 These granaries contain immense quantities of *kosra* and other hill grains, rice, beans, dried forest fruits, etc., in big bins of bamboo basketry, smaller baskets, and large *chiptis* or lidded boxes of leaves on a framework of cane or twigs. The bins are all lidded with stitched-leaf tops, tied round the rim with creeper cord, like the paper top of an English jam-jar. The Marias store here also dried rolls of tobacco leaves, coils of creeper and other ropes, and gourds of all shapes and sizes for making spoons, ladles and water-bottles; and when they used *moghi* dancing shields and peacock plumes attached to them they used to hang them under the eaves except when they wrapped them in leaves and hung them in the tops of trees.

342 513 The village dormitory, as has been said above, is generally in the centre and at one end of the village street. It is a long-house made with no partitions, surrounded generally with a bamboo wattle-work fence; and it is practically a roofed *alpanji* or sleeping platform, the criss-cross bamboo framework of which covers almost the whole floor at a height of about 2½ feet above the floor. Often it is entered from in front by a door under the highest point of the eaves, to which access is gained by a narrow horizontal gangway of logs raised the same height above the ground as the sleeping platform and extending from the outer fence to the door; persons entering the dormitory climb on to the gangway by a rough stile, consisting of a tree stump set in the ground between two vertical posts which serve as railings. [374] The interior is badly grimed with smoke, as log fires are lit at night under the sleeping platform, the only door is fastened, and there is no window or vent for the escape of smoke. I have never found anything inside a dormitory except two or three drums and occasionally the shrine of the Village Mother.

The 'gotul-lon'

B. Bison-horn Maria Villages, Houses, and their Contents

361 Of Hill Maria villages the essential thing to remember is that they shift as the cultivation shifts, and so seldom remain more than four or five years in one place. The few villages that have good permanent rice fields tend now to become more or less permanent.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XI

HILL MARIA WOMEN CARRYING GOURDS OF WATER

HILL MARIA WOMAN CARRYING A LEAF-BOX OF GRAIN

(Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt)

482
142
291
301
415

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE STREET, TELAM, NEAR KATAKALIAN

361
342

[FACING p. 118]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 [423] The population is comparatively small, and the land available for the shifting *penda* cultivation is very extensive. There is practically no individual property in *penda* land, and it is recognized only in permanent rice fields.

361 241 178 621 In comparison, the Bison-horn Maria country is thickly populated; there is far more permanent rice cultivation; much old *penda* land has lost its forest growth, or is getting steadily slower in recuperating it after each time when it is felled and burnt for *penda* cultivation; and each villager likes to have a large *bari* or garden enclosure at the back of his house or in the immediate neighbourhood of the village where he can grow tobacco, maize, chillies, tomatoes and sesamum, and can pen his cattle for the sake of their manure. In consequence, economic considerations now operate in favour of the permanency of Bison-horn Maria villages and against their being shifted; as the pressure on the land has become greater the alternative sites (*padar*), to which in past generations a village was from time to time shifted, have been permanently occupied by hamlets (*para*) of that village, and the settlers in the hamlets have permanently occupied the adjacent *penda* sites once cultivated in rotation by the shifting village. Many big Bison-horn villages have six or seven hamlets, some of which are virtually separate villages, and are beginning to assert a separate identity by having their own headmen and sometimes their own village priests, though on formal occasions all will still gather together at the original *padar* of the village and its hamlets, and acknowledge there the authority of the headman and priest of the parent village. In the Abujhmar hills, moreover, each village is still inhabited almost entirely by members of one clan, and all the lands of the villages are regarded as the lands of the clan. But in the Bison-horn country, though each parish is still said to be the *bhum* (earth) of the clan which first settled there, yet there are generally in the village many houses of other clans and wife-clans, from whom the first settlers and their descendants have taken wives. Though they will still say that a certain village is the *bhum* [423] of the clan that founded it, yet in consequence of the many representatives of other clans settled there now the village and its lands are not looked on as that clan's property in anything like the same degree as among the Hill Marias, nor in actual fact is the original clan so free to shift the village as it was before it allowed its wife-clans to share its village site and cultivable lands. Often, too, the headman is no longer a member of the settler clan. If, [166] therefore, a Bison-horn village does shift in these days, the move is probably due to superstitious motives, or to epidemic or epizootic disease.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria
364 villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is
177 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-
361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page 121) must have their *bari* opposite them across the street. Each [351] *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many [231] pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among
841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Piki-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

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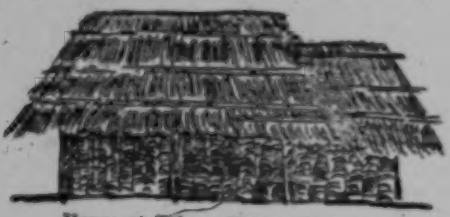
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

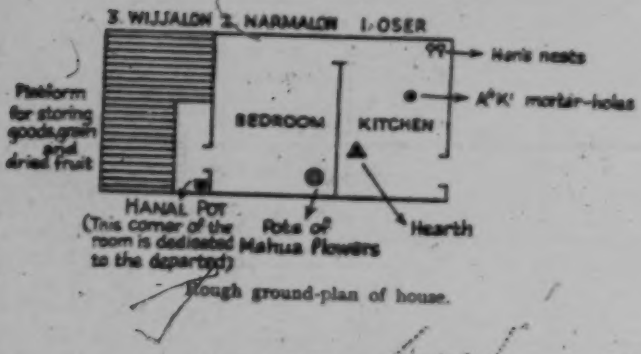
PLATE XII

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE AND HOUSE

342

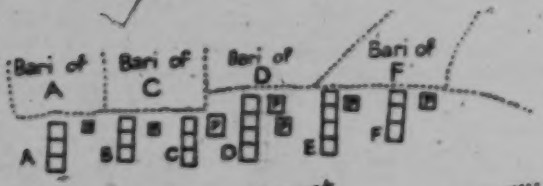


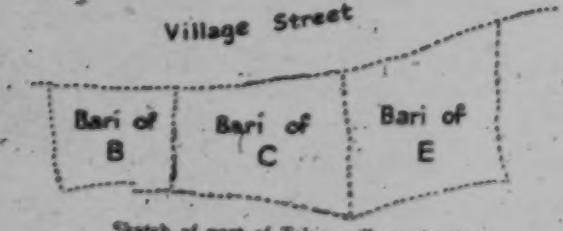
House at Telam, May 11th, 1930.



Rough ground-plan of house.

361





Sketch of part of Telam village street.

KEY

P = Pig-sty

= House

----- = Bamboo wattlework fence

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *padas* (headmen) and *pormas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

Shifting villages

The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma*'s house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Telam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

Houses

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. These being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *akhi* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc. If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orha*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE

THE whole life of the Maria is primarily directed towards the raising of food from the earth, either by cultivation, or by gathering the fruits of the forest, or by fishing, hunting or trapping. His agriculture, as we have seen, determines the sites of his villages, and regulates his relations with his wife. His festivals, it will be seen, are designed either to ensure the benevolence of the earth and the ancestors and the clan-god towards the crops about to be sown, or to celebrate the first eating of each of the main crops, and the final harvest-home, in a spirit of communal thanksgiving. The human population to him is the crop of men that the *Bhum* or Earth raises for the clan, or for the Ruling Chief.

The Hill Maria still regards the crops as the result of the combined labours of the village rather than of the labours of individuals. If one suffers, all suffer, and all combine to support the old and the needy, and to help each fellow villager to get through the heaviest parts of the yearly agricultural round. The young man on marriage, or the fellow clansman settling in the village, must have his share of the village lands for cultivation. In the raising of crops, then, the village and not the individual cultivator is the unit, even now, in the Abujhmar hills. But the Bison-horn Maria is an individualist. He has lived long in contact with semi-Hinduized neighbours, and has long begun to practise the more advanced methods of the settled cultivator. Permanent cultivation fosters individualism. Even in the Abujhmar hills the few permanent rice fields are definitely the private property of individuals; and as the use of the plough spreads and more and more of the wet lands become permanent rice fields, the owners of these fields begin more and more to assert in their shifting cultivation plots the rights of permanent private ownership already admitted in their rice fields. This has already happened among the Bison-horn Marias, aided by the rapid growth of population increasing the pressure on the land and reducing the land available for distribution to newcomers to the villages. The indications are that formerly they shared the communal attitude of the Hill Maria. In describing, therefore, the agricultural life of the community, I shall deal primarily with that of the Hill Marias, indicating where necessary the different developments among the Bison-horn Marias.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

128 It will be convenient to describe here the religious ceremonies of the Hill Marias, so bound up are they with their agriculture; but as the agricultural ceremonies of the Bison-horn Marias are much more elaborate, it will be more appropriate to describe them in dealing with religion in Part IV. Unless, therefore, I state otherwise, the ceremonies mentioned in this chapter will be those of the Hill Marias only.

241 In previous chapters, when speaking of the shifting cultivation of the Marias, the term which I have generally used is *penda*.

Systems of cultivation

Central Provinces literature has used the general terms *dahia* or *bewar* indiscriminately for all forms of cultivation in which crops are raised on the ashes of trees felled and burned for that purpose. In Bastar *dahi* is the Halbi term applied to the system of cutting trees or brushwood in the forest, and bringing them to an old unembanked field, where they are spread out to dry and then fired just before the rains break. Such fields are always level, and not hill slopes. The practice is known to the Hill and the Bison-horn Marias, and called *parka*; but as it is usually applied to old fields that have lain fallow (or occasionally to a rice field which is to be sown with a dry crop), the Hill Marias make little use of it, but will take more to it now that the substitution of a poll-tax for the former attempt to impose a regular land revenue settlement is encouraging them to re-cultivate old rice fields and to bring the flat *marhan* lands under cultivation. It can be seen in the villages between Orcha and Chhota Dongar, on the edge of the Hill Maria country, where the hills begin to open out into broad valleys.

Flat lands covered with forest growth which is cleared from time to time and burned for shifting cultivation are known in the Halbi language as *marhan*. The forest growth is felled *in situ* and spread out to dry in January or February; it is fired towards the end of May, and the ashes are spread evenly over the soil with an instrument like a squeegee with a handle eleven or twelve feet long, called *dosna-dang* in Halbi and *parha-lathi* by the Marias; as the name makes it clear, this is used for spreading the ashes in *parka* or *dahi* cultivation also. The ashes are ploughed into the ground after the first fall of rain. *Marhan* cultivation is called *dippa* by Murias and Hill Marias, and *erka* by the Bison-horn Marias, who subdivide it further into *mudur-erka* or timber forest *marhan*, and *marram-erka* or scrub-jungle *marhan*. These flat lands can be cultivated for only two years normally; in the first year the undergrowth is cut, the smaller trees and some boughs of big trees, while the big trees are girdled. To provide ashes for the second year, the big trees girdled the year before are felled, after piles of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

dry brushwood have been burnt round their feet if the girdling has not prevented some sap again rising. Ultimately, if these lands do not have a long enough rest between successive clearings, the forest loses its power of regeneration; and it is to such former *dippa* or *erka* lands that the *parka* or *dahi* system described above is applied. *Dippa* is fairly common between Orcha and Chhota Dongar, and it is because there is plenty of land still available to ensure each *dippa* an adequate rest that *parka* cultivation is so uncommon. But in the more open country of the large Bison-horn Maria villages much land seems to have lost its forest regenerative power, and every remaining non-fruit tree has its boughs lopped year after year to provide fuel to be carted off to the old *erka* lands for *parka* cultivation till it looks, when its new leaves sprout, like a Lombardy poplar in shape. The raking of the ashes with the *parka-lathi* in the height of the hot weather is very exhausting, and the men who do this work often suffer for some days later from very dark-coloured urine.

Both *dippa* (*erka*) and *parka* are more advanced methods of cultivation than the Hill Maria's favourite *penda* or hill slope cultivation. For this he fells and burns the forest growth on the hill slopes, which are often very steep. Beyond roughly distributing the unburnt material over the slope, and, wearing wooden clogs or strips of *saja* bark to protect the soles of his feet, poking unburnt logs into a burning patch with long bamboo poles, he does not try to spread the ashes evenly, or use the *parka-lathi*, and consequently adjacent patches of crops vary greatly in height and density. He sows the seed broadcast in the ashes after the rains have broken, and does not attempt to dig up the soil of the slopes with his *gudari* hoe except in the few patches where the sown seed does not germinate; these he roughly scarifies and resows. The *Gazetteer* (p. 54) repeats the story that the seed is 'sown along the top of the slope from which the rain water washes it down and spreads it over the field'; the bare idea of this makes Hill and Bison-horn Maria laugh, and it is obvious that if sowing were so much left to chance, the only parts of the slope producing any crops would be the sides of the natural drainage channels. The Hill Maria does scarify his rare permanent rice fields and sometimes his *dippa* land with his hoe, and one man in three hundred may use a plough on them; but the Bison-horn Maria uses his plough on rice field, *parka* and *erka* and even occasionally on the lower and less steep parts of his *penda* slopes, while he scarifies with his hoe all that he does not plough.

In most Hill Maria parishes *penda* is the only kind of cultivation, and though in much of the Bison-horn country permanent

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949 .
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 rice cultivation, semi-permanent *parha* fields, and the less ephemeral *erka* cultivation have displaced it, yet tracts remain like those round Katakalian and Kuakonda, from Paknar to Massenar, where *penda* still reigns supreme, and in late May hillside after hillside here is speckled grey with the fresh ashes of the newly burned timber, or there is dotted with the vivid green of the fresh undergrowth shooting up from the old roots and stumps which have somehow survived the last three years of fire and axe; hard by are patches of pole forest ready for their turn of *penda*, when the newly fired plots are exhausted. Though maps show such areas in the Bison-horn country as forest, they are really all cultivated areas, on which forest is grown in rotation with other crops as a source of fertilizing nitrates; and here every slope and every patch of forest has passed into the separate possession of individuals. The extent of *penda* cultivation in the Abujhmar hills is less apparent to the eye, as the population is far sparser and the parish lands far wider. The slopes successively cultivated get a longer fallow period, and are farther apart.

This shifting forest cultivation is criticized from two points of view. The forestry enthusiast laments the passing of much fine forest, and foretells desiccation and erosion. Others condemn *penda* as a lazy method of cultivation. The former forgets that in most of this area the forests have been too remote and inaccessible ever to be exploited, and that, even though some fine timber has been sacrificed, much that has gone was hopelessly over-mature. Vast areas of forest have been reserved by the State, and it has not been possible to work half of these reserves. The Maria does not range through his forests clearing patches for cultivation at random; he has more or less definite rotations, and the clearings after two or three years' cultivation may get twelve or fourteen years' rest, at the end of which they have a dense forest growth. Few signs are apparent of erosion, save in the more open parts of the Bison-horn country where *erka* has cleared the plains below the hills of forest; and there are no signs of any reduction in the heavy rainfall. In the remaining *penda* lands of the Bison-horn Marias no good timber is destroyed; whether these lands are at the moment growing grain or bush, they should now be regarded as lands under cultivation. The axe and fire of the *penda* cultivator have let light and civilization penetrate slowly but surely into the Bison-horn country as nothing else would have done for centuries; they alone have prevented the Abujhmar hills remaining a trackless wilderness.

It is a superficial criticism that condemns *penda* cultivation as lazy. The clearing of the land, especially if it be covered with heavy timber, is most arduous. Remote and sometimes almost

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

perpendicular slopes two or three miles from the village have to be cleared; the wood and scrub spread over the ground, which, in the Bison-horn country, has beforehand been dug over with the hoe or, perhaps, on the lower and less steep slopes, ploughed with great difficulty; field-houses, sheds and watching platforms have to be built on the *penda* slopes. The firing of the *penda* is particularly arduous; the stumps have to be cleared of the shoots that spring up when the rains have set in; and where deer or bison are numerous the clearings have to be fenced with heavy timber fencing. Man and woman here have unaided to do all that regular plains cultivators do with the aid of ox and plough, and much more besides. They do not weed their crops, and they broadcast their seed; here alone they save labour which falls to the regular cultivator, not out of laziness, but from ignorance.

For convenience the names which the Hill Maria gives to the months may here be stated:—

	English	*Maria*
The cultivator's year	December-January	Pusi
	January-February	Mah
	February-March	Phagur
	March-April	Chaita
	April-May	Mur
	May-June	Na
	June-July	Ha'i
	July-August	Hagh
	August-September	Eranj
	September-October	Eram
	October-November	Orma
	November-December	Pa. or Pandi

The Bison-horn Maria uses generally the local Hindu names for the months. The calendar is, of course, lunar, the word *lenj* meaning either moon or month. Of the above names the first four are obvious corruptions of the Hindu names Pus, Magh, Phalgun and Chait. Mur is explained as meaning 'beginning'; 'to begin' is *mur hiyana*. Na is a shortened form of *nalung*, the numeral 4. Ha'i of *ha'ingu* (5), Hagh of *argu* (6), while the other four names are derived from forms akin to the Telugu words for 7, 8, 9 and 10, namely *eru* (7), *ermori* (8), *ormadu* (9) and *padu* (10); it is interesting to note that although ordinarily the Hill Maria, except on the southern edge of the Abujhmar hills, has Gondi forms only for numbers 1 to 6, and after that uses the Hindi numerals, in the nomenclature of the months he remembers Dravidian forms for numbers 7 to 10. He counts the year as beginning in Mur, though some will say Na. (The Bison-horn Maria uses the local Hindu names for the months.) But as the actual round of agricultural operations begins with the felling of trees for the coming *penda*

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 cultivation, it will be convenient to start this account from the new
865 moon of Phagur, that is to say, the new moon nearest to the end of February, before which it is not considered right to start cutting forest for *penda*, though the work is started two or three weeks earlier for *dippa* cultivation. The choice of the *kaghai* site (see p. 107 above) for the *penda* will have been made beforehand, either in informal discussion among the village elders or at the ceremony after *Koqsar*, the great concluding harvest festival, at which the *kasyeq-gaita* seated on his *udam-garia* seat of honour with the villagers seated around him, confirms by formal pronouncement the decisions probably already reached in informal discussions with the elders about the village arrangements for the coming year.

241 Before the felling of the forest may begin, a further ceremony takes place. I attended the ceremony at Orcha on March 11th, 1934, when the moon of Phagur was nearly full. At about 1 p.m. the *kasyeq-gaita* with the elders proceeded to the selected *kaghai*, which was covered with a dense growth of sapling sal trees; the oldest villager present, a man of about fifty, said that he was a small child when it had last been cultivated. There Usendi Delu, the *kasyeq-gaita*, cleared a small piece of ground at the foot of a *saja* tree, set up a stone on it against a root of the tree, and placed an egg upright on its pointed end in front of the stone. He then squatted on the ground before the stone to the right of the egg, and Usendi Moda, the *gaita* or secular headman, to the left of the egg. Both put their hands together, palm to palm, touched the ground below the egg with them and raised them to their foreheads, uttering in unison the formula, *'Bhum kenji! Talugh kenji! Jimme jaga kenji! Anam pirka a'i, nehna nehna manna a'i! Kohla pandi! irka gumur hadi!'* (Earth hearken! Mother hearken! All that is here and around hearken! Let our crops and vegetables grow here, let them grow and yield full increase! Let our *kutki* ripen! Let our cucumbers and pumpkins mature!) They repeated the formula in unison, again saluted the earth in front of the egg, and then arose. The congregation of elders which had squatted around them and kept silence all through the ceremony also arose, and everyone returned to the village, leaving the egg there unbroken. There was no formal felling of the first tree, and no allotment of the different plots of *penda* land.

241 From this ceremony onwards all are free to start felling.
423 There is no formal allotment, but villagers divide up the land by mutual discussion, the size of each plot depending on the number of persons in the household to be fed and capable of doing a full day's work with axe and hoe. It is largely a matter of one man volunteering to clear one plot and another man the next, and so on;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the preparation of the *kaghai* site is a task to be accomplished by the whole village. Disputes are practically unknown, owing to this strong feeling of community of interest. There is, moreover, in the Abujhmar hills ample land for all, and any man is free to work harder than others if he likes to cultivate a larger plot; but he seldom does so unless he either is a newly married newcomer to the village, bent on building up a reserve of grain, or has a large number of dependents. There is no guarantee that a man will have the same plot as that allotted to him when the *kaghai* was last previously cultivated, or even a plot of the same area; but in villages where land is not so ample as in others, and a *kaghai* may be cultivated therefore at shorter intervals, each man as far as possible is allowed the same plot that he occupied at the previous cutting, though he may have to contribute a part of his former land to accommodate newcomers or newly married youths. There are villages where either the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita* is a strong man and has arrogated to himself a right to allot the *penda* plots; but he would get short shrift if he were unfair in his allotting: he is not a chief, but only *primus inter pares* among the village elders.

Plots once allotted and cultivated are for the time the private property of the householder who cultivates them, and he marks the limits of his cultivation either by leaving certain tree stumps to serve as boundary marks (the Bison-horn Marias who retain permanent rights over their *penda* plots are especially careful about this, the boundary trees often being left intact and not even lopped, save in so far as necessary to keep birds off the *penda*), or by planting lines of roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) or of *til* (*Sesamum indicum*) along the edges of his plot; roselle with its crimson seed-vessels and *til* with its deep yellow blossoms make very vivid boundaries.

Each family fells its own *penda* plots, and the villagers do not combine to clear each plot in turn as they combine in threshing. The work takes two or three weeks, and the men do all the heavy work, though women and children assist in cutting small trees and undergrowth and in arranging them for firing. Any fruit trees are carefully spared. If any of the ground is dug up with *gudari* hoes, men do most of the work, though they leave it to women on the flat *dippa* lands or on the gentler *penda* slopes. The iron *pulu* digging stick is used for grubbing up roots large enough to be a serious impediment. Much timber, when the growth is heavy, is reserved for fencing the *penda* against wild animals, where any herds of deer survive. The wood is left to dry through the heat of April and May, which are holiday months.

When the wood is dry, the *kasyeq-gaita* calls a meeting in the village dormitory to fix a day for firing. All the villagers combine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to fire all the *penda* plots simultaneously, and the women take no part in this work. There is no public ceremony before the firing; but the *kasyeq-gaita* starts it for the whole village by firing the first bundle of dried brushwood in his own plot with a bundle of dried grass kindled from a glowing ember brought from his own house; he makes fire with a fire-saw only if no ember is available or if it has died on its way to the *penda*. At Handawada in May 1930, heavy rain fell, and so delayed the firing of the *penda* that the *kasyeq-gaita* and village elders went in deputation to the clan-god Verma Pen of the Gume clan at Toinar and promised to sacrifice a cock to him if he would stop the rain; he only received his cock after he had fulfilled the condition and it had been possible to fire the *penda*. The firing takes only three or four days if the wood is really dry.

241 417 Between firing and sowing there is only a short interval in which the villagers must work hard to prepare their fences and field houses. There are no fences between individual plots as a rule, these being marked off either by lines of *til* or roselle at sowing, as already explained, or by laying a few poles lengthwise along the edge of the plots; but there is a general fence around each block of plots, except where there is no risk of animals damaging the crops. A type of fencing found only around Orcha and the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*, known as *kokor* (crooked) *garpi*, is a zig-zag stockading of logs laid horizontally on each other, the sides of each projecting angle being fifteen or twenty feet long; it looks like a vast herringbone pattern climbing the hillside. Grass *tum* fences, made in the same way as the *tum* partitions of houses already described, are used where the need for protection from animals is less, and, where bamboo is very plentiful, bamboo wattle-work fences. Another type of substantial timber fence is the *welma* fence consisting of poles laid horizontally one on another, held in position between pairs of bamboo uprights driven into the ground, and tied together at intervals between the horizontal poles; the upright bamboos are generally the two halves of a thick bamboo split lengthwise. I have not noticed in the hill villages the stockades of sal piles driven into the ground which are common among the Murias of the north and are met in Bison-horn Maria villages also.

241 342 513 The chief field-house is really a sleeping platform raised high above the level of the crops on wooden piles, similar to the field watchers' *machan* found throughout Central India, but far more elaborate; the space between the piles below the platform is walled round with bamboo wicker-work or *tum*, and there is a thick thatched roof. As in the dormitories, a fire is kept burning at night below the platform to warm those sleeping on it. Tools and weapons, and cooking pots and food, are kept in the room below the platform,

[374]

PLATE XIII

HILL MARIA *PENDA* FIELD, JUST HARVESTED, DUDMARKA, KUTRU MAR

[facing p. 132]

[facing p. 132]

241

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate
342 cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in
513 various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian
241 wigwams, known as *panambaksha*. They may also erect big and
343 small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

241 Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

[834] **Sowing** From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory.

241 Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the
769 forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-ahk*). These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit henjat! Miku har kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemasi mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

241 On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyaq-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 The people of Bastar are apt to use the Halbi word *kosra* as a generic term for all grains raised by *penda* cultivation. Strictly speaking, it applies only to *kutki*, *Panicum miliaceum*, which the Marias and Murias call *kohala*, to which they also give the same wider meaning as *kosra*. The early sown grains are called generically 'small *kosra*', and those most sown are *Panicum frumentaceum*, known as *sawa* or *ghatka* or, to the Hill Marias, as *amu*, and *Panicum miliare*, known as *sika* or *chikma*, which seems also to be the grain known to the Hill Marias as *turya-kohala*; others sown are *kodon* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) and *hikka*, a Hill Maria word which I have not been able to identify; the Bison-horn Marias, and, to a much smaller extent, some Hill Marias, also sow much *haruna* or light mountain rice. All these are sown generally without any pulses, but cucumbers, marrows and gourds are sown early near the field-houses. *Panicum frumentaceum* and *Panicum miliare* ripen generally in time for their New Eating festivals to take place at the end of Hagh (July-August); the mountain rice and other early grains are reaped a little later, at the beginning of Eranj (August-September).

Crops

The second main sowing is of the later crops known collectively as 'big *kosra*', chief of which is the true *kosra* or *kutki* (*Panicum miliaceum*), with which will be met *kodon*, *kang* (*Setaria italica*) and *bajra* (*Penicillaria spicata*). These are sown in Ha'i (June-July), to be harvested in Pa (November-December). No attempt is made to keep the different crops separate, and the confusion is made worse by broadcasting with them seeds of various pulses, especially *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus*; Maria, *pupal*), *arhar* (*Cajanus indicus*), and *sem* (*Dolichos lablab*; Maria, *jata*).

The third sowing is the '*Os kosra*' sowing of a second crop in August-September on the land from which the 'small *kosra*' harvest has already been reaped. About a quarter of this is sown with '*os kosra*' millets, the remaining three-quarters being devoted to pulses, including not only varieties of the 'big *kosra*' pulses, but also *mung* (*Phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (both *Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*). This crop is harvested in Pusi (December-January).

241 834 513 The rains bring out a plentiful crop of shoots from the stumps of the trees felled for the *penda*, and before these get too big a day is appointed for all the villagers to cut and get rid of them. As soon as the ears form on the growing crops it is taboo for the men to have sexual intercourse or to sleep in the village. This taboo remains in force until the final combined New Urad and Koqsar festival, when it is held at the end of Pusi

After sowing

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*ṭoḷo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

Harvest

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the midst of the grain crops to support them. The cut crops which are to be threshed are stacked on the wooden platforms prepared before sowing, in beehive shaped stacks, called *paki* by the Hill Marias and *kupa* in Halbi.

The women prepare the threshing-floor (*karanu* in the hill dialect), clearing a piece of ground near the stacks of grain, and plastering it with mud. In the centre of this the men erect a thick bamboo railing on posts. It is *polo* for women to take part in the actual threshing. Oxen are never used. For each cultivator in turn, beginning with the *kasyeq-gaita*, all the men and boys in the village combine to thresh (*wisna*). They range themselves in two rows facing each other, with the bamboo railing between them.[1] Holding this with both their hands and supporting themselves by it, they dance up and down, rubbing the ears of corn between their feet. They thresh in this way only *kodon*, *kutki*, rice, *ghatka*, *chikma* and *hikka*; the women pick the ears of grains like *kang* and *bajra* in baskets, and rub them in their hands to extract the grain. The cultivator whose grain is being threshed is expected to feed all the villagers helping him for that day, and if possible to give them a good drink of *salphi*, the fermented sap of the sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*), which is raised from cuttings in large numbers all over the Hill Maria country. The threshed grain is winnowed by men only, winnowing being as taboo to women as sleeping in the fields or threshing. One man stands on a rough wooden platform and pours the grain from a basket held above his head, while another, if there is not wind enough, winnows the falling grain with a basketry winnowing fan of the usual Indian type (*het* in Maria). All the men and women of the village combine to carry the threshed and winnowed grain of each cultivator to his compartment in the long granary. They never measure their produce, but there is no taboo on this account; it simply is that they grow crops for their own sustenance, and not for sale, and it is easy to see whether the grain garnered is adequate for the coming year or not. They do indeed understand something of bazaar measures, for some of their pulses and oil seeds are sold annually to raise the money needed to pay their poll-tax; they make their own measures of basketry, with different traditional shapes for each kind of produce that they sell; and at the bazaar you may see them measuring out their produce in these in front of the Hindu tradesmen to whom they are selling it. Their measures are very accurate, and need never be challenged. If they make them a little too large, they plaster a little mud over the bottom to reduce the capacity.

[1] I have since seen *kodon* and *kutki* threshed in the same way by Korkus on the Betul border of Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The Bison-horn Marias (and, I believe, many of the Murias also) have similar ideas of it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to thresh or winnow. They are not so particular about the cessation of conjugal life between the sowing and sprouting of the crops, and between their coming into ear and being garnered. They use bullocks to tread out the grain on a threshing floor. Each cultivator has to take the help of his fellow villagers to carry his corn, but it is a service for which he hires them, and not a routine piece of communal village service in gathering the village crop as in the Abujhmar hills.

The new-eating festivals of the Hill Marias

It is taboo to eat any of the new crops until the appropriate new-eating festival has been celebrated.[A] These are very similar to the *pandum* festivals of the Bison-horn Marias, which will be described in the chapter on religion; but they are less elaborate and are fewer in number; the Bison-horn Maria seems to have a *pandum* as an essential preliminary to almost every act of gathering the produce of field or forest. The Hill Maria has only three, or, in villages where the last festival is held as late as March or early April, four of these festivals. The first is known either as *Tur Korta Tindana* or *Amu Korta Tindana*, according as the chief of the early ripening rains crops is *Panicum miliare* (*turya-kohala*) or *Panicum frumentaceum* (*amu*), and is held at the end of Hagh, that is about the middle of August. In Eranj (September) comes *Hikka Korta Tindana* in villages, like Handawada, where there is no rice cultivation, and *hikka* (see p. 134 above) is the chief crop ripening next after the August crops; where much rice (*wanj*) is grown, *Wanj Korta Tindana* is celebrated instead at the end of Eram (middle of October). This is followed in Pusi (January) in the villages where the final festival is celebrated after February by *Kohala Korta Tindana*, the first eating of the main *Panicum miliaceum* (*kutki*) crop. The last and greatest festival, held on dates varying from the end of January till early April in different clan-areas, is *Pupal Korta Tindana*, combined with *Koqsar*, the clan-god's festival; when this takes place early enough in the year to be economically convenient, it is the new-eating festival not only of *urad* (*pupal*; *Phaseolus radiatus*) and other pulses and beans, but also of *kutki* and the other late ripening hill grains. '*Korta Tindana*' is Hinduized literally as '*nawa khana*', 'new eating'. A main reason for the varying dates of this last festival is that dancing is permissible only at it, at weddings and at the camps of touring officials. The round of festivities after the final harvest-home is prolonged by celebrating the festival clan after clan; all the youths of neighbouring clans go to dance at each other's *Koqsar*,

[A] [see cat. 116, p. 420. – Ed.]

1:Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

and many a marriage arises from the first meeting of lad and girl in these dances.

The land, as has been seen, is the land of the clan-god (if not even, in some sense, the clan-god himself). It is natural, therefore, that before any of these festivals are held in the individual villages of the clan the main ceremony for the whole clan should take place before the clan-god, either in or near the parish where his permanent hut-temple is situated. When the new grain of the crop concerned has been garnered, the *kasyeq-gaita* of each village sends word to the *pen-waddai* or clan-priest. The clan-priest consults the clan-god personally if himself a medium, or else through a medium, and announces a date for the celebration before the clan-god. On the night before leaving their village to attend the celebration, the *kasyeq-gaita* and all the men who are to go with him next day observe sexual continence, and sleep in the dormitory. The *kasyeq-gaita* is fed that night on fish, at the expense of the village, in some clan-areas. In a few villages a separate *bhum-gaita* exists, whose sole function seems to be to lead the villagers in visits of this kind to the clan-god. Before dawn, each wife grinds about 4 lb. of the new grain for her husband to take to the clan-festival. No women may attend the new-eating ceremonies. Besides supplies of new grain, the *kasyeq-gaita* and men take on behalf of the whole village a cock or two (there is no rule as to the colour of the victim), and perhaps, when the village is large or prosperous, a young boar (*not* a gelded pig) or a barren sow.

The deputations from the various villages assemble at the *pen-rawar* or shrine of the clan-god. The god, which in form is always a framework of logs criss-crossed with bamboos and bedecked with peacock feathers, spirals of quills, brass bells and other simple finery, is then taken out of his hut by four men of the clan-priest's family or village, and borne to the traditional place of sacrifice, which may be near the shrine or even outside the main village of the clan, three or four miles from the shrine. There they set the god down on stones under a *saja* tree, and the four bearers have a ceremonial wash. Sometimes the clan-priest again, either himself if a medium, or through mediums, consults the wishes of the god, who always permits the festival to continue, but generally suggests that they should first offer worship to the Village Mother of the village where the assembly has gathered. All adjourn to her shrine, and there the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village places a grain or two of the new crop on the table-stone or cleft stick representing the Mother, cuts the throat of a small chicken, sprinkles its blood on the Mother, and throws it down, still alive, on the ground. All watch the chicken eagerly; if after a convulsive leap or two it falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen. When making his offerings, the *kasyeq-gaita* adjures the Mother to remain favourable to the village.

All return then to the clan-god, and here the clan-priest offers for each village some of the new grain and cuts the throat of the cocks and pigs brought by each *kasyeq-gaita*, sprinkling blood from each victim on the clan-god, on whom he calls to be ever present to help them, in weal or woe, in field or forest, at home or abroad. In the less important new-eatings, if the practice among the Bardal clan observed in August 1930 at Kutul is universal, the flesh of the sacrificed animals is not then eaten in a communal feast, but divided among the men present, each of whom takes it to his home, where the male members of the family alone eat it with new grain. Some liquor is drunk in the houses by the men and the unmarried girls, but this is not an essential part of the proceedings. The fermented rice gruel, *landa*, which is always freely consumed at Bison-horn Maria *pandums*, is never even manufactured by Hill Marias, who say that it is taboo to them. After the return of each village delegation to its village, the local *kasyeq-gaita* (whether there is a *bhum-gaita* or not) performs a similar ceremony on a smaller scale before his Village Mother; this in some clan-areas is attended by the clan-priest also, as a guest, but not as a celebrant except in a few large villages to which the clan-god is brought for the occasion; in some other villages a cairn or table-stone is set up near the Village Mother's shrine, and, like her shrine, sprinkled with blood. Nor are the Departed forgotten, for they, too, can harm the garnered crops or the next harvest. The housewife pounds the new grain before the festival in a specially made mortar hole with a pestle (*ysp'al*) washed in water newly drawn from a running stream. She cooks it in the *lonu* room on the Hearth of the Departed (see p. 114 above), and the ashes of this fire are never swept away. In the evening, before the new food is eaten, she places a little as an offering on the floor just in front of the Pot of the Departed, with some appropriate adjuration; and some she places in three *siari* leaves, which in the early morning her husband deposits outside the village by the side of some path (never, apparently, at the cemetery or the Stones of the Dead (*kotokal*)), saying, '*Kopa-hopi muneta tado-pepi hisor mator, ade hintoram*,' meaning, 'We give what our grandfathers and great-grandfathers used to give to their ancestors of old.'

The association of the clan-god with the three first new-eatings is not so marked as at the last, which is the harvest-home celebration. The tendency is to regard them more as domestic than even village ceremonies. No dancing or drumming is allowed at them, and no

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyeq-gaita* obtains the permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman sweeps out her house, and the *kasyeq-gaita* goes to each house and collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan, or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought from Japgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots kept at his *pen-rawar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana* before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially where the *udam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

important, for then the *kasyeq-gaita* and, in a minor degree, the secular headman have their hour of glory, and something of the honour that might be paid to real chieftains. The *kasyeq-gaita* as intermediary between the Village Mother and her children sacrifices to her a pig and a cock, and sets before her a basket of new *kutki*, pulses and beans. A feast similar to that before the clan-god follows. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* proceeds to his *udam-garia* or seat-of-honour, next to which may be a smaller seat for the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*); it is either a long, flat boulder, or a flat stone supported on stone legs, as in Plate XXIII. He wears no insignia, and is to all appearance as naked and poor a Maria as all his villagers. The men seat themselves around in a circle on little stone cromlechs. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* formally announces the programme for the next year, what *penda* slope is to be cultivated, what arrangements are to be made to meet State or zamindari demands for land revenue or labour, and so on; the announcements, it is true, are the results of previous informal village discussions, and not the *kasyeq-gaita's* orders independently conceived by him, but his formal promulgation is needed before they can be brought into effect.

After *Koqsar* they are free to cut grass and bamboos, and to collect forest produce, or to hunt; it is true that in most villages there is little game but hares and field-mice, but a Maria thinks a field-mouse the rarest of delicacies, and will stop any occupation to chase a mouse or dig them out.[1] But the long year is over at last, and till the next sowing, though there is ahead the labour of felling, spreading and firing the wood for the *penda*, taboos are lifted, and there is no fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex. So now is the season of new marriages and of conjugal life in the home, and the seed is sown for the raising of the human crop.

Assessment and payment of land revenue among the Hill Marias

It has been indicated that there are the beginnings of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias. As a matter of fact, several villages have traces of old rice embanked fields. Two things long effectively checked the spread of permanent cultivation. One, before the 1910 rebellion, was the presence of a police station at Kutul, the headquarter village of the Bardal clan and *pargana* in the very heart of the Abujhmar hills. This meant a constant demand from the Kutul police for rice as *bisaha*,[2] and

[1] I had a carefully arranged beat for a family of man-eating tigers at Kutru ruined because the Hill Maria beaters rushed in wild enthusiasm to catch two or three mice disturbed by the beat.

[2] See p. 14 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the few who grew it soon abandoned its cultivation and returned to the hill grains which the police would not eat. The second thing, even more potent than the demand for *bisaha* because of its universality, was the land revenue policy. In the remotest times the hill villages paid what little assessment the Chiefs imposed on them in kind, royal granaries being situated at centres like Barsur, Partabpur and Narainpur. There is no need to believe the picturesque story told first to Elliot in 1853 and since repeated by writers down to Russell and Hiralal, that 'their tribute to the Raja of Bastar, paid in kind, was collected once a year by an officer who beat a tom-tom outside the village and forthwith hid himself, whereupon the inhabitants brought out whatever they had to give and deposited it on an appointed spot'[1]; this is one of the typical tales with which the old State officials used to try to disguise their utter ignorance of every part of their charge except the handful of villages in their immediate vicinity. But in actual fact there was no regular assessment. The secular headman of the village (*gaita* or *peda*) collected as a rough poll-tax from every able-bodied male cultivator whatever he could fairly be called upon to contribute in kind, and delivered the village contribution at the royal granary. Even when the Chief in 1805 and 1872 attempted for the first time to settle villages with outside lessees and to assess the land revenue on the basis of fixed payments partly in cash and partly in kind for every plough, his officers made no effort to interfere with the traditional system in the Abujhmar hills. But after the State came under management in 1891, the authorities aimed at gradually introducing improved settlement methods based on the experience of British districts in the Central Provinces. The general method was to ascertain the rate per plough imposed at the late Raja's last settlement, to decide what enhancement per plough each village could bear, and then to ascertain the number of ploughs in each cultivator's possession and in the whole village. The number of ploughs was estimated from a rough calculation of the seed capacity of each field, and further checked by comparison with the number of cattle, counted when brought home to the village in the evening. In the better cultivated parts of Bastar, seed capacity of 7½ *khandis*[2] was regarded as a plough of land, and in the jungly parts seed capacity of 5½ *khandis*. Simultaneously, every effort was made to extend to all parts of the State the leasing of villages to *thekadars* or lessees, who were available in numbers in the open and settled parts and only too ready to seize the chance of getting the aboriginal

[1] Russell and Hiralal, Vol. III, p. 120.

[2] The Bastar *khandi* is a measure equivalent to 40 *paili* or 160 *soli*; a *soli* contains 40 *tolas*, or approximately 1 lb.'s weight of rice.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

villages there for nothing, with the hope of appropriating the best village lands for themselves and getting them tilled by the forced labour of the villagers. The theory was that good and substantial cultivators from outside the State would bring capital and improved methods into Bastar and play something of the part played by the landlord in the development of English agriculture. In practice the *thekedari* system was the cause of untold harm even in the permanent villages of the State, where the alien *thekedar* destroyed the solidarity of village and tribal life besides mercilessly exploiting the aboriginals, whom indeed he goaded into rebellion in 1910. Luckily, I was able to secure its abolition for the future, and every opportunity has been taken to resume management of the villages through the headmen when a lease has fallen in or in cases of mismanagement.

When the authorities tried to apply the system to wild regions like the Abujhmar hills, fortunately for the Hill Marias their reputation as sorcerers was such, and their cultivation was so primitive, that no foreigners would take leases of their villages. There were hardly any ploughs, and the problem of estimating the seed capacity of *penda* plots on remote and steep hillsides was too much for the wits and energy of badly paid Hindu *patwaris*. A farcical record was, however, prepared of the number of 'hoe-ploughs' of land cultivated by each Hill Maria on the basis of a seed capacity assumed in nine cases out of ten by pure guess-work, the *patwari* and his superior officials never going near the villages. Individual assessments were then made on each man, in spite of the communal feeling in regard to the land. These assessments varied in their incidence without rhyme or reason, except that they had been based on guess-work. Men deserted their villages in large numbers and migrated into the Chanda part of the hills or into the Bastar zamindaris, with which the authorities were not so concerned. As it was felt that every good village should have a lessee, and no outsider would come near, the hapless headman of many a village was made to put his thumb-mark to a lease deed of his village, only to find himself in consequence legally responsible for the whole village assessment, even if his villagers had absconded or were unable to pay. The post of headman became one to be avoided or nominally given to the simpleton of the village, whom the villagers would put forward as a figurehead, while the *kasyeg-gaita* retained the religious headmanship and was the real headman so far as the villagers were concerned. No allowance was made for the vagaries of shifting cultivation; though one year a man newly married or with a large growing family to support might be allowed by the village a larger *penda* area than others, and after a year or two

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

241
651

would get only the normal share, yet, if the settlement took place in the first year, he might find himself saddled for all the period of settlement with a rent estimated on the seed capacity of that year. If a man dies, his widow is maintained by the village community and does not have her own cultivation; the taboo customs make any other arrangement impossible: but the State authorities would expect her, till the end of the settlement, to pay the rent assessed on her husband in his lifetime, and in practice this became a charge on the village. Villages themselves shift, as we have seen; and sometimes some villagers settle in one *paghai* and some in another. The *patwaris* would report these as two villages, and the settlement arrangements would be made accordingly. When *patwaris* came to prepare the annual rent papers, they might find that the villagers were cultivating a new *paghai* and say that they had not only to pay the rent assessed on the *paghai* that they were cultivating at settlement, but also an additional rent because they had also taken up 'new' land.

These are examples of the absurdities of the blind application to this most primitive race of assessment ideas evolved from those built up on long experience of other parts of India where there is little trace left of the old feelings of village solidarity. Fortunately, *patwaris* were too few, too tired and too afraid of 'Maria magic' to spend a moment longer in the Abujhmar hills than they could help; and those who should have checked their work shared their fears and found that there was more need of their presence in the tracts where assessments were considerable. A high and remote *penda* slope would never be visited at settlement, and even if the *patwari* made enquiries in his camp from assembled villagers they soon began to learn the virtues of concealment; the system, in fact, dealt a severe blow to the natural frankness of the people. The only kind of land that could not be concealed from the *patwari*, because always on the lower levels and close to the approach paths of the village, was the occasional patch of two or three permanent rice fields, on which promptly a very high rate of rent was assessed, little less than that applied in the rice lands of the good villages of the plains. The breaking of land into permanent cultivation should be regarded as an improvement in such tracts and exempted from enhancement of assessment. Cultivators with little use or understanding of money were scared at once by the prospect of more market bickering than ever to raise the cash to pay the enhanced rent, and before the 1927 Antagarh tahsil re-settlement practically all permanent rice cultivation had disappeared from the Abujhmar hills.

That 1927 settlement was, I hope, the last that will ever be attempted on such lines. The Settlement Officer did not personally

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

visit any Maria village or check the work of his subordinates on the ground. He called in the headmen to camps in the plains below, and announced the new rents. All had been enhanced on the basis of these seed capacity statements. These were of the usual guess-work type. The *patwaris* did not even visit each village, but called all the villagers from three or four villages to one camp and asked them how much land they cultivated. If a man said that he was cultivating a large area, his word was accepted, and he was assessed accordingly. If he equally truly said that he was cultivating four or five acres, the *patwari* refused to believe it and wrote him down as holding a 'hoe-plough' of thirteen or fourteen acres. Naturally, many villagers deserted to other lands of their clans in the zamindaris. In the years following the settlement, *patwaris* went to each village to prepare the annual papers, and a *patwari* who wanted to make a show of zeal generally reported that more land was being cultivated than at settlement, and had the alleged new areas assessed. In 1930 I found many examples of this; at Handawada the villagers had been assessed at settlement to Rs. 33 for 124 acres, and, as in the next two years the *patwari* had reported new cultivation, the assessment had been raised to Rs. 41. On measuring the cultivation on the spot, I found that seventeen able-bodied cultivators in all had 68½ acres. Four or five acres is, in fact, enough *penda* land to provide sustenance for the ordinary Hill Maria family.

Government accepted my recommendation to cancel this settlement in the Hill Maria country, and in its place to impose a poll-tax on every able-bodied male over sixteen years of age. The number of assessees is to be checked every fifth year, and every other check will thus coincide with the decennial census, and save duplication of work. The headman and elders are made responsible for collection and payment, and arrears are leviable from the village as a whole, not from individuals; it is left to the village community to decide what to do to any individual slacker. A commission of 1¼ annas in the rupee is paid to the headman for prompt full payment. Rice or other permanent cultivation is not specially assessed. No annual papers are prepared. *Pari passu* with the quinquennial count of able-bodied men, cattle are to be counted for assessing grazing rates, the annual enumeration of cattle being abolished; the rates will not be varied during the five years, whatever the increase in the number of cattle. The changes apply to the whole of the Hill Maria country in Bastar, in whatever administrative division it is situated.

The re-settlement of the whole area on this basis was carried out after I had left Bastar, in 1932, and was everywhere welcomed

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 651 by the Marias. It deals with the village community through its mouthpieces, the headmen and the elders. Many have returned to Bastar from the Chanda Maria country. The best sign which I observed when I spent the first month of my 1934 furlough in the Abujhmar hills was that the long abandoned rice fields are all being restored to cultivation. It is interesting to note that the headman has never ventured to keep the commission for himself, but always either divides it among the villagers, or by common consent spends it on pork or liquor for a village feast.

241 In the Bison-horn country as a whole there is now as much permanent and semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, and the *patwaris* have always been more accurate in their records. The people are more sophisticated and ready to safeguard their interests. The *penda* lands are fairly accessible, except in the hilliest parts. It has been pointed out already that each piece of each *penda* site, whether at the moment under bush or under crop, is now regarded as the individual holding of some cultivator. The people have many markets in their midst, and understand measures and seed capacities. It has not, therefore, been necessary to apply the poll-tax system there. A great deal could be done even there to turn the people from shifting to permanent cultivation by recognizing new permanent cultivation as an improvement.

Methods of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias

Where the Hill Marias have started permanent cultivation they have in general adopted the methods of surrounding Murias or Bison-horn Marias, save that very few of them have mastered or attempted to master ploughing, but prepare the land with their *gudari* digging hoes. A few now keep hired Rawat herdsmen, but do not themselves tend, milk or work their cattle. If the recognition of permanent cultivation as an improvement could be combined with a determined attempt by the State to teach carting, ploughing and milking, even among the Bison-horn Marias, shifting cultivation would be greatly diminished.

243 312 When he does grow rice, the Hill Maria generally does not irrigate it with water led from a storage reservoir or tank; his method is rather to build his dam across a stream or waterway and to cultivate the land above it. The illustration opposite shows both sides of the dam made in 1930 for cultivation of this kind at Tondawada; the deep hole below the dam was made when its predecessor was washed away by an abnormal flood. No water flows here in the cold weather. First a wall of grass *tuwa*[1] was erected along the length of the dam, and behind this a wall of *welma*[1] horizontal pole fencing, supported behind with thicker pole piles

[1] See p. 132 for definition of *tuwa* and *welma*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE XIV

312
243

TONDAWADA, HILL MARIA DAM FOR RICE CULTIVATION
Above Downstream face *Below* Upstream face

[Facing p. 146]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

243 312 driven into the ground; these were buttressed further with slanting pole props with forked ends bearing against the vertical piles, while smaller forked poles were at intervals driven into the dam on either side of the piles, but below the slanting props. This vertical pole-revetting faced downstream. Against the upstream face of the grass *tum* earth was banked with a gentle slope and gently sloped off to ground level upstream. A large and nearly hollow tree-trunk was left in the middle of the dam, to act as a pipe to carry off excess water. They called the dam *nadi*, and the tank *ore*. It was not built to store water, but to retain moisture in the tank-bed, and it was the bed which was cultivated, being dug all over with the *gudari* before the rains. The dam was still serviceable when I visited Tondawada in 1934, four years later, and other small rice plots had been made higher up the waterway by placing low mud dams across it. Though the village had shifted from the adjacent site and the *penda* slopes under cultivation in 1934 were far away, these rice patches were being prepared for cultivation in readiness for the 1934 monsoon.

241 Though it has been said above that the Bison-horn Maria has as much permanent or semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, there are many tracts in his country where *penda* is his main occupation. All Gonds or Koitor, wherever I have met them, seem at heart to long to revert to the raising of the light millets off the ashes of felled timber; though it is prohibited in the British districts of the Central Provinces, I have seen it in the *jagir* estates of the Chhindwara and Hoshangabad districts, and in the Nagpur district the prospect of being allowed to do this for the first year or two was in 1932 the best bait for attracting Gond settlers to a forest village in Ramtek tahsil and even to a malguzar's waste lands village in Saoner tahsil. So it would take little to make the far less advanced Bison-horn Maria abandon permanent rice cultivation and stick to *penda* on the hill slopes or *erka* on the plains; and much of his semi-permanent cultivation is only *parka* cultivation of former *erka* lands necessitated by their final refusal to bear any more forest after years of shifting cultivation; instead of at once applying permanent methods to the land, he cuts brushwood from other forests and brings them to the deforested land to burn instead of the brushwood it bore in former years. But in these *parka* fields he can raise only rice, not his beloved small millets. In his *penda* fields he sows only *kuthi*, *Panicum miliaceum*, of the type sown as the main crop in the Abujhmar hills; but in many places the forest growth felled for his *penda* is almost pure bamboo, and here instead of *kuthi* he sows what he calls *gondku*, which I have not had identified.

Bison-horn Maria cultivation

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 In his *mudur erka* (big tree *erka*) he raises *chikma* (*Panicum miliare*), *gatka* (*Panicum frumentaceum*) and *sama*, all crops of the first sowing, ripening by early August, and, as main crops, *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) which he calls *gurra*, and *kulthi*, which he, like the Hill Maria, calls *kohala*, both of which ripen with the *penda kulthi* [273] in early December; with him *Eleusine coracana* is an important crop, as he uses it as a principal ingredient in his *landa* intoxicant. In his *marram erka* (brushwood *erka*) he sows only the pulses *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), which he calls *popul*, and *kulthi* (*Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*) which he calls *koreng*. The '*os kosra*' millets which the Hill Maria sows as a second crop after the crops reaped in August he calls '*mach kohala*', and sows not only similarly as a second crop, but also as the main crop in his *erka* land for the third and last year of its cultivation, when it is too exhausted to bear anything else.

241 Besides the fact observed on page 128 above that, unlike the
423 Hill Maria, he ploughs the ashes, or digs them with his hoe, into his *erka* and *penda* lands, these lands have, therefore, this further great difference from the Hill Maria *penda* lands, that each crop has its own appropriate type of cultivation, and is therefore sown separately, not jumbled up with every other kind of crop in a hopeless welter. He is, moreover, careful to preserve any mango or other fruit trees on his plot. As he retains permanent rights over his plot, whether it is tilth or forest at the moment, he has to be more careful over its boundaries than the Hill Maria, and cannot be content with the temporary sowing of a line of *til* or roselle. At each burning, therefore, he spares important trees or stumps at boundary junctions, which he calls *sarkari* or 'authority' trees, and sometimes he leaves a thin line of trees standing along his boundary when he fells the forest. He generally grows his beans and gourds on these and other trees, not on poles stuck up in the middle of other crops like the Hill Maria.

241 It has been seen that he has always a *bari* garden enclosure
[417] round or near his house in the village, which he calls *lon-welung* or
'house fencing', and generally fences with either bamboo wattle-
[231] work (*wedur-welung*) or a fence of brushwood tied slantwise between horizontal struts (*jhat-welung*). Here at night he pens his cattle, and the ground is thus richly manured to bear maize (*jonna*), *sarson* or mustard (*tarson*) and tobacco (*pogo*)[1] as essential crops, with in these days frequent patches of chillies, tomatoes and other vegetables. *Sarson* is the most paying crop exported from Bastar,

[1] The Hill Maria grows tobacco and a few poor chillies and tomatoes in little plots left clear of dab grasses when *penda* land is useless for grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria.

and its cultivation has spread among all lowland Gonds, who expect to pay their land revenue out of its proceeds. 241

Lastly there are the permanent rice lands, for wet cultivation. There are wide areas of permanently embanked and irrigated rice fields (*weda*), the use of which the Bison-horn Marias have learnt from their Hindu neighbours; more typical of them are the embankments of little hill-side watercourses into a series of descending little fields, which they call *jhorki weda*. The only fields which they consider can really be cultivated year after year, without resting fallow or the refreshment of wood ash or cow-dung ash, are the fields with good deep black soil; but too frequently the Maria has been elbowed out of such lands by the Hindu lessee of his village, or by Halba settlers. The other rice lands the Bison-horn Maria believes to become exhausted or 'develop sand' after two or three years' cultivation, and he then leaves them fallow for four or five years or more till they are covered with a thick growth of grasses and weeds, especially a grass he calls *chimmia*. The grass, although not burnt like forest in *erka* and *penda*, is looked upon by him in much the same way as a fertilizing agent to be ploughed into the soil; and so in a considerable degree even the cultivation of his *weda* rice fields must be regarded as shifting. 243 242

He ploughs these fallow lands up during the rains, unless, owing to their position, they are too wet to be ploughed till the end of the rains, and he repairs the embankments so that each field may retain ample water to rot the grass and weeds. At the end of the rains he gives them a second and more thorough ploughing, and leaves them alone all through the dry season. Just before the monsoon bursts he broadcasts rice seed, and then, when it has sprouted and there is adequate water in the fields, he follows the Chhattisgarhi practice of *biasi*; that is to say, he puddles up the field, young plants and all, by working all over it a flat log, on which he stands, yoked to a pair of oxen. When the land has been ploughed both before and at the end of the rains, the system is called *kohana*; where only the ploughing at the end of the rains has been possible, it is called *karkatti*. The second system is, of course, applied to all fields that have borne a crop just before being ploughed. 243

If it rains heavily before *kohana* and *karkatti* lands prepared in this way can be sown broadcast, they resort to the '*lai*' system. The seed is soaked in cold water and placed in baskets lined with the sacred *saja* leaves, filled with thick liquid cow manure, and covered over with *palas* (*Butea frondosa*) leaves; it is left thus for three or four days to sprout. The sprouted seed is washed out of the cow-dung with warm water, and is then sown broadcast. A

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

243 *kopar* or flat log is dragged by oxen over the field according as the seed has sprouted vigorously or slightly. In many parts of Bijapur and Dantewara tahsils the *lai* system of sowing is the normal rule. Bison-horn Marias also often take a *kopar* over their *parha* and *erka* fields after they have ploughed in the ashes after the first showers of rain, so as to ensure thorough mixing of the soil and ashes. Light or heavy rice is sown in the *wada* and *jhorki wada* fields according to its position; light rice ripening early is thus generally sown in the *jhorki wada*, which drains rapidly, and always in the dry *parha* lands. The mountain rices sown in *penda* and high-level *erka* lands cannot be acclimatized in the plains.

312 In the *Gazetteer* it was stated that the people of Bastar generally were very slow to understand the advantages of irrigation; land and rain are abundant everywhere except in the south. But of recent years many Bison-horn Maria villages have constructed small *mundas* or tanks, partly for irrigation, and partly to water their cattle; and tank-bed cultivation such as that in the Hill Maria village of Tondawada described earlier in this chapter is much commoner among them.

000 This completes this account of Hill and Bison-horn Maria agriculture. The Bison-horn Maria has a number of agricultural ceremonies to sanctify his various operations and of taboos like the Hill Maria, but far more, and, like his agricultural methods, more elaborate. They will be described in the chapter on religion; their recital in this chapter would have overburdened an already long account.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter VIII

Procuring of Other Food and Drink

'Whatever came across them they must needs kill and eat it;
They made no distinction. If they saw a jackal they killed
And ate it; no distinction was observed; they respected not antelope,
sambhar and the like.
They made no distinction in eating a sow, a quail, a pigeon,
A crow, a kite, an adjutant, a vulture,
A lizard, a frog, a beetle, a cow, a calf, a he- and a she-buffalo,
Rats, bandicoots, squirrels—all these they killed and ate.
So began the Gonds to do. They devoured raw and ripe things.'
(Hislop's version of the Lingo epic of the Gonds.)

A. Food Gathering

Famine has never been a problem in Bastar, as the Marias and other tribes have always been able to draw half of their food supplies from the innumerable edible products of the vast forests. The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department, and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list. At page 124 above, many of the more important forest products collected and garnered were enumerated. *Mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*) is not common in the Abujhmar hills, where consequently little *mahua* spirit is distilled or drunk; where it does occur, the Hill Marias collect its flowers and fruit as eagerly as cultivators throughout India. It is common in the Bison-horn country. The women and children gather the fallen flowers in the mornings. It is dried in the sun, and then stored in bamboo wicker baskets; it keeps a long time. It is used to flavour *pej* and *gato*, or roasted. Oil is pressed in the plains from the fruit. Tamarind trees are not really wild, but were originally planted around village sites; the fruit is carefully gathered from all the unoccupied village sites. The fruits of the *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*) and *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) are two of the main sources of food supply. They collect also fruit of the *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*) and *aonla* (*Phyllanthus emblica*). Wild mangoes are common, and they are learning to cultivate the tree; they store whole fruit, dried pulp, and kernels whole or crushed. In the south of the State the toddy palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is the mainstay of the economic life of the people, but

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

it is not much used among Bison-horn and Hill Marias in comparison to the *salphi* or sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*) which is found wild and is extensively propagated. When the *salphi*, after much cutting of the spadix for the intoxicating sap, ceases to flower, the interior of the stem yields a fibrous pith. This the Hill Maria women (probably the Bison-horn also) pound on a large flat stone with a heavy oval pebble held in their right hand, to separate pith from fibre. The resultant pith 'grain' looks like lime, and is steamed into cakes; an earthenware pot has a little water poured into it, and over the water bamboo sticks are criss-crossed and covered with *siari* leaves as a platform for the pith to be steamed; no salt or sugar is added.

Actually most of the fruit already mentioned is collected by women and children; the men, of course, deal with the toddy and sago palm sap, and their methods will be described in the section on drinking and intoxicants. The men collect those forest products which they need for basketry or rope making, or in finding which there is an element of the chase. They like to roam about with their bows and arrows while their women are busy gathering fruit.

The women gather also various leaves, flowers and seeds as vegetables. They use the young green leaves and the seeds of the sal (*Shorea robusta*); the flowers of the *giril marra* shrub (*Indigofera arborea*); the young curled fronds of bracken in the Abujhmar hills, possibly also on the Bailadila mountains, where, too, it is common (the Hill Marias call it *handa jabba* and the Bison-horn *anda koser*); the seeds of the marking nut tree (*Semecarpus anacardium*; *bhelwa*); the young green shoots, pith and seeds of the bamboo; the fruits of the *ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*). The digging of forest roots and yams in the rains is one of the women's chief occupations; there are many varieties, and some are now cultivated. In the early rains a much sought after foods are the *khudrati* or *bora* fungus, and the mushroom. Various wild plants are gathered as vegetables from marsh and river valley, especially the *chius*, the long thin leaves of which are like small hyacinth leaves, and are a favourite food of wild buffalo and bison. Women and men collect large supplies of *siari* or elephant creeper leaves for use as plates and drinking vessels. *Aki* is the Gondi word for a leaf, and the assonance *aking-waking* is commonly used as covering all produce which the Maria collects from the forest.

In August and September the Bison-horn Maria women spend hours swishing a basket[1] over the tops of certain wild grasses in the fields to collect the seeds, which are eaten like the small hill grains.

[1] Hill Maria women also do this, using little wicker-work shields fastened to bamboo sticks to beat the grass seeds into a basket.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A little later they collect *kapani*, the wild bearded rice common in all old rice fields and fallows and at the edges of standing water, by holding a winnowing-fan in one hand and beating the grain of the standing ripe plants into it with the other; the bearded ears are sometimes plaited into '*sela*' fringes for ornamenting doors of houses at the new-eating festivals.

The men are adept in collecting the honey of various kinds of bees, though sometimes, despite forest rules, too prone to save trouble by felling rather than climbing a fine tree. For this purpose, and for tapping palm trees, they often fasten to the trunks of trees long thick bamboos, cutting the side shoots down to stumps four or five inches long to serve as ladder rungs. Gums are collected from many species of trees, for use as bird-lime or in securing the *kosa* silk whipping of arrow-heads, etc. In Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils the Forest Department has quantities of *tasar* silk cocoons collected by Bison-horn Maria men when, in the rains in the intervals between sowing and reaping their various crops, they go out to the forests in search of such delicacies as red ants' nests, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs. The cocoons are high on sal or *saja* trees; where the climbers cannot reach them they use long bamboo poles with a piece of bamboo fastened at an acute angle at the end to serve as a hook. They get about Rs. 3 a thousand cocoons from the Koshta weavers who employ them; the Hill Maria, however, generally collects only what cocoons he needs for his own purposes. Red ants' nests are cooked, leaves, ants and all, either with *pej* or *gato*, or by themselves and eaten with pulses as a vegetable. They are also a favourite febrifuge; a rough and ready remedy is to shake out the live red ants on to the patient's skull, when the formic acid of their stings is said to reduce the fever; the more elaborate method is to boil the nest, ants and all, and to strain off and use the juice as a febrifuge in small doses; this juice is said to taste sharper than any lime and believed to be invaluable for a long-standing fever. In collecting the palms of the dwarf palms *chhind* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *P. acaulis*, and *buta chhind* (*P. farinifera*) for use for thatching, basketry or making rough cords for binding fences, the men not only collect the small dates or the flowers (according to season) and the edible pith of the *buta chhind*, but also the fat white grub of a certain beetle, which is also found in the stems of the toddy palm and in fresh green monsoon bamboo shoots. This is eaten fried in ghee or oil with a little spice and chillies, and is regarded as a great delicacy; it is sold in the Jagdalpur market for three or four pice, and even high-caste Hindus buy it. When white ants emerge in flying swarms early in the monsoon they collect them after they have shed their wings, or pull the wings

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

222 off, and eat them raw. The men gather the edible bean-pods of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper when cutting its stems for rope fibre and gathering its leaves for plates, rain hats and shields, but generally light a fire then and there in the forest and roast the beans in the pods, when it is easy to extract them to eat.

B. Hunting and Trapping

224 The Hill Maria is as omnivorous as all Gonds, and it is difficult to discover what he will not eat if he can get it. But there is little game left in the Abujhmar hills, except where the hills descend to the Indrawati, Gudra and Kotri valleys. The *shikaris par excellence* of Bastar are the Murias of the northern plateaux and the Bison-horn Marias of the *parganas* around Barsur and the Indrawati valley, where there is still fairly plentiful game. The Hill Maria is therefore not an expert beater, though twenty-four hours spent by any would-be sportsman in Kutru territory in training Hill Marias to beat will be amply rewarded, not only by the quick way in which they learn, even if taught only by pantomime, but by the fun and humour with which they will take their lesson. They have memories of hunting tiger, panther, bison, buffalo, deer of all kinds, and even, very shadowy, of rhinoceros.[1] But the appearance in the hills of one or two tiger after the 1931 census for the first time within human memory was interpreted as a sign of divine displeasure, and all the census house numbers painted by the enumerators on little squares of wood prepared *ad hoc* by the Marias and preserved in many houses for each census from 1911 onwards were collected together and burnt on the village boundaries to placate the Departed. Outside Tondawada village a panther was shot by the village lads with arrows thirty years or more ago; three small stone menhirs about twenty inches high were driven then into the ground at the spots where its head, the root and the tip of its tail had lain when it fell dead; the feat is still spoken of as a deed of prowess. Orcha is the only Hill Maria village, so far as I am aware, that follows the practice of the spring hunt before sowing the crops, which is so marked and important a feature of tribal life among the Bison-horn Marias, the Parjas and Bhattras; but the Orcha people seem to have copied the hunt from the Bison-horn Marias without its religious significance; there is no sprinkling of blood on the first seeds sown, no ceremony before and after the hunt, women take no part in the proceedings to drive unwilling men out to the hunt, and no portion of the slain quarry is offered to the clan-god, the

Hill Marias

[787]

[1] Compare *Gazetteer*, p. 32. The rhinoceros tradition still existed in 1928.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Village Mother or the Departed. Bowmen are posted in advance, and they beat the game up to them. They share and share alike in the bag, no special limb being reserved for first arrow or first spear or anyone. 224

They all have bows, and arrows of varying sizes and shapes for every kind of living thing, but are not very expert in their use, save in the lower country where game still abounds. There is no bird and no animal that they will not shoot or trap and eat if they can get it. 411 224

But in most of their country the only creatures that they can trap are hare, jungle-fowl and peafowl. A sure sign of the nearness of a Hill Maria village is the presence of numerous hare-traps (*morel-guda*) by the side of a path. A small oval of ground is cleared of growth and surrounded either with small boulders or with sticks driven into the ground, and about eighteen inches above it. A passage is left unfenced at each narrow end of the oval wide enough for a hare to enter by one and go out by the other without turning round. The trapper urinates in the oval, and it is a considerate act for any passer-by to do so; in some villages a common urinal pot is kept by the dormitory for use at night, and the urine is divided in the morning between the hare-trappers. The ground inside the oval is soon impregnated by the salt, and hares begin, therefore, to frequent it. When this is known from the droppings which they leave there, the inner passage is blocked up with sticks or boulders, and behind it a bamboo is fixed in the ground to serve as a spring. Two strings are tied to the top of the bamboo, one for the release trigger of the trap, and the other passed through a hollow bamboo tube four or five inches long, to end in a running noose. The release-trigger is a length of thin bamboo stick which is laid more or less horizontally across the oval, one end resting lightly against the inside of one wall of the trap, and the other placed under the 'tap' of a bamboo stick fastened in the ground by the opposite wall of the trap; the 'tap' is a short length of stick branching downwards from the main stick. The tap stick is called *dim-kola*.[1] The noose is looped over the entrance to the trap, the bamboo tube being hung on one of the wall sticks or rested on one of the boulders. The hare enters through the noose to get his salt, dislodges the release trigger from the side of the wall opposite the tap stick, and so releases the spring. As this flies up, the bamboo tube slides down the other string towards the noose and helps to tighten it around the hare. 224

Pitfalls covered lightly with earth and leaves on criss-crossed sticks, and with spears or bamboo spikes planted in the bottom,

[1] *Dim* means penis.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

224 are made in game paths for deer. A form of trap made by Hill Marias, but commoner among Jhoria Murias and Bison-horn Marias, is the *bewar*; the *penda* or *dippa* plot is surrounded by a high fence or stockade, called *bewar* in Halbi and *ganso* by Murias and Marias. A space wide enough for a sambhar or two to enter is left in one wall of the enclosure, and this is cleared of all growth, swept clean daily, and sometimes spread with sand; this is called the 'road' (*sarak*). At another point in the fence, generally the corner remotest from the 'road', they leave a narrow exit passage, 6 or 7 feet long and 1½ feet wide at ground level. The whole floor of this passage is dug out to a depth of 6 feet, and spears and sharpened bamboo stakes are planted in the bottom. The sides of the passage are walled with slanting poles, the top of which is 7 or 8 feet in vertical distance from the ground level; these lean on vertical posts about 4 feet high, and have horizontal pole struts lashed on both sides by *siari* thongs; the passage is thus 1½ feet wide at ground level and 4½ feet wide at the top of the walls. At ground level, tufts of grass are fastened under the bottoms of the slanting walls to form fringes meeting in the centre of the trench and concealing its existence. This passage and trench are called *korrpanch* in Gondi and *onkakodra* or *kalkodra* in Halbi. At dawn the cultivators creep up to the 'road', and if there are any deer-tracks in the sand they make all the noise they can, and the deer, if still inside the fence, dash for the trenched passage, and fall through the grass floor into the spiked trench.

The illustration opposite shows a panther trap erected at Handawada in 1934 to catch a small panther that had been carrying off village poultry. Between a double row of thick bamboo stockading standing from 50 to 53 inches above the ground and roughly lashed together about 32 inches above the ground, with lengths of split bamboo twisted round every fourth or fifth bamboo, were two fall beams weighted in the middle with heavy stones, and a little over 18 feet long, called *kalk-panj*. The stockading was strengthened by boulders piled around its base. The farther end of the *kalk-panj* beams rested on the ground and the front end was raised about 20 inches above the mouth of the stockading by a cross-beam of timber 7½ feet long called *adam-guryu*. The farther end of this cross-beam itself rested on the ground beyond the off side of the mouth of the stockading, whence it slanted upwards at an angle of 30 degrees between the second and third posts of the stockading walls, resting 19 inches above the ground on a horizontal bamboo pole 34 inches long called *mirpos-kola*. The *mirpos-kola* ran along and parallel to the near wall of the stockading, with its centre resting in a fork half-way up a post planted in the ground, the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

mirpos-rai. The *adam-guryu* cross-beam rested on the front end of the *mirpos-kola* bamboo; to the back end was tied a piece of *siari* twine about 9 inches long with a short stick at the end to serve as a release-trigger. As in the hare-trap, one end of this trigger was held vertically under the 'tap' of a bamboo *dim-kola*, while the other end was held from escaping inwards from under the 'tap' by being thrust outwards by the near end of a piece of bamboo laid as a bait-stick across the floor of the trap; the off end of the bait-stick was fixed against the inside off wall of the stockading. The *dim-kola* tap-stick was 12 inches from top to ground, into which it

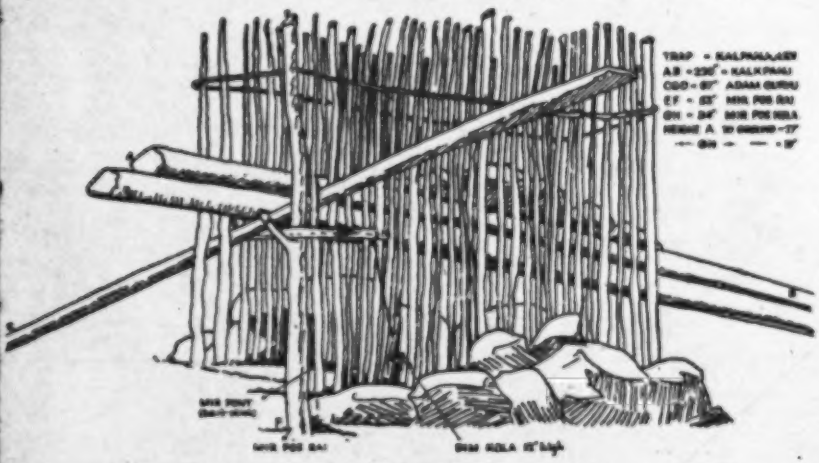

FIGURE 8
(Drawn by Mrs. A. M. Boyes)

was firmly driven outside the near wall of the stockading and between the stockading and the retaining boulders; the 'tap' was about 4 inches above the ground-level. The ground was slotted across the mouth of the stockading from the point where the *adam-guryu* cross-beam rested on the ground, so that that beam, when released, might fall into the slot. The bait-stick and the floor of the trap below it were baited with very 'high' dead mice and their guts; the Marias evidently believed that panthers shared their own partiality for these delicacies. If any animal had put his head inside the stockading and touched the bait, he would have been bound to dislodge the bait-stick. This would have deprived the lower end of the trigger of its support; the upper end, deprived of the resistance of the lower end against the bait-stick, would have

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

124 sprung free of the ' tap ' of the *dim-kola* and so released the back end of the *mirpos-kola*, the front end of which would have given way beneath the weight of the *adam-guryu* cross-beam and brought the stone-weighted *kalk-panj* fall beams crashing down on to the animal, while the *adam-guryu* fell into the slot prepared for it in the ground. The trap had been set for six weeks with no result, and they had not tried making a trap of this kind for years. It looked too fragile for any but a very small panther ; the bait-stick was barely 2½ feet from the mouth of the trap ; and the fall even at the mouth was only 20 inches. Kalmu Boda, the expert *shikari* who is *pargana* headman of the Bison-horn villages around Barsur, was openly scornful.

Snares and springes for pea-fowl, jungle-fowl and snipe, and bird-lime for other birds, with occasional nets for birds or deer complete the Hill Maria's hunting equipment. I have not seen him using nets ; the villages where most nets are to be seen are those near the Bison-horn country, and their users presumably copy Bison-horn methods.

Bison-horn Maria hunting

In the most advanced and thickest populated parts of the Bison-horn Maria country, such as the Paknar, Katakalian and Kuakonda tracts, it is difficult to find any wild creature except birds and insects. In Hindu India the monkey is always present, being sacred and so free to devour anyone's crops. The Maria eats monkey as readily as any other animal, and the monkey long ago decided to avoid his lands. At my camp at Katakalian there was a sudden shout and dozens of Marias left me to rush at a tree on which someone had seen a luckless flying squirrel (*Pteromys petaurista*). Even hares and rats are said to be less common here than elsewhere. Like Hill Marias, Bison-horn Marias spend hours digging out field rats and [252] mice, carefully wrapping each victim in grass before carrying them home in glee to roast them whole skewered on bamboo spits, singeing off the fur. They sell and buy rat meat in the markets, either raw, or in little jerked squares on bamboo spits ; but that [195] they are getting sensitive to ridicule on this account is shown by the fact that the buyer must ask for ' earth-roots ', not rats or mice. Frogs are another delicacy, also spitted and roast. Python, *daman* [252] and non-poisonous snakes are eagerly sought after ; for ordinary eating they skin, slice and fillet the snake and stew it with spices, when they say it tastes midway between fish and chicken. Small portions of python separately cooked are regarded as a valuable cure for ' pot-belly '.

The great round of ritual vernal hunts preceding sowing have been the chief cause of the extermination of game. The religious

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison horn Maria

aspect of these will be explained in a later chapter. But for these *parad* (Halbi) or *weta* (Bison-horn Maria) whole villages or *parganas* used to turn out all their able-bodied males, and beat over a stretch of jungle ten miles long and a mile wide into nets with spearmen standing ready behind them to slay every animal that escaped the arrows of the beaters, who often fired the forest grasses as they went. Stops were put out along the flanks, and the beating was expert. It is not unnatural that game was rapidly exterminated. For some years they attempted to come in large *weta* parties to the well-stocked jungles in the Muria country of the northern plateau; 500 bowmen and spearmen from Chhitapur and Killepal *parganas* were stopped in 1929 by the Bhanpuri police from raiding the Amraoti Forest Reserve in Kondagaon tahsil, a sportsman's paradise full of buffalo, bison, barasing and all the deer of Central India. They now know that they must confine their *weta* to their own *pargana*, but they feel this to be a hardship. In the Kuakonda *pargana* they have had perforce, as there is no game left, to give up the *Jur-weta*, the hunt in which the whole *pargana* joined a week after the chief village hunt, the *Wijja-weta* or Seed-Hunt. At Killepal in 1930 they said that for some years they had secured no game except a hare in the *Wijja-weta*, though they had gone out for it; in a little while in such regions the ceremonial hunts will end, except the *Kare-weta* or Grass Hunt, which precedes the *Kare Pandum* or Grass-cutting Festival some time before the *Wijja-weta*, and in which they beat the fields for hares, rats and quail.

Where there is still ample game, they hold the *weta* as of old, if perhaps on a smaller scale, with the *Jur-weta* becoming a thing of the past. Kalmu Boda, the *pargana* headman of Barsur *pargana*, and the Bison-horn Marias of the *pargana*, especially those of Boda's village of Pharaspal and the surrounding villages, have the hereditary reputation of being the most skilful netters of tiger and other game in the State, and for many years the State authorities have requisitioned their willing help in getting rid of man-eating tigers in northern Bastar. They hunt in this way for sheer sport, not merely as part of the ritual round of the year. In May 1932, I was a guest with others at a shoot arranged by my successor at Koilibera in North Antagarh to get rid of some troublesome man-eaters; and, to assist, Kalmu Boda had marched over 100 miles from Pharaspal with 140 Bison-horn netmen. As it was essential to get rid of the pests, we could not unfortunately let Boda organize the beats as he would have done if left to himself; a line of guns in the usual *machans* was posted in front, but Boda posted his nets and men behind them. The nets are arranged in a line about five feet above the ground on bamboo props, and secured at intervals to trees;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison horn Maria

224 they must be loose enough to fall on any animal driven into them by the beaters and entangle it. Some twenty paces behind the nets the Marias make little shelters of leaves, about fifteen yards apart, carefully camouflaged from the front, and in these shelters groups of four or five spearmen stand motionless. They do not move till an animal is clearly entangled in the net, but then there is a rush of men to have the honour of the first spear. The first man stabs and holds the animal down with his spear, while the others blood their spears. He gets as his portion the off hind leg from buttock to hough, the headman gets the saddle, and the *waddai* or clan-priest the liver, the portion usually given to the Departed. At Koilibera I saw deer, four-horned antelope and a panther netted in this way and duly dispatched. On the last day a tiger, shot at but missed twice from the *machans* in front, hurled itself at full gallop into the net twenty yards to the right front of the shelter where I was standing with a group of spearmen. It fell headlong, and the net fell on to it according to rule; but unfortunately at that point the rope meshes were old and brittle, and the ground rocky and grassless; the tiger's weight and speed smashed the retaining rope and burst a hole through the net. There was a brief vision of a mighty forearm sweeping aside the encumbrance, and the tiger was free; he rushed roaring by the side of the next clump of spearmen, so close that they could have touched him. Wisely all stood stock still from the moment when the tiger entered the net till it had passed them; but then one of the guns from a back *machan* not so wisely fired over the heads of the line of spearmen. Whether he hit the tiger or not, he enraged it, and it swung round to charge. Those of us on the ground with rifles could not fire at first because the tiger was not clear of the line of spearmen; but a rain of rather wild bullets, one of which broke the tiger's near forearm, checked him, and Kalmu Boda gave it the *coup de grâce* (possibly saving more than one life) by hitting it in the neck with a contractile bullet fired from an ancient twelve-bore gun, rusty and uncoiled, with barrels patched with rough iron bands and held together with wire, and as loose in the breech and stock as a gun could be. The bullet killed the tiger outright. Boda had missed twice and misfired once before the final shot. The Murias and Marias present drummed the tiger back to camp with their usual anapaestic rhythm, and the Marias broke into a dance, advancing and retreating before the dead tiger to the same anapaestic drumbeats.

The Bison-horn Maria is an adept at nets and snares of all kinds and sizes for all manner of game. Kalmu Boda has recipes for poisoning tiger and other game. For poisoning arrows they use occasionally the crushed seeds of the *Abrus precatorius* shrub; 411 278

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia neriifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pigs

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*merrsheng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charhal padi* and *kural padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

Poultry

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Korr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar.
[2] See pp. 103 and 120.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

541 Cock-fighting is the favourite pastime of the Bison-horn Marias, well-known venues being the weekly markets at Kuakonda, Paknar, Kukanar, Bastanar Ghat and near Karli, among several others. They tie iron knives to the cocks' legs. If the cocks break away, their owners pick them up and rub their hackles or spit into their beaks to get their blood up. The defeated cock always becomes the property of the victor's owner. On any market morning you can see scores of Bison-horn Marias walking to market with cocks tucked under their arms. Hill Marias do not themselves go in much for this pastime; only a few of them even stay to watch cock-fighting at Dhaurai market. Some of the Kutru Hill Marias attend cock-fighting every week at Oikal in the Ahiri zamindari of Chanda.

231 614 **Goats** Goats are seldom kept by the Hill Marias, though at Nugur in the Indrawati valley the Parllo clan, despite the fact that its totem is the goat, kept goats for the Teli tradesmen who owned the village rice bins described on page 102; but they could not eat goat flesh or even take goat milk.

Among the Bison-horn Marias, many, including even those who belong to the goat phratry and goat clans, keep goats and use goat milk; but totemistic rules prohibit members of goat clans and phratry from eating goat flesh.

231 **Cattle and buffaloes** As has been seen, the Hill Marias are not rich in cattle, do not milk them or yoke them to carts or ploughs, and generally keep Rawat herdsmen to tend them. Nearly all eat beef whenever they can afford it. Bullock or cow sacrifice is almost an essential part of funeral ceremonies, and all present eat the meat. Dead cattle are divided up and eaten; at Kutru, Hill Marias ate all that remained of a cow killed by a family of man-eating tigers, though the mangled remains had been gnawed by hyaenas and jackals, and exposed to the sun for four or five days till full of flies and maggots. The headmen of the villages of Padalibhum, Tapalibhum, Behramar, Nurbhum and Sonpur Mar *pargawas* frankly admitted that they liked eating beef when they could get it; at Handawada, on the other side of the hills, the headmen of the Dantewara Mar and Mangnar *pargana* villages asserted that they never eat dead cattle, and only eat the beef of sacrificed animals. There are practically no buffaloes in the Abujhmar hills.

231 439 231 The Bison-horn Marias are great stock-raisers, both of cattle and buffaloes, and they export many head of cattle to Chanda and Raipur, as well as over the Madras border; in fact the land revenue is often paid out of the price received for cattle, and one of their favourite grievances is the cattle export duty of a rupee or two imposed by the State. They use cattle for ploughing and are

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandum* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandum*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Nennor new-eating feast.

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue.

Dogs and cats Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Darra, darra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bamboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *konda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralur are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasnar to Bhamragarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

226 564 markets. The Kuruks go up into the hills to collect these dues, and they also dry fish and bring it round from village to village in the hills, bartering it for grain, generally at the rate of five pieces the size of a finger for a *pasli*[1] of *kutki*; the Hill Marias allow them to sleep in the *pasli-gotul* rest-house. They are expert with net and with rod and line. Frequently they stretch a cord over the head of a pool with several short lengths of line ending in baited hooks depending at intervals in the water, while they go across the tail of the pool in their dug-out canoes spanking the surface of the water with their paddles or with long bamboos to drive the fish up towards the baits. They fish simultaneously several little rods tied to clumps of rushes or reeds. They certainly catch fish at all times except in high floods, and send them alive to your camp in water in little dug out sections of trees. As boatmen they are expert in [501] managing their clumsy and heavy dug-outs, which are generally [651] made of *Bombax malabaricum* wood owing to the heavy duty charged by the Forest Department for the far more durable teak. I spent nearly three weeks in their charge in November 1927 with Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the State Medical Officer, journeying in their dug-outs down the Indrawati from Kutru to the Jitam rapids, whence they returned to their villages. They were expert in [501] shooting rapids even with two dug-outs lashed together, which they sometimes took through the wild tangle of rapids above Bhamragarh with two paddlers standing in the bows and two in the stern. The paddles are rectangles of teak nailed to teak handles. One dug-out would shoot ahead to explore the rapids, and its owner appear suddenly on the top of a rock to shout directions to the rest; old Kuruks and their grey-headed wives would appear out of tributary streams from riparian villages and croak away their greetings in the guttural Hill Maria dialect, and then paddle back upstream in the [374] morning mist with charcoal or wood smoking around them in broken earthen crocks at the bottom of their boats, carried for warmth. At dusk, after escorting us to our camp on the Bastar bank, they invariably would paddle croaking off to rocky islands in midstream, whence at night the eye would be delighted with their numerous fires of driftwood and the ear with the melodious refrains of their songs.

226 The Hill Marias make various forms of fish cages and traps with reeds and cane. They dam river shallows in the hot weather and poison the pools. In the rains they make *govla* piers of boulders in cylindrical wicker-work baskets, like the piers of their bridges, between which is laid a platform of wicker-work, the upstream end of which rests on the bed of the stream, and is weighted down with

[1] A measure containing about 4 lb. weight of grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

stones; the platform is thus sloped against the stream, and small fish coming down are unable to get through the meshes of the wicker-work, and are thrown by the water high and dry on to the downstream end of the platform; this is merely an elaboration of the *dandar* trap regularly made in the plains by other Koitor at corners of rice-fields where there is any considerable fall in the level of a main irrigation current. 226

The Bison-horn Marias have four or five different kinds of nets, and field fish traps of three or four kinds varying in size from the big field *dandar* above to the *bisar*, a small cylindrical trap of reeds or canes fastened together with wefts of cord, with inverted cones of similar construction inside; the narrow mouth at one end of the trap is fixed close to a small hole made through the embankment of a flooded rice field, and the small fry washed through the hole into the trap cannot escape through the cones. Women make a series of small mud dams across the swampy ends of tanks or pools, and dry out the space enclosed by each dam in turn by throwing the water out with winnows or baskets; they then collect what fish are left in the mud.

In the north of the State the Bhattras, Parjas, Murias and low-caste Hindus always precede the ceremonial eating of new mangoes at Aktai, the local name for the Hindu festival of Akshya Trittya, which falls usually in the second fortnight of April, by a ceremonial *parad* for fish; their general method is for all the men to go into the forest to gather the leaves, roots and fruits used for poisoning fish, then to poison the selected and previously dammed rivulet or small tank; after the stupefied fish have been collected and divided, each family cooks and eats the fish with the new mangoes, and the head of the family goes to the source of their usual water-supply and offers water in a new *handi* with a little grain in the name of the ancestors. In Gondi this is called the ceremony of '*Yer upikona pen hanal*' (offering water to the clan-god and the Departed). Some Bison-horn Marias observe this practice also before their own Marka Pandum, or New Mango Festival, but they prefer having a real beat for fish to poisoning pools, though both they and the Hill Marias frequently poison pools. But most Bison-horn Marias beat for fish at all times of the year, except the rains, when there is too much water, just for sport, and join for this with villagers of other castes, such as Jhari Telanga, Halba or Parja. As many as fifty or sixty square-meshed nets are collected, about four feet deep, and the bottoms of the nets are weighted with stones, while pieces of wood are fastened on the top edge to act as floats. Before the nets are arranged in the water, the *pursa* (village priest or spiritual headman, corresponding in Bison-horn villages to the 226 769 226

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

226 Hill Maria *kasyeq-gaita*) of the village where the beat is to take place sets up a small bough of *jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*) or *jamala* (*Eugenia heyneana*) on the bank of the river, beneath which he places an egg and a little husked *kutki* in an egg shell, and prays to *Jalkanya*, the Water-maiden, for good fishing; if the beat is successful, the *perma* after it is over breaks the egg and spills the yoke and the *kutki* on the ground in her name. The nets are lowered into the water tied together in a long line across the river, with side-nets (*kanasi*) at right angles on both sides of the main net towards the line of beaters, if the river is too wide or there is much water near the banks too shallow for the main net to be stretched from bank to bank. A line of men stands behind the nets, and three or four hundred yards away the beaters form a line across the river from bank to bank, and advance towards the line of nets, beating the water with hands, sticks and bamboos, and shouting and beating drums. The fish are divided up in the village, the *perma* and *pada* and those who have provided nets getting double shares; if a tank is beaten, the owner of the tank gets a double share. These beats are at times quite exciting and the catch is heavy, as shown by the following account of an eyewitness, Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell:—

'On Christmas Day 1921 we were encamped at Salnar, a village on the banks of the Indrawati about nine miles from Barsur. The river here is only 3½ or 4 feet deep, and breaks up into two streams divided by a sand spit. The surroundings are beautiful, with a clear view of the Koreka! Mad waterfall seven or eight miles away. The river was ideal for the fishing *parad*, which began early in the morning and lasted till sundown, with a short break for a midday meal. We spent the whole day on the sand spit, watching the great catches of fish. The people of this locality are Bison-horn Marias, and the method of the *parad* was very like that of an ordinary beat for game; a main net about 15 yards wide was sunk across the river upstream, its bottom weighted with stones and the ends tied with cords to enable it to be lifted, while some ten men held the top. From the ends of the net other cords, to which were fastened at every few inches bunches of dry palm leaves and stone weights, were strung out by men in dug-out canoes in a semi-circle for 30 or 40 yards on each side, and placed in charge of stops aligned from one end to the other of each string; the task of these stops was slowly to draw in the strings towards the main net after the beat had begun, and so keep the fish within a circumscribed area. The main line of beaters numbered about twenty, each armed with a small triangular net fastened on a triangle of stout sticks, with a fourth stick fastened at the apex as a handle. Behind them a second line of beaters, but fewer in number, followed at a distance of two yards, carrying triangular nets of the same type but without handles. As the first line beaters advanced they held their nets in front of them under the water by the handles, while those in the second line advanced with their nets held straight out in front of them and against their bodies. The object of the front line was only to drive the fish forward into the main net, and to sweep up with their own nets any fish which might try to rush back at the end of the beat; the second line had to be on the look out for any fish which might jump clear over the backs of the front line when collared in their nets. It was only the large fish, generally mahseer, which when backing from the main net to meet the nets of the front line beaters jumped clear out of the water towards the second line. It was really wonderful to watch the dexterity

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

with which the second line dealt with these fish, some of which weighed from ten to fifteen pounds, and required all the handling that the men were capable of; even then many were dropped from sheer weight. In all, more than 300 fish, of all sizes, were caught in the day, enough to provide ample food for a week for everyone present. The Marias were delighted.' 226

For poisoning fish all or some of the following[1] are used:— 278
korkoti (3, 5) leaves and twigs; fruit of the *maniya* (1), *kirach* (1) (*Cassaria graveolens*), *kotheua* (1), *pendra* (1) (*Randia uliginosa*), *kotma* (3), *iriya* (5), *wasa* (5) or *vachcha* (5), and *kue* (6) (*Randia dumetorum*); roots of the *sirindi* (1, 2), *agya* (1, 3, 4) (*Millettia auriculata*), *korti* (1), *timra* (1, 2) (root-bark), *kewu* (5) (pounded with earth from a white-ant hill), *kumbhi* (1, 5) (root-bark; *Careya arborea*), *tumsi* (5), *basemati* (6), and *batte* (6); bark of the *karra* (1, 3, 6) or *karla*, *kirangi* (4), *kuchali* (5) (*Strychnos nux vomica*) and *muchi-tumri*[2] (5) (*Diospyros montana*), *kodra-marra* (6) and *chil*[3] (6); and the ground oil-cake (1, 5, 6) made from *tora*, the seeds of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*). 226

The ingredients are pounded together with stones or axe-heads on a rock in or near the pool or tank; if the water is deep, they are thrown into it the night before the fish are collected; if it is shallow, the poisons act in an hour or two and can safely be thrown into the water in the morning. The fish are stupefied by them, and are easily collected floating on the surface.

In the Kolab-Sabari in Sukma zamindari and Konta tahsil, Bison-horn Marias and others have night beats for fish in the hot weather; they call the beats '*chingra parad*' and '*kola parad*'. The late Circle Inspector Chaitan Singh gave the following description of these:—

'The beat must be held on a dark moonless night, and not in a tank or a small nullah or in water flowing over mud which would be stirred up by the feet of the beaters, but in clear shallow water flowing over sand or shingle, not more than thigh-deep. Four or five men enter the water carrying each a bamboo torch, and a basket; the torch is held not more than a foot above

[1] The numbers 1 to 6 stand for lists of poisons supplied from 1, Jagdalpur; 2, Sukma; 3, Kondagaon; 4, Dantewara; 5, Konta; and 6, Bijapur. There is almost certainly some duplication owing to the different names prevailing in different parts of Bastar for the same plants. Bastar plant names so differ from those in the Central Provinces that identification is difficult without sending actual specimens to Dehra Dun. The Central Provinces forest lists give as known fish poisons roots of *Millettia auriculata*, fruit of *Cassaria graveolens*, *Cassaria tomentosa* and *Randia dumetorum*, bark of *Ongeinia dalbergioides*, and leaves and bark of *Cleistanthus collinus*. *Strychnos nux vomica* and *Diospyros montana* are well known as poisonous plants.

[2] *Muchi-tumri* is possibly the same as *timra* in lists 1 and 2.

[3] *Chil*, which occurs only in the Bijapur list, may be the Telugu word *chil* for *Strychnos potatorum*, the clearing nut. The seeds of this are used for clearing muddy water.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

226 the water. On each side of each torch-bearer goes a man armed with bow and arrows; for small fish the arrows have heads like the handles of spoons, but for large fish they use arrows with heads with only one wing and barb, like an ordinary arrow-head bisected from point to shank. The torch-bearers and bowmen wade up against the current, and the fish, which at night are feeding in these shallows and not in the deep pools, are attracted or stupefied by the glare and are easily shot with the arrows or caught in the baskets.'

E. Intoxicants and Other Drinks

273 The commonest intoxicant in the Abujhmar hills is the fermented juice of the sago-palm (*Caryota urens*), and the tree is common also in many parts of the Bison-horn Maria country. It is now propagated freely by Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The tree, unlike the toddy-palm, is monoecious. The flowering peduncles, which appear like thin elephant trunks, have their ends cut off before they flower, and act as taps, bamboo tubes being fastened below the cut to catch the sap; the Bison-horn Marias often use earthenware pots. The tubes are emptied in the morning and evening, bamboo poles still retaining the stumps of side-shoots being tied on to the trees as rough ladders. When [272] fresh, the sap is not intoxicating and has a pleasant dry taste, not unlike champagne. After two or three years' tapping the tree dies, when the inner tissue of the stem yields the starchy food substance 757 already mentioned. If the ends of the peduncle get worm- or grub-eaten before they are tapped, it is considered a sure sign of witchcraft, and more than one murder has been recorded on this 534 account. The bottom of the trunk of the dead tree is commonly used as the hollow body of the Hill Maria single-membrane *turam* or kettle-drums.

Sago-palm

273 The toddy-palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is not grown or tapped in the Abujhmar hills, but is common in the south of the Bison-horn country especially among the so-called Koyas and the Dorlas, and in Sukma and Konta. In this teluguized region whole villages camp out in the toddy groves from March till June in a perpetual state of semi-intoxication, taking solid food only in the evening, and sometimes going without that for three or four days or even a week. The sap is tapped by cutting the ends of the flowering spadices, in much the same way as the sago-palm; the spadix appears in the male trees from November to March, while the female tree yields sap from April to June. The vessels used to catch the sap are generally thick bamboo tubes three or four feet long, of about three gallons capacity. Excessive tapping soon shortens the life of the trees. The juice rapidly ferments, though not intoxicating when drawn, and fermentation is expedited by the habit of mixing the fresh juice with that left

Toddy-palm

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

over from previous days. The female trees bear fruit in May, and the pulp of this is eaten, generally after roasting the fruit on an earthenware crock and breaking off the rind. They also eat the unripe seeds and seedlings, as well as the roots. They collect the seed and leave it to germinate in pits; they propagate the trees also from root cuttings. 273

Individual ownership in the trees is to some extent recognized, not necessarily, however, in the owner of the land. There is a sort of village arrangement as to the trees to be tapped by each family, permitting a rough rotation where trees are plentiful, so as to give them a much needed rest from tapping. The Koyas and Dorlas sacrifice a fowl or a goat at the foot of the first tree tapped, and the sacrificial victims are then taken to the Village Mother's shrine and eaten there by the men. 273 423

Date-palm The *sindi* (*Phoenix sylvestris*) is occasionally tapped in the Bison-horn country by making an incision in the bark below the crown of the tree. 273

Mahua The *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*) is common everywhere except in the Abujhmar hills, and it is the spirit distilled from it that is sold at the State excise shops, except for a few toddy shops around Konta. There is very little illicit distillation, the State liquor distilled by licensees at outstills being very cheap, and the pass rules enabling Marias fairly easily to get an adequate supply of the spirit for the religious and domestic or social occasions at which its consumption is obligatory. The State does not tax the tapping of the sago-palm and toddy-palm, but merely tries to prohibit the sale and to limit the quantity of the resulting spirit which individuals may possess. [656] [651]

The Parjas and Bison-horn Marias sometimes make a wine from *mahua*, said to be red in colour, by several successive boilings and strainings of *mahua* flowers. It is called *suram*; I have never been able to get hold of any.

Landa *Landa*, a cause of half the homicide committed in Bastar, is the favourite intoxicant of the Bison-horn Marias, but is taboo to the Hill Maria. It is made of equal portions of husked rice or *kuthi* and *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*). The rice or *kuthi* is soaked well in water, strained off and pounded to a paste. The *mandia* grain is first damped and allowed to sprout, then dried in the sun for three or four days, and soaked, strained and pounded like the rice or *kuthi*. Both are then well mixed. They then take an earthenware *handi*, with holes in the bottom, and cover the holes with a lattice of bamboo slices, on which they place *siari* leaves. The mixed rice or *kuthi* and sprouted *mandia* are piled on these leaves. The *handi* is then placed on a *handi* of

[see cat. 116 | p. 421. – Anal 75]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

273 water, and the latter on the fire, so that the contents of the upper *handi* may be well steamed. When they have been steamed long enough, they are mixed in another *handi* with water to the consistency of *pej* gruel, and left in a cool place to ferment for five or six days, with the top lidded with leaves; when there is a smell like a fowl-house that badly needs cleaning they know that it is ready. *Landa* has to be provided in large quantities for all the guests at a wedding, when open house is kept; all present at funeral ceremonies need it, and some is poured over the menhir erected in the name of the dead man at the *Urashal*; it is given to all who have worked on a new tank at the completion ceremony; a *handi* full is carried by a lad's father and party when going to ask a man for his daughter as wife for the lad; on the sixth day after a child is born *landa* is given to the man and woman called from each house for the naming; at sowing, reaping, threshing and ploughing a little is given to every helper; and at each *pandum* each household makes and consumes some. At the Kuram Pandum, when the new *kuthi* is eaten, the *landa* should be made from new *kuthi*.

273 There is said to be some creeper from the flowers or sap of which an intoxicating liquor is made by the Bison-horn Marias in the Sukma zamindari, below the Tulsidongri mountains; of this no proof was forthcoming. Possibly the rumour referred to the known habit of the Marias drinking the sap of the wild vine *Vitis repanda* as a substitute for water. Otherwise water is their sole other drink, always from clear running streams, save in the dry southern fringes of the Bison-horn country in Konta tahsil.

271 **Other drinks**

271 The Hill Maria and the Bison-horn drink after meals. The latter drinks in the normal Indian way, and often from a brass *lota*, or at least a leaf-cup. The former, however, in the remoter villages still almost steals to the edge of the stream like a shy animal, kneels down, and puts his mouth to the water. Otherwise he stands in the water and scoops up water into his mouth with rapid moves of alternate hands.

Drinking

273 [169] When Bison-horn Marias drink *mahua* spirit, either the head of the family, in case of domestic ceremonies, or every drinker in general drinking bouts, before drinking pours a drop or two on the ground in the name of the Departed. Hill Marias follow the same practice in general drinking bouts, but the libation may be made before or after drinking. The liquor is brought in large earthen pots or in gourd bottles from the nearest liquor-shop. Hill Marias fill large leaf-cups from it, which they take round to all present and from them fill the small leaf-cups which each person has ready for himself; the Bison-horn Maria doles out his liquor either with the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

orke gourd ladle mentioned on page 66 above, or, in these days of sophistication, with a more or less exact imitation, known as a *hal-burria* or wine-ladle, made in bronze by the *cire perdue* process by the Gharwas, about the size of a large meerschaum pipe, with a hollow stem holed on the top of what would be the mouthpiece if it were a pipe; the 'bowl' is filled with liquor, which is poured out into the drinker's leaf-cup through this hole. Men, young women and girls, and boys drink; and mothers give liquor to their children except those only just born. Girls soon know when they have had enough, but even then never let the wine-bearer pass them without refilling their leaf-cup, which as soon as he has passed by they take over to the youth of their fancy.

273

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter IX

Domestic Life; Miscellaneous

A. Treatment of Sickness

164 758 Amongst the Hindus of the plains the Hill Maria has a great but totally undeserved reputation for his skilful use of herbs and roots to treat the sick. A few chronic sufferers may be met who have migrated to the Abujhmar hills in the fond hope of getting their sufferings mitigated by Maria medicine; they will readily tell you that the Marias were more ignorant than they themselves, though some have stayed on, finding the simple life and the climate of the hills tonic in themselves. Actually, the helplessness of the Hill Maria in the face of the simplest injury or ailment is pathetic. A simple sore beginning from a thorn in the buttock is neglected, till the whole buttock becomes one vast sore. The commonest and worst disease among them is, or was, yaws; whole households suffered, and many for the moment apparently free bore on their persons obvious indications that it was only a matter of time before the disease would reappear in the secondary or tertiary state. Innumerable cases came to my camp doctor for treatment in my 1930 tours. I sent him again in the summer of 1930 to tour in the area, and of 280 cases treated by him in 26 villages, 79 were yaws cases; in his next tour in the same villages, 69 new yaws cases were brought to him. Later tours were undertaken by him and other doctors for injecting yaws patients with salvarsan preparations, with great success; in my March 1934 return visit to this area I did not see one case, and everywhere the villagers were profuse in their thanks for deliverance from the scourge, for which they had known no antidote or alleviative. It is common also in the hilly parts of the Bison-horn country, and in the lower Indrawati and Godavari valleys, where the Bastar dispensaries get many a yaws patient from the Chanda and East Godavari districts of British India.

164 Syphilis is extremely rare among the Hill Marias; the 280 cases already mentioned as treated in summer 1930 did not include one case of venereal disease. Where it is common in Bastar the carriers have invariably been either police constables and forest guards or Rohilla and Telugu traders. Hill Marias have luckily been comparatively immune from the attentions of minor State

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

servants. Though the Bison-horn Marias are not free from either venereal disease or the visits of these gentry, yet they have been fairly successful in keeping their women to themselves, and have suffered little except in the south, where many of them go at times to Dummagudem and other Madras towns for work. If, however, the Telugus have given them venereal disease, they have more than repaid them with yaws. 164

Skin diseases, such as scabies, ringworm and eczema, are common, especially among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, who under Hindu influence are taking to the use of clothes. They cannot afford a change of clothing, and dispensary treatment is defeated at once if the old infected clothing cannot be discarded. Hill Marias wearing only scanty loin-cloths are far less affected; but even among them the 280 cases treated included 10 of scabies, 9 of ringworm and 7 of eczema. [177]

Eye complaints are frequent, owing largely, no doubt, to the habit of living and sleeping in dark unventilated huts and dormitories thick with smoke. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 16 of conjunctivitis, 5 of cataract, and 5 of other eye complaints.

Malaria is very common among the Bison-horn Marias, and in the Bijapur tahsil blackwater fever occurs. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 26 of malaria, only 4 of which were of children with badly enlarged spleens.

Old men and women are frequently seen crippled with rheumatism, and 17 of the 280 cases were of young men suffering from rheumatic complaints. Of the rest of the 280 cases, 24 were badly neglected ulcers, 6 bad foot-cracks, 25 simple stomach complaints, and 9 (including 3 of pyorrhoea) neuralgia from badly decayed teeth. No figures were kept of what is now the most obviously prevalent complaint, hydrocele, because it was impossible to treat this in camp. Glasfurd noted the prevalence of this in the sixties, and wrote in paragraph 66 of his Report that:—

'Hydrocele . . . is exceedingly common in the Chintulnar and Sookmah (i.e. Sukma) Talooks, and also around Dantewara and in all parts, indeed, lying adjacent to the Baila Deela range of hills. I should say that from 10 to 20 per cent. of the population in these parts are afflicted in this manner. Their own account of it is that it is caused by drinking the water of nullahs during the freshes.'

To me it now seems commoner in the Hill Maria country than elsewhere. The victims know no cure, and are only beginning to realise that something can be done for it in the dispensaries.

The idea that Marias are expert physicians is an amazing example of the general Hindu ignorance and superstitious dread of the aboriginal. In actual fact the Maria has only a few queer 757 752

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

nostrums like the use of red-ants for fever or python-flesh for pot-belly already mentioned, and cauterization is the only treatment he knows for simple injuries or foot-crack (just as he brands the flanks of ailing cattle). A Maria bitten by a rabid dog at His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler's Christmas camp at Kondagaon in 1927 refused point blank to be sent out of Bastar to Raipur for Pasteur treatment, but ultimately as a concession to the general anxiety asked to be given the body of the dog, and ate its liver.[1] To Marias illness is generally a manifestation of something malignant, either the magic of a human enemy or the ill-will of a god or spirit. At funerals, steps are taken to ascertain whether magic was the cause of death; in illness a medium is called in, or a *wede* or *gunia* with knowledge either of spells to defeat the spirits of evil or of the white magic means of blowing away illness, *jhara phukna*, epidemic or epizootic disease may be defeated either by palisading the village after sweeping it clean, and posting guards with bows and arrows to shoot the demons of illness, as was done by Hill Marias in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, or by special disease-riddance ceremonies like the annual ceremony described on page 140. Yet such is the Hindu's faith in their 'medicine' that in 1930 the late zamindar of Sukma hastened his death when in the last stages of diabetes by taking the advice of Bison-horn Maria 'doctors' or *gunia* to the effect that he had two intestines, one of which had withered like a dead plant, while the other, though withering, was still partly green and could be revived if the patient fed it with lumps of black earth.

Maria treatment of disease

B. Manufactures

In the preceding chapters frequent mention has been made of basketry, for Maria measures, grain bins, walls of houses and fences, dancing shields and so on. The Hill Marias are great basket-workers, men and women. The men make all the big basketry bins for storing grain and the large baskets sold at the markets, as well as dancing shields and fencing and matting; the women make the basketry measures, basketry plates and the smaller domestic baskets, as well as brooms of various grasses, which are generally plaited together at the top by basketry methods. In camps, Hill Maria youths almost invariably employ any spare time in basket-making. Bison-horn Marias on the contrary leave it almost entirely to their women, except that the men make the basketry caps that are the basis of the *tallagulla* bison-horn dancing headdress, and fencing.

1. Basketry

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 421. - AW 1934]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The favourite basketry material is bamboo, in thin strips varying from half an inch to three-quarters in width. Occasionally the wefts are of reed, coloured twine, or bamboos pared down to the thickness of twigs. Patterns are produced by using warps of dry bamboo strips from the heart-wood, and wefts of green strips from the outer rind. Nearly all the Hill Maria basketry is twilled, with each weft passing over and then under two or three warps, the topmost edge or rim being twilled-twined with a weft of thin bamboo pared to the size of twigs; and sometimes an ornamental plaited ring is worked around the central circumference. The measure baskets made by the Hill Marias and brought by them to the markets for sale or for measuring out the grain which they sell or the salt which they buy are of different shapes and sizes for each commodity. The grain measure is a *bhurki*, eight of which make a *soli*[1] or half a seer, i.e. a measure containing about a pound's weight of rice. There are slightly different sizes for rice, *kuthi*, mustard and pulses, according to the size of the different grains; all *bhurki* measures are little round baskets with slightly convex bottoms and uniform in diameter at top and bottom. For salt, a rather similar basket called a *kochli* is made, sufficient to hold one pice worth of salt, of roughly the same capacity as a *bhurki*; they are graduated for smaller quantities by being plastered inside with varying quantities of mud or cow-dung. *Mahua* flowers are measured by being heaped on shallow dishes called *kurli*, shaped like inverted cones or Annamese hats; each should contain 4 *pailis*, or 128 *bhurkis*, and those that I tested were remarkably accurate. The Hill Marias sell also the flat basket dishes already referred to, but rather larger than those they use for their own plates; they are called *badiya*.

2. Iron-work

Frequent mention has already been made of the Maria blacksmiths, and some of their tempering and manufacturing methods have been described in the section dealing with weapons and tools. These blacksmiths appear to be of Maria stock, speaking the Maria language, indistinguishable physically, having the same phratries and clans, and following the same customs. Enquiry in the big blacksmith settlements at Bagmundi Panera in Jagdalpur tahsil, at Kamargudem below the Aranpur ghat in Konta tahsil (both Bison-horn blacksmith villages), and from the Hill Maria blacksmiths at Nugur in Kutru zamindari, showed in every case that some of the blacksmiths either had themselves once been cultivators or had fathers who were originally

[1] 5 *tola* or Government rupees' weight of rice is contained in one *bhurki*: 8 *bhurki* = 1 *soli*, 4 *soli* = 1 *paili*, 2 *paili* = 1 *ori*, 2 *ori* = 1 *kuri*, 20 *ori* = 1 *khandi* = 40 *paili*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyeq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyeq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bugi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

each of which they split in two. These are piled on dry faggots, and covered over with dry brushwood, and burnt; when they think that they have been burnt long enough, they plaster wet mud over the heaps to prevent the escape of smoke, and leave them all night. Meanwhile they make the *mahua* charcoal, burning the heaps of dry logs and pouring water over the glowing embers; this can be collected overnight, but the *karra* charcoal is not ready till the morning. 325

They build a cylindrical furnace (*garum*) of clay, generally some 3½ feet high and tapering upwards, with a circumference at the base of nearly 5 feet and at the top of nearly 3 feet. At the back of the furnace a bamboo matting plastered with mud about 6 feet long and 3 feet broad is inclined from the mouth of the furnace at an angle of 35 or 40 degrees, and supported on four sticks fixed in the ground; this is called a *dikki*, and serves as a feeder. In front of the base of the furnace a hole is made for the blast, and at the side of the base a hole to serve as a flue for the slag; this flue is called *kachping*. It is plugged at first with wet clay, when the furnace is filled with fuel. The bellows (*arrangang*) are made from two sections of tree trunk about a foot in diameter and three inches thick; these are 'dug out' with axes or burnt out till the bottom is about an inch thick, and the tops are then lidded with cow-hide tied round the edge like the paper tops of English jam-jars. In the centre of each hide a small hole (*bukka*) is made, and one end of a two feet length of cord is passed through this and fixed to a short stick resting against the inside of the hide; the other end is tied to the end of a bamboo springe stick fastened at an angle to the ground in the earth behind the bellows. Each hide is soaked in water before use. The two bellows are placed side by side flat on the ground, and from holes in the front of their wooden walls two hollow bamboo tubes about two feet long converge to meet at the blast hole of the furnace, or rather at an earthen pipe made in prolongation of this hole; the pipe is made of wet clay plastered round a core of leaves; one end is plastered to the blast hole with clay, and the leaf core is then removed.

The bottom of the furnace is filled with a mixture of rice chaff and about a pound of *karra* charcoal broken small; this is fired through the bellows hole by blowing lighted charcoal through the earth pipe or *tuyère*, but the furnace is first filled to the brim with *karra* charcoal piled on the mixture of charcoal and chaff. The smith stands with one foot on each bellows, and depresses each in turn with alternate foot, supporting himself with a stick held in each hand; as his foot descends it closes the *bukka* hole, and the air is forced through the bamboo pipe and the earth *tuyère* into the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

325 furnace, which is soon in full blast: the depression of the bellows also depresses the end of the springe stick, which springs up as soon as the pressure of the foot is released and so lifts the hide with it and allows the bellows to get a fresh charge of air.

Meanwhile the iron ore after its preliminary burning in *saja* bark has been broken up with the hammer into small lumps and mixed with charcoal, the mixture being placed in readiness on the *dikki* feeder platform. When the furnace has been in blast for about fifteen minutes and the charcoal in it about half burnt, the assistant slowly passes the mixed ore and charcoal down the feeder into the mouth of the furnace, until none is left. After an hour, one of the men clears the clay plaster from the mouth of the slag flue, below which a little trench about six inches wide has been dug, and the slag falls through the flue into this trench. The heat is sometimes so great that the bellows man, instead of holding a support stick in both hands, holds in one a winnow or a piece of matting which he uses as a fan on his body. The whole furnace is generally roofed over as a protection from the sun; and in the hot weather, if smelting is unavoidable, it is done at night, though during the *mahua* and forest fruit collection season in March and April all the forges and furnaces are closed down. Smelting takes 3½ hours, and in the winter one lot of ore is smelted at dawn and another in the afternoon. They keep a small stock of ore for smelting in the rains, when they believe it useless to look for good ore.

After the 3½ hours' smelting the rough spongy bloom of iron that results is removed from the furnace to an ordinary open forge, where it is re-smelted in *mahua* charcoal and beaten out with the *mutti* hammer on a boulder of stone; this refining takes about an hour.

A furnace of this kind takes about 50 lb. of charcoal and 26 lb. of ore; it yields about 8 lb. of bloom, which on refining produces 4 lb. of iron, still more waste comes from which when it is worked up into implements.

326 The open forge which he uses for refining or for ordinary smithy work the Maria smith calls *o'idal*, the word used for the domestic hearth. He digs a small hole with the pointed end of his *mutti* hammer, crushes the earth so excavated with the blunt end of the hammer and makes it into mud with water. A little mud is smeared on the lip of the hole and the end of a stick laid on this, over which more mud is plastered till it is covered with a firm little mound of mud; the stick must slope downwards towards the centre of the hole. The stick is then worked round and round in the little mound of mud to make a firmly consolidated air passage through it,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and removed. This air passage serves for the forge the same purpose as the earthen pipe *tuyère* for the smelting furnace, and the bamboo pipes of the bellows are arranged to converge at its entrance. The hole originally excavated is filled with *mahua* charcoal. 326

The smiths' only tools, which they make themselves, are the pointed and blunt ended hammer or *mutti* already mentioned, and long iron pincers with long noses, which they call *andes*. They generally have large and small hammers. The haft is inserted in a hole right through the maximum thickness of the head, at a point about a third of its length from the broad flat end; the remaining two-thirds tapers to a rough point.

3. Brass-work

The brass workers already frequently mentioned, unlike the blacksmiths, are by now practically a distinct caste. Hindus and Murias call them Ghasias, which is the name applied elsewhere in Central India, Chhota Nagpur and Orissa to one of the lowest and most degraded of the untouchable castes, whose usual occupation is grass-cutting and horse-tending, while some sections make combs for the hair or for weavers' looms. Even in Bastar, where many of them are skilled artisans, the wildest Maria holds them in profound contempt. The Maria calls them Gharwa. In outward appearance there is little difference between them and their Muria or Maria neighbours, and probably in the remote past they may have been recruited from these or other aboriginal stocks. Rohilla traders and oppressive zamindari managers in the past have often employed Ghasia duns to extract money from Marias; such is the Maria's feeling of degradation if a Ghasia comes near his house that the villagers would combine to pay a miserable rupee or two to these extortioners to get rid of their foul presence. 326 564

The Gharwas buy old brass or bronze in the markets or through Hindu middlemen. They make their brass ornaments, spoons, bells and Muria hunting horns by the *cire-perdue* process. The first or inner core of their moulds is made of earth from white-ants' hills, and known as *mati-kutan*; the earth is puddled with water and moulded to the needed shape in the hands. This is dried in the sun, and when hard covered with a coating of beeswax, on which the desired pattern is made in relief with long thin threads or small pellets of beeswax; various patterns can be produced by whipping these threads round the circumference of the *mati-kutan* core, or applying them on the sides of its plain wax covering in coils, spirals, suns, mooms, lozenges, twined, or in any other pattern; and the pellets are used to produce bands of dots. The wax is warmed till it is pliant in the hands, and then forced through a tool called a 326 [439]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

326 *pichki* for the making of these thin wax threads. The *pichki* consists of two parts each shaped like the letter T, but with a short stem and the cross-piece or handle three times as long as the stem. One T-piece is entirely of hard wood, handle and stem being cylindrical and smoothly rounded; but the stem of the second T-piece is hollowed so that the solid stem of the first may fit closely in it, and at its bottom it has a brass cap with holes like the lid of a pepper pot. A lump of soft wax is placed in this hollow stem, and then the solid stem of the other T-piece is fitted into the hollow socket, and the Gharwa presses the two cross-piece handles together in one hand, so as to force wax through the perforations like meat through a mincing machine.

When the core has been covered with wax and the wax pattern, it is known as ***main-kutan***, ***main*** meaning wax. The ***main-kutan*** is covered over closely with another layer of white-ant clay with a drain-hole left at one end; this clay must be pressed firmly on to the wax pattern, to take the impress of it. It is dried and heated enough to melt the wax, which is run off from the drain-hole. It remains to replace the melted wax with molten metal. The ***main-kutan*** as it stands is not strong enough, and so it is again covered over with a thick coating of white-ant clay mixed with water in which certain leaves and grasses have been cooked, which gives the clay a greenish colour. At the top, over the drain-hole through which the wax was poured out, a large clay-cup or ***khondi*** is plastered as part of this new clay covering, and the whole affair is now known as a ***kashut-chancha***. This is hardened in the sun, and then baked in a furnace with the ***khondi*** uppermost; the metal melts and falls through the drain-hole into the place occupied by the wax, and takes the pattern left by the wax on the clay that was plastered over it.

323 There are no potters in the heart of the Abujhmar hills, partly because in the valleys of the clear rocky mountain streams there is no suitable clay, and partly because the Hill Maria still grows and uses gourds for many purposes, or else uses bamboo tubes. But all now use earthen pots at least for cooking, and for the Pot of the Departed, many also for drawing and storing water. At every market, therefore, in the valleys and plains below there are potters who do a considerable trade with the Hill Marias, and some have settled in their villages like Nugur and Lakka between the Kutru foot of the hills and the Indrawati, while, of course, potters are plentiful in the Bison-horn country. [564] The potters belong to the great Kumhar potter caste, at least in name, though here again many differ little in type from surrounding Marias. They use the common type of Indian potters' wheel, and

4. Pottery

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

there is no need to describe their processes in this book. The potter, like the Gharwa, expects immediate payment for his goods and is not a tribal servant remunerated with a retainer of grain at harvest like the blacksmith; but he often takes payment in grain. For a Bison-horn Maria marriage, the potter will make and supply as many pots as are required, but after the marriage is paid a bullock, cow or calf for his work. 326

C. *Musical Instruments*

1. Drums

The Bison-horn Marias use the large double-membrane drums called *birya-dol*, of which typical specimens are shown in the illustrations in Plates VIII and IX. The hollow cylindrical body of these drums is a section of the trunk of a *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) or a *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*) tree up to sixteen or seventeen inches in diameter. The right hand membrane is made of goat-skin, even by those who have the goat as totem, and this is struck by the finger-tips of the open right hand. The other membrane is of cow- or bullock-hide, and this is struck with a bamboo stick carried in the left hand, and sometimes adorned at the end with a bunch of the pea-pod iron pellet-bells that are attached to the *tirdudi* bamboo dancing-sticks of their women. The membranes are stitched to each other by thongs of cow-hide criss-crossed over the outside of the wooden cylinder. That cylinder is sometimes as much as three feet long, and the weight is very considerable. The drum is slung over the right shoulder by a sling of hide or cord, sometimes adorned with cowries, and is carried obliquely across the stomach, the right end being the higher. There is no season among them when drum-beating is taboo or *melo* (their term for the Hill Maria *polo*). They have different drum rhythms for different dances, for weddings, for success in the chase, and a dactylic beat, for the drum beaten from the roof of the house to announce death; for the *pen-harsita* dance at their festival corresponding to the Hill Maria Koqsar they use the drum-stick only, and not their right hands, the rhythm being seven short beats followed by two long beats. 534 [824] [533]

These *dol* drums are occasionally found in Hill Maria villages also, but are a sign of cultural contact with the Bison-horn Marias. The essential Hill Maria drum is the single-membrane *turam* drum. The body is a wooden bowl, generally the rounded base of the hollow trunk of an exhausted *salphi* (*Caryota urens*) tree, trimmed with the waist-knife to bowl-shape; sometimes a section of *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) trunk is similarly whittled into bowl-shape. The membrane is dried untanned cow-hide, hair outwards, and this is [824]

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

534 attached by criss-cross thongs of the same material to rings of the same material tied round the outside of the bowl in its centre and just above its base. The thongs are passed through holes pierced in the overlap of the membrane with the point of the knife or of an arrow, and pulled taut without anything being done to guard the edge of the membrane from tearing. Occasionally pottery bowls [177] are used instead of *salphi* or *bija* wood, a practice learnt both from the Teluguized Gonds of the south and the northernmost Murias of Antagarh tahsil.

533 The *turam* drum is placed on the ground between the outspread legs of the player, who sits on his buttocks with legs bent at the knee. The drum-sticks are held lightly between the index and middle fingers, the right stick being somewhat larger than the left. [784] It is taboo to beat a *turam* except at Koqsar and weddings, though nowadays most of them regard the taboo as lifted for a dance at a high official's camp. The ordinary rhythm at Koqsar and weddings is :— .

The rhythm thus begins and ends on a long beat with the right hand, with six short left hand and five short right hand beats alternately in between.

534 I saw once at Nugur a small drum of the *turam* shape made with a hollow gourd bowl.

When it is taboo to use the *turam* drums, boys use what are called by them *pak-dol* or *veddur-dol*, literally 'bamboo-drums', which are really split-stringed instruments. They are made of two-foot lengths of the thick bamboo called *noli-veddur* by the Marias, or *bendri-bans* in Halbi. The outer rind of the bamboo is prised apart from the rest of the bamboo for a length of about eighteen inches, three inches being left joined at each end. The prised rind is about one-eighth of an inch thick and an inch and a half wide. It is raised from the body of the bamboo by two small bridges (*barga*) of bamboo inserted at each end as near its junctions with the body of the bamboo as possible, and is made into three 'strings' by two longitudinal cuts. The drum is laid on the ground and rubbed firmly into position in the dust, and dust is poured along its sides; the 'strings' are then struck with light drum-sticks in the same way as the *turam*. The Bison-horn Marias do not make this.

Brass dish-shaped gongs (*gatta*) struck with sticks used, till a few years ago, to be an indispensable part of the bride-price or

[see cat. 116, pp. 421-422, - Ans-45]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

sponsalia at a Hill Maria wedding. They were brought to the markets by itinerant Telugu dealers, but for some reason or other they have ceased to stock them, and the modern wedding takes place without them. Several remain, and are now highly prized, but are generally brought out for a camp dance, along with any old brass pot or piece of metal with which a clanging noise can be made.

2. Gongs

A few northern Hill Marias and, occasionally, Bison-horn Marias use the brass *tori* hunting horns of the Murias, and towards the Parja country the Bison-horn Marias sometimes imitate these by a 'horn' of strips of palm-leaf wound like a bandage round and away from the end of a wooden mouth-piece, each fold being gummed on to the edge of the preceding fold to the extent of the overlap.

3. Other instruments

Some Bison-horn Marias use bamboo flutes to accompany the *dol* drums at wedding dances, but I had no chance of examining one closely. They use also little iron jews-harps (*kach-tendor*) made by the blacksmiths, but of the primitive type, with the tongue straight and welded to the bend between the two arms of the frame, and of the same length as the arms, but only a thin narrow strip of iron. They say they have also a small wooden stringed instrument which they call *kikir*, probably a derivative of the Indian *chikara*.

The only other instruments are the bells and jingling anklets already mentioned in describing the dancing-dress of Hill Maria men and the dancing-sticks of the Bison-horn Maria women, unless mention is made here of the bull-roarers, which Hill Maria boys call *ate* and make of a strip of split bamboo, pointing one end and notching it near the point for a bark string, with which, looped round one finger, they whirl the bull-roarer round counter-clockwise. It seems to be purely a toy, and to have no religious or magical significance. At various camps the lads present made them on request; none were holed at the bottom.

4. Bull-roarers

D. Dancing

The description of Maria dancing given by Russell and Hiralal (III, pp. 136-7) is brief and misleading; it possibly relates to Marias of the Chanda plains, though the dancers illustrated are wearing typical Hill Maria dancing-dress. Russell and Hiralal do not mention the remarkable Bison-horn dancing.

1. Hill Maria

It is taboo for Hill Marias to dance except on the night of Koqsar and at weddings, or at the rare visits of State officials. For practical purposes, therefore, it may be said that they dance only

[See cnt. 116 p. 423 - Analysis]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

535 in the early summer, between the harvest-home and sowing. It is, therefore, not surprising that their dancing is poor and monotonous in comparison to that of the Bison-horn Marias, the Telugnized Koitor of the south, and the Parjas, Gadbas and Murias of the north. There is nothing to prevent married women joining in; they always join the Koqsar dances, and if generally the wedding dances are restricted to unmarried girls, even old women often take part in dances at official camps.

533 The essential feature of the Hill style of dancing is that it is *pata-eudowna*, dancing to song, and the singing is far more important 535 than the drumming. The theme of the song and the lines with meaning are sung by three youths or two youths with a girl between them, who are known as the *pata-bhita* or 'song-fellows', who walk up and down as they sing in front of the line or ring of dancers; they are shown clearly in the illustration opposite. All the dancers answer each stave sung by the 'song-fellows' in full-throated chorus, usually a meaningless refrain. The opening refrain and the chorus refrain are sometimes soft and melancholic, almost wailing; the refrains are melodious and lingering, far more intelligible to the European than any Hindu music.

535 Normally the dancers form a long line, not a circle, though the line is curved and revolves in a circle, always right-handed. Sometimes the line is of men and boys only, sometimes (as in the illustration opposite) the girls are all together at the far end of the line, but more often, if not invariably after they have warmed to the dance and any initial shyness has worn off, there is a girl between every pair of men or boys. But whether the dancers on his right and left are girls or not, each dancer puts his right hand round the neck of the dancer on his right, and his left hand round the waist of the dancer on his left. The right foot is moved slowly to the right, the body being raised on the toes of both feet; the heels are raised twice and lowered without touching the ground, and then raised a third time and brought to the ground, when the left foot is brought up to the right foot and the raising and lowering of the heels are repeated with both feet together; the right foot is then moved away as at first, and the steps repeated. Each time the body is raised with the heels, the male dancers make their bunches of buttock-bells clash together by a jerk of their posteriors. So the whole line gyrates very slowly, in perfect time; but as this step is never varied, and the only change is in the songs, the dancing is monotonous to a spectator. Actually the jolliest part of the performance at camp dances is the hilarious entrance of the dancers in a rampaging column of fives or sixes, lads and girls mixed, yelling, whistling and laughing, on to the dancing ground, preceded

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE XV

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29

HILL MARIA DANCERS

482
445

HILL MARIA DOMESTIC LIFE
Fetching water from river
(Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt)

[Facing p. 184]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

535 by a few men with kettle-drums and more with clanging brass gongs; to this babel of sound must be added the clatter of the innumerable iron neck-rings and the bracelets of the girls, and the clangour of the great bunches of bells on the buttocks of the male dancers. The whole scene is lit up by blazing torches and log fires.

535 831 Often a slight element of obscenity is introduced by one or two men dressed as tiger-men with large imitation *membra virilia* which they brandish at each other and at the women, girls and youths, rushing ludicrously here, there, and everywhere, and provoking such laughter that often the dancers have to break off their singing to join in.

535 868 There is no formal dancing teaching. Boys are allowed to join in the dances when they are about six, and girls when nine or ten. They learn simply by imitating their elders.

535 574 Men of all ages, married and unmarried, youths, boys, young wives and girls join in the Bison-horn Maria dances. There appears to be no time of year at which they are forbidden to dance, though naturally the spring and the summer, when they are freest from field-work, see most of their dancing. If at this time of year you invite villagers to dance at your camp, the throb of the drums attracts more and more men and girls from surrounding villages; for the tradition is that no invitation is needed, and that open house should be kept at a wedding or any other occasion when there will be dancing.

2. Bison-horn Maria

535 292 There is no mixing of men and girls as in the Abujhmar hills. The girls, in their ordinary finery of beads and iron and brass neck-rings, and wearing their head snoods and fillets of polished brass, have no special dancing apparatus except the *tirdudi* dancing-sticks ornamented with iron bells which they hold upright in their right hands, clashing the bells in unison by striking the ground with the butts of the sticks on their left front as they bring their left foot across in front of their right; each girl rests her left arm on the back of the left shoulder of the girl on her left. They gyrate to the right, like the Hill Marias, but the Bison-horn women have a far more rapid step; the right foot is moved to the right and slightly to the rear, and the left foot is then brought across the right leg to the right front, while the ground is struck with the butts of the jingling dancing-sticks. The girls in this way dance fast around the outside of the dancing men, sometimes singing as they go; but the unceasing throb of the men's great drums drowns their song.

535 The women's step never varies, whatever the dance; but the men have many different dances and steps, and can improvise a dance on practically any theme, such as asking for pork or *landa*. Their *pen-harsita* or Koqsar dance is a very fast, side-stepping

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AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535 dance, which makes everyone laugh, while all the mediums of neighbouring villages attend, and, possessed by their godlings, leap wildly to and fro, carrying bunches of *saja* leaves in their hands or holding them over their matted hair, to the general merriment. The chief wedding dance is the bison dance, every male turning at intervals in his paces to smile and 'glad-eye' the next dancer, and each then pretending to butt the other with his bison-horns; in another figure they similarly mimic two cocks fighting. The greatest sign of skill is to be able to impale on the tip of the horns a piece of grass twisted into a ring and thrown on the ground; the dancer may before this pretend to be a young and frisky bull, butting at wisps of grass or trees, or hurling them into the air to toss them on his horns. I have seen a dancer pick a small finger ring off the ground on the tip of his horns. As among the Hill 535 Marias, and indeed most Central Provinces Gonds, there is always 831 a comic and obscene element; men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear or goat fur, and carrying clubs, nets and dummy guns, rush in and out amongst the dancers, making obscenely suggestive gestures with their clubs at the dancing or onlooking girls, and provoking roars of laughter.

[473] There is generally a pause for *landa* or *mahua* spirit sooner or later, after which the girls sometimes, before resuming the dance, sit in a bunch swaying from their hips and singing short catchy refrains, with either frankly sexual meaning or no meaning at all; and often the lads opposite make the whole company laugh by imitating them in falsetto.

The dancing and singing, it need hardly be said, lead on frequently to love-making, couples retiring into the darkness, or else starting an affair ending in experimental union and perhaps, later, in matrimony.

E. Other Amusements

524 The Bison-horn Marias' favourite pastime of cock-fighting has already been described (see page 162 above). Small wooden toys are made for the children, very crude representations of tigers or [764] other animals; and a pathetic sight at the graves of children are these toys left there for the *kasal*[1] of the children to play with. I have never found any Marias making string figures; and they have 526 shown no interest in attempts to demonstrate them. The Murias and Bhattras have innumerable games in which all the village youth takes part in the cold weather and spring nights, many of which

[1] Literally the 'Gone' used of the spirits of the dead.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

involve considerable physical exertion and have proved excellent material for the physical training of the boys in the State schools; at the Muria *gotul* dormitories these games often take the place of dancing and singing. But the only Hill Maria villages which have anything of the kind appear to be those of the Padalibhum and Tapalibhum *pargenas* which are gradually adopting the dormitory organization of their Muria neighbours; and some Bison-horn villages on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country are beginning to copy the Murias and Bhattras. Early to bed is the rule for old and young in Maria villages, and the child from the beginning learns to copy his father's activities; his playthings soon become small bows and arrows, fishing-rods and snares, skill in the use of which will make him an asset to the community. Stilt-walking in the early monsoon, occasional use of bull-roarers and bamboo drums, crude ornamentation of the walls of houses or the carving of ornamental combs and beadwork seem to be the only other recreations of Hill Maria youth.

526 [868] 883

F. Reckoning Time

The Hill Maria names for the months have already been given (page 129), and it has been said that in general the Bison-horn Marias know and use the local Hindu names. They call a month *lonj*, the word used for the moon; but all, even Bison-horn Marias, have to think hard before they can tell you what month it is, and there may be a certain amount of argument on the point. Throughout Bastar there is something of this uncertainty; the local Hindu months are named after festivals such as Goncha, Dasehra and Diwali; and the Bastaria, even if he adopts these, does not like to observe them on the same date in every village, because that would deprive him of the chance of taking part in the celebrations at the surrounding villages.

805

Though the Bison-horn Maria knows the Hindu names for the days of the week, and uses them in his conversation, the Hill Maria does not. If word comes to a Hill Maria headman that in thirteen days' time he and his villagers have to go to the tahsil court, or to work on the annual road repairs, he will make a tally string with thirteen knots and undo one every day, leaving to keep the appointment on the morning of the last knot. These tally strings are also kept by those who attend markets at fairly regular intervals; and in a murder case, of which the villagers had decided to suppress or postpone informing the police because it was the harvest season, the wife of the murdered man, determined to get justice, had kept a tally string on which she tied a fresh knot every

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

805 morning after the murder, ultimately going to the police when there were fifty-four knots on it.

The Maria names for the times of day belong to this sub-chapter, but as they follow so closely the daily routine, I give them in the next sub-chapter.

G. *Daily Routine*

512 805 The following list of times of day was taken from Bison-horn Marias. It is more comprehensive than the Hill Maria nomenclature but the latter understand or have similar expressions in their own dialect for the Gondi expressions used by the Bison-horn Marias, though phrases dealing with ploughing or buffaloes, and Halbi expressions, unless corruptions of Gondi expressions, are not current in the hills. In the list, Ha. stands for Halbi, Hi. for Hindi and G. for Gondi.

Hāchakusānā (G.)	2 or 3 a.m., the time when the *kāch-pitte* or king-crow calls '*Thākur-jī, thākur-jī!*' in the forest.
Kōrrā-kusānā (G.) / *Kukra-bastan* (Ha.)	Cock-crow.
Pal-tōrr-tintā (G.) / *Hal-jovto-berā* (Ha.)	3 a.m., time to put the yoke or *hal* on the oxen.
Pharphar-berā (Ha.)	When the darkness is fleeing; *pharphar* is Gondi, the Nagpur Gonds saying *phalphal-āṅā* for this time.
Narkām (G.)	Just before sunrise.
Tirtir-pōrrā (G.) / *Tirtir-berā* (Ha.)	The time when the sun is rising 'tir-tir' above the horizon.
Ek-pōrrā (G.) / *Pānkhēl-berā* (Ha.)	7 a.m., when the women go to fetch water (*nā*).
Hāt-pōrrā (G.) / *Hāto-berā* (Ha.)	9 to 10 a.m., time to go to the market (*hāt*); sometimes they say '*hāt-pej-berā*', the time to have *pej* gruel before leaving for the market.
Jānā-pōrrā (G.) / *Pej-berā* (Ha.)	About 10.30 a.m., the time for the morning meal of gruel (*jānā* or *pej*).
Tallā-pōrrā (G.) / *Mund-berā* (Ha.) or *Ād-pōrrā* (G.)	12 noon, when the sun is directly over the head (*tallā* or *mund*), or when the day is half (*ād*, corruption of the Hindi *ādhā*) over.
Aṛhāī-berā (Ha.)	2.30 p.m.; literally '2½-time'; though Halbas do not know the clock, yet they use the expression, and so do nearly all Bison-horn Marias.
Hirrī-pōrrā (G.) / *Kathī-berā* (Ha.)	About 4 p.m., when flocks of green parrots (*hirrī, kathī*) invade the fields, and the women return from the fields.
Rafraf-berā (Ha.) or *Rāṭchandā-berā* (Ha.)	When the sun is half below the horizon. '*Rafraf*' is probably Gondi. Sunset in Maria is '*pōrrā digmānā*'.
Kōndāng-tikānā (G.) / *Gai-goru-berā* (Ha.)	Time for tying up cattle.
Mas-mas (G.) / *Masmas-berā* (Ha.)	When the light is fast going.
Jhul-pul-berā (Ha.) / *Phul-sandhī* (Hi.)	About 7.30 p.m., when the flowers all shed their greatest fragrance.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Bhainā-andhyār (Ha.)		'Buffalo-darkness', when the evening has become as dark as a buffalo's hide.
Tindī-tindānā (G.)	}	9.30 p.m., the time of eating (*tindānā*) the supper of boiled rice (*bhāt*).
Bhāt-kerā (Ha.)		
Bhāt-nāsā-kerā (Ha.)	..	The time when drowsiness (*nīnd*) comes over one after supper.
Nerjāl (G.)	..	Midnight. The Hill Marias say *nerjām*.

The routine of the Bison-horn family's day is roughly as follows. The woman rises at cock-crow, and arranges her hair, but does not wash. She then pounds grain with the *usṭal* husker. Her husband gets up when it is time to yoke the bullocks, and goes off to plough. She then sweeps out the house and its surroundings, and goes to the river to fetch water, and on her return cooks the *pej* gruel for her husband's meal; any spare time is occupied in basket-making. He generally comes home for this meal, but when the field-work is heavy, she takes it to him there. If they have had their meal in the house (the women always eat after their men have been satisfied), they return together to the field, where the wife works as hard as the husband, often even ploughing. She stays in the field till 'parrot-time' and then goes back to the house to prepare the evening meal, bathing naked on her way in a river pool. Her husband comes back at dusk, and ties up the cattle in the *bari* or in the byre; the children bring them home, calling stray animals with a kind of shrill yodelling. He then bathes naked in the men's pool, and returns for his supper and sleep.

I have not attempted to recapitulate the daily routine of the Hill Maria, most of which, including his four meals, has been detailed in the preceding pages, which have generally dealt primarily with him rather than the Bison-horn Maria.

H. Fire-Making

All Marias and most Murias make fire by means of a fire-saw.[4] A piece of bamboo about 1½ or 1¾ inches in diameter and about 16 inches long is split down the centre for about half its length, and wedged open with a pebble or a bit of stick at the split end. This 'hearth' stick is called by Hill Marias a *nogho*, and is explained by them as the 'mother' of the fire. Another length of bamboo, perhaps a little longer than the 'hearth', is split in half, and one half is trimmed along the top of the split to a clean, sharp edge; this trimmed half they call the *kamia*. A flat boulder is selected and firmly planted on the ground. On top of this are placed dry leaves, or a bit of old rag, if available; and two men hold the 'hearth' down by its ends on the stone and the leaves, so that the leaves are under the V formed by the wedged split. The third man then saws

[4] [See cat. 116, p. 423. – Haimendorf]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

372 his *kanda* by the sharp edge between their hands across the split in the ' hearth ' and at right angles to the ' hearth ', rapidly increasing the speed of his sawing; this friction soon engenders smoke and a spark, which falls through the ' hearth ' on to the little heap of inflammable bamboo sawdust that has fallen with the sawing on to the dead leaves or rag. Sawing is at once stopped, and the ' hearth ' lifted off the sawdust with great care by the kneeling men, who gently blow on the spark till it spreads and kindles the sawdust, when they fold the leaves carefully over sawdust and sparks and take the packet off to the place where a fire is to be lit, kindling first heaps of dry grass, and with this small sticks and finally logs. They are very quick in the process. I introduced a race in the tribal sports at the Maharani Sahiba's Dasehra celebrations, in which teams of three had to run fifty yards, make fire, and run with it another fifty yards to kindle a bonfire; and Hill Maria teams invariably won; the timing of the whole process, from the start till the bonfire was well alight, was eighty-seven seconds. In the [177] Muria and some Bison-horn Maria tracts the use of matches is coming in.

There appears to be no ritual occasion on which fire has to be kindled in this way. The first pile of dry wood at the firing of the *penda* fields, and the fires for cooking sacrificial meals, are kindled [179] from a burning log brought from the Hearth of the Departed in the *kasyep-gaita's* or *penna's* house.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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PART IV

Religion and Magic

[p. 191]
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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter X

The Earth, the Clan-God and the Village Mother

771 In the scanty literature dealing with Bastar, few things have received briefer attention than the religion of the Marias. Russell and Hiralal try in twenty-one pages (III, 97-118) to summarize the religion, magico-religious ideas and festivals of all the Gonds of the Central Provinces; their account, therefore, necessarily must be vague about the Marias, and on Bastar generally is in many respects misinformed; there is a tendency to prefer the picturesque to the unvarnished facts, as in the accounts of the alleged human sacrifices at Dantewara and of *Doctor Deo*. I have already stated that there has never been the slightest proof that the former ever took place, and pointed out that, if they did, they were semi-State Hindu ceremonies under the aegis of the Raja and the hereditary Rajput high-priest of his tutelary goddess Danteshwari. *Doctor Deo* is represented as a principal god of 'north Bastar'; actually the Mohammedan sub-assistant surgeon 'deified' as *Doctor Deo* died of cholera on the Keskal pass as he was returning to Raipur from Bastar, and his spirit has been attached by the surrounding Murias as a peon or servant to the shrine of Bhangaram at the head of the pass, where from generations past the final scene of disease-riddance or *bohorani* ceremonies among the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur and Kondagaon tahsils and the adjacent Bastar Irredenta tracts of Jeypore had taken place; here the scapegoat from Jagdalpur is at last driven forth into the wilderness, and hundreds of litters or model *rath* chariots have been deposited in front of Bhangaram with scape-doves and the sweepings of houses visited by epidemics. *Doctor Deo's* cult is a later and very minor accretion of this ancient cult.

General: previous writers

776 618 Glasfurd in his Report correctly noted that, like the Jhoria and other surrounding Murias, the Marias of the Abujhmar hills had in several villages Log-gods which they called *pen* (plural, *penk*); but he did not realize that there was one of these *penk* for each clan. This was pointed out on page 42 of the *Gazetteer*, though the clans are spoken of there as 'tribes' or by the Hindu term *gotra*; the suggestion there made that the system of each clan in its own area worshipping its own *pen* was even then breaking down, was at least premature, considering that it is still in full force in the Antagarh

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

parts of the Abujhmar hills, if, as will be seen, it is weaker on the Kutru side and has been modified among the Bison-horn Marias.

Even among the Gonds of the British districts of the Central Provinces bordering on the Nagpur District, the special godlings such as Pharsi Pen, Matiya, Ghangra, Chawar and Palo (see Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 99) seem to be only incidental and later additions to their religion. There the clans are divided into groups or phratries according to the number of Little Gods or Chuddur Penk kept as domestic godlings in a pot inside the house of the head of the family; and for each clan there is, or was, somewhere in the Province, a Holy Circle or *Pen-hara* beneath a sacred *saja* tree, in the fork of which would be tied a grass bundle containing for the whole clan a set of godlings of the same number as the Chuddur Penk in the houses of members of the clan; this set is in reality the Big-God or Bhera Pen (a name commonly Hinduized as Bura Deo or even Mahadeo) of the clan. Just as the Chuddur Penk pot in the house not infrequently contains, besides the actual Chuddur Penk, a vermillioned shell or pebble or knot of wood representing the 'Chuddur (small) Mahadeo' or Narayan Deo or some other godling from whom the family may believe itself to have received some past help, so too the grass bundle at the Holy Circle may contain representations of Bara (big) Mahadeo, Narayan Deo, Pharsi Pen, Matiya, Ghangra, Palo, etc. But it is hopeless to expect the householder or the *Pen-gadwa* custodian of the Holy Circle to name each of the Chuddur Penk or their Bhera Pen counterparts; they have no individual names, but collectively are the clan-god. Apart from these Chuddur Penk *penates*, many houses in British districts have, in a recess in the wall or in the corner of the room, corresponding to the corner of the *lonu* where the Maria keeps the Pot of the Departed, a row of little plaster mounds representing the souls of the Departed, unless these have been taken to the *Pen-gadwa* priest at the Holy Circle and there re-united by him in the *gadwa* marriage ceremony to the clan.

Gond religion outside Bastar; the Chuddur Penk

Lucie-Smith and others record of the Marias of the Chanda District that they also have these Chuddur Penk, with phratries or groups of clans differentiated according to the number of the Penk. When, finding definitely no trace of them among the Hill or Bison-horn Marias of Bastar, I suggested to Dr. Wood, the present Bishop of Nagpur, who worked as a missionary for years in Chanda, that the information about the Chanda Marias was wrong, he very kindly had further enquiries made by the Rev. S. G. Patwardhan, an Indian Christian missionary with an intimate knowledge of

The Chuddur Penk not known in Bastar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chanda Gonds, who reported definitely that in the Chanda Maria villages of Bidri, Yemla, Burgi, Uddera and Kandodi the Marias had one three-god, six four-god, eight five-god, eight six-god and eight seven-god clans. The difficulty is, of course, that the word 'Maria', as we have seen, is not a Gondi word and may cover more than one ethnic group, as in Bastar; there certainly are differences between the plains and Hill Marias of Chanda, and the point needs to be cleared by verification in definite hill villages in the Chanda portion of the Abujhmar hills. My enquiries from some of these villagers who visited my camps in Bastar along with Bastar relatives never produced any Chanda Maria who admitted belonging to a god-group or having Chuddur Penk in his house. Admittedly even in Nagpur District, Gonds are reluctant to show their Chuddur Penk, and Koitor everywhere have to be handled delicately before they will talk of the other domestic cult, that of the Departed. Nevertheless, I have known many Marias intimately, and have had them talking freely on these questions; and I have seen the contents of every pot, gourd, packet or other receptacle in many a Hill and Bison-horn Maria house: but I never found any domestic godling, and they have always denied having them, or god-groups founded on them. So likewise did adjacent Jhoria and Gotal Murias, though some of them knew of Gonds who had immigrated into Bastar from the Central Provinces with domestic godlings and god-groups. The only Bastar Gonds of whom it has ever been reported that they have domestic gods in addition to the clan-god are the 'Telugu Gonds' towards Konta (by which is probably meant the Dorla), stated on page 42 of the *Gazetteer* to have for each family a separate god represented by a few pieces of *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) wood; but the Dorla villages that I visited near Jaggergonda had no such family gods.

It may, therefore, be taken as certain that neither Hill nor Bison-horn Marias of Bastar have the cult of the Chuddur Penk, and that their clan-groups are not founded on them. If they are to be fitted into the traditional scheme of god-groups by persons who dislike exceptions to a rule apparently so universal among other Gonds, they must come in as the missing one-god group!

Much has been said in the preceding chapters, particularly the chapter on agriculture, on the cults of Bhum (the earth), the Clan-god and the Village Mother. In some sense, all three are the same, all Marias, Hill and Bison-horn, being the children of Bhum. They will tell you sometimes that the Pen clan-god and the Village Mother are also Bhum; and in some places the cairn or table-stone below the sacred *soja* tree does duty

General nature of Bastar Maria cult of Earth, Clan-god and Village Mother

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

771 on one occasion for the Pen and on another for the Village Mother; even at the annual village festival of the Mother following the clan harvest-home and Koqsar of the Hill Marias the Pen, if honoured, is sometimes honoured on the same stones as the Mother, and not at a separate cairn. It is useless to expect to get any clear-cut distinction between the three conceptions out of a Maria, whose religious ideas are vague and inchoate. He knows only that there are factors which may bring trouble or which may benefit, and that the wise clan and village duly propitiate them, though, if in their turn these unknown factors fail to reciprocate, they will get no further meed of sacrifice for the same immediate object unless the desired benefit is at once granted. An example of this attitude has already been given in the mention in Chapter VII of the deputation that went to see the Gume clan's god to protest against rain preventing the firing of the *penda*, and to promise him a cock if and when he stopped the rain. In the actual formulae pronounced by the village *kasyeq-gaita* in the hills and the *perma* in the Bison-horn country at the sowing and other ceremonies, however, I have never heard the clan-god's name mentioned; they start almost invariably with '*Bhum kenji, Talugh kenji!*' 'Earth hearken, Mother hearken!', sometimes addressing similarly '*Nel*' or fields and '*Jimme Jaga*', all that is around. Here *Bhum* and the clan-god appear to be identical; in the villages where there are both a *kasyeq-gaita* and a *bhum-gaita* in the Abujhmar country, it is the latter who has to preside over the village deputations to the clan-god. The distinction, however, is not clear-cut. In most hill villages there is no separate *bhum-gaita*, and the *kasyeq-gaita* not only performs his work, but is sometimes called *bhum-gaita* or *bhumia*, while in Bison-horn villages the *perma* is *bhum-gaita* and addresses himself in some tracts to the Earth both as Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi, earth-god and earth-goddess, besides being the priest of the Village Mother and the other forms which the earth takes in Bison-horn cults, such
791 as Dongar Deo or Kodo Deo. The *waddai* or *modul-waddai* I have referred to as the clan-priest, and it has been seen how in the Hill Maria clan-areas each village goes to him for the celebration of the clan festival and for obtaining the clan-god's permission to hold the village festival. But the clan-priest is generally not the clan headman even in the Abujhmar hills tracts where the clan-area has become the modern *pargana*. He may or may not be a person of ability and influence. He should be the medium, into whose body the clan-god enters and through whose mouth the god makes his
622 will known to his clan. The secular *pargana* headman is a man of
791 far more influence; and in the villages the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* are religious headmen in a way that the clan-priest seldom is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the clan; often the same man is both religious headman and secular headman (*gaita, peda*), and these functions were probably always combined before the growing interference of the State with village life and the excessive demands for forced labour and supplies began to make the secular headmanship a burden to be avoided by the true leader of the village and put on to the village simpleton.

The Village Mother is always dealt with in Hill and Bison-horn villages through the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* respectively; but she neither enters into the body of a medium nor can be consulted through one like the clan-god. Though it be through her that the *kasyeq-gaita's* eggs are addled or other omens of ill or indications that the village should shift are sent, yet to make plain her will the medium of the clan-god, that is the clan-priest (the *waddai* or *modul-waddai*), is sent for, and through his mouth the clan-god expounds the will of the Unseen Powers. It is tempting to regard her as the personification of the female and the clan-god as that of the male element in the reproductive powers of the Earth or Bhum; needless to say, there are no Maria theologians to worry themselves over such distinctions, and it is not a clear-cut one, since some clans have a clan-goddess, not a god; e.g. Oghal Muttai, goddess of the Dhurwa clan, and Gumtuli, goddess of the Padali clan of Padalibhum at Adnar. This conception, nevertheless, does to a considerable extent clarify the fundamental relation between the Earth, the clan-god and the Village Mother. The other point to be remembered is that the clan-god is the Earth in its dealings with the clan, and the Mother the Earth in its dealings with the village. No woman or girl may take part in the festivals, public sacrificial meals, worship and intercession of either clan-god or Village Mother.

The Earth, then, as clan-god, is the god of nourishment and reproduction, and of life itself; the Marias are his children, fed by him. For them to raise their sustenance he divided up the land among the clans, and the clan-area among the villages, and in each clan and village he appointed priests or headmen who alone might communicate with him, and to whose first ancestor he revealed the clan and village boundaries, which knowledge has been handed down from father to son. The Maria leaves his *penda* slope for another after two or three years because the god is suffering from having too much nourishment extracted from that slope, but he will return to it when the god has recovered from his exhaustion. Children are but one of the god's crops.

The Clan-god

In form, we have seen, the clan-god of Marias of both kinds and of Murias, is a framework of three parallel *saja* logs held together by cross-pieces of bamboo or *saja*, to which they are lashed by cords of *siavi* creeper or twisted

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

thongs of the outer rind of bamboos. Where *saja* trees are scarce, he may be made entirely of bamboos, but will be lodged in a hut under a *saja* tree. The junctions of the logs and the cross-pieces are adorned with bunches of peacock and jungle-cock feathers, and the ends of the logs with rupees or spirals of peacock quill or bands of brass and silver. At the first-fruits ceremonies his shed is adorned with plaited fringes of the stalks and ears of the new grains, or bunches of bean and pulse pods; and he is brought forth to have the blood of the sacrificed victims sprinkled upon him.

Halbas, Telangas and Murias have precisely similar gods, if the logs composing them are more elaborately adorned and sometimes carved. Their generic name in Bastar is Anga Deo or Pat Deo, 'Log-God'. The central log is the essential part, for the other two logs are added primarily to enable the god to be borne on the shoulders of four men when he goes forth to a festival or a witch hunt. The Jhoria log-god at Narainpur had a special nose for witches, and the late Raja Bhairam Deo, great-grandfather of the present Maharaja, installed a copy of it in the palace at Jagdalpur; for witch hunts the god used to be brought in from Narainpur while the palace copy was sent to Narainpur during his absence. I found that the palace copy was in 1927 being used generally without reference to the Narainpur prototype for detecting witchcraft around Jagdalpur, a fee of Rs. 5 being paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the Temple Court of Wards whenever surrounding Murias requisitioned its services.

As has been observed on page 51, there is a tradition among the Hill Marias (of Chhota Dongar, Mangnar and Barsur Mar *parganas*) that the great log-god Pat Raja of the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana* with the help of his wife's brother, Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan of the Bison-horn village of Ghotpal, near Barsur, divided up both Hill and Bison-horn Marias into clans, in the old days when there was regular intermarriage between the Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The legend does not appear to be known to the latter, who have only vague traditions of having at some remote date descended to their present lands from the Abujhmar hills, where occasionally they say that their clan-god still resides.

It is certain that most of the Hill Maria clan-gods have relationship claimed for them with Pat Raja of Mohnar. The Usendi clan of Orcha has his younger brother Wikir Hunga at Japgunda, the Deda clan of Kurmer have another younger brother, Nule Harma, the Dhurwa clan of Gomagal have his sister Oghal Mutta'i, the Hill Maria Marvi clan of Toqtoli in Mangnar *pargana* have his sister's son Mara-Magh, while the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

pargana not only acquired a yet younger brother of Pat Raja, Verma Mo'itto Pen, as their clan-god, but also a family of Pat Raja's clan, the Jaterom,[1] as hereditary clan-priests because, the Jaterom being *akomama*[2] (wife-clan) to the Gumelor, the new god was related to them as *mama* or maternal uncle and had to have a priest or *waddai* of his own clan or one *dadabhai*[2] (brother-clan) to it. They say in fact that all clan-gods are mutually related, if they are sometimes very hazy as to the actual relationship; and they add that the gods, being Koitor, must have a full set of brother-clans and wife-clans like any other Koitor. Memories are, however, so poor that it is often difficult to ascertain the name of a man's dead father and quite impossible to ascertain the name of his grandfather and the clan and village of his grandmother, if, indeed, even of his mother; and it would be altogether out of the question to disentangle the descents and relationships of the clans by deduction from the traditional kinship of the clan-gods to Pat Raja and each other.

That old clans split up into new clans is clear, especially among the Hill Marias, from the fact that several of the larger clans have attached to them smaller clans which have no separate clan-god of their own, but attend the celebrations of the god of the large and presumably parent clan; certain other clans, though they have new clan-gods of their own, acknowledge their origin from another clan by taking the permission of the god of that clan before holding their own clan festivals. The way in which these clans split up is a matter belonging rather to the chapter in Part V, where the clan and phratry organization is dealt with as a matter of social organization, than to this chapter on religion. Here the point is that new clans are breaking off, and that their separation from the parent clan is signalized by the birth of a son or daughter (a son in the cases that I have seen) to the god of the parent clan. Thus Tumirgunda, in the plains between Handawada, still a true Hill Maria village, and the river Indrawati, near Barsur, belongs to the Tamo clan, and is the seat of their god Hurra Gunda Mo'itto[3] Pen. The *modul-waddai* of this clan-god was in 1930 still the *modul-waddai* of neighbouring villages of the Atami clan; and of the Tamo and Atami villages in his 'see' some were, like Tumirgunda itself, still mainly Hill Maria in culture, dancing in Hill Maria style, and some had changed to Bison-horn culture and dancing, and were recognized as Bison-horn

[1] Jāterom is the plural of Jāte; the clan is distinct from the Jātā, plural Jātālūr, and the Jāti clan of Jātwara *pargana*.

[2] Clans are *akomama* to clans with which they may intermarry, but *dadabhai* to all others.

[3] '*Mo'itto*' ('old man') or '*mutta'i*' ('old woman') is always added to the clan-god's name.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 618 villages by the headman of the Bison-horn Pharaspal *pargana*. The god had long ago produced a son worshipped as clan-god in the Atami village of Chudala Karka, now a Bison-horn village. But the son's dependence on the parent was shown by the practice of the Tumirgunda clan-priest every third year making a new network of peacock's quills for encasing the front cross-piece of the Chudala Karka son. The *modul-waddai* shaves his beard only when he has to start to make a new quill network, and lets it grow after that till it has again to be replaced three years later. Chudala Karka pays Tumirgunda for this network a pig, a *khandi* of 164 lb. of husked rice and a pot of *mahua* spirit. In the *pen-rawar* hut of the god at Tumirgunda was yet another son, already named Hunga Gunda Mo'itto Pen, who was being made for another Atami village in the 'see', and was to be taken to it as soon as he was a year old; he then consisted only of one bamboo pole tipped with a silver cone and adorned with bunches of peacock feathers. Here perhaps the need for separation was arising because the Atami villages were adopting or had adopted Bison-horn ways, while the village for which the new god was being 'born' was some way from Chudala Karka, and effectively separated from it by the Indrawati river. So at Kurmer at the end of 1929 Nule Harma, god of the Deda clan, was producing a 'son' for some distant villages of the clan; and we have already seen how the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar *pargana* acquired from the Jaterom of Mohnar not only a younger brother of their god, but a Jate family to be his clan-priest.

The *Gazetteer* has been quoted as suggesting that the system of separate areas and separate gods for each clan was breaking down. Among the Hill Marias the remark is justified to the following extent only. Many of the old villages of the Bhairamgarh Mar and Kutru Mar *parganas* of the Kutru zamindari have disappeared, including indeed the two which Glasfurd gave as the seats of the chief Hill Maria clan-gods of his time. Many clans have disappeared or are reduced to one or two households. There are various causes; maladministration leading to exodus to the tahsils of the plains or the Chanda district, the great 1918 influenza epidemic, and the ravages of yaws. The total disappearance of clans is evidenced by [764] the presence in villages now settled by other clans of *kotokal* rows of menhirs erected for the Departed of forgotten clans, quite distinct from those erected by the present clan, which can give no information at all about its predecessors. Clans greatly diminished in numbers soon find that they cannot economically manage to keep even one village going on their traditional clan-area, much less keep effective control and user of all the alternative *penda* slopes of the area. The dregs, therefore, of three or four clans may settle

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

together in a village in the area of the largest dreg, and abandon claim to the other clan-areas; for example, Aipur in Kutru Mar had in 1931, one Hoyami, one Telam, one Micha and two Bardi clan houses, while Malahanar had four Hoyami, two Pungati and one Diwa. Both were originally Hoyami clan villages; the clan has also still the villages of Komu and Kalhaza in Bhairamgarh Mar, but has since the census deserted Malahanar, as the headman and all but one Hoyami householder died suddenly, and the remaining Hoyami shifted to Kalhaza. In adjacent parts of the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* there are big clans like the Usendi and the Jugho already needing fresh lands, and the obvious fields for expansion are the empty lands of dwindling or extinct clans in Kutru Mar and Bhairamgarh Mar. Often big clans have just thrown off parties of squatters who have founded fresh villages in such places; the large Gume clan of Barsur Mar has, for example, long occupied Dunga, Goti and Kunjewada in Bhairamgarh Mar. Where there is still a remnant of a clan strong enough to raise some opposition to squatters from other clans coming in to their areas, but not to retain effective cultivating occupation, the *kasyeq-gaita* of the chief village (the clan being always too small to have retained an area big enough to become a *pargana*, and seldom having even a clan-god in its days of adversity) has sold some of the clan land for a few rupees to another clan; thus comparatively recently the Ark clan, now of Korowaya village only, sold the lands of their deserted village of Itulnar for Rs. 30 to the overflowing Jugho clan of the adjacent Chhota Dongar Mar village of Adeq and other large villages. When the sale took place, the *kasyeq-gaita* of the Arkalur showed the *kasyeq-gaita* of the Jughalor the traditional village sites, and the cairns marking former shrines of the Village Mother, and extracted a sworn promise of reverence for her. The Arkalur themselves could not have long been in occupation, as they said that the *kotokal* menhirs at Itulnar had not been erected by them but by some other forgotten clan which had died out before their occupation of the village.

Not only have hardly any of these dying clans clan-gods and clan-priests, but also the colonizers, having left their hereditary clan-area, consider themselves outside their clan-god's jurisdiction, and 'under no need' therefore to attend his Koqsar or to get his permission to hold festivals before the Village Mothers of their new villages. So the Gumelor of Dunga, Goti and Kunjewada are seen no more at the Gume Koqsar of Verma Mo'itto Pen at To'inar in Barsur Mar, and the Jughalor settlers of Itulnar do not join their fellow Jughalor of Adeq and other villages of Chhota Dongar Mar at the Koqsar of the Usendi and allied clans' god Wikir Hunga at

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

618 Orcha. Ultimately the new colonies may spread, and they may feel the need of clan-gods and petition the clan-priests of the areas 776 from which they migrated to give them a son of the old clan-god; but meanwhile the majority of them get on quite well without him and his clan-gatherings, and find the Village Mother and village ceremonies quite enough for their needs. If in time they ask for a clan-god of their own, they are likely to get some additional name to distinguish them from the main section of their clan, and ultimately all mention of the original clan name will be omitted.

Special features of the Clan-god among the Bison-horn Marias

It was remarked on page 194 that for each clan of the Gonds of the British India districts bordering on Nagpur there is or was a *Pen-kara* or Holy Circle under a *saja* tree somewhere in the province. If he has not become detribalized, every Gond should visit this once a year with offerings, or at least should pay sacrificial fines there on the birth of a child, on being released from handcuffs, on readmission to the community after some social lapse, and so on; and there ultimately his soul should be brought after death, to be united to the clan Departed. The villages are there no longer the *bhum* of particular clans, and many clans and god-groups may be represented in one village. Members of the clans are scattered far and wide over the province, and in one Nagpur Gond village you may find representatives of clans with the *Pen-kara* of their gods at places so far apart as Berar, Chhindwara, Lanji or Chanda. Many have settled far from their *Pen-kara* for so many generations that the fatigue of the long journey has been avoided more and more by each new generation till in the end it has been given up, and many of the present time cannot even say where it is.

776 To this kind of attitude some of the Bison-horn Marias are beginning to come. There are many clan-areas[1] in Bijapur and 618 Dantewara tahsils and in Kutru zamindari on both sides of the river Indrawati which, as indicated in the ethnic map on page 40, 615 are peopled by clans once purely Hill Maria in language and culture, but now modified in both by contact either with Bison-horn Maria

[1] Examples are Chikatraj Pen of Kutru, the god of the Gota clan of Kutru, Borje, Bhirabhatti, Pillur, Sappimarka, Kakler, Gattapalli, Mendri, Udru villages; Kuwo-Gundo Pen, god of the Majje and Wadde clans of Bodametta, Kodepalli, Majje-Mendri, Kungler, Madhepar, Dudepalli, and Rengawaya in Kutru zamindari and of Kounde (where the god is kept and the clan-priest lives) and other villages in Chanda District; Wachami Mo'itto Pen, of Markanar in Kutru zamindari, god of the Wachami clan of Markanar, Irkapal, Karkelli, Kumharmeta and Bodeli in Kutru Zamindari and some adjacent Wachami clan villages in Ahiri zamindari; Wange Muri Pen, of Dhanora in Bijapur tahsil, god of the Kuriyami clan of several villages around Dhanora and Thoinar and Pharsegarh sub-zamindaris of Kutru.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

or with Dorla neighbours. The clearest sign these retain of their Hill Maria origin is the retention of separate clan-areas, clan-gods and *modol-maddai* clan-priests for each large clan (*pari* or *hatta*) or pair or trio of closely related clans, as distinct from the Bison-horn Maria institution of one *pen* or clan-god for each of the five groups of clans or phratries (*barr* or *kudmam*) and every clan (*hatta*) included in it, without any fixed phratry-area. On the other hand, each village in the true Bison-horn tracts is said to be the *bhum* of the clan (*hatta*) of the *pemma* who originally founded it, and, as it is the *bhum* of his clan, he alone can officiate for the village at the ceremonies and sacrifices before the Village Mother, the Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo, Bhu-deo and Bhu-Devi, and the other forms under which the Earth is worshipped at the different agricultural ceremonies.

The Bison-horn country is extensive and, compared to the Hill Maria country, well populated. The villages forming the *bhum* of even individual *hatta* clans may be miles apart, while a village that is the *bhum* of a clan in phratry A may be surrounded by villages that are the *bhum* of clans in phratries B, C, D and E for miles before there is another village of a clan of phratry A. Further, though a village may be the *bhum* of the *pemma's* clan, he may easily have only a few other householders of his clan in the village, but several of other kindred and affine clans. At Aranpur, most members of the big and small Marvi, the Hemla and the Oyami clans, all of which are included in the Marvi phratry, did not know the name of the clan-god of their phratry, but suggested vaguely that his *pen-rawar* might be in the Abujhmar hills or in Padar-raj, their name for the plateau around Jagdalpur. Some knew that the god's name was Handa Kosa Pen, and a few said that his *pen-rawar* was at Killepal, nearly sixty miles away, where the great western road from Jagdalpur to Bhopalpatnam approaches the passes descending to the Dantewara valley. At Killepal, however, I had not been shown Handa Kosa Pen; the village is the *bhum* of the Kuhrami clan, which gives its name to the Kuhrami phratry, and the clan members stated that they had no *pen-rawar* of their clan at Killepal, but that Hemraj Pen, their god, was, they had heard, in some village near Orcha in the Abujhmar hills. It was often agreed that a Maria should visit his Pen or clan-god every year in Aghan or Pand month (November-December) and offer a pig or a cock to the god at this annual *pen-jatra* or festival of the *pen*. At Aranpur a few of the older men said that they had long ago visited the Marvi clan-god Handa Kosa Pen at Killepal in their youth, but in recent years no one seemed to have been near. It was agreed that certain social offences could only be expiated by a visit and penal offering to the clan-god.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 614 615 The elders of the villages can actually often give the names of each of the gods whom they say that each of the five Bison-horn phratries worships: the Markami phratry worships Harma Pen; the Kuhrami phratry give varying names for their god, Hemraj Pen, Perambhoi (the name applied by the Dorlas to their corresponding Perambhoi phratry) or Banian Muttai; the Kawasi phratry worships Babo Herma Pen; the Marvi phratry Handa Kosa Pen; and the Sodi phratry Tul-Muttai Pen, whose *pen-rawar* is at Kamkanar in the Gangalur *pargana* in Bijapur tahsil, where Sodi Harma the *modul-waddai*, was regarded as the headman of all the surrounding Bison-horn villages. But other names are also given, such as Hirangraj, Hingaraj and Belraj for the Kartami clan, Hirmaraj for the Kawasi, Sodi, Markami and Marvi clans, and Hing-hunga and Mundaraj for the Beko and Kalmu clans. I have used the word 'clan' advisedly, because in this list some gods are shared by clans belonging to different phratries; thus Hirmaraj is shared by the Markami and Kartami clans of the Markami phratry and by the Sodi and Marvi clans of the Sodi and Marvi phratries, while of the worshippers of Hing-hunga and Mundaraj the Beko clan belongs to the Kuhrami phratry and the Kalmu clan to the Markami. Use Modia Pen of Ghotpal is restricted to the Lekami clan of that and surrounding villages, which is now considered part of the Kuhrami phratry. Other local log-gods will be found in the heart of the Bison-horn country at such places as Dugeli; some may be the true *pen-rawars* of the phratries, but I have been unable to verify this.

614 615 173 The whole position is, it must be admitted, somewhat confused, but it would be wrong to expect to systematize it. The same confusion will be found again over the totems of the phratries and clans; there are two phratries with the tortoise as totem, and inside the same phratry will be found clans with totems of their own or the totem of other phratries, or no totem at all. The traditions of the Bison-horn Marias all point to their having descended southwards from the Abujhmar hills to colonize their present country, and the presence in their midst of ruined Hindu cities at Dantewara, Barsur, and Bhairamgarh, of traces of forgotten kingdoms at Tirathgarh and Kuakonda, and of isolated villages of Jhari Telangas descended from the subjects of early medieval Telugu kings, point to the truth of the traditions. We have seen how new clans are forming to-day on the southern fringes of the Abujhmar hills, and how the Bison-horn culture is gradually absorbing the southernmost Hill Maria clans, which have, however, not fitted themselves fully as yet into the five-phratry organization, but retain their own clan-gods. The five phratries are named after five principal clans,

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the names of which recur not only among Murias in north Bastar, but also among all the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Possibly strong bodies of these clans were the original colonizers, and with the growth of population in their new surroundings have either thrown off sub-clans or absorbed clans newly descending from the hills or acquiring their culture. It is not surprising that settlers in the tracts farthest from their first settlement should find it difficult to worship at the original shrines of their *pen*, and should either forget them, or here and there make fresh log-gods for themselves, perhaps sharing them with other adjacent clans not necessarily of their own phratries, just as they have learnt, unlike the Hill Marias, to share with other brother-clans and wife-clans village lands which are the *bhum* of their own clan.

The cult of the *pen* log-god of the clan is thus, as may be expected, considerably weaker among the Bison-horn than among the Hill Marias. Often he is neglected almost entirely in the annual feasts, or vaguely associated with the Departed in the expressions *pen-hanal* or *dhumo-deo* used of the ancestors. Where there is a log-god, he tends to be regarded merely as one of the local godlings that are becoming as numerous among the Bison-horn Marias as among the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Where there is none, occasionally at festivals before the Village Mother or other manifestations of the Earth a stone or two may be set up in his name under a *saja* tree and receive its share of the sacrificial blood and libations. It is not surprising that, therefore, the *waddai* of the clan-god is more purely a medium among the Bison-horn Marias, and less of a clan-priest than he is among the Hill Marias, and that most Bison-horn villages have at least one *waddai* who may be possessed not only by the clan-god but by other godlings also; even when he is attached definitely to a log-god at a festival, he may be possessed by him and give oracle on his behalf, but the *perma* of the village is the principal celebrant, and the *waddai*, when not possessed, degenerates into a mere *mantram*-reciting assistant of the *perma*.

Often there is no hut-temple for any deity among the Bison-horn Marias except one for Danteshwari Mai or Maoli or Mata, whose cults have spread from the Hindu temple of Dantewara, and in time will reach every village of Bastar. The Earth cult, however, remains, as among the Hill Marias, the essential cult. Its chief form is thus the cult of the Village Mother, called Tallin Ochur in the Bison-horn dialect. For all the village ceremonies there is a fixed plot of land in a field belonging to the *perma* and known as the *bhum-jaga*, *hadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu*: *bhum-jaga*

The Village Mother and other gods among the Bison-horn Marias

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 means 'the earth-place'; *hadri* is the Bison-horn word for *kasyaq*, the knife carried in the loin-cloth, and the *pərma* is sometimes called the *hadri-gaita*. *Wijj-arku* means 'seed-*mahua*'; in most Bison-horn villages there is a sacred *mahua* tree, instead of the *saja* tree that is the rule in hill villages, in the middle of the sacred field, and the tree is the 'seed-*mahua*' because beneath it are held the ceremonies of the important '*Wijja* (seed) *Pandum*'. The *saja* tree remains equally sacred, as will be observed from the way in which its leaves are used in the ceremonies described in the next chapter. Under or near the *mahua* tree is often a wooden post or an upright cube of stone with a sloping top, known generally as Bhimul, which is made as occasion demands to serve as Bhimul Deo, Tallin Uchur, Dongar Deo, Mata, or any other god required; near this the *pərma* will clean and plaster a flat piece of ground, known as *khari-mandi*, for sacrificing the victims. Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo and Bhu-deo combined with Bhu-devi and called generally by the Bison-horn Marias of Sukma zamindari Polamraj and Polam-muttai, are all really forms of the Village Mother, or at least of the Earth; there are several other such forms, and, though all are fundamentally the same, they tend gradually to be vaguely differentiated in the minds of the villagers, and soon, no doubt, will be individual godlings, each with his own functions. Bhimul is
776 the rain-giver, who has been Hinduized amongst Central Provinces
781 Gonds and the Murias of the north of Bastar as Bhimsen or Bhima, one of the five Pandava brothers; besides his annual *pandum* in the early spring, he is liable to be treated roughly if the rains are late or scanty. His wooden or stone post is then pelted with dung and filth by abusive females, who challenge him to show his powers by sending his rain to wash himself clean.

The Bison-horn Marias go much farther than the Hill Marias in deifying the forces of nature. There are the Ban Devi spirits of the forest, Jalkamani the spirit of rivers, and, for

Demons

nearly every mountain pass, pile of boulders, or precipice, some spirit, all of whom may need propitiation, and some of whom are becoming godlings with a cult. The Hill Marias have a vague dread of evil spirits of the mountains, which they call *rau*; amongst the Murias and Bhattras there are other demons such as Uran Rau who blows away the grain with the chaff at winnowing, and Chitkar Rau who brings wild animals to trample down the crops; but the only *rau* to whom I have heard a name given by Hill Marias is Raja Rau, the demon of the Raughat pass in Antagarh tahsil, held to be a very Raja of the *rau* because he caused mountain-sickness to the first European surveyor seen in Bastar. All Marias also speak with fear of a water-witch in the

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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form of a great serpent, known as *Tondatara*, haunting river rapids and waterfalls, the mere sight of whom is fatal.

The traces of totemism amongst Hill and Bison-horn Marias will be described in the chapter on social organization. It may briefly be stated here that there appears to be no connexion between the totems and the clan-god, and that at no ceremony, either clan or village, or domestic, is the totem ever mentioned or worshipped. It gets a vague respect, perhaps an occasional *salaam*, from members of the totem, and they do not touch, kill or eat it if they can avoid doing so.

Totems

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XI

The Annual Religious Ceremonies of the Bison-horn Marias

In Chapter VII, on Maria agriculture, which was treated chiefly from the point of view of Hill Maria agriculture as being far less advanced than Bison-horn Maria agriculture, the Hill Maria festivals and ceremonies were described. The Bison-horn Marias have many more ceremonies and a much more elaborate ceremonial, and though these are as closely connected with the agricultural calendar of the year as those of the Hill Marias, they are best described here in a separate chapter than in Chapter VII where a description of them would have wrecked the balance of the description of agriculture.

It would, from the agricultural point of view, perhaps be logical to start the account of the *pandum* festivals and *weta* ceremonial hunts from the Kare Pandum of Magh month, held early in February, because until it has taken place it is *melo* or taboo to cut timber for *erka* and *parka* cultivation; in another sense, however, it is one of the last festivals of the year, for its holding also signalizes the lifting of the taboo against the reaping of the forest grass crop and of bamboos, and it follows soon after the Jata Pandum at which new *urad*, beans and pulses are eaten for the first time. The Bhimul Pandum that comes next, in the middle of February, is also designed to secure satisfactory rain for the coming year, but is not described first because it makes the account of all the *pandum* clearer and briefer to begin with those on which there is the fullest information. The Irpu or Idu Pandum, or *mahua* flowers first-fruits ceremony, which is held soon after the Bhimul Pandum, is therefore taken as the first ceremony of the year. In some parts it is combined with the Marka Pandum, the mango first-fruits ceremony; but, at all events to the south of the Bison-horn country, it is quite separate and more important, as the *mahua* tree plays a more important part than the mango in not only the economic but also the religious life of the people. The *pussa* of the village fixes the day, which is always a Friday in the bright half of the month, in consultation with the headman (*pedā*) and elders about a week beforehand. On the night before the ceremony all the men observe sexual continence,[1] and in the morning assemble at the *mahua* tree in the *pussa's*

The Irpu Pandum

[1] Sexual continence is the rule on the night before every *pandum*.

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AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

field, the *pərma* bringing a cock and a little milk and husked rice. The *pərma* cleans a small rectangle at the foot of the tree, sets the egg upright on it, and strews the rice in front of the egg. The cock is set down on its feet, and as soon as it pecks up a grain or two of the rice, the *pərma* cuts its throat in the name of the Village Mother, whom he prays to accept the egg and the cock offered by the village, and to bless them with a bumper crop of *mahua* flowers and fruit. He then pours milk over the trunk of the tree and some of the clusters of *mahua* flowers, and prays to the milk-spirits Pal-mu'ito and Pal-mutta'i (Milk-old-man and Milk-old-woman) to shower upon them *mahua* flowers fat with milk. Next he throws the egg over the tree, calling on Nus-mu'ito and Nus-muttai (Insect-old-man and Insect-old-woman; *nus* is a grub or insect that attacks the ends of the twigs from which burst the *mahua* flowers) not to damage the flowers. Then all the men present quickly gather up dead *mahua* leaves lying around beneath the tree and put them into the baskets that they use for collecting *mahua* flowers, pretending that they are flowers; the idea, of course, is to act the gathering of a crop of flowers as thick as the carpet of dead leaves, and to persuade the trees in sympathy with this magic to yield a generous crop. The *pərma* then takes the sacrificed cock as his portion, and all disperse to their homes. Before this ceremony has been held it is taboo to collect *mahua* flowers.

The mango first-fruits ceremony is held generally a little later, in March, the *pərma* convening a similar meeting of the elders to fix the day as soon as he sees that the young fruit has formed on the trees, and to arrange either for a *sari-bori* village subscription for buying the sacrificial victims or for getting the victims from those whose turn it is to give them at this *pandum*. We have seen already (pp. 165-6) that this is sometimes preceded by a ceremonial fishing beat or *wata*, and by pouring of water in the name of the Departed. All the males of the village assemble on the morning of the *pandum* by the *pərma's hadri-bera* field, the head of each family bringing a pig or a cock, a pot of *landa* or *mahua* spirit, cooking pots, and a pound of husked rice or *hathi* for each member of his family present. For this festival sometimes instead of using the *hadri-bera* field they resort to a mango grove, a grove of trees by a stream, or a clump of forest trees thickly covered with creepers, often on a hill-top, and known as a *deo-hot*; the site is always reserved for such ceremonies, and it is taboo to pluck even a leaf in them. There should be a sacred *saja* tree there. At the foot of this tree a space is cleaned and smeared with cow-dung and water, over which a table-stone is set up on three or four small stones, to serve as the *gadi* or throne

The Mango Pandum

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

796 of the god, in this *pandum* generally known as Kodo Pen. The *perma* puts a round white stone on this throne in Kodo Pen's name, strews wet rice on the ground in front of the stone, and arranges eggs at the side of the rice. The *perma* then puts his own cock down to see if it will eat the rice, as in the case of the sacrificial victims at the Irpu Pandum, and then in turn the cock produced by each head of a family is put through the test; the process is called the *tohana* of the cocks. If any cock refuses to touch the rice, the *perma* asks its owner whether he has promised the god any other sacrifice, and if the owner says he has no recollection of having done so, the *perma* turns to the cock, and says, 'If he promised an egg, I command you to pick up the rice; if he promised a pig, I command you, etc.' and so on, suggesting further victims; and the owner is expected to provide the last victim suggested before the cock picks up the rice. When all have been through the *tohana*, the *perma* with the sacred knife cuts off the heads of the cocks and pigs, cutting them from the throat upwards, and sprinkles the blood of each victim over the god, the rice and the eggs. He heaps the heads together, and hands the bodies back to the owners of the victims. He then pours a little *landa* and *mahua* spirit on the white stone representing the god, places two or three unripe green mangoes on the 'throne' beside him, bends to the earth before him with his palms pressed flat on the earth, belches, and prays to the god to save them from all sickness and adversity, now that they have offered him the new mangoes. He then bows his head to the ground, rises and stands facing the sun, whom, with folded hands, he calls on to be a witness that the *pandum* has been performed. When the *mahua* first-fruits ceremony is combined with the *Marka Pandum*, *mahua* flowers are offered along with the green mangoes, and cooked and eaten at the feast that follows. After addressing the sun, the *perma* gives back to each family the head of its cock, and these are fried and eaten with *landa* or *mahua* spirit. The men of each family then cook the rice and the bodies of their sacrificed pigs or cocks in the cooking pots that they have brought with them, along with some green mangoes and *mahua* flowers; and they sit in a circle and eat the food, washing it down with more liquor, before returning with their cooking pots to their houses. The *perma* cooks and eats his own sacrificial meat with his brothers and sons apart from the rest, and hangs his cooking pot with the sacred knife inside it on some tree in the sacred grove before going home. On the next day, as after most of these *pandum* feasts, the head of each family observes in his house the *Hara Tindana* (Halbi, *Basi Tihar*) or 'remains-eating' feast, to which he bids his womenfolk and his friends, and brother-clan and wife-clan relatives from

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AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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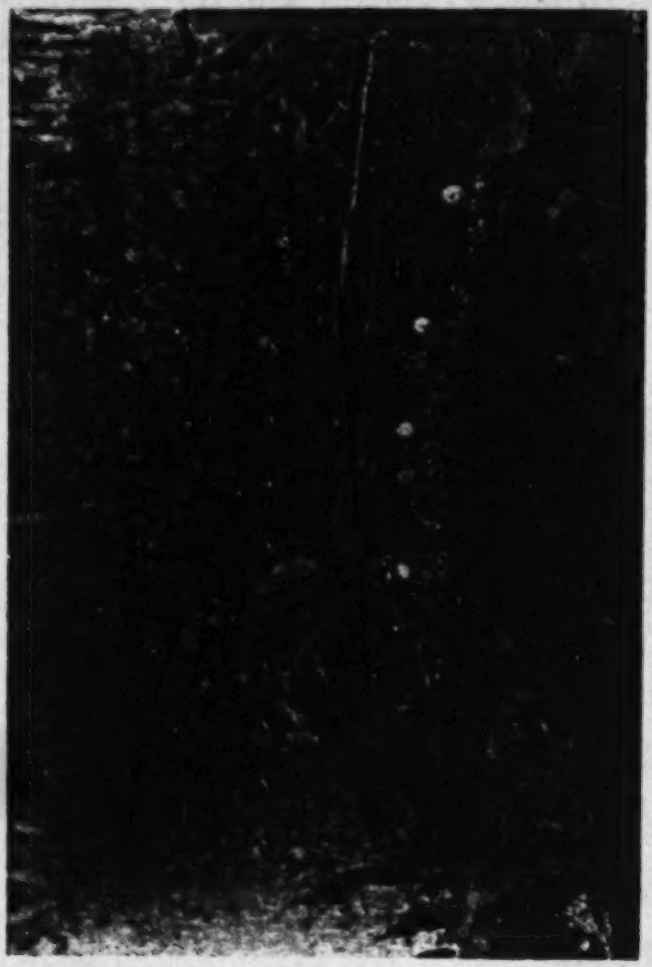

PLATE XVI

THE SACRIFICE BEFORE THE *WIJJA-WETA*
The offerings before the altar of bows

[facing p. 210]

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AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erku* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwarin or Forest-maidens, and on each

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AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

heap offers an egg and a tooth-stick (*datun*), sometimes also a miniature bow and arrow; he then takes up each tooth-stick in turn, splits it and throws down the split halves to test the omens in the way already described, after praying with folded hands to the Forest-maidens for success in the hunt and protection from wild beasts. Then he takes an arrow off the altar, and, holding it by the shaft just above the feathering, cuts the top of each egg with the sharp edge of the arrow-head.

The omens having thus been taken, and the bows and arrows of the altar, if any, reclaimed by their owners, all the men go off with their weapons in the *wela* ritual hunt to beat the forest for game. The women appear with pots full of cow-dung and water, into which they dip sprays of leaf and shower the foul water with fouler abuses on any laggards. If any animal is slain, the shedding of much blood on the ground is regarded as foreshadowing plentiful rainfall and a rich harvest; on the spot where it falls they cut little bits off the tips of its ears, nose, tongue, feet and tail, place each bit on a separate *saja* leaf on the ground in the name of the Forest-maidens or of Karenga Deo, and pray for a continuance of this good fortune. At the end of the hunt they take the carcasses of the animals back to the *mahua* bough erected in the name of the Village Mother in the *kadri-bera* field, and leave them there. They then go home for supper.

Towards midnight each man returns to the *kadri-bera* with his bow and arrows, a small packet of *kutki* and other grain seeds wrapped up in leaves, a little *mahua* liquor and a white cock; a pig is also brought for all the villagers. Some villages do not expect each man to bring a cock, but purchase a number of cocks by *sari-bori* subscription. The men hand over the packets of seed to the *perma*, who piles them on the ground in front of the *mahua* bough and places his sacrificial knife beside them. He then prostrates himself before the *mahua* bough and prays to the Village Mother for good and timely rain and bumper crops. He then puts each cock and the pig through the *tokana* rice-eating test, and sacrifices them one by one, cutting their heads off from the throat upwards, piling the heads all together near the *mahua* bough, and holding each body over the pile of seed-packets and the *mahua* bough to soak them well with blood; he then throws the bodies aside. Next he breaks with his knife in the Mother's name the egg which he had set up in the morning, and pours some *mahua* spirit on the ground before the *mahua* bough. The *perma* and the men of his family then roast and eat the heads of the cocks and the pig, and each other family the body of the cock contributed by it; when cocks have been bought by subscription, the *perma* slices

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AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

them up and distributes them. The pig, cooked with rice, is next apportioned among all present and eaten.

Meanwhile some boil the rice brought by each villager, and the carcasses of the animals killed in the afternoon ritual hunt are skinned, cut up and roasted, after the head and the legs below the knees and hocks have been cut off, taken to the hut-temple of Mata and tied with ropes to wooden roof-posts in front of the goddess. The *parma* and all the men, when the meat is cooked, drink liquor and eat the meat; by that time, however, many have had enough, and carry off their share to their houses to eat later.

Women take no part in this feast and may not be present, except that they are expected to meet the successful huntsmen on their return and dance and sing in front of the bodies of the animals killed in the hunt as they are taken to the *hadri-bera*.

When the eating is over, the *parma* takes up his own packet of blood-stained seed, and hands each man his packet. They take them off to their houses, and place them carefully on the storage platform inside the *wijjalon* room of their houses.

By this time it is daylight, and they must all start out on another ritual hunt after the usual preliminary offerings to the Forest-maidens and omen-taking. If any animal is slain, the usual portions are then and there offered to the Forest-maidens on *saja* leaves in the forest, and at the end of the hunt the bodies are brought back, greeted as before by dancing women, and taken, not to the *hadri-bera*, but to a shed prepared in the village for that purpose. Sexual intercourse is no longer taboo, and the dancing that follows ends in the men getting their own back for the abuses with which the women drove them out to the hunt.

The next day they cut up the carcasses left in the shed overnight, and divide the meat; first the head, intestines and the legs below the knees and hocks are set on one side; then the man who killed the animal in the hunt is given the rest of the off hind leg and sometimes some meat from each side of the backbone, the *pada* (not in all villages), the saddle, and the *maddai*, if any, or the *hanal-gaita*[1] (again in some villages only), the liver; and lastly the balance is divided among all the men, including those who have already received privileged portions. Each takes off the meat to his own house, for the *Hara Tindana* remains-eating feast for his women, and brother-clan and wife-clan relatives. But before they start this feast, one of the villagers on behalf of the village takes a cock and an egg to the priest of Mata's hut-temple. The priest sacrifices them to her, and in return restores the heads and legs tied up in the temple after the first ritual hunt. The villager brings them back

[1] Priest of the Departed, alias *pitar-gaita*. See p. 217 below.

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AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 to the shed where the animals killed in the second ritual hunt were kept and cut up, and there they are cooked along with the head, intestines and lower legs of those animals, and eaten by the men of the village.

This should be followed on the next Sunday by the *Jur-weta* for the whole *pargana* at the chief village of the *pargana*, the *perma* of that village acting as the officiant before the altar of bows and arrows erected in the name of the Forest-maidens, and the *perma* and elders of each village offering an egg and a tooth-stick to be placed by the officiating *perma* in the bran-heap of each of the three Forest-maidens. The *weta* is sometimes followed by worship of the clan-god and the *Pen-karsita* festival, except in villages where that takes place at the Mandai or Deogudi Jatra on or about the full moon day of Magh. It has already been said that the *Jur-weta* is now abandoned in most *parganas* because nearly all except small game has been exterminated. Actually, however, the photograph illustrating the sacrifice to the Forest-maidens, facing page 211, was taken at a *Jur-weta* and not at the *wijja-weta* of the preceding week.

796 241 589 It remains to state what each man does with the packet of consecrated seed which he takes back from the Wijja Pandum to his house. Before seed-time, he calls in a medium (*wadde*), through whom he consults the oracle as to the propitious day and hour for the field sowing ceremony. At the appointed time, taking care to be overlooked by no one, he takes to his field a sowing basket containing the consecrated seed mixed with other seed, a little cooked rice and a cock. In the field he clears a little plot of ground, spreads rice on it and, as soon as the cock starts to eat it, cuts its head off from the throat upwards in the name of the Earth-god, and sprinkles its blood on the ground and on the seed in the basket. He prepares a small piece of the field for sowing, and on it sows three handfuls of the blood-sprinkled seed. He then cooks and eats the body of the cock in the field, leaving the head there, and makes his way back to his house, still trying to avoid being seen. After this ceremony he is free to complete his sowing when he likes.

796 **Hareli** Hareli is not observed by all Bison-horn Marias, but is universal among Parjas and Bhattras and the Jagdalpur Murias, and, under its common local name of Amavas, amongst Halbas and other Hindus of the State. The Dantewara and Barsur temples have spread its observance among the Bison-horn villages of Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils, and the villagers generally wait till the temples have celebrated the festival before celebrating it in their villages. On the morning of the day on which they have decided to hold it, the village elders assemble at the

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AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

perma's house and take him to the hut of the log-god, if there is one in the village, or to Mata's hut (the Mata-guri). No animal is sacrificed, but the *perma* lights a fire in front of the god or goddess, burns a little ghee or sal (*Shorea robusta*) resin in the fire, and bows before the deity; each elder does the same. The *perma* then fixes in the thatched roof of the shrine a leafy spray of the marking-nut tree (*Semecarpus anacardium*) and a spray of the *sitawari* creeper, and sends the congregation out to the forest to get *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) branches to stick in the centre of each of their fields. They adorn the *tendu* branches at the top with a leafy marking-nut twig and a spray of *sitawari*, and fix them upright in the centre of each rice, *erka* and *penda* field, sometimes pouring a little milk over them; the idea seems to be to indicate by the branch a tall and well-branched plant such as each rice or *kuthi* seed sown in the field should produce. They then bathe in the nearest pool or river, and fix a spray of marking-nut and of *sitawari* in the thatch of their houses. They then eat roast pork or fowl in their houses, and drink *landa*, entertaining those too poor to afford a dinner of their own, and giving salt to their cattle. Nothing is offered to the Departed at this festival.

The Kurum Pandum

The Kurum Pandum is observed towards the end of August, and is the earliest of the new-eating or first-fruits ceremonies of the cultivated crops, in this case the early-ripening millets off the *erka* and *penda* fields, especially *chikma* (*Panicum miliare*). It is sometimes called Kadi Pandum. In ordinary villages where there is no log-god the first part of the celebrations takes part at the *kadri-bera* field before the Bhimul post, which for this ceremony is regarded as the Village Mother. Early in the morning of the appointed day the women clean the ground in front of their houses, wash their floors with cow-dung and water, and then go to a pool to bathe and wash their husbands' and children's clothes. Those who can afford it get new clothes for the *pandum*. Towards noon the men assemble at the *kadri-bera* field, and the usual rectangle is cleared and cleaned by the *perma* around the Bhimul post; but for this ceremony they make a dwarf fence of *saja* twigs stuck in the ground on three sides of the rectangle, and carpet the rectangle with *saja* leaves. The *perma* stands to the west of the Bhimul post, and, facing the east, addresses it as the Village Mother, praying to her and bowing before her. The villagers subscribe for a pig, a white cock and eggs for a sacrifice; sometimes even now a young bull or heifer is stolen for this purpose. The *perma*, as usual, brings wet rice for the *tahana* test of the victims, and spreads it on the *saja* leaves, laying the eggs in a row before the goddess. He sacrifices the cock and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

pig, sprinkles their blood over the goddess and over each of the *saja* leaves, and breaks the top of each of the eggs with his knife. Then he offers the goddess ears of *chikma*, other early millets, and mountain rice; if the latter is not yet in ear, he offers a flowering rice stalk. He then prostrates himself with the palms of his hands flat on the ground, belches, and prays the goddess as their mother to accept these first-fruits, to grant them grace to have their new-eating feast, and to save her witless children from all troubles and adversity. He then hands each man one of the bloodstained *saja* leaves, and, leaving someone to watch over the slain victims, all go and bury the leaves in their fields. Each man then brings a handful of old rice from his house to the *kadri-bera* field, and hands it over to the *perma*, who cooks the bodies of the victims and the rice separately, and distributes them to the men, who eat their share there.

Meanwhile the women, for whom it has been taboo to attend the ceremony in the *kadri-bera* field and the burial of the leaves, will have prepared meal from the new millets and mountain rice; the grains are still rather green, and are roughly threshed, parched in a broken earthen crock held over the fire, pounded with the *uspal* husker, winnowed free of husks, and ground between two hand mill-stones with a quantity of salt; some mix in a little *gur* sugar. The wife of each head of a family cooks the new flour in a Hanal Kunda or Pot of the Departed (not, of course, that in which oil, etc., is placed in the name of the newly dead), along with new vegetables from the *bari*, other than gourds, beans and cucumbers. When the head of the family returns from the sacrificial meal already described, he brings with him the junior members of his family, but *not* his wife-clan relatives, and some of them bring small chickens. He sacrifices these to the Departed, offers them some of the new flour and vegetables, and pours a libation of *mahua* spirit and *landa* on the floor of the corner of the *wijja-lon* room that is dedicated to the cult of the Departed. The new flour and vegetables are then eaten in his house by them, their wives and their unmarried children; but no one of any other clan may participate, and on that day no one must give anything out of his house, not even fire from his hearth, to anyone of another clan.

On the next day, however, there is the usual remains-eating feast (*Hara Tindana*) in their houses, to which they are free to invite friends, brother-clan and wife-clan relatives, whom they regale on *mahua* spirit and on *landa*. In the evening they dance the *korlam* dance without their bison-horn head-dresses, but with men and women dancing separately in their usual way.

In villages where there is a log-god and a *Mataguri* or hut-shrine of Mata, the sacrifices on the first day are made before each, the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

perma with three or four mediums officiating at the former, and the priest of Mata (*Mata-pujari*) at the latter. In some villages there is a separate hut close to the shrine (*pen-rawar*) of the log-god or clan-god and to the *Mataguri*, and a separate priest of the Departed called generally *Pitar-gaita*, but sometimes *Dhuma-gaita* or *Hanal-gaita*, the use of the Hindu term *pitar* for the local terms *dhuma* and *hanal* being significant of the way in which Hinduism is gradually modifying tribal religion. At the Ghotpal Kurum Pandum, for example, on the 9th September 1930, the men assembled with the *perma* outside the *pen-rawar* of Use Modia Pen along with the men of two adjacent Lekami villages. The *pen* log-god was brought out and set down on four stone slabs set up as posts. The proceedings started with the *Pitar-gaita* bringing two new earthen pots and about half a pound each of new *chikna* and new mountain rice to a separate shed at the side of the *pen-rawar*. He kindled a fire, and in one pot cooked small quantities of the new *chikna*, set this out on three *mahua* leaves as an offering to the Departed, and attached a fringe of rice plants in ear to the roof of the shed. He then started to cook the rest of the new *chikna* and new rice in the other pot, sitting in the shed, while the others present went to attend the sacrifices in front of the log-god. These were conducted in much the same way as those already described as made usually before the Village Mother; but there was no sprinkling of blood on *saja* leaves or burial of the leaves in the fields, the *perma*, who acted as clan-priest, washed the mouths and feet of the pigs and cocks before applying the *tokana* test, and a *wadde* medium sat by the side of the log-god reciting '*mantram*' as the *perma* sacrificed each cock and pig. The *perma* then poured three libations each of *mahua* spirit and *landa* in front of the log-god. All the men then returned to the *Pitar-gaita's* shed, and sat in a circle round it, while the *Pitar-gaita* stuck a pinch of the cooked *chikna* and rice on the centre of each man's forehead, just as Hindus apply the *tika*. Thereafter all went back to the *pen-rawar*, and first the *perma*, then the *Pitar-gaita*, then the *pada* headmen of the three villages taking part in the ceremony, and last eleven or twelve village elders saluted everyone present and drank a leaf-cupful first of *mahua* spirit and then of *landa*. Then the sacrificed cocks and pigs were cooked, and all the men sat in a circle and were given each two leaf-cupfuls of *landa* to drink and two pieces of the cooked meat. All ended by drinking some *mahua* spirit and the whole feast was over by 9 p.m., when they dispersed to their houses without dancing. No females had been present. They had the usual family new-eating next day, with offerings to the Departed inside the house. Ghotpal and some other villages have no dancing at this *pandum*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 Nowhere, so far as can be ascertained, are any offerings made at the *urakhal* menhir stones for the Departed.

After this *pandum* everyone is free to eat the new early millets and garden vegetables other than gourds, cucumbers, beans and pulses. The practice as to mountain rice varies, for there is still the Korta Pandum or rice first-fruits ceremony to follow. In some places people are free to use and cook the new mountain rice in any way they like after the Kurum Pandum. In others it must be cooked or roasted without being first washed in water until the Nuka Nordana Pandum has been held, which coincides roughly with Diwali.

The Korta Pandum comes about a month after the Kurum Pandum, and celebrates the first eating of the new rice of the main crop, and of new cucumbers, pumpkins and gourds.

The Korta Pandum

Unlike the Kurum Pandum, it is a purely domestic ceremony with no public offerings, though the date for it is fixed for the whole village by the usual elders' meeting. It takes place in the first or second week of Kuar, i.e. in early October. Before dawn of the day before the festival the head of each family tries to get to his fields without being seen and reaps enough of the new rice for the morrow's ceremony, for which it is threshed, parched, husked and winnowed in readiness. *Landa* is prepared, and *mahua* spirit bought. On the appointed morning the new rice is cooked in the Pot of the Departed by the housewife, along with the flesh of the goat, cock or pig sacrificed to the Departed by the head of each family, and eaten by the men and women of the family (affines being excluded) in the way already described for the domestic ceremony of the Kurum Pandum. All take *landa* and liquor, and then in most villages the men don their dancing head-dresses, and sing and dance from house to house, exchanging visits and drinking *landa* with all their neighbours. There are the usual remains-eating feasts given next day for brother-clan and wife-clan relatives from other villages, with more singing and dancing.

[769]

The literal meaning of '*nuka nordana*' is 'husked-grain (*indica, chawal*) grinding'. The festival is not universal among the Bison-horn Marias, and is held at about the beginning of the third week of Kartik month (November). It is sometimes spoken of as Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights; but no Maria houses are illuminated for it. Other local names are Pit Phorni (Halbi) and Deuthni. The ceremony should be held before the clan-god or log-god, but in villages where there is none it takes place in the *kadri-bera* by the usual Bhimul post, and, as for the Marka Pandum,

The Nuka Nordana Pandum

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

a table-stone with a white pebble on it may be erected in the name of the clan-god under a *saja* tree. The *perma* sacrifices cocks and a pig or goat on behalf of the village in the usual way, and washes some new husked rice and *kuthi* and offers it to the god. The men cook and eat the sacrificial meat then and there. The wife-clan relatives may be present, but in most villages are not allowed to participate in the sacrificial rice and meat and are supplied with other rice and meat which they cook separately. The usual remains-eating feast takes place in the houses next day.

The Jata Pandum

At the Jata Pandum, held somewhere near the full moon of Pus (December-January), they celebrate the eating of the first new beans, pulses, and the latest ripening grains. There is the usual public sacrifice for the men before the log-god or the Village Mother. In the south, towards the Doria border, the festival is known as Chikur Pandum, and the sacrifices are always to a table-stone beneath a *saja* tree known as Dhania Deo, which, like the Bhattra Dhani, appears to be only another form of the earth-god. The only special feature of this *pandum* is that the domestic sacrifice and libations to the Departed in the house are often followed by a ceremony for weaning suckling children, the first food given being some of the rice and sacrificial meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed.

The Kare Pandum

This takes place in Magh (January-February), soon after the Jata Pandum, and, as already observed, is preceded by the *Kare Weta* in which fields and open spaces are beaten for small game. I was unable to ascertain what other special features, if any, the festival has, or whether new grass and new bamboo are offered to the gods. Until the festival has been held it is *malo* or taboo to cut grass or bamboos or to start felling timber for *erha*, *parka* and *penda* cultivation.

The Bhimul Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum comes very soon after the Kare Pandum. I have no detailed information. But it is a ceremony for ensuring a good rainfall in the coming monsoon. It takes place by the Bhimul post in the *kadri-bera*, over which a booth of boughs is erected. Men and women attend. The booth is decorated with strings of mango leaves. The *perma* sacrifices a white cock and an egg, and pours *landa* over the Bhimul post; and men and women then empty over the post baskets containing a little of every kind of field produce. Men and women then sit in the open, and consume *landa*. All night the village women dance, led by the *perma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head or in her arms.

The Bhimul Pandum is really the last of the *pandum* held in all villages. It only remains to mention the Mandai or Deoguri

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

796 Jatra, which is held generally about the full moon of Magh, but in some villages is part of the round of festivities and hunting connected with the Wijja Pandum in the month of Chait. The Mandai is a Hinduization of the old Pen-karsita. Throughout Northern Bastar a Mandai Jatra is held at all big centres at about this time, culminating in the great Mandai in the open space called Kodo Bhata in Jagdalpur, which the Chief should attend in state, processing on elephant seven times round the fair, accompanied by innumerable mediums leaping and dancing possessed by their gods. The Hill Maria counterpart is the Koqsar on the day after the Pupal Korta Tindana. The Bison-horn Pen-karsita tends to resemble the Mandai of the bigger villages of the north, all the local gods being brought out and the *wadde* mediums, possessed by their godlings, leaping and dancing wildly about. The special Pen-karsita drum rhythm and dance have already been referred to.

The Mandai

These are the main festivals, though here and there there are further *pandum*, such as the sacrifice offered at the base of the first toddy-palm to be tapped among the southern Bison-horn Marias. Nor must it be expected that in every *pargana* or village the local *pandum* will conform exactly to the descriptions in this chapter, which represent the principal features of *pandum* actually seen in Dugeli, villages around Kuakonda, Aranpur, Ghotpal and villages in Sukma zamindari. The festivals are far more numerous and more elaborate than those of the Hill Marias. It is an obvious suggestion that if the Bison-horn Maria tradition of migration from the Abujhmar hills be correct, the accretions to the hill cults represent entirely the influence of the old Telanga Hindu centres of Dantewara, Barsur and Bhairamgarh. But this does not account for such features as the soaking of the first seeds to be sown in the coming harvest in the blood of the animals sacrificed in the Wijja Pandum, or the burial of the blood-stained *saja* leaves in the fields during the Kurum Pandum, which have suggestions of connexion with the Khond Meriah ritual; or for such magico-religious pieces of ritual as the gathering of *mahua* leaves in the baskets used for collecting *mahua* flowers, the dancing of the *perma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head, or the spilling of milk on the *mahua* buds. Primitive cults are influenced by Hinduism, but also react on it; and it seems to have been part of the policy of the Bastar Chiefs to identify themselves as much as they could with the religious life of their primitive subjects, save those in the inaccessible Abujhmar hills. Much of the long Dasehra ritual at Jagdalpur is elaborated from primitive ideas. Tribal gods have been recognized, and many are allowed to join in the Mandai

Conclusion

796 177

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

procession at Jagdalpur. The Dantewara temple observes several of the local *pandum*, if in a Hinduized form, while the ceremonies of the isolated Telanga villages now surrounded by a sea of Bison-horn Maria villages have become little different from those of the Bison-horn Marias. Hinduization there is, and has long been; but that alone does not account for the differences between the ritual of the Bison-horn Maria and that of the Hill Maria and his Muria neighbours. The physical differences between the two sections of Marias are slight, but their traditions are different, and at least it is clear that they represent different waves of migration. The remarkable differences of dancing, drumming, singing and ritual, and in the intonation, words and inflexions of their dialects, which make them mutually unintelligible, cannot be explained merely by saying that the Bison-horn Marias are 'more advanced' and more in contact with Hinduism and Telugu influences than the Hill Marias.

Note.

Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., has, since this book went to the press, kindly sent me a note of an interesting recent investigation by the police at Madder in Bhopalpatnam zamindari. A Mohammedan woman asleep on the night of June 13th, 1937 in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a knife or arrow over her right ribs, and woke to see what she believed to be two Marias running away. The police enquiry elicited information that many Marias in Kutru zamindari (i.e. Bison-horn Marias or Hill Marias of the plains in long contact with Doria or Bison-horn influence; the true Hill Marias would not venture down to Madder), before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice seed before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XII

The Cult of the Departed; Magic and Witchcraft; Omens; Beliefs about the Phenomena of Nature

A. The Cult of the Departed

In the preceding chapters there have been many references to the *Hanal* or Departed. In Chapter VI were described the *lonu*[1] or Room of the Departed in the Hill Maria house, with the Pot of the Departed and the Hearth of the Departed, and the corresponding *wijjalon*[2] room in the Bison-horn Maria house; in Chapter VII the reader will have seen how the Departed are regarded by the Hill Maria as having the power to influence sowing and harvesting, and are therefore propitiated at seed-time by the *wijj-akk*[3] or 'seed-leaves' ceremony and at the new-eating festivals[4] by the wives offering the new grains before the Pot of the Departed after cooking them on the Hearth of the Departed, and by the husband in the morning depositing three leaves with the new food by the roadside as offerings to them. Of all Marias Chapter VIII[5] has told of the universal practice of pouring a drop or two of intoxicating drink as a libation to the Departed before drinking, and Chapter IX[6] of a burning log from the Hearth of the Departed in the *kasyeq-gaita's* or *perma's* house being used to fire the first pile of dry wood for *penda* cultivation and to light the fires for cooking sacrificial meals. We have seen also in the last chapter how the Bison-horn Maria (*a*) offers water to the Departed at the time of the Marka Pandum[7]; (*b*) has the new grain and vegetables cooked in the Pot of the Departed by his wife and sacrifices cocks or other victims to them in the domestic ceremonies in connexion with the Kurum Pandum,[8] (*c*) the Korta Pandum[9] and (*d*) the Jata Pandum[10]; (*e*) has in some villages a separate priest of the Departed known as the Pitar-Gaita[11] or Hanal-Gaita who has special duties to perform at the public ceremonies of the Kurum Pandum (possibly at other *pandum* also, but no enquiry was made on this point); and (*f*) at the weaning ceremony at the Jata Pandum[12] makes his children eat as their

[1] See p. 114.
[2] See p. 123.
[3] See p. 133.
[4] See p. 139.
[5] See p. 170.
[6] See p. 190.
[7] See p. 209; cf. also pp. 163-6.
[8] See p. 216.
[9] See p. 218.
[10] See p. 219.
[11] See p. 217.
[12] See p. 219.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

first solid food the new grain and meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed. 769

It will be seen in the sections of the next part of this book that deal with birth, marriage and funeral customs that there are further rites, either indicating the power of the Departed to influence the fortunes of their posterity, or designed to propitiate them. Such are the searching of the body of a new-born baby for the birth-marks of some ancestor; the libations to the Departed in the betrothal and marriage ceremonies of all Marias and the sacrificial meal given to Bison-horn bride and bridegroom before the Pot of the Departed in the bridegroom's father's house; the ascertaining at Hill Maria funerals whether the death was due to the wrath of the Departed; the special precautions taken in the obsequies of persons killed by tigers or lightning, victims of small-pox and pregnant women; and in Hill and Bison-horn obsequies the attempt finally to lay or placate the Departed by the erection of a menhir in the *kotokal* or *uraskal*.

The word *kanal* is simply a past participial form of the verb *kandana*, 'to go'; 'Departed' is thus a literal translation. It has a sound of finality about it, as though the dead, once departed, were finished with; and indeed men of the hill clans that do not erect menhirs for the dead are apt to assert that this is the case, and that they never worry further about their dead after they have been cremated or buried. Yet there are many signs that even they do not really think so. All Marias, it has already been observed,[1] are shy of talking about the Departed, though it takes little to get them to discuss other religious beliefs and ceremonies. I have had Hill Marias denying that they do anything for the Departed or offer them anything at death or the new-eating festivals, and then either found at their new graves a wooden *kanal-gutta* post and a stone *kanal-garya* seat for the Departed, with a sacrificed cow's tail and foot hanging from a tree close by, or discovered a Pot and Hearth of the Departed in their *lonu*. There is almost certainly not a Maria who does not believe that for some time, at least, after their death the Departed are to be feared and appeased by the necessary offerings and memorials. [764]

This fear of the *kanal* as likely to cause illness, death, the attacks of tigers or famine (for it is these apprehensions that lie behind most of the observances catalogued in the first two paragraphs of this chapter) may operate also not to the alarm of the righteous only, but as a protection to him because of its efficacy in deterring others from offences against the house. Goods stored in the *lonu* of the Hill Marias and the *wijja-lon* of the Bison-horn

[1] See p. 195.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [834] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *kanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *kanal*. The *kanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *kanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common 776 use of the expression *pen-kanal* has already been mentioned. As the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this 614 association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *wraskal* be the last thing that an individual *kanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lons* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only 775 around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip. All Marias agree that the dead are somewhere underground; men, animals, trees, and perhaps rivers and streams have in them *jiwa*, a principal of life, and some say that when a man dies his *jiwa* goes to Pogho Bhum, the sky, while that part which is cremated or buried goes below the earth and is his *hanal*. There is a belief that the menhirs erected at the *hatokal* or *urashal* increase in size if the *hanal* commemorated by it is happy. There are traces of an embryo belief in reincarnation in the practice among Hill Marias of examining a new-born baby to see if it has the same birth-marks as a dead ancestor and, if so, of naming it after the ancestor if of the same sex, or his spouse if of the other sex. Hindu ideas are beginning to influence Bison-horn Marias; tombs are erected sometimes by the side of the menhir in the *urashal*, thatched over to protect the dead from the heat of the sun, and with a pot of cold water, replenished from time to time, hung over the memorial to drip through a small hole in the pot to cool him further. But, like their ideas about the earth and the gods, the Marias' ideas about the Departed and the after-life are very indefinite and vary from place to place; it is safe only to go on their actual practice, and not on what some of them will say by way of generalization or theory; the latter are certain to be those who have had most contact with the outer world and persons of other faiths. There is one practical way in which old Bison-horn men show their belief in some future existence. They often choose before death the cow or bullock to be sacrificed when their menhir is erected in the *urashal*; and it is alleged that if the heir thinks it better to slay some other animal, the animal chosen by the dead man always pines to death. The graves of Hill and Bison-horn Marias are adorned with strips of cloth, spears, fishing-rods and other things they may need hereafter, and their ornaments are buried often with them.

B. Magic and Witchcraft

We have seen before that such is the ignorance of the local Hindus about the Marias that, in the words used by Glasford in 1862,[1] 'the simple and unsophisticated Gond tribes are believed to be expert necromancers, and on the most intimate footing with evil spirits'; and that the Marias have a totally undeserved reputation as physicians, although their general idea of sickness

[1] Report, p. 32.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *wadde* or *wadde*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[1] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[2] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[3]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[3] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 168. [3] Report, pp. 32-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVII

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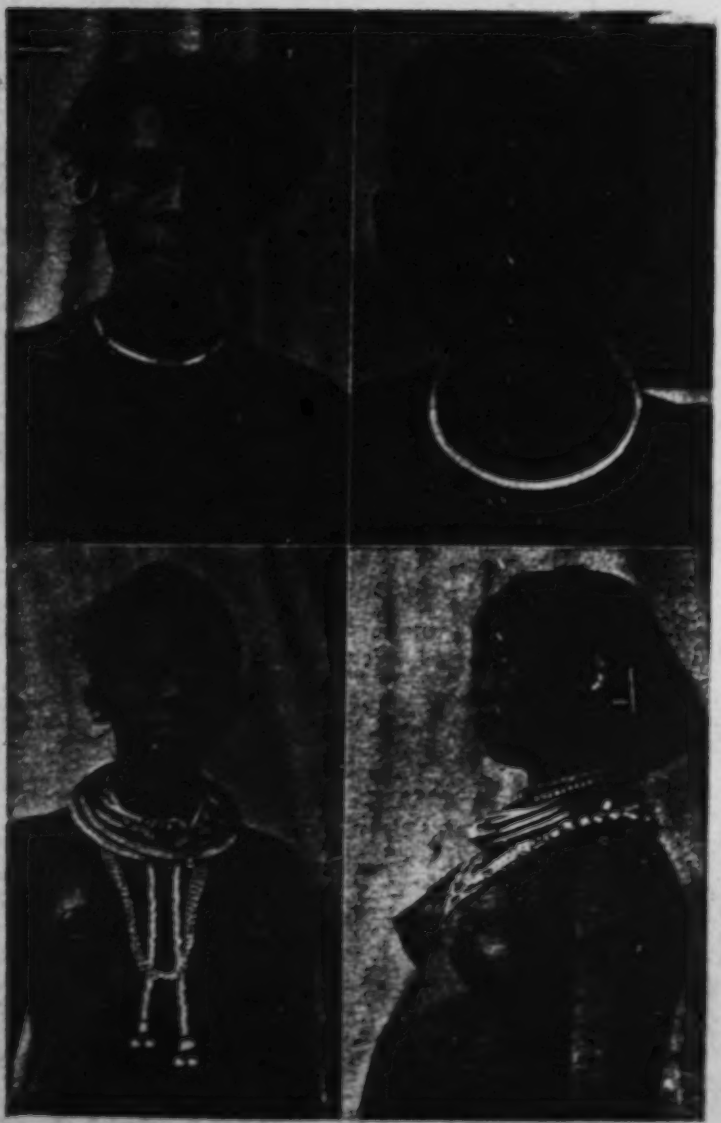

HILL MARIA TYPES

Above Arki Baiyya of Korewaya — Gecha Pola of Chadala Tondawada
Below Jugbo Baba of Italnar — Gama Kwado of Goti

[Facing p. 226]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to molest suspects. There were cases from Muria and Bhattra villages where the community inflicted degrading punishments only somewhat less cruel than those of Grasfurd's day; but in all but one of the Maria cases the man who believed himself wronged acted entirely on his own, often after consulting the god through a *waddai* medium, and killed or tried to kill the suspect with any weapon that came handy. The exception was the 1916 Hill Maria murder at Orcha, in which many villagers combined against the *pargana* headman, who, like his father before him, was said to have been expert in the black art, and to have used it and his position as headman to set up a '*raj*' over the *pargana*. They combined to seize him at night, crushed his testicles and hanged him from a creeper. Nor were women ever suspected in Maria cases, although in three cases among Jagdalpur Murias and Bhattras women suspects were very roughly handled. In two Bison-horn murders it was clear that the murdered man had threatened his murderer to bewitch him, and one of these blackmailers was himself a *waddai*. In fact, the *waddai* is generally believed by the Bison-horn Marias to know black magic as well as white magic and divination, and is apt to be feared accordingly.

It is naturally difficult to ascertain the methods believed to be used by the black magician; those who imagined they had suffered judged the fact solely from the nature of their sufferings, the word of the *waddai* consulted as to their source, and, perhaps, the known enmity of the suspect towards them, while naturally no practitioner of black magic cared to admit it or to describe his methods. Black magic is commonly referred to as *pangat*; and popular talk confirms the methods described at page 43 of the *Gazetteer*:—

> 'Whenever an enemy's life is to be taken, a bit of his cloth or hair is offered to a god with some incantations consisting of a string of names of godlings, and the victim should then pine away, unless he in turn calls in a magician. This practice is locally called *kuda marua*. Another plan is for the magician to put up two bits of grass tied in the form of a cross to represent his client's enemy, and, after going through incantations, shoot at the little figure with a miniature bow and arrow made of grass. If the arrow hits the mark it is believed that the enemy will surely die, unless he has recourse to magic to avert the spell.'

The information on which this was based came from the mixed Hill and Bison-horn Maria country around Barsur, and the word 'magician' is a translation of '*waddai*'.

White Magic

The white magic in vogue is merely the counter-magic used by a friendly *waddai* to avert or cure illness and disease. Of actual Hill Maria methods I obtained no notes; but certain *waddais* or *leshis* have a much greater reputation than others. I gather that Hill Maria methods do not differ from those in vogue among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, in which

[See cat. 116, pp. 423-424.—Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

755 F187 even Hindu officials educated at colleges outside the State place great trust. The cause of the illness or affliction is discovered by some form of divination (*hal hudatora*), generally by means of rice-grains, unless the case is serious enough to necessitate the actual presence of the log-god. The *waddai* always waits till he is possessed by his god (' the god comes upon him ' or ' sits on him ') to give his decision and advice. He gets rid of illness by ' *jhara phukna* ', blowing it away; as the sun is setting and again as it is rising he, to the accompaniment of long spells (*guni*), pretends to B247 charm a patient's illness by brushing it with a spray of leaves of *amaltas* (*Cassia fistula*), a tree with various magic uses, down from the head or the affected part to the toes, where he blows it away. The spells consist mainly of long lists of godlings; here are three specimens acquired from Telami Dhurwa, a *waddai* of Dhurli in Dantewara tahsil :—

(a) ' *Haranjuro, Jurjapo, Panduro-Parokhanda, Kosarabir, Bhumandra, Modarabir, Kosrapilko, Lenkjugo, Pa'inpaye, Hurremara, Ligoni, Munoputali, Munj-huro, Wiroputali, Bhimaraj, Karanje-putali, Karwaraj, Rupkhanda, Jangabela, Mudara, Yerkama, Akalkaro, Mandkola, Wermar, Yekanath, Nai-taras, Mor-khanda, Natur-khanda, Gurrakom, Gôpanath, Gurja ! Widse him.*'

This is just a catalogue of names said to be of godlings, but almost all of them unknown even to Telami Dhurwa, and ending with the adjuration ' *Widse him* ' or ' Let it go ! ', after saying which the *waddai* lets out a puff of breath from his mouth.

(b) ' *Dhanbaw, Arra-barra, Thakur Deo, Unatka'i, Chhewatin, Dhobin, Chandarin, Bhandarin ! Hat ke bandh* (close the hands), *tônd ke bandh* (close the mouth), *kan ke bandh* (close the ears) *! Guru, bandh !* (Close, oh Guru) *Gusta, Talisar ! Rukh-cho rukh-jat, ban-cho ban-jat, dongur-cho dongur jat !* (literally, " Of trees, tree-kind, of forest forest-kind, of ant-hill ant-hill-kind ! ") *Kud-mon bhed-mon ilis* (You came by enmity) *Pongan mon ilis* (You came by witchcraft), *par bahare udun-ja* (but get out !).'

This is a Halbi formula, starting with names of godlings, telling them to close the hands, mouth and ears of the illness, and then ordering the illnesses of tree, forests and ant-hill to get out, whether they came through enmity or witchcraft.

(c) ' *Chimni, Biruma, Beyani, Pulapo, Nangapo, Idusio, Tulmia, Kosalnago, Irpadmo, Wano-Puriya, Koyendo-Hunga, Ar-Iriya, Podemala, Ar-hunga, Deo-nanda, Hurkura, Nur-Guru, Path-guru, Path-chala, Gurujan !* '

This is a meaningless jingle of words, mostly names of godlings or demons (*rau*).

006 I have not attempted here to speak of the various magico-religious ceremonies, for their magical aspect is commented on when the ceremonies themselves are described under agriculture, religion or other subjects.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

C. *Omens*

We have seen how the addling of the eggs of the *kasyeq-gaita's* hens may lead to the abandonment of a village site[1]; how the siting of a new Bison-horn village is affected by the finding of roots or stones when the *perma* digs a hole for the first *saja* post, and how even when these omens have allowed the hole to be dug, they have further to be confirmed by the villagers waiting till the next day to see whether two heaps of rice have been disturbed[2]; and how before the ceremonial *weta* hunts of the Bison-horn Marias begin, the *perma* consults the omens with two split pieces of a tooth-stick.[3] The Bison-horn Maria often calls in the *waddai* to examine the omens and fix auspicious days for sowing or other occasions. Omens are particularly important in connexion with betrothals and weddings, but among Bison-horn Marias only; the Hill Marias, except those living in contact with the Bison-horn Marias, seem not to worry over them, and in fact to be ignorant of the whole practice. But the Bison-horn Maria likes everything done on an auspicious day, and then only if no adverse omen is met. Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 78) write:—

> 'In Bastar an omen is taken before the wedding. The village elders meet on an auspicious day as Monday, Thursday or Friday, and after midnight they cook and eat food, and go out into the forest. They look for a small black bird called Usi, from which omens are commonly taken. When anybody sees this bird, if it cries "*Sun, Sun*" on the right hand, it is thought that the marriage will be lucky. If, however, it cries "*Chi, Chi*", or "*Fis, Fis*", the proposed match is held to be of evil omen, and is cancelled. The Koya Gonds of Bastar distil mahua liquor before arranging for a match. If the liquor is good, they think the marriage will be lucky, and take the liquor with them to cement the betrothal; but if it is bad they think the marriage will be unlucky, and the proposal is dropped.'

The *usi* bird is a common source of omens; the Marias of the Kutru zamindari below the Abujhmar hills, who are really Hill Marias influenced greatly by contact with Bison-horn Marias and Teluguized Dorlas, when they select a new *modul wadde* as clan-priest and social arbiter, consult the omens before confirming their selection; they go to the forest, and if they hear an *usi* twittering on their left as they go and on their right as they return, consider that the omens favour their selection, but make a fresh selection if the bird twitters on the other sides. Among Bison-horn Marias the *usi* is not the usual source of marriage omens; if the party on its way to ask for a girl's hand in marriage meets a tiger, panther, sambhur, chital, jackal or snake crossing their path from left to right, it is a good omen; if it crosses the path from right to left, the omen is bad, but merely shows that the expedition has started on a bad day and must

[1] See p. 103. [2] See pp. 122-3. [3] See p. 211.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. Beliefs about Natural Phenomena

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To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-wil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garhar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
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PART V

Social Organization, Law and Custom

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XIII

Social Organization; the Phratries and Clans

114 The investigations that have resulted in the materials for this book have had perforce to be made piecemeal in the intervals of a busy administrative task. Here the professional ethnologist who is able to make a prolonged stay among the subjects of his studies has a profound advantage over the administrator; and in no direction is this advantage more pronounced than in tracing the ramifications of a system of social organization. Even where the genealogical method of enquiry can be profitably employed it is useless for this wide purpose, unless the collection of pedigrees and of information on laws and customs based upon them can be spread over as wide a field as possible. Apart from the lack of leisure from which an official administering a State so large and with such a tradition of personal rule as Bastar must suffer, there is a further difficulty [153] about genealogical enquiries, namely the poor memories of the Marias as to their ancestors, sometimes even as to their own parents and uncles. It is very seldom that anyone can remember the names of ancestors earlier than his grandparents; many cannot even remember their grandmother's name, much less her clan, unless the family has regularly followed the tradition of cross-cousin marriage. When, as among the Hill Marias, there is so little individual property to pass by inheritance, land being the property of the clan, cattle being scarce, and the contents of the houses being either food or not made of durable materials, some of which have to be buried with their owner or destroyed at his death, the genealogical method may not lead the enquirer very far. Very old men and women are, moreover, not common. The only pedigree covering more than three generations that I was able to collect is printed in Appendix II after the lists of clans. Two circumstances favoured it. There were two very old but intelligent men, Usendi Baiyya and Usendi Dangi, living when the pedigree was first taken in 1930; their nephew Usendi Moda, a man of unusual intelligence, was then about fifty, and all three had a good memory of the clans and villages with which the family had intermarried for three generations; even then Baiyya and Dangi could not remember their paternal grandmother's name or the clan and village from which

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

she came. The second circumstance was the fact that, to some extent, I could spur their memories from the record of a 1916 Sessions case in which Moda and two other members of the family had been sentenced to imprisonment for life for the murder of a fourth member, Usendi Bhosa. The family was, moreover, one of considerable social importance. It has the hereditary right of providing the secular headman of both the village of Orcha and the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, while the Usendi clan is one of the strongest in the Abujhmar hills, and the Koqsar festivals of its god Wikir Hunga attract people from far and wide. In most families it is impossible to get beyond the paternal grandfather, if indeed beyond the father and mother; but though the names are forgotten, obligations are not; and many, if not all, Marias remember the clans and families with which they have cross-cousin marriage alliances. Of 105 Hill Maria marriages investigated, fifty-seven were marriages between cross-cousins; it is not so easy to check the remaining 46 per cent. in which the marriage marked the start of new affinities, at least as between the two contracting families, if not as between the clans.

On the other hand, a man touring as the administrative head of the State has the advantage of always having many Marias from different clans and villages assembling at his camps, and so of ascertaining their matrimonial alliances and testing practically any clan lists which he may have made or obtained elsewhere. But here a further difficulty crops up. Communications among the Hill Marias are very bad, and it by no means follows that an Usendi living, let us say, on the southern edge of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* has the same views on the clans from which it is permissible to seek a bride as an Usendi in the Chanda part of the Abujhmar hills or in the northernmost Maria *pargana* of the Antagarh tahsil. There is always a tendency to limit clan jurisdiction to the administrative division; though investigation will reveal much intermarriage between one *pargana* and the next, even though one should be in one tahsil and the other in another, in a zamindari or even in British territory, yet the investigator will be assured that 'we do not take wives from that clan or village because it is not in our *pargana*' or 'our raj'; and it has already been seen that when members of a clan migrate from their clan-area to colonize lands deserted by other clans outside the *pargana* they no longer consider themselves under any obligation to attend their original clan-god's festivals.

This much has been said by way of introduction, and of apology if, as I fear, this chapter is the least satisfactory and the least final in its conclusions.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The only writers who seem to have touched on the social organization of the Bastar Marias before are Russell and Hiralal, who said (III, pp. 64-6) :—

Russell and Hiralal, on the social organization of the Bastar Marias

'The Gond rules of exogamy appear to preserve traces of the system found in Australia, by which the whole tribe is split into two or four main divisions, and every man in one or two of them must marry a woman in the other one or two. . . .

'Among the Gonds, however, the subdivision into small exogamous sects has been also carried out, and the class system, if the surmise that it once existed be correct, remains only in the form of a survival, prohibiting marriage between agnates, like an ordinary sept. In one part of Bastar all the septs of the Maria Gonds are divided into two great classes. There are ninety septs in A Class and sixty-nine in B Class, though the list may be incomplete. All the septs in A Class say that they are Bhaiband or Dadabhai to each other, that is in the relation of brothers, or cousins being the sons of brothers. No man of Class A can marry a woman of any sept in Class A. The septs of Class A stand in the relation of Mamabhai or Akomama to those of Class B. Mamabhai means a maternal uncle's son, and Akomama apparently signifies having the same maternal grandfather. Any man of a sept in Class A can marry any woman of a sept in Class B. It will thus be seen that the smaller septs seem to serve no purpose for regulating marriage, and are no more than family names. The tribe might just as well be divided into two great exogamous clans only. Marriage is prohibited between persons related only through males; but according to the exogamous arrangement there is no other prohibition, and a man could marry any maternal relative. Separate rules, however, prohibit his marriage with certain female relatives, and these will be given subsequently (ibid., p. 72). It is possible that the small septs may serve some purpose which has not been elicited, though the inquiry made by Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath[1] was most careful and painstaking.

'In another part of Bastar there were found to be five classes, and each class had a small number of septs in it. The people who supplied this information could not give the names of many septs. Thus Class A had six septs,[2] Class B five, Classes C and D one each, Class E four, and Class F two. A man could not marry a woman of any sept belonging to his own class.

'The Muria Gonds of Bastar have a few large exogamous septs or clans named in Hindi after animals, and each of these clans contains several subsepts with Gondi names. Thus the *Bakorasans* or Goat race contains the Garde, Kunjami, Karrami and Vadde septs. The *Kachhimvans* or Tortoise race has the Netami, Kawachi, Usendi and Tekami septs. The *Nagvans* or Cobra race includes the Maravi, Potari, Karanga, Nurethi, Dhurwa and others. Other exogamous races are the Sodi (or tiger), Behainsa (buffalo), Netam (dog in Gondi), Chamchidai (bat) and one or two more. In this case the exogamous clans with Hindi names would appear to be a late division, and have perhaps been adopted because the meaning of the old Gondi names had been forgotten, or the septs were too numerous to be remembered.'

As will be seen in this chapter, the part of Bastar where five 'classes' were found was presumably the Bison-horn country and its cultural extension, the Dorla country, where there are definitely five phratries each containing varying numbers of clans. The tract in which, according to Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath's enquiry, the

[1] Diwan of Bastar for many years.

[2] Six classes, A to F, are given, though the text speaks of five, the actual number among both Bison-horn Marias and Dorlas. But so few 'septs' are mentioned, nineteen as compared to the fifty in my list of phratries, that the enquiry must have been incomplete.

[See cat. 116, p. 428. — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Marias were divided into two moieties containing ninety and sixty-nine 'septs' (for which this book uses the term 'clans') can only have been the country of the Hill Marias.

The clan organization of the Hill Marias

Unfortunately the records of the Rai Bahadur's enquiry are not forthcoming. But he appears never to have entered the Abujhmar hills, and his enquiries were probably based on questions put to Hill Marias at camps to which they came to see him in the plains. The list of hill clans in the appendix shows only fifty clans. My enquiries so far as possible covered even those Hill Maria *parganas* which I did not visit, and though my list is, no doubt, incomplete, the great difference between his 159 and my 50 clans must mean that he included many areas which are not Hill Maria areas, probably all Kutru zamindari, and all Antagarh tahsil.

As we have seen, the clans are not merely little more than surnames; quite apart from questions of exogamy, they are, in the Abujhmar hills, practically political units, each, at least of the flourishing clans, with its own clan-area; and each clan had a *panchayat* system for dealing with everyday offences. Clans may feel themselves closer to some clans in kindred or affinity, as the case may be, than to others; but on the whole it is the social solidarity of the clan and its members, its '*bhumkal*' as the Marias say, that keeps the Hill Marias together. Had it not been for the strong feeling of the clan for its own *bhum* (earth) the mistaken and oppressive land revenue system in vogue till recently and the gross mismanagement of at least the Bastar zamindaris would have resulted in wholesale migration to Chanda District. As it was, many went, but generally a nucleus of the clans remained, and now that things are better in Bastar many of the emigrants are returning.

I started my enquiries strongly influenced by the passage quoted from Russell and Hiralal, and expecting that the hill clans would fall naturally into two moieties. So for long they did. I began with the great Usendi clan of Orcha and the Chhota Dongar hill *pargana*. So far as that *pargana* is concerned, the clans in it do fall into two moieties, the Usendi clan having six clans related to it as *dadabhai* (brother-clan) and fourteen as *akomama* (wife-clan); not only did each of the clans concerned agree that it stood in the relation shown to the Usendi clan, but their statements were confirmed by the actual marriages examined. But the first major difficulty arose in the adjacent Barsur Mar and Mangnar *pargana*. There is no doubt about the Usendi freely intermarrying with the important Gume clan which practically monopolizes Barsur Mar; the pedigree in the appendix, for example, shows four such marriages

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

in cross-cousin relation. It is equally certain that the great Jugho clan of Adeq and other Chhota Dongar villages as well as of Itulnar in Bhairamgarh Mar regularly intermarries with and is *akomama* to the Usendi clan. If there were two moieties, all clans from which an Usendi could take a wife would have to be in the moiety other than that containing the Usendi clan; that is to say the Gumelor and the Jughalor would have to be in the same moiety and so would be *dadabhai* to each other and unable to intermarry. But actually they are *akomama* to each other and do intermarry quite often. Take again the important Jate clan of Mornar in Mangnar *pargana*, and its closely connected *dadabhai* clans the Tokalor and Hukur of Erpanar. They are *dadabhai* to the Usendi. On the two-moiety theory, therefore, they would be in the same moiety as the Usendi clan, and so would be any clan from which the Gumelor, with whom the Usendi, Jaterom, Tokalor and Hukur intermarry, might take a wife. The Gumelor often take wives from the Marvi clan of Tokhtoli and three other villages in Mangnar *pargana*. The Jaterom, Tokalor and Hukur should, therefore, be in the same moiety as that clan and debarred from taking wives from it; actually they consider themselves 'close *akomama*' relatives of the Marvi clan, and intermarriage is frequent. As, therefore, on the two-moiety theory Marvis must be in the opposite moiety to the Gumelor, they ought to be in the same moiety as the Usendi clan with whom the Gumelor intermarry; but, e.g., Marvi Bital, the headman of Tokhtoli, married his cross-cousin Usendi Puse of Juwara, continuing a chain of such marriages between the two families. The Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group of clans takes wives from Marvis and Gumelor, the Marvis from the Gumelor and the Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group, and the Gumelor from the Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group and the Marvis. Again, the Dhurwa clan is a close *dadabhai* of the Jughalor, and in practice (vide the pedigree) intermarries with the Usendi. It also intermarries with the Gumelor, who, as we have seen, themselves intermarry with the Usendi. This is another triangular example that cannot be fitted into the two-sided moiety theory. Examples can be found also in the north of the hills. The Farsal, Bardal and Gotal clans are very definitely *dadabhai* both to themselves and to the neighbouring Muria clans the Karangalor and Dughalor; the three of them marry mostly Jughalor girls, but also Usendi and Wadder girls, and the Usendi of the Kiringal and Dugal *pargana* are *akomama* to the Karangalor and Dughalor. On the two-moiety theory, therefore, the Usendi and Jughalor ought to be in the same moiety and, therefore, would not be allowed to intermarry. But actually they do, very frequently.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Bison Horn Maria

[616] 615 618

The theory of two moieties therefore completely breaks down, and it is obvious that we are confronted by something approaching phratries. The Bison-horn Marias call their groups *kutmam* or *tarr* and their clans *katta*; but the Hill Marias know neither of the two former words, and, though some towards the south of the hills understand *katta*, they use the word *pari* that is in vogue for this purpose among all the Central Provinces Gonds. It is possible that they have some word for groups of clans, but I was unsuccessful in trying to get at it. They have some conception, however, of groups. The Usendi, Wadder, Katlami and Jaterom consider themselves brothers; Wikir Hunga, the god of the Usendis and Wadder, is a younger brother of Pat Raja, god of the Jaterom, and Pandu Hunga, god of the Katlamis, is the next brother after Wikir Hunga and has a Jate *waddai*; the Deda clan of Kurmer may also belong to the group, as its god Nule Harma is the youngest brother of Pat Raja. To the group would also belong the smaller clans of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* that are *dadabhai* to the Usendi, the Korami, Dodi, Deda and Parsal. Similarly the Jugho (*alias* Karme) clan says that the Dhurwa clan is its elder and the Dolwar clan its younger brother; their marriages are all consistent with membership of the same group, which possibly also includes the other Chhota Dongar clans of the list not mentioned above as *dadabhai* to the Usendi group, and the Yete clan of Kutru; all these are definitely *dadabhai* to the Jughalor. The Bardal, Farsal, Gotal, Nughoti, Tapa and Hichami clans of the north appear to be a group, to which would be added the Dughalor and Karangalor had they not become Murias and decided to discontinue the give and take of daughters in marriage with the Hill Marias. Of the grouping of the Kutru clans it is difficult to speak; but judging from marriages the Parllo, Jata, Kohka and Ark clans are a group of *dadabhai*, and *akomama* to another group consisting of the Boter, Wachami, Mohanda, Oyami, Mohke, and Pungati. The former group appears to be *dadabhai* to the Usendi group, and to be differentiated from it only by the fact that its members live in the Kutru zamindari, while the Usendi group is practically confined to the Antagarh tahsil. In Mangnar there is definitely a Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group, while the Marvi may belong to the same group as the Marvi phratry of the Bison-horn Marias and may include the small Alami and Nonde clans of Mangnar. The Gumelor of Barsur Mar seem to be in a group of their own so far as most of the Hill clans are concerned. The chief clans ungrouped in this tentative grouping are the Padal of Padalibhum and the Jati of Jatwara; both possibly come into the great Jughalor group.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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618

It should be clear from what has been said that these groups or phratries are not proved, but are a hypothesis that does explain observed facts, which cannot possibly be squared with the theory of two moieties. That theory is the less likely when it is remembered that amongst all the Gonds of the Central Provinces it is usual to find phratries, whether the simple totem-phratries of the Bison-horn Marias of Bastar or the three-god, four-god, five-god, six-god and seven-god phratries of the Chanda, Nagpur and Chhindwara districts. Russell and Hiralal have already been quoted as saying that there are similar totem phratries among the Murias. But one must not necessarily expect to find the same number (five) of phratries among the Hill Marias; they perhaps are not conscious of having any phratries at all, and the groups are only the result of proximity and convenience, tempered by the accidents of the political geography of the hill country. There are no signs at all of totems for these suppositious groups, like those shown in the list of Bison-horn clans, and existing among the Murias; the Usendi will not eat or keep goats, and the Parllo, though they tend goats for Telis, will not eat them or drink their milk. The Kohkalor will not touch or fell the marking-nut tree (*kohka-marra; Semecarpus anacardium*) or its fruits. The Yete are called after the crab (*yete*), but they eat crabs. The Neghal are called after the panther (*neghal*), but the reason seems to be that when they founded their village a panther was killed at the entrance to it, the panther now commemorated by three stones (see page 154). The Alami have the *alam* or chameleon as totem, and salaam gravely any chameleon they may meet. But the reverence paid by the Jaterom to the brooms of *jate* grass used to sweep their god's shrine and by the Hukur to the ladle that they use to dole out the sacrificial rice cooked at the same shrine are acts akin to the annual worship paid by all Hindu artisans to the tools of their craft. The other things mentioned in the totem column in the list of hill clans in the appendix are not totems, but explanations of the origins of the names of the clans concerned. It is thus clear that traces of totemism among the Hill Marias are very slight, and affect individual clans, not groups. There is no connexion at all between totemism and the taboos, nor does it figure in the cult of the clan-god.

It was suggested on page 205 that the five major clans from which the five Bison-horn phratries take their names might have originated from the migration of strong bodies of each of those clans from the Abujhmar hills, in the same way that even now bodies of clans like the Jughalor and the Gumelor are beginning to occupy deserted lands of forgotten or dwindling clans in Bhairamgarh Mar, and that each of these five major clans split up into smaller clans,

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AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

615 each new clan, however, retaining to some extent its membership
618 of the original clan, the name of which became the generic name for it and its daughter-clans. The process can be seen at work in the hills; the Tokalor and Hukur have clearly split off from the Jaterom, while the Usendi group must at some time have split away from the Jaterom, as their clan-gods are the younger brothers of the Jaterom god Pat Raja, and the Katlami god Pandu Hunga, the eldest of these younger brothers, is served by a Jate *waddai* (clan-priest). It does look as though there may have been an original two-moiety system, which has expanded into a group system merely because as colonization proceeded strict adherence to the rule of taking a wife from the other moiety proved impossible owing to distances and bad communications. For the emigrant clans who colonized the Bison-horn country, which could support a far larger population than the hills, it would be particularly necessary to allow a wider range of choice than possible under two-moiety exogamy. This is secured if a man in phratry A can take a wife from phratry B, C, D or E.

Bison-horn phratries and clans

So we have the phatry and clan organization of the Bison-horn Marias. The list in Appendix II shows nine clans in the Marvi phratry, ten in the Kuhrami, three in the Sodi, twenty-one in the Markami and eight in the Kawasi, fifty-one altogether, as compared with the nineteen of Russell and Hiralal. The list mentions six other clans whose phratry I did not ascertain. Like the Muria phratries mentioned by Russell and Hiralal, these phratries are often described as the *bans*, a Hindi word for race, of their totems; the Marvi phratry in most of the Bison-horn country is the *Bakrabans* or Goat race, and in Sukma and the south the *Nagvans* or Cobra race; the Kuhrami phratry is the *Kadiaribans* or Cuckoo race; the Sodi phratry is the *Baghbans* or Tiger race; and both the Markami and the Kawasi phratries are *Kachhimvans* or Tortoise races. Almost exactly the same phratries with the same subordinate clans are found among the Dorla Koitor of the south; but they have other names for the phratries, called after the *yelopi* or *velpu* god of the phratry, only one of whom, Perambhoi, after whom the phratry corresponding to the Bison-horn Kuhrami or Cuckoo race is called, is even known to the Bison-horn Marias.

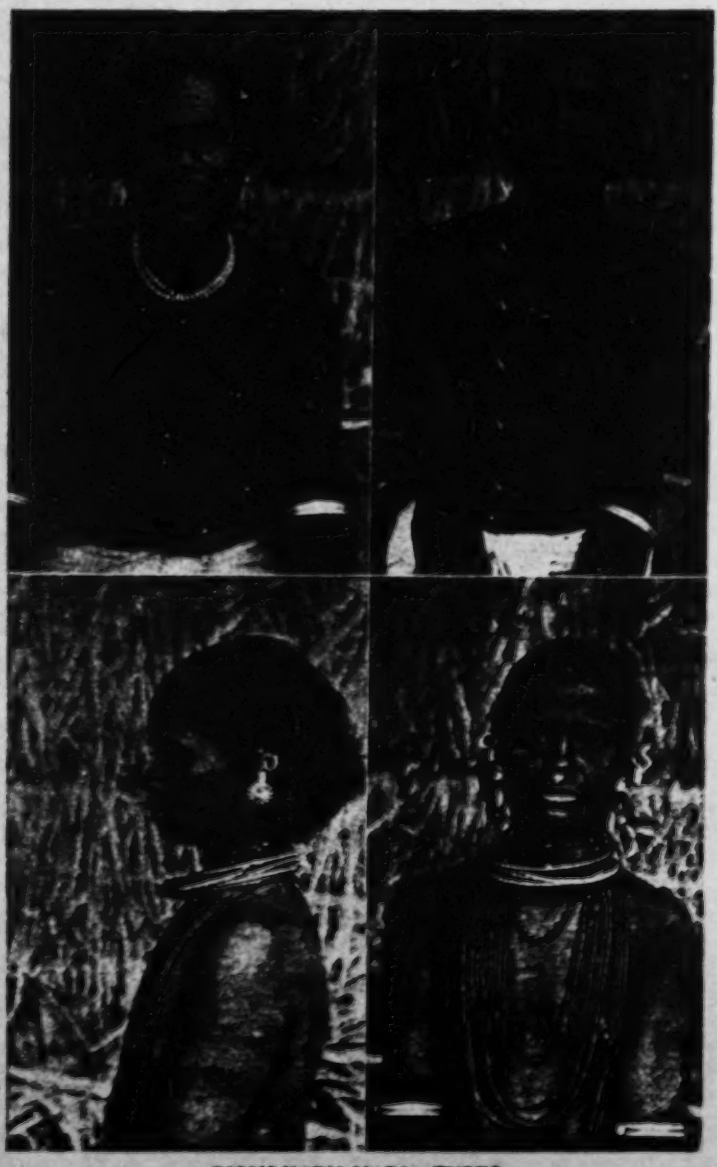
There are certain peculiarities. Although clans belong to a phratry with a certain totem, they sometimes have either no totem or a totem of their own, which may be the same as the totem of one of the other phratries, or one peculiar to itself. The Hemla clan of the Marvi or Goat phratry has the tortoise as totem; the Kalmu clan of the Markami Tortoise race has the goat as totem; and the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVIII

142
291
301
304
302



BISON-HORN MARIA TYPES

Above Markami Harma of Burgum Markami Joga, headman of Burgum

Below Mase, wife of Markami Muka of Kakadi

[Facing p. 240]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615 618 Poriami clan of the Kuhrami or Cuckoo phratry has the buffalo, which has supplanted the tiger as the totem of the Sodi or Tiger phratry, since tigers so far forgot themselves as to kill and eat some men of the phratry. In the Cuckoo phratry two clans, the Kartami and the Kuhrami (which gives its name to the phratry), have the *karot* or hornbill as totem, while the Kunjami clan has the *kunje* or screech-owl. In all these cases it is the clan totem that matters, not the phratry totem; the Hemla clan will kill goat or cobra, the Kartami and Kuhrami the cuckoo, and the Kalmu the goat. Some clans have no totem of their own, but have no scruples about touching, killing or eating the totem of their phratry; examples are the Tamo clan in the Goat phratry, the Oika clan in the Tiger or Buffalo phratry, and the Birya or Big Markami, the Gonche, the Miriyami, the Nupo and the Tati clans in the Markami Tortoise race. Two conclusions follow. The first is that certain clans in the phratry, those with different totems, probably did not split off from the parent clan of the phratry, but were independent clans grouped into the phratry at a later stage, probably owing to contiguity. The second thing is that the association of the totemic animal or plant with phratries and clans is so far from universal and plays so small a part in the life of the whole tribe that it is either something new, borrowed from another culture, but not really assimilated, or else a relic of something that has decayed with antiquity. It is remarkable that the Birya or Big Markami clan should not have any scruples about the tortoise, the totem of the Markami or Tortoise phratry, while the Chudala or Small Markami clan is very particular about it. Yet it is only of the tortoise totem that there is any [773] legend; there is said long ago to have been a great flood, which the brothers Markam and Kawasi were unable to cross until a tortoise came and took them on its back.[1] Some, however, do go [784] out of their way to avoid touching or harming their totem, particularly the Kawasi Tortoise phratry; blindness is the punishment which eating the totem is said to involve. I was told by a Kawasi

[1] This legend of the origin of the tortoise totem is one of the very few traces (the only trace that I have met) among Bastar Marias of the Ramcharan legend of the origin of the Gonds. In the version of this given in Trench's *Gondi Grammar*, Vol. II, all the ancestors of the Gonds were stopped on their way to worship the Great God by a great flood, 'whereupon in haste they plunged into the river, and one caught hold of a Tendu log, another a Sirras, another a palm tree, another a teak tree, another an iguana, another a tiger, thus each seizing something or other, they forded the river. Having crossed the river, they assembled near a Saj tree, and ate the new rice that ripens in hollows, and drank, and asked each other, "What did you catch hold of when you crossed?" They said, "I for my part seised a palm tree and forded on it, I a teak tree, and I a tiger." Addi-rawan-pariol says, "Then your *pari* will be the Palm tree, yours the Teak, and yours the Tiger." Thus *paris* were found for all of them

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

I was told by a Kawasi

615 618 [58] informant that a bride coming from a clan with a different totem to a Kawasi household was made to eat her father's totem as a sign of abandoning that totem's race or clan; but I could never verify this. There is a definite ceremony for transferring a re-marrying widow from her first to her second husband's clan; but this has nothing to do with the totem.

There is nothing to prevent a man in the Markami Tortoise phratry taking a wife from the Kawasi Tortoise phratry. In fact, if totems were of real significance, it is hard to see why there should be these two mutually exogamous Tortoise phratries. Nor is there anything to bar them intermarrying with the Hemla Tortoise clan in the Goat phratry; the same applies to the Goat and Buffalo phratries and the Goat and Buffalo clans in other phratries.

Another point that suggests that the phratry has arisen as a convenience for enlarging the matrimonial field is that each village is regarded as the *bhum* (earth or soil) of the individual Bison-horn clan that first settled it, not of the phratry. To give a few examples, Massenar is the *bhum* of the Atrami clan, Lendra and Singwaram of the Barse clan, Mandimarka of the Dodi clan, Durandarbha and Gumadasaka of the Hemla clan, Dugheli and Pharaspal of the Kalmu clan, Birya Gudra, Etipal and Bhusaras of the Kartami clan, Berma and Karrigudem of the Kunjami clan, Kondasaoli, Komarguda, Kodmair, Ursangal, Tetam and Koriras of the Birya Marvi, Chudala Gudra, Tarlaguda and Banjepalli of the Chudala Marvi, Palnar, Phulpan and Singaram of the Vetti. Each clan thus has villages that are far apart; there is no contiguity of all the villages that are the *bhum* of one clan, and therefore no compact clan-area as in the Abujhmar hills. Nor is there any phratry area; five contiguous villages may easily be the *bhum* of five clans each belonging to a different phratry. Even in the villages that are the *bhum* of one clan it is quite possible that the *perma* may be the only member of the clan in the village, and in every village there are settlements of all the clans with which the founder clan has intermarried, each clan that is big enough being allotted a separate quarter in the village for its houses, and clans of which there are only one or two representatives perhaps sharing a quarter with other clans of their phratry. Only a *perma* of the founder clan can mediate between the villagers and the Earth and Village Mother; and if that clan has retained its own clan-god, little heed is paid to the clan-god of the phratry or the parent-clan of the phratry. At the sacrifices to the Departed and the subsequent sacrificial meal at first-fruits ceremonies only the householder's *bhumkal* or fellow-clansmen may be present, not members of other clans in his phratry even. The division of the large Marvi, Markami and Sodi clans into

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

big and small clans of the same name is an old one, and, as the examples above show, the big and small clans have different villages as their *bhum*; the reality of their separation is further shown by such differences of custom as the Big Marvi clan making flat table-stones or *dawya-kal* for their dead instead of the usual menhirs or *urathal* which the Small Marvi and all other clans except the Kuhrami erect for their dead, and as the different outlook of the Big and Small Markami to the tortoise totem of the Markami phratry.

Traditional origins of clan names

The chapter may be closed with examples of the traditional origins of certain Hill and Bison-horn Maria clan names, into which nothing totemic appears to intrude.

Gumdur When their first village was founded the sky had become *gums* or overcast with clouds.

Gecha The founder of the clan was a laggard or stay-behind (*gecha*).

Dolwar Though Hill Marias, they make *dol* drums like the Bison-horn Marias.

Dhurwa They walked in front of the clan-god like *dhurwas* preceding the Raja of Bastar in a procession.

Akhal '*Leafy*': the founder was a great tree-climber.

Kallami The '*borrow-pit*' clan, diggers of borrow-pits for tank embankments.

Karma The '*sunset*' clan, because the founder was born at sunset (an alternative name for the Jughalor).

Kuhrami The '*people of the mist*' (*kuhra*), because on cold weather mornings they walk ahead of others to disperse the mist and heavy dew.

The examples are similar to those given by Russell and Hiralal (III, pp. 68-70) for the Gond clans of Betul District.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XIV

Marriage

582 618 Whatever the origin of the clans and phratries, they serve as a means of regulating the marriages of Hill and Bison-horn Marias; in the case of the latter, among whom the clan is no longer a territorial as well as a social unit, one might say that the primary function of the clan and phratry organization is the regulation of marriage. A child is born into the clan of its father, and, if a son, must remain in that clan all its life; but, if a daughter, passes on marriage to the clan of the husband, and on re-marriage from his clan to that of the second husband. A son must not take a wife, or a daughter a husband, from the father's clan or from any clan that is brother-clan or *dadabhai* to it: he must marry a wife from, and she must marry into, some clan that is a wife-clan or *akomama* of their father's clan. It has been seen that the phratry system of the Bison-horn Marias gives them a wider field of selection of wives and husbands than the more inchoate group system of Hill Maria clans. A widow, however, must not marry as second husband a man whose clan is brother to her father's clan, even though through being in a phratry other than that of her first husband's clan the second husband's clan would be wife-clan to the first husband's.

Exogamy

In a word, throughout a woman's life all her marriages are regulated by the clan into which she was born.

601 114 Appendix III gives a list of the Hill Maria terms of relationship so far as I could ascertain them; they were collected in Orcha and adjacent villages by the genealogical method, and verified in other parts of the Abujhmar hills. They were collected as terms of reference, though some are used also as terms of address, e.g. *mama*, *dada*, *kaka*. I was unable in the time at my disposal to make a similar collection of the Bison-horn Maria terms; but so far as my observation went their terms are the same but for dialectical differences. This applies also, it may be added, in a considerable degree to the terms used by the Gonds of the Nagpur District, and, to judge from the incomplete list given in Trench's *Grammar*, Volume I, to those of the Betul Gonds. It may be added that when [551] a son has been born to him, a Hill or Bison-horn Maria is often addressed by his family and neighbours as the father of his son, e.g. '*Rajin-tappo*', meaning 'Father of Raje'.

601 *Dadabhai*, the word used to designate kindred or brother-clans, is a combination of *dada*, the Gondi term for an elder brother, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *papa* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother.

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison-horn. A youth of the Gumo hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

684
635

illicit intercourse with a young widow who had been born a Gume, and had a child by her dead husband. This was regarded as incest. The youth was put to the ordeal of plunging his hand into boiling cow-dung and water, and as he was very severely scalded the couple were adjudged guilty. The youth was ultimately received back into the community after a penal feast to the clan, and has since married legitimately; but the widow and her child were driven out of the *pargana*, and in 1934 were said to be living in a village some forty miles away near the Chanda border of Kutru. This was the only definite example of a breach of the rules of exogamy among Hill Marias that came to my notice. In Padalbhum and Tapalibhum *parganas*, however, there were said to have been one or two cases within memory in which both the man and the woman had been received back into the clan after recovery of heavy penalties from them and their parents and after they had sworn to separate and never repeat the offence. It was stated that a child born of such an incestuous union would never be admitted to social or religious ceremonies, or given a wife. Among the Bison-horn Marias connexions between men and women of the same clan appear never to occur, but cases are by no means unknown of affairs between men and women of the same phratry, and it was stated that these are regularized by a visit to the clan-god of the man, with the child, if any, of the union, and by the payment of a heavy fine. I had to try the son of a *waddai* clan-priest who had killed his father because the latter, after first seducing the wife of the accused's younger brother, had raped the accused's wife and driven both his sons out of the house. In this case the two women were not of the same phratry as their father-in-law, and he could have married them had they not been married to his sons. Tribal feeling against the dead man was extremely bitter, and, though it was recognized that the son was justified in slaying his father, this alone was not sufficient to purify the two sons from the guilt of their father's incest; a heavy fine was imposed on them, to collect which took them three years, though in the meantime the elder son was allowed to succeed his father as clan-priest and to officiate as such, and both were admitted to the *pandum* and other feasts. In two other murder cases there was a remarkable hostility displayed by witnesses towards husbands, in one case the accused and in the other the brother of the murdered man, whose wives were suspected of incestuous love affairs; but it was not possible to ascertain exactly what had happened. The general idea seems to be that such incest will bring upon the community the special wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, in the form of visitations of man-eating or cattle-lifting tigers, or famine or pestilence.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

582

Cross-cousin marriage

It has already been said (page 234) that a very high proportion of marriages are cross-cousin marriages, and that such unions formed 54 per cent. of the Hill Maria marriages into which I enquired. The proportion is not much less among the Bison-horn Marias. Such marriages are considered the most seemly, both because the family which has given a daughter to another family in marriage in one generation should have this obligation repaid by getting her daughter back as a wife for a son of the next generation, and because such family arrangements obviate the necessity of paying the much heavier bride-price required for getting a bride from a new and unrelated family. Such marriages are known as *gudapal* or 'tribe-milk' marriages. The commonest form is marriage between a daughter and her mother's brother's son (brother being again used in the extended sense). But it has also been extended to cover marriages between a girl and her father's sister's son and a son and his mother's brother's daughter, which merely mean the borrowing of a wife from the same family for two successive generations; in such cases the predominant consideration, apart from the wishes of the bridegroom and bride, is the smaller bride-price which will be demanded by relations so close in affinity. Moreover, it is a reflection on parents if, when a girl is mature, no marriage is arranged for her and no one asks for her; in such cases it is a recognized right of the parents to ask either the mother's brother's son or the father's sister's son to carry her off and make her his wife, even though he be already married to some other woman. Similarly a man, especially among the Bison-horn Marias, often acquires as second and third co-wives the younger sisters of his first wife. When a Bison-horn Maria girl marries a man other than her mother's brother's son, the latter, unless he has forfeited his prescriptive right to her by previously marrying another girl, is entitled to compensation from her husband, usually Rs. 5. But the Hill Marias do not observe this. For to them the free choice of the youth and girl is far more important, and when a girl is never compelled to marry against her will, it obviously is unnecessary to compensate anyone if she refuses to marry him. In a similar way Bison-horn Marias consider that a younger brother has a prescriptive right to an elder brother's widow, and he therefore gets Rs. 5 compensation if any other man marries her.

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No value is set on pre-marital chastity, and it is doubtful whether any girl preserves her virginity until her marriage. The typical attitude was thus expressed by Usendi Moda, the headman of Orcha, already mentioned as one of the men sentenced for the 1926 Orcha murder, and whose family pedigree is given in Appendix

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

836 II. His sister married Gecha Harma of Udala Tondawada, and at the wedding he met Harma's sister Gecha Kowe, and danced with her. They liked each other, and met at other weddings and at koqsar dances, and had sexual intercourse two or three times, which Moda said was necessary in order to ascertain that they were both physically capable. Everyone saw that they were in love, and their wedding followed as soon as the necessary betrothal ceremonies could be completed. But if pre-marital intercourse results in pregnancy, there can be no formal marriage, which the Hill Marias call *marmi* and the Bison-horn *pendul*; the girl states the name of the man responsible, and goes to live in his house without any ceremony, the union being described as *ottur* ('taken away'). A child born to a girl without even *ottur* would be considered as belonging to the clan of the man whom the mother names as the father; and this putative father would be expected to take the mother and child to his house, the union being known to the Hill Marias as *akme-hattu* ('thus-went'). No stigma attaches to such unions, and the children have exactly the same position and rights as the children of a formal marriage.

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584 Hill Maria parents do not try to interfere in their children's choice of wives and husbands. When a youth and his girl know their minds, each tells his or her parents. Then the youth's parents, with the elders of the village, go, without the youth, with about a rupee's worth of *mahua* spirit (or five bottles) to the girl's parents, taking care to arrive at their house at about four or five o'clock in the afternoon. The father of the youth opens the door of the girl's house, places the liquor bottles inside the threshold and rejoins his party, all of whom sit silent outside the door. The girl's parents then call in some of the elders of their village, and in their presence tell the girl that this liquor has been brought on her account, and ask her if she is willing to go and live with the youth in the village from which the liquor has come. If the girl agrees, the liquor is at once drunk by the parties from the two villages, and the girl's parents entertain the visiting party to supper; if she refuses, the youth's parents take the liquor back to their village. This ceremony is called *talq-da'ina* ('going to ask'). It may take place on any day of the year, Hill Marias recking nothing of auspicious days or omens.

Hill Maria regular betrothal and marriage

[787]

There is a second *talq-da'ina*, generally after an interval of about a year; it sometimes takes place sooner, but it is considered bad form to be too importunate. The youth does not go with his parents even this time; he does not, indeed, meet his betrothed between the first *talq-da'ina* and marriage, as, once a girl's hand

1: Grigson, G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

has been formally demanded, shame prevents her looking at her betrothed. The parents this time do not take the village elders with them, but bring a rupee's worth of *mahua*, as before. The purpose of the visit is to ask the girl's parents if they are now ready to give the girl in marriage, or want to wait another six months or year; if they are poor, they may not have had time to collect enough to meet their share of the cost of the wedding, and this is the only possible justification for further postponement of the wedding. Normally the girl's parents say they are ready, and ask the youth's parents to come for the girl in ten days' time. This visit occurs generally at the end of Phagur or early in Chaita month, because, although marriages may take place at any time of year, they almost always take place in Chaita, when there is no field work and there is plenty of grain in hand from the freshly garnered harvest. Before this visit the amount of the bride-price or *paring*, settled at the previous *talq-da'ina*, should be ready, and the girl's parents signify their readiness to give the girl by asking the youth's parents to bring the bride-price in ten days' time. The amount of the bride-price varies with the means of the youth's family. It consists of a rupee's worth of new cloth for the bride's mother, a gelded pig, one *pailî* (four pounds) of salt, one *pailî* of ground *ambari* (roselle) flowers, one or two pounds of red chillies, two or three pieces of turmeric, and, according to the means of the bridegroom's family, from one to four *dutî* baskets each containing ten *pailî* (forty pounds) of husked *kuthi*, from eight annas' to three rupees' worth of *mahua* spirit, and from Rs. 5 to Rs. 40 in cash. It is the cash portion of the bride-price that is avoided or reduced by cross-cousin marriage or such arrangements as the marriage of a brother and sister of one family to the sister and brother of another; other items are unaffected; the bride's mother must always get her cloth, and the pig and grain are eaten at the wedding.

On the day appointed for bringing the bride-price the bridegroom stays at home, but his father and mother, taking the bride-price, proceed to the bride's village, accompanied by all their fellow-villagers, and preceded by three or four drummers. The villagers who go with them, men, women, boys and girls, do not expect to be fed entirely at the expense of the bridegroom's parents, and therefore take their own food and drink for the first meal on arrival; it is felt that to be entertained at the expense of the parents would not be helping them, but adding to the financial burden of the wedding.

On arrival, the bridegroom's parents make the bride-price over to the bride's parents, and all the visiting party then cook their food and eat it apart from the bride's parents and co-villagers. After

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 this supper both parties assemble in front of the bride's house, the men and youths in dancing-dress, and there is dancing and singing till dawn, all men, women, youths and girls present being free to take part, whether married or single, old or young. Soon after dawn the pig, grain and liquor brought by the bridegroom's parents as part of the bride-price are divided into a portion for the bride's village and a portion for the visiting village, cooked and partaken of by all present; any deficiency is made up by the girl's parents, this being their only expense; they do not even decorate their house or put up booths for the guests.

This wedding breakfast over, the bride is brought out by her parents and made over to the bridegroom's parents. She is not washed or given special clothes, though if funds permit she sometimes gets a new loin-cloth. She is expected to weep profusely in token of reluctance to leave her father's home. The bridegroom's parents take her on foot through the forest to their village, arriving always in the evening. The bridegroom stays in his house; to go out to meet the bride would be immodest. She is escorted to his house, thrust inside, and the marriage is thus completed without further ceremony. There is no present from the bridegroom to the bride, not even a ring as among the Bison-horn Marias. Supper that night is cooked for the couple by the bridegroom's mother.

582 177 Pre-puberty marriage never occurs among the Hill Marias, who look upon it as an utterly abhorrent custom of the Kosor or Hindus. Unfortunately a few Bison-horn Marias are beginning to ape their Hindu neighbours in this as in other matters; but even now probably only three in a hundred Bison-horn marriages are child marriages.

Child marriage

583 It is very common for the bridegroom to serve his future father-in-law for his bride instead of paying the bride-price. If at the second *talq-da'ina* his parents have to admit to the girl's parents that they cannot afford the bride-price, it is arranged for the bridegroom to go as *lamana'i* or suitor-servant to the girl's parents for a term of years that varies from three years to seven or eight, though when the term exceeds three years the girl usually becomes the *lamana'i's* wife for the last two years. For the first part of his service the *lamana'i* is not supposed to have intercourse with the girl, but, provided that the girl agrees (and she is seldom reluctant), he generally does so after a time. It is, however, considered a disgrace to her parents if in consequence she becomes pregnant, and they are fined a pig, which is eaten by all their and the *lamana'i's* clansmen, after which the girl is regarded as the *lamana'i's* wife. Often at the end of the agreed period of service the father-in-law is unwilling

Serving for a wife

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to let his daughter go, or to lose the assistance of his future son-in-law; but in that case the marriage is at once celebrated, the *lamana'i* leaving his father-in-law's house where he has stayed for the period of his service for a house built for him in the father-in-law's village, and his parents and their party, after the wedding dance and breakfast, take the girl and leave her there with him instead of in their own village; but thereafter no *lamana'i* ever stays more than two years in his father-in-law's village. Provided that the girl has not become pregnant, there is always a regular *marmi* wedding at the end of the agreed term, the bride's parents meeting the expenses; if she has become pregnant, after the penal feast of pork already mentioned she becomes the *lamana'i's* wife merely by passing into his keeping by *ottur*. 583

This account of marriage by service is based entirely on investigations among the Hill Marias; but it is equally common among the Bison-horn Marias, and their practice is much the same except that, of course, the regular marriage at the end of the term of service is the ordinary Bison-horn *pendul* wedding, while, owing to the fact that in all villages there are many houses and fields belonging to clans other than the original clan that founded the village, the *lamana'i* often settles permanently in his father-in-law's village, and breaks up new land for himself with the consent of the *pala* or headman.

Among Bison-horn Marias a father wishing to ask another man for his daughter's hand for his son goes to him with a few relatives and takes a *paili* of rice, and a large earthen pot (*handi*) and a small earthen pot (*dudi*) of *mahua* spirit. As already stated in the section on omens, the party will turn back if it meets a bad omen on the way, and postpone the journey for a fortnight. On their arrival at the girl's house her father calls his relatives and the village elders; when all have assembled, the father of the prospective bridegroom formally asks the girl's father for the girl as his son's wife. Sometimes the visiting father comes rather to assert his right to the girl in *gudapal* marriage, and before either his son or the girl has attained puberty, than in the expectation of arranging the wedding in the near future, especially if he has heard rumours of the girl being given to someone else; in such cases the girl's father almost always refuses to give his girl at least till both the boy and the girl are mature, and the boy's father formally declares that he will never renounce his *gudapal* rights. It has already been said that the Bison-horn Marias assert these rights more strongly than the Hill Marias, among whom the *gudapal* tie is rather a convenient and economical arrangement than a binding 584

Bison-horn Maria betrothal ('talpena') and marriage ('pendul')

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

584 contract; they therefore attach less importance to the consent of the girl, and even if a father or his son agree to the *gudapal* girl marrying some other husband, the latter has to compensate the *gudapal* cousin. If a girl's father raises objections to the proposed match, whether a *gudapal* match or not, bitter quarrels often follow; but generally the boy and girl have learnt their own minds before this first formal demand for the girl (*taipana* in the Bison-horn dialect), or there has been previous informal discussion between the two families. Normally, therefore, the youth and girl both being mature, the girl's father gladly agrees to give his girl, and then the youth's father gives him the *paili* of rice and the large and the small pots of *mahua* liquor. The girl's father takes the small pot into [769] the *narma-lon* room of his house, and pours a small quantity on the ground in front of the Pot of the Departed as a libation, the rest being drunk by him and the members of his family. The liquor in the large pot is divided among the relatives and friends of both families who have come to witness the *talpana*, and all disperse except the youth's father and his companions; the rice which he has brought is cooked and served to them and the girl's family. Her father then invites the youth's father to come again for the formal declaration of the betrothal to all his relatives and friends from near and far. The visitors then return to their village.

Some time later the father of the youth in consultation with [787] his friends, and often with the aid of a medium, fixes a day for this second visit, and sends word to the girl's father in good time for him to invite all his relatives and friends. This time he and his party take with them a small pig, two *paili* of rice, a very large pot of *landa* and a large and a small pot of *mahua* spirit. On arrival at the girl's house they are greeted by her father and the assembled guests, and the former announces the betrothal to the company and asks for their formal approval. This given, the girl's father as [769] before pours a libation to the Departed from the small pot of *mahua*, and he and his household drink the rest of its contents. The large pots of *landa* and *mahua* spirit are consumed by all the assembled guests, *barbatti* beans being fried by the girl's mother and served along with the *landa*; and the rice and pork are cooked and served to all present. All then go.

Yet a third preliminary visit to the girl's father follows, the date being arranged as before by the youth's father, and word being sent to the girl's father. This time the former and his party take and deliver to the latter two large pots of *landa*, two large and one small pots of *mahua* spirit, five *paili* of rice or *kuthi*, and a large pig. The youth's father tells the girl's father that he intends to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

celebrate his son's marriage on a certain date, and asks him to deliver the girl to him on the appointed day; in reply he agrees to do so, but calls on the youth's father to settle the bride-price then and there, and to deliver it to him when he comes for the girl. Bison-horn Marias do not use the word *paring* for the bride-price, but either the Chhattisgarhi Hindi word *barna*, the Halbi word *jora*, or, more commonly, the ordinary Hindi term for expenses, *kharcha*. They then discuss terms. If it is a *gudapal* union, the girl's father expects only to get as much *landa*, *mahua* spirit, grain and cloth as his family had to pay in the previous generation when he married her mother. A Bison-horn marriage is extremely expensive to the bridegroom's parents because they are expected to keep open house, and guests pour in uninvited from all villages to which the throb of the marriage drums reverberates; and therefore the actual bride-price is kept as low as possible. In fact, in many *parganas* they assert that no cash passes from the bride-groom's parents to the bride's. The practice varies; a single rupee passed in the weddings that I saw, though in certain disputes that came to my notice after a wife had eloped with another man the first husband claimed from the new husband the refund of cash alleged to have formed part of the bride-price. In general, however, cash is not the important element in the Bison-horn that it is in the Hill Maria bride-price. Usually the bride-price consists of from five to ten very large pots of *landa*, one *pailî* of husked rice or *kutki* for every pot of *landa*, two large and one small pots of *mahua* spirit, a large gelded pig ready slaughtered, a cock, and about four yards of Mahra cloth for the bride's mother, the cloth being sometimes called in Hindi *ma'i-lugra*. Another consideration is the cost of the dinner that the girl's father has to give to his relatives before the girl is taken away, known as *sullam-jawa*, and of her going-away presents; in the discussion about the bringing of the bride-price on the wedding-day suggested by the bridegroom's father, the girl's father sometimes alleges that he is too poor to collect the necessary food and presents by the suggested date and that he must therefore have another year before handing over his daughter, unless the bridegroom's father will help him with a loan in cash or in kind. The loan is readily made if the latter is well-to-do. These matters being settled, the bride's father formally promises to hand the girl over on the appointed day, and the promise is ratified by the usual libation from the small pot of *mahua* to the Departed of the girl's family, and the consumption of the *landa* and the *mahua* spirit by all present, the bridegroom's father and his party returning to their village after having been entertained to dinner by the bride's father.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 There is now no obstacle to the wedding. The appointed day may be any auspicious day in the year, chosen in the manner explained in the section on omens; but in practice almost all weddings take place in the early hot weather, as among the Hill Marias. I will first give a general outline of the wedding procedure, and then reproduce, with some revisions, an account of an actual wedding which I saw at Ganjenar and Massenar between Dantewara and Kuakonda in May 1930; the account has already been published in the *Central Provinces Census Report*, 1931.

On the afternoon of the wedding day the bridegroom, his parents and many relatives of both sexes proceed to the girl's father's house with the agreed bride-price. On arrival the bridegroom's father delivers the bride-price to the bride's father, the cloth for her mother being placed on top of one of the large pots of *landa*, and asks him to hand the bride over. In response the [769] bride's father takes up the small pot of *mahua* spirit, and after the usual libation to his Departed in his *sarna-lon* room drinks a little spirit and gives the rest to the members of the household. *Landa* is then taken from one of the pots brought as bride-price and from one of those provided by the bride's father, and distributed to all the guests present, both from the bridegroom's and the bride's villages and clans. Meanwhile the bride is bathed at the nearest pool by women relatives, and a bevy of the women of her village and clan keep up a constant chorus of song, to the occasional beating of drums. After the bride's father has entertained all present of both parties to the *sutlam-jawa* or relatives' dinner, consisting of grain and the flesh of the pig brought as part of the bride-price, the girl is brought out by her father or brother towards dusk, and handed over to the bridegroom, their hands being joined and rings exchanged. The senior woman relative of the family takes up the cloth brought for the bride's mother, and wraps it round her, while a male member of the family hands the bridegroom's father a hind-leg of the bride-price pig, to be taken to his village to feed the bridegroom and bride and the bridegroom's family. The bridegroom's party then escort the bridegroom and bride with the bride's going-away presents to the bridegroom's village, accompanied by the girl's relatives and fellow-villagers. Special booths are prepared at this village for the bride's relatives. On arrival, the bride and bridegroom are taken into his father's house to the Place of the Departed in his *sarna-lon* room and seated there with the father, brothers and mother of the bridegroom; they eat the hind-leg of pork brought from the bride's house after it has been cooked on the Hearth of the Departed. Meanwhile the other guests sit down to pork and rice cooked separately outside the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
301
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An old Bison-horn Maria from Godra, between Kutakalian and Kunkonda (See p. 93)

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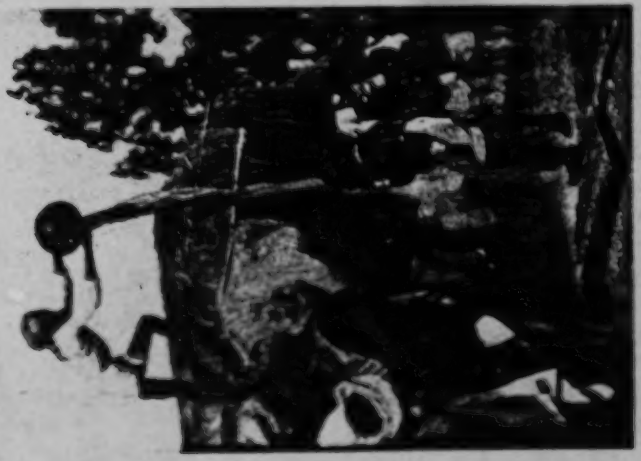

Plate XIX

The pouring of water over the bridegroom and bride at the Bison-horn Maria wedding described at p. 258

[facing p.254]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 house, and are given *landa* to drink. At the meal in the Place of the Departed the couple are exhorted by the bridegroom's father to live together in unity and concord, and to be faithful. All night the drums roll and guests pour in to dance and drink *landa* or sing around the bride and bridegroom, the men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses. Ultimately next morning the couple are made to stand on a hurdle under the eaves of the hut constructed for them, and a kinsman of the girl's father climbs on the roof and tips a pot of water over them. The boy then drags the girl into the hut, both pushed by willing hands, and the door is fastened on [353] them and a bamboo-matting curtain hung over it. After a while they emerge, and the bride takes a ceremonial farewell of the girls of her village, and the guests disperse. Finally in the evening she is thrust into the bridal hut by her husband's younger brothers and his friends, her husband being already inside awaiting her.

In the account of the Ganjenar-Massenar wedding which follows, naturally no description can be given of the scenes in the *narma-lon* rooms of the bride's and bridegroom's fathers, to which outsiders are not admitted, or of other parts of the wedding ceremonies which I did not actually see. The bridegroom was the son of Atrami Hunga of Massenar, the younger brother of Atrami Kopa Dhurwa, a very influential headman who was decorated by the late Raja of Bastar for keeping that *pargana* quiet during the 1910 rebellion, and the bride was the daughter of Kunjami Harma, the headman of Ganjenar. When I reached the latter's house, which was about two miles from my camp at Massenar, the bridegroom and his party had arrived, and the relatives' dinner was over. The bride had gone to a tank to be bathed by her elder sister and her brother's wife; the bridegroom and his father were walking about talking to the guests and the bride's male relatives. There were not many persons present, perhaps 150 all told; a few men were beating their dancing drums, but none were wearing their bison-horn head-dresses. Around the door of the separate sleeping hut used [533 by Kunjami Harma's daughters and other womenfolk, some thirty 831 women were standing shoulder to shoulder, swaying to and fro and 195] singing a choral refrain of '*Kokalin-waya*' to obscene verses sung by a laughing woman in the centre of the group. Another band of women hurled abuse at them at intervals, when the leader of each band tried to out-Billingsgate the other.

535 When the bride had been bathed, she emerged from the sleeping 585 hut with a cloth wrapped over her shoulders, and was dragged into a chain of dancing and singing girls with their arms closely linked, while the bridegroom, also with a cloth over his shoulders, was pushed into another chain. These chains of girls circled and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535 585 gyrated in all directions, at one moment appearing inextricably mixed together, only to disentangle miraculously at the next and weave themselves into fresh spirals and circles, singing abuse at each other. All the while the group of standing girls went on [533] swaying and singing round the door; the leader caused great laughter by improvising a song warning all girls to be on their guard that night, for the Diwan, the Tahsildar and the Circle Inspector were watching them, and who knew what might happen after dark?

583 431 585 Before we arrived the bridegroom's party had presented the bride-price, which consisted of one slaughtered pig, a live pig, five very large pots of *landa*, five *pailí* of husked rice, four yards of Mahra cloth for the bride's mother, and one rupee. While the chains of girls were dancing around the bride and bridegroom, her mother's sister came out and displayed the bride's going-away presents, a *masni* or grass sleeping-mat, a small basket containing about a *pailí* of husked rice, a large pot of *landa*, and a young bull calf newly weaned.

585 Some men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses and beating their long drums now started to dance near the gyrating chains of girls, and there was a further accompaniment to the singing of bamboo flutes. The two chains of girls suddenly opened out, leaving the bridegroom and bride together, and the girl's father and the bridegroom's elder brother were with them, holding their hands. The old father, Kunjami Harma, held up his hand for silence, and started a long speech, asking the bridegroom's elder brother, 'Have you come willingly for this flower? Will you wear it and cherish it? It is fresh and tender, and will not bear rough handling. Know you how witless women are? If she be a poor housekeeper, pardon her. If she cook badly, pardon her. If she speak to other men, do not take it amiss, but pardon her.' There were other similar injunctions, and to all the bridegroom's brother answered yes. Then Kunjami Harma took his daughter, who took the bridegroom's right hand, and placed on his little finger a ring that she had pulled off the little finger of her own right hand; the bridegroom then took a ring off his own left little finger and placed it on hers; cloths were held over their heads while this exchange was in progress. The bridegroom then took off another ring, which the girl's elder sister received in her outstretched cloth, while she said, 'From now onwards you must neither touch me nor utter my name till I am dead. If you do, all will laugh at you, and your brethren will fine you.' I was told that if she dies before him, he will take a ring off her little finger and wear it on the middle finger of his right hand. He also gave a ring to the bride's younger sister, for he is free to touch her and to talk of her by name. Then his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

elder brother touched the old man's feet, and the old man touched his, and then each placed his hands on the other's shoulders, standing face to face, and leaned his head forward first on the other's right, then on his left shoulder; finally each salaamed the other with both hands held in front of his face, palm to palm, and said '*Jukar!*' Each of them then exchanged similar salutations with all their near relatives present and the leading guests, including myself and the other State officials present.

The girls now started singing again, telling the bride that she must leave them and go to her man, that her lot would be hard, and that if she did not like her man she should make up her mind to leave him. Meanwhile the bridegroom slipped off over the fields to his father's house at Massenar to be ready there to receive the party escorting the bride.

The bridal procession then formed up, led by some thirty women, singing and side-stepping along the narrow jungle path in the gathering darkness. After them walked the elders, then a party of drummers, followed by the bride, pretending to struggle against a cluster of laughing girls pushing her to Massenar. All danced as they went, beating their jangling dancing sticks on the ground in time with the drums and the steps of the dance. It took them two and a half hours to cover the two miles to the bridegroom's father's house in Massenar.

There a multitude of other girls and men received them, the men all in the traditional dancing costume, with a thundering roll of drums, while dozens of bombs of gunpowder and rice chaff were exploded. The full moon beat down on a sea of tossing plumes, or shone back from the glistening bison-horns of the head-dresses, till the whole courtyard was full of rampaging and fantastic movement. The bride and bridegroom were seized by fifty girls, and made to sit in their midst in front of the house where they were later to live, all packed as closely as sardines, swaying to and fro on their hips as they sat, and singing obscene marriage songs in full-throated chorus, while all prodded and plucked at every part of the bodies of the bride and bridegroom, whose heads were muffled in cloths.

After watching this for some time I went off to my tent for dinner, but returned towards midnight. The bride and bridegroom were still where I had left them, surrounded by the swaying and singing girls. Some of these had babies sleeping in their laps as they sang, and many, tired out, were sleeping, hemmed in by their companions. The crowds had swollen, and every forest path was thronged with men and women hastening with drums and dancing kit to join the dance. Some came from villages twenty-five or

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

585 535 thirty miles away, but showed no sign of fatigue. Around the dance many were lying already drunk, for sixty large pots of *landa* had been provided for the guests. Now and again an excited youth and girl would leave the dance and disappear in the trees. But there must always have been over two thousand men dancing; and those who had been overcome by the *landa* would return to the dance as soon as they had slept off their intoxication.

All night the drumming and dancing went on, though when I returned to the scene at 7.30 a.m. many men were lying asleep or drunk or merely resting, with piled drums and head-dresses. Now many men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear's fur and carrying thick bamboo sticks, dummy guns and nets, rushed in and out among the dancers, making obscene [831] gestures with their sticks at the dancing and watching girls, to the general merriment. Looking for the bride and bridegroom, I found them, their heads still covered with the same cloths, riding on the shoulders of their sisters' husbands in the middle of a ring formed by a long chain of girls with arms outstretched and hands clasped, who headed off all the efforts of the 'steeds' to break out of the ring with their riders.

585 The fathers of the couple now decided that the time had come for the final ceremonies; the sun was getting hot, and the *landa* supplies low, for the dancers continued at intervals to leave the dance for a drink and a nap before the maddening beat of the drums called them out once again. A bamboo wicker-work hurdle was placed on the ground in front of the door of the hut where the couple was to spend its married life. To this the bride and bridegroom were led, and when they were standing on it they were at last freed from the cloths in which their heads had been enveloped for the last twelve hours. As they stood there hand in hand, the girl's father's brother climbed on to the eaves of the hut[1] with a large pot of cold and dirty water, and suddenly tipped its contents over the bride and bridegroom, whereupon, amid general laughter, the bridegroom seized the bride, and both rushed into the hut, the door of which was closed and curtained upon them. But they were allowed only ten minutes' privacy 'to discuss what they would do that night', as the bridegroom's old father explained; and even then they cannot have heard each other speak for the din of the drumming and dancing, which had not ceased for a moment even when the water was poured from the roof.

After ten minutes the bride emerged, and was surrounded by the girls of her own village, who in unison sang to her advice on a wife's duties and rights, urging her to return to them if her

[1] This is illustrated in Plate XIX. [See ca1.116, pp. 129-25, Pl.21]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

husband ill-treated her, while she provided a chorus of simulated wailing. They took her off to the booths prepared for her parents and the guests from her village, and sat there with her for the rest of the morning and all the afternoon, taking their food there, while the rest of the guests finished the *lauda* and slowly dispersed, beating their drums, along the forest paths. At about 5.30 p.m. the bridegroom entered the bridal hut alone, while his younger brother went to the booth where the bride had spent the afternoon, cried 'Come, sister-in-law, it is time that you were bedded,' caught her by the hand and tried to drag her off. She screamed and feigned resistance, but he called four or five other laughing youths to help him, and between them they pulled the girl to the door of the bridal hut, opened it and pushed her in, barring the door on the outside. Then they stole a cock from the bridegroom's coop, and, accompanied by the girls who had come with the bride from her village, plucked the cock and scattered its feathers along a path leading to a forest glade, where they cooked and ate it, and all dispersed.

The *ottur* and *ahemahattu* forms of marriage among the Hill Marias have already been mentioned; the same forms exist among the Bison-horn Marias. Actually women are very free to change their attachments or, if unattached, to go to the house of the man of their choice and live with him as his wife even if he is already married. It is convenient for the man to have the services of an extra woman in a society in which so much work is done by women; and it is not considered right for a nubile woman to be unattached. Particularly among the Bison-horn Marias, men with two or three wives are common; only one of these will be a regularly married wife, and the others will be either her younger sisters or parallel-cousins or other women who have come into the husband's keeping of their own choice, or after becoming pregnant as a result of a liaison with him. The expression commonly used by the Bison-horn Marias for a woman going in this way to live with a man is the local and Chhattisgarhi Hindi term *paisa-saundi*, and the unions are known as *paithu* or *ediyattur*; there seems to be no difference between these, just as for practical purposes there is little between the *ottur* and *ahemahattu* forms of the Hill Marias. Where an unmarried woman is made pregnant, and becomes the man's wife by living at his house, the man has to give his fellow-clansmen an entertainment (*paithu*) or dinner, and pay the usual bride-price. Husbands have similarly to give a dinner when unmarried girls, wives or widows, of their own choice and without their guardians' consent, go to live with him; but in such

Irregular marriages, widow marriages and divorce; attitude to abnormalities

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

588 cases there is no bride-price, though the deserted husband can claim from the new husband the bride-price which he paid when he married the woman, a *gudapal* cousin can claim Rs. 5 compensation if an unmarried girl goes to some other man, and a younger brother of the dead husband can claim Rs. 5 compensation if a widow goes to a new husband. Sometimes when parents or parties to a marriage are very poor and cannot afford the expense of a regular wedding they merely start to live together in this way, either performing the marriage ceremony later when they have had time to collect the means required, or else distributing tiny cakes to their clan-fellows instead. The term *aghnirtur* or *arnirtur* is sometimes applied to the elopement of an unmarried girl or a wife with another man.

583 *Poyse'ettur* or marriage by capture still occurs, though getting rarer every year. We have seen how, when a girl remains unmarried her parents will arrange for her cross-cousin to carry her off; and in the Bison-horn *pendul* regular marriage described above there is an element of marriage by capture in the way in which the bride feigns resistance when the bridegroom's party begins to escort her to his village and when she is finally parted from the girls of her own village with a show of force by the bridegroom's younger brother and his friends. In fact, the Hill and Bison-horn Maria custom of the bride being taken off from her native village to the bridegroom's village and of the wedding taking place there may be a survival of a former general custom of marriage by capture. When the girl is unmarried and is carried off by her cross-cousin at her parents' request, they usually explain matters to her as she is being carried off and advise her to make the best of it. I found only one Bison-horn Maria who admitted having really captured his wife in the good old way once so prevalent in the Killepal, Dantewara, Pharaspal, Kuakonda and Aranpur *pargenas*, probably in the whole of the Bison-horn country. He was reticent about the whole affair, though apparently the girl had been willing to marry him, but her parents had objected. According to old records the practice was for the villagers of the girl's village to beat the invading party of youths until it had crossed the village boundary with the girl; Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 79) state that the women only used to beat the invaders in this way, the invaders making no effort to retaliate, and the marriage being completed by the gift of a cloth to the girl on arrival in the captor's village and a *lenda* carousal by the invading party.

587 Widow marriage is common among all Marias. In the hills, widows usually go to their husband's younger brothers without any

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

ceremony; I found no case in which any widow had married a man who was not her dead husband's brother (or parallel-cousin). Indeed, owing to the distances between Hill Maria villages and the fact that in nearly all of them the men are all of one clan, irregular marriages are far less common there than in the mixed-clan villages of the Bison-horn Marias. Among the latter the second husband has sometimes to compensate the dead husband's parents in part for the bride-price paid by them when their son married the widow, as well as compensating their younger son, if any. Sometimes the widow and second husband sit side by side on stools, the widow wearing a new cloth and new ornaments, and near relatives put marks on their foreheads with oil and turmeric. There is also sometimes a ceremony to transfer the widow from the clan of her former to that of her new husband; two pieces of grass are placed together in the form of a cross to represent a man, and this cross is separated from another by a knife. Two leaf-cups are filled with water, and three times water is poured from one into the other. The two grass crosses representing the two husbands are sprinkled thrice with the water, and then the heads of the crosses are plunged together first into one cup and then into the other. The knife is regarded as the witness of this transfer of the woman from one clan to the other. When a woman elopes from one husband to another, there is sometimes a similar reconciliation ceremony between the two men after the new husband has obeyed the *panchayat's* decision as to the compensation to be paid to the first husband; their four hands are placed together, and water is poured thrice over them.

It has been seen that women not only have practically free choice among the Hill Marias and considerable choice among the Bison-horn Marias as to their husbands, and that among the latter a woman frequently goes off to a new husband if she wants to. This is practically all that there is in the way of divorce, the position being regularised by the *panchayat* insisting on the new husband paying the appropriate compensation, which is generally only the bride-price paid for the woman at her original marriage. The children, if any, remain in the father's custody, since they belong to his clan. Women often desert their first husband if they have no children and consider his sterility the cause. Physical revulsion from an abnormality is another known cause; a Kuruk Maria fishing girl in the Behra Mar hill *pargana* ran away from a husband with a withered leg, which she said had been wasted away by an angry demon (*rau*), and despite her father's and brother's entreaties to her not to put them to the expense of having to refund to her husband the heavy bride-price of Rs. 70 that he had paid them for her, absolutely refused to return. Hare-lipped men seem to have

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32.
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

586 732 no difficulty in getting wives to stay with them. Dwarfs, on the other hand, not only find it hard to get wives except their elder brothers' widows, but are passed over in the succession to a post of responsibility or the management of a family. Madness is particularly dreaded, and would certainly involve the elopement of a wife. But husbands, though they would divorce a mad [833] woman *a thoro*, would still maintain them; sexual intercourse with a mad woman is believed to result in complete loss of virility. 586 I have heard of no case in which a husband has divorced his wife; she may be frigid or barren or in other ways unsatisfactory, but so long as she is not unfaithful her husband is expected to maintain her, and his remedy is to seek another co-wife, often getting her younger sister or parallel-cousin as compensation for her falling [679] short of expectations. The murder of wives in sudden fits of temper for petty shortcomings is unfortunately common among the Bison-horn Marias, though almost unknown in the hills. Nor must it [837] be assumed that because Bison-horn wives often elope, their husbands tamely submit to infidelity; the detection of an intrigue often results in the husband killing the wife or her paramour, though once a wife has made good her escape to another man's house the [593] husband usually accepts the *fait accompli*. The beating or ill-treatment of wives is strongly condemned by all Marias.[a]

[a] [See Cat. 116, p. 425. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter XV

Birth and Childhood

A. Hill Marias

No Marias are unaware of the causal connexion between intercourse and pregnancy, and all women know when they miss their first menstruation that they are probably starting to bear a child. Pregnancy among Hill Marias is attended by no taboo either for man or wife, so far as I could ascertain, and the wife continues performing her ordinary routine work right up to the last day of her pregnancy. Sexual intercourse, however, ceases as soon as pregnancy is known to have begun. 842 843

During ordinary menstruation, as we have seen in Chapter VI, the wife, like all young women, is secluded for five or six days either in the communal menstruation hut, or in the *kala* or menstruation room or the separate menstruation hut of the house. The menstruation huts, whether communal or private, are known as *pedawo'gha'i*, or (in the south of the Abujhmar hills) as *dolo-low*, or (in the extreme north) as *kurma-low*. The term *pedawo'gha'i* is applied also sometimes to the *kala* room in the houses. These huts and rooms have been described already on pages 104-6. The Hill Marias say that their clan-god and their Departed would be angry if they gave up their immemorial custom of secluding their women during menstruation, and that no man should see a woman's face at such a time; 'we have seen that they often guard against the magic of women in this condition by placing castor oil plants and seeds on the roof of the hut when it is occupied. The men do not seem to have any clear idea of what happens to a woman at such times; they only know and say that she 'has gone *pedawo'gha'i*'. There is no ceremony of any kind at a girl's first menstruation, or during pregnancy. Though children are generally born in the menstruation room or hut, and for some time after birth the mother has to live there subject to the same prohibitions as during menstruation, yet during her nine months she is free from the ordinary taboos to which she is subject during menstruation; that is to say, she is free to visit her husband in the fields and to cook his food for him, in fact to do all her ordinary household and field or market tasks. But it is taboo for a pregnant woman to pick or break anything growing. There may possibly be certain prohibitions which I did not discover, 841 [789] [881] [844] 843

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

843 such as, in other parts of India, of the use of a knife or the cutting of anything; but ordinary enquiry elicited no clue to them.

844 It was said on page 106 that children are born in the menstruation hut or room. This is certainly the case so far as the private huts and rooms are concerned; but in my notes it is not clear whether births ever take place in the communal menstruation hut. They probably do not, because obviously it may be needed at any time for other women of the village, and I have notes of children in Hikpulla and Nugur, where there are communal menstruation huts, being born in a corner of the veranda of the house specially walled off for the purpose.

[777] Cases are known of a mother being delivered of a child in the fields or the forest, but this is considered very unlucky, and as soon as the mother knows that her hour is upon her, she must make every effort to get in time to the menstruation hut or room. During delivery she may have the comfort of the presence of her mother-in-law or some woman from the village; but there are no midwives, and the woman with her must not touch her or assist the delivery; the mother is expected to do everything for herself, and it is regarded as very wrong if she is unable to do so. They pray to the clan-god during a difficult delivery, but appear to do nothing else to assist the mother by either medicine or ceremony. The mother herself has to cut the navel-cord of her baby either with her husband's ordinary knife or with an arrow-head. She cuts it about three or four inches from its junction with the stomach, and binds it close to the junction with a ligature of cord, the portion between the cut and the ligature being left to dry and fall off; and she is expected to bury the placenta (*modi*) immediately after this under the house rubbish-heap outside the back of the house. If the child is born [845 dead, the mother has to bury it somewhere in the forest, going there alone and digging the grave without assistance; it may not be 766] buried in the regular village graveyard. Around Handawada a mother is expected to stay in the menstruation room for a full month after delivery; but the general rule in the interior of the Abujhmar hills is for her to remain there for eight days or until the navel-cord dries and falls off.

846 Everywhere it is taboo for the father to do any field or other work during this period of eight days before the navel-cord falls. No medicine is given to him. He must not sleep in the house during the period in most parts of the hills, but in the dormitory; around Handawada he sleeps in the portion of the *kala* room separated from the woman's portion by the *binda* mud threshold. He must not cook his own food during this period, and has to get a man friend to cook food for him in another house and bring it to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

him. He has, however, to cook food for his wife. The latter during ordinary menstrual periods stays, in villages where there are menstrual rooms or private and not communal menstruation huts, on her side of the mud threshold and keeps there special water-pots and cooking pots; her husband brings food and water in the regular pots, and, standing on his non-taboo side of the mud threshold, pours their contents into the menstruation water and cooking pots. But as he may never touch the latter, he cannot use them for preparing food for his wife after child-birth, and so has to buy a special set of pots for cooking her food then, which are destroyed at the end of her period of seclusion. Nor is the husband permitted to enter the ordinary rooms of the house until the child's navel-cord has fallen off; he has to build a temporary room at the back of the house near the menstruation room or hut, and cook there. It is taboo for him to give any other person any fire from the hearth in this temporary kitchen. Breach of the taboos attaching to child-birth by either parent is believed to entail the wrath of the Village Mother. During the period of seclusion the mother is permitted to leave the room only to bury the placenta or to answer the call of nature. As it is taboo for her to pick or break anything growing during the period, she has before her delivery to lay in enough leaves for cleaning herself after defecation to last for the full period. She wears nothing but the *mudang* until the end of the period.

After the navel-cord has fallen off or at the end of the period of seclusion, the mother goes out at night to the river, immerses herself, and cleans her old loin-cloth and the cloth of her *mudang*. In the early morning she emerges wearing her loin-cloth and carrying her baby, which in most villages her husband then sees for the first time; around Handawada, however, he is allowed to see it in the menstruation room on the morning after it is born. The mother has to sprinkle every part of the house with water.

From birth to death there is no age ceremony of any kind, neither at birth, naming, weaning, ear-boring, hair-cutting, puberty, first shaving, nor on any other occasion. Normally the child gets no name until it is two or three years old, when its parents know its physique and something of its character. But there are three exceptions to this. When the child is brought out from the place where it was born at the end of the initial period of seclusion, it is examined for birth-marks; and if these are considered to be the same as those of a dead ancestor it is given that ancestor's name, or, if, for example, the child is a boy and has his father's mother's birth-marks, it gets her husband's name. Thus Usendi Moda, the headman of Orchg, was called after his dead grandfather because he had the same mole on his hip as he;

Naming

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

553 Yete Mura, the headman of Hoinar, was born hare-lipped and was therefore named after his hare-lipped paternal grandfather; and Jugho Dallu, the headman of Hitulnar, recognized on his son the birth-marks of his dead mother Pora'i and therefore gave him the name of her dead husband Dugha. This practice is a sign of some sort of belief in the reincarnation of the Departed. The second exception is the practice of giving a name immediately after birth when birth has coincided with some natural phenomenon or incident. Usendi Ippo of Orcha was called Ippo because born when the *mahua* tree (*ippa marra* in Maria) was in flower; Usendi Irka was born when the cucumbers (*irka*) were ripening in the *penda* fields; Usendi Ghasi was so named because, just before he was born, a *patwari* rode into Orcha and ordered his father Moda to go and cut grass (*ghas* in Halbi) for his pony. Oyami Gursha, headman of Kornu, was born when his father and uncles were making a wicker-work bin (*gursha*) for storing grain. Yete Mura named his daughter Reko because she was born when the *reka marra* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) was in fruit. The third exception, which, like the first, indicates some belief, if not in reincarnation, at least in a previous existence, is the practice when a new-born baby cries loudly for three or four days of reciting to it all the names that the parents can remember and giving it the last name uttered before it stops crying, on the theory that it has stopped crying on recognizing its name. Normally, however, the name is not given till the child is two or three, and then depends on such things as whether it is fat or thin, slow or smart, learnt to walk or speak quickly, and so on. Thus a boy was named Morlel or 'hare' because he used to double suddenly like a hare when running about the village; Bunge is a name given to a boy with a huge stomach; Baiyya or 'mad' to a harum-scarum boy; Banga to a shy, untalkative child; and U'ile or 'thin' to a child thin through much illness in his early years.

551 177 Russell and Hiralal state (III, p. 87) of the Gond race as a whole that names derived from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and, on this assumption, actually suggest that perhaps the Gonds had not advanced to the stage of having individual names before they came into contact with the Hindus! This is certainly not true of either Hill or Bison-horn Marias. Of 103 male and 38 female Hill Maria names collected from 215 men and 107 women, and 103 male and 23 female Bison-horn Maria names collected from 236 men and 68 women, very few, not 5 per cent., were Hindu, the proportion of Hindu names being, as might be expected, slightly higher among the Bison-horn Marias. Only about 27 per cent. of the Hill Maria men's names and 8 per cent. of their women's names occur also, in the same or a modified form, in the lists of Bison-horn

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Maria names, though, of course, very few Bison-horn women's names were collected. A noticeable difference is the absence from the Hill Maria of names given according to the day of the week on which the person named was born, such as Budhi (Wednesday), Mangru (Tuesday) and Lakhmu (Thursday); it has already been noted that the Hill Marias have no names for the days of the week. 551 177

Weaning

A child is breast-fed until it can both walk and take its own food by hand, sometimes as long as three years. Unlike the Bison-horn Marias, the Hill Marias have no weaning ceremony. 862

Education

There is no system of training Hill Maria children corresponding to the Gotul or Dormitory system of the Murias, except in the northernmost Hill Maria *parganas* of Padalbhum and Nurbhum. In the greater part of the Maria country, children learn simply by accompanying and imitating their parents and the elder boys of the village. At night the boys who are old enough to leave their mothers sleep in the communal dormitory, and in the evenings they sit outside the dormitory round the fire with the men of the village. When the corn is ripening and the men sleep in the field-houses, in many villages the dormitory is closed, and the boys sleep with their fathers or elder brothers in the fields. Thus from his earliest days the child learns the routine of village and tribal life from constant association with his elders. He is made to do his share of the field work, and taught the use of the bow and arrow and the setting of snares. Children of six and seven of both sexes join in the village and clan dances, very quickly mastering the steps. We have seen how they use bamboo *pak-del* drums to master the rhythm of drumming. In the ordinary hill village there is nothing corresponding to the Muria custom of the dormitory owning and cultivating a field or fields and applying the proceeds either to dormitory feasts or to the purchase of beads; but in the Barsur Mar villages and, therefore, probably elsewhere in the Abujhmar hills fathers encourage children to keep their own pigs, which they sometimes sell to procure money or grain for buying beads and knives. Girls similarly soon learn domestic routine from their constant association with their mothers. They cannot associate with boys in the manner of the Murias, among whom every girl must attend the boys' dormitory every night and has her own *gotul* 'boy-friend' to serve, since these *gotul* unions must be between couples who could legitimately marry under the rules of exogamy, and in nearly all Hill Maria villages all the boys and girls are of the same clan and therefore kindred. Yet the girls make bead fillets, ear-tassels and necklaces for the boys, and the latter carve wooden combs for the girls. 861

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

861 The complete *gotul* organization is a feature of Muria and not of Hill Maria culture. But as it has extended to Padalibhum and Nurbhum (possibly also to parts of Tapalibhum and Behra Mar) among the Hill Marias, a brief account of its salient features will not be out of place; it may be expected to spread into the hills with the gradual improvement of communications. A fairly full account from my notes on the Murias has been printed in the *Census of India* 1931 *Report*, Vol. I, Part III B., pp. 81-3. It may be added that it is easier for the Marias of Padalibhum to copy their Muria neighbours because Padalibhum not only has two or three villages which are not Padali villages but belong to the Nuroti and Usendi clans, but even in Padali villages has settlers of these two clans, which are *ahomawa* (wife-clan) to them.

[858] Boys and girls of an age to visit the *gotul* dormitories are known as *leyar* and *leyas* respectively. All the boys assemble at the
857 dormitory in the evening for dancing, games and social and sexual
571 training, sleeping on there after the departure of the girls to their
864 homes late in the night. The girls attend at the dormitory ... the evening, each girl being paired off with a boy of an *ahomawa* clan. The girls have to comb their boys' hair and massage their arms and legs, to dance with them, and to be initiated into the mysteries of sex with them. Marriage frequently follows these dormitory unions, but by no means always does. Children are expected to attend the dormitory from the age of eleven or twelve, and the parents may be fined for not sending them. Every boy and girl has a special dormitory name or rank; the smaller children have designations which are little more than names, but those of the elder boys change as they are promoted, and involve special duties. The Hill Marias seem to have adopted the ranks for the boys only, the girls retaining the name given them on their entry until they leave the dormitory organization on marriage, but taking among their fellows the precedence of their boy-mates in the dormitory.

[171] In Padalibhum the head boy of the dormitory is always known as the *leyar-gaita*, and below him the *gotul* officials are the *leyar-majhi*, the *silledar*, the *jaliarsi*, the *laharu*, the *baiddar* and the *kandar*; of these, *silledar*, *baiddar* and *kandar* are Hindi terms copied from the titles of State or zamindari servants; in many a Muria dormitory all the office-holders have such designations instead of the old native names. Besides these names or designations to which

[531] special duties and privileges are attached, they have for the boys the names Jalka, Jolsai and Joria, and probably others. The girls' dormitory names ascertained were Jaliaru, Lahari, Manjaro, Nircsa, Jhelo, Gujaro, Piyosa and Belosa. At a camp at Partabpur attended by Hill Marias from Padalibhum, the *leyar-gaita* of three

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

village dormitories were present. All were Padali by clan from Padali villages. Their dormitory mates were respectively Lahari, a Nuroti girl, Jaliaru, an Usendi girl, and Nirosa, a Nuroti girl; and despite their different designations, these girls were the head-girls of their villages in virtue of their boys' ranks. Another Usendi village in Padalibhum called its head boy Silledar, and his mate was Jhelo, a Padali girl. All four stated freely that they expected ultimately to marry their mates, and that they and all the other dormitory boys often had sexual intercourse with their girls.

The dormitory in these *parganas*, as among the neighbouring Murias, is really a school for training the youth of both sexes in conjugal and social duties and in the lore of the clan; the dormitory office-bearers are practically prefects and monitors. The headman and other elders of the villages frequently call on the head-boy for the help of his boys and girls in field-work; but here they are not paid wages, as among the Murias, but are only fed by those for whom they are working. They are also asked to help in thatching houses and building granaries. In weddings the girls are expected to sing, and boys to collect fuel and leaves for cups, and both have to dance; they have similar functions at the various new-eating festivals. The head-boy imposes fines for unjustifiable absence from the dormitory, or from weddings and festivals, or general disobedience of his orders or those of other office-bearers, a bottle of *mahua* spirit being the usual penalty, the cost of which falls upon the parents. The head-boy's mate has similar powers of fining other girls. At the nightly meetings of boys and girls at the dormitory there are dancing in season, tale-telling, singing and games, and from an early age boys are given practical lessons in sexual intercourse.

B. Bison-horn Marias

The information which I was able to collect on this subject among the Bison-horn Marias is much less full than that given above for the Hill Marias, and needs further testing and considerable supplementing.

During pregnancy the mother carries on her ordinary work. The only note which I have of any disability attaching to pregnancy is that when the flesh of animals slain in the *weta* ceremonial hunts is divided up and eaten, no share may be given to the husband of a wife who either is pregnant or has her monthly period. In most Bison-horn villages there is no menstruation hut, and in their houses there is no menstruation room. A few villages near the foot of the Abujhmar hills have a hut where young girls are

[see cat. 116, pp. 425-426. - Awl 4/51]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

§43 secluded for their first menstruation, known as the *piki-kurma-lon*; but generally speaking, Bison-horn Marias do not seem to hold in the same strength the Hill Maria fear of a woman in this condition.

844 For the birth of a child a separate hut or booth is erected in the compound, generally at the back of the house, known as the *er-nihitana-lon*, or water-washing hut. This is often little more than the roughest of booths, and considerably inferior to even a Bison-horn Maria pigsty. Here the mother remains for a full month, during which her husband is not allowed to go to his work. The delivery is assisted by an experienced woman relative or fellow-villager, who cuts and binds the navel-cord and washes the child immediately after it is born, and gives it to the mother to suckle. No food is given to the mother that day; on the next morning she is made to drink a decoction of the bark of the *kusum* [824] tree (*Schleichera trijuga*), the root of the dwarf *chhind* palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*), and *kulthi* (*Dolichos biflorus*) pulses, pounded to a powder and boiled together, and an hour or two after this dose she is given a meal of warm boiled rice. She is dosed and fed in this way for six or seven days more, until the navel-cord falls off; and then she washes her whole body and is allowed to eat regular meals. At the 852 end of the month the *lon-wa'ina* or Returning to the House ceremony 533 takes place. The child is named with the aid of a medium, though actually names seem to be given for reasons very similar to those actuating Hill Maria choice of names. A pig, a goat or a number of cocks are killed, and the mother, having washed her clothes and her body, cooks the flesh, all the villagers and relatives being entertained to dinner. Thenceforward the mother is free to resume all her normal household and field work, and the father can resume his work.

553 I once witnessed an unusual naming ceremony. A son had been born after three elder brothers had died. It was considered 789 that their deaths had been due to the hostility of some demon or of the familiar spirit of some magician, and on the medium's advice the baby had been suspended in a rough cradle over the rubbish-heap by the fence of the *bari* garden, and all the men present threw cow-dung and filth all round the cradle, shouting out '*Kacharu*' or 'Filth!', which name was given to the child in the hope that thereby the malignant power would be deceived into thinking that the parents set no value on the child.

862 Children are breast-fed for two years or more, as among the Hill Marias. It has been already recorded (page 219) that there is among the Bison-horn Marias a special weaning ceremony during the Jata Pandum at which the first solid food given to the children is a portion of the rice and meat offered to the Departed.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XVI

Death and Funeral Ceremonies

A. Hill Marias

The ordinary rule throughout the Abujhmar hills is to cremate the bodies of headmen and elders of influence and standing and of their wives, and to bury all others.

Except on the southern fringes of the hills, where the villages are influenced by contact with their Bison-horn Maria neighbours, the Hill Marias do not follow the Bison-horn custom of beating a drum from the roof of the house, which Russell and Hiralal predicate of all Marias. The custom is creeping into the hills from south of the Indrawati, and has for example already reached the Kutru Hill Maria villages of Lakka (Lanka) and Karangal; but there it is reserved for men of higher status. The drum used is the hill *turam* kettle-drum, and is usually one of those kept in the village dormitory; the village lads beat it continuously day and night from the death till the burial or cremation of the body.

News of the death is sent out to all the brother-clan and wife-clan relatives and friends of the deceased. The funeral is postponed for two or three days, to give them time to assemble. Then all the women gather in and around the house where the body is lying. A man is never left to die on a cot, but is lifted on to the ground as his end draws near; they say that their reason for this custom is simply that they do not want the dying man to fall off the cot in a last convulsion. Women are never allowed to sleep on a cot. They close the eyes of the corpse, and lift it on to a rough wicker-work bier, covering it over with a length of cloth. It is burned or buried with the clothes and jewellery that were on it at death. The women sit around the corpse and outside in the street, and break into loud keening for the dead.

For the last rites the body is not washed or otherwise prepared, but is left just as it was composed after death. Friends and relatives carry it out on the bier, the only person for whom it is taboo to touch or carry a body being the *waddai* clan-priest medium and his medium assistant (*lezhi*). The bier heads the procession to the burial and cremation ground, and is followed by the remaining relatives and friends, the women still keening and beating their breasts.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 Both for burial and for cremation most Hill Marias place the body in the grave or on the pyre with the head, face upwards, towards the sunrise and the feet towards the sunset; the Usendi clan, however, reverses this.

761 When the death is obviously a natural death after a long life, and there can be no suspicion of magic, nothing is done at the funeral to ascertain the cause of death. But if, for example, a 764 man or woman dies suddenly in the prime of life for no apparent reason, the bearers halt on the path just by the funeral ground, and stand with the bier resting on their shoulders. The *waddai* takes seven *saja* leaves, and places them in a row on the ground a few paces away from the bier. One leaf represents the Earth or Bhum, and stands for death through the displeasure of the Village Mother; the second stands for death through sickness; the third for death through the displeasure of the clan-god and the Departed (*pen-kanal*); the fourth for death through the magic of a fellow-villager; the fifth for death from the magic of a man whose enmity has been aroused against the deceased by a quarrel or exchange of abuses; the sixth for death from the magic of a *waddai* or magician; and the seventh for death from natural causes. The *waddai* or, if he is not present, the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita*, strikes the earth three times with an axe, and calls on the corpse to disclose the cause of its death. The corpse is then believed to impel the bearers to carry it to one of the leaves and stand on it; or else the *waddai* first excites the corpse by scattering husked grain over it till it moves the bearers to one of the leaves. The bearers then leap eight or nine paces away from the leaf, and stand with their backs to the row of leaves. They must not look behind them while the *waddai* changes the order of the leaves, after which the corpse has again to impel its bearers to stand on one of the leaves. Three or four times in all the process is repeated, the leaves being rearranged each time behind the backs of the bearers; and if each time the corpse indicates the same leaf, despite its changes of position, the company is satisfied that it has truly revealed the cause of its death. If in successive tests it indicates different leaves, they assume that there was nothing wrong with the death. In old days the elders stated that if the corpse indicated magic as the cause, the *waddai* at once called on it to point out the magician among those present at the funeral, or in the dead man's village or an adjacent village; but nowadays they do not proceed to an immediate witch-hunt; a seed of suspicion has, however, been sown which will sooner or later grow into assault or murder.

764 Then, if the body is to be buried, the bearers bring it to the grave, which is dug only waist-deep, lift it off the bier and place it in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764

the grave, with its face upwards, and, normally, its feet towards the sunset. The senior near kinsman present then throws a clod of earth on the head of the corpse, and says, 'This is all I can now do for you, and I give you my portion.' Then each near kinsman present flings a clod into the grave, uttering the same formula, followed by five elders of the village, who therefore are distant kinsmen, and after them by any affines who may be present. If there are no near kinsmen present, the five village elders take the lead in the ceremony. The women take no part in this. The dead man's *erramiogh* (that is, his wife's elder brother or his own younger sister's husband) will have brought to the grave the dead man's spare clothes, if any, his ornaments, his axe (but not his bow and arrows), his hoe (*gudari*), his cot and his dancing clothes and ornaments; generally all or some of his cooking pots are also taken to the grave. It may be added that the *erramiogh* has the duty, when he arrives, of uncovering the body and inspecting it for any signs of foul play. When a woman dies, it is still her husband's *erramiogh*, generally her elder brother, who performs these offices. The property thus brought to the grave is either buried with the body or hung up on *saja* trees over or near the grave, or on the fence or *kanal-gutta* posts erected around or in front of the grave. When the men present have dropped their clods on the body, the earth is shovelled into the grave from all sides, and heaped well over it. Over the mound thus made, leaves are spread, and over them logs are piled. Burial or cremation always takes place in the evening, it being the rule not to bring the body out of the house till about 4 p.m. The grave is dug, or the pyre made ready, as the case may be, about four or five hours beforehand, and the keening of the women begins in the early morning and lasts till the body reaches the funeral ground.

While some men are digging the grave, others cut posts of *saja* wood in the forest hard by, clear them of bark, and roughly carve them with their axes and knives in the manner shown in the bottom illustration of Plate XX, often carving at the top of the posts rude representations of peacocks. On the Kutru side of the hills the rule is to set up two large posts of this kind in front of the grave, and a smaller and much plainer post at the four corners of the grave. The posts are called *kanal-gutta*. As soon as the grave has been completed, these posts are set up, and the *erramiogh* of a dead man or the brother of a dead woman, makes at the foot of one of the two large front posts a small stone cromlech, known as *kanal-garya* (throne of the departed), pours a little *mahua* spirit on the ground by the foot of each post and on the table-stone of the cromlech, on the latter of which he also strews a little husked grain. He takes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 then a small chick, twists its neck, breaking the skin of its throat with his nails, sprinkles its blood on the rice, and leaves it there. He then ties a piece of cloth brought from his own house to the boughs of a *saja* tree overhanging the grave, and other pieces handed to him by relatives and friends who wish to honour the dead man, as well as strips of the dead man's clothes brought from his house. Next he, and after him the other affines of the dead man in turn, or, if a married woman has been buried, her father's kindred, take a leaf-cupful of *mahua* spirit, pouring a drop on the grave as an offering to the dead person, and after them the kinsmen of the dead do likewise. The *erramtogh* also offers the *kunal* little *bediya*[1] baskets of rice and *kutki*, and an empty miniature *kandi* (pot). The kinsmen of the dead man have to provide the *mahua* spirit and the grain, baskets and pot. Finally the grave, except the two front *kunal-gutta* posts, is generally surrounded with a fence of criss-crossed strips of bamboo.

766 For a cremation the procedure is much the same. The pyre is made ready beforehand, like the grave, and the body is laid on it. The *erramtogh* brings a burning log from the hearth of the dead man's house, and with it kindles the pyre; and then the kinsmen, the five village elders, and the affines each place a small piece of wood on the head of the corpse, uttering the same formula as when they throw clods of earth on a body in a grave. The pyre is almost always made at the foot of a *mahua* tree. They pile no leaves or logs over the ashes, but leave them there to the mercy of the elements, after fencing them, setting up *kunal-gutta* posts and a *kunal-garya* cromlech, and tying strips of cloth to overhanging *saja* boughs.

767 The ritual varies in different parts of the hills. In some tracts, particularly near Orcha and on the Narainpur side of the hills, they set up only one *kunal-gutta* post, in front of the grave, or none at all. The *mahua* spirit ritual also varies. After earth leaves and logs have been piled over the grave, and the *kunal-gutta* post and the cromlech, if any, have been set up, the *erramtogh* takes a leaf-cupful of liquor, pours a drop or two from it on the earth and logs piled above the head of the corpse, and drinks what remains; this is done after him in turn by the male affines, the kinsmen, and the women present.

The dead man's cot or sleeping-mat and the bier on which his body was carried to the funeral are always left by the grave; and often his dancing head-dress is deposited on the top of one of the *kunal-gutta* posts, while the grave is further adorned with his old fishing-rods and wooden representations of spears and axes. The bottom illustration on Plate XX shows a typical burial grave in

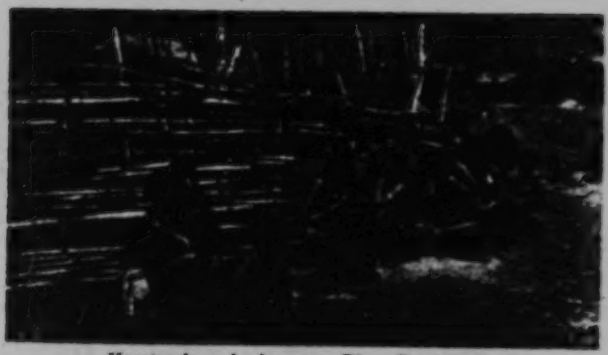
[1] See page 175 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE XX

764

Mourning over a corpse, Handawada
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)



Keening for a dead woman, Bhera Tondawada

Burial grave at Nagur, Kutru Mar
HILL MARIA DEATH CEREMONIES

[*face p.* 674

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 the village of Nugur, with the cromlech in front of the two large *kanal-gutta* posts and behind them two of the small corner *kanal-gutta* posts and the log- and leaf-piled grave. At a cremation grave seen at Handawada, where the ashes of the pyre were still fresh, there was no *kanal-gutta* or cromlech, and the only offering to the dead visible was a small basket that contained the funerary grain, fixed at the top of the fence erected round the grave. The usual strips of cloth were hung from the boughs of trees overhead. The wicker-work frames of dancing shields were also suspended from the fence, although, as related on page 76 above, the use of these dancing shields has for the time been abandoned. The Nugur photograph on Plate XX shows dancing head-dresses on top of the two large *kanal-gutta* posts, a large imitation spear of bamboo between them, and strips of cloth hanging from long bamboo saplings planted in the ground, as there were no reasonably low overhanging boughs. The two upper photographs on the plate show women mourners around a sheeted body in a house at Handawada, and keeners outside a house at Bhera Tondawada at noon before a funeral.

Immediately after the actual funeral in many parts of the hills all the mourners proceed from the funeral ground to a spot by the side of one of the paths entering the village. There the *erramiogh* or the next nearest affine relative present builds a small cairn from 1½ to 2½ feet high, surmounted by a flat cap-stone; the cairn is known as a *marma-kal* or *marman-gal*. On the cap-stone he and each of the householders present places a pinch of rice or *kuthi* grain, addresses the dead man by name, and tells him that he gives him this food to eat. All then go home. In the Tapalibhum, Behramar and Sonpur Mar *parganas* the dead man's heir or *jiya-bital* sets up this cairn on the path a little way from the burial or cremation ground. At the selected spot he clears the ground, places a little grain on it, and makes a small chicken peck at the grain; he then cuts its throat behind his back with a knife, the *erramiogh* or some other near affine places a large flat stone at the side of the dead chicken, and the heir piles stones over it. No words are uttered while this is done. Here they call the cairn *korq-kotiktana-kal*, or 'chicken-feeding stone', and do not know the term *marma-kal*. In the Farsal, Bardal, Tulagotal, Hukkagotal and Farsigotal *parganas* they apply the term *marma-kal* to a small stone set up by the side of the path leading from the village to the *kotokal* row of menhirs for the dead as a temporary consolation for the departed when the heir has not sufficient grain or money to erect a menhir immediately after the funeral.

765 Mourning is observed for four days after the funeral, and it is taboo for the heir and the men of the deceased's family to go to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

765 work in this period. Often a house or a portion of a house in which a death has occurred is shut up and not re-occupied. It is, however, not repaired. So long as it stands, it is regarded as a memorial of the dead. On the day after the funeral, if the house is still to be occupied, the rooms and the surroundings are cleaned out, and the floors are re-plastered. On the first three mornings after the [769] funeral they place a little meal from the Pot of the Departed on the grave as an offering. At the end of the period of mourning 764 the heir, if rich enough, should proceed at once to set up a menhir to the dead in the *kotokal*, in the *parganas* and villages where these menhirs are still erected. If, however, he cannot yet afford to do so, he goes to the graveside, bows before the *hanal-garya* cromlech, tells the dead man's *hanal* that he is sorry that he cannot yet afford to erect his stone, and begs him to be patient, to forgive him for the delay and not to harass him. It may take him two or three years to collect the necessary grain and money for feeding those who are to help him to find and erect a suitable menhir. In many parts of the hills the custom has fallen into disuse, because of its cost. But it is still common on the Kutru side of the hills, in Tulagotal, Hukkagotal, Farsigotal, Farsal, Bardal, Tapalibhum, Padalibhum, Nurbhum, Behramar and Sonpur *parganas*, and also prevails in Dugal and other neighbouring Jhoria Muria *parganas*. In Chhota Dongar *pargana* few clans now erect either *marma-kal* or *kotokal* stones, though in many villages old rows of *kotokal* menhirs attest the former prevalence of the practice; the Bokalur are almost the only clan there who still erect them. From Adeq in that *pargana* rows of menhirs will be met by the traveller at Itulnar in Bhairamgarh Mar, between Itulnar and Hikul in Barsur Mar, and at Toinar and other villages in the latter *pargana*; but the clans now occupying these areas do not erect menhirs, and say that the rows still standing were erected ages ago by clans no longer known, though the Gumelor attribute the menhirs in their village of Toinar to the long extinct Timor clan. The Tamor of Tumirgunda between Handawada and the Indrawati have a *kotokal* on the hill path to Hirameta, but have erected no new menhir there for years, and say that nowadays no stone is set up till three generations have elapsed after death; they admit that this is practically a confession that the practice has been abandoned, and say that it was found to be too expensive.

When, however, the heir has enough grain and money to pay for the food and drink needed for the erection of a menhir, whether on the fourth day after death, or after the lapse of some months or years, he calls together his relatives and friends, and all go off into the forest to look for a suitable stone. The only consideration

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

guiding their choice is the adequacy of their resources to provide food and drink for the men required to drag or carry the stone. The menhirs in the Abujhmar country and the adjacent Muria tracts are considerably smaller than the vast menhirs sometimes met in the Bison-horn country; the largest that I have seen, at Lakka in Kutru Mar, were just over 8 feet high, and about 2½ feet wide by 10 inches thick at the base. They drag out the selected stone from its resting-place, and place under it several cross-pieces of wood, and on each side of it a long thick pole, to which the cross-pieces are lashed. The stone is then lashed to the cross-pieces, and the poles are lifted on to the shoulders of the bearers, from twenty to thirty in number, and so the journey to the *kotokal* begins. At intervals they stop, and are given by the heir drinks of *mahua* spirit, which is considered to give them strength to bear the burden; and they are given at least one meal on the way. There will also be reserves of bearers, who carry the food and drink and cooking pots, to be entertained. So they ultimately reach the *kotokal* and deposit the stone on the ground at the appointed spot. If it is too late to erect it that evening, a feast follows at the heir's house, and all night the men and women dance with their wife-clan (*akomama*) relatives. In the following afternoon the stone is erected under the supervision of the *erramtogh* or the senior wife-clan relative present. A hole is dug in the ground at one end of the stone and then the stone, if small, is pulled upright by willing hands and held there while the earth is shovelled in. If it is large and heavy, ropes are lashed round the far end and used to pull it upright, with its base in the hole, and ten men or so hold poles on both sides of its apex to prevent it falling over, while others ram small stones, earth and turves around its base. In Kutru Mar, Chhota Dongar Mar, Behramar, Tapalibhum and Sonpur Mar a *kanal-garya* cromlech is then made at the base of the menhir, and the heir of the dead man comes up to it, and squats on the ground with his back to the menhir and the cromlech. He takes an eight or nine days old chicken, and, holding it behind his back and never looking at the stone, cuts its throat with the nails of his hand, sprinkles its blood on the table-stone of the cromlech, and pushes its body under the table-stone; next he places an offering of rice or *kulthi* grain on the table-stone. As he makes the offerings he speaks to the dead man, saying, 'Whether you were killed by magic, or by the wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, or died naturally, I know not. But now I have put up this menhir for you, and you must wander no more. Stay here in peace for ever, and do not worry us your descendants.' In Tapalibhum and Behramar they erect the stone and sacrifice the chicken in silence. Only the heir has to keep his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 back to the menhir; all others present may watch the whole proceedings. In Padalibhum and parts of Nurbhum they do not sacrifice a chicken, but only place an offering of grain on the cromlech. In Farsal, Bardal and the three Gotal *parganas* they then usually kill a boar a few yards away from the menhir, stretching it out on its stomach, two men holding it down with a pole across its neck, while a third man kills it with blows from the blunt side of the axe-head. They boil and eat the pork there, men, women and children, but give no part of it to the *hanal* and do not even hang its tail over the top of the menhir. In these *parganas* they assert that they have given up sacrificing a cow after the erection of the menhir; but I should be surprised if this assertion were strictly true. A similar claim was made by the Padali headmen of Padalibhum, but Bardal Gille, the headman of Rawan in that *pargana*, stated that some clans still offered a cow and hung its tail from the menhir. There is still a fear of offending Hindu State officials by frankly admitting the slaughter of cows. Cow sacrifice is further limited by the comparative scarcity of cattle in many parts of the Abujhmar hills, whereas pigs are plentiful. Even where they assert that they no longer sacrifice cows they do not scruple to eat the flesh of a cow that has died a natural death or been killed by a tiger.

In Kutru Mar they do not erect stones brought to the *kotokal* for women and children, but leave them flat on the ground. The stones for women and children, whether erected or prone, are always smaller than those erected for men. There is a general belief that menhirs increase or decrease in size according as the *hanal* is satisfied or not.

769 After the chicken and grain have been offered on the cromlech at the foot of the menhir, the heir, still turning his back on the menhir, goes off at once to the nearest pool of water, followed by the others present, and all wash their arms and legs and return to the village. Where cow sacrifice is still in vogue, as in Tapalibhum, Behramar and Sonpur Mar *parganas*, the *erramtogh* then sacrifices a cow or a pig or both, generally in the *lonu* room of the heir's house before the Pot of the Departed, using the blunt side of the axe-head, saying to the dead man, '*Niwa naode mat haukin torun. Idek mak suh-duk komuk manu*', or, 'I sacrifice this in your name; hereafter keep still and do not make trouble for us!' The tuft at the end of the cow's tail is fastened to a loop of cord, and hung over the apex of the menhir just erected. The heir then entertains all who have assembled to a second dinner, off the sacrificed beef and pork, and the night ends in dancing and liquor. Needless to say, this procedure is costly, and many a *hanal* has to rest content with a *marma-kal* cairn.

[See cat. 116, p. 423. - Awa 1/94]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Where, as in Orcha and most of the surrounding villages of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, *kotokal* menhirs are no longer erected, a cow or pig is nevertheless sacrificed in this way in the village on the night after the funeral at the heir's house, and portions of the flesh or the liver when cooked are placed under the cromlech at the base of the *kanal-gutta* post, or, if there is no cromlech, on the grave, while the tail, and sometimes also a lower leg, from hock to hoof, are fastened by a cord from an overhanging *saja* bough. The usual feast and dance then follow. 769

One reason for the abandonment of the custom of erecting menhirs may be that the clans which have abandoned it have in fairly recent times abandoned their traditional for their present clan-areas; for it was the rule that the menhir should always be erected in the village from which the dead man or his ancestors had originally come, not in the village at which he was living at the time of his death. 178 764

A person who has killed himself, or who dies from cholera or small-pox, is not buried or cremated at the regular funeral ground, but in the forest at some distance from it. There had been no recent case in any village which I visited of a woman dying when pregnant or in child-birth, and no one could say what would be done in such a case. Persons killed by tigers or other wild animals must be burned, not buried, at the place where their remains are found, or to which they are brought for the inquest. They must never be brought into a village, for otherwise the dead man's *kanal* may bring the tiger there. The remains, if scattered, are collected and placed in a cloth brought from the dead man's house; but such bodies should be touched as little as possible. Logs are piled under the body where it lies and kindled, and anything found with the body or at the place where the tiger attacked the dead man is burnt with it; but no dancing dresses or other property are brought from his house to be burned with him, and no offerings of grain or *mahua* spirit are made at the grave. No *marma-kal* cairn and no *kotokal* menhir are set up for him; but there is nothing to prevent this being done for the victims of cholera or smallpox. 766

Treatment of abnormal deaths

B. Bison-horn Marias

The true Bison-horn Marias, as distinguished from members of clans once Hill Maria in culture but now adopting Bison-horn customs, cremate all their dead except those who die from abnormal causes. When a man dies, his son-in-law is sent for, and on arrival climbs on to the roof of the house with a *dol* drum, which he beats 764 763

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

763 for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

764 When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the [533] mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *wrakhal*.

[787 On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion 761] remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *wrakhal* menhir. There are *wrakhal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children [718] whenever a death occurs.[a] On the Jagdalpur side, however, and around Paknar, though every village has its *wrakhal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of 764 grain—*kutki*, *urad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of *mahua* spirit and *laddu*. But expense is not taken into account at 177 weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. 554 The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[a] [See cat. 116, p. 426. — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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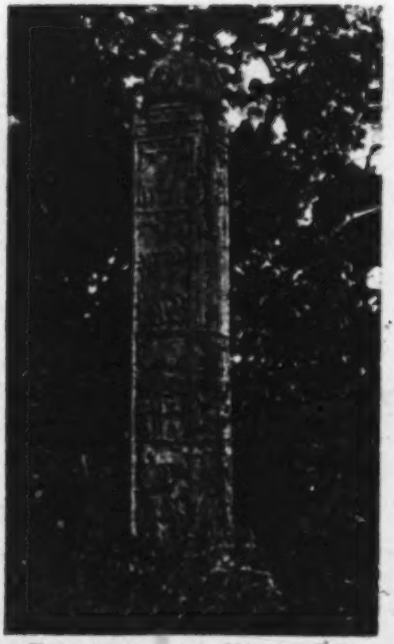

Urasgatta post, near Chitrakot Falls

764

Danyakal and uraskal stones, Aranpur

BISON-HORN MARIA MEMORIALS TO THE DEAD

[Facing p. 286]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

themselves socially they not only cease to follow old Maria customs, but begin to resent being called Marias and to claim the designation of Muria. In some places, especially in villages where it is hard to find suitable menhir stones, they erect in their stead posts of *saja* wood, which they call *wrasgatta*. The upper illustration on plate XXI shows a very elaborate *wrasgatta* from a roadside village near the Chitrakot falls, on the northernmost fringe of the Bison-horn country. It is carved on each of its carefully squared sides with representations of hunting scenes, and the objects of the chase. Originally these were picked out in red and blue paint. Plate XXII shows part of a large row of *wraskal* menhirs by the side of the road from Dantewara to Kameli, at the foot of the bridle-path ascending to the Bailadila guest-house; such enormous menhirs as those shown behind the women in this illustration are seldom set up in these days; the tallest shown was thirteen feet high, and the broadest over six feet wide at the base. The normal size of those nowadays erected is shown in the lower illustration on plate XXI; this portrays part of the *wraskal* of Aranpur village, by the side of the forest road from Kuakonda to Dummagudem, and at the head of the Aranpur pass. In this photograph the interesting thing is the large flat stone resting on four boulders. This is known as a *danya-kal*, and was placed there as the memorial of Birya-Marvi Hurra Wadde, who in his life-time was *perma* and *bhum-gaita* of Aranpur, as well as a *wadde*. The Birya-Marvi and the Kuhrami clans are the only two which always make *danyakal* and never set up *wraskal* stones; all the other clans, even in the Marvi and Kuhrami phratries, and including the small or Chudala Marvi clan, erect *wraskal* stones. This Aranpur *wraskal* was not restricted to the Birya-Marvi clan, although the village was founded by that clan; the *danyakal* stone on the right edge of the photograph was the last stone at the south end of the row; next to it on the north were fifteen *wraskal* stones of the Kunjami clan, and after them three of the Chudala Marvi clan. The small stones at the foot of the menhirs are known as *kanal-kutul* or ghost stools, and serve the same function as the *kanal-garya* cromlechs of the Hill Marias. Any recently erected stone can usually be detected either by the presence of a cow's or pig's tail hung over its apex by a loop of cord, or by the dirty white stains of libations of *landa* poured over the stone when it was set up.

The stone is selected and carried from the quarry to the place where it is to be erected in much the same way as that already described for the Hill Marias. I use the word quarry advisedly, for these great slabs or pillars cannot be found as surface boulders. I have not seen the actual quarrying; but they understand how to

[See col. 116, pp. 426-427. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

316 crack boulders by burning piles of logs on and around them, and use their iron digging-sticks as crowbars to assist the work. The [823] stones are too heavy to be carried merely by the ends of the two long poles to which the Hill Maria lashes the short cross-pieces of wood on which the stone rests; the Bison-horn cross-pieces project beyond the stone, and on the ends they attach long loops of twisted bamboo rind, through the upper ends of which they pass cross-poles over the top of the stone, and the ends of these cross-poles, like those of the two long poles, are borne on the bearers' shoulders. 764 The heir of the dead man has to provide food and drink for the bearers, as in the Abujhmar hills. The stone is taken to the place where it is to be set up, and the heir sacrifices a cock on the other side of the road on the spot where the body was cremated, and buries it in a hole dug under the ashes.

All proceed thence to the dead man's house, and there in the *wijja-lon* by the Pot of the Departed the heir sacrifices another cock to the dead man. The latter's son-in-law, or, if there is none, his *erramiogh* or some other affine, in the name of the dead man kills, with blows from the blunt head of an axe on its head, the cow or cows selected by the dead man during his lifetime; they believe that if these cows are not sacrificed in fulfilment of his wishes they pine away and die, and then the dead man is said to have come and fetched them away. Pigs are sometimes sacrificed as a substitute for or in addition to cows. The sacrificed animals are then skinned and cut up for roasting, the liver being cooked separately for the dead man. They take the liver, the tails tied to loops of cord, and a pot of *landa* to the *uraskal*, and there the affines of the dead man see to the erection of the stone. The heir hangs the tails over the top of the stone, after pouring *landa* over it, and sometimes milk also. He then places the roasted liver on the *hanal-kutul* cromlech, and with his back turned to the menhir sacrifices a chicken and places it under the cromlech, in much the same way as the Hill Maria heir. All present fling rice, *kuthi*, *urad* and *mung* at and around the menhir, and then follow the heir to the nearest pool to bathe, without looking back at the menhir. They eat the roast beef and pork of the sacrificial victims either on the banks of the pool or at the dead man's house, with boiled rice and pulses, and *landa* and *mahua* spirit to drink. The son-in-law or other affine who beat the funeral drum is presented by the heir with a brass dish and a piece of cloth, or, more often, with the cloth only. All then disperse.

At the first Marka Pandum following this, a final offering of mangoes and grain is made to the dead man's *hanal* at his *uraskal*.

In some villages a forked bough is erected instead of an *uraskal* or an *uraigatta*. It is always cut from the sacred *saja* tree.

2[see cat. 116, p. 427. — Archyt]

1:.Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

764

PLATE XXII

Urnshal stones on Dantewara-Bailadila road
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)

[facing p. 282]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

766 At Paknar in May 1930 I tried the murderer of a man whose body had been taken to Jagdalpur by the police for *post mortem* examination and had been buried there. In the course of the trial I visited the spot where the accused had shot him dead with a bow and arrow as he and the villagers helping him were carrying his *kuthi* harvest from his *penda* field to his granary. His kinsmen had performed funeral rites for him there, sacrificing, roasting and eating two cocks and a pig, hanging up the loin-cloth which he was wearing when killed, and which they had brought back from Jagdalpur, and throwing rice and other grains at the trunk of the tree. They had also thrown away there all the earthen pots in his house except the Pot of the Departed, and his wife had burnt her bangles there. They had poured a libation of *mahua* spirit on the ground at the foot of the tree, which had been stained by his blood, and had adjured his *hanal* to be contented with this, stay with the *hanal* of the other Departed and bring no trouble upon them. A little *mahua* seed oil had then been added in his name to the Pot of the Departed in the *wijja-lon* of his house.

Abnormal deaths

Often when a person is murdered or drowned or dies in any unnatural way, a great cairn of stones is erected over his remains at the spot where he died, known as a *punji-paknar* in Halbi, and any passer-by is supposed to pick up a stone and fling it on the top of the cairn. The custom is common to all the peoples of Bastar, including the Hill Marias; in 1913 two Hill Marias murdered a Maria Lohar girl, with whom both had often cohabited, through fear of the disgrace one of them would incur if the child which she had conceived were born and she named him as the father. The village elders hushed up the murder, and removed the body to the head of a pass crossing the Tiralgarh hills, and there a huge *punji-paknar* was piled over the remains.

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Victims of small-pox and women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried by Bison-horn Marias, but not in the regular cremation ground. Before these women can be buried, a *wadde* or *gunia* has to shut up her malignant spirit by driving iron nails into her knees and elbows. But *uraskal* menhirs are erected for them and for victims of small-pox. Persons killed by lightning are cremated at some distance from the ordinary cremation ground, and no menhir may be erected for them. Menhirs are also forbidden for persons killed by tigers, whose remains are burned in the forest where they are found, with whatever possessions were with them when attacked or killed. A dummy tiger is made of bamboo sticks, taken to the boundary of the village, and there burnt.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XVII

Village, Clan and Pargana Authorities and Panchayats; their Executive Authority; their Judicial Authority and Methods; Property and Inheritance; Position of Women; the Recent State Orders Restoring Judicial Authority to Panchayats

623 625 692

One of the most remarkable features of the Bastar of 1927 was the extent to which tribal, village and caste *panchayats* still regulated the religious and social life of the people, acted as intermediaries between them and the State and its zamindaris in meeting State demands for taxes, labour and supplies and in protecting the ryots from undue exactions, and exercised much *de facto* criminal and civil jurisdiction. Here ready to hand was the nucleus of an organization which, if properly handled and fostered, could in time save the State much money spent on law and justice, police and general administration. But the opposite policy had consciously or unconsciously been followed. Any exercise of criminal jurisdiction, even in petty crop theft cases, had been regarded as usurpation of the authority of the police and courts, and persons who had already made ample amends under tribal custom were arrested and sentenced all over again by the tahsildars, while headmen and elders not infrequently were punished for not reporting the offences. A badly trained police, often singularly lacking in common sense, would descend on a village and waste days in pointless investigation of petty cases, expecting not only to be fed on rice, mutton and poultry by the villagers during their stay, but also to be provided with stores of grain under the old *bisaha* system to take away with them at the end of the investigation. Villagers would be compelled to carry the supplies thus forcibly taken from them to the police station, perhaps two or three days' march distant, and would rarely be given even the nominal payment prescribed under the old *bisaha* rules. Then would follow a protracted trial at the still more distant tahsil headquarters, ten witnesses being summoned where three or four would have been ample; and probably all these witnesses at the end of the trial would have to accompany the police party back to the police station to carry their impedimenta, and might be kept even longer as '*athpaharia begar*' labourers to clean the police office and lines and do domestic work for the constables.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The civil matters ordinarily decided by the *panchayats* would be marriage cases, such as settling the compensation to be awarded to a husband when his wife had eloped with another man. But tahsildars would entertain complaints under the sections of the Indian Penal Code punishing adultery from a husband dissatisfied with the *panchayat's* decision, and thereby undermine yet further the authority of the *panchayat*. I have in an earlier chapter referred to the effect of the unconscionable demands for forced labour and supplies on the position of the village headmen, and shown how in consequence the tendency was to put forward a dummy as the headman for secular matters, the real leadership of the village remaining with the religious headman, that is to say, the *hasyeq-gaita* in the case of the Hill Marias, and the *perma* in that of the Bison-horn Marias, but the dummy being available to bear the brunt of official wrath, though powerless to effect anything without the consent of the village elders. Formerly, there seems little doubt, the *hasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* also discharged the functions of the secular headman; the differentiation of the two functions was the result of the State officials' treatment of the aboriginal. In many Abujhmar villages the functions are still combined, or are held by members of the same family, because State officials were always loath to penetrate into the interior of the Hill Maria country. With the revival of the authority of the headmen and *panchayats* that is now the policy of the State, it may be expected that gradually the religious headmen will resume the secular headmanship also.

It is not surprising that, as the result of these methods of dealing with the aboriginals, their *panchayats* tended to co-operate as little as possible with the State; their object became to conceal crime from the police and in general to comply with State requirements only so far as was necessary in order to avoid trouble, and, above all, visits of subordinate State officials to their villages. The records of murder and other trials show many cases of the village elders meeting and deciding to hush up a crime, especially if it had occurred at harvest or any other busy agricultural season, rather than have the whole life of the village community disorganized by police investigation, committal proceedings and Sessions trial. Such crimes may have come to light later through the *panchayat* reporting them at their own convenience, or through the widow or other relative of a murdered man being dissatisfied with the compensation which the murderer had been ordered to give, while in some *parganas* informers arose who subsequently used their supposed prestige with the police to become petty local tyrants. Conversely on occasions *panchayats*, disgusted with the failure of the police to investigate thefts or with the acquittal of guilty persons by the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

623 692 tahsildars, took the law into their own hands and had the thieves killed.

Purely social matters, breaches of caste or tribal prejudices, 623 were left by the State to the jurisdiction of caste *panchayats* and of 622 the caste headmen, appointed for nearly all Hindu and semi-Hindu 692 castes in the State by the Ruling Chief in the tahsils and by the 564 zamindars for their own zamindaris; after the first appointment these offices tended to become hereditary in the family of the person appointed, the succession having to be recognized by the Ruling Chief, from whom the headmen of leading castes would receive a turban as insignia of office. A register of these headmen is kept, and appeals from their decisions in caste *panchayat* in social matters lie direct to the Ruling Chief, this power during the long minority of the late Maharani of Bastar having been exercised on her behalf by a relative of hers who manages the State temples at Jagdalpur. But the State never appointed caste headmen for Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who retained their own tribal customs in these matters, and whose *panchayats* did not, like those of Hindu castes, deal only with social matters, but also with petty crime and with the administration and agricultural management of the villages and clans, as well as their relations with the officers of the State. To some extent the Murias were in the same position; but in certain areas caste headmen had been appointed for them, and they had learnt to defer to the Palace as the ultimate arbiter in social matters, while great numbers of their villages had been granted to alien lessees who asserted their own authority and belittled that of the traditional headmen and *panchayats*.

622 623 692 A text for the enquiries which I had made into the *panchayats* of the Marias was the following passage from the appendix to the chapter on caste (Chapter IX, p. 239) in Marten's 1911 *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*:—

'The following account of the tribal council of the Maria Gonds of South Chanda has been sent in by the Manager of the Ahiri estate, and is worth quoting almost in full. Every genuine Maria village has a village headman or *patel*, called the *Gaita*. In addition to his office as a *gaita* he generally exercises also the hereditary functions of a *Bhumia* or religious headman of the village. This dual office used formerly to be held as a rule by one and the same man in the village, and, with a few exceptions here and there owing to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia*, it is still so held in the majority of cases. The man enjoying the double office is therefore the patriarch of the whole village community, and his authority in the village (or a group of two or three villages) under him is supreme. This post is hereditary. The caste has not a standing Panchayat or governing body. It is called together when required. But the system prevailing in the caste is far more developed and is in certain respects more far-reaching than the ordinary Panchayat 623 system prevailing in other castes. The village *Gaita*, on receiving a report of 692 a misdemeanour or other occurrence in the village, calls two or three elders of the village together—the number is not fixed, nor is it necessary to call the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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same man every time—sends for the complainant and the accused, and after hearing the parties decides the case with the help of the village elders, who as a rule agree with his decision.

The jurisdiction of the village panchayat is confined to the village itself, and a local village panchayat is never referred to for the decision of a case by persons at a distance. A group of about 50 to 100 villages is constituted into what is locally called a *patti*, and this *patti* acknowledges the authority of the chief religious and social headman of the group, who is called the *Sendhia*. The *Sendhia* is the chief priest and judge of the *patti*. Every marriage contracted, every case of social misdemeanour involving the penalty of a fine, and every other social and religious function performed in any village of the *patti* yields the *Sendhia* a fixed fee in cash, ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 10, and in some exceptional cases up to Rs. 50. The office of the *Sendhia* is also hereditary, and the *Sendhia* is the dominant authority in the *patti*. The authority of the *Sendhia* (for purposes of a Panchayat) is invoked only in exceptional cases involving the interests of a number of villages, and in such cases the decision of the *Sendhia* on an appeal being made to him by or against a village panchayat (or a number of village panchayats) is final. For purposes of a panchayat therefore each *patti* forms a distinct unit, the internal composition of which is as follows :—

(*a*) Each village holds its own panchayat composed of a few village elders and presided over by the village headman (*gaita*).

(*b*) Each group of villages acknowledges the authority of the *Sendhia*, who is the court of appeal for difficult or intricate intra-communal disputes.

(*c*) Each *Sendhia's patti* is, as a rule, a compact block of country, sharply defined by prominent natural geographical boundaries (a range of hills, a large river or a nullah), and the *Sendhia's* authority is confined to his own *patti*.

The affairs of one *Sendhia's patti* are never referred to a *Sendhia* of another *patti*. Each *patti* is known by its local geographical name (such as the Lahiri *patti*, the Vennasugar *patti*, the Jarawandi *patti*, the Ghat *patti*, and so forth), and each *patti* is the sole undisputed domain of the local *Sendhia*. The only remarkable case of an exception to this general rule that occurred within the memory of living man was during the cold weather of 1909 at the village of Kotmi, which belongs to the Vennasugar *patti*. A Maria's daughter of the village eloped with a Mussalman. The local village panchayat took a feast from the father of the girl, and fined him an amount adequate enough for the dues of the *Sendhia*. The *Sendhia* demanded more and censured the village panchayat for having let the man off with a light amount. The village panchayat considered the *Sendhia's* demands to be exorbitant, and threatened to alienate themselves from him and to invoke the aid of a foreign *Sendhia*. This was too much for the *Sendhia*, who directly excommunicated the whole village panchayat. The panchayat therefore sent for the *Sendhia* of Judt, who naturally refused to affiliate the village to his *patti*, but, seeing the difficulties of the case, agreed to purify the culprit for a small fee, which was paid to him. He performed the necessary ceremonies and reclaimed the unfortunate father of the girl. Thereupon the whole *patti* of Vennasugar rose against the village of Kotmi, and threatened to use violence. This caused some uneasiness to the police, who began sending in reports. The Manager of the Ahiri estate went to the spot, and his camp was immediately besieged by about a hundred *Gaitas* of the *patti*, headed by the *Sendhia*, who clamoured for justice. Their complaint was that the village people of Kotmi had set a bad example, and that the people of the *patti* would know no rest till they (the Kotmi people) got themselves purified by the *Sendhia*. The Marias of Kotmi were, on their part, too obstinate to yield, and with great difficulty the Manager succeeded in effecting a compromise by prevailing upon the *Sendhia* to reduce his demands. He agreed ultimately to give absolution for a nominal amount, which was paid by the girl's father, and thus ended in a merry drinking bout what threatened to be a small civil war. The next

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

632 692 morning the *Sendhia* repeated the necessary spells, and, collecting together all the *Gaitas* of the *patti* with the Kotmi fellows, sprinkled fresh well water over their heads and declared Kotmi as re-affiliated to his *patti*.

'This specific instance illustrates not only the great power exercised by the *Sendhia* in his *patti* but also the fact that it is impossible for a village to alienate itself from a *patti* or to disregard the authority of a *Sendhia*.'

632 The South Chanda *patti* thus described seems to be very like the clan-*pargana* of the neighbouring Bastar Hill Marias, though much larger, if the figure of from 50 to 100 villages in each *patti* is correct. Actually, however, the *patti* probably includes several clan-areas or, at all events, villages of several clans, though I have not been able to make any enquiries in Chanda. The designation *Sendhia* is used in the Bhopalpatnam zamindari of Bastar for the headmen appointed by past zamindars over the local Naikpod, Kapewar, Barod and Dolod (Pardhan) castes; among Bastar Marias, however, the term appears to be used only in the Kutru Mar *pargana*, of which Arki Burga of Jegur, a village south of the Indrawati, was in 1930 the hereditary *sendhia*. But his sole function was the reclamation of any Maria guilty of a breach of social rules, and he had no other rights or authority, nor was his presence essential in any *panchayat* except one convened to deal with cases of outcasting. He was in no sense a headman of the *pargana*, and had none of the authority of the *sendhia* of Chanda or the *pargania majhi* or headman of the Maria and Muria *parganas* of Antagarh, Kondagaon, Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils in Bastar. In fact, there were no *pargana* headmen for the Kutru Mar and Bhairamgarh Mar *parganas* of Kutru zamindari, the *gaita* of the parent or principal village of a clan being the nearest approach to a *pargana* headman; when Arki Burga was asked to become *pargana* headman he refused; the little actual influence he possessed over the Kutru Mar *pargana* was shown by the fact that he had left the *pargana* to live at Jegur. The headmen of the Hill Maria *parganas* of Antagarh tahsil are sometimes called *sethia*.

632 622 In the two Hill Maria *parganas* of Kutru the village *gaita* is often still both religious and secular headman. The clans are small, and their villages not always contiguous. The *gaita* of the parent village may not actually decide all cases from each of the other villages, but he can interfere with the decisions of the *gaita* and elders of the other villages, and the latter often refer cases to him; for the decision of such cases he sits in *panchayat* with the *gaitas* of all the other villages of his clan. Examples of these small clan groups are the Gumelor villages of Dunga, Pariakot and Goti in Bhairamgarh Mar and the Mohanda villages of Lakka, Puslakka and Bhuri in Kutru Mar; of the former group the headman of Pariakot is the head *gaita*, though Dunga is the parent village, for the ancestor of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the headman of Pariakot was headman of Dunga when he founded Pariakot from Dunga; of the latter group the headman of Lakka, the parent village, is the head *gaita*, and has since been appointed *pargana* headman of the Kutru Mar *pargana* as the most influential headman in the *pargana*. In these cases, as generally among Hill Marias, the *waddai* or clan-priest is not the headman of the clan. But the Marias of Kutru south of the Indrawati and of the adjacent parts of Bijapur who are of Hill Maria origin modified in culture by contact with Bison-horn Maria and other neighbours, have usually their *waddai*, by them designated *modul wadde*, as the secular head of the clan as well as clan-priest. The names and villages of most of these clans have been given in the footnote to page 202. The post is hereditary, but the holder is sometimes deposed if he does not duly propitiate the clan-god or is oppressive. In matters affecting the State and in ordinary village routine he has no authority (unless he has been recognized as *pargana* headman), the village *peda* and *perma* being supreme; and in ordinary village *panchayats* he probably takes no part, except in his own village, and even there probably only as a member, the *peda* being the president. As social arbiter he decides tribal cases, such as breaches of social rules and marriage disputes, at the annual harvest festival, there known as the *Pindi Pandum*, with the aid of a clan *panchayat* of the leading *pedas* and *permas* of the clan villages.

Among the Hill Marias of Antagarh tahsil, that is to say of the greater part of the Abujhmar hills, we have seen that the *parganas* are clan-areas, the exception being the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, where, however, the Usendi clan predominates and is recognized by the other clans as the chief clan of the *pargana*. The man now recognized by the State as the *pargania majhi* or headman of each of these *parganas* is the hereditary clan headman or *pargania gaita*. He is the chief headman of the village headmen of his clan rather than clan headman, for, though orders issue as his orders, they are issued always after consultation with a *panchayat* of the leading headmen, religious and secular, and elders of the villages in the clan-area. Any attempt on the part of a *pargania gaita* to presume on his position to make himself a little chief or tyrant is fiercely resisted by the clan; one of the reasons for the 1916 murder at Orcha of Usendi Bhosa, the headman of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, was the belief that he was trying to 'set up a *raj* over Metabhum'. Similarly in villages the headman's authority is rather that of the spokesman of the village elders than his own individual authority. If the tahsildar sends word to the *pargania gaita* that, for example, a camp or camps have to be prepared in his *pargana* for the Diwan, or that on a certain date each village in the *pargana* has to supply

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

men for road repairs, the *pargania gaita* cannot merely send out orders to the headman of each village in his *pargana* assigning his village a share of the *pargana* task. But he has to send out his *garhai* or messenger, a clan servant remunerated in grain at two or three *pailî* per cultivator, to call in the *gaita*, *kasyeq-gaita* and leading elders of each of the clan villages to a meeting at his village or some central spot, at which he arranges the distribution of the work in consultation with them. Similar meetings are called for arranging collections of money or grain for any clan festival, such as Koqsar, or any special disease-averting or tiger-averting ceremony. In a dispute between some of his villagers as to the distribution of the work he naturally would give the final word; and similarly when he calls in selected village *gaitas* to sit with him to decide inter-village disputes or to interfere with what he considers a wrong decision of a village *panchayat* he may have the final word. Strictly speaking, he is at liberty to dissent from the members of his meetings and *panchayats* and to insist on his own view being the final view in the matter; but in practice he would get short shrift if he made a habit of going against the majority. In actual fact, therefore, we have here a tribal organization very similar to that postulated by Mr. C. U. Wills, I.C.S., in his monograph on 'The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chhattisgarh' (see pages 4 and 33 above) as the foundation on which the Chhattisgarh Maharajas superimposed their roughly feudal system. In the village the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita* is merely *primus inter pares* in regard to the village elders and in the clan or *pargana* the *pargania gaita* in regard to the *gaitas* and *kasyeq-gaitas* of the other villages of the clan or *pargana*. The natural democratic tendencies of the tribe not only are a bulwark against mismanagement by State officials, but also block any attempt on the part of a village or *pargana* headman to become a local despot. We have seen already[1] how even when the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village enthroned on his *udam-garia* stone seat of honour at the Koqsar festival announces the agricultural programme of the coming year he is issuing no independent orders, but merely confirming *ex cathedra* the decisions already reached in *panchayat* between him and the elders. These stone seats for the *kasyeq-gaita* and *gaita* are almost the only outward sign of their primacy in their villages; and in some villages they sit on them also to preside over meetings of the elders for administrative or judicial work. The photograph on plate XXIII opposite this page shows the *kasyeq-gaita* and *gaita* of Itulnar thus seated in *panchayat*.

In the Bison-horn Maria country there are no contiguous clan or phratry areas, and the *parganas* often represent former petty

[1] See page 141.

HILL MARIA *PANCHAYAT*, ITULNAR
showing religious and secular headmen seated on stone udam-garya seats

[face p. 290

facing P. 290

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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516
352

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

622 kingdoms or *garhs* of forgotten chiefs, or divisions of the early
623 medieval Telanga kingdoms of Barsur, Dantewara or Bhairamgarh.
632 The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chudala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

689 Social offences involving exclusion from tribal ceremonies and
564 feasts are very similar in these days to those of neighbouring Hindu
684 castes. The worst offences are to get maggots in wounds, to take
688 food from or have sexual relations with persons of the despised Ghasia, Mahra or Lohar castes, and to break the rules of exogamy by having sexual relations with a girl of a brother-clan. Another offence, which among the Bison-horn Marias may lead to considerable trouble, is the eating of any new crop or the cutting of grass or bamboo before the appropriate *pandum* has been celebrated; this form of sacrilege is believed to be avenged by the earth or clan-god sending tigers to carry off cattle or men, and in a case which came before me in which such a visitation had followed the cutting of grass by two villagers before the Kare Pandum the *panchayat* had ordered them to compensate the owner of each cow or bullock killed by the avenging tigers. The way in which breaches of the rules of exogamy are dealt with has already been described (pages 245-6 above). Any form of social relations with Ghasia,
689 Mahra or Lohar, however unwitting, entails penalties not only
564 on the actual offender, but also often on his near kinsmen. In the
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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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1913 case (see page 283 above) in which two Hill Marias murdered a Maria Lohar girl with whom they had been cohabiting, their parents and brothers all had to be purified by the *pargana* headman, and the actual murderers were purified by him a year after the murder; one of the main reasons for the villagers hushing up the crime was the belief that greater harm might have resulted to the clan if the Lohar girl had borne a child to the murderers than from them killing her. In 1926, Oyami Masa of Malhanar in the Kutru Mar hill *pargana*, an orphan boy six years old, was outcasted for taking some food from a Ghasia who was spending the night in the village *kos-gotul*[1] (strangers' rest-house) and found the child half-starved. As soon as the villagers heard of this they regarded him as outcasted. They realized, however, that he could not be expected to pay the expenses of the purification ceremony, and as they themselves had had poor harvests and were not in a position to meet the cost just then, they built a hut for the child at some distance from the rest of the village, and there he had to live for two years, till they could pay to purify him; meanwhile they provided food for him, leaving it for him at some distance from his hut. After two years had elapsed they subscribed eight annas cash as remuneration to Arki Burga of Jegur, the *Sendhia*, ten *paili* of rice and a *paili* of pulse, and invited the *Sendhia* to come and purify the boy. The men of the neighbouring villages of the clan were also asked to attend. At the bidding of the *Sendhia* the villagers built seven small huts in a row, and the boy had to pass through each in turn, each being burnt down as soon as he had passed through it. The *Sendhia* himself then shaved the whole of the boy's head, including even his crown-tuft. This done, the boy was taken to the river, made to bathe thrice and brought back to the village, where the *Sendhia* burnt his tongue with a *karra* (*Odsa marra*) twig, made him drink a little from a cup of milk into which he had dipped a piece of gold, and sprinkled the rest of the milk over the boy and the onlookers. The boy then fetched water, and in this the *Sendhia* boiled the rice and pulses, and served the cooked food to the boy and all the clansmen present. This incident typifies the way in which Marias combine to relieve each other's difficulties. The postponement of the caste feast until the offender has had time to collect all that is necessary is almost a rule of tribal life, and one that might with advantage be copied by the pharasaical elders of Hindu castes in British India. The social offence may offend the clan-god, and so its expiation is the concern of the whole clan, which therefore must help the offender gradually to raise the cost of the expiation ceremonies.

[1] See page 106 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

In the chapter on marriage we saw how the elders had to witness the betrothal ceremonies, and how the *panchayats* deal with cases of divorce and elopement. It may be added that among the Hill Marias the clan-headman, like the *Sendhia* of the Chanda Marias, gets certain traditional fees which the parties have to pay in addition to the compensation which the *panchayat* may award to the injured parents or husband, or to the cost of the tribal feast; at every marriage in Kutru and Bhairamgarh Mar the clan-headman gets a fee of eight annas; when a *panchayat* has settled the compensation to be given to the first husband by the man with whom his wife has eloped, the old and the new husband have each to pay the clan-headman four annas. But the latter is expected not to retain the whole of his fee-income, but to divide it with the headmen of the villages of his clan who have assisted in the ceremony or *panchayat*.

I have already described on page 246 above, the ordeal to which the Gume Hill Maria clan *panchayat* in 1929 subjected a Toinar youth accused of incest with a girl of his clan. How far the ordeal survives in the remotest parts of the State I cannot say; naturally instances of its use very seldom come to light. There is reason to believe that ordeals of this kind were a regular feature of the 'justice' administered by bygone Chiefs and zamindars of Bastar, rather than a product of aboriginal thought; compare the account of the settlement of the Kudmer-Jatalur land dispute at page 96 above. Ordinarily, however, the *panchayats* follow no regular procedure beyond hearing the parties and their friends as informally as possible and deciding the case then and there after free discussion among themselves.

Questions of property seldom arise among the Hill Marias, there being obviously so little scope for dispute when 95 per cent. of the cultivation is shifting cultivation of hillsides regarded as the property of the clan and not of the individual, and when the village site is shifted at least every six years. Sons after marriage live in a separate portion of the long-house of their father or uncle, if there is space for adding a portion for them, or else build a separate house as close as possible; when next the village is shifted there is ample space for all to live in separate houses under one long-house roof. Questions of inheritance of houses therefore arise only when, as among the Bison-horn Marias, villages have become permanent and are not shifted at regular intervals. Even here, however, there are few disputes. The little value set on houses is shown by the fact that it is generally the youngest son who lives on in the father's house after his death, as probably his elder brothers will have married long before him and built separate houses for themselves on marriage. There is among the Bison-horn Marias a vague right to demand

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

691 421 partition of a father's property when a son sets up house for himself, but although he can press for his share, it is felt by the community to be against tribal spirit, rather than unfilial. When, on the other hand, a father had outraged tribal feelings by seducing his sons' wives and driving his sons from his house, his refusal to let his sons have any share in the family property was considered by the Bison-horn Marias an additional justification for his subsequent murder by his sons.

691 428 768 There is so little domestic property of great value among the Hill Marias, and so many of a man's few tools and possessions, as we have seen, are buried with him, that inheritance disputes about movable property are almost unknown. Though among the Bison-horn Marias less is buried or burned with the dead, the remaining movable property generally passes with the house; if the elder sons have set up separate establishments in their father's lifetime they will have equipped themselves with the few possessions they need, and will not worry about the younger brother appropriating what their father has left. Women's ornaments generally are buried or burned with them.

428 When the inheritance includes valuable rice-lands, they remain generally the joint property of the sons and brother's sons, and the father's surviving brothers, the eldest son generally nominally being the manager, though he will certainly have to give way to an uncle or younger brother or cousin if he is inefficient, weak-minded or deformed. The produce will be stored in his granary, but shared among the members of the family.

428 736 587 Daughters and sisters have no right of inheritance of their father's or brothers' lands or property. For the land is really the land of the clan, and the daughters and sisters will on marriage have passed to the clans of their husbands. A widow is entitled only to maintenance, and as on her husband's death she very often becomes the wife of his younger brother, she gets her maintenance as a matter of course; if he leaves no younger brother and she does not marry again, she lives on in her late husband's house and works with other women of the family, and is maintained by their husbands. A girl whose parents die before she is married frequently goes to a married sister's house and becomes a co-wife.

562 For a woman on the whole is a kind of property, or a valuable adjunct to the house and family. For her, the husband's family has had to pay a bride-price that is a severe tax on its resources[1]; or else, where cross-cousin marriage prevails,[2] she represents the repayment of a debt incurred when her father took his bride from

[1] See pp. 248-50 and 252-3 above.
[2] See pp. 234 and 247 above.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the family and clan to which she goes as a bride. She may elope with another man, but he must compensate the first husband. She must work for her husband, having his meals ready in the home or taking them to him in the field when he wants them, gathering forest fruits and roots, and doing her appointed work in the fields; many a woman has paid with her life by exasperating her tired husband by not having his food ready or by cooking it badly. She is not a full human being like a man. She is taboo when menstruating; she may not sleep in the field when the crops are ripening; she is debarred from attending at the festivals and *pandum*; she has no special dancing dress. Yet with all this she has not too bad a position. As a girl she has considerable freedom both in pre-marital sexual life and in the choice of a husband, and she is fairly free to leave her husband if he ill-treats her, or if he cannot beget a child. Tribal sentiment strongly condemns wife-beating. Her natural taste for ornament is given full scope, her parents gradually collecting beads and metal neck and arm rings, her boy-companion presenting her with beads and carved hair-combs, and her husband when she is married recognizing her right to spend a few of the scanty pice she earns from the sale of her basketry at the bazaar on simple trinkets. She participates in the tribal dances and songs, though not in the religious ceremonies that accompany them. In fact her position *vis-a-vis* her husband is far freer than that of the ordinary Hindu wife. Above all, she is not exposed to the evil of child marriage and premature motherhood, of which habits of their Hindu neighbours Maria headmen will speak with abhorrence.

Such in brief and imperfect outline are the main principles governing tribal law and custom, and the main features of the old village and tribal headman and *panchayat* organization. No attempt has been made in this chapter to draw any clear-cut distinction between the ways of the Hill and the Bison-horn Marias; in actual practice both treat such matters in much the same way, the main distinctions being (*a*) that the primitive clan organization is stronger and the authority of the headmen more limited by that of elders among the Hill Marias, and (*b*) that the Bison-horn Maria has been more in contact with the outer Hindu world than the Hill Maria.

The recent State Order restoring jurisdiction to Panchayats

Under the State Order framed in 1932 by my successor, the regular criminal courts of the State have been deprived of jurisdiction over the primitive tribes in cases of certain public nuisances, simple hurt and assault, thefts (except of cattle), of property worth Rs. 5 or less, mischief, trespass, house-trespass, bigamy, adultery and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

692 623 enticing a married woman from her husband.[1] The civil courts have been deprived of jurisdiction in claims for civil damages arising out of these criminal offences, and in simple money, grain and cattle claims up to Rs. 25 in value. All such cases are to be dealt with by the village *panchayat*, the convening of which and the selection of the elders of which are left to the village headman. No particular lines have been laid down to regulate procedure; the *panchayats* are not allowed to impose more than Rs. 25 as a fine, though in marriage cases they may allow marriage expenses up to Rs. 50, while corporal, barbarous or degrading punishments are prohibited; and the village *kotwar* or watchman at his periodic visits to the police station has to report the results of cases decided by the *panchayats* of his villages since his last visit. Any person dissatisfied with a decision of the village headman and elders can appeal within a month to the *pargana* headman, who is assisted by a *panchayat* of four headmen chosen every year by the assembled headmen of the villages of the *pargana* before the tahsildar. Though no orders were issued to regulate the disposal of fines, the headmen are encouraged to spend them on village improvements, save where tribal custom prescribes a tribal feast as part of the penalty.

623 There has not as yet been time enough to judge the success of this attempt to restore authority to the headmen and elders. In some parts the *panchayats* appear to be working surprisingly well on the whole; in some they either have little work to do or else have not won the confidence of the tribes through not having the right men as members, or perhaps through a weak man having been made headman in the old days and not yet having been ousted by the religious headman or the natural leader of the village; a few have had to be superseded, and the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts restored, because they were tampered with by Hindu and Mohammedan traders in adjacent market villages; here foreign influence had perhaps already gone too far towards detribalizing the village life. Obviously a good deal depends on the personality of the *pargana* and village headmen, and on the unobtrusive sympathy and watchfulness of the State officials; regular inspection and interference would, of course, be fatal to the success of what is largely an attempt to defend the tribes from the visits of the petty official. In the Abujhmar hills and the parts of Dantewara and Jagdalpur tahsils which I visited in 1934, the headmen and elders greatly appreciated the relief which the orders had given from the burdens of police and court investigations, and the *pargana* headmen were taking their appellate duties seriously and fairly soundly. It

[1] The actual Penal Code sections are 277, 290, 323, 334, 341, 352, 354, 355, 379, 380, 426, 447, 448, 494, 497, 498 and 504.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

is no use expecting formalism from such unlettered tribal tribunals; the rules as issued perhaps err a little on the side of formalism, and the *panchayats* must not be expected to follow them too strictly or blamed if at times they exceed their nominal powers, so long as rough, ready and cheap justice, within the comprehension of the villagers, results. Once the real leaders of the clans and villages learn that the State is trusting them and that they can trust the State also, the headmen and *panchayats* will be an admirable focus for the introduction and spread of measures of enlightenment. 623

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Appendix I

Administrative Divisions of Bastar State

631
161

	Area[1] (*sq. miles*)	*Population* (1931 *Census*)
Tahsils:		
Jagdalpur	1,996	198,640
Kondagaon	1,880	83,992
Antagarh	2,885	51,703
Dantewara	1,016	75,872
Konta	1,336	14,206
Bijapur	989	24,135
Zamindaris:		
Kuta	1,360	14,836
Bhopalpatnam	720	17,596
Sukma	650	40,171
Kotapalli-Pamer	230	1,132
Total	13,062[1]	522,283[2]

[1] The areas are given according to the figures current before recent surveys. These surveys have only covered portions of the State, and will not be completed till 1944. In May 1934 the Survey of India, computing from the old maps of the Trigonometrical Survey (which I have often found surprisingly inaccurate for the wilder parts of the State) and from the revised figures of recent surveys, calculated the true area to be 13,725 square miles for the whole State. Revised calculations for each tahsil and zamindari are not available.

[2] The populations of each tahsil and zamindari given above were calculated in the State from preliminary census returns; but separate figures were not isolated by the Central Provinces Census Office. The true population of the State was finally returned as 524,721.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Appendix II

618
632
621
776

Lists of Hill Maria Clans and Bison-horn Maria Clans and Phratries, and Pedigree of the Hill Maria Family holding the Hereditary Headmanship of Chhota Dongar Pargana and Orcha Village

[(d) Signifies that the village was deserted in 1934]

Hill Maria Clans

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Usendi	Chhota Dongar	Orcha Japgunda Hoinar (d) Juwada Dugarli Bagom Thadur Machan Duseli Kejang (d) Uragonda (d)	Wikir Hunga (kept at Japgunda, but brought to Orcha for festivals)	Goat
	Kutru Mar	Michwada	None	
	Kirangal (*not Hill Maria but Gotul Muria*)	One or two villages	?	
	Chanda District	?	?	
Wadder	Chhota Dongar	Dhancra Jori Hikpalla Kodeli Perilmeta Rengabera (d)	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda	None
	Bhomra (Muria)	Kurselhur	Use Dokra of Kurselhur	
	Chanda District, and Kutru S. of Indrawati	Kaunde and others, and Madhepar and a few more in Kutru	Kuwo-Gundo of Kaunde	
Korami	Chhota Dongar	Hirangal Verma	Worship the Usendi god of Japgunda	None

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dodi	Do.	Jhara Rajpur Idnar	Do.	None
Deda	Chhota Dongar	Kurmer Dedalur	Nule Harma or Eram Mo'itto of Kurmer	None
Parsai	Do.	Chalcheghi	Do.	None
Katlami	Do.	Jhori Hilkpalla (shared with Wadder)	Panda Hunga of Jhori, elder brother of Wikir Hunga, the Usendi god	None
Jughe, *alias* Karme (plural, Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar	Adeq Karanmeta (d) Akmeta (d) Maspur (d) Nelanar Makawada Gomagal Hasnar Rainar	Worships the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda	None; the name Karme said to mean 'sunset', the ancestor of clan having been born then
	Bhairamgarh Mar	Gapa (d) Itulnar	Say would worship Wikir Hunga if still in Chhota Dongar *pargana*, but no need as now in Kutru zamindari	
Dhurwa (almost a branch of Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar	Share Gomagal and Hasnar with Jughalor	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda but have also his sister Oghal Muttai as their own god	None; clan says it is elder brother of Jughalor

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dol ('younger brothers' of Jughalor)	Do.	Kohkapaghai	Worship Usendi god Wikir Hunga	Called Dol because members started making *dol* drums
Matami	Do.	Teknar	Do.	None
Dugher	Do.	Maramnar	Do.	None
Potawi	Do.	Almost extinct; one house in Orcha	Do.	None
Poyami	Do.	Kundali (one house)	Do.	None
Gecha	Do. Mangnar	Udala Tondawada Wetekal (d)	Do.	None. Name means 'sluggard' clan
Neghal	Chhota Dongar	Bhera Tondawada	Do.	Panther
Ahkal	Do.	Gudadi	Do.	None
Ete[1]	Do.	Kondakoti	Nule Harma of Kurmer	? Crab
Boka	Do.	Dondrewada Bokalur		None
Kohla	Chhota Dongar	Mandali Kushnar Batwada Kostari Gumter Hoinger Devanar Kerinar Irpenar	Mu'ima Kohla Pen of Batwada	?
Padāl	Padalibhum	All the *pargana*	Gumtuli Muttai, of Adnar	None
Kumoti	Chhota Dongar	Almost extinct; 2 houses in Hasnar, 1 in Rainar	None	None
Jīti	Jātwara	Most of the *pargana*	?	?

[1] Ete is probably the same as Yete, a Kutru Mar clan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Boter	Kutru Mar	Boter	None	None
Wachami	Kutru Mar and Ahiri (mostly Indrawati valley)	Kumharmeta Markanar Irkapal Karkalli Bodeli and some Ahiri villages	Wachami Moitto Pen of Kumharmeta	?
Mohanda	Kutru Mar	Lakka Hingmeta Bhuri Pusalakka	A god at Lakka	?
Oyāmi	Bhairamgarh Mar	Komu Kalhaza Malahanar (d)	None	None
Mohke	Do. Chhota Dongar	2 houses in Kalhaza Albera (d)	None	None
Yeta	Bhairamgarh Mar	Hoinar	None	Crab
Pungati	Do.	2 houses in Ader (Kutru)	None	?
Bardāl	Bardal	Whole pargana	Hurra Mu'iya of Kornār	None
	Tapalibhum	Ranimarka		
Farsāl	Farsāl	Whole pargana (13 inhabited villages)	Kodo Mo'itto of Dhurwada	None
	Bhairamgarh	Bheriabhum	None	
Gōtāl	Hukkagotal	Whole pargana (9 inhabited villages)	Pāhanleya Muttari of Tōinar in Tulagotal	None
	Tulagotal	Whole pargana (9 inhabited villages)	Do.	None
	Farsigotal	Whole pargana (5 inhabited villages)	Tōp Mudya of Mohandi, said to be younger brother of Pahanley's husband	None

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
621
632
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Tapa	Tapālibhūm (Chhote Mar)	Nearly all the villages of the *pargana*	Rikaa Pen of Dodrimarka in Tapalibhum	None
Nughoti *alias* Nuroti	Nurbhum jātwara Tapalibhum	All *pargana* but Turko Kohkameta Markawada Hachekote	?	None
Hichami	Nurbhum	Turko	The Nughoti god	?
Parlio	Kutru Mar	Dodmarka Karangul Nugur Ader (Kutru) Padmeta	Koruk Pen of Karangal and Nugur	Goat
Jātā	Kutru Mar Chhote Dongar	Jātalur Akdum (d)	None	?
Kohka	Bhairamgarh Mar	Kakowada, or Kakawoki	None	Kohka-marra the marking-nut tree
Ark	Do.	Korowaya; sold Itulnar to Jughalor	None	None
Jāte (plural, Jāterom)	Mangnar	Mornar	Pat Raja	The Jāte grass used for making brooms to sweep the god's shrine
Tokalor	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The *toka* or flap of loincloth left to hang behind like a tail
Hukur	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The *kuk* or basketry ladle used to stir rice cooked at the god's shrine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
621
632
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Marvi	Mangnar	Tökhtöll Kuwer Modangwada Moghori	Mārā-māgh, Pat Raja's sister's son or *bāranjal*. They get leave from Pat Raja to hold his nephew's festivals	?
Tamo	Dantewara Mar	Tumirgunda Padmeta	Hurra Gunda Moitto of Tumir-gunda	None
Atāmi[1]	Barsur	Chhota Karka Palawaya	Do.	?
Lekami[1]	Barsur	Batawada Ghotpal	Use Modia of Ghotpal	?

There were one or two Lekami houses in the Hill Maria villages of Handawada and Dunga.

Game	Dantewara or Barsur Mar	Toinar Handawada Hikul Thakawada Paralnar Prinkapal Kodokal Hitawada	Verma Mo'itto Pen of Toinar. The *waddai* is Jātē by clan	None
	Bhairamgarh	Kunjewada Goti Dunga Pariakot	None	
Alami	Mangnar	Nendur Gatla	Attend festivals of Pat Raja, god of Jāt-erom at Mornar	Chameleon (alām)
Nonde	Mangnar	Rotad	Do.	Rope

[1] Now, in culture, Bison-horn clans; but the Lekami intermarries with the Game clan, and the Atami still worships the Hill Maria *pen* of the Tamo clan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615
618

BISON-HORN MARIA PHRATRIES AND CLANS

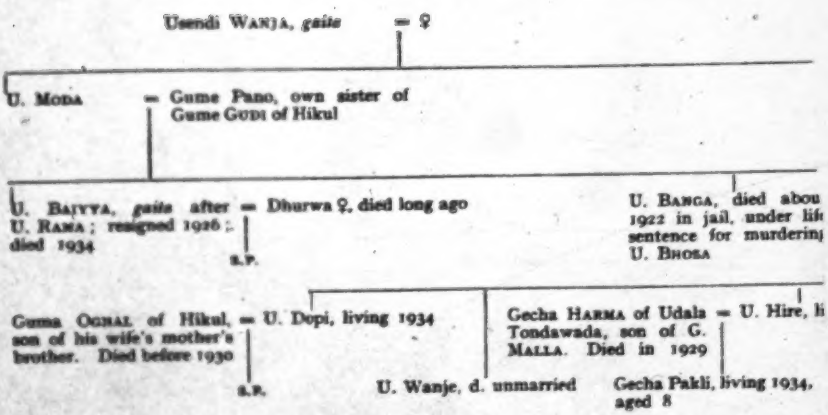
Phratry	Totem	Clans	Totem
1. Mārvi	Goat (Dantewara Jagdalpur) Cobra (Sukma and Konta)	Bārse	
		Biryā Mārvi	
		Chudalā Mārvi	
		Dōdī	
		Hēmlā	Tortoise
		Kuppē	
		Oyāmī	
		Pēdāmī	
		Tamo	
2. Kuhrāmī or Kadiārī	Cuckoo (*kadiārī*)	Budādī	
		Gaddī	
		Kartāmī	Hornbill (*karoī*)
		Kuhrāmī (or Karāmī)	Do.
		Kunjāmī	Screech-owl (*kunje-pitte*)
		Lēkāmī	
		Poriāmī	Buffalo
		Rawa	
		Veko	
		Wetti	
[1]3. Sōdī or Ōdī	Tiger	Biryā Sōdī	Buffalo
		Chudalā Sōdī	Do.
		Oikā	
4. Markāmī	Tortoise	Atāmī (or Atrāmī)	*Atra*, the flower of the *phul-bahari* grass
		Bālā	
		Bōtē	
		Bhōyāmī	
		Biryā Markāmī	
		Chudalā Markāmī	
		Dudhi	
		Dumo	
		Durro	
		Gonche	
		Kalmu	Goat
		Karṭe (or Kandte)	
		Kikder	
		Miriyāmī	
		Neṅdi	
		Nupo	
		Poyāmī	Buffalo
		Tāti (or Tāmti)	
		Tēlāmī	
		Tikder	
		Undāmī	

[1] The tiger was the original totem, and the clan is still spoken of as the tiger-race; but the tigers have broken the legendary rule that no tiger will attack a Sōdi, and the Sōdis retaliate by joining in tiger-beats and adopting the buffalo as their totem instead of the tiger.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PEDIGREE OF THE

601
632



[p. 306(A)]

U. B
killed
accide
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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

GREE OF THE ORCHA FAMILY IN WHICH SUCCESSION TO *PARGANA* AN

601
632

J. BANGA, died about 922 in jail, under life entence for murdering J. BHOSA = Gume Ippo, d. of his mother's brother, G. GUDI of Hikul. Living 1934, nearly 80

of Udala n of G. in 1929 = U. Hire, living

cha Pakli, living 1934, d 8

U. MODA, about 55 in 1934. released in 1926 after 10 years of life sentence for U. BHOSA's murder. *Gaita* since 1928 = ♀ = (2) Gecha Kowe, own sister of his brother-in-law Gecha HARMA, married year after him and Hire. Living 1934, about 34

U. IKKA, 8 years old in 1934 — U.

♀

(U. BHOSA's magic was said to have killed this wife and daughter)

U. BHOSA, became *gaita* when in about 1910 U. BAIYYA, his first cousin, resigned, and was appointed *pargania* (*pargana* headman). Murdered in 1916 for magic and 'trying to set up a *raj* over Metabhum'; was then 60 = Potawi Kane, d. of P. MURRA of Tular hamlet of Orcha. Living in 1934 in part of U. POLA's house and cooking for him, but not as his wife

U. BARANGA, said to have killed himself in 1927 by accidentally falling from a *saiphi* tree

U. IKKA, about 18 in 193 brought up by U. POLA, uncle

[p. 306(B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

601
632

RGANA AND FAMILY HEADSHIP IS HEREDITARY

U. RAMA, succ. his father as *gaita*; murdered for magic by U. BANGA in 1906 =

U. DANGI, died very old in 1933 = Ahkal Nendo, d. of Ahkal MULLA of Godari; still living 1934

Kowe, own brother-in-ARMA, murer him and g 1934.

U. HARMA, d. 1926, just after release from jail for U. BHOSA's murder = Dol Bire, d. of Dol Murral of Kokapar

Son ' 'cilled by BHOSA's magic '

U. KOHLA, d. 1928 became *pargania* AN *gaita* in 1916 on BHOSA' murder

s old in U. Dôtl, born in 1932

U. KOSA, 26 in 1934, = Jugbo K *pargania* since U. KOHLA's death in 1928. Married in 1929 GUDI of

U. Wighâl, born 1932

URRA rcha. t of iking wife

U. POLA = Dhurwa Bargi, d. of Dhurwa MULLA, kinsman of POLA's mother's father, died in 1919

s.p.

about 28 in 1934; p by U. POLA, his

[p. 306 (C)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

601
632

HEREDITARY

U. RAMA, succ. his father as *gaita*; murdered for magic by U. BANGA in 1906 = Dhurwa Kâhpe, d. of Dhurwa MODA of Gomagal

Ahkal Nendo, d. of Ahkal DULLA of Godari; still living 934

re, d. of Dol Murral kapar

U. KOHLA, d. 1928; became *pargania* and *gaita* in 1916 on BHOSA's murder = Guma Mene of Hikul, sister of Guma Oghal, his brother-in-law

BA's

♀ 'killed by BHOSA's magic'

U. KOSA, 26 in 1934, *pargania* since U. KOHLA's death in 1928. Married in 1929 = Jugho Kohle, d. of Jugho GUDI of Adeq

U. WÂGHÂLL, born 1932

KLA = Dhurwa Burgi, d. of Dhurwa MULLA, kinsman of POLA's mother's father, died in 1919

S.P.

[p. 306(D)]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615
618

Phratry	Totem	Clans	Totem
5. Kawāsi or Wanjāmi	Tortoise	Bertā Dirdōd Kawāsi Muchāki Murāmi Padāmi Urve Wanjāmi	

The following six clan names have not been attributed to their phratries: Gonde, Kiske, Korsa, Punem, Rega, Savalam.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

601

Appendix III

Hill Maria Terms of Relationship

(These are terms of reference; but see p. 244)

Father	*tāppe*
Mother	*talugh, awā*
Stepfather	*hāhā*
Stepmother	*huchī*
Elder brother (m.s.)	*dādā*
Elder brother (w.s.)	*dādā*
Elder sister (m.s.)	*dhhā (dhāhī)*
Elder sister (w.s.)	*dhhā*
Father's elder brother	*pepī*
Father's elder brother's wife	*pwī*
Father's younger brother	*hāhā*
Father's younger brother's wife	*huchī*
Father's elder brother's son	*dādā*
Father's elder brother's daughter	*ānpō*
Father's sister (elder or younger)	*āhō*
Father's sister's husband	*bachā*
Father's sister's child	*marriyō* (m) *mandārī* (f)
Mother's brother	*māmā*
Mother's brother's wife	*āhō*
Mother's brother's child	*marriyō* (m) *mandārī* (f)
Mother's elder sister	*pepī*
Mother's younger sister	*huchī*
Mother's sister's husband	*hāhā*
Father's father	*tātō*
Father's mother	*hāpī*
Son	*indghī*
Daughter	*miārī*
Son	*māghī*
Daughter	*miārī*
Stepson	*māghī*
Stepdaughter	*miārī*
Younger brother (m.s.)	*tamō*
Younger sister (m.s.)	*hellār*
Younger brother (w.s.)	*tamō*
Younger sister (w.s.)	
Younger brother's child (m.s.)	*māghī* (m)
Elder brother's child (m.s.)	*miārī* (f)
Husband's brother's child	
Father's younger brother's son	*tamō*
Father's younger brother's daughter	*hellār*
Brother's son (w.s.)	*pedā*
Wife's brother's son	*māmā*
Mother's brother's child	*marriyō* (m) *mandārī* (f)
Sister's child (m.s.)	*bachā* (m) *bachī* (f)
Husband's sister's child	*hanomāghī* (m) *hanomiārī* (f)
Father's sister's child	*marriyō* (m) *mandārī* (f)
Younger or elder sister's child (w.s.)	*māghi* (m) *miārī* (f)
Son's son (m.s.)	*tamō*
Son's daughter (m.s.)	*hellār*
Son's son (w.s.)	*wandō*
Son's daughter (w.s.)	

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

601

Mother's father	*dhō*	Daughter's son (m.s.) / Daughter's daughter (m.s.)	*dhō*
Mother's mother	*hāhō*	Daughter's son (w.s.) / Daughter's daughter (w.s.)	*wandō*
Husband	*koitor*, or *mudyal* (old man)	Wife	*ār*
Wife's father	*māmā*	Daughter's husband (m.s.) / Daughter's husband (w.s.)	*andə*
Wife's mother	*āiō*	Son's wife (m.s.)	*koryārī*
Husband's father	*māmā*	Son's wife (w.s.)	*koryārī*
Husband's mother	*āiō*	Younger sister's husband (m.s.)	*erramiōgh*
Wife's elder brother	*erramiōgh*	Elder sister's husband (m.s.)	*dādā* or *bāiō*
Wife's younger brother	*errandi*	Younger sister's husband (w.s.)	*pehā*
Wife's elder sister	*ako'in*	Elder sister's husband (w.s.)	*dādā*
Wife's younger sister	*hōhkōrī*	Brother's wife (m.s.)	*koryārī*
Husband's brother	*dādā*	Elder brother's wife (w.s.)	*ange*
Husband's elder sister	*ākkā*	Younger brother's wife (w.s.)	*koryārī*
Husband's younger sister	*hōhkōrī*		

Wife's elder sister's husband	*aglā*
Wife's younger sister's husband	*bāiō*
Husband's elder brother's wife	*ākkā*
Husband's younger brother's wife	*hāllār*
Son's wife's father	*p'arī*
Son's wife's mother	*ākkā*

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

APPENDIX IV

NAMES OF MEN AND WOMEN

(a) Hill Marias

551

MEN (215)

Aitū (2)
Arjāhā
Bāghū
Baiyyā (2)
Bandē (3)
Bangā (3)
Banjar
Barangā
Bhōsā (5)
Bīrā
Bital (2)
Borangā (2)
Bōrkā
Buchā
Bungē
Bungrī
Burkā
Bursā
Dabbā (2)
Dallu
Dangī
Dēlā (3)
Dōbā
Dōgā
Dōgū
Dūgā (4)
Erkā (3)
Gabā
Gangā
Ghāsī (2)
Gillē
Gōndā
Gudī (2)
Gudrā (2)
Gurshā (2)
Hāghā
Hormā (5)
Hirjā (2)
Hungā (4)
Irkā (2)
Irpā (2)
Jallā
Kāmā (2)
Kandar
Kandī
Kāpā
Karēt
Karpā
Kēsā
Kēyē (4)
Khuria
Kohla (6)
Kōhlāl (3)
Kōlā (2)
Kōpā (2)
Kōplā
Kōriā
Kōrkē
Kōsā
Kūlē (2)
Kūmal (5)
Kundī
Kurwē
Kutkē (2)
Kuttā (2)
Lamri
Mādī
Mahrū
Mallā (2)
Mārā
Māsā (5)
Mēsā (2)
Mēsō
Mirsō
Mōdī (3)
Mōriēl
Mukkā (10)
Mullā (2)
Mullī (2)
Mūrā (16)
Murral (3)
Mūsrā
Narangō (2)
Nēndā (3)
Ōghā (3)
Pāndrū (3)
Pēdū
Pēndā (4)
Pōlā (4)
Rājū (2)
Rāmā (2)
Rēkā
Sobrai
Sūkhā
Udsā
U'ilē
Ungal
Usō
Ville
Wanjā (3)
Wārangē
Watē
Wijjā (6)

WOMEN (107)

Bandī (4)
Bīrē (4)
Bukē (2)
Būrgī (2)
Chērō (3)
Dāmē
Dōbē (2)
Dōpī (3)
Dughō (3)
Dūtī (4)
Ewadō (2)
Goghai (4)
Gudī (2)
Hidē
Hirē (6)
Ippō (4)
Kāhpē (2)
Kānē (4)
Kiringo
Kōhlē (4)
Kōwē (2)
Kume (2)
Kundī
Māsē (8)
Mēnē (3)
Mōrī
Mūrī (4)
Mūsrā (2)
Nēndō (4)
Pākī (3)
Panō (2)
Pōrai
Pūsē (3)
Rēkō (3)
Sūtrī (2)
Wanje (3)
Wāghāli
Wijjē (4)

N.B.—The numbers in brackets indicate the number of persons bearing the name indicated in the total 215 men and 107 women taken into account. No number is given when the name occurs only once.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

(b) *Bison-horn Marias*

MEN (236)

Aitū
Artī
Bāghā
Baihā
Bakkā
Bandā
Bandī (14)
Bēlā
Bhīmā (3)
Bōdā (3)
Bōngrī
Bortā
Budhī
Bugrī
Burrā
Chalkī
Chamrū
Chēwā (4)
Chūlā
Dēwā (9)
Dhūrwā (6)
Dōgī
Dōgōrī
Dōkā (2)
Dōlē (2)
Dōmē (2)
Dōrā (3)
Duggī
Dullā
Dūmā
Edlā
Gangā (6)
Ghāsī
Gōgē (8)
Guddī
Gundā
Gūrdām
Harmā (10)
Harrā
Hirlā (2)
Hirmā (7)
Hungā (6)
Hurrā (5)
Indāmōkā
Indar
Jōgā
Jūngā
Kāmā (3)
Kānā
Kannā
Kēsā (2)
Khōjā
Khōtlā
Kōhlā
Kōlā (5)
Kōndā
Kōpā (3)
Kōsā (11)
Kōyē
Kummā
Kuttā (2)
Lakhmū (2)
Lakkā
Lingā
Mallā (2)
Mangrū
Markā
Māsā (15)
Mātā
Mādhō
Mūkā (8)
Mundā
Mundrā (4)
Muttā
Nādī
Nandā (4)
Nangā
Pāndā (3)
Pandrū
Pisōrī
Pōdlā (2)
Pōnārī
Pōtā (2)
Rāmā
Rāmū
Risāmī
Rōdā
Sanīāsī
Sikkā
Simā
Singā
Sukrā
Sūpā
Tāngrī
Tikrī
Tōkā
U'ikā
Ūsā (2)
Vaddī
Vēlā (5)
Vēttlē
Wāngrē
Wōdī

WOMEN (68)

Aitū
Bandē (2)
Bangē (4)
Bhairē
Būchē (3)
Budhnī (2)
Bullī
Dōmē (2)
Ērē (4)
Gaipuē
Gangī (7)
Hirmē
Jimnē (3)
Kāmē (3)
Kōsī (4)
Māsē (12)
Mukke (2)
Mukī (8)
Muttī
Pillī (2)
Pirī (2)
Sukrī
Tōrkī

N.B.—The numbers in brackets indicate the number of persons bearing the name indicated in the total 236 men and 68 women taken into account. No number is given when the name occurs only once.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

APPENDIX V

ANTHROPOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF THE HILL AND BISON-HORN MARIAS

By Mr. RAMESH CHANDRA ROY, M.Sc., B.L.,
Joint Editor, *Man in India*

I ACCOMPANIED Mr. W. V. Grigson in his March 1934 tour in the Hill and Bison-horn Maria country of the Bastar State, and was able to measure 100 Hill Maria and 50 Bison-horn Maria males; a severe attack of fever unfortunately prevented me from measuring as many Bison-horn as Hill Marias. I measured the Hill Marias in the Abujhmar hills camps at Orcha, Adeq, Itulnar, Hikul and Handawada from these and adjacent Hill villages in the *parganas* of Chhota Dongar Mar, Kutru Mar, Bhairamgarh Mar, and Barsur (Dantewara) Mar. The Bison-horn Marias were nearly all measured in the camp at Aranpur in Dantewara tahsil, near the head of the pass leading down from the Dantewara plateau to the Dorla country of the Konta tahsil; the men were mostly from Aranpur and Chameli *parganas*. I append tables summarizing the results of my measurements; space has forbidden the reproduction here of the long tables of individual measurements, which I hope subsequently to publish elsewhere. I have followed R. Martin's anthropometric technique.

General description

Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias are generally of medium stature, though tall and short individuals are not uncommon. The mean heights of those measured were 162·7 cm. Hill, and 161·7 cm. Bison-horn Maria. They are very well built, with well-proportioned body and limbs. Their skin colour varies from pale wheat to light black (the actual figures were: out of 100 Hill Marias, 9 light brown, 60 brown, 16 dark brown and 15 light black; out of 50 Bison-horn Marias, 3 pale wheat, 5 light brown, 26 brown, 9 dark brown and 7 light black). They have a thick growth of hair on the head, but often cut it short or even shave it in front and round the peripheral region of the head, leaving a long crown-tuft. They have very little facial and body hair, and even those who can grow sparse beards and moustaches often have them clean shaved. The hair is black or dark brown, and is wavy or curly.

Their foreheads are retreating, but straight foreheads are not rare; of 100 Hill Maria foreheads 16 were straight, 57 slightly

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

retreating and 27 retreating. The corresponding figures for 50 Bison-horn foreheads were 4, 35 and 11. The supra-orbital ridges are not generally as well developed as those of some other Pre-Dravidian tribes. 142

The eye-slits are straight, but oblique eyes occasionally occur. I did not see a single epicanthic fold, or even a tendency to one. The eyes are generally black, often with a reddish hue, but grey and dark brown eyes also occur. The nasal root is slightly or moderately depressed, with a straight nasal bridge, though a concave nasal bridge is not uncommon. The nose is rather broad with fairly broad nostrils.

The lips are as a rule thick, but thin and medium lips are also occasionally found. The lower lip is often slightly or moderately everted, or tends to be everted.

The face is frequently oval and prognathous, and the malars and zygomatic arches are generally well marked. The usual chin is oval, but square chins occur. The mandibular angle is rather broad, and the face in consequence pentagonal, round or square.

The women have generally a round or oval face, concave platyrrhine noses and everted lips. Their nipples are very big and plug-like, resembling those of Negro women.

Indices

Analysis of the metric data gives the following results[1]:— 141

Cephalic Index. The classification of the men measured was:—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Dolichocephalic	75	30, or 60%
Mesocephalic	22	17, or 34%
Brachycephalic	3	3, or 6%
TOTAL	100	50

The Hill Maria cephalic index averaged 76·16 ± ·22, ranging from 67·5 to 83·2, and the Bison-horn Maria 76·21 ± ·27, ranging from 68·8 to 86·0.

Length-Height Head Index. The classification of the men measured was:—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Hypsicephalic	77	36, or 72%
Orthocephalic	18	14, or 28%
Platycephalic	5	Nil
TOTAL	100	50

[1] For classifications, see Haddon, *Races of Man*, pp. 10-12.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Altitudinal Index averaged 65·11 ± ·24 for Hill Marias, ranging from 55·3 to 78·3, and 64·81 ± ·31 for Bison-horn Marias, ranging from 58·3 to 71·7.

Nasal Index. The classification of the men measured was :—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Leptorrhine	8	1, or 2%
Mesorrhine	58	30, or 60%
Platyrrhine	34	19, or 38%
TOTAL	100	50

The Hill Maria nasal index averaged 81·51 ± ·48, ranging from 61·1 to 97·7, and the Bison-horn Maria 82·9 ± ·65, ranging from 65·4 to 98·0.

Morphological Facial Index.[1] The classification of the men measured was :—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Hyper-euryprosopy	11	5, or 10%
Euryprosopy	28	18, or 36%
Mesoprosopy	31	18, or 36%
Leptoprosopy	26	8, or 16%
Hyper-leptoprosopy	4	1, or 2%
TOTAL	100	50

The Hill Maria morphological facial index averaged 85·63 ± ·33, ranging from 73·4 to 97·4, and the Bison-horn Maria 84·6 ± ·36, ranging from 76·1 to 96·7.

How far are the Hill and Bison-horn Marias alike in their physical features?

Comparison of Hill and Bison-horn Marias

At first sight one notices that the Bison-horn Marias are a little lighter in skin colour than the Hill Marias. But if we look to the comparative tables (Tables I and II below) of the means with probable errors for the different absolute measurements and indices, we shall not hesitate to say that there is very little difference between the two. No doubt if we calculated the probable errors of the respective mean differences and co-efficients of racial likeness our calculations would reveal dissimilarities in most of their characteristics; but these dissimilarities would not be great enough to show any real difference between Hill and Bison-horn Marias. I have, however, refrained from calculating the respective probable errors of the mean differences and co-efficients of racial likeness, because if I

[text continues on p. 317]

[1] Martin, *Anthropometry*, Vol. I.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

TABLE I

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF ANTHROPOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS OF 100 ADULT MALE HILL MARIAS

141

Measurement	Unit	Mean	Probable error of mean	Standard deviation	Probable error of standard deviation	Coefficient of variation	Probable error of variation
ABSOLUTE MEASUREMENTS							
Stature	cm.	162·70	±·37	5·56	±·27	3·41	±·16
Head height	mm.	119·93	±·46	6·79	±·32	5·66	±·27
Head length	mm.	185·39	±·41	6·11	±·29	3·30	±·18
Head breadth ..	mm.	138·71	±·30	4·51	±·21	3·25	±·15
Least frontal breadth	mm.	101·66	±·29	4·44	±·21	4·36	±·22
Bizygomatic breadth	mm.	132·17	±·37	5·54	±·26	4·19	±·20
Bi-gonial breadth ..	mm.	88·03	±·40	5·93	±·28	6·74	±·32
Inter-orbital length ..	mm.	32·23	±·17	2·58	±·12	8·00	±·32
Bi-orbital length ..	mm.	94·62	±·30	4·38	±·21	4·63	±·22
Nasal length	mm.	48·97	±·23	3·45	±·16	7·04	±·34
Nasal breadth ..	mm.	39·68	±·17	2·46	±·12	6·20	±·30
Nasal height	mm.	16·33	±·12	1·78	±·09	10·90	±·53
Nasion-prosthion length	mm.	65·60	±·29	4·22	±·20	9·26	±·44
Nasion-gnathion length	mm.	113·22	±·43	6·30	±·30	5·56	±·27
Nasal arc	mm.	110·05	±·40	5·87	±·28	5·33	±·25
INDICES							
Cephalic	—	76·16	±·22	3·30	±·18	4·33	±·21
Altitudinal	—	65·11	±·24	3·57	±·17	5·48	±·26
Nasal	—	81·31	±·48	7·06	±·34	8·66	±·41
Facial	—	85·63	±·33	4·93	±·23	5·73	±·27

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

TABLE II

141 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF ANTHROPOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS OF 50 ADULT MALE BISON-HORN MARIAS

Measurement	Unit	Mean	Probable error of mean	Standard deviation	Probable error of standard deviation	Coefficient of variation	Probable error of variation
ABSOLUTE MEASUREMENTS							
Stature	cm.	161·70	±·47	4·90	±·33	3·05	±·21
Head height ..	mm.	117·14	±·47	4·90	±·33	4·18	±·28
Head length	mm.	181·38	±·52	5·50	±·37	3·03	±·20
Head breadth ..	mm.	138·46	±·53	5·53	±·37	3·99	±·27
Least frontal breadth	mm.	100·16	±·36	3·77	±·25	3·74	±·25
Bizygomatic breadth	m.m.	130·68	±·49	5·10	±·34	3·90	±·26
Bi-gonial breadth ..	mm.	86·50	±·43	4·54	±·31	5·25	±·35
Inter-orbital length ..	mm.	30·44	±·30	3·18	±·21	10·45	±·72
Bi-orbital length ..	mm.	92·82	±·34	3·60	±·24	3·42	±·23
Nasal length	mm.	49·04	±·31	3·24	±·22	6·61	±·45
Nasal breadth ..	mm.	39·84	±·25	2·57	±·17	6·45	±·44
Nasal height	mm.	15·86	±·17	1·74	±·12	1·10	±·07
Nasion-prosthion length	mm.	63·84	±·37	3·87	±·26	6·06	±·41
Nasion-gnathion length	mm.	110·40	±·46	4·81	±·32	4·38	±·30
Nasal arc	mm.	107·92	±·45	4·66	±·31	4·32	±·29
INDICES							
Cephalic	—	76·21	±·27	2·81	±·19	1·56	±·11
Altitudinal	—	64·81	±·31	3·23	±·22	4·98	±·34
Nasal	—	82·90	±·65	6·86	±·46	8·26	±·56
Facial	—	84·60	±·36	3·76	±·25	4·44	±·30

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

had been able to measure 100 instead of only 50 Bison-horn Marias, their measurements might have averaged the same as those of the 100 Hill Marias measured. Yet from the data obtained we can fairly say that on the average both Hill and Bison-horn Marias are dolichocephalic, hypsicephalic, mesorrhinic (leaning towards platyrrhinic), europrosopic and medium-statured peoples.

What is the cause of the mesocephalic and mesorrhinic elements actually present in both the peoples? Is it not the outcome of the mixture of the dolichocephalic and brachycephalic elements on the one hand, and the leptorrhine and platyrrhine elements on the other, actually present in both? The dolichocephaly and platyrrhiny, the dark brown skin and other elements are probably the real characteristics of these pre-Dravidian (proto-Australoid) peoples. But how are we to explain the small proportion of leptorrhiny and brachycephaly and the large and mutually equal proportions of europrosopy, leptoprosopy and mesoprosopy in these two predominantly dolichocephalic and mesorrhine peoples?

Racial Affinities

Dr. Haddon[1] finds in the original pre-Dravidian Gond a Pareoean strain, which causes the brachycephalic head form, the broad prognathous face and the occasional obliquity of the eye-slits.[2] As against this theory it may be pointed out that there is an absence of the true epicanthic fold (at least I have found none), and of the yellowish skin, which are the main characteristics of the Pareoeans.[3] Moreover, the leptorrhine element in the Hill and Bison-horn Marias cannot be explained by such an assumption.

It is interesting to note that a good percentage of Marias also conform to Dr. Haddon's Dravidian[4] group in all essential characteristics, namely dolichocephaly, medium stature, oval face, mesorrhiny, plentiful wavy or curly hair, and brown skin of varying shades.

[1] Haddon, *Races of Man*, 1929, p. 20.

[2] Cf. Hutton, *India Census Report*, 1931, Vol. I: 'It also seems possible that the vague suggestion of the mongoloid, which is so often given by the appearance of the hillmen of Chota Nagpur, of Bastar State in the Central Provinces and of the Madras Agency tracts, may be due to a strain of Pareoean blood which has come in by sea from the east. One is insistently reminded in these areas of the Assam hill tribes, and both Haddon and Buxton have drawn attention to this strain, which struck the present writer quite independently and contrary to his expectations; and the admitted proto-australoid element in these tribes is no obstacle to this, since it must have extended at some period through what is now the archipelago to the Australian Continent, apart from the probability of its absorption on the mainland.'

[3] Haddon, ibidem, p. 32.

[4] Ibidem, p. 21.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It may thus not be unreasonable to infer that a basic pre-Dravidian (proto-Australoid) element in the Hill and Bison-horn Marias has been modified by a considerable Dravidian element, and tinged either with a Pareoean element, or, probably, with some Alpinic[1] element (cf. the presence of leptorrhine, hypsicephalic and brachycephalic elements in both Hill and Bison-horn Marias), or with both a Pareoean and an Alpine element.

[1] Haddon, *Races of Man*, 1929, p. 26.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Appendix VI

Language

In Volume IV of the *Linguistic Survey of India*, Maria is somewhat briefly discussed and considered to be a mere local dialect of Gondi, 'almost identical with the ordinary Gondi of the district'. The only authority on the language mentioned in the *Survey* is Glasfurd's *Report on the Dependency of Bustar* (Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. XXXIX, Calcutta, 1863); Appendix II of the report contains a 'Maria' vocabulary. But as Glasfurd called the Hill Maria 'Maree', his vocabulary obviously was not collected in the Abujhmar hills, but probably among the Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils. The specimen printed in the survey seems to me to be one from the Bison-horn Maria country, while the sketch of the Maria dialect at pp. 532-3 of Vol. IV of the *Linguistic Survey* deals obviously with the Bison-horn Maria dialect. In fact, I do not think that it has before anywhere been stated that there is a marked difference between the two dialects, so marked, indeed, that, as I have observed before, a Hill Maria and a Bison-horn Maria cannot understand each other's mother-tongue and have to communicate in Halbi. I am not qualified to speak in any detail of the differences between the two dialects. A collection of words will often show very marked similarities or identities, but the same word will often be very differently pronounced by a Hill and by a Bison-horn Maria. Inflexions are different, those of the Hill Maria being more similar to those used by the Gond of the plateaux of the Central Provinces, though much gutturalized, while those of the Bison-horn Marias are, presumably, influenced by Telugu contacts. And in general towards the north of Bastar the Hill Maria and the Muria indent on Hindi for words wanting in their mother-tongue, while the farther south you go the more you find the Bison-horn Maria indenting upon Telugu, though he also draws considerably on Halbi. The Bison-horn Maria's speech seems far more guttural than standard Central Provinces Gondi, but even he is amazed at the difficulty of the Hill Maria gutturals, and always compares Hill Maria speech to that of crows.

The volume of transcriptions and translations of Gramophone Records of Languages and Dialects spoken in the Central Provinces and Berar, edited by the late Rai Bahadur Hiralal and published

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

194 in 1920 at the Madras Government Press, gives two Maria records, which appear to me to be Hill Maria, probably from the south of the Abujhmar hills. They are full of the gutturals *gh*, *kh* and *q* (of which the sounds are similar to the corresponding Arabic gutturals), but do not clearly distinguish the short, almost clipped short, sound of the vowel o (sometimes a also) which I have transliterated in the Glossary and elsewhere as ŏ and ă respectively, as in *ghatŏ* and *păghai*; unfortunately, there are few examples of these in my specimens below, though they certainly occurred in the speech of the storytellers; but my Hindi scribe had no sign to distinguish short o from long o, or this clipped ă from the ordinary short a which is understood between two consonants in Devanagari script. Undoubtedly, also, the vowel e is sometimes short and sometimes long in Maria, as in all Gondi, but it is almost invariably shown as long both in the gramophone record transcriptions and in my specimens.

114 The *Linguistic Survey* does not mention the only Maria grammar which then existed, *A Manual of the Mardia Language* by A. A. 194 Lind, published in 1913 at the Mukti Mission Press, Kedgaon. This is a useful work in Bastar, but often exasperating in its deficiencies; the vocabularies and inflexions were collected in different parts among different tribes, and thus are often of little use when most needed. It does, however, attempt to record the gutturals of Hill Maria, and whenever the vocabulary gives alternative forms, one with a guttural and one without, the gutturalized form may be taken to be the Hill Maria form, and the other probably the Bison-horn Maria. The author rightly points out that the guttural Hill *gh* and *kh*, corresponding to Arabic *ghain* and *khe*, are often 'interchanged with' r and y respectively, meaning that where the Hill Maria e.g. calls his bark cloak ta*gh*āl, the Bison-horn Maria will say *tarālī*. He points out also the existence of a gutturalized h, which is pronounced almost like *kh*; for example the verb *vēhnā*, to say, is by many Hill Marias pronounced practically as *vēkhnā*, and I have so transcribed it in my specimens.

194 No authority has, so far as I recollect, pointed out one peculiarity that to some extent affects all Gondi speech, but is most marked in the pronunciation of Hill and Bison-horn Maria. That is the check, almost click, so common in the middle of long words, especially between the root of a verb and its inflexion. Sometimes I have indicated this by inserting a small a above and between two consonants; I think that an apostrophe in the same position would be sounder.

Towards the south, the Hill Maria often drops an initial h, and softens his gutturals nearly as much as his Bison-horn neighbour.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

I have tried in the specimens below and in transcribing the vernacular words used in the text of the book to follow the same orthography as the *Linguistic Survey*, with modifications as noted above. When no long or short sign is printed above a vowel, it is pronounced as an ordinary short vowel, not clipped. As a rough guide to pronunciation :—

Pronounce short a as the final a in America
" long a as in fast
" short e as in when
" long e as the ea in great
" short i as in bit
" long i as ee in meet
" short o as the first o in bottom
" long o as in pope
" short u as in put
" long u as the oo in foot
" ai as the English affirmative ay
" au as the ow in cow

When a small a is printed above the line between two consonants, it is generally little more than a pause between syllables, the check already mentioned; when it is so printed at the end of a word, it represents the short a sound without which, for example, it is almost impossible to pronounce a final consonantal y.

Cerebral t, d and r are printed with a dot below them, and nasal n with a long sign above it. The following points observed at pp. 4-5 of Volume I of Mr. C. G. Chenevix Trench's *Grammar of Gondi* apply to the Hill Maria dialect of Gondi also :—

(*a*) ' The -r is frequently rolled in Gondi as in English, and even before a consonant. . . . To avoid the appearance of affectation, single -r is written in the latter contingency. Thus, . . . though the -r in Dörtönā, = I am tired, first person singular perfect tense of Dörrānā, = to be tired, is strongly rolled, it is written single. This tripping -r is characteristic of the language.'

(*b*) In all southern dialects of Gondi there is a tendency to cerebralize all -r's, i.e. to pronounce r as ṛ. (The Hill Maria goes further, and gutturalizes ṛ to *ghaín*.)

(*c*) ' Similarly, in the oblique cases of nouns, d and ḍ are often interchanged and t and ṭ sometimes.'

(*d*) ' It is often impossible to say whether a vowel should be marked long or short.'

(*e*) It is doubtful whether initial o or e exist in the language. ' There is always a faint w sound before the o, and generally a half-uttered y precedes the e. Thus the Gond betrays his affinity to the Madrasi butler who pronounces " eight " " Yeight."'

(*f*) ' A similar " Madrasi " tendency is the addition of ū to final t, ṭ, d, ḍ and l. Ādū is often heard for ād, ōlū for ōl, ämmātū for ämmāt, tākālū for tākāl, the third person neuter singular of the future of tākānā, to walk.' Compare Hill Maria *maṣu* for Gondi mārs, = axe, *himatu* for *himat* as second person plural of the imperative of *hiyānā*, to go, in my specimens

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It may be observed that in these specimens and in the *Linguistic Survey* records there is far less borrowing from Aryan languages than in the Gondi folk-tales, stories and songs printed in Volume II of Trench's *Grammar*. In my specimens there are two corruptions of English words which have become current through excise and police practice respectively, *bōtāl* (bottle) and *rapōṭ* (report). Fairly recent Hindi or Halbi borrowings (as distinct from long acclimatized words of Sanskrit origin like *mīn* (fish), *wijjā* (seed) or *bēsh* (good)) found in my specimens are *ḍōkrā* (old man), *ḍōkrī* (old woman), *dinām* and *dināl* (daily), *kabāṛ* (work), *khush* (pleased), *tiyār* (ready), *bichār* (thought), *milē-māsī* (together), *sarkār* (authorities), *lagē* (fastened), and *rāzī* (contented).

I have not collected any specimens of Bison-horn Maria language, nor have I the qualifications to attempt any sketch of the grammars of the two dialects. The Hill Maria specimens that follow were recorded under my supervision by Sampat Singh, my interpreter, in the villages of Orcha and Hikul in the Abujhmar hills in March 1934, the records being corrected with the aid of the Hill Marias in my camp.

Two Stories, from Hikul Village

I. The Monkey Son-in-law

Unḍ nāgā mattā. Ḍōkri- mu'ittā mattā, ōrā unḍ miyāṛ
One village was. Old-woman-old-woman was, hers a daughter

mattā. Ad pīkī layā mattā. Ḍōkri- mu'ittā ad pīkī-tun
was. That girl maiden was. Old-woman-old-woman that girl

bōn-kē hēwā mattā. Unḍ mēṭā-tā unḍ kōwē ḍōkri-mu'ittā-
anyone-to giving-not was. A mountain-from a monkey old-woman-

nagā pīkī-may*dē lām wātā. Ḍōkri-mu'ittā
old-woman-to girl-for bride-servitor came. Old-woman-old-woman

kētā, 'Nimā bārā-kīyā wātōq, kōwā?' Kōwā ittoq, 'Illē,
said, 'You what-for have-come, monkey?' Monkey said, 'No,

māmō, bēnōrē lām tās*tēq, nannā paṛī tūngānā-may*dē
father's-sister, anyone bride-servitor will-keep, I work doing-for

mandākān.' Ḍōkri-mu'ittā bichār kitā, 'Māwā-igā paṛī kiyānōr bōgh
will-stay.' Old-woman thought-made, 'Me-with work doer anyone

illē; pīkīn-may*dē kōwā baranjā-tun tās*kān.' Injōr vēākātā,
not; girl-for monkey son-in-law-for I-will-keep.' Then she-said,

'Mākā paṛī kis, tihtānūr.' Kōwā-kn tāstōq. Kōwā vēākātōq,
'Me-for work do, I-will-feed.' Monkey she-kept. Monkey said,

'Māmā, nā-kō unḍ maqsu par-ēlm; pēndā narkān.'
'Father-in-law, me-to an axe made-give; penda-clearing I-will-cut.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

539

Kōwā-nā pōlō kēñj-si, mu'ittōr māṛōnagā uṇḍ maqsu banā-kīyā
Monkey-of saying having-heard, old-man blacksmith-with an axe making-do

vēṅātōq. Ogā māṛō tānā kōlā-bārā maqsu-nā kisī kōwāng-kū
said. That smith its handle-with axe having-made monkey-to

hittōq. Aske kōwā tānā māmān-tōnē vēṅātōq ki, 'Nākun jāwā
gave. Then monkey his father-in-law-to said that, 'Me-to gruel

aṭsi-sim; nannā pēṇḍā naṛkālāy[a] dākān.' Mu'ittā-ḍōkrī
cooking-give; I penda-clearing to-cut will-go.' Old-woman-old-woman

vēṅātā ki 'Kōwā-tun jāwā himatu, aur pēṇḍā naṛkālāy[a] dāyānur.'
said that 'Monkey-to gruel give, and penda to-cut he-will-go.'

Aske narkōm pīkī jāwā kis-hittā. Jāwā pā'is, kōwā pēṇḍā
Then in-the-morning girl gruel made-gave. Gruel having-taken, monkey penda

naṛkālāy[a] hattōq. Pēṇḍā naṛkālāy[a] wiṛsī, kōwā 'rēkā tumrī
to-cut went. Penda to-cut having-neglected, monkey achar tendu

tindā-lāy[a] marā mēṭā huṛtōq, wa pāyā muṛpē maqsu-tun
to-eat trees mountain was-seeing, and afterwards at-evening axe

marā tōl-ā lagē-kīsī lōn wātōq. Pīkī kōwān man-kīwō mattā.
tree bark-to having-fastened home came. Girl monkey liking-not was.

Onā paṛī-tun huṛsī, ḍōkrī ōnā miyāṛ-tun kētā, 'Huṛā, pīkī, kōwā
His work seeing, old-woman her daughter-to said, 'See, girl, monkey

baṛānjā nāh[a]nā kām kiyānōr, nimā ōn man-kēwīr.' Pīkī kēmēk
son-in-law good work will-do, you him liking-make-not.' Girl silent

ātū. Dinām kōwā jāwā kājsī kām kiyānā may[a]dē hattōq. Uṇḍ diyā
was. Daily monkey gruel taking work doing for went. One day

māmāī kētōq, 'Nēṇḍ nannā bārā pēṇḍā huṛ[a]lāsī ākān.' Kōwā
father-in-law said, 'To-day I also penda to-see will-come.' Monkey

kētōq, 'Nāṛ wā'īkī.' Imā diyā ōnā māmā-kū kōwā
said, 'To-morrow come-please.' Next day his father-in-law monkey

nāṭēnā naṛkal pēṇḍā-tun tōṅātōq. Mu'ittōr kabāṛ-tun huṛsī khush
of-the-village cut penda-to showed. Old-man work seeing pleased

ātōq. Pāyā ōgā lōn wās, ḍōkrī-tun kētōq. Mu'ittōr-nā pōlō
was. Afterwards he home having-come old-woman told. Old-man's word

kēñjsī mu'ittā bārā khush ātā. Nāṭēnōr pēṇḍā bōṛsāl[a]y[a]
having-heard old-woman also pleased was. Villagers penda to-burn

handānā-askē kōwā bārā jāwā pa'is tiyār ātūr. Nāṭēnōr pēṇḍā
going-when monkey also gruel having-taken ready was. Villagers penda

bōṛsatōq arā kōwā tumrī rēkā tindā ātūr. Nāṭēnōr kōh[a]lā bītānā-askē,
burnt and monkey tendu achar to-eat began. Villagers kutki sowing-when,

kōwā vēṅātōq, 'Wijjā parkā, māmā, nannā bārā bīt[a]kān.'
monkey said, 'Seed look-for, father-in-law, I too will-sow.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

539 Mu'ittōr wijjā parhakas hittōq. Kōwā wijjā-tun guppat-tagā
Old-man seed having-looked-for gave. Monkey seeds-to undergrowth-in

missī-hittōq. Missī pāyā lōn wās, 'bītān' injōrē
buried. Having-buried then home having-come, 'I-have sown' saying

ōnā māmā-tun vēḵḵātōq. Mu'ittōr ittōq, 'Pēndā huṛ°lā dākōm,
his father-in-law-to told. Old-man said, 'Penda to-see we-will-go,

baṛānjā.' Indānkē, kōwā vēḵḵātōq, 'Dā'I.' Kōwā
son-in-law.' He-having-spoken, monkey said, 'Please-go.' Monkey

munē munē, tānā māmā pāyā pāyā wītal pēndā hur°lāsī
in-front in-front, his father-in-law behind behind sown penda to-see

hattōq. Kōwā askē munē tōḵḵas-mattōq, ad pēndā-tun ōs bēṛ
went. Monkey then before shown-was, that penda second time

tōḵḵātōq. Kōḥ°lā mōṛas-mattā. Huṛtōq, payā milē-māsī lōn wātōq.
showed. Kutki sprouted-had. They-saw, then together home came.

Imā diyā kōwā ittōq ki, 'Māmā, nannā piṭṭē rākhā-may°dē
Next day monkey said that, 'Father-in-law, I birds watching-for

pēndā-tagā dākān.' Ah°lēkēn dinām jāwā tinjī kōwā pēndā-nagā
penda-to will-go.' Thus daily gruel having-eaten monkey penda-to

rākhā-may°dē handōr. Agā kōwā nāṭēnā gōṛ-ku mēhtānā
watching-for used-to-go. There monkey of-the-village cattle grazing

pēkōr-nā pēndā bīt°lē-tun tindūr. Ah°lēkēn dinām tinjōr-mattōq.
lads-of penda the-sown was-eating. Thus daily he-kept-eating.

Pēkōr huṛtōq ki 'Mawā kōhalā-tun bātā lēkōrā dinām tintā?' Und
The-lads saw that 'Our kutki what animal daily eats?' One

diyā pēkōr jamā wāsī bichār kitōq. 'Ayō, bōgā igkā rākhā
day lads together having-come counsel took, 'No, someone here watching

man°tu, askē huṛ°kīṭ bātā tindāntā.' Imā diyā und pēkā kōḥ°lā-tagā
stay, then you-will-see what is-eating.' Next day a boy kutki-near

rākhā-mattōq. Askē kōwā garak-manj kōḥ°lā tindā wātōq, bārā
watching-stayed. Then monkey soon-after kutki to-eat came, and

tindāllāsī ātōq. Rākhā pēkā huṛsī ōnā sang°tōr-kun vēḵḵātōq.
eating began. Watching boy having-seen his comrades-to told.

Imā diyā sabē milē-māsī kōwā-tun hawaktōq. Hawaksī-manj hachun
Next day all together monkey killed. Killing-after a-little

kōwā-tā awing ōnā māmā-tun bārā pēkōr hittōq; ōgā tittōq.
monkey-of flesh his father-in-law-to also lads gave; he ate (it).

Mulpē ātā, matī kōwā ōnā māmānā lōn āwō ātōq. Askē ōnā
Evening came, but monkey his father-in-law's house not come. Then his

māmā parkitōq. Munḍ nālū diyālī payā ōnā māmā-ku
father-in-law searched. Three four days later his father-in-law-to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

539

yērkā ātā ki pēkōr hawaktōq. Ona māmā rām ātōr
known became that the-lads had-killed. His father-in-law angry became

pēkōr-nū vēāātōq, ' Idēn nannā sarkār-tagā rapōṭ kiyā-kān.' Askē pēkōr
lads-to said, ' This I authorities-to report shall-make.' Then lads

bēṛatōq ittōq, ' Ayō, ilēāā kēmā ; māt bōgā ni-agā lām
were-afraid said, ' No, thus do-not ; of-us someone you-with bride-servitor

mandākōm. Askē mu'ittōr rāzi ātōq. Ūnd pēkā ōnēgā lām
we-will-stay. Then old-man content became. A lad his bride-servitor

mattōq, askē ōnā pīkī-tun ad lām pēkānā-tōgāē maimī kis-hittōq.
became, then his girl-to that bride-servitor boy-with marriage made.

Lōn kis, tittōq.
House having-made, they-ate.

Free Translation

In a certain village an old woman had a maiden daughter, whose hand she would give to no suitor. A monkey came from a mountain to gain the girl's hand by serving for her. The old woman asked the monkey why he had come, and the monkey answered, ' Father's sister, if I could find anyone to give me his daughter as my wife after I have served him for her, I would stay with him and work for him.' The old woman reflected that she had no one to work for her, and determined to keep the monkey as a future husband for the girl. So she told him that if he would work for her, she would keep him. So she kept the monkey. The monkey then asked his future father-in-law to get an axe made for him to enable him to cut the trees for his *penda* cultivation. The old man ordered an axe from the blacksmith, and the smith duly made an axe complete with handle and gave it to the monkey. Then the monkey told his father-in-law that if he were given some cooked gruel to eat, he would go to clear the *penda* plot. The old woman told her daughter to make gruel for the monkey, so that he could go to work. So next morning the girl made gruel and gave it to the monkey, who ate it and went off to cut the forest for *penda* cultivation ; but he did no cutting, but searched the mountain-side for achar and tendu fruits to eat, and then in the evening left the axe in the bark of a tree and came home. The girl hated the monkey ; but when the old woman saw him return from work, she said to her daughter, ' Look, my girl, what good work this monkey son-in-law will do, and yet you dislike him ! ' But the girl kept quiet. Every day the monkey when he had had his gruel went off to work. One day his father-in-law said that he would go with him to see the *penda* cultivation, but the monkey suggested that he should wait till the morrow. The next day the monkey showed him the *penda* clearings that had been made by the villagers, and the old man, thinking he was looking at the monkey's work, was delighted, and went home and told his equally delighted wife.

When the villagers were going to burn the felled timber in the *penda* plots, the monkey took his gruel, and said that he was ready to go and burn his *penda* also, but while the villagers were busy burning theirs, the monkey was eating tendu and achar fruit. And when the villagers were sowing their kutki, the monkey said that he, too, was going to sow, and asked his future father-in-law to look out some seed for him. The old man found some seed and gave it to the monkey, but the monkey threw it away in the undergrowth, and came and told the old man that he had sown the seed. Then the old man said that he would go with the monkey to see the *penda* plot, and the monkey agreeing, they went off, the monkey leading, to see the sown field. The monkey again showed the old man the same plot which he had shown him before, on which the kutki had sprouted, and then they went back home.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

539

Next day the monkey told his father-in-law that he would have to go up to the *penda* field to scare away the birds; and thereafter every day after his gruel the monkey used to go off on the pretence of watching the crops; but when he reached the *penda* fields, he used to eat the kutki growing on the fields of the boys who were absent grazing the village cattle. The boys observed that some animal was eating their crops, and one day consulted together, and decided to leave a boy there to see what happened to the crops. Next day, therefore, a boy was left to guard the *penda*, and soon after he had been posted he saw the monkey come and start eating the kutki. The watchman told the other boys, and next day all combined to kill the monkey; they gave a little of its flesh to the old man also, and he ate it.

When evening came but the monkey did not come home, his father-in-law searched for him, and three or four days later learnt how the boys had killed him. In a rage he told the boys that he intended to report their action to the authorities. They were frightened and begged him not to do this, promising that one of them should come and serve him for his daughter's hand. Then the old man was satisfied. One of the boys came to serve him to win his daughter's hand, and ultimately he married the servitor to his daughter, and the boy and girl made a house and lived there together.

II. Catching Peacocks

Uṣṇ nāṭē-nagā mu'ittōr mu'ittā mattōq. Mu'ittōr ōnā pēndā-nagā
One village-in old-man old-woman were. Old-man his penda-field-in

kōh^{a}lā biti-mattōq. Kōh^{a}lā pāṇḍ^{a}tā. Pāṇḍ^{a}tā kōb^{a}lātun mal tinjōr-
kutki sown-had. Kutki ripened. Ripened kutki peacocks eating-

mattā. Tān huṛsi mu'ittōr rākhā may^{a}dē dināl pēndā-tagā
kept. Them seeing old-man watching-for daily penda-field-in

mantoq. Und diya mu'ittor-tun ḍanḍ pōr^{a}tā; ōghu lōn handā parō-
was-staying. One day old-man-to fever arose; he home go could-

wātō. Askē ōnā muti ittā, 'Nēnḍ mu'ittōr pēndā-tāhi bāhu wāyōq?'
not. Then his wife said, 'To-day old-man penda from why not-come?'

Onā huṛ^{a}lāsi mu'ittā pēndā-tēkē hattā. Aṭkā hanj huṛtā mal
His seeing-for old-woman penda-towards went. There having-come saw pea-

kōb^{a}lā tinjōr-mandē arū mu'ittōr kētul-nagā hunjas-mattōq. Askē
cocks kutki eating-were and old-man field-house-in sleeping-was. Then

ḍōkri mu'ittōr-tun huṛsi kiltā. Askē mal mu'itta-ḍōkri-
old-woman old-man seeing wept. Then peacocks old-woman

nagā wās vēkātōq bārā kētōq, 'Nimā bāṭā-kiyā kilintā?' Ḍōkri
near coming spoke and said, 'You what-for weep?' Old-woman

ittā, 'Ayō, māwā mu'ittōr-tun ḍānḍ partā; handā parōr. Nimā mēnd
said, 'No, my old-man-to fever has-come; walk cannot. You also

aṭkā hanj huṛā.' Mal kētu-dē-lōpā huṛ^{a}lāsi hattōq. Askē
there going see.' Peacocks field-house-inside to-see went. Then

ḍōkrā ittōq, 'Kētu-dā tāṭ kēh-aim.' Mal ittōq,
old-man said, 'Field-house-of mat-door shut.' Peacocks said,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

539

'Dōkri, id mu'ittōr bātā intōq?' Dōkri ittā, 'Āyō, idēn
'Old-woman, this old-man what says?' Old-woman said, 'No, him-to

nēh°nā ḍand yē'ittā, aur bāy° ātōq.' Dōkri kĕtu-nā tāṭ
severe fever has-come and alarm came.' Old-woman field-house-of mat-door

kĕh-aitā. Payā ḍōkrā tēdsā sabē mal-dun hawaq-tōq. Payā mu'ittā
shut. Then old-man arose all peacocks killed. Then old-woman

mu'ittōr mal-dun pa'ls lōn wātōq tittōq.
old-man peacocks taking home came ate.

Free Translation

An old couple lived in a certain village. The kutki which the old man had sown in his *penda* plot had ripened, and as he had seen peacocks eating the ripe crop he was living in his field to guard the crop. One day he was attacked by fever and could not go home. His wife, wondering why he had not come, went towards the *penda* plot to look for him. When she reached the field she saw peacocks eating the crop and her husband lying in his field-house, and she wept at the sight. The peacocks came up and asked the old woman why she was weeping. She answered, 'Alas, my old man has fever and cannot walk; just go there and look at him.' So the peacocks went inside the field-house to see. Then the old man cried, 'Shut the mat-door of the field-house!' The peacocks asked the old woman what he had said, and she answered that he was in delirium from his fever. So saying, she shut the door of the field-house, and the old man sprang from his bed and killed all the peacocks. Then the old woman and he carried the peacocks home and ate them.

Three Songs from Orcha

533
539

(These are sung at weddings or at the Koqsar festival.)

I

Refrain: Alēy° rēlōy° rē rēlōy° rēlo,
ālēy° rēlōy° rē rēlōy° rēlō!

Chorus: Pānḍōkā kusiñtā, dādā-lē, pānḍōkā kusiñtā!
(The racquet-tailed drongo is calling, my brothers!)

1. Bātāy° pāṭā ōmtarā, layōrē, bāṭāy° pāṭā-yē!
(Some-kind-of song sing, lads, some-kind-of song!)
Chorus.

2. Pūnōm, layōr, pūnōm-rā, layōrē, pūnōm, layōrē, pūnōm-ē!
(We-know-not, lads, know not, lads, know not, lads, know not!)
Chorus.

3. Adrām āyō, badrām, layōrē, adrām āyō, badrām?
((If) thus not, how, lads, (if) thus not, how?)
Chorus.

4. Jāwā lēwā āyō-tā, layōr-ē, jāwā lēwā āyō-yō!
(Gruel without not, lads, gruel without not!)
Chorus.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

533
539

5. Bōtēl dāṛ°ngō jakmā-rā, layōr-ē, bōtēl dāṛ°ngō jakmā-yē !
(Bottle (of) wine intoxication, lads, etc.)
Chorus.

6. Māwāṅg huṛa-lē āyō-rā, layōr-ē, māwāṅg huṛa-lē āyō-rē !
(At-us look not, lads, etc.)
Chorus.

7. Ōmṭarā, layōr, ōmaṭō, layōr-ē, ōmṭarā, layōr, ōmaṭō !
(Sing, lads, sing, etc.)
Chorus.

8. Āyār, dādā, āyōrā, layōr-ē, āyār ō-ō-yē !
(Ayar, brothers, ayora, lads, ayaro o ye !)
Chorus.

Free Translation

Aleya, reloya re reloya relo !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling, brothers !
Sing us some kind of song, lads !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
We know no songs, lads, we know no songs !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
If we cannot sing thus, lads, how shall we sing ?
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Without food we cannot, lads, we cannot sing !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
If we drink we'll be merry, lads, merry !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Do not look at us, lads, do not look at us !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Sing, lads, keep singing, keep singing, lads, sing !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Ayār, brothers, āyōrā, oh lads eh ! āyār ō-ō-yē !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !

II

Kokorēng ko-reng !

Refrain : Alēya rē-lō-ya rē-lō !

Chorus : Kōkōrēng kōrēng ! (meaningless).

1. Bāroq banē māyō !
(What for was-not !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
2. Wāṭarā, lāyōr, wāṭā !
(Come, lads, come !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
3. Idrā pāṭā manō !
(This-kind song is-not !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
4. Dūsar pāṭā ōmū !
(Another song sing !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
5. Pāṭār ōmwāl, ātēkē.
(Song-singer is, then.)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

533
539

6. Wō wō weātāke āyō !
(Wo, wo we saying are not !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
7. Wāyō-rā, layōr, wāyō !
(Not-come, lads, not-come !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
8. Omarā, dādā, ōmū.
(Sing, brother, sing.)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
9. Kaṣṭīn duralā ōratū
(In-eyes dust has-fallen)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
10. Ōsār bhūmite āttākē.
(Another's land, therefore.)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
11. Bīroq banē māyō !
(What-for was-not !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !

Free Translation

Aleya reloya relo
Kokoreng koreng !
Why are we not singing,
Kokoreng koreng !
Come, lads, come !
Kokoreng koreng !
This kind of song is no song.
Kokoreng koreng !
Sing a different song !
Kokoreng koreng !
If singers are here !
Kokoreng koreng.
Song out of time is useless,
Kokoreng koreng !
No one has come, lads,
Kokoreng koreng !
Sing, brothers, keep singing,
Kokoreng koreng !
Dust has fallen in our eyes,
Kokoreng koreng,
From singing in another's land.
Kokoreng koreng !
Why are we not singing ?
Kokoreng koreng !

III

(*Sung by dancers at the Koqsar festival only.*)

Refrain : Sōlāy^{a} rē rē lōy^{a} rē rē lōy^{a}, layōr, rē rē lō rē rē lōy^{a} !

Chorus : Kākāṛ, dādā-lē, kāpērā, layōr, kāpērā layōr-ē !
(Crow, brethren, night-jar, lads, night-jar, lads !)

1. Tēlan pēgā guṛanjōrā, layōr, gūṛanjōrā, layōr-ē !
(Above (?) rain is-thundering, lads, thundering, lads !)
Kākāṛ, etc.
2. Ālāṭhkā āyō āyō-rā, layōr, āyō-rā, layōr-ē !
(Thus not not, lads, not, lads !)
Kākāṛ, etc.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

533
539

3. Adrām āyō, badūrā, layōr, badūrā, layōr-ē ?
((If) thus not, how, lads, how, lads ?)
Kākāṛ, etc.

4. Wō'atī-tagānē mātālarā, layōr, mātālarā, lāyōr-ē !
(Veranda-in Mata-is, lads, Mata-is, lads !)
Kākāṛ, etc.

5. Rāwaṛ-agānē pēn-ōrā, layōr, pēn-ōrā, lāyōr-ē !
(Shrine-in clan-god, lads, clan-god, lads.)
Kākāṛ, etc.

6. Uṭī-tagānē Tallōgkā, layōr, Tallōgkā, layōr-ē !
(Carrying-net-in Village-Mother, lads, Village-Mother, lads !)
Kākāṛ, etc.

Free Translation

Solaya re re loya, re re loya, lads O, re re lō, re re loya !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
The rain-clouds are thundering, lads, thundering on high !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
Do not sing thus though, nay, lads, no, nay, no, lads, do not sing thus !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
If thus we must sing not, lads, then how must we sing, lads ?
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
In her veranda is Mātā, lads, the Mātā goddess, lads O !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
In his shrine is the clan-god, lads, the clan-god, O lads !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
In her net the Village Mother, lads, the Village Mother, lads !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !

FOUR RIDDLES (*mesur*) FROM HIKUL VILLAGE

Q. Ustā-nādē gumchār bōṛē kōrintā ?
(Cow-dung) plastered (place)-on dove what crawls ?
What is the dove that struts on fresh cow-dung plaster ?
A. Ōṛā. (A boat.)

Q. Rēkā- ichōr puñgār, kauṛā- ichōr pēṛēm ?
(Leaf-hat as-big-as flower, cowry-shell as-small-as seed ?)
What is the seed as small as a cowry shell inside a flower as big as a leaf-hat ?
A. Bālō ; wad. (A spider in its web.)

Q. Hudilā pīlā mēttā-tūn tochtōq ?
(Small child mountain wears-as-hat ?)
What is the child that wears a mountain on its head ?
A. Yēṭṭē. (A crab.)

Q. Ōnāgā nāṭēnā pōnāgāi mārē-tē mēñj ?
(Any village-of green-pigeon feather-on egg ?)
In any village what is like an egg on the feather of a green pigeon ?
A. Nēl-Marrā. ((A fruit of) the *aonla* tree.)

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Appendix VII

Glossary of Vernacular Terms

104

[*Abbreviations:* BHM. = Bison-horn Maria dialect; Chh. = Chhattisgarhi Hindi; G. = Gondi; H. = Hindi; Ha. = Halbi; HM. = Hill Maria dialect; U. = Urdu.]

Āghā (HM.) Husband's living and sleeping room.

āṇḍī (HM., BHM.) A hole in the floor, used as a mortar in which grain is pounded with a wooden husker or pestle.

Ākōmāmā (HM., BHM.) See p. 199. A man may marry only from an *akomama* clan. In this work I have sometimes translated it as 'wife-clan', though, when a woman speaks of her *akomama* relatives, the right term would be 'husband-clan'; sometimes I have used of such relatives the term 'affines', using 'kindred' for relatives of *dadabhai* or brother clans, union with a girl of which is considered incest.

algi (HM.) Veranda.

alpanji (HM.) A sleeping-platform.

angīdī (HM.) Women's kitchen and sleeping room.

āṛē (HM.) A bull-roarer.

Bāndā (Ha.) A knife or bill, shaped like a dao.

bāṛī (G.) A garden enclosure, generally behind the dwelling called *lōn-mulung* or 'house-enclosure' by the BHM.

barnā (Chh.) Bride-price. The BHM. use this borrowed term, or else the Hindi word *karcha*, meaning expenses.

begār (H., Ha., U.) Forced labour; the corvée.

Bhūrī Pen (G.) The 'Great' or Supreme God; originally, for the Gond of British India, the clan-god kept at the *pen-hara* or Holy Circle, as distinct from the *chuddur penk* (small gods) kept in the house of the head of each family.

bhūm (Sanskrit and G.) Earth or land; the earth-god.

bhūm-gaitā, or bhūmiā Among HM. generally an alternative designation of the *kasyap-gaita* or religious headman, but in a few HM. villages he is a separate functionary whose function is to lead the elders in deputation to the clan-god at the chief village of the clan. Among BHM., an alternative designation of the *pernā*, or religious headman of the village.

bhūm-jāgā (BHM.) The sacred plot of land set apart in the field of the *pernā* or religious headman for certain religious ceremonies generally at the *pandum* festivals.

bisōha (Ha.) Supplies requisitioned by State officials from cultivators. An old Sanskrit term for the twentieth part of the harvest, traditionally reserved for the pay of officers of the king.

bīāsī (Chh.) The puddling of rice-fields with a flat log drawn by oxen, to thin the young rice plants.

bīryā-dāl (BHM.) The large double-membrane drum used by Bison-horn dancers.

bohoriāl (Ha.) A disease-riddance ceremony.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

104

Chalki (Ha.) An assistant of the *pargana* headman, generally hereditary.

chipti (Ha.) A lidded box, made of leaves on a framework of cane.

chuddur penk (G.) The 'small gods' or penates of the Gonds of some districts of the Central Provinces.

Dādibhāi (HM., BHM., G.) The term used for 'brother-clans'; see '*ahomama*' above.

Dahi (Ha.) A form of cultivation in which boughs and brushwood are brought from the forests and burnt on old fallow fields so that the ashes may serve as fertilizers. HM. and BHM. call it *parha*.

ḍeḍā'lnō (HM.) A leaf shield worn on the shoulders as a protection against rain.

Deo (H.) A god.

Deo-kot (Ha.) The sacred grove of a clan-god.

dhāmā (Ha.) The ghost of a dead man; used by Halbi-speaking BHM. as equivalent of BHM. and HM. term *hanā*.

dippā (HM.) Flat forest lands, patches of which are used in rotation for growing crops in the ashes of the felled and burned forest growth. The BHM. term is *arkā*, and the Ha. term *marhā*.

ḍōḍī (HM.) A field-house.

dolā-lon (HM.) A menstruation hut.

Dor-bhūm 'Lowlands'; HM. use this name for the country of BHM. and Murias, and BHM. for that of the 'Doria' tribe of South Bastar and the Godavari valley. The Doria derives his appellation from the Telugu *dora*, meaning 'lord'.

dhōḍi (Ha.) A small earthen pot.

Erkā (BHM.) See *dippa*.

Gaitā (HM., Muria.) A headman.

Gāon (H.) A village.

garh (H.) A fort, or a feudal division of country.

gaitā (HM.) A dish-shaped brass gong.

ghāṭ (H.) A mountain pass; used in Anglo-Indian speech of a chain of mountains such as the Eastern Ghats.

ghāṭō (HM., BHM.) A thick porridge of rice or other grain, called in H. *bhāt*.

gorlā (HM., BHM.) A bridge pier consisting of a cylindrical bamboo basket filled with boulders.

gotul (HM., Muria.) A communal village dormitory, used mainly by bachelors, but at times by all the males of the village, and used also almost as a men's club.

gotrā (H., Ha.) A sub-division of a Hindu caste. It is used by Halbi speakers for the Maria clan.

gudapal (HM., BHM., G.) Literally, 'tribe-milk', the term applied to the marriage of cross-cousins, and to the cross-cousins themselves. A in one generation marries B, the sister of C. The son of C regards the daughter of A and B as his *gudapal*, and is entitled to demand her hand in marriage or to demand compensation if she is married to someone else. By C's son marrying A's daughter, C's clan is repaid the 'milk' debt which A's clan incurred when A took B to wife from C's clan.

guḍārī (HM.) A hoe or mattock, called *hargudār* by the BHM.

guḍi (Ha.) A hedge-temple.

gunīā (Ha.) One versed in *guni*, or magic spells.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hīlā (HM.) A menstruation room in a house.

hanāl (HM., BHM.) A past participial form of the verb *handānā*, to go, used of the Departed, or of the ghost of a dead man which is to be propitiated by appropriate ceremonies, and finally laid by the erection of a menhir. 104

hanāl-gattā (BHM.) Priest of the Departed.

hanāl-gattā Wooden posts erected at the grave of a dead person.

hanāl-garyā 'Ghost-throne'; the small cromlech set up at the base of a *hanal-gatta* or a menhir.

handī (H., Ha.) A large earthen pot.

harā-tindānā (BHM.) 'Remains-eating'; the feast to which all friends and relatives are invited on the day after the *pandum* ceremonies which only members of the family may attend.

Jāgīr (U.) A Crown grant of land or of the right of collecting land revenue, generally as a reward for service rendered or to be rendered.

jarmaa (Ha., HM., BHM.) 'German'; the word used for the aluminium alloy of which many bazaar ornaments, ear-picks, etc., are manufactured.

jāwā (G.) The thin grain gruel called *pej* in H., Ha. and Chh.

jīwā (G.) Personality, life, that which survives after death and is not malignant like the *hanāl*.

jīyā-bāāl (HM.) The heir of a dead man.

Kāch-tender (BHM.) A jews-harp. (*Kach* means 'iron'.)

kadrī (BHM.) Knife (HM. *kasyeq*).

kadrī-berā (BHM.) 'Knife-field'; a piece of land in the field of the religious headman (*pormā* or *kadrī-gattā*) set apart for certain religious ceremonies and sacrifices. It is also known as *bhūm-jāgā*.

kadrī-gattā (BHM.) An alternative name for the *pormā* or religious headman, corresponding to the HM. term *kasyeq-gattā*.

kāghai (HM.) An area set apart for *penda* cultivation when left fallow for a term of years to allow the forest growth to recuperate. It is called *kars* by BHM.

kal-burria (BHM.) Wine-ladle.

kar'nu (HM.) A threshing-floor.

kasyeq (HM.) The knife carried in the loin-cloth in a wooden sheath.

kasyeq-gattā (HM.) The 'knife-headman' or religious headman of the HM. village, and *ex-officio* priest of the Village Mother. The word 'knife' refers to his sacrificial functions.

kattā (BHM.) Clan. HM. and Gonds generally use the term *pārī*.

katul (HM., BHM.) A field-shed.

khandī (H.) A measure of capacity, containing (in Bastar) 40 *pailī* or 160 *seli*. A *seli* contains rice weighing 40 *tola* or slightly more than 1 lb. The *khandī* of rice thus weighs about 164 lb.

kochī (HM.) A man's dancing-skirt.

Kōpār (HM.) The final harvest festival of the Hill Marias, in honour of the earth and the clan-god.

Kos, (plural Kosor) (G.) Name used generally by all speakers of Gondī dialects of Hindus. Marias apply it generally to strangers.

Kos-gotul (HM.) The strangers' rest-house, set apart in HM. villages for lodging State officials and other strangers who are not Koitor.

kosrā (Ha.) The grain *kutki* (*Panicum miliaceum*).

1: Grigson .G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

104

kotôkâl (HM.) The menhirs set up by the roadside to the Departed.
kupâ-kelk (BHM.) The knot into which a man ties his crown-tuft of hair.
kurmâ-lon (HM.) A menstruation hut.
kutki (H.) The grain *Panicum miliaceum* called *hokâlâ* by Marias and Gonds, and *kosra* in Halbi.
kutmâm (BHM.) Phratry or group of clans, also called *têrr*.
Lamanâ'i (G.) A youth serving his future father-in-law for his daughter's hand when he cannot afford the usual bride-price.
lândâ (Ha., BHM.) An intoxicating gruel, made from rice and *Eleusine coracana*.
leski (HM.) A medium, employed as assistant by *maddai* or clan-priest.
lingam (H.) A phallus.
lon (HM., BHM.) House; the northern Gonds say *ren*.
lonâ (HM.) The inner room of the house, used for the cult of the Departed and as a store-room.
lotâ (H.) A small brass pot.

Machân (H.) An elevated platform, set up in trees for shooting at big game, or in fields for watching crops.
mahuâ (H.) The tree *Bassia latifolia*. Its flowers are distilled to produce the chief intoxicating spirit of Central India.
mâjhi (Ha.) Headman.
mândâ (Ha.) Granary.
mândiâ (HM., BHM.) The grain *Eleusine coracana*.
mantram (H.) A spell or religious formula.
miggawâdang (HM.) Small brass wire rings worn in the helix of the ear.
mâqef. (HM.) An axe, called *maras* by BHM.
marhân (Ha.) See *dippa*.
marmi (HM.) Marriage, by the normal ceremony.
masni (Ha.) A grass sleeping-mat.
mato (BHM.) Taboo; the HM. term is *polo*.
Metâbhûm (G.) Highlands (*matâ* (G.) means mountain); both HM. and BHM. call their country Metabhum and themselves Meta Koitor.
modai-waddi'i (BHM.) A clan-priest.
moghi (HM.) A dancing-shield.
mudang (HM.) A garment worn by women, consisting of a square patch of cloth passed between the legs, and attached behind and in front to a cord or bamboo hooped around the waist and threaded through numerous brass rings.
mundâ (Ha.) A small irrigation tank.
mungyâ (BHM.) Bead-necklaces.
musal (HM.) A club-shaped wooden husker or pestle, by which grain is pounded and husked in the *dâbâ* hole in the floor. BHM. call it *uspâl*.
muyang (HM.) Pellet-bells.

Nâr or **nâgh** (BHM., HM.) A village.
narmâ-lon (BHM.) Room in which women and infants sleep.
Nâgh-Talughi or **Nâr-Talurri** The Village Mother goddess of the HM.; BHM. generally use the Hinduized form Gaon Devi.

O'lâal (G.) Hearth.
o kâ (Ha.) A gourd ladle.
oser (BHM.) The veranda of a house.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

164

Pader (Ha.) See *pāghaī*. The term *Pader-dēś* applied by BHM. to the open well-settled country of the Jagdalpur tahsil may simply mean 'village-realm'.

pāghāī or pāgh (HM.) A village site, one of the alternative sites in parishes where there is much shifting cultivation. BHM. use the Ha. *pader*, and Murias and some HM. *pāre*.

pagḍhe (HM.) A gourd ladle.

pagrī (H.) A turban.

paik (Ha.) Originally a soldier of the medieval feudal militia of all the states of Orissa and Chhattisgarh; used in the *lingua franca* of Bastar of police constables, etc.

panchāyat (H., Ha.) The council of village or caste elders, traditionally five (*pānch*) in number.

pandum (BHM.) A first-fruits or new-eating ceremony.

pārad (Ha.) See *mata*.

parganā (H.) A sub-division of a tahsil or zamindari, corresponding roughly to the ancient *gawā*.

pāṛī (G.) The word used by almost all Gondi speakers for the clan; BHM., however, call it *batta*.

pāṛing (HM.) Bride-price.

parkā (HM., BHM.) See *dalā*.

patwārī (H.) Village accountant-surveyor, employed by State to maintain village assessment records and on settlement work.

pāyā (BHM.) Parting of the hair.

pedā (BHM.) Secular headman of village, corresponding to HM. *gaita*. The term is occasionally used by HM. also.

peḍāwō'ghāī (HM.) A menstruation hut or room.

pen (G.) God. As used by HM. and BHM. refers to the clan-god.

pendā (HM., BHM.) The chief form of cultivation among Marias. The method is that described for *dippa*, but *penda* lands are always steep hill-slopes, and generally have far longer fallow periods than *dippa* lands.

pendal (BHM.) Regular marriage.

pen-gīdwā (G.) The clan-priest of the Gonds of the Nagpur and adjacent Central Provinces districts, who is the custodian of the *Bhava Pen* and the *pen-harā*, or Holy Circle.

pen-rāwar (HM.) The clan-god's shrine or hedge-temple, generally called *dongrā* (Ha.) by BHM.

pen-waddāī (HM.) The priest-medium of the clan-god.

permā (BHM.) The religious headman of the village. See also *bisam-gaita* and *kadri-gaita*.

phaṛsī (Ha.) A kind of axe.

phūl-mānjhī (HM.) A disease-riddance ceremony, called *bahordaī* in Ha., and *rog-barrā* by BHM.

pole (HM.) Taboo.

pūrukang (HM.) Rings or plugs worn in the lobe of the ear.

pūjāri (H.) One who performs the *pūjā* or worship of gods.

pūpal (G.) The pulse weed (*Phaseolus radiatus*).

Rau (Ha., BHM.) Demons, chiefly of mountains and high places.

reking (HM.) A large leaf hat used as protection against rain.

Sāja (H.) The tree *Terminalia tomentosa*, held sacred by Marias and all Gonds. (G., *mard-marrā*.)

Sāl (H.) The tree *Shorea robusta*.

salphī (Ha.) The sago-palm (*Caryota urens*) called *gargā marrā* by Marias.

shrī-dān (Ha.) Village subscriptions of labour, supplies or money for communal or State objects; a corruption of an Arabic technical term.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

siāri (Ha.) The elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*, much used for making cord.

sōjā (HM.) Iron hoops worn by women around their necks.

Tāghāli (HM.) A raincoat made of strips of retted bark of the tree *Kydia calycina*, sometimes used also as a dancing-skirt for men.

tahsil (U.) A large sub-division of a district or State, administered by a *tahsildar*.

tallāgullā (BHM.) The plumed bison-horn dancing head-dress of men.

talq-dā'lnā (HM.) Literally, 'going to ask'; used of the formal visit of a youth's parents to a girl's parents to ask for the girl's hand for their son. The BHM. call this *tālpānā*, or 'asking'.

talutār (BHM.) A patterned brass snood, worn over women's hair.

tārr (BHM.) = *kutumbu*, a phratry or group of clans.

thekadār (H.) One who holds a village on *thekā* or lease from the State or a zamindār.

til (H.) The oil-seed *Sesamum indicum*.

tirdudi (BHM.) Woman's bamboo dancing staff, adorned with iron pellet-bells.

tiyā (BHM.) Iron neck ring.

tokānā (BHM.) Used of consulting the earth-god as to what sacrifice he demands by placing wet rice on the ground before a cock and reciting names of possible victims till the cock pecks up the rice; the god is held to want the victim last-mentioned.

tōpi (H.) A hat; used by HM. of their dancing head-dress.

tōṛā (HM.) Tail; used of the end of the loin-cloth left to hang over the right buttock.

turi (Ha.) The Muria hunting-horn.

tum (HM.) A form of grass fencing.

turam (HM.) A kettle-drum.

Uddam-gurya (HM.) The religious headman's seat of honour.

urad (H.) See *punal*.

urae-kal (BHM.) = HM. *Aotakal*, q.v. (from *waaral*, to bury, and *kal*, a stone).

urpāl (BHM.) See *wusal*.

utkri (BHM.) A brass fillet worn over women's hair.

Wetā (BHM.) A ceremonial hunt, or *pāwal* (Ha.); the most important is the *wijja-wetā*, or 'seed-hunt', preceding the sowing of the new harvest.

wijja (G.) Seed; the Hindi *bij*.

wijja-dodi (HM.) A long-granary.

wij-erku (BHM.) 'Seed-*mahua*'; an alternative name for the *bhum-jaga* or *kadri-bera* plot in the *perma's* field set apart for religious ceremonies, which has generally on it a sacred *mahua* tree.

wijja-lon (BHM.) Room in dwelling-house used as granary and for cult of the Departed.

wittō (BHM.) A fringe of hair, left along the forehead.

zamindari (U.) The estate of a zamindar, who in Bastar (as in the Central Provinces generally) is a subordinate chief, a survival of the medieval feudal chiefs subordinate to the Maharaja, holding a large estate on payment of tribute to the Maharaja or the Government, as the case may be.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

APPENDIX VIII

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

113

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1939
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

INDEX

(The abbreviations M, HM and BHM are used for Maria, Hill Maria and Bison-horn Maria respectively.)

Abnormalities, 261-2, 265-6.
Abujhmar hills, 5, 12, 22, 26-8, 30, 49, 91, 128, 141-6, 173, 236, 296.
Adeq village, 26-7, 91, 201, 237, 312.
Adultery, 224, 285, 295.
Agriculture:
  permanent, 125-6, 127; HM, 14, 144, 146-7; BHM, 147-50.
  shifting, 28, 38, 96; HM, 106-10, 125-41; BHM, 147-8, 190.
Agricultural Year, 129-41.
Ahiri *zamindari*, Chanda District, 26-7, 34, 50, 162, 286-8.
Akha (*Akshya Tritiya*) Hindu Festival, 165.
Allotment, of land for shifting cultivation, 130-1.
Amusements, 181-7.
Ancestors. *See* Departed and Genealogical method.
Angami Nagas, 76, 83.
Animals, wild, shot out by M, 80-1.
Anklets, dancing, 81.
Annam Deo, Raja, 3, 4, 38, 39.
Antagarh, *taluk*, 16, 22-3, 24-8, 33, 44, 49, 285, 288-9, 299.
Anthropometry, xi-xii, 48, 312-18.
Antlers, of spotted deer, in dancing head-dress, 81.
Anta, 117, 133, 153.
Approaches, of villages, 101.
Arapur, *pargana* and village, 28-30, 56, 175, 203, 281, 312.
Ark clan, 201, 238.
Arrows, 84-8, 135, 168, 182, 187, 211, 264.
Arts, 82-3, 96, 187.
Assessment, land revenue, 141-6.
Atami clan, 199-200, 305, 306.
Atrami clan, 242, 233, 306.
Axes, 75, 83-4, 102.

Bachelors' dormitories. *See* Dormitory.
Bad deaths, 223, 230; HM, 279; BHM, 283.
Bailadila mountains, 23, 28-9, 30, 37, 91, 281.
Bamboo, 84, 106, 135, 163; food, 152; tubes, 70, 168.
  See also Drums, Fencing and Fire.
Banda, knife or dao, 83.
Banjara, carrying caste, 10-11.
Bari, gardens, 66, 102, 106, 119, 120.
Barkos, territorial division, 33-4.
Barsur, ancient kingdom, 4, 5.
  village, 26, 51-2, 220.
Barsur Mar (Dantewara Mar), *pargana*, 27 etc., 312.
Bardal, *pargana* and clan, 21, 26, 33, 70, 139, 141, 237-8, 275-6, 303.
Basketry, 70, 73, 80, 113, 117, 118, 136, 174-5.
Bastar State, area and population, 3, 299.
  ethnography, 35-37.
  geography, 20-34.
  history, 3-19.
Bathing, 63-6, 189, 215, 234, 255.
Bazaars. *See* Markets.
Boads, 27, 45, 71-3, 96, 267.
Beans, 51, 134, 148.
Begar. *See* Forced labour.
Behramar *pargana*, 22, 23, 26, 33, 162, 275, 276, 277, 278.
Bells, xiii, 45, 52, 73, 76, 81.
Benur, village and *pargana*, 25, 44.
Betrothal, HM, 248-9; BHM, 251-3, 293.
Bewar, type of cultivation, 126.
Bhairamgarh, market village, and Mar *pargana*, 4, 27, 163, 220, 312.
Bhairam Deo, Raja, 14, 16, 198.
Bhangaram, god, 193.
Bhamragarh, village in Ahiri, 22, 23, 26, 27, 163, 164.
Bhattra, race, 16, 35, 36, 37-41, 43, 186.
Bhera Pen, god, 46, 194.
Bhoji, *zamindari* and village, 4, 32.
Bhimul, god and cult, 206, 215, 219-20.
Bhopalpatnam, *zamindari*, 10, 18, 27, 28, 30-1, 288, 299.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

001

Bhum (Earth), 9, 119, 125, 130, 138, 176, 193, 195-206, 230, 236, 242.
Bhum-gaita (Earth-priest), 109, 138, 139, 196.
Bibliography, 337-8.
Bijapur, *taluk*, 5, 18, 23, 28, 30-1, 299.
Birds, as pets, 163.
Bird-lime, 153, 158.
Birth, of children, 65, 67, 224; HM, 261-9; BHM, 269-70.
Birth-marks, 265.
Bisaha. *See* Forced supplies.
Bison-horn head-dress, 79-81.
Bison-horn Marias, 8, 12, 16, 23-3, 44, 47, 221.
general account, 53-7.
for details, *see* subject headings.
Blacksmiths, xiii, 37, 50, 56, 65, 67, 81-2, 83, 87, 90, 175-8, 183.
Blood, used to fertilize seed, xiii, 212-13, 220, 221.
Blunt, Captain, 10-11.
Boar tushes, 81.
Boda, Kalmu, headman of Barsur *pargana*, xix, 159-60, 200.
Bohorani, ceremony. *See* Ceremonies, disease-riddance.
Bond service, 14, 18.
Bottada, race. *See* Bhattra.
Boundaries, 39, 101, 131, 132, 140, 148.
Bows, 81, 84-8, 155, 187; use for music, 88.
Bracken, 152.
Branding, 174.
Brass-work, 65, 68, 71, 73, 75, 81, 171, 179-80.
Bride-price, 182-3, 247; HM, 249-50; BHM, 252-3, 254, 256, 294.
Bridge building, 93.
Bridges, 101-2.
Buffaloes, 162.
Bullocks, 95.
Bull-roarers, 183.
Burial. *See* Funeral.
Butler, Sir Montagu, xvi, 174.
Byres, 120.

Cain, the late Rev. J., 54-5, 94.
Cairns, 101, 139, 283.
See also Stones for dead.
Calendar, 129.
Canoes, 164.
Capture, marriage by, 247, 260.
Carrying sticks, 63.
Carts, 63, 122.
Cash, 142, 144.
Castor-oil plants, 104.
Castration, 161.
Cats, 163.
Cattle, 101, 122, 136, 142, 145, 146.
byres, 120.
Cauterization, 174.
Central Provinces Census Report, 1911, 34, 286-8.
Census, 3, 32, 36-8, 46, 49-51, 53, 145, 154.
Gazetteer (Grant's 1870), 12.
Central Provinces States, xvi, 35.
Ceremonies:
age, 265.
agricultural, 45, 130, 133, 134-5, 137-41, 206, 208-21, 289, 291.
changing clan of widow on re-marriage, 261.
death and funeral, HM, 271-9; BHM, 279-83.
disease-riddance, 101, 140, 174, 193, 290.
first-fruits, 125, 134, 137-41, 165, 169, 198, 208-11, 215-18.
fishing, 165-6, 209.
hunting, 39, 154, 158-9, 211-14, 219, 269.
naming, HM, 265-7; BHM, 270.
new tanks, 170.
palm-trees, 169.
rain, 132, 206, 219-20.
village-shifting, 109-10, 122-3.
weaning, HM, 267, BHM, 270.
Chaitan Singh, the late Circle Inspector, xviii, 167.
Chakrakot, medieval kingdom, 4.
Chalukya kings, 3, 4.
Chanda District, 10, 22-3, 25, 26-7, 28, 143, 239, 286-8.
Marias, 38, 69-70, 202, 286-8, 306.
Character, of M., 27, 91-7.
Charcoal, 176-7.
Chaurasi (traditional land division of 84 villages), 33.
Chhattisgarh Feudatory States Gazetteer, 46, 77, 102, 127, 150, 193, 195, 200, 227.
Chhindwara, Central Provinces District, 147, 239.
Chhota Dongar, village and *pargana*, 6, 26-7, 33, 44-5, 62, 63, 91, 224, 234, 236-8.
Child marriage, 250, 295.
Children, 46-7, 66, 112, 263-70. *See also* Birth and weaning.
Chintalnar, former *zamindari*, 4, 31.
Chitrakot, falls of R. Indrawati, 21-3, 24.
Cholera, 93, 279.
Christian converts, 224.
Chudur Penk, domestic ('little') gods, 194-5, 239.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Clans, 51-2, 119, 193-205, 233-46, 288-9, 300-7.
areas, 45, 119, 138, 200-1, 234-43, 279, 286-8, 289-91.
gods, 43, 51, 104, 106, 123, 125, 132, 137-40, 193-205, 224, 226, 239-41, 246, 264, 272, 277, 292.
priests, 57, 104, 110, 137-8, 196, 199, 226, 240, 246, 271, 239, 283.
worship, 137-40.
change of, by widow, on re-marriage, 261.
Cleanliness, 65-7, 120, 189.
Climbing, 63.
Clogs, 127.
Cloth, 65, 68-9, 253, 274.
Clothing, 63, 173, 274; HM, 68-77; BHM, 77-81.
Clouds, 230.
Cock-fighting, 162, 186.
Codes, Indian Penal, Criminal Procedure and Civil Procedure, unsuitable for aboriginals, 15, 95, 285, 296.
Colour, M, sense of, 96.
Combs, 68, 73.
Communism, of M, 97, 102-3, 125, 130-1, 145.
Confederations, primitive, of tribes, 36.
Cooking, 104, 113, 124, 132, 135, 139, 151-2, 153-4, 158.
Co-operation, 97, 125, 130-1, 136, 137, 249, 292.
Coops, chicken, 104.
Cots, 64, 271.
Couvade, HM, 265; BHM, 270.
Cowries, 63, 69, 80.
as currency, 18.
Cows, eating of, 43, 44, 162-3, 278-9, 282.
export of, 162.
hides of, 117, 177, 181.
milking of, 50, 122, 146, 162.
ploughing with, 50, 146, 162, 188-9.
sacrifice of, 162-3, 215, 223, 225, 278-9, 280-2.
tending of, 50, 146, 162-3, 188-9.
theft of, 163.
Cremation. *See* Funeral.
Criminal jurisdiction, 95, 284-6, 295-7.
Cromlechs. *See* Stones for dead.
Crops, 119, 133-6.
Creepers, cord, 80, 85, 113, 117, 133, 154.
Cross-cousin marriage, 234, 236-7, 247, 294.
Cultural parallels, xi-xiv, 220.
Curiosity, 92-3.

Dahya, form of cultivation, 38, 126.
Daily routine, 187-9.
Dancing, of HM, 45, 74-6, 83-4, 137, 139-40, 183-5, 267, 269, 278-9.
of BHM, 51-2, 63, 79-81, 160, 183, 185-6, 213, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220-1, 255-8.
of Parjas, 41.
of Jhoria Murias, 45.
-dress, 41; HM, 74-6; BHM, 79-81, 174, 274-5.
-sticks, 81, 181, 185.
Dandami (name for BHM), 12, 51.
Danteshwari, State goddess, 5, 7-11, 104, 205.
Dantewara Mar, *pargana*, 27-8, etc.
Dantewara, *tahsil*, 23, 28-9, 299.
temple and village, 4, 5, 7-11, 16, 221.
Dasehra, festival, Hindu, 91, 190, 220.
Days of week, 187, 267.
Defecation, 64, 66, 265.
Deformities, 230, 261-2, 266.
Democratic ideas, 289-90.
Demons, 206, 261, 270.
Dhaurai, market village, 63, 71, 73, 162.
Dhur, division of Gonds, 50.
Dhurwa, alias of Parja, 36, 39.
Departed:
Association of, with clan-god, 205, 223-4.
Cult of, xii, 114, 123-4, 133, 139, 216, 217-9, 222-3, 254.
Fear of, 125, 139, 154, 222-4, 246, 272, 277.
Hearth of, 114, 139, 190, 222-3.
Libations to, 170, 216, 217-19, 222-3, 252, 253, 254, 282.
Memorial stones for, xii, 45, 96, 139, 154, 163, 170, 200-1, 223, 224-5, 243, 273-83.
Pot of (*hanal hunda*), 114, 124, 133, 139, 216, 218-19, 222-3, 278, 282-3.
Priest of, 213, 217, 222.
Rebirth of, 223.
Room of (*lowa*), 114, 123-4, 133, 216, 253, 254, 278.
Offerings to, 114, 139, 209, 216, 217-9, 222-3, 242-3, 273-4, 275-6, 277-9, 280-3.
See also Funerals.
Digging-sticks, 90, 131, 282.
Dippa, form of cultivation, 126-7.
Divorce, 261-2, 293, 295.
Doctor Deo, godling, 193.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dogs, 163.
Domestication of animals, 161-3.
Domestic gods, 194-5, 239.
Doors, 115-6, 118, 123.
Dorbbum (lowlands) and Dor Koitor, 49-50.
Dorla, tribe, 11, 32, 51, 52-7, 235, 240.
Dormitory:
bachelors' (*Koitor-gotal*), xii, 44, 45-7, 64, 102, 104, 109, 110, 112, 118, 122, 132, 138, 187, 264, 267-9.
for non-Koitor visitors, 106, 122, 292.
Dress, 45, 64; HM, 68-77; BHM, 77, 81.
Drinking, 170-1.
See also Intoxicants, Landa, Mahua, Salphi and Toddy-palm.
Drumming, 139-40, 160, 181-3, 184, 185, 255-8, 267, 271, 279-80.
Drums:
bamboo, 182, 267.
double-membrane (*dol*), 52, 63, 81, 181-2, 279-80.
gourd, 182.
single-membrane (*huvam*), xii, 118, 140, 168, 181-2.
Dummagudam, town in E. Godavari Agency, Madras, 28, 173.
Dums, employment of Gharwas as, 179.
Dwarfs, 260.

Ear-rings, 72-3, 78-9.
Ear-scoops, 79.
Earth. *See Bhum.*
Earth-eating, oath, 96.
Earth-god (Dhania Deo), 219. *See Bhum.*
Earthworks, 146-7.
East Godavari Agency, Madras Presidency, 4, 28-32, 35, 40, 53-6, 172-3.
Eastern States Agency, 3, 35.
Eating, 117, 135.
Eclipses, 230.
Education, 16, 267-9.
Eggs, 103, 122, 130, 140, 166. *See* Sacrifices.
Eickstedt, Professor Baron Egon von, xi, xvi, 48.
Elders, 284-94.
Elusine coracana (mandia), 134, 148, 169-70.
Elliot, Lt. C., 8, 11, 142, 337.
Elopement, 259-60, 261-2, 295.
Elwin, Verrier, xi, 337.
Endurance, 60-4, 128-9.
Enmity, 94.
Erbs, type of cultivation, 126-7, 147-8, 149.
European, early visitors of Bastar, 10-13.
Excise policy, xv, 15, 18.
Exogamy, 51, 199, 224, 235-6, 244-6, 291.
Eye complaints, 161, 173.

Fagan, the late Colonel, 15, 77.
Famine, 151.
Farsal, clan and *pargana*, 22, 26, 33, 52, 237, 275-6, 303.
Farsigotal *pargana*, 22, 33, 275, 276, 303.
Fear, 91, 92.
Felling, forest for shifting cultivation, 131.
Festivals:
Jhoria Muria, 45.
HM, 133-4, 137-41.
BHM, 137, 208-21.
Fencing, 131-2, 148, 174.
bamboo wattlework, 102, 118, 132, 148.
brushwood, 148.
grass (*tuse*), 115, 118, 132, 146.
log, 135.
pole-stockading, 132, 147.
pole-stockading, 106, 147, 156.
wattlework, 117-8, 132.
zeleza (horizontal poles), 132, 146.
Ferry dues, 163.
Feuds, 94.
Field-houses and shelters, 129, 132-3.
'Fifth Report,' quoted, 10 (footnote).
Fire and fire-making, xii-xiii, 64-5, 131-2, 189-90.
Firing *penda* fields, 131-2.
Fish, fishing and apparatus, xiii, 117, 138, 163-8, 209.
Food, 90, 103, 117, 135, 136, 188-9.
Food gathering, 91, 131-4, 189.
Forced labour (*begar*), 14, 16, 18, 43, 143, 197, 284.
Forced supplies (*bisaka*), 14, 16, 18, 141-2, 284.
Foreigners, exploitation of Bastar by, 14, 16, 18, 42, 143. *See also* Hinduization.
Forest produce, 91, 117, 123-4.
Forest reservation, 16.
Forests, 25, 128-9.
Forest-spirits, 206, 211-12, 213, 214.
Frankness, natural, of M., 95, 144.
Fraser, the late Sir Andrew, 15.
Freedom, M. love of, 96.
Frogs, eaten, 158.
Fun, M. sense of, 93.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Funerals, 64, 76, 92, 170, 176, 186, 222-5; HM, 271-9; BHM, 279-83.
Fungus, edible, 152.
Fusion of cultures, xi.
Future life, M, ideas of, 224-5.

Gadba, Mundari-speaking tribe, 42, 69.
Gagva (weapon), 83.
Games, 186-7, 269.
Gangalur, *pargana*, 204.
Garh, ancient territorial division, 5, 6, 32-4, 42.
Garhes, clan messenger, 290.
Gayer, Mr. G. W., former Administrator of Bastar, 16.
Genealogical method, 233-4.
Gharwa (Ghasia) brass-workers' clan, 65, 71, 73, 75, 81, 124, 171, 179-80, 291-2.
Ghotpal, village, 51, 204, 217.
Gidam, market village, 28, 71, 163.
Gifts, 97.
Girdles, 69.
Glasfurd, Capt. C. L. R., former Deputy Commissioner of Sironcha, 7, 8, 12-14, 27, 32, 42-3, 44, 53, 54, 57 (footnote), 68-9, 74, 77, 80, 88, 91, 193, 200, 225, 226-7, 319, 337.
Glasfurd, Colonel A. L. R., 80-1, 337.
Goats, 120, 162, 239.
Godavari, river, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 28-32, 35.
navigation scheme, 12, 13, 17.
District Gazetteer, 35.
God-groups, Central Provinces Gond, 194-5, 239.
Gods. *See* Bhangaram, Bhera Pen, Bhimsil, Clan-gods, Dantesh-wari, Ispural, Lingo, Pen, and Part IV generally.
Gogonda, village and hills, 24, 31, 32.
Golapalli, *pargana*, village and hills, 24, 29, 32.
Gold, used in purification ceremony, 292.
Gond race, 10, 25, 35-7, 42, 46, 47, 53, 56, 76, 77, 147, 193-5, 202, 239, 243, 244.
Gondi language, 4, 5, 35, 38, 42, 43, 55, 319-30.
Gonga, xii, 189-3.
Gotul. *See* Dormitory.
Gotul, clan, 237-8, 303.
Gottiwar tribe of Gonds, 53-5.
Gourd drums, 182.
Gourds and gourd implements, 66, 118, 124, 134, 148, 171.
Grain, kinds of, grown by M, 133-6, 147-50.
Granaries, HM, 75, 102-3, 112, 117-18, 269; BHM, 120, 123-4, 133.
Grass, thatching, 115, 135.
seeds used for food, 152-3.
Gratitude, 97.
Grazing rates, 145.
Greetings, 97, 257.
Grierson, Sir G., O.M., *Linguistic Survey*, 6, 38, 39, 319-20, 337.
Grinding, 113, 124, 139, 189.
Grubs, as delicacies, xiii, 153.
Gum, 153.
Gume clan, 109, 198-9, 200, 201, 236-8, 243, 288, 305.
Gunia (sorcerer), 174, 228, 283.

Haddon, *Races of Man*, 48, 313, 317, 318.
Hafting, 83.
Hail, 230.
Hair, 66, 67-8, 88.
Halba, tribe, 5-6, 37, 42, 149, 198, 226.
Halbi language, 6, 38, 42, 95.
Hasal. *See* Departed.
Handawada village, 107-13, 312.
Haveli, festival, 214-15.
Hare-lip, 230, 261-2, 266.
Hares, 135, 153.
Harvest-home. *See Kojsar* and Ceremonies.
Hawking (falconry), 163.
Head-hunting, xiii.
Headmen, *pargana*, 94, 196, 284-97.
village, 14, 18, 95, 102, 103, 110, 112, 130, 140-6, 196-7, 284-97.
Hearths, 111, 113, 114.
Hell, 224.
Herdsmen, 101, 122, 146.
Highlanders, 49-50, 55.
Hikul village, 95, 103, 312.
Hill Marias, 22-3, 25-8, 44-5, 220.
general account, 49-53.
for details, *see* subject headings.
Hinduization, 36, 38-9, 43, 49, 70, 76, 91, 173, 217, 220-1, 225, 250, 266, 296.
Hoes, 89-90, 127, 146, 147.
Honesty, of M, 95-6, 102.
Honey, 153.
Hornbill, 81.
Horns, hunting, 179, 183.
Hoshangabad, Central Provinces district, 136, 147, 163.
Hospitality, 97.
Houses, 66, 103; HM, 110-17; BHM, 119, 120-4.
contents of, 116-17, 122-4.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hukkagotal, *pargana*, 22, 26, 33, 275, 276, 303.
Huker clan, 135, 237, 304.
Human sacrifice, xiii, xviii, 6-9, 193.
Humour, M, sense of, 93, 95.
Hunting, 39, 84, 154-61, 211-14, 219, 269.
Husking. *See* Grinding.
Hutton, Dr. J. H., xvi, 48, 76, 83, 90, 114, 317.
author of Introduction, xi-xiv.
Hydrocele, 48, 173.

Ignorance, of foreigners about Bastar, 3, 10, 13.
of Hindus, etc., about M, 3, 12, 27, 68-9, 142, 143, 172, 173, 225.
Impotency, sexual, 261, 262.
Improvements, agricultural, 146.
Incest, xiii, 245-6, 291.
Individualism, 97, 120, 125.
Indrawati river, 10, 17, 21-3, 30.
Influenza, 1918 epidemic, 174, 200.
Inheritance, 294-5.
Injection and inoculation, 172, 173.
Insanity, 262.
Intermarriage of M with fishermen, 163; with blacksmiths, 175-6. of HM and BHM, 51, 198.
Intoxicants, 71, 168-71, 186. *See also* Drinking.
Iron, use of against magic, 283.
Iron-work, 175-9.
Irrigation, 146-7, 149-50.
Ispural, Supreme Being, 224, 230.

Jagdalpur, capital of Bastar State, 4, 17, 43, 220.
Jagdalpur, *taksil*, 4, 16, 21, 24-5, 36, 38-44, 91, 203, 299.
Jaggergonda, village, 5, 28, 195.
Jail, 94, 97.
Jalkamani, water-spirit, 166, 206.
Japgunda, village, 140, 198.
Jarahur. *See* Kuruk.
Jâtî clan, Jâtâlûr village, 96, 199 (footnote), 238, 304.
Jâtî Pandum, BHM festival, 219.
Jâtî clan, plural Jâtârûm, 135, 199, 237, 238, 239, 240, 304.
Jâtî clan, Jâtwara *pargana*, 22, 33, 199 (footnote), 236, 302.
Jenkins, Sir R., Resident at Nagpur, 3.
Jews-harps, 183.
Jeypore (Orissa), 8, 10, 13, 18, 21, 23-4, 33, 36, 38, 39, 49, 57.
Jhoria, group of Murias, 25, 44-7, 195.
Jhorian, *pargana*, 33, 45.
Jiwa (personality, life), 67, 225.
Jugho clan, 201, 237, 238, 239, 243, 301-2.

Kaghai (shifting cultivation site), 107.
See Village shifting and Agriculture.
Kakatiya dynasty, 3-4.
Kammar caste. *See* Blacksmith.
Kanker State, Eastern States Agency, 5, 10, 12, 25, 44, 46.
Karangul village, 105-6.
Kare Pandum festival, 219.
Kerhatti, type of cultivation, 149.
Karnatak rajas, 4.
Kasyep-gaita (religious headman), 96, 102, 103, 106-7, 110, 130-2, 136, 138-41, 143, 176, 190, 196-205, 284-97.
Katakalian, *pargana* and village, 4, 23, 28, 128.
Keskal, village and pass, 23, 193.
Khond race, xiii, 220.
Killepal, *pargana* and village, 23, 30, 203.
King-crow, 188.
Knives, 70, 81-3.
Kohawa, type of cultivation, 149.
Koitor, true name of Gond race, 35-6, 54-5, 147.
Kolab-Sabari river, 11, 18, 21, 23-4, 32, 36.
Kondagaon *taksil*, 16, 24-5, 45-50, 299.
Konta *taksil*, 18, 23-4, 28-30, 31-2.
Kopar festival, 130, 134-5, 137, 139-41, 183, 201, 220, 248, 290.
Korku tribe, 36, 136, 163.
Korta Pandum, BHM festival, 218.
Kosor, Gondi appellation of Hindus, 71, 106, 292.
Kowa, grain. *See Panicum miliaceum*.
Kotapalli Pamer, *zamindari*, 4, 31, 299.
Koya, race, 4, 5, 24, 35, 37, 44, 47, 53-7.
Kuakonda, *pargana* and village, 4, 23, 28, 122, 128, 162, 204, 220.
Kuhrami phratry and clan, 203-4, 281, 306.
Kukanar, market village, 32, 162.
Kurmer, village, 62-3, 96, 111-12.
Kuruk, M fishing tribe, 163-4, 261.
Kurum Pandum, BHM festival, 215-18.
Kutki, grain. *See Panicum miliaceum*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

INDEX

Kutru Mar, *pargana*, 27, 277, 278, 312.
Kutru, *zamindari* and village, 4, 11, 18, 27, 28, 29-31, 162, 163, 202, 288, 299.
Kutul, village of Bardal HM clan, 139, 141.

Ladders, 153.
La'i, type of cultivation, 149-50.
Lamsena'i (suitor serving father for hand of daughter), 107, 250-1.
Landa (fermented rice gruel intoxicant), 94, 124, 139, 148, 169-70, 185-6, 210, 232-9, 280, 281, 282.
Land revenue, 141-6, 149, 162, 236.
Language, 221, 319-30.
Lard, 161.
Leaf-boxes, 118.
Leaves, for cleansing, 66.
for clothing, 68.
as plates and utensils, 140, 152, 171.
Legends, 46, 51, 57.
Lekami, clan, 204.
Lenki, medium, 110, 227, 271.
Libations, 170, 216, 222, 252, 253, 273-4, 282.
Lightning, 223, 230.
death from, 283.
Lind, A. A., *Manual of Mardia Language*, 320, 338.
Lingagiri, *pargana*, 31.
Lingo, epic of, 46.
Linguistic Survey, 319-20, 337.
Log-gods, 42, 197-8, 226.
See Clan-god.
Lohar. *See* Blacksmith.
Loin-cloths, 63, 65, 69, 71, 77-8.
Lowlanders, 49-50, 54-5.
Lucie-Smith, Col., author of Chanda (1869) Settlement Report, 22, 46-7, 91, 194, 338.

Madness, 262.
Maggots, in wounds, 291.
Magic, 67, 94, 95, 104, 168, 174, 176, 220, 225-8, 272, 280, 283.
Mahra, weaving and menial caste, 37, 65, 291.
Mahua (*bassia latifolia*):
flowers and fruit as food, 124, 151, 175.
liquor distilled from flowers, 139, 151, 169, 170-1, 186, 210, 248-54, 269, 274, 277, 282.
seeds, 124, 167.
tree in religion, 206, 208-9, 274.
wood used for charcoal manufacture, 176, 178.
Maire, 148.
Majhi (headman), 288.
Malkangiri (*taluq* of Jeypore), 57, 90.
Mandai Jatra, festival, 214, 219-20.
Mandia, grain. *See Eleusine coracana*.
Mangnar, *pargana*, 27, 69, 132, 135, 162, 236-8.
Mangoes, 151.
first-fruits ceremony, 165, 209-11, 282.
Manufactures, 65.
See Basketry, Brass-work, Iron-work, Knives.
Marathas, 5-7, 10-11.
Marhan, type of cultivation, 126-7.
Maria, general account, 49-50.
difference between HM and BHM, 194-5, 220-1, 312-18.
Markami, phratry and clan, 204, 306.
Markets, 50, 62-3, 71, 73, 117, 124, 136, 144, 153, 162, 163, 174.
Marriage, 137, 140, 170, 181, 183, 186, 229, 233-4, 240, 244-62, 269, 293, 294.
Marten, the late Mr. J. T., C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S., quoted, 34, 286-8.
Marvi, phratry, 204, 306.
clan, big and small, 203, 281.
Mata, goddess and cult, 205-6, 213, 215.
Matlaghat hills, 24-5.
Mats, 64.
May, Mr. James, former Diwan of Bastar State, 17.
Meals, 135, 188-9.
Measures and measuring, 136, 174-5.
Medieval territorial systems, 4, 32-9, 290.
Medical relief, 16, 93, 172-4.
Medicine, 153, 158, 161, 172, 173-4, 225, 227-8, 270.
Mediums, 110, 138, 174, 176, 186, 196, 214, 217, 226-8, 229, 270, 271-2.
Megalithic culture of M, xii, xiii. *See* Cairns, Stones for dead, Stone-seats, Village mother.
Melo (BHM equivalent of HM *polo*), = Taboo, q.v.
Memory, 199, 233-4, 265-6.
Menhirs. *See* Departed, memorial stones for.
Menstruation, xii, 65, 104-6, 112, 115, 120, 135, 224, 263-4, 265, 269, 295.
Mental processes, 65, 92-3.
Meriah ritual, xiii, xviii, 220.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000

Metabbum ('Highlands'), 49.
Methodists, 224.
Mice, 135, 141, 157, 158.
Migrations of tribes, xi, 46, 48-9, 55, 204-5.
Militia, medieval *paik*, 6, 42, 106.
Milk, libations, 282.
  use in purification ceremony, 292.
Milking, 162.
Milky Way, 230.
Mirthul *pargana*, 31.
Mitchell, Dr. W. P. S., M.B.E., State Medical Officer, xix, 174, 166-7.
Mitchell, the late Surgeon-Major, 16.
Modul-waddai, 57, 289.
  See Clan-priest.
Mohammedans, invasion of Bastar by, 3, 5.
Moieties, 235-8.
Money, 124, 136, 144.
Mongoloid element in M, xii, 317.
Monkeys, eaten, 158.
Months, names of, 129, 187.
Moon, 129, 187, 230.
Mountain demons, 206.
Mourning, 92, 271, 275-6.
Mudang belt, part of female's dress, xii, 65, 71, 265.
Murder, 94-5, 168, 187, 226-7, 234, 262, 272, 283, 285, 289, 292, 294, 295.
Muria, tribes of Gonds, 6, 16, 37, 83, 84, 286.
  games, 186-7.
  general account, 42-3, 48-9.
  numbers, 49.
  Jagdalpur Murias, 43-4.
  Jhoria Murias, 44-5, 308.
  Gotul Murias, 46-8, 187, 308.
Music, 96.
Musical bow, 88.
Musical instruments, 181-3.
Mustard, 148-9.

Nagas (of Assam), xii-xiv, 47, 76, 83.
Nagpur, Central Provinces district, 19, 76, 147, 194, 239, 244.
Nagpur, Lord Bishop of (Rt. Rev. Alex Wood, D.D.), xvi, 194.
Nagvansi Kings, 4.
Nahal, wandering hunters, 88.
Nails, finger, 66.
Nakednesa, 63-6, 71, 78.
Names, 93, 265-7, 268, 270, 310-11.
  dormitory names, 268-9.
Narainpur, village, 25, 44, 45, 62, 71, 274.
Natural phenomena, 206, 230.
Nature spirits, 166, 206, 230.
Navel-cord, 264-5, 270.
Nelasnar, market village, 163.
Nets, for game, 84, 158, 159-60.
  for fish, 164, 165-8.
  miscell., 117.
Nicknames, 95.
Nugur village, 102, 106, 111-12, 180, 264, 275.
Nuha Nordana Pandum, festival, 218-19.
Numeration, 129.
Nurbhum, *pargana*, of Nuroti clan, 26, 33, 162, 268, 276, 278, 304.

Oaths, 96.
Obscenity, at HM dancing, 185, 186.
  at BHM marriage, 255, 257-8.
Offerings to dead. *See* Departed.
Officials:
  pargana, 32, 284-97.
  State, 14, 62, 106, 137, 141-6, 289-90.
  village, 102, 122, 131, 141-6, 284-97.
Oil, 151.
Omens, 103, 122-3, 211-12, 229-30, 251.
Opium, 71.
Orcha village, 27, 91, 94, 103, 107, 110, 140, 154, 198, 233-4, 265-6, 274, 279.
Ordeal, trial by, 246, 293.
Orissa States, 35.
Ornamentation, 68, 82, 83, 96, 115, 138, 187.
Ornaments, 45, 68, 267, 294, 295.
  HM, 71-6, 267, 271.
  BHM, 67-8, 78-81.

Padalibhum, *pargana* of Padal clan, 26, 33, 162, 187, 268, 269, 276, 278.
Padar Raj, BHM name for Jagdalpur *tahsil*, 203.
Paddles, of canoe, 164.
Pagh'i (alternative village site). *See* Village site.
Pakmar village, 128, 162, 280, 283.
Palace service, 42, 43, 49.
Palas tree (*butea frondosa*), 149.
Palm trees, 123, 153.
  See also Salphi, Sindi, Toddy-palm.
Panchayat, xii, 15, 18, 33, 95, 208, 229, 236, 248, 284-97.
Panda Baijnath, Rai Bahadur, 39, 233-6.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Panicum frumentaceum (*ghatka*), 134, 137, 148.
miliaceum (*hulki*), 103, 134, 137, 147, 169-70.
miliare (*chikma*), 134, 137, 148, 215.
Panther-trap, 156-8.
Parakot, village and former *zamindari*, 4, 25, 26, 30.
Parganas, territorial division, 5, 6, 15, 22, 26-7, 32-4, 284-97.
Parja, tribe, 16, 25, 35, 36, 38-41.
Parji, dialect of Gondi, 39-41.
Parka, form of cultivation, 126, 147, 150.
Parlio clan, 96, 105-7, 162.
Parrots, 163, 188.
Partition, 294.
Paspalum scrobiculatum (*kodos*), 134.
Pastimes, 181-7.
Paths, 101.
Patwardhan, Rev. S. G., 194-5.
Peacocks, associated with the dead, xii, 273.
in folk-tale, 326-7.
feathers used on arrows, 87.
Pada, 102.
See Headman and Officials (Village).
Pedigrees, 233-4, *facing* 306.
Pen, clan-god. *See* Clan-god.
Penda, shifting cultivation of hill slopes, 126-9.
See Agriculture, shifting.
Pen-kavsita festival, 214, 220.
Pen-rawar (clan-god's temple), 106, 138, 140, 194, 204, 217.
Perma (BHM village-priest), 122-3, 165-6, 176, 190, 196-206, 208-20, 242, 289.
Pestles. *See* Grinding.
Phratries, 194-5, 202-5, 235-46, 290, 306-7.
Physical attitudes, 64, 190.
Physical features, xi-xii, 45, 48, 53, 61-2, 312-18.
Physical powers, 62-4, 190.
Pig-food, 103.
Pigs, 138, 161, 267, 278, 281.
Pig-sties, 103, 120.
Pile-building, 117.
Pira-mauha ceremony. *See* Ceremonies, disease-riddance.
Placenta, 264, 265.
Plastering, 66-7, 113, 120.
Playthings, 187.
Ploughing, 95, 122, 125, 127, 148-50, 188.
Poison, for arrows, 160.
for game, 160-1.
for fish, xiii, 164, 167.
Police, dislike of M for, 95, 141.
Poll-tax settlement of Abujhmar hills, 50, 126, 136, 141-6.
Polo ('forbidden'). *See* Taboo.
Population. *See* Census.
Pork, 27, 161.
Poroja, Madras name for Parja tribe, q.v., 35.
Pottery, 180-1.
drums, 182.
Poultry, 103, 104, 117, 161-8.
Pregnancy, 223, 230, 263-5, 269-70, 279, 283.
Property, 120, 293-5.
Pubic hair, 94.
Pulses, 134, 135, 137, 148.
Purification, 246, 287, 288, 291-3.
Python, as food and medicine, 158.

Quail, 159, 163.
Quivers, 88.

Rabies, 174.
Racial affinities, xi-xiv, 317-18.
Rage, fits of, 94.
Railways, 17-18.
Rain-bow, 230.
Rain-ceremonies, 206.
Rain cloaks and hats, xii, 63-4, 76-7, 113.
Raja-Muria, 36.
Raj-Gond, 36.
Rao, Mr. C. Hayavadana, 49 (footnote).
Rats, 153, 158.
Rau. *See* Demons.
Rawat (cattle-tending caste), 50, 106, 122, 146, 163
Razors, 67.
Reaping, 133, 135-6.
Rebellions, 14, 16-17, 141, 143.
Recreations, 186-7.
Reincarnation, 266.
Relationship terms, 244-5, 308-9.
Rest-houses, 106, 122, 164.
Revenge, 94, 187-8.
Rheumatism, 173.
Rhinoceros, 154.
Rice, 25, 38, 102, 118-19, 126, 128, 137, 141-2, 144, 149-50.
Rice-beer. *See Landa*.
Rings, 71.
in marriage, 245, 256.
Roads, 13, 17-18, 24-6, 28-30.
Roofs, 114.
Ropes, 117, 118, 153.
Roy, Mr. R. C., xi-xii, xix, 48, 61.
author of Appendix V, 312-18.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000

Rudra Pratap Deo, the late Raja, 14.
Ruling Chief and family, 3-7, 13-15, 42, 142, 193, 198, 286.
Running amuck, 94.
Russell and Hiralal *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*, xvi, 5, 46, 113, 115, 142, 193, 194, 224, 229, 235, 239, 240, 243, 260, 266.

Sacred thread, sale of right to wear, 39.
Sacrifices, 104, 130, 132, 138-41, 165, 169, 190, 208-9, 209-20, 270, 273-4, 277-9, 281-3.
Saja tree (*terminalia tomentosa*), 104, 110, 115, 123, 130, 133, 138, 149, 176, 186, 195, 197-8, 209, 215-16, 219, 273, 274, 279, 282.
Salphi tree (sago-palm; *caryota urens*), xii, 136, 181.
as food, 151, 168.
liquor from, 136, 152, 168, 224.
Salt, 13, 27, 175.
Salutations, 97, 257.
Sandals, 70, 117.
Sari-bori (village subscriptions), 14, 209, 212, 292.
Sawara (tribe), xii, 90.
Scarecrows, 133.
Sendkia (or *Sethia*), clan or caste headman, 286-8, 292.
Service for bride, 107, 250-1.
Sexes, segregation of, 65-6.
Sexual continence, 109, 113, 133, 134-5, 137, 138, 208, 211.
Sexual intercourse, xii, 65, 109, 113, 133, 134-5, 186, 213, 224, 263, 268-9.
Sexual training, 268-9.
Shaving, 67, 200, 292.
Shields, dancing, 45, 52, 75-6, 118, 275.
Shyness, 91-2, 144.
Sickles, 135.
Silk, 82, 86, 153.
Sindi tree (date-palm), 169.
Singing, 96, 184-6, 253-8, 269, 327-30.
Skin diseases, 70, 173.
Sleeping, 64, 65, 112-13, 117, 118, 120, 124.
in fields, 63, 109, 132-3, 134.
Smallpox, death from, 279, 283.
See also Vaccination.
Smelting. *See* Ironwork.
Snakes, as food and medicine, 158.
Social offences, 286, 291-2.
Social organization, 233-43, 300-7.
Sodi, phratry and clan, 204, 240, 241, 242, 306.
Sonpur Mar, *pargana*, 26, 33, 162, 275, 276, 277.
Sores, 172.
Sororate, 245.
Sowing, 127, 129, 133-4, 135, 147-8, 149-50.
See also Ceremonies.
Spears, 84, 160.
Squirrels, flying, 158.
Stacks, 133, 136.
Stars, xiii, 230.
Stilts, xii, 140, 187.
Stone-seats, xii, 96, 102, 130, 141, 290.
Stones for dead, xii, 45, 96, 139, 163, 170, 200-1, 223, 225, 243, 273-83.
for dead panther, 154.
Strangers, attitude towards, 27, 91-3, 95.
Streets, village, 102, 120.
Stringed instruments, 88, 182-3.
String figures, 186.
Subscriptions. *See* Co-operation and *Sari-bori*.
Sukma, *zamindari*, 4, 18, 24, 28, 32, 36, 39, 299.
the late Zamindar, 174.
Sun, in ceremonial, 210.
considered a man, 230.
Survey, of India, 22, 56, 299.
Swastika, 74, 96, 115.
Syphilis, 172.

Taboos (HM *polo*, BHM *malo*), xiii, 62, 64, 106, 109, 112, 113, 114, 115, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 144, 181, 182, 207, 208, 219, 224, 239, 263, 264-5, 269-70, 271, 276.
Tales, 269, 322-7.
Tally-strings, 187-8.
Tamarind tree, 151.
Tangri Dongri hills, 24, 30.
Tanks, 146-7, 150.
Tapalibhum, *pargana* of Tapa clan, 22, 26, 33, 162, 187, 268, 275, 277, 303, 304.
Tattooing, 62, 74.
Teeth, 62.
Teknonymy, 244.
Telam village, 120-1.
Telanga (Telugu) race, 5, 24, 220-1.
Teli traders, 102, 239.
Telinghat hills, 24.
Telugu influence, 5, 24, 53-7, 220-1.
Thatching, 103, 115, 120, 123, 269.
Theft, 95, 163, 215.
Thekadari system, xi, 14, 18, 142-3.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Threshing, HM, 136; BHM, 137.
Thunder, 290.
Thurston, *Tribes and Castes of Southern India*, quoted, 54.
Tigers, as avengers of offences, xiii, 291.
  eating of animals killed by, 162.
  method of hunting, 159-60.
  poisoning, 160-1.
  persons killed by, 279, 283.
Time, reckoning of, 187-8.
Tiraigarh hills, 283.
Tirathgarh, village, 4, 28.
  seat of legendary tailed kings, 4, 204.
Tobacco, 102, 118, 119, 148.
Tobacco boxes and tubes, 70.
Toddy-palm (*borassus flabellifer*), 151-2.
  as food, 168.
  sacrifices to, 220.
  tapped for liquor, 168-9.
Tokalor (Tailed) clan, 69, 135, 237, 304.
Tomatoes, 148.
Tondawada village, 91, 95.
Tools, 81-90, 132.
Toothpicks, 79.
Totemism, general, 204, 207.
  among Bhattras, 39.
  BHM, 204, 240-2.
  Dorlas, 240.
  HM, 239.
  Marias, 43, 235.
  See also Appendix II, 300-7.
Toys, 186.
Trapping, 154-61.
Traps, for birds, 153, 158.
  for deer, 155-6.
  for fish, 164-5.
  for hares, 155.
  for panthers, 156-8.
Trench, Mr. C. G. Chenevix, C.I.E., I.C.S., *Gondi Grammar*, xvi, 241, 244, 321-2.
Truthfulness, 95-6, 144.
Tulagotal, *pargana*, 22, 33, 273, 276, 303.
Tulsidongri mountains, 24, 32, 36.
Tumirgunda, village of Tamo clan, 52, 199, 200, 305.
Turbans, 70, 74-5, 78.

Udam-guria (headman's dolmen seat of honour), xii, 96, 102, 106, 130, 141, 290.
'Uplift', 76, 78.
  See also Hinduization.
Urad, a pulse (*phaseolus radiatus*), 134, 137, 148.
Urinating, 64, 155.
Urine, as bait for hares, 155.
Uriya language, Bhattri dialect of, 38.
Usendi clan, 140, 198, 201, 233-4, 236-8, 265-6, 269, 272, 289, 300, 306.
Usendi Moda of Orcha, xix, 233-4, 247, 265.
  pedigree, *facing p.* 306.
Utensils, 66, 124, 132, 170.

Vaccination, 16, 93.
Vegetables, 119, 135, 148, 152.
Vendettas, 94-5.
Venereal disease, 173.
Village, 66.
  HM, 101-10.
  BHM, 118-23.
  sold by one clan to another, 201.
Village mother, goddess and cult, 9, 39, 96, 104, 105, 106, 110, 118, 123, 130, 133, 135, 138-9, 140-1, 155, 161, 169, 195-7, 201, 205-6, 212, 219, 242, 265, 272.
Village shifting, 66-7, 103, 107-10, 119, 122-3, 291.
Village subscriptions. *See* Co-operation and *Sari-bori*.
Vine, wild, 170.
Virginity, lost before marriage, 247.
Vizagapatam Agency, Madras Presidency, 3, 17.
  See Jeypore.
Vizagapatam Gazetteer, 39.
Waddai (clan-priest), 57.
  as headman, 289.
  as magician, 226-8.
  as soothsayer, 229, 271-2, 283.
Walls, of houses, 114-15, 117.
Warangal, city and district, Hyderabad State, 3, 4, 38, 39.
Warmth, 113, 118, 132, 164.
Washing, 65-7, 138, 270.
Watching crops, 129, 132-3.
Water-drawing, from river, 189; from wild vine, 170.
Waterfall-demon, xiii, 207.
Water-goddess, 166, 206.
Wattlework. *See* Fencing.
Wax, use in *cire perdue* process, 179-80.
Weaning, 219, 267, 270.
Weapons, 81-8, 132.
Weaving, 65, 97.
Wedding, 229, 249-50.
Weda (magician), 174.
Whetstones, 82, 83.
Whistling, 'sni', 94.
Wicker-work, 101, 112, 117, 123.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

008

Widows, 144, 244, 245, 294; widow-marriage, 244, 245, 260-1, 294.
Wife-beating, 259, 262, 295.
Wills, Mr. C. U., I.C.S., 4, 33, 290.
Winnowing, 135, 136.
Winnows, 117, 136, 140.
Witchcraft, 168, 176, 198, 225-8.
Women, 62-3, 135-6, 151-2, 174, 189, 224.
  debarred from attendance at sacrifices, 197, 211, 213.
  cook first-fruits, 216.
  property and status, 294-5.
Wood, The Rt. Rev. Alex, Bishop of Nagpur, xvi, 194.

Xylophone, xiii.

Yams, 90, 97, 124, 152.
Yaws, 48, 93, 172-3.
Yete clan, 239, 303.

Zamindaris, 4, 10, 11, 15, 32, 143 286, 288, 299.
Zigzag stockading, 232.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

SUPPLEMENT

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TO THE REISSUE OF 1949

COMMENT
By Verrier Elwin

NOTE ON THE MARIA GONDS
OF CHANDA AND DRUG DISTRICT
By Sir Wilfrid Grigson

NOTES
By Verrier Elwin

ILLUSTRATIONS
By Verrier Elwin & Sir Wilfrid Grigson

[p. 351]
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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

COMMENT

114 In a remarkable defence of scholarship and science, the late Baron von Hügel enumerated the intellectual virtues which find but a scanty development outside the life of the mind—' candour, moral courage, intellectual honesty, scrupulous accuracy, chivalrous fairness, endless docility to facts, disinterested collaboration, unconquerable hopefulness and perseverance, manly renunciation of popularity and easy honours, love of bracing labour and strengthening solitude '.[1] These qualities, which the anthropologist needs even more than the theologian, can be recognized in all the work to which Mr. W. V. Grigson has set his hand: in this book there is specially revealed his ' endless docility to facts ', in this preface his genius for disinterested collaboration. For it is not altogether a light thing to turn another investigator loose in one's own special pastures with full freedom to kick up his heels and do and say what he will.

I have perhaps two qualifications for entering those pastures: the first is that I have been over the ground—ten years later, it is true—but largely in Grigson's footsteps, as it was by his inspiration: the second is that I have read this book more frequently —I am willing to bet—than any other human being now living on this planet. I was once stranded on a three weeks' tour in Orissa with no other literary nourishment than Lord Wavell's *Other Men's Flowers*, and I estimate that I read (for I read quickly) that estimable anthology through no less than a dozen times. I must have read *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* even more often than that, for during several touring seasons it was never out of my hands, as I followed its guidance and used its great array of facts as a basis for further research. It is not an easy book, but it wears well. Three years' testing left me with a profound respect for its accuracy, admiration for the style and manner and a deep affection for the author who could write with such understanding of poor and ignorant folk. Naturally there are points where I disagree, where my judgement or information differs from Grigson's, even where I would, after much enquiry, go so far as to say that he was mistaken. He collected much of his material fifteen years ago, and wrote most of it not long afterwards; in

[1] F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion* (London, 1927), Vol. 1, p. 79.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

114 those days he tended perhaps to give more credence to the reports of his subordinates, to accept more readily the denials of villagers, and to generalize more frequently than he would to-day.

Yet these are but toys; the massive structure stands and will mark an epoch in the development of anthropological research in middle India. Burma and Assam, which have given us many good monographs are, for ethnographical purposes, largely separate from the rest of the sub-continent. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*[1] is the first Indian book in the new manner which reaches modern standards of enquiry and documentation, which can compare with publications on America and the Pacific. It is not, of course, all due to Grigson, but it is an instructive exercise to examine the books on peninsular India published before 1938 and those that have appeared since.

No one has known and explored Bastar as Grigson has, and his real book is written on the face of the countryside he loved so completely. He started a tradition in Bastar and still to-day there is peace, freedom and happiness in hundreds of villages as a result of the principles he established. A whole legend has grown up round the name of 'Grikson Diwan', for if Grigson loved the Marias and Murias they certainly reciprocated his affection. It is rare for aboriginals to know, still less to remember, the names of administrators, yet I found in 1940 and the following years that Grigson's name was known in the remotest villages of the State, and old men who had no idea that there was a war believed that somewhere or other Grikson Diwan was caring for their interests. At the top of the beautiful Raughat the villagers will show you a great rock from which, they say, Mr. and Mrs. Grigson, enraptured by the loveliness of the scene, once leapt fully clad into the waters of the pool far below. The Murias of Koilibera were still chuckling ten years afterwards at their recollections of Grigson's chase of a man-eater, when the Marias of the south whom he brought with him ate every monkey in the hills and stripped all the trees of the forest of red ants—Grigson himself being by no means backward in sharing the fantastic diet. In one high lonely clearing

[113] [1] So far as I know, Mr. Grigson has published the following since *The Maria Gonds of Bastar: Reports—Notes on the Aboriginal Problem in the Mandla District* (Nagpur, 1940); *The Aboriginal Problem in the Balaghat District* (Nagpur, 1941); *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar* (Nagpur, 1944). *Forewords*—to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Bombay, 1943), to Verrier Elwin, *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943), to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Tribal Hyderabad* (Hyderabad, 1945). Translations of Muria Songs in *New Verse*, Feb.-March 1937. Review of Elwin, *The Baiga* in *Man*, Vol. XLI, p. 38. Letter on 'Cowrie Shells in the Central Provinces of India' in *Man*, Vol. XL, p. 159. Note on 'Human Sacrifice in Hyderabad' in *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, p. 68. *The Aboriginal in the Future India* (London, Royal Anthropological Institute, 1945); Presidential Address, Deccan History Association (Hyderabad, 1945).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of the Abujhmar, I was told, Grigson once encountered an ancient woman completely naked. She had never seen a white face before and, believing the visitor to be a Rakshasa, fell at his feet begging to be allowed to go for a few moments to her village to bid farewell to her little grandson, after which she would return to be devoured. 114

There is no end to these stories, many of them tales of generosity and kindness that would embarrass Grigson to have repeated. The result has been that Bastar is a very pleasant place to tour in. I have had trouble enough in Provinces and States, where there has been no one like Grigson to precede me, to realize vividly the difference that he has made. He is not the only one; Bastar has long been fortunate in her officers; but he set the pace.

When it was decided to issue an Indian edition of this book and Grigson asked me to write a sort of Comment to go with it, I was puzzled to know what to put in. I have done a certain amount of writing[1] about Bastar and the Bison-horn Marias, among whom I spent a good deal of time, and I did not want to repeat here what I had already written. In the end, at the risk of being very scrappy, I decided to give all my unpublished notes on the Marias, rather on the principle of the Abbot's order at the sack of Beziers: 'Kill them all; God will know his own.'

I deal first, therefore, with a few larger subjects, where my material supplements Grigson's, such as magic and the tragedies to which its practice leads, Bison-horn Maria ideas and taboos with regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, the dormitory and funerary customs. It seemed worth while to describe in some detail a marriage ceremony and the Ghotpal Marhai which I had witnessed personally. After that I proceed to give brief notes on points in the book which appear to need amplification. Short of reprinting a large amount of already published material, I do not know what other plan was possible.

II

Do the Marias believe in a Supreme Being? Grigson was not able to assemble any very definite evidence on this point. 'Only around Orcha', he says, 'and a few neighbouring Chhota 776

[1] For convenience of reference I shall give a list of my publications on Bastar and the Murias or Marias. 'Ceremonial Cross-Dressing among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 163; 'Suicide among the Aboriginals of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 207; 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII, p. 121; 'The Sago Palm in Bastar State', *J.R.A.S. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 69; 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, p. 97; *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); 'Stilt-Walking among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLIV, p. 38; *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944); *The Muria and their Ghotul* (Bombay, 1947); 'Funerary Customs in Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXV. [113]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 Dongar Pargana Hill Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural, who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip.' Koppers, who is perhaps a little too obviously anxious to discover belief in a Supreme Deity everywhere for the demands of strict science, protests at this vagueness. 'In the light of the many facts known to-day', he says, 'this effort at explanation is not satisfactory. Apart from other difficulties it seems more than improbable that aboriginals would in such a case quickly and easily find a new word to express a meaning which (according to Grigson's assumption) would be foreign to their mental vocabulary. The word Ispural appears to be genuinely Dravidian.'[1] But Grigson could hardly be expected to improve on his evidence, and actually nothing is more characteristic of the aboriginal ecstatics than their invention of new words. I too have heard vague references to Ispural—far away from Chhota Dongar in the east of Kondagaon as well as in the Jhoria foothills. In a Muria song, Ispural is described as having daughters, the youngest of whom is Phulsundri Rani. In a Burkal Pata, a song used when a man has been killed by a tiger, Ispural appears as one of many gods who is accused of having caused the tragedy. Among the Bondos of Jeypore (who do not speak a Dravidian language), I found Ispur as the name of a sky god who is invoked at the time of winnowing the grain if there is no wind to blow away the chaff. This, and the fact that he has daughters, suggests that Ispural is a variant of Indra or Indal, a sky god who sends the rain and whose daughters often visit the earth. The actual word 'Ispural' may have been born in trance. A wizard hears the names Ishwar, Indal, Purub (Lord); they sink into his mind and are forgotten; then one day as he is raving in trance a new word comes into his head, and a new god is made.

But although Ispural is only doubtfully a name of the Supreme Being, the evidence appears to me overwhelming that all the aboriginals of central India and Orissa believe in some sort of Creator or Supreme Deity. Some of them, identifying him with the Sun, call him by a special tribal name and very generally they use the honorific terms Bhagavan or Mahapurub[2] and their dialectical variants. The most convincing proof that this belief is not a

[113]

[1] W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV and XXXVI, p. 307.

[2] Bhagavan is the classical Hindu term for the adorable object of *Bhakti* worship; Mahapurub or Mahaprabhu is a Sanskrit word meaning 'great master' and may be applied to any eminent person, human or divine; in Bengal it is specially used of Chaitanya

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

modern Hindu or missionary accretion is to be found in a study of the myths of origin which in many tribes have all the marks of antiquity. In these a Supreme Being is firmly established. He is not omnipotent, he is not omniscient, his character is ambiguous, his morals are uncertain and his language coarse. But he is exalted far above all others and he is the prime mover in the creative process as well as the goal of the human spirit after death. 776

My collection of Maria myths is incomplete, but the Bison-horn Maria story of Creation leaves no room to doubt the tribe's belief in a Supreme Deity. 776 773

There was a great rain and the world was drowned. But Gajabhimul put a brother and sister—their names were Kawachi and Kuharami—in a gourd. This gourd drifted to and fro until it ran aground on a great rock. Mahapurub sent a crow to search for men. The crow found the gourd, pecked it open and released the boy and girl who began to cry. Mahapurub told the crow to stop the noise, but it wanted the children to die so that it could feed on their bodies and it did nothing. Mahapurub sent an eagle, but it too did nothing. Then he sent a tiger, but it too did nothing. At last he sent a monkey. The monkey sat on a rock and asked the children what was the matter. The rock was so hot that it burnt its buttocks and it jumped on to a tree. 'We have nowhere to go,' said the children, 'and there is no food.' The monkey returned to Mahapurub and told him. 539

Mahapurub now sent a boar. 'Near the rock is a tortoise,' he said. 'It has made itself a home of mud and clay. Take off the mud and spread it on the rock.' 'But how am I to live without food?' asked the boar. 'These children will sow seed,' said Mahapurub. 'There will be a harvest on the rock, and you will be the first to eat it.' That is why the wild boar always ravages the crops before men can reap them.

The boar found the tortoise and rolled itself in the mud. It came to the rock and shook itself violently. The mud flew in all directions and there was the world again.

This story was recorded at Rewali and was repeated with small variants in other villages. But at Killepal, the Marias said that the children were put in the gourd by the gods Andalkosa, Patraj, Pirusi and Tuldokarj. It was Mahapurub who wanted to destroy the children and he himself tried to cut the gourd open and so let them drown. But the gods got hold of the gourd in time and threw it into the water and it drifted away out of Mahapurub's reach. If this is a Supreme Being, it is a singularly imperfect one. And 776 773

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

indeed it must be confessed that the Maria belief in Mahapurub is weaker than in other tribes. The Sun and Moon were created, not by him, but by human beings. Fire was not given—as in so many legends—to the world by God, but was discovered by man in a more or less natural way in a broken stone or a split bamboo. In only one of the folk-tales does Mahapurub play a part. In this he teaches the hero how to make a hearth and gives him a magic bel stick. He refuses to answer the prayer of a bird which begs him to restore its mate to life.

On the whole, we may conclude that while the Marias undoubtedly believe in some kind of Supreme Deity, he is not vividly imagined by them, and his cult is overlaid by the interest and excitement aroused by the earth-bound deities like Danteshwari and the clan-gods and by the attention that must be given to the Departed.

III

The general pattern of Maria magical beliefs has been traced by Grigson and his picture may be supplemented by my chapter on 'Witchcraft and Magic' in *Maria Murder and Suicide*. A few additional notes may be of interest.

The dread of witchcraft and black magic seems to me to be stronger among the Marias than in the other primitive populations of Middle India. Among the neighbouring Bondos, for example, it is comparatively weak and hardly troubles the deeply religious Saoras whose attention is concentrated on pacifying the Dead.

In Maria opinion, the practitioner of black magic is frequently a widow, often a rigrish widow. Her chief delight is to interfere with other people's pleasures; she sends grubs into the spathe of the sago palm and thus checks the supply of the refreshing juice; she loves to rob a fresh young girl of her rightful joys by prolonging her menstrual periods; she frustrates men's happiness by making them impotent; she blights the marriage-bed with barrenness. These wanton and jealous widows are a great nuisance in Maria society. Oyami Anda of Bara Harmamunda told me how he was pestered by one of them but, since he had two wives already, did not want to be involved in a scandal and in any case was not attracted, he rejected her advances. In revenge she nearly killed him with black magic. Another old Oyami Maria insisted that it was only a widow who could perform this magic; as a young man such a woman had begged him to lie with her and when he refused had made him impotent. At Kuchepal I met a man who had once engaged himself in that most dangerous of erotic adventures, a love-affair with a widow. After a time he wearied of her and in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

revenge she 'destroyed his seed'. For several years he was unable to get a child, though in the end the Perma diagnosed the trouble and after the proper sacrifices his wife conceived. 754

A number of recent murders were due either to the desire of a victim to be revenged on a witch or wizard or to a man's resentment at being accused of sorcery. The Orcha murder of 1941 was due to a Hill Maria called Mukka suspecting that the Gaita, Pidche, was practising sorcery against him. After killing him he put the corpse in a stream, but next day recovered and buried it, the whole village agreeing to hush the matter up. The following year Podiyami Doma of Michnar killed Kuharami Konda during a New Eating Festival because the latter accused him of being a thief and a sorcerer. On November 26th, 1941 Gumma Karwe, a young Bison-horn Maria, killed his uncle Gumma Galla at Toinar. Only three months previously Karwe had been married. One day his young wife went with his father and step-mother to visit relations at Gummalnar, a journey that took them over the Indrawati. It was October and I well remember the heavy floods that year. The water swept away the canoe in which they were crossing the river and the bodies were never recovered. A month later, while uncle and nephew were drinking palm wine together they began to quarrel. The younger man accused his uncle of causing the death of his wife, on whom he had spent twenty rupees in cash and three measures of paddy, by magic. Galla admitted it, even boasted of it, and threatened to kill him in the same way. The boy, wild with rage and fear, killed Galla forthwith by a heavy blow from his axe. 674 754 578

At the beginning of March 1944, one evening as the crescent moon was rising above the eastern horizon, there was a violent quarrel in Barse Bendo's house at Kadampal, and a few hours later one of the disputants crept out of his house and stabbed his enemy to death with an arrow as he lay asleep. Barse Bendo was a well-known and successful magician with a large practice. In the same village a youngish man called Kunjami Gota set up as a Siraha and seems to have succeeded in drawing away some of Bendo's patients and creating a sense of rivalry and opposition. Gota's own uncle, Kunjami Tonda, however, preferred the treatment of the older and more experienced man, and when his wife Mate fell ill at the beginning of 1944 he took her to Bendo, and not to his nephew, for consultation. She soon recovered, but shortly afterwards Tonda's two little sons, Lakhma and Bala, fell ill and he came with his whole family to stay in a leaf-hut built for patients in Bendo's compound. Bala was cured in a day or two, but Lakhma, who had a swollen face, did not improve. Here was Bendo's chance. At the time of divination he skilfully introduced the name of Gota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

754 578 674 into his ravings and afterwards declared that it had been revealed to him that the child's illness had been caused by the evil influence of his rival whom he now denounced as a Pangnaha or sorcerer. Gota was summoned to the house and when he came Tonda—prompted by Bendo—asked him to perform antidotal magic to undo the harm he had done and so cure the little boy. This was a clever move. If Gota agreed he became a self-confessed Pangnaha; if he refused to treat a patient, Bendo would see to it that his reputation as a Siraha was destroyed. Gota chose the safer course, and declared that he knew nothing about the treatment of the sick. They all protested at this, reminding him how they had seen him curing disease by *mawa-bujha* and sprinkling rice on the heads of ailing children. Tonda said, 'Bendo has cured Bala, but he can't do anything for Lakhma. You are a new man and have cured other people's children. Now cure your own cousin.' But Gota still refused. This made Tonda furious, for the refusal confirmed his suspicion, so carefully fostered by the jealous and wily Bendo, that Gota himself was responsible for the trouble, and that in fact he was an impostor, not a Siraha at all, but a mere Pangnaha. He lost control of himself and began to shout insults and accusations at his nephew, saying that he was trying to kill his own cousins and was of such unbearable wickedness that even when he was found out he would do nothing to remedy matters. In the quarrel the two men came to blows, but they were separated and Gota was taken back to his house. The others went to sleep and Tonda lay down outside the little hut where his wife watched by the sick child. But Gota, angry and brooding over the accusation which he knew well would spoil his practice as a Siraha and thus ruin him economically as well as socially, waited for some hours and then crept into Bendo's compound and stabbed Tonda to death with an arrow. Gota was brought to trial and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, escaping the gallows partly in consequence of a passage (on p. xxvi) in *Maria Murder and Suicide* which was quoted in the judgement.

To understand the Japgunda murder of 1943 a certain amount of family history must be related. Masa, a Hill Maria of Japgunda, had two brothers Gai and Bija. When Gai died, leaving a widow and a daughter Muri, his younger brother inherited the widow along with the property and adopted a boy named Erka as a Lamana'i to work for his step-daughter. When the period of service was complete, Erka and Muri were married and both continued to live in Bija's house until in due time Erka succeeded, on Bija's death, to control of the household and became guardian of Bija's three little sons, Suku, Gilu and Aga.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Masa, the children's uncle and sole survivor of the elder branch of the family, was the Waddai of the clan-god of Japgunda. He seems to have resented the way a poor Lamana'i boy like Erka had risen in the world and become owner of both his brothers' property, and there was some tension in the relations between the two houses. For five or six years, Erka had had good crops and Masa bad ones, and Masa decided that his failure must be due to the fact that Erka was practising magic against him. One day he openly accused the younger man of sorcery and challenged him to an ordeal. Erka, who had no desire to quarrel, accepted and a pot of boiling water and cowdung was prepared. Erka dipped his fingers into it and was badly burned.

This incident convinced the villagers that Erka was a sorcerer and had a curious effect on his own character. He found that, far from being a social outcaste, he—the poor Lamana'i boy—was believed to have the ear of the goddess Parkal Muttai and that many people were coming to him for advice and help. He grew proud and arrogant and when he caused the death of a calf, a pig and a fowl belonging to Masa, no one dared to remonstrate with him. Bija's little boys were growing up and Erka built a house of his own near by. Presently Aga was to be married and some time late in August 1943 the wedding was held in Bija's old house. Masa was, of course, invited but on his way to join the festivities—for the essence of a Hill Maria marriage is a dance, a drink and a heavy meal—Erka went out to intercept him. He greeted him pleasantly and showing him a gourd of rice-beer took him aside to drink with him on the bank of the village pond. Some time later boys coming in their finery for the marriage dance saw the two men sitting together by the water under a virgin moon. The next day Masa's mutilated body was found in the pond.

Erka immediately used his reputation as a sorcerer to hush the matter up. He called the elders to his house, bribed the Kotwar whose duty it was to report suspicious deaths to the police, and taking the headman and another person of some influence aside, sat them down and drew on the ground what was described at the trial as a 'magic line'. He put dub grass, a knife and a bit of cowdung on it and two rupees on one side and three rupees on the other. Then he asked the two men to pick up the money, saying that this act bound them to secrecy. Deeply impressed, the headman went out and told the other villagers that they must cremate the body at once and make no report to the authorities. On the way to the pyre the usual divination by *sāja* leaves was performed and indicated that Masa had died by violence. It was five months before rumours of the crime reached the police.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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I do not in any way emphasize it, but it seems to me curious that many crimes connected with sorcery are associated with water; they are performed on the banks of ponds or rivers and in several instances the body has been thrown into the water afterwards. Does a murderer who has killed a sorcerer believe that there is some spiritual antiseptic for him in throwing his victim's body into water?

IV

841

Grigson has studied in detail the custom of the Hill Marias in regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, but his notes on the Bison-horn Marias need, as he says, 'considerable supplementing'. The Bison-horn Marias have the curious belief that men, not women, were originally subject to a menstrual period. They used to tie hollow bamboos to their organs to catch the discharge. Once—according to one legend—a girl was laughing at a man in this distressing and inconvenient condition, and he lost his temper and threw the bamboo at her; in another story a sister wanted to help her brother, who could not cut his clearing properly on account of the bamboo tagged on in front of him, and offered to take it instead.

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Yet other legends ascribe the origin of menstruation to a wound. There were formerly teeth in the vagina and when these were removed, the wound was not wholly healed. Once the vagina was in the crick of the leg behind the knee—you can still see its shape—but a hen pecked at it and the frightened organ jumped for safety to its hiding-place between the thighs. But it was hurt and it still bleeds every month at the recollection.

841

All the Gond tribes are very strict about the menstrual taboos, in this contrasting sharply with the Orissa Bondos, Gadabas, and Saoras, who are at a similar stage of culture and live not very far away. Grigson has described the extreme rigorism of the Hill Marias and has rightly suggested that the Bison-horn Marias are somewhat less apprehensive of the dangers of menstruation. But they too, like the Murias and the Gonds generally, are strict enough in their application of the taboo and breach of it may be punished by the Departed through the bite of a snake or the destruction of the harvest. They do not usually build special menstruation huts, but sometimes where there is a girls' dormitory, menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and unmarried girls on the other. In such villages, no married woman may go near the dormitory nor should youths enter it. Not all dormitories however are used in this way.

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Elsewhere part of the veranda of the ordinary living-house is screened off or a little hut is built in the compound for the use of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a woman at this time. At the menarche (for which the word used is *kumor utta*, 'the blossoming of the flower'), however, a special hut is built for the girl by women outside the village. A woman of the household brings her food and sleeps with her at night; she must bathe whenever she returns to the house. In some villages, the Marias still make a platform up a tree for the girl, who during the day must hide herself in the forest.

It is very dangerous for anyone to see, let alone to touch, a girl at her menarche. At Tikanpal I was told that if a man saw such a girl as he went through the jungle he should slap her and then go to her parents and after rebuking them, demand a fowl which he should sacrifice; then he should bathe and anoint himself with oil. At Gadapal they said that a man should throw a lump of earth between his legs at the girl, or a stick over his shoulder, and then go home and bathe. Neglect of these precautions might lead to blindness.

At the end of the period—all this refers only to the first period—the girl destroys her hut or platform during the night, throws away her cloth,[1] bathes and returns home before cockcrow. In some villages she is expected to remain for a day or two longer on the veranda of her house: if she has a married elder brother, it is the special duty of his wife to attend to her. Then she puts oil and turmeric on her body—an act which is said to symbolize her formal re-admission into caste, for during the previous days she has been regarded as excommunicated. In many Maria villages, however, the ceremonial use of turmeric is still unknown, and the elder brother's wife carries a pot of water round the house and sprinkles everyone saying, 'Now you are back again in caste'. After this the girl fetches water in an earthen pot and cowdungs the floor. In the evening her father invites some of the elders to a bottle of liquor and says, 'My daughter who was unclean all these days is now clean again'. He sacrifices a fowl to the Departed and they feast on its flesh.

There is not nearly so much fuss about the later periods. The woman has to keep out of the way, but there is no danger in looking at her, and when it is over she just has a bath and resumes her ordinary duties. But even so her daily programme is considerably disturbed. She must not sleep inside the house and, of course, sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden. She must not cook or fetch water or go to work in the fields. She must not touch cattle, pigs

[1] There do not seem to be any special taboos associated with this cloth. But the leaf-cups from which the girl eats at this time are charged with magical potency and if a witch can get hold of them she can afflict the girl with palsy.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

841 or fowls. She must not take grain from the bins or approach the Hearth of the Departed. Except at the menarche, however, she may fetch wood and leaves which may be used by other members of the household; she may fish so long as it is not in a pond; she may even dance so long as it is not at a Penkarsita and she does not touch any man.

When I was taking photographs in Maria villages I frequently came up against these taboos. At Mokhpal I was unable to photograph a girl with strikingly Mongolian features because she was in her period—the people seemed genuinely afraid that the menstrual exhalations would break the lens. At Tikanpal, where I wanted to stage a group of girls making leaf-cups, I was not permitted to do so because one of them was in her period and must not sit on a mat. At Doriras a married girl refused to be photographed standing in front of the girls' dormitory because menstruating women were accustomed to sleep there.

During a wife's period a husband is subject to the laws of a 'little couvade'. No one will eat from his hands; no one will accept tobacco from his pouch. He must not cook or fetch water. He too must not go to the grain bins or approach the symbols of the Departed. He may go to a shrine, but he must not enter it; he may cut his clearing, but he must not fire it or sow seed. He may not hunt, carry a *kumar*-pole, climb a tree, cut grass or reap a crop. If he is a Perna or Gaita he may not perform any religious rite, and if he is a Gunia he cannot divine the cause of sickness.

842 It is generally believed by the Marias, as by the rest of India, that a woman is most likely to conceive if she has intercourse on the day she has her ceremonial bath at the close of the period.

886 As by other aboriginals the climacteric is accepted by the Marias as a matter of course. 'As it appears, so it disappears.' If an elderly woman or her husband dreams of a dried-up tank or stream, it means that this crisis is approaching.

V

843 Pregnancy is diagnosed by the cessation of the menses, vomiting, swelling of the breasts and a darkening of the nipples. 'The face dries a little.' It is generally supposed that a boy is more exacting and makes the mother look fragile and exhausted, while a girl keeps her fresh and well.

843 177 During pregnancy, Bison-horn Maria taboos are not exacting and my suspicion is that originally they were as few and as casual as those of the Hill Maria, and that any elaboration is due to the influence of the local Hindus who, on the whole, pay more attention to the pregnancy than to the menstrual taboos. In other words,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *baukinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bhimul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

844 seat above it. Near by he drives the arrow or knife into the ground. He brings a pot of water and puts it inside the hut; should the water
[787] decrease of its own accord it is regarded as a very bad omen and the child is expected to die. This hut is now used constantly by the mother who comes five or six times a day to bathe herself and the baby. She always takes water from the pot kept inside the enclosure and it is refilled each time with warm water heated elsewhere. The mother regularly pours warm water over the child's umbilical stump, for so long as it does not drop off she is in a state of taboo and can do no work.

In some villages the placenta is buried under a *bassia latifolia* tree and a large stone is placed above, 'for this tree does every kind of work for us'. Very small babies are sometimes buried in the same place so that they can suck the milky sap.

When the stump falls off, it is buried in the placenta-pit; should it be dug up and eaten, for example, by a dog, the child would cease suckling and die. After a year has passed the Perma comes to offer compensation of a fowl and rice-beer to the Earth Mother because they have offended her by burying the placenta and cord in the ground.

846 Once the stump has dropped the mother is free of the restric-
852 tions on her and when she feels ready—'when her body is dry and clean'—she has a final bath, cowdungs the house and begins to cook and live normally again. The father shaves the child's head. The mother herself destroys the little bathing-hut. The father smears the arrow with oil and puts it in the roof of the house. When a boy grows up it is shown to him and he can use it for hunting, though no special virtue seems to attach to it.

852 On the day of the mother's ceremonial entry into the house,
553 there is a little feast, cooked by the woman herself, on the veranda. The Perma and a few neighbours are invited and they have a pot of rice-beer. Before they drink, each of the visitors dips his finger into it and gives it to the child to suck. The mother presents oil and a ring to each of the women who helped her and to the Waddai and Perma. The child is often, though not always, named on this occasion. A chicken is dedicated by being fed on rice and is set free. A year later it is sacrificed and a bit of the liver is given to the child. If a baby cries continually it is supposed that it has been given the wrong name and the Waddai renames it and dedicates another chicken. In Gadapal I was told that if the gods disapprove a child's name, they send Hidmaraj to make it itch and Markaraj to make it cry.

845 The Marias do not seem to have made up their minds about twins. One village thinks them lucky, another disastrous. There

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

is a vague idea that monozygotic twins are more likely to be fortunate than dizygotic. Thus when Tati Buta's wife gave birth to female twins at Palnar, it was observed that they had but one placenta and the people declared them to be lucky and expected them to survive—which they did. But at Phulpar, where Sodi Mandra's wife gave birth to dizygotic twins, a boy and a girl, both died within a fortnight, and at Bara Harmamunda, where Oyami Kama's wife had male twins of the same order, both parents and the children died soon afterwards. 845

The Marias believe that the cause of such births may be physical, magical or supernatural. When Gangu of Koriras had male twins it was believed to have been due to her eating off a leaf-plate made of double leaves. It was the indiscretion of eating a double cob of maize that gave Oyami Kama's wife her twins. The Marias, therefore, are generally careful not to pick double leaves or fruit—double plantains, ebony fruit, maize and so on. Even a husband should be careful about this. For even though twins are not specially unlucky nobody wants them, and it is hard for the mother to nourish two children properly. If a young girl has twins, it is generally assumed that she has been lying with more than one man. At Gogonda a woman had intercourse both with her husband and a lover on the day of her post-menstrual bath. The result was twins and such grievous offence to the Departed that they killed both children within a few weeks.

The Marias also believe that twins may be the result of intercourse with a supernatural being. At Gudra I was told how Hunga Nupo's wife was visited by a Rau: 'He laughed and went to her. The next day her husband lay with her and in due time she gave birth to twins.' A similar story is told of the wife of Sodi Mandra.

Maria twins, like twins all over India, are named after the inseparable couple Rama and Lakshman. Two boys are Rama and Lakha, two girls Rame and Lakhe. The after-birth, whether double or single, of both children is buried in one pit and only one arrow is put above it. In the same way the twins are supposed to remain very close to each other throughout their lives. 845 553

VI

Grigson was unable to find any trace of the dormitory among the Bison-horn Marias; the people always denied that they existed, and even said that they were a degraded institution. Grigson was rightly suspicious of these denials, for in fact a simple form of dormitory exists in most of the bigger Bison-horn Maria villages. Even to-day the headmen deny their existence—I have never 883

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

883 quite understood why—but once they realize that the enquirer is not prepared to be deceived they talk fairly freely about them.

883 In all these villages there are commodious rest-houses for the use of visitors and officials on tour and when they are unoccupied 485 —and they are but seldom used officially—the boys sleep in them as their dormitories. The boys, however, are not fully organized as among the Murias, but a leader may be appointed—in Mokhpal he was called the Sian, in Chote Timnar the Peda. Sometimes an older man sleeps with them and imposes a rough sort of discipline, fining those who are absent without cause. An old Maria, Sodi Mukha, is said to have been very proud of his management of the dormitory at Mokhpal. 'Originally', I was told in this village, 'the boys used to make their house in the middle of the place and it was theirs. But when Government ordered us to make a rest-house we had to build it not as we wanted it, but as the officers wanted it.'

883 The girls sometimes sleep together in the house of a lonely widow, but often have their own building. This is occasionally 841 combined with the corporate menstruation hut. The menstruating women sleep on one side and the unmarried girls on the other. It is more common, however, for such women to sleep at home and to leave the unmarried girls to themselves. They too are not organized as in the Muria ghotul, but they are fined for quarrelling and for non-attendance. Both boys and girls have regular duties. They must all bring wood for the dormitory fire. At marriages and funerals they must collect wood and make leaf-plates. In the evening the boys and girls often meet in some central place or in front of the boys' house and dance and play games.

883 The relations between the boys and girls are not organized and disciplined as among the Murias. At marriages the members 836 of the two dormitories may slip away together and sleep in some secluded place. At Penta the boys described how a girl would make a hole in the wall near which she slept. 'Then a boy creeps up and pokes a stick through the hole to wake her, and she creeps out to join him.' At Bara Harmamunda, the boys said that they actually went into the girls' house, though I fancy this is exceptional.

883 The Bison-horn Maria dormitory does not seem to play an important part in the social or religious life of the tribe. It is not established in the mythology; it does not serve as a school of dancing or as a place for initiation into sexual experience; there is no need in these pacific hills for village guard-rooms. Whether at any time the institution existed in a more flourishing form it is now impossible to say.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

VII

I found it very difficult—and I suspect that Grigson had the same experience—to see Marias in action. Tribes vary greatly in their willingness to allow a visitor to be present at their ceremonial. The Murias used to invite me to marriages or festivals, sending information about them long beforehand. The Saoras are delighted to have visitors at their celebrations and more than once the ghost of a long dead headman has come upon the priest and admonished the people to treat me right. But the Bondos do their utmost to keep the stranger away; during the great summer festival they pile the paths leading to their villages with thorn bushes and not even a fellow Bondo, if he belongs to another village, is admitted. The Marias do not go so far as that, yet I found them singularly unwilling to let me watch them do anything. When I was camping at Borgum I heard that the Wijja Pandum was to be celebrated in two days' time and rather unwisely announced my intention of being present. On the morning of the festival a delegation arrived in camp to say that the proceedings had had to be postponed because the Perma's wife was in her period—though I darkly suspect that the old lady had in fact passed the climacteric. I had to dodge round the country for weeks before I saw a wedding, and to witness the Ghotpal Marhai I had to come sixty miles on an elephant down from the Abujhmar because the dates were changed at the last moment.

But since a page of personal observation is worth a whole chapter of hearsay I will describe the wedding at which I assisted and the great festival at Ghotpal in 1942.

On March 15th, 1942 I was camping in Gogonda at the edge of the hills overlooking the great southern plain. That evening, I was told, two girls were to be taken to Sirsitti, a village some two thousand feet below, to be married. At about five o'clock therefore married and unmarried women collected and began to dance with one of the brides. She had her head and shoulders completely covered with a shawl and wailed loudly all the time. Three pots of rice-beer were distributed to the dancers and a large number of onlookers, and then the dancers took the bride round the village. This was a very pretty sight. The circle of dancers would suddenly elongate into a line and then curl up again in a ring. As they danced from house to house, men and women would come out and put a ring on the bride's finger or a necklace round her neck and embrace her by raising her hands twice to their foreheads and then clasping her in their arms. As they did so, the dancers sang the names of the people who were giving presents and their exact relationship to the bride. At other times they sang how the girl had hitherto been going to and fro freely in the jungle, getting wood, husking grain,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 fetching water, but that now she was to go to a life that was both
[533] sweet and bitter. Finally, a group of quite little girls arrived on the scene with bundles of food tied up in cloth on their heads and the bride, still weeping loudly, was carried off by her girl companions across the fields into the sunset. It was a moving sight, this taking away of the bride to her new life, but it was noticeable that no member of the bridegroom's family came to fetch her. She was simply taken away by her own people to his village.

Next morning I started before dawn with my assistant Mr. Sampat Singh on the long descent to Sirsitti. The scenery on the way was magnificent. From the brow of the hill we could see stretching away almost to Orissa the great plain of Konta and Sukma with the peaks of hills rising above the mist just touched by the morning sun. When we reached the village we found the two marriages in progress, though everyone was a little jaded having been up dancing all night. There were little camps outside the village for the two brides and the bridegrooms' families sent food and liquor out to them. During the morning there was some desultory dancing in the middle of the village, and a group of girls sat round each bride who wailed loudly from time to time as the girls sang to her about the sorrows and hardships of the married life to which she was now going. Young men from Gogonda, the brides' village, cooked the food supplied by the bridegrooms and this was ready about three o'clock in the afternoon. The visitors assembled beneath a magnificent mango tree outside the village, and the feast was very carefully served by the young men; an exact number of
[264] leaf-cups was prepared and each contained the same number of bits of pork; an equal number contained identical portions of rice. The boys then served the cups, first to the women and then to the men. Others went round pouring gravy on the rice and they all ate together. When the meal was over they went to a stream near
[271] by and drank, kneeling down and putting their faces right into the water to suck it up.

Then the girls assembled round the first bride, who was still
585 covered with the shawl which all through that sweltering day she had not once laid aside, and danced with her into the centre of the
535 village. Another party escorted the second bride and soon the scene was very lively with two separate dances whirling round the square. Presently the first party danced up to the future husband's house. They gathered in a very tight block before the door and began to sing loudly and rapidly, jerking their bodies to and fro from the hips, a song which meant, 'Come and get her if you can, brother; come and catch her if you can'. For some
585 time the bridegroom stood in a rather embarrassed fashion in the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

doorway while his parents encouraged him and the old women shouted ribald jokes. At last he plucked up courage and made a dash for the girl. Her companions resisted him but at last, of course, he broke through them, seized the girl and dragged her weeping loudly into the house. The girls rushed after them and pushed and hustled them into an inner room and shut the door on them, the theory being that they would consummate the marriage there and then. The old women stood round the hut trying to look inside and discussing the bridegroom's potency. The cock which is often stolen by the bride's party from the bridegroom's house was here given as a present with a little cloth to the bride's younger sister.

This was the end of one marriage. The other was a surprise. The girls came dancing with the shrouded bride up to the house, the bridegroom put on a new shirt for the occasion, his mother brought water to wash the feet of her new daughter-in-law. Everything was ready, but after the girls had danced round once or twice in front of the house, they made as if to go right round it in honour of the Departed. Everybody waited for them to complete the circuit and return, but their voices grew fainter and fainter, and I went out to see them dancing away into the forest. It was then explained to the unfortunate bridegroom that certain ceremonies had to be performed in Gogonda to protect the bride against magical dangers with which she was threatened and that she would be returned to him in three days' time.

It was then six o'clock and we returned to camp.

VIII

On February 2nd, 1942 there was celebrated at Ghotpal near Barsur the great Marhai and Pen-Karsita of the Lekhami clan. Directly I arrived and made my camp under some trees I was greeted by a little deputation of local priests who told me very politely but quite firmly that though they were delighted to have me there I would not be permitted to take any photographs or write anything down. Later I went with Mr. Sampat Singh to the shrine of the Ghotpal clan-god, the Anga, Usendi Pen, with whom are his sons Hunga and Wella and his daughter Wange. I was at once surrounded by people telling me that I must not go inside. An elderly magician approached me and in a stern voice told me to take my hat off, for I was looking at a god. Such instructions are unusual in aboriginal India.

Nothing happened that day, but people began to assemble and many merchants arrived and set up their booths in a line along the edge of the great open dancing-ground in front of the shrine.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 Next morning large parties of Marias and Murias came from every direction, some of the Murias from the Mardapal Pargana and the villages round Chhota Dongar. A little rain fell and there was a lot of blowing of horns. At midday the Anga and other symbols of the gods were taken down to a stream for a bathe and during the afternoon many Sirahas fell into trance and postured and danced in ecstasy. A little shrine was set up in the middle of the clearing and as more and more people arrived and other gods came to visit Usendi Pen, the Sirahas danced wildly round and round it. A procession was formed, the Anga leading it, with tall poles decorated with peacocks' feathers following, and a crowd of children carrying [534] gongs and various substitutes for gongs—bits of painted wood, the lids of old kerosene oil tins, anything that could be banged to make a noise.

Gradually the place filled up and by four o'clock there were three or four thousand people present—a small attendance, I was told. The Marias and Murias showed little interest in the shops which were mostly attended by local Hindus and officials, and there was very little drinking, though many a boy brought a gourd or a bottle of rice-beer or palm wine hanging under his arm. Then the dancing began, and hundreds of boys and girls in the full Hill Maria dancing attire (though no Hill Marias were present) and carrying decorated sticks and axes over their shoulders, formed lines and processions and great circles, until the entire ground was alive with slowly circulating movement.

As evening fell little fires sprang up under every tree where groups of people made their camps. The older people drank, cooked and gossiped with their relatives. Like all bazaars the Marhai is a great occasion for repairing friendships. During the night the boys and girls continued dancing, and from time to time the Sirahas brought out the Anga-gods and danced with them.

The moon rose at midnight and turned the scene into one of extraordinary majesty and beauty. The festival was decorous and restrained, but very happy. There was no orgy and practically no drunkenness. At dawn the dancing stopped and in a few minutes the whole great assembly melted away back into the forest.

IX

764 On page 281 Grigson refers briefly to the Bison-horn Maria custom of erecting carved wooden pillars in memory of well-known or wealthy tribal leaders. There are not many of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

These pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. They are usually made of the wood of *terminalia tomentosa* or *shorea robusta* and are erected with ceremonies similar to those used for a menhir.

As far as I know, the pillars are always made by non-aboriginals, but since the Marias give their instructions to the carpenters about the patterns they want carved, they do thus throw some light on Maria psychology even if they do not illustrate their sense of art. For example, the pillar in memory of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar was made by Bharto, an Oriya carpenter of Jagdalpur. The pillars for Barse Marka at Barrem and for Marvi Masa at Jabeli were both made by Anda Kalar of Potali. For Barse Marka's pillar his sister's son gave a bull calf worth twenty rupees, cloth worth five rupees, two rupees in cash and daily rations for the fifteen days while the carpenter was working.

There was a fine pillar to a wealthy Maria named Muchaki Hunga near Dilmilli on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. It is a fat, thick pillar, carefully squared, standing some fifteen feet high with elaborate carvings round the base and a decoration of crocodiles and pigeons at the top. The whole is surmounted by a trident, obviously suggested by the carpenter, and on this again is a small bird. On the west face of the pillar there are carvings of dancers wearing bison horns and six girls who are realistically portrayed with breasts and genitalia. Below them is a tiger, a crane and a peacock. On the south side is a picture of the dead man riding an elephant, an umbrella in his hand and bags of money at the saddle. Five women follow him with pots of rice-beer and spoons. Below them are rats. At the foot are men ploughing, deer and tigers. On the east side is a man riding a horse and fish, horses and a tortoise. To the north is a man and wife with their children, a gourd for taking beer from a pot and representations of snakes and birds. Below this are two pairs of dogs apparently copulating, and at the very bottom some men are carrying a pot of rice-beer.

Near the pillar is a grave built up in the modern Hinduized fashion and protected by a little shed.

Near Massenar, at the end of a long row of *waskal* menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa. This is much more slender than the one at Dilmilli and is not so well carved. But it has carvings of Kopa himself on his elephant with the inevitable umbrella, a gun and a tobacco pouch. On his chest is a small circle which I was told represented his Jubilee Medal. The pillar is further decorated with carvings of men dancing with the bison-horn head-dress, boys and girls dancing with a pot of rice-beer, a man trying to drag away a girl by the hand, crocodiles,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

764 porcupines, peacocks, fish and tigers. The carpenter had put in a representation of Hanuman, but the Marias, knowing little of 532 him, supposed it was a policeman included to emphasize Kopa's dignity.

The pillar also has, or had, pigeons on the top and there was a trident, though the Marias were ignorant of its meaning. 'It is the pole's turban,' they said. 'It is made of iron to save us the trouble of renewing it.'

It is obviously impossible to describe all these pillars[1]; in 1942 they were to be found near Chitrakot, near Killepal, at Lalaguda, near Sirisguda, at Taragaon, at Kumalnar and at Garda. I saw a very simple one at Chingner in honour of an important member of the Lekhami clan. It was standing out in the jungle by itself; there were three rows of lozenges cut in the wood near the top and a single carved pigeon above. It was still red with oil mixed with *geru*. At its foot was a flat stone supported on two others, the *hawal-garya*. From the top there hung a strip of cloth, possibly a bit of the dead man's dancing dress.

It is important to note that these pillars are closely associated with the megalithic culture of the Marias. Sometimes both a menhir and pillar are erected for the same man; sometimes the pillar stands at the end of a row of stone monuments. It is not, therefore, in any sense a substitute for the *uraskal* but a supplement to it. I have noticed a similar combination of stone and wooden [171] monuments among the Lanjhia Saoras who have come under Kond influence.

It is tempting to suppose that the various animals and birds carved on the pillar have some totemic significance, but I doubt if this is so. In the first place, every pillar has a wide variety of animals portrayed upon it; in the second the people themselves say that these animals simply represent the ordinary objects of the chase and are carved to indicate some of the interests of the dead man. Each pillar in fact attempts to be a biography in wood of the deceased.

These notes are desultory enough, but they do at least give me 114 an opportunity of paying some tribute to the man whose endless docility to facts has enabled him to make so striking a contribution to science and whose great-hearted affection for the aboriginals has led him to propose a policy and establish principles which, if adopted by the National Governments of the future, will preserve freedom and happiness in the hills and forests of India. There is much that is tedious in anthropology, much that hardly seems worth while,

[1] The pillar of Marvi Oyami Masa, the homicide, is described in detail in *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 201.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

much that cannot conceivably be turned to practical advantage. It needs a mind like Mr. Grigson's which can see the whole, grasp the meaning of the culture, love it and use it. He is one of the few who, in Blake's words, has 'the power to make the inside of the Cave seem Infinite'. 114

VERRIER ELWIN

Patangarh Village.
Mandla District
August 17th, 1945

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A NOTE ON THE MARIA GONDS OF CHANDA AND DRUG DISTRICTS

I HAD planned for this Indian edition of *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* a long note on the Marias of the zamindaris of the Chanda and Drug districts which border on the country of the Hill Marias of Bastar, and the Muria country of the former Paralkot zamindari and the Antagarh (now the Narainpur) tahsil of Bastar. From 1940 to 1942 I held various secretariat appointments at Nagpur, but was also simultaneously entrusted with the duty of investigating the conditions, throughout the Central Provinces and Berar, of the so-called aboriginal tribes. Thus, unlike most occupants of secretariat pews, I was occasionally able to escape from the tedium of that distressing and almost universal complaint, the files (as they were once described in a witty farewell speech by a great provincial administrator), to the backwoods, their green and mountainy valleys, and their scattered Korku, Baiga or Gond tribes, still so little outwardly changed from the state in which Sir Richard Temple, the first Chief Commissioner of the newly formed Central Provinces had seen them eighty years before, when, as Forsyth[1] wrote :—

> 'Then were seen strange sights in that unknown land; when distant valleys and mountain gorges, that had heard no other sound than the woodman's axe, echoed to the horse-hoofs of the tireless Chief, and his small knot of often weary followers; when the solitary Gond or Byga clearing his patch of millet on the remote hillside, was astonished by the apparition, on some commanding hill-top, of that veritable 'Government' (Sirkar) in the flesh, which to him and his for several generations had been an abstraction.'

Alas, with every year seeing new additions to the statute book of India and of the provinces, each adding more and more to the burden of files and desk-work, it has long been increasingly rare for the Gond or Baiga to see the Sirkar or any of its minions in the flesh, and rare for the district officer to be able to tour off the beaten track in the backward, forest parts of his district. Hence the growth of the aboriginal problem, the task of enabling the tribesman to preserve his own culture and values, even the very acres which he won from the jungle or inherited from his father, against the

[1] Captain J. Forsyth, *The Highlands of Central India* (London, 1889), pp. 17-18.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

invasion by land-hungry Hindus of the highlands and backwoods, with its accompaniment of money-lenders, cloth pedlars, lawyers' touts, landlords and forest contractors.

The terms of reference for my aboriginal enquiry directed my special attention to the conditions in the tribal tracts which had been declared Partially Excluded Areas under the Government of India Act of 1935. Those are the tracts, speaking generally, where the tribes still constitute a majority of the population and by thus being able to preserve much of their own traditional way of life can still present something of a united front to the invasion of new settlers and new ideas.[1] The Partially Excluded Areas of Chanda district include the huge Ahiri zamindari of Sironcha tahsil and the Garchiroli tahsil zamindaris of Dhanora, Dudhmala, Jharapapara, Khutgaon, Kotgal, Muramgaon, Palasgarh, Rangi, Sirsundi, Sonsari, Chandala, Gilgaon, Pai-Muranda, Potegaon and Gewardha. My enquiries therefore gave me a long desired chance of seeing the Marias of Chanda. These zamindaris have a total area of 4,013 square miles, mostly of hill and forest, and had in 1941 a population of 115,031; this figure included 70,821 'aboriginals', so that out of every 1,000 persons, 607 were tribal. In the 1931 census 34,776 of the Gonds of these zamindaris were returned as Marias, against a total of 34,986[2] Marias for all the British districts of the Central Provinces, leaving only some 210 Marias for the *khalsa* areas of Chanda district and the zamindaris of the Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district. The total strength of the Maria tribe in the British districts of the province is given in the 1941 census summary as 39,553,[3] district figures not being shown. Almost all of these will have been returned from the Chanda Partially Excluded Areas.

It has been indicated in this book how vague are the terms 'Maria' and 'Muria',[4] and how all the tribes thus vaguely designated speak of themselves as Koitor or Koi, distinguishing between one group and another by such terms as Highland Koitor, or Lowland or Plains Koitor. Let it be remembered that the word Maria is not a Gondi word and that *all* Gondi-speaking Gonds throughout the Central Provinces and Berar and Hyderabad State speak of themselves as Koitor; then it will be realised how unprecise, unscientific a term 'Maria' really is. Here in these Chanda zamindaris it is

[1] Any investigator of tribal conditions soon realises that the tribesmen inside the Partially Excluded Areas are not yet in as bad a plight as their kinsmen outside those areas, in the more 'advanced' districts, where they are steadily losing such land as is left to them and sinking to the status of landless labourers in the service of those who have expropriated them.

[2] and [3] *Census of India*, 1941, Vol. I, Part I, Table XIV, p. 118.

[4] See pp. 35-6, 42, 44, 46-50.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 often difficult to say where the Koitor begin or cease to be Maria. Much depends on the idiosyncrasies of the census enumerators. Moreover just as in Bastar there is really no hard and fast ethnological boundary line between Hill Maria and the tribes generally referred to as 'Muria', so in Chanda to the north and west of the zamindaris many now classed as Gond would undoubtedly at one time have been regarded as Maria, while where Chanda district borders on the west of the Narainpur (Antagarh) tahsil of Bastar the villagers are ethnically identical on both sides of the border, but on the Chanda side are called Maria and on the Bastar side Muria: of this I had a remarkable instance on my journey north from Surjagarh[1] in Ahiri zamindari to Jarawandi,[2] where the forest track crosses the two small west-protruding tongues of Bastar shown near the north-west corner of Bastar in the ethnographic map on page 40, near the Antagarh villages of Udcha[3] and Irpanar[4] in the southern tongue and Markanar[5] in the northern tongue; men of one clan living in the tongues called themselves Muria while their fellow-clansmen in the adjacent Ahiri villages called themselves Maria.

101 Drug district, Chanda district and Bastar State all meet at the
16| north-west corner of Bastar, as the map on page 40 makes clear. At this corner of Drug are the Drug Partially Excluded Areas, the zamindaris of Aundhi, Koracha, Panabaras and Ambagarh-Chauki transferred to Drug from Chanda in 1907. These zamindaris had in 1941 a population of 82,202, of whom aboriginals numbered 51,452, or 626 in every thousand. Of the latter some 16,750 were returned as practising the tribal religion, and the bulk of these must have been Gond. No 'Marias' were returned. Yet again, especially in Aundhi and Koracha, there is no racial difference between those returned there as 'Gond', their Chanda neighbours returned as 'Maria' and their Bastar neighbours returned as 'Muria'. Reference to land revenue and settlement records even in Panabaras zamindari[6] shows that down to the great famines at the end of the nineteenth century and even later the local headmen and ryots were frequently recorded as Maria by tribe.

101 All that in fact can safely be predicated of the country covered
131 by my tour in the Chanda and Drug zamindaris is that according to

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Qr. Inch Sheet 5A. ref. MV4774.
[2] Ibidem, ref. MQ5121.
[3] Ibidem, ref. MV4898.
[4] Ibidem, ref. MV5298.
[5] Ibidem, ref. MQ5314.
[6] See for example Grigson, *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar* (Nagpur, 1944), pp. 79-81.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Central Provinces terminology it was Maria country, or had till recently been thus considered; according to modern Bastar terminology it would be considered Muria country. To this there is one exception. The map on page 20 shows a projection westward into Chanda district of the Abujhmar Mountains between the western border of the State and the Kotri River, north of the Indrawati, just west of the junction of the Behra Mar, Jatwada and Farsal *parganas* of Narainpur (Antagarh tahsil) shown in the sketch-map on page 33. On this projection of the hills there are, speaking from memory, seven or eight villages which are definitely Hill Maria like the adjacent Abujhmar villages of Bastar, completely Hill Maria in culture, peopled by tribesmen who, like the Hill Maria of Bastar, call themselves Meta (Highland) Koitor, and despise the Maria of Lahiri and the other plains villages of Ahiri zamindari below their fastnesses.

I was able to make a rapid tour through much of this Chanda and Drug country in December 1940, and January 1941; certain preliminary investigations before my visit were made for me in Chanda by Mr. J. D. Kerawala of the Central Provinces and Berar Civil Service, who was then the Sub-divisional Officer, and he was with me throughout my tour. Some of the administrative and economic notes made on this tour were incorporated in various chapters of my book *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar*[1] to which I shall refer hereafter as *The Aboriginal Problem*, for the sake of brevity. I also filled a thick note-book with ethnographic and anthropological material, and had intended to use that material for this Note. Unfortunately the note-book perished when my house at Hyderabad was burnt down in a sudden senseless riot on the Ides of March 1946, along with almost all my Chanda photographs, the note-books, manuscripts and photographs of twenty-five years in India, and the whole of my library. No doubt this has simplified packing to quit India, but so far as this Note is concerned it has meant depriving it of what would have made it most valuable. It has therefore to be written from memory, and references in *The Aboriginal Problem*.

Let me now describe the tour generally, mentioning the places visited and the persons and things seen. My first halt was at Allapilli[2] in Sironcha tahsil, the site of the teak saw-mills of the provincial Forest Department, a few miles from Ahiri,[3] the headquarters of the Ahiri zamindari, which I visited from Allapilli.

[1] Nagpur, Government Printing, Central Provinces and Berar, 1944.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV0852.
[3] Ibidem, ref. MV0749.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 The Zamindar, Mr. Dharamrao Bhujangrao, is himself a Raj-Gond, Atrāmi (6-god) by clan (*pari*); he was then a member of the provincial Legislative Assembly and had been for a short time a Minister in the Provincial Government. His huge estate comprises 2,545 square miles in Sironcha tahsil and 55 square miles in Garchiroli tahsil. The *District Gazetteer*[1] describes almost the whole estate as consisting of 'one unbroken range of forests', drained by the great Wainganga, Pranhita and Indrawati rivers and their tributaries. 'On the extreme east stretches a simple maze of hills of considerable height, which fill almost the whole of the large tract east of the junction of the Palmāgotam,[2] Paralkot and Indrawati rivers at Bhamragarh.[3] These hills[4] attain a height of from 2,000 to 3,000 feet and are absolutely inaccessible to any kind of vehicle. Some distance south of Ahiri itself are situated the Bhimaram and the Dewalmāri hills, and to the east of these lies another range of hills known locally as the Mallanāgutta range. The greatest length and breadth of the estate are each about eighty miles, and, with the exception of Government forests of an area of about 82,000 acres which have been acquired in its interior, it is altogether uninterrupted by other properties.'

161 In the 1931 census Ahiri had in all its 2,600 square miles only 358 villages, 7,748 occupied houses and 40,450 inhabitants,
162 a population, that is, of only sixteen to the square mile. It is thus by far the most thinly populated area of the Province. Even the other Chanda zamindaris had 38 persons to the square mile, and the zamindaris of the Sanjari (Balod) tahsil of Drug district 94. Ahiri's population included 28,968 followers of tribal religion, of whom only 43 were literate, 97 Brahmans, 8,842 Hindus, 2,042 Depressed Classes, 427 Muslims and 72 others. The followers of tribal religion nearly all were 'Maria'. The Hindus would include some hinduized Gonds near Ahiri and along the Pranhita Valley and the Chanda-Sironcha road; but of all the 34,776 Maria enumerated in Chanda district only 274 returned their religion as Hindu and even of the 95,358 other Gonds in the district only 25,302 were Hindu.

It is remarkable to contrast the effect on the tribal population

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 449.

[2] The quarter-inch *Ordnance Survey of India* sheet does not record this name. The three rivers which meet at Bhamragarh are the Indrawati, the Kotri (which is the Paralkot here mentioned) and the Nibra, which in this book (p. 25-7), I have called by its Maria name Nei Bherat ('Dog River').

[3] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. 65A, MV6730. See p. 22 for an account. The confluence of the Indrawati and Kotri or Paralkot rivers is illustrated facing p. 182 of *The Aboriginal Problem*.

[4] These are the projections into Ahiri of the Abujhmar Mountains already mentioned.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It is remarkable to contrast the effect on the tribal population 565
of Ahiri of two influences, that of the zamindar and his administra- 177
tion at Ahiri and that of the Allapilli forest depot. The zamindar as a practising Raj-Gond, related both to the former royal house of Chanda and to the neighbouring zamindari families of Kutru and Bhopalpatnam in Bastar State, might be expected to be in some sense a focus or rallying point of tribal culture. But he and his relatives and agents (so far as the latter are Gond) are representatives of what Verrier Elwin describes as culturally the fourth class of aboriginals, the old aristocracy of the country who 'retain the old tribal name and their clan and totem rules and observe elements of tribal religion though they generally adopt the full Hindu faith and live in modern and even in European style'. He adds that the members of this fourth class may be said to have won the battle of culture-contact, since 'aristocratic tradition, economic stability or affluence, outside encouragement, a certain arrogance and self-confidence characteristic alike of ancient families and modern enterprise, have enabled them to assimilate the blessings of civilization without injury to themselves'; but he wisely reminds us that 'such educated progressive persons are not necessarily, simply because they are of aboriginal stock, the best qualified to represent their poorer brethren, of whose needs they often have only an elementary knowledge'.[1] The zamindar of Ahiri at least on the economic side has done much to preserve his tribal ryots from the evil effects of such sudden contacts as have reduced to 'despair and degradation' Elwin's third class of aboriginals, 'those who under the influence of external contact have begun to lose their hold on tribal culture, religion and social organization'.[2] He has accordingly himself been active in efforts to save his people from alien money-lenders, and was, for example, an active and valuable member of a voluntary debt conciliation board that worked in Sironcha tahsil in 1935-6.[3] Yet the fact that Ahiri, as the headquarters of the estate administration, especially when the estate has been under the Court of Wards, has become a centre of the modern way of life, has brought to Ahiri and Allapilli and all the adjacent villages a steady influx of outsiders, mostly Hindu, as officials, contractors, cloth and salt dealers, money-lenders and cultivators. The Dasehra festival, attended by ryots from all villagers coming to honour the zamindar as their Raja, has accustomed even remote Maria villagers to certain fundamental Hindu ideas. The Court of Wards administration has proceeded on its ruthless, standardized lines, to impose on the

[1] The quotations are from *The Aboriginals* (Oxford Pamphlet on Indian Affairs, No. 14, Bombay, 1943), pp. 10-11.
[2] Ibidem, p. 10.
[3] *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 285-6

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

565 177 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally therefore on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 466 166 The Allapilli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen, etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

622 791 [1] For example, the suppression of *podu* cultivation, or the deliberate curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

> 'The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village, and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village; sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*. Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> 'This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official, and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

interior villages send down their young men in relays to work for wages at Allapilli. There they get prompt and regular payment and just and fair treatment. There are resting-sheds where the Marias can sleep, leave their scanty personal possessions and take their meals in clean surroundings, not divorced from their own kind. The Forest Department are arranging ever-improving facilities for them to purchase cloth, grain, salt and ornaments at fair prices. Forest work is in itself a technical training. At one time also the local officials tried to establish at Allapilli a small carpentry and basketry school.[1] Everywhere on this tour I met Marias who were on their way either to or from Allapilli, or had worked there from time to time in the past and looked upon it as a place to which they could always go to earn quickly any cash needed for payments of rent, fines or bride-price. More than one passage in *The Aboriginal Problem*[2] describes the Marias' consciousness of the fact that the Allapilli departmental forest operations have saved them from debt and distress; the establishment throughout the Chanda zamindari forests of similar 'Allapillis' was one of my recommendations. Allapilli has further been the one thing that has saved the Marias from the economic ruin that they feared when the Court of Wards and district authorities by a sudden ukase stopped their *podu* or *dahi* cultivation.

From Allapilli we motored eastwards by forest road and by estate forest tracks, generally motorable after slight repair in the open season, to Bhamragarh, halting a night on the way at Pirmeli; it was some fifteen miles from Allapilli to Pirmeli, and another twenty-three on to Bhamragarh. I had been preceded on this tour by Mr. Kerawala inquiring into debt at each big village, and the neighbouring village *bhumias* and *gaitas* and the *patti Sendhias*[3] from miles around gathered again to repeat to me what they had already told him. The first such gathering was at Mirkal[4] and the next at Pirmeli itself. At both places we heard much about money-lenders and their methods, and I therefore reproduce from *The Aboriginal Problem*[5] the gist of Mr. Kerawala's report on what he was told at Mirkal and Wateli;[6] those whom he saw at Wateli came to my camp at Pirmeli.

At Mirkal he enquired particularly into the economic and social conditions of the Marias of Mirkal, Sagangatta and Kasampalli villages. He found that many were heavily in debt to Hindu

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 283.
[2] Pp. 257, 332 and 366.
[3] See p. 387.
[4] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, *ref.* MV2148.
[5] Pp. 180-2.
[6] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. MV4955.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

426 563 money-lenders of Ahiri and Rajaram.[1] Few loans had been taken in cash, and the borrowers being unable to read or write had to depend entirely on the word of the money-lenders. Mada, son of Bodka Maria, of Sagangatta had borrowed Rs. 20 for wedding expenses ten or eleven years before from a Rajaram money-lender, and since then had been repaying him from time to time, generally in kind; he admitted however that he had also taken occasional loans of seed grain. He had no idea of the rates of interest and no means of checking his account, but had been told by his creditor that he now owed him Rs. 100. Korke, son of Kesu Maria said that his 'kind' *sahukar*, Chinwar Poshatti of Ahiri, was good enough to have gone on accepting for years whatever he had been able to pay towards a debt of the details of which he was completely ignorant. A Sagangatta villager had borrowed Rs. 40 twenty years ago from a Kalar money-lender in Ahiri for a wedding and, though he had since repaid many small sums and had given his creditor a bullock and a cow, had been told that he still owed Rs. 100; he said that the Kalar would never explain how he worked this out, but he thought the heavy rate of interest to be the reason why the debt still grew. Generally the Marias said that if they needed seed, they could only get it from the Ahiri and Rajaram money-lenders, who advanced seed on condition of repayment with 25 per cent. interest at the next harvest or 50 per cent. at the second harvest if they defaulted at the first; no consideration was given to failure of crops, and it was only on the promise of payment of 50 per cent. interest that further time was allowed for repayment of principal.

Similar tales were told at Wateli and at my Pirmeli camp by the very large gatherings of Marias. As at Mirkal, cash loans were few but nearly all had taken seed loans at rates of interest varying, even for punctual repayment, from 25 to 50 per cent., and going even higher than 100 per cent. in the event of default. Even if cash is borrowed, interest is paid annually in grain until the borrower can find cash to repay the principal. In fact the money-lenders seem to reckon on perpetual interest in kind on petty initial loans of five to ten rupees. Thus a Maria from Khandanwadi village had borrowed Rs. 10 from an Ahiri Kalar four years before; in each of the first and second years he had paid grain worth Rs. 10 merely as interest, but in the next two years his crops had failed, and he expected in the fifth year to have to pay either Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 worth of grain. A Maria from Pokht village had borrowed Rs. 5 six years ago, from a Telugu money-lender of Indaram, but as he had repaid nothing the Maria headmen said that he was a ruined man, as the money-lender's claims must have so swollen that the Maria

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. MV1833.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

would never be able to repay during his lifetime, and the debt would devolve on his sons. Another Maria from Irakdumme village had borrowed Rs. 20 bride-price from an Echli money-lender ten years before and had so far paid him paddy worth Rs. 22-8 as interest, but nothing towards principal, and had no idea what the final demand of his creditor would be. Another Maria from Batanfundi village had borrowed Rs. 12 from an Ahiri money-lender six or seven years ago and though he had repaid the principal was still being dunned for Rs. 40 worth of grain as interest, and was afraid that this high rate would now be doubled, as owing to the crop failure of 1939 he had been unable to repay any grain that year.

Throughout this area a crying need is an agency for advancing small seed-loans. The Government have seldom done this, on the theory that the zamindar should meet his tenants' needs; but we could not find one who had ever been given a seed-loan by the estate. The rates of interest extorted by the nests of money-lenders at Ahiri, Rajaram, Allapilli, Indaram, Echli and other centres are preposterous. The need for these seed-loans has been imposed on the Marias largely by the arbitrary stopping of their *podu* (*dahi*) shifting cultivation; *podu* fields always produced seed grain at least. Such is the pathetic honesty of the Marias that when the Debt Conciliation Board was working they readily acceded to the money-lenders' request to place their thumb-marks by the hundred on application after application begging the Board not to interfere between them and their money-lenders: it was only by persistent effort that the Board secured nearly 800 applications. In our camps the Maria elders opposed debt relief measures on the ground that if a man borrowed it was only right that he and his heirs after him should go on repaying. The final report of the Debt Conciliation Board of 1936 mentioned some fantastic cases. In one a Telugu Komti of Indaram had lent a Maria of Koreli a bullock on hire in 1920, at the usual fee of Rs. 4 worth of paddy. For twelve years the Maria went on paying Rs. 5 worth of paddy. In 1932 the Komti made out that the Maria still owed him Rs. 700 worth of paddy, and proceeded to show against him further compound interest of 50 per cent., until, when the Board took up the case, the Komti claimed as much as Rs. 2,320 worth of grain—all this for the hire of a single indifferent bullock. This, however, pales into insignificance against an Echli case of a money-lender lending Rs. 32 to finance a wedding a few years before, and in his accounts showing this debt, despite a repayment of Rs. 20, as having risen to Rs. 17,519!

At every halting place and camp the Marias' chief grievance, however, was not so much the exactions of money-lenders as the

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again."[2]

Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa*.
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Gond element had been scheduled, and many others omitted. It was unsound also to confine the privilege to Marias and Gonds, for there are many other aboriginal or semi-aboriginal tribes, such as Pardhan, Halba, Nagarchi, Thoti and Ojha, and artisan, grazier and untouchable castes living in close symbiosis with the Marias, who should get this concession; such an extension would reduce cases of illegal tapping, possession, sale and transfer, and minimize excise subordinate officials' opportunities for harassment and extortion. One of the worst agents of exploitation in aboriginal areas has been the Kalar excise contractor. The Maria here, thanks to this toddy and sago-palm concession, and the availability therefore in his village of this free source of mild intoxicant and the yeast vitamin, has long been far freer of economic thraldom to the Kalar than the other aboriginals in the province who have not had this concession. Moreover the Maria does not seriously abuse this privilege, except perhaps by occasionally selling or giving toddy to non-Marias. I strongly opposed a Nagpur proposal that 'a beginning should be made in the direction of regulating the drinking of toddy by the Marias of Sironcha' who, it was said, 'literally subsist on toddy for some months of the year and are drunk most of the time'. There may be some truth in this theory of drunkenness in regard to the teluguized plains, villages of Sironcha outside the zamindari, as noted of similar South Bastar villages on page 168. But of the Ahiri Marias it is quite false. For one thing the morning and evening climb of the palm-trees by rough bamboo ladders calls for nerve, and would be impossible for a drunkard. All through this tour I never saw a Maria drunk on toddy. Nor in the average Maria village are there enough tappable trees available to cause a tenth of this alleged general intoxication.

Just near Bhamragarh in one village bitter weeping came from a woman whose husband had been hauled off that morning for illicit tapping of toddy in an excise raid. As usual the main lament was not so much against this being treated—to my mind needlessly—as an offence, as against the social consequences of being handcuffed and imprisoned. Here we were close to the Kasansogh Togh or Kasansur Turri and other islands of the Indrawati formerly the subject of a boundary dispute between Chanda and Bastar, which I had settled in my voyage down the Indrawati from Kutru in 1927; across the river lay Pharasnar, headquarters of a sub-zamindari of Kutru zamindari, where I had then camped. The ethnographic map on page 40 marks the population of the Bastar bank here as mixed Dorla and Hill Maria, or Hill Maria who have almost become Dorla; and on page 52 I have noted that though on both sides of the river the villagers seem to be of Hill Maria origin and still exchange

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 brides, yet in the census of Bastar they were recorded as Murias.

000 Bhamragarh village itself had few Maria residents. Celebrated though it is as a beauty spot, to my mind the junction of the three rivers there can only be appreciated in its full beauty from the Bastar shore or, better still, from midstream, as I saw it first in 1927. This time we stayed in a forest rest-house on the Indrawati bank, and the Zamindar who had motored out to join me talked under the moon till late at night on tribal problems.

164 744 Yaws has long been a scourge of the Marias, in Chanda as in Bastar, but whereas the campaigns against yaws, begun when I was in Bastar and carried on with unremitting energy ever since by Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, have now almost eradicated the disease in Bastar save for fresh infection from contacts with Chanda Marias or Hyderabad Gonds and Koyas, in Chanda it is still very rife. Bhamragarh gave us an example typical of the difficulties which may beset schemes for helping the aboriginal in the absence of constant supervision of local minor officials. In 1936 the Government had opened a dispensary at Bhamragarh, primarily with the idea that it would become a centre for yaws treatment. Mr. Kerawala visiting Bhamragarh just before my tour, finding that hardly any yaws or other patients attended the dispensary, inquired why, and was told that the Assistant Medical Officer posted there was demanding a fowl and eggs from every Maria as a fee for each injection. His plea was that he had extreme difficulty in getting supplies, so that unless he could 'live on' the Marias he often had to go back by cart the 38 miles of forest track to Allapilli to get supplies, which meant closing the dispensary for nearly a week at a time. One of many things into which I was looking during this tour was the progress in Chanda of the first year of an anti-yaws campaign financed from a Government of India grant. Before that campaign began such anti-yaws work as had been attempted had been haphazard and unplanned, and nothing had been done to ensure that each patient took the full number of injections needed for a permanent cure. At all my camps in the Marias country patients streamed in for treatment, and as the Sub-assistant Health Officer deputed to accompany me for yaws work travelled in my lorry and had to stop in every village on our way to treat yaws patients, our arrival in camp was generally long after dark. The incidence of yaws seemed far greater than the Public Health Department had imagined. We had cases, as I have said, at every camp, perhaps especially among the Hill Marias at Kuvakodi, in Lahiri, and in all the villages between Pirmeli and Surjagarh, and thence on into Aundhi zamindari in Drug district;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias, Gonds, Marars, Mahras, Halbas, almost all communities were infected. At Jarawandi and in the villages of the Jharapapra and Aundhi zamindaris along the Bastar border many Maria and Halba villagers contrasted the Central Provinces Government's lack of care for them in Chanda and Drug districts with the anti-yaws and other public health work over the border in Bastar. It is of course only comparatively recently that doctors have recognized the existence of yaws as a distinct (and easily curable) disease which responds to treatment similar to the usual syphilis treatment; the *District Gazetteer*, for example, refers to the disease as 'a mild form of leprosy named "Gondi rog"'.[1]

Another thirteen miles of forest track, fairly easily negotiated by cars, brought us from Bhamragarh to the large village of Lahiri,[2] the headquarters of a *Sendhia's patti*, as mentioned at page 287. Lahiri lies at the foot of the Abujhmar Mountains, and beyond it no wheeled vehicles could proceed. Between Bhamragarh and Lahiri we saw several examples of the skilful *gatta* cultivation of the Marias, thus described in Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report:—

'In *gattas* the land above the dam is cultivated. To construct a *gatta*, a miniature valley with gently sloping sides, through which a stream flows, is chosen. The space between the banks of the stream is built up in the hot weather with trunks of trees, having their thinner end towards the point from which the current flows, and across these are fixed smaller logs and brushwood. The upstream face has thus a gentle slope to the front, while the rear face is almost perpendicular, and is sometimes strengthened by vertical stakes. The barricade is carried from four to eight feet above the level of the banks, and is then heaped with earth. As soon as the first rains have softened the ground, sods, about fifteen inches long by twelve broad and five thick, are dug with a heavy teak implement called a *katua*, and with the sods wing embankments are built. These are run out in continuation of, and level with the log barricade, until the rise of the valley reduces their height to about a foot, when they are sloped off to the front and flanks; and pipes of *mohwa*, *en* or *gougool* are put through. Similar *gattas* are constructed at convenient distances at other points of the stream, and if the situation be favourable, twenty of these *gattas* may be seen spanning the valley in regular series. Surplus water passes round the flanks of the *gatta*, and sometimes in floods, the stream tops the dams and cascades over. Rice is planted in the wet ground above the dam, and, where there is a succession of *gattas*, water, if required, is passed from a higher to a lower level through the wooden pipes in the embankment. Some of the *gattas* rise to twenty feet above the stream bed, and are very substantial structures, flooding large areas.'

This skill is slowly making its way among the Hill Marias, and the illustrations facing page 146 of this book of a Hill Maria dam at Tondawada in Bastar are really of a typical *gatta*, including the hollow tree-trunk pipe. That this traditional skill persists and has developed into a real irrigation technique has been shown by Rao

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.
[2] Spelt Lahir on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV8455.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 312 Bahadur D. Lakshmanswamy in his 1922-4 Sironcha and Garchiroli Settlement Report, paragraph 31 :—

'Agriculture in parts of these zamindaris is as thorough as in the most advanced *khalsa* tracts. One has simply to look at the extensive rice fields and *gattas* of the Madias [*sic*] to admire the almost mathematical levelling of their field embankments. The Maria Gond has a genius for rice cultivation. He selects the best *silan* position area, and with an intuition for irrigation lays out his fields one below the other so as to utilise water from the field above to that lower down. A natural stream or spring of water is generally never allowed to go waste by him. He so embanks and diverts the supply by a system of well arranged water-channels as to utilise the whole supply for his rice area, however distant it may be. Even in the remotest part of the zamindaris agriculture has now developed beyond the domestic stage and assumed the commercial stage. The aboriginals constituting the greater part of the population of these zamindaris mostly live on the early rice, small millets and beans, while the heavy rice grown in the big *gattas* and embanked areas is exported to the markets.'

241 Now it should be noted that this means that for his own subsistence the Maria still relied on the grains and beans dear to his heart, and grown by *dahi* or *jalapod* cultivation, which had not then been stopped except in parts of Ahiri. The growth of heavy rice as a commercial crop is yet another sign of the transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Of this the money-lender takes full advantage.

241 406 563 For in these plains villages around Bhamragarh and Lahiri, besides Marias and Gonds there are nests of Teli exploiters, notably in the six villages of Lahiri, Mallampodur,[1] Kukurmeta,[2] Arawara,[3] Dodrai[4] and Idadapalli.[5] Many of these Teli money-lenders are now wealthy, as a result of small grain loans to the plains Marias and Gonds. The *modus operandi* is repayment indefinitely at rates of interest so high that the principal can never be repaid, while interest takes the form of a steady and heavy share of the debtors' harvest. Some of the Telis resort habitually to molestation of their debtors until the latter satisfy their yearly demand, but though molestation of debtors is now a cognizable offence under the Debtors' Protection Act, the police in their far distant police station at Etapalli never take action against molesting money-lenders. We have seen already on page 102 how these Telis' tentacles had spread to such Bastar villages as Nugor in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, where there were big matting paddy bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored on behalf of the Telis, who were free from time to time to remove all paddy from the bins surplus to the Marias' seed requirements, while each Maria villager was free to help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest

[1] References on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A :
1. MV7951
2. MV7854
3. MV7055
4 and 5. Not marked.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

he would repay with 50 per cent. interest.[1] Although it is clear that these Teli, Kalar and Telugu money-lenders do levy an exorbitant toll on the Maria villagers' produce, it is equally clear that they are fulfilling a necessary function, which has become the more necessary since the stopping of *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation below the hills has restricted the Marias in most villages to permanent rice cultivation on small acreages always dependent on seasonal rainfall evenly distributed in time. If such money-lenders are excluded, then they must be replaced by Government grain depots and village grain banks.

Of Maria funeral rites the *Gazetteer* observes that a stone or a carved post about five feet high is usually put up to mark the spot where a man's body has been cremated, and that 'sometimes one comes across a forest glade strewn with these memorials, the only sign of some deserted village, the very name of which has perished'.[2] Many rows of carved wooden posts may be seen between Bhamragarh and Lahiri, while at Lahiri itself I saw scores of such posts and of the small cromlechs (*hanal-garya* or 'thrones of the Departed') described on page 273, and mentioned in the *Gazetteer*[3] as built on the spot where the body was burned. The top of one of these very substantial funerary posts, or *hanal-gutta*, photographed at Lahiri, is reproduced as one of the illustrations in this Supplement. Noticeable are the carved wooden horns, between which is a carved wooden bird, probably a hornbill. The wooden horns are common, and probably are a modern symbol of the cow formerly sacrificed at the erection of a menhir or wooden *hanal-gutta* by Hill Marias[4] and Bison-horn Marias[5] throughout Bastar: the funerary customs of the Chanda Marias seemed, however, to be Hill Maria in type, and this was confirmed by oral enquiries at Lahiri.

The addiction of the Bison-horn Marias and of the Kutru Hill Marias of Bastar to cock-fighting has been described on page 162. I particularly inquired if the weekly cock-fights at Oikal in Ahiri zamindari, there mentioned, and at Lahiri itself still went on. But all cock-fighting among Chanda Marias had for some years been stopped under orders from an inexperienced young European District Superintendent of Police on the theory that it contravened the Gambling Act. But the Marias maintained that, as in Bastar, so here, there had never been cash betting (as, indeed, one might expect in a region where all transactions are still so largely in kind), but the defeated bird had passed to the owner of the winning bird.

[1] For further details, see *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 183-4.
[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 100.
[3] Ibidem, loc. cit.
[4] See pp. 278-9.
[5] See p. 281.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

541 656 Such iron knives or spurs as were tied on to the cock's legs were very small, and a Lahiri Maria criticized the usual theory that this way of increasing a cock's natural armament is cruel on the ground that if it meant a quicker death for the defeated cock it was merciful. All the headmen promised that if the ban on cock-fights were lifted they would frown on cash or grain betting, and, if we so desired, on the use of iron spurs and knives. Thoughtless officiousness such as that which stopped this favourite tribal pastime is only too typical of the lack of imagination with which officials, great and small, are apt to interfere with all that lends colour to aboriginal life.

615 618 114 Lahiri was one of the chief camps where I questioned the local Marias as to their clan organization, particularly the grouping of clans into phratries according to the number of *Chuddur penk* or Little Gods. I mentioned on pages 194-5 my doubts as to the traditional accounts of this god-grouping among the Chanda Marias. But these accounts go back to Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report. A somewhat confusing summary of his account, on page 101 of the *Gazetteer*, seems to imply that there is little difference between the god-grouping of the Raj-Gond, the other Gond tribes of Chanda. Lucie-Smith divided the Raj-Gonds into a four-god group, with the tortoise and crocodile totems, a five-god group with the iguana totem, a six-god group with the tiger totem, and a seven-god group with the porcupine totem: these groups were 'divided into what the *Gazetteer* calls 'houses or families, distinguished by their family name or *padi*', i.e. into what in this book have been called clans (*pari*), which numbered 28 among the Raj-Gonds, 24 among the Marias and 17 among the Dhurve Gond. Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, p. 66) say that in Chanda :—

> 'There are four main groups worshipping seven, six, five and four gods respectively, and each group contains ten to fifteen septs. A man cannot marry a woman of any sept which worships the same number of gods as himself. Each group has a sacred animal which the members revere, that of the seven-god worshippers being a porcupine, of the six-god worshippers, a tiger, of the five-god worshippers, the *saras* crane, and of the four-god worshippers, a tortoise. As a rule the members of the different groups do not know the names of their gods, and in practice it is doubtful whether they restrict themselves to the proper number of gods of their own group. Formerly there were three-, two-, and one-god worshippers, but in each of these classes it is said that there were only one or two septs, and they found that they were much inconvenienced by the paucity of their numbers, perhaps for the purposes of communal worship and feasting, and hence they got themselves enrolled in the larger groups. In reality it would appear that the classification according to the number of gods worshipped is being forgotten and the three lowest groups have disappeared.'

They suggested that this conjecture was supported by the fact that in Chhindwara and other localities only two large six-god and seven-god groups remained.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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114

The accounts over-simplify scattered data collected without concentrated field-enquiry. Even the *Gazetteer*, in a footnote to the passage quoted above from page 101, speaks of a group of three-god Marias having lately been verified in Lahiri. Shoobert[1] quotes the late Bishop Wood as having verified the existence of a group of three-god Marias in the Chanda villages of Lahiri and Beni-Gunda near the Bastar border of Chanda district, and enquiries which the Bishop had made for me in 1929 by the Rev. S. G. Patwardhan, the well-known Indian missionary priest of the Scottish Episcopal Church Mission at Ahiri, went further, as indicated on page 195, and established definitely that the Chanda Marias of Bidri, Yemla, Burgi,[2] Uddera and Kandodi had one three-god clan, six four-god, eight five-god, eight six-god and eight seven-god clans (31 clans against Lucie-Smith's 24). Russell and Hiralal are wrong even of Chhindwara district, where I verified some three-god clans (as in Nagpur district) and even a one-god and a no-god clan. Baron C. von Fürer-Haimendorf's forthcoming book on the Raj-Gonds of the Adilabad plateaux of Hyderabad will deal exhaustively with the god-grouping[3] of the Adilabad Gonds, whose social system is based on a system of four phratries (*saga*), the seven-god, six-god, five-god and four-god phratries. His conclusions there have been to some extent foreshadowed in his interesting article 'The Cult of the Clan Gods among the Raj-Gonds of Hyderabad', published in *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, 1945, pages 149-86. His field-work has been far more detailed and closer than any previous work among Raj-Gonds, and the whole body of myths which he has recorded as to these phratries or god-groups throws altogether new light on the origins and facts of Gond social organization. It badly needs to be supplemented rapidly by similar enquiries among all the sections of the Gonds not only in Chanda district, but also in all the Central Provinces and Berar districts and States where this god-grouping still persists. One is apt to assume that it is dying out or deteriorating rapidly in areas formerly known as British India, in contrast to areas such as Adilabad, which has never been under British rule, and has been till recently free from the detribalizing, hinduizing work of the schoolmaster, or as most of the Chanda Maria country. But the difference may be rather that the Gond of the more

[1] *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*, 1931, p. 334.

[2] I checked this at Burgi (*Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV3842) and discussed the whole question with Rev. Patwardhan at Ahiri: the 31 clans may be far from exhaustive.

[3] Haimendorf prefers to speak of 'seven-brother', 'six-brother' phratries, holding that his Raj-Gonds speak of a classification by the number not so much of *penk* (gods) as of *Pen*, an almost untranslatable term meaning 'heroes', or 'divine ancestors'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615 618 114 advanced ' areas further north, faced by Brahman ridicule of his culture, has more and more withdrawn into his shell and learnt to conceal the more intimate features of his tribal religion and culture.

174 60 618 Until we have before us the records of such systematized and widespread field-work it is impossible to form any reliable general theory of the origin of this god-grouping. My tentative view, so far as the Chanda Marias are concerned, for what it is worth, is that the god-grouping is a comparatively recent importation from their northern and western Gond (especially Raj-Gond) neighbours. As I have pointed out on pages 194-5, the Bastar Marias and Murias have neither god-grouping nor *chuddur penk*. I added that none of the Chanda Marias who had come to my camps in Bastar had these institutions. This may appear inconsistent with the definite proof of the existence at least of god-grouping among the Chanda Marias, as recorded from Lucie-Smith's time onwards, and verified by Bishop Wood and Rev. Patwardhan and in this tour of mine. But here again one must distinguish between the Chanda Marias of the hills above Lahiri and those of the plains and foothills. Those who came to my Bastar camps were all Chanda Hill Marias: those among whom god-grouping was verified were plains Marias. I camped for four days at Kuvakodi, a hill village high above Lahiri, and visited other hill villages close by both in Chanda and in Bastar. The Chanda Hill Marias are identical in culture with the Bastar Hill Marias, and like them had, at least at Christmas 1940, no god-grouping and no *chuddur penk*. The Hill Marias of Chanda in fact appear to be what the *Gazetteer*[1] describes as the Gaita sub-tribe of Gonds, and the speakers of the dialect referred to by it[2] and in the *Linguistic Survey* as Gattu, the language of the 'Kois or Gonds of the hills, especially in Sironcha', who 'are known as Gattu or Gotte Kois'; for it speaks of the Gaita Gonds as being 'almost alone in retaining the old Gondi custom, once universal, of building their village in two long barracks lying east and west facing each other about eighty feet apart' in which the married people dwell, while the bachelors, and in some villages unmarried girls also, have separate barracks. This description clearly fits the Hill Marias of Kuvakodi and adjacent hill villages, as it would do the villages of the neighbouring Hill Maria *parganas* of Bastar.

So we start with these, the most primitive of the Marias of Chanda, and find among them no trace of god-grouping or *chuddur penk*. Down the hill we come to Lahiri, and we find god-grouping (which, however, includes a three-god group absent among the Chanda and Adilabad Raj-Gonds), but, so far as I could ascertain, no *chuddur*

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 97, 98.
[2] Ibidem, p. 73.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

penk corresponding in number to the number of gods of the god-group, and apparently no domestic cult except of the Departed. As you go northwards beyond Surjagarh or north-westwards towards Chand the Marias begin to understand the meaning of god-grouping and of *chuddur penk*, but even there seemed to me—admittedly my enquiries were superficial—to have no such vital interest in these things as a typical Raj-Gond or Dhurve Gond. This would be explicable on a theory that this god-grouping was something gradually imposed, not necessarily deliberately, but by infiltration and imitation, by the Gonds of the ruling house of Chanda and the aristocratic Gond zamindars, under the feudal system grouped about the Chanda Maharaja, upon the whole 'Maria' substratum of the Gonds of Chanda. The Marias probably represent one or two early waves of Gond migration southwards or, at least the Hill Marias, an earlier pre-Gond race with Veddid, Malid or Munda affinities.[1] There are differences between Chanda Hill Maria and plains Maria speech, the former being as guttural as Bastar Hill Maria; but all Chand Marias speak a form of Gondi very different from the Gondi of the Raj and Dhruve Gonds of Chanda, which would support the view that the latter represent different waves of migration, later moreover in view of their very advanced social and political organization and their aristocratic elements: compare also the position of the Pardhan bards and musicians in Raj-Gond life with their rarity in Maria villages. It is probable also that the ancestors of many who now are called Raj-Gonds a few generations back were Maria. The *Gazetteer*[2] mentions that though Marias do not now (1909) intermarry with Raj-Gonds, the records of the Ahiri family show that they once did so. The very term Raj-Gond in my view, as expressed on page 36, arose from the process still common whereby as sections of aboriginal tribes became Hinduized or acquired political power they distinguish themselves from the main body of their original tribe, so as to fit into the caste system. There can be little doubt that as the Raj-Gond kingdom of Chanda grew in power leading local Gond or Maria headmen or elders who fitted into the social organization of the kingdom came to be regarded as Raj-Gond: compare also the discussion earlier in this Note[3] of the meaning of the term 'Maria' and its disappearance in Drug district terminology in very recent times.[4] What, therefore, could be more

[1] Comparable with, for example, the Kolams of Hyderabad and Berar, or the Hill Reddis of Hyderabad, Madras and Orissa. The late Bishop Wood on hearing Bastar Marias talk said that to him it sounded like Gondi spoken with Mandari accent and intonation. See also R. C. Roy on pp. 317-18

[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909) p. 101

[3] P. 377.

[4] P. 378.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

natural than for the backward Marias aspiring to raise themselves to Raj-Gond status to copy gradually the Raj-Gond social organization? It is equally possible that *pari passu* the Raj-Gond ruler and nobles encouraged this: in all these semi-feudal, semi-tribal states and sub-states, as to this day in the States and zamindaris of Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the Maharajah of the State or the Rajah of the zamindari remains the final arbiter in caste matters, even often conferring the right to wear the sacred thread on communities actively hinduizing themselves. At Surjagarh and Jarawandi camps, various *Sendhias* and headmen practically admitted to me that god-grouping was not originally a Maria institution.[1]

From Lahiri there was a long climb of thirteen miles to the Hill Maria village of Kuvakodi, when we halted for four days, including Christmas Day. The track led at first up the valley of the Lahiri river, then up the side valley of a small tributary, and so by an exceptionally steep ascent on to an undulating plateau, across which we reached Kuvakodi at dusk, our camp equipment all being carried on poles by Marias, whom on arrival we rewarded not only in cash but, in Bastar fashion, with salt and beads, and a feast of pork: the Marias sat ranged by clan and village, and those who killed and cooked the pork distributed to every man and child, and to the women of Kuvakodi, a portion of the meat off each joint of the pig. On the way up a slight detour took us through the small village of Gudumundi, and from Kuvakodi we visited Podewara and the Bastar village of Nelangari, some five miles from our camp.

Each day started with a parade of yaws patients for inoculation, all from Chanda villages: the Bastar Marias, who came in to see me and to join in the dancing each evening, looked tolerantly on, having themselves long before had the benefit of the Bastar anti-yaws parties.

The whole cultivation system of the Chanda Hill Marias is identical with the Bastar system described in Chapter VII of this book: it is, that is to say, *penda* cultivation and not what is generally known in the Central Provinces as *dahi*, or its Chanda plains variations of *khamori*, *jalapod*, *podu* or *sampod* (these terms will be explained later in this Note). There is the same broadcast sowing on the same kind of clearings of seed of all the minor millets and beans. The

[1] Haimendorf in reviewing Shamrao Hivale's *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley* has pointed out that the fact that the Pardhans' clan organization is everywhere based on that of the local Gond, does not disprove the different origin of the two peoples, for there are many examples of other tribes adopting their Gond neighbours' system of phratries and clans. He instances from Chanda district and Hyderabad State not only the aboriginal castes as certain Maratha blacksmiths and brass-workers who have the same clan names as the Gonds, *Man in India*, Vol. XXVI, 1946, p. 231. Compare also the Kuruk fishing tribe in Bastar, pp. 163-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

same ceremonies and festivals are observed in connexion with cutting and firing of the *penda*, sowing, harvesting and first eating of the new crops. Most of the reaping of the 'big *kosra*' crops had been completed, but that of the '*os kosra*' millets and pulses was still in progress. For many of the *penda* plots in the current *kaghai* cultivation clearing (see p. 107) this was the second and last year of cultivation, and the *kuthi* crop raised was known as *hiwar*, a term, according to the *Gazetteer*,[1] always technically applied to these second year crops. I sent specimens of both *hiwar* and *kosra* or *kohala* (see p. 134) for identification to the Nagpur Agricultural College: botanically both were identical. These villages have never had the advantage of the special system of poll-tax assessment on every able-bodied axeman in the village which I devised for Bastar (p. 145). The system followed in these hill villages of Ahiri is roughly this. Each *penda* is cut by a number of villagers with the approval of the *gaita*, and the portion cut by each of them is roughly marked by one or other of the methods indicated on page 131. Help is taken from other villagers, who are always ready to give this mutual aid, and at harvest the produce is divided among the different share-holders of the *penda*, with something also for all who helped to clear the *penda*; sometimes a number of plots are specially earmarked for division of the produce by the *gaita* and elders amongst all who joined in clearing the whole *kaghai* and in watching and fencing the crops; a part of the produce is also allocated to villagers too old and feeble to work. The zamindar's *kamdar* or agent is paid rent, usually in kind, by the *gaita* for the whole village, for paying which the *gaita* takes a share of the produce of each *penda* plot. The village cultivation is in fact a truly co-operative enterprise.

I have alluded above to the arbitrary stopping in the plains Maria villages of the Chanda zamindaris of *dahi* cultivation, and the consequent increase of debt among the Marias. This Kuvakodi hill tract is fortunate, however, in having escaped this prohibition; it is the only Ahiri area where *penda* reigns undisturbed. It was therefore no surprise to find not a single case of old debt among the fifty or sixty Hill Maria cultivators who assembled at my camp from Kuvakodi and the other hill villages. Occasionally when crops are poor and the *kamdar* has to be paid rent in cash, the *gaita* goes to a Teli money-lender in the plains to borrow the money. But the villagers look on this as the debt of the whole village, not of the *gaita*, and though the Teli is as unscrupulous here as in any plains village in exacting high interest, yet the combined villagers are usually able to repay in kind in a year or two. Nowadays sometimes not only they, but even their Bastar neighbours, instead of resorting

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 170.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by
426 working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not
621 regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *ponda* must
661 not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant
439 cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

535 Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria
292 style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatiharkana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-binita* or 'song fellows' and the dance-steps.[1]

535 The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The
534 *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence.
301 Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of 'jewellery' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 75-6 and 183-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to be a definite infiltration of Bison-horn Maria influences from Bastar. The illustration in this Supplement shows some of the Lahiri Maria girls and gives some indication of the quantity and Bison-horn style of the ornaments.

Before climbing to Kuvakodi I had sent some Marias up the valley to Nugur village in Kutru Mar, on the Indrawati banks, to invite to my camp the Kuruk boatmen who had taken Dr. Mitchell and myself in their canoes in November 1927, down the river from Nugur to the Jitam rapids.[1] Tati Ogha and Rajintappa, the leaders of our 1927 'fleet', and several of the boatmen arrived at Lahiri that evening, and recognised me, after thirteen years, with tears of joy. They were received and made at home with the utmost courtesy—that almost stately courtesy so characteristic of the Gond, whether of Marias at a feast or of Betul Gonds receiving the bride's party at the bridegroom's village; although the Bastar Hill Marias look down on Kuruks or 'Jharaman' (netters), the Lahiri headmen could not do enough for these Kuruks, giving them the best of the food, refilling their leaf-cups with *mahua* spirit, and showing a real delight when I tied a *pagri* on each Kuruk's head, and presented them with cloth and beads, while they insisted on the strangers getting the best places from which to watch the dancing.

The motor journey from Lahiri to Surjagarh, about 59 miles in all, involved a return on our outward tracks through Bhamragarh to a point three miles east of Pirmeli, thence roughly north or north-west through Kandar, Burgi and Markel villages to Chukmitapalli, and thence due east through Hitawara to Surjagarh; despite a very early start we reached Surjagarh after dark, thanks to 'receptions' in every intervening village and, above all, to delays for treating yaws patients. All these Maria villages have excellent human material, and some surprises for the visitor. At Burgi, for example, a boy dashed off to his house to emerge as a uniformed boy scout! Some years before an attempt to start a boy scout movement in Ahiri zamindari had met with some initial success, but had apparently died out. Yet this boy had carefully preserved his uniform in a leaf-box, and, more hopeful, he and some other boys had preserved the memory of the lessons they had had on cleanliness and hygiene and in a minor way were still influencing the villages to carry out what they had learnt. It is often assumed that the Marias and similar men of the backwoods have never seen anything of the outer world. Comparable with the visit of a party of Bastar Hill Marias to the Allahabad Exhibition mentioned on page 71, was the fact that this boy and some other Maria youths had been taken two or three years before to a scout jamboree at Delhi. When I asked

[1] See p. 164.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

[883 177] him his chief impression of Delhi, he spoke of the Kutb Minar, which he told me was almost as fine and tall as the factory chimney of the Allapilli saw-mills! Either at Burgi or the next village another phenomenon was a Maria in a good tweed coat above khaki shorts and stockings with flashes, wearing over all an excellent fawn Curzon topi with a dark brown pugaree, far smarter than I have ever owned. I discovered that his clothes had all been given him by the zamindari of Ahiri, when he had become a member of the Sironcha Independent Local Board. That night, still in his fine feathers, he came to see the dancing in my camp at Surjagarh: but as the drumming swelled and the dances warmed up he found himself unable to keep up the detachment appropriate to his pseudo-*sahib* status, and gradually divested himself of topi, coat, shirt and shoes, finally peeling off his shorts to reveal beneath them the usual abbreviated loin-cloth of the Maria, seizing a drum, and joining in the dance: he was then indistinguishable from any other Maria but for his air of authority as a headman, and his 'undress' was typically Maria, as described in the *Gazetteer*[1]:—

291 304 'Their dress is scanty, consisting of a compromise between a *langoti* and a *dhoti*, a strip of cloth wound tightly round the waist in rope-like folds and passed between the legs with the spare end hanging down in front below the knees. Often this garment diminishes to the scantiest rag. They adorn their necks with handsome strings of beads and their arms occasionally with metal and glass bangles. Their ears are pulled out of shape by the weight of numerous brass rings with which they are usually garnished, and occasionally they wear *pagris*.'

632 This Independent Local Board for the Sironcha taluq consisted then of eighteen members, of whom only six were aboriginals, although there were 3,354 aboriginal to 2,850 non-aboriginal voters. The aboriginal members were almost all returned unopposed, and were *de facto* the nominees of the zamindar, who had had to use his full influence to persuade them to join this peculiar body! It was in the circumstances no surprise discovery that the open, mainly non-aboriginal, country around Sironcha and Ahiri got far more benefit from the Board's expenditure and services than the wild interior of Ahiri zamindari. But the Maria members were utterly illiterate and at sea in the Board meetings. It was the zamindar's influence alone that secured for the Maria areas such services as the Board gave them. Nevertheless, the mere fact that there is an independent local authority for Sironcha tahsil secures that at least this tahsil does get spent on it all that it pays in cesses and other local taxes, and a fair share of Government grants to local bodies, in marked contrast to the fate of the zamindaris of Garchiroli tahsil, who come under the tender mercies of the Chanda District Council

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and see the bulk of the Council's funds, including their own contributions, spent on the open and advanced tracts of the district where the villagers must be placated for political reasons. More will be said on this point later in this Note, in dealing with the Garchiroli zamindaris. 632

The dancing at Surjagarh stands out in memory as faster and livelier than any other dancing seen on this tour. The drums too were different, great double membrane drums of short sections of *semar* (*bombax malabaricum*) trunks, up to 2 ft. 6 in. or 3 ft. in diameter. The *Gazetteer* well describes the typical Maria dance :— 535 [534]

'The favourite dance is a peculiar rippling step forwards, with the foot dragged, not very graceful when done by a single individual, but looking quite different when done in unison by a great circle of dancers singing a *re-lo, re-lo*, chorus to which the step keeps time. In some villages where the headman is an enthusiast for the pastime a trained band performs weird and wonderful step dances to the sound of the drum. At a big dance the trained band occupies the inner ring round the fire, while the common folk, men and maids, in separate rings move round in great circles in opposite ways. All are dressed for the occasion in their best, bearing in their hands weird ornaments of wicker work, with garlands of flowers on their necks, and, in their hair, feather ornaments humorously or coquettishly placed. Seen in the red glow of a huge log fire, glinting on the shining beads and barbaric ornaments of the dancers, with the throb of the drums, and the beat of many feet moving in unison to the wild music of the voices in chorus, a Maria dance is a spectacle not easily forgotten, but lingers as a characteristic scene when other details have faded from the memory.'[1]

That would well describe that wild night at Surjagarh, when the dancers, their spirits enlivened by several earthen pots of *mahua* liquor, kept up their dancing nearly till dawn. It had been a long and tiring day, and I retired early, the last thing seen from my tent before I closed the flap to shut out the blaze of the many log fires, the dust and the tramp of hundreds of feet, being our now nearly nude Local Board Member, well warmed by liquor and congenial surroundings, leading a ring of dancers and gravely demonstrating the right steps.

Next morning after an early breakfast we climbed with many of the night's dancers up to the keep of the old fort that crowns the Surjagarh hills, 1,273 feet above the forests at their base, the ascent being over what the *Gazetteer*[2] truly calls a noble cliff of black ferruginous mica schist. 712

'The ascent at first is by a narrow rift in the mountain, whose sides rise vertically on either hand 600 feet in height, and then the path winds round the face of the cliff in natural steps formed by the weathering of the schist. The whole ascent has been carefully fortified by a series of stone breastworks, here thrown across the path, there perched on an overhanging ledge of rock, and if properly defended would be impracticable for troops without means of shelling. Within the keep on the summit there used to be a small tank which

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 99-100.
[2] Pp. 428-9.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

712 has now disappeared. The gates of the fort are lying on the top, and there is a stone platform, on which are images of horses and elephants sacred to the presiding deity, Thakur Deo. Previous to the Gond conquest Surjagarh was a noted Mana fortress and about the end of the 17th century was occupied by two famous chieftains, Sādho Vuria and Mula Vuria, who rebelled against the Chanda king, Ram Shah, and, secure in their strong fortresses, harried the low lands with impunity. At length Ram Shah granted the tract to a relative named Kokshah, who after some years of desultory warfare stormed the hill and put the insurgent leaders to the sword. Kokshah then made Surjagarh his citadel, and under its shadow his descendants, the present Ahiri family, have extended their possession, east and west, and south and north, until nearly 3,000 miles of country own them masters. The scenery of these hills is very wild, and the black glittering mass of Surjagarh, streaked here and there with patches of bright green and red, stands out grandly against the sky. The upper cliffs have a beautiful shrub, with dark green leaves and clusters of lovely blue flowers.'

There were still 38,650 Manas in Chanda district in 1931, and Thakur Deo on the summit of Surjagarh remains their tutelary deity. Also named after them is the fortress of Manikgarh in the Rajura talnq of Adilabad district. Russell and Hiralal[1] speak of them as a Dravidian caste of cultivators and labourers, possibly an offshoot of the Gonds, and associated in the popular mind with Gonds and Gowaris. They are now completely Hinduized, and have generally adopted Maratha customs. The Thakur Deo platform on the Surjagarh summit had a wealth of clay images, mostly horses, in type precisely similar to the horse images associated with Aiyyenar in South India.

137 If you stand on the summit, in whatever direction you look, north, south, east or west, all the Sironcha and Garchiroli tahsils and the Abujhmar Mountains of Bastar still seem to be one vast forest, with only occasional small yellow patches indicating village sites and cultivation. Speaking of the Chanda Marias' shifting cultivation (*podu*) Lucie-Smith wrote in 1869[2]:—

241 'For the vast wilderness east of the Wyngunga it is the very best that could be devised. By it, year by year, more and more land is cleared of forest and made ready for the plough, and thus every Maria village has around it a very much larger area of open ground than would be the case if the plough only were used. No one who has passed through these great wastes, shut in by lofty trees and dense masses of bamboo, and seeing, sometimes for days, not a trace of human habitation, can fail to rejoice at the work fire and axe are doing. It is of course important to prevent the destruction of forest containing valuable timber, and to arrange for reserves of jungle wood, grass and bamboos near the cultivated tracts, but, this done, *dahi* cultivation should be encouraged. It would be idle to speculate upon the changes in temperature and in rainfall the clearance of the forests would entail, for even if the population increase to the full, and coal mines, railways and river navigation bring all the prosperity we hope they will, yet in all human probability the youngest teak seedling now springing into life will have grown old and withered to dust before the eastern wilderness shall have sensibly decreased.'

[1] Vol IV, p. 172, *et seq.*
[2] Loc. cit. para. 132.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Railways have still, eighty years later, not penetrated the wilderness: the river navigation schemes proved a failure: the coal mines are well to the west. The prophecy has thus been fulfilled, but with a difference: the clearings are fewer and farther between than in Lucie-Smith's day owing to the virtual cessation in Chanda, except around Kuvakodi, of *podu* or *dahi*.[1]

His wise and discriminating approval of *podu* was overlooked soon after the 1922-4 land revenue settlement of the zamindaris in Ahiri and the Garchiroli zamindaris, when, without apparently any order from Government, the local authorities stopped *podu*. The *Settlement Report* had only said that the miscellaneous income received by the zamindars from *jalapod* had under standing orders been omitted from the assets on which land revenue was to be assessed, so that in case it damaged the forests, Government interference might be justified. In every Garchiroli zamindari except Gewardha *jalapod* had gone on until the 1922-4 settlement, but the total area had been found to be only 993 acres. Rao Bahadur Lakshmanswamy, the Settlement Officer, reported that it was never allowed in good quality timber forests, but only where there was a sparse unmarketable forest growth; even then there was a ten years rest between successive fellings and burnings. The rent on each clearing was recovered in grain and not in cash, the quantity per axe varying from 60 lb. in Kotgal zamindari to 200 lb. in Rangi zamindari: the rent was always substantially less for the second than for the first year of a clearing. The Settlement Officer considered that the privilege of carrying on this shifting cultivation contributed indirectly to the expansion of settled cultivation, and believed that the withdrawal of the privilege would probably unsettle the present occupants: he urged therefore no interference; the area was small, the forest valueless, the privilege kept the Marias happy, and the zamindars, alive to the increasing value of their forests since the advent of the railway and road communications, were sufficiently alive to the need of restricting *podu* and charged higher rates for it in the areas nearer the open parts of the district and the railway than in the remote zamindaris.

[1] This has been mentioned already in this Note on pp. 390-1 and 397. *Podu* strictly speaking is the *dippa* or *mankon* of the Hill Marias (p. 120), while *jala* or *khamari*, which is really the *dahi* of most of the province and the *parka* of the Bastar Marias, consists in the sowing of rice on low-lying plots where water naturally collects in the rains, after these plots, which generally have no forest growth, have been fertilised in May with the ashes of grass and wood cut beforehand from the adjacent forests and spread over them. On the *podu* plots, light rice, all the minor millets and beans and pulses are sown. When *mandia* (*eleusine coracana*) is sown, the cultivation is known as *somped*. As general terms in Chanda either *podu* or *jalapod* are used. *Podu* is also the common term in Hyderabad State.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

In Ahiri zamindari *podu* had been stopped even earlier. In 1917 the then Deputy Commissioner inaugurated an active policy of discouraging it in favour of plough cultivation. He decided to allow no *podu* outside village areas, to make each village *gaita* responsible for reporting the name of each *podu* cultivator and the area, as measured by bamboos, cut and sown by him, and to charge rent at the same rate for *podu* as for plough land. Failure to report any cultivation contravening the orders was to be punished in the first instance by a heavy penal rent, and, if repeated, by total prohibition of all *podu* in the village at fault. This drastic restriction was introduced in all the zamindari except the Kuvakodi Hill Maria tract. The proposals were expounded by the Deputy Commissioner at the end of his tour to several hundred *gaitas* assembled for the purpose at Ahiri. This thoughtlessly wide-sweeping measure soon led to the universal cessation of *podu*: the orders gave great scope to minor zamindari officials for harassing the Marias by alleging that their *podu* contravened the restrictions, and in the end it seemed safer to have no *podu* at all. It seems also that ultimately some Deputy Commissioner finally prohibited *podu*, though the order had disappeared when his successor looked for it in 1930.

In all my camps, especially near the Bastar border, across which *podu* is permissible in every village, the bitter complaints of every Maria showed how harshly this had operated: we have already seen how it has delivered them to the tender mercies of the money-lenders. That, moreover, Rao Bahadur Lakshmanswamy's warning that such interference would unsettle the present occupants had been justified, was proved by the widespread migration of Marias to their kinsmen's villages over the Bastar border, with their greater freedom; of this several *gaitas* and zamindars complained, notably in Jharapapra zamindari. I had a conference with the Garchiroli and Drug zamindars at Murumgaon later in the tour, on New Year's Day, 1941. Several of them complained that in the past the district officers had fined them for allowing *jalapod*, and, yet worse, that they were still often being fined for alleged felling, without the Deputy Commissioner's permission, of high tree forest whenever their ryots broke up new lands even for plough cultivation; the ryots then always burn the felled forest growth and raise the first crops on the new land by the traditional method, but officials stigmatize this as *podu*. The zamindars considered that the stopping of *jalapod* had been quite unjustified, and that if it were again allowed, but confined to commercially worthless miscellaneous forest from which at present they derived no income, it would at least bring in something to them, and above all would save the Marias from the effects

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of rice failures such as those of 1939 and 1940. In the former year the Marias, dismayed by the failure of rice on their plough-lands, took the law into their own hands and started cutting *podu* in the east of Garchiroli tahsil and the adjacent Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district, being to some extent incited by emissaries of the leader of an agrarian agitation in the Dondi-Lohara zamindari. It seemed to me that in their present mood they would before long again defy the restrictions and cut *podu* on a wide scale. 241 656

I recommended accordingly that their wishes should be met, as it should not be difficult to regulate *podu* by fixing a regular series of sites to be felled in two-yearly rotations. Silviculturally too there was much to be gained by this. When *podu* was first restricted and then prohibited, the miscellaneous forests were allowed to grow up just as they had been left after the last *podu* fellings, with all the old high stumps and crooked or double or treble stems. Even the patches of teak were often useless because the trees had been left to shoot from old undressed stumps. Most of this vast forest around Bhamragarh, Surjagarh and Jarawandi has no commercial value at all, and never will have unless good teak can be grown. In the neighbouring Panabaras zamindari of Drug I found that some forty years before the Court of Wards had initiated a practice of requiring *podu* cultivators to sow teak seed in the *podu* clearings before abandoning them. This did much to produce the fine forest that is now so valuable an asset of that estate. The Marias whom I met in Ahiri, Jharapapra, Aundi, Koracha, Murumgaon, Rangi and Dhanora zamindaris were most appreciative of the idea of *podu* being allowed with this condition of the sowing of teak seed in the second and last year of cultivation. All knew how the Allapilli departmental forest operation had saved the local Marias from economic ruin, and they were quick to realize that conservation of the surviving teak and the growth of teak in areas now to be selected for that purpose and sown with teak at the end of *podu* cultivation would bring teak forests, and therefore ultimately operations such as those at Allapilli, far nearer to their villages in the days of their grandchildren. Besides areas thus earmarked for teak regeneration after *podu*, there should also be fixed areas around each village where *podu* should be allowed indefinitely. The Marias also would welcome the extension to other parts of Ahiri and the other zamindaris of the precedent of the leasing by Government from the Ahiri zamindar of the forests around Allapilli: the surviving teak areas around Surajgarh would for example be suitable leased areas. In all these measures the fullest co-operation of the Marias could without much difficulty be obtained by enlisting the sympathy and support of the *bhumias*, *gaitas*, and *Sendhias*, whose authority remains real and 241 313

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

unchallenged. I emphasize the word sympathy: the method of threatening and punishing the headmen must be given up, and every effort made to win their understanding support for the new measures and even to entrust them with their execution.

The walks and talks at Surjagarh delayed the start on the 32 miles journey to Jawarwandi, and the car and lorry were more than once bogged on the way, so that once again we arrived in camp long after dark. It was on this journey that we crossed the tongues of Bastar territory mentioned on page 378 of this Note: in the southern tongue, in fact, we were bogged for an hour or more, but, as in Bastar, were readily helped to extricate ourselves. I noticed and stopped in *gotul* or bachelors' dormitories in several villages before and after Surjagarh. Many of these are treated by touring officers as though they were rest-huts built for their special convenience, like the *chauri* of Hyderabad or Berar villages. They use them also for posting up legal notices, and in two I found nailed to the wooden posts copies of the *Yudda Samachar* or War News in the Marathi edition published by the provincial War Purposes Fund for dissemination of accurate war information in all villages; this showed singular lack of intelligence on the part of those who controlled such propaganda in Chanda district, for in these Maria villages not a person was literate and very few could speak Marathi. The *gotul* culture here must be similar to that among the Murias just across the Bastar border in North Antagarh, but in the short time available I did not overcome the Marias' natural reluctance to discuss this intimate social organization, a reluctance heightened, I suspect, by the fact that here on the fringes of the *gotul* country the institution is the butt of Hindu ridicule or prurient curiosity. But there certainly are *gotul* in these villages, at least for the youths, and I found one, with some difficulty owing to the reticence of the local Marias in these mixed villages, at Erka in Rangi zamindari. So far as I could make out, they are still to be found in the Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug.

Jarawandi is the headquarters of a sub-zamindar holding under Ahiri a taluq of twenty-three villages: the rival claims of Ahiri and Jarawandi to the seignorial dues have been a nuisance to the local Marias. Here there was a large gathering of headmen and *Sendhias* of *patti* groups of villages. Enquiries from them and later at Murumgaon showed that the *panchayat* system described in the extract on pages 286-8 of this book is not only as vigorous as ever, but is more widespread than previously recorded, there being *Sendhias* in almost every Chanda zamindari. It had been stated to me that the zamindars outside Ahiri had usurped the authority of the *Sendhia* and his *patti panchayat*, but I doubt the truth of this, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the *Sendhias* and the zamindars also denied it. The allegation possibly arises from the fact that the zamindar appoints or confirms the succession of the *Sendhia*, and may arbitrate in a case involving parties from the *patti* of two or more *Sendhias*. Moreover the zamindars themselves have probably often descended from the tribal headmen of old, and so it is easy for them to perform the function of ultimate arbitration in social matters which is so characteristic of the chiefs of the ancient semi-feudal organization of the province from whom they descend or derive. Obviously it would be easy to apply to all the Chanda Maria country the Bastar *panchayat* system.[1]

From Jarawandi our route took us six miles to Pendri, the largest village and virtual headquarters of Jharapapra zamindari, thence six miles to Jharapapra and back; on fifteen miles to Aundhi in Drug district, and thence seven miles to Murumgaon, the headquarters of the Chanda zamindari of that name; the last mile was at long last on made road, the third-class road running east from Garchiroli through Khutgaon, Dudhmala, Dhanora, Rangi, Murumgaon and Koracha zamindaris to Dondi-Lohara and Drug. We were, however, to have trouble on this road next day, when heavy rain flooded unbridged streams between Murumgaon and the twenty miles distant Manpur, the *de facto* headquarters of the Koracha zamindari of Drug. The very long delay in bridging this road and raising it in class is only too typical of the neglect by Government and District Councils of aboriginal areas.

Similarly the District Council had not opened a single school in Jharapapra zamindari. The late zamindar, a Halba by tribe, and amongst the most intelligent and progressive landholders of the two districts, had opened a private school at Pendri[2] which at the time of my visit was being run by a Gondi-speaking teacher of the Marar agricultural caste, and his pupils were six Marar, six Halba and two Pardhan boys. Marias and Halbas are the chief elements in the small population of the zamindari, dwindling steadily by the drift in recent years of Marias across into Bastar for the sake of *podu*.

All along this route there had been frequent pockets of Marar cultivators, especially near the streams. These industrious, progressive, dark-skinned agricultural pioneers have pushed up the valley of every substantial river in the backward areas of Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Drug, Raipur and doubtless other aboriginal districts of the Central Provinces. They have been the chief factor in such increase as there has been of permanent, especially irrigated, cultivation in these Garchiroli and Drug Partially Excluded Areas.

[1] See pp. 293-7.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. M/5228

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

563 Pendri is now mainly a Marar village, its 451 inhabitants including only some forty Marias and sixty Halbas. They seem able to live in easy symbiosis with all Gonds, to whom they impart much of their agricultural skill. Their intrusion into these tribal areas, provided it is controlled, is therefore not a bad thing.

178 At Jharapapra there was a once familiar sight, the Halba log-god of the zamindari family, in type precisely similar to the clan-gods of the Hill Marias and the Halba log-gods at Chingnur near Bare Dongar and at other Halba centres in Bastar. The *Kutumb-Naik* headman of the Bare Dongar Halbas had told me in 1929 how some years before the then zamindar of Jharapapra had sent a party of Halbas to carry off the Chingnur log-god to Jharapapra, and how the god had resented this and 'flown' back to Chingnur from the first halting place of the god-snatchers.

000 Of the visits to Aundhi[1] and, next day, to Manpur[2] in Koracha zamindari and some way along the Manpur-Panabaras road, there is little to say except that, generally speaking, the Drug Court of Wards regime in Panabaras and Aundhi seemed to be progressive, and the Drug District Council to do more for the Partially Excluded Areas than its Chanda counterpart.

[162] In the four Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug the aboriginals form well over sixty per cent. of the population. The 427 worst feature of these estates is that there is a *thekaderi* system, originally akin to that once prevalent in Bastar, and that many of the *thekadars*, especially those on whom the semi-permanent 'protected' status has been conferred, are non-aboriginal oppressors of the local Gonds and Marias, while comparatively few aboriginal headmen, except in Panabaras and Ambagarh-Chauki zamindaris, have been declared protected. The whole original conception was wrong in that it involved conversion of the tribal headman or *gaontia* into a lessee or *thekadar* of his village. Various examples have been given in *The Aboriginal Problem*[3] of the way in which these Maria headmen were thus transformed into *thekadars*, and then lost their villages in the great famines, or for other causes, to non-aboriginal intruders, who now rack-rent and oppress the surviving aboriginal tenants. We may give here one example, that of the village of Dokhla in Panabaras zamindari. This village was settled before 1861 by a Maria headman and ten other Marias. The headman absconded during the great famines at the turn of the century. Another Gond was then given the lease, but ultimately could not pay the lease-money and had to surrender the village.

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. MQ3349.
[2] Ibidem, Sheet 64D, ref. MQ8366.
[3] Pp. 79-81.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The Court of Wards finally gave the lease to a Hindu of the Kurmi caste, on a premium of Rs. 211. The present lessee, his son, was made protected in 1923. Though the aboriginals as a whole have not actually lost land since 1902, the lessee had been very oppressive, forcing the aboriginals who borrowed from him to surrender their fields to him and then selling them to new tenants. 427

In Panabaras the departmental working of the five teak forests, largely built up, as already stated, by the Court of Wards insisting from 1900 onwards on *podu* cultivators sowing teak-seed on their plots in the second year of cultivation, has done something on Allapilli lines to bring economic relief to the local aboriginals. These four estates have been special targets for the agrarian agitation already mentioned, which started from the adjacent non-excluded Dondi-Lohara zamindari and made a special feature of inciting the Gonds and Marias to burn *podu*. 313

In the Garchiroli zamindaris on the whole the Marias and other aboriginals continue to hold their own and to take gradually to permanent cultivation, though far more slowly than outsiders: in the twenty years after the 1922-3 settlement aboriginal cultivation had increased by only 23 per cent., but non-aboriginal by 50 per cent., there being 6,523 aboriginal tenants of 76,113 acres against 4,012 other tenants of 46,863 acres. The aboriginals still have miles and miles of land available for extending their cultivation, but always hanker after their beloved *podu*. 241 311

This *podu* question, as I have already said, was the principal topic at the conference of the Drug and Chanda Partially Excluded Areas zamindars at Murumgaon on New Year's Day, 1940. Other topics were the neglect of the Garchiroli zamindaris by the Chanda District Council, and the future of the zamindars, in view of the political threat to the whole zamindari system. To deal first with the last topic, let me say that while there may be much to be said for 'liquidation' of big landed estates, especially of absentee proprietors, the policy towards aboriginal zamindars should be different. Most of them are descendants of long lines of tribal chieftains holding estates on very ancient tenures dating back to the semi-tribal, semi-feudal systems[1] under which most of middle India was organized centuries ago. Properly speaking these chiefs in relation to their ryots and fellow tribesmen are *primi inter pares*. Some of the wealthier aboriginal proprietors of the huge Chhattisgarh estates may have aped the princeling: but most of the Chanda zamindars are closely akin to their people—the Rangi chief, for example, is frankly a Maria among Marias—and do their utmost to protect their ryots. Legally, so long as the proprietary rights in any 632

[1] See p. 4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

632 land remain vested in an aboriginal belonging to a tribe notified under the Land Alienation Act of the province, even new tenancies in favour of non-aboriginals require sanction. Often the existence of the aboriginal proprietor is the one thing that saves his fellow tribesmen from being ousted from their lands by Hindu and Muslim incomers. Once he disappears and free alienation of land by aboriginals becomes possible, they will soon sink finally to the level of landless hewers of wood and drawers of water, or at best of factory fodder for Nagpurs and Jamshedpurs. A recent official report on grazing and *nistar*[1] in the zamindaris frankly envisaged the disappearance of the tribal chieftains as probably a good thing; the non-aboriginal who would replace him, it was said, would bring new ideas, new capital, new progress, and therefore it would be better for the villages, which would be well managed by a non-aboriginal instead of being mismanaged or ignored by an aboriginal proprietor. What are the facts? Hardly a single 632 non-aboriginal who in the history of the Central Provinces has 563 elbowed the Gond proprietor out of his estates has done anything for the aboriginal tenantry except to reduce them to debt and helotry. Such new ideas as they have brought into the tribal villages have always tended to destroy or suppress everything good or vital in tribal custom and culture; their 'new progress' has been achieved by getting the aboriginal so heavily into debt that it has been easy to hand over his land to Hindus of castes more acceptable to the new landlord. Nor is it true that there has been no progress under the tribal zamindar: everywhere there has been a steady rise in permanent cultivation, as can clearly be seen from comparing present conditions in such remote estates as these Chanda and Drug zamindaris with the conditions recorded when the Central Provinces were formed in 1861. To the aboriginal also the fact that his *Raja*, as he will always term his zamindar whether or not Government recognize the title, is like him a Korku, a Gond, a Halba or a Maria, has great psychological significance; not all of his tribe are excluded from the seats of the mighty, and a Gond may even rule over a Brahman, and be the final arbiter in the social disputes within his estate not only of his own tribe, but even of Hindu castes. In many zamindaris, notably the Garchiroli estates, Government and District Council alike have neglected communications and nation-building; whatever there is of education and medical relief is even now largely paid for by the zamindar.

[1] *Grazing and Nistar in the Central Provinces Estates, the Report of an Enquiry*, by H. S. Kamath, I.C.S. (Nagpur, Government Printing, 1941); see especially paras. 358-64. *Nistar* means, roughly, tenants' rights of user of forest produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

I have written elsewhere[1] that the Garchiroli zamindaris afford a typical example of the neglect of aboriginal interests by the District Council; I might truthfully add by the Government also. So far my tour had taken me into Jharapapra and Murumgaon only of these estates; my departure from Murumgaon to Garchiroli was to take me in 37 miles through parts of Rangi, Dhanora, Dudhmala, and Khutgaon zamindaris: I visited Erka in Rangi, Dhanora, Dudhmala and Chatgaon in Khutgaon.[2] At Murumgaon I met almost all the zamindars. Over most of their estates there was no school, hospital or veterinary dispensary, practically no wells had been sunk, and visits of touring public health and veterinary assistants had been rare. The zamindars told me that a number of former schools had been closed on the plea of low attendance, the reason for which was that the children, who knew no language but Maria Gondi, were bored by lessons in the alien Marathi, while the teachers, knowing no Gondi and hating exile in these forest tracts, frequently went sick, generally in name, but often in fact. At Dhanora I found a small school that had just been re-started by the District Council after being closed for six months because no teacher could be found; at last a local untrained Depressed Classes youth had been appointed and had seventeen pupils, of whom five were Marias: it was a dull, ineffective institution. The zamindar of Potegaon said that though two or three years before Government had made a grant for starting an aboriginal school at Potegaon the District Council had provided no teacher; he was paying for one from his own pocket. I have mentioned the private school at Jharapapra which the zamindar himself finances.

High hopes were placed by the first Congress Ministry of the province in the *Vidya Mandir* Act, which provided for a new type of school in villages, intended to pay its way from the produce of lands attached to the school as endowments, and from the yarn to be spun by the pupils whose basic crafts were to be spinning and perhaps agriculture. I saw two of these, for which the zamindars had provided land, at Erka and Chatgaon. The attendance at both was very small, and they were in all ways utterly alien to the Maria way of life. Erka was typical. The *Vidya Mandir* fields were over a mile from the *Mandir*, which in outward appearance was indistinguishable from any ordinary plains village school, even down to the faded Congress flag on the roof. The masters of these institutions bear the time-honoured designation of *guru*. Here,

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 377-8.

[2] The map references on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Qr Inch Sheet 64D, are Murumgaon MQ5461, Erka MQ4262, Dhanora MQ3652, Dudhmala MQ2849 and Chatgaon MQ2046.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

874 [875] too, no caste Hindu had been forthcoming and the authorities had had to draw on the Depressed Classes to find a *guru*, who was a town-bred Mahar, knew no language but his Marathi mother-tongue and was utterly ignorant of aboriginal life and customs, though twenty-two of his thirty-three boys were Maria-speaking aboriginals. The boys were doing some listless spinning, a useless craft in an area where no cotton is grown. The raw cotton for spinning has to be carted from Chanda, miles away: not one of the boys will spin in after-life. I asked if they could sing: the *guru* switched them from spinning on to droning out in a dreary, nasal tone a Marathi song which meant nothing to them. Helped by their parents, I tried to get the boys to sing a Maria song and dance a Maria dance, but their spontaneity had been so quenched by the alien ideas of the *Vidya Mandir* that even with their parents' help they were too shy or shamefaced to attempt their own wonderful tribal songs and dances. There was nothing in their whole curriculum which bore any relation to their tribal culture or appealed to the tribal imagination. Even the *Vidya Mandir* fields were so far from the village that the boys never visited them or learnt modern agricultural methods from the *jamadar* in charge, who merely grew rice to meet the cost of this useless institution. It was worse than useless, for it was detribalizing the boys, making them ashamed of their own way of life, and giving them nothing in return: it was no surprise that in this village all were peculiarly reticent as to the existence of a *gotul*, and that the latter was a moribund affair.

114 This completes the picture of my tour to Chanda Maria country, so far it has been possible to reconstruct it from the printed record of *The Aboriginal Problem* and from memory. Ethnologically the Note is somewhat meagre in its information. The impression, however, that I carry in my mind of the Chanda Marias is of a tribal culture still vigorous in its institutions and its arts, still knitting together the ways of life of a vigorous tribe closely akin on the one side to the Marias and Murias of Bastar, on the other side to the Raj-Gond and other tribes of northern and western Chanda, and of Milabad. What differences there are between the Chanda Marias and the Hill and other Marias of Bastar and the Murias of north Bastar and Kanker, only detailed field-work can define. It is an admirable theatre for such field-work, and the time for it is running short, since the Marias of Chanda are exposed, in a way that no Bastar tribes are exposed, to the impacts of modern Indian civilization. Of particular interest would be an investigation of my theory that the social organization of the plains Marias of Chanda was fundamentally similar to that of the Hill Marias and Murias of Bastar but has been overlaid with god-grouping and other ideas inherent in the social organization of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the later waves of Gonds and Raj-Gonds which set up the kingdom of the Gond Maharajas of Chanda. It would be very interesting also to see whether anything survives of the peculiarly Hill Maria and Muria cult of the clan-god as distinct from the more developed religious system of the Raj-Gonds, with its wonderful foundation of myth, the full richness and religious and cultural significance of which the world will begin to realise when Haimendorf's epoch-making book on the Raj-Gonds of Adilabad is published in the near future, and when it is followed up by similar detailed investigation of Gond life and custom in all parts of Gondwana. How far there is any common mythological basis of Raj-Gond and Maria culture would be a factor of great significance. I am conscious that the weakest side of this book has been its failure to probe into the mythology and folk-songs of the Bastar Marias. I do not believe Hill Maria culture to be nearly as rich in that respect as Muria culture is shown to be by Verrier Elwin's book, *The Muria and their Ghotul*. Yet there must be more to be said of the folk-tales and mythology of the Marias of Bastar than has appeared in the first edition of this book; indeed the second section of Elwin's Comment in this edition gives some indication of the wealth of Maria myth awaiting record in Bastar.

Another question clearly needing investigation is the extent to which the *gotul* as an institution is a real factor in Chanda Maria life. I have implied in this Note that it survives, but is gradually being relegated into obscurity as a result of the impact of Hindu ideas and of Hindu ridicule. That would, however, apply more in the northern zamindaris than in the country along the Bastar border from the River Indrawati north to Jharapapra. This part of Ahiri zamindari is landlocked and largely protected from the influx of Hindu ideas save in so far as these are brought in by zamindari and government subordinates. The fact moreover that the *Sendhia* and *patti panchayat* organization is still vigorous in Ahiri zamindari should be an indication that there has been no psychological inhibition on these Marias preserving their tribal life and cultural inheritance unimpaired. It would be interesting, however, to trace the outer boundaries of the *gotul* system and to see what has happened to it, when, and why, in these outer fringes.

This Note is stronger in its picture of economic conditions. Here the most significant fact has been the banning of *jalaped* or shifting cultivation during and after the Great War of 1914-18. One would like, given the time and opportunity, to get at the psychological reaction of the Maria to this as expressed in his folk-songs; one would like also to be able to go through the records of criminal

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and civil litigation in which Maria parties have been involved since this interference with their way of life, and to see also if it has had any bearing on suicide. Quite clearly, however, it has had a tremendous and adverse effect on their economics. It has accentuated their transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy and, by virtually forcing them to grow rice, a commercial food crop, as their principal crop, it has played into the hands of the *bania* and the money-lender who naturally desire to buy up rice for export. It may be suspected also that this has had an adverse effect on the diet and physique of the Maria. The small millets, which are the characteristic and favourite food of the Marias and were best grown in the *podu* clearings, are dietetically of higher value than rice. Their market value was small, but so long as the Marias' granary had ample stores of these millets, he had not to depend upon the money-lender for seed or cattle, nor to bother about marketing his produce. The only partial remedy so far provided for the economic ills caused by the stopping of *podu* has been the departmental forest work at Allapilli. Here the Maria, doing work of a type for which his life in the forest suits him and receiving fair and prompt cash payment for his labour, has been able to earn money which could keep him out of the clutches of the money-lender and the bribe-taker. But this too has had its detribalizing effect, accustoming him to working far from his home village and in close contact with an alien civilization and culture.

The next difficulties that the Maria has to solve in assimilating himself to the life of modern India are the problems resulting from the impact of political India with its steady tendency to seek to reduce all things and all institutions throughout India to a drab uniformity. There is no doubt that the Maria is not ready to exercise the vote. It is equally clear that he has his own vigorous tribal organization and that his *patti panchayat* could easily be entrusted with the same powers that have been given to the village and *pargana panchayats* in Bastar. It seems obvious also that on these *panchayats* could be based some sort of system whereby Marias could handle the problems of local self-government in their country. These *panchayats*, for example, if entrusted with the selection of local Marias for a zamindari *panchayat*, could produce a body in real touch with tribal life in all its facets. Tribal village life is still naturally co-operative, even though in the plains individualism is now stronger than in the largely collective villages of the Hills. In fact the whole *podu* system was an incentive to the co-operation of all the villagers; rice cultivation, in contrast, drives villagers into individualism and ideas of private property as indeed does the whole land revenue system which has been

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

gradually foisted from the developed lands of Hindustan upon all the tribal areas of India. Yet the Co-operative Department does no work among the Chanda Marias. Such work would indeed be useless if stereotyped as usual. What is needed is a deliberate attempt to implant amongst the Marias co-operative organization of forest labour, whether for working at Allapilli or for taking coupes or contracts for minor produce in other zamindari or Government forests. Village grain-banks could be made to flourish, for after all, the existing granary in a Maria village, even if in these days the ultimate owner of the surplus is the Teli money-lender, is essentially a village grain-bank from which the villager can help himself to seed or even to grain for food if he observes the implicit obligation of replacing it with 25 or 50 per cent. interest out of his next harvest; but grain-banks should be the property of the village and not of alien exploiters. If the Maria is to be educated so as to hold his own in the modern world, his education can best come in the first instance from the fostering of such co-operative enterprise, accompanied by protection from the alien money-lender, subordinate officials and other exploiters. Out of this economic self-government can spring the elements of political self-government.

Education is advocated generally as a means of protection. But the standardized 'education' gained in the ordinary village school has not protected the plains villager from the money-lender, and is something entirely alien to the living culture of the tribes. One of the worst features of the spasmodic attempts to provide education in the Maria villages has been the impossibility of getting town-bred teachers of good social standing to resign themselves to exile in the forest. This, as we have seen, has led to the importation of teachers from the Depressed Classes with their habitual inferiority complex. A Maria or a Gond is not an untouchable, and it is wrong to set a man of 'untouchable mentality' to teach and exercise a teacher's authority over him. The only hope of meeting the growing desire for education in a sound way is to impart education through teachers drawn from the tribe itself, knowing the tribal language and tribal lore, and thoroughly at home with tribal villagers. Both Verrier Elwin and I have on various occasions set forth our general ideas as to the soundest approach to the problem of aboriginal education; there is a synthesis of our ideas in Chapter 14 of *The Aboriginal Problem*. But the most effective experiment in this direction within my knowledge has been the Marlavai work initiated by the Haimendorfs amongst the Gonds of the central plateaux of Adilabad District in the Nizam's Dominions. Gond youths were selected from surrounding villages, where there was a demand for education, and put through a course of training in a

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

114 village training centre where all the buildings were built of local materials in precisely the same style as the existing village houses but with improved dimensions, light and ventilation. The Gondi language is used as the medium of instruction, Lanbach Gondi charts having been prepared, and Gondi primers with Gondi folk-songs, tales and myths: the teachers were also trained to teach Marathi and Urdu.[1] Model grain-banks and co-operative stores and an agricultural farm have been based on this centre which has also trained Gonds and Kolams in the work of the *patel* and the *patwari*. When he passes out, the new schoolmaster goes back to his village and with a small grant of cash and free timber has to get a rough school building constructed. These schools are visited regularly by the head of the Marlavai training centre, and there are periodic rallies at Marlavai. These methods have rapidly expanded educational facilities among the Adilabad Gonds, and the schools are kept in close touch with the vigorous tribal life; tribal games, songs and dances are an essential part of the school curriculum. What is more, the tribal headmen and elders are kept in close touch with Marlavai and its offshoots, and are consulted freely on all new ideas as to curricula and other developments. Classes for adults are also held in Marlavai and some of the village schools.

If the Maria *gotul* life is at all vigorous it should not be impossible to link it with such modern education. For the *gotul* is essentially a children's commonwealth in which the youths are instructed in the tribal way of life. If that way of life is to be supplemented by education enabling the Maria to read official documents, village records, and money-lenders' accounts and the accounts of his own co-operative societies, it would be natural in some way to link the new education with the *gotul*, and to adopt for the reading and writing curricula the songs and stories which are sung and told to the *gotul* gatherings.

000 The task of dealing with these problems has almost finally passed from British hands, and it has become the unshared responsibility of the educated Hindu or Muslim to do his best to protect the aboriginal and bring him forward to contribute to the India of the future his characteristic joy of life and his tradition of co-operating with his fellow men. Nothing will be gained by puritanical opposition to liquor, music and dancing. Much of very great value will be lost if any distinctive elements of tribal cultures are frowned upon or ridiculed. The whole problem of the future of the tribes bristles with difficulties with which we have failed to cope in the historically short period of our connexion with India; Indians themselves

[1] In Chanda or Drug there would be no such trilingual difficulty as it would be necessary only to use either Marathi or Hindi in addition to Gondi.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

had previously failed to solve them in thousands of years. Is it too much to hope that Indian scientists and Indian political leaders thinking on modern scientific lines and taking the advice of their own trained anthropologists will at long last set themselves to foster or preserve the happiness of the peoples of the forests and the hills, and so to enable them to contribute their own will to happiness as a major solvent of all India's problems?

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

NOTES

000 *Page* 45, *line* 33. Although ' gotul ' is the traditional spelling, the word is more appropriately spelt ' ghotul ', for the ' h ' in the initial letter is quite evident.

Page 45, *line* 34; *page* 47, *line* 4. Here Grigson was misinformed. Indeed, far from it being true that the boys and girls do not share the life of the Jhoria dormitories, they actually pair off and have a pre-marital ' marriage ' in excess of what is normally practised in Kondagaon. Probably this accounts for the ' heat ' with which they repudiated the suggestion that they had anything to do with each other. For an amusing account of a denial given to Rivers in somewhat similar circumstances, see R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia* (London, 1936), p. xxiv.

Page 46, *line* 16. Knowledge of the legend of Lingo, whose cult is more or less coterminous with the performance of the Pus Kolang dances, is fairly widespread among the Murias. I have recorded versions of the epic in the Antagarh, Benur and Ghat Jhorian, as well as in the Amabera, Parganas of the Narayanpur tahsil, and at Alor and Kanhargaon in the Kondagaon tahsil. The legend has been elaborately studied in *The Muria and their Ghotul*, Chapter VIII.

Page 52, *line* 10. The mixture of Hill Maria and Bison-horn Maria styles in festal dress and dancing extends into the Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils. The Bison-horn Marias at the Ghotpal bazaar dance in entirely Hill Maria fashion and I have seen beautiful dancing-shields as far away from the Abujhmar as at Kaklur. I suspect that in all the area round Barsur and Gidam the Bison-horn Marias follow the Hill Maria style for festival and religious dances and their own style for marriages and general entertainment. Many Jhoria Murias do the same.

Page 64, *line* 44. But I have often seen Bison-horn Marias, both men and women, standing to urinate. The custom is also common among the northern Murias, and even among so advanced a tribe as the Santals I have seen women standing to urinate against a fence or wall.

Page 66. The Bison-horn Marias usually give an impression of cleanliness; the women especially, with their carefully-dressed hair and gleaming ornaments, often look very smart. But I have noticed that many of them do not wash their hands before meals, and many

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

continue their old habit (shared by the Baigas and most of the Orissa tribes) of wiping themselves with leaves after defecation. This custom, along with beef-eating and the breeding of domestic pigs, appears to worry that slightly ludicrous figure, the pious social reformer, far more than more obvious social evils. In Orissa, for example, earnest attempts have been made to induce the Bondos, of all people, to use water after defecation. A few have begun to do so, using the village stream (sole source of water-supply) as a latrine: the only result of these rather pathetic endeavours at 'improvement' has been to make the water-supply of a few aboriginal villages as filthy as that of many 'advanced' areas. As a comment on this curious belief that a change in defecatory habits indicates an advance in culture, I note that in a famous Indian Public School, new boys are greeted with the question, 'Do you wash or wipe?' If a boy 'washes' he is regarded as coming from a definitely inferior social stratum.

Page 69, *line* 31. The multiple cord belt is not worn by Gadaba women, as Glasfurd says, nor by the Bondos, as Hutton says at page xiv of his Introduction to this book; it is a certain class of Kond women, notably the Kuttia Konds and the Konds round Nimgiri, who wear it. Gadaba women wear, not a belt, but a bustle made of many separate cords lashed together; this certainly gives them 'a strange appearance'. Juang women formerly wore belts made of a great number of little earthen cubes strung on cords. Cowrie belts are still common among the northern Murias.

Page 80, *line* 35. Cowries seem to have come back on the market again; I have seen them on sale in the bazaars and have noticed many new cowrie belts and fringes for the bison-horn head-dress. For notes on the use of the cowrie, see Grigson's communication to *Man* (Vol. XL, p. 159) on the subject, and my article, 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State' in the same journal (Vol. XLII, pp. 122ff).

Page 81, *line* 11. Murias have told me that they distinguish two kinds of bison horn. Those of inferior quality are all-black in colour. The better type are white from the root to the middle and then dark to the tip; nowadays such horns fetch anything up to twenty rupees—sometimes a bullock is given in exchange for a fine pair. Murias go all the way from Dantewara into the Jeypore zamindari to obtain them.

Before leaving their village for a dance Maria youths often promise a fowl to Mahaprabhu, the Village Mother and the Departed saying 'Save us from hostile magic and the evil eye, and see that no feathers fall from our head-dresses. Let the drums give a good sound; let them not be broken'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 *Page* 86. Col. E. Clementi Smith, who commanded the detachment of troops which was sent to Bastar at the time of the 1910 rebellion, writes to me that in those days the Marias made arrow-heads of bone and porcupine quills as well as of iron. He adds, 'Another thing I remember was the dislike of a guide, when moving along jungle tracks, if one came to a cock's head stuck on a stick—the guide always said "one couldn't go there". The same objection also arose if one came to thin boughs bent over the track and intertwined. I need hardly say that we couldn't stop for these signs and one used to kick them out of the way—I think the guides expected the heavens to fall on us for such desecration. Another [436] thing I remember was that salt was more acceptable as payment than pice. We had a lot of our "enemy" enrolled as porters at one time. They hardly ever deserted. The sepoys liked them and I am always glad to know that we never caused any casualties among them.' For Col. Clementi Smith's account of the Bastar rebellion, see *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, pp. 240-53.

Page 113, *line* 35. The real taboo is not so much on intercourse [513] inside a house as on a bed. At Komhu I was told by the Hill Marias that 'no woman may sleep on a cot, for the village Pen is in it'. The Bison-horn Marias and even the Raj Gonds have the same rule. A wealthy Gond Zamindar is said to have made a platform of earth for his wife, as he would not allow her a bed.

Page 135, *line* 14. The Hill Marias do actually avoid their wives (how astonished the Baigas would be at the idea!) from the time when the *hoira* shoots appear until the threshing is over. They control themselves, they told me at Itulnar, 'by tying their cloth very tight'.

462 *Pages* 135-7. Though there is some division of labour between men and women, Bison-horn Maria women are much freer to share the work of men than are the women of many other tribes. They are allowed, for example, to plough—a thing strictly taboo to the Gonds of the Central Provinces. But they must not carry loads on a *kawar*-pole, for if they do Dongar Pen and the Rau will be offended and bring misfortune on them. They may reap a crop, but they must not tie it in bundles or lift it on to their heads with their own hands; a man must do it for them or there may be a scarcity the following year. Women may climb trees, but not near a house; they may fish, but not hunt. They may not winnow, but they can thresh with their feet (there is an illustration of this in *Maria Murder and Suicide*) and may beat out a *mandia* crop with long poles. Men, on the other hand, may not husk rice or clean it in a fan; they should not grind, nor should they carry pitchers

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

on their heads. They must not remove rice from the Pot of the Departed.

Page 169, *line* 33. Of the 100 cases of homicide examined in *Maria Murder and Suicide* 13 were due to intoxication by rice-beer and 6 to other liquors. In a further 14 cases of which Grigson kept notes, *landa*-intoxication led to 2 murders and other intoxicants to 3.

Page 174, *line* 5. The Murias still remember this camp and recall how Sir Montague Butler gave one of the headmen a ten rupee note as a present. That was seventeen years ago, when ten rupee notes were seldom seen. The Muria showed the note to a Forest Guard and asked him what it was. The Guard offered to buy it for a rupee, saying that was all it was worth. The Muria accepted the bargain and went off full of gratitude to the kindly Guard but doubtful of the Governor's generosity in giving him such a small reward. Quite recently a Mussalman merchant of Narayanpur was prosecuted for cheating a Muria with coloured labels which he declared were hundred rupee notes.

Page 174, *line* 9. At Dugeli I saw in 1942 a small carefully-fenced enclosure round a group of plantain trees, among which was a tall plant not unlike a sugar cane, which I was told was the 'Baiha Danda' and was used as an antidote to the bite of a mad dog. It was grown entirely for this purpose, in case the emergency should arise.

Page 174, *line* 15. The custom of blowing away disease may be illustrated by the experience of Oyami Harma of Bara Harma-munda. 'Once when I was working in my fields with some labourers I had employed, they performed magic against me and a lot of mud went into my mouth and filled my whole body. The Waddai discovered what had happened and cured me by blowing the mud out of my stomach. Another day, some people came to ask for rice. I refused at first, but they persisted and at last I had to let them have some. But they were annoyed with me and with my own rice they made hostile magic and filled my belly with it. The Waddai cured me by blowing it out.' Sucking is also practised. A Siraha places his lips on a patient's stomach and sucks. If he finds only blood in his mouth, it means a Rau has sent the disease; if there is a little earth with the blood, it indicates the Earth Mother.

Page 182, *line* 24. I have seen split-string instruments similar to the *veddur-del* among the Bondos and Saoras in Orissa, as well as among the Jhoria-Murias; they have been noticed for the Reddis by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Reddis of the Bison Hills*, p. 348. Meerwarth reports that they are common in Malaya and Indonesia

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and are found in the Shan States—A. M. Meerwarth, *A Guide to the Collection of Musical Instruments exhibited in the Indian Museum, Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1917), pp. 5f. But the Shan instrument improves its sounding-board with a hole in the bamboo and it, as with the Reddis and Bondos, is beaten with only one hand. But the Marias and Murias use plectra in both hands, with the instrument on the ground.

Page 183, *line* 17. Beside the iron jews-harp, which is also known to the Ghotul Murias, the Bison-horn Marias use a small bamboo harp of a pattern common to the Bondos, Sacras and several Assamese tribes.

Page 183, *line* 21. The *kikir* is illustrated on page 20 of *Maria Murder and Suicide*.

Page 183, *line* 34. Hill Maria dancing is rather monotonous unless there is a great deal of it. But when several thousand gather for the festival, the scene is magnificent. Grigson has described the pattern of their dance as a long curved line moving slowly in a circle, while a group of 'song fellows' move up and down before it. On a great occasion this group of singers gradually develops into a procession as boys and girls leave the line and form up behind them. This 'column of fours' may in fact entirely absorb the line; when both remain they revolve about each other.

I saw a very attractive variant on the usual Bison-horn dance in the Konta tahsil, where the women shouldered their sticks and went round with a skip and a jump. In the Dantewara tahsil I recorded five different steps used by the women.

(1) The circle moves anti-clockwise singing '*Nonile wayale*' and the steps are: right foot to right, left foot swings back behind with a pause in mid-air while the dancing stick is thumped twice on the ground. Then right foot again, and three thumps of the stick. This step is also done to a refrain '*So-lo rela re rela*' and '*So rela re rela*'.

(2) A very simple anti-clockwise circular movement. Right foot to right and left foot to right behind it. The song is about cattle and the fields.

(3) Another circular dance with the steps going right to right, left behind to right, right to right, then left over in front of right.

(4) The feet go: left, right, left to right, a pause, the right is wagged over in front of the left and towards the left for three beats of the stick. Then it is put back on the ground to the right of the left and then left right left quickly.

(5) Left in front of right, right to right behind it, then the left in front of the right and so on. In this dance the sticks are not thumped with three beats at a time, but with single beats.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Little boys practise the bison-horn dance with head-dresses made of bamboo rings which have bamboo 'horns' sticking up in front and at the back a spike ornamented with feathers. They beat their stomachs or use bits of wood instead of drums.

Page 189, *line* 31. But I found everywhere that both kinds of Marias were also accustomed to use the fire-drill. The fire-saw of the Hill Marias can easily be worked by two men; there is no difference between it and the Baiga or Juang saw, which is always handled by two persons.

When Bison-horn Marias go to fire their clearings, they should as far as possible approach them with their faces towards the east. The Perma and Gaita break two small branches, the Perma a dry and the Gaita a green or 'living' branch, and drive them into the ground. They light these with a burning log from the Hearth of the Departed in one or other of their houses. If both branches burn well, it is a sign that the clearing also will burn properly; but if one burns and the other does not, it means that the clearing will only burn in patches and will thus be insufficiently manured. Special offerings must then be made.

Page 225, *line* 9; *page* 278, *line* 25. In one village—but only one—at Mokhpal, I found scepticism about the tradition that the menhirs grow in size. Here the Bison-horn Marias laughed at the idea and said that, if—for example—a stone grew smaller, it was probably because the ground was damp and it sank down.

Page 225, *line* 11. The Bison-horn Marias believe that the Dead are reborn, if at all, in their own homes; they generally deny that they ever reappear as animals. Yet an animal may be born in, or have a powerful influence over, a human being. A girl at Mokhpal was born with the left side of her face covered with a sort of fur; the Marias said that an ancestor who was killed by a bear had been reborn in the child. As a result the wearing of dancing-masks covered with bear-fur has been abandoned, for fear that the wearers should be affected in some future birth. A man killed by a tiger may reappear in one of his descendants with marks of the claws on the neck. It may be that to people who live so near to nature rebirth in animal form does not seem specially distasteful. Marias and Murias live close to their animals and love them. At Lakhopal there is a small menhir in memory of a faithful dog.

Page 227, *line* 12. In 1939, Soma Ganda-Maria of Gomagal killed a man, who had seduced his wife, in the most brutal manner by squeezing his testicles till they burst. He then seized his penis saying, 'It was with this that you copulated with my wife,' and tore the skin from it. Finally he throttled him. Anyone who

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 would condemn the savagery of the Maria, however, would do well to ponder Michael Angelo's painting of the Last Judgement which portrays those who have died in lust being dragged down to hell by demons clinging to their private parts.

Page 235. Koppers ('India and Dual Organization', *Acta Tropica*, Vol. I, No. 1-2, 1944, pp. 85ff.) discusses the problem of a dual classification among the Marias. He rightly emphasizes that the 'dual division of the Gonds of Bastar has nothing whatever to do with dual classification in the ethnological sense'; in any case, though there is a dual division of Marias, there is no dual division of the Gonds of Bastar who fall into several groups. Russell believed that he had found traces of a dual classification system. Grigson denied the validity of this, 'and with good reason', as Koppers says. The fact that the Bison-horn Maria phratries as such are not exogamous, 'taken in conjunction with the occurrence that the Hill Marias have almost nothing to do with phratries, leaves little doubt as to the relatively recent and secondary character of phratry organization among the Gonds of Bastar. We cannot do otherwise than agree with Grigson who refuses to see any connection between a dual classification system and these phratries as presented to us.' On the other hand, the relationships between wife-clans and brother-clans are somewhat reminiscent of 'the triple, circulative organization of the tribe described by Held'. Koppers concludes that although it is impossible to speak with anything like certainty of the existence of dual classification among the Gonds of Bastar and of the Central Provinces, 'it is another question whether in the light of future research some of the fragmentary evidence may not after all prove to be a remnant of a former dual classification system, which, in this case need not necessarily have been indigenous to the Gonds. It is at all events interesting to note that even Grigson finds himself unable to reconstruct the earlier stages of social organization among the Bison-horn Maria on any other basis than that of an "original two-moiety system". From his general impression of all the material to hand Grigson considers himself justified in concluding that all the rest must have developed out of this. For the moment his conclusion can be regarded only as a hypothesis but it is one which may well contain a certain amount of truth.'

823 *Page* 258, *line* 31. The custom of pouring water from the eaves of a house is not confined to marriages. In some Bison-horn Maria villages, a girl is given this treatment at the menarche. When her first period is over, the girl bathes and stands below the eaves in front of her house. Her elder brother's wife or, if she is married, her husband's sister or elder brother's wife, pours water

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

over her from the roof, and she has to catch some and drink it. In some villages, again, if a man marries a widow or another man's wife, the woman must stand below the eaves with a *bassia latifolia* leaf on her head. The Waddai pours water and rice-beer from the roof, all over her, and after this she can enter her new home. When Oyami Anda of Bara Harmamunda married a girl for whom a Lamana'i youth had already been engaged, he had to stand with his rival's brother under the eaves of his house for a ceremony 'to make them forget enmity'. Anda's right hand was placed below the other's right hand, both having the palms upward. In front of them the Waddai made a heap of rice and set an arrow upright in it. He climbed on the roof and poured water over the hands of the two men who allowed it to flow down the arrow and over the rice. Afterwards Anda gave a pig and two fowls to the dispossessed Lamana'i as an offering to the latter's *hanal*. Had this ceremony not been performed, Anda—so he believed—would have suffered from a watery swelling of the body. 823

Page 262. Marias of both kinds are exceptionally virtuous in their sexual lives. Venereal disease is almost unknown, except in the vicinity of the few schools. Several old men have assured me—and I believe them—that since marriage they had had no other woman than their own wives. Love-charms and erotic stimulants are not much in demand and are not approved. At Molasnar there was a Naiko who was said to be making some sort of living by selling love-potions to the Marias; he used to administer them in liquor or tobacco and once a woman took one of them she would follow her lover everywhere 'like a pet dog'. But a Maria said, 'If I bring a girl in this way, my store of rice will grow less for such a union is not a yoking of the house of Mahapurub, and the girl will probably leave me after a time.' Vetti Muda of Dhurli described how when he was a young man (he must have been born about 1870), he used to take a regular diet of monkey's flesh. 'As a result I became very strong and active and could hop from tree to tree like a monkey. Once when I was going through the forest a monkey slipped from the overhanging branch of an ebony tree and was killed by the fall. I cut off its organ and roasted and ate it, with the result that I became so potent that I needed four wives at once.' But it is characteristic of the Maria—as against, for example, the ordinary Gond, Pardhan or Baiga—that he should have used the word 'wives'. 832

Page 269, *line* 27. Grigson has recorded 2 Hill Maria folk-tales. In my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* I give 5 Bison-horn Maria, 37 Muria and 13 Kuruk stories, some of which are probably known also to the Hill Marias, for they were recorded in villages 838

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

538 not far distant from the Abujhmar. The Kuruk stories are almost certainly current also among the Bison-horn Maria. Two of the five specifically Bison-horn Maria tales, like one of the two Maria tales, are about monkeys. The first describes a helpful monkey which is treated with great ingratitude by human beings; in the second—as in Grigson's tale—a monkey marries a human girl and does not make a very great success of the union. In neither case, however, is there any reference to the dispareunia which the Baigas delight to emphasize in stories of the 'Beast Marriage' type. Two of the other tales, 'The Magic Eyes' and 'The Loving Ghost' are exceptionally charming and, while full of conventional folk-lore clichés, strike a note of some originality. In my *Myths of Middle India*, I give Bison-horn Maria legends of the creation of the world, the making of the sun and moon, the origin of fire and several stories of the Vagina Dentata cycle.

Page 280, *line* 34. In the country round Gidam and Barsur, 178 many clans that follow the megalithic tradition elsewhere have abandoned the practice of erecting menhirs, though the Barse, Kalmu and Kunjami clans continue it and erected twenty-six menhirs within the limits of the Gidam Revenue Circle in the years 1938-42. In the Jagdalpur tahsil, though the custom is less well maintained here than elsewhere, the Poyami, Vetti, Bekor, Kuharami, Marvi Padami and Muchaki at least continue to erect *uraskal* stones. Near Jagdalpur, however, and in the neighbourhood of Paknar, there has been some falling off of the practice.

Whatever may be the reason for the abandonment of megalithic customs—and I am rather sceptical about the influence of the Hindu taboo on beef-eating—certain clans have been affected by the warnings of their priests. In Vagriguda, for example, a village in the heart of an area where these customs flourish undisturbed, no menhirs are erected now because once when the village was overwhelmed by an epidemic, the Siraha declared that it was because the Village Mother was annoyed at the practice. The 187 Telami clan have abandoned the practice in the Dhurli area because once when they were quarrying a stone to serve as a menhir, a snake wriggled out of the crack, and this was taken as a sign of the divine displeasure. I believe that many culture changes in India are not due to the spread of civilization but are caused by incidents like these.

Page 281, *line* 24. The upper stone is called *danya-hal* and its 000 supports *odiyal*. In the Kutru zamindari, the Akri clan calls the upper stone *gariyakal*. The Chudala Marvi clan erects both *uraskal* and *danyakal* stones throughout the Konta tahsil and in such villages as Gogonda, Mankapal and Koya Vekur. So do the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

SUPPLEMENT

427

Sori, Miriami, Kalmumi and Markami clans.. My impression was that the *danyakal* stone was becoming more and more popular; it is supposed to confer a certain dignity on the family that has it; and for some reason it is said to be cheaper. Other clans which often use the *danyakal* stones are the Tati, Muchaki, Vetti, Hemla, Oyami, Birya Barse, Punem, Durro and Rawa.

Supplementary material concerning Hill and Bison-horn Maria funerary rites, will be found in my article 'Funerary Customs in Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXV. In the same volume is an important discussion on the megalithic culture of Bastar in relation to other parts of India by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf.

Page 282. Koppers has made the interesting suggestion that the unbloody sacrifice of horned cattle for the dead when an *urashal*-menhir is erected by the Marias, is a widespread custom. 'In this matter of the unbloody killing of animals destined as a sacrifice for ancestors, there is complete agreement between Gonds, Mundas and Santals', and he refers to Bodding who says that 'sacrifices to *bongas* are performed by beheading the sacrificial animal, whilst to the forefathers it is always done by a stroke of an axe-head on the neck'. The Munda also kills horned cattle for the dead in this way. (See W. Koppers, 'Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils', *Annali Lateranensi*, Vol. VI, 1942, p. 193). But how far is this distinction really due to a desire to save the skins of horned cattle? In Orissa at least the vendors of cattle for sacrifice charge an additional sum (up to ten rupees) if the skin is not returned to them intact, with the result that in many cases the sacrifice of a cow or buffalo is unbloody while that of a goat or pig is bloody. At the erection of a menhir by the Bondos I witnessed on the same day and on the same occasion the sacrifice of a pig and a bullock for the ancestors: the first had its throat cut, the second was killed by a blow from the back of an axe in order to save the skin. The Saoras usually make unbloody sacrifices of buffaloes to the ancestors but I have seen a goat (also for the ancestors) decapitated by a sword. I suspect the economic interest is primary.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

ILLUSTRATIONS

[p. 429]

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

133

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Scenery on the Sabari River near Konta

Typical scenery of the Abujhmar Mountains

[illegible]

[End Plate A]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
301
302
224

Verrier Elwin

Muchaki Pandu, Bison-horn Maria of Gogonda with hunting-horn

Bison-horn Maria of Lakhapal

142
301
304

Verrier Elwin

[End Plate B]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
622
301

Markami Hunga, Bison-horn Maria Headman of Marenda

[End Plate C]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria -
Bison Horn Maria

142
292
301
534

Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria youth of Kakker in Hill Maria festival dress

[End Plate D]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
292
534

Bison-horn Maria dancer

[End Plate E]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
301
304

Hill Maria children

142
301

Muchaki Kundi, Bison-horn Maria girl, of Bargum

[End Plate F]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
291
516
301

Bison-horn Maria girl of Mohlipal

[End Plate 6]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

142
291
301

Group of Marsa girls from Lahiri, Chanda district

142
291
301
853
854

Hill Maria mother and child

[End Plate H]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

415
516

Verrier Elwin

Marvi Bhima and Machaki Kondi making leaf-cups at Bergum

[End Plate I]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
301

Bison-horn Maria girl brings in the harvest [Verrier Elwin]

[End Plate J]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

285

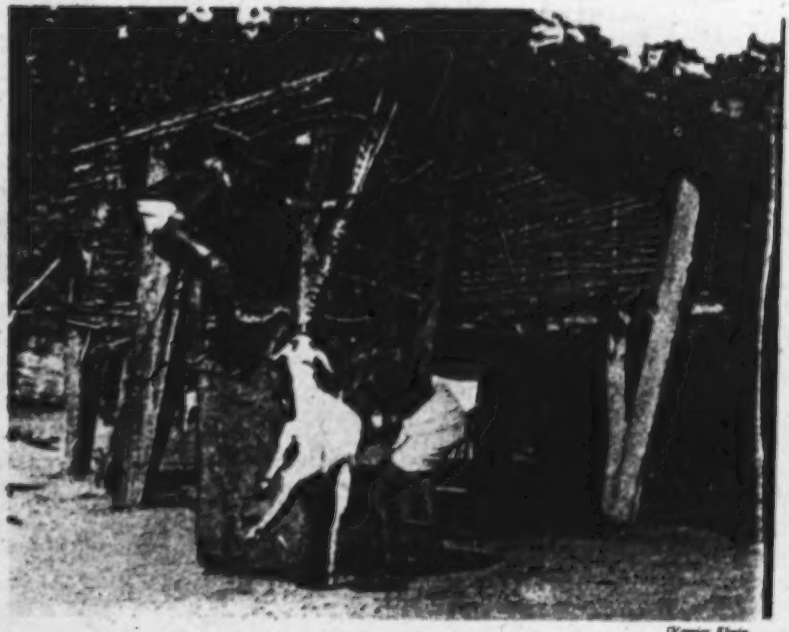
Bison-horn Maria women making a mat

[End Plate K]

J: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

231
343



Bison-horn Marias at Bastanar struggle to get a goat into its shed [Verrier Elwin

[End Plate L]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

526

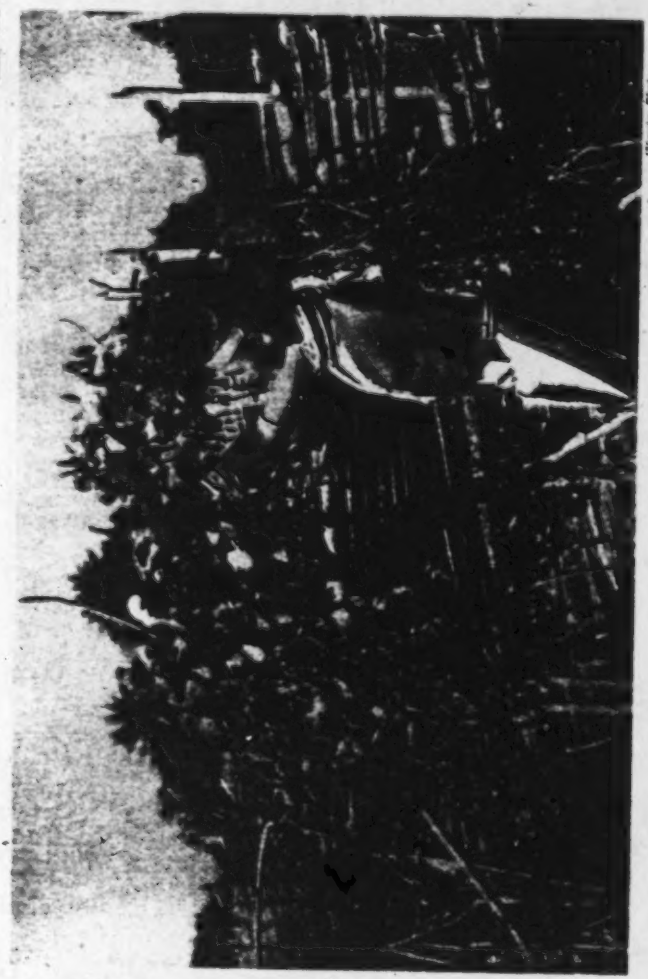
Bison-horn Maria girls playing games at Mokhpal [Verrier Elwin

[End Plate M]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

231
241



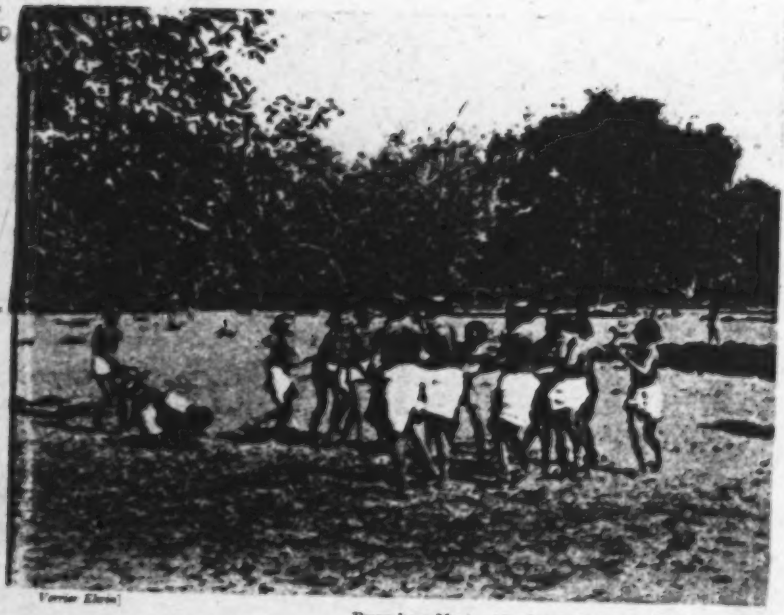
Bison-horn Maria girl feeds a parrot on a bean-vine at Mukhpal

[End Plate N]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

526



Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria girls playing games at Mokhpal

[End Plate O]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

844
415
515

Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria mother with her newly-born child at Maranda. Note the arrow driven into the ground where the placenta is buried, and the stone for bathing

[End Plate P]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

301
304
854

Verrier Elwin

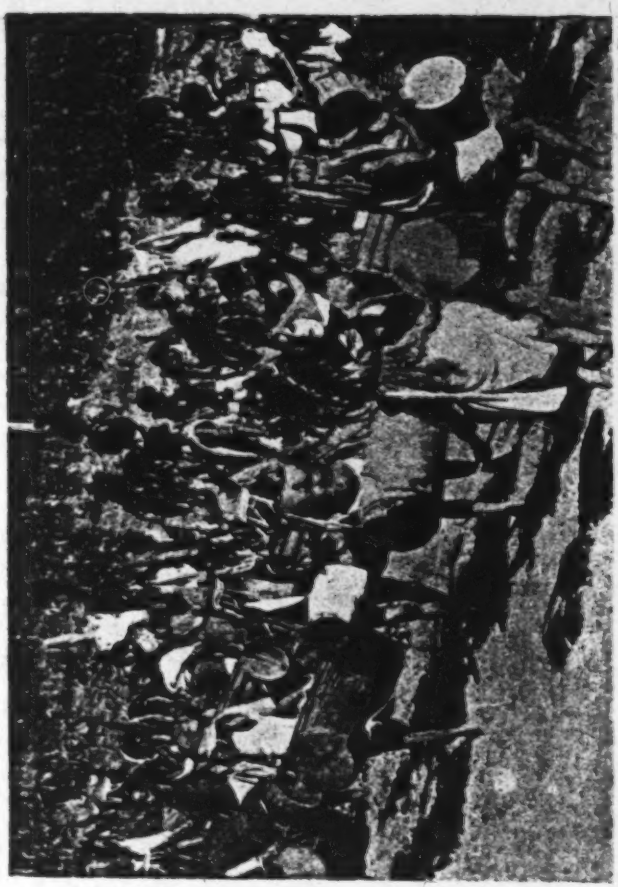
Jugho Chero, of Ituhar, shown in Plate VI (*facing p. 70*), photographed ten years later

[End Plate Q]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535
534



Bison-horn Marias dancing.

[End Plate R]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535

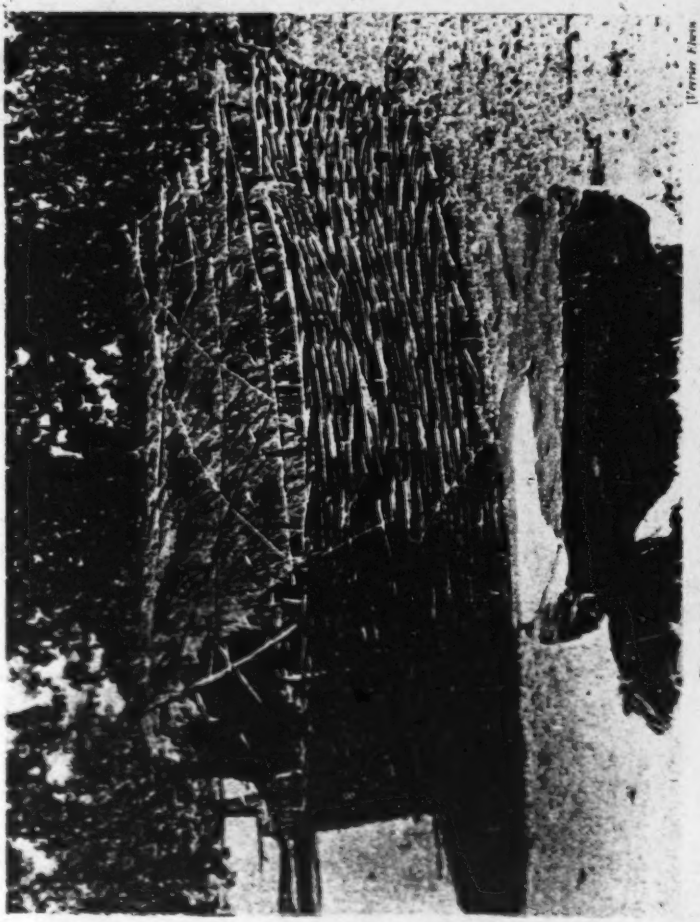
Bison-horn Marias dancing

[End Plate 5]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

764

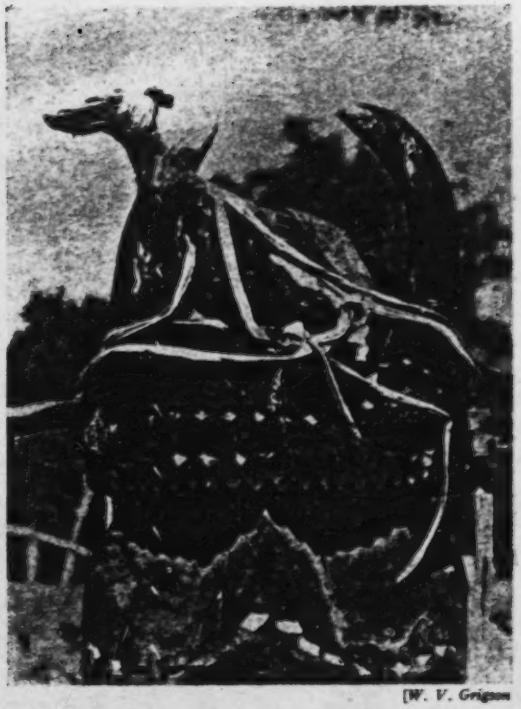


Bison-horn tomb with danyakal stone in front, at Palnar

[Fwd Plate T]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

764
532



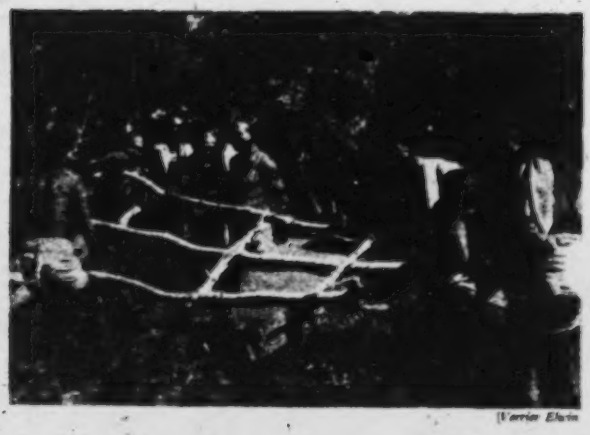
[W. V. Grigson

The top of a Maria funerary post (*hanal-gutta*) at Lahiri, Chanda district

[End Plate 4]

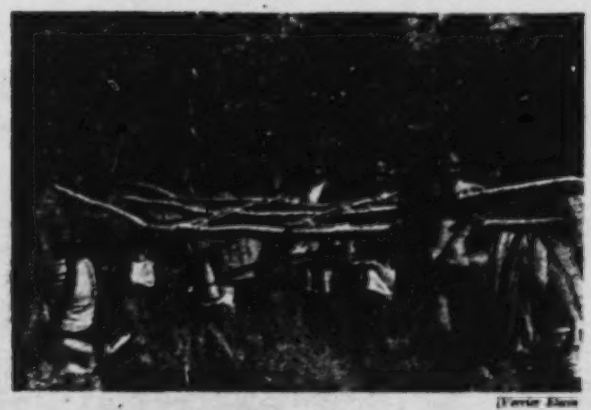
1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

764
483



[Verrier Elwin

Scenes at the erection of a menhir at Mawenar



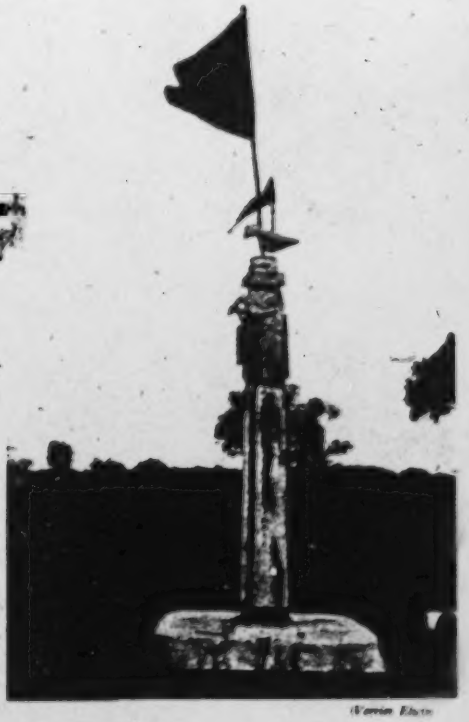
[Verrier Elwin

[End Plate V]

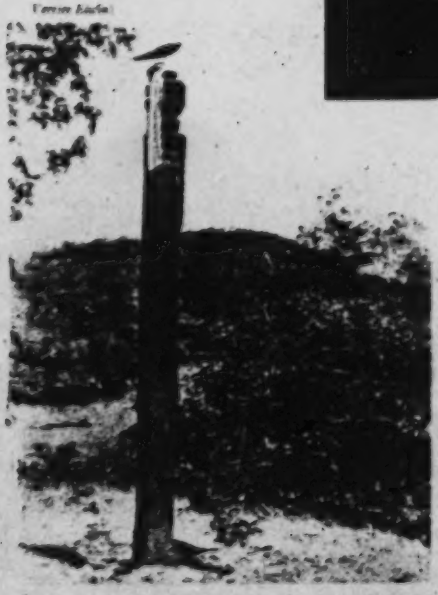
1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

764
532

Memorial pillar
at Bare Atapur



(Verrier Elwin)



Memorial pillar (for members of the Lekhami clan) near Chinger. Note the cromlech at the base

[End Plate W]

1: Grigson G-5. (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

764
53

[Verrier Elwin

Memorial pillar for Barse Marka at Barrem

[End Plate X]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

782
516

After the Census, the Marias took the house-numbering boards outside their villages and sacrificed pigs to them in order to avert the danger of numbering the people

[End Plate Y]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

532
718
48r

[Verrier Elwin

Tati Mundra of Tikampal, with the 'wooden' horse or 'vehicle' of the Tati clan-god Hunga

[End Plate 2]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535
522

Bison-horn Maria clown, covered with glistening mud, postures during a dance

[End Plate ZA]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

534
417
302

Bison-horn Maria boys repair a drum

[End Plate ZB]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

142
291
534

Hill Maria playing stringed instrument

[End Plate ZC]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

534
516

Hill Maria youth playing a *reddar-dol*

[End Plate ZD]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

534
535
292

[Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Marias dancing

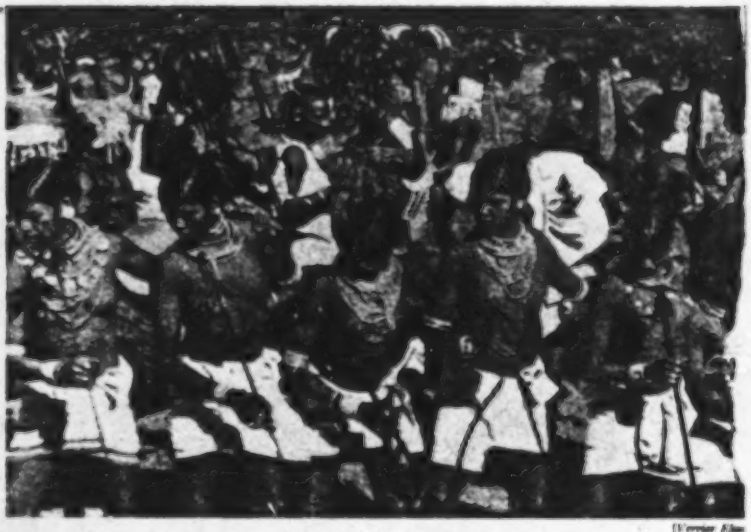
[Verrier Elwin

[End Plate ZE]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535



Bison-horn Maria girls dancing [illegible]

[End Plate 2F]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142
291
301
415
516

The chelik are armed

[frontispiece]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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WITH SHAMRAO HIVALE

Songs of the Forest
Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills

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Muria

THE MURIA

AND

THEIR GHOTUL

VERRIER ELWIN

GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

[p. iii]

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Muria

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[p. iv]

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Muria

TO

JEHANGIR P. PATEL

[p. V]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

—ST PAUL

For thousands of years human folly has overwhelmed love with debris, pelted love with filth. To liberate love from this is to restore that vital human value which among all human values stands supreme.

—HIRSCHFELD

The concealment of truth is the only indecorum known to science; and to keep anything secret within its cold and passionless expanse would be as prudish as to throw a cloth round a naked statue.

—WESTERMARCK

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Muria

PREFACE

THE subject of this book is the ghotul, the village dormitory, the bothie, the bachelors' hall—*Jünglingshaus* is an attractive German word used recently by Ruben—of the Muria of Bastar State. Similar institutions are widely distributed among communities of the Austro-Asiatic cultures, though none have been studied in sufficient detail for full comparison. But on the existing evidence it seems probable that the Bastar ghotul is one of the most highly developed and carefully organized in the world. For what is a village guardroom for the Naga, a boys' club among the Uraon, a refuge for temporary sexual association in Indonesia, is for the Muria the centre of social and religious life.

The study of an institution that is related functionally to every aspect of a tribe's life presents certain technical difficulties of presentation. The culture pattern must be developed in due order; but this means that there will be many references in the earlier chapters that can only be explained later on. A book of this kind, where everything fits in, which describes a culture that is integrated and intelligible, has to be read in bulk—as it were—rather than in sequence. For the reader's convenience, therefore, I give here a brief introductory account of the ghotul in the light of which Part I must be read.

The Muria ghotul is an institution, tracing its origin to Lingo Pen, a famous cult-hero of the Gond, of which all the unmarried boys and girls of the tribe must be members. This membership is carefully organized; after a period of testing, boys and girls are initiated and given a special title which carries with it a graded rank and social duties. Leaders are appointed to organize and discipline the society; throughout this book I call the boys' leader the Sirdar and the girls' leader the Belosa. Boy members are known as chelik and girl members as motiari. The relations between chelik and motiari are governed by the type of ghotul to which they belong. Two distinct types of organization are recognized. In the older, classical, type of ghotul, boys and girls pair off in a more or less permanent relationship which lasts till marriage. They are often 'married' and cohabit in the dormitory for several years. In the more modern form of ghotul, such exclusive associations are forbidden and partners must constantly be changed.

Chelik and motiari have important duties to perform on all social occasions. The boys act as acolytes at festivals, the girls as bridesmaids at weddings. Both dance before the clan-god and at the great fairs. They form a choir at the funerals of important people. Their games and dances enliven village life and redeem it from the crushing monotony that is its normal characteristic in other parts of India.

The intimate association of the ghotul with every aspect of Muria life means, of course, that we must study the whole of that life in less or greater detail. The ghotul must be put in its place. For this reason I have divided the book into two Parts. Part I gives the setting and background, Part II describes the life of the chelik and motiari in detail.

In Part I, I begin with a description of the geopolitical background of the tribe, and give a brief account of the three elements that compose it—the Dhoria, who are Hill Maria now settled in the plains, the Muria immigrants from the north, and the very old aboriginal population of eastern Kondagaon. In Chapter II, I describe the economic life of the Muria; the ghotul is only a night club; all day its members are engrossed in the quest for food and drink. The chelik are kept busy in both axe- and plough-cultivation, hunting, fishing,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

gathering honey, tapping the sago-palm, collecting fuel. The motiari not only work very hard at home, but they go out for roots, wild fruit and myrabolams, to pick broad leaves for plates, cups and pipes, to fish and to express oil.

Chapter III describes the organization of the tribe by clans and families, a matter of absorbing interest to the chelik and motiari since it controls their relations with one another and directs their ultimate matrimonial alliances. I then give three chapters to discussing the course of Muria life, and take the reader right through a Muria's history from birth to death. It was difficult to decide where to put the long and rather tedious chapter on the marriage ceremonies, but I finally decided to put it here rather than in Part II where it would have unduly disturbed the sequence of my argument. This section, though tedious enough, is of great importance, for throughout it the ghotul members are in the centre of the stage and are rarely seen to better advantage.

Chapters VII and VIII describe Muria religion and mythology. The ghotul system derives from and is vitalized by the legend of Lingo Pen, which I discuss in the greatest detail. The dormitory is itself a shrine protected by supernatural forces and full of uncanny power; I show how intimately it is connected with the religious life of the tribe.

We are now in a position to turn to the main subject of the book—the ghotul itself. Chapter IX discovers many parallels to the Bastar institution in other cultures and suggests reasons for its origin; one of the most interesting of these is the Muria's desire to prevent his children from witnessing 'the primal scene'. This leads to an account of the relations of parents and children. I then describe the ghotul buildings, the different types of ghotul organization, ceremonies of initiation and the appointment of leaders, and in Chapter XIII I give a typical evening in the ghotul according to its jealously preserved procedure. Other chapters deal with dress and fashions, dreams, games and dances, riddles and folk-tales.

In Chapter XVI, I describe frankly, but I trust without offence, the ghotul's attitude to sex, and in the following chapter attempt a solution of the problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity. Final chapters attempt to relate the ideas of this remarkable institution to the tribe's attitude to marriage and morality.

It is little wonder that the Muria should regard their ghotul with passionate and loyal devotion. The word so often used to describe it, *parmakoro* or *parmanghor*, 'lovely as the horns of bison', reveals its tender and romantic associations. Its joys are celebrated in a score of songs.

Pupal husir bida he dewa,	Good as the taste of *urad* pulse,
Laya ra udna bida helo.	So was your life with the chelik, sister.

The road leading to its door is like a jackal's tail; the first ghotul had a roof of peacock feathers and a door of ogre's bones. It was 'beautiful as a horse's throat'. If a Muria wants to describe water that is fresh and sparkling, he calls it *chelik sundar pāni*, 'water beautiful as a chelik'.

My chapters on life in the ghotul will probably be of greater interest to the general reader, but throughout the book I have tried to find the synthesis of the whole culture, to see Muria life as a coherent living entity, as a thing logical, dignified and beautiful. In every investigation of a civilization not one's own, there comes—usually only after months or years of routine investigation, tedious checking and the patient accumulation of facts—a moment of sudden glory when one sees everything fall into place, when the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

colours of the pattern are revealed, and one finds oneself no longer an alien and an outsider, but within. 128

It is easier to reach this point among the Muria than in other tribes, for Muria life revolves round the ghotul and the problem is thus simplified. I doubt indeed if the ghotul could exist in another kind of society, a society less free from rivalry and competition, less subject to jealousy, less gentle and tolerant. It could not, I think, be a feature of a disintegrating tribal society; if the ghotul should disappear, we should know that the Muria had begun the long descent to degradation and collapse that has affected many Indian tribes. At present Muria culture and society is complete, close-knit, organized, loyal to itself; the Muria has a full and happy life; and a great part of his unity and happiness depends on the ghotul. There has never been official interference in his religion and culture; the reformer and missionary have been kept far from him. For he has the advantage of living under an administration that has been conducted for many years by officials with scholarship, sympathy and imagination, and his life has been little disturbed, except—as we shall see—by occasional travellers and subordinates.

To the outsider, whether he be a subordinate official, a wandering merchant or a casual visitor to the State, the most important thing about the ghotul, the thing that at once arouses his sniggering curiosity and excitement—is the sexual relation between chelik and motiari. It is probably true to say that many people who live all their lives among the Muria hardly ever realize that the sexual relation is secondary and the magical, religious and social aspects of ghotul life predominant in the Muria's mind. I hope that no one will put down this book without reading, if he reads nothing else, the chapter on 'Moral Standards in the Ghotul'; he will then see that his suspicions of the ghotul as a place of sexual licence are unfounded. If there is licence there is also taboo; if youth has freedom it moves on into a life of strictest decorum. Muria life may be described as having in its pre-nuptial period many of the features of Huxley's *Brave New World*, but in its post-nuptial period the atmosphere of the poems of Tennyson.

But there is, of course, a simple, sensuous and passionate sex-life in the ghotul, and I have described it fully. As it still seems necessary to justify such freedom of description, I will quote the words of two great scholars which, with the quotations that I have put at the beginning of the book, should surely be enough to satisfy all but the most unintelligent. The Rev. R. W. Smith is one of the greatest of African missionaries and was for many years Literary Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. His book on the Ba-ila is a model of scientific research. On the subject of the relations of the sexes, he writes,

> There is much that is unpleasant in this part of our subject—much that we would fain pass over in silence. But if we are to be faithful to our purpose to give a true picture of the Ba-ila, we must not dwell upon what R. L. Stevenson called 'the prim, obliterated, polite surface of life', but must lay bare 'the broad, bawdy and orgiastic—or maenadic—foundations'. To write of the Ba-ila and omit all reference to sex would be like writing of the sky and leaving out the sun; for sex is the most pervasive element of their life. It is the atmosphere into which the children are brought. Their early years are largely a preparation for the sexual function; during the years of maturity it is their most ardent pursuit, and old age is spent in vain and disappointing endeavours to continue it. Sex overtowers all else. . . We desire to look at even these things from their point of view. Our object is not to hold them

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

128 up to reprobation, but simply to describe and understand. To them, the union of the sexes is on the same plane as eating and drinking, to be indulged in without stint on every possible occasion.[1]

Among the Muria, where sex is regarded as something much higher than eating and drinking and the technique of love has been developed to an almost ideal level, it is obviously still more necessary that we should study this subject. To such a study we may also apply wise words of Malinowski.

> In anthropology the essential facts of life must be stated simply and fully, though in scientific language, and such a plain statement cannot really offend the most delicately minded nor the most prejudiced reader; nor can it be of any use to the seeker after pornography; least of all can it entice the unripe interest of the young. For pruriency consists in oblique day-dreaming and not in simple and direct statement. The reader will find that the natives treat sex in the long run not only as a source of pleasure, but, indeed, as a thing serious and even sacred. Nor do their customs and ideas eliminate from sex its power to transform crude material fact into wonderful spiritual experience, to throw the romantic glamour of love over the technicalities of love-making.[2]

114 The neglect of the village dormitory as a subject of research, not only in Bastar but throughout the world, is astonishing.[3] In English, Hutton Webster's *Primitive Secret Societies* deals only with the men's houses from which women are rigorously omitted. In German there is the standard work by Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde* on age-groups and men's societies, a study by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Das Junggesellenhaus im Westlichen Hinterindien*,[4] on the social functions of the dormitories in Further India, and a chapter in *Völker und Kulturen* by Schmidt and Koppers which deals with age-grades and the social functions of the dormitories. For the institution as maintained by specific tribes, we have hints and scattered details in many books, but full-dress accounts are rare. In India the most detailed are C. von Fürer-Haimendorf's on the Konyak Naga and S. C. Roy's on the Uraon. In Africa Leakey has given some valuable information about the intimate life in the *manyatta* of the Masai, and Malinowski has an illuminating account of the Trobriand *bukumatula*. But compared to what might have been written on so fascinating and important a subject comparatively little has yet been attempted.

Moreover the great museums of ethnographic fact also ignore the subject. There is only a passing reference in Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage* to the institution, though one would have thought it highly relevant to his discussion of the hypothesis of primitive promiscuity. Briffault is equally silent, so is Frazer. Nor does Unwin, in a book largely devoted to a study of pre-nuptial chastity, *Sex and Culture*, pay any attention to the evidence (scanty enough, yet of great importance) from the village dormitory. Hambly, in his *Origins of Education among Primitive People*, mentions the dormitory, but hardly accords it its rightful place as one of the most powerful agents of

[1] E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 36.

[2] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages* (London, 1932), p. xiv.

[3] Long ago Peal noticed the same thing. 'The paucity of references to the Morong in many standard works relating to the Indo-Pacific region, is most extraordinary.'—S. E. Peal, 'On the Morong as possibly a Relic of Pre-marriage Communism', *JAI*, Vol. XXII (1893), p. 235.

[4] In *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, Vol. I (1930). I owe the references to the continental literature to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PREFACE

primitive education. Havelock Ellis would, I think, have found much to interest him in the sexual relations of the boys and girls of primitive societies, but he too seems to have considered the existing literature as lacking in detail and authority. 114

Yet—as a glance at this book will show—the ghotul, and presumably the village dormitory elsewhere, provides the most important evidence for any discussion on group-marriage, group-concubinage, pre-nuptial chastity, pre-nuptial infertility, experimental marriage, the union of near kin and the value of the rules of exogamy. For the general reader, uninterested in technical anthropological problems, the ghotul raises equally interesting questions about co-education, the influence of punishment, the expediency of marriage between those who have grown up together, the relegation of parental responsibility, the relation of discipline and freedom, and the elimination of jealousy. It opens up the widest problems of sex and marriage; and even though Muria society may not provide solutions, it does at least put the questions.

The ghotul does not yield up its secrets readily. It is easy enough to obtain a superficial knowledge of its organization, but the Muria have no conscience at all about misleading the inquirer, and it is almost routine for them to give incorrect information at first. They invariably deny—if you ask them questions—that chelik and motiari have intimate relations; they told Grigson that girls never slept in the ghotul of the Narayanpur Tahsil; I have often been wearied by their lies. Every statement must be weighed and checked; the anthropologist has to be both a detective and a magistrate; he must be ready to follow the slightest clue, but he must test with the greatest care the evidence that is put before him. 123

We must not blame the Muria for their reticence. It is the natural and proper barrier set up against prying eyes; it is their ultimate refuge against the inroads of civilization. Moreover chelik and motiari are bound to secrecy, to conceal everything not only from the stranger but from their own relatives, when they are admitted to the ghotul fellowship.

How then was it possible to gather the vast amount of detailed information presented in this book? The answer is simple; the Muria cannot resist affection. They are the most friendly people in the world—once you have learnt how to set about them. They immediately respond to respect. For years they have been scolded, peered at, ridiculed by every visitor to their villages; their first reaction to a newcomer is naturally to throw up a barrier of reticence and falsehood. But directly they find that the visitor knows something about them and likes what he knows, there is a wonderful change and he is overwhelmed with intimacies.

I first visited the Muria country in 1935, and repeated my visits for several years till 1942. In 1940 I was appointed Census Officer of Bastar State and a little later Honorary Ethnographer with the status of a Head of a Department—a position that greatly facilitated my inquiries. In an Appendix I give a list of all the ghotul in the State, and note those that I visited personally and what I saw. I have also recorded those which I was not able to visit myself, but about which I believe I have exact and authentic information—information collected by more than one of my colleagues and which has stood the test of check and counter-check. It seems to me essential that an ethnographer should present his credentials in as precise a manner as possible and should confess his failures. I must admit, for example, that I have not lived in the Muria area during the rains. I have personally witnessed, however, at least samples of everything described in the book, and the total number of ghotul visited comes to no fewer than 347. 14

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

I have always been annoyed by the use of the words 'always', 'commonly', 'universally', 'rarely' in anthropological literature, and even though I have used them often enough myself, I have longed for more precision of statement. This dissatisfaction drove me to prepare a questionnaire about some of those matters on which Westermarck and Briffault, for example, make their most confident assertions. I decided that out of a population of a little over 100,000, a sample of 2,000 cases would not be regarded as insufficient even by mathematicians. I had forms printed at the Jagdalpur Press and questions were asked by members of my party under my close supervision. I believe that the results of this inquiry are among the most valuable conclusions of this book. There must always be a margin of error, but on the whole I believe that a high degree of accuracy has been obtained. It is possible, I know, to lie convincingly by statistics more easily than by any other method, but in the realm of social anthropology I must confess to a great feeling of relief, when instead of having to say, for example, 'The institution of the marriage by service (Lamhada) is not very common' I can observe that 'Out of 2,000 cases examined only 113 were Lamhada'.

All the photographs in this book were taken by me except Plates LIX–LXV which were given me by Dr C. von Fürer-Haimendorf (my own Bondo and Gadaba pictures were not ready in time) and Plate CV which was made specially by Mr F. Berko from specimens collected by Mr Shamrao Hivale. I used a Contax camera with a 5 cm. Sonnar lens for ordinary work and an 8·5 cm. Triotar for long-distance and close-ups. Developing and enlargements were done by Messrs Kodak, Bombay, whose staff showed great interest in my work and at all times gave me every consideration.

With a few exceptions (Figs. 123-4, 127–9) all the line-drawings in the text are by Mr R. F. Motofram, for whose work I cannot sufficiently express my admiration and who is responsible not only for the drawings but also for the beautiful colour-plates and for some improvements in the half-tones. Most of the drawings were made from specimens collected by me and taken down to Bombay, but Figs. 20, 22, 30, 44, 45 and 46 were drawn from my own photographs, Fig. 48 from a photograph given me by Mr G. F. Ramsden, C.I.E., I.C.S., and Fig. 40 from a photograph by Dr C. von Fürer-Haimendorf. Figs. 34–9, 41, 76, 116 and 137 were copied from books and journals; acknowledgements will be found in the text.

It was A. E. Housman's ambition that one day a copy of *The Shropshire Lad* taken into battle should stop a bullet aimed at a soldier's heart. I have a similar desire for this, as for all my other books, that in the battle for existence which the Indian aboriginal now has to wage, it may protect him from some of the deadly shafts of exploitation, interference and repression that civilization so constantly launches at his heart. If this book does anything to help the Muria to continue as they are today, happy, free and innocent, I shall be content.

V.E.

Patangarh Village
Mandla District, India
11 July 1942

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Muria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IN preparation of a book of this kind the ethnographer requires the help of many friends. First and foremost among these was Shamrao Hivale, since 1928 my constant companion, supporter and consoler. He accompanied me on my first visit to Bastar in 1935 and afterwards went with me on many of my tours. His genius for friendship with aboriginals and his ability to catch the essential imponderabilia of primitive life (which is admirably displayed in his book *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley*) was invaluable, and this book owes to him much of its life and colour and some of the important 'documents' were due to his friendliness and enterprise.

It was Mr W. V. Grigson, C.S.I., I.C.S., who first directed my attention to the ghotul by his account of it in a report of the 1931 Census. Subsequent inquiries have shown that some of his facts only apply to the particular ghotul he examined and at that date. But he put me on the road. His book on the Maria Gond was in my hands every day for three years and today its torn and dilapidated condition is a tribute to the value I have always put on it. Throughout the writing of this book and its production, Mr Grigson's friendship and support, and his unparalleled affection for Bastar and its people, have been a constant inspiration.

After Mr Grigson had inspired me with an interest in Bastar, Mr E. S. Hyde, I.C.S. (who was then Administrator), got me there. Mr Hyde was succeeded by Mr A. N. Mitchell, O.B.E., I.C.S., a man who belongs properly to an earlier generation of officials, to the spacious days of Grierson and Crooke, for he has managed to combine his desire to gain justice for the underdog with a high tradition of scholarship. He is the author of a *Grammar of Gondi* and he has made substantial contributions, which are acknowledged in the text, to this book on the linguistic side.

In February 1941, Mr Walter Kaufmann, who was then working in All-India Radio, spent a week with me investigating the music of the Maria and Muria. There could be no one better qualified for the task, and I count myself most fortunate in being able to include his recordings of ghotul songs and the rhythms of Muria drumming.

In March of the following year, Dr B. S. Guha, the doyen of Indian anthropologists and most delightful of travelling companions, visited me in Bastar and we went together to Dongrigura in the east and Markabera in the west. Dr Guha made a number of measurements and has generously allowed me to print his conclusions.

In Bastar itself I had so many helpers that I cannot name them all, but I must at least mention the then Assistant Administrator, the late Rai Sahib Niranjan Singh, who contributed notes on Bastar religion; my friend Mr S. M. Ishaque, Assistant Settlement Officer, whose practical help and wide knowledge of the people of Bastar was always at my disposal; Mr D. A. Dubois who made things easy for me in his office and cheered me in his home; Mr Ramakrishnan, who rescued me from many difficulties while I was Census Officer and has since shown his interest in my ethnographic work; the late Mr Qudratulla Khan, Excise Officer, who prepared me a valuable note on the use of liquor in the State; Mr A. C. Mayberry, M.B.E., and the whole of his police staff, especially Thakur Manbahal Singh, who has an unusual knowledge of the Muria and sympathy for their institutions; Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, M.B.E., who helped to keep me fit through many arduous journeys, and the great-hearted

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Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

000 Dr K. Satyanarayan, who saved the life of my son and gave constant help to members of my party. Every Tahsildar gave me help in my various inquiries, but for this book I owe a special debt to Mr T. R. Menon (since Diwan of Nilgiri State) and Mr Q. Huq who were stationed in the northern area while I was living among the Muria.

Then there was Mr Sampat Singh who was lent me by the State for two years, a man with a remarkable command of the Gondi language, a wide knowledge of the Bastar aboriginals, and a deep sympathy for their culture. He had some training from Mr Grigson several years before and soon became adept in creating a friendly and confident atmosphere. He nearly always accompanied me on my tours.

My trained assistants, Sundarlal and Gulabdas, may now be regarded as very efficient and trustworthy investigators. They usually went ahead of the main party to explore. It was only after they had made friends with a village and prepared the way that the rest of us would go there. Sometimes they reported hostility or indifference and we would change our programme. Unhappily Sunderlal twice fell very ill in Bastar and had to return home. Gulabdas also suffered constantly from malaria, but his almost passionate devotion to the Muria kept him going. His knowledge of Bastar has astonished residents and officials of many years' standing.

Another member of the party was Dhanuram, an educated Muria who was lent to me by the Settlement Department. He is an Usendi of northern Antagarh, and I believe that he is by origin a Hill Maria. He is a good and faithful person who quickly learnt that nothing was required of him but fact. It was his special task—since he was a Gondi-speaking Muria—to write down the songs and stories in original and help me to translate them. Buchul is a Gondi-speaking Pardhan from Mandla who did a few months' good work and would have done more had he not suffered from the usual Pardhan objection to exerting himself. My chaprasis, Tularam—a Dhakar—and Mangtu—a Bhattra—were also helpful in creating a friendly atmosphere and in banishing suspicion.

The Gondi texts which, it must be remembered, are in a corrupt Muria-Gondi, with the translations, are due mainly to the work of Mr Sampat Singh and Dhanuram. Mr A. N. Mitchell also checked many of the songs.

I have left to the last the help given by my wife, who is herself a Gond and was believed by the Muria to be a Maria with the result that I was known generally as the 'Maria Sahib'. To get information from the motiari's point of view was almost impossible for a party of men; Kosi filled the gap and obtained some unique experiences from her friends in the ghotul—into which, however, to her great annoyance she was not allowed, as a married woman, to enter. My son came to the Muria country when he was only a fortnight old and was indeed conceived in the shadow of the ghotul. He played his part in the creation of this book as an object of admiring excitement to one and all. I had a gramophone, and mechanical toys, and there were always many presents, but nothing 'drew' as he did. He has since played a similar part in the wildest hills of Orissa, among Juang and Bhuiya, Gadaba and Kond, and was nowhere more successful than among the fierce and untamed Bondo.

I must also thank Mr H. J. B. Le Patourel, Diwan of Jashpur State, for an account of the Dhumkuria within his administration; Mr K. C. Seth, Census Officer of Kanker State, for a statistical record of the ghotul across the Bastar border; Mr H. V. Blackburn, who first escorted me to the Kuttia Kond hills; and above all Mr W. G. Archer, I.C.S., who enabled me to see something of the remnants of dormitory culture among the Ho, Munda,

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Muria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Asur and Uraon, whose own work has been a perpetual source of inspiration to me, and who found time to go carefully through my MS and make suggestions that have improved it. CDO

Others who read the MS and involved me in endless labour of rewriting (to the benefit both of the book and my own soul) were Dr C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, Mr Evelyn Wood and Mr Denys Scott. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf is one of those scholars whose learning is equalled by his generosity; his assistance has at all times been unstinted, and I have always found it wise to follow his advice.

Few books can have been scrutinized more carefully or criticized more drastically than the first draft of this book during the rains of 1941 at Morfa House, then the home of Evelyn and Maeve Wood in Bombay. They not only studied the MS themselves and discussed it in the greatest detail, but arranged gatherings in their house where I was able to read parts of it to a group of scientists and get their criticisms. Among those who helped in these discussions were Sir S. S. Sokhey, Dr A. P. Pillay, Dr K. Masani, Dr J. M. Shah, Dr Kronenberger, Dr Mrs Moraes, Dr Mrs Gorey and Mr Denys Scott. I owe more than I can say to these discussions which clarified many points hitherto obscure and suggested further lines of inquiry. Evelyn Wood not only interested himself in the matter of the book, particularly on the psychological side where he raised many points of importance, but also concerned himself with every aspect of its production and illustration.

Mr F. Berko also assisted in the arrangement of the half-tones, and I must express my appreciation of the workers in the Times of India Press who did the reproductions.

The process of publication, long-drawn as it has inevitably been in the last years of a world war, has been made a constant pleasure by all those, to whom I may not refer by name, who conducted it—my friends in the office of the Oxford University Press, Bombay; the printers of the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta; the map-makers at the Wesley Press, Mysore.

But publication would have been impossible without the practical sense and scientific interest of Mr Jehangir P. Patel and Mr J. R. D. Tata. A munificent subsidy from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, together with a grant from the Darbar of Bastar State, provided the necessary funds for the production and I would express here my deep gratitude for this assistance.

[p. xvi is blank]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CONTENTS

PART I: THE PATTERN OF MURIA LIFE

Page

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I. BASTAR STATE — II. THE TRIBAL POPULATION OF BASTAR — III. THE MURIA — IV. PHYSICAL CHARACTERS OF THE MURIA — V. MURIA MIGRATIONS 3

CHAPTER TWO: THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

I. THE MURIA VILLAGE — II. CULTIVATION — III. THE MURIA'S YEAR — IV. CULTIVATION AND THE GHOTUL — V. THE MURIA'S FOOD — VI. HONEY VII. OIL — VIII. HUNTING — IX. FALCONRY — X. FISHING — XI. LIQUOR — XII. THE SAGO-PALM 23

CHAPTER THREE: ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

I. THE CLAN SYSTEM — II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CLANS — III. CLAN RULES — IV. THE FAMILY — V. SUMMARY 59

CHAPTER FOUR: THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. PREGNANCY AND BIRTH — II. NAME-GIVING — III. THE LIFE OF YOUNG CHILDREN — IV. TATTOOING — V. MENSTRUATION 70

CHAPTER FIVE: THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

I. BETROTHAL — II. THE EVIDENCE OF THE SONGS — III. SIX KINDS OF MARRIAGE — IV. THE MARRIAGE CEREMONIES — V. THE NAYANAR MARRIAGES: A DIFFERENT PROCEDURE — VI. THE GHOTUL'S SHARE IN THE CEREMONY — VII. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY 86

CHAPTER SIX: THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

I. OLD AGE AND THE CLIMACTERIC — II. DEATH AND THE GHOTUL — III. THE SOUL AND ITS FATE — IV. THE INTERVENTION OF THE DEPARTED IN HUMAN AFFAIRS — V. FUNERARY RITES — VI. DIVINING THE CAUSE OF DEATH — VII. 'BRINGING BACK THE SOUL' — VIII. THE BAZAAR CEREMONY — IX. THE POT OF THE DEPARTED — X. MEMORIALS TO THE DEAD — XI. THE ERECTION OF A MENHIR — XII. GENERAL IDEAS ABOUT THE MENHIRS — XIII. THE MANAL PATA — XIV. SUBSTITUTES FOR THE MENHIR — XV. REMNANTS OF MEGALITHIC CULTURE IN EASTERN KONDAGAON — XVI. THE DANGER OF THE ABNORMAL: DEATH FROM WILD ANIMALS — XVII. THE DANGER OF THE ABNORMAL: THE ONDAR MUTTAI — XVIII. SUMMARY 141

CHAPTER SEVEN: MURIA RELIGION

I. INTRODUCTORY — II. THE ORIGIN OF THE GODS — III. THE NATURE OF THE GODS — IV. THE CLAN-GOD — V. MURIA TEMPLES — VI. THE MURIA PRIESTHOOD — VII. WHITE AND BLACK MAGIC — VIII. THE ECSTATIC TRANCE — IX. THE CURE OF DISEASE — X. MURIA FESTIVALS — XI. PURIFYING THE VILLAGE — XII. THE BIRTH OF A GOD — XIII. CONCLUSION 174

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Page

000 *CHAPTER EIGHT: THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN*

I. THE SHRINE OF LINGO PEN — II. THE LINGO LEGEND IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES — III. HISLOP'S VERSION OF THE LEGEND — IV. THE BETUL VERSION — V. INTERPRETATIONS — VI. THE LINGO LEGEND IN BASTAR — VII. A METRICAL VERSION OF THE LEGEND — VIII. THE STORY OF USARENGI PALLI — IX. LINGO AND THE GHOTUL — X. LINGO AND CREATION — XI. LINGO AND THE SUN AND MOON — XII. LINGO AND THE DISCOVERY OF FIRE — XIII. LINGO AND THE DISCOVERY OF LIQUOR — XIV. THE COMING OF DEATH 225

PART II: THE GHOTUL

CHAPTER NINE: THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

I. THE VILLAGE DORMITORY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD — II. THE ORIGIN OF THE DORMITORY — III. THE MURIA'S OWN THEORY — IV. AVOIDING THE PRIMAL SCENE 269

CHAPTER TEN: THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS 326

CHAPTER ELEVEN: TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL 333

CHAPTER TWELVE: GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES 352

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: AN EVENING IN THE GHOTUL 371

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

I. DRESS AND FASHIONS — II. HAIR-DRESSING — III. COMBS — IV. CLEANLINESS — V. TOBACCO — VI. THE SLEEPING MAT 381

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: GHOTUL DISCIPLINE 398

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

I. INTRODUCTORY — II. THE ANATOMY AND MYTHOLOGY OF SEX — III. EROTIC ATTRACTIVENESS — IV. THE APPROACH TO TUMESCENCE — V. — VI. — VII. THE SEXUAL ACT — VIII. LOVE-CHARMS — IX. IMPOTENCE — X. SEXUAL DEVIATIONS — XI. CEREMONIAL CROSS-DRESSING — XII. FRIENDSHIPS 419

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY 459

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: DREAMS 475

CHAPTER NINETEEN: GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

I. INTRODUCTORY — II. THE PUS KOLANG EXPEDITIONS — III. THE PEN KOLANG EXPEDITIONS — IV. THE CHAIT DANDAR EXPEDITIONS — V. THE DIWALI DANCES — VI. THE HULKI DANCES — VII. THE CHHERTA DANCE 485

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CONTENTS

Page 000

CHAPTER TWENTY: DANCE AND SONG

I. INTRODUCTORY — II. THE EIGHTEEN INSTRUMENTS — III. THE MANDRI DRUM — IV. DANCING DRESS — V. THE MANDRI DANCE — VI. THE DRUM RHYTHMS — VII. RELIGIOUS DANCES — VIII. THE HAR ENDANNA — IX. KARSANA 521

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE: GAMES

I. INTRODUCTORY — II. GAMES OF LITTLE CHILDREN — III. HOUSEHOLD GAMES — IV. MARRIAGE GAMES — V. DRAMATIC GAMES — VI. GAMES OF ANIMALS AND THE CHASE — VII. GAMES AS EXERCISE — VIII. ROUND GAMES — IX. MISCELLANEOUS GAMES — X. COCK-FIGHTING 536

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO: OTHER RECREATIONS

I. MURIA HUMOUR — II. A TEST OF WIT — III. RIDDLES — IV. FOLK-TALES 583

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE: THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

I. INTRODUCTORY — II. THE APPEAL OF THE CHILDHOOD FRIEND — III. 'A MARRIAGE HAS BEEN ARRANGED' — IV. MARRIAGE BY SERVICE — V. POLYGYNY — VI. ADULTERY — VII. DIVORCE — VIII. JEALOUSY — IX. QUARRELS AND THEIR CAUSES — X. THE VOCABULARY OF ABUSE 614

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

I. THE GHOTUL FESTIVALS — II. CEREMONIAL AXE-CULTIVATION — III. THE STILT FESTIVAL 648

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE: MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL 654

APPENDIX ONE: CLASSIFIED LIST OF GHOTUL VILLAGES 667

APPENDIX TWO: THE LANGUAGE OF THE MURIA
BY A. N. MITCHELL 683

APPENDIX THREE: GHOTUL TITLES 691

APPENDIX FOUR: CENSUS RETURNS 696

APPENDIX FIVE: STATISTICAL INQUIRY 699

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY 701

INDEX OF AUTHORITIES QUOTED 719

INDEX OF SUBJECTS 723

[p. xx is blank]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ILLUSTRATIONS

Facing page

COLOURED PLATES

005 Typical Jhoria necklace and head-band from Markabera .. 125
Jhoria necklace and ear-ornament from Nayanar 138
Jhoria necklace and head-band from Remawand 534

PHOTOGRAPHS

The chelik are amused. *Frontispiece*

Plate

I Scene on the Indrawati River 4
The Chitrakot Falls in flood 4
II The Kotri River 5
Lingo's shrine at Semurgaon 5
View from the Keskal Ghat 5
III Motiari of Sirpuri, showing method of arranging combs .. 12
The Gujaro, Sulki and Mularo of the Barkot ghotul 12
IV A Muria of Nayanar greets his friends before drinking salphi juice 13
V A study in contrasts. The two boys are brothers, but one goes to school 18
VI Nari, the priest and landlord of Nayanar 19
VII Motiari of Munjmeta listening to the gramophone .. 30
VIII Motiari ploughing at Bayanar 31
Carrying earth to embank a field 31
Chelik at Sirpuri in solid-wheeled cart 31
IX Chelik bringing wood for dahi cultivation 36
Muria firing a marhan clearing near Antagarh 36
X Chelik at Markabera thrashing with their feet 37
Winnowing grain. Note the first sheaf tied to the thrashing pole 37
XI The fermented sap of the sago-palm is a favourite drink .. 44
XII Chelik of Bayanar digging 45
The Meliya of Phanda spinning rope 45
XIII Chelik of Masora roasting a rat 52
A porcupine trap near Lohatur 52
XIV The falconer 53
XV Chelik with bow and arrow 60
Returning from the ceremonial hunt 60
XVI Two motiari from Kapsi 61
The Belosa of the Bhanpuri ghotul 61
XVII Making a fishing net 66
XVIII Chelik at Temrugaon fishing with rod and line from a specially prepared pier 67
Chelik setting dundka and dandar traps in a small stream 67
XIX Dasru of Markabera with his chargod net 78
XX Chelik at Kollibera fishing with a net 79
Boys setting a sondri trap in the River Kotri 79
XXI The arrow and stone above the pit in which a child's placenta is buried 82
Mother with her two children at Phanda 82
XXII Ceremonial greeting of the bridegroom by his relations .. 83
Marriage booth 83
XXIII Bride at Amasara with braided hair 94

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Plate		Facing page
XXIV	The bride's bath	95
	Chelik fan the bride dry after her bath	95
XXV	Motiari attending the bridegroom at Nayanar	102
XXVI	Motiari carrying the crowned bridegroom at Sidhawand	103
	Bridegroom sitting in the lap of an attendant	103
XXVII	Pouring oil down an arrow on to the head of the bride	106
	Preparing the bride's seat underneath a curtain	106
XXVIII	The Horn Dance at Sidhawand	107
	The Lagir ceremony at Sidhawand	107
XXIX	The bride spits at her husband	128
	The husband proves his virility by breaking logs	128
XXX	Bride being taken out for the Lagir procession	129
	The bride bids farewell to her old companions	129
XXXI	The dead man's daughter-in-law throws rice over the bier	144
	Memorial menhirs near Khutgaon	144
XXXII, XXXIII	Scenes from the Dance of the Ghost	Between 144-5
XXXIV	Tomb at Gudripara	145
	Small menhir in front of the Gudripara tomb	145
	Son and grandson offer liquor at a father's tomb at Phunder	145
XXXV	Siraha's swing at Alor	180
XXXVI	The Anga, Lalit Kuar, of the Poyami clan at Masora	181
	The Anga indicates its will	181
XXXVII	Gaita of Almer in trance, wearing cowrie jacket	188
	Priest of Pendrawandin at the Kondagaon Marhai	188
XXXVIII	Siraha carrying Anga and Gutal at Adner	189
	Litter of the Village Mother outside her shrine at Masora	189
XXXIX	The 'horse' of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon	196
	A Dhurwa hobby-horse	196
	Hobby-horse at the Malakot wedding	196
	The 'horse' of Lingal Pen at Cherpal	196
XL	Grain strung across ghotul gate at Ulera	197
	Muria camp, with village flags, during the Dassera festival	197
XLI	The Nero of the Tarbaili ghotul	204
	Two great friends: Pilsai and his *hoonra* at Sidhawand	204
XLII	Bathing the gods at Adner	205
	Bathing the gods at Masora	205
XLIII	Siraha medium at Adner, scourging himself	208
	Siraha treating the author for fever, at Metawand	208
XLIV	The Hikmi strings his bow in the ceremonial hunt	209
	The Almer Gaita worships axe, bow and arrows before a hunt	209
XLV	Uraon village elephant of Saparum	224
	Uraon dhumkuria at Borhambey	224
XLVI, XLVII	Siraha prophesying above the dedicated bull; The sacrifice; Priests of other deities fill their hands with blood	Between 224-5
XLVIII	The dhangar's 'mistress' at Borhambey	225
	The punishment pillar at Agru	225
XLIX	Uraon dhangar	242
	Uraon dhangri	242
L	Irpe, a Hill Maria girl of Belimori	243
LI	Hill Maria boys in front of the Itulnar ghotul	254
	Bison-horn Maria girls in the court of the Dugeli ghotul	254
LII	Hill Maria chelik in dancing dress	255
LIII	Bison-horn Maria girl from Gudra, Bastar State	278
LIV	Hirme, a Bison-horn Maria girl, washing her hands	279
	Bison-horn Maria dancers	279

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate		Facing page
LV	Mask worn by Bhuiya youths on ceremonial expeditions	282
	Girl member of the Bhuiya dormitory at Ronta	282
	Bhuiya dormitory at Raisua	282
LVI	Juang dhangri at Kantara	283
LVII	Dances of the Juang dormitory	292
LVIII	Juang youth with chang drum	293
	Juang youths with long drum in front of the dormitory at Korba	293
LIX	Konyak girls with skirts of palm-leaves	300
LX	Konyak girls dancing at the spring festival	301
	Konyak girls dressing each other's hair	301
LXI	Kalyo Kengyu dancers refreshing themselves with rice-beer	306
LXII	Bondo girls	307
LXIII	Gadaba girls during a dance	318
	Gadaba boys playing on their stringed instruments	318
LXIV	Bondo dance	319
	Bondo girl playing the Jew's Harp	319
LXV	Gadaba girls during a dance	326
LXVI	The Palli ghotul	327
LXVII	Uraon dhangri	330
	Motiari of Kongera grinding	330
LXVIII	The ghotul at Masora	331
	Black and red wall-paintings in the More Berma ghotul	331
LXIX	Phirtu, the Chowkidar of the Masora ghotul	338
	The ghotul near Malakot	338
LXX	The Baghbera ghotul	339
	The Bandopal ghotul	339
LXXI	The Hikmi of Almer removes wood from the ghotul stack	350
LXXII	Carved pillar at Chandabera	351
	Carved pillar at Remawand	351
LXXIII	Carved pillars at Chandabera	356
	Carving on the pillar of a shrine at Phanda	356
LXXIV	Pillar at Binjhe with the chelik who carved it	357
	Drawing on old census number-board	357
	Carvings on a pitorka drum from Dongrigura	357
LXXV	Chelik of Tolnar with his ghotul 'wife'	364
LXXVI	A Lohar boy: the Chowkidar of the Berma ghotul	365
	Motiari cleaning the Bandopal ghotul	365
LXXVII	At Kongera a motiari passes on her drink to a chelik	388
	Motiari serving food to the chelik at Nayanar	388
LXXVIII	A motiari serves the boys	389
	The ghotul Kotwar, son of Nari, serving food at Nayanar	389
LXXIX	The Belosa combs the hair of the senior Kotwar at Nayanar	396
	The Alosa massages the junior Kotwar at Nayanar	396
LXXX	The Malko of the Koilibera ghotul	397
LXXXI	Chelik at Bandopal making a kutul head-rest	406
	Chelik at Phunder making a comb	406
LXXXII	Motiari at Bandopal making bead necklaces	407
	A woman at Remawand makes a mat	407
LXXXIII	The turban as box	410
	Girls wearing cowrie head-dress	410
LXXXIV	Motiari of Palli pounding tobacco in a wooden mortar for the chelik	411
	The Chalan of Jhakri preparing a pitorka drum	411
LXXXV	Jhoria dancers at Kabonga	420
	Jhoria dancers at Amasara	420

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Plate		Facing page
LXXXVI	Chelik with face decorations	421
	The Likhen of the Timnar ghotul	421
LXXXVII	Motiari of Palli with leaf-cup	428
	Pola festival earthen bullocks put on the roof for luck	428
LXXXVIII	The Nero of Tarbaili with bamboo water-container	429
LXXXIX	Rubbish hung over the road to purify a village	464
	Leader of the Diwali dance	464
	Chelik with sacred fire	464
XC	Pus Kolang dances: two movements in the Lingo Pata at Phulpar	465
XCI	The Malik of the Jungani ghotul with friends	480
XCII	The semur tree at Phulpar, hung with dancing sticks	481
XCIII	Dancing sticks strung across the road near the village boundary at Koilibera	484
	Chelik preparing to hoist their sticks across the road	484
XCIV	Chait Dandar dances: two movements in the Stick Dance at Malakot	485
XCV	The Watia Karsana	492
	A Chait Dandar dancer	492
	A straw man	492
XCVI	Motiari drying mahua flowers at Temrugaon	493
	Motiari collecting and sifting mahua flowers	493
XCVII	Hulki dance at Alor	500
	Hulki dance at Koilibera	500
XCVIII	Hulki expedition mask (From Sirpuri)	501
	Chait Dandar masks representing man and wife (From Kachora)	501
XCIX	Mask used in Ciherta dances (From Berma)	508
C	Earthen dolls from Phauda	509
	Malko and Dulosa with earthen dolls at Chandabera	509
CI	Pus Kolang: the Monkey dance	512
	Pus Kolang: the Kokothar dance at Koilibera	512
CII	Nakta mask used for Ciherta dance	513
	Masked chelik representing a frog or leopard, at Phunder	513
CIII	Pus Kolang mask	528
CIV	The Malik of the Kongera ghotul in dancing dress	529
CV	Wooden dolls, representing a chelik and motiari, attached to gongs and carried over the shoulder on any festive occasion	532
CVI	Chelik of Temrugaon wearing typical Hill Maria cap and playing the hunting-horn	533
	Chelik panchayat denouncing a would-be reformer	533
CVII	Kachora chelik with tudra drum	540
CVIII	Chelik playing the flute at Nayanar	541
	Ghotul Kotwar of Markabera playing the dhmsir	541
CIX	Chelik worshipping their drums at a marriage at Nayanar	550
	Motiari carrying drums for their chelik	550
CX	The Sirdar of the Sidhawand ghotul	551
	The Salki of the Kongera ghotul with kundri drum	551
	The Danga of the Belora ghotul with daki drum	551
CXI	Movements in a Mandri dance at Khutgaon	554
CXII	The Kotwarin of the Kongera ghotul	555
	The Malko of the Markabera ghotul	555
CXIII	One method of placing the arms in the Hulki dance	560
	Chelik of Atungaon, showing buttock-bells and cowrie streamers	560

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate		Facing page
CXIV, CXV	Movements in the Mandri dance at Kabonga	Between 560-1
CXVI	Mandri and Relo dancing at Kachora	561
CXVII	Relo dancers accompanying the boys	564
	Mandri dancers on their knees	564
CXVIII	Marriage dancers at Kachora	565
	Motiari of Kachora practise the marriage dance	565
CXIX	Chelik and motiari of Aturgaon and Kongera doing a variation of the Maria dance	572
	Chelik of Toinar doing samdhi-par	572
CXX	Festival dancing at Kongera	573
	Dancers marching in a procession	573
CXXI	Festival dancing, with big dhol drums, at Phunder	582
	Festival dancing, with small drums, at Phanda	582
CXXII	Durpa Dandi	583
	Movements in the Nana Darbena dance at Alor	583
CXXIII	The Guguring Gus dance at Alor	586
	Purar Karsana, a ring dance at Phunder	586
CXXIV	Karmata Karsana: Swinging-the-Baby, at Temrugaon	587
CXXV	Donga Karsana: Oranges and Lemons, at Koilibera	594
CXXVI	The Salho of the Munjmeta ghotūl	595
	The Jhaliyaro of the Karikhodra ghotul	595
CXXVII	Jatta Karsana at Metawand	606
	Mao Karsana: Hunt-the-Buffalo, at Markabera	606
	Gudina Karsana: Rolling-over game, at Koilibera	606
CXXVIII	Wanjing Karsana: Rice-husking game, at Temrugaon	607
	Rice-husking in fact	607
CXXIX	Tedapotur Karsana at Sidhawand	608
	Munjmeta chelik playing the Watia Karsana	608
CXXX, CXXXI	The Root Game Planting the roots Pulling up a root Carrying the roots to be washed in the river Washing the roots	Between 608-9
CXXXII	The Mogral Karsana, or Crocodile game	609
	Wrestling at Koilibera	609
CXXXIII	Kor Karsana: Revealing a cock	610
	Guessing the cock	610
CXXXIV	The Purad-upihana Karsana which imitates the movements of the wood-pigeon	611
CXXXV	The Koda Karsana, or Horse game	622
	An archer in a hunting game at Alor	622
CXXXVI	Shooting the bison at Sidhawand	623
	Bison-hunting at Alor	623
CXXXVII	Hunting games: Preparing a human tiger at Pupgaon	624
	Village jester shoots with a spade	624
	A hunt at Phanda	624
CXXXVIII, CXXXIX	Movements in a 'Pulling-up' game Kadna Karsana or Wrestling game Baipar-lad Karsana: bullock laden with sacks Gudha Karsana Mahamandal Karsana or Snake game	Between 624-5
CXL	Goihal Karsana, or Lizard game	625
	A cock-fighting game	625
CXLI	A cock-fight at Bayanar	626
CXLII	Chelik dancing at the Kokoko festival	627
	Chelik collecting offerings at the Kokoko festival	627

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Plate		Facing page
CXLIII	A motiari throws water over the Kokoko dancers at Bandopal	638
	Muria of Masora dancing with a dog in his arms	638
CXLIV	Chelik of Nayanar squirts water at a motiari	639
	Old people throw mud at each other at a Malakot wedding	639
CXLV	Dancer dressed in peacock's feathers	646
	A dummy giant at Sidhawand	646
CXLVI	The Jhelo of Puppaon with earthen dolls and cattle	647
CXLVII	A chelik at Phaunda dressed up as a monstrous bird	650
	The chelik reveals himself	650
CXLVIII	Stilt-fighting	651
CXLIX	Stilts piled up outside Phunder village	652
	Stilts piled up over Dito Pen at Alor	652
CL	Ceremonial axe-cultivation: preparing the Gaita's field	653
	Cooking in the Gaita's field	653

FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Kunj digging-stick of iron	25
2	Dayi wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking	26
3	Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood	27
4	Yerk used in the same way as the gagra, but of a different pattern	28
5	Uspal rice husker	33
6	Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi	35
7	Characteristic Muria bow	39
8	Pellet-bow	40
9	Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum	41
10	Arrows and arrow-heads	43
11	Elaborate arrangement of strings and a wooden peg attached to the leg of a falcon, intended to prevent the strings from tangling	46
12	Arrow with detachable head, used for shooting fish	48
13	Brass *orki* used for ladling liquor	50
14	*Baras* or *latti* used for cutting up meat and planing wood	58
15	Decorated Muria knife	62
16	Spinning-top	76
17	Brass rings with small bells attached	88
18	Marriage crown for the bridegroom made of date-palm leaves	108
19	Marriage crown for bride	111
20	Manda platform with typical decoration, from Telenga	115
21	Squirt, used in fun for spraying people with water at a marriage	128
22	Iron lampstand placed in the centre of the marriage booth	130
23	*Chapshi-mundi* necklace, from Kuntpadar, of red, white and blue beads	136
24	Brass horse, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines	196
25	Brass swing, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines	197
26	A typical carved wooden pigeon often found in Muria shrines	199
27	Decorated wooden 'horse', with horns of the barking deer, used for ceremonial dances	206
28	Gond shrine near Nagbir, Chanda District	208
29	A wooden 'horse', with horns made of the tusks of the wild boar and decorated with feathers of the peacock and the racket-tailed drongo	210
30	Wooden horse, attendant on Hunga and Hirma, gods of the Tati clan, at the Bison-horn Maria village of Tikarpal	211
31	Axes of a type used to kill sacrificial animals	214
32	Muria knife and sheath, of a type often used in sacrifice	216
33	Dancing-shield used by chelik during the festivals of the clan-gods	221

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure		*Page*
34	Men's house in Dallmanhasen, Melanesia	273
35	A decorated bachelor's house in the Trobriand Islands	275
36	Men's house of the Bamum	281
37	Lhota Naga *morung* at Pangti	285
38	Ao Naga *morung* with 'sitting-out' platform and log-drum shed, Mokongtsu village	287
39	Front of *morung*: Eastern Rengma	289
40	Konyak Naga *morung* of Wakching	291
41	A group—Kumlee and her friends	300
42	Juang comb from Keonjhar State	302
43	Juang comb from Bali, Keonjhar State	303
44	Carving on a pillar in the Bhuiya dormitory at Nagira	304
45	Wooden figures of Dihuri (village priest) and his wife on the verandah of the Bhuiya dormitory at Talapada	305
46	Bhuiya carving on a pillar of the dormitory at Raisua, of male and female symbols	307
47	Kond girls and boys performing a dance similar to the Muria Hulki	309
48	Kond tobacco-tubes	311
49	A Gadaba winter-dormitory	313
50	Gadaba dancing-sticks	315
51	Bondo girl's neck-band	316
52	Bondo boy's head decoration	317
53	Bondo bamboo drum	318
54	*Kutul* from Talabera showing small drawer for keeping ornaments	331
55	Carved head-rest from Markabera	332
56	Carved underside of wooden head-rest from Kumli	332
57	Carving on the pillars of the ghotul at Almer	333
58	Ghotul carvings at Nayanar	335
59	Wall-decoration from the Remawand ghotul	337
60	Carving in the ghotul at Nayanar	342
61	Carving on the door of a private house at Bandopal	344
62	Carving on a pillar in the ghotul at Almer	348
63	Karajarner necklace from Palli. The beads are dark blue	353
64	Jhoria ear-drops from Nayanar, of red, white and blue beads, with small tufts of red wool at the bottom	353
65	Ear-ring with pendant of red, blue and white beads	360
66	Bead belt with bells and cowries from Remawand. The beads are blue and white	371
67	Carved wooden comb from Toinar	374
68	A comb from the Narayanpur Tahsil	374
69	A comb from Phulpar	374
70	A bamboo comb, of a type sometimes made by Muria for sale in the bazaars	374
71	The *pusal hoji* or cat's footprint necklace	375
72	The *kuje hoji* or rat's footprint necklace	375
73	Carved wooden ear-plugs from Kanhargaon	375
74	Comb of a type often used in the Abujhmar foothills	377
75	Double comb from Bhanpuri	377
76	Malayan comb	377
77	Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel	379
78	Comb with carved leopard	379
79	The *kumul-gota* or tortoise box	379
80	Bird-comb from Chandabera	382
81	Comb from Bhorpal	382
82	Tobacco-box from the Mardapal Pargana	384
83	*Kalari-gota* from Borpal	384
84	*Dudeng-gota*. A small tobacco-box 'as round as a girl's breast'	384
85	Jhoria head-band of red, blue and white beads	385

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Figure		Page
86	A cowrie belt from the Jhoria area	387
87	Head-band of sago-palm fibre from Malakot	389
88	Neck-band of date-palm fibre from Bayanar	389
89	Cowrie head-band from Ulera. The cowries are attached to a cord made of carefully woven sago-palm fibre	389
90	Wooden hair-pins from the Jhoria area	391
91	Carved wooden blocks from Markabera used by the motiari as supports for their hair	393
92	Boy's hair-retainer made by a local blacksmith out of the ribs of an old umbrella	393
93	*Min-hāp-gota*. A beautiful carved tobacco-box which can be stuck into the turban	395
94	*Pude-gota*, with an obvious representation of the vagina	395
95	Tobacco-box from Penjori decorated with carvings supposed to represent the bones of the *min* fish	395
96	The wooden *āch* used for making a *mawi*-mat	397
97	Comb from Palari. The two horns are of bees-wax	398
98	Comb from Antagarh	398
99	The *Pude-gota*	398
100	Tobacco pounder	399
101	The *Dudo-muri-gota*	399
102	A Jhoria comb from Markabera	399
103	A brass tobacco-box made by the local Ghasia	401
104	A sun and moon tobacco-box	403
105	Boy's necklace, from Kajen, of cowries strung together with red and 'silver' beads	403
106	The ghotul Kotwar's wooden spears	405
107	Iron spears used by the chelik in hunting	405
108	Toy wooden records used by the Kotwar of the Naria ghotul	407
109	Tobacco pouch with bell and tusk ornaments	409
110	Carved tobacco-box from Nayanar	411
111	A tortoise tobacco-box	413
112	*Marka-batta-gota* or mango tobacco-box	413
113	Carved tobacco-box from Markabera	415
114	Carved tobacco-box from Metawand	417
115	Lamana woman's jacket adorned with cowries and used by Muria men for the purposes of divination	449
116	Klemanta women dressed as men	453
117	Ornamental stick carried on dancing expeditions	487
118	Dummy guns carried on dancing expeditions	493
119	Dancing-sticks from Remawand	494
120	Anklet of bells worn on dancing expeditions	495
121	Comb with chelik and motiari on horseback	497
122	Ornamented wooden axe carried by the leader of the girls on a Diwali expedition	502
123	Toy used on Chherta expeditions	515
124	Toy used on Pus Kolang and other expeditions	515
125	Gongs from Alor	517
126	Dancing-stick from Remawand	518
127	*Gaga dhol* drum	522
128	*Parrang* drum	522
129	*Mandri* drum	522
130	A *pitorha* gong	525
131	A *tawangi*	525
132	A *dhusir*	527
133	Another type of *dhusir*	527
134	An iron *kshrong*	529

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure		Page
135	Hunting-horn of brass	530
136	Bamboo Jew's harp	531
137	Chin and Mikir harps	531
138	Iron Jew's harp	534
139	A bamboo drum	535
140	Flutes	537
141	*Pitorha* gong	542
142	Bull-roarer from Markabera	544
143	Pendant of red and white beads, attached to a ring in the ear	557
144	*Murgal Pannivar* necklace. The large beads are white and the small are mainly white but occasionally light blue	557
145	Sling used in hunting	571
146	Set of cock-fighting knives in cloth bag	581

MAPS

	Page
India, showing the position of Bastar State	3
Administrative Divisions of Bastar State	4
Physical features of the Narayanpur and Kondagaon Tahsils	5
Kondagaon Tahsil	6
Narayanpur Tahsil	8
The Parganas of the Narayanpur Tahsil	9
The Distribution of Aboriginal Tribes in Bastar State	11
Sketch-map to illustrate the influences affecting the life and customs of the Muria	13
Sketch-map of the Kongur Pargana	671

CORRIGENDA

Page 80, lines 35 and 37. A more literal translation of *ghāt utaris* would be 'she has left (i.e. she has had to leave) the watering-place' and of *dhār bohis* 'the rapids are flowing': *dhār* is a swiftly-running stream, sometimes a waterfall.

Page 172, line 10. Read 'bury' for 'cremate' and in line 12, read 'grave' for 'pyre'. As the rest of the paragraph shows, the body of a woman dying in pregnancy or childbirth is buried, not cremated: this is, I believe, the almost universal custom.

Page 315, footnote 1. For 'out of 1,000 marriages', read 'out of 100 marriages'.

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PART I

THE PATTERN OF MURIA LIFE

[p. 1]

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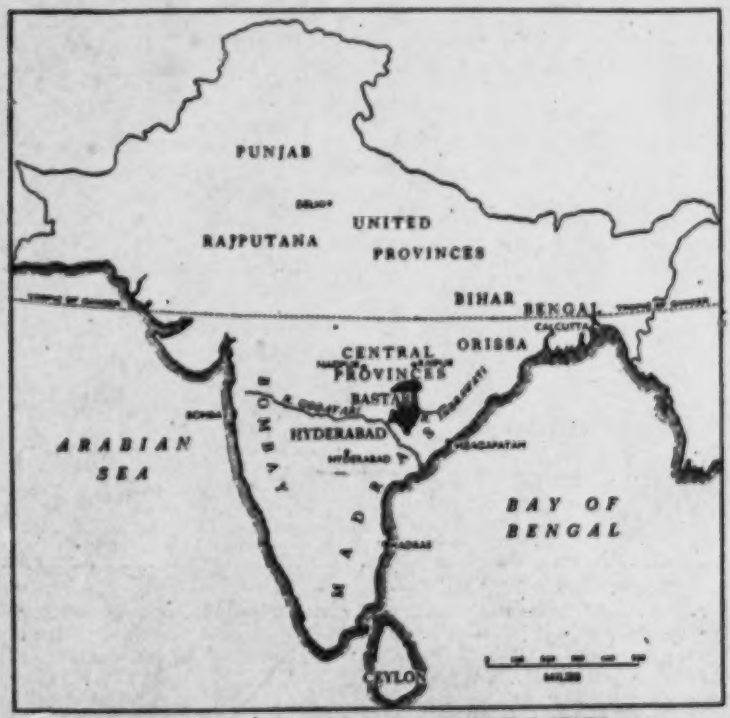
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. Bastar State

131 THE great plain of Chhattisgarh stretches down past Raipur and Dhamtari in hot and dusty monotony till it spends itself against the hills of Kanker. Thenceforward the journey is a never-failing delight; as the traveller moves towards the Bastar plateau the countryside breaks into song about him; he is greeted by hardy smiling woodmen singing at their work; the skyline is broken by fantastic piles of rock; all around is the evergreen sal forest. Presently he sees looming up before him a row of sharply-rising hills, the sentinels that stand on guard before the country of the ghotul. The white pillars that mark the boundary of the State are soon passed, and the long steep ascent of the Keskal Ghat must be essayed. From the summit there is a magnificent view of the great sea of hill and forest below.



INDIA, SHOWING THE POSITION OF BASTAR STATE

Bastar is a large State of 13,725 square miles lying between 17° 46′ and 20° 14′ North and 80° 15′ and 82° 1′ East. It is bounded on the north by Kanker

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

131 State and the Drug District of the Central Provinces, on the west by the Ahiri Zamindari of the Chanda District, on the east by the great Jeypore Zamindari of Orissa, and to the south by the Nizam's Dominions. In 1931 its population was 524,721 giving a density of only 34 to the square mile, but in the last ten years the figure has risen to 634,912. The State is divided into six tahsils and four zamindaris, and is at present administered by a Diwan resident at Jagdalpur, the capital, in the minority of the Maharaja.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF BASTAR STATE

An admirable account of the geography and administration of the State is given by Grigson in his standard *Maria Gonds of Bastar*, which should be consulted by every reader of this book.[1] Bastar is roughly bisected by the great Indrawati river which flows west from Kalahandi through the Jagdalpur Tahsil and the south of the Abujhmar Mountains to the Chanda border. Here we are not concerned with the beautiful and fascinating country south of the river; our business is with the north.

[1] W. V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* (Oxford, 1938).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

133

Scene on the Indrawati River

The Chitrakot Falls in Flood

Plate I

[p. 4 (A)]

Plate II

133

The Kotri River

[346]

Lingo's shrine at Semurgaon

View from the Kushal Ghat

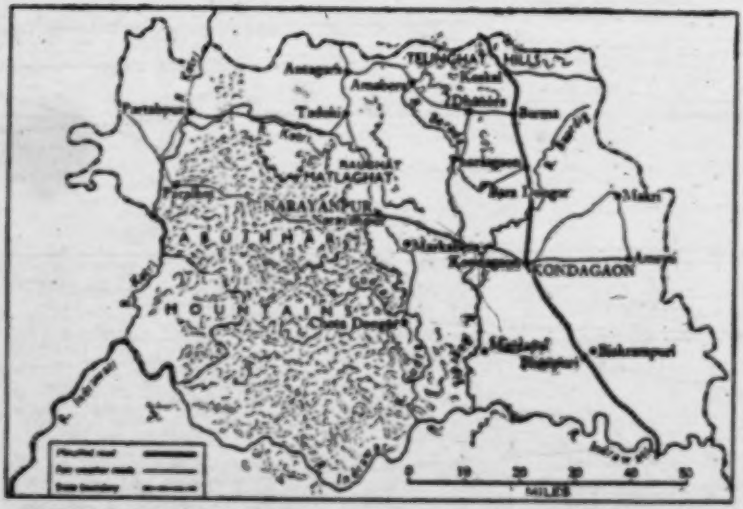
[p. 4 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

131 The territory north of the Indrawati is divided into three administrative divisions. The first, in the north-east, is the Kondagaon Tahsil; the second, in the north-west, is the Narayanpur, formerly the Antagarh, Tahsil, and the third, to the south, is the Jagdalpur Tahsil. Of these only the first two are inhabited by the type of Muria whose institutions and life are the subject of this book; in the heavily populated and fertile lowlands of the Jagdalpur Tahsil the Muria have no ghotul and, under Palace and other influences, have largely abandoned their characteristic beliefs and practices.

133 The Kondagaon Tahsil occupies the great north-eastern plateau of Bastar. This plateau, which is some 2400 feet above sea-level, runs south from the Telinghat Hills as far as Tulsidongri below Jagdalpur. To the east it extends



PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE NARAYANPUR AND KONDAGAON TAHSILS

into Jeypore and Kalahandi, and on the west is bordered by the Matlaghat and a range of hills extending south from Benur to Karikot. The scenery is green and pleasant, but rather monotonous except round Bara Dongar—where there are picturesque hills—and in the Chalka Pargana in the neighbourhood of the Boroda and Baordig rivers, where great rocks rising above the fields and forest combine with the quiet river views to make many pictures of serene beauty.

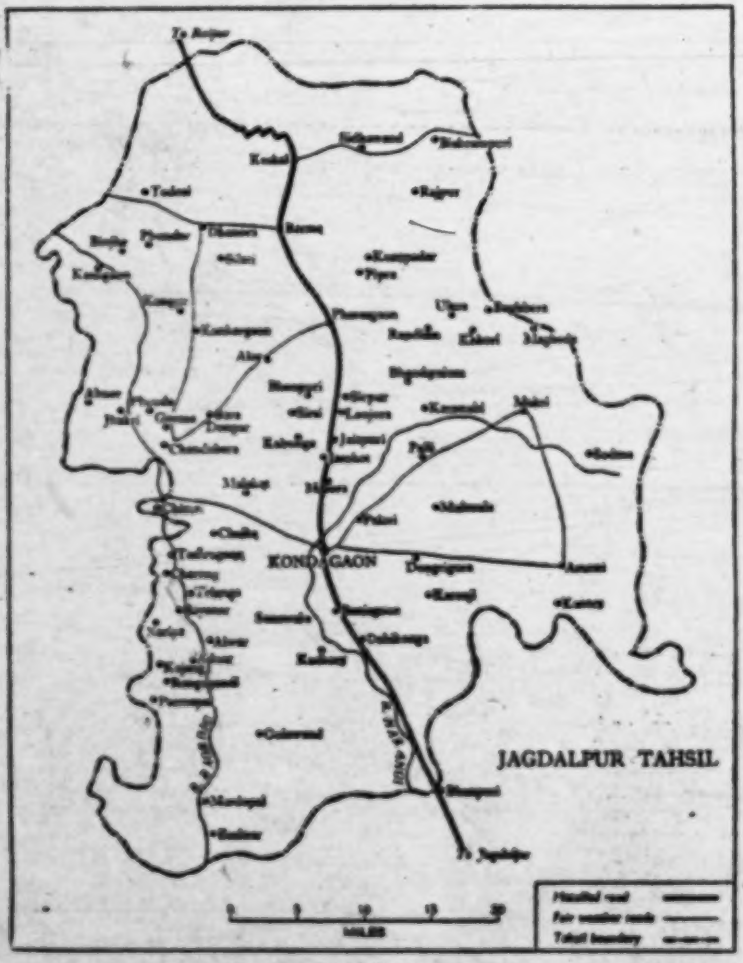
There are two main rivers in the tahsil. The Baordig flows from the north-east corner of the plateau, crosses the main road at Lanjora, winds round by Malakot, cuts the Kondagaon-Narayanpur road at Alwa, passing mostly through scrubby jungle and open tracts of embanked rice-fields, with occasional hills strewn with rocky boulders. Finally it forces its way between steep banks and large rocks till it joins the Boroda near Bayanar. The Boroda comes down through the Amabera Pargana, into the Kongur Pargana, across very similar country, then flows on with the Baordig to join the Indrawati at Karikot.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

133 These are the main features of the Kondagaon Tahsil: a main road,
491 open all the year round and vibrating day and night to the rumble of lorries connecting the capital with the greater world. A high plateau, broken by one range of hills running north from Bara Dongar and to the south and east.

[131
491]



KONDAGAON TAHSIL

Two main rivers and many streams. Forest everywhere, mainly sal forest, green all the year. Four fair-weather roads; one east from Keskal along the northern border to Bishrampuri and on into Jeypore and the Likma Forest

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

133
491

Railway; another from Kondagaon itself round the Makri Reserved Forest, a hunter's paradise. A third goes west from Berma to Antagarh, skirting the south of the Telinghat Hills. A fourth and most important connects the two tahsil headquarters of Kondagaon and Narayanpur.

There are no towns and few important villages. Kondagaon itself has a court with a First Class Magistrate, a police-station, dispensary, middle school, forest, excise and revenue offices and a headquarters of a timber company, a few shops, and an important bi-weekly bazaar. Thousands of Muria visit the place for the Marhai festival in March. There is only one other police-station, at Keskal, an important village at the head of the pass leading down to the lowlands. There are schools here and at Baniagaon, Mardapal, Pharasgaon and Bara Dongar. Bara Dongar is a beautiful village with important Hindu temples and a special connexion with the Maharaja, who is ceremonially enthroned here, when a smaller version of the royal Dassera festival is observed every year.

The population of the Kondagaon Tahsil in 1941 was 111,428. The area is 1880 square miles. It has 511 villages, of which 23 are deserted. In 1942 I counted 276 ghotul in the tahsil, but this figure is probably an under-estimate.

The headquarters of the western tahsil have recently been moved from Antagarh to Narayanpur. The Narayanpur Tahsil is much larger than Kondagaon, being 2885 square miles, but its population is only 62,305. It has 831 villages, of which however only 565 are inhabited. In 1942 there were about 244 Muria ghotul. The tahsil has much more character and diversity than Kondagaon and it is not easy to describe. It will be most convenient to follow its roads.

From Berma on the main Keskal-Jagdalpur road, there branches a forest road through heavily-wooded and attractive country to Amabera and thence to Antagarh. In its course the road passes the village of Penjori at the edge of the high plateau: two miles away at the end of a path winding through magnificent trees and wild mountain scenery is the famous shrine of Lingo at Semurgaon. Thence the road begins an abrupt descent down the Matlaghat to the Antagarh plain. Unhappily a fringe of trees and tall bamboos, as nearly everywhere in Bastar, hides the view from the traveller's eyes. At the foot of the mountains the road is only 900 feet above sea-level and has reached the northern plain which is simply a continuation southward of the Chhattisgarh-Kanker lowlands. Here is Antagarh, the old administrative centre of the tahsil, where there is still a large bazaar, a police-station and a school. The population of this area is very mixed, for the Muria are influenced both by the wild Maria of the hills and the sophisticated Gond of the lowlands. There are many immigrants from British India.

From Antagarh runs a beautiful road to Narayanpur. On the right are hills of vitrified sandstone that glow pink like dolomite rocks in the evening sun, and half-way along the road climbs the magnificent Raughat between the Abujhmar and Matlaghat Hills. In the woods on either side are charming Muria villages, Padbera, Aturbera, Pimlpar and many others.

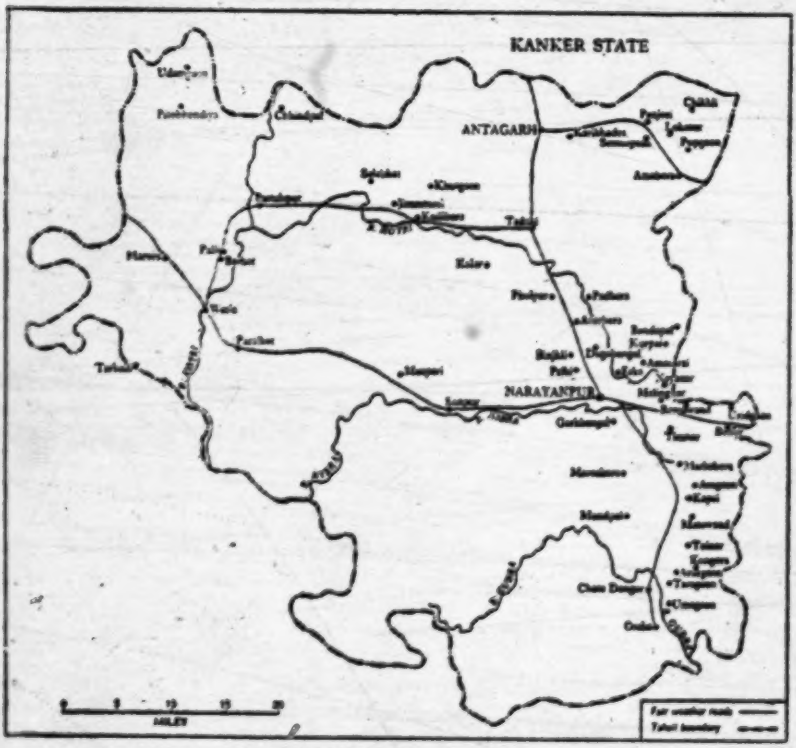
Narayanpur itself is a very large village not yet grown into a town. It is fresh and open, surrounded by hills in the near distance. Near by is Binjhli among its great mango groves and palms.

From Narayanpur roads go west, south and east. The western road is one of the loneliest and most exciting in Bastar. After passing the Halba centre of Soupur, it forces its way into the very heart of the Abujhmar through wild and majestic scenery, and on to Parallkot and Partalpur. Here is the

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

133
491

most striking landmark of all Bastar, the great mass of the Abujhmar Mountains, an impregnable fortress, wild, lonely, exalted, exhilarating, home of the Hill Maria. To the west of the mountains, in sharp and striking contrast, is one of the most 'civilized' areas of Bastar, the north-western plain, where the ghotul still flourishes, but a little shyly, and the children have none of the decorations that make their fellows to the south such a delight to see.



NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

The road curves round at Partabpur and runs east back to Antagarh. For a great part of its journey it runs near and parallel to the beautiful Kotri river. The Kotri, which has its source in the Raughat and Matlaghat Hills, flows west through Koilibera to meet another river of the same name that comes down through Kanker from Drug. They meet near Partabpur and travel on together through the Muria tracts of the extreme west into Sironcha, until at last they join the Indrawati at Bhairamgarh. This is the river that makes glad the heart of the Muria of the north-west. It is a lovely river, wide and open, with glorious sands, and every now and then a glimpse of distant mountains. Some of the happiest days of my life have been spent on its banks.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

South and east of Narayanpur is the true Jhoria country, home of the most charming and friendly people in Bastar. Between Narayanpur and Chota Dongar, the villages of the Abujhmar foothills, Kapsi, Markabera, Metawand, Kongera are probably Hill Maria in origin. Beyond Chota Dongar a road goes up into the real Maria country and Orcha village, passing through the wonderful Marian gorge, where the Gudra river emerges through enormous wooded rocks out of the hills.

THE PARGANAS OF THE NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

The area east of the Antagarh-Narayanpur road is equally attractive. Here are the villages of Nayanar, Bandopal, Almer and Jhakri which frequently appear in this book. The country is well-wooded and hilly, more varied and beautiful than the Kondagaon Tahsil into which it leads. The old Hindu centre of Benur is near the road half-way between the two tahsils.

I have spoken throughout of roads, for they provide a convenient means of finding places on a map, and actually divide up the two northern tahsils very well. But it should not be supposed that these roads are great highways of traffic. Except for the Keskal-Jagdalpur road, not one of them is open during the rains. Several cannot be used by cars before December. The roads are important as agents of culture-change, however, because along them come the slow-moving trains of bullock-wagons, the ever-touring chaprasi and constable, the merchant on his laden horse. These are not, of course, confined to the official roads; the inter-village communications of north Bastar

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

491 are excellent, and there are few places to which a bullock-cart and even a car cannot be taken with a little care.

631 Although the Muria area is divided officially into the two tahsils I have described, the people themselves think much more in terms of the smaller administrative unit, the pargana, the Manjhi or Chief of which is the court of appeal in all tribal disputes. The parganas of Narayanpur are clearly defined blocks of territory with considerable homogeneity of custom and fashion within their borders. But in Kondagaon, the parganas are very broken up. The Keskal, Kongur, Chalka and Mardapal Parganas are well defined, but the Hatiya and Sonawal Parganas, to name no others, are scattered all over the tahsil, and it must be hard for the Pargana Manjhi to exercise any sort of control over the area in his charge.

It has always been a tradition of the State to allow the village panchayats, which we may call judicial committees of village elders, to have jurisdiction over most tribal offences with a final appeal to the Maharaja. Since 1932 the jurisdiction of the village courts has been greatly extended to include cases of simple hurt and assault, minor thefts, mischief, trespass, adultery and enticement. They can also settle civil claims up to a value of twenty-five rupees. The Pargana Manjhi are not personally members of these courts, but to them lies any appeal from their findings. These men, who have the privilege of wearing red turbans, are a useful link between the aboriginals and the Administration. Though some of them abuse their position and tend to divert fines to their own use, they are on the whole a first-rate body of men, and their friendship is invaluable to the investigator.

The tradition of local self-government, so firmly established in the State, is an important factor in the conditions that make the ghotul and its organization and discipline possible.

II. The Tribal Population of Bastar

101 The tribal population of Bastar is varied and interesting. In order to simplify my description I will adopt the names given to the tribes by Grigson, though it must be remembered that, convenient though these often are, they are not always the names used by the people themselves.

The Hill Maria are the least influenced by the outside world and have retained most of their religious and cultural institutions. They live in the [162] Abujhmar Mountains and there were 11,500 of them in 1931, and probably some 13,000 now. They are both shy and friendly, an attractive people, cultivating their desolate and lonely hills with axe and fire; their life and customs have been fully described by Grigson.

The Bison-horn Maria, a great tribe of some 175,000 persons, live south [162] of the Indrawati in the Dantewara, Konta, Jagdalpur and Bijapur Tahsils and in the Sukma Zamindari. Grigson has studied them in less detail than the Hill Maria.[1] They have very little contact with the Muria of the north, except that they meet parties of them coming down from the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas to dance at the great Marhai at Ghotpal. Their characteristic dance is the marriage dance with a splendid bison-horn headdress. A megalithic culture survives among them, and there are traces of a ghotul system long since moribund.

[1] A detailed study of one aspect of their life will be found in my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); some of their folk-tales are given in my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944).

INTRODUCTION

The Bhattra. In 1931 the Bhattra numbered 36,611 in Bastar, but there are many more of them in Jeypore and Kalahandi. In Bastar they are strongest in the north-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil, but a 'Bhattra movement' is spreading

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINAL TRIBES IN BASTAR STATE

among the Muria of Kondagaon. Its main features are the wearing of a sacred thread and the abolition of the ghotul. They are said to have come with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal, and they are rapidly becoming a Hindu caste like the Raj Gond, to whom they are probably related.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

101 *The Dhurwa*, or Parja, live in the south-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari. In Bastar there are about 20,000 of them, but there [162] are many more of the allied Poroja across the border in Orissa. Their dancing is distinctive, but many of its elements can be paralleled among the Muria.

The Gadaba. There are very few of these left in Bastar. In 1931 only 398 were returned. The Bastar Gadaba have retained little that is characteristic of their tribe. They have no connexion with the Muria of the north.

The Halba. This is a powerful and important near-Hindu caste, probably descended from the old military garrisons stationed in the larger villages. [162] There were 18,427 of them in 1941, of whom 4599 were in the Narayanpur and 3149 in the Kondagaon Tahsil. Their language, Halbi, is used throughout the State; many of the Gondi-speaking Muria use it as a second language, though Chhattisgarhi is now competing with it. The best folk-poetry there is in Bastar is composed in Halbi. The Halba sometimes serve as priests of the Anga clan-gods in the Muria country and the caste has its own Anga similar to those of the Muria.

[162] *The Dhakar* is a new caste—9596 strong—recruited from the offspring of mixed Halba and Kshattri unions. Many of its members, by their intelligence and ability, have won good positions in the State.

The Jagdalpur Muria, or Raja Muria, are in my opinion the least attractive people in Bastar. Like the Raj Gond, they consider themselves superior to the Maria or Muria of the north; like the Raj Gond they have lost most of their own culture without assimilating that of the Hindus. It is possible that the Raja Muria are civilized Bison-horn Maria rather than civilized Muria, but it is impossible to be sure. They have been greatly exposed to external influence, from the Palace, from Orissa, from the cult of Danteshwari; many of their villages are leased to outsiders. Grigson estimated that there were about [162] 32,000 Raja Muria in 1931; there may be some 40,000 now.

Of these tribes the most important in their influence on the Muria are the Hill Maria. The Bhattra and Raja Muria exercise a disintegrating effect upon them in the south. The Halba live in scattered little communities throughout the Muria area and influence those who live in their immediate neighbourhood.

Other castes living among the Muria are the Rawat, the Mahara, the Kalar, the Lohar, the Ghasia, the Ganda, the Nahar and the Pardhan.

The Rawat are the cowherds living in almost every village. They are also known as Ahir or Gopa. Their children are usually admitted to membership of the ghotul. The Rawat's association with the cow ensures him a good social position. As Eha says, 'His family having been connected for many generations with the sacred animal, the cow, he enjoys a certain consciousness of moral respectability, like a man whose uncles are deans or canons'.

[162] *The Mahara*, who numbered 32,787 in 1941, the *Ganda* (7130) and the *Panka* (4178), on the other hand, have officially a very low status. No one is 'untouchable' in a Muria village, but children of these castes are not usually [58] welcomed in the ghotul and a liaison or marriage with a Mahara or Ganda is regarded as unforgivable. Once at Lamkhanar I met a Muria, Duaru, who went out of his mind because his wife eloped with a Ganda. On the other hand, these people have an important place in tribal life. They are the spinners and weavers of the countryside and supply the Muria with much of their cloth. They generally provide the village watchman or Kotwar and they thus have the duty of reporting Muria births and deaths. Mahara musicians attend the more sophisticated Muria weddings. More important still, they are famous for their powers of divination as Siraha. Scores of Mahara mediums appear at the greater Muria festivals and at the Dassera

142
301
302

ABOVE: Motiari of Sirpuri, showing method of arranging combs

BELOW: The Gujaro, Sulk and Mularo of the Barko ghotul

[p.12 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate IV

147
.A91
516
415

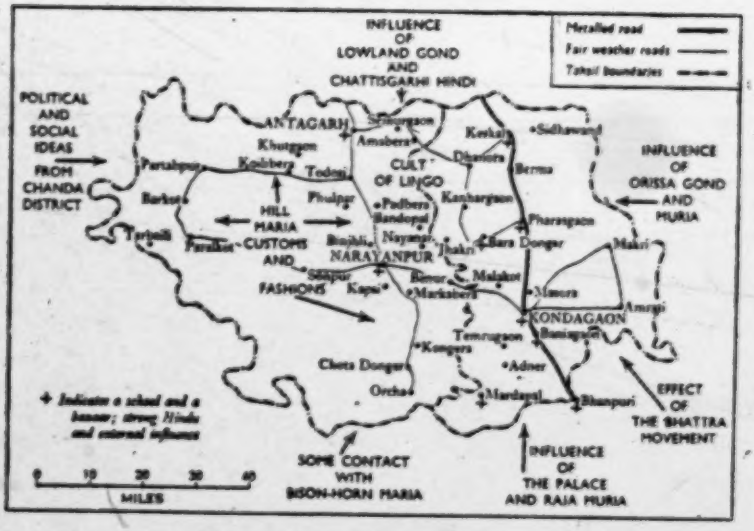
A Muria of Nayanar greets his friends before drinking salphi juice

[p. 12 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

celebrations in Jagdalpur. Many—but not all—of these people are aboriginal in everything but name; in feature, colour, dress and manners they are hardly to be distinguished from their Muria neighbours.

The Lohar living in Muria villages are generally tribal Lohar, not members of the great Hindu caste that bears this name. Muria and Maria who take to iron-work are separated from the rest of the tribe and have now been formed into an endogamous community of their own. The Muria generally regard the Muria-Lohar as somewhat inferior, but their antagonism does not go so far as to ban Lohar boys and girls from the ghotul. In 1941 there were 7877 Lohar in the whole State and 2718 in the two Muria tahsils.



SKETCH-MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCES AFFECTING THE LIFE AND CUSTOMS OF THE MURIA

Many *Kalar* are obviously aboriginals who have taken to the liquor business. Well-to-do Muria occasionally take contracts for distilling and selling mahua spirit. There are 13,451 Kalar in the whole State.

The Ghasia, of whom there are only 1704, are regarded with considerable scorn by the aboriginals who suspect them of desecrating their graves to obtain the 'grave-furniture' buried with the corpses. Yet they owe much to this caste, which is responsible for making, by the *cire-perdue* process, the brass images and horns used in Muria worship, buttock-bells for dancing and ladles for serving liquor.

The Pardhan. There are only a few members of this most interesting tribe, allied to but distinct from the Gond, in Bastar. But there is a Pardhan

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

181 Pujari for the shrine of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon and Pardhan minstrels and priests are to be found in some Muria villages. Pardhan boys and girls are admitted to membership of the ghotul.

I found *Nahar* at Kuntpadar and at Kabonga and neighbouring villages. Their boys and girls had joined the ghotul and were taking a leading part in its affairs. Elsewhere this tribe has a very low position: it is mainly to be found in the west Central Provinces and Berar and is regarded as derived from a mixture of Bhil and Korku.

III. The Muria

Kariya mur ke manse ān. We are the dark people.—Muria saying

The word 'Muria' is used in Bastar to mean, generally, an aboriginal. In this sense it has long been applied by State officials to all the primitive tribes except the Maria of the Abujhmar. In recent years the people themselves have also widely adopted it. Throughout the Dantewara Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari, the tribe which Grigson calls 'Bison-horn Maria' returned themselves as 'Muria' at the 1941 Census. There are also the Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil. There is thus a good deal of confusion about the proper classification of the Bastar aboriginals. Let me therefore say at once that when I use the term 'Muria' in this book, I apply it to the aboriginals of the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils whose culture centres round the ghotul. Grigson estimated that there were some 78,000 of these in 1931; there are [162] about 100,000 now.

The name Muria has been derived from *mur*, the palas tree, or from *mur*, a root.[1] There is no apparent reason why the Muria should be named after the palas tree, which is neither a totem, nor specially honoured by them, nor even common in their territory. But the derivation of the word from *mur*, a root, has much to commend it. *Mur* may also mean 'permanent', as in *mur podor*, a permanent or regular name as opposed to a nickname: the Muria, in contrast to the Hill Maria, have permanent settlements and dwellings.

Early writers were impressed by the industry and cleanliness of the Muria. They are good cultivators, said Sir Benjamin Robertson in 1891, 'active, hardy and well-behaved and their villages are generally clean and comfortable'.[2] Hislop describes them as more civilized than the Maria, forming 'the bulk of the agricultural population in the north and centre'. Beyond the eastern frontier, however, 'where they mix with the Khonds in Patna, Kharond and Jeypur, they are somewhat wilder and devoted to the chase'.[3]

184 We must now survey these Muria of the north, for they are not all of one family, and the differences between them are interesting and significant. I will begin with the western parganas, lying to the west and north of the great mass of the Abujhmar Hills. It is in these hills that the key to many a Muria custom will be found. The people of these parganas seem to be Hill Maria who first settled in the plains and then came under strong alien

[1] R. V. Russell and R. B. Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), Vol. III, p. 64.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 186.
[3] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces* (Nagpur, 1866), Part I, p. 22.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

influence from across the Chanda border. Their villages are a compromise between the communalism of the Maria and the individualism of the Gond; the houses are arranged in streets and open on to one another, but they have substantial independent gardens behind. The women often dress in almost Maria fashion, exposing the breasts, but wearing few ornaments, and the men imitate the fashions of the Chanda border. Ten years ago, at the time of a Satyagraha agitation, many of them bought Gandhi caps. These are still worn, but pulled out of all shape to make them politically respectable. The ghotul is used mainly by boys and men; in Maria fashion it is the centre of the male life of the village, a tendency which the external influences across the border tend to strengthen.

In the northern parganas, the Muria have many links with their fellows in Kanker State and the Drug District. There are ghotul in both these areas, but in Drug ghotul life has become furtive and obscene, strumpeted by the contagion of the plains. The people in these northern parganas look and dress like the Gond of the Central Provinces; they have no affinities with the Maria of the neighbouring Padalibhum, whom they regard with amused astonishment. But they have the ghotul system very fully developed, although some of them vehemently deny the fact at a first conversation.

To the east, the Antagarh and Amabera Parganas are very similar—the people in dress and manners akin to the Gond of the Central Provinces. Here the cult of Lingo is at its strongest, and the Muria appear to be immigrants from the north. Although the ghotul flourishes, the people here are perhaps the least attractive of the Muria, for they are suspicious, timid and ill-mannered.

There is a striking contrast between these drab and sullen northern Muria and the people south of Narayanpur. This is the country of the best, most beautiful, most charming of all the peoples of Bastar, the so-called Jhoria Muria. These Muria are, according to their own account, Maria of the Abujhmar who have settled in the plains. They have retained a great deal of their original Maria culture but, where they have altered, they have improved and developed it—an astonishing variant of the normal result of culture-change.

In Bastar, says Hislop, 'the Madias are also called Jhorias, probably from *jhodi*, a brook'.[1] Dalton, deriving the word Maria from the Gondi term for a tree, *mara*, says the Maria 'are also called Jhoria, from *jhodi*, a brook. This is the name given to the gold-washers in Chutia Nagpur, who are in all probability Gonds likewise'. The word Jharia is found as the name of the wilder sub-divisions of several tribes in the Central Provinces,[2] and there is a section of the Poroja of Orissa called Jhoria.[3] I visited some Jhoria villages in Koraput District in 1944. They are an attractive people, with a fully developed megalithic culture and the village dormitory, but they bear no resemblance to the Bastar Jhoria.

The first to describe these 'Jhoorias' was Glasfurd who, writing in 1862, says that they 'are found principally in the north-western parts about Narayenpoor and Partabpore, and extend towards Kakeir; they are a numerous

[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part I, p. 7.

[2] P. N. Bose gives Koitur or Jharia among his classes of Gond, 'to which class', he says, 'the hill Gonds belong almost exclusively. Jharia literally means "jungly".'—P. N. Bose, 'Chattisgar: Notes on its tribes, sects and castes' in *JASB.*, Vol. LIX (1890), Part I, p. 283.

[3] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 197. A note by M. W. M. Yeatts on the Porojas and Saoras. See also G. Ramadas, 'Porojas', *Man in India*, Vol. XI, p. 247, and E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), Vol. VI, pp. 209ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

184 class, and subsist partly by cultivation and partly by hunting and on the fruits of the forest. Their dress resembles that of the following caste, the Marias, with whom they may be said to constitute about a third or more of the population of the Bastar Dependency, and whom they resemble in customs and appearance.'[1] But in the 1891 Census only 936 people returned themselves as Jhoria; the 'numerous class' had probably by that time been merged in the Muria. Sir Benjamin Robertson writes of them that 'the Jhorias are more akin to the Marias than to the Murias; they resemble the former in dress and like them prefer a life in the woods to the attractions of a civilization even so mild as that of the Bastar country'.[2]

Unfortunately the word 'Jhoria' is no longer in general use, for it would have been a convenient term to describe this distinctive and delightful people. At the present time, some eighty years after Glasfurd wrote, the Muria of Partabpur do not seem to be properly classed with the 'Jhoria', nor should the word 'Narayanpur' be used in this connexion. Both in the Partabpur Tahsil and the immediate vicinity of Narayanpur, alien influence has been too strong; the characteristic signs of the Jhoria are there, but they are sadly weakened. At the present time, there are Jhoria living in the Ghat Jhorian, Jhorian, Baragaon, Narayanpur (except near the town), Dugal and Karangal Parganas, the west of the Benur Pargana, the east or plains area of the Chota Dongar Pargana, and the Mardapal, Chalka and a few villages of the Sonawal and Bamni Parganas in the Kondagaon Tahsil.

What are the characteristics of these Jhoria Muria? They are Hill Maria who have descended from the Abujhmar and have come into cultural contact, not with any 'superior' aliens but with a sympathetic and allied people. The Muria of the plains taught these Hill Maria to develop their ghotul system; hitherto they had confined it to boys and men—the plains Muria transformed it by admitting the motiari. The Muria taught them new dances, but preserved the old hill dances for the worship of the gods. Even these they developed, extending the monotonous Maria 'round' into a procession. The Gond of the north would have soon stripped off the feathers and profusion of bead necklaces and cowrie belts from their new neighbours; not so the Muria. The new and exciting theory of a 'co-educational' ghotul stimulated these Maria; it made them wash—the Jhoria are some of the cleanest people in Bastar, though their ancestral Maria are among the dirtiest; it awoke their artistic sense, impelling them to make ever better necklaces and combs, wooden supports for the hair of their motiari, tobacco pouches so carved that they would inform a girl at a glance of your intention.

It is impossible to say at this date whether the custom of erecting monoliths for the dead, the allocation of territory to each clan, the making of clan-gods, the observance of agricultural festivals spread through the Muria country as a result of Maria influence, or whether similar customs always existed and merely reacted on one another.

These Muria, even those so far away as in the Jhorian Pargana, say, 'We are Maria' and admit that they intermarry with the hillmen. They call their funerary rites 'a thing of the Maria Raj' and their special festival dances the 'Maria-endanna'.

It is always with a heavy heart that I bid farewell to these charming children of the foothills and turn to the Muria of the plains. Yet these Muria too have great and many virtues and a culture well worth our study. As we

[1] C. L. R. Glasfurd, *Report on the Dependency of Bastar*, 1862, par. 86.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, pp. 182 and 186.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

move into the Kondagaon Tahsil, into the Kongur and Sonawal Parganas, we find the influence of the Abujhmar steadily decreasing. The gay feathers disappear from the turban, the pretty headbands go from the brow; bells are still tied in Maria fashion over the buttocks for a religious dance, but the boys waggle them horizontally instead of in the striking and effective vertical rhythm of the hills. We begin to find marriages celebrated in the house of the bride instead of the bridegroom; on the other hand, the parade round the pole is done outside the marriage-booth in old Gond fashion instead of inside after the Hindu use. The ghotul theory changes a little. Probably the majority of Jhoria ghotul are of the older 'pairing-off' type, in which a chelik 'marries' a motiari and remains faithful to her. But now we begin to find the rule coming more and more into force that boys and girls must not combine in this fashion, but must change; a chelik is fined if he sleeps with the same girl for more than three days in succession. 184

A third cultural area extends from the middle of the Kondagaon Tahsil, past the hills of Bara Dongar, across the main road and away to the east and south towards the Jeypore boundary. The first area is that of the north, from Partabpur to Keskal, where there is a large admixture of Drug and Kanker Gond; the second is the area of the south and west, where the people are mainly Maria who have settled in the foothills; this third area may be called that of the aboriginal Gond of Bastar. The Muria of this part conform physically, as Grigson rightly says, 'more to the standard type of Central Provinces Gond than any other Koitor in Bastar; they are short in stature but well-proportioned, with roundish heads, flat noses, distended nostrils, ugly features, straight black hair and scanty beard and moustaches'.[1] Dress and fashions have become rather mediocre; there is not a trace of Maria influence. The girls wear cheap bazaar ornaments in the ears, no headbands, and none of the elaborate necklace-wear that is so beloved of the Jhoria. They put a few combs in their hair and sling a number of red and white necklaces about their necks. The boys sometimes put on a lot of red, white and black necklaces, but they seem to have none of the sense of colour that characterizes their brethren to the west. The ghotul system flourishes; there is perhaps a majority of the ghotul of the modern type. Round Kondagaon especially, the ghotul building is often out in the jungle with a small and secret door. Marriages are a curious blend of old Gond and new Hindu elements, but are generally more splendid in display and consistent in ritual than among the Jhoria, who only a few generations ago celebrated a wedding with nothing more than a dance and a heavy meal. Religion and worship have the misfortune to lack the magnificent Maria festal dancing; on the other hand, secular dances are much more varied and exciting. A few Hindu gods have crept into the pantheon and many villages engage low-caste Hindu drummers and trumpeters who torture the air with their cacophanies. But it should not be supposed that the Kondagaon Muria are more 'Hinduized' than those to the west. Hindu influence is still a very local matter: an ardent Hindu schoolmaster or forest-guard may influence the people of his immediate neighbourhood, but his effect does not travel far. Funerary customs, however, are almost universally on the Hindu pattern, though the practice of erecting memorial monoliths has not yet wholly disappeared.

The ghotul continues to exist immediately beyond the Bastar border at many points. In Kanker State there are still nearly 80 of these dormitories with a ghotul population of 1218. There are a few ghotul in the Chanda

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 48.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

184 and Drug Districts. How far the institution was distributed in former times must remain a mystery. Hislop describes the Gaiti Gond as 'calling themselves Koitars . . . Their chief peculiarity, which I have not found among common Gonds, though it may exist even among them, is to have in each village a separate tenement set apart for the occupancy of unmarried men during the night. This they call a *gotalghar* (empty bed house). In some villages there is a like provision made for the unmarried Gaiti women . . . When the Gaitis have returned in the evening from their work in the jungle, where they are very industrious in cultivation and cutting timber, all the families go to their respective houses for their supper, after which the young men retire to their common dwelling, where around a blazing fire, they dance for an hour or two, each having a small drum suspended in front from his waist, which he beats as he moves about while the young women sit at no great distance accompanying the performance with a song.'[1]

[162] The Census of 1891 returned 5521 of these Gaiti who were then distributed in the Sakoli Tahsil of Bhandara (where they numbered 665), the Brahmapuri Tahsil of Chanda (215) and the north of Bastar (4535).[2] About this W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'The reference to Brahmapuri Tahsil dates back to the time before the separate Garhchiroli Tahsil was created. The reference therefore is probably to the people of the Garhchiroli Zamindaris such as Jharapara and Murramgaon, and possibly to the zamindaris of Karacha, Aundhi and Pannabaras now in Drug District which were in Chanda before the foundation of Drug. Some of these zamindaris border on Antagarh Tahsil and the local Gond is sometimes referred to as Maria and sometimes as Gaita, just as in Sironcha Tahsil the Hill Maria is sometimes called Gaita because his headman is known as the Gaita of the village.'

619 582 With all these differences do the Muria regard themselves as a single tribe? Can any Muria intermarry with any other Muria family? Do they eat together? Have they any connexion with the outside world?

Such problems as these are not easy to solve, for they do not often arise in practice and there are few precedents. Geographical factors tend to split the Muria up into roughly endogamous groups, but there is no rule about this. A Muria boy from the extreme west can go to a ghotul in the east of Kondagaon and find himself at home and perhaps find himself a wife. The ghotul is a fundamental bond, and in theory at least all Muria who have it as part of their culture can marry each other. In practice, the Jhoria Muria of the south-west do not often come into touch with the Gond Muria of the north and east, and marriages between them are rare.

As for different tribes and tribes outside Bastar—the Muria of the northern parganas often intermarry with the Kanker Gond (who also have the ghotul system and are really Muria). The Jhoria Muria marry Hill Maria of the appropriate clans whenever geographical conditions allow them to do so. The same is sometimes true of the Muria of the Paralkot area. Those Muria who have migrated from Jeypore naturally marry their relations who have remained in the Orissa territory. Bindo, the old Muria leader of Benur, told me that 'we marry Kanker Gond and the Bhattra Muria of Jagdalpur (but not the Raja Muria) for we are of the same family; but now we live in the hills and they on the plains. Those who live near the Raja are the true Raja Muria, and they look down on us.' Bindo is here referring to the thirty or forty thousand Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil to the south of Kondagaon. These Muria have

[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part I, p. 22.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 183.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142
301
291
534

Plate V

A study in contrasts. The two boys are brothers, but one goes to school

[p. 18 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate VI

142
291
301

Nuri, the priest and landlord of Nayanar

[p. 18 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

619 given up eating beef, and either never had or have abandoned the ghotul system. Their influence is gradually making itself felt in the south of Kondagaon to the east of the road, where the Ghotul Muria call those who have separated themselves from them 'Bhattra'. This is probably the best name for the Raja Muria of Jagdalpur. Indeed it would be a great convenience if we could call the western Muria 'Jhoria', the Muria of Kondagaon 'Muria' and the Muria of Jagdalpur 'Bhattra'. It may be that one day they will call themselves by these titles, and then we can follow suit.

582

However, there is no intermarriage between the Raja Muria or Bara Bhattra of Jagdalpur, but it continues naturally enough with the Bhattra Muria or ordinary Muria just across the border of the tahsil. It is evident, however, that the Muria think of themselves as a single people, related (it is true) to several others, but having one common rallying point in the ghotul founded by Lingo Pen, the father of the tribe.

IV. Physical Characters of the Muria

142 At the end of February 1942, Dr B. S. Guha, of the Zoological Survey of India, accepted my invitation to visit Bastar in order to examine the physical characters of the Muria. He joined me at Dongrigura in the Kondagaon Tahsil, where he measured 52 adult male Muria, and we then went on to Markabera in the Abujhmar foothills. Here he measured 51 adult male Muria of this and surrounding villages. He has written a detailed account which is printed elsewhere, but the following brief description may be inserted here.

'The difference', he writes, 'between the plains Muria of Kondagaon and the Abujhmar foothills Muria, in all essential physical characters, is hardly significant except to a small extent in the shape of the nose. The latter have a slightly longer, narrower and more prominent nose as compared to the former. This difference may be fortuitous and may disappear if larger samples are taken, a view to which I am provisionally inclined, though the possibility of some genuine difference in this respect between the two cannot be altogether ruled out.

'Taking the two groups together the Muria are a short-statured long-headed race with broad cheek bones and rather short pearish type of face. Alike in the absolute measurements (mean H.L. 185·56±0·35; H.B. 138·56 [141] ±0·29 and mean C.I. 74·72±0·18) and the bulging of the occiput, the head is essentially dolichocephalic; there is hardly any true brachycephaly noticeable. The forehead is on the average well-arched but in an appreciable number it tends to be vertical. The supraorbital ridges vary from moderate to well-marked—in a few they are very prominent. On the whole the face tends to project forwards—approximately one-half of the people being prognathic. The nose is usually flat and broad and the nasal root depressed, the lips thick and the chin retreating. In a small number, however, the face is longish, the lips thin, and the chin well developed and some even show a prominent nose with a tendency to aquilinity.

'The skin colour is on the average dark chocolate brown, though individuals with brown and even yellowish brown skin colour are not wanting. The hair is black and varies between straight and wavy with a few persons showing curly hair. It is usually very rich on the head but only moderate on the lips and face. The body hair is rather slight.

'The eye colour is generally black and the eye is horizontal but in seven men examined it was undoubtedly oblique and in a few cases traces of the

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

142 epicanthic fold were found in one or both eyes. Among the Hill Muria observed at Markabera, light brown skin colour, high cheek bones and the unmistakable presence of the epicanthic fold were also noticed.

144 'Taking all the characters together, I am inclined to the view that the Muria are not different from the Bhil of the Vindhyan ranges measured by me and belong essentially to what we have termed the Proto-Australoid group. While this is really the basic-type, it is possible that they have absorbed a little of the blood of a finer racial type (as a result probably of their contact with higher caste Hindus across the Godavari) as shown in the occasional occurrences of a longish face, thin lips, prominent chin and well-developed prominent nose. In addition there is unmistakably a Mongoloid element, though very small, and it appears to be more marked in the Hill Maria and the Muria of the foothills than the Muria of the plains. How exactly this has to be accounted for, remains to be seen but I am inclined to agree with Hutton that the intrusion probably came from the eastern coastal regions.'

V. Muria Migrations

174 As we have seen, there are probably at least three different elements in the composition of the Muria tribe. The first is the Hill Maria migration from the mountains into the hills and forests of the south and east, from which has emerged the Jhoria of today. The second is a probable migration of Gond from the Central Provinces into the northern parganas, to which testify common traditions, the legend of Lingo and the continued intermarriage between Kanker Gond and Bastar Muria. The third element is that of east Kondagaon, which may represent the true Bastar autochthon, where the Muria —having been longer in the country than the others—have lost more of their original customs and language.

173 All three elements have traditions of migrations from Warangal in the south and Lanji-Dhamda in the north. Many try to blend the two.

Warangal is, of course, the original home of the ruling family of Bastar, whose ancestors reigned there from about A.D. 1150 to 1425. This Kakatiya family was probably originally feudatory to the Chalukya kings and only later ruled independently. 'Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had been an outlying and loosely-held group of feudal dependencies of Warangal.'[1]

It will be of interest to give a few of the stories still current in Muria villages. Suko Manjhi told me at Bandopal that his family first lived in Lanji-Dhamda and then went to Warangal. In Warangal, he went on,

> The Raja was one day going to court when Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a vision saying, 'Where are you going?' The Raja replied, 'To my court'. The goddess said, 'This is not your court, nor your kingdom. I will show you where your real kingdom is; if you stay here both house and kingdom will be lost. Come with me; you go ahead and I will follow, but do not look behind; your kingdom will extend as far as you can go!' The Raja went on and on into Bastar and up as far as the Pairi river where there is now the Kanker boundary. As he went along he listened all the time to the sound of Danteshwari

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 3.

INTRODUCTION

Mai's anklets, but as they were crossing the river some sand got into them and she stopped to clean them. When the music of the anklets ceased, the Raja turned round to see what was the matter. Danteshwari was very angry and cried, 'You have disobeyed me. You might have been the greatest of all kings, but now your kingdom must stop here.' 173

Bhikari Muria, the Gaita of Kerawahi, gave a different account:

> Our ancestors came from Warangal driven by hunger and thirst, and were searching for a home and food to live. Seven brothers reached Jarandi village and slept near a threshing-floor. The next morning they saw a great heap of kodon chaff. Their wives examined it and found there was still much grain left there, so they told their husbands to fetch bullocks from the village. The brothers each gathered a bin full of grain and went to the villagers saying, 'Look, how much grain we have found, take it, for it is yours'. But the villagers said, 'No, we had thrown away the chaff, and there was no grain there; what you have got is a gift of the gods'. Then with what they had found the seven brothers scattered in the villages of Otenda, Jarandi, Magenda, Kerawahi, Bandaseoni, Umargaon and Uridgaon. These were the first Muria villages. The brothers were of the Kawachi clan and these villages are their *bisam* (clan-territory).

This story comes from the east of the State. Many of the accounts given in the west describe how the Muria first settled in the Abujhmar and were originally Maria. Eighty-year-old Bindo of Benur, for example, describes how,

> My ancestors lived in Warangal. One of them had a dream. The god Raja Dokara appeared to him and told him to go to Bastar, for the god himself was going there. So my ancestor followed the god and settled at Teknar in the land of the Maria.
>
> Some time later my ancestor went to the lowlands to buy bullocks. The Muria there said to him, 'Come and live with us here and we will make you our leader'. My ancestor agreed to do so, but when he returned to Teknar to fetch his belongings, the Maria would not let him go.
>
> But after a time, Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Come down to the lowlands and I will help you; I will give you a Muria wife and will make you the chief of the village'. When he heard this, my ancestor left Teknar and came to settle in Benur. Here the Muria gave him a wife and he became one of them and the chief of that village.

In Sidhawand, a Muria village on the Kanker border, the headman, who belongs to the Kasai Maravi clan, said that his ancestors came from Garha-Mandla,[1] but where this was he could not say.

The tradition of a migration from Lanji-Dhamda[2] is vaguer and less detailed than that of the royal pilgrimage from Warangal. Yet it persists. Bara Pen

[1] Garha and Mandla are often mentioned together as if they were one place. Mandla was the capital of the Gond Raja, Hirde Shah, from 1650 to 1706, after which the Gond Rajas were known as 'kings of Garha-Mandla' until the kingdoms collapsed before the Marathas.

[2] Lanji is also connected with ancient Gond history. A Rajput adventurer—according to one tradition—named Jadhu Rai took service in the court of one of the original Gond Rajas at Lanji and, marrying his daughter, occupied the throne and thus started the Gond

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

173 was born from a stone in Lanji-Dhamda. The Poyami Gaita at Jamkot claimed that 'the Poyami clan came from Dhamda, but is now scattered everywhere'. In Ulera and neighbouring villages the Muria said that they were really Gond from Lanji-Dhamda and that they intermarried with Kanker and Jeypore Gond.

Rajput dynasty which continued for hundreds of years. In comparatively modern times a fort was built at Lanji by one of the Gond Rajas of Garha-Mandla. 'While engaged in the excavations, a spirit appeared who declared herself to be the goddess Lanjhoi and she promised to constitute herself protectrix of the fort, provided a human sacrifice was yearly offered at her shrine. It was consequently named after her. Many years later, Chimanjee Bhonsla on his Cuttack expedition took the Lanjee road. He saw and valued the position of the fort and erected a small temple in honour of Lanjhoi. Though human sacrifices are not now offered, the Gond Raja of Kawardah, on visiting the Nagpore Exhibition in 1865, found it necessary to sacrifice goats at the shrine that his ancestors had dedicated to Lanjhoi.'—A. J. Lawrence, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Bhandara District* (Bombay, 1867), p. 29.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWO

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

I. The Muria Village

BEFORE approaching the main subject of this book, it is necessary to see how the chelik and motiari live at home. In a sense, there is no such thing as a typical Muria village any more than there is a typical Muria house. But most of the villages conform to the Gond pattern: they are set among trees—the Muria seem fonder of shade than wind and do not often choose the hill-tops beloved of the Maria and Baiga—and each house is enclosed within a separate fence that also surrounds its garden. There is thus a sharp distinction between a Muria and a Hill Maria village: the latter, like the Baiga village, consists of a row of houses joined together and opening on to a common street. Traces of this survive among the Muria in the enclosures of some of their leading men; at Markabera, for example, the headman's house is like a little village, a long enclosure with a small street on to which face many dwelling-places and granaries. In Palli-Barkot, and other western villages also, groups of related families build their houses to open round a square.

But generally the houses are scattered about, sometimes widely scattered, to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens, and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul are ever in a special or recognized position.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small courtyard, are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs. As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the east of Kondagaon the verandah of the main house is often deeper than the room inside. Where houses are built like this, there is no need for special menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar, where there is no room to seclude a woman on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and cleanness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of Mother Earth, and a love of animals. The pigsties are substantial, often with a double roof; the cattle-sheds are sometimes raised on pillars; sitting hens are given comfortable nests raised well above the ground. The houses themselves are cosy and homely, crammed with every sort of basket, leaf-bundle and utensil. Fish-traps, drums, wooden clogs hang from the roof, and flutes and bows and arrows are stuck under the thatch. Inside, in an inner room, is kept the mysterious Pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and placated.

These houses are the work-rooms of the chelik and motiari; they are the homes only of the married. The life and interest of chelik and motiari centre in the ghotul. But life there is definitely regarded as a preparation and training for the home. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

Most of the Muria are undoubtedly very poor. I was one day discussing with W. V. Grigson, who had visited Mandla after several years in Bastar, whether the Bastar villagers were poorer than those in the Central Provinces. I suggested—and he agreed—that probably the Bastar villagers were actually poorer, but that their lives were so much richer that they seemed far more

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

511 prosperous than their fellows in a district like Mandla. In Mandla, for example, or Bilaspur, the worst poverty is the poverty of the spirit, the decay of art and culture, the disappearance of tribal religion, the dying-out of dance and song. Against this background, material want stands out stark and bare. But the Muria of Bastar has a full rich life; every day brings its delightful and absorbing pursuits; at least twice a month there is a sharp break in the monotony, the colour and music of a festival, the excitement of a hunt, the romance of a dancing expedition—and all the time, if you are young, there is the ghotul which you would not exchange for any offer of material wealth.

II. Cultivation

241 'It is as bad for a Muria to fail in his cultivation as for a monkey to slip from a branch,' but it is not necessary to spend very much time on this subject, important as it is. The axe-cultivation of the Maria, which closely resembles that of the Muria, has been fully discussed by Grigson,[1] and for its wider implications my own account of bewar in *The Baiga* may be consulted.[2] The Muria's permanent rice-cultivation hardly differs from that elsewhere in India and need not be described in detail.

For the sake of completeness, however, and because we must never forget that the ghotul exists in a setting of agriculture, food-gathering and hunting, I will give a brief outline of the Muria's methods of cultivation.

There are three kinds of axe-cultivation and the Muria practise them all, for 'the axe is our milk-giving cow':

1. *Penda* is cut on the steep slopes of hills. The Muria fells the trees and undergrowth, fires them when dry, and sows his seed in the ashes after the first rains have fallen. In a *penda* clearing there is no digging or ploughing of the earth. After two or three years a *penda* plot is abandoned and a new clearing made. This is the most common form of axe-cultivation among the Hill Maria: it is the bewar of the Baiga. No plough or hoe is used. For beans and pulses, holes are dibbled with a primitive digging-stick.

2. *Dippa*, also called *marhān* and *erka*, differs from *penda* in three ways—

   (*a*) The clearings are made on fairly level ground, not on the side of hills.

   (*b*) After the fellings have been fired the ashes are evenly distributed over the whole area; in a *penda* clearing no one bothers to do this. The result is a much more even and regular crop.

   (*c*) When the rains fall, the ashes are ploughed into the ground, or dug into it with a hoe, and only then is the seed sown.

3. *Parka* or *dahi* differs again: in *dippa* and *penda* clearings, the trees are felled in the very place where it is desired to sow. They are burnt on the spot. But in *parka*, trees and brushwood are cut elsewhere and are carried on to an already existing field. Here they are spread over the field and fired. After raking the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria plough them into the ground and sow their seed.

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–30.
[2] Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), pp. 100–31.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Raughat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle.

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhārni*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'.

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari pude*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths.

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*.

FIG. 1. Kunj digging-stick of iron
Length 1' 7"

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the ashes. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] The other villagers come and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *harlat* or *halla* (*dhoona* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *harpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes called *hatwak* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun at the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

[1] The Juang keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandapgarh* dormitory, and usually ignite their clearings from it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

When this is done and the ground is cooled, the bullocks are brought and chelik and motiari with their ploughs drive the ashes deep into the soil.

The plough is 'the lizard that runs into its hole in the dry tree': it has 'three heads and ten legs': the cowhide reins of the oxen are described as 'the dead bullocks that go before a living man'.

Before the seed can be sown, the Wijja Pandum must be celebrated. This festival, which is preceded by a ceremonial hunt, is held at any time from April to June. Essential to the festival, one version of which I describe in detail in Chapter VII, is the hunt which foretells the success or failure of the crops, the feast on the animals killed, and the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the seed—some of which is taken away by every householder. In some villages, at the end of the ceremonies, the chelik roll the Gaita in mud from an ant-hill.

The night before the actual sowing, which is sometimes fixed when new leaf-shoots appear on the bhoir tree, all the men again sleep in the ghotul and the motiari stay at home to ensure chastity and thus avoid any possible infection of menstrual blood. On their way to the fields in the morning, they put a small heap of seed at any cross-roads they pass. Each householder has a leaf-cup of the seed that was consecrated with blood at the Wijja Pandum, and sows this after the Gaita has sacrificed a chicken in his field.

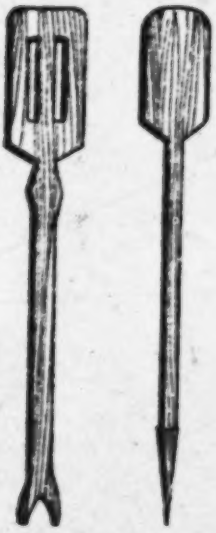


FIG. 2. *Dayi* wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking. *Length 2′ 9″*

The Muria, unlike the Hill Maria, sows different kinds of seed in different places, but like the Hill Maria he sows them at different times. In the west and central areas there are three main sowings.

The first sowing, immediately after the first rains, is of small millets—*turo kohala* or *kosra*, *kikma* and *mandia*. *Rahar dāl* is sown with the *mandia*. Gourds and pumpkins are sown at the same time.

The next sowing is in early July of rice, *kutki* and *urad dāl* as well as beans.

The last sowing, of what is called *os kosra*, is done in August, though not on ground that has already been used that year. Rice is again sown and *mung* and *kulthi* pulses.

Before the actual sowing of the seed, the Muria prepare their fences, and the field-huts and watching-platforms for the guarding of their crops. The fences are not, of course, as in civilized areas, to keep out their fellow-men but to protect the crops against wild animals: bison and deer are plentiful in north Bastar, especially in the Makri area, and can do much damage to the fields.

There are many kinds of fencing. Sometimes there is none at all; in the jungle clearings a line of poles is enough, in the permanent fields the embankments make a clear division. Sometimes a strong *gannao* stockade is made by placing hundreds of logs upright in the ground. Fences of bamboo wattle are also made.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*hetul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

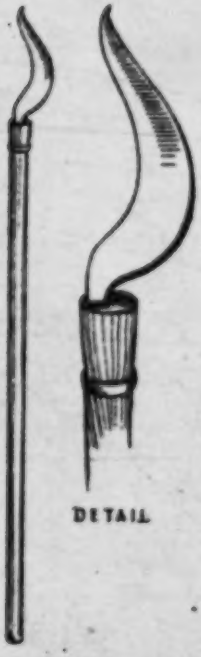
[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *Kharchedar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

241 they still make a small *parka* plot somewhere in their fields so that some of the grain will mature quickly and they will have enough to eat at home.

Their big fields are generally embanked, often irrigated with some ingenuity. They are distinguished according to the soil and location—*dhar nali* or *gabhār* is a low-lying rice-field, a *tikra* is a field on a slope, a *dobha* or *mal* is an ordinary level field—and they are often given names, the Cat-stone Field, the Field of the Frogs, the Field of the Ghost.[1]



DETAIL

FIG. 4. Yurk used in the same way as the gagra, but of a different pattern
Length 3′ 10″

Perhaps the most treasured thing, and often actually the most profitable, in a Muria's agricultural life is the *bāri* or garden enclosure near his house. This is carefully fenced with a stockade or with bamboo wattle-work, and is manured and enriched with the sweepings of the house and the droppings of the cattle throughout the year.

Here the Muria sows the profitable oil-seeds, sarson, til or arsi; here he sets beans by the fence, and a broad patch of red *jira* spinach. Often he plants some castor trees, or a sago-palm, sometimes plantain and papaya. One specially guarded patch contains his tobacco supply for the year.

Once the seed is sown, the attention of chelik and motiari is largely diverted from the ghotul to the fields. Ghotul life is almost suspended, though the smaller children go and solemnly imitate the habits of their elders. Little fires twinkle in the fields and the sweet music of the flute comes through the darkness.

When the first grain appears on the shoots, the Gaita offers an egg to Talhur Muttai to ensure its safety.

During the season, in the permanent fields there is a lot to be done. The embankments must be constantly repaired. The sprouting rice must be puddled with a board dragged by bullocks. The girls must go to weed. The boys set fish-traps where the water escapes through the embankments. It is a time of danger and taboo: an act of adultery may blight the grain, a quarrel discourage its growth.

[226] [184]

Everybody goes to reap the crop. They use the ordinary iron sickle. Before thrashing, the bundles are piled up on wooden platforms, heaped into rough bins, sometimes just stacked in neat circles on the ground.

The first sheaf cut is tied to a tree overlooking the field or clearing.

252 The *kora* thrashing-floor is prepared by men, for in many villages it is taboo for women to do this, and so the men clear the ground in or near the field, plaster and cow-dung it. In the middle they place a pole (*mer-gulla*) to the top of which they often tie a sheaf (Plate X). If they are going to use oxen, they attach a pole to the *mer-gulla* and drive the animals round in the usual way. Often, however, the Muria thrash with their feet (Plate X). If there

[1] For an account of names of fields in India, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1891), pp. 115 and 141.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do. 252

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing. [464]

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it. [462]

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath. [585]

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground. 251

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'. 415

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bari*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masera in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals. 196

Irpa Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Kurum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Koria or *Puna Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

A Cultivation Song

241
539

A song sung to accompany the Korak Dahiya Karsana illustrates the various processes of cultivation and life in the fields.

Warpendoy pendoy rāmo rāmo!	In the Wendpendoy jungle is the hill Ramo!
Korak pehchi wāykom sāngo.	We will come to cut the tree branches, *sāngo.*
Miya wāy wāy pehchtorom sāngo	Before you came we had cut the branches.
Korak hāh wāykom sāngo	We will come to spread the branches in the field.
Miya wāy wāy hāhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had spread the branches.
Hurri tāsi wāykom sāngo	We will come to set fire to it with straw.
Miya wāy wāy hurri tāstorom sāngo	Before you came we had set fire to it.
Lāting tata wāykom sāngo	We will come to bring the rake.
Miya wāy wāy lating tatorom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the rake.
Parka puhi wāykom sāngo	We will come to plough the *parka* clearing.
Miya wāy wāy puhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had ploughed the clearing.
Goräng wili wāykom sāngo	We will come to sow the mandia seed.
Miya wāy wāy wilitom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the seed.
Hāmo wili wāykom sāngo	We will come to sow the *hāmo* seed.
Miya wāy wāy wilitom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the seed.
Goräng kichi wāykom sāngo	We will come to pick the mandia crop.
Miya wāy wāy kichtorom sāngo	Before you came we had picked the crop.
Goräng jākhi wāykom sāngo	We will come to thrash the grain with a stick.
Miya wāy wāy jākhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had thrashed the grain.
Goräng kemi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sift the grain in a basket.
Miya wāy wāy kemtom sāngo	Before you came we had sifted the grain.
Goräng taddi wāykom sāngo	We will come to gather the mandia grain.
Miya wāy wāy taddihtom sāngo	Before you came we had gathered the grain.
Goräng widing wāykom sāngo	We will come to make a rope-bin for the grain.
Miya wāy wāy widihtom sāngo	Before you came we had stored the grain.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate VII

291
142
301

Motiari of Munjmeta listening to the gramophone

[p. 30 (A)]

Plate VIII

241
231

482

492
493

1 Motiari ploughing at Bayanar

2 Carrying earth to embank a field

3 Chalik at Sirpur in solid-wheeled cart

[p. 306]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

241 539

Dhusir jâhi wâykom sângo	We will come to press the grain into the bin.
Miya wây wây jâhlorom sângo.	Before you came we had pressed the grain.

III. The Muria's Year

221 796

It is very difficult to give any sort of general time-table, for events vary in their incidence and in their order from place to place and from year to year. Everything depends on the orders of the Gaita and Siraha, and dreams, economic factors and 'inspirations' combine to disturb the course of events. However, the following table may be taken as giving a rough picture of a normal year:

January ..	Bhimul Pandum, the festival of the rain-god. Pupul Korta Tindana and Pen Karsita, the New Eating Festival of pulses, also known as Jata Pandum. Chelik go from village to village dancing the Pus Kolang or Chherta. The people reap the til oil-seed.
February ..	Kare Pandum, after which the people may cut grass, bamboos and may begin felling trees for their *dippa* and *parka* clearings. The chelik begin collecting wood and grass for the ghotul. The Marhai festivals, great semi-religious commercial fairs, begin now and continue in various places until April.
March ..	Irpu Pandum, the festival of the mahua tree, Marka Pandum, the festival of the new mangoes, and Til Khani, the festival of oil-seed, are held about this time. The marriage season begins and continues until May. Boys and girls go out dancing the Chait and Mahua Dandar. The people are busy collecting mahua flowers, tendu leaves and wood.
April ..	Wijja Pandum, the seed festival, preceded by a ceremonial hunt. Ceremonies to purify and protect the villages. People begin breaking myrabolams. Hot weather begins. Many marriages everywhere.
May ..	Timber spread over *parka* clearings. Local ceremonies to ensure a good harvest and rainfall.
June ..	Timber in clearings fired. Rains begin. Ploughing and sowing. Fencing of gardens and repairs to houses, thatching and protection against rain.
July ..	Amawas or Hareli festival. Chelik make stilts.
August ..	Heavy rain during the month. Tur Korta Tindana or Kurum Pandum, when the first millets are eaten.
September	Rains are clearing. At the end of the month is the Korta Pandum, the first eating of the new rice, cucumbers and gourds. On the day after this festival, the chelik break their stilts and pile them on the stone of Dito or Bhimul Pen.
October ..	Chera or Nuka Nordana Pandum, before which the new rice must not be washed. The Dassera festival attracts thousands to Jagdalpur and Bara Dongar, and is celebrated in a few ghotul. Diwali comes a little later:

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

221
796

the Muria do not illuminate their houses for it, but tie ears of grain in long strings over their doors. Road work begins, and everybody is busy reaping.

November.. A busy month in the fields. Since September the ghotul have been almost deserted by the chelik, who spend their time in little huts watching the crops. Reaping, thrashing, winnowing and storing grain occupies everyone. From the end of October the motiari have been going out dancing the Diwali and, where this practice is unknown, boys and girls go together for the Hulki dances.

December.. In some villages the Jata Pandum is held in this month. People cut their sarson crops and store them. They collect myrabolams till the end of January.

IV. Cultivation and the Ghotul

883
241

At Padbera and a number of villages in the neighbourhood of Antagarh the ghotul has its own property. The villagers give the chelik a piece of land for cultivation which is known as *chelik-parka*. The boys bring the wood from the neighbouring forest, spread it on the field, burn it and sow the seed. The girls see to the weeding and when the crop is ready all join in the harvest. The girls husk the rice in the ghotul itself and when it is ready give a feast to the village. The following day they offer an egg, red and black powder and liquor to the Kanyang and Rau of the field for the protection of the ghotul.

The chelik and motiari sometimes go to work as a ghotul. Should a party of visitors arrive from another village for a dance and there is no food or liquor for their entertainment, the boys approach one of the wealthier villagers (who of course may have several of his own children in the ghotul) and ask him to advance them rice and pulse, some liquor and a pig, promising they will go to work for him when he needs help in weeding his fields, gathering his harvest or mending a broken embankment. At other times villagers who are in urgent need of help employ the ghotul children and pay them with gifts of grain and pulse. I am told that money is rarely given. Sometimes the boys and girls only receive their food, though this food at least in the evening must be good and should include pork and liquor. When the children receive gifts of grain they save it up, storing it in the house of the leader, till there is enough for a big feast. This is prepared and eaten near the ghotul, or helps to augment the feast at the end of a dancing expedition. The parents are also invited; since the mothers may not go inside the ghotul, the feast is enjoyed outside.

V. The Muria's Food

Kare ahār la pele pahār. If you get enough to eat you can push a mountain aside.—Muria proverb

883

In addition to work in the fields, chelik and motiari are kept busy all day long, in and around their homes. The motiari must fetch water from the well or stream, collect leaves from the jungle for leaf-cups and plates, nurse the babies, clean and cow-dung the buildings, husk rice and grain, help in the cooking, feed goats, pigs and cattle. The boys must fetch firewood from the forest, make string from hemp and bark, prepare the ploughs and carts, keep the buildings in repair, and look after the cattle and other animals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol.

> Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
> At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

A broom is 'the thing that licks quickly and then falls flat'; a leaf-plate is 'the little tank full of thorns' or 'the boy that morning and evening gives a share to all'; a pot of curds hawked round the village is described as 'the white cock going from house to house'.

But the main interest of chelik and motiari—for after all they are still only boys and girls—is in food. *'Bhaio bihān kandiya ma dhyān.* As soon as morning comes, his mind is in the cooking-pot.' Of things to eat the Muria have a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the State has not yet interfered with their right to natural roots, fruit and leaves—they may take what they want so long as they do no damage.

As Grigson says of the Maria: 'The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department and copy from it the names of all edible forest products; one would not even then produce an exhaustive list.'[1] I do not propose to give such a list here; but I will briefly mention the things that chelik and motiari like best. Meat and fish probably stand first in popularity—I will describe them later.

FIG. 5. Uspal rice husker. Length 5'9"

Among fruit trees, the mahua is supreme. When the flowers begin to fall, the cattle are kept tied up until the women and children have gathered them. They spread them in bright yellow patches swiftly turning brown on rocks, before their houses, in specially-made enclosures. When dry enough, the flowers are beaten with heavy sticks, sometimes with the wooden doors of a pigsty. The pulp is made into chutney with dried khamer fruit and tamarind kernels, and eaten with rice or gruel. The oil is used for cooking and lighting. The flowers are stored in baskets, and make one of the most eagerly demanded gifts when the chelik make a dance tour of a village.

Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with chilli and salt to the chelik.

Acora fruit is liked, and there are many riddles about it. 'A green pigeon came from Porobhum and laid its eggs on a leaf.' 'The white bird hides its eggs under its wings.' Other popular fruits are those of the thorny bhoir—'Mother bites, but daughter invites'; the kurlu—'The little sparrow's liver is sweet'; the aonla, the char, the jamun and the tamarind. Tendu fruit is picked while still unripe and put in kodon chaff to mature. Sometimes it is buried in the ground and a fire is lit above it. When ripe, it is eaten raw. Wild figs are eaten ripe or dried and ground up with flour.

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

883 262 262 252 222 [373] 262 222 [563] [524] [251]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In
222 the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs
252 before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs, regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful
[278] remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

262 The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith
276 that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams;
524 a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

262 Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries' when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

262 Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja
843 Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[171] [1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. 'The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Saises in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[171] [2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 10ff.

[278] [3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

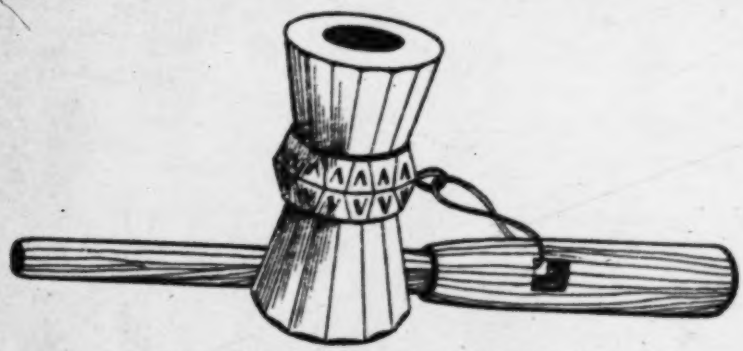


FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chelik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

with wood and fired; pots are placed in rows upon them. The motiari husk and clean the rice, and make the leaf-cups and plates, but the boys do the actual cooking. When the rice is ready it is tipped out in a great pile on bamboo mats. A pig, which is killed by being beaten on the head with a rice husker, is roasted in the fire till its hair is burnt off; it is skinned and cleaned. Flesh, bones and skin are cut up into little squares of equal size—an important matter, for it is essential that everyone should receive exactly the same amount. These pieces are fried in mahua oil, and put into large earthen pots with rice-water, salt, haldi and chilli and boiled till ready. Fish is prepared in much the same way, except that usually something sour is added to flavour it. Fowls are cooked in leaf-cups. The intestines are squeezed out, and the whole chicken with head and feet is roasted with a little salt. Eggs are wrapped in leaves and baked in the fire. Mongoose flesh is roasted and spiced with dried mangoes. Crocodile is boiled.

At the ghotul feasts and marriages I have attended everyone sits round in a big circle, and the boys (sometimes assisted by a few motiari) serve the food. The bits of meat are carefully counted out into leaf-cups and distributed. Rice is served from baskets or winnowing-fans direct onto leaf-plates.

At home, the family sits round the pot of jawa, which is taken straight off the fire and placed in the middle of the floor. Each has a little chutney on a leaf in front of him and an empty leaf-cup. The mother dips a gourd into the pot and helps the little children; then each member of the family helps himself. There is no idea that men should eat before women or elders before the children.

Doctors say that the Muria's food lacks fat and protein and criticize them for not taking more milk, ghee and vegetable. No doubt the Muria, like other people, would eat more of these things if they could get them. But there is no doubt that they do not like milk, and rarely take it themselves or give it to their children.

Famine is not common in Bastar, for the people can fall back on the almost limitless products of the forests. But it has been known, and a sombre song preserves its memory.

Nimāre uche dāntona rawnāni	Vulture, whither away, vulture?
Dori bhumi dāntona dāda le	I am going towards the west, brother,
Bhumi dukār dukār roy dāda le	For the day of want has dawned.
Bhumi te dukār arit roy dāda le	The famine is over all the world
Hikāt huro bhaiso roy dāda le	Black, black are the buffaloes,
Sarpane bhaiso arit roy dāda le	And all of them have died, brother.
Podor pungār doyo roy dāda le	White as cotton flowers are the cows,
Sārpane doyo arin roy dāda le	And all of them have fallen in summer.
Pukle dhelāt rawnāl roy dāda le	On the broken clod the vulture,
Wetla marāte kawrāl roy dāda le	On the withered tree the crow,
Kawar woker inta roy dāda le	The crow is cawing, brother.
Raiyaka reyon kawrāl roy dāda le	It is ready to fly down.

VI. Honey

Honey was discovered by a Maria named Waddai who also gave his name to the whole succession of Waddai diviners. 'Waddai went one day to a medium, with a gift of char nuts, seeking help for his sick son. On the way he met a monkey which had been outcasted for falling while jumping from a tree and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

284
482

Chaitk bringing wood for dahi cultivation

Plate IX

Muria firing a marhan clearing near Antagarh

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

252

Chelik at Markabera threshing with their feet

Plate X

Winnowing grain. Note the first sheaf tied to the threshing pole

[P. 36 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honey-comb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitha ondār* and the *lohti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lohti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognise four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhago mohe*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sathapuri mohe*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohe*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nihiti mohe*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Godaba.

[2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also *ibid.*, p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs: the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'It a golden box bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 450.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

524

Wori wori singār,
Bāni bāni pungār.
Rows and rows of decorations,
There are many kinds of flowers.
—A honeycomb.
Tutri bukāte bātri perek.
In a small hole is a small seed.
—*Lokti* bees.
Untie the she-buffalo and milk the peg.
—Getting honey from a hive.
A herd of cattle has one leader.
—The swarm and its queen.
Many flowers grow in the tank.
—A honeycomb.
Flower, flower, how it flowers!
What comes out of the flower?
—Bees.

I have recorded one song about bees, but I was unable to discover any games that illustrated the taking of a hive.

539

Song

The bees suck the kosra flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The bees suck the paddy flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The Manjhi says he'll give his daughter
To the boy who kills the bees.
An orphan chelik kills the bees,
He brings the hive and shows the Manjhi.
The Manjhi gives the boy his daughter.
The bees suck the mandia flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.

VII. Oil

Aun kare matai, tel kare chiknai, kapare kare barai. Food fattens, oil adorns, clothes dignify—Muria saying

252

The Muria make many different kinds of oil; some for use in their carts, some for light, some for medicine, but most, of course, for food. The *gīrangyi* is extracted from mahua seed and is used mainly for cooking. So is the oil gained from the usual oil-seed crops, 'the slender trees that have a hundred babies', which are often raised in the *bāri* gardens. Seeds of the sarai tree are collected and make a useful oil. The fat of lizards and the grubs that live in the date-palm and the fat of cow, buffalo, goat, pig, cock, and several kinds of deer all yield oil which can be used for cooking and to mix with food. For lighting purposes and to oil the wheels of bullock-carts, oil made from the seed of the karanji, bandgul or kosom is used. Oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and

[373 493]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and 252 [302]
for the hair and body for toilet purposes is made from the mahua seed or indeed from any of the oils used in cooking.

The method of extracting oil from the mahua seed is as follows. A pot of water is placed on a fire near the oil-press and heated. Then into a bamboo cone, exactly like the *jib* in which rice-beer is prepared, is put the ground and dried seed. Covered with a small basket this is placed above the water-pot and the seed is steamed for about fifteen minutes. The steamed oil-seed is then tipped out into a small basket called *kora* and the operator presses it down with a rice-husker. When this small basket is full of closely pressed oil-seed, it is carried over to the press. This is called *gāramot*,[1] and is of a very primitive kind. A long forked branch is inserted into a hole made in a living tree about two feet above the ground. Underneath is placed the *gāratoṭe*, a block of wood with lines carved on its upper surface to carry off the oil. The basket of oil-seed is placed on top of this and the bough is laid upon it. The women place large stones on the forked end of the bough, thus forming a heavy weight to press down the seed. In the fork is a peg to keep it in position. After about half an hour the oil begins to flow and drips down into an earthen pot below.

This work is generally done by women, often by the motiari. In Masora I once saw two motiari extracting oil from the seeds of the keuti tree. These girls fetched the seed from the jungle, broke it up with their feet, ground it, steamed it and then put it into the press. They said that the chelik had no oil for their hair and they were doing this, entirely on their own, to please them.

VIII. Hunting

The Muria will eat almost anything. They profess to despise the Maria 262
for eating monkeys and in Koilibera they still talk about the time when W. V. Grigson camped along the northern road near the Abujhmar and the Maria of the Barsur Pargana, who came to see him, left not a single monkey

[411]

Fig. 7. Characteristic Muria bow
Length 5′ 4″

in the hills and stripped the whole forest of red ants. But near Jungani I saw a monkey's skin hanging up in a house and the people admitted that 'the children had eaten it'.[2] Crocodile is not disliked; after the skin is removed, the flesh, which is a little coarse, can yet be cooked and eaten

[1] This press resembles that reported as used in Assam and by the Korku.—K. P. Chattopadhyaya, 'Indian Oil Presses,' *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Institute*, Vol. I (1936), p. 43.

[2] Bison-horn Maria say that 'though its skin is black, the monkey's flesh is white as rice-beer'. They often roast the monkey in its skin and eat everything. If a man eats a monkey's placenta he will be as active as a monkey and able to jump from tree to tree. It is said that Kodaya Pota's great-grandfather did this. The Waddal and Gaita of Dualkurka (and perhaps other villages) do not eat the flesh because the monkey helps them in their priestly duties—an obvious reference to Hanuman.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *tarank tarank tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tita*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tita de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking puda*, *peking puda* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho oh ho mama*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligundi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dussera festival in Jagdalpur.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *engrâw*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats.

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongera* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hâyna mânjhi*).

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachâr*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

FIG. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

224 796 787 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonra rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 796 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khamna Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every [782] three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate.

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 841 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt. As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Benur, Dansa Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sambhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered.

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chaniyagaon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection.

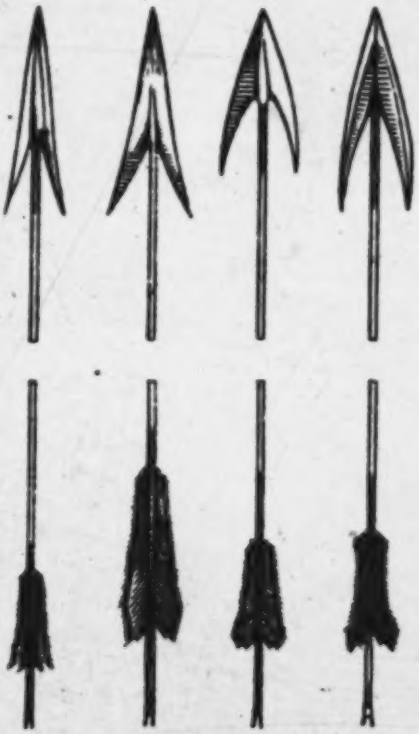


FIG. 10. Arrows and arrow-heads
Length ⅓ S

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul.

I

Chikkal mâti kariya mâma kâvigir kâvigir shikâri shikâri!
Tupak sâja kima mâma.
Mâli gondi tupâk mâma.

Gojar kanar sava mâma.

O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!
Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
The name of the gun is Maligondi, uncle shikari.
Make gunpowder with gum from the mode tree, uncle shikari.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

539
224

Tumir mara jhāka māma. — The machan is on the ebony tree, uncle shikari.
Jhāka sāje kimu māma. — Make the machan there, uncle shikari.
Ghotiya kāya goli māma. — Make bullets like ghotiya fruit, uncle shikari.
Jhāka udi dākat māma. — We will go and sit on the machan, uncle shikari.
Nāra nuda waiki bāncha. — You must come with me, nephew shikari.
Wātek icho waiki bāncha. — If you are ready, come with me, nephew shikari.
Māoku wātek pahchhāt bāncha. — When the sambhar comes we will shoot it, nephew shikari.
Hāle mara māri bāncha. — On the hill of sal trees, nephew shikari.
Ahey khojin oyhāt bāncha. — We will go to search there, nephew shikari.

2

Kainākhe gulel dai kainākhe dori wo dai sona kainākhe gunel? — What is the *gulel* made of, what is the rope, mother?
Bānz ke to gulel bābu san sutri doriga bābu. — The *gulel* is made of bamboo, and the rope of hemp, my son.
Kainākhe ghora dai kainākhe phata wo dai? — What is the horse made of, and what is the bridle, mother?
Banz ke to ghora bābu sut ke to phata bābu. — The horse is made of bamboo, the bridle of thread, my son.
Kainākhe dhuti dai kainākhe ke gulla? — What is the basket made of, and what are the pellets, mother?
Bānz ke to dhuti bābu māti ke gulla. — The basket is made of bamboo, and the pellets of earth, my son.
Koni hāt men gulel dai koni hāt men gulla? — In which hand is the *gulel*, and in which the pellets, mother?
Dori hāt men gulel bābu jawni hāt men gulla. — The *gulel* is in the left hand, the pellets in the right, my son.

3

Taina nāmar nāna re nān nāmar nān ho

Māligondi tupak tun bor sāje bindur ho? — Who made the Maligondi gun?
Māligondi tupak tun mistri sāje bindur. — The carpenter made the Maligondi gun.
Teka marra hata tun bor sāje bindur ho? — Who made the stock of teak?
Teka marra hata tun bar-hi sāje bindur. — The carpenter made the stock of teak.
Kabra hāl bakra tun bor sāje bindur ho? — Who made the trigger of the gun?
Kabra hāl bakra tun mistri sāje bindur. — The carpenter made the trigger of the gun.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

222
481

The fermented sap of the sago-palm is a favourite drink

[p. 44 (2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

241
291
301

Chelik of Bayana[1] digging

Plate XII

The Maliya of Phanda spinning rope

[283]

[p. 44 (B)]

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

224 534

Māligondi tupak tun bor payal ūndur ho?	Who holds the Maligondi gun?
Māligondi tupak tun singāl payal ūndur.	Singal holds the Maligondi gun.
Adu bādu patār tun singāl weli ūndur ho.	Singal took the gun to the jungle.
Ihla hur dulhi patār singāl weli ūndur ho.	Singal went to hunt by a spring.
Ghotiya mara daram te bodāl kunjil māta ho.	He found a bison asleep by a ghotiya tree.
Barbara kursi manji singāl udil ūndur ho.	Seeing it Singal prepared to fire.
Jirra barga tikni tun singāl mānde kindur ho.	Singal placed the support for his aim.
Saw sawa kursi manjil singāl dābe kindur ho	Singal fired the gun with care.
Ting tohli tohli lariyo bodāl mutil ūnd ho.	By that shot was the bison killed.
Ringri hāpa linga laya gorhā-wātil ūnd ho.	Linga boy stood like a small brinjal ready to kill it.

4

Are tina nāmur nāna re nāna nāmur nāna na ho tina nāmur O nāna nāmur nāho, tina nāmur nānāho tina nāmur na. Hurre, hurre, hurre

Ho bhālu keto dera re ho kahān ohar dera.	Where is the bear's home, where can it be?
Are bhālu keto dera re ho jhāpi khāle dera.	Under the bushes the bear has its home.
Achchha ohar khāna pina, achchha ohar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Are kodri keto dera re ho, kahān ohar dera.	Where is the deer's home, where can it be?
Kodri ke dera re ho gudri upar dera.	On the low hills the deer has its home.
Achchha ohar khāna pina, achchha ohar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Hurre, hurre, hurre.	

IX. Falconry

223 While cock-fighting is rare in the east and common to the west, hunting with a hawk is known all over eastern Kondagaon, but is rare among the Jhoria Muria and in the west.

Muria boys get the hawks when they are very young and train them carefully. They teach them to catch small chicks, keep mice for them in little bamboo cages and train them by withholding food and then rewarding them with morsels of frog and lizard. They 'hood' them by closing their eyes with feathers thrust through the lids. When mature the birds are able to catch quail, partridge, snipe and sparrows, though it is said that they are not able to kill a wood-pigeon.

A hawk is kept in the verandah of the house perched on a specially made pole round which an old bit of fishing-net is wrapped. It is tied by an ingenious

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

223 arrangement of strings attached to a wooden rod called the *pawala* which keeps them from tangling. This is illustrated in Fig. 11. When a boy is going to take the hawk to hunt, he wears a goatskin finger-glove to protect his hand from being scratched by the claws. He hangs round his neck a little bamboo fish-basket containing frogs and lizards. This is carefully closed with a cloth tied round the mouth. He goes with the hawk sitting either on his hand or on his head, and with his free hand he holds the bough of a tree to beat the undergrowth for birds. Generally two or three boys go out together and when they have started any game they release the hawk from the slip-knot by which it has been tied and throw it into the air with the right hand from behind the shoulder. The hawk flutters wildly for a moment and then darts for its prey. When it catches anything, it sits down perfectly still on the ground. The boys run after it and recover it without difficulty. On hunting days the hawk is kept hungry and is only rewarded after it has made a kill.

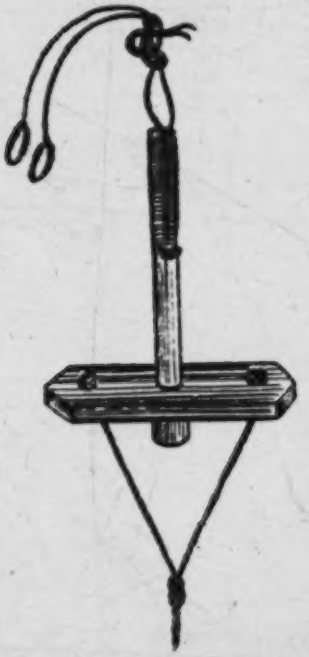


FIG. 11. Elaborate arrangement of strings and a wooden peg attached to the leg of a falcon, intended to prevent the strings from tangling
Length of upright rod 3½"

[524]

A riddle—'He makes a snare for others, but his own feet are caught'—refers to the hovering hawk which appears to have been caught in an invisible snare. There is a saying that an idle man who does no work yet always turns up punctually for food is like 'the vulture who finds it easy enough to eat a dead bullock and the hawk who can always catch a little bird'.

The following Ghotul Pata about Lingo's son, Netturgundi, throws an interesting light on traditional Muria falconry:[1]

539
223

The Song of Netturgundi

Who was that Raja? He was Netturgundi.
He had a hawk. He was wondering what to do.
He took the hawk to hunt; here and there he went.
The hawk sat on his head. He took his gold and silver stick.
He slung the fish-basket behind his back.
So, with his hawk on his head, the Raja went to hunt.

To the Field of the Frogs the Raja took the hawk.
There he hunted, there he got nothing.
He thought 'Now where shall I go?' and went to the Fallow Field.
'I will hunt there; some animals are grazing there.

[1] A hawk plays an important part in the Pardhan tale of Mara Kshattri. Its body was golden and it was fed on ghee and sweets. *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 70ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.'
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill.
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish that live in tanks and flooded fields.

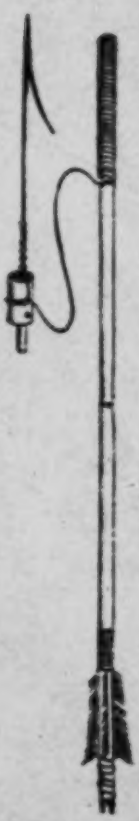
They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *kavangra*, *nâri* (or *hâmi*), *bels* (or *khokni*), *dundum*, *lanse* (or *turu*) and *bigum*.

The gall-bladder of the *bigum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake-bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by filling it with the small kvera grain. They keep this carefully and when it is needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient to drink.

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and

226
227
[524]

worms and a peacock feather is attached to the line as a float. There are riddles about both hook and float. The hook is 'the bullock with the broken horn that drinks the water of twelve villages'; the float is represented as saying to the fish, 'You are eating secretly, but I'll tell brother what you're up to'.



Nets are also used. The *changori* is a net with a very fine mesh which takes at least a year to make. It is weighted with little balls of baked earth or iron and thrown into the water. Other nets are the *jhorli*, the *dingra* and the *sarka*. These are pushed or dragged through the water, or stretched across the narrow part of a stream and the fish beaten into them.

The *mānder* is a net of hemp cord attached to a bamboo trap which is set in rapids and narrow streams. The *kurjār* is a rigid net. Ten bamboos joined at one end radiate outwards and a net is spread over their points. The middle of the net is raised by a cord attached to the top of the trap, and it is then thrust down into the water. The *paina* is the net attached to a triangular bamboo frame which is pushed through the water, the fish being caught in the belly of the net simply by the pressure of the stream. The *chargod* (Plate XIX) is attached to bamboos tied together at the end of a long pole and is dipped into the water.

The *dundka* or *sondri* is a bamboo basket with a wide bottom tapering sharply towards the top with holes in the upper side. It is used (Plate XVIII) in conjunction with the *dandar* (also called *talai* and *bissar*), a long bamboo cylinder measuring about five and a half feet, about two feet wide at the large open end and gradually narrowing: inside is a spiral with bamboo points projecting inwards.[1] The small end is placed in the hole at the side of the *dundka*, and the water drives the fish down the trap and thus into the basket.

The *thāpa* (Halbi) or *utād* (Gondi) is a circular plunge-trap, three feet wide at the bottom. A Chherta song refers to it:

[539]

FIG. 11. Arrow with detachable head, used for shooting fish
Length of shaft 21'

Thāpa re thāpa, māchh māriya thāpa,	O trap, trap, fish-killing trap,
Ye gāon cho'eka manks, bāte nawan chāpa.	Take the boys of this village and press them down.

The *chadiya* is a bamboo scoop two-and-a-half feet long leading into a pocket extending another one-and-a-half feet. It is placed in a field at some point where the water escapes, and catches crabs, frogs and little fish. 'In the middle of the field Gango's son is weeping *chir chir*.' This scoop may some-

[1] This trap resembles the Fenland eel-trap used in the Severn near Worcester. It is known as a grig in Fenland, and is made of split osiers. In Worcester the narrow end is called the starling. It has two canes of pointed sticks called inchins in Worcester and chabs in Fenland. *Chair* is an old word for the narrow part of a river.—See *Man*, 1934, p. 178 and 1936, p. 179.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long.

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Naldnek horinta muruus tagat ke peshinta*: It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'.

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes.

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden.

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first.

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2]

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election

[1] R. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Koya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 52.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of ghotul leaders; it is distributed when a boy or girl leaves the ghotul after marriage; it is a convenient and compendious means of paying a fine. The chelik offer it to their drums before a wedding, and drink it in honour of Lingo at the end of the Pus Kolang dance.

FIG. 13. Brass *orhi* used for ladling liquor
Length 8"-9"

This homely drink, so intimately connected with every aspect of their lives, so accessible to the forest-dwellers, so readily and cheaply prepared, may not be distilled by the Muria in Bastar or by the aboriginals anywhere. Its profits must be divided between the State and the middleman. Home-distillation is everywhere forbidden, and the privilege of the manufacture and sale of the spirit is farmed out to contractors in open auction. The business has thus passed into the hands of the most degenerate type of Hindu and Mussalman adventurer, for few aboriginals have either the means or the enterprise to compete with the sophisticated aggression of the outside world in the open market. These adventurers rob both the aboriginals and the State. They dilute the spirit; they put soda in it to cover the fact of their tampering; they make false returns; they use filthy water in unclean pots;[1] their shops are centres of the most degraded type of alien immigrant into tribal territory.

When the National Congress came into power in 1938, they declared that they would not apply their Prohibition laws to Europeans or aboriginals. It would have been more consistent had they allowed the aboriginal to distil his own liquor and had thus ceased to draw revenue from his drinking habits. The real evil of the present system is not that the aboriginal gets drunk, but that in order to get his liquor he is forced into contact with the worst type of alien and outsider.

In this respect conditions in Bastar are better than in many other parts of India. The Excise Department is efficient and understanding; the State controls the mahua trade, but allows the aboriginal great freedom in the use of toddy and salphi. But nothing can atone for the evil of depriving a primitive people of a natural right.

However, once that has been done, the arrangements in Bastar are as good as can be imagined. The spirit is cheap, only two annas a bottle,[2] and passes are freely granted to the Muria and Maria to purchase whatever is needed for ceremonial and social occasions. As a result there appears to be very little illicit distillation in either Kondagaon or Narayanpur. The figures of prosecutions for the five years, 1937-41, are these:

[1] The riddle 'Man and wife join in the same lane', to which the answer is 'The two pipes of the still', probably hints at the dirt of the Kalar's out-still.
[2] This was in 1941.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

674

Tahsil	Population in 1941	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	Total
Kondagaon ..	111,428	3	1	1	..	6	11
Narayanpur ..	62,305	13	..	2	..	3	18
Jagdalpur ..	236,931	16	4	14	5	26	65
Dantewara ..	90,345	58	20	35	10	20	143
Bijapur ..	25,587	4	17	29	18	23	91

Such a table does not, of course, mean quite what it says. An increase in the number of cases detected may imply greater zeal on the part of the Excise and Police staff rather than an outbreak of illicit distillation. Moreover, as the Excise Officer writes to me, 'The number of cases detected represents only a small fraction of those actually occurring, especially in the south of the State'.

Yet even so, the contrast between the Muria of the north and the more civilized Muria of Jagdalpur and the Bison-horn Maria of Dantewara and Bijapur is striking. In the ghotul, the peace-loving Muria are taught to observe the laws.

On the other hand, the incidence of the consumption of mahua spirit in 1942 was greater in the Narayanpur Tahsil than anywhere in Bastar. There is only one way of calculating this, and that is on the basis of the licence fees, which are in turn based on the presumed out-turn of the still; such figures cannot be altogether reliable, but they give at least some indication, as the following table will show:

273

Tahsil	Population in 1941	Presumed out-turn in gallons	Consumption per 100 of the population in proof gallons
Kondagaon ..	111,428	36,137	32·43
Narayanpur ..	62,305	36,700	58·90
Jagdalpur ..	236,931	63,581	26·84
Dantewara ..	90,345	42,000	46·48
Bijapur ..	25,587	11,275	44·06
Sukma Zamindari	47,914	24,200	50·51

The Muria recognize the danger of drinking to excess, and indeed they have few drunkards. 'Liquor is dangerous, even a wise woman falls through drinking.' 'An out-still in the village—quarrels in the ghotul.' But it is irresistible. 'At first it tastes nasty, but afterwards you know it for the sweetest thing on earth. You would sell everything to get it.' There is a song about drunkenness:

273
539

Gond bond bhaisa pond
Lai hadri halin pond,
Kalār kalārin chuniya chor,
Ghar ghar mangai burga jor.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

273 This seems to mean, 'When drunk a Gond is like the hind-quarters of a buffalo, which you can cut with a knife but nothing happens. The Kalar and his
539 wife are the thieves of the liquor-pots and so they have to beg from door to door for beef-soup.' The song reveals the usual scorn for and unpopularity of the Kalar.

276 The Muria do not approve of drugs. 'We will seduce the Kalar's daughter (mahua spirit), but we won't even look at the Raja's sister (opium).' They do not drink *gānja* or *bhāng*—'those are for the Hindus'—though Lingo is said to have distributed *gānja* to chelik and motiari in the ghotul he founded. Kotla, an old Muria of Kuntpadar, recalled what happened to him when he drank *gānja* as a chelik. 'Once as I was ploughing my field, I took off my cloth and put it under a tree, where a cow found and ate it. In the evening I felt cold and took a lot of *gānja* to warm myself. I got very drunk and shouted in the ghotul that I was going to die. That night I took several motiari and they were all angry with me. Next morning I felt very ashamed and have never taken *gānja* or even tobacco since.'

272 The Muria sometimes make what is called *surem*, a concoction of mahua flowers which have been boiled in water again and again, sometimes with slices of mango added. They occasionally tap the date palm and drink its sweet heavy juice. In the east and south of the ghotul country, they
273 occasionally make the landa rice-beer so beloved of the Bison-horn Maria.

Landa, which tastes like an imaginary mixture of dynamite and Sanatogen, is the most potent intoxicant in Bastar. It is also the most deceptive. It does not produce its effect at once. The thick tasty fluid slips down the throat, and the drinker deceives himself into thinking he is having a good meal; before he knows what has happened he is dangerously drunk, and he remains drunk for a long time. Not a few of the homicidal crimes of the Bison-horn Maria are due to or are at least occasioned by the drinking of landa.[1]

To the Hill Maria, landa is *polo*, or taboo, and the Jhoria and northern Muria under Maria influence do not make it. Its use appears to be confined to the Muria of the centre, east and south. It is made by mixing kosra or rice and mandia. The rice or kosra is first soaked in water, then dried and ground in an ordinary hand-mill. The resulting flour is mixed with hot water into a paste. A woman places a large earthenware pot full of boiling water on the fire and fixes an inverted conical basket (called the *jib*) over its mouth. She fills this with the paste and steams it for about a quarter of an hour and then puts it aside.

Previously the mandia grain has been soaked in water, set aside for two or three days till it has sprouted and then dried and ground. The woman pours some of it into a very large pot, puts the rice paste above it, and adds more mandia flour in the proportion of one part of mandia to two of rice or kosra. She then fills the pot up with cold water and puts it aside in a corner of the room. Here it stands for five or six days; when it is seen to be obviously fermenting and there is a bitter smell, they know it is ready.

The Muria do not use landa for ritual purposes; it is made by just those Muria who do not erect memorial menhirs to their dead—which is the time when the Bison-horn Maria chiefly use it ceremonially. The Muria take it at marriages and funerals; they give it to their labourers at seed-time or harvest; it is generally regarded as a sort of supplementary drink to be used when the supply of mahua spirit or salphi juice is insufficient.

[1] Elwin, *Maria Murder and Suicide*, pp. 135ff.

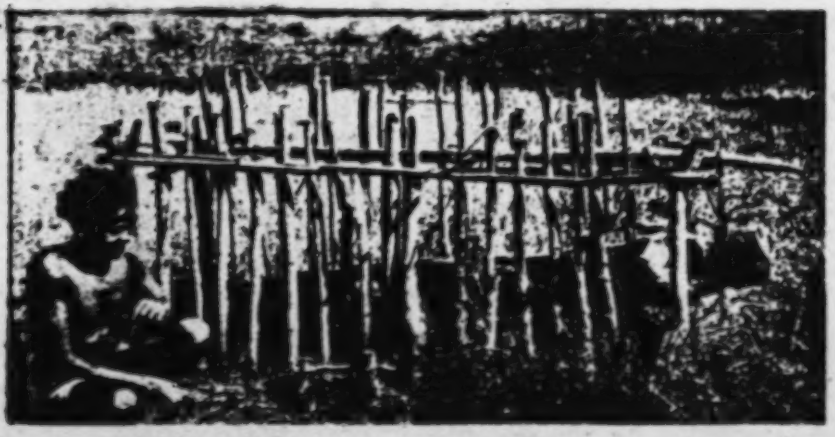
Plate XIII

516
252

Ehelik of Masora roasting a rat

A porcupine trap near Lohator

224



[p. 52(N)]

223
231

Plate XIV

The falconer

[p. 52 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

XII. The Sago-Palm

273 137 Another very popular drink is the juice of the sago-palm, and since the Muria have developed many legends round it I will give the subject a section of its own.[1]

The sago-palm (*Caryota urens*, Linn.), which is known as *gorga marra* in Gondi and as *salpi rukh* in Halbi, is widely distributed over the greater part of the State. It is an erect monoecious tree, with axillary spadices, which sometimes grows to the height of sixty or eighty feet. Its long bipinnate leaves with their fish-tail ends are sometimes twenty feet long. The aboriginals, whether Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria or Muria,[2] regard the trees primarily as a source of liquor, though they use the inner tissues of the stem and the wood for other purposes. The popularity of the tree is shown in the riddle, [524] 'Above sits the parrot, below is the thrashing-floor', suggesting that under the beautiful sago-palm a great crowd of people gather, and in such songs as '*Waliya wāto gorga ale māmdle*—O uncle, the sago-palms are everywhere you go'. Unlike mahua spirit, however, salphi juice is not usually used in worship or on other ceremonial occasions.[3] It is rather a drink for one's private and friendly hours, though it may often supplement a failing supply of mahua at a marriage or funeral.

824 538 As always, legends and stories gather about anything that is intimately connected with the life of the people. There are several different accounts of the origin of the sago-palm, but all agree in connecting it with youth and gaiety. It came into being when maidens danced together or when boys pursued their loves. In the north of the State the most common legend traces its origin to an expedition of boys and girls from the house of Bhagávan, which came down to earth to dance and bathe.[4] One such party came to Chikhli village on the northernmost plateau of the State and after bathing, the girls left behind the cowrie ornaments of their hair. These ornaments are very popular among the motiari; sometimes a mass of cowries covers the whole of the back of their heads. When the girls found they had lost their ornaments they were angry and cursed the cowries saying, 'Now turn into sago-palms and we will always live with you and will never lose you again.' For this reason it is said that the cowrie is the tuft of feathers that fell from Lingo's turban. Yet again it is said that the tree was a feather stuck in the hair of a motiari which fell off as she was going to Penjori village to dance the Diwali dances, and turned into a tree when she got angry with it. But everywhere it is agreed that the tree springs up in all those places where the girls either from the house of Bhagavan or from some earthly ghotul used to go to dance. In the forests above the Raughat and all along the northern plateau there are a great many of these trees and these were the very parts where the girls went for their dancing in the dawn of the world.

There are, however, some other versions of the origin of the palm. In Mule village the Muria say that when the seven salphi maidens (Gorga Kanyang) were born they only had one placenta between them. This was cut off and

[1] For a fuller account see my article 'The Sago-Palm in Bastar State', *JRAS. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII (N.S. 1942), pp. 69–78.

[2] Grigson is not quite correct in saying that Hill and Bison-horn Maria 'almost alone in Bastar use salphi liquor'.—Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. The Muria of the north are among the most enthusiastic drinkers of salphi juice in the whole State.

[3] According to Thurston, the fermented juice is used ceremonially at marriages and festivals by the Poroja and Savara.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 216, 322.

[4] The seven heavenly damsels who came down to dance and bathe on earth is a common motif in Indian folk-tales. See Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 100.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

buried by their mother. Almost immediately the seven sisters ran away, and when the mother could not find them, she went to the place where the placenta was buried and let the milk from her breasts fall upon it. As the days went by there gradually grew up from the placenta a tree which was full of milk. This was the sago-palm that was born from milk and always gives milk.' There is a riddle—'Milk comes from the horns of the buffalo'.

Another story comes from Pharasgaon. Long ago there were eleven brothers and one day as they went hunting in the jungle they grew very thirsty. They came to a group of palm trees and rested in their shade. The youngest brother looked up at the tree and said, 'This is a very fine tree. Surely there is water hidden in its branches! I can see a pot tied there. Who can climb up and get it?' Each of the brothers tried to climb the tree and failed, for when they were nearly at the top they saw that the pot was full of blood. But the youngest boy made a rope of siari fibre and climbed up and when he looked in the pot the juice appeared to him as milk. He brought it down and they all drank of it. The ten elder brothers fell senseless but the youngest boy was intoxicated with pleasure. But he grew afraid thinking that his brothers would die. Then his god said to him, 'Offer a pig to the Gorga Kanyang and they will recover'. He sacrificed a pig and his brothers sat up again.

This is the origin of the sacrifices that are made to the tree before it is tapped. It is believed that if no offerings are made the juice turns into blood and makes the people ill. If offerings are withheld for a long time, the tree dries up.

In the Chota Dongar area, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar and the Muria of their immediate neighbourhood trace the palm to Tallur Muttai or Mother Earth herself. At the beginning of the world, Tallur Muttai came with Kadrengal (whom some call her brother and some her husband) to the forest of Bastar. Kadrengal was innocent of sexual desire, and so Tallur Muttai created sago-palms with the hope that their juice would excite him. When Kadrengal first went to tap the trees, he tied a thread from the cut peduncle down to a hole which he dug below, but the wind blew it to and fro and the juice was scattered. Then Tallur Muttai taught him how to tie a gourd to catch the juice and place a leaf to guide it safely. Kadrengal drank a great quantity; desire came to him; and he went to Tallur Muttai.

But the Hill Maria of Jharagaon and Nalnar say that the palms originated when the seven Kanyang, daughters of Bhagavan, came down to Singardip (the world) to bathe. They combed their hair, and wherever their hairs fell the trees sprang up. They give the names of three of the Maidens of the sago-palm—Fuse Kanyang, Ganganangi Kanyang and Kondakalbuli Kanyang.

The palms are carefully guarded. Sometimes a large bamboo mat is tied round the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree.

This is the method of extracting the juice. The ends of the flowering spadices are cut and hollow bamboos, gourds or earthen pots are fixed where they can catch the flow of sap. Bamboos or gourds are simply tied to the tree, but a pot may be fixed in position with a couple of poles below it tied round the trunk and fixed together supported by a string tied to a bough above. The pot is placed inside a basket and its mouth tied to the spadix, to the end

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of which a folded leaf of the date palm is attached to ensure that the juice trickles down into the pot. A small gourd with a hole at either end is kept in the pot, which is finally protected with a bamboo cover to guard it from wind and birds.

When the climber has reached the pot, he removes the leaf and scrapes the end of the cut spadix with a knife that is kept among the branches. Sometimes he rubs it with a little marking-nut juice. Then he removes the sap from the pot and puts it in a gourd tied round his waist. Sometimes if the tree is very high, he lowers this gourd down to the ground with a cord. Then he replaces the leaf at the end of the spadix, puts the cover over the pot and descends.

There are various rules and customs about the use of the juice. It is not considered good to drink it when it is too sweet, as it has a laxative effect. For this reason a little of the old juice is always left in the pot to ferment it. To increase its power a little of the root of the danbaher tree is added. When the weather is cloudy it is considered that it will not be good. The juice of a newly tapped tree should not be given to a pregnant woman or she may abort. In fact, at the beginning, when a new tree is tapped only men drink. The Hill Maria do not give the juice at any time to a woman in her menstrual period.

There is a curious idea that the sago-palm itself is subject to a menstrual period.[1] Every month there is a space of two or three days during which the juice does not flow properly and it is not considered safe at this time to drink even what little there is. So, too, for the first week or so after a new tree is tapped the juice should be avoided, for it is then, they say, like semen. At Phunder, the Muria said that the end of the tree's menstrual period is indicated by the presence of a lotus leaf in the pot.

In some villages, the Muria believe that two Kanyang visit the palms. One is Jal Kanyang, and is a motiari; the other, Kando Kanyang, is regarded with characteristic inconsistency as a chelik. When Kando Kanyang comes to play in a tree, the juice is scanty but good; when Jal Kanyang comes, the juice flows like a river but it is less potent. Sometimes then a little sand and fish are found in the pot.

This belief in the fish that get into the pot is widespread. Once in the days of Chaitu Gaita of Alor, a chelik climbed a sago-palm and found two *lara* fish and some sand at the bottom of the gourd. At Palli I was told that such fish were 'sometimes caught by the Salphi Maiden and taken up into the tree'. I have recorded the same idea among the Hill Maria.[2]

When a tree is tapped for the first time offerings are made to the Gorga Kanyang. In some villages a hollow bamboo full of water is brought from a stream and leant against the foot of the palm. It is believed that a Kanyang lives in this water and probably there is an idea that the tree will give as much juice as there is water in the bamboo. In order to improve the flow of juice the villagers sometimes promise the Gorga Kanyang a pig or a chicken.

At Admar on the day they first tapped a new tree the village Gaita, followed by all the villagers, came to its foot. With red and black powder he made a row of three circles, inside each of which he drew a cross. Rice was piled on these crosses and [illegible] leaf-cups full of salphi juice were placed by them. One pile of rice was for the Gorga Kanyang, one for Kando Kanyang, and one for

[1] This idea is widespread: I have found it among Juang, Kond, Gadaba, Bondo and, in Bastar, among the Bison-horn Maria.

[2] Compare S. L. Hora, 'Fauna of Fishes in India', *JRASB.*, Vol. XXIX (1933), pp. 93ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Mother Earth. The Gaita offered eggs and chickens, first making the chickens eat the rice and then killing them. The juice in the leaf-cups was offered to the Earth Mother and the Kanyang and then everyone drank a little. After this the owner was free to tap the tree in the ordinary way.

Failure of the sago-palm may be due either to black magic and witchcraft or to the hostility of one of the Gorga Kanyang. The Kanyang, if she is not happy in a particular village, may twist the branches at the top of the tree and cause them to wither. It is generally believed that the tree gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul. Then she marries and the juice ceases to flow. The motiari of the palm tree is afraid of marrying too soon. If we touch the tree with a cloth yellowed by haldi it will stop giving juice till the new shoots come, for the shadow of haldi (that is, of marriage) is upon it.'

For gonorrhoea, a very rare disaster among these aboriginals, the sufferer stands below holding a leaf-cup into which a friend pours a little of the juice from the top of the tree. The patient offers a few drops to the Gorga Kanyang and then drinks it without allowing it to touch the ground.

The wood of the palm is not usually used for building in Bastar but the Hill Maria make their *tarang* drums out of its hollow dried-up trunk. The Muria also make combs and drum-sticks out of the dry wood. Some of the Muria in the Abujhmar foothills make necklaces of the fibre. The leaves are often used as hair-ornaments or to decorate the village dormitories. Sometimes the flowers are pounded into flour, mixed with water and drunk as a sort of gruel. When it is evident that the tree will give no more juice, it is cut down and the pith is removed. This is pounded into a sort of flour and steamed in the usual way into cakes which are popular eaten with honey or sugar. This practice is common across the whole of the sago-palm country. I have found it among Hill Maria, Bondo, Gadaba, and Juang and it has been recorded for the Kadir and Khasi.[1]

The salphi juice is either brought back to the house and stored there until by fermentation it becomes much more intoxicating than in its fresh condition or it is drunk immediately at the foot of the tree. Little groups of people, generally men, go out to the trees, taking with them roasted crabs or frogs, little bits of chicken, various kinds of chutney, carefully wrapped in leaf-cups. The liquor is drunk from leaves, generally simply folded to make a sort of cup, and it is sometimes poured direct into the mouth. Many delightful hours are thus spent by the villagers out among the woods or on the hills.

When a tree is specially planted by seeds or cuttings it is very carefully tended. A fence of wood is built round it and it is watered regularly. Sometimes a tree is associated with the memory of a particular person. In Kanhargaon, a village in the Chota Dongar area, a Muria planted salphi and mango trees fifty years ago and they still preserve his memory. When the people go in the evening to drink the juice, they offer a few drops in the name of Talur Muttai and Kadrengal to the sago-palm and a few drops in the name of the dead man who planted the trees to the mango, 'so that as we drink you can drink also'.

Generally speaking the tree belongs to the man in whose field or garden it is growing. Where the trees are out in the jungle, or standing in the common land of the village, disputes sometimes arise. The headman or the more influential priests generally claim these trees as their own, but there is also a

[1] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 171.; P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), p. 52. See also Grigson, op. cit., p. 131.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

custom that the man who goes to the trouble of tapping the tree, protecting it with thorns, and making a bamboo ladder, has a right over it, especially when it is growing far away in the forest. The trees are not taxed but the villagers are not allowed to sell the juice. Disputes simply arise over the right to take the liquor for personal use.

The salphi juice, however, is not generally so intoxicating as to cause quarrels in the same degree as landa rice-beer or mahua spirit. Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual* (par. 263) gives some account of the comparative alcoholic strengths of these drinks. 'The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number of tests made with toddy from all parts of the Madras Presidency were:

		Percentage by Volume
Coconut ..	.. 85·7° U.P.	8·1
Palmyra ..	.. 90·8° U.P.	5·2
Date ..	.. 91·4° U.P.	4·9
Sago ..	.. 89·6° U.P.	5·9

Toddy exposed for sale in Bengal in 1909 was found generally to range in alcoholic strength from about 93° to 94° U.P. When reasonably fresh it has a food value somewhat comparable with that of well-made malt beer.' The average strength of landa rice-beer may be taken at about 85° U.P. (8·6% by volume). Mahua spirit is much stronger—*rasi* may be sold at strengths of 50° to 70° U.P. and *phuli* of 5° to 35° U.P. The average for *rasi* is 60° U.P. (21·8% by volume) and for *phuli* 25° U.P. (42·8%).

XIII

With all these varied economic and social activities how far do chelik and motiari meet one another during the day? Does tribal custom allow them to share the same tasks or are the functions of men and women sharply differentiated?

The girls, of course, have the major part of the house-work to see to. They cook, bring water, clean the buildings with cow-dung and whitewash, husk the grain, grind wheat or spices. They generally make the *marai* mats, tie grass into brooms, prepare leaf-plates and cups. In the house a woman must not climb on the roof and she must not take grain out of the dhusir grain-bin, although it may only be removed at her command. A motiari before the menarche may go into the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept, but not afterwards—for she is going to join another clan and has no part with these ancestors; her spirit will mingle with those of her husband's family.

The chelik, on the other hand, have comparatively little to do in the house. They may cook and bring water when the womenfolk are in their periods; they have the business of erecting the framework of the building which the girls will later plaster with mud, and they thatch the roof.

But their main work is outside. In male hands is all the business of the fields and forest. They make and use the ploughs; they cut wood for fuel or cultivation; they embank the fields; they tend the cattle, make and drive their carts; they go to hunt and fish; they watch the crops and thrash and winnow them.

Yet there remain many chances for sharing of labour between chelik and motiari. A boy does not always see his motiari in the dark. Both can repair

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Muria

883 462 the embankment of a field, both can join in spreading brushwood over a clearing.

883 462 784 A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. But she must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife, or thrust the plunge-traps into the water.

[412]

FIG. 14. *Bawas* or *talli* used for cutting up meat and planing wood
Length of upright 9"

A motiari, once she is mature, must not sleep on a machan to watch the fields. She must never go with a boy to sleep there—if she does a tiger will shake it and perhaps kill them both. In some villages, she may cow-dung the thrashing-floor, provided it is of her own clan, but she cannot thrash with her feet, or winnow the grain from a fan though she may do it with her hands. She must not sow seeds of rice or millet, though she does sometimes sow beans and vegetables.

883 462 The motiari gather mahua flowers with the boys; they collect myrabolams, and extract oil. Very important, they take food to the boys while they are working in the fields. This is a constant motive of romance in folk-tales.

883 The motiari may attend a funeral and most of the festivals. At the New Eating ceremonies they prepare the plates and cups for the feast, and are eager spectators of the ceremonies. They dance at most festivals with the boys. But I know of no Muria women Siraha-mediums or Gunia-diviners, though these are not unknown in Chhattisgarh. I am told, however, that there is a female Siraha of Pendrawandin in Gudabera, and there is a tradition that in former times it was the women who sacrificed to the gods. 'In those days, they used to cut the tail instead of the head and the bird or animal instead of dying would escape. Men soon got annoyed at this and said, "You women do not know how to do it; from now we will sacrifice". Men then began to cut off the heads of the birds and animals and the sacrifices were complete. This is why women do not eat the head of any bird or animal offered to the gods. They said to their husbands, "Now the head is yours, ours is the tail".'

[791] [784]

462 784 There are not many absolute taboos. A man must not husk grain or grind it. He must not wash women's clothes or wear them—except at night. Girls must not wear boys' turbans and clothes except on ceremonial occasions.

883 On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER THREE

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

I. The Clan System

AN elaborate discussion of the clan system of the Muria would be out of place and not very profitable, for it is impossible to bring any kind of order out of the confusion into which that system has fallen in modern times. But some account of the clans and their rules must be given, for they are of real importance to the children in the ghotul and a breach of the clan-rules may merit not only the vengeance of the Departed but severe punishment from the leaders of the ghotul and of the tribe. The clans regulate the absorbing question of marriage and the still more absorbing relationships of chelik and motiari. Their distribution directs to some extent the annual dancing expeditions. The clan festivals are among the most exciting and colourful incidents in the ghotul's life.

I will therefore briefly outline the clan system—though it must be remembered that it is not really a system—and I will then give a few stories about the origin of these clans and finally an account of the rules and customs that are observed.

The clan system of the Muria is now greatly confused. In the old days it seems probable that the inhabited territory of north Bastar was divided up among the different clans of Maria and Muria, and each had its own particular *bhum* or clan area. In each *bhum* there was a spiritual capital called the *pen-rawar* or *pen-kara*. Here lived the clan-god or Anga with the clan-priest to tend him and mediate between him and his kinsmen. Here they came for the chief festivals of the Anga; here they brought their dead and erected their menhirs; here they gathered for the special panchayat that discussed offences against the clan laws.

Traces of this organization exist, but the increase of population, the occupation of vast new tracts of land, the scattering of the clansmen in all directions has destroyed the clear pattern of former days. Many Muria have never visited their *pen-rawar*, many are living in *bhum* that really belong to other clans, most clans have *bhum* rights in villages that are widely apart. There are no longer compact clan areas, and in every village—though each is regarded as the *bhum* of some special clan—there live members of several other clans.

It was this fact, of course, that made the ghotul, in its Muria form, possible. Among the Hill Maria, where the old one-clan-to-one-village system still survives,[1] girls are not allowed to share the dormitory with the boys because of the obvious danger of clan incest.

The Muria, then, preserve the old traditions but in a confused and disorderly way. Many clans have more than one *pen-rawar* and several gods. The Naitami clan, for example, has spiritual headquarters at Kharkagaon, Kabonga, Chingnar and Sirpur; the Poyami clan worships Samrath Dokara—an Anga—at Sirsi, as well as Budha Pen at Lanjora and Chingnar. The Dhurwa clan has a clan-god, Son Kuar, at Metawand and another, Budha Dokara—an Anga—at Kharkagaon. The Sori clan worships Budha Pen at Chingnar, Kara Hurra at Garanji and Lalit Kuar at Gorma.

In each case, however, there is one ancient *pen-rawar*, to which the more orthodox elders of the tribe go when they can and where they will have their

[1] See Grigson, op. cit., pp. 236ff.

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Muria

614 menhirs erected. This belief in the clan-*bhum*, whether original or adopted as a result of immigration and settlement, is still sufficiently alive to excite serious quarrels. It was a dispute over the rights to a clan-*bhum* that began the deadly feud between the sorcerer Singlu and the people of Almer.[1] Most of the inhabitants of Almer belong to the Kaudo clan (which has its *pen-ravar* at Kharkagaon) and they consider that the place is Kaudo-*bhum* since they first settled there. But Singlu is a Karanga. One day he said to the Kaudo priest, 'Let me erect memorial stones in your village; then my ancestors will live here and will help me and my family'. But the priest pointed out that the headquarters of the Karanga clan was at Kokori. 'If you bring your ancestors to this village, our gods will be neglected,' he said and refused to give him any *bhum*.

There was a similar conflict at Bandopal. The *bhum* here also belongs to the Kaudo clan which has erected a number of menhirs. Members of the Gaude clan, which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kaudo, demanded a share of the *bhum*, probably because it was more convenient for them than to go to Kharkagaon. After many quarrels and a long dispute, the Kaudo people agreed to let the Gaude clan erect its menhirs within their *bhum* territory, and they even made a Gaude Gaita assistant to the chief Kaudo Bhum-Gaita (priest of the soil). But many of the Kaudo clansmen objected to this and stopped erecting menhirs at Bandopal, going instead to Kharkagaon (where indeed they ought always to have gone). In the end the Gaude people decided to give up erecting menhirs at all because of the expense, and gave back the land to the Kaudo clan.

615 The clans fall roughly into five phratries, which are generally called by the Hindi word for 'race', *vans*. There is the Nagvans or Serpent Race, which includes a number of brother-clans, most of which have the cobra as their totem and cannot marry among themselves; the Kachhimvans or the Tortoise Race, the Bakravans or the Goat Race, the Baghvans or the Tiger Race and the Bodmiṅkvans or the Fish Race.

All the clans within one phratry are *dādābhai*, or brothers, to one another, and all the members of each clan are *dādābhai* to each other. The word used to describe the relation of a clan into which you can marry your daughter is *akomāma*, a combination of the words *ako*, which means a man's mother's father, daughter's son and daughter's daughter (all of whom will belong to a different clan in a different phratry) and *māma*, which means a man's mother's brother, his father-in-law and his wife's brother's son (who will again, of course, be members of different clans).

[582 935] A chelik or motiari, therefore, who is seeking either amorous adventure or permanent domestic relationship, has to turn to members of the *akomāma* clans. Fortunately, owing to the wide distribution of the population, there are nearly always members of such clans in one's own ghotul or near at hand.

614 Before going on to describe the origin of the clans and the special rules that govern them, I will give in tabulated form a list of clans with their totems. It is not worth while adding to this an account of the *bhum* territory as this is too scattered and disorganized; the same is true of the clan-gods and *pen-ravar*.

[615] It will be noticed that in addition to the phratry totem each clan has its own totem which is sometimes different. The Sori clan has three different totems.

[1] See p. 204.

911

Plate XV

Chelé with bow and arrow

Returning from the ceremonial hunt

[p.60(1)]

291
301

Two motiari from Kajur

Plate XVI

The Baiga of the Bhanpuri ghotul

[P. 60(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

CLAN	TOTEM	CLAN	TOTEM
	The Nag (Cobra) Phratry		
Buyi	Bullock	Maravi	Goat
Dhurwa	Goat	Kassi Maravi	Kassi tree
Duga	Cobra	Etikal Maravi	She-goat
Kalo	Cobra	Nei Nuroti	Dog
Karanga	Wild buffalo	Nuroti	Cobra
Kaudo	Goat and horse	Partabi	Goat
	The Kachhim (Tortoise) Phratry		
Kawachi	Tortoise	Parchapi	Tortoise
Komra	Tortoise	Poyami	Tortoise
Markami	Tortoise	Tekami	Tortoise
Naitami	Tortoise and dog		
	The Bakra (Goat) Phratry		
Gaude	Goat	Ori	Goat
Karhami	Goat	Uika	Kassi tree
Komra	Goat	Wadde	Goat and kassi tree
Kunjami	Goat		
	The Bagh (Tiger) Phratry		
Sori	Tiger, buffalo and bod fish		
Wadder	Buffalo		
	The Bodmink (Fish) Phratry		
Halami	Bod fish	Kuhrami	Kassi tree
Hurpundi	Bod fish	Kumoti	Kumot bird
Kachlami	Kassi tree	Usendi [1]	Usi bird

I have somewhat arbitrarily divided the clans into these five phratries, though we must not suppose that this is how the Muria usually thinks of them. In each area he is only concerned with the relatively small number of clans in his own neighbourhood. When Dhanuram, my Usendi assistant from north-west Narayanpur, went to Kondagaon Tahsil, the Kuhrami and other related clans did not recognize him as one of themselves, for they had never heard of the Usendi—which is a great clan of the Abujhmar and north-west Bastar.

[1] Russell and Hiralal put the Usendi clan in the Kachhimvans. Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 65.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

There are other clans which I have not been able to fit into the scheme of phratries—the Hurra clan with its clan-god Lingo Mudial at Semurgaon, the Karati with its *bium* at Phunder, the Vetti which has the lizard as its totem and the Kodovetti which has the mongoose. These, of course, fit into the scheme of *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relationships of their own neighbourhood.

FIG. 13. Decorated Muria knife
Length 1' 5"

There are not many songs about the clans. I give one Jhoria Pata from Sirpuri.

Those who kindle fire in the field
are boys of the Uika clan.
How strong the Uika boys are!
Those who make a hearth with brinjals from the Panara's house are boys of the Maravi clan.
Those who sit on a gate and call it a horse are boys of the Maravi clan.
How strong the Maravi boys are!
Those who build a hearth of pig's droppings are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who sit to clean their teeth with a twig are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!
Those who blow the buffalo horn are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who throw fine rice on the road are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CLANS

Many of the clans derive their origin from some historic journey in the course of which a river had to be crossed. Others have local and special reasons for their origin.

This legend of crossing a river is known throughout central India. Many Gond, Baiga and Agaria trace their clans and the attachment of those clans to certain totems from this.[1] In Muria mythology we are sometimes told

[1] Compare, for such tales in the Central Provinces alone, Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 61ff.; Grigson, op. cit., p. 241; C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919), Vol. II, pp. 88.; Elwin, *The Agaria*, p. 75; M. P. Buradkar, 'Totemism among the Gonds', *Man in India*, Vol. XX (1940), pp. 120 and 277f.; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 77 (the Gond emigrating from Phuljhar cross the Gondki river in flood).

that this first great journey was the coming of Lingo with his brothers to the earth. This is the Alor version of the tale.

> At the beginning of the world, after Lingo and his brothers had put the earth in order, heaping up a mountain here and hollowing out a river there, the earth began to weep crying, 'There is no one to serve or worship me'. But Lingo and his brothers said, 'Do not distress yourself, we will go to find a priest for you'.
>
> Then Lingo took his brothers to Lanjhi and Dhamda. In Lanjhi Raja Naitam was living. He had seven sons and seven daughters. Lingo came to them and said, 'The earth is ready in the Middle World and we have come to take you there'. When they heard that, Raja Naitam and Raja Markam with their sons and daughters and their subjects, Hori, Kawachi, Poyami, Kuhrami and Kando, set out with Lingo and his brothers to the Middle World. Raja Naitam and Raja Markam had many possessions and they travelled more slowly, lagging behind the others.
>
> After a time they came to a great river. Lingo and his brothers said to themselves, 'We are gods and can cross without difficulty, but how are these human beings to get over?' On the bank tall grass was growing and Lingo and his brothers made it into a rope and stretched it across the river. The subjects clung to the rope and got across, but they were jealous of the two Rajas who were coming behind and, once they were safely on the far bank, they cut the rope. Then Raja Markam and Raja Naitam not knowing that the grass was cut began to cross, but under their weight the rope went down and they sank up to their necks in the middle of the river and stood there weeping. The *dandai* fish, who is the king of all the creatures that live in water, heard the sound and sent a tortoise to save them, and since then the Markami and Naitami honour the tortoise as their god.
>
> At last the whole party reached the Middle World. Raja Naitam and Raja Markam had brought their cattle with them, and they offered a black calf to Mother Earth and pleased her greatly. These are the old priests of the Earth. All the gods have come from Lanjhi-Dhamda except Danteshwari and Maoli, who came from Warangal.

There are endless versions of this tale. In Lanjora a member of the Naitami clan said that,

> At the beginning of the world a brother and sister on their way to a certain village came to a great river. The sister went ahead and reached the other side. Then a flood came down and the boy was left behind. Each wept on opposite sides of the stream. Then came a tortoise and asked the boy why he was weeping. When he told his story, it took him on its back and began to swim across. Half way across, the tortoise sank, but as the boy was drowning a dog came from the far bank where the sister was standing and swam out to him. He caught the dog's tail and was dragged to safety.

This story obviously attempts to explain how it is that the Naitami clan, which is named after the dog (*nai* is the Gondi word for dog) yet honours the tortoise as its totem. Many Naitami, however, have a special reverence for the dog as well.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

539
614

Another very common variation of the legend is that told by the Hirko clan:

> When the first twelve brothers came to Bastar from Warangal, they came to a great river and decided to have their midday meal before crossing. Six of the brothers said, 'The river may flood; let us eat our food quickly' and they mixed their rice with water, ate it and went ahead. The other six mixed ghee in the rice instead of water and it took a long time to cook. As they were waiting for it to be ready the river came down in flood and, unable to cross, they sat on the bank and wept. Then came a tortoise and asked them what was the matter. When they told their story, the tortoise said, 'Will you worship me and never eat my people if I take you over?' They swore to do so and the tortoise carried them across on its back, and ever since these six brothers honour it as Bara Pen. In Dongar, Bara Pen used to go from place to place in the form of a tortoise.

Other clans are connected with the bod fish.[1] Members of the Halami clan at Gorma described how,

> There was a great tank in the jungle and below it was a village. The people of that village thought that if the banks were to break they would all be drowned and they decided to make a channel to carry the water away in another direction. Hearing this Kana Pen came to the place and camped below the tank. 'I will break the bank,' he said to himself. By his magic he put all the Muria to sleep and then broke the banks and the water poured out. Kana Pen saved himself by clinging to the root of a tree, but as the water poured over him the bod fish came, angry and saying, 'I will eat one of the eyes of whoever has dried up my tank'. It caught Kana Pen and ate one of his eyes and since then Kana Pen has been one-eyed. Since that day we worship him and with him we worship the bod fish in order to stop it eating his other eye.

Another clan which in certain places honours the bod fish is the Sori. At Masora members of this clan had a slightly different version of the story. Here they regarded Kana Bod as a man.

> The people of the village went to a nearby river to make a bridge. They had iron spades, but Kana made a wooden one. When the others began to dig out the stones, Kana sat idly on the bank. The others got tired, but the bridge was not yet ready and they shouted to Kana, 'Now come and work yourself'. So he took his wooden spade and began to dig. As they watched him the others said to themselves, 'If we kill this man and throw him in the river, then the bridge will soon be ready'. When he heard them Kana jumped into the river and was carried away by the water. A great fish caught him and ate one eye. After that Kana Bod turned into a fish and we have worshipped him as a god.

The Sori clan is actually the tiger clan (*sori* means tiger in Gondi), but it is connected with bees and buffaloes as well as with tigers and bod fish. In

[1] The bod fish is regarded as specially sluggish in Chhattisgarh and is often compared to a drunken Kalar. See R. B. Hiralal, 'Why Kawar Women are Black', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LX (1931), p. 33.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

Kashkodra, a member of this clan described how his ancestors were born from a tigress: 539 614

> Two children were born: one brother was a tiger, one was a human being. When the boy grew up, one day he was going to the fields with eleven other men. A tiger came by and asked each in turn, 'Who are you?' Each of them, knowing that the tiger would not kill its own child, said, 'I am Sori' and it spared them. When it came to the real Sori boy it was angry and said, 'You can't all be Sori' and ate him. Ever since we have been angry with the tiger that betrayed us, and when a tiger is killed we put an egg and a pice in its mouth.

In Sidhawand I recorded yet another story of the origin of the Sori clan.

> The twelve Sori brothers went to get honey in the forest. The tree where bees lived stood beside a stream and the shadow of the hive could be seen in the water. Eleven of the brothers seeing the shadow in the water tried to reach it, but they fell in and were drowned. The twelfth brother looked up and saw the hive; so he climbed the tree and got the honey. In this way the Sori clan came into being.

In Cherlbera the Maravi clan trace their origin to an incident in Chingnar.

> In Chingnar a Marar dug a well but could not reach water. Presently a tortoise came out of the well and everyone said, 'It must be a god'. Then the tortoise came to the Marar in a dream saying, 'I am Bara Pen, I will give you water in your well and a son to your wife if you worship me'. The next day the Marar took a goat to offer to the tortoise but it refused the sacrifice saying, 'I must have a cow'. This the Marar refused to give. So the tortoise said, 'I will stay no more with you, I will go to the Muria'. The Muria gave the tortoise a cow and thus became Maravi (for Bara Pen came to them from the house of the Marar), but because the Marar offered a goat, the Maravi do not eat goat.

Other stories throw light on the way in which some clans possibly did originate—through dreams and the divisions of families as well as by migration. In Silati village, the Naitami told us that,

> Long ago an old Muria widow lived with her son. When the boy was old enough he was married, but the next day he died and they broke the girl's bangles. The girl and her mother-in-law were weeping bitterly, but at last the husband came to the girl in a dream saying, 'Worship me as Dulha Deo, and I will go on being your husband'. The next day she made offerings to Dulha Deo and from that time he used to come daily to her by night till a son was conceived and born. The elders of the village came to the girl and asked whose child it was. 'I have been to no one,' said the girl, 'It is the child of Dulha Deo.' They were all laughing at her when the dead boy came out of the house and they realised that it really was Dulha Deo who had given the child. So we Naitami call ourselves *rilodilko nasr* (born of a widow) and our women do not wear bangles.

From the same place I recorded a story explaining why the Naitami and the Poyami, though both having the tortoise as their totem and both being descended from the same parents, can yet intermarry in some villages:

> During a great famine, a Poyami was dying of hunger and went to a Naitami's house to beg for food. The Naitami said, 'There is no food

614
539

here, I can give you nothing'. But the Poyami said, 'At least keep my daughter to work in your house and give me a little food'. So the Naitami fed him and kept the daughter in payment. When the time came for redeeming the girl the Poyami had no money, so the Naitami kept the girl and married her. From that girl there was born a daughter who was Naitami and from her brother there was a son who was Poyami. These two married, for the girl was *dudh-bahini* to the boy.

III. Clan Rules

614 Every clan has its own distinctive regulations based often on some incident in the story of its origin, often, too, on something that has happened, probably really happened, to a member of the clan.

The first rule is, of course, the obvious one; that no one may marry within the clan or a member of a clan that is related as *dâdâbhai*. Marriages can only take place between clans that stand in the *akomdma* relationship to one another.

The second rule is that members of a clan must avoid injury to the totem animal, tree or plant, must not eat it, and must usually give it some special honour or worship. In many clans, when the totem animal dies, the members observe mourning just as they would if a human being of their own clan had died.

Thirdly, there are a number of special rules such as that forbidding the members of the Naitami clan to wear bangles.

Among the food rules, some are clear enough. None of the members of the Bakravans or Goat phratry may eat goat's meat. We have seen that there is an added reason for this among the Maravi because, in the story of their origin, the Marar from whose house the tortoise emigrated offered it a goat. When a goat dies the Maravi perform funerary rites for it; they will not even touch the water from which a goat has drunk. This rule is taken very seriously. Twenty years ago in Palari one Bhaira Maravi ate goat's flesh by mistake and died of it, his throat swelling and choking him. Raghunath Maravi also ate it by accident, but he sacrificed a pig to Mati Pen and a buffalo to Bara Pen and was saved, though his brother died. In Kondagaon a man of the Partabi sept ate a goat and was very ill. He was excommunicated and only readmitted to the tribe after paying a heavy fine.

The members of the Kachhimvans or Tortoise phratry avoid eating the tortoise and worship it. The Naitami clan in addition to honouring the tortoise revere the dog, which they regard as their elder brother. Members of the Sori or Tiger phratry, however, have a buffalo totem, since members of the clan consider that they were betrayed by the tiger who ate the original member of their clan. But they still refuse to kill a tiger, and when one is killed they perform funerary rites for it.

Members of the Nagvans or Serpent phratry are supposed to be immune to the bite of the cobra, but some of the members of this phratry also honour other animals. For example, the Karanga has the wild buffalo as its totem and the Nei Nuroti has the dog.

Members of the Usendi clan which, being a Hill Maria clan, does not fit easily into any of the Muria phratries, do not eat the *usi* bird. The Kaudo sept has to avoid the horse: its members may not ride a horse or touch it. If a horse is tied in front of a Kaudo house, it goes mad or dies. The Komra sept never cut down a kassi tree, nor do they eat its leaves as vegetables. They must not cook roti with oil, and at the New Eating ceremonies they

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

286
291

Making a fishing net

[p. 66 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

226

Plate XVIII

Chelik at Temrugaon fishing with rod and line from a specially prepared pier

Chelik setting dandia and dandar traps in a small stream

[P. 66 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

614 must not themselves cook at all but must get their food from others. If they do cook in their houses a tiger will kill their cattle.

A similar rule applies to members of the Poyami clan, who have been forbidden by their clan-god to cook in their own houses at Diwali. Once an old man broke the rule and his cattle died. The Poyami sept also must not eat carrion, though a cadet branch, the Busar Poyami, may. Long ago a Poyami ate a dead cock and died of it. Randa Pen, who is the same as Dulha Deo, has forbidden it. The Poyami are so particular about this avoidance of carrion that they must not use even grain or fruit that has fallen of its own accord to the ground or they will lose their eyesight; if a gourd falls down or if rice falls from a basket or bin, they must not use it but must give it away to someone else. The grandfather of the Pujari of Karanji broke this rule and was supernaturally blinded as a punishment.

The Kuhrami clan must not eat cocks and they are said to place a small image of a cock on the forehead of a bridegroom at a marriage.

I have already noted the fact that Naitami women cannot wear bangles. If they do, it is believed that a snake will wind round the wrist or that the arm will swell until the bangle is broken, and both husband and wife will die. So when members of this sept go to perform the betrothal ceremony they do not give bangles, as is usual, to the future bride. The Naitami frequently marry the Poyami, and after a Poyami girl is engaged to a Naitami boy she also gives up wearing bangles even before she is married.

This custom derives from the story that has already been given. It was said in Silati that many years ago when a boy and girl were shut up together in the house on the last night of their wedding and the boy took his wife to bed for the first time, a snake coiled itself round her wrist. The boy hastily promised to break the bangles in its honour and the snake went away.

A wife, of course, changes her clan to that of her husband after marriage and even, in many cases, after betrothal. Once the ring-cowrie has been placed in the Pot of the Departed of her father's house,[1] a girl is regarded as having made compensation to her own ancestors for her desertion of their clan, and is now a member of her husband's clan. Sometimes she even goes for festivals, especially those of the clan-god, to her future husband's house instead of remaining with her own family. She is now free to eat her old totem animal and generally some opportunity is taken after the marriage to enable her to do this. Before she does so a few drops of liquor or a coconut are offered to her own ancestors to ensure that they will not be offended.

Adoption is uncommon among the Muria, but it exists. Where a baby is adopted from a family belonging to another clan, the child's clan and totem is changed—unless it is a sister's son. There is a small ceremony for the changing of the clan: offerings are made to the clan-god and the Departed and a feast of pork and liquor is given to the village. After this the child takes his new father's clan and ancestors as his own.

IV. The Family

582 Such, very briefly, is the system into which the chelik and motiari must adjust their lives. But can a chelik marry any girl of the tribe provided she belongs to an *akomdmo* clan? As in the rest of India, the Muria regard certain relations as standing in a forbidden relationship; with others there is the

[1] See p. 127.

582 fullest freedom to joke and even to intrigue: with yet others marriage is almost obligatory.

A boy obviously cannot marry relatives of the inner circle or any of his classificatory 'aunts' or 'nieces'. He is strictly forbidden to marry his wife's elder sister, his mother-in-law, his younger brother's wife or widow and any other woman in a parallel relation to them. There is no objection to his marrying his grandmother or granddaughter even when they are in the direct line of relationship. A few cases are known of men marrying their great-aunts or grand-nieces.

As we shall see presently, the great majority of Muria marriages are of the cross-cousin type and are celebrated between a boy and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or with girls in the same classificatory relationship to him as these.

Throughout India certain relations are regarded as standing in a privileged position to each other. They have licence to laugh and joke with each other, generally in a rather vulgar manner, and in some cases sexual relations between them are not very severely condemned.

605 The Muria have their own system of joking relationships. As a result of the common cross-cousin marriages, a chelik has special licence to joke and flirt with his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter (both *mauâri* in Gondi). A motiari can be equally free with her father's sister's son or her mother's brother's son (both *mauriyo* in Gondi). This freedom, however, only lasts so long as they are not engaged to be married. Should such an arrangement be made the joking relationship changes into one of avoidance, for a girl must never have anything to do with her betrothed.

So long as these cousins are not engaged, however, they have many jokes [835] together. A boy is at liberty to catch hold of the girl's breasts and he may have intercourse with her. If he sees her going to the river to wash her clothes at the end of her catamenial period, he is free to shout to her, 'Are you off to polish it and take off the rust? What are your plans for tonight?' Or again 'How long was the bank of the lake broken?' The girl in turn often teases her boy-cousin by accusing him of having relations with his own sister: 'I saw you with her; you'll have to pay a fine, or if you don't you'll have to marry her'.

604 An uncle stands in a joking relationship to all his nieces except the daughters of his own sister. For example, a man and his uncle's daughter's daughter are in this relationship.

607 As elsewhere in India, a woman and her husband's younger brothers or a man and his wife's younger sisters are specially privileged. So are grand-
603 mother and grandson or grandfather and granddaughter. A boy may say to his grandmother, 'Once you are dead I will eat beef in your honour; I will go dancing in front of you with a drum; why don't you die quickly so that I can get a good feast?' And she replies, 'If I die you will have to spend a lot of money, you will have to get rice, you will have to bring several tins of liquor, so what good will it be?' A grandfather always flirts and jokes with his granddaughter. Sometimes he says to her husband, 'How dare you sleep with my wife? You will have to give me the bride-price for her', and so on.

607 The connexion between a man (*dewar*) and his elder brother's wife (*auge*) is the central theme of the Lingo legend. This kinship is more than a mere joking relation; it is often one of deep romance. A Ghotul Pata illustrates the kind of humour that passes between them.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

607

Dewar: O Ange, the gruel is made of broken rice.
Ange: O my Dewar, where are you going today?
Dewar: Today I am not going anywhere
For I have to load my bullocks.
Tomorrow I go to another land to trade.
Ange: I too will go with you to drive the laden bullocks.
Dewar: Don't come with me, for all know how we stand to one another.
Those who do not know us will call us brother and sister.
And when they call us that we shall be ashamed.

The relations between *sawdhi* and *sawdhin* are generally of an amiable, coarse and humorous nature. For men this is a drinking rather than a joking relationship, and all their lives whenever they meet they regard it as an excuse for a bottle. The women, specially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breasts, stick feathers into the private parts and exchange the coarsest jokes. 602 522 [831]

The place where this joking and fun most commonly occurs is at a marriage. 'There is no purdah in a house of marriage.' Everybody feels free to fool about; no one is going to be offended; everyone is slightly drunk.

V. Summary

The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. Nothing reveals more clearly the extent of this domination than the fact that out of 2000 marriages examined no fewer than 1799 were of the cross-cousin type and, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, 1884 out of 2000 boys married according to their parents' wishes. This could only happen in a society which had a strong regard for its own organization and laws. 614 582

The clan system retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. Clan festivals remain great and notable occasions. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. The *sawdhi* relationship, as may be seen in every song and story, continues to be of the first importance. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs. Totemism is less important, but is still far from moribund. The whole complex of ideas and customs is greatly confused, but the very confusion is perhaps a sign of its vitality.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Burka in jāwa undāna bedur gatta te mak dāyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

842 Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some
789 evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead. A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform spells to stop her supplanter from realising the fullest joys of marriage. The Constable of Modenar said that Mayakaka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Hus-
842 band and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of
578 Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel
[586] miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

843 A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (intercourse), and *poidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to space confinements properly. After a year, 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months, and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'. But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puerperium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them? But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

843 In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements.
844 The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

full figure and the child is 'fine as a young tiger'. The Hare Birth, however, occurs after only eighteen months, and the child is weak and sickly. The Frog Birth, after twelve months, is also bad for the child. In the Lizard Birth, when the child resembles a lizard, there is an interval of three years, but the mother is herself weak and her breasts secrete insufficient nourishment. 843 844

When a girl suffers from menorrhagia she has a Green Lizard Birth, and the child is weak, but the offspring of Mother Birth, when the period begins and ends punctually, is vigorous.

Once the mother is pregnant she is subject to the usual routine and taboos, though generally I think an increase of restrictions at this time is due to Hindu influence.[1] The Muria woman's movements are not greatly controlled, but she must not climb a tree and should stay indoors during an eclipse. She must be very careful not to steal anything; if she takes bread, she will bear a male child with his ear bent over; if she steals haldi, garlic, or ginger, the child will be born with six fingers. In one village my wife was recommended to tie a mango in her sari; then, when she had a child, it would never be ill, 'even its nose wouldn't run'. But it is dangerous to eat a mango, for it may cause abortion. 843

The husband is also subject to taboos. He must not cross the blooded path of a hunted and wounded animal. He has to eat separately at festivals. Neither he nor his wife may eat the head or legs of any animal killed for sacrifice or in a ceremonial hunt.

The scene of birth is generally on the verandah or in a cattle-shed. A child must not be delivered in the kitchen or the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept. There are no professional midwives and assistance is given by the women of the family and sometimes by the Gaita's wife. Few precautions are taken. The mother is given ordinary food and often begins to work on the third day. 844

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife in a few villages (in Temrugaon, for example), but more generally with an arrow-head, whether the child be a boy or girl, by the mother, sister, elder brother's wife or Gaita's wife.

The placenta is wrapped in a siari leaf and buried in a pit behind the house, and a small screen of branches is erected round it. Until the umbilical stump falls off, this pit is not filled in; it is covered with a stone or a wooden seat on which the mother sits to bathe once or twice a day for about six weeks. During this period, she must not go into the house but must stay on the verandah. The digging-stick with which the pit was dug and the arrow with which the cord was cut are driven into the ground beside the pit. A pot of water is kept near by. When the stump falls, they throw it into the pit and fill it up with rubbish and earth. When the mother stops bathing and resumes her ordinary domestic duties, they wash the digging-stick and arrow, offer liquor and apply haldi to them. The stick is put back in the house, and the arrow is stuck into the roof or given away. It is not regarded as having any special significance or value after its work is done. 844 787

If the 'signs' of a tiger or a snake appear in the soil above the buried placenta, the child is expected to be killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. Should the water in the pot leak out of its own accord, the child will meet its death by drowning. A strangulating umbilical cord suggests that the child will die by hanging, either in jail or through suicide.

[1] Compare with the very simple Muria tradition the elaborate regulations of the more sophisticated tribesmen of the Central Provinces described in my article, 'Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills', *JASB*, Vol. IX (1943), pp. 99–148.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

844 Until the stump falls the father is in a state of taboo. He must not cook, he must not leave the house to visit his friends, he cannot go to the ghotul. No one will accept his tobacco and he cannot share in a sacrificial feast.

843 Certain attempts are made to influence and to diagnose the sex of unborn children. If a motiari, after fasting for twelve hours at her first menstruation, eats a dish of *khichri*, a mixture of pulse and rice without salt, her children will likewise be a mixture of boys and girls. If she goes to the jungle on this day and brings home a bundle of leaves on her hip, she is likely to bear girls.

Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman.

[524] *Chipta upre jai phar,* There is fruit inside the basket,
Jona bilu kai phar? How can you know what fruit it is?

845 Abnormal births are not common but are not unknown. Twins are called *jānwar jiya* and are not regarded as either particularly lucky or unlucky. Twins with a single placenta are born if the mother eats a double fruit such as a double plantain or tendu or uses double leaves as a plate. Sensible women are careful to avoid doing this but sometimes accidents happen. In Rengagondi, there are twins, named Joga and Jogi, who were born because the mother ate off a double leaf at the end of her period. Such twins may also be due to a woman's passing between two men on her way back to the house from her menstrual bath. The shadows of both men fall upon her and the twins resemble them. In some places, it is thought if she passes at this time a man holding a baby she will have twins—if it is a boy, she will have male twins; if a girl, male and female. If the woman lies on her back after intercourse so that the man's seed divides into two streams, twins may result. When there are two placentae it is often supposed that the woman has been to two men and the twins, therefore, have different fathers. The woman may also have had intercourse with a ghost or spirit on the day following intercourse with her husband. Where this is suspected, the twins (if boy and girl) are called Dukhalu and Dukhali and are vaguely regarded as unlucky.

[177] Pandru of Bermakot twice had twins, from different wives. The first were from the Manjaro whom he made pregnant in the ghotul and were both girls: the second were from the Nirosa, another of his ghotul lovers, and were both boys. Pandru thinks he had twins because he went to each of the girls twice on the night following the post-catamenial bath. If this is done during the rains, girls will be born: if during the hot weather, there will be boys.

[177] A foot-presentation is called in Gondi *tāli-janamā* or 'cow-birth', for the child is born like a calf. This is regarded as very unlucky indeed and the family must immediately protect the child by waving round it a bundle of burning grass. Such births are generally expected to be fatal to the mother. A *kova bānjh* is a woman with only one child; 'she is like a plantain which gives fruit once on a stalk and never again'.

II. Name-giving

559 After about six weeks the mother stops her ritual bathing and resumes her domestic duties inside the house. It is now time to give the child a name, a name—it must be remembered—which the little chelik or motiari will hardly use during the period of childhood, which will never be taken by husband or wife after marriage, and will be uttered only with reluctance after death. Even then a later nickname may supplant this *mur-podor* or original name.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

But this name is important because of its connexion with the theory of rebirth, and before it is given it is necessary to discover which of the family ancestors has returned in the young child. Many different methods of divination are adopted. At Bandopal they tied up some rice into a little bundle of siari leaves and put it on the child's head. Then the Siraha took the names of all the family ancestors that he could remember one by one: if the child drops the bundle on its shoulder as the medium is repeating a name, they know who it is. In the Sonawal Pargana I found the Muria placing a lighted lamp in a leaf-cup of sarai above the pit where the placenta was buried, while they waved a second lamp round the child reciting names. The child shows its recognition of its name by putting its hands out towards the lamp. In Karikhodra they put a chicken-bone in the child's hand and give the name that is used when the child drops it. At Gorma, they made a ball of siari leaves, put it in front of the child and waited till it touched it. Sometimes, the child refuses to drink its mother's milk. Then the medium is called and he recites names as usual; they give the one that coincides with the child's turning to the breast. In Aturgaon, they wave rice in a leaf-cup round the child, put it down before it, stick a scrap of rice on a siari stalk and place it in the child's hand. When the child throws the rice over its shoulder, they give the name.

The names are, as we might expect, slowly becoming Hindu in character, though this tendency should not be exaggerated. Out of 2000 names, only 85 were specifically Hindu and such names as Ram, Ganesh, Govind, Sita, Indira, were comparatively rare. Girls and boys are sometimes named after the Hindu months in which they were born—Asaru, Baisakhu, Bhadru or Phagu—and after the day of the week—Aitu, Mangal and Sani.[1]

As always, events at the time of birth influence a child's name.

Akalsai or Kangalu	Born in a famine year
Barat or Bartiya	Born during a marriage procession
Dera	Born in a hut
Duwaru	Born in the yard
Irpa	Born at the time of picking mahua flowers
Satiru	A seven-months child

The usual derogatory names are given with the idea of depreciating a child's value in the eyes of hostile spirits.

Amlu	Sour	Burjaha	Dirty
Apoti	Stinking	Chamra	Shoemaker
Banda	Naked, or dock-tailed	Dhondu	Useless
Barko	Thin	Ganda	A despised weaver
Barra	Crack-brained	Gatharu or Gatti	A little bundle, or undersized
Baya or Baihi	Mad	Hoche	Drunkard
Bhondu	Stupid	Jakari	Madman
Bhoska	A dunce	Lardhu	Useless
Bhuka	Hungry	Sukiu	Wizened
Bohher	Stinking		

A remarkable name in this class is Duma, the Halbi word for the dead.

Yet on the other hand, there are just as many names calculated to flatter the child. The derogatory names are generally only given when calamity

[1] In the text I have mostly given the names of men: in many cases a feminine form of the same word is used for women, thus Bhuki, Sakli, Sugria.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

551 and sorrow have visited a family; if two children have died, the parents hope to avert another disaster by calling the next one Hagru (excreter) and so on. Laudatory names are much more common.

Anjori	Splendour	Dularsingh	Lovable
Amoli	Invaluable	Hirasingh	Handsome as a diamond
Amarsingh	Immortal		
Bahadur	Brave	Laharsingh, Laharu, Lahari	Happy
Balsai	Young King		
Bansingh	Lord of the forest	Ruprai, Rupsingh or Rupa	Silver
Birsingh	Brave		
Budha	Wise and learned	Sobi	Beautiful
Dhansingh, Dhanu	Rich	Sugru	Beautiful
		Sunher	Golden

A few Muria are named after trees and vegetables.

Amori	A tree	Jira	A red vegetable
Baranga	A tree	Jhitka or Jhitu	A shrub
Dhodra	A hollow tree	Kanda	A root
Guthlu	Mango seed	Kehala	A tree

Others are named after animals, birds and fish.

Baghrai	Tiger	Maliyarsingh	Peacock
Bhainsa	Buffalo	Malsai	Peacock
Bharanda	The broom-tailed (probably a tiger)	Mendi	She-goat
Domi	A fish	Mugur	Crocodile
Dulu	A fish	Newra	Mongoose
Gundru	A small bird	Paddi	Pig
Kawe	A bird	Pitorka	Bulbul bird
Kidar	A bird	Sukai	Dry fish
Liti	Sparrow	Usir	A bird
Maina	A starling	Yerjalu	Bear

Another class of names is taken from musical instruments and other material objects such as Erra (a sickle), Nagel (a plough), or Gota (tobacco-box).

Bajo	Fiddle	Dhol	A drum
Balo	A sort of violin	Kndurka	Wooden gong

Disease-names are either given when the child is grown and are purely descriptive, or they are prophylactic, given in the hope that the bearer of the name will not be afflicted with the fact.

Dutka	A leg disease	Khoru or Khoriya	Lame
Kodi	Leprous	Konda	Dumb
Thota	Cripple	Gaja	Ringworm

Names deriving from physical characteristics are more in the nature of *pusko podor* or nicknames, though names based on colour are probably given when the child is a baby.

Bhuri	Fair, light brown	Chhendi	Long-haired
Bhuaku	Fat	Chirangu	Curly-haired
Bijju	Impotent	Denga	Tall
Bondka	With a long navel	Derka	Left-handed
Botori	Undersized	Dhonya	Big-bellied
Bulu	Fat-faced	Hetka	Stammerer
Chamtu	Dry-faced	Jatiya	Long-haired

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

551

Jalpi	Curly-haired	Meso	Black
Kari or Kariya	Black	Milku	Short-sighted
Koso	Black	Mondi	Crippled
Lintu	Short-sighted	Mundra	Hairless

Other nicknames, of which there are a great variety, may be represented here by—

Bode	With a big shaking stomach	Karbe	Burnt in the fire as a child
Dahko	A fast walker	Pakla	Grey-haired
Dalu or Darsu	A heavy eater of pulses	Pitarri	One who quickly loses his temper and talks very fast
Dorga	Big-bellied		
Garbari	Always bustling about		
Golar	Always wanders like a bull	Potsu	Stout
		Udlin	A girl who eloped from the ghotul.

Of the 2000 names collected, we may make the following classification:

	Number	Percentage
Specifically Hindu names ..	85	4·25
Hindi or Halbi names ..	820	41
Names of probable Gondi origin ..	1095	54·75

These figures are, I suggest, sufficient to reinforce Grigson in his criticism of Russell and Hiralal for their statement[1] that names from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and that it was only after contact with the Hindus that the Gond took to having individual names. Grigson found that out of 267 names collected from the Maria only 5 per cent were Hindu.[2] But he does not give the percentage of names that a Hindu might conceivably use.

The following Muria names[3] may not all be Gondi, but no ordinary Hindu would use them:

Bindo	Gile	Kule	Pitsa
Boga	Gulu	Kundel	Poke
Boko	Gurti	Leske	Pola
Bosa	Hirdu	Malo	Poriya
Bul	Jaggu	Mirdu	Sankoy
Chahra	Jainu	Mitku	Silo
Chepu	Jakkar	Muke	Singa
Chirga	Jako	Nappu	Sudu
Chogu	Jamni	Nargo	Tahtor
Dirka	Jauge	Orcha	Temsu
Dirwi	Jelu	Orsu	Thiblu
Duge	Jepi	Ote	Tuge
Durru	Keso	Pakur	Turku
Gannu	Korge	Picho	Udlu
Gecho	Kosl	Pite	Wandel

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 87. [2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 266.

[3] Hislop gives the following specimens of Muria names, which I reproduce because they are the earliest we have. 'Names of males: Badal, Bukal, Boyal, Dhala, Dhodi, Dorga, Gagaru, Gidit, Higal, Judahal, Kodal, Malal, Mulal, Milol, Mustal, Odhi, Pichka, Semaru, Surka, Sival. Females: Gajari, Hinga, Judahi, Kodo, Kami, Sukali.' Hislop, op. cit., p. 24.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Life of Young Children

In youth the spider's web is the sky.—Muria proverb

[853] Muria babies, who are suckled for at least two years and then often weaned at the Jata Pandum, seem to be happy and contented. The Muria are good parents, proud of their children, tolerant towards them in many ways, anxious to teach them things, delighted as they see them grow. 'When a young child walks for the first time, the earth trembles for two-and-a-half days.' But directly a child is old enough to play, he is regarded as old enough to work. The early stage of 'eating while playing and playing while eating' is soon over and the little girls and boys have to take their share of the work of the house. Tiny girls may often be seen staggering about with the youngest baby in their arms or helping their mothers to cow-dung the house. Sometimes you may see a line of boys and girls following their elders back from the jungle, each with a tiny basket of fruit or a minute bundle of leaves on their heads. During this period the children are very dependent on their parents and go everywhere with them. A boy takes his little axe and follows his father to the jungle. A girl takes a pot and goes with her mother to the well.

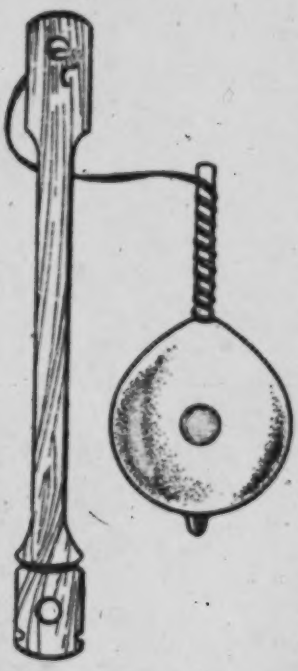


Fig. 16. Spinning-top
Length of upright wooden stick, 8¾"

It is now that the parents, and especially the fathers, enjoy the happiest relations with their children. You may often see a father carrying his baby son to the ghotul and sleeping with him there, or taking him to a festival, sometimes even encouraging him to dance as a medium before the clan-god. The father may give a boy a tiny drum or axe, toys that are just like the real thing, or he may make his children little wooden carts or ploughs.

From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. Tattooing

The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

that girls should be tattooed before marriage and if possible before they are betrothed. If a girl is not done till after marriage, her parents-in-law can demand the cost from her own parents. There is some idea that the marks are a sort of passport to heaven. 'If she dies without being tattooed, Mahapurub will punish her. But if she brings him beautiful drawings from the Middle World, he will keep her with him and look after her.'

In the western parganas the tattooing is often done by a girl's own mother or by some elderly woman of the tribe. A crude needle is made out of the brass wire used for an ear-ornament and charcoal dust is mixed with til or mahua oil. In the central and eastern areas, however, most of the tattooing is done by wandering Ojha women.[1] These are the wives of semi-aboriginal professional musicians. They have various stories to account for the origin of tattooing which, as we should expect, are generally Hindu in tone. In Narayanpur the Ojha described how

> At the beginning of the world there was no caste distinction among mankind. Mahapurub decided to divide men up into castes by giving them appropriate presents. A man who was given a net became a fisherman; a man who was given a plough became a Gond; a man who was given a pen became a Brahmin. At last Mahapurub found that he had given away everything except a drum, and he looked round to see who would take it. A number of men were passing along the road and one of them was lagging behind the others. Mahapurub gave him the drum telling him that his name was henceforth to be Ojha, and thus the caste began.
>
> The Ojha now began to earn his living by wandering from village to village beating his drum, telling stories and begging. One day when he went home in the evening his food was not ready and he beat his wife saying, 'All day I go from place to place earning our living; you stay at home doing nothing and yet you cannot even cook my food'. The woman replied, 'I go to the tank for water, I fetch wood from the forest, I clean the house, I cook the food. What other work am I supposed to do?' In the manner of women she began to sulk, saying to herself that she would only eat what she earned. After she had fasted for eight days Budi Matal's carpet began to shake and she sent her messenger to find out what was the matter. The messenger took the Ojha woman to the goddess. 'I have no work to do and so my husband beats me', said the Ojha woman. Budi Matal replied, 'Very well, I will give you special work to do, provided you always worship me'. She took the Ojha woman to the forest and found a sarai tree; she removed some of the gum and put it on a bit of earthenware, covering it with another bit. Then she smeared both pieces with cow-dung and put them on a fire. After a little while she removed the lid and found a black deposit there. She scraped this off with a bit of wood and put it in the broken half of a coconut shell. Into this she put some water and stirred it well. She fixed three needles in the knot of a bamboo and made the Ojha woman lie down with one cheek to the ground. So she tattooed her. Afterwards she washed the place with cow-dung and rubbed in oil and haldi.

[1] In their article 'Ojha' Russell and Hiralal do not mention tattooing as one of the Ojha's activities.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 296ff. The name is applied to the soothsayers and minstrels of several tribes, but the Ojha of Bastar are probably of Gond origin. There were 137 Ojha in Bastar in 1941.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

773
304

Then said the Matal, 'I have done this for you but you yourself must do more than this. First of all tattoo, then wash the place with cow-dung, then sprinkle haldi oil and offer rice in my name. Then holding the needles and some haldi and pulse in your right hand, catch hold of the first fingers of the woman you have tattooed in your left hand and with your right make three passes round her body. Put the haldi and pulse in her sari and let her go. By this means the burning of the marks will be cooled.'

At Palari in the Koudagaon Tahsil the Ojha gave a different version of their origin. Here they described how

> Bara Deo was the son of Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai. He had six brothers and seven sisters. One day the seven sisters went to Tallur Muttai and asked her for ornaments such as would last even after death. Kadrengal gave Bara Deo a dhol and a dhamru drum. Then two sons were born to Bara Deo. One was called Murha and the other Ojha. Bara Deo taught Murha to beat the dhol with wooden sticks on the ground. Because he beat with wood on the ground Murha became a ploughman but Ojha played his dhamru slung from his shoulder, and spent his life hunting and drawing patterns on the walls of houses.
>
> In this way the Ojha's wife learnt how to tattoo and once a year the Ojha gives a goat to Bara Deo saying, 'Behold, we go all over the world tattooing. From the marks we make let there be no wound, no pus, no swelling. Let no evil magic attack us as we work.' Because of this, Bara Deo lives with the Ojha and no witch can injure them at the time of tattooing.

304
386

The method of tattooing is still today very much what is supposed to have been taught the first Ojha woman by Budi Matal. Lamp-black, charcoal, pounded incense is mixed with either castor, til or mahua oil. This is put in the broken half of an earthen pot, covered, and burnt over a lamp or a small fire. The black deposit is removed with a shell and kept in a small pot or bit of coconut.

304

The Ojha woman makes a pen of bamboo and draws the desired pattern on the skin. Then with three or four needles she pricks in the black colour. Before beginning she takes the names of the Seven Sisters of Bara Deo. At the end she receives from her victim's relatives rice, haldi, oil, chillies and salt. This she waves round the girl and sometimes performs the little rite with the needles that I have already described. She offers part of what she has received to the Seven Sisters. This helps the pricks to cool quickly and not hurt too much.

Muria girls are tattooed on the forehead, chin, arms and the calves of the legs. Most of the patterns are conventional—squares, triangles, and lozenges. Sometimes you may see two little figures representing a chelik and a motiari. There is no magical significance or even special meaning in the marks. 'It is for pleasure', say some Muria; others declare that it is simply a decoration, but a permanent one. 'Your words', a girl may whisper to her chelik, 'will remain like the tattoo marks on my breast.'[1]

[1] It is curious to find Crawley saying that it is 'erroneous' to attribute the painful processes of tattooing, boring and scarification to the desire for ornament. 'There is ample evidence that "savage mutilation" is never due to this desire; the savage does not hold with the maxim—*il faut souffrir pour être belle.*' This evidence is not given, but Crawley insists that tattooing and other mutilations are for the protection of the parts affected from supernatural dangers. I doubt if this is so in India.—E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. II, pp. 168ff.

226
227

Plate XIX

Dasru at Markabera with his charged net

[p. 78 (a)]

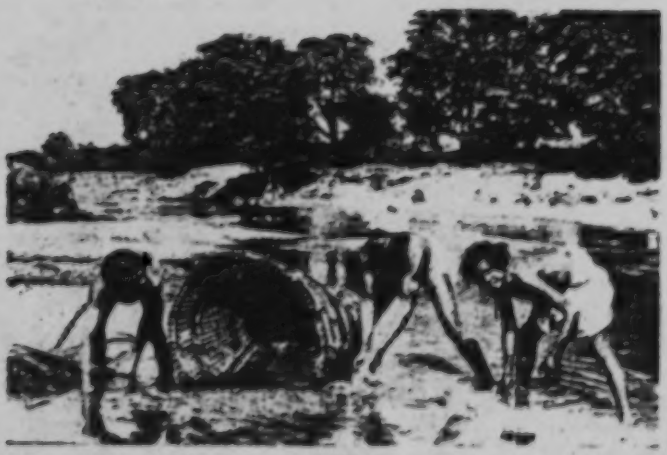
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XX

226
227

Chelik at Kothbera fishing with a net

Boys setting a sonziri trap in the River Kotri



[P. 78 (B)]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

304 There are not generally any taboos on a girl during the day that she is tattooed, but in Kokori I found that a girl was not allowed to go to the
522 ghotul the following night. This is probably a practical rule made because the girl is likely to be in some pain on that day. But when a girl does return to the ghotul after her tattooing the boys laugh at her and make the old joke about *godan* and *chodan*. 'If you could bear the pricks of *godan* (tattooing) surely you won't be afraid of the pricks of *chodan* (intercourse).' The girl naturally says that she cannot bear either. Then her boy may say, 'Look, there is pain when one is being tattooed, but in intercourse there is nothing but fun', and the girl replies, 'Well, if a mountain were to fall on me I would die, but if you fall on me I suppose I shall go on living, so you had better do what you want'. This conversation was recorded at Padbera.

314 There are a few songs about tattooing. One is in the nature of a prayer to cool the pain of the marks.

539

Arji binthi mān kamdra.	Listen to our prayer.
Us dinhi bachan tumdra.	Yours is the promise we made that day.
Sujihi jhār uthdra.	Let the burning of the needles cease.

Two other songs are sung during the 'tattooing' of the *kalsa*-pot during a wedding. The first has a refrain continually repeated, *Main wāna godende āya*, 'Mother, I want to be tattooed'.

1

God jāle godende nuni.	If you wish, you may be, daughter.
Kon rājcho gogin nuni?	What land has the Gogin come from, daughter?
Dongarcho gogin āya.	The Gogin is from Dongar, mother.
Dudr barhāle rale āya,	I was sweeping the yard,
Jabre wasala āya	She forced me to sit down.
Main nahin bol le āya.	I said I wouldn't, mother.
Kitro kitro mole re nuni?	How much did you pay her, daughter?
Nilo āgar dugūni wo āya.	Double the usual sum, mother.

2

Aga bagādāng dumhi dai?	Where do the tattooers come from?
Raigarh da dumhing dai.	From Raigarh they come.
Aga baga wātāng dai?	Why have they come here?
Singār hoti wātāng dai.	They have come to tattoo you.
Singār hoti punong dai.	They don't know how to tattoo.
Dando mola kintāng dai?	What is their charge for tattooing the arm?
Huj tāsi punong dai.	They don't know how to use the needles.
Māt mola kawom dai.	We won't pay their wages.
Māt hoti hewāh dai,	If they would let us do it,
Māt singār hotorom dai.	We would tattoo ourselves.[1]

[1] The Bison-horn Maria regard tattooing as a comparatively modern innovation, intended mainly as a means of attraction. The work is still done chiefly by the Maria themselves: they make needles of thorns and the colour is made by mixing the ash of pother bark, date palm or myrabolams with mahua oil. Lamp-black is also used.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

V. MENSTRUATION

561 Neither in the ghotul nor outside are the age-grades of Muria children very strictly defined. There are, for example, no rites of transfer from one age-grade to another, but generally four different stages in a child's growth to maturity are recognized. The first stage for a boy or girl is babyhood; the boy is called *pila*, the girl *pili* or *noni* (daughter). This stage lasts a year. The child then becomes a *tākna peka* or *peda* (feminine *tākna peki* or *pedi*), the word *tākna* meaning 'a toddler'. This stage lasts for two or three years till the child begins to play about the house and perform little tasks, when it is known as a *leka* or *leki*. At the age of seven or eight the boy becomes a *lāyor peka* or *nangriya*, the second word implying that he is now able to go along with his father behind the plough. A girl of the same age is known as *lāya peki*, *noruu lāya* (meaning 'immature', a girl who does not yet have to wash after her menstrual period) or in Halbi *tāndak pāni ānu leki*. Finally a girl on passing her menarche becomes a *lāya*, *torita*, *tarni*, *dhāngri*. She is now *juwān* or *mast juwān*, mature. A boy too is now called *lāyor*, *dhāngra*, *dinda* (meaning unmarried) or *juwān* (meaning mature).

541 The significant moment in these stages of growth is obviously a girl's first menstruation. This is a crisis of enormous importance to her both socially and psychologically. The fact that she is subject to this monthly cycle sets her as woman in an entirely different category to man. Menstrual blood makes her dangerous, infectious while alive; it may turn her into a ghost of dread and horror after death. A dozen names and expressions for this condition testify to the importance it has in the Muria mind. It will be most convenient to give them in tabular form: all, except the last three, are Gondi.

Pendaw oghai	'Her private parts are flowing.'
Kata pongta	'The bank of the field is broken.'
Netur danta	'Blood is flowing.'
Tora pongta	'Blood is flowing.'
Arro dia	'She is taboo.'
Atāna āyo	'She is not cooking.'
Arka chhande kita	'She's in the position of one who may not touch cooking-pots.'
Pirita	'She is wrung out like a dhoti.'
Ghāt utaris	'She can't go to the water-place.'
Bhāta me hona	'To be outside,' i.e. she cannot enter the house.
Dhār bohis	'Blood is flowing.'

The first menstruation is called *yete arta* ('the call to water') in Gondi and *phulsundri* ('the blossoming of the flower') in Halbi.

841 In many villages, especially those to the west where the influence of the Abujhmar Maria is strong, the Muria build separate huts where their women can 343 be segregated at this period.[1] Sometimes they make one communal hut for the whole village; sometimes there is one hut for a group of houses; occasionally a big house with a large family has a hut to itself. The Muria do not generally build such huts outside the village, but in some isolated spot within its borders. The huts are usually wretched little buildings with small doors. Inside may be seen a bed, a cooking-hearth, a few pots, some strips of cloth, a little firewood. The hut is built by the chelik—no married man may help—who are paid by the village women with liquor for their services. Every year at

[1] Among many other villages may be mentioned Sarandi, Chingnar, Kalepuras, Hochur, Tadbera and Talabera. The huts are called in Gondi *mitte-burma* (the hut that must not be touched) or *yer mayāna lon* (the hut for bathing in water).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

841
[343]

the beginning of the rains only the young chelik in the *nangriya* age-grade may re-thatch the roof. When they have finished, they have to pay a 'fine' of seeds or liquor to the ghotul. Girls must never touch the roof.

The motiari's life in this hut is miserable enough. At Padbera a girl exclaimed, 'You feel as if you were in jail; why has God sentenced us girls to such a punishment as this?' While she is segregated in the hut a girl must not go to a well for water, though she may go to the nearest stream. She must not go about the village for fear that her shadow may fall on a man and destroy him. She may, however, go to the forest for wood or leaves. Another girl at Talabera said, 'When we stay in the hut we always feel very hungry; sometimes we cook for ourselves, but generally the family brings it for us. Someone puts it down outside and runs away. If it is not enough, we cannot ask for more. My knees always ache, my stomach hurts, I feel lazy and unhappy, my head is heavy and in my breast is that *dak dak dak* feeling.' She went on to describe how at night they were very frightened lest some Ondar Muttai attacked them. 'We sit up together comforting one another for many hours. When we dream, we see ourselves singing and playing with the chelik and motiari. When at last we have a dream of the embankment of a tank being repaired, we know that the period is over and we will be able to return home.'

In the centre and east of the State, segregation huts are not erected. Their distribution seems to depend not only on the strength of Maria influence, but also on the style of village architecture. As we move east, we find the houses built with very large and deep verandahs where there is plenty of room for a girl to feed and sleep without coming into contact with the rest of the family. It will generally be found that where special menstruation huts are made, the village houses are small and without adequate verandah space. This is one of the reasons why the Hill Maria make a special menstruation room in their houses, even where they do not make a special hut.

But although the girls are less strictly isolated and their lot is thus less wretched than where they have to spend their days and nights away from everyone, the taboos controlling their work and movements are very strict and are enforced by stringent sanctions. These rules indeed are common throughout India,[1] though adapted to the special circumstances of Muria life. The motiari during her period may not cook or fetch water or touch the grain-bins or approach any cultivated field or clearing for shifting cultivation. If she goes into a field where the rice is sprouting it will never reach maturity. She must not step across even the mark of a plough on the ground. She cannot attend a marriage or festival. She must not go near the shrine of the Village-Mother. If she is present at any occasion where liquor is being distributed, she must not accept it from the hands of a man; another girl takes it for her and hands it to her in a leaf-cup. She must not take part in any games or dances, particularly in any ceremonial dances.

The most stringent taboo is on her relations with men. Sexual intercourse is absolutely forbidden; though the woman does not seem to be affected, the man who goes to a menstruating woman will die. There is no cure for him, magician and priest are alike helpless. He is lost. The woman must not even touch a man or let her shadow fall upon him. Should a man be accidentally touched he is excommunicated and must be purified by passing through 'a ring of fire' before anyone will accept food or tobacco from him.

[1] For a full account of these, see my paper, 'Primitive Ideas of Menstruation and the Climacteric', *Essays in Anthropology Presented to S. C. Roy* (Calcutta, 1942), pp. 141–57.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942)-1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

841 In Chandabera the Muria described how once when a man had touched a menstruating woman the Gaita heated gold and touched his forehead, tongue and shoulders, sprinkled him with rice-water and water in which gold had been [688] dipped, made him drink it in the name of the Earth Mother who had been insulted, and imposed upon him a heavy fine.

This is the same penalty as that extracted from a murderer on return from jail. It does not necessarily mean that the Muria regard the two offences as morally equal, but it does suggest that they regard them as equally dangerous in the supernatural field.

A woman's husband also is subject to the strictest rules. During his wife's period, he must not dig the ground, visit his fields, either to sow or reap, thatch the roof, go to the thrashing floor, touch the grain-bins in the house, or visit the village shrines. If he visits his thrashing floor the quantity of his grain is reduced by half. But he may go to the ghotul and sleep there, though no one will take tobacco from his hands. He is allowed to fetch water and cook; [522] indeed he generally has to do this work when his wife is barred from it, and many are the ribald jests that greet a young husband caught carrying pots from the well.

841 If he is a priest, he cannot conduct any religious ceremony during his wife's period, and festivals often have to be postponed on this account. A curious 539 story from Korenda illustrates the special difficulties that may trouble a polygamous Gaita.

> At the beginning of the world, there was no god of the Wadder clansmen, though they were numerous enough, while on the other hand there was a god of the Partabi though there was only one solitary male member of the clan. He was the Gaita and he had seven wives. Since one or other of his wives was in her period all the month round, he was never able to perform his priestly duties properly. They were due to eat the new rice on Monday: on Sunday night his eldest wife began her period. They postponed the festival till Friday: but no sooner had the eldest wife bathed on Wednesday than the youngest began on Thursday. And so on, he could never keep the festival, till Dokara Deo began to trouble the Gaita and he gave both his gods, Budha Deo and Dokara Deo, to the Wadder clan.

841 How do these taboos affect the ghotul? The great majority of Muria girls experience the crisis of the menarche while they are still motiari. Only in a few villages like Malakot do the people try to get girls married before maturity. Even where they are married, the little wives may sleep in the ghotul till they are mature. At her first period, a girl-wife gives *jori-darango* or a gift of liquor to the boys and girls 'to show her companionship with them is ended'.

The ghotul members take a great interest in the menarche. Everybody 841 knows all about it at once and there is a lot of joking and laughter. 'Our new pot is broken, where can we go and clean it?' 'She has trodden on dirty 522 leaves.' 'The embankment of the field is leaking.' When the chelik see the girl sitting plaintive and embarrassed behind her house or in the segregated hut they call to her, 'Have you got a baby, or what is the matter with you? Which is it, a girl or a boy?'

841 I describe elsewhere the special precautions that are taken at the menarche to ensure freedom from conception. A girl must be careful not to throw away her cups and plates for if a witch can get hold of them, she can cause her a great deal of trouble. She should, on this occasion, take these vessels and the ash in which she has cleaned her pots to the river for the Yer Kanyang or

2: Elwin E-S (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

894

The arrow and stone above the pit in which a child's placenta is buried

Plate XXI

954
291

Mother with her two children at Phauda

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585

Ceremonial greeti of the bridegroom his relations

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Plate XXII

Marriage booth

[P. 82 (B)]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

841 Nahani Deo. In some villages, however, the older women do not allow the girl to go to a stream or tank at all. They bring her water and let her bathe and wash her clothes on a stone in the compound.

We can understand how the rules affecting the menstruating motiari must be particularly strict when we remember that the ghotul is a shrine built by Lingo Pen, still sacred to him, and that the children within its walls are not only specially protected from marauding ghost or evil nightmare, but are also subject to the taboos and disciplines of *le monde sacré*. The girl therefore is forbidden for a period varying from four to seven days to enter the ghotul or even touch its fence. She must never, of course, touch a chelik at this time. If she did, they told us at Kajen, he would go mad. Even if her shadow fell on him while he was drinking, he would fall senseless to the ground. Should a girl go into the ghotul concealing her condition, the ashes of the ghotul fire would scatter in all directions and might continue to do so for two or three days, a sure sign that Lingo Pen is offended. When the culprit is discovered, she must offer a bottle of liquor to the insulted deity.

There is naturally considerable risk that a girl may begin her period during the night or evening while she is in the ghotul. A chelik in Munjmeta described what is done. 'She feels the warm blood, she shows it to her chelik and goes away at once.' 'Once', he said, 'his motiari did not realize what had happened and spent the night in the ghotul. When it was discovered in the morning, he himself was fined three long pieces of wood.'

The motiari is not, of course, allowed to go on the Diwali, Chherta and Mahna Dandar excursions while she is in this condition. If the period only begins after she has started out, she must make an offering to the local god and return home. Should any motiari begin her period at the moment when the chelik are about to start for their Pus Kolang dances, they abandon the trip. If during a boy's absence on this expedition his 'ghotul wife' should menstruate, he is warned of the fact by a dream and must make offerings to Lingo Pen. A chelik may go to the ghotul even while his special partner is in her period, but no one may take tobacco from him. The others tease him, saying, 'Don't worry, she'll be all right in two or three days. Perhaps you dug a little too deeply last night'.

If a girl is to be married, and her period begins on the eve of her marriage, this is postponed for a day; then she takes a bath and declares that officially all is well. Once when I went to Borgaon for a wedding, the bride entered her period on the critical day and the ceremony was postponed. On another occasion, when the omens did not come right, the people made a search through the wedding party to see if any relative was concealing this condition.

841 A girl does not bathe her whole body until the flow of blood ceases, but she does change and wash her pubic cloth, though she has to be very careful where
515 she puts it to dry for fear a witch should steal it. This cloth must never be touched by a man. It is either thrown away after every period or hidden
291 in a safe place outside the house. Along the banks of the Boroda river near Temrugaon I noticed many earthen pots, some floating in a backwater, others hidden in bushes. These were the pots in which the menstrual cloths were boiled to get them clean.

841 At the end of the period the girl goes as secretly as possible to a stream for her bath. She must be careful not to meet any man on this day, for should
515 his shadow fall upon her, her first child will resemble him. In some villages the girl must take two baths, in others she must take three. After the first bath she cleans and cow-dungs the room where she will sleep, washes all her clothes and sprinkles oil and haldi in the house and on her body. She then

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

841 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following
515 day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria
[842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be
[833] responsible for it?' In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

841 When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O
522 Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

841 As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In
787 Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

841 Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached
776 to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendrawandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

the motiari Hidde who died for love. Unhappily, when the girl committed suicide, she was in her catamenial period. The result is that she is regarded in some places as an untouchable goddess. Some ten years ago, her symbol was taken to the great festival at Keskal, and her Siraha went into the shrine of Bangaram, consort of Danteshwari. The Siraha of Bangaram and Hinglajin Matal stopped them. There was a great quarrel, and Pendrawandin's Siraha took the case to the court at Kondagaon, whence it went in appeal to the Maharaja. He ruled that the goddess was banned from visiting the shrines of Kuar Pat (son of Kanda Dokara), Danteshwari, Bangaram and Hinglajin Matal, but that she might be taken elsewhere.

All over the State there are stories of the unhappy fate which has befallen those who have broken the menstrual taboos. In the Karikhodra ghotul I was told of a shocking incident in Jatabera (Kanker State) where two menstruous women went to a *dahi*-clearing, picked a cucumber and ate it. A tiger attacked them and killed them both.[1] At Tarabera, Lati quarrelled with his wife when she was in her period and struck her twice. Soon afterwards he hanged himself in his field. 'The Departed were angry with him for touching an unclean woman and drove him to kill himself.'

[1] This rigorist attitude towards the menstrusting woman is by no means confined to the aboriginal in India. Thus, to give but one example, M. N. Srinivas describes the traditional outlook of the highest Hindus of Mysore. 'The menstruum is nothing but the sin of Brahmin-killing in liquid form.' The degree of defilement varies from day to day. For the first day's impurity a woman will be punished by being reborn as an untouchable, for the second day's as a Brahmin-killer, for the third day's as a washerwoman.' The daughter of the sage Udanka was nightly transformed into a mass of worms because seven lives earlier she had touched some cooking-vessels while in her period.—M. N. Srinivas, *Marriage and Family in Mysore* (Bombay, 1942), p. 129.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FIVE

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

I. BETROTHAL

584 THE next critical moment in the life of a Muria is the betrothal. This may be done at any age, before puberty or after it, but it is generally arranged later rather than sooner. It is followed, after a number of years, by the marriage, which is still nearly everywhere adult.

I propose to give in this chapter an account of the ceremonies of betrothal and marriage so that our picture of the course of Muria life may be complete, but I will reserve a discussion of the broader aspects of marriage to PART TWO of the book so that they can be considered, where they ought to be considered, in relation to the ghotul.

The betrothal ceremony is called in Gondi *pungār mīchna*, the 'plucking of the flower', *pungār kurki*, 'looking at the flower' and *talk dāyna*, 'going to beg'. These expressions indicate the chief features of the ceremony: the boy's parents make two or even three visits to the house of the future bride, the 'flower' whom the boy will pick and put in his turban.

On the first occasion, before setting out, the boy's father offers liquor in siari leaf-cups to the Departed, one for the boy, one for the girl and one for the Departed themselves. They wait for a time, and if they find one of the leaves has fallen or curled up, they take it that the omens are unfavourable, and either abandon the project or postpone it. In fact, this is the time when the greatest attention is paid to omens.

584 Muria omens are specially important before an engagement, on the way to the forest for a hunt and before setting out on a journey. These 781 'symbols of the future seen in the present'[1] do not influence events, but declare what is about to happen. If the members of a betrothal party see a bad omen on the way they return home because they know it will be a sheer waste of time to proceed; their visit simply cannot be successful.

781 It is through animals especially that the Departed and clan-ancestors warn or encourage the living about the future. 'The Departed', they said at Palli, 'speak through animals telling us to go or not to go.' On a ceremonial hunt, if one of the party fails in some ritual duty to the dead, an offended ancestor may take the form of an animal and attack him as a warning.

Muria omens can be divided quite simply into good and bad.

GOOD OMENS

An usir bird cries *sing-sing* on the left.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the left, saying 'Go, go, your business will succeed'.

A jackal going from left to right. 'The left side is regarded as a centre of greater vitality than the right. Hence the jackal going from left to right means that the animal is going away from the life centre, and thus that a death symbol is being removed.'[2]

A monkey cries *hoop-hoop*. It might be supposed that it was the reference to Hanuman and the sacred monkeys that made this lucky

[1] W. G. Archer, *The Blue Grove* (London, 1940), p. 159. [2] Ibid., p. 161.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

bet for the fact that the omen can also be bad. If the members of a betrothal party hear a monkey cough, they return home. 787

A tiger or leopard. A symbol of power.

A mango tree. This is lucky because mango leaves are used to decorate the marriage-booth.

A bear. Another symbol of power. The bear is generally looked on as very potent, and its male member is used as an aphrodisiac. [832]

A blue sambhar.

A woman carrying a full pot—though in some villages it is thought unlucky to see any kind of pot.

When a sparrow says *pitik pitik* it means the carriers of officials on tour are coming; if it says *pichu pichu*, it means they are going somewhere else and all is well.

BAD OMENS

An usir bird crying *kichir-kichir* on the right.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the right, saying '*Kiddarr*, don't go, don't go'.

A crow crying *kaw kaw*, eat, eat! Its tail points towards something dead for the vultures to eat.

A snake across the path. A very natural warning of danger.

A woman carrying an empty pot or going to the river with a bundle of dirty clothes.

Anyone throwing away ashes or rubbish.

A plantain tree, for its leaves are placed on a bier and in a grave.

A peacock.

A mongoose.

A rat.

A lizard. If one crosses your path, you should catch it and burn it to ashes.

In some villages, a cat.

A hare.

Thursday and Saturday are unlucky days, on which important work should not be started.

If the omens are favourable, the father of the bridegroom, with two or three relatives carrying several bottles of the best liquor, set out for the bride's house. When they reach their destination they sit down in the court, and presently the girl's father says, 'Have you come on any business?' They answer, 'We hear that a flower has blossomed in your house; we have come to pluck it'. 'Why do you want to pluck it?' asks the girl's father. 'So that we may stick it in our hair.' 'Have you seen the omens on the way?' asks the girl's father. 'Yes, and they were good to us.'[1] 584

If the parents are willing they now usually ask the girl her opinion. If she refuses, they tell the visitors that the flower is not for plucking, but if she

[1] W. G. Archer has made a careful study of these symbolic dialogues during marriage negotiations (op. cit., pp. 147ff and *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 147ff.). The flower symbolism does not seem to be used by the Uraon, but Russell and Hiralal notice it for the Kond (op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 467f) and give some charming sentences used by the Tuel. 'I hear that a sweet-scented flower has blossomed in your house and I have come to gather it.' To which the bride's father may reply, 'You may take my flower, if you will not throw it away when its sweet scent is gone'. (Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 590.) The same symbolism is known to the Kharia and I have recorded its use among the Bison-horn Maria, the Koruk and the Dhurwa in Bastar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

584 agrees, they accept the liquor brought and drink it together. If the parents are unwilling, but the girl desires the match, it is said that they usually have to give in to her.

Here too they offer liquor on leaves to the Departed inside the house and watch the leaves to see whether the omens are favourable or not.

At the next visit, the boy's parents bring four baskets of rice and more liquor. The boy's mother washes the girl's feet with liquor and offers a ring. In some villages they drop liquor in the rice-husking cavity; in others they make an offering of cowries or their equivalent to the Pot of the Departed. As they do so, the boy's father says, 'O Departed, accept this offering. We take this girl into our clan and give you cowries in her stead'. At Esalnar the people said that in the old days the Duga sept used to give five cowries, and now give fifteen pice, and the Sori sept used to give three cowries and now nine pice.[1] These are put into the Pot of the Departed. From this day the girl is regarded as belonging to the clan of her betrothed, and must obey its rules and taboos. In some places it is considered proper that a girl should go, even before marriage, for New Eating ceremonies to her future husband's house.

At Chimri I was told that as the boy's parents go home, the motiari stop them and demand 'ring-cowrie', a small present of rings or cowries to compensate the ghotul for the loss that it will suffer when the girl is married. In other places, this is done during the marriage ceremony.

[301]

FIG. 17. Brass rings with small bells attached
Actual size

At this second visit, the bride-price is fixed. If the engagement is made many years before marriage the boy's parents generally pay an annual visit to the girl's house, taking her presents of liquor and ornaments.

[801] The bride-price should be in terms of odd numbers, three, five, seven or eleven. Even numbers are *jori ki jori* and so unlucky: you must have something over a pair. The number nine is also unlucky: a man may die of it.

There are many games about this betrothal ceremony and it is often mentioned in the songs; during their slow tedious dance round the marriage-booth the chelik sing a mixed Gondi and Halbi song about it.

[1] The Muria clans do not now appear to worship different numbers of gods, but the above practice suggests that perhaps they once did. Ward says that the Gond marriage contract was generally to the effect 'that the father of the bridegroom elect should give the father of the bride as many rupees as he worships Deos (the latter never exceed nine in number, but vary from that number to five)'.—H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mandlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 136.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Nihun lewël wätor nuni.	We have come to take you, girl. 584
Halay dehi jhulay de!	Let us shake her, let us swing her!
Jora jängh la nichat lamay de.	Extend both your legs. 539
Châbde re ban ke bendra.	The forest monkey bites.
Kohom de re ghar ke bilai	The household cat scratches.
Mahâra dhare jora bichchu.	In the Mahara's house, there is a pair of scorpions.
Re re loyo rela re re la!	*Re re loyo re re la!*

II. The Evidence of the Songs

The importance of the betrothal ceremony is shown by the place it holds 584
in the long narrative songs sung in the ghotul or at a funeral. These songs 533
are valuable as revealing in the most authentic manner what the Muria themselves regard as important; they are in fact documentaries in verse.

I quote here two of these songs, both of which give an interesting account of the course of Muria life. The first is a song used when a menhir is erected. It was sung by Dorga Muria of Dugabangal, a village at the foot of the Abujhmar Hills. In the second song, a Ghotul Pata from Nayanar, is another vivid description of the betrothal. Both in these songs and similar narrative poems given elsewhere in this book, the importance of the ceremony is clearly emphasized.

The Fate of Nirabosi Usendi

In this island of the world lived Kamragatti of the Dhurwa clan. 584
He had a daughter.
There was a boy, too, son of Nirabosi of the Usendi clan. 539
Nirabosi Usendi went to Kamragatti Dhurwa to betroth his son.
He himself went ahead and the brother-clansmen behind.
The Dhurwa asked them, 'Why have you come?'
'You have a daughter, we have come for her.'
'I have a daughter, I have not given her to anyone.'
Thus spoke Kamragatti to Nirabosi of the Usendi clan.
Seeing the bottle of liquor, Kamragatti desired it.
'You are related to me of old, I will give you my daughter.'

The daughter was inside and heard their talk.
She said, 'Many men came for my betrothal, but he did not give me to them.
Today they came and he has given me.'
Thinking thus she was very pleased.
The men drank the liquor and so made an end.
Old man Kamragatti was thinking; he thought, 'I too will give them liquor'.
Amasetiya Kalar and Hiramoti Kalarin had a still.
He went there to fetch liquor.
His daughter came out of the house.
The Usendi asked her, 'Where are you going?'
'I am not going anywhere, I am only coming out of the house.'
'O daughter-in-law, you are so big—why are you not going to someone?
O daughter-in-law, we have come today for your betrothal and you are going out.'
'Men came before for my betrothal, but my father refused to give me.
That is why I am living here and do not go to anyone.'

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

'Hear my word, O daughter-in-law, I have a son, come for him.
Come to the Saturday bazaar, I will send my son there.'
The Usendi said thus and the daughter-in-law was ready to go to the bazaar.

The old man Kamragatti brought liquor.
'I have already taken your liquor, now take mine',
So saying they sat and drank together.
They finished the liquor and were ready for food.
They made chicken curry and prepared fine rice.
They finished the food and got up to go.
Usendi said, 'O samdhi, now we must go'.
'It is no use coming once, you must come again;
'My daughter is young; we will drink a lot of liquor.'
Doing Johar to his samdhi Usendi said, 'I will come again'.

Usendi went to his house and told his son, the Garhbangal boy,
'We went for your betrothal and everything is well arranged,
O son, go to the Saturday bazaar and there the girl will come to meet you.'
When his father said this, the boy was silent from shyness.
This Garhbangal boy prepared to go to the bazaar.

Kamragatti's daughter was called Nerum Taro.
As she went round the bazaar, she met the boy.
They were of one face, like brother and sister.
She asked him, 'Where are you living?'
And he replied, 'Where are you living?
I am living in such and such a village, and I am a Usendi boy'.
Hearing this, she told him,
'We have already talked with your father and it is of you we talked'.
'Yes, I am that boy; come girl, come home with me.'
When the Garhbangal boy said this, the girl was ready to go.
The boy went ahead and the girl followed him.
As they went they passed a jungle on the way.
They went into the thicket beneath the shade of a mango tree.
As they rested, the boy said, 'Don't go back to your father's house'.
'I won't go, brother, how can I leave you?'
The Garhbangal boy was very pleased.
He held her arm as though it were a sweet root;
Her bosom was a banyan leaf on which lay two fruits;
He held the breasts and she remained quiet.
Her thighs were stalks of a plantain tree.
He spread them out and did as he desired.

They got up from there and went to the house;
The path was a jackal's bush, the road was a rat's tail.
Talking to one another, they reached the house.
As they came along the road, the sun set.
Garhbangal had a separate house to sleep in;
They reached the house in the dark and lit a lamp;
There was a cot there and they sat upon it.
They were young, they slept together.
As they lay and sat, they did as they desired.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

The mother was looking out to see why her son did not return,
She went to ask the folk in the bazaar;
The bazaar-folk said that he had been talking to a girl.
She came home and told her husband saying, 'He has been talking to a girl'.
'I had already told him, that's why I sent him there,'
The Usendi told his wife and she was content.
There was a separate sleeping-place for the Garhbangal boy;
She went there and saw them talking to one another.
Seeing this, she returned and told her husband.
The wife of Nirabosi Usendi said,
'There are two there and they are talking to each other'.
Then they both went there to look.
As he went, the Usendi called, 'Have you come back, O boy?'
When they knew someone was coming, they sat separately.
'O daughter-in-law, you also have come home.'

They took them both into the house.
The old woman lit a lamp to put the tika;
She put tika on the girl and kissed her.
Nirabosi Usendi, holding his stick, went to call the villagers,
'Come brothers, my son has brought a girl;
Let us discuss her, whether she will remain or no.'
So saying the old man brought them all.
'She has come as a *haiwark* girl;
Let us marry her at once.'
All night the marriage ceremony continued until dawn.
The boys gathered holding their drums,
And the girls with their cymbals in their hands.
At dawn they finished the marriage and performed the Lagir,
And the boys danced the Lagir dance.

The old man Kamragatti heard the noise of the dance.
He said to himself, 'Where is my daughter? I must have a marriage for her like that'.
They finished the marriage and finished the tika also.
All day they ate and drank till evening, and the boys were thinking,
'Let us take the bride and bridegroom and put them in their house'.
They took the bride and bridegroom and shut the door;
They took a bottle of liquor and stole a cock;
Boys and girls ate it together.

Old man Kamragatti said, 'Who has carried off my daughter?'
He was grinding his teeth as though his mouth was full of pulse.
When he learnt that Nirabosi Usendi had taken his daughter,
He sent an arrow saying, 'Let Nirabosi Usendi die'.
He sent an arrow of fire and snapped his fingers.

Nirabosi Usendi and his wife died;
Garhbangal, the boy, was weeping *sirk, sirk*.
The whole village gathered there;
The boy went for the samdhi and they all came;
The brother-clans and samdhi-clans gathered.
The samdhi laughing beat the drum;
They buried them both and made a tomb.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

584 All the clansmen went away.
The Garhbangal boy told them,
539 'Come on Wednesday, and on that day we will do the *gatgang* ceremony.
On that day we will put a stone or pole'.
So they did Johar and went away.

The cock-people gave cocks and the goat-people gave goats;
And the clansmen made ready goat and pig.
On that day all the samdhi came.
The dead man's soul was living in a saja leaf,
The samdhi cooked the food to give to the dead man.
After cooking it they carried some of the food to the cross-roads,
They called the soul to eat it;
They offered the *jāwa* and *gāto* in the name of the dead man;
The boys and girls danced with the dhol drums.
They cut a saja tree as a post and placed it in the ground.
The soul came there and that is the house of the dead.

The samdhi went to bring a stone;
They went to the Hill of Panthers for a stone;
Some took a cot and some took poles to carry it.
The samdhi brought the stone;
They brought it to the place where they had put the pillar,
The samdhi saw the place and said, 'This is a good spot'.
So thinking they dug a hole;
They dug two holes with the digging-stick;
There they put the stone of the dead.
From the saja tree the dead man came to the stone;
They put haldi and oil on the stone; they put tika on it.

Those who had cowries gave cowries; those who had money gave money;
Those who had rupees gave rupees; those who had dishes gave dishes;
Those who had pots gave pots; those who had cloth gave cloth.
All these things the samdhi took away.
There they finished the work of the stone of death.
'Go, samdhi, go, let us eat in the house.'
Then came from the dead man's house
All old men and women and chelik and motiari also,
They gave their wages to the chelik of several villages.
The boys went away and they fed the samdhi with beef and rice.
For putting a stone for a dead man, this much only.
The dead man's bazaar is not a small bazaar;
On a Saturday, on that day was the bazaar.
There was a king of the dead, he was a great man;
That Raja made ready to go to the bazaar;
His Rani also was ready to go to the bazaar.

Ghotul Pata: The Marriage of Phulsundar Raja

There were seven wealthy brothers,
They had aged parents.
Six of the brothers went to plough,
The youngest stayed at home doing nothing.
He said to his brothers, 'Go and find wives'.
How shall we go without knowing where to go?'

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

'Take a bottle of liquor and go for the betrothal anywhere.' 584
They reached a girl's house. 539
They gave Johar to the father-in-law,
They gave Johar also to the mother-in-law.
Father-in-law asked, 'Why have you come?'
'There is a flower; for that we have brought liquor.'
'We have a flower, but we have already drunk liquor for another.
Take away your liquor, for we will not drink it.'

For their betrothal they had to go elsewhere.
They saw a girl, they gave Johar to her father.
They gave Johar to her mother.
'Where are you going with that bottle of liquor?'
'We have come for the betrothal of your daughter.'
'I have no daughter; take away your liquor.'

As they searched for girls on their way they reached a house.
They came to a widow's house.
There was a girl there.
'Why have you come with a bottle of liquor?'
'You have a daughter; we have come for her.'
'She is my only child; I will not give her to you.
She is to me both daughter and son.'

Leaving that house, the boys went on their way.
They said, 'How are we to find girls for wives?'
There were daughters of Bhagavan;
There were seven sisters and none were betrothed.
The boys went to Bhagavan and gave him Johar.
Bhagavan asked them, 'Why have you come?'
'You have a daughter; we have come for her betrothal.'
'It is true I have a daughter, but we have already drunk liquor for her.'
So said Bhagavan and the boys made ready to depart.

But as they were going, the youngest daughter said,
'O sisters, hear my word.
A year has passed, but my father has not drunk liquor for me.'
The small girl said to her father,
'We are all mature; why don't you accept the liquor?'
Her father said, 'There is no one who has come for your betrothal; how then can I give you?'
The small girl went to the house where the young men were,
And said, 'Come to my house for my betrothal'.

Father-in-law said, 'There is no mate; why have you come?'
Bhagavan said, 'There is no mate, O daughters'.
The small girl told her sisters, 'There is no mate for us.
What shall we do. There is the Baidar.
Let us ask him about our mates.
Birds and ants combine in pairs, and why not we?
Let us go to the Baidar, for he keeps the accounts of all'.

They then asked the Baidar, 'Are there mates for us or no?'
Bringing his books the Baidar came out.
He brought a book large as a village boundary.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

He read his book about birth and mating,
He sat and looked at his books.
Then said he, 'It is written here.
Reading my books I forgot.
Morning and evening I have read my books
For twelve years and thirteen ages,
All read but none can understand.
Sitting, sitting, I have become hunchbacked'.

At that time the small girl saw the book and laughed.
She tied up that book in her waist-cloth,
She told her sisters, 'Let us go.
Let the papers be; but let us go to the house'.
The small girl took Baidar's papers in her cloth.
Her elder sisters asked her, 'What are you taking in your cloth?
O sister, let us know what it is'.

They gathered round and read the paper.
'It is for our mating and says what should be done.
We cannot win mates unless we go to the Middle World.'
Down to the Middle World they climbed by a silken thread and went towards the east.
They came to a village. 'Where are you, brothers? See, we have come.'
'I am the watcher of my house, I always live at home.'
'O brother, hear my word.'
'What is it? Let me know.'
'Keep us with you, so we will remain.'
'I do not know what to answer; my elder brothers know.
Wait a little till they return home.'

Soon the brothers came and the girls said, 'Brothers, brothers!'
'What is the matter? Let us know.'
'No, it is nothing. Only keep us with you, brothers.'
'All of you may live here if you like.'
The small girl said, 'Let us be divided pair by pair.
The eldest sister for the eldest brother,
The middle sisters for the middle brothers.
And I will live with the youngest brother'.

All then were paired with each other.
They gave a granary-full of rice to be husked;
Somi and Dami husked the rice.
The villagers were called to fetch the liquor.
Twelve outstills of *phuli* and thirteen outstills of *rasi*.
They went to a Chitkul Mitkul Kalarin, beautiful and sweet.
They asked for liquor from that Kalarin,
Twelve outstills of *phuli* and thirteen outstills of *rasi*.
The Chitkul Mitkul Kalarin measured out the liquor.
The liquor was brought and the marriage was performed.
The marriage was finished and they were yoked together.

Living, living, the eldest brother's wife conceived.
Day by day the belly grew; it was made by Bhagavan.
She gave birth to a boy and the Chhati ceremony was performed.
For that ceremony they husked a granary-full of rice.
'Go and bring leaves and fuel for the Chhati ceremony.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

302
301
585

Bride at Amasara with braided hair

[p. 94 (A)]

585
415

The bride's bath

Plate XXIV

Chelik fan the bride dry after her bath

[p. 94 (B)]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Five went to the hill for leaves and fuel.
The small girl was lazy, she was sleeping on the road.
'O girl, pick the leaves and take them home.'
At that she went away and slept on the rock.
'I am not feeling well, sister, I feel very bad.'
'Why are you feeling ill? What disease have you got?'
'Come here, girl, and lie down and listen:
Whether it be true or false, there is the beating of a drum.'
'No, let us go home, it is for our father's funeral.'
So they went home and told the eldest sister,
'You remain here, we will go for our father's funeral'.

'I too will come with you, O sisters.'
'No, do not come, see how small [1] is your baby.'
'No, I must come, or they'll say, Look the eldest daughter hasn't come.'
She took the baby and went along with them.
'Let us not take the child, let us leave him with the cattle.'
So thinking, they left him with the cattle.

They went on to the funeral.
The baby got up and followed them.
They turned round and said, 'O girl, your baby is coming'.
So they took him with them.
They reached the house and did Johar to everyone.
All wept and they finished the rites of the dead.

The daughter of Gharabundi was Phulsundri Rani.
'O mother, betroth this girl for me.'
'No, son, her betrothal has already been arranged.
They have betrothed her to Oriyal Jhoriyal.'
So he went to his little mother and asked her to arrange his engagement with this girl.
She winked at the boy to come to her.
'Put on some bangles and wear a cloth.'
She has married Raja Phulsundor.
The marriage is done, the liquor is drunk.
They did a Raja-subject marriage [2] hastily.
The Raja caught the Rani's finger and made her sleep inside the house.
He stayed seven days in that village.
The village potter brought his pot to boil the clothes.
In that pot they boiled the clothes and took them to the river.
They threw away the haldi-stained clothes.
But they washed the new clothes and took them out and went.
After bathing they returned to the house.

Both went riding on a horse.
So Phulsundor Raja brought her home.
Reaching home they lived and ate.
Gharabundi went to Oriyal Jhoriyal.
'Phulsundor Raja stole my daughter.'
They searched for them and held a panch.
The panch decided and took the bride-price.

[1] *Yetwa*, the word means to hold a little baby with the arm against the breast. The whole line runs in the original—'Niya wayma bai bâbu to yetna âyore gil gila âtor'.
[2] A Raja-praja marriage is one performed hurriedly, within the limits of a single night and day.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. Six Kinds of Marriage

583 As in other parts of aboriginal India, the Muria recognize several different types of marriage, which for convenience I will give in tabular form.

585 (i) *Ostasāna marmi* (Halbi, *sopni bihao*). This is the traditional Gond marriage; the parents, after anointing the girl with haldi, send her to the bridegroom's house where the Lagir is performed.

(ii) *Talk dayna* (Halbi, *chal bihao*). This is the Hinduized modification of the Gond marriage and is performed partly in the bride's and partly in the bridegroom's house. The Lagir is held outside the bride's house. It is known as Chat-marmi in Betul and is only performed when the contracting parties have quarrelled.[1]

(iii) *Arwitāna* (Halbi, *udaliya*[2]). This is the marriage of a chelik and motiari who elope to a friend's house and have the rites there without the approval of their parents. The full ceremonies may be performed, but the bridegroom has to pay for them himself.

(iv) *Haiwark wāt* (Halbi, *paisa mundi* or *paitu*). Here a girl runs away from her parents' house and forces marriage on a boy of her choice. She arrives, sits down and refuses to go away.

[587] (v) *Tika tasāna* (Halbi, *haldi-pāni bihao*). This is the simple and inexpensive ritual performed either for a widow or widower who remarries, for the marriage of divorced persons or for an adulterous marriage.

(vi) *Yer dosāna marmi* (Halbi, *bhul bihao*). This is the hurried marriage when a motiari is found to be pregnant. If the boy to whom she is engaged is willing to marry her in spite of this and is willing to accept the child as his own, it is called a *bhul bihao*. If the marriage is with the boy who caused the pregnancy it is simply a *yer dosāna* or 'pouring-water marriage'.[3]

585 I will describe in very considerable detail the first two types of marriage. The others may be disposed of more expeditiously.

The *Arwitāna* marriage is often performed with the full rites, though naturally somewhat modified by the absence of the parents, and the fact that the bride and bridegroom are attended by chelik and motiari of another ghotul.

The *Haiwark wāt* marriage is celebrated when a girl leaves her home and forces herself upon her lover. When the boy asks her what she wants, she says she has come for *paisa mundi*. If the boy is willing, and sometimes even if he is not very enthusiastic about it, the marriage is performed as soon as possible. That very evening the chelik and motiari assemble and build a simple booth with only five pillars. Bride and bridegroom sit in this and the Gaita places rapidly-made crowns on their heads, and puts haldi and oil on their bodies. The village people do tika and the chelik and motiari take bride and bridegroom seven times round the booth and someone pours water and haldi over them.

587 The *Tika tasāna* marriage is simple and inexpensive. It often has to be, for in the case of adultery, elopement or a marriage after divorce, the new

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 80.
[2] Russell says this means 'Love in the fields'—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 468.
[3] To these forms of marriage many parallels may be found in other Indian tribes as well as in traditional Hinduism.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

bridegroom has to pay up the expenses of the original marriage and sometimes compensation to the original husband as well as a fine to the panchayat. The ceremony is performed inside the house, bride and bridegroom sitting together. The bridegroom puts a cloth on a wooden seat, pours liquor on it and hands it to his bride. She rolls up mango leaves into little *kinwa* and puts them in her ears. There is no dancing, no anointing with haldi, no going round the booth. Visitors place a tika mark of dry rice without the usual oil or haldi.

The Gaita sprinkles the new cloth of the bride with liquor and gives a little sermon: 'O Mahapurub, this man's house has been broken; this woman's house is broken. These two have we elders yoked. O Mahapurub, give them all they need to eat and drink. Let them have sons and daughters. For all their visitors let there be enough.'

Then the newly married pair touch the feet of the village elders who bless them saying, 'Go brother and sister, live well and eat well; may you have children; when we come to visit you, give us a little water. May Mahapurub care for you.'

When a widow is remarried there is the same ceremony, and almost the same words are used except that instead of the reference to the broken houses, the elders speak of the loss of the husband. Should a widow be marrying an unmarried boy—as might easily happen if the girl had been married young—the boy is anointed with haldi and oil, but she is not.

The *dewar* or husband's younger brother has first claim upon a widow and if she marries anybody else, her husband has to compensate him. In some places, there is a formality by which a woman can avoid the reproach of widowhood without actually getting married. In Banjora, for example, 'she need not put on bangles; if she puts *kinwa* of mango leaves in her ears in the name of her *dewar* or her grandson, she is no longer a widow'. At Bopna, when Gagra's father died, his widow put what are called *hāt kinwa* in her ears. As they described the incident to us, 'she said to herself, "Since there is an Anga in our house no one will eat from my hands now I am a widow. I will put *kinwa* in my ears and bangles on my wrists in the name of my *dewar*; if I don't, my relations will fine me and even men of my own house won't eat with me." So thinking, she went to a bazaar, and on her way home she picked a couple of mango leaves, rolled them up and put them in her ears in the name of the bazaar. After that she was no longer regarded as a widow.'

Sometimes old women put these *kinwa* in their ears in the name of their grandsons. 'If there is no husband for you, marry your grandson.' In Gudla, Lakmu's father's brother's mother put *kinwa* for Lakmu. It is generally said that a grandmother can put these ornaments in the name of her own son's own son, that is, her real, and not merely her classificatory, grandson.

Finally, we have the sad and furtive ceremony that is performed when a *motiari* has the misfortune to conceive. A booth with only five pillars is erected, relations apply haldi to both bride and bridegroom, but the leaf-crown is put only on the bridegroom's head. He has to go alone round the booth for the Lagir ceremony accompanied by a man carrying the marriage *kalsa*-pot, which represents his wife. They then sit together and tika is made with rice mixed with haldi and oil. A pregnant girl may never go round the booth for the Lagir ceremony.

Irregular marriages, obviously, can be celebrated at any time of the year; but regular marriages are performed only in the hot weather (March to May).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

IV. The Marriage Ceremonies

585 I will now describe in detail the actual procedure of a Muria marriage. This rather tedious task is, I fear, inevitable, for during a wedding the chelik and motiari are on the stage nearly all the time and are rarely seen to better advantage. But to give a coherent account of these marriages is not easy, for—as among the Gond of the Central Provinces—customs vary from village to village and from year to year. Aboriginal marriage procedure seems specially sensitive to outside influence. As we have seen, in northern Bastar the Muria are subject to the influence first of the Abujhmar Maria, then of the Gond of Chanda, Chhattisgarh and Orissa and finally of Hindu traders and officials. In the Chota Dongar, Mardapal and Chalka Pargana I found marriage customs vague and uncertain; I got the impression of people playing a part that was new to them, performing ceremonies that were not theirs by long tradition. This is probably because these people are really Maria who have come to settle in the plains—and the Maria have practically no marriage ceremonial at all. The payment of a bride-price, feasting and dancing in the bride's house, the taking home of the bride and closeting her with her husband: such is the simple formula of a marriage in the Abujhmar Hills.

As we move north and east, however, we find more and more complexity and precision in the marriage ceremony. In the Jhorian, Amabera and other northern parganas of Narayanpur, the influence of the Chhattisgarh Gond is clearly seen; marriages are usually held in the house of the bridegroom, the marriage-booth is built inside the compound, and many of the customs remind me of what I have seen in Mandla and elsewhere.

In the north and east of the Kondagaon Tahsil, Hindu elements are prominent—the use of haldi, the marriage-booth, the sevenfold circumambulation, and many minor details. The most notable difference in custom is that the main ceremony is held in the bride's house. This is the Hindu custom, but it is also that of many Uraon, the Baiga and (most significantly) the Hill Maria. There is some reason to suppose that the Gond practice is not really primitive but, like so many other customs, grew out of some actual incident that was interpreted as revealing the will of the gods.[1]

But even where the ceremony is modified, there is an attempt at a compromise with normal Gond custom. The groom's booth is made *outside* the bride's house, and he has a separate camp. Bride and groom are anointed with haldi in their own separate houses. The climax of the ceremony is at the groom's booth, and the concluding rites in his house.

But where the marriage is held in the groom's house, the booth is made *inside*, and both bride and groom are anointed together.

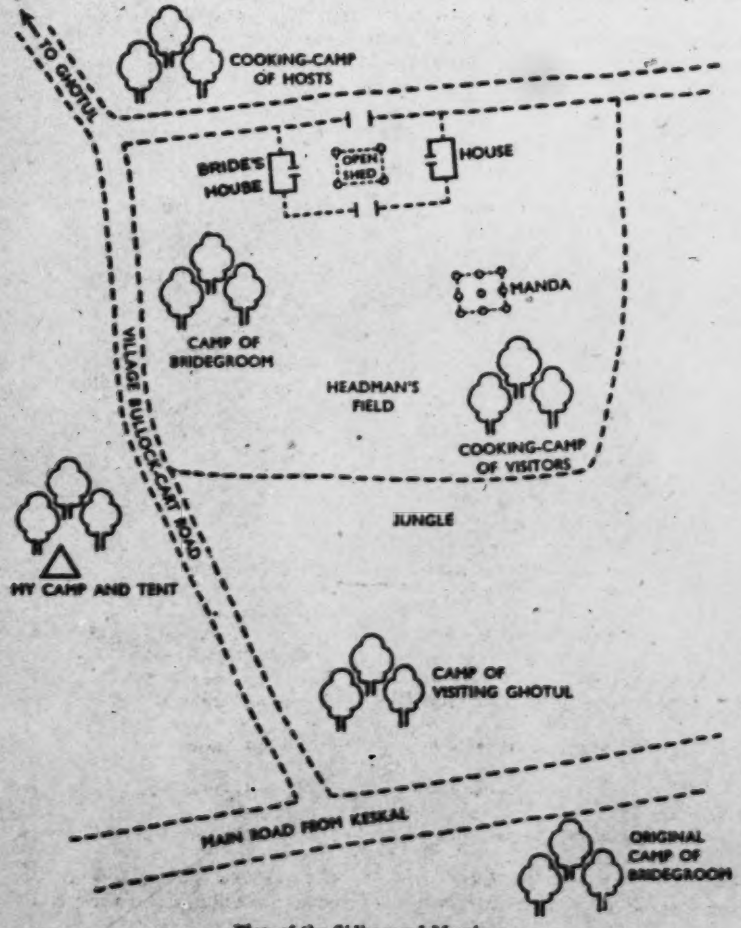
I must therefore inflict on the reader two accounts: the first is of the marriage of Dhuti and Nohori which I attended at Sidhawand in the north-east of the State from 3 March 1941, where the ceremony was held at the bride's house, supplementing it with observations of two marriages which I saw at Malakot in April of the same year. The latter was a double cross-cousin

[1] Russell and Hiralal suggest that 'the custom of holding the wedding in the bridegroom's house is a survival of the custom of marriage by capture, when the bride was carried off from her own house to the bridegroom's, and any ceremony which was requisite was necessarily held at the house of the latter. But the Gonds say that since Dulha Deo, the bridegroom god and one of the commonest village deities, was carried off by a tiger on his way to his wedding, it was decided that in future the bride must go to the bridegroom to be married in order to obviate the recurrence of such a calamity'.—Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 73. Crooke refers to a version of the legend wherein the bridegroom was killed by lightning.—W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), Vol. I, p. 119.

marriage; a Naitami girl and boy of Malakot married a Poyami boy and girl of Parsipadar by exchange. The second account describes the marriage of Karanga of Nayanar and Waddai of Amasara which began on 15 April 1941, and was held in the bridegroom's house. There were three marriages in succession at this time, and I also have notes of similar ceremonies in Telenga, Atargaon, Naria and Esalnar. In both accounts I emphasize, though I do not exaggerate, the part played by the chelik and motiari. 585

The Sidhawand Marriage

In Sidhawand lives my *sakhi*, Pilsai; and his uncle the headman of the village (a Maravi) sent me a very warm invitation to be present at the marriage



Plan of the Sidhawand Marriage

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 of his daughter to a Poyami boy from Eitkonar. On 3 March 1941, therefore, I made my camp in the village, and was greeted with great affection.

Preparations for the Marriage

585 533 For a whole week before the marriage, there had been energetic preparations both in the ghotul and the home. In the ghotul the chelik and motiari gathered round the bride and sang songs about her future joys and sorrows. So important is this training of the bride that even where the girls do not normally sleep in the ghotul, the rule is relaxed for these few days.

The songs describe the joys of ghotul life and the girl's stern and sorrowful experiences under a stepmother's rule. Here is a fairly lengthy song on this familiar theme. After each line the refrain *Rerela rerela rela rerela* is repeated several times. Each line ends with the exclamation *Roy helo, O sister!* and is itself repeated twice.

Song

Rerela rerela rela rerela

585 539

Niya ra mandāna loni roy helo,	This used to be your home,
Loni gājur hindu roy helo,	How clamorous your talk here,
Loni re hinja podār roy helo.	But now the house is silent.
Niya re nāru gali roy helo,	Yours was the village path,
Koliyāl tokār harri helo,	The path was like a fox's tail,
Bera re arrān gāti roy helo,	You used to go at sunset,
Dāwāng haide heti roy helo,	In your left hand a winnowing-fan,
Tināng haide hesur roy helo,	In your right hand a broom,
Ghotu de heya handi roy helo,	You went to clean the ghotul,
Jaliyāl mal lekha roy helo.	Like a peacock strutting.
Amha na miyār indur roy helo.	We said, 'There goes so-and-so's daughter'.
Ghotu de gājur hindu roy helo,	In the ghotul was a lot of noise,
Kile re koru racha roy helo,	The court was long and broad,
Niya ra jor tor layor roy helo,	You had a boy lover,
Jodire ondoy kiti roy helo,	But you are leaving him lonely,
Sangi re jor tor layor roy helo,	You had a boy lover,
Sangi re tavi dāki roy helo,	You are going away leaving him behind,
Dinda re rāj te mandi roy helo,	You were living in the kingdom of the unmarried,
Adere rājo pulo roy helo,	You will never enter it again,
Buto re habār punwin roy helo,	You don't know what toil there is ahead,
Sagāre vidun punwin roy helo,	You don't know what relatives can be like,
Haton ne wāton ne punwin roy helo,	You don't know what visitors will come,
Kosure hoyiune punwin roy helo,	You don't know what officials will come,
Ideke sudi wāyar roy helo,	But soon you will know it all,
Ideke bara pundaki roy helo.	Soon you will discover what married life is like.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Rerela rerela rela rerela

They remind the motiari of her former lovers:

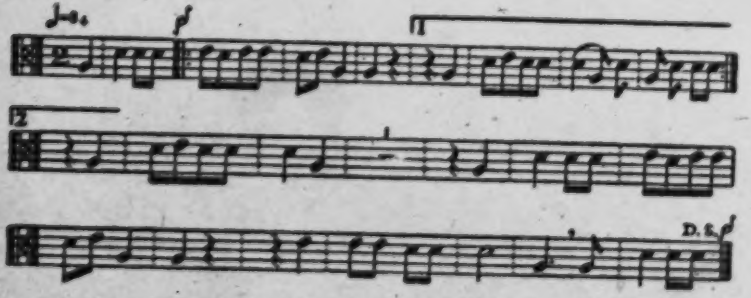
585
539

Niya jorta layor helo adere,	He was your yoke-fellow,
Kotal jori layor helo adere,	He was your lover,
Ore layor hunjdi helo adere,	You used to sleep with him,
Narka dhuinga talkindi helo adere,	At night he craved tobacco,[1]
Dhuinga hile indur helo adere.	You said you had none.
Adere dhuinga āyo helo adere.	But that was not his real desire.
Hewon injor witindi helo adere.	You denied him and tried to run away.
Layon tasi dāhi helo adere.	But now forever you are leaving him.

They also remind the bridegroom (if he is in the same ghotul) of what he too is going to lose.

How good it would have been had the Raja stayed, O Rani!
He would have been lord of this kingdom;
We would have served him as his servants;
We would have brought our ploughs for his field;
We would have carried his loads without charge.
We would have been given rice as our wages.
We would have carried home his bundles of rice.
We would have brought them from the fields, lifting up our loads.
We would have taken them to the Raja, and he would have paid us our wages, O Rani!

This song is specially appropriate to one of the leaders of the ghotul: other songs have a more general application.



[533]

Dinderājo jorājo nona.	The kingdom of the free, lad.
Ide rājo puto nona.	You'll never see it more, lad.
Niya udyna ghotul nona.	You came to the ghotul, lad.
Parmāhoro ghotul nona.	Fair as bison-horns, lad.
Ide ghotul de wandir nona.	You used to come here always, lad.
Dāna haide giki nona.	A sleeping-mat in the left hand, lad.
Tina haide barga nona.	In the right hand a stick, lad.

[1] To ask for tobacco is the conventional way of inviting a girl to sexual congress.

[833]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 539 During the day, material preparations keep the family busy and excited. Rice must be husked and cleaned, pulses prepared; the men must arrange for liquor, the women for oil and haldi. As they grind the haldi the women sing:

Māyo balum jamudi.	O Jamidarin mother, we call on you.
Kākor ghare niy utra,.	Don't go elsewhere, O mother,
Maniya daniya ghare je.	But come to Maniya Daniya's house.
Tuke newta pārila,	We invite you here,
Dandik bale yiha se,	Come for a little while,
Haldi pura dihāse.	Let there be full measure of haldi and flour.
Asa māyo asa je.	Do not betray our faith in you.
Māyo balum bangārām.	O mother Bangaram!
Tuke newta pārila.	We invite you also.
Kākor ghare newta je?	Whose is this invitation?
Maniya daniya ghare je.	It is to Maniya Daniya's house.
Haldi pura dihāse.	May there be full measure of haldi and flour.

And so on, endlessly, through a score of deities. Maniya Daniya simply means 'so-and-so' and is altered to the actual name of the householder in each case.

The Bridegroom's Farewell Dance

585 Shortly after my arrival, a roll of drums heralded the approach of the bridegroom, attended by a party of chelik and motiari, who made a temporary camp under a mango tree outside the boundary of the village. This night they cooked for themselves, but three of them came on deputation to the headman to ask for assistants to help with water and cooking. Later, the bridegroom's party began to dance, led by the boy himself; it was his farewell and final dance as an unmarried man.

The Preparation of the Bride

At about nine in the evening, the elders of the village assembled outside the headman's house for a preliminary drink, and two hours later the chelik and motiari gathered in the same place. The elders had now gone away, and the boys made a big fire, and brought out the bride. The girl, who had been Belosa, was covered with a cloth and made to sit in the lap of the Tiloka, her own sister, and was supported on either side by the Sirdar and Kandki. [152] She began to weep loudly and mournfully: she was in good voice, for she had been practising in the ghotul every day for the past week. Today she must continue to cry all night. The boys and girls sang to drown the painful noise, to instruct her in her new duties and themselves to mourn the loss of their Belosa. All night they continued weeping, singing, sometimes dancing, though unlike the bridegroom the bride had no heart for this. From time to time they took a little liquor. It was a moving sight, for the girl's sorrow was genuine, as well it might be—she was leaving a world of freedom and romance for the unfamiliarity of a strange house. The ghotul children also felt the departure of one of their number very deeply; they had lived with her for years; as Belosa she had been the lover of the boys and controlled the destiny of the girls.

585 533 The sequence of the songs was fascinating; with Pilsai's help I was able to get a lot of it down. It was sung in a mixture of Gondi, Halbi and Chhattisgarhi.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
301
291

Motiari attending the bridegroom at Nayanar

[p.102 (A)]

Plate XXVI

585
292

Motiari carrying the crowned bride groom at Sidhawand

585

Bridegroom sitting in the lap of an attendant

[p. 102 (B)]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585
533

The Bride's Song

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539 The bride wept:

Father, my own father, come to me,
For I am going away to a stranger's house.
Had I been a boy you would have brought a daughter
To your own house.
But as I am a girl you send me away.
Had I been a boy, my wife and I would have stayed with you and made you happy.
But I must go away, and we both are sad.

Mother, my own mother, come to me.
Yesterday I was husking rice in your house;
I was sweeping the floor, fetching water from the well,
Cooking food for you, plucking leaves for cups and plates.
But now I go away to a stranger's house, and who will care for you?
How lovingly you looked after me!
But in this new house shall I find joy or sorrow?
When you come to see me shall I be able to give you so much as a cup of gruel?
From today my games, my fun, my seeing you will end.

Now the bride addressed the head of the ghotul.

O Sirdar, when you came to the ghotul and found it dirty
With ashes and dust and no one had swept it,
You called for me and asked me whose fault it was.
The Kotwar and Kandki defended me,
But you said, We are not Maria that we should sleep in dirt,
And so you fined us.
Now I am going away and whom will you have to fine?
Daily I cleaned the ghotul,
But now who will clean it?
With you I used to play and dance,
But now my feet are bound, and I shall not meet you even in my dreams.
Who knows whether I shall find joy or sorrow in this stranger's house.
Sometimes I combed your hair and laughing rubbed your arms,
But sometimes I was tired and slept.
Then you all said, Why don't you comb our hair,
And massage our limbs today?
You must have been to someone, why don't you come to us today?
For this you punished us, turning us out, and saying,
Never come more to the ghotul.
But I brought you liquor and with folded hands
Begged you to let us in again.
Now even in my dreams I may not massage you,
And who will there be to comfort you?

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
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Then she addressed every girl in turn, repeating the same formula to their different ghotul titles.

O Dulosa, Tiloka, Alosa, Jhankai!
I used to bid you sweep and clean, go here and there,
Comb this boy's hair, rub that boy's limbs.
Sometimes you forgot your duty and I abused you.
I went with you for the Diwali and the Hulki dance.
With you I played all kinds of games.
Now who will go to dance or play with you?
Who will teach you our ghotul ways?
While I was with you I taught you everything.
But now I go to a strange house,
And I cannot teach you even in my dreams.

Then the chelik replied,

Only yesterday you came to our ghotul to press our hands and arms,
But now who will comfort us?
Only yesterday you made us happy with your talk and laughter,
But now who will comfort us?
We used to trouble you in every way,
Yet you always gave us comfort.
If you didn't come to the ghotul for two days, we used to ask in the village where you were.
Sometimes they said you had gone away or had fallen ill.
Then when you came at last and we asked you what you had been doing,
You replied 'I went to such and such a village' or 'I was ill and so I couldn't come'.
But when we knew that you had not gone anywhere,
When we heard that you were not ill, but had been to sleep in some rascal's house,
When we knew that you had deserted us for that worthless fellow,
We had to punish you.
But now you will never be punished again,
For you are going away to a husband's house.
Never in your life will you be punished again like that.

Only yesterday we told you to fill our leaf-pipes, to fetch us leaves, to sweep the ghotul rooms,
But now you will never do that again.
We shall look at you from far away and whisper, There goes Belosabai.
No more can you go with us or sit with us.

But live happily there as you lived with us.
Love your husband and comfort him as you loved and comforted us.
Roll his leaf-pipe for him, fetch him leaves and water,
Clean his house, comb his hair, massage his arms and back.
But leave your games and loves and laughter.
Your games and loves and laughter now are for your husband.

And the motiari sang weeping:

Give food and water to your husband's parents.
Don't quarrel with them, don't annoy them, hark to what they say
So you will be happy; if not, your life is ruined.
Live happily with your husband's younger brothers and sisters.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585
539

Pick leaves for them, fetch water, bring them wood, and clean their house.
Yesterday you laughed and played with us; tomorrow laugh and play with them.
Yesterday you went with us for water to the well; tomorrow go with them.
If a stranger comes to your new house, content him with water for his feet and a cup of gruel.
When we come, show that you remember us, and give us what we need.
You used to teach us everything, how to make necklaces with beads,
How to massage and how to please the chelik;
But who will teach us now?
When you troubled us, you were our defence;
But who will defend us now?
We will never forget you, without you our ghotul is empty and deserted.

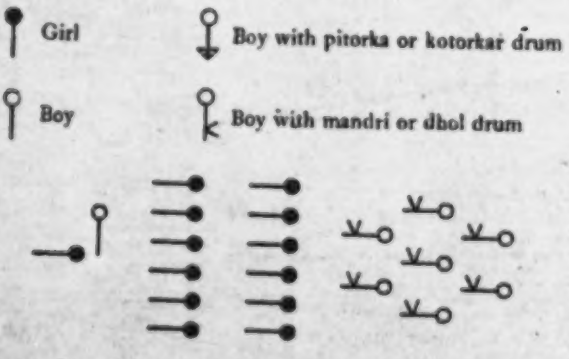
585

In this wonderful exchange of tenderness and remembrance the whole of ghotul life becomes real and vivid. Almost every line might have a footnote referring to some chapter of this book.

After a long night of this, everyone was a little subdued, and nothing happened next day till about 3 p.m. when the bride's party of chelik and motiari went out with their drums to meet the bridegroom.

The Welcome of the Bridegroom

The boys led the way with their drums, followed by a double line of girls, clashing their cymbals, singing loudly. They advanced three paces, halted,



retired two paces, and then advanced again. At the same time the bridegroom's party advanced from their camp in similar formation, bringing the boy with them. As they went along, the girls sang a Gondi song with the refrain *Riri loyo ririla riri loyo ririla rila.*

Sindi ãhi mowuri buba,	There's a crown of palm leaves, father,
Nana mowur kerka buba,	I will wear that crown, father,
Bubãn lãr ne kerka.	Wear it to please my father.
Sãtu jãr dãdãlor buba,	I have seven brothers, father,
Dãdãn lãr ne kerka buba.	For love of them I'll wear it, father.

585
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Meeting of the Parents

585 Just inside the village the parties met—the girls greeted each other, and the elders sat down on the ground for *pārin-bhet* or *samdhi-bhet*, an important little rite which emphasizes that marriage is more than a union of two individuals; it is an alliance of families. A cloth was spread on the ground, and the father of the bride and the father of the bridegroom—the two samdhi—sat down together to talk for a few minutes. The Gaita drew lines of rice-flour and turmeric on the ground, and exclaimed, 'Let tomorrow's work be rooted deep and the tree grow large!' When they got up someone threw a pot of haldi-water over them and there was a lot of ribald laughter.

In Esalnar, the samdhi sat down with a pot of water and cleaned their teeth, exchanging the twigs and saying, 'Let there be no quarrels, let all be well, let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'.

During this little ceremony the motiari sing various songs, of which the following (in Chhattisgarhi) is an example:

[533]

[539]

Milo milo milo samdhi kukur pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a puppy!
Kukur pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a puppy? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi hāthi pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a baby elephant!
Hāthi pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a baby elephant? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi burkāl pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a tiger cub!
Burkāl pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a tiger cub? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi gini pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a sucking pig!
Gini pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a sucking pig? Take away your baby.

The bride's motiari went forward; one of them picked up the boy on her back, and they led him in this formation to his camp on one side of the headman's field.

Here was a small leaf-hut under a shady tree. Men and women of both parties greeted the bridegroom. They washed his feet and put a rice-mark on his forehead. Then they led him into the hut and made him sit on a new mat.

The Giving of the Ring

The scene now shifts to the bride's house. Presents of cloth were given to the bride's mother. As it had not been done at the engagement-time, the ring-cowrie, in its modern form of four annas, was given to the bride's father and put in the Pot of the Departed to compensate the ancestors for

585 Pouring oil down an arrow on to the head of the bride

Plate XXVII

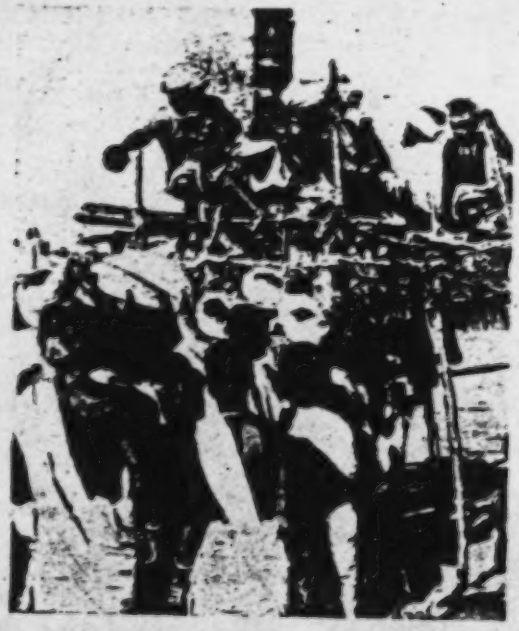
Preparing the bride's seat underneath a curtain

[p 106 a]

Plate XXVIII

535

The Horn Dance at Sidhawand



The Lagir ceremony at Sidhawand

[p. 106 b]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 the loss of the girl from their clan. This is a very important and significant ceremony. It represents the passage of the girl from her original clan into that of her husband, and indicates that she will henceforth be numbered with his ancestors.

The bridegroom was carried over from his camp. A new mat was spread, and the samdhi sat down. A little rice was put on their knees. The bride sat in the lap of her father-in-law, the bridegroom in the lap of his. Motiari covered the girl's hand with oil. The Gaita put a ring on the boy's little finger. The boy then seized his bride and tried to transfer the ring to her. But her hand was oily and slippery, and there was a long struggle—which caused great amusement—before he was victorious. Then the girl hit him with her clenched fist and jumped up. He tried to hit her back, but a group of her chelik dashed forward and covered her escape.

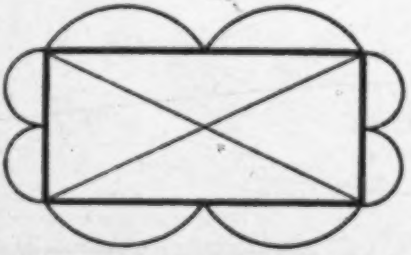
All the time the motiari stood by singing loudly:

[539]

Muda muda intoni dāda!	He is saying ring, ring, brother!
Sonār pekoh āyerom dāda,	Were I a goldsmith's daughter, brother,
Son muda hewerom dāda,	He would give me a golden ring, brother,
Dinda layorālek roy dāda,	Were he an unmarried boy, brother,
Kuddum dāka wāteni dāda.	He would come running to me, brother.
Kaide muda niya ro dāda.	The ring is in your hand, brother.
Pila hāra āteke roy dāda,	Were he a man with children, brother,
Pila odch kemy roy dāda.	He would bring them to stay with me, brother.

The Crowning of the Bridegroom

The bridegroom was now carried back to his camp, where the Gaita made a *ghari*-pattern[1] on the ground like this. The boy sat in the lap of his elder brother's wife. Old women, mother's and father's sisters, covered his head with the ends of their saris. The Gaita came with an elaborate crown made by Pannara from date-palm leaves. The leaves in the crowns are carefully counted: if the number in each is uneven, all will be well, but if the bride's number is even it means that the marriage will be a failure. This is the Neyi Maur or Oil Crown which will be worn throughout the preliminaries of the marriage, and then exchanged for the Lagir Maur at its crisis. The Gaita and the boy handed it to and fro seven times. The Gaita held it up, exhibited it left and right and with a sudden movement pushed it over the boy's face, while the whole party shouted in



[1] These patterns, which are also made in the marriage booth, are akin to the 'threshold designs' common throughout India. Their purpose is, I think, definitely 'witch-baffling' Cf. *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 268 and XLIX, p. 181.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 triumph. He dropped a little oil over the boy's head and shoulders, and applied haldi to his body with mango leaves. He was followed by everyone present.

[292]

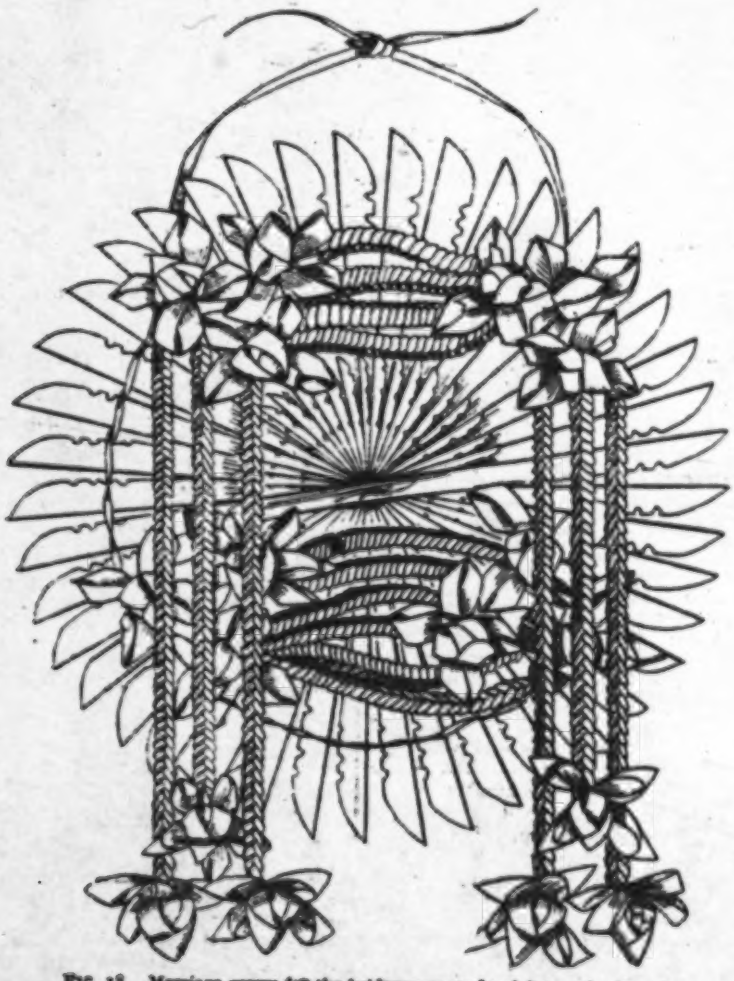
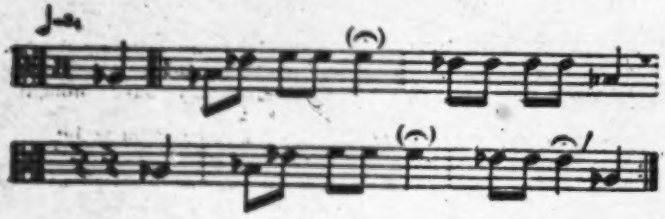


FIG. 18. Marriage crown for the bridegroom made of date-palm leaves
Breadth 1'

Meanwhile, the motiari sang songs about the date-palm, from whose leaves the crowns are made.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH



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Chhind phūn ho mauor dai,	Of palm leaves is the crown, mother.
Main mauor bāndho dai?	May I wear the crown, mother?
Kāy mola dobe bābu?	What will you give me, son?
Gaiberi ho rupiya dai,	I'll give you a bundle of money, mother,
Katha ho hoila dai,	I'll give you a bullock in the stall, mother,
Wahi hoila dobe bābu.	Give me that bullock, son.

Here is a rather charming little song, which was recorded at Palari.

585
539

Bīri hota chhind hota rati rati hunde	The palm grows near the fence and cries all night.
Na hind re chhind hota bābu mauor pinde,	Don't cry, O palm, my son will wear you as a crown,
Bāndo le bāndo pujāri chatuk mauor bāndo.	Tie O tie it, priest, carefully tie the crown.

Bringing in the Mandu Wood

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Now the chelik of Sidhawand, assisted by visiting chelik from other villages, went out with the Gaita to fetch wood for the marriage-booth. The Gaita cut a small mahua tree with a single blow of his axe, and the boys cut the other poles and leafy branches of sarai wood. Presently the party returned, drumming, dancing and singing, with loud shouts of *Pude* (vagina).[1] It was now nearly sunset. The boys piled the wood in the place where they were going to build the booth, and danced round it holding each other's hands. The nattiari came and picked up the mahua tree. They stood in a bunch very close together, everyone held the tree and banged it up and down, singing vigorously.

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While the wood was being brought in the girls sang taunt-songs at the boys, most of them obscene. The first, for example, has the refrain *Kerad hāyāng burka sulling farbatuk chato nor layor*, 'The chelik's testicles are like the fruit of a dried-up tree and the root of a gourd; his penis is like a snake'.

[1] Risley describes a festival of Dharti Mai among the Mal Paharia. 'The dancing party shout continually *hur, hur* (*pudendum muliebre*), a mode of invocation believed to be especially acceptable to the goddess. In this somewhat indelicate cry we may perhaps see a barbarous and undraped reference to the *vis genitrix naturae* so prominent in many early forms of belief.'—H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1891), Vol. II, p. 71.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Songs

585
539

Layor talle manda ri sango;	The boys are bringing the boughs on their heads;
Maksi manda tator ri sango.	Secretly they have brought the wood.
Bucking poynāh kāhtor ri sango.	They have cut it bit by bit.
Māke marri kewer ri sango,	If they would give us axes,
Chhak ne manda kaderāt sango.	We'd cut the wood with a single blow,
Mamāt manda tawerāt sango.	And we would bring the wood in.

In the next song, the boys sing the first three lines and the girls answer.

Mando deri kokoti wākoti soy bai.	The pole of the booth is crooked, girl.
Tumcho vati chepoti roy soy bai.	Your vagina is like a chapati, girl.
Jhelun dānka netu roy soy bai.	We will dance jumping up and down, girl.
Tumcho asan vatu roy soy dāda.	If we were to do it instead of you, brother.
Jhelun dānka netu roy soy dāda.	We would dance jumping up and down, brother.
Gāra phāndun netu roy soy dāda.	We would yoke the cart and take it away, brother,
Kukra bāsti netu roy soy dāda.	At cock-crow we would take it away, brother.
Kānde tangia dhartu roy soy dāda.	We'd put axes on your shoulders, brother.
Bāchun deri mārtun roy soy dāda.	We'd bring a straight pole, brother.
Kokta bākta deri roy soy dāda.	We'd never cut a crooked pole, brother.

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[837]

There are other songs which I need not quote, in which there is much play about crooked wood and the crooked penis, and the penis which can dig well in intercourse but cannot dig a hole for the pillar of the booth.

The boys had hidden a pice somewhere in the wood, and the girls spent a long time looking for it. Finally, about 7-30 p.m., the Gaita put some rice on the spot where the motiari had danced with the mahua tree, and dug a hole with his iron digging-stick. If white-ants or stones are found there, they move to another spot, offering an egg and chicken to whatever god the Siraha decides was responsible for the ill omen. But all was well today. The Gaita broke a coconut on his digging-stick, and the chelik planted the centre-pole of the booth and the mahua tree in the hole that the Gaita had made. After drinking a little liquor, the chelik then proceeded to make the booth (*manda*).

This was a very simple affair. Nine sarai poles were placed in a rough square, in the middle of which was the centre-pole and the mahua tree.[1] On the centre-pole a small representation of the vagina is often carved. A roof

[1] A number of tribes put the mahua in the marriage-booth. The Omanaito do (Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 444), so do the Birjhia (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 332), the Sonkar of Chhattisgarh (ibid., Vol. III, p. 316), and the Bunjya or Bhinya (Dalton, op. cit., p. 148). Mock marriages to the tree are performed by the Bagdi, the Kurmi, the Mahili and no doubt others (*Census of India, 1911. Report for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, pp. 322ff). The Gond of Mandla put a mango tree in the centre of the booth, but elsewhere use a post made of mahua wood (Ward, op. cit., p. 138).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

was made by tying poles round the square and criss-cross over it. This was again covered with leafy branches. Round the poles was tied a haldi-coloured string, or sometimes simply a rope of paddy-chaff, and a string of mango leaves. This string is called *torwa* (Halbi) and is mentioned in another *manda* song. This has the refrain *Riri loyo ririlo ririlo riri loyo ririlo*, and is addressed apparently to the village mother.

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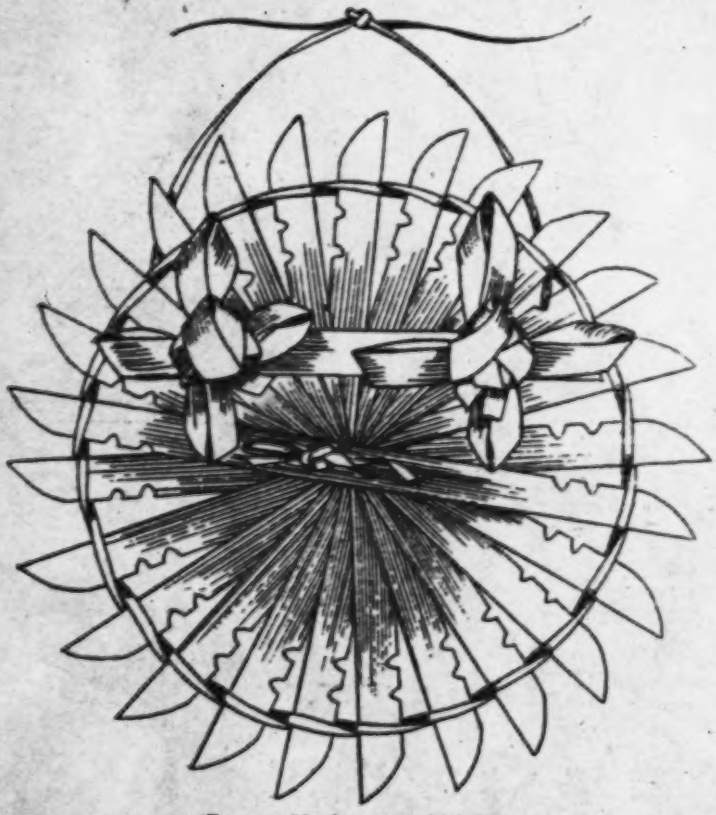

[292]

FIG. 19. Marriage crown for bride
Breadth 6"

Bīlo hoonār pokhna dai,
Sukhun dukhun boha wo dai.
Gachar muchar āyna roy dai?
Kāmjlo bola āyo wo dai?

Haryar manto yukhwo dai.
Tārīl tamor lamor wo dai.

O Mother of this young boy,
Reveal his happiness and sorrow.
Why do you stay silent, Mother?
Because nothing has been promised you?
Take our offerings willingly.
He has no brothers, Mother.

585
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Awa bābo lewor wo dai.
Wenayise torun wo dai.
Mardi marra manda wo dai;
Layān parle bona wo dai.
Marka āki torun wo dai.
Bākiya nima bohwi wo dai?
Bābuna jiwa werriyta wo dai.

He has no father or mother.
But here is a goat for the *torun*.
The pole is from the saja tree;
Young girls made the platform.
Of mango leaves is the *torun*.
Why do you not answer, Mother?
The boy's soul is frightened,
Mother.

Tying of the Beni-plaits

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After this, the motiari carried the bride back to her house and her motiari and others anointed her with haldi. Then in both camps motiari busied themselves with tying the hair of their charges into two long and five little plaits. Other motiari stood round singing a song with the refrain,

Riri loyo. Ririlo vilo riri loyo ririlo riri loyo ririlo vilo vilo riri loyo ririlo.

Sura beri sakāli bābu.
Baden suda pāiki bābu?
Atin miyār manta roy dai.

Tāna suda pāiku dai,
Niya jor tā ayo roy bābu,
Helār bhāi biti roy bābu,
Saga saina biti roy bābu,
Awa bābo biti roy bābu.
Awa bābona lewon roy bābu.
Tārāl lewor lewon roy bābu.

The plait is a sevenfold chain, boy.
Whose plait will you tie, boy?
I'll tie the plait of my *māma*'s daughter, mother.
For her I will tie the plait, mother,
She's no fit mate for you, boy,
She has sisters and brothers, boy,
She has relations, boy,
She has father and mother, boy.
You have no father or mother, boy.
You have no brothers, boy.

This is a very common sentiment in the marriage songs. The bridegroom is an orphan, alone in the world, useless, ugly, unfit to mate with a bride so richly dowered with wealth and relatives. I add two other very short songs:

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I

Sur beni beni roy āya,
Main beni pārondo āya,
Pārole pāro luy pāro nona

O the links of the plait, mother,
I want to tie the plait, mother,
If you wish, boy, you may tie it.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

2

Sāt bahin kanya buba!	O the seven Kanya sisters!
Kanya dhari bazāla buba.	Holding your waist they sit.
Sāt bhātti phuli nā buba	O the seven-times distilled liquor
Buba indāna buba na	Father, say, father.

585
539

THE THIRD DAY

Bathing Bride and Bridegroom

Shortly after dawn the bride's motiari brought out the bridegroom and danced with him. Then they bathed him in front of his camp, making him sit on a wooden seat, while two chelik fanned him vigorously with large baskets. When this was finished he jumped from his seat into one of these baskets and the bride's motiari picked him up and carried him, swinging him vigorously, back to his camp. They left him with loud cries of *Sote* (penis). Then the bridegroom's motiari bathed the bride.

585

Songs

1

Riri loyo rilo rilo riri loyo ri ri lo rilo ri riloyo ri ri lo

585
539

Māna bālu na yeru ra sangori;	The water's for our boy;
Sono jhar jhar yeru ra.	Like a stream of gold is the water.
Niya munin yeru ra;	The water's for your girl;
Koda urkul yeru ra.	Like horse-stale is the water.
Niya bābuna yeru ra;	The water's for your boy;
Neyu urkul yeru ra.	Like a dog's urine is the water.
Māna munina yeru ra;	The water's for our girl;
Sono jhar jhar yeru ra sangori.	Like a stream of gold is the water.

2

Dulhi na ānga dhoila chelik sundar pāni,	Bathing the bride's body with chelik-beautiful water,
Paniya paniya bolis re nona.	You were begging for a comb, a comb.
Abe paniya pāwalis re nona.	Now you have got your comb.
Sai shanwār zātum roy nona.	It's the Saturday bazaar today.
Sātum daure kindi roy nona.	You were going to the bazaar.
Dulhi na ānga dhoila chelik sundar pāni.	But you are bathing the bride's body with chelik-beautiful water.

Digging the Manda Earth

I missed seeing this at Sidhawand, but witnessed it at Malakot. Some older women, carrying baskets covered with cloth, led a small procession of singing and dancing motiari and drummers to the house of the village cowherd (Kopa or Rawat). They danced for a time before the house, asking the Kopa's wife to come out.

Song

Kopa le kopa le pania kopa pania roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, come outside.
Kopa le kopa le tuha toriy toriy roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, have you some earth?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Kope le kope le uduk toriy himm roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, give us a little.
Kope le kope le sānde toriy himm roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, give the earth quickly.
Kope le kope le bāti jora hiti roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, what are you doing?
Kope le kope le tada kope tada roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, quickly get up.
Kope le kope le kopāl ondah hitor roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, is the cowherd enjoying you?
Kope le kope le girda mate mājyoy roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, haven't you finished?
Kope le kope le girda tāyo hushar roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, are you still sleeping?

585 Presently the woman appeared carrying a digging-stick and was greeted with derisive shouts. She led them to the spot where the cattle rested at midday. There she sprinkled water and cow-dung and prepared a little patch of ground. The Gaita offered rice, egg-shell and haldi, and took the digging-stick in his hand. This was also held by the Kopa's wife and the bridegroom's mother. All three together dug up a little earth, put it into a basket and covered it with cloth. Suddenly one of the motiari picked up the basket and ran as hard as she could towards the *manda*. The chelik chased her; they had to catch her before she reached it. They were just in time; they took one of her rings, and then allowed her to put the earth by the mahua tree under the booth.

Plastering the Manda Platform

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Then some old women, singing very fast, began to plaster with this special mud a little platform in the middle of the booth. They made patterns of rice-flour, plastered them in, and finally smoothed it all over.

Song

Boula parila layar pannuva hauda buking.	The boys don't know how to make the platform.
Nāgal chatang tallanjo.	The penis is like a ploughshare.
Māha boula parri hauva re.	The boys won't let us make the platform.
Sir hauva layar parri vom.	If they did, how beautifully we'd make it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Some of the mud was left and the old women smeared it on any man they could find. I saw one of them creep up behind the Gaita and blindfold him with her muddy hands, shouting *Pude dāwango* or Vagina liquor! At that they all sat down and had a drink. Refreshed by this, the Gaita and an assistant drew an elaborate pattern on the freshly-plastered platform, and put earthen lamps at its four corners. The rice-flour and haldi for this was ground by the Gaita with his own hands.

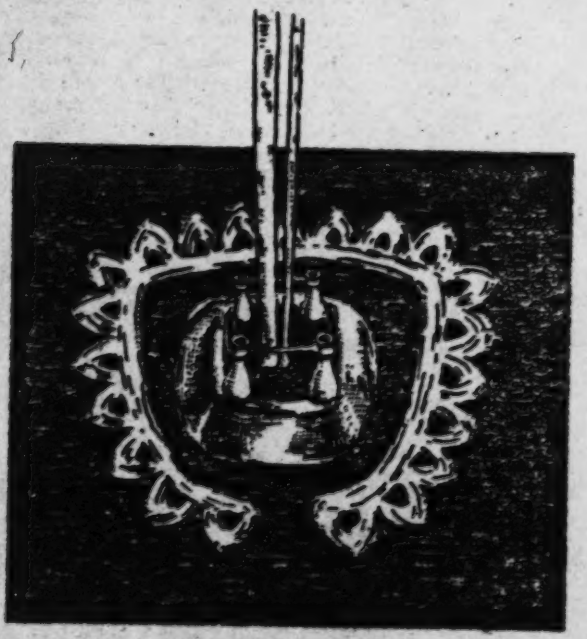


FIG. 20. K. ada platform with typical decoration, from Telinga

Songs

1

Alor alor singāri dosi,	Make varied patterns, Dosi,
Nahua singār barāiye dosi.	The best patterns you know,
Kike mimu kānkaru dosi,	The fish has come from Kanker,
Kānkar tike khigita dosi.	The pattern faces Kanker.
Kotuej tamu kimu yo dosi,	Make the corners square,
Korri hoji singāri dosi.	Make a cock's-foot pattern, Dosi.

2

Hardi pakhua hardi pakhua dosi.	Apply the haldi, Dosi.
Khāle kaniya khāle kaniyalla dosi.	Below for the Kanyang, Dosi.
Upar kaniya upar kaniyalla dosi.	Above for the Kanyang, Dosi.
Jan bisarbe jan bisarbe dosi.	Do not forget, Dosi.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Hēna duma la hēna duma la dosi.	Put it for the Departed, Dosi.
Māta māuli la māta māuli la dosi.	For Mata Maoli, Dosi.
Jan bisarbe jan bisarbe dosi.	Do not forget, Dosi.
Tore dharam jo tore dharam jo dosi.	It is your duty, Dosi.

Further Anointing of the Bridegroom

585 Now his own motiari carried the bridegroom out again and brought him to the *manda*. They danced round the booth, one of them carrying him on her back, till they were tired. Then they made him sit on a motiari's lap on a bamboo fan to the west of the booth and outside it, and put a fan between his hands which he held folded before his face. Again they put haldi, making it 'climb' up his body. The bride's brother's wife came and wept loudly, saying, 'Never forget us and the love we've had for you. Come and see us often. Don't trouble our poor girl. She is ignorant and foolish, but you will be able to teach her. Let her come and see us often'.

This tedious and exasperating ritual continues during the whole ceremony. Every relative in turn must perform it over and over again.

Songs

585
539

1

Dāda indān he dāda!	Cry brother, brother!
Dharmu telu chaga wo dāda.	Anoint with holy oil, brother.
Tuhe dharam lāge de dāda.	This is your gift, brother.
Bai indān he bai!	Cry sister, sister!
Dharam telu chaga wo bai.	Anoint with holy oil, sister.
Tuhe dharam lāge de bai.	This is your gift, sister.

And so on, interminably, through the entire table of affinity.

2

Tilohe telo telo wo dai!	O the oil of til, mother!
Mola re telu chada wo dai.	Let me rub the oil, mother.
Tola re telu charāten wo beta,	I would rub you with oil, son,
More re buta kamey jo beta.	But I have work to do, son.
Sagore din he bute wo dai,	You can work every day, mother,
Yehe re din he tele wo dai.	But this oil is just for today, mother.
Tore re buta rahe wo dai.	Leave your work, mother.
Mola re telu chada wo dai.	And rub me with oil, mother.

3

[831]

Kis kowe kowe layon eh he.	The chelik is a little monkey.
Kene porro tanga kowe eh he!	Climb up, O little monkey!
Gokāle dudo kowe eh he!	Her breasts will fill your fists!
Kene der raiya kowe eh he!	Come down again, O little monkey!
Rāpāle pudo kowe eh he.	Her vagina is big as a spade, O little monkey!

4

This song is from Bayanar village, a Paskana Pata for the anointing. The refrain imitates the noise of a goat in heat.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Sai le le bo bo bo! Sai le le bo bo bo!

585
539

O young darling, whence have you come,
Have you come for the play of love,
With an ox-goad under the mango tree?
Why have you come, big-breasted love?
I will catch you and enjoy you.
Saikobai, why have you come?
Your pubic hairs are like a shrub in Amgaon.
We were yoked together in the ghotul.
Now you are going, and I bid you farewell.
Now you are leaving the ever-thrilling ghotul.
I took you under the pipal tree and shook you to and fro.
By the ant-hill I tumbled you.
Your ghotul lover has come for you,
But no longer are you there to welcome him.

Taking the Omens

585
787

Now the final omens must be taken. The Gaita placed an earthen pot full of water on the verandah of the headman's house, and dropped grains of rice two by two into it. For a successful marriage the grains must meet tip to tip. If they meet crosswise, there will be quarrels; if they both sink, the married pair will die together in a year; if they do not meet at all, the girl will elope with someone else. On this occasion, the two grains sank to the bottom, and the headman sent round an inquiry whether any of the near relatives of the bride had just begun to menstruate—a calamity which had previously been known to disturb the omens. At about the same time the bridegroom fell into a trance, twitching, shivering, stretching himself and then falling inert to the ground. Apparently none of the women were in the tabooed condition and the bridegroom's mother—a managing woman with an enormous bun of hair on the top of her head which caused some to regard her as an incarnation of the Hindu god Mahadeo—thought quite obviously that it was I with my camera who was causing all the trouble, but did not like to say so. After a time, however, when the Gaita had made some extravagant promises to the gods, the boy recovered and the rice grains floated round and hit each other most properly tip to tip.

Filling the Kalsa

585
831

The little kalsa-pitcher, which is to be placed by the mahua tree in the marriage-booth, must be filled with rice. The motiari put a basket before the bride. They place the pot inside and fill the bride's hands with rice, covering them with a cloth. Several of them catch hold of her hands and move them up and down above the kalsa, singing *Relo*, until all the rice has fallen into the pot. When the pot is full the motiari stand up with a loud cry of *Sai!* (penis).

Songs

1

Nandi kata dotola burka bhillu lotola.	The reeds grow by the river, where the old bear lies.
Kilke jille lotola dulhi le lotola.	With whom is he lying? He's lying with the bride.

585
539
831

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 *Kai pila koli bhĩlu pila kole.* Whose was the child? It was a bear's child.
539 *Kĩke buba balade dulha ke buba balade.* Whom will he call father? The bridegroom.
831 *Kĩke ãya balade dulhi ke ãya balade.* Whom will he call mother? The bride.
Kai rãg men gãge de hur hur balade. To what tune will she weep? *Hur hur.*
Ama pãn chiro chãro. The mango leaf sounds *chiro charo.*
Dulha chotli kira paro ach. There are maggots in the bridegroom's penis
Mande pude kurri. Loudly cry 'Vagina'.

2

Goti roy dodon banjãra aya! O the Banjara's bullock, mother!
Noni bona roy sudha dĩki noni? With whom will you go, girl?
Mãma na marri manlor go ãya. There is my *mãma's* son, mother.
Noni miya jori pobe roy noni. He's not fit to be your mate, girl.
Ona roy sudha hamma roy noni. Do not go with him, girl.
Gere mara jori roy ade jori pibo. He is as bad as a pair of gere trees.
Ona re suda hanon roya ãya. I will not go with him, mother.
Aich mande pude kandi bandhla. Under the booth is a vagina tied with a cowrie.
Dulke kandi bhurza. And breasts like a brown pot.
Leka cho chotli bhurza! O the penis of the brown boy!
Ama pãn siro sãro. The mango leaves sound *siro sãro.*
Lõki cho pudi kira paro kurri. The girl's vagina is full of maggots.

585 [531] Before the kalsa-pitcher is put in its place by the central pillar of the booth, it is decorated, sometimes beautifully and with great elaboration. Red, yellow and black grain is stuck with cow-dung in varied patterns, or stars and lines of dots are made in white and black. While two of the older women are doing this, the motiari stand by and sing.

Song

585 *Riri loyo ri ri lo rilo ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri lo ri ri loyo ri ri lo*
539 *Urza wonjing karza wo dai.* The pot is decorated with rice, mother.
Nena karza kotikãn dai. I place a mark on the pot, mother.
Bĩli wonjing kotikin bãbu? With what kind of rice will you decorate it, boy?
Hinga wonji kotikãn dai. I will use *hinga* rice, mother.
Bona suda kotikin bãbu? With whom will you decorate it, boy?
Atin miyãr maruta roy dai. With my *mãma's* daughter, mother.
Tõna suda kotikãn dai. I will decorate the pot for her, mother.
Tõna suda parwin roy bãbu. You won't be able to do it for her, boy.
Tõna jorti ãyuri roy bãbu. She is no fit mate for you, boy.
Tõral tamor biti roy bãbu. She has brothers, boy.
Halãr bhai biti roy bãbu. She has sisters and brothers, boy.
Awa bãbo biti roy bãbu. She has a mother and father, boy.
Nãkun arik wãka wo dai. But I am willing, mother.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

When the kalsa-pitcher is ready, decorated and filled with grain, it is taken out to the booth and placed by the central pillar. 585 539

Song

Hi dewani ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri lo

Ona ri bona ri karsa dai?	Whose is this pitcher, mother?
Jāti poyami pahāna jāti muni.	It's for a Poyami boy, daughter.
Ondyise karsa muni.	This pitcher is for him, daughter.
Karsa malka māta dai!	How the pitcher glitters, mother!
Karsa kuri dāka dai.	I am going to look at it, mother.
Nāya bārang sādu muni?	Why does it please you, daughter?
Yarri māyla tāndi muni.	It is a pot for bathing, daughter.
Tāndi gala oroy muni.	The pot is not broken, daughter.
Modi ashle kāri muni.	The cord has been cut with this arrow, daughter.
Kāri gala māyoya muni.	The arrow is not lost, daughter.
Loni kāre manar dai.	The Lamhada boy is in the house, mother.
Turra khoda hanar dai.	He has gone to hunt wild animals, mother.
Melel khoda hanar dai.	He has gone to hunt the hare, mother.
Māo khoda hanar dai.	He has gone to hunt the sambhar, mother.
Ashe kāri māyuār dai.	Then the arrow will be lost, mother.
Barsa pare mātona dai.	I am grown up now, mother.
Nāhun arik māta dai.	I am very happy, mother.
Hanana lenu tikon dai.	I cannot rest till I go away with him, mother.

In this song, mother and daughter look ahead beyond the marriage to the girl's first child. The kalsa-pitcher becomes the pot of warm water heated daily by the husband for the young mother's bath; the arrow down which the anointing oil is poured becomes the arrow by which the child's umbilical cord is cut. The young husband has gone on a ceremonial hunt—and by his success or failure they will know the number of their children.

From time to time a couple of girls came to clean the *manda*: as they did so, the others stood round singing, *Re re loyo re re la rela rela re re loyo re rela.*

Dulha bahan gelo belosa?	Where has the bridegroom gone, Belosa?
Wahin bahār gelos belosa.	He has carried off his sister.
Kai dāru eanias belosa?	What branches has he spread?
Pharsa dāru eanias belosa.	He has made a bed of pharsa branches.
Kai pila hoke re belosa?	What child has she borne?
Bhālu pila hoke re belosa;	It is a bear cub;
Hur hur hure re belosa;	It cries *hur hur*;
Chālhak hole khole se re belosa.	It runs to bite you, Belosa.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Midday Dance

585 Then the chelik gathered round the booth and began to dance, holding
539 each other's hands swinging backwards and forwards to a rather dismal tune, as they circled slowly round.

Songs

1

Têra wo dai nâwa sono pungâri.	Give me my golden flower, mother.
Nâwa iga to hile muni niya bubân nigâdu.	I haven't got it, your father has it, son.
Têra wo buba nâwa sono pungâri.	Give me my golden flower, father.
Nâwa iga to hile muni niya dâdân igâdu.	I haven't got it, your brother has it, son.
Têra wo dâda nâwa sono pungâri.	Give me my golden flower, brother.

—and so on, taking the names of every relative present.

2

Walâldâti koiyâl wulâlta?	Where are you going, fox, where are you going?
Chithodâl wayâl hilu jo têna toka tun kopar pandhal.	Make a broom of a squirrel's tail.
Walâldâti nirâl wâlâlta?	Where are you going, leopard, where are you going?
Chithodâl wayâl têna thâla tun kudwo pandarâr.	Make a measure of the head of a rat.

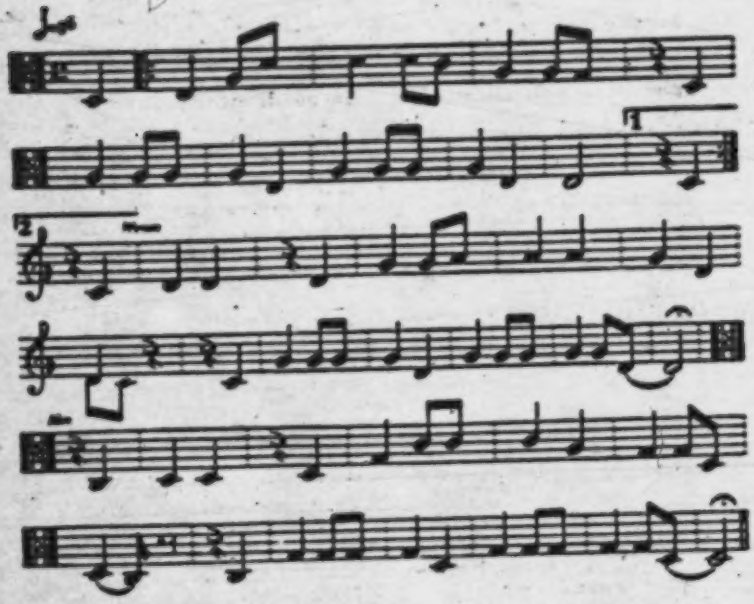
585 It was now midday and the visiting motiari brought food to the booth as reward for the boys who had gone to fetch the wood the previous day. The boys sat down in a wide circle round the booth and the girls served them with rice and vegetables on leaf-plates. When they had finished the chelik got up and down three times shouting 'Penis!', and so dispersed.

When darkness fell everyone went home for the evening meal. The headman provided pork for his visitors: the pig was knocked over the head with a rice-pounder and the Gaita offered the carcass mahua-spirit saying, 'Let there be enough flesh for us all and some left over'.

Throughout the night there was singing and dancing; every now and then the weary bride and groom were brought out to be anointed, from the feet upwards to the head.

[533 831] The company drank, and made merry with fescennine songs, for 'there is no purdah in a house of marriage'. Much of the dancing during the night and a large part of the day was done without drums in almost Hill Maria style. Boys, or boys and girls, held hands and moved slowly round the marriage-booth in a wide circle. The singing was monotonous, but the songs themselves are often more interesting than those concerned merely with details of the ritual.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH



585
533

Songs

1

Aliyāro maliyāro kanhi ruka joji!
Aliyāro maliyāro sānde joji kinni!

Aliyārsingh maliyārsingh nimār waka dāhit?
Aliyāro maliyāro pārwān pite jori!
Aliyāro maliyāro jori parhi dāka!

Aliyārsingh maliyārsingh wātir bhumi dāka?
Aliyāro maliyāro lānjir bhumi dāka!

The gruel is made of bits of rice, Aliyaro Maliyaro! 585
Give us the gruel quickly, Aliyaro Maliyaro! 539
Where are you going, Aliyarsingh Maliyarsingh?
We are like a pair of pigeons, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
We are off to search for wives, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
What country are you going to, Aliyarsingh Maliyarsingh?
We are going to Lanji Land, Aliyaro Maliyaro!

2

Charota mara buka charota mara darmi ray!
Wārāna darbār buka darbār nahi ray?

O the shade of the charota tree, father!
What is this durbar, O father?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Kosa re kohkana nuni kosa re kohkana doyon roy!
O the silken horns of the bullock, daughter!

Tāne re mola nuni tāne re mola kindan roy!
I have named a price for this bullock, daughter!

Nākune nāreh buba nākune nāreh kema roy.
Do not deceive me, father.

Nākune mola buba nākune mola kindan roy.
You are selling me, father.

Kile re khapra buba kile re khapra rupia roy,
A rupee is worthless as a broken bit of earthenware,

Rupia re jiwa buba rupia re jiwa kiti roy.
Yet you love rupees, father.

Koda re urkul buba koda re urkul dārango roy,
Liquor is worthless as a horse's stale.

Dārango re jiwa buba dārango re jiwa kiti roy,
Yet you love liquor, father,

Miyāne jiwa buba miyāne jiwa hewi roy.
And you do not care for me.

3

Nikun lewāl nuni wātor roy guguti guguti.
They have come to take you away, my girl.

Wātir bhum tor dai wātor roy?
Where have they come from, mother?

Chhattisgarh tor nuni wātor roy.
They have come from Chhattisgarh, my girl.

Wātir wātir dai hamiāl roy?
What work do they do there, mother?

Jāti kawdo nuni hamiāl roy.
They are of the Kawdo clan, daughter.

One ise dai hemāt roy;
Don't give me to them, mother;

Kodo usi dai paron roy;
I cannot husk the kodon, mother;

Karwul māti dai danda roy;
My arms are like tundri roots, mother;

Danda gala dai nindo roy!
My arms are not yet grown, mother!

One ise dai hemāt roy.
Don't give me to them, mother.

4

Koh bodāl bodāl hopa le;
I have a horned bison, Kopa;

Nāwa bodāl mai: hopa le.
My bison is lost, Kopa.

Hāle māri māri gaita le,
On the hill of sal trees, Gaita,

Akey toru osi gaita le.
I had taken it to graze there, Gaita.

Sono tāye guta hopa le.
I had a golden tethering peg, Kopa.

Guta inja poitu hopa le.
Now the peg stands solitary, Kopa.

Hira tāye dāmir hopa le.
The tethering-cord was made of diamonds, Kopa.

Dāmir himu poitu hopa le.
Now the cord is lonely, Kopa.

Dāmir himu poitu hopa le.
Now the cord is lonely, Kopa.

5

Bharewān bharewān kaida nana pairi harena;
I will wear the Bharewa's anklets;

Kālu re kālu re rumjum rumjum pairi harena.
The anklets tinkle *rumjum rumjum*.

Kochiyāna kochiyāna kaida nana churi harena;
I will wear the Kochiya's bangles;

Kaida re kaida re rumjum rumjum churi harena.
The bangles tinkle *rumjum rumjum*.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585
539

Setina setina haida nana getil kuhena;
I will wear cloth from a merchant's shop;

Nani re nani re rumjum rumjum getil kuhena.
When I wear that cloth, my waist goes *rumjum rumjum.*

Sonārān sonārān haida nana suta karena;
I will wear a goldsmith's neck-band;

Todara re todara re rumjum rumjum suta karena.
The neck-band sounds *rumjum rumjum.*

Sonārān sonārān haida nana dāru karena,
I will wear a goldsmith's ear-ring,

Kaiwu re kaiwu re rumjum rumjum dāru karena.
The ear-rings sound *rumjum rumjum.*

Kasarān kasarān haida nana chura karena,
I will wear the Kaser's bangles,

Kālu re kālu re rumjum rumjum chura karena.
The bangles tinkle *rumjum rumjum.*

6

[534]

Nāna tehendor turit roy ange,
My *tehendor*[1] is lost,

Baga ise turit roy bābu?
Where was it lost?

Jamka jumur manda roy ange,
It was lost among the crowds beneath the booth,

Agāy ise turil roy ange.
It is lost there.

Niya sang nor layor roy bābu,
Your friend the chelik

Niya layor hara oyor roy bābu,
Has taken everything,

Or ise oyor roy ange,
But he did not take that away,

Niya sang nāng layāh roy bābu!
O your friend the motiari

Ore bāra oyong roy bābu.
Must have taken it away.

7

Bara lopa bārang kalo le nuni?
O what is in the field, girl?

Jhumjhum āyana nuni kankī tulawa.
The girl is cleaning pieces of rice, *jhumjhum.*

Bara lopa tarāy kalo le?
What is in the field, sister?

Tarai lopa wārang kalo le.
The tank is in the field, sister.

Tarai lopa durpa kalo le?
What is in the tank, sister?

Durpa morada wārang kalo le.
The lotus-root is in the tank, sister.

Durpa morada kanjal kalo le?
What is under the lotus-root, sister?

Kanjal rosela wāyena kalo le.
Under the lotus-root there is a mouse, sister.

Wāyen ayo wāyena dāda le?
Will you come to catch the mouse, sister?

Nāke dai rāngār dāda le.
I would love to come but I cannot, brother:

Niya dai matah kalo le.
Mother would be angry with me, brother.

Jhāpit sandra kitona kalo le.
I have given cloth from the basket, sister.

Hitah icho waiha dāda le.
If you have given it, brother, then I will come.

[1] Iron Jew's-harp.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

8

585 539

Hare nāru ursima hese maryum	Don't build your house near the
parcha biti nāru heso maryum!	road, cousin!
Mardumshumāri nāru roy maryum!	There will be nothing but receipt-books and Census forms, cousin!
Kosur koytor wāynur heso maryum.	There the peons and their porters will come.
Khatiya lāwo indānur heso maryum.	They will say, 'Bring us a bed'.
Khatiya inda punwi heso.	We don't know what a bed is.
Katul inda puton heso.	All we know is a cot.
Chānwal lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us rice';
Chānwal inda punwi heso;	We don't know what rice is;
Nukāng inda puton heso.	We only know paddy.
Dāl lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us lentils';
Dāl inda punwi heso.	We don't know what lentils are.
Dāring indā puton heso.	We only know pulse.
Namak lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us ground salt';
Namak inda punwi heso.	We don't know what ground salt is.
Hawor inda puton heso.	We only know rock salt.
Haldi lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us turmeric';
Haldi inda punwi heso.	We don't know what turmeric is.
Kamka inda puton heso.	We only know haldi.
Ghee lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us ghee';
Ghee inda punwi heso.	We don't know what ghee is.
Neyi inda puton heso.	We only know oil.
Pyāj lāwo indānur heso;	They will say, 'Bring us onions';
Pyāj inda punwi heso.	We don't know what onions are.
Gondri inda puton heso.	We only know garlic.

585 In this song, the words for the different things supposed to be demanded by the visiting officials are given both in the village and the more sophisticated dialects. A *khatiya* is demanded: the villagers only know of a *katul*. The visitor asks, in his own language, for *chanwal*, rice: but the villagers use the Gondi word *nukāng*; and so on.

The Arrow Ceremony

Now came the final anointing with haldi, the 'bringing down' of the oil from head to foot in contrast to the previous 'climbing', when it was applied from foot to head. The bridegroom was brought to the west of the booth and sat on the lap of one of his motiari. He held his hands above his head and an arrow was placed in them. The Gaita first, and then all his relatives, poured oil down it and it spread thence over his body. The same ceremony was performed for the girl, but inside the house.

Songs

585 539

1

Kudār kolāng dākāng māwor.	Our boy's stride is long as the handle of a hoe.
Neka dākāng wātma māwor.	Don't stride along too quickly, boy.
Keri gābo mendul;	Our boy's body is a plantain fruit;
Mendul gala nindoye.	His body is not yet ripe.
Ali ākhi moka;	His face is a pipal leaf;
Moka gala nindoye.	His face is not yet ripe.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585 539

Berel āki chhāti;	His chest is a banyan leaf;
Chhāti gala nindoye.	His chest too is not yet ripe.
Kāreka kāya tala;	His head is a kadam fruit;
Tala gala nindoye.	His head is not yet ripe.
Kārwul māti danda;	His hand too is a tundri root;
Danda gala nindoye.	His hand is not yet ripe.
Neka jhuleh kema	O boy, don't shake your hand too much
Danda dole māyār.	Or it will be broken, boy.

2

Huh dusār dusār buba huh dusār roy buba

Neyura dusār reha buba.	The haldi oil has been rubbed down, father.
Kānde kāwar bojha buba.	A heavy load for a small *kāwar*, father.
Reh teke bojha buba,	Its weight is the same though you bring it down,
Teh teke bojha buba.	Its weight is the same though you raise it up.
Nāwa bojha reha buba.	Bring down the weight, father.

585 Then while a circle of motiari stood singing, others bathed the boy and re-tied his hair in three or four plaits. They decorated him, painting his eyes with black and white powder, and making stars of yellow haldi on his face with a splayed castor-twig. They put a new crown, the Lagir Maur, over his head and face. So attired he went round greeting everyone. A pot of haldi-water was hung from the roof of the booth.

The Lagir

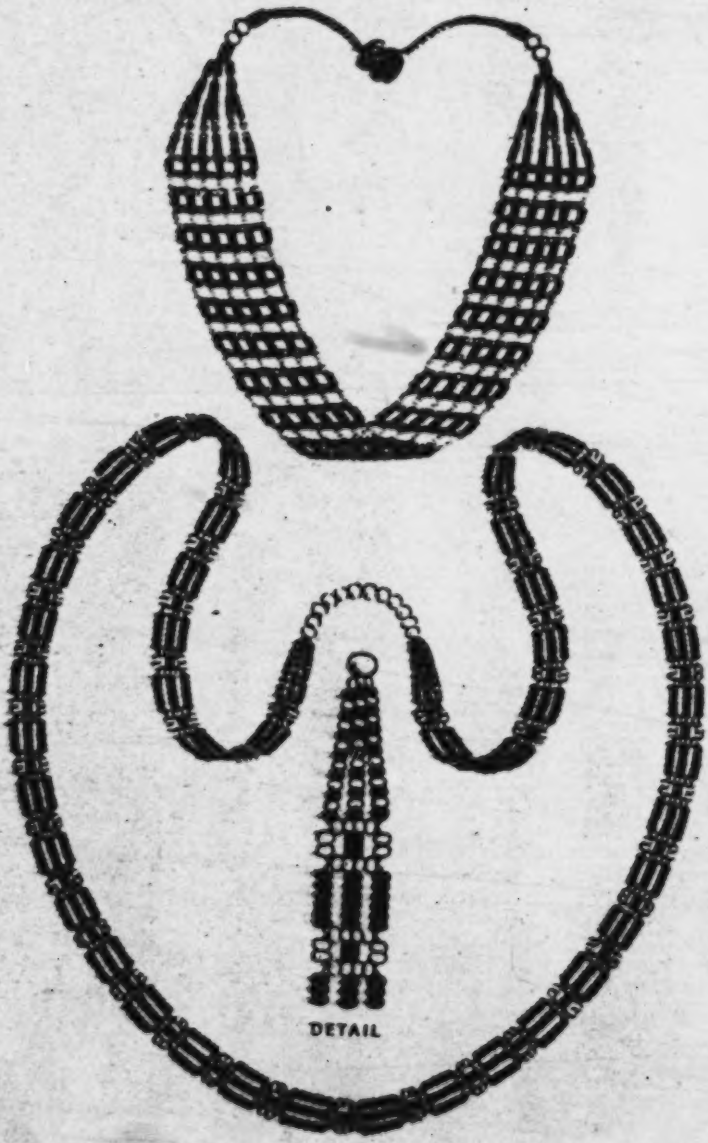
Now the drums began to sound; the chelik moved out in formation from the bridegroom's camp and began to move round the booth. The whole place began to stir. Soon with grand display the bride's drummers came down the road. They were led by two lines of boys waving antlers in the air; [292] one boy was dressed in peacock's feathers, another had a gay cowrie jacket. They advanced, placed the horns on the ground, raised them with loud cries, retired, then came on again. They reached the booth and danced near by.

The bride's elder sister's husband came out of the house with the bride on his shoulders and a group of men held a canopy over them. A man similarly related brought out the bridegroom from his camp. As the two parties approached the booth, the drumming increased in volume, rows of girls singing and clashing their cymbals followed, a 'bison' appeared pursued by hunters, and a dummy giant whirled into the centre of the scene.

The two parties, the boy's party leading, now went round the booth, outside, seven times anti-clockwise. The drummers went ahead, the girls followed, clouds of dust rose in the air. When this was done, bride and bridegroom were made to stand at the west side of the booth, and their clothes were knotted together. The girl's elder brother and four other men climbed the booth, and poured a little liquor and then a whole potful of haldi-water over the pair. In Malakot, where brooms were tied to the tops of the nine poles, the men threw them down and shook the booth violently.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

301



TYPICAL JHORIA NECKLACE AND HEAD-BAND FROM NARRAINPUR

[facing p. 125]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 This is the supreme moment of the marriage, the ceremony that finally asserts the union of bride and bridegroom,[1] the ultimately binding element in the long-protracted ceremonies. Bride and bridegroom were now man and wife.

Song

[539]

To manda batti dai;	There is the cattle's resting-place;
Aga padda manta dai.	There is a calf there, mother.
Padda dohi dāka dai.	I am going to tie that calf.
Sono ta dāmir dai,	There is a golden rope,
Padda poya hewo dai.	But the calf won't let me catch her.

Carrying off the Bride

Immediately the boy seized the bride, rushed her once round the booth, and carried her off to his camp, followed by a row of motiari singing enthusiastically. The bride's elder sister has the right to try to stop them: she stood in the way and was only appeased by the present of a cloth.

Ceremonial Greeting

In a few minutes the motiari came to bring the newly-married pair back to the booth for tika, the ceremonial greeting by relatives and friends. They sat down on a mat to the west of the booth, each supported by motiari, and everyone in turn put a rice-mark on their foreheads and a small present in the dish before them. As people bent down to do this, old women poured haldi over their backs and often tried to undo their clothes and smear their naked buttocks. There was much ribald laughter and a lot of fun.

[523]

The motiari stood round singing as loudly as they could. Each relative was greeted in turn. Here is the song they used when the boy's father came for tika.

[539]

Wilor wālor-manda buba!	The booth is shaking, father!
Mandāt hovlu wār-tu buba.	The branches of the booth have withered, father.
Sānde tika tāza buba.	Do the tika, father.
Wele bera hema buba.	Don't be late, father.
Pile harau harau buba.	The birds grow hungry, father.
Karun manda paron buba.	I can't bear to be hungry, father.
Niya marri lāruna buba.	This is your darling son, father.

[1] The essential and binding part of the marriage ceremony varies in different parts. In the Punjab it consists of the *phera* or circumambulation of the sacrificial fire. In the United Provinces the young couple walk round not a fire but the marriage shed or pole. In the east of these provinces and also in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, the binding part of the ceremony is generally the *sindurdan* or painting of the bride's forehead with vermilion. Amongst certain castes such as the Hari, the bride and bridegroom smear each other with their blood, which they obtain by pricking their fingers with a thorn. In Bombay the higher castes follow the practice of circumambulation. The lower castes sprinkle rice over the bride and bridegroom, while some pour milk or water over the joined hands of the couple. In Orissa their right hands are tied together with *kusa* grass, or their left hands when the bride is a widow. In Madras there are various ceremonies, such as making them eat from the same dish, or knotting their garments together, or pouring water over them so that it runs from the man to the woman. But the most common is for the bridegroom to tie the *tali* or necklace round the bride's neck. The Brahmin bridegroom places the bride's foot seven times on a mill-stone, a symbol of constancy.—*Census of India, 1911, Report for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, p. 322.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

The Marriage Sermon

At this point the Gaita and one or two elders sat down and delivered a sort of sermon. One man spoke, then another took up the tale, and a third continued. 'Now we have linked you two together. May you always have enough to eat and drink. May you live together happily. Bear many sons and daughters. Do not forget your parents. Greet the visitor at your house with food and water.' 585

The Farewell

When the tedious business of the tika was over, the bride and groom were taken back to the groom's camp and their crowns were removed. The boy was taken by his party out of the village to the road which ran near by. After a little while the girl, led by her father and escorted by two motiari (her own sisters) and preceded by drummers from her old ghotul, followed. When they came to the road, the girl bade a last farewell to her chelik and motiari. Accompanied by her two sisters, she went to each in turn and wept before them. She gave a pice to each of the chelik and they 'kissed' her farewell.

The two samdhi again sat down, drank a little and threw haldi-water over each other. 'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it!' Then suddenly two chelik picked up the bride and bridegroom and they went off very quickly, a line of motiari walking behind them.

Song

Kāka ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to uncle's house, mother,	[539]
Burkga mās khain wo dai.	There they eat beef.	
Dāda ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to brother's house, mother,	
Bokri mās khain wo dai.	There they eat goat.	
Didi ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to sister's house, mother,	
Kukri mās khain wo dai.	There they eat chicken.	
Hamla bāsi pej dein wo dai.	But we like to eat stale *pej*.	

The New Home

When the party came to the boundary of their own village, the Gaita drew a line of rice-flour across the path and placed seven aonra rings upon it. They stepped across this and went home without looking round. When bride and bridegroom reached their house, the boy's mother came out to greet them. She washed their feet and drank a little of the dirty water. She took her daughter-in-law into the house, and presently brought her out again into the court, where those of the villagers who had not been able to go for the wedding came to do tika and gave their presents. Then bride and groom were taken back into the house; offerings were made to the Departed and the ring-cowrie was put into the Pot of the Departed to symbolize the fact that the bride had now joined her husband's clan and after death would henceforth be numbered with the ancestors of her new home. Other offerings were made to the pots hanging from the roof and the grain-bins. 'These are all yours now', exclaimed the mother. 'Live here happily with us.'

The Wedding Crowns

At the end of a marriage the wedding crowns must be properly disposed of, for it would be highly dangerous to throw them away where a witch could get at them. It will be remembered that there are two crowns, the Neyi

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 Maur or Oil Crown, which is worn during the period when the bride and bridegroom are anointed with oil and haldi, and the Lagir Maur, which is put on immediately before the critical moment of the marriage.

The customs vary from place to place. After the marriage the Oil Crown is generally thrown into a stream with some small offerings to the Yer Kanyang. The other crown is sometimes tied to the central pillar of the bridegroom's house. In Palari members of the Marrai clan bury the crown by this pillar and make offerings of liquor to the Departed above it, in order that the wife will always be faithful to her husband. In Kokori the Naitami and Marrai clans put the crowns in a hollow tamarind tree standing in the village. Other clans tie them to the pillars of their houses. Here they throw pulse and rice on the crowns in the name of the Departed. In the north of the State, at Penjori for example, when they are grinding haldi, preparing oil and husking rice in preparation for the marriage, the chelik and motiari go in procession to the ghotul and tie a little crown to the pillar in the name of Lingo. They then go to the Hanalkot and tie another crown there in the name of the Departed. In the Bara Dongar Pargana they sometimes tie the crown after the marriage in the shrine of the clan-god.

Even when a chelik or motiari has left one ghotul and joined another, his old ghotul may remember him at the time of his marriage by tying a crown to their pillar. This was done in 1940 at Penjori when the chelik put up a crown for a boy who had left them a year before to work as Lamhada for a girl in Kanker.

THE FOURTH DAY

I was not able to see the ceremonies of the fourth day at Sidhawand, but at Malakot I saw them twice; the procedure was, I believe, the same at Sidhawand.

293

FIG. 21. Squirt, used in fun for spraying people with water at a marriage
Length 2' 7"

After the ceremonies of welcome to the new daughter-in-law were concluded, or on the following morning, bride and bridegroom were brought out of the house and made to stand together on an old mat.

Wherever I have seen this done, the couple affected the greatest distaste and stood averted from each other's presence. The attendant motiari first handed the boy a toilet-twig; he gave it to the girl and she threw it away. He gave her another one, and she threw that away also. Then she gave him one and he threw it away. He took a fourth and cleaned his teeth with it, and gave it to her. She cleaned her teeth and threw it down.

This rite may symbolize the intimacy of married life—I am not sure. The next appears to be a test of potency. The chelik gave the bridegroom a number of stout poles about six feet long. He handed them to his wife; she threw some away and returned others to him and he had to break them. The boys had already notched them half way down so this was not very difficult.

Suddenly without warning the boy seized his bride and spat in her mouth. When she had recovered, she handed him a gourd of water; he filled his mouth

Plate XXIX

585

ABOVE: The bride spits at her husband

BELOW: The husband proves his virility by breaking logs

[p. 128a]

Plate XXX

585

ABOVE: Bride being taken out for the Lagir procession

BELOW: The bride bids farewell to her old companions

[p. 128 b]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585 with the water, caught her and spat again in her mouth. Motiari gave him another gourd of water and he passed it on to his bride; she twice filled her mouth and spat all over him.

Now the motiari gathered round and undid the plaits of hair that had been tied during the wedding.

Song

585 539

Sura beri sakāli sakāli he buba,	There are seven links in my plait,
Nana sakal lehika lehika he buba.	I am going to undo the links.
Bona lārne lehika lehika he buba?	For whose love will you undo it?
Sālu jor dāda lor dāda lor he buba;	I have seven brothers;
Dādān lārne lehika lehika he buba.	For love of my brothers I will undo it.
Bārāng his lehika lehika he buba?	What will you give before you undo it?
Dobir bhainsi hiyāka hiyāka he buba,	I'll give a buffalo from my herd.
Tāne yise hema roy hema roy he buba,	Don't give a buffalo,
Dobir hinja poyor roy poyor roy he buba.	Or the herd will be desolate.

585 When the hair was undone, the motiari combed it, and then bride and groom threw water and rubbish over each other. They needed a bath and the motiari poured water over them.

Then two motiari sat down presenting little laps for ritual occupation. The boy sat down, and the bride came to sit in his lap. She stayed there a moment, then jumped up and hit him on the back. Then she sat down, and he prepared to sit in her lap. But at the right moment she wriggled aside and he tumbled to the ground amid roars of laughter. But he jumped up and hit her two or three times with his clenched fist.

The fun now became general. Chelik filled their mouths with water and blew it over the motiari. The girls filled leaf-cups with cow-dung and spilled it over the chelik. Meanwhile the Gaita's wife collected the haldi-stained clothes of bride and groom; someone brought out a pot and went round begging for fire. He pushed handfuls of rubbish against private parts saying, 'Set them on fire!' At last they put the pot on the fire and boiled the clothes. But they were soon brought out and tied in a bundle. The Gaita poured a little liquor on the four corners and they lifted up the bundle seven times. Bride and groom undid the wet clothes and threw them over each other. [831] Someone pretended to be a Ganda with a large imitation penis and went round trying to sell the clothes.

At last the Gaita caught hold of the married pair and dragged them into the house for a well-earned meal, which they took together in ceremonial state.

The Last Rites

The marriage is over but a curious and interesting rite remains. Bride and bridegroom go for one last visit to the ghotul. The bride first massages her husband and then every boy in turn. The chelik send the husband off to his house, and a little later tell the girl to follow him. When she refuses three or four of them take her by force, push her into the room with her husband and shut them in. I have seen this done at Malakot and Nayanar. I will describe the Malakot incident here.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585

[354]

585
522

585

FIG. 22. Iron lampstand placed in the centre of the marriage booth
Height 5'

In the evening, after everyone had eaten their supper, the chelik and motiari went singing to escort the bridal pair to their new house, which had been entirely deserted for their benefit. All the other people had gone away. The chelik and motiari danced before the house for some time, the newly-married pair dancing with them. Then the little boys and girls were sent away, and the seniors caught hold of the bride and groom and pushed them into the house. Here the girl stood still while the husband was taken into a small inner room. The Sirdar spread a new mat, placed a cloth on it (they sometimes put oil on it 'to make it slippery') and made him lie down on one side. Then they pulled the girl into the room and made her lie down beside him. The boys patted them farewell, and ran out shutting the door behind them.

Outside they ran to the wall of the house, trying to peep in and hear what was going on, laughing and excited. The boys ought now to have caught a cock and taken it away, plucking its feathers all along the road, to roast it in the ghotul. But the groom's old mother had been too clever for them and had hidden all her poultry.

This cock is known variously as the *lod-kor* or 'sleeping cock', *pussi-kor* or 'semen cock', *honda-kor* or 'pubic-hairs cock', *pude-kor* or 'vagina cock', and *gel-kor* or 'copulation cock'. The usual custom, as we shall see at Nayanar, is to catch this cock, pluck the feathers going along the road, roast it in or near the ghotul or the ghotul camp, and then when everyone is asleep to push burnt feathers, entrails, bits of bone, into the mouths, ears, noses and private parts of the sleeping children—a joke that never fails to cause the greatest mirth and delight.

The theory seems to be that the cock is some sort of compensation. 'He is eating her vagina; we are eating the vagina cock.'

In Atungaon I was told that the ghotul leaders gave a little sermon to the husband when they shut him up with his bride. 'Take this girl; she is now your property. Give us a sleeping-cock in exchange. Sleep with the girl in happiness and joy; may she bear a child within a year; it is your duty.'

The chelik of Murjmeta told me that where boy and girl belonged to the same ghotul, and where that ghotul was one in which boys and girls paired off in some kind of permanent relationship, they had a different custom. When the marriage was over, the bride returned to the ghotul and combed the hair and massaged the limbs of her old ghotul-husband for the last time. She slept with him for an hour, and then the chelik took her to her husband and shut them up together. The cock in this

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

case was not stolen, but was given by the husband in compensation for taking a girl away from the ghotul. 585

As they escort the newly married pair to bed the boys and girls sing a characteristic song.

Dulha cho māndo dulha cho māndo,	In the bridegroom's booth,
Parwān jhulata.	Swings the pigeon. 585
Dulhi cho māndo dulhi cho māndo,	In the bride's booth, 539
Tendha lotese lot buba lot.	The lizard copulates and copulates. 831
Pālak bhāji mane re leha bhāji hunlāy jai se leha.	Spinach is drying on a leaf.
Jewa jewa tenda bans se re leha tenda pāni nākin tire re leha.	There is a pair of weighted balances (of a well), but he won't use them.
Palārigaon cho jaliya gānja,	The long-tailed cock of Palari,
Dongrigura cho kāri koni,	The black hen of Dongrigura,
Dandik chathi abhich dahi.	Every moment they want to copulate.

When everything was over, at Sidhawand the headman and the village elders purified the village from any possible evil introduced by the many visitors. They sprinkled liquor round the houses and offered a chick to the Village Mother. 585 783

V. The Navanar Marriages: A Different Procedure

Such was the marriage ritual at Sidhawand and Malakot. I believe that a very similar procedure is followed all over eastern Bastar. We must now take a brief glance at the other type of marriage, where the main ceremony takes place at the bridegroom's house and where a number of minor details differ. 585

The marriage I am now to describe was celebrated at Amasara and Nayanar on 25 April 1941 and the following days. On the first evening the bride was prepared as at Sidhawand. Her motiari sat round her all night, weeping and consoling her. The next morning the bridegroom, escorted by his chelik and motiari, came to Amasara to fetch her. On the way, at the village boundary, the Gaita made the usual line of ash and offered liquor in three saja leaves, saying, 'Let there be no trouble and no quarrels. Let us return in safety'. They stepped over the line and went on their way, none looking back.

The Farewell Ceremonies

Both parties cooked separately out-of-doors in the fields. During the day there was the usual application of haldi, weeping, exchange of presents and some heavy drinking. When I reached Amasara on the afternoon of this second day, I found a scene of great animation. Several groups of boys were dancing with mandri drums; in another part of the field rows of girls were dancing and singing Relo. Another group of motiari in boy's clothes, with waistcoats and turbans, were preparing for the Jhoria Endanna when the bridegroom has to recognise his bride amidst a group of dancing motiari disguised as boys, an incident which I study fully in Chapter XVI. In the middle sat a row of old women, samdhi to each other, their bodies covered with haldi-water and singing drunkenly.

It was getting late and presently the bride's parents went to the boy's people and said, 'Now you are our daughter's mother and father; we are giving her

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 to you'. At this the girl went weeping to her friends and gave them little keepsakes. As evening fell, the party left the village. Bride and bridegroom walked most of the way, but whenever they came to a field the chelik carried them across, and they threw pulse and rice onto the ground in honour of the Earth Mother. In Telanga, the bride had to cross a stream. She brought two aonra rings and threw them left and right as she went over in honour of the Water Maiden (Yer Kanyang) for she too was still a maiden.

The bride was brought to her new house rather late at night, but her mother-in-law received her, washing her feet and giving her a kindly welcome. In Telanga, the boy's motiari made the girl stand on a new mat covered with peacock's feathers for this greeting.

Bringing in the Manda Wood

At about 10 p.m. the chelik of Nayanar and visiting villages went to bring the boughs for the marriage-booth. After the Gaita had cut the mahua tree, food was given to the boys and they had supper there in the jungle. They returned to the village, dancing and drumming, shouting *Kiddar-pude* continually. A number of women waiting in the court of the house tried to stop them entering, but the manda branches were full of red ants, and the boys scattered these over the women and dispersed them. Then they danced banging the branches on the ground till the courtyard and road was alive with the ants; they chased any girl they saw, and rained a stinging shower over her.

The booth was hastily erected; there were only four poles and no brooms tied at the top. A rope of paddy straw was tied round and a string of mango leaves. The important thing to notice is that this booth was put up inside the courtyard of the house—I saw the same thing at Telanga—and this completely altered the whole ceremony: the grand procession of the Lagir became obviously impossible.

Now weary and bitten all over with red ants I went to bed. I am told that the party danced and drank all night; I can well believe it, they looked jaded enough next day.

Early the following morning, the Rawat's wife as usual dug up a little earth, [831] but here there was no chasing of a motiari. An old woman put the earth in her sari and tied it over her buttocks, afterwards letting it fall in a very vulgar manner. As they returned the girls took grass from the thatch of a house and put it in their hair; later they stuck it in the centre pole of the booth.

The Worship of the Drums

This rite, which does not seem to be known in eastern Bastar, is very important in the central parganas. Before beginning to dance, the chelik put three mandri and a wooden gong together on the ground. The two leaders of the ghotul removed their turbans, made a small pattern of rice-flour and offered liquor to Tallur Muttai, Lingo and the Departed. Then four other boys caught hold of the drums and at a given signal picked them up all together with a loud cry, while other boys pulled the 'priests' over backwards. Only after this could the chelik dance. As visiting villages arrived the chelik marched up the road, with grand and triumphant drumming, and worshipped their drums in the same place.

The usual rites are now performed; the interminable application of haldi, the taking of omens, the tying of the plaits, the bathing of bride and groom.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

In some villages the Gaita takes the marriage pair to the shrine of the Village Mother to offer sacrifice and ask if all will be well. 585

Rites of Anointing

On the Lagir day, the groom was first taken round the pole inside the booth five times; this corresponds to the *kũari bãnwar* of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The girl was taken round later and carried swinging to and fro into the house.

In this type of marriage, bride and groom are again and again carried out of the house by their attendants to be anointed. After fifteen or twenty minutes they are taken back; then after a rest, brought out again. They are made to sit on a wooden *pidha* seat under the booth.

Songs

585
539

The seat is made of sandalwood, O sister.
Come out girl and sit upon the seat.
It is in the raj of your mother and father.
It is in the raj of your brothers and relatives.
There is no kind of trick about it.

From Naria village, I have a few of the songs sung by the bride herself when her different relatives come to anoint her.

When her brother comes, she sings:

Give the oil lovingly;
Give the ghee costly as gold, brother;
Make the good oil climb my body.

When different *akomãma* relatives come, she sings:

Put a mark on my forehead, friends;
Put much haldi on my body.
You are the daughters of a great house,
I am your little sister.
How happy I was in my own home!
Now I go to a stranger's house.
Who can tell if I will live,
Who can tell if I will die there?

When her brother's wife com[illegible] sings:

I used to be in your house, bhauji,
Now you are giving me to a stranger.
You used to give me good food to eat,
But now you are sending me away.
When you come to visit me
Who knows if they will let me give you food or no?

At the end of the anointing ceremony, girls lifted the bride up and swung her vigorously to and fro as they carried her into the house.

Song

We will hold you fast,
We will not let you fall.
Swing, bride, swing.
We hold you safely in our hands

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 The Lagir was a very tame affair compared with what I saw at Sidhawand and Malakot. One of the boy's samdhi led the procession. He was followed by the boy, then by the girl, and then by five motiari singing. After completing the seven circuits, they tied the clothes of bride and groom together, and made them sit down for tika. When this was done a man poured water over them from the roof of the booth.[1] After this they were taken outside the house and the little rites of toilet-twig, undoing the plaits and breaking wood were performed as at Malakot.

The Tour of the Village

Now chelik and motiari escorted the bride and bridegroom round the village on a sort of farewell-tour. The party first visited the ghotul, where the boy and girl threw rice and copper coins into the building. Thence they went to the Gaita's house and round the village. As the party entered each compound the house-folk came out to wash their feet, put tika on their foreheads and embraced them. The groom tied bead-necklaces round the necks of the young children of the house. The housewife gave rice and a coin or two, all of which was carefully collected in a basket by the leading motiari.

The Ghotul Camp

During a marriage the cooking has to be done out-of-doors. The ghotul is closed until all is over. At Nayanar a special camp was made in a magnificent grove of mango trees. Here the boys and girls lived and entertained their visitors. On the last night, the bride and bridegroom came at sunset, and the chelik and motiari of Nayanar sat round in a great circle. The bridegroom, who had been the Sirdar, attended by two motiari, gave necklaces and rings to every boy and girl. The rings were strung on two big *sutia*-torcs. The bead necklaces were tied together as they came from the bazaar. These gifts must have cost at least twenty rupees.

The Bedding of the Bridal Pair

Bride and bridegroom went to their house for supper; chelik and motiari had theirs in the camp and fed their many visitors. At about 11 p.m. girls and boys went to fetch the bride and her husband. They 'stole away secretly', as I was told, and stayed a little while in the camp. Then suddenly the chelik seized the girl and her husband and took them to their house. They went willingly enough at first, but when they reached the bridal chamber, though the girl entered without persuasion, the boy made a great deal of fuss. But at last they pushed him in, spread a new mat, and made them lie down together. The chelik ran out and shut the door, shouting with excitement. It was noticeable that no older person came near or showed the slightest interest.

585 522 This time the chelik were able to catch a cock. They took it down to the camp and made a fire in a field near by and roasted it. In the meantime the younger children went to sleep. About midnight, the boys who had bedded the married pair, and eaten the cock, came round with handfuls of offal and burnt bones and feathers. They pushed these into the mouths and privates of the sleeping girls and boys, who woke spitting and protesting but

[1] This is possibly the oldest part of the ceremony. Cain, writing in 1876, describes how a Koi woman was made to bend her head while the man leant over her and friends poured water out of a bottle-gourd. 'When the water ran off his head to that of the woman they were regarded as man and wife.'—J. Cain, 'The Bhadrachallam Taluka', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V (1876), p. 357.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
522

with a pleased recognition that the marriage at which they had so earnestly assisted had been consummated.[1]

VI. The Ghotul's Share in the Ceremony

Nâg nâgin ke bihao ma dondiya ke salmal. The little fish are kept busy at the cobras' wedding.—Muria saying

585
883

No wonder that there is no greater threat to a Muria boy or girl than that the ghotul members will not attend their marriage. For from beginning to end the smooth progress of the rite depends on the chelik and motiari. For a week beforehand the motiari instruct the bride in the ghotul. Chelik and motiari accompany the bridegroom when he goes to fetch his bride; they sing and dance at every point of the ceremony; the chelik go to bring in the wood for the booth and the girls direct them to its site by dancing on the spot with a mahua tree. Boys and girls go together to fetch the earth for the manda-platform, and dance round it when it is ready. The motiari attend through all the long-drawn business of anointing, they carry the bridal pair about on their backs; they bathe them, do their hair, feed them and weep with them. At the central moment of the rite, it is the drumming of the chelik and singing of the motiari that provides dignity, colour and excitement. Chelik and motiari again assist at the concluding ceremonies in the bridegroom's house, and it is the chelik who ultimately arrange the consummation of the marriage.

But these ritual duties are only the beginning of their task. They have to see to the entertainment of a large number of guests. The Sirdar arranges for wood and organizes the dances; the Belosa sees to the supply of water and leaves. She and her motiari have to make leaf-cups and plates for the male visitors (they only give leaves to women visitors, considering that they should be able to make their own). This in itself is a very considerable task, but in addition nearly all the cooking is done in the ghotul camp, and chelik and motiari have to serve food at meals. I have never seen girls work so hard as at Nayanar, where there were three weddings one after another: as the chelik were leading one husband and his bride to bed, the motiari were preparing the next bride for her fate. The girls never seemed to stop working; they were engaged day and night; yet though they began to look very tired

[1] Similar customs are observed by other tribes. In Siriti, I watched Bison-horn Maria girls escort the bride to bed, though here the groom had to drag her into his house. Then a jovial party stole a cock and scattered its feathers along the path. The Juang boys escort the bridegroom from the *darbar* (dormitory), sometimes tying him hand and foot, to where his bride is waiting. They make him sit with her and say, 'See, here is your house: look to it. Here is a new girl, big-breasted and young. Do not disappoint her.' The boys piss inside the house, throw rubbish over the floor, then tie the door and run away. Bride and groom must clean the house before the marriage is consummated. I have witnessed a similar ceremony in a Bondo village.

For the Kota of the Nilgiri Hills, consummation was in the nature of a test, like the custom of 'bundling' in Wales. In the morning, the girl was questioned whether she liked her husband: if she did, the marriage was confirmed, if not, it was annulled.—E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India* (Madras, 1907), p. 62. Here, as with the Hill Maria and other very primitive tribes, the payment of bride-price and consummation was the marriage: there was little more to it.

By Hindus of Western Bengal, the third night after the wedding is called Phuleshya, or the flower bed. 'Eavesdropping goes on freely.'—S. N. Roy, 'Stree-Achar in West Bengal', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, p. 190. In Mysore, the Brahmins observe the beautiful *garbhadana* ceremony, when the husband in a room filled with flowers pours fruit into his wife's lap and the priest prays 'May a male embryo enter thy womb as an arrow the quiver'.—M. N. Srinivas, op. cit., pp. 134f.

585
883

towards the end, I did not once see them strained or quarrelsome. Their tremendous vitality kept the thing on the move and made everyone cheerful and happy.

In return for all this work, the chelik and motiari seem to get very little, one meal a day and a little liquor. The bride and bridegroom distribute small keepsakes, rings and beads. The motiari of the bride's ghotul demand and receive four annas as *mundi*-cowrie. The chelik also demand a new mandri drum from the bridegroom in compensation for the loss of one of their girls. They are generally given eight annas instead. This present is called *sakta*. The boy also has to give *chithul*-cymbals, or four annas, to his own chelik.

People treat the chelik and motiari with great respect, for there is great fear of offending them—a strike, which is not unknown, can upset the entire proceedings. It is

[301]

DETAIL

Fig. 23. *Chapaki-mundi* necklace, from Kuntpedar, of red, white and blue beads
Length 5' 5"

[831]

noteworthy also that there is no exchange of obscenities between the older people and the ghotul members. When the old women smear their dirty hands on all available male faces, catching hold of their private parts or pouring haldi over their buttocks, they never do it to the chelik. It would be considered equally shocking for a married man to poke his stick at a motiari

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

or to abuse her as he may do freely to the married women. There is no doubt about it: these girls and boys are set apart. They must not be touched by sophisticated adult hands.

585
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VII. The Significance of the Marriage Ceremony

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182

Where both boy and girl belong to the same village and come from the same ghotul, the procedure is simplified and shortened, but otherwise follows the same lines as in the foregoing accounts. It will be seen that, in spite of various differences, the essentials of the rite are everywhere the same. The fundamental things seem to me to be these—the preparation and instruction of the bride in the ghotul, the ceremonial fetching of the bride by the bridegroom and his party, the building of a marriage-booth with its associated magical materials and patterns, the exchange of gifts and payment of a bride-price, the liberal use of oil and haldi to consecrate the bride and bridegroom, the procession round a marriage pole or booth seven times (the last two items are obvious borrowings from Hinduism), the tying together of the bridal pair, the pouring water over them (probably a development of a Maria custom), minor rituals designed to emphasize the unity of the couple and to ensure the potency of the bridegroom, the last visit to the ghotul and the official bedding of the couple by the chelik.

Let us consider the meaning of these essentials in more detail. In a brilliant analysis of the marriage ritual of the Bihari Kayasth, W. G. Archer takes a comparison from modern art. 'If we are to find an analogy for this wedding ritual, the nearest would be a surrealist poem, ballet or novel. In a surrealist work the action has a strange power and a mysterious charm. Strange persons develop their intriguing contacts and the action has an air of irrational urgency. On analysis it is seen that many of the actions are symbolic and the poem, novel or the ballet generates its power from the semi-conscious associations which its dialogue, gestures, scenery and action evoke. In the ritual of a Kayasth wedding, there is a similar use of irrational action, a similar use of persons with a strangely inflated power, and a similar use of semi-conscious symbols. The meaning of the ritual may be submerged and, for many, may be scarcely comprehended but its basis is in a symbolic system and its total effect is overpowering.'[1]

This will apply also to a Muria wedding, though the meaning here is sometimes more obvious; the Kayasth is a highly developed community and naturally resorts more to symbolic concealment of its real interests and desires. The different elements in a Muria marriage can be easily distinguished. There are first the many rites that emphasize the break with the old life and the entry to the new. There are the symbolic actions and materials to express the sexual aspect of the marriage and to ensure its fertility. There are the symbolic or overt arrangements to protect bride and bridegroom at this critical moment of their fortunes. The social and business aspect of the union of the two families is always prominent.

The length, complexity and extravagance of the marriage ritual is necessary to impress on boys and girls who are so used to love and sex the importance of the step they are now taking. Marriage here does not, as in so many other cultures, mark an initiation into the mysteries of sex. It is not, usually, the binding together of two people who have fallen in love with each

[1] From *The Wedding of the Writers*, the manuscript of which I have been privileged to see before publication.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
182

other. It represents instead the end of a life of sexual and domestic freedom and the companionship of young people. It marks the beginning of economic responsibility, a change of residence, a transformation of the whole way of life. The ritual is adapted to emphasize this. There is the long week of preparation in the ghotul and the vigil of song and weeping that ends it; there is the parental fuss; the obvious trouble and expense for everyone; the solemn regard for omens; the new clothes and ornaments. I have often been reminded of the preliminaries to an operation—the bathing and shaving of the body, the tests and examinations, the rendering of the person aseptic, the creation of a sense that the patient is a being already separate and apart who will never be quite the same again. So now chelik and motiari are prepared for an operation that will sever them for ever from the carefree joys of youth.

The importance of this operation is further emphasized by the treatment of bridegroom and bride as the Raja and Rani of their brief matrimonial court. They are crowned; the leaders of their community defer to them and treat them with respect; their 'army' and 'police' accompany them everywhere, even when they go to perform their natural functions; they must never walk but always be carried about; at the time of tika everyone salutes them; they are 'Raja and Rani for two days and a half'.

This is a time of peculiar supernatural danger and the measures taken to avoid it find their parallels in many parts of the world. The crowns are not only symbols of royalty but correspond to the wedding-veil. Bride and bridegroom are also covered with a cloth both at the crisis of the Lagir and other important moments of the ceremony. This, and the refusal of bride and groom to look at each other, is connected partly with sexual modesty, partly with the belief that it is dangerous even to see dangerous persons.[1] Bride and bridegroom remain silent for most of the ceremony; certainly they never speak to one another. 'This is a common taboo upon persons passing through a critical period, and the principle behind it is a natural impulse of egoistic sensibility, a sort of recognition of the importance of the occasion, combined with more or less of spiritual fear, either of general danger, or in this case, of danger from each other.'[2]

The ceremonial beating of the bride by the bridegroom and of the bridegroom by the bride, which occurs several times during the ceremony, is regarded by Westermarck as intended to drive away evil influences and may also be connected 'with the idea of gaining power'.[3] Protection from evil spirits is probably also the aim, or one of the aims, of the Jhoria Endanna when a group of motiari including the bride dress up as boys and the bridegroom has to try to recognize his future wife.

Among the demon-scarers employed during the ceremony may be mentioned the brooms tied to the booth, the oil so freely used, the tying of the hair in plaits, the carrying of bride and groom over the threshold and the ceremonial bath. Brooms are important as sweeping away ghosts and spirits; sticks or grass from a broom are often used in magic or divination. All over the world bride and bridegroom are carried during their wedding[4] and in particular are never allowed to touch with their feet the threshold which is generally haunted by spirits. The ceremonial bath is regarded by Crawley as intended 'to neutralize the mutual dangers of contact'.[5] The magical

[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 44.
[2] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 58.
[3] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage* (London, 1925), Vol. II, p. 518.
[4] Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 532ff.
[5] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 39.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 182 importance of the Muria bath is emphasized by the use of the winnowing-fan (universally important in magic) to fan and drive away all risk of evil.

The red ants scattered over the marriage party are perhaps intended merely as a joke; they may, however, represent a survival of some former custom of ordeal. In British Guiana a man before marriage had to show his fitness for it by allowing himself to be sewn into a hammock full of fire ants.[1]

Yet to the participants in the marriage it is probable that its financial and social aspect is of even greater importance than the supernatural atmosphere into which they have projected themselves. The alliance of the two families is emphasized by the little rite of *samdhi-bhet* at the very beginning and by the farewell of the new relations-in-law at the end. Their prayer—'Let there be no quarrels. Let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'—and again—'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it'—indicates the importance of the ceremony for the family, the clan and the ancestors. This is still further shown by the presents made to various relatives and, above all, by the gifts offered to the Departed—to the Pot in the old home to compensate the ancestors for the loss of a girl, to the Pot in the new family to indicate that the bride has left her old clan and joined that of her husband.

But it is not only family and village that the motiari must now desert; she has to leave her ghotul. So gifts and compensations are given: there is a feast, a farewell massage, and marriage-crowns are often put up on the ghotul pillar. Bride and groom bid ceremonial farewell to their old companions as they set out for their new home.

So far we have dealt mainly with rites of parting and separation: other ceremonies stress the social and sexual union of bride and groom and attempt to ensure its natural fertility. The giving of the bridal ring is a world-wide symbol of union, so is the ceremony of eating together. At the end of the Lagir circumambulation (itself a rite of aggregation with a subsidiary cathartic or prophylactic purpose [2]), bride and groom are tied together and water is poured over them. On two occasions, the bridegroom or his friends carry off the bride; this may be a survival of an older tradition of marriage by capture or may merely be intended to stress the emphatic break with the old life and entry into the new.

582 182 831 The sexual interest is both manifest and latent. There is little concealment or symbolism about the ceremonial bedding of the married pair, the vagina carved on the main pillar of the booth, the obscene horseplay between relatives, the constant cries of 'Penis' and 'Vagina', the songs, the jokes, the abuse. In such sexual jokes, says W. G. Archer, 'is a release of repressed energy which when applied to the marriage must necessarily make it fertile'.[3]

Other of the incidents and objects in the ritual are of a symbolic character. Some are directly sexual: thus the motiari bang the mahua branch up and down on the site of the booth just as Bison-horn Maria girls use their dancing-sticks, professedly in imitation of sexual intercourse. The pouring of water over bride and groom is a symbol of world-wide distribution, and the breaking of wooden poles links up with many examples given by Westermarck,[4] where

[1] Sir E. F. Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), p. 221.
[2] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 512ff.
[3] *The Wedding of the Writers.* And Westermarck says, 'The sexual indulgence of the wedding guests may, on the principle of homoeopathic magic, be a means of assisting bride and bridegroom in achieving the reproductive aims of their union'.—Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 390.
[4] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 457.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 182 831

things are broken to ensure or facilitate the consummation of the marriage. The Berber blow a cane to pieces. The Zulu bride breaks a spear. Among the Yakut dry rods are broken and burnt.

Haldi, with its yellow colour, is both a ghost scarer and a sex-symbol. It is significant that one of its forty-six ancient synonyms is *kamala*, 'lustful' and others refer to it as 'night'.[1] The oil with which it is mixed is, to the Muria mind at least, another sex-symbol, recalling the oil used in massage and that traditionally put on a lover's mat 'to make it slippery'.

Other objects are concerned more with the fruit of intercourse, for the fertility so carefully avoided in the ghotul is now passionately desired. The kalsa-pitcher is an obvious symbol of the womb: it is filled with fertile grain and a lamp (which stands for the act of love in folk-poetry as in Pahari paintings) covers its mouth. The arrow is another obvious sex-symbol[2]; the very interesting song on p. 119 connects the marriage arrow with the arrow used to cut the umbilical cord of the first child: here too the kalsa-pitcher becomes the pot from which the mother is bathed during the ceremonial uncleanness of the puerperium. The decorations of the booth, the strings of mango leaves so green and fertile, the coconut, the grain, the burning lamps, all hint at love and love's fruit. Even the curious rite where the bride and groom throw away their toilet-twigs and spit at each other may aim at ensuring union and productiveness. Most obvious of all the symbols are those connected with earth, for woman is everywhere the earth whom man must plough and sow.

585 182

The incidents and furniture of a Muria marriage, therefore, have not come together by chance. They are purposeful and charged with meaning. They express in vivid and dramatic form the working of the Muria mind. There could hardly be a more emphatic means of bringing home to a young couple their social, sexual and domestic union.

[1] See *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 39.

[2] Westermarck gives many examples, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 490; so does Archer, *The Blue Grove*, pp. 172ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SIX

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

I. Old Age and the Climacteric

888 THE place of the aged in Muria society is not unenviable. The training in the ghotul instils into the minds of boys and girls the idea of respect for older people and, for all its stress on equality, a sense of the dignity of position and achievement. This attitude remains with the children all their lives. An older man, therefore, often enjoys a very favoured position. In time he becomes a member of the village, and even of the pargana, panchayat. The system of cross-cousin marriage, so largely prevalent in the tribe, ensures that he is surrounded by a large number of relatives and dependants. Among these he gradually rises to a position in which flattering attention is paid to his judgement and it is considered essential that he should be consulted in everything to do with the welfare of the tribe, the clan, the family, and the ghotul.

887 Nor is there any loss of the variety and colour of life. He still occasionally visits the scene of his youthful happiness and, if he is wise and tactful, the children will consult him about their affairs. If he has the art of music or story-telling he will command absorbed attention. He still goes to the great tribal festivals and the commercial Marhai in the larger villages. At these, if he is a Sirsha he will dance and beat his drum as lustily as any chelik; he will meet scores of old friends and drink with them. At marriages, which he invariably attends, he has a special licence to play practical jokes and to indulge the coarsest behaviour. There are certain to be present many men and women who stand to him in the 'joking relationship', and a marriage is the stage whereon the Table of Relationship comes to dramatic life. Nobody is likely to think less of him for his pranks. Indeed the antics of the old men are an enlivening and picturesque feature of most marriages. [522]

888 But, of course, the varied scenes he has witnessed and the bereavements he has suffered generally tend to make the old Muria at other times somewhat sad and meditative. Disease sometimes hampers his movements, though many old Muria are remarkably hale and hearty. A proverb runs: 'When a child he plays; when a boy he displays his beauty; in age his head shakes and he meditates.' This comparison of youth and age is a favourite one among the Muria. 'The baby has no hair; the youth dresses it; the old man's curls behind.'

887 The old village woman, Muria, Gond, Pardhan or Baiga, deserves the world's most profound respect. Her wrinkled face and bent indomitable form, which is so familiar a sight in every Muria village, is the symbol of the courage, devotion and the will to persevere characteristic of her race. Upon her falls the heavy burden of the work of an ever-growing household. She is expected to be present and to help at the confinements of every one of her descendants. She constantly has to care for her grandchildren and may even be called on to provide milk for them from her withered breasts. Should she be relieved of the burden of a family, her lot is no less arduous, and I have often seen the pitiful little huts in which some lonely, childless widow spends the evening of her days.

But the old woman's lot is not unbroken drudgery. The scheme and pattern of Muria life is well devised to break up the monotony of village existence with bright and vivid colours and gay bursts of song. The old woman too

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Muria

887 goes to the market and attends the festivals, though there is not so much for her in these as for the men. But her real hour of happiness is at a marriage. Here she may lay aside restraint and recapture the abandon of youth. Now she may drink heavily and for a few hours in blissful intoxication free herself of inhibitions and forget all that is tiresome and weary in her life. If the older men enliven the marriage scene with their buffoonery, [522 the older women divert it with their obscenity. There is nothing that they 831] may not say, little they may not do. Their songs and their dance movements are outrageous and never fail to rouse laughter in the crowd.

888 In a very few cases Muria women grow riggish in old age. They adorn themselves with many ornaments and wear bright-coloured saris. This behaviour is not approved.

You are an old woman,
Forget your dances.
You are an old woman,
Yet on your buttocks is a tiny cloth
And flowers are in your hair.

Although there is a rule that women should never use their ghotul titles after marriage, when a group of old women who have grown up together in the same ghotul meet in later life, they usually use the old names in order to awaken happy memories of the past. I am told that then they exchange reminiscences through half the night and that such times are among the happiest of their lives.

886 As elsewhere in aboriginal India, the climacteric does not appear to be dreaded or even to be specially noticed. In India, women are old at 45 and they greet the cessation of the menstrual period with relief that they are now saved from its embarrassements. I have not been able to find any myth about the climacteric; there does not seem to be any rule about it or any desire to avert it. It is a purely natural phenomenon. 'The stream that flowed so long is dry', 'the old tree has begun to wither'. Some people believe that the tree withers because 'no one goes to an old woman,[1] so her vagina has no grain to eat; no rain falls in her stream, so how can it flow?'

II. Death and the Ghotul

761 The ghotul is a place of separations. But when a chelik or motiari dies
883 there is a special feeling of sorrow, a sense of outrage, the conviction that something exceptional and abnormal has occurred. Sometimes the ghotul is closed for three days; where it is not closed the children gather sadly and there is no singing and there should be no intimacies. When older people die the dormitory is not closed. 'The ghotul is the *Dinda-mahâl*, the Palace of the Unmarried. As the Raja's Palace is not shut when people die in the town, neither is ours. But if two or three of the chelik and motiari die, then we shut it.' At Dongrigura, they said that when a chelik died, the motiari wept and next day initiated one of the younger boys and gave him the dead chelik's title, so that there might be no gap in their fellowship. When the Subedar died, they made his little brother Subedar next day and gave him as 'husband' to the Subedarin, his *anga*, or elder brother's 'widow'.

The death of a chelik or motiari is always abnormal. The death of a little child or of a child in the womb is no less unnatural. 'Just as in a field, rice

[1] A rather cynical proverb runs: 'How disgusted is a man who eats stale food in the morning and goes to bed with an old woman at night.'

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

761
883

sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

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The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal; the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose of it.

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All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatisfied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the loveliest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away. They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Kuara-bhut, revealing his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain. In Palnar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy. When the Siraha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

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In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

eyes; it throws down grass from the roof. But no one need ever be afraid of the ghost of a chelik or motiari.'

During the bazaar ceremonies in the east of the State (when these are performed for a dead chelik or motiari) the villagers say, 'Mahapurub sent you into this world only for a little while; he did not intend you to live with us for long; so don't be angry and don't trouble us'. The parents are led round the shops and then go home leaving the Uriya-bhut in the bazaar. The dead boy or girl is not mingled with the Departed as are the married, and no menhir is erected for them.

Sometimes the ghost of a chelik may be dangerous. In the compound of the Khutgaon ghotul there was formerly a great stone. One of the boys died and the ghost came to sit on it bringing an epidemic with him. Many boys and girls died and the ghotul had to be destroyed and rebuilt in another place. But the stone remained where it was and when the villagers tried to move it sickness broke out again and so they left it alone.

Many Muria say that when an unmarried girl dies her ghost is dangerous because if a witch can get hold of it, she gives it the form of a pretty girl and sends her to rob men of their seed. Such a girl may appear as a man's mother or sister and torment him.

A dead motiari may also continue to visit her old friends of the ghotul. This only happens, however, when the boys sleep outside, for it is believed that Lingo protects the actual building from the invasion of any witch or spirit. The Sirdarsingh of the Chargaon ghotul told me how he once had an encounter with such a ghost. 'She visited me and I went to her; for many days she was with me; I could not get rid of her. I often went to her and my clothes were spoilt with my discharges. At last I gave her a comb and necklace and she went away, but for fear she may return I sacrifice a pig every year.' So too motiari complain of visits from some old lover's ghost: 'he comes to us, pressing us'.

III. The Soul and its Fate

The belief in immortality, or at least in some kind of survival after death, is bound up with the idea of the soul. The Muria theologians say explicitly that a man has two or even three souls (*jiwa*). In Bakulwahi the villagers said that after death one of these souls[1] went to Mahapurub, one became a Hanal and lived in the Pot of the Departed, and the third became a Chhaiya or Shade, a ghost that visited his relatives in dreams and often made himself a nuisance. The word Hanal, as Grigson has pointed out, is literally translated 'The Departed', for it is a past participial form of the Gondi verb *handâna*, to go.[2] Whenever I speak of the Departed, therefore, it may be taken as translating Hanal in original. In Randhna the people said that,

> Every man has two souls: one lives in his mouth and one in his body—you can feel it going *duk-duk* in the chest. The first soul goes from the mouth direct to Mahapurub; the other remains in the corpse and goes with the mourners to the grave. It watches the body being burnt or buried from a tree nearby, then goes to the nearest stream and lives there until the people come and catch it in the form of a fish and take it home. Then it lives in the house as a god (*dev*).

So also in Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria of the Abujhmar foothills said that,

> A man has two souls: one always remains with him; the other, a smaller one, leaves him in sleep and its adventures are what we call

[1] Throughout, when I use the word 'soul' it represents *jiwa* in the original.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 223.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

764
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The dead man's daughter-in-law throws rice over the bier

Memorial menhirs near Khutgaon

[p. 144 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769
292
535

Plate XXXII

[P. 144 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769
292
535

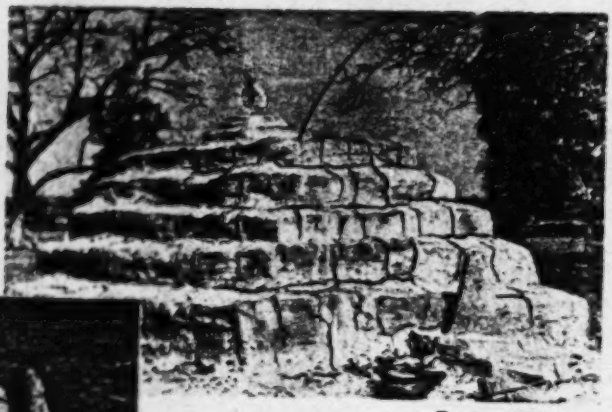
Scenes from the Dance of the Ghost

[p. 144 (E)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXXIV

764
769



Tomb at Gudripara

Small menhir in front of the Gudripara tomb

Son and grandson offer liquor at a father's tomb at Phunder

[p. 144 (D)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

774 [775] dreams. When a man dies the soul remains near the house and when a child is born we say 'A visitor has come' meaning that the soul has returned to its own place.

The ability of the soul to leave the body and its power of independent movement is illustrated by a significant story, told by a middle-aged Muria, Dalsai of Kerawahi.

> When I was about fourteen years old I died of small-pox and my soul was taken to Mahapurub. I watched my parents sitting round my body weeping in their grief. Mahapurub was sitting on a cot: my soul said to him, 'I'm hungry, give me something to eat'. Mahapurub replied, 'What do you want to eat?' My soul said, 'Ripe mangoes, ripe figs and plenty of salphi juice to drink'. Mahapurub said, 'There's nothing to eat here: go back to Manjhpur [the Middle World or earth] and have it there'. So my soul returned to its body and the corpse sat up. I said to my family, 'What are you weeping for?' I then asked for ripe mangoes, ripe figs and salphi juice, and my parents gave me everything I wanted. But the Mata [goddess of small-pox feared by Hindus and aboriginals alike] said, 'You have escaped from Mahapurub, but you can't escape from me. Give me one of your eyes'. Since then I have been blind in one eye.

Kotla Muria of Kuntpadar describes how in his youth he 'died' during a cholera epidemic.

> Everyone fled from the village leaving me senseless in the house. I died and my soul went to Adibhum, the Lower World. There I saw a world just like ours, but the men were of small stature, and the cows and bullocks were the size of pigs. When I went among them, the inhabitants said, 'Who is this man? Why has he come here? We have no room for him'. They gave me some food and asked me to leave immediately. My soul returned to earth and entered my body. The food I had taken in Adibhum was enough for me to move my legs a little, and presently I recovered.

The effect of such stories on the simple aboriginal mind is to impress upon it the belief that the soul can exist apart from its bodily integument. Even when that has been shed for ever, dreams prove that the soul continues to exist, though it is only possible to see the Dead for a few years, up to the time when they are finally mingled with the Hanal. It is generally supposed that there is no need to tend or placate a man's soul more than twenty years after his death.

775 After death, the soul goes to Mahapurub and, when a sufficient time has passed, returns to the 'warmth and comfort' of its own family. Though the Muria believe in rebirth, they have no idea of Karma and their picture of life after death is quite unmoralized. There are no words in Gondi for sin or virtue: a man may be ruined, here and hereafter, for breach of a taboo, but the notion of retribution for sinners is an alien importation.

772 775 Have the Muria any idea of Hell or Heaven? Their myths and folk-tales are full of references to the three worlds—Porrobhum or Uparpur, the abode of Mahapurub or Ispural; Nadumbhum or Manjhpur, the Middle World, the earth on which we live; and Adibhum or Tarpur, the Under World. This typically Hindu conception has the advantage of giving the story-teller three stages or levels to work on and greatly extends the possible range of a hero's adventures. There is frequent communication between these worlds by

772 means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub
slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose
775 brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In
at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.[1] I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.[2] The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. The Intervention of the Departed in Human Affairs

775 But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally
769 interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are particularly interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any
[837 breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery
is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is
753] brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or grievous hurt peace can only be made between the two families if peace is made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery with another man.

769 The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead. Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall, to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing, to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 96.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubetantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, op. cit., p. 141.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

to its prey, to protect the boys and girls going out on dancing expeditions, to ensure that the drum gives its accustomed thunder. Life and death are thus united by these beliefs and rites, and the whole of existence is seen as a single sequence where physical death is but an incident which in no way disturbs the continuity of interest or relationship.

V. Funerary Rites

In the west, Muria death customs are dominated by Hill Maria influence. In Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria said that their funerary rites were 'things of the Maria Raj'. As we move east, where the Muria population probably represents an earlier Gond immigration from the north, customs are not unlike those typical of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The north-east of Bastar, however, has been more open to Hindu influence and it is not always easy to tell what the original traditions were.

The Muria bury important people, little children, chelik and motiari, and the victims of small-pox. They cremate all others. They lay the corpse, whether of man or woman, on its back with the head to the east. At Padbera, the Gaita said, 'It is because we came from the east. East is "up" and west is "down"'.

Members of each clan and either sex are disposed in separate places. Those who die from unusual causes are taken far away into the jungle. In Palari I was told that the remains of a tiger's victim should be burnt on the actual scene of death. Usually the corpse is placed under a mahua tree.

I will first describe one of the several funerals that I have witnessed, and then give any variations that I have recorded elsewhere.

On the night of 8 December 1940, in Bauri, a village of the Abujhmar foothills, a woman of about forty years named Dhako, the wife of Genjru of the Wadder clan, died and was carried home on a rough litter to her husband's house at Amgaon. She had died of 'a watery swelling of the body', perhaps dropsy, which is generally regarded as a punishment for adultery. The people were very reticent about speaking of the cause of her death and I never was able to hear the real story.

Since it is taboo for a woman to sleep on a cot, Dhako died on the ground and was again laid on the floor of her own house covered with a sheet. Many women, assembled in the house and outside in the street, wailed loudly from time to time. Gradually the relatives gathered and, when all were there, the corpse was carried out on a bamboo mat into the courtyard. Six women sat round weeping. An old woman of the Wadder clan (which can marry with the Partabi clan to which the dead woman originally belonged), but not a member of the family, now tied a little rice and a cowrie in knots on either side of the cloth. There were three knots on each side joined by a thread which ran criss-cross over the body. They did not bathe the corpse nor close the eyes, but the woman's little daughter, a child about five years old, put haldi on her mother's face, and the other female relatives present did the same.

Meanwhile a group of chelik, most of whom were related to Genjru, were busy making a sort of ladder to serve as bier. This they covered with dry grass. The corpse was lifted out and placed upon it. The chelik took it on their shoulders and went into the jungle followed by both men and women. Genjru's younger sister followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice over it. Another woman carried a basket containing three different roots and bits of haldi.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

764 The Muria cremate the bodies of those who die of yaws, leprosy and dropsy, so a party of chelik went ahead to prepare the pyre. When the bearers reached the place, which was in thick jungle, on the far side of a stream, away from the usual crematorium, they carried the corpse round the pyre, which was below a great mahua tree, three times anti-clockwise, and then laid it on the ground to the south-west of the pyre with the feet to the west.

Each of the relatives present came forward and laid a small piece of cloth on the body. Dhako's father-in-law (a father-in-law or an elder brother is often the chief actor at a funeral) poured out some mahua spirit by the head of the corpse saying, 'Today accept this from our hands; after today how will you get it again?' They then removed most of the clothes, but tied one piece to a branch of the mahua tree. The rest they took home to distribute among the children.

The chelik lifted the corpse on to the pyre and the old Wadder woman placed a little earth on saja leaves at either side of the head. She took a stone and broke Dhako's bangles 'for now she is separated from her husband, she is a widow'. They put a little jawa-gruel and water by the head, leaving the pot there. The chelik piled wood and dry grass round the pyre, but none was actually laid on the body. They rested the bier against the pile of wood and one of the boys broke it with his axe, then struck the ground all round—to represent the driving of nails 'to close the house' and prevent the ghost walking, and then two of them threw the axe to and fro over the pyre three times.

Now the same chelik who had carried the bier lit bundles of grass from a coil of paddy-straw rope which had been brought slowly smouldering from the hearth of Genjru's house, and ran quickly two by two round the pyre in opposite directions kindling the dry grass. The flames shot up and the women broke into a loud and moving lamentation. The men threw twigs (of any tree) onto the burning corpse, muttering, 'God to whom we vowed gifts has failed us. Let him take these twigs instead, for it's all he'll get'.

The people stayed for a while, some of them looking up fearfully at the smoke to see if it would go straight into the air or no, then returned slowly and sorrowfully to Genjru's house. The father-in-law met us and distributed oil which was rubbed on face, hands and legs instead of a bath. He gave tobacco and liquor to those who had brought pieces of cloth to cover the corpse, but not to others. The people then slowly and quietly dispersed.

When the corpse is buried, similar customs are observed. On 12 November 1941 I attended the funeral of Bhaira, a middle-aged man of the Halami clan, at Gorma. Here the bier was covered with plantain leaves[1] and the corpse bound firmly to it with cord. Here it was the dead man's daughter-in-law who, with hair untied, followed the bier. When they reached the grave, which was about five feet deep, the village Siraha put a little cow-dung at the bottom, placed plantain leaves above and on the leaves some sticks. After the corpse had been lowered into the cavity, it was covered with plantain leaves, and the Gaita let a few drops of liquor fall by its head saying, 'When you were alive, I could give you nothing, but at least take this now'. After the grave had been filled in, large stones were placed upon the mound. The men went to bathe, but the women remained. The widow brought a pot containing all that was left of the food that had been cooked for the dead man on the day of his death, and emptied it near the grave. She was persuaded by the other women to sit down above her husband's

677 [1] Plantain leaves, which are sacred to the Hindus, are regarded as unlucky by the Muria because of their use in funerals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

head. Weeping bitterly, she cried, 'All these days you were with me. Now you have left your wife and gone away. So take your bangles, I don't want them any more'. She broke the bangles and threw them on the grave. 764

In Amgaon the rite of the dead fish was omitted, probably because no fish were available. But in Gorma, when oil was given to the guests for their purification, they were also offered a small dead dry fish floating in oil. They had to touch this and make a mark on the Gaita's forehead with a drop of oil; he did the same for each of the guests.

Ceremonies vary considerably according to the age and status of the deceased. Thus when a young bride died at Temrugaon on 22 March 1941, it was the chelik who took a leading part in the ceremonies and some of them made a pathetic reference to her youth of happiness in the ghotul. Here it was three women, the girl's mother and two sisters, who poured liquor, not onto the ground, but into the corpse's mouth. Three chelik broke the bangles: each placed one hand on a stone and their leader smashed the bangles. Most of the other ornaments were removed and distributed as gifts to the motiari. But the wooden square, round which a Muria girl's hair is tied, was placed in the grave above her head along with the broken bangles and one necklace. After the earth had been filled in, the women poured a little oil and some gruel from a gourd onto the head of the grave.

The sense of outrage, the feeling that something has gone wrong, that the magicians have failed and the gods have 'let them down' is almost as marked as the deep and genuine grief of the mourners. We have already noticed how they said at Amgaon, 'God to whom we vowed gifts has failed us'. At Gorma the family had promised a goat to Gondin Pen, a pig to Tallur Muttai, another pig to the Rau and a chicken and coconut to the Departed. At the funeral, just before the grave was filled in, the dead man's son stood by the head of the grave and broke a small stick into five pieces. He threw one piece into the grave and said, 'I promised Gondin Pen a goat if you lived. But you died and this is all she'll get'. He threw the second piece and said, 'I promised Tallur Muttai a pig if you lived. But you died and this is all she'll get'. And so on. At Temrugaon the husband and father of the dead girl stood at the head of the grave holding seven saja twigs. The others present said to the husband, 'If she were alive, what would you give?' He replied, 'A goat, a pig, a hen' and so on, and at each answer threw one of the twigs into the grave.

When an old and distinguished Muria dies the ceremonies are more elaborate. The body is carried out to burial with singing and dancing. An *akomāma* relative beats the *hātur-dhol* (death-drum) to summon the relatives and then goes dancing and beating his drum before the bier, singing, 'O dead man, now you are sleeping with your feet turned up, and your penis is pointing to the sky'. It is one of the social duties of the chelik and motiari to attend such funerals and escort the bier. I have recorded one of the Gondi songs that are sung on such occasions.

Chele dāda ro ro le.	Come, brothers, come.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai! 764
Oru boru rājāl ra?	Who is this Raja? 539
Māna yise rājāl ra.	It is our Raja.
Dori dipte dāntor ra.	The Raja passes through the Under World.
Dori dipte gajur ra.	There is a great noise in the Under World.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

764
539

Manjhpur te chimu ra.	In the Middle World is silence.
Porro dipte chimu ra.	In the Upper World is silence.
Rājān onse os wait ra.	Let us take the Raja home.
Bāra dindowa asta ra.	Twelve times have the folk been called.
Warāt dādi marāt ra.	Come, brothers, come.
Hajār muli gurh to ra.	A thousand men have gathered.
Adu bādu koda ra?	What horse is this?
Bagri māro koda ra.	It is the horse Bagri Maro.
Tānāng kālku itek ra?	What should we say of its legs?
Ai kālku na koda ra.	This horse has eight legs.
Tāna talla itek ra?	What should we say of its heads?
Nālung talla na koda ra.	This horse has four heads.
Sono tāye kharau ra.	It has golden shoes.
Kharau yise kertor ra.	It has to wear these shoes.
Hira tāye lagām ra.	It has a diamond bridle.
Lagām poysi uditor ra.	Catch the bridle and mount the horse.
Perke munev mānev ra.	There are men before and behind.
Odāng odāng pulur ra.	There are police on either side.
Koda chhute māta ra.	The horse begins to run.
Adu bādu māhāl ra?	What is this palace?
Māhāl porro bairag ra.	Above the palace flies a flag.
Chāron kotunj te bairag ra.	On its four sides are flags.
Nao khand ta māhāl ra.	There are nine quarters of the palace.
Māhāl lopa jhulna ra;	Inside there is a swing;
Sono tāye jhulna ra.	The swing is made of gold.
Hira tāye gādāi ra.	The throne is made of diamonds.
Gāddi sope kewit ra.	Give him the throne.
Māhāl sope kewit ra.	Give him the palace.
Johār bhetu kewit ra.	Greet him with Johar.
Dāt ra dādi dātu ra.	Come away, brothers, come away.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

In this very interesting song, the horse Bagri Maro is, of course, the bier and its four bearers. The men and police on every side are the escorting chelik. The palace is the grave and the tomb that is usually built above it for an important man. The flags are the bits of cloth tied to overhanging trees or attached to the tomb itself. The throne is made of sticks and leaves on which the corpse is laid.

I also have a lengthy and very coarse song sung by the mourners as they go down to the stream to bathe after disposing of the corpse. I will give the first fifteen lines.

Chole dāda ro ro le.	Come, brothers, come.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Dātu ra dādi dātu ra,	Let us now go hence,
Yeru miyāla dātu ra,	Let us go to bathe in the stream,
Ghātum teke reyit ra,	Let us go to the bathing-place,
Samund teke yer miyit ra.	Let us bathe in the ocean.
Adu bādu rāni ra?	What Rani is this?
Ade rājona rāni were ra.	This is the Rani of that Raja.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Angār mute rāni ra.	Angar Mute is the Rani.
Yer miyāli kilandu ra.	Weeping, she is bathing in the water.
Jhāro jhāro kilandu ra.	As she weeps the tears fall.
Pitāmaro dhoti ra!	O her silken cloth!
Dhoti tunc kurandu ra.	She looks at her cloth.
Tēna dudong āteke ra?	How can we describe her breasts?
Mākka kāyāng dudo ra.	Her breasts are as the bel fruit.
Ghātum tikeda wāndung ra.	From the bathing-place she is coming home.
Lonc tike kandung ra	In the house
Mul gathe māta ra	There are so many relatives
Suju buju kile ra.	That we cannot count them.

The rest of the song describes Angar Mute's court, to which comes the Pargana Manjhi with small legs, his spear over his shoulder, a big-bellied Kotwar and many other officials. The Manjhi delivers judgement, giving a hundred rupees to the Raja and only a pair of bullocks for the Muria. 'One of the bullocks had no tail, the other had no horns.' Then the chelik and motiari who have escorted the corpse to the burial ground are described. There are sixty boys led by Kosi Leyur and sixty girls led by Gara Karre Mode, the Belosa of the ghotul, whose vagina is sixteen cubits long and whose pubic hairs are five cubits long. 'A jungle boar could roll in her vagina.' The boys break her bangles and push the pieces into her navel with a *jharar jharar* noise.

All this, which seems merely coarse to us, is exceedingly amusing to the Muria; the song is really a comic effort intended to relieve the tension of the funeral now that the main rites are done.

VI. Dividing the Cause of Death

It is always important at a funeral to discover the cause of so monstrous and unnatural a thing as death. At Binjhli, when magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the Siraha medium recites a string of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty man is mentioned, the bier moves forward violently of its own accord. This method, which resembles the use of an Anga clan-god for divination, is common throughout the State, and Grigson has recorded a similar, though more elaborate, rite in use among the Hill Maria.[1]

At Kehalakot, the Muria remove some locks of the dead man's hair and a little earth from beneath his head. They make a small flag-pole with the hair and the earth and a saja leaf stuck on an ebony stick. They take this to the jungle and a boy holds it while the Siraha recites the names of any suspected causes or people. When the right word is uttered, the flag is said to quiver. At Kokori the villagers go to the boundary and put five heaps of rice in a row, one for Mahapurub, one for witchcraft, one for Mother Earth, one for the ancestors of the house, and one for any local godling who may have been troublesome. The people sit some distance away, and spend the time having their hair done by their relatives-in-law. Presently a crow flies down and pecks at one or other of the piles of rice, thus revealing the cause of death.

The *thumkukri* divination is done with chickens on the second or third day after death. One chicken is taken from the house of the dead and one from

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

761 the house of a samdhi. The chickens are exchanged so that a representative of the dead person's house holds the samdhi's chicken and vice versa. The
787 usual piles of rice are made and the chickens held before them while a string of names is recited. When the chickens peck at the rice, it is believed that they have revealed the cause of death. The chickens are then sacrificed and cooked with the rice on the spot.

It is commonly believed all over India, as by the Muria, that the way the smoke rises from the funeral pyre indicates the sort of death the deceased has suffered. If the smoke goes straight up, it indicates a natural death; if it goes crooked, it proclaims the hand of witchcraft.

VII. 'Bringing Back the Soul'

769 The curious rite of 'bringing back the soul' is known to the Hill Maria and the Bison-horn Maria, but is most common among the Muria who practise it in many different forms. Since this rite is performed throughout the Central Provinces, and since some of these Muria probably represent an ancient migration from the north into Bastar, it is not surprising that we should find this cultural link between them.[1]

It is rather difficult to describe the rites because of the bewildering variety of detail to be discovered from village to village, but it is possible to get a fairly clear picture of the main outlines.

After death, on the following day or at any time up to three years, when there is sufficient provision in the house, the relations of the dead man are summoned for a feast. Sometimes the relations are warned by a dream that the spirit of the dead is dissatisfied and that they must do something to comfort and honour him.

The people assemble, both *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relatives, and enjoy a feast in the dead man's house. The next morning they go singing, both men and women, attended by chelik and motiari with their drums and cymbals to the nearest tank or river. In some villages a samdhi makes a small booth on the bank; nine reeds are planted in the ground, mango leaves tied to them and a string run round them seven times. On the top he puts a small mat and on the ground he makes a circle with red and black powder and places an egg in the middle in the name of the Yer Kanyang (the Water Maiden). The Gaita then puts three rings of aonra fibre in the circle and an earthen pot filled with water.

[1] Accounts of bringing back the soul have been given for several tribes by Russell and Hiralal, for the Gond (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 94), Ahir (III, p. 28), Halba (III, p. 195), Kharia (III, p. 450), Kond (III, p. 469), Lohar (IV, p. 124), and Taonla (IV, 341). The practice is probably common to all the tribes in the Central Provinces. It is said that the Gond once buried their dead inside the house in order to ensure re-birth within the family; possibly 'bringing back the soul' has a similar purpose. The Gond customs recorded by Russell and Hiralal resemble those of the Muria. Others, however, differ. For example, the Kharia bring back the soul of the dead by attracting it at night to a lamp placed at a cross-roads. They sit near the lamp calling on the dead man and when the flame wavers in the wind, they break the lamp saying that the soul has returned to them. The Kond are said to have brought home the soul riding on a bow-stick covered with cloth. The Lohar have a custom, which I have myself noted for the Pando of east Bilaspur. Rice-flour is spread on the floor of the kitchen and covered with a brass plate. The mourners go to the village boundary, again spread flour on the ground, call on the dead to come and wait till some worm or insect crawls on to the flour. They catch the creature with a pinch of dough and carry it home and let it loose in the house. The flour under the brass plate is scrutinized and it is said that usually the foot-prints of a man or animal are found; this indicates the body of the man or beast to which the soul has passed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The near relatives of the deceased then go into the water crying on the dead to come to them and try to catch any kind of living thing. Whoever first catches a fish or prawn or frog, whatever it may be, is regarded as being specially loved by the dead and is rewarded with extra drinks and small presents. They put the fish into one of the pots together with a ring. The pot is covered with a bamboo cover on which is a new sari. The *akomdma* relative applies haldi and oil to the pot and as he is doing this someone else catches hold of every member of the party in turn, both men and women, and smears their private parts with haldi-oil. Then a girl (daughter or daughter-in-law to the dead) lifts the pot, puts it on her head, carries it up to the house and puts it down near the Pot of the Departed. A samdhi sacrifices a chicken after testing it in the usual way; when the chicken eats the rice offered it is a sign that the soul of the dead man loves his family as before. Then they pour the water together with the fish and ring on to the ground and tie the ring, which represents the man's soul, from the roof above the Pot of the Departed. Sometimes the ring is tied to a broom. They hang the pot itself up to the roof of the house. They eat the sacrificed chicken and drink and dance and then disperse. A samdhi makes a mixture of the water in which rice has been cleaned, the bark of the mango tree and a little cow's milk and sprinkles the whole house in order to purify it. 769

Some time afterwards, at one of their clan festivals, the members of the family take either the pot or simply the ring that has been hung in the Room of the Departed to the clan shrine or Hanalkot, which must be located at the clan headquarters or at least in some village within the clan territory. In some villages, as at Gudla, this is only done for men; women stay in the house. But at Sirsi the souls of both men and women were taken to the Hanalkot. In Kerawahi they said that at the special festival for Bara Pen, which occurs every two or three years, the members of the Poyami clan take the pots in which the soul has been brought from the river along with the rings to the shrine of their clan god. They sacrifice fowls saying, 'Here is the god of Lanji-Dhamda, go to him and you will become like him. As he helps us, so you too help us'. They tie the ring to a tree overlooking the shrines and break the pot. Then after the usual feast they go home.

Sometimes, however, the people take the soul direct to the Hanal. This is a small shrine for the dead, generally under a saja tree. They put the pot containing the soul and the ring down near the tree and sacrifice two hens, one for the dead man's family and one for his *akomdma* relatives. They feed these saying, 'Have you come happily today? Don't trouble us, you are to become a god. Always help us and don't trouble us'. When the chickens eat, thus showing that the soul is pleased, a member of the family kills one chicken and a samdhi kills the other. On the place where the chickens are sacrificed, they pour out the water and soul from the pot. They tie the ring by a single thread to the tree thus 'mixing him with the dead'. Everyone who came should have brought a chicken; these are now killed with sticks and roasted. The two sacrificed chickens may only be eaten by those who killed them. They drink liquor and dance and sing, and then go dancing home.

In the Bara Dongar Pargana the Muria have a very impressive death-dance for this occasion. A man wearing a beard of bear's hair, four *putri*[1] horns tied on his forehead, a fishing-net round his loins, a wooden doll in one hand, a bent stick in the other, leads the way from the river up to the house. In 769 535 [293]

[1] *Cervulus Muntjac*, the barking deer.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769 front of him one samdhi carries water and another a stick. As they go along
535 they beat the path and throw water on it saying, 'We are making a road before you, come slowly leaning on your stick; we are making a road for you, come samdhi to your house, don't stay outside'.

The bearded man, who is supposed to represent the soul of the dead, weary, hungry and exhausted comes walking slowly, bent like an aged man. Soon he falls to the ground exclaiming, 'I can go no further'. Then the samdhi says, 'You must drink this jawa-gruel' and they give him a drink of liquor and pull him up on his feet. He goes on a little more and falls on his feet again. Other people dance round him beating sticks against each other and all the people sing. He falls down again and again exclaiming that he is too weary and hungry to go further.

When they get near the house the bearded man and his two attendants roll on the ground and the family has to come out and beg them to bring the soul in. 'We will pay you your wages' they say, meaning that they will give them plenty of liquor. The daughter or sister of the deceased comes out with haldi, rice and water in a dish and washes the feet of the man who represents the soul.[1]

769 Inside the house they place a small stump, eight inches high, in the ground in the name of Bara Pen. There is a nail in the post and they hang the pot containing the fish on this and all relatives put haldi on it and offer pice to it saying, 'We have brought you here for your last marriage'. They sacrifice a cock to Bara Pen saying, 'Now keep this soul with you'.

They pour the water from the pot over the stump of the dead man, who is thus supposed to bathe in it. There is a curious idea that the fish must disappear as otherwise it will mean that the soul has not 'flown out of the pot to mingle with his ancestors'. Once when Lahari Maravi's father died, a witch kept the fish in the pot and would not let it fall out. They had to make special sacrifices before the soul was able to mingle with the Departed.

During the ceremonies of catching the soul and bringing it back to the house a number of songs are sung, of which the following are given as examples.

Song

769 539 *Re re nāgo re rela !*

Dāt ra dādi dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go.
Aga baga dākāt ra ?	Where are they going?
Sono rupo banding ra,	To the gold and silver tank,
Aga yise dātu ra.	Let us go there.
Phauj lamra mānta ra.	The whole company is going.
Agāy yise yewandur ra.	They have arrived there.
Sāt kori layor ra,	Seven score chelik,
Sāt kori layah kere ra,	Seven score motiari,
Agāy yise kandur ra,	They are going there,
Banding jhalke māndur ra.	Where waves move the water of the tank.
Agāy yise parakandur ra.	They are searching for it.
Jiwa koji kindur ra,	They are searching for the soul,
Bagāy jiwa puto ra.	But they cannot find it.

[1] Such dramatic rituals give some point to Ridgeway's suggestion that serious drama originated from the worship of the, often deified, dead. See Sir W. Ridgeway, *Drama and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races* (London, 1915).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Dāda hāvāl thur ra,	His brother says,
Wāy ra bābu wāyu ra.	Come, father, come.
Idāu injor kutur ra	When he said this
Jīwa injor wāndu ra.	The soul came.
Dāda hāvāl poyindu ra.	His brother caught it.
Dōtu dādi dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go:

Re re nāgo re rela!

769
539

This song explains itself so clearly that no commentary is needed. It is sung by chelik and motiari while the elder people are groping about in the water trying to catch some kind of living creature. The next song also gives an exact description of the rites that accompany the return of the soul, after it has been caught, to its home.

Songs

Ange hāri nihandu ra	Daughter-in-law puts it (the soul)
Puhna tīnd to irandu.	In a new pot and shuts it up.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Ange hāri indu ra,	Daughter-in-law says,
Dāyu bābu dāyu ra!	Come, brother, come!
Sāi kori layor ra,	Seven score boys,
Sāi kori layākhe ra,	Seven score girls,
Dand laure māndur ra,	They go along,
Ange hāri poyse māndur ra	Daughter-in-law carries the pot on her head.
Lone yise yewtor ra,	They reach the house,
Ghāt ghadse māndur ra.	They come outside.
Lone yise yewkun ra	When they reach the house
Agāy yise rohandu ra.	She puts down the pot.
Nātemoru saga ra,	Wife-clansmen of the village,
Bāhar tore saga ra.	Wife-clansmen from outside have come.
Samdhi saga wātmandur ra,	The wife-clansmen have come,
Helār bhai saga wātmandur ra.	The brother-clansmen have come.
Ore yise talhikindu ra,	They are asking,
Jīwa muda tun talhikindu ra.	They ask for the ring of the soul.
Jīwa muda tun poyendur ra	The relatives
Saga sama poyendu ra.	All touch the ring.
Saga saina jīwa muda tun ra	The relatives tie the ring
Kasur pakiya ta dohandur ra;	On a broom;
Lopāra murwis pāt ta ra,	Then take the broom inside,
Agāy yise dohandur ra.	And tie it to the cross-beam.
Rend rupaiya na dāyanga ra:	They give two rupees for liquor:
Dārango yise tach mandur ra.	They give liquor to all.
Saga saina tun hindur ra:	They give to the wife-clans:
Bhai bandhun tun hītor ra.	They give to the brother-clans.
Lotor yise mānej ra	The people of the house
Johār bhetu hindur ra.	Salute them with Johar.
Johār bhetu kichun ra	After the Johar greeting
Apun āpunlokhe kandur ra.	The visitors go home.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769
539

The next song refers to the erection of the booth in honour of the Water Maiden whence the motiari carry the pot containing the soul up to the house.

Chole dada re re le	Come, brothers!
Gari poto hintor ra	The Gaita's son
Gaitana marri hintor ra,	Makes a seat,
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Rāni kaniyātun gari ra	In the Rani's name
Hintor nima girta āwu ra.	For you he makes a seat.
Nima rāni dāyu ra!	Come O Rani!
Nima penu atoni ra.	You have become our god.
Garh huiyār mata ra	The house is ready
Rāni kaniyāna āndu ra.	Of the Rani Kaniya.
Garh lopa bīrāng ra?	What is there in the house?
Ghar lopa jhulna ra,	There is a swing in the house,
Sono tāye jhulna ra,	The swing is of gold,
Chāndi tāye sakri ra,	The chains are of silver,
Hira tāye gādi ra	The throne is of diamonds
Gādi poroy udila ra.	On which she sits.
Tāna poroy ilche ra	Above her
Jora chawar artu ra.	Are a pair of fly-whisks.
Dari dipte gajur ata ra;	In this world there is much noise;
Niya sangnor girta ra	Come, for your friends
Ator nima acho dayu ra.	Are happy.
Manjhpurte chim arta ra	In the Middle World is silence;
Nima acho dayu ra.	Therefore come.
Silāwāri leyāk ra	Silawari is a maiden,
Dātu bai dātu ra,	Come, girl, come,
Mawa jiwa oil ra;	Bring our *jiwa* home;
Harik maule dāyu bai	Come willingly
Lone nima wandaki ra.	And live in our house.
Samdhi saga wator bai.	The wife-clan people have come, girl.
Helār bai u atang ra,	The sisters have come,
Daul lawre wator ra,	Come by the path,
Lone tike wontor ra.	Come home with the soul.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

Another song, recorded at Kokori, refers to the wild and lonely life of the soul in the jungle before it is brought home to live in the granary.

Bābu iole bābu na!	Brother, O brother!
Tuy bale bābu sunu!	Listen to us, brother!
Jau bābu jau na!	Go, brother, go!
Jau bābu jau!	Go, brother, go!
Kaha bale jawa bābu?	Where should I go, brother?
Kaha bale jau?	Where should I go?
Pāni ghāte jau bābu,	Go to the place of water, brother,
Bāra bali kholi.	Where there are twelve rooms.
Jhar bhitar rahis bābu;	You were living in a tree;
Ban bhitar rahis;	You were living in the forest;
Pāni ghāte jau bābu.	Go to the water-place, brother.
Pāni ghāte jau.	Go to the water-place.
Burjaun rahis bābu.	You were in the dust, brother.
Pāni nahauk karu.	Now go to bathe.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

769
539

Pānī nahank jau bābu,	When you have bathed, brother,
Gadiya bahk jau.	Go, sit in the granary.
Nāwa lugā pidun bābu,	Wearing a new cloth, brother,
Gadiya me bahau.	Sit in the granary.
Chāti cho dhar howun bābu,	Like a line of ants, brother,
Ghare hale jau.	Let us go home.
Age din cho dādā bābu,	The elders of former days,
Ulay milah jau.	Go to mix with them.

This song, which is in Halbi, refers to the custom of east Kondagaon (and of other parts) of keeping the soul in the granary. The song ensures that the soul will come happily. It is said that the souls of the dead hear all things on earth the wrong way round. Mourning sounds to them like merry-making, and a song sounds like a wail.

VIII. The Bazaar Ceremony

769

In some villages in the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria go to the nearest bazaar to buy parched rice, gram and liquor. They walk round the shops scattering the rice and gram and then visit the grave of the dead man. Here they eat and drink a little and then go home saying to the soul of the dead, 'Come home with us'. They go into the Room of the Departed and it is believed that the soul follows them.

The mourners go to a bazaar. The women carry rice, bread and sweets in their baskets and sit down near the market-place, but away from it. They pretend to have a bazaar of their own and the men of the party go to them and pretend to buy. The widow or the chief female mourner, if the deceased was a man, comes and sits in the middle of the party; the Gaita offers fire and incense and the rest give her leaves and flowers. In some villages it is supposed that it is at this time that the soul of the dead man mixes with his ancestors. Then the widow leads the party widdershins round the bazaar and comes home. On their arrival at the house the mourners say to her, 'Now let us depart. You have had great sorrow, for your life has left you. You have had great expense, but don't worry. Live happily and eat your fill. God has given you sorrow, but if you brood on this sorrow overmuch who will care for your children?'

In the Mardapal Pargana they performed the same ceremony by walking round the place where the cattle rest at midday. In other villages, specially those at some distance from a bazaar, the people hold a mock bazaar in their own compound putting out for sale old clothes, bits of wood, seeds and beans. Instead of money they use the broken pieces of an earthen pot. This does not seem to take the place of the ordinary ceremony of bringing the soul in a pot from the river but is supplementary to it. If for any reason these ceremonies are not performed, a cock is sacrificed annually at the year's end. A saja 'tooth-twig' is also given so that the dead man can clean his teeth before eating.

The ceremonies are confused and vary from village to village and even from time to time. But the main outlines are clear. The soul of the dead man is supposed to be living outside his home and must be brought back. People go to the nearest stream or tank and catch some living creature which they bring with dance and song, and sometimes with an elaborate ceremonial, to his old home. There they believe the soul will rest for a time. Afterwards they take the ring representing the soul to the central shrine of all the members of the clan. There is thus a double mingling of a man's soul with the Departed,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769 first with the immediate members of his own family in his own house, and then with all the members of his clan.

IX. The Pot of the Departed

Funeral rites and memorial pillars or stones emphasize the importance of the dead to the outside world and to the neighbours, but for the family, attention centres round the Hanal Kunda or the Pot of the Departed, a large earthen pot which is kept in a dark corner of the inner room of a Hill Maria house and in the store-room by the Bison-horn Maria. Among the Hill Maria this room is often called the Hanal Kholi or Room of the Departed. In addition to the Pot there is also a Hearth of the Departed on which the housewife must cook new grain at each of the First Eating festivals. In the same room various stores are kept. Among the Bison-horn Maria the room dedicated to the dead is the Wijja-lon, the third of the three buildings of which their homes are normally composed. This room is generally used as the seed-room or granary and is almost entirely filled with a large platform on which pots, baskets and sacks are placed. In one corner, however, there is the Pot of the Departed and near it the sacred hearth. The Jhoria Muria and other Muria also keep the pot inside their houses, sometimes in the ordinary store-room, sometimes in the granary. As we move east across the Kondagaon Tahsil, however, the custom shows signs of weakening and there are villages where a special permanent pot is not preserved in private houses, though there is usually one in the Hanalkot, or corporate house of the dead.

This Pot of the Departed is quite distinct from the little pots in which the soul of a dead man is brought back to the house and taken to the Hanalkot in order to be mingled with his house and clan ancestors. It is a permanent pot to which special offerings are made on all important occasions of Muria life. New grain and vegetables are cooked in it at the appropriate festivals. From time to time women put a little rice and flour into it. In the north of the State, as at Khutgaon, two pots were kept for the dead in the kitchen, one full of rice and the other empty. At every meal the housewife transferred a pinch of rice from the full into the empty pot in honour of the Departed. When the empty pot was filled members of the household, but no others, cooked and ate it. At an engagement ceremony, a cowrie is put in the pot to compensate the family ancestors for the loss of a girl from their clan.

There are various rules about this pot. No man may remove anything from it. No unmarried girl above the age of puberty may approach it. The reason for this is that the unmarried girls of the family will shortly be leaving the house and will be transferred to another clan and their connexion will be with a different pot in someone else's house. At a Muria marriage also, when the bride comes to her new home, her mother-in-law shows her the Pot of the Departed and a rice-husker saying, 'These things now are yours, care for us, honour the dead, give food to all, entertain strangers'.

X. Memorials to the Dead

Throughout Bastar menhirs are erected in memory and in placation of the dead. The Hill Maria, the majority of the Bison-horn Maria, some of the Dorla, and the Muria of the north and west still maintain their megalithic culture. Even the eastern Muria continue it in a special form that we shall presently consider. The custom has, however, been abandoned in certain areas and by certain clans.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The stone erected by the Muria is an upright menhir called *uraskal* (from Gondi *uraana*—to bury, and *kal*—a stone) or *kotokal*. At Surewahi, near Antagarh, the villagers called the 240 menhirs of their memorial field *khomakal*. They stand from 2 to 8 feet high, and may be 1 foot to 4 feet broad and 6 to 10 inches thick. The Muria of eastern Kondagaon sometimes set up little menhirs not more than a foot tall. 769

The menhirs are erected for men, women and children, and usually stand in long rows by the roadside, near the village boundary, in the neighbourhood of the cemetery, or even in the village itself. Nearly always a small flat stone supported on two other stones is placed at the foot. This little cromlech is called the *kandi-gaya*, or 'ghost-throne', and is used as an altar of sacrifice. Stones for men and women are usually put separately, and anyone who has died a suspicious death has his menhir apart from the others.

Hutton has referred to the megalithic culture of Bastar as 'now apparently rapidly decaying',[1] but the Jhoria Muria continue to erect menhirs everywhere and so do the other Muria of Narayanpur Tahsil and western Kondagaon. As we move east, however, and come more and more into the midst of Muria whose ancestors migrated south from the Central Provinces, the megalithic tradition tends to disappear, though it survives here and there, as we shall see, in curious and interesting forms. 769 178

Why should a practice so widespread, so reasonable and so harmless to mankind have disappeared in the areas I have mentioned? The answer is not an easy one. Sometimes there is an actual difficulty in getting stones, and the Muria naturally do not care to transport great slabs of rock across great distances. The reason most commonly given is expense. This is probably the true reason, for the cost of erecting a menhir is considerable. A great feast has to be given; one or more cows must be sacrificed, and perhaps pigs and chickens as well; large quantities of liquor must be provided; and the carriers of the stone must be properly rewarded. Grigson, however, discussing this problem among the Maria, thinks that the question of expense is not the real reason, pointing out that many aboriginals spend a great deal of money on their marriages; he suggests that the true reason is contact with Hinduism 'with its veneration of the cow'.[2] This may be true of a few villages near Jagdalpur or Dantewara or of those Maria and Muria who have come under the strong influence of the Palace or the cult of Danteshwari. But I believe that in spite of ardent denials to officials and visitors, beef is still eaten from one end of Bastar to the other. In fact, there is evidence that the last few years have seen a revival of beef-eating. In any case, where a forked stick takes the place of a menhir, the fork is intended as a holder over which the tail of the cow should be hung.

It is more likely, certainly along the main roads and in the east, that there is a desire to imitate the Hindu custom of erecting elaborate tombs for the dead. Many of these may now be seen, with a small shelter over them, and a pot hanging above.

The break-up of the clan system, according to which in the old days the country was divided into definite clan areas, each with a central shrine for the clan god and one central place for the erection of all the menhirs of the clan, has been an important factor. The clans now are so scattered and their *bhum* or territory is so divided up that many Muria have never been to their original *pen-raawr* or clan headquarters. The menhirs are no longer erected

[1] J. H. Hutton, Introduction to Grigson, op. cit., p. xv.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 280.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769 at the spiritual capital of the clan-*bhum*, but are often placed in the village where the dead man used to live. I will return to this point immediately; it will 178 be sufficient to say now that the break-up of any form of organization is likely to cause a parallel decline in custom.

The association of the dead with the clan god is seen not only in the custom of erecting menhirs in the clan-*bhum*, and the use of an expression like Penhanal, but also in the Muria practice of taking the soul from the house to the Hanalkot which is always connected with one special clan. This was clearly illustrated at Phunder, where an earthen pot, full of rice, hangs above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any member of the clan dies, the mourners take his soul here, sprinkle the blood of a sacrificed chicken above the clan-pot, and thus leave the soul of the dead with his clan ancestors. Once a year, at the first New Eating ceremony, the Gaita removes the pot and changes the rice in the name of the Departed.

XI. The Erection of a Menhir

769 The Muria regard it as necessary to bring the stone for their menhirs and the wood for the manufacture of the clan gods from special forests and hills. At Kokori the Naitami clan bring their stones from Chapadongri, the Maravi from Mahadeodongri. The Kalo clan of Mahurpat used to fetch their *kotokal* stones from Boga in Kanker State. One of their ancestors, they say, turned into stone (*kal*) on a hill near this place: they stole the stone and since then have been known as Kalo.

Since the Muria generally use small stones they seldom have to quarry them, but pick them off the ground. When people go to the forest for wood or to hunt they keep a look out for suitable surface stones.

The actual erection of the stone is done by the Jhoria Muria in largely Hill Maria fashion,[1] but here it is the chelik and motiari who escort the menhir to its place with their drums and dances. In the Paralkot area, when an old man dies, an *akomāma* relative dances with an axe over his shoulder in front of the stone and the boys and girls follow drumming and singing. In Phulpar they said that on this occasion, which here they called Kal Ursana or stone-burying, an *akomāma* relative beats the *hātur-dhol* or death-drum in front of the house of the deceased and chants a refrain: 'You are dead now; today we will devour your wealth with pleasure.'

I will give an example of the procedure followed at Kehalakot village. Birju Kaudo decided, as a result of dreams which troubled him, to erect a stone in memory of his parents. Stones for this clan have to be brought from a hill called Deodongri. He took with him the Gaita of the Hichami clan which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kaudo clan, for it is the rule that the removal of the stone must be performed by a member of such a clan. The Gaita made a *chok* in front of the stone and offered liquor, pulse and rice, then dug it up. At first they could not get it out of the ground and the Gaita declared that the dead man was annoyed about something and they offered a black chicken to appease him. Once they had got the stone out of the ground they placed it on a specially prepared litter, covered it with fresh cloth and brought it to the *bhum* of the Kaudo clan, being careful not to take it through any village on the way.

As they brought it near, the dead man's sister and daughters stopped them, standing in a line across the path, and demanded rings. Birju gave them a

[1] See Grigson's description, op. cit., pp. 276ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rupee to purchase rings in the bazaar. The Hichami Gaita then dug the hole and they put a saja leaf in the bottom and the stone above it. Soon afterwards a second stone was brought for Birju's mother and this was placed separately, for it is the rule that the memorials for men and women should not usually be together, though this rule, like all rules, is often broken. They bathed the stones and put a *gappa* basket with roots and rice in front of the woman's stone and a dish in front of the man's. Everyone present put a mark of oil and haldi on the stones, just as they might have done at a marriage to the bride and bridegroom. They returned home and sacrificed a bullock and tied the tail to the old man's menhir. On this occasion the souls of the deceased were brought back to the Hanalkot, which stands in the village itself. 769

The cow or bullock is often chosen by old people while they are still alive. Widows, who may reasonably expect to be neglected, are insistent on dedicating such an animal.

XII. General Ideas about the Menhirs

There is a universal belief that the memorial stones grow in size if the soul of the dead is satisfied with the arrangements that are made for him. I have on several occasions spoken to the Muria of the north (who erect very much smaller stones than the Maria of the south) about the great *wraskal* of the Bison-horn Maria. They invariably reply, 'But, of course, these stones are very old and they have grown; they could never have put up such big ones'. They believe that even the small stones of the north will grow in time. Kodu, the very intelligent Malguzar of Khutgaon in the extreme north of the State, told me that in the past twenty years he has definitely seen the stones grow in size. A very small stone is put for a baby and it is believed that it will grow gradually until it has reached the size it should have been had it been placed for a man of twenty.

When a stone grows it is considered fortunate. There is sure to be happiness and good luck for the family. If a stone falls down or goes crooked, the relatives consult the Siraha and then put it straight and offer whatever sacrifices he has recommended. It is generally supposed that when a stone falls, it is an indication that the ghost of the dead is angry or feels neglected. In some places, the collapse of a menhir is regarded as prophetic of disaster, and generally should white ants make a nest over the stone it is considered a bad omen. But in some places there is a belief that there is no need to worry about this after twenty years have passed. After twenty years the Hanal has become completely mingled with his ancestors and no longer exists as a separate entity. When an old stone falls down, therefore, the Muria perform no ceremonies and leave it where it is. [787]

XIII. The Hanal Pata

It is very difficult to persuade the Muria to repeat the songs connected with death at any but the proper time. This is quite natural, for there is to all simple minds something dark and ominous about talking of the dead. I did not find a Hill or Bison-horn Maria who was willing to repeat a single song. It has only been among the more open-hearted and friendly Muria that I have been able to get a few songs, mostly in Gondi, which are used during a funeral and at the time of erecting a menhir. I have already given the funeral songs; I will now quote a few songs used at the later ceremonies. 533 761 769

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769
539

From Sonawal village comes a Halbi song used at the time of quarrying the stone.

You were on the ground, O stone!
Come now to our house, and see your children.
Once you were a man,
Now you are a god (*deo*).
You were in the grave, O man!
Today we bring you to your home.
We will all feast and drink
In memory of you.
Ri ri loyo ri ri loyo!

The next step is to bring the stone to the memorial ground. Here is another Halbi song—which can also be used at the time of placing a memorial pillar at the grave.

Hearken, brother, hearken, brother!
You were a tree, brother,
You were a stone, brother,
You were out on the hillside, brother.
Today we remember you.
Come to your house, brother, for you are growing old.
Come to the granary and live with your family.
Limb to limb we will live with you,
We will hold each other's arms.
Come to the house, come to the granary.
We have no knowledge, teach us wisdom.
The clansmen are sitting: go to the house.
The clansmen have come in crowds,
Though the court is small and narrow.
There is not enough rice,
How are we to feed the clansmen?
There is nothing in the house;
Go, brother, and give them something.
There is not enough curry,
Yet thick as sal trees are the clansmen.
There is liquor from twelve stills,
Yet there is not drink for a drink apiece.
There are twelve sacks of rice,
Yet there is not enough to give each visitor a helping.
There are five measures of salt, three measures of chilli,
Two measures of haldi, yet there is not enough.
What can we do? You teach us.
Give us food, brother, and then there'll be enough.

This stress on the practical difficulties of entertainment is typical. As we have seen, many clans have abandoned the practice of erecting menhirs because of the expense. It may be noted that here a situation seems to be visualized in which the *kotokal* stone is erected at the same time that the soul is brought home to the house.

We now come to songs sung at the actual placing of the stone in position. It is probable that many of these songs are interchangeable; we must not think of them as carefully chosen and arranged as in an English hymnal.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Re re loyo re re la! re re loyo re re la!
Re re laila he ayo ra! Ayo bāha re re la!

769
539

Sora bova dhartin ra,	Sixteen-, twelve-storied earth,
Nāva khandi prithi ra.	Nine-storied world.
Ida dharti ta mandaki ra.	Lie down here to rest.
Nika kotum ta otum ra.	We leave you in the forest.
Mamat iga mandakom ra.	We shall not be here.

This song, in sharp distinction from its predecessor, lays all the stress on the fact that the soul is to stay in its stone house in the jungle. I will now give another Gondi song used at the erection of a *kotokal*. At the end of each line there is a refrain almost like a sigh—*Ye budha, O old man!*—addressing the dead.

Yenda budha yenda budha!	Dance, old man, dance!
Nikun kuri wātom ra.	We have come to see you.
Niya kelār miyār rāndom ra,	Your sons and daughters have come,
Niya samdi saga wātorom.	Your relatives have come.
Udak dārango tatorom,	We've brought some liquor,
Niya bāta tatorom.	We've brought it for you.
Niya karsār kuri wātorom,	We've come for your ceremonies,
Hariyer manta yetā ra.	To make you happy.
Kenja budha kenja ra.	Listen, old man, listen.
Keri gābo mendul ra.	Your body is like the pith of a plantain tree.
Bes mundāng kilku ra.	Your legs are like fine pillars (of a house).
Berel āki chhāti ra.	Your chest is like a banyan leaf.
Kurawal pite tala ra.	Your head is like an owl's.
Ali āki moha ra.	Your face is like a pipal leaf.
Usir gatta chundi ra.	Your hair is like the usri grass.
Chundi malkh konu ra.	Shake your hair.
Tindi kursi wāyom ra.	We haven't come to watch you eat.
Hariyer manta yenda ra,	Dance full of happiness,
Niya Māhāl kiyhom ra.	We are making a palace for you.
Aga baga ron penu ra?	Where does your god come from?
Dhamda ton penu ra.	The god is from Dhamda.
Kenja budha kenja ra.	Listen, old man, listen.
Māhāl lopa barang ra?	What is inside the palace?
Sono taya jhulna ra,	If there was a golden swing inside,
Bārāng bāna āyuār ra.	How beautiful it would be.
Jhulna jhula mayu ra	Swing to and fro on the swing
Nikun sewa kiyhom ra.	And we will serve you.
Nikun puja kiyākom ra,	We will give an offering for you,
Kāla menda kiyākom ra.	We will give a black ram for you.
	[*The dead man speaks*]
Tāna bhojān kawon ra,	I won't eat that,
Pujāri lāma lengra kimu ra.	I must have the long-tailed one.
Tāna bhojān kiyuka ra	I will eat that
Pujāri akar dupu kimu ra.	If you give some incense.
Achha sewa kimu ra	Serve me well
Girdā wānāh kimu ra.	That I may be well pleased.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769 539 'The long-tailed one' mentioned in the song is, of course, a bull. Lanji-Dhamda is the traditional home of many of the northern Muria whence they migrated into Bastar.

I have already given extracts from the lengthy song recorded at Duga-bangal,[1] which is sung during the transport and erection of the stone; it is interesting to note how closely life and love and death are allied in Muria thought, which regards them as a single process. The bulk of this Hanal Pata is indeed about life, and only at the tragic end do the singers discourse of death.

The song begins with some sententious lines about the universality of death.

Sora dhāru dharti roye deva,	Sixteen-storied world,
Nau khandu pirthi ra ale!	Nine-storied earth!
Singār mālor dīpu roye deva;	Here is the island of mankind;
Igāy hāyvālor ra ale.	Here all die.
Māne manja igāy roye deva,	Men, ants, worms,
Hurr pate igāy ra ale,	Animals are here,
Bhagavān ise pandtu ra deva,	Bhagavan has made them,
Saboy tune pandtu ra ale.	He has made them all.
Kondāng manās hurāna ra,	See with the eyes,
Kālku manās dāyna ra ale,	Walk with the feet,
Kaiku manās kām kiyāna ra,	Work with the hand,
Tori manās barkāna ra ale.	Talk with the mouth.
Idām bhagavān pandtu ra,	So has Bhagavan ordained,
Singār mālor dwlf ute ra ale.	So provided in this world.
Bāhchitek ise igāy ra,	Here men quarrel,
Koyma hitek igāy ra ale,	Here men laugh,
Dharmu hitek igāy ra,	Here is virtue,
Pāpu hitek igāy ra ale.	Here is sin.
Ide singāl dwlone ra	In this world
Rājālor ise mantor ra ale.	Live royally.
Samdhi saga igāy ra,	Here are the samdhi clans,
Bhaibānd igāy ra ale.	Here too are the brother-clans.

After this the song continues along the lines which I have already given.

XIV. Substitutes for the Menhir

769 The Muria erect memorial poles and pillars as well as stones. At Modenga they described how they made a small bundle of straw with rice inside it called *dhusir* for a man and a small bamboo basket (*gappa*) for a woman. They put marks of haldi and oil as at a marriage on the wooden pillar and some also on both the baskets and give them to the sister or daughter of the dead. The girl has to take these to the house and from that day has to worship Lagar Pen who comes to the house then. Every three years thereafter she must offer a pig to Lagar Pen. If she has given birth to a male child in the interval a male pig will be sacrificed, and if a girl has been born a female pig.

It is generally said that the erection of the wooden pillar and the application of oil and haldi to it represents the second wedding of the dead. Here the pillar is usually made of saja. At Phanda the Muria described how the saja branch must be cut by a member of an *akomāna* clan after he has offered rice, pulse and liquor to it saying, 'I am going to take you in honour of the

[1] See pp. 89-92.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

dead'. He covers it with a new cloth and ties it round with a string seven times, turning the pillar round and round. After it has been put in position, the ground in front is cow-dunged and three circles of flour are made. A pot of water is placed in the central circle and the Gaita says to the pillar, 'Now I will take you home'. A representative of the dead man's family makes a mark on it with haldi and oil and offers a little rice and a pice. Only the one representative of the bereaved family does this, though all the members of the wife-clans do so. They sacrifice two chickens and offer liquor to the pillar and go home. They kill a bullock and come back with the tail and tie this to the pillar saying, 'We have now given you everything, don't bother us or put us to any loss'. The *akomdma* relative carries the pot of water back to the house of the dead man and places it near the Pot of the Departed. They offer it liquor there and ask the dead man always to remain there and live together happily with the other ancestors. 769

The Muria sometimes make fairly elaborate graves. I saw one very interesting tomb at Gudripara. An old man named Maria Muria of the Poyami sept died in February 1940. He had cleared the jungle with his own hands, established the village, planted mango trees, founded the ghotul, ruled the community as its mukaddam for many years. So although his *bhumiyār* would normally be at Kokameta, the villagers made a tomb for him in his own village. It was built exactly a year after his death, in February 1941. Since Bhagavan had taken his spirit, a 'Bhagavan-diya' or lamp was placed on the top. All round were relics of the dead man—cloth tied to sticks, traps, baskets, pots, spoons, a spindle for preparing hemp-cord. Most interesting of all was a small menhir placed in front of the tomb. Here met in one place Muria, Gond and Hindu customs.

In Phunder I saw an elaborate tomb for a very old man, Rai Singh Thakur, who died in 1937. On the top of the tomb was an earthenware horse with an image of the dead man riding upon it and an elaborate trident. Rai Singh's son, Nergu Maravi, gave a small bullock to the Kumhar for making the horse and another bull to a Lohar for making the trident. As the dead man was a great drinker, his son and grandsons regularly offer liquor at his grave.

But the most common substitute for the memorial pillar is simply nothing at all. The graveyards and cremation grounds of the Muria dead are sad and pathetic witnesses to the vanity of human hopes and ambitions. There may be a ring attached to a tree; you may see a few stones and logs upon the grave; sometimes there are pots or poles at the four corners; there may be a decorated spire (as at Binjhli), or an iron lampstand (as at Phunder) in the centre. Nearby are a few bits of grave-furniture, a baby's cradle, some simple toys, cooking-pots for women, traps or baskets for men. But by none of these can a man's name be preserved. A few seasons wash them with their rains, a bear or hyena digs up the ground. Only the memorial stone can survive even for a while the chances of mortal life.

XV. Remnants of Megalithic Culture in Eastern Kondagaon

Throughout their entire territory the Muria preserve some form of megalithic culture, but this grows less and less prominent as we move towards the east. When we cross the road and move east towards the Orissa border, the custom of placing large menhirs almost disappears, though some tradition of using stones in memory of the dead survives.

This survival takes several different forms. Sometimes a very small stone is brought and placed on the ground near the Hanalkot or elsewhere;

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

169 sometimes a single stone is erected for a whole clan; sometimes a stone is combined with a modern tomb.

At Kanhera, when the time comes for performing some ceremony to content the dead, the relatives are summoned and they go to the nearest stream. A representative of the family and an *akomāma* relative go together into the water while the people on the bank call upon the dead. The two men duck under the water and one or other brings up a stone or a fish. If it is a fish they put it into the pot and take it home in the ordinary way; if it is a stone they dress it in a new cloth and carry it along till it falls down of its own accord. They bury it there, wherever it may be, put a small marriage crown upon it and anoint it with haldi, then go dancing home.

In Bopna village there is a deep pool in a neighbouring stream. When, after some years, there have died three or four people whose spirits must be mingled with their ancestors, the mourners go to this pool and make the usual offerings on the bank. Presently Bara Pen comes on one of the *akomāma* relatives and he goes down into the water calling on the spirits of the dead to draw near. As he takes one name his foot strikes against a stone and he picks it up; he takes another name and again picks up the stone below his feet. He then takes these stones to the Hanalkot (which is underneath a saja tree) and puts them on the ground saying, 'They will go down into the ground of their own accord'. The mourners anoint them with haldi and sacrifice a pig, killing it with a rice-husker. It is generally believed, wherever this custom exists, that the stones will bury themselves. Should they remain above the ground it is considered a bad omen.

In other villages the people do not go to the river but a samdhi goes to any part of the jungle where there are a lot of stones and throws rice at them saying, 'Throwing rice upon you I invite you to come'. The next morning he goes again and searches for any stone that may have fallen over during the night. This stone is supposed to contain the soul of the deceased and is taken as a memorial to the Hanalkot. In Kokori they said that when the stone fell over of its own accord, the Siraha offered it liquor and then an *akomāma* relative picked it up and carried it 'as if it were a baby' to the Hanalkot. There they covered it with cloth, tied a marriage crown and made the marriage marks of haldi, while the chelik and motiari danced before it.

In Banjora I found a different tradition. A few days after death the Muria in this village dedicate a pig, washing its feet and offering it rice. They then let it wander where it will. If after five years no wild animal has killed it they go into the forest for a memorial stone. When they have found a suitable stone, they sacrifice the pig before it. They anoint the stone with haldi and bring it to the Hanalkot, where it plants itself in the ground of its own accord.

At Randhna village, the Muria put either a wooden pillar or a stone, according to the revelation made to the Siraha in each case. An *akomāma* relative goes into the jungle to find one or the other. If a stone is indicated he sits down beside it; if a pillar, he cuts the tree, usually a saja, carves it roughly with a large ball on the head, and sits there. Then, led by the motiari and chelik with their drums, the relatives come singing and dancing and say to him, 'We have come to fetch a memorial for our dead; will you give it or no?' He says, 'Yes, I will give it'. They offer haldi and liquor to the pillar or the stone and then the *akomāma* picks it up and comes towards the village, the chelik and motiari dancing round him. Now the dead man's soul comes into the stone and guides the man here and there until it is satisfied. At last, of its own accord it falls from his arms on to the ground. As elsewhere the *akomāma* relatives cover it with cloth and put on the marriage crown. They offer a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

bullock and enjoy a great feast. In Randhna I saw several such pillars and near them a few memorial stones. In Kopra there were three pillars and in Charkai one. 769

In Baghbera, not far from the Orissa border, there is a magnificent mango grove with shrines for Bara Pen and the Village Mother. Not far from these shrines, under a saral tree, there is a stone about two feet high which is used as a memorial menhir for all members of the Poyami clan in that area. When any member of the clan dies the people come to the stone and make the usual offerings. When I saw it, there were two bundles of straw in the tree above, symbolizing the roof of the stone's temple, and a tethering rope which had been used for cow-sacrifice. Tied round it was a rope made of bark with its end splayed out to look like a flower. The Muria said that the origin of this was that a very old man of the Poyami clan died long ago and came to his descendants in a dream saying, 'In such and such forest there is a stone; bring it for me'. They did as he commanded and later when other members of the same clan died they too came in dreams and said, 'Take us to where our grandfather is'.

Finally there is the custom that we have already noticed, of placing a stone in front of a modern tomb. Here we can see clearly how ancient tradition survives alongside modern innovations.

XVI. The Danger of the Abnormal: Death from Wild Animals

The Muria have the most elaborate ceremonies to meet the dangers of abnormal death, for it is in their country that tigers are most common and tragedies most frequent. When such an incident occurs, the chelik collect the remains of the deceased and his possessions at the very place of death and burn them. They blow a hunting-horn over the pyre and run away. 766

A day or two later the male members of the house go to the spot with other villagers. They dig up some of the blood-stained earth and make an image of the dead man; with rice-flour they make an image of the tiger. They place these together inside two circles made of flour and haldi, and draw a line of flour representing a rope to join the two together. The Gaita sacrifices chickens and eggs, saying, 'Go and take your dog to some other land. Tie it up properly there and keep it safe. Don't bring it here, we don't want any dogs here'. Then he hits and breaks the model tiger with a sickle crying, 'Tiger! Tiger!'

The chickens are now cut up into a great many little bits, and some of these are given to members of the party and roasted and eaten on the spot. Bones and leaves used for this little feast must be buried carefully, for if a witch got hold of them she could use them to bring the tiger back. The party now breaks up and each member takes a solitary and zigzag route home, throwing away the little bits of chicken as he goes. The idea of this is that if the ghost of the deceased tries to return to his village, he will be puzzled by the roundabout route and will be so busy eating the bits of chicken that he will never get there.

Women do not attend this ceremony, for if a woman's shadow were to fall on the materials of the feast, the tiger would come again. But if a woman is killed by a tiger, a digging-stick is thrown into the ashes of the pyre with the idea that her ghost will take it to dig roots in the jungle and not trouble the people in the village.

After a few days all those who took any active part in the cremation ceremony—such as carrying the remains or preparing the pyre—go to the place

766 and make customary offerings in the name of the tiger, the dead man and Bagharam Pat to clear themselves of infection. If this is not done, the tiger haunts their dreams.

After an interval, which varies from a week to three years, the people go to bring the soul of the dead man to the proper place, where it will be mingled with his ancestors. The household prepares a feast and invites all relatives. At the east of the village they build an open shed with two poles in the middle and on the floor trace a square with rice-flour. A small pot is filled with flour and put in the middle of the square, and above it another empty pot closed with a lid. A ring, threaded on a fine cord and tied between the two poles above the pot, is swung to and fro. The elders sit round and sing the Burkal Pata, or Tiger Song, which I will quote presently. As they sing this, the dead man's soul comes, the string breaks and the ring falls on to the lid of the pot.

The Gaita at once removes the upper pot and examines the flour in the lower vessel. If there is a 'tiger's mark' on the flour, they believe that a tiger will again devour the man at his next birth—and since the man will be reborn in his own family this means, of course, that the tiger will again visit and harry the same village. If there is a cow's mark, the more Hinduized Muria say that the dead man will be reborn as a cow and then be eaten by a tiger. But if there is a man's footprint, all will be well. They then take the ring, which is known as *Bāgh-kanāl mundi*, to a tree (usually a saja tree) nearby, and hang it up there saying, 'Now this is your home; live here and don't trouble us'.

After this the people feast, but not on meat. When all is over they throw the pots, leaves and leaf-cups into the river, bathe and return home.

A cat's footprint on the floor is considered very ominous. 'When a man is eaten by a tiger', I was told at Remawand, 'his soul dwells in the tiger's tail. On the same day of the week on which he was cremated, a small cat forms itself out of the ashes of the pyre and wanders away into the jungle. If a man sees it and recognizes it, calling it by the name of the dead man, it disappears. If not, and if the cat looks at the man, and he says nothing, another tiger will come to trouble the village.'

If a man is killed by a bear, the same ceremonies are observed.

The Burkal Pata, which is sung while the 'ring of the tiger-ghost' swings to and fro above the earthen pots, is often dragged out to an enormous length. It consists of a formula, which can be repeated as often as necessary, accusing one god after another of having sent the tiger which killed the man.

766 539

Porro sātu dīpu ra.	In the Upper World are seven islands.
Ale ale ale ale!	*Ale ale ale ale!*
Ariy sātu dīpu ra.	In the Lower World are seven islands.
Īdo dīpu aroy ra.	Bad is this Middle World.
Nāte nāya talur ra:	There is the Village Mother:
Awe sangu manong ra:	She did not help him:
Awe tinda hitung ra.	She gave him up to be devoured.
Tāna kawār bada ra?	Who follows after her?
Use mudiyāl pewu ra.	There is Use Mudial Pen.
Nima bāra tinwi ra?	Was it you who ate him?
Nima baliy hati ra:	You were wandering round about;
Nai paiyu hati ra.	You had a dog with you.
Bāra joring nai ra.	There are twelve pairs of dogs.
Nima chuchoh hīti ra.	You gave orders to the dog.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Guddūng oda bādu ra,	It came hiding in the grass,
Hupa lekha poyāndu ra.	It caught him like a rat.
Hajār rupiya ta jīwa ra.	The soul is worth a thousand rupees.
Jīwa nukṣān kili ra.	You have destroyed the soul.
Ade jīwa puṭṭo ra.	The soul cannot return again.
Bada diya ta puja ra?	What offering did he fail to give?
Puja badu barah mator ra?	Did he fail to give what he had promised?
Adenh ise titi ra?	Was that why you ate him?
Nima gala tinwi ra.	But it wasn't you who ate him.
Nihuma ijor itan ra.	I said it was you (but I was wrong).
Hongu dāpu āyma ra:	Don't be angry:
Sāte berūng johār ra.	I give you a sevenfold greeting.

Use Mudial Pen is acquitted, and now Hirto Mudial Pen is accused in exactly the same words. He too is found innocent and the singers, afraid that they may have angered him, beg him not to be offended and greet him seven times with their Johar. Then in the song as I have it recorded, Muyang Waddai is accused—presumably of black magic—then Lingo Mudial Pen, Kara Harra Pen, the Rau of Tipagarh, the Kandra Kaniya, the Rau of Raughat, the Mata of the man's own home, and finally Ispural. Of Ispural, which is a variant on Mahapurub or Bhagavan, the Supreme Being in whose hands are the issues of life and death, it is said,

Nimāy ise titi ra.	It was you who ate him.
Hāyna kago autu ra;	The time of his death had come;
Adenh ise oti ra.	That was why you took him.

But even Ispural is proved innocent, and at last the singers decide that it was the dead man's own ancestors, the Departed of his own house, who desired his company and sent the tiger to bring him.

Lota ise mudiyāllor ra,	The ancient of the house,
Aba ise titur ra,	It was he who ate him,
Jori pandila otung ra.	To gain a companion for himself.
Māhun jori tāstur ra,	He left our companion behind,
Tanha ise otung ra.	That was why he took him.[1]

XVII. The Danger of the Abnormal: The Ondar Muttai

Throughout India the ghost of a woman who has died in pregnancy, in child-birth or immediately after child-birth is feared and dreaded.[2] The

[1] Russell and Hiralal have many accounts of the precautions taken by various tribes after a man has been killed by a tiger, some of which resemble those of the Muria. They describe the rites of the Baiga (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 84), Bhattra (II, p. 274), Dumal (II, p. 536), Gond (III, p. 81 and III, p. 95), Halba (III, p. 274), Kalanga (III, p. 308), Kawar (III, p. 398), Kurmi (IV, p. 79), Panwar (IV, p. 346), Sansia (IV, p. 498) and Savara (IV, p. 483). There is no particular reason in most cases why the customs recorded should be peculiar to the various tribes, nor why they should be recorded for some tribes and not for others. Probably very similar rites are common throughout the Central Provinces and indeed most of aboriginal India.

S. C. Roy has described the rites of the Uraon and I have described a Baiga ceremony that I personally witnessed in the Pandaria Zamindari (*The Baiga*, pp. 298ff.). According to Russell and Hiralal, the Gond and Halba resemble the Muria in suspending a ring over a pot of water, which they watch till it falls. The Bhattra, Kawar, Uraon and others dress a man as a tiger and either tie him up, banish him or force him to release his prey, with the idea that what is done in symbol will be achieved in effect.

[2] The Chinchin or Chunni, as this ghost is called elsewhere, is a familiar figure in Indian ethnographic literature. One of the earliest accounts is by Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

175 reason for this may be that just as the ghosts of virgins and the unmarried are dangerous because they have missed the most delightful, the most exciting, the most interesting thing in life and are therefore supposed to be anxious after death to revenge themselves on mankind, so also the woman who dies during the process of parturition is suddenly deprived of the chief privilege and wonder of womanhood—the joy of being a mother. Bitter and disappointed she seeks an appalling vengeance upon men.

In Bastar this fearful being is known in Halbi as Churlin or Bandrin and sometimes as Raksin or Banra-raksin. The Muria, however, know her as Ondar Muttai. This means the Old Bee Woman, implying I think that she comes upon a man with the ferocity and speed of a swarm of bees.

The Ondar Muttai is described with every circumstance of fear and horror.[1] She has only one breast, so long that it is usually slung over her shoulder. She has teeth long as the palm of your hand, an enormous head, great round eyes, a bulbous nose and ears like winnowing-fans. Her feet are red as fire, but curiously enough are not described as turned back to front as in the rest of India. She dances with her breast flung across her back and calls to men to come to her. When they hear her voice their legs tremble and fail beneath them. She lives in the forest or on the bank of a lake, and on the day the cuckoo first sings you can see her eyes across the water. In some villages, there is a belief that you are safe as long as you are in the company of buffaloes.

The Ondar Muttai appears to human beings in several different forms. Towards women and children she nearly always displays her dangerous and terrifying aspect. When a child is born and the placenta is not expelled, the ghost of the mother after death pursues young children. She catches them and carries them about, holding them against her breast. This is so terrible that the children weep and weep and cannot be consoled.

When the Ondar Muttai catches a man, sometimes she tickles him until he is so weak and exhausted that she can do her will upon him. Sometimes she says to him, 'Will you eat black *gur* or white *gur*?' If he answers, 'I'll

171 pp. 269ff., who stresses her reversed feet and her power of destroying young men. Russell and Hiralal describe Churel superstitions and precautions among the Gurao who bury a lemon under the corpse, and the Kurmi who place thorns above it. Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 180f. and IV, p. 78.

The Uraon believe that the Churel destroys men by tickling them—S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), p. 96—and Dehon describes how they prevent the return of the ghost by twisting round the feet of the corpse and driving long thorns into them. They bury the body face downwards with the bones of a donkey.—P. Dehon, *The Religion and Customs of the Uraons, Mem. ASB*, Vol. I (1905–7), pp. 139f. The Birhor, like the Muria, do not admit the Churel to the company of the ancestral dead and only women may bury the corpse.—S. C. Roy, *The Birhors* (Ranchi, 1925), pp. 267ff. The Santal Churin licks the flesh from a man's bones. At burial long thorns are driven into her feet to prevent her running after her victims.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 411. The Chenchu appear almost unique in burying such women 'in the usual manner'.—C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Bombay, 1943), p. 154.

Frazer has collected many references to similar beliefs for the Lushai, Kachin, Shan, Palaung as well as for the Malays, the Kayan of Borneo and the Kiwai of British New Guinea among others. Similar ideas are found again among the peoples of Northern Nigeria and Rhodesia and even among the ancient Mexicans. 'Possibly the fears and superstitions gathering about this ghost are world-wide. See, for full references, J. G. Frazer, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III, pp. 182ff.

[1] The Kharia believe that her malignant power 'is believed to be foreshadowed by the trouble she gave to her people in her last days of life, the degree of deformity and fearfulness that her features assume on death and the trouble that her corpse, by the violent contortions of its limbs on its way to the grave, gives to the pall-bearers'.—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), p. 302.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

eat black *gur*' she fills his mouth with black stones and so kills him, then removes his brain and eats it. 775

She is said to be most powerful on the night of the anniversary of her death.

Sometimes, however, the Ondar Muttai approaches men in very different guise. In her enchanting aspect, one is tempted to describe her as the personification of the erotic dream. Thus the headman of Ulera village described how once in a dream a lovely girl came to him. Her hair beautifully combed, her neck adorned with necklaces, many combs in her head, she sat down beside him and smiled at him. 'Seeing her my mind was for her and I wondered if I could get her. Then she came and sat very close to me. She seemed to have large and lovely breasts. I caught them with my hand but there was nothing there. Then I went to her but found she had no vagina. All my power went from me and then I saw that she was a hideous ghost with one long breast across her shoulder and I awoke. All the next day I felt very ill.' This dream is typical of scores of similar experiences. 775 154

There is another very curious type of encounter with this ghost. All over Bastar (and I have found the same tradition in the Central Provinces) there is the belief that a man can capture an Ondar Muttai, 'bind' her with his charms and keep her as a wife.[1] I will give a few examples of this: 775

> In Patlabera, near Keskal, a Halba was sitting in his field playing on his *chikhāra*. A Churlin came and sat on his instrument. As he sang he closed his eyes and she danced invisible upon it. He did this for many days until at last he opened his eyes and saw her. Then he 'bound' her with his charms and married her. She lived with him for twenty years and several children were born to them. But on the day of the marriage of their youngest child she rose into the air with a cry and disappeared.

A similar story, this time of a Ganda called Khokoya, comes from Bakrabera; another of a Rawat or Ahir from Chingnar, another of a Marar in Kolur, yet another of a Rawat from Milkulnar. A realistic tale comes from Kumli village:

> One day a Rawat was playing his flute as he sat in the fields grazing cattle. As he played a Raksin came and danced to the music. When the Rawat saw her he 'bound' her by his charms to the ground and drove iron nails into her head, thus destroying her power of evil. He married her and had seven daughters from her. He married them all. One day he brought the youngest daughter to his house. Her mother said to her, 'Clean my hair and catch the lice that are tickling my head'. The girl began to clean the hair; she found the nails that had been driven into the skull and pulled them out. The woman immediately became a Raksin again and disappeared.

It will be noticed that in every case the man who keeps the ghost is not an aboriginal but a member of one of the lower Hindu castes living in an aboriginal village. These people are generally credited by the aboriginals

[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 367ff. Enthoven, whose reports are sometimes to be received with caution, says that in Bombay there are three classes of 'Chudels'. The Poshi Chudel, a woman who has not enjoyed the pleasures of life, fondles children and renders good service to her bereaved husband. The Soshi Chudel was persecuted in life: she dries up the blood of men and revenges herself upon her family. The Toshi Chudel was a woman who loved her husband and still, as a ghost, brings him pleasure.—R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay* (Oxford, 1924), p. 196.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

115 with a particular knack of achieving connexion and intercourse with supernatural beings and, at the great festivals of the State, scores of Ganda and Halba mediums fall into a trance and dance ecstatically before the gods. It will be noticed also that in every case the Churlin dances, that she is 'bound' by charms, cohabits with her captor for many years, bears him seven children and finally disappears on recovering her original garments. It is impossible to say what is at the bottom of this widely distributed tradition.

115 In order to avoid the danger of the Ondar Muttai special precautions are
166 taken at the time of her disposal. The Muria, in common with everyone in Bastar, believe that she cannot cross water, so they cremate her body between two streams. The priest makes four iron nails and drives these into each corner of the pyre. Sometimes nails of kassi wood are used. Thorn-bushes are placed above the body. It is considered very important to bury the body immediately. Even if the woman dies at midnight, she must be taken out. They bury the corpse, and only unmarried boys are allowed to handle it. They carry it quickly to the grave, throw the earth upon it and run away. On the day the body is buried, the earth round the grave trembles.

In many villages the Gaita or Waddai goes round the grave throwing mandia grain upon it with the idea that the ghost will be so busy picking up and counting the small grains that she will not have time to do anything else.

The Dorla of Dubatota tie bundles of thorns round the wrists and ankles of the corpse. The Dhurwa of Netanar said that the Gaita drives iron nails through the hands and feet. The Muria of Phunder described how once when a pregnant woman died, the chelik tied her body to the bier with a very strong rope and after lowering it into the grave the Gaita drove four nails into the ground at its four corners. This protection, however, was not successful and so a herd of she-buffaloes was taken to the grave and made to trample upon it. This is another example of the belief that there is some special protection against the Ondar Muttai in the buffalo. The Hill Maria round Chota Dongar said that when a pregnant woman died only women could dispose of the corpse. Women dig the grave on the far side of the village boundary and on the four corners put bits of iron slag and young shoots of the cotton tree. If they put a memorial stone for her, which, in any case, will be a small one, they put a cotton tree pole there also. The Muria sometimes lay an ebony bough over the grave.

115 The Ondar Muttai or Churlin, however, returns to her own country after a certain time. For example, the Muria say that in Jeth (July) at the time of violent wind and rain, the Ondar Muttai goes to her own land, the Rakasgarh, and mingles with her own people. The Hill Maria said the same thing, that after three years she goes to her own country, and I have found a similar tradition among the Bison-horn Maria. What happens to her there is not revealed.

XVIII. Summary

[161] Perhaps the most striking thing in the Muria attitude to death is their emphasis on the continuity of all existence, their belief that death is but an incident in a vital process which continues after the soul has shed its temporary physical integument. But the Muria have not been able to take the further step forward from this into a serene faith and hope in the happiness of the dead, and their desire to help and serve the living. The dead appear rather as dissatisfied, mischievous and wayward, deeply interested in human life but anxious to interfere, to display their power, almost to show off, rather than to assist mankind.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The Departed and the ancestors are a sort of perpetual old guard keeping a sharp watch upon their descendants. They are a strictly orthodox and conservative body ever ready to take offence, always on their dignity, suspicious, revengeful, unsympathetic. The honour of the tribe is very dear to them and they are determined to see that it is not betrayed by their unworthy heirs. Any breach of tribal law, any change, any heterodoxy in thought or worship is immediately and drastically punished.

The Departed are, to some extent, associated with the fertility[1] of the land, but I have not anywhere found the belief that the menhirs can improve the crops and the soil. The Departed are remembered at sowing and harvest, at winnowing time and when the crops are brought to the granary. The Pot of the Departed is indeed often kept among the grain, and the soul brought home to live in the granary. But such remembrance is no more than is paid to the Departed at every chance and turn of mortal life. They are equally remembered when a man drinks liquor or marries his daughter or goes to a dance and, as I say, they are remembered not so much to ensure their blessing as to prevent their interference.

The aim, therefore, of the Muria cult of the dead is above all things to put the Departed in their place, to keep them in order and to keep them quiet. Menhirs are set up, sacrifices are offered, endless pains are taken to ensure that the dead are not offended and in their spleen bring disaster upon the world. For the dead suffer an unfortunate change of character after they have left the earth. The kindest, friendliest, gentlest nature becomes warped through death, and in a sense it may be true to say that human beings who are still alive should feel a deep pity for their unfortunate companions who have gone before them into what is very truly a land of shadows. Perhaps this is why the Muria are so anxious to bring their dead back into their own families 'where they will find warmth and love' and where they will receive the comfort that they need.

[1] I have frequently noticed that traps are set in the graveyards and near the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap within a few yards of the graves. At Baghbera there was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs. At Markabera there was a tiger-trap similarly placed. It would be tempting to suggest that there is some deep connexion here but I think it is more likely that the traps are set in the graveyards because animals are attracted by the offerings of grain and roots that are made both to the menhirs and on the graves.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SEVEN

MURIA RELIGION

I. Introductory

711 813 ALTHOUGH this book does not profess to be a study of Muria culture as a whole, it is necessary to give an outline of the religion of the tribe because the ghotul is itself a religious institution and has its share in the worship of the gods, while many of the chelik are already being trained as mediums and priests.

The ghotul is a *thirtha-sthān*, a holy place, as a Hinduized Muria explained to me; you cannot commit sin within its walls. It was founded by Lingo Pen, noblest of Gond cult-heroes, and no evil dream or power of witch or warlock can invade its sanctuary. Chelik and motiari undertake dancing expeditions in honour of the gods; they visit the great clan festivals and dance at them; at the New Eating ceremonies chelik are employed as cooks and motiari gather leaves for plates and cups. In the ceremonial hunts before certain festivals, the chelik play a major part, and they have special duties in connexion with the first ritual cutting of forest clearings. In some villages it is the chelik who roll the Gaita in mud at the Wijja Pandum and carry him home on their shoulders.

The ghotul also is itself the scene of occasional religious activities. In Palli-Barkot and neighbouring villages the blessed seed collected at harvest-time is hung up in the ghotul until it is needed for the first sowing. On the eve of many festivals the Kaser-Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure chastity for himself and the chelik. Dassera and Diwali are observed by the ghotul members in their own way, and they keep other special festivals which I will describe in detail later when I return to a fuller discussion of the ghotul's part in the religious life of the tribe.

711 Muria religion is undoubtedly a religion of the Hindu family with special affinities to its Shaivite interpretation, yet at the same time it is but little 'Hinduized'. It remains a special and characteristic faith, a logical entity which can be described and recognized. It acknowledges a large number of deities whom it pictures in a simple and homely manner. It has a definite priesthood and a body of mediums who communicate with the gods while in a state of trance. It erects shrines and temples to the gods and builds small huts for the tendance and placation of the dead. It consecrates every rural activity by sacrifice and a sacramental meal. It purifies and protects the village by a series of ceremonies, and it directs its beneficial power against the energies of witch and warlock.

The subject is a large one, and I cannot hope to treat it fully here. But I will give a brief account of the Muria gods, the Muria priesthood and the shrines in which worship is performed. I will describe the customary methods of worship and sacrifice and consider the trance in which the gods make their wishes known. Certain phallic elements in the worship must also be described. I will then give a brief outline of the festivals and ceremonies by which the whole of Muria life is brought under the sway of religion, and conclude by giving detailed descriptions of festivals I have myself observed. We shall then be in a position to see more fully how the ghotul fits in to this great complex of belief and practice.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

II. The Origin of the Gods

A Hindu lives by ceremonies; a Muria lives by his gods.—Muria proverb

Muria religion is a blend of the tremendous and the homely; at one moment the peasant trembles before a display of overwhelming dynamic energy, at the next he is abusing his god for flirting with a goddess of his own clan. The Muria take a great interest in the domestic affairs of their gods; they are much better acquainted with divine than human genealogies; they are proud of the vast confusion and multiplicity of the Bastar deities.

For there are, they say, 'more gods in Bastar than anywhere in India'. Many legends describe their immigration, their birth, their movements from place to place. 'Long ago'—the story comes from Benur—

> before the Bastar Raj had come into being, Raja Dokára lived in Warangal.[1] His younger brother was Gotal Dokara. When Danteshwari Mai came to Bastar, Raja Dokara followed her as the Lamhada of Budha Dokara's sister, Pat Rani. Gotal Dokara accompanied them, but he went to live in the Marian Raj in order to avoid his brother. Raja Dokara settled in Bara Dongar and was married to Pat Rani. From them were born Hunga Dokara, Pahedunga, Waikirunge, Guttehunge and Lingo Dokara.
>
> In Bara Dongar, Budha Deo and Samrat Dokara his brother had many daughters. Four of these were carried off by the four elder sons of Raja Dokara. Budha Dokara and Samrat Dokara had seven score sons and seven score daughters. They said to Lingo Dokara, 'These are for you'. But Lingo was very pure. He said, 'No, I do not desire to marry'. So the four brothers said, 'Well, you stay at home and we'll give these girls villages instead'. So the four brothers put the rest of the girls into a fish-basket and sat on the back of a tortoise. By their magic the tortoise turned into an elephant. Seated on the elephant the brothers rode slowly round the Bastar Raj. As they went they gave one girl to four villages, another to seven, and each girl became the Mata Devi of her village.
>
> The tortoise moved very slowly and the brothers put *Mhúwa* oil under its tail. So passed many days. The four brothers' wives took red cucumbers and put them in swings and rocked them to and fro, saying 'These are our children'. Now their servant was Kadrengal. They sent him to find their husbands. There was only one girl left in the fish-basket. Her name was Tallur Muttai. The brothers threw her with the basket into Paramwar village and went home, for they could hear from afar the singing of their wives. But Kadrengal met Tallur Muttai and said to her, 'Let us live here together'. They were not married, but lived there as mistress and servant. She used to send him to make people ill, and thus they got food-sacrifice and made a scanty living.

There follows an account of the brothers' return home, their suspicion of their wives—'Who is the father of these children?'—the testing of Lingo and his vindication. In this version of the tale it is Tallur Muttai who goes with Kadrengal to bring Lingo out of the iron bin in which he is being roasted

[1] In Metawand, the villagers told us that 'the gods used to live in Warangal. Thence they climbed by a red thread into the Upper World. Looking down they saw Bastar and charmed with the sight descended by the silkworm's thread into the Bastar hills and lived there'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

to death.[1] Tallur Muttai asks him to marry her, but he refuses and runs away to Semurgaon, where 'being weary' he turns into a stone, and has ever since been worshipped.

This rather tedious account yet gives an exact picture of the working of the Muria's mind when he turns it to theology. The distribution of the gods probably represents very ancient migrations of the tribe. As the different Muria families moved here and there, it was necessary that their gods also should move and, in order to emphasize the unity of the tribe, should be related to one another. A Pus Kolang chant sung by the chelik of Phulpar gives a good picture of the multiplicity, variety and confusion of the Muria pantheon.

Aho ravaloyo ravala rav loyo rav loyo aha ravala!

O the sixteen divisions of the earth,
The nine divisions of the sky!
Who is lord of the earth?
The lord of the earth is Tallur Rai.
Give him a good Johar.

O the hoar-frost and Pati Pen!
Give him a good Johar.

O the tiger and Kadrengal!
Give him a good Johar.

Oho the red Sun like a blazing log
Oho the haldi-coloured Moon!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in a corner is the bed,
In the midst is the ocean
Nearby is the Kutala.
Oho the many baby stars!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in the ghotul Madan Matal Rai!
In the village Jamadarin Mata!
Oho Nelo Maria Rai!
Give him a good Johar.

[1] For a full account of the Lingo legend, see Chapter VIII.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

776
539

In the banyan is the cat,
In the pipal Mirchuk Rai,
In the deep gully Bhutuk Rai,
In the Hutang stream is Kaniyal Rai,
Give them a good Johar.

Near Ranghat is Talachetang Rai,
In Jabkastang stream is Kaniyal Rai,
Give him a good Johar.

To the Rau of the pass, Johar.
To Tipagardha Rau Rai, Johar.
To Hitagardha Rau Rai, Johar.
To Kodagardha Rau Rai, Johar.

Below the pass is Maoli Rai,
Below the hill is Maoli Rai,
In Dantegarh is Maoli Rai,
In Antagarh is Maoli Rai.
Give, give a good Johar.

Salute them all with good Johar—

Kana Mudial Pennur Rai [Lingo's brother Bechor's son]
Bechor Kodor Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Budha Mudial Penur Rai [*Akomāna* to Lingo]
Guta Mudial Penur Rai
Dewar Mudial Penur Rai
Kada Hural Penur Rai
Kokor Mudial Penur Rai
Oche Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kola Koso Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Halel Dokari Muttai Penur Rai
Halai Dokari Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's sister]
Hirgiri Penur Rai [son of Halai Dokari]
Son Kumar Penur Rai [son of Kanda Dokara]
Netturgundi Penur Rai [son of Lingo]
Lingo Mudial Penur Rai.

Oho the eighteen instruments of Lingo Rai!
The hunting horn hanging from his shoulder,
The Madan Parai drum at his loins,
The Paijna Rai (anklets) on his feet,
The Dhassir Rai (fiddle) across his chest,
The Jhikar Rai (Jew's harp) with the wind passing through his nose,
The Sulur Rai (flute) played with his mouth.
Give him a good Johar.

Salute them all with good Johar—

Dandiki Dokari Penur Rai,
Sanga Deo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

776
539

Paik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's father's brother's son]
Aik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Tograjdeo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Perma Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's brother]
Bhumrandari Penur Rai [Lingo's elder brother's wife]
Pordegumal Penur Rai [Lingo's daughter's husband]
Nulemuttai Penur Rai [Lingo's sister]
Poche Dokara Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Maria Moghraj Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kokal Bidral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kurumtala Penur Rai [Lingo's brother [1]]

776

By this time the reader probably feels that he has had enough. But he need not fear that I propose to take him much further into the intricate and often contradictory relationships of the Muria gods. The subject needs a book to itself and an investigator deeply interested in the theology of primitive peoples. All I wish to do here is to impress on the reader the great complexity of the Muria pantheon, and the intimate human way in which its various members are interrelated.

The gods then come into being by migration from outside and by the division of the tribe into various clans. Many of the gods named in the song are clan-gods, and as the clans split up new gods come into being. But this is not the only way that gods are born. We already have a hint of a fundamental Muria belief in the statement that Tallur Muttai sent her servant to trouble men with disease in order to get food-sacrifice to keep her quiet. The gods are troublesome and expensive, and the more troublesome they are the more they are honoured. This is, of course, the normal Gond method of attracting attention. A Gond wife, who is devoted to her husband, sulks and makes a nuisance of herself, not because she is in a temper, but simply because she judges that to be the best way of getting herself noticed.

[152
593]

776
773

Some of the gods, however, have come into being as a result of actual incidents, no doubt greatly magnified by the course of time. I have only room for a few examples of this tendency. In a village near Bishrampuri there is the shrine of Pendrawandin Pen, a goddess about whom there has been much controversy. Long ago, so runs the local legend, a Muria of the Naitami clan had a daughter called Hidde for whose hand a Poyami boy called Kuria was serving as Lamhada. Hidde's father made a dam across a stream, but the water kept breaking through. Then one day a dream came to him, 'Worship me and I will stop the water'. The Muria thought in his heart 'Whom shall I sacrifice?' He decided to offer the Lamhada boy, Kuria. He took him to the stream, pushed him in and piled earth above his body. At once the dam became firm and strong. But now Hidde began to search for her lover, and when she came to the dam she saw one finger sticking out of the earth. When she saw this she jumped into the stream and was drowned also.[2] After a few days, her ghost began to trouble her father, and when he asked who it was, she replied, 'I am Pendrawandin, your daughter; worship me and I will trouble you no more'. Then began the cult of Pendrawandin and her consort Kuria Pen. Unfortunately, at the time of her death Hidde was in

[1] The word 'brother' is used in both its actual and classificatory senses: the Muria are very confused over these relationships.

[2] With this story compare the legend of Ganga and Beni, who are associated with the source of the Wainganga river at Mundara.—R. V. Russell, *Seoni District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 198.

219

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

her catamenial period, and so Pendrawandin is considered by many an untouchable goddess. 776

The famous Kanda Dokara, father of Lingo, came into being in a very simple way. This is the story they tell at Kuntpadar. 773

> There were seven brothers and their wives. One day the women went to the jungle for grass to make brooms. Six of them made big bundles and put them on their heads to carry home, but the youngest wife only made a very small bundle and was unable to lift it. She called the others and they could not lift it either. Then she said, 'Whether you are god or devil, let me lift this bundle and when I get home I'll give you food-sacrifice'.
>
> When she reached home she was afraid that her husband would be angry with her for bringing such a small bundle, so she threw it into the pigsty. When her husband asked her where her grass was, she said, 'Who knows what was the matter; there was some god or ghost in it; I threw it into the pigsty'. The husband went laughing to get it, but when he too could not lift it up, he said, 'If you are really a god, give me a son'. Then he undid the grass and found inside a root, and they all worshipped it. Afterwards the Muria had twelve sons, the eldest of whom was Kanda Dokara and the youngest Lingo. He used to carry the root with him as a weapon. This is why we swear by the grass in a broom and use it to find out why we are ill and where our cattle have strayed.

Such is a typical account of the origin of the gods. There is a difficulty; sometimes it is an epidemic, sometimes it is some lighter matter as in the story I have just recounted. But always the god manifests himself by causing some hitch in the smooth working of human life. In Adner in 1940, there was an outbreak of cattle disease and the Siraha-mediums declared that a new god had been born, and was not receiving his due honour. A great festival, which I will presently describe, was held to appease the affronted deity and stop the disease.

Any strange or inexplicable event may bring a new god into being; the subdivisions of clans, the migration of peoples, the desire to imitate the Hindus are equally potent in the creation of gods. We must now consider the nature of these gods and who they are.

III. The Nature of the Gods

776 [524]

There is only one tree, but it gives many kinds of leaves—
A god (deo) that causes many kinds of trouble.—Muria riddle.

The gods of the Muria, as we have seen, are many and varied. The majority of them are, I think, comparatively modern. Some have been imported, some are the result of Hindu influence, some have come into being as a result of dreams, some at a magician's whim. It is only the Earth, the Dead, the clan-god and the Maharaja which are ancient and fundamental to Muria worship and belief. [171]

But many other gods are worshipped, the extent of their cult and the notice they receive depending on the instructions given by the Siraha from time to time. For just as Muria ceremonies are not arranged in a precise formulary but rather make up a repertory from which the priest on the instructions of the Siraha will draw what he requires, so also the vast pantheon of the Muria may be regarded as a sort of repertory of deities out of which, from

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

time to time, the Siraha selects one or two for special worship and attention. The cult of the gods, therefore, moves to and fro, now illuminating a forgotten deity, now strengthening the influence of the more powerful. There is nothing fixed, definite, logical or formulated about Muria religion, for here the power of the prophet and magician is greater than that of the priest. Muria religion is thus dynamic and essentially modernist. It can always adapt itself to new conditions. There is nothing traditional or orthodox in its temper.

The Supreme Being

The Muria have a belief, which is probably very old, in a Supreme Being, whom they call variously Mahapurub, Ispural and Bhagavan. Mahapurub, which may be literally translated the 'Great East', perhaps has reference to the Sun. Bhagavan is, of course, the common Hindu name for the adorable god of Bhakti worship. Mahapurub and Bhagavan are not distinguished in Muria thought: the difference between them is linguistic, Mahapurub being used in the exclusively Halbi-speaking areas. Ispural presents more of a problem. Grigson found the word in use in a few Hill Maria villages bordering the Muria country. 'Ispural would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was. . . It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip.'[1] But to Koppers 'this effort at explanation is not satisfactory'. The word Ispural, he thinks, is 'genuinely Dravidian' and suggests a very old belief in a Supreme Being.[2] Like Grigson, I was unable to discover anything about Ispural, though he appears in the song given on p. 169 as one of the deities accused of having caused a man to be killed by a tiger. He is, however, acquitted of the charge and the death is ascribed to the jealousy of the Departed. But the word is known right across northern Bastar and I agree with Koppers that it probably represents an ancient element in Muria theology.

Mahapurub, to call him by what is his common name, is the creator of Nadumbhum or the Middle World. He lives in Porrobhum, or Upper World, attended by his seven daughters, the divine motiari, and from this post of vantage exercises a rather sketchy control over human affairs. He created the world, but only with the help of Lingo and Bhimul. He made mankind, but so carelessly that many people turned into witches and warlocks. It took him a long while to discover how to ensure that men and women would die and thus provide him with a sufficient supply of *jiwa* or living souls. He appears to exercise no control at all on the daily life of mortals; he does men no good, but neither does he do them any harm. As a result there is not a single shrine for him throughout the Muria country. He receives no sacrifices and in ordinary thought is largely ignored. As the originator of death, however, it is supposed that when a man dies it may be at his command.

Both Bhagavan and Mahapurub appear in Muria folk-tales though I am not sure how far the picture given there is to be taken in a theological sense. Each deity has seven daughters, though we hear nothing of wives.[3] Every evening the seven daughters go in their flying chariot to visit Mahapurub and to dance before him.[4] In one tale the seven daughters get annoyed with the hero and build a dam to stop the rain falling on his fields. He climbs up a

[1] Grigson, op. cit., pp. 244f.
[2] W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV/XXXVI (1940-1), p. 307.
[3] The Bhil, however, 'are all of one opinion that Bhagwan has no wife and no children'. Koppers, op. cit., p. 292.
[4] Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), p. 8.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

778

Sirahu's swing at Alur

[p. 180(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

776 silken thread to ask Bhagavan himself for water. On the way he discovers the dam and destroys it: the girls beat him. Bhagavan intervenes and tells his daughters not to give trouble to human beings.[1]

Mahapurub is shown living in the Upper World and curious about conditions of life elsewhere. He sends a crow to tour the three Worlds and discover where the greatest happiness is to be found. The crow reports that it is in the Middle World. The youngest daughter insists on going to see, so Mahapurub calls a spider and makes it spin a thread to connect the Upper and the Middle Worlds.[2]

In the tales the Supreme Being appears far more accessible than we should imagine from a study of the theology. A hero goes to Mahapurub's palace to ask a boon and a magic goat and the seven daughters are given with a father's blessings.[3] Another hero goes on pilgrimage to Mahapurub and has all his problems solved.[4]

Bara Pen

The Great God of the Gond, it has always been said, is Bara Deo, Bhera Pen, Budha Deo. He is supposed to live in the sacred saja tree and to be more honoured by the Gond than any other. In Bastar, however, this deity is not specially worshipped by the Muria.[5] Among them the name Bara Pen or Budha Dokara is the name of a very ancient clan-god, and nowadays, whenever the Muria are at a loss to give a name to a clan-god, they call him Bara or Budha Pen. There are indeed a bewildering number of Anga, flags and Gutal with these names. At Chingnar there is an Anga who is worshipped by the Naitami, Tekami, Maravi, Poyami and Parchapi. He is called Budha Dokara. At Kharkagaon there is another Anga with the same name connected with the Duga, Kalo, Halami, Dhurwa, Buyi and other clans. At Kursai Budha Pen is the god of the Komra and Kaudo clans. At Kokori he is the god of the Uika and Wadde clans; at Metawand of the Partabi and Ori; at Lanjora of the Poyami. I have no doubt that there are other shrines in his honour in many other villages.

The extent of the cult of Bara Pen in Bastar might be supposed to indicate his importance, but he is not one of those deities who is constantly remembered at festivals or funerals. I think that his cult is extensive largely because his name is convenient. Bara Pen, a great god, Budha Deo, a venerable god; it is an obvious and useful title.[6]

The Earth Mother

The earth or *bhum* is the ultimate source of life and power who manifests herself in all the other deities. Men are the children of earth, fed and loved by her. She is personified in Tallur Muttai who appears frequently in legends and songs. She is one of the gods living in the ghotul to protect the children;

[1] Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 31-2.
[2] Ibid., pp. 139f. [3] Ibid., p. 10. [4] Ibid., pp. 283ff.
[5] 'As far as I have ascertained the Marias and Murias do not worship Burra Deo.' —W. H. Shoobert in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 75. This is going too far.
[6] 'The Gonds are, however, found to have one common object of worship called according to the linguistic peculiarities of the locality, Bura Deo, Bada Deo, or Badial Pen. Pen and Deo mean the same, but the signification of Bura or Bada, I am not sure of. Major Macpherson tells us that Bura Pen, the Kandh god, means "the god of light". Mr Hislop no doubt rightly conjectures that Badial Pen, whom he also calls Badhal Pen, and the Kandh god is the same; but he translates Badhal in one place (page 14) as "the old god", though in a note to the same page he quotes as if affirming the *Calcutta Review* in translating the word "Sun-god". If Bura Deo means "old god" it should, I suppose, be written "Burha", but in the way the word is pronounced, I do not detect the aspirate.' —Dalton, op. cit., p. 281.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

716 she has a special concern for the success of the crops; according to some legends, she invented the sago-palm. The Muria offer sacrifices to her on all the chief occasions of their lives.

Nowadays, however, the Muria have got into a great muddle about Mother Earth and her associated deities. She is now often identified with the goddess Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of Bastar. Tallur Muttai, under Hindu influence, turns into Mati Deo, then she changes her sex back again to Danteshwari Matal. She is also often mixed up with the Gaon Devi, or any other Matal or Maoli who may be worshipped in the village. It is impossible to expect any kind of consistency, for the Muria are not trained theologians, but it is fairly safe to say that when the Muria worships either Gaon Matal, Jimmedarin Matal, Thakurain, Danteshwari Matal, Maoli or indeed any other Matal, he is really thinking of Tallur Muttai or the Earth. In the prevailing Shaivite atmosphere of Middle India, all nature deities are inevitably personified as female.

The Earth Mother, in whatever form she takes, generally has a special shrine in her honour. She may be represented by a wide variety of symbols. Her special priest is the Kaser-Gaita, who makes offerings to her on every occasion affecting the life or honour of the village.

The association of this goddess with the ghotul is not perhaps very close, but in some places she is believed to live there with Kadrengal, her official consort, and with Lingo. There is indeed a story that Tallur Muttai was in love with Lingo and, after murdering one of his wives, tried vainly to win him to herself. Before going out on any dancing expedition and at their return to the village, the girls and boys make suitable offerings at the shrine of the Earth Mother. They remember her also when they go to hunt or fish, when they make a new drum, when they worship the drums before a marriage and when they accompany a corpse to its grave.

The Earth Mother in the form of Danteshwari Mai or Matal is rapidly growing in importance and distinction throughout Bastar. In almost every village now there is some shrine or symbol in her honour. The arrival of her litter at a festival is the signal for a special demonstration. She excites the same vague but patriotic sentiment that the Church of England arouses in many Englishmen. She is a national institution, and though few Muria of the North can have visited her temple at Dantewara, a good many must have seen her coming in her panoply and attended by her priest on his elephant for the Dassera festival at Jagdalpur.

To enable the reader to understand the feeling of the Bastar Hindus towards this goddess I will quote from a communication made to me by the late Rai Sahib Niranjan Singh, Assistant Administrator of the State.

> Danteshwari is the family goddess of the Ruler. She is the Adi Shakti, the origin of all creation. She has no beginning or end and is not limited by space. She is the creative faculty of Brahma. When the whole creation is annihilated, she remains in Brahma, as a plant remains in a seed and other creations reappear through her. That power is symbolized as feminine since the generative function is a woman's attribute. She is all powerful and has a dazzling beauty. Her eight hands and the lion on which she rides are symbols of her power. She takes shape to rid the world of sinners and make it happy for the pious. She appeared when Mahishasur had spread terror in the world and killed him. She showers power, strength and happiness on her devotees. Sacrifices of goats and buffaloes are made in her name. The flesh of sacrificed goats is taken by men of the upper and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

lower castes and that of buffaloes only by Shudras. This flesh is of special sanctity as through it men who worship her get power. She is the special Goddess of the warring class—the Kshatriyas. Being the family goddess of the Ruler, she is recognized as the ruling goddess by all classes of Hindus and aboriginals of the State. 776

The Divine Right of Kings

The Maharaja is regarded as divine by all the Muria and Maria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and by some of the northern Muria. Each ruler appends the word Deo to the end of his name, the other male members of his house calling themselves Singh, though to distinguish them from other Kshatriya the prefix Lal is added, as in Lal Kalindar Singh. 776 648

The *gadi* or throne is held sacred and no one but the actual ruler may sit upon it. Should anyone break the rule, he would die. [778]

The ruler has special powers of intercession. 'His sacrifices, fasts, and oblations during the Dassera and Chaitrai festivals benefit not only himself but the members of the royal family and the people of the State. All the important deities of the State are brought to Jagdalpur during Dassera and worshipped on behalf of the ruler, his own worship being confined to the family goddess Danteshwari, Maoli and a few other gods. This worship keeps away disease from the people and cattle and results in good crops and universal happiness, as the deities remain pleased.'[1]

So strongly do the aboriginals believe this, that they greatly resent the Maharaja leaving the State even for a short time. His absence means a withdrawal of divine protection from cattle, crops and people.

Kadrengal

Kadrengal is the consort of Tallur Muttai, as Bangaram is the consort of Danteshwari. A story which I quote elsewhere[2] links him with the forest and the chase, and he is generally worshipped by the Muria before they set out on a ceremonial hunt. In some villages, however, Pati Deo takes his place. 776

His name occurs from time to time, generally in association with Tallur Muttai, in the songs and legends. In the oldest mythology he plays the part which more modern people ascribe to Mahadeo.

With Tallur Muttai and Lingo, he lives in the ghotul and protects the boys and girls. Along with other deities he is worshipped and remembered at festivals and on most of the major occasions of Muria life.

Dulha Deo

Jaha chulha taha Dulha.—Where there is a hearth, there is Dulha Deo.

Dulha Deo is the marriage god and is supposed to preside not only over the wedding but over the marriage bed, its happiness and its fertility.

Dulha Deo is not an original Muria god. He is an immigrant from the Central Provinces, where he receives very much more attention than in Bastar. In Bastar he has a certain nuisance value as causing trouble during marriages, a rather expensive addition to the pantheon who must be placated for fear that he will make himself objectionable. His ill temper can easily be explained

[1] Private communication from Rai Sahib Niranjan Singh.
[2] See page 40.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

776 by the tragic circumstances of his origin. According to universal legend he is the ghost of a young bridegroom who, on the way to his wedding, was killed either by lightning [1] or by a tiger. Frustrated at the moment of achieving happiness, he lives on, soured and bitter, to trouble mankind.

For this reason Dulha Deo is regarded as particularly touchy and there are many stories about his quick temper and his readiness to take an insult and notice a slight. For example, at Silati the Muria described how he interrupted a Kalar marriage at Bara Dongar. A Muria neighbour had dedicated a pig to Dulha Deo. On the morning of the marriage the pig wandered over to the Kalar's house and the Kalar exclaimed, 'Alas! I have seen a pig's face early in the morning'. When Dulha Deo in the form of the pig heard this, he was very angry and stood snorting with rage in front of the house, refusing to allow the marriage to proceed. At last the Kalar had to touch the pig's feet and promise a goat in honour of Dulha Deo.

A practical reason for Dulha Deo's bad reputation may be the fact that at a marriage everybody is very excited, more or less drunk, and hitches in the procedure and quarrels between relations are always likely to occur. Whenever anything goes wrong, the blame is put on the god who must then be properly appeased. Dulha Deo serves a useful purpose as the divine whipping-boy.

Bhimul Pen

[778] In many Muria villages there is a small shrine of four wooden pillars and some cross-poles, but no roof, round one or two stones that may be anything from one to three feet high. These represent the deity who is called variously Bhimul Pen, Bhima or Bhimsen and his wife Bhimsenin or Gorondi Dokari.

I think it probable that there was a very ancient aboriginal deity, a rain-god called Bhimul, whose cult has been assimilated to that of the mightiest of the Pandava brothers, Bhimsen. The Muria expect both Lingo and Bhimul to provide them with rain in due season. If there is a drought, Bhimul's stone is [789] covered with cow-dung with the idea that he will quickly send rain to wash himself clean.[2]

But the Muria Bhimul has many other functions. In eastern Kondagaon, he takes the place of Lingo as the founder of the ghotul and its protector. [534] He is regarded as having a special interest in drums and must be worshipped when a mandri drum is made and when it is used at a wedding. He and his wife are associated with stilt-walking. He appears as the cause of thunder and the fertilizer of the crops.

Bhimul has a special festival to himself in order to ensure a good rainfall. [796] The villagers bring in March a little of whatever seed or vegetable is available and throw it over Bhimul's stone. The Gaita makes the usual offerings. Chelik and motiari dance all night.[3]

[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 119; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73.

[2] To get rain, Bombay Hindu villagers 'besmear the phallus of Shiva with cooked rice and curds'.—Enthoven, op. cit., p. 321. The Parja of Bastar are described as fixing a piece of wood into the ground in the name of Bhimsen over which they pour water when they are in need of rain.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 377.

[3] For the widespread cult of this 'heroic godling' both among Hindus and aboriginals, see Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 66, 89, 230 and Vol. II, p. 182; Grigson, op. cit., pp. 206, 215, 219; S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Calcutta, 1912), p. 98; *The Baiga*, p. 59 and *passim*; *The Agaria*, p. 93; *The Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 76 (for the cult among the Nagpur Gond); ibid., p. 236 (for the Urali's idea that thunder is the result of a duel between the two Bhimas in heaven); Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. IV, pp. 56 and 71 (for the Koyi tradition that traces the origin of the tribe to Bhimador who while hunting in the jungle met a wild woman of the woods and married

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

The Gods of the Home

Among the Muria, specially those towards the east and round Kondagaon, there is a definite belief that certain gods are attached to men and women and go about with them sharing their life and helping when help is needed. At Kanera the Muria said that Dokara Deo lives with men and aids them in distress, while Kondi or Lagar Deo lives with women. At Dongrigura the Pujari said that the gods themselves do not accompany men everywhere but 'their shadows come to them on the wind' always ready to help in danger. At Karanji the people said that whatever god receives special honour rewards his worshippers by living with them but that Budha Deo, Kondi Deo and Lagar Deo, who came with the Raja of Bastar from Warangal to protect him, are the special gods who go here and there to guard human beings.

The fact that this belief is mainly confined to the more sophisticated (though still truly Muria) villages near Kondagaon suggests that it is a Hindu importation along the main road from the Central Provinces.

Kondi Deo goes with a girl[1] to her husband's house on the day she is married. After the birth of the first child, any misfortune that comes is attributed to this god and the family has to promise to worship him on condition that he troubles them no more. They wait for a year and then the woman's married sisters come to visit her and subscribe sufficient money to buy a pig.

On a Saturday the house is cleaned and the next morning a *chok* pattern is made in the compound with rice-flour, in the middle of which some rice is placed. A small earthen pot is put there and a knife. The head of the family offers incense and makes the pig eat the rice saying, 'O Kondi Deo, protect and preserve my family and children. It is for their sake that this offering is made to you, and we will repeat it every second year'. When the pig has eaten the rice, the husband of either the eldest or the youngest sister kills it. They cook the pig and invite the village elders to the feast. A pit is dug inside the house into which, when the feast is over, the leaf-plates, the pig's bones and even the water in which the cooking-pots are washed, must be thrown. They then hang the earthen pot and the knife near the Pot of the Departed.

The worship of Lagar Deo is not unlike that of Narayan Deo to whom the Larn pig is dedicated in the Central Provinces.[2] Lagar Deo is also a special god of women and is indeed often identified with Kondi Deo. He first lives with the mother of a household, but after the marriage of the eldest daughter he goes with her to her new home. When her child is born he first troubles the mother and then goes to each of her married sisters and troubles their female children. When they decide to appease him they ask all the female members of the family, sisters, sister's daughters, grand-daughters, all of them, and

her. The Koyi dance is an imitation of Bhimador's pursuit of his enemies); R. B. Bainbridge, 'The Sacrifice of the Rajmahal Hills', *Mem. ASB.* Vol. II, pp. 468.

Other legends about Bhimsen may be found in *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, pp. 29 and 135 (for Bhimsen's romance with a Devi); A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Reports*, Vol. XXII, p. 53 (the pillar of Asoka near Betiya locally regarded as Bhimsen's walking-stick); *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI, p. 16 (the Iron pillar at Bakhra known as the pole of the bullocks of Bhimsen); an interesting and well-told story in R. A. Sterndale, *Seonee* (Calcutta, 1877), p. 97.

[1] Among the Uraon, Asharai and her companion Jodo are the special deities of women. Once in a generation, every family must perform a ceremony for the well-being of its female children. As in Bastar, all female relatives and their husbands attend. For a full description, see S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 65ff.

[2] See *The Baiga*, pp. 429ff. and articles by Shamrao Hivale and Durga Bhagwat in *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 92–119.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

776 dedicate a pig by castrating it and removing a bit of the ear and tail. They wash its legs and throw rice at it saying, 'If you are a true god, give us prosperity, keep us safe and after so many years we will give you gifts'. Then the pig is set free and allowed to go where it will. The rice which was thrown at it is carefully divided and given to each of the husbands of the woman's younger sisters. They are to sow this every year, and at the end of three years to bring whatever has been produced. The men sow this seed in a special patch of ground, harvest it and store it separately, repeating the process every year. When they are ready they appoint a certain member of the family as the Kotwar for this special duty and he goes round to the houses of all those relations who three years before had shared in the ceremony. Once again all the female members of the family must come. Every household invited must bring a chicken.

On the appointed day each of the husbands comes with the rice that he has grown. They dig a pit and bring the dedicated pig. After making it eat rice as usual, they beat it over the head with a rice-husker and so kill it. The men invited to the feast may eat the pork, but the only women who may do so are those who were present at the original ceremony. Sometimes an interval of five years is allowed between the dedication of the pig and its sacrifice.

In some places the earthen pot with rice, pulse and a small knife is always kept near the House of the Departed to satisfy Kondi Pen.

The Divine Motiari

776 Throughout India the villagers dread and take endless trouble to placate the
171 Matal or Village Mothers.[1] These dangerous and malignant beings are the cause of disease, domestic tragedy and accident. It would be an interesting subject for psycho-analytic research to discover why the beautiful name 'Mother' should be given to these bloodthirsty deities.

But beside the Mothers there are the Maidens. These too are known in other parts of India.[2] In northern Bastar at least, as we might expect in a country populated by charming and graceful motiari, the Maidens or Kanyang are generally regarded as benevolent though, like the motiari, they expect to receive proper attention. It is not, I think, fanciful to call these the 'Divine Motiari' and indeed the seven chief Kanyang Sisters have the names Belosa, Dulosa, Alosa, Sulki, Lahari, Jalko and Malko, all of which are the titles of motiari. It is said that in the ghotul these titles are specially treasured and fortunate since they are the names of the Kanyang in whose honour the girls dance the Diwali dances.

776 There are Naiads, Kanyang, Divine Motiari—call them what you will—of the forest and of the water. One Kanyang lives in the sago-palm ; another flashes across the sky in the shape of lightning; another presides over the salt-lick. In all they number seven score.

Let us examine some of them and their character more carefully. Perhaps the most important of the Kanyang is the Yer Kanyang, the rather lonely maiden who lives in streams and rivers. When she hears the music of the dance floating across at night from the nearest ghotul, she grows very sad and goes to find some motiari living wretched and ashamed because of the menstrual contagion that is on her. Then the two dance together in the world of dreams all night. This maiden is honoured by the Muria when they go to fish. Gifts are promised before they begin and if the catch is good they always remember her. When Gadru of Chaniyagaon was nearly drowned as a child, the Siraha

[1] See Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 111ff.
[2] See Dalton, op. cit., p. 188; Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 112.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

diagnosed the reason in the failure of the boy's father to sacrifice a pig to the Yer Kanyang as he had promised to do after a good catch of fish. 776

A bride going from Amasara to Nayanar to be married gave the Water Maidens in a river she crossed two rings: 'As we give rings to our motiari she gave, for the Maidens of the Water are also motiari.' What is called the Neyi Maur or the first wedding crown, worn when haldi is put on the body of bride and bridegroom, is thrown into the river after the marriage, for the Kanyang of the water. After the cowhide for a drum has been soaked in water, offerings are made to her for fear she has been defiled. This Kanyang, who is called Yer Kanyang, Julan Kanyang and sometimes Bisran Kanyang, like all such beings is sometimes touchy and may attack men in the form of a crocodile. When this happens, the villagers must give her large gifts, a pig, eggs, seven rings of aonra, red powder for her forehead and bangles for her wrists. In Matawal they said that when they went to fish they always remembered the Bisran Kanyang and when they got a good catch gave her such feminine finery as they thought she would like. Bisran Kanyang is said to give special help to witches. [782]

Another Kanyang of the water, called Ghat Kanyang, lives in the place where people bathe and draw water. When they take an Anga to bathe it at its annual festival they make offerings to this Kanyang saying, 'Be with us to help us. Here we drink water, here our children bathe. Let there be no disease, let no witch overlook the water; protect us and we will worship you every year'.

Bahi Kanyang lives in very small streams and is offered bangles made of weeds and other gifts to ensure good rain and plenty of water in the rice-fields. Chapar Kanyang, the Maiden of the salt-lick, lives in the place where cattle go to lick the salty earth, and there every year the Bhum-Gaita goes with the villagers to make the usual offerings in order to free the cattle from disease.

Kanyang of the fields, such as Berha Kanyang, preside over the crops. When the rice is ripening the Muria offer a pig for the village and a chicken for each house so that the grain may be good, undamaged by wild animals and not destroyed by witches. In Gudla people said that there were two Kanyang in the fields; one called Wujri is benevolent and ensures a good crop; the other, Bagri Kanyang, is responsible when the crop fails. In Matawal, the Maiden of the field was called Ras Kanyang and at Binjhli, Dhand Kanyang. Here they said that at harvest time the Gaita went to every field with chickens, vermilion and the new rice and offered it to Dhand Kanyang and Dhand Rau. Only when this had been done could they cut the crop.

In the forest lives Sukhli Kanyang in her little hut. Should a cow wander near, Sukhli Kanyang catches it and sucks the milk.

The Kanyang of the sago-palm, which was originally a feather-tuft in a motiari's hair, is described elsewhere.[1] This Mur Kanyang, as she is sometimes called, gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul'. Then she 'marries' and the juice ceases to flow. This Kanyang is subject to a menstrual period during which no one should drink the juice. Regular offerings are made to her when a tree is tapped for the first time.

Local Gods

In addition to the gods whose cult is more or less universal throughout the Muria country, there are many local gods who have generally come into being as a result of a dream or some magician's diagnosis of the cause of a calamity.

[1] See p. 35.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

Round Kondagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

IV. The Clan-God

We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halba, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

793
292

Plate XXXVII

Gaita of Almer in trance, wearing cowrie jacket

Priest of Pendrawandin at the Kondagaon Market

[188a]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXXVIII

778

Siraha carrying Anga and Gutal at Adner

Litter of the Village Mother outside her shrine at Mawra

[p. 188(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

Today when the process of god-making in Bastar has burst all bounds, when the clans have been scattered, when new clans have come into existence and old clans divided, there is no longer the neat and tidy arrangement of former days. But there is still a deep attachment to the idea of the clan-territory and the clan-god. Every clan still has its spiritual headquarters, still has the clan-god who is regularly worshipped at the great festivals, still maintains a clan-priest (Pen-Dhurwa or Pen-Waddai) to perform that worship, and still in many cases takes its dead to mingle with the clan-ancestors. What has happened in modern times is that each clan may have several places whither it will go for worship or for the disposal of its dead, and this has confused the picture. But the clan-gods are still of great authority.

The Anga is in form and character unique among the aboriginal gods of India. In form it is an arrangement of three parallel poles of saja,[1] bel or ira wood, over which are tied by siari rope cross-pieces of bamboo or saja. The central pole is the actual god, the two side-poles being simply intended to enable his two or four bearers to raise him and carry him about. This central pole has a curious head called *koko* which resembles that of a snake or bird. At the junctions of the logs and cross-bars there are tufts of peacock feathers. Silver ornaments, symbols of the sun and moon and sometimes plain rupees, are nailed to the ends of the poles. Bands of silver may be hammered round them. Bells are hung round the 'neck'. Sometimes the Anga is two-headed: husband and wife live together. The clan-god of the Maravi at Phunder, who is called Karati Dokara, has two heads each with a hooded cobra nailed to it. So too the Anga at Bhanpuri, Son Kuar, is two-headed. Sometimes the Anga's wife is made in the form of a pole and placed upon him.

The Anga is kept in a special shrine apart from the other gods and is either suspended by ropes from the roof or placed on a bamboo support a couple of feet above the ground. When it is taken abroad or goes to live for a time in someone's house, a special stand must be made for it. The Anga usually has a *jiwa* or soul. At Phunder it is a piece of iron carefully preserved under the sacrificial stone in front of the shrine. In Semurgaon the soul of Lingo is a bit of iron wrapped in a grass bundle and hung above its body. Sometimes the soul goes abroad of its own accord and has to be replaced with appropriate offerings. At Chingnar, the soul of Son Kuar goes to hunt at night and in the morning feathers are found scattered about his shrine.

When in use, the Anga is kept sometimes very casually. In Dongrigura, I saw one hanging from the roof in a corner of the granary belonging to the Gaita. At Magbeda, it was lying crookedly in a broken-down hut in the Gaita's garden. The two-headed Anga, Son Kuar-Maqli, at Bhanpuri, is kept in the Gaita's *bāri*-enclosure in a little shed. At Karanji the Naitami Anga, Pila Kuar, is kept in the Gaita's house.

The Anga often has one or more attendants in the form of wooden horses slung from the roof beside it. These horses are taken out at the clan festivals and the mediums dance wildly with them. There are two horses attending the Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon. The shrines may be adorned with the skulls of animals killed in the latest ceremonial hunt, with decorated poles or sticks used by the god at festivals, and with symbols of the god's children.

For the Anga is very like a human being. It marries and has children. It has relations both inside and outside the clan. Some of the older gods have very large families. Lingo Pen's brothers, nephews and other relatives are enshrined and worshipped all over the north of the State. The process of

[1] The famous Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon is made of saja, for it was this tree he kicked as he escaped unhurt from his great ordeal.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

778 multiplication is accelerated by the Anga's polygamous habits. The son of an
776 Anga may itself be an Anga, or it may take the form of a Gutal—a long pole
614 with a bunch of peacock feathers at the top, or a Lath—a decorated flag attached to a bamboo staff.

The manufacture of an Anga is an elaborate and dangerous business. It is a necessary one because new gods are born from time to time, and the old gods wear out. There is a general idea that an Anga 'dies' every three or four generations. When this happens it leaves its mortal frame and troubles its clansmen until they make it a new one. Sometimes it expresses its will by burning down its shrine—when this happens everything is consumed, but the god itself is unharmed. Sometimes it attacks the village cattle in the form of a tiger. Sometimes it plagues the Gaita with appalling dreams.

The actual making of the god is unusual and interesting; it reveals the logical and straightforward working of the Muria mind. Once it is admitted that the Anga is a sort of person with like passions to ourselves, the rest follows. I will give some typical accounts from villages in the north of the State.

In Kokori the clan-priest told me that when an Anga gets very old and tired, it is taken to a river and 'cooled' by being thrown into the water. The clan-priest prays to the Yer Kanyang, 'Now it is in your charge, you must care for it'. After a time the old Anga sends a dream to the priest and the villagers decide to make a new one. They have to go to another priest of a clan which stands in a marriageable relationship to the Anga's clan and he takes them to a suitable tree. He embraces it, and if his hands meet round the trunk it is a good omen, and an engagement is celebrated.

The following year in the month of Magh they again go to the same priest who offers rice to the tree and says, 'Now we are going to take you away'. He goes round it with a thread, winding it seven times, and then cuts it down. As he is cutting it, he gives the tree liquor from time to time 'in case it should get tired'. They take the wood home, and induce some old man to make the Anga. When it is ready they take it to the river and make offerings to the Yer Kanyang. Every Anga has an umbilical stump with a cord attached and the father's sister of the clan-priest must cut this cord and throw it into the water. Then they bathe the god to purify it after the cutting of the cord. At last it is taken to its temple and a young bull is sacrificed.

Another interesting account comes from Korenda, where the Anga of Budha Dokara and Dokari Deo, the clan-gods of the Partabi and Wadde clans in that area, are made every few generations. The preliminary rites are performed as elsewhere, but later, just before the visiting clan come to fetch the wood for their Anga, the Gaita of the Bhatgaon *bhum* (whence the wood must be taken) goes to the path by which they will come and buries seven eggs at intervals along it.

After the visitors have cut and dressed the wood, and are preparing to go home, they whistle loudly. The Gaita and villagers of Bhatgaon are waiting for the signal, and at once come out to catch them in a sort of game of hide-and-seek. The visitors dash for home, but if one of them is unlucky enough to break one of the buried eggs, it turns into a tiger which destroys their cattle.

When the Korenda people get home, they cut the tree into two, the upper half to be used for Budha Dokara and the lower for Dokari Deo. A special enclosure is made near the shrine of the now exhausted clan-god, and the wood is left there until someone comes forward who is willing to make the Anga. There is no limit to the interval; it may last any time from a few weeks to several years. When one or two very old men, who are not likely

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in any case to live much longer, come forward for the work, they set them to make the frames. When they are ready they put an egg on each Anga and make the old men sit 'to hatch them'. They have to sit there until their *jiwa* (souls) pass from their bodies into the gods. They know when this happens because the Angs begin to shake and tremble of their own accord. Directly this happens, the members of both clans bring a cow or bull and sacrifice it. The old men climb down from their perches and the Gaita breaks the eggs before the gods.

Both Anga now start swinging and are carried on the shoulders of four Siraha-mediums. After the usual dance they are placed in their shrines.

But the two old men who made them, and whose souls have passed into their frames, die within a few days.

It is obvious, therefore, that it is highly dangerous to make an Anga. In Korenda at the present time the process of god-making has been delayed, although long overdue; for there is no old Partabi or Wadde willing to take the risk. It is generally said that such men will die within a year; if they do not they are regarded as exceptionally lucky. But their life thereafter is blind and shrunken, miserable to themselves and a heavy charge on their relations. Thus in Kabonga, Malsai made a new Anga and lived for four years before he died. But it is said that for the last three years of his life, he was a senile and helpless figure, longing for the death that was denied him.[1]

Repairs to the Anga, which are made every twelve or fifteen years, are less dangerous, but they too should only be undertaken by old men.

The Anga has various functions. Its primary function, of course, is that of god of the clan, keeping its scattered members together and attracting them to its worship. It is honoured at the great clan festivals held once a year in the *pen-rawar* and it may also be taken out to visit the shrines of related clan-gods. At a big clan-festival and at the great Mandai commercial festivals at Jagdalpur, Dantewara, Kondagaon and elsewhere sometimes a dozen or more of these Anga may be present. The procedure is generally the same. The Anga is worshipped with various offerings; it is taken down to the river and immersed in water, it is then anointed with oil and carried on the shoulders of its bearers; it is 'exercised' by dancing and playing with the other gods. At these festivals I have often watched the Anga attended by a dozen lesser gods, a crowd of drummers and gong-beaters and a vast company of boys and girls, men and women, going round and round the sacred clearing in procession. This is the Pen Karsita or Sport of the Gods.

Incest within the clan is regarded as specially insulting to the Anga and before the guilty can be forgiven offerings must be made to it. If they do not do this the offenders' bodies will swell and their eyes burst. They will be buried apart from the other members of the family or clan, and their children will be given to the despised Lohar in marriage.

As god of the clan the Anga is specially interested in marriages, and in many villages the Muria place one of the marriage crowns upon it or in its shrine. Often too it is concerned in death ceremonies. The memorial menhirs of

[1] An old report, by Captain MacPherson, on the Kond refers to one of their destructive deities. 'It is firmly believed that the tree under which the deity is placed must die; that the water in which he is laid must be dried up; that the priest in his service cannot expect to survive four years.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 20. When the Kiwai Papuans erect a man's house (*darima*), an old couple perform the proper ceremonies and die soon after. 'There seems to be an understanding that the endowment of the house with its various magical properties has consumed their vitality.' —G. Landtmann, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 22.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

members of the clan should be erected, if possible, in its neighbourhood. At Phunder there is a bamboo bundle containing a small earthen pot hanging above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any Maravi dies his relatives carry his *phul* there, open the bamboo bundle and sacrifice a chicken above it, allowing the blood to fall into the pot. This means that the soul of the dead man will henceforth live in the pot hanging above his clan-god.

Another important function of the Anga is to serve as a means of detecting witches, breach of tribal taboo, theft or even to discover loss of property. At the end of 1940 I witnessed an interesting witch-hunt at Palki in the Narayanpur Tahsil.

On 16 November 1940, Aitu, the Muria headman of Palki, bought eight annas worth of Court Fee stamps and affixed them to an application to the Tahsildar of Kondagaon, complaining that in his village the animals were dying, people were falling sick and crops were failing, and asking for the services of the Anga Deo at Bara Dongar to discover what witch, magician or malignant ghost or deity was responsible. On his paying five rupees into the Treasury the Tahsildar issued *parwana* instructing the priest in charge of the god to take it to Palki (but to no other village) in order to discover and thus cure the trouble.

On the 18th, Aitu reached the shrine at Bara Dongar, and almost immediately the party set out. There was Deo Singh, the hereditary Halba priest of the god, four Muria bearers to carry it and a 'Dhurwa' priest, a Muria specially attached to the god's service. In two days they reached Palki and camped in a little shed of branches outside the village, placing the god on a rough bed of logs and branches in a separate hut.

There Deo Singh told me about this famous Anga. His name was Narsingnath Deo and he was born at Amgaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana. His father was Morg Raj, who now lives at Paralkot, his mother Devni Dokari of Antagarh. His younger brother is the Pat Deo who now lives at Jagdalpur and was taken there in the time of Raja Bhairon Deo to hunt witches. Here, of course, Deo Singh was talking in theological language: actually the Raja, hearing of the fame of the Anga in the wilds, had a copy made and installed in the palace at Jagdalpur. For some time the custom was to bring the original god from Jagdalpur and send the copy to take its place; but in time this custom was dropped and today the Anga in the palace acts independently of its prototype.

Raja Bhairon Deo, continued my informant, at one time had both Anga at Jagdalpur. There was a great epidemic, and none of the gods was able to help, so the Raja ordered them all to be thrown into the Indrawati river. But only Anga Deo and his young brother Pat Deo floated on the surface and drifted to the shore. This made them very famous, but the Raja felt that it was wrong to keep two such gods in Jagdalpur and he sent the Anga Narsingnath to Bara Dongar, where he has since resided.[1]

This Anga is made of bel wood. Every three generations it is remade. It is decorated with a silver snake and a sun and moon in silver. The old worn-out images are thrown into a deep pond at Amgaon.

On the 20th of November the witch hunt at Palki began. It was only with great difficulty that I was able to be present, for the villagers concealed both the time and place of the ceremony, and in fact were sending me off in the

[1] For another account see W. V. Grigson's Introduction to my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), pp. x f. According to Grigson's information the Jagdalpur god was copied from the Narayanpur god.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

opposite direction. Once I had made an offering of silver to the god, however, they became very friendly and I was able to witness all that happened 776

Carried by four men, and accompanied by the village elders, the Anga Deo was carried from house to house round the village. The god stopped before each house, and the women had to come out with an offering of a leaf-cup of rice and a copper coin, and walk under the god and away the other side. If all was well the Dhurwa placed a ring of aonla leaf on the threshold and a bit of iron slag and hammered it with an axe. 778 754

But in two houses the Anga scented trouble; he refused to accept the offerings of the householders, swinging round indignantly, then rushing to and fro, whirling and turning in an alarming manner. He pointed out an old man and woman in one house, and the householder in another as specially affected by the evil. The priests hastily poured liquor in front of the god 'for he becomes thirsty when there is some mischief in his presence'.

At last they took the Anga back to his hut outside the village and everybody sat round to discuss what had happened and to consider what was to be done. On this occasion the mediums proclaimed that it was not a magician or witch, but a number of deities affronted at not receiving sufficient honour—Pendrawandin, Pardeshin, Koriya Pat, Garba Rau and the local ancestors—who were causing the trouble. That day and the next day were spent in sacrifice to the Anga and divinations by the local mediums. On the morning of the third day diagnosis having been fully established, they went to effect a cure.

The bearers carried the Anga to the first house which had been shown as 'infected'. They stood before the door and a Siraha-medium sat down before it. The god 'climbed' on him and he revealed what things were needed to appease the angry gods. He made two little images of black wax to represent the *kus* digging-bar of Koriya Pat and the axe of Pendrawandin. The owner of the house brought out a basket of rice and many little leaf-packets of parched gram, rice, lamp-black, rice-flour, haldi. The medium danced and postured before the god, and the Dhurwa took two chickens for the Rau, a pig for Pendrawandin, and a goat for Koriya Pat and made them eat a little rice. Each householder present put a rice-mark on the goat saying, 'Whatever evil disease, ghost or god is troubling us, take to yourself and carry away'. 776 778 754 787

After this the bearers were suddenly impelled to take the Anga out into the jungle and we all followed. The Anga wandered about erratically, but at last came to a halt at a point where two paths crossed, before an ant-hill. The medium fell into a trance again and called out instructions in a high clear voice. The Dhurwa cleared the ground and made a criss-cross pattern of black and white. He placed seven little piles of rice in a row. He made the sacrificial animals eat, and then killed them, dropping the blood on every pile of rice. With his knife he made a circle to enclose the god, and nailed a piece of slag into the ground.

Then the old man and woman who had been proclaimed as 'infected' came to the front and, holding bunches of *chir* grass (the grass from which brooms are made) behind them, broke them in their hands, threw them away with a gesture of finality, spat and walked hurriedly home without looking round, and by another way. The Anga also was taken home by another route back to its camp. 776 778 754

I was not able to see the ceremonies for the purification of the other house. The Anga demanded an offering of the fur of a wild squirrel, and this took some time to find. Two days later, however, the rites were performed and the village was cleared of its supernatural dangers.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice, returned home the next day.

Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2] At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Land of Anga and the body. Yamabirata 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shameless pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga) ", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'. —Nundolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 327.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

The similarity between this description and the account which I have just given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mân ta pen nahi ta pâthar.—*If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.*—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under saja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

[1] See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
[2] Dey, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
[3] Ibid., p. 344.
[4] J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

778 346 [532]

The buildings vary greatly. Some are solid mud houses with strong doors, others are open sheds, a few stand in substantial compounds of their own with pillars and swings before the entrance. The furniture and symbols inside vary as greatly. In the solid buildings there is generally something that might be damaged by cattle or blown away in a storm—little brass images of horses, elephants and bulls, elaborate litters for Danteshwari, bunches of peacock feathers. Flags and very small images are wrapped up and put into an earthen pot hung from the roof. The long Gutal poles (with a big bunch of peacock feathers at the top) are slung from the roof, and the Anga Deo are hung on ropes from the roof or placed resting on bamboos. Other symbols of the gods are chains, spears, axes, digging tools, whips of cow-hair, shields.

FIG. 24. Brass horse, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines *Height* 9½″

In the more open sheds, the symbols of the gods have to be slung high up very near the roof. At the foot of the central pillar there is generally a flat stone which serves as the seat of the god, and there are several big stones placed together to form a hearth for the cooking of the new grain and pulses or sacrificial animals. The gods are often taken out of their temples to be worshipped, at least on all major festivals, but the sacramental cooking is done inside. So you may often see big wooden spoons stuck in the roof. Outside the temple, there may be a swing with a spiked seat on which the medimma can prophesy; there is often a row of wooden pillars, each with a stone seat before it, to which certain visiting gods can be tied, and there may be a stone for special offerings to the dead.

[83] On the wooden pillars, there are often phallic symbols. At Metawand I saw an elaborately carved vagina showing the clitoris and labia; there are similar carvings at Markabera and Baygnar.

346 I will describe one or two representative shrines, for this will give a better idea of them than any general account. At Markabera is the *pen-rawar* of the Wadder clan, and near the temple is a row of menhirs erected for members of the clan who have died in the neighbourhood. But Markabera is not the original *pen-rawar* of this clan. That is at Kakori, where the clan-god, the Anga Bope Harma, has his residence. Many years ago, Bope Harma had a son at Kakori who was named Bhumiriya; two brothers of the Wadder clan lived there as the Dhurwa Pujari. After a time Bope Harma ordered one of the Wadder brothers to go to Markabera and make a new *pen-rawar* there with a temple to Bhumiriya.

The temple is built with nine wooden pillars, fixed in place by the clan-priest who put iron slag at the bottom of each hole. Bundles of grass called *gubbs* were prepared by a Karanga, a clan *akwalwa* to the Wadder clan; mahua flowers and water were offered them and they were tied to the top of the pillars before thatching. The roof was then thatched, but no walls were made. Every ten years, the *pen-rawar* building is renewed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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1 The 'horse' of Lingo Pen at Semerguon 3 Hobby-horse at the Maichot wedding
2 A Dhurwa hobby-horse 4 The 'horse' of Lingal Pen at Chetpal

[p. 196 (A)]

Plate XL

196

Grain strong across ghotul gate at Ulera

Muria camp, with village flags, during the Dussera festival

[p. 196 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

346 Just inside the gate of the enclosure there is a line of pillars and four stone seats. These poles are for the convenience of such visiting deities as are

[532]

Fig. 25. Brass swing, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines
Breadth 8½"

represented by poles or flags and can be tied to the pillars; the stones also are seats for those gods who have a traditional or family right to come to the temple. Such are Kustirmago Pen, a cousin of Bhumiriya, an Uika god from Kasabahi; Lath Kuar, Bhumiriya's son, a Wadder god from Tadopal; Inde Muitar, a Karanga god of Suhnar and Son Kuar, son of Kanda Dokara, a Maravi god from Garhbangal. Near the gate of the enclosure is another stone [529] of sacrifice where black hens are offered to the dead. One of the pillars is used to tie the buffaloes and bulls which are to be sacrificed to Bhumiriya.

[531] Entering the temple, we find a clean open shed with broad wooden pillars on which are carved crude representations of the sun and the vagina. Here too are four stone seats. The chief is, of course, for the lord of the temple Bhumiriya himself. The second is for his father Bope Harma who is brought every ten years to sit with his son. The third is for Dhursai Kuar, a son of the Pat Deo in Jagdalpur, who comes at festivals from Timnar, and the fourth is for Lalsai Kuar of Metawand.

From the roof hangs an earthen pot containing little bells and a bundle of peacock feathers. Another pot has in it a piece of cloth used as a flag at festivals. In the roof are ten large wooden spoons, which are used for the

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

346 New Eating ceremonies and made ceremonially every ten years, and a large gourd kept for pouring water. Piled round one of the pillars is a heap of dancing-sticks of dhaman wood called Bhumiriya Kolang; these are kept in the shrine for the Pen Kolang dances and at the end of three years are taken to the village boundary and hung up on a rope across the road. There is a *hakum* hunting-horn, not a brass one, but the real horn of a wild buffalo.

883 This description is not irrelevant to a book on the ghotul. The spoons and
796 gourd are used by the chelik, who have the responsibility for cooking at the festivals. The dancing-sticks are made by the chelik and used for their ceremonial dances. The hunting-horn is sounded by chelik to summon the people for festivals. Every visiting deity means a corresponding visit from the chelik and motiari of its village: Markabera is thus in close touch with several villages—Timnar, Metawand, Kokori, Kasabahi, Tadopal, Garhbangal and Suhnar. The Markabera god visits Metawand and Kokori, and possibly other villages. The visits of the gods with their attendant chelik and motiari, many of them of clans different to the Markabera Wadder clan, play a very important part in bringing boys and girls of these villages into touch with one another.

346 In Markabera there was only one temple. In Bayanar there are eight grouped together round a wooded hill covered with fantastic rocks amid which the little shrines are built. A narrow path leads steeply up the hill to the first shrine standing up sharply on a rocky mound of its own. This shrine is the home of Pandi Dokara Gutal (represented by a pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the end) and his two sons Mundi Kuar Gutal and Lalit Kuar Gutal. The three poles are slung high up beneath the roof, for the shed is an open one. At the foot of the centre pillar of the hut is a stone seat, with gongs and an iron lamp. This is a Naitami shrine and there are two stone hearths at either end of it, one for the clan-priest of the Naitami and the other for the husbands of women in their menstrual periods and women who have very recently given
[831] birth to a child. On one pillar is a carving of the vagina, on another the sun and moon and a crude horse.

By the little path along the hillside are two sets of pillars with flat stones in front of them to support Pandi Dokara at festivals. A little further on is a small temple for Hinglajin Dokari. This goddess is represented by a closed litter, and there is the usual stone and hearth for her worship.

A little way down the hill is a temple of the Sori clan which houses two more Gutal (poles)—Dawdi Dokara and Lalsai Dokara. Going still further down the hill we reach a large rock on which is a fourth shrine which is empty save for a stone representing Mundi Kuar; this is in charge of a Hindu (Kalar) Pujari from Mungwal.

These little temples on the hillside were curiously impressive; old gods of hill and forest seemed very present there. Down the hill in a shed was a bamboo pole and a flag in an earthen pot representing Son Kuar, the son of the Anga Deo at Narayanpur—another Naitami shrine. One of the most interesting things I saw on this visit was in the temple to Son Kuar. Here was a very small earthen pot tied up in dub grass, in which the *jiva* of a dead priest was dwelling. For a long time even the Pargana Manjhi hesitated to tell me his name, especially in that potentially dangerous spot, but at last I got it—it was Tota Muria.

We went on towards a great grove of mango trees till we came to a closed temple, again of the Naitami, in which was a characteristic Anga Deo, Baiha the mad god, a stone to represent Bangaram consort of Danteshwari, and two other stones for Kotgudin Matal and Dulardei Matal. Here we were in a definitely Hindu atmosphere. There was a large clay elephant for Bangaram,

[Description of temple buildings see pp 196-198, cat. 116—Ed.]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and in front of the shrine a pile of old clay elephants, bulls and horses. And indeed I was told that the Anga used to live up on the hillside but was offended by the rough Muria habits and moved down to the plain where he

FIG. 26. A typical carved wooden pigeon often found in Muria shrines
Length 9½"

would not be offended by the sight of his worshippers eating beef. Here, in vivid symbol, was the god leading the hillmen down into the plains, from the open free hut to the enclosed house, to a reform of diet and a change of religious custom and the use of ephemeral images made by low-caste Hindu artisans.

There are two other small temples, both open sheds, to visit; both are for the Naitami clan. The first is for Paknabundin Matal, who is represented by a big stone, and the other for Tallur Muttai, the Village Mother, also represented by a stone. These four temples of the plain are not without their charm; set among great trees they look towards the grim rocks of the hills above them. But they have not the hard clear light and freedom of the shrines that brave the rocks and mountain.

VI. THE MURIA PRIESTHOOD

Who are the priests that officiate at these temples? In a sense every Muria is a priest; for the head of each family tends the dead of his house and can make offerings to his personal gods, but there are priestly families of greater or less influence which have performed the worship of the gods for generations.

Notable among these is the priest of the clan-god or Anga, often now called the Pen-Pujari or Pen-Gaita. In the Chota Dongar and Partabpur areas, he is called the Pen-Waddai. He is also known as the Dhurwa, which is the name of a tribe in the south of the State and possibly has associations with the Dhur Gond. This use of a tribal name as a priestly title is paralleled by the use of the word Baiga to denote a village-priest. It suggests that the Dhurwa tribe like the Baiga is regarded by the people as of great antiquity.

Then there is the priest of the *bhum* or earth. The Kaser-Gaita (knife-priest), also known as the Bhum-Gaita or Mati-Gaita (earth-priest), has the duty of offering sacrifices to the earth and keeping the village free of disease. It is he who must go to the fields and clearings when they are prepared and must make offerings at sowing time and harvest.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

There are also in most villages one or more Pujari, as they are now called, who are the priests of the more Hinduized deities, such as Danteshwari and her consort Bangaram. In most villages there are many minor deities and each of these may have its special Pujari.

These men do not form in any sense a special priestly class. Only in very rare instances could you recognize a Gaita or Pujari by his bearing or appearance. They are simple, decent, kindly men who spend most of their lives in the field and forest, but they have been chosen, as their parents were chosen, to mediate between men and the unseen mysterious gods. They are invariably, so far as I know, men of good character and never abuse their position unless the dark fate of supernatural power comes upon them and they turn to black magic. They often have to discipline themselves and to exercise a restraint which is not common among the Muria. All village priests must fast and be chaste on the day and night preceding any major ceremony. In some places the period of abstinence may extend to a week.

In some villages, not all, of the Chota Dongar Pargana the Kaser-Gaita is only able to hold his office until he is married. He is thus usually a boy of about sixteen. He is not allowed to go to the ghotul; he must have as little as possible to do with women; even a woman's shadow must not fall on his body. He should not take tobacco from anyone's hands for fear his wife might be in her period. He should not go to a bazaar for fear he unwittingly touch such a woman. He must not talk to a man whose wife is menstruating. In his own home, his cooking-pot is separate from the others. Few boys could endure so rigorous a regime for long, and the Gaita is only made to hold office for three years. Then the god reveals in a dream which of the chelik should take his place. If the old Gaita returns to the ghotul before he is married, he gives the chelik and motiari a feast of pork and liquor.

When a Gaita dies his successor is not immediately appointed. In eastern Kondagaon, although the eldest son inherits the Gaitaship automatically, he cannot exercise his functions until he has had a certain recognized and official dream appointing him and authorizing him to act. In other parts of the State a ceremonial hunt is held before the son or brother of the dead Gaita can take his place. In the name of the dead man, the whole village goes out to hunt and they take the omens from the animals they get. If they kill a hare it means that the dead man disapproves of his son or brother and that the inheritance must pass out of the family. If they get a male animal it means that the dead Gaita does not want a successor at all. If, however, they shoot a female sambhar, chital or barking-deer, they accept this as meaning that the late Gaita's son or brother may be appointed. Should they fail to get one of these animals, they fast the whole day, cook and eat outside their houses in the evening and sleep away from their wives and go out daily to hunt for three days. If within this period they succeed in shooting one or other of the three female animals required, the new Gaita begins his duties forthwith; otherwise they wait for a year and then repeat the test.

Throughout tribal India the influence of the priest is greatly modified by that of the seer. Often these functions are combined in the same person, and his influence is thus greatly increased. But at every ceremony, every festival, in all cases of sickness, at the last rites of the dead, the priests have to consult the prophets for their instructions. There is not, in fact, anything like a definite system of ritual which must always be performed in the same manner. There is rather a great repertory of rites and customs from which many possible combinations can be drawn. The prophet or medium of the gods has to explain

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in each case what kind of worship, what special offerings, what peculiar rites will be acceptable to the god.

These mediums are known in Bastar by the Halbi word Siraha. A Leski is sometimes the Siraha's assistant; sometimes the words are used synonymously. The Siraha does not offer sacrifice, indeed he is not a priest at all; he is simply a medium through whom the gods make known their will. He has the power of falling into trance, of dancing ecstatically and of diagnosing disease and interpreting the divine commands while in this condition. Scores of these men may be seen at any of the great festivals in the State. With their long hair flying wildly about them as they shake their heads, with scourges and whips in their hands and their drunken, drugged, besotted look, they are a distinctive feature of every Muria religious assembly. Yet, in ordinary life, they are completely normal, sensible, hard-working men and no one would suppose that they were capable of such remarkable transformations.

The Gunia, who understands *guni* or magical charms, is simply a medicine-man. He is called in to cure the sick, to recover lost property and to discover the culprit when goods or cattle are stolen. The Panjiyar is a diviner who works by measuring bits of grass which he questions until he obtains the correct answer. The Gunia tends rather to work with a winnowing-fan or a lamp. Both use grain for divination.

Another common form of divination in Bastar is by eggs. Among the Hill Maria, the Kaser-Gaita watches the eggs hatched in his house; if these get addled it may be a sign that the village site should be changed. The Muria test the omens by egg-throwing at the time of breaking stilts.[1] All the Bastar tribes use eggs in worship, and offer them before going out to hunt and fish, 'for they are greatly loved by the gods'.

Eggs are liked by the gods because 'an egg is like a virgin whom no one has touched, or a pregnant woman who holds two souls at once'. A curious tale explains the origin of poultry.

> There was an entirely dark village twelve *kos* long. Once the people went out with a widow's son to search for light. They went a long long way until they lay down weary to sleep. When they awoke they found the sun in the sky. The widow's son declared that he had not slept and had seen a one-legged man put the sun there. The others were jealous that he should have seen this sight and killed him. They divided the flesh among themselves and gave some to the boy's mother, who took it not knowing what it was. She put it aside for him to eat when he should return. But next day, early in the morning as the sun came into the sky, the boy's flesh turned into a cock and began to crow. So when a hen lays an egg it is only a lump of flesh; it is when it hears the cock crow that life comes into it. That is why gods and men love eggs—for they are a sign of strength and life.

For this reason, it is said, gods and ghosts are not often responsible for addling eggs; this is done by human enemies. If a setting of eggs is thus spoilt by black magic, it should be lifted up together with its straw and placed on a piece of an earthen pot. It should be taken to a cross-road, where the priest must say, '*Thu thu, mailotia*, go back to whoever sent you'. He throws away the eggs and the party returns home without looking back. Elsewhere when

[1] Divination by egg-throwing is recorded of the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. In 1942 I found the Juang of Pal Lahara employing the virgin son of the village priest to test the omens, before a festival, by egg-throwing. The use of eggs in worship is widespread in Bastar and Orissa.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

the eggs go bad, the priest plucks the feathers of the hen and puts them with the eggs. Broken egg-shells (which are usually preserved on bits of stick and kept under the roof) are added and all are taken to a cross-road. The priest cries, '*Thu thu*, you wanted to injure my hen. Take this and go away'. After this, the hen grows new feathers and the next lot of eggs will be good.

In the north-west of the State, the son of the village Gaita has a position of privilege in the ghotul and is often appointed its leader, but in the rest of the State the boys of the priestly families have no special privileges and can claim no special office; they are treated exactly the same as any other boys. But the Gaita's and Siraha's sons begin their training as priests or mediums while they are still boys, and many chelik have the power of falling into trance and prophesying. In Masora I saw chelik being taught how to bathe the gods and carry them about. In Koilibera I watched the Gaita teaching two of the chelik how to sacrifice chickens and offer egg-shells to the gods at the end of the Pus Kolang expedition. Parents often take their sons to special festivals so that they can learn what to do by imitation. The chelik usually attend ceremonies as acolytes and prepare the sacrificial food, wash the vessels, and make ready the sacrificial hearth. In this way the future Gaita or Pujari learns his business. The function of Siraha or Gunia is not always hereditary, but boys are chosen and trained when it is found that they are of an unusually sensitive temperament.

VII. White and Black Magic

Hitherto we have been dealing with Muria religion mainly in its relation to the gods; we must now take a brief glance at its prophylactic and protective measures on behalf of man against the natural and ghostly enemies. Chelik and motiari are protected against black magic by the divine power of the ghotul fence, but they are only safe while they are inside the ghotul. Evil powers cannot enter the building, but they camp all round, and the Muria boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of battle in the unseen world.

Black magic entered the world through an insufficiency. Bhagavan had seven daughters. He had prepared flour with which to create man, but his daughters stole and ate a little from some of the heaps of flour. In these there was thus not enough material for them to become real human beings and they became magicians and witches. Because of their lack of flesh and blood, they try to steal flesh and drink the blood of men. The warlock and witch are thus sub-human, not fully created. In the untouched Muria tradition, the enemy of mankind is usually a man; belief in female witches and the evil eye of woman is generally a later and Hindu accretion to the old beliefs.

The story comes from Karikhodra. In it we see that the warlock and witch are sub-human, not fully created. In other stories witchcraft originates in disobedience and cannibalism. In Matawal in the Mardapal Pargana we were told the following tale:

> A Muria and his sister left their parents' house and went out to seek for work. After a time they returned home and wished to make an offering to Mother Earth. They went to the shrine of the goddess and the boy said to his sister, 'Whatever you do, do not eat any of the flesh sacrificed here'. They found that the Gaita had put some flesh on a saja leaf in the name of the goddess before her shrine. As they approached a crow flew down, ate some of the flesh and scattered the rest. The boy picked it up and put it back again on the leaf. Behind the shrine a lot of blood from the animals offered and sacrificed had

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

collected in a pool. The girl was afraid to eat the flesh in the presence of her brother but went there secretly and drank the blood. 754

When Mother Earth saw all the offerings that had been made, she was very pleased with that Muria boy and said, 'O boy, whatever you want ask it of me and I will give it to you'. The boy replied, 'I want nothing'. Then the goddess said, 'From today I make you the priest of my shrine. But your sister will be a witch; look at her mouth'. The boy looked and it was red with the blood that she had drunk. From that day, owing to the disobedience of women, there have been witches in the world. 713

Another story comes from Kanhargaon:

Lingo married Kodurjunge and lived with her happily, working in his fields. But Tallur Muttai was jealous, for she desired to marry Lingo herself and thought how she could accomplish her desire. One day she took Kodurjunge into the jungle and made her eat a basketful of jamun berries. Then she left her there and went to Lingo saying, 'Your wife is a witch, come and look at her mouth, she is coming home with her mouth reddened with the blood of men. When I saw her I ran away terrified to tell you'. Presently Kodurjunge came home and when Lingo saw her mouth reddened with the jamun juice, he thought, 'Yes, indeed, she must be a witch', and killed her.

Then Tallur Muttai said, 'You cannot live without a wife, marry me'. But Lingo sat with hanging head and would not look at her face. So Tallur Muttai filled with anger went out and cut up Kodurjunge's body. She took it round the village saying that it was pig's flesh. All the pregnant women there at once roasted a little of the flesh and ate it. The others put it in their houses for the morrow's meal. When Lingo discovered what had happened, he went round the village and told them to throw the flesh away. Those who threw it away suffered no harm, but all who had eaten became witches.

The methods of the Muria warlock are not unlike those practised elsewhere in India and indeed throughout the world. The warlock makes a grass doll to represent his enemy and buries it with the head of a chick.[1] This will soon cause his enemy's burial. To injure cattle, he gets the bone of a cow and buries it with a consecrated egg on the threshold of a cow-shed. A more elaborate method is to put the bone, with a hair from the tail, and a little cow's blood, into a small earthen pot and bury it in the path by which the cattle will go to their grazing-ground. The magician ruins a crop in the same way, burying a little rice with appropriate charms in the thrashing-floor. The rice in a pot can be diminished by placing an ear of rice beneath it. 754

To burn with fire, a warlock picks up a hot coal and a pebble and blows them with a charm towards his enemy, or he burns a grass doll. The antidote to this is to wave hot cow-dung ash three times in the air and hide it under a tree; as the ash cools, so will the victim.

To stop a girl having a child, an enemy—it is usually a woman in this case—steals a little of the haldi from her body as she kisses her on her wedding day. She scratches up some of the mud which the bridegroom throws on the girl at the end of a marriage ceremony and somehow obtains a scrap of her menstrual cloth. She buries these by a river and her victim will be sterile.

[1] This is the devaluario of the ancient world, the image-magic common in all ages and all places.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

154 674 The fear of magic is a prominent cause of the few murders committed by Muria in the last ten years. Manga of Kodoli believed that his uncle had caused the death of two of his sons by magic as a sacrifice to the Yer Kanyang of his tank. One day the supposed sorcerer said to him, 'I ate up your sons and now I will devour you', whereon Manga killed him. At the Diwali festival in 1938, Boga killed the Pujari of Katagaon because he was a sorcerer and did not do his worship properly with the result that the crops failed.

In Padnar (Mardapal Pargana)—a village where there is no regular ghotul—a man called Kana suspected a whole family of practising black magic. His accusations were so serious that several of them went to live elsewhere. But one by one they returned, and by Dassera of 1939 they were all back in Padnar. One day during the festival Kana, thoroughly drunk on rice-beer, took the opportunity of telling them they were wizards, accused them of relieving themselves on the village gods, and threatened to turn them out of the village. This drove four men of the suspect family to desperation and they assaulted and killed their enemy.

154 The methods of black magic and the attempts to counter it may be studied in the interesting case of the long struggle for magic supremacy between Gurgu, the Gaita of Almer, and his enemy Singlu. The quarrel started when Singlu, who belonged to the Karanga clan, said to Gurgu, who is a Kaudo, 'I have lived many years in this village. Let me erect *kutuksul* here and then my ancestors will live here and help me'. But the Gaita pointed out that the clan-territory (*bkum*) of the Karanga was at Kokori and Singlu should have his menhirs erected there. 'If you bring your gods and ancestors here, our gods will be neglected.' And he refused to give him land.

Singlu began his campaign by making a *kapâd*, a magic door, which was represented by cutting wood into three pieces and burying them. The intention of this was that Gurgu's door (symbolizing his house) would be broken and his family ruined. But Gurgu did counter-magic and survived.

Then Singlu cast a spell over Gurgu's speech. Previously Gurgu had prided himself on being able to talk fluently in Halbi with visiting officials, but now he found that he could only talk in Gondi, and there was a general belief that as a result he would be deprived of his position as village headman. But Gurgu 'cured' this also and when I saw him was speaking excellent Halbi-Chattisgarhi.

[187] Singlu's next move was to send a white owl every night to the village. This bird, which is a sort of Ondar Muttai,[1] is very ill-omened. When it cries someone is sure to die. The villagers began to fall ill, but Gurgu managed to 'cure' this also. I was not able to get many details about these 'cures'; I gathered that Gurgu did not perform any symbolic acts of sympathetic magic, but rather by making generous sacrifices obtained the assistance of the local gods. The sacrifices, however, included a doll of dub grass which may have been a means of devoting Singlu to the deity. Gurgu also put nails of iron slag round the village boundary to 'close' it against magic, but as Singlu was already inside this precaution was not of much value.

When I visited Almer, Singlu had recently caused great consternation by taking a hare to the village boundary and sacrificing it to some unknown deity. Now only the Kaser-Gaita may offer such sacrifices and this breach of religious etiquette was believed to have offended the gods greatly, for they drove away all wild animals from before the village hunters. This was the time of the Marka Wijja Pandum, before which the helik go out on a ceremonial hunt, on the result of which depends the success or failure of the crops. But

[1] See pp. 169f.

The Nero of the Tarhalh ghotul

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Plate XLI

Two great friends: Pikni and his lover at Sidhawand

[p. 204 (A)]

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Bathing the gods at Adner

Plate XLII

Bathing the gods at Masora

[p. 204 (B)]

MURIA RELIGION

754 Singlu brought disaster this year on the hunt. For a whole month the chelik were taken by Gurgu to the forest, but they got nothing. One day they did shoot a young sambhar but it ran away to another village with their arrows sticking into it, and another village got the meat and the omen. All round other villages were returning triumphant from their hunts, but on 22 April 1941 when I was there the Almer boys returned yet once again empty-handed and Gurgu exclaimed with tears in his eyes, 'I am defeated'.[1]

Here the magician was acting, as it were, at a distance. There is also among the Muria a tradition of the Parat Bagh or were-tiger where a man is metamorphosed into a tiger and attacks his enemy directly. He kills but does not eat him. To become a tiger, a man must go to an ant-hill and circle round it seven times clockwise repeating the necessary charm. It is the charm that matters, and somewhat naturally I have been unable to get hold of it. The man then becomes a tiger, and goes to kill his enemy. When he returns he goes round the ant-hill again, this time anti-clockwise, and is restored to his own shape.

While magicians are very dangerous, but seem to live quite respectably at home, the witch is surrounded in the popular mind with every circumstance of horror and disgust. She goes out naked as a cow; before her go the *mohini*—soothing charms of love—to lull her victims asleep; her spittle is like fire falling to the ground; she drinks the blood of her victims, vomits it and cooks and eats her vomit; she feeds on excrement.

VIII. The Ecstatic Trance

754 How are these evils countered? We have to remember that not all human
791 ills are regarded as of supernatural origin; there are many which are 'natural' and are met by natural remedies. But many other types of disaster are not
781 explicable on natural grounds, and to deal with these the Siraha-medium or the Gunia-diviner is consulted for a proper diagnosis. This diagnosis is generally obtained in trance. The Siraha sits by his patient, some burning coals before him, coughs and belches, and shakes his head till his whole body is in motion with rapid rhythmic movements. These gradually increase in violence, the hair streams out and is thrown to and fro, saliva trickles from the mouth and the tongue protrudes. After a time, the medium gives a loud cry and falls forward, placing the palms of his hands on the burning coals. The smoke curls up between his fingers. He then sits back on his heels, and his companion asks him questions; it is believed that now the god speaks through his lips and the questioner will hear the truth of his perplexities.

791 These mediums also prophesy in a general way at festivals, when they play and posture with a complete forgetfulness of the outside world. Some of them
781 scourge themselves violently with iron chains, others catch hold of the symbol of a god and rush violently about with it, others roll in the dust, hurl themselves on the ground, sit on the spiked seat of a swing, turn somersaults, or simply jog up and down on their toes for lengthy periods.

[1] There was a similar war between a sorcerer and a whole village which he reduced to terror at Sulanga in 1938. Sonu Muria, an ex-convict and a quarrelsome, angry man, was the Pujari of Bhatti Pen. To quarrel with Sonu meant, almost as a matter of routine, that someone would die in your house. From this cause Jagru, a Halba, lost two of his sons on one day and left the village. Another Halba, Jubi, lost three members of his family in a year. Sonu had a row with a settlement of Ganda: several died: and they all migrated. The Muria and Halba of Sulanga took the matter to the police and urged that the Ango should be sent from Jagdalpur for their protection.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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787 When these mediums carry a clan-god or the litter of a Matal (Village Mother) on their shoulders, they seem to act quite involuntarily and in an astonishing unison. I have seen four men bearing an Anga perform the most complicated evolutions, twisting and turning in every direction, and all in

[293
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FIG. 27. Decorated wooden 'horse', with horns of the barking deer, used for ceremonial dances
Length of wooden section 3' 4"

unison without a word of command or hint where they are to go next. It is little wonder that the Muria place implicit faith in the movements of these men and accept the divinations of the Anga as final.

What is the explanation of this trance? It is well known that in the condition of 'ligature', as Pratt observes, the 'voluntary control of the muscles is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

considerably weakened and the sensations become very dull and dim. The higher centres of the brain seem to be partially split off from the incoming sensory currents, on the one hand, and from the motor centres, on the other'.[1] At the same time, the mental state becomes more and more simple and the many objects of normal consciousness gradually tend to give way to a state of monoideism. These mediums are undoubtedly out of their wits; they can hurl themselves about and fall with a force that would injure men in an ordinary state of consciousness.[2]

It is interesting to find that in Bastar as elsewhere throughout the world this ecstatic condition is associated with the horse. 'It is not only in Java and Bali', writes Beryl de Zoëte, 'that the hobby-horse is associated with trance. The wonderful Roumanian Calusari, the little horsemen, the Good Fairies who dramatically fight the Wicked One in their ecstatic dance, have as one of their principal functions the exorcism of evil spirits who bring disease, just like the Koeda Kepand (rattan horses) of Java and the Sanghyang Djaran of Bali. And this function is exercised through an abnormal state of consciousness which at a certain degree of intensity we call trance, and in some cases through the medium of a wooden or rattan horse, or merely the head and tail of a horse united by some kind of rod . . . Perhaps there is no continent in which the hobby-horse is unknown. In England he seems innocent enough, ambling along among the mysterious antlered figures of Abbot's Bromley, or through many a French folk-dance.'[3]

The horse has long been used in magic. Tacitus and Camden referred to augury by the horse in the ancient world. It has been said that the Wooden Horse of Troy was 'an instrument of magic rather than military tactics'.[4] Armed horsemen in Arabia in more recent times are quoted as riding round the tent in which a child is to be born and showing clearly by their arms, horses and movements that they are trying to frighten away evil spirits at a vitally important time.[5] In India the worship of the horse has been recorded for certain aboriginal tribes. For example, Hislop says that throughout the Nagpur District at his time (*circa* 1860) everyone worshipped Koda Pen, and a god named Kola Sur was worshipped with an offering of earthen horses on the top of a hill near Great Ambora.[6] The mare-headed goddess, Basali, represented with a horse's head or as a wooden horse, is worshipped by the Keots and allied tribes in Orissa.[7] The Bhil represent their dead as riding on

[1] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1923), p. 424.

[2] With the Bastar trance we may compare the 'jerks' which have been described by a contemporary in a revival in South Carolina in 1803. Persons would 'suddenly fall to the ground, and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backwards and forwards with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a woman's head might be heard to crack . . And then there was the jumping exercise in which several persons might be seen standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies.' —N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 43, quoting Bishop Capers. This would be a good description of the Muria trance.

[3] W. Spies and B. de Zoëte, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London, 1938), p. 78.

[4] W. F. J. Knight, 'Myth and Legend of Troy' in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVI, p. 96, who cites L. Malten in *Jarkb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.*, Vol. XXX (1915), pp. 179ff. as authority for 'the dangerous and demoniac associations of the horse in early times'.

[5] Ibid., p. 109.

[6] Hislop, op. cit., Part IV, p. iii. See also V. Ball, *Jungle Life in India* (London, 1880), p. 23.

[7] P. Sen, 'A Basali Folk-Song', *Man in India*, Vol. XII, pp. 175ff. and S. C. Mitra, 'On a Curious Cult of Orissa', *JASB*, Vol. XXX, p. 19.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

825
171

horseback; so do the Korku on their carved memorial tablets.[1] The Muria often offer horses of clay or brass (Fig. 24) at their shrines. Sir Lewis Fermor

[532
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After a photograph by G. F. Ramsden

FIG. 28. Gond shrine near Naghi, Chanda District

discovered a remarkable iron horse among clay horses offered to a village god on the top of a hill of manganese-ore in the Chhindwara District, which he thought might be compared with the horse offered to the Southern Indian deity Iyenar.[2]

One of the oldest of Indian sacrifices is the *aśvamedha*, or horse-sacrifice, which has been traced to Scythia. 'There has always', says Penzer, 'been a close connexion between horses and the sea-god, and also with the sun. The latter connexion is due not merely, I think, to the fact that the horse was the "vehicle"—of the sun-god—but because, through its swiftness, strength and activity, it was itself a symbol of the sun.' Penzer gives an account of the rite, which included the horse's consecration and its release for a year's wandering before the actual sacrifice. After its death, the queen lay with the animal so that its great powers of fertility might be transferred to her.[3] Fraser describes rites for the horse among the Russians and Chinese.[4] The Greeks sacrificed horses to the sea-god.

This association of the horse with magic, worship and sacrifice provides a background to its connexion with divination and ecstatic trance among the

[1] See W. Koppers, 'Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils and Other Primitive Tribes in Central India', *Annali Lateranensi*, Vol. VI (1942), *passim*; D. H. Gordon, 'Korku Memorial Tablets', *Man*, 1936, Vol. XIX.

[2] L. Fermor, 'An Iron Horse from the Central Provinces', *JRASB*, Vol. II (1936), pp. 211–14.

[3] *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. IV, pp. 24–28.

[4] *Pausanias*, Vol. IV, pp. 197f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLIII

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Shaka medium at Adwar, moonging himself

Shaka treating the mother for fever, at Mahrwaid

[p. 208 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLIV

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The Hikmi strings his bow in the ceremonial hunt

The Abuzr Gaita worships axe, bow and arrows before a hunt

[p. 208(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

825 171 Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Gurusala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

825 532 787 791 I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite home for spirit-influence.'[3]

IX. The Cure of Disease

755 Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 122.
[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agapitoff and Khangalof.
[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 290.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

755 Manjhi told us that he knew of an expert Siraha in the neighbourhood, and I determined to try his treatment. I must say that I found it very

[781]

Pl. 29. A wooden 'horse', with horns made of the tusks of the wild boar and decorated with feathers of the peacock and the racket-tailed drongo
Length of wooden section 3' 3"

soothing and comforting. The Siraha paid three visits to my tent. He began with diagnosis, by inducing a state of trance while his assistant, the Manjhi

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

himself, offered incense on a dish of red-hot coals. When the god came on him, the Siraha fell forward with his hands on the fire, then stood up and came directly to my bed and laid his hands on my head. He bent over me

FIG. 30. Wooden horse, attendant on Hanga and Hirwe, gods of the Tati clan, at the Bison-horn Maria village of Tikanpal
Length 3'

and blew rice—with which he had filled his mouth—all over my face three times and made passes over my body from head to feet. He clapped his hands and standing upright poured rice on my head.

At the second visit he repeated the process, except that this time he blew twice in my ears. The third time, he again went through the same routine, but brought a garland of flowers which he placed round his neck in the name of the Village Mother. He had previously discovered that the cause of my illness was the Rau of Markabera, where I had just been in camp, so he now brought an egg, a small grass image of myself, and a grass bow-and-arrow on a saja leaf. He waved these over me, and outside the tent offered them to the Rau, picked them up and carried them hastily away into the jungle. As he went he picked a bit of chir grass, broke it and threw it away behind him.

When I recovered, as I did after a few days, I was told that I had been treated in the strictly conventional manner and that no variations had been made for me because I was a stranger. The main points of the treatment are obvious enough—the blowing away of the evil spirit, the lucky rice on the head, the passes down the body to take the illness out into the toes and beyond, the offering of symbols of the patient and carrying them away. Everything was aimed at taking something away from the sick man. At the same time the cause of the disease, in this case a Hill Spirit, had to be amused with the toys and placated by a ceremonial egg.

Other methods of diagnosing disease are those common among the aboriginals and even the village Hindus of the Central Provinces—and no doubt elsewhere. I have fully described methods of divination by the measuring-stick and the winnowing-fan in *The Baiga*; the Muria have the same technique.

Divination by rice, by water, and by chickens is, in essence, similar to European table-turning. The Gunia makes a pile of rice in the name of a god. He asks a question and removes a few grains. These he counts—an odd number means yes, an even number no. For each question he has to repeat the process seven times. Another method of augury is to place a small pot of water by the sick man's side. The Gunia makes several piles of rice, one for the sick man, one for witchcraft, one for the gods and so on. He drops a grain from the patient's pile into the water, and then one from the witch's pile. If the witch's grain 'catches' the man's, he declares his disease due to witchcraft. If not, he removes it and tries with a grain from the god's pile. And so on.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

755 To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and
787 tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Anga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

755 When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thus* is performed.

A *thus* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *khum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahapurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

759 Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means.
755 Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescription of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have
278 recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833] *For impotence.* The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *toj-rāl* and *bhoj-rāl* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753] *For dropsy.* This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

summer or the work of burning *dahi*, saying, 'O the summer has brought this burning for me'. They eat onions as a cure. 757

For pain in the stomach. The root of the arandi shrub, or the small green shoots of the bahera tree. 755

For wounds. The bark of the mendla tree. 278

For rheumatism. There are several different remedies:

(1) Put some leaves of the kumi tree on the affected place and blow the pain away.

(2) Powder the roots of the karanji and sarpho plants. Mix with oil and rub it in.

(3) Touch the painful swelling with a bit of 'seed-iron' (*bij-loha*), or a thunderbolt.

For fever. The classic treatment is with red ants, which are sprinkled over the patient's body—the stings act as a counter-irritant. Sometimes, however, the ants are put in a pot of water, the lid is closed and the water is boiled for an hour. Then it is strained out and salt, chilli and garlic are mixed in it and it is given to the patient to drink. The residue of red ants is cleaned, ground up with salt and chilli and made into a chutney and given to the patient with his first food.

Another common febrifuge is to pound the leaves of the chili tree, and make a drink by mixing them with salt and chilli in water.

Red ants are also given as a cure for biliousness. A chutney of red ants, haldi and chilli is said to act very quickly on the stomach.

For headache.

(1) Pull each of your toes in turn. When you have found the toe that is connected with whatever part of the head is aching, tie it up and the pain will cease.

(2) Grind up the roots of makar and tikur with fresh haldi. Make a hot poultice of this and apply it to the head.

For diarrhoea. Take seven grains of rice and seven grains of urad pulse and the dry leaf of any old bamboo in the house. Grind them up together, boil in water, strain and take on an empty stomach.

For itch. Make an ointment of the white underskin of a snake and karanji oil.

For sores.

(1) Collect some harra fruit (myrabolams), dry and grind them to powder. Make a paste with a little oil, and apply to the sores.

(2) Remove the dirt from the patient's own ears, mix it in a paste of rice-flour and apply to the sores.

For the bite of a mad dog. Get a bit of the flesh of a mad dog which has died, dry it carefully and store it. When needed, it may be given mixed with gur not less than two years old.

Several different kinds of medicinal oil are made by the Muria. For cracked feet, and wounds in the ears of a bullock, they extract oil from the *dhaman* snake or the cobra. The fat is removed and melted in a pot and kept carefully in a small gourd. For rheumatism, oil made from the fatty parts of the tiger, the leopard or the bear is said to be effective.

X. Muria Festivals

Muria festivals are of several different kinds. The great Marhai are commercial festivals; in the larger Hinduized villages the old Pen Kamita or 'Sport of the Gods' has been turned into a large bazaar, at which the religious element 527

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

527 is present but not obtruded. The Kondagaon Marhai lasts four or five days, but only on one of these is there any serious spiritual business. Then clan-gods from the surrounding villages attend, scores of Siraha fall into ecstasy, and a great procession goes round the booths of the fair. In the Muria country, similar Marhai are held in Keskal, Narayanpur and Antagarh.

[411]

FIG. 31. Axes of a type used to kill sacrificial animals

Dassera is a national festival. If the Marhai corresponds to St Giles Fair or the Lord Mayor's Procession, Dassera is for the people of Bastar the King's Birthday, the Aldershot Tattoo and Primrose Day combined. Pargana headmen from all over the State assemble at Jagdalpur to pay tribute to the Maharaja and attend the Muria Darbar. The ceremonies last a fortnight and the aboriginals play a major part in them; among other things they kidnap the Maharaja and have the right to pull his ceremonial car. Central in the Dassera ritual is the royal worship of Danteshwari: her priest and litter come all the way from Dantewara; and no Muria who sees the regal attention the goddess receives at Jagdalpur but wants to introduce her to a shrine in his own village.

The great Jatra may be classified as tribal festivals. These are the religious pilgrimages to the shrines of the clan-gods and to notable gods in celebrated temples. They are sometimes celebrated annually and sometimes every three years. They are very great and exciting occasions; gods are brought by their devotees from surrounding villages; hundreds of chelik and motiari come to dance; and scores of Siraha enliven the scene by their antics. In villages where there is no clan-god, there is usually a small Deo-jatra, an assembly of the villagers to do honour to the local gods. These are brought out of their shrines, bathed, exercised and worshipped. Such ceremonies often occur shortly before the Wijja Pandum in April or May.

796 I have already given an outline of the agricultural festivals which, with the festivals of the clan-gods, are the most important events of the year. All these festivals are of the same pattern; at one the first pulses are eaten; at another the freshly reaped millets; at a third mangoes and other fruits. It will be sufficient, therefore, to describe in detail one of these celebrations, and I will now give an account of the Marka Pandum, or the ceremonial eating of the first mangoes of the year, which I saw at Masora on 17 April 1941. This feast is preceded by a ceremonial hunt. I missed this at Masora, arriving only in time to see the chelik return with a fine hare slung over a boy's shoulder,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

But I was able to see it at Almer a few days later on 23 April. This hunt is mainly the business of the chelik directed by the Kaser-Gaita, but other and more experienced hunters join in, for success in the hunt is the best of omens, not only for a plentiful supply of wild fruit but later for a fine harvest. A crowd therefore of chelik and older men led by the Kaser-Gaita with their axes and bows and arrows, some with gourds of gruel to refresh them on the way, gathered on the path leading towards the jungle. 196

The Gaita laid his own bow and arrows and axe together with a chelik's bow and arrows and axe across the path. He made a small doll out of dub grass and a grass bow and arrow and placed these in front. He made three piles of earth and on each of these placed a ring of aonra leaf and a branch of tendu. He made fire with a fire-drill (not a saw) and lit a little incense which he offered to Tallur Muttai the Earth Mother, Mundri Dokari the wife of Budha Deo, and the Departed, crying to the earth to give good hunting. He waved the fire over the arrows, pressed his right hand hard on the ground, then carried away the grass doll and bow and arrow towards the village and threw them to the side of the path. At the same time the ghotul Sirdar picked up the bows and arrows and axes with a cry of triumph, crossed the line and went quickly down the path without looking back. [372]

That day in Almer they got nothing, but the following evening, in Bandopal, the chelik returned with a jungle-fowl and a young chital. As they cut the chital up, they removed the tip of the ears, the tongue, the hoofs and liver; these bits were done up in three leaf-packets and cooked separately. The Kaser-Gaita took these packets and offered them to the local gods; a little was left over and put aside for himself. The flesh was cooked where it was cut up—in the fields outside the village—and a little wrapped up in leaves was given to every household.

We now return to Masora for the Marka Pandum. The different clans in this village kept the festival in different places, each with their own clan-gods; I went with the Poyami people and their Anga Deo to a sacred grove near a small stream in the jungle about a mile from the village. Here we found the gods—the Anga Deo whose name was Lal Sai, the Gutal pole called Lalu, and the tall flag-staff and flag of white cloth, with sun and moon and nine little men worked on it in red which represents Budha Deo—placed in position under a saja tree. A brass horse for the Rau was under another tree, and a broken sword and shield for ancestors who had died in battle long ago. [718]

Not far from the gods the chelik had cleared and cow-dunged a patch of ground and were busy cooking rice and kosra. There were baskets of mangoes, char and karmata fruit ready for the pot. In front of the gods also 'these three sisters, mango, char and karmata', had been placed.

Presently three of the chelik took their hunting-horns and blew them as a sign that the proceedings were to start. The mediums obtained leave to begin and the gods were taken up and carried to the stream. There the Gaita first offered eggs, liquor and aonra rings to the Water Maidens and took the gods down into the stream and washed them thoroughly. The Gaita crossed the stream and offered eggs and rings and liquor to the Forest Maidens for the safety of the cattle that might graze there.

After the bathing the gods were brought back and anointed with mahua oil. Then two of the Siraha-mediums sat in trance before the gods and discussed with them in a curiously intimate and homely way what offerings were to be made and what the gods would do in return. The clan-priest took chickens that were brought for every Poyami household and two pigs and persuaded them to eat a little of the rice that was piled in small heaps before the gods.

796 As they did so they all yelled at the animals, 'Don't trouble us or we'll give you nothing next time'. One pig refused to eat—it had been offered as a fine: the donor's wife was a witch—and this showed the enormity of the offence which it was expected to condone. But the people did not take it back; they cried, 'We offered it willingly, but you refused, yet we give it all the same'. One man asked for a son, but they shouted to the gods, 'No, give him a daughter'.

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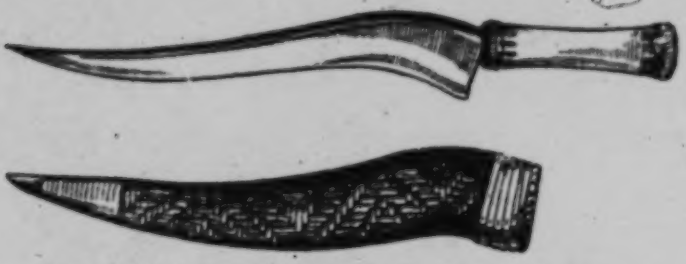


FIG. 32. Muria knife and sheath, of a type often used in sacrifice

796 After the animals had been fed, the priest offered three brass rings for three men who had died during the past year, saying 'Let them now be mingled with
782 the Departed'. Then the animals were killed. The priest put his knife upright between the toes of his right foot, plucked some of the feathers, cut off the head of the chick and sprinkled the blood over the rice and the gods. He killed the pigs by holding them down firmly and sawing off the heads, which he placed facing outwards before the line of rice. As the first pig was killed the worshippers stood with folded hands crying, 'Let the village folk be well; let there be good crops this year; let our animals, cows, pigs, goats and hens be well.' As they killed the second pig, they cried, 'Though it didn't eat, show whether you accept it or no'. They watched eagerly to see how many times the automatic action of the muscles would open the mouth of the decapitated head. Slowly the mouth opened and shut three times and the people were pleased, for this was a sign that the penalty pig had been accepted and all was well.

Similar offerings were made to all the gods, or at least a little blood was sprinkled on them. After a pause, the priest offered the mango, char and karmata fruits, cutting them in half, and removing the stones.

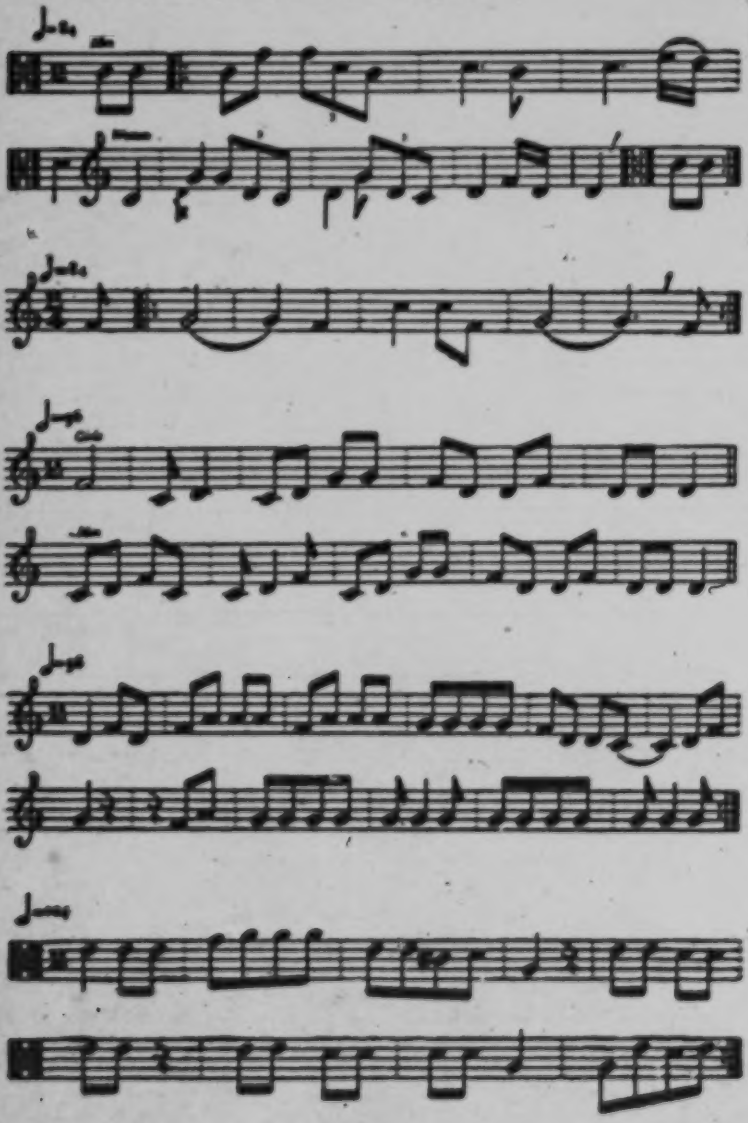
796 Now the women and motiari approached and the Anga went dancing to meet them. He stood before them, and they offered him liquor—'When a Gondi god drinks even one cup of liquor, he talks and dances very well', said one of my guides. Then the chelik picked up their big dhol drums and danced in a long straight line, shuffling to and fro, drumming very vigorously and crying loudly as they changed their direction. The women and girls also danced in a line, and all the Siraha-mediums began to throw themselves about and play and dance, generally carrying one of the gods in their hands. A Naitami boy had come to the wrong place and he picked up the Gutal Lalu and was dancing with it. But the Poyami people resented this, and took it from him with loud abuse.

The dancing, drumming and drinking continued till sundown, when the meat with the fruit and rice was cooked. Then the people—men and women—

MURIA RELIGION

set and ate, and returned home for an all-night dance by the chelik and 796
motiari.

During a festival the Muria sing to a large variety of tunes, of which 796
Walter Kaufmann recorded a number of samples: 533



2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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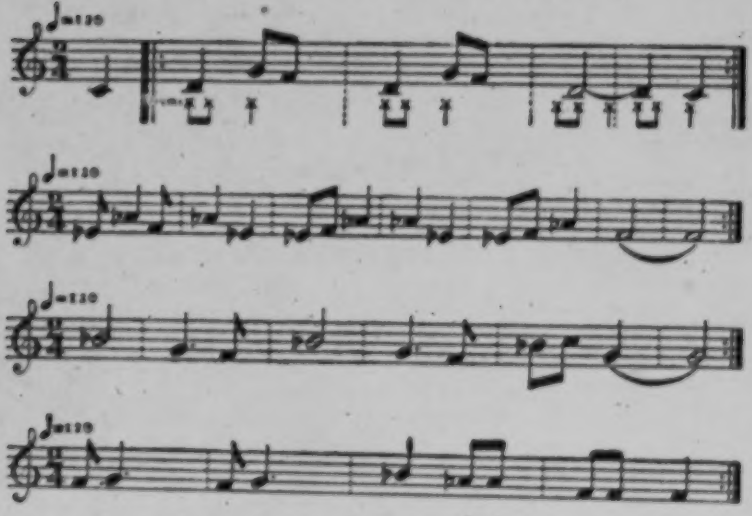

XI. Purifying the Village

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Throughout the year ceremonies, called in Halbi *bohorani*, are performed to purify the villages of disease and evil. Old brooms and baskets are collected and carried to the village boundary, and a scapegoat may be consecrated and sent away into the jungle.

Such ceremonies are performed before the Wijja Pañdum in May, when the nearest stream or river first comes down in flood in July or August, before the Puna Pandum in September and before the Jata or Pupni Pandum in January. If necessary, it may be repeated before the Marka Pandum. All the year round, in fact, these protective ceremonies continue; apparently they cannot confer permanent immunity.

I will give a detailed description of one of these purificatory rites, the Nartate Kiyana for the purification and protection of Bandopal, which I witnessed on 25 April 1942. We were woken at dawn by the blowing of hunting-horns, at the sound of which the village assembled. The people went first to the shrine of the Village Mother and offered incense there; the mediums took Kuari, Marin Dokari and Hoche Muria, each represented by a bundle of date-palm leaves, out of the shrine. Others carried gourds, sonra rings, iron slag, parched gram, wheat cakes, eggs, chickens, the root of a date-palm, a pig, rice and liquor.

A long procession went round the village boundaries. At every point where a path went out of the village, the Gaita put three bits of iron slag, hammered them into the ground, and touched the place with the palm root. This, by a pleasant fiction, represented the sacrifice of a pig. At the four points of the compass he offered eggs to the Rau or demon of the forest. As they went round the boundaries, the mediums caught the ghosts and spirits of the surrounding jungle—the Bhut and Mirchuk—on the trees with palm leaves and popped them into a gourd which they then shut with a leaf-cup.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

At last the party found a suitable ant-hill, and made seven piles of rice before it, which the Gaita forced the chickens to eat. When their eating had signified that the god had accepted the offering, he killed them. He presented the root representing a pig, two eggs, parched gram and wheat cakes, and buried the gourd full of little demons and the leaves with which they had been caught in the hole of the ant-hill. This isolated and destroyed the evils threatening the village, and closed it with a magic wall against hostile sorcerers. 196 183

Later in the morning a Muria, followed by a Muria-Lohar carrying a basket, went with his hammer and some iron slag round the village. He put three 'nails' in every doorway, and each householder gave him two pice worth of mahua flowers for his services.

Such is the Muria method (which has many points of resemblance to Baiga and Pardhan custom) of closing the magic boundaries of a village, and removing its supernatural dangers.

XII. The Birth of a God

On 31 March 1941 there was a very special occasion at Adnar village. The Pupal Korta Tindana was to be celebrated with the delight and pomp which this festival always excites. But an even more important event was the birth of a young god, so young that he had not yet been even named, but was now to be called Chelik Sai. 196

During the whole of 1940 the people of Adnar had suffered constantly from fever and other diseases. When the Siraha were consulted, the Adnar gods spoke through them saying that a new god had been born and was angry that he was receiving no worship. They were told to go to Bargaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana where they would hear from the god Doko Mudial what they must do. The Kaser-Gaita and the people of Adnar therefore went to visit the Kaser-Gaita of Bargaon. He brought Doko Mudial out of his shrine, and the local mediums asked what was to be done. The god replied that a younger brother of his own had been born, the father being Maria Dokara who lives in the Abujhmar, a god of the Kuhrami clan. He said that the people of Adnar must make the god at once and honour him with a *Poroy-tasna* (name-giving) festival. Doko Mudial, who is an Anga, was then carried out into the jungle on the shoulders of two mediums and he showed where the bamboo for making his younger brother was to be cut. The Gaita of Bargaon offered eggs and liquor to the tree and cut it with a single blow of his axe. He handed it over to the Gaita of Adnar, who took it home.

On the morning of the festival day two members of the Naitami clan, which stands in the *akomdma* relation to the Kuhrami, took the bamboo into the jungle near the Adnar temples and made the new god. They offered eggs and liquor, spun some cord on a takli, and prepared a large bunch of peacock feathers with a special arrow made of virgin iron. There was also a new knife of virgin iron provided by the Muria-Lohar of Rengagondi. Others erected a pole of saja wood and placed a flat stone before it in front of the new temple—a simple open shed—which had been built for the young god. When all was ready the Kaser-Gaita brought the new god and placed him against the pole in front of his house.

Adnar is a *pen-ramar* of no fewer than three separate clans, the Naitami, Kuhrami and Kawasi. Outside the village, about a quarter of a mile from the river, in the forest is a group of seven temples, each a thatched open shed, with the usual flat stone, cooking apparatus and the god slung high against the roof. Before each temple were poles or frames against which the gods

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

could be rested, and flat stones for sacrifice. In one temple is Visir Mark, son of Kati Dokari, clan-god of the Kuhrami; in another is Udum Kuar, his *akomdma*, clan-god of the Naitami; in a third is Soma Dokara, clan-god of the Kawasi, and *akomdma* to Visir Mark. On this occasion there was a fourth Anga present, the elder brother of the young Chelik Sai, Doko Mudial, who had been brought from Bargaon.

In the other temples were long Gutal poles, each with its bundle of feathers at the top—Kati Dokari (Kuhrami), Samrat Dokara (Naitami), Desh Matra (Naitami), Bhale Dokari (Kawasi). Samrat had his wife with him—Iyadai, represented by a very long pole. Outside the group of temples was a separate shrine for Budhi Matal represented by a closed litter. Such were the gods, and when I arrived on the early morning of 31 March they were being brought out of their temples while chelik gathered with large dhol drums. Visitors came from the Chota Dongar, Mardapal and Chalka parganas, but only the Bargaon people brought their gods. A hut of leaves was erected for those visitors who did not belong to the three clans, and from this hut also the husbands of women in their periods and pregnant women could get their food. But I was told that the husbands and mothers of newly delivered babies got nothing at all before the umbilical stump had fallen.

The proceedings opened with some vigorous drumming on the dhol drums, and several mediums fell into their customary trance and asked the gods for permission to begin the festival. When the gods had declared that everything was in order, the Kaser-Gaita of Adnar, a tall lanky man wearing a woman's coloured jacket adorned with cowrie shells, danced round the temples telling every god to get ready.

Then a long procession started for the river. Each god was taken on the shoulders of a member of its own clan and carried through the jungle. As we went, we reached a place where a Rau, or demon of the forest, lived, and rice was offered to him. A little later we came to Bhimul Pen in the shape of a round stone—he was given a brass ring; at the river-bank rice was offered to the Yer Kanyang. Then the priests of every clan offered egg-shells and kosra to the gods, and after that they were thrown into the river for a bath. They were thoroughly washed, and most of their worshippers also took the opportunity of a refreshing plunge. After the gods had been carried back dripping and bedraggled, they were anointed with sesamum oil (for this was also the Til Tindana, the first use of the fresh oil).

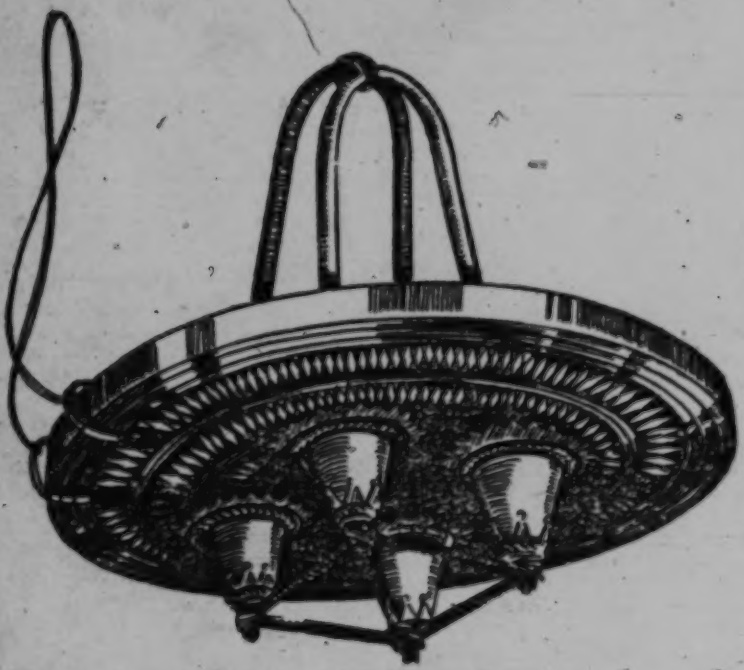
The rest of the day was occupied with three chief activities. The gods themselves, borne on the shoulders of their mediums, played and danced before their temples. The clan-priests, helped by the chelik, busied themselves in cooking a large feast, in which the new oil and pulses were freely used. Women gathered and the motiari brought piles of leaves and sat in the shade of trees making them into plates and cups. Mediums stood before their deities asking questions and delivering oracles to any who came with private troubles. After the midday meal which the members, both men and women, of each clan ate separately, the usual offerings of chickens and pigs were made to the different gods.

At about four o'clock there was a concentration of mediums round the new god Chelik Sai, and it became known that he had asked for the sacrifice of a young bull (it is only at a funeral that a bullock is used). A party of mediums went for it and it was presently brought in slung to a pole carried by two strong chelik. It was laid before Chelik Sai and blindfolded. Everyone gathered round, the motiari specially pushing to the front. The bull's ribs were touched with the end of the god's Gutal pole. Then with an axe, the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

clan-priest of the Kuhrami struck the throat of the animal and killed it with a single blow. The Gaita of every god pressed forward with hands outstretched,

796



[535]

FIG. 33. Dancing-shield used by chelik during the festivals of the clan-gods

crying to the bull to have pity on them and not to be angry, then dipped their hands in the blood and carried it to offer to their own deities. The clan-priest of the Kuhrami made an incision in the bull's side and removed part of the liver and offered it to Chelik Sal. After this they carried the carcass away into the jungle and cut it up.

For the evening meal, the meat was boiled in a score of pots, and rice mixed with sesamum oil, urad pulse and some green vegetables was cooked for each clan separately by the clan-priests in their respective temples.

As evening fell, the chelik and motiari, gorgeous in their festival attire, came from Bargaon and Taragaon, Atargaon and Esalnar, Kajen and Kongera, from Chalka, Temrugaon and Chimri. Each party made a little camp under the trees, lit a fire and cooked some food. About ten o'clock they began to dance, pargana by pargana, in huge circles lit by the light of torches. The gods were brought and placed in the middle of the dancing-field. All night the boys and girls danced and at dawn the gods awoke and danced and postured. About seven o'clock the visitors went away and the gods were taken home. Chelik Sal, who after all is a chelik, danced with the motiari;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

796 he could not keep away from motiari; he chased them round and round the field. A Siraha-medium collected a brass ring from every woman present to offer to the gods; this may have been a token of compensation for the presence of women at the festival, for in strict Muria tradition no woman should have been there.

XIII. Conclusion

771 182 This chapter has dealt with the theological and ceremonial aspects of Muria religion. This is far from being the whole story, for religion is for the Muria a very wide thing, consecrating every aspect of life, inspiring a comprehensive ethical system and linking gods and men, living and dead into a single family that even the intrusion of death cannot destroy.

Muria religion is not unlike that of other tribes—Bison-horn Maria, Raja Muria, Halba, Bhattra—in Bastar (though it has an advantage of the others in possessing a noble hero-god whose example is an inspiration), but it is very different from that of its neighbours. Its elaborate, rich and picturesque character is in striking contrast to the drab and languid faith of the Central Provinces Gond. The tribes of western Orissa near the Bastar border—Kond, Bondo, Gadaba—fully endowed as to personal culture, have a less developed and satisfying religion. The rites of the Maria of the Abujhmar and Chanda are stark and austere beside those of the Muria.

Muria religion, like Muria institutions, has probably reached the peak of its development. In its action on the Muria mind, Hinduism has had a fertilizing and energizing effect, far different from the Puritan destructiveness of its influence to the north. So long as the tribe and its institutions hold together, so long as they remain free from external interference, there is hope that this religion may continue to satisfy Muria needs and interpret Muria aspirations. Otherwise, I fear, now that the peak is reached, change will only bring decline.

Muria religion today is not without dignity and power. It has its distortions and abuses—many have been noted in the present chapter—but we must not confound the corruptions of a religion with religion itself. Even its superstitions may have their value. George Tyrrell once suggested that the superstitions of Catholicism provided 'harmless and healthy outlets for humours otherwise dangerous and morbid'.

Religion must fulfil and answer human needs. There is hardly a greater need among aboriginals than freedom from fear, and Muria ceremonial by aiming at the placation of god and ghost (the ultimate source of all fears) brings the great gift of solace. The desire for continuity is met by the elaborate funerary rites which bring the Departed home. The marriage ceremonial consecrates the Muria's passionate interest in the family. The fundamental longing for tribal unity and solidarity is expressed and strengthened by the great festivals when many villages dance together, share a common meal and unite in the worship of the gods. The gods intermarry and are related just as men are.

To the Muria, is God the rewarder of them that seek him? There is little that can be called love in the Muria's attitude to any of his gods. But there is gratitude often and sometimes a belief that a god takes a special interest in a man, furthers his cause and goes about with him. There is pride too; a powerful and important clan-god is a source of credit to a village, a fine litter of Danteshwari awakes feelings of patriotic delight. But generally the gods are feared; like the Departed they are dangerous and must be kept in their place. There is many a god who is never noticed except when he makes a nuisance of himself.

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MURIA RELIGION

Morals are not usually closely linked with aboriginal theology and ritual. Muria ethics, as we see elsewhere, are fully developed and reach a lofty standard. Part of the system undoubtedly derives from Lingo who during his earthly sojourn is believed to have taught many lessons of domestic fidelity and daily conduct, and whose own life and character is not ignoble. The other gods are less highly moralized, yet their worship probably has a moral influence. For example, when they return home after dancing all night at a festival, are the chelik and motiari better boys and girls? Probably. Their social instincts have been strengthened. Their whole life—gay, colourful, united, peaceful—has appeared more than ever attractive and desirable, and they know that it can only be enjoyed by the practice of certain virtues. They have learnt, in the common dance and common meal, the futility of jealousy, greed and pride. 171 182

This fulfilment of the need for moral growth is not, of course, a conscious one; nor is the satisfaction of the sense of beauty in the dancing, music and drum rhythm at festival, marriage and funeral. But it is there and it is most important. The phallic element is not obtruded, but that too is there and its presence reassures the people that this necessary and beautiful aspect of human life is not alien to the divine interest.

A few other points may be noted. I have already stressed the absence of fixed forms and even of a defined pantheon. There is no sacred book, no canon, no deposit of faith committed to a central authorized guardian, no regular liturgy. Religion is always on the move. Even the legends change from village to village. The living voice of the prophet is more important than the convention of the priest. The dream of today is more urgent than the tradition of yesterday. The position and reputation of the gods is constantly changing. As the Muria become more State-conscious, more patriotic and nationalist, as the opening of communications brings them more in touch with the Palace and the Dussera traditions, the worship of Danteshwari is likely to grow ever stronger. By contrast I think the cult of Bara Deo will wane more and more as it has done already in the Central Provinces. Indeed in the neighbouring Bindra Nawagarh Zamindari I have recorded a legend that the decline of Bara Deo was directly due to the British occupation; the old god was captured by the British who still hold him and derive their power from him. As more and more forests are reserved the ancient jungle gods tend to disappear; Kadrengal, lord of the hunt, is already a mere shadow of his former self. There is no need for missionary effort; the advance of civilization will automatically change the character of the gods. I anticipate a considerable increase in the cult of Mahapurub and Bhagavan who are above earthly changes. Modern civilization tends to push men's aspirations and their divinities up into the sky.

The Muria attitude to the gods is a curiously ambivalent blend of familiarity and terror, of humour, affection and abuse. Often they do not so much pray to the gods as talk things over with them, usually at the top of their voices. If they are not satisfied they abuse their gods with point and wit, or treat them very casually in an attempt to bring them to their senses. I was unable to obtain many *mantra*; I believe few exist; the expressions used for the harvest on page 25 and at the time of the hunt on page 42 are definitely intercessory rather than mandatory. The idea that the priest, by virtue of his position or his abstinence, can force the gods to his will, is alien to Muria thought. Yet along with the familiarity and homeliness, there is sometimes a very real sense of awe. In some of the hill temples, when a famous medium is possessed, when the Anga moves so mysteriously to show

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

its will, at the crises of the bull-sacrifice, at the dance of the dead, the urgent and catastrophic nature of the unseen is emphasized and the worshippers are hushed into dread and reverence.

Muria religion, then, which anticipates the vast developments of Hinduism, is not unworthy of the great religious system which has grown up on the same soil and out of the same traditions. Of that system it is of course a simple and childlike version, yet it does not lack dignity, power and beauty, and the modern Hindu—if he is wise—will treat it with the reverence that is always due to children's things.

Plate XLV

532

ABOVE: Uraon village elephant of Saparum

BELOW: Uraon dhumkuria at Borhambey

342

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLVI

796
787
782

Sirahu prophesying above the dedicated bull

[p. 224 (8)]

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AW32 Gond
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Plate XLVII

796
782

The sacrifice

Priests of other deities fill their hands with blood

[p. 224 (c)]

778

Plate XLVIII

The dhangar's 'mistress' at Borbambey

The punishment-puller at Agra

[p. 224(D)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

I. The Shrine of Lingo Pen

IN the wild wooded country at the top of the hills, as you go up from Antagarh towards Amabera, is the little village of Semurgaon, and in the forest that surrounds the village, on a cliff overlooking a tiny stream, is the shrine of Lingo Pen who was once honoured by the Gond and Pardhan all over the Central Provinces. Today, as a living force, his cult is probably confined to the north of Bastar, and to the Muria, to whom he has given many deities and the most cherished of their institutions.

In Semurgaon, Lingo's shrine, a substantial thatched hut, is maintained by the Muria, but his priest is a Pardhan—Deo Singh of the Koreti Nang sept—who sings and plays before him on the dhusir-fiddle which is also Lingo's dwelling-place. The shrine is not unworthy of this venerable deity, the lord of all the aboriginal gods of Bastar. Under a spacious roof lies the Anga of Lingo suspended on a swing and sheltered by a great screen of peacock's feathers. At the four corners of the swing are bunches of the same feathers, and at the Anga's side is Lingo's *jiwa* or soul, a piece of iron like a ploughshare wrapped in grass. Round Lingo's neck is a bell, his son Nettungundi. To the right is his throne, a large cup-shaped stone. Above hangs an iron drum and a hunting-horn. From the roof are suspended pots containing Palo, the sacred cloth, and Lingo's two horses, crooked sticks adorned with feathers on which the mediums ride in ecstasy before him.

Every three years there is a great festival at Semurgaon, when Lingo is brought out of his shrine and is worshipped with pigs, goats and bulls. From all over the Jhorian, Amabera and Antagarh Parganas and from Kanker State come the pilgrims bringing their gods with them, 'for Lingo is Raja and Bastar is his kingdom'. At Alor also, in a clearing in the heart of the jungle, is a four-foot pillar of mahua wood in honour of Lingo, and every three years there is a festival. Indeed throughout northern Bastar you may find Lingo's relatives and hear his legend, a token of the strength and distribution of his cult.[1]

II. The Lingo Legend in the Central Provinces

Later in this chapter I present several versions of the Lingo legend as it is current among the Muria of Bastar, where its outstanding feature is its account of the founding of the ghotul. But first let us consider some other versions of the story which have been recorded in the Central Provinces.

The first of these versions was taken down by the Rev Stephen Hislop from a 'Pardhan priest of the Gond at Nagpur' in the Gondi tongue, and was later edited, translated and published by Sir Richard Temple, in 1866.[2] Unfortunately we have no indication of the distribution of the legend, nor indeed whether—in the form recorded by Hislop—it was known to any other

[1] There is a shrine to Lingal Pen at Cherpal in the Dantewara Tahsil, but I do not know whether the Maria here identify him with the Lingo of the north.

[2] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*. Edited by R. Temple, 1866. Large extracts from Temple's translation were reproduced by Bishop Eyre Chatterton in his *The Story of Gondwana* (London, 1916) and many of Temple's notes used without acknowledgement. A brief summary is given by Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 47ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

113 than the narrator himself. Temple says that the poem was 'for many generations sung by the Pardhan priests to circles of listening Gond'; Russell, more cautiously, simply says that 'Mr Hislop took down from a Pardhan priest a Gond myth'. In some form or other, however, the Lingo story seems to have been widely distributed, for we meet it in Betul, Nagpur and in the south, though probably not in the Eastern States and districts.

There is little literary evidence of the distribution of the legend. P. N. Bose, in an article on 'Chhattisgar: notes on its tribes, sects and castes', says that 'Lingo is held in great veneration in some parts; but elsewhere the very name is unknown'.[1] Dalton says that of the personages mentioned in the Hislop legend 'the Gonds whom I have met with know nothing. I have frequently questioned them on the subject, but they never apparently had heard of Lingo and his feats. Some Murpachi, or four-God Gonds, in Bamra told me they had heard of Lingo, but he belonged to the Western Gonds'.[2] Crooke records that the Patari of Mirzapur who attended the Manjhi and Kharwa as priests and bards, worshipped a god Ningo—who is, of course, the same as Lingo.[3]

From the Dondi-Lohara Zamindari of the Drug District I have recorded a legend that gives to Lingo the same sort of position enjoyed by many other Gond deities. The substitution of crab for human sacrifice is interesting.

> In Dwarka village a Gond prepared a tank. In this tank there grew many lotus flowers. From one of the lotus stalks was born Lingo Pen. He came in a dream to the Gond and said, 'Sacrifice to me your son and I will double the wealth you have'. The Gond agreed and his wealth increased greatly. But when the time came for the sacrifice the Gond broke his promise, and Lingo Pen was so angry that all that Gond's wealth and cattle and his wife and children were destroyed. He himself died and his clan came to an end.
>
> After a time the villagers also left using the tank and gradually it levelled out and appeared as a field. Many people wanted to use the field, but always Lingo Pen would appear before them and drive them away. 'If you will give me a man in sacrifice', he said, 'you may plough my field. Otherwise you must go away.'
>
> Then one day a Gond named Rahpal came from another village and took his plough to the field and began to plough it. As he was doing so, Lingo Pen appeared and said, 'Who are you? Why are you driving a plough into my head?' The Gond fell at his feet and said, 'I am a poor man; spare me'. Lingo Pen said, 'You must give me two-feet worship'. The Gond said, 'You have asked for two feet in worship; I will worship you with ten feet. I will offer it to you on the day the bullocks finish thrashing the grain that grows in this field'. Then said Lingo Pen, 'Very well, when you reap the rice, make twenty small piles of the sheaves and as many piles of sheaves there are so many will be the cartloads of grain that you will get'.
>
> So when the Gond reaped his crop he made twenty piles of sheaves and prepared a thrashing-floor. He invited his caste-fellows and made ready the sacrifice to Lingo Pen. He caught a crab in the stream and brought it to the thrashing-floor and called on Lingo Pen with fire and incense. The god came and said, 'What is this?' 'You asked for two feet in sacrifice and I promised you ten. Here is the ten-feet

[1] *JASB*, Vol. LIX (1890), Pt. I (No. 3), p. 281.
[2] Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 282. [3] *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1891), p. 66

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

creature.' When Lingo Pen saw the crab he was pleased and no longer asked for men. Now we always give Lingo Pen a crab whatever else we may also be offering him. 113

In the Oundhi tract of the same district, so Miss D. Bhagwat informs me, Hulki songs are addressed to Lingo and he is described as the patron of dance and music, as in Bastar.

Johar johar O Lingo!
The *minda*-lyre gives out its tune;
Kadur hum it says.
On his waist Lingo wears brass bells;
There are anklets on his feet;
At his lips there is a flute;
From his ears too there burst
Notes of music:
They come from every side.[1]

In the Bindra-Nawagarh Zamindari, however, the Gond seem to identify Lingo with Bhimsen or Bhimul. Here he is a Rain God. The Gond make a shrine of four pillars round a stone, and when the rain fails they take it as a sign that Lingo is displeased and go to the place dancing and singing.

I am informed by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf that among the Gond of Adilabad District (Hyderabad) the hero Pahindi Kupar Lingal[2] figures mainly as the liberator of the Gond gods. He divides the Gond into clans and establishes their great god, the Persa Pen. But the tale of his 'temptation' does not seem to be known. He is, however, a patron of music as elsewhere. He used to play eighteen tunes on his guitar: it is the beauty of his playing that awakes the imprisoned Gond gods and revives them with new life and hope. Later he saves his own life by his art, and introduces music and dancing to the world.[3]

In Rewa State, about twelve miles from Amarkantak, on the banks of the Narbada, is a beautiful mountain named Lingo, from whose forest-covered slopes comes at times the sound of ghostly music. The story current among the Pardhan and Gond of this region is that the mountain is named after Rai Linga, son of the Raja of Deogarh, founder of the Dhurwa clan.

Once Bhimsen went to Amarkantak, carrying a load of roots, which hung from his pole in two fish-baskets. One was a *mohra* and the other a *dhuti*-basket. On the way, the pole broke and the two baskets of roots fell down and turned into hills, which were then called Mohra Dongar and Dhuti Dongar.

About this time, Rai Linga, who had quarrelled with his brothers in Deogarh, camped at Mohra Dongar with his soldiers. He liked the place so much that he decided to build his palace there, and from that time the hill was known as Rai Linga Dongar. A short while afterwards Bara Deo also came to live with Rai Linga.

One day the Pujari of the Khajarwariha Dhurwa clan set out with the other villagers to Rai Linga Dongar to mingle their dead with Bara Deo. They made offerings of rice, chickens and goats, and danced to

[1] Private communication from Miss D. Bhagwat.
[2] *Pahindi* is the name of a shrub with a red flower: *kupar* is 'the hair-knot worn on one side of the head': the name may mean 'the flower-born Lingal with his hair-knot to the side'.
[3] Private communication from C. von Fürer-Haimendorf.

113

the beating of the drums. As they were returning home, the Pujari suddenly remembered that he had left behind his sacrificial knife. He turned back and as he entered the shrine saw all the gods partaking of the offerings they had made. The gods were angry that a human being had seen them feasting and decided that the Pujari should not return to his village lest he should tell others what he had seen. Hardly had the Pujari gone inside the shrine than the door shut behind him and he was unable to get out. At the same moment, the villagers who were still on their way home turned into stone with their horses and possessions and these can be seen to this day. The shrine in which the Pujari was shut also turned into stone with the passing of years. After this disaster, the villagers no longer made sacrifices on the top of the hill.

Half-way up the hill can be seen two spears and a few cow-bells. These belong to Rai Linga and the villagers make offerings to them in time of sickness. To this day, the approach of disease or danger is heralded by gunfire from the top of the hill, which can be distinctly heard.

In Huddatola there is a sacred bathing-place known as Deodhar. In former days the Pujari bathed here and dived underground to find a siari plant growing there. He used to pluck some leaves and offer them to Bara Deo. The Pujari was able to do this then because the god possessed him, but today although people bathe on the very spot, they cannot reach the siari plant, for they are not helped by the god.

Once a man was relieving himself close to the Deodhar. Annoyed at this, Rai Linga threw a spear at him but it missed and struck a flat stone. Some people from Ramnagar took this spear to their village, but on the way they died. The mark on the rock made by Rai Linga's spear can be seen to this day.

Another Mandla story connects Lingo with Lanjhi, a traditional home of the Muria.

Lingo Deo was born in Lanjhi Garh. There was a Dhurwa Raja. He was very poor. One day Lingo Deo gave him a dream, 'I am going to take birth in a bamboo clump. You worship me and I will make you wealthy'. The Raja woke up and went to find the bamboo clump. There he found Lingo with his head protruding out of the bamboo and he offered him food-sacrifice. The Raja took Lingo Deo home with him and the god stayed with him. After this the Raja grew wealthier every day.

Then one day said Lingo Deo, 'Come with me and I will take you on tour and then bring you home again'. As they went they came to Lingo Hill in Rewa State and there they made a palace for the god. Lingo had a son who had married someone in Surguja. Lingo had invited all the gods except Kukra Pat. The marriage party went on its way. Lingo Deo made ten days and nights as if they were a single night. 'In one night it must all be done and no one should know of it.'

As the marriage party was returning home, Kukra Pat heard of it and felt annoyed that all the gods had been invited and only he had been left out. When the marriage party reached Lingo Hill, Kukra Pat called 'Kukra-koo, kukra-koo'. When they heard that noise, some of the gods turned into stone, some into wood, some into earth; their drums and horses also turned into stone and wood and earth. Some

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of the gods had gone into the palace, and had taken the Raja's battle-axe with them. Dhurwa Raja went in to get his axe and the doors shut upon him, and he never got out again. 773

The Khuttia Kond (I am henceforth going to spell Kond instead of Khond, Khand, Kandh or Kondh) of Orissa, who are not after all very distant geographically from the Muria, have a deity Linga Pinnu, who founded their tribe and gave them their chief institutions including the village dormitory. At Sunabata, I recorded a song, much of which might have been chanted in Bastar.

We will sing a song of Linga Pinnu.
Linga Pinnu made the world,
Linga Pinnu made the people,
Linga Pinnu made the Kui,
Linga Pinnu made the Pano,
Linga Pinnu made the sahibs,
Linga Pinnu made the sambhar,
Linga Pinnu made the barking-deer,
Linga Pinnu made the cows,
Linga Pinnu made the roots,
Linga Pinnu taught us how to sing.
Linga Pinnu showed us how to beat the *tapha* [small drum],
Linga Pinnu showed us how to beat the *lisna* [big drum],
Linga Pinnu showed us how to blow the *mohori*,
Linga Pinnu taught us to cut *guriya* on the hillside,
Linga Pinnu taught us how to plant roots and pulses.
Linga Pinnu taught the unmarried boys to sleep in the *dhangra-ilu*,
Linga Pinnu taught them how to dance and sing.
Linga Pinnu showed us how to do the Meriah sacrifice.
Linga Pinnu was born from the ground
From the ground between Gumma and Karanja;
He lived till he was old.
He taught us everything and died.
When he married he had children:
We are all his offspring.
Linga Pinnu divided us by castes and clans.
Then we Kui said to one another,
'How shall we eat? How shall we live?'
Linga Pinnu took us to the jungle;
He taught us how to cut and burn.
For our crops he gave us seed.

We must not, of course, be taken in by names. Since Lingo or Linga simply means the phallus and might thus be given as a name to any deity of the Shaivite type, its use does not necessarily imply a connexion with the Muria Lingo. But legends to the north, in the Central Provinces, are probably of the same family.

III. Hislop's Version of the Legend

Unfortunately Hislop's version was considerably bowdlerized by Sir Richard Temple, assisted by the Reverend Baba Pandurang of the Free Church of Scotland Mission, who was Mr Hislop's native assistant, and his companion in several tours, and who frequently was employed by Mr Hislop in obtaining

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

113 information'.[1] All such passages as were 'redundant, frivolous, improper or objectionable' were cut out and 'the original whole thus pared down to about one half'.[2] But Temple's translation is delightful and to read it is to obtain a fairly good picture of the Gond as seen through the superior eyes of a Hinduized Pardhan who was well acquainted with the advanced culture of the capital of the province. It would be truer to say that it was a Hindu myth about the Gond, or perhaps even a Hindu missionary tract aiming at spreading the Shaivite faith, rather than a genuine element of Gond mythology.

The Lingo of the legend, as Temple admits, is not a Gond, but 'appears throughout in the character of a devout Hindu'.[3] He wears a dhoti round the loins down to the heels (but the Gond has it tied above the knees), he keeps a knot of hair on his head, a diamond on the navel, and on his forehead a sacred mark. Although in front 'he looks foppish like a young man, from behind he looks like a devout Brahmin'.[4] He conquers the gods by fasting and penance. His practice of celibacy is typically Brahmin.

Hislop's legend contains many other Hindu features. Russell points out that the 'Hindu who clearly composed Mr Hislop's version wished to introduce the god Siva as a principal actor' and he therefore removed the site of the cave in which the Gond were imprisoned to the Himalayas. The scornful references to the bad smell and omnivorous habits of the Gond are typical of the Hindu attitude to the aboriginals even today. Many small points—the preference of sons to daughters (not characteristic of the Gond), the introduction of Hindu demons like Basmasur and a version of the bird Garuda, the worship of Hanuman at the end of a wedding—indicate the Hindu standpoint of the author.

At the same time, even Hislop's story contains many very primitive elements, and the main outline of the life of Lingo appears to be of genuinely Gond origin. Dalton goes too far in saying that the legend 'cannot be regarded as embodying any true Gondi traditional lore'.[5] After an account of the creation, the epic describes how from the womb of Parvati eighteen thrashing-floors of Brahmin gods and twelve thrashing-floors of Gond gods were born. The Gond were 'disorderly behaved' and a 'smell was spread over the jungle'. Mahadeo, in order to get rid of them, called them to a meeting. He made a squirrel and let it loose in their midst. They chased it, and the squirrel led them on into a large cave in which Mahadeo shut them up. Only four escaped; they fled to Kachikopa Lohogarh, or the Iron Cave in the Red Hill, and lived there. But Parvati desired the restoration of her Gond, and fasted for six months until Bhagavan promised that they should be given back, and caused Lingo to be born for that purpose.[6]

[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part III, p. 1. [2] Ibid., p. 8. [3] Ibid., p. 22.
[4] Ibid., p. 23. [5] Dalton, op. cit., p. 282.
[6] On the liberation of the Gond from the cave wherein they were imprisoned, there is a curious note in *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 106: 'According to the Gond legend, Lingo was the leader who liberated the first men of the nation from a cave in Kachi Kopa Lohagad or "The Iron Valley in the Red Hill". The exact position of the valley is not stated, but it would seem to have been somewhere in the Himalaya Mountains as Mount Devalagiri is mentioned. Mahadeva is said to have closed the mouth of the cave with a large stone 16 cubits high. Lingo removed the stone and "sixteen crores of Gonds" came out of the cave. No meaning seems to be attached to the name Lingo, but in Gondi *lowya* means "a wolf" and in Mahratti *lowa* (in which case the story may be totemistic). This is a similar legend to that of the Mughals whose ancestors were confined in the iron-bound valley of Irguene Kon, from whence they were delivered by Burtechino or the "Dun wolf". According to Abulghazi Khan, the ancestors of the Turks were liberated from the iron-bound valley of Irgana Kon by Bertesena. Every year the Khan of the Turks went to sacrifice in the cave of his ancestors at Mount Erkenech Kun. Speaking of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

713

There was a tree;
It was blossoming. Then said Bhagavan, One of its flowers shall conceive.
By God's doing, clouds and winds were loosed. A cloud like a fan arose: thunder roared and lightning flashed;
The flower burst, clouds opened and darkness fell; the day was hid...
In the morning, when clouds resounded with thunder, the flower opened
And burst, and Lingo was born, and he sprang and fell into a heap of turmeric.
Then the clouds cleared, and at the dawn Lingo began to cry...
It was noon, and wind blew, when Lingo began to grow.

He quickly grew up; 'he was a perfect man: water may be stained, but he had no stain whatever'. But he was lonely. He climbed a needle-like hill and from afar he saw the four Gond on the Red Hill. He met them and became their little brother. He asked them to get him an animal without a liver. They went for a long hunt, but could not find what they wanted. Lingo then taught his brothers to cut down trees and make a field. Their hands quickly blistered and they threw down their hatchets. But in an hour Lingo made a large clearing. The black soil appeared and he sowed rice and fenced it.

There follows a beautiful account of the rains, the growing of the rice and the coming of a herd of nilgai deer to eat it. Lingo and his brothers hunt the deer and kill all save one old bull and a little doe. When they want to cook the meat, the brothers try to make fire with their flints, but fail; Lingo then has an encounter with the giant named Rikad Gawadi, in whose field fire is found. Lingo makes a guitar to charm the giant:

He saw in front three gourds.
Then he saw a bamboo stick, which he took up.
When the river was flooded,
It washed away a gourd tree, and its seed fell, and each stem produced bottle gourds.
He inserted a bamboo stick in the hollow of the gourd and made a guitar.
He plucked two hairs from his head, and strung it.
He held a bow, and fixed eleven keys to that one stick and played on it.

It is interesting to find that in Nagpur, as in Bastar today, Lingo was regarded as a great musician. He played so beautifully that the giant and his wife began to dance.

Lingo took the guitar in his hand,
And held it; he gave a stroke, and it sounded well; from it he drew one hundred tunes.
It sounded well, as if he was singing with his voice.
Trees and hills were silent at its sound.

The old giant hears the music and says, 'Whence has a creature come here today to sing like the maina bird?' And he begins to dance.

the ancient Getae, Strabo remarks that Zamolxis whom they revered as a god, "retired into a district of caverns". The mountain is held sacred and is thus distinguished, being named Kogaionon.—*Archaeological Reports*, Vol. IX, p. 158, quoting De Herbiot: *Bibliotheque Orientale*, Vol. VI, p. 152; Gibbon, chapter 42; Prichard, *Physical History of Mankind*, Vol. IV, p. 337.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

113 Sometimes sitting and sometimes standing, jumping and rolling he began to dance.
The music sounded as the day dawned. His old woman came out in the morning, and began to look out.
The old woman called her husband to her.
With stretched hands and lifted feet, and with his neck bent down, he danced.
Thus he danced. The old woman looked towards her husband, and said, My old man, my husband,
Surely that music is very melodious. I will dance, said the old woman.
Having made the fold of her dress loose, she quickly began to dance near the hedge.
Lingo said in his mind, I am a devout Lingo; God's servant am I...
Water may possess a stain, but I have none. I am Lingo. I will make the old man and woman
To dance the Gond dance.

He calls on a number of Gond gods, and makes friends with the giant. He invites him to a great feast of venison. The giant offers his seven daughters to Lingo in marriage. Lingo declares that he himself will not marry, and gives the girls to his brothers, two apiece to the three elder and one to the fourth. At first they are suspicious, knowing that Lingo, as the youngest brother, will have access to all the girls. But Lingo says—in a passage which, as I will show later, is of the greatest importance to an understanding of the poem—

If you marry them they will serve me.
They will be my sisters-in-law. You are older, and I am younger.
They can give me water and bread, and spread a bed for me;
I will sleep on it. They can give me a bath; my clothes they will wash.
They will be my sisters-in-law, and like my mothers they shall be.
So said Lingo. When Lingo said they will be my mothers, the suspicion of the four vanished.

The marriage is celebrated in the house of the bridegrooms—a characteristic Gond touch. After the marriage, the elder brothers go out to get meat and fruit, saying that Lingo should sit in a swing and be entertained by the seven wives. 'He thought of our good, not of his own, so we will reckon him as our father.' But after the brothers have gone to the forest,

The seven sisters said within themselves, Hear O sisters. This Lingo
Is our husband's younger brother, and we are his sisters-in-law; we are at liberty to laugh with him;
We can pull him by the hand, and we can make him to speak with us.
Lingo does not laugh with us; he neither speaks nor looks towards us; he has closed his eyes;
But he shall laugh, and we will play with him. So saying,
Some held his hand, and some his feet and pulled him, but Lingo moved not his eyes;
He did not speak or laugh with them.
Then Lingo said to them, Hear, O sisters. You have held my hands
And feet, and pulled them; but remember you are my sisters.
You are my mothers; why do you deal so with me? I am God's servant.
I don't care though my life be sacrificed, but I will not speak with you, nor look at you, nor laugh with you. So said Lingo.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

In spite of these protests, however, the sisters persist in their attempts at seduction, until Lingo beats them soundly with a rice-pestle. They flee before him, 'like bellowing cows'. Lingo goes back to sleep. The women lie down in their houses. When the brothers return, the women accuse Lingo of having shamed them. The brothers are very angry and say,

> We told Lingo at the first
> That there were seven sisters, and that he might choose one from amongst them,
> And that we would marry the rest. But he said,
> They are my sisters, they are my mothers.
> Thus said that sinner, wicked and ill-conducted, that Lingo.

The brothers then decide to kill Lingo. They entice him into the forest with the story of a great animal which had put them to flight and which only he could slay, and there they kill him. They pluck out his eyes.

> One said, Let us play at marbles.
> They took out both the eyes, and said, O seven sisters! You also join in play.
> They brought the eyes, and placed one on the east side, and the other on the west;
> And the brethren, sitting close, held the marbles between the joints of their fingers.
> They began to play at marbles with the two eyes; and their game lasted an hour.

But this is not the end. Bhagavan sends the bird Kagesur to find Lingo's body and Kurtao Sabal sprinkles nectar upon it and restores him to life. Lingo then sets out to find the imprisoned Gond; he endures penance for twelve months till the golden seat of Mahadeo begins to shake. Mahadeo agrees to release the Gond, but Narayan interposes with a typical folk-tale test: Lingo must bring him the young of the black Bindo bird. Lingo performs this task successfully and on his return releases the Gond, divides them into clans and teaches them the ritual of marriage.

Such is, in brief outline, the earliest recorded version of this great legend. A little after the publication of the Hislop papers, the otherwise entirely admirable Captain Forsyth was mistaken enough to turn it into the metre of *Hiawatha*.[1] From this version we must be content to glean a few rich ears of poetry:

> And our Lingo redivivus
> Wandered on until the night fell.
> Screamed the panther in the forest,
> Growled the bear upon the mountain,
> And our Lingo then bethought him
> Of their cannibal propensities. . . .
>
> His bulldog fierce Basmasur. . . .

[1] J. Forsyth, *The Highlands of Central India* (London, 1871), pp. 182ff. Forsyth finds that 'the programme' of the 'Hindu saint Lingo' bears a 'singular resemblance in many respects to the legend of Hiawatha, the prophet of the Red Indians'. But, he adds, 'the noble savage of North America is a very different character from the poor squalid Gond of Central India; and not even the genius of a Longfellow or a Fenimore Cooper could throw a halo of sentiment over the latter and his surroundings'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Mahadeo
Came and saw that bed of prickles
Where our Lingo lay unmoving,
Asked him what the little game was.

Russell, who quotes from both Hislop and Forsyth, says that 'certain variations from another form of the legend obtained in Bastar are included'[1] in his pages. But there is no indication of this, and indeed the only part of Russell's account which is not obviously derived from Hislop or Forsyth is a short passage on page 61 of his third volume 'taken from a slightly different local version'[2] which describes the universally-known story of the crossing of a river, whereby tortoise and crocodile totems are derived, and a brief reference to Lingo dividing the Gond into clans and teaching them about marriage.

IV. The Betul Version

We must now turn to a comparatively modern version of the Lingo story, recorded by C. G. C. Trench in Betul.[3] There is, again, no indication where the story was recorded or from whom, though special reference is made to Tahaldas, petition-writer of Betul, and Parsial Kotwar of Lapajhiri, the writer's two munshis. Petition-writers are, of course, famous throughout India as authors of fiction. Trench's version is undoubtedly a more authentic Gond product than Hislop's and is nearer to the Bastar legend, though it too has many Hindu elements. The picture of Rai Linga in heaven and his incarnation is typically Hindu. A Raja goes to the Ganges to bathe. Rai Linga's brothers go to hunt in the forest of Bindraban, and catch fish in the Ganges and Jamna. The death ceremony is Hindu, so is the custom of building an elaborate tomb. At the end of the story Rai Linga ascends to heaven like Tukaram or any other Hindu saint. Moreover, as I shall show later, the character of Rai Linga is as typically Brahmanical as Hislop's Lingo.

Trench's story opens in heaven. Rai Linga descends and enters into Talko the queen. In due time he bursts out from the crown of her head. Unfortunately, the king who had gone to the Ganges 'with his pots and pans to bale out pools of fish' is drowned that very day and the queen, regarding Rai Linga as a curse, sends two maidens to bury him in the forest. But they take pity on him, and leave him under a banyan tree. Thence he is carried off by Rani Gidal, queen of the vultures, who drops him into the lap of Queen Barren, consort of King Sterile. The boy soon grows up and, like the hero of many other Gond folk-tales, takes a bow and arrow and wanders away to the palace of his real mother. Queen Talko accepts the boy as her own and makes him her 'throne-seated king' above the heads of her six elder sons.

The elder brothers are naturally annoyed at this and they take the young king out to catch fish in the Ganges and Jamna, where they try to kill him. But Rai Linga escapes and follows his brothers home. Then the brothers go out on a six months' trading venture taking five or fifty bullocks loaded with pearls and jewels. They say to the boy, 'You look after your six sisters-in-law well. Let them not joke or talk with anyone. We are going to trade'. Rai Linga was a lad of twelve years. 'He spoke not a word to his sisters-in-law, nor did he joke with them. He would play and talk with the village

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 49.
[2] Ibid., p. 61.
[3] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 108.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

maidens.' The six wives used to look out from their fort and say, 'See, girls, how he jests and talks with the village maidens, but not a word to us!' When the boy came home, they used to feed him and spread his bed. But he took no notice of them and at dawn he would return to play with the village maidens. At last the six sisters decided that each of them should spend one night with the boy. 'The first night, the eldest forced him to lie down with her, but Rai Linga went to sleep and slept all night through. He never moved, or touched, or laid a finger on her. . . . He never spoke a single wicked word with the village maidens also.' Each sister tried in turn to seduce the boy, but to no avail; then they took him to kill green parrots in the forest, and there stripped him naked, but he did nothing. 'Rai Linga put on his dhoti and went to the village and began to play with the village maidens.'

773

At last, in despair, the six sisters shut themselves up with a tame cat and the cat in a rage scratched and bit them. When the brothers returned home they found their wives down with fever and accusing Rai Linga of having dishonoured them. 'Rai Linga was playing with the village girls, but they seized him and brought him from there, and put him into an iron grain-bin, and outside the village prepared a great furnace of wood, and brought the iron grain-bin to the furnace, and put it inside it, and set fire to the furnace. Rai Linga was burnt to death.'

Three days later, the elder brothers decide to take 'this stud-bull' from the fire and perform his funeral rites. But when they go to remove him, Rai Linga is alive. He says, 'If I had committed a sin, I should have been burnt. I committed no sin'. Hearing this, the brothers repent and say, 'Rai Linga is innocent. The guilty ones are the women'. They bring Rai Linga with great honour, but they tie bars to the women's legs, yoke bullocks to them, and drive them round the village till they die. For this Rai Linga reproves them, and for a time they all live without wives.

We then get an echo of Hislop's story: Rai Linga goes to the forest and kills many stags, but there is no fire to cook the feast. He sets out to find fire, and obtains it from an old woman who has seven daughters. The girls go with him to the place where the stags had fallen, and they cook and eat their fill. Rai Linga tells the girls to take away the meat that is left, but they protest that they are unable to carry it. So he sends a brother with each girl to help her. By a trick he brings the girls to his own house and there he marries them to his brothers. One girl is left and the brothers say, 'Won't you marry her?' But Rai Linga says, 'Let her go where her vocation calls her (*bega tana sanaar*[1] *lagai agga dal*). I am a holy saint. I may not stay'. So he embraced them all, and vanished, and departed to his own Agnadip, and his six brothers reigned as kings in Singardip.

In both the Nagpur and Betul versions there are many parallels to the Bastar story which also has various (but fewer) Hindu elements. Everywhere the climax of the story is the conflict between the elder brothers and the younger. Everywhere Lingo is represented as the founder of the Gond tribe and giving it characteristic institutions. The other legends make no mention of the ghotul which is so prominent in the Bastar version, but it is noticeable that in the Nagpur story Lingo is a great musician, and in the Betul story Rai Linga is always playing with the village maidens; since he is only a lad of twelve years he sounds very like a chelik playing with the motiari. They are not, however, described as motiari, but as *saima raiyang*.

[1] *Sanaar*, a Hindu expression.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

V. Interpretations

113 Unfortunately both versions of the legend have been romanticized in a manner hardly true to the facts. Bishop Eyre Chatterton says that 'there is a deeper side to the story of Lingo, which no one interested in "things of the soul" can fail to appreciate. The story invites the Gonds to think that they owed their simple civilization to a being of a higher order than themselves. . . . The story, too, claims for the "emancipator" a wonderfully noble character. "Lingo was a perfect man, water may be stained, but no stain had Lingo."[1] His rejection of temptation, his freedom from malice and guile, his readiness to forgive his murderers, to forget their ingratitude and injuries, and to complete his mission of the rescue of the Gond race, remind one strangely of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.'[2] Forsyth, more properly, compares Lingo to Hiawatha, though he too suggests that 'to some an even more startling parallelism may suggest itself'.[3] Trench claims that 'the Rai Linga legend presents astonishing parallels to the Gospel narrative. Rai Linga may not inappropriately be styled the Gond Redeemer. The legend records his incarnation, his purity of heart, his temptation, his death at the hand of unjust accusers, his resurrection after three days, his discovery of fire, and his final ascension into heaven. In Dr Hislop's version there is also a close parallel to the descent into Hades, for Rai Linga is represented as releasing the Gonds from an underground cavern, where they had been confined by Mahadeo for their misdeeds on earth'.[4]

This is sheer nonsense. It is false, not only in sentiment but in fact. It is a vivid example of the danger of relying on apparent parallels between wholly different cultures, without reference to their social background. The incarnation of Lingo is a Hindu conception as is the manner of his miraculous birth in Hislop's story. Far nearer to Gond ideas is the Bastar story of the birth of the honest peasant Lingo in a poor cottage, or even that other version which says that he was born from a stone.

The death of Lingo presents no parallel to the Crucifixion. His incarceration in the iron grain-bin was, as the Bastar story clearly shows, an ordeal of the type familiar to all students of folk-tales, in which the hero must pass a chastity test by holding red-hot metal or plunging himself into boiling oil.[5]

[1] The expression 'Lingo was a perfect man' with its Dominical reference is not in the original. The Gondi is *Her Lingal yetun dag malka lingundag halla*, 'Lingo (was such) that to water there might be a stain, but to Lingo there was no stain'. He is, however, called *satodhar* (saint), *pongariyar* (god's servant), *bhân* (devotee).

[2] Eyre Chatterton, op. cit., p. 223.

[3] Forsyth, op. cit., p. 180.

[4] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 111.

[5] The practice of ordeal in the classical Hindu law-books has been summarized by A. B. Keith in his article 'Ordeal (Hindu)' in Hastings' *Ency. Rel. Eth.*, Vol. IX, p. 324. The *Yajnavalkya-smriti* gives five ordeals: (1) sacred libation; (2) the balance where the defendant is weighed twice, and must be of lighter weight the second time; (3) fire, where he must walk across seven circles carrying a piece of red-hot iron in his hand; (4) water, in which he must keep immersed while a runner fetches an arrow shot from a bow, and returns; (5) poison, usually made from aconite, which is drunk, and must show no ill effects during the day. Brihaspati and Pitamaha add other ordeals which include that of removing a hot piece of gold or a ring from a pot of boiling ghee, and licking a red-hot ploughshare. The subject had been fully treated long before in *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. I (1792), and later by G. Buhler, 'A translation of the Chapter on Ordeals from the Vyavahara Mayukha', *JASB*, Vol. XXXV (1866), pp. 14–49.

The literature of the ordeal in modern times is extensive. Thurston gives a dramatic account of tests by snake-bite, crocodiles and other means.—*Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, pp. 421ff. Crooke has given a number of witch-ordeals and points out that the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

Lingo's resurrection after three days might be a striking fact did we not remember that it is the general Gond, and even Hindu, custom to perform funerary rites for the dead on the third day. I do not know where the discovery of fire occurs in the Gospel narrative, unless Mr Trench was thinking of the Day of Pentecost. Lingo's final ascension into heaven may be paralleled again and again in classical Hindu mythology and even in the lives of modern Hindu saints. But it is unknown in Gond or Muria thought. 113

Lingo's 'temptation' raises problems of the greatest interest. Bishop Eyre Chatterton, more cautious than the civilian, does not venture to compare Lingo's experience with that of Christ. He says that it reminds him of 'the same temptation which befell the patriarch Joseph in the house of Potiphar'. But there is no resemblance whatever between the relation of Lingo and the wives of his elder brothers and that of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. The latter was a temptation to the socially and religiously condemned crime of adultery; the former was not a temptation nor, if Lingo had yielded to the solicitations of the six wives, would it have been a sin. For the climax of the Lingo legend turns on the Indian form of the Levirate.[1] The wife of an elder brother is in 'a joking relation' to the younger brother. He will have the right to marry her when she is a widow, and he may have the tenderest—and even intimate—relations with her while she is a wife. This is true, not only of Gond and Muria, but even—to some degree—of Hindu society.

But although there is little social condemnation of a younger brother who enjoys the society and the bed of his elder brother's wife, there is no doubt that younger brothers who refrain from exercising their privileges are greatly admired. Lingo did not so much avoid a sin as attain a positive virtue by his conduct. But what is at the bottom of the story? Why, if Lingo was to be presented as pure at heart, was he not shown as resisting some temptation that would have involved a really shameful fall, an act of clan-incest, for example, or even ordinary adultery?

To answer this, we must remember that this incident in the Lingo story closely resembles a motif that is very common in Gond—and indeed in nearly all—folk-tales, the conflict between a youngest boy and the jealous elder brothers. This motif was studied by Macculloch in his *Childhood of*

practice of making a witch walk over burning coals or a heated ploughshare was once common in both India and Europe.—Crooke, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 271. See also Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. I, p. 260 (boiling cow-dung water used by the Bonthuk); Vol. IV, p. 67 (the Koyi); Vol. IV, p. 185 (the Kuruvikkaran); Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 494 (the Sansia who placed a hot iron plate on the suspect's head); S. C. Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 425 (for ordeals by white ants and boiling water); *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, pp. 23 and 113, and Vol. V, p. 115 (the Sikh Jat and the Khasia); K. J. Rowe, 'Chhatra' in *Journal of the University of Bombay*, Vol. IX, Pt. IV (1941), p. 190; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Pt. IIIB, p. 55 (the Bhil); *The Agaria*, p. 167. There is no space to give parallels from other countries.

Two tales resemble the story in the text. Temple, in his *Legends of the Punjab*, gives an account of a heroine who has to prove her chastity by bathing in boiling oil, an incident which affords an exact parallel to the Lingo legend.—R. C. Temple, *The Legends of the Punjab* (Bombay, 1884–1901), Vol. I, and *Wide-Awake Stories*, p. 429. Another story is of Prince Surab who, accused of immorality by his father's Minister, submitted to the ordeal of burning oil in order to prove his innocence. When the Prince entered the cauldron he was unhurt, whereupon the Minister protested that the oil was not hot enough. A bel fruit was thrown into it and burst with great violence, one of the pieces killing the wicked Minister on the spot, and vindicating the Prince.—A. Cunningham, *Archeological Survey of India*, Vol. XVII, p. 99.

[1] The difference between the modern Indian and Jewish version of the Levirate is that in the former there is no idea of providing a son for the dead man. Though this is provided by Manu and the Hindu law-books, it is a notion foreign both to the Indian aboriginals and to the Hindus.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

773 *Fiction*, where he collected tales with this formula from every part of the world and divided them into eleven distinct cycles. 'Certain of these cycles show only the superiority of the young hero or heroine; others appeal more directly to our sympathy by showing him as the victim of adverse circumstances; others do so still more by setting forth the callous wickedness of the elder sisters or brothers."[1]

The reasons for the popularity of this motif are many. There is the sentimental appeal of the young and weak. In polygamous society the child of the youngest wife is often the most cherished. There is the fact that according to the old custom of Borough-English or *Jungstenrecht*, the youngest son was once the most important member of the family and inherited the bulk of the property. Macculloch gives no Indian examples of this practice but, referring to Mongol, Tartar and Singhpo custom says,

> These survivals over definite European areas, as well as the existence of the custom elsewhere, prove that we are face to face with no mere eccentricity of inheritance; they suggest that this may once have been a universal law. Various reasons have been assigned for the existence of this law. Blackstone and Robertson cite several, and incline to the opinion that the elder sons, having become *pars reipublicae* and ceased to be *pars domus*, had received an allotment of public land, while the youngest remained with his father to carry on the household. Littleton explains it by saying that after the death of his parents the youngest son would be least likely to take care of himself, and hence his maintenance was made sure by casting the inheritance upon him. Gommé and others think it due to the fact that the elders (as in the case of the nomadic Tartars) had gone out to found new homesteads, the father's homestead being then reserved for the youngest son. Perhaps the story of Jacob and Esau—Esau the elder going off to found a new family and home, Jacob the younger staying at home and becoming heir—is a reminiscence of this, but coloured to suit a later age, in which primogeniture was the rule, and some explanation of Esau's disinheritance was needed. Elton derives the practice from the domestic religion centring in ancestral worship and consequent reverence for the hearth, with people who saw no natural pre-eminence in the eldest.
>
> This view is probably the best explanation. It suggests that on the youngest son devolved the rites of the worship of the departed father, and as such rites were invariably connected with the hearth as the rallying-place of the home, the hearth and homestead naturally became his by right. We have seen how the homestead is given to the youngest son, while in certain cases explicit reference is made to the hearth. Folk-tales show that the connexion of the youngest child with the hearth had by no means been forgotten; Cinderella, Cinder-jack, the Norse Boots, all have their natural place at the fireside. It has become a position of degradation; but once it was the place of honour. Nor is this quite forgotten, for from it the despised hero or heroine is taken directly to place and power. As for the funeral rights and the ritual of ancestral worship devolving on the youngest-born, the Cinderella tales, in which the gifts are directly supplied to the despised child from the parent's grave, may be a survival.[2]

[1] J. A. Macculloch, *The Childhood of Fiction* (London, 1905), pp. 350–80
[2] Ibid., pp. 374ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

But I doubt if the necessity of ancestral worship devolving on the youngest son accounts for the Lingo legend. In Bastar, it is a sister's son or a son-in-law who generally performs the funerary rites. Lingo was—in most versions of the tale—miraculously born and the parents play no part in the sequence of events. The Lingo legends fit into the common folk-tale formula: probably all the elements suggested by Macculloch had their part in its construction: but I believe it is the custom of the Levirate (to which Macculloch does not refer) that gives it its real point. 113

The legend, especially in its Bastar form, cannot be understood apart from the foundation of the ghotul and the horror of adultery so characteristic of Muria society. Here is a very practical reason for the village dormitory—it insulates the elder brothers' wives from the dangerous, legitimate, seductive younger brothers. The youth of the tribe, so distracting to business with its fun and music, is concentrated away from home. The figure of Lingo stands out as the ideal younger brother, who denies himself even his legitimate claims and is absorbed in the ghotul and the motiari. It is not impossible that the legend was composed by a jealous elder brother, once cuckolded and turned reformer, who desired to abolish the disruptive influence of the *ange-dewar* relationship.

There remains the character of Lingo which reminds Bishop Eyre Chatterton 'so strangely' of Jesus Christ. The impropriety of comparing the two figures becomes evident when we remember that Sir Richard Temple had to omit nearly half the poem describing Lingo because it was 'frivolous, improper and objectionable'. I greatly doubt whether either Hislop's or Trench's version represents the original legend as it was told normally to village people. The Pardhan priest in Nagpur was obviously a Hindu convert and would not be likely to repeat passages that would too greatly offend a missionary. I suspect too the hand of the Reverend Baba Pandurang. I doubt also whether Mr Trench's petition-writer would have been likely to have risked any improper elements in the story of Rai Linga. This may sound rather hypercritical, but I have never been able to understand how it was that a cult-hero with a phallic name—Lingo means the phallus—should have become the embodiment of purity. Nor could I understand why the supposed embodiment of the Gond virtues should have been a celibate. The Gond despise celibacy; they believe that a man who dies unmarried turns into an especially unpleasant ghost after his death; the sadhus and other celibates in their folk-tales are without exception presented as the greatest rascals. [589]

The Bastar version of the legend suggests a solution of this problem. Lingo is a phallic deity, as the origin of his name given in the legend on page 241 clearly shows. He does not ascend into heaven, but marries seven wives and has children who people the Bastar shrines with gods. He is the founder of the ghotul, where he has his motiari. This is the true Gond picture of the character of Lingo. Hislop's and Trench's versions are undoubtedly nobler to Western and Brahmin eyes, but they are unreal in a Gond setting.

VI. The Lingo Legend in Bastar

Not all the Muria know the legend of Lingo, though all worship him and regard him as the founder of the ghotul. His cult is more or less coterminous with the Pus Kolang, which is danced in his honour. Different versions of the legend have, however, been recorded in the Antagarh, Benur, Amabera, and Ghat Jhorian Parganas of the Narayanpur Tahsil, and at Alor and Kanhargaon in the Kondagaon Tahsil. In north and east Kondagaon, though 113 [883]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

713 the Lingo cult is strong, there is some confusion about the legends. In Masora he was given the notable privilege of discovering mahua-liquor in a tale almost identical to that in which the Baigs attribute the same achievement to Nanga Baiga. In other parts of Kondagaon, I have heard him confused with the Gond Bara Pen and he is sometimes supplanted by Bhimul.

Let us now examine these stories, which are of great interest as revealing what is probably an earlier version of the legend than that current in Betul and Nagpur, and are of the utmost importance to our understanding of the Muria's attachment to the ghotul. We will begin with a typical example of what we may call the general version of the legend; it was recorded in the important village of Alor.

An old man and woman [1] had seven sons. Of these they loved the youngest with special love. The six elder brothers were married, but the youngest remained without a wife. He used to go hunting every day and in the evening he came home and played; soon the six wives of his elder brothers fell in love with him, and used to swing him in a swing outside the house.

One day the six elder brothers said, 'Here we are every day working hard in the fields, and this fellow does nothing'. Hearing this, the youngest boy got up early and took the oxen to the fields before his brothers were awake. When they got up and saw the oxen were gone they hurried to the field and found two furrows were completed. They took their bullocks and each went to his own field.

Presently the six wives came to the field with the midday meal and they first fed the youngest boy. When he finished his meal it was his custom to play a little on his instruments. The six women sat listening to the music and only then took what remained to their own husbands. When they saw this, the elder brothers stopped the boy going to plough and told him to remain in the house. But in the house also the boy used to play his music, and the women sat listening to him, and thus delayed taking food to their husbands.

At last the eldest brother said, 'This is a rascal, let's drive him away'. They said to him, 'Be off with you, go away'. The boy went out into the jungle; there he saw a bird sitting in a banyan tree. He shot at the bird and drove a leaf into its body so that the bird and the leaf fell to the ground together. On that leaf was written, 'When a leaf and bird fall together, the hunter will become a Raja'. When he had read this, the boy took the leaf and bird home and showed them to his brothers. They said, 'You may be a Raja, but we don't want you in our house. Be off with you'.

The boy went again into the jungle. He went on and on and on, until at last on a hill he met a tiger which was ploughing with two elephants yoked to its plough. The boy said, 'You must be a very great person to have elephants in your plough'. The tiger said, 'No, there is one much greater than I; that is Lingo'. Then the boy said, 'But I am Lingo'. The tiger said, 'How can I know that? If Lingo beats me in a wrestling-match, then I shall know him to be Lingo'. So the two wrestled together, and the tiger was thrown, and became the boy's servant.

[1] In Bandopal, however, I was told that Lingo was born from the stone Tipagurh Meta. Thence he came to Kolchor and thence to Semurgaon.

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

Again they went on and on and on through the jungle till they found in the middle of the road a great Rakshasa lying with its mouth wide open; its chin rested on the ground, its head was in the sky. The tiger said to the boy, 'If you can pass this Rakshasa then you will truly be a Raja'. But Lingo said, 'How can I pass? I am only a boy'. The tiger said, 'Shoot an arrow into the air, and while it is in the sky transfix it with another, shoot another at that, and then shoot again and again till there is a ladder of arrows which you can climb and so pass by'. The boy took his bow and shot arrow after arrow as the tiger said. He tied a rope round his waist and the tiger clung to this. Then they both climbed up the ladder of arrows to Mahapurub. 113

The tiger said to Lingo, 'There is Mahapurub sitting there; go and see him'. So Lingo went and did Johar before Mahapurub, saying, 'It was written on the banyan leaf that I should be a Raja; but how is this to be?' Mahapurub said, 'First go and spend twelve years in penance. Live alone on a lonely hill and play your music in my honour. Then you will be a Raja and I will give you my daughter as wife. But first you must kill the Rakshasa'.

Lingo came down from the sky and shot a thousand arrows at the Rakshasa and it fell down. Then he went away and on a lonely hill built a house, where he played on eighteen instruments together. Hearing the sound, the boys and girls of the neighbouring villages were filled with desire and ran to him, and every night they came to sleep and play in their ghotul which Lingo had built.

Every day Lingo went to his parents' house for food. The parents told their daughters-in-law to provide him with the best food, and they gave him everything with great love. The brothers again grew jealous and told him to go and plough in their fields. So Lingo took two buffaloes and tied them to the harrow with his own loin-cloth. Then naked he climbed on the harrow and drove the buffaloes across the field to break the clods of earth.

As he was driving the buffaloes back he came face to face with his sisters-in-law who were bringing him his food. His *ling* stood up stout and strong before him, and when the girls saw it they said, 'Look how stout and strong is his *ling*; from today his name must be Lingo'. He got down from the harrow, and dressed himself, then sat and played for an hour, and the women were late again.

The six brothers said to one another, 'Surely this fellow is up to some mischief with our wives, or why should they be so late?' They said, 'Let us beat these women for being late again'. Now the women were afraid and they took thorns to scratch their bodies and tear their breasts and they threw dust on their heads, and lay down to sleep. When their husbands returned they found their house empty and no food ready, but only their wives lying on the ground. When they roused them and asked what was the matter, those women replied, 'Look how that scoundrel has treated us', for they were angry that Lingo had not made love to them.

When the brothers heard this, they were very angry and decided to kill Lingo. So the next day they said to him, 'Let us go hunting'. Lingo got ready and they went with their bows and arrows to the forest. Soon they saw a squirrel on a bija tree. The brothers said to Lingo, 'Climb up the tree and catch it'. As Lingo was climbing the tree, the six brothers took their bows and arrows; but Lingo saw them and hid

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

113 behind a branch. Then the six brothers shot together, but the arrows stuck in the tree and did him no harm. From that bija tree came out the sap red like blood and the brothers thought, 'Lingo is dead'. They returned home and performed the funeral rites and prepared a great feast in his honour on the third day. Two of the brothers went out for wood and leaves; as they were getting them they saw Lingo coming from the jungle, a dead squirrel in his hand. They said, 'Brother, we thought you were dead'. Lingo said, 'My brothers know nothing'. So Lingo and the boys came home. When they saw Lingo the brothers said to one another, 'How did he escape?' and 'Tomorrow we will certainly kill him'.

Next day, the brothers again said, 'Let us go hunting'. Lingo got ready and they went with their bows and arrows to the forest. Soon they saw a porcupine; it ran away into a hollow saja tree. The brothers said to Lingo, 'Go in and bring it out'. Once Lingo was inside, the brothers stopped up the hole and piled wood round the tree, poured oil upon it and set it on fire. After the tree had blazed for a long time, the brothers supposed Lingo must be dead, but then they heard the sound of the eighteen instruments, all together, within the burning tree. They stood up to see what it was, and the music ceased. They sat down, and it began again. So it was all night. But at dawn the music stopped and the brothers thought, 'Now surely Lingo is dead'.

They returned home and performed the funeral rites again, and again prepared a great feast in Lingo's honour on the third day. Two of the brothers went for wood and leaves; as they were getting them they saw Lingo coming from the jungle, a dead porcupine in each hand. For there was a squirrel's hole under the tree and Lingo had hidden there and so escaped.

This time the six brothers said to one another, 'Let us ask Lingo to swear whether he has lived pure from our wives or no. If he says he has, let us put him to the ordeal. We will put oil in an iron pan, light a fire below it, and when the oil is boiling we will throw him in and close the pan. "If you are really pure", we will tell him, "the fire will have no power over you".'

The following day the six brothers called blacksmiths from twelve villages and got them to make a great iron pan and its lid. They lit a fire below it, and poured in oil. When the oil was hot Lingo sat in it, and they closed the pan. Soon it was so hot that none could approach, but inside it was cool and from the fire the brothers heard the music of the eighteen instruments.

There is some disagreement as to how Lingo got out of the iron pan. According to the Alor story, the wicked sisters-in-law themselves came weeping and crying 'Come out, little brother, come out', whereupon the iron cover broke and Lingo leapt from the fire. In Karikhodra, the chelik said it was Lingo's mother's brother's daughter, called Bhamnin, who came from Kanker and said, 'If you are impotent you will sit there, but if you are a man you will come out'. Lingo at once stood up and knocked off the lid of his iron prison. In the Benur version, the incident occurred in the Karikhodra jungle where Lingo had a motiari. When she heard of it, she came running to save him. She pushed open the lid of the pan and allowed him to come out. This is what we should expect of a motiari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142
291
301

Plate XLIX

Uraon dancer

Uraon dancer

[p. 242 (1)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32

Plate I.

142
291
301

Irpe, a Hill Maria girl of Bolimori

[p. 242 (b)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

713 At all events, Lingo escapes. Then, according to the Alor story, 'As Lingo sprang from the fire, his foot struck the tinsa tree—and the bark has ever since looked dry and dead on one side. The white ash from his body flew over the saja tree—and it became white and holy. He rubbed his body, black with oil and smoke, against the ebony tree, and ever since its bark has been black. He cursed his sisters-in law saying, "Whenever you have babies, there will be the marks of scratches on your bodies" and so it is with all women to this day.

'But the six brothers were very frightened. They said, "Three times we have tried to kill him, now surely he will kill us. Let us see his face no more". And Lingo said to them, "From today I will not see your faces again". So even today Lingo Pen faces the opposite direction to his brothers.'[1]

There is no fixed ending to the legend. One version makes Lingo ascend into the sky and marry the daughter of Bhagavan. Another marries him to the Brahmin girl from Kanker, who was his mother's brother's daughter. 'But when Lingo went to plough, Aure-tunda made a love-charm for her and carried her away. She had a child and the girl had put the baby in a swing. When the child began to cry Lingo came to see what was the matter. He found his wife gone and followed her footprints into the jungle and killed her in a pit. So Lingo's wife became a goddess and went to live in Tewda. After that Lingo married seven wives.' A third version, from Benur, sends Lingo back to live again in the ghotul. In Chargaon, the story is that the brothers, despairing of killing him, drove him out, and Lingo went alone to the forest near Semra: he built a hut at the foot of a kurlu tree and lived there playing his instruments.

VII. A Metrical Version of the Legend

Metrical versions of the Lingo legend are common in the north central parganas. I have recorded several versions, in Pharasgaon (Kongur Pargana), at Chingnar, at Hurra Penjori, at Jhakri, at Kanhargaon, at Chikhli, at Karikhodra and at Tumasnar. I will give the version recorded at Tumasnar, which shows many interesting variants from the Alor story.

In Upardip there ruled a king.
He had no one; he was sterile.
He was a rich man, he was a cow-shed [for wealth],
His city was as broad and long
As in a day nine ploughs could go.
His house was twelve bamboos high.
There were hunting platforms,
There was much cattle,
The cattle-sheds were paved with sleepers.
That Raja's name was Duruk Sai, his Rani was Kanak Dai.

Under the sleepers of the cattle-shed lived a cobra.
She gave birth to seven babies,[2]
Those babies had but one cord between them.

[1] This is maintained in current practice. The Anga of Lingo's brothers all face the opposite direction to that of Lingo himself at Semurgaon.

[2] This is one of the clichés of the Indian folk-tale. The hero born of a cobra or protected by it is so common that it is hardly worth giving examples, but reference may be made, among many others, to Dalton, op. cit., p. 231; A. K. Iyer, *The Cochin Tribes and Castes* (Madras, 1909–12), Vol. II, p. 89; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 451; O. R. Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India* (Hyderabad, 1941), p. 97.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

113 They were weeping *taring taring*, the Rani heard them in the night.
Then said Kanak Dai Rani, 'O Raja, in the middle of the night whose child is weeping here?'
She rose and lit a lamp, she went outside to see.
She found the children and told the Raja, 'There are babies here'.
When she told the Raja this, he too went out to see them.

He approached the babies, and there was the cobra.
She tried to bite him, but the Rani begged her,
'I have no children; give me these'.
The snake was pleased, and gave them to the Rani.
There was one cord for seven babies, how were they to cut it?
They cut it with a curved sword, they cut it with a knife,
They cut it with a straight knife, they cut it with a straight sword.
But they could not cut the cord; both Raja and Rani were exhausted.
There was a small piece of bamboo there, with this they cut the cord,
They cut it with a single blow and separated the babies.
They took them to the house and cared for them.

Slowly the children grew, the Raja gave them names.
They were Use Mudial, Raja Mudial, Budha Mudial,
Soma Mudial, Kana Hurra Mudial, Kana Mudial,
The youngest was Lingo Mudial.

Slowly the children grew, they played in the village.
They went out to hunt with little bows and arrows.
They gained knowledge and desired to bring wives.
But they knew there were no wives for them.
'Let us leave this place and go to Nadumbhum',
Thinking thus, they came down by the silken rope.

The seven brothers made their camp in Nadumbhum.
Six brothers were married, their wives are still named,
Bhumanthar, Dhakardeoni, Mardeoni, Theorajunghe,
Mahipurjunghe, Halayindokari, these were their wives.
Only Lingo remained unmarried.
His hair reached up to Porrobhum above,
His tail hung down to Tarbhum below.

At one time he played eighteen instruments of music.
There was a *pilorka* gong at his knee, a *gulguda* drum at his waist,
From one shoulder hung the *mandri* drum, from the other hung the *dhol*.
There were bells tied at his back, there were *paijns* on his feet.
In his hands were *sarangi*, *dusir*, *dhumir*,
In his hands were *tehondor*, *mohir*, *jihli*, *chithal*, *kilkun*,
In his hands were *parvai*, *kundir*, *charahewa*, *donthar*,
On all these instruments he played at once,
There were love-charms in them, all who heard them were entranced.

The six brothers were busy ploughing their land,
They were working in the Field of Frogs.
Their wives carried their food to them in the field.
But when Lingo played his music,
Those who were fetching water stood still to hear,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

Those who were carrying food to their husbands stood still to hear,
The six wives forgot their work and stood as in a trance.

The husbands were angry, their food was always late.
The eldest brother sent one of them to see what was the matter.
He came to the house and hid behind a grain-bin,
But when he heard the music he too was entranced and lay down asleep behind the grain-bin.
At last the food was cooked, and as the women were going his wife saw him,
And left his share beside him in his hiding-place.

The wives were late again, and next day the eldest brother came himself,
He saw all that happened, and was very angry.
'How can we destroy this useless fellow?'
So thinking he went to his field at Huppelolod.

As Lingo played, the village girls gathered round him and danced,
The chelik came too with their drums,
They made a ghotul and lived near him, for there were love-charms in his instruments.
But none loved him as did those six wives,
His elder brothers' wives, his *ahga*.
But he cared nothing for them, he loved the motiari,
All his desire was to dance and play with the motiari.

Then those wives were very angry.
'How can we destroy this useless fellow?'
So thinking they went inside their house.
'We will not take food to the field today, let us go to fetch thorns from the jungle,
We will scratch our bodies with the thorns till the blood flows.'
So thinking they went to bring thorns from the jungle.
They brought the thorns and scratched their bodies,
They tore their clothes, the blood came from their bodies.
Each lay down in a separate corner of the house.

At sun-standing time the brothers were looking for their meal,
They were hungry, they grew very angry.
'Let us leave our ploughing and go to drink our gruel at home.'
So thinking they went to the house, and found their wives lying here and there in corners.
They said, 'Why are you each sleeping in a corner?
What is the matter that you should be so sleeping?'
'Nothing is the matter, but your brother—
He ruined our honour, beat us and tied us up.
He tore our clothes and blood came from our bodies,
If you beat him to death, then only can we go on living here.'

The brothers believed the story true,
They too wished to destroy Lingo.
'Let us take him out to hunt, and kill him in the jungle.'
So thinking they took him with them,
To hunt for barking-deer and hare. Thus they deceived their brother.
They went to the great forest, they found nothing but a jungle rat.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

113 The rat ran up a bija tree and nobody could climb it.
They told Lingo to climb the tree.
Lingo got ready and he climbed the tree.
'Now he is climbing, let us shoot him with our arrows.'
Each arrow weighed twelve maunds, but not one struck him.
They hit the bija tree and its sap came out like blood.
When they saw the blood of that tree, they thought they had pierced the body,
Thinking Lingo dead, they returned to their house,
They told their wives, 'We have killed Lingo'.
Hearing this the women were pleased.
The brothers went to call the *akomāma* for the funeral.
The *akomāma* came and they performed the rites.
Lingo climbed the tree and killed the rat,
He took it to his ghotul and roasted it.
After three days he went home playing on his instruments.
When the women heard the music they cried, 'Lingo is coming, you told us he was dead'.
Seeing Lingo the brothers were ashamed.
All the *akomāma* returned to their homes.

Again the brothers plotted how to kill Lingo.
'Let us take him to the jungle, this time we will certainly kill him.'
So thinking they went to the great jungle, they found nothing but a porcupine.
The porcupine ran into a hole in the ground.
They told Lingo to follow it.
Lingo got ready and went into the hole.
The brothers brought great logs of wood and blocked the hole.
They set fire to the wood. 'Lingo is burnt to death.'
So thinking they went home and told their wives.
Hearing this the women were pleased.
The brothers went to call the *akomāma*.
All the *akomāma* came and performed the funeral rites for Lingo.

There was a Rau, the master of that jungle.
The porcupine was his servant and led Lingo to his house.
The Rau was away taking roots to the bazaar, but his wife was there.
When Lingo played his eighteen instruments, she was enchanted.
She gave him four porcupines, and showed him another way by which he could escape.
Lingo went to his ghotul, and cooked one porcupine for the boys and girls;
He sent three porcupines to his brothers, and began to play his music.
The wives heard the music and all abused their husbands.
'Look, Lingo is coming; you told us he was dead.'
The brothers were ashamed; the *akomāma* went away angry.

Once again the brothers plotted how they might destroy their brother.
'We will put him to the test; we will try him by oil and fire.'
They went to Karikhodra, where still stands the Pillar of Oaths.
They made an iron vessel of twelvefold smelted iron.
Twelve pots of oil they poured into it,
They put Lingo into it and covered it,

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

773

They fixed the lid in place with strong nails.
They made a hearth and put the vessel on it.
They brought twelve cartloads of wood and lit the fire.
'Now Lingo will surely die.' So thinking they went home.

As the oil boiled, Lingo began to play his music.
When they heard the sound the brothers and their wives despaired.
From inside the vessel, Lingo kicked the lid away.
The lid he kicked fell on the Tata Hill,
The vessel turned to stone and is still seen at Karikhodra.
Lingo came out, he leaned against the ebony tree and burnt it black,
He kicked the tinsa tree and all one side was burnt.
He kicked the saja and it turned white; today we call it impotent—
It is impotent as Lingo was with his brothers' wives.

'He will surely kill us now.'
So thinking the six brothers ran away.
Lingo called to Use Mudial and told him not to be afraid.
Use Mudial asked him, 'How will the world continue?
When they hear your music no one will work, all must stand still and listen.'
Lingo said, 'I will give my instruments to the chelik and motiari.
They will live in the ghotul and no one will hear their music.
So will the world continue so long as there are ghotul'.

The other brothers ran away and scattered through the jungle.
Use Mudial stayed with Lingo and worked with him in the fields.
When Lingo died Use Mudial went to the Maria mountains;
Raja Mudial went at once to the Maria Kingdom;
Budha Mudial ran away to Rai Kursai;
Soma Mudial went to the Maria mountains;
Kana Hurra Mudial fled to Garanja, Kana Mudial to Dhanora;
Lingo went to Semurgaon. 'They are not my brothers,
They are my enemies, I will not see their faces.'
So saying he took an oath,
The oath taken that day remains till now.

Lingo went to Kesurboda, there he was married.
Lingo had seven wives, all of them were Brahmins.
One lived in Kongur, her name was Mudri Muttai.
Each day she husked twelve measures of rice and ate it.
She was a witch and Lingo turned her out.
The second wife lived in Changori with her son Bal Kuar.
She was a witch and Lingo turned her out.
Now Bal Kuar lives at Kotori.
The third wife was Hirgomiro, she lived in Baneri.
She was a witch and Lingo turned her out.
The fourth wife quarrelled with him and he sent her to Bhaisgaon in the Kanker Raj.
He sent the fifth away to Dhaneli in the Kanker Raj, for she too was a witch.
The sixth we have forgotten, but the last was Netturgundi's mother.
Lingo was working with his hoe in the Cat-stone Field,
As he was working there his wife brought him gruel to drink.
She put the gruel beneath a tree and tied a swing.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

773 There his son slept, his name was Netturgundi.
The mother went into the field to weed the grass.

Heweh Tunda Kshattriya [1] carried away Lingo's wife.
Netturgundi was weeping *leveng leveng*,
Hearing the noise, Lingo came to see where his wife had gone.
He searched but could not find her.
He went carrying an ox-goad.
He saw on the way the footprint of Heweh Tunda Kshattriya.
Seeing the footprint he thrust the goad into the ground.
It turned into a bamboo that can be seen today.
His bullocks ran away dragging the plough to the Budhwari Mari Meta,
There they turned to stone and still are seen.
Lingo tied Netturgundi round his neck and went to find his wife.
He met Heweh Tunda Kshattriya half way.
When Heweh Tunda KsLattriya saw Lingo he left the girl and ran away.
Lingo caught his wife and pushed a peg into her vagina.
He beat her and cut her into seven pieces; these pieces became stones.

He followed Heweh Tunda Kshattriya to the hill by Chichgaon.
There was a cave and Heweh Tunda hid there.
Lingo put twelve cartloads of wood outside to make smoke.
Heweh Tunda ran out and fled away leaving no trace behind.
Lingo gave up the search and wondered what to do.
He went to Bagjar, from there he went to Penjori.
Thence he went to Baskur, thence to Dudhpar, and at last came to Semurgaon.

There was at Chikhli a family of the Partabi clan.
Lingo began to think of them. 'They should do some service for me.'
Sona and Rupa Partabi had seven daughters-in-law,
They went to get grass for brooms.
They cut the grass and made it into bundles.
They pulled up a siari creeper, root and all, to tie them.
They stripped the creeper with their teeth and tied the bundles.
The smallest girl had only seven handfuls in her bundle.
Lingo Pen liked this girl and his desire was for her.
The six elder sisters lifted up their bundles,
But the seventh could not raise her little bundle.
All seven had to lift it before they could put it on her head.
When they reached home the others put their bundles in the house,
But the seventh bundle stuck to the girl's head and they all had to pull it down.

The youngest girl put her bundle in the pigsty.
All the pigs died and the Partabi wondered why.
Then she put it with the hens and the hens all died.
She put it in the cattle-shed and the cows all died.
She put it with the buffaloes and the buffaloes died.
At last she threw it into the buffalo pond and the Partabi went to ask the Siraha,
'What is this thing that troubles us? Why are my cattle dead?'

[1] Literally, 'the warrior who was like gum so that anyone who touched him stuck to him'.

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

The Siraha said, 'The mark of Lingo Mudial Pen is here; 773
You must worship Lingo Pen'.
When the Siraha said this, the Partabi said,
'When my animals come to life, I will worship Lingo Pen'.

The Siraha bade him go and look at his animals.
The Partabi went and saw that the ears of the dead were quivering.
He went again and now each pig and hen and cow and buffalo
Spoke to him in its own tongue, bidding him worship Lingo Pen.
He went a third time and now they were all alive.
The Partabi thought then that what the Siraha said was true.
'This is a true Pen, for the cattle are alive.'
Since that day the Partabi clan offer sacrifice to Lingo.
'This is no ordinary Pen, this is a true Pen.
He taught us songs and stories,
He taught the girls and boys to live together in the ghotul,
He is still there in Semurgaon.
We take his name and give him the sevenfold Johar.'

VIII. The Story of Usarengi Palli

This version of the Lingo legend is not known to all the Muria, and in Randhna, a village to the north-east of Kondagaon, I recorded a curious variant in which the foundation of the ghotul is ascribed to a hero with a Telugu name—Usarengi Palli.[1] But in this version also Lingo plays a heroic and sacrificial part. He comes down to earth to save man from the death that Mahapurub was planning to send to the world; he bears in his own body the heavy blows of the divine wrath—although, with a characteristically primitive touch, he escapes before he is actually killed and allows Usarengi Palli to suffer death instead.

When the world was created, there was a city in the Middle World, such a city that on one needle's point nine lakhs of roofs could stand; it was twelve kos long and twelve kos broad. Here lived seven score chelik and seven score motiari; they were all of one mind—if one went somewhere they all went there, if one came home they all returned. There was great love among them all. One day they said to one another, 'Here are many of us, boys and girls together, and we regard everyone as equal. But we need a leader'. Now in the house of Usarengi Palli there was always food to eat and liquor to drink. The boys made him their chief. Among the motiari was one called Shri Belosa; she was made the leader of the girls.

These boys and girls used to sleep together; they went to work together. One day Usarengi Palli thought, 'Here are all these boys and girls, but we have no house to sleep in'. So thinking, he made a house. Its door-frame was a lizard, its walls were made of *chipa* fish, its door was of *dandai* fish, its pillars were the horns of the great sambhar, the cross-beams were the bones of *bhui* fish tied with prawns, and instead of grass the roof was covered with peacocks' feathers. In this house the boys slept in one long line, the girls slept in another long line. Only Usarengi Palli and Shri Belosa slept together.

[1] The story used also to be told by an old man in Barbetta, but he has died and no one has inherited it.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

113 In the Upper World, the twelve brothers Lingo and the thirteen brothers Bhimul danced and sang and played; the sound came down to the Middle World and Usarengi Palli heard it. When he heard it, he made a fiddle and a tambourine, and when the twelve brothers Lingo and thirteen brothers Bhimul danced and sang in the Upper World, Usarengi Palli listened and played the same tunes on his instruments in the Middle World. So passed many days.

One day Shri Belosa said to Usarengi Palli, 'Brother, here are seven score chelik and seven score motiari. We do not know how to dance or sing. Teach us so that we too may have happiness'. Usarengi Palli said, 'All these days I have never left you. I have never gone anywhere. How could I learn anything that you do not know?' Shri Belosa replied, 'Every day you play on your instruments; certainly you know how to dance and sing'. Usarengi Palli said, 'Well, if you would really learn to dance and sing, you must be ready to go where I tell you'. Shri Belosa and the seven score chelik and seven score motiari replied, 'Where you tell us there we will go'. Usarengi Palli said, 'Well, tomorrow we will go'. They all got ready and went outside the village to a fig tree. Shri Belosa bathed and put on a silk sari sixteen hands long, and garlands, rings, and bracelets. Each girl brought a *guppa*-basket, and each boy a *dhuti*-basket.

Usarengi Palli wore a *pitambar*-cloth,[1] and a turban of sixteen hands tied *bail-bidwar*;[2] he had a *dhuti*-basket under his arm, in one hand his fiddle and in the other his tambourine. Singing and playing Usarengi Palli danced his way to the fig tree, where the chelik and motiari saluted him.

When they were all ready Mahapurub let down a thread of silk from the Upper World on to the fig-tree, and they climbed up the thread into the Upper World. There was a banyan tree, and they made their camp under its shade. But Usarengi Palli went on alone to find the twelve brothers Lingo and the thirteen brothers Bhimul; they had been dancing so long that they had sunk into the ground up to their waists. Usarengi Palli saluted them and they called him to dance with them. He asked, 'Whose hand shall I take? Who will teach me?' The youngest brother Lingo took him by the hand and taught him what to do. As they began to dance the seven score chelik and seven score motiari came to that place and saluted them. Shri Belosa gave tobacco to everyone. When the dance was over, the twelve brothers Lingo and thirteen brothers Bhimul said to Usarengi Palli, 'Now you must dance and sing'. When Lingo began to dance he went fifteen paces forward and fifteen paces back, and he danced so that they were not hungry by day or sleepy by night.

Now the songs Usarengi Palli sang went into the *guppa*-baskets of the girls and the *dhuti*-baskets of the boys. The girls' baskets had no holes and so the songs remained in them—and to this day the songs of the girls are strong and true. But the boys' *dhuti*-baskets had a hole and the songs escaped, and still the singing of boys is bad.

When the dance was over, and they had saluted their hosts, Usarengi Palli took the chelik and motiari back to their camp beneath the banyan tree. They went down the silken thread back to the Middle World.

[1] *Pitambar*—The Maharaja wears this red or yellow silk dhoti at Dassera. It costs from two to three hundred rupees. It is also spread over his body after death.
[2] Tied as bullocks go round the pole on the threshing-floor, anti-clockwise.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

There they prepared every kind of instrument of music. Shri Belosa said to Usarengi Palli, 'So far we haven't given you a name. Today we are going to make you our Kotwar'. He said, 'No, I don't want a name', but all the boys and girls said, 'We are going to give you a name'. Shri Belosa sent two or three boys for liquor to Badaur Kalarin. She was sitting on a golden seat pouring water into the still, and the boys bought three rupees worth of liquor from her. Shri Belosa thought in her mind, 'Now today we are going to give Usarengi Palli his new name. He must have a turban for his head and a new sleeping-mat'. So thinking she went to a Ganda's house, and bought a cloth twelve hands long. She made a mat for him. She called the elders of the village, and when they came she said, 'Today we have made Usarengi Palli our chief and have given him the name of Kotwar'. She made Usarengi Palli sit on his new mat, tied the turban round his head, and gave him liquor to drink saying, 'From today our elder brother's name is Kotwar'. They all drank and then the elders said, 'Show us the new dances that you have learnt'. They danced and from that day these dances spread throughout the world and the ghotul was begun.

Now so long as Usarengi Palli was alive, there was no death in the world. But when Mahapurub saw that the seven score chelik and seven score motiari were learning all his art from Usarengi Palli, and no one was dying and no souls came to him, he began to consider how he could bring about the death of men. But the youngest of the Lingo brothers discovered what Mahapurub was planning to do, and filled with desire to save Usarengi Palli and all men, he came down to earth and went secretly to live with Usarengi Palli to protect him.

Mahapurub sent Dhurban, the arrow that kills with earth, to destroy Usarengi Palli. This arrow pierces the body and its evil spreads inside so that the man swells and dies. But Lingo stood in the way and received the arrow in his own body. Then Mahapurub sent one arrow after another, he sent a flight of arrows, and Lingo received them all in his own body. After that Mahapurub sent Aginban, the arrow of fire, but Lingo caught this also in his own body and saved Usarengi Palli. At last Mahapurub sent his messenger with a great stick to beat Usarengi Palli. But Lingo caught as many of the blows as he could bear on his own body, until he thought that if he suffered any more he too would die, so he escaped and the messenger fell upon Usarengi Palli and beat him to death. As Usarengi Palli lay dying he called the seven score chelik and seven score motiari to him and said, 'Now I must leave you' and so died.

The chelik and motiari took up his body and carried it dancing and singing to the burial ground. After they had buried it and were going to bathe in the river, Shri Belosa lingered behind. She had always looked after Usarengi Palli; she had cooked his food and spent her days and nights with him. On this day she had brought haldi from her house tied in a corner of her sari. When she was alone she put a haldi mark above the grave where the head of her lover was, and another mark on her own forehead, saying, 'We two were yoked together. I will never marry now. We lived as if we were married, and now with this mark we are truly married'.

On the day of the funeral feast when they should have taken food and the feet of the pig and goat they ate to the grave, they forgot to take the feet. After a few days the seven score girls went to kill fish; as

773 they were busy at the work, evening came on, and they bathed in the river. As they began to walk home, night fell, and they had to pass by the grave of Usarengi Palli. When they reached the place, they put down their *guppa*-baskets and sat down. Shri Belosa said, 'All your queens have come!' At that word, suddenly Usarengi Palli came out of the earth and took the girls into the grave with him. That night every one of the seven score motiari became pregnant.

The next day, Shri Belosa said, 'Come, let us go to sell our fish in the bazaar and buy ourselves things with the money'. Usarengi let them out of the grave, and when they reached the bazaar they found that their fish were large and fine and they soon sold them. Some bought necklaces, some bought rings, and as they busied themselves with their purchases, night fell. They could not find their way back to the grave, so they went into the village. There Usarengi Palli's mother was weeping, remembering her son. Shri Belosa said to the other girls, 'Look, our mother-in-law is weeping. Come, let us go to her and comfort her'. The girls went to the old woman and greeted her. The old woman said, 'Where have you been all this time? Your parents are looking for you everywhere'. Shri Belosa said, 'We just went to the bazaar'.

Now Usarengi Palli, finding himself lonely in his grave, said in his mind, 'The seven score boys surely went to that bazaar, and are dancing and making merry with the girls'. He took a great stick and got out of the grave and went to the bazaar. But it was too late; there was no one there. So he went thence to his mother's house, and found the seven score girls sleeping, and his mother and Shri Belosa watching by them. When he saw his mother he embraced her. She begged him to stay with her. But he was angry and said, 'What have you ever done for me? No one cares for me. I will not stay'. As he said this, there came into the mind of his mother and the seven score girls that they had forgotten to take the trotters of the pig eaten at the funeral feast to Usarengi Palli's grave. They got up and went hastily to the grave but there was no sign. The old mother returned home weeping loudly, and Usarengi Palli took the seven score girls with him into the grave and they were not seen again.

IX. Lingo and the Ghotul

883 773 To the Muria perhaps the most significant thing about Lingo was his foundation of the ghotul system; this was the greatest treasure he has given mankind; neither the discovery of fire,[1] the gift of mahua liquor,[2] nor the invention of music can compare with this. The ghotul is an integral part of the Lingo legend; even in the Betul version there is a hint of it in the oft-repeated statement that Lingo could not attend to his brothers' wives because he was always playing with the village maidens.

The significance of the ghotul for the legend is this, that it explains why Lingo was 'chaste', why he achieved so supererogatory a virtue as to turn a 'joking-relation' into one of avoidance, why he did not let himself be seduced by his brothers' wives. Like any good chelik his attention was absorbed by the ghotul, not only—be it noted—by its erotic delights, but by the eighteen instruments played there, by the songs and dances, the discipline, the fellowship.

Every version of the Bastar legend stresses Lingo's association with the ghotul. The Alor version ends: 'From the days of Lingo the ghotul is built

[1] See p. 262. [2] See p. 263.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in every village, and the boys and girls live there together without sin. So long as a girl wears combs in her hair she may play and laugh with the chelik, but when we see a girl without a comb, we say nothing to her, for she must be a man's wife. And as Lingo was twice in the fire and no evil touched him, so it is with the boys and girls in their ghotul.'

The Karikhodra story concludes: 'When Lingo died, they made ghotul everywhere in his memory and to make him happy. For as the children dance and play he rejoices.'

And the Benur tale ends: 'Lingo lived in the ghotul, and the magic of his music drew the boys and girls to him. Because of Lingo no evil can come to the ghotul; no witch can enter there, or fever or disease; and for three years from the blossoming of her flower no girl can conceive.'

The first ghotul, where Lingo lived after his elder brothers married (the boys, it will be remembered, had no parents but it was equally necessary that the youngest should not witness his elder brothers' relations with their wives) and which was called *dinde-mahāl*, or palace of the unmarried, was a beautiful place.

> Lingo's ghotul was beautiful as the horns of bison, beautiful as a horse's throat. Its central pillar was a python, the poles of the roof were *mahāmendal* snakes, the beam was a *dāmas* snake, the cross poles were cobras. The bamboo framework of the roof was made of kraits tied together with vipers and covered with the tails of peacocks. The verandah roof was made of bulbul feathers. The walls were of bod-fish bones, the door was made of the crimson *silyāri* flowers, the door-frames of the bones of ogres, the fastening were *ular-malom* snakes. The floor was plastered with the flour of urad pulse. The *kutul*-seats were crocodiles. There was an Anga there of saja wood swung from the roof by *pirpitti* snakes.
>
> Lingo himself wore a turban like a white gourd flower; his dhoti was coloured silk; his shirt shone in the sun; his clogs were made of sandal wood, his stockings of mongoose fur, his belt was a *gidarra* snake; as he walked he sparkled. He carried a crooked stick in his hand; he walked as if he were husking rice.[1] That is why we dance so slowly and carry an axe over the shoulder.
>
> Every day Lingo used to go hunting, and every night to the ghotul. His gun was an ebony branch, his bullets were wild berries, he sat in the nest of the *rala* bird above a salt-lick. When he had shot enough, he would return to the ghotul. Belosa and Manjharo would welcome him, and take his mat. Malko and Jalko spread it on the ground, Dulosa was his blanket. Because of the love-charms in his eighteen instruments all the unmarried boys and girls would come running to the ghotul. Lingo's ghotul name was Manjhi; it was given him by Belosa and Manjharo. He himself gave the girls their names. Belosa and Manjharo sat by Lingo and combed his hair, they scratched his arms with their combs and massaged him with oil. Belosa gave him ganja—there was no tobacco then. Lingo's comb was made of dhaman wood. After massaging Lingo, the girls got up and saluted him with Johar,[2]

[1] In Old Calabar, when a man passed the sacred objects of Egbo he walked as if he were lame.—Hutton Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies* (New York, 1908), p. 116. Compare the limping dance of the priests of Baal.

[2] The Johar was the supreme achievement of Rajput chivalry. A besieged garrison, perceiving its fate hopeless, prepared for the Johar as for a wedding: the women threw themselves into a furnace, and the men sallied out to die in battle with the enemy.—

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883
773

then danced to the music of his eighteen instruments until they were weary, when they lay down and slept.

The traditional names of the first motiari differ from place to place. In Jhakri, they gave the following list:

Godakare Mode, whose navel was long as the axle of a cart, the leader, who collected the girls and gave them their orders.
Belosa, her assistant.
Kurumtuse Buke, whose duty was to distribute things—tobacco, parched rice, liquor.
Hinahibe Bire, who made the bamboo pins for leaf-cups and plates.
Akintare Jare, who spread the leaves which served as mattresses at bedtime.

Among the names of the first chelik are:

Mankor Singa, the leader.
Jiha Guta Soma, whose duty was to bring wood.
Karata Guta Soma, who had to make the fire.

At first things did not go altogether smoothly. The boys stole wood from the village houses, they relieved themselves on the paths, they neglected their work for their dancing. There was even an attempt to stop the ghotul. 'At first', so runs a Masora account, 'there were twelve score motiari and twelve score chelik who came to listen to the music of the eighteen instruments. Lingo caught them by the hands and they danced and danced and danced. Soon the children's parents grew angry and said, "Here is a man ruining our children" and they forbade them to go to the ghotul. At that Lingo was angry and he changed his form and went from house to house bringing death and disease. The people went to the Siraha, who discovered the cause and told the villagers to let their children go again to the ghotul.'

After this Lingo began to teach the chelik and motiari ideals of discipline and service. One night he came leaning on his stick, and when the girls and boys heard it tapping on the ground they kept very quiet. He sat down and taught them never to relieve themselves on the village paths, not to have anything to do with married women, not to steal wood from the villagers. Then in order that they should not spend too much time on dancing, he allotted them certain seasons when they should dance all day. During the rest of the year they should dance only at night. At Jhakri, Raunu gave other details:

> The first fire was lit by Lingo in the ghotul. It was the Pus Kolang fire. Lingo taught the boys how to go from village to village dancing in his honour. The boys tried; Lingo became Gain and showed them their mistakes. The next morning, they looked at the ashes of the fire, and there were the marks of a bullock's hoofs. Three days this happened and Lingo declared it a good omen. He called his tiger and they went out to dance, leaving the girls behind. 'This is in honour of Lingo', they said, 'and whoever goes to a girl will die.'
>
> Lingo took the boys outside the village and made them stand facing it. He put seven little heaps of rice, seven aonra rings and seven bits

J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (London, 1920), Vol. I, p. 555. The expression is now used as a greeting by many tribes. Tod describes it as a salutation sent by a Rajput chief to an inferior landholder (Ibid., Vol. I, p. 163). For the Muria it is a greeting between equals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

883
342

Hill Maria boys in front of the Ituinar ghotul

Bison-horn Maria girls in the court of the Dugeli ghotul

[p.254(a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Plate LII.

292
535

Hill Maria chelik in dancing dress

[p. 254 (B)]

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

of slag on the ground before them, and prayed to Tallur Muttai, 'Look after these children. Keep them safe from other gods'. Lingo gave fire to Mankor Singa, and bade him tend it so that it did not go out till they returned. Then they went to dance in seven villages.

After seven days Godakare Mode and the three score motiari brought a bamboo and decorated its shoots with gold. 'If they have been faithful to us and if all is going well, it will stand up of its own accord and no one will be able to pull it up.' So thinking they welcomed the boys home. The boys hung their sticks on the tree and sat down to smoke. The bamboo stood of its own accord and none could uproot it.

Then came Lingo and was pleased with the stick. He tried to pull it up, but it would not move. Then he cut it down, at the bottom, near the ground. From the stump grew a semur tree; ever since, the semur tree has had thorns like the small branches of a bamboo.

Then the motiari said, 'We too must go to dance with you'. So Lingo took them for the Chait Dandar and the Hulki dances. At Diwali, the girls said to the boys, 'You go off by yourselves in Pus; we will go to dance by ourselves at Diwali'.

The tradition of Lingo's association with the ghotul is still very much alive. Every year thousands of boys take great pains to perfect a complicated and rather tedious dance and set out on a pilgrimage in his honour, which must be marked by accurate performance and complete chastity. In some ghotul, as at Masora, a dhol drum hangs near the door in honour of Lingo. Lingo in his turn protects the ghotul which he has founded; no evil dream can approach, no sin can be committed, and no girl will become pregnant for three years after puberty.

The chelik remember Lingo, with their ancestors and the Earth, whenever they drink liquor; they offer him a few drops of mahua spirit whenever they play their drums at a marriage; even in eastern Kondagaon, they invite him to weddings saying, 'This is your marriage, your haldi-oil, not ours but yours'; they still sing many songs in his honour. Most of these are inexpressibly boring, consisting as they do of a long and largely inaccurate recital of Lingo's relations. This poetic and romantic figure has not inspired much poetry in his worshippers. The following song is typical.

Lingo Pata

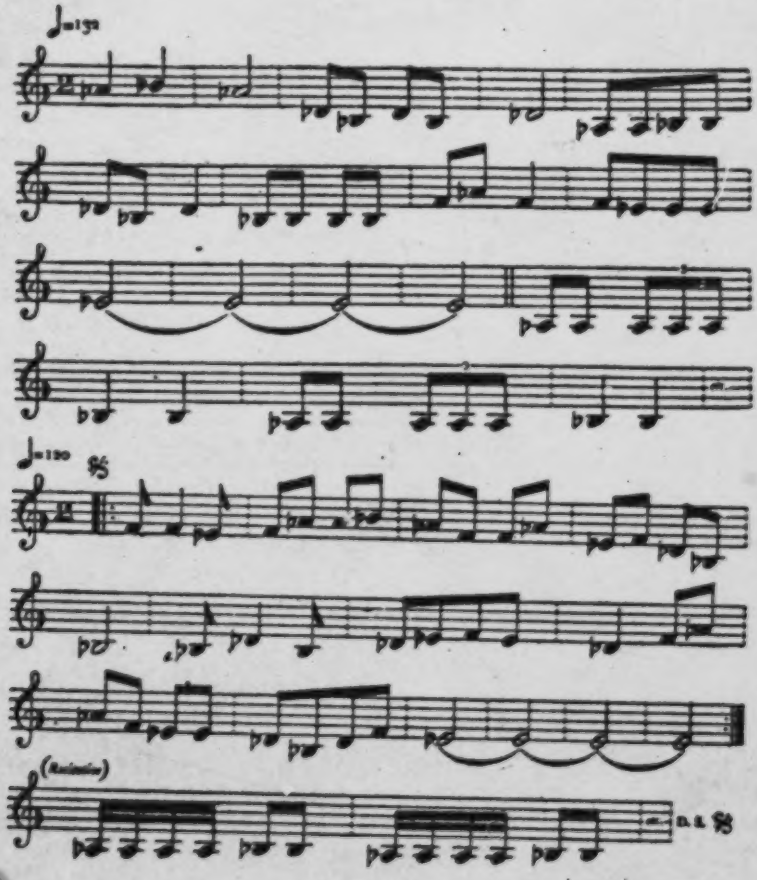
Re re loyo re re la rela
Re re loyo re re la re re la rela

Bāra bhai lingo ra layor,	O twelve Lingo brothers,
Pinding kamkāng niya ra layor.	There's haldi and flour for you.
Dāy ra lingo dāyu ra lingo!	Come, Lingo, come!
Pinding kamkāng yakti ra lingo.	With haldi and flour we anoint you.
Wāyura pāta wai ra lingo.	May songs unknown come to us.
Wāyura dāka wai ra lingo.	May steps unknown come to us.
Pahili pāta niya ra lingo,	The first song is yours,
Maria pāta mawa ra lingo.	The Maria song is ours.
Pahili dāka niya ra lingo,	The first steps are yours,
Maria pāta layor ra lingo.	The Maria song is the chelik's.
Wāy ra lingo wāyu ra lingo!	Come, Lingo, come!
Nana wāyla parron ra layor.	I can't come, chelik.
Nāwa buto manta ra layor.	I've got work to do, chelik.
Kudār holāng butong ra layor.	I've got to fix the handle of my hoe.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883
533
539
973

At Masora, the chelik sing in Halbi to Lingo before a wedding.



Lingo, balun, Lingo!
Kāy kāie āy chalikman?
Bila dhare bila newta parli bila dhava jao.
Macho buta āss.
Tucho kāy buta āss?
Macho korki dheta bharlo āse.
Tucho bigur nitoy git gobind tucho.
Pahilo tucho sigcho mand.
Aru sigcho hardi.
Tucho āy nibnato git banu āy.

Lingo, say, Lingo!
Why have you come, chelik?
We've come to invite you to the wedding.
I have work to do.
What work have you to do?
I must make a handle for my hoe.
Without you nothing can be done.

To you liquor must first be given.
The haldi must first be put on you.
Only with you the song goes well.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

In Penjori, near Semurgaon, the Gaita explained how Tallur Muttai (who is no other than Mother Earth) and Kadrengal her consort (who is lord of the forest and the *dahi* clearing) are connected with the ghotul. 883 773

> In a saja tree were born a girl Tallur Muttai and a boy Kadrengal. They gave a dream to Lingo and told him 'We have been born in a saja tree: give us a place to live'. So Lingo made them a small hut and they lived there. To please them he used to play eighteen instruments at once. In these were love-charms which drew all the boys and girls of the village to listen.

In many ghotul, Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal are honoured as well as Lingo and with him protect the children from harm.

X. Lingo and Creation

The creation stories of the Muria are on the same pattern as similar stories throughout the central portion of peninsular India.[1] The main difference is that Lingo, at least in the older stories, takes the place either of Bhimsen or the other cult-heroes which various tribes exalt as the chief actors in their mythology; and that Kadrengal, a rather mysterious figure, vaguely regarded as a forest-god, and his wife Tallur Muttai (Mother Earth) play the parts that in other areas are allotted to Mahadeo and Parvati. The following story was recorded in Kokori in east Kondagaon. 773

> In the old days there was an earth. At the time when Lingo and his brothers were born Mahapurub turned the world topsy-turvy and it was eaten by the earth-worm, so the Middle World became nought but water. There were two young children on the earth. God put life into their bodies by poking them in the back: the marks of his fingers still remain. They hid inside a gourd which grew up out of the water as a great creeper and reached the heavens.
>
> Presently the worm excreted the earth and some of it fell on a siari leaf. That earth began to weep, 'Who is there to serve me, for all mankind are drowned?' When Lingo heard that weeping he went to see what was the matter. Meanwhile Mahapurub had plucked the gourd growing from the great creeper in the heavens and found inside the two small children. 'Where can these children live?' So thinking he sent his crow to search for it. The crow flew and flew across the ocean until at last it saw Lingo and his brothers driving their harrow over the sea. Wherever the harrow went there was land, where it went crooked or missed a place there was water and a river, where the earth was piled up at the side there was a mountain. When the crow saw this it flew back and told Mahapurub that the earth was made again, and the two children were sent to live there.
>
> Mahapurub told the boy and girl that they should marry each other but they refused saying, 'We are brother and sister'. So the smallpox goddess came and separated them and each got smallpox.[2] Afterwards when they met they did not know who they were, for their faces were

[1] Compare Roy, *The Mundas*, App. I, pp. 2–7; Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 400–24; A. Campbell, 'The Traditions of the Santals', *JBORS*, Vol. II (1916), pp. 158ff.; Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 262; D. D. Agarwal, 'Ethnographical Notes on the Cheros', *Man in India*, Vol. IX (1929), p. 205; W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV-VI (1940-1), *passim*. *The Baiga*, p. 308; *The Agaria*, pp. 268.

[2] I have recorded this idea among the Juang, Kond, Gadaba and Bondo of Orissa: it is probably very common.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

773 covered with the marks of disease, and they got married. Now these two, man and woman, had no knowledge of sex. They lived together working in their fields, but the man never went to his wife. Presently Mahapurub sent Lingo to see how they were getting on. 'They know nothing of love or copulation, they are living as brother and sister', so said Lingo. This made Mahapurub anxious about the peopling of the world. So he gave Lingo two pills filled with his love-charms to give them.

When Lingo reached the house, he found the man had gone to hunt but the woman was bathing. He gave her the two pills and told her to eat one of them after the bath and to give the other to her husband when he returned. Having done this, Lingo went away. The woman ate one pill but was so pleased with it that she ate the second also, leaving nothing for her husband. Directly she swallowed the pills she was filled with excitement and passion and ran into the forest to seek her man.

At last when he returned from hunting, instead of giving him his food she took him into the house and pulled him down to the ground beside her. But for all her caresses there was no desire in him and he did nothing. He ate a heavy meal but she could not eat. All night she tried to rouse him, but without success. Then once again Lingo came to see how they were. He peeped through the door and saw the woman trying to rouse her husband. So he brought two more pills and this time gave them one each. Now at last the husband's desire was awakened and he went to his wife again and again, but since the woman had a greater number of pills she was much the more passionate. That is why the Muria say women remain more passionate than men unto this day.

So strong was their passion that the very next morning a child was born. After this, children were born throughout the world and men and women increased in number.

The stories go on to tell how Lingo brought the Muria to Bastar from Lanjhi-Dhamda and how the different clans came into being as they tried to cross over the great ocean that separated Dhamda from Bastar. He also taught the Muria how to worship Mother Earth.

The Muria was thinking, 'How am I to worship the earth for I have nothing to give her'. He had one daughter. He covered her whole body with soot to make her black and forced her to walk on all fours like a black cow. Then he went to the jungle to worship Mother Earth. On the way he met Lingo driving a cow. Lingo said, 'O man, where are you going?' 'I am going to worship Mother Earth.' 'What are you going to sacrifice?' 'I have nothing to give but my own daughter and I am going to sacrifice her.' Then Lingo said, 'Give me your daughter, and I will give you my cow'. From that day the Muria have not offered human beings to the Earth Mother but, taught by Lingo, have sacrificed their cattle.[1]

XI. Lingo and the Sun and Moon

773 821 Lingo is also, in some legends, connected with the creation of the sun and moon and the disposal of other heavenly bodies. In what appears to be the

[1] Nanga Baiga was also taught to substitute animal for human sacrifice.—*The Baiga*, p. 315.

198

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

oldest Muria thought, Lingo, unlike such exclusively mundane cult-heroes as Nanga Baiga, has much to do with the heavens. Later on, he is often displaced by Bhimul Pen or Bhimsen. In Ulera the Muria told the following story.

When this world was first made there was neither sun nor moon and the clouds and the earth were like husband and wife, they lay so close together.[1] Men were very small and had to move between them. They ploughed with rats and to pick brinjals they had to reach up as though they were getting mangoes from a tree. As they walked to and fro they used to knock their heads against the clouds.

Then Lingo and his brothers raised the clouds into the sky and there was room for men on earth, but there was no sun or moon and everything was dark. There was a tree called Huppe Piyer. When this tree blossomed it was day, when it dried up it was night. The twelve Lingo brothers and the thirteen Bhimul brothers thought and thought how they could bring more light to the world. 'Where can we find something which will make light and darkness?' So thinking they came to the tree Huppe Piyer. 'This is what we want', they said and began to cut it down. It was so big that the twelve Lingo brothers and the thirteen Bhimul brothers could cook their food and sleep in the space cut by their axes. When it was nearly cut through, it still did not fall for on the top of the tree sat the bird called Gara-surial-pite holding it up. Said Lingo to his brother, 'We must kill this bird', and Kosa Kana took his axe and killed it. Then the tree fell to the ground.

When the tree came down it fell on the thirteen Bhimul brothers and they shouted with fear. Lingo picked it up with one hand and threw it aside. Now this tree stood in the kingdom of twelve Rajas, and when these heard the noise they sent their police to see if the tree was safe. The police reported that someone or other had cut it down and the Rajas sent their soldiers to arrest the culprits. Lingo said to the soldiers, 'We have come to make two lanterns so that there may be light by day and light by night. We have done no evil'. So said Lingo. But the soldiers took no heed of what he said and attacked the brothers with their spears and swords. Lingo took all the blows in his own body and saved his brothers. Then he himself took his sword and fought and killed the soldiers. With their blood the tree became red, for its roots drank it up. Then the brothers stripped off the bark and cut the wood into two great circles.

They made the lower circle into the sun and the upper circle into the moon. The sun was as big as the kingdoms of the twelve Rajas, but the moon was smaller. When they were ready, the brothers wondered how to put into them a living soul. Mahapurub had a son. 'Only by killing Mahapurub's son and giving his blood to the sun and moon to drink will they become alive and be man and woman', so said Lingo. The brothers thought and thought how to catch Mahapurub's son, but at last Lingo said, 'I will catch him' and went to Porrobhum.

[1] The association of the proximity of earth and sky has been recorded among the Santal.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 401; the Buna—M. N. Basu, *The Bunas of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1939), p. 84; the Birhor—Roy, *The Birhors*, p. 436; the Gond—R. V. Russell, *Castes of India*, 1916, Vol. XIII, p. 94; and the Khasi—Gurdon, op. cit., p. 193. Fraser quotes similar stories from Africa—J. G. Fraser, *The Worship of Nature* (London, 1926), pp. 96 and 109. The legend is probably widely distributed.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

773
821

Mahapurub was working in his fields. His wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. There he sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon. The sun, who is a man, drank a lot of the blood and that is why he is always red. The moon, who is a woman, only drank a little and is always pale.

When Mahapurub's wife returned and could not find her son, she ran to tell her husband and they were full of sorrow. But next morning when the sun rose red into the sky, Mahapurub cried to his wife, 'Look, there's your baby in the sky; don't weep, for you will always be able to look at him'.

824

In many villages the Muria know the widely-dispersed story of how the moon tricked the sun into swallowing his children.[1] They generally say that the moon is subject to a menstrual period and when her time comes she hides herself, thus accounting for the dark nights of the month. The sun works all day. We cannot see him at night because every evening he goes to his wife, but the Muria are not quite clear or consistent about this because some of them think that on account of the stealing and sacrifice of Mahapurub's child, sun and moon were cursed to remain for ever apart. Some Muria say that the sun's wife is Sukko, who is the daughter of the moon and it is she who keeps him company during the night. In Muria riddle the moon is 'the fat bullock that loses its horn in its old age'.

[524]

The stars are explained in many different ways. In Ulera they said that they were the shavings of the great tree Huppe Piyer. In Aturgaon they said that they were the babies of the moon. In Berma they said they were the moon's servants. The moon brings her children out at night and plays with them. Everyone believes that the stars are alive. 'The stars are looking at us', they sometimes say, and it is almost uncanny to hear them speaking of sun and moon and stars as though they were actual living people. Riddles about the stars are common: '*Mesel kadang pendh*: the whetstone is covered with *wung*-grains.' 'The dish is so full of areca nuts that you cannot count them.' 'Take a stick in your hand and count the cowries.'

[524]

The eclipse is not explained otherwise than by the usual stories current in central India,[2] but the Muria have their own way of observing the event. It is regarded as a very good time for snaring animals or catching fish. Women dig holes in their yards and pretend to throw out water with a basket crying, 'Now we are clearing the stream for fish'. This little rite will result in good fishing expeditions later on. Boys make their *gulel*-slings, for as the moon catches the sun so will the pellet from the sling hit its mark. They also begin making nets and traps of every kind for the same reason, and put the bamboo baskets and platforms in the fields to catch and dry fish. Nets for birds are set and traps for animals arranged.

Thunder and lightning is explained in several different ways. Some say that lightning is the great *daudai* fish which leaps out of the ocean of universe into the sky, its scales flashing in the sun. In other villages they say that thunder and lightning comes from the smithy of the heavenly Lohar who is working iron in Porrobhum. The thunder is the sound of his heavy hammer;

[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 331f. for references to Uraon, Santal and Tod legends.
[2] Crooke, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 21; Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 431 and 440; *The Baiga*, p. 334; Rutherson, *op. cit.*, pp. 58f.; J. J. Modi, 'A Few Ancient Beliefs about the Eclipse', *J. Anth. Soc. Bom.*, Vol. III (1894), pp. 249ff. Frazer has a useful summary in *The Golden Bough*, Vol. II, pp. 4ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

the lightning is the flash from his anvil. The thunderbolt is the hot slag he throws away.[1] 821

In Badgai the Muria said that the lightning was the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden) playing in the sky. As she laughs, her teeth flash. When she laughs in the north, then comes the rain.

Lightning is useful to the world. Lightning warns us of rain and even brings the rain. When it strikes a plant or a tree the Muria collect the bark and burn it in their houses as a remedy against bugs and lice. The bark of a tree struck by lightning is a valuable medicine in cases of delayed delivery. [278]

Thunder is even more useful. It is caused either by the noise of the heavenly smithy or by Lingo or Bhimul dragging their water-skins across the sky. At Aturgaon the Muria said that thunder is the noise made when Mahapurub sits on one of the bullocks made by potters at the Pola festival and rides on it across the sky. In Dongrigura they said that 'Mahapurub goes out to work in his fields or to fetch wood. He sees a storm coming and jumps into his cart and drives hard for home. The rumble of the wheels is the thunder.[2] Mahapurub's iron axe or sickle falls down to the earth with a great crash. If people can find it, it is an invaluable cure for rheumatism or headache.' In Kokori the Muria added the detail that Mahapurub's cart is dragged by sterile women. There is generally the idea that thunder has a beneficial effect on sterility.

For the Muria call the thunderbolt, 'the seed'. In Palari they said, 'Thunder is very useful, it means that the heavenly semen is falling to earth; all the small sprouts of rice and the small vegetables on which this seed falls become pregnant and so bear good fruit.' In Karanji also the Muria said that rice, vegetables and trees only bear fruit after hearing thunder. If there is no thunder the crop is always poor. 'We know this must be so, for it is the same with hens. The hen must hear the cock crow, otherwise its eggs will not be fertile.' It is said that if a thunderbolt falls or lightning strikes the earth near a barren woman, she will soon become pregnant.

Here is another account, from Kokori. 'Bhimul is man; Earth is woman. When Bhimul is on heat, he tries to approach Earth. But there is no road or path, and he rushes about trying to find the way, he hurls rocks and mountains to and fro—and this makes the thunder. At last he can contain his seed no longer: it spurts out—and a thunderbolt falls. From this seed man gets his food. Unless Bhimul gets on heat there is no rain or harvest.'

Rain is described as the chaprasi of Mahapurub who goes ahead of him when he sets out on tour. The rainbow is Lingo's *agindaw*, or magic arrow of fire. The rain-giver is either Lingo or Bhimul. The people of the north-west generally beg rain from Lingo, for it is here that Lingo's cult is strongest. In the east they approach Bhimul. In Chikhli village at a time of drought in 1941, the Muria went to Lingo and offered him a bull, but he only gave them three days' rain. When they asked him why this was he said, 'In the old days the Raja himself honoured me with sacrifice, but now I am forgotten and so I am not giving rain'. In Markabera they had the curious notion that the first rain is the marriage of Mother Earth and the frogs come to make music for it. Frogs fall from the sky: if they fall into the water they remain frogs; if they fall into a field they turn into tortoises; if they fall under ebony trees they turn into hares.

[1] In Bastar the Hindus say that during a thunderstorm the *tiri* bird lies on its back with its feet in the air in order to protect the earth. Many Muria say the same.

[2] This is a common Hindu notion. Thunder is the voice of Indra, or the roar of the wheels of Bhagavan's chariot. See Rothoven, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

821 I have heard hail described as 'the bones of the rain'. The rainbow is the great snake, Bhumtaras, that rises from its ant-hill to stop the rain.[1]

XII. Lingo and the Discovery of Fire

773 In Bastar, as in Hislop's version of the legend, Lingo is associated with the discovery of fire. In some villages it is said that the first fire to be kindled was that made by Lingo at the original Pus Kolang dance. At Kanhargaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana the Jhoria Muria told this story:

> At the beginning of the world, when the earth sank beneath the great waters, there were no men left but the seven Koroho-Lingo brothers. When the water went down again, they set out to find fire to warm themselves and cook their food. Presently they saw a Maharin whose name was Parajunge; she had a fire. They made their camp near her house and went to get fire from her. The girl gave the eldest brother some fire in a bundle of grass but it went out. Then the next brother went, and the next, but every time the fire went out. At last Lingo himself went. When she offered him fire in the grass he hit her twice and picked up a burning log from her fire and took it to his camp.
>
> The brothers went away, but the girl soon found that she was pregnant from the two blows which Lingo had struck. The boy grew up, and when he was old enough he went with the other boys and girls to dance in Lingo's ghotul. Parajunge, his mother, followed him. Now Lingo was leading the dance with a tuft of palm leaves in his turban. When the dancers got tired they sat down to smoke and the boy said to his mother, 'All these other children have fathers, but where is my father?' Parajunge said, 'It is the one who is wearing leaves in his hair, go and catch him'. The boy caught him by the leg and cried, 'You are my father'. When the brothers heard it they were very angry with Lingo and said, 'We would have given you a kingdom, but he who makes a Maharin pregnant becomes a Mahara'. Lingo said, 'I never went to her, I only hit her and she became pregnant of her own accord'. They disputed this for many days and at last Lingo said, 'You may test me by oil and fire; make a great iron vessel and fill it with twelve pots of oil; put me in it and boil me on a hearth lit with twelve cart-loads of wood; if I am unhurt it will prove me innocent'. The brothers carried out the test and Lingo was unharmed; he sat in the fire playing his eighteen instruments. The brothers then believed Lingo and gave him the kingdom. The name of the boy was Son Kuar and he was admitted into the ghotul as a Muria, but they would not accept his mother.

In this account of how Lingo brought fire to the tribe, we may note the tradition that he got it from a woman and that the incident is vaguely connected with impregnation. Frazer has collected myths from many parts

[1] The Hill Maria have the same idea. So have the Koi, who call the rainbow Larbeng, the serpent—Dalton, op. cit., p. 177. The Pardhan of Mandla say it is the raised head of Basuk, the cobra who supports the world. The Bison-horn Maria call it Bhimsil-vil, the bow of Bhimsil—Grigson, op. cit., p. 230. The Baiga call it the house of Bhimsen—*The Baiga*, p. 336. Hindus generally call it the bow of Ram or of Indra, though they too speak of it as a snake. 'The rainbow is connected with the snake, being the fume of a gigantic serpent blown up from underground. In Persia, it was called the "celestial serpent".'—Crooke, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 144.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of the world, Australia, the Murray Islands, Melanesia, the Caroline Islands, South America, which represent women as being in possession of fire before men.[1] 113

We also see very clearly that the attempt to kill Lingo in the iron vessel was really, as I have already suggested, an ordeal of a type to which frequent reference is made in the literature of Indian antiquity.

XIII. Lingo and the Discovery of Liquor

In the east of the State, where Lingo's cult is weakest, he is still imagined as a simple, kindly, generous peasant. He is the giver of happiness; he is the honest ploughman working for his family, making furrows three miles long, guiding his plough with his son Netturgundi tied below his neck. He eats anything, stones or trees, rice or pulse, birds or monkeys. His hair reaches to heaven and his tail goes down to hell.

Once Lingo gave a great feast to mankind. As the guests were going home he sent a Nahar servant to listen to what they were saying about him. The servant heard them complaining that though the food was all right, they had been given 'nothing coloured to make them happy'. When Lingo heard this he said, 'Is there nothing in the jungle to make men happy?' This preyed on his mind and he went everywhere in the forest to search for happiness until he came at last to a great hollow mahua tree. The corollas had fallen into the hollow, rain had filled them with water, and they had fermented. Many maina birds gathered round to drink, and Lingo saw them 'cry loudly and dance'. So he took some of this drink home, and at his next feast gave it to his guests. This time they went home saying, 'Today Lingo has given us happiness'.

Nanga Baiga is said to have discovered liquor in almost exactly the same way.[2] The Bondo have a similar tale; so have the Savara of Koraput who attribute the great discovery to Bhimsen. The Sondi tradition is that Brahma created Suka Muni from the dirt between his eyebrows and authorized him to distil spirit from the *ippa* (mahua) flowers, which had hitherto been eaten by birds.[3]

Mahua spirit does not seem to be associated with the sexual passion, but there is a common belief that rice-beer and toddy were invented to ensure a proper increase of population. Tallur Muttal is said to have created the sago-palm so that its juice might stir the sluggish desires of Kadrengal.[4] In Ho tradition, the first man and woman never came together 'from their extreme simplicity' until Sing Bonga the Creator 'taught them the art of making rice-beer, the use of which caused them those sensations which were in due time the means of peopling the world'.[5] The Kol have the same belief.[6] The Santal say it was Lita, a traditional hero whose bow is the rainbow, who taught the first man and woman to make rice-beer and thus introduced sexual congress to the world.[7]

[1] J. G. Frazer, *Myths of the Origin of Fire* (London, 1930), p. 206.
[2] *The Baiga*, p. 311. 'There is a common belief that on occasions bears become intoxicated as a result of eating fermented flowers.' A. A. Dunbar Brander, *Wild Animals in Central India* (London, 1931), p. 7.
[3] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 396. [4] See p. 54.
[5] Tickell, 'Memoir on the Hodesum' in *JASB*, New Series, Vol. IX, Part II (1840), p. 777. Compare Dalton, op. cit., p. 185, who observes that the old Munki are fond of telling this story with all sorts of indecent details.
[6] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 308.
[7] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III, p. 109.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

113 It is probable that further investigation might discover the cult-heroes of several other tribes credited with this achievement.

XIV. The Coming of Death

Death is a stranger in the world, alien and unnatural. The first men did not die. For long ages Lingo kept death away. But at last it came and the Muria have several legends to explain how. According to one story, it was a boon to counteract the misery of living for ever.

> In the old days the Muria did not die, yet could not keep their youth.
>
> They sat in the courts of their houses propped up with bits of wood; they could not use their hands or feet, and their gruel had to be poured into their mouths by their relatives. At last they went to Mahapurub and asked him to give them the gift of death. 'Do you want death for everyone', he asked, 'or only for yourselves?' 'For everyone', they replied. From that day both young and old have died.

Another tale attributes the coming of death to Mahapurub's need of souls to people his kingdom, an idea common also among the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces.[1]

> In Nadumbhum (the Middle World) no man died, and Mahapurub wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He had a son. He killed him and prepared to carry him out for burial. But when his wife heard of it, she ran weeping to the place and, taking her son from him, sat with the corpse in her lap. Mahapurub said, 'We must bury the child, don't be foolish'. But she cried, 'No, I'll never give him to you'.
>
> Mahapurub then planted a jamun tree behind her. When it fruited, some of the plums fell to the ground. She picked them up and ate and her mouth was reddened with the juice. Mahapurub came again and said, 'Give me the boy. You are a witch, you are eating his flesh'. He brought a mirror and when she saw her reddened mouth, she thought she really was eating the boy. She wept bitterly, but gave the body to Mahapurub. He buried it, and from that day death has been in the world.

A different version of the same theme, from Palari, gives some interesting details about the creative process.

> At the beginning of the world men were very small; they ploughed with rats and had to pull down brinjals as if they were getting mangoes. The ground was so soft that you could fall through it down to Adibhum (the Lower World). In those days men could remove the tops of their heads, examine them for lice, and put them back again.[2]
>
> When the first men died, their neighbours took them out to burial, but the corpses got up and came back and sat in front of their houses. When the neighbours came in, they asked, 'Where have you been?' 'We've been out burying you.' 'What sort of folk are you? We were just sleeping and you carried us here and there. When we awoke we returned home.'[3]

[1] *The Baiga*, p. 329.
[2] For a similar tradition among the Santal, see Bompas, *op. cit.*, p. 401.
[3] The theory that death was originally of a temporary character is held by the Birhors—Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 252f., and I have recorded it among the Juang and Bhuiya of Keonjhar State.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

When Mahapurub heard of this, he wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He thought, 'I must stick the tops of their heads on; then they will certainly die'. He ground flour, mixed it with water into a paste and hid it. Then he went to see the first man and woman. 'What have you got inside your heads?' he asked. 'Do show me.' They removed the tops of their heads, and Mahapurub quickly smeared the edges with paste, muttering, 'Never come unstuck again'. When the first man and woman put the tops of their heads back, they stuck and soon afterwards people began to die. 713

And now for fear that the dead might come back again to their houses, the neighbours burnt their bodies and they never returned to life.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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PART II
THE GHOTUL

[p. 267]

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER NINE

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

I. The Village Dormitory throughout the World

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X 171

THERE is nothing unusual or extraordinary about the ghotul; similar institutions are widely distributed throughout the world. One of the first writers in English to examine the 'communal barracks of primitive races', S. E. Peal, drew attention to the fact that 'from Bhutan to New Zealand and from the Marquesas to the Niger', the system existed and was distinguished by certain persistent features.

> Firstly, we see in all, except among the nomadic Australians, that there is a special and recognized building, or buildings, for the unmarried young men and lads to sleep in, and at times for the young women, also in many cases together.
>
> Secondly, we notice that among the races having these barracks without exception there is complete liberty between sexes until marriage.
>
> Thirdly, and most significant of all, these barracks are invariably tabu to the married women, whether the race or tribe is exogamic or endogamic.
>
> We may also note that, as a general rule, we see adult marriages where this social system is in vogue, and conjugal fidelity seems greater than among the more civilized races, by whom juvenile chastity is valued.[1]

The dormitories fall into two clearly defined groups—one, of the semi-military 'barracks' type, appears to aim at a strict segregation of the boys and is connected with war, hunting and magic; the other allows or even encourages them to have relations with the unmarried girls and possibly aims (though our knowledge is too fragmentary to assert this with confidence) at regulating the pre-nuptial interests of tribal youth. Both types of dormitory, like the Muria ghotul, fulfil important social and religious functions. Those of the first type are well summarized by Hutton Webster.

> The men's house is usually the largest building in a tribal settlement. It belongs in common to the villagers; it serves as council-chamber and town hall, as a guest-house for strangers, and as a sleeping resort of the men. Here the more precious belongings of the community, such as trophies taken in war or in the chase and religious emblems of various sorts are preserved. Within its precincts, women and children, and men not fully initiated members of the tribe, seldom or never enter. When marriage does not follow immediately upon initiation into the tribe, the institution of the men's house becomes an effective restraint upon the sexual proclivities of the unmarried youth. It then serves as a club-house for the bachelors, whose residence within it may be regarded as a perpetuation of that formal seclusion of the lads from the women, which it is the purpose of the initiation ceremonies in the first place to accomplish.
>
> An institution so firmly established and so widely spread may be expected to survive by devotion to other uses, as the earlier ideas which

[1] S. E. Peal, 'The Communal Barracks of Primitive Races', *JASB*, Vol. LXI (1893), pp. 296ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 823
X 171

led to its foundation fade away. As guard posts where the young men are confined on military duty and are exercised in the arts of war, these houses often become a serviceable means of defence. The religious worship of the community frequently centres in them. Often they form the theatre of dramatic representations. In rare instances these institutions seem to have lost their original purpose and to have facilitated sexual communism rather than sexual separation. Among some tribes the men's house is used as the centre of the puberty initiation ceremonies. With the development of secret societies, replacing the earlier puberty institutions, the men's house frequently becomes the seat of these organizations and forms the secret 'lodge'.[1]

Haddon also emphasized the social importance of the men's house in Melanesia.

> Speaking in general terms, these places are tabooed to women and to the uninitiated, they are used as dwellings or meeting-places of the men, and in them various ceremonies are held; they constitute the social, political and religious centres in the public life of the men.[2]

Like the club-houses of New Guinea, says Haddon again, the *kwod* of the Torres Straits Islands was

> the central spot in the social, political and religious life of the men. After initiation, the young men could frequent the *kwod* and they habitually slept there and they had to look after the place, keep it in order, fetch water, collect firewood, attend to the fires, and in fact to do whatever the elder men required of them.[3]

Hutton Webster, whose book on primitive secret societies was written in 1908, believed that 'promiscuity, either before or after marriage, was the exception among primitive peoples', and that the exclusively male dormitories were the more primitive—the admission of women being a sign of deterioration and deviation from their main purpose. He says little about the girls' clubs or women's secret societies but observes that 'the admission of women is characteristic of the disintegration of secret societies'.[4] Many primitive peoples are undoubtedly, just as the Muria are, examples to the whole world for marital fidelity, but it is worthy of note that it is just those observers who have spent most time and studied most dispassionately, who have been convinced of the general pre-nuptial sexual freedom of their people. The entertaining, if acrimonious, debates between Westermarck and Briffault on this point would have more finality if we could trust the authorities on which they base their arguments. But even Westermarck, who inclines to stress the limitations that primitive people put on promiscuity, admits the very general freedom, only pointing out that this freedom cannot be used as an argument that a stage of promiscuity preceded marriage. He adds that sometimes this freedom is due to contact with civilized races, and that pre-nuptial freedom does not mean that a girl can always be changing her lovers without reproach, but that rather in their love affairs boys and girls often reflect the constancy of their elders.[5] We shall see presently that among the Muria this was probably the case in the older ghotul and that promiscuity is a definite feature of modern and more sophisticated times.

[1] Hutton Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies* (New York, 1908), pp. 11.
[2] A. C. Haddon in *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits* (Cambridge, 1904), Vol. V, p. 3.
[3] Ibid., p. 365.
[4] Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 121.
[5] E. Westermarck, *Three Essays on Sex and Marriage* (London, 1936), pp. 213ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

883 X
171 X

I stress this because it is essential that we do not approach our study of the village dormitory with a belief that pre-nuptial sexual freedom is something unusual in the primitive world. Nor can I accept Hutton Webster's contention that the admission of girls to the dormitory is a sign of its degeneration. If there really was a desire to prohibit all sexual congress before marriage, it would be, but except for a few societies such a rule has not been established. Briffault points out that 'secret societies to which women are admitted are more generally prevalent in the remoter and more inaccessible districts of the interior of Africa and the Upper Congo, while exclusive men's societies flourish among the more sophisticated and less primitive coast tribes'.[1] Modern writers have thrown a great deal of new light on the real nature of the boys' clubs and girls' houses in Melanesia and elsewhere and have shown that there was a closer connexion between them than was once supposed, though even today we have not enough material for a complete picture.

I will now make a brief survey of the dormitory throughout the world, a survey which suggests—as Hodson says—that 'it would seem to be rather symptomatic of a definite level of culture than distinctive of any special ethnic group or groups'.[2] This is, of course, only a survey of samples but it will be sufficient to show that the Muria ghotul is nothing unusual or bizarre, but represents a genuine attempt of the human spirit at a certain stage of development to solve some of the psychological and social problems that even the most 'advanced' nations have not yet adjusted to their satisfaction.

Melanesia and New Guinea

Exclusively men's houses have been reported throughout Melanesia and New Guinea. 'In all the Melanesian groups', says Codrington, 'it is the rule that there is in every village a building of public character, where the men eat and spend their time, the young men sleep, strangers are entertained; where as in the Solomon Islands the canoes are kept; where images are seen, and from which women are generally excluded; the *biala* of Florida, the *oka* of San Cristoval, the *madai* of Santa Cruz, the *tambu* house of traders, the *bure* of Fiji.'[3] In the Banks Islands, when a boy began to grow up, his parents sent him to the *gamal*, saying, 'He is a boy, it is time to separate him from the girls'.[4] The *eravo* of New Guinea seems to be very similar to the *kwod* of the Torres Straits. Both are described as having an educational purpose.[5] Seligman has given an account of the *mares* of the Mekeo District,[6] and Haddon of the bachelors' house among the cannibal Tugeri.[7] On Mailu Island there is a club-house for each clan in a village, and the dormitory is built between each clan-group of houses. The heads of enemies are placed here 'to look terrible'; spears and the regalia of war

[1] Briffault, *The Mothers* (London, 1927), Vol. II, p. 533n, where other arguments against Hutton Webster's view are given.

[2] T. C. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), p. 73.

[3] R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians* (Oxford, 1891), p. 102.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 231. It is good to read Bishop Codrington declare (p. 233) that although 'considerable laxity of intercourse between boys and girls undoubtedly existed, and unchastity was not very seriously regarded, yet it is certain that in these islands generally there was by no means that insensibility in regard to female virtue with which the natives are so commonly charged'. But where an unmarried girl desired relations with a youth, she made the first advances, communicating her wishes to his paternal aunt. See W. H. R. Rivers, *History of Melanesian Society* (Cambridge, 1914), Vol. I, p. 39.

[5] See *Man*, Vol. V (1905), p. 3.

[6] C. G. Seligman, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 226.

[7] A. C. Haddon, 'Kava-drinking in New Guinea', *Man*, Vol. XVI.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
X171

are hung up and raids are planned and celebrated. This is the *dubu*, where lads sleep from initiation to marriage.[1] The *tohes* of Santa Anna and San Christoval are said to be of great size and beauty; they serve as sanctuaries, and war canoes and the bones of warriors are kept in them. Boys are confined to the *tohes* for a year before initiation and then sleep there till marriage.[2] In the Loyalty Islands each village has a large dormitory, where the young men sleep with a few elders to look after them. It is called the *kneimelom*.[3] Mrs Hadfield gives a few details about it. The house, she says, was strictly reserved for men: it served as a town hall 'and all important municipal councils were held there'. As in Bastar, it was considered improper for any boy to be absent: 'if any youth absented himself from this house and slept in the village he was recalled to a sense of the impropriety of such an action by hearing, in the early morning, a chorus of voices chanting his name, accompanied with many insulting insinuations as to the cause of his absence'.[4]

The Kiwai *darimu* of the Fly River area seems to be of the same type. It is often very large and is used by the unmarried boys or by the married when on ceremonial occasions they must sleep apart from their wives. The ghotul serves the same purpose. 'Broadly speaking, from the Dutch border eastwards society as a whole is based on an idea of a separation of the sexes, and brought to bed-rock, the whole system is probably based on war and fighting.' The *darimu* is associated with more or less secret ceremonies for the initiation and training of lads who are taught about their totems, the use of the bull-roarer and the mysteries of agriculture. At one point of the initiation ceremony 'a small wood carving of a naked woman is shown, and stated to be particularly favourable to a good supply of sago'.[5] In fact, 'essentially the *darimu* is for ceremonial purposes'. The building is charged with a store of magical 'heat'; its construction is attended by the constant application of magical medicines: it is dominated by great posts carved to represent human figures and of a strongly erotic character and the blood of enemies is smeared upon them. So impressive in the old days was the interior 'with all its paraphernalia of erotic ceremonies' that more than once strangers fainted when they went inside. A *darimu*, 'charged with magical power, is an efficient ally of the tribesmen when away on a fighting expedition, for it helps them from a distance'.[6]

The *ravi* is common in New Guinea from the Papuan gulf westwards: it is used as a men's club-house and is a centre of religious ritual. The *ravi* of the Purari Delta, says Raymond Firth, is 'a huge thatched house, fifty yards or so in length, built on piles and having as its most characteristic

[1] W. J. V. Saville, *In Unknown New Guinea* (London, 1926), pp. 36 and 105. The missionary Saville is severe on Mailu 'morals': boys and girls chose their lovers freely and no girl went to her husband as a virgin. But Malinowski says that a girl who changed her lover too often was condemned, and there is the interesting parallel with Muria custom that if a boy wanted to marry a girl he avoided her and only if he did not desire marriage did intercourse take place. It is not clear, however, whether the love-affairs of the young people were associated in any way with the *dubu*. B. Malinowski, 'The Natives of Mailu', *Trans. R. Soc. South Australia*, Vol. XXXIX (1915), pp. 559–63.

[2] Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 6.

[3] S. H. Ray, 'The People and Language of Lifu, Loyalty Islands', *JRAI*, Vol. XLVII (1917), p. 227.

[4] E. Hadfield, *Among the Natives of the Loyalty Group* (London, 1920), p. 42.

[5] W. N. Beaver, *Unexplored New Guinea* (London, 1920), pp. 183ff.

[6] G. Landtmann, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), pp. 81., 17, 211.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 X
171 K

feature a high overhanging open gable which yawns like the gaping mouth of some primeval crocodile. The raising of the heavy main posts which bear

After a photograph by Parkinson, facing p. 269 in Max Schmidt's *The Primitive Races of Mankind* (Harrap)

FIG. 34. Men's house in Dallmanhasen, Melanesia

the weight of the gable demands concentration of effort, organization of labour and engineering skill, and the owners of the house take pride in their size. A new post is often decorated with flowers and palm branches before it is set up. So much is a large post a testimony to the industrial qualities of the owners that, as F. E. Williams was once told, visitors to a *ravi* 'shed tears of jealousy on first clapping eyes on a new post which fronted it'.[1]

Many other such institutions exist, or have existed, in New Guinea and the Melanesian Islands under various names. They are all described as being forbidden to women and most as being associated with the warlike side of tribal life.

Such are the houses for men only, taboo to women. But this is not the whole picture: there are other houses which are represented as fulfilling the purpose of sexual initiation or as providing a place of temporary cohabitation. The youths' house in the New Hebrides is known as the *imotium*.

> All villages have special houses where all unmarried circumcised males live, and to this house comes at special seasons a girl known as the *iouhanaus* whose special task it is to initiate the boys into the mysteries of sex. No man can contract a marriage who has not been initiated

[1] Raymond Firth, *Art and Life in New Guinea* (London and New York, 1936), p. 23. F. E. Williams says that the Purari 'severely deprecated loose conduct in unmarried girls'. Yet 'there was certainly opportunity for sexual gratification placed before the young men'. *The Natives of the Purari Delta* (Port Moresby, 1924), pp. 243ff.

18

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Y883
X171

by the *iowkanan*, and a man may not be betrothed until he has been touched by her. There is no special ceremonial act in the touching and it is admitted that it is generally the prelude to connexion with the woman. There is no payment made to the woman for this service, but the village or tribe which furnishes her receives compensation. She is painted in a special manner as a sign of her profession and wears turtle-shell ear-rings and other ornaments, while a shorter skirt distinguishes her from other women. After a circumcision ceremony, the *iowkanan* is sent to live in the bachelors' house with the unmarried men, and while she is living there, the mothers of the young men with her take food for their sons, though their sisters are most rigorously kept away. The youths make use of the *iowkanan* while she is living with them, but when she is absent a period of abstinence prevails. After her services are no longer required she returns to her village and later makes a good marriage, for there seems to be no ill feeling against her.[1]

The relation between the boys' and girls' houses of the Wagawaga of British New Guinea has been discussed by Seligman.

> Certain houses are dedicated to the use of unmarried girls above the age of puberty who habitually pass the night in them. These, like the local man-houses, are called *potuma*, and are usually old houses which, when their owners build new ones, are given over to the girls. The girls resort to these houses in the dusk, and after dark a number of young bachelors will proceed to such a *potuma*, and with the exception of one of their number, squat down outside.
>
> This youth enters the house and asks the girls if any of them are willing to receive any of the boys whose names he repeats. If one of the latter finds favour the girl says, 'All right, you tell him byemby he come'. Usually each girl selects a partner, and after finding out which girls want companions, the ambassador comes out and tells the boys which of them have been selected; the latter resort to the *potuma*, while the unchosen remainder may proceed to another girl-house and there go through the same programme. In each *potuma* the evening is spent in singing and yarning, but it is understood that in most cases connexion will follow. Each couple goes to sleep together, but without discarding petticoat and perineal band; when a boy wakes up and sees that the others are asleep he has connexion with his partner.[2]

There are points of resemblance here, especially in the girls' privilege of choosing their partners, which recall the Muria ghotul. With the *bukumatula* of the Trobriand Islands there are still further points of resemblance and difference. The *bukumatula* was established, says Malinowski, because 'the lasting liaisons of youths and adult girls require some special institution, definitely established, physically comfortable, and at the same time having the approval of custom'. In every Trobriand village, therefore, there are houses—there may be as many as thirty in a single village—in which 'a limited number of couples, some two, three, or four, live for longer or shorter periods together in a temporary community. Such houses also and incidentally offer shelter for younger couples if they want amorous privacy for an hour or two'.

The houses are simply furnished with bunks covered with mats. Since they are only used for sleeping, they are 'strikingly bare. They lack the

[1] C. B. Humphreys, *The Southern New Hebrides* (Cambridge, 1926), p. 45.
[2] Seligman, *op. cit.*, p. 500.

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A N32
Muria

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feminine touch, the impression of being really inhabited'. Each boy owns his own bunk and regularly uses it. 'When a couple dissolve their liaison,

After a photograph facing p. 59 in B. Malinowski's *The Sexual Life of Savages* (Routledge)

FIG. 35. A decorated bachelor's house in the Trobriand Islands

it is the girl who moves, as a rule, to find another sleeping-place with another sweetheart.' But the pairs of lovers remain, at least for the time being, strictly faithful to one another; there is never an exchange of partners; 'in fact a special code of honour is observed within the *bukumatula*, which makes an inmate more careful to respect sexual rights within the house than outside it'.

Malinowski summarises the characteristics of the *bukumatula* as being '(1) individual appropriation, the partners of each couple belonging exclusively to one another; (2) strict decorum and absence of any orgiastic or lascivious display; (3) the lack of any legally binding element; (4) the exclusion of any other community of interest between a pair, save that of sexual cohabitation'.[1]

Between the *bukumatula* and the ghotul there are obvious resemblances (particularly the decorum and lack of any legally binding element) with the individual appropriation characteristic of the *joduldr* ghotul. But the one great central ghotal house, heart of a hundred religious and social interests, carefully organised and disciplined, is fundamentally different from the Melanesian institution.

[1] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages* (London, 1932), p. 59.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Polynesia and Micronesia

X 823
X171

Throughout Polynesia and Micronesia the men's house is widely distributed, sometimes existing for the purpose of sexual segregation, sometimes—as in the case of the notorious Areoi—developing into a secret society, occasionally promoting the cohabitation of the boys and girls. Hutton Webster quotes from missionary reports severely condemning the Uritoi *maisons des célibataires* of the Marianne Islands. The Uritoi are described as young men who desired to live with girls without engaging themselves in the bonds of marriage; they had a mysterious language which they used principally for amorous songs; they lived together in dormitories to which their parents urged them to go.[1] This sounds not unlike the Trobriand *bukumatula*. Of the Ti or bachelor's hall in the Marquesas, studied by Herman Melville in 1847, Peal says, 'The absence of marriage except in a rudimentary (endogamic) form, the complete sexual liberty, utter ignorance of modesty, and remarkable development of the Ti, or barracks tabu to women, are as singular as the general happiness and plenty, absence of sickness and crime'.[2]

In the Pelew Islands the young men formed themselves into clubs called *kaldebekel* and built dormitories called *bai*. A youth was regarded as only a guest in his parents' house; his real home was the *bai*, and he was not supposed to spend the night with his mother and father. In each *bai* there were one or more *armengol*, unmarried girls, who were the temporary property of the boys.[3] An early authority, Captain C. Bridge, says that 'a few women from neighbouring villages frequent' the dormitories. 'It is not considered *comme il faut* for a woman to enter one in her own village. If she did she would become an outcaste; going into one a mile or two off, however, in no way affects her position.'[4] In the Carolines three or four unmarried girls called *mespil* were kept in the club houses 'whose business it was to minister to the pleasures of the men of the particular clan to which the building belonged'. Each man took his turn by rotation with them. This was 'an ordeal or preliminary trial to fit them for the cares and burden of maternity'. Afterwards the *mespil* could marry and there was no harm in it. Sometimes another village carried off a *mespil*, but this was thought very improper.[5] This arrangement appears to resemble that in the *imieum* of the New Hebrides, but it is possible that the situation has been misunderstood by our authorities; it is a subject on which the most detailed research is needed.

Peal considered that the 'bachelors' barracks' spread from Polynesia to New Zealand, and quotes a report that it was known there as the *whares matoro*, 'the sleeping-place of the young men, and often of the young women too. *Whare* means "house" and *matoro* is the advance made by women towards the other sex. These *whares* were also the places where the village guests were entertained. Sexual intercourse between the young and unmarried was quite unrestrained in former times'.[6]

1 Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 169.
2 Peal, *JASB*, Vol. LXI, p. 261, quoting H. Melville, *Narrative of a four months' residence in the Typee Valley of Nukuhiva, one of the Marquesas, in 1847*.
3 On the Pelew Islands Kubary is our chief authority. He is quoted by Hutton Webster.
4 *Proc. RGS*, Sept. 1886, p. 549.
5 See F. W. Christian, *The Carolines Islands* (London, 1899), pp. 288ff, and *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XIII (1899), p. 134.
6 Peal, op. cit., p. 256.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

The Far East

The Jakun of Malaya appear to have the same desire as the Muria to prevent their children witnessing the 'primal scene'. 'As soon as signs of approaching puberty appear in their children, the Jakun arrange for them to sleep apart. On land, the boy slept in a separate part of the hut, or in the first part of the boat if he was on water.'[1] So too Low, who was Colonial Secretary at Labuan, says of the Hill Dyak of Sarawak that 'so strict are these people in encouraging virtue amongst their children, that the young and unmarried men are not permitted to sleep in the houses of their parents, after having attained the age of puberty, but occupy a large house, of peculiar construction, which is set apart for their use in the village'.[2] Just how this arrangement promoted 'virtue' is not explained.

The Battak of Sumatra have a *sopo* dormitory, to which women are admitted and it is said that they sit there to ply their daily task of weaving. 'In the central parts of Celebes the men's house is known as the *loho*. In Flores it is called *romaluli*, in the Kei Islands *roemah kompani*, in Timor *umalulik*. In each village of Formosa there are one or more *palanghans*, large enough to hold all the boys who have reached the age of puberty and are still unmarried.'[3]

The men's house is also said to be found among the Moi of Annam and the Kha of Siam. Bandesson says that its aim is to prevent sexual relations between the young men and the unmarried girls, but since he adds that 'the Moi seem to attach no importance to female chastity' it hardly appears to succeed in its object.[4]

The Philippines

The difficulties of studying this subject, and the contradictions in our records, are nowhere more clearly illustrated than by the many diverse statements that have been made about the *olag* or girls' house maintained by the Igorot of Luzon in the Philippine Archipelago. Hutton Webster[5] lists the Igorot *pahafunan* among his exclusively male clubs—'it is the man's club by day and the unmarried man's dormitory by night'—but he makes no reference to the boys' relations with the girls in the *olag*, though he must have known of them since he refers to Jenks' ethnographic survey of the tribe.[6] Westermarck[7] quotes Chamisso (who, as Briffault acidly remarks, 'spent nearly a week in Manila'[8]) as well as Meyer and Blumentritt to prove that some of the independent tribes of the Philippines, including the Igorot of Luzon, 'held chastity in great honour, not only in the case of women, but also in the case of young girls, and protected it by severe laws'.[9] Briffault shows that Meyer and Blumentritt both based their opinion on a passage in a pamphlet by Lillo de Garcia which runs as follows:

> As soon as the children attain puberty, both boys and girls are completely isolated. In each village there are two large houses; the maidens

[1] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, p. 86.
[2] H. Low, *Sarawak* (London, 1848), p. 247. See also p. 281.
[3] Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 8, where all references are given.
[4] H. Bandesson, *Indo-China and its Primitive Peoples* (Translation, London, 1919), p. 45.
[5] Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 9.
[6] A. E. Jenks, *The Bontoc Igorot* (Manila, 1905).
[7] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage* (London, 1925), Vol. I, p. 146.
[8] R. Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 49.
[9] Westermarck, op. cit., p. 146.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Y 883
X 171

spend the night in one of them and the boys in the other. With the latter an old man, and with the former an old woman act as overseers and take care that no one shall slip in or out of the houses during the night.

Briffault further quotes de Garcia as saying that so strict is the continence enforced on Igorot girls that, being unable to control their passions, they go into the woods and have connexion with monkeys.[1]

Westermarck makes no reference at all to the *olag*, though it is hard to understand how it was possible to discuss pre-nuptial sexual relations among the Igorot without doing so. It is only when we turn to Jenks' remarkable study —which was written before both Hutton Webster and Westermarck—that the situation becomes clarified.

Jenks points out that Blumentritt completely misunderstood the aim of the *olag* whose purpose 'is as far from enforcing chastity as it well can be. The old women never frequent the *olag*'.[2] Girls are sent to their dormitory at an early age, and though the boys have a separate house they are free to visit them. The girls themselves entice the boys; sometimes a girl steals a boy's pipe, cap or breeches, and he has to come at night to recover his property. 'Marriage', says Jenks, 'never takes place prior to sexual intimacy, and rarely prior to pregnancy.' Though a boy may be sexually intimate with one, two, three, or even more girls at the same time, 'a girl is almost invariably faithful to her temporary lover'.

Briffault claims that the girl's faithfulness to one lover at a time is regarded by Jenks with scepticism and as inconsistent with the whole conduct of the *olag*. Westermarck admits his acquaintance with Jenks' work[3] but never explains how he could make such high claims for the chastity of Igorot girls in spite of the institution of the *olag* where, as Jenks says again, 'there is no such thing as virtue, in our sense of the word, among the young people after puberty'.

Finally, Jenks' opinion is confirmed thirty-six years later[4] by R. F. Barton who took a rather severe view of Igorot promiscuity.

> This whole mountain country has an institution that has been called 'trial marriage'. The unmarried from the age of three or four years up, sleep at communal dormitories for each sex. The older boys make nocturnal calls on their sweethearts in the girls' dormitories. Inmates and amorous swains used to carry a torch of pitch pine to light their way over the precipitous village paths. But now there isn't any more pitch pine, so every youth has a flashlight and so have most of the girls. The flashlight came just in time to save the Igorot's peculiar institution.

The wheel has come full cycle. What was regarded by Hutton Webster as a means of segregating the boys of the tribe and as a social centre of male life, is now described as something entirely concerned with sex.

The following account, however, based on Jenks, of the dormitories of the Bontoc Igorot, summarizes the established facts. The boys sleep in the *pahafunan* or *fawi*, which is taboo to women, and in the day is the club of all the men. This visible exponent of tribal institutions 'is a building forbidden to women, the functions of which are several: it is a dormitory for men—generally unmarried men—a council house, a guard house, a guest house for

[1] Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 50.
[2] Westermarck, *Three Essays on Sex and Marriage*, p. 239.
[3] Jenks, op. cit., pp. 66ff.
[4] R. F. Barton, 'The Igorots Today' in *Asia*, June 1941.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Bison-horn Maria

142
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Bison-horn Maria girl from Gudra,
Bastar State

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Bison-Horn Maria

142
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Hirme, a Bison-horn Maria girl washing her hands

Plate LIV

Bison-horn Maria dancers

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 823
X 171

men, a centre for ceremonials of the group, and a resting place for the trophies of the chase and war—a "head house".[1]

For the girls there is the *olag*, generally a small stone and mud-walled structure, in which a grown person can hardly stand, with a very small door. It is only used at night and over the floor are boards which serve as beds for the girls: these are put very close together on a frame about one foot above the ground. Although girls may not go to the *fawi*, boys go freely to the *olag* and are entertained there by their lovers. Indeed 'the *olag* is the mating place of the younger people of marriageable age'.[2] A married man does not usually visit it, though he may if a former lover is there unmated. But 'a man whose wife is pregnant seldom visits the *olag*, because he fears that, if he does, his wife's children will be prematurely born and die'.[3]

Jenks calls the *olag* 'an institution of trial marriage'[4] and says that when one of the girls becomes pregnant 'she at once joyfully tells her condition to the father of the child, as all women desire children'. Even if he does not marry her, she does not find it difficult to get another husband 'since her first child has proved her power to bear children'.[5] I have found a similar idea in Bastar. As in Bastar also, the Igorot have no puberty rites—and Jenks explains this by the fact that the *olag* is 'an institution calculated to emphasize the fact and significance of puberty'.

There are similar parallels between the Ifugao *agamang* and the Bastar tradition. 'From the time he is physically independent (four to seven years) a child sleeps in a dormitory for the unmarried. This may be a vacant house or the house of a widow, widower, or unmarried person. The *agamang* for boys contains only boys and bachelors, the girls' *agamang* is always mixed, the inmates being little girls, large girls and their lovers, old women, widows (including divorcees) and their lovers if any.'[6] For at puberty or soon after, the boy begins to visit the mixed *agamang*. Considerable light is thrown on 'the heedless and promiscuous' sexual relations of the dormitory in the autobiographies collected by R. F. Barton. 'If pregnancy results from a liaison there, marriage follows as a matter of course. It is inconceivable to the Ifugao that a boy should not marry the mother of his child unless there should be doubt about the paternity.' Marriage, however, as in Bastar is generally arranged by the parents.

Barton, impressed by the promiscuity of *agamang* relationships, considers that 'Ifugao youths are utter strangers to adolescent love' and indeed questions whether love, 'as we understand it', can exist apart from monogamy. But Muria experience in the ghotul shows clearly that love can co-exist with considerable freedom in sexual relations.

In the Ifugao boys' dormitory, says Barton, 'masturbation and sexual perversions are absent—at least I am sure about the latter. There is no word for either'.

America

Village dormitories are found in many parts of South America. The Bororo of Brazil have a highly organised men's house or *bakito*.[7] After a boy has been weaned, which is said to be delayed to the fifth or even the seventh

[1] Jenks, op. cit., p. 32.
[2] Ibid., p. 33.
[3] Ibid., p. 66.
[4] Ibid., p. 66.
[5] Ibid., p. 67.
[6] R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans* (London, 1938), pp. 9ff. and many references to the institution throughout the book.
[7] V. Frič and Paul Radin, 'Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians', *JAI*, Vol. XXXVI (1906), p. 388.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Y883
M171

year, he enters the *bahito* and henceforward only occasionally visits his parents. The dormitory serves as a school where the children are taught spinning, weaving, the manufacture of weapons and singing. Every evening the local chieftain goes to the *bahito* and sings his commands for the following day, inspiring the boys with his accounts of hunting trips and perilous journeys. It is not clear how far girls share the life of the *bahito*, but there is some evidence that at a certain time of the year, a feast takes place in the *bahito* at which the young men steal the virgins and keep them in their dormitory. But since this is only done to girls who have no parents, the practice cannot be very common. If a Bonoro suspects his wife of infidelity he puts her at the disposal of the young men in the *bahito*, but Fric says that he never saw more than two such women in any village.

Hutton Webster says that in Mexico and Central America the men's house was found among some of the tribes still living in a primitive condition, but most of the instances he gives are of secret societies or village clubs, not real houses of youth. The *celpule* of Guatemala, however, was probably a real boys' dormitory, and Hutton Webster quotes Herrera as describing it as a sort of college 'where four hundred youths chosen by the Prime Men resided'. These boys were trained in all the arts of war. Herrera gives a curious account of their relations with women.

> These men were authoriz'd to stand in the Market, and if any Woman brought with her a Maiden Daughter, above twelve Years of Age, they ask'd the Mother, why she did not marry that Girl? She gave what reason she thought fit; the young Man reply'd, It is now Time for her to breed, and not to spend her Time in vain, carry her to the House of the young Batchelors, and he appointed the Time. . . . Then she carry'd the Girl, whom the Youth kept one Night, and deflower'd; if he lik'd, he took her to Wife, departed the College, and went home to live with her, and another was put into the College in his Stead. If he did not like, he restor'd her to the Mother, ordering that she should be marry'd and multiply.[1]

Africa

In Africa, where the dormitory is reported of many tribes, it seems to have arisen partly as a guard-room and training centre for young warriors, and partly to save parents from the embarrassing presence of grown-up children in small houses. Basuto boys live in a separate building and have to perform social duties. The Wigendo of the Hehe-Bena-Sangu peoples of East Africa served as the chief's bodyguard and were treated 'like pupils in a school', receiving instruction in war, sex and deportment.[2] Unyamwesi boys eat and sleep in their *ibanza*, and dance in the open space before it. The men's house is said to have existed in the Congo among the East Manyema and Mogwandi, among the Wapokomo of East Africa, the Yaunde and other tribes of the Cameroons and the Mandingo of the Western Sudan.[3] Bari children of both sexes sleep in their parents' hut when quite young, in the goat-houses with the goats when a little older, and near puberty the boys build themselves a hut and live together.[4]

[1] A. de Herrera, *General History of America, commonly called the West Indies*. Translated by Stevens (London, 1740), Vol. IV, p. 127. Quoted by Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 16.

[2] W. B. Mumford, 'The Hehe-Bena-Sangu Peoples of East Africa', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVI (New Series), p. 212.

[3] Hutton Webster, op. cit., pp. 128.

[4] C. G. and B. Z. Seligman, 'The Bari', *JRAI*, Vol. LVIII (1928), p. 415.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

The Bawenda *fonalo* is a school for the young men. It is an oblong fortress-like walled enclosure near the entrance to the chiefs' kraal which is used

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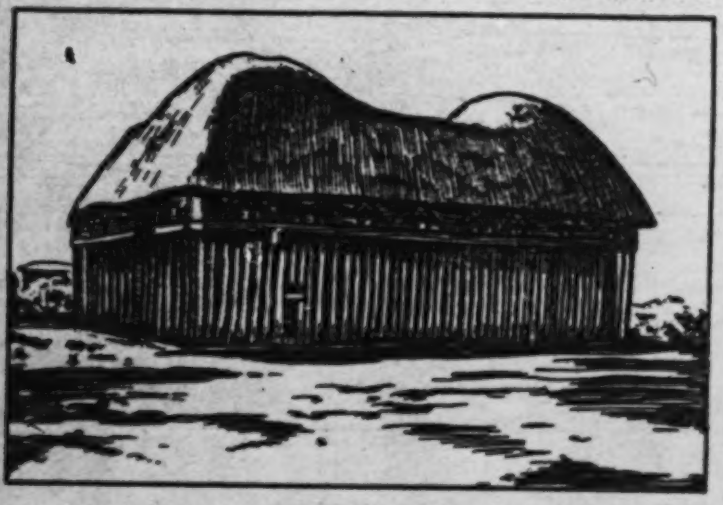

After a photograph by B. Ankermann facing p. 321 in Max Schmidt's *The Primitive Races of Mankind* (Harrap)

FIG. 36. Men's house of the Bamum

also as a guard-house. Here boys are 'made men' and used as the chiefs' bodyguards. No stranger is admitted. Inside is a little round shed containing fetishes. The boys are shown these, but are bound to secrecy. They are taught etiquette, to bear pain, to be brave in war. The girls are trained separately. But after the boys and girls have completed their separate training, they attend together a *domba* school where they are taught about marriage and child-birth. There are symbolic plays and on the last day of their training they do a python dance all night. In the morning a ceremonial coitus is performed beneath a blanket by a pair of initiates.[1]

When Lugwari boys and girls reach the age of about eight years they are put into the sleeping-huts called *adroso*, separate from their parents. When several families live close together, these houses are often built communally and placed in the centre of the cluster. Children of both sexes sleep together in the *adroso*.[2] Among the Kipsiki or Lumbwa tribe of Kenya Colony, unmarried boys on attaining puberty sleep, if their father is alive, in the *sigwoindi*. 'Each youth has a sweetheart in particular, with whom he sleeps from time to time; if she is a virgin, he respects her virginity for years while sleeping with her. A number of youths and girls may sleep in one hut. There are no indecencies.'[3]

[1] H. Cotterill, 'The Bawenda', *JAI*, Vol. XXXV (1905), p. 372. See also H. A. Stayt, *The Bawenda* (Oxford, 1931).

[2] R. H. McConnell, 'Notes on the Lugwari Tribe of Central Africa', *JRAI*, Vol. LV (1925), p. 452.

[3] J. Routledge, 'Notes on the Kipsiki', *JRAI*, Vol. LIII (1924), p. 68.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 983
X 171

Emin Pasha recorded that 'a peculiar custom' prevailed among the Madi and their neighbours, the Shuli. Buildings raised above the ground are scattered about among the houses of the village. They are very like large granaries, but have in the front an oval doorway, and are smoothly plastered with clay. As soon as signs of puberty arrive, the girls sleep in these huts, and boys who have reached maturity have free access to them. Should a girl become pregnant, the youth who has been her companion is bound to marry her, and to pay her father the customary price of a bride.[1]

The Bweni of the Bondei country are said to have a dormitory where boys and girls 'too old to stay in their father's house for obvious reasons' live and sleep. Bedsteads are the only furniture; the children appear to be excused ordinary household duties. The mothers supply firewood, each one piece. 'As far as I can discover', writes the missionary Dale, 'it is never the custom for the boys and girls to enter each other's rooms. In the morning they may do so, but not one or two. Half a dozen may for the sake of a gossip. If one does do so, he is called *mwangwizi*—one who opens the door by night when people are asleep.'[2]

The Nandi, however, allow sexual relations in the dormitory. Unmarried warriors sleep, perhaps ten at a time, in a separate hut. 'Unmarried girls are allowed to visit the warriors in these buildings, staying with them for a few days at a time and living with them in a state of free love.' No married women are admitted, and when the warriors are away the girls look after the hut.[3]

But perhaps the most interesting of such institutions in Africa, and one about which we are fortunate enough to have a full and detailed account, is the *manyatta* of the Masai.[4] During their time of service in the warrior class the members of each Masai age-group live in special villages built away from the main married men's villages which are called *manyatta*. A *manyatta* consists of a number of huts each one of which is built, and lived in, by the mother (or another married woman relative) of one of the warriors. The elder women, who are accompanied by their children and especially by the warriors' uninitiated sisters and half-sisters, are there to work for the youths; the girls attend chiefly as their companions and lovers. A girl can only live in the *manyatta* if she has a brother there, and each young warrior is expected to bring two or three of his sisters who should if possible be fairly grown up.

The huts for the warriors are not divided into rooms. At one end, not screened off in any way, is the bed of the mother and her children. At the other end, equally unscreened, is the bed on which the warriors and their girls sleep together. The warriors give a general invitation, but it is a girl's privilege to choose her warrior for the night. No warrior sleeps in his own mother's hut, but arranges to go to one of the other huts and calls the girl to

[1] *Emin Pasha in Central Africa* (London, 1888), p. 103. Quoted by J. G. Frazer *The Native Races of Africa and Madagascar* (London, 1938), p. 323.

[2] C. Dale, 'An Account of the Natives inhabiting the Bondei Country', *JAS*, Vol. XXV (1896), pp. 196f.

[3] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 16. Hutton Webster says that the Fang of the French Congo have a similar institution, but the authority he gives—A. L. Bennett, 'Ethnographic Notes on the Fang', *JAI*, Vol. XXIX (1899), pp. 66ff.—suggests rather that the *akong* is simply a palaver house.

[4] L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *JRAI*, Vol. LX (1930), pp. 192ff. The Masai, says J. Thomson, 'live in a very indescribable manner till they are married'. *Proc. RGS*, Dec. 1884, p. 761. See also S. L. and H. Hinde, *The Land of the Masai* (London, 1901), pp. 70-4 and A. C. Hollis, *The Masai* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 322, 330-11.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond
Bhuiya AW28

Plate LV

Mask worn by Bhuiya youths on ceremonial expeditions

142
532

Girl member of the Bhuiya dormitory at Rusta

342

Bhuiya dormitory at Raisua

[p. 282 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond
Kharia AW36

Plate LVI

142
291
301

Juang dhangri at Kantara

[p. 282 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria
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X 883
883
X 171

him there. Several warriors generally sleep with their girls on the big bed, and there may be younger girls also with them.

'No girl may sleep with a man except she be absolutely nude, but on the other hand, although she may not refuse an invitation to sleep with a man, she is not necessarily expected to allow him full sexual intercourse, and, in fact, often does not do so.' Thus—strange as it may seem—Masai girls do sometimes go to their husbands as virgins in the physical sense of the word, although they have slept with men in the *manyatta* countless times.

'Besides the casual day-to-day lovers described above a girl has very often a more permanent lover in her *manyatta* chosen from the ranks of those who have been her casual lovers.' There is a public ceremony of choosing, and in some cases the couple ultimately marry, 'but this is not usual, as nearly every Masai girl is betrothed during childhood, and usually girls are quite content to marry those to whom they were thus betrothed. Should a girl be unwilling to marry the man to whom she is betrothed she usually contrives to become pregnant by her "permanent lover" and to persuade him to marry her'. We shall notice a similar habit among the Muria; in those ghotul which allow it, marriage between 'permanent lovers' is comparatively rare; but where a deep and lasting love exists, a chelik may do his best to make his motiari pregnant in order to break the matrimonial arrangements that have been made for them.

Among the Tanala, a hill tribe of Madagascar, when the eldest child in a family reaches fifteen or sixteen, even if not mature, the father builds it a separate house to the east of his dwelling. Girls use this as a work-room and receive their friends there, but sleep in the house. The boys all live together and only eat at home. The Tanala explain the institution as a defensive measure of the parents to avoid the nuisance of visitors. Girls are said to avoid intercourse before marriage, as early intercourse and promiscuity may lead to sterility. But 'premarital chastity on the part of a man would be taken as a confession of impotence and would make it difficult for him to find a wife'.[1]

Assam

The village dormitory in Assam has importance as a guard-house, a centre of social and religious activities, a school for the young men and a factor in the clan-organization of the tribe. 'There can be no doubt', says C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'that the men's house system is a very ancient institution. The rôle which the *morung* plays in the villages of the Konyaks shows how deeply it is rooted in their social organization, and since the Konyaks seem to represent an older type of Naga culture than any of the other tribes, it appears most probable that the *morung* belongs, together with the log-drum, to the oldest cultural stratum of the Naga Hills.'[2] We are fortunate in having many excellent accounts of the peoples of Assam by competent observers and our knowledge of the men's house there is more detailed and exact than that of other parts of the world.

One of the earliest accounts is in John Butler's *Sketch of Assam*, published in London in 1847. I do not know what reliance can be placed on Butler's remarks, but I quote a passage, which contains one very strange circumstance, because it was first in the field.

[1] R. Linton, *The Tanala*, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Vol. XXII (1933), pp. 296ff.

[2] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'The Morung System of the Konyak Nagas', *JRAI*, Vol. LXVIII (1938), p. 378.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
X 171

> On attaining the age of nine or ten years the boy is called a Moorungea, and from that time no longer resides with his parents, but, with all the youths of the village, takes up his abode at the Moorung, a large building set apart for this especial purpose. The parents, however, still continue to provide him with food, and he is obedient to their will, assisting them in cultivating their fields. . . The girls all live together, like the boys, in a separate Moorung, or house allotted for them; sometimes they reside in a house in which a corpse is kept, probably from the greater sanctity such an inmate would confer on their habitation.[1]

Another early account of the dormitories in Assam is by Peal who in the early months of 1882 made an expedition up the Dihing basin to Dapha Pani. He sketched a girls' house at a small Singphu village called Jagon. Peal distinguishes two types of *morung*—

> the *deka morang*, of the grown young men, who also act as guards, their houses being often on the outskirts or outlets of a village, and the little boys' *morang*, where they all sleep together, and are under certain laws or regulations of their own. In some villages as among the Bor Duria Naga there are as many as ten and twelve *deka morang*, several boys' *morang*, and three or four for the unmarried girls. Incautious or abrupt questions regarding these latter, especially by strangers are apt to produce denial or evasions, as these hill men well know that our ideas of chastity are not theirs. But at times they speak out plainly. Lately a Bor Duria Naga who was giving me a list of his village *morang*, in reply to my query as to whether the young men went to the girls' *morang*, said '*Na pai, na pai, dinot na pai*', not in the day, they would be ashamed, but after dark after all had eaten, then they went and all had great fun, it was their custom.
>
> Among all these tribes this is more or less the custom, and we may truly say their chastity begins with marriage, juvenile chastity is not the rule, but the exception.
>
> As we see the custom about us, it generally appears that the unmarried have to sleep away from the parents' house, at times only the boys and young men, at others the young women and girls also, but in this case they have different houses, though all are called by the Assamese *morang*. Among the Bordurias, Mutons, Banparas, Jobokas, Sanglois, and the tribes near, they are called Pa (*pah*); west of the Diku river I hear these morangs are called *Arisu*, and there are different tribal names for them among the Singphu, Mishmi, Miri, and others, on the north or river bank of the Brahmaputra; attached to them are I hear fixed rules or laws, which it would be most interesting to collect and collate, and which may doubtless yield a clue to their origin. Viewing the 'morang' as a phase of social evolution, it is probable that we have here before us one phase or form of the transition from original sexual liberty to our institution of marriage and modern ideas of chastity.
>
> The idea that sexual fidelity begins with marriage is here obvious, and almost implies that the institution began by capture, or purchase, giving a pair the right to live separate, as has been urged by many. A curious feature of the case confirmatory of this, is, that sexual infidelity by the female after marriage seems rare, much more so than among

[1] John Butler, *A Sketch of Assam, with some Account of the Hill Tribes* (London, 1847) p. 164.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
171X

civilised communities. At this Jagon village there was only one *morung* and that for girls, the allusions to it I heard when we were returning, were unmistakable.[1]

The *morung* of the Chang, Yimsungr and Sangtam are small and are used chiefly as drum-houses and depositories for the skulls of enemies.[2] The men's house is insignificant also in Angami villages. The boys sometimes sleep on a wooden platform outside some ordinary house; if any place is set

After a photograph by J. H. Hutton, facing p. 123 of J. P. Mills' *The Lhota Nagas* (Macmillan)

FIG. 37. Lhota Naga *morung* at Pangti

aside for them, they do not use it habitually, but for ceremonies which by traditional usage call for a house definitely allotted to the young men of the clan. At other times it is used 'merely as a casual resort for the village bucks'.[3] There is no separate house for girls.[4] The Sema also do not have the *morung* as a separate institution, though in times of scarcity little models are built,

[1] S. E. Peal, 'Notes of a trip up the Dihing basin to Dapha Pani, etc., January and February, 1882', *JASB*, Vol LII (1883), pp. 16-17.

[2] Pfeyre-Haimendorf, op. cit., p. 377. There is a brief account, and many drawings and photos, of Konyak, Chang, Sangtam and Sema *morung* in J. H. Hutton's *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area East of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929). See also H. Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbunde* (Berlin, 1902), pp. 278ff.

[3] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas* (London, 1921), p. 49. [4] Ibid., p. 169.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Y883
X171

'the underlying idea apparently being that the scarcity may be due to the village having neglected to conform to a custom which has been abandoned'.[1] Gait, however, says that bachelors usually sleep together in separate houses. 'Unmarried girls sleep together by threes and fours in the front compartment of certain houses; here they assemble at nightfall and sit spinning yarn, cleaning cotton and chaffing and laughing with the young men often for hours.'[2] 'With the Dimasa (Hill Kacharis) the dormitory is now no more than a raised and sheltered platform in the middle of the village, and with the Plains Kacharis of Kamrup it seems to have faded into the *nimghar* where Hindu religious ceremonies take place.'[3]

But among most of the other Naga tribes the *morung* system is highly developed and elaborate buildings are erected. The *morung* of the Kalyo Kengyu Naga indicate a well-established system; they are the homes of the unmarried youths.[4] The Lhota Naga call their bachelors' house *champo*. Here raids were planned and discussed, and to it all heads taken in war were first brought and prisoners of war detained. No woman was admitted. The buildings were smaller than the great buildings of the Ao and Konyak, yet might be 40 feet long by 15 feet in front. 'The interior of a *champo* is not attractive. It is dark, dirty, smoky, stuffy and full of fleas. Yet a Lhota talks of his happy *champo* days much as an Englishman talks of his schooldays.' As sometimes among the Muria, the *champo* has land belonging to it and from the rice grown thereon pigs and cows are bought for the rebuilding festivals which occur every nine years. When a boy leaves the *champo* after marriage he has to pay a small fine of meat as compensation to his old companions for the loss of his labour.[5]

The Memi have both boys' and girls' dormitories called *ikhuichi* and *iloichi* respectively.[6] In some cases both boys and girls use the same house, the young men sleeping on an upper shelf and the girls below them. 'The publicity', says Hutton, 'probably entails great propriety of behaviour.'[7]

Among the Naga tribes of Manipur, there do not seem to be the great specially-built *morung* characteristic of the Ao and Konyak, but it is considered a public-spirited thing for a man to make over his house to the young men or to allow them to sleep in his own house, a practice reported of the Kabui and Mao tribes and the Vuite and other Kuki clans. The institution was once much more fully developed than it is today or even when Hodson wrote.[8] Dalton says of the Kabui, quoting Colonel McCulloch, that 'according as the village is large or small they assemble in one or several houses which for the time become their homes. These clubs are ruled over despotically by the seniors amongst them, who exact from their juniors, with unsparing hand, service of all kinds. The young women also have their separate places of resort, and between them and the young men intercourse is quite unrestricted, without tending to immorality'.[9] Unmarried girls of the Kuki clans, as in Manipur, had officials called Ningon-lakpas whose duty it was to look after them in their dormitories called *singousil*.[10]

[1] J. H. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas* (London, 1921), p. 37.
[2] E. A. Gait in *Census of India, 1891*. Assam Report, Vol. I, p. 231.
[3] J. P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas* (London, 1926), p. 732.
[4] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'Through the Unexplored Mountains of the Assam-Burma Border', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XCI (1938), p. 209.
[5] J. P. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas* (London, 1922), pp. 248.
[6] Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 343. [7] Ibid., p. 49.
[8] T. C. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), pp. 70ff.
[9] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 52.
[10] Hodson, op. cit., p. 76.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

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Among the Garo, the bachelors' house is called *dokacheng* in Assamese or *nokpante* in tribal dialect. 'This building is lofty and most substantially

After a photograph by Mellejohn, facing p. 74
in J. P. Mills' *The Ao Nagas* (Macmillan)

FIG. 38. Ao Naga morung with 'sitting-out' platform (left) and log-drum shed (right) Mokoongtsu village

built: one half of it forms an open hall in which the village conferences are held, and the chief Lashkar holds his court. The remainder is enclosed as the dormitory for the young men. The posts and beams are fantastically carved.'[1] In the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and the more remote portions of the Nowgong district, 'the unmarried male Lalungs reside in a bachelors' *chang*, similar to that found in Garo and Naga villages. In this respect the Lalungs appear to be in an interesting state of transition, as the practice is no longer in vogue in Kamrup and the more accessible portions of Nowgong'.[2] This was in 1891. The Lyngngam of the Khasi Hills also have dormitories 'where the young unmarried men sleep, where male guests are accommodated, and where the village festivities go on'. This, says Gurdon, is a 'custom of the Thibeto-Burman tribes in Assam, and is not a Khasi institution'.[3]

The institution of the *risonsar*, as it existed among the Mikir at the beginning of the present century, was described briefly by Stack. 'The most important institution', he writes, 'from the point of view of agriculture was the club of the *dokas* or young men; but it is reported that this useful form of co-operation is now falling into desuetude.' Formerly the youths had their own house; already when Stack wrote they were living in the place where strangers were

[1] Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 61. See also A. Playfair, *The Garos* (London, 1909), p. 39.
[2] E. A. Gait in *Census of India, 1891*. Assam Report, Vol. I, p. 231.
[3] P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, second edition, 1914), p. 196.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 823
X 171

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

lodged in the house of the head of the village. The boys' club was carefully organized and had regular officers to whom duties were assigned.[1]

The Abor had their *morung*, which Dalton describes as a 'town hall'. 'This is in the same style of architecture as the private houses, but it is 200 feet in length and has 16 or 17 fireplaces.'[2] 'The unmarried girls', says Needham, 'have apparently any amount of latitude given them', and he notes their love of singing and dancing.[3]

The *zawlbuk* is common to many of the Lushei Kuki clans, though the Vuite do not build houses but arrange for unmarried boys to sleep in the house of one of the elders, and the Rangte allow them to sleep in the house 'of the girl they like best'.[4] The Purum have a custom that if a man has a son and a daughter the son must go and sleep in the house of someone who has an unmarried daughter.[5] The Lushei, Chiru and Vaiphei build elaborate houses for the boys, generally on a steep hillside, for the tame bison are kept under the house and this arrangement ensures good drainage. 'The young boys of the village have to keep up the supply of firewood for the *zawlbuk*, this duty continuing till they reach the age of puberty, when they cease sleeping in their parents' houses and join the young men in the *zawlbuk*. Until that time they are under the orders of the oldest or most influential boy, who is their *hotu* or superintendent. The *zawlbuk* is the particular property of the unmarried men of the village who gather there in the evening to sing songs, tell stories, and make jokes till it is time to visit their sweethearts, after which they return there for the rest of the night. Travellers not having any friends in the village use the *zawlbuk* as a rest-house, but eating and drinking are seldom, if ever, carried on there.'[6]

I have kept to the end those tribes of whose dormitories we have the fullest and most dependable accounts. The *morung* of both Ao and Rengma Naga have been admirably described by J. P. Mills and that of the Konyak Naga with a wealth of detail by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf. Near the gate of an Ao Naga village stands the *morung*, 'a really fine building, often over fifty feet long and twenty feet broad, with a front gable thirty feet above the ground. It is both a guard house and a club house, and plays a most important part in the social life of the village'.[7] Its membership is based on an age-group system, admissions being made every three years of all the boys belonging to one particular group. 'Boys on first entering the *morung* have certain menial duties to perform till, in three years' time, a new age-group takes their place and the fags of yesterday blossom into bloods for the next three years of *morung* life.'

In a Rengma village also the *morung* is the finest and most ornate of the buildings. It fulfils a variety of functions. 'It is a club far more strictly preserved from feminine intrusion than any club in England. There the men sit and gossip. The old men are primed with drink and by their discourses keep alive the traditions of the village. In the old days warriors invariably kept their shields, spears and daos in the *morung*. The *morung* is also a sanctuary. No criminal can be touched while in a *morung*. Nor may any crime be committed there. Property can be left lying about in one with absolute safety, for to steal is tabu. Any stranger too must be treated politely. High

[1] E. Stack and C. J. Lyall, *The Mikirs* (London, 1908), pp. 111.
[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 23. [3] J. F. Needham, *Proc. RGS*, May 1886.
[4] J. Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans* (London, 1912), pp. 143 and 146.
[5] J. Shakespear, 'The Kuki-Lushei Clans', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXIX (1909), p. 374.
[6] Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, p. 82.
[7] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 73.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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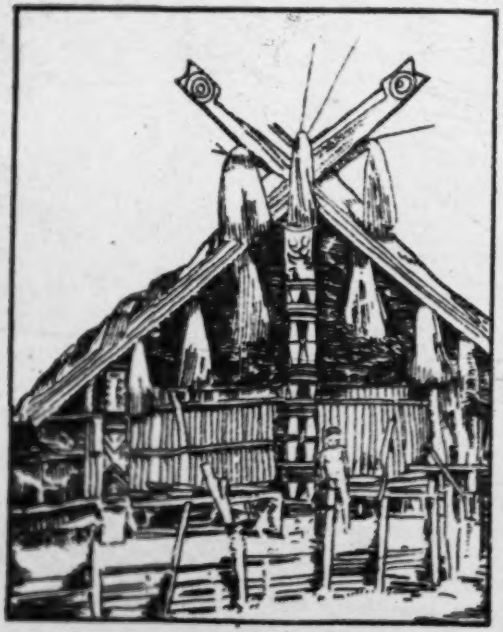
words and abuse are forbidden.' Boys remain in the *morung* from the age of six or seven till they marry. A reflection of Muria practice is seen in the



After a photograph facing p. 49 in J. P. Mills' *The Rengma Nagas* (Macmillan)

PIC. 39. Front of *morung*: Eastern Rengma

custom of having boys and girls sleeping round bride and bridegroom, though the Muria do not do this after marriage. Girls, like boys, must not sleep with their parents after a certain age and special arrangements are made for them also. In the Tesophenyu group the girls' sleeping-platform is conveniently near the ground, and admittedly young men are allowed to sit on it. Rumour has it that they often sleep there.[1]

Of all the *morung* those of the Konyak Naga seem to be the finest and most elaborate.[2] In each of these great houses, there is a large xylophone seldom less than twenty feet long. The pillars are carefully carved, and as in the Muria ghotul sexual motifs are frequent. Again as in Bastar 'one of the main features of most *morung* is the complete equality of all its members'. There are *morung* officials, but they act only on ceremonial occasions. There is a ceremony of admission for young boys, which with its allusions to the taking of heads and symbolical spearing of a tree, indicates that one of its main purposes is to make the boy—in a magical way—fit for war and head-hunting.

[1] J. P. Mills, *The Rengma Nagas* (London, 1937), pp. 49ff.
[2] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'The Morung System of the Konyak Nagas', *JRAI*, Vol. LXVIII (1938), pp. 349ff.

2: Elwin, E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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It also marks his entry into the economic life of the *morung*. As with the Muria this does not involve any considerable loosening of the ties between a boy and his parents; he still takes all his meals with them, and he is much more often seen in their house than in the *morung*, which he uses mainly as a sleeping-place.

Fürer-Haimendorf has fully studied the interesting question of reciprocity between *morung*, indeed in such detail that I cannot even summarize his conclusions here. Connected with each *morung* is a girls' dormitory—the *yo*—where the girls assemble every evening and are often visited by the boys of their *morung*. 'But only a few girls actually sleep in the *yo*, for the smaller girls go back to their parents' houses and the bigger girls usually prefer to go with their lovers to the granaries.' As among the Muria, boys and girls exchange gifts, bamboo combs, cloth and ear-rings, and they too use a traditional formula when seeking a girl's favours. Lovers work together in the fields, and the girls sometimes give feasts for the boys.

The Konyak *morung* is less a 'kingdom of the unmarried' than the ghotul. It is an affair of adults as well as of children. It is a centre of village life and a pillar of Konyak social and political organization. 'The *morung* system regulates the relations of every man and woman with the other members of the community, and forms a framework for the numerous mutual obligations between individuals and groups. It strengthens the sense of social unity, developing in the boys of a *morung* a strong *esprit de corps*, and at the same time encourages competition between the *morung*, thus stimulating the activities of the whole village . . . The *morung* is an extremely ancient and important feature of Naga culture.'

Almora and British Garhwal

The *rambang* of the Bhotias of Almora and British Garhwal has been described, rather unsympathetically, by Sherring. The institution did not exist everywhere, even at the beginning of the century, but flourished in certain parganas, Darma, Byans and Chaudans. Sherring describes the *rambang* as 'the village club and generally a very disreputable place'.

> Married and unmarried men go there, also single women, and married women up to the time that their first child is born. Girls start to go to the *rambang* from the age of ten years, and practically never sleep at home after that age, the result being that a virtuous girl is unknown in pargana Darma. As is to be expected, a system such as this leads to the freest intimacy, and one sees a man walking about with his arm round a girl's waist, both under the same covering shawl, a practice common in Europe but rare in the East.
>
> Large villages have more than one *rambang*, and, as the avowed object of these *rambangs* is to arrange marriages, only those persons resort there who can marry one another, such as the boys of a neighbouring village, or, if of the same village, only those who are not relations. If girls wish to invite the boys of a neighbouring village to meet them they wave long sheets, one girl holding one end and another the other end. This waving can be seen for miles, and is really a very pretty custom. It is also used in bidding farewell to friends and lovers, and is frequently accompanied by whistling, which is the usual method employed by the boys of inviting girls to come out of their homes. On hearing the whistles the girls take a little fire and issue forth from their houses and proceed with the boys to the chosen spot, and, if they are

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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old friends, they sit side by side round a blazing fire, otherwise all the boys sit on one side and the girls face them.

Often the girls dance, and sometimes the boys, while singing, smoking and drinking are continued until they are all weary, when sleep brings quiet to the scene.

The *rambang*, like the dormitories elsewhere, is the regular guest-house for visitors.

> When a resident of a distant part of the country comes to a village, travelling on business, he would not dream of asking his friends to give him food and shelter, for this would be regarded as a disgrace: he must wait to be invited by them first. However, if he goes to the *rambang* he is sure of a hospitable welcome. In this way the *rambang* is a great convenience, but it can only be used thus by persons known in the village. A stranger is unwelcome without an introduction.[1]

After a photograph by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf

FIG. 40. Konyak Naga *morung* of Wakching

Bihar

Our knowledge of the village dormitory in peninsular India is far less detailed and exact than that of the *morung* and kindred institutions in Assam. Of the Santal we are told by a nineteenth-century civilian that 'the juvenile community are strictly controlled by their own officers (the Jog-manjhi and Jog-paramanik), whose superintendence continues till the youth or maiden enters on the responsibilities of married life'.[2] Dalton says that there is no

[1] C. A. Sherring, 'Notes on the Bhotias of Almora and British Garhwal', *Mem. ASB*, Vol. I (1905-7), pp. 105f.

[2] W. W. Hunter, *The Annals of Rural Bengal* (London, 1868), p. 217.

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separate dormitory for boys or girls among the Santal, but observes that 'the utmost liberty is given to the youth of both sexes. Unrestrained they resort to markets, to festivals and village dances in groups; and if late in the evening they return under the escort of the young men who have been their partners in the dances or have played to them, no harm is thought of it'. 'There is always reserved an open space in front of the Jog-manjhi's house as a dancing place. To this the young men frequently resort after the evening meal, and the sound of their flutes and drums soon attracts the maidens, who smooth and adjust their long hair, and adding to it a flower or two, blithely join them.'[1] This sounds very like the situation actually existing today in the Mardapal Pargana in Bastar, where the actual building has disappeared though all the traditions of ghotul life continue without it.

Of the Paharia dormitories in the hill villages of the Santal Parganas, we have only the most fragmentary accounts. Bainbridge says that 'the dormitory system prevails among the Saorias. The marriageable girls have a house to themselves and the youths have another'.[2] Of the Mal Paharia, O'Malley simply says, 'the dormitory system prevails' and adds that 'sexual licence, though prohibited in theory, is tolerated in practice'.[3] In March 1944 I accompanied W. G. Archer on a ten days' tour of the Damin and saw such characteristic villages as Surujbera (Saoria), Amarbitta and Gaurpara (Kumar Bagh Paharia) and several Mal Paharia settlements. But beyond getting a vague confirmation that the dormitories existed, it did not seem to me that the institution was very much alive. At Surujbera, however, we saw two substantial boys' houses and a girls' house at opposite ends of the village. Roy says of the allied 'Pahira' of Manbhum that although 'every bachelor in the boys' dormitory (*dhāngar-mela*) has his recognized sweetheart among the maidens of the maidens' dormitory (*sāgin-pāl*), post-nuptial immorality is rather rare'.[4]

Bihar and Orissa is the classic home in India of the village dormitory, though the advance of 'civilization' has largely destroyed it. But we are fortunate in that the dormitory of this part of the world has been described by two writers of great authority, E. T. Dalton and Sarat Chandra Roy.[5] Dalton was a man of keen observation, wide powers of sympathy and a brilliant literary style, who had the advantage of travelling among the tribes before they had become at all sophisticated. S. C. Roy spent forty years observing the Uraon; when he wrote his first book about them he had given them fifteen years; he lived in their villages, talked their language, shared their life, made scores of intimate friends, championed their cause in the Courts, the District Council and the Legislature. His most elaborate work was on the Uraon, but he had an intimate knowledge of the Munda, the Birhor, the Kharia and the Bhuiya of Orissa. A Catholic missionary, Father P. Dehon, also gave a brief and hardly sympathetic account of the *dhumkuria* at the beginning of the century.[6]

[1] Dalton, op. cit., p. 214. On the other hand, the missionary Petrick told S. E. Peal that communal barracks for the unmarried of both sexes were seen (Peal wrote in 1892) 'in all Santhali and Oraon villages'. Peal, op. cit., p. 254.

[2] E. B. Bainbridge, *The Saorias of the Rajmahal Hills*, *Mem. ASB*, Vol. II (1907), p. 84.

[3] L. S. S. O'Malley, *Santal Parganas Gazetteer* (Calcutta, 1910), p. 74. See also S. S. Sarkar, *The Malers of the Rajmahal Hills*, pp. 74ff. and Dalton, op. cit., p. 272.

[4] S. C. Roy, 'The Pahiras of Chota Nagpur', *JBORS*, Vol. VI, p. 539.

[5] Roy, *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur* (Ranchi, 1915) and *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928).

[6] P. Dehon, 'Religion and Customs of the Uraons', *Mem. ASB*, Vol. I (1905–7), p. 135.

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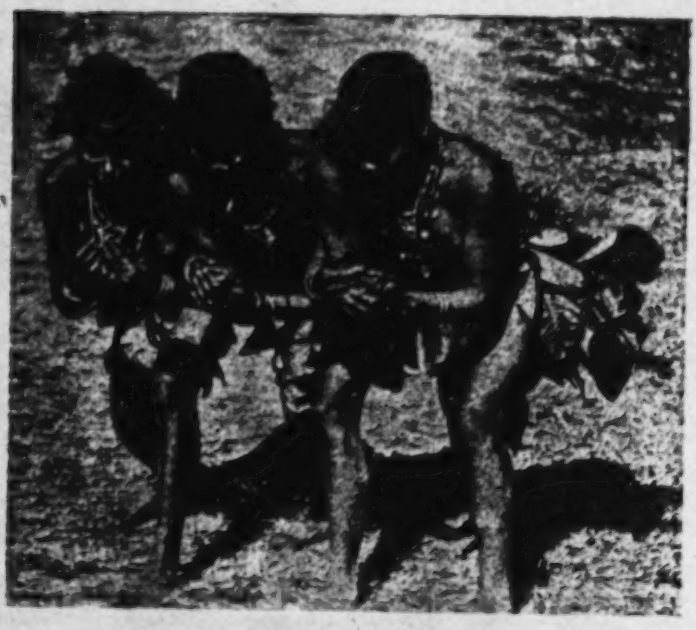

Plate LVII

Dance of the Jaang dormitory

[p. 292 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond
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Plate LVIII

Juang youth with chang drum

Juang youths with long drum in front of the dormitory at Kerbg

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THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

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In his book *The Oraons of Chota Nagpur*, Roy gives an elaborate account of the *jonkh-erpa* or *dhumkuria* as it existed in certain villages twenty-five years ago in the east of the Ranchi District. Unhappily, except for a hint that even at that date the public *dhumkuria* building was beginning to disappear from village life, he gives no indication of the statistical distribution of the dormitories, nor whether the customs he describes were universally practised or confined only to a few villages.

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At the beginning of March 1940 Shamrao Hivale and I spent a few days with W. G. Archer visiting Uraon villages in East Ranchi,[1] and even in this short time it was possible to note many interesting parallels to the Bastar ghotul. The *jonkh-erpa* or *dhumkuria* building is still, as it was when Roy wrote twenty-five years ago, a substantial well-kept hut with a door, but no windows, in a prominent part of the village. At Borhambey, there were well-decorated pillars and beams, and the deep grass on the floor covered with mats must have made a comfortable bed. The house at Kota was supported by stone pillars. At Murma the *dhumkuria* was a well-built house in a picturesque spot. In most cases, the houses overlook a beautifully-kept dancing-ground, sometimes surrounded with stone seats. Inside the dormitories, we found drums, mats, piles of wood, but only at Borhambey the strings of bull-roarers and foot-scrapers described by Roy. The most significant objects kept in the dormitories are the village emblems, wooden animals taken out for religious fairs and preserved with the greatest care and attention. Thus at Saparum the boys exhibited with pride an admirable wooden elephant; at Nagri they produced an elephant and a coloured banner; at Kota we saw a horse supported on bamboo beams in the verandah: at Mandar there is a fish; at Khanjia seven crocodiles. That these traditional and semi-sacred objects should be preserved in the dormitory is the surest sign of the vitality of the institution. Moreover, its central position and the obvious pride the boys took in their club testified to the fact that among the Uraon the dormitory was, at least in former days, socially approved and an integral part of tribal life.

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The most striking difference between the Uraon and the Bastar institutions is that Uraon girls do not share the life of the *dhumkuria*, nor do they seem to have anything resembling the chelik-motiari relationship. Boys, who are here called *dhāngar* or *lokhār*, seem to be admitted a little later than in Bastar, at the age of eleven or twelve. They are divided into three age-groups and many boys retain their membership—especially now that children are being married comparatively young—until they have one or two children by their wives. The supervision and control of the dormitory is in the hands of a boy who is called the Dhangar-Mahto and he is assisted by the Chalaba or Kotwar. These officers are changed every three years. There is a simple ceremony of appointment, as in Bastar, and the outgoing Mahto hands to the new Mahto a leaf-cup full of rice-beer while the outgoing Kotwar gives the new Kotwar his insignia of office, a plaited straw-cord, taking care to hit him twice with it, no doubt as a means of transferring his power and authority. New members are admitted only once in three years, not annually as in Bastar, and there are elaborate ceremonies of initiation. Roy has described in detail the new moon hunt which precedes this, and the taking of omens by new pots of water. The ceremonies described by Roy are not now maintained everywhere. At Kota we were told that boys were admitted at the Sarhul festival, when they had to bring certain offerings. On admission, the parents have to supply

[1] We visited Kota, Semra, Agra, Saparum, Nagri (Kumbhar, Tola), Gutwa, Mandar, Borhambey, Murma, Jajhpur and three others near Lohardaga.

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a lamp, a small earthen pot, and enough oil to light the dormitory for a fortnight.

As in Bastar the *dhumkuria* boys have many social duties. They cook for visitors at a wedding. When strangers come to the village and are accommodated in the dormitory, the *dhāngar* have to entertain them and shampoo their legs. Younger boys at all times have to massage the legs of the older boys and scrape the soles of their feet with special wooden scrapers. As in Bastar, if there is urgent need of a supply of labour, a peasant can arrange for the boys to work for him. In return for their services to the village, the boys are allowed to gather fruit from the trees in the neighbourhood, and they perform a ceremonial gathering of mahua flowers. Roy describes a curious rite for the driving away of cattle disease performed at night by naked *dhāngar* boys. As we shall see, the chelik of Bastar have a ceremony for ridding the village of disease.

There does not seem to be anything to correspond to the dancing expeditions of the Muria, but the Uraon boys go to *jatra* fairs, and from time to time attend what is called a *bhaiyari* gathering. The occasion for this is the formal present of a flag. The visitors approach with drums beating and their hosts come out to welcome them with pots of water, offerings of rice and bundles of leafy mango-twigs. They wash the feet of their guests, scatter rice over them, and throw the 'benedictory mango-twigs' at them. Then they dance together. On these occasions the boys enter into formal friendships and alliances with one another.

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There is no room here to describe all the various ceremonies and occasions that characterize Uraon dormitory life; they are fully described by Roy and have no counterpart among the Muria. We may mention, however, two remarkable ceremonies which Roy believes have for their aim the magical strengthening of the procreative powers of the young men 'so as to enable them to indefinitely increase the huntsmen in the tribe'. The first of these is the propitiation of Mutri Chandi. For three nights, the unmarried boys and girls dance in the village dancing-ground, and the boys steal the girls' *bindio* ear-ornaments. On the evening of the fourth day, the boys go to the place where Mutri Chandi is represented by a stone half buried under a tree. A boy priest digs a hole before the stone and sacrifices a black fowl. He puts the blood and severed head into the hole together with the girls' ornaments. While these are being offered the boys shout 'May girl children decrease and boy children increase'—a curiously different prayer to that of the Muria boys at their festival, 'Let us have sound sleep with our motiari, and let them not conceive!' Then all the boys urinate into the hole and they fill it up with earth. They retire a short distance and pelt the tree above Mutri Chandi with clods of earth.

This occurs shortly after the Sarhul festival every year. Another rite is described by Roy as occurring twice a year, once before the Phagu festival in March and again before the Sarhul in April or May. The Mahto of the boys takes them to some secluded spot carrying a new thin sal stick and a sal sapling in which a slit has been made to resemble the vagina. The boys smear each other with red earth. The sal sapling is planted firmly in the earth. The youngest boys have to strip themselves naked and the older ones spit into the slit in the sapling. The little boys now insert in turn their penile organs into the saliva-filled slit. As each boy does so the Mahto hits him with the sal stick. 'Here', says Roy, 'we see a persistent endeavour to gain an accession of power through alliance with the powerful force of Nature and of man. The saliva of efficient young men, and contact with the powerful sal sapling and

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the sal stick are evidently supposed to promote fecundity. And the object of the ceremony seems to be a magical accession of power to the procreative organs.'[1] Dehon gives a different picture of the initiation ceremony. 'When a boy is six or seven years old, it is time for him to become a member of the *dhumkuria* or common dormitory. The eldest boys catch hold of his left arm and, with burning cloth, burn five deep marks on the lower part of his arm. This they do to be recognized by the Uraons at their death, when they go into the other world.'[2]

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The girls' dormitory, or *pel-erpā*, is not a public building, and in fact 'its location is not supposed to be known to anyone except its inmates and to those of the Bacheloes' Dormitory'. Roy says that the girls have no office-bearers, but an elderly male Uraon is appointed Pelo-kotwar to look after them. There is, however, often a *Barha Dhāngrin*, the eldest of the girls and their natural leader. Among the girls, as among the boys, there is a three years' novitiate during which the little girls have to do all the drudgery of the institution. The girls have many duties at weddings and may be called in a body to help in the reaping of paddy. They have to cook at the bone-burial ceremony.

We have little information about the relationships between the boys' and the girls' dormitories. Boys and girls constantly dance together on the village dancing-ground till a late hour at night. 'During the three years of her novitiate, each Uraon maiden is required every year to plait a strip of palm-leaf-mat about six inches wide and as long as the length of the Bachelors' Hall.' These are given to the boys who stitch them together and put them on the floor of their house. There is also a ceremonial presentation of barley-shoots by the girls to the boys. There are obviously bound to be many attachments between boys and girls as in every village in the world, but is there anything resembling the chelik-motiari relationship?

Dalton knew the *dhumkuria* over seventy years ago. His view is that 'it is well known that the girls often find their way to the bachelors' hall and in some villages actually sleep there. I not long ago saw a *dhumkuria* in a Sirguja village in which the boys and girls all slept every night. They themselves admitted the fact, the elders of the village confirmed it, and appeared to think that there was no impropriety in the arrangement. That it leads to promiscuous intercourse is most indignantly denied, and it may be that there is safety in the multitude; but it must sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy. Yet the young Oraon girls are modest in demeanour, their manners gentle, language entirely free from obscenity, and whilst hardly ever failing to present the[illegible]unds with a pledge of love in due course *after* marriage, instances of illegitimate births are rare, though they often remain unmarried for some years after reaching maturity. Long and strong attachments between young couples are common. *Dhumkuria* lads are no doubt great flirts, but each has a special favourite among the young girls of his acquaintance and the girls well know to whose touch or pressure in the dance each maiden's heart is especially responsive. Liaisons between boys and girls of the same village seldom end in marriage.'[3] Father Dehon's account is dated thirty years later. 'As for the girls', he says, 'they go and generally sleep in the house

1 Roy, op. cit., p. 243. But see p. 413 of the present work.
2 Dehon, op. cit., p. 151.
3 Dalton, op. cit., p. 246. In an article written five years earlier, Dalton says that an elderly dasuan looked after the girls and was 'always armed with a stick to keep the boys off'. E. T. Dalton, 'The "Kols" of Chota-Nagpore: The Oraons', *JASB*, Vol. XXXIV (1866), p. 175.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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of an old widow who is not such a fearful cerberus as not to be softened by kind attentions from the boys of the *dhumkuria*. The would-be vestals are then, as may be imagined, exposed to many dangers. In villages in which they less respect themselves, the boys and girls sleep promiscuously together in the same dormitory. The *dhumkuria* boys form a kind of association; and they pledge themselves to the greatest secrecy about what is going on in their dormitory. Woe to the boy who dares to break that pledge. He would be most unmercifully beaten and looked upon as an outcast.'[1]

Roy, however, says that it is an ancient Uraon custom that no girl should enter the boys' house.[2] If a girl breaks this rule the boys will temporarily lose their eyesight. In Mandar we were told that she herself would get night-blindness—a more appropriate punishment. Roy suggests that most of the boys and girls pair off, and that the older girls 'decide beforehand which boy will suit a particular girl' though the wishes of the younger boys and girls are not ignored. A boy indicates his choice by wearing some token, a flower or ornament which the girl is in the habit of using. During the novitiate period, however, 'a boy is not permitted to have intimacy with a girl'. A girl who refuses to take a partner among the boys is ostracized by the other girls. Roy thinks that 'there is a well-recognized rule of fidelity' among the boys and girls, and 'adultery' is punished by the Dhangar Mahto with a fine. Contrary to Bastar custom, this relationship is not necessarily dissolved by the marriage of the parties to it; it may continue until a child has been born to either. Marriages between boys and girls of the same village are uncommon, but 'community of clan is (in practice, though not in theory) often no bar to pre-marital intercourse'. To prevent conception, says Roy, an Uraon girl 'either reverses her loin-cloth for the nonce by wearing it with its front side to the back or ties to her loin-cloth just over the abdomen the false plait of hair sometimes worn as a coiffure'. If this fails, recourse is made, as in Bastar, to abortifacients.

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W. G. Archer tells me that the *dhumkuria* now only exist in the eastern sub-divisions of the Ranchi District. He did not find them in the Gumla sub-division when he was working there. On the other hand, H. J. B. Le Patourel, Diwan of Jashpur, a State that lies on the western border of Bihar, has sent me an interesting account of how the general tradition of the *dhumkuria* and the selection of a leader still persists, though the public building has now disappeared.

There is insufficient material for a full comparison between the *dhumkuria* and the ghotul. Unhappily, neither Dalton nor Roy was able to describe the institution with sufficient objectivity. It is very desirable that a full and detailed investigation of the Uraon dormitory should be made before it is too late; I am convinced that there is a great deal more to be discovered than has yet seen the light of publication.

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Except in parts of the Lodma Pargana, says Roy, the Munda have no institution so fully developed as the Uraon *dhumkuria*. But 'all the young bachelors have a fixed common dormitory in the house of a Munda neighbour who may have a hut to spare for the purpose. And similarly, all the unmarried girls of a hamlet sleep together in a house belonging to some childless old Munda couple or to some lone elderly Munda widow. These *gitiora* are in their own humble way seminaries for moral and intellectual training. When young bachelors and young maidens are assembled in their respective *gitiora* after their evening meals, riddles are propounded and solved, folk-tales,

[1] Dalton, op. cit., p. 133.

[2] Roy, op. cit., p. 248.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

traditions and fables are narrated and memorized, and songs sung and learnt until bed-time.'[1]

I myself was only able to see one mixed village of Ho and Munda, Hessadih, on the main road between Ranchi and Chaibasa. This is a large village with two dormitories for Munda boys and one for Munda girls, and one for Ho boys. It also has a school. The first dormitory we saw was a hut with open bamboo walls and a wooden door, standing in a compound near the village dancing-ground; there were three living-houses and the girls' dormitory within the same fence.

In the boys' house there were two beds, a raised platform on which we found two boys seated mending a drum, and from the roof hung fish-traps, mats and leaf-raincoats. It was an obviously lived-in place, cosy and untidy. Just across the compound was the dormitory for five or six girls. A boy said that the girls cleaned their house for them, made them mats and brought grass for repairing their roof. He was very emphatic about the duty of the girls to make their mats without reward.

On the edge of the village, in a very pretty spot under jack-fruit trees, there was another Munda dormitory which seemed to have been specially constructed for the purpose. It had a cylindrical grass roof, the side walls being only 3½ feet high. It was entirely open in front. It had a wooden fence round it, and a gate, which opened onto a clear open space with large mats covered with drying rice.

In the Ho quarter of the village, again on the outskirts, was another small shed of somewhat the same pattern, which also appeared to have been specially made. There were three mats there, musical instruments (*tuhila*), a fire burning before the mouth of the hut, and a fence—part of which consisted, astonishingly, of tall memorial menhirs for the dead. Ten boys, we were told, slept here regularly.

The local schoolmaster, a Lutheran Munda, had the lowest opinion of these dormitories and said that they led to every kind of sexual excess and so absorbed the attention of the youths that they could not attend to their studies. The dormitories, he thought, existed for sex and sex alone. I give his opinion for what it is worth; converts, especially when talking to strangers, are not apt to regard with favour their old customs. It is interesting to note, however, that the Asur Christians have not found their dormitories inconsistent with missionary teaching.

The Ho have been described by D. N. Majumdar in his book *A Tribe in Transition*.[2] But just because the Ho are a tribe in transition, it is exceedingly hard to discover the real truth about their ways. They are already sensitive, shy, resentful of inquiries. When we visited the Kolhan with W. G. Archer at the end of February 1940, we encountered a genuine reluctance to speak of the dormitories or even to admit their existence. Before our arrival inquiries (connected with the Census) in thirty-one villages had been met with a stolid negative. It was only with difficulty that we persuaded a few individuals to reveal the secrets of the institution. Our information is, of course, quite unsatisfactory; I cannot help feeling that the unusual reticence about the *gitiora*—as the dormitories are called—may conceal facts

[1] S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Ranchi, 1912), pp. 383f. In the early article by Dalton to which I have already referred, he somewhat rashly declares that 'the Dormitories is never used by boys of the Moondah tribe. It is an institution quite unknown to the Hos, but the Moondahs and Hos build themselves houses in which all the family can be decently accommodated'. *JASB*, Vol. XXXV, p. 176.

[2] D. N. Majumdar, *A Tribe in Transition* (London, 1937).

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of deep sociological interest. But these facts cannot be discovered by inquiry, but only by observation—a lengthy and exacting task.

Such information as we were able to obtain may be summarized as follows.

In order to prevent boys and girls sleeping in the same room as their parents, the custom arose of putting them to bed in the kitchen or store-room. Sometimes several boys would come and sleep together, or the girls would gather in the spare room of a friend. In Rumkut, for example, we found some ten boys sleeping together in a large room which was used partly for stores, partly for this purpose. There was a small house some distance away in the compound of another family which was used by half-a-dozen girls—their ages must have been between 16 and 18. There appeared to be similar arrangements in the other three hamlets of this village. In one small hamlet, where all belonged to one family, the parents were sleeping in one room, three girls in another and the two boys in a third. Here we have the village dormitory either in embryo—or decay. Should another family settle in this hamlet, the boys would naturally go to join their friends in their room and the girls in theirs.

But there appears to be no real organization, no officers of the *gitiora* and no recognized relation between the girls and boys. The girls do not seem to go to clean the boys' house, it is possible that even the sleeping mats are not made by the girls as presents for the boys, but are made by the womenfolk of the boys' own families. There is no training in social or sexual duties, nor does the Ho *gitiora* seem to be closely associated with dancing.

In Rumkut we were told that four of the girls had special friends among the boys, and one boy at least had a comb given him by his girl. But these were not chelik-motiari relationships; they were the liaisons that exist between the unmarried in every village in the world.

If Majumdar's book is to be trusted, the dormitory does not occupy a very prominent place in Ho life. 'In many villages'—this is almost all he has to say—'one meets with a huge dormitory house overlooking the Akhara dancing-place, where the bachelors of the village sleep in the night and lounge during the day. Inside the house, one finds a big mat made by the maidens of the village and respectfully presented to the tribal manhood, a number of musical instruments, and all the offensive and defensive weapons of the inmates. There are a number of pegs on the inside walls of the house for hanging the bows and arrows of the inmates, and most of the requisites for fishing and hunting are also stored there. In some villages this house is absent, and in its place we find the outer house of residence of the village chief serving all the purposes of the dormitory. It is only the bachelors' house that opens out into the Akhara, but all other houses that may be adjacent to it have their backs towards it.'

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The Birhor dormitory is also known as *gitiora* and has been described by Roy.[1] The buildings are as different from the splendid *morung* of Assam as can be imagined. Two small huts of leaves and branches are made, one for boys and one for girls; the boys' hut has only one door, but the girls' hut has an additional door at the back. Boys and girls are admitted when they are about ten years old; there do not appear to be any dormitory ranks or even formal leaders. An old woman is supposed to sleep across the doorway of the girls' hut, but boys enter by the back way and girls go out to meet their sweethearts who summon them by striking the walls of the hut. 'Every bachelor has his sweetheart among the maidens. And I am informed by some

[1] S. C. Roy, *The Birhors* (Ranchi, 1925), pp. 245ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria
Central Tribes AW46
Asur

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

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Birhor elders that to attract a maiden he loves, a young man sometimes approaches her without any clothes on his body.'

'There is, however, no trace of sexual communism. On the other hand, there appears to exist a well-recognised rule of fidelity.' If a boy sleeps with the recognised lover of another boy, the latter retaliates by sleeping with the first boy's girl.[1] Occasionally 'spirit-possession is made a pretence by a young man to go with his sweetheart. He meets her at a market and begins to shake his head violently and in this condition of supposed spirit-possession carries her off in the direction of some jungle'. In case of pre-marital pregnancy, abortion is caused by the use of certain roots. 'But the occasions for this are few and far between.' Forbes stresses the integrity of the Birhor marriage-bond. 'The boys and girls live together and are allowed all freedom before marriage, but in their wedded life they are exceedingly chaste.'[2]

G 883 X 171 X A 883

Ruben's monumental *Eisenschmiede und Dämonen in Indien* gives some account of the dormitory system among the Asur. He rightly stresses the reason for the establishment of separate sleeping-places as the desire not to disturb the intimate life of the parents. He mentions that some older person usually sleeps with the children. 'The *panch* of the village watches to see that their life is not too immoral. Love and marriage are not absolutely identical for the Asur.'[3] 'Generally, however, the young people do what they like in the dormitories and the intercourse of unmarried people is permitted; this was admitted without embarrassment.' Shamrao Hivale and I visited the Neterhat plateau with W. G. Archer in March 1940 and saw a number of Asur villages.[4] It was impossible in the time to get any but the most superficial knowledge of these institutions; we could only ask about them and had no opportunity for living in them and observing for ourselves. But it was obvious that the institution here was in no way to be compared to the Bastar ghotul.

G 883 X 171 X A 883 342

In the first place, the Asur do not build special houses for their unmarried boys and girls. The building of separate houses may be taken as a necessary sign of a fully developed dormitory system; where these houses are not well kept, the institution is probably in decay. The Asur dormitories are small huts belonging to lonely people who, in order to get a little company, let the children of the village use them. In Bijapath, for example, a village of Christianized Bir Asur, we saw two such dormitories. The girls' house, which belonged to Gahin an old widow, stood in the village street. Inside were pots, baskets of earth, a cooking-hearth, rope, wooden seats and a mat. Here slept five little girls—we saw them. About thirty yards down the street, round the corner, was the boys' house, larger but less well kept, which had been given to the boys by Kalu Asur, after his wife had died. Here too were a number of domestic things, pots, hearth and grain-bin, but the boys kept their mats, drums, and bows and arrows there. We saw most of the boys—Chotan, Alfred, Pandra, Lukas, Tempu. As nearly all the people in the village belonged to the same sept, the Kusar, I doubt if there could be much romance between the members of the two dormitories. The girls did not do anything for the boys, did not clean their house for them or bring them toilet twigs; they did not even dance together, at least not without the older people's help.

[1] I have known this to happen in Bastar. At Bandarsinai the ghotul Kotwar ran away with the betrothed of his friend the Diwan. So in rage the Diwan ran away with the Kotwar's betrothed. Both couples were brought back and reassorted.

[2] L. R. Forbes, *Report on the Ryotwaree Settlement of the Government Farms in Palamow* (1872), p. 44.

[3] W. Ruben, *Eisenschmiede und Dämonen in Indien* (Leiden, 1939), p. 72.

[4] We visited Nawa Toli, Koteya, Lupungpath, Dokar, Bijapath, Kerakhair, Johlpath and Jam Tola.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria
Kharia. AW36 Central Tribes AW4
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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

So too at Jobhipath, we were shown where the girls slept, in a small room off the verandah of a house to which some of them belonged. It was as though two or three sisters were to ask all their friends to come and keep them company. The boys' house was a hundred yards away, at the other end of the village; their drums and mats were hung up in the house, the owner of which, a widower, we were told, usually slept with them and looked after them. These were Bir Asur.

We were told that in the Christian Bir Asur village of Lupungpath there were similar dormitories—Ruben says that in this village the Christian teacher had two houses and had allocated one of them to the boys—but in the two Birjhia Asur villages we visited we found no signs of the custom, probably because they were both small hamlets.

Of the Koros (Korwa) fifty years ago, Driver wrote, 'Every large village has its *Dumkuria* or bachelors' quarter, for boys who are too old to live with their parents; girls stay with their parents until they are married'. In front of the building was a dancing-ground and young people enjoyed 'considerable freedom' before marriage.[1]

Orissa

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The dormitory system survives among most of the wilder tribes of Orissa and I myself have made preliminary investigations among the Juang, Bhuiya,

From R. A. Sanwell's 'Notes on a Forest Race called Patooas or Juangs', *JASB*, Vol. XXV (1856)
Fig. 41

[1] W. H. P. Driver, *JASB*, Vol. LX (1891).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W[illegible] Gond
Naga AR 13
Konyak

Plate LIX

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291

Photograph by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Konyak girls with skirts of palm-leaves

[p. 300 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond
Naga AR13
Konyak
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302

Photographs by Dr. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

ABOVE : Konyak girls dancing at the spring festival

BELOW : Konyak girls dressing each other's hair

[p. 300 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria
Kharia AW36

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

Kond, Gadaba, Bondo, Didai Porojà and Savara. The Orissa dormitories are of two distinct types: the Juang and Bhuiya build a large and sometimes elaborately decorated house in the centre of the village which serves not only as a sleeping-place for the young men but as a club and council chamber for the elders—the girls have a separate house near by. The other tribes allocate houses originally built for ordinary domestic purposes to the boys and girls separately anywhere in the village, and the social function of the men's house passes to the stone seat and platform of the elders which is such an important feature of their cultural life.

Most of the Orissa tribes have a fairly strict system of territorial exogamy and this means that normally the relationships between the boys' and girls' houses of a village are fundamentally different from those of the Muria: the dancing expedition to other villages takes the place of the evening spent together in the home dormitory.

The Orissa system is everywhere marked by separate huts for boys and girls, a system of dancing expeditions leading to adventure and marriage, the organization of tribal youth under a leader, the employment of the dormitory members on ceremonial occasions and in work for the State and the wealthier members of the community. It co-exists with a very high standard of domestic fidelity after marriage and, as in Bastar, with shifting cultivation, a still active megalithic culture, the ritual hunt, elaborate festivals and ceremonial dances.[1]

In the cold weather of 1942, I toured in the Juang Pirh of Keonjhar and visited a number of Juang villages in the lovely country round Malyagiri in Pal Lahara State. Some of the people, whom Dalton calls 'the most primitive people I have met with or read of', still wear their leaf-dress. The dormitory, called by them *darbar* or *mandagarh*, flourishes in Keonjhar, but has generally decayed in Pal Lahara and Dhenkanal, the other two States where Juang are to be found. In Keonjhar the dormitory stands in the centre of the village and is often an imposing building with carved beams and pillars. Near by is a separate, smaller house, the *dhāngri-bāsa*, for the girls.

The Juang dormitory may be considered under several aspects: it is the centre of the male social and economic life of the village; it is an organization of the youth of the tribe; it is a school of dancing; it is an expression of the communal art of the people.

The place of the *darbar* in the social life of the village is emphasized by its construction. It is a big comfortable house, open all along one side, with a high verandah. At the back of the house, there is often a small room in which goats are kept for sacrifice or an enclosure for the village gods. On a platform are great bins for the collection of the tax-grain. At Samagiri, the moneylender's accounts were written on the wall: at Bali, they were kept—inscribed on strips of palm-leaf—on a ledge. In the middle of the room is a fire, kept always burning.

In the *darbar* the men assemble for every important event in their corporate life. Here they settle the distribution of clearings for their axe-cultivation 'so that the gods can overhear everything we do'. Here the priest's axe, with which the first tree is felled, is stored. From the *darbar* fire is taken to kindle

[1] Brief references to the Orissa dormitories will be found in (for the Juang), Dalton, op. cit., p. 154; H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1891), Vol. I, p. 351; (for the Kond), Dalton, op. cit., p. 295; (for the Pauri Bhuiya), S. C. Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas of Orissa* (Ranchi, 1935); Risley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 114; (for the Poroja), *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 198; G. Ramadas, 'The Porojas'. *Man in India*, Vol. XI, p. 248; (for the Gadaba), G. Ramadas, 'The Gadabas'. *Man in India*, Vol. XI, p. 165; and other references given later in the text.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Kharia AW36

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the brushwood in the clearings. Before every festival the men meet here to decide what is to be done. Here the grain, which is to be taken to the treasury for the payment of taxes, is collected. Visitors are entertained in the *darbar*, especially that special type of visitor who has come ceremonially to arrange a wedding. The *darbar*, in fact, combines the functions of a club, a church and a municipal office.

This means, of course, that the *darbar* is less a *dinda-rāj*, a 'kingdom of the young', than the Muria ghotul. But it does serve, in its way, to organize and control the youth of the tribe. Unmarried boys sleep here 'so that they will not see their parents together'. They are called *bhendia*: unmarried girls are *dhāngri*. They are not given titles, but their leaders are known as Muro-bhendia and Muro-dhangri respectively. The *darbar* members have their social duties as in Bastar: the *bhendia* must attend on visitors and assist at funerals: boys and girls must dance at weddings and festivals: they may be called to work in the fields by a villager in need of help. Discipline seems to be strict. The girls have to keep their own house in order and clean and cow-dung that of the boys. Younger boys must fetch wood for the *darbar* fire, bring water and tooth-twigs for the toilet of their seniors, and massage them in the evenings. Girls have to provide leaves and make leaf-plates and cups for communal feasts.

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FIG. 42. Juang comb from Keonjhar State

Failure to perform these duties earns the usual punishments. Boys are sometimes beaten; sometimes they must hold their ears and get up and down so many times; they may be forced to sit outside in the cold; or they may be expelled. After expulsion the parents have to come with handfuls of tobacco and a gift of liquor, and touch the feet of the elder boys before the offender is forgiven. The *darbar* has a useful function in training boys and girls in habits of discipline and obedience, in developing their social conscience and in making them alert and clean.

As in Bastar, the Juang dormitory has an important influence on art and music. In many villages beams and pillars are elaborately carved with elephants, hunting and dancing scenes, female figures and rows of women's breasts.[1] Boys are inspired to decorate beautiful little combs as presents for

[1] As, for example, in the dormitories at Gopāgaṅga, Pathigarh, Bali and Khajurbani.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Kharia AW36

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

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the *dhāngri*. The door into the sacred and reserved part of the dormitory is often well carved with conventional patterns. Where the *darbar* has disappeared, as in Pal Lahara, there is a corresponding decline in the aesthetic sensibility of the tribe.

Even more important is the *darbar*'s influence in preserving tribal dancing. In Dhenkanal, where the dormitory has collapsed before the spread of education,

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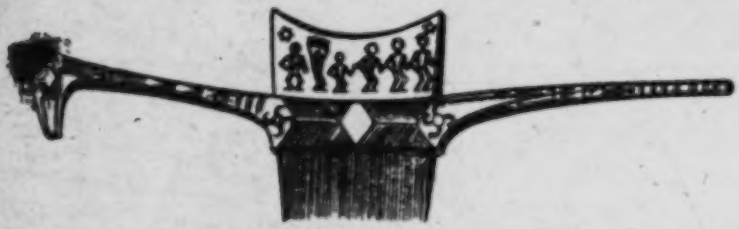

FIG. 43. Juang comb from Ball, Keonjhar State

the Juang have abandoned their beautiful and characteristic dances and adopted those of their low-caste Hindu neighbours. But in Keonjhar, the walls of every *darbar* are hung with *chāng* guitars, and in some villages are preserved the very long (up to nine feet) *māndar* drums used for festivals. In fine weather, almost every night the girls come to the dancing-ground, which is invariably made in front of the *darbar*, and dance with the boys. Both boys and girls go out separately on dancing expeditions to other villages, and many love-affairs and marriages result. Indeed, according to one legend of its origin, the *darbar* came into being when Rusi (founder of the tribe) taught his sons and daughters to dance.

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The relationship between the boys and girls of the dormitories is complicated by the fact that originally the Juang had a system of territorial exogamy, whereby each village was occupied by one clan only and thus boys and girls seeking amorous adventure or regular marriage had to find it outside the boundaries of their own homes. This meant that the *darbar*, like the Hill Maria ghotul, became an exclusively male institution, taboo to the women and girls of its own village not for any magico-religious reason but for fear of clan-incest. At the same time there grew up a system of ceremonial exchange of visits between the dormitories of different villages which seems to have aimed at promoting an intimacy that would lead to marriage. Boys would visit a village where the girls were of a marriageable clan, stay in their dormitory for three or four days, dance with them and ultimately marry them. The girls would return the visits, dance with the boys in front of the *darbar* and retire to sleep in the girls' dormitory, where they might be visited by the boys.

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But gradually this tidy arrangement broke down and today few Juang villages are the exclusive possession of one clan. Out of 100 marriages examined, in 23 cases men had married girls of their own villages. This has meant, of course, that where there are girls of other clans in the *dhāngri-bāsa*, the whole atmosphere is changed. The boys and girls of the same village can dance together freely and there is no longer a taboo on intimacy. But the *darbar* has retained its integrity and the taboo on women has survived the reason for its existence. The rule now permits boys to visit the *dhāngri-bāsa*, but prohibits girls from sleeping in the *darbar*. At the end of a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria
Khavia AW36
Bhuiya AW28

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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dance boys and girls retire to their separate houses, and then any boys belonging to the right clans go to the girls' house and ask for tobacco. The girls let them in and massage and entertain them: not infrequently they spend the night together. But I have been told that there is a rule that a boy must on no account have intercourse daily: he should not attempt it, at least with the same girl, more than once in four or six days.

The realities of life in the Juang dormitories can be most clearly seen in a few extracts from Juang life-histories. Thus Bhudwa, the Dihuri (priest) of Kordagi (Keonjhar State) describes how

> when I was about ten years old I went to sleep in the *mandagarh*. My father made me a *chāng* drum and I worshipped it. At night when we finished dancing we used to go to the girls' house and they used to massage our arms and legs. At festivals the girls used to cook food for us and bring it to the *darbar*: the *bhendia* would collect a little money and give it to the girls. Each of us gave his own *dhāngri* a comb, ring, and necklace. I had two girls with whom I exchanged presents. When we went to dance in other villages—I used to go to Kajuria and Banspal—we used to take parched rice and ornaments for the girls there. On our way home the girls would stop us and sing songs and we made flower-friendships. I was very shy at first, but in my second year when the girls came with presents to dance in our village I slept with two of them.

Bangru of Nawagaon (Pal Lahara State) remembered a time when the dormitory was more flourishing in the State than it is today. He described how a group of girls came to his house when he was about ten years old and said, 'Come to dance and sing and sleep in the dormitory'. Soon afterwards he broke a drum and had to pay a fine of eight annas in liquor. 'I had affairs with four or five girls after the dances were done. Now I am old, but when I see the boys and girls meeting in the dance, my youthful memories return and I want to laugh.' Gelu of Badhimarra had his first girl in the *dhāngri-bāsa* when he was about fourteen. 'I made love to her with parched rice. How sweet it was! But when it was over everything went dark around me.' Basu of Rangmatiya was approached, most improperly, by a girl while he was sleeping in the *darbar*. He refused her and she made him impotent by her magic. Ratna of Khajuria said, 'I loved playing on the *chāng* and dancing. One day I made a splendid comb and stuck it in my girl's hair during a dance. She fell in love with me and we ran away together.'

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FIG. 44. Carving on a pillar in the Bhuiya dormitory at Nagira

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Of the 100 marriages I examined, 23 were the result of dancing expeditions, 4 were 'serving marriages', 4 were 'Paithu'—where the girl came forcibly into a youth's house, and 69 were of the regular type negotiated by the parents.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947- AW32 Gond AW32
Muria
Kharia AW36
Bhuiya AW28

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

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In 32 cases, boys married their mother's brother's daughters. 31 confessed to pre-nuptial intimacy with their future wives.

Only 2 per cent of the marriages ended in divorce, yet another confirmation of the fact that the dormitory usually co-exists with a tradition of the highest marital stability.

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FIG. 45. Wooden figures of Dihuri (village priest) and his wife on the verandah of the Bhuiya dormitory at Talapada

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I visited, and stayed in, many Bhuiya dormitories in the Bonai, Keonjhar and Pal Lahara States in November and December 1942. The building is usually smaller than among the Keonjhar Juang, but it is well-made and cosy, situated in the heart of the village, and has a good dancing-ground and the pillar of Gram Siri (the Village Mother) in front of it. Inside the walls are decorated with the horns of deer and many drums: at Phuljhar I found an elaborate tiger trap: in many villages the apparatus of the Karam Festival is kept in a sort of loft. As with the Juang, the dormitory is the centre of such artistic creation as there is: at Koira (Pal Lahara) there was a beautifully carved door; at Raisua (Bonai) the main pillar had remarkable carvings of a Bhuiya woman with her husband who was represented as a fish; on the verandah of the *darbar* at Talapada (Keonjhar) were wooden images of the Dihuri and his wife made as a compliment by a party of visitors.

In Bonai, the foundation of the *darbar* was associated with dancing.

> Boram Budha taught us to cut forest clearings and when the crop was ready showed us how to make rice-beer. Boram and his wife were drunk: he beat his chest like a drum and his wife danced before him. Then the boys also beat their chests and the girls danced for them. After this Boram Budha made an iron *chhog* and a house where the boys and girls could live.

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Another tale of origin is connected with the desire that children should not share their parents' bedroom.

> Long ago, Boram Budha and Boram Budhi taught their children to dance saying, 'We ourselves did this when we were young'. Then Boram Budha said, 'How can I sleep in the presence of all these children?'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria
Bhuiya AW28
Kandh AW35

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> So he made a special house for them, and gave the girls a room in a widow's house. Whenever the boys beat their *chāng* drums, the girls came out to dance. So now in Boram Budha's name, we build the *darbar*, and dance, sing and worship.

Every boy must be a member of the *darbar* and every girl of the *dhāngri-bāsa*. When a boy gets old enough, the Naik (head) of the *darbar* says to him, 'Come and play the *chāng* with us, play games with us, and sleep with the other boys in the *darbar*'. The little boy comes with a bottle of liquor and makes himself a member. Titles are not given, but a leader 'who sits like a Raja' is appointed. Duties, punishments and expeditions are the same as among the Juang. At a marriage, the elder boys give a feast and a pot of rice-beer to the younger as a reward for their many services. When a boy is married, the other boys give him a mat saying, 'You lived with us for many days: now take this and be happy'. They escort him to his bride at the end of the wedding and shut him up with her saying, 'Now the burden of a house rests on you. It will not be now as in the days of youth. Now the handcuffs are on you. Use the girl well so that she bear children, many and soon.'

Dalton's account of the Bhuiya dormitory suggests that the youths conduct affairs with girls of their own village (who live in the *dhāngri-bāsa* without, 'strange to say, anyone to look after them') as well as with those of other villages whom they visit on 'the more exciting and exhilarating occasions' of the ceremonial dances. Dalton has given a delightful account of these and observes that the Bhuiya girls have 'certainly more wit, more romance, and more poetry in their composition than is usually found amongst the country folk in India'.[1]

It will be seen therefore that the *darbar* is as important for the Bhuiya as for the Juang. It is a social temple, the centre of village life, from which radiate many types of healthful and creative activity.

The Bhuiya or Bhuinhar of Udaipur State do not appear to have the dormitory, though a tribe with which they were amalgamated at the 1921 Census, the very interesting Pando, maintain a *bhangra* for boys and *dewas kuria* for girls. W. H. Shoobert has described his visit to these dormitories.

> They were small and clean huts capable of holding about six people each and the two which I saw, one for men and one for girls, each had a couple of cots in them. There were several bachelors' quarters in the village because the huts were not very large. If a boy is absent from his quarters for five consecutive nights a panchayat is held to inquire into his conduct.[2]

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I found that both the Kuttia Kond of north-western Belīguda and the Dongaria Kond living round the Nimgiri Mountain[3] had dormitories (*dhangra-ilu* for boys and *dhangri-ilu* for girls), but not in a very fully developed form. Sometimes there was a separate house as at Kuchchili, but more often boys and girls had small rooms set apart for them in the long line of village houses. A curious feature of the Kond system is that there are usually two or more boys' dormitories in a village—the boys are divided sometimes by clans,

[1] Dalton, *op. cit.*, pp. 142ff.
[2] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XII, Part I, p. 421.
[3] In the company of H. V. Blackburn I visited Kuttia villages—Rajam, Sunabeda, Sapar, Rangapera and Bikapanga—in a tour from 24 November to 4 December 1943, and saw Dongaria Kond villages—Munda, Suttangumi, Dongumi, Dhamripanga, Kuchchili, Ambdhoni and Tonda—from 5 to 9 December 1943. Later I visited Kond villages in the lower reaches of the Machkund River and, in January 1945, Kond villages of Bodo Kinidi and the Gunupur Taluk.

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond
Naga AR13
Kalyo-kengyu

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Photograph by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Kalyo Kengyu dancers refreshing themselves with rice-beer

[p. 306 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond -
Bondo AW30

Plate LXII

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301

Photograph by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Bondo girls

[p.306(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria
KandhAW35
Bhuiya AW28

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sometimes according to the villages where their future wives are living. The girls' dormitory seems to be more fully elaborated and in several villages I noticed that it was the centre of great activity and frequently visited by boys as well as girls.

The Kuttia name for an unmarried boy is *ravinja*, for a girl *rasha*. At Susabeta, there were a number of officers—the Manjhi-dhangra who is the head of both girls and boys and organizes the entire junior life of the village; the Dolai, his assistant, who is responsible for discipline and fines; the Jani, who sees to the supply of wood and leaves and arranges supplies for feasts; and the Rawat, who attends to visitors and arranges labour and food for visiting officials. The girl officers, I understood, took the same names with a feminine termination—Manjhi-aru, Dolai-aru. In this village the girls do not go to sleep in the dormitory until after puberty.

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At Rangaparu, there were small dormitories on both sides of the great village court. Both boys and girls took their titles from the village where their betrotheds were living. Thus among the boys one was named Kanji-korenja, one Bikapanga, another Batiparenja—all names of villages. Similarly girls were Naju-aru, Sakubicha-aru, Timba-aru, Minda-aru.

Between the boys and girls there does not seem to be any organized relationship as in Bastar; this is specially the case in smaller villages where all the people belong to the same clan. But where it is possible, boys give rings and combs to the girls and sometimes marry their dormitory lovers. At the Pus Punni festival (January) the boys give the girls a formal present of a cow or goat; in Phag (February) the girls make an offering in return, generally a barren sow which only boys can eat. For a week before the festival the boys beg supplies of grain and mahua from the villagers. Boys and girls dance for two or three days and it is said that great sexual liberty prevails.

FIG. 46. Bhuiya carving on a pillar of the dormitory at Raisua of male and female symbols

Dalton describes how every Kond village has separate dormitories for bachelors and maidens: 'as it is said that chastity is not one of their virtues and that free intercourse between the sexes is not discouraged, it may be assumed that the separation is not very rigidly enforced'. The girls' dormitories are 'under charge of an elderly matron, who sleeps inside and locks the door. She sleeps very sound, I dare say'.[1]

[1] Dalton, op. cit., p. 295.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

In several of the centre houses in the Dongaria Kond villages round Nimgiri, houses whose purpose is somewhat obscure but which may be god-houses used by boys to sleep in, I noticed women's breasts carved in pairs on the cross-beams in exactly the same style as in the Juang dormitories of Keonjhar. Some of the boys, however, reminded me rather of Bastar; their bead ornaments were similar and they had the 'dolled-up' over-dressed appearance so characteristic of the Jhoria Muria.

In the Machkund valley, the dormitories were in the midst of the villages, small houses deserted by other people. But the relations of boys and girls were obviously friendly: there was a lot of flirting during a dance that closely resembled the Hulki, and boys with their arms round their girls' shoulders stood listening to our gramophone just as in Bastar.

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A strange and rather pathetic legend about the origin of tobacco, from the Kond village Meriahpatta (Koraput District) throws some light on dormitory life in former times.

> At one time boys and girls used to sleep together in the dormitory. A rich man's daughter was dying for love; she loved a poor Kond boy. They slept together in the dormitory but they did not lie together. One day the girl said, 'Come to me'. But the boy said, 'We are of the same clan; how can we?' But the girl gave him no peace; she was always begging him to lie with her. Then one day people came from another village to betroth her in marriage to a youth. She said, 'I will not marry; do not speak for me to anyone'. She said, 'If you must marry me, then marry me to the one I will name'. And she gave the name of the boy she loved. 'But how can you marry him? He is of the same clan.' The girl said, 'We were all born of one brother and sister; so what harm is there when we have different parents?'
>
> The villagers called the boy and asked him if he would marry the girl. He refused. 'I must marry a girl from another village, not my own.' So neither of them married. Soon the girl died. A few days afterwards the boy went to the forest for wood and leaves. On his way back in the evening, he passed by her grave. He saw a lovely flower growing from the grave. He picked it and smelt it; the scent was so good that it made him drunk. He lay down to sleep and when he got up all his weariness was gone.
>
> The next day he picked another flower and leaves and put them in his bed and slept with them. The scent quickly put him to sleep. In a dream the girl came to him. She laughed at him saying, 'I said all that for love of you, yet you did not listen and refused to marry me. Why have you brought me to your bed today? Get up and lie with me. I will come every night to your bed. If you do not tumble me, I will destroy you.'
>
> The boy got up and there the girl was, sitting on his bed. He tumbled her, and then every night she was a girl and every day a scented flower. She said, 'I died unmarried, sobbing *halap-halap*. Now all men will desire me'. There were no seeds then. But the boy died and they buried him in the same grave and after that there were seeds. The flower spread all over the world from Chandrapore and now men cannot live without it.

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The Gadaba have preserved the dormitory in their remoter villages; I saw something of it in villages to the west of the Machkund River in January 1944

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THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

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and February and March 1945.[1] Groups of boys and girls are generally housed separately in any available buildings, but in some places cosy little huts, less than six feet high, are made of grass and plastered over with mud. These tiny nests, piled with soft grass, are entered by a minute door through which the four or five boy or girl members must crawl. Warm and comfortable, they are specially made for the cold weather.

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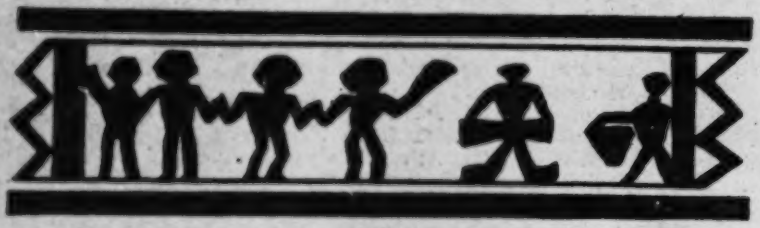

FIG. 47. Kond girls and boys performing a dance similar to the Muria Huiki
(From a wood-carving at Totaguda in the Machkund valley)

The boys and girls do not have special titles, but are organized and disciplined under the leadership of a youth called the Bise, who is sometimes known as the Dhangra Panjihar, the priest of the unmarried. The Bise is a very important person in Gadaba society. It is he who arranges dances and dancing expeditions; he provides parties of girls and boys to work in the fields; he looks after visiting officials; he conducts the special ceremonies of youth. Nothing can be done without him, as the visitor to a Gadaba village quickly finds.

Like the Juang, the Gadaba were originally organized on a system of village exogamy which is now breaking down. Those villages which have retained the principle do not, of course, allow intimate relations between their members, instead boys and girls go regularly to visit other villages. But where members of more than one clan live together, the boys spend a lot of time every evening in the girls' dormitory.

Every year there are official dancing expeditions at the end of the Pus Parab festival. Special dancing-sticks are cut under the direction of the Bise. The Sisa (village priest) offers an egg on the path along which the boys and girls will go and on their return performs other rites to free them from any possible magical infection from outside. No girl in her menstrual period may accompany the party. There must be no quarrels; disputes are punished with a fine. When the dancers reach the village they have planned to visit, they first perform in front of the Sisa's house and then before the *sodor* (the stone platform of the elders). They are given substantial presents of rice and a goat. On their return they erect the branch of a cotton tree and hang their sticks on it. After this begins the season of stick-dancing in their own village. A fire is lit every night before the *sodor*; on the first night the

[1] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf generously put at my disposal the preliminary field-notes of his visit to the same area three years previously. My own record of Bondo and Gadaba life was made independently and I have been glad to find how far our conclusions have coincided. Fürer-Haimendorf has given an excellent brief account of the two tribes in 'Megalithic Ritual among the Gadabas and Bondos of Orissa', *JRAS Beng.*, Vol. IX (1943), pp. 149-76.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Bise must prepare it. In addition to this formal and ritual expedition, boys and girls often go separately throughout the year to visit other dormitories; when boys go they are received by the girls, they dance and play together, form flower-friendships and sometimes arrange marriages.

Gadaba dancing is beautiful to watch and has the variety and excitement of the best Muria dancing, a sure sign that the dormitory is alive. One of the girls' dances imitates the various duties of every day; the girls pretend to cow-dung the floor, throw away rubbish, bring water, bathe, cook and serve the food. Another resembles the Muria Hulki. The stick dances are even more elaborate and amusing than the Muria's.

Boy and girl members of the dormitory, instructed by the Bise, play an important part on many ceremonial occasions. At a marriage the boys attend the bridegroom and girls escort the bride to her new home. The boys play their part in the ritual hunts. At festivals the girls must help in preparing rice-beer and make leaf-cups and platters. The Bise is largely responsible for the conduct of the worship of Bor Gumang. If a hen addles its eggs, only the dormitory boys may kill and eat it. On the last day of the Pus Parab festival, boys and girls collect food from the villagers and catch fish and crabs in the nearest stream. While the girls prepare a feast, the boys fetch the branch of a semur tree which they plant in the middle of the path. The Sisa makes the customary sacrifices and the girls bring cooked fish or crabs and offer it to the tree. Then the Sisa first, and after him all the boys, shoot arrows at the tree. If their aim is good, they will have good hunting in the coming year.

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But the most important festival of the boys and girls is the Ongon or Kakri Gota. Every October the village headmen go to Jeypore (the headquarters of the area) for the Dassera festival. On the day they return, the girls catch a cockroach in their dormitory, tie it up with grass from the roof and hang it to a bamboo pole. Two girls shoulder the pole and followed by boys and girls weeping as at a funeral, go in procession to the cockroach's cremation-stone (*sāro-raisang*). They put the cockroach on the stone, make a little pyre of sticks and grass and two boys set fire to it at 'head and feet'. As the flames leap up, one of the girls removes a ring from her finger and throws it on the fire. Afterwards the Bise recovers it and wears it himself. The girls go weeping to the *sodor*, sit there for a time and then go home.

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The Gadaba are rather obscure about the meaning of this. 'The cockroach is the grandfather of the boys and girls.' There is a vague legend that the first boy and girl were born from a cockroach. It is possible that the creature symbolizes any children who have died as members of the dormitory. For, a month later, its obsequies are performed. When the harvest is done, in the bright full moon of Aghan (November-December), the boys and girls celebrate the Ongon Gota, when they raise a menhir at the *sodor* in honour of their dead Grandfather Cockroach (*sāro-dādi*). The girls and boys prepare as much rice-beer as they can. On the morning of the ceremony they go singing together to catch crabs. The Bise throws a little rice into the stream in the name of Grandfather Cockroach saying, 'If there is truth with Grandfather Cockroach, let us find crabs quickly'. The first crab is put aside and when they have caught sufficient they take them to the Bise's house. The boys go to find a stone, beating their drums. They bring it to the *sodor* where they are joined by the girls carrying a pot of rice-beer. They all cry together, 'O Grandfather Cockroach, accept our beer', and one of them puts a little on the top of the stone. They erect it near the *sodor* and the Bise cries, 'O Grandfather Cockroach, we do this for you. Let there be no quarrels among us.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

Let us dance and be happy. If visitors come from another village, let there be no quarrels. Keep far away fever and disaster. As we go through the jungle let there be no bear or tiger and let not our toes hit against the stones.'

The boys go again with their drums into the forest and now bring two branches of a cotton tree. They plant them near the *sodor* and to the first the Bise ties a crab and a pumpkin and to the second a cucumber. They drink the beer and begin to dance round the trees. Anyone has the right to steal the crab and eat it. Directly someone takes it, the boys cry, 'Someone has stolen our buffalo; tie up another'. Gradually all the crabs are tied up and stolen one by one. The boys and girls dance all night and next morning the Bise cuts up the cucumber and pumpkin; everyone grabs a bit and runs away.

On the general atmosphere of the Gadaba village Fürer-Haimendorf says, in a sentence which I entirely endorse, 'The spirit of camaraderie between girls and boys is evident even to the casual observer. Indeed their gay and unself-conscious behaviour at feasts and dances reminded me of the happy atmosphere among Naga youths'.[1]

The character of the Bondo dormitory depends on certain tribal principles, that none of the descendants of the original settlers of a village should intermarry, that therefore, as a general rule, girls and boys must seek their life-partners outside and that parents should allow their children an astonishing freedom of choice in settling their own affairs. The original Bondo dormitory was apparently a sort of matrimonial agency. There are no signs that it was ever a central institution, filled with magic power, where tribal affairs were conducted. It did not exist to promote the arts of recreation, for the girls and boys of the village could have little to do with each other. It was not a village guest-house, for there were rarely any guests. Its aim was marriage. It was the instrument by which a tribe which believed in giving full freedom to its children expressed its policy.

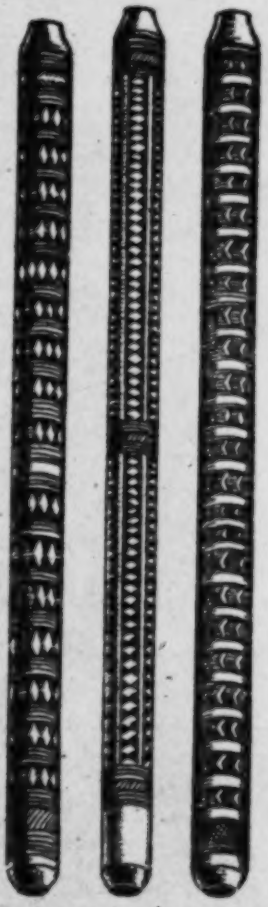

FIG. 48. Kond tobacco-tubes

The classical Bondo dormitory was a sort of ordeal; it was an expression of the Test-Theme motif of the folk-tale. It was a pit, roofed over and entered

[1] Fürer-Haimendorf has given an account of this ceremony (op. cit., pp. 158f.) which confirms at many points my own description, but he misses the motif of the cockroach and pays, I venture to think, a little too much attention to the crab as associated with death. Crabs are used in all Orissa festivals as an inexpensive substitute for animals. Here they are obviously a substitute for buffaloes. In Drug I found the 'ten-legged' crab offered as a substitute for the 'two-legged' human sacrifice.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

by a tiny door, where the girls lived and entertained boy visitors from other villages. It corresponded to the Under World where the hero had to go to win his bride. Here he was tested, and so was she; if they passed the test a life-long relation was established.

I was unable to see any specimen of the older pit-dormitory, though I visited many Bondo settlements during tours in 1943, 1944 and 1945; indeed I doubt if they exist, though I heard rumours of them. But I was able to record a number of descriptions of what they were like. At Dumiripada I was told

> We used to dig out a large pit at Dassera time and roof it over with bamboo, matting and palm-leaves. We covered it with earth, smoothed it down and cowdunged it. There was a small hole as door with a bamboo shutter and a bamboo ladder to climb up and down. Before it was used the Sisa had to sacrifice a hen and a pig inside the pit and sprinkle the blood over it and on the roof.[1]

Another, fuller, account was given in Andrahal where I was shown the site and certain relics of the old pit.

> Since they could not marry in their own villages, how were the girls to get husbands? It is no good marrying unless a girl and boy like one another; otherwise they will be unfaithful and tigers will destroy us. So we made a separate place for the girls to which boys could come and dance and play, sleep and get to know them.
>
> It was Mahapurub himself who made the first pit. Before houses were built Mahapurub lived in such a place. One day when the boys were hunting they saw the pit and thought, 'If we make such a pit we will not feel cold' and so they made one to use in the winter months. But when they first dug the pit, great rocks used to come out. Then Bursung gave the Sisa a dream: 'Sacrifice in my name and the pit will be ready.' After that we never made a pit without giving an egg to Bursung and a fowl to Hundi. When a new pit was made the girls had a feast and the Sisa (but not the boys of the village) shared it. An old woman used to go with the girls and stay with them until they wanted to sleep. Then she would climb out, close the door with a big stone and go to her house. In the early morning she would return, remove the stone and let the girls out.

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In this pit the girls used to sleep from October onwards for about six months. It was obviously a cold-weather barracks, hardly suitable for the heat or rains. During these months boys of other villages were free to visit them. They would come to the pit; if the door was shut—it is noticeable that it was always shut from the outside—they would remove the stone and climb down into the cosy firelight. They would sing and play with the girls and then often spend the night with them.

If a boy was specially attracted by one of the girls, he would persuade his friends to come again and again. Then, I was told at Andrahal,

> The boy says to himself, 'Does this girl like me or not?' He lights a leaf in the fire and burns her as she sits by him. If she is unwilling she abuses him and goes to the other side of the fire. But if she likes him she says nothing, but quietly herself lights a leaf and burns him.

[1] There is an account of this pit, written in the patronizing tone characteristic of the time, by J. A. May, 'Notes on the Bhoondas of Jeypur', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II (1873), pp. 237ff.

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THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

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He must not make a sound. Sometimes they burn each other with bits of bamboo. Then the boy makes another test. He takes a bangle or ring and offers it to her, catching her by the hand. If she accepts it, they are betrothed. The boy goes home and tells his father. He says, 'Do what you will, my son, if you are happy'.

There then follow the complicated economic transactions of the betrothal and finally the marriage in which the boy and girl members of the dormitories take a leading part.

The pit-dormitory came to an end, not as the result of any 'reform' but for an entirely practical cause. It was found to be too risky to keep the girls out on the outskirts of a village near a jungle full of wild beasts. There are many different tales of the tragedy that led to a change of custom. At Dumiripada I was told

> Boys came here from another village. They danced and played with the girls. They were sleeping together. One was wakeful and went out to piss. A tiger came by and killed him.

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FIG. 49. A Gadaba winter-dormitory

(See p. 309)

But at Tulagurum they said that

> One evening the girls were very late getting their food and when they went to the pit, there was a tiger waiting. As they were climbing down, it sprang on them and carried one of them off. That very night the Raja of Nandi Deo had a dream that it was not safe to put the girls in a pit; they must have a special house inside the village.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Most tragic of all is the story from Salanpada.

> At Salanpada when the girls were sleeping, the old woman who looked after them went away and forgot to shut the door. The tiger came and crouched by the opening. A girl went out to piss, she saw the tiger and thought it was a dog and tried to drive it away. But the tiger sprang on her and they both fell into the pit. The tiger killed most of the girls but two or four escaped by pretending to be dead. In the morning, when the old woman came, she saw the tiger and ran for help. The villagers came with their bows and arrows and killed it and when they opened the roof they found only three girls alive. Since then we have kept the girls in a house inside the village.

Today the Bondo girls live in any small house that may be available. They often have some old woman to look after them, and there does not seem to be any ban—as there is in Bastar—on a widow or a woman forsaken by her husband living with the unmarried girls. The boys have another house, but it is the girls' dormitory that is important.[1] The centre of the male life of the village is the stone platform, the *sindibor*. The boys' houses are only the base-camps for adventure, from which they go out in search of love and happiness. The old tradition has survived the collapse of the old underground buildings. Parties of excited happy boys (usually, but not necessarily of other clans) still come from other villages to dance and sing. The girls have palm wine ready for them and the boys bring necklaces, rings and mats; many Bondo boys have bunches of little rings always hanging at their belts. Girls and boys sit round the house in the warmth of the fire and sing to one another; some of the music is exquisite—I shall never forget the beauty of the girls' songs at midnight in Bandapara. A boy may play the flute, a girl the Jew's-harp. My wife, who spent many evenings in the *selani dingo*, tells me that the evening programme is hilarious, but usually indoors. The Bondo are not good dancers; they have none of the various turns and paces of their neighbours the Gadaba; and they do not seem specially fond of dancing. But they love sitting round and making jokes.

Since the ultimate aim of the Bondo dormitory is matrimony, this fact dominates the relations between the girls and their boy visitors. Here is a striking contrast to the situation in the ghotul. Ghotul relationships should never lead to marriage; *ingersis* relationships should never lead to anything else. The Muria allow parents absolute authority, the Bondo allow children absolute freedom, in the choice of partners. The Muria forbid intimacy between engaged couples; the Bondo only permit it after the betrothal has been ratified. Premarital pregnancies are a serious, if not very common, problem to the Muria; they seem remarkably rare among the Bondo. Greatest difference of all, the Bondo seem but rarely to indulge in pre-nuptial intercourse. There is some laxity at the great festivals, when a girl may steal a boy's cloth and not return it to him until he pays her the tribute of intimacy, but in the dormitories, although the boys may fondle the girls' breasts and flirt outrageously, intercourse is regarded as a very serious thing; it suggests that one has definite intentions; it is not permitted lightly; and more than one over-daring youth has had his head broken by an outraged dormitory maiden.

The organization and discipline of the dormitories is not highly developed. I have not found any leader comparable to the Gadaba Bisi or Muria Kotwar.

[1] The girls' house is called *selani dingo* or *dongo*; *dingo* is the name for the old pit. The boys' house is *ingersis*, but it is now often called simply by the Oriya name *bhus*.

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Neither girls nor boys are given titles. On the other hand, they are expected to work, sometimes for the village elders, always for visitors. Boys assist at marriages, funerals and the ritual hunts; girls prepare leaf-cups and platters and cook and brew rice-beer for marriages, funerals and festivals. During the Pus Parab festival, two unmarried boys have ritual duties throughout the long-drawn ceremonial. Boys go to fetch a bride and girls escort her to her new home. Boys and girls together attend to the consummation of a marriage.

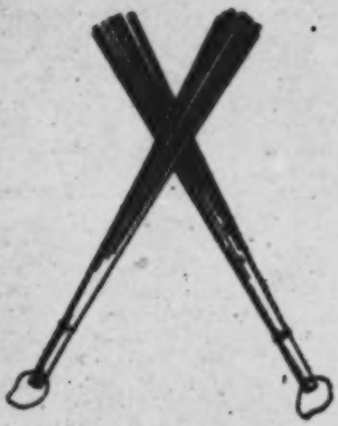

FIG. 50. Gadaba dancing-sticks
Length 25"
(*See p. 309*)

Pfeier-Haimendorf summarizes the importance of the Bondo system. 'To the Bondo who must find his mates in other villages, the friendships made in the *saland dingo* are the only conceivable avenue to marriage and any breakdown of the dormitory system would be tantamount to a revolution of his social life; indeed it is probable that in the place of mutual attraction, family interests and considerations of wealth would become the decisive factors in the conclusion of marriages.' 'The dormitory system of the Bondos is not only of the highest value for the regulation of family and social life, but acts also as a stimulant to economic activities.' [1]

The Jhoria, Didai and Parenga have dormitories which appear to be on the same lines as those of the Gadaba, but I did not have opportunity to examine them in detail. At Patarput, Gangapada and Bhajurguda the Didai dormitory seemed to be in a flourishing condition; the boys' dancing had attained a high degree of technical perfection, and there was that general atmosphere of courtesy, simplicity and service that characterizes all villages where the dormitory system exists in its integrity.

South India

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The dormitory was probably distributed fairly widely among the tribes of South India, but our records of these peoples are imperfect and only of a few can its existence be affirmed. In Travancore, it is said that each Muthuvan, Mannan and Paliyan village has separate dormitories for boys and girls. The institution 'is an important means of preserving social life'.[2] The 'bachelors' hall' of the Kanikkar serves a threefold purpose: it is a house for the unmarried boys and taboo to women; it is used to accommodate visitors, and it serves as a village council hall. Unmarried girls have a separate establishment. The

[1] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'Aversion to Marriage among the Bondos of Orissa', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), p. 170. Fürer-Haimendorf says that 'Bondo marriages are easily dissolved'; out of 2,000 marriages examined by me in 1945, 5 had ended in divorce—this is double the Muria rate.

[2] L. A. Krishna Iyer, *The Travancore Tribes and Castes* (Trivandrum, 1938), Vol. III, p. 32.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

dormitory here, says Krishna Iyer, 'is undergoing a process of decay'.[1] Of the Maravan, the same writer says, 'sexual licence before marriage is neither recognised nor tolerated. All the unmarried young men are kept in a dormitory for the night, while all the maidens are housed in another dormitory and are in charge of an elderly woman. After supper, both boys and girls go to their respective dormitories'.[2] The Kadu Kuruba of Mysore have the same custom: there are separate huts for youths and girls, 'both under the eye of the headman'. The youths' hut is called *pundungar chavadi*, 'the abode of the vagabonds'.[3]

The dormitory has also been reported for the Kota,[4] but it does not exist among the Toda.

The Central Provinces

The difficulty of putting the ghotul in its proper historical perspective is illustrated by the fact that we have only two or three meagre and obscure references to it in all the literature of the Central Provinces. Hislop mentions it, deriving the word *gotalghar* from *kotal*, a led horse, and *ghar*, a house[5]; this suggests that the stress was then on the ghotul as a rest-house for travellers, which was occupied by the young men when no one was there. In the east of Chanda District, he says, 'bothies for bachelors are universal'.

Russell and Hiralal say, on what evidence I do not know, that 'many Gond villages in Chhattisgarh and the Feudatory States have what is known as a *gotalghar*. This is a large house near the village where unmarried youths and maidens collect and dance and sing together at night. Some villages have two, one for the boys and one for the girls'.[6] There follows an excellent brief account of the Bastar ghotul. The *Chhattisgarh Feudatory States Gazetteer* describes the Gond of Kanker State as allowing their girls and boys to have 'their separate sleeping barracks outside the village' where they meet nightly to play and dance and sing.[7] Grigson doubts whether the ghotul exists anywhere among the Gond of the Satpura mountains and other parts of the Central Provinces, including Chhattisgarh, though he says that he was told by 'an intelligent Gond' on the Nagpur-Chhindwara border that 'he had heard many years ago that some such thing existed somewhere beyond Deogarh in Chhindwara District'.[8]

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FIG. 51. Bondo girl's neck-band
(See p. 314)

[1] L. A. Krishna Iyer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 9. See also E. J. Macfarlane, 'Hill Tribes and Fisherfolk of Travancore', *Man*, 1933.
[2] Ibid., 'The Mannans of Travancore', *J. Anth. S. Bom.*, Vol. XIII, p. 137.
[3] L. K. Ananthe Krishna Iyer, 'Kadu Kurubas', *Man in India*, Vol. IX (1929), p. 229.
[4] M. B. Emeneau, *JAOS*, Vol. LIX, p. 131.
[5] Hislop, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[6] Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 131. See also *Census of India, 1901*, Vol. XIII, Part 2, p. 201; A. E. Nelson, *Raipur District Gazetteer* (Bombay, 1909), p. 226; L. F. Reghie, *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 98.
[7] K. A. de Brett, *Chhattisgarh Feudatory States Gazetteer* (Bombay, 1909), par. 76.
[8] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria, Hill Maria
Bondo AW30

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

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Miss D. Bhagwat tells me that she found traces of the ghotul system in the south-eastern corner of the Raipur District and in the Aundhi Zamindari of Drug. But it is now in a decayed condition. 'It is almost gone: the people seem ashamed to own it.' The buildings exist no longer, but the organization and tradition remain. Boys and girls dance and sing together. They go on the Pus Kolang and Hulki expeditions. The boys are instructed in the Karsal-git, secret songs and riddles about death which the girls must not hear. Some sort of sexual initiation is given to both boys and girls.

Recently I found the Bhumia-Baiga youths of Lamni in the Bilaspur District had the custom of sleeping together in an elementary dormitory in someone's house.

In Bastar itself, the Hill Maria have a ghotul in the middle of every village in the Abujhmar Hills. In this the unmarried boys sleep, often on long raised platforms running down one side of the house, married men are segregated when it is taboo for them to be with their wives, and visitors are entertained. So far as I know the Hill Maria ghotul is always of the one-building type. Owing to the fact that 'in nearly all Hill Maria villages all the boys and girls are of the same clan and therefore kindred'[1] and since dancing is taboo for most of the year, there is nothing like the chelik-motiari relationship. Grigson, however, noticed that the Muria type of ghotul was spreading through the Padalibhum and Nurbhum (possibly also to parts of the Tapalighum and Dehra Mar) Pargana, where in some villages members of more than one clan have settled. The Hill Maria seem generally to give ghotul ranks only to boys, 'the girls retaining the name given them on their entry until they leave the dormitory organization on marriage, but taking among their fellows the precedence of their boy-mates in the dormitory'. This sometimes happens among the Muria. Grigson describes how 'at a camp at Partalpur attended by Hill Marias from Padalibhum, the *koyar-gaita* of three village dormitories were present. All were Padali by clan from Padali villages. Another Usendi village in Padalibhum called its head-boy Silledar, and his mate was Jhalo, a Padali girl. All four stated freely that they expected ultimately to marry their mates, and that they and all the other dormitory boys often had sexual intercourse with their girls'.[2] Grigson sums up the aim of the dormitory as

FIG. 52. Bondo boy's head decoration

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[301]

[1] Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, p. 167.
[2] Ibid., p. 168.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria, Hill Maria
Raj, Bhatra
Bondo AW30

G
X 883
X 171

'a school for training the youth of both sexes in conjugal and social duties and in the lore of the clan'.

There is no sign of the ghotul among Raja Muria and Bhattra. But the Dhurwa preserve a relic of the institution in the custom that sends unmarried boys to sleep in the Thana-gudi (village rest-house) when it is empty and girls to a room in someone's house. At Kachripati a Dhangra-manjhi was appointed to look after both boys and girls. The Bison-horn Maria also have the institution, though in a degenerated form. Grigson did not discover these dormitories and says that the headmen he met at Aranpur and other camps stated that they were a degraded institution.[1] On the other hand, many Maria have told me that they would like to have the fully developed ghotul of the north, but that they fear scandal due to pregnancies and that since a village is generally occupied by members of the same clan, there would be danger of clan-incest. I have found ghotul for both boys and girls in most Bison-horn Maria villages,[2] though the elders always deny that they exist. In every Bison-horn village there is a commodious rest-house for the use of visitors. This is used by the boys as their ghotul. The boys are not fully organized like the Muria chelik; but a leader is appointed—in Mokhpal he was called the Sian, in Chota Timnar the Peda. Sometimes an older man sleeps with the boys. Absentees are fined. An old Maria Sori Mukha is said to have been very proud of his management of the dormitory at Mokhpal. 'Originally', I was told in this village, 'the boys used to make their house in the middle of the village and it was theirs. Then when Government ordered us to make a rest-house, we had to build it not as we wanted it, but as the officers wanted it.

The girls sometimes sleep together in the house of a lonely widow, but more often have their own house. This is occasionally combined with the corporate menstruation hut. The menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and the girls on the other. Generally, however, women are not segregated in this way during their periods (they occupy a special hut attached to their own houses) and then the unmarried girls have a house to themselves. In either case the boys build the house, and the girls reward them with home-made rice-beer. If the house is used by menstruating women, the boys have to bathe and wash their clothes after thatching the roof.

Both boys and girls have regular duties. Both must take wood to their dormitories, or they are fined. At marriages and funerals, boys and girls must

B
[534]

FIG. 53. Bondo bamboo drum
Length 19"

bring wood and make leaf-plates. In the evenings they often meet in some central place or in front of the boys' house and dance and play games. But I have not heard that they have any rule of hair-combing or massage. At Pulsur a Maria described how 'the boys join the girls' dances, holding the dance-stick with one hand and a girl's breast with the other'.

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
[2] I saw *pahing kurma* (girls' houses) at Dugdil, Khotepal, Dudkarka, Lakhepal, Mailadil, Sarangi, Dudawa, Pusalur and other villages in 1940–2.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond
Gadaba AW31

535
534
291
142
301

Gadaba girls during a dance

Photographs by Dr. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Gadaba boys playing on their stringed instruments

[p.318(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond
Bondo AW30

535
342
291

Bondo dance

142
301
334

Plate LXIV

Bondo girl playing the Jew's Harp

Photographs by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

[p. 318 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria
Raj, Bhatra

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

X 883
X 171

The relations between boys and girls are not organized and disciplined as among the Muria. At marriages, the members of the two dormitories slip away together and sleep in some secluded place. At Penta the boys described how the girls made holes in the wall near which they slept. 'Then a boy creeps up and pokes a stick through the hole to wake her, and she creeps out to join him.' At Bara Harmamunda, the boys said that they actually went into the *peking kurma* (girls' house). Three boys would go together and enter one at a time. After one boy had spent a little while inside, the second would come and pretend to catch him. 'What boy is in there? What are you doing?' He would then drive him out and take his place. This is not done in those dormitories where menstruating women sleep, for men cannot enter them, nor—presumably—where an old woman acts as chaperone.

There is no dormitory at the big Maria village of Gogonda. Hundreds of years ago, I was told, at the creation of the world, there was a dormitory in this village where girls and boys slept together, the girls in a line on one side of the house, the boys in a line on the other. One day when fishing they failed to make the proper offerings to the Yer Kanyang and she, being angry, suddenly caused the earth to open and swallow up both house and children. The parents heard a loud crying and ran to the spot, but could find nothing but water, and this pit always full of water can still be seen in Gogonda. At Muler they added the detail that the boys and girls went down into separate pits and came out into the valley a thousand feet below. Some time later the Gogonda people tried to revive the dormitory and built a house for the girls. But whenever they slept in it, it became filled with frogs and so had to be abandoned.

II. The Origin of the Dormitory

The origin of the village dormitory remains obscure. Possibly it is a survival of the communal house from which private dwellings split off[1]; the special quarters for unmarried men in the communal houses of Borneo seem to suggest this.[2] Hodson suggests three stages in the development of the home. At first there is the communal house where the whole village lives together. This develops into a group of individual houses with the sexes segregated—the unmarried boys and married men have their dormitory, the unmarried girls have theirs, the only people to live at home are the mothers and very young children. Finally, owing to the economic pressure of modern systems of taxation family life is extended to make the mother's house the abode also of the husband. 'This again has developed into the complete family house where the children of all ages and of both sexes live in the same house as their parents.'[3]

Shakespear suggested that the object of the dormitory was to prevent incest[4]; it is more likely, as we shall see, that it was instituted to save children from witnessing 'the primal scene' and from being an embarrassment to their parents. It fits in too with what seems to be a genuine psychological discovery of primitive peoples, that the less you see of people the better you get on with them. So, normally, a bride should be brought from another village; so, betrothed couples should have nothing to do with each other; so, if boys and girls are not shut up with their parents all the time, especially in the evenings

[1] S. E. Peal, 'On the "Morung" as possibly a Relic of Pre-marriage Communism', *JRAI*, Vol. XXII, p. 244. Cf. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), p. 86.
[2] C. Hose and W. McDougall, *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* (London, 1912), Vol. I, p. 52.
[3] Hodson, op. cit., p. 76.
[4] Shakespear, in a footnote to Hodson, op. cit., p. 86.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
X171

when the father may be drunk and the mother tired and both ill-tempered, family life runs more smoothly and is more permanent.

In some cases, particularly in Africa and Assam, the dormitory has undoubtedly a military purpose. Sometimes this end is sought by sexual abstinence and segregation from the girls; sometimes, the people appear to think that their warriors will fight better if they have no frustrations.

Roy summarized the aim of the Uraon dormitory as having been in its time 'an effective economic organization for purposes of food-quest, a useful seminary for training young men in their social and other duties, and an institution for magico-religious observances calculated to secure success in hunting and to augment the procreative power of the young men'.[1]

I do not think we can ignore the magical aspect of the dormitory, though I doubt if this provides a reason for its foundation. For example, Shakespear reports of the Lushei Kuki clans that if a man kills a rhinoceros, his family will die unless he goes straight to the *zawlbuk* or to the forge and remains there for a day and a night.[2] The connexion of the dormitory and the magical forge is interesting. So also among the Chang, when a man kills a tiger, he must stay in the *morung* for thirty days.[3] When boys are initiated into the *darimu* of the Kiwai, they are shown a small image of a naked woman; this is expected to improve the supply of sago.[4] The chelik of the Muria ghotul have a special connexion with fertility rites.

Combined with these, there are entirely practical and straightforward reasons for the establishment of dormitories. Everywhere we find the need of a rest-house for visitors in a village and a special tradition of hospitality. In village life everywhere, it is useful and convenient to have the younger members of the tribe organized and available for work. Nor should we forget the apparently universal human tendency to form clubs. Where society is organized on an age-grade basis, this naturally leads to special clubs for the younger people and the unmarried. The aim of the Bondo, and possibly of some other tribal, dormitories in Orissa appears to have been to enable girls to find suitable husbands and to test their desirability.

No doubt all these causes have been, in their way and according to circumstances, operative in different parts of the world. The Bastar ghotul is peculiar in its elaborate organization of the sexual life of its members, in allowing close relations to live together in the same ghotul, and in having no military purpose.

III. The Muria's Own Theory

X883
187

The Muria themselves explain the origin of their ghotul in several different ways. First and most important they trace its beginning back into the mythological past of the Gond race.[5] Some also stress the desire to segregate the youth of the tribe and thus prevent them being an embarrassment to their parents; others emphasize the need of providing a sort of Boy Scout troop which will always be available to look after visitors to the village.

The last is the least likely reason. The Muria country has only been visited by officials in the last sixty years and by officials in any number during the

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 211.
[2] Shakespear, *The Lushai Kuki Clans*, p. 103.
[3] Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 180.
[4] Beaver, op. cit., p. 184.
[5] The ghotul is possibly very old. A Jain text of the first or second century A.D., the *Brihat-Kalpasutra-bhashya* (Vol. IV, verse 3446), refers to the *Vijayharana-chala* of Tosali (or Bastar State) among the places to be avoided by Jain monks. This was a hut erected in the centre of the village where a fire was kept burning, and where a great number of lowly persons congregated to make selections for marriage.—Private communication from Mr V. S. Agrawala, Lucknow Museum.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

883X
182

present century. The statement is one of those that are so often made with the idea that they will please the inquirer. 'We had to start the ghotul', said the headman of Binjhli, 'because we were ordered to maintain huts in which touring officers and subordinates could stay. It was a great problem how to look after these huts and how to serve the needs of the officers, who devoured more than a herd of buffaloes, whose ponies had to be fed with buckets of ghee, and at last we decided to put them in charge of the boys and girls.' It is true, of course, that though properly the ghotul and the Paik-gudi or Thana-gudi (official rest-hut) should be distinct, in practice most villages have no separate building for touring subordinates, and when these visit the village the chelik and motiari vacate their little club and turn it over to them. It is also true that the chelik have to see to the pitching of tents and to the supply of firewood for more exalted visitors. But the bulk of the work is done by the village Atpariha (drudge) and the Rawat (cowherd) from whose hands Hindu visitors are able to take water.

But this is an excuse, not a reason, for the existence of the ghotul. The same may be said of a suggestion made in Markabera that the ghotul was established to keep the tribe together, to maintain its culture and to protect its girls from the seduction of outsiders. The ghotul certainly achieves this end. It is an ideal instrument of the laws of endogamy. It is a powerful preservative of the old culture. But I doubt if the danger of intermarriage with outsiders has ever been acute.

In Markabera I also heard the interesting suggestion that the ghotul was founded 'to get the girls used to it'. We ourselves are so accustomed to the idea that a girl should be a virgin on her wedding-night, that it is hard for us to realize that many primitive people would very much prefer her not to be. Hence the *jus primae noctis*. Hence the ceremonial deflowering of girls by men other than their husbands. The ghotul might possibly—though I doubt if it could be the sole reason—have arisen from a desire that husbands should not have to face the magical infection of hymeneal blood.

We begin to approach the real reason for the ghotul in a statement by a very old Muria named Yogi who lived in Jaitpuri. The ghotul began, he said, 'because we didn't know what to do with these offspring of a vixen's vagina'—indicating everybody present. 'We were tired of settling their quarrels, and we didn't want their noise. So we said, "You all go off and play and spend your time together. You can do what you like provided you do the work we want from you, bring wood and water, tend the cattle, nurse the babies". At first we gave them a place on the verandah of someone's house, but there were too many of them and we got no peace, so at last we gave them a special house to live in away from the rest of us.'

The Lingo legend suggests that the ghotul serves the useful purpose of removing the younger brothers of a household from their dangerous proximity to the elder brothers' wives.

This is part of the truth but not the whole truth. I believe the fundamental reason for the ghotul is to prevent children watching what Freud called 'the primal scene' and to commit to the older boys and girls the task of educating the younger children, for which the parents have not the time or inclination.[1]

[1] Among the Tanalua, when a boy reached the age of nine he went to live with his maternal uncle, for it was feared his father would be too indulgent and not force his child into the stern training for a life of bear-spearing and on the sea. The uncle would throw the child into cold water and harden him till he was grown and he returned to his parents. C. Osgood, 'Tanalua Culture', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXIII (New Series), p. 702.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
182

To understand this, we must consider in some detail the relation of Muria parents to their children.

IV. Avoiding the Primal Scene

X883
182
593

At about the time when children become capable of something more than games and food, they also become something of an embarrassment about the house. There is nowhere for them to sleep at night. They are always clamouring to go and play with the other children. They are apt to surprise the intimacies of marital life. The parents decide that it is time they went to the ghotul. At the age of six or seven, then, a child begins its dormitory life. In most ghotul there is a group of very small children, sent by their parents 'to get them out of the way'. They are not given ghotul names or any ghotul privileges, but the house serves as a sort of crèche, and after all most of the little children have older brothers or sisters there who can look after them.

One of the reasons often given by Muria to explain the existence of the ghotul is that 'it is sinful for parents to sleep in the presence of their children'. 'As soon as a child understands what it [that is, sexual intercourse] is, we send it to the ghotul.' Apparently the Muria parent does not consider the child capable of understanding the meaning of the 'primal scene' till it is about six or seven. But it is interesting and significant that the Muria should consider the point at all. It is indeed of such importance that I will quote all the statements that have been made to me about it. 'The very reason for the ghotul', said the headman of Jhakri, 'is that it is sinful to sleep before a daughter or a son. They must never see the parents sleeping on one mat, either by day or night. Suppose a little girl comes home late at night for some reason and finds her parents holding each other on the mat, they are very angry and abuse her saying, "Haven't you your ghotul to live in? Why do you want to come here?"'

In Malakot, the village Gaita told me that 'young children are only kept at home while they are too young to understand pleasure and pain. Very little children may sleep with their mothers, but then they must go somewhere else. They are always getting frightened, so we send them as soon as we can to the ghotul.'

Here is another opinion from one of the elders of Kongera. 'Suppose the child is two or three years old and suddenly wakes up to find its father copulating with the mother. The father goes on, he takes no notice, but the mother pats the child's chest saying, "I'll give you something to eat in a moment, but keep quiet now, my darling". The father also speaks sweet words to the child in order to deceive it about what is happening. But suppose it is a big child, of five or six years, then it is difficult. The father ceases his work and goes away. Next day they send it to the ghotul.'

And this from Binjhli: 'The ghotul was made simply to stop children watching their parents copulating. As soon as boys or girls understand what that is, we send them to the ghotul. It is a great shame to watch one's own parents at it. "What are they doing?" the little children say, wondering. "Why is my father throwing my mother about like that?" So we take them to the ghotul, and they ask no more questions. But what do the Hindu children do and the sahibs, where all live in one house and they have no ghotul?'

And finally from Alor: 'How difficult it is for parents to tell their bigger children, whom they have not yet sent to the ghotul, to go and sleep in another room. Some children are very good and understand, but others are stupid and insist on crowding into the parents' room. We daren't, even while

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

983 X
192
543

they are asleep, pick them up and put them on the verandah. We feel very pleased when they begin to say, "This or that little girl has gone to the ghotul. I used to play with her, and now I feel lonely. Do let me go too". We send them to the ghotul very willingly.'

This desire to prevent the child from witnessing the 'primal scene' is interesting and important, though modern psycho-analysts are inclined to believe that Freud over-emphasized its dangers, and certainly any harm likely to be done to the child would have been done long before it reached the ghotul age. But it is at least significant that the parents are aware of the danger, that they think it not only embarrassing for themselves but harmful to the children, and that so many should trace the foundation of the ghotul to a cause which Freud would surely have applauded.[1]

But not only does the ghotul save the child from the psychological dangers of witnessing the 'primal scene'; it alters the entire parent-child complex by putting in the place of the father a new disciplinarian and in the place of the mother a new object of sensual attraction. 'When a boy or girl enters the ghotul', said a leading chelik at Masora, 'he usually forgets his relations altogether. They say they have no relations. The head of the ghotul is the father, and the Belosa is the mother.' However strict the father may be at home, however insistent on the fulfilment of domestic and economic duties, his authority is nothing before that of the dreaded Sirdar, who can fine you, truss your legs up to the roof, make you a mockery to your fellows. The father fades into the background; if he comes home drunk and beats up the family, the children will not be there; his orders and curses are feeble before those of the Sirdar. The father may still control a boy's work and duty, but his emotional life is dominated by the Sirdar. The result of this has been well put by J. P. Mills. Speaking of the policy of the American Baptist Mission in Assam which has, of course, been to discourage the dormitories which formerly flourished there as in Bastar, he writes,

> In forbidding their converts to use the *morung* and in undermining it as an institution the Mission are taking a very dangerous step, from which they would surely have shrunk if they had considered the psychological aspect of the matter. A boy goes to the *morung* when he is very small—as soon, that is to say, as he 'feels shame' at sleeping in the same room as his parents. It is in the *morung* that he fags for other boys and is taught his duties in life and generally hammered into shape. This means that the *morung* tends to take the place of his father as a disciplinarian. This is most important, for it is from a son's feeling towards his father as disciplinarian that one of the great stresses of the family complex arises. Looking back over the thousands of Naga disputes that have been brought before me in the course of my service, it certainly seems to me that violent quarrels between fathers and sons are more frequent in tribes which have no *morungs*.[2]

Mills illustrates this by showing that in the Sema tribe where, as we have seen, there are no *morung*, such quarrels are disastrously common; Angami boys, who also do not grow up in dormitories, resent any form of discipline,

[1] The same desire is said to be at the bottom of the custom recorded of the Savara of Orissa who, it is claimed, never have sexual congress after nightfall, but go out together during the day to special places in the jungle. The tribe has no dormitory, and the whole family has to sleep together in a single hut. See S. N. Roy, 'The Savaras of Orissa', *Man in India*, Vol. VII, p. 331. But I believe the taboo on intercourse at night to be an invention. I discuss it in my *Myths of Middle India*.

[2] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 491.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

yet among the Ao, where the *morung* plays an important part, quarrels between father and son are rare.

Muria parents are tolerant and understanding. 'Whenever we hear the music of a drum', said a boy at Kabonga, 'we feel restless; we leave everything we are doing and go at once to dance and sing.' Here I was told a story, that is often repeated, of a boy who was sowing seed in his father's field. He had a whole measure of rice to sow, but when he heard drums beating in a neighbouring village he forgot all about it and went off to join the dance, leaving the pile of rice on the ground. Three days later he returned expecting to be beaten, but his father had understood the boy's feelings and had himself gone to the field and sown the rice instead. I have been told in various villages that for recognised festivals and marriages, parents are very sympathetic to their children.

[689] And indeed if the parents interfere with the life and discipline of the ghotul, if they stop their children going to it without sufficient excuse, they are fined—and so firmly established is the institution that they pay up.

There is very generally a convention that the parents know nothing of what happens in the ghotul. They are not even supposed to know their children's titles though, of course, they actually know everything that goes on. But the conventions must be observed. The children do not sing ghotul songs at home. A girl should not let her parents see her as she goes out to the ghotul or when she comes back. That is one reason why she returns home very early in the morning. She ought to be at work husking rice or cleaning the house when her parents get up. Should a girl meet her father as she is going to the ghotul, she should turn her head aside and walk away as quickly as possible. They should not greet or say anything to each other. But in some villages, in Kabonga for example, and at Jhakri, the older people have told me that when a girl gets engaged, her mother advises her to be very careful about allowing boys to take liberties with her. It is said, however, that the parents never warn a girl or boy against any particular person. At Jhakri, Raunu said that the mother says to the daughter at this time, 'Don't play and laugh too much with the boys; be happy, but don't let your hands and feet get into trouble. I never got into trouble nor did your grandmother; we were always known to be good girls for we never became pregnant. Never run away with a boy but marry the one we choose for you and don't quarrel with your girl friends.' So also a father advises his son to be very careful in his relations with girls who are already engaged to other boys. The reasons for this attitude are purely financial: 'Don't make a girl pregnant. We are poor people; I shall not be able to pay the fine; if you get into mischief you will have to go and work as someone's servant and pay the fine that way. Be happy but don't always run after the same girl.'

It will be seen that this kind of advice is very practical, and for that reason the boys and girls do not resent it. The parents are not concerned with the 'morals' of their children and, indeed, even when a boy makes a girl pregnant the parents generally stand by him and help him. When I asked a chelik at Markabera whether his parents ever got angry with him for sexual indulgence in the ghotul, he replied, 'Why should they, didn't they do the same when they were young?'

It is not easy to obtain information about the mother-son relationship. I have not heard of any 'possessive' mothers and the general circumstances of Muria life are such as to eliminate the dangers of the mother-fixation. Naturally, mothers tend to spoil their sons and fathers their daughters. 'A boy may be frightened of his father but he is never afraid of his mother. If

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

he does not work properly his father chases him with a stick and he hides until he knows the danger is past and then his mother receives him lovingly and gives him special food.'

It is said that a mother often accuses the father of jealousy, saying, 'You cannot bear seeing that boy's happiness when he goes to the ghotul dance; can't you remember that you were a young boy yourself once and you too went to the ghotul?'

Widows' sons and only sons are often spoilt and indulged—'*Rând ke beta sând*, a widow's son is a bull': he does what he likes and no one can control him. So too it is said of an only son that 'he brings home all the quarrels of the world: if he is given a pot to urinate in, he does it on the floor'.

On the whole the relation of children and parents is a happy one. This may be at least one reason why there is so little conflict and jealousy, so little strain, among the Muria.

In many respects, Muria practice corresponds to what Seligman once described as the psycho-analytic ideal of education. Melanie Klein, speaking of children rather younger than many of those in the ghotul, describes the upbringing of the future generation. 'We shall be more sparing of compulsory ethical requirements in regard to the tiny developing creature than people were with us. We shall allow him to remain for a longer period uninhibited and natural, less interfered with than has hitherto been the case, to become conscious of his different instinctive impulses and of his pleasure therein, without immediately whipping up his cultural tendencies against this ingenuousness. We shall aim at a slower development that allows room for his instincts to become partially conscious, and together with this for their possible sublimation. At the same time, we shall not refuse expression to his awakening sexual curiosity and shall satisfy it step by step, even—in my opinion—withholding nothing. We shall know how to give him sufficient affection, and yet avoid a harmful superfluity: above all, we shall reject physical punishment and threats, and secure obedience necessary for upbringing by means of withdrawing affection.'[1]

Of this passage Seligman says that 'my experience suggests that further investigation will show a very small number of psychotics among the less advanced of the primitive races, and here it is interesting to note that in the upbringing of their children these races do, to a considerable extent, conform to the psycho-analytic ideal' set out above. He adds that 'there is, however, one desideratum laid down by the author, which I believe is only occasionally fulfilled, "that the child from birth shall not share the parental bedroom"'.[2]

[1] Melanie Klein, 'The Development of a Child', *The International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, Vol. IV (1923), p. 445.

[2] C. G. Seligman, 'Anthropological Perspective and Psychological Theory', *JRAI*, Vol. LXII, p. 221. A terrible picture of the effect on a boy's mind and character caused by witnessing scenes in his parents' bedroom is given by Graham Greene in his novel *Brighton Rock*.

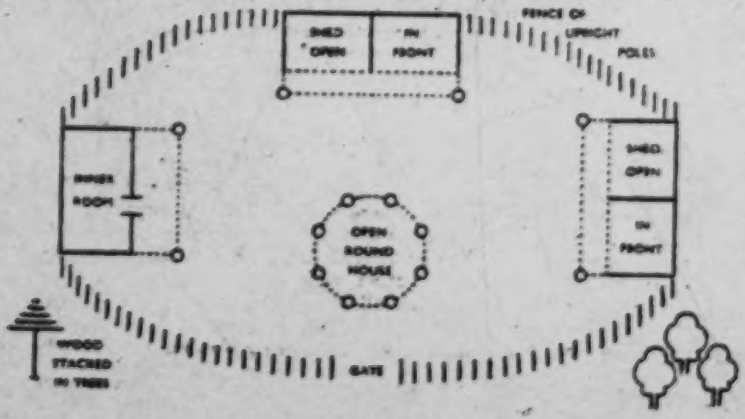
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TEN

THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

X 883 342

THE position and architecture of the ghotul is largely determined by one simple fact. In every village in Bastar, as we have seen, the people have to build and maintain a hut for the use of travellers and touring officials. This is an excellent arrangement: it prevents the invasion of aboriginal homes by outsiders, and it means that in every village there is some clean and roomy place where disputes can be settled and official business transacted. This Paik-ghotul or Thana-gudi, as it is called, is supposed to be separate from the Koitur-ghotul or Ghotul-gudi, the club of the boys and girls, and in some Muria villages it is. But in many others the elders of the village seem to have decided that it would save them a great deal of trouble if they combined the Paik-ghotul and the Koitur-ghotul in one compound. It would take up less room, means less building, and the young men would be always there to do the work. I have already quoted some Muria elders as saying that this was actually how the ghotul originated. If the young men were kept together in one place they would always be ready to serve visitors and could hand over their house to them for the night. This situation is of course comparatively modern. Old Muria like Yogi and Bindo remember the day when there was no revenue staff and they never saw a touring officer.



DANCING-GROUND
The Mariahera Ghotul
(See p. 327)

X 883 342

The original ghotul, then, was probably a small building on the outskirts of the village, among trees, perhaps originally in some sacred grove, aloof from the public eye, with a small secret door. You may still see this kind of ghotul in predominantly Hindu villages and in parts of Kondagaon, at Kanker and Sonawal, for example, in the south, and Kerawahi, Majhiboran, Lihagaon in the north. But there is no rule. Near the eastern boundary, there was a small ghotul at Baghbera, and a combined Thana-gudi and Koitur-ghotul at the neighbouring Ulem. Where a village consists, administratively,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond
Gadaba AW31

Plate LXV

142
301
291

Photograph by Dr Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf

Gadaba girls during a dance

[p. 326 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXVI

X893
342

The Palli ghotul

[p. 326 (8)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

of several hamlets, there will probably be a large ghotul in the main village (where officials usually halt) and small ones in the hamlets.

In all such villages there is a separate building in the middle of the village for officials. In Masora, for example, there was a large Thana-gudi inside the village, and away on the outskirts, among trees, is a small hut with a fenced compound in front. This is the home of the chelik and motiari. In Baniagaon, a predominantly Hindu village with a school, the ghotul is similarly separated from the officials' halting-place, and is a single building with a small door facing away from the village towards the forest. In Kachora, near by, you may see the same type of ghotul, even further removed from the ordinary dwelling-places of the village, beyond the shrine of the Village Mother, perhaps because an aggressive Brahmin lives there and tries to dominate the Muria. I obviously cannot give a list of all such villages, though there are not very many of them. In the Chalka Pargana, I think of Kajen, Naria and Maranar as places where the Thana-gudi was separate from the ghotul. In such villages there is sometimes not even a fence to isolate the compound; that is not necessary, forest and field keep the children separate from the world. But in all there is a small secret door, a hatch which you have to bend down to and climb over—not unlike the door by which Alice entered Wonderland.

But, as I have said, in the majority of Muria villages the Thana-gudi is combined with the Koitur-ghotul, and this influences both its plan and its location. Officials will not want to camp outside the village in the jungle; they will need a hut for their horses, and accommodation for servants. And so we get the large ghotul with its spacious compound, standing in the very heart of the village, which is familiar to every touring officer in the north of Bastar. This arrangement is unsatisfactory and was never contemplated by the Administration. Into the very heart of Muria life is injected the all-too-often poisonous contact of every casual wanderer. There is a type of touring subordinate who makes a point of halting in ghotul where it is known that there are pretty motiari and pesters the chelik to pimp for them—which to their honour, be it said, they never do. Contractors for myrabolams or tendu leaves camp for days in the ghotul, making it impossible for the boys and girls to live their normal lives. I once found an opium-seller permanently established in a ghotul with his wife, thus outraging the fundamental Muria rule that the presence of a married woman there is an offence to Lingo Pen. He was removed at once by the Administrator, but Bastar is a big place and it is impossible to say in how many other places the integrity of the ghotul is thus destroyed. This is, of course, the Muria's own fault. It is due to the slackness and selfishness of the older men who want the youngsters to do all the work. It is thus difficult to do anything about it.

Let us examine some of the villages which have ghotul of this type. Often, so long as there are no visitors, the enlarged ghotul is all to the advantage of the boys and girls. In Markabera, for example, chelik and motiari have in all five different sleeping-places and a spacious compound. The house with the very deep verandah is, of course, the original ghotul and the other buildings have developed from it to meet the pressure of outside visitations. But the extra room thus provided and the open sheds available as dormitories are a boon to the children's health. The one-room ghotul with its tiny door and no windows and its crowded floor, its stuffy smoky atmosphere, cannot be good for anyone.

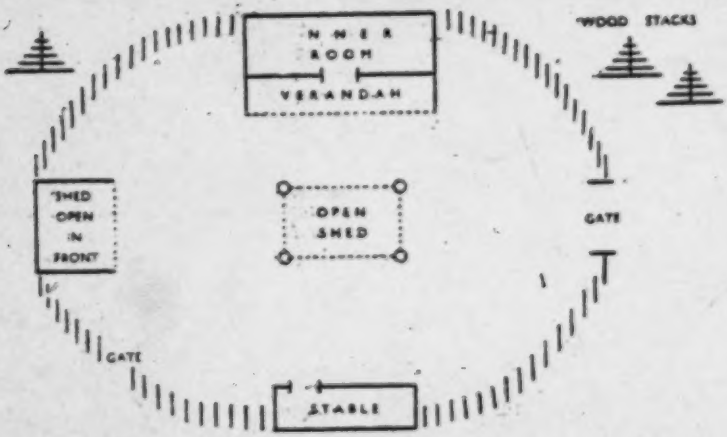
Fortunately—from this point of view—the larger type of ghotul is far the most common. This model with its central house with deep verandah, spacious inner room, large door, open hut for conference or sleep in the hot

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria
Maria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

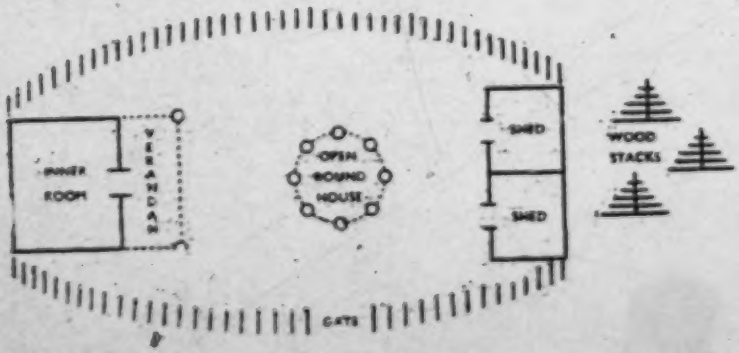
X 883
342

weather, and several small sheds, the whole surrounded by a fence, may be seen in scores of Muria villages. There is the same arrangement at Bandopal, at Ulera, at Amgaon, at Jhakri, at Almer, at More Berma. This is the plan of the ghotul at Almer in the Bara Dongar Pargana:



This ghotul stands in the middle of the village, in a grove of tamarind trees.

In a third type of ghotul, its position in the middle of the village is possibly due to Maria influence. The traditional Maria ghotul is the centre of the male life of the village. The men assemble there in the evenings, and talk, smoke, drink and sleep. But girls do not normally attend. In villages like Palli Barkot, Watia, Phulpar, Koilibera, on the fringe of the Abujhmar Maria country, the ghotul is in the heart of the village; it is generally (except at Koilibera) not so spacious as those we have been considering. The plan below of the ghotul at Palli Barkot is typical.



These ghotul are often beautifully kept. At Khutgaon, there is a spotlessly clean compound forty paces square; in it are three open sheds, one with a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

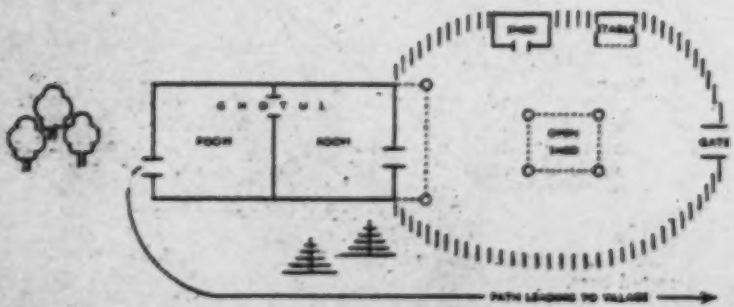
THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

finely-constructed round roof, and two large houses with thick mud walls. One of these is the Thana-gudi, the other has an inner and an outer room for the boys and girls. The Telenga, Temrugaon and Chureng ghotul are of the same pattern, like Palli Barkot; a big house with a small or deep verandah, a central open hut with often a rounded roof and two small open sheds, the whole surrounded by a high wooden fence. 883X 342

In the north of the State, on the Amabera plateau and generally to the north of the forest road from Berma to Antagarh and up to the Kanker border are to be found the least attractive ghotul—and ghotul members—in Bastar. The buildings are mean, dilapidated and draughty. The dormitory actually used by the boys and girls rarely has a door and thus loses its intimacy and coziness. My memories of Puppgaon, Chikhli, even Penjori, are not happy.

It remains to mention a few special dormitories. Semurgaon is traditionally the site of the first ghotul, built there by Lingo himself. He could hardly have chosen a lovelier or more charming spot. But the ghotul today is small and almost unique in having unplastered walls made of bare logs. On a pillar in the centre are carvings of chelik and motiari, horses and combs. From the door you look out over a wild expanse of forest and *dippa* clearings.

No visitor to Nayanar can ever forget the ghotul there—the long building with its little windows and two doors, at one end like a hatch, at the other large and dignified, its carved pillars, its charming site at the edge of the village among great trees. This is its general plan—



One of the most delightful and original of all the ghotul is at the Budakasa Para of Malakot. Here outside the village, in the woods, shadowed by tall sago-palms, is a house lifted well above the ground on pillars eight feet high. Above the wooden floor is a low wall two feet high all round, then an open space to the roof. This platform is reached by a ladder. Both the upper room and the space below it are used; there are fires kept burning in each.

The ghotul is built by the chelik themselves, though the boys often get the help of the older men by promising to help in their fields at sowing-time or harvest. The motiari being grass for the roof, stones and earth for the floor and, when the walls are ready, plaster them with mud. Before they begin the work, the boys mark out on the ground the proposed plan of the building and put there a little pile of rice covered with a leaf-cup. They leave it all night and in the morning go to examine it, sometimes only for one day, sometimes for three days running. Should the rice be scattered, it is taken as a bad omen and they build the ghotul elsewhere. But if the rice remains just 883X 342 787

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the four corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chalik-bairag* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central parganas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and no one would steal from it.

As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more, and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The chelik desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Kober and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has siddari birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidhe*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidhe* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.

Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

[1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bhuiya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of hexagons right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. "Hutton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of sexual excitement' in Naga morung.—Hutton, *Diction*, op. cit., p. 42.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria
Oraon AW39

Uraon dhangri

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Plate LXVII

Motiari of Kongera grinding

G
142
291
301
252
412

[R.339(4)]

X 883
342
417

Plate LXVIII

The ghotul at Mason

Black and red wall-paintings in the Mere Berma ghotul

X 883
353
532

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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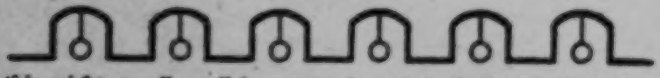
on the central pillar. In the small Kolur ghotul there is one slender pillar covered with carvings of the vagina, as always showing the clitoris, but here there was a double clitoris and a clitoris upside down.

At Markabera there were similar carvings of the vagina with the clitoris.

Often a chelik may be seen with an enormous penis, a motiari in his arms. The boys say that these carvings are very useful as an approach to girls. It may be that the vagina in the central pillar is the relic of a custom now forgotten of initiating smaller boys by pressing them against it.[1]

The walls of the ghotul are often decorated with drawings and paintings. In 1940 there was a fine display in the Remawand ghotul. The following year I saw a frieze of fantastic paintings (illustrated in Plate LXVIII) at More Berma. At Netagaon there were models of motiari, tigers and a monkey. In Urdabera there was a model of a chelik with his motiari, and over the door a mud model of a horse. In Dongaon, there were modellings of a chelik and motiari riding on a horse. At Kuntpadar, one wall was well decorated with drawings of a boy, a vagina, a girl, a bow and arrow and the sun and moon. At Palki there was the representation of a bird trap:



But this might equally well be a sexual symbol, similar to the design of the phallus within the vagina that I noted at Metawand:

883 X
352
[531]

The day-time visitor to a ghotul will find little enough there by way of furniture. Cots are never used; everyone sleeps on the ground. Seats and stools are rare, but in many ghotul are to be found long narrow pieces of wood raised some two inches from the ground. These are the *kutul* which may be used either as seats or pillows. Some are very long and suggest the custom of several boys and girls sleeping together. They are often carved with geometric designs, figures of boys and girls, crude representations of the vagina. I have one with four breasts carved on its under-side. Occasionally you may see a *kutul* with a little drawer hollowed out below for storing necklaces or other ornaments during the night. As far as I know these head-rests are the corporate property

FIG. 34. *Kutul* from Talabera showing small drawer for keeping ornaments. *Length 1' 7"*

[1] A remarkable parallel from an English Public School (Repton) is provided in Dunton Welch's *Maiden Voyage* (London, 1943), p. 48. The author is describing the House dormitory. 'Two lips had been painted on one of the beams and all new boys had to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of the ghotul, though they are usually appropriated by particular boys for the period of their membership.

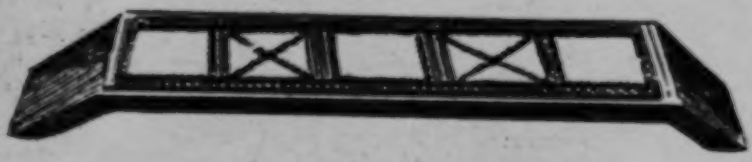


Fig. 33. Carved head-rest from Markabera
Length 5' 6"

In eastern Kondagaon drums are usually kept in the ghotul; at Masora a dhol-drum hangs under the verandah roof—it is the local habitation of Lingo

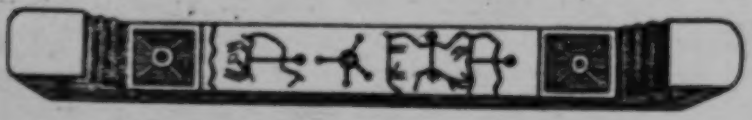


Fig. 56. Carved underside of wooden head-rest from Kumli
Length 4'

Pen. At Dongrigura and other villages in this area, the whole ceiling is of drums, a fine and impressive sight. Special officers are appointed to provide rope for hanging them up and to see that they are kept in good order.

Flutes are often pushed into the thatch, but dancing-sticks are kept in the shrine of the Village Mother. I have never seen the emblem of a god, a flag or a 'horse' in the ghotul, nor any village symbol, but in Palli Barkot there was a bundle of blessed seed hanging from the roof.

There are often little holes in the wall for keeping tobacco and other small treasures. Sometimes too there are holes in the floor—for husking the rice that is brought home from the Pus Kolang and other expeditions. In one or two ghotul I have seen holes low down in the wall to serve as urinals. Outside in the courtyard there may be a large flat stone for washing clothes, but this is probably an innovation for the benefit of outsiders.

Inside the ghotul compound there is generally a stack of grass for thatching the roofs. Outside are tall piles of firewood, which may be stacked criss-cross about a central pole or piled up in the forked branches of a tree. Sometimes long poles are stood upright against and round a tree. In Jhakri I saw near the ghotul four different ways of storing the chelik's wood—it was stacked horizontally criss-cross round a tree; it was laid in parallel rows between two trees; it was criss-crossed between two upright poles tied together at the top by a rope; and it was stacked upright against a tree.

These stores of wood play an important part in the consciousness of every Muria boy, for his earliest ghotul memories are of his duty to add one or two pieces to them every evening, failure to do so earning dreaded punishments.

pull themselves up by their arms, to kiss them. I remember struggling up, and at last reaching the yellow pitch pine and the two crimson lips. They looked indecent, for some reason; as if they were the drawing of another part of the body.' If the boys were not quick or could not reach the lips, they were flicked with wet towels as an encouragement.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

I

BEFORE proceeding further it is essential that we distinguish carefully between two different types of ghotul, for these are so sharply differentiated by rule and custom and the psychological conditions of each are so distinct that until this is done we can get no clear picture of the intimate relations between chelik and motiari.

The fundamental principle of the first type of dormitory, which is sometimes called the *jodidār*[1] or 'yoking' ghotul, is that of fidelity to a single partner during the whole of the pre-marital period. Each chelik is paired off with a motiari; he is formally 'married' to her; she may even take the feminine form of his title as her own. Divorce is allowed, though infidelity is punished.

In the second type of ghotul, which is probably a later development of the classic model, any kind of lasting attachment between chelik and motiari is forbidden. No one can say that such and such a motiari is *his* girl; if anyone sleeps with a particular girl for more than three days at a time, he is punished.

In all other matters, whether of discipline, routine, social duty or recreation, there is no difference between the two types of ghotul. We must, however, carefully distinguish them for their sexual customs and psychological conditions.

The *jodidār* ghotul is, I think, the original form of the Muria dormitory. In the first place, it is most widely distributed in the more primitive parganas—the Chota Dongar, Dugal and Karangal—and in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar Mountains. It has retained its place most successfully among the Jhoria, who are undoubtedly the oldest of the Muria groups. Secondly, the Muria themselves describe the other type of ghotul as a modern improvement intended to eliminate scandals and the danger of pregnancy. The change from one type to the other is still going on. At Karangaon, which was formerly

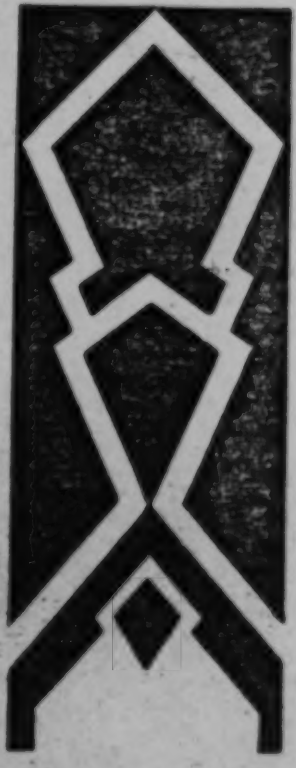


FIG. 57. Carving on the pillars of the ghotul at Almer

[1] A *jodi* or *jori* is the word used for a life-long friend, yoke-fellow or husband and wife. A *jodi* is something definitely more than a temporary lover. It is the person yoked to whom one will pull the heavy plough of life. See V. Elwin and S. Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 240f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 823
836
178
[842]

a *jodiddr* ghotul, a pregnancy scandal caused the chelik and motiari to adopt the other rule of partnership. Twenty years ago, Masora was a *jodiddr* ghotul; today its members insist on change. I believe that originally all over the ghotul area the dormitories were of the older type; then in order to avoid the scandals and elopements that naturally arose from such intense and lasting attachments, and as a result of the belief that conception was less likely when the cycle of coitus was frequently broken, the rules were changed.

The ghotul, therefore, gives no support to those who believe in what Westermarck called the 'hypothesis of primitive promiscuity'. Promiscuity is the last thing permitted in the *jodiddr* ghotul. It might even be argued that it is the result of culture-contact, for the ghotul in the neighbourhood of towns and schools, or along the roads, are generally of the modern, promiscuous, type.

This gradual change from one tradition to another probably accounts for the very haphazard distribution of the two types at the present time. The old tradition persists in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar and among the Jhoria; elsewhere there is no rule. Here and there throughout the whole area, *jodiddr* ghotul survive in the midst of dormitories which, as the result of scandal or example, have changed their rules. In the Kongur Pargana, for example, More Berma, Kanhargaon and Gorma are ghotul of the old type surrounded by others, as are Chimri and Morenga in the Bangoli Pargana. At the present time, the newer type of ghotul seems to be in the majority; out of the 2000 married men examined, 720 had grown up in *jodiddr* dormitories, and 1280 in the others, while out of 347 dormitories of which I have information on this point 269 have adopted the new rules, 78 retaining the older customs.

II

X 823
836

In the *jodiddr* ghotul, the pairing-off of chelik and motiari in a more or less permanent relationship, only to be dissolved by the marriage or death of one partner, is taken very seriously. In most villages there is a custom of the ghotul marriage, which is celebrated after the children have attained ghotul maturity and received their titles. In Metawand the chelik gave me a detailed description of the ceremony.

The members of the ghotul are allotted their various parts in the marriage. First of all, the boy's 'parents' go to the girl's 'parents' for the betrothal ceremony, carrying two leaf-pipes to represent bottles of liquor. The girl's parents say—in strict accordance with tradition—'Why have you come, samdhi?' 'O there's nothing special, we were going this way and looked in for a few moments.' 'No, no, there must be some reason.' 'Well, we did hear that a flower had blossomed in your house; we would pick it to adorn our hair.' 'Ah, how truly they say that a dog is fed many years only to be taken by a panther in the end, and a daughter is cherished only to be carried off by the samdhi.' There follows the usual dispute about the bride-price and, when that is agreed, the two parties sit together and smoke.

The following day comes the 'marriage'. Ashes are used instead of haldi. A little booth is made in the ghotul court. The marriage ritual is briefly recapitulated. Water is poured from the roof over the two children. Hagar hands catch them and shut them up in an inner room. The bride screams, 'Open the door, let me out'. The others, shouting with laughter, at last let them go. That night the two sleep together, and will probably continue to do so until one of them is married.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

But 'divorce' is allowed. I was given a vivid account by a chelik of the Kapsi ghotul of how this is arranged. If a motiari has intercourse with another boy, her own chelik reports the matter to the Sirdar saying, 'My wife has left her house and made another; for many days she lived and fed with me, but now she has run away and my honour is ruined. How can I live in a broken house, how can my work prosper in a field of weeds?'

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[531]

FIG. 58. Ghotul carvings at Nayanar
Slightly enlarged

Then the Sirdar calls the girl and says, 'Well, girl, why have you left your husband? Do you really want to forsake him and live with this other boy?' If the girl has made up her mind, she may answer, 'Yes, I want to live with this boy. My honour has gone to him'. The Sirdar then says to the second boy, 'How can you live with another chelik's wife? Think well, are you going to keep her, or will you send her away again?' The boy replies, 'I didn't fetch the girl; she came to my mat of her own accord. Now how can I quarrel with her or drive her away? Her husband must have neglected her or beaten her'.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 836

At this the Sirdar turns to the first boy and says, 'Yes, tell us, you must have abused her and driven her away by your unkindness'. But he replies, 'I never abused her for rice or for work or for lying together. She left by her own desire, straying like a cow. I want her no more. But I must have her price'.

This leads to a long haggle about the compensation to be paid and at last a hundred rupees is settled, and another chelik stands bail. After a few days the second boy brings a hundred siari seeds, and five leaf-pipes representing five bottles of liquor for the panchayat. The money is paid, the pipes are smoked, some ashes are sprinkled over the newly-assorted pair, and the readjustment is complete.

After a few days the deserted boy goes to the Sirdar and says, 'Have you any widows in your pargana, master?' The Sirdar says, 'Well, perhaps—in such and such a village there is a widow, or she may be a virgin, I really forget'. Once again parents are appointed, there is a betrothal and a new marriage. In Kapsi they said that the Tussaro had the task of seeing that the bridegroom fulfilled his duties to his new wife.

I have recorded a curious custom in several ghotul of this type. At Chimri, when the young chelik first gets his 'wife' he has to pay a sort of rent or tribute for her to the ghotul. She is a 'new field' and he must give five score pieces of green wood every year for it. Later, when his girl passes her menarche, the boys say that 'the field is well ploughed and manured'; its value has increased and he must pay ten score. Still later, when the land is fully developed, he must give twenty score. At Mundpal, the rule was that for a young girl, described as a *banghar* field unbroken by the plough, the boy had to give ten score siari seeds. When the girl became mature, she was described as the fruitful ploughed land known as *gabhar*, and the boy had to pay the ghotul fifteen score. Three years after the menarche, a girl was known as a *munda* or embanked field, and now the chelik had to pay twenty score.

And further, if a girl had a great many ornaments, she was described as a rich woman with a large herd of cows and goats, and the chelik had to pay a super-tax of ten score seeds for her. At Rengagondi the boys counted the number of reeds in a girl's sleeping-mat and estimated her importance and the tax to be paid on her accordingly.

Like the 'police work' of the ghotul, this taxation is a sort of game; yet it is taken perfectly seriously, and it impresses on everyone the 'right' that a chelik has over his ghotul-mate. Many a feast has been enjoyed by the ghotul company out of the public taxes.

Another example of the importance of the 'ghotul marriage' is to be found in the entirely serious creation of a whole set of 'ghotul relatives'. In ordinary life, the Muria (like most of the rest of India) regard certain people as standing in a relationship of taboo. Such are a boy's wife's elder sister (*akoin*), his younger brother's wife (*koryár*), and his father's younger brother's wife (*kuchi*). He must not sit alone in the same room with any of these; he must not touch their heads; in his presence they must not 'lift their legs'—that is, they should not sit or climb over a fence before him and must not walk in front of him.

These rules are observed, at least officially, in the ghotul. Thus a young chelik must not have anything to do with the elder sister of the motiari who is his special partner; an older boy must not sit on his younger brother's sleeping-mat for fear he may be led into an improper familiarity with his '*koryár*'. In Metawand and Markabera there was even a rule that two brothers should not sleep in the same room of the ghotul, for it is essential that the younger brother's 'wife' should avoid the elder brother. She must not be

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

883X
836

found alone in the ghotul with him. A Muria girl never covers her head,[1] but at least she must not undo her hair in his presence. When the elder brother is away from the ghotul his 'wife' is allowed to sleep with her '*dewar*', the younger brother.

A chelik does not seem to have to avoid entirely his brother's daughters; in the ghotul he may abuse them or flirt with them, but he ought not to sleep with one of them. But they can massage him, as indeed his own sisters can. They call him *sukwa* in the ghotul. This leads us to the interesting provision that close relations should not address each other by their ghotul titles, but by terms of relationship, thus continually reminding themselves and one another how they are related and that they must behave.

What is the reason for these rules of avoidance? The ban on the younger brother's wife is probably to safeguard the position of the younger brother, always in jeopardy as a hundred folk-tales show. In the ghotul certainly it serves as a valuable protection to a younger boy, whose brother might well be the all-powerful Sirdar or Diwan. Similarly, the rule of avoidance between a boy and his motiari's elder sister, who might be the almost equally powerful Belosa or head of the girls, prevents her from taking advantage of her position to seduce a boy away from his 'lawful wife'.

[531]

883X
836
593

FIG. 59. Wall-decoration from the Rensewand ghotul
Height 8'

There does not appear to be any taboo on brothers and sisters witnessing each other's erotic adventures in the ghotul, provided they do not discuss them with each other and, of course, strictly avoid any relations between themselves. It is not, however, considered improper for a brother to have full knowledge of and to hear all about his sister's love affairs. Once in Binjhli a boy told me in Gondi how he had dreamt that he was having intercourse with a certain girl. The girl's own brother interpreted for me without embarrassment.

A sister sleeps every night with a boy in the presence of her brother. A brother flirts and makes love and sleeps with girls before his sister. They seem to be quite unembarrassed and both behave naturally.

[1] What Hoffmann said so charmingly of the Munda is true also of the Muria girl: 'Nothing but a lead or a flower is ever seen on the head of a Munda woman.'

22

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

In many ghotul a sister may comb and massage a brother, but in Kabonga there was a rule that she must not salute him with Johar nor comb his hair.

Many coarse jokes are made about the relation of brothers and sisters when everyone is drunk at a marriage. There are many obscene songs about it, for it is regarded as a licensed subject for humour. As in other societies, however, it is probable that such humour only exists against a background of very strict propriety. The suggestion that a brother is sleeping with his sister is amusing simply because he never does.

Generally it is said that brothers and sisters live together very happily. When they do quarrel a boy may say to his sister: 'You *potsa* (big-bellied one), you *chipri* (you've got dirty eyes), *saladri* (murderess).' It is said that a girl on her marriage remembers these delightful animosities and weeps bitterly saying, 'No one will be able to quarrel with me so sweetly in future'. The brother may threaten to turn his sister out of the house, but she has the ready retort available that 'in any case I am not going to stay in your house, I can easily make a living somewhere else'.

III

How far is the rule of fidelity to a single partner kept? This is a matter on which there can be no possible statistical evidence; one can only give a general impression and quote a few examples. The temptation to break the rules must be very great. Ghotul routine aims at stimulating the sexual passion. The boys and girls live in the closest contact, and enjoy sexual intimacy in one another's presence. Certain relatives, such as the younger brother, have traditional privileges. The chelik are often absent in the fields, and their motiari sleep accessible and alone. In every 'memoir' that I have collected, the narrator has described how he or she evaded the ghotul rules.

From these memoirs I will give a few quotations. My first is from the experiences of Budhu, a Poyami of Kanera in the Sonawal Pargana of Kondagaon, in a *jodidir* ghotul forty years ago.

> In those days there were about twelve boys and ten girls in the ghotul, and a boy used to sleep with his partner until his marriage unless he changed his name. I was married to the Malko and loved her very much. I was then Sepahi. But after two years, I was made Kotwar, and I had to leave Malko and sleep with the Kotwarin, for that was the rule. Yet my thoughts were always for Malko, and at night when everyone was asleep I would leave the mat where I was sleeping with Kotwarin and creep over to Malko to make love to her.
>
> My parents knew nothing of this, yet to my delight they told me one day that they were going to arrange my marriage with Malko, which was just what we wanted.
>
> A few days after this good news, I went to Sonawal for work and stayed there for a week. During this time I slept in the Sonawal ghotul with the Jamadarin. On the last night this girl took the comb from my hair as a keepsake. From Sonawal I went to Kokori and danced in the ghotul there. One of the motiari fell in love with me and constantly offered me tobacco. After a few days I started home, but three of the girls met me in the jungle and begged me to stay with them, but I had to go home.
>
> Soon afterwards I was married to Malko and we were very happy. We have always done everything together and have never quarrelled.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
301
291

Phirtu, the Chowkidar of the Maseta ghotul

Plate LXIX

The ghotul near Maisheti

342

[p.338 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
342

Plate LXX

The Baghbera

The Bandopal ghotul

[417]

[p. 338 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
836
[37]

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

A year after my marriage, the Maharaja came to Bara Dongar and I went with my father to see him enthroned. Afterwards we went to Malakot, and I slept in the ghotul for two nights. While all were asleep one of the girls came secretly to me.

Here we have a picture of a situation where a boy who is a member of a *jodidār* ghotul and thus supposed to be faithful to his official partner, yet continues his romantic attachment to the girl he really loves and whom he ultimately marries. Budhu was also able to evade the rules by visiting ghotul of the other type. Had the Sonawal and Kokori ghotul also been of the *jodidār* pattern, they could not have extended to him such privileges.

It will be noted that these temporary encounters with other girls did not in any way interfere with the boy's devotion to his Malko and the happiness of his married life with her. He says, and I have no doubt that it is true, that he has never had an affair with a married woman, or indeed with any other woman after the early incident in the Malakot ghotul. 'After a year my wife stopped me going to the ghotul.'

Here is another significant record of life in a *jodidār* ghotul at the time of the Bastar rebellion (1911). The narrator is Gadru, a Muria of the Kunjami clan from Chaniyagaon.

After I had been in the ghotul a year I was given the name of Silledar at the time of the Chait Dandar, and six months later I was paired off with the Jhalaro and began to sleep with her. The Mukhiya warned us both not to have too frequent intercourse and to take every care that there was no scandal [i.e. pregnancy]. I slept with the Jhalaro daily, but I only went to her twice a week or even less. The girl who really loved me in the ghotul was the Alosa, my mother's brother's daughter. Her partner was the Jhoria and she had to sleep with him every night. But when he was asleep, she often used to crawl over to my mat and I would turn my back on the Jhalaro and make love to her.

An old woman of about seventy years of age, Koili of Berma village, gave some interesting reminiscences of her ghotul life.

For six months after I joined the ghotul, until I got a title, I slept with the little boys. When I was made Nirosa I was too poor to give the usual feast of parched rice and liquor, but the chelik collected money for me and got a rupee's worth of liquor so I was not shamed. That night everyone was very drunk, and the Kotwar who slept with me had intercourse with me for the first time. The next day the Kotwar ordered that henceforth I was to sleep every day with the Sirdar. The Sirdar was related to me, though distantly, as a parental uncle, and I did not like it at all, but I had to do what the Kotwar said. We were both very shy and never spoke to one another and slept back to back with faces turned away. It was a long time before we had intercourse, but when there was a marriage in the village, everyone got drunk and excited and that night we went to each other. After that our shyness disappeared, and we used to have congress every night.

Soon afterwards my betrothal ceremony took place. Among those who came for it was the Kapatdar of the Veleknar ghotul. The Sirdar had gone away somewhere, and that night the Kapatdar slept with me. When the others knew of it, they laughed at us and teased us; I was so embarrassed that for a whole week I stayed away from the ghotul.

When I was married, the motiari brought me to the ghotul compound

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
836

and gave me liquor to drink. I made Johar to all the chelik and motiari and never entered the ghotul again.

Three years after marriage I gave birth to a male child, but with great difficulty, for the Sirdar who loved me very much after all the years we were together in the ghotul and who had wanted me to run away with him, was angry at my marrying someone else and sent magic to trouble me. When I recovered, the Sirdar made my husband ill instead, but the Siraha cured him.

Another old woman over sixty years old, Kachari of Kanhargaon, remembers the ghotul of that village while it was still *joddidār*; a few years later the rules were changed on account of a scandal.

My ghotul husband was the Likhen; I was the Chaiko. But the boy I really loved was the Salya. One day while I was going to the ghotul, I met the Salya and went with him to a field. The Sirisdar and Beldar saw us and reported the matter to the Kotwar. That night the chelik refused to let me enter the ghotul, and the Kotwar and some others questioned me outside the door, accusing me of having had intercourse with the Salya in the field.

The Diwan said that as a punishment every chelik would have me that night, but just then a constable came to the Paik-gudi and the Diwan had to go and fetch him wood, so I escaped. But the Kotwar tried to have intercourse with me during the night. I resisted him, and in the morning he was very angry and told the Diwan what had happened. The next evening five of the chelik had me one after another, and in spite of all my cries and struggles I could not get free. The other motiari watched, but did nothing to help me.[1]

When I was sixteen years old I was betrothed to a chelik at Bara Dongar, but I eloped with the Salya. We were about to get married at Bandopal, when a search party caught us, and I was taken home and immediately married to my betrothed. Later I left him for a very handsome chelik from my old ghotul whom I met in the bazaar. Four years later I went mad as a result of the magic of my first husband, but the Siraha cured me.

IV

Yet in spite of such occasional breaches of the rules, the *joddidār* ghotul remains a school of marital fidelity. Severe penalties attach to the discovery of the cloth of a girl other than your own on a mat or to the taking advantage

[171]

[1] Roy describes a similar act of corporate violation as a punishment inflicted on a girl in the Oraon *dhumkuria*. 'Should a girl refuse to come when sent for, a number of young boys are dispatched to bring her by force. When she is brought, should she refuse to elect a mate, a number of older boys violate her one after the other, until she names the boy she would have for her mate.'—S. C. Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 246. Sir E. A. Gait wrote: 'I have been told that if an Oraon girl is thought unduly coy all the youths of the village combine against her and get her deflowered by one or more of their number.'—J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. II, p. 28n. In the Kondabera ghotul, there was once a 'strike' and the girls, so the chelik told me, "decided not to let us have them. We all decided to take them by force one night, and so we did". But I doubt if this often happens either in Bastar or Chota Nagpur. I have, however, found parallel incidents among the Gond and Pardhan of Mandla. It is perhaps worth noting that if a Bororo Indian suspected his wife of infidelity, he put her at the disposal of the young men in the *bakito*-dormitory.—V. Fric and P. Radin, 'Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians', *JAI*, Vol. XXXVI (1906), p. 290.

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

of a chelik's absence from the ghotul to seduce his motiari. These things happen, but they are condemned. 883X

The cheliks themselves consider that this type of ghotul has several great advantages. The first, characteristically, is the very practical one that if a girl becomes pregnant 'they know the thief'. Elsewhere it is naturally often difficult to fix the responsibility of fatherhood. Again, the chelik say that a great deal of trouble is saved. 'We know what to do; there is no jealousy or dispute; everything is settled, and there is no more to be said.' I think it is true that there is less strain and anxiety in these ghotul; and there is room for the development of deep intimacy and romantic attachment. In the pre-nuptial period, however, it may be argued that these things are not altogether desirable. 836

They certainly lead to greater conflict with the parents over marriage. Many cheliks and motiari look forward with misery to separation from the partner who has shared with them the happy days of youth, and occasionally—but only occasionally—ghotul partners elope together rather than face a separation. Statistics here are striking. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 1884 were celebrated according to the wishes of the parents and the great majority of cases were of the cross-cousin type. Of the 116 irregular marriages, 77 were those of cheliks who married their 'ghotul-wives'. Only 39 irregular marriages were reported from the other type of ghotul. In view of the smaller number of men from the *solidih* ghotul, these figures indicate a proportion of about 1 in every 9 of cheliks in this type of ghotul who had conflict with their parents, and only 1 in about 32 from the other type of ghotul. 883X 836 583

Of those who married their 'ghotul-wives', 9 out of 77 divorced them later, giving a proportion of 11·6 per cent against a proportion of 2·9 per cent of divorces for the whole 2000 marriages. It is interesting that the proportion of divorces among Lambadis—the other type of chelik who live in close contact with their future wives before marriage—is almost exactly the same, 11·5 per cent. And although 77 and 113 cases respectively are not sufficient for us to draw far-reaching conclusions, it is undoubtedly striking that there should be so high an incidence of divorce among these and only among these two classes of people. 883X 836 586

Yet even though a passionate ghotul attachment is not the best preparation for a life-long union, at the time separation seems tragic indeed. A girl especially, whose chelik marries someone else, is a pathetic figure. 'Her life has left her'—or they put it in Munjmeta—'she lies alone on her mat and pines for him; she has no heart to take another lover.' Often she sleeps with a girl friend who is herself in the arms of a boy, but she lies with her back to them, turning away from all that happiness. In Ulera they said that when a girl's lover leaves her, she cannot sing for many days. When the Mukhwan of Benjora died, the Mukhwanin's face was 'destroyed by sorrow'. 883X 836 152

Boys are often, but not always, more philosophical. 'Yes, for a month you feel wretched', said a chelik in Markabera. 'Then you forget all about it. One may be able to meet her again, but that is difficult and dangerous. But at least you can always get another girl in the ghotul.' Yet at Bopna the Sildadar was called a 'widower', so miserable was he after his 'wife's' marriage last year. At Markabera, Dasru took to drink after his ghotul wife was married and Gurti, who was deeply attached to the beautiful and vivacious Malko, looked very lonely and miserable when I saw him nearly a year after her marriage to a boy in another village.

It is remarkable, however, how few actual tragedies there have been from this cause. In the last ten years, only one case of suicide has been registered 883X 836 762

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 836 762

as due to the separation of a chelik from his motiari. This occurred in 1932 and was, as we should expect, in a *jodidār* ghotul, at Amgaon in the Karangal Pargana. Chaitu and Munga—I do not know their ghotul titles—the boy about twenty years old and the girl about eighteen—were greatly attached to each other and dreaded the thought of separation. They each begged their parents to let them marry, but Munga's father was adamant and married her to Dasru of the Markabera ghotul, a different Dasru, of course, from the one

[31]

FIG. 60. Carving in the ghotul at Nayanar
Height 4½"

I have just mentioned. After the marriage she was taken to Markabera, where the chelik diverted themselves as usual by shutting her up with the new husband whom she did not love. Before she left Amgaon, she was taken round the village to say good-bye and every household made their contributions for the ghotul feast that would be held a week after the marriage.

When the time came, chelik and motiari went singing through the pretty wooded country that separates Amgaon from Markabera and invited Munga to the feast. Her husband could not refuse, though he must have known there was danger in Amgaon, but it was so near—only two miles away—that he let her go. When she reached her old home, she went to meet Chaitu in the lonely corner of a field; he had brought some liquor for her, and they sat down to have a farewell drink together. But a little girl, Chaitu's younger sister, followed them and ran to tell her father. He hurried to the spot, caught the two lovers

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

together, and beat the boy, telling him that the girl was no longer his, and that such meetings would bring scandal upon them all. Behind those slaps how much one can see of parental exasperation over a long and troublesome intrigue, almost certainly parental envy of a son entranced by love, and the usual Muria dread of adultery—a very genuine sentiment.

Boy and girl ran away—I can see their quick Muria nature dissolved in tears and anger—and returned to the ghotul for the feast that sealed their separation. Munga had to massage every chelik after supper as a farewell rite, but then, when all was quiet, they crept together out of the ghotul to the woods. That night—it was 20 May 1932—they climbed onto the great branch of a mango tree, tied and adjusted ropes, and facing one another fell to death. When they were found, Chaitu had his hand upon his motiari's shoulder.

V

Although outwardly both types of ghotul are the same and often only the most careful investigation can distinguish them, the customs and atmosphere of the modern type are entirely distinct. Here everything is arranged to prevent long-drawn intense attachments, to eliminate jealousy and possessiveness, to deepen the sense of communal property and action. No chelik may regard a motiari as 'his'. There is no ghotul marriage, there are no ghotul partners. 'Everyone belongs to everyone else' in the very spirit of *Brave New World*. A chelik and motiari may sleep together for three nights; after that they are warned; if they persist they are punished. If a boy shows any signs of possessiveness for a particular girl, if his face falls when he sees her making love to someone else, if he gets annoyed at her sleeping with another chelik, should he be offended if she refuses to massage him and goes to someone else, he is forcibly reminded by his fellows that she is not his wife, he has no *hag* or right over her, she is the *mâl* or property of the whole ghotul, and if he looks like that he will be punished.

This type of ghotul is sometimes called the *mundi-badaina* because in it you change from girl to girl just as you change your rings from finger to finger.

How is it that this type of ghotul has so widely displaced the classical *jodiddr* dormitory? Why is the process of change from one type to the other continuing today? There are many reasons.

In the Bernr Pargana and at Kolibera I heard the phrase 'so that they will not be ruined by love'. This is certainly a genuine consideration. Too much love before marriage will mean too little after it. Sexual romance is not the best preparation for a life-long union. A strong and lasting attachment to a girl in the pre-nuptial period may lead to an elopement and an irregular marriage. Such a marriage disturbs the serenity of the home—which ultimately depends on the parents; it destroys the old alliances of families and prevents the repayment of ancient debts; it often turns out unsuccessful. In villages where several such elopements have occurred within a short time, the rules of the ghotul have been changed.

The modern rules are also intended as a contraceptive measure. The Muria believe that conception only occurs when the male and female remain together for a long period and enjoy an uninterrupted series of acts of coition with no divergence of interest. Both psychological and physical concentration in fidelity to a single partner is required for pregnancy.

A former Chalan of Golwand, for example, described how he consistently changed his ghotul partners and never made anyone pregnant; but two friends of his in the same ghotul slept every day with the same girls and impregnated

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 853 836 842

them both. The Gaita at Kolibera said that a chelik could have congress three times a night and it would do no harm, but if he went to the same girl more than three days running he would fall ill and she might conceive.

The modern type of ghotul breaks up the coital sequence and is thus supposed to lessen the danger of conception. Statistics, however, show that this is not so. Among 2000 men, 80 made motiari pregnant during their ghotul period; of these 25 or 1 in 28·8 belonged to *jodidār* ghotul, and 55 or 1 in 23·2 to the modern type.

[531]

FIG. 61. Carving on the door of a private house at Bandopal
Slightly enlarged

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A more genuine reason for the prevalence of the newer rules is the Muria temperament which is fundamentally hostile to individualism, to exclusiveness, and to any kind of 'possessiveness'. The Muria believe that if everyone belongs to everyone else in the ghotul there will be no room for jealousy. I am not at the moment thinking whether this is true or not, but it is certainly what

2: Elwin .E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

983X
836

they think. 'If we get jealous of each other', they said at Nayanar, 'we exchange lovers.' At Esalnar a chelik said, 'We change partners because we want everyone to be happy; if one boy and one girl are always together as if they were man and wife, then some would be happier than others; the best boys and the best girls would be the property of individuals instead of being the property of the ghotul, and the rest would be miserable'. When someone told the chelik at Kabonga that they were behaving like a lot of goats, they indignantly explained that 'if a girl always sleeps with one boy, we feel that the unity of our life is being destroyed; in a ghotul all the girls should be the wives of all the boys'. In Bhanpuri they used a similar phrase that 'all the girls are the wives of the Kotwar', meaning that since the Kotwar is in charge of them and has the task of distributing them among the chelik, they must all be regarded as his wives in his capacity as a representative of the ghotul.

The result of this arrangement is—according to Muria theory—that everybody in the ghotul is in love with everybody else. 'Boys and girls in a ghotul love each other as brothers love sisters, as parents love children, as husbands love their wives.' It is remarkable that this general diffused love and affection among chelik and motiari should lead them to identify parental, family and romantic love.

In Masora the boys gave as a reason for changing their partners the very human liking for change, 'love's sweetest part, variety'. One of them said, 'You don't want to eat the same vegetable every day'. The change of object undoubtedly stimulates the sexual instinct and makes ghotul life more exciting. But since the whole tendency of Muria society is towards stability, I doubt if the desire for variety has played a very important part in the development of the ghotul rules.[1]

Another reason for the change of rules, given this time by the chelik of Sidhawand, was that if a chelik was always going about with the same motiari, the elders of the village would notice it and suspect that they had sexual relations. Yet at Chandabera, where there is a *jodidār* ghotul, the Muria claimed that the boys and girls behaved with so much discretion that no one could ever guess how they were paired off. Here we come up against the strange convention that the elders of the village have no idea of what goes on in the ghotul, where they all spent their own childhood, but suppose it to be, as they said again at Sidhawand (where some had been to school), 'a sort of Boy Scouts Club, whose members meet together for social service and for nothing else'.

The extent of this convention should not be exaggerated. The elders are often equally prepared to make the most indecent comments on the sexual activities of the younger generation. But in the presence of outsiders at least, there is a general tendency to make a show of the decorum of village life.

Of this type of ghotul, Evelyn Wood has asked how its ideal can be achieved 'without a sense of universal futility and frustration caused by such lavish dissipation of libidal power'. The answer to this is, I think, that we must

[1] The ghotul evidence hardly supports Bloch, who has based his belief in an original state of promiscuity largely on the human desire for change. 'It is perfectly clear', he says, 'that the human need for sexual variety, which is an established anthropological phenomenon, must in primitive times have been much stronger and more unbridled. Since even in our time, in a state of the most advanced civilisation, this natural need for variety continues to manifest itself in almost undiminished strength, we can hardly regard it as necessary to prove that in primitive conditions sexual promiscuity was a more original, and, indeed, a more natural state than marriage.'—I. Bloch, *The Sexual Life of Our Time* (London, 1908), p. 191. But the history of the ghotul shows that it is the desire for permanence that is original; it is only the modern type of dormitory that attempts 'to do justice to the human need for sexual variety'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 913
136

not overestimate the extent of ghotul promiscuity. There is no kind of orgy or licence; everything is strictly regulated and conducted with the utmost decorum. The average ghotul is small, with not more than twenty members. Of these twenty, several are bound to be closely related or of the same clan. In Palli, for example, which is a large ghotul, only three clans were represented, in Kajen only two. Moreover these boys and girls have grown up together from babyhood. When, therefore, we read that a chelik has to sleep with a new girl every three days, we are not to think of him as being able to pick and choose from an endless procession of new and exciting girls. He is going to spend his time in rotation among a little group of girls every one of whom he knows very well indeed. There is no doubt a certain dissipation of libidal energy, but I do not think that, except perhaps in the very large ghotul, it is excessive.

And further, a boy is not generally able to choose his partner at will. It is the Kotwar, in consultation with the Belosa, who decides how the chelik and motiari are to couple and when they are to change their partners. For example, at Kabonga the Kotwar himself told me, 'I am the Raja of the motiari and every two or three days I rearrange them and tell the Belosa who is to sleep with whom'. In Dongrigura, the Kotwar himself had the privilege of a permanent partner, and he and his 'wife' made arrangements for the rest. There was the same custom in the neighbouring Palari. In Binjhli, it was the leading girls who made these arrangements.[1]

The rules differ from place to place. At Bakulwahi, where the girls slept in the ghotul only on Sundays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and where there were in 1941 more chelik than motiari, the following procedure was adopted. Suppose there were thirty chelik and ten motiari, then on Sunday the motiari would comb the hair of all the chelik, but they would leave their combs in the hair of only ten as a sign that on that night those boys would have partners on their sleeping-mats. On Wednesday the girls would leave their combs in the hair of another ten; so also on Thursday. In this way every chelik was able to sleep with one of the motiari once a week. Should a girl not distribute her affections equally, she was punished, and should she leave her comb in the hair of the same boy two nights running she was heavily fined.

The typical Muria emphasis on equality is shown by an explanation given by the chelik of this ghotul when I raised the point that it was surely unusual that the number of girls could be divided so conveniently into the number of boys. If that were impossible, they pointed out, if for example there were twelve girls to the thirty boys, then twelve boys would sleep with twelve girls on Sunday and another twelve boys with the twelve girls on Wednesday. By Thursday only six boys would remain unpartnered for that week. On that night only six girls would leave their combs in the hair of these boys, and the other six girls and the other twenty-four boys would sleep alone. Any other arrangement would destroy the unity of the ghotul.

[1] With this we may compare the very interesting arrangements of the Masai *manyatta*-dormitory. When the warriors feel like it, which is 'very, very often', they go in a group to stand outside the village and call to the girls. These approach and the warriors then say 'Tusinkin!' whereupon each girl selects one of the men; by her choice she binds herself to sleep with him that night. 'It is a point of honour and etiquette that no girl so called upon to choose a man may refuse to do so, but she may make her choice from any of those men who were in the group that called to her.' The Masai also have a system of selecting permanent lovers, though these can still sleep with other partners—but the permanent lovers can sleep together without formality whenever they desire.—L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *JRAI*, Vol. LX, pp. 1918.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

493X
836

At Ealnar there is a different arrangement. Here a motiari sleeps with a chelik for two months and during this period she takes as her title the feminine form of his name. Thus a girl who is temporarily sleeping with the Tahsildar is temporarily Tahsildarin. When she changes her partner and goes to sleep with the Kotwar, then for two months she is called Kotwarin. This arrangement is formally announced in the ghotul, and the girl and boy exchange rings which they return to each other when their period of partnership is ended.

'Does not this arrangement', I asked, 'destroy one of the chief reasons for changing partners, namely, that conception is less likely when a boy and girl do not sleep together for too long a period?' In order to avoid this danger, the boys explained, the rule at Ealnar is that no one may have intercourse without special permission from the council of elder boys. During the two months, they said, this permission was only given about once a week. When the bigger boys decide on it they tell the Kotwar. He goes to the girls and says, 'Today, girls, you may eat tobacco and lime'. Then he says to each in turn, 'Are you going to eat your tobacco or not?' and each is expected to say 'Yes'. If a girl says 'No', he replies, 'Then why did you come to the ghotul? If you behave like this, we will turn you out'.

The following morning the Tahsildar and Kotwar sit by the door and ask each girl in turn as she goes out, 'Did you eat your tobacco last night or no?' If the girl says 'Yes' she is allowed to go, but if anyone says 'No' then her chelik is fined a pice for loss of prestige.

A remarkable thing about these arrangements is that they interfere with the normal course of sexual selection. The beautiful girl and the ugly, or even deformed girl has exactly the same sexual opportunity, exactly the same sexual privilege. So with the boys. In Bhanpuri the Daroga was blind; in Chandabera the Kotwar was a cripple; elsewhere I have seen boys with hare-lips, deeply pitted with small-pox, repulsive with yaws, but every one of them officially had the same privileges as the most handsome and adorable chelik. The Chandabera Kotwar, indeed, was 'married' (for it was that kind of ghotul) to the prettiest girl in the whole company. A girl must be prepared to go to any member of the ghotul fellowship. For example, in Sirpuri, the rather mediocre Sirdar was very much in love with a beautiful girl, the Malko, who treated him with disdain. When he tried to talk to her, she abused him and drove him away. Although she was more than once told to sleep with him, she managed to arrange to exchange him for another boy. After this had happened for a little while, the Sirdar reported the matter to the Diwan who said, 'Try for a few days more and let's see what happens'. When she still refused, the Diwan called for the Kotwar and told him to adjust the matter. The Kotwar went to the Malko and said, 'What did you come to the ghotul for? Did you come for your own pleasure or for ours? Did you come to play with us or to sulk? If you want to sulk you had better sleep at home.'

Still the Malko refused to have anything to do with the Sirdar and at last the boys expelled her from the ghotul. We must remember that she was a beautiful girl and was giving her affection freely to the very boys who expelled her, but she was breaking the integrity and fellowship of the ghotul, so she had to go. After a little while, however, she gave in. She paid a fine of two annas' worth of liquor, was readmitted and that night slept with the Sirdar.

I recorded a similar incident in Kabonga, where the Belosa disliked the Kotwar and preferred to be expelled from the ghotul rather than sleep with him, but in the end she too gave in.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 813
836

It is equally offensive to the ghotul spirit for a chelik and motiari to fall openly in love and to insist on sleeping together to the exclusion of the rest. When they do this the others get jealous and irritated. If a girl, who has thus given way to her feelings, then goes to comb the hair of another boy, he says, 'Don't touch my head, go and do your lover's; I am not a boy, you never take any notice of me'. None of the chelik will let her massage them. If this treatment is not successful they catch the offenders by the hand and drag them out of the ghotul saying, 'Come no more to our ghotul, sleep in your own houses, have a lonely marriage without us, for we won't come to it'. In Kabonga, where such an incident occurred in 1941, the Kotwar said that after they had expelled the boy and girl, the boy very quickly repented, paid a fine of liquor and was readmitted. The girl was more obstinate. After a time the Kotwar went to her house and said that if she would sleep with each of the three leading boys on three successive nights, he would let her return. In the end she agreed to this and was accepted back into the ghotul. A similar incident occurred at Sirai where a girl insisted on trying to sleep always with the same boy. The others said, 'Is there only one chelik? Aren't we chelik too?' and at last turned them both out. They were only readmitted when they gave a rupee's worth of liquor to the company.

[531]

FIG. 60. Carving on a pillar in the ghotul at Ahmer

In a number of ghotul this system of complete equality has broken down and the three leading boys, the Sirdar or Diwan and his counsellors, including probably the Kotwar, have the right either to have a permanent partner just as in the older type of ghotul, or to choose their own partner whenever a change is made, without reference to the Kotwar. When this is done, and it happens generally in the bigger ghotul where there may be as many as sixty or seventy members, the leaders still insist on the rule of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

883 X
836

change being rigorously observed by all the others. Sometimes the three leading boys allot to themselves the three leading girls and exchange them between themselves, but do not allow them to go to the others. This is recognised as hostile to genuine ghotul tradition, for it does indeed offend against the ideal of equality.

In Bunjora, the Kotwar, who there is the head of the ghotul, must always sleep with the Belosa or leader of the girls. The other chelik and motiari must change their partners every three days. The rule is that the Kotwar's mate must be the head of the girls and be called Belosa. Supposing the Kotwar gets married, then the new Kotwar must take the Belosa as his partner, but if both are of the same clan or closely related then the new Kotwar gets a new girl as his permanent partner and she calls herself Belosa while the old Belosa changes her name and loses her position. In this way Kotwar and Belosa always sleep together and rule the ghotul.

Another way in which the rules are broken is by simple evasion. In his memoirs, Bindo, who was head of the Benur ghotul sixty years ago, describes how he formed an attachment for the Malko.

> For a whole year we slept together. But the rule was that Malko could not sleep daily with the same boy. So what did we do? I used to sleep alone in a corner, and she would lie down with some other boy. When all were asleep she would get up and come to me. There was another beautiful girl in our ghotul, the Dulosa, who also loved me. She often came to me. So I used to sleep with Malko some nights and with Dulosa other nights. The chelik and motiari knew about it, but they were afraid to say anything as I was their leader.

In Binjhli also, I was told that lovers would arrange to meet earlier in the evening before going to the ghotul. The experiences of Konda, the secular headman of Kanhargaon, are worth recording.

> Formerly in the Kanhargaon ghotul, it was the custom to exchange partners. Before I was made Jotiya, little girls used to sleep with me, afterwards I slept with the big girls. The Jhalaro, who was related to me as a distant cousin, loved me, so did the Piosa, who was in a joking relationship with me. The Piosa used to sleep with me every night, but secretly, and when she had no partner the Jhalaro also crept stealthily to my mat when all the others were asleep. These two girls used to make necklaces for me and in return I made them combs, and often gave them a few pice when they went to the bazaar. If at any time I was absent from the ghotul, the Jhalaro and Piosa would come to my house and by some means or other would drag me there. When the Sirdar discovered that the Jhalaro was sleeping with me, he fined her two annas' worth of liquor and I was warned that if I let her sleep with me again I would be fined a rupee and would be responsible to the elders of the village if anything happened. Unfortunately, the Jhalaro became pregnant, and when I learnt that the fact was known to everyone I got frightened and ran away to Malakot. In my absence Jhalaro's parents hurriedly had her married to her betrothed. I then returned to Kanhargaon and the next day went with the other ghotul boys to Pisander to dance the Pus Kolang. On our way home we were all drunk and the other boys quarrelled with me. They accused me of disgracing the ghotul's name and would not let me return with them. But I offered them eight annas for liquor and we became friends.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X813
836

One day when I met the Piosa in the Dhanora bazaar I gave her some gur and parched rice and we planned to elope to another village. But when the Piosa returned home she fell ill, and after a few days she died.

VI

It will be convenient to consider here some other deviations from the classic ghotul model. In a number of villages, although the girls attend the ghotul every evening for singing, dancing and games, and even comb the chelik's hair and massage their limbs, they do not sleep in the dormitory, but go away late at night either to a house of their own or to the verandah of some old widow's house.

In such ghotul there is generally a rule that the girls may sleep in the dormitory once or twice a week and at festivals and marriages. An absolute ban on cohabitation is unusual. For example, in Binjhli, where the ghotul life is highly developed, there is massage once a week on Fridays and that night the chelik and motiari sleep together. On other nights the girls go home to any convenient house. But they stay in the ghotul for a very long time, and the boys say that they often have intercourse with them before they go away. The girls also told my wife the same. In the neighbouring village of Palki, there is a similar custom, but here there are two ghotul in one compound. Girls and boys sleep separately all the week except on the bazaar day, Wednesday. In both ghotul this rule of separation is relaxed on festivals, before marriages and when girls or boys return from dancing expeditions. In the Kalpatti Pargana and in Kanker State, the motiari generally go home about midnight after games and massage (though they often lie down for a time with the boys before they go), but at festivals and for eight days before a marriage chelik and motiari sleep together. In Tarbaili, in the Paralkot area, the boys said that they saw the girls home after dancing and had intercourse with them on the way. In Palli, near Kondagaon, where the girls and boys sleep in different rooms of someone's house, they meet every fifth day for massage and to sleep together. In the Nayanar ghotul, they said that they slept together for one week in every month, but for the other three weeks the girls went home in the evening. I doubt, however, if this was true—of Nayanar.

The reason for this arrangement, which is generally a temporary one, is almost always some scandal that has agitated the elders of the village. In Karagaon it is said that two boys combined to make a girl pregnant. They had to pay five rupees fine between them and the girl was married at once to her Lambada. The motiari found that they had got a good deal of discredit out of this incident and after a time went to the village headman and said that it was not their fault, for the boys forced them to have intercourse. So the elders ordered that the boys and girls were only to sleep together every third day: for two days they must be separate; on the third day they could come together, but even then they must change their partners every time. In Kerawahi four or five years ago the ghotul Kotwar eloped with the Suliyaro. Since then the girls have only been allowed to sleep in the ghotul one day a week. Similar stories come from Bokrabera, Kokori, where two years ago three or four girls became pregnant, and Bakulwahi.

The aim of this rule is not so much to punish the boys and girls or to educate them in self-restraint as to avert conception, and is based on the Muria belief that pregnancy only occurs as a result of regular cohabitation night after night over a long period. By breaking up the acts of intercourse and lessening their frequency the chances of conception are supposed to be diminished.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

I 883 X
372

The Hikmi of Almer removes wood from the ghotul stack

[p. 350(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

531
342

Carved pillar at Chandabeni

Carved pillar at Ramawand

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

X 883 836 177

In a certain number of ghotul, particularly those all round the boundary of the Muria area, where the villagers have come under strong Chhattisgarhi and Oriya or Jagdalpur influence, the girls probably never sleep in the ghotul, but this is the sort of thing about which it is impossible to be sure. In some Hindu villages also, where there is only a small Muria population, the motiari return home regularly in order to avoid the ridicule of their Hindu neighbours. This is particularly true of the north and east of the Kondagaon Tahsil.

In some villages the ghotul has been abandoned altogether. The reasons for this vary. In the south-east of Kondagaon, where many of the Muria in villages approaching the borders of Jagdalpur Tahsil are becoming Bhattra, they naturally have given up the ghotul as an institution. In Kanera, for example, where the Bhattra movement is strong, there is no ghotul building though the boys sleep together in somebody's house and the girls still come to dance and to massage them. In the Amrati and Makri Parganas a number of villages have gone Bhattra with a consequent closing of the ghotul.

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Then throughout the Mardapal Pargana, except in one or two villages, Kaalnar for example, there have been no ghotul within living memory. This is more curious because the Mardapal Pargana is closely linked to the Chota Dongar and other Jhoria Parganas. The boys and girls dress and dance in Jhoria fashion; they have the same games; they go to the same festivals as the chelik and motiari of the villages to the north and west of them, but they do not have the ghotul system.

Sometimes magic or the fear of it is the cause of a dormitory being abandoned. There is no ghotul in Barbatta, for at one time many of the chelik and motiari died of an epidemic. It is said, however, that they still sleep together in a private house in the village. In Barkai a jealous Kalarin witch made black magic against the ghotul and many of the boys and girls were taken ill. They made the necessary sacrifices and all was well for two months. They fell ill again and this time they built a new ghotul, but there was still trouble. So now the dormitory is closed altogether. At Lihagaon continued epidemics, which naturally spread quickly in the confined conditions of the dormitory, combined with several scandals, resulted in the abandonment of any special building, though the chelik and motiari continue much of their life without it. At Morohnar, the Malik made his motiari pregnant and went to live in Kanera. At Kanera he eloped with another girl and married her. 'This angered the gods, and the chelik and motiari of Morohnar fell ill.' The ghotul was shut for two months, re-opened, the members fell ill again, and it was finally closed.

X 883 836 177

Sometimes outside interference is the cause. At Dahikonga, the Hindu landlord forced the Muria to destroy their ghotul. At Selnar, where there is a primary school, the teachers have succeeded in driving the ghotul life underground and all that clean, healthy, happy existence has yielded to furtive meetings on verandahs and in the fields. In Pendrawand, the ghotul was closed under the influence of outsiders from across the border, but the boys and girls use a dilapidated Thana-gudi when it is unoccupied.[1]

[1] Somewhat similar causes have led to the abandonment of the *dhumkuria* dormitories in several Uraon villages. In Kumbhar Tola, a Hinduised Uraon village only four miles from Ranchi, there was no *dhumkuria*. In a village near the Jashpur border, where there was a large Church, and in another village near Lohardaga, the people professed that they had not even heard the word *dhumkuria* and an elderly Uraon became quite offensive at the suggestion that there was such a thing in his village. At Agru I saw the ruined building of a dormitory which had been abandoned, because they could not afford, so they said, to replace the roof. But since at Agru there was a fine dancing-floor, there was probably some other reason—a mysterious death, or a scandal—which accounted for the *Dhumkuria*'s collapse. Roy says that 'in one village we were told that long ago a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWELVE

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

I

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IN the first splendid ghotul, with its peacock roof and door of ogre's bones, Lingo gave the boys and girls names and duties. The oldest stories say that the first chelik were Mankor Singa, Jiha Guta Soma and Karata Guta Soma, and the first motiari Godakare Mode, Belosa and Kurumtuse Buke; the later tales give the girls' names as Belosa, Manjaro, Jalko and Dulosa. Lingo's own ghotul name was Manjhi. Since then every boy and girl, on becoming a full member of the dormitory, has received a title.

These titles are of great significance. Until they receive them, the children have no standing; they cannot get 'ghotul-mates'; they are the servants and drudges of the others. But once they are named they enter into the full equality of the ghotul fellowship. They now almost forget their *mur podor* or home name, which must never be used in the ghotul or by the other children, and is indeed hardly ever used except at home, by parents and close relatives, or for some official purpose.

An ordinary name is often ugly or unkind, but the ghotul title has the tenderest and happiest associations, charged with romantic memories. For this reason it is never used by parents, who must pretend not to know it. A boy may sometimes tell his father his name but the girls never reveal it in the home. After marriage, a boy goes on using his title as indeed he continues for a time to exercise his old office; but a girl must never allow people to address her by a name which has so many memories of the free days of youth (though an old lover may, rarely, use it for that very reason), she should not call her husband by his old title, or refer in any way to hers in his presence. But I am told that when a group of old women who were once members of the same ghotul get together, they call each other by their ghotul names 'to remind themselves of happiness'. Close friends continue to address one another in this way all their lives.

For everybody treasures the memory of his title. When visiting the Jagdalpur jail, I found the sulkiest Muria prisoners expand into beaming smiles when I addressed them by their old ghotul names.

As the children grow older, they are promoted from rank to rank in the ghotul hierarchy, and their titles are often changed. Sometimes, however, they are too attached to their original title to give it up. This may be one reason for the great diversity in the names of the leaders in different places. In different ghotul I have found the leader called variously Sirdar, Kotwar, Malik, Diwan, Jhoria, Malguzar, Silledar, Salya and Gaita, though elsewhere these titles may be given to quite junior boys. On the other hand, the majority of girls call their leader Belosa, though at Markabera she was Malko, in Binjhli Manjaro and in a group of three villages (Udanpur, Kapsi and Timnar) she

tiger carried off two boys from the *dhumkuria* house and since then the house has been abandoned and allowed to fall into ruins, under the belief that the tiger indicated the will of the gods that the village should no longer maintain a public *dhumkuria* building'.—Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 213. W. G. Archer has studied the distribution of the Uraon dormitory, and the areas where it has disappeared, on the basis of information collected at the 1941 census.—*Man in India*, Vol. XXV, No. 1.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

301

FIG. 63. Karajaruer necklace from Palli. The beads are dark blue

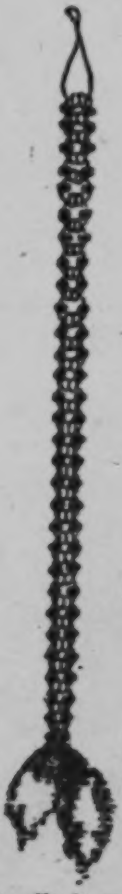


FIG. 64. Jhoria ear-drops from Nayanar, of red, white and blue beads, with small tufts of red wool at the bottom

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
551

was Suliyaro. There is no rule about this, and the children change their names as often as they retain them.

There is indeed no fixed list of titles with an order of precedence. In one village the Kotwar may be a subordinate; in the next he may be the leader. The Raja may rank below the Diwan, or the Tahsildar below the Constable. In the same way, though many of the titles carry duties with them, it is impossible to say that these duties will always be associated with the same titles. In Silati village, the Munshi has to see to the supply of wood, but in Taragaon it is the Tekedar who does this, while the Munshi has to 'write' reports about absentees. In Haddigaon, it is the Budkher who collects the children and brings them to the ghotul; in the neighbouring Palli, it is the Sirdar.

Throughout this book, however, in order to avoid endless qualification of every statement, I call the leading chelik the Sirdar, the leading motiari the Belosa, and the chelik in charge of the girls the Kotwar, except—of course—when I am quoting actual incidents that have occurred in a particular ghotul, where different titles may be required.

I will give here a few lists of names and titles as they were in 1941—it must be remembered that they change every year. A list of all titles in alphabetical order will be found in Appendix III. The following were the boys and girls in the Kabonga ghotul with their duties, in order of precedence.

Chelik of Kabonga

Diwan Sirdar Mukhwan	These form the 'supreme council' which controls the affairs of both boys and girls.
Kotwar Chalan	These have the special task of seeing to the attendance and behaviour of the girls.
Munshi	Keeps an account of all that is done.
Jamadar	Sees that the girls have a proper supply of combs.
Kandki	Entertains visitors from other ghotul.
Dafedar Baidar	See to the cleanliness of the ghotul, and keep the roof thatch in order.
Kajanti Chalki	Attend to the tobacco supply. The Kajanti must offer it to visitors.
Bara Pahadar Nani Pahadar	Attend to seating arrangements. They give mats to visitors, and if little boys are sitting on mats they turn them off for the elders.
Kamdar Beldar Chowkidar Likhen	These are 'subjects' whose only function is to do what they are told.

Motiari of Kabonga

Belosa Dulosa	The leaders of all the girls who arrange how everyone is to sleep, and see that their 'subjects' perform their duties properly.

232

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

Tiloka Nirosa Pirsa Janko Malko Jankai Manka Junki Alosa	These all have to clean the ghotul, bring leaves and make them into plates, cups and leaf-pipes, comb and massage the boys, and perform any other task allotted to them by the Belosa, Dulosa or Diwan.

883
551

Kabonga is a village in north-central Kondagaon. I will now give a list from Esalnar, a 'Jhoria' village of the Mardapal Pargana, very near the Chota Dongar Hills.

Chalik of Esalnar

Diwan	Head of both boys and girls. The final judge in all disputes.
Manager Tahsildar Sirkil	Assistants to the Diwan.
Mukhwan	Inspector of the boys. Reports absentees to the Diwan.
Kotwar	In charge of the girls. Controls their discipline and work.
Inspector	Looks after visitors, provides them with mats and wooden pillows.
Pahardar	Administers punishments imposed by the Diwan. When there is too much noise keeps the children quiet.
Dafedar	Sees to the supply of wood.
Munshi	Arranges for the cleaning of the ghotul's surroundings and approaches.
Chalki	Looks after the drums, and sees there is string to hang them from the roof.
Gaita	Collects fines and has charge of them.
Havaldar	Must recover anything lost during a dance.
Kajeechi	Looks after the tobacco. Must see that there is enough for elders and visitors.
Ijardar	At any ceremony the liquor is kept in his charge.
'Mukkadam Baidar Soldar	'Subjects' who have no special duties.

In this village the girls' names are simply feminine forms of those of their ghotul partners—Diwanin, Managerin, Kotwarin. The order of precedence is the same as for the boys. As in Kabonga, the girls do not have separate

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
551

individual duties, but the two leaders, under the direction of the Kotwar, allot them their tasks as need arises.

I will give one more list, from Karikhodra near Antagarh in the north—the village where Lingo is said to have passed his supreme ordeal of oil and fire. Here the old Gondi titles are more prominent.

Chelik of Karikhodra

Manjhi	The leader. Passes judgements and inflicts fines.
Diwan	He examines the reports of the Singga.
Singga	He is in charge of the girls and reports defaulters.
Beldar Karati Alorsinh Jhaliarsinh Jolsay Daidar Subedar Laharsinh Salikrai Laharu Jhoria Kapatdar Kosa Milledar Kanjua	These are all 'subjects'. Special duties are not allotted. They have simply to obey the orders of the three leaders.

Motiari of Karikhodra

Belosa	The head of the girls, 'the Rani'.
Dulosa	Her assistant, 'the Diwanin'.
Mularo Muliyaro Salho Mulki Tiloka Suliyaro Malko Chaiko Achhoke Nilmili Laharo	These are all 'subjects', who have to perform their ghotul duties irrespective of the titles they hold.

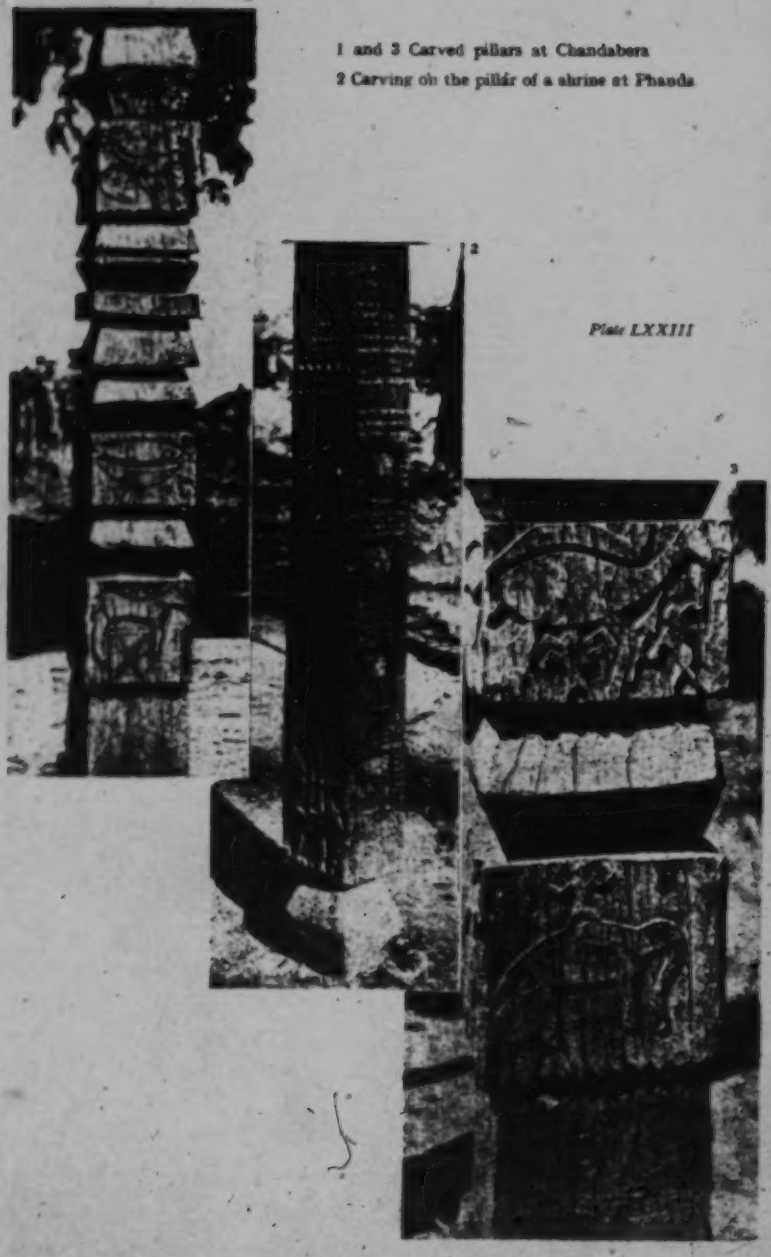
The names in these lists are given in order of precedence, an order that is strictly observed. If the senior boys and girls are away—working in the fields or on the roads, for example—the younger boys and girls occupy their positions with dignity and zeal. In Masora once, all the elder boys were away in the fields watching the crops, with the result that the Jamadar, a charming youth called Dulsai, was in charge. No one could have fulfilled the duties of leader, judge and father with more zest.

X883

Some special duties were recorded at Kokori, where the Chalan had to provide an escort home for visitors and the Likhen had to clean the drums

2/ Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

531



1 and 3 Carved pillars at Chandabera
2 Carving on the pillár of a shrine at Phanda

Plate LXXIII

[p. 356 (a)]

531
537

Pillar at Binjhe with the chalik who carved it

Drawing of old cen... number-l...

Plate LXXIV

[534]

Carving ... a pict... drum ... Dumpa...

[p. 356(b)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

X 883 with flour. At Karanji the Sirdar and Baidar had to escort the motiari when they went to the forest to gather leaves for plates and cups, and the Jamadar had to arrange for small boys and girls to carry the drums when they went to some other village for a dance. At Baniagaon, the Matatgar had to look after the drums; the Baidarin arranged how the motiari were to comb and massage the boys in the evenings; the Kotwar and Chalan were the lawyers who regularly appeared to defend girls accused of some breach of ghotul discipline.

X 883 539 In a song recorded at Gawari, there is a reference to the duty of the Jaramkal and Supedar, who in this ghotul have to escort the girls when they go to fetch leaves. This is the Aking Koyana Karse Pata and, as they sing it, the motiari pretend to be picking leaves.

Sir pula helo dori ned weke dākāt roy sango ned weke dākāt roy?	Where are you going today, friends?
Sir pula helo dori marm āking dākāt roy sango marm āking dākāt roy.	We are going to pick leaves for the wedding.
Sir pula helo dori won tori oykāt roy sango won tori oykāt roy?	Who are you taking with you, friends?
Sir pula helo dori jaramkal supedār sango jaramkal supedār roy.	We are taking Jaramkal and Supedar.

X 883 551 In some ghotul, boys' titles are given to girls. At Taragaon and Atargaon, the two leading girls are called Malik and Chalan; they are the 'ghotul wives' of boy-leaders bearing the same names. At Rengagondi, the three chief girls are called Malik, Kotwar and Chalan for the same reason. In Nariha, the girls' leader is called Chalan. These villages are in the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas, and the custom seems confined to that area. But in ghotul, especially in the neighbourhood of Kondagaon, where the boys and girls 'pair off', it is not uncommon (as we have already seen at Esalnar) for girls to take names which are really equivalent to the English 'Mrs'. Thus, in Pirapal and Haddigaon, girls are called Kotwarin (or Mrs Kotwar, the ghotul-*wife* of the Kotwar), Supedarin (or Mrs Supedar) and Mukhwanin.

X 883 551 177 The ghotul titles are linguistically a very mixed collection. A. N. Mitchell, who has traced the derivation and meanings of a list drawn from over a hundred ghotūl in every part of the Muria area, has derived them from Urdu, Hindi, Halbi, Gondi and English. The English titles are generally corruptions of names used by State officials; thus Captan, or Captain, is the name by which the State Superintendent of Police is usually known in the villages; Engineer is the head of the P.W.D.; Daktlar is the local Assistant Surgeon; Orsel is the Overseer of work on the roads. Urdu and Hindi titles for excise, revenue and military officers are common, and so are the Hindi titles for such subordinates as the constable, watchman, headman, or forest-guard. It is curious that the title Kotwar, which in Muria villages is often held by a despised Ganda or Mahara, is in the ghotul usually an indication of importance.

X 883 551 Gondi names are more common among girls than boys. Among boys' titles we may notice Belumdar, owner of a *bāri* or garden, Ghotulsai—lord of the ghotul, Neliya—a good fellow, and the very common variants of Laharu which seems to imply in Gondi a 'dandy' or Don Juan, the word being derived from the Hindi *lahariya*, striped cloth, the wearing of which is regarded as very fast and 'advanced'. Some of the Gondi titles seem more like nicknames than anything else—thus Uden or Kude, meaning someone who sits down

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
551

and is perhaps given to a lazy boy, Meliya from the Gondi verb 'to wander', or Jelu which means 'an obstructive fellow'.

Some of the girls' names are very pretty; such are the Gondi Alosa, 'pleasant-spoken', Dulosa—a corruption of the Hindi *dulocha*, soft; Malko, a peahen—Plate CXII shows how fitting the title can be; the Hindi Mulari, the 'precious one'; the Gondi Saile, 'friendly'; and Belosa, perhaps derived from the bel tree.

A few titles appear to have been given in derision to boys or girls who have been caught misbehaving in the ghotul. Thus Hagru and Mutra or Mutri have reference to natural functions which may not be performed inside the building; Padru is given to a flatulent boy and Bandri to a smelly little girl.

Some other titles seem to be chosen for their sound rather than their meaning: Jelkar, which comes from a Gondi word meaning a 'ripple on water', is probably chosen for its likeness to Jailer and Budhker; Jalla or Jallam is a Hindi word meaning a 'spider's web'—perhaps Jallam was taken as a pun on Salam, another ghotul title. And I think some of the titles like Tiliyaro (which has a reference to tilli pulse), Siliyaro (the Gondi for a vegetable) and Jaliyaro are primarily chosen just because they sound attractive. So too, among chelik's titles, Paseldar (owner of mung pulse) is nothing more than a parody of Tahsildar or Issaldar.

II

X883

There does not seem to be any fixed age at which children can claim admission to the dormitory; it depends mainly on their relations with their parents. When they reach the stage of going about with other children, forming gangs and playing with them instead of staying at home, there is a natural desire to go to the ghotul. The first entry is very informal, especially for boys, who simply slip in almost unnoticed with the rest. A girl does not go until 'she covers her shoulders'. This does not suggest that she is mature, but there comes a stage when she wants to wear a little more clothing than is usual in infancy, and this marks her entry into her ghotul phase. A girl usually asks her mother first, and often—we were told—the mother herself suggests it when the children are old enough for their presence to be an embarrassment in the home at night. Sometimes a girl is greatly attached to her mother—and the mother too may find her help necessary in looking after still younger children—and her coming to the ghotul is delayed. Then the older girls go and fetch her, saying to the mother, 'Your girl is now grown up; you must let her come, or you will be fined'.

In any case there is no taboo on even the youngest children going to the dormitory; a father may take his two-year-old son to sleep there when the mother is away at a wedding or in her catamenial period; smaller children often go to watch the games and dances. A boy's initiation is not like going to a new school; he knows all about it already.

But very little girls and boys are not allowed to sleep in the ghotul, 'for they sometimes wake up crying, and they wet their beds', so they are taken home after the games and dances are over. Before a child can sleep in the ghotul 'he must be able to look after himself'. At Deogaon, they said, 'We only let big girls sleep in the ghotul; what can the little ones do?' Konda, headman of Kanhargaon, recalled how his elder brother used to chase him out of the ghotul and beat him for coming before he was old enough.

When children first begin to attend the ghotul regularly, they are left alone for a week or so. Then the elder boys ask them if they are going to be regular in their attendance and why they did not come before. The children usually reply that their parents kept them away. Then the Sirdar says to a boy,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

'Now that you have begun to come to the ghotul, you must come every day. You must bring one bit of wood every day. You must first salute me and then all the other chelik and you must do what they tell you to do.' To a girl he says, 'You must obey the Belosa and Dulosa, and clean the ghotul every day'. 883X

A little boy must bring a *gik*-mat with him. This is usually made for him by his mother or an elder sister. But a girl is allowed to beg for a 'camping site' on someone else's mat.

The children are now called *nona* or *noni* till they get proper titles. They do not join the dances, unless they are being specially instructed; they generally play and sleep together. At bedtime they have to salute the full members with Johar. Every evening they must bring a bit of wood for the ghotul store. In some places they have to hand round the tobacco which nowadays takes the place of the ganja which was provided in Lingo's ghotul. When girls are few, the boy probationers massage the elder boys, but not as the girls do it—they massage the legs and thighs. Both boys and girls have to act as ghotul fags and are made to work hard enough. Old Sukali of Masora described how as a little girl, the Pissa of the ghotul, 'I used to carry little bundles for the others at dances and marriages. I was always ordered about by everyone'.

The older boys and girls take a lot of trouble over these children. They teach them manners and to keep their mouths shut. They instruct them in dancing and the ghotul games. They watch them closely and punish any failure or slackness. They specially watch a child's regularity of attendance, and whether a boy brings his wood properly and the girl does her cleaning. Regularity, obedience and habits of work are taught and tested. 883X 867

When a sufficient time has passed, and the leaders see that the children have grasped the ghotul rules and customs, they decide to give them a title at the next Dassera or Diwali. To the Muria these festivals are simply dates; they do not observe them in a religious sense; and the date is nearly always wrong. In some ghotul, children are given names at any time of the year; in others, boys are named at Dassera and girls at Diwali; in others again, boys and girls are named together at Diwali. In some ghotul, in Pandripani, for example, and Bakdopal, girls are given their titles at the menarche. 'When a girl first puts water on her head, then we give her a name.' But this cannot be a general rule, for I have seen dozens of little girls with ghotul names. 883X 553

Titles are given at a simple and pleasant ceremony. I was present at Sidhawand on 5 November 1940 at the naming of five children. At the beginning of the evening, the boys and girls assembled, each bringing a seer of parched rice. The Sirdar and Kotwar measured each contribution to see that the quantity was right, and then poured it onto a cloth spread on a mat in the middle of the ghotul compound. Presently the Belosa brought three leaf-cups and the Sirdar filled one for Lingo Pen, one 'for the Diwali' and one for the Village Mother and her consort. The rest of the rice was divided into four parts, for men, for women, for Kokameta (a neighbouring ghotul with which the Sidhawand ghotul was on very friendly terms) and for the boys and girls of Sidhawand. These last, it may be observed, only got a quarter of the feast.

This done, the Belosa and Dulosa held a formal consultation, came forward and called out three diminutive boys, Tuna, Gando and Dorga. They caught hold of each in turn, lifted him up, hit him twice and announced his name. To Tuna they gave the title Tel-dundi, to Gando the name Hardi-garbo and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
553

to Dorga the attractive title Chelik-sunder. Then the Sirdar called the leading boys aside and they whispered together for a few minutes. The Sirdar went to the group of girls, picked up two of them and brought them into the middle of the company. He lifted each in turn and hit her with his clenched fist. To the first, Sukmi, he gave the name Jankai and to the second, Pakli, the name Mankai. This was all done, as it should be done, in the presence of the people, in the face of the village elders, who yet by an absurd fiction are not supposed to know that such a thing as a ghotul name exists.

301]

Fig. 63. Ear-ring with pendant of red, blue and white beads
Actual size

The motiari now did Johar, first to the Sirdar, then to all the chelik and elders and visitors, but not to any women. Then the Sirdar, followed by the three boy initiates, did the same. This is the only occasion when the Sirdar salutes his 'subjects'—it is a kind action, to make the little boys feel at home. It is the last time the initiates perform the Johar rite. After the Johar, the Sirdar gave a little sermon to the new boys. He waved a siari stalk round them three times and said, 'Bear this *kāwar* [pole for carrying loads]. Serve the [ghotul] government. Give food to the official and the stranger. Serve and feed your father and mother. Now you have a new name. Grow up quickly and live till you are an old man.' He put rice-marks on their foreheads and gave them a leaf-cup of liquor. In Aturgaon, the leader gives the initiates a ring, but this was not done here.

In many villages, when he gets his name, the initiate gives a bottle of liquor to the ghotul, of which he then becomes a full member. He is then excused the tiresome duties of childhood. He no longer has to bring wood daily: he no longer salutes anyone. But in some places, the little boy has to continue doing this even after he has got his title until he is 'grown up' and makes a formal offering of liquor to the ghotul. For a girl, a title means less change, for she still has to salute the boys every night and perform her obligations in tobacco, leaves and cleaning. But boys and girls alike gain a new dignity,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

and they are soon ordering about those unfortunate children who have not yet received their names.

III

In time the little boy will grow up and may become Sirdar or Diwan; the little girl may one day be Belosa. How are these appointments made? The choosing of the leaders is a serious matter, for they not only have great power over the happiness of the children, but they are also responsible for the smooth working of village life. The elders of the village, as well as the boys and girls, are anxious that the best appointments should be made.

How is the leader chosen? The Muria have not discovered the principle of voting, which I do not think would appeal to a people so devoid of jealousy and the spirit of rivalry. Generally the new leader is an obvious choice; the boy who has acted as second-in-command has been well trained, and if he is a good boy will naturally step into the old leader's place. If all the leaders are married in the same year, the matter is more difficult; but if he is available, the position usually goes to the boy whose special duty it has been to look after the motiari. If he can fill that, he can fill any office. The choice is made easier by the fact that the old leader does not relinquish his office immediately after marriage; he continues in it for six to twelve months longer. Sometimes he remains permanently: at Masora, the Diwan is Lakmu, a married man with sons in the ghotul. But Lakmu still retains his title and is the final court of appeal in all disputes. Under these circumstances there is plenty of time for the ghotul to make up its mind. In a serious case of dispute, the village headman or the Pargana Manjhi is asked to intervene and decide.

The leader of the girls is appointed in much the same way, though here the influence of the boys' leader counts for a great deal. Especially in those ghotul where the chelik and motiari pair off, the Sirdar's motiari is often made leader of the girls.

What sort of boy or girl is chosen to be Sirdar or Belosa? Except in the Kalpatti and Bandadesh Pargana of the north-west, where the son or a near relative of the Kaser-Gaita must be appointed, no one has any claim on office by reason of the wealth or position of his parents. To become the head of a ghotul is a simple triumph of character. We may gain some idea of the qualities expected from the following descriptions. The first is from Binjhli. 'A good man is one who helps in difficulty and sympathizes in sorrow. Dhansai Muria was like that. He never told a lie. He spoke kindly and gently to everyone. He was never seen angry. Even when he was drunk he never swore at people.' And in Kuntpadar we were told about Nattu Babu, a Mussalman. 'He thinks everyone equal to him. He loves humble people, he loves the ugly, he loves the destitute. You would never think he was a Mussalman.' On the other hand, a bad man, like Mundra Muria, is 'friends with no one. He speaks friendly to your face, then goes away and does you an injury. When there is work he avoids it, he is rough and abusive in speech. When he sees a good harvest in another's field, he burns with jealousy.'

A leader therefore must be gentle, friendly, not quick to anger or abuse, a good worker himself. He must be able to organize the work at a marriage or festival, and arrange for an official's camp. He must be popular with the girls, who naturally have a lot to say in his appointment. And in most ghotul, the leader admirably fulfils these conditions. You could not find anywhere boys more intelligent, gentle and hard-working than the boys who

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 [554]

in 1940-1 were the Salya of Binjhli, the Sirdar of Sidhawand and Malakot, the Hikmi of Almer, the Likhen of Kanhargaon, the Kotwar of Kabonga.

When the old leader, the Sirdar, decides finally to lay down his office, there is a small ceremony for the appointment of his successor. The following is the custom in villages of the Chalka Pargana. The old Sirdar, after giving due notice to the elders of the village and the ghotul members, comes on an appointed day wearing a new turban which he has bought himself, five to eight hands long. The ghotul members collect money in the village and purchase liquor. When everyone has assembled in the ghotul, the elders ask the members, 'Whom do you want for Sirdar?' They give the name of the boy they want and the elders remove the turban from the old Sirdar and tie it round the head of his successor, saying, 'From today the ghotul is in your hands. Whatever you command must be done'. The members reply, 'We will do whatever he says'. Then the elders say, 'Look, boy, these children are in your care. If you take them to another village, yours is the responsibility. When they are sleeping, look to see that every child is there. You may go hungry, but don't let the children starve. When there is a marriage, you must arrange the work. When anyone dies, you must see to it. When a visitor comes, you must arrange wood and water. See that the ghotul is always clean and the children are also clean. For if they are happy, it is your credit; if they are ruined, it is your fault.' At this point, in some villages, the girls present the new Sirdar with a new sleeping-mat; in Binjhli, they give him three rings, which he wears throughout his time of office and returns when he resigns; in Markabera, they give him a leaf-pipe of honour. Finally the girls formally give him his new name, hitting him on the back with clenched fists, and his 'subjects' salute him with Johar and place *tika*-marks of rice on his forehead. They give him liquor to drink, and celebrate his appointment with a dance.

[787]

In Khutgaon village, I found that the turban ceremony had been abandoned. Some years ago a dog urinated on it. This was regarded as a very bad omen, and when the Siraha was consulted he declared that they must no more tie the turban on the leader's head nor must the motiari any longer touch the heads of the boys with their combs. The disappearance of old customs is not always due to alien influence.

On 1 November 1941 I was present at Bhanpuri when a new Diwan (as the head of the ghotul is called there) was appointed. The girls and boys assembled shortly after nine for what was called the *Diwali mark*, or eating of parched rice in honour of the Diwali festival. Each member had to bring a contribution to the feast: big boys and girls brought one seer each, somewhat younger children brought half a seer and the little probationers a quarter. The rice was collected on mats spread on the ground in the compound and carefully measured. Part was put aside for the villagers—in fact for the children's own parents; part was allocated to a neighbouring village with whom the ghotul was on friendly terms; the rest was for the present company.

Then the elder boys retired inside the ghotul and deliberated about the appointment of their new Diwan. This was only a formality, since the matter had been settled long before. They came out and declared that they had chosen Gando the Sirkil. The Belosa and Dulosa, the two leading girls, then went to Gando, pulled him to his feet and thumped him hard on the back crying 'Diwan Diwan'. After the Belosa had put a ring on his finger, he went round and saluted everyone with Johar. After a few days he would, he promised, treat them to eight annas' worth of liquor.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

883X

After this the parched rice was distributed, and the youngsters played uproarious games, while the village elders gave the new Diwan a little sermon which nobody could hear for the noise. Yet it was obviously a great occasion in Gando's life, and both he and the village elders took it seriously enough.

Indeed after fifty years Bindo looks back to his appointment as the Silledar or head of the Benur ghotul as one of the top moments of his life. He claims that his character and virtues were so outstanding that he was elected leader at once, when he was only ten years old, even before he had been initiated. It is impossible to verify it, but that is his story.

> After I had been a year in the ghotul all the boys and girls were delighted with me. At Diwali time, the village elders came to the ghotul to make a new leader. The Pargana Manjhi asked the chelik, 'Which of you boys is the most intelligent and honest? Which of you is fit to be your leader?' The chelik at once replied, 'There is only one boy: Bindo must be our Raja'. At that the elders turned to me and said, 'You are the Raja of this ghotul. Care for it well. Do not let its affairs go outside. If anyone does wrong you may punish them. When visitors come to the village, see to their needs. If labourers are needed, supply them. When there is a marriage or a funeral, send the boys and girls for work.'
>
> My name was then changed from Bindo to Silledar. The Gaita put a ring on my finger and said to the chelik and motiari, 'Now Silledar has become your Raja. Obey him in all things, submit to his punishments. Work hard and keep the ghotul clean. Keep free of scandal; the honour of the village is in your hands'.
>
> Then parched rice was distributed and when the elders had drunk their liquor they went home.

After the actual head of the ghotul, a very important appointment is that of the Kotwar, as he is called in most villages, who has the duty of looking after the motiari. This boy is in some ways the executive officer of the ghotul. Since a great deal of the actual work of the dormitory is done by girls and as the arrangements to be made for them are far more complicated and difficult than for the boys, the Kotwar is a person of the greatest influence and importance.

In consultation with the Belosa, he arranges in those ghotul which change their partners how the boys and girls are to be paired off. This fact alone gives his position great significance. Again, in consultation with the Belosa, he allocates duties to the girls at marriages, dances and festivals. If the motiari do not obey him he has the power of punishing them. It is said that first he refuses to accept a girl's Johar and for a time, however much she may try to please him, he refuses to speak to her. If she continues disobeying him he may fine her or give her some other small punishment; but if the offence is a serious one he has to report the matter to the Sirdar in the usual way.

The Kotwar not only punishes the girls but he himself is often punished on their behalf. He is responsible for them and if they fail to clean the ghotul or perform their social duties, it is regarded as his own fault and he is penalized.

Sometimes the Kotwar is appointed on the same day as the Sirdar or Diwan. When this is done the Belosa puts a ring on the Sirdar's finger and her assistant, the Dulosa, gives another to the Kotwar.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883 In some places there is a boy called Pargana Manjhi who exercises the same functions as that official actually does in the life of the tribe. Normally, however, appeals against the decisions of the ghotul leaders go to some older man who has retained his association with the ghotul for that very purpose.

The girl leader is generally appointed by the older boys in consultation with the Kotwar and the motiari. This is an entirely informal matter, there is no election, there is rarely a dispute. In some places the ghotul 'wife' of the leading boy becomes the head of the girls, especially in those ghotul where the girls' names are the same as those of the boys. Thus, where the Diwan is the head of the boys the Diwanin will lead the girls. In those villages where the Gaita's son has the right to leadership of the boys, the Gaita's daughter has a similar privilege among the girls.

The actual ceremony of appointment of a Belosa is similar to that of a Sirdar or Diwan but omits, of course, the tying of a turban. The elders say to the girl, 'Greet the boys with Johar, give them tobacco, comb their hair, massage their limbs, keep the ghotul clean, look after the younger girls, see there is no scandal; this is your responsibility and charge'.

IV

883 In some villages, specially in those of the north-west (in the Kalpatti-Bandadesh and Paralkot-Kalpatti Parganas) there is a rule that the son of the village 554 Gaita must be the head of the ghotul. Thus in Koilibera and Barkot I found that the Gaita's son ranked, even when he was a little boy, above the son of the Pargana Manjhi and this boy or some other relative of the Gaita was always the head of the ghotul. In Sarandi the son of the Dhurwa and in Padbera the son of the Manjhi were the leaders of their ghotul. The head of the Barkot ghotul was called Gaita and was the Gaita's son. The head of the Mannegaon ghotul was also called Gaita and the post was held by the son of Kandru, the Gaita of that village. In a Ghotul Pata recorded at Markabera, the village Gaita's son is leader of the chelik and the Gaita's daughter leader of the motiari.

883 But in other villages throughout the whole Muria area such an idea is unheard of and, when I have suggested it, has been indignantly rejected. The 183 only leadership is that of character; the whole principle of the ghotul, I have been told again and again, is that everyone is equal, rich or poor, the son of priest, headman or landlord, all are one in this fellowship which knows no wealth-distinction or privilege of inherited rank. And this, I think, is true. The Muria belief in equality is often carried to quite fantastic lengths. If work is demanded from a village by the Government, every family contributes the same amount. If in any ghotul all the boys have titles and there are thus no probationers to bring wood in the evenings, all the boys go together to fetch wood in a cart; each cuts exactly the same quantity and all bring the wood home. If one boy is not able to be present, they postpone the task till another day. If the village gets any present it must be exactly distributed and at feasts exact measurements are made of parched rice, meat or liquor. The Muria of Chandabera said that 'if one of our tribe were to pile up heaps of gold before us, we would still say "O, he is only a relation; our sons can marry his daughters",' and in Phunder the headman said, 'Of all the good things our children learn in the ghotul, one of the best is that everyone is equal'. In Phulpar, the leader was the son of the Atpariha or village drudge. At Chandabera, the Kotwar was deformed; at Bhanpuri, the Daroga was blind. Both had important duties and every privilege.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXI

352
291
301

Chelik of Toinar with his ghotul 'wife'

[p. 364 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142

A Lohar boy: the Chowkidar of the Berma ghotul

Plate LXXVI

342
356

Matiari cleaning the Bandopal ghotul

[p. 364 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

X883 829

The Muria belief in equality is illustrated by a characteristic story. 'Raja Dokara ruled in Tulsidongri. It was thick jungle: there was no Brahmin to cook his food. So he went to Bhagavan to ask for one.' Bhagavan said, "Certainly take one if you can recognize him. They all look alike to me". Bhagavan told everyone to wear a dhoti, and when they came, Brahmin and Ganda, Muria and Dhakar, Halba and Maria, the Raja found it impossible to tell which was which. So he sent Idur Kola Pen to see what he could do, but he also failed. At last a fly came and said, "Give me something to eat, and I'll get you a Brahmin". Idur Kola Pen offered it gold and silver and many tax-free villages. "No", said the fly, "I don't want these. There's a sore on your leg. Let me sit and feed there." Idur Kola Pen allowed it, and when it had fed, the fly settled on a Brahmin's head. Thus the man was recognized and he became Raja Dokara's cook.'

X883 554

This conception of complete democracy affects the position of the leaders. Their power is not absolute; they can be, and sometimes are, removed from office. They can be punished by a meeting of the other members. At Palari, the three leaders—Diwan, Tahsildar and Jamadar—abused their position, and the boys and girls met and fined them. In any case, the rule of the ghotul is not that of a dictator, but of a council. Associated with the chief boy or girl is a company of two or three who advise them on all important matters.

These leaders do, of course, have their privileges. The little boys fag for them and massage them if the girls are absent. Little girls do the Belosa's hair and run her errands. In ghotul where partners have to be constantly changed, the leaders are sometimes allowed to have girls of their own. In Banjora, for example, the Kotwar, who is there the leader, and the Belosa always sleep together, though the others must change every two or three days.

V

X883 563

Are members of other tribes and the Hindu castes admitted to the ghotul? This is the sort of question that is usually met with an indignant denial from the Muria elders, who explain that they never admit outsiders for fear of possible matrimonial complications, and equally indignant denials from Hindus and others who claim that the ghotul is a degraded institution to which they would never send their children. Neither is true.

Throughout the Muria area may be found examples—not many examples, but some—of Muria-Lohar, Rawat, Nahar and even the despised Ganda and Ghasia being admitted as members of the dormitory. Such children receive titles; they are allotted duties and allowed all ghotul privileges. In Palli Barkot the people said that Muria-Lohar boys and girls were given the fullest privileges but that there was a ban on Mahara, Rawat and Kuruk. The Lohar children could sleep with the Muria children, but must not marry them. In Nayanar I discovered to my astonishment that two of the girls who were taking the leading part at a Muria wedding were Lohar—the Alosa and Dulosa of the ghotul. In Markabera, the most popular girl in the entire company, the Saile who had a Muria ghotul-partner, was a Lohar. The Belosa of the Mule ghotul was a Lohar, so was the Salya; in 1941 the Jamadar of Kokori, the Jamadar of Phunder, the Jalaru (a girl) of Phunder, the Jhoria of Modenga were all Lohar.

The leading drummer of Hatipakna was a Nahar and two of his brothers and a sister were also prominent members of the ghotul. At Junganar a Ganda boy was made the Suel, and a Ghasia was the Kotwar at Modenga. In Phunder there was a Kalar boy. Rawat are commonly admitted.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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Such privileges are not universal or uncontrolled. In Junganar only very small Ganda girls may massage the boys or sleep in the ghotul; once they are mature, though they may attend the dances, they may not massage and must say Johar at a distance. This rule seems to have been made by the Ganda elders rather than by the Muria. For the Muria are generally more anxious to control the behaviour of the boys of other castes; girls are allowed to do what they like.

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The relations of Muria and Muria-Lohar are discussed in more than one song. Here is a Manda dance song from Tursani village.

Jāging poysi weke dāda roy seng busur bhusbās ?	Where are you going with your bamboo basket, brother?
Nia bāti pāri dāda ?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori hile bai.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wāde lyona bai.	I am a Lohar boy, girl.
Nima weke dān ton dāda ?	Where are you going, brother?
Irum mara koyala bai	To get charcoal of mahua wood, girl.
Koyala pandi dān tona bai	I am going to make charcoal, girl.
Nana gala wāyāka dāda.	I will come with you, brother.
Nima icho wāyama bai.	Don't come with me, girl.
Jāti dube māyār bai.	Your caste will be broken, girl.
Sarus pite jori dāda.	Two cranes make a perfect pair, brother.
Jori ise ayakāt dāda.	We will pair off like them, brother.

A Har Pata, sung when the girls of Kehalakot go to dance in other ghotul at Diwali, is on the same theme.

Pāri porro nititon bai le.	On the bank of the field you were standing, girl.
Niya pāri wāti roy bai le ?	What is your clan?
Pāri ori hile roy dāda le.	I have no clan, brother.
Nāwa pāri ātek roy dāda le.	If I had a clan, it would be yours.
Jāti sori layāna dāda le.	I am a girl of the Sori clan, brother.
Niya pāri wāti roy dāda le ?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori hile roy bai le.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wade layona bai le	I am a blacksmith boy.
Titi dāda ulti roy dāda le,	You have eaten and drunk me, brother,
Jāti dube kiti roy dāda le.	And have made my caste sink down.

Naturally such an arrangement sometimes leads to trouble. At Sarandi a Lohar chelik ran off with a Muria motiari, and since then outsiders have not been admitted there. At Gohora, the Saidar—a Rawat boy—eloped with the Piosa who was a Muria girl, and the ghotul was henceforward closed to visitors.

VI. Relations between Different Ghotul

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Members of different ghotul meet at dances, marriages and festivals. They visit each other on dancing expeditions throughout the year. Sometimes they have dancing contests. Neighbouring ghotul send gifts to each other, especially at the time of eating parched rice at Diwali. Thus when I was at Sidhawand, the boys put aside a good portion of their parched rice to send to the Kokameta ghotul with which they had relations of special friendship. At Banjora they sent one measure of rice to Bhopna and one measure to Kokori asking the boys and girls of those ghotul to share their feast. Bhopna and Kokori returned the gifts at the Chherta festival.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

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Generally relations between the ghotul are friendly enough, but quarrels do occasionally arise. Once at a dance the boys of Kabonga failed to perform the Johar Par properly and salute the boys of Hatipakna who were dancing with them. The insulted chelik slung their drums over their shoulders and went away, and the Kabonga boys had to give them a rupee's worth of liquor before they would consent to dance with them again.

Formerly the boys and girls of two neighbouring villages, Kanhargaon and More Berma, used to go to the same ghotul which stood on the boundary between them. But the time came when the boys of Kanhargaon complained that they were unfairly treated in the distribution of motiari by the More Berma Kotwar. It was found impossible to adjust the matter and in the end the Kanhargaon boys and girls separated and built another ghotul just within their own village boundary not more than a hundred yards away. The members of the two ghotul meet at marriages and festivals, but they never visit one another nor do the chelik have anything to do with each other's motiari.

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Boy or girl visitors from other ghotul are always warmly welcomed. When a boy's parents move from one village to another the boy automatically becomes a member of the ghotul in his new home and either retains his original title or is given a new one. A boy visitor is often put to the test. The girls push little bits of wood under their rings before they massage him 'to see how much he can stand'. By this means they can hurt a boy considerably, for even without rings the girls' massage is vigorous enough to make the skin smart and sting. If a boy passes his test successfully, the Belosa (with the approval of the Kotwar) may invite him to sleep with her. Generally a Muria boy visitor from another ghotul is given a partner for the night.

When a girl goes visiting another village she has to be more careful. She generally stays in her house and does not go to the ghotul. When the chelik hear of it they send two motiari to fetch her. They go to the house and say, 'Sister, come, do come to our ghotul'. She generally replies, 'No, sisters, no, I must not', to which the girls answer, 'O, just come for a little singing and then we will bring you home'. If she still refuses all the boys and girls go to the house and sing taunt-songs outside until she weakens. If she does go, she must return home for the night. She ought not actually to sleep in another ghotul. In some villages there is a special official whose task it is to escort such visitors home. When a motiari returns to her own village the chelik examine her very carefully and if it is proved that she slept in another ghotul, she is severely punished for what is regarded as treachery to her own boys. But this, like all Muria rules, is neither absolute nor universal. The girls who go on the Diwali dancing tours always sleep in the ghotul of the villages they visit and are entertained by the chelik.

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Unknown girls are sometimes regarded with suspicion. They may not keep the menstruation rules. They may be witches in disguise. A story from Atargaon points the moral.

> There was a mother and her daughter. The daughter says, 'Marry me to someone'. The mother says, 'I know no one, daughter'. 'I will go and find a husband for myself; give me a basket and I will go today.' The girl leaves her home and starts out to search for a husband. On the way a chelik meets her. He catches her by the shoulder. 'Why have you caught me? Let me alone, brother, let me alone.' 'I won't let you go unless I take you to the jungle, then you may go.' Then says that girl, 'Very well, hold this basket for me while I relieve myself'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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She goes among the bushes and turns into a tigress. She comes roaring and kills and eats the boy.

Then she becomes a girl again and goes on her journey. She meets a man fetching wood. He speaks to her and she turns into a tigress again and kills him. At last she reaches a Saturday bazaar. The bazaar is finished but she sits down near the carts of the merchants. Four men see her beauty and desire her. She makes them all mad and they run away.

A little boy is going round the bazaar picking up scraps, bits of lac, cigarette ends, grain and other odds and ends. He sees the girl and tells his grandfather about her. That grandfather is a magician. 'Come, daughter, and marry my son.'

That night the chelik hear that a beautiful girl has come to the magician's house. 'Let's bring her to the ghotul.' They go to the house and bring her singing and dancing on the way. They make her sleep with one of the chelik. Presently she says, 'This is too crowded, let's go outside'. They go out and the boy spreads his mat while the girl goes to relieve herself outside the compound. She comes roaring, a tigress, and kills her lover, then returns as a girl to the magician's house. The chelik suspect what has happened and go again and bring her by force to the ghotul. Once again they make her sleep with a boy to discover if it was really she who was the killer. Once again she takes the boy outside and goes to relieve herself, but this time the boys are waiting armed with sticks and when she comes into the compound they fall upon her and kill her.

VII. Leaving the Ghotul

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A girl automatically leaves the ghotul when she is married and must never enter it again. In many places she gives a feast to the ghotul members either on the first day of the marriage ceremony or a week or so afterwards. Sometimes it is her duty to massage every chelik for the last time before she finally goes to her husband's house. The bridegroom also may give a present of a basket of mahua oil-seed which is pounded and cleaned, after which the motiari massage the chelik with it, including their legs.

The only exception to the rule that bars a married girl and even a widow from entering the ghotul is when a girl is married very young. She is then permitted to sleep in the dormitory and join in all its activities up to the time of her first menstrual period. In the Jamkot ghotul, for example, Kariya was married to a little girl and she continued to attend. Here they said that so long as the girl had not been sent officially to her husband, whether she had passed the menarche or no, she might continue as a motiari, but I think that this is unusual.

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Such child-marriages are comparatively rare. Where children are married, it is generally in villages where there have been scandals in the ghotul and the parents, instead of interfering with the ghotul routine, adopt this means of preventing pre-nuptial pregnancy. At Korenda I was told that 'in the old days, when there were neither roads nor motor-cars, the Muria were honest, truthful and virtuous'. A boy was not considered suitable for marriage 'until he had made two or three long trips with a load', say from Narayanpur to Kondagaon or Kondagaon to Jagdalpur. The girls were not considered ready 'until their breasts were fully grown and even beginning to slope downwards'. But now the situation has changed. *Abiha rāj halau, larha larki malau*—'The kingdom of today is black, the boys and girls are like monkeys'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942, 1947 A W32.Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

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It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young.

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Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'.

A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palmi, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. Married Men in the Ghotul

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Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two chelik and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval.

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In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted.

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But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 626 When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic, they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently hardened to persist in their visits after this.

X 883 837 But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Maru, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margaon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1942 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahua Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

X 883 591 768 589 There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul, Dasru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

X 883 The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

X 883 578 But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she said, 'well, why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AN EVENING IN THE GHOTUL

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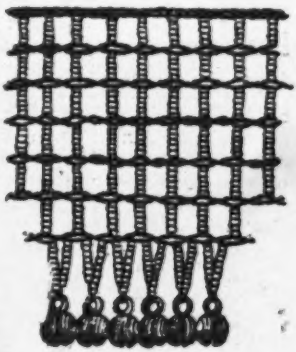
THE ghotul is very literally a night-club; it is only in the evening that there is 'a noise in the belly of the elephant'; during the day, except on festivals, it is deserted. The real life of the ghotul is in the firelight. The conventions and routine of a ghotul evening are almost everywhere the same. I have spent a hundred evenings in all parts of the Muria area with the chelik and motiari and have found, on the whole, a remarkable similarity of custom. The Muria explain this by saying that all ghotul have developed from the first house at Semurgaon where Lingo himself prescribed the routine that should be followed.



DETAIL

[301]

In the afternoon, motiari come to sweep, clean and cow-dung the buildings and courtyard. Their grass brooms are soon raising clouds of dust; rubbish is collected in basket or winnowing-fan and thrown away; cow-dung mixed with water is spread by hand over the floor. At sunset, someone often comes to arrange and light the fire; where there are no matches to light your pipe or lanterns to show you your way about, a fire serves more purposes than warmth and is needed even in the hot weather.

At any time after supper, it may be from 7.30 up to 9 p.m. according to the season and the circumstances of the village, the chelik begin to arrive.

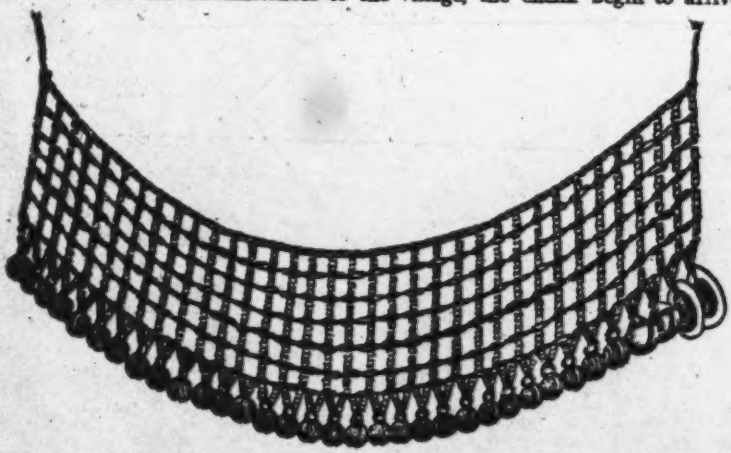


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FIG. 66. Bead belt with bells and cowries from Remawand. The beads are blue and white

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883 517 They come one by one, carrying their sleeping-mats and perhaps their drums. The little boys bring their daily 'tribute' of wood, 'clock in' by showing it to the official responsible and throw it in a corner. The elder boys gather round the fire; one takes a half-smoked leaf-pipe from his turban and ignites it by placing a bit of glowing wood in the cup, another plays a few notes on his flute, a third spreads his mat and lies down. The Kotwar inspects the buildings to see if the girls have done their work properly. The Sirdar comes in tired and calls a youngster to massage his legs. Gradually all the boys assemble.

At the same time the motiari are collecting near by, in someone's house, or just round the corner; at Binjhli and other villages where there is a special girls' house they gather there laughing and chatting generally, I was told, about the day's encounters with the chelik. If a group of girls have to come some distance, as from another hamlet, they often sing on the way.

Then at last the girls come in, with a rush, all together and gather round their own fire. After a while they scatter, some sitting with the boys, others singing in a corner, some lying down. Nearly always there are boys and girls who are tired after the long day's work at home, and these lie down at [516] once in a corner or in one of the smaller huts—to lie flat on the face with head buried in the arms is a popular ghotul attitude when one is alone.

The others occupy the time in pleasant harmony; sometimes they dance for an hour or two; the smaller children play rampageous games; sometimes they just sit round the fire and talk; in the hot weather on a moonlit night you will see them scattered all about the compound. Often they sing lying down, two by two, chelik with motiari, or in little groups. A boy tells a story; they ask riddles; they report on the affairs of the day; there may be a ghotul trial; they plan a dancing expedition or allot duties at a wedding. I shall never forget the sight in some of the larger ghotul of 60 or 70 youngsters thus engaged.

[533] Among songs, the most popular are the taunt songs which boys and girls sing against each other, especially those with proper names that can be changed to suit the occasion. Everybody in turn is paired off, often with forbidden relatives; one after another they are caught in compromising situations; they are engaged, married and divorced, re-married.

Songs

X883 539

I

Re re la rela re re la rela re re la

Korka ta doyo oiki helo tiloka.	O my little sister Tiloka, take the cow out of the cow-shed.
Tāna osi bāra hiyākān dāda silledār?	Why should I take the cow from the shed, O brother Silledar?
Mēhwāl kopāl lewa bāra hiyākān?	There is no grazier, Kopa, why should I take it?
Bāra na dāye oiki helo tiloka?	O little sister Tiloka, what do you want?
Guda ta gino oiki helo tiloka.	Take the pig from its sty, Tiloka.
Tāna bāra hiyākān dāda silledār?	Why should I take the pig from its sty, O brother Silledar?
Konār ta kor oiki helo tiloka.	O little sister Tiloka, take the hen from inside the house.

AN EVENING IN THE GHOTUL

Tāna bāra hiyākān dāda sil!edār ?	Why should I take out the hen, O brother Silledar?
Bāra na dāye oiki helo tiloka ?	O little sister Tiloka, what do you want?
Sanduk ta rupiya oiki helo tiloka ?	Will you take the rupee from the box?
Tāna nana bāra hiyākān dada silledar ?	Why should I take the rupee from the box, O brother Silledar?
Jhāpi ta chocho oiki helo tiloka ?	O little sister Tiloka, will you take the cloth hidden in the basket?
Tāna nana oikān dāda silledār !	Yes, brother Silledar, I will take the cloth hidden in the basket, O brother Silledar!

2

This song is from Manegaon and has the refrain *Suy ale helo le.*

Pāt paroda pālor podela.	On the ant-hill grows a *kurai* tree.
Bag na pungār puyta injore.	The flower has blossomed, sister.
Bor dādān mihchi oye rāt ?	Who are you going to give the flower to, sister?
Laharu dādān mihchi oye rāt.	I will pin the flower on Laharu.
Tirha hāya tāla injore ;	That boy's head is like the *tirka* fruit;
Beze pungār pāga injore ;	His turban is like the *kewu* flower;
Pāgāt pungār mihchi hiyākāt,	I will pin the flower on his turban,
Udimy mut-ka mamāt hiyākāt,	I will give him a blow with my fist,
Durro poy-nai mamāt bilkat.	And quickly I will run away.

3

Barpala Post Oyna Pata

This song, with its refrain, *He dāda saidar*, addressed to the head of the ghotul, is called 'The Song of Carrying off by Force'.

Barang sarpār te udiion saidar ?	Why are you sitting in the middle of the road, Saidar?
Badenke ise udiion ?	Whom are you waiting for, Saidar?
Alosānk ise udiion.	You are waiting for Alosa, Saidar.
Kaida arka poyni kathe ise handu.	She went with her pot for water, Saidar.
Talāt kumār hiskun kathe ise handu.	She had a roll on her head, Saidar.
Sarpār tākhe handu.	She came along the road, Saidar.
Tāne ise poyandi.	You caught hold of her, Saidar.
Ayo ayo indu.	She said, 'No, no', Saidar.
Tata tāne ondi saidar.	You dragged her to the jungle, Saidar.

After an hour or two of dancing, singing, games or story-telling, certainly not much after ten o'clock, the serious business of the evening begins. The younger boys, those who have not yet been given titles or excused their tribute of wood, go round to every senior boy beginning with the leader (but not afterwards following any special order) saluting each with Johar followed by the ghotul title—'Johar Sirdar', 'Johar Kotwar', 'Johar Silledar'. But for greeting relatives, the term of relationship is used—'Johar *dāda*', 'Johar

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

māma' and so on. As they give the salute they stretch out their hands, sometimes both hands, lower and then raise them in a pretty gesture. Often

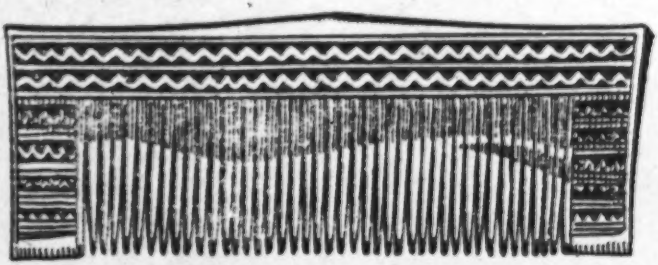


FIG. 67. Carved wooden comb from Toinar
Length 6"

they only use one hand, laying it on head or shoulder; in the east of Kondagaon they put both hands on the head.

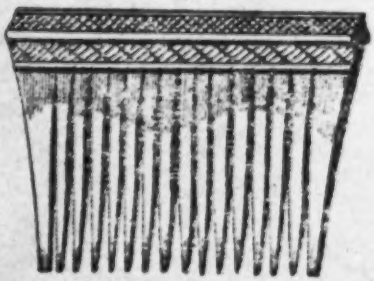


FIG. 68. A comb from the Narayanpur Tahsil
Width 2¾"

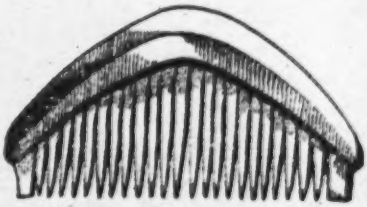


FIG. 69. A comb from Phulpar
Width 3¼"

When the boys have finished, the motiari go round in the same way, with the same gestures and salutes, generally speaking in high, almost artificial voices. In Phulpar the girls did not say Johar, but repeated the ghotul title twice, thus—'Gaita, Gaita' or 'Kotwar, Kotwar'. A girl should not salute a boy to whom she is betrothed or her Lamhada, and she must be very careful about using the proper terms of relationship—for by this means she is reminded of the tribal laws of avoidance. In some ghotul this ceremony is performed twice, once when the company first assembles and

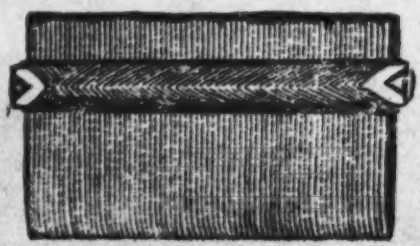


FIG. 70. A bamboo comb, of a type sometimes made by Muria for sale in the bazaars
Width 2¾"

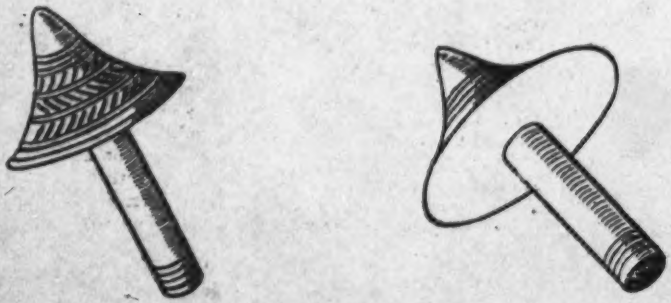
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

301

FIG. 71. The *pusal hoji* or cat's footprint necklace. The beads in the centre are white and red and the cat's footprint itself is made of white, blue and yellow beads. The rest of the necklace is composed of a number of beads, orange, brown, pink, mauve, green and scarlet
Length 15"

FIG. 72. The *hupa hoji* or rat's footprint necklace of blue and white beads
Length 31"

FIG. 73. Carved wooden ear-plugs from Kanhargaon



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Muria

then again at the usual time. At Palari, where the girls take the boys' *mazni*-mats home with them every morning and bring them in the evening, the first salutation is called *Mazni-johar*, for it is then they give the mats to their chelik.

In some ghotul, especially those where they do not massage every night, the two leading girls crack the boys' fingers as they go round.

Immediately after the Joharni, a girl distributes finely-powdered tobacco and sometimes a supply of leaf-pipes to the boys. The tobacco is taken from the ghotul store, to which all must contribute.

The motiari often go outside for a few minutes. The Belosa may now arrange how the massage is to be done and decide whether they will sleep in the ghotul that night and, if so, how they will pair off. When they are ready they come back into the ghotul and each girl goes straight to a boy to comb his hair and massage him. There does not seem to be any rule about this. A girl is not bound to massage her own ghotul partner, nor does the fact of massaging imply that the two will sleep together. In practice, however, the elder girls generally massage the elder boys.

In the Chota Dongar Pargana, the girls go to massage the chelik in the very place where they are going to sleep. Elsewhere they sit in a circle or grouped round the fire, sometimes scattered about the room. If the boy is asleep the motiari rouses him and makes him sit up; she sits or kneels behind him, very close, with her knees round his body. With her comb she begins to shake out and arrange the boy's hair.

The combs are small and it is often difficult to get them through the long unruly locks of the chelik. In Masora the method of combing was to tap the head rather roughly, then to twist the comb round, digging it into the skull; then the hair was pulled out and fretted and at last tied again into a bun. The digging in of the edge of the comb is known as *pitis pitis kiyāna*; it is intended to kill lice and clear away scurf.

In Pupgaon, the combing was much gentler, and was only done every three days. In Bandopal, the girls did not tap the head but twisted the comb through the hair and rubbed the scalp in a very soothing way. When we were at Binjhli they were not combing at all, and in Khutgaon after a dog had relieved itself on the leader's turban, the Siraha forbade the girls to touch the chelik's heads. But generally the combing is done in the way I have described. When a lot of girls are at it together, the clicking of the combs against a score of hard heads makes a remarkable noise, reminding me of a phrase by Roy Campbell:

> While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,
> Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

But this is not the end of the comb's work. The motiari now uses it to titillate the skin of the back and arms. She rubs the points of the comb very gently to and fro, up and down, over the back and then when she has massaged that, takes each arm in turn and runs the comb up and down the skin.

Now the massage begins. In many ghotul (in Binjhli, for example, and in Bandopal and Almer among many others) this is done with the oily waste of the mahua or karanji seed, and cleans as well as refreshes. In Gorma, in May when they burn *dahi*, they massage the whole body with karanji waste. 'For in the old days this is how Tallur Muttai used to massage Kadrengal.' In other ghotul and at other seasons the massage is done with the hands alone.

The motiari begins by passing her open hands gently over the back, rubs a little harder, presses back on the ball of the hand, pushes more and more vigorously and always upward till the chelik nearly falls forward on his face,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

412
531
301

FIG. 74. Comb of a type often used in the Abujhmar foothills
Length 3¾"

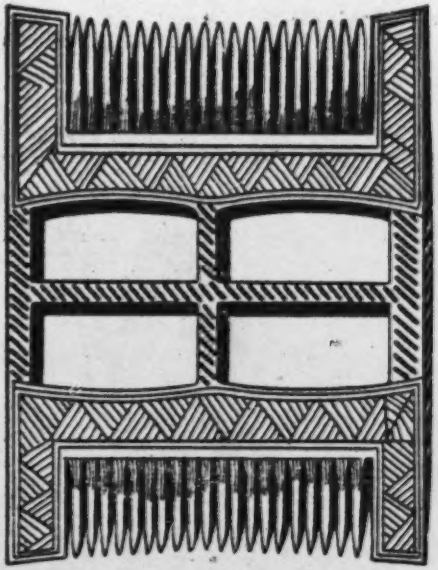
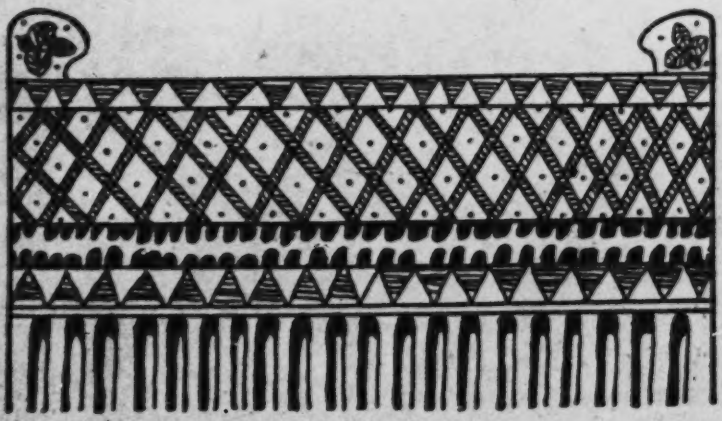


FIG. 75. Double comb from Bhanpuri
Height 4¾"



From Paul Schebesta's article 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula' in *JRAS* (1929), p. 758
FIG. 76. Malayan comb
(*See p. 368n*)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
302

then rubs down more gently, soothes and quietens the whole body. If oil-seed is used, she rubs this off gradually and cleans the back by ever more gentle movements of the hands. Sometimes, as at Chandabera, the girl catches a boy's shoulder with one hand and rubs and pushes his back very vigorously with the other. In eastern Kondagaon the girls often stand beside the boy and rub the back downwards.

Then the girl takes the boy's left arm and places it over her shoulder, squatting back on her heels and pulling him towards her. The comb is again brought into play, and the skin is soothed by gentle stroking with the hand, before she begins a very vigorous massage of the arm, gripping it with both hands and pulling downwards, then moving the hands in opposite directions with a twisting motion. When a girl is wearing a large number of rings this can be painful. It is impossible to say that the movement of the massage is away from the heart or towards it; it moves in both directions. There is obviously no rule.

When the left arm is finished, the girl removes it from her shoulder, lays the hand in her lap and cracks the fingers one by one. Then she repeats the process for the right arm. In Koilibera the girl did not put the boy's arm on her shoulder but on the ground, and rubbed it up and down.

In some ghotul there now follows a very intimate form of massage. In Binjhli the girl kneels upright or stands behind the boy and bends over him putting her arms round his neck and massages the chest with downward thrusts of the hands, while the boy leans back against her body in great enjoyment. This generally excites ribald comment and cries of 'Catch hold of her breasts!' or 'How big are her breasts?' In Almer, the girl puts her hands under the boy's arms and rubs his chest and stomach. In Phulpar and Koilibera I saw a girl crack a boy's fingers by putting her arms round his neck from behind to catch his hands.

A few other variations may be noted. It is not uncommon for two girls to massage a boy together. One does the back while another massages the arms. In Binjhli and a few other ghotul the girls do not put the arms over their shoulders but in their laps; here too they begin with the arms and afterwards do the back and chest.

In many places it is taboo for the motiari to massage the boys' legs, and where Hill Maria influence is strong even after marriage a wife does not massage her husband's legs unless he is ill. But in the central area, in Gorma, Berma, Jogi Alwar, and doubtless elsewhere, and in Chargaon and Korkoti to the north, the girls massage the boys' legs every now and then, at Jogi Alwar every three days, at Berma every fifteen. The girl sits in front of the boy and rubs right up the leg almost to the groin.

When a girl has finished her massage, she often lays her hand on the boy's head or shoulder and says Johar.

In the majority of ghotul this is the daily programme, but sometimes the combing and massage is done less frequently. In Binjhli, it was once a week—on Fridays; in Pupgaon, the girls cracked the boys' fingers every day, combed their hair every three days and massaged once a week.

X883
513

It is now fairly late and boys and girls prepare for bed. In fine weather they may scatter about the compound and in the various huts; when it is cold or wet they seem to prefer crowding into the main ghotul building. The little boys and girls lie down in a long row, two boys, then a girl, a boy, two girls and so on. Boys without partners—and there are often fewer girls than boys—lie down two and two on their little mats. Those who have permanent or temporary partners lie down with them, side by side facing each other in

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

each other's arms on the sleeping-mats. They often have to lie very close together; sometimes two boys have one girl between them; many of the couples actually touch each other. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the compound.

In ghotul where the motiari always sleep in the ghotul, bedtime is a simple matter of routine. In places where they only stay on sometimes, they go singing to their own house or verandah. When they are not sure what to do, they stay on till the Sirdar says, 'Well, girls, are you going to sleep here or are you going home?' The Belosa answers, 'It's very late, I think we'd better stay here' or 'There's a tiger about, it's not safe to go'. The Sirdar says, 'Then go to your mats at once and don't keep us awake any longer'.

FIG. 77. Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel
Width 4½"

In Chandabera, the boys told me that the girls often said, 'Let's go home tonight' and ran away. But if a boy was anxious to sleep with his girl, he would ask the Kotwar to keep them and he always did.

FIG. 78. Comb with carved leopard
Width 5"

FIG. 79. The *kessal-gula* or tortoise box
Height 4"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 983
513

When visitors come to the village, the girls usually do not go to the ghotul at all. In Karikhodra the chelik complained bitterly about the disruption of ghotul life that was caused by the continual presence of subordinate officials and merchants. During the busy seasons of the year the ghotul is practically closed, specially at the time when everyone is needed to sleep in the fields to guard the ripening crops. When the boys are in the fields, the girls often camp on the verandah of someone's house where they play, dance and sleep. During a marriage, also, the ghotul is normally closed and in some villages there is a rule that the members must sleep in their camp and not in the dormitory so long as the ceremony continues.

In the very early morning, the Belosa gets up and goes round the ghotul rousing her girls. They ought to be out of the ghotul before dawn. 'They leave early', said a boy in Markabera, 'because they come laughing from the arms of the chelik and feel shy about it.' I am told that in Kondagaon the girls remain later, until it is light, but in Narayanpur they leave at cock-crow. 'A girl should be hard at work husking or grinding grain before her parents are up.' The boys get up later, but it is considered improper for them to be seen sleeping in the ghotul after the village is up and about. Soon after the girls have gone, they too are up and, taking their mats with them, return to their houses and the duties of the day.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

I. Dress and Fashions

THE chelik and motiari, as we have seen, pay a lot of attention to their charming persons, so much attention indeed and of such a varied nature that it is not easy to describe their fashions in a single chapter. But the task is made somewhat easier by the tradition of ghotul solidarity. To be in the fashion, according to Muria ideas, it is essential that all the girls of any one village should look exactly alike. They must have the same coloured cloth round their loins, the same ornaments in their ears, the same bangles on their wrists, the same kind of beads about their necks. The Belosa sets the fashion and all her subjects follow it. There is a little more latitude allowed to boys, especially to the leaders. The Malik of Jungani can wear a wonderful comb fashioned with a chelik and motiari on horseback; the Kotwar of Chandabera can have a tobacco-pouch shaped like a fish in his turban; the Manjhi of Kabonga can go about with a beautifully-carved wooden bird perched on the comb in his hair. But girls cannot do that sort of thing; for them originality is bad taste.

There are five main fashion areas—the villages along the northern border, the Jhoria of the south and centre, the Muria of the north-west near the Abujhmar, the villages round Kondagaon and along the main road and the eastern forest approaching the Jeypore boundary. Each of these areas has its own special style.

There are, however, certain general observations that may be made of Muria everywhere. All Muria wear the same kind of cloth. It is taboo for a Muria to weave, and most of their cloth comes from the local Ganda and Mahara weavers. The cloth is good, but unenterprising, generally plain white with a red stripe or band. The chelik rarely wear a dhoti; all they can usually afford is a loin-cloth tied round the waist, passed between the legs and allowed to hang down in front. Well-to-do boys use a broader cloth that covers the buttocks, but most leave them bare and only conceal the private parts with a narrow strip that forms a sort of bag.

Girls wear a small cloth, supported back and front by their waist-string, to cover the private parts. Over it they wind round the loins a small strip of cloth like a very short skirt, carrying the end up and over one shoulder so as somewhat to conceal the breasts, and tucking it in again behind. In the Jhoria and north-western parganas, both breasts are often left exposed when no stranger is near, and nearly always one breast is visible—a fact that gives point to the riddle: 'The cow-shed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get inside.'

Muria boys and men usually wear a turban, and this varies not so much from a desire to be in the fashion but according to what one can afford. The classical Muria turban is tied round and round to form a sort of box on the head; in eastern Kondagaon the overhanging flaps are carefully decorated with coloured fringes. This box is rightly so named, for it not only covers the head, but serves as a receptacle for combs, mirrors, lead-pipes and anything else that a boy may wish to take about.

Neither married nor married women cover their heads in conventional village fashion. It is a mark of a Muria girl that her head should be proudly free.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

412
531
301

FIG. 80. Bird-comb from Chandabera
Height 4½"

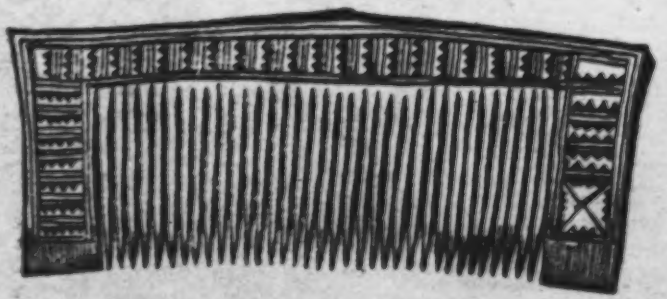


FIG. 81. Comb from Bhorpal
Length 5½"

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Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria everywhere are at the mercy of the merchants in the bazaar, though these are not entirely indifferent to popular demand. They supply cheap aluminium armlets and anklets, glass and lac bangles, aluminium and silver neck-bands, the *kawel* necklaces of rupees known throughout Central India, and many varieties of beads. Muria chelik and motiari buy these in the bazaars and wear them. They indicate nothing except perhaps the way in which the natural taste and intelligence of the aboriginals is degraded in the interests of big business. 301 439

We may now turn to the special ornaments worn by the Muria in the different fashion areas I have named. We will begin with the Jhoria, for these are the most distinctive and interesting of all the Muria. 301

The Jhoria, as we have seen, are simply Hill Maria who have settled in the foothills. You can distinguish a Maria from a Jhoria girl by her breasts so charmingly displayed and the tattoo marks less charmingly marring the beauty of her face. It is not so easy to distinguish between a Jhoria chelik and a young Hill Maria boy. [304]

Like the Hill Maria, the Jhoria give the impression of being a little over-dressed.[1] They are 'dolled up', smart, tight, fresh, alert, vivacious—altogether charming. Their clothes are worn tightly round their bodies, revealing the grace and energy of the figure. Their ornaments and especially their necklaces do not hang about them, but are drawn tight round their heads and necks. The feathers in their hair give them the perky bright appearance of young birds.

Most striking of all are their gaily coloured bead decorations. They wear bead-bands, sometimes three or four of them, round the head, keeping the hair in place. Round the neck are two or more broad bead collars and a profusion of necklaces; their beautiful and elaborate designs are fully illustrated in the colour plates in this book.

Jhoria boys and girls wear ear-pendants of coloured beads (Fig. 64): some girls also wear large circular shields (*dhār*) without the usual chains, or home-made wooden *hiruā* (Fig. 73) covered with silver paper.

Bangles are not made by the Muria, and those worn by boys or girls are the usual bazaar products.

Rings play an important part in ghotul life. A boy or girl on being appointed to high office is presented with a ring: at a marriage the bride and bridegroom give rings to their old companions: a ring is buried in front of the Gaita's house before a Deo-Dandar or Pen Kolang expedition and is later given to the leader of the dance: rings are collected at a festival and offered to the clan-god. [585]

The rings are of brass or aluminium: some are decorated with little bells (Fig. 17). Girls often wear a great many which the boys beg them to remove before beginning the massage.

Girls often wear rows of combs in their hair, with thick bunches of cowries,[2] and balls of red and green wool. Both chelik and motiari love to put flowers in their hair or over their ears.

The Jhoria chelik wear cowrie belts just above their loin-cloths. There seems no shortage of these; they may be found everywhere. Sometimes the son of well-to-do people wears a broad silver *hardan*, bought in the bazaar, of a kind used by girls.

[1] The word is W. V. Grigson's; it exactly describes my own impression—if such a phrase can be applied to people who hardly wear any clothes at all.

[2] For the use of cowries, almost universal in Bastar, see my article 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII (1942), pp. 121–4.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

276
531
301

Fig. 82. Tobacco-box from the Mardapal Pargana
Height 5"

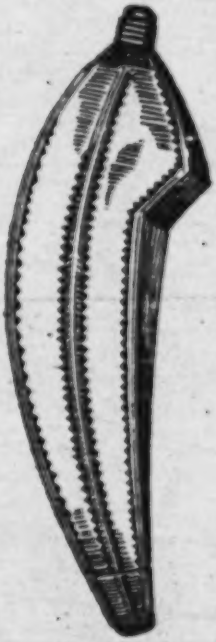

Fig. 83. *Kalarigola* from Borpal
Height 7½"

Fig. 84. *Dudong-gola*. A small tobacco-box 'as round as a girl's breast'
Height 1½"

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Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

In the north-west, in the villages of the remote Partabpur and Paralkot areas, where Hill Maria influence is still strong, the chelik of the Paralkot area distinguished two types of necklace: the cat's foot pattern and the rat's foot. (Compare Figs. 71 and 72.) Some of the motiari here wore necklaces usually characteristic of the Hill Maria, with large white beads, and little bells at the end. I have seen motiari with both breasts exposed in Maria fashion, though others have been very fully dressed in smart red saris. Head-bands are not worn, but boys and girls stick flowers and feathers in their hair. The girls usually have few combs.

One may still see necklaces and head-bands of fibre, either sago or date palm, carefully made (Figs. 87 and 88).

To move north from the Jhoria country is to receive an unforgettable impression of drabness. The bright head-bands disappear: the smart tight bead-collars yield to floppy monotonous necklaces. The beads are big, cheap and red; almost everything is bazaar-purchased. One particularly misses the girls' decorations. The Kalpatti, Surebahi, Antagarh and Amabera are the least colourful of all the ghotul parganas. Contact with Chhattisgarhi Gond has ruined their taste and destroyed their artistic enterprise.

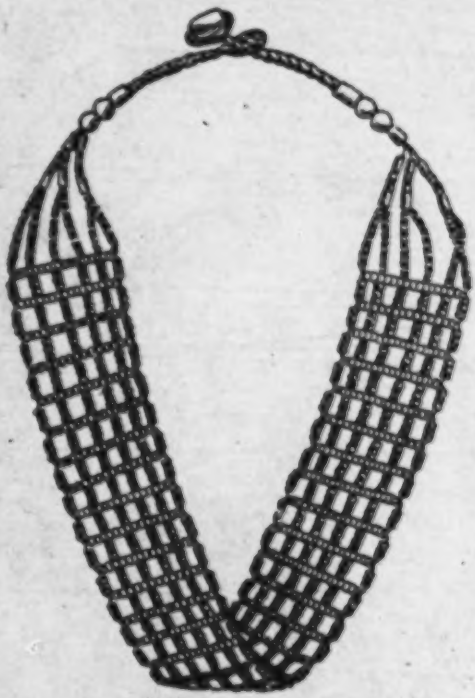


FIG. 85. Jhoria head-band of red, blue and white beads

Round Kondagaon and along the main road, the chelik and motiari have a charm of their own, though there is little in their dress or ornament to emphasise it. Both wear a great many necklaces, of red and white beads, getting the effect from quantity rather than from anything artistic in the design. They distinguish the *gir-gatti*, a necklace of small black beads, *moti-mala*, made of white beads, *jug-jugi*, of red and white beads, *jiti-mungiya*, of red beads, *fasi-mala*, a decorated neck-band and *hari*, a thin black necklace.

Occasionally you will see a solitary head-band; girls often have masses of combs.

In the ears, the motiari wear cheap yellow *hiranu* from the bazaar, or *dhar* shields. The boys have little brass rings in the helix.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

301 The cowrie belt is almost unknown, but the chelik carry strings of cowries, bells, beads and tobacco-pouches at the waist.

In this area, the girls have either floppy brass *pairi* slipping down over the heels, or the thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the ankles.

Finally, in the extreme east of Kondagaon, the chelik recapture something of the aesthetic attractiveness of the Jhoria. Once more elaborate necklaces of small red and blue beads appear; a head-band of cowries and black sago palm fibre is often worn (Fig. 89). The chelik's turban is specially attractive: 291 it is tied straight round into a box with one flap hanging over the top, the other falling behind. The boys themselves attach pretty fringes of pink, mauve and red tassels to these flaps.

For protection against rain, all the Muria make large round hats of leaves placed between a double bamboo framework, and long shields of the same material to hang from their shoulders. In a few villages near the Abujhmar they make the *tarali*-cloak of strips of retted bark characteristic of the Hill Maria.

II. Hair-dressing

302 The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria.
832 You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive.

Care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render
302 to a chelik; it is during the hair-combing in the evening that friendships become
515 intimate and proposals are made; wherever she is, in camp for a marriage or festival, resting in the heat of the day while working on the roads, or just
524 sitting in the house, a girl takes any chance she can of cleaning a boy's head, and examining it for lice, 'the thousand babies housed in a dry tree', 'the black cows that live in the thick forest, bothering everyone and drinking red water', 'the tigers that breed so quickly in the jungle'. She catches them with the end of her comb, or with her fingers, and kills them with thumb and forefinger. 'Ten went to hunt', says the riddle, 'but two did the killing.'

302 The chelik keep their hair fairly long. A straight fringe is cut across the forehead, and from the parting above it the hair is brushed back and tied in a bun usually covered by the turban. Some of the Muria living under the shadow of the Abujhmar follow the Hill Maria custom of shaving the whole head except for a patch on the crown which is carefully combed back and tied in a knot.

The chelik cut and trim their hair once every month or so, when the motiari who comb it tell them to. They cut and shave each other's heads with small razors made by the village Lohar. The motiari keep their boys closely shaven as to their chins, but they seem to like a good moustache. There is no other reason for shaving: the Muria, except those who have begun to imitate Hindu customs, do not shave at funerals or other religious occasions.

Girls do not cut their hair. They part it down the centre, and very carefully smooth it down and back. Behind the head they wind it over the small wooden blocks called *kunjar balla* (Fig. 91) which are carved for them by the chelik, and tuck it in underneath, fixing it in place with the *kunjar koto*, beautifully made wooden pins (Fig. 90)—also the gifts of chelik—to which are often attached bunches of cowries, coloured wool or strings of beads.

Both boys and girls treat their hair with oil, generally oil specially expressed by a motiari, a mother or sister. Many Muria now carry little bazaar mirrors which they constantly use.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Jhoria have the most elaborate hair-ornaments. Bands of beads (Fig. 85) are made by the motiari with great art and taste, and are worn round

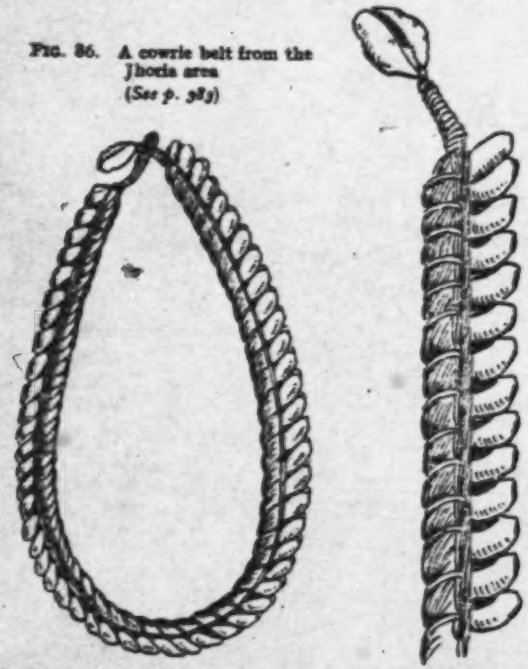


FIG. 86. A cowrie belt from the Jhoria area
(See p. 383)

the head by both boys and girls. Thick bands of blue, white and red beads, or three narrower bands, give the children a distinctive and delightful appearance. Sometimes long strings of beads are also wound over and round the turban. Boys and girls alike delight to stick feathers in their hair—feathers of junglecock, peacock, the racket-tailed drongo. Girls often wear tufts of the sago or date palms and any flowers that may be available; they have a special affection for the marigold, which is 'the most beautiful of flowers', and the crimson velvety *siliyāri*.

The motiari in the Jhoria country tie great masses of cowries over the bun into which their hair is tied, mixing them with balls of red, green and blue wool.

There is a pretty game called Atoi-mal-mal Karsana in which the girls stand in a half-circle singing 'Make my hair soft and *mal-mal*'. Each girl in turn goes round the circle smoothing and parting the hair of her fellows.

In the east of the State, in the villages round Ulera, I found many boys using hair-retainers (Fig. 92) made out of old umbrella ribs by the local Muria Lohar.

But, of course, the chief hair-ornament is the comb, a subject of such importance that I describe it in a separate section.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Betle marrāte pungār puy ānia

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

[1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The bearers lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'

[2] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 27f.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAI* 45 (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 396ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poesy* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, op. cit., p. 180.

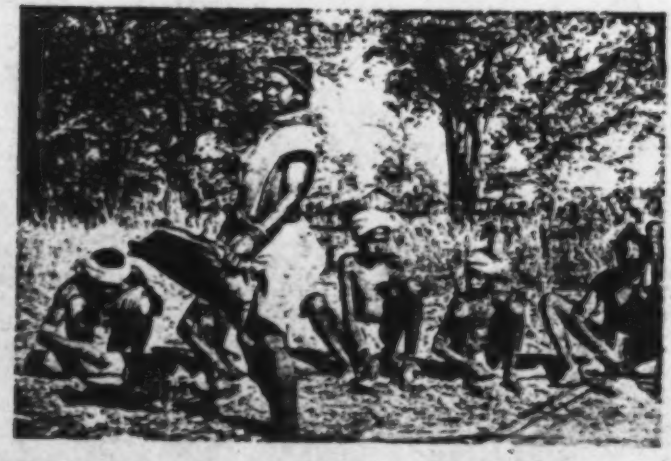
[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Muduvar.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—Ibid., Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, op. cit., p. 47.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
516
291
264

At Kongera a motiari passes on her drink to a chelik

Motiari serving food to the chelik at Nayanar



2. Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
264
415
291
381

Plate LXXVIII

A motiari serves the boys

The ghotul Kotwar, son of Nari, serving food at Nayanar

[p. 388 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

[301]

FIG. 87. Head-band of sago palm fibre from Malakot (*see p. 383*)
Length 23"

FIG. 88. Neck-band of date palm fibre from Bayanar (*see p. 385*)
Length 16"

X 883
431
836
412
301

devoted lover. Every comb, however, is a gift. When a girl wants a new one she brings two annas' worth of silver metal from the bazaar and that

[301]

DETAIL

FIG. 89. Cowrie head-band from Ulera. The cowries are attached to a cord made of carefully woven sago palm fibre
(*See p. 385*)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

night goes to comb the hair of the boy from whom she desires a present. She does his hair with special care and whispers in his ear, 'Look, boy, I have brought some silver, make me a nice comb'. The boy says, 'I don't know how to'. The girl says, 'But of course you know'. Then the boy says, 'Well, what will you give me? Will you....?' The girl says, 'Never', meaning 'Yes', and the boy makes the comb.

In well-disciplined ghotul a boy cannot give a comb to a motiari without the permission of the Kotwar; sometimes it has actually to pass through the Kotwar's hands. For such a gift seems to be regarded as a very definite and important step in the love relations between a boy and girl, and it is considered necessary by the ghotul authorities to keep a check on such intimacies in case there is any scandal or trouble. To this witness some lines in a Paskna Pata from Bandopal:

> Where did you get a comb like that?
> You got it from the embrace of a chelik.
> One comb for once, two combs for twice.

If a comb is lost or broken, the chelik must make a new one. Otherwise his motiari says, 'How can I comb his hair?' If the Kotwar hears about it, he orders the boy to make one, and he does so at once.

Most combs are made of mahua or karraha wood. Implements used in their manufacture are a small saw, ¾" broad and 6" long, rather like a fret-saw; a *kadri* knife; a *hujji* chisel and a *tatti* adze.

The Kotwar of the Phunder ghotul made a comb for me. He took a piece of mahua wood 2' long and 3" broad, supported one end on a bit of wood and gradually planed down one end, first with the adze and then with his knife. He stood it on end and trimmed the top; then with the saw cut a number of slits 1" deep, measuring them with a twig to ensure that they were even He cut them again and again to enlarge the slits, leaving on either side of the wood a space uncut.

Now another boy came and held the wood firmly, and the Kotwar cut off 1½" from the top with his saw, first cutting half through on one side, then turning the wood over and doing it from the other. Finally he broke the piece off and trimmed it with his knife. So far the process had taken half an hour, but the small piece of wood had taken shape as a comb. The boy now spent fifteen minutes shaping the sides, then with his chisel he enlarged the slits again and carefully cleaned the apertures between the spikes. After this, he held the comb in the hollow of his left hand and grasping the chisel firmly in the right and pressing it down hard began to decorate the comb with various patterns. By the time he had finished, he had spent two-and-a-half hours on the work, the greater part of the time being spent on the decoration.

The next morning the Kotwar went to a wild fig tree to extract its sticky, milky gum. He struck a branch with the blunt end of his axe and caught some drops of gum in a leaf-cup. He brought this back and sat down by a fire. He spread the gum on either side of the comb with a bit of straw, warmed it on the fire, applied more gum, laid the silver paper over it and rubbed it in hard with the handle of his chisel till the pattern showed. He repeated the process on the opposite side toasting the comb before the fire by sticking it on the end of his chisel. Finally he brought out the pattern clearly by pressing in the silver paper with his own finger-nails, and washed it with a straw dipped in water.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

In some villages of the Bomra Parguna, if a comb falls down, it must be left where it is for a whole day. No one else may pick it up, and the owner should say nothing to anybody.

FIG. 90. Wooden hair-pins from the Jhoria area
Longest pin 4½"
(See p. 386)

In most places, there is a rule that when a motiari marries she should remove her combs within a certain time. Naturally if she has a dozen or more in her hair, the presents of a ghotul lover, it is only proper for her to return them to him when she marries someone else. But suppose it was her own husband who gave them to her, or another girl? Then she continues to wear them. It is not safe to say that a girl with combs is a motiari, one without combs a wife. I have seen women with three children wearing them. But usually the smart silvered ones are removed within a year of marriage.[1]

IV. CLEANLINESS

The Muria are, on the whole, a clean and tidy people. The chelik and motiari especially are devoted to their toilet, wash their clothes frequently,

[1] The Lakher and Lushai share the Muria objection to other people using their combs. 'They fear that if a man who is subject to headaches or who has a vampire soul uses another's comb', the owner may suffer in the same way.—Parry, op. cit., p. 34.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

515 bathe daily, and keep their hair in beautiful condition. They have to—they are always on duty.

Both boys and girls bathe naked. A party of motiari goes to a stream, and when they are sure they are alone, they remove their little wraps and plunge into the water. They rub their limbs and bodies with mud, shake out their hair, rub in handfuls of mud, rinse it again and again. They have nothing corresponding to towels, so they sit in the sun to dry.

If, however, they have to bathe in some more public place such as a well or tank, they first wash legs, arms and face. Then the girl removes the upper covering of her body and tucks it between her legs or wraps it round her waist, and washes back and breasts in a way that does not wet her cloth.

Chelik usually bathe naked, even when there are other people about.

For washing at home, there are often hollowed-out trunks set up on a couple of supports with a run-away out through the wall of the house to some favourite tree such as a sago palm. A wife pours water over her husband's hands and feet, and often over his whole body. A common method of washing is to fill a long-handled gourd with water, tuck it under the chin and tip out the water over the hands which are thus free to be rubbed together.

There are gaps in the general tradition of cleanliness. No one seems to think it necessary to bathe after sexual intercourse. For the chelik and motiari this would, of course, compel them to admit that they had had it. The following lines are sarcastic: they are a fragment of a taunt song used during a marriage.

Your son is bathing in water,
At the hour of Raja Karan.[1]
Your daughter is bathing in water,
When intercourse is over.

The Muria do not usually wash their hands before food, though they do sometimes. They do not wash after defecation. Old women are often very dirty, as well they might be considering the hard toil that is put upon them. It takes time to go down to a stream to bathe; it needs strength and energy to bring water for a bath; an old widow rarely has either. And so we have many sayings from unsympathetic neighbours scorning these poor and simple people. 'A Muria woman never husks more rice than for a single meal and never covers her bottom which is always thick with dirt.' 'A Muria may be rich as a Raja, but he will always be dirty as a pig.'

Such dirt as there is may usually be traced to poverty, a poverty not infrequently due to the exactions and exploitation of the Muria's critics. It is true that both men and women dirty their buttocks by sitting on the ground—they tuck up their scanty clothes to save them from being worn out. So too if the cloth is dirty, it is because frequent washing will shorten its life—and then who will provide another? The well-to-do Indian or European critic, with servants to bring him water for his hands before a meal, does not always remember that when you have to bring water from a distant stream with your own hands, you tend to use it with more economy.

Yet in spite of poverty, in spite of a generally indifferent water-supply, in spite of a complete lack of toilet accessories (how many English women would keep as smart and fresh as a motiari without one of those aids to nature on which they so greatly rely?), the Muria keep themselves and their houses clean and pleasant enough.

[1] Raja Karan is a legendary king who had a passion for cleanliness.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria wash their houses with a solution of cow-dung and water. When this has dried they apply a whitewash of clean mud from the jungle. A good

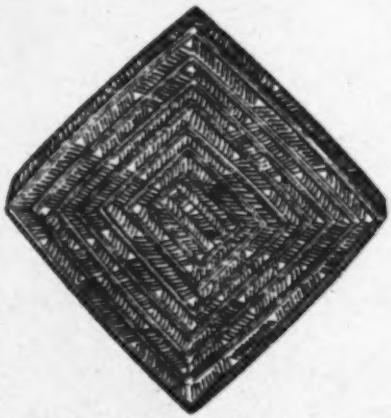


FIG. 91. Carved wooden blocks from Markabera used by the motiari as supports for their hair
(See p. 386)
Two-thirds actual size

housewife should do this every day. The motiari must keep the ghotul spotlessly clean—'This is how she learns to keep her husband's house clean when she leaves us', explained the boys at Berma.

Chelik and motiari wash their clothes frequently, almost as often as they bathe; the older people, naturally less concerned about their personal appearance, more anxious about economy, wash them less. The clothes are put in a pot with the ash of saja, dhaura, sesamum, siari-creeper or rice-chaff, and are boiled. When ready the pot is carried to the river, the clothes removed and washed by being beaten with the hands on a stone and rinsed again and again in the water. The clothes of a woman in her period, and especially her pubic cloth, are boiled on the river bank. At Temrugaon I saw many empty pots lying on the bank and even floating in the pools which were used for this purpose, for they cannot of course be taken back to the house.

FIG. 92. Boys' hair-retainer made by a local blacksmith out of the ribs of an old umbrella
(See p. 387)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

514 For defecation, the Muria go into the fields or jungle. Their villages are always clean of human excreta; if a child relieves itself in the house, the mother immediately cleans the place and sprinkles ash over it. One of the instructions given by Lingo in the first ghotul was that the boys and girls should never relieve themselves on the paths. Moreover since they do not wash themselves with water after defecation, the banks of streams or rivers are usually clean—in striking contrast to the horrible condition of streams near many a more 'advanced' village.

[824] After defecation the Muria clean themselves with leaves, but they do not use siari, saja, char, sarai, tendu or karmata leaves for this. The saja is, of course, sacred; the tendu also is connected with Lingo. Sarai, karmata and siari leaves are used as leaf-plates.

A strict rule against urinating in the ghotul greatly helps to preserve its cleanliness and freshness. The rule is not, however, universal. In a few ghotul there are little holes in the wall down near the floor which are used as urinals. In others, though the children are not allowed to urinate inside the building, they may do so against the fence. Generally both boys and girls [534] stand to urinate—a fact which gives point to the riddle: 'Shoot the arrow with all your might, yet it still falls beneath your feet.'[1]

V. Tobacco

276 In many ghotul, the distribution of tobacco is an important part of the evening ritual. As the girls go round for Johar, the Belosa and her assistant *883 put a few pinches of finely-powdered tobacco into the chelik's hands. One of the boys has the special duty of seeing that there is a proper supply and that the girls prepare it daily.

The legendary origin of tobacco is described in a story from Kachora.

> Long ago a party of Muria went to visit the Maharaja during Dassera. On their way they came to a spot where a barren woman had been cremated. This woman had been very beautiful, but no one cared for her—for who goes to a withered tree for shelter from the sun? She complained to Nandraj and he said, 'Though they take no notice of you now, once you are dead they won't be able to get on without you.' So after her death, a beautiful plant sprung from her ashes.
>
> One of the party went to relieve himself and saw the plant. He picked a leaf and began to chew it. He found it sweet and distributed it to the others. On his way home, he went to get more leaves, but found the plant had dried. So he took the seeds and planted them in his garden. When the leaves were ready he chewed them and felt a little drunk. The feeling was so pleasant that whenever he had no leaves in his mouth he longed for them. This is why tobacco is called *surti* [after the Chhattisgarhi word *surta*, longing or remembrance].
>
> Every morning tobacco plants give off a sort of smoke because of the dew that settles on the leaves during the night. So the tobacco used in a leaf-pipe is called *dungya*, or smoke.[2]

The chelik, and still more their elders, suffer to the full this *surta*, or longing for tobacco, which they either chew or smoke in small tightly rolled leaf-

[1] The Muria ghotul is generally much less odorous than the Uraon *dhumkuria* I visited. A writer has described the inner room of the Ao Naga *morung* which is used as a urinal as 'emitting such an obnoxious smell that it makes even the second room unfit for entrance'.—S. N. Majumdar, 'The Ao Nagas', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 53.

[2] Cf. the Kond story on p. 308.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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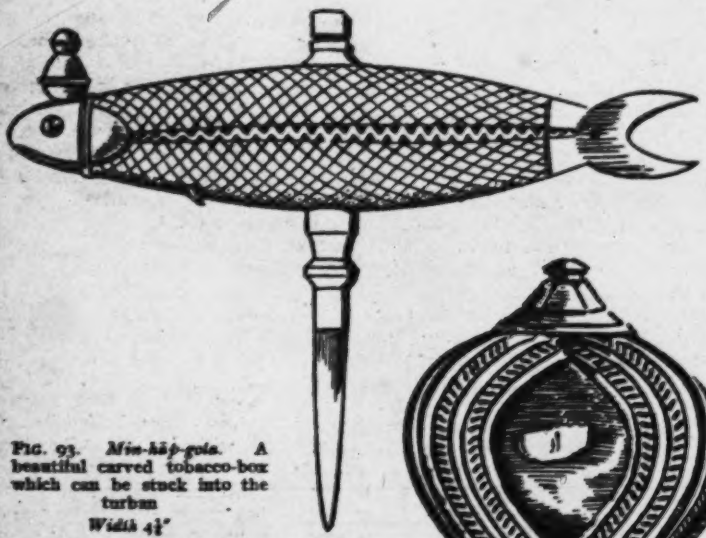

FIG. 93. *Min-hāṛ-gola.* A beautiful carved tobacco-box which can be stuck into the turban
Width 4½"

[831]

FIG. 94. *Puda-gola*, with an obvious representation of the vagina
Height 3½"

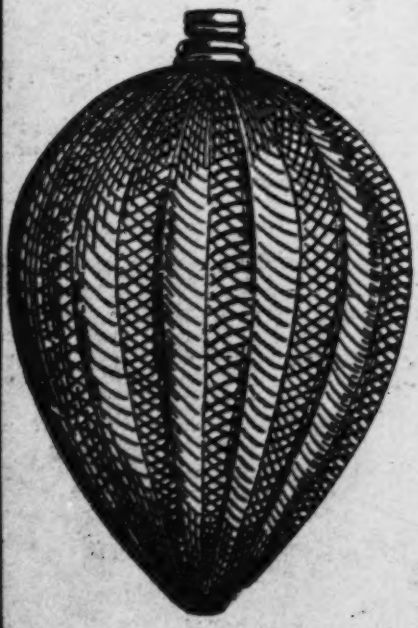

FIG. 95. Tobacco-box from Penjori decorated with carvings supposed to represent the bones of the *min* fish
Height 4½"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pipes. These are lit with little bits of glowing coal picked from the fire, and when half-smoked or not in use are generally kept tucked into the turban or hidden in a hole in the ghotul wall.

But the chelik do not rely only on the tobacco supplied them in the ghotul. Any enterprising boy has tucked into his loin-cloth or hanging (sometimes with a bunch of bells or cowries) at his waist a specially-made tobacco-pouch. These *gota* are, as a glance at the illustrations in Figs. 82-4, 93-5, 99, 103-4, and 109-14 will show, elaborate and varied. They are of every size and shape. One is like a fish, another carved like a wheel, a third resembles a mango. Some are of garud, moda or korsya wood, others are cut from the kernel of a fruit, a few are of brass. The stoppers are fitted tightly with a little lac. Some are covered with the testes of a goat or sambhar. Most are elaborately carved.

Many of the *gota*-pouches are named. There is the *dudong-gota*, round as a girl's breast; the *chakka-gota* (Fig. 77), a beautifully carved wheel; the *hemul*, or tortoise pouch (Fig. 79) with its elaborate designs; the charming *marka-batta-gota* (Fig. 112) shaped like a mango; the *kalāri-gota* (Fig. 83); the *min-hāp-gota*, with its decoration of fish bones; the *tumur-gota*, whose carving resembles the flowers of the ebony tree; the *girne* or lizard *gota* (Fig. 82); and the *damera-āching-singār gota* (Fig. 110) with its elaborate silver decorations. Some of the *gota* have a deliberately sexual purpose; the *pude-gota* (Figs. 94 and 99) has small representations of the vagina carved on it and the *dudo-muri* (Fig. 101) has marks that are supposed to resemble the pimples round the nipples of a woman's breast. The chelik show these to girls to excite them. But, indeed, as I show in another chapter, to ask for tobacco is itself a polite way of asking a girl for sexual congress.

The Muria grow tobacco in specially fenced gardens near their houses and sometimes in enclosures made on the banks of stream or river. When it is ready, it is cut and allowed to dry in the garden. Then it is placed between layers of kodon straw 'which turns it red in a few days'. After this it is dried again, this time on the roof of the house, and finally tied up in bundles with home-made string.

VI. The Sleeping-mat

The *gik* or *masni*-mat is an important piece of ghotul furniture. When a boy joins the ghotul for the first time he is expected to bring a mat which is usually made for him by his mother or an aunt. Later on, especially in the *jodiār* ghotul, a girl ought always to make a mat for her special chelik, but elsewhere the mats seem to be made by a boy's mother, sister or some other female relative. At a marriage a new mat is usually presented to the bridegroom.

The mat is not difficult to make. A rectangle is marked out and pegs driven into the ground at its four corners. Bits of bamboo are tied between the pegs at opposite ends of the rectangle and a dozen or more strings of hemp or grass are tied from one end to the other so as to form the warp. Before they are attached, they are threaded through the holes of the *āch*, a wooden instrument illustrated in Fig. 96 which is used to beat the grass into place. The woman sits down with the *āch* before her and threads bits of reed or grass over and under the strings. After she has threaded two or three she sprinkles them with water and pulls the *āch* sharply towards her several times, thus pressing the grass into position. This is done over and over again until finally the mat is complete.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

X 863
302

ABOVE: The Beloa combs the hair of the senior Kotwar at Nayanar

BELOW: The Aloa massages the junior Kotwar at Nayanar

[p. 396 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXX

X
883
291
142
301

The Malko of the Koilibera ghotul

[P.396(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

These mats are kept at home and boys or girls bring them rolled up under their arms at night to the ghotul. In some villages this is the special duty of the girls. When they arrive they go round saluting the boys and presenting them with their mats. This is known as *Masni-johar*.

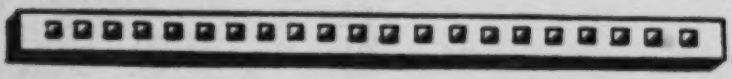

FIG. 96. The wooden ārā used for making a *masni*-mat
Length 9' 10"

The mat is very definitely a sexual symbol and many ribald jokes are connected with it. The new mat given to a bridegroom at his marriage is generally smeared with oil 'to make it slippery'. Once when I was sitting down in the village of Amgaon a chelik brought me a *masni* but an old man said, 'Don't sit on it, it is covered with semen', and everyone thought it very amusing. It is supposed to be a great honour to be given a mat by the chelik, probably just because it is a symbol of so much excitement and romance.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

I

'We obey our ghotul laws more faithfully than the laws of Government; for we ourselves made the ghotul laws, and so we love them.'

—Common Muria saying

X 883
867

THE life of the chelik and motiari is strictly regulated, and when a leader is appointed one of the powers with which he is entrusted is that of judging and punishing offenders against the ghotul code. It is surprising how important a place these punishments hold in the minds of the

[301
412
531]

FIG. 97. Comb from Palari. The two horns are of bees-wax
Width 2½"

[276]

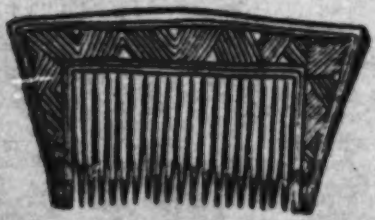

FIG. 98. Comb from Antagarh
Width 5"

FIG. 99. The Pushpin
Actual size

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

children. When they are initiated, the little boys are told—'You must come every day, or you'll be punished'. The girls are likewise told—'You must

FIG. 100. Tobacco pounder
Length 18"

come every day, or you'll be punished. You must massage the chelik, or you'll be punished.' And when a girl leaves the ghotul at marriage, her

FIG. 101. The *Dudu-muri-gota*
Height 4"

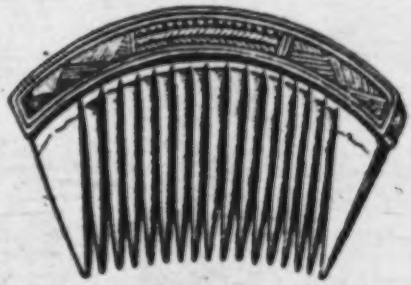

FIG. 102. A Jhoria comb from Markabera
Width 3½"

most tender memories, as revealed in the farewell songs, seem to be connected with punishments. *'Dudhāv gai ke lāl mithai*—The cow that gives milk:

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

even her kicks are sweet.' A study of ghotul offences and the type of punishment awarded, therefore, may be expected to throw some light on Muria notions of morality and the inner life of chelik and motiari.

Their offences, of course, cannot be understood properly except against the background of the general moral and social life of the tribe. To the Muria, as to most aboriginals, tribal solidarity is the supreme good, and anything that breaks this precious unity and fellowship must be condemned. Individualism is the great sin. For this reason, quarrelling and homicide are rare, theft is almost as uncommon. There are few who refuse to share the common work and interests of the community. Adultery is bad, not only because it infringes the rights of another Muria, but because it breaks up the carefully regulated domestic system of the people, and threatens to disrupt it by jealousy and hatred.

We have already seen the stress laid by the Muria on work. Slackness and laziness are very severely regarded, and are the commonest sources of friction between wife and husband. Cleanliness, decency, decorum and modesty are virtues much prized. A quiet and kindly attitude is expected of the tribal leaders; the bully and the coward are equally disliked.

Against this background, what sort of actions are condemned by ghotul opinion and punishable in ghotul law? Let us first consider those actions that are held to betray the common interest. They are doubly important, for in the highly specialized and concentrated fellowship of the ghotul, the general tribal instinct for unity becomes intensified.

II

Quarrels in the dormitory are strongly condemned. They are disturbing to the peace of ghotul life and specially offensive to so gentle and uncontentious a people. Children are fined for this, and may even be expelled. In Khutgaon there was once a very quarrelsome chelik. After a time, the leaders of the ghotul called him and said, 'Do you want to be in the ghotul or outside it?' The dreaded threat of expulsion brought him to his senses and he gave no more trouble.

The betrayal of the ghotul fellowship by repeating outside anything that happens within its walls, especially any stories of the intimate relations of chelik and motiari or some scandal about a pregnancy, is one of the greatest of ghotul crimes, for 'that which comes from the mouth bears fruit throughout the world'. Once at Gorma, the Kotwar and Belosa revealed to the village that a girl was pregnant; they were expelled and told that they would never be readmitted. Only when they brought a lot of liquor and fell at the feet of each chelik in turn, promising never to offend again, were they allowed to return.

Ghotul solidarity is constantly emphasized by the use of the ghotul title, and proper names may never be used between members. If a young child forgets this and addresses, say, his elder brother by the name that is always used at home, the others explain the custom to him; but if he offends again, he is punished.

The dormitory has to be kept clean. Though spitting is permitted, anyone who urinates inside the building is punished. This prohibition extends, in some places, to the court outside. To break wind is not a very serious offence; the children laugh at the offenders and call them *pudva* or *pudvi*. Only a light punishment is imposed. At Esalnar the culprit had to salute

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

every boy in turn saying, 'Johar, *mahārāj*, I have farted'. An interesting rule prohibits the other boys and girls from laughing at the offender too much. The name *padva* may be used three times but not more; anyone who carries the joke too far is fined.

FIG. 103. A brass tobacco-box made by the local Ghasia
Actual size

A bed-wetter is punished with the *khotla-pahava* described below; if incurable, he may be expelled.

Most ghotul are actually kept beautifully clean; occasional lapses are severely penalized. It is the special duty of the girls to sweep and cow-dung the building, but often the Kotwar in charge of them is punished instead. At Kabonga, when the Diwan found that the ashes of the previous day's fires had not been cleared away, he reported the matter to the Inspector who called the Kotwar and threw ash all over him. The Kotwar insisted that it was the girls' fault, not his, and so the girls were called and ash was thrown over them and pushed into their private parts. At Kokori also, two girls were tied to the roof by their feet and ashes put into their vaginae. 'As you've let the ghotul be dirty, we are making your privates dirty', said the boys.

It is generally the chelik who have to see to the surroundings of the ghotul. At Palari in 1941, the Munshi, Sipahi and Likasdar were told to clear a space in front of the building for a dance, but they failed to do so. They were hung together from the roof until they begged forgiveness and promised to do the work at once. The younger boys are often punished for failing to bring their daily tribute of wood—a task they all dislike. In the Jamkot

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
867
861

ghotul there was a boy called Antar (from a hunter-whip) who had the duty of 'whipping' boys who failed in this task.

Chelik and motiari are insistent that everyone must take an equal share (though not always the same share) in the common labour and common recreations. Failure to attend the ghotul regularly is punished; an absence of two or three days, unless there is a very good excuse, means a fine. It is specially bad for the motiari to absent themselves. This is regarded as a really serious offence, an infringement of the chelik's rights, a breach of ghotul fellowship; it raises the suspicion that the girl is having an affair with a married man or a member of another caste. On the other hand, if a girl enters the ghotul during her menstrual period she must provide liquor and perhaps a more substantial sacrifice to appease Lingo Pen whom she has offended.

A girl's conduct is controlled when she visits another village. She may go to the ghotul to dance and even perhaps massage and comb the boys but she is expected to return home before bedtime. If she does not, and the boys of her own ghotul discover that she has betrayed them, they punish her with a heavy fine.

The motiari are often obstinate and troublesome—at least in male opinion—and have to be disciplined. Sometimes they get sulky and refuse to join the games and dances; the Jularo of Sarandi was fined an anna for failing to attend a dance. Sometimes they refuse 'to let a boy play with them on the ground'; sometimes they fail to comb or massage properly. At Kajen the ghotul Kotwar reports every Tuesday whether any of the girls have lost their combs, or have refused to do the chelik's hair.

It is regarded as very offensive for a chelik to force a girl against her will: in Markabera a chelik once forced the Alosa, who was the ghotul-wife of another boy, and was fined as much as two rupees. But if a girl refuses—once she is mature—to have intercourse with at least one of the chelik, there is consternation, and if she persists, both boys and girls may refuse to attend her wedding.

Boys also may be punished for failing to fulfil their social obligations. At Palari, the Baidar and Dafedar refused, on account of some private spite, to attend the Captain's marriage and each was fined four annas. At Gorma the headman's son, who went to school and learnt there to despise the ghotul and its ways, found when the day of his marriage approached that the boys and girls would not attend it. 'All these years', they said, 'you have despised us. You have not joined our dances or helped us in our work. Now you can get married without us.' The boy had to dress in all the Muria ornaments, change his little cap for a turban, and sleep in the ghotul for a week before he was forgiven.

III

Ghotul officers who fail to perform their duties are punished. No one is privileged and no one is exempt. This is an important point. Were an older man, like the Diwan of Masora who still holds office at the age of forty, to try to protect his own son or daughter, he would himself be fined even though he was the leader and a final court of appeal in all disputes. If the head of the chelik tried to protect his own special motiari or his ghotul-wife, he might be turned out of office. Bindo had no hesitation in punishing the Dulosa, who was his lover, for failing to clean the ghotul.

Mangru of Masora told us how when he was Pahardar it was his duty to punish people. But he could never bring himself to do it, so he himself was punished. His legs were tied to the roof and he had to hang there while boys and girls sang one Relo song. A former Chalki of the Jamkot ghotul

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

was similarly punished for failing in his duty to make the chelik and motiari work at a wedding. As a boy Bindo punished the ghotul Kotwar for disobeying his orders to fetch the motiari in the evening; fifty years afterwards he still remembers the incident with satisfaction.

When the head of the ghotul is penalized, it is a convention in some ghotul that the motiari should beg to be punished in his stead. This happened at Chandabera when I was there, and the Sirdar was fined for not making proper arrangements for his visitors. The girls implored to be allowed to suffer for him.

FIG. 104. A sun and moon tobacco-box
Height 2½"

FIG. 105. Boy's necklace, from Kajen, of cowries strung together with red and 'silver' beads

Should the head of the ghotul turn out a bully or a slacker, the chelik and motiari take the help of the village headman and remove him. This does not happen very often because there is plenty of time to test a boy before he is appointed. But it is not always possible to judge how far power is likely to corrupt character, and scandals do occur. I have recorded a number of cases from the history of the last few years. In Mannegaon, the Leyur-Gaita was removed for bullying and abusing the children. The Malik of Esalnar was once degraded for bullying. The Kotwar of the Berma ghotul a few years ago got very much above himself and used 'to punish for four hours instead of one' until the members rebelled. They fined him a rupee, deprived him of office, made him a 'subject' with the name of Silledar, and appointed the Kandki in his place. Recently in Kehalakot the Kotwar gave so much trouble to the girls that he was fined eight annas and removed.

Laziness also disqualifies a boy from holding high office. In Atargaon the Manjhi was dismissed 'for not working properly'. The Kokori Chalki was degraded to the rank of Kotwar for laziness and the Kotwar was appointed

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in his place. The Belosa of Berma was removed because she was too slack to control the girls.

I have only once heard of a boy being removed from office for abusing his sexual privileges. In Sonawal the Diwan seduced another chelik's 'wife'. The others fined him, but he refused to pay, saying, 'I am your master, I am not going to pay a fine to my "subjects"'. He and his own wife, the Diwanin, or head of the girls, were both degraded and made 'subjects'.

IV

We now turn to breaches of the sexual conventions of the ghotul. Here, according to the type of ghotul, two opposite types of offence are recognized.

In those ghotul where there is a rule against 'pairing off', boys and girls are punished if they sleep together too often. The Subedar and Silo of the Binjhli ghotul were fined four annas each for sleeping together every day. In these ghotul too it is considered very bad form for a boy to be 'possessive' about a girl, to be jealous over her and claim her as his. 'We must change every two or four days, or we are fined.'

But in the other type of ghotul, boys and girls are fined for committing what may be called 'ghotul adultery'. A case of this has already been described in Chapter XI. If a chelik sleeps with another boy's motiari during her 'husband's' absence, he is fined. If the Kotwar 'finds the cloth of a girl' who is not the boy's 'mate' on his mat, he reports the matter and the boy is punished.

In villages where there are separate ghotul for boys and girls, they may be fined for visiting one another on days when this is taboo. In Lihagaon, where there were separate dormitories for boys and girls, some years ago the Likhen of the boys was Lamhada to the Mularo of the girls. One night she came to the boys' ghotul and slept with him—a double impropriety since engaged couples are not supposed to sleep together in the ghotul. He was fined a rupee by the chelik, but refused to pay, and on the third day ran away with the girl whom he had already made pregnant. They were brought back and fined two rupees. This time they paid up, and the ghotul members agreed to the marriage and said they would attend it.

With all the freedom of the ghotul, there is a strict insistence on decorum and modesty. It is remarkable that at weddings when the older women and men behave with a complete lack of restraint, abusing each other and catching hold of each other in the most obscene manner, the motiari are never molested. The chelik are sometimes punished for showing an indecent interest in the girls even in the ghotul. Once at Palari the girls were dancing the Durpa Dandi, or Lotus Stalk Dance, when each girl rests one leg on her neighbour's waist. It is considered a rather risky dance and the girls rarely perform it in public. The Kandki of the ghotul sat down near the dancers and tried to peep up in a rather unpleasant manner. The girls stopped dancing and took him inside the ghotul. 'What were you sitting down for?' 'Nothing.' 'You wanted to look at us, you dirty little beast, so we're going to punish you.' They tied his hands together and bound them to the roof for fifteen minutes. When he was released, he had to salute each of the girls in turn and beg forgiveness.

V

How does the machinery of ghotul justice work? How are its punishments inflicted? I will give one or two actual examples before proceeding to tabulate the penalties.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A N32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

883 X
861

In the first week of November, 1940, the older boys of the Masora ghotul were away watching the field-crops and the Chalan was in charge. For several

[411]

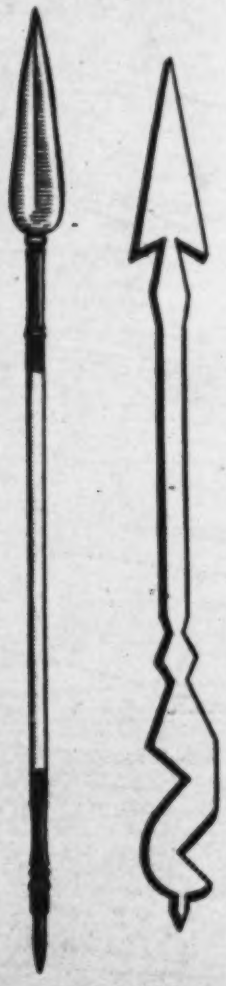

FIG. 106. The ghotul Kotwar's wooden spears
Lengths 6' 1" and 5' 1"

FIG. 107. Iron spears used by the chaiik in hunting
Lengths 6' 6" and 5' 5"

days five of the girls—Belosa, Tiloka, Piosa, Janka and Alosa—had reported to him that they too were going to watch the crops. Actually, however, they went to sleep at home. Probably they found the ghotul dull without

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 861

the bigger boys; possibly they simply wanted a rest. On 4 November the Kamdar who, in the absence of the older boys, was attending to the girls' behaviour, reported to the Sipahi (ghotul 'policeman') his suspicion that the girls were deceiving them. That night they watched and found their belief well founded. They returned to the ghotul and told the Chalan. The Chalan issued orders that when the girls next came to report, they should be arrested and given the stick-punishment.

The next evening, when the Janka and Piosa came to say they were very sorry but they must go to watch in their fields, the Kamdar and Sipahi stopped them. But the girls abused them violently—'You can drink our urine, but you won't punish us, *mailotia*'—and ran away. When this was reported to the Chalan, he went to consult the Diwan, an older married man who exercised general supervision over this ghotul. The Diwan said, 'Call all the girls tomorrow night, and certainly punish them'.

On the afternoon of the 6th, therefore, the Kamdar went round the village telling all the boys and girls that they must attend, for 'tonight there will be a judgement in the ghotul'. But when the time came, Belosa, Tiloka and Piosa refused to come. The Chalan sent the Kamdar and Sipahi to bring them by force.

When they were at last assembled inside the ghotul—and it is noteworthy that neither the Diwan nor the older boys thought it necessary to attend: they were content to leave it to the juniors—the Chalan asked the Belosa whether it was true that she had been sleeping in her house, and why. She replied, 'There was no wood for the ghotul fire; it was cold; so I slept one night at home'. This retort, which implied that the boys had been failing in their duty of providing wood, and was probably true, was hardly tactful. The Chalan became abusive and pointed out that there was plenty of wood. 'You slept at home every night; you are all sleeping with married men.' Then he examined the other girls, but they refused to answer. At last the Alosa cried, 'It was only one night; all the other nights we were sleeping in the fields'.

No witnesses were called; everyone knew the girls were guilty. The Chalan said, 'What punishment will you have? Choose!' The motiari made no reply, so the Sipahi said, 'Why not make them get up and down a hundred times holding their ears?' 'No', said the Chalan. 'The stick-punishment would be better.' Hearing this, the Belosa broke out, 'Why should you punish us at all? We haven't done anything.' The Chalan replied, 'Well, why didn't you come to the ghotul? Why don't you answer our questions? We'll certainly punish you if you don't speak properly.'

But the girls were still silent, so the boys pushed them out of the ghotul and shut the door. The girls were now really frightened and did not dare to run away. They crouched against the wall in the cold, while the boys discussed their fate round the fire. At last the Chalan said to the Sipahi, 'Bring in those *bāploti*, and give them the stick-punishment'.

So the door was opened and five very subdued girls were brought in. The Chalan asked if they were ready for punishment and they said they were. The Kamdar brought in five thick logs, and put them between their legs, making them squat on the ground, away from the wall, their arms folded. They were sentenced to 'two Relo'. This meant they were to sit like this, and very uncomfortable it is, while the boys sang through two Relo songs. During the second song the Alosa touched the ground with her hand and was immediately slapped and pushed over by one of the boys. The Janka began to cry, and the boys roared with laughter. When the Relo songs were

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Chelik at Bandopal making a kutul head-rest

32v

Chelik at Phunder making a comb

[p. 406 (A)]

Plate LXXXII

306

Motiari at Bandopal making bead necklaces

A woman at Remawand makes a mat

285

[p. 406 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

X983
861

finished, the Chalan asked the girls one by one if they would offend again. When each promised to be good in future, he let her get up. The girl who wept was forgiven last. Each girl had to go round the circle of boys and salute them with a smile. Then said the Chalan, 'That's finished. Now comb our hair and massage us, and we'll go to sleep'.

Less severe treatment was given to the girls at Bandopal, when I was sleeping in the ghotul on 25 April 1941. At about 10 o'clock at night, as the dancing and games came to an end, I was surprised to see all the girls filing out of the courtyard and sitting by the gate. The Manjhi had discovered that the verandah of the main building, where he and the other leaders slept, had not been properly cleaned. He sent for the Belosa and Dulosa and ordered them to take their girls out of the compound. They did so, no one took any notice of them, the boys lay down and slept as usual, and for a time the girls sat quietly outside the gate. Presently a subdued and penitent voice called, 'Silledar, let us come in'. There was no reply. Then very seductively and sweetly, 'Kotwar, do let us come in'. Still no reply. There was a pause, and then two or three girls at once cried, 'Manjhi, let us in and we'll do anything you want'. This went on for half an hour, and then the Manjhi sent the Kotwar with four other boys to interview the girls. The panchayat squatted down on the near side of the gate and there was a long consultation. At last, the girls promised never to neglect their work again and the Kotwar went to report to the Manjhi who was sleeping on the verandah with a few of the senior boys. He told him to bring the girls in. They filed in and went to the Manjhi. He again made them promise to keep the ghotul clean, then forgave them and told them to massage him and the other senior boys as a penance before they went to sleep.

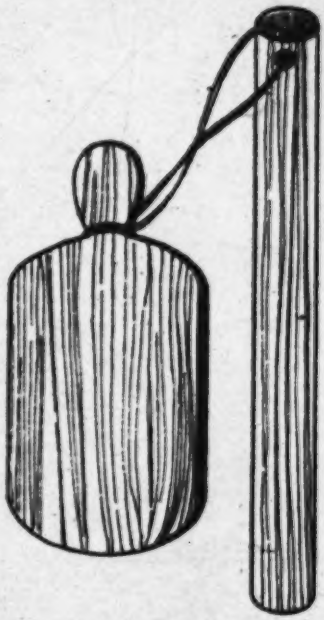

FIG. 108. Toy wooden records used by the Kotwar of the Naria ghotul
Length of upright cylinder 1'

In the Chalka Pargana, in such villages as Kajen, Chimri and Temrugaon, the chelik imitate very closely the ordinary police procedure of the State. The ghotul Kotwar has a wooden spear (Fig. 106) in imitation of the State Kotwar's spear, and a wooden tablet (Fig. 108) which corresponds to the village report-book. It is his duty to report once a week (just as in fact the village watchman reports once a week) to the Inspector of Police, who records the information and if necessary takes it to the Diwan. Fines are paid in pieces of wood or siari seeds, a piece of wood representing a rupee. The thing has the semblance of a game but it is taken very seriously, and a fine of fifty 'rupees' means quite a lot of work.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
861

The following incident is typical. At Palari the Jhalko went to Banjora for a week in January 1942 and while she was away the Nirosa and Jhankai stayed away from the ghotul for five days. The Kotwar inquired into the matter, and made his usual report to the Havaldar who in turn referred it to the Inspector. The Inspector went to the Sirdar, the head of the ghotul, and reported that three girls had been absent.

'Have you examined them?' asked the Sirdar. 'What was their excuse?'

'I questioned them, but they had nothing to say.'

The girls were brought before the Sirdar and in cross-examination it came out that Jhankai had a sore place, and Jhalko claimed that she had been away in another village.

'Did you get the Kotwar's permission to go?'

'I asked him, but he didn't say anything. What was I to do? My parents told me to go.'

Witnesses were called to show that Jhalko stayed away for two days more after she had returned.

The Sirdar then pronounced sentence. The Jhalko would get up and down twenty times holding her ears. The Nirosa, who had no excuse at all, would do it eighty times, and the Jhankai fifteen times. This sentence was carried out, but the Nirosa managed to get hers reduced in appeal to ten. 'But I will count very carefully', said the Sirdar.

Afterwards the Sirdar asked the girls, 'Now you've been punished. Was it fair or are you angry with us?' Each of the girls in turn said, 'No, it was perfectly fair; I was guilty'.

On 25 March 1941, one of the boys at Chimri pretended to be a visiting official; he came into the ghotul and complained that it was dirty, there was no wood or fire. He sent for the Kotwar and Manjhi, who came with folded hands, and he abused them, fining them ten 'rupees' each. Another day the Kajen Kotwar reported to the Inspector that he had noticed on a boy's mat a cloth which belonged to a girl who was not his ghotul-wife. The Inspector pretended to write this down in his 'book', and sent the Constable who handcuffed the two lovers with lengths of siari twine and brought them to the Tahsildar. He lectured them and fined them five 'rupees' each. They appealed to the Diwan who enhanced the sentence to twenty-five 'rupees' or bits of green wood.

VI

These examples will be sufficient to show how the machinery of ghotul justice works and which officials are involved. It sounds like a game, but is taken very seriously. We have seen how the Kotwar or other boy with similar duties first discovers and reports an offence. It is investigated by the Thanedar or Inspector, who in turn brings the culprits before the Tahsildar. Finally the leader of the ghotul considers the case, pronounces judgement and inflicts punishment. In those ghotul which have some older man still holding office an appeal may lie to him. There is often a boy whose special duty it is to carry out the sentence.

The punishments inflicted are of some variety. We have already seen the *khotla pahara*, or stick-punishment, in operation. Sometimes the stick is put through both legs and arms and the hands are tied in front. In Kajen it was the Tahsildar's special duty to see that the victims did not support themselves against the wall or ground.

The *povokal werkana* or *pahara oratar* is more severe. Hands and feet are tied and the victim is slung from the roof by his feet, remaining topsy-turvy while the others sing one, two or three Relo songs.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

883X
861

Kaning taliyana is the very common Indian punishment of making someone squat down on the ground and get up and down holding his ears with his

[27b
531]

FIG. 109. Tobacco pouch with bell and tusk ornaments
Height of pouch 3½"

hands. It is difficult, exhausting and undignified. But it is not very painful and it leaves no trace, which probably accounts for its popularity among subordinate officials. In Lihagaon, pebbles were held to the ears while the culprit was pushed up and down twenty-five to fifty times. This was how the Manjhi punished Dursal Rani in the song recorded at p. 608.

At Nanipodar, the chelik connected this punishment with a story of a Raja and a dancing girl of the Mirdangiya caste—whose girls are famous for their wit and beauty.

> There was a Mirdangiya. She danced before a Raja. He was so pleased that he said, 'Ask what you will and I'll give it to you'. She said, 'Spit on the floor and then lick up the mess'. The Raja said, 'How can a Raja do such a thing?' Then the Mirdangiya said, 'Very well then, give me the turban from your head'. He did so and she wore it herself and went away well pleased.

The movements of a girl jumping up and down holding her ears are supposed to resemble the Mirdangiya dancing before the Raja, and the chelik taunt the girls saying, 'Ho re Mirdangiya! Today you've become Mirdangiya'. To which the girls reply, 'We are Kanchnin [good and beautiful] girls. If we were Mirdangiya we would be dancing and you'd have to give us your turbans.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 983
861

The boys laugh and say, 'Then it was the Raja who was punished, now it is the Mirdangiya'.

Nil mandana or *kal nitana pahara* is a simple punishment of expulsion and endurance. A boy or girl is made to stand outside the ghotul fence on one leg with the other leg pressed against it, while the others sing a number of Relo songs.

The *nagil puhana pahara* or plough-penalty is fairly common as a punishment for breaking wind. One chelik pulls the legs of the victim and two push down his shoulders; legs are pushed and shoulders pulled until he is exhausted.

In the *porokal karhana* the culprit is made to spread-eagle himself from the roof and to hang there till permitted to come down.

The *korit pahara* is simply a 'pushing about' punishment. Everybody pushes and smacks and pulls the victim about till he cries for mercy.

In Masora they sometimes tie the culprit's hair to the roof and make him stand like that for so many songs. Sometimes his hands are tied together up to the roof.

It will be noted that these punishments can be described, shall we say, as chronic rather than acute. The sharp, abrupt sting of corporal punishment so familiar to the European schoolboy is unknown. The punishments, in so far as these are physical at all, involve the endurance of discomfort and distributed pain, and above all the loss of dignity. This is perhaps what we would expect of so gentle a people to whom the catastrophic decisiveness of a flogging would appear intolerable. Even the punishments must be associated with something beautiful; they are endured to the sound of music, the rhythmic movements of the Relo songs.

A fine is a very common form of penalty. In the ghotul the fines are almost always interpreted in terms of bits of wood or siari seeds. A fine of ten rupees probably means ten bits of green wood (dry wood is brought by the younger boys in the daily routine), a fine of a hundred means a hundred siari seeds. This type of substitution is not confined to the ghotul. In Bandopal I once saw a root sacrificed instead of the pig the villagers could not afford, and elsewhere I have seen sticks given in place of chickens—sacrificed and treated exactly as if they really were chickens.

The seed-fines are collected until there is enough to invite the whole village to a party. Any monetary fines are usually put in charge of the village headman for safety, and used to buy liquor. The seeds are fried as a relish; liquor is distributed; and it is said that during this party the chelik and motiari recount the history of the fines and penalties of the past year to the amusement and benefit of all.

The most dreaded punishment is expulsion from the ghotul. A foretaste of this is given to very small boys who fail to bring their daily wood, when their elders refuse to accept their Johar in the evening. The little boy goes round the circle saying Johar, but each chelik looks through him and refuses to answer. This soon reduces the child to penitence and he promises never to offend again. If he does, or if the little girls fail to clean the building, they may be sent to sit outside the door for two or three hours. This is regarded as equivalent to excommunication. It is a rather pathetic sight to see a little boy or girl, in the cold winter or the rains, crouching lonely by the door while the others enjoy the warmth and company inside. Occasionally a boy or girl is forbidden to join the ghotul expeditions or go to a marriage. Sometimes members are actually expelled—incurable laziness, obstinate refusal to submit to ghotul discipline, a quarrelsome temperament, the breach of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

301

The turban as box

Girls wearing cowrie head-dress

[p. 410 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

276

Motiari of Palli pounding tobacco in a wooden mortar for the chelik

Plate LXXXIV

534

The Chalan of Jhakri preparing a pitorka drum

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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clan and relationship rules may lead to this extreme penalty. It is indeed extreme, for it means the death of youth, the loss of company and the shame of a wedding without dancers.

[276 531]

PIG. 110. Carved tobacco-box from Nayanar
Actual size

That is, in fact, the final sanction of the ghotul rules—the fear that the chelik and motiari will refuse to attend one's wedding. It is no idle threat; it has been done; it has been still more often threatened, and the parents have had to pay a fine. Once at Jhakri the Piosa failed to do her share of bringing leaves at someone's marriage, and the boys said, 'This girl is too great for us. She evidently likes to be alone. Well, she shall marry alone'. When her marriage day arrived there was a great disturbance and the elders of several villages had to pacify the offended boys. But at last, after her parents had given a gift of liquor, they agreed to assist.

No reader of Chapter V can fail to see the importance of this threat. No wedding can proceed without chelik and motiari. Their absence would mean that on the greatest day of one's life there was drabness, mockery and disgrace. So long as this ultimate sanction remains, the youngsters submit cheerfully to all the penalties, harsh as they may sometimes seem, that the leaders of the ghotul may inflict.[1]

[1] Anyone who thinks the ghotul discipline too hard should read a curious paper by Thurston on 'Corporal Punishment in Vernacular Schools' in India, in which forty-two different manifestations of pedagogic sadism are listed.—*Ethnographic Notes*, pp. 433–40.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

VII

X883
861
171

It may be of interest to compare these penalties with the disciplinary measures taken in other village dormitories. There is a curious account in an old book on the Chittagong Hill Tract by Captain Lewin, who was Deputy Commissioner of this area and seems to have been a man of considerable sympathy and knowledge.

> In the village communities, even as the adults have a recognized head, so also is there a head boy appointed to control the boys of the village. This head of the juvenile community is called the *goung*. I shall give here, as illustration of their village customs, a recital which I heard told at the camp fire one night in the jungles, by one of our policemen of the Palaingtsa clan. He said: 'I was formerly *goung* over the unmarried lads of Hmraphroo village; this was when I was about seventeen years old. At night all who were unmarried, and weaned from their mothers, used to sleep in the *khiong*. One night Ougiyn, and Reyphaw, and Chaindra, came to me and got leave to go and sleep with their sweethearts. The girls were named Aduhbyn, Hlapyn, and Aduhsheay. I remember their names quite well; they are married now, and two of them have children. Our lads went by stealth, of course: if the parents had known it there would have been a row. Next day a little girl told me that Pynhla, another of our lads, who had not got leave to sleep out, had passed the night with her sister. This was quite contrary to rule, and it was therefore determined to punish him. Next day we all went to the Raja's *joom* to help to build his house, and in the evening, when we returned, we made a big fire on the bank of the stream that runs through the village; and I sent and called Pynhla, but he was afraid, and would not come; he stayed in his father's house, and said he had fever. I knew this was only an excuse; so I sent three lads to bring him forcibly, and they went and brought him, although his mother abused them much; but the father and mother could not hurt them, as they were acting by the *goung*'s order. When he came, I called upon him to say why he had slept away from the *khiong* without leave. At first he denied all about it, and then I brought forward the little girl, and he asked her, 'How did you know it was I? It was dark'; and she said, 'The moon shone on your face in the early morning when you opened the door to go away'. When he heard this he saw there was no escape, and he fell at my feet and asked forgiveness; but I fined him three rupees on the spot for the sake of discipline.[1]

In the Uraon *dhumkuria*, as in Bastar, many different punishments are inflicted. In Mandar the boys described the penalty for not keeping the dormitory clean; if any animal or bird dirtied the place they had to make the excrement into little balls with their own hands and throw it away. If a boy wet his bed, they said, the others stuck a pin into the ground and spat on it; the offender had to pick it up with his own teeth. In the middle of the ruined dormitory at Agru I saw a fine stone pillar. Boys who failed to attend the dances were forced to hop round this five times with two bits of bamboo tied tightly to their legs. Fines were also inflicted.

Roy has described the 'slit' in the central pillar of 'some of the *dhumkuria*' and connects it with a fertility ceremony in which the boys insert their 'penile

[1] T. H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India* (London, 1870), pp. 118ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

organs' into a slit in a sal sapling.[1] In *Oraon Religion*[2] he says that this is to be found 'in most *dhumkuria* houses'. He only mentions the name of one village, however, Borhambey. We saw the slit there, but did not find it in any of the other dormitories we visited, nor has W. G. Archer been able to find any trace of the custom elsewhere.

383 V
661
171
[276-531]

FIG. 111. A tortoise tobacco-box
Height 4½"

FIG. 112. *Mavha-batta-gota* or mango tobacco-box
Height 3½"

It is probable that the 'dormitory slit' was chiefly used for punishing refractory boys. According to the *dhangar* who talked to Shamrao Hivale at Mandar, it was used as a punishment for boys who were shy or sulky and refused to join in the communal games and dances. 'A lump of red earth is put on the pillar, and the Mahato stands by with a stick, and hits us on the legs and tells us to push our penis into the earth, and then he pushes us against it again and again till we become red. If a boy is sulky, we bring him at night to the *dubri* (mistress) and we push his penis into the slit until he cries and promises not to offend again. We all hit him and push him to and fro against the pillar till his penis hurts and he cries.'

Discipline in the Naga morung is, as we might expect, more rigorous and the punishments more drastic. 'Among the boys of the village', says Mills,

> there is a certain amount of rough play, and a bumptious or obnoxious youngster is taught his place exactly as he is in an English Public School. He may sit down in the dark and find stinging leaves have been put ready for him. Or a more elaborate punishment may be inflicted which many a mother in England would not approve of for her darling. A plank is laid like a see-saw over a log. One end is weighted down with a wooden pillow. The boy has to jump on the other end and the wooden pillow flies up and hits him on the back of the neck.[3]

There is nothing in Bastar to compare with the Naga bullying, a process by which young boys are hardened to face every kind of danger and difficulty.

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 243.
[2] p. 53.
[3] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 52.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

'Men who are now middle-aged say that when they first entered the *morung* they were very severely disciplined, not to say bullied. They were, for instance, held over the fire and compelled to endure the heat without a cry. Or they were made to show their pluck by being sent alone on a dark night to fetch a bamboo from a certain clump. The boy sent was allowed no torch or weapon, and had to gnaw the bamboo through with his teeth or hack it off with a sharp stone. Or, again, a boy would be sent to leave a torch at some particular spot far away in the jungle and come back alone in the dark without a light. In the morning the older boys would go and see if the burnt remains of the torch were in the proper place. Nowadays boys have an easier time, but a considerable number of duties falls to their lot, and for the first three years a boy's life is very like that of a fag at an English Public School. Boys of the lowest class must keep a supply of torches in the *morung* for travellers passing through the village late in the evening; they have to massage the bigger boys' legs when they come in tired from the fields; they are responsible for the wood and water needed for cooking; they must make pipes and sharpen *daos* for their seniors. In fact, for three years they have to do what they are told, and do it quickly—a most excellent system.'[1]

VIII

Hitherto we have considered only the trivialities of ghotul discipline. The sexual relationships of chelik and motiari give rise to far more serious problems. I discuss the large question of ghotul pregnancies in a separate chapter: here we must consider how far life in the dormitories encourages breach of the clan-laws or leads to incest between near kin.

There are the strictest rules against clan-incest. Do they work? It is not easy to give an answer. That clan-incest is possibly not uncommon may be gathered from such sayings as 'When the door is shut there are no clans, we are only chelik and motiari'; 'Once the door is shut and the fire dies down, all relationships are levelled out'; 'Our tribal rules extend to the border of the sleeping-mat; we watch the youngsters as far as that; what happens inside that country no one knows'. It was the opinion of an educated Muria that the chief danger of the ghotul was that it promoted intimacy between members of the same clan and even exposed near relatives to unnecessary temptation.

It is impossible to say. Even if I filled pages with village gossip it would prove nothing. Only an exact statistical inquiry could answer the question whether the Muria chelik was prone to incest or no. And that could never be obtained. But certain things may be affirmed.

At first sight, considerable freedom appears to be allowed. A motiari may comb the hair of a boy of her own clan, and may massage him. Even a close relation like an 'own sister' may do this. In Kabonga the Muria said that girls and boys of the same clan might sleep together, but must not have sexual intercourse. At Kajen in 1940, all the boys and girls were of the Halami sept, except one girl who was a Kuhrami. Yet they went daily to the ghotul and slept together there. They denied that they had sexual intercourse. This may be true, but no reliance can ever be put on a denial in Bastar. In the Metawand ghotul I found the following pairs 'married' to each other—Partabi and Maravi, Wadder and Maravi, Maravi and Maravi, Maravi and Katlami, Maravi and Wadder, Maravi and Maravi, Kuhrami and Maravi. In Dongrigura, in 1940, nearly all the ghotul members were Sori, save one or two Naitami and Kuhrami. The Pahardar and Pahardarin were 'married':

[1] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, pp. 179f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

both were Sori. So were the Beldar and Beldarin, the Sirdar and Sirdarin and the Supedar and Supedarin. If members of the same sept could be 'married' to each other, the feeling against clan-incest *inside the ghotul* cannot be very strong. So long as the relation does not result in pregnancy it does not seem to matter greatly. No one knows except the chelik and motiari—and they never tell.

883 X
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[276
531]

FIG. 113. Carved tobacco-box from Markabera
Height 2½"

But if there is a pregnancy it is a serious matter. In such a case, I was told at Kabonga, the members of the ghotul assemble and pass judgement. 'Look, brother, look, sister, you are both of the same clan; you are brother-sister to each other, yet you have done this evil. If the elders hear of it, we can give them no answer. We ourselves do not think it sin; it was the lust of youth, you were mad with love; but the elders will think it sin.' And they insist that the boy should bring an abortifacient. In Munjmeta when a Katlami boy fell in love with a girl of the Wadder clan—these are forbidden to one another—the ghotul members held a meeting and solemnly warned them that they would be fined if they continued to sleep together and that if the girl became pregnant it would be most serious for them both. But I heard that they took no notice.

The offence is usually condoned by a heavy fine, anything from six to twelve rupees to the panchayat and a calf or pig to the clan-god. But so long as the lovers are willing to separate, they are not barred from marrying in the usual

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 835 way, though not always with the full ceremonial. Indeed a girl should be married to the boy she is engaged to—if he will have her—as soon as possible. At Kibi Belanga, for example, a Maravi boy, the Panda of the ghotul, used to have intercourse with a Maravi girl, and she became pregnant. The matter became known to the elders of the village who fined him and married the girl quickly to a Naitami boy of Kidir village to whom she was engaged. The child was born three months after marriage and was accepted by the husband. A few years ago in Hathipakna there was a scandal when the Malko, 'a daughter of Naitami', was made pregnant by the Jamadar, also a Naitami. They attempted an abortion, without success, but after the boy's father had paid twelve rupees, the Malko was married, by the reduced ceremonies, to a boy at Sodma.

The kindly, gentle Muria makes things as easy as possible for the young. 'Even an elephant with four legs sometimes stumbles.' 'What can you do to one who has missed the road?' But if the girl refuses to leave her lover, the matter becomes very serious, and both are outcasted. In Metawand, I was told that such people were never re-admitted into the tribe, and after death only the chelik would touch their bodies and take them to the pyre. If a *kutukal* was erected it would have to be apart from the others.

A few years ago, at Alor, a member of the Kuhrami clan eloped with a Kuhrami girl. They were condemned by the panchayat, but took no notice. For 'the mouth that desires its fill and the genitalia that are excited never listen to advice'. They are now living together at Hirri. No Muria will eat with them, and at festivals of the clan-god they get no share of the consecrated meat. If a son is born, he will be called Bhula Huwa, but he will not be regarded as outcaste. He will have all the tribal privileges denied his parents. 'For he was tied up in the bundle; he knew nothing of what was done.'

This rigorist attitude is not so much one of moral condemnation as due to a fear of the supernatural vengeance that may descend upon the whole clan. In some cases, the guilty pair are forgiven if they perform an elaborate ceremony and pay sufficient fines. For two years they have to wait. Then if the Gaita approves he takes them to a tank or stream. Near the bank they make a ring of stakes and build a little bamboo wall, covering it with grass and thatch, inside which the boy and girl are made to stand together. The grass is set on fire and as it blazes up they jump through the flames into the water. After bathing, they put on new clothes and throw the old ones into the water. They make suitable offerings to the gods and are henceforth free of their guilt.

X 883 835 762 The general atmosphere of kindly tolerance probably accounts for the fact that so few tragedies have occurred. In the police records of the last ten years there are only two cases of suicide which arose out of clan-incest. The first was in January 1932. Chime and Kule of the Timri ghotul were of the same clan and in love with one another. The girl's parents married her to a boy called Jhola, from Supbeda, who had a wife already. She left him and it is said that she returned to the Timri ghotul and began to sleep there again. If this is true, it is remarkable in view of the normally strict taboo on married girls entering the ghotul. But all such rules are broken sometimes. After a time she was found to be pregnant but only after several months did the matter come to the ears of the village elders. When they questioned Chime about it, she took the hand of Kule and named him as the father of the unborn child. This was too much for him and on the night of 28 January, though he went to the ghotul as usual, when all were asleep he went quietly out and hanged himself.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

For months everyone must have known all about it. Before the girl's marriage Kule's breach of the clan laws was complete and open; it must constantly have been discussed in the ghotul, and the elders must have known of it. Yet until the day of the 'trial' it had never been openly proclaimed in the village that he had offended against the laws of the tribe. That was too much for him, he saw his girl lost to him, a life-long shame, and heavy penalties. So he killed himself.

FIG. 114. Carved tobacco-box from Metawand
Height 2½"

There was another case in 1936 in Kerawahi when a chelik and motiari[1] who belonged to the same clan fell in love with one another. They often used to slip outside the ghotul at night and sleep together. After a time the girl found herself pregnant. When the matter became known, there was a great scandal and the elders announced that they would hold a panchayat. The boy was so ashamed and so afraid of paying the fine that was certain to be inflicted, that he hanged himself. The girl was afterwards married to another boy, but was punished—the people said—by excessive menorrhagia. She grew thinner and thinner, and after a year her husband left her and married someone else.

IX

I have heard of very few cases of incest between near relatives. In spite of all the joking, in spite also of the close proximity in which near relatives grow up together in the ghotul, I think that the rules are kept. On the rare occasions that they are broken, the act is regarded with severe censure. At Sahimunda a girl was made pregnant by her own *mâmâ*, her mother's brother. She publicly accused him and he was fined. In Adenga, a Muria kept his own father's junior wife. He was excommunicated and banned from all tribal privileges. He and the woman were not even allowed to get water from the usual place. I am told that he is never to be admitted into the tribe. In the same village the Gaita kept his mother's sister, and was excommunicated.

A tale of incest from Kapsi is obviously satirical and hardly suggests approval of what was done.

> Long ago there lived an old man who married his son to a very lovely girl. When she came to his house the father at once fell in love with her. He sent his old wife and son to another village to get rice, and that evening he himself pretended to get high fever and lay groaning on his bed. The poor daughter-in-law came to him and said, 'What can I do for you?' He said, 'Ask the Departed in the granary what they want you to do'. She went to them and asked, 'What can I do for my

[1] According to the police report, the chelik was Lati, son of Dhanaji, and the motiari was Koli, daughter of Bidmunda. Lati was Koli's paternal uncle. I do not know their ghotul titles.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
835
539

father-in-law?' The old man crept out of bed and stood behind the wall. When the girl asked the question, he replied in a loud, strange voice, 'Your father-in-law is going to die; there is only one way to save him; lie with him and his fever will be cured'. At this the girl was frightened and said to the Departed, 'But the marriage haldi is still on my body, how can I do such wickedness? The marriage booth is yet green, how can I betray my husband?' But the old man replied, 'If you want your father-in-law to live, do as we say; the sin will not be yours, but that of the Dead'. Then the poor daughter-in-law went back to the old man and told him what the Departed had said, and he asked her what she thought of it. She said she was willing to do what they ordered and she lay with him. When all was over, she asked whether his fever had left him, and he told her that it had, and praised her devotion to the Departed.

270

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

With reference to those parts of the human body which, because of their intimate conjunction with organs of drainage, suffer an opprobrium both unwarranted and psychologically dangerous, I think much trouble and misunderstanding can be avoided if we observe the world of flowers. Exactly as 'Roses and lilies fair on a lawn' display the sexual parts of the rose and the lily, so, in literal fact, our sexual parts are our flowers, and that is a decent and salutary and sweetening way in which to regard them. . . Prudence is necessary, but not error, and nursery prejudices should not cloud our reason.—Eric Gill, *Drawings from Life* (London, 1940), p. xv.

I

THE Muria has a simple, innocent and natural attitude to sex. In the ghotul this is strengthened by the absence of any sense of guilt and the general freedom from external interference. The Muria believe that sexual congress is a good thing; it does you good; it is healthy and beautiful; when performed by the right people (such as a chelik and motiari who are not taboo to one another), at the right time (outside the menstrual period and avoiding forbidden days), and in the right place (within the ghotul walls where no sin can be committed), it is the happiest and best thing in life. 883X 833

This belief in sex as something good and normal gives the Muria a light touch. Nari's saying that the penis and vagina are *kassi hi sali*, in a 'joking relationship' to each other, admirably puts the situation. Sex is great fun; it is the best of ghotul games; it is the dance of the genitals; it is an ecstatic swinging in the arms of the beloved. It ought not to be too intense; it must not be degraded by possessiveness or defiled by jealousy. It is believed that the best and most successful sex relations are to be had in the modern ghotul where partners often change.

The very idea of a Platonic attachment is ridiculous. Young chelik and motiari may sleep together for a long time without congress, but consummation is the end and goal. 'Thirst is not quenched by licking dew.' Let us consider a remarkable document that was given Shamrao Hivale by the villagers of Palli. A newly-married boy found himself impotent—he had not experienced this embarrassment in the ghotul; it was supposed to have been brought upon him by the hostile magic of a former lover—yet however caused it threatened to destroy his happiness. This is how the other chelik described his wife's attitude—she was only a few weeks out of the ghotul, still practically a motiari. Some of the phrases used are probably traditional, for they occur in songs.

'I didn't come to your house', she is supposed to have said, 'just to eat rice. I could have got rice anywhere. I'm not going to stay here just looking at your face. You may have money, but that can only fill my stomach, not my heart. I could fill my stomach myself by going out to work. Well, now I'm off—anywhere, anywhere in the world so long as my heart can be filled. Where the heart is not filled what girl will stay? God made man and woman for this very work. It was to fill each other's hearts that he made ants, worms, birds, rats, pigs, tigers and every other thing. They all live with their mates and copulate. They all marry and love comes from their copulation. But I don't find love by just looking at your face. If your cart-pole was not in place, what did you marry for?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When you saw me and knew that your heart was not captured, why did you ruin me? What am I to do now? Tell me. Where am I to go?'

Inside the ghotul sexual anaesthesia is known, but it is uncommon and is regarded as a sort of deviation. I have met a few Muria who have never been to the ghotul or who have never shared its sexual activities. Dhansingh Pandu of Palki is a man of some forty years and still unmarried. He has never been to a ghotul. His father used to say to him, 'These boys talk in front of their sisters as if they were their lovers. You don't know what gods there are in the ghotul; many gods live there; you might unwittingly offend one of them and be destroyed. No one knows what people may have in their hearts when all sleep together.' But it was not only his father's exaggerated fears of the supernatural that stopped Dhansingh from attending the ghotul; he himself had no desire to go. But now he regrets it. 'I am a very lonely man', he told me. 'I might now be happily married. But at that time I was very poor and I had no passion.' The real reason for his abstinence seems to have been a dread that he would be forced into sexual intercourse for which he had neither power nor inclination.

Another Muria who has never been a chelik is Hagru of Masora. In his youth he lived in the Hindu potters' quarter of Kondagaon town where there was, of course, no ghotul. 'I used to feel very lonely when I heard how happy the other boys were, but what could I do?'

Early marriage sometimes brings ghotul life to a premature close. In Malakot, I found the people arranging their children's marriages as early as possible 'to prevent copulation in the ghotul'. Old Sukali of Masora was married so young that 'she never even learnt to sing a Relo'. But child-marriage is not common and young married girls are generally allowed to attend the ghotul till puberty or until they are sent to live with their husbands.

Although the Muria insist on abstinence from sexual congress before the ceremonial hunts and require their priests to remain celibate on various occasions, the rule does not seem to be due to any special regard for celibacy as such or belief in its power; it is rather connected with the dread of the menstruous woman. On the eve of a festival all the males of a village must sleep in the ghotul—which for that night is cleared of motiari—to ensure that none of their wives or other relatives will infect them with the defilement of a catamenial period that might begin during the night. So too the very strict rules governing a young Gaita's relations with women in the Chota Dongar Pargana appear to be based mainly on a desire to isolate him from the dreaded menstrual contact.

Celibacy is not admired, and it is dangerous to be unmarried, for a man or woman who dies in this condition lives for ever restless and frustrated, and a nuisance to the friends he has left behind on earth. It should be noted that it is marriage and not sexual experience that is important. The Hindu sadhu is rarely respected, though he may be feared for his supposed supernatural powers. The state of *sannyās* is everywhere associated in the aboriginals' mind with idleness and beggary rather than with chastity. In Alor the chelik spoke very scornfully of celibacy: 'It is a way of life for loafers.' And of boys and girls who stand aside from the main life of the ghotul, they say 'they will get children directly they begin'. 'There may be one in a thousand girls who tries to keep her water, but she will get a child in her *haldi-dhoti*', while her clothes are still stained with the marriage turmeric. It is dangerous to store up power, for when it is released it may prove too potent.

In order to enforce this attitude, the chelik tell a number of stories illustrating the danger of breaking the ghotul tradition. One such tale, from

535
492

Jhoria dancers at Kabonga

Jhoria dancers at Amasara

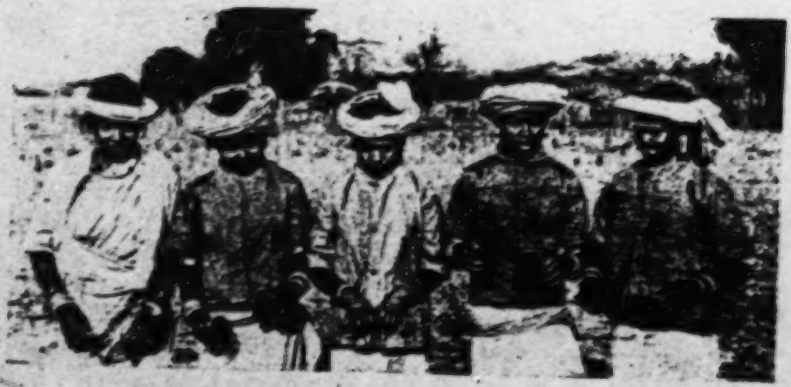

Plate LXXXV

Plate LXXXVI

302
291
301

Chelik with face decorations

The Likhen of the Tumsar ghotul

[p.420 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A N32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

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Atargaon, is about the seven motiari who knew nothing about sex. One day they went to gather leaves with their grandmother. The old lady climbed a tree and the girls looked up and saw her vagina. When she told them what it was for, they were so frightened that they left the ghotul and went to live far away in the jungle. Whenever they saw a man they beat him and drove him away. The story proceeds through various adventures to the inevitable conclusion. Each of the girls is seduced by a sadhu and becomes pregnant.

X883 539

Another story, given me by Sonu, a Muria of Jamkot, is of interest as emphasizing the ghotul doctrine of equality, that everyone in the ghotul fellowship must be loved and happy: if not, disaster may befall.

There were seven score chelik and seven score motiari. All slept together in the ghotul. One of them was the son of a grazier of goats, and none of the girls would sleep with him. When he came to the ghotul, they would abuse him. 'Get out, you grazier's son, you block of wood.' The boy's name was Lakari; that was why they called him a block of wood. But Lakari was a clever boy and he made a love-charm.

One day the boys and girls decided to go to Kodawata to earn their living. When he heard of this, Lakari decided to have all the girls for himself. He put the boys to sleep by his charms. When the girls were ready for their journey, he went ahead beating his drum. They thought that all the boys had started and set out after them.

Now Lakari was very poor; his bed was the earth, his blanket was the air, his pillow was his own elbow. He was so poor that no girl would let him sleep with her. He went along with an axe over his shoulder, his *dhol* drum slung from his arm and a drumstick in one hand. He led the girls away into the jungle, on and on for a whole month. When he beat the drum they ran after him, but he always kept at a distance so that they wouldn't know who it was.

The jungle stretched for twelve *kos* on every side, there was not even the name of a village. The jungle was called Madhuban, the sweet forest; the trees were so tall that it seemed the moon had stuck to them. When Lakari had led the girls into the very heart of this jungle, he took off his clothes and sat shivering with cold. When the girls saw that the chelik were not there and it was only Lakari who had brought them all that way, they were angry and disappointed.

On a hill-top between two rivers Lakari built a ghotul for himself. On the far side of the river he made another house for the girls. They refused to visit him or even look at him, they were so angry. By the time the rains began they found they had eaten all their provisions for the year. Lakari himself had nothing; he lived on honey.

Now at last one of the girls came to him and said, 'How are we to live here without a village or bazaar? Even you can give us nothing to eat'. Lakari replied, 'I will see to everything; come with me to the bazaar and we will get what we want'. The girls went fishing in the river, and this girl brought fish in a basket and he himself took honey and they went together to the bazaar at Ladri. They sold their things and bought what they wanted. On the way back, Lakari went as slowly as he could so that they would have to spend the night in the jungle and the girl would have to sleep with him. When darkness fell he made her a bed in the sand of a river; there was one bed for him and one for her with a fire between. He had brought food and ornaments to please her.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 539

At midnight the umagaji bird cried *Ha huhu*. The girl shrieked with fright and said, 'O Lakari, let me sleep near you, for I am afraid'. Then the bird cried again and the girl said, 'What is the bird saying?' Lakari replied, 'It says "Drive on, drive on!"'. So now there was no mother, no father, there was no one in the world, and he went to her. From the bird's talk came the boy's copulation. Every time the bird cried, the girl clung again to Lakari.

In this way Lakari took each of the girls in turn, and at last every one was pregnant and he had seven score sons. When the boys were old enough to earn their living, Lakari got bullocks for them. In this way family life began and villages were formed, because a girl was frightened of a bird.

II. The Anatomy and Mythology of Sex

831 192

The Muria seem to have a rather sketchy knowledge of the sexual organs and their functions. They have no idea of the purpose of the testes or of the existence of the hymen. They do, however, recognize the clitoris and understand its function. Their vocabulary is limited, but sufficient to cover the main points of the external genitalia.[1] They have half-a-dozen words for the penis, three or four for the vagina (the most popular simply means 'the lower part of something'), and words for the labia majora (*pude adawing*, vagina flesh), the urethra (*urkul bukka*, urine hole) and the clitoris (*titiguta*, a word which like its Graeco-English equivalent probably has reference to the organ's power of erection and excitement). The Muria word for orgasm is *pusi* or *wijja pesina*, 'the coming out of the seed'.

There is no word for love in Gondi. The Muria use the Chhattisgarhi word *mâya* and sometimes *pirit* or *perem*, which are simply corruptions of the ordinary Hindi words. But neither do they have any words for lust or desire, and for erotic excitement use expressions that are only descriptive of the physical sensations of sex—*penda kohalta* said of a girl means that her 'vagina is itching'; *bondę dokalta* that the 'penis is quivering'. The expression *girda kiyâna* is sometimes used for 'making love'; *girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'. *Girda ator* can be used in the sense of 'being in love'. But abstract and emotional terms are rare in Gondi, as in most primitive languages.

831 524

Sexual riddles are interesting as showing how direct and forthright are the Muria's references to the genitals and sexual intercourse.

Chapti pakna gohivailaisek.
The flat stone itches.

—The vagina.

Sulung dandi bundla bursa.
The pole is long, its bottom is black.

—The penis.

Kondâng lewa boteng.
The fish that has no eyes.

—The penis.

[1] I notice that our authorities often confuse the names of the genitalia, perhaps because the tribes themselves, like the British and French, use a bewildering variety of synonyms for them. Ward gives as Gondi words *prest* or *munchelee* for the 'affections', *wiya Lalatur* for 'beloved', and *nebilla* for 'to kiss'. There are no such words in Trench's vocabulary.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

831
534

Itaa laaa patwa tado.
Touch it and up it goes.
—A mat, or the penis.

Mela aur jela bahir jhule
Mantor hach hatile lopa narey kiyëntor.
Mela and Jela swing to and fro outside;
The iron rice-husker is at work within.
—Sexual congress.

Three are dancing in a thick jungle.
—Sexual congress.

There are two witnesses to this thief's escapades.
—The testes and penis.

831

But if their anatomical knowledge of the genitalia is slight, the Muria compensate for it by an extensive mythology of sex, which is, I think, even more elaborate than that of the Bison-horn Maria and the Orissa tribes.

It is remarkable that the Muria seem to regard the sexual organs, whether male or female, as living things with an independent life of their own.[1] For example, one of the reasons given for forbidding urination inside the ghotul is that the girls' urine would smell abominably because her labia majora are always chewing her urine as she walks about—just as a goat chews its food, and therefore a girl's urine smells as strongly as a goat's.

831
539

There are several stories about the vagina, though the Vagina Dentata legend, known throughout the Central Provinces and Orissa, is comparatively rare. The following story is from Masora.

Long ago the vagina had the power of leaving its body at night and going out to feed in the fields. It had teeth with which it could eat; it would stay out all night grazing in the fields and return satisfied in the morning.

By and by the village people began to say, 'What is this thing that comes at night and eats up our crops? Let us set traps and catch it'. So they set traps in their fields, and that night when the vaginae came to feed they were caught and the villagers collected them and took them to the Gaita's house in a big basket. They shut them up in an inner room and went to report the matter to the Raja. The Raja sentenced the vaginae to be hanged.

When they heard this, the villagers were frightened, for they said, 'How are we to live with our wives if their organs are destroyed?' So they went to the Raja asking him to forgive them and promising to repay the owners of the fields for whatever damage had been done.

The Raja said, 'First of all the teeth must be broken and removed from the vaginae. Whoever can do this will be rewarded'. No one knew how to do it until at last a one-eyed policeman, who himself had a knife growing from his penis, declared that he would deal with the matter. With his knife he removed the teeth and then with hammer and nails fixed every vagina back in its place. The nail he used is the clitoris which stands above the vagina to hold it steady. The vaginae then cursed the man who had done them this injury and turned him

[1] A similar idea is found in the Crow Indian tale *Montsda Lopuma*, where a man's penis begins to talk and refuses to stop.—R. H. Lowie, 'Myths and Traditions of the Crow Indians', *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. XXV (1918), p. 225.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

931
539

into a pig. Even today the pig's virile member is shaped like a knife.[1]

A rather similar tale from Palari (Kondagaon Tahsil) connects the incident with Bhimul and his wife.

> The vagina used to creep out of the body where it lived and go in search of maize and cucumbers. It would nibble its way through a fence and steal from the field. The farmers made fences of iron and now when the vagina tried to get through, its teeth were knocked out by the iron. A small bit of iron stuck in the vagina's mouth and became the clitoris. When the teeth came out, blood flowed from the mouth and the vagina went to Bhimul for help.
>
> Now the penis of Bhimul was five hands long and he cut it into several pieces, each four fingers long. He put one piece into the vagina's mouth and said, 'Don't eat cucumbers or maize any more: from today this will be your food'. But the bleeding did not stop, and Bhimul said, 'It will stop soon and then after a month it will bleed again'. Such was the beginning of women's menstruation.
>
> There was blood at the end of Bhimul's penis where he had cut it. It went into the belly of the woman to whom the vagina belonged and she conceived. This is how the birth of children began.
>
> In those days men had no genitals. One day they went to Bhimul to complain about this. He fixed a bit of his own penis with wax between the thighs of a man. Such was the beginning. But the penis fell off as the wax melted. They went to Gorondi Dokari (Bhimul's wife) and she put two small chickens under the penis to support it. Such is the origin of the testes.[2]

Another Vagina Dentata story comes from Koelari.[3]

> There was a Rakshasa's daughter with teeth in her vagina. She used to live mostly as a tigress and kept ten or twelve tigers always with her. When she saw a man, she would turn into a pretty girl, seduce him, cut off his penis, eat it herself and give the rest of his body to her tigers.
>
> One day she met seven brothers in the jungle and married the eldest so that she could sleep with them all. After some time she took the eldest boy to where her tigers lived, made him lie with her, cut off his penis, ate it and gave his body to the tigers. In the same way she killed six of the brothers till only the youngest was left.
>
> When his turn came, the god who helped him appeared in a dream saying, 'If you go with this girl, make an iron tube, put it into her vagina and break her teeth'. The boy acted according to his dream, and when the tigers came for his body, he climbed into a mango tree

[1] Similar stories among the Bison-horn Maria relate how a man once caught a vagina eating his gram and knocked its teeth out with a pestle; in another tale, from Kamell, people used to feed the wandering vagina out of charity. When it was satisfied it would open its mouth and do men no harm. Even now the vagina has not forgotten its old habit of eating *gur* and gram and still tries to 'bite' the male member by its muscular contractions.

[2] Elsewhere the Muria said, 'The testes are the children of the penis and have sapped their father's strength. Only when the children restore the strength can their father work'.

[3] I present a large number of similar legends recorded from the Gond and Pardhan of the Central Provinces, the Bison-horn Maria of Bastar, and the Juang, Gadaba and Savara of Orissa in my forthcoming book *Myths of Middle India*.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

and made himself very small. The tigers chased him and the girl too became very angry. He cursed her; 'Let nothing but your face remain'. And so it was; she became a bat which eats, excretes, urinates and copulates through one and the same hole. One of the mangoes opened and the boy crept inside. A parrot carried off the mango to the Raja's palace.

831
539

The parrot dropped the fruit, it broke open, out came the boy and after various adventures married the Raja's daughter. The hero of an Agaria story was similarly saved by the use of an iron condom.[1]

Sometimes it is said that originally the vagina was situated below the knee of the left leg. One day a chicken pecked at it, and it jumped up to a place of safety between the thighs where it has remained ever since. But it was wounded and blood still flows from it every month. From Bara Dongar comes the tale of the vagina which died.

> One day a vagina died and its companions were wondering what to do with it. 'Shall we cremate it or bury it?' said some, but others said, 'Let us divide it among us'. They cut it up and each stuck a portion on itself. This is the origin of the lips [labia majora]. The woman whose vagina died was the first hermaphrodite.

In the same style is a story from Alor, which has the familiar competition-motif.

> The breasts and the vagina had a quarrel. 'I am the greater,' said the vagina. 'It is for my sake that men go mad and die.'
>
> 'No,' said the breasts. 'We are greater. It is our beauty that men come to see. If there were no breasts, who would come to you?'
>
> 'If there was no vagina, who would bother about you? Do men chase a flower or a lovely stream?'
>
> 'Men see us from afar and excited by our beauty draw near. It is only then that they notice you; first they touch us, then you.'
>
> 'But no one gets pleasure from touching you.'
>
> 'But if they didn't see and touch us, how would they be excited? You would be neglected entirely.'
>
> So quarrelling, the vagina and the breasts parted and went their ways. As they went along, the breasts met a man and he took them aside and began to fondle them. But when he looked down and saw nothing there, he went disappointed away.
>
> Then the breasts went to the vagina and said, 'Come, sister, you have won the battle; you are the greatest of all'.

There are also legends about the penis. Originally it was of gigantic size.

> Once the penis was so long that as a man lay in bed it could get out of the house and penetrate a woman a hundred yards away. When he went abroad, a man would wind it round and round his waist and tuck in the end.
>
> One day a penis broke through the wall of the house, entered a woman, came out of her mouth, dipped its head into a cooking-pot and ate all the supper, and in withdrawing killed the woman. Then all the women

[1] For a discussion of this legend, see my article 'The Vagina Dentata Legend', *The British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XIX (1943), pp. 430–53. For accounts of its distribution in North America, see W. Bogoras, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. IV (New Series), p. 667 and R. H. Lowie, 'The Test-Theme in North American Mythology', *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXI (1908), p. 110.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

§31 §39 came to cut it off. The man grasped his penis with his hand, but that was all he could save. The women cut it off and it is now only a hands-breadth long.[1]

Another version of the tale, however, connects the disappearance of the long penis with the Vagina Dentata legend.

> In the old days there were teeth far back in the vagina. One day when the long penis went in, the teeth cut it and all that remained was a stump of its present length. Angry at this, the man brought a rice-husker and broke off the teeth. In those days the penis itself was covered with thorns; it stood up like a semur tree. But there were no thorns at the root. The thorny part was cut off, and the smooth part remains to this day.[2]

In this mythical past it was man, not woman, who was subject to a menstrual period.

> Formerly men had to live outside their houses every month. They used to tie hollow bamboos over the penis to catch the blood. One day a girl saw this and laughed at the man. He pulled the bamboo off and threw it at her.[3] Since then women have suffered this flowing of the blood instead of men.

III. Erotic Attractiveness

§32 I found it very difficult to get the Muria to give any clear account of what they meant by beauty. They are always moved by the loveliness of natural scenery, but they are not very articulate and find it hard to express themselves except when the words of a song or proverb provide them with a ready means of utterance. The following Chitkul Pata from Amakot, for example, reveals not a little aesthetic appreciation.

Jilāng jāpar bandār!	How beautiful the lake!
Bandār soba bārāng?	Why is the lake so beautiful?
Bandār soba pāri,	Lovely are the banks of the lake,
Bandār soba yero.	Lovely the waters of the lake.
Yero soba minur.	Lovely are the fish in the water.
Minur soba bārāng?	To the fish what is lovely?
Minur soba sila.	To the fish the water-reeds are lovely.
Pārar soba bārāng?	On the bank what is lovely?
Pārar soba marka,	On the bank the mango trees,
Kāndi udo marka,	The mango's spreading branches,
Waliya wālo gorga.	And the palm trees everywhere.

In human beings the Muria seem to admire liveliness, animation, vigour more than perfection of colour or feature. They apply their universal test of hard work not only to assess a person's morals, but even his erotic attractiveness. 'However beautiful the face, one's eyes turn aside disgusted from a loafer.'

[1] The Bison-horn Maria attribute this incident to a man named Baikesa and say that he himself cut off his long penis through shame when it touched a woman not his wife by mistake. He bled to death and was buried in a sitting posture. He is still honoured as Baikesa Pen with a pile of stones in many villages.

[2] But the Bison-horn Maria of Dugoli said that the penis became short because in olden times the Mahara had none at all and went to Gaja Bhimal to beg for one. He cut off the long part from the Maria, but they held the stems in their feets. This is why the Maria have nothing to do with the Mahara for fear they lose the rest of the organ.

[3] For this reason, it is said, the Bison-horn Maria pelt a girl with mud at her first menstruation.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

832

The Muria do not seem able to analyse a face and say whether, for example, thick lips or a snub nose is repugnant to them. I have often showed them the frontispiece of Grigson's *Maria Gonds of Bastar*, which depicts a handsome Maria youth sitting with his wife. Everywhere the comment was the same; the couple had beautiful ornaments, but they were not sitting properly. Nothing was said about their features. And in fact, whenever I have discussed this subject, both chelik and motiari talk of the clothes and ornaments of a person rather than of feature or carriage. Here, for example, are some typical descriptions of attractive chelik given by motiari to my wife. 'He is always washing and doing his hair; his clothes are white and clean; he knows how to stand and sit [that is, he has good manners]. Even though he is thirty years old, we all love the Mansai, for he is never dirty.' That was in Palki; at Binjhli the favourite chelik was the Belumdar. 'He is of fair colour, his hair is curly, his face is always clean, he has beautiful ear-rings, his clothes are always white.' Not, it will be noted, 'he has beautiful ears' but 'he has beautiful ear-rings'. The Saliya of the same ghotul was also greatly admired; he was indeed a most handsome and charming youth. 'He is as clean as a State servant.'

In Markabera the motiari said: 'It's the ornaments that matter. It's the hair and the necklaces and the combs that matter. He must have all the ornaments, round his head, at his ears, about his neck, at his waist: how beautiful he looks then! He must have combs in his hair, and clean clothes. Let the nose be as it is, let the eyes be as they are, let the mouth be as it is; they were made by God and will be what they are. But we make the ornaments and with them a chelik can make himself as handsome as he wills.'

And indeed how handsome and delightful the chelik—especially the Jhoria chelik—can make themselves! When a boy is in love he borrows all he can, sticks feathers in his hair, covers himself with coloured beads, ties bunches of little bells at his waist. 'Then as he goes along, the bells jingle, and we motiari run out to see who is coming. "It's the Kotwar." "No, it's the Diwan." When she sees how beautiful he is, a motiari's mind rises for a boy.'

Nowhere do the chelik display their manly vigour, their agility, their sexual attractiveness to better advantage than in the Mandri dances. Some of the movements have a definitely sexual meaning, but all reveal the strength and energy of the drummers. It is said that the best lovers are those who use homemade wooden drums and not earthenware drums bought in the bazaar. It is considered that only a very ardent lover would go to the trouble of making a drum out of wood. 'Such men are strong and can break the horns of a deer.' Any girl will go to them rather than to those who are content with mere bazaar products. 'A chelik who can beat a wooden drum knows well how to beat a girl in love.'

In girls the chelik admire vitality and beauty, but expect them to be well-dressed and decorated. In Masora they said that the Malko was very pretty for 'she wears her cloth carefully, and always looks at her shadow to see if she is bearing herself well'. 'When we hear the *chatak-chatak* of a girl's anklets, we run to see who it is and whisper to each other, "Look, there she goes, how pretty she looks".' But they also expect a girl to be pretty in the Western and Hindu sense. I have noticed that the girls I myself thought worth photographing were those who received most attention from the chelik. The two favourite girls in Binjhli were the Silo and the Sansaro; they were both small, slender, with rather delicate hands and feet, light-coloured, with bright attractive features, well-dressed hair ornamented with many combs, and plenty of necklaces. 'Their faces are always "ready" and their hair well-dressed.'

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

§32 In Markabera the most beautiful girl was considered to be the Malko, whose photograph appears in Plate CXII. She won her fame, I think, by her vitality and carriage rather than for any loveliness of feature. The Kotwarin of Kachora, who was universally acclaimed as the most attractive girl there, and who may also be seen in Plate CXII,[1] could hardly be called beautiful. But she was bubbling over with life and energy, and her dancing was wonderful.

Other girls, very beautiful to Western eyes, whose photographs adorn this book, the Jhelo of Pupgaon, the Nero of Tarhaili, the Malko of Koilibera, the Salko of Munjmeta, were obviously the ruling queens of their youthful courts. I noticed that each of them was a vigorous and active worker, a fact that contributed not a little to the chelik's admiration.

In Kokori the Muria gave what is very rare, a detailed description of a beautiful girl.

> Her legs and feet should not be too long; they should be neither thin nor fat. The toes must not be big or crooked. She should have a slim waist so that when she ties her cloth round it, buttocks and waist will be level. A long stomach is ugly; so are buttocks that stick out behind. The nose may be small, but not snub. A big head or ears, or fat cheeks, are ugly. When the hair is combed it should lie flat on the head. A girl must not be very tall. Her eyes should not be black, and she should never put lamp-black in them or she would look like a witch. The most important thing is that she should dress well and work well. If a girl wears a good cloth she looks sweet, but with lots of ornaments she is entrancing. Even an ordinary girl can be beautiful with proper ornaments. But, however sweet her face may be, if she is idle or slovenly, we think her ugly.[2]

In the songs there are not so many references to feminine beauty as one would expect. Indeed many of the songs, being sung antiphonally between chelik and motiari, indulge in taunts rather than flattery. Thus Gadakare Mode of Lingo's ghotul hardly sounds attractive to modern ears. 'She had a navel as big as a cart-wheel and a wild boar could roll over and over in her vagina. She looked like a sack of salt from Nandgaon.' The chelik are often described in equally unflattering terms.

But the songs do sometimes make reference to a quality in woman which they call *sapota*, meaning that all her physical characters are balanced and in proportion. Such a girl is neither tall nor short, fat nor thin; 'she has a straight nose without too long a space between its tip and her lips; she has straight hands and feet, a slim waist, round breasts that are not too large. Her eyes are dark and bright'. The songs also refer to a type of girl they call *jalmalko*, which seems to describe the way a girl carries herself. 'She struts about like a peacock with tail erect'—many motiari resemble the male rather than the female bird. A Tutumri Pata refers to a girl as *jalkona naka jalkonaina*, one who goes swinging her hips to attract the eyes of men. A *bai chihan khota*, a girl with hair parted and combed with care, is always beautiful.[3]

[1] The caption in Plate CXII incorrectly gives this girl's village as Kongera.

[2] It will be of interest to compare these ideas with the estimate of classical Indian beauty made by Coomaraswamy. In the Rajasthani and Pahari paintings, he points out, are all the Hindu woman-ideals, both physical and spiritual. 'The heroine's eyes are large as any lotus flowers, her tresses fall in heavy plaits, her breasts are firm and high, her thighs are full and smooth, her hands like rosy flowers, her gait as dignified as any elephant's and her demeanour utterly demure.'—A. Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting* (Oxford, 1916), p. 2.

[3] Trench gives the expression *singri-mingri* for a well-dressed and ornamented girl; *komona* means 'pretty' and *subin* 'buxom'. Mitchell gives *sukna-kurna* as meaning

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond AW32
Muria

291
415

Motiari of Palli with leaf-cup

Plate LXXXVII

532

Pola festival earthen bullocks put on the roof for luck

[p. 428 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXXVIII

142
291
301
415

The Nero of Tarbaili with bamboo water-contain

[p. 428(2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

832 826 Although the Muria do not analyse the parts of the body or the face with the care given to this pleasant task by the more sophisticated Indian communities, they have a fully developed aesthetic tradition of the breast. This is natural in a people who but yesterday learnt to cover the upper part of their bodies with a cloth. Even now I have seen in many Muria houses girls husking rice or grinding grain without any upper cloth. When no strangers are about, they still, in the western areas, discard as many clothes as possible. The breasts, so often seen, are always admired. A boy, asked the age of a girl, will answer by showing with his open hands the size of her breasts. 'She may have breasts as big as a coconut, or they may be small as a lemon, but they are beautiful and we love them', said a chelik at Masora. 'A girl's beauty is in her breasts. But'—and this is an interesting point—'the breasts do not remain. After a child is born their loveliness departs. But always there are the shoulders; they never betray us.' In other words, sexual congress demands something to hold—'from holding comes joy indescribable'; in [833] youth a chelik holds the breasts; later he holds the shoulders, and these never betray him, but go with him all his life.

There are many vivid similes for the breast, a whole vocabulary and system of classification, reminding one a little of Jayle's famous distinction of nine mammary types. As we might expect, several of the chelik's classifications are of small and immature breasts—the *paras dudo*, like half-formed gourds; the *bengri dudo*, like small brinjals at which the boys laugh saying, 'When will the brinjals in your garden be ripe?'; the *bondo-kukh dudo*, like little mushrooms; the *thoka dudo*, like small pots. The *kosa dudo* are compared to cocoons; they are the breasts of a girl only just mature; and the *urang kuskle dudo* are also immature and 'flat as dog-flesh'.

The breasts of the older motiari are finely developed. Such are the *gutta dudo*—'their youthful strength stands up like pegs'; the *kapa dudo*, the 'ripe brinjal which is fresh and firm'; the *kindri dudo*, of which it is said that 'even if she has five children they will keep their shape'; the *burka dudo*, the large hemispherical breasts of a faithful wife and loving mother; the *marka dudo*, or mango breasts; the magnificent *niral dudo*, 'tiger breasts', the best of all, hemispherical with well-marked areolae and a beautiful conical-tipped nipple, whose milk nourishes a child into a young tiger.

Less admired are the *kurbin dudo*, small with long nipples, called 'monkey breasts' in Mandla; the *dhodka* or *torka dudo*, another gourd breast but elongated and weaker which gives poor thin milk; the *chimni dudo*, with long nipples 'like the funnel of a country lamp'; and the *hind dhati dudo*, the nipples of which are 'like the berries of the chhind shrub'. It is notable that in this group the breasts are classified according to the nipples.

The breasts of older women are the flat *kulta dudo*, the *kurpuj dudo*, long as country shoes and the *tiblo dudo* which 'flop down like dripping water', a description which recalls the expression in Betul Gondi—*dudukh ding-dong ading*: 'her breasts are dangling like a blanket behind a cart'.[1]

'beauty', but this seems to mean simply 'good to see'. Ugliness is described with more animation. *Sika-arjāl* means, in Betul, 'a shock-headed untidy person looking like a savage bear'. *Bukrāl kurumpra mai* is a 'fat-faced woman'. To call a man *Akkur* in Gondi means he is 'thin as a stick'. Mitchell gives *opo* as meaning 'ugly' among the Bison-horn Maria.

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 36. Muria similes for the breast, which may be paralleled by those current among the Baiga (see *The Baiga*, pp. 343ff) must be almost unique for detail and imagination. 'The Greeks had their *dēmu pudikolon*; the Arabs admired the pomegranate breast: the medieval German ideal was "that the breasts should be high and rounded, like apples or pears, small and soft" (Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection*,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

832 It is possible for an unattractive motiari to make herself beautiful by magic. She must go all alone in the middle of the night and fetch home the charred bone of a barren witch who has died on a Sunday and has been cremated on the same day. She must then sacrifice a chicken before the bone on seven successive Sundays, saying 'I have brought you to make me beautiful'. On the seventh Sunday she touches every part of her body with the bone 'and her beauty then knows no bounds'. It is not surprising that the majority of girls prefer to leave their natural charms as they are.

IV. The Approach to Tumescence

X883 832 Contrary to what the Peeping Tom, be he chaprasi or social reformer, supposes, the real difficulty of ghotul life is not an excess of libido, but a deficiency that might well wreck it. For the essence of such a life is that it should be, as Milton defined poetry, 'simple, sensuous and passionate', that it should be redeemed from mediocrity and degradation by enthusiasm and a fine sexual vitality. But not only does Muria libido appear to be generally rather weak, but the special conditions of life in the ghotul tend still further to depress it. On this point, Havelock Ellis has the final word.

> Courtship, he says, 'is the process by which powerful sensory stimuli proceeding from a person of the opposite sex gradually produce the physiological state of tumescence, with its psychic concomitant of love and desire, more or less necessary for mating to be effected. But between those who have been brought up together from childhood all the sensory stimuli of vision, hearing, and touch have been dulled by use, trained to the calm level of affection, and deprived of their potency to arouse the erethistic excitement which produces sexual tumescence.'[1]

Havelock Ellis is here discussing the origin of the horror of incest, and arguing against Westermarck's theory of a special instinct that makes sexual intercourse between near kin an impossibility. But his words are equally applicable to the ghotul, where boys and girls grow up together under conditions of far greater intimacy than do most brothers and sisters. Chelik and motiari, like brothers and sisters, 'in relation to each other have at puberty already reached that state to which old married couples by the exhaustion of youthful passion and the slow usage of daily life gradually approximate'.[2] This would, of course, be somewhat overstated as applied to the ghotul, but it is not altogether wide of the truth. In any one ghotul the boys and girls have lived

p. 147): Chaucer describes a beautiful woman 'with buttokes brode and breestes rounde and hye'; the *Song of Songs*, through the Authorised Version, popularised among English readers two lovely similes—'Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies'; 'Thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine'—echoed by Sidney with his 'O breast in which two white sheep swell in pride'. Wycherley (*The Country Wife*) uses the orange simile, but a modern poet, Dylan Thomas, speaks, less romantically, of 'bagpipe-breasted ladies'. We must be content with one more comparison from a Lao poem, translated by E. Powys Mathers.

> Whether the breasts be as slight as citrons
> We would make love,
> Whether the breasts be as great as pumpkins
> As wrinkled as elephants,
> As soft as cooked rice.

See also Verrier Elwin, *Folk-songs of Chhattisgarh* (Bombay, 1946), pp. 388.

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 206f. Compare Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 198ff.

[2] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., p. 206.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883λ
832

together all their lives and their capacity for erethistic excitement is naturally dulled.

But the Muria have the wit to put this fact to the best of uses and yet preserve their psychic capacity for sexual happiness. The calm level of affection—almost as of mature experience—which they achieve while yet in their teens, expresses itself in the wonderful harmony and fellowship of the best ghotul, the general diffused affection which leaves no room for jealousy and possessiveness. As anyone who has stayed for a time in a good ghotul must notice, the boys and girls form a compact, loyal, friendly little republic; they are all evidently very fond of each other; there is a large, generous, corporate romance uniting them. They do really seem to live in a sort of glow; the superb light of cleopatrine passion is absent, but so is the harsher glare of excited grasping lust. In the soft diffused glow of corporate affection, a girl decorates herself not only for one boy, but for all the boys and for the ghotul's honour and delight. The boys drum and dance to please their special lovers, it is true, but also to excite and gratify the entire company of motiari.

But ideal as it may sound, such a situation has its dangers. A diffused affection does not promote sexual potency. And Muria, and indeed all aboriginal tradition, sets little value on unconsummated love. Without it there would be no harmony or content; everything would deviate. The very thing that the reformers and puritans most deplore in the ghotul is what keeps it clean and healthy. But to preserve this superbly natural life is not easy.

The ghotul routine might have been planned by some great erotic genius, so admirably is it devised to ensure tumescence whenever that may be desired. So apt is the ghotul method, so finely adapted to its purpose, so stimulating and tonic in its effect that were it possible to send jaded husbands and wives away from civilisation for treatment to the Muria, I do not believe one of them would return uncured.

'So far', says Havelock Ellis again, 'from the instinct of tumescence naturally needing to be crushed, it needs, on the contrary, in either sex to be submitted to the most elaborate and prolonged processes in order to bring about those conditions which detumescence relieves. A state of tumescence is not normally constant, and tumescence must be obtained before detumescence is possible. The whole object of courtship, of the mutual approximation and caresses of two persons of the opposite sex, is to create the state of sexual tumescence.'[1]

How then is tumescence achieved under the rather unfavourable circumstances of ghotul life? The buildings and surroundings of the dormitory are a powerful stimulant. These little huts, rich with tender and romantic association, the waving forest trees around, the stillness of the night, perhaps a moon, the bright fire in the courtyard, the tinkling bells tied to a chelik's waist, the distant song of motiari on their way—cannot fail to make the hearts of boy and girl beat faster.

The routine of a ghotul evening is a carefully devised preparation for intercourse, a tonic to deficient libido. First of all, the sense of touch is vividly stimulated by the combing and massaging. Havelock Ellis quotes Bain as saying that 'touch is both the alpha and omega of affection', and he stresses 'tenderness' as the characteristic 'quality of affection which is founded directly on sensations of touch'.[2] This exactly describes what I have often noticed about the motiari's technique of massage. Beginning with great vigour,

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 53.
[2] Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection*, p. 6.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883 832 almost roughly, it grows gentler and gentler until at last the girl's hands are moving caressingly, tenderly over the arms and bodies of their boys, rousing affection and stirring with every gesture new desire.

The use of the comb to titillate the skin has a similar effect: Muria boys and girls are susceptible to tickling, which has been described as 'the most intellectual mode of touch sensation and that with the closest connexion with the sexual sphere'. As the motiari dresses her chelik's hair and with her comb gently tickles and stimulates his back and arms, he responds by fondling her breast, by stroking her legs (which are usually placed round his body; as she massages, the girl often grips the boy's waist between her knees) or by boldly tickling her. Certain types of massage are specially exciting. The girl stands above the boy, bending over him, and rubs downwards, passing her hands over the stomach down to the specifically erogenous region which thus receives a powerful tonic; sometimes she massages the legs, pushing her hands right up to the groin.

It is curious that with all this, the kiss as a means of sensory excitement is but little used.[1] It is not unknown—far from it—but it is something that goes in fashions; a ghotul discovers it, as at More Berma, and then everybody kisses. But even then the kiss does not appear to be on the lips, nor does the tongue play any part; for the Muria the kiss is a highly concentrated form of massage with the lips upon the skin. Boys kiss the face and breasts; I have never heard of *fellatio* being practised, but it may be—the description of it causes no offence.

After touch, smell is a powerful stimulant. Charming is the freshness of the open hill and forest, but more charming still, say the chelik, is the smell of perspiration, oil, wet earth, a suggestion of urine, all tempered by the bitter-sweet wood-smoke, which is regarded as the peculiar aroma of the ghotul.[2] The ghotul smell is unforgettable; it is not unpleasant even to a stranger's nostrils; and boys have told me that they have found it a strong sexual stimulant. 'The smell of the wood-smoke in a girl's hair, how exciting it is!' exclaimed a chelik at Markabera. So is the smell of the cow-shed clinging to boy or girl, a clean healthy smell with good associations. At Temrugaon the boys loved the scent of the marigolds that the motiari put in their hair and declared them to be their favourite flower.

[515] No artificial scents are used, and this means that both boys and girls have to be very careful about bodily cleanliness; an unpleasant vaginal odour is mentioned as specially inhibiting to desire; there is a saying—*muh sundri gänd gendri*—however beautiful the face, if a girl has a dirty body, she will not be admired.

X883 832 535 But 'the most usual method of attaining tumescence', says Havelock Ellis, 'a method found among the most various kinds of animals, from insects and birds to man—is some form of the dance'.[3] 'It is everywhere the instinctive object of the male, who is very rarely passive in the process of courtship, to assure by his activity in display, his energy or skill or beauty, both his own

[1] It is a commonplace of anthropology that primitive peoples do not kiss; I have always wondered how investigators can be so sure of this. The ordinary word in Gondi is *bariydna*, 'to kiss'. Trench says that the word as used in Betul—*barvdna*—means 'to kiss, of humans, to nose, of dogs'. Ward gives *sahilo* as a Gondi word for kiss used in the Mandla District (*sähina* means 'to lick'). I also found the Muria using a word *levandi*, which was said to mean 'kiss', but I am doubtful about this.

[2] The Uraon *dhumburia* have a quite different smell, in which the odour of urine is much more prominent. The Bison-horn Maria again have a strong, and rather attractive, smell, not unlike the Savara but quite distinct from the Muria.

[3] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 53.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

passion and the passion of the female. Throughout nature sexual conjugation only takes place after much expenditure of energy.'[1] And so the ghotul evening usually begins with vigorous dances and games, many of them frankly provocative of the sexual emotions. The splendid parade of the Mandri dance, the intimacies of the Hulki, the suggestiveness of some of the games are invaluable as a preparation for tumescence. There is a proverb *Rela rela bonda pala*—'If you start with singing Rela you end with the satisfaction of desire'. It must be noted that it is not only the chelik who by the energy of their display excite the motiari; the girls' games and dances are equally powerful stimulants. In one of these games, the girls bend forward, each holding a stick in her hand to represent a penis, and dance with jerky movements of the buttocks that closely simulate the sexual process. As they dance they sing,

Nên nân chéngro,	Little little prawn hairs,
Bare lân hînde,	Very long thorn,
Kaha gai ho,	Where has he gone,
Nandpurihâr Râja?	The Nandpurihar Raja?

The 'little prawn hairs' are the pubic hairs and the long thorn is the penis of the chelik. In the Jhoria Endamma, the girls also sing songs about sexual congress.

V

We have already seen, particularly in Chapter XI, something of the scope of sexual opportunity offered by the ghotul as also the limitations it imposes on the normal process of sexual selection. Under these conditions do the chelik and motiari really 'fall in love'? What happens to the tenderness of devotion, the tensions and despairs of passion, the idealizing of the adored object which is still, to the majority of Europeans, essential to any proper relationship between the sexes? Or does life in the ghotul, as Dalton said of the Uraon dormitory, 'sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'?

It is possible that the Muria, in the diffused tenderness of corporate affection, in their simple and natural view of sexual congress, in their rational and realistic attitude to one another, have achieved something better than the sentimental raptures of the lover in the novelette 'sighing like furnace' for an impossible ideal.

Many chelik and motiari seem to pass through their ghotul period without any very passionate love-affairs, content and happy with the ghotul tradition of love. Others, in the course of their seven or eight ghotul years, experience one or two vivid and exciting adventures which may last only a few months and which interrupt but illuminate the general course of their less intense amours. Others again, of a different temperament, are always falling in love and out of it, coveting other cheliks' 'wives', arranging to meet girls outside in the forest or visiting them when the others are asleep. 'Love often makes us break the rules,' said a chelik at Kuntpadar.

For across the calm sea of unstrained, unfrustrated affection, there blow sudden gales and storms. A new girl comes to the village; a boy suddenly awakes to the charm of a motiari he has known for years; a chelik displays himself as a popular hero and draws every heart; little girls and boys grow up

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 32. The sex-dance of the sub-human primates 'consists of an erect swaggering waddle quite different from the usual mode of locomotion. No doubt its function is to intimidate and prepare the female for sexual submission to the dominant male.'—Clifford Allen, *The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities* (Oxford, 1940), p. 27. See also H. Bingham, *The Sex Development in Apes* (Baltimore, 1928).

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

and in their maturity reveal new opportunities. Chelik and motiari are then disturbed, devastated, broken just like anyone else; they fall in love. 'The best love is the first; that is the work of a madman. The rest is the result of an arrangement.' How do boys set about satisfying their passion? And even when it is far less intense than this, how do they approach a new girl whom they desire to win? How do they even persuade the girl with whom they regularly sleep to allow them consummation—for in most ghotul, though a girl is bound to sleep with one of the chelik, she need not have congress with him unless she wants to.

Love-making begins, said a chelik at Bandopal, 'with laughing, smiling and dancing together. Then we arrange to meet in the fields or forest, perhaps by a stream. The boy gives her a carved comb. She steals a little money from her parents, and buys beads to make him a necklace. When it is dark she gives it to him. He wears it at night, but in the day he keeps it carefully hidden.'

In the remote approach to the beloved, gifts play an important part. The chelik make hair-pins, wooden blocks for the back hair, pretty little combs and small tobacco-pouches. The motiari respond with bead-necklaces, bead-bands, ear-pendants, and even mats. Mirrors are popular gifts on either side. The gift of a comb is regarded as a sign that one's intentions are really serious; in some ghotul it may not be given directly, but must pass through the Kotwar's hands so that he may keep a check on ghotul romance. Some girls accumulate a great number of these ornaments; it does not necessarily mean that they have many, but rather that they have devoted, lovers. The Likhen of Kanhargaon made twelve combs for his beloved Surtao; when she danced, she used to remove them and give them to him for safe keeping.

[831] Many of these gifts promote a chelik's suit not only by pleasing the girl, but by a more direct solicitation. The boys carve tiny symbols of the vagina or of a penis in erection, they draw breasts and even the pimples round the areola. They make these drawings or carvings on combs or tobacco pouches, and on the walls or pillars of the ghotul and on trunks of trees in the forest. Sometimes they carve breasts on the wooden pillows they use at night. These symbols, they say, often make it easier to open a conversation.

When girls fall in love with boys, they show their devotion by doing things for them. They take their dirty clothes to the stream for washing. They do their hair with special attention. They carry their drums. They bring secret presents of liquor or tobacco from their homes. They go to the jungle for little gifts of fruit. Such attentions quickly win the chelik's heart.

The pangs and sorrows of frustrated love are rarely, I think, experienced. Even where desire is strong, it is tempered by the great range of sexual opportunity. 'Is there a lack of tigers in the jungle?' A girl who is attracted by a boy but who, for some reason, cannot win him, says philosophically enough, 'What is the use of rice in someone else's grain-bin?' and finds another lover. A boy says, 'If not today, I will plough the field tomorrow'.

VI

Such is the remote approach to what the Muria regard as the really important thing in human relations, sexual congress. We must now consider the more immediate approach to this critical and definite expression of love, without which no friendship can be real.

Motiari are often shy and unwilling; they are afraid of pregnancy; sometimes they are just not interested in that particular boy; they are well aware

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

883X
836

of the seductive power of modesty. None of the evidence suggests that congress in the ghotul is readily achieved. It is not a place where girls are 'easy'; a chelik has no harder work than this.

A very important ghotul tradition is that a chelik must not rush a girl. It is considered improper to have intercourse with a motiari the first time you sleep with her—though doubtless there are offenders against this exacting code. A boy must approach a girl carefully and with respect; he must ensure that she is emotionally prepared for him; it is a sin to have intercourse before the girl is 'ready'. How many civilized people regulate their lives with such wisdom?

A chelik in Atargaon was in love with a girl for months, but she always repelled him. He took her to the Dhawadai bazaar and on the way begged her to be kind. She still refused, fearing he would make her pregnant. At last he gave her two bottles of liquor, and even then she only yielded when he solemnly swore to accept the responsibility if there was a child. A former Chalki of Telanga had a similar experience. He was in love with the girl he slept with, but she would never yield to him. He too took her to a bazaar and treated her to liquor and parched rice. She said, 'Your heart and mine are one; surely I will give you all you want. But now if I become pregnant, I shall have to carry a load that should be borne by two bullocks, not by one. If you promise to share the load, you can do what you will.' The Chalki promised; she gave herself to him; within a year she had conceived; and the boy kept his word and married her.

I will now quote a few documents, which are so much more valuable than general statements, about the immediate approach to intercourse. Each describes the first contact of the boy with that particular girl. At Munjmeta a chelik described how,

> If a peasant leaves his village and comes to another, his sons and daughters enter the new ghotul. If the new chelik can find a girl who has no partner [this is one of the ghotul where boys and girls are 'married'], he sleeps with her, taking her in his arms but doing no more. The next day he touches her breasts, and that day and the next he plays with her, tickling, stroking, fondling till he is sure she will not mind. She may still stop him doing anything for a day or two more. Then after a time, he excites her greatly; when all are asleep, he touches her knees, he pushes them a little; if she doesn't cry out, he opens them, he undoes her pubic cloth, and goes to her.

Another account comes from Kapsi, a beautiful village under the shadow of the Abujhmar Hills.

> We never try to have a girl the first day we sleep with her. We play with her first, and only when she is ready and excited do we go to her. It happens like this. After some days of sleeping together the chelik says to his motiari, 'We have slept together for such a long time now; won't you let me eat your tobacco?' The motiari replies, 'But I haven't any tobacco; how can I give you what I haven't got?' He says, 'O yes you have, only you're hiding it somewhere'. She says now, 'I've never done it; I don't know what to do'. If she goes on refusing, he gets angry and says, 'For so many days you have slept on my mat; you have warmed yourself with my blanket; I have given you combs and rings, and all the world knows I love you. But after tonight don't sleep with me again. My life is hurt. Yet for many days my life was in you.' Then he turns his back on her and pushes

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

her off his mat. When that happens she soon becomes sorry and flings her arms round him saying, 'Why are you angry? We are always together; we will meet tomorrow'. Later, when all are asleep, she opens her cloth and lets him have his way.

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that just as it is the motiari who rule the sexual side and make the sleeping arrangements in the modern type of ghotul, so in both types it is the motiari who take the lead in actual congress. 'When a girl first goes to the ghotul,' said a motiari at Binjhli, 'she is sent to a chelik. She sits down by his mat and says, "Won't you give me a camping-site?" The chelik answers, "Lie down and sleep". The girl is always frightened at first, but she should make no fuss even if it hurts her, for then everyone would hear and laugh. A boy must never ask a girl to sleep with him. It is we who make the arrangements.' 'At first', I was told, 'it is the boy who is shy. But the first long steady look of the motiari encourages him, and afterwards he takes the lead.'

I will give finally a charming record, recorded at Phanda by Shamrao Hivale, of the way a chelik and motiari in love talk to one another.

'All day you were in my eyes,' says the chelik. 'You went to that village, and I kept on looking at it and saying to myself, "She is there".'

'Yes, I went away,' responds the motiari, 'but I felt as if you were just behind me. I could see your shadow by me all the time.'

'All day long I felt as if you were actually talking to me.'

'I said to myself, "Now the sun stands overhead; he must have returned from the jungle with his wood; perhaps he is resting, perhaps he is drinking his *jāva*".'

'I felt as if I should take you away, and talk to you alone, and never hear anyone else's voice again.'

'I never want to hear anyone else either.'

'Do you know what I did in the afternoon, when you had come home and then gone out fishing? I was ploughing, but I felt I must look at you, so I left my plough and hid under a bush by the river. There I could see you fishing and I felt very happy. After a little while I went back to my plough.'

VII. The Sexual Act

Kosra ke kīte asan Muria ke lote. As is the reaping of millet, so is the intercourse of the Muria.—Muria proverb

In the ghotul there is no ceremony of sexual initiation, no formal rite of defloration, no permission (save in a few ghotul) is needed from the leaders for the first or any other intercourse. 'Desire is not controlled by rules, nor is our copulation.'

From their earliest days in the ghotul the little chelik and motiari play together until gradually, imperceptibly the vaginal entrance is enlarged and the hymen disappears without a tear. 'We used to behave,' said Nari, 'exactly like little bulls and cows, sporting together till the bull could penetrate.' 'When you sleep with a girl night after night,' said the Antar of Jamkot, 'however small you may be, as long as flesh becomes wood, you try to beat her with it.' And the Budhkar of Kapsi described how he quarrelled with his parents and eloped with his still immature wife. 'She was too young, and for a long time I only played with her and was quite happy with that till she was mature.'

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

For it is not considered proper for the older boys to have congress with a motiari till she has passed the menarche. 'Real happiness only comes when you are both mature. Of course the kids do it, but without the falling of water there's little pleasure. It is like eating a raw fruit. There is no sweetness in it. It is like rice without salt.' This judgement comes from Kajen; another is from Kabonga. 'To try to have a girl before she is mature is as hard as for a pig to dig up roots. Sometimes it manages it; it gets the root up and enjoys it. But it prefers its ordinary food.' The Kotwar of Temrugaon said, 'The first time I did it was with a little girl and it was very painful. She didn't like it either. One ought not to dig in the field of an immature girl, for one's *pahi* (digging-stick) may get damaged.' 883X 833 836

But after a girl's first menstruation, said Raunu of Jhakri, 'everyone plans to be the first'. Even now, however, the girl must not be forced or hurried; she must be wooed, persuaded, loved into yielding. Sometimes girls who are afraid of intercourse succeed in resisting the chelik for a long time. Often the first serious sexual experience of a girl is during a marriage, when everyone is excited and perhaps a little drunk, and no one asks questions or notices what is going on.

The ghotul leaders do not interfere unduly with the young children, but they see that they receive proper sexual training and instruction. 'As a young bullock is broken to the plough, so a young boy is taught.' The evidence for this sort of statement is best presented in actual 'documents'. Here is one from Kapsi. 883X 864 836

> A big girl teaches a little boy by letting him fondle her breasts and hug her. Then she opens and spreads her legs and makes the little boy lie on her breasts. She shows him how to open her clothes and insert the little penis with his hand. The first time the boy doesn't know what to do and the juice comes out too soon. But the next day she says, 'You only pressed me last night, nothing was done properly. I had no pleasure'. The boy replies, 'Today I'm really ready; now I know what to do'.

In Munjmeta, the Melia recalled how he learnt to perform the sexual act from the very descriptions of the older boys. And in Markabera, the Diwan said,

> A little boy doesn't need to be taught anything. Does a young crab have to be taught how to dig earth? But the elder boys generally tell them how to do it. When the little boys tell them their secrets and how they tried but failed, the older chelik show them the best way. The older girls do the same for the little girls. Sometimes older girls who get fond of little boys teach them themselves. But we learn everything by being in the ghotul. How can the little boys check themselves? Who doesn't feel a desire to eat when he sees people enjoying a feast in his presence?

Thus from a very early age the young chelik and motiari are trained in sexual technique, both by example and by actual instruction. A boy does not approach his marriage bed a virgin, but neither does he go to it a fool.

The immediate sexual approach and the technique of copulation practised by chelik and motiari are conditioned by the circumstances of ghotul life. Normal sexual congress should take place within the ghotul. It is believed that this precaution lessens the chances of conception (there is a 'safe region' rather than a 'safe period'); it protects boy and girl from the calamitous interference of magic; and it imposes a certain degree of restraint and discipline. 883X 836 833

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Naturally there are many breaches of the rule; at marriages and festivals, on dancing expeditions and during everyday work in field and forest, chelik and motiari unite in intercourse—but this is regarded as irregular, not exactly condemned, but accepted as outside the routine.

This fact alone is sufficient to make the ghotul tradition almost unique. For here is a company of boys and girls, many of them close relatives, who perform the sexual act in public, often in a single room. For it is public, even though veiled by the mask of darkness and a convention that no one should watch his neighbour. In some of the bigger ghotul, of course, the boys and girls are able to thin out a little; they can scatter in the different huts; in the hot weather they can sleep out in the compound. But during a large part of the year chelik and motiari sleep together in one small smoky room. They do not care to leave the warmth and security of their cosy ghotul for the dangerous and inconvenient discomfort of field or jungle. So we find brothers performing the sexual act before their sisters, and elder brothers in the forbidden presence of their younger brothers' 'wives'. Sometimes they are so crowded together that they have great difficulty in achieving coitus without waking up their neighbours.

For this reason, because intercourse must be with all the secrecy possible, without display and without disturbance, the normal method of copulation inside the ghotul is not unlike the characteristic European method—the girl lies prone on her back, and the boy stretches himself upon her, forcing her legs apart and often raising them to place them round his thighs.

But when the lovers meet outside the ghotul, they are able to indulge more varied postures. At Jhakri the chelik knew of four—the girl prone on her back and the youth kneeling or squatting before her; both sitting and facing one another; the youth prone and fully extended above the girl who sometimes raises her legs and sometimes extends them; and both standing, the girl supported against a tree or wall. At Palari, a chelik said, 'Usually we lie flat, but when a boy is very happy he sits above her.'

A former Sirdar of Singarpuri described the difference between intercourse with a motiari in a crowded ghotul and with one's own wife in a private room. 'To have a motiari is like living on borrowed money; you are always anxious, and afraid someone will notice what you're doing. But with your own wife at home, you can have her lying down, you can have her standing up, you can have her from the front, you can have her from behind. She is like a good crop which you can eat till you can eat no more.'

But copulation *a posteriori* is generally considered improper. There still linger stories probably imaginary, that the soldiers who raped Muria women during the Rebellion of 1911 took them in this way. There is a ribald story current in the Bara Dongar Pargana of a married couple who wearied of the constant publicity and monotony of intercourse in a crowded home.

> So one day the man took her to the jungle and said they would copulate like horses. He persuaded her, though with great difficulty, to become completely naked. He said, 'Now you lean forward and when I come to you from behind, making love-noises like a horse, you must kick me with one leg'. But they had both forgotten that she was wearing heavy anklets with sharp edges, and when she kicked, one of these cut his lip open, and it has not yet completely healed.

A more tragic, though equally ribald, tale comes from Gorma.

> A husband saw a pair of cranes copulating as he was going home drunk from the liquor-shop. He said in his mind, 'That's how I'll do it tonight'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

So thinking, he tied a sickle to his nose as a beak, bound a winnowing-fan on each arm, put a broom on his bottom. There he was, a bird. He mounted his wife from behind, flapping his wings and crying *kar-kar-kar*. But he knocked over a lamp, set fire to the house and was burnt to death.

A chelik and motiari generally agree to have congress at the time of the massage. When the girl lays the chelik's hand on her shoulder so that she can massage his arm, he squeezes it in a certain manner. This is how the Kotwar of Chandabera described it.

> They have agreed on it. They lie down together on the mat. He has his hand on her breast, but that means nothing. When all are asleep, he makes the sign. I cannot tell you what it is, but we all know it. She says 'Go away' but he knows she means yes. He doesn't kiss her or touch any part of her, save her breasts and shoulders. He raises himself and separates her legs. She at once unties her cloth. When he is on her, she puts his organ in its place with her hand. She says nothing, nor does he. They are very quiet. He must do it hard; unless you sweat, unless your rut (*masti*) leaves you, you are not satisfied. She says, 'Push on, push on (*alena, alena*)'. She won't let him go till she is satisfied. At last the word *Hai* comes from both their lips. They are no more drunken. *Eho lela kenda raiyār ashe hong dayār*. When it goes out through her ears, her temper is cooled.

Bindo, the old Muria of Benur, recalled a love affair of sixty years ago.

> I used to sleep with the Malko in the ghotul. Though she would be lying by my side, I did not go to her at first, for I was the head of the ghotul and thought I oughtn't to. But after two or four days, Malko caught hold of my penis and put it between her thighs. Even then I did nothing. Then the girl got very angry and refused to sleep with me for some days. But at last she came again to my mat and this time I went to her. After that we often had intercourse together.

This elementary form of masturbation by girls is known as *dinga-dinga* and seems to be common. But it must be noted that it is a preparation for normal intercourse and not (as so often in Africa) a substitute for it. In Masora the chelik said that 'when a motiari wants a boy, she catches hold of his penis and plays with it till he goes to her'.

The function of the clitoris is not unknown. It is usually prominently portrayed in drawings or carvings of the vagina. Its history is traced in the myths. To the male storyteller, it is a slightly ludicrous object, a parody of the penis, and a mention of it never fails to raise a laugh. In intercourse, said a Muria at Sirpuri, 'the clitoris becomes violently agitated when it sees the penis approaching'. The Antar of Masora said, 'When it sees the penis coming, the clitoris smiles'.

The Muria believe it is the woman who takes the lead and sets the pace. A curious illustration of this is the fact that, contrary to what I believe to be the almost universal practice in village India, the girl herself undoes her pubic cloth.[1] Elsewhere this is considered immodest in a girl and unmanly in her

[1] 'The folds of the sari which are tied in the front are called *tirani*, which is a very significant word in Indian love-making. The knot of the sari is to be untied by the man when the lovers unite.'—D. Bhagwat, *Folk-songs from the Satpura Valleys* (Bombay, 1940), p. 22.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

833 partner; but here, so far from being thought improper, it is not unknown for a girl to attract a chicken-hearted chelik in this way.

Woman is indeed regarded as insatiable. 'Woman is earth; man cannot plough her.' The proverb means that as a single plough cannot break up the universal earth, so no man can really satisfy a woman. Here we have the opposite view to that commonly held in Europe, that sex is the man's privilege and the woman's duty; in aboriginal India, sex is the man's duty and the woman's right. It is her compensation for the embarrassments of menstruation and the pains of child-bearing. She has no more powerful means of dominating and subjugating the male.

It is difficult to say what a Muria regards as the normal frequency of intercourse. Among adults it is often said that a Muria woman insists on a daily connexion until the first child is born; after that twice a week is enough.' A wife is very passionate until she gets a child, but then the child takes her passion and her strength away.' Yet when a husband is more ardent it gives great satisfaction to his partner. 'If he goes to her three times during the night she beams with happiness and tells her friends, "I saw no sleep tonight. He gave it all to me. His life was in me all night".'

[595] This tradition imposes a great strain on the polygamous husband and may explain why multiple marriage is so rare. A former Chalki of Bayanar had two wives. 'We never quarrelled so long as I went daily to both. I didn't mind for I was strong enough. After all, it is only your land, and every man tills as much as he can. All you need is a pair of strong bullocks and a plough.'

A childless couple are often driven to excess in a vain attempt to stir the 833 mysterious forces that cause conception. A Daroga of More Berma told me, 842 'My penis has been worn out by seven years' hard work, just as a bit of cloth is torn to bits after months of heavy wear, but still I cannot get a child'. And a man at Alor said, 'You may work night and day, but unless God fills the womb with hair, it is all of no avail'.

X883 In the ghotul sexual practice varies. In places where there has recently been a pregnancy, the leaders insist on restraint as a contraceptive measure, 833 and sometimes demand that their permission be taken before indulgence. But this is emergency legislation, and the ghotul soon slips back into freer ways. In the stricter ghotul, the chelik and motiari do not have congress more than two or three times a week. At Esalnar, they claimed that they did not exceed once a week—*for* here they were much concerned to prevent conception.

But elsewhere I have heard the chelik laugh at such moderation. 'The penis is the *datun* (toilet-twig) of the vagina and should clean it every day.' In Binjhli, where chelik and motiari only sleep together once a week, on Fridays, they said that they had intercourse outside the ghotul every day, and at least three times on Fridays.

In most ghotul, the motiari expects her chelik to approach her sexually every day. 'If the boy does nothing, then the following evening when she is combing his hair she says, "Was it a day or a night yesterday? You forgot it was night. Why were you lying beside me like a corpse?" The boy feels very ashamed and says that he had a bad head or was very tired after working in the fields. "But I'll tire you out tonight", he says.'

'A night without intercourse', said a motiari at Chandabera, 'seems twelve years long.'

834 The Muria tradition, which is always wise and sane in sexual matters, interrupts the routine with many holidays. The regular monthly rest during the catamenial period of wife or motiari is a boon alike to husband and chelik. During pregnancy and after it there is a fairly long period of abstinence. During

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pregnancy, intercourse should cease after the fifth month: there is unanimous testimony on this point. After childbirth—so many Muria claim—a husband does not approach his wife for one, or even two, years. 'He must not go to her till the child is weaned.' This may possibly be true of a few villages under strong Hill Maria influence, but even there it seems to me doubtful. There is certainly a desire, however, to space confinements properly and 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain'. But the ground dries long before this. 834

Elsewhere I have heard it said that 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'—an important point, in that it places the responsibility for resuming intercourse on the woman. In Alor, the Muria said that a period of six months was sufficient, in Chandabera that intercourse was resumed when the child first smiled. In Chameli the villagers spoke of a case where a child had died because the mother gave birth to another during the lactation period of the first. 'The child drank the milk of blood.'

These 'holidays' serve a valuable psychological, as well as a physiological, purpose. In the ghotul, where their close and constant contact might easily make chelik and motiari utterly weary of one another, life is frequently broken up. For months the chelik go to watch in the fields, and the motiari are alone in the ghotul. The menstruating girl is not only sexually taboo; she does not come to the ghotul at all—and is all the more welcome when she reappears. The arrangement that chelik and motiari should go on separate dancing expeditions is psychologically sound, as is proved by the enthusiastic welcome they receive on their return. 883 833

VIII. Love-charms

In an atmosphere like that of the ghotul, where frustration and sexual anxiety are comparatively rare, the use of love-charms is less common than among other aboriginal people. But the Muria are acquainted with such charms and sometimes use them, though the results may not always be permanent. 'If I get a girl in this way,' said a Muria at Remawand, 'my store of rice grows less, for such a union is not a yoking of Mahapurub's house. The true yoking comes of its own accord.' It is said that 'girls won by magic run by deceit'. 883 837

The charms are generally based on simple principles of sympathetic magic. For example, at Alor the Gaita said that the way to win a reluctant lover was to pursue a pair of *sarus* cranes. These cranes, as is well known, always go about in pairs, and it is said that if one of them dies its mate will quickly follow suit.

> When the cranes fly up into the air one or two feathers may fall. One of these must be caught before it reaches the ground. Then offer it liquor and a black chicken, burn it, tie the ashes in a little bundle to your waist and somehow or other touch the girl with it. Then you will love each other like a pair of cranes. But this is a dangerous charm for as the two cranes always die together so if the girl dies you will die too.

Another curious charm comes from Gorma.

> When you go to relieve yourself, wait till a pig comes along to eat your excreta. Leaving your cloth undone, jump on the pig and pull out a little hair from the back of its neck or forehead. Tie the hair in your cloth and do yourself up. Wait till a Sunday, and then push the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
832

girl you want with your left arm and she will follow you as a pig follows your excreta.

Here are some other charms.

Go to the Siraha and ask his help. Beg some of the ashes of the incense he has offered to the gods and some blessed rice. When you get a chance give this to your girl to eat and she will never leave you.

Catch a pair of sparrows and on a Sunday take them to a cross-roads and sacrifice them by cutting off their heads. Make two little holes in the ground side by side, put a head in each and cover them with earth. Leave them all night and the following morning go to examine them. If the female head has moved into the male hole, you will be successful. Now remove the heads and offer them liquor and a black chicken. Burn them and tie up the ashes in a bundle at your waist. Next Sunday, somehow or other touch your girl with the bundle without her knowing and she will come to you as the sparrow's head went to its mate.

On a Saturday go to the jungle and invite a *kari-bhulan* shrub to help you by sprinkling rice and liquor over it. Go next day and dig it up. If the roots are stuck together, you will know that all will be well. Take the roots home and get some aromatic leaves. Promise a goat to Lingo if you succeed.[1] Fry the roots and the leaves together, pound them up and mix a little in your girl's food without her knowing.

A similar charm is made of parasites growing on the bhansuli, bantga, kolicha-buta, gawai and phunder trees. They are collected and burnt. A black chicken is killed and its blood dropped upon them with the words, 'I give thee life to win me such and such a girl'. Then the ashes are tied up and the girl is touched with them in the usual way.

In Kolur village there was a Muria who claims that the tobacco in his pouch is so full of love-charms that he can win any girl he wants with it.

Two special types of charm must be mentioned. In Padbera there are stones which represent historic Muria who died fighting. These stones are regarded as very potent and boys or girls scrape a little of the stone to make charms. Once the Munshi (Mainu Uika) of the Bakulwahi ghotul got a little of this stone and offered it rice and liquor saying, 'I have brought you a gift, fulfil my desire and I will give you yet more'. Then he gave the scrapings in some tobacco to the Jhalko and the girl became so entranced that she eloped with him and they were married.

A similar custom attaches to the stone remains of Neng Mudial, about whom the Muria tell a romantic story:

Long ago there lived two brothers, Tande and Gunshi, at Chaurang village. Between them these two brothers had eight wives. They had an old servant called Neng Mudial. One night this old man by his love magic carried off all eight wives. He took them first to Kotpar village, then to a very beautiful spot near the junction of Bongapal, Badgai and Bandopal where he dug three tanks and prepared bricks to build a fort.

Now when the brothers Tande and Gunshi awoke in the morning and found their wives and their servant missing, they were filled with fury

[1] In Mandla, a lover promises a white goat to the Rai Linga Hill if his suit succeeds.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond AW32
Muria

and went out to find them. They searched for many days and at last when they were almost weary of their chase, they discovered Neng Mudial near the pile of bricks for the great fort he hoped to make. Neng Mudial was sitting at his food and asked them to wait a moment; he would discuss matters when he had finished. But they were so angry that they cut off his left hand. Then they threw him on the ground and cut off his testicles and penis. They threw the testicles to Chandabera, where they turned into stone and may still be seen. They threw his penis to Ban-Chapai and it is there to this day. The old man himself turned into a stone. Then the brothers found their wives and killed them all and returned sadly to Chaurang, where they died and are worshipped even now.[1]

The cult of Neng Mudial is still maintained at Chandabera, Bandopal and Bongapal, and annual offerings are made to his stones. The chelik believe that if after offering sacrifices they scrape a little from the stone testicle or penis and give it to their girls, these will be as certainly enticed as were the wives of Tande and Gunshi.

Closely allied to the use of love-charms is that of some sort of aphrodisiac. The Muria generally believe that a meat diet is useful for this, and especially the virile organs of the bear or goat.

It sometimes happens that when a motiari has succeeded in humbling a boy, taunted him with his lack of vigour and rather conspicuously bestowed her favours elsewhere, he wants to be revenged upon her. In order to do this, he prepares a very powerful tonic according to this prescription:

> Find a two- or three-year-old *dodka* cucumber plant with a parasite on it. Climb up without throwing your shadow on it and pick a bit without using your nails. Burn it and tie the ashes in a little bundle. Keep it in the house where the shadow of a menstruous woman or witch will not fall on it. Then at the time of intercourse tie it on your wrist or elbow and your thing will be as large as the cucumber and you can humble any girl who has scorned you.

An interesting use of a love-charm was recorded at Kabonga. The Sirdar told us that shortly after marriage, he was planning to elope with the Salki whom he had loved as a chelik. 'But my wife made a love-charm, and I fell in love with my own wife, and forgot the Salki.'

IX. Impotence

Stekel begins his great work on *Impotence in the Male*[2] with a solemn warning. 'In men love-inadequacy is increasing to an alarming degree, and impotence has come to be a disorder associated with modern civilization... The percentage of relatively impotent men cannot be placed too high. In my experience, hardly half of all civilized men enjoy normal potency. Nowadays ejaculatio praecox is no longer a disorder; it is the regular accompaniment of civilization.'[3] Among the Muria, however, cases of impotence of any kind are extremely rare. It is, I think, possible to affirm this with confidence,

[1] For a somewhat similar legend of Nakti turned into stone, cf. *JBORS*, Vol. II, p. 214.

[2] W. Stekel, *Impotence in the Male* (English Translation, New York, 1939), p. 1. Compare also Dickinson's judgement. 'Our most grievous male problem of maladjustment is premature ejaculation and it is only second in disastrous effect to blundering technique'. —R. L. Dickinson, *Human Sex Anatomy* (London and Baltimore, 1933), p. 82.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X983
833

because nobody has any reticence in discussing the subject. It is in fact one of the things the people rather enjoy telling you, it is something unusual and interesting—a rather cruel joke, but still a joke. Out of 2000 married men, only 3 were absolutely impotent and only 9 relatively impotent—these admitted that their wives had betrayed them because 'they could not satisfy them', almost certainly a reference to ejaculatio praecox.

In view of this it is strange to read in Stekel: 'One may attempt to solve this question by studying the erotic life of primitive races. It is erroneous to think that primitive peoples experience a richer sexuality and possess a stronger sexual appetite than civilized man. On the contrary, exhaustive research proves that sexuality in primitive races is subject to numerous limitations and reveals a more rut-like (periodic) character. Their erotic life is poor in comparison with the ecstasies of civilized man. The psychic component of love is almost unknown to them.' When we turn to the footnote to see what Stekel means by 'exhaustive research' we find references to only two books—Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and Buschan's *Die geschlechtlichen Ausserungen der Naturvolker im Handbuch der Sexualwissenschaften*. As a matter of fact, there has hardly been any research at all, let alone any 'exhaustive research', into the sexual life of primitive man. Such intimate knowledge as we have is far from supporting Stekel's generalizations, which appear to be based on the opinions of missionaries, officials and travellers, the most untrustworthy of all informants.

Muria libido, I agree, is somewhat weak, but since Muria institutions are well adapted to correct this deficiency, the matter is of little practical importance. The essential point remains. Out of 2000 marriages, only 12 were ruined by impotence. Had they been in civilization, according to Stekel the figure might have been in the neighbourhood of 1000.

In Muria society impotence is rare as a fact; it is very common as an accusation. This will account for the comparatively large vocabulary of terms, mainly Halbi and Chhattisgarhi, used to describe it, for to a Muria girl a sexual failure of twenty-four hours merits the charge. The words, however, are not really very unkind or scornful. *Terwa* means 'crooked', *thotha* means 'blunt', *baila* means 'a bullock' and, after all, a bullock is a very useful animal. Other words are *karba* (small), *larga* (crooked) and *murda* (a corpse). *Thât ni ude* means that 'the cart pole does not rise into position'. The only Gondi word for this condition is the interesting *doko*, which is a negative form of *dokāna* or *tokāna*, meaning 'to peck'. This word is often used of chickens which refuse to eat consecrated rice at a festival and *doko*, therefore, seems to imply the inability to peck at one's proper food. The fact that only one of these expressions is in Gondi still further emphasizes the absence of impotence among the unsophisticated aboriginals. Moreover the rather tolerant attitude implied in these terms of abuse suggests that the condition is sufficiently rare for no one to trouble himself very much about it.

In the ghotul, however, an impotent boy may have rather a bad time. 'God was making a woman but forgot what he was doing and stuck a bit of skin by mistake in front of the corpse,' said one pert motiari at Binjhli. 'If I were a man and like that, I would drown myself in the river,' said another. 'She is angry, for he keeps her dry as ashes: if he says a word, she is on fire.' 'A tree cannot grow without water, nor can love.' I have given at the beginning of this chapter the remarkable document that was recorded at Palli in which a girl who was unfortunate enough to be married to an impotent youth expressed her feelings. I have a taunt song on similar lines from Chikhli.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

883X
833
539

Here's a twig of the ebony tree,
Here's the twig you were telling me of.
No one can use it at either end.
I have offered water in a brass pot,
I have offered gruel in a leaf-cup,
I have served him rice in a dish,
I have given him curry in a leaf-cup,
But he does not speak to me.
He doesn't know what to do.
I cannot live just looking at his house,
I cannot live just to fill my belly.
I can only live if my heart is filled.
I will go away to my father's house.
How can I live so long without my proper work?

The symbols in this song are sexual. The brass pot, the leaf-cup, the dish offered by the girl to her husband, and his useless toilet-twig are recognized symbols of the female and male genitalia. In the concluding lines the girl declares, as she did at Palli, that life is something more than just looking after a house or filling one's stomach with food. The word in the eighth line which I have translated 'He does not speak to me' also means 'He does not have intercourse with me' and thus gives the key to the whole song.

883X
833

An impotent chelik's life in the ghotul is not altogether intolerable, for there are nearly always more boys than girls, and it does not matter very much if one of them has to sleep alone. But once the boy has got married, his position becomes desperate. A former Kotwar of the Kapsi ghotul was impotent. To cover his embarrassment he used to leave his wife at home and go to sleep in the ghotul. Naturally he was not very popular there, and after a time the motiari began to try to turn him out. They escorted him dancing and singing home to his wife, made him take her by the hand and said to her, 'Here's your husband. Sleep with him, beat him, do something with him; we don't want him in our ghotul'. Then they took a chicken from the house and went away, thus suggesting that they had again performed the final marriage rite when bride and bridegroom are put to bed together. After this had happened two or three times, the unfortunate youth gave up going to the ghotul—for he could not afford the continual loss of chickens—and went to sleep in any empty verandah or disused shed.

Boys who are married to older girls are accused by their wives of sexual inadequacy. A boy at Jamkot said, 'My wife was much older; how could my little penis please her? She used to go to her mother's house, and when I went to fetch her back, would say, "Do you think I can be happy sleeping with your pots and dishes? I want a man to live with".' At Karanji, the Mukhwan was also married to an older girl. 'My first wife was always dissatisfied because of my small penis. She used to leave me at home and go to dance the Chait Parab dances, for she came from the lowlands, and loved them. At last she met a man there who could please her, and left me. But my next wife was very happy.'

Such impotence is, of course, merely a symptom of immaturity. So also may be the cases reported of chelik who, though fully potent in the ghotul, find themselves impotent with their wives. This is usually attributed to a jealous motiari who resents her chelik being married to someone else. Ghasia, a very old Muria of Gatka, recalls how in his youth the Pissa of the ghotul was in love with him, and when he refused to marry her, made him impotent

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

by magic on his wedding-night with the result that his bride left him the next morning. But after the usual sacrifices, he was cured and claims that he was able to embrace his wife three or four times every night. At Karagaon a chelik was married when he was very young, but continued to live in the ghotul (which was *jodidār*) and was paired off with a much older motiari. When the time came for the boy to live with his wife, this motiari made him impotent by her magic so that he would always come to the ghotul and not stay with his wife. Unfortunately the charm was so powerful that the boy was impotent in the ghotul as well as in his house and both girls deserted him. After the Siraha had diagnosed the trouble, his parents offered food-sacrifice, and the boy recovered.

X. Sexual Deviations

'Investigation among a number of primitive peoples,' says Seligman, 'fails to discover any cessation of overt heterosexual interests during the years of the alleged latent period.'[1] This seems to be a sounder view than that expressed by older writers on the subject who, drawing much information from travellers' reports, ascribed to the aboriginal every form of sexual perversion. 'Among a large number of primitives,' says Muller-Lyer,[2] 'vices are to be observed which rank with those of Babylon and London . . . running the whole gamut from shameless eroticism through masturbation, tribadism, pederasty, and sodomy to the most obscene perversions.' 'Primitive men,' says Briffault,[3] 'exhibit no greater delicacy in regard to the satisfaction of their sexual instincts than in their diet. The objects that gratify the former are often as disgusting to us as those which satisfy their appetite'; and he goes on to speak of 'homosexual atrocities unknown to European vice and Nasamonian rites, the disgusting character of which passes all conception'. Most of the writers who so freely attribute to primitives the vices of Babylon and London have never themselves lived in primitive society; they are content to accept the biased views of missionaries and the highly-coloured exaggerations of travellers. It is remarkable that those who have lived among primitives with an open and scientific mind are generally of another opinion. Without question Seligman's view is true, probably of all Indian aboriginals, certainly of the Muria.

It is only where an imported prudery has disturbed the even course of ghotul life that there may be found an occasional deviation from the normal. In the Kalpatti Pargana, where the influence of Chhattisgarhi Gond has succeeded in sending the motiari home after spending an hour or two rousing the chelik to a high degree of unsatisfied tumescence, masturbation is not uncommon. I do not know what else the 'reformers' would expect. At Khutgaon a chelik said, 'After the girls have gone we feel lonely and dissatisfied, so we catch hold of the *khairbuta* [a tree which shakes - the penis] and milk it like a cow till the seed comes out. This is our pleasure'. In a few other ghotul also, where the girls go home for the night, I have been told that masturbation is practised as a measure of relief.[4]

[1] Seligman in *JRAI*, Vol. LXII, p. 213. Compare B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, p. 55.

[2] F. Muller-Lyer, *The Evolution of Modern Marriage* (London, 1930, translation of the Munich edition of 1913), p. 37.

[3] Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 398. Another writer taking the same view is Bloch, *The Sexual Life of our Times*, pp. 512ff.

[4] This kind of deviation, temporary and compensatory in character, has been observed for various animals. Allen quotes Bata who observed frogs that, unable to find suitable partners at mating-time, attempted to copulate with pieces of floating wood. Allen, op. cit., p. 10. Jenkins found that if rats were segregated sexually, homosexual

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

The Gondi words used to describe masturbation, *bonde karsāna* for the male, *penda karsāna* for the female, meaning 'penis game' and 'vagina sport', do not suggest any high degree of social condemnation. *Bonde karsāna* is in contrast to *bonde endanna*, the 'penis dance'; as I show elsewhere, *karsāna* and *endanna* do not differ so much in form as in occasion. *Bonde karsāna* then is the satisfaction gained out of due order, in the wrong way perhaps, yet only a game. *Bonde endanna* is the legitimate, sanctioned, dutiful performance of the penis on the dancing-ground of the vagina at the festival of sex. Sex is a holy thing, a marriage or a festival, and you do not play games at a festival. 839

Homosexual practices are very rare. There is the usual coarse play among boys; they catch hold of each others' genitals; they sometimes ride on each other in imitation of the normal sexual act; in Nayanar little boys were taught to massage the legs of their elders. There was a story in Dongrigura of two chelik who practised mutual masturbation, and in the same ghotul two little girls were caught 'lying together like man and wife'. Boys often embrace, sit in one another's arms, sleep together on their narrow mats under a single blanket—but this is all part of the general affection and intimacy of ghotul life. An experienced police official has told me that he has never known a case of sodomy from the ghotul, and the jail authorities in Jagdalpur, some of whom have had from twenty to thirty years' experience, say that homosexual interests are never manifested by the aboriginal prisoners.[1] 838

Erotic zoophilia is less common, as we might expect, than among other peasants, for at least in its more bestial forms it is, as Havelock Ellis says, 'the sexual anomaly of dull, insensitive and unfastidious peasants . . . the vice of the clod-hopper who is unattractive to women or inapt to court them'.[2] But the chelik are not dull, insensitive and unfastidious, still less are they inapt to court women. Both boys and girls, however, enjoy the mixoscopic aspect of zoophilia, though Bindo's statement that 'fish copulate like snakes, winding round each other' does not seem to reveal very accurate observation. The chelik often dress up as animals and simulate their copulation. 839

There is no specific word in Gondi for bestiality, which is regarded as ludicrous and unnecessary rather than repulsive. Like all deviations, it is supposed to belong to the civilized world rather than to the Muria Raj. The chelik recall how it was a Gond of Kanera who was jailed for going to a she-goat and a Rawat of Bayanar who was caught with his cow. At Ulera they talk about a Ganda who went to his mare. Members of these castes can hardly perhaps be called 'civilized', but the Muria regard them as Hindus and representative of a different culture.

Allen points out that 'many animals are unsuitable for sexual approach except sadistic ones, but no doubt whole hecatombs of animals have perished for this reason'.[3] The Muria are kind and gentle to animals, though a drunken priest may sacrifice a pig or cock with some cruelty.

behaviour began after a time and developed in proportion to the period of segregation. M. Jenkins, *Genetic Psychological Monographs* (London, 1928), Vol. III, pp. 457ff.

[1] Writing of the Ho, Majumdar has suggested that their low fertility rate may be due to sterility induced by a 'homosexual fixation'. 'The institution of village dormitories definitely fosters homosexuality. There is a system of fagging in these dormitories. The smaller boys serve those of larger growth, shampoo their limbs, comb their hair, and play the part of girls.'—D. N. Majumdar, *A Tribe in Transition* (London, 1937), p. 72. Unfortunately we know nothing about the Ho dormitories, and without knowing Majumdar's evidence, which he does not present, it is difficult to discuss his suggestion. But from a very brief investigation, it was evident that in the Ho dormitories the girls were segregated, and there is thus a different situation from that in Bastar.

[2] Havelock Ellis, *Psychology of Sex* (London, 1934), p. 154.

[3] Allen, op. cit., p. 85.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

839 679 An unusual case of cruelty, with a possibly sadistic basis, occurred in 1934. Chaitu was then a young Muria of Khuregaon, and had been the Silledar of the ghotul there. He lived with his wife, a son and a small sister called Sukti who was an idiot child, aged about seven, deaf and dumb from birth and physically incapable. Chaitu was apparently always very cruel to this child and used to beat her for not helping in the house or playing with his baby. On 3 March 1934 he moved all his household goods from his village in order to take them to Pahurbel, where he wanted to live. The goods went in a cart and the family followed on foot. Poor little Sukti was unable to keep up with the rest and several times fell down crying. Chaitu was angry at this and beat the child with an axe, striking her on the right hand, thigh and foot. He dragged her along the ground some yards, struck her on the top of the head and on the left forearm with the axe and twisted her neck till she died. They left the body there and went on their way.

Chaitu was a young man when he did this cruel deed and did not seem to think he had done anything wrong, for the dead girl—he said—was an idiot and he killed her in a fit of temper. He was sentenced to transportation for life.

839 Exhibitionism and scoptophilia are unknown as *substitutes* for normal sexuality. Chelik and motiari are continually enjoying sexual congress in company; every night a boy can watch his neighbours if he wants to, he can show off his sexual prowess if he feels so inclined. Actually there is a strong tradition against 'peeping', except on the night when the chelik shut up in a room the newly-married pair. Then they may listen and try to peep through cracks in the wall.

Older men and women often indulge in 'indecent exposure' at weddings. I once saw a leading—and normally most respectable—Muria at Nayanar strip off his loin-cloth and dance naked at a wedding in front of a large company of women, including his own daughters. Shamrao Hivale witnessed a similar incident during a festival at Masora. Old women imitate the sexual act and fondle each other's wrinkled breasts.

None of these exhibitions can be classed as psychopathic or abnormal; it is worthy of note that I have never heard of chelik and motiari exposing themselves; in the senile it is probably a simple method of attaining tumescence.

XI. Ceremonial Cross-dressing

838 Ceremonial cross-dressing has been recorded of a number of primitive peoples and many different explanations of the custom have been advanced. 'Among the lower races', says Havelock Ellis, 'the manifestations of Eonism may occur not only, as in civilization, in a sporadic and isolated way, but also sometimes endemically in groups' and he suggests that possibly this tendency may represent not, 'as we might have been tempted to suppose, a corrupt or over-refined manifestation of late cultures, but the survival of an ancient and natural tendency of more primitive man'.[1]

Seligman used the expression 'ceremonial cross-dressing' to describe what he observed in dances of the Marshall Bennet Islanders in Melanesia and among the Lotuko in Africa.[2] Similar customs have been reported of the Sea-Dyaks of Borneo and the Omaha; and from other parts of the world a long list of examples has been given by Crawley.[3] Sometimes the change of dress is inspired by a dream and occurs occasionally and in emergency; sometimes it

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Eonism*, p. 33. [2] Ibid., p. 35.
[3] E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. I, pp. 318ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

is a part of the regular ceremonial of a festival or marriage; sometimes it is due to 'supernatural' inspiration.[1] 838

[292]

FIG. 113. Lamana woman's jacket adorned with cowries and used by Muria men for the purposes of divination

In Bastar I have noted two forms of this cross-dressing. Men sometimes put on women's jackets adorned with cowries when they go to prophesy in trance before a god and reveal his will to their fellows. At the bigger clan-festivals you may see a dozen or more mediums dancing and gesticulating in a state of ecstatic excitement, all wearing round their bodies these gaily-coloured and rather incongruous blouses. 838 787 292

But this is the only occasion, I think, where the male aboriginals of Bastar put on women's dress. It is more common for women to dress up as men. Bison-horn Maria women of Dantewara sometimes put on male garments at the great Wijja Pandum and drive their men-folk out to the hunt which precedes the main business of the festival. The Muria have the same custom, and the unmarried girls, dressed up as boys, dismiss the men of the tribe for a ceremonial hunt on the success of which will depend the value of the annual harvest.[2] 838 796 292

[1] For the 'Change of Sex' motif in Indian fiction, see Penzer, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 231ff. and W. N. Brown, 'Change of Sex as a Hindu Story Motif' in *JAOS*, Vol. XLVII (1927), pp. 3ff.

[2] Thurston speaks of a similar custom among the Koyi, where the women 'dressed in their lords' clothes' drive the men out to hunt at the Bhudevi Pandaga or Festival of the Earth Goddess. He describes a procession held before such a hunt: 'About the middle of the day, we saw a procession approaching as on the previous day, but it consisted entirely of women, the drummers and swordsmen being women dressed up as

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

838 585 292 535 On the third day of a marriage, the motiari retire to the ghotul or their camp and dress up as chelik. They put on turbans, waistcoats and loin-cloths. They borrow boys' armlets for their arms, put knives in their waist-bands, and approach the marriage-booth carrying axes, branches of mango leaves and bunches of *dab* grass. They dance up to the marriage-booth, under which the bridegroom is seated, and ceremonially sweep it. Among the dancers is the bride disguised as a boy. All the dancers are in fact disguised, for they wind their turbans round and round their faces to make it as difficult as possible to tell them apart. As the girls go round and round the booth, they challenge the bridegroom to pick out his bride. He is supposed to be unable to do this, so at last, as the girls draw closer and closer to him, the bride suddenly darts out from among them and hits him on the back with her clenched fist. He jumps up and attempts to hit her back but she escapes and her fellow motiari do their best to protect her. After this the girls continue dancing for some time, then retire to their homes and remove their male disguise.[1]

This practice is called the Nemuldwar, the 'army of the bride and bridegroom', and the dance is the Choli Endanna or the Jhoria Endanna. The name Choli Endanna simply means 'the waistcoat dance' and refers to the male disguise. The word Jhoria probably means lowlander[2] and has been fully explained in Chapter I. It is now no longer used as the title of the tribe, which has become merged with the Muria. There is, however, a Jhorian Pargana or sub-division and it is said that the dance is so called because it originated here. Although the word Jhoria means 'lowlander' in comparison with the Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains, to the Muria and Gond of eastern Bastar it is the name of an older and more primitive people. The expression Jhoria Endanna, therefore, suggests a dance of old time and ancient tradition. It is the most primitive of all the marriage dances.

838 585 535 539 As the motiari approach and dance round the marriage-booth, which they do very slowly in a long straight line, each girl clutching her left-hand neighbour round the neck with one arm, while with the other she waves her bunch of grass and mango leaves to and fro as if she were sweeping a floor, they sing a number of songs. There is a considerable variety of these and I will give a few examples of different kinds. The first song refers to the ceremonial sweeping of the marriage-booth.

Diwān wiyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Wāyu dewa wāyu roy dewo!	Come girl, come Dewo!
Wiyār hayu wāyu roy dewo!	Come to sweep, girl, come Dewo!
Naling c'wo gorāng roy dewo.	The mandia is like sours fruit.
Gorāng wori ola roy dewoni.	She went to grind the mandia.

men. The chaunt and dance were as before, except that the pantomime abounded in the most indecent gestures and attitudes, all illustrative of sexual relations. One girl slipped (or pretended to) and fell. Whereupon, one of those playing a man's part fell upon her to ravish her. A rescue ensued amidst roars of merriment, and the would-be ravisher was in process of being stripped when our modesty compelled us to call an interval.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 66ff.

According to fanciful tradition, witchcraft began through a transvestite expedition. Marang Buru had decided to teach men witchcraft, but the women made them drunk and then 'put on pagris and dhoties and stuck goats' beards on their faces' and went to learn the magic art instead.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 422.

[1] At Pardhan marriages in Mandla, the bride is sometimes disguised as a boy and her future husband is challenged to find her. I found a similar test among the Binjhwar of Chhattisgarh. The custom is doubtless widely distributed.

[2] See pp. 19–27.

292

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!
Hirpeng ichak wejing roy dewo.
Wejeng usi ala roy dewo.
Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!
Parka pila wākeroa dewo,
Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!

Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
The rice is like chips of wood.
She went to husk the rice.
Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
She went with her baby on her back,
Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!

938
785
539

The next song is about the girls' disguise. The bridegroom cannot recognize the bride now, but he will recognize her all too well when the marriage is consummated.

Burga chodi layor.
Bāba kohore hore!
Nanāy layor intor.
Layāh ondak hitor,
Layah tadla hewong.
Murka portāna intor.
Ona chada māyuār
Māna here wāyor.
Mākh ise wariyāntor.
Dulkin chinka māyor,
Mulnāh chinka māntor
Layor ise ilāk.
Wāni muthka hewor.
Nāwāy āri iner.
Bāba kohore hore!

The boy is getting old.
Yet he calls himself a youth.
He collects the young girls,
He won't let them go.
He calls himself an orphan.
He says he'll see what happens
If we come near.
He frightens us away.
He can't recognize the bride,
But he'll know her tonight
If he really is a youth.
We are going to hit him.
He says, 'This is my wife'.

The next song explains itself. It must be remembered that each of these songs is being sung by girls led by the bride herself who insists over and over again that she is a boy.

Mutka hilāy wāl iona,
Nana jhoriyān layor.
Nākh kurse wariata,
Nana jhoriyān layor.
Pichāl tangiya khaj iona,
Nana jhoriyān layor.
Kariya koi kartana,
Nana jhoriyān layor.
Manda kai wāsiona,
Nana jhoriyān layor.

I come to beat him,
I am the Jhoria boy.
Seeing me he is afraid,
I am the Jhoria boy.
I have a small axe on my shoulder,
I am the Jhoria boy.
I am wearing a black coat,
I am the Jhoria boy.
I have come to clean the marriage-booth,
I am the Jhoria boy.

Another song seems simply to describe the various clothes and ornaments that the girls are wearing:

Aga baga dāng parsing saiya sona?
Arra nāking parsing saiya sona.
Aga baga dāng kundring saiya sona?
Kokka nāking kundring saiya sona.
Aga baga dāng chitharing saiya sona?
Garua kaiyakking chitharing saiya sona.

Whence is the drum that sounds so bravely?
From Arra comes the drum.
Whence is the *kundring* that sounds so well?
From Kokka comes the *kundring*.
Whence are the cymbals that clash so loudly?
The blacksmith made the cymbals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

938
585
539

Aga baga da dhoti roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the dhoti that looks so smart?
Gĩndon kaiyada dhoti roy saiya sona.	The Ganda made the dhoti.
Aga waga dãng muyãng roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the bells that tinkle so merrily?
Kaser kaiyadãng muyãng roy saiya sona.	The Kaser made the bells.
Aga baga dãng paniya saiya sona ?	Whence came the comb that looks so fine?
Layon kaiyada paniya roy saiya sona.	The chelik made the comb that looks so fine.

Finally, I will give two examples of the many obscene songs that are sung during this dance, for otherwise it is impossible to get a clear picture of the meaning and atmosphere of the rite.

Nana jhoriyãna waiwoy gãlo tinwãna.	I am Jhoria: I will not eat half-cooked rice.
Nana jhoriyãna dais dudo poyuãna.	I am Jhoria: jumping up and down I hold her breast.
Nana jhoriyãna podoh monde dekwãna.	I am Jhoria: I break the girdle round her waist.
Nana jhoriyãna hãrspoche tendwãna.	I am Jhoria: I quickly pull off her cloth.
Nana jhoriyãna pudete bonde nehyãna.	I am Jhoria: into her I press myself.
Nana jhoriyãna teks bura mihachwãna.	I am Jhoria: I will pluck out my pubic hairs and throw them away.

In the same style is a Halbi Jhoria Git.

Go to sweep the booth, Belosa.
Where has the bridegroom gone?
He is nowhere in the house.
What can be be frightened of?
He is dying for his penis.
He is going to have his sister.
Where has he taken her?
He has taken her to the river bank.
What leaves has he spread for her?
He has made a bed of *jam* leaves.
Jham-jham he swings to and fro.
Bathing, bathing, he inserts it.
Get off, get off, brother, she cries.

These songs are sung by the bride herself and by a party of unmarried girls. They have changed their sex for the occasion and imagine themselves performing the sexual act as men. The significance of this will be seen when we discuss the ultimate basis of the rite.

838
171
182

Various reasons have been advanced by scholars to explain this custom in different parts of the world. Frazer has emphasized the difficulty of the problem. "The religious or superstitious interchange of dress between men and women is an obscure and complex problem, and it is unlikely that any

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

838
171
182

single solution would apply to all the cases.'[1] He has suggested that the custom of the bride dressing as a male may be a magical means of ensur-

From a photograph in *Natural Man* by Charles Hose, by kind permission of the publishers, Macmillan & Co., Ltd

FIG. 116. Klemantan women dressed as men

ing a male heir. Certainly it is possible that cross-dressing has something to do with fertility. In Sarawak the Klemantan women dance in turbans and a sort of dhoti at a harvest festival which has been described as 'a celebration or cult of the principle of fertility and vitality—that of the women no less than that of the rice grain'.[2] Zuln women dress in men's clothes and go to herd their cattle to save them from disease.[3] Crawley refers to a custom of the Ngaste of Assam when men dressed as women dance in honour of the children

[1] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1911–15), Vol. VI, p. 160. See also J. Abercromby, 'An Armenian Custom in the Caucasus', *Folk-Lore*, Vol. II (1891), pp. 179ff.

[2] Hose, *Natural Man* (London, 1926), p. 128. Hose gives a charming photograph, upon which Fig. 116 is based.

[3] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 320.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

838
171
187

born during the year.[1] In the Mandla District of the Central Provinces of India, Gond and Baiga women from time to time dress up as men and go from village to village with spears and axes on a sort of ceremonial hunt. In each place they catch and kill a pig, an act normally taboo to women. That this is a fertility rite is indicated partly by the fact that it is practised in times of dearth and also by the songs used for the occasion. One of these is as follows:

Kutki kodon ke bharti hoe!	May kutki and kodon increase!
Kukra bilai ke jharti hoe!	May dogs and cats decrease!
Gai garua ke bharti hoe!	May cows and cattle increase!
Kukra bilai ke jharti hoe!	May dogs and cats decrease!

This is called Stiria-raj[2]; the custom is also known among the Maria and Muria. At Toskapal I was told how women made moustaches of lamp-black, put on dhoti and turban and went armed from place to place sacrificing goats and pigs. Kond women also dress as men and sacrifice fowls.

Frazer again suggested that the wife wears husband's garments in order to transfer to him her future pains at child-birth.[3] But there is no tradition of the couvade among the Muria, and it seems rather far-fetched to suppose that the young bride will already be so anxious about her pains as to wish to be rid of them even on her marriage day.

Another suggestion is that the marriage disguise is aimed at averting danger from the evil eye at a moment when the bride is particularly susceptible to the influence of hostile magic.[4] The marriage disguise has been noted for different peoples in Africa and India as well as in antiquity; sometimes it is carried so far as to substitute a mock bride for the real one. This was the view of Crooke,[5] after a survey of the Indian evidence, and the final opinion of Frazer.[6] Westermarck, however, who gives many examples of the marriage disguise, doubts whether all these practices can be explained as attempts to deceive evil spirits. 'Facts of this sort seem better to agree with Mr Crawley's theory of "inoculation", according to which the bride or bridegroom assumes the dress of the opposite sex in order to lessen the sexual danger by wearing the same kind of clothes as "the loved and dreaded person", and the greatest possible assimilation between them would best serve the purpose of neutralizing that danger'.[7]

But the Muria practice of not only disguising the bride, but also her companions, so that not even the husband can tell which is which, does appear to aim in some way at averting hostile magic or the enmity of the dead or evil spirits.

[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 103.

[2] There was a similar custom among the Kol. 'In October, 1880,' says Haldar, 'I witnessed at Ranchi a curious sight of bands of Munda girls, wearing turbans, going about in procession armed with sticks, spears and axes. All the girls of a village so equip themselves and make a descent upon the next village to the east, carrying off whatever fowls, kids, pigs, and lambs they can secure. The village thus devastated takes its chance by sending a similar expedition of Amazons to the next village eastwards and so on. Retaliation is forbidden, nor is any resistance offered; and, moreover, it is quite legitimate for the invaders to seek their booty wherever they may be concealed. This festival, called *Jani-shikar*, takes place once every twelve years, and is supposed to have been started by a Raja of the Nag-bansi family, named Ganes Sahi, in the twelfth year of his reign.'—S. Haldar, 'A Curious Kol Festival', *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 98.

[3] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. III, p. 216.

[4] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 498f. and 318f.

[5] Crooke, op. cit., p. 8.

[6] Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. IV, pp. 215f.

[7] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. II, pp. 318f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

In an interesting account of the women's hunt in the Ranchi District of Chota Nagpur, W. G. Archer has traced the mythological basis of the custom, but he points out that it also fulfils a psychological need. 'We shall only be grasping its real value if we regard it not as fact but as poetry, as the expression of a need rather than a statement of a truth.'

> This need may be defined as follows. In Uraon society, the principles of succession are male, the method of government is male, the salient offices are male. The men are by convention and tradition the social superiors of the women. But if this is the convention, it is only partly the fact. In Uraon villages, the actual relation is one of equality. It is as equals that the men and women dance. It is as equals that a wife and her husband order their family affairs. And it is as equals that they work and live together. There is thus a stress between the formal structure of tribal-life and the actual feelings and emotions that thrust upon it. To relieve this stress is the function of the hunt and the myth.
>
> The myth shows that although the men may rule, it is the women who are also men. In its reliance on the success of a simple trick, it expresses Uraon pleasure in naive cleverness and under this typically Uraon cover, it mildly pokes fun at male incompetence. The balance is therefore righted. The women are recognized to be the equals of men.[1]

It is possible that we may have to connect the custom very deep down with the same tendency that has produced the eonist deviation. The last Jhoria songs that I have quoted give some point to the supposition that cross-dressing is an expression of 'penis-envy'. I have only given two songs of this nature, but there are many on the same lines which suggest that for once the motiari are able to assert themselves against the chelik who so constantly establish their sexual domination in normal times.

Probably several different reasons have combined to produce the rite. The Muria girls dance disguised at the marriage partly to protect the bride, partly to avert hostile magic or the evil eye, partly to restore the sexual balance of the tribe and partly too, simply because they love dressing up and get a lot of fun out of it. It is very amusing to see the unfortunate bridegroom trying to guess which of the many girls before him, all looking exactly alike, is his own wife. If he chooses the wrong girl everyone is delighted; when the right girl darts out of the group and beats him it is an occasion not to be forgotten.

But such cross-dressing is always ceremonial. There are strict taboos on men and women wearing each other's clothes on ordinary occasions, and this makes the rite, when it does occur, all the more exciting and impressive.[2]

[1] W. G. Archer, 'The Women's Hunt' in *Essays in Anthropology Presented to S. C. Roy* (1942), pp. 187ff. The same feeling is revealed in the widespread myth of the Island and Country of Women, which goes back to the *Mahabharata* and was recorded by Hiuen Tsang. For an account of this interesting subject and full references to the literature, see W. Crooke, 'The Land and Island of Women', *Man in India*, Vol. II (1942), pp. 274ff; J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 263 and my *Myths of Middle India*.

[2] In an account of prophylactic disguises for averting evil in the Bombay Presidency, J. J. Modi gives three types of sex disguise—

(1) Proclaiming the birth of a boy as that of a girl.
(2) Perforating the nose or the ear of a boy like a girl's.
(3) Allowing the growth of long hair in a boy so as to make him appear like a girl.

See J. J. Modi, 'Prophylactic Disguise for Averting Evil', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), pp. 282ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

XII. FRIENDSHIPS

X983
572

The 'official' friendships which are such a common feature of the social life of many castes and tribes in the Central Provinces and Chota Nagpur are not popular among the Muria. This *bode-hiyāna* (friendship-making) is regarded as a Hindu custom and throughout the Jhoria country is practically unknown. In the Kondagaon Tahsil, especially in villages along the main road and in parts of the Bara Dongar Pargana, such friendships are indeed made, but do not play a very important part in the ghotul or in village life.

As in the Central Provinces, when these ceremonial friendships are instituted, the parties to them henceforth stand together and help each other in a very special way.[1]

Dalton says the ties 'are almost as binding as those of marriage'.[2] The parties may not address each other by their ordinary names, though they may continue to use their ghotul titles. Such friendships can only be made between people who are *akomāma* to one another. In certain cases boys and girls can make these friendships with each other, though they are much more common between members of the same sex.

In Bastar the best-known friendships are the *keonra-phul*, the *supāri-phul*, the *sakhi* and the *baru*. I have not found the *jawāra* friendship, though I have occasionally heard of the *gangājal* and *bhajli*. It is said that the *keonra-phul* is made between men and women who stand in a joking relationship to each other as, for example, between a man and his elder brother's wife. A girl often becomes *sakhi* to her father's brother's wife. Boys and girls can be *baru* to each other and there is a line in a song which suggests that they can also become *jai-mongra-phul*:

> He asked me to be his *jai-mongra* flower-friend, mother;
> But I am too shy to be that, mother.

These friendships are initiated by a simple ceremony in the ghotul. Two leaf-cups are made and little lamps are placed in them and lit. The friends wash each other's feet, stand face to face, put flowers behind each other's ears, exchange three times shoots of grain, *supāri*-nut, a little sand or whatever it may be, embrace and greet each other by their new names and salute everyone who is there. They then distribute coconut and liquor.

I have not found many examples of this charming and natural practice. There were such alliances in Binjhli and Alor. At Sidhawand, Pilsai had a *keonra-phul* in the Sirdar and at Masora Phirtu had a friend of the same

[1] This system of friendships in Chota Nagpur and Orissa has been described by Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, pp. 235ff.; *The Kharias*, p. 162; *The Birhors*, pp. 527ff.; *The Oraons*, pp. 396ff. Roy stresses the fact that the aboriginals generally form these alliances with members of other communities, thus indicating that the custom is a borrowed one. Certainly any elaboration seems to indicate external contact: thus the primitive Juang only have the Makro, Sangat and Phulo friendships, and do not take the names of flowers. The Dhurwa-Purja have the custom in a very simplified form. I have not found it at all among the Maria. See also Gordon, op. cit., p. 188, who remarks that after an acquaintance with the people of Bilaspur of fourteen years he 'can recall only one instance in which such a friendship was broken', and adds 'It has been hinted to me that these friendships sometimes result in a community of possessions extending even to a community of wives'. Firth has given an interesting account of such bond-friendships in Tikopia, which he considers 'less striking forms of covenant' than the blood-brotherhood of Africa, but which illustrate 'some aspects of the sociology of co-operation and the very real and immediate advantages of a psychological, economic and social kind which an institutionalised friendship provides, and the moral sanction which attaches to the performance of material, non-ritual services'.—R. Firth, 'Bond-Friendship in Tikopia', *Custom is King* (London, 1936), pp. 239ff.

[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 353.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A N32
Muria

883X
572

degree. It is worthy of remark that both these boys had been to school. At Sidhawand my wife and I became the *supāri-phul* and *sakhi* of Rame and Pilsai respectively. My *sakhi* certainly takes this friendship and its obligations very seriously indeed. In Sidhawand the Kotwar entered into the *bhaji* relationship with the Nircsa.

If the two friends are to sleep together in the ghotul—this is a Masora and Jamkot custom—they must place a piece of cloth between them. Otherwise 'to sleep together would be a sin'. I do not think we should read a very deep meaning into this; the rule is not intended to prevent homosexual practices which do not exist; the two friends are simply in a religious or magical state to one another.

But apart from such covenanted alliances, there are deep and lasting friendships between chelik and chelik, motiari and motiari, even though these have no formal name and are not officially recognized. But it seems to me that these tend to express themselves in gangs or groups rather than in pairs. The exclusive, passionate, devotion of two boys or two girls to each other would be contrary to the strongly communal nature of the ghotul and indeed of all Muria society.

So although the Padhar and Tahsildar (Pilsai) of the Sidhawand ghotul are *sāthi* (companions) who 'must always be together, must stand by one another, and feel miserable if they don't see each other', their attachment is not exclusive. The Sirdar is always with them, and the three boys sleep together with their motiari in a corner of the ghotul. Boys and girls group themselves according to age; the bigger motiari, who have to do so many things together, naturally spend most of their time together and become great friends. In Jhakri there were several groups of boys and they told us that they had their own secret language and could talk to each other and make jokes without the others knowing anything about it. 'When you are friends, you can all fart together', as one of them said. They would not even tell their secrets to the girls they loved. Even in the *jodidār* ghotul, such groups of boys are said to share their girls with one another, though not, of course, with anyone outside. But it is said that these friendships weaken after marriage, as the friends begin to 'tread the hill of the elders' and to suffer 'the cares of house and door'.

Two famous friends, who have continued to this day, are the former Atkari and Soha, Nari and Tota, of Nayanar, both men of outstanding character, witty, active, genial, popular. In their youth, both were fined for making their motiari, the Tilcka and the Manjaro, pregnant, and have thus borne ever since the name of *jataka*, a Gondi-Halbi word meaning someone 'who takes a thing by force'. They always slept on the same mat in the ghotul, back to back with their motiari on either side of them on separate mats. People talk also of the friendship between Rama, the Sirdar, and Sukder, the Likhen, of Palli. 'They never go anywhere alone; they are always together.'

But, on the whole, such devoted alliances and partnerships are rare. The reasons for this are many. There is, as I have said, the strongly communal and highly organized character of ghotul society. From childhood the Muria are trained to do things together, to move, work, mourn, rejoice as a group. Then there is the strong feeling against jealousy and anything that would promote jealousy. The habit of mind that forces a boy to sleep every night with a different motiari is not likely to encourage him to form an exclusive attachment to a member of his own sex, which would be likely to excite the jealousy of the others. In Alor, the villagers said of two great friends, older men, that 'those two always cut everything in pieces; they disturb the judgements of the panchayat'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 983
572

Any form of partiality is resented by the Muria. We see this in the ghotul which dislikes even a hint of favouritism towards a boy or girl on account of the wealth or rank of the parents. It is the same among the elders. The panchayat, the village mind, must work dispassionately; intensity of personal relationships ruins fair judgement.

When I was discussing this question in Khutgaon, and asked why it was that in that (Kalpatti) pargana there were so few famous friendships, the answer came quite simply: 'Because we are more interested in girls.' Let the European reader of this book pause to reflect how much of his own youth was passed in exclusively male society, what the word 'dormitory' meant to him—as compared to what it means to a Muria!—and he will realize that the kind of friendship that was so important a part of his life at school or the university will obviously have little significance in Bastar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

842
171

RECENT controversies about the sex life of primitive peoples, which have centred mainly on such questions as the extent of their ignorance of physiological paternity and the pre-marital licence they permit, have tended to obscure the equally interesting and important problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity.

This problem, which arises in an acute form among the Muria, has often puzzled anthropologists. They have observed that many societies allow the unmarried complete freedom of sexual opportunity, that 'illegitimate' births are rare, but that after marriage the women generally prove remarkably fertile. It is to writers on the Pacific area that we are indebted for a clear statement of this problem. African observers have tried to find some solution in the contraceptive practices and restraints of their peoples and have generally, I think, evaded the main issue. In India there is little evidence of value to illustrate the sex life of its aboriginals. It is astonishing that none of the writers on the village dormitories or men's houses throughout the world have seriously tackled a question so fundamental to any discussion of the institutions they have described.

One of the first to draw attention to the question was Seligman, who wrote in 1910 that a puzzling feature of the licence undoubtedly permitted throughout the Massim area of British New Guinea was the very small number of illegitimate births which took place.

> Wherever the confidence of the natives was gained it was admitted that abortion was induced, but the most careful inquiries failed to produce evidence that the practice was as frequent as might be expected considering the prevailing liberty. In fact, with every *a priori* reason for expecting abortion to be commonly produced I came to the conclusion that in fact it was a somewhat infrequent event.[1]

Rivers noticed the same thing among the Eddystone Islanders.

> The very free relations existing before marriage might have been expected to lead to the birth of many children and to the existence of definite regulations for assigning such children to their proper place in society. Such births seemed, however, to be extremely rare, and in the whole of the pedigrees collected by us only one such case was given, and that many generations ago.[2]

Writing in *Oceania* on the culture of the people of Wogeo, one of the New Guinea islands, Hogbin says that,

> Single girls do sometimes have children, but illegitimacy is not nearly so common as one might have expected. Just why this is so it is impossible to say. I observed one fact that bears directly upon the problem, namely that it is extremely rare for women to have children until they are, I judge, more than twenty-one years of age, by which time most of them are safely married. I have noticed that even when a girl is married directly after her first menstruation, which does not

[1] C. G. Seligman, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 500.
[2] W. H. R. Rivers, *Psychology and Ethnology* (London, 1926), p. 76.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

842
171

regularly take place until almost certainly after the seventeenth year, it is most unusual for her to have a child for several years.[1]

Barton notes that in the Ifugao *agamang* 'conception results less frequently than one would expect. The surprising intensity of the sex life of the *agamang* period seems to create physiological conditions unfavourable to conception: possibly the excessive intercourse keeps the female organs in a state of hyperemia'.[2]

The classical statement of the problem is by Malinowski. In his great study of the Trobriand Islanders—who have in their *bukumatula* an institution for pre-marital congress not wholly unlike the ghotul—he says,

> Since there is so much sexual freedom, must there not be a great number of children born out of wedlock? If this is not so, what means of prevention do the natives possess?
>
> As to the first question, it is very remarkable to note that illegitimate children are rare. The girls seem to remain sterile throughout their period of licence, which begins when they are small children and continues till they marry; when they are married they conceive and breed, sometimes quite prolifically. I express myself cautiously about the number of illegitimate children, for in most cases there are special difficulties even in ascertaining the fact... so that only an approximate estimate can be made even in a community with which one is very well acquainted.
>
> I was able to find roughly a dozen illegitimate children recorded genealogically in the Trobriands, or about one per cent.[3]

Malinowski goes on to say that contraceptive methods are completely unknown in the Trobriands. Two years later Rentoul, in a communication to *Man*, declared that the Trobriand women were 'specially endowed or gifted with ejaculatory powers, which may be called upon after an act of coition to expel the male seed'.[4] Though Malinowski poured scorn on Rentoul's suggestion, describing it as 'one of the typical myths which circulate among the semi-educated white residents', Himes is not prepared to reject it altogether.

> What is undoubtedly the same technique, seminal expulsion by violent bodily movements, is reported as used by Australian natives. Therefore its occasional use by some Trobriand women is a possibility. Other circumstances being equal, a positive declaration of use seems more credible than a denial by natives in conversation with an anthropologist.[5]

Yet even if some of the Trobriand women do practise this means of contraception, as some of them undoubtedly limit the number of their offspring by abortion, the problem still remains—the extreme disparity between the extent of the sexual licence allowed and what is usually regarded as its inevitable sequence. Malinowski says again,

> Can there be any physiological law which makes conception less likely when women begin their sexual life young, lead it indefatigably, and mix their lovers freely? This, of course, cannot be answered here,

[1] H. J. Hogbin, 'The Native Culture of Wogeo', *Oceania*, Vol. V (1935), pp. 320f.
[2] R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans* (London, 1938), p. 11.
[3] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, third edition (London, 1932), pp. 166ff.
[4] A. C. Rentoul, 'Physiological Paternity and the Trobrianders', *Man*, Vol. XXXI (1931), p. 153.
[5] N. E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception* (London, 1936), p. 33.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it is a purely biological question; but some such solution of the difficulty seems to me the only one, unless I have missed some very important ethnological clue.[1]

The problem thus posed presents itself in a peculiarly acute form when we consider conditions of life in the ghotul. For here, boys and girls—in spite of various checks and disciplines—cohabit from the period of their first tentative experiments, through full sexual maturity, for five to eight years until their freedom is ended by marriage. Yet here too pregnancies are comparatively rare and, though various contraceptive means are practised, few of them have physiological properties.

The incidence of pregnancy, however, is higher than that discovered by Malinowski in the Trobriands. Out of 2000 cases, 80 men admitted to having made their ghotul partners pregnant, and in the 220 ghotul examined, I found a history of 327 pregnant girls.

I believe that these figures are reasonably accurate. Although there is a strict rule against any member of the ghotul revealing even to the elders of the tribe, let alone to an inquisitive outsider, the fact that a motiari is pregnant at the moment, this reticence is no check on the loquacity of older men about matters long since past. As we shall see, there is no moral or social stigma attaching to pre-marital pregnancy; it is rather a matter of business, a complicated financial transaction. Everyone in the ghotul hushes it up rather as one might hush up a friend's mistakes or follies, anxious only to get him off. But once it is all over, the bills paid, the girl married, the child accepted as a full member of its legal father's family and clan, the real father allows himself the pleasures of retrospection; he recalls the potency of former days and finds it not ungratifying to remember what a lad he was.

Eighty pregnancies out of 2000 is 4 per cent, much more than Malinowski's figure, astonishingly more than Rivers'—and this in spite of the fact that the Muria admit to contraceptive practices that are denied in the Trobriand and Eddystone Islands. It is possible that a statistical, instead of a genealogical, inquiry would have yielded higher figures, at least in the Eddystone Islands. The genealogical method is not the best way to discover 'illegitimate' births among primitive people, for the whole trend of primitive society is to legitimatise births wherever possible.

Yet although the older Muria are not unwilling to admit the scandals of long ago, it is regarded as vitally important for a Muria girl to avoid conception. Pre-nuptial intercourse is socially recognized, and even tacitly approved, yet pre-nuptial pregnancy is at the moment of its occurrence a major social disaster, the chief anxiety of ghotul life, the one cloud upon its dreamland. It brings disgrace upon the ghotul, it endangers the girl's normal marriage prospects, it imposes a heavy financial burden upon the boy's parents and it casts a momentary shadow over the whole village. It is sometimes believed that a youth who has 'wasted his seed' [2] in making a motiari pregnant will be sterile later in life. On joining the ghotul the little chelik and motiari are solemnly warned both by their parents and by the ghotul leaders of the risks of pregnancy and are told how to avoid it.

For the Muria have a vivid appreciation of the fact of physiological paternity. The answer to the riddle 'Out of water, bones' is 'Semen and a child'.

[1] Malinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

[2] The expression used for a girl is *was bigad gaya*, 'her nerve is broken', if she conceives out of due time.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

842 Conception, they say, is due to 'the conflict of two waters'. 'It is a kind of urine that makes a baby.' 'The child is formed in the womb just like the chicken in the egg, first the white, then the yolk, then the bones and flesh, and at last the life.' But some Muria say that it is not possible to have any exact knowledge about the conception of a child. 'It is not as though we were just tying up a bundle and could say exactly what we had put inside it.'

But the place of the father, the male, in the procreative process is fully recognized in folk-tale, song and the talk of every day. The Muria even have their theories about the physiological conditions necessary for conception. The first and most important of these is that the climax of the male and female should occur simultaneously. If the woman reaches her climax before the man's orgasm, his seed will be destroyed by her discharge. If the woman fails to reach a climax at all, conception will not occur. The Muria illustrate this by pointing out that if rice is sown in too much water, or if the rainfall is excessive, the seed will rot and there will be no harvest. If there is no rain after the seed is sown, it will wither. For a good crop there must be moderate showers.

883 Chelik and motiari then are well aware that conception normally follows
842 sexual congress—'If you excrete in a stream, the mess will rise to the surface'; they are strictly warned that conception must not occur; at the same time they are given every opportunity, and indeed encouragement, to copulate. It is evident, therefore, that they must at least believe—in spite of a 4 per cent figure to the contrary—that conception can be avoided. What methods are adopted to achieve this end?

The first, and possibly to the Muria mind the most important, is a supernatural one. The ghotul is protected by Lingo Pen and the Earth Mother. It is a shrine, a *thirtastān*, as the more Hinduized Muria call it. Within its walls no sin can be committed. No evil dream can harm the sleepers; no hostile magic can draw near. Conception cannot occur within the ghotul walls; a pregnancy is believed to be the result of furtive extramural activity.

For three years after the menarche, say the Muria, Lingo Pen saves the motiari from conceiving. There must be centuries of observation behind this faith in a sterility interval. Prayers and offerings are made to ensure the god's protection.

When a girl at her first menstruation goes to bathe in the stream, she prays to the Nahani Kanyang (Bathing Maiden) saying, 'So long as I live in the ghotul, see that my blood flows by the moon, and that I do not conceive. If you grant my desire I will make you an offering at my wedding'. If the prayer is granted, the girl offers an egg, some coconuts, ornaments, a little slag from the smithy, rice and an aonra ring to the Kanyang. I am told that the motiari have a great faith in this prayer, which they believe has prevented thousands of conceptions.

Sometimes the girl offers to the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden) the leaf-cup and plate from which she has eaten on the morning of the first day of her menarche, and prays, 'As you dance and play in the water, so let me dance and play. Let me not be pregnant till I am married, and on my wedding-day I will give you gifts'.

When a chelik and motiari fall in love with each other, especially if they belong to the type of ghotul that frowns upon such attachments and thus forces them to have congress outside its walls, they sometimes go to the jungle and, standing before a saja tree, offer an egg to Lingo Pen, saying, 'Protect us

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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from scandal [that is, pregnancy]; if anyone's name is to be ruined, it will be yours and not ours'.[1]

A curious story comes from Aturbera. On the Tongar Mountain, the son of a Rau (hill-demon) died and that night there was a great wind and all the spirits wept. A chelik of the Uika clan heard the sound and its horror drove him mad. He went out onto the mountain-side and there in a high wind found the burning body of the Rau. He pulled the corpse from the flames and cut off its little finger. When he came to his senses he returned home, and put the Rau's finger in a hollow bamboo which he buried in front of the ghotul. Since then, it is said, no girl in that ghotul has ever become pregnant. At her menarche each motiari digs up the bamboo, removes a tiny scrap of the finger and offers it to the Rau saying, 'Let me not conceive'.

The chelik too are equally concerned to avoid the social and financial embarrassments of a conception for which they may be held responsible. At the Kokoko Festival, when the first patch of axe-cultivation is ceremonially fired, the Sirdar prays, 'Give us sound sleep with our motiari and let them not conceive'. This is how I heard them say it in Bandopal, and again a few days later I heard, at the same festival at Nayanar, the chelik pray, 'Give us daily congress with our motiari, sound sleep in the ghotul and let not the girls conceive'.

But the Muria do not rely entirely upon such supernatural contraceptives; they have faith also in physical means. They believe that the most favourable period for conception is immediately after the catamenial period; after the menstrual flow has stopped, a little blood remains in the vagina; this catches the seed and causes pregnancy. 'The woman's blood and water sucks at the man's water; she has been alone for days, now she is very excited; in this way conception occurs.'

Chelik and motiari must, therefore, avoid intercourse at this time. In most ghotul they are very strict about this. In some there is a rule that the girls should not come to sleep with the chelik till the sixth or seventh day. Even then it is the rule in Binjhli for boys to practise *coitus interruptus* on the seventh day, and a motiari is appointed to give the girls instructions to insist upon it. In other villages, although the girls may be allowed to return to the ghotul immediately after the close of the period, they are not permitted to sleep with the chelik, still less to have intercourse with them.

Another practical method of birth control is based on the belief that if a girl frequently changes her partners she is less likely to conceive. This idea, as we have seen, has led to far-reaching changes in the organization of the ghotul. The old rule of absolute fidelity to a single partner has been changed into one which forbids chelik and motiari to sleep together for more than three days at a time. A constant change of partners, it is believed, renders conception less likely.

Statistics, however, hardly bear this out. Of the 2000 married men examined, 720 had grown up in the *jodidār* ghotul and 1280 in ghotul where partners had to be changed. Of the 80 who made a girl pregnant during their ghotul period, only 25 were living in the *jodidār* ghotul, and 55 in the others, giving a figure of 1 pregnancy in 23·2 for the 'modern' ghotul and 1 in 28·8 for the *jodidār*, in exact contradiction of Muria tradition.

Members of the *jodidār* ghotul, however, say that they achieve some kind of limitation by 'spacing' their copulations. There is often a rule that the chelik

[1] On the other hand, a jealous girl or boy watching a beloved in the arms of another may offer a little rice and an egg to the Departed in the name of Lingo saying, 'Let so-and-so become pregnant, and be forced to face the scandal of a panchayat inquiry'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

must not have intercourse with their 'wives' more than once or twice a week. They sleep together daily, but the ghotul leaders do not permit sexual congress; in such a close-knit society, control is not difficult. It is interesting that the natural sequence of a 'scandal' is the adoption of a rule that the motiari must not stay in the ghotul all night, or that they may only remain there before festivals and marriages, or on certain days of the week. This indicates the Muria belief that by breaking up the cycle of intercourse, conception is less likely to occur.

The Muria believe strongly that conception cannot follow an act of casual intercourse. A woman must remain with the same partner for at least a month, and during this time congress must be frequent.[1]

Coitus interruptus is known, but I have recorded it as practised in only two ghotul, Binjhli and Padde. I would not ordinarily pay much attention to the negative evidence in such a case, but in this matter inquiries have been made widely and with great care. There does not seem to be any reason why people who are prepared to discuss freely the most intimate sexual matters, even those that are taboo, should deny the method unless it really did not exist. In the majority of ghotul, it had not even been heard of, and a description of it was greeted with astonishment and even mirth. 'How should anyone withdraw at the very moment we want it to stay longer and go deeper?' asked a chelik at Kabonga, and at Markabera the comment was, 'After you have entered with so much trouble, how can you leave before your work is over?' Even at Binjhli the girls said that they disliked it and tried to prevent the boys' doing it except immediately after menstruation.[2]

Certain supposedly contraceptive herbs are taken orally. In Siuni the Muria Gaita prescribed as follows:

'Get an anagondri [the white garlic tied to the tall festal poles used by the Rawat at a Marhai bazaar]; let it dry; powder it and give it to a girl at her first menstruation in a little tobacco. This will keep her infertile for several years.'

Another remedy comes from Kuntpadar. The creeper called *keksa* is carefully watched until one is found which gives flowers but no fruit. The chelik goes to this 'barren creeper' on a Saturday and offers a little rice and *urad* pulse to it saying, 'I give you this: now come to help me'. The next day, early in the morning before cock-crow, he sacrifices a black chicken and coconut to the creeper. He sprinkles some of the blood over it and lets a little fall on the kernel of the coconut, a small bit of which he burns.

Now comes a delicate and difficult moment. He must uproot the creeper with a single jerk. If he is hesitant and fumbles with it, the root may turn into a snake and bite him. But if all is well, he takes the root home and waits until his girl's post-catamenial bath falls on a Sunday. On this day she must fast till evening when she is given a bit of the root mixed with the coconut and rice. After this, she will not conceive, just as the creeper, though it gave flowers (menstruation), bore no fruit. It is important, however, to

[1] The Gadaba of Orissa also believe that occasional intercourse in the dormitory cannot lead to conception; 'the field must be tilled for a long time before it can bear a crop'.

[2] It is curious that *coitus interruptus* is not practised more commonly by primitive people. The Baiga take the same attitude as the Muria: 'the sowing of the seed is the happiest moment in one's life'—how should one resist it?—*The Baiga*, p. 221. But the Tikopia practise it freely.—R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia* (London, 1936), pp. 490f. It has also been recorded for the Thonga (Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. I, p. 55), the Masai and generally in Africa (Himes, op. cit., pp. 58f.). Himes quotes Margaret Mead for its existence among the Samoans (ibid., p. 23).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

783

Rubbish hung over the road to purify a village

535
292
778

Leader of the Diwali dance

Chelik with sacred fire

[p. 464 (A)]

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883
535
796

Plate XC

Pus Koitang dances: two movements in the Lingo Pata at Phulpar

[p. 464(R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

see that the root of the creeper has no side-shoots, for these impair its efficacy.

Another orally administered drug is supposed to confer permanent sterilization.

'On a Sunday pick a few pieces of a parasite growing on a tilai tree. Dry them and heat in the fire till they can be powdered easily. Make into small pills with gur and give them to the woman—without her knowing—to eat with parched rice.' This is sometimes given by a chelik to his motiari. 'When there is great love between a boy and girl, he gives it to her so that they can love one another without danger.'

I do not know how commonly these remedies are used, but there is no doubt that chelik and motiari are expected to avoid conception somehow. A pregnancy is regarded as a gross piece of carelessness. There is a general belief that no one need conceive unless they want to, that a definite psychological factor is involved. If a boy and girl do not give themselves to one another with too oblivious a passion, if they hold back a little, if they are careful not to love too constantly or too long, conception need never follow. We have seen that too much love is not approved in the ghotul; conception is the punishment of an over-passionate attachment.

But when all precautions fail, and a girl finds herself pregnant, what happens? Directly she finds that 'the moon has come again, but the stream of blood is dry', she tells her chelik. There is no difficulty in the old type of ghotul; her ghotul-husband will look after her. In the newer type, where during the course of the month the girl may have been sleeping with a dozen different boys, she chooses either the one she likes best or the one with whom she first had congress after her last period. His immediate duty is to bring abortifacients.

Abortions are probably fairly common. In one village I was told that they mixed gur, ashes and the strongest mahua spirit available and gave it to the girl to drink. In another place the Muria said that they used gunpowder [1] mixed with mahua spirit. In Kokori, the Gaita recommended the obviously magical remedy of taking a bit of bark from a mahua tree which had been struck by lightning. This was burnt and the ashes mixed with liquor. In Berma, an eighty-year-old Muria recalled how when he was Nengi of the ghotul he made the Nirosa pregnant. He first dosed her with *keksa* root, but without success, apparently because he did not know the correct ritual of obtaining it, and then on a Monday he bought a bottle of *phuli* liquor. 'On that day we both fasted and in the evening, after bathing, I offered an egg and some liquor to Lingo Pen saying, "O Mahapurub Lingo, if you are a true god, let this girl abort: if you don't, the sin is yours and not mine. You founded the ghotul and if you truly live there till this day, show proof of it and I will offer you another egg". I then made the girl drink the rest of the liquor and in her drunkenness she aborted. As I had promised I gave the second egg to Lingo Pen.'

In one ghotul, about which I believe I have entirely authentic information, six of the girls had procured abortions; one had achieved it three times, twice in the third month and once in the fourth; another girl had achieved it twice. But the motiari do not like using abortifacients, for they believe that they lead to sterility later on, and this ghotul was probably exceptional. There

[1] Hinton (*op. cit.*, p. 8) quotes an unpublished report by W. B. Cline that 'It is the custom among the natives of the Oasis of Siwa in the Lybian Desert to drink infusions of gunpowder' as a contraceptive measure.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

were a number of older girls there; in other places, where only a few motiari exceed three years from the menarche, such large-scale abortifacient practices appear to be unnecessary. In any case the practice is not approved by the elders of the tribe. In Hathipakna, the Malko was made pregnant by the Jamadar, both being of the same clan. An older man tried to procure an abortion, but failed; the matter became known and he was fined five rupees by the clan panchayat.

If all their efforts fail, the chelik and motiari report the matter to the ghotul leaders, who keep it dark as long as possible. There is no greater ghotul crime than to reveal such a secret in the village.

In the meantime the girl may elope with the same or another lover, and get married quietly elsewhere. If the marriage season is at hand, it is not uncommon for the parents to hurry on the marriage with the girl's original betrothed, and for no one to say anything about it. When this happens it is whispered that 'the girl has a baby in her *haldi-dhoti*', that is, while she is still wearing the clothes stained with the marriage oil.

If neither of these solutions are possible, the headman and elders of the village hold a panchayat in the ghotul, at which all the chelik and motiari must be present. The headman says, 'By whose hand is this? Whose is this belly?' The girl says nothing but goes to the boy responsible and takes him by the hand. If the parents of her betrothed are present, the headman says, 'Look, your goods are damaged; do you still want them or no?' He turns to the girl and says, referring to her betrothed, 'Do you still want this boy or no?'

One of two things thus can happen. If the girl's betrothed is willing to have her, and she has no objection, the marriage is performed as soon as possible. The chelik who caused the pregnancy has to pay some compensation to the husband as well as a fine to the panchayat. This happens more commonly than one would expect; if a girl is pregnant, even by another boy, it is at least a proof that she will not be barren. Out of the 80 pregnancies to which I have referred already, in only 26 cases did the girl marry her lover; in the other 54 cases she married her betrothed.

Where the girl refuses to marry her betrothed or he decides that he does not want her, as happened in the 26 cases, she declares in the panchayat. 'This boy has given me this belly. I will go with him and never leave him.' When she says this, her parents abuse her, for it will mean financial loss to them, and the elders give everyone a lecture, pointing out that such things never happened in their day and that with a little care all such scandals could be avoided. When the Kotwar of Atpal made a girl pregnant, the elders fined him and reproved him with the words, 'When a mare has an itch for it, she allows the horse to mount her, but she knows she cannot stop the seed from entering her. You too knew it, so why were you not careful?'

A long discussion, generally entirely financial, follows. Fines are imposed and compensation decided. The village elders demand their share. The marriage is arranged as soon as possible.

In either case, the child is accepted by its real or legal father, and the origin of its birth is soon forgotten. It carries little stigma, and once the financial side of the incident is settled, little more is said. For the disgrace and danger of a pregnancy is not a moral one. A pregnancy is dreaded because everyone makes a fuss, the routine of daily life is upset, the matrimonial arrangements so carefully devised to unite families and repay old debts are disturbed, there is a general feeling that someone has blundered. The chelik and motiari are embarrassed, but they are not ashamed.

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

Sometimes, indeed, the chelik actually try to make a girl pregnant. In Kanhargaon, two very popular motiari were betrothed to boys at Nayanar. The Kanhargaon chelik did all they could to make them pregnant so that they could force them into marriage and keep them in their own village. But they were unsuccessful, and in the end one of the girls was seduced by her own betrothed at a marriage, became pregnant and was hastily married to him. It is not uncommon, though I have no statistics on the point, for engaged couples whose parents unduly delay their marriage to force the issue either by eloping together or by trying to achieve a pregnancy.

But on the whole, the admirable ghotul rule that engaged couples should have nothing to do with one another before marriage is carefully observed. Out of 113 Lamhada boys serving for their wives and in close proximity for several years to the girls they were going to marry, only 5 made them pregnant.

Pre-nuptial pregnancy does not seem to injure the couple's relationships in marriage, provided a youth marries the girl himself. Of the 26 chelik who married the motiari they made pregnant, not one made a failure of his domestic life. At the time of my inquiries every one of them was living with his original partner and very happy with her. But those who had infertile sexual connexion with their wives before marriage showed a comparatively high divorce rate. Of the 316 who admitted to this, 14 had unsuccessful marriages. Of these 77 were the regular ghotul-wives of my informants and 68 of them were still living together when I inquired.

In only three cases during the last twenty years has a pregnancy been taken so seriously as to lead to tragedy. Two of these were the suicides which I have already described in Chapter XV. But here it was not so much the pregnancy itself as the fact that the pregnancy was the result of a connexion between chelik and motiari of the same clan that mattered. The third tragedy appears to have been due largely to a chelik's fear of the disgrace and expense, especially as it was his second experience of the kind.

At the beginning of April 1942, Birjhu, a chelik of the Aturbera ghotul, discovered with dismay that his motiari, Mori, was pregnant. Only a year before he had made another girl pregnant in the ghotul, had refused to marry her and had forced his parents to pay compensation. They did so, but they made many threats as to what they would do if it occurred again. Mori, who seems to have been in love with the boy, said that he must marry her, but Birjhu refused and said that if she told anybody that it was through him that she had conceived, he would kill her. After a little while, however, the poor girl told her brother's wife about it. When Birjhu heard she had done so, he planned to carry out his threat. On the night of the 14th of April, he told Mori he would do what she wanted and they had better elope together and get married in another village. Late at night they crept stealthily out of the ghotul and made their way through the forest. But suddenly, before they had gone very far, Birjhu caught hold of the girl and strangled her. Then he dragged her body below a tree and tied a rope round the neck to make it look as though the girl had committed suicide.

The following day a report was made at the Narayanpur police station that Mori had committed suicide. When Birjhu heard that the matter had gone to the police, he was frightened but possibly even more he was overwhelmed with sorrow and misery at what he had done. He disappeared, and two days later hanged himself from a tree in the jungle.

But this is the only incident of the kind that has yet been recorded.

Such is the general picture, familiar to students of pre-marital freedom everywhere. How are we to explain the fact that through all the years of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 842

eager youth and splendid physical vigour the chelik and motiari cohabit, employing few precautions worth the name, and yet achieve so low a pregnancy rate as 4 per cent? What explanations have been advanced to solve the problem in other cultures?

X883 842 171

Our first point must be to insist that there really is a problem. When chelik and motiari sleep together, do they really have sexual intercourse, or do they seek some other form of sexual gratification that does not involve the penetration of the male seed into the vagina? This question has been raised for the Bantu by Torday who believes that he has solved the problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity by showing that it is not promiscuity at all.

> It is scarcely credible that Bantu parents and elders should be devoid of common sense to such an extent as to permit their children to have promiscuous intercourse and yet visit them with dire penalties when the natural consequence, pregnancy, follows. When this question has been fully investigated (an extremely delicate task) it will be found, no doubt, that what is generally described as free sexual intercourse between unmarried youngsters is nothing more than one form or another of mutual masturbation.[1]

African tradition undoubtedly favours some form of unconsummated sexual excitement. Laubscher has described the practice of *mdsha* among the Tembu and Fingo peoples. This is performed by the boy facing the girl and placing his penis between her thighs, but penetration must be avoided and every three days the girls are examined to ensure that they remain virgins. Laubscher says that this early erotic form of hetero-sexual adaptation does not, at the pre-pubertal period, replace masturbation.[2] Leakey describes a somewhat similar practice of the Masai warriors in their *manyatta*-dormitories. Although a girl cannot refuse an invitation to sleep with the men, 'she is not necessarily expected to allow a man full sexual intercourse, and, in fact, often does not do so. Thus—strange as it may seem—Masai girls do sometimes go to their husbands as virgins in the physical sense of the word, although they have slept with men in the *manyattas* countless times.'[3] Similar sexual play without consummation is known as *ngwiko* by the Wakikuyu[4] and as *umba* by the Akikuyu. Driberg describes Lango intrigues with unmarried girls as 'platonic' in so far that, although a couple may spend a whole night together, they must not enjoy full sexual relations.[5]

Such practices must involve considerable strain, both physical and psychological, and it is notable that Leakey says that in the dormitory Masai girls 'usually have no objection to full intercourse' except on certain days. The Muria certainly seek to limit the amount of intercourse. Some ghotul send their girls to sleep at home or in a separate house; in these the boys sometimes practise masturbation after the girls have gone, but far more often have intercourse with them on their way home. As in the Masai dormitory, a girl is not bound to have intercourse with the boy she sleeps with on any particular day, but—unlike the Masai tradition—she cannot refuse to have intercourse with him at all. A few girls manage to avoid intercourse for several years, but they are not approved, and the very fact that they are discussed and criticized indicates their rarity. Chelik and motiari do, however,

[1] E. Torday, 'The Principles of Bantu Marriage', *Africa* (London, 1929), Vol. II, p. 256.
[2] B. J. F. Laubscher, *Sex, Custom and Psychopathology* (London, 1937), p. 72.
[3] L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *JRAI*, Vol. LX, p. 194.
[4] C. Dundas, 'Native Laws of some Bantu Tribes', *JRAI*, Vol. LI, p. 248.
[5] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango* (London, 1923), p. 135.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 A
842
171

often sleep together without sexual congress. The girls have a practice, called *dinga-dinga*, of playing with the penis, and the great prominence given to the clitoris in drawings suggests that they indulge in some form of clitoridical stimulation. But full sexual intercourse is everywhere the rule, and is normal through all divergences and for every type of ghotul.

How far does infanticide and abortion solve the problem? Hutton suggests this for the Angami Naga.

> The licence allowed to unmarried girls raises another question. What of their children? Here accurate information is exceedingly difficult to obtain. Illegitimate children are very rare, and Mr Davis remarks that 'it is impossible to resist the conclusion that they are made away with immediately after birth, or that abortion is procured before the birth of the child'.[1]

Yet few cases come to the courts, and even Hutton with his great experience was unable to find examples. For the Muria I have described an attempt at abortion as a routine measure in cases of ghotul pregnancy, but its ineffectiveness is shown not only by definite statements to that effect, but also by the number of children actually born. Infanticide is, I am certain, unknown.

883 X
842

The Muria themselves, as we have seen, place considerable reliance on a frequent change of partners. Pitt-Rivers suggested that promiscuity sterilizes by mixing the sperms of different males.[2] Westermarck considered that promiscuity resulted in a pathological condition of the vagina that resulted in barrenness.[3] But the theory of a spermotoxin has not been endorsed by any responsible scientist, and is not supported by the Muria statistics, for there are more pregnancies in the ghotul where partners are frequently changed than in those where each motiari remains faithful to a single partner.

Not altogether unsound is the Muria belief that contraception is secured by spacing acts of congress and that pregnancy cannot follow single or casual coitus. 'Conception often in the writings of novelists', says Zuckerman, 'results from an isolated sexual act, but in real life this is probably exceptional',[4] and he quotes Meaker as saying that:

> Undoubtedly there are human matings in which a single act of coitus, or at most coitus repeated at intervals throughout one menstrual month, would infallibly produce conception, but these are exceptions. Most couples who succeed in reproducing do so in spite of certain imperfections in the conceptive mechanism .... most people are relatively and not absolutely fertile.[5]

The Muria belief has naturally arisen from an observation of what actually happens. A girl who remains infertile in the ghotul quickly conceives after marriage. 'A motiari', said a chelik at Bhanpuri, 'is an unenclosed clearing; a wife is fenced and irrigated land. As you care for it, it soon bears a harvest, and becomes more and more easy to plough.' And the Jholer of Moroskoro said, 'We had a child within a year of our marriage, for we loved each other and had congress without fear'.

883 X
842
171

This belief seems to be common in the Pacific. Of the Melanesians of British New Guinea, Seligman says,

[1] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 171.
[2] G. H. L. Pitt-Rivers, *The Clash of Cultures* (London, 1927), p. 148.
[3] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. I, p. 334.
[4] S. Zuckerman, 'The Physiology of Fertility in Man and Monkey', *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XXVIII (1936), p. 48.
[5] S. R. Meaker, *Human Sterility* (London, 1934), p. 41.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
842
171

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

> I believe that . . . Papuasian girls are less easily impregnated than the women of the white race. Whether this is in any degree due to early coitus, early and strenuous work in the gardens, or is a racial peculiarity I do not venture to surmise, but the point of view taken becomes perhaps more comprehensible when it is remembered that the Sinaugolo hold that a single act of coitus is insufficient to produce conception, so that a Sinaugolo girl does not expect to have a child unless visited fairly regularly for a comparatively lengthy time, perhaps not less than a month.[1]

The Tikopia also believe that,

> A child cannot be conceived by a single act of impregnation, but only by a repeated series of acts. This is in line with the view that the child is formed by the coagulation of semen, hence several deposits at close intervals are necessary. The habit of young people of copulating once then missing some days before the next time of intercourse is a corollary of this.[2]

The Muria belief in a safe, or rather unsafe, period is widely shared by other communities. Ancient Indian tradition regarded the *ritu*, or the period extending from the fourth to the twelfth day after the beginning of the menses, as particularly favourable to conception. A husband must approach his wife at this time; if he does not he will suffer the pains of hell.[3] The same belief is universally distributed in modern India, with an emphasis on the first or the first two days after the close of the period. Many aboriginal tribes insist on their women behaving with special restraint and care on these days.

Hollis reports that the Nandi girls are careful not to visit the huts of the warriors for some days after their period 'for fear of becoming pregnant after intercourse with the men'.[4] Himes quotes a report on the Isleta Indians of New Mexico that 'if a woman does not wish to conceive she will not have intercourse for nine days after menstruation'.[5] The great gynaecologist Soranos warned his readers to abstain from coitus directly before and after menstruation.[6] Aetios of Amida, a Greek physician of the sixth century, gave the same advice.[7]

The Muria belief that conception is a girl's own fault and that it can be avoided by the proper psychological attitude during coitus—'Let her not want it, let her not give herself, let her be quiet and not respond—and there will be no danger'—resembles the ancient Chinese practice known as Kong-fou, a sort of self-hypnosis by which the thoughts during intercourse were directed elsewhere. Kisch quotes Riedel as authority for a statement that the women of the island of Buru often had intercourse with strange men, 'but maintained a passive and indifferent state, for the purpose of avoiding conception', and adds that 'it is well known' that

> An active participation on the part of the woman in the sexual act, by increasing her voluptuous sensations, gives rise to certain reflex actions—descent of the uterus, rounding of the os uteri, induration of the portio vaginalis, and, finally, ejaculation of the secretion of the cervical

[1] Seligman, op. cit., p. 500.
[2] J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. I, pp. 215ff., where references to the classical texts are given. [3] Firth, op. cit., p. 492.
[4] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 82.
[5] Himes, op. cit., p. 15, quoting E. C. Parsons in *47th Ann. Rep. B.A.E.*, p. 213.
[6] Ibid., p. 90. [7] Ibid., p. 94.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

885
842
171

glands and of the glands of Bartholin; these changes accelerate the entrance of the semen into the cavity of the uterus, and increase the motility of the spermatozoa.[1]

But Kisch considers that sufficient dependence cannot be placed on this belief that the uterine reflexes are under the conscious will. Himes thinks that the idea simply 'proceeds from a sense of guilt in coitus; if it is not enjoyed, the consequences will not be so unfortunate'.[2] This might well apply to European women, but it is rare to find this sense of guilt among the Muria, though once a chelik at Moroskoro admitted that when, after marriage, he copulated without fear of the consequences his wife quickly became pregnant.

We may note finally that the Muria are not exceptionally fertile. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 150 were infertile, though some of these may have been fruitful later. Of these 150, only 1 husband had previously caused a ghotul pregnancy, and his subsequent sterility was regarded by his wife (who was probably the real person at fault) as a punishment. This infertility may be due to dietary factors; but it is interesting that the inflammatory diseases, such as mumps and epididymitis, which usually cause sterility in the male, are practically unknown among the Muria.

885
842

All these different factors have probably contributed to the low conception- and birth-rate in the Muria ghotul. A certain number of abortions are procured by not very efficient means; *coitus interruptus* is occasionally practised; certain disciplines and restraints undoubtedly play their part. But the Muria have no form of contraception, that is sufficiently widely practised, that can account for only 80 pregnancies caused by 2000 males copulating at least twice a week (to give the lowest figure for the most disciplined ghotul) for the period between the ages of 12 and 17.

The most satisfactory general explanation is to be found in the theory, usually associated with the name of Hartman, of a period of adolescent sterility. This explanation was first promulgated by Crew in his Presidential Address on 'Puberty and Maturity' before the Second International Congress for Sex Research held in London in 1930. From experiments conducted on 100 female mice at the first oestrous Crew found that while 20 refused to mate, only 24 of the 80 who did mate became pregnant. But three or six months later, the fertility rate rose to 80 or 90 per cent. 'It is seen, therefore', says Crew, 'that though pregnancy can occur at the time of the first oestrous, it is relatively uncommon.'[3] The following year Hartman developed this theory as a result of his observations on the sex life of rhesus monkeys, and in a number of important publications[4] has since established the fact that there is not only a 'very high incidence of non-ovulatory cycles in young mammals but that human beings also have an infecund period for some years after the menarche'. Ashley-Montagu has given an admirably lucid summary of this and subsequent literature on the subject. 'It has long been known', he points out, 'that puberty is by no means coincident with the development of the reproductive powers, that in the girl menstruation may long precede the

[1] R. H. Kisch, *The Sexual Life of Woman*, Eng. trans. by M. E. Paul (New York, 1926), p. 403.

[2] Himes, op. cit., p. 21.

[3] F. A. E. Crew, 'Puberty and Maturity' in *Proceedings of the Second International Congress for Sex Research* (London, 1930), p. 9.

[4] C. G. Hartman, 'On the Relative Sterility of the Adolescent Organism', *Science*, Vol. LXXIV (1931), pp. 226-7; *Contributions to Embryology*, No. 134 (Washington, 1932), pp. 1-264; *Time of Ovulation in Women* (Baltimore and London, 1936); *Sex and Internal Secretions* (Baltimore, 1932).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883
842

more important function of ovulation, and that in the youth ejaculation may long precede the process of spermatogenesis.' The experiments of Mills and Ogle on mice, and of Yerkes and others on the chimpanzee have confirmed this belief. Ashley-Montague quotes investigations made by Mondiere on the women of Cochin China, by Maxwell on Chinese women from South Fukien, by Mills and Ogle on white and negro mothers of illegitimate children, and by Chau and Wright on a very large number of Chinese women living in sub-tropical Canton.[1] Among the latter, the mean age at menarche was 14·5 years, the mean age at marriage 17·6 years and the mean age at the birth of the first child 20·5 years—which suggests a sterility interval of 6 years.

> It seems probable that in the human female, and in the mammals, which have thus far been studied, there is generally an interval of anything up to five years or more between menarche and the ability to procreate, during which the female is functionally sterile and unable to reproduce. This sterile interval has been shown by Hartman to be due, in the monkey at least, to the non-ovulatory character of the adolescent menstrual cycle. And as Hartman has pointed out, puberty, which is signalized by the onset of the first menstruation, merely marks 'the early manifestation of a train of events (adolescence) which only after three or four years on the average lead to ovulation and conception, the proof of maturity'. It is such facts as these, as Hartman has also suggested, which may possibly explain the infertility of the unmarried women in primitive societies.[2]

Zuckerman, in an article wherein he prophesied that both puberty and the menopause will one day become controllable events, has adopted and discussed the theory.

> Only the first phase of the full ovulation cycle is experienced for a long period after the process of reproductive maturation (puberty) sets in both in man and monkeys. The anterior lobe of pituitary presumably undergoes waves of activity during which it elaborates only a follicular-maturation hormone, or only enough of a general gonadotropic hormone, to cause development of the ovarian follicles. The hormone produced by the developing follicles causes growth of the uterine mucosa, and when the wave of pituitary activity comes to an end, the wave of follicular growth it stimulated also ceases, so that the uterus no longer comes under the influence of the follicular hormone. As a result, a retrogressive uterine phase sets in and menstruation occurs. The first menstrual cycles after puberty probably always follow this course, i.e. the first menstrual cycles experienced by women are usually unaccompanied by ovulation.
>
> Hence it was that the Trobriand Islanders studied by Malinowski never conceived in their early youth in spite of unrestricted sexual

[1] M. F. Ashley-Montague, *Coming into Being among the Australian Aborigines* (London, 1937), pp. 236ff., and 'Adolescent Sterility' in *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, Vol. XIV (1939), pp. 13–34, 192–219. Dr Ashley-Montague was good enough to communicate his conclusions to me from America during the war, and I am greatly indebted to him for the light he has thrown on a problem which, to everyone who lives in the aboriginal world, is of great interest and importance.

[2] A. T. Mondiere, 'Sur la Monographie de la Femme de la Cochinchine', *Bull. de la Soc. d'Anthrop.*, T.3, Ser. 3 (1880), pp. 250–61; C. A. Mills and C. Ogle, 'Physiologic Sterility of Adolescence', *Human Biology*, Vol. VIII (1936), pp. 607–15; K. T. Chau and J. M. Wright, 'Gynaecological Notes: Canton Hospital', *China Medical Journal*, 1925, pp. 684–7.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883
842

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

licence. Hence, too, births rarely occur before the third year of effective marital relationship in Indian 'child marriages'.[1]

Let us now turn to a consideration of the Muria statistics. I give below a table showing the number of births of a first child at varying ages. It may be said with a good deal of confidence that effective marriage never or rarely begins before a year after the menarche, and in many cases not for two or three years.[2] It never occurs in the pre-pubertal period.

Table I, then, gives the number of births for each period of months or years after effective marriage. The total number of cases examined was 2000, of which 150 were infertile.

TABLE I

Length of time after effective marriage	Number of births
Within a month	1
After 2 months	1
3 months	6
4 months	3
5 months	1
6 months	17
7 months	10
8 months	4
9 months	3
1 year	187
1 year and a half	50
2 years	463
2½ years	93
3 years	603
4 years	180
5 years	116
Uncertain	112

I have some confidence in the accuracy of these figures because the length of time before a child is born is a matter of the greatest interest to both wife and husband. It is probably one of the few things in Muria life about which accurate calculations are made.

I have less confidence in my other tables, but I give them because they are interesting and suggestive. They represent the result of an inquiry in which men belonging to 220 different ghotul were consulted about the conception-problem during their own chelik periods. Each man may be assumed to have spent at least 5 years in the ghotul. Few of them showed any reluctance to talk about the affairs of their youth: the statements of those who did were

[1] S. Zuckerman, 'The Physiology of Fertility in Man and Monkey', *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XXVIII (1936), p. 39.

[2] The average age of menarche in the Indian girl has been given as 14·21 ± 1·66 years.—Carjal, 'The Reproductive Life of Indian Women', *The Indian Journal of Medical Research*, Vol. VIII (1920), pp. 366ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
942

checked by separate inquiries from other members of the same ghotul. In the 220 ghotul there were histories of 327 pregnancies. The Muria were consulted about the ages of the girls who became pregnant, and the number of years which had passed in each case between menarche and pregnancy. Muria calculations are obviously rough and ready, but it is hard to see how we can get more accurate figures for a primitive society. I give them for what they are worth.

TABLE II

Ages of girls at first pre-marital pregnancy in 327 cases				
15	..	..	..	1
16	..	..	..	26
17	..	..	..	49
18	..	..	..	66
19	..	..	..	63
20	..	..	..	46
21	..	..	..	25
22	..	..	..	18
23	..	..	..	23
24	..	..	..	8

TABLE III

Number of years between menarche and pregnancy in the above 327 cases				
1	..	..	..	2
2	..	..	..	61
3	..	..	..	99
4	..	..	..	82
5	..	..	..	30
6	..	..	..	28
7	..	..	..	3
Uncertain	..	..	..	22

Even though these figures cannot be regarded with the confidence one would give to laboratory material, they are strikingly suggestive of the sterility interval. Table I, which refers to the post-marital period, is confirmed by the two other Tables which describe pre-marital conceptions.

I have little doubt that here we have the real solution of our problem.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

DREAMS

OFFICIALLY it is not possible to dream inside the ghotul, for Lingo and the other ghotul gods protect those who sleep there, and indeed I believe that in many places the boys and girls dream very little, enjoying sound and satisfying sleep in the security, warmth and delight of their peculiar realm.

But not all ghotul are equally happy. In Binjhli for example, where there was a strange atmosphere of jealousy and frustration, I heard a great deal about dreams. And in all villages there are official and standardized dreams which are believed to be the normal means of receiving communications from gods or ancestors.

It is not possible, I think, to provide material on this subject which will be of much value to the psycho-analyst. It is very difficult to obtain the Muria's associations to their dreams; their memory is poor and they are so timid that too prolonged an inquiry is likely to make it impossible to obtain any information at all. But it is possible to discover various ideas and attitudes of the Muria through an examination of their dreams, especially since the most important are of the official type.

What is the Muria theory of dreams? Where do they come from and why do we see them? Some say that all sleep is a dream; sleep is the food by which man's life is recreated and 'the dream is the chutney of sleep'. As with other Indian aborigines the Muria theory of dreams is closely related to the idea of the soul or *jiwa*. The *jiwa* leaves the body in sleep, goes here and there and what it sees during its adventures is the dream.[1] The power of the *jiwa* to leave the body is described in a significant tale from Ulera.

> One day long ago two men went to a blacksmith's shop to rest. One fell asleep, the other sat by his side watching. Presently from the sleeper's mouth there came out his *jiwa* in the form of a lizard and went to feed. A dog saw it and chased it into an ant-hill. There it saw a pot full of rupees.
>
> The other man covered the sleeper's face with coal-dust for a joke. When the *jiwa* returned it did not recognise its body with the blackened face, and went away seeking for it elsewhere. By and by the second man noticed a lizard going to and fro, and soon realized what had happened. He quickly cleaned the sleeper's face, and the lizard, recognizing the body, entered it, and became a *jiwa* again.
>
> When the sleeper awoke he told his friend what he had seen in his dreams, and they went to the ant-hill and found the rupees. This is a true tale of what actually occurred.[2]

[1] Compare *The Baiga*, p. 408.

[2] The literature of the 'separable soul' is considerable. It appears in folk-tales as the useful motif of 'entering another's body' which, as Penzer rightly insists, must not be confused with the quite distinct 'life-index' motif. Crooke observes that 'in Bombay it is considered most reprehensible to play jokes on a sleeping person, such as painting the face in fantastic colours, or giving moustaches to a sleeping woman. The absent soul may not be able to find its own body, the appearance of which has been thus changed, and may depart altogether, leaving the body a corpse'.—*Religion and Folk-Lore*, Vol. I, p. 232. For the subject generally see *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. I, p. 37, n. 2; A. E. Crawley, 'Doubles', Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. IV, pp. 853f.; M. Bloomfield, 'On the Art of Entering Another's Body', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. LVI, pp. 1ff.;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

828 539 774 Another tale, from Atargaon, points the same moral.

> Dream and Wealth were disputing which was the greater. When they could not agree they decided that each should hide in turn and whoever could find the other, yet not be found himself, would win the contest. Wealth hid himself first. He took the shape of a pot of rupees and hid in an ant-hill. Dream went to a very poor boy who was lying asleep and called his soul to come out. When the *jiwa* came Dream sent it to the ant-hill. It returned, and when the boy awoke he went to the ant-hill and dug up Wealth in the shape of the pot. Then Dream hid in the wind, and was blown here and there about the world. Wealth could not find him and when they met again he admitted that Dream was the greater.

In this other world into which the *jiwa* can enter during sleep, the gods and the Departed are familiar figures and the *jiwa* can talk with them and learn their will. Often, however, the Muria speak as though the gods and the dead had come to them in sleep, that the approach was, as it were, from the other side. Obviously the ordinary Muria, any more than the ordinary Englishman, has no consistent theory. One thing which has puzzled him, and which he explains by a fantastic tale, is the 'falsity' or symbolism of dreams. In Berma I was given a story which accounts for this.

> Long ago men could read the future in their dreams. An owl heard of it and said, 'If men can see the future in dreams, they will never die'. The owl waited till the gods were holding a darbar and then fell with a bang into the midst of them. The gods said, 'What is the matter?' The owl replied, 'I have had a dream, and in that dream I was marrying a Raja's daughter. We had done eleven rounds of the Lagir; had it been twelve she had been mine; but I awoke and fell to the ground. Now I must marry this girl. What am I to do?' The gods were concerned and said to one another, 'How can a red-eyed bird marry a Raja's daughter?' The owl replied, 'But all the world gets what it sees in dreams; how can it be that only my dreams are false?' At that the gods cursed men saying, 'From now on, let all dreams be false'.

828 781 Dreams, therefore, are symbolic. They are code messages from the other world and only the wise can decipher them. There is a fairly extensive system of dream-interpretation, on the whole consistently maintained throughout the Muria area, though with a few variations from place to place. I will tabulate these interpretations for the reader's convenience.

781

	Good Dreams
One's dead parents . .	. . Lucky, for it shows they have retained their affection for one.
Drowning in a river . .	. . Very good. The Yer Kanyang so loves the dreamer that she wants to marry him.

Sir J. G. Frazer, *Taboo and Perils of the Soul*, pp. 37 and 49; *Punjab Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 166 (which gives a tale with a similar motif to that in the text); W. A. Clouston, *Popular Tales and Fictions* (Edinburgh, 1887), Vol. I, p. 437.

For a Santal story of a soul which slipped out of a man's sleeping body in the form of a lizard and was prevented from returning, see B. Bonnerjea, 'The Social and Ceremonial Life of the Santals', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LIX (1930), p. 100.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

787 from a tree is very bad at Kokori and Gorma, but good elsewhere, though it is always bad to dream of climbing.

The reason for this divergence may be that in some cases dream-interpretation does not depend on any manifest or latent symbolism, but has been worked out pragmatically: a marriage dream did in fact one day precede a death at Palli or luck in the hunt at Koilibera, and ever afterwards it has been associated with failure or success.

The interpretations are in any case not very clear. The association of fish with dropsy is interesting, so is that of flying with evil spirits and of raw meat with witches. But I cannot see the connexion between a kotri fish and money, or liquor and meat, or a tiger and hunger. It is remarkable, in view of the hobby-horse dances,[1] that the horse should be regarded as a spirit and so unlucky.

These interpretations are taken quite seriously and often guide a man's conduct. The chelik may refuse to go on a Pus Kolang expedition if one of them has a dream of a tiger shortly before they set out. A motiari will be wise if she avoids visiting the ghotul the day after she has dreamt of a river in flood, for this suggests that her menstrual period is imminent.

We must turn now to the official or standardized dream by which the Muria receive communications from the gods and the Departed. Muria social life is, as we have just seen, sometimes guided by a chance dream of a prophetic nature. But the religious and disciplinary side of its life is almost dominated by such dreams. When a god, for example, feels that he is neglected or forgotten he may draw attention to himself either by bringing disease upon a village or by sending dreams. The god does not always come in his own form, but symbolically. For example, a neglected Kanyang may appear as a motiari and will continue to bother the sleeper until offerings are made to her. The Yer Kanyang may appear as a crocodile. If the crocodile seizes you in a dream and you do nothing about it, you will fall ill. To prevent this the dreamer calls the Siraha and goes with him to the river to offer egg-shell ground up with burnt earth from below a hearth, vermilion for the naiad's forehead, bangles for her arms, and coloured wool for her hair.

Dreaming of a horse means that a Rau (or forest-d) is angry, and eggs and parched rice must be offered to him. In Dongrigura the Gaita said that the dream of a horse, buffalo, pig or peacock meant that a Rau was dissatisfied with the attention he was getting. If the Rau appeared in the form of a horse or a buffalo, it was necessary to make an iron image of the animal and offer it to him. For a pig or peacock, however, the sacrifice of a pigeon was sufficient. At Sirsi, if a man dreams that he is caught by a tiger, this is supposed to indicate the displeasure of the Earth Mother and two or three days afterwards the villagers have to assemble and sacrifice a chicken in her honour.

Such dreams represent the whims or spleen of deities according to their mood. More important instructions are given by the clan-gods with regard to the construction of the Anga. As far as I know, every Anga is made or repaired as a result of a dream. For example, at Karanji, there was an Anga of Bara Deo, but no sacrifice was being made to it in 1942 because the Pen-Gaita, Ghenwa, was dead and the god had not yet come in a dream to appoint his successor. The Duma-guru (ancestral priest) also had failed to appear. In this village it is the custom for Bara Deo to come in a dream saying that offerings are to be made and the Duma-guru directs the place and time. At

[1] See pp. 207ff.

DREAMS

Chandabera the headman of the village had a dream in which Danteshwari Matal appeared to him and told him to cut down a large sarai tree which was obstructing her worship. This tree pleasantly shadowed Danteshwari's own shrine, and the headman thought it was unnecessary to remove it. Later his leg became swollen and the Siraha declared that the reason was his failure to obey the goddess. Even so he took no notice, but when a little later his brother had a fit of madness, he thought it best to obey his dream and cut down the tree. At Padbera, the god Phande Hunga (a grandson of Halayin Dokari) gave a dream to the Gaita of the Durro clan, promising to make him prosper if he would make him an Anga. The dream even showed that mahua wood was to be used and that it must be brought from the Magagaon forest. 787

The appointment of a Gaita or Gunia often depends upon appropriate dreams. Succession to the priesthood is hereditary, but until the Gaita's son or grandson gets a dream he cannot take up his appointment. In the meantime, somebody else has to perform his functions in his name. The Gaita of Randhna, for example, described how 'six months before I had my dream my father died. Then I dreamt that I went to the bazaar and drank a lot of liquor. As I was coming home, I met Matal Maoli and Danteshwari who said, "Your ancestors served us and never made mistakes; we were pleased with them and never gave them trouble; now you are their son and you are to serve us. Do your work well and whatever you ask we will listen and answer your questions". I awoke frightened but there was no one there. From that day onwards I was the village Gaita.' Once in Alor, when there was extensive crop failure, the Siraha dreamt that the office of Kaser-Gaita should be abolished. In his place one of the Siraha dreamt continually everything that had to be done. 787 791

The dead also reveal their wishes through dreams. Sometimes they indicate that they are dissatisfied with the attention that is being paid them. For example, a Muria of Bhopna said, 'If I dream of a tiger rushing to attack me, I recognize it as a Dand-duma, a troublesome ghost. To prevent the danger I must pound up a bit of living coal, take some burnt earth and draw two parallel lines on the ground. I offer a chicken there and throw it away.' In Sirsi the Muria said that a man regards any dream of his dead parents as requiring some sacrifice. It is supposed that the dead appear in a dream if they are intending to cause trouble later on. The dream is a preliminary warning to the living to be careful. The dreamer offers an egg and a chicken saying, 'Since you have come in my dream, I am giving you these things; be content with them and give us no trouble'. 787

To dream of drowning is a very significant dream that demands instant attention. I describe elsewhere how the Muria believe that adultery is punished by an attack of dropsy. To dream of drowning with its association with water, therefore, means that among your ancestors was an adulterer who died of watery swelling of his body and that the full rites of satisfaction for his crime have not yet been performed.

At Gorma, a Muria dreamt that he was drowning. When he consulted a medium about this, he was reminded of an association with water that had occurred in his family: one of his ancestors had in fact died of dropsy as a penalty for adultery. 'His spirit is uneasy, so he has given you this dream.' To quiet the ghost, the villagers made a man's image of grass and took it to the river. They put it beside a stone with one of its feet upon it, and the Gaita and the ghost's living relatives also put their feet on the stone and made the usual offerings and drank to the honour of the dead. After this there were no more dreams.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

787 Not only religious functions and duties are revealed in dreams. In Alor a chelik said that he sometimes dreamt the songs and dances that were to be performed on the morrow. Another chelik in Nayanar said that he dreamt once that he was able to do a new kind of dance and sing a song that he had never been able to learn in fact.' After his dream he found that he could do both. At Kabonga, the Village Mother sometimes comes in a dream to tell the boys to dance, and next day they go to a neighbouring village and perform the Hulki.

154 Of the dreams recorded from chelik and motiari the majority were frankly sexual in their manifest content. This was perhaps what was to be expected; although the ghotul is hardly a home of repressed wishes there are some which from time to time pass through periods of stress and tension, and there are boys and girls in both types of ghotul who suffer the frustration of their desires. But where among ourselves such desires express themselves in discreet symbolism, the ghotul's frank and open attitude to sex permits the censor mechanism to lie unused. The most common ghotul dreams are those of 'eating, playing, dancing and sexual congress'.

A very interesting series of dreams were recorded for me by my wife from two motiari in the Binjhli ghotul. At that time (December 1940) this ghotul, which is one of those which does not permit permanent attachments, was passing through a difficult phase. There were about a dozen girls of eighteen years or more who were for various reasons unable to get married; they had been in the ghotul for a long time; young and beautiful motiari were growing up and diverting the attention of the chelik. Angry scenes between the motiari were not uncommon and some of the older girls were restless and unhappy. Such was the situation in which two of the senior motiari had the following dreams. I will give first those of the head girl of the ghotul, a motiari of about nineteen years.

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik I love. I have often wept as I remembered the dream.
>
> I have often dreamt that I was married.
>
> On a dancing expedition I borrowed all the combs of a young and beautiful motiari.
>
> I dreamt I was sleeping with the chelik I loved. He combed my hair. The next morning he gave me eight combs, for he saw I hadn't any.

And these are the dreams of her assistant, a motiari perhaps seventeen years old, a pretty girl.

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik outside the ghotul. We were caught and I was fined three bottles of liquor.
>
> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik on separate mats side by side. I held him in my hands all night. He never took his hands off my breast.
>
> I often dream of intercourse. When the boy approaches me I say, 'Hush, what's the matter with you?'
>
> A chelik slept with me in my dream. He held my breasts tightly in his hands. I said, 'Don't do that, let me go'. He said, 'How can I help it? I always do it'. I said, 'You chelik have no mercy on us'.

In the Binjhli ghotul, the motiari sleep with their chelik only once a week. On other days, after an evening of strong sexual stimulation, the girls return to their separate house. Several of these dreams appear to show the influence of this. The longing for combs revealed in the first set of dreams and the obvious jealousy of the young girl who had many of them, reflects a common

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Muria

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The Malik of the Jungani ghotul with friends

[p. 480 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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The semar tree at Phulpar, hung with dancing sticks

[p. 480(E)]

DREAMS

motive in ghotul life: the comb is the treasured gift of a lover and to have many combs is a proof of attractiveness and sexual power. The first dream of the second girl, where she slept with her lover outside the ghotul and was fined, reflects one of the methods by which the rule against too passionate an association with a particular person is avoided. 154

It is very difficult to obtain the dreams of motiari; I cannot, therefore, say whether the fact that every one of those recorded has a sexual motif is of significance or not. But the dreams themselves are interesting and rather pathetic.

Everywhere I have found many dreams of frustration among the chelik. This is not perhaps what we should expect, but it may be that the only dreams they remember are those about an experience which is so unusual to them. Naturally, even in the ghotul, where sexual opportunity is so free, a boy or a girl will from time to time have sexual desires that cannot be satisfied at the moment. Such desires will give rise to dreams, but these must not be regarded as suggesting that the ghotul is generally a place of lost opportunities and frustrated desires.

Gadru of the Chapai ghotul had the following dreams:

> After a heavy meal one night, I dreamt that I had visited a neighbour's house and was smoking a leaf-pipe. A beautiful motiari sat down beside me and said, '*Eh dâda*, give me some tobacco'. But as I was looking for a mat on which we might sleep, I awoke.
>
> One day when I was sleeping outside the ghotul, a pretty motiari came and lay down beside me. I said to her, 'O girl, let me do what I desire'. Her breasts appeared flat to the eye but when I pressed them I found they were *gatto dudo*, hard as pegs, to the touch. I mounted her but could not find her vagina, and while I was searching for it my water left me and I awoke.
>
> One day I dreamt that I was going to another village and saw a motiari bringing water from the river. I said to her, 'Give me something; promise you won't refuse'. She caught hold of me and dragged me along; but when I looked at my clothes I saw they were stained with blood that was flowing from her, and I awoke. After this dream I went the following day to the bank of the river and made offerings to the Yer Kanyang.

This dreamer Gadru was nearly drowned when he was a little boy and was only saved with great difficulty. The Siraha declared that the boy's accident was due to his father's failure to fulfil a vow he had made to the Yer Kanyang to sacrifice a pig when he had been out fishing. Probably this old association appears in his third dream.[1]

Here are some more dreams of frustration. In Chandabera, the Mukhwan dreamt

> One night I was making love to the Aloea, but when I was about to have intercourse with her, she got up and ran away.

This dream actually materialised after three days, although before that the boy had never had anything to do with the Aloea. He said that if he had dreamt that he was actually having intercourse with the girl, he would never

[1] The belief in a 'drowning spirit' or Dubha and in the Jate Burhi, the old woman who lives in tanks and drowns the unwary, is probably still common in Bengal and Bihar, and is reflected in Muria ideas about the Yer Kanyang. See S. C. Mitra, 'Water Spirits in North Bihar', *Man in India*, Vol. III (1923), pp. 196ff. and the same writer's article, 'Superstitions Regarding Drowning and Drowned Persons', *JASB*, Vol. LXII.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

154 have won her later on. The dream of frustration, therefore, is sometimes a lucky one.

Then again, at Kokori the ghotul Kotwar dreamt that,

> I went with the chelik and motiari to dance. All the other boys had combs in their hair and necklaces round their throats, but I had forgotten my comb and ran home to get it. As I was going, Dulosa caught hold of me and said, 'Come, *dāda*, come'. Just as I was going with her into the jungle a lot of people came by and I pretended that I was simply going to piss. The people went on, and as I was pissing Dulosa pushed me over and ran away. Dulosa was not a special lover of mine either before or after the dream.
>
> One day Nirosa said to me, 'O *dāda*, I want to sleep with you'. She combed my hair that night, but afterwards when we were about to lie down together, another of the boys came and pulled her away, and I awoke.

This experience must be fairly common in the ghotul. The Kotwar of Kabonga described the following dream:

> One day I dreamt that I was ploughing in my field and felt hungry. I went to bathe in the stream and sat down on a stone. The fish bit my feet. Presently a girl came to fetch water, and I said, 'O girl, where have you been all this time that you only come now?' Then I found that I was eating *jāwa*, but when I lifted the leaf-cup to my lips there was nothing in it but water. I was just going to speak to the girl when I awoke.

A curious incident occurred in Kabonga. Here the Diwan of the ghotul had been married for several years, but still held his office. He described one day how:

> I spent the night in the ghotul and when I went home in the morning my wife was very angry. She said, 'Last night you took the Belosa by force, and the girl has told the whole village'. I was annoyed, but as I was going to find the Belosa, I awoke.

Two days afterwards the Diwan learnt the meaning of this dream. A boy actually did go to the Belosa when she was asleep. She had no idea who it was, and in the morning accused the Kotwar saying, 'He did not let me sleep all night'. Fortified by his dream, which told him that the girl was obviously in the habit of making false accusations, the Diwan ordered that she should be expelled from the ghotul, for she had brought disgrace on them by her lies.

I will give a few other dreams with a manifest sexual content. A chelik in Koilibera told me of a dream in which he saw boys and girls dancing in front of the ghotul. He caught hold of one of the girls and had intercourse with her. While he was with her, a tiger (which is of ill-omen in this village) came and disturbed them.

In Nayanar a chelik said that he often dreamt that he was sleeping with girls from other ghotul.

The younger boys' conflict with their seniors is probably the motive of this dream from Binjhli, given by a rather unattractive boy:

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with the Silo [the most attractive and beautiful girl in the ghotul]. I had my life in her. In the middle of the night she made me get up and lay my body on hers. But just then the Salya woke and said, 'A visitor has come. Give him

DREAMS

your mat to sleep on'. So I had to get up and give him the mat on which we were sleeping together. I was very sorry, but when I came back, she took off her sari and spread it for me to lie on, and I covered her with my blanket. 154

In Markabera the head of the chelik said, 'If my ghotul-wife is away, I dream of sleeping with her. I chase her and often have her'. He sometimes experienced orgasm during such dreams. 'I once dreamt that I was going to dance in another village. I walked along the road with a girl I had always wanted. That night I was able to sleep with her in the other village.'

A chelik at Chandabera said, 'We generally dream of our earliest loves in the ghotul, for these are girls whom we never forget. We dream that they are sleeping by our side or running away from us. Sometimes we dream that we have gone out fishing with them or that we are on our way to a marriage dance'.

The seriousness with which the Muria treat their dreams and the reality they ascribe to them is clearly shown in the precautions taken the following day. I have already referred to various cures for nightmare. I will add a few more. At Bhopna a Muria said, 'If I dream that I have gone down under the water, I consult the Siraha and he says that it means that an evil ghost is coming. This once happened to me, so I got seven different kinds of wood and made a bonfire of them by the bank of a stream. I put some gur and ghee on the fire. Then I and my wife went round it three times, entered the water and ducked below it. We took off our old clothes and left them there on the bank, dressed in new clothes and went home without looking round.' This was rather a drastic and expensive cure. An easier means of averting the possible danger of a dream is this from Chingnar: 751 782

> A dream of a fight between two people suggests danger from black magic. To avert this the figure of a man with a bow and arrow should be made with grass and a bad egg, a pig or a chicken should be offered to it. The little image should be thrown away outside the village and the danger will disappear. [754]

Gadru of Chaniyagaon once dreamt,

> A beautiful woman came to my children and said to them, 'I am going to devour you, because your parents give me nothing to eat'. The next day my children fell ill, and the Siraha declared that their sickness was due to Lagar Deo, who was angry because the customary offering to him three years after the first child had not been made, and he therefore wanted to kill all my children. So I dedicated two pigs to Lagar Deo to be allowed to wander freely and killed three years later. Once I had done this my children recovered. 781 753 782

At Palnar, the Suel once dreamt that he was climbing up a huge stone. Suddenly he saw a chaprasi, he was frightened and tried to run away. He fell down and broke his teeth. When he awoke he found he had fever and only recovered after he had sacrificed a pig and made other offerings.

In Chandabera, a Muria jealous of the happiness of the chelik performed hostile magic against the ghotul. The Sirdar dreamt that one of the boys had died and his corpse was being carried away for burial. Soon afterwards he himself got an attack of fever. He was sleeping at home and dreamt that a chelik came to him saying, 'Come, let us go to dance at a wedding'. The Sirdar replied, 'I am suffering from fever and cannot go'. The chelik said, 'The fever has been sent you by such and such a person, you must drive it

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

back again'. Then the boy awoke and the following day sent for the Siraha, who agreed that his illness was due to magic. They then took a pig and chicken outside the village and sacrificed them saying, 'Are you going away or not?' Both pig and chicken ate the rice offered them, and this was taken to mean that the danger from the magic was averted. The boys feasted on the pig and chicken and the Sirdar recovered from his fever. It was generally believed that the chelik who visited him in his dream was Lingo Pen himself.

Naitami Dole, a Muria of Kokori, described an experience when he was the Sirdar of his ghotul.

> One night I dreamt that I was having intercourse with a motiari. The next morning I found myself suffering from fever, so I called the Siraha to ask what was the matter. He told me that an enemy had sent the motiari to me by his magic. So I went down to the bank of the river and made seven circles on the bank putting rice, powdered egg-shells and ashes in them with an egg in the middle circle for the Yer Kanyang. Then I recovered.

To see one's house burning in a dream means that black magic, particularly in its very dangerous form of the *agisalaw*, or arrow of fire, is going to be sent against one. To avert it a chicken should be sacrificed and a small image made of *dab* grass carried out across the village boundary and thrown away.

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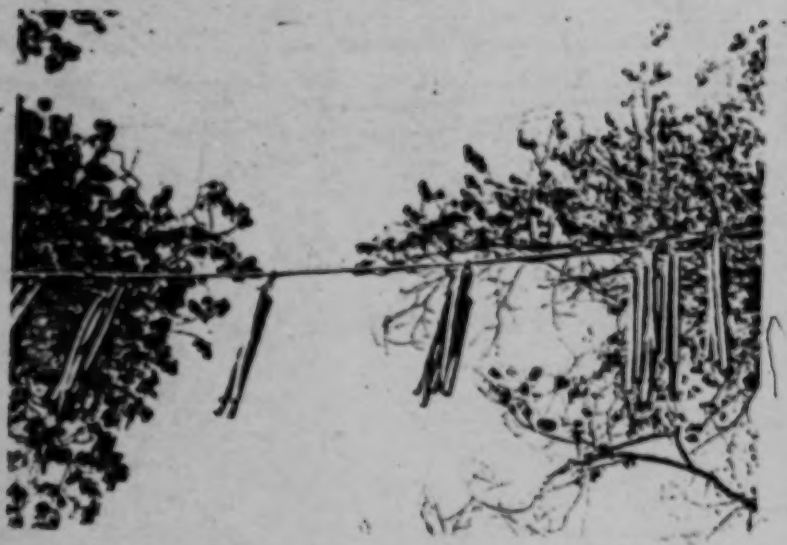

Dancing sticks strung across the road near the village boundary at Kolibera

Chelik preparing to hoist their sticks across the road

[p. 484 (A)]

Plate XC.III

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Plate XCIV

Chait Dandar dances: two movements in the Stick Dance at Malakot

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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CHAPTER NINETEEN

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

I

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DELIGHTFUL and enlivening features of ghotul life are the expeditions which are made throughout the year to other villages.[1] I will consider here only those visits which are made by the ghotul officially, under the command of the leaders and with appropriate discipline and rules. Such expeditions are made for marriages, for the festivals of the clan-gods and the Marhai fairs, and—in the cold weather—for ceremonial dancing from village to village. Sometimes the chelik and motiari go together, sometimes separately. Although every trip has a definite and serious purpose it is transformed by the spirit of youth and love into a holiday adventure. Now girls and boys of different villages meet one another and fall in love; now chelik and motiari can go out together on the freest and happiest of picnics far away from the drudgery of everyday life.

Every marriage attracts the neighbouring ghotul; early in the morning of the marriage day the chelik and motiari of a dozen villages are up, decorating themselves, preparing their drums, collecting their few necessities. When they reach their destination, they camp under trees or by a stream. They go to the wedding to help in the making of the booth, to dance before the house and above all to share in the splendid display of the Lagir. They are entertained by the bridegroom's family; they get their food and some liquor. For the rest they roam about together, playing, laughing, flirting or talking and resting in their little outdoor camps. Marriages usually occur in the warm weather and provide a perfect picnic-holiday for everyone.

The great festivals of the clan-gods provide another opportunity for amorous adventure or recreation. The Muria mind does not confuse piety with religion. The gods are to be satisfied and honoured; they must be bathed, fed, humoured, coaxed, caressed; but there is no reason why their worshippers should not enjoy themselves. The Canterbury Pilgrims would have been quite at home at a clan-festival. I have witnessed these at Adnar and Metawand. Hundreds of boys and girls attend them—a magnificent sight with their finery and ornaments. Here again, each ghotul makes a separate camp under trees, but the chelik and motiari dance together and there is more mixing with other villages than in a marriage.

Many a boy arrives with a bottle of mahua liquor half hidden beneath his arm. He has come with a definite purpose of meeting and attracting a girl from another village. At night he may be seen with a torch searching everywhere for his sweetheart. Even married men are allowed licence on these occasions. The gods themselves, carried about by mediumistic Siraha, assault the girls and chase them about. The festal dancing begins about nine o'clock in the evening and goes on till dawn; it is a splendid and moving spectacle. All round are little camp fires, and as the night wears on more and more boys and girls slip away together into the jungle or retire to sit by the fire and drink their liquor.

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There are finally the ceremonial expeditions, which we will now consider.

[1] Similar expeditions are made by the Orissa tribes, the Bhuiya, Juang, Bondo and Gadaba, though these generally have a serious matrimonial purpose alien to Muria tradition.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

II. The Pus Kolang Expeditions

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The Pus Kolang expeditions undertaken by boys during the Hindu month of Pus (Jan.-Feb.) are among the more serious of the ghotul's annual diversions. Attired in special costume, the chelik visit a number of villages, dancing and singing in honour of Lingo Pen, who is said to have inaugurated the custom. Their behaviour is strictly regulated by rules and taboos; they carry a god with them and sacred fire. Unlike the girls' Diwali dance, there is no sexual purpose behind these expeditions; indeed the strictest taboos are enforced and there is a general sense of danger; everyone has to be very careful; breach of the rules earns catastrophic punishment. 'The dances are for the gods', said the boys at Phulpar. 'We don't feel inclined for girls; besides, many have died for sex at the Pus Kolang.'

This sense of danger probably accounts for the rather haphazard distribution of the custom. In Udanpur, for example, Kurumtalla Pen ordered the chelik not to dance, but they disobeyed; as they left their village, one of the boys died. In Chiyanar, the boys' dog once bit another dog and when they got home a chelik died. In Bhanpuri, the dancers were once warned by a tiger's print in the ashes of the Pus Kolang fire not to go, but they went and a pair of chelik died. Since then they have abandoned the custom altogether. Generally, south of the Narayanpur-Kondagaon road and east of the Keskal-Kondagaon road the Muria do not dance the Pus Kolang, but everywhere in the north it is common. In the Chota Dongar area they say, 'We don't dance it because we are really Maria'. It is significant that in this part the cult of Lingo is at its weakest.

As the cool refreshing season of Pus approaches, the ghotul leaders consult the Gaita about the time and direction of the expedition. They remember the villages where they were well entertained last year; they recall the food they were given and the omens they saw, and they draw up a programme. In the dark half of Pus, they begin to practise. The dances are difficult and must be carefully taught to the younger boys, for it is dangerous to make mistakes. The chelik prepare their clothes, masks and toys. For weeks they study the rhythm of the sticks and the movements of their feet, but always outside the fence of the ghotul compound.

X883 X484 796 787

On the first day of the time decided, the chelik light a fire and dance round it. In the morning they examine the ashes; if these are undisturbed or if they are marked by panther, dog or bullock, all is well; if there is the footprint of a man, tiger, cat or hen, it means that Lingo is warning them not to go. In some villages, however, the ashes should not be disturbed at all. Any mark is regarded as a warning. The boys consult the Siraha, who sometimes forbids the expedition altogether and sometimes allows it on certain conditions. The next day they look again, and again on the third day. If for three days the ashes are well-omened they accept the signs and prepare to go.

X883 X484 796 [793]

During this period they have been deciding who are to be the Gaia and Jokta, the leaders of the singing; how they are to pair off; they have been getting their clothes and *Lingo-singār* (ornaments) into order. These clothes and ornaments include feminine elements: the boys wear skirts and many necklaces and neck-bands borrowed from the motiari, but I do not think this involves any element of cross-dressing—it is simply due to a desire to be as ornamental as possible.

When Lingo led the chelik on the first Pus Kolang expedition, he took a tiger with him. In memory of this the boys in many villages now take a dog,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and for this reason the dance is sometimes known as Nei Kolang or Kukur Kolang.

At Phulpar the chelik said that they took with them whatever dog wandered round their fire and sat down near its ashes, but in other villages I have been told that they only take a dog which is carefully trained, for it is essential that it should not bark or bite or have anything to do with other dogs. In Udanpur they said that the dog was taught to dance.

The dog serves both as a mascot and to take the omens. The boys remove a bell from the shrine of the Village Mother and tie it round its neck in the name of Lingo. When they dance in a circle the dog must sit in the middle. At meal-times, the Gain gives it three handfuls of rice before anybody else is fed.

When the dancing party enters a village the chelik wait to see what the dog will do. If all is well, it sits down quietly and they stay. If it wanders off into the village and enters someone's house, it means that a pair of boys will die. If it runs out into the fields even late in the evening, it is a sign that they must move on at once. If it fights with another dog, someone will die. Should the dog leave the party and return home, it is taken as a warning of great danger.

When the chelik return to their village they sacrifice two chickens for the dog, though a boy has to be content with one, and they place stones for it on a cairn. They remove the bell from its neck and replace it in the shrine of the Village Mother. From the time the bell is tied round the dog's neck to the time it is removed, no member of the party may have sexual intercourse. But once the bell is removed, it is a sign that they are free.

In most villages the same dog accompanies the party for three years running, but at the end of that period it is expected to go mad or to be carried away by a tiger. The theory is that for three years Lingo 'possesses' the dog for the brief period of the expedition, but at the end of the time he takes the form of a tiger and carries it away.

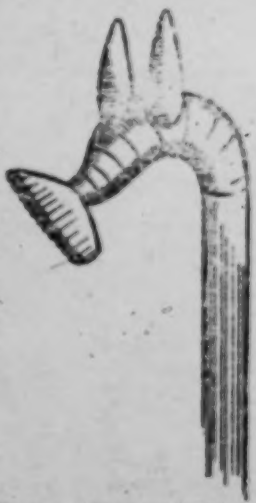


FIG. 117. Ornamental stick carried on dancing expeditions
Full length 2' 7½"

When all is ready, about a week before Charta-punni, the chelik put on their full dress and dance all day. They are rather solemn about this; they talk to no one and take a very superior attitude towards their girls and have nothing to do with them. The next morning, the Gaita takes them to the Village Mother's shrine where the spear of Maria Pen is kept. They dance before the shrine in a straight line, not in a circle; this is the 'Lingo Par'. The Gaita brings fire from his house in a length of smouldering rope spun from paddy-stalk fibre. With the aid of this he offers incense saying, 'These youngsters are going out to dance. Let no disease attack them on the way. Bring them home safely. Let the spear be their aid and Maria Pen go with them. If they return in safety I will give food-sacrifice'. He fixes the smouldering rope on the point of the spear and brings it out.

This was the custom in Phulpar and Koilibera; in the latter village the Gaita went on to the shrine of Thakur Deo and worshipped there with the same

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 X 484 796

words. From this shrine he took a bunch of peacock's feathers which he handed to the Gain—the leader of the singers.

The chelik now assemble outside the Gaita's house and the Gain takes the spear in his hand and they dance the stick-dance for the first time. After that they dance before the ghotul. Then they go with the Gaita and a Siraha along the road to their first point of call. When they reach the village boundary, the Gaita draws a line across the path and places on it seven rings of aonla leaf, seven bits of iron slag and makes seven little piles of rice. The Gaita and Siraha squat down by the side of the path, and the boys step across the line one by one, exclaiming 'Let us return safely'. Should any magical or supernatural danger be threatening one of the boys, the Siraha will immediately react by falling into a trance or jerks, and the expedition will be halted until the danger is discovered and removed.

[791]

X 883 X 484 796 784

Once the boys have crossed the line, they have definitely passed out of the ordinary world. They are dedicated to Lingo Pen and must be about his business. They are charged with spiritual power and open to spiritual attack. The rules and taboos of the expedition must be rigorously observed. Some of these rules seem to be intended to segregate the boys from all the associations of sex; others to protect them from catching the spiritual infection of strange villages.

I have already noticed the rule of chastity. Reinforcing this are rules forbidding the chelik to enter the compound of any ghotul or even to touch its fence. Except for the six leaders, the other boys may dance with the motiari, but they must not touch them. They dance in separate rows. They must not pass under the Diwali decorations in any house—for to these boys Diwali has no associations with the Feast of Lights, but is rich with memories of erotic adventure with the girls who have visited their villages for the Diwali dance. Nor may the boys enter any door or touch the thatch of any roof; they must not eat from the hands of a married woman; they must be careful that not even the shadow of a woman in her menses falls upon them. Such regulations remind the boys of their separation for the time being from all domestic ties.

Should a boy's ghotul-wife begin her period while he is on the expedition, the fact is shown him in a dream, and he must make or promise an offering to Lingo. The boys are generally warned of danger by dreaming about tigers.

[778]

In order to protect the chelik from the infection of a strange village, there is a rule that the fire with which they cook their food must always be lighted from the need-fire smouldering on the point of the sacred spear. On the other hand they are allowed to eat from the motiari of the village they visit—but their own boys must serve the food. Two boys are appointed cooks, one to see to rice, one to the pulse and salt. The chelik and motiari of the village visited may bring food, even cooked food, but they should not talk much and must soon go away. When they lie down to sleep round the fire in their little camps under trees near the ghotul, the boys must light this fire also with the need-fire.

They are not allowed to cross over a fallen tree. They must keep to the same order and pairs with which they started. At the first dance of all, the Gaita cries 'Make up your pairs' and henceforth they must never change partners. They must always dance in the same order. A boy must always sleep with his partner, and with no other. If they break this rule they will die, and it is said that in Talabera this did actually happen. If one member of a pair dies, his *jori* or mate will die also. Probably a quite sensible rule to ensure the technical perfection of the dancing has been exalted into a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

taboo. It is very dangerous to make mistakes in the dancing or stick-beating, and any kind of error is heavily penalized.[1] If one of the boys makes a mistake the Gaita of the village visited removes the turban of the Gain and the boys have to pay a fine of two bottles of liquor before he will return it. Should a boy drop his stick or if his dhoti gets loose, he has to pay a similar fine. Anything dropped must be picked up with the teeth.

Special rules control the conduct of the three leading pairs, the Gain and Jokta or Roche-sela and two other couples. They must talk to no one; they must not dance with the motiari of the villages they visit; they may only sing the special Pus Kolang songs.

The dancing party from Phulpar in 1941 visited Sarandi, Kurse, Kutgaon and Tursani. When they reached Sarandi, they went straight to the Gaita's house and danced before it. As they entered the village they sang,

Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.
Show us the Gaita's house, chelik.
Don't you know the Gaita's house, chelik?
Where have you come from, chelik?
We have come from the land of hills.
If we show you, what will you give us, chelik?
We will give you a cloth for your loins.
It's the house with a cart in the yard, chelik.
There is a pond for the buffaloes in front, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.
On a bamboo pole there's a monkey, chelik.
There's an elephant tied to the pillar, chelik.
There's a horse tied in the shed, chelik.
On the roof there sits a peacock, chelik.
There's a gun against the fence, chelik.
A sword against the wall, chelik.
A parrot on its perch, chelik.
A maina in a cage, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.

The boys sing this song to a circular stick-dance rather slowly and reverently as if their words were charged with deep spiritual meaning. Then while two boys take a basket into the house to beg for rice, pulse and salt, the others begin their programme of dances.

[1] For similar beliefs in the danger of making a mistake during a ceremonial dance, see J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. III, p. 318. Compare also A. E. Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1890), p. 93.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

There are four of these, quite distinct from those danced at any other time. Indeed it is often considered dangerous to dance the Pus Kolang dances even for show at a visitor's camp.

The first, which is the Pus Kolang dance proper, is a stick-dance. The sacred spear is stuck in the ground and the boys circulate round it rather solemnly, each boy attached to his neighbour by dancing-sticks which both hold.

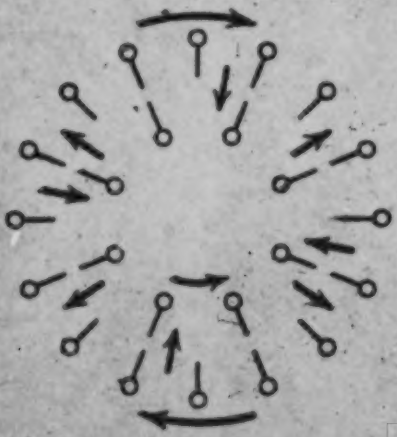
Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.

Old man Lingo Pen, Johar to thee,
After Lingo what god was there?
After him was Budha Pen.
Johar to him!

After Budha Pen, who was there?
After him was Mudial Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!

After him who comes?
After him comes Mudial Use Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!

And so through a long list of gods, Gundi Pen, Sonknari Pen, Phulknari Pen, Kurumtulla Pen, Balknari Pen, Naturgundi Pen.



To all these gods we fold our hands,
We beg them not to be angry,
Not to forget us.
We will give incense, cock and pig.
To all we give Johar!

Then the dance changes, and improves. The boys form two circles facing each other. These two rings circulate antagonistically and at the same time the boys of the inner circle change places, with a hop and a jump and three taps of the sticks, with those of the outer circle. This goes on continually, so that the two circles are in constant movement against each other and always alternating. The flourishing and beating of the sticks is very pleasing.

A special variety of the stick-dance is called Kappu Duka. *Kappu* is a bird and *duka* means to lift the feet. So this dance imitates the rapid movement

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

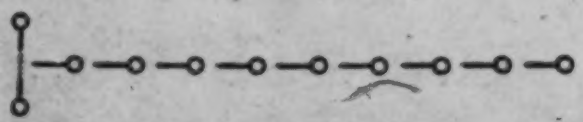
of a bird picking up its feet. The step changes to a much more lively and bouncing movement; the boys swing their buttocks and tinkle their bells with greater vigour; they sing with more zest and clash their sticks merrily. The song is long and tedious.

In what *gark* shall we buy, chelik?
In Raigarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
A cloth for the loins,
To make the loins beautiful, chelik.
In what *gark* shall we buy, chelik?
In Sarangarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
Ornaments for the body,
To make the body beautiful, chelik.
In what *gark* shall we buy, chelik?
In Delhigarh we will buy, chelik.

And so on, until head and ear and waist ornaments have been bought for the adornment of the handsome chelik.

A rather serious dance is the Lingo Endanna, which is also called Pen Endanna. For this the boys form up in two long lines facing inwards. At the head of the line, two boys face each other holding their sticks across the gap. The leader stands behind these sticks and beats them. The boys move slowly forward and back, singing. After a time they sit down and do the same thing, but without moving. Then they rise and the line turns in on itself, the leader going down and stepping over the sticks; then the boys return with the sticks held above their heads. This movement is known as Hichelhar Pata. The songs are conventional, referring to Lingo Pen and his relatives.

There is another movement, which I saw at Pupgaon.



The two leaders face each other holding a stick between them; the line of boys forms up headed by the Ghotul Manjhi. They stand quite still singing slowly and sadly; the Manjhi gently taps the cross-stick in front of him.

Now the dancing-sticks are carefully piled round the sacred spear. For the Maukey dance, three or four small boys mount on the shoulders of a circle of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
X484
796
535

their elders and are raised into the air with a whistle and a shout.[1] This pyramid slowly gyrates, and the other boys form a procession and march round and round singing.

Songs

1

[533]

Re raloyo re rela re rela rela re raloyo re rela rela
Sayrela re rela rela.

[539]

At the boundary the monkey sits on a pile of stones.
Get up, monkey, get up, monkey.
My horse is speaking to you, monkey.
You are sitting on a long pole, monkey.
You are eating the raw ebony fruit, monkey.

2

Whose is this temple, girl?
It is the shrine of the Kolang boys, girl.
This is their temple, girl.
Come out to see it, girl.
Bring a lamp in the left hand, girl,
Water in the right, girl.
Give them greeting, girl.
Bring rice in the fan, girl,
Rice in the basket, girl,
Rice in the leaf-cup, girl,
Bring salt in the leaf-bundle, girl.
Give us something to drink from your hand, girl.

The last dance is the Kokotar Daka Endanna. The chelik form a line, each boy holding in his right hand the stick of the one in front and in his left the stick of the one behind. They go round in a rambling line, while the boys at the end hop about and waggle like the tail of the *mondo-pilo* bird. Others say that the head of the line is a dog and the tail a hare; the purpose of the dance then becomes a game in which the head of the line must turn round and catch the tail. In Kollibera, the boys at the tail imitated the copulation of goats.

[721]

[1] Thurston describes a similar dance performed by Koyi women. 'The older ones stood in a circle with their arms intertwined and the younger girls perched aloft, standing astraddle on their shoulders.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 72. I have seen similar dances of this kind performed by the Dhurwa-Parja of southern Bastar, the Koud of Koraput District and the Bhil of the Dangs.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Good A W32
Muria

883
796
535

The Wotte Karsawa

A-Chait Dandar
dancer

A straw man

[p. 492 (A)]

X883
415
314

Motiari drying mahua flowers at Temrugaon

Motiari collecting and sifting mahua flowers

Plate XCVI

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
X 884
796
535
[539]

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Song

Whose sticks are these, mother-in-law?
The sticks of our clan, mother-in-law.
The sticks shine in the sun, mother-in-law.
Come out to see the sticks, mother-in-law.
In your left hand bring a lamp, mother-in-law.
In your right hand bring water, mother-in-law.
Quickly, quickly give us greeting, mother-in-law.

Probably to the Muria mind the constant repetition of 'mother-in-law' is amusing; a second song is also humorous.

On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
The hare has teeth as big as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustaches are like spear grass, chelik.
Its hairs are like a pile of bamboo shavings, chelik.[1]

From the Gaita's house the chelik move round the village, dancing before each house in turn and collecting a little rice. Meanwhile the motiari are busy collecting rice themselves; they cook this in the ghotul, and later serve it to the boys in their camp. At night boys and girls dance together, but without their sticks.

In the morning, the boys give the girls two or four pice and try to hit them when they accept it. When they reach the village boundary on their way to the next village, the little rite of crossing over a sacred line is repeated. Before reaching the new village, they halt somewhere by a stream and cook the food that they have just collected, lighting the fire from the need-fire on their spear. Then they go on and repeat the same programme.

At last the expedition is over; the days of taboo will soon be at an end; the boys approach once more their own village. News of their coming has preceded them and their motiari have not been idle. In Khutgaon I was told that they went out with the rest of the village to catch hares for the boys' feast. But everywhere the girls take the Gaita out into the jungle and make him cut one or two small semur trees. The semur tree is chosen because it was a semur which grew up out of the stump of the gold-covered

[293]

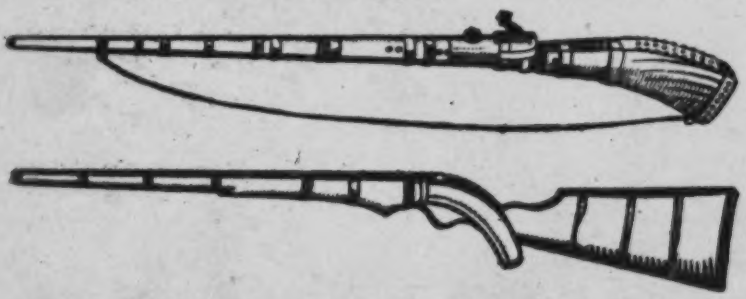


Fig. 118. Dummy guns carried on dancing expeditions

bamboo which Lingo himself cut down at the end of the first Pus Kolang expedition. In some villages the boys say that the semur is chosen because Lingo

[1] For similar humour, see my *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, pp. 150ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
X484
794
535

used to shelter beneath it when he was alive. Obviously there is a reference to Semurgaon, the village where Lingo is said to have turned into a stone and now has his shrine. The semur has the added advantage that its spikes frighten off magic and demons. A small semur is chosen because a bigger one might be inhabited by the ghost of some dead chelik. The bare branches of the tree that suddenly blossom with bright red flowers may symbolize the menarche or nuptial fertility.

[293]

The semur must be cut very carefully. The motiari offer rice and pulse before it saying, 'As our boys went out well and happy, so well and happy may they return'. As the Gaita cuts it the girls stop it falling to the ground, for should it do so, it is believed that a pair of dancers will die on the way and not return.

They then tie a saja leaf round the stumps of the trees and carry them back either to the ghotul compound, or to an open space in the middle of the village, wherever the ashes of the fire by which the omens were originally tested are to be found. If the trees, after being planted, do not stand up straight it is believed that disaster is in store for the boys. The motiari make small mud platforms, whiten them with clay and sometimes decorate them with drawings of the chelik.

These platforms are to be left for three years, though I doubt if this is often done, but it is important that at the end of the proceedings the semur trees should be pulled up. Should they sprout with renewed life it means that the Gain and his mate will die. In Ghotulbera this actually happened and now the trees are always pulled up and thrown away.

Fig. 119. Dancing-sticks from Remawand

After the platforms have been made, the motiari prepare a lot of leaf-pipes, bundles of tobacco and toilet-twigs. Where there are two trees, one is for the leaders of the party, the Gain and Jokta, the other for the rest. This is an anxious and exciting day for the motiari; their chelik have been away amidst unknown dangers to the heart and spirit; they must do all they can to please them. This evening they cook in the ghotul or near the boys' camp in an enclosure of branches.

When the boys reach home, they go first to the Gaita's house and dance there. They then proceed to the ghotul or to their camp, where they put the spear into the ground near the semur trees and dance round them. After a time they gather about the trees and suddenly all cry *Hurrī* and hang their dancing-sticks on the branches. They remove their special clothes and hang these too on the branches. They take the pipes and tobacco from the trees and smoke them. The next morning they clean their teeth with the toilet-twigs which the motiari have provided. They are home again.

In Koilibera in 1941, the boys reached the village in the morning and spent the day dancing and collecting grain. In the evening, after they had danced round the semur trees, the Kaser-Gaita made little squares with coal-dust, rice-flour and haldi at the foot of each tree, and offered incense with the aid of the need-fire that the boys had now brought home. The chelik gathered round him and their leader offered him the sacred bunch of peacock's feathers and after exchanging this three times, the priest hung it on the first tree. Then the boys hung up their dancing-sticks and turbans. The rest of their attire was packed in little baskets and put under a tree.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

The boys then sit down and the motiari feed them. They must not, however, go to the ghotul that night; there are still ceremonies to be performed.

The next morning the motiari husk in the ghotul the grain that the chelik have brought home. On the verandahs of some ghotul there are permanent mortars for this purpose. In the evening boys and girls will cook this together. The boys then begin to dance; they go to the Gaita's house—at Koilibera they came to my camp; but fairly soon they go home to collect chickens and pigs for sacrifice. When they have all re-assembled they set off in a ragged procession, led by the Kaser-Gaita, towards the village boundary. On the way every boy picks up a stone and carries it along with him.

FIG. 120. Anklet of bells worn on dancing expeditions

When they reach the boundary, the Kaser-Gaita goes for water; others clear a space under a tree by the roadside; the boys make a pile of stones in honour of Lingo Pen near by. In some villages, each pair of boys put down two stones and one above them. The Gaita's stones are put first and then all the others in a line with finally three stones for the dog. The chickens are sacrificed before the appropriate stones. The following day the boys go to inspect the stones and if any of them have fallen over it is regarded as a fatal omen and that particular pair of dancers will die. When the Gaita returns he sprinkles a little water on the cleared space, smooths it over, makes seven piles of rice and offers incense.

The chelik stretch a rope of siari creeper across the road and tie their dancing-sticks to it. The sacred bundle of peacock feathers is tied at one end. Two chelik climb trees on opposite sides and haul up the rope until it stretches taut across the road.

Now the Gaita offers chickens, eggs and two small pigs in the usual way. At Koilibera I was interested to see how he taught two of the boys, allowing them to practise with a few of the chickens and a pig. When this was over, the boys went to the road and rather formally stripped themselves of the *Lingo-singār*, the dress worn in honour of Lingo, packing the turbans, skirts and bells into little bamboo baskets.

The Pus Kolang is almost over. The chelik return home to the village and the Gaita goes with a few of the leading boys to the shrine of the Village Mother and replaces the sacred spear of Maria Pen. Everyone has returned safely, so the priest offers a goat. The rest of the day is spent preparing for the evening feast, which is taken at about five o'clock. At Koilibera, on 25 January 1941, I attended this feast; it was a very pleasant affair. A great crowd of people sat round in a half-circle, mothers with their children, old men, little boys. The older boys served the food; the motiari saw to arrangements behind the scenes. There was an excellent meal of rice (of several different kinds collected on the trip), pork, goat and pulses. My wife and I sat with the Chowkidar and Kalingsai. Presents of meat were sent to the whole village, to Kalar, Halba and Mahara without distinction. Last of all the older chelik and the motiari got their food, and that evening they went to sleep in the ghotul.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Pen Kolang Expeditions

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796
535

Between the ordinary Pus Kolang expedition and the Chait Dandar, which I will describe immediately, there is a sort of intermediate dance called the Pen or Deo Kolang. This is danced by boys only, but girls accompany them to do the cooking and keep an eye on them. Just as in the Pus Kolang, the chelik practise their dances, light a fire to test the omens and go to the shrine of the Village Mother to get fire and a spear or axe or bell. When this is done the Gaita buries a ring in front of the shrine.

The boys follow very much the same rules as are observed on the Pus Kolang expeditions and have to observe chastity even with the motiari of their own village. When they return they dance before the Gaita's house and he digs up the ring and returns it to their leader. At Esalnar they said that it was essential that the dancing party should make a complete circle of villages right round their own village. Every boy must dance for at least three years or the gods will be angry with him. At Esalnar, as also in villages south of Narayanpur such as Bakulwahi and Markabera, the dancing-sticks are not slung up across the road but are placed in the Deo-gudi.

The distinctive features then of the Pen Kolang are that girls accompany the party, that a ring is buried, and that the dancing-sticks are placed in the Deo-gudi at the end of the performance.

At Bakulwahi there was a rule that on the last day when the last dance was finished every boy had to throw his stick down at the same time, or they would fall ill.

IV. The Chait Dandar Expeditions

Throughout the east-central and south-eastern villages of the Muria territory the Chait Dandar, Katj Dandar or Mahua Dandar dances take the place of the Pus Kolang. I have already pointed out that as we move east and south from the Jhoria area the cult of Lingo grows progressively weaker and there is thus less inducement to perform the Pus Kolang, which is essentially a dance performed in his honour. The Chait Dandar is a much happier and freer dance than the Pus Kolang. It is not hedged about by a score of taboos and the dread sanctions that enforce them. The essential feature, indeed, of this dance is that boys and girls go out together and that there is no rule forbidding sexual intercourse between members of the same or of different ghotul.

Apart from this the general procedure of the Chait Dandar is not unlike that of the Pus Kolang. Before the chelik and motiari start, they practise for many days in the ghotul—for here too mistakes are dangerous and have to be atoned for. When all is ready they first dance in the ghotul; they then go to the shrine of the Village Mother where they offer liquor to Tallur Muttai saying, 'O Mother Earth, we are but children, teach us to dance well, save us from mistakes'. Then in front of the Gaita's house they dance again and the Gaita digs a hole into which he puts a ring, planting a semur tree above it. In some villages he offers liquor here in the name of Bhimul Pen.

When the boys and girls set out, they cross over a line of aonra rings as usual and promise to give Mother Earth and the Departed offerings if they protect them from magic and evil spirits. In each village they go first to the Gaita and then collect mahua and food from every house. The visitors are entertained in the ghotul; sometimes they are made to dance at once and the ordinary procedure of the evening is omitted; sometimes, however, hosts and visitors interchange their girls for combing and massaging. I doubt if

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

this exchange goes so far as to include the sleeping arrangements, but I have no real information about this. Food is provided by the hosts. If the Irpu Pandum, the festival of the eating of the new mahua flowers, has not been celebrated, there is a strict taboo on the drinking of mahua spirit. If this taboo is broken the supply of flowers will fail. In Jungani there was a rule that the dance must not be performed at all until the flowers were gathered in. Here it was supposed that the noise of the stick-dance has a bad effect on the crop.

At the end of the expedition the boys and girls return to their own village and dance before the Gaita's house round and round the semur tree. The Gaita offers liquor to it, then pulls it up and throws it away. The ring is given to the leader of the dance. Finally the boys tie their sticks to a rope across a path near the village boundary in the usual way.

If there is a bazaar in the neighbourhood the boys visit it and dance in its four corners.

FIG. 121. Comb with cheilk and motiari on horseback

The sticks used in this dance are called either *dewdir* or *Adli* and are usually made of surtali wood. Before the Gaita pulls up the semur tree the boys hang their sticks upon it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
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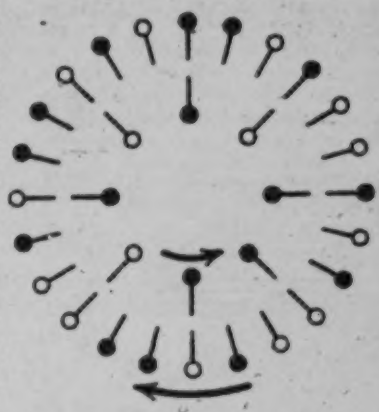
796
535

The dances and songs differ slightly from those of the Pus Kolang. In April 1941, I saw the Chait Dandar dancers of Jungani when they visited Malakot. The girls had no special dress, but the boys wore the dancing skirt, turbans and bells loosely hung above the buttocks. The leader of the party, the Gaita, wore the elaborate comb illustrated in Fig. 121 and a gaily coloured bag round his neck.



The dancing resembled the Pus Kolang dancing, but was much enlivened by the presence of the girls. The sticks used were much longer, about three feet with a notch at one end. In the big stick-dance with which they began the boys and girls mixed freely, forming two antagonistic circles. Each boy and girl held a stick in either hand, the right pointing upwards and the left down. As the circles revolved, they struck each other's sticks and passed on. They danced on their toes, with a light and easy step, right foot to right, left foot to left, the left foot up and down, then across to the right. The circles moved in both directions, reversing with a loud cry of *Ow-ha*. As usual among Muria, the boys shook their buttocks horizontally to ring the bells; this gave a very ragged effect in comparison with the strict timing and unison of the vertical jerk of the Hill Maria.

Songs

X883
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796
535
539

1

Hun hun hun hun jām huy

The peacock has a long tail.
Where is the long-tailed peacock?
The peacock's in the Gaita's house.
How much does the peacock drink?
The peacock takes five sips.
Come down, O long-tailed peacock!
Where will it come down?
In the Pujari's house,
In his house come down.
O long-tailed peacock!

2

Roy wāyo jām huy

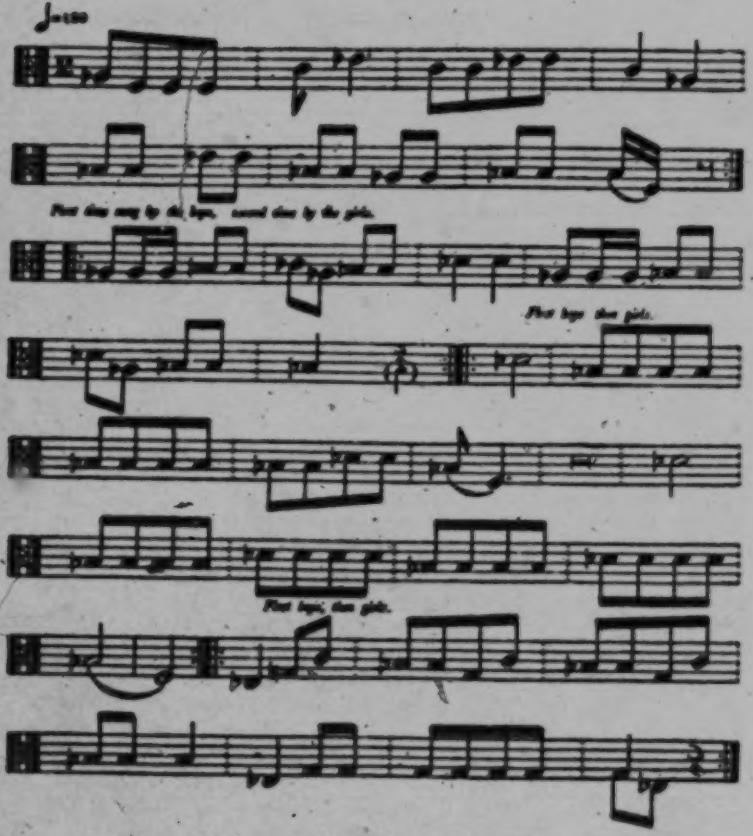
Don't think about your lover, she won't come now.
You'll miss your step in the dance if you think of her.
You won't sing properly.
Where has the Pujari gone?
He has gone with a knife to sacrifice.

320

883X
484X
796
535
539

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Ask the Gaita's wife where the Gaita has gone;
He has gone to his village holding an umbrella.
Ask the Manjhi's wife where the Manjhi has gone.
He has gone to give judgement holding his stick.



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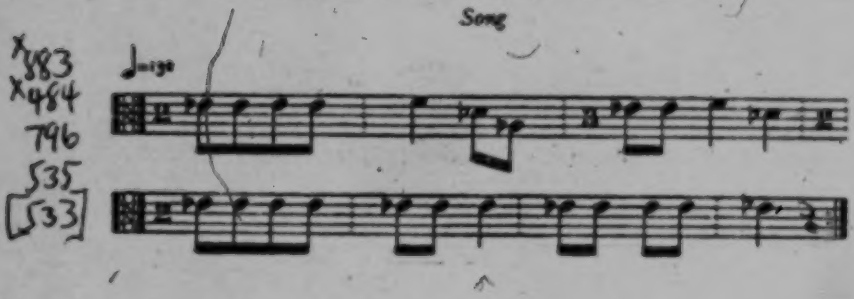
The second dance corresponded to the Lingo dance of the Pus Kolang. Boys and girls made two long lines facing each other; each pair held two sticks between them and beat them in unison. After a time the line turned in on itself, the leaders taking it down under a roof of sticks; then they turned round and the sticks were held low down near the ground and the line this time stepped over them.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song

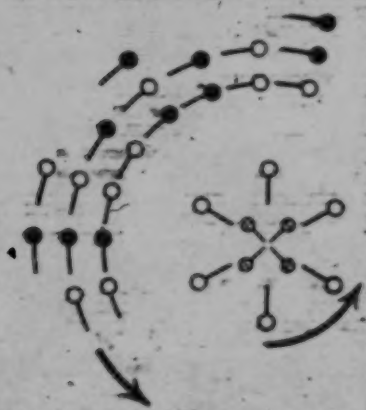


Tari nāna na nāre nāṛja tari nānāre

[534]

Oho maina ho lālsai baitho danda ho.	O maina bird, O Lalsai! Sit down with a stick.
Oho kāhen he danda ho lālsai maina kāhen he danda ho tari?	What is the stick made of, O Lalsai maina?
Ye bāte paltu ho rāja maina ho lālsai ye bāte paltu ho!	Let us turn this side, O Raja maina, O Lalsai!
O ho chait dandar ho rāja maina ho lālsai ho teri.	This is the Chait Dandar.
Uthen dakhu ho rāja maina lālsai ho tari.	Let us stand and watch it.

Lalsai means a prince. The young Maharaja used to be called Lalpila. The third dance was called the Bendri (or Monkey) Endanna, very like the usual pyramid dance, but with a brighter note in the procession where boys and girls marched round with their arms about each other's necks. Four little boys mounted on the backs of half-a-dozen seniors, who rose up with a loud whistle. The rest of the party formed the procession and went round the pyramid beating their sticks, with quick hopping movements. They advanced three paces, paused, swung back a little and then advanced again. From time to time they made excellent *hoop-hoop* monkey noises. When they descended, the younger boys saluted their elders with Johar, apparently in gratitude for their safe return from so perilous an elevation.

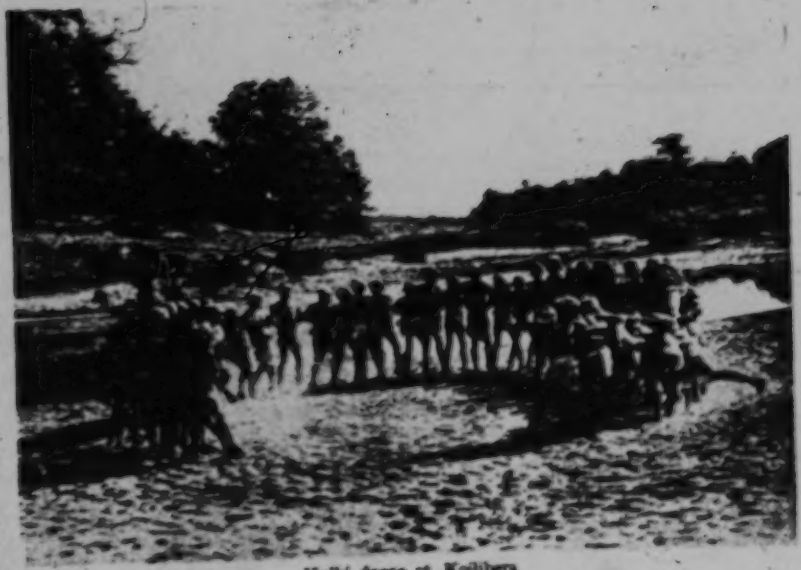


The last dance was performed in a slow and solemn line. Boys and girls, embracing one another about the shoulders, formed a long row, sticks in hand. They advanced two steps, retired two steps and at the same time moved a little to the right. After the line had thus travelled some distance, it moved back to the left. The movement was slow and tedious and the singing rather flat.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
X484
796
535

Hulki dance at Aivr



Hulki dance at Kolibera

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
X484
796
535
532

Plate XCVIII

Hulki expedition mask
(From Sirpur)

Chait Dasdar masks representing man and wife (From Kachora)

[p. 500(a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Songs

1

Tare nare nare na nare

Porre mettia dippa tendera lālsai.	Cut the clearing on the top of the hill, Lalsai.
Dippa tendsi bāra kewerār lālsai?	Why is the clearing to be cut?
Dippa tendsi bāra bitirār lālsai?	What will be sown in that clearing?
Dippa tendsi ganga parbai bitirār lālsai.	In that clearing *ganga parbai* seed will be sown.
Ganga bitsi bāra kewerār lālsai?	What shall we do with that seed?
Ganga pungār jhola jewerār lālsai.	We will put its flower in our turbans, Lalsai.

The *ganga parbai* is a specially profitable seed.

2

Tari na hari na morey, nāna hari nāna ho, ye na hari na morey na, hanhaiya morey ye na, hari na morey na

Bhala kaise rowen more pandhi parewān ho?	How does my wood-pigeon cry, and my dove?
Kaise rowen manjur?	And how does my peacock cry?
Bhala ghutru ghutru more pandhi parewān ho;	O *ghutru ghutru* cries my wood-pigeon and my dove;
Dhoks dhoks manjur.	O *dhoks dhoks* cries my peacock.
Bhala kay chāra charen more pandhi parewān ho?	O what food has my wood-pigeon and my dove?
Kāy chāra charen manjur?	What food has my peacock?
Bhala gotin charen more pandhi parewān ho;	My wood-pigeon and my dove eat small pieces of stone;
Dhānen charen manjur.	My peacock eats rice.
Bhala kaisen sowen more pandhi parewān ho?	And how sleeps my wood-pigeon and my dove?
Kaise sowen manjur?	How sleeps my peacock?
Bhala guva ma sowen more pandhi parewān ho;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove sleep in their nests;
Jhāre ma sowen manjur.	And my peacock sleeps in the tree.
Bhala kahān pāni piwen more pandhi parewān ho?	O where do my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water?
Kahān pāni piwen manjur?	And where does my peacock drink?
Bhala ghare pāni piwen more pandhi parewān ho;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water in the house;
Bane pāni piwen manjur.	My peacock drinks water in the forest.

There are evidently no chastity taboos in the Mahua Dandar expeditions. Girls and boys went about with free and natural embraces that were a delight to watch. During the stick-dance, when a boy approached a girl he fancied, he waggled the bells on his buttocks furiously and laughed and flirted with her as she passed. In our camp a party of dancers stood for a long time watching us. Every boy had his arms round a girl, and the Belosa stood with two boys; they were all embracing each other (see Plate XCI). There was no self-consciousness or shyness, no fear either of the stranger or the gods.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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796
535

You would not see that sort of thing on a Pus Kolang expedition. As a chelik described it at Chandabera, 'We all go together for the Maḍna Dandar and have great fun. No one has a right over any girl and all play with each other'. Occasionally boys and girls of different villages fall in love and run away together.

V. The Diwali Dances

But of all the opportunities for romantic adventure so liberally provided by Muria society, none is more exciting than the girls' Diwali dance. The word 'Diwali' is here simply an indication of date; the dances have nothing to do with the Hindu festival. Even the dates are usually wrong; I saw Diwali dances on 18 November 1940 at Binjhli, on 24 November at Remawand and on 27 November at Bandopal. The actual Diwali that year was on 24 October. I saw it again at Sirpur on 30 October 1941, though the real festival was a fortnight earlier.

[531
293]

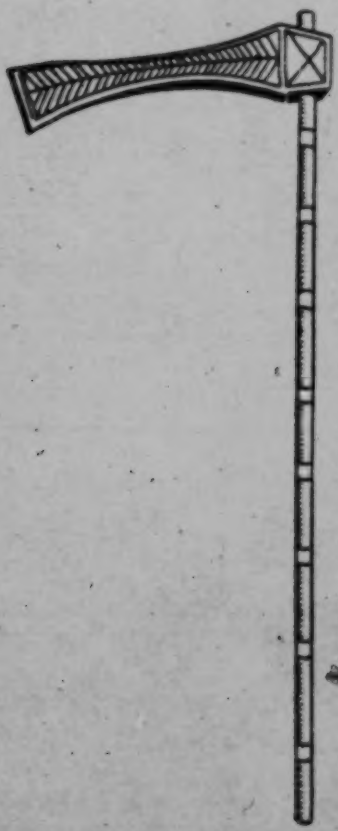


Fig. 122. Ornamented wooden axe carried by the leader of the girls on a Diwali expedition

During this season the motiari go from village to village, singing and dancing. But to the east of the main road, the Diwali is only danced in a few villages; to the south of Kondagaon it is almost unknown. Instead boys and girls go together for the Hulki.

Sometimes, the Diwali is abandoned for a time because of a scandal, sometimes on supernatural grounds. In Talabera, the girls cannot dance or sing at all, for if they do a god (*deo*) attacks them. He makes the girls tremble and fall to the ground: the Gaita has to spit and beat them with a stick to get rid of him.

There does not seem to be any special religious or magical purpose in these expeditions; they are simply for enjoyment and amorous adventure. Only girls go, led by their Belosa, and when they visit any village, only the boys of that village may be present to entertain them. The visitors dance first at the Gaita's house, then through the village; they camp in the ghotul; the local boys cook for them and entertain them. In the evening, the visiting girls and the local boys dance and play together and the dancing often lasts all night. During those long hours every one of the visitors is taken away into the jungle; the more attractive ones may be taken several times. The evenings are fruitful of love-affairs and sometimes a chelik now meets his future wife. A boy from Kapsi told me that he met

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

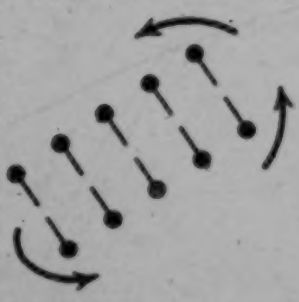
GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

his bride when she came from Markabera to dance. He took her three times to the jungle.

I will now trace the experiences of a party of these dancers as they go out from their village.

For days discussions in the ghotul have centred round the girls' programme. Some of the girls have definite villages in mind; there is a handsome boy glimpsed for a moment at a last year's wedding: here is a famous drummer and singer whom they all admire. The chelik are more concerned that their motiari will be properly fed and cared for. 'Last year such and such a village was very mean; don't go there this time,' they say. 'But that village gave you pork and a little ghee, it is worth a second visit.' The girls too have their memories, different ones. They have to consider too the prevailing clans, and the *khaps* of the places they propose to see. At last the programme is settled. The motiari are to go to seven villages and return home on the eighth day.

On the morning of their departure, the girls go to the shrine of the Village Mother, and the Gaita offers incense and promises food-sacrifice if they return safely. The girl leader, carrying an ornamented axe over her shoulder, takes fire from the shrine in a coil of rice-straw. She must preserve this fire throughout the tour. Other girls must not touch either the axe or fire, for they represent the village god. Then the Gaita takes the party to the boundary of the village and makes a line across the path, on which he puts little piles of rice, and seven rings of sonra leaf with some iron slag. Over this the girls step in single file while the Gaita prays, addressing all the gods of that part and the Departed, 'Our girls go out to dance the Diwali dance. Let them go well, let them come well. Let there be no fever, cough or cold. If they come unharmed, we will give you liquor, incense, eggs, a cock. They are going to a strange country; let them have no trouble. It is your duty to see to this'. And then with a sudden change of tone, 'If they return with fever, cough or cold, I will piss in your face'.



By now the girls have passed and the Gaita says no more to them, for they must go on their way without once looking round.

Presently they reach the first village on their tour programme. They go straight to the Gaita's house, pile their belongings, their extra wraps, their big baskets for collecting food, under a tree, and begin to dance. The Diwali dance takes several forms. One is a slow, monotonous dance, in a circle, clapping the hands and singing, mostly Relo. In another the girls form themselves into two rows and move round quickly with four steps forward and to the right, two back, then four to the right again.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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X484
796
535
[539]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

In Sidhawand, the girls danced in two lines following each other. Each girl had her left hand on her neighbour's shoulder and her right hand hung straight down. They took two steps to the right, right, left, right, then slid the left foot along the ground.

When they first arrive, the Diwali dancers sing:

1

Thākur ghar kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's house, brothers?
Jora kukur bhuke re bhai rām,	Where a pair of dogs are barking, brothers,
Tehi thākur gharu re bhai rām.	There is the Thakur's house, brothers.
Thākur beta kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's son, brothers?
Jora kardhan pahire re bhai rām.	He has a double silver belt, brothers.
Tehi thākur beta re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's son, brothers.
Thākur bohāri kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers?
Jora suta pahire re bhai rām.	She has two bands round her neck, brothers.
Tehi thākur bohāri re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers.

2

Mulir mulir intoni kāri gurti!	You are crying army, army, O blackbird!
Aga baga da mulir kāri gurti?	Where has the army come from, blackbird?
Rainigarh da mulir dāda.	The army has come from Rainigarh, brother.
Hurrig lehka mulir dāda.	The army comes like a line of black ants, brother.
Dondera kayang talwār dāda.	The sword is long as the dondera fruit, brother.
Tormend tormend puja roy kāri gurti;	They are killing people *tormend tormend*, blackbird;
Mindāk tora reyandu roy kāri gurti;	The blood is flowing up to the knees, blackbird;
Luwur minu kubnāh roy kāri gurti;	*Luwur* fish are swimming in it; blackbird;
Nāri minu targanāh roy kāri gurti.	*Nāri* fish are swimming against the stream, blackbird.

A crowd soon gathers, attracted not so much by the dance as by the desire to see who has come. The local chelik are very excited and bustle to and fro making arrangements. They send their own girls to clean the ghotul, but once that is done forbid them to come near. Their own girls are planning to go out themselves in two days' time, so they do not really mind.

In Remawand, when the girls from Markabera came, the Remawand boys went round the village collecting rice, pulse and salt, and cooked it under a tree near the Gaita's house. When the girls had finished singing they camped in the ghotul, taking complete possession of it, spreading their things everywhere; some of them lay down and slept at once, tired with the journey and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

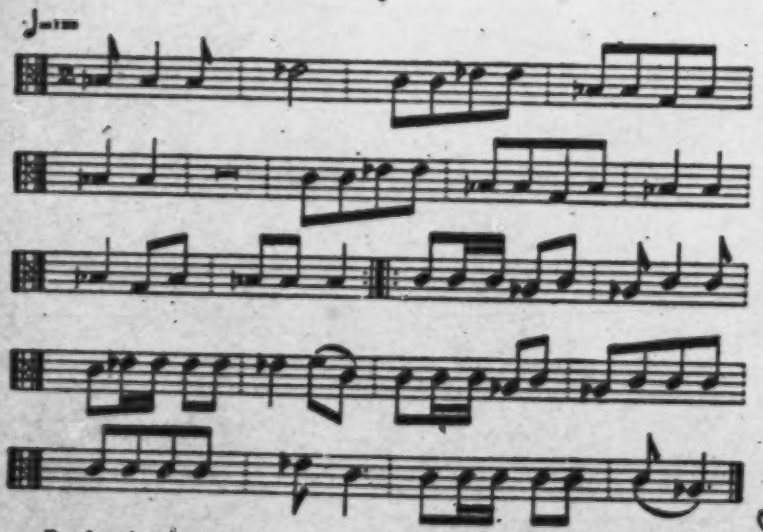
GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

in preparation for an exhausting night. When the food was ready the boys brought it to the ghotul and they all ate from leaf-plates, seated on logs of wood placed in a rough circle. There were about a dozen visiting girls and as many hosts.

After supper a great fire was lit in the ghotul court and some of the girls began to dance in a small circle with the boys in another group, a slow and mournful dance, wholly unsuited to the spirit of the moment. None of the older people came near; it was the hour of youth. . Presently they wearied of the dance, and sat down round the fire, the girls in a half-circle on one side, the boys facing them. They began to talk very delightfully to each other. I do not think I have ever heard a group of people talk with such gentle and natural charm. The girls began by asking the clan of every boy; the boys asked the same question of the girls. This was significant—a necessary preparation for later assignations and even marriages. Then the two parties exchanged names, ghotul-names, and this caused a lot of merriment, for of course the girls' lovers in Markabera had often the same names as the boys of Remawand. Then the boys began to call themselves by the girls' titles and the girls took the boys' names, causing roars of laughter and some embarrassment. This was probably a form of proposal and assignation. . When the Sirdar called himself Malko and she replied by calling herself Kotwar, he knew that her attentions were engaged elsewhere. But if she said 'I am the Sirdar', he knew that his advances at midnight would not be rejected.

Songs

I



Banda vola pungûr wo âya.
Pungûr nilhichila dâhigo âya.
Nima icho kanma wo nuni.
Bona nuda daki wo nuni?

In the lake there is a flower.
I go to put it in my hair.
Don't go, little daughter.
Who will go with you there?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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Māmān marri mantor go āya;
Ona suda dāha wo āya.
Tāra nāwa sandra go āya.
Sandra nana uhka go āya.
Kosa wāri polka go āya;
Tāra nāwa polka go āya.
Wāler igāda tukil wo āya;
Tāra nāwa tukil wo āya.
Muyāng end-leng kocha go āya;
Tāra nāwa kocha go āya.
Kawdāng end-leng humār go āya;
Tāra nāwa humār go āya.
Hupe lolor wati go āya!
Hupe lehkā dāha go āya.
Nana waronāy alona āya.
Saboy tāskun dāynur go āya.
Kape kanhār bera go āya,
Kape lekha parriya ka āya.

There is my *māma*'s son:
I will go with him.
Give me my *sandra* cloth.
I will wear my cloth.
The *polka* jacket is made of silk;
Bring me that jacket.
The basket was made by the Nahar;
Give me my basket.
The measure has little bells round it;
Bring me the measure.
The *gundri* is adorned with cowries;
Bring me the *gundri*.
O the jungle clearing of the rats!
Like a rat I will go.
I will go all alone.
For everyone has left me.
Over the field of the *kapu* bird,
Like a bird I will go.

2

Aga baga pārewāng roy dele?
Dongur bhum tāng pārewāng roy dele.
Aga baga raiya nung roy dele?
Gāita dāda duār re roy dāda.
Kile re koru rachāte roy dele,
Agāye ise raiytāng roy dele.

Whence are these pigeons?
The pigeons have come from the highlands.
Where have the pigeons settled?
In the Gaita's court.
In front of his fence,
There they have settled.

3

Kumda phul sitārām hayde layor.
Tuma phul sitārām hayde layor.
Kākri phul sitārām hayde layor.
Mogra phul sitārām hayde layor.
Keonra phul sitārām hayde layor.
Chameli phul sitārām hayde layor.
Gulāp phul sitārām hayde layor.
Āma phul sitārām hayde layor.

Salute the flower of the pumpkin, boys.
Salute the flower of the gourd, boys.
Salute the flower of the cucumber, boys.
Salute the flower of the *mogra*, boys.
Salute the flower of the *keonra*, boys.
Salute the flower of the *chameli*, boys.
Salute the flower of the rose, boys.
Salute the flower of the mango, boys.

4

Dāda le waiya munke re korha hiton;
Parhe re purha hiton, dāda.
Murwise pāi jaliyal, dāda.
Pinjora le maina hiton, dāda.
Rachāte gāda hiton, dāda.

In front you have built a cow-shed, brother;
Behind you have made a grain-bin, brother.
The peacock is on the roof, brother.
The maina is in its cage, brother.
The cart is in the courtyard, brother.

2: Elwin E.5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Latite kowe hiton, dāda.	The monkey is on the pole, brother.
Nawchāre pāt te chidral, dāda.	The rat is in the rafters, brother.
Kena ye manwān āywin, dāda!	What a rich man you are, brother!
Dulate hesa himun, dāda,	Give us a basketful, brother,
Kāwir te hilāp āyār, dāda.	A full load, brother.
Jiwa tun hami hema, dāda.	Don't give less than that, brother.
Niyare poroy poykom, dāda.	Then we will throw [praises] on you, brother.

5

Muda muda intoni dāda!	Ring, Ring, say Ring, brother!
Guru pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a blacksmith girl,
Kachi muda hewerom dāda.	She would have given an iron ring.
Sonār pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a goldsmith girl,
Soni muda wālerom dāda.	She would have given a gold ring.
Kauro pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been of the Kauro clan,
Kawri muda hewerom dāda.	She would have given a cowrie ring,
Kudum dāka wālerom dāda.	And she would have walked stamping her feet.
Dinda layor ātehroy dāda,	Had you been an unmarried boy, brother,
Kudum dāka wāta roy dāda,	You too would have walked stamping your feet,
Māte muth ka hewerom dāda.	And we would have beaten you with our fists.

From time to time girls would jump up and try to run into the ghotul to sleep, but the boys were generally quick enough to catch them. This went on all night, alternating dance and pleasant talk. Every now and then a boy pulled a girl out of the ghotul and away into the fields. No one took any notice, though there was a little laughter when they returned. The girls took it in turns to get a little sleep; there were generally three or four girls sleeping at any one time.

In the morning, the girls first sang outside the Gaita's house and the boys went round the village collecting a basket of rice for their journey and the midday meal which they would eat beside a stream half-way to their next village. When the boys returned, suddenly the girls ran to the ghotul leaving four of their number standing in line. These put two pice on the ground. Two of the boys ran to pick up the money and as they bent down the girls thumped them on the back. Then the boys took the baskets of rice down to the ghotul, put it on the ground, and the girls had to pull it away without getting hit. They emptied the basket and put it outside the gate; the boys made a dash for it, but were again caught and beaten. Then the girls, accompanied by the Gaita, went again to the boundary; a line was drawn across the path, they stepped over it and went their way.

This programme was repeated every night for a week, and then the girls went home. I witnessed their return at Binjhli and Bandopal. On the 18th of November, 1941, the chelik of Binjhli were very excited and busy. They took a whole cartload of wood into the jungle. They dug a pit in the ground, long and deep but narrow enough to bear a row of pots full of rice and pork. They lit the fire and prepared the feast. About 6 p.m. came the news that the motiari were approaching, and the boys ran through the forest towards a footpath some two hundred yards away.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
X484
796
535

Here were sitting the Gaita and a Siraha; across the path was the usual line of ash, a row of tiny green rings of aonra leaf, bits of egg-shell.[1] We sat and waited. Suddenly out of the jungle came the line of motiari, eighteen of them, bearing themselves most proudly, their rows of silvered combs and ornaments shining in the evening light. The chelik smiled in welcome and delight. It was an unforgettable moment.

The first girl reached the line across the path and squatted down before it. The Siraha fell into trance asking the gods if all was well. The leader of the chelik waved two chickens round her head and she was allowed to pass. The other girls stepped directly over the line, one by one in single file. They put their bundles in the ghotul, then went to the Gaita's house and began to dance and sing. They were weary and hoarse after their week's continual singing, but they danced for half an hour, and then made an end.

Now night was falling, and the boys in great excitement went back to the jungle and finished cooking the feast. Two big girls, who had been in their menstrual period—as the boys informed me at the top of their voices—and so could not go on the trip, were making leaf-plates and cups. Soon the motiari came and sat in a long line; boys ran to and fro with torches. The chelik first served palm wine, then bits of highly chillied pork and rice on leaf-plates. My wife sat and ate with the girls; I had a place to myself near the fire, and enjoyed the feast as much as anyone. The flavour of the food was excellent and it was well cooked; at least it did me no harm.

The elders of the village also came and even some of the Ganda and Kalar. When they and the girls had eaten, the chelik were able to sit and take their supper. At last all went to the ghotul. They were too tired and excited to dance; they lay down together and slept.

On the evening of the following day, the girls gave a feast to the boys in the same place, using the rice and pulse that they had collected on their expedition.

At Bandopal, the chelik made a feast for the girls in a shed on the edge of a field near the village. They cooked rice, pulse and fish, crabs and frogs that the boys had caught specially for the feast. When the motiari assembled, they were given liquor. Then, holding the leaf-cups in one hand, they saluted the chelik with the other. After this the Jhoria, head of the chelik, asked the girls where they had been, what food they had been given, what entertainment they had received, and whether there had been any trouble or sickness on the way. The girls gave a lively account of everything that had happened, describing how they had been given here a chicken, there a pig, and here had been meanly received. The Jhoria declared that when girls or boys came from those villages they would be treated as they had treated them.

In Bandopal, the purification ceremony was not held on arrival but the following morning. The girls were taken outside the village by the Gaita and the boys. The Gaita made the usual line of ash, and sacrificed liquor, eggs and chickens. Some branches were placed across the path and the girls told to step over them and go home. As they went the chelik hit them on the back 'to drive away disease'.

[1] When Juang return from similar expeditions, at a cross-roads near the village boundary a line of date palm leaves, bhoir thorns, and an ebony branch is made across the path. The leader says, 'Whatever devils are dancing after us, let them return hence and follow us no more'. Each dancer in turn spits and steps across the line and so goes home without looking round. The Juang do this even on ordinary occasions when they return after a visit to another village. The Savara, and I have no doubt many other tribes also, take similar precautions whenever they visit other villages for a ceremonial purpose.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Mask used in Chaitra dances (From Berma)

[p. 508 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate C

53V

Earthen dolls from Phauda

Malko and Dulesa with earthen dolls at Chandabera

[p. 508 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

VI. The Hulki Dances

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As we move east, the custom of allowing girls to go to dance by themselves from village to village at Diwali gradually weakens. Indeed the Diwali dance of the girls is almost co-terminal with the Pus Kolang dance, although in isolated villages like Surma in eastern Kondagaon the Diwali is still kept up. Where it has died out, its place is often taken by the Hulki expedition. Just as the Chait Dandar has replaced the Pus Kolang and boys and girls go together instead of boys only, so the Hulki replaces the Diwali dance and boys and girls go together instead of girls only. The Hulki expedition is sometimes made in the ordinary way and boys and girls go out for a week's tour; sometimes they simply go out for the day or for a long evening to neighbouring villages and return to their own ghotul to sleep. There is no special decoration worn, except that boys put on all the clothes they have and the girls adorn themselves with their prettiest ornaments.

When they start, the dancers perform the same sort of ceremonies for their protection and success as is done in the other dances. A line of rings is made and the Gaita promises suitable offerings if the party returns safely. The leader of the party, who is still called the Gain, prays, 'May our song and dance be good, may the rhythm keep time, may the tune not be spoilt, let no witch or magician injure us, let us not be attacked by Arjatta Parjatta, Bhut, Massan, Jurelin, Mirchuk, Matia of other villages. May the gods of the villages we visit not trouble us'.

The visitors dance and collect food and liquor as usual and are generally joined by the boys and girls of the village they are visiting. Hosts dance in one line, visitors in another. At Bhandarsiuni they sang a song in honour of Lingo. When the Bhandarsiuni party, which included many big boys but only very little girls, visited Sirpuri on 28 October, 1941, it was amusing to note how bored the Sirpuri *boys* were with the visit, though the Sirpuri girls bustled about with great excitement to arrange entertainment for their visitors.

When the boys go for Hulki, with perhaps only a few girls, the members of the two ghotul dance against each other till one party becomes exhausted.

Often the members of the two ghotul dance together. It was at such a time that the Jholer of Morenga—and many another—met his bride. 'I went to dance at Mundpal and a girl pushed her way through the crowd and danced beside me. I put my arm round her and rested my hand on her breast. Later I gave her liquor to drink and we slipped away into the jungle. After a few months, we ran away together and were married.'

The actual dance, which is called Hulki or Kokti, is a serpentine promenade in which boys and girls, clasped in each other's arms, combine a rhythmic movement with all sorts of fun. It is a quick and jolly dance, delightful to watch and, I suspect, entrancing (provided the circumstances are right) to dance.

Boys and girls form a long line all facing one way. They hold each other by placing the right arm lightly across the right-hand neighbour's bottom, while the left hand holds the right arm of the left-hand neighbour but one which is, of course, resting across the immediate left-hand neighbour's back. The method is most easily understood by looking at Plate CXIII. The dance often begins with only boys holding each other rather loosely with a wide inviting space between each pair. Girls one by one burrow in, pushing their heads down under the boys' arms. The dance is so intimate that girls have to see who their neighbours are; they ought not to have on either side of them a member of their own clan or a relative of some forbidden degree.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
X484
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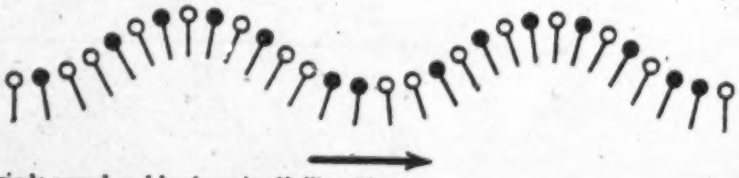
535

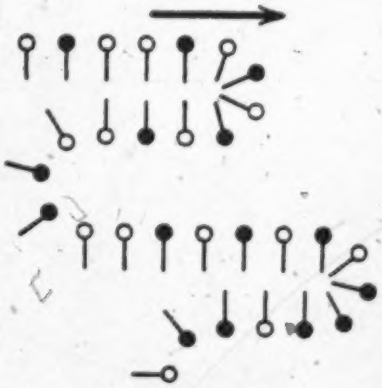
THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The line moves to left or right with a very simple, rapid step sideways. The dancers generally keep perfect step, and all the legs come over together in a delightful way. The line reverses its direction with a loud cry of *Jai keonra jai mongra* (as if we were to cry 'Victory to the lily and the rose!') or *Hurē hurē hurē, Sālē sālē sālē*, or even a sharp barking noise.

Now the line that began like this—



winds round and back on itself, like this—



This, of course, is great fun; when the line winds back the dancers all bump their behinds against each other; the leader suddenly ducks under a gap in the line and makes it thread through itself; he begins to go very fast or tries to pull the line over, and there is a regular tug-of-war; they form into a big circle, head and tail of the line joining hands, first facing inwards, then with a movement like pulling a glove inside out they turn themselves into a circle facing outwards

All the time the quick, fresh, even step never changes—so long as the song remains the same. But at last the dancers change to a *Nāna nāna rē* motif, and then the step gets more of a swing in it, until at the end it

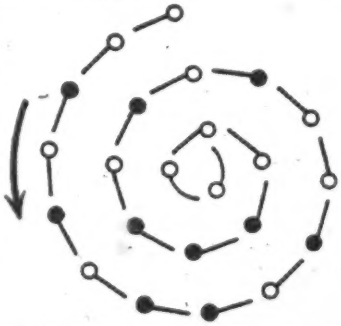
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

develops into a new movement—three steps to the left with a skip on the third step, then one step back to the right on the right foot with a good swing, half-left with the left foot which then goes back directly to the left. This is a pleasant change. Finally the line spaces itself out; the boys and girls resign their happy intimacy and stretch out hand in hand, whereon they repeat the same steps and movements.

In Pupgaon the head and the tail of the line each held sticks; at one point they met and held each other's sticks; the rest of the line had first to pass over them and then below, after which they worked round again into a complete circle.

Some of the best Hulki dancing I have seen, vigorous, precisely regular, dramatic, exciting, was at Alor. The boys and girls stood in line facing forwards, each with the left hand on the shoulder of the one in front, thus giving a slightly 'half-right' inclination. The steps were five paces forward, right foot up to left and half back; five paces back, left back to right and half forward; five paces forward and so continue; reverse at a shout; five paces back, left foot swung in and out.

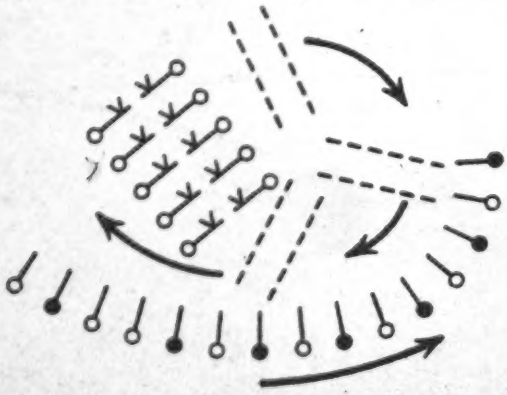
Sometimes the Hulki line rolls itself up like a centipede—



In fact there is no limit to what the Hulki dancers cannot do. It is the liveliest and happiest of all the dances and the boys and girls hate to leave off once they have begun.

In the north of Kondagaon Tahsil (I have seen it at Sidhawand and Amgaon, but only there) the Hulki is danced with drums, small *hulki-māndri* which the boys grasp with the left hand and beat very fast with the right. The drummers form two lines facing each other, while the girls and the rest of the boys form the usual Hulki line (see below).

The Hulki songs bear little relation to the dance. Those sung in the earlier stages have the refrain *Silip rēle role*

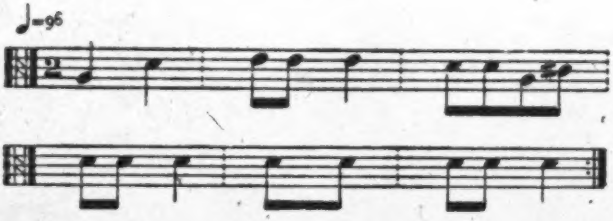


role; those sung later have the refrain *Arē lina nāmur nāna re.*

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Songs

1



Sora dhāru dharti nawu khandu pirthi ho!
O the sixteenfold earth and the ninefold heaven!

Dharti mālik boru lariyo pirthi mālik boru ho?
Who is the master of earth and who is the master of heaven?

Dharti mālik lingo lariyo pirthi mālik rājāi ho.
Lingo is master of earth and Rajal is master of heaven.

Lingona wehle pāta lariyo lingona wehle dākān ho!
O the songs that Lingo taught us, O the steps that Lingo taught us!

Pahili pāta lingo lariyo pahili dākān lingona ho.
The first song is Lingo's, and the first step is Lingo's.

Maria pāta layora lariyo maria dākān layora ho.
The last song is the boys', and the last step is the boys'.

Nadum narka diya lariyo nike poroy poyiom ho.
At midnight burns a lamp, we have taken your name.

Hongu dāpu āyma lariyo nike johar lāgi ho.
Don't be angry with us, we salute you with Johar.

2

Aring koring bāder roy.
Clouds are over heaven.

Poron bāder poyndu roy.
The sky is overcast with clouds.

Darka pirru dar dar roy,
The rain comes pouring down,

Jimti piru jim jim roy.
Then drizzles drop by drop.

Dori usa handu roy.
Towards the sunset flows a flood,

Dakha pehchor handu roy.
Forcing its way along.

3

Gugti gugti māri māri kokore.
Let us play *dudu* in the dust.

Kum dudu dudu roy he bai?
Are you coming to play *dudu*?

Dud karsi wayeni he bai,
I would like to come, but I can't,

Wāyon āyo wāyena he dāda;
Mother is in the house;

Lone dai manta roy he dāda.
She will be angry with me.

Niya dai matek roy he bai.
Don't bother about her.

Sura weri jhāpi roy he bai;
The basket has seven chains;

Jhāpite sandra hitona he bai.
I have put cloth into the basket.

Baske wane hitoni he dāda?
When did you give it?

Konem wedur joli roy he bai;
When you were in your cradle;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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535

Pus Kolang: the Monkey dance

Pus Kolang: the Kokothar dance at Koilibera

[p. 512 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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532

Nakta mask used for Chherta dance

Plate CII

Masked chelik representing a frog or leopard, at Phunder

[p. 512 (B)]

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Jolit nima mandi roy he bai,
Ashe nana hitona he bai.
Sandra ise-hitek roy he dāda,
Nana ise wāyka roy he dāda,
Jori ise ēyhāt roy he dāda.

You were swinging in your cradle,
Then I put the cloth for you.
If you have given cloth, brother,
Then I will come, brother,
And we will live as yoke-fellows,
brother.

4

Bhālur beti rāni hai men lure jāy ho?
Where is the bear's queenly daughter?

Bhālur beti rāni dongri men lure jāy ho.
She is playing on the hill.

Bhālur beti rāni kahān pāni jāy ho?
Where is she drawing water?

Bhālur beti rāni tariya men pāni jāy ho.
She is drawing it from the tank.

Bhālur beti rāni kahān sutela jāy ho?
Where does she sleep?

Bhālur beti rāni dongri men sutela jāy ho.
The bear's queenly daughter sleeps in the little stream.

5

Miti bolo mitiyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.
O sweet-spoken coolie girl, show me the way.

Mai ni jāno dāhar bābu mai ni jāno hor ho;
I don't know the way, brother;

Pāni ghāt me jābe bābu paniyārin la puchbe re ho.
Go to the water-place and ask the water-girls.

Ye bai paniyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.
O water-girl, tell me the way.

Kor me khele kor larka larka la puch lebe ho.
O boy, ask the boys playing in the road.

He bābu leroko thākur ghar kon re ho?
Where is the house of the Thakur, O boy?

Yewni jewni chor debe jābe manja gali re ho,
Turn neither left nor right, and go straight on,

Rang pote chuhi pote tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where the walls have been washed in colour and white,

Jawra bawnra kukur bhuke tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where the dogs Jawra Bawra are barking,

Kama me to āti bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where an elephant is tied to a pole,

Āla me to ghora bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where a horse is tied in the shed,

Lewa me to bainsa dube tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where the buffaloes are tethered in the yard,

Kota me to gaiya bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where the cows are shut in the shed,

Dāng me to bandra jule tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where a monkey swings on a bamboo pole,

Chhāni me to manjur nāche tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where a peacock is dancing on the roof,

Pinjora me to mena bole tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where a maina sings in its cage,

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kat me to suwa bole tahi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a parrot talks on a wooden perch, that is the Thakur's house.
He bai thakurain thākur kahān gais re ho?	Where is the Thakur, O Thakurain?
Hāt me tenga daris bhaiya rāja ke sewa gais re ho.	With a stick in his hand he has gone to serve the Raja.
Kaiya tere kaiya bhāji nadi tir he kaiya re ho.	The *kaiwa* tree is on the river bank.
Amor thākur la to rāja ghar le maya re ho;	Our Thakur has the love of the Raja's house.
Arri thākur parri jo chong bharela dewe re ho.	The Raja gave him tobacco to smoke.
Keni tere keni bhāji bāri tir he keni re ho.	The *keni-bhāji* grows near the fence.
Amar thākur he bālak beti son he beni gāte re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden plait.
Airi tere airi bhai tarai he airi re ho.	The ducks live in the tank.
Amar thākur he bālak beti son he peri pinde re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter wears golden anklets.
Amar thākur he bālak beti son he paniya konche re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden comb in her hair.

6

Meta porro tingi te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the top of the hill?
Meta porro tingi te bodāl gore lāta ho.	The bison is swinging on the top of the hill.
Gora lariyo boda di nihun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O bison!
Bodāl da tohār te bātāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the bison's tail?
Bodāl da tohār te chachi gore lāta ho.	The *chachi* bird is swinging on its tail.
Kene dor dhamki te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging under the hill?
Kene dor dhamki te yekta gore lāta ho.	Under the hill the pig is swinging.
Gora lariyo yehlā di nihun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O pig!
Turjing arta bharri te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging in the field of thick grass?
Turjing arta bharri te korwal gore lāta ho.	In the grass-field the sambhar is swinging.
Pāwur marra tonda te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the siari tree?
Pāwur marra tonda te munj gore lāta ho.	The monkey is swinging on the siari tree.
Gora lariyo munj di nihun sobhe māta ho.	Your swing looks very fine, O monkey!

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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293

FIG. 123. Toy used on Chherta expeditions
Length 6' 6"

FIG. 124. Toy used on Pus Kolang and other expeditions
Length 4' 6"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

VII. The Chherta Dance

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As we have seen, many ghotul do not perform the Pus Kolang dances. Some do not even go to dance the Mahua Dandar. In such places, the chelik concentrate on the Chherta festival. In many other villages, however, the Chherta is danced side by side with the older dances.

The Muria say that at the marriage between Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai the supplies of food and liquor for the visitors ran out, and the chelik assisting at the ceremony were sent to beg for food and liquor from neighbouring villages. They did so, and the marriage was happily completed. The more Hinduized Muria villages and the Hindus of Bastar generally have the same tradition, but they say that the marriage was between Mahadeo and Parvati. I doubt whether the Chherta dance is a genuine Muria dance or very long established in their culture; it is common throughout Chhattisgarh and in the Central Provinces, whence it has probably been imported.

Its attractiveness to the Muria is that it is great fun. In enables them to get a little liquor and have a feast. It is not overshadowed by the catastrophic penalties that come upon those who break the taboos of the serious, dangerous Pus Kolang. For this reason the Chherta has spread widely throughout the centre and east of the Muria territory.

On a Chherta expedition boys and girls go together. They dance in the ghotul of the villages they visit and sleep there. Hosts and visitors entertain one another. The visiting party salutes the elders of the ghotul at night and they then exchange girls for massaging. The visitors, however, take fire from their own village and are supposed to cook for themselves.

During the day the visiting party goes round the village dancing and begging. The leader of the dance is a boy whom they call the Nakta.[1] He is dressed up, sometimes in tattered clothes, sometimes in finery, and wears a grotesque gourd mask. The gourd is generally decorated: two rings are put for eyes, a nose is made of wax, a mouth is cut and a number of grains are stuck in it to look like teeth. A beard of the hair of nilgai or bear is attached below. A bunch of peacock feathers is tied to the top. I saw one mask with a small wax bullock placed above the nose. As the dancers go through the village they stand in a line before each house, and beat the ground with long sticks while the Nakta capers about before them with the most grotesque gestures and antics. Two or more boys carry baskets, and while the others dance these go into the house and beg for liquor, rice, pulse or other food. When they have been round the village the girls who have accompanied them take what has been collected and cook their meal.

On return from the expedition the boys and girls take the Nakta to the nearest stream, roll him in the mud, duck him in the water, and give him *mandia roti*, making him eat it with his head under water.

Besides the Nakta, other diversions enliven the Chherta festival. In Remawand I saw an ingenious toy—a stout bamboo pole was decorated with some excellently carved monkeys climbing up towards a bird perched on the top. An arrangement of strings kept both monkeys and bird in motion (Fig. 123). At Koilibera, there was a similar toy which was taken also on Pus Kolang and other expeditions. At the bottom of the bamboo pole the wood was serrated to make a 'musical rasp', and at the top was a little man.

[1] Nakta is an abusive term meaning 'noseless'. It probably refers to the custom of cutting off an erring wife's nose, for it is usually applied to sexually loose persons. It can also be used in an affectionate playful sense. A Nakti Devi is worshipped in parts of Chhattisgarh.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Here the chelik said that the animals represented were lizards and they were climbing the tree to catch a wood-pigeon (Fig. 124). At the top of each toy were cymbals that clanged whenever its strings were pulled.

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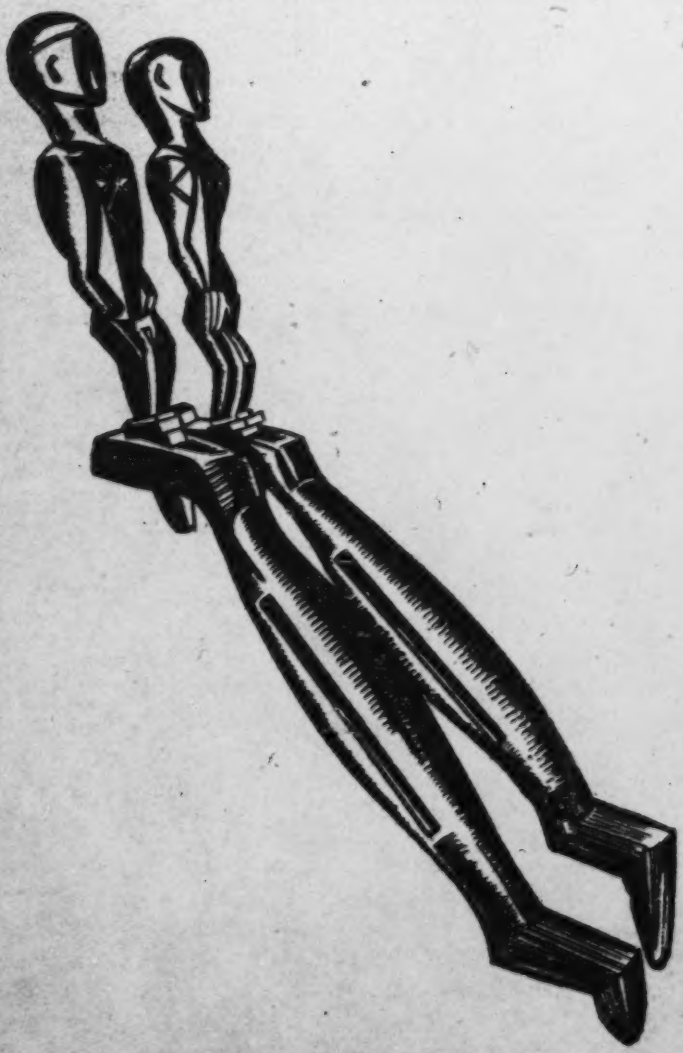

FIG. 125. Gongs from Alor
Cf. Plate CV

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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535

In Alor Shamrao Hivale found some very elaborate gongs. They are illustrated in Plate CV and Fig. 125. Each gong is a single piece of wood hollowed out in the middle with a carved beak at one end and at the other a flat strip with a hole in the centre. Into this slot there fits a 4″ peg projecting from a small support on which stands the wooden figure. Through the peg there is a small hole to take a wooden pin which fixes the figure firmly in position. The figures are male and female. The male is slightly taller, standing 15½″ from the base. The female is ½″ shorter. The two figures are differentiated by the shape of the genital organs and by small breasts in the female and a lozenge-shaped pattern on her body, probably intended to represent the womb. The hair is roughly indicated by carved lines and is different in the two images. The man has the five fingers of each hand carved on either side of his thighs where he is supposed to be holding his hands. This feature is absent in the female image. The male rectum is shown but not the female. The entire length of each gong is 2′ 6½″ from end to end. The slot in the middle is 10½″ long, ⅝″ broad and 2″ deep.

[243]

Fig. 126. Dancing-stick from Remawand

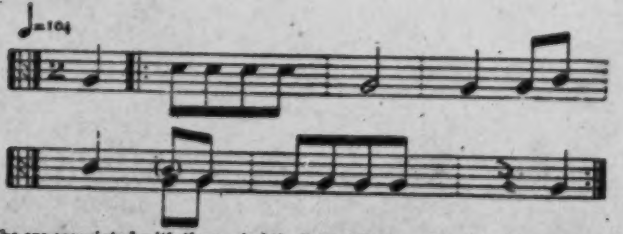
Among other things taken out for the Chherta and Pus Kolang expeditions, I have seen masks[1] of various kinds (illustrated in Plates XCIX, CII, CIII) and dancing-sticks. At Gorma I saw a *Chherta-gujir*, very like the dancing-sticks of the Bison-horn Maria, made of an old umbrella rod, with a bunch of iron bells at the top. At Remawand was a stick called *jarar-bargar*; it had an iron crown fitted with rings.[2] Decorated wooden guns are also carried.

The songs used during the Chherta are confused and obscure, a series of disconnected images and symbols, though there is always one song concerned with straightforward begging. I will give examples of both kinds.

Songs

I

[533]



[1] Masks are associated with the *ravi* of the Purari Delta and 'masked dances or ceremonial parades are a common institution in New Guinea'. In the *ravi* masks are worn during the initiation of boys, when there is a taboo upon garden produce and in a mortuary ceremony in which a masked figure represents the spirit of the dead revisiting his home.—R. Firth, *Art and Life in New Guinea* (London, 1936), p. 26.

[2] This type of musical stick is similar to that carried by postal runners in the neighbouring Jeypore Zamindari.

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Ban bhainsa āna tāna khāye lasun pāna pāna jām kuy.
The jungle buffaloes go here and there eating garlic leaves.

Chari buli āo bhainsa rupa bera thāna thāna jām kuy.
Come buffaloes and graze in the silver field.

Khat kurha cho kānta huda; halār gharo bhātti bhātti;
There are thorns in the pile of rubbish; there is an outstill in the Kalar's house;

Bhātti cho mundi he āg lage; pinda he chābli chāti chāti.
The top of the still caught fire, the ant bit the buttocks.

Bhuhute bhuhu hai huwāri dengur cho bhuhu ho ho.
There are maggots in the new ant-hill.

Pila rāja bairamgarh jora chawar duhu ho ho.
The baby Raja of Bairamgarh is fanned with a pair of fans.

Kar karāti karāti pipar pān cho dati dati.
The pipal leaf has nipples.

Chirak charak mand bache jit halāring beti ho ho;
The Kalarin's daughter is selling liquor drop by drop;

Tan tan rupaiya gine halāring bai ho ho jām kuy.
She is counting her rupees *tan tan*.

2

Jhirliti jhirliti pandki māra liti.
Jhirliti jhirliti, the pigeon killed the sparrow.

Dokara dokari jhagra kola chāpun dila luthi.
The dotard quarrelled with his dame and burnt her with a fire-brand.

Ao dokari chhandaiyla tola dehun roti.
Come, old woman, and I will give you bread.

Roti pitha hai harhun? Bare bāp he beti.
What am I to do with your bread? I am the daughter of a rich man.

Gāda upar garli chonda upar khila.
On top of a big cart is a little cart, and the poles are joined with a nail.

Gāra cheghi kāhdela sidhāwandiya pila.
To ride on this cart a chelik from Sidhawand is invited.

Amli boti tingāli pur duwāre mācha.
The tamarind fruit is very sour; the platform is in the yard.

Mācha cheghi kāhdela duyi māma bhācha.
The uncle and his nephew are called to sit on the platform.

Naya nāngār bāri bāri juna nāngār bāri.
On the new plough is tied a strap, on the old plough is a strap.

Ye gaon cho lahimanha kolepa nilo ari,
The children of this village were carried away by a fox,

Kolepa cho beta beti amhe balla dādi.
And its children will call us grandfather.

Chher chherta hi mer mera, bāman dorgoda.
Chher chherta hi mer mera, bāman dorgoda.

Donga dāda yete rala pawli adgada.
A tall man was coming along, and his foot was caught.

Nāni lāwa guri guri bade lāwa guri.
The little quail is sweet, so is the big quail.

Jhatka bida das kāka tucho mai cho pudi.
Quickly give us alms, uncle, or your mother's vagina.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Pāni suna pāni suna londi barli duna.	A water dog with a cup full of excreta.
Ayale pār cho kohoda paile paile jayna.	Cranes from here go to the other side.
Paile pār cho rāut laka mārun mārun khāyna.	The Rawat boy there kills and eats them.
Sipi sipi dongri kosa cho dori.	The hill of shells, the cord of silk cocoons.
Tucho beta he dakhle māma sānjh bera.	I saw your son, at evening time.
Adan, lasa dhaura lasa pondhke dharli kasa.	The gum of saja, gum of dhaura, like holding someone's buttocks.
Aware bai chihan khosa, bhelwān tel he ghasa.	O come, girl with hair well-done, I'll cover you with *bhelwa* oil.
Kāri āma lure lure, pandri āma lure.	O the black mangoes, O the white mangoes, are hanging down in heavy clusters.
Mahādeo he parsād me pandri baile mile.	By the grace of Mahadeo we will get a light-coloured girl.

3

Come out, girls, to see what boys have come.
They have come from the Upper World.
Give us our present quickly, for it is growing very late.
Tie up a pair of bullocks:
Kill a fat hen: bring rice out of the granary.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY

DANCE AND SONG

I

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DANCE and song, games, stories and riddles should not be regarded as mere recreation; in the Muria's eyes they are serious and important business. A ghotul's reputation largely depends on the excellence of its dancing; the motiari's ability to sing may make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful wedding. Even the games, many of them, serve an educational purpose. The younger boys and girls are carefully trained in the ghotul, and the others practise night after night, repeating the same steps and rhythms again and again till they get them right, before they set out on a dancing expedition. The complicated stick-dances need special training and practice, for once an expedition has started mistakes are regarded as ill-omened.

776 533 535

The first musician was Lingo himself, and the practice of music is not held, as so often in India, to be discreditable, but is honourably rooted in the history and mythology of the tribe. Many of the songs and dances have a religious purpose, and often begin with an invocation to Lingo and other gods. Before the Mandri dances at a wedding, worship should be performed before a pile of drums.

883X 578

It is refreshing to go to Bastar from the reform-stricken [1] and barren districts of the Central Provinces. As you climb the Keskal Ghat the whole countryside bursts into song about you. The Muria have a short way with 'reformers', as I was fortunate enough to see at Telenga village on 26 March 1941. There was a marriage that day in the village, and the chelik and motiari from eleven villages came to attend it. But when they arrived they did not begin to dance as usual, but went out into the jungle for a consultation. They had seen among the wedding guests the sinister figure of Chainu, the headman of Maragaon. A month earlier this Chainu had attended a marriage at the house of Guma in his own village. Chelik and motiari had come as usual and danced till noon. Then according to custom they asked for liquor to offer to the drums and food for themselves. Chainu, who had been under a good deal of Hindu influence, refused to let them have either liquor for the drums or food for themselves, and declared that he would 'stop this dancing throughout the pargana'. The chelik and motiari left the marriage in protest and for a month the matter was the subject of heated discussion in their ghotul.

Now in Telenga the boys saw their chance. After a long discussion, they came back, a large and formidable crowd, and told the Pargana Manjhi (of Chalka) that they wanted a panchayat and that Chainu must be there. Near the marriage-booth the boys assembled in a great circle, and almost all the wedding guests joined to see what would happen. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom were left sitting in their places, entirely forgotten.

[1] It is very hard to understand the mentality of the 'reformers' who would deprive the aboriginal of his beautiful and innocent recreations, and would impose on him a 'Shiv-raj' (as it is often called) at which the great dancer Natarajan would have shuddered. It is interesting to compare the attitude of the American Negro towards the 'Spirituals' which have done as much as anything else to establish him throughout the world. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were considered fit only for uneducated 'country niggers'. 'As late as 1909, Negro students at Howard University rebelled and refused to sing them. By the more progressive and aggressive elements in the race the Spirituals were frowned upon as a reminder of slavery and ignorance.'—N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 3. Then suddenly, they became the fashion, and the Negroes found that nothing gave them more credit and prestige.

534

FIG. 127. *Gogo dhol* drum
(*See p. 524*)

FIG. 128. *Parvang* drum
(*See p. 525*)

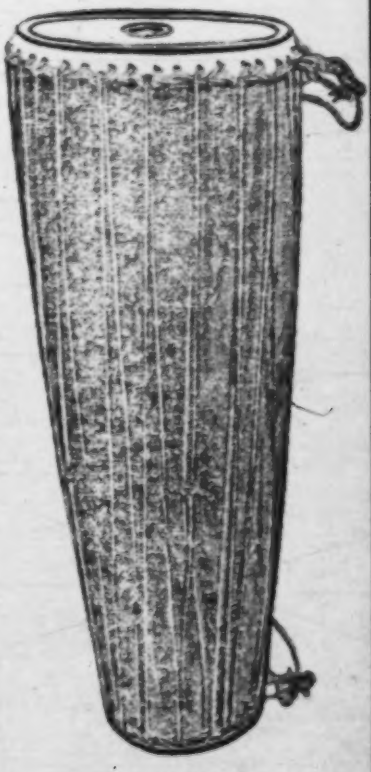


FIG. 129. *Mandri* drum
(*See pp. 530ff.*)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

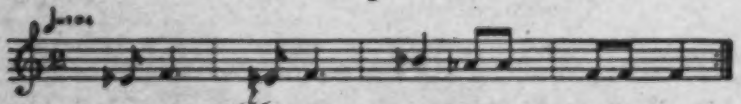
I have never seen boys more angry than these as they developed their indictment of Chainu and declared their grievance. They sprang to their feet one after another, trembling with rage, hardly able to speak for temper, pointing at the culprit who stood before them, at first haughty and defiant, but gradually weakening to a complete collapse. The boys called witnesses to show that he had insulted the god of the drums, that he was interfering with their old customs and spoiling their pleasure. Chainu tried to deny it, and called his witnesses, but they were not believed. The boys got more and more angry; tough little Pankru of Kajen had to be held back by his friends. The boys demanded a fine of three rupees. Chainu apologized and offered one. But they did not accept this and insisted on their three rupees. The Pargana Manjhi was commissioned to see that the money was paid. At this point the bridegroom came rather pathetically into the middle of the crowd and said, 'Why do you want to have this quarrel at *my* wedding: I thought you all came here for me, but it seems that you are only interested in your own affairs'. At this people began to laugh and having won their point the boys went to worship the drums, and to dance.

The Muria are very good dancers: at their best, and taking into account the great variety of their dances, they are not inferior to any in Bastar. They dance both with and without drums, sometimes with flutes, the sexes mixed or separate. Many of the dances are accompanied by songs, and the music of these, as well as many of the drum rhythms, were written down by Walter Kaufmann during a tour with me in February 1941. He recorded songs sung by the boys and girls of Kongera, Toinar, Markabera, Narayanpur and Kondagaon, and though the collection which he has generously allowed me to use here is not complete, it will give a fair idea of the type of music, which is undoubtedly of a very primitive character; it is entirely within the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, the 'Jhoria' songs being sometimes three-tone, sometimes four-tone and sometimes roughly five-tone. Kaufmann spoke of the clean, clear shape of the tunes, their purity and integrity; they were 'straight, delightful, impressive and very old'. He was however disappointed in the singing of the Narayanpur ghotul, which has come under the influence of education and the outside world. The singing there was vague and unbalanced; though still of the primitive pentatonic scale, it had become 'unclean'.

Muria music has decided Mongolian affinities, and the curious yodel of the Relo chorus reminded Kaufmann of Chinese and Tibetan songs and even of those of the Pacific Islands. In the Muria country as in Mongolia all rhythms can be divided by two or four.

The Muria seem to distinguish tunes and songs mainly by the different rhythms of their choruses. When the songs are sung antiphonally, one party keeps the tune going and the other sings the words. 'One ploughs the tune; the other follows sowing the seed.' In Bandopal the Muria called the theme of a song the *lekna* and the chorus, which is generally a variation of the word Relo, is called the *rockî* or *ish*. The Relo chorus, for all its apparent verbal monotony, is capable of much subtle variation in tune and rhythm. Typical choruses are these:

I



Rere loyo rere la rerela rela. Rere loyo rerela rere rela rela.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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533

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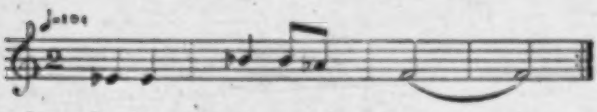

O rere loyo rela rela. Re re loyo re rela. Re re loyo rerela. O rerela rela rela rerela rela rererela rerela rela rerelo oy.

The word Relo, however, has had a disastrous effect upon the Muria: it has served as a hypnotic drug that has destroyed their poetic faculty. Their songs, compared with those current in other parts of aboriginal India, are singularly devoid of inspiration.

II. The Eighteen Instruments

X 883
534

Lingo was the first of musicians; he brought music to the world; he had eighteen instruments and played them all at once. Many Muria cannot say more than that there were eighteen, but some can give their names, though the lists do not always agree.

In a Lingo Pata sung by the Phulpar chelik as they set out on their Pus Kolang expedition, they described:

The eighteen instruments of Lingo Rai,
The Dhol Rai hanging from his shoulder,
The Hakum Rai under his arm,
The Madan Parrai drum hanging from his loins,
The Paijna Rai on his feet,
The Dhusir Rai played across the chest,
The Jhikar Rai played when wind passes through the nose,
The Sulur Rai played with wind passing through the mouth.

The Phulpar boys did not know more than this. But Suku of Bandopal knew the names of all eighteen, as do many of the chelik in the typically 'Jhoria' Parganas. The list is as follows:

1. *The nissan drum.*—A large single-membrane iron drum played with two sticks on the ground at festivals. When a new skin is needed, the Muria offer a bull to Lingo Pen, skin it and begin to prepare the hide that very day. The drum is also sometimes called *mdwdloti* or *lohâti*.

2. *The goga dhol drum.*—A single-membrane wooden drum, 14" deep with a diameter of 17", covered with cow-hide.[1] It is slung round the shoulders and beaten with a single stick held in the right hand at festivals and at the funerals of very old and famous people.

3. *The dhol drum.*—This is a large circular double-membrane wooden drum, 15" deep and 17" in diameter, covered with cow-hide, which is fixed in place with a bamboo ring and cords of leather. It is said to be the local habitation of Bara Pen and Lingo, and is beaten with a single stick at festivals. Its loud and solemn note gives point to the riddle—

[534]

Kaide nehtike bita mend dânta, Beat it with your hand and it runs half a cubit,
Bargîte hiteke kos mend dânta. Beat it with a stick and it runs two miles.

[1] The measurements in this chapter are of specimens in my possession: there is naturally some degree of variation.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
534

4. *The mandri drum.*—This is the chelik's favourite drum, the marriage

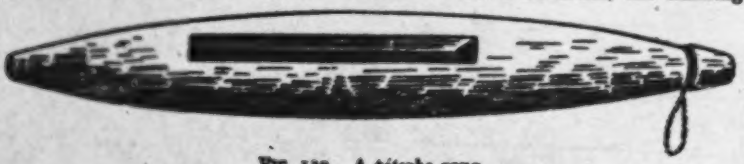

FIG. 130. A *pitorha* gong

drum. In shape it is a long barrel of wood, with two membranes of unequal size. It is so important to the life of the ghotul that I describe its manufacture and use in a separate section.

5. *The parrang drum.*—This is a waisted drum of earthenware, shaped like an hour-glass, 18" to 2' long with a cow-hide cover of 9" at either end. It is used as a substitute for the mandri in some villages. It is also called *tori parra*, *parrai*[1] or *parrayia*.

There is a wooden variety of this drum, smaller but of the same pattern, called *hulki mãndri*, *ojha parra* or *damru*. The first name derives from its use in the Hulki dance, the second because it is played by the wandering minstrel Ojha. The drum is a little under a foot long; the ends have a diameter of 6" and narrow to 3" at the waist. It is hollowed out of a single piece of wood. Lizard-skin membranes at either end are fixed in place by rings of bamboo and tied by a cord that is crisscrossed round the drum. A leather belt, to which is attached a carved wooden peg, passes round the waist and is held by the left hand.

This is the Muria version of the widely-distributed *dãmaru* used by beggars all over India. In its very small shape it has a stick or stone tied to a string: it is shaken and the stone strikes each head in turn. In Madras it is called *udakkai*.

6. *The turburi drum.*—This small earthenware drum, hemispherical in shape, is also called *kundur*, *kundri*, *kundurha* and *kundori*. Its Muria form is a sophisticated version of the Hill Maria *turam* drum made by them of sago palm or bija wood. Its single membrane is of cow-hide. It is tied to the waist and beaten with two sticks at festivals. (See Plate CX.)

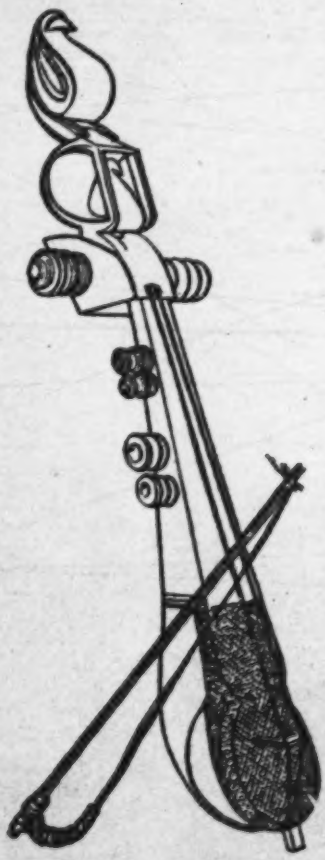

FIG. 131. A *sarangi* (*See p. 526*)

[1] *Parrai* is a Tamil word for a drum, from which the Paraiyan caste may possibly get its name.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
534

7. *The pitorha gong.*—This is a wooden gong, also called *tudra*, *hutorha* and *thuturha*, which seems to have developed out of the wooden cow-bell. But this hollowed-out, membraneless instrument differs from the cow-bell in having no clapper; it is beaten with two sticks during marriage dances and makes a sharp penetrating noise. The name *pitorha* means a bulbul. Riddles about the gong are:

Hayle hor hara hara inia. The dead cock cries *hara hara*.
The cock's belly is removed, but it goes on crying for food.

It is this class of instrument that gives most scope to the chelik for carving the little decorations and symbols of which they are so fond. The gongs often have small mirrors fitted into the wood, carvings of tigers, birds, chelik and motiari, and crude drawings of the vagina (Fig. 141). The heavy cow-bell type of *pitorha* is often fairly large; one in my possession measures 21" by 10½", another 23" by 14", a third 27½" by 14". Sometimes the *pitorha* takes the shape of a hollowed-out canoe (Fig. 130). I have one that is 26" long with a slit 10" long, 3" deep and 1" across. A small hole is made in the bottom of the slit to improve the tone.[1]

The wood used is generally semur or siuna. A chelik goes to the tree and throws rice and pulse at it in the name of Lingo. 'To improve the sound', the gong is worshipped with oil and haldi before a marriage.

8. *The sarangi.*—A fiddle of the ordinary Indian pattern, made of a single block of wood, with a hollowed-out belly. The Muria sometimes carve a bird at the top (Fig. 131).

9. *The dhusir.*—This is another type of fiddle with a bamboo neck attached to a resonator made of half a coconut. This is covered with lizard skin. The strings are of horse-hair. The instrument is held to the shoulder and played with a bamboo bow which has horse-hair strings.

10. *The toheli.*—This resembles the Indian *sitar*. A bamboo neck is attached to a gourd resonator. It is played specially in honour of Bara Pen and Bangaram.

11. *The dumri.*—A guitar made of a thick board over which brass strings are tied, with a large gourd resonator. It is held with one hand and the strings are plucked with the other. If any of these stringed instruments are played at a wedding, they are first worshipped with oil and haldi in the name of Lingo.

12. *The hakum hunting-horn.*—Originally this was an ordinary buffalo horn, and still many of them may be seen slung from the roofs of shrines. They are blown at festivals to announce the arrival of a god or to mark any important turn of the ceremonial. The Ghasia make an elaborate brass horn by the *cire-perdue* process, which is eagerly bought by those Muria who can afford it. Such brass horns are common in Madras, where they are called *kombu*, and in Nepal under the name of *sringa*.

13. *The solor flute.*—This is also called *kalur* and *husor* in Gondi and *banswri* in Halbi. It is a cylindrical bamboo tube with from four to six stops. Among the Muria flutes in my possession, one is 3' long. It is closed by the

[1] This appears to be a miniature edition of the large wooden xylophone made from a hollow log and sometimes called a canoe-drum which is frequently found in the Naga Hills, among the Wa of Burma, in the Malay Peninsula and in Borneo. Hutton connects it with the Fijian *lali*. 'It may be associated with the use of the war canoe, as its construction appears to be attended in the Naga Hills by taboos identical with those attending the construction of canoes in Melanesia; and canoes have been used, occasionally at any rate, for drumming in Manipur, in Papua and in Oceania.'—J. H. Hutton, 'Races of Further Asia', *Man in India*, Vol. XII (1932), p. 10.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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534

natural joint at the proximal end near which a circular sound-hole has been burnt. Half-way down the pole is a set of three holes and then after a space

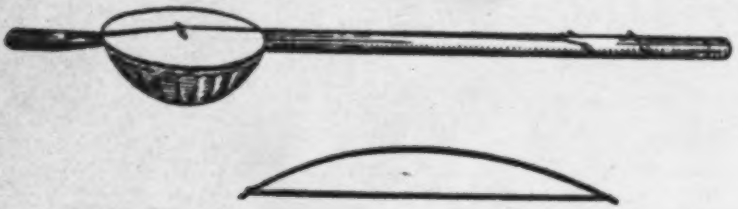


FIG. 132. A *dhuzir*
(*See p. 526*)

of 4" another set of three holes. A bamboo stick with a bunch of cloth at the end is kept inside the flute to clean it. Another flute, with five stops, has a lozenge-shaped sound-hole which is divided into two by a lump of wax, so that the air can escape from both ends of the flute which has no joints to close it. A small piece of tin, held in place by a roll of salphi fibres, can be slid up and down to close one or both of the sound-holes. This flute is 14" long; a third, of the same size, has four stops and a sound-hole. This, which is only capable of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, is, of course, the most primitive. I have found it distributed in the remoter villages throughout the entire Muria area. It is curious that contact with the bazaars and main roads should even add stops to the flute, but it is so.

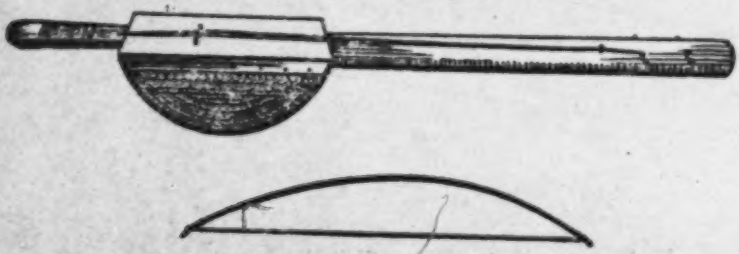


FIG. 133. Another type of *dhuzir*

The chelik sometimes play their flutes very well. They dance with them at festivals, and play them while watching cattle or sitting lonely in a field-hut at night. In Bermakot, the chelik distinguished ten different tunes.—Matapar, Bangarampar, Maolipar, Budha Dokarapar, Khanda Dokarapar, Lingopar, Son Kumarpar, Kuari Maolipar, Bhamnipar and Bhagarampatpar.

14. *The kekreng.*—This is the curious musical rasp, a notched stick belonging to the idiophone class, found also in south-east Asia and Africa. The rasps are generally made of bamboo poles about 5' long with a bunch of feathers at the top. At the lower end a slot is made and notches are cut along it on either side for about 8". A bit of wood is rubbed over these notches making a rasping noise which can be adapted to the rhythm of the drums. A similar rasp made of wood, 1' long, 1¼" deep and ⅜" broad, was attached to the bottom of one of the elaborate toys carried on Chherta and Pus Kolang expeditions.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883 534

Here the wood was hollowed out like a little canoe and the notches were cut in its sides.

I have also an elaborate iron stridulator; it is a hollow cylindrical tube 18" long notched right down its upper surface, and twisted at the narrower end into a crude representation of a cobra with hood erect. Attached to its lower side by an iron loop is a 4" 'hair-pin' of twisted iron which is used to rub against the indentations of the upper surface.[1]

15. *The kach-tehendor.*—This little iron Jew's harp is said to make music so sweet 'that even a snake would dance to it', but it is not popular because it is supposed to damage the teeth. It is made by Muria-Lohar from locally smelted iron; a prong is enclosed in a small frame which is held by the teeth, the mouth thus acting as resonator, and it is played by jerking the vibrating prong (Fig. 138). There is also a very delicate instrument made of thin bamboo cut so as to leave a vibrating tongue tied by a string at the end. Held between the teeth, the string is jerked and a sweet low humming noise is produced.[2]

16. *The muyang bells.*—Small pellet-bells are tied to the buttocks by the Jhoria Muria for their festival dances. They are jerked up and down or swung to and fro. With them are usually two or three larger clapper-bells called *irna*. They are made of brass by the local Ghasia. Pellet-bells are also tied round the arms, the calves or the ankles, and strings of them are hung from the girdle.

17. *The kalwaking anklets.*—These are hollow, made of iron or brass, and contain small pellets of the same material. When the chelik dance vigorously stamping their feet, the clash of the anklets blends pleasantly with the rhythm of the drums.

18. *The chitkul cymbals.*—Nearly all Lingo's instruments are still used only by boys, but the *chitkul* are more common in the hands of girls. They are made of brass by Ghasia or Bharewa and are often attached to each other by long chains of cowries. Men and boys also use them—there is no taboo

[1] Grigson found the Baiga of Arwar in the Balaghat District using a musical rasp, which they called *kirr-kitti*, made of a 'tapering rod of dhaman-wood carved by a series of bulges into a kind of ratchet. The key-board is a short piece of bamboo one foot long, one inch wide and a quarter of an inch thick, obtained by tangential section so that the outer surface of the bamboo is retained for roughly one-fifth of the periphery of the complete bamboo. This piece of bamboo is then bisected lengthways by a second tangential cut extending for two-thirds of its length. Five cuts in the radial direction are made to produce a double set of five "fingers", which have a common groove about 1¼" from the open end. To operate the instrument the tapering "ratchet" stick is stabbed vertically downwards through the groove.'—W. V. Grigson, *The Aboriginal Problem in the Balaghat District* (Nagpur, 1941), p. 14. This is similar to the South Indian *kokkara*, used by Pulayar, Vedar and Kuruvar sorcerers. The *kokkara* is 'formed of a plate of iron turned into a tube, the edges strongly serrated and not closely united. From it hangs a chain and an iron pin which is rubbed along the dentate edges of the iron cylinder, making a horrid grating noise'.—S. Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore* (London, 1883), p. 49. The Savara *daddawurdjan* is a stridulator made of a hollow bamboo with a slit, either side of which is ragged with small grooves, the upper part of the slit being covered with the hand to regulate the volume of resonance.—G. V. Sitapati, 'Sora Musical Instruments', *Bulletin du Musée Ethnographie du Trocadero* (Paris, 1933), No. 3, p. 23. I have also seen Savara use as a rasp the inner ribbed core of a buffalo's horn.

[2] The jew's harp is common in Assam and Burma, where it has been recorded for the Lakher and Chin, though it is absent among the Lushai. The Naga tribes call it 'mouth music' and use it for serenades. The Mikir and Garo make a double harp and for the Kachin 'all love passages are conducted with this as the chief musical instrument'. Still more elaborate harps are found in the Sadiya District. So seductive is the music that the use of the harp is forbidden by many missionaries.—A. W. Young, 'The Jew's Harp in Assam', *JASB*, Vol. IV (N.S., 1908), pp. 235f. I have found little bamboo harps popular in the Juang and Bondo dormitories (cf. Fig. 136).

Plate CIII

532
292
293

Pan Kolang maak

[p. 528(N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CIV

535
V47
V93

The Malik of the Kongera ghotul in dancing dress

[p. 528 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883
534

about it—but generally for fun; an old man dressed as a beggar may do a turn by himself, mournfully clashing a pair of cymbals; a couple of chelik will take them and imitate the jerky dance motions of the motiari.

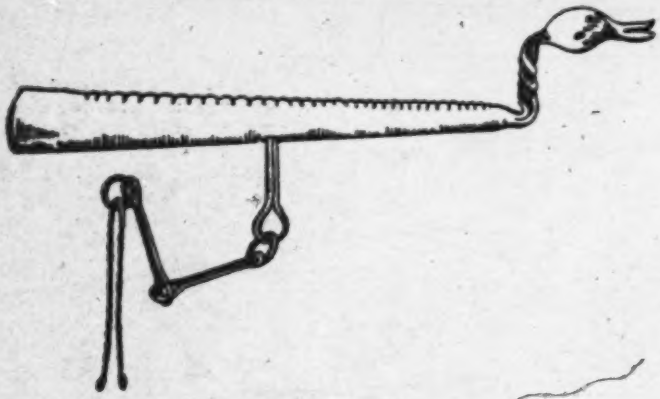


FIG. 134. An iron *kelveng*
(*See p. 527*)

These were the eighteen instruments of Lingo, and even today they are still full of the love-charms that he put into them. Not every chelik can make and use them all. Every chelik, it is safe to say, can deal with the drums; every motiari can handle the cymbals. But the buttocks-bells are not known in eastern Kondagaon, and in any ghotul there are rarely more than two or three boys who can play the stringed instruments.

Most of these instruments are not, of course, peculiar to the Muria, and it is certain that several of them do not go back to the days of Lingo. The dhol and turburi are of the ordinary Indian pattern, so are the stringed instruments. But the hunting horn, the four-holed flute, the musical rasp, the bamboo Jew's harp, the canoe-shaped gong are very primitive.

Beside the eighteen instruments, the Muria have a few others. They sometimes use a tambourine called *dahi*, made of goatskin stretched over a wooden ring, 15" in diameter. This instrument is common throughout Orissa: it is the chang of the Juang. The Jhoria of the western parganas make bull-roarers for amusement. I have not been able to discover any religious or magical significance in them; they are only used as toys. The Muria make their bull-roarers of bamboo slats, 12" to 18" long and ½" to 1" broad; they are notched round one end and a string is attached; sometimes they are pointed at the other end. The blade is then whirled round in the air and a roaring noise is made, as a result of the edge and flat surface being alternately presented to the air and thus acting as a closing and opening valve.[1] The *mora*, which is the *shanai*-clarionet of other parts of India, is sometimes used at marriages.

[1] The bull-roarer is widely distributed throughout the world, but can hardly be called common in India. It is used in the Uraon *dhumbuvia*, and Roy discovered it among the Santal, Ho and Munda. Munda and Uraon bull-roarers have been found perforated as well as notched, but elsewhere, as in Bastar, only the notched type has been recorded. See S. C. Roy, 'The Bull-Roarer in India', *Man in India*, Vol. VII (1927), pp. 62f.

2: Elwin E⁵-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
534

A very simple drum is made by Muria living in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar Mountains. Two slats are made on the upper rounded surface of a split bamboo about 3′ long and these are raised by small wooden frets placed at either end. These are beaten with two small wooden sticks, the operator sitting cross-legged on the ground.[1] (See Figs. 53 and 139.)

III. The Mandri Drum

So important is the mandri drum to the chelik and so essential to their chief dances that I devote a special section to its manufacture and use.

The drum exists in two forms, the first akin to the *mridang* pattern universal throughout India, the second of the *damaru* hour-glass type. The *khut mändri* is a double-membrane drum, 30″ long, of wood or earthenware, the two ends being of different sizes, one 10″ in diameter and the other 7″. The membranes are made of cow-hide attached by strips of the same material criss-crossed round the body of the drum. The *kulki mändri*, which is also called *ojha parra* or *damaru*, is a waisted drum, shaped and hollowed out of a single piece of wood. At either end it is covered with lizard-skin which is fixed in place by a ring of bamboo held by cords made of siari bark. A normal size for this drum is 11″ long and 6½″ diameter at either end.

It is said by the Muria that only a great lover, a man who desires to shine before the maidens of the village, will go to the trouble nowadays of making a wooden mandri. Earthen drums or earthen bowls from which drums can be manufactured are easily obtainable in the bazaars and there is a growing

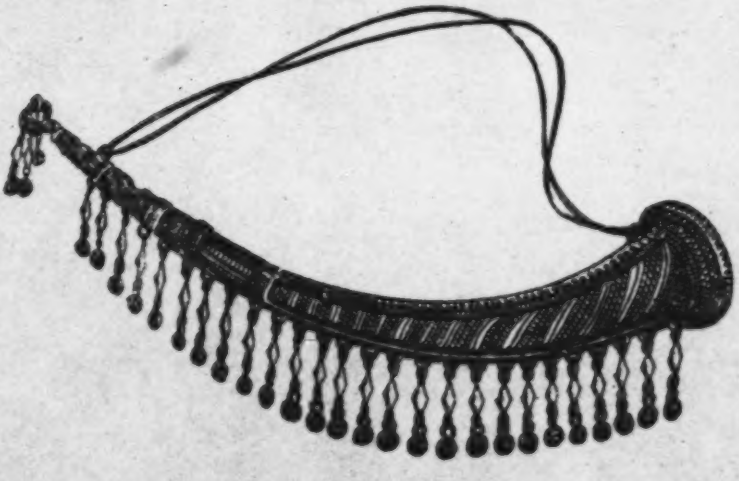


Fig. 135. Hunting-horn of brass
(See p. 526)

tendency to use them. Those who make the mandri of wood do so, therefore, with great care and elaborate ceremonial.

[1] This resembles the *tsoung* of the Shan States. But the Shan instrument has a sort of sounding board made by a hole in the bamboo. The Reddis have a similar split stringed instrument.—C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Reddis of the Bison Hills*, p. 348—so have the Bondo (Fig. 53), and the Savara.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

In the month of June, when the first rain falls and the frogs begin to croak, a boy goes to the jungle to find a suitable tree. The tree may either be bija,

FIG. 136. Bamboo Jew's harp
Length 4½"

After a drawing from A. Willifer Young's article 'The Jew's Harp in Assam' from *JASB*, Vol. IV, 1908, p. 238

FIG. 137. Chin and Mikir harps

sisuna, mahua, mango or dumar fig. Probably the most commonly used is the bija. Before cutting the tree the chelik must offer it an egg with some sàrai gum as incense on a little fire saying, 'Look, we are taking you to make you into a drum; may the sound you give be that of a good drum'. Another prayer is, 'Look Bhimul, let our drum sound well'. In Palari the boys used to offer *sapàri* and coconut in the name of Danteshwari and the Departed saying, 'May our drum give a good sound and may we learn every kind of step (*dàha*) and rhythm (*dàr*); may the chelik have no kind of sorrow; may the songs of the chelik and motiari be good'. The reference to Bhimul, which is repeated at the worship of the drums before the marriage ceremony, is probably due to his association with rain and thunder. In some legends thunder is caused by the noise made by Bhimul dragging his water-skin across the sky. He who gives thunder in heaven is the best person to promote the thunder of the drum on earth.

Then the boy cuts down the tree and takes it home. He hollows out the wood with his *bewar* (Fig. 14) and axe until it is of perfect shape. He makes

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
534

a little hole in one side and closes it with a wooden plug. This is called the drum's umbilical stump. Later when the drum is ready the boy will blow into it, the idea being that when there is more air inside, it will sound better. Then he puts it aside for a year. During this year he should offer Bhimul a pig for the success of his drum. Then in the same month that he originally cut the wood, when the frogs are croaking again, he ties the skin to either end.

The preparation of the skin also has its appropriate ritual. The boy takes the cow-hide to the river and puts it in the water to soak. When he finds after three or four days that the hairs come out easily, he removes it and offers red and black powder, seven rings of aonra leaf, egg-shells, a chicken and liquor to the Yer Kanyang saying, 'O Kanyang, for so many days you have been defiled; to free you of this I make these offerings; let the skin be good and let it not break'. The idea that the water is defiled by contact with cow-hide is, of course, an accretion on older Muria thought. It is quite inconsistent, for the same Muria do not hesitate to eat beef and to offer cows and bulls to their gods. It is said that once a Siraha, when consulted as to why the skins of the drum broke rather quickly, declared that it was because the Water Maiden was angry at her defilement by contact with leather, and the custom arose from this.

The skin is tied to the drum in the months when the frogs begin to croak so that as the frogs croak loudly the drum too will give a loud noise'.

Then the boy with the help of his friends makes a little platform of sticks on the ground, lays the skin upon it, stands on either end to keep it taut, scatters ash over it and with a bit of wood rubs off the hairs. He doubles the skin, lays the drum mouth-downwards on it and cuts round leaving an ample margin. When it has dried he cuts the upper skin to the exact size required, leaving the underskin to project all round. He makes long strips of cord from the hide, cutting it out circlewise. Then he ties the skins to either end, fixing them in place with the cords that he criss-crosses over the body.

It is said that cow-hide is better than bullock's, but that the skin of cow or bullock killed by a tiger gives the best sound of all. This is obviously based on the idea that the drum thunders as the tiger roars.

Now as the chelik is finishing his work he soaks a few mahua flowers in water and offers them to the drum with a little rice, pulse, haldi, an egg, and a chicken saying, 'Look, Bhimul Mandri Guru, O all ye Departed, I am offering you this so that my drum may sound well every day'. In the villages of the north, where the cult of Lingo is prominent, the offerings are made in his name. This is more appropriate, since Lingo was the first musician who taught the Muria the art of drumming.

Then the boy puts some oil and flour mixed together on both ends of the drum; he sometimes attaches a sort of saddle of polished cow-hide to protect his body. I have also seen ordinary blankets, deer-skin or leopard-skin used for this purpose. At last when everything is ready, on that very night the boy summons the chelik and motiari and dances with them the whole night beating the drum all the time. The drum thus introduced to the community of youth may last a lifetime.

The drums are hung in the verandah or sitting-room of a house or suspended from the roof of the ghotul. In some ghotul the entire ceiling is covered with drums, a very impressive sight. The instruments are treated with reverence and are honoured on special occasions. The mandri is used mainly for marriages; for religious festivals a circular dhol drum is employed. When the boys go for a marriage, as they enter the village they exclaim, 'May no hostile god or goddess, witch or warlock trouble us'. They pluck a little dub grass and

532

Wooden dolls, representing a chelik and motiari, attached to gongs and carried over the shoulder on any festive occasion

Photograph by Burke
Plate CV

[p. 532 (A)]

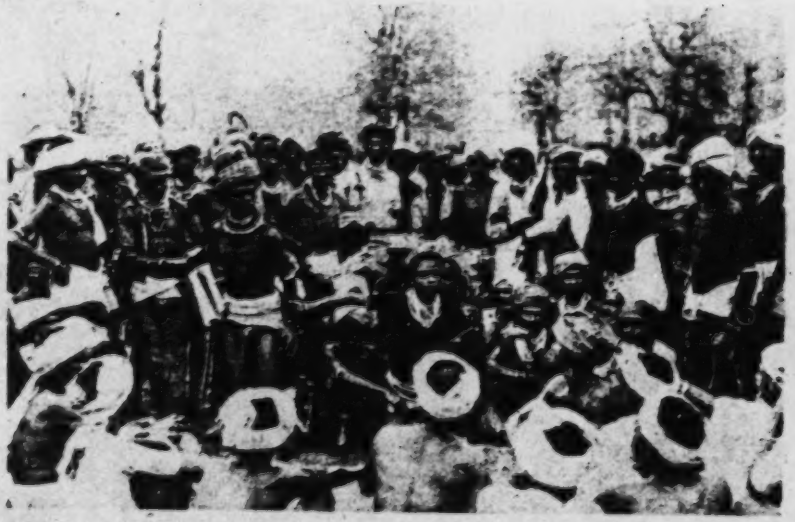
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
534
291

Chelik of Temrugaon wearing typical Hill Maria cap and playing the hunting-horn

Plate CVI

X883
578



Chelik panchayat denouncing a would-be reformer

[p. 532 (2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

throw it behind them as they go. They also tie a little to each drum, pushing the ends of the grass under the strings. As they enter the village, they drum what is called the Bhimul Par or the rhythm in honour of Bhimul, and go once round the marriage-booth. Then they go apart and stack the drums in a row or pile and the leading drummer, who is called the Mandri Guru, offers liquor and the usual gifts of rice, haldi and flour to the drums in the name of Bhimul, Lingo or Danteshwari Matal, according to the local custom, and always in the name of the Dead. 'Let the sounds of the drum be good', they say, 'and let the variety of our dance-steps and rhythms be right. O Mandri Guru Bhimul, as your drum used to sound, so may ours.' As they finish the offerings the boys gather round and each stoops down and catches hold of his drum by its cords; then at a given signal they all together lift the drums into the air and, with a loud cry, sling them across their shoulders and begin to beat them vigorously.

When a drum is broken, the owner asks the Siraha why, and only repairs it after making the appropriate offerings to whatever god or ancestor caused the trouble.

Some of the riddles about this drum are picturesque:

'The seed is outside, the bark inside.'
'In the elephant's stomach buzzes a fly.'
'It cries *tihito*, this bird with no teeth.'
'The bullocks come from Porrobhum [the Upper World] crying *burum burum*.'[1]

IV. Dancing Dress

Chelik and motiari wear no special dancing dress for weddings or any ordinary occasion. They simply put on as many ornaments as they can, stick feathers in their hair and occasionally tattoo their faces with white dots and stars.

Even for festivals the Muria of the east have no special dress and they go out on their Hulki and Dandar expeditions in their ordinary clothes. But the Jhoria have a very elaborate and distinctive dress for the festivals of the clan-god; and the Muria of the north and west wear a special uniform (which I describe elsewhere) for the Pus Kolang and Chait Dandar expeditions. Here I shall confine myself to a description of the Jhoria festival attire, which closely resembles the dancing dress of the Hill Maria.

[1] It is interesting to compare these riddles about drums with those current in other tribes. The following are Uraon:

'A brown cow lows in the middle of a field.'
'The boy who only speaks when beaten.'
'Outside pretty
Inside empty.'
'Put down silent—picked up noisy.'
'The fishes gather when the dry tree is beaten.'

These are Kharia:

'The jack-fruit tree is a tree full of mandri drums.'
'The little fishes gather at the sound of the clouds.'

These are Baiga:

'At the least touch, it growls.'
'An orphan boy with a big belly cries all night.'
'He is brought and hung up. When the crowd gathers, they beat him.'

See Archer, op. cit., pp. 181ff.; Roy, *The Kharias*, pp. 450ff.; *The Baiga*, pp. 464ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The basis of this dress is a very commonplace shirt and a white skirt with red bands, held in place by a wide sash, all of bazaar cloth. The chelik wear on their heads either turbans tied straight round to make a sort of box or a round cap of bamboo lattice-work covered with red cloth with one end hanging down behind as a streamer. This *topi*, as it is called, is decorated with feathers, cowries, coloured balls borrowed from the motiari and anything else available. When a turban is worn, it is similarly decorated and has one or two long streamers, or strings of cowries hanging down behind.

Round their waists the chelik tie a cord and attach to it bunches of small and big bells which hang above their buttocks.[1] I once saw a boy with a large wooden cow-bell. From the shoulders hangs the very distinctive dancing-shield called *moghi*. This is a circular shield of carved wood or basketwork, with bamboo hoops underneath to support it away from the back and often four smaller hoops of bamboo or brass on the upper side, through which are threaded more streamers of red, white or blue cloth (see Fig. 33).

Sometimes coloured shawls are thrown over the shoulders spoiling the effect, since they conceal the shields. I have only once seen the older type of Hill Maria 'rib-waistcoat', and that was at Bandopal where the boys covered their waistcoats with folded strips of white cloth so arranged as to look like a series of ribs down the body. Round their necks the boys wear masses of ornaments, many of them borrowed for the occasion from their sisters and cousins.

FIG. 138. Iron Jew's harp
Length 3½"

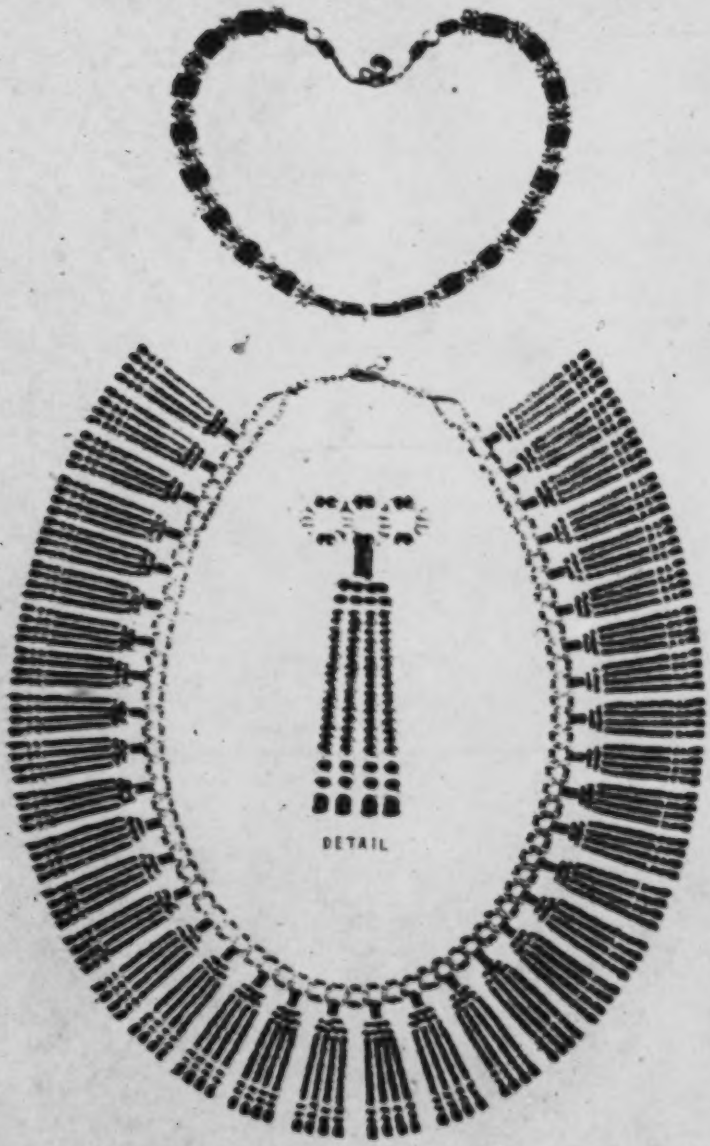
Every dancer must carry something over his shoulder. Nowadays this is often an umbrella, though an umbrella decorated with strings of cowries or even bunches of fruit. Traditionally the Hill Maria carried a large pharsa battle-axe over his shoulder: the Muria still sometimes make exaggeratedly large wooden pharsa, carved wooden godel axes, sticks with bunches of peacock feathers tied to the top; the less enterprising carry ordinary pharsa and godel axes and even wooden sticks.

The most interesting objects carried by the Muria for their festival dances are the 'horses', or *hokti* as they are called (Figs. 27, 29). These are roots of trees chosen because their shape roughly resembles the head of a horse, often a fringe of smaller roots being left on the upper side to indicate the mane. This 'horse' is given horns or ears by fixing pointed bits of wood, barking-deer horns, or the tusks of the wild boar to the front of the 'head'. From its nose hang long streamers of white feathers, and the nose itself is often decorated with crisscross patterns. Into the back of the *hokti* are fixed three or four ornamented sticks each with a tuft of feathers at the end. The general effect, specially when a very large number of these 'horses' appear together, is magnificent.

[1] These buttocks-bells, which are characteristic of the Hill Maria, have also been recorded in the Coorg area of the Western Ghats. See M. B. Emeneau, *JAOS*, Vol. LIX, p. 132.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

301



JHORIA NECKLACE AND HEAD-BAND FROM REWAWAND

[facing p. 534]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

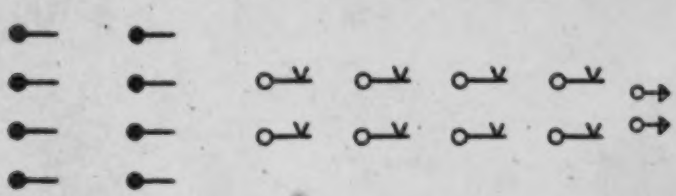
V. The Mandri Dance

X 883
535

I include here all those dances which are primarily exhibitions of drumming with the earthen or wooden mandri, the large waisted parrai, and the wooden tudra. These dances are performed at marriages or for amusement in the ghotul; they are the dances normally displayed at the camps of touring officials and visitors.

There is no special uniform; the dancers wear what they can. Boys sometimes carry carved wooden axes over one shoulder: girls and boys may decorate their faces with white spots, lines and stars. There is often a boy in peacock-dress or a cowrie-jacket. All the pomp and excitement of the dance is for the boys; the peahens to these exuberant peacocks are usually pushed into a corner where they sing a subdued little Relo on their own.

There are a great many different movements in the Mandri; I will describe them one by one. The prelude, or grand entrance, is done at the beginning of the dance always, when the boys bring in the wood for the marriage-booth, when they go to welcome the bridegroom on his arrival at their village, and when they escort bride or bridegroom to the Lagir ceremony. The formation is simple—boys form a double file followed by two rows of girls.



The procession advances a few steps, halts, retires a little, advances again. Sometimes it comes forward with a rush, halts, turns round and rushes back not quite so far, comes on again; with each rush the procession makes a slight advance. I saw this done very effectively at Sidhawand, where the boys held antlers in their hands. When they reached the limit of their advance they bowed with them to the ground, then all together raised them into the air with a fine flourish, and retired. At Kokori, boys entered in a long serpentine column. Every four paces, they knelt down, then advanced crab-like sideways, knelt, went back, came on again, knelt, moved to and fro on their knees. Sometimes the line of drummers squats down and hops along, drumming vigorously the while. When the drummers have made their entry, they should perform the drum worship in the name of Bhimul or Lingo.

They then usually form themselves into the first movement, which is quite simple. They go round in a circle, with a straightforward rapid walk, the

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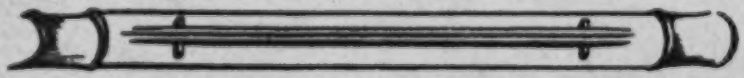

Fig. 139. A bamboo drum (*see p. 530*)

knees slightly bent. If there are any boys with wooden kutorka or tudra, these gyrate inside the main circle. The girls form two lines some distance

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
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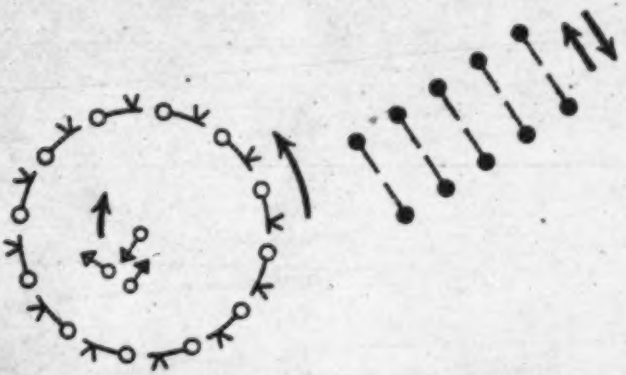
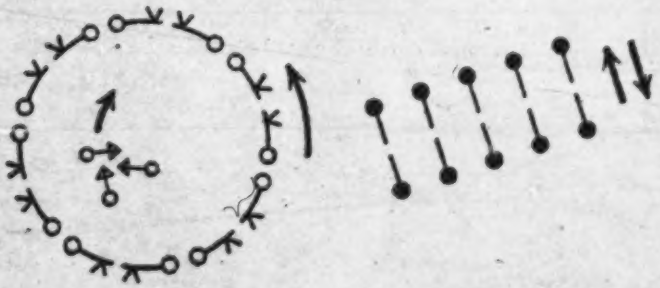
away, and sing a Relo song which has no relation in time or rhythm to the drumming or the movements of the boys. Since the girls' dances are quite independent, I will describe them all together later.



There is no particular order about the subsequent movements and formations of the Mandri dance. After a time the circle of drummers, on an order from the leader, either turns round and goes in the opposite direction, or goes backwards.

At another order from the leader, every other drummer turns round, so that now they rotate in pairs. Sometimes each lays his left hand on his partner's drum: this is the *Samdhi Johar*.



This first turn becomes general. While watching the dance at Bandopal I wrote, 'the basis of this Mandri is a revolving circle, of which each member also gyrates round his neighbour. The circle also contracts and expands rhythmically, for in gyrating each drummer takes a couple of steps in and out'.

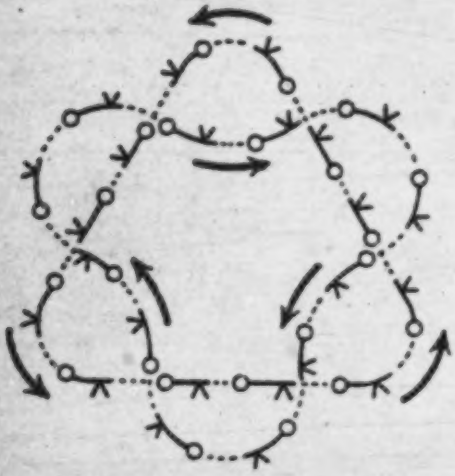
Then they change again, and now there are two circles gyrating in opposite directions, threading through each other—this is called the *sewilaka* (see p. 537).

The drummers beat with an upward flourish of the hands; each swirls round, bending his knees a little; each member wheels as the whole circle wheels.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

883X
535

But there is no limit to the variations of the Mandri. At one moment the dancers are going round in a circle, and each boy has one hand on the shoulder



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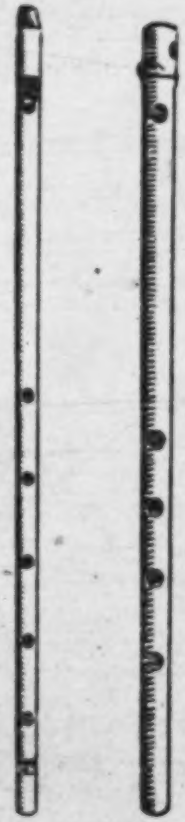


FIG. 140. Flutes
(See p. 526)

of the drummer in front of him; the next they have closed in and are kneeling down facing inwards clapping their hands; soon they jump up, turn round, open the circle and kneel again facing outwards, clapping their hands. They put their hands on their hips and sway twice on their feet. Sometimes they gyrate with the drums between their legs, beating with the left hand behind the left leg, then they swing the drums up and forward. Between beats, they touch first chest, then buttocks with their hands, then beat the drums.

Sometimes they do a sort of leap-frog: the circle shakes out a little, and they kneel down with the drums on the ground and each in turn jumps over the others. When that is done they begin to gyrate, kneeling down, and hopping forward.

In another movement, the boys kneel in a circle facing one way; they shuffle round on their knees, upright, they lean back on their heels, one foot to one side, then to the other. They go round slowly on their knees, like a fantastic ring of cripples, then lean right back and go backwards supporting their bodies with one hand, drumming with the other. Then they go forward on all fours beating with alternate hands and at last spring up and go round quickly.

When they tire of this, they sit on the drums lengthways as though riding a horse; then they turn inwards and move towards the centre pulling the drums in with graceful movements, and later widen the circle again with the same movements reversed. They abandon their drums and dance round the circle, clapping their hands, sometimes sitting down on each other's drums to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
535

beat them for a few moments, up again and round, leaping, gesticulating, whirling round.

The best Mandri dancing I have seen was at Khutgaon under the inspiration of the remarkable old Muria landlord Kodu. A band of twenty-five black-coated boys headed by Kodu entered the ghotul. Several had silver belts tied across their shoulders from right to left, or chains of little bells hanging down behind; they wore silk turbans, cheap ornaments and used small parrang drums. Here, I thought, were typical decayed Muria of the lowlands. But there was nothing decayed about their dancing. They entered, and stood still without a sound. Kodu raised his hand in a fine gesture and a shout, and they all did the same. They gesticulated with both hands, and away they went in a swiftly moving circle. After a time the boys rushed outwards; they clapped their hands twice, turned, drummed on the turn, stopped, pointed, gesticulated, drummed again, clapped their hands twice, bent down, exclaimed loudly, stamped, went round again, clapped their hands twice, beat the drums twice, went round and round. Then more pointing in the air and shouting, a jump in the air, two claps of the hands, two beats of the drum, then round again, now facing out, now in, clap and drum again.

Now the dance changed. As they went round, the drummers hopped three paces on the left foot, turned inwards, stood still. There was a pause of silence, then all gesticulated and shouted together, faced about, shouted, turned to the right and circulated drumming with very wide movements of the hands, more and more quickly, left foot forward, right up to it with a little kick, right forward, left up to it with a kick. Then they stopped and moved backwards, round and round, drumming incessantly with great vigour. At last they

[533]

Drum rhythm

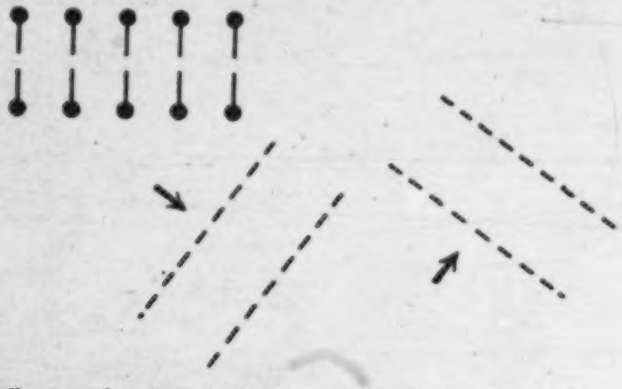
stopped, facing out from their circle, pointed to the sky, gave a great shout, and broke their ranks. It was a most invigorating dance to watch.

During this magnificent parade, the motiari too were dancing, but in a corner, shy and subdued, their heads bowed and bodies bent to hide their charms. No one took any notice of them; all eyes were on the boys. Yet the girls' dances are interesting, and can be delightful. The motiari form two lines facing inwards, and generally begin by standing erect and singing antiphonally while they clash their cymbals or clap their hands. They do not hold each other. Presently one line bends forward while the other remains upright, and those bending forward clap their hands or cymbals low down between their legs.

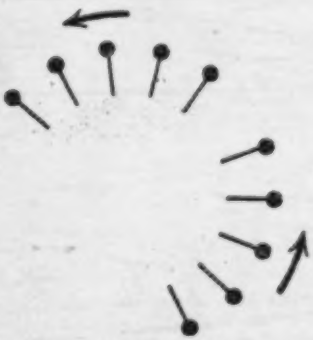
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
535

The two lines now gradually work round; ideally they should pivot round on their centre, preserving the double-line formation—



Actually they often form into a half circle in two sections as below.



An alternative movement is this—the girls form two lines, but when it comes to the moment when one of them is to bend forward, the line turns round and then bends down. The Jamkot Para motiari did this very well; every four beats of the cymbals they swing round and change position. Sometimes both lines have their backs to each other. Here they do the swing-dance in line; in Kachora I saw it done excellently in a circle. The motiari there first went round clockwise with their cymbals in a full circle; then every girl began to turn right every three steps and bent down, gave three beats with the cymbals, stood upright, took three steps round, turned left, bent down and so on. In this way, the circle alternately faced inwards and outwards. Done with real vigour this is an exciting dance to watch. At Bhanpuri, each girl put her left leg between the legs of her left-hand neighbour, thus moving slowly round.

In the Kondagaon area, the motiari sometimes accompany the boys' Mandri dance in one long line, each arm in arm with her neighbour, clashing their cymbals and either bending forward or swaying to and fro.

In Chandabera the Karse Pata was a quick round: the girls clasped each other by the waist and went left right, right foot always behind the other, with rapid vigorous and distinctive singing. But in another form of the Karse Pata, two lines face each other and the motiari clasp each other's hands. Each line in turn bends down and the girls swing their clasped hands to and fro while they sing. In this they do not move round but remain stationary.

Most of the marriage songs have to be sung by a line or half-circle of motiari. While they are tying the plaits of bride and bridegroom, or applying haldi, or offering tika, or bathing or decorating the happy pair, the girls obviously

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

cannot move about. They have, however, devised a most effective form of stationary dance which obtains its effect from the movements of the hands and the swaying, bending and jerking of the body. This is probably why the girls' dances are not synchronized to the boys' drumming. The girls have their special duties and must adapt their songs to these, but the boys can move about independently for a large part of the time.

VI. The Drum Rhythms

In villages in the central area particularly, the Muria distinguish a great many *pār* or rhythms in their drumming. These rhythms are not connected with the *dīka* steps, though they are sometimes associated with special movements of the dance. Thus, there are *pār*-rhythms for the Pargao in a marriage, for the dances round the booth, for the great crisis of the Lagir, and to lead bride and bridegroom to the marriage-bed. Different rhythms accompany the worship of Mother Earth.

The *pār* are known by easily memorized sentences, the words of which have usually no connexion with the dance but describe it by their rhythm. The Jhoria Muria do not seem to know many of these. At Metawand, the chelik only knew of two—'When we beat the drum with both hands', said one of them, 'the drum says *nikun getha nikun getha*, copulate properly, and when it is beaten with one hand, it says *deos deos endāl*, dance jumping'.

It is in villages like Kabonga, Bargaon and Hathipakhna and in most of the ghotul of the east-central area that the practice of the *pār* has been most fully elaborated. At Hathipakhna there was a blind Mandar Guru, an old man who taught the boys their rhythms. He had only to say the words and the chelik immediately followed on their drums.

Drum rhythm

The meaning of many of the rhythms is obscure, and in some cases I can give only an approximate translation.

1. *Pargao Pār*, used when bride or bridegroom (according to local custom, see page 98) arrives at the other's house, and is greeted by a procession of dancers. The drummers first circle round, all facing one direction; they then split up into pairs and each pair faces his partner. A number of different rhythms are used, for this is a memorable moment in the life of every boy and girl.

(a) *Barha mānu le lukhūwan khāwāt tuy to āt tuy to āt sage le lukhān le purkuwāt ?*
You are eating the stolen pork. How will you give it to the sage?

(b) *Jim jim jim nadum narha, jim jim jim nadum narha.*
Rain is falling in the dead of night.

(c) *Hāi jāoit duriya duriya, poj khāwan jāoe.*
You are going to a market far far away. Eat your gruel and go.

(d) *Kahān le yillāoit duriya lāphi duriyille.*
You have come from far away.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CVII

883.4
53

Kachora chelik with tudra drum

[p. 540 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CVIII

X683
534

Chelik playing the flute at Nayanar

Ghotul Kotwar of Markabera playing the dhusir

[p. 540 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

883X
533
535
585

(e) *Are buba kazhār be.*
O father, it will bite.

(f) *Dur dur dur dur neyi kazhār be.*
Drive it off; the dog may bite.

2. *Saga Pār*, used when the two fathers-in-law meet officially for the first time. The chelik dance round them in a circle, facing each other in pairs: every now and then they halt and each pair raise their hands off their drums and salute each other, crying on a long steady note *Johār ho saga.*

(a) *Johār ho saga johār.*
Johar, saga, Johar.

(b) *Tuy samdhi mai samdhi surti minjun kānurula.*
You are samdhi, I am samdhi, let us eat the powdered tobacco.

(c) *Aking koya korka dārango tuska ta.*
Pluck the leaf, O hoe, to serve the liquor.

(d) *Tekāt layor māndi tun.*
Boys, lift up your knees.

(e) *Gatla pāta sakle kim dāy pohre mām.*
Put on your clothes properly before you go away.

(f) *Johār ho saga johār bhet howun duno saga samdhi mand piyun.*
Johar, saga, johar, we've met so let us drink.

(g) *Adi narka bhum narka tara paka kal norka.*
Bring water to wash the feet at midnight and midday, O boy!

3. *Dārango Undāna Pār*, the rhythm for drinking liquor. This also accompanies the ritual drinking of liquor by the two fathers-in-law.

Dumun dumun kāka ta, dumun dumun kāka ta.
Take out liquor from the pot and drink.

4. *Manda Pār.* These are the rhythms used while the boys bring in the wood for the marriage booth—the drummers go to the forest and return dancing and drumming vigorously at the head of the procession; when the platform is plastered inside; and when any of the many minor rites are being performed under its shade.

(a) *Usta gundur gundur ta tin pakor wark wark!*
O the quail! Eat parched rice, O boys!

(b) *Bonyla banāwan jhatka māti ān gaitin.*
Let us make a platform; O Gaitin, quickly bring the earth.

(c) *Harde reka puita pakin ponda uita.*
The char flower has blossomed on the way; the girl's vagina has swollen.

(d) *Chick ponda kawrula.*
The vagina is a cowrie facing upwards.

(e) *And and and, āyo āyo āyo!*
That's it! That's it! No it isn't! No it isn't!

(f) *Goon cho manuh siyān.*
All the headmen of the village.

(g) *Nawun nawun chopāwan.*
Take her, press her.

(h) *Ad laya hasta kandik surti dasta.*
That girl is beautiful, give her some tobacco.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

(i) *Manda mandi tendsim dāy pokre mām.*
Throw away the mess in the booth and go away.

5. *Neyi Tarhāna Pār.* The tedious business of anointing bride and bridegroom with oil, which continues intermittently for two days, is enlivened by some excellent dancing.

(a) *Tada mudiya tatti de.*
Stand old man and give the adze.

(b) *Gām chehli basunde ta.*
We will sit while the sun is shining.

(c) *Barha mānz ke chorun neyse lāchhu āy lāchhu mai hi dāda mai to ni chorey.*
It was Lachhu, not I, that stole the pork.

(d) *Dim dim dim kosum dim tumcho bāpcho polka dim.*
Testes! Testes! Kosum testes! The hollow testes of your father!

(e) *Dengur mundi me lamka āse, chu kābri chu.*
In the ant-hill is a hare, *Chu kābri chu.*

(f) *Tada bhuzhi kātum dāyi.*
Stand up, fat woman, and go to the bazaar.

(g) *Karanji gaon cho kurza, gaon kāje purza.*
He is impotent in Karanji village; but he is a real man in ours.

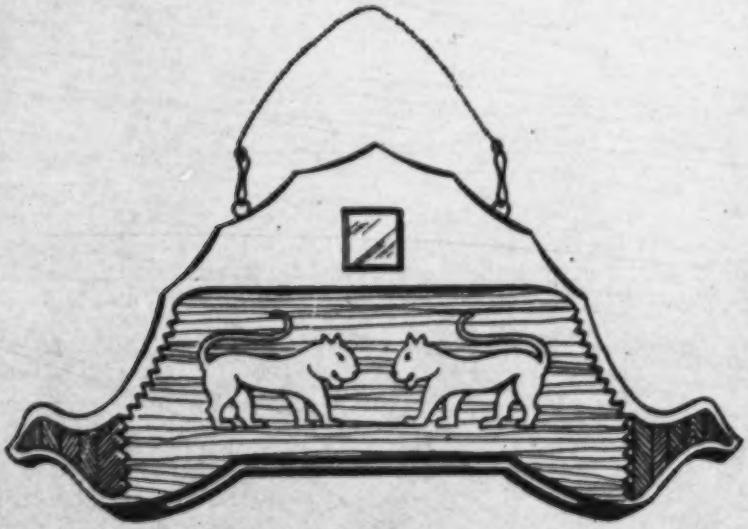


FIG. 141. *Pitorha* gong

6. *Maur Tatāna Pār.* The rhythm while the bride and bridegroom are having their crowns tied on their heads.

Tatti de tatti de kamsār kābu kamsār.
Give the adze, give the adze. But the boy won't go.

DANCE AND SONG

7. *Lagir Pār.* The climax of the marriage is when the bride and bridegroom are escorted round the booth seven times in a procession of chelik with their drums and by loudly singing motiari.

(a) *Mai samdhi toy samdhin johār bhet howun leha he pāni rikāwun.*
We samdhi do Johar, pour the water over the boy.

(b) *Baniagāon cho ban bhainsa bāte chāra charess gucha bai hadendata hadendata.*
The wild buffalo of Baniagaon is grazing on the way. Move aside, girl, and I will drive it off.

(c) *Yergunda inta tāne tinta, hamka inta, tāne tinta.*
Say it is a water-snake and eat it. Say it is turmeric and eat it.

(d) *Korwāl kusir koraata agay mute narasta.*
The *korwāl* vegetable has sprouted; the girl went every day to see it.

(e) *Bāte valo durki chu chu chu ta ta ta.*
The panther is on the road. *Chu chu ta ta ta.*

(f) *Johār layer johār hor phat phate manta.*
O boys Johar! It is cock-crow time.

(g) *Tada buda hātum ta.*
Stand up, old man, and go to market.

8. *Kor Pude Pār.* Bride and bridegroom are not allowed to slip away quietly to bed; they must be escorted thither with the roar of drums. In these *pār* the boys from time to time raise both hands from their drums and wave their arms in the air like excited cocks—an obvious reference to the cock they are going to steal.

(a) *Adan luta dam-dama tarni bāyle gum guma.*
The charred saja wood is strong, the young girl is hard and firm.

(b) *Dulhi dudh he dulha dhare dulhi thar thare.*
The bridegroom holds the breasts of the bride and the bride trembles.

(c) *Dhirey dhirey dhirey gumcha, chānd chānd chānd gumcha.*
Penetrate slowly! Penetrate quickly!

(d) *Dengur mund cho howu, bhitre newun gab gab dewu.*
The root in the ant-hill; take it inside and press it hard.[1]

This is the end of the rhythms used in marriages. The following *pār* can also, of course, be used in marriages, but they are not connected with specific moments of the ceremony. They represent the purely recreational side of the dancing.

9. *Gondin Pār.* The drummers circle in a line of couples facing each other.

Gondin gondin bolsat hāy he gondin bolsat? Buchah mand dese tabio gondin baldte.
To whom will you say Gondin, Gondin? If she will give a little liquor then you can call her Gondin.

10. *Māndar Palni Pār.* The drummers first stand still facing each other in pairs. Suddenly they flourish their hands in the air and move quickly round with short steps, knees bent. Then they straighten their knees and dance to left and right on alternate feet.

[1] It is said that the chelik sometimes use these rhythms as a sort of secret language to make proposals to the motiari. Even when no words are spoken they are understood: even the tapping of the rhythm with the fingers is enough.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
533
535

Karanji gaon cho bhursa aur bodi nāo pārun pārun sāng. Gotok bāhri cho gotok silih.
Speak of Bhusa and Bodi of Karanji. For one broom there's one bamboo pin.

11. *Sailori Pār.* The rhythm is very distinctive. The drumming is punctuated by shrill cries and the boys wave their arms in the air between the beats. Their circle moves constantly backwards and forwards.

(*a*) *Nāchun nāchun kahān jānwān? Hamke lāgli bhuk donāyek pej kon dewu āy?*
Where should we go dancing dancing? We are hungry, who will give us gruel?

(*b*) *Kedun kedun bāgdare yekło manuk yend kare chichka chargod ke ār kare.*
The tiger makes the man run away; what can the fellow's testes do? He can only hide in a fish-net.

(*c*) *Chachān mārun neyse chachān mārun neyse jānw bohāri chandāwān.*
The hawk has carried it away; let us go, *bohāri*, to release it.

(*d*) *Chāh chāh pār oltom.*
The drum-beating is very careless.

[534]

FIG. 142. Bull-roarer from Markabera. *Length 1' 9"*

12. *Kondagaon Pār.* A rhythm specially associated with the Kondagaon ghotul.

Dum dām Kondāgaon nāogaon Sonābāl.
Beating at Kondagaon and judgement at Sonabal.

13. *Māndri Pār* or *Māndar Kelni Pār.* One of the drummers kneels down and the others go round him in line and then one by one jump over him. The last boy of the line also kneels and they then jump over two drummers, and so on till all save one are kneeling. He jumps over the whole line, kneels at the head of it, and leads them round, still kneeling and drumming in a circle, moving forward first on one knee and then on the other.

Māndar dandik kelun ta.
Play the drum for a little while.
Pāgi hitāwun desta.
Remove the cloth from the vagina.

14. *Uram Pār.* This complicated 'Pleasure Dance' is delightful to watch. The boys first move in a circle, beating their drums with both hands at the same end. Then they put them down on the ground, large end facing outwards, and go round beating each of the drums in turn until they return to their own. They sit down on the drums and beat each end in turn with both hands. Then they beat the outer ends, stand up and clap their hands in the air, swing round, bend down and beat the inner end, then roll the drums round in a circle, lift them two paces, put them down again, beat alternately inner and outer ends, roll them round again, beat outer ends, stand again clapping

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

their hands above the head, stoop down, swing the drums up over the shoulder and continue the dance in the usual way.

Basu nāsr gāwun duno bāt cho.
Let both parties sit and sing.

15. *Wark Pār.* When the boys and girls eat parched rice on some ceremonial occasion in the ghotul, they dance to this rhythm.

Udi saga udita porbodela dāt sangi dāt sangi mamāt jāle wāyom.
Sit, saga, to play the Porbodela game.

16. *Māti Pār.* The only rhythm for a religious occasion. This is sometimes used when offerings are made to Mother Earth.

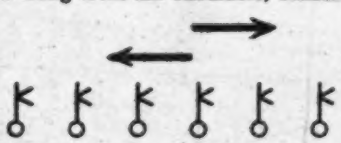
Buta bhitar cho lamha māns chāh chāh ne.
They left the hare's flesh carelessly below the shrub.

VII. Religious Dances

Muria chelik and motiari dance at the great clan festivals, at the ordinary village ceremonies, and during the Pus Kolang and other expeditions; they dance, in fact, in honour of the clan-god, the village gods and the ghotul god. I describe the songs and dances of the expeditions in the chapter on that subject; these dances, which were mainly stick-dances, seemed to fall readily into a class of their own and so have been separately described. We must now examine the religious dancing of the ghotul at the ordinary festivals.

Here we find immediately a great difference between the south-west and the north and east of the Muria country. In the Chota Dongar, Karangal, Mardapal and Chalka Parganas mainly, and in villages not far from their borders, the Muria celebrate their greater festivals in typically Abujhmar Maria fashion. Elsewhere they have a distinctive Muria form of dance and drumming. Let us take the latter first.

The festival dancing of the northern and eastern Muria is not elaborate. A line of chelik, each with a large dhol drum slung from his shoulders, stands not far from the place of sacrifice. They drum very vigorously with a single stick held in the right hand and move to and fro in line. As they reach the end of their movement they drum with special vigour and shout at the turn.



Sometimes, however, the line moves forward a certain distance, all turn round and move back, then back again.

At the same time a group of boys with small turburi drums dances in a small circle, beating very fast and twirling round. The motiari form the usual double line and move to and fro (see p. 546).

There is nothing spectacular about this dancing, though the dhol drumming is often impressive, and when flutes accompany the drums it is delightful.

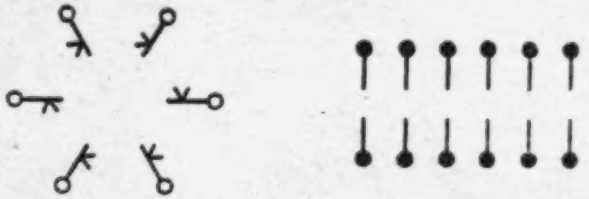
It is a very different story, however, when we turn to the great festival dances of the Maria-Muria. When the chelik and motiari of a dozen villages assemble in their full dancing-dress it is a magnificent spectacle. Two conditions are necessary for the proper appreciation of this dance; it must be

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

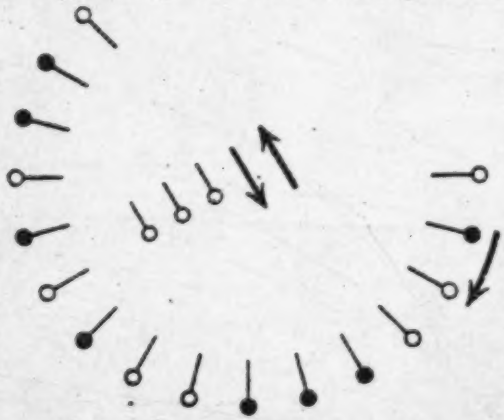
THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
535

done in mass and it must go on all night. When a small crowd of Maria or Muria dancers assemble at a camp to give an exhibition dance, it soon becomes

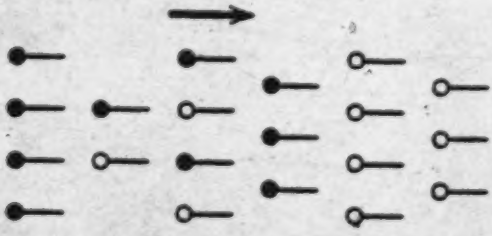


monotonous. But when four or five hundred dancers spread themselves over a great field, and move round to the light of torches, the blowing of hunting-horns, the clang of bells, the waving of innumerable plumes, the earth itself seems to come alive. And it goes on and on and on till you are intoxicated by the gentle rhythm, and by dawn even the outsider can appreciate the ecstasy and delight of the boys and girls who can dance untired for hours before their gods.



There are two main dance formations, the second developing out of the first. A line of boys and girls facing inwards, each with the right arm round the shoulder or waist of his neighbour, moves round in a great circle and very slowly. The circle moves in both directions. At the same time two or three boys in a line walk up and down the main dance to lead the singing.

The steps are very simple. In the main line each dancer moves his right foot slowly to the right, rises on his toes three times, brings the left foot up to the right, rises again on his toes, then moves to the right once more. As he does this, he jerks the bells on his buttocks. The singers in the centre simply walk forward, but with a slight pause at the end of every second step.



Now gradually the number of singers in the centre of the circle increases. A second row of boys is formed, then a row of girls. Soon the whole dance has turned into a procession and the gyrating line has disappeared.

23B

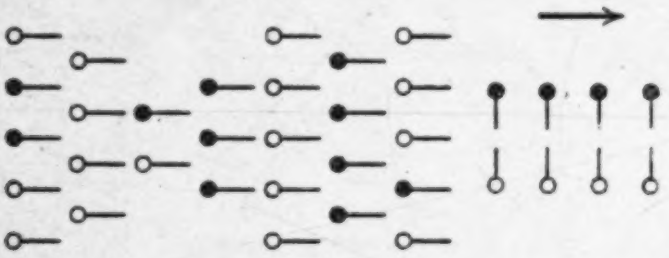
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

883X
535

The procession walks forward and round in any direction. Or it may choose a 'beat' and walk up and down simply reversing when it reaches its limits.

This procession is, in fact, often performed as a separate dance, in this formation:



I have seen chelik and motiari dancing like this, without their finery, round and round the ghotul compound at night simply for practice and recreation.

A third festival dance is done with the little turburi drums. A line of boys with the drums faces a line of girls and they run with very quick and energetic steps to and fro, the boys drumming furiously and the girls singing.

At most of the big festivals of the Maria-Muria and Jhoria you will also see the line of boys beating the big dhol, holding it low down, half-way to the ground and beating it with a stick in the right hand.

No one should ever miss seeing a big festival in this area; it is a moving and unforgettable sight. For in addition to the formal dances of chelik and motiari, there are the individual dances of gods, mediums, the 'horses' of the gods. These leap in the air, roll on the ground, fight one another; here you may see a medium in spirited combat with a stick-god, defending himself against its blows with a small shield; there is an Anga Pen refreshing itself by disturbing a line of motiari; again two gods who are not on the best of terms chase each other, dodging in and out of the groups of amused spectators.

VIII. The Har Endanna

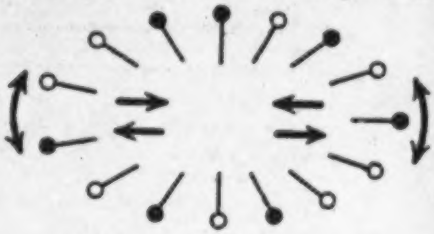
The Har Endanna vaguely recalls the dance and song of the Maria of the Abujhmar; it is as tedious, but less interesting. The dancers wear no finery; there are no bells on the buttocks to be jingled with rhythmic jerks; but the atmosphere of the dance, in its sad slow singing and its solemn movement, is the same. The Muria call it the oldest of their dances, and it may well have come down from the Abujhmar long ago.

There is a large circle of boys and girls, some hand in hand, some with arms interlaced behind the backs of their companions. The form of the dance is that of an expanding and contracting ring which moves slowly round on its own centre, first one way and then the other. The dancers take two steps forward, then two steps back again, each time moving slightly to the left or right. Their bodies sway slightly and the hands, where these are joined, swing to and fro. There is little attempt at keeping time, none at any kind of rhythm. The singing is equally slow and dreary.

The Har Endanna is danced round the marriage-booth, by girls and boys during the Diwali expeditions, and in the ghotul when there is nothing else to do.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883 S35 Sometimes the Har is not done hand in hand, but each dancer places his left hand on his left neighbour's shoulder and lets his right hang down.

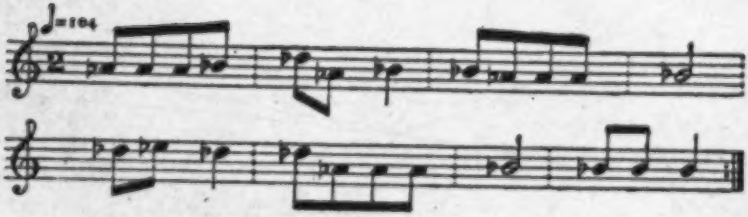


Everybody sings; they generally begin with the Lingo song, continue to describe the exploits of 'the gods, ancestors and the Raja', and use general songs without much meaning.

Songs

I

[S33]



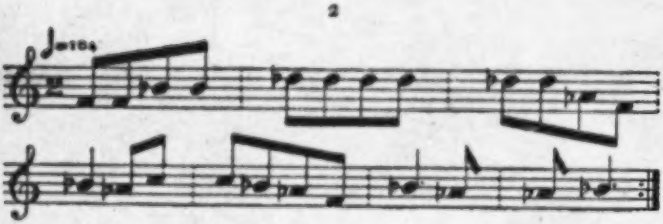
X883 S35 S39

Māri reka dengāl āto āto āipāta reka gujal āti le:
Kākar vārile reka āti he.
Konem wedur gapa āti he niya miyār mateh āti le.
Reka tinda loha āti he āta.
Hile āyo manta hāre he hāre tāne dārgon ulona hāre le,
Tānke isi lohon hāre he.
Reka tinda dahom āti he.
Hipiya pite jori āti he jori dāhom āti le.
Reka tijin wāihom āti he.
Niya hāre āyena ayen āti he he āti nikun āti inena āti le.

On the hill the char is tall;
In the clearing it is small.
O the char on the Hill of Crows!
Were your daughter here, there would be a basket of soft bamboo.
Send her to eat char.
She is in the house, son-in-law,
But we have already drunk liquor for another,
And I cannot send her.
We will go to eat the char.
Like a pair of birds we will go.
We will come when we have eaten.
Send your daughter with me.
I will be your son-in-law,
I will call you mother-in-law.

DANCE AND SONG

2



883X
535
533
539

Where should I sell you, O bullock?
Laharsingh, Lahari and Udamsai!
I will sell you to a Teli, O bullock!
Don't sell me to a Teli, brother.
Let me stay in a Muria's house, brother.
The oil-press sounds *kiur kour*.
I can't pull the oil-press, brother.
Laharsingh, Lahari and Udamsai.

3

The cock has crowed, let Sona come.
The cock crows *kukuru kuru*, let Sona come.
Let it crow, Sona.
The dawn has come, Sona.
This is a thing of joy, Sona.
There is nothing here for anger, Sona.
We have come to dance for joy, Sona.
It is still dark, brother.
Don't go away, brother.
Let us dance together, brother, let Sona come.
The cock has crowed, let Sona come.

IX. KARSANA

883X
535

A large number of dances are not called *endanna*, dances, but *karsana*, games. The distinction is not one of form, but of occasion. Endanna, or dance, is performed at special times—at a marriage, a festival, an expedition. Karsana, game, can be performed at any time, and usually is danced informally in the ghotul. Some of the karsana, of course, are real games jolly, boisterous frolics, but others are simply dances which have no deep significance.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kokora Karsana

This is called Kokora (Crane) Karsana at Remawand, Mindachna Pata at Markabera, and Tutumri Karsana at Kuntpadar. It may have other names elsewhere. The girls form a circle; each puts her hands on her neighbour's knees, that is, her right hand on her right-hand neighbour's left knee while her right-hand neighbour puts her left hand on her right knee, so that all round the circle arms are crossed and the girls bending forward. They dance very vigorously, standing stationary, but jerking their buttocks inwards. Presently they swing round and face outwards, and now their buttocks knock against each other to the amusement of all. In Sidhawand, when the girls faced outwards they lifted their hands from their knees and clapped them together. But the essence of this dance is its frankly sexual imitations.

Songs

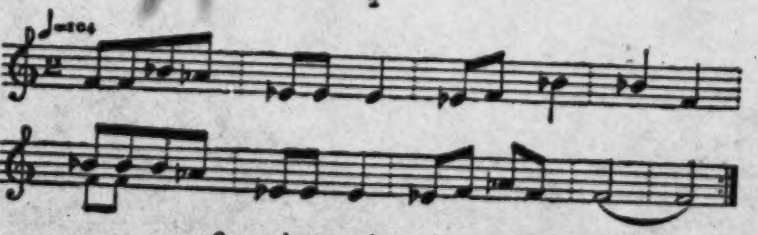
I

Kon pāra jābe re kokoda, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kalār pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kewta pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Māhara pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.

Where are you going to, O crane? *Durun ruchu durun ruchu.*
Go to the Kalar hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Kewta hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Mahara hamlet, O crane.

The names of the hamlets are those of low Hindu castes. The refrain *ruchu ruchu* is reminiscent of the noise *ruchmuch ruchmuch* which a bed is supposed to make when intercourse occurs on it. The crane is everywhere a sexual symbol, the devotion of these birds to one another being proverbial.

2



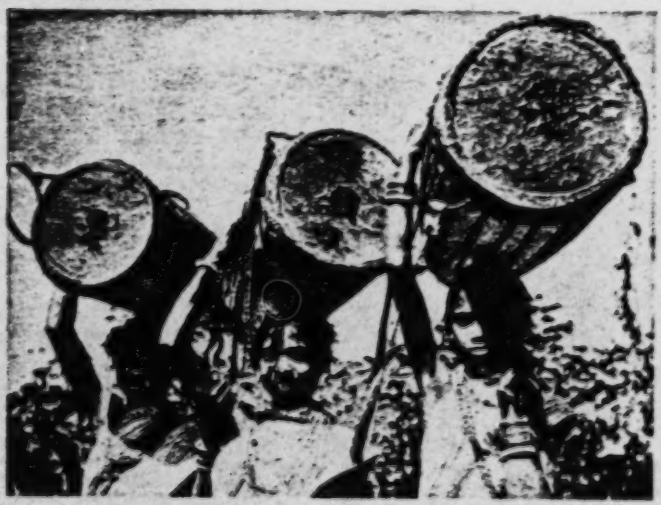
O re re loyo re rela re re loyo oy!
O tu tumri parheli dtin! O toilet-twig from the ebony tree!

X883
534

Plate CIX

Chelik worshipping their drums at a marriage at Nayanar

Motiari carrying drums for their chelik



2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
534

Plate CX

The Sirdar of the Sidhawand ghotul

The Danga of the Bekra ghotul with dakl drum

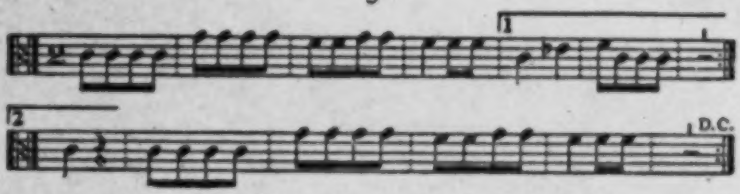
The Salki of the Kongera ghotul with kundri drum

[p.550(B)]

DANCE AND SONG

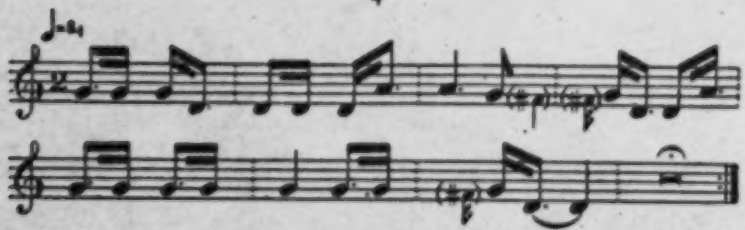
O miya mari bayāli bayāli ātin.	Your son has gone mad.
Ona nāna wāyon na nāna wāyon rāy.	I will not come for him.

3



Andeknāta māndeh jela jālum te jālum te!	O wearer of the long-tailed turban from Adangaon!
Kokti mazri bhet pāwlu bhetum te bhetum te,	We catch the *kokti* fish,
Rahar pungār bhet pāwlu pudgāte.	We pluck the *rahar* flower.
Andeknāta māndeh jela jālum te jālum te!	O boy with the long-tailed turban from Adangaon!

4



Tu tumri tumri rāndi jalkena!	Spit on the ebony tree, Call it widow, widow!
Neka jalkemaima rāndi jalkena!	Don't show off too much, O widow!
Kasur muta'paima rāndi jalkena!	Don't use a broom, or your body will swing to and fro, O widow!

5

Chu ruchke ruchkela painjana.	*Chu ruchke ruchkela painjana.*
Kāke'kāje daikī lābe painjana?	For whom will you bring a girl, O anklet?
Beldārkāje daikī lābe painjana.	Bring a girl for the Beldar, O anklet.
Bhuzki bhuzki donk lābe painjana.	Bring the fat girl, O anklet.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

6

We will call Jalarsingh brother, O crane!
Whom will you call *bhauji*, O crane?
We will call Surtao *bhauji*, O crane!
What will she call you, O crane?
She will call you *dewar*, O crane!
You will trick her and eat her, O crane!

Jal-kanni (Shaking) Karsana

Girls and boys form a large circle, each with hands on the neighbour's knees. They circle round kicking out the right leg behind, moving sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, but always with the right leg kicking out and a convulsive pushing movement of the body which is bent forward.

Song

Ut gur gur ut gur gur poya layāna nanāy warre na,
Hāium hanji pātum tawāna nanāy warre na.
Weda hanji koda tawāna nanāy warre na.
Harri hanji mudiyo tawāna nanāy warre na.

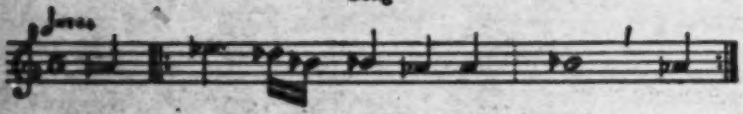
When the quail cries *ut gur gur ut gur gur* I am not afraid of the Poyami girl,
When I go to the bazaar to bring cloth, I am not afraid.
When I go to the field to bring the horse, I am not afraid.
When I go above the road to bring a husband, I am not afraid.

Nak Dondi Karsana

A variant on the previous exercises is the Nak Dondi or Bhais-sand Karsana which is supposed to imitate the tethering of buffaloes. A big circle is made of boys and girls. Each puts his hands between the legs of his neighbour's so that everyone is clasping the hand of the next but one. They then circulate with a lively skip and a hop, the right foot forward, the left foot to the left, the right foot to the left and the left foot to the left with a skip. All bend forward and move their arms up and down with the result that they catch each other constantly between the legs. As this is a mixed dance its sexual implications are obvious.

DANCE AND SONG

Song



883 X
535
533
539

Re re loyo rela rela re re la rela

What were you doing, girl, your anklets sounding *chiding-chadang*, in the cowshed?
I was just clearing up the cow-dung, brother.
There was no cow-dung there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just clearing up the cow-dung.
What were you doing, girl, your anklets sounding *chiding-chadang*, in the garden?
I was combing my hair, brother.
There was no head nor hair there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just combing my hair.
What were you doing on the river bank in the shade of the plum tree?
What were you doing on the leaves, girl?
I was just sitting there in the shade, brother.
There was no shade there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just sitting in the shade.

Re re loyo re re loyo rela rela re re la rela.

This song was not in Gondi but in Chhattisgarhi Hindi, and recorded in [illegible]awand village. Its picture of a faithless motiari being interrogated by her true lover is a common motif in ghotul songs.
Another of the songs used was recorded at Dongrigura.

Kariya baila darbār chale;	The black bullock is going to the darbar;
Kariya cho lāri mon dul wo champa	O Champa, sway to and fro in the
kariya cho lāri mon dul.	black bullock's shed.
Dinda layan darbār chale.	The young girl is going to the darbar.
Dinda cho pagri mon wo champa	In the turban of the boy is a
dinda cho pagri mon phūl.	champa flower.
Munga baila darbār chale.	The red bullock is going to the darbar.
Munga cho lāri mon dul wo champa	O Champa, sway to and fro in the
munga cho lāri mon dul.	red bullock's shed.
Pandra baila darbār chale;	The white bullock is going to the darbar;
Dul champa dowra pandra cho lāri	O Champa, sway to and fro in the
mon dul.	white bullock's shed.
Dinda layan darbār chale;	The maiden is going to the darbar;

X983
883
533
535
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Dinda cho lāri mon dul wo champa
dinda layan cho lāri mon dul.

O Champa, sway to and fro in the maiden's shed.

Ujur (White) Karsana

Two lines of girls face one another and dance to and fro singing.

Ujur ujur kanār te dadākor mārte
From the white white corner of thirty hills,

Pais oya hewom,
We will not let her be taken away,

Ujur ujur kanār te dadākor mārte yer miya hewom,
We will not let them bathe,

Ujur ujur kanār te dadākor mārte nei tari woykom,
We will not let them anoint her with oil,

Ujur ujur kanār te dadākor mārte lagir paya hewom.
We will not let them perform the Lagir.

All the references here are to the marriage ceremony.

Durpa Dāndi Karsana (Plate CXXII)

The Durpa Dandi or Game of the Lotus Root is also called Chingri Bunbutti. The leading girl puts her right foot on her left knee. Another girl stands on her right and puts her left leg up over the leading girl's right leg, thus supporting it almost at a right angle to her body. The next girl does the same until there is a complete circle of girls each standing on one leg with the other tucked up in the air. This is supposed to represent a flower supported on its stem. Then the girls begin to sing and each jumps up a little on her one leg and claps her hands.

Song

Durpa dāndi dāndi layor jāmdār jāmdār!
O the lotus plant boy, *jām* leaf, *jām* leaf!

Dāndi tari dānāt layor jāmdār jāmdār.
Go to pick the plant, boy.

Dinda layor āteko layor jāmdār jāmdār,
If you are unmarried, boy,

Jāti ānār ānār dewri wāyki jāmdār jāmdār.
You will come pushing through the fence.

Pila hilār āteko layor jāmdār jāmdār,
If you are the father of children,

Pila wonde his mandaki jāmdār jāmdār.
You will be busy looking after them.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
535
534

Movements in a Mandri dance at Khutgaon

[p.554 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
291
301

Plate CXII

The Kotwarin of the Kongera ghotul

The Malko of the Markabera ghotul

[p. 554(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

Guguring Gus Karsana (*Plate CXXIII*)

883
533
535
539

A line of girls, each with her hands on her hips, fingers to the front, runs round and round like a snake. This is a very attractive dance as I saw it in Alor in 1941. The girls ran quickly and gracefully round and round and in and out, bending their bodies slightly.

Hãhki mend kohla usta.	I husk the grain in a wooden mortar.
Nãwa nãri nolla guguring gus!	My back is aching, *guguring gus!*
Hãhki mend wanji usta.	I husk the rice in a wooden mortar.
Nãwa nãri nolla guguring gus!	My back is aching, *guguring gus!*
Hãhki mend kore usta.	I husk the pulse in a wooden mortar.
Nãwa nãri nolla guguring gus!	My back is aching, *guguring gus!*

The word *guguring* is used to describe *khulti* pulse that is boiled whole, without being ground.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

GAMES

X983
524

I

THE number and variety of Muria games is remarkable. The games (*harsana*) are played in the ghotul, some of them indoors, some out in the compound and usually on ordinary occasions. The word '*harsana*' meaning 'a game' is distinguished from *endanna* 'a dance' rather by its occasion than by its form. Many dances are not called *endanna* because they are not performed either at a marriage, a festival or an expedition. They are casual, go-as-you-please affairs for entertainment, and so, though the form is that of a dance, they are called *harsana* or games.

Some of the games are excellent exercise. They have the same kind of importance that drill has for an army; they teach the ghotul members to move together and to move at once. Others should probably be called little dramas rather than games and they too have their value in developing the wit and imagination of the boys and girls as well as being great fun. There are many domestic games which imitate such tiresome household duties as the husking of rice, the drawing of water, cooking, gathering leaves and fruit. I doubt if these are intended to teach the children anything; what Muria girl needs to be taught to draw water or husk rice? Their educational purpose is rather to make these tasks more attractive and to bridge the gulf between the conflicting claims of home and ghotul. When a thing is turned into a game it is less like work. On the other hand, the marriage games seem to be definitely intended to practise the chelik and motiari in the complicated ritual of a wedding, in which they play so conspicuous a part.

But perhaps the majority of the games are meant only as entertainment and to pass the time. Some of them are certainly adapted to serve the same function as the dances in the ghotul routine. They prepare the boys and girls for tumescence. Others are the natural bubbling over of youth and high spirits.

I have roughly classified the games in this chapter, but it must be remembered that the Muria themselves would never think of such a schematic arrangement.

II. Games of Little Children

I begin first with the games played by very little children.

These are generally noisy, riotous and formless, but often show considerable spontaneity of imagination. The children make little propellers with leaves and allow the wind to spin them round. They make all sorts of dolls with mud and clay and decorate them with their ornaments. At the Hindu Nawa festival, which is generally observed throughout Bastar, the potters make toy grindstones, bullocks, horses, earthen wheels to be attached to little carts, cooking-pots and tiny hearths. After the children have played with these for a few days, those that remain unbroken are sometimes put on the roof of the cattle-shed. The children, however, are not dependent on the potters and like making mud-pies and dolls with earth mixed in their own urine. But generally the small children share the games of their elders, nor is there any taboo or bar on their doing so.

Spinning-tops are used, but not widely and only for amusement. The top illustrated in Fig. 16 was made of a small gourd, through which a bamboo

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

301

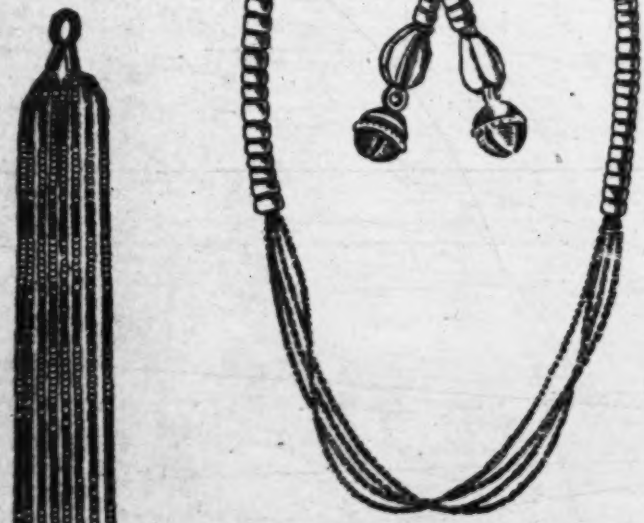


FIG. 144. *Murgai Pannivar* necklace. The large beads are white and the small are mainly white but occasionally light blue

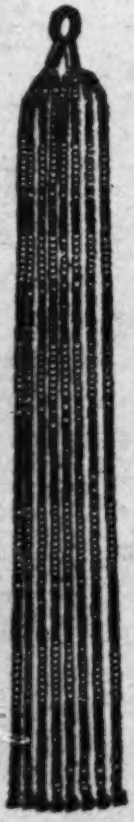


FIG. 143.
Pendant of red and white beads, attached to a ring in the ear

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
524

peg was driven. It was spun with the help of a carefully fashioned wooden handle, perforated at one end, through which the string was threaded. Boys sometimes fight with their tops against each other.[1]

III. Household Games

I will now give some account of those games which imitate the tasks of every day, rice-husking, drawing water from the well, cooking, cleaning and using dishes, gathering fruit, making a cart, sending grain to market. Such games are mostly played by girls, though there is no bar on boys joining in.

Wanjing or Rumela Karsana (*Plate CXXVIII*)

This game, which is called the Wanjing (husking), Rumela (grinding), Pindi Usna (grinding flour) and Chakki (grindstone) Karsana, is very popular. Girls gather in a compact group. One of them sits on the ground in the middle, holding a long stick in her hand. The others grasp the stick and lift it up and down singing various songs, of which I will give three examples.

X983
534
539

1

Bad bai pindi use rumela rumela?	Which of the girls is husking grain?
Alosa bai pindi usela rumela rumela.	Alosa Bai is husking grain.
Wirik wārek kema dāda rumela rumela.	She should not pound carelessly, brother.
Basken usmāl paiwāl dāda rumela rumela.	She never did it before, brother.
Sālo bai pindi usela rumela rumela.	Salo Bai is husking grain.

2

Kāy dhān kāy dhān, suliāri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Mot dhān mot dhān suliāri joy nārangi.	Coarse rice, coarse rice, Suliari, O the orange!
Kāy dhān kāy dhān suliāri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Kabri dhān kabri dhān suliāri joy nārangi.	Mixed rice, mixed rice, Suliari, O the orange!
Kāy dhān kāy dhān suliāri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Kuji dhān kuji dhān suliāri joy nārangi.	Fine rice, fine rice, Suliari, O the orange!

[1] Tops are common among the Naga tribes, less so in other parts of India. I have recorded their use among the Bhuiya and Juang. The Sema Naga use tops only after the sowing is over, and the Chang fine a man who uses one at any time other than during or just after sowing. The Lhota have the same rule, though they inflict no fines. See Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 104; Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 123; Mills, *The Lhota Nagas*, p. 84; Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 281.

GAMES

3

Dhān kutat rahew wo dai. I was husking rice, mother.
Dharis musar māris wo dai. Holding the rice-husker he beat me.

Luga dharke parayew wo dai; I took my cloth and ran away;
Wahi hāt ais wo dai. He followed me along the road.
Sind buta men luhew wo dai. I hid behind a chhind shrub.
Didi ghar gayew wo dai: I went to my elder sister's house:
Bāsi pejla rihais wo dai. She gave me stale gruel to eat.
Dāda ghar gayew wo dai: I went to my elder brother's house:
Kukri nikār khawais wo dai. He gave me chicken to eat.

The game imitates one of the more tedious duties of the motiari, the husking of grain, sometimes—before a marriage—in large quantities. Sometimes the stick, which represents the rice-husker, is omitted, and the girls make a ring with their hands, and swing it up and down. When they do this it means they are imitating the grinding of wheat.

Another variant, the Dundum or Chuer Karsana,[1] where the girls join their hands in a ring and swing them up and down, represents the drawing of water from a well—another of the commonest of the motiari's tasks. One of the songs used is this:

Where are you going, sister?
I am going to play in the deep water.
Why are you going, sister?
I am going to be mixed with salt and savour.
I am going to get covered with turmeric water.
Where are you going, sister?

[1] Ba-ila boys play a similar game which to them represents filling a pot.—H. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 251.

2: Elwin E.5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
524

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Hoydel (Hearth) Karsana

A girl lies down on the ground. Two other girls each pick up one of her legs and put it between their own. A fourth raises the first girl's body by the shoulders and they swing her round singing '*Hoydel dhara, hoydel dhara*, pick up the hearth!'

Baipar-lad Karsana (Plate CXXXIX)

A big boy goes down on all fours. Two little boys lie on their backs on each side, put their legs over his back, and catch hold of each other's feet with their hands. They are thus slung like two sacks on the back of a bullock. The older boy gets up and carries them to market.[1]

Godel-gara Karsana

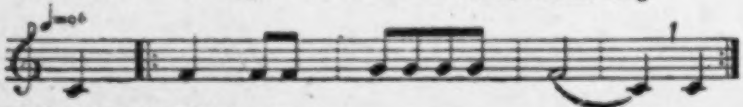
This represents the wooden wheels of a cart. Boys tuck their feet well into their thighs, and roll over and over like cart-wheels.

X883
524
533
539

Other Games

The motiari have a fairly large repertory of songs about the kitchen, which they use for almost any dance. The next four songs are sung while they stand in rows facing each other, alternately bending forward and erect, as they clap their hands and cymbals.

This, from Phauda village, is called the Thari Pata, or Dish Song.



Uth uth re thāri thāri māri!
Pur genta unding.
Māta maoli dolinta dolinta.

Uth uth re kasela kasela masela.
Uth uth re sura mura mura.

Pick up, pick up the plate!
The hill is burning.
This is of Mata Maoli the shaking, the shaking.
Pick up, pick up the pot!
Pick up, pick up the bangles!

Kuru Pata, or Song of the Kurlu Fruit

Mudur lopādāng kuru panding sāngo.

Sangem kri datu ale sāngo.
Panding tinda dākāt ale sāngo.

Renda ālkāng keit ale re sāngo ui sāngo ri suy.

There is a kurlu fruit in the big jungle, Sango.
Let us go together, Sango.
We will go to eat the ripe kurlu fruit.
Let us call twice *Ui*, Sango, *ri suy!*

[1] This is exactly the same as the Sema Naga game 'Hog's-rub', described and illustrated by Hutton.—*The Sema Nagas*, p. 108. But boys in a similar formation among the Ifugao represent a wooden lounging bench.—R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans*, Plate VIII.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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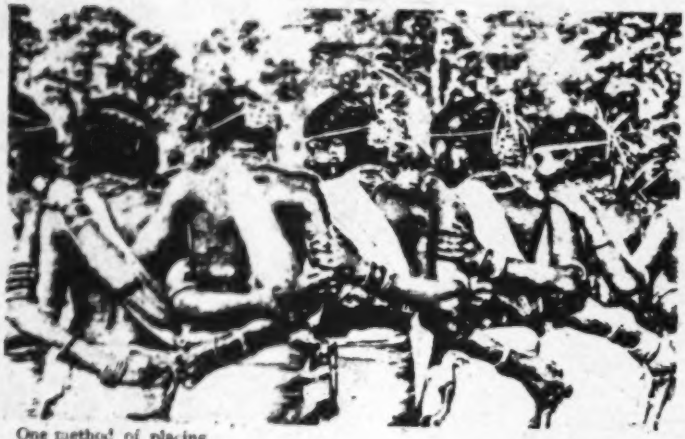
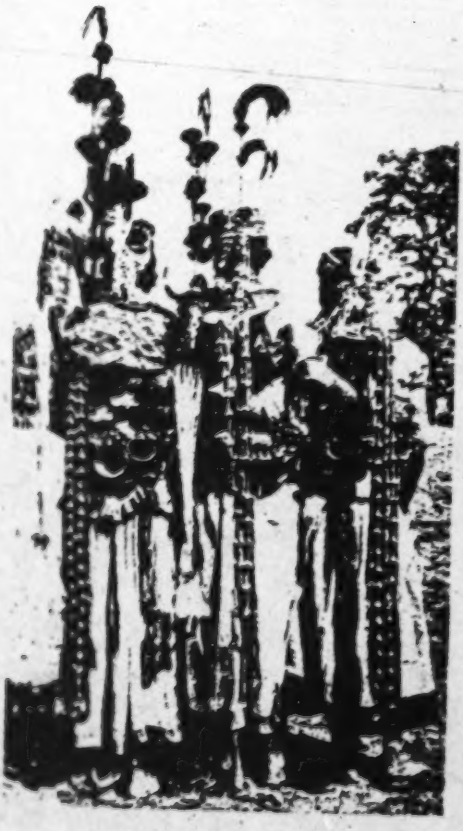
883
535
534



One method of placing the arms in the Hulki dance

Plate CXIII



Chelik of Aturgaon, showing buttock bells and cowrie streamer

[p. 560(1)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
534
535

Plate CXIV

Movements in the Mandri dance, at Kabonga

[p. 560(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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534
535

Movements in the Mandri dance, at Kabonga

[p. 560 (c)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CXVI

X883
534
535

Mandri and Relo dancing at Kachora

[p. 560 (b)]

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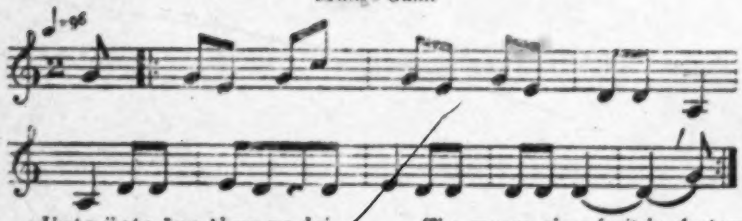
Muria

GAMES

Mango Game



Jhopa jhopa āma phare wo dai.
Kon bai tore wo dai dāli dāli?
Kon bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar?
Julpi bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar.
Kon bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli?
Sālo bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli.

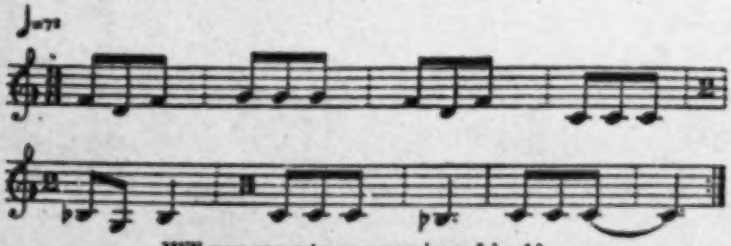
The mango gives fruit in clusters.
Which girl has picked a basketful?
Which girl is carrying a load?
Julpi is carrying the load.
Which girl carries the basketful?
Salo is carrying the basketful.

Chik-dondi Pāla [1]

Press down the *siliyāri* vegetable with a little pot.
Press down the juice with a little pot.
What was in the hand is gone.
What was on the head is gone.
Eat the *singri* fish with salt in a leaf-cup.

IV. Marriage Games

The ghotul children never tire of imitating the marriage dances. Two big girls pick up a boy and girl and prance about with them, while the other motiari stand in a row singing. Another time the girls divide into two rows, clapping their hands, swaying to and fro and singing. Then each row comes forward in turn and touches the feet of the other. This is the Tarweling Karsana, when the girls sing a song with the refrain *Sāngo tarweling marweling*. A *sāngo* is a girl friend who is not a relative.



Will you come to our marriage, friend?
We won't come to your marriage, friend.
We have no cloth to wear.
We will give you cloth.
Your husband will abuse me.
I have no husband, friend.

[1] *Chik-dondi* is actually the stick used for setting bird-lime.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
S74
[539]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The dry river carried him away.
His tomb is by the road.
There is no tomb by the road.
We have not seen a tomb.

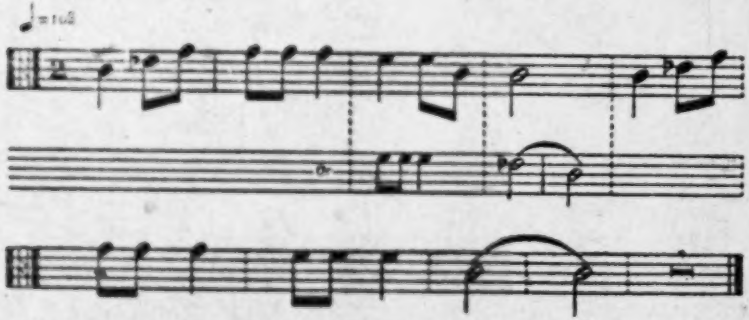
In another game one of the girls is made to take the part of the bride and the motiari sit round her, clutching her hands, weeping and singing mournfully.

The Kalsa Karsana is also popular, very similar to the games that imitate drawing water or rice-husking. The girls gather in a close circle, each grasps another's wrist and thus form a ring held low down. Then they raise and lower their arms singing the usual Kalsa song. This represents the ceremony when bride or bridegroom fill the kalsa-pot with grain.

Sometimes, the children make a little booth, put a boy and girl under it and smear their bodies with white earth (representing haldi) while a group of girls stand behind singing a marriage song.

The betrothal also is frequently imitated. A little girl represents the future bride. She sits in the middle of a close circle of girls who represent her family. Girls dance round and round them asking for her hand in marriage. From time to time they try to break through the circle of relations and carry the girl away.

[533]



Song

[539]

Bad bain mahla hanerāi bahin loh?
Sālobain mahla hanerāi bahin loh.
Bor dādan jori oyerāi bahin loh?
Silledār dādan jori oyerāi bahin loh.
Haring paring darango waderāi bahin loh,
Haring harri udarāi bahin loh.

For whose betrothal shall we go?
We will go for Salobai.
Who will be her yoke-fellow?
She will be yoked with the Silledar.
We will give liquor to everyone, one by one,
And then we will sit in a row.

This can, of course, be done over and over again, pairing off the chelik and motiari with each other, not sparing close and forbidden relations.

V. Dramatic Games

Many games express and illustrate the Muria's sense of drama. The boys and girls act their little plays with vivacity, humour and intelligence. Some of the plays are about thieves, others about cock-fighting, others about livestock and cultivation, one about human sacrifice. As always in a State, the people love pretending to be kings and queens.

GAMES

Thief Games

X 583 524 In the Paralkot area I saw the Hirka Karsana. Boys and girls sit in a line to represent a planting of brinjals. The owner of the garden puts a dumb fellow in charge to watch it. A thief comes by, and greets the dumb watchman, 'There's a fine wedding down in the village; come and see it'. He takes the watchman away with him and sits him down away somewhere, runs back and carries off a child (a brinjal) from the end of the line. Now the owner comes back, and abuses the watchman. He gives him honey, represented by a handful of earth, to persuade him to work properly. The dumb man shows in pantomime that it was a fox that stole the brinjal. Gradually the thief removes the whole garden. The last brinjal stands up as a sign that it has grown well. The thief takes this too and cooks it. The owner comes and asks what it is. 'It's *jāwa*-gruel', says the thief. 'Then give me some', says the owner. The thief is frightened and calls his dog, a boy on all fours, which chases the owner away, and the game is done.

In Phulpar I saw a simpler form of the brinjal-stealing game, here called Hapang-kultur. The children make a little pile of stones, each of which represents a brinjal. They divide into two parties. One party sits round the stones to protect it, the other has to break through and carry off as many 'brinjals' as it can.

Song

[539]

Lito lito bānga parela ;
Kāwar hāwar hon torela ?
Kāwar hāwar jolma torela.
Chhai chhai bori hon bechela ?
Chhai chhai bori manai bechela.
Nakti paisa hon jhokela ?
Nakti paisa jalām jhokela.

Bunches of brinjal are ready ;
Who picked them load by load ?
Jolma picked a load of them.
Who sold them six to a *bori* ?
Manai sold them six to a *bori*.
Who took the worthless money ?
Jalam took the worthless money.

Meriah Game

In the north-western area both Maria and Muria play a game which recalls the days of the Meriah sacrifices of the Kond. The very name Meriah Karsana is used. Boys and girls form little groups representing houses in a village. A band of three boys comes round singing, begging, shouting. While the attention of the 'householders' is thus distracted, the Meriah party seize one of them and carry him off. Then they go through the motions of cutting off his head, pretend to offer him in sacrifice and return for the others.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Donga Karsana (*Plate CXXV*)

X983
534

Another type of thief game resembles 'Oranges and Lemons'. In Kuntpadar and Koilibera, it was played this way. Two girls stood with joined hands facing each other. They lowered their hands and a line of boys and girls stepped over them. They raised their hands and the line went underneath. Suddenly the girls caught a boy. The leader of the line asked, 'Why have you caught our man?' The girls replied, 'He has stolen chillies'. 'How many times?' 'Only once.' 'Then let him go.' 'No more, no more.' He was now in prison. The girls made him husk rice by beating his hands; then they shook and beat him 'as if he were in a winnowing-fan'. They pulled his ears—this was the picking of leaves. At last they both hung round his neck to show that he was loaded with rice chaff, chillies and onions, and let him go.

In Sidhawand it was played a little differently. The two girls represented, for some obscure reason, a 'boat'. When they caught a boy, the leader said, 'Why have you caught our friend?' 'He's been stealing rice.' 'How much?' 'Only a little.' Then the girls punished him, pushing him and pulling him about 'as the police do in jail' until the victim cried, 'Come, my queen, eat milk and rice' and they let him go.[1]

Min Karsana

The Muria, like the Munda,[2] have their own version of Blind Man's Buff. Boys and girls form a big circle round a blindfolded boy who has to squat down and hop about trying to catch them. When he catches someone, he feels the legs and tries to guess who it is, while the following dialogue is repeated:

'Blind man, blind man, what fish is this?'
'It is a bod fish.'
'Blind man, blind man, where are its bones?'
'In the river.'
'Blind man, blind man, how many bones?'
'Three cart-loads.'
'Blind man, blind man, where is its oil?'
'In the pot.'
'Blind man, blind man, how much oil?'
'Three pots of oil.'
'Blind man, blind man, where is the flesh?'
'In the basket.'
'Blind man, blind man, whom are you holding?'

If he guesses correctly—and it is surprising how hard they find it to guess right—the blind man is released and whoever he caught must take his place.

Kor Karsana (*Plate CXXXIII*)

This is the cock-fighting game. The children divide into two parties. The leader of each side secretly chooses one of his girls or boys and covers the

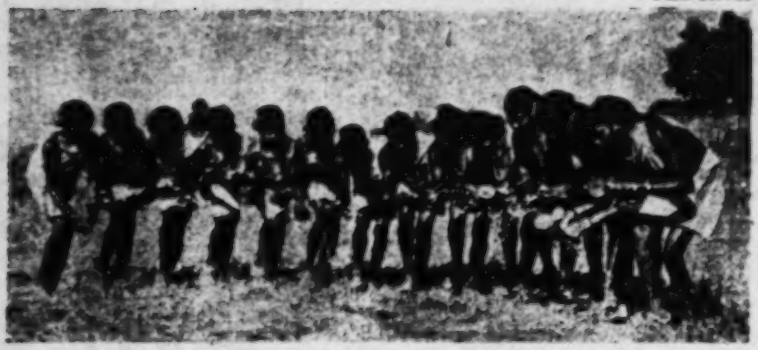
[1] S. C. Roy has given a full account of the Kantara-inu or jack-fruit game played by the Munda and Kharia, which is not unlike the brinjal-stealing and other thief games of the Muria.—S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Ranchi, 1912), pp. 492ff. and S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 463. See also *The Baiga*, p. 463.

The Ba-ila have a game to represent thefts from a melon patch.—Smith and Dale, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 253. The Trobriand Islanders imitate the stealing of bananas.—Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, p. 206.

[2] Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 491.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
535



Reio dancers accompanying the boys

Mandri dancers on their knees

X883
535
534

[p. 564 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CXVIII

X883
S35
S34

Marriage dancers at Kachora

Motiari of Kachora practise the marriage-dance

[P. 564 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
S24

'cock' with a blanket. Then they bring the 'cocks' forward and make them squat down, facing each other and bending forward as the fighting cocks do. Each 'owner' goes over to the other's cock, pokes it, tickles it, and says, 'Crow, cock, crow!'—at which the cock whistles—to try to see who it is. They each have to guess, whereon the cocks stand up throwing off their blankets. Whoever guesses right wins the game.

The Hawk Games

These Gidal Karsana[1] or Kor Karsana take different forms on a general pattern. I will first give the Berma version.

The hawk gives its adze and chisel to a farmer, who gives them to his hen. In other words the boy playing the hawk gives a bit of wood to the leader of a line of children. The leader is the farmer, the children behind him his chickens. The hen hands the adze and chisel to the next hen and so all down the line. The last hen is very hungry and gives the tools to a goodwife in the village in exchange for a morsel of gruel. After a time the hawk returns and demands its tools from the farmer. He says, 'Ask my hen for them'. She says, 'I gave them to my neighbour'. And so all down the line. The last hen says, 'I was very hungry and I sold the tools for a morsel of gruel'. Back comes the hawk to the farmer and says that since the tools are not to be found it will have to eat the hens instead.

The farmer shakes his head, and says, 'Well, who is greater, you or me?' The hawk says, 'I am the greater, of course'. 'Let us see', says the man, and they measure themselves with arms outstretched, jumping into the air. Then the farmer says, 'Well, eat if you can. But will you eat sitting or standing?' The hawk promises only to eat the hens when they are standing. At once it pounces on a hen. But she as quickly sits down and is safe. Then the hawk runs round and round trying to carry off the hen at the end of the line, but the leader swings the line round to oppose it, and whenever the hawk approaches, the hens have only to squat down to be safe. You would think the hawk would get little to eat, but it is surprising how stupid poultry are! As they run round, the hens sing,

Tin koliya mirsum gugurgum. Eat, jackal. Don't fall down, *gugurgum.*

Ade kiko koliya gugurgum. This is uncle jackal, *gugurgum.*

The song suggests that originally the game was of a jackal, not a hawk, that tried to catch the hens.

I saw the game played slightly differently in Masora. Here a line of children, widely separated, represent pegs in the ground. The chickens run round and round the pegs, chased by the hawk. Once they can catch hold of the pegs they are safe. This is easy for the chickens, and so the hawk generally gets a 'dog' to help him.

In Masora they also play the Hawk Game with mice instead of chickens. There is a long line of mice, first he-mice, then she-mice. Their Raja is Kundal-mussa. Along comes the hawk and gives a comb, in other words a small

[1] The Munda have a similar game of 'Fox and Hen'.—Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 495. The Kharia play the Chil-hor-hor, or 'Vulture and Chickens'.—Roy, *The Kharias*, p. 464. So do the Ho.—D. N. Majumdar, 'Games of the Hos of Kolhan', *Man in India*, Vol. V (1925), p. 190.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
S34

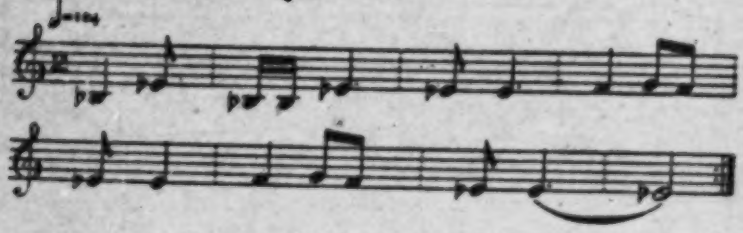
stick, to the Raja of the mice. He gives it to his Diwan, who passes it to the Tahsildar and so to the end of the line. Here a faithless she-mouse gives it away to the first person who offers her a cup of gruel.

Then the game follows the same pattern as at Berma. When the mice sit down, it means they have escaped into their holes, and naturally the hawk cannot get at them.

They played it very well at Masora; boys protected girls in the best tradition; they fell in heaps and tumbled over each other, and they all enjoyed themselves enormously.

Song

[533]



[539]

The hawk will swoop down like a wave,
When the midnight dew comes down.
It will carry off the chicken,
When the cock crows at dawn.
The hawk will eat the chicken,
When the midnight dew comes down.
O set the chicken free,
When the cock crows at dawn.

The Root Game (Plates CXXX and CXXXI)

This game, which imitates the growing of sweet potatoes or other roots in the garden, is played with many small variations all over the Muria area.[1] Boys and girls sit in line holding each other round the waist, the boy or girl at the end gripping a tuft of grass or a tree. These are the roots. A boy and his 'wife' and a 'servant' go up and down the line pushing sticks under the bottoms of the children, knocking them on the head and generally pushing them about. This is the cultivation of the soil. They go round again and now dig up a little dust and rubbish on either side and throw it over the 'roots'. The third time, they put their hands on the heads of the sitting children chanting '*Lud lud kuruch*, Are you ready? Are you ripe?' They pinch the 'roots' to see if they are ripe or no. All this time the 'owner of the field' is beating and abusing his 'wife', insulting her relatives, threatening to marry again—the patter is only limited by the inventiveness of the boys.

Then the gardeners go to the head of the line and begin to pull off the boys and girls one by one. They clutch desperately at each other, but in the end they are dragged off and away, hit twice and thrown in a heap. This represents the digging up of the roots. The last boy holds out for a long time and the wife has to tickle him before he lets go.

[1] Compare the similar game described in *The Baiga*, p. 463.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 - AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GAMES

The gardeners now hire two men to carry the roots to the river for washing. There is a lot of discussion about this, but at last two 'coolies' are willing to work for four annas a day. The coolies get a stout pole and put it over their shoulders. Two or three girls and boys catch hold of the pole and are lifted up hanging to it and so carried a little way off, where the coolies bump them on the ground, and then rub them all over with dust and rubbish. This is the washing of the roots. They are bumped to remove any superfluous earth that may be clinging to them. The owners of the field stand by abusing the coolies. 'Why don't you wash that root properly? We'll cut your pay' and so on. When a big girl is carried out they cry, 'There's a fine fat root; we'll eat it tonight for supper'. If a girl is heavily tattooed, they say, 'What are these marks on that root? It's eaten by grubs, it's full of worms. Throw it away'. Of another they say, 'That root's gone rotten, it's stinking, give it to the coolies'. Then the coolies bring the roots back and pile them in a heap, throwing the boy-roots on top of the girl-roots where possible.

Now the roots are to be cooked. The children sit round in a circle, their feet extended to the middle. In the centre the owner and his friend dig with a stick. The wife fans the roots with a leaf. The roots wriggle their feet to represent flames. The grass and earth dug up by the owner is thrown on the heads of the roots. The wife goes round pinching them to see if they are 'done' or not. In some villages half the children lie down with their feet to the centre, and the others catch them under the shoulders and swing them round in a big circle.

At last, some of the roots are sold for chips of wood—the bargaining gives endless opportunities for 'patter'—and the rest are eaten by being hit twice on the back.

Raja Rani Kersana

The motiari sit in two rows facing each other. In front of each row sits a girl representing the Raja and Rani.

The Rani's party sings, 'What will you give her?' The Raja's party replies, 'We will bring pots for her'. But this is not enough. The Rani's party replies, 'But what will you give her?' The Raja's party answers again, 'We will bring ornaments'. And so on interminably, through every present that has ever been given by a Muria to his motiari. But as they are singing, the Raja is shifting nearer and nearer to the Rani, until at last 'he' is near enough and he can jump on her and carry her away.

Another song, in Halbi, sung during this game, was recorded at Gawari. After each line is the refrain *Jây Rânî* (or *Râja*) *dhire dhire rage rânî dhire dhire jîwo*.

X883
534
533
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

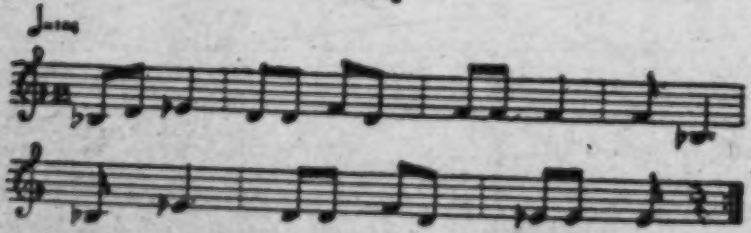
Song

Rānicho bāla bahania lānten;	For the Rani we are bringing an armlet;
Rājācho bāla darpanj lānten;	O Rani, come slowly, go slowly. For the Raja we are bringing a mirror;
Rānicho bāla paijjan lānten;	O Raja, come slowly, go slowly. For the Rani we are bringing anklets;
Rājācho bāla dhoti lānten;	O Rani, come slowly, go slowly. For the Raja we are bringing a dhoti;
Rānicho bāla churi lānten;	O Raja, come slowly, go slowly. For the Rani we are bringing bangles;
Rājācho bāla topi lānten;	O Rani, come slowly, go slowly. For the Raja we are bringing a hat;
Rānicho bāla sandra lānten.	O Raja, come slowly, go slowly. For the Rani we are bringing a sari;
	O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Rajana Belori Karsana

The 'Game of the Raja's Love'. The girls form into two lines facing one another. One line darts forward and touches the other's feet and quickly retires. The others chase them and try to touch their feet before they have got home.

Song



X883
534
539

Tucho kājo tucho kājo khilludu	For you, for you, I have brought
anlude mocho belori.	an ear-ring, my love.

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Muria

GAMES

Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho khilwān ke tucho khilwān ke !	Your ear-ring, your ear-ring!
Munde thechu re belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho kāje tucho kāje māla anīwle mocho belori.	For you, for you I have brought a necklace, my love.
Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho māla ke tucho māla ke !	Your necklace, your necklace!
Munde thechu re belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho kāje tucho kāje mundi anīwle mocho belori.	For you, for you I have brought a ring, my love.
Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho mundi ke tucho mundi ke !	Your ring, your ring!
Munde thechu re belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!

They continue the song indefinitely, using the names of every possible ornament.

VI. Games of Animals and the Chase

As we have seen, the Muria are good hunters, and like all aboriginals are greatly interested in the behaviour of animals.[1] They have games to imitate various animals and birds, and some of their most dramatic displays are about the chase. In this they resemble, though they do not emulate, the remarkable bird and animal dances of the Juang and Pauri Bhuiya. One of these imitates the strut of a peacock, another the ambling gait of a bear, yet another the unwieldy movements of an elephant. In one exciting Juang variant, girls play the part of vultures devouring a corpse, and again, lying face downwards on the ground, they wriggle like snakes.

Goihal Karsāna (Plate CXL)

This is the Lizard game. A boy gets down on his left leg and right hand and sticks his right leg out behind. Then he moves rapidly forward, first on one hand and then on the other, while he beats his chest with the free hand. The right leg always remains stuck out behind like a tail.

Hupen-horikna Karsana

In this a boy imitates a mouse scratching itself, though he might equally well be almost any other animal. He lies flat on his face supporting himself on his hands and propels himself along by jerky movements of his bottom in an amusing way.

Tedka or Nirai Karsana

A small boy wears a mask of white cloth. Two sticks are placed inside to make a mouth which opens and shuts. The effect is bizarre in the extreme. The boy is covered with a blanket and supported on the shoulders of two friends and his feet are carried by a third. They hop round and round with him while he opens and shuts his mouth and jerks his head. Sometimes

[1] When, some years ago, I went with a party of aboriginals to Calcutta I found them more interested in the Zoo than in anything else.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883
524

he charges about on all fours. He is supposed to represent a frog but in some places he is called a panther.

Mogral Karsana (*Plate CXXXII*)

This is the Crocodile game. A boy is held between two others by the waist. A third clutches his legs. They walk forward, and the boy in the middle sways his arms and tries to keep his head and shoulders upright.

Yen Karsana

This is the Elephant game and is played by five boys. Two of them go down on their hands and knees, two climb up and lean forward supporting themselves by their hands on each other's shoulders. A fifth climbs right up on top. Then they go round until they fall over.

Koda Karsana (*Plate CXXXV*)

I have recorded two different forms of this Horse game. The first is played by three boys. Two stand holding sticks at either end in their hands. Two other sticks are laid across their shoulders. A third boy climbs up and sits between them on the upper sticks and supports his legs on the sticks held below. He then drives the two boys forward as though they were a horse.

In the second version two boys get down on their hands and knees, a third stands between them bending slightly forward. A fourth stands on the backs of the kneeling boys and places his hands on the shoulders of the third. So placed they go round and round.

Purar-upihana Karsana (*Plate CXXXIV*)

This imitates the wood-pigeon. Two boys sit opposite each other, putting their feet under the other's buttocks. Each in turn half rises and claps his hands in the air. They swing to and fro, and rise up and down in a very attractive movement.

Hunting Games[1]

The Muria hunting games are exciting and realistic. One type represents the chase after a gaur or sambhar; the other shows the defence of the cowherd against the tiger that attacks his cattle.

I saw an excellent hunt in Sidhawand. A gaur was made by throwing a blanket over two boys. The head was a winnowing-fan doubled over and covered with cloth and real horns were attached to it. A tail of grass and peacock feathers was hung behind. The gaur came on the scene, trotted round, grazed, sat down and went to sleep. Presently a party of hunters appeared. They were nearly naked, smeared all over with ashes, their hair

[1] Mills has an excellent description of hunting games played by the Rengma Naga.—Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 122*f*. The Lakher have an Elephant Hunting game.—Parry, op. cit., p. 188. The Kond have a dance that represents a bison hunt; 'one man with the horns and skin of the animal takes to his heels followed by the remainder, who capture him after a brief chase, and bear him back as a trophy'.—Dalton, op. cit., p. 300. Compare also the Lion Hunting game of the Ba-ila.—Smith and Dale, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 237*ff*. Haddon saw boys at Vetlas acting 'very realistically' a pig hunt and a kangaroo drive.—A. C. Haddon, 'Notes on Children's Games in British New Guinea', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 289.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

883 X
524

flying in the wind. Two had bows and arrows; two were magicians with winnowing-fan and measuring-sticks to discover by divination where their quarry was; one imitated a dog with a bell on his neck; and there was an old man carrying a pot and a basket to take the meat home.

The party chased the gaur round and round the field. Sometimes they lost it, and then the magicians sat down, fell into trance, measured their sticks, and shook the winnowing-fan. The dog ran round with his nose to the ground; it was a great joke to beat and kick him. After a time they shot the gaur and it rolled over on the ground. The hunters ran to it, patted, stroked, embraced it, congratulated each other; they danced round and round with delight. It was a charming scene and reminded one of the passion for the chase that still dominates the heart of every Muria. The dog fell upon the gaur and began to eat it; it had to be beaten off. Then the magicians ordered the party to pick up the great animal and carry it to a stream where they would cut it up and eat it. But the gaur came to life and chased them away.

In Kuntpadar, the magicians blew into the sambhar's ear to see if it was alive or not. The magicians there were very lively, turning somersaults and shaking their heads in trance. At Palli (Kondagaon) there was an interesting variation. One of the boys—practically naked save for a scrap round his loins—represented the *jiwa* or soul of the gaur. When the animal was injured and lay dying on the ground, its soul came to perform a strange and uncanny dance above and round the body. The boy contorted himself like a wounded worm and twisted and turned in the strangest manner. At last it fell on the body, a sign that the life had after all returned, and the gaur got to its feet and ran away.

[411
284]

FIG. 145. Sling used in hunting

In other villages I have seen this game take another form. A boy plays the part of cowherd and takes the boys (bulls and bullocks) and girls (cows) out to graze in the jungle. They crawl along pretending to nibble grass and roots. Then the tiger or leopard appears: in Pupgaon he was an almost naked boy whose body was covered with stripes and stars made by applying white earth and charcoal with the splayed end of a castor twig; in Kuntpadar and Markabera I saw a tiger made by tying a boy round and round with strips of bark to represent the stripes, and a large cloth round the head. The tiger

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 524

creeps through the grass and presently leaps out and seizes one of the bullocks; it drags it away and returns for a cow. The cowherds get their bows and arrows and large balls of cloth to represent bullets from their wooden guns. They ambush behind trees, track the tiger through the grass, play all the tricks of the hunter. At last the tiger is killed and slung on a pole to be taken home and skinned.

Mao Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

This is a variant of the hunting games. A ring of girls represents a forest-covered hill, and a girl representing a sambhar stands inside. Two girls march round and round singing, and every now and then charge the ring, trying to break through and catch the sambhar. This is how I saw it played at Markabera.[1]

Song

[533]

[534]

The deer has come, its tracks are over here.
There are no tracks this side, friend.
There is the mandia crop in the field of the Cat Stone.
It has gone to graze mandia, friend.
The *urad* crop is half ready, friend.
It has gone to graze it, friend.
The fencing is rotten, friend.
The game has come, its tracks are over there.

The hunters push the group of girls crying, 'The fencing will fall down'.

In Remawand, however, the circle that holds hands is a bamboo fence inside which are two chickens. A 'leopard' runs round outside trying to get it. He dashes against the fence, and if he can break through he catches the chickens and rolls them on the ground. This is called Durka or Niral Karsana. In the Paralkot area, the boys said the girl in the middle was a she-goat; otherwise it was played as at Remawand.

In Chimri, Kajen and Nariha, I saw yet another version called Paddi-dagan, or Pigs in the Garden. A ring of children squat down holding hands to represent the garden fence. Inside are four little pigs. These have to jump out without being hit between the legs.

The Parbodela game recorded at Berma is yet another version. A circle of girls hand in hand runs round and round; there is a boy inside to represent a dog, another—the tiger—chases round outside. The girls sit down for a moment, to give the tiger a chance to jump, then the fence is up again.

[1] With these games, compare the Tuyu-meream of the Kharia, where the circle is a goat-pen and the jackal tries to get in to eat the goat.—Roy, *The Kharias*, Vol. II, p. 463.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
535
534
292

Chelik and motiari of Aturgaon and Kongera doing a variation of the Maria dance

Chelik of Toinar doing samdhi-par

[p.572(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
535

Plate CXX

Festival dancing at Kongera

Dancers marching in a procession

[p.572 (8)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 913
534
[539]

GAMES

Song

Udūl sāngi parbodelāng sāngi!	Sit friend, sit friend Parbodela!
Nilil sāngi parbodelāng sāngi!	Stand friend, stand friend Parbodela!
Ade sāngi nirūl sāngi parbodelāng sāngi!	There is a panther, friend Parbodela!
Witil sāngi parbodelāng sāngi!	Let us run away, friend Parbodela!

VII. Games as Exercise

People who work as hard as the Muria should not need further exercise, but many of the ghotul games are in fact admirably designed to test the strength, develop the muscles and train the eye and the intelligence. It is curious that competitive jumping and the tug-of-war, so popular among the Naga, are not found in the ghotul.[1]

Tod-de Pehekana Karsana[2]

A boy sits down on the ground and someone puts a ring behind his back. He has to lean backwards with arms outstretched tilting his head over and back until he can pick up the ring with his mouth. This is a very difficult feat, and generally the boy falls over before he can accomplish it.

Kap-munrs Tehana (Pulling-up) Karsana

The boy lies flat on his face, raises his legs up into the air and grasps them with his hands behind his back so that he is lying supported on his stomach with legs and feet above him. Another boy puts his hands into the loop thus formed and swings him over his back.

Gudha (Rolling-over) Karsana

A boy bends down with his head to the ground, and another boy lies on him. The first boy catches hold of his loin-cloth from below and he catches hold of the first boy's loin-cloth from above. The first boy then hoists him up and throws him over backwards. A glance at Plate CXXXIX will elucidate this necessarily obscure explanation.

Kal-tehana (Legs-up) Karsana

A big boy clasps his wrist with one hand, a small boy stands on his palm holding the other's head with his hands. Then the first boy lifts him off the ground and walks about with him till he is exhausted and has to let him fall.

Kadna (Wrestling) Karsana (Plate CXXXVIII)

In this game a boy climbs up over one boy and under another. Two boys, A and B, stand facing each other, clasping one another's arms. Boy C leans,

[1] Compare Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 120ff.; *The Lhota Nagas*, pp. 81f.; Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 102f.; *The Sema Nagas*, p. 109. Among the Trobriand Islanders 'the favourite and most important game is the tug-of-war'—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 207.

[2] The Gondi words mean 'Lifting up with the mouth'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
524

head downwards, against the back of A and gets his legs round A's chest. Then he pulls himself into a sitting posture with his legs now round A's waist, climbs up over A's head, descends through the arms of A and B and dives down between B's legs.

A Pulling-up Game (*Plate CXXXVIII*)

Two boys sit facing each other, placing their feet sole to sole. They hold hands or a stick and try to pull each other off the ground.[1]

Gudina Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

Girls sit on their knees in a long line, bending right over with their heads between their knees, and sing in a rather muffled way. The girl at one end heaves herself up and rolls over and over along the line till she reaches the other end. Each girl does this in turn. They sing the following song:

[539]

Dhondera wāndera dhondera wān-dera.	*Dhondera wāndera*, if it is a girl preserve her.
Peki āteke tāsna dhondera wāndera,	She will fetch water in an earthen pot,
Tānd to yur tatārde dhondera wān-dera,	She will bring roots,
Māting karsi tatārde dhondera wān-dera.	She will bring leaves.
Aking kois tatārde dhondera wāndera.	If it is a boy, throw him away.
Pekāl āteke wātna dhondera wāndera.	*Dhondera wāndera*, if it is a girl preserve her.
Peki āteke tāsna dhondera wāndera.	

I would not like to read more into this song than I should. On the face of it, it is very interesting indeed. Many a Muria would rather have a daughter than a son.

Karmata Karsana (*Plate CXXIV*)

Two lines of girls face one another and join hands. The boys pick up a smaller girl and throw her onto the 'bed' thus formed. Sometimes she supports herself by placing her hands on the shoulders of the two leading girls, sometimes she lies prone, sometimes there are two girls, one at either end of the line.[2] When they are ready the girls swing their victim to and fro, singing the while.

X983
524
539

Songs

I

Joyo karmata, joyo roy !	Swing Karmata swing!
Lahur itān mati lahur hāra āyo,	We thought it was a *hansi* fish, But it's not a *hansi* fish.

[1] A similar game is known in the Trobriand Islands.—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 206.

[2] A similar game has been recorded in British New Guinea, and is there called Bido-bido. 'Two rows of boys and girls face each other and opposite couples lock hands in sedan-chair fashion. A small boy projects himself prone upon the lane of hands at one end of the row and is tossed along it to the other end and as he passes each couple they run to the fore-end of the avenue and take up position as before thus making an endless lane.'—R. F. Barton, 'Children's Games in British New Guinea', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 266.

GAMES

Sipa itān mati sipa bāra āyo.	We thought it was a *chipa* fish, But it's not a *chipa* fish.
Kotri itān mati kotri bāra āyo,	We thought it was a *kotri* fish, But it's not a *kotri* fish.
Tengri itān mati tengri bāra āyo.	We thought it was a *tengri* fish, But it's not a *tengri* fish.
Madum itān mati mādum bāra āyo.	We thought it was a *madum* fish, But it's not a *madum* fish.
Joyo karmata joyo roy.	Swing Karmata swing.

2

Kākor mācha men jhulna ho dai?	In whose *mācha* is the swing, mother?
Sājen ki mācha men jhulna ho dai.	The swing is in Sajen's *mācha*, mother.
Upar le aise nawa jogi ho dai;	A new beggar has come from above;
Suliyāro la legise nāwa jogi ho dai.	He has taken away the Suliaro.
Suliyāro hanse se much-much ho dai.	Suliaro is laughing *much-much.*
Sājen dekhe se mit-mit ho dai.	Sajen is peeping *mit-mit*, mother.

3

Bor dādāl ukār ungiwāl?	Who is swinging in the swing?
Kalamsai dādāl ukār ungiwāl.	It is Kalamsai swinging in the swing.
Adu badu bai ukār uhāna?	Which girl is pushing the swing?
Manjāro bai ukār uhāna.	Manjaro is pushing the swing.
Uhma rāni uhma nana arika.	Don't swing too hard, Rani, or I shall fall.
Arwi rāja arwi nana yetka.	You won't fall, Raja, for I am here to catch you.

Mahamandal Karsana (*Plate CXXXIX*)

Boys and girls form themselves into a great *mahamandal* snake. Each grasps with both hands the buttocks of the one in front, and the line moves forward with a peculiar stamping movement. The head does not try to catch the tail; it simply imitates a snake, swinging round and round in a very serpentine manner. At last the line ties itself up by threading through itself again and again till all the children are knotted into a compact and helpless group.[1]

Num-murial Karsana

This is a variety of the above game which I saw at Palli-Barkot and danced by the Tarbaili children. They wind and unwind themselves in the same way, but in the middle they squat down and walk over one another. At the beginning too the head of the line does not tie them up, but weaves his line through the main line, in and out under the uplifted arms. Here the name of

[1] This is like a Trobriand game, in which 'the players stand in a long chain holding hands, and then walk round the person who stands at one end. This end remains immovable and the person at the other end leads the chain round in gradually narrowing circles until the whole group is pressed together into a tight knot.....It is then unrolled.'—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 207.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
524

the game is taken from the Nun-nurial bird, which runs hither and thither in search of grasshoppers and grubs.

Chik-dondi Karsana[1]

This is similar to the preceding game. A long line of as many as forty boys and girls stand with arms extended, catching each other by the hand. Sometimes boys and girls are mixed; more properly the girls are at one end of the line and the boys at the other. Girls sing, *'Silori silori tande masak lo'* and the boys answer *'Kinari kinari tande masak lo'*. To which the girls reply, *'Hat ke geli mund ke geli jolinta joil singri masli non purgi kaon ta kaon ta'*. As they sing, the head of the line swings round and, bending down, burrows under the upraised arms of those next to him; he goes round again to those next but one, and so on, until several circles are rotating at once and the great line is gradually wound up. Then very rapidly they unwind themselves and soon are standing in line again. Now the opposite end begins, and they repeat the process until they are tired.

VIII. Round Games

We may now consider those games in which the children chase each other and run in and out of circles. These too are mainly important as exercise, to train the boys and girls in alertness, lightness of foot and the capacity to seize an opportunity.

Watia Karsana (*Plate CXXIX*)

Boys and girls sit in a big circle. A boy takes a roll of cloth or bit of paddy rope (*watia*) in his hand and runs round and round until he drops it behind someone. That boy or girl must jump up and catch the first boy before he can get round the circle into the safety of the place that has just been vacated.

A variety of this under the same name is played in Tarbaili. Two lines of boys and girls are formed facing each other at some distance. They throw a roll of cloth to one another. Anyone who misses the catch becomes the prisoner of the other side. So they continue until all are gathered on one side.

Giri Giri Karsana[2]

A number of girls sit in a circle. One girl bends down in front of them and several hit her on the back. She jumps up and chases them round the circle. Any she can touch must go and sit inside. They continue till she has caught them all.

Ganda Karsana

Boys and girls sit down in a big circle. They have to get up one by one. The first boy or girl whose knees crack while rising is 'out' and is called the Ganda, or untouchable. Sufficient children sit down to make the circle, and the rest run round and round outside; the Ganda goes into the circle and dashes out to catch as many as he can. Anyone he touches must go into the circle, and when all are caught the game is over. As they run round they sing:

Ek cowrie de re Gānde, nāk me orain de.
Give me a cowrie, Ganda, and I'll wear it in my nose.

[1] *Chik-dondi* is the stick for applying bird-lime.
[2] When you waggle your finger in someone's palm, it is *giri giri*.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GAMES

Pot Karsana

983.3
524

The Pot Karsana is very similar to the above. Some of the children make a circle; half the others go inside and the other half run round outside. They pull each other in and out of the circle singing *Pot pot pot*.

Pairi Karsana

A number of children sit down in a circle. The space between each child is regarded as a door. Others go round and round in line and have to cross into the middle of the circle by each door in turn. Once the leader of the line has succeeded in jumping over, the rest may follow him. If the sitting children manage to catch the leader by his ankle, as he jumps over, he is caught. It is a 'foul' if more than one tries to jump over at the same time.

A variety of this is called Usta Gundur Karsana.[1] Boys holding hands squat in a circle on the ground. Others run round clapping their hands and singing '*Usta gundur ta tin pe kor wark wark*'. 'Run round and jump. Get some parched rice and eat it.' The aim is to jump into the circle without being touched by the 'wall'. If one boy manages to get in, it means the gate is open, and they all go in and dance inside. Now they have to try to jump out.

Purar Karsana[2] (*Plate CXXIII*)

Girls stand in a ring holding each other's hands. A similar but smaller ring stands inside. The outer ring jumps over the inner ring and gets inside. Then that ring jumps inside again and so they go on over and over each other.

Song

[539]

Tuy chilkul?	Are you a little [pigeon]?
Ki mai mithul?	Or am I a pretty girl?
Ghighara he pāni	The water of a pot
Tabak tor.	Splashes out when it is shaken.

A *mithul* girl is a smart pretty child who always keeps herself well dolled-up.

I saw almost the same game under the name of Kinaring Karsana at Kuntpadar. A double ring of girls hold hands. The inner ring bend down and the outer ring walk inwards over them. Then that ring bends down and the original inner ring walks over them. They turn and move outwards in the same way. They sing *Kināri kināri dondi mashelo*.

IX. Miscellaneous Games

There are a number of games which do not fall readily into any classification. I give some of them here.

Nana Darbona Karsana (*Plate CXXII*)

Girls stand in a circle facing inwards. They jump up and down, clapping their hands above their heads. Suddenly they turn outwards and go on jumping up and down and clapping their hands.

[1] *Usta gundur* is a small partridge.

[2] *Purar* is a wood-pigeon.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song

Nana darbena!
What is your clan, girl?
Whose daughter are you?
I want to laugh with you.
You are of the Naitami clan;
You are a Naitami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
You are of the Kuhrami clan;
You are a Kuhrami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
You are of the Poyami clan;
You are a Poyami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
What is your clan, girl?
If I go to a village, I will bring a boy and will laugh with him.
If I go to the field, I will bring a horse and will laugh with it.
If I go to the market, I will bring a girl and laugh with her.
Nana darbena!

Buchi Karsana

This, which means literally 'the game of the girl with a broken ear', is played by girls standing together in a close circle. They begin to sing a little song with no particular meaning and all bend forward touching their ankles. At each line of the song they raise themselves a little touching first the knees, then the waist, the breast, the shoulders until the hands are held high above the head.

Song

Dāda gelose gaon gelose buchi buchi!	Brother has gone to his village, *buchi buchi!*
Dāda cho thaili me arrigunda arrigunda;	In his purse is sweet tobacco;
Tindkiney tinwiney arrigunda arrigunda?	Will he eat the sweet tobacco?

The word *buchi*, which means a broken ear, is sometimes used as a girl's name. To tear the ear-aperture (used for ornaments) is regarded by the Muria, as by people elsewhere, as a social disaster, but here the expression seems to have no connexion either with the song or the game.

Mundi Karsana

A ring of girls stand very close together. Every girl with her left hand catches the thumb of her neighbour's right hand until there is an upper ring formed. Then each with her right hand catches the thumb of her neighbour's left hand until a lower ring is formed. They then raise and lower the two rings, singing with a quick jerky rhythm.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GAMES

883X
524
534

Song

Èk ak mundi !	One one ring!
Dwy duy mundi !	Two two rings!
Okar mundi !	His ring!
Mundi lori !	Rings in a circle!
Pasparala de hodo mâli lori de hodo mâli lori !	Put the *pasparala* shrubs in a circle!

Panung-dohing (Frog and Lizard) Karsana

This game is also known as Doke and Nagil-mâting (Root-digging). I have also seen it played by Gond and Pardhan in the Central Provinces. Three boys or girls stand back to back on one leg. They link their legs together in order to support themselves and then hop round in a circle clapping their hands and singing various short catches, of which one is *Nagil-mating hutuh hutuh*, or 'We dig for roots and eat them'. And another is

Pehi titung pânung dohing mât titom latka.	The girls ate lizards and we ate frogs.
Pokor titung pânung dohing mât titom bell.	The boys ate lizards and we ate sweets.

Jatta (Grindstone) Karsana (Plate CXXVII)

883X
524

Four boys lie down feet to feet like a star. Their feet are tied together with someone's turban. Bigger boys catch them by the arms and raising them up go round and round in a circle.[1]

Tolapotur Karsana

Boys lie down in a long straight line, each extending his right hand above his head to catch hold of his predecessor's loin-cloth. The boy at the end gets up and walks straddled down the line dragging the boys up with him till all are standing now with their arms between their legs clutching their neighbour's loin-cloths. Then the leader reverses the process and walks back till all are lying on the ground again. *Tolapotur* may mean 'stitching a leaf-basket' and the game may be supposed to represent this.

Song

[539]

Mother-in-law 's like a *potor* leaf.
Husband's elder brother 's like the central beam of the house.
Husband's younger brother 's like the verandah pole.
Father-in-law 's like a teak leaf.

In this song the symbols are probably sexual. The mother-in-law is like the leaf of the *rêm-dâtun* (or *potor*) tree whose twigs are usually used for cleaning teeth. The two brothers of the husband have virile organs, the elder's like the thick house-beam, the younger's pleasant and penetrating, as the slender pole that supports the verandah. Father-in-law is useless as the leaf of a teak tree.

[1] Haddon recorded a similar game in British New Guinea. Four boys lie at full length forming a cross: a small boy crouches at their feet. Other boys lift them up and go round so that 'the whole contrivance revolves like a four-spoked wheel'.—Haddon, op. cit., p. 290.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Johar Karsana

This game, which is one of the many attractive games played in the big ghotul at Alor, is a saluting game. The motiari form a line, the leader comes forward, bends down with her back to the others and swings to left and right, touching the feet of each in turn. She goes down the line and the next in order follows her.

Song

Didi boli boli kudum keli lo,	Sister, say, we have stamped our feet,
Ulti pão parilo pulti pão parilo.	Saluting the feet this side and that.
Juna garh dekhilo nawã garh dekhilo.	We saw the old fort, we saw the new fort.
Sakhi chãnwur badilo.	We made friendship with rice.
Rãja tika tikilo.	We gave greeting to the Raja.
Son kukra basilo!	O the golden cock crowed!
Kumãr kukra basilo	The red cock crowed
Ki ki ri kir.	*Ki ki ri kir.*

Kudum represents the sound of stamping feet. After the song has been sung through to the sister, it is done for the mother-in-law, cousin, sister-in-law, anyone you please.

A Guessing Game

The Muria have a guessing game called Mundi Karsana. In Phulpar the girls stood in a circle holding out their hands. One of the boys put a ring into a girl's hand. Then the other boys had to come one by one to guess where it was.

In Metawand, this was played by boys and girls together sitting down, but the principle was the same. Sometimes the guesser puts his hand on each forehead in turn: it is believed that whoever has the ring will have a hot head.

A Game with Myrabolams

In Nayanar, I watched the chelik playing with *harra*-myrabolams. Two boys sat facing each other, each had a pile of myrabolams. The first boy picked up a handful, threw them into the air, and tried to catch as many as possible on the back of his hand. He failed to catch any, and lost his turn, and the other boy made the attempt. He caught two and put these beside him, the next throw he caught one, then three, but at last, though he had only three stones left, he dropped them all and lost his turn. Then the first boy tried again.[1]

X. Cock-fighting

Cock-fighting is a popular sport among the Muria of the central and northern parganas, but it is little followed in the east where it is said to be a pastime worthy only of Ganda.[2] But in the west and central areas, cocks are specially

[1] A similar game is known as *Dhapa* by the Pauri Bhuiya.—Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 284. I have seen it in Mandla, and it is probably universally distributed.

[2] For an excellent account of cock-fighting among Kol, Bhumij and Uraon, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 95. Thurston considered it a 'disgusting spectacle' and agreed with Colonel Newcome that it should be performed in secret. He describes cock-fighting among the Mohammedans of Mysore who do not use steel spurs but

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

reared and trained to fight. It is said that in the good old days, the fights used to be between two men, and the spectators bet on the result. Cock-fighting came in when this exciting custom was forbidden. Large meetings

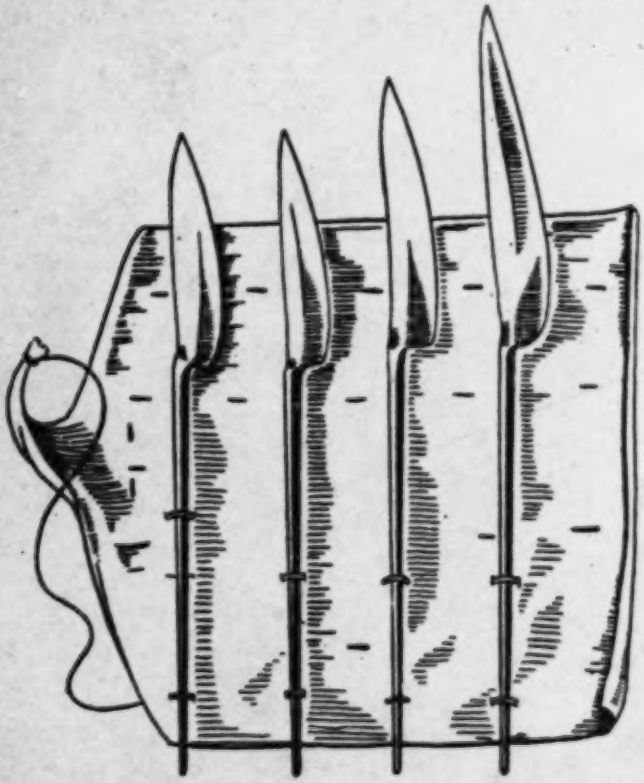

FIG. 146. Set of cock-fighting knives in cloth bag
Length of longest knife 3"

are held at the end of most of the bazaars late in the afternoon. Special meetings are also called in the larger Muria villages, both regularly and on

sharpen the natural spurs with a knife. 'A real good fight' he says 'may last for several hours.' This, and several other details of Thurston's description, seem to me a little doubtful. Thurston adds that the sport was popular in South Canara among the Bant, but since it often led to quarrels was discouraged by the police.—*Ethnographic Notes*, pp. 569f. I have never seen it in the Central Provinces, though I have watched maina-fighting in Sarangarh State. Other references to cock-fighting will be found in T. R. Padmanabhachari, 'Games, Sports and Pastimes in Prehistoric India', *Man in India*, Vol. XXI, p. 144; D. N. Majumdar, 'Games of the Hos of Kolhan', *Man in India*, Vol. V, p. 201; J. Barkar, 'Assam and the Aboms in 1660', *JBORS*, Vol. I, p. 186; and in some of the standard monographs on individual tribes.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

341
525

special occasions such as a gathering of the pargana panchayat. In this part the Muria are enthusiastic over the sport and not inconsiderable sums of money pass to and fro in the bets which inevitably accompany a fight. To the gentle Muria the attraction of cock-fighting is not (as it is to the more blood-thirsty Bison-horn Maria) the excitement of blood and battle, but the pleasure of betting. The cock that loses also becomes the property of the winner.

When the company has gathered in the shade of a great grove of trees, the cocks—which have been brought to the place carefully covered—are measured against each other so that in no fight will they be too unfairly matched. The spur-men, who are Muria specially trained in the business, go aside to tie the spurs to the cocks' feet. These spurs are sharp knife-blades about 3" long and slightly curved, made by the Muria Lohar of locally smelted iron, and are kept in little bamboo cases or rolled up in a cloth hold-all.

The spur-man attaches the blades to the cock's feet, spits on the string and binds it round and round until the blades are firmly fixed at exactly the right height and angle. He then removes dirt from his ears, mixes some with the dust from his left foot with a little spittle and rubs the mess on the blades saying, 'O Mahapurub, O the Departed of my house, you know my truth and goodness. It is for you to give this cock victory'. He removes a feather from the cock's tail, cuts it in two with the blade attached to its leg, spits on it and throws it away. If the cock is victorious, the spur-man receives a leg of its defeated adversary.

The owners now pick up their birds and stand facing each other in the middle of a clearing surrounded by an excited crowd of spectators. They hold the cocks out, make them peck at each other and when they are aroused put them on the ground. The birds usually go to the attack at once, and the fight only lasts a short time. The blades are very deadly and I have frequently seen both cocks fall dead after thirty seconds' combat. Once a cock turns away from its adversary, it is considered defeated.

After a victory, the owner of the cock should make an offering of liquor to the Departed. At Binjhli he was expected to give a coconut to the Village Mother. At Ullera, the Muria said that when they put the cocks into battle they remembered the Departed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X813
531
534

Festival dancing, with big dhol drums, at Phunder

Festival dancing, with small drums, at Phunda

[p. 582 (W)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
535

Plate CXXII

Durga Dandi

Movements in the Naga Darbana dance at Aler

[p. 582 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

OTHER RECREATIONS

I. Muria Humour

522 THE humour of the Muria is probably more fully developed than that of any other tribe in Bastar or the Central Provinces; the ghotul is a natural school of wit; the constant association of young people forces them to devise many forms of entertainment. The first and most elementary expression of Muria humour is plain buffoonery. They love throwing dirty water at each other, sprinkling people with red ants, creeping up behind someone and clasping muddy hands round his face. In Nayanar, the chelik had bamboo squirts (Fig. 21) with which they projected streams of water at the motiari. At a marriage, old men and women get great fun out of pouring haldi-water over the buttocks of their relatives as they bend down to greet the bridal pair. They enjoy poking each other's genitals and catching hold of them, and if anyone dances naked, especially if this is in front of forbidden relatives, they laugh till they can hardly stand. The reader will note that here it is the social rather than the sexual aspect of the ribaldry that appeals; it is the notion of doing something unusual and improper before people in whose presence the strictest decorum is usually practised. Jokes about incest are funny because it is almost unknown in Muria society; it is possible to be humorous about adultery simply because it is so rare. The obscene jokes of a Muria marriage do not by any means imply a general standard of obscenity; indeed they suggest the opposite. It is in the most rigidly correct middle classes of English society that the vulgar postcard has its widest circulation, for it is the sense of contrast and incongruity that is amusing. In this connexion George Orwell has recently drawn attention to the difference between obscenity and immorality. The obscene is based on the implication that 'marriage is something profoundly exciting and important, the biggest event in the average human being's life. So also with jokes about nagging wives and tyrannous mothers-in-law. They do at least imply a stable society in which marriage is indissoluble and family loyalty taken for granted...A dirty joke is not, of course, a serious attack upon morality, but it is a sort of mental rebellion, a momentary wish that things were otherwise.'[1] So, in this sense Muria jokes are obscene, but they are not immoral.

522 292 The Muria get a great deal of fun out of dressing up. At weddings, especially at the critical moment of the Lagir, many people—both young and old—appear in fantastic array. One man performs as a giant; another has an enormous rope penis; a third is covered with ash and goes about imitating the Siraha-mediums. In Malakot the villagers were highly amused at the antics of an old man dressed in a bear-skin who was led about by his keeper, himself swathed from head to foot in paddy-rope. The village headman, ordinarily the soberest of beings, appeared riding a hobby-horse and flourishing an umbrella. At Sidhawand there was a 'sadhu' with a long tail and an ash-covered fisherman who burlesqued Muria fishing methods. Masks are sometimes worn, especially during the Pus Kolang and Chherta expeditions. In Kachora two boys wearing gourd masks played at man and wife, the wife causing great mirth by a pair of artificial breasts. In Phulpar a chelik wore an artificial beard of squirrel's hair which he combed before a mirror. In

[1] G. Orwell, 'The Art of Donald McGill', *Horizon*, Vol. IV (1941), pp. 135ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

522 Gorma, the Muria Atpariha dressed up as a straw man, with a whitened face and beard of bear's fur. He carried about an enormous bow and a wooden
292 spade as arrow. Even an old solar topi is thought amusing—when it is on a chelik's head. The desire to create a sharp dramatic contrast prompted a Muria at Masora to dance with a dog in his arms (Plate CXLIII).

522 But beside a delight in sudden contrasts, the Muria have a special attraction to the grotesque. In one story a girl with a huge umbilical stump buries herself in the bed of a river, but the stump sticks up and a bullock cart is caught on it. The first motiari had a vagina so large that a wild boar could roll about in it. She looked like a sack of salt from Nandgaon. In a song, a boy has a penis as long as a cucumber and testicles as fat as pumpkins.

In Gorma I saw an extraordinary dance, when the performer, distorting his face and body, pranced about the ghotul like an obscene bird. With his hand he poked his bottom, privates, chest and head, smelt his supposedly soiled and stinking fingers, then pushed them in the faces of the onlookers. It was done so well that you forgot the indecency in a sort of horror as at some perverted creation of the mind. In the same category are the 'panthers' or 'lizards' that so often appear at a dance or wedding. A boy covers himself with a blanket, and with an ingenious arrangement of twigs makes himself a head and beak which opens and shuts. He then crawls about in what I can only call an abominable manner which never fails to give a thrill of fear.

More purely humorous was a great bird made at Phauda. A chelik lay on the ground with his hands stretched out before him. The others covered his body with a blanket and his hands with cloth. They decorated the cloth-covered hands with ornaments, gave them a beak and ears, and produced a grotesque bird. Then the boy by moving his hands made the bird peck about very divertingly (Plate CXLVII).

If we turn to verbal wit we find a similar tendency. In the songs are references to moustached peacocks[1] and tusked hares.

[539] On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
Its teeth are as long as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustache is like jungle grass, chelik.
Its hairs like bamboo shavings, chelik.

In the Ghotul Pata there are many such diverting descriptions. How excellent, for example, is the account of the Kotwar who is fed on gruel twelve years old and full of frogs and lizards[2]

[539] His moustaches said *suyi suyi* as he drank,
His throat cried *gurgur gurgur*.
As he ate the frogs and lizards, his mouth went *pitos pitos*.

The descriptions of the chelik and motiari at Siri Somni's marriage and of the treatment given to Bai Dursal Rani by the Manjhi[3] are funny even to Western ears.

[1] Compare the Uraon poem:
The cobra comes
With his hood raised
Asking alms.
The heron comes
With his neck straight
Twirling his moustaches. (Archer, op. cit., p. 122.)

[2] The antics of the village Kotwar are a favourite theme of the Gond and Pardhan story-teller in the Central Provinces. See my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 281., 208f., and Elwin and Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 372ff.

[3] See p. 608.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

II. A Test of Wit

The posing of riddles is a fairly popular form of amusement in the ghotul. It sharpens the wits and is often very amusing, the sharp and unexpected contrasts between description and meaning often surprising the listeners into a sudden burst of laughter. Many riddles have both a manifest and latent meaning, the latter usually sexual. Riddles illustrating various sociological points will be found throughout the book, but I will add another 150 here.

In Gondi, the riddles are usually in what may be called prose. Rhyme is very uncommon and even assonance and punning are rare. The following are hardly typical:

Utu tutu bhui la tutu.
The horn comes out of the ground.
A bamboo shoot.

Uding uding inta, dāy dāy inta.
Say sit sit and say go go.
Sand in which you get stuck.

Porro kāre, adi mend.
Thrashing-floor above, its pole below.
An umbrella.

Konda udinta kāsra witinta.
The bullock sits, the tethering cord runs away.
A pumpkin.

The usual Gondi riddle has no special form.

Undi urpāddun nur nei kaskintāng.
A hundred dogs bite one lizard.
The rafter of a house.

Tāmur iruura lokku jotāy manta, mati warro warrona lota koriyor.
The brothers live together, but never enter each other's house.
A pair of shoes.

It is in the Halbi riddles, which are now almost as common as those in the original Gondi, that we find rhyme and assonance. The Halbi riddle is spoken very fast with an emphasis on a central word.

Sukko rukh thai kare;
Burga bhālu hai kare.
The dry tree says *thai*;
The old bear says *hai*.
A gun.

Kurlu dongri mārlu jhāti;
Ek thuni pachās pāti.
Cut shrubs on the hill of kurlu trees;
There are fifty rafters on one pole.
An umbrella.

Ek garkcho murkiyai,
Bāra garkcho pāsikhai.
The cow with the broken horn from one house drinks the water of twelve houses.
A fish-hook.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

522 524 *Chiringta bāja;*
Natrāl pāga.
It makes a noise like a drum;
It has a red turban.
A sarus crane.

Alliteration is also used.

Phulte phulese,
Jharte jharese.
Flower blossoms
And drops soon.
A bazaar.

Some riddles end with a taunt or challenge, a device which is generally only used when an extra line is needed to complete the rhyme.

Jhil mili tarai
Rai ratan bāri.
Ye dhandha ke nijānbe,
Baile cho nāk ke kāti.

The star sparkles
The fence is beautiful.
If you don't answer this riddle,
Your wife's nose will be cut off.
A mirror.

Karkas pāna rupas dheti
Dhandha ko nahi jānbe ghasnin ke beti.
Rough leaves, silver stem.
If you don't know this riddle,
You're a Ghasnin's daughter.
Sugar-cane.

There's a wall round the lake.
If you can't answer this, you'll be my bond-servant.
A mirror.

The stick is straight,
At the top are bells.
If you don't know what this is,
An ant will bite your bottom.
Male genitalia.

A few rather curious riddles take the form of imaginary conversations. A thorn addresses a man about to step on it. 'I see you, but you don't see me.' A householder speaks to a leaf blown in by the wind. 'Where have you come from, old chap, making your camp on my doorstep?' A flooded river as it rushes on speaks to the reeds growing in its bed, 'You stay where you are; I am going to Ratanpur'.

The riddles posed in the ghotul may not all be of Muria origin, but at least the Muria can enjoy them and see their point. Even if a man cannot make that kind of joke himself, he may claim to have some sense of humour if he enjoys reading Thurber. Many of the descriptions set out in riddle form are really witty and amusing even to the sophisticated Western mind. The riddles too gain their effect from bizarre contrasts. An axe is described as 'a roasted pig jumping from tree to tree'. Anyone who has seen a Muria roasting a pig, holding the headless creature over the fire, will appreciate the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X
883
535

ABOVE: The Guguring Gus dance at Alor

BELOW: Purar Karsana, a ring dance at Phunder

[p.586(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
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Plate CXXIV

Karmata Karmana: Swinging-the-Baby, at Temrugaon

[p. 536 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

wit of that; it is even better than the Uraon riddle on the same theme—'A parrot playing on the dry stump of a tree'.[1] Another pig riddle is about a needle and thread which is described as 'a little pig with a cord in its bottom' instead of where the pig's cord ought to be, in its nose.

And what an admirable description of palm wine! 'Outside how quiet—but in the belly how it thunders!' The stomach is always amusing; as with us there is the connotation of something gross and amiable, the fat man keen on his food. A drum is 'a fly buzzing in an elephant's belly'—stressing the contrast of the huge belly and the little fly. A winnowing-fan is the 'man with buttocks in front and stomach behind'—the same kind of absurdity as when a man puts on his trousers back to front.

An oil-press is 'the hunchback bear that pisses all round'. A gun is riddled thus: 'Tap the dry tree and the old bear says *Hai*.' This seems to me amusing in a quiet and bucolic way, but—to make one more comparison with the Uraon riddles—their description of a gun as 'a ghost speaking from a dry piece of wood'[2] is uncanny and chills the heart. It probably has more effect on a European reader: he remembers a thousand guns and the ghosts that they have made.

There is an excellent description of a letter:

A little wood-pigeon has a fat tummy:
Where are you off to, pigeon?

Some other witty riddles are these:

The basket broke and out came the tiger.—*A pig excreting.*
Always turns up punctually to work.—*The sun.*
A black cow with a thousand feet jumps onto the Raja's food.—*A fly.*

You can almost see those dirty feet landing in the middle of the plate, scattering the royal food across the table, the face of the indignant Raja.

Two riddles expose the limitations of the human frame: 'You can see the distant hill, but not the one on top of you.' That is your own head. And 'your own back' is the answer to 'You can see all the world save one little plot of land'.

Two smutty jokes: 'The creature has a penis above and a vagina below.' *The backside of a cow.* 'He has his penis in his mouth.' *A sahib smoking a cigar.* These with their vague half-remembered associations to Havelock Ellis are probably more amusing to a European than to a Muria.

Really witty smut is not very common; I have been through many Paske Pata, the marriage songs which hurl rhythmic abuse at all the relations of the bridal pair, but I have found nothing that seems funny to me. Yet it obviously seems funny to the Muria, for at each new obscenity they shout with triumphant laughter. Why should it be so amusing to say 'I'll bed your sister', 'I'll copulate with your mother', 'I'll carry off my uncle's daughter'? The reason again is not sexual, but social; it is due to the absorbed attention which all Muria give to family relationships. You can always raise a laugh from a Muria audience by a reference to the Table of Affinity.

As we see elsewhere, certain relations stand in a *hassi ki nāt*, a joking relation, to one another. The time-honoured jokes are brought out again and again and always get a good hand. A man says to his *bhāīcka*: 'Why not come and live on us? You can't get a living in your own house. Then I'll be able to carry off your daughter, I've always wanted to marry her.' A chelik laughs at his *māma*, mother's brother. 'I'm going to have your daughter', he says.

[1] Archer, op. cit., p. 180. [2] Ibid., p. 180.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

522 'Well', says his uncle. 'She *is* being kept for you.' 'No, I want a larger choice of girls. But I'll just carry her off for a few days.' And two samdhi joke with each other. 'I know you sleep every night with your sister', says one. 'Yes, and we all know whom *you* sleep with.' And so on interminably.

X883 522 In the ghotul, children tease each other but they are not allowed to go too far. A chelik who repeats a joke until it becomes cruel is fined. At a motiari's first menstruation, everybody is pleased and amused. 'Today the embankment of the field is broken.' 'We'd better call a lot of coolies to mend the leaking tank.' When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period of seclusion, the boys say, 'So the coolies have stopped the hole in the field. Don't let anyone make a new hole tonight'.

In the Binjhli ghotul one day the Silo, an older girl, was forcibly 'married' to the smallest boy there—this is a ghotul in which formal 'marriages' are not allowed, so the game had the double value of incongruity both in age and custom. The children performed all the marriage ceremonies, pretended to drink a lot of liquor, imitated the antics of their drunken elders, and finally dragged the pair off to bed together. But the little boy ran away. Then they pretended that a child was born, and a bundle was handed round the ghotul, the boys giving it their 'breasts' to suck. At last the little 'father' had to take it, but he threw it away crying, 'It doesn't look like me; she's been going to other boys'.

When older men come to the ghotul, there is a lot of coarse jesting about their relations with their wives. I remember the headman of Kuntpadar who is almost completely bald had himself massaged by the Belosa and said, 'How is she going to pull her comb through my few hairs' and 'If my old woman were to see me now, I wonder what she'd say. It's a good rule that wives mustn't come to the ghotul'.

X883 522 551 A boy or girl with any deformity is laughed at and is given a nickname which will remind him of it. Some of these names are themselves witty—Dhol, fat as a drum; Banga, who was a stupid baby; Pota with a big stomach; Salaidu who never does what he is told but always something else; Cholu who never stops talking, and Marin—who is like a Maria, 'never takes any notice of anyone and when you want to beat him gets out his bow and arrows'. A boy at Binjhli, of whom it is said that he cannot see a motiari without saying something to make her laugh, is called Jhola. In the same ghotul a big overgrown fellow was ragged mercilessly. He was *dokara* (old man) by day and *bokara* (goat) at night. 'All the land of the ghotul has been broken up by his great ploughshare.'

X883 522 Shamrao Hivale heard a chelik and motiari talking to each other in the ghotul; each sentence sent them into fits of laughter. 'What have you got?' said the boy. 'No, tell me first what you've got.' 'Well, I've one root and two onions.' 'And I', said the girl, 'have two sweet mangoes and a basket for your root.' 'Yes, but what am I to do with the onions?' 'They can stay out in the compound.' 'But at least put the root in your basket.'

Straightforward sexual jokes, with no social reference, about copulation and the private parts are common enough. For the Baihar Karsana (Mad Game), at Kanhargaon, boys dress up as a lunatic with his wife and child. He has a huge penis, 'she' grotesque breasts. Every time he touches them, he gets burnt; he tries to pull out her pubic hairs, and gets burnt again. The wife gives birth to a child, a cloth doll, the husband suckles it—but I need not particularize the endless buffoonery. The copulation of animals may be imitated; this is done even in the public—and very sacred—Pus Kolang dances. Excretory jokes are rare, I think, though boys laugh at girls

OTHER RECREATIONS

if they catch them relieving themselves. There is nothing very subtle or witty in any of this. In fact, since there are so few taboos on sex in the ghotul it is rather difficult to be funny about it.

It is worth noting that even the gods are not above a bit of horse-play. In Adnar I watched the young deity Chelik Sai, who was after all a chelik and conveniently represented by a long erect pole, amusing himself with a group of motiari. In the hands of his medium he pranced about, poking himself at the girls, chasing them about, pretending to catch them and ride upon them. Another medium carrying an iron chain amused everybody by his absurd gestures; he would dance round and round a line of girls, bend down and peer up into their faces in the most ridiculous manner. In Metawand, one of the horses of the gods was chased about the field, and roars of laughter greeted the divine sport.

A common type of funny story finds its humour in an absurd and indecorous situation. In Metawand I was told the tale of the woman who is going along the road in the rains. Some of the mud gets into her vagina and when she stops at a stream to wash it, a crab catches hold of her clitoris. She calls a man to help, but hard as he pulls at the crab he cannot make it let go. At last he tries to bite it off, but it gets hold of his nose with its spare claw, and there they all are—on a public highway, the respectable Muria with his nose stuck in the vagina of an unknown woman. After a while along comes a Lohar and gets the crab out with his tongs, but only on condition that the woman will give him 'tobacco' whenever he wants it. Some days later he comes to her house to claim his reward. She is busy cooking and asks him to lie down on a cot until she is ready. He lies on his face, but he is so excited that his erect penis goes through the strings of the cot and protrudes below. A cat thinking it a bit of meat, catches it. The situation is now reversed. The woman comes out and refuses to release the Lohar unless he declares her quit of her debt to him.

Another tale, from Aturgaon, which is known in Bengal and to the Uraon, but is given an entirely fresh and vivid turn by the Muria, again gets its effect from the sticking together, in public and deplorable juxtaposition, of incongruous things: a man and woman cannot get apart, a midwife finds her hands stuck to her head and nothing on below, a magician discovers a bullock's horns sticking to his bottom. Personally I think this tale is really funny, even in its bare and literal form.

There was a Muria Raja with one son. In his village was a barber who also had an only son. The two boys were always playing together, they would never do their work. The Raja used to tell his son to go and plough in the fields, but he always refused. At last the Raja got very angry and turned him out. The boy put on his ornaments and took a bag of money, mounted his horse and rode away. As he went he met the barber's son and told him that he was going to his future father-in-law's house. The barber's son said he would go with him.

Presently, the Raja's son said he wanted to relieve himself. There were no leafy trees at hand so the barber's son said, 'You had better take off your clothes and ornaments and go to the jungle in your loin cloth'. While the Raja's son was away, the barber's son put on his clothes and ornaments and rode off on the horse.

When the boy returned and found his things gone, he wept so loudly that Bara Deo heard his crying and came to him in the shape of an old

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

522
539

man. 'Go to your father-in-law's house', he said, 'as a servant. I will give you this charm, that whatever you say will happen.' So the boy went and took a job as servant. He found the barber's son living there in his stead, wearing his ornaments and dressed in his clothes. That night the barber's son went in to the father-in-law's daughter. The Raja's son outside the door exclaimed, 'As they are, let them be; without my order let them not separate'.

So there they were, stuck together and all night they struggled to get free. In the morning the members of the family sent their servant, the Raja's son, for a midwife to cut the unhappy pair apart.

Now as the Raja's son was bringing the midwife to the house, they had to cross a flooded river and both of them stripped themselves naked. The Raja's son said, 'Put your clothes on your head, hold them there with your two hands and so cross the river'. As the woman approached the opposite bank, the boy said, 'As you are, so remain; without my order you may not change'. So the midwife came naked, holding her hands to her head, and weeping and, of course, she could do nothing.

So then they sent the Raja's son to fetch a magician. As they were coming along together, the magician went to relieve himself but there was no water near at hand. But there was a dead bullock's head with two horns and he wiped himself on it. As he was doing so, the Raja's son exclaimed, 'As you are, so remain; without my order you may not change'. And so the magician came to the house with the bullock's head and its horns sticking to his bottom. When he saw him, the father-in-law was so frightened that he said, 'Whoever can solve this trouble, shall have my daughter and all my money'. Then the Raja's son told him what had happened and his father-in-law said, 'If you can make all well again, I will believe you, and you shall have my daughter'. At this the Raja's son removed his charms and the horns dropped from the magician's bottom, the woman covered her vagina with her hands, and the girl released the barber's son from his captivity.

Then the father-in-law killed that barber's son and married the Raja's son to his daughter.

From that day we never use barbers to cut our hair. We never use water when we relieve ourselves. If the omens are wrong we never go to betroth a girl, and we think it no fault if the unmarried sleep together.[1]

[1] In a Bengali tale, which we probably possess in a somewhat bowdlerised version, the stick of a cowherd gets stuck to his hand, the winnowing-basket of a maid servant gets stuck to her hand, a platter sticks to the hand of a Rani, and a Raja and his courtiers get stuck to their seats and have to be sawn off.—S. C. Mitra, 'A Bengali Cumulative Folk-tale of the Old Dame Lousy Type' in *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Bangalore, July 1922. Other parallels may be found in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 212ff., where the Prince makes the impostor's mouth stick to his hookah and the priest's wife stick to his shoulders as he carries her across a stream, and in A. Grignard, *Haha's Oraon Folk-lore* (Patna, 1931), pp. 46ff., where the Prince declares, 'If this fellow be her god-given bridegroom, you stools stick to the seats of these sorcerers' and of course they do. I recorded yet another version in a Juang village in Pal Lahara State. In this a greathead who suffers from impotence has the compensatory power of sticking things together. He attaches a girl's buttocks to a rock while she is bathing and a pot to an old man's behind. There is a ribald scene where a bride and bridegroom are fixed together and the whole family tries to pull them apart. An Inquisitive Brahmin bends over the place of conjunction and gets his moustache caught there. These stories are of the same order as the Todo-Kota motif of the dog becoming stuck in copulation.—M. R. Emeneau, 'Some Oraon Stories', *JAOS*, Vol. LXIII, p. 163.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

524

OTHER RECREATIONS

III. Riddles

1. In the middle of the field they are measuring salt.
Rats.
2. A small boy brings out the salt to be measured.
Rat digging a hole.
3. You stay where you are, swaying to and fro:
I am going to Ratanpur.
A flooded river speaks to reeds growing in its bed.
4. I will say to my brother, 'Don't eat, don't eat'.
Fishing-hook.
5. The wind shakes it *hurur hurur:* why is it not fit for eating? You are looking at the jungle; why don't you eat it?
Sambhar and hankar fruit (which sambhar do not eat).
6. Eight legs, nine knees, it decorates the wall, the old dried-up headman.
Spider.
7. The dock-tailed one has twenty-two cubs.
Spider.
8. In the dry tree the flower blossoms: it is beautiful in the world.
Cloth.
9. The belly behind, the back before.
Calves of the legs.
10. Malan bites the buttocks of Salan.
Marking-nut seed and fruit (which sticks on at the end).
11. The *chiroti* fruit is not to be plucked;
The spotted bullock is not to be tethered;
The green stick is not to be lifted.
Sun, tiger, snake.
12. The Jamdar hides in the leaves;
The Kamdar hides in the clods,
There is a *ruckhai* sound in the grain-bin.
Hare, field-rat, mouse.
13. It jumps *cha cha*; it is naked in spite of its clothes; it is the ants' priest; it is the Gunia of the forest.
Frog, spider, snake, sui bird.
14. Inside flesh, outside bones.
Coconut.
15. There's one pot inside another: the son is whiter than the father.
Coconut.
16. The pig is three years old, but it has only a little bit of flesh.
Gongi and shell.
17. The white cock's organ is bent.
Gongi shell.
18. The small boy jumps along, repairing as he goes, the bank of the field.
Needle.
19. It drinks water on the rock and jumps over the tree.
Axe.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

524

20. You are going taking me with you.
A man and his shadow.

21. Who is the priest of the Bastar soil?
The potter.

22. The piebald horse ate a thousand leaves.
A bamboo umbrella.

23. They built a palace without using water.
White-ants.

24. Four-score buffaloes go along a narrow road.
Ants in a line.

25. There is a black man in your house.
Ant.

26. Big eyes, sharp teeth.
Monkey and white-ants.

27. On the ground big teeth; in the sky big eyes.
White-ants and a vulture.

28. It drinks its gruel from a gourd; it hides among the bamboos.
A baby drinking milk and sleeping in a basket.

29. Chitkunj Mitkunj crosses twelve hills, but hides in a dry leaf.
Siari seed.

30. Sit, Bondki, sit. Why are you standing?
The wall of a house.

31. Many kosum flowers in one bunch.
Market.

32. In the field a snake is wriggling.
Cultivators using a rake.

33. On the bush are many yellow birds.
Chilli.

34. The small boy makes the king weep.
Chilli.

35. The smell of the marriage feast is hot.
Chilli.

36. A chip of a dry tree.
Finger-nail.

37. On the green tree is a dry piece of wood.
Finger-nail.

38. Going, coming, but no footprint.
A boat.

39. You can't throw away the seed, but you can throw away the bark.
Boat (from which bits are chipped off when it is made).

40. The deer goes to and fro without feet.
Boat.

41. The fist is full of seed, the house is full of beans.
Children.

42. An old woman digs up the ground.
Pig.

OTHER RECREATIONS

524

43. The basket broke and out came the tiger.
A pig excretes.

44. A Lamana woman goes along throwing parched rice on the path
A she-goat excretes.

45. The dish comes from a Raja's house; touch it and you swell.
Fire.

46. On the dry tree blossoms a flower.
Fire.

47. A small boy pulling hard puts on his dhoti.
A man winds rope into a grain-bin.

48. The sacrificed goat drinks water.
Hemp.

49. Lick quickly and fall down.
Broom.

50. Pick up the bundle and it talks.
Broom.

51. Nobody knows the noise of its beating *pat-pat.*
Eyebrow.

52. If anything is thrown in the two tanks, they overflow.
Eyes.

53. Even little fish can't get into this shining tank.
The eye.

54. A new plough, a new yoke, a new field yields a crow.
A new daughter-in-law.

55. It is hard to pick up, but you can throw it away with your left hand.
Ashes from the hearth.

56. A chelik uses up a whole cart-load of toilet-twigs.
The hearth.

57. At the time of yoking—one:
At time of loosing—two.
Toilet-twig used to clean the teeth, which usually splits after use.

[515]

58. Five men are ploughing the fields and ten men are collecting the earth with a harrow.
A twig for cleaning the teeth. (Five men means five fingers and ten men means fingers of both the hands.)

59. The hornless bullock grows a horn.
Moon.

60. It always turns up punctually.
Sun.

61. Four are cold, four are hot, four are wet. The deer has twelve toes: each grazes by itself.
The year.

62. The black cock gathers it; the white cock spreads it out to dry.
Night and day.

63. In the stream sits a decorated bird.
Money in a string-bag.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

524

64. The vulture eats the bullock, but can never finish it.
Sharpening-stone.

65. It is raining dum-dum; the tortoise goes to the bank.
Rain-hat.

66. The spotted monkey eats thirty-two score leaves.
Rain-hat.

67. The thrashing-floor is above, and its peg is below.
An umbrella.

68. This peacock has only one leg.
An umbrella.

69. The baby is born with seven coverings.
A bamboo-shoot.

70. The cowshed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get in.
Breasts that can never be properly covered with cloth.

71. The nose-string is above, the hawk below.
Mango and its stem.

72. Unmarried they beat her:
Married they let her be.
Pot.

73. Inside it goes down deep;
Above it rises high;
It is needed every year.
Thatching grass.

74. The long hen lays its eggs in a circle.
Dāng-kānda, a root.

75. Fruit, fruit, seedless fruit.
Eggs.

76. A cow bears seeds; the seeds bear children.
Hen's eggs.

77. The cow gave birth to a bone, and the bone to a calf.
A hen.

78. Fruit without root.
An egg.

79. The mother gave birth to a seed and the seed gave birth to a child.
An egg.

80. The orange now has flowers.
A chick hatched from an egg.

81. The tree has only two leaves.
Man and his ears.

82. Up stairs, down stairs, a fish in the middle.
The tongue.

83. Dead bullock goes ahead.
Cowhide rope of a plough.

84. A ploughshare falls from the hillside.
A lizard.

85. The white cock goes from house to house.
Curds being hawked from door to door.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
S24

Dongs Karsana:
Oranges and Lemons, at Koilibera

Plate CXXV

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 863
304

The Salho of the Munjmeta ghotul

Plate CXXVI

The Jhaliyaro of the Karikhedra ghotul

[p.594(N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

524 86. There's white water in the black pot. Queen Thamka is dancing there.
The pot in which curd is churned.

87. It comes when you call and goes back when you threaten it.
Gate.

88. Going it goes, coming it comes.
Door.

89. It takes its food without vegetables.
Wooden spade for digging earth.

90. Three brothers stand on one leg.
Leaf of the pharsa tree.

91. The sweetest thing in the world.
Sleep.

92. A bird goes along dragging a cart-load of grass behind.
A peacock.

93. The white bullock has a black halter.
Kosa-cocoon.

94. You fire the arrow with all your might, but it falls below your feet.
Urine.

95. The mother sits still and her child whirls round.
Earthen pot and gourd used to stir the jāwa-gruel.

96. Two are dry and four are slimy.
The horns and udders of a cow.

97. A hundred dogs bite one lizard.
Rafter of a house.

98. The two brothers live together but never enter each other's house.
Shoes.

99. You can hear the noise of the ring and see its mark on the road.
Cart-wheel.

100. This creeper has only one fruit, but inside that fruit there is a flower.
Lamp.

101. A little sparrow scattered its feathers about the whole house.
Lamp.

102. There is a fire in its mouth; its tail drinks water; we all love it, for it's like a queen.
Lamp.

103. It has a head but no heart. It walks but cannot speak.
A copper coin.

104. The flower is in the water but the fruit is in the tree.
Wild fig.

105. The black seed is sown in the white field.
Ink and paper.

106. A little wood-pigeon has a fat tummy. Where are you off to, pigeon? To meet the king.
A letter in the post.

107. The bullock sits down and its tethering cord runs away.
A pumpkin.

108. The tethering cord is long and many calves are tied to it.
Cucumbers on their stalk.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

524

109. The ram cries when you touch its horn.
Grindstone.

110. The small drum has holes at either end.
Mahua flower.

111. The two brothers clean their teeth with one twig.
Two wheels and one axle.

112. There's no tree near the seed. If you eat it, it disappears.
Hailstone.

113. It cannot understand, but others understand; it is not a man, but it walks day and night.
A watch.

114. It grows in the sun and dies in the shade.
Sweat.

115. It shoots its arrow, but it has neither bow nor hands.
A porcupine.

116. Licks quickly and looks up.
A hoe.

117. It is life without bone, it is black but it's no young buffalo.
A leech.

118. All is burnt but the king's small piece of cloth.
A path.

119. Everything in the forest is burnt but the yogi's sack.
Date-palm grub.

120. The big creature has small eyes, ears like winnowing-fans and no wings.
Elephant.

121. A black cow has a thousand feet; it jumps on to the king's dinner.
A fly.

122. Daughter-in-law's name is Koelapati; mother-in-law's name is Tarro. It goes round the village making a noise.
Government and Kotwar.

123. A little pig has a cord in its bottom.
Needle and thread.

124. Whistle and the pole waves to and fro.
Tail of a dog.

125. The big forest has a little forest at one end.
A dog and its tail.

126. The vagina is underneath, the penis is above.
Tail of a cow.

127. In front, it cuts with a sickle.
In the middle, it fills a basket.
Behind, it sweeps with a broom.
A cow.

128. A little girl ties a lot of cloth round her waist.
Spinner's bobbin.

129. This house has no doors.
Kosa-cocoon.

130. If you give, I will give.
Joker greeting.

.2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

524

131. The plough has ten servants; each bullock has five. They catch the mangoes. They shut the little door; they fill the house with water.
Love-making and intercourse. The ten and five are the fingers.

132. Two sisters live together with one husband.
Tongs.

133. From the tree-top falls a green leaf.
A parrot comes down to feed.

134. The goad with a little mouth. Who knows what it is?
The person who is bitten knows.

135. Catch it firmly, throw it away.
Nasal discharge.

136. The pillar of the Raja's house sounds *has mas*
The Raja shakes it and it trembles *dal dal.*
Plantain.

137. The fruit of the jungle climbs to the sky.
Whirlwind.

138. A crooked footprint on a broad leaf.
The navel.

139. Throw it down, but it won't break.
Kosa-cocoon.

140. On a burnt tree the vultures sit.
People round liquor.

141. The Manjhi who fells you to the ground.
Landa rice-beer.

142. The roasted hen jumps alive out of its own bottom.
Burnt grass springing up again.

143. The fencing is decorated, the water of the tank sparkles. If you don't know the answer, you will be a girl's *kabári* (bond-servant).
A mirror.

144. The earth is sticky: the lid is the broken half of a pot.
Tortoise.

145. Bastar's Raja and Kanker's Rani have the same face.
Mandia and sarson seed.

146. When he eats, his thighs are swollen.
A man puffs out his cheeks as he plays the mohori-trumpet.

147. The Mohammedan's horse is full of holes; however many mount it, it never wearies.
A country cot.

148. The leather is cut into threads. The thread is tied to seven drums. Some is tied in a knot, some is tied to a cot, the rest is put out to dry, and the kite without claws comes and kicks it down.
A spider's web spoilt by the wind.

149. The pole stands up without support.
Hair.

150. There's a bunch of corn on the withered tree.
A scorpion.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

IV. Folk-tales

X 883 538 Folk-tales and legends are told in the ghotul if there is a boy there who knows any. There does not seem to be a formal 'right' of possession over a particular story, but in practice certain stories are connected with special people. One boy knows a story which was taught him by an elder boy on leaving the ghotul or by his father, and this boy is always called on to recite it.

X 883 538 533 No one is likely to forget the experience of listening to one of these stories, which are often in a sort of rhythmic prose and chanted to a recognizable tune. The most remarkable that I have heard was a long and rambling Ghotul Pata chanted by Dasru of the Markabera ghotul. Dasru sat in the middle of the room, a little group of boys near him, the other chelik and motiari reclining near. He sat very upright and sang with great animation, gesticulating with his hands and the boys near him joined in a chorus and beat the ground with little sticks.

I heard another beautifully sung story in the Masora ghotul. This was the tale of the Ogre and the Little Girl; the boy who 'owned' it was a very small boy, the Anter. He and a friend sang in a curious shrill falsetto and the whole ghotul joined in the chorus:

Rai sarso sarso phul nuniks nāngar gurdum—gurdum gurdum gurdum.
Rākas bukas barma bhat des nuni kuchi kwar—gurdum gurdum gurdum.

The story was chanted in a kind of rhythm, while the beat of the chorus was irresistible, the boys booming grandly on the *gurdum*.

Sometimes the narrative of the tale is in 'prose' and is recited in the ordinary speaking voice, and the dialogue is sung, occasionally in rhymed couplets. The boys and girls sit round listening with great attention, and nod their heads saying '*Hingo*, Yes', at the right moments.

X 883 538 Most of these stories have been published separately for it would have taken too much space to include them here.[1] I am, however, giving two narrative poems which throw some light on conditions of life in the ghotul. The first is the Ghotul Pata mentioned above, which illustrates the custom of a ceremonial beat for fish before a festival, the appointment of the Gaita's children as ghotul leaders, and the relations of brother and sister in the dormitory.

X 883 539

Ghotul Pata of Markabera

The Gaita of the village gathered them all together saying,
'Look brothers, the month of Magh has come again,
And we must decide about the Mango Festival'.
Everyone came and eagerly decided,
For already other villages had kept the Festival.
'Certainly, we also will keep the Festival, but what curry shall we eat?'
'Haven't we many chelik and motiari in our ghotul?
Send the chelik and motiari to catch fish for the Festival.'
So said the leaders, and the chelik and motiari prepared to go.
When they were ready the chelik and motiari went to catch fish.

[1] See my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), which includes many Muria stories; some appear to be original, others turn on such universal motifs as those of the Quest, Grateful Animals, Brother-Sister Incest, the Hero on Pilgrimage.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
539

OTHER RECREATIONS

There the Gaita's son Negi was leader of the chelik,
And his daughter too was leader of the girls.
In the midst of the jungle, there was a lake which they emptied.
While the others were emptying it, Negi lay down and slept,
Though Negi was one of a party of chelik and motiari.
Draining, draining this water, at last the tank was emptied and the fish were caught.
They all started home, but no one woke up Negi.
Even his sister had forgotten him, but she remembered on the way.
She said, 'My brother is sleeping, go and wake him up'.
This she said to everyone, but no one listened to her.

So she left them and herself went back to wake him up.
She thought in her mind, 'How am I to wake him?
If I touch him and wake him, they will say I am his wife'.
Thinking thus, she took some clay from a white-ant hill to rouse him.
She threw it at his head, with this she woke him up.
The sister then started to go back home,
And Negi also got up and walked along behind her.
The chelik and motiari on their way thought they would laugh at them.
The chelik and motiari began to say to them,
'You two, sister and brother, must have been to one another,
So from our caste we are going to turn you out'.
Thus talking they reached the house of their parents, and told them this story.
In anger they turned them out of the village.

These two left that country and went to seek another.
Thus walking for days, Negi and his sister left their own country.
They had no rice, and on the way they grew very hungry.
On they went and at last they reached a forest-clearing.
In that clearing there was a creeper of cucumbers.
Of the fruit only two were ripe, all the rest were green.
The owner counted them every day; then the old man went to sleep in his house.
From this same creeper Negi took one cucumber, and the two shared it together.
Next day when the old man came, he found one ripe cucumber was missing.
He returned to his house and told his old woman,
'I don't know who has eaten our cucumber, but be quick and make my food,
I will make a machan there and sleep to watch my creeper'.

The old woman, his wife, cooked his food quickly;
He ate it and went back to his clearing and made a machan.
The old man was sleeping there when Negi came again.
The old man asked him, 'Who are you that steals my cucumber?'

'I am the son of your younger brother.
My sister and I have been turned out from our country.
Old father, we have come to you for shelter, for we have been starving.'

The old man and woman thought to themselves,
'We have no children and if we keep these two,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

They will earn money and look after us'.
Thinking thus, they took them to their house and Negi began to earn.

The old man went out to find a wife for Negi.
Having found the girl, he married him.
Negi's wife stayed for two months, then ran away.
The old man and old woman, they also died soon.
Afterwards, the brother and sister thought thus:
'Those two were protecting us, they were our mother and father,
We will perform funeral rites in their honour.'

Negi chelik now was ready to wander in the jungle.
He had two dogs, whose names were Sauran and Bhauran:
Taking these two dogs with him, he went wandering through the jungle.
His sister in the house thought thus:
'My brother has gone to the jungle, he will come back hungry,
I will cook food quickly.'

So thinking she went to find some fire.
She went round the village searching, she grew tired but could not find it.
She saw smoke somewhere in the jungle:
To that place she went for fire.
That fire was in the abode of a Churelin.
The Churelin was not in the house, but her son was there,
'O brother, give me fire', said the girl.

Seeing the girl, he thought, 'I will keep this girl'.
There was a broken earthen pot,
He made a small hole at the bottom.
Above it he put ash and on the ash he put fire,
And he gave it to her.
He did this so that as she went, the ashes might fall on the way.
The girl went home and kindled fire and prepared rice and curry.
From towards the jungle her brother came back home.
To him she served food and ate herself.

Next day the Churelin's son followed the ash and came to her house.
When he arrived, the girl was pounding rice.
The boy came in and sat in her lap.
The girl said, 'Go away, for if my brother sees you,
He will kill you', thus said the girl.
But when he would not go, she took him in and hid him in an earthen pot.

He said, 'In my mother's house there is a mango tree,
Send your brother there for mangoes and my mother will catch him and devour him'.
Hearing this, the girl decided to do as he told her.
When her brother came home she sent him out for mangoes.
The boy went to pick mangoes with his two dogs.
He climbed the mango tree and began to pick them.
'Why are you plucking my mangoes?' Saying this, the Churelin came out of the house.
Negi seeing this was frightened, but the dogs were underneath the tree.
He signalled to them and they began to chase her.
The dogs bit and killed her and Negi came home with the mangoes.
Negi gave the mangoes to his sister and she ate them.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

883X
539

The girl went in and said to the Chuvelin's son,
'The Chuvelin was no match for my brother, for he has killed her'.
The boy said, 'Say to your brother, "I cannot sleep.
O brother, go and bring the flower of sleep, then only can I sleep".
If you say so, he will go to bring the flower.
He will die there as he seeks the flower, and we will live happily.'
Hearing this, she said so to her brother,
'I cannot sleep, brother, go bring the flower of sleep'.

Negi got ready to bring this flower.
The flower of sleep was beyond three seas.
The seas were in the way, he could not reach the flower.
He came to the sea, and there was a frog who asked him:
'Where are you going and what are you going to bring?'
'My sister cannot sleep, so I am going to bring the flower of sleep.'
Negi said to the frog, 'Will you help me cross the sea?'
The frog hearing this helped him cross the sea.
When he had crossed one sea, there was another. There was no way to go.
There too he searched for a way across and could not find it.

There was a crocodile and Negi said to it,
'I am going to find the flower of sleep, will you help me cross the sea?'
And the crocodile helped him to do so.
When he had crossed the sea, on the other side there lived a Raja.
He had a beautiful daughter who slept in a house apart.
Before this house there was a tamarind.
Negi made his camp beneath this tree.
The Raja's daughter saw Negi.
She asked him, 'Why have you come?'
Negi said, 'My sister cannot sleep and I am going to bring the flower of sleep for her'.
She said, 'Don't go yourself, I will send someone to bring it for you'.
Saying this she took Negi to her house and called her mother.
'Mother, I cannot sleep, will you get me the flower of sleep?'
Hearing this the Rani went to bring the flower.
She brought the flower and stuck it over the door.

The whole night Negi slept with the princess.
Then he travelled home and came to his sister.
Negi asked his sister why she had tried to kill him.
She swore she was innocent, and Negi drew his sword.
'If you are truthful your tongue will not be cut even by a sword,
If you are not truthful, your tongue will be cut'.[1]
His sister touched the sword with her tongue, and it was cut immediately,
And so her brother killed her with the sword.
He cut her body into seven pieces.
The Chuvelin's son was watching all this from the house.
Through fear he ran out of the house.
Negi saw him and ran after him to catch him.
He caught him and killed him.

After this he married the princess and they began to earn their living.
After a few days Negi became rich.

[1] In Bastar, as in other States, the royal swords are regarded as sacred. Many Chiefs regard an oath on a sword as specially binding.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
539

Now he thought, 'Let me go and see what my parents are doing'.
Taking with him all his wealth, he went to his parents' country.
There he built a big house and began to live there.
His parents had been rich when he was living with them.
After he was driven out, they became very poor.
They used to beg from house to house,
And even then got scarce enough to fill their stomachs.
They were so poor that even the dogs did not look at them.

The father came to Negi for alms.
'O merchant, give me something, for I am very poor.'
He said thus, and did not recognize Negi.
But his son recognized him and said,
'Where do you come from, and where is your house?
How many children have you got?'
'O merchant, I had one son whom I turned out of my country.
Since then I have become a poor man.'
'Who am I, do you recognize me?'
'O merchant, I cannot recognize you', said the old man.
'I am your son, whom you drove out of your house.'
Hearing this the old man was frightened.
He fell at his son's feet and caught them firmly with his hands.
From that day Negi kept him in his house.
They lived and ate together and ruled their affairs.

The Marriage of Siri Somni Raja

The following song (the original of which is in Gondi) was recorded at Penjori, two miles away from the famous shrine of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon. It gives a vivid picture of a Muria betrothal. In places it almost suggests a world ruled by chelik and motiari. The punishment of the Rani by the Manjhi is entirely in the ghotul tradition. The early list of ghotul titles is interesting.

The earth of villages was born,
Places and lands were born,
Mata Maoli was born,
In the world above were many islands,
In the world below were seven islands,
In the middle was Singaldip.
To the Gaita belonged the villages.
There was a Manjhi.
There was the Raja's land, land of four corners.
There was a Raja Siri Somni,
He was a little boy.
The father of Siri Somni was Kunkal Siri Raja.
Kunkal Siri Raja died.
The mother of Siri Somni Raja was Bai Durgal Kani.
She wept very loudly crying, 'O my Lord has died.
Here is my land of villages, what am I to do?
I am a woman, I have a son,
He knows not how to read a paper,
He knows not how to do justice.
What am I to do?'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

883X
539

Siri Somni Raja daily grew older,
He ate milk and ghee and butter,
He slept in gold cotton,
He rubbed red powder on his body,
He grew tall as a shrub,
He grew bigger daily.
He became mature,
Siri Somni Raja.

Then said Bai Dursal Rani,
'I'll arrange the marriage of my son,
I'll perform his marriage'.
'With what city's Rani?'
'There is a girl in Kathinggura city.'
'Whose daughter is she?'
'She is the daughter of Katsunga Rani.'
So she thought in her mind.
The Rani sent to arrange the betrothal.
'I'll marry her in her cradle.
I've many servants,
I've my Negi Jogi,
I've my Pande Pardhan,
Hear my word all of you.'
'What's the matter, Rani?'
'Kathinggura city,
Go there for the betrothal.
I'll marry her in her cradle.'

Negi Jogi got ready,
Pande Pardhan got ready.
'We will go, Maharani.'
Three handfuls of pulse,
He ate it raw,
Diwan Kshattri sat to eat it.
Jarihkhan Musalman,
With a crippled hand ate his food raw.
Bodelal was a chilli-eater.
Many kinds of curry made with ghee,
Eighty kinds of curry made with arsi oil,
Two kinds of curry made with mahua oil,
Curry of bitter *kurais*,
They ate the thirty-two different kinds of food,
Those men who were going for the betrothal.
That is how they ate their food.

This is how they dressed.
In dhoti of *pitambar* cloth,
With other cloth like gold,
With shoes on their feet,
Shoes made of sambhar skin,
Shots covered with the skins of mice,
Their stockings made of lizard skin,
Hilmi and Kamdar prepared to go.
They put on their ornaments,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X993
893
539

They had supari nuts of iron,
Their *pān* was made of pipal leaves,
They were chewing it *mayure, mayure*,
Colouring their teeth.
Holding sticks in their hands,
Their turban's flap like a Banjari bullock's tail.

They went along like old bullocks,
They went three days' journey.
O the spear of the mahua tree!
They went carrying the spear.
Then they approached the city,
They did Johar to their father-in-law.
'Who are you calling father-in-law?'
'We are your sister's sons.'
When they said this, they brought a long and broad cot for them,
Carpet-soft fit for a Raja.
They put the spear down on a stone,
They had their grass bundles with them,
They gave grass to the spear,
And the spear ate the grass.

'Hear, *mâma*, hear,
We have come to wear a flower.'
'What flower is this you want to wear?
What flower can you get now?
If you had come at Diwali, you could have worn the pumpkin flower,
You could have worn the flower of the beanstalk,
You could have put them in your ears.'
'We have not come for flowers like those.
You have a daughter, we have come for her.'
'What is this you are saying, my sister's son?
My daughter is a child, what will you do to her?
She is swinging in her cradle.'
'Her I will marry in the cradle.
Hear, *mâma*, hear, let us talk of marriage,
I have lack of nothing, I have a twelve-year pig,
I have an eighty-years castrated goat,
I have rice and pulse in plenty.'
Thus they arranged the marriage to take place in two-and-a-half months' time.
'We are going, let the matter thus remain,
We will come in two-and-a-half months.'

Then they did Johar and went back home to Bai Dursal Rani.
Diwan Kshattri asked, 'What did you do with the flower?'
'We did well; the marriage will be in two-and-a-half months' time.'
'There were men of twelve villages, O Rani,
We settled everything with them.'
'Call the men of nine towns for Siri Soonni's marriage;
There are many villages all around, like a bunch of bells.'
Such was this country;
The market was as in the days of their fathers;
There were Gaita and cultivators and Manjhi Mukasi,
There were poor men and rich; it was a great country.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

883^x
539

In this country there were chelik and motiari.
There are seven-score girls and six-score boys,
There are boys in the ghotul lovely as a bison horn.
There is a leader of the seven-score girls,
Her name is Gadakare Mode.
Her navel is one cubit long,
She looks like a sack of salt from Nandgaon.
Bai Durual Rani was thinking in her mind:
'The chelik and motiari of my village will bring leaves and wood.
In the upper village there is Negi Sai Kotwar;
Go and call the Kotwar, bring him quickly here.'
'Come, Kotwar, the Rani is calling you.'
'Why is she calling me? I have stolen nothing.'
His soul trembled *duk duk*,
For fifteen days he could not eat.
He put on a cloth one cubit long.
He went to the Rani and asked her what she wanted.
'I want nothing, but there are nine towns:
There are chelik and motiari there.
Go and fetch them for the marriage of Siri Somni;
Beat your drum and bid them come;
Tell them to bring leaves and wood.'
'I am hungry, Rani, give me gruel to eat.'
'There is no gruel, Kotwar, what can I do?
There is rice-water twelve years old,
Frogs and lizards have fallen in it.'
'I like such gruel; give me some to eat.'
She gave him a measure of salt and a handful of chillies,
His moustaches said *suyi suyi* as he drank,
His throat cried *gurgur gurgur*.
As he ate the frogs and lizards, his mouth went *pilos pilos*.
'There will be coarse rice in the small houses,
There will be fine rice in the big houses,
We will bring it for the marriage.'
So saying the Kotwar drank his gruel.
He so filled up his belly that his loin-cord broke.
The Kotwar was naked, he got up and ran away.
His penis was one-and-a-half handspans long,
His pubic hairs were one cubit long,—
With his two hands he hid his penis and so ran away.

There was a grazier woman wearing twelve cubits of cloth.
He went to her and snatched her cloth away,
The Kotwar tied that dhoti down to his knees.
The grazier woman ran away covering her vagina with her hands.
The seven-score chelik were playing marbles in the ghotul.
She ran into the midst of them.
The boys cried, 'She is taking away our marbles'.
So saying, those boys chased her.
They cried, 'Don't take away our marbles, grazier girl'.
The grazier girl was running in front, the boys ran behind.
She went into her house, the boys followed her inside.
Her vagina was one handspan broad,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
539

Her clitoris was four fingers long,
Her pubic hairs were long as thatching grass.
The grazier girl removed her hands, the boys saw the sight.

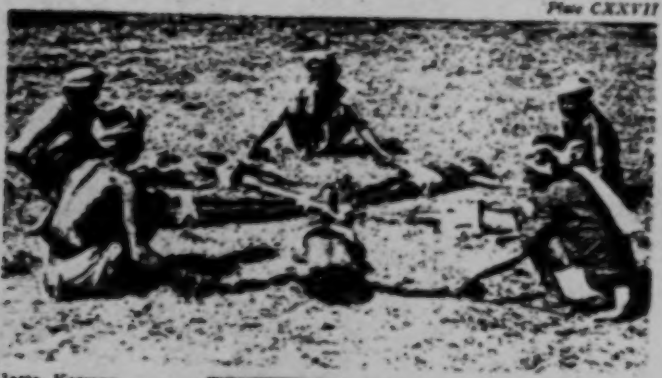
Negi Sai Kotwar was beating his drum,
Proclaiming the marriage of Siri Somni Raja.
There was the chelik Singa, handsome as the *singa* fish;
There was the chelik Pola, like a deer's tail;
The crippled Nawje was carrying an axe;
The long-haired Latiya held a spear;
Welal had a battle-axe;
The stupid staring Bakke was carrying a lizard;
Chital had a rat;
Batal had a hare.
There was Gadakare Mode;
There was Gango like a *gogum* flower;
Big-cheeked Buke distributed rice-husks;
Broken-fingered Thoti gave out curry;
Bhime was stitching leaves;
Mule sat silent;
Gengre called the pigs, snuffling through her nose.
Little Thubri was going to market;
Dogri was picking beans;
Lahari was picking brinjals.
Singal chelik was driving the cart,
Driven by uncle-nephew buffaloes.
The motiari went with Singal,
The chelik told them to go,
They went to pick leaves for the marriage.
They went to the golden hill with the noise of a thousand men,
They gathered wood and came home shouting.

Singal chelik prepared to go with them,
Gadakare Modé also prepared her cart.
Her navel was seven cubits long.
Singal chelik yoked the uncle-nephew buffaloes to his cart.
Singal went ahead with the cart, and the others followed.
They went with the clamour of a thousand men.
As they went to Siri Somni Raja, they passed a river on the way.
The girl Gadakare Mode was thinking in her mind,
'I will block the road[1] and not let them pass'.
She went into the river-bed and dug the sand,
She hid there covering herself with sand;
Everything was covered but her navel stump.
Singal brought the cart by that way and drove it over the navel stump;
The axle stuck against the stump, but Singal tried to urge the cart forward.
He was beating the buffaloes.
They were saying, 'What has the cart stuck on?'
There was a one-eyed boy, he saw what it was.

[1] *Hasv alakna*, to stretch a rope across the way before a marriage party or hunters returning successful from a beat. It is a form of Neng: see my *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, p. 9.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Y883
524



Jatta Karsana at Metawand

Mao Karsana: Hunt-the-Buffalo, at Markabera

Godina Karsana: Rolling-over game at Kohibera

[p. 606(N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CXXVIII

A883
524

Wanjing Karsana : Rice-husking game, at Temrugaon

Rice-husking in fact

[253]

[p.606(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
539

OTHER RECREATIONS

'So many boys and girls were here, but none of them could see it,
But I the one-eyed boy have seen it,
It is the girl Mode who has done this.'
'Listen, O Mode, we know it is you who has blocked the road.'
'Yes, it is, but this is my custom.'
'You have stopped the cart with your navel stump,
Now let it go, we will give you liquor.'
Then Mode let the cart go by.

The boys brought wood and leaves,
They took them to the palace of Bai Dursal Rani.
Rani Dursal sent Negi Jogi and Pande Pardhan to bring the bride.
A thousand men went to bring her, a three days' journey they went,
They went to Kathingpura city.
Jangobai, the daughter of Katsunga Rani was swinging in her cradle.
They had come for her marriage, the Raja and Rani also came there,
She was swinging in her cradle and crying *taring taring*.
They brought her to Siri Somni's house with a great noise of drums.
In that palace of seven rooms there was the marriage.
Inside was Siri Somni and outside Jangobai in her cradle.
So the cradle marriage was performed.
Then the Manjhi asked about *paisuni*.[1]

The Manjhi was a Dhurwa, he had no moustaches; it was he who asked this.
His head was like a booth overgrown with beans,
His eyes were like small earthen pots,
His nose was like a bamboo pole,
His teeth were like choppers,
His chest was as big as a cart-wheel,
His ears were like winnowing-fans,
His legs were like branches of the *pirsi* tree,
His beard was like a broom,
His moustaches were like thatching grass,
His eyebrows were like ears of *hirwa*-pulse,
His rectum was like a pit in the field.
The Manjhi was like this, he was an important Manjhi.
There was a mongoose whose fur was like thatching grass.
It asked Gadakare Mode for a present.
'What can I give you? I will give you a rupee,
I will give you gold and silver.'
'I don't want these things, what I want is your breasts.'
Then the mongoose jumped over her breasts and cut them off.
This Gadakare Mode went to the chelik;
When the boys saw her they asked her where she had been.
'I have been to relieve myself.'
'Don't deceive us, we know what you have been up to.'

Siri Somni Raja was growing bigger every day,
Jangobai Maharani was also growing up every day.
Siri Somni looked on her as his sister.
Jangobai called him her elder brother.

[1] Chhattisgarhi expression for sending a girl to her husband's house when she has matured.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 823
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

They used to go together to relieve themselves,
They used to sleep and play together,
They used to eat and drink and sit together.
Then the Raja became mature.
In youth there is strength, in age disease.
So passed seven years of Siri Somni's life.

Then Jangobai Rani also became mature.
Rani Dursal looked on her as her daughter.
The Manjhi thought to himself, 'Why does she call her daughter-in-law daughter?
Let us go and explain things to the Rani'.
So the Manjhi went to her and the Rani came out.
She gave him a cot and the Manjhi sat upon it.
Then he explained to her that Jangobai was her daughter-in-law, not her daughter,
'We have come to tell you this, now we are going away'.
The Manjhi went to Sonorupo Kalarin's house.
'O Kalarinbai, give me as much liquor as can be made by twelve out-stills.'
She gave it to him to drink in a pot;
The Manjhi drank himself drunk from a *parsa* leaf.
'Send some men to bring the Rani here.'
They went to call the Rani,
They went to the Rani and said, 'The Manjhi is calling you'.
The Rani said, 'Why is he calling me, I have not punished anyone,
I have not stolen anything', but she prepared to go,
The Rani went to the Darbar.
She saluted the Muria with Johar and the Hindus with Ram Ram,
And salaamed also Jaribkhan Pathan.

The Manjhi approached her holding in his hand a *chamargola* stone.
He made the Rani hold the stone against her ears and get up and down.
In this way he punished her.
At last the Rani grew tired, and there was pain in her knees;
She begged the Manjhi to let her go.
'Why are you punishing me?'
'Because you were calling your daughter-in-law your daughter.'
'She used to call me mother, what else could I do?'
'Now you must do this, rub wood-ash on your body,
And so rubbing yourself with ashes, go to your daughter-in-law.'
She was inside the house, she was swinging in her swing.
The Rani called, 'Daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law, O Jangobai'.
The girl came out and asked, 'What is that white stuff on your body?
Have you taken opium and liquor, O mother?'
'I have taken no opium or liquor, daughter-in-law.'
'Don't call me daughter-in-law, that is sinful,
For I am not yet betrothed to any man.'
Jangobai got angry and seized Dursalbai by the hair;
She kicked her and hit her with her fists.
'Don't beat me, daughter-in-law, wait a little.'
Jangobai beat her and satisfied her anger.

Holding the water-pot in her hand, she prepared to fetch water,
She went to fetch water at the old tank, to cook thirty-two kinds of food.

X883
S24

Tedapotur Karsana
at Sidhawand

Plate CXXIX

Manjmeta chelik playing
the Watin Karsana

[P-608(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Good AW32
Muria

X883
534

Plate CXXX

The Root Game

Planting the roots

Pulling up a root

[p. 608(R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
524

Plate CXXXI

Carrying the roots to be washed in the river

Washing the roots

[1.608(c)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
5v4

Plate CXXXII

The Mogral Karnam, or Crocodile game

X883
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Wrestling at Kolibura

[p. 608(a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

X983
539

Jangobai went to fetch water,
She went along the footpath to fetch water.
Seven pairs of girls were on the path.
The Rani was going along the path and the girls asked her,
'Where are you going, Rani, you never go this way?
Where has your husband gone? You should have him with you'.
'I am not married, girls, I have no husband.'
'When you were in the cradle then you were married.'
The Rani said to them, 'Don't talk indecently'.
As she took out the water, she said to them,
'If I have a husband, I will draw clear water,
If I have no husband, the water will be like blood'.
So saying she took out the water,
It was clear water that she drew.
Taking the water in a pot she went home.
She said, 'Where is the rice?'
'Look in the house, there is rice and pulse, O daughter-in-law,
There is every kind of curry made of ghee, and eighty kinds of curry made with arsi oil,
O daughter-in-law, Siri Somni Raja is coming now,
When the Raja comes, give him water in his hand,
Put a tooth-twig in his hand and give him water for his bath.'
When the Raja came his Rani gave him water in his hand.
'O Raja, take this twig and use it.'
'You are my sister, how is it you are giving me water in my hand?'
So saying the Raja ran away for shame.
Daughter-in-law Jango Rani took her food and went to sleep.
After eating, the food that remained was hung from the roof.

At night Jango slept on the threshold on her cot.
The Raja came at night and knocked against the cot.
Siri Somni Raja thought in his mind,
'If I go under the cot, they will say he went under his sister,
If I go above the cot, they will say he went to his sister,
But somehow or other I will go inside the house'.
The Raja went over the cot into the house,
The Raja was hungry, he was searching for food,
He found the food hanging from the roof,
There was a dish which fell down.
Bai Dursal Rani said,
'Get up, daughter-in-law, the cat with half a tail may have come'.
Jangobai got up and shut the door.
She went inside and began to quarrel.
The next day the Raja thought, 'I will demand three-score ploughs in service'.
He said to the mother, 'Bring gruel'.
The plough was of iron, the yoke also was of iron,
In the hen's egg was gruel, in the pea-hen's egg was rice,
In the pigeon's egg was curry.
She took it to the ploughing place.
Siri Somni Raja was ploughing,
Jangobai Rani took the gruel there.
'O Raja, lift down the food, it is a very heavy load.'

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X983
539

The Raja came and beat Jangobai.
Thence the Raja went to sit in his Darbar.
She gave the gruel to the ploughmen,
She gave them rice and returned home.
She said to her mother-in-law, 'I will not remain here.
Your son did not greet me, how can I remain?'
She took off her ornaments and put them in a basket,
She did Johar to Pande Pardhan,
She fell at the feet of her mother-in-law,
She did Johar to the servants.
Jangobai Rani went away taking her basket with her,
Jangobai was going along the road.
'Look, who is going on the road? Recover the road money.'
Majjar Khan Mussalman went to take the money.
'Where are you going, girl? Pay me the road money.'
'What shall I give? I have nothing, brother.'
She was wearing a ring on her finger, she was ready to give it.
Jangobai Rani gave him the ring.
He tied it to his waist, but it fell down;
He tied it to his cloth, but it fell down;
After that he wore it on his little finger where it stayed.
The lice on his head gathered in one place.

Siri Somni Raja stood up and went home,
He went inside the palace of nine rooms,
He slept on the long broad bed,
He slept on the bed facing upwards.
He saw a comb in the rafters.
The Raja tried to get the comb but it disappeared.
On that comb there was written the story of his marriage,
Of his marriage when he was a child in the cradle.
'Which is that Rani?' 'She is the Rani of Kathingpura.'
Jangobai's marriage was done when she was a child in the cradle.
The Rani's marriage was performed outside the palace in her cradle,
While inside was the Raja.
Thus it was written and the Raja read the story when he found the comb.
The Raja asked his mother Bai Dursal,
'Where has my wife Jangobai gone?'
'She has only gone to the bazaar to buy bangles.'

He went to the bazaar and there the Manjhi's daughter was wearing bangles.
He thought, 'This is my wife', and hit her thrice.
She said, 'Why are you beating me? I will make a report about you'.
'I thought you were my wife, that's why I beat you. It was a mistake,
Don't report the matter, I will give you five rupees.'
He returned to the house and again asked his mother, 'Where's my wife?'
'Your wife has left the house, my son.'
'I will go to look for her, make ready pulse and rice.'
He prepared his horse called Bagri Maro,
He decorated the saddle like a pharsa flower,
Bai Dursal Rani prepared the food.
Siri Somni Raja took it in a bundle.
He took his hostile knife and his sword like a lizard's foot.

398

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
534

1

Kur Karsana

1. Revealing a cock
2. Guessing the cock

2

[p. 610 (A)]

X
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534

Plate CXXXIV

The Parad-upihana Karsana which imitates the movements of the wood-pigeon

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

N 833
539

Siri Somni Raja tied them to his waist.
He prayed to the Hanal Pen[1] to look after him,
'I am going to search for my wife, you must help me'.
Bai Dursal Rani said, 'Do not go, my son'.

He beat the horse with a cobra snake for whip.
The horse Bagri Maro flew into the air.
Jango Rani was going ahead, the Raja followed her.
He could not catch her, he was a full two miles behind.
He reached the kingdom of Molol Sai.[2]
Molol Sai had seven wives, sitting in a palace of seven rooms.
Siri Somni went by riding on his horse.
The seven Ranis saw Siri Somni Raja.
'Call him, sister, we will give him a pipe to smoke.'
The Rani, seeing him, stood in the way,
She caught the bridle of the horse Bagri Maro.
'Where are you going, brother? Come to my house and smoke a pipe.'
'I do not smoke, nor do I eat tobacco.'
'You are a man, how is it you don't know how to smoke tobacco? You are like a woman.'
Shamed by these words the Raja then went to her house.
Four seers of lime and one seer of tobacco
She powdered and put it in the pipe.
The Raja pulled at the pipe and fire burst out.
With that fire the palace was burnt down.
He mounted his horse and rode away.
Molol Sai Raja had gone to eat grass.

Siri Somni Raja came to the land where everything was gum.
He saw gum on the way and halted by it.
He took fire-sticks from his pocket and burnt the gum.
Now he came to the land covered with traps.
There in a trap a sambhar had been caught.
He made his horse stand and went into the trap.
He went in, and relieved himself, coming out he let the trap-door fall.
He mounted the horse and rode away.
He came to Raimunda Garh where lived Dera Manga Raja,
And there was his Rani.
When he reached there, he found his Rani by his guru-magic.
He caught her and brought her to his kingdom.
On the way was the river Surug.
He reached it and prepared their food for dinner.

Jango Rani went to bathe in that river.
There were sixteen streams of the tank and thirty-two streams of the river.
As she was bathing, a bod-fish ate her.
Siri Somni Raja was cooking their food.
There were Nahar there, and they killed the Raja.
Two mongoose brothers called Jar Khandi came there.
They prepared to restore his life to Siri Somni Raja.
The mongoose gave life to the Raja.

[1] The Departed, his clan-ancestors. [2] Lord of the horse.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X983
539

The Raja came alive and went to find his Rani.
He crossed the sixteen streams of the tank and thirty-two streams of the river,
By his guru-magic he drank up the water of the tank.
In the tank there was no water, only the fish were left.
The Raja looked into the bellies of the fishes.
He found no trace of his Rani and he grew weary.
There was a frog and the Raja prepared to split open its belly.
The frog cried, '*Tarang tarang*, don't do this, O Raja,
I will tell you where your Rani is, but don't cut me open,
The bod-fish has eaten her and it is not here;
That fish has gone to Basum Katri's kingdom'.

There was a Kewat, and he killed the fish;
He caught the fish in his *dandar* trap made with thorns;
He took the fish home, and began to cut it up.
Jangobai was inside that fish's stomach.
She called out from inside, 'Cut carefully, O father'.
Hearing this the old man cut carefully.
Jangobai then came out from the fish's stomach.
When they saw her, the old man and his wife were very pleased;
'We have no son or daughter, we will keep this girl'.
Jangobai Rani looked like a fire.
Basum Katri Raja went to see his city.
He saw Jangobai and thought in his mind that he would marry her;
He said to the old Kewat and his wife,
'Give me your daughter, I will marry her'.
'This is a poor man's daughter, how can you marry her?'
'Somehow or other I will marry her.'
Basum Katri Raja prepared for the marriage.
The marriage was performed, all but the Lagir.
Siri Somni came there searching for his wife;
Siri Somni Raja came as a sadhu,
To the place where Basum Katri's marriage was being celebrated.
He sat there, saying 'Hey Ram, Ram'.
He said to Basum Katri Raja,
'There is some trouble in your house, I will relieve it'.
'Maharaj, save me from this trouble.'
'I will do tika and thus save you from trouble.'
He pretended to put tika, but carried off his Rani.

Basum Katri Raja pursued them.
Siri Somni was ahead, Basum Katri followed.
On the way they met and fought,
The hostile knife and sword like a lizard's tail.
The knife was like a jackal's tongue and the straight sword like a dog's tongue.
They fought with these weapons but did no damage to each other.
They fought and fought, but neither could prevail.
Siri Somni said to Basum Katri Raja,
'I will come as rain, you try to stop the river'.
Basum Katri Raja laid down across the river,
Siri Somni rained for three days.
The river flooded and carried away Basum Katri Raja.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

883 X
539

The next day the Raja went to look for him.
Basum Katri Raja had been caught against a tree.
Siri Somni Raja found him there.
Siri Somni Raja said to Basum Katri Raja,
'Which of our mouths is red? Let's open them to see'.
So Siri Somni Raja deceived him.
Basum Katri Raja opened his mouth.
The hostile knife and sword like a lizard's tail pierced through his mouth.
Then Basum Katri Raja died.
Siri Somni took his wife home.
They reached their village and lived there and ate.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

It is a cart, if you know how to drive, boy.
It is a food, if you know how to eat, boy.
It is a path, if you know how to walk, boy.
It is a horse, if you know how to ride, boy.

—*Marriage song* (*Lagir Pata*) *of Malakot*

I

581

AMONGST ourselves marriage is so closely associated with an initiation into a sexual union and experience that was previously tabooed, that it is not easy at first to adjust ourselves to the outlook of a society that can so clearly distinguish between sexual love without marriage and domestic love within it.

For a Muria the sexual side of marriage is comparatively unimportant; he marries because he wants to have children whom he can call his own, so that he can have a home of his own, and so that he can have a partner whom he can regard as his own, over whom he has authority and a right, with whom relationship will be permanent and recognized.

This is not mere individualism; it is part of the process of growing up. It is the discovery that sexual excitement is not enough; it is often, as we shall see, the still deeper discovery that romantic attachment is not always the best foundation for a lifelong union. There is a beautiful saying in the *Rigveda* (III, 53, 4)—'Wife is the home; she alone is the place of rest'—which is well paralleled by something said by a young Muria wife at Phunder about life with her husband: 'It was like sitting down on a stool after a long and troubled journey.'

The life of pre-nuptial freedom ends in a longing for security and permanence. This desire is naturally more emphatic in the ghotul where partners are often changed. In Kongera a Muria said, 'You only get real pleasure from your own property; in the ghotul it is always someone else's'. And Gando of Jaitpuri said, 'I often remember my life in the ghotul, but you can't get that happiness always. That is only for four days, but life in your very own home lasts'. Man and wife become each other's property; they get a *haq* or 'right' over each other; and because everybody respects this right, regarding adultery as evil and dangerous, Muria marriage is secure and is not marred by fear, the source of jealousy.

Every Muria contrasts the free happy life in the ghotul with the economic drudgery of marriage. 'The ghotul is for happiness,' they said at Nayanar. 'The home is for work.' The Jamadar of Sorma said, 'Don't ask me about my youth, for in those days I never lacked tobacco and lime. But now I have lost my happiness in thinking always of my belly'. Many songs underline the contrast.

581
539

O the kingdom of the unmarried!
You will never see that kingdom more.
Of housework you know nothing.
You went wandering in the fields,
Looking like a sarus crane.
Early morning you would go;
Evening you'd come home again.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

581
539

O that beautiful ghotul!
Every day you went to clean it.
The road was like a jackal's tail.
You used to go along that road.
In your left hand was a winnowing-fan,
In your right hand a broom,
At sunset you would go there.
You will never see that Raj again.
Now you are going to your husband's house.
Now your pleasure will be work in the house.
You have got no sense at all.
Your husband will curse you,
Your mother-in-law will curse you.
Holding your forehead you will weep.
You will remember the days of youth.
Then you will know what hardship is.
You have got no sense at all.

883
593
[591]

The first days of marriage certainly appear to emphasize this taunt. The new life together is not immediately satisfactory, especially for the girl. She has to stay in a house filled with her husband's relatives, and work for them. She has not yet a house, perhaps not even a room, of her own. It is not easy for her to adjust herself to the complete and drastic change in her life. 'A young wife,' they said at Mascra, 'is like a bulbul whose tail goes up and down all the time. So does she shake her buttocks. She cooks if she feels like it, gets water if she feels inclined. It is hard for her to forget she is no more a motiari; her feet itch to dance.' But she must never enter the ghotul again, the ghotul which for the last six or eight years has been the centre of her social and emotional life. She must avoid her old ghotul partners; she must forget her ghotul name; she must give away most of her ornaments; she has lost her freedom. Lingo Pen will no longer protect her from pregnancy, which indeed quickly follows. There are no more rapturous evenings round the ghotul fire, no more expeditions through the green forest to other villages, no more dancing to the light of torches at the great festivals. She is now a wife and must prepare to be a mother.

For the husband the change is less drastic. He may continue to spend his evenings in the ghotul, returning home late at night to sleep. This is perhaps the hardest trial that the young wife has to bear; she must abandon old romance, he may continue it. He even holds his ghotul title for six months or a year longer. He may go on expeditions, organise marriages, dance at festivals. But his sex life is undoubtedly curtailed. 'Now he is responsible,' I was told at Malakot. 'He is a man with wife and home. Fun and teasing is ended, touching others is ended; he has a wife. For his old habits the penalty is swelling and death. He may now only do it at marriages and at the sport of the gods at festivals.' Even his visits to the ghotul must soon end. Sooner or later he must lay down his office; sooner or later comes the day when the boys suggest that his presence is no longer so welcome as it was. He must then stop his visits or he will be fined and his poultry stolen.

But by this time married life has become established and serene. Happiness has begun to illuminate the hard tasks of home and field. That is why the Muria regard marriage of such supreme importance; everyone must pass through its gate to the fulfilment of tribal and social life. The ghotul with its many joys might easily have become an end in itself. But the Muria

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

regard it as a mere preparation; the ghotul is the school of marriage, a training-ground of the domestic virtues. 'When a girl learns to keep the ghotul clean, she will keep her husband's house clean; the boy who is taught to bring wood and work hard will do the same in his own house.'

Still more important, the ghotul exercises its members in the sexual arts and virtues. In other 'higher' societies, how many lives have been ruined on the marriage night![1] But when a newly-married Muria husband and wife approach each other, they are already sexually educated, graduates in the technique of love, instinctively able to avoid the dangers into which untried partners so easily fall. The agony of defloration is divorced from marriage; the hymen casts no shadow across its consummation. The husband is not likely to be repelled by frigidity or shocked by dispareunia—an experience which might later make him impotent. Not a little of the serenity and stability of Muria marriage is due to the fact that when husband and wife cross its threshold they are both prepared.

II. The Appeal of the Childhood Friend

But though the ghotul is a school of marriage, it is not a place for experimental marriages. According to Muria tradition a chelik should never marry his ghotul partner, and once a boy and girl are betrothed they are separated in the ghotul by the strictest of taboos.

For a long time I was under the impression that marriages had to be arranged between families living in different villages. But when I examined the matter statistically I was surprised to find that out of the 2000 marriages scrutinised, there were

Marriages between members of the same ghotul	765
Marriages between members of different ghotul	1235

Of the 765, between members of the same ghotul, there were

Lamhada (marriage by service)[2]	113
Irregular marriages (chelik marrying their ghotul-wives) ..	77
Betrothed in the ordinary way	575

These figures are sufficient to show that there is no official objection to boys and girls who are to marry each other later growing up in the same ghotul. This is significant when we remember that both boy and girl will be regularly cohabiting with others during the betrothal period. But that this does not interfere with their ultimate happiness is shown by the figures for divorce. These are very low, only 59, or under 3 per cent, for the whole tribe, but they rise startlingly in two special cases.

[1] 'The course of a marriage is determined by the wedding night.' With these words Dr R. S. Chesser opens her discussion of the Honeymoon in A. Forbath, *Love, Marriage, Jealousy* (London, 1938), p. 169. The Muria would think that very odd.

[2] Many of the Lamhada boys probably came from different villages, but after beginning their period of service would have had to join the same ghotul as their future wives.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

Type of Marriage	Number of Marriages	Number of Divorces	Percentage of Divorces
Marriage by service ..	113	13	11·50
Marriage with ghotul-wife ..	77	9	11·68
Others marrying in the same ghotul	575	2	0·34
Marriages between members of different ghotul ..	1235	35	2·83

One other figure may be given. Out of the 2000 men questioned 316 admitted that they had had some connexion with their wives before marriage, either at a festival or marriage, during a dancing expedition or at a bazaar. Of these 14 or 4·4 per cent were divorced later. This figure, of course, includes the 77 who married their ghotul-wives.

These statistics seem to me important. They suggest in the first place that where the rules of avoidance are properly observed, there is no danger to future happiness in betrothed couples growing up together. That 573 out of 575 of such couples should have made a success of their marriages is very striking. It is equally striking to discover that it is among those very persons who had opportunity for some sort of experimental marriage that the divorce rate is highest. The Lambada boy, as we see later in this chapter, spends his whole time with his future wife, working with her in the fields and in the house; ghotul mates in the *godiddr* dormitories do not usually share the same home, but they too spend a great deal of time together during the day and sleep together every night—often for five, six or seven years.

These figures throw some light on a problem which has been debated by Havelock Ellis, Westermarck and Briffault among others—whether the happiest marriages are between those who have grown up together or who have met later in life as strangers; a question which, if it could be settled, might throw some light on the origins of exogamy and the reason for the hostility to incest.

'Generally speaking,' says Westermarck, 'there is a remarkable absence of erotic feelings between persons living very closely together from childhood. Nay more, in this, as in many other cases, sexual indifference is combined with the positive feeling of aversion when the act is thought of. This I take to be the fundamental cause of the exogamous prohibitions.' This 'sexual indifference to housemates' he illustrates by an interesting communication from the headmistress of a co-educational school in Finland. 'One youth assured her that neither he nor any of his friends would ever think of marrying a girl who had been their schoolfellow; and I heard of a lad who made a great distinction between girls of his own school and other, "real", girls, as he called them.'[1]

Westermarck quotes the important passage from Havelock Ellis,[2] which I have already used in another connexion, to the effect that 'the normal failure of the pairing instinct to manifest itself in the case of brothers and sisters, or of boys and girls brought up together from infancy, is a merely negative phenomenon due to the inevitable absence under those circumstances of the conditions which evoke the pairing impulse. ... Between those who have

[1] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 192ff.
[2] Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection in Man*, p. 203.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

000 been brought up together from childhood all the sensory stimuli of vision, hearing and touch have been dulled by use, trained to the calm level of affection, and deprived of their potency to arouse the erethistic excitement which produces sexual tumescence.'

Briffault, however, contends that this is to confound the mating instinct with the sexual impulse.[1] I do not often find myself in agreement with Briffault, but on this point he so exactly expresses the Muria's opinion that I must quote him in full. He points out that the mating instinct has its chief foundation in habitual association (the Muria would say that at least it is not checked by such association) and 'a man's female companion of childhood quite often becomes his wife'. Love between associates of childhood has been the theme of countless romances, from *Daphnis and Chloe, Aucassin et Nicolette*, to *Paul et Virginie* and *Locksley Hall*.

> The psychological facts which have given rise to the notion that common upbringing is unfavourable to sexual attraction are that in relations with companions of the other sex, especially if established before the awakening of the sexual instincts, the sentiment of affection such as is created by use and wont, preponderates over the male sexual instincts, and that the two impulses are, as has been seen, antagonistic. The companion who is regarded with pure affection as part of one's habitual surroundings is thus less liable to become an object of simple sexual desire than the stranger. She is loved and married from affection and established companionship, and the masculine impulse is a superadded ingredient only of the sentiment with which she is regarded. These unions are hence viewed, not only without any suggestion of horror, but as the most desirable and suitable. And such, in fact, they are, for it is on companionship and affection, and not on sexual desire, that the success of permanent sexual association depends; and that association to be permanently possible must arise, in the first instance, from such companionship and not, as the theories of Dr Ellis and Dr Westermarck would demand, from 'erethism'. The mating instinct, where it exists in animals as well as in human beings, depends precisely upon the checking and subordination of the male's sexual impulse by the tenderness that is derivative of maternal instincts and which is both the cause and the effect of association.

Both sides make many references to primitive cultures, where as usual their arguments are weightier than their authorities, and to the behaviour of animals, stallions, buck-rabbits, mallards and even seals. 'I cannot resist reproducing Westermarck's quotation from Montaigne. 'I was fain to turn out into the paddock an old stallion, as he was not to be governed when he smelt a mare: the facility presently sated him as towards his own, but towards strange mares, and the first that passed by the pale of his pasture, he would again fall to his importunate neighing and his furious heats as before.'[2]

The Muria, just like the stallion and the buck-rabbit, and most of us, is excited by a new object of sexual attraction. A visiting chelik receives far more attention from the motiari than any of their regular boys; a new girl in the ghotul may for the time being threaten its solidarity. But this is nothing to do with the mating impulse which, for the Muria, is normally divorced from sexual desire or erethism. Westermarck's contentions explain the

[1] Briffault, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 244ff.
[2] Montaigne, *Essays*, Book II, Chapter XV.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

popularity of the modern ghotul where partners must frequently be changed; Briffault's explain the success and stability of Muria marriage.

The Muria themselves do not seem even to consider the point, whether future wives and husbands should grow up together. If it is convenient, they allow it; but they arrange their marriages on family and economic considerations. If a man wants to marry his son to his sister's daughter or to his wife's brother's daughter, as in the great majority of cases he does, he will not stop to consider whether the girl lives next door or beyond a mountain range; he will get down to the business side of the betrothal as soon as possible before anyone else can get in before him.

But there can be no doubt that the Muria recognizes the psychological danger of allowing a betrothed couple to get to know each other too well before marriage. He therefore imposes the strictest taboos on their behaviour towards each other with, as we have seen, the happiest results.

Where a future husband and wife live together in the same ghotul, they must have nothing whatever to do with one another. The girl must not comb the boy's hair or massage him; she must not, of course, sleep with or near him; she must not even salute him with the Johar. She must not give him liquor from her own leaf-cup or hand him tobacco. In the more intimate dances, like the Hulki, she must not dance in his arms. When the chelik of Binjhli wanted to do something very risky and modern, they tied the Kapatdar and his betrothed girl together with a turban, put them down on a mat and retired to see what would happen. The engaged pair struggled free, and without speaking to each other went to sleep in opposite corners of the ghotul.

In the *jodidār* ghotul, a boy and his betrothed are both 'married' to others, and in both types of dormitory have the fullest liberty to flirt and sleep as they will. In Masora I once watched Phirtu's betrothed massaging another boy and flirting outrageously with him. Phirtu was laughing at them. I said, 'Don't you mind?' 'Why should I?' he replied. 'I haven't any *haq* over her yet.' In Kanhargaon, the young motiari who was betrothed to the much older Sirdar played with so many chelik in his presence, kissing, hugging, fondling them, that he got disgusted and went out. But the others thought this was improper of him. 'She doesn't belong to him yet; why should he mind?'

The result of this curious ambivalent rule is apparently to increase desire. Once it is accepted that virginity is not even desirable in either wife or husband, the fact that they can watch each other and know everything that is going on does not rouse disgust but makes the partner all the more attractive and desired, more thrilling when at last possessed.

Is the rule of segregation kept? Not always. I have no statistics, but it is possible to say that almost everywhere there are stories of engaged couples who have slept together, caused scandal and eloped to ensure an early marriage.

But this is never with the idea of having some form of experimental union to discover whether they would really suit each other, still less with the idea of immobilizing the future partner from going to others before marriage. The great attraction of engaged couples for each other is a very simple matter: it is the fact that if there is a 'scandal', in other words if the girl becomes pregnant, it will not matter very much and there will be no fine. As usual, sex goes back to economics.

In that case, it may be asked, why was not the ghotul founded on this principle—that every chelik should pair off with his future wife, live with her till she conceived and then marry her? The answer to that has already been

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

000 given by Westermarck and Havelock Ellis and our own statistics. It simply does not work.

Another curious problem is this—why should engaged couples elope together? It is not uncommon—again I have no statistics, but I know of a dozen cases—where chelik and motiari, who were in any case going to be married, have gone to all the trouble and danger of an elopement. Why is this? It is generally due to economic causes. When the parents keep on postponing a marriage on financial grounds, sometimes the boy and girl get tired of waiting and force their parents' hands. This may be done either by the boy making his future wife pregnant, or by simply eloping to some friendly ghotul and persuading the members there to celebrate the marriage. When this is done, nobody really minds very much; for a lot of money is saved, and the married pair are received, when they return, with the usual honours. Such adventures do not seem to ruin the later happiness of the home.

Crawley has explained a similar policy of segregation during the period from engagement to marriage among other peoples as a magical taboo.[1] 'The principle is to prevent all intercourse until the particular ceremonies which obviate the danger of the new relation, mutual contagion between two particular persons, have been performed, and to prepare them for these and for the new state of life—the taboo of avoidance being thought to be in itself some guarantee of future safety.... The young people are about to enter upon a critical state, that of living in more or less close contact with each other, and as that state derives its dangers from their reciprocal influence, a taboo is set between them until it is removed by the ceremony which united them while rendering them mutually innocuous.'

It may be so. But I have a growing conviction that many of our conclusions about the sex life of primitive peoples have been vitiated by the earlier investigators' assumption that aboriginals knew nothing of sexual technique, had no idea of romantic love, and based their actions, even the most intimate, on magical principles and fears. Modern research is rapidly destroying these premises and, certainly for the Muria, I believe that much which convention would ascribe to magic and religion should really be attributed to the tribe's remarkable knowledge of the psychology of sex.

The taboo between betrothed couples is thus seen to be entirely practical. It aims at preserving the mutual stimuli of vision and touch.[2] It is connected with the universal admiration for modesty, the general appeal of reticence. Even if a chelik's wife is not a virgin absolutely, she should at least be a virgin for him. Where this condition is fulfilled marriages are most happy, and the divorce rate is at its lowest.

III. 'A Marriage has been Arranged'

X 583 582 584 It is only by a breach of all rule and tradition that a chelik's motiari can be his wife. We have seen this happen in 77 cases out of 2000 with a comparatively high percentage of marital failures. In some other cases a chelik is forced by an unlucky pregnancy into a marriage with a girl to whom he was not officially betrothed; in a few other cases romantic passion leads to an elopement. But the great majority of marriages are arranged by the parents, or

[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 25.

[2] Two proverbial sayings illustrate this. '*Dwrha ho hôja wih lâgo*, the distant drum is sweet' and '*Dwrha mâyo rudhâpan, najîdh mâyo gindpan*, the distant love is charming, the love at hand detestable.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rather—since so many alliances are formed according to the relationship laws —by the voice of society and tradition. The figures are as follows—

Number of—	Number	Percentage
Chelik marrying according to parents' wishes	1884	94·20
Cross-cousin marriages	1799	89·95
Divorces among arranged marriages ..	49	2·60
Irregular marriages	116	5·80
Marriages with ghotul partners ..	77	3·85
Marriages forced by pregnancy ..	26	1·30
Marriages by elopement on romantic grounds	13	0·65
Divorces among irregular marriages ..	10	8·62

The cross-cousin marriage is known as the *gudamol* or *gudapal*, the 'tribe-nest' or 'tribe-milk' marriage, and may be compared with the *dudh-lautāna* or 'bringing back the milk' of the Gond of the Central Provinces. Its popularity, to which the above figures abundantly testify, is not the least of the factors that bind the Muria as a tribe so close together. The *gudamol* is, of course, a marriage between a chelik and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or a motiari and her mother's brother's son or father's sister's son. In its *kutiyāri* form, the cross-cousin marriage is extended to cover persons in the same general classificatory relationship as these but less closely related. What this means in practice is that when a family gives a girl to another family in one generation, it gets a girl back in return in the next generation.

The advantage of this is manifest. The bride-price can be much lower. The clan-ancestors are satisfied—it will be remembered that when a girl leaves a clan at her marriage compensation must be put into the Pot of the Departed. Everything remains homely and familiar—there is the same set of *saga-samdhi*, there are no new relationships to be explored. Old-standing alliances are strengthened. Just as after death, steps are taken to ensure the return of the dead to his own family circle, so at marriage there is satisfaction at keeping the children within a certain range of families.

To the chelik and motiari subjected to this arrangement it appears less that their parents have settled their fate than that society itself has done so. The parents themselves must bow to tribal custom. This is, I think, important in view of the very strong hold of tribal custom and social solidarity upon the Muria, even upon the young Muria. Boys or girls may easily rebel against their parents; obscure complexes may well arouse in them dissatisfaction with anything their parents do; but they have a passionate devotion to the tribe. 'We love our laws', they say, 'and obey them far more readily than we obey the Government—for we made them ourselves.'

We should not therefore think of chelik and motiari as forced by some external influence into unions for which they have no desire; rather we may say that as part of society they follow society's laws.

The mother's brother's son, though he must be avoided, becomes a figure of romance, stronger than the most handsome chelik to whom there is ready access. He is often mentioned in the ghotul songs.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

983
58
539

O mother, the clouds look like smoke,
Each roof seems joined to the one next door.
I must go and see it, mother.
Whom will you go with, daughter?
I will go with my uncle's son, mother.
Don't go with him, daughter;
He will pour haldi over you.
Let him pour haldi if he wills, mother.
I can't rest till I go with him.

X983
584

In those cases where no *gudamoi* union is possible or convenient, the parents consider many things before they go to 'pluck the flower' of a betrothal. It may safely be said that the thought uppermost in their minds is the happiness of their child. A father seeking a daughter-in-law considers whether the women of such and such a family are hard workers, free from the taint of witchcraft, unstained by scandal. He does not seem to worry whether a girl is beautiful or no, though he would naturally prefer her to be 'well made and conformable'. When a betrothal party arrives at a house, a girl's parents discuss much the same things. Will the boy be a good worker? Has there been scandal in the family, signs of indifference to the laws of the clan? Is the boy himself steady, will he go through with the matter? The girl is consulted; if she strongly objects, the father sends the visitors away. Once she has agreed, however, he expects her to abide by her choice. In the song on p. 89 there is a hint that several betrothal parties may visit a house before the parents can make up their minds—a delay not always pleasing to the daughter.

X983
581

We have, therefore, in Muria society two very different traditions existing side by side. Before marriage, in the ghotul, boys and girls are encouraged to live to the full a life of romantic passion. For marriage, everything must be arranged on the lines of strictest commonsense. A boy can live with the girl he is in love with before marriage, but not in marriage. How does this arrangement work?

I am not here attempting to pass a personal judgement in this matter, I am not considering whether it is a good or a bad arrangement. The interesting thing is what the chelik and motiari think of it.

Generally, the boys and girls believe that what their parents, or rather society and the tribe, arrange makes for ultimate happiness. They may object to a particular choice made by their parents, but they do not object to their making a choice at all. It is easier for them to accept this position because what they think matters about marriage is not so much the partner as the whole condition of life so different from life in the ghotul. 'The ghotul is for happiness', they said at Nayanar. 'Marriage is for work.' They are more concerned about the new home than the new partner. The new way of life is more important than the person who will share it.

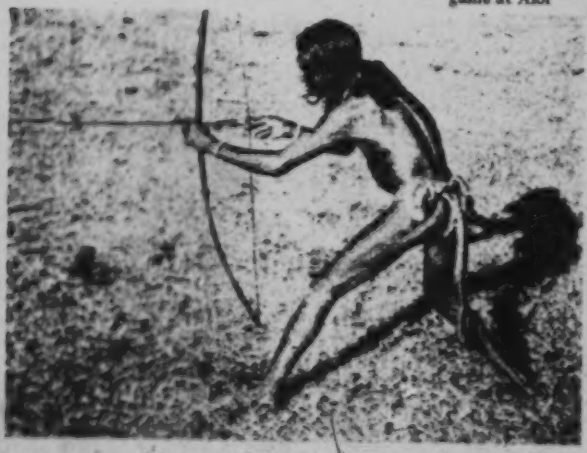
It is some such reflection as this that enables boys and girls to bear the very great pain of separation from their lovers at marriage. This is a very real thing, especially in the *jodidār* ghotul. Here a chelik and motiari may have lived six or seven years together, perhaps in great fidelity, and have come to love each other devotedly. Everything in life—except responsibility for children and a home—has been shared. They have gone together to festivals and danced all night in each other's arms. They have been to a score of marriages and shared a world of jokes together. They have slept night after night in the ghotul 'lovely as a bison's horns'. Then suddenly

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
524

The Koda Karsana, or Horse game

An archer in a hunting game at Alor



[p. 622 (A)]

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Plate CXXXVI

Shooting the bison at Sadhawand

Bison-hunting at Alor

[p. 622 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

AW3
581

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

they are torn apart; they must never talk to each other again; each must change over to live, under conditions infinitely less romantic, with someone of whom they may know nothing.

Yet in the great majority of cases they do it, and believe it to be for the best. And statistics support them. A percentage of only 2·6 of marital failures among arranged marriages is very low.

But naturally there are disorders of this neat and tidy arrangement. Sooner than be married to another girl, some boys—from both types of ghotul—elope with their motiari. In Kabonga, the chelik said, 'If a boy does not run away with his motiari, he doesn't really love her'. A girl may slip away to the house of her lover and establish herself there for a *paisa mundi* wedding. 'A girl in love for the first time will walk even on a monkey's path', narrow, slippery and steep. She cares little for the opinion of her fellows. Such incidents are not very common—there were 116 irregular marriages among our 2000, of which 90 were elopements—but they occur. When the parents' hands are forced in this manner, they generally accept the situation. Compensation has to be paid to the girl's betrothed or, if she was not engaged, to her parents, and all is well.

In a case of pregnancy, if the girl does not run away, she is married to her betrothed—if he will have her, or to the boy responsible—whether he wants her or not, and a fine must be paid. Sometimes the pregnant girl runs away with her chelik and they get married in another village. There is always, however, an attempt to bring the lovers back. If there is no pregnancy and they are caught in time, they are fined and nothing more is said. If the girl is pregnant, and she is brought back, she must be offered to her betrothed, and it is a remarkable result of ghotul solidarity how often the boy accepts her and the responsibility for another's child.

The following incident is instructive:

> There were three brothers in the Garhbangal ghotul. The eldest made a girl pregnant; he was fined five rupees and she was married to her betrothed. Then the same boy made the same girl's younger sister pregnant. He consulted with his second brother and they persuaded their youngest brother to carry off the girl to another village and thus accept the responsibility for the pregnancy. The eldest brother did not want to be held capable of 'ruining' two girls, and he was moreover engaged to marry the landlord's daughter, whom he did not want to lose. But the youngest boy and the motiari were caught and brought back. The boy confessed the truth, and the eldest brother was fined seven rupees and the two others five rupees each. The girl was married to her betrothed. All three brothers are now happily married.

Sometimes parents who are very sympathetic decide that they will bear the fine and the bother, and allow a son to marry a girl he has made pregnant, if they are sure he really loves her, and there are no serious difficulties in the way. But generally, parents do not like to do this. At Binjhli, a girl was pregnant by a chelik to whom she was greatly devoted, but her father said, 'Why did you not tell me about this when I drank liquor for you on the betrothal day? I took gifts for you publicly, and now you would make me look down on the ground in shame'. At Nayanar too a father spoke in much the same way to a boy from Kulanar who made his daughter pregnant. 'How can I give her to you? You are a thief, though I know you love her and she loves you. But I have taken gifts and I have drunk liquor for another clan, and how can I change now?'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

This may sound hard, but unless parents insisted I doubt if the ghotul could continue. The orderly life of the tribe would be destroyed. After a betrothal a girl belongs already to her future husband's clan; she may attend his clan festivals and should avoid his, and not her own, totem. An engagement is not a mere contract between individuals; it is an alliance of families and clans, affecting even the Departed.

Serious difficulties are not common. Occasionally a man may have an experience like that of Kunjami Gudra of Chaniyagaon.

> While I was a little boy I was betrothed to a girl in Korpar village. Two years afterwards I went with the other chelik of Chaniyagaon to Jungani for the Pus Kolang dance. There I met the Nirosa of that ghotul, and fell in love with her. When she came with the other girls to dance the Diwali dances in our village, I was able to make love to her.
>
> Then I was married, but I did not care for my wife. Soon after the marriage I went to work at Jungani and stayed in the ghotul for some days. Now my love for the Nirosa grew much stronger. She told me she was betrothed to a boy in Gorma, but I persuaded her, and shortly after I returned home, she came to my house. I said, 'Why have you come?' She replied, 'For *paisa-mundi*, for money and a ring'.
>
> My first wife left me, but did her best to plague me with magic. One day she sent a black cobra to attack me. Another day as I was returning from the Dhanora bazaar—where my first wife lived—a tiger (sent by her) chased me up a tree. But with my second wife, I am living very happily.

Out of the 20 suicides committed by Muria of the north during the past ten years only two were the result of parental interference in their children's love affairs. I have described one of these cases on page 416 and I will give the other here, for it is relevant to our discussion.

In 1933 Budha of Bayalpur arranged a marriage between his son Malsai and Ghasnin, the daughter of Jiti of Korhabera. They were both then young children. Each grew up in their separate ghotul, and Ghasnin began to accompany the older girls on the Diwali dances. The motiari of Korhabera go to Honawandi and the chelik of Honawandi go for the Dandar dances to Korhabera. Gradually Ghasnin herself became a leader of the motiari. In 1940 she became very friendly with Dawari of Honawandi, and they decided to marry. One evening Ghasnin begged her mother to allow this, but she refused. The next day, Ghasnin ran away to Honawandi and was married to Dawari that very night, the chelik and motiari of the ghotul there assisting at the wedding. Next morning, her elder brother arrived and angrily forced her to come home. On the way she escaped and ran through the jungle back to her husband. But her brother came again and forcibly took her home. Her parents decided to hand her over to the parents of Malsai, her betrothed. But because she was married and in love, and because Malsai was an undersized diseased boy, she was in despair. On the morning of 28 January 1941 she escaped from the house and drowned herself in the village tank.

In both these incidents, the sense of obligation to the official 'legal' partner is worthy of remark. Gudra had to quiet his conscience by persuading himself that his first wife was a witch; Ghasnin allowed herself to be taken from her husband's house, and seems to have accepted as inevitable her re-marriage to Malsai.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32.
Muria

X883
524

Hunting games

Plate CXXXVII

Preparing a human tiger at Puggaon

Village jester shoots with a spade

A hunt at Phasuda

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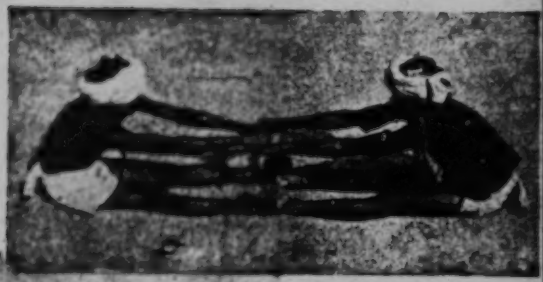
Plate CXXXVIII



Movements in a 'Pulling-up' game

Kadna Karnana or Wrestling game

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Paigur-bad Karsana: bullock laden with sacks

Plate CXXXIX

Gudha Karsana

Mahamandal Karsana or Snake game

[p:624 ©]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
524

Plate CXL

Goibal Karnana,
or Lizard game

A cock-fighting game

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

IV. Marriage by Service

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One of the first to describe the custom of marriage by service in India was the Abbé Dubois who wrote that 'the expenses of a wedding are so considerable that in all castes one often sees young men, who are without the necessary means, using the same expedient to procure a wife that Jacob employed with Laban'.[1] 'Marriage by service must be distinguished from other customs which take a son-in-law to live in his wife's house. In all parts of India a youth may go to live with his parents-in-law either because the girl's family is well-to-do but without sons, or because it is poor and needs an extra man in the house, or because the son-in-law is poor and cannot pay the bride-price. The Coorgis allow a man who has no sons to give his daughter in marriage on the understanding that his son-in-law will remain with her in the house, and that any issue will belong to his family. Similar customs are reported from the Holeya of Bombay and the Kunnavan and Madiga of Madras, as well as from Assam, Kashmir and the Punjab. It is said that if a Santal or Uraon boy marries a girl without brothers and stays in his father-in-law's house and works for him till he dies, he will inherit the property.'[2]

Westermarck has distinguished between marriage by service as a regular form of marriage, which is preferred by the people because it gives an opportunity to test a youth's fitness, and marriage by service as a substitute for marriage by purchase.[3] Schmidt and Koppers have shown that the institution, 'functionally and culture-historically belonging to a matriarchal culture, has been transformed under patriarchal influence into the institution of paying the bride-price'.[4]

Marriage by service in Bastar means that a youth whose family cannot afford the bride-price comes to live in his father-in-law's house and works for him until he has earned his wife. He then marries her and either takes her to a house of his own or stays on with the parents-in-law. In the Madras Presidency the number of years' service required was seven; in the central India of today, it is generally not more than five and often only three. In the Punjab and the United Provinces it is normally three years. Here the practice is found among most Hindu castes, even Brahmins and Rajputs, and sometimes among Mussalmans. Youths who serve in this way are often despised, and a proverb is quoted from the United Provinces: *Kuta pāle, so kuta; sās ghar jamai aur bahin ghar bhai*—He who tames a dog is a dog; other dogs are those who live in a mother-in-law's house or where a sister is married.[5]

The chelik who goes to serve for his bride is called Lam or Lamhada in Gondi, Gharjiya in Halbi and Lamsena in Hindi.[6] In the Central Provinces

[1] J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 1928), p. 213. Nowadays many youths go instead to the tea gardens of Assam in order to earn sufficient to pay a bride-price; it would be an interesting subject for inquiry, to examine how far the Tea Districts Labour Association's recruitment has modified the institution of the 'serving marriage'.

[2] See *Census of India, 1931*, United Provinces Report, p. 311.

[3] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 366ff.

[4] O. R. Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India*, p. 147, quoting Schmidt and Koppers, *Volker und Kulturen* (Regensburg, 1924), pp. 270ff.

[5] *Census of India, 1931*, United Provinces Report, p. 311.

[6] For the institution in India generally see Ward, op. cit., p. 138 (for the Mandla District); *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part IIIB, p. 53 (for the Bhil); Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 210 (Bastar), Vol. III, p. 394 (Kawar), Vol. III, p. 550 (Korku), Vol. IV, p. 133 (Mahar), Vol. IV, p. 152 (Majhwar), Vol. IV, p. 166 (Mali). See also Ehrenfels, op. cit., p. 197; S. Hivale, *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley*, pp. 205ff.; *The Baiga*, pp. 287f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 583 he is sometimes known as the Gahania[1]—the boy who is in pawn. Elsewhere in India he is called Ghar-jamai, Ghardi-jawae, Ghar-damand and Khana-damand—these expressions mean 'house-son-in-law'.

The Lamhada is betrothed to his girl in the ordinary way, and then comes to live in her father's house, where he is treated as one of the family. If he has been living hitherto in a different village, he has to leave the ghotul there and join the ghotul of which his future bride is a motiari. He will get a ghotul-wife or a temporary partner as the case may be and he will live with her at the same time that he serves for his betrothed. We thus have the interesting situation that if a Lamhada boy comes from another village to a place where there is a *jodidar* ghotul, he gets two new girls—one his betrothed with whom he should have nothing to do, and the other his ghotul-wife with whom he will regularly cohabit.

The strongly equalitarian character of the Muria saves the institution of serving-marriage from certain obvious disadvantages. A boy is not looked down upon because he has no money. The capital that he brings to his new home is the strength of his arms, his industry and his enterprise. It is true that the hardest tasks are often given him, but these are to test his capacity and willingness to work rather than any token that he is regarded as inferior. His status in the ghotul is as good as any, and he is just as likely to become Sirdar or Kotwar as the son of the house where he is serving.

[522] But the Lamhada is a licensed subject for jesting. His close proximity to his future wife—in the same house, a definitely more 'risky' connexion than the closely disciplined relationship in the ghotul; his relations with his mother-in-law and other forbidden persons begun even before marriage; the heavy tasks and tests that are laid upon him; these are subjects for endless comment and amusement.

X 883 583 539 In Dugabangal, the boys and girls sing a *Lam dayna pata*, a song about a boy going as a Lamhada.

Say Lamka Lamka, say son-in-law.
Hard is the work of the Lamka boy.
What is the plough made of?
The plough is made of the kosom tree.
What is the yoke made of?
The yoke is made of the siuna tree.
What is the pole made of?
The pole is made of the tinsa tree.
The bullocks are uncle and nephew;
The field is the field of the frogs;
The rice is black as the eyes of a queen.

In a Chitkul song of the Amoli ghotul, a girl is represented as chiding her father for not getting her married.

I am growing up like the beans in the garden,
Yet no one comes to marry me.
I am seven years mature, my father,
I am nearly old as you.
Yet if a boy comes to be Lamhada,
You show him the axe that weighs twelve *gana*;
You show him the basket of two hundred bamboos;
And he goes to find another girl.

[1] In Betul Gondi he is called Lamjanai and the girl he is betrothed to is Lamjana-watar.—Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 104.

400

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A cock-fight at Bayanar

Plate CXLI

[p.626(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942; 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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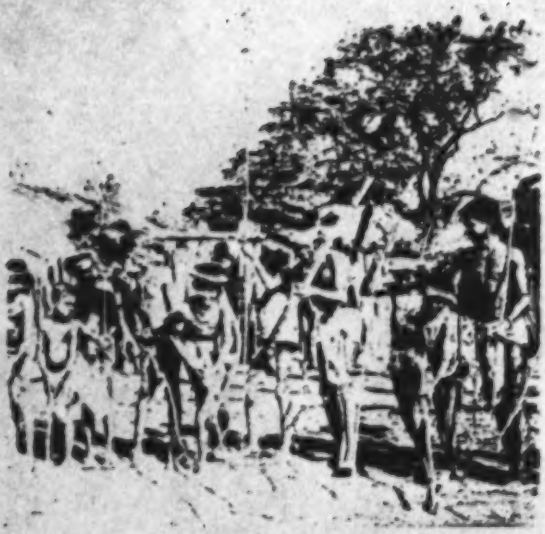

Chelik dancing at the Kokoko festival

Plate CXLII

Chelik collecting offerings at the Kokoko festival

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

An old woman at Masora spoke with great indignation about the way her mother treated the boy who served for her. 'She gave him the heaviest work, and she delayed our marriage as long as she could, for she wanted to get as much work out of him as possible.'

An interesting expression was used at Chandabera. 'A Lamhada is the *korydri* (daughter-in-law), because he is brought to the house of his wife. Just as the mother-in-law usually abuses her son's wife, so now does the mother-in-law abuse her daughter's husband. He is the daughter-in-law and must do her work.'

An adaptation of a familiar folk-tale motif describes the trials of a Lamhada and his final victory.

> A father-in-law says to the Lamhada boy, 'Boy, go and sow sarson seed'. The boy goes and in the evening, the father says, 'Boy, go and bring it back, seed for seed, in the same measure'. The Lamhada goes weeping, for he loves the girl, and begins to pick up the seeds one by one. A pair of partridges come by and say, 'Boy, don't weep: we will gather it all for you'. By evening every grain is back in the measure.
>
> Then says the father, 'Boy, bring me five measures of ashes from hemp-waste'. The Lamhada collects a pile of waste and burns it, but the ashes go to nothing. At last he goes to his father-in-law and says, 'Without a knotless bamboo, I can do nothing'. The father searches on every hillside and at last returns. 'Boy, I am defeated'. The Lamhada says, 'But if I bring it, will you give me your daughter at once'? The father promises, and the Lamhada brings back a reed. 'Here is bamboo without a knot: give me your daughter.'

What of the relations between the Lamhada and the girl with whom he is brought into such intimate contact? In the ghotul the same rules are supposed to apply as govern the conduct of other betrothed couples. The girl must strictly avoid her Lamhada; she must not salute him, nor comb his hair, nor massage him. She must not sleep with him, or sit on his mat. In his presence she will sleep regularly with other boys; he too will have his own partners. Yet neither may reproach the other, though they will be working together all day in the same house.

But although betrothed couples usually seem to observe these rules of avoidance fairly strictly, they are sometimes broken by the Lamhada. Several factors contribute to this. The boy and girl are brought into far more constant and intimate contact in kitchen, field and forest than ordinary engaged couples. A girl cannot help feeling that the Lamhada boy is already more or less married to her when she sees his relations with her parents, watches him already observing the special rules of jesting and avoidance with her other relatives; perhaps not a little sympathy is roused in her heart at the sight of the hard life he leads. Above all, if they do come together, and if she should become pregnant, nothing is easier than to perform their marriage—the boy concluding his term of service afterwards. When the Malik of Lohatur who was a Lamhada made his betrothed pregnant, they were not even fined, for the parents said, 'If it hadn't happened today, it would have happened tomorrow'.

Many cases of such 'irregularities' have been recorded. Dhani, the old Muria woman of Masora, had her affections strongly stirred by her mother's treatment of her Lamhada and she used to sleep with him in the ghotul. At Tarbaili, a girl was passionately devoted to her Lamhada; they used to slip out together at night into the forest—for at least they must preserve the conventions.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883
584

A former Kotwar of the Berma ghotul was Lamhada to the Dulosa; he made her pregnant, but as they were engaged, they were quickly married, though not without a fine of one rupee to the ghotul and three to the village. I also heard at Chargaon of a Lamhada who slept in the ghotul with his bride-to-be. In Lihagaon, a motiari went from the girls' ghotul to the boys' ghotul (for here they have separate establishments) and slept with her Lamhada; she was caught and they were punished.

In Palli (Kondagaon), I was told of two Lamhada; one was the Pahardar who was serving for the Dulosa, the other was the Chajen who was serving for the Tiloka. One day, they said with a good deal of amusement, the Tiloka said 'Johar' by mistake to her own Lamhada. Sometimes too she slept with him, but usually these two pairs divided—Pahardar and Tiloka and Chajen and Dulosa—and slept together in one corner. 'There could be no quarrel or jealousy; they are motiari, no one has a *haq* over them.'

A Kinnaring Pata glances at such relations.

How old is the Kinnaring girl?
She goes to bed in our house,
But she gets up with her Lamhada.
She eats and drinks in our house,
But she sleeps and rises with her Lamhada.

An interesting comment on these irregularities, and one which suggests that the rules governing the conduct of engaged couples were not made without reason, comes from Rengagondi. A former Munshi of the ghotul served as Lamhada for a girl, and often had intimate relations with her. She too petted him in the house and saw that he got good food and not too much work. But once they were married and went away to live together, she began to repulse him; she generally refused intercourse, and when he forced her, ran home to her parents.

To the Muria mind, however, the most important disorders of this arrangement are financial. Suppose the Lamhada turns out unsuitable: he does not work, he is a fool, he becomes diseased. He will have to be compensated for his wasted years. Suppose the girl elopes with someone else; the Lamhada has his just claims.

As far as I can tell, the Muria—in distinction to the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces—deal very fairly with these boys. If a man's daughter elopes before marriage, they see that her husband pays full compensation, anything up to fifty rupees, to the Lamhada. If the boy has to be turned out he is paid something, not perhaps very much, for such services as he has rendered. There was a significant incident at Pharasgaon.

> 'I served as a Lamhada for seven years', said Baiti, a Muria of about forty. 'Just as we were going to be married, my girl ran away with a chelik she had met during the Diwali dances. My father-in-law was a very good man, and he gave me his youngest daughter instead. She was much younger than I was, but I took her to my own home and we both went to live in the ghotul. Although we were to be married, she used to sleep with other boys and I with other girls. We never quarrelled about it. Now we have been married for years and always have been happy. I never went to her before marriage. Now she looks older than I do, but when we were married people laughed at me for taking such a young girl.'

This incident, which is the converse to what happened at Rengagondi, certainly suggests that it is best to keep the betrothal rules.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

Another form of compensation was recorded at Modenar. Here there were two Lambada in the ghotul serving for two sisters; the Diwan was betrothed to the Dulosa, the Likhen to the Jaimo. One day the Jaimo was found to be pregnant by the Diwan; they went off together and were married, and the Dulosa was given to the Likhen in compensation. 883X 584

The institution is not very common; it would be wrong, however, to call it unpopular. Out of our 2,000 cases, 113 were serving-marriages. Of these 93 were cross-cousin marriages, 40 *gudamol* and 53 *kutiyūri*. 13 had divorced their wives or been deserted by them, a rather high proportion of 11·5 per cent as compared with the divorce-rate of the whole tribe which is under 3 per cent. But the other 100 marriages were stated to have been happy enough. The majority of Muria, however, can generally find sufficient money to pay the small bride-price required—and after all, a son in your house is worth something—and the Muria love their children. Hence only 5·5 per cent of marriages are of this type.

V. POLYGYNY

A gentleman, talking to Samuel Johnson about France, told him that in that country as soon as a man of fashion married, he took an opera girl as his mistress, declaring this to be the general custom. 'Pray sir,' said Johnson, 'How many opera girls may there be?' The gentleman answered, 'About four score'. 'Well then, sir,' replied Johnson, 'you see there can be no more than four score men of fashion who can do this.' Even if apocryphal, this rejoinder is relevant to any discussion of the prevalence of polygyny among primitive peoples. For this type of marriage is a simple matter of statistics. 595

Westermarck laboriously considers the geographical distribution of polygyny and then turns his attention to its prevalence in different grades of economic culture. Quite apart from the astonishing character of some of the witnesses whom he admits to his scientific court—for the aboriginals of central India he depends on Forsyth and Hislop (admirable in many respects, but how could they possibly have known the facts about Gond polygyny?), an article in the *Calcutta Review*, and the childish *Wild Tribes of India* by Rowney[1]—his entire argument is vitiated by one simple fact. In every primitive society, every woman must be married. There are no aboriginal spinsters. Widows may, and generally must, remarry. Widowers may remarry and usually do. There are no aboriginal concubines or prostitutes (outside certain professional tribes). Therefore the prevalence or otherwise of polygyny is conditioned largely by this one fact, the excess of the number of females over males. Thus Westermarck's statement that 'among pastoral peoples I have found none which can be regarded as strictly monogamous, and both among them and the higher agriculturalists polygyny is undoubtedly more frequent than among the hunters and incipient agriculturalists',[2] means nothing more, if it means anything at all, than that among hunters and incipient agriculturalists, there is a higher female mortality and no surplus women—which is what we would expect in view of the hard life lived at this stage of economic development.

In any society where there are more women than men, and where there are neither spinsters nor prostitutes, there must be some form of polygyny. This is so in Europe and in so-called 'higher' society everywhere, only there the plural wives are called mistresses and have no legal or other rights. The Muria is more honest and more just; he turns his mistress into a wife and accepts her children as his own.

[1] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 8. [2] Ibid, p. 26.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

595 161 The Census of 1931 showed that 'women generally preponderate in the more primitive tracts and men in the more advanced areas'. The aboriginal tribes have 'a high proportion of women'.[1] This was certainly true among Gond, Bharia, Binjhwar and Kawar in the Central Provinces, but the returns for the Maria and the Uraon show a lower figure for women. Here I suspect the accuracy of the returns, for there has often been a tendency among aboriginals to return lower figures of women on account of the curious suspicion that the Census inquiries are leading to a wholesale deportation of girls to England for the pleasure of the sahibs or, as I was once told, 'for the honour of Queen Victoria'.

In 1941, the figures for the chief aboriginal communities in Bastar were as follows.

	Males	Females	Total
Maria	60,015	60,095	120,110
Muria	109,512	110,142	219,654
Bhattra	5,471	5,398	10,869
Dorla	7,097	7,508	14,605
Dhurwa (incl. Parja) ..	13,208	12,611	25,819
Gond	8,344	8,276	16,620

My suspicion about the accuracy of the low returns for Maria women in 1931 is confirmed by the fact that 10 years later women outnumbered the men. Women also outnumber men among the Muria, but it must be remembered that at least 50,000 of those returning themselves as Muria were in reality Bison-horn Maria. When we turn to the Ghotul and Jhoria Muria we find another picture.

	Muria males	Muria females
Narayanpur Tahsil—North	8,390	7,975
West	691	631
South	8,647	7,833
Kondagaon Tahsil— North	16,596	16,550
South	17,049	16,506
Total ..	51,373	49,495

There is thus a deficit among the Ghotul Muria of 1,878 women, out of a rough total of 100,000, or 18 per 1,000. There is little scope, therefore, for polygynous enterprise, even though I again suspect that there are actually more women in the tribe than the Census returns admit. Wherever, as Census Officer, I was able to check returns, I found a tendency to conceal the real number of motiari.

595 In the 2,000 marriages examined, only 44 were or had been polygamous. Of these 29 men claimed that they had lived happily with two wives at a time, but 9 admitted that their experiment had not lasted very long. In 5 cases the first wife left the husband, in 4 the first wife succeeded in driving out the

[1] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XII, Part I, p. 131.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

second after a time. In 6 other cases a plural marriage was in progress, but was unhappy and disturbed by constant quarrels. 595

Polygyny is not socially disapproved—though an incidence of only 2 per cent might suggest it was. The Muria's attitude is rather that a man has undertaken more than he is likely to be able to manage, and is more to be pitied for his difficulties than to be condemned for impropriety.

For example, at Berma, a Muria said, 'Two wives are like two drums with the player in between; he beats one or he beats both according to the rhythm required. But a good drummer does his best with a single drum'. Or again at Kanhargaon they said, 'You will always hear the noise of pots clashing and breaking in a house with two wives; nothing is done properly, not even rice is cooked in time'. And the Kandki of Bunagaon said, 'I am dried up even by one wife. How could I manage another?' But elsewhere I have heard it said that a clever man can keep two wives happy 'just as two hands beat the two ends of a drum in rhythm'.

It is everywhere said that the wives quarrel, not through sexual jealousy or about prestige, but because each thinks the other shirks her due share of work. As I show later in the chapter this question of the distribution of work is very important to the Muria mind and is indeed the cause of most of the quarrels and a high percentage of the suicides in Muria society. [578 762]

For example, in the following record of a quarrel it is the dispute about work that is really important. A husband has been neglecting his senior wife. 'Is my vagina bitter and hers so sweet?' she says and then turns on the junior. 'You *bāploti*, it is I who made this man what he is today: everything in the house is mine; all you should eat is my leavings.' The younger girl replies, 'I didn't come here of my own accord: he is as much my husband as yours, for it is he who brought us both here'. Then the husband says to the elder, 'Don't be angry. I have brought this girl, not because I love her more than you, but so that she can help you in your work'. 'But that is what she never does. When I am cooking, she should fetch wood, when I am defiled, she should cook. But she refuses.' The younger wife, in some villages, has to observe various vital taboos. She cannot approach the Pot of the Departed at will. She can only go at the New Eating Festivals after an offering has been made and a feast enjoyed. Before this she should not take any grain to the place where the Pot is kept. [784]

In the sexual sphere it is supposed to be comparatively easy to manage two or even three wives.[1] The headman of Chandabera, a charming man with the body of an athlete, told me how he arranged that he himself and each of his two wives slept in three different places. Then he made love to one or the other according to his desire, not much caring whether the other was awake and watching or no. On this point, he said, he never had trouble. In Badgaon, a Muria said that he had to have his senior wife three times a day and the junior twice in order to stop them fighting over his body—but this was doubtless an exaggeration.

I will quote some of the remarks made by these sexual athletes during the statistical inquiry.

A Sirdar of Kejang: 'I did not care for my first wife: I married her at my parents' wish, and they were more interested in marrying a rich man's daughter

[1] In many tribes, leading 'characters' take pride in keeping a number of wives. A Maria of the Oyasul clan in Kanker had six wives; in Kerlapal another Maria had seven. I found a Juang in Keonjhar State with seven. The famous Yogi Baiga of Mandla had six, with twenty-six children. A Pardhan of Balaghat had a similar number and used to take them all, walking behind him in a file, when he went to a bazaar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

595 than in my happiness. Soon I found I could not bear to sleep with her and I went back to the ghotul. There I fell in love with Buski and eloped with her and married her. Afterwards I felt sorry for my first wife, and simply out of kindness tried to sleep with her. In this way I lost all happiness, for they began to quarrel with each other, and with me.'

A Saidar of Pharasgaon: 'I lent a man twenty rupees. When the time came for repayment he had nothing to give. So he told me to take his daughter instead. We all three live together very happily. I once beat my second wife for not working properly, but that was the only time we quarrelled.'

A Chalan of Kehalakot: 'I feel ready for a second wife now, but I don't want to be a dog.'

A Kamdar of Chandabera: 'We hear that two wives won't sleep together. But we Muria have always been together in the ghotul, and if a man has two wives, they are both content to sleep with him.'

A Pujari of Kachora: 'I was married to a much older girl and she was always abusing me for having such a small penis. I used to say, "Give it time to grow and all will be well". But she would take no notice and was always wandering about in search of something bigger. Later on I married three wives'—probably to restore the self-respect so deeply injured by his first wife.

A Saidar of Bargaon: 'I had no children from my first wife and she begged me to marry another girl. So I married a widow. We lived together very happily. I always slept with my first wife, and the second lay near by. I used to have intercourse with each of them on alternate days'.[1]

A Jolia of Malmeta: 'I have no children, and I want to marry a second wife. But I have no money to pay for one. I think about it day and night and feel very wretched.'

A Baidar of Bunagaon: 'I am a Siraha. One day some people brought me a girl for treatment. I could do nothing. So they said, "Take her as your second wife, and you will cure her". So I married her, and put on her finger a leaf-ring of aonra, and we have fought the gods together. By becoming my wife she has been cured.'

Surju of Kuntpadar: 'My first wife was barren, and she herself suggested that I should marry another. I did and slept with each alternately. Sometimes they quarrelled, but once the younger girl had a baby, they became great friends, and my elder wife is very fond of the child.'

Here we have many different reasons for polygyny—the desire for offspring, the repayment of a debt, the need to restore injured dignity, a love-affair. In one case the first wife urged her husband to take a second, but more often she employs all the resources of magic or intrigue to prevent her husband installing a junior partner. Chaitu of Chandabera described his experiences in this matter.

> A girl came one day to my village and I fell in love with her. I asked her to come to my house and she agreed. I immediately sent for liquor and invited the village elders to drink. At about midnight, while everyone was drinking outside, I suddenly felt that I must see

[1] The tradition that both wives are to be treated as sexual equals is rooted in Hindu antiquity, as is shown by the admonition of Daksha to Soma for loving Rohini to the exclusion of the other twenty-six constellations. 'Behave in the same way towards all thy wives that a great guilt may not come on thee.' But Soma took no heed and was cursed to wax and wane continually. The *Kamasutra* also says, 'If a man has gathered many wives, let him be the same to all.'—J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 471.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

what she was really like, so I went to the house and asked her to lie with me. She asked me what I was doing outside and I said I was drinking in honour of her marriage to me. Although she had been very sweet to me up to that moment, she suddenly cried, 'No, you are simply drinking my urine'. I was drunk and got very angry, and though she tried to prevent me I forced her. But it gave me no pleasure. 595

Next morning I found the girl was ill. There was no fever or anything we could see, but she lay sick on the ground. I took her to a Siraha and we had to stay with him for a fortnight. I used to give her food and do everything for her, but she got no better. One day I tried to have her again, but she said, 'Wait a moment while I go outside' and she slipped out of the house and ran for her life to her own village. I am sure that my elder wife did some magic to turn this girl's heart away from me. Later I tried to marry another girl, my elder brother's widow, and my wife drove her away also.[1]

VI. Adultery

The Muria have the reputation of observing a very high standard of marital fidelity, and all my observations go to confirm popular report. The incidence of divorce, less than 3 per cent, suggests that they regard marriage as something to persevere in, and while obviously no statistics can be supplied for individual infidelities, social tradition and religious belief are directed towards making adultery both difficult and dangerous. 837

The Muria, usually so tolerant and gentle, are here exceptionally rigorist. Adultery brings the swift vengeance of heaven not only on the guilty individuals, but on the tribe. A woman's sin can ruin the ritual hunt and in consequence endanger the year's harvest. The vision of priest or medium can be dimmed by the infidelity of a wife, children may suffer and die, tigers may assail the village herds. The guilty pair themselves are visited with a shocking punishment; their bodies become covered with sores and swellings, and a watery dropsy brings a wretched death. 837 753

This is no empty danger, as is proved by actual examples. The Solia of Munjmeta told me how his grandfather died of this cause; in Sidhawand, when a man eloped with a married woman, his father died of dropsy and he himself became a permanent invalid. In Lihagaon, one Badru died after an act of adultery. This vengeance comes from the Departed who are the guardians of the purity of family and clan. In Kongera an outraged husband 'set the Departed on the guilty' and wife and lover fell very ill. At Netanar a Muria said that he was only able to preserve his wife's virtue by the help of the Departed whom he constantly invoked for this purpose.

Adultery is suspected when cattle die suddenly, especially if the tongue protrudes and there is a certain kind of watery discharge. The Siraha then 837 783

[1] In Indian tradition and folk-lore, the majority of heroes are successfully polygamous—Ramachandra being a notable exception. In the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, the first wife is represented as welcoming her new companions. Suryaprabha married seven wives on seven consecutive days: by his magic powers he was able to divide his body and live with them all at once.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924-5), Vol. I, p. 429. Naravahanadatta had a similar power of self-multiplication (Ibid., Vol. II, p. 477. See also Vol. I, p. 451). Folk-lore wives usually agree—unless they all combine against a youngest favourite. Among Gullala Shah's happy co-wives, Panj Phul helps her husband to obtain his fourth.—J. H. Knowles, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir* (London, 1888), pp. 466 and 483 and compare M. Frere, *Old Deccan Days* (London, 1929), p. 324. There is an amusing note on the subject in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 318f.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

837 has to divine who is the guilty party in order that peace may be made and danger averted.

783 Adultery therefore is not only the betrayal of tribal fellowship, the infringement of another's right to property, a breach of sexual tradition, but it is highly dangerous. A sort of public apology has to be made to the betrayed husband and a ceremony of purification performed.

In order to avert their fate, once the matter has become public, the guilty pair go to the Gaita with a pig or goat which he offers to the local deities and the Departed. Then he goes with witnesses to the nearest tank. On a stone he puts two bits of broken earthenware and some dub grass. Everyone present puts one foot on the stone; the Gaita throws water and liquor over the guilty pair who cry, 'Let us not now swell with water. May the Yer Kanyang living in the midst of this water make an end of our sin (*pāp*)'. The seducer then greets the woman's husband and all is forgiven.[1]

X883 A similar ceremony is performed in the *jodidār* ghotul if a chelik goes off with another boy's motiari, or if he sleeps with her in his absence. At Atargaon, 836 where a chelik eloped with another's ghotul-wife, but was brought back after 783 a few days, the ghotul Manjhi took the two 'husbands' out of the village to a place where two paths crossed. He made them stand on either side of the path and put a knife on the ground and above the knife a stone. He made the boys put their right feet on the stone and gave them each seven leaf-cups of water. Seven times they exchanged the cups of water and seven times cups of liquor, and swore to preserve friendship with one another. The seducer promised to pay a heavy fine if it happened again.

X883 There is one type of adultery, however, which does not seem to be taken too seriously. 'Suppose a girl has a ghotul lover.' So they put it at Markabera. 836 'She elopes with him. They are brought back and she is quickly married to her betrothed. After a few weeks she runs away again to her lover. She 837 is again brought back, again accepted by her husband, though he knows she has slept with her old lover. And then she is happy at last and settles down.' 'It is like getting a new cow,' said the chelik at Nayanar. 'She does not at first like her new home. She runs back to the herd and her former pastures. But we don't beat her for that; we are rather doubly kind.'

In dealing with a motiari-wife, that is not only kind; it is intelligent.

VII. Divorce

586 Throughout tribal India divorce is easy and generally the wife has the same rights as her husband. Among the Muria divorce on either side is possible, but the stability of their marriage tradition makes it a comparatively rare event. I have already described how divorce can be effected in a *jodidār* ghotul. Similar ceremonies can release a woman from her partner in adult life. These ceremonies, it must be observed, are essentially rites of purification; they are retrospective, having reference to an already existing state of affairs. The actual union with a new partner and the paying of compensation effects the divorce; now husband and wife have to be free, not of each other—for they are that already—but of the dangers that cling to the conduct of one or both.

The ceremonies are the same as those by which a couple taken in adultery are cleared of their fault. Whether the woman returns to her own husband

[1] A similar ceremony is performed to purify a boy who sleeps with a near relative in the ghotul, but in this case a root or cucumber is used instead of a goat for sacrifice.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

or goes to a new one is not the point. What matters is that there should be no supernatural interference in the even course of the life of the tribe, and no hatred or division between its members. 586

The critical point of a divorce is the repayment of the bride-price. However firmly the old and new husbands may have been bound together by the ceremonies of purification and reconciliation, the old husband will not eat with the new till he gets his money. When he does, they all sit down and feast together at a meal which is also shared by the woman in dispute.

Divorce, however, is rare. The pattern of Muria life, the Muria's attitude to sex, the training of the young in the ghotul, leads generally to happy marriages. I have already given the figures for divorce, but I will tabulate them here.

Number of divorces among people who had	Number	Percentage to total number of relevant cases
Married girl in same ghotul	24	3·13
Married girl in different ghotul ..	35	2·83
Lived in a *jodiddr* ghotul	27	3·75
Lived in a 'modern' ghotul	32	2·50
Married their betrothed	49	2·60
Married their ghotul-wives	9	11·68
Lived as Lamhada	13	11·50
Been forced into marriage by a pregnancy	..	..
Total number of divorces in irregular marriages	10	8·62

The reasons for divorce must also be tabulated, though a disappointingly large number of informants failed to give details.

Reasons for divorce	Number
She ran away' (No reason given)	25
We quarrelled over work'	3
She did not like me'	1
She eloped from her parents' house before coming to me' ..	2
She was a bitch'	2
I was ill and she didn't like to stay with me'	1
We did not like each other'	2
Impotence	2
I could not satisfy her'—probably *ejaculatio praecox* ..	9
My elder wife could not stand it when I married a second ..	5
My elder wife drove out the second'	4
She was always going off to her parents' house' ..	1
She was a thief'	1
She was of bad character'	1

This table makes it clear that far from divorce depending on the whim of the husband, in the majority of cases it is the wife who takes action; at least

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

586 40 of the divorces were due to the women. To these we might perhaps add another 9 cases where divorce followed a polygynous marriage.

It is noticeable that in no case has childlessness been put forward as a reason for divorce, though I have found this outside the circle of informants examined for statistical purposes. It is also notable that out of 2,000 men only 11 were [333] suffering from some kind of impotence. It is possible to assert this since it is almost axiomatic that divorce should follow impotence. 'As soon as the penis weakens, the vagina runs to the jungle.'

In this particular set of divorces no case of witchcraft is mentioned. But this too I have found elsewhere, and the legends tell how Lingo himself had to drive away five of his seven wives because they were suspected of being witches.

The 25 cases of wives who 'ran away' are probably to be classed as love-affairs. There is no case of a man driving out his wife for adultery. 'A Muria never gets angry with his wife unless with his own eyes he sees her in the arms of another man.' Nor does the Muria husband listen to scandal. 'All the village knows where the cow is at pasture—except the cowherd.'

593 The paucity of material makes a study of divorce difficult. Generally the Muria husband and wife remain together through all vicissitudes. I heard of a beautiful example of fidelity at Bargaon. A former Chalki described how after he had been married a year, his wife's 'privates came out' and he was unable to have intercourse with her. His friends advised him to marry someone else. 'But I considered how she had given me great happiness for that year. How could I leave her then? What would she have done? Who would give her happiness? So I stayed with her, and married no one else, but sometimes visited the ghotul.'

If there is any possible excuse for forgiveness, the Muria forgive a sexual lapse—not because they are complacent but because their philosophy forces them to tolerance. If there is any kind of doubt in an accusation, they give their partner the benefit of it. Through poverty and sorrow, despite the malice of witch and warlock or the mysterious hostility of the unseen gods, through doubt and temptation, heedless of the swift death of beauty and the passing of desire, they stand by one another and in their old age are not without reward. Muria domestic life might well be a model and example to the whole world.

VIII. Jealousy

152 Jealousy, which was defined by Descartes as 'a kind of fear related to a desire to preserve a possession', is generally used in a much wider sense and covers, as Westermarck says, such different emotions as rage at a rival, revenge for stolen property and anguish at the knowledge or suspicion of violated chastity and outraged conjugal affection.[1] Hartland in his study of jealousy among 'savages' considered that the sense of ownership was the seed-plot of jealousy,[2] but Westermarck rightly points out that this is not enough; 'If jealousy has anything to do with the sense of ownership the reason is that it is primarily connected with the desire of possession, which is something different. Moreover sexual jealousy springs from sexual love.' One of the best recent descriptions is by Stekel. Jealousy, he says, is 'the expression of the desire to possess an object wholly. It is primordial, is born with man and dies with him. It is still a tragic characteristic of all people, to be unable

[1] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 302.
[2] E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (London, 1910), Vol. II, p. 102.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

to share: and each development, each advance on the part of mankind can be traced back to the opposite formula: ability to share'.[1] 152

The absence of jealousy among primitive people has often been noticed and Hartland has given a long list of tribes remarkable for this amiable trait. Since he connects it, however, with general promiscuity, indifference to the marriage tie and a fundamental belief that primitive man is incapable of real love, his study does not throw very much light on Muria conditions. Westermarck and Briffault have also each filled a chapter with rather dubious evidence on the subject from all parts of the world, which would have had greater value had there been an agreed definition of jealousy among their authorities.

As with the problem of pre-nuptial chastity, so with jealousy, our evidence is confused, contradictory and little of it would be admitted in a court of law. The result is that it is possible to produce equally imposing lists both of those peoples who are temperamentally jealous and of those who are not.

Even in Bastar two tribes living side by side present a notable contrast in this matter; the Bison-horn Maria of Dantewara and Sukma are notorious for the violence of their jealous and suspicious temperament which fills the jail at Jagdalpur with homicides; the Muria are no less remarkable for an almost complete absence of this passion. I do not think it is possible to lay down a rule; doubtless some tribes are more attached to possession, dignity, prestige than others. Jealousy always has its roots in something else.

But what is so interesting about the Muria is that they recognize jealousy as a problem, accept it as a danger to marital happiness, and direct the education of their children towards eliminating it from their psychology.

The ghotul trains its members in a strict equality; on the whole, just as in a big family, it manages fairly successfully to laugh out of countenance dignity and prestige; it sets its face against possessiveness and the desire for the exclusive enjoyment of anything; it insists on things being shared. Even the *jodidār* ghotul, where girls are allotted to their partners in a fairly permanent relation, achieves this in no small measure; and the newer type succeeds in an unusual degree in eliminating jealousy. Undoubtedly, as I have said already, there is a very remarkable general diffused affection among the boys and girls. The sense of property and possession is certainly lessened; policemen have told me that they believe the small amount of crime in the north of Bastar is due to the fact that Muria children learn while still in the ghotul to share things with everybody else and not to grab them for themselves. As the chelik said at Ulera, 'There is equal love for all, just as in a family'. 883X 152 867

Naturally there will be moments of strain, particularly when there are a few boys and girls of outstanding physical attraction in the ghotul; yet sexual jealousy between boys is certainly lessened. An old Muria of Jaitpuri, recalling his ghotul days, said that there was a girl in the ghotul whom he loved very much. 'When she slept with other boys I used to feel a little jealous, but I said to myself, "This ghotul life is only for four days and in any case if I don't have her today, I'll have her tomorrow".' In the ghotul two friends will lie down with a girl between them, and sometimes—as at Sidhawand—a group of boys occupies a corner of the ghotul with a group of girls, every one of whom is shared among them. Several of my chelik friends have told me that they have slept again and again with every girl in the ghotul.

There are, of course, exceptions. Ghotul differ from one another, a few deviating widely from the classical model. The younger boys are sometimes jealous of their seniors; I have noticed this at Masora and Markabera. As 883X 152

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy', Forbath, op. cit., p. 359.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883 152 I have remarked elsewhere, the situation in the Binjhli ghotul at the end of 1940 was in many ways unique. Here was a large number of girls including several between the ages of seventeen and twenty, and the tension was often rather acute between the drab-looking older girls, some of whom had had more than one abortion, and the fresh, bright, lovely, younger motiari. These naturally wanted to sleep with the younger and more attractive boys, but so also did the older girls. One of the younger girls told my wife how 'the older girls are always jealous of the young and beautiful motiari. Sometimes they catch hold of their hands and forcibly pull them away from the more handsome and amusing boys, saying, "I know you want to sleep with him, *bāplotia*, but you're not to. You go and sleep over there". And the younger girls have to go away, disappointed, to some other boy. There is a lot of hatred between beautiful motiari and the Belosa. The chelik can say nothing. A chelik must never ask a girl to sleep with him. The ghotul is ruled by girls.' I remember very vividly the tense atmosphere in this ghotul one Friday night (the night they sleep together) when the allotment of partners was going on.

Another girl said that when she was forced to sleep with a boy she disliked and saw some of the older girls lying down on the mat of her special friend, she would sometimes scream with temper and lie awake all night burning with jealousy.

The situation in the Binjhli ghotul at that particular time, however, was, I think, exceptional and I have not found anything to parallel it elsewhere. Generally the girls and boys live together very happily.

The ghotul system is well adapted to train both boys and girls in sexual self-confidence. Pathological jealousy is often due to a sort of psychic impotence; it is a symptom of self-mistrust and of dread that one is sexually or otherwise incompetent. 'Jealousy is the projection of one's own insufficiency upon the partner.' But chelik and motiari do not generally feel insufficient: their life is so full and happy, so supported by mutual love and admiration that they approach their life-partners with natural confidence that they can satisfy and thus possess them wholly.

Another possible reason why the Muria are so free from jealousy is the absence of homosexuality, the importance of which in this matter has been stressed by Stekel in an acute analysis.[1]

The ghotul attacks jealousy partly by its tradition that it is a passion unworthy of chelik or motiari, partly by a frank sexual communism, sometimes—as in the *jodidār* ghotul—by the opposite method of making infidelity so difficult and so condemned that no boy or girl need worry about their exclusive possession. But in every case I believe that the strong sense of ghotul solidarity is the most powerful agent against jealousy.

152 After marriage, the fellowship of the ghotul widens out into the fellowship of the tribe. Sexual communism is no longer practised, but a great deal of the fear that Descartes noticed as a root of jealousy is eliminated by the strong social feeling against adultery; Muria simply do not commit this crime just as they do not commit the crime of theft, and therefore there is no need to fill one's mind with fears about the safety of one's possessions. Since love is not afraid, it is not possessive. Adultery is not only socially condemned, it is very dangerous; it casts a blight on the village, it ruins the ritual hunt, it diverts the fisherman from his catch, it brings wild beasts upon the cattle, and it causes the offenders to swell all over and perhaps even die. Social and supernatural sanctions alike make it unnecessary to be jealous.

[1] Stekel, *op. cit.*, pp. 360ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate CXLIII

A motiari throws water over the Kokoko dancers at Bandopal

Muria of Masora dancing with a dog in his arms

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Plate CXLIV

Chelik of Nayanar squirts water at a motiari

Old people throw mud at each other at a Malakot wedding

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[p. 638 (b)]

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

Quarrels are equally dangerous. They not only destroy one of the chief of the Muria's treasures—his sense of tribal solidarity—but like adultery they bring the vengeance of heaven upon the village that indulges in them. They must, therefore, be avoided and if they do occur peace must be made at once. In Binjhli Tetku and his brother Maria had a row over a field and beat each other. Their sagā-relatives hurried to the village, they got salphi and mahua liquor, and held a panch. The Gaita dipped a gold ear-ring in water and sprinkled it over the two offenders; he dipped the ear-ring also in the liquor. Each brother gave the other a drink and peace was established. When Dandu and Aitu quarrelled in Masora, everyone was afraid that some epidemic would attack the village. They both did indeed fall ill, their bodies swelling mysteriously. They called the Gaita and gave him a pig, five measures of rice and a rupee's worth of liquor to sacrifice. He did so, praying, 'O Mahapurub, you are the earth, you are our mother. We have made a mistake. Even an elephant with four feet sometimes slips; what can we men with only two feet do? We give you this offering, let there be no more trouble.' And he warned the quarrellers that next time it would cost them ten rupees to make peace.

Everything in Muria society is thus calculated to render jealousy unnecessary, dangerous and undignified. Its absence is further proved, not only by a mass of statements and absence of the criminal cases that would certainly arise from it, but by concrete instances of social practice. For example, the Muria does not insist on his wife coming to him as a virgin, nor does she expect that her husband should find in her the first girl he has ever loved. When we consider the vast number of peoples who have required an exactly opposite state of things, we see how free the Muria must be from jealousy affecting the period before marriage.

After marriage, says the best Muria opinion, husband and wife should never refer to their lives in the ghotul, still less should they rebuke each other with their old love-affairs. The very fact that exceptions to this are so carefully noted shows how rare they are. A Saidar of Botha is said to have forced his wife to swear that she never slept with any boy in her ghotul. The Diwan of Nayanar is said to have constantly nagged his young wife about a former lover till she stopped him by saying, 'Very well, if it is true—as you say—that I love him so much, I will go and live with him'. At Aloi the Gaita said, 'A boy may try to get his wife to confess what she did in her ghotul, but he has no right to, and she can always say "Whatever I did, you did the same or more" '. It was considered a very severe rebuke indeed when the Kotwar of Almer shouted at his lazy wife, 'Why don't you get up earlier to work? Didn't your parents teach you how to work, or did they only train you to sleep with the chelik night and day?'

A husband is generally very good to a wife who as a motiari got a child by another man. He takes the child as his own and the convention is that no reference should ever be made to the matter. This would not be so astonishing if it only happened when a girl conceived in the ghotul, for any sensible man would regard it as the logical conclusion of what he had already accepted, that his wife was sleeping with other youths throughout the period of their engagement. But it is remarkable, I think, when a boy accepts a girl who has run away with another man whom she obviously loves and is going to have a child who will constantly remind her of this former lover. An incident at Samalpur is typical of scores of others which I have recorded. In this village the Sirdar of the ghotul made a girl pregnant and ran away with her. They were brought back and he was fined five rupees and the girl was married to her betrothed.

593 A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar
152 was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at
837 Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby? Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilizing him to some extent.

587 We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining
152 faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. Quarrels and their Causes

152 For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria
578 life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiari during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude: every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

be distributed equally; no one boy must do more than another; no one may shirk, but no one may be unduly burdened.[1]

In the home, after marriage, quarrels usually arise about the distribution of work. This, rather than sexual jealousy, is the real cause of dispute in polygamous households. Where brothers live together, their wives quarrel about the serving of the food. To say *tohirsa* of a girl implies that 'she stares at other people eating' in a suggestive way; 'she peeps in from the door when other folk sit down for a meal, hoping to get some' but she will do no work herself. The real sting of the expression *jutaha*, 'eater of another's leavings', is that it suggests that the *jutaha* never works for himself, but goes cadging round ready to eat anything, even the scraps off dirty plates.

Men beat their wives for not cooking properly, but rarely for any other cause. Here again, the reason for a man's anger is not that he feels he has missed a good meal, but that he thinks his wife is not doing her fair share of work of the home. He himself has been out all day working in the fields; his wife has been enjoying herself at home, chatting with her gossips, wasting her time; otherwise she would certainly have cooked properly.

The actual records of these quarrels are instructive. At Jhakri I overheard a man quarrelling with his wife. 'Why didn't you make the rice soft, you *jutaha*?' he shouted. 'You haven't even yet learnt to cook. When you were a girl did you do nothing but dance at marriages?' To which his wife replied, 'Of course, all through my youth I sat still in the house, and my food was brought to me in bed. Ever since I married you, you have done all the work and I have just sat filling my belly.. Come along, *mailotia*, turn me out of your house, you can get another cook, and I'll live somewhere else.'

At Pulil, Shamrao Hivale was privileged to listen to a wife abusing her drunken husband for chronic idleness. It was an epic row, which went on and on, and of which every detail was so often repeated that it was easy to record.

> You can only live, screamed the woman, where there is a smell of liquor. That is your real home—the out-still—there is your bed and hearth; you have no home here. What will you do if I die? Who will feed you, who will look after the children? If you won't work, I will leave you and I will take away my children. You wander all day like a goat and all night like a thief. There is no salt in the house, there are no chillies; suppose the landlord comes and asks for some, or suppose a constable comes and wants food, what shall we do? If visitors come, what food can we give them? How are you going to pay the taxes? You shameless creature, a woman has sense but you have none. When there is work to be done, there is no life in you, but when you see liquor you are full of vigour. Then you are like a pig when it catches sight of excrement.
>
> You child of a Ghasnin's vagina, go and wash your dirty face and eyes; go and see how other people work. If I had known what you were like, I would never have come to your house, you corpse. When there is work to be done in the house, then your back begins to ache, your penis is sore. Look, your son is ill, but you won't go to the Siraha—

[1] The Santal also insist on the exact division of food at festivals—P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 78—and I have noticed it also among the Oraon tribes. So keen are the Savara on the precise allocation of labour that when I have required porters to shift camp, every man in the village has turned up—many more than necessary—to ensure that no one does more, or less, work than anyone else.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

593
518
152

for you would have to give him liquor. The children are old enough for marriage but you can't spare the liquor to betroth them. Yet there's always plenty of liquor for your own genitals. If you at least had a sister, I would go to her house and forcibly bring her daughter for our boy—but what other family would give a girl to marry a son of yours unless they had the proper gifts of liquor? You eater of excrement, eater of dog's-flesh, I have spent my life telling you how to live, and now in a year or two you will go to your grave, yet you have never taken note of what I say. We have no place in the house to dry tendu or mahua; we have no garden and the manure is lying useless in the house. Everyone else has beans and vegetable and even sago palms, but we never have anything. You come quarrelling for better food, the children cry for cucumbers, there is no maize, and the children have to go and watch other people eating—while your hands and feet are being eaten by white ants. May a tiger eat you, then I can marry another man. If you die there will be less evil in the world.

Yet, as a boy at Phauda said, 'We may quarrel for *poj* and *pāni* in the day, but we become one at night', and at Kehalakot the Chalan said, 'Our life is never full unless we quarrel'.

This enjoyment of a quarrel, at least between lovers, is shown in a proverbial rhyme.

Tor gāri to mor kān ke bāri,
Tor mutka to mor chutka,
Mārbe lāt to mor dār bhāt,
Jitna mārbe paniki tatnāki banihi.

Your abuse is the ring in my ear,
Your blows are my toe-rings,
If you kick me, it is my pulse and rice,
The more you beat me with your shoes, the more we are united.

Just as between husband and wife, so between parents and children quarrels arise about the distribution of work. On the whole relations in the home are friendly and happy; it is notable too that any attempt of parents to punish their children is spoken of as a 'quarrel'—something that arises between equals.

Parents indeed rarely complain about their children's sexual activities; the thing that worries them is that the ghotul interferes with the work of the house. The average Muria parent, it seems to me, does make real sacrifices for his children. He must experience considerable financial loss as a result of letting them go on so many expeditions, attend so many marriages and festivals and divert so many of their deeper interests from their home. But no one can say that he likes it. He usually complains that the boys and girls are guilty of four main faults—they don't obey their parents, for they have more consideration for the ghotul leaders than for them; they steal family property, little bits of wood and tobacco, and take it to the ghotul; they get uppish, answer their parents back and are afraid of no one; they don't get up early enough in the morning and they don't do enough work. Among the forms of abuse and examples of domestic quarrels that I have been able to collect, nearly all are concerned with this one point of not doing enough work. A mother says to her daughter, 'You *nahki moilotia*, all day long you are laughing with your boy friends; so and so's mother was telling me that you were ruining him; he never does any work now. If you don't work properly at home, how will you work in your husband's house? He will turn you out and our honour

412

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

will be ruined'. Or a father says to his son, 'I spit on your ghotul friends; all you can do is to dance and sing; you have no idea of how to work; when I tell you to do some work you always have a pain in the stomach. When you see a plough you at once get fever, but when you hear a drum your pains and fever disappear at once'.

At Jhakri Raunn gave us some examples of how angry parents talk to their children. Here is a mother telling her daughter what she thinks of her: 'You *futāki*, why can't you work? If you don't begin to use your limbs now, what will you do later?' And the girl replies, 'Why are you always bothering me? If you don't want to give me food, don't; if I have got to starve, I will starve, or I will go away and beg'. Then the father joins in: 'After you are married you are going to ruin our name; you will go changing from husband to husband, for not one will put up with your idleness; and everywhere you go people will laugh at us. Has not your mother taught you to do anything but to dance in the ghotul? Must you spend all your life in the ghotul? You cannot even cook the rice properly.'

In the same way the mother says to the son, 'Why can't you go to the fields? Why can't you look after the bullocks? Your one desire is to eat without moving your limbs; your hands and feet are broken. Yet this is your own house; this is your own property; how are you going to look after it when we are dead? How are you going to bury us properly if you never do any work?'

But the Muria believe that the mother is generally very kind and loving to her son. As Nari said at Nayanar, 'The father is always saying to himself that the girl is going to leave him and go to her husband's house and therefore he is tender to her, but the mother does not seem to mind her going away. She thinks of her own reputation. Unless she is nasty to the girl, she cannot teach her anything and so she has to nag her continually'.

These quarrels about work lead, in a few rare cases, to the serious consequence of suicide. During the past ten years there have been 20 suicides among the Muria of the ghotul area, and a study of the causes leading to them confirms what I have written in this chapter. The suicides have been due to the following causes.

Cause of Suicide	Number	Percentage
Insanity	2	10
Sickness	3	15
Fear due to breach of tribal rules ..	1	5
Fear of prosecution	1	5
Conflict with parents over marriage ..	2	10
Sorrow for the death of a son	1	5
Quarrel over childlessness	1	5
Quarrels about work	9	45

This is a very small number of suicides, only 2 a year, for so large a population, working out at about 20 to the million annually. The method of suicide, in every case but one, was hanging; the single exception was the young wife who drowned herself at Korhabera.

The suicides due to quarrels and disputes number 12, or 60 per cent. This, which would be surprising in other communities, is less so here in view of what we have seen of the sense of outrage that a quarrel gives to a Muria.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

762 578 152

I will give a few case-histories to illustrate this. Ghasia was a Lambada boy. He went to dance at a tribal festival and on his return was violently abused by his 'father-in-law' for neglecting his work. He went out and hanged himself.

Karu of Todopal was a lazy, ill-tempered youth. One day his father abused him. 'You *nasalotia*, I have fed you all your life; when will you start feeding me? All you can do is to sit about and eat' and doubtless a lot more. The boy lost his temper; there was a violent quarrel; he rushed out of the house and hanged himself on a mango tree.

Sukta was a fifteen-year-old chelik of Baghbera. In October 1931 he was beaten by his father for allowing the cattle to get into the *bâri*-enclosure and spoil the green chillies growing there. The boy ran away and hanged himself on a tamarind tree just outside the village.

Bhadu, a Muria of about 30 years, was the youngest of four brothers living together at Burbal. The eldest, Rupji, had to take his wife to a Siraha for treatment. This usually takes time; it is expensive, and involves a lot of drinking. After a few days Rupji came home in a rage and found his brothers had been neglecting the field-work in his absence. He quarrelled violently with them and was so upset that that night he hanged himself with his own turban from a mahua tree near the house.

Kaharu, a man of about 35, was a habitual drunkard. He worked for a Mussalman settled in the village, Dhoundai. One evening in July 1940 he got his wages and went to the liquor shop. When he returned home drunk, his wife scolded him for spending all their money on liquor and for doing no work. He got angry, beat her, and went back to drink again. His wife followed him quarrelling violently. Kaharu took her home and hit her with his axe. She managed to escape, but Kaharu being very drunk thought he had killed her and hanged himself with one of her cloths in front of the house.

Sukaro, a middle-aged Muria woman of Killam, is described in the police reports as thin-skinned and hot-tempered, suffering from an ulcer on the left knee that did not make her any more amiable. One day when she was supposed to be watching the standing crops she went to another village. Her husband made a great to-do about her neglect of her work, and she got so angry that she hanged herself.

Dhonya was a young chelik of about 15 belonging to the Kurasnar ghotul, who did not get on well with his father. So constantly did they quarrel that at last the boy went to Jodenga to live with his uncle. A month later the father followed him and abused him publicly, saying that he had become a vagabond and would do anything but work. The boy got very angry, refused to eat and went out with his bow and arrows. But he only went as far as the Thanagudi. A few minutes later the father followed and found him hanging from a beam inside the building. He cut him down at once, but the boy was dead.

The apparent cause of suicide in these cases seems trivial enough at first sight. I have little doubt, however, that deeper reasons were usually present. The triviality of motive so often advanced by the villagers who report these tragedies is really a screen to protect the real significance of the deed from ~~official or merely inquisitive eyes~~. In the majority of cases, also, psychoneurotic or psychotic symptoms have been recognised by the people themselves. So deeply rooted is the faith in work and its equal distribution that a public rebuke on such a subject is an insult not to be borne and suicide is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

less the expression of outraged temper than a final and complete protest against a loss of dignity.[1]

It must not be supposed that because quarrels arise over work, chelik and motiari are slack or lazy. They are in fact singularly laborious and the disputes about work stand out because they occur against a background of a very high tradition of industry.

It is very rare that these quarrels end in murder. One day at the end of the rains in 1932, Kodu came home tired and hungry from the fields. His elder brother's wife, Babe, had only got *jhao* ready for him: he demanded rice, and she retorted that 'since his arms and legs were not broken, he might cook his food himself'. He replied that as long as there was a woman in the house he was not going to do woman's work and he gave her such a severe beating that she died after a few days.

Bahai, a former Chalki of the Umargaon ghotul, lost his temper with his wife Ruputi because though he had a bad throat and cough, she cooked the irritating *dhoka* vegetable for him. He was drunk at the time and gave her a heavy blow with a wooden stool. When I saw him in jail he said that he loved his wife—'it was a mistake, not from my heart'—and that she often visited him in dreams.

Bandi (a thin big-eyed youth, formerly the Kajanchi of Kanera) had two wives. He too quarrelled with them over food. He came hungry and there was nothing ready. He got out his razor and said he was going to kill them. The elder wife ran away, but he gave two deep cuts on the arm and belly of his younger wife. She survived, but was in hospital for months.[2]

I have seen only one record of murder on account of a wife's infidelity. Mangju was the former Kandki of the Amgaon ghotul and his wife had been the Manjaro of the same ghotul. But the girl did not like him and, it is said, would never give herself to him. She ran away twice to the house of a lover at Bamhni. The second time a group of people went to fetch her back. As they were returning at night they met Mangju and handed the girl over to him. He gave her a very severe beating then and there in the forest, and a week later she died. Mangju was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

X. The Vocabulary of Abuse

The Muria's vocabulary of abuse is meagre and unenterprising compared to that of other aboriginal tribes. Perhaps we ought not to regret this; it may be a sign of the genial and pacific temper of the people that they put so little of their imagination and colour into their swearing. But I sometimes think that their continual use of one standard and now almost meaningless expression has dulled their inventive powers.

This expression, as common as the English 'bloody' and as meaningless, is the universal *mailotia*. This is a Halbi word meaning 'to lie with your mother', but very few of those who use it so freely intend seriously to suggest that an act of incest has occurred or could occur. Indeed, the way all meaning has been drained from the expression is clearly seen in the fact that a mother can apply it to her own daughter. Girls shout it at other girls, aunts at their nieces, grandmothers at their granddaughters. There is certainly no Lesbian suggestion here; it probably simply implies 'you are capable of anything'.

[1] For a full discussion of this subject, see my book *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943).

[2] The elder wife had been the Salan of Gahapal, the younger Belam of Metawand. Both marriages were regular, the first arranged by the parents, the second a love-match. Bandi told me the two girls got on very well together.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

578 192

The expression can be varied into *bāplotia* when it is applied to a girl, but this is less common.

Halbi terms of abuse, used by the Muria but not confined to them, are the usual *nakta* or *nakti*—'noseless', a reference to the habit of removing someone's nose as a penalty for adultery; *pashmār*, a girl who goes to five men; *jutaha*, eater of the leavings of others, a thing forbidden by tribal law; and such words as *tolbi*, slacker, and *gadhi*, donkey. As in Chhattisgarh, references to the pubic hairs are common. 'You can't shave my pubic hairs', 'Can you pull out five of my pubic hairs?', 'Do you want to copulate with my hairs?' are expressions sufficiently insulting, but actually to pull out one or two of these hairs and throw them at an adversary is unforgivable.

The Muria can be very rude if he feels inclined—'Come and eat my penis'; 'Eat your mother's excreta'; 'Come and lick my plate'. *Gukhai* means 'eater of human excrement', *masaha* means 'a gluttonous eater of meat'. 'You have nothing in your own house, but run about licking others' plates.' The Muria are perhaps better at taunts than at abuse, a fact which explains the large number of taunt-songs which, sung amicably enough in the ghotul, equip the singers with weapons suitable for sterner business later on.

In Gondi almost the only abusive expressions have an incestuous reference. There are a few others, but I doubt if they are taken very seriously. I once heard a chelik say quite amiably to a motiari who had failed to clean the ghotul, '*Korka mon armi hatteke galla ni pendāna jāhano*, A shed-full of buffaloes are scratching your privates'. And in the songs a not uncommon taunt is 'A jungle boar is rolling in your vagina'. I am told that a word *laria* is used with the same intention as the Chhattisgarhi *bhosri*, and means the penis. But more common is the simple *makha*—a hillman may call the people of the foothills *Jhoria-makha* or 'offspring of a lowlander's penis'; a conceited Raj Gond may be told that he is *Ganda-makha* or 'born of a Ganda', one of the despised weaving castes.

But these are rather unusual. When the Muria gets annoyed, he calls to mind the Table of Affinity and works through it, with special reference to forbidden relatives. Thus we get *niya āwān getha*, 'I will copulate with your mother', which is usually said by a man to his own son, or classificatory son, to his daughter or younger brother's daughter: and *niya dīdi na getha*, 'I will copulate with your elder sister', said by a man to his wife (the elder sister is, of course, in an 'avoidance' relationship).

To a sister's husband, a man may say *Niya ajin ponda getha*, or 'I will copulate with your father's mother' and *Niya halena getha*, 'I will copulate with your sister'.

These expressions, it will be noted, do not suggest that the person abused has committed incest or any tribal offence. The speaker proclaims his own intention of doing so—suggesting, I suppose, that his enemy is too weak or too acquiescent to interfere.

Another formula, which can be used in a great many different ways, is a reference to the private parts of various relatives. The Muria go into this with some anatomical detail. They say, for example, *Niya miyar na ponda* or 'Your daughter's vagina' but they can also refer to her clitoris—*Niya miyar na bīti gutta*—or her *labia majora*, her urethra and her breasts. I am told that a man abuses his sister's son or daughter by reference to their daughter (who is in a forbidden relation to him), and his wife's brother's son by reference to his father's sister who is, of course, his own wife.

These references to one's own wife are the strangest feature of primitive abuse. Nothing rouses stronger passions; nothing—on the face of it—is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

535
292

Plate CXLV

Dancer dressed in peacock's feathers

A dummy giant at Sidhawand

[p. 646 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CXLVI

X883
524

The Jhelo of Pupgaon with earthen dolls and cattle

[p. 646 (8)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

more absurd. A father tells his son or daughter that he will copulate with their mother, an uncle tells his nephew that he will sleep with his aunt. And so he may. But he ought not to talk about it. 578 192

Such a vocabulary of abuse could only effect its object in a society where great stress was laid on family relationships and where the rules of those relationships are strictly observed. It is just because a man never does intrigue with a forbidden relation that the accusation becomes effective and even amusing. If a Muria thought it was really true, he would not say so; for he is a decent fellow, and even in his hottest moments does not want to cause trouble.

The most significant thing about this vocabulary is in its omissions. There are no religious oaths—for they would be too dangerous. There is no suggestion of unnatural offences—for they are practically unknown. There are no references to prostitution—for there are no Muria whores.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

I. The Ghotul Festivals

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796

THROUGHOUT this book we have seen the important part that the chelik play in the religious life of the tribe. Their success in hunting is the best of omens for the coming harvest; their drumming and dancing adds excitement and delight to the dreariest routine. They serve very much the function of a choir, a choir, moreover, which contains a rather high proportion of theological students. For many of these boys are already training to be clan-priests, Kaser-Gaita or Siraha mediums. At the time of sacrifice the Gaita may take his son and make him perform the actual rite, anxiously watching to see that there is no mistake. At Masora, Lakmu and his son Phirtu carried the Anga on their shoulders together and were moved to and fro by a divine inspiration that came equally to both. I have often seen young chelik dancing in trance, beating themselves with iron scourges, and tossing their dark beautiful hair into wild disorder.

But in addition to being choir-boys and acolytes for their elders, the chelik have festivals of their own which are closely connected with the ghotul. At Diwali, before the motiari go out on their dancing expeditions,[1] the boys and girls collect parched rice and have a feast in the ghotul, at which they admit new members and give them their titles.

At Jhakri, they described how at Diwali the motiari bring parched rice and gur for Tallur Muttai who, in this ghotul, lives in one of the pillars. They offer it first to her, and then all feast together. At Gorma, there was a stone by the village boundary where the children went for this feast. Decorations, sometimes elaborately made with ears of rice and flowers, are strung over the ghotul door.

At Dassera, which is not observed in the villages, the chelik dress one of their number as a Raja, put him on a throne, sometimes even on a wooden chariot; the 'ghotul ryots' bring him presents and he gives gifts to the Diwan, Tahsildar and other State servants. Every boy and girl brings two cucumbers which, in ghotul currency, represent two goats. They stick wooden legs into them and sacrifice them to Danteshwari. They invite a few of the village elders and have a feast in the ghotul.

In some villages—I have noted the custom in the Chalka Pargana—the chelik and motiari have their own version of the Irpu Pandum. At the end of the mahua season they spend three days collecting the flowers—this must be done at the end of the season, for it is believed that after these three days the flowers stop falling—and make liquor for themselves, boiling the flowers in water with slices of mango. If there is a Kalar out-still contractor in the

[1] Such ceremonial parades are not unknown elsewhere. The Chherta and similar dances are common throughout Middle India. 'It is a well-known practice', as C. R. Krishnamacharlu informs me, 'in the Tamil, Telugu and Kanara areas of Southern India for village schoolmasters and their students to go to the several households of the villages singing laudatory songs and receiving presents during the Dassera holidays.' The boys carry decorated bows and shoot sandal powder at their hosts. Krishnamacharlu compares this to the Chelidonia festival of ancient Rhodes, when boys went singing and begging from door to door. See also *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II, p. 53 and Vol. III, p. 63.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
796

village, they give him a fowl and some rice in compensation. They offer some of this liquor to the village gods, the boys and girls dance from house to house, and they eat and drink in honour of the mahua tree.

In Palli-Barkot, and other villages of that neighbourhood, when the villagers first cut the rice crop, each householder thrashes a handful of grain in his hands and takes it to the ghotul. There the Gaita ties it up in a bundle with paddy string—to imitate the usual household grain-bin—and hangs it up in the roof. In the month of Magh, a little of this grain is taken out, husked on a stone, and offered to Thakur Deo for the protection of the village. There is a feast that night in the ghotul, and the whole village comes for it, only the married women sitting outside. Here they say that it is not the presence of Lingo that keeps the married women out of the ghotul, but the blessed rice-seed which might otherwise be ruined. Later, at the first fall of the rains, the Gaita distributes a little of the seed to every householder.

II. Ceremonial Axe-cultivation

883X
796
241

Everywhere the chelik are specially associated with the cutting of timber for *parka* or *dippa* cultivation. For *parka*, it will be remembered, wood is cut at a distance and brought and strewed over a field and then fired for manure. In *dippa* the trees and undergrowth are cut on the spot and fired there, and the seed is sown in the ashes. In Bandopal, in April 1941, and in Nayanar two days later I saw a ceremony that combined the cleaning of the village with the consecration of the first *parka* plot. At dawn the chelik assembled in the ghotul. The four leading boys carried large baskets and were unadorned; the rest were fantastically attired with turbans of old rope, fronds of broom-grass stuck in the hair, smeared with ash, and already hung about with old baskets, winnowing-fans and scraps of matting. When they were ready, the party set out waving long sticks in the air. They visited every house in the village, including those of non-Muria. Outside each house, the boys formed into a long line and began to push their sticks along the ground, digging it up a little and clearing the ash and leaves in one direction. When possible they dug up the neatly-plastered courtyards to the great annoyance of the housewives. As they danced they sang,

Reka pindi kokko kokko.
Marka pindi kokko kokko.
Irpu pindi kokko kokko.

And so on with every sort of variation. The meaning of this was 'Break up and grind the char, mango, mahua' and then in the various changes—*Mao pindi* (grind the bison), *Dudo* (grind the breasts) or *Puda pindi* (grind the vagina). *Kokko* is said to represent the pounding and breaking of myrabolams against a stone; the elder dancers tapped their sticks on the ground 'as if they were breaking harra'.

While this demonstration was in progress before the house, the elder boys went inside with their baskets and were given mandia flour, mahua flowers, perhaps a copper coin. In some houses the people were far from friendly and threw dirty water and abuse at the boys. In every house where a motiari was living there was tremendous fun. The girls, some of whom ran round from house to house ahead of the boys, hid behind the door and when the boys approached jumped out with dirty water and threw it over them. In one house the two leaders were shut up inside with the Belosa and Dulosa,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

N883
796
241

'as if they were bride and bridegroom' the others said. In another the boys shut the girls in, piling brushwood against the door. In two places the boys were able to steal chickens. One was a Muria chicken, and the owner let it go with a laugh; but the other was taken by way of revenge on a surly Hindu who abused the boys and gave them a stingy contribution of flour. They got the hen and hid it in a basket. The owner followed them round protesting, but he never found it.

From every house the boys took some old basket, broom, bit of matting, broken winnowing-fan, so that by the time they had done their round they looked an extraordinary collection of scarecrows. This, of course, was part of the clearing of the village of disease.

By now the boys had several baskets full of flour and mahua flowers. They took the mahua to the out-still where it was exchanged for liquor, and carried the flour and the two chickens out into the fields. Here they threw down in a corner of the Gaita's field all the rubbish they had collected and their dancing-sticks, and some of them gathered brushwood and a little timber and strewed it over a patch some five yards square.

Other boys brought water and large pipal leaves, and two of them mixed the flour and water and made thin cakes spreading the mixture on one pipal leaf and covering it with another. Then the Sirdar fired the first *parka* of the year with a bit of straw-rope brought from the ghotul fire.

After the wood and rubbish had blazed up, the boys threw three of the mandia-flour cakes into the ashes as an offering to the Kis Kanyang (Fire Maiden) and placed the others in the embers to cook. The Gaita offered the two chickens to the Earth. All looked eagerly to see how the bodies fell; if they fall on one side it is a good omen, if downward, bad. Today one omen was bad. The Gaita sat by the fire with chelik on either side, and offered liquor to the spirits of the dead Gaita of the village, praying, 'Give us good wind and no rain when we fire the *parka*; give us sound sleep in the ghotul with our motiari, and let them not conceive'.

[187]

Then they all drank. The leaves were pulled out of the fire, the bread was distributed and little bits of roast chicken. I got one of the chickens' heads and a bit of bread. Now this was done, the villagers could cut and fire their *parka*. After the rains began, the Gaita would sow in this spot and after him the other villagers.

In Khutgaon and the villages of that area, this festival does not seem to be kept, but on the eve of the day that they decide to cut the wood for the *parka* or *dippa*, the Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure that all are chaste. After the usual offerings in the village temples, he takes the people to the forest. As the chelik cut the wood they cry *Kiddari puda!* upon which the Gaita says to the other villagers who sit watching, 'Give them something to eat'. They have brought pots with burnt rice at the bottom, water and gourds. They chase the chelik, catch them, smear their faces with black soot from the pots and give them each a little burnt rice to eat. If there is any left it is taken to the ghotul and the motiari are similarly treated in the evening.

The *bohorani* ceremonies for the protection of the village must not ignore the ghotul, though theoretically such rites should not be necessary. At Chingnar, every three years the Gaita goes round the ghotul seven times, drives slag 'nails' into the threshold and buries a ring before it to keep off witchcraft. At Surma, they tie seven mokha leaves over the door with the same purpose.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
292

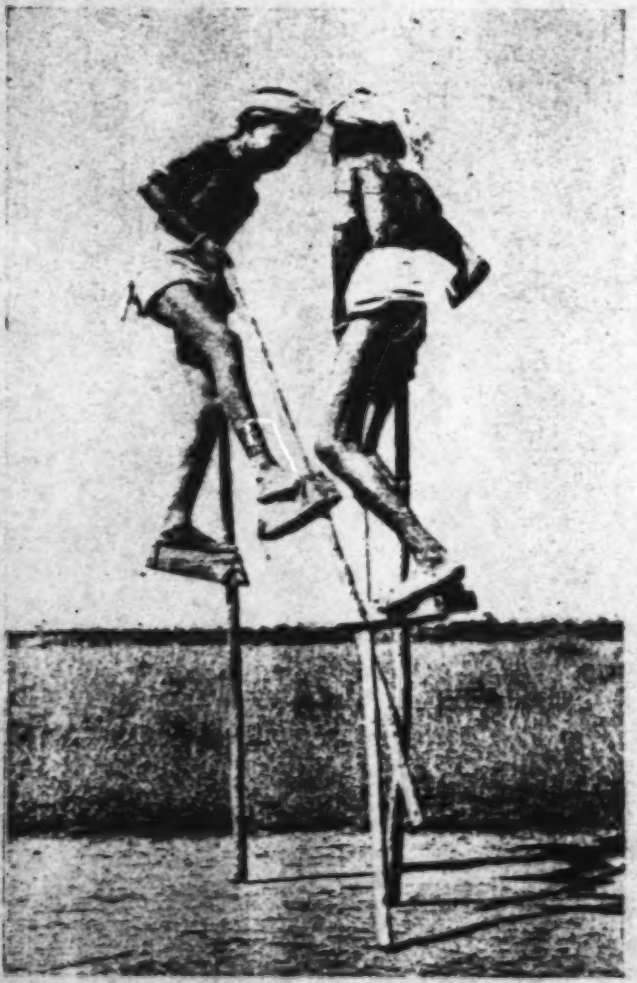
A chelik at Phauda dressed up as a monstrous bird

The chelik reveals himself

[p. 650 (N)]

X883
481
796
524

Plate CXLVIII



Stilt-fighting

[P.650 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

III. The Stilt Festival

843
481
796

The use of stilts during the rains is a semi-religious practice common throughout Middle India and no doubt elsewhere.[1] It has been suggested that it has some magical significance aimed at encouraging the crops to grow.

'The Geeree', says Colonel Ward, describing the custom in Mandla, 'can hardly be called a festival: it is remarkable more for its absurdity than anything else, and is left to the children to celebrate. This they do by walking about the place on stilts for some days, praising the institution of the Geeree, or stilts, as placing them above the necessity of walking in the mud; and finally, proceeding in procession to the Nerbudda, they throw the stilts in and return to their homes.'[2]

The chelik have similar, but more fully developed, customs. The stilts are made of two poles of either ghotiya or sarai about 6' high, to which foot-rests are attached 2' from the ground. These are made of hollowed bits of char wood which are filled with pebbles and fixed together round the poles either by nails or small wooden pegs. The stilts are made early in the rains at the Amavas Pandum which corresponds to the Hareli festival of the Hindus. During the rains, the chelik constantly walk about on their stilts making a great deal of noise as the pebbles inside the hollowed foot-rests rattle about. The only game they play on the stilts is stilt-fighting when they attack each other and try to bump each other off.[3] They become expert in lifting one of the stilts off the ground and hitting another boy with it. They are also able to do very clever solo dances, hopping on one leg with the other raised from the ground.

[524]

Stilt-walking is permitted for a couple of months during the rains from the time of the Amavas Pandum until after the first New Eating ceremony in the middle of August or a little later. This is called the Korta Tindana in Gondi and on the second day of the festival, which is known as the Hara Tindana or the day on which the people eat the leavings of the food that remained after the big day of the festival, a special ceremony takes place in connexion with the stilts. After this day it is taboo to use stilts at all. Grigson adds that among the Hill Maria there is a rule that stilt-walking is not only taboo during the rest of the year but also every fourth year.[4]

On the second day of the Korta Tindana the chelik assemble and go round the village on their stilts holding bursundi plants in their hands. They dance in front of each house in turn begging for rice, eggs, liquor and money and sing,

Lêya dêya loo loon thi,
Roi hoda hoda tha
Nêna daha dharthe,
Gondri bursundi pâra pâra.

[539]

This may be freely translated, 'O stinking mosquitoes, run away to the fields of rui before our feet touch the threshold, for with branches we are hunting

[1] Ao, for example, by the Angami and Ao Naga, the Kuki and Kachari, and the Marqueseans. See Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 155 and J. G. Frazer, *Belief in Immortality* (London, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 339f. Russell gives photographs of Hindu boys on stilts (*op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 42 and 48) and describes the custom briefly at Vol. IV, p. 111.

[2] H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mandlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 65. Compare E. M. Gordon, 'Notes concerning the People of Mungeli Tahsil, Bilaspore District' in *JAS Beng.*, New Series, Vol. I (1905), p. 193.

[3] The Angami Nagas, like the Marqueseans Islanders, play a game on stilts in which the contestants try to balance on one stilt and trip up their opponents with the other. See J. H. Hutton, 'Assam and the Pacific', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 6.

[4] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

you'. As they dance, the boys beat the ground with their bursundi branches, as a result of which it is believed that stinging wasps and flies will not bother the village for the rest of the year.[1]

Then the chelik go on their stilts outside the village to where a stone stands on an ant-hill in honour either of Bhimul Pen, Dito Pen or Gorondi Muttai. They go in procession round the stone seven times and the Sirdar winds a string round and round it. He sends one of the boys some distance away and he himself presses his hand down on the ground to crack his fingers and says, 'Now we will see if you have really been helping us'. He picks up one of the eggs that they have begged from the village and throws it to where the other boy is standing. If the god is favourable, the egg does not break and the other boy picks it up and throws it back. They do this three times.[2] If the egg breaks the leader picks up the mess and rubs a little of it on the penis of every member of the party in turn saying, 'May we be free of itch and ringworm'.

Then they break their stilts and arrange them over the stone. Sometimes the stilts are tied in a sort of square and the foot-rests and pegs hung from it. Four stilts are placed upright at each corner and a cord is tied round them. They offer eggs and chickens at the foot of this shrine and tie the eggshells in a string to the top of the stilts. They kill the chickens by hitting their heads on the ground, not by cutting their throats as usual. Then they cook the chickens and any other food that they have been given and eat the feast and drink as much liquor as they have been able to collect. There is a rule that on this day they must not cook on a stone hearth out of respect for the stone representing the deity, but should cut green pegs of saja wood, drive them into the ground and put their pots on these.

There are various stories to account for the origin of this ceremony. In the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria say that on the festival of Amavas Lingo's brother, Bhimul, went out of his house to give salt to his cattle. His little son wept, crying, 'I want to go too', and as it was very muddy his mother Gorondi made him a pair of stilts and sent him with his father. When the village boys saw Bhimul's son walking on the stilts, they asked their fathers to make them also, but they said, 'No, we don't know how to do it'. So the boys went to Gorondi and persuaded her to make stilts for them. One day a boy fell down; Gorondi ran to him and rubbed the wound with her hands and it healed at once. The boys used to bring their wounds to be cured and their broken stilts for her to mend. At first she refused but afterwards she said, if they brought her eggs and chickens as payment, she would do anything they wanted. So ever since the boys give her presents once a year and she saves them from falling and the stilts from breaking.

Another version of the story attributes the origin of the practice to the notorious jealousy between Bhimul and his wife. There is always supposed to be bitter rivalry between them. In Bhandarsiuni, the Muria once dedicated a bull to Bhimul promising that they would sacrifice it to him if he gave them good rain. This made Gorondi very angry and her Siraha called the villagers and said to them, 'Why have you been so stupid as to give a bull to my husband? Bhimul has gone below to dig roots and he won't be back for six months, so

[1] Russell records a Tuli custom at the Pola festival, when women bring branches of a thorny creeper which they call Marbod and sweep their houses saying, 'O Marbod, sweep away all diseases, pains, coughs, bugs, flies and mosquitoes'.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 352. Cf. Hivale, op. cit., p. 283.

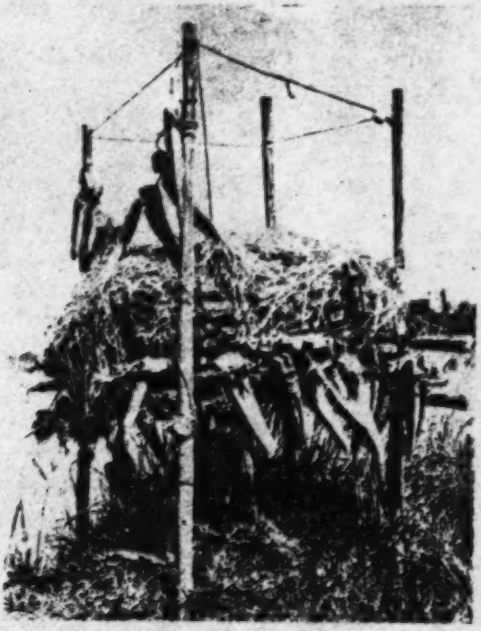
[2] Divination by egg-throwing, though in a different way, is common among the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. For an interesting account of the folk-lore of eggs, see L. F. Newman, 'Some Notes on the Folklore of Poultry', *Folk-lore*, Vol. LIII (1940), pp. 104ff.

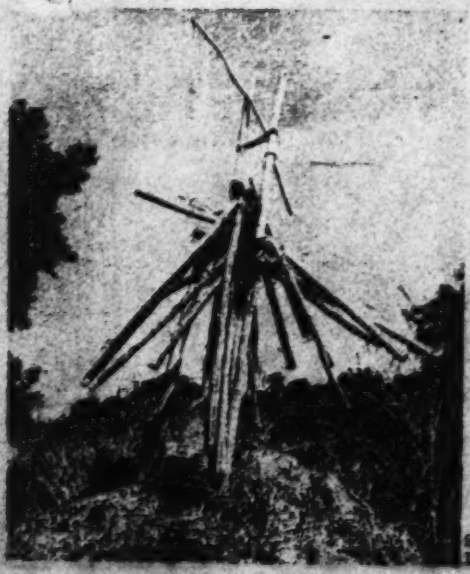
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
491
796

Stilts piled up outside
Phunder village

Plate CXLIX





Stilts piled up over
Dhur Pen at Alur

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CL

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796
415

Ceremonial axe-cultivation:
preparing the Gaita's field

Cooking in the Gaita's field

[p. 652 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

how can he do anything for you? Give me the bull and I'll do whatever you want'. So they sacrificed the bull to her and even before they had finished cooking it, before they had time to eat it, down came a torrent of rain. 'This is a grand old woman', said the villagers, 'we must not forget her.' When the villagers again began to honour Bhimul at the Amavas festival Gorondi got very angry but the villagers said, 'Don't trouble us; go and knock over any boys you may find walking about on stilts and break their bones and hurt them'. So Gorondi went out and bothered the boys by knocking them over and injuring them wherever she could until they went to consult the Siraha. He told them that if they promised to honour Gorondi as well as Bhimul on the second day of the Korta Tindana Pandum she would give them no more trouble. Since then the boys of every village have honoured Gorondi in their festival and it is said that they never fall from their stilts or hurt themselves.

That this story is not universally known is shown by the fact that in some villages the broken stilts are piled up over the stone of Bhimul rather than of Gorondi and sometimes on a stone called Dito Pen which means literally the 'Stilt God'. But in most places stilt-walking is connected with Bhimul and his wife.

IV

A discussion of the ghotul and religion was obviously necessary. Here as in every other aspect of Muria life the dormitory plays a dominant part. These boys and girls are consecrated to service; the consecration may seem to Western eyes primitive and crude, but it is real enough; it is very real to them. They live in a temple dedicated to the service of gods and men: the chelik and motiari fulfil that dedication admirably, at marriage and funeral, at festival and in the fields.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

X83
577

THERE is little immorality in the ghotul. The outsider who looks on it as a place of unbridled licence and youthful corruption commits two errors, one of method and one of fact. His method of approach is wrong, for we cannot import our own ideas and standards into another culture and judge that culture by ours. But he is even wrong in point of fact. The ghotul is regulated by exact and far-reaching laws which are very generally obeyed. Its life, compared with the life of young people in other aboriginal villages, is marked by restraint rather than by excess.

Let us first consider the general standards of good and evil among the Muria. I have often discussed this question in the ghotul. 'The greatest sin', said a Muria in Markabera, 'is to injure someone by magic. It is very bad to hurt a man, specially an old man, with an axe. To kill cattle without cause is bad, but there is nothing wrong in sacrificing a bull or cow for a funeral or at a festival.' On the other hand, 'to give food to the hungry is a great virtue. If a man can't pay his rent, and there is a warrant for him, to save him is a great virtue. If a stranger comes from far away, and I entertain him in my house, that is a great virtue. If a man loses his way, to put him on the road again is a great virtue. If a man is rich and when we ask a loan he gives more than we ask and takes little interest, he is a good man. If a man is a Siraha and we ask his help, if he comes at once to help the sick, he is a good man. If a man is old and wise, and when we are in trouble he does not talk foolishly or reproach us, but gives sound advice, he is a good man.'

A quarrelsome and angry man is regarded as very bad. A gentle and kindly manner, freedom from bitterness and jealousy, generosity and open-handedness are qualities that are much admired. The late headman of Masora was regarded by many of his people as a sort of saint. 'He speaks kindly whether he is hot (drunk) or cold (sober). He speaks slowly to everyone. He has no enemies among his own folk, though he has many enemies among the *paik* (subordinate officials), for he always protects the poor from *begar* (forced labour). His greatest enemy is the Kotwar who would take work even from a corpse. But the headman never gets angry, never orders you about; when he wants you to do something, he talks as if he were requesting you to do it. He has often paid rent and fines for the poorest villagers from his own money. All the children run after him. He laughs and jokes with everyone and is nice even to the Ganda.' Anyone who has listened to an outsider, whether chaprasi or landlord or contractor, talking to Muria will appreciate the virtue of the saying, 'He speaks slowly to everyone'.

Another good man in Masora was Laksdu, a young man, very lovable. 'He never quarrels, but earns his living and remains quietly at home. We have never heard of a quarrel in his house. He is cool.' In Binjhli I was told that the most respected man in those parts was Dibin of Karlakha. He is admired for his wisdom. 'He knows all languages, all knowledge, all wisdom and how to share it. He understands what to do at a marriage, at a funeral, at a festival for the gods. He cannot quarrel. If he gets drunk he goes and lies down somewhere by himself, for fear he may speak roughly to someone. He has never stolen anything, or beaten anyone. He lives happily with his family.' Another man of the same type is Dandi Muria of Palki.

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

In Kuntpadar, the people stressed the virtue of a democratic outlook, the estimating of everyone as equal to yourself. In Metawand, they thought more of generosity. To help a man in need and be kind to those who come to you in trouble is the sign of a good man. Courage is also admired, but not specially so. Yet it is said of Kurwal Kumoti of Palki that 'where the English only venture into the jungle armed with guns and protected by many people, he goes anywhere without a weapon and has no fear of bears or tigers'.

Is sexual morality in our Western sense an ingredient of the good man's character? When I have raised this point in conversation, the reply has always referred to forbidden relations. 'The greatest sin'—this is the view of Lakmu of Masora—'is to have something to do with your younger brother's wife. Or for a girl to have intercourse with a Ganda.' Elsewhere, in several villages, I was told how serious it was to break the laws of exogamy, to have intercourse with a forbidden relation and to commit adultery. In Masora, when I asked if they thought it wrong for the unmarried to have intercourse with each other, for a long time they could not understand the question. When they did, they answered, 'Only if he sleeps with the same girl too often: he must change'.

Here then we have a general picture of the moral qualities that are considered desirable and the vices that are deplored. Let us now come nearer to the ghotul. 'In the ghotul no sin can be committed.' This is not strictly true, but it is sufficiently true to explain the wonderful innocence and simplicity of the chelik and motiari. There is no sin in sex, provided—as I have said before—sexual relations are enjoyed with the right people, at the right time, in the right place and in the right way.

Chelik and motiari must choose the right partner. They must strictly avoid the inner circle of forbidden relatives. Intercourse within the clan is forbidden, but is not regarded as very serious so long as no one knows about it and it does not result in pregnancy. In the *jodidār* ghotul, chelik and motiari must be faithful to one another; in the other, they must avoid too great attachments to special individuals. It is practically unknown for a motiari to have an affair with someone outside the tribe. One of the first lessons taught to a young girl in the ghotul is that she must avoid Ghasia, Ganda, Mahara and Lohar. It is probably safe to say that no European has ever had anything to do with a Muria girl, and I am told by State officials that in the old days when, in the more 'advanced' areas round Jagdalpur, it was the custom for the village headman to bring women for touring subordinates, this was never done in the ghotul villages of the north. I am told that chaprasis, forest guards and constables, who are sometimes such a menace to rural virtue, are never able to seduce the motiari of the ghotul, where the village dormitory remains to protect tribal honour. This opinion is confirmed by the fact that venereal disease is almost unknown among the Muria. In fact, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, has told me that in thirty years' service he had never seen a straight case of venereal disease among the Bastar aboriginals.

The rules governing the sexual life of the ghotul are strict and appear to be generally observed. Breaches of the rules are sufficiently rare to be talked of for many years and to be severely punished.

But sexual intercourse must not only be with the right people: it must be at the right time. It is tabooed before the greater festivals, before a hunting expedition, during the Pus Kolang dance and, most important of all, during a girl's menstrual period.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

It is also tabooed in certain places. Intercourse should occur within the ghotul walls, within the supernatural fence that protects from evil. It is often considered wrong, however, for a boy to have intercourse in the presence of a relation whom he is supposed to avoid. In the ghotul where they 'pair off', for example, an elder brother should not have intercourse in the presence of his younger brother's motiari. He should do it in one of the other huts. It would also be very wrong indeed, and be likely to attract tigers to the village, for a chelik and motiari to sleep together on the platform from which the boys watch the ripening crops. Moreover one must always be careful to choose a place which is not haunted by a god or ghost. In Kajen the boys and girls of the ghotul go every year at the Pupal Pandum sacrifice to what is now known as the Chelik-tarni Dongar. Long ago they went there to practise the Cherta and camped beneath a great rock. One of the chelik took a motiari apart and had intercourse with her. They knew it was dangerous, for they immediately offered a small sacrifice to the demon of the hill. When they rejoined the party, an orphan boy (whom the others were treating unkindly by refusing to let him join them) cried, 'You take care, the rock will fall on you'. They laughed saying, 'What does he know?' 'Then one rock spoke to another rock, "These children have done wrong; let us fall upon them". The orphan boy climbed on one of the rocks and sat on the top. Suddenly it fell and covered all those chelik and motiari.' When the people came, called by the orphan boy, they found nothing but a banyan tree already growing from the foot of a motiari which was sticking out of the debris.

Lastly, sexual relationships must be conducted in the proper manner. 'When there is consent and love there is never sin.' But it is considered very wrong to force a girl to the act against her will. Such cases of ghotul-rape are not common. It must be remembered that for a motiari to sleep with a boy does not mean that she is prepared to have sexual intercourse with him. The younger girls sleep for years in the arms of boys with nothing more than a little erotic play. Only after the menarche do they begin to have regular sexual congress. If then a boy forces a girl against her will, and the others hear of it, he is fined.

Sexual deviations are almost unknown. Bestiality is regarded as a crime of civilization, unworthy of a Muria. The devious course of modern European sexuality would seem horrible to so straightforwardly heterosexual a tribe. Homosexuality, which Stekel has called 'the insoluble problem of modern civilized man'[1] is no problem to the uncivilized Muria. 'Jealousy and homosexuality are the two primary causes of the disorder of our passions',[2] says this same scientific observer of the European scene. Will not even the reformer admit the advantage of a tribe which is so largely free from these two evils?

So long as sexual relations do not overstep these boundaries of good taste and morals, there is nothing wrong in them. Sex is a good thing, healthy, beautiful, interesting, the crown and climax of love. Love indeed is meaningless, inconceivable without it. It is right and good for a chelik to love his motiari and to lie with her. Such is the simple Muria philosophy.

This accounts for the delightful freedom from self-consciousness that is one of the most remarkable things about ghotul life. When after a visit to the Kongera ghotul, Walter Koelmeyer exclaimed 'This is the cleanest place I've ever been in' I think he meant that. There is no sniggering, there is nothing cheap or nasty, there is nothing furtive about the relations of these

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy' in Forbath, op. cit., p. 362. [2] Ibid., p. 366.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

boys and girls. They dance clasped in each other's arms; they go about together, chelik with his arm round the neck of motiari. How revealing are Plates LXXV and XCI. In one a chelik lies on a cot with his arm on his motiari's shoulder, while she sits almost on top of him making leaves. They were not posed for the photo, and they showed no embarrassment at my approach with the mysterious camera, even though they were from a village I did not know well. In the other Plate two chelik and a motiari are listening to the gramophone outside my tent. They are completely absorbed in it and in each other. One of the boys embraces the girl with both his arms. You would not see this natural innocence in the more 'advanced' parts of aboriginal India.

But this refreshing freedom never degenerates into immodesty in public. It would be unthinkable for a chelik to dance naked—as I have seen older men do—in the presence of women or of his elders. The motiari never indulge in the cheerful vulgarity of the old women at a wedding. A chelik never catches hold of a girl immodestly in general company, though he will embrace her and walk with his arms about her. The great festival dances, though the air is full of romantic suggestion and the older men dance with the greatest licence, are conducted by chelik and motiari with complete decorum.

The sympathetic reader will realize how hopeless it is to bring our cut-and-dried judgements of sexual morality to bear upon a situation such as this. But he will also realise that even on his own standards the ghotul cannot be called immoral in the sense that it has no rules or laws or that it ignores those it has. Its regulations are as far-reaching and as strict as our own, and they are often better kept. For the rules are not imposed from without, but have been made by the ghotul-members themselves. Thus they are reasonable, adapted to the actual situation, and so easy to obey.

It is curious that while a Western visitor to a Muria village, if he is of a Puritan turn, will probably be chiefly concerned about the pre-nuptial relations of the children, the Hindu visitor—who is, of course, by far the more frequent—will be scandalized by the casual attitude of the Muria towards cows. Many years ago earnest efforts were made by Hindu reformers in the State to stop cow-sacrifice, and still today—though the majority of State officials preserve an admirable restraint in interfering with tribal customs—landlords, merchants, schoolmasters and travellers do what they can to put an end to the practice. But, except for a few centres where Hindu influence is strong, bulls and cows continue to be sacrificed and eaten all over the northern part of the State. The Muria cannot believe that this is wrong, for the gods demand it. There is nothing in their culture or mythology to forbid it—and indeed we here have a good example of the difficulty of importing a new idea into a system that has no provision for it. Yet if the Muria ever does ponder about 'moral' problems it is this that perplexes him and not any question about pre-nuptial chastity.

Stealing is generally condemned, but it is licensed on some special occasions. The chelik are expected to steal a cock when they take the newly-wedded bride and bridegroom to bed; they appear to have similar licence when they perform ceremonial dances round the village.

The incidence of crime is very low. An experienced police officer, who had served in the ghotul area for twelve years, told me that in all this time there had been no case of murder, riot, assault, hurt, or rape in connexion with the ghotul. There has not been a single case of rape against a Muria, though non-aboriginals have been arrested for raping Muria women. It is a remarkable thing that most of the crime in the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils occurs

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883 674

in the Mardapal Pargana and along the north-eastern border in just those areas where the dormitory system is moribund. The ghotul has almost disappeared from the Mardapal Pargana, and the system is rapidly decaying along the border. A policeman told me that in his opinion ghotul-education was a most valuable preventative of crime, for boys and girls learnt to share everything and to scorn acquisitiveness and the lust of possession.

577

To lie and cheat is reprehensible, but does not seem to be taken very seriously. It all depends on whom you are deceiving. It may well be a positive virtue to give an inquisitive ethnographer a false date for a ceremony or direct him to the wrong village when he wants to see a funeral. To break an oath or take a false oath is not so much an offence against morality as to do something very dangerous. In Binjhli I was told of a former Pargana Manjhi who stole a lot of rice during a famine. He was put on his trial, but took a powerful oath that he was innocent. As he walked out of the court, 'his eyes broke' and he became blind.

Muria ethics, therefore, combine a firm belief in taboos and the danger of breaking them, with a faith in the value of certain amiable and social virtues. The Muria are a closely knit tribe; as their culture is still living they are bound together by many ties. They therefore regard as most reprehensible those faults and crimes that would break the solidarity of the tribe—anger, jealousy, assault, adultery that leads to these things, the practice of magic that divides a community with hatred and suspicion, the breach of tribal laws of relationship which destroy its unity, and the breach of the laws of endogamy which destroy its integrity. Those virtues are most admired which bring men together in peace and happiness—a gentle tongue, an open hand and house, the love of wife and children, loyalty to tribal law.

In conclusion, let us for a moment look at the ghotul from our own Western standpoint, and try to assess the value of the Muria attitude to life and especially to sex not by their standards but by ours. It is not the business of the ethnographer to pass moral judgements, but he may perhaps imagine himself talking to a Christian missionary or a devout Hindu reformer, both of whom take so different a view to the Muria's, regarding sex as bad and dangerous in itself and any form of 'unchastity' as the worst of sins. Is there anything to be said for the Muria way of life?

X883 861

In the first place it must be said that the chelik and motiari are wonderfully happy. Their life is full, interesting, exciting, useful. The ghotul is, as they often say, 'a little school'. The chelik are 'like Boy Scouts', as I was told in a village which had a troop in the local school. There is no comparison between these children and the sad-eyed, dirty ragamuffins of villages at a similar cultural level elsewhere. In the ghotul the children are taught lessons of cleanliness, discipline and hard work that remain with them throughout their lives. They are taught to take a pride in their appearance, to respect themselves and their elders; above all, they are taught the spirit of service. These boys and girls work very hard indeed for the public good. They are immediately available for the service of State officials or for work on the roads. They must be ready to work at a wedding or a funeral. They must attend to the drudgery of festivals. In most aboriginal villages of the Central Provinces the children are slack, dirty, undisciplined, and with no sense of public spirit. Even those who attend school generally only develop a strong desire to advance their own interests at the expense of their fellows.

With all this our missionary and Hindu friends will be in agreement. 'But', they will say, 'that is not the point. Our complaint is that these youngsters

422

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883
861

sleep together.' It is at least one point in their favour that this sleeping together does not seem to do them a great deal of harm.[1] There are no signs of corruption or excess; these bright-eyed, merry-faced boys and girls do not give you the impression of being the victims of bestial lust. They are living a life of fulfilment and it seems to do them good.

They do sleep together, but—as we have seen—under conditions of discipline and some restraint. Children in other aboriginal villages also have sexual congress but without discipline and restraint. The aboriginal and semi-aboriginal boys whom I have known for the past ten years in the Mandla District all too often begin their sexual life before the age of twelve and indulge in it freely till they are married and after. It is notorious that venereal disease is rampant throughout aboriginal India, and some of the most pathetic sights I have seen have been cases of young boys and girls with syphilis. Reports from other parts do not suggest that customs vary greatly in this respect. I have no hesitation in saying that for the areas that I know intimately, there is more sexual excess among young people in ordinary villages than in ghotul villages.

Another interesting and curious point is that there are few people with a stronger sense of domestic morality and conjugal fidelity than the Muria. Adultery is very rare, and is visited with supernatural punishment when it does occur. You could not find happier or more united families. One of the reasons for this is that the ghotul system discourages the custom of child-marriage which is rapidly spreading through aboriginal India. Among romantically-minded people, child-marriage means, inevitably, domestic infidelity. Boys or girls find themselves tied to partners in whom they have no interest and naturally leave them and seek others. Another reason for this remarkable fidelity among the Muria is that in many ghotul boys and girls are 'married' and are taught the necessity of fidelity to their partners. In the other type of ghotul, they grow up from their earliest years to believe that though change is the mark of the unmarried, stability must characterize the married. Once a girl is in your *kaq* or 'right' she must stay there and you must stay with her.

Now one of the great evils of semi-aboriginal India is domestic infidelity. Divorce is universal, elopement common, adultery an everyday affair. The ghotul villages have a much higher moral standard in this respect. Figures are startling. The incidence of divorce in Bastar is under 3 per cent. An examination of 50 marriages in Patangarh village in Mandla District showed 23 divorces or 46 per cent.[2]

[1] 'This early promiscuous intercourse does not appear, as far as I can see, to affect these races prejudicially, many having a fine physique and contrasting as a rule favourably with the Aryan races of the plains.'—S. E. Peal, 'On the Morong' in *JAI*, Vol. XXII (1893), p. 248. Peal was for 26 years resident in east Assam. And Dr Clifford Allen in an important book published by the Oxford University Press says, 'It is essential for the health of the individual that normal sexual contacts should be made as early as possible. It should be noted that all savage tribes living in a state of nature encourage their young people to marry as soon as possible. . . . We have been told *ad nauseam* by cleric and moralist that continence does no harm to anyone; that the moral character is strengthened by abstinence and so on. This we do not believe. The sexual organs consist of gland and muscle co-ordinated with the nervous system. No other organs are improved by disuse, so why should these be exceptions? Again, the nervous system does not improve if some instinctual urge is obstructed, and indeed we know for certain that the obstruction of strong instinctual urges leads only to their breaking out in some abnormal channel, as when the starving man chews bits of wood and leather to allay his hunger. We believe the same is true for the erotic instincts.'—Allen, *The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities* (Oxford, 1940), p. 167.

[2] See my article, 'The Duration of Marriage among the Aboriginals in the Maikal Hills', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII (1942), pp. 118.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
839

We may then consider how the ghotul boys and girls are almost completely free from those furtive and unpleasant vices that so mar our Western civilization. There is hardly any masturbation, the scourge of the English Public Schools; where it is practised, it is due to the mistaken efforts of reformers to improve the ghotul. Prostitution is unknown, unthinkable. No motiari has ever given her body for money. Homosexuality, sodomy, bestiality are shocking things, unworthy of chelik or motiari and never indulged by them. Nor does Muria society know the thin frustrated spinster or the male neurotic so prolific in the modern Indian 'ashram', with his desiccated outlook and censorious judgements.

[157]
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These are great gains. At the same time we must not forget that there are many things in our own society which would shock and offend the Muria. A chelik would be scandalized by the Public Schools in England—the atmosphere of competition, the corporal punishment, the bullying, the petty tyranny of senior boys, the segregation with its attendant vices, the common homosexual interests, the furtiveness of association with girls, the worship of sport which has no connexion with real life. The prostitution in our cities would seem to him an abomination, and he would be filled with pity for the unmarried together with a dread of what would happen to them after death.

He would find a wholesale disregard of right and proper taboos. The missionary probably kisses his mother and sister, and certainly allows his wife to cook and touch water during her menstrual period—things which would horrify the Muria. The Hindu is often criticized by the Muria for allowing his children to sleep in the same room as their parents, which the Muria thinks far more immoral than sending them to sleep with other children in the ghotul. The sanitary arrangements of many a Brahmin home offend the Muria and he considers the Hindu attitude to untouchables, widow-remarriage and purdah as unworthy and degrading. If he is reflective enough, he will equally insist that the Westerner whose civilization is characterized by all the anti-social vices, violence, jealousy, adultery, and war, is not in a position to criticize his quiet, peaceful, happy, useful ghotul.

Although observers of similar institutions in other cultures have generally been impressed by their virtues and social value, there have been exceptions. In an early work S. C. Roy called the Uraon dormitory an 'abomination',[1] though I believe his opinion altered later. Dalton thought that intercourse in a dormitory 'must sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'.[2] In a very early account of the Seneca Indians of Canada, Cartier says, 'They have a very bad custom with their daughters, for as soon as they are of age to go to man, they put them in a bawdy-house, and abandon them to anyone who will take them, until they meet with a suitable party. And this we have seen by experience, for we saw those houses as full of girls as a school in France is full of children'.[3]

In the Marianne Islands, the missionaries found themselves opposed by the Uritoi *maisons des célibataires* and, regarding only the sexual relations of the girls and boys, declared that '*le Démon a établi icy des Seminaires de débauche*', while another writer described the purpose of the Uritoi societies of Guam as '*un épicurisme grossier*'.[4]

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 211.
[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 248.
[3] J. Cartier, *Brief récit de la navigation faict en MCDXXXV et MCDXXXVI*, first published in Paris in 1654. Quoted by Brifault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 34.
[4] Quoted from Le Gobien, *Histoire des Iles Marianes*, p. 61, and L. de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du Monde* (Paris, 1826–44). Vol. II, p. 369 by Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 169.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

Equally ignorant of the real purpose of the village dormitory is the Report of the Partially Excluded Areas Enquiry Committee of Orissa published in 1940. The Report refers to the Orissa dormitory in these elegant words:

> We do not, however, like that the peculiar social institutions of the aborigines as a whole should be disturbed. It is to be left to themselves, if and when they are educated, to reform their own institutions. But we cannot lose sight of one institution, obtaining among the aborigines, which has a tendency to emasculate these people. This institution is called Dangri Idu. There are houses where boys and girls of one tribe are made to sleep at night separately, but in a body, specially in the Ganjam area. This leads to promiscuous intercourse, however. This should be discouraged. This is a social matter and propaganda should, therefore, be carried on against it, and the executive officers may also be asked to see that it is abolished by persuasion.[1]

This is the chaprasi's view of the dormitory, the sneaking sniggering opinion of Peeping Tom, a policy begotten by ignorance upon indecency. Those who have studied these institutions with intelligence and patience have reached a very different conclusion.

Thus C. von Fürer-Haimendorf writes of the *morung* of the Konyak Naga that they are the centres of village life and the pillars of their social and political organization. The *morung* system regulates the relations of every man and woman with the other members of the community, and forms a framework for the numerous mutual obligations between individuals and groups. It strengthens the sense of social unity, developing in the boys of a *morung* a strong *esprit de corps*, and at the same time encourages competition between the *morung*, thus stimulating the activities of the whole village. The rivalry between *morung* leads sometimes to serious quarrels, yet it is as a rule beneficial to the community.[2]

Of the *eravo* in British New Guinea, a writer in *Man* observes:

> The fully initiated native regards his *eravo* as his alma mater; all he knows of the past history of his tribe; his knowledge of his duties and obligations to his tribe and community; his contempt and dislike for all and everything opposed to the interests of his tribe and community; in brief, all that he is he owes to his *eravo*, and the teaching he received in it during his initiation will dominate his actions through life.[3]

Jenks had a good opinion of the Igorot dormitory.

> The life in the *olag* does not seem to weaken the boys or girls or cause them to degenerate, neither does it appear to make them vicious. Whereas there is practically no sense of modesty among the people, I have never seen anything lewd. Though there is no such thing as virtue, in the modern sense of the word, among the young people after puberty, children before puberty are said to be virtuous and the married woman is said always to be true to her husband.[4]

[1] *Report of the Partially Excluded Areas Enquiry Committee, Orissa* (Cuttack, 1940), p. 92.
[2] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'The Morung System of the Konyak Nagas, Assam', in *JRAI*, Vol. LXVIII (1938), p. 278.
[3] See *Man*, Vol. V (1905), p. 3.
[4] A. E. Jenks, *The Bontoc Igorot* (Manila, 1905), p. 67.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

000 The *bahito*, the highly organized men's house of the Bororo of Brazil, has been described as 'a public school where the children are taught spinning, weaving, the manufacture of weapons, and above all singing'.[1]

Stack and Lyall deplore the fact that the boys' club—the *deka*—of the Mikir, which is such a 'useful form of co-operation', is falling into desuetude. Villagers like having *deka*, they say. They help greatly in cultivation, practise dancing and singing, and keep alive the village usages and tribal customs. They are in great request at funerals, which are the celebrations in which most spirit is shown.[2]

Parry speaks with approval of the discipline maintained in the Lushei dormitories. 'A young Lushei as soon as he is six or seven years old is no longer allowed to sleep in his father's house, but is sent off to the *zawlbuk* and becomes the fag of the older boys. Very strict discipline is maintained; the younger boys are obliged to work for the older, are taught to wrestle, are punished when disobedient, and generally are imbued with a sort of public school spirit, with excellent effect on their character in after-life.'[3]

He regrets the absence of the institution among the Lakher. To this fact he traces the lack of discipline in a Lakher village. 'A young Lakher when ordered to do something by an elder will argue, where a Lushei would obey at once . . . I ascribe much of the indiscipline among the Lakhers to the fact that they have no bachelors' house.'[4] Their morals also suffer. Bachelors do not sleep in their parents' houses, nor even, as among the Paithes, in the verandah of the chief's house, but in the house of the girl they happen to prefer at the moment. As soon as a boy reaches a certain age, 'he is no longer allowed to sleep in his parents' house, but is sent off to join the young men in some house where there are unmarried girls. This arrangement is not conducive to morality, and has the further disadvantage that the boys lose the disciplinary training of the bachelors' house'.[5] Mills also praises the *morung* discipline among the Ao Naga. For three years the boys 'have to do what they are told, and do it quickly—a most excellent system'.[6]

X 383 861 Indrajit Singh, a Hindu writer from the Central Provinces, in spite of some inaccuracies in his general account, well summarizes the function of the ghotul in Muria society:

> It is an institution that has manifold uses. It teaches social habits to the youths of both the sexes. It trains them in post-marital behaviour and makes them useful members of society. It inculcates a feeling of tribal discipline, provides a focus for the sentiments of the people and prepares the younger generation to discharge those social and economic obligations without which collective life of any kind can neither grow nor thrive.[7]

000 All external interference in tribal custom is risky: it is fatal when it is based on ignorance and prejudice. I have already quoted Mills' warning to the American Baptist Mission in Assam: 'In forbidding their converts to use the *morung* and in undermining it as an institution the Mission are taking a very dangerous step, from which they would surely have shrunk if they had

[1] V. Frič and Paul Radin, 'Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians', in *JAI*, Vol. XXXVI (1906), p. 388.
[2] E. Stack and C. J. Lyall, *The Mikirs* (London, 1908), p. 12.
[3] N. E. Parry, *The Lakhers* (London, 1932), p. 28.
[4] Ibid., p. 28.
[5] Ibid., p. 247.
[6] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 180.
[7] Indrajit Singh, *The Gondwana and the Gonds* (Lucknow, 1944), p. 72.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

considered the psychological aspect of the matter.' The *morung*, in Mills' view, takes the place of the father as a disciplinarian and thus relieves for the Naga one of the 'great stresses of the family complex'.[1] 'It is unfortunate', says J. H. Hutton, 'that the change of faith which attends missionary effort should lead to the abandonment of art in wood-carving, dancing, song (hymns, of course, excepted), and ornament, while even more serious perhaps in the Assam Hills is the Christian opposition to the institution of the bachelors' house, where the male youths of the tribe are educated in the conduct and the traditions which enable them to live a life suited to their environment and to continue the social organization on which the communal life of the village depends. The inevitable result is the disintegration of the village community and the sacrifice of communal to personal interests.'[2]

In Bastar, the ghotul may in years to come be threatened not so much by missionaries as by well-meaning but rather unintelligent social reformers and politicians in a hurry. It is doubtful also how long this aboriginal fortress will be able to hold out, not against true civilization, but against that parody of it which characterizes the low-caste non-aboriginal villages of the vicinity.

Even if the ghotul were something far less valuable, instead of being the focus of all that is most vital in Muria life, interference with it would be undesirable. Any who wish to 'improve' or 'uplift' such people as the Muria should consider the wise words of Henry Balfour:

> The decay of old customs too often involves for the [people] loss of pride and interest in themselves and their past traditions; virility gives way to listlessness and apathy, a state which is now recognized as one of the potent factors in promoting depopulation. The arbitrary suppression of all traditional customs, ceremonies, and dances . . . is a short-sighted and retrograde policy. It strikes at the root of practically the whole social structure of the people, and its effects are apt to prove disastrous.[3]

The village dormitory is a symptom of a certain stage of cultural development. We ourselves consider that we have outgrown it; we may grow into it again. In the days when I shared the free and happy life of the Muria I used sometimes to wonder whether I was a hundred years behind the times or a hundred years ahead. I do not suggest that we should replace the Public Schools by ghotul and turn our own children into chelik and motiari, but I do suggest that there are elements in ghotul life and teaching which we should do well to ponder and that an infection of the Muria spirit would do few of us any harm.

The message of the ghotul—that youth must be served, that freedom and happiness are more to be treasured than any material gain, that friendliness and sympathy, hospitality and unity are of the first importance, and above all that human love—and its physical expression—is beautiful, clean and precious, is typically Indian. The ghotul is no Austro-asiatic alien in the Indian scene. Here is the atmosphere of the best old India; here is something of the life (though on a humble scale) portrayed at Ajanta; here is something (though now altogether human) of the Krishna legend and its ultimate significance; this is the same life, the same tradition that inspired the Pahari paintings. Of these paintings, Coomaraswamy, in a passage which might almost have been written about the ghotul, says,

[1] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 49.
[2] J. H. Hutton, in *Modern India and the West* (Oxford, 1941), p. 441.
[3] H. Balfour, Foreword to Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. xii.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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> Many will be drawn to Rajput art as much by sympathetic and ethical, as by aesthetic considerations. Such paintings must always ultimately appeal to those who are already attracted by Indian life and thought, and above all to those who realize that they form the last visual records of an order that is rapidly passing away, never to return. In any case, their ethos is unique; what Chinese art achieved for landscape is here accomplished for human love. Here, if never and nowhere else in the world, the Western Gates are opened wide. The arms of lovers are about each others' necks, eye meets eye, the whispering *sakhis* speak of nothing else but the course of Krishna's courtship, the very animals are spell-bound by the sound of Krishna's flute, and the elements stand still to hear the *rāgas* and *rāginis*. This art is only concerned with the realities of life, above all with passionate love-service, conceived as the means and symbol of all Union.[1]

India still tends to regard her primitive population as something to be regretted. This book may perhaps help to show that her hills and forests hold a rich human treasure, natural to her soil, part of her great culture, which she should not despise.

[1] A. Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting* (Oxford, 1916), p. 7.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIXES

[P. 665]
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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX ONE

CLASSIFIED LIST OF GHOTUL VILLAGES

X883
361
162

This Appendix gives a fairly complete list of ghotul-villages, so far as I was able to discover them during the Census operations of 1940-1; the figures in the third and fourth columns are those for chelik and motiari at that date. They were obtained through the revenue officials and in all the marked villages were carefully checked by members of my party. I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the figures in the unmarked villages.

In order that the reader can see the extent of my inquiries, and the amount of research achieved or unavoidably omitted in any area, I have added to the list of ghotul the following information:

*** means that I myself have visited the ghotul or that I am intimately acquainted with its members. Two or more of my colleagues also have visited the place, and all information has been carefully checked. Those ghotul that I know better than others have their names printed in large type. The initials S.H. stand for Mr Shamrao Hivale.

** means that the village has been visited by two or more members of my party, and that I have reasonably full and confirmed knowledge of the ghotul and its affairs.

* means that the village has been visited by members of the party, but that I have only general information about it.

The letter 'J' in the second column means that the ghotul is of the older *jodidār* type; the letters 'AB' mean that it is of the *adal-badal* type where partners are changed.

Any future investigator should not rely too much on these notes. A ghotul which was large and flourishing in 1941 may have entirely changed its character by 1947. Boys and girls grow up and make a once dull ghotul interesting: others marry and deprive a formerly lively ghotul of its most prominent members.

The Kondagaon Tahsil

Amrawati Pargana

A pargana to the extreme east of Kondagaon, lying in and round the Makri Reserved Forest. There are not many Muria villages and most of them are under Oriya or Bhattra influence.

Darli ..	..	9	7
* Gudsara ..	AB	10	8
Gumri ..	..	7	7

Aonri Pargana

This pargana comprises villages scattered over the northern plateau to the east of the Koskal and Kongur Parganas. The ghotul are said to be of the *adal-badal* type, and the chelik dance the Maluna Dandar and not the Pus Kolang. Marriages are celebrated in the bride's house.

Aonri ..	..	18	15
Charbera ..	..	10	8
Herwakodo	..	7	4
Khotarpal	..	15	12
Kongera ..	..	8	6
Kosmi ..	..	10	9
Nawagarh	..	20	15
Nayanar ..	..	12	10

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
361
162

Nirachhindli ..	..	15	11	
Palora ..	..	9	9	
Sawala ..	..	16	15	
Sonpur ..	..	8	7	

Bamni Pargana

A small pargana south-west of Kondagaon town, in the neighbourhood of the Golawand Reserved Forest.

*** Bamni ..	J	30	22	
* Borgaon ..	AB	8	7	
* Dhansuli ..	AB	9	9	
* Totar ..	AB	10	9	

Bangoli Pargana

The Bangoli Pargana consists of a few villages in the west-central area, adjoining the Narayanpur Tahsil. Chelik and motiari dress in almost Jhoria fashion.

** Banchapai	AB	10	9	
** Bangoli ..	AB	10	8	
*** CHIMRI ..	J	15	14	Camped here 21-3-41. Many small *kotokal* stones.
** Chiyanar ..	AB	10	9	
** Kehalakot ..	AB	11	10	Met and talked with several boys in 1941.
** Morenga ..	J	18	14	

Chalka Pargana

This is one of the Jhoria Parganas, and its villages are friendly and attractive. It lies to the west of the tahsil, parallel to the Narayanpur-Chota Dongar road, which is only five miles away across low hills. The river Baordig runs through the pargana.

*** ADNAR ..	AB	14	12	An important religious centre. Camped here on 31-3-41 for festival described at pp. 218ff.
*** Alwar Jogi	AB	5	4	Camped here 30-3-41.
* Alwar Karati	J	7	5	
* Banagaon ..	AB	7	8	
* Barko ..	AB	8	8	
* Bawri ..	J	7	5	
*** BAYANAR ..	J	18	16	A pretty village under a hill, whereon are many shrines. Camped here in March, 1941.
** Cherang ..	J	10	9	
* Chichdongri	AB	12	11	
* Junganiban	AB	15	12	
*** KEJANG ..	AB	15	13	Very charming and interesting boys of whom I saw a lot at Bayanar and Telanga.
* Kongera ..	AB	8	7	
* Korobera ..	J	7	7	
* Maragaon ..	AB	10	10	
** Mungwal ..	AB	12	9	
*** NARIVA ..	AB	14	12	An interesting ghotul with friendly boys. Visited 22-3-41.
* Nugali ..	AB	9	7	
* Pala ..	AB	12	12	

APPENDIX ONE

883X
361
162

*** Tembugaon	J	13	14	On the banks of the Baordig. Camped 22-24-3-41.
*** Telanga ..	J	12	11	Visited 27-3-41. Saw a wedding and incident described on p. 521.
* Toram ..	J	9	7	

Hatiya Pargana

This pargana, whose name implies a 'bazaar' or civilized area, is a very large and scattered one, extending over the whole area north of Kondagaon. It includes Dongrigura only four miles from Kondagaon, and Sidhawand forty miles to the north. Generally the Pus Kolang and Diwali dances are not performed; marriages are at the bride's house; and the megalithic culture has practically disappeared.

*** Alor ..	AB	72	58	Magnificent ghotul and dancing. S.H. visited on 17-4-41 and V.E. on 15-11-41. Pillar to Lingo Pen.
Arandi ..	..	20	24	
Baijanpuri ..	..	13	14	
Bail ..	..	10	10	
*** Bara Dongar	AB	7	6	Beautiful village with Hindu temples. Bazaar and school. Small Muria hamlet with ghotul. Visited in 1937 and several times afterwards.
* Barbatar ..	AB	15	12	
Bayalpur ..	..	7	6	
* Belgaon ..	AB	8	7	
*** Berma ..	J	23	17	Friendship begun on 12-11-40, other contacts on 3-7-3-41 and 1-3-12-41. Admirable headman and friendly children.
* Bhandarwandi	AB	13	12	
** Bhiragaon	J	10	10	
* Bhumka ..	AB	11	9	
*** Bisrampuri	AB	79	57	Visited on 7-11-40.
** Chandagaon	AB	10	11	
Chhindli ..	..	23	12	
Chichari ..	..	8	9	
* Chilputi ..	AB	23	22	
* Dariya ..	AB	5	6	
Deodongar ..	..	16	14	
Deohardali ..	..	9	8	
* Deokhargaon	AB	9	11	
Dondra ..	..	10	8	
*** Dongrigura	AB	17	16	Camped here with B. S. Guha 22-2-41. Guha took measurements of Muria here and in neighbouring villages.
Gare ..	..	16	14	
Guhaborand	..	9	8	
Hakla ..	..	7	7	
Hatma ..	..	9	8	
Honaswandi	..	9	6	
Jorahera ..	..	11	10	
Kalgaon ..	..	8	8	
** Karagaon ..	J	13	14	
* Karmari ..	AB	8	4	
Khajrawand	..	14	17	
Khalari ..	..	12	18	
* Khargaon	AB	21	15	
Kibra ..	..	8	8	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
361
162

**	Kohkametta	J	9	7	
***	KOKORI ..	AB	15	14	Camped here 22-31-12-41. A good headman, but ghotul disturbed as result of scandal the previous year. Good boys' dancing.
*	Korabargaon	J	6	7	
	Kosahaduli	..	12	13	
	Kumarbargaon	..	11	6	
	Machhli ..	..	5	8	
***	MAGHEDA ..	AB	20	15	Delightful village near the Jeypore border. Visited 30-12-41.
*	Manjhiborand	AB	13	11	
	Manjhichera	..	21	19	
	Masukokori	..	15	8	
	Nalajhar ..	..	6	7	
	Narna ..	..	8	5	
***	PALARI ..	J	26	23	Visited on 26-2-42 with B. S. Guha. Very friendly ghotul.
	Parond ..	..	14	15	
	Patla ..	..	8	5	
***	Pendrawand	AB	10	9	Visited 6-11-40.
	Pitechuwa ..	..	7	5	
*	Pusapal ..	AB	8	6	
***	SIDHAWAND	AB	20	14	Visited 3-7-11-40 and 3-7-3 41 for a wedding. Many other contacts with chelik.
	Siwnipal ..	..	10	8	
*	Taragaon ..	J	9	8	
	Tewsa ..	..	8	10	
**	Themgaon ..	AB	10	8	
	Toskopal ..	..	27	18	
***	ULERA ..	AB	21	16	Pretty village, visited 26-12-41, with excellent headman and large ghotul. Near Jeypore border. Falconry and fairly good dancing.
	Undri ..	..	11	6	
	Veranga ..	..	27	30	

Keskal Pargana

The Keskal Pargana is fairly homogeneous, in the north-west corner of the tahsil. Much of it is composed of the hills known as the Mari Hills on the edge of the plateau overlooking Kanker State. As always where external influence is strong the Muria here are suspicious and unfriendly. The chelik dance the Pus Kolang, know the legend of Lingo, but marriages are in the bride's house, and memorial menhirs are not erected.

***	Amgaon ..	J	20	15	Visited 7-11-40. Good dancing and games.
	Amaguhan ..	..	5	7	
	Badra ..	..	6	6	
*	Batrali ..	AB	11	12	
	Chikladih ..	..	8	9	
	Harwel ..	..	12	10	
	Jamgaon ..	..	6	6	
	Khale Chandeli	..	15	12	
	Kodobhat ..	..	8	7	
	Kudalwahi ..	..	9	5	
	Manikpur ..	..	12	13	
	Matenga ..	..	16	12	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

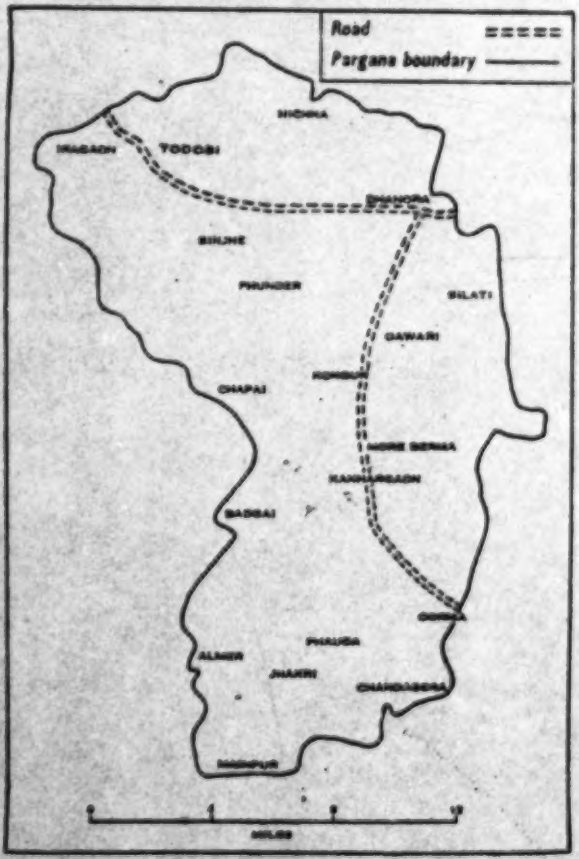
APPENDIX ONE

** Mohpal ..	AB	10	9
* Salebhat ..	AB	12	9
* Sargipal ..	AB	7	8
Umradah ..	..	7	3
Upamurmend	..	11	9

883 X
361
162

Kongur Pargana

This delightful pargana contains some of the most characteristic ghotul in the State. It lies between Bara Dongar to the east and the Bara Jhorian, Kolur, Baragaon and Benur Parganas to the west. As you move across it you leave



SKETCH-MAP OF THE KONGUR PARGANA

[491]

typical Kondagaon villages where the Chait Dandar is danced and the boys have little decoration, and come to as typical Jhoria villages, where the Lingo legend

X883
361
162

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

is known, the Pus Kolang and Diwali are danced, marriages are celebrated in the bridegroom's house, and a full megalithic culture survives. There is a range of pleasant hills in the east of the pargana.

***	Almer ..	AB	17	15	Visited 23-4-41.
	Amgaon ..	..	9	8	
*	Badgai ..	AB	23	25	
*	Baniagaon	AB	10	9	
*	Banjora ..	AB	10	5	
*	Barda ..	AB	13	8	
**	Bargaon ..	AB	23	17	
	Barwar ..	..	11	12	
*	Belgaon ..	AB	8	7	
*	Bhatgaon ..	J	11	8	
	Bhongapal	..	12	10	
***	BINJHE ..	AB	41	37	Camped here 10-12-41.
**	Bokrabera ..	AB	22	19	
*	Botha ..	J	9	7	
**	Buiki Junganar	AB	15	13	
***	CHANDABERA	AB	24	17	Visited with S.H. 12-14-11-41. Admirable headman and ghotul.
***	Chaniyagaon	AB	34	23	
**	Chapai ..	J	15	13	
	Chhindlibera	..	9	9	
*	Churegaon	AB	20	17	
*	Daure ..	J	8	7	
*	Deogaon ..	AB	12	9	
***	Dhanora ..	AB	20	28	Visited 11-12-41. Shrine of Kanda Dokara, Lingo's brother.
	Dundaberma	..	11	9	
*	Eragaon ..	AB	14	12	
*	Gadar ..	AB	10	9	
**	Gawari ..	AB	14	11	
***	GORMA ..	J	20	22	An important village. Saw funeral on 10-11-41. Camp from 7-12-11-41 with S.H.
	Hichka ..	..	10	9	
*	Iragaon ..	AB	9	7	
	Jamgaon ..	..	7	8	
***	JHAKRI ..	AB	17	11	A fascinating village among hills. Friendly and informative ghotul. Visited with S.H. on 11-11-41.
*	Kalepal ..	AB	8	6	
**	Kanagaon	AB	18	16	
***	KANHARGAON	J	13	8	Camp here from 4-12-41 to 22-12-41. Most friendly and interesting.
*	Karmari ..	AB	12	13	
	Karraormetta	..	21	19	
*	Kawagaon	AB	9	9	
**	Khandsara	AB	9	9	
	Khanlikurd	..	10	11	
	Khawlikala	..	9	7	
*	Kokarajunganar	AB	8	9	
*	Kondapakhna	AB	7	8	
***	Kongur ..	AB	62	49	An important village, the headquarters of the pargana.
*	Korgaon ..	AB	19	14	
*	Korkoti ..	AB	10	10	
*	Kotpar ..	J	8	6	
*	Mainpur ..	AB	7	7	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 X
36!
162

APPENDIX ONE

* Markara ..	AB	16	14	
Misri ..	..	6	5	
* More ..	AB	5	7	
*** MOHR BERMA	J	24	21	One of the friendliest villages in Bastar. Adjoins Kanhargaon, where I camped 4-22-12-41.
* Net ..	AB	6	5	
* Oragaon ..	AB	7	7	
* Padde ..	AB	8	6	
** Palna ..	AB	10	8	
Parali ..	..	5	3	
** Pharagaon	J	14	12	
*** PHAUDA ..	AB	20	15	Visited with S.H. 9-11-41. A large lively Jhoria village. Chelik danced at Dongrigura, 25-2-42.
*** PHUNDER ..	AB	45	39	Visited 8-12-41.
* Randhna ..	AB	13	9	
** Silati ..	AB	11	7	
Timri ..	..	11	9	
*** Todosi ..	AB	27	25	Visited 9-3-38 with S.H. A rather dull village.
* Torand ..	J	9	8	
* Toyapal ..	AB	6	5	
Turki ..	..	7	3	
Umla ..	..	10	10	
* Urandbera	AB	9	9	

Kopra Pargana

A small pargana east of the main Keskal-Jagdalpur road, and a little north of Pharagaon.

* Kopra ..	AB	27	21	
* Korlobera	J	15	12	
Kukdadih ..	..	6	5	
Nawkabera	..	17	11.	
* Taraibera ..	AB	16	15	

Makri Pargana

This pargana lies north of the Ar[illegible] Pargana, in and around the Makri Reserved Forest and a forest reserve described by Grigson as 'a sportsman's paradise full of buffalo, bison, barasing and all the deer of Central India'.

*** Baghbera ..	AB	19	15	A pleasant village, with very friendly ghotul near the Jeypore border. Visited 28-12-41.
Khuri ..	..	8	5	
Lubha ..	..	16	11	
Pirhapal ..	..	7	7	
*** RANDHNA	AB	21	18	A pretty place among hills. Megalithic substitutes. Legend of Usarengi Palli. Visited 30-12-41.
Sarsa ..	AB	5	4	
** Sorma ..	AB	15	13	

Mardapal Pargana

A large pargana in the extreme south-west of the tahsil. Chota Dongar and the approach to the Abujhmar is only a few miles from its western boundary. It has

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
361
162

the Golawand Forest on its eastern side and the Baordig river flows through it. Although it is a typical Jhoria pargana, the ghotul has almost entirely disappeared, probably through the influence of Raja Muria from Jagdalpur Tahsil which borders it. But chelik and motiari in full dress go to dance at marriages and festivals. They go as far as the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Marhai in the north and the Ghotpal Marhai in the south. All the intimacies of ghotul life appear to be preserved, even though the buildings have gone.

***	Esalnar ..	AB	18	16	An important and interesting ghotul. Met the chelik and motiari of this and Rengagondi on several occasions. Since the establishment of the Golawand Forest Reserve, Esalnar has been placed in the Bhamni Pargana.
***	Rengagondi	J	18	15	

Sampur Pargana

A pargana with very scattered villages in the area to the north of Kondagaon.

*	Athgaon ..	AB	6	9	
*	Babai ..	AB	25	19	
*	Badra ..	AB	8	9	
	Balenga ..	..	22	19	
*	Balond ..	AB	25	23	
	Banakot ..	..	28	23	
***	Bhanpuri	AB	21	18	Visited 31-10-41-2-11-41. A good village. Saw the 'Diwali Werk' and appointment of a Diwan.
*	Bhiragaon	J	10	9	
	Budra ..	..	14	13	
**	Charkai ..	AB	25	19	
	Chichari ..	..	12	15	
	Gattipalna	..	10	3	
*	Girola ..	AB	12	11	
	Jarkongera	..	14	12	
***	Jungani ..	AB	27	19	Witnessed the boys and girls doing the Mahua Dandar on 2-4-41.
	Kibaibalenga	..	10	7	
*	Kokori ..	AB	24	19	
	Kosagaon ..	..	4	3	
**	Lihagaon ..	AB	31	31	
*	Lubha ..	AB	8	7	
**	Otenda ..	AB	34	29	
	Pasangi ..	..	10	6	
	Pirhapal ..	..	11	12	
**	Rajpur ..	AB	20	18	
	Satgaon ..	..	5	4	
***	Sirsi ..	AB	17	15	Saw the motiari dance the Diwali on 29-10-41.
***	Sirpur ..	AB	18	23	Visited 28-30-10-41. Good stilt-walking and falconry.
	Termunda	..	5	6	

Sonawal Pargana

A pargana with villages so widely scattered all over the tahsil that its name has no geographical significance.

***	Baniagaon	AB	38	33	Large mixed village on main road with school. Visited often.

883.1
361
162

APPENDIX ONE

* Banjora ..	AB	9	8	
* Baphna ..	AB	9	9	
* Bhanderdasai	AB	42	38	
* Bunagaon	J	11	9	
* Chawrang	AB	12	14	
* Chema ..	AB	8	7	
* Chikalputi..	AB	5	5	
*** Dahikonga	AB	20	16	Mixed village on main road; ghotul closed in 1941 by landlord's orders.
Gamri ..	..	7	5	
* Golawand	AB	9	8	
** Haddigaon	AB	14	13	
** Hangwar ..	AB	15	10	
*** HATHIPAKHA	AB	20	18	Met chelik on 5-11-41 when they danced magnificently.
*** Jaitpuri ..	AB	20	13	Frequent contacts.
* Jhara ..	AB	8	6	
*** KADONGA ..	AB	27	22	Camped 3-6-11-41 with S.H. One of the most interesting villages.
*** KACHORA ..	AB	12	10	Visited 9-11-3-41. A small ghotul but full of life and wonderful dancing.
** Kanera ..	AB	8	6	
* Karanji ..	J	14	12	
*** Kerawahi ..	AB	36	29	Interesting and informative people.
* Khandam	AB	12	11	
*** Kondagaon	AB	31	29	Ghotul in Jamkot Para. First visited in February 1935 with S.H. W Kaufmann recorded dance music here in February 1941.
* Kusma ..	J	11	9	
*** Lanjora ..	AB	63	56	Figures are for two hamlets. On main road. Bazaar. Visited in 1937 and 1940. My son, three weeks old, made his first acquaintance with the Muria at this camp.
*** MALANDT ..	AB	27	21	Visited with S.H. 1-3-4-41. Saw two weddings. Lovely open scenery and nice people.
** Maranar ..	AB	19	15	
*** MARORA ..	AB	44	39	First visited by S.H. in March 1938. Made a small permanent camp here and used it as headquarters 1940-2 for Kondagaon Tahsil. Friendly, unspoilt, though on main road.
** Malwala ..	AB	21	16	
* Newta ..	AB	8	10	
*** PALAS ..	J	64	42	Visited by S.H. 6-4-41. Contacts also in 1942.
Parmapal ..	J	12	11	
*** PIPRA ..	J	150	137	Figures are for several hamlets, one of which is Kuntpadar where I camped 11-13-11-40.
* Pulang ..	AB	12	11	
** Punewand	AB	10	7	
** Rajegaon ..	AB	8	7	
* Sambalpur	AB	16	13	
* Singanpur	AB	27	25	
** Sonawal ..	AB	15	14	
Tilarwand..	..	3	4	
			675	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Narayanpur Tahsil

X983
361
162

Amabera Pargana

This pargana occupies the north-east corner of the tahsil. The countryside is hilly, wild and beautiful. The Lingo legend is known and the Pus Kolang dance performed everywhere, as we would expect seeing that this pargana is the scene of many of Lingo's exploits and his central shrine is at Semurgaon. Ghotul buildings here are draughty and uncomfortable, and the people, especially those near the Kanker border, suspicious and unfriendly.

Bara Teora	AB	8	7	
* Boragaon ..	AB	6	5	
* Changori ..	AB	21	19	
* Chichgaon	AB	8	7	
*** Chikhli ..	AB	18	16	A very dull ghotul. Visited 14-16-12-41, and was ill there, but witnessed an interesting elopement.
* Gergaon ..	AB	9	7	
** Kesarbera	AB	8	10	
* Kohchur ..	AB	5	4	
* Kolihari ..	AB	8	9	
*** Lohatar ..	AB	6	7	A mixed village with small ghotul.
* Matla ..	AB	5	5	
Nagarbera..	..	15	11	
Nilgundi ..	..	6	5	
Padargaon	..	10	11	
*** Penjori ..	AB	17	15	Wild and beautiful village, visited 10-6-40. Good ghotul.
*** Pupgaon ..	AB	20	22	Visited 2-4-12-40.
* Pusaghati	AB	11	9	
Rajpur ..	..	8	7	
*** Semurgaon	AB	9	7	Visited 4-12-40. Shrine of Lingo Pen. Triennial festival.
* Tumasnar	AB	15	14	
Vetegaon ..	..	6	5	

Antagarh Pargana

Antagarh was formerly the headquarters of the tahsil, until Narayanpur supplanted it in 1940. The pargana runs along the northern boundary of the State. Ghotul customs are similar to those of Amabera, which adjoins Antagarh and is reached by a road descending over 1,000 feet down the Matlaghat. The Antagarh plain is only about 800 feet above sea level, the Chhattisgarhi language is popular and many ideas and customs of the lowlands are gradually invading this and the neighbouring parganas of the northern plain.

Bulawand	..	10	10	
Garda ..	..	8	7	
* Gawrekhasgaon	AB	19	17	
* Ghumsimunda	AB	9	7	
Godri ..	..	11	9	
* Gondbenapal	AB	18	16	
Himora ..	..	12	10	
* Hirribori ..	AB	8	9	
Jaitanawagaon	..	7	7	
*** Kalgaon ..	AB	14	17	
Kamta ..	..	13	12	
* Kanagaon	AB	11	9	
*** Karekhodra	AB	24	23	A charming village three miles from Antagarh with a well-built and flour-

APPENDIX ONE

883X
361
162

				ishing ghotul. Visited 9-6-40 and 4-12-40. The traditional scene of Lingo's final ordeal. Name means 'black hole'.
Kanrokhasgaon	..	7	8	
* Khorpani ..	AB	11	10	
* Konechur	AB	7	6	
* Koragaon ..	AB	10	10	
* Kotankhor	AB	11	12	
* Kubche ..	AB	5	5	
*** Lamkanar	AB	9	9	Visited 8-6-40.
Masbarar ..	..	14	13	
Nawagaon ..	..	8	8	
Paiwari ..	..	4	6	
Pondgaon	..	14	8	
Pungaon	..	7	6	
Sureli ..	..	10	10	
* Sore ..	AB	16	14	
* Tenurupani	AB	11	12	
Topal ..	..	9	8	
Yetebaika	..	4	3	

Bandadash Pargana

This pargana is in the extreme north-west corner of Bastar, and has Drug District on its northern boundary. It is difficult of access, and though the ghotul exists, I am told that the people have become shy and sensitive about it. There are said to be a few ghotul across the border in Drug.

Bargaon ..	..	15	13	
Bara Kapsi	..	11	10	
Chhindpal	..	8	8	
Deora ..	..	6	7	
Dhorkatta ..	..	10	10	
Ergutta ..	..	7	6	
Hirangarh	..	10	11	
Jugani ..	..	11	9	
Marawandi	..	14	12	
Marjhar ..	..	9	9	
Palamureli	..	10	9	
Pitobhoodiya	..	18	16	

Bavagaon Pargana

This is one of the typical 'Jhoria' parganas. It is situated near the eastern border of the tahsil, immediately south of the Jhorian Pargana with the Kolar Forest Reserve to the west.

*** Amanara ..	J	15	10	Visited 12-4-41 for a marriage.
*** Borpal ..	J	25	23	Visited 11-4-41.
*** Deogaon ..	AB	17	15	Met chelik in December 1940.
*** Erka ..	AB	10	10	Visited several times in 1941.
*** Gewari ..	AB	19	18	Met chelik in March 1941.
Huchani ..	..	12	10	
Irlo ..	..	6	4	
** Kanagaon	AB	14	14	
** Kherkagaon	AB	17	15	
*** Khurpal ..	AB	13	12	Met the chelik of this village several times during 1941.

X883
162
361

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Bonur Pargana

A beautiful pargana on the eastern borders of the tahsil, by which the road from Kondagaon approaches Narayanpur. Here we are still on the high northern plateau, and the scenery is one of rugged hills and splendid forest. The ghotul are often carefully built and carved; chelik and motiari wear the full 'Jhoria' attire; memorial menhirs are erected. The Lingo legend is known and some villages dance the Pus Kolang; all send the motiari out for the Diwali dances.

*** Arpal ..	AB	16	12	Met chelik in December 1940.
Bagbjhar ..	..	10	11	
*** Bonur ..	AB	7	7	Formerly an important Muria village, it has now declined.
** Bhatpal ..	J	13	9	Many contacts in 1940.
* Borand ..	AB	9	8	
*** Chandagaon	AB	10	8	Met chelik in December 1940.
* Chhinari ..	AB	7	5	
* Dandwan ..	AB	5	4	
** Gohra ..	AB	13	12	
Gulumkodo ..	..	6	4	
*** Kalepal ..	AB	12	11	Met chelik in December 1940.
* Karhagaon	AB	8	9	
** Khargaon	AB	11	10	
** Koliyari ..	AB	14	12	
* Kulanar ..	AB	17	13	
** Kulhargaon	AB	14	12	
*** Malingnar	J	13	10	Visited 23-11-40.
Mandoki ..	..	11	9	
*** METAWAND	J	25	27	Visited with S.H. 13-18-12-40. Saw Pupal Korta Tindana and festival of clan-god on 15-12-40.
* Mundpal ..	J	9	6	
*** NAVANAR ..	AB	27	21	Visited 23-11-40, 12-14-4-41, and 26-4-41 with S.H.
** Netanar ..	J	9	8	
*** Panigaon ..	J	11	10	Met a number of chelik in December 1940.
*** REMAWAND	AB	17	16	Visited 21-24-11-40. Saw Diwali dancers from Markabera. Again visited with S.H., 25-4-41.
** Senapal ..	AB	14	12	
Sirpur ..	..	8	6	
*** Turtha ..	J	13	11	Met several chelik in December 1940
** Uridgaon ..	AB	9	8	

Bhanwa Pargana

This is really an Abujhmar Pargana, but there are Muria in some of the low-lying villages.

Chilparas ..	..	7	8
* Gundal ..	AB	8	6
Panklobri ..	..	13	12

Chota Dongar Pargana

The great Chota Dongar Pargana lies half way across the southern part of the tahsil. The south of it is in the Abujhmar Mountains and is inhabited by Hill Maria. The road from Chota Dongar to Orcha through the Marian gorge has magnificent scenery. The Muria here are undoubtedly Hill Maria who have settled in the less inaccessible villages of the pargana. A large assembly of chelik

APPENDIX ONE

and mutiari in dancing dress, such as I witnessed in Kongera, is an unforgettable sight.

***	Atungaon ..	J	28	19	Met many Muria from here on 6-2-41.
*	Bargaon ..	AB	19	14	
	Barma ..	..	8	6	
*	Chemali ..	AB	9	7	
	Dhamora ..	..	9	8	
*	Dumal ..	AB	19	16	
**	Gawalmal ..	J	14	12	
*	Horemar ..	AB	12	11	
*	Kanera ..	AB	24	21	
***	KOWCHERA ..	AB	50	45	Visited with W. Kaufmann 5-7-2-41.
**	Kosahar ..	AB	22	19	
*	Kumari ..	J	18	18	
*	Marhonar ..	AB	12	8	
*	Palli ..	J	13	11	
***	Rajpur ..	J	12	9	Visited 6-2-41.
*	Sulga ..	AB	8	7	
***	Taragaon ..	J	18	11	Many contacts in 1940-1.
*	Temrugaon ..	J	9	9	
***	Toinar ..	AB	18	16	Many contacts in 1940-2.

Dugal Pargana

The Dugal Pargana, which lies north of Narayanpur town and across the road to Antagarh, has some flourishing ghotul of the Jhoria type, though those near Narayanpur itself like Binjhli and Palki have modified their ornamentation considerably.

**	Aturbera ..	AB	15	12	
***	BINJHLI ..	AB	37	32	An important village, where I built a permanent camp. Stayed here with S.H. during November and December 1940 and often visited.
	Birlyabera ..	..	9	7	
***	Dugalbengal ..	J (now AB)	19	17	Many contacts in 1940-1.
***	Gurhbengal ..	J (now AB)	22	19	Many contacts in 1940-1.
	Kadakha ..	..	17	11	
**	Kadapal ..	AB	9	6	
	Khadagaon ..	..	12	10	
**	Mahka ..	AB	25	23	
***	PALKI ..	AB	31	28	Frequent visits in November and December 1940 with S.H.
*	Salanga ..	J	11	10	

Jhorian Pargana

There were formerly two Jhorian Parganas, the Ghat Jhorias and the Bara Jhorias, but the bulk of the former was included in the Kolar or Matia Forest Reserve. The present Jhorian Pargana lies on the eastern border of the tahsil and opens onto the Kongur Pargana of Kondagaon, with the western villages of which it has much in common. The ghotul are well built, carving is common, chelik and motiari adorn themselves in Jhoria style and dance like Hill Maria but with many embellishments. The Lingo legend is popular, boys dance the Pus Kolang and girls the Diwali. Marriages are in the bridegroom's house. Menhirs are erected to the dead.

*	Alnar ..	AB	12	10	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
361
162

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

***	BANDOPAL	AB	27	21	Visited 28-30-11-40 and again with S.H. 22-25-4-41.
	Bartanar ..	..	8	8	
	Garda ..	..	5	4	
*	Halainar ..	AB	6	5	
*	Karmari ..	AB	7	5	
	Kongera ..	..	8	4	
**	Kursai ..	AB	12	11	
**	Mule ..	J	12	9	
	Palarmeta	..	4	3	
	Pipra ..	..	3	2	
	Royi ..	..	4	3	
	Telanga ..	..	4	4	

Karangal Pargana

This pargana lies between Chota Dongar and Narayanpur. The chelik and motiari are of the Jhoria type and the customs throughout the pargana are similar to those described for the Jhorian Pargana, except that the cult of *Lingo* is weaker and only occasionally do the chelik go to dance the Deo Kolang. The motiari, however, dance the Diwali dances from village to village.

***	Amgaon ..	J	14	12	Visited with S.H. 10-12-40.
	Bara Jamri	..	10	9	
*	Baghdongri	AB	15	11	
***	Bakulwahi	J	29	27	Many contacts in 1940.
	Bamni ..	..	27	20	
***	Bangal ..	J	14	11	Many contacts in 1940-1.
*	Bawri ..	J	7	6	
**	Borand ..	J	9	8	
*	Borgaon ..	AB	8	8	
*	Deogaon ..	J	16	15	
	Derdul ..	..	12	7	
	Gotabenur	..	5	3	
***	Halami Munjmeta	J	11	10	Met chelik on 12-12-40.
***	KAPUR ..	J	29	19	Visited 9-12-40; contacts in February 1941 and 1942.
*	Karmari ..	AB	8	7	
**	Kherkagaon	J	13	12	
	Kochwahi	..	11	9	
*	Kokori ..	J	10	6	
*	Kukrajhor	AB	12	10	
**	Kumli ..	J	16	13	
*	Laleubnar	AB	7	6	
*	Malechur ..	J	9	8	
***	MANKAMERA	J	16	17	Visited with S.H. 7-12-12-40; with W. Kaufmann 6-2-41; with B. S. Guha 28-2-42-2-3-42.
**	Moreskodo	J	12	11	
	Naumammeta	..	6	7	
*	Nelwar ..	J	9	8	
	Sergipal ..	..	3	3	
*	Siwni ..	AB	13	9	
*	Tadopal ..	J	10	8	
***	Tinmar ..	J	21	19	Many contacts during 1940-2.

Kalpatti Pargana

Kalpatti means 'lowlands' and this pargana is on the northern plain connecting with Chhattisgarh. Yet it has many links with the Hill Maria and the Abujhmar.

APPENDIX ONE

Menhirs are erected, and the Pus Kolang is danced. The Lingo legend is known. Chhattisgarhi Hindi is generally spoken along with Gondi.

* Darwisalebhat	AB	13	12	
*** Jiramtarai	AB	14	10	Met the chelik and motiari on 26-1-41 at Kollibera.
* Kastura ..	AB	7	6	
* Kaurosalebhat	AB	11	10	
*** Khutgaon	AB	16	13	Visited 27-28-1-41. Remarkable Muria landlord.
*** Kotlibera	AB	23	21	Visited 25-26-1-41. Unforgettable river scenery. Saw Pus Kolang dance and ceremonies.
* Kurusbori	AB	7	8	
* Maragaon ..	AB	13	12	
Masur ..	..	6	3	
* Murawandi	AB	8	5	
* Murnar ..	AB	7	7	
Nawge ..	..	3	2	
*** Partapur ..	AB	14	12	Visited 29-1-41, but have no detailed knowledge of ghotul.
Pipli ..	..	8	6	
* Salgi ..	AB	10	6	
* Tumnai ..	AB	15	9	

Kiringal Pargana

This interesting pargana belongs properly to the Abujhmar, and the Muria here are obviously Hill Maria who have come down from the heights. The women often go bare-breasted, and the ghotul—though allowing full membership to girls—is still the centre of the male life of the village.

*** Barkot ..	J	14	12	Visited 30-1-41. Charming wooded village and nice people.
Gheragaon ..		4	3	
Kavakatta ..		7	4	
Kherangaon ..		7	3	
Mangi ..	..	6	4	
*** Pallli ..	J	17	12	Visited 29-1-41. Well-built ghotul and good dancing.

Kolar Pargana

A large pargana lying between Antagarh and Narayanpur with much fine mountain scenery. The hills above the magnificent Raughat rise to 2,938 feet. The Abujhmar and Matlaghat hills join across the Pargana. Jhoria influence here is not very strong. The Pus Kolang is danced everywhere; menhirs are erected; marriages are celebrated in the bridegroom's house; the Lingo legend is known.

* Badangi ..	AB	18	16	
* Balkasalebhat	AB	18	15	
*** Bondanar ..	AB	15	13	Visited 7-6-40.
** Chingnar ..	AB	10	9	
Chipoti ..	..	12	11	
** Hoychar ..	AB	8	5	
** Hurtarai ..	AB	9	6	
Kadawar ..	..	16	12	
* Kanelsad	AB	12	9	
** Khalepanar	AB	19	15	
*** Kolar ..	AB	8	6	A large mixed village. Visited 22-1-41.
Kursai ..	..	4	2	
* Malmeta	AB	18	17	
* Marnar ..	AB	8	7	

X883
162
361

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

***	Padbera ..	J	21	19	A friendly and beautiful village in the hills. Visited 19-12-41.
***	Phulpar ..	AB	47	39	Visited 22-24-1-41. Saw Pus Kolang dancing.
*	Pusawahi ..	AB	24	13	
**	Sarandi ..	AB	25	21	
*	Sirsangi ..	AB	10	10	
**	Talabera ..	AB	15	12	
	Taralkotta ..		12	11	
*	Tumapal ..	AB	8	5	
	Yeranar ..	..	15	13	

Narayanpur Pargana

A small pargana in the open country surrounding Narayanpur, the headquarters of the tahsil, where there are courts, a dispensary and school, and a very big bazaar to which come Hill Maria from the Abujhmar as well as large numbers of Jhoria Muria. I would not now call this a Jhoria pargana; external influence which first attacks externals has stripped the Muria of their delightful ornaments. The ghotul at Narayanpur is drab and rather corrupt.

*	Garanji ..	AB	25	19	
***	Narayanpur	AB	34	31	Frequently visited with S.H. from 1937 to 1941.

Paralkot-Kalpatti Pargana

This pargana occupies the western end of the tahsil and includes the old zamindari of Paralkot. This is the gateway by which the influence of Chanda Hindus and Congressmen enters the State. The lovely Kotri river passes through the pargana and the hilly scenery on its eastern side which leads into the Abujhmar is attractive. Chelik and motiari on the east of the road and at Tarbalil are hardly to be distinguished from Hill Maria; the girls often go bare-breasted. But to the west, the people get more and more drab and uninteresting.

***	Betiya ..	AB	6	4	Visited 30-1-41-1-2-41.
	Ghotanbera ..		11	9	
	Irpanar ..		9	8	
	Kanharpaon ..		8	7	
	Karakoda ..		6	6	
*	Kurunar ..	..	15	13	
*	Markanar ..	..	9	9	
*	Marora ..	..	12	11	
	Mausamtola ..		10	10	
	Nagaldand ..		11	10	
	Parenga ..	..	7	8	
***	Tarbalil ..	..	13	13	A very attractive company came from this ghotul to dance at Betiya on 31-1-41.

Surwahi Pargana

This lies on the northern boundary of the State between the Antagarh and Khalpatti parganas, and is said to be very like them.

*	Alkanhar ..	AB	16	14
*	Amoli ..	AB	20	18
*	Chargaon ..	AB	9	8
*	Durpipli ..	AB	10	9
*	Jathangaon	AB	9	5
*	Maragaon ..	AB	14	12
*	Nawagarh	AB	17	15
*	Surwahi ..	AB	19	15

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX TWO

THE LANGUAGE OF THE MURIA

By A. N. Mitchell, O.B.E., I.C.S.

197

Introductory

In the year 1940 when I was Administrator of Bastar, I began, at Dr Elwin's suggestion, a linguistic survey of the State. This survey was intended to be one of many subsidiary inquiries in connexion with the decennial Census, and it started from the assumption, which was then generally believed to be correct, that Bastar State was the home of a large number of different languages and dialects. It is still true to say that the number of languages spoken is remarkable in proportion to the area of the State, which is 13,725 square miles and may be roughly compared to that of Belgium. There is the official language, Hindi, and in the south of the State large numbers of people also speak Telugu. It is correct to say, however, that there are practically no people whose mother-tongue is Telugu, and very few with whom Hindi comes more easily than Halbi, which is probably the most commonly spoken language of all. This Halbi is in my opinion properly to be classified as a dialect of Marathi, but its vocabulary is a synthetic one of Gondi, Hindi, Oriya, and Marathi words.[1] It is not only the mother-tongue of the Halbas, who traditionally accompanied the first Raja of Bastar when he fled into the State from Warangal early in the fifteenth century, but also of a number of semi-aboriginal castes such as the Bhattras and Dhakar, all of whom mainly inhabit the east central portion of the northern plateau. In addition there are many thousands of Muria who no longer speak anything but Halbi, while a minority of Muria, Jhoria, Maria, and Dorla all over the State have learnt it as a second language. The Dhurwa, who are mainly found in the south-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and the extreme north of the Sukma Zamindari, have a distinct dialect of their own, which is, however, recognizably related to other Gondi dialects. Finally there are a few scattered villages of Gadaba, mainly in the Jagdalpur Tahsil, who speak their own language, which belongs not to the Dravidian group as Gondi does, but to the Kolarian group of which few examples are normally to be found south of the Mahanadi river.

2. With the exception of Halbi, all these languages between them account for only a small proportion of the total population of the State, which now stands at about 630,000. The most interesting fact which emerged from my linguistic survey was that in a great arc running from the north-east corner of the State westwards, southwards and finally south east, a dialect of Gondi is spoken, which is for practical purposes one and the same dialect whether it is spoken by Muria, Jhoria, Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria, Koya, or Dorla. The number of speakers is probably about 300,000 out of a total population for the State of 630,000. For this reason and because the exigencies of service during war-time cut short my time in Bastar, I finally concentrated on this dialect, especially as spoken by the Bison-horn Maria, and produced a grammar thereof which was published at the Bastar State Press in 1942.

3. This amount of preliminary explanation is necessary before I proceed to give some account of the language of the Muria in order that two points may be made clear. The first is that the Maria language is essentially the same as that

[1] Halbi, says Grierson, 'can hardly be called a true dialect. It is a mechanical mixture of bad Marathi, bad Oriya and bad Chhattisgarhi, which varies in the proportions of its constituents from place to place. On the whole Marathi inflexions form its most prominent feature'. It is the language of the Palace and used by clerks and others in Jagdalpur for police correspondence. Its use has now spread widely throughout Bastar where over 170,000 persons returned it as their mother-tongue in 1931.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

197 of other Gond, or more properly Koitor, in Bastar State.[1] The second is that I have not been able to make as close a study of the language as spoken by the Muria as I have of that spoken by the Bison-horn and Hill Maria. This note should, therefore, not be taken as in any sense the last word on the subject, but rather as an illustrative introduction. One more reservation is necessary. I have mentioned above that many Muria can now only speak Halbi, and I would make this more clear by pointing out that no form of Gondi is now spoken in the areas enclosed on the north by the Makri river in Kondagaon Tahsil, on the west by the main road from Jagdalpur, and on the south by the Indrawati river from the eastern border of the State to the point where it is crossed at Jagdalpur by the main road. Even to the west of that road in an area about twenty miles in depth between Jagdalpur and Kondagaon the same remark applies. It is round this block that the arc to which I referred above is described.

4. This view of the essential unity of the dialect of Gondi spoken in Bastar State is not that which was held by Sir George Grierson in Volume IV of *The Linguistic Survey of India*. At page 532 thereof he stated that the Maria dialect of Bastar 'seems to be almost identical with the ordinary Gondi of the (Chanda) district'. On page 473 also he expressed the opinion that Maria does not differ so much from ordinary Gondi that it should be classed as a separate dialect. When referring to the Gondi spoken in the north of the State, that is, by the Muria and Jhoria, he came to the conclusion that this was the same as that spoken by their neighbours to the north and west in Kanker State and the Drug and Chanda Districts of the Central Provinces. I believe both these views to be incorrect, and to be based on incorrect material supplied to him by the Bastar State authorities at the time. Among other reasons for this belief of mine I would place first the undoubtedly erroneous geography from which Grierson started. A comparison of what Dr Elwin has written in this book of the distribution of the Muria and Jhoria, and of what Mr W. V. Grigson has written in his *Maria Gonds of Bastar* regarding the distribution of the Maria, with what Grierson has written on the same subject, for example, at page 529 of Volume IV, will serve to prove this fact. On many points of grammatical detail, also, his information was undoubtedly wrong. In giving examples I adhere to my view that Muria and Maria Gondi are for practical purposes the same language. Grierson, then, at page 528 of Volume IV refers to the existence of separate forms of the dative and accusative cases. There are no such separate forms. The personal terminations of verbs are not the same in Bastar as those mentioned by Grierson on pages 528-9 and 533. The personal pronouns mentioned on page 532 are not identical with those which he, erroneously, says are used in the Gondi of the north of the State. There is no negative infinitive as stated by him (p. 533). There is no passive voice, which he states to exist generally in Gondi (p. 482). On page 473 he has admitted the existence of typical southern features in the language spoken by the Muria when he mentions the use of initial 'l' for 'r' and 'h' for 's'. On the same page he speaks of the form *ana* = 'I' being used among Muria as among Gond elsewhere, but I have not heard anything but the form *nana*. His citation of the words *dana* or *danva* meaning 'her' also appears incorrect. I have heard *tana* among Maria, but *dana* appears to be a simple transposition of consonants for *adna*, the genitive of *ad*. On page 528 again he speaks of a second person plural ending in *ir* which I have not heard. On page 529 he quotes a form *lohloh* = 'he sent', and *hitoh* for *hitor* = 'he did'. These are obvious mistakes in transliteration committed in an attempt to reproduce the guttural 'r' or uvular trill, a feature of the speech of Hill Maria in particular. They are not plural forms at all as he suggests. Similarly the form *himtu* = 'give' (imperative) seems to be a mistake of transcription for the universal form in Bastar *himut*. He gives the form *hayatona* = 'I die'

[1] One Muria, when asked to give an example of the difference between his language and Maria, said that for the imperative 'Come' Muria say *Dayuura* while Maria say *Way*. The latter is, of course, the singular imperative from *wayana*, while *wara* is the plural imperative. *Dayuura* means literally 'go come', an inverted form of the Hindi *Ā jao*. Not a very significant difference.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

which is not found in Bastar, where moreover the verb *dolitana* is used. He speaks of *hi* and *hu* as dative terminations 'confounded' with the accusative in *wu*, whereas in my experience all three are interchangeable postpositions. He speaks of an ablative termination *agada*, which is rarely heard, and which is an instrumental postposition used by the Muria. He mentions plural terminations in 'ng' and 'r' as used by the Muria, and on page 532, speaking of the Maria dialect, he says that he has not found plurals in 'or' and 'ng' but that there is no reason for supposing that they are lacking. They are in fact almost entirely lacking both among Muria and Maria. On page 530 he speaks of separate plural forms for the second and third person of the various tenses of the verb. These do not exist, and I have not found the plural imperative termination in 'at', except in the negative imperative, nor the past negative tense, which he mentions. 197

5. Grierson's material can thus hardly be described as reliable, and it has led him into a curious position. On the basis of apparently wrong information he has linked the Gondi dialect of North Bastar with Gondi in general, and refuses to admit that it is a separate dialect at all. This seems to me incorrect. But his incorrect material being the same for the language spoken among the Muria, the Hill Maria, and the Bison-horn Maria, he has arrived at the correct conclusion from wrong premises that these three peoples, with the Jhoria, speak for practical purposes the same language. But it is not the statements alone in *The Linguistic Survey of India* which have led to a wrong conclusion. There are also omissions in the description of the Maria dialect of certain points which more clearly define its right to be described as an independent dialect. I would mention particularly the following. Nouns never inflect in oblique cases, and a variety of postpositions can all be used with the appropriate case, subject to no law except very rough standards of euphony. There is thus no ground for distinguishing declensions. There is no distinction between singular and plural in the second and third personal pronouns. In the conjugation of verbs, gender is only distinguished in the third person and then not always and number is only distinguished in the first person. There are other less striking points which tend to prove the same thing.

6. A final proof of the distinct entity of this common Bastar dialect can be found by looking further afield and comparing it in general with those dealt with by Lind[1] and Chenevix Trench.[2] From such a comparison it seems justifiable to conclude that there are at least three main dialects of Gondi at the present time. Trench has dealt with a dialect which appears to cover practically the whole of the central plateau of the Central Provinces. Lind has dealt with a dialect which appears to cover the whole of the southern portion of Chanda District, and probably (though I have no proof of this) extends into the Godavari Basin between Bastar State and the Nizam's Dominions. A modified form of this dialect, which is full of Telugu influences, appears to be spoken in the southern and western portions of Bastar State. The Bastar dialect is the third.

7. For historical and physical reasons there is nothing surprising in the independent existence and survival of this dialect. Lind has suggested, without giving reasons, that the Maria language, as he heard it, was the source of the various forms and dialects of Gondi all over the Central Provinces and Berar, but I have not been able to find any evidence for holding this view. Nor is it clear to me whether the Bastar dialect possesses in its grammar embryonic or vestigial forms. But the history of the country would justify the view that the dialect is very old, since it has had little or no contact with the outside world for centuries. Grierson, in Chapter VII of the *Imperial Gazetteer* (1907–9), has shown that it is not established whether the Dravidian languages entered India from the north-west where the Brahuis would therefore form the 'rear guard'; or whether they came from the south from the hypothetical 'Lemurian Continent'. Anthropology does not seem to have solved this problem during the past 30 years. But in either case the geographically central position of the Bastar dialect among Dravidian languages might give grounds for thinking that it constitutes an isolated survival

[1] A. A. Lind, *A Manual of Maḍia* (Mukti Mission Press, Kedgaon, 1913).
[2] C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

197

of an ancient form of speech. The only certain fact, however, is the age-long isolation of the Maria and Muria, and on the whole I am inclined to deduce from this fact that the peculiar structure of their grammar is a development from archaic Gondi in the direction of extreme simplification.[1] An example of archaism is to be found in the very few indications of gender, and those on the principle that males of the human species are masculine, and the rest of creation neuter. The absence of declensions shows no crystallization of convention in respect of the use of postpositions, which both Lind and Trench have called case endings. Again, there are only scanty traces of plural forms. These are entirely confined to proper names of places and peoples. Thus, the Maria and Muria like other so-called Gond, refer to themselves as Koitor. Place names such as Kaklur and Chitalur probably illustrate the same termination, as does the clan name Tokalur among Maria. The third personal pronoun 'or' was probably originally an honorific plural. And the verbal noun of agency, e.g. *kewalor* = 'doer', is almost certainly a plural form, since Lind has found the singular form *kewal* in Chanda District. The paucity of these forms suggests that they are a survival, but there is no sign of any tendency to add any suffix to them to make a new distinct plural, such as the termination 'ork' found in other dialects. Finally, there is the exceedingly clumsy method of constructing conditional sentences, which seems to be a primitive feature of the language, while the absence of many grammatical forms found in the Gondi of Betul District shows the latter language to have developed from an archaic and primitive condition in the direction not perhaps of simplicity, but of greater flexibility than that found among Maria and Muria.

8. Grigson has described Bastar State as 'an almost unknown backwater of the river of Indian history'. The present ruling family is descended from the Kakatia kings of Warangal, of whom the last was killed in battle with Mohammedan invaders early in the fifteenth century. His brother fled across the Godavari into Bastar, and from his time until very recent years the country has been practically without history and almost without contact with the outside world. Before the fifteenth century it appears from inscriptions that a Telugu line of Nagwanshi kings ruled in the eleventh century at Barsur, which lies in the centre of the State in the Bison-horn Maria country, and whose ruined temples indicate that there was then an advanced Hindu civilization in that area. Grigson has shown that up to the time of the Mohammedan conquest of the Deccan there must have been much Telugu infiltration, of which many signs still remain; but since that time the country has been largely undisturbed. There can never have been much Telugu or other Hindu influence on the Hill Maria or Muria; and the eight centuries which have elapsed since there can have been any strong Telugu influence on the Bison-horn Maria have given ample time for independent development of dialect, free from the outside influences to which Gondi has been exposed elsewhere. To this day Bastar State continues to be a very isolated area. On the north and north-east borders there is a certain amount of traffic with the adjoining British Indian districts and the Kanker State and the Jeypore Zamindari, which has brought the influence of Chhattisgarhi speech to bear on the Muria, but even this does not affect the Bison-horn Maria, whose contact with other peoples on the east is confined to the least developed portions of the Jeypore Zamindari. On the west and south of the State there is still not much intercourse across the Godavari river with the Chanda District, the Nizam's Dominions, and the Madras Province, in all of which areas the people are, in any case, similar to their Bastar neighbours and act as a buffer between them and more developed peoples. Although communications have been greatly improved in recent years, more than 11,000 square miles of the State's total area of 13,725 square miles are under forest, so that communication even between one tribe and another is still a matter of some difficulty. That this must have been very much more so in the past is obvious. The Maria and Muria still lead a laborious life, mainly dependent for their subsistence on

[1] A similar tendency towards simplification of grammar is mentioned by Allen Crawford, in connexion with the English of the inhabitants of Tristan da Cunha in his book *I went to Tristan* (London, 1941), p. 137, 'They seldom use the past tense'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

197

shifting cultivation of various types and, except in certain areas where the Bison-horn and Hill Maria have exterminated all game, on hunting.

9. All these factors must have combined to produce physical conditions capable in turn of producing marked individual changes and development in their language. One such condition is illustrated by a well-substantiated theory advanced by the American ethnologist Horatio Hale, and quoted by Otto Jespersen.[1] Hale found that in Oregon, a region not much larger than France, at least thirty different families of languages exist. This he explained by the fact that, among the hunting tribes of America, in which single families frequently were separated from the main tribe, in a vast and largely uninhabited country, language was much influenced by children, who were either left much to themselves owing to their parents' preoccupation with agriculture and hunting, or were actually left alone as the result of disease or the casualties of a hunter's life. Or again, where the men either died or were killed, the women left behind had little time for domestic life, and the children were neglected not only in respect of their physical welfare but also in respect of the correctness of their speech. From these circumstances arose fundamental changes of language, whereby actual new families of languages came into existence among ethnologically cognate peoples. I do not suggest that such extreme circumstances have ever been present among the tribes of Bastar, but they must have been present to some extent among the Bison-horn Maria and the Muria and to a greater extent among the small and isolated communities of the Maria of the Abujhmar Hills. The institution of the ghotul, where children of both sexes live together from an early age until marriage, separate from their parents for much of the day and the whole of the night, may also have led to great changes in the language. How important the influence of the ghotul has been it is not easy to judge, as the institution no longer exists among the Bison-horn and Hill Maria in the form in which it is now found among the Muria. But among the latter it is a fact, as Dr Elwin has discovered, that the children of the tribe have developed their own songs and stories and, to a very large extent, their own habits of conversation.

10. The foregoing arguments would explain the marked grammatical differences between the Bison-horn Maria and the Maria of the Bhopalpatnam Zamindari and of Chanda District as recorded by Lind. It would also explain the relative rarity of Hindi words in the Bastar dialect as a whole, while the earlier history of the race would explain the more numerous Sanskrit survivals and signs of Telugu influence; if indeed explanation of such features is necessary in view of the fact that Telugu and Gondi are closely related in the Dravidian family. It would also explain the differences of pronunciation which make it almost impossible for tribes who are fairly close neighbours to understand one another. For example, the speech of the Hill Maria is compared by the Bison-horn Maria to that of crows, owing to its numerous gutturals and glottal stops. One of these gutturals is the letter 'r' mentioned above, pronounced in the same way as a Frenchman pronounces the 'r' in Paris. Leonard Bloomfield calls this the 'uvular trill'.[2] The comparison with the speech of crows is reminiscent of Virgil's description of the young crows in their nests uttering *Presso ter gutture voces*, which may be confirmation of the accurate observation of natural phenomena by the Bison-horn Maria. The Bison-horn Maria themselves speak in a guttural manner, the Muria less so; and another feature of the pronunciation of both is its extremely staccato nature. They almost invariably fail to pronounce initial 'h' and there is a tendency to interchange the cerebral and trilled 'r'. In other respects the pronunciation is very much as described by Trench for the Betul Gondi, initial 'e' being often preceded by a 'y' sound, and 'e' and 'o' being pronounced sometimes short and sometimes long. Orthography, is not, therefore, an easy matter. I adopted the Nagri script in my grammar as being adequate for the purpose, but the Telugu script, according to Grierson, is better suited to the language.

11. An outline of the grammar of this language follows. There is little to say about syntax, beyond what I have indicated therein, since its syntax is similar

[1] O. Jespersen, *Language*, pp. 180-8.

[2] Ibid., p. 470.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

197 to that of other Gondi dialects and of Hindi, of which the latter at least is widely known.

Outline Grammar

193 *Nouns.* These are never inflected and there is no distinction of form between singular and plural. The oblique cases are indicated by postpositions. Genders are very rarely indicated and play little part in the grammar of the language, though they do exist in the minds of the speakers. They are two in number, masculine and feminine-neuter. The former includes only males of the human species and the latter covers the rest of creation, whether male, female or inanimate. The commonest postpositions are as follows:

tun, ke, or *nu,* indicate the accusative
nu, na, ta, or *nad* meaning 'of' (genitive)
tun or *ke* meaning 'to' (dative)
to or *tena* meaning 'with' or 'from' (comitative and ablative)
da meaning 'with' (instrumental) is only used of things
te or *taga* meaning 'in' or 'on' (locative)

All these can be used with any noun, the choice of alternatives apparently being governed by considerations of euphony. For example *lon,* a house, usually takes those postpositions which begin with 't' and elides its final 'n'; thus, *lota* = of a house, *lote* = in a house, and so on. There is no justification for distinguishing declensions.

Adjectives. These also are inflected neither for number, gender nor case. The language is well supplied with simple and compound adjectives, but the primitive feature of the language is that simple adjectives sometimes have to be expressed in a compound form, e.g. *bata hilwa* = poor, its literal meaning being 'without anything'.

The verbal noun is sometimes used as an adjective in the same way as the passive past participle in other languages, e.g. *murcha,* shut, from *murchana,* to shut.

Comparison is normally expressed, as in other Indian languages, by using the positive form of the adjective followed by the postposition *tena,* from. There is, however, a single interesting exception, *nela,* 'good', having the comparative and superlative form *nelator.* Syntactically this is used as other adjectives are with *tena.*

The superlative is expressed similarly to the comparative, as in Hindi with the use of the words *sabe mul,* 'all'; e.g. *sabe mul tena perke,* 'last of all'.

Pronouns and Pronominal Adjectives. The only remarkable feature of these is that there is a distinct word for 'we', namely *mamat,* usually shortened in conversation to *mat.* This is one of the very few plural forms in the language. I = *nana,* thou and you = *nima* and *or* = he, she, or they. Another interesting feature is that pronouns have inflected forms. *Nana* produces *na, nima* produces *ni, or* produces *on,* and *mamat* produces *ma.*

Pronominal adjectives are distinct adjectives and not merely the genitives of pronouns, except in the case of *ona,* his. They are *nawa* or *na* = my, *niwa* or *ni* = yours, and *nawa* or *ma* = ours.

Numerals. Up to and including 6, the cardinal numbers are almost identical with those in Telugu. From 7 to 19 inclusive the Hindi numerals are used, after which comes *bovk,* 20. Beyond this the word *kori* = score, is used in combination with other numbers. This word is of wide distribution in Eastern India, being used in Oriya among other languages, but is probably Dravidian in origin. For 100 the Hindi word *sau* is frequently used, as is the Urdu word *hazar,* a thousand, to denote vaguely large numbers. An interesting feature of the numerals is that the word for 2 has a masculine form *iru* and a neuter form *rend* or *rand.* This is one of the few cases where gender is distinguished.

Ordinals are the same as cardinals with the sole exception of *onde,* first.

Frequency is expressed by the word *gele,* time, probably borrowed from Marathi, which is added to the cardinal number, and multiplicity is expressed in the same way.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX TWO

Demonstrative, Interrogative, and Relative Pronouns and Adjectives. The demonstrative pronouns do not inflect but distinguish genders. The demonstrative adjectives are the same. This-*aev* or *uen* masculine, and *id*, feminine-neuter. That-*or*, masculine, and *od*, feminine-neuter.

The interrogative pronoun 'who' has various forms in different areas, those which I have heard being *benor*, *bor*, *benon*, and *ben*. There is also a feminine and neuter form *bed* or *bad*, which.

There are no true relative pronouns. Relative clauses are avoided completely by such means as 'that man came, to him I said', for 'I said to the man who came'.

There are no reflexive pronouns, the sense of 'self' being rendered by an emphatic suffix 'i' or 'e'.

Postpositions and Adverbs. The structure of the language in this respect is precisely the same as that of Hindi and other similar Indian languages. Thus there are a number of true postpositions and a number of adverbs used as postpositions by being linked to the noun either by the genitive or ablative postpositions. For example 'in front of the house' would be *lon ta muns*. There are also pure adverbs of place, time and manner, which have no peculiar features.

Verbs. There are no regular conjugations in this language, though all the verbs are conjugated with a remarkable degree of similarity. In many respects the conjugation of verbs is close in manner to Hindi and other Indian languages, and so calls for no particular mention in an outline of this type. One or two peculiarities, however, are of importance.

Normally the second person singular and plural are the same and make no distinction of gender. The first person has different forms for the singular and plural but makes no distinction of gender. The third person is the same for singular and plural but has different forms for the masculine on the one hand and the feminine-neuter on the other.

The tenses which have no particularly interesting features are the aorist present, the continuing present, the simple future, the imperfect, the past aorist, and the pluperfect.

The continuing present, the imperfect, and the pluperfect tenses are constructed by means of participles used with the auxiliary verb 'to be' as in Hindi.

The imperative, the infinitive, the participles and the verbal nouns are for the most part unremarkable.

A peculiar feature of the language is the existence of a conditional tense. An example of this from the verb *poyiana*, to seize, is typical of all verbs:

1st person singular	*poyen*
2nd person singular	*poyin*
3rd person singular	*poyer*
1st person plural	*poyerom*

This tense can be used equally for future or past conditional clauses, but in Bastar State it can only be used in the apodosis of a conditional sentence, not in the protasis. The protasis is always expressed by a rather clumsy participial construction, the compound parts of which are not found elsewhere in the language. Thus, 'if he had come' is *er wathe*. *Ke* is a postposition meaning 'by way of' or 'by reason of'. *Wat* appears to be a past participle active, which is never used in any other construction. The words might, therefore, be literally translated 'by reason of him having come'.

Although it is convenient to regard the infinitive as normal and regular, in fact there is no real infinitive in the language in the English grammatical sense of the word. *Poyiana* meaning 'to seize' is really the genitive of a verbal noun *poyia*, and this fact is extremely clear from the general use of this so-called infinitive in the language. Occasionally, however, this genitive form is itself used as a verbal noun and also as a supine similar to the Latin supine terminating in 'um'.

Participles normally in use are the present and the past participles active and past participle passive. Apart from the latter there is no such thing in this language as the passive voice, and any such idea has to be expressed either by an intransitive verb, a paraphrase introducing an active verb, or a paraphrase containing the passive past participle.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

193 The language has a noun of agency formed from the verb, e.g. *poylalur* meaning 'one who seizes'. An unusual participle is that of resemblance, e.g. *poylap* meaning 'as if seizing'.

Typical of Gondi dialects in general and also found in the Muria dialect are the negative tenses and the negative imperative. The former is used to express negative action in past, present, or future without the addition of any negative particle. The negative imperative is formed by adding the prohibitive suffix *ma* to the root of the verb, and this suffix may be of Sanskrit derivation and related to the forms *mat* in Hindi and *ma* in Pushtu and Persian. Very rarely one hears a negative gerund formed from the root of the verb and the termination *wakah*.

Causal verbs are formed according to regular rules, as are compound verbs. There are no inceptive or desiderative verbs, but there is a potential verb *parana* which is used in a variety of ways corresponding to the Hindi *sahna* and *parna*.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX THREE

GHOTUL TITLES

The following is a list of titles collected from over a hundred ghotul in every part of the Muria country. I owe many of the derivations and meanings to Mr A. N. Mitchell.

551
192

TITLES OF CHELIK

Achhoy	Hindi. *Achhā* means 'good'.
Adhikar, or Adhker	Hindi. *Adhikār* means 'authority'.
Akilsai	Probably a Mussalman name, Aqal Shah. The latter word always becomes Sai in Gondi and either in its original or corrupt form is common among the Gond.
Aliram	A curiously mixed Hindu and Mussalman name.
Alorsing or Alursi	Gondi. *Alor* is 'one who makes a disturbance'.
Apkari or Atkari	Urdu. An excise man.
Athpahariya	Hindi. 'One who is on duty for eight watches', day and night. Used in Bastar for the village drudge.
Baidar	Hindi. *Bahidār*, a money-lender's accountant.
Baksi	Urdu. *Bakshi*. A common title in northern India among Mussalmans and Hindus. Also a Parsi surname, 'treasurer'.
Bandobast Saheb	Urdu. A Settlement Officer. Here probably given after a visit to the village of Mr S. M. Ishaque who is widely known in Bastar under this title.
Bandukdar	Urdu. One who carries a gun.
Barko	
Beldar	Urdu. A digger, one who wields a spade.
Belumdar	Gondi. One who owns a *belum* or garden.
Budhker	Hindi. A clever fellow, one who has *budh*, intelligence, used of village officials.
Captan	English. A title usually used of the State Superintendent of Police.
Chajem	Gondi. One who roams about.
Chalau, Chāluk, or Chalān	Gondi borrowing from Hindi *chalāna*, meaning organizer.
Chalki	Hindi. Assistant to a headman.
Chaprāsi	Hindi. A peon, one who wears a *chaprās* or badge.
Chelik-sai	Lord of the chelik.
Chelik-sunder	*Chelik* is Gondi, meaning a 'good-looking, unmarried youth'. *Sunder* is Hindi *sundar*, beautiful.
Chowkidar	Hindi, watchman.
Chutukdar	
Constiball	English. A constable.
Dafadar	Urdu. One in charge of a section.
Daidar	A corruption, through Halbi, of Hindi *dawan*, oppression. Means a 'bully'.
Dahdar	English. Doctor.
Dandasi	Rare.
Dāroga	Urdu. An inspector.
Dewān	Urdu. A Diwan, or Prime Minister.
Dubey	A Brahmin name, contraction of Dwivedi.
Dular or Dularsing	Gondi. The word means 'love'.
Engineer	English.
Gaidar	Cowherd(?), from Hindi *gai*.
Gāita	Gondi. A priest.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

551
192

Gangedar	Perhaps from Ganga, the Ganges.
Gâred	English. A Forest Guard.
Garhi	From Hindi, *garh* fort, or headquarters (?). Perhaps *chhitelain*.
Gotul-sai	Gondi and Urdu. 'Lord of the ghotul.'
Gurti	Gondi. Strong.
Hagru	A nickname having reference to defaecation, usually given by parents to deceive hostile demons as to a child's true value. Here it is rather a nickname than a title.
Hardi-garbo	Hindi and Halbi. Refers to turmeric powder.
Havaldar	Urdu. A sergeant.
Hikmi	A Halbi social title.
Ijardar or Ijekdar	Urdu. From *ijara*, a monopoly. Used in Bastar of excise contractors.
Issaldar	Probably from Urdu Risaldar, an officer of cavalry.
Jailer	English.
Jalansai	Gond name, probably corruption of Urdu Jalim Shah.
Jalla or Jallam	Hindi. Means a 'spider's web'.
Jamadar	Urdu. An infantry rank above Havildar.
Jangel Saheb	Forest Officer.
Jelkar	Gondi. A ripple on water.
Jelu or Jeluk	Gondi. An obstructive fellow.
Jhakajhol	
Jhalakwar	Hindi. One who glitters.
Jilen	Perhaps from Hindi, *jila*, thin or fine. Compare English 'skinny'.
Jilmil	Hindi. Mica.
Joler	Hindi. This and the following title suggest a cheat, but Joler is not quite so strong as this. Perhaps 'fibber' would put it better.
Jolma	Probably a variant of the above.
Julpi	Hindi. From *julufh*, a curl of the hair. Hence curly-haired.
Jhalakrai Jhulukrai	Hindi. From *jhalakna*, to glisten. Hence, one who glistens. Like Lingo, founder of the ghotul.
Jumukdar	Hindi. From *jhumka*, little bells on the ear or ankle, and thus one who carries such bells. These are often worn as ornaments, especially by the Jhoria Muria.
Kajanti	Corruption of *khajanchi*, a treasurer.
Kalbot	
Kalikdar	Hindi. From *kali*, black.
Kalingsai	Corruption of Hindi *kalgi*, an aigrette on a turban, and *shah*.
Kamdedar or Kamdar	Hindi. An agent.
Kandki	Hindi. Village officer in charge of a *kand*, a section.
Kanjus	Hindi. A miser.
Kapatdar	Hindi. From *kapaddar*, a dressing-boy.
Kasra	
Katlami	A Gondi clan-name.
Khuti Manjhi	
Killasing	From Hindi *killana*, to scream.
Kisimsai	Probably a corruption of the name Kasim Shah.
Kopki	
Kosa	Hindi. A silk cocoon.
Kotiya	Hindi. One in charge of the *kothi* or granary.
Kotwar	Hindi. A village watchman.
Kude	Gondi. From *kudana*, to sit. Thus, one who is always sitting.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX THREE

Kusei	Hindi. From *kushal*, happiness. Thus, the happy boy.
Lahardar, Laharu, Laharchi or Laharsing	Used in Gondi to mean a 'dandy', from Hindi *lahariya*, striped cloth. The wearing of some unspeakable striped shirt is regarded as very fast and 'advanced' by the Muria.
Likin or Likhen	One who carves hair combs, from Hindi *likhna*, to write.
Malik	Urdu. A master.
Manikdar	Hindi. One who owns a ruby: precious stones often are girl-symbols.
Manigar	English.
Manjhi	Hindi. A boatman or skipper. Used in Bastar for the Headman of a Pargana.
Master	English.
Meliyā	From Gondi *melāna*, to wander.
Mitchell Saheb	Scotch.
Mingur	From Gondi *mirāna*, to run.
Muharrir	Urdu. A clerk.
Mukhwan	From Hindi *mukh*, a face; one who produces people before a panchayat.
Mukkadam	Urdu. A village headman.
Mallyāsing	From Gondi *mal*, a peacock and the name Singh.
Munshi	Urdu. A reader.
Mutra	Hindi. One who urinates. Probably given to a boy who was caught urinating inside the ghotul, or to a bed-wetter.
Nachen	Hindi. From *nāchna*, to dance. A dancer.
Nākedar	A subordinate in charge of an outpost, *nāka*.
Narhar	A Hindu name.
Nāzir	Urdu. A tahsil official.
Neliya	Gondi. *Nela* means good, hence 'a good fellow'.
Nengi	A Halbi social title.
Nispettar	English. Inspector.
Odsel	English. Overseer.
Oppal	Probably from Hindi, *uppam*, best.
Padru	From Hindi *pādna*, to pass wind. Probably given to a boy who had the habit of doing this inside the ghotul.
Pahardar	Hindi. From *pahar*, a watch. Hence a watchman.
Pāgra	Hindi. From *pāgā*, a turban. Hence one who has a turban.
Pāgra-meliya	See above. *Meliyā* is a Gondi word meaning a wanderer.
Palk	Hindi. Palk is a foot soldier. The word is used in Bastar of all subordinate officials.
Pande-Pardhan	The Pardhan are the priests and musicians of the Gond. Pande-Pardhan appears as a court official in some of the Ghotul Pata.
Pasildar	Gondi. *Pasil* is the mung pulse. Hence the title means 'one who owns mung'. Probably given because of the assonance with Tahsildar or Issaldar.
Patwāri	Hindi. A village land record official, originally an accountant.
Phenka	Gondi. The bulbul.
Phoop Singh	Probably from the Hindi root *phopā*, which in various forms means 'lung', hence anything spongy, hence 'fatty'. The late Willy Forbes, Secretary of the Nagpur Club, was very fat. He was known to the servants as '*Phopkas Sahib*' (A.N.M.).
Raja Saheb	Hindi. A king.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

551/192

Rānger	Forest official.
Rengo	Hindi. *Rengna* means 'to stroll'.
Rupedar	One who owns rupees or silver.
Saidar	A Hindi social title.
Salām	An Urdu greeting.
Saledar or Silledar	Urdu Ziledar, one in charge of a district. The Silledar was the armour-bearer of the old Maratha chivalry, and the breeder of mares for the army.
Salho	From Hindi *chalna*, to go. One who goes.
Sāligrām or Sāligrāi	A Hindi name, Shaligram, described as meaning a stone linga of the Hindu god Mahadeo.
Salya or Selya	A local, but not Gondi, word *sal*, meaning (?) pangolin.
Sanker	Eastern Hindi, meaning morning.
Sikandār	A Mussalman name.
Sileh	Gondi *sile*, clothing (Hindi *sina*, to sew).
Singga	From Hindi *sing*, a horn.
Sipāhi	Urdu, a soldier.
Sirdār	Urdu, a chief.
Sirajdār or Sirasdar	Urdu, Sarishtedar, a judicial moharrir.
Sirkil	English, Circle Inspector of Police, probably named after the popular Thakur Manbahal Singh, who for long held this position.
Subedār	Urdu, a military officer.
Sudher	Halbi, *sudh*, cleverness, hence a clever fellow.
Suen or Suwel	Gondi corruption of Hindi *hud*, a well.
Sulhi	Probably corruption of Hindi *chula*, an oven. Hence 'cook'.
Suluksai	A Gondi name. Sai is the same as Shah.
Sunder	Hindi *Sundar*, beautiful.
Surjut	Hindi *suraj ki jyoti*, the brightness of the sky.
Tabu	
Tahsildar	Urdu. Revenue official.
Tekedar	Hindi. A Tekadar is one who farms the revenues of a village on payment of a quit-rent.
Tel-dundi	Hindi. An oil-press.
Tindka	From Gondi *tindāna*, to eat, perhaps 'hungry or greedy one'.
Uden	From Gondi, *udāna*, to sit. Hence one who sits down. Compare Kude.
Ukwar	Gondi. A mattock.
Vakil	Urdu. A pleader.

Titles of Motiari

Achhoke	Gondi adjective, good.
Alosa	Gondi adjective, pleasant-spoken.
Anbaiko	Perhaps from Marathi *ana*, bring, and *suh*, root of Gondi *nchnānā*, to say, and female termination *ko*. Hence 'she who tells one to bring things'.
Beldarin	Feminine of Beldar, q.v.
Belosa	Perhaps derived from the bel tree.
Chaiko	Gondi. One who talks nonsense.
Dasoda	Hindi name.
Dulosa	Corruption of Hindi *dulocha*, soft.
Galje	Gondi. The noisy one.
Gandri	Hindi and Halbi, one who smells bad. Probably a derisive nickname rather than a proper title.
Haliyāro	Hindi *haliya*, a herd or flock, hence cowherd or shepherdess.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX THREE

Jaimo	
Jalaro, Jalāri or Jaliyāro	From Hindi *jalna*, to burn, perhaps 'hot stuff'.
Jalko	Gondi. A ripple. Compare Jelkar.
Jamadarin	Feminine of Jamadar, q.v.
Janakrāi, Janko, Jamko or Jankāi	Hindi names.
Jhelo	Gondi. A splash of water.
Jilmili	Hindi. Mica. Compare Jilmil.
Junki	Gondi. Tinkling.
Kotwarin	Feminine of Kotwar, q.v.
Lahari or Laharo	From Hindi, *lahar*, a wave.
Malko or Malkārose	Gondi. *Mal*, a peacock, a girl like a peahen.
Manjāro	From Hindi root *manj*, middle. Perhaps the second of three sisters, or one who holds a secondary place after the ghotul leaders.
Mankai	Hindi *mānāna*, to obey, hence the obedient one.
Mette	English mate in a gang, with a Gondi feminine termination.
Mulāri or Mulāro	Probably from Hindi *mulya*, value, hence 'precious'.
Mulki	From Urdu *mulk*, country. Thus 'country lass'.
Mutri	Feminine of Mutra, q.v. But not necessarily, in this case, his ghotul mate.
Nirosa	A Sanskritic word meaning 'clean'. There does not seem to be such a word in Hindi, but the meaning is definite. The word exists in Halbi, and it may be connected with *niroj*.
Piosa	From Hindi *pina*, to drink. Perhaps one who drinks a lot of palm-wine or 'the thirsty one'.
Rani	Hindi. A queen.
Saidarin	Feminine of Saider, q.v.
Saile	Gondi. Friendly.
Salko	Feminine of Salya, q.v.
Samsāro	The patient one. *Samsar* is Halbi for patient.
Sargi	Hindi for the sal tree.
Siliyāro	Gondi *siliya*, a vegetable.
Silo	Hindi cloth or clothing (*sina*).
Singāro	Hindi *shringār*, adorned.
Sulāko	From Hindi *chula*, an oven. Hence perhaps 'cook'.
Surtān	Hindi *surta*, thought. Hence 'thoughtful'.
Surti, Surto or Surtel	Hindi, tobacco. One who distributes tobacco to the chelik.
Tiliyāro	From a pulse. Probably given for its assonance with Jaliyaro or Siliyaro.
Tileka	From the Hindi name, *trilok*.
Tulki	
Tusro or Tusāro	
Ujlro or Ujlāro	Gondi. White.

551
192

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX FOUR

CENSUS RETURNS

162 It may be of interest to give the Census returns for the different aboriginal tribes in Bastar. But it must be remembered that these figures are of unequal value. Any Census in a tribal area has to face unusual difficulties. There is first the muddle over the names of tribes—aboriginals are always changing their names to get a social lift; then the dislike of the people numbered to telling the truth; then the incapacity of the enumerators; and finally the very ancient objection of primitive people to being counted at all.[1]

But the figures for Bastar, such as they are, will be found below. In 1891, they were as follows:

Bhattra	21,439
Gond	70,069
Gotte	5,070
Halba	13,865
Jhoria	936
Koi	7,281
Maria	25,855
Muria	53,960
Parja	13,467
Tagara	396

In the next three enumerations all the aboriginals of Bastar—the Halba cannot really be counted as aboriginal—were counted together under the name Gond. In 1931 there was a fresh attempt at a more scientific classification, though this too was over-simplified and thus failed of its purpose. In 1931 the official figures were:

Bhattra	36,611
Gond	24,407
Koya	9,988
Maria	146,070
Muria	124,993
Parja	17,568

Fortunately the 1931 figures were collected in Jagdalpur and not (as in 1941) in Nagpur and hence it was possible for Grigson to examine them and make additional estimates which have much more scientific value. I will make a table of the figures taken from various parts of his book.

Bhattra	36,611
Dison-horn Maria.	146,070
Gadaba	398
Ghotul Muria	61,000
Hill Maria	11,500
Jagdalpur Muria	32,000
Jhoria Muria	17,000
Koya	9,988
Parja	17,568

[1] In 1881, internal dissensions in Bastar 'brought the census operations to a standstill'. But May's Census of 1921 was 'conspicuous', as was Grigson's in 1931. Among the causes for public hostility, the C.P. Reports give such beliefs as that Government wanted the names of young girls for immoral purposes, that every tenth man was to be

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX FOUR

Nothing more vividly reveals the inadequacy of Census figures for ethnographic purposes, than a comparison of the 1931 official totals with those of 1941. There was no great epidemic, famine or migration to account for the changes.

162

	1931	1941
Bhattra	36,611	10,869
Doria	..	14,605
Gond	24,407	16,620[1]
Koya	9,988	nil
Maria	146,070	120,110
Muria	124,993	219,654
Ojha	..	137
Pardhan or Pathari	..	960
Parja	17,568	25,820

The Northern Muria were distributed in 1941 as follows:

	Narayanpur Tahsil	Kondagaon Tahsil
North	16,365	33,146
West	1,322	..
South	16,480	33,555
TOTAL	34,167	66,701
GRAND TOTAL		100,868

The great majority of this 100,868 are Muria whose culture centres round the ghotul, though a few hundreds must be deducted for those under Bhattra influence in southern Kondagaon. The number of Jagdalpur Muria are now given as 36,682 as against the 32,000 estimated in 1931.

Grigson gives:

Jhoria Muria	17,000
Other Ghotul Muria	61,000

which makes a total for Ghotul Muria of 78,000, a figure which has now risen to roughly 100,000—the rate of increase is not unparalleled in other parts of the State. I think that Grigson probably underestimated the number of Jhoria Maria, as he did not include those living in the Kongur and Chalka Parganas. My very rough estimate for 1941 would therefore be:

Jhoria Muria	30,000
Other Ghotul Muria	70,000

Of the total number of 219,654 Muria, only 1,430 returned themselves as following the Hindu religion: in Narayanpur there were 246, in Kondagaon 12 and in Jagdalpur 396. It is curious that out of the heavily Hindu-ized Bhattra tribe only 34 out of 10,869 returned themselves as Hindus in 1941.

The figures for several of the other tribes have been thrown into confusion by the general custom of Bastar aboriginals calling themselves Muria, a term which is much more popular than Gond or even Raj Gond—words which are sometimes

sent to colonize Upper Burma and that human sacrifices were required for a goddess in Raigarh. Even now special offerings are made by Maria and Muria to purify their villages from the contagion of the Census.

[1] Even adding 933 Raj Gond, 96 Dhur Gond, 336 Mir Gond and 90 Dhurwa Gond, the total is only 17,213.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

162

used contemptuously in the State. Thus 44,048 Bison-horn Maria in the Dantewara Tahsil returned themselves as Muria in 1941 (though another 25,212 continued to call themselves Maria), and all but 4 of the 9,001 Bison-horn Maria in the Konta Tahsil returned themselves as Muria. The remarkable decrease in the number of Bhattra is probably due to the same cause, and the 9,988 Koya of 1931 have disappeared altogether. On the other hand, 14,605 persons in southern Bastar preferred to call themselves Dorla, and I have accordingly entered them under that name in the map at p. 11.

The present number of Hill Maria is probably in the neighbourhood of 13,000. My guess for the Bison-horn Maria, which is perhaps as good as anyone else's guess, is 175,000.

We may note finally that in 1941 there were in Bastar:

Banias	228
Brahmins	3,948[1]
Christians	2,704[2]
Kshatriyas	805
Mussalmans	2,060
Sondis	3,453
Telangas	11,734
Telis	1,619

[1] Of whom 3,307 were in the Jagdalpur Tahsil.
[2] Of whom 1,527 were 'Issi' and the rest 'Christian'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX FIVE

STATISTICAL INQUIRY

An inquiry was made into certain specific matters relating to marriage from 2,000 adult married Muria men distributed in 220 villages. The total population of Muria who maintain ghotul is about 100,000, and the number of genuine Muria villages containing a ghotul in 1941 was 522. The villages chosen were distributed over the whole area except the extreme west and north-west, which it was not possible to visit and where indeed the ghotul tradition has been somewhat obscured by external influence.

I have given figures from this inquiry in many parts of the book, but for convenience I will re-assemble some of them here.

1

The Ages of the Men Consulted	
Between 20 and 30 ..	445
,, 30 and 40 ..	728
,, 40 and 50 ..	567
50 and over ..	260

2

Number of Men who had Lived in Different Types of Ghotul	
Those living in *gotidêr* ghotul	720
Those living in 'modern' ghotul	1,280

3

Marriage	
No. marrying girl to whom they were betrothed	1,884
No. of 'romantic' or forced marriages ..	116
No. marrying girls in their own ghotul ..	765
No. marrying girls in a different ghotul ..	1,235
No. marrying their ghotul wives ..	77
No. of Lamhada or service-marriages ..	113

4

Cousin Marriages	
No. of *gudumal* marriages	1,189
No. of *kutiyâri* marriages	805
Marriages between totally unrelated persons ..	6

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

5

162

Divorces	
No. of men still living with original wife	1,765
No. of widowers	176
Total number of successful marriages	1,941
No. of divorces	59
No. divorced of 765 who married girls of the same ghotul ..	21
No. divorced of 1,235 who married girls of different ghotul ..	38
No. divorced among 720 belonging to *jodidār* ghotul	27
No. divorced among 1,280 belonging to 'modern' ghotul	32
No. divorced among 1,884 who married their betrothed	49
No. divorced out of 116 'romantic' marriages	10
No. divorced out of 316 who had connexion before marriage ..	14
No. divorced out of 113 Lamhada	13
No. divorced out of 77 who married their ghotul wives	9
No. divorced out of 26 who married the girls they made pregnant in the ghotul	Nil

6

Pregnancies	
No. of men who made a girl pregnant in the ghotul	80
No. of these living in *jodidār* ghotul	25
No. of these living in 'modern' ghotul	55
No. of men marrying girls already made pregnant by someone else ..	49
No. of men marrying girls made pregnant by themselves	26
No. of 113 Lamhada making their own betrothed pregnant ..	5

7

Polygyny	
No. of Muria males (1941 Census)	51,373
No. of Muria females	49,495
No. of plural marriages	44
No. out of these 44 claiming to be successful ..	29

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

Words without reference are Gondi, words in brackets, without reference, are Halbi.
G = Gondi, GN = Gondi of Narayanpur, GK = Gondi of Kondagaon, Ha = Halbi, H = Hindi, SKT = Sanskrit.

104

In order to make the book as easy as possible for the general reader, I have omitted in the text the majority of Gondi or Halbi-Chhattisgarhi words. But since many of these are interesting in themselves and necessary to complete our picture of the Muria, I have added a number of them here, classified according to subject. Words explained in the text are not usually included. It must be remembered that these are words used by the Muria, whose Halbi is uncertain and whose Gondi is often corrupt and takes different forms from place to place.

ADMINISTRATIVE

athpahariya (Ha) The village drudge, who is on duty for 'all eight watches', often a Rawat or Kopa cowherd, from whose hands all visitors can take water.

chālki (H) Manjhi's assistant. Also called **Garhi** (GN), **Chalau** (H), and sometimes **Jhoria** in the north.

dorbhum (H. **khālpati**). The Lowlands.

garh (H) An ancient feudal division.

hāt, atmm A bazaar.

kāndki (H) Mukkadam's assistant.

khām, khalsa (H) Villages under the direct control of the State, paying their revenue direct and not through an intermediary.

kosar, paik (Ha) Words used for outsiders and strangers. **Paik** is most commonly applied to chaprasis and constables. **Paik**, originally 'foot soldier' in Hindi, from *pair*, a foot. Cf. *paijama* in Persian = leg-clothes.

kotwār (H) The village watchman, often—but not always—a Ganda or Mahara.

mānjhi (H) A pargana chieftain. A pure Hindi word meaning 'skipper of a ship'.

matabhum The Hill country, especially the Abujhmar Hills, also called **mār, māri,** and **patār. Mār** is a word of wide distribution and is almost certainly identical with Oriya **māl. Mār** and its variants in Gondi means 'tree' and thus, as applied to a countryside probably means 'wooded uplands'. 'Uplands' is a relative term and in Orissa the word **māl** applies to areas, inhabited by aboriginals, which are forested but not always very high. Of course the fertile plains are rarely in possession of aboriginals (A.N.M.).

mukaddam (H) A village headman. Also called **thākur** and **mokor** (GN).

nār (G), gaon (H) A village.

pāndarij Land without forest; used by the northern Muria for the flat rice-lands of Jagdalpur Tahsil.

panchāyat (H) A judicial committee normally of five persons. Also called **bhumkāl udna** (GN).

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104

pār, paghai — A word (H. **birān**) meaning an empty or deserted village site.

pāra (H) — A hamlet or group of houses forming part of a village. Another word commonly used is **tola**. Both words are widely distributed in India.

pargana (H) — The sub-division of a tahsil.

tāhsil (H) — An administrative sub-division of the State, in charge of a **tahsildar**.

thekadāri (H) — A village farmed out to a landlord who is generally in Bastar called a **thekadar**, but is known elsewhere in the Central Provinces as **malguzar** or **mokasa**.

yer gātum — A bathing place.

zamindāri (H) — An hereditary estate held on privileged tenure by local chiefs.

Articles of Daily Life and Use

dera — A spinning-wheel or **takli** (H) used for making cord from hemp.

dholangi — A bamboo bin for storing grain.

heti, yet — The winnowing-fan, **supa** (H).

hirkānj, irkās (GN) — The **alkka** cords depending from a carrying-pole, and in which the load is tied.

hoydal — Cooking-hearth of earth. When made of stones, **daying**.

hukur — Spoon.

kuri, kuring — Leaf-plate or **patri**, made of **aking** leaves.

kurul — Leaf-cup for drinking **jāwa**. An ordinary leaf-cup is **dopa**, or **doni** in Halbi.

katul — The country-cot, or **katiya**, now fairly common among Muria, but never used in the ghotul.

kāwar, bāyinga (GN) — A pole used for carrying loads.

malla, arka — The words most often used in Gondi for a pot. **Kila** or **gor** is a very large earthen pot, and **yer gāgir** is often used for a water-pot. Small pots are **kopa, kondal, toksi**.

mora, jal (GN) — A shield of leaves inserted into a bamboo framework, used as a protection against rain.

orka, bokka (GN) — A gourd ladle, also called **buriya**. A brass variety made by the Ghasia by the *cire-perdue* process is now often used for serving liquor.

rek, kālo — The leaf-hat used during the rains.

topāri — A rectangular **bidai** basket, also called **pera**. The Muria use a number of different baskets, including the common **jhāpi** which they call by its Hindi name; the **warria**, a square open basket also known as **takra, buti** or **gappa**, and the small leaf-basket called **hipti** or **hipota** (GN).

usmāl, usnāl — Rice-husker, the **musal** (H).

Articles of Iron

bāndai kaser or **bānda** — A knife.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

godel	The ordinary serviceable axe. Also **marsak** (GN) or **tayinga** (tangiya).
gorka	A spear.
hatkr, yetkr	A sickle (**hasiya**).
kach	Iron. It is generally smelted and worked into tools by the Muria Lohar.
kadra	A long-bladed knife for killing animals.
kaser	Knife, specially the sacrificial knife used in worship, whence **kaser-gaita** or Knife Priest.
kuaj	The shouldered digging-stick called **pulu** in the Abujhmar and **kus** in Halbi. It is sometimes used for husking grain.
kurkr	A hoe.
majiya	A razor.
pharsa (H)	The 'battle-axe' often used in ceremonial dances.
tatti	A sort of plane, **bārsa** (HA).
yerk	A knife, for cutting grass and brushwood, with a long wooden handle, also called **harru, sura gāgra**, or **bhālu gāgra**, according to shape.

Astronomy

adi-bhum	Below the earth.
adurk	Hail.
bhimul-wael	Rainbow, 'the bow of Bhimul', the rain-giver.
bhum-gurjāita	Thunder (Mitchell gives **idrita**).
hand-gariyāl-lopta	Eclipse.
hukum, mirko	The stars (in Betul, **sukkum**).
inj	The moon.
nadum-bhum	The earth.
pir	Rain. (The same word is used in Betul, but Mitchell gives **musar** as used by the Bison-horn Maria).
porad	The sun. (Trench says the Betul Gond have no word for sun.)
porro-bhum	The sky.
pus-gurum	Lightning (Mitchell gives **mirkāna**).

Cock-fighting

kāti	The knife attached to the cock's foot.
kork-wāchāna (kurka larai)	Cock-fighting.
wāchāna kor (larāto kukra)	A fighting-cock.
nai (sut)	The thread with which the knife is tied.
thaila (Ha)	Purse to hold a set of knives.

Cultivation

nesr	A wooden implement for carrying branches from the forest to the fields for **parka**. In Halbi **bharni**.
dippa	Also **erka** or **marhān** (Ha). Level forest land burnt and cultivated in rotation.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104 **harpunj** — Sandals of sambhar-hide worn while treading the hot fields of axe-cultivation. **Katwāk** are wooden clogs.

kara — The **kothār** or threshing-floor.

ketul — A field-hut, **lāri** (Ha).

kopir (ragra) — A soil-leveller.

kor-lāt — Also **balla** (GN) and **dhosna** (Ha). A rake used to spread the ashes evenly about a clearing or field.

koyāna (katal) — Reaping.

mariyāna (dubrayi) — The second ploughing.

mer-gutta — The winnowing-pole.

munda (Ha) — An artificial pond. In GN called **neling** and **katta**.

nangel (nāngar) — Plough.

pāhāna (khapal) — The first ploughing. This and similar Gondi words are the infinitives of verbs.

parha ursāna (ropa) — Transplanting.

parka — Also **dahi** (H). Brushwood is brought and spread over the fields, then burnt and the ashes are ploughed into the ground.

pārum (phār) — Ploughshare.

pebchna (biyāsl) — Puddling.

penda — The hillside axe-cultivation of the Maria and wilder Muria.

tondi, tond — A **mācha**-platform for watching the crops.

weda, bera (Ha) — A field.

wisāna (mindal) — Threshing.

witāna (bunal) — Sowing.

Daily Programme

104 805 **ād pāhar (adhu-pāhar)** — 'Shade time.' Late afternoon.

bāhat erta — 'It is bent.' Afternoon.

gai gohdi bera (Ha) — 'Time of the return of the cows,' or **godroki** (Ha) 'Time of tying up the cattle'.

gānda lote bera (Ha) — 'Time when the Ganda goes to his wife.'

hikāt (bhainsa andhiyar) — Dark, 'dark as a buffalo'.

hirri pord — When green parrots fly to the fields and the women come home.

jāwa pord, pito karu pāhar (pej bera) — Time for **jāwa**, 'time when the birds are hungry'. 10 a.m.

jāwa undāna pahār — Time for drinking gruel.

kaimal huskār, gudin pahār — Time of the first sleep.

korkusāna pāhar (kukrabasl) — Cock-crow.

mulpe — Sunset.

nadum narka (manjhar rāti) — Midnight.

narki pāhar (bara bihān) — Early morning. 6 a.m.

nekaitit pord, talla pord (munde bera) — 'Sun-standing' or 'head-time'. Noon.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

palvi viyinta, wiytu (raja karan bera)	Dawn: the time when Raja Karan rose and bathed. 104
pharphar bera	The flight of darkness.
phulsundri (Ha)	Evening when the flowers give out their fragrance. 805
tirtir pord	The sun rises **tir-tir** into the sky.
yer pord (panihāri bera)	Time for fetching water. 8 a.m.

Dancing Dress

chāpi, mogiya	Dancing-shield. 104
gathurta, karhāna	Cloth tied criss-cross over the chest.
gheri	Skirt, called **kochi** by the Hill Maria.
guba	Tuft of feathers.
irna, ghāti	Buttock-bells.
jela	Streamers attached to the cap.
kauda-hār, koya-kaudāng	Cowrie decorations.
kokti	Wooden 'horse' carried on shoulder.
lolita, puring, toka	Different parts of the 'horse'.
muyang, ghulghuli, ghungru	Small bells worn on arms or ankles
topi (H)	Dancing-cap.

Death

bagmeri bhut (Ha)	Ghost of a man killed by a tiger.
bisrān itāna	The ceremony of touching a dead fish at the end of a funeral. In Halbi **bisram** means the bad smell of a dead fish.
burkāl pāta	Song sung when a man is killed by a tiger.
erramtogh	A wife's elder brother or younger sister's husband, who have special duties at a funeral.
hanāl, muriyalor (duma)	The dead, the departed. *Hanāl* is a past participial form of the verb **handāna**, to go; and thus 'the departed' is a literal translation (W.V.G.).
hanāl gaita	Priest of the Departed.
hanāl gariya	Pot of the Departed.
hanāl gata (khama)	Wooden memorial pillar.
hāt hanur (marni)	Funeral.
hātur dhol (marni dhol)	The drum for the dead.
jiwa (Ha)	The soul.
jiwa tatāna, yer niyāna (dasnāhan)	Ceremonies on the tenth day.
jiya bitāl	Any relative, but not a *sagu*, of the deceased.
kal ursana, kamk ursana	To erect a menhir.
kutukal, ursakal	Memorial menhir, from Gondi **kal**, a stone and **ursana**, to bury.
kishiyāna (agi deto)	Cremation.
nelānj jurāl, nelānjur	Ghost of a motiari.
nirkor kotāna (tijnāhan)	Ceremonies on the third day.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104 **ondar muttai, surel, orohrande, churin** The ghost of a woman dying in pregnancy or childbirth.

uriya bhut, mirchuk, matiya, kunwaria duma (Ha) Expressions to describe the ghost of a chelik.

wich A dead man.

wich bati (marā-bhāta, dumakot) Disposal place for the dead.

Dreams

barre māltor (baramtor) Talking in sleep.

bhāk kātār (thua) Ceremony to prevent bad dreams. **Bhāk** means 'a promise', **katār** a 'throwing away'.

jiwa (Ha) The 'soul' that sees the dream.

kaniskna Dream.

urkanor *Nocturna eneuresis.*

Economic Relationships

adiya, adi (Ha) The practice of lending bullocks or seed in consideration of receiving half the crop in return.

bāka (Ha) The practice of loaning bullocks for a fixed amount of grain, say six khandi a year apiece.

begār (H) The practice of taking free, and generally forced, labour from the villagers.

biaāha (H) A very old Sanskrit expression for the custom that reserved the twentieth part of the harvest for the Raja's officials.

biyaj (Ha) Interest. It is noticeable that there is no Gondi word for this.

dat The annual cash payment to a farm-hand.

jewar, kural Either a servant's monthly wage in kind, or the contribution of a whole village to a Lohar, Rawat, or Kotwar for his services.

kābār, kābāri The pledging of a man's services for a period of time in consideration of an advance of grain or money. **Kābār** is work done for someone else as opposed to **pari** (G) work done for oneself. **Kābāri** probably means 'one who carries a **kāwār**-load'.

karra (udhar, karja) A loan.

wita (bethiya) Wages.

Ethics

arro Taboo: used chiefly of food.

arwit-tu, paisotu (GN) Adultery. In Halbi **udaliya**.

bonde nohakāna, penda karsana (cherka gotna, chotli khel) Masturbation.

dharom (Ha) Virtue, a borrowing from Hinduism.

dong Theft.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

104

eting getwal — Bestio-sexuality. There is no general word, but **getwāl** 'copulation with' is added to the name of the animal.
hatwark, wititu — Elopement. **Witāna** means 'to run'.
hawakāna — Murder.
jabardasti getna (Ha) — Rape. There is no Gondi word for this.
kondār-murt (bokra-basiya) — Incest: behaviour like a bull—in Gondi, or like a goat—in Halbi.
kusk-birtur, kusk-hātur — Suicide. **Kusk** means 'of one's own accord'; **birtur** is 'hanging'; **hātur** is 'death'.
malo — Taboo: used of places, actions and relatives.
pāpu (Ha) — Sin, an idea for which there is no special Gondi word.
polo — Taboo: a general word.
tupunj getwāli — Homosexuality.

Evening in the Ghotul

dhuyinga, pogho (surti) — Tobacco.
gārn pich, tora pend — Oil-waste of *bassia latifolia* often used for massage.
gik (mazzi) — Mat of **marrām (botha)** grass.
hichār — Bamboo comb.
hunjna dera — Sleeping-place.
irsāna — To comb the hair.
johār bhumkāli — Greeting to a company of boys.
johārni (Ha) — Act of salutation.
nohkāna — To massage.
paniya (Ha) — Wooden comb.
pitis pitis kotāna — To delouse the hair.
tarka, chāp (tāti) — Bamboo mat.
wurak morhāna, kāyi morhāna (GN) — To crack the fingers.

Falconry

hachār — The hawk (**chhachān**).
hachār-murka (chhachān-dhuti) — The basket for the hawk's food.
hachār payāna tola — A goat-skin glove to protect the hand from scratches.
paula, pawala — The elaborate wooden peg attached to the bird's cords to prevent them tangling.
uting parhāna — The bunch of palm leaves with which the boys drive the birds.

Festivals

bāsi punnag (bāsi tihār) — The 'stale' day after a festival marked by various observances. *Bāsi* is food left over from a meal and served up again.
jatra (SKT) — A festival, generally a clan-festival.
kut pehchāna, nārtāte kiyāna — Purifying the village.
marhai (H) — A commercial festival.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

pandum Festival.
penkarsana, karsār (deo khelni) 'The games of the gods' at the clan festivals.
pohchāni, bohorāni Ceremony for removing evil from the village.
polhāna (jogāni) The offering of first-fruits.
punāng tindāna (nāwa khāni) New Eating Ceremony.
singoti, sela The fringe of ears of grain tied over doors at festivals, especially Diwali.

Fire-making

hāhak The 'hearth' of a fire-drill.
khanda The saw. In Hindi this word means 'sword'.
khanda-achāna Making fire by a saw.
nogho-kodiya, ate The 'hearth' of a saw.
nur-achāna Making fire by a drill.
nurkis Fire made by a drill.
usmal The drill.
wadur kis Fire made in a hearth.

Food

alainj (chapora) Red ants.
gāto The ordinary **bhāt** or boiled rice.
gondka 'Crab's eyes' or **kekra ankhi**.
gorāaj, gorra **Mandia** (*eleusine coracana*).
guge (batar kira) Edible flying ants.
hāring The ordinary wheat-cake or chapatti.
harsum **Sarson** oil-seed, the profitable crop *sinapis alba rape*.
hind porak (chhind kira) Edible grubs living in the *phoenix sylvestris* palm.
jandrān **Jondra** maize (*zea mays*).
jata Beans (*dolichos lablab*).
jāwa A gruel, called elsewhere **pej**, the staple food of the aboriginals of central India, made of rice or millet.
kāng, ārk *Setaria italica*. Also called **kollya lengri**.
kohola, kosra (Ha) These are words applied rather widely to the small millets beloved of the aboriginals. **Kosra** applies most particularly perhaps to **kutki**, *panicum miliaceum*. Other popular small grains are—
mal kohola or **bara kosra**
taro kohola
os kosra
mach or **hudala kosra**
koda (*paspalum scrobiculatum*)
rende, hamu, gatka or **sawa** (*panicum frumentaceum*)
ragda, dusa, kapni, wild rice.
chikma or **turiya kohola** (*panicum miliare*).
kore (harwa) The pulse *glycine hispida*.
kotum kukk A mushroom (*kukk* is an umbrella). The Muria distinguish several varieties, such as the **bodang**, the **pud-kukh** which grows on an ant-hill, the

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

	mundur-kukh which appears at Dassera time, and the **hichra-kukh**, a small fungus generally growing on an ant-hill.
kusir	**Sāg** or curry.
māti	Roots. A great many of these are eaten; common among them are the **kāndul māti** or sweet potato, the **hind māti** or root of the *phoenix sylvestris*, the **bhurka** or **bhains deti māti.**
nuka	Husked rice.
nung	Oil from the seed of *til, sesamum indicum.*
pande, panne	Frog.
pesel (mung)	The pulse *phaseolus mungo.*
pupul (urad)	The pulse *phaseolus radiatus.*
rahar (arhar)	The pulse *cajanus indicus.*
toskār māt (tikur)	The wild arrowroot, *curcuma angustifolia.*
wark	Parched rice, also **wakuhāk** (GN) and **chiura** (H), the poor man's delicacy eaten between meals.
wanji	**Dhān** or rice.
yete	Crab.

Ghotul Buildings

bāndra	The fence round the ghotul enclosure.
dinda rāj (Ha)	'The kingdom of the Unmarried.'
ghotul	The village dormitory.
ghotul racha (khor duār)	The dancing ground.
kirki bukān (kāna poika, bhulka)	Holes in the walls for storing tobacco and small possessions.
kodasār	The stable.
kupāhi ghotul	The outer room of the dormitory.
kutul (pirha)	A wooden pillow.
mandak	The open shed in the ghotul court.
murwis harsi (moogri deri)	The central pillar of the building.
nata harsi (oona deri)	The side pillars.
parmāngkor ghotul	'The dormitory beautiful as a bison's horns.'
rosni (akori)	A long bamboo with a catch on one end, used by chelik to pull down fruit and often kept in the ghotul.
sojāhi ghotul	The inner room.
waikor (akoos)	Wooden bracket for hanging drums.
wark bād (dāru mācha)	The wood stack.

Hair-dressing

bang-mihana (pāti)	Parting, either for boy or girl.
bachāng (tapra)	Boy's fringe.
julpia	The hair on either side of the parting.
kalgi khopa, kunjār	Method by which girls tie their hair in a bun.
kunjār balia	Wooden block under the hair kept in place by wooden hair pins.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104

kunjār koto Wooden hair pins.
kupar (jura) Top-knot.

Honey

poring, puk-por Honey-comb.
puk Honey.
ukhi Burning grass tied to the end of a bamboo and used to smoke out a hive.
wising or **puk-wising** Bees. In Halbi, **ondār māchhi.**

Hunting

dohola A club arrow-head. In Halbi, **dokena.**
gunel A pellet-bow which has a **gunel-moras**, or string, a **phata**, or sling, **koda**, or wooden pegs in the sling, in which **gulla**, or small stone balls, are slung.
kārin, kār An arrow, of which the various parts are
kārin The head.
marrai The shaft.
kār-hachhar The shaft-nock.
kanāng The barb.
hulum The tang fitting head to shaft.
mal-tohk The feathers.
korpanj (onha) A trap-pit dug in a corner of a forest clearing.
lākāna, lākānj (dand-detor) The sacrifice after a successful hunt.
mitwanj, ahela A cage-trap for porcupine and hares.
molol-wad, molol-bāgur (lamha-jāl) A trap for hares.
nirāl-tonga A cage-trap for panthers.
pitwanj (dang-phanda) A spring-trap.
wadi (jiyād-bāgur) A trap for large animals.
wali dāyna, weta walina (GN) To go hunting. **Parad**, a Halbi word from Oriya, is used specially of the ceremonial hunt.
weel A bow, of which the various parts are
weel The stave.
hawand The string.
kitsi The horns.
wijja-weta (bij-parād) The annual ceremonial hunt before sowing.

House and Village

atana-lon The kitchen. In Halbi, **randha-ghar.**
awār, charak (GN) The garden, or **bāri**, the precious, treasured fenced-in field near the house, which is carefully manured and where the most valued crops are sown.
bohla, bira The verandah. A very important part of the building, where visitors stay and women are segregated during their periods. Also called **bhaunti** (Ha).
bohla-hunjāna Menstruation-hut or verandah-space. Also **aeka-lon, witār, kurma** (GN) and **chhua-kuriya** (Ha).
dheki lon The room where grain is husked.
hamur-lon A house in which a corpse is lying. **Marni-ghar** (Ha).

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

104

bandi-lon	The small hut for the placation or tendance of the dead found chiefly in the western areas. In Halbi, **dumaghar**.
ber-guda	Hen-roost.
lon, ghar (H), **kuriya** (CH)	A house.
lopa ukpi	Inner room.
nadum ukpi	Outer room. Also **parsâr** (Ha).
pad-guda	Pig-sty.
racha	Courtyard. Also **angna** and **duâr** (Ha).
sâr, mandap (Ha)	Covered space in front of the house, where people sit to talk and work. On the roof, which is flat, grains and tobacco are dried. Called **chhauni** and **baithak** in Chhattisgarh.
thili-korka	Cowshed. Halbi, **kotha**.
wijja-dholi	Granary. Also **dhâba** (GK) and **kothi-gadiya** (Ha).

Liquor

burka (tuma)	Gourd to contain the sap of the sago palm.
gâra (tora)	The seed of the *bassia latifolia* tree.
gâra pich (tora pend)	Oil-cakes made after the oil has been expressed from the *bassia latifolia* seed. The oily waste is used by the motiari for massaging.
gorga dârango (salpi ras or mand)	The refreshing juice of the sago palm.
gorga goriya	The cut peduncle of the sago palm.
gorga marra (salpi rukh)	The palm *caryota urens*, Linn.
gotinj, biker (akoos)	The bamboo hook that holds the ladder in place.
hâja (thâpa or dâng)	Bamboo ladder for climbing the palm.
handar, takli (chariya)	The basket which keeps the pot in place.
hind dârango	The fermented juice of the chhind palm (*phoenix sylvestris*).
hochâna (matwâr hoio)	To be intoxicated. A drunkard is **hoche** (matwâr). Trench gives **jhakhuna**, to be dead drunk.
hurlin, surlin	A drink made by soaking mahua flowers in water.
irah puyl, irpa pungâr, irpa kuching	The corolla of the tree *bassia latifolia*.
irma, irah, irpa (H. mahua)	The tree *bassia latifolia*, Roxb.
jâli	The inverted bamboo cone used to strain beer.
landa, barkâr (GN)	The highly intoxicating beer, made of **gorra, gorinj** (GN) or **mandia** (Ha) *eleusine coracana*., **nuka**, rice, **kohola** or **kosra**, *panicum miliaceum*, or other small millets.
mala, arka (Tamil)	Pot placed permanently in position to catch the sap of the sago palm.
mâri (tit)	Matting that protects the pot from wind and the droppings of birds.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104 **parāo, kai-buriya (orki)** A small gourd ladle kept in the pot.

siti (kari or **katki)** The leaf-pipe that directs the juice into the pot.

Love and Love-making

[192] The Muria are inarticulate on this subject. There seem to be few, if any, Gondi words to express emotional or abstract conceptions. They borrow from Halbi or Chhattisgarhi when they wish to do so.

bichār wātu (man, bane) Desire.

girda ātor To be in love.

girda kiyāna To make love. *Girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'.

jugti bikti, mohini (H) A love-charm. **Jugti** suggests an invisible being adept at playing conjuring-tricks, **yukti**, in the cause of love.

maya kiyāna To love.

maya pirit, perem (H) Love.

Marriage Ceremonies

beni pehchāna (beni guthto) Tying the plaits.

bohala, chaura Earthen platform below the booth.

dulha, dulhi (Ha) The bridegroom and bride. It is curious that there are no Gondi words for this.

ghari wersāna, chawk Pattern drawn on the **chaura** platform.

harpān pārin (samdhin bhet) Formal greeting between mothers-in-law.

kalsa (Ha) A decorated pot with a **diwa** lamp above it.

lagin, lagir The final ceremony, the essential binding part of the rite.

mānda (Ha) Marriage booth.

marmi, marming (bihao) Marriage.

neyi rehāna (tel utrāto) Anointing with oil from head to feet; making the oil come down.

neyi tarhāna (tel chaghāto) Anointing with oil from feet to head; making the oil climb up.

pargeh, pargāw (Ha) Ceremonial bringing in of the marriage party.

pārin johār (samdhi bhet) Formal greeting between fathers-in-law.

pungār mihchna The betrothal, lit. 'Plucking the Flower'. Also called **talk dāyna** or 'Going to Beg' and **pungār kurki** or 'Seeing the Flower'. In Halbi **mahala** or **sagai**.

rupiyān payāna, karch yetāna To pay or take the bride-price.

sikla karsana, tori usna (chikal mundi) Bride and groom play in the mud together.

tika (H) Ritual greeting of bride and groom by placing a mark on their foreheads.

torun (Ha) String of mango leaves tied round the booth.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

Relationships

akomāma — Member of a different clan with whom a marriage can be contracted. 104

alda-balda, adal-badal (ulat-pulat) — The custom of changing one's ghotul partner frequently.

anga-nona, anga-harandu-nāt — The relation between **dewar** and **bhauji**, a youth and his elder brother's wife.

dādābhai, tamur-dādai (bhai-band) — Those who are related in the same clan, with whom it is not possible to marry.

gudamoi, gudapāi — The cross-cousin marriage. **Guda** means 'nest', **mola** means 'price', and **pāl** means 'milk'. Thus the bride-price is kept inside the nest; the 'milk' that is given in one generation is repaid in the next.

jodidār — The tradition of ghotul fidelity.

kawāna māne, kawtik māne (hasai nāta) — The 'joking' relationship.

muriyāl mehāna — 'The elder must not touch.' The 'avoidance' relationship.

pāri, biring, birid, pār (barag-bas or gotī) — A clan-sept.

saga, samdhi-samdhin — The relationship between the parents of married persons. **Samdhi** is a contraction from Hindi **sambandhi**, connexion.

Religion

Adibhum (kālepur or tarpur) — The Lower World, not to be confused with Hell.

anga (pat deo) — A clan-god of special construction often employed for divination.

chutki (Ha) — To make magic by snapping the fingers.

deo (H) — A word of very wide application applied to any god or godling who interferes in human affairs.

dhur-bān (Ha) — A magic formula, a **mantra**.

doli (Ha) — A litter for carrying a god to festivals. Danteshwari Mai is usually represented in a litter.

gariya — Sacred stone.

gunia (H) — A magician with a knowledge of **guni**, magic charms. He may also be called **panjiyār**.

gutāl — A bamboo pole with peacock feathers.

gutta, khamba — Stakes to support flag-poles.

hanāl-gaita or hanagunda — Priest of the Departed.

hasa kiyāna — 'To make an egg-shell', to perform a **thua**, a ceremony which concentrates a disease or other evil into a moveable object which can then be removed from the village or house.

hath hurāna (supa dekhna) — To divine with a winnowing-fan.

hode (pangaha) — A warlock, practitioner of black magic.

hode hanār (pangahin) — A witch.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

104

jhara phukna	To blow away evil or danger.
jol ungāna (jhulna jhulto)	Divination by swinging.
kanyang (kaniya)	A 'Maiden' or naiad believed to inhabit woods and streams.
kapād (Ha)	A 'magic door' made to trouble an enemy.
kāri hurāna, katiya hurāna	To divine with a broom.
kaser-gaita or **māti-gaita**	The Knife Priest or Earth Priest, also called **nel-gaita, bhum-gaita** or **mātiyār**, in attendance on the Village Mother.
lāt (Ha)	A flag-pole, to which is attached the emblem of the clan or village god.
mahapurub	Probably incorrectly derived on p. 180. The word must be the same as **mahaprabhu** (SKT), which means 'Great Master' and in Orissa is widely used as a title not only of the Supreme Being but of any leading deity.
mātal	A 'Mother', generally the Village Mother.
mat hiyāna	To give medicine.
mudiyal, muittor (dokara, dokari)	These words which mean Old Man or Old Woman are usually added to the names of the clan-gods. Thus the *form* of Lingo Pen is that of an Anga, and he himself is referred to as Lingo Mudiyal or Lingo Dokara.
Nadumbhum (mānjpur)	The Middle World, or Earth.
pālo	Sacred cloth.
pāti	A forest god.
pen	A god, generally clan-god.
pen-dhurwa	A priest in special attendance on an Anga. If he is expert in magic he may be called **pen-waddai.**
pen-pujāri or **pen-gaita**	A clan-priest.
pentishta	According to Glasfurd, two posts of unequal size near the road, erected before beginning anything new and meaning 'the first, the consecration'.
pitkur (Ha)	Sacrifice of blood from one's finger to a god.
Porrobhum (uparpur)	The Upper World, not to be confused with Heaven.
rau (Ha)	A hill demon.
rawar (gudi)	A shrine. **Pen-rawar** is a shrine of a clan-god. Shrines are often furnished with **hukur**, wooden spoons, **hepur gutte**, fans of wood or feathers, **kaser**, knives, **pen-kunda**, pots for cooking sacrificial meals, **chhatar** (H), umbrellas, **sawur** (ox-tail used as fan) and **tirsul**, a trident.
siraha or **leski**	A medium capable of being inspired by a god and of thus revealing his messages to mankind.
talia melihāna (jhupna)	To shake the head in trance.
Tallur Muttai	Mother Earth.
tokāna	Divination by giving rice to chickens.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

Songs and Dances

butlag-ting	A mask dance.
dāka	Dance-step.
endanna	Dance.
hatto	Riddle.
kahka	Proverb.
kolān mudiyāl, kolān guru, gāyān, jokta	Leaders of the Pus Kolang dances.
lekna	Theme of a song.
leng	Tune.
pār	Drum-rhythm.
pāta	Song.
pāta oywāl	Singers.
pito	Story.
roche	Chorus, generally a variation on the **relo** motif.

Stilt-festival

bād	Pile of old stilts placed over the stone of Bhimul.
dito	Stilts.
dito-dandi	Stilt-pole.
dito-palk	Foot-rests attached to the stilt-poles.
jabān	Wooden pegs to keep the foot-rests in place.

Synonyms

aking-making	An 'echo-word' on **aking**, leaves, meaning any kind of jungle produce.
irub-na-yer	'Water of mahua' for liquor.
kota sāmbar	'The long-tailed one' is used for **thāli**, a cow.
morna	'A rope' is used instead of **tās**, a snake.
warreata	'The fear' is used for **burkāl**, a tiger.

Tattooing

bale hawar (sallya dana)	Resin of *boswellia serrata* sometimes used to make the ink.
buji, uji	Needles.
jaddān perak (jāda bija)	Castor seed used to make the ink.
kājar	Black tattoo ink.
khopa (kondi or thoka)	The small pot to hold the ink.
nung neyi (tilli tel)	Oil of *sesamum indicum*, also used to make the ink.
singār kotla, anjala, dennka (H, godna)	Tattoo.

Trees, Shrubs and Creepers

ala (salai)	*Boswellia serrata*, Roxb. The Muria use the fragrant gum-resin as an incense in sacrifice.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104
824

amarbel (Ha) — *Cuscuta reflexa*, Roxb. In Hindi, **akāshbel**, a clinging creeper used as an emblem of close friendship.

berel (bar) — The banyan, *ficus bengalensis*, Linn.

bor-renga (bhoir) — *Zizyphus jujuba*, Lamk. The Muria use its wood for fuel and sometimes to make agricultural implements. The thorny branches are used for fencing. The fleshy drupe is eaten. Hence the riddle—'The daughter is beautiful, but the mother bites'.

chil, hikum — *Acacia concinna*.

dumel bito (polai) — *Alstonia veneriata*. The bark and roots are used to poison animals.

dundipipar — A variety of *ficus religiosa*, Linn.

garānj (karanji) — *Pongamia glabra*, Vent. Oil for lighting is expressed from the seeds; the waste is used in the ghotul for massage. The fruit is rather like a comb, whence the riddle—'A tree full of combs'.

gorga (salpi) — *Caryota urens*, Linn. For a full account, see pp. 53ff.

gunj (H) — *Abrus precatorius*, Linn. The bright red seeds are used as beads and as goldsmith's weights; crushed, they poison arrows.

harangi (sargi, sal) — *Shorea robusta*, Gaertn. The splendid **sāl**, one of the most valuable of India's timber trees, used everywhere for building, railway sleepers, tools. The Muria earn money by sawing and carting the wood. They eat the seeds and young leaves and use its resin as incense.

hindi (chhind) — The wild date-palm, *phoenix sylvestris*, Roxb. The leaves are used for mats and baskets, and for marriage-crowns. The fermented sugary sap is drunk.

iru, irpu (mahua) — *Bassia latifolia*, Roxb. See p. 33.

ita (imli) — *Tamarindus indica*, Linn. The pods are used in making condiments.

jadda (aranda) — *Ricinus communis*.

kadam, kāreka (H) — *Anthocephalus cadumba*, Miq. The fruit is eaten by human beings as well as by birds and cattle.

kaka (harra) — *Terminalia chebula*, Retz. The myrabolams are used for tanning and many Muria get work collecting and preparing them for contractors.

kaner — *Nerium odorum*, the oleander, a poisonous shrub. The seeds were used to murder an unwanted husband in southern Bastar in 1940.

karandi (mokha) — *Schrebera swietenioides*, Roxb.

karāt (kāru) — *Sterculia urens*, Roxb. The ghost tree, so called because of its gaunt white trunk with branches leafless half the year.

kasi (khasal) — *Bridelia retusa*, Spreng.

kehla (dhāman) — *Grewia tilliaefolia*, Vahl. The tough elastic wood is used by the Muria for their carrying-poles and bows.

khairi, khair kuta (Ha) — *Acacia catechu*, Willd.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

104
824

kingeri (harsingri) *Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*, Linn. Widely used in medicine by the aboriginals. Buffaloes like scratching themselves against the scabrous leaves. The fragrant flowers are popular with the motiari.

kohoka (bhilwan) *Semecarpus anacardium*, L.F. The marking-nut tree. The Muria eat the seeds. For the use of the juice as a counter-irritant see Codrington.

kumur (kumi) *Celastrus paniculata*, Willd.

kurru, kalmodia (kuriu) *Gardenia latifolia*, Ait. A small shrub of xerophytic habit.

kursi (siuna) *Gmelina arborea*, Linn. The fruit, a succulent ovoid drupe, is eaten by chelik and motiari.

mahka (bel) *Aegle marmelos*, Correa. The tree is sacred to Hindus. The Muria use the fruit ceremonially as a substitute for the coconut.

mang (kahu) *Terminalia arjuna*, Bedd.

mard (adan, saja) *Terminalia tomentosa*, W. & A. The tree sacred to the Gond throughout central India.

marka (ām) *Mangifera indica*, Linn. The mango.

mughori (palās or pharsa) *Butea frondosa*, Roxb. The 'Flame of the Forest'. Rope is spun from its root fibres; plates and cups are made from the leaves; important in the lac industry.

nali (aonra) *Phyllanthus emblica*, Linn. The handsome wax-like fruit, which is very astringent, is valued as a stomach medicine. The leaves and branches are important demon-scarers.

nanum (shisham) *Dalbergia latifolia*, Roxb. Indian rosewood.

nendi (jāmun) *Eugenia jambolana*, Lam. The black plum.

pahur (siāri) *Bauhinia vahlii*, W. & A. The camel's-foot creeper. The large leaves of this gigantic creeper are used as plates and for thatching. The Muria make rope from the fibre.

phundar *Calotropis gigantea*, R.Br. A shrub with a milky juice.

pipir, ali (pipar) *Ficus religiosa*, Linn. The most sacred tree in India, but not specially honoured by the Muria.

raka (chār) *Buchanania lanzan*, Spreng. The fruit, which is like a plum, is coated with sugar and sold as the **chironji** sweet.

amaltas (Ha) *Cassia fistula*, Linn. A beautiful tree bearing clusters of golden flowers.

hka (behera) *Terminalia belerica*, Roxb. The fruit is rapidly devoured by animals.

sāgun (Ha) *Tectona grandis*, Linn. The teak, the most important timber tree in India, famous in ship construction and for many other uses.

tirka (mākar tendu, mendu) *Diospyros embryopteris*, Pers. The fruit, which is rich in tannin, is eaten by monkeys.

toya (dumar) *Ficus glomerata*, Roxb. The wild fig.

tumir (temru, tendu) *Diospyros melanoxylon*, Roxb. The ebony tree, important in magic. The berries are a useful food.

turmura, tongmalia (jāla) *Wendlandia exserta*, D.C.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

104
824

vedur (idas) The bamboo, *dendrocalamus strictus*, Nees. The young shoots are a great delicacy. The seeds are also eaten and the pith, **vedur-jiwa** or 'soul of the bamboo', is valued.

walek (semur) *Bombax malabaricum*, D.C. The cotton tree, used ceremonially by many tribes in peninsular India.

wengor (bija) *Pterocarpus marsupium*, Roxb. The Sanskrit **asana** tree. Very important for timber. The red gum-resin is mentioned in the Lingo legend.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INDEX OF AUTHORITIES QUOTED

000

Abercrombie, J., 433
Aetion, 470
Agarwal, D. D., 237
Agrawala, V. S., 300
Allen, C., 433, 446, 659
Archer, W. G., xiv, 86f., 137ff., 293, 296, 299, 352, 413, 455, 533, 584, 587
Ashley-Montague, M. F., 471f.

Bainbridge, R. B., 183, 292
Balfour, H., 663
Ball, V., 207
Barton, J., 281
Barton, R. F., 278, 279, 460, 560, 574
Bass, M. N., 239
Baudesson, H., 277
Beaver, W. N., 272, 320
Beghin, L. F., 316
Bennett, A. L., 289
Bhagwat, D., 185, 227, 317, 439
Bingham, H., 433
Bloch, L., 345, 446
Bloomfield, M., 475
Bodding, P. O., 641
Bogoras, W., 435
Bompas, C. H., 170, 259, 264, 450
Bonnerjea, B., 476
Bose, P. N., 15, 226
Brett, E. A. de, 316
Bridge, C., 276
Briffault, R., x, xii, 271, 277, 446, 618f., 637, 640, 660
Brown, W. N., 849
Buhler, G., 236
Buradkar, M. P., 60
Butler, J., 285f.

Cain, J., 134
Campbell, A., 257
Campbell, J. M., 209
Cartier, J., 660
Census of India, 1891, 14, 16, 18
Census of India, 1911, 110, 126
Census of India, 1931, 13, 62, 184, 237, 265, 306, 625, 650
Chatterton, Hyde, 203, 236ff.
Chattopadhyaya, K. P., 39
Chen, K. T., 471
Chenoy, G., 450
Chenoy, R. B., 626
Christian, F. W., 276
Cline, W. B., 465
Clouston, W. A., 476
Coddington, R. H., 271
Coomaraswamy, A., 402, 664
Crawley, E., 76, 136, 448, 453f., 475, 620
Crawford, A., 680
Crew, F. A. E., 471
Crooke, W., 34, 98, 169f., 184, 186, 237, 260, 262, 454, 473
Cunningham, A., 185, 237
Curjel, 473
Czaplicka, M. A., 209

Dale, G., 282
Dalton, E. T., 49, 110, 181, 186, 226, 230, 243, 262f., 286ff., 292, 294, 297, 301, 306f., 388, 456, 570, 660
Dehon, F., 170, 292, 295f.
Descartes, 636, 638
Dey, N., 194
Dickinson, R. L., 443
Driberg, J. H., 468
Driver, W. N. P., 300
Dubois, J. A., 625
Dunbar Brander, A. A., 263
Dundas, C., 468

Ehrenfels, O. R., 243, 625
Ellis, A. B., 489
Elwin, Verrier,
The Baiga, 24, 169, 171, 184, 185, 257, 258, 260, 262, 263, 264, 475, 533, 564, 566, 625
The Agaria, 62, 184, 237, 257
Maria Murder and Suicide, 10, 32, 195, 645
Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal, 10, 180f., 584, 598
Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills, 333, 584
Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh, 606
Myths of Middle India, 323
Emeneau, M. B., 316, 534
Enthoven, R. E., 171, 184, 260f.

Fermor, L., 208
Firth, R., 273, 436, 464, 470, 518
Forbath, A., 616, 637, 656
Forbes, L. R., 299
Forsyth, J., 233f., 236, 629
Fraser, J. G., x, 170, 259, 263, 282, 340, 455f., 476, 489, 651
Frere, M., 633
Freud, S., 444
Freycinet, L. de, 660
Fric, V. and Radin, P., 279, 340, 662
Fürer-Haimendorf, C. von, x, xii, xv, 170, 227, 283, 285, 286, 289, 309, 311, 315, 530, 661
Galt, R. A., 286, 340
Garnett, L., 588
Gibbon, E., 231
Gill, E., 419
Glanfeil, C. L. R., 16
Gordon, D. H., 208
Gordon, R. M., 456, 631
Gottschling, E., 281
Greene, Graham, 325
Grimaud, G. A., 683
Grigsaed, A., 590

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

000 Grigson, W. V., xiiff., 4, 12, 17, 20, 23, 24, 27, 33, 53, 56, 59, 62, 75, 144, 146, 151, 159, 160, 180, 184, 188, 192, 194, 202, 317ff., 528, 651, 673, 684, 686, 696, 705
Guha, B. S., xiii, 19, 669, 670
Gurdon, P. R. T., 56, 201, 259, 287, 652

Haddon, A. C., 270, 271, 579
Hadfield, E., 272
Haldar, S., 454
Hartland, E. S., 636f.
Hartman, C. G., 471
Havelock Ellis, xi, 429ff., 447f., 617ff.
Herrera, A. de, 280
Himes, N. E., 460, 464, 470f.
Hinde, S. L. and H., 282
Hiralal, R. B., 64
Hislop, S., 18, 75, 207, 225, 229ff., 234, 316, 629
Hivale, Shamrao, xiii, 183, 209, 293, 299, 413, 419, 448, 584, 588, 625, 641, 652, 667, 669, 672f., 675, 676ff.
Hodson, T. C., 271, 286, 319
Hogbin, L., 459f.
Hollis, A. C., 282, 470
Hora, S. L., 55
Hose, C., 449, 453
Hose, C. and McDougall, W., 319
Housman, A. E., xii
Humphreys, C. B., 274
Hunter, W. W., 291
Hutton, J. H., 37, 150, 285, 286, 320, 330, 455, 469, 526, 558, 560, 573, 651, 663

Im Thurn, E. F., 139
Indrajit Singh, 662
Iyer, A. K., 243
Iyer, L. A. K., 315f.

Jenkins, M., 446f.
Jenks, A. E., 277ff.
Jespersen, O., 667
Johnson, S., 629
Junod, H. A., 464

Kaufmann, W., 281, 523, 650, 679
Keith, A. B., 236
Kisch, E. H., 471
Klein, M., 525
Knight, W. F. J., 207
Knowles, J. H., 633
Koppers, W., 180, 208, 257
Krishnamachariar, C. R., 648

Landtmann, G., 291
Lauterbur, E. J. P., 468
Lawrence, A. J., 22
Lasbrey, L. S. B., x, 280, 346, 468
Le Goubin, 660
Le Potourel, H. J. B., 281, 296
Lewis, T. H., 432
Lind, A. A., 685
Lintot, R., 283
Low, H., 277
Lowie, R. H., 423, 425

Macculloch, J. A., 238f., 382
Macfarlane, E. J., 316
MacPherson, Captain, 191
Majumdar, D. N., 297, 447, 565, 581
Majumdar, S. N., 394
Malinowski, B., x, 272, 275, 446, 460, 564, 573ff.
Mateer, S., 528
Mathers, E. P., 430
May, J. A., 312
McConnell, R. R., 281
McCulloch, W., 590, 633
Mead, M., 464
Meaker, S. R., 469
Melville, H., 276
Meyer, J. J., 84, 470, 632
Mills, J. P., 286, 288f., 323, 413, 414, 558, 570, 573, 651, 662f.
Mills, C. A. and Ogle, C., 472
Milton, J., 430
Mitchell, A. N., 357, 428f., 683ff., 691, 701
Mitra, S. C., 207, 481, 590
Modi, J. J., 260, 455
Mondiere, A. T., 472
Moses, S. T., 34
Muller-Lyer, F., 446
Mumford, W. B., 280

Needham, J. F., 288
Nelson, A. R., 316
Newman, L. F., 652

Ogle, C., 472
O'Malley, L. S. S., 292
Orwell, G., 583
Osgood, C., 321

Padmanabhachari, T. R., 581
Parsons, E. C., 470
Patty, N. E., 391, 579, 662
Peal, S. E., x, 269, 276, 284f., 291, 639
Penzer, N. M., 194, 208, 260, 445, 475, 633
Pitt-Rivers, G. H. L., 469
Playfair, A., 287
Pruit, J. B., 207
Preuss, K. T., 588

Ramadas, G., 15, 302
Ray, S. H., 272
Rentoul, A. C., 460
Risley, H. H., 109, 302
Rivers, W. H. R., 271, 439
Robertson, B., 16
Rowney, H. B., 649

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INDEX OF AUTHORITIES QUOTED

Roy, S. C., x, 37, 169, 170, 184, 185, 237, 257, 264, 292, 295ff., 301, 320, 340, 351f., 415, 456, 529, 533, 558, 564f., 572, 580, 660
Roy, S. N., 135, 323
Ruben, W., vii, 299
Russell, R. V., 178, 299
Russell, R. V. and Hiralal, R. B., 14, 61, 62, 73, 77, 98, 110, 146, 152, 169, 170, 184, 194, 225, 234, 243, 260, 263, 316, 625, 632f.

Samuell, R. A., 300
Sarkar, J., 581
Sarkar, S. S., 292
Sawe, K. J., 237
Savile, W. J. V., 272
Schebesta, P., 377, 388
Schmidt, M., 273
Schmidt, W. and Koppers, W., x, 625
Schurtz, H., x, 285
Seligman, C. G., 271, 274, 448
Sen, P., 207
Shakespear, J., 288, 319f.
Sherring, C. A., 290f.
Shoobert, W. H., 181, 306
Sitapati, G. V., 528
Skeat, W. W. and Blagden, C. O., 277, 388
Smith, R. W. and Dale, A. M., ix, 539, 564, 570
Sorcone, 470
Spies, W. and de Zoete, B., 207
Srinivas, M. N., 85, 133
Stack, E. and Lyall, C. J., 288, 662
Stayt, H. A., 281
Stekel, W., 636ff., 656
Sterndale, R. A., 185

Temple, R., 225ff., 229f., 239
Temple, R. C., 237
Tickell, Lt., 263
Thomas, D., 430
Thomson, J., 282
Thurston, E., 13, 37, 49, 53, 56, 110, 135, 184, 388, 450, 492
Tod, J., 254
Tordoy, E., 468
Trench, C. G. C., 62, 234ff., 428f., 432, 626, 685
Tyrrell, G., 228

Unwin, J. D., x, 195

Ward, H. C. E., 88, 110, 146, 432, 625, 631
Webster, Hutton, x, 253, 270, 272, 276, 277, 280, 660
Welch, D., 331f.
Westermarck, E., x, xii, 138ff., 270, 277, 278, 430, 454, 469, 617ff., 625, 629, 636
White, N. I., 521
Williams, F. E., 273
Wright, J. M., 471

Yeatts, M. W. M., 15
Young, A. W., 528, 531

Zuckerman, S., 469, 473

[P. 722 is blank]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Abnormal, births, 72; deaths, 167ff.
Abortifacients, 296, 415, 464, 469
Abstinence, ceremonial, 25f., 42f., 174, 230, 239, 420, 486ff., 495, 630
Abuse, vocabulary of, 642, 645f.
Admission to dormitory, 358ff.
Adolescent sterility, 471ff.
Adoption, 67
Adultery, 43, 146f., 212, 400, 479, 633ff., 639
Africa, the dormitory in, 280ff.; sexual life in, 468
Aged, position of the, 141f.
Age-grades, 80, 288, 293, 358ff.
Agricultural festivals, 298f.; 214ff., 649ff.
Agriculture, 24ff.
Almora, the dormitory in, 290f.
Anaesthesia, sexual, 420
Anatomy of sex, 422f., 646
Anga Pen (clan god), 97, 181, 188ff., 205f., 211f., 215, 219, 223, 225, 253, 477ff., 648; illustrated, Plate XXXVI
Animals, Muria love of, 23, 569; as food, 34ff.; hunted, 39ff.; folklore of, 40; as totems, 61ff.; names from, 74; as omens, 86f.; dances and games imitating, 569ff.
Ants, red, as food, 34, 39; in the marriage ceremonial, 132, 139; as a febrifuge, 213; in buffoonery, 583
Anura (*Phyllanthus emblica*, Linn.), as food, 33; in funerary ritual, 152; in hunting ceremonial, 215; at purification of village, 218; use of, taught by Lingo, 254; in contraceptive ritual, 462; on dancing expeditions, 488, 508; vocabulary, 717
Aphrodisiacs, 443
Appointment of Gaita, 200, 479; of ghotul leaders, 249ff.; in Urson dormitory, 295
Archaism in Muria grammar, 686
Arrows, in hunting, 43; in fishing, 46, 48, 49; used to cut umbilical cord, 71, 119, 140; for anointing rite in marriage, 124; at Tija ceremony, 188; in cure of disease, 211; in hunting ceremonial, 215; legendary ladder of, used by Lingo, 241; magic, 251, 483; to cure bad dreams, 483; use of, illustrated, Plates XV, XXI, XXVII
Art and the dormitories, 273, 287, 302f., 339ff.
Assam, dormitories in, 283ff.
Astronomy, 258ff., 703
Attractiveness, erotic, Muria ideas about, 426ff.
Avoidance, rules of, 68, 338f., 634
Axe-cultivation, 29ff.; ceremonial, 649ff.; illustrated, Plates IX, CI.
Babies, cure of, 76
Bangaram, 85, 183, 198, 200
Bara Deo, see Bara Pen
Bara Pen, born in Lanji-Dhamda, 21f., 133; honoured in tortoise, 64; sacrifice of buffalo to, 66; and tattooing, 78; and funerary ritual, 153f., 166; enshrined in nzango grove, 167; described, 181; decline of cult, 181, 223; lives with Rai Linga, 227f.; and ritual dream, 478; lives in dhol drum, 524; in folk-tale, 590
Basmasur, 230, 233
Bathing, after menses, 83f.; during marriage ceremony, 113, 138, illustrated, Plate XXIV; of gods, 191, illustrated, Plate XLII
Bazaar ceremony, 137f., 213f.
Bear, song about, 45; ceremonies after man killed by, 168; genitalia of, as cure for impotence, 212, 443; intoxicated, 263; in dreams, 476; use of hair on masks, 516
Beating, ceremonial, 129, 138
Beauty, Muria ideas about, 426f.
Bed-wetting, 401, 412, 693
Beef, attitude to, 34, 159, 657
Bees, 37, 65
Bestiality, 636
Betrothal, 86ff.; in ghotul, 334; in folk-tale, 603f.
Betrothed couples, relations between, 619, 626
Bhagavan, house of, 53; daughters of, 54, 93f.; ordainer of human life, 164, 169; as Supreme Being, generally described, 180ff.; cult developing, 223; in Lingo legend, 230f., 233, 243, 257; story about, 365
Bhimsen, see Bhimul Pen
Bhimul Pen, 31, 146; generally described, 184f.; honoured in Tija ceremonial, 188; identified with Lingo, 227, 239; in the Usenegi Palli legend, 250ff.; as a rain god, 261; originates menstruation and birth, 424; and dancing expeditions, 495; and stilts, 654f.; and the rainbow, 703
Bijnor, dormitories in, 291ff.; illustrated, Plates XLVIII, XLIX, LXVII
Birdlime, 41; game, 576
Birds, folklore of, 40; trapping, 41; omens from, 86f.; games imitating, 565f., 577; imitation, 584
Birth of children, 70ff.; of a god, 215ff.
Blind Man's Buff, Muria version of, 564
Bonesia, described, 419f.; riddle about, 584
Bride, preparation of, 122ff., 131
Bride-price, 88, 623
'Bringing back the Soul', 151ff.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Arooma, riddles about, 33, 593; attached to marriage-booth, 125; as demon-scarer, 138; use in taking oaths and for divination, 179; use in ceremonial, 193, 218, 690; and Lingo, 248
Brothers and sisters in ghotul, 337f.
Buildings, ghotul, 326ff., 709; illustrated, Chap. X and Plates LXVI, LXVIII, LXIX, LXX
Bull-roarer, 272, 293, 529; illustrated, 544
Bullying, 403, 413
Bull-sacrifice, 220ff., 261, 654f.; illustrated, Plates XLVI, XLVII
Burial ceremonies, 148f.
Buttock-bells, 17, 534

Cannibalism, 202f., 233
Carvings in ghotul, 330f.; illustrated, Chap. X, and Plates LXXII, LXXIII, LXIV
Castes and tribes
Abor, 288
Agaria, 62, 184, 237, 257
Ahir, see Rawat
Ahom, 581
Angami Naga, 285, 469, 558, 573, 651
Ao Naga, 286, 288, 394, 414, 651, 662
Asur, 297, 299

Baiga, 23, 49, 62, 141, 169, 171, 184f., 199, 211, 240, 257f., 260, 262, 264, 317, 429, 454, 475, 528, 533, 564, 566, 631
Bania, 698
Basor, 625
Bharia, 630
Bhattra, 11, 18f., 169, 318, 351, 630, 696
Bhil, 20, 207, 237, 257, 625
Bhotia, 290f.
Bhuinhar, 306
Bhuiya, 257, 264, 291, 300, 305ff., 456, 485, 558, 569, 580; illustrated, Plate LV
Bhumij, 580
Binjhwar, 450, 630
Birhor, 170, 257, 259, 264, 292, 298f., 456
Bison-horn Maria, 10, 38, 51ff., 87, 135, 139, 158, 172, 195, 211, 262, 318f., 424, 426, 432, 449, 518, 582, 630, 637, 640, 696, 698; illustrated, Plates LI–LIV
Bondo, 55f., 222, 237, 301, 311ff., 320, 485; illustrated, Plates LXII, LXIV
Bonthuk, 237
Brahmin, 35, 230, 243, 625, 698
Buna, 259

Chang, 283, 320, 538
Chenchu, 170
Chero, 257
Chhara, 237
Chin, 326
Chiru, 288

Castes and tribes
Dhakar, 12
Dhimar, see Kuruk
Dhurwa, 12, 87, 172, 192, 209, 456, 492, 630
Didai, 301, 315
Doria, 172, 630, 697
Dumal, 169

Gadaba, 12, 55f., 222, 257, 301, 308ff., 424, 485, 696; illustrated, Plates LXIII, LXV
Ganda, 12, 171, 365, 447, 452, 580, 654, 655
Garo, 287, 528
Ghasia, 13, 365, 526, 641, 655
Gond, 17, 18, 20, 22, 49, 62, 88, 141, 152, 169, 181, 194, 209, 223ff., 259, 264, 316, 320, 340, 385, 388, 424, 446, 454, 579, 584, 621, 629, 630, 662, 696
Guruo, 170

Halba, 12, 169, 171, 192, 205, 696
Hill Maria, 8f., 10, 14, 23, 52ff., 66, 80, 135, 158, 172, 201, 262, 317, 383, 386, 525, 534, 698; illustrated, Plates L–LII
Ho, 263, 297ff., 447, 529, 581
Holeya, 625

Jat, 237
Jhoria, 15ff., 52, 159, 315, 383, 450, 533, 630, 696
Juang, 55f., 201, 257, 264, 300ff., 330, 424, 485, 508, 528, 529, 558, 569, 590, 631; illustrated, Plates LVI–LVIII

Kabui, 286
Kachari, 286, 651
Kadir, 56, 388
Kadu Kuruba, 316
Kalanga, 169
Kalar, 13, 52, 184, 365, 519, 550, 648
Kalyo Kengyu Naga, 286; illustrated, Plate LXI
Kanikkar, 315
Kawar, 169, 623, 630
Kayasth, 137
Kaut, 207
Kewta, 590, 622
Kharia, 37, 87, 152, 170, 292, 456, 533, 564, 565, 572
Khasi, 56, 201, 259, 287, 632
Koi, 134, 184, 237, 440, 492, 696
Kol, 260, 263, 434, 580
Kond, 37, 55, 87, 132, 181, 191, 222, 229, 257, 301, 306ff., 330, 394, 434, 570
Konyak Naga, 283, 284, 288ff., 661; illustrated, Plates LIX, LX
Kopa, see Rawat
Korku, 208, 625
Korwa, 300
Kota, 135, 318

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Castes and tribes
Koyi, see Koi
Kshatriya, 183, 698
Kuki, 388, 631
Kumar Bagh Paharia, 292
Kunnuvan, 625
Kurmi, 169, 170
Kuruk, 47, 87, 365
Kuruvar, 528
Kuruvikkaran, 237

Lakher, 391, 528, 570, 662
Lhota Naga, 285, 286, 558, 573
Lohar, 13, 152, 365f., 386f., 582, 589, 655; illustrated, Plate LXXVI
Lushai, 288, 320, 391, 662

Madiga, 625
Mahar (Maharu), 12, 262, 365, 550, 625, 655
Majhwar, 625
Mali, 625
Mal Paharia, 292
Mannan, 315f.
Mao, 286
Maraz, 65, 171
Mewi, 286
Mikir, 287f., 528, 662
Muduvar, 388
Munda, 184, 237, 257, 292, 296f., 337, 434, 589, 564, 565
Muthuvan, 315

Nahar, 14, 365

Ojha, 77f., 525, 697

Puliyan, 315
Pando, 152, 306
Panka, see Ganda
Panwar, 169
Pardhan, 13f., 141, 209, 225ff., 262, 340, 424, 579, 584, 603, 697
Parenga, 315
Parja, 12, 53, 184, 690, 696
Paroja, see Parja
Pulayar, 528
Pulvan, 288

Raja Muria, 12, 318
Rajput, 235f., 625
Rawat, 12, 171, 321, 365f., 447, 464, 520
Reddi, 530
Rengma, 286, 315, 413, 558, 570, 573, 663

Sangtam, 285
Santia, 169, 237
Santal, 170, 257, 259, 260, 263, 264, 292, 430, 476, 589, 603, 641
Saora, 53, 169, 263, 301, 323, 424, 432, 508, 528, 641
Saonia Paharia, 183, 292
Savara, see Saora
Sema Naga, 37, 285, 323, 560, 573
Sondi, 263, 698

Tagara, 696
Tamla, 152
Teli, 652, 698
Toda, 316
Turi, 87, 260

Urali, 184
Uraon, 87, 169, 170, 185, 260, 292ff., 330, 340, 351, 394, 472, 432, 433, 455, 529, 533, 580, 584, 587, 589, 625, 630, 660; illustrated, Plates XLVIII, XLIX, LXVII

Vaiphei, 288
Vedar, 528

Celibacy, Muria attitude to, 420
Census returns, 630, 696ff.
Central Provinces, the dormitory in the, 316f.
Character, type of, most admired, 361
Chhattisgarhi language, 676, 683
Child, sex of unborn, 72
Childhood friend, appeal of the, 616ff.
Children, life of, 76; games of, 556f.
Churelin, 169ff., 600; see Ondar Muttai
Clan-area, 59ff., 159
Clan-god, 59ff., 151, 160, 188ff., 215ff.; see Anga
Clan-incest, 308, 318, 414f.
Clans, 59ff., 127, 158
Cleanliness, personal, 391f.; of ghotul, 401
Climacteric, 142
Cobra, as totem, 66; in Lingo legend, 243f., 611, 624
Cock-fighting, 564, 580ff., 703; illustrated, CXLI
Coitus, Muria method of, 436ff.; jokes about, 588
Coitus interruptus, 84, 463f.
Combs, 144, 253, 290, 298, 302f., 307, 330, 338, 346, 376, 383, 388ff., 432, 481, 610, 693; illustrated, 302, 303, 374, 377, 379, 398, 399, 497; Plates III, LXXXI
Communal labour, 32
Conception, supernormal, 252, 262
Consummation of marriage, 129f., 134, 334, 543
Contagious magic, 212
Contraception, ideas about, 82, 296, 343, 437, 459, 690
Cooking, methods of, 36
Corporate violation, 340
Cowries, 53, 88, 118, 136, 158, 220, 383ff., 386f., 449, 541; illustrated, 387, 389; Plates XXXVII, LXXXIII, CXIII
Cows, attitude to, 34, 130, 163f., 167, 199, 238, 657
Crabs, 34, 226, 310, 589
Cravings of pregnancy, 34
Creation, story of, 237f.
Cremation, 147f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Crime, 50f., 288, 657
Criticisms of dormitory system, 660f.
Crocodile, as food, 36, 39; game, 570
Cross-cousin marriage, 621ff., 699
Cross-dressing, 131, 448ff.; illustrated 449, 453; Plate LXXXV
Crowns, marriage, 105ff., 125, 127, 166, 542; illustrated, 108, 111
Cruelty, 448
Cultivation, 24ff., 30, 703f.
Cymbals, 528

Daily programme, 704
Dances, Chaps. XIX, XX *passim*, 227, 250, 305, 479; at a marriage, 120ff.; funerary, 153; Jhoria, 131, 448ff.; Hulki, 227, 509ff.; Pus Kolang, 488ff.; for Lingo, 490; Pen Kolang, 495; Chait Dandar, 495ff.; Diwali, 502ff., 648; Chherta, 516ff., 648; Mandri, 535ff; religious, 545ff.; Har, 547ff.; dress worn during, 533, 705; sticks for, 198, 485; in dreams, 479; vocabulary, 715; illustrated, Plates CXI–CXXIII
Dancing expeditions, 309; Chap. XIX; illustrated, Plates LXXXIX, XC, XCII–XCV
Danteshwari, 12, 20f., 63, 85, 159, 181f., 196, 198, 200, 214, 223f., 479, 531, 533, 648
Dassera, 31, 214, 394, 648; illustrated, Plate XL
Death, Chap. VI *passim*; origin of, 251, 264f.; riddles about, 317; vocabulary, 705f.
Defecation, 394, 692
Defloration, 436, 616
Demon-scarers, 138
Departed, the, Chap. VI *passim*; honoured at a hunt, 42, 215f.; liquor offered to, 49; child named from, 73; offerings to, at a betrothal, 86ff.; at burial of marriage crown, 128; at worship of drums, 132, 331ff.; at dancing expeditions, 493; belief in, fundamental to Muria religion, 179, 222; in ribald tale, 417f.; in dreams, 477f.; angered by adultery, 633; by breach of menstrual taboos, 83
Discipline in ghotul, Chap. XV *passim*, 662
Disease, treatment of, 209ff., 294, 632
Divination, 73, 151ff., 211f.
Divine Right of Kings, 183; see also Maharaja
Divorce, 303, 333f., 634f., 659, 700
Dog, as totem, 63f., on dancing expeditions, 486
Door, magic, 204; carvings, illustrated, 335, 342, 344
Dramatic dances, 134; games, 561f.
Dreams, Chap. XVIII *passim*; origin of migration, 21; in the menstruation hut, 81, 84; the Departed appear in, 132, 167; tiger in, 168; Ondar Muttal in, 171; clan-god in, 190; of a murderer, 195; at appointment of Gaita, 200; erotic, 337; on dancing expeditions, 488; vocabulary, 706
Dress, 381ff., 533ff., 705
Dropsy, 146, 148, 212, 477, 633
Drowning, death by, 71; dreams, 478f.
Drums, worship of, 132f., 524, 531; at death, 149, 160; and Bhimul, 184, 531, 535; general account, 524ff., 530ff.; rhythms of, 540ff.; riddles about, 533; illustrated, Plate CIX
Dulha Deo, 65, 67, 98, 183f.
Duties of ghotul members, 354ff.; at a marriage, 135f.; at a funeral, 147ff.

Early marriages, 293, 368, 420
Earth Mother, 54, 56, 63, 82, 132, 179, 181f., 202f., 258, 261, 495; see Tallur Muttal
Ebony (tendu, *Diospyros melanoxylon*, Roxb.), used ceremonially at hunt, 42; at funeral, 151; on dancing expeditions, 508; as food, 33, 72; in Lingo legend, 243, 247; taboo on, 394; vocabulary, 717
Eclipse, 71, 260
Economic relationships, vocabulary, 706
Ecstatic trance, 172, 205f., 299, 449; illustrated, Plate XLIII
Education, 325
Eggs, use of in ritual, 32, 143, 152, 167, 190, 201, 211, 213, 218, 219, 309, 462, 465, 508, 652; riddles about, 594
Elder brother's wife, or widow, 142, 237
Elephant game, 570
Elopements, 341, 351, 366, 416, 620, 634
Emblems, Uraon village, 293; absent among Muria, 332; illustrated, Plate XLV
Epicanthic fold, 20
Epilepsy, 212
Equality, Muria emphasis on, 202, 249, 343f., 363, 421f., 457, 626, 632, 637
Erotic dreams, 171, 481ff.
Ethics, 145, 223, 654ff., 706ff.
Evening in the Ghotul, An, Chap. XIII, 797
Evil Eye, 49, 209, 454
Excise rules, 50
Excommunication, 36, 86, 81, 416
Exercise, games as, 573f.
Exhibitionism, 448
Expeditions, dancing, Chap. XIX; illustrated, Plates LXXXIX, XC, XCII–XCV
Expulsion from ghotul, 347, 421f.

Falconry, 45ff., 670, 707; illustrated, 46, Plate XIV
Family, 678f., 647
Famine, 36
Father, relations with, 323, 642f.
Feasts, 369, 493, 507f.
Fertility, desired after marriage, 140; and the Departed, 146, 173; and Bhimul,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

261; and Urasn rites, 294f., 412; and the dormitory system, 320; and cross-dressing, 433; and intercourse, Chap. XVII
Festivals, 213f., 485, 644, 648ff., 707f.
Fever, cure for, 213f.
Fidelity, domestic, 223, 269, 284, 299f., 636; to ghotul partner, 338ff.
Fines, Chap. XV passim, 347, 349, 370, 410, 415, 623, 635
Fire, 85, 148, 215, 231, 235, 236, 254, 268f., 301, 416, 477, 483, 486f., 503; riddles about, 593
Fire-Maiden, 650
Firewood, 332; illustrated, Plate LXXI
Fish, 47, 55, 64f., 149, 155, 186, 293, 305
Fishing, 47, 251f., 260, 481, 598f.; illustrated, Plates XVII–XX
Flags, 150f., 198, 197, 215, 330
Flea, a magic, 212
Flowers, use of, 387, 506
Folk-tales, 8ff., 18of., 598ff.
Food, 32ff., 708f.
Forgiveness, 636
Friendships, ceremonial, 304, 310, 456ff.
Frogs, 34, 45, 153, 261, 319, 532, 612; games imitating, 570, 579
Fruit, 33, 716ff.
Frustration, dreams of, 480ff.
Funerary rites, 147ff.; illustrated, Plates XXXI–XXXIV
Furniture in ghotul, 331f.; illustrated, 331, 332

Games, Chap. XXI, 549ff.; illustrated, Plates CXXIV-CXL
Ganja, 52, 359
Gardens, 28
Goat, as totem, 65
Gonds, 518, 526; illustrated, 517, Plate CV
Gonorrhoea, 56, 212
Grammar, Gondi, 686; outline of, 688ff.
Graves, 165f.
Grindstone game, 579
Grotesque, love of the, 584
Guessing game, 580

Hail, origin of, 262
Hair, 152, 386ff., 709f.; pins for, illustrated, 391
Halbi language, 683
Haldi (turmeric), 55f., 71, 77, 78, 106ff., 140, 147, 154, 161, 164, 167, 185, 203, 334, 494, 533
Hare, 262; sacrifice of, 204
Hawk-moon, 565
Headache, remedy for, 213
Headhunds, 585f.; illustrated, 585, 589, 595
Heaven, 145f.
Hell, 145f.
Hindu influence on Muria life, 17, 27, 71, 73, 96, 137, 145, 150, 163, 168, 194, 198, 200, 202, 225f., 230, 234, 286, 387f., 351
Hobby horses, 207f.; illustrated, Plate XXXIX
Homosexuality, 446ff., 638, 636
Honey, 36ff., 65, 146, 710
Horses, brass on tomb, 165; in shrines, 196; for a Rau, 215; attendant on Anga, 189, on Lingo, 225; and the ecstatic trance, 205ff.; sacrifice of, 208; as Urasn emblem, 293; in dreams, 477; in festival dances, 534; game, 570; illustrated, 206, 208, 210, 211, Plates XXXIX, CIV
Hospitality, duty of, 105, 291, 302
Household, games, 558ff.; gods, 183
Human sacrifice, 226, 259f., 311, 563, 697
Humour, 151, 338, 492, 583ff.
Hunting, 26, 39f., 71, 125, 189, 200, 204, 214, 215, 293, 310, 450; games, 569; vocabulary, 710; illustrated, Plate XV
Hunting-horn, 167, 198, 215, 526; illustrated, 530
Hymen, absence of, 436, 616
Hymeneal blood, dreaded, 321

Illicit distillation, 50f.
Immortality, 144
Impotence, 212, 283, 304, 443, 542, 635
Incest, 191, 319, 338, 414ff., 430, 583, 617, 646, 655
Infanticide, 469
Infertility, problem of prenuptial, Chap. XVII
Initiation, 272, 331, 359f., 437
Intercourse, sexual, rules about, 346f., 635f.; origin of, 54, 263; methods of, 436ff.; riddle about, 597
Instruments, musical, 177, 524ff.
Iron, in magic and ceremonial, 189, 196, 204, 205, 209, 212, 218f., 225, 254f., 260f., 305, 424, 462, 488, 503
Ispural, 47, 145, 169, 180

Jealousy, 325, 344f., 457, 636ff.; 652
Jew's-harp, 123, 177, 314, 328; illustrated, 331, 334
Johar salutation, 253f., 373f., 541, 596; game, 580
Joking relationships, 68f., 141, 232, 587, 626

Kadrengal, 42, 54, 78, 175, 182, 223, 257, 263, 376, 516
Kamana, see Games
Kising, 452
Kondi Deo, 185

Lactation, 212
Lagar Deo, 185f., 483
Lagir, ceremony at wedding, 96, 97, 125f., 543, 583; illustrated, Plate XXVIII
Lambada, see Serving Marriage
Lamps, 73, 130, 140, 165, 201; riddles, 595; illustrated, 130

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

600

Language, of the Muria, 683ff.
Lanji-Dhamda, 20ff., 63, 153, 163, 228, 258
Laziness, condemned, 400, 403, 641
Leaders, appointment of, 361
Leprosy, 148
Levirate, 237ff.
Lightning, 47, 98, 184, 186, 260f.
Lingo, 52, 53, 63, 83, 128, 169, 175, 180, 189, 203, 209, Chap. VIII *passim*, 321, 327, 329, 332, 339, 371, 402, 462, 486, 490f., 521, 532, 548, 602, 615, 649, 670ff., 676ff., 692
Liquor, 49ff., 67, 87, 131, 146, 193, 216, 219, 240, 251, 255, 302, 334, 339, 347ff., 362, 369, 400, 402, 411, 434f., 465, 485, 506, 533, 582, 634, 648, 711
Lizard game, 569; illustrated, Plate CXL
Local gods, 187f.
Love, charms, 253, 258, 441ff.; words for, 422; character of a Muria's, 433ff., 623; affairs, 349f., 502f.; vocabulary, 712
Lying, attitude to, 361, 658

Madagascar, dormitories in, 283
Magic, to protect fields, 27; to obtain honey, 37; in hunting, 42; and the sago-palm, 56; and tattooing, 78; and divination, 201; generally described, 202ff.; and murder, 204; and attacks by wild animals, 205, 624; to protect village, 218f.; and Kiwal *darisau*, 272; and Naga *morung*, 289; and dormitory generally, 320; and hymeneal blood, 321; and disease, 340; and ghotul, 331, 482; of beauty, 430; and impotence, 304, 446; and cross-dressing, 454; and dreams, 482ff.; and dancing expeditions, 485ff.
Mahadeo, 42, 117, 230, 236, 516, 694
Mahapurub, division men into castes, 77; prayers to, 144, 465; soul taken to, 145; variant on Iapural or Bhagavan, q.v., 169; as Supreme Being, 180f.; cult of, 223; instructs Lingo, 241; in the Usarangi Palli story, 249ff.; and creation, 257f.; and coitus, 258; sacrifice of son, 259f.; and thunder, 261; and origin of death, 264f.; makes first Bonde dormitory, 312; derivation of word, 714
Maharaja, 7, 10, 40, 183, 214, 339, 394
Mahua (*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.), 31, 33, 35, 49, 58, 109, 147, 225, 263, 390, 465, 531, 596, 648, 716
Maidens, Divine, 126f.
Malaya, dormitories in, 277
Mandri-drum, 530ff.; illustrated, 522
Mangoes, 31, 33, 56, 72, 97, 110, 214, 477, 531, 598, 644, 648, 717
Maoli, 63, 177, 182, 183, 479
Marriage, six kinds of, 96f.; ceremonies, Chap. V; significance of, 137ff.; social and sexual aspects of, Chap. XXIII; in the ghotul, 334ff., 619; early, 368, 420, 483, 521; after pre-marital pregnancy, 96f.; games, 561f.; statistics, 699f.; vocabulary, 712f.; illustrated, Plates XXII–XXX
Married men in the ghotul, 369f.
Masks, 516, 569, 583; illustrated, Plates XCVIII, XCIX, CII, CIII
Massage, 104, 376, 378, 432; illustrated, LXXIX
Masturbation, 279, 439, 448f., 660
Meals, 35
Medicine, 209ff.
Mediums, 201
Megalithic culture, 158ff., 672
Melanesia, dormitories in, 271f.
Membership and rules of ghotul, 252ff.
Menhirs, 60, 158ff., 191, 204, 670, 678ff.; illustrated, Plate XXXI
Menstruation, generally described, 80ff.; dangers of, 25, 27, 42f., 85, 367, 420f., 440, 488, 660; and conception, 72, 462; rules, 81; and polygyny, 82; taboos, 83, 635; of sago-palm, 55; and segregation hut, 81, 318; and dreams, 84, 477, 487; and Pendrawandin, 84f., 178f.; and magic, 83, 203, 463; of moon, 260; origin of, 424ff.
Meriah, sacrifice, 229; game, 563
Migrations, 20ff.
Milk, Muria attitude to, 36
Missionary policy criticised, 323, 662f.
Modesty, 404
Moon, origin of, 258ff.; riddle, 593
Mouse-game, 569
Mother-son relationship, 323f., 643
Murder, 195, 467, 645, 657
Music, character of Muria, 523
Mythology of sex, 423ff.

Name-giving, 22ff.
Necklaces, 381ff.; illustrated, 136, 353, 375, 403
Netturgundi, song of, 461.; son of Lingo, 225
New Eating ceremonies, 29f., 160, 631, 651
New Guinea, dormitories in, 271f.
Nicknames, 74, 585
Nightmare, 482
Ningo, see Lingo
Nudity, in bathing, 392; in dancing, 448, 583

Oaths, 647, 658
Obscenity, 129, 136, 139, 583ff.
Oil, 38, 77, Chap. V *passim*, 107, 140, 149, 161, 164; 386, 542
Old age, 141f.
Older girls, marriage with, 369
Omens, 42, 86f., 110, 127, 161, 265, 293, 325f., 362, 475ff., 481, 485
Ondar Muttal, 169ff., 204
'Oranges and Lemons', 564; illustrated, Plate CXXV
Ordeal, 235ff., 262f., 311f.
Organization of tribe, 398ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Origin legends of divination, 36f.; tiger, 42; clans, 62ff.; tattoo, 77f.; gods, 173ff.; magic, 202f., world, 257ff.; copulation, 258, 421f.; Sun and Moon, 258ff.; fire, 262f.; liquor, 263f.; death, 264f.; ghotul, 252ff., Chap. IX *passim*; tobacco, 308, 394
Owls, folklore of, 204, 476

Parents, attitude of, 324, 648
Parvati, 42, 230, 516
Peacocks, 40, 190, 196, 223, 249, 494; name from, 695
Penalties, tribal, 66, 82
Pendrawandin, 38, 84f., 178, 193; priest of, illustrated, Plate XXXVII
Penis, legends about, 425ff.
Perversions, 279, 647
Phallic symbols, 196f., 223, 229, 239, 272, 302, 308, 330f., 388, 434; illustrated, 330, 331, 337
Philippines, dormitories in, 277ff.
Pirutries, 60ff.
Physical characters of Muria, 19f.
Physiological paternity, knowledge of, 460f.
Pigeon, carved, 199
Pigs, dedication of, 166, 187, 483; sacrifice of, 36, 49, 54, 184ff., 193, 215f., 218, 220, 225, 312, 434, 481, 495; in love-charm, 447
Placenta, 54, 71, 73
Polygyny, 82, 442, 629ff., 700
Polynesia, dormitories in, 276ff.
Possessiveness, 344f., 637
Pot of the Departed, described, 158; 23, 57, 71, 88, 127, Chap. VI *passim*, 185, 631
Poverty of the Muria, 23, 392
Prayers, 79, 139, 212, 509, 531
Precedence, order of, in ghotul, 354ff.
Pregnancy, premarital, 278, 415, 464ff.; marriage after, 623
Premarital sexual freedom, 269, 278, 284, Chap. XVII
Premature ejaculation, 443, 635
Priestess, 58
Priesthood, 199ff., 211f.; training for, 648
Primal scene, 319ff.
Promiscuity, 270f., 278, 534, 545, 659
Prostitution, 629, 647
Proverbs, 32, 51, 76, 141, 142, 173, 183, 315, 398, 399, 416
Punishments in ghotul, 103f., 302, 340, 363, Chap. XV
Purification of village, 218f., 631; illustrated, Plate LXXXIX

Quarrels, 315f., 389, 400, 639, 654

Rai Linga, see Linga
Rain, means of obtaining, 184, 261
Rainbow, 261f., 263
Rape, 656
Rasp, musical, 516, 527f.; illustrated, 529
Reciprocity between dormitories, 290, 366ff., 509
Reformers, 521; illustrated, Plate CVI
Relatives, in ghotul, 336; vocabulary, 713
Religion, Muria, Chap. VII; and the ghotul, Chap. XXIV; vocabulary, 713f.
Rheumatism, remedy for, 213
Rice-beer, 52, 204, 263; riddle, 597
Rice-husking game, 559, 562; illustrated, Plate CXXVIII
Riddles, 33, 37f., 46, 49, 50, 179, 260, 381, 386, 388, 394, 422, 461, 524, 533, 585ff., 591ff.
Rings, 88, 106f., 114, 139, 153, 160, 168, 216, 220, 290 307, 363, 367, 383, 496, 578, illustrated, 88
River, legends of crossing a, 20f., 62f.; origin of, 178
Root game, 566; illustrated, Plates CXXX, CXXXI
Round games, 576f.
Round worms, remedy for, 212

Sago-palm, 53ff., 146, 187, 385; in dreams, 477; vocabulary, 711f.; illustrated, Plate XI
Saja (*Terminalia tomentosa*, W. & R.), 149, 151, 153, 157, 161, 164, 189, 194, 211, 219, 243, 247, 253, 257, 393, 394, 462, 494, 652, 717
Salutation, ceremonial, 253f., 373f., 500, 541, 596
Scandal, 339, 350f., 400, 462, 670
Schools, 402; effect of, illustrated, Plate V
Scoptophilia, 448
Secret language, 543
Segregation huts, 81ff.
Semar (*Bombax malabaricum*, D.C.), 255, 493ff., 718
Separable soul, 475f.
Service, marriage by, 341, 467, 617, 625
Sex, Muria's attitude to, Chap. XVI, 663
Simplification of Muria grammar, 686
Sin, 145
Sleeping-mat, 396f.; illustrated, 397, Plate LXXXII
Small-pox, 145, 147, 257
Smell, sense of, 432
Snake-bite, 71
Sorcerer, 60, 204, 205
Soul, idea of the, 144ff.; and dreams, 475ff.; of an animal, 571
Spacing of confinements, 70f.
Sparrow, in remedy for epilepsy, 212; in love-charm, 442
Spinning-top, 76, 536f.; illustrated, 76
Spitting, in marriage ceremony, 129; in Uraon dormitory, 294; illustrated, Plate XXIX
Split-string instrument, 530
Stars, 260
Statistical inquiry, 699f.
Stealing, attitude to, 72, 288, 330, 657

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

000

Sterility, 76, 203; interval, Chap. XVII
Stilts, 184, 201, 651f.; vocabulary, 715; illustrated, Plates CXLVIII, CXLIX
Substitutes for menhirs, 164f.
Suicide, 71, 342f., 416, 467, 624, 643
Sumatra, dormitories in, 277
Sun, origin of, 208, 258ff.; riddle, 593
Supreme Being, 180f. See Bhagavan and Mahapurub
Swarm of bees, lucky, 37
Swing, magician's, 197, 205, 223, 240, 514; illustrated, 197, Plate XXXV
Symbols in marriage ceremony, 137ff.

Taboos, on women, 27, 29, 57, 147, 269f., 273; and clan rules, 66f.; on pregnant woman and her husband, 71, 220; after birth of a child, 72; after tattooing, 79; during menstruation, 81ff.; during a wedding, 138; and Pot of Departed, 158; on a Kaser-Gaita, 200; during Pus Kolang dances, 487; during Chait Dandar dances, 497; between betrothed couples, 616, 620; on stilt-walking, 651
Tallur Muttai, 25, 42, 54, 78, 132, 149, 175, 181ff., 203, 215, 257, 263, 376, 495, 516. See also Earth Mother
Tattooing, 76ff.; vocabulary, 715
Taxation, in ghotul, 336
Temples, 195ff.
Temptation of Lingo, 237ff.
Thakur Deo, 487, 649
Thief games, 563
Threshing-floor, 28f.; illustrated, Plate X
Three Worlds, 145f., 250f., 264, 312f.
Thunder, 260f., 531
Tickling, 170, 432
Tigers, created by Tallur Muttai, 42; as totem, 61, 64, 66; omens from, 71; and breach of taboo, 85; and Dulha Deo, 98, 184; rites after death caused by, 143, 147, 167ff.; in magic, 205; in legend, 240; transformation into, 368; in dreams, 482; Lingo's, 486f.
Titles in ghotul, 186, 234, 352ff., 400, 606, 691ff.
Tobacco, taboo on use of, 72; symbol of sexual congress, 101, 435; distribution of, 250, 376; origin of, 308, 394; generally described, 394; pouches, 396; and love-charm, 442; ceremonial offerings of, 494; name derived from, 695; pouches illustrated, 311, 379, 384, 395, 401, 403, 409, 411, 413, 415, 417
Toleration, 416
Tombs, 165; illustrated, Plate XXXIV
Tortoise, 631., 273
Toys, 485, 556; illustrated, 76, 515, Plates C, CXLVI
Trance, ecstatic, 172, 299
Transvestism, 131, 448ff.; illustrated, 449, 453, Plate LXXXV
Traps, 41, 495, 173; illustrated, Plate XIII
Travancore, the dormitory in, 315f.
Trial marriage, 279
Tumescence, the approach to, 430ff.
Twins, 72
Types of ghotul, Chap. XI

Umbilical cord, 71, 140, 190f., 220, 243f.
Unmarried dead, fate of the, 143, 420
Urination, 294, 394, 400, 423, 693; riddle, 595
Usarengi Palli, story of, 249ff.

Vagina Dentata legend, 423f.
Value of ghotul, 661ff.
Venereal disease, 213f., 655
Village, plan of, 23f., vocabulary, 710f.
Village Mother, 49, 81, 167, 182, 195, 211, 218, 305, 332, 480, 487, 496; litter of, illustrated, Plate XXXVIII
Visits between ghotul, 366ff.

Warangal, 20f.
Water, ceremonial pouring of, at wedding, 125, 134, 139; at funeral, 153; at ghotul marriage, 334; and purification after adultery, 634
Water Maiden (Yer Kanyang), 49, 84, 132, 152, 190, 204, 215, 220, 261, 319, 462, 476, 477, 481, 532, 634
Widowers, position of, 370
Widows, marriage of, 97, 640
Wind, breaking, 400f., 437, 693
Witchcraft, 49f., 56, 78, 107, 127, 144, 151f., 154, 167, 192, 202f., 211, 247, 367, 450, 477, 532, 624
Witch hunt, 192ff.
Work, division of, 27f.; importance of, 400, 622, 631, 641
Wounds, remedy for, 213, 652

Xylophone, 189, 526

Yaws, 148, 213
Year, the Muria's, 31f.
Yer Kanyang, see Water-Maiden
Younger brother, position of, 68f., 97, 233, 237ff.

Zoophilia, 447

[For comparison of the ghotul (communal dwelling) and its features, with those in other cultures, see category 116, pp. 269-320.]

/For travel by ghotul members in the form of ceremonial dancing
" expeditions" to neighboring villages, see category 116, pp. 485-520/

2: Elwin
883

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[For information on the ghotul and the activities of its members, see category 116, pp. 269-682.]

/Materials referring to crime and crime statistics will be found in Category 116, pp. ix-x, xxv-xxvi, 35-45, 50-51, 53-54, 62, 68-78, 82, 85-102, 104, 106-110, 112-114, 116-119, 121-130, 135, 137-165, 167-171, 173-179, 184, 191-193, 217, and 222-245.--Analyst/

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MARIA MURDER AND SUICIDE

BY

VERRIER ELWIN

WITH A FOREWORD BY

W. V. GRIGSON

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A Siraha treats his patient at Tikanpal; medical treatment led to several murders

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FOREWORD

IT is a privilege to me to write this foreword to Verrier Elwin's book *Maria Murder and Suicide* and to be associated in this way with a man whose great work for the aboriginal of Middle India has made his name known wherever two or three are gathered together to think of India's duty towards her oldest inhabitants, the men of the malaria-belt, the forests and the hills. To his social and philanthropic work he has now added sympathetic and revealing anthropological work of the first order, recording while there is yet time to do so the still distinctive ways of life and culture of many sections of India's twenty-five and a half million tribal population. His researches are providing a scientific basis not merely for social work among the tribes, but above all for the great and complex task of administering the tribal areas in the tribesman's interests. The programme of any wise administration for these areas should be not only to enable the tribesman to hold his own in the world without losing his way of life, his virtues, his dancing, his songs and his laughter, but also, once he has been secured freedom from fear, from want, and from interference, to make his own special contribution to the free India that is to be. That contribution may well be a restoration to the drab village life of the plains of freedom from the puritan and the kill-joy, and the revival of what Mr Elwin in his pamphlet *The Aboriginals*[1] has referred to as the 'art of recreation, an art which is lamentably absent from the ordinary Indian village'. That pamphlet is commended to all who desire to get a clear and sane picture of the whole tribal problem; it states both the creed of one of the finest and best-equipped minds now at work upon the problem, and the case for the scientific approach to it.

TO one who has served in Bastar State it must always be a pleasure to read or write anything that will carry his mind back to that beautiful land and its peoples or

[1] *Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs*, No. 14 (Bombay, 1942).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

contribute to the greater understanding of them. 'Pleasure' may seem inappropriate of a book whose title contains the words 'murder' and 'suicide': but it is the fundamental purpose of the book that should be borne in mind, its desire to reveal the psychology underlying the 'crimes' of violence committed by one of the finest and least spoiled of Indian tribes, and the circumstances that drive its men and women to suicide. Such work can only lead to a wiser handling of the aboriginal accused by the judge or magistrate; and it raises acutely the question of punishment and the prison treatment of tribal convicts. The opening thirty-six pages of the book moreover give a vivid summary of Maria life, even in so short a compass revealing various facets that escaped me in the field-work and enquiries which preceded the writing of my book *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*.[1] In my preface to that book I expressed the hope that other books would be written about the Maria, correcting and supplementing my statements by more systematic field-work and that my book would tempt trained workers to visit the ethnologically unexplored lands of Bastar and Jeypore. Mr Elwin will agree, I think, that it was talks with me that moved him to visit Bastar, where like many others he has fallen a victim to the beauty and interest of that State.

This short book is the firstfruits of his Bastar researches; although, its subject being what it is, it cannot compare for delight and scientific thrill with his forthcoming *magnum opus, The Muria and their Ghotul*, to me it is of particular interest, both because I was myself the Sessions Judge who tried twelve[2] of the hundred cases summarized in the Appendix and because the book is founded, independently, on an idea I long entertained of a similar book based on an examination of all available sessions trial and other records available from 1915 to 1930. I still have the notes which I prepared on some of these cases, including all those dealt with in this book for the years 1920-30 and fourteen others; and I summarized my general experiances of murder in Bastar in pages 94-5 and 226 of *The Maria Gonds*

[1] Oxford University Press, 1938.

[2] Nos 6, 7, 12, 26, 27, 28, 29, 45, 57, 62, 73 and 81; the murder in No 69 also took place in my time but the trial came after I had left Bastar as the accused had absconded.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

of Bastar. To this study of previous records I was led by my realization, after a year's experience of original and appellate work in Bastar, of the great difficulty of applying to the decision of charges against tribal offenders the general practice as to the appreciation of evidence, court procedure, the assessment of guilt and the imposition of penalties laid down in the commentaries on the Evidence Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Penal Code, all of which had been imposed on the tribal and other areas of Bastar, as of the whole Central Provinces (in which Bastar State was then included), without any thought that any section in these enactments, framed for sophisticated India on European models, might perhaps not suit every part of India. I should have been saved many moments of anxiety as to the justice of my decisions and as to the whole trend of criminal justice in the State had I had at my command so full a study of murder and suicide as Mr Elwin's book, which not only analyses so many actual cases but also links up the results with the conclusions of standard works on crime, penology, psychology and ethnology.

I can almost completely endorse Mr Elwin's analysis of the general causes of Maria murders, though the concept in Chapter XI of fatigue as a cause of crime is one of those things that is startlingly revealing, but has only to be stated to be appreciated as true. Moreover I should perhaps plead guilty to having given currency to what he speaks of (p. 42) as 'the myth that landa rice-beer is the most important cause of homicide', by writing that 'about half the Bison-horn murders are committed in landa intoxication'.[1] His figures on page 139 show that only 13 of his 100 murder cases were influenced by landa and 6 by other intoxicant liquors. In the further 14 cases of which I still have notes landa intoxication caused 2 murders, and other intoxicants 3. In the earlier years of Bastar's political association with the Central Provinces drunkenness was probably an even more frequent cause of crime, or perhaps a symptom rather than a cause, since often landa or liquor was taken by persons brooding over grievances, and thinking of violent action. It may be of interest to classify these 14 murders

[1] *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, p. 94.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

114 according to Mr Elwin's categories. Apart from the five
674 intoxication murders, two were prompted by belief that crops had been bewitched, one was a fatigue crime and one was caused by a dispute as to property, one by resentment over being dunned for a debt of one anna and one by a quarrel over failure to repair the skins of a drum broken by a friend who had borrowed it, while three were the result of conjugal infidelity. There were three cases in which the villagers agreed to conceal the crime to avoid the trouble of police and court investigation. The means employed included assault with an axe, a sword, a fencing pole, a stick, a wooden stool and fists, kicking, throttling, shooting with bow and arrow, twisting of neck and stabbing with a knife. In one case the accused committed suicide to avoid the disgrace attendant on the revival of an old scandal caused by his son's association with a blacksmith girl whose murder he and the villagers had hushed up for three years.

114 Of witchcraft and magic as factors in crime Mr Elwin
776 has written fully in Chapter V, and has illustrated at page 61
784 a typical clan-god, Anga Pen or Pat Deo (log-god), sometimes used to detect witches in the manner described at page 17, while at pages 185-6 he deals with the Maria view that a witch or a sorcerer should be killed. That view is undoubtedly widely held outside tribal circles, and the power of tribal log-gods to detect black magic is equally strongly believed in by Hindu and Muslim subjects of the State. The reaction of tribal beliefs and practices on the local Hindu rites and ceremonies is very marked, and an example of this is the way in which Raja Bhairon Deo, the great-grandfather of the present Maharaja of Bastar, installed in Jagdalpur a log-god which was either a copy of a famous log-god from Narayanpur in the north-west of the State, or, according to its present Halba Pujari, was brought by a former ruler from Dongar, the old capital, to Narayanpur, and shifted thence by Raja Bhairon Deo. This god is now the Pat Deo of Bastar *par excellence*, and four ceremonies are held in his honour during the Maharaja's Dassara celebrations. His witch-finding function strongly survives, and I well remember my amused astonishment when in 1927 during an inspection of the accounts of the Jagdalpur Temples managed by the State Court of Wards I found

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

that the villagers around Jagdalpur frequently requisitioned his services for this purpose, paying for them a fee of Rs 5 into the State Treasury. When I wondered whether by lending the log-god the Court of Wards had not been accessory to the killing or beating of witches, the Pujari thus explained the god's conformity to modern law: 'Pat Deo is worshipped to save men from *bhut* and *pret*, and detects *bhut*, *churel* and witches. If a village needs his detective services, the villagers pay into the Treasury a fee of Rs 5, and then the Manager lets me take the god out. I walk behind Pat Deo, who is carried on the shoulders of four men, none of whom must come from the village which needs his help. Starting from the east side, we take him round the village widdershins, and then enter the village, Pat Deo himself impelling the bearers and then knocking against the house where the evil is hidden or against the actual magician. He will not leave the house till the guilty one comes out. Then in these days the offender kneels before Pat Deo and cries for forgiveness, which is given before Pat Deo goes home; he is not even outcasted now. In my grandfather's time he would have been set on an ass with his face towards the tail and taken in procession round the village; his head would then have been shaved, his front teeth pulled out by a Ghasia, and his hair and teeth buried in an ant-hill, while he would have been excommunicated and driven out of his village. They pulled out his teeth to stop him using them to suck blood and because without them he could not pronounce his spells.' One may be pardoned for scepticism as to the affair even in modern days being closed with Pat Deo kindly forgiving the magician!

This fear of magic as the source of illness and all troubles is strong in many parts of India. Here in Hyderabad belief in the power of *bhanamatti* or black magic is widespread, even among some persons of the highest education and social standing. A detailed investigation was made in 1916 by Mr L. B. Goad, an experienced officer of the Indian Police, then in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department. His conclusion was that *bhanamatti* was so absolute a scourge in parts of Hyderabad and so utilized as a form of blackmail by its practitioners that special measures were

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

needed to root them out. The evils which he found to have been inflicted on the victims in a series of cases investigated included loss of consciousness, barking and howling like jackals, appearance of black marks on various parts of the body, giddiness with great abdominal pain, setting of the jaws whilst the victim beat the air and ground with hands and feet, immodest and uncontrollable dancing like a prostitute, ape-like antics, violent laughing and hysteria, clothes dropping off the body, vomiting and spitting out of stones, gravel, marking-nuts, needles, thorns and lemons, food turning into excreta, loss of speech, cessation of menstrual periods or their continuance for weeks and months on end, and many others. His report concluded: 'I trust that this report of mine may have the desired effect of proving that the existing state of affairs in those tracts in which *bhanamatti* is prevalent requires special measures to deal with the present evil. If this is not done the populace will take the law into their own hands, as they have done in more than one instance in the recent past, and as they threatened to do when the District Magistrate of Bidar took action in Bidar City with a commendably strong and firm hand last autumn. Having personally witnessed the dreadful trials which women and girls have to suffer under the scourge of *bhanamatti*, I should not hesitate, did the power lie in my hands, to extend the operations of the Criminal Tribes Act to every cowardly blackguard who was known to practise the vile cult of *bhanamatti*.' Even now the Hyderabad District Police retain the services of an official versed in the art of treating the victims of *bhanamatti*. Most of its practitioners are persons of the untouchable castes, but the victims in the 1916 Bidar 'epidemic' of *bhanamatti* included persons of all ranks and professions, even lawyers. Murders of suspected practitioners[1] continue in Hyderabad. Is it to be wondered at that this fear of magic is so common a cause of murder amongst the Maria? It is after all not so long since in Great Britain an Act of Parliament passed in 1736 finally stopped prosecutions for alleged witchcraft.[2] Mr Elwin has pointed out on page 80

[1] Two were reported in the *Times of India* of 5 May 1933.

[2] A useful brief summary of British witchcraft history and folklore is given in Chapter X of *English Folklore* by Christina Hole (London, 1940).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

that the European superstitions as to crime go far beyond the superstitions of the Maria, and mentions in particular the 'Hand of Glory' ideas; it may be of interest to reproduce an English recipe for making, using and counteracting a Hand of Glory given by Francis Grose in *A Provincial Glossary, with a collection of Local Proverbs and Popular Superstitions*, published in 1787[1]:—

> Take the hand left or right of a person hanged, and exposed on the highway; wrap it up in a piece of a shroud, or winding-sheet, in which let it be well squeezed, to get out any small quantity of blood that may have remained in it; then put it into an earthen vessel, with zimat, saltpetre, salt, and long pepper, the whole well powdered; leave it fifteen days in that vessel; afterwards take it out, and expose it to the noon-tide sun in the dog-days till it is thoroughly dry: and if the sun is not sufficient, put it into an oven heated with fern and vervain: then compose a kind of candle with the fat of a hanged man, virgin wax, and sisame of Lapland. The Hand of Glory is used as a candlestick to hold this candle when lighted. Its properties are, that wheresoever anyone goes with this dreadful instrument, the persons to whom it is presented will be deprived of all power of motion. . . . The Hand of Glory would cease to take effect, and thieves could not make use of it, if the threshold of the door of the house by which they might enter, were anointed with an unguent composed of the gall of a black cat, the fat of a white hen, and the blood of a screech-owl; which mixture must necessarily be prepared during the dog-days.

Particular attention should be paid to what Mr Elwin has to say in Chapter XVII about the aboriginal prisoner. Whether in Bastar, the Central Provinces or in Hyderabad, I have never felt happy over the subjection of the aboriginal convict to ordinary jail life. Seventeen of the persons convicted in the hundred cases of the Appendix are shown as having died in jail, though, as jails in India go, the Jagdalpur jail was always good. Mr Elwin has summarized the reasons for the Maria's hatred of jail life, and all who have to handle the aboriginal convict should read, mark, learn and inwardly

[1] I owe the quotation to my brother Geoffrey Grigson's anthology *The Romantics* (London, 1943), p. 96.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

digest his words. I have always felt that Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code, which prescribes the penalty for murder, is inadequate, in the case of aboriginals, in its recognition of degrees of murder; transportation for life, i.e. life imprisonment, even as reduced by modern practice as to the periodic review of sentences and earned remission, is an intolerable punishment for the average Maria murderer whose crime is committed in a sudden fit of anger and is unpremeditated. Fortunately in the old days such Sessions sentences had to be confirmed by the Political Agent who could also act on the Judge's recommendation to reduce the sentences in the exercise of the royal clemency; this accounts for the frequent reductions of sentences shown in the Appendix as having been ordered in appeal. Let us hope that the new combined High Court for the Eastern States will take as realistic and humane a view of this as the political officers have done, and in their handling of the aboriginal criminal shed the preconceptions and prejudices of the bar and bench of 'civilized' India. The same approach to the imprisonment of the aboriginal is needed in less heinous cases also, and the principle should be, whenever possible, not to send the aboriginal to jail—at least until there are special jails for aboriginals; too often used the Central Provinces jails to be full of unfortunate aboriginal illicit distillers or smugglers. The Central Provinces courts have now begun to realize the undesirability of jailing aboriginals and the need of discretion in inflicting fines proportionate to their slender means; but few policemen and magistrates realize the social cost to the released convict or the acquitted prisoner of the *hathkari dand* (handcuff penalty), and the cost of the ceremony for purging him from the defilement of the jail or lock-up described in pages 195-9. I have always regretted that I was never able in Bastar to experiment with the idea that came to me towards the end of my service there, of a village or camp jail, such as is suggested in the concluding chapter of this book. I see nothing impossible in this, nor in letting the aboriginal prisoner have his singing and dancing, observe his festivals and propitiate his gods; even after a time he might, on promotion to a separate personal hut and holding, be allowed the company of his wife. Agriculture and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

horticulture would be the ideal occupations in such a jail village, for the average aboriginal remains an agricultural novice.

As to the death sentence there is little to add to Mr Elwin's remarks in Chapter XVIII. Murder and violence were far more frequent in Bastar in the past than they have been since 1910, the Rebellion year, and at one time executions were carried out publicly in Pargana headquarters for deterrent reasons. This possibly had some effect on the vendetta and the bully. My own practice was to impose the death sentence only in cases of premeditated murder or murder with robbery. The very formidable and steady increase of murders and attempted murders in Hyderabad State ever since the virtual suspension of capital punishment is a warning against removal of the fear of death. And though death may be asked for by an occasional Maria in preference to long years of prison, its finality and grimness are realised even by them, and recognized at times as the only appropriate penalty. This happened when I sentenced Marvi Aita of Paknar (H. Case No 45) to death. The whole trial was impressive. I held it at Paknar, travelling there in the first motor car to use a newly made forest road and followed by a bus bringing assessors, counsel, accused and police escort; we were held up in the few villages through which we passed so that the *perma* and elders might sacrifice cocks and sprinkle blood on the car and bus wheels. The accused had been the village bully, and after the trial, which had added drama from taking place on the actual spot where Aita had deliberately shot Kamlu Masa dead with an arrow as he and his helper neighbours were bringing home his kodon harvest, when I had pronounced sentence, the entire village filed before me to touch my feet in gratitude for freeing them from the perpetual menace of Aita's bullying, and it was then only that I learnt that he had been wrongly acquitted by a former Diwan on a previous murder charge and had been guilty also of yet another killing which the village had been afraid to report.

Let me conclude this Foreword by warmly recommending the book to all whose duties bring them into contact with the aboriginal, though it is so to speak only a study

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

for that full-dress portrait of law and crime in tribal India that is so long overdue. It should also serve to show the ethnologist the wealth of valuable material to be gleaned from the case-records of the Indian courts. The illustrations are a delight, and our warm thanks are due alike to the author and the publishers.

W. V. GRIGSON

Hyderabad, Deccan
20 October 1943

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CONTENTS

		Page
	PREFACE	xix
I	CRIME IN ABORIGINAL INDIA	1
II	THE BISON-HORN MARIA	11
III	THE STATISTICS OF VIOLENT CRIME	37
IV	THE CAUSES OF VIOLENT CRIME	50
V	THE CAUSES OF CRIME: WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC	60
VI	THE CAUSES OF CRIME: MARITAL INFIDELITY ..	81
VII	THE CAUSES OF CRIME: THE DESIRE TO ELIMINATE	92
VIII	THE CAUSES OF CRIME: DISPUTES ABOUT PROPERTY	98
IX	CRIME IN THE RELATIONSHIPS OF FAMILY LIFE ..	104
X	THE CAUSES OF CRIME: ALCOHOL	131
XI	THE CAUSES OF CRIME: FATIGUE	143
XII	THE CRIME OF REVENGE	147
XIII	THE CRIMES OF WOMEN	161
XIV	CRIMINAL LUNACY	167
XV	THE HOMICIDE'S BEHAVIOUR AFTER HIS CRIME ..	173
XVI	THE ATTITUDE OF SOCIETY	180
XVII	THE ABORIGINAL PRISONER	207
XVIII	CONCLUSION	215

APPENDIXES

I	TABLE OF 100 HOMICIDES	221
II	TABLE OF 50 SUICIDES	246
III	NOTE ON THE INDIAN PENAL CODE	250
	LIST OF AUTHORITIES	252
	GLOSSARY	254
	INDEX	255

MAPS

SKETCH OF SOUTH BASTAR	19
SKETCH OF THE DANTEWARA TAHSIL	28

[p. xvii]

[p. xviii is blank]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Muria

PREFACE

121 This book is a contribution to social anthropology rather than to the study of crime. For many of the tragedies here are not crimes in any intelligible sense, though in our present state of dealing with such matters we treat them as if they were. In the second place, I have naturally approached the subject from the angle that was most familiar to me. I am neither an administrator, a lawyer nor a policeman. In dealing with crime this is a great disadvantage. It is specially so in India where these simple village crimes offer few problems of detection, and where it is impossible to study the general reaction of society through the columns of the daily press or in such revealing impulses of compassion as petitions for reprieve. It is only rarely that anything like a detective problem with clues and counter-clues is set for the police. It is equally rare for interesting points of law to arise during a trial. In the great majority of cases the accused confesses. But this does not mean that these aboriginal crimes have no importance. It is of absorbing sociological and psychological interest to study the reasons that drive unsophisticated primitive men to kill and wound their fellows; and their behaviour afterwards, as well as the conduct of everyone concerned, is of almost equal importance.

184 While I was collecting material for my book *The Muria and their Ghotul*, I was greatly struck by the difference in the incidence of crime between them and the great Maria tribe to the south. For homicide the annual incidence to the million is only 21 among the Muria, while it is 69 among the Bison-horn Maria; for suicide it is 22 against 53. In the last 10 years there have only been 21 Muria murders, and a large number of these have occurred either on the boundaries of the State or in the Mardapal Pargana in the extreme south of the Muria area, bordering on the Maria territory. The Muria differ from the Maria in the quite extraordinary absence of jealousy among them, in their lack of attachment to property and personal possessions, in their very strong civic and social instincts, in their gentleness and kindness. I believe that this difference is largely due to the

[p. xiv]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Muria

existence among the Muria of the Ghotul or village dormitory, in which the boys and girls of the tribe grow up from childhood under a high degree of discipline and are trained in the tribal virtues. A system of what is practically pre-nuptial sexual communism teaches them from an early age the impropriety of jealousy. The habit of sharing everything all through childhood and youth in the dormitory weakens their individualistic attachment to personal property. The result is that several of the main causes of murder only lightly press upon them. The Bison-horn Maria probably had a similar dormitory club at one period and traces of it may still be found today. But it no longer exists as a social force, and the result is that the Maria—compared to their northern neighbours—grow up passionate and jealous, strongly attached to individual goods, undisciplined and revengeful. The Muria do not seem to consume any less alcohol than the Maria. Indeed the consumption of mahua spirit per head in the Muria area is higher than in the south. The Maria, however, drink more rice-beer, and there are many more cases of illicit distillation detected among them.

When my friend Mr A. N. Mitchell was Administrator of Bastar, he was troubled by this problem, and one day in conversation about it, one of us—I forget which—suggested that I might make some sort of survey of Maria homicides from my own independent angle. Mr Mitchell, with his unique zeal for everything affecting the life and welfare of aboriginals, gave me all possible facilities for my enquiry, and I was thus able not only to study official documents but also to visit the jail and discuss matters with many criminals.

The first task in my enquiry was to get at the records. I decided to confine myself to the exclusive study of the Bison-horn Maria, and here we were immediately faced by our first difficulty which was to decide who were to be included under this name. The name has come to be used in Bastar and in anthropology as a result of Mr W. V. Grigson's memorable book, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*. But it is not, of course, a word that is used by the people of themselves. Many of them now do not call themselves Maria at all. At the 1941 Census, thousands of Maria returned themselves as Maria, because they thought it sounded more respectable. Many others in the south have for some time

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

past taken the title of Dorla. Others again are known as Koya, and a few call themselves Gond. When I was in Konta, the very wild Maria there said, 'We are not Maria. That is the name of the uncivilized fellows in Dantewara'. When I was in Dantewara, the equally wild Maria there indignantly rejected the old name which, they said, was only properly given to the savages of Konta. The expression 'Bison-horn Maria' is an obvious linguistic makeshift. Another name for the tribe is Dandami Maria. But I have never heard this used by the people themselves, and many do not know what it means. The name 'Bison-horn Maria' is derived from the tribe's custom of using a magnificent head-dress of bison-horns for their marriage dances, and possibly 'Tallaguda Maria' or even 'Sing Maria' (an expression in actual use) would preserve both the descriptiveness of the title and linguistic propriety. But for the time being I have continued to use the very convenient term, Bison-horn Maria, and throughout this book it will be understood that, wherever the word 'Maria' is used without qualification, it is to the Bison-horn and not the Hill variety of the tribe that I refer.

It will be evident, however, that official records, which are not concerned with scientific classification, were not likely to preserve these nice distinctions between one tribe and another, and I was at first provided with a very large number of files, many of which had nothing to do with the Bison-horn Maria at all. I think it is not unlikely that the bad reputation of this tribe for violence is, to some extent, due to the fact that a number of people who do not belong to it are included when statistics are compiled. However, at last, after much sifting and sorting, I found that I had a collection of 103 records of Bison-horn Maria homicides covering the years 1921 to 1941. During this period there must have been nearly 250 such cases altogether, but some of the files had been eliminated and others for one reason or another were not available. However, 103 was a very fair sample. For convenience I omitted the last 3 cases, and was thus left with a set of 100 taken entirely at random, distributed throughout the period under review and taken from every part of the area.

It was rather more difficult to get records of suicide, for

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

127 these were not kept at the headquarters of the State, but
121 distributed in the police stations and many of them had been eliminated. But the State Superintendent of Police called in as many aboriginal files as could be found, and again after much sifting I found myself with exactly 50 unselected Bison-horn Maria suicide records. These extended over a period of 10 years.

114 Between 1935 and 1942 I made many tours in this enchanting land among these enchanting people. On the earlier tours I was accompanied by my friend Mr Shamrao Hivale whose amazing sympathy and insight helped me to catch my first vision of Maria culture. Later I had the support of my wife who, being herself a Gond, was able to get quickly in touch with the people and immediately established a friendly atmosphere. Particularly in the later tours I tried to see as many scenes of violence as possible, to talk to released convicts and to discover the general attitude of a village towards any crime that had been committed within its boundaries. In Arampur I stood beside the still warm ashes of the ritually-cremated clothes of Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged in jail. At Khutepal, I watched Oyami Masa's children playing on the very floor once stained by the blood of his murdered wife. In the forest near Jabeli
[211] I had a clearing made so that I could photograph the carved pillar erected in memory of a famous murderer. In Rewali I was visited by a ferocious-looking youth who had twice stood on trial for his life and had twice preserved it. Here too I talked with Hemla Bakka who killed his wife for infidelity and was now unable to get another. In Doriras I saw the grave of the murdered Boti which had been desecrated by
[764] Ghasia for the sake of the purse of money which had been buried to help the dead man on his journey to the other world. In the same village I visited the home of Kawasi Borga then serving a life sentence, and talked to his fine sons and his sad pathetic wife.

124 Later I spent many hours in the Jagdalpur Jail talking to Maria who were serving terms of life-imprisonment for homicide. Some of them were as informative as the limits of their psychology allowed, for it must always be remembered that aboriginals are not accustomed to discussing those matters which are of special interest to anthropologists. Other

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

prisoners clearly suspected some trick and told me very little. On the whole I was impressed by the great sadness of their life, even though in the jail they are well and kindly treated. Most of them, I think, felt that an inexplicable tragedy had befallen them. They did not feel like criminals. Their lives had been destroyed by a capricious destiny.

It was naturally more difficult to get information about the suicides, for, in the nature of the case, the person of most interest could not be present to tell his story. Relatives also and the villagers were more reticent, I thought, in discussing this subject, possibly because they feared that any revelations might lead to further police investigation. But even so I was able to get a certain amount of information about the Maria's attitude to self-murder.

But enquiries among the Maria are never easy. The people say that, as a result of Mr Grigson's investigations when he was writing his book on the tribe, their villages have suffered an invasion of man-eating tigers. In one village where I myself took photographs it was declared afterwards that I had made all the women barren. The Maria are friendly people, and I was able to make many friends among them. But particularly on matters which have a police reference they are naturally inclined to be secretive and prefer to claim ignorance rather than by confiding in the investigator perhaps expose themselves to later difficulties. Moreover, there is undoubtedly throughout aboriginal India a belief that talking about tribal affairs may anger the ancestors of the clan or disturb some godling's peace of mind. It is said of Korava children, members of a criminal tribe in Mysore, that they are taught from infancy to say 'I do not know' in reply to questions put to them.[1] Many Maria adopt the same attitude.

The presence of my wife, whom everyone (incorrectly) regarded as a Maria but who has a Maria name, was of great assistance in removing suspicion, as was the fortunate chance that I always go barefoot in the villages. I learnt later that the Maria believe that one reason why the crops are so poor nowadays is that officials defile Mother Earth by trampling on her with their shoes. 'At first,' they said, 'when anyone

[1] L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes* (Mysore, 1930), Vol. III, p. 612.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

crossed a field in shoes a tiger ate him, but now the god which possessed the tiger only ruins our crops.' Even though I made the human women barren, therefore, I did not injure the fertility of Mother Earth!

I do not suggest that in this book I have discovered anything new. But the transition from a social order where everything was settled by the tribe to a state of affairs where everything is settled by outsiders and nothing at all by the tribe, is of obvious interest. The tragedies described here throw light on many aspects of tribal life, and are specially valuable as indicating what things are emotionally disturbing to the Maria mind. When we read a monograph on a tribe, its whole life is laid out before us. Some things are interesting and exciting to the reader, but it is not always easy to discover what is interesting to the people themselves. Supplementary studies like this help us to appreciate the actual realities of, for example, a polygamous household or the real difficulties of the serving-marriage. The impact of witchcraft on the minds of the people, the extent of their attachment to property, their jealousy and desire for revenge are vividly illustrated here.

The value of such a study as this is not, however, only for the student. As the tribal areas are opened up, and as the aboriginals come more and more into touch with the outside world, it will become ever more essential for administrators and magistrates to understand tribal mentality. It is hard enough sometimes to understand any kind of aboriginal action. There is nothing more baffling than aboriginal crime. The Courts are all too ready to save time and energy by accepting a plea of drunkenness as an explanation of what seems incomprehensible. Undoubtedly a proportion of aboriginal crime, like the crime of civilized people, is due to alcohol. But I do not believe the proportion is large and there is reason to suppose that the plea of drunkenness so frequently put forward is often suggested to the accused by his advisers.

The importance of anthropological knowledge for the proper evaluation of aboriginal crime hardly needs illustration. One of the most difficult things that a Court has to decide in a case of homicide is whether the deed that it is evaluating comes under any of the Exceptions to Section 300 of the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I.P.C. Was the crime premeditated? Was it provoked by a serious and unbearable insult? The difficulty here, which every Sessions Judge admits, is that what seems an extreme provocation to him or the Assessors may hardly be noticed by the aboriginal, and incidents that seem quite trifling to the 'civilised' mind may rouse the Maria or Naga to a fit of homicidal rage. The matter is complicated by the fact that the tribes vary greatly from one to another. The Bison-horn Maria, for example, are passionately concerned about female chastity, and a wife's infidelity is constantly a cause of murder. But in this their Gond and Baiga neighbours to the north have a much lower standard. Love is comparatively free. Divorce is easy and a wife's betrayal is readily compensated by the payment of a small fine. It is obvious, therefore, that a Gond or Baiga who suspects his wife of infidelity is not put to anything like the same degree of provocation as that suffered by a Bison-horn Maria under similar circumstances.

Premeditation may be indicated by tribal customs. The Bison-horn Maria express the spirit of implacable revenge by certain dramatic symbols. They pull out their pubic hairs; they remove a few handfuls of grass from an enemy's roof; they whistle loudly the dreaded *sui* whistle. In any case where an accused is proved to have indulged in one or other of these acts, it may be assumed that his crime was premeditated.

A Bastar tragedy, the murder of Tati Hirme by her deceased husband's younger brother Doga, provides an interesting example of how a knowledge of local custom can explain an otherwise meaningless crime. According to tribal practice a younger brother has a right over his elder brother's widow, a right which extends not only to her person, but to her property. This right Tati Hirme refused to Doga, and there is evidence that for a long time the youth bitterly resented her behaviour. On the day of the tragedy he went to her house and asked her for some tobacco. She refused, and he murdered her.

At first sight here is precisely one of those motiveless crimes which have so often puzzled outside observers. It is true that there was hostility between the parties, but the refusal of a small gift of tobacco was hardly sufficient for so disastrous a result. But in Maria practice to ask a woman

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

682 but in Maria practice to ask a woman
674 for tobacco is a symbolic way of inviting her to sexual inter-
832 course, and when the boy asked his elder brother's widow to have congress with him, he was only demanding his right and when she refused it, he found the provocation, both to his pride and his desire, so great that he killed her.

Research, both by medical science and by anthropology, may in time reveal how far the apparently motiveless homicides of aboriginals can be explained as crimes of exhaustion and fatigue. Again and again a man kills his loved wife in a sudden explosion of temper and for no apparent cause. It is probable that in many cases the real reason is not alcoholic intoxication, but extreme fatigue.

A point that often troubles the Courts is the time-element in cases where provocation is pleaded as an excuse. It is often found that there is a lapse of some hours between the actual incident that gave provocation and the subsequent act of violence. It has too often been held that this lapse of time should deprive the accused of gaining the benefit from Exception 1 of Section 300 of the Indian Penal Code. But there can be little doubt that an aboriginal's intelligence does not work so quickly as that of a more sophisticated person, and even in matters of everyday life it often takes an appreciable time for an idea to take root and effect a result in his mind. Laubscher's analysis of the psychology of the Tembu Negroes of South Africa is of some importance here. The Tembu, he says,

> Is not by nature blood-thirsty, but his aggressive instinctive or pugnacious propensities are excitable, easily roused and explosive. His aggressive libido flows outwards, becomes readily externalized, and sudden impulsive assaults, often fatal, are not uncommon. Careful study of the emotional reactions of the participants in stick fights, of course initially playfully performed for my benefit, has shown me how quickly and explosively the native loses his temper and retaliates with death-dealing blows at his opponent. Fatal blows are only avoided by the defensive skill of the opponent. Aggressive impulses are quickly evoked, although there is no apparent bad feeling after such a stick fight. I came to the conclusion that once an emotional impulse is aroused and the stimulus continues to be present, the native just drifts along with the impulse and exercises little or any inhibitory power, unless this inhibition is brought about by the evocation of another

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

impulse, opposite in aim to the first, such as a fear of consequences, but it must be a fear stimulated by something present at the moment. Resultingly, the intellectual mechanisms of foresight, judgement and self-control are readily submerged by the instinctive impulse.[1]

I have described the two maps given in this book as 'Sketches', for that is what they are. It is in any case difficult to plot the Maria village-area, for many of the larger villages consist of a dozen or so hamlets spread over four or five miles yet all bearing the same name. Moreover, war conditions make it desirable that exact and informative maps should not be prepared at the present time. The reader, therefore, must accept these Sketches as being only rough indications of the location of the more important villages and the general lay-out of the countryside.

I have not burdened these pages with many cross-references. The two Summaries at the end of the book give the names of the murderers and suicides in alphabetical order, the clan-name in each case coming first. The Summary of homicides enables the reader to trace the sentence and subsequent history of each of the main characters in the book and also to see at a glance the entire outline of Maria crime.

My first friend in Bastar was Mr E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., a life-long champion of the aboriginals and the ally of every sincere supporter of their cause. The assistance given by him and Mr A. N. Mitchell was continued by their successor, Mr K. Radhakrishnan, I.C.S. At every stage of my enquiries I had the sympathetic interest of Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, M.B.E. Dr Mitchell has been for many years the Superintendent of the Jail at Jagdalpur and is extremely popular among the prisoners. Every ex-convict with whom I have talked has praised him, and indeed he reminds me of what Dostoeffsky says about the good-natured Russian Prison Governor who treated his men as equals. 'They did not love him, they adored him. I do not remember that they ever permitted themselves to be disrespectful or familiar. On the contrary when he met the Governor the convict's face suddenly lighted up; he smiled largely, cap in hand, even to see him approach.' Another popular figure in the Bastar Jail was Dr

[1] B. J. F. Laubscher, *Sex, Custom and Psychopathology* (London, 1937), p. 362.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

000 Satyanarayan who is believed by the Maria to perform some medical magic to free them from erotic desires. Rai Saheb Niranjan Singh, Assistant Administrator, who himself has tried and sentenced a large number of Maria criminals, threw much light on the social conditions that give rise to crimes in Bastar. To the police I must give a special word of thanks. Instead of resenting the intrusion of an amateur, Mr A. C. Mayberry, M.B.E., State Superintendent, and his staff gave me every possible assistance. Thakur Manbahal Singh particularly gave me information about the psychology of the homicide which revealed his very deep knowledge of the people. To many other policemen, Circle-Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Constables, who aided me in my tours and enquiries, I must express my gratitude. Mr Qudratulla Khan gave me valuable information on Excise matters. Mr Janardhan Joshi and Mr Ramakrishna took great trouble to find records for me, and helped me in every way. Mr S. M. Ishaque's experience of the Maria is unique. He accompanied me on one important tour, and even when lying in great pain in hospital gave me guidance and advice. Mr Q. Huq and Mr M. M. Khirey, who were at the time Tahsildars of Jagdalpur and Dantewara respectively, exerted themselves in every way to assist me in my tours, and greatly encouraged me by their support.

Mr Sampat Singh acted as my interpreter and teacher in Gondi on most of the later tours. His help was quite invaluable. He himself had been present as a clerk at many murder trials, and was often able to expose the real points at issue. I am very grateful for his company and for the intelligence and energy which he put into a difficult and exacting task. Gulabdas, my assistant, who has been under training for many years and can now be regarded as an expert in his particular sphere of enquiry, did excellent exploratory work, and by his affable and insinuating address won the confidence of many Maria and persuaded them to reveal their secrets.

122 Part of the expenses of research were covered by a research grant from Merton College: I owe a heavy debt of gratitude to the Warden and Fellows for their assistance. The actual publication of the book was made possible by the enthusiasm and practical assistance of my friend Mr Jehangir

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

P. Patel. The deeper realities of friendship and alliance are not matters for public acknowledgement: this book is itself a token and a proof of them. Mr Patel's share in it has been complete.

Mr C. R. Hemeon, I.C.S., and Mrs Hemeon read the manuscript and made important comments and suggestions. Mr Hemeon adds to an extensive legal and judicial experience an ardent interest in criminology and Mrs Hemeon's unique gifts of understanding and insight make her the kind of critic that an author prays for.

Mrs Maeve Wood made two beautiful drawings (the Anga Pen and the Bison-horn head-dress) and gave much help in the preparation of the maps and half-tones. Mr R. D. Motafram's ready and expert hand was responsible for the other line-drawings. The picture of the Meriah sacrifices was discovered for me by Mr Evelyn Wood.

To Mr C. R. Gerrard I am specially indebted for the dust-cover which takes the book out into the world with beauty and significance.

Mr W. V. Grigson, I.C.S., first inspired me to visit Bastar and then helped to make it possible for me to stay there. A Foreword from him is peculiarly appropriate: his knowledge and love of Bastar is unprecedented and he himself handled with understanding and justice many of the incidents in this book.

Mr Grigson was succeeded in Bastar by Mr D. R. Rutnam, I.C.S., who established administrative principles which have been of the utmost advantage to the aboriginals and from whom I have learnt much about the mentality of the Maria criminal.

I must not conclude without a word of thanks to the Manager and staff of the India Printing Works who devoted themselves to the task of producing this book with accuracy and despatch; to the staff of Messrs. Wagle who made the half-tones; and to Mr P. N. V. Nathan for his faithful and enthusiastic work on a difficult manuscript.

VERRIER ELWIN

Patanpach,
Mandla District, India
1 July 1942

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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

CHAPTER ONE

CRIME IN ABORIGINAL INDIA

I

Our knowledge of violent crime in aboriginal India is still elementary. Historically the most sensational conflict between a tribe of aboriginals and Government was over the Meriah sacrifices offered by the Khond up to the middle of the last century. An admirable summary of the ideas underlying the sacrifices and the rites accompanying them is given by Frazer (who bases his story on the records of Campbell and Macpherson) in *The Golden Bough*. 'The sacrifices were offered to the earth goddess, and were believed to ensure good crops, and immunity from all diseases and accidents. In particular, they were considered necessary in the cultivation of turmeric, the Khonds arguing that the turmeric could not have a deep red colour without the shedding of blood'.[1]

Infanticide was at one time fairly common among certain aboriginals and has been recorded for, among others, the Irula of the Nilgiri Mountains, the Toda, the Khond and the Kallan. The practices of this last tribe have been described by Thurston.

> It is stated by Orme, on the authority of the Jesuit Father Martin, that the fury of revenge operates so strongly among the 'Colleries' (Kallans) that a man, for a slight affront, has been known to murder his wife and all his children, merely to have the atrocious satisfaction of compelling his adversary to commit like murders in his own family. The former practice of infanticide by the Kallans is dealt with at great length in the Manual of the Madura district, where it is stated, on the authority of the survey account, that 'a horrible custom exists among the females of the Colleries. When a quarrel or dissension arises between them, the insulted woman brings her child to the house of the aggressor, and kills it at her door to avenge herself, although her vengeance is attended with the most cruel barbarity. She immediately thereafter

[1] See Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, (2nd edition), Vol. II, pp. 241 f.; J. Campbell, *A Personal Narrative of Thirteen Years Service amongst the Wild Tribes of Khondistan* (London, 1864); S. C. Macpherson, *Memorials of Service in India* (London, 1865); S. C. Roy, 'Ethnography in Old Official Records', *Man in India*, Vol. II (1922), pp. 78 ff. and other works.

[p.1]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

proceeds to a neighbouring village with all her goods. In this attempt she is opposed by her neighbours which gives rise to clamour and outrage. The complaint is then carried to the head Ambalacaur, who lays it before the elders of the village, and solicits their interference to terminate the quarrel. In the course of this investigation, if the husband finds that sufficient evidence has been brought against his wife that she had given cause for provocation and aggression, he proceeds unobserved by the assembly to his house, and brings one of his children, and, in the presence of witnesses, kills his child at the door of the woman, who had first killed her child at his. By this mode of proceeding he considers that he has saved himself much trouble and expense, which would otherwise have developed on him. This circumstance is soon brought to the notice of the tribunal, who proclaim that the offence committed is sufficiently avenged. But, should this voluntary retribution of revenge not be executed by the convicted person, the tribunal is prolonged to a limited period, generally fifteen days. Before the expiration of that period, one of the children of the convicted person must be killed. At the same time he is to bear all expenses for providing food for the assembly during three days'.[1]

The Wynad Paniyan at one time had a bad reputation and it was not unusual for people to come long distances to engage them in the task of carrying out some more than usually desperate robbery or murder. 'Their mode of procedure, when engaged in an enterprise of this sort, is evidenced by two cases, which had in them a strong element of savagery. On both these occasions the thatched homesteads were surrounded at dead of night by gangs of Paniyans carrying large bundles of rice-straw. After carefully piling up the straw on all sides of the building marked for destruction, torches were, at a given signal, applied, and those of the wretched inmates who attempted to escape were knocked on the head with clubs, and thrust into the fiery furnace'.[2]

The Bhantu were equally savage in their methods.

> If resistance was shown they were merciless; indeed, one particular gang sent to Port Blair had committed over fifty murders in one series of outrages. As they were working against time, cruel and violent methods were often adopted

[1] E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India* (Madras, 1907), pp. 503 ff.
[2] E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), Vol. VI, pp. 69 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

796

Ancient term of Marish Sacrifice at Goomsur, Khondistan
(From J. Campbell, 'A Personal Narrative of Thirteen Years Service', 1864)

[facing p. 2]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

to compel the victims to reveal the hiding-place of their treasure, such as forcing women to sit on burning charcoal. Rape was common. The traditional weapon of attack was a short hard stick, thrown with tremendous force, while the lathi was used for defence. In more recent years, however, guns have been adopted and khaki worn. Having secured their plunder, they buried it immediately in the vicinity to avoid any incriminating evidence and dispersed. In the event of a murder being committed, no serious action is taken, though it is regarded as pap or sin, and if a stranger has been murdered, the murderer distributes gur among the brotherhood. This costs Rs. 1-4-0. Should one of the tribe, however, be murdered the offender must give a feast costing Rs. 101.[1]

The outlook of the criminal tribes on crime is, however, entirely different from that of the ordinary aboriginal. Ananthakrishna Iyer describes the attitude of the Korava, a criminal tribe of Mysore. 'On a careful examination of the ethics of the Korava and allied tribes, it will be found that theft is a sporting method of making a living, and not a crime as understood by the rest of society. To them it is a love of adventure. If a Korava has bad luck and goes to jail, it is a part of his life which must be endured, but he hopes for good luck in his attempts to escape. He believes it right to steal. When a Korava has committed a theft, he sometimes volunteers to help the police in hunting down the culprit and knowing all the facts, puts them off the scent, and the crime goes unpunished'.[2] This could not be given as a description of, for example, the Bison-horn Maria.

These criminal tribes are distributed throughout India and many of them have been carefully studied by police officers.[3] The Thag stranglers were made the subject of a sensational book by Meadows Taylor. But most of these criminal tribes are not really aboriginals, but offshoots of the lower Hindu castes. One of the few real aboriginal criminal tribes was the Pardhan—but their main interest lay in cheating and theft—and today the great majority of them have settled down to a peaceful and law-abiding life. In Assam, Naga head-hunters have advanced to the savagery of modern Europe

[1] C. J. Bonington in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III-B, p. 37.
[2] L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes* (Mysore, 1930), Vol. III, pp. 622 f.
[3] A useful brief account is given in B. S. Hathorwal, *Economic and Social Aspects of Crime in India* (London, 1934).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

Tantia Bhil, a famous dacoit
(From R. V. Russell and Hiralal, 'Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces'—By courtesy of Messrs. Macmillan)

[facing p. 3]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

without the help of either education or parliamentary institutions.

The Bhil at one time were greatly feared for their ferocity, and there were some famous Bhil dacoits. It is said that 'in former times when the Bhils seized a whole herd they sometimes offered a human sacrifice to the Mata of the thieves. They then killed the shepherd near the Mata as a sacrifice. The sacrifice was also conducted in another way. The shepherd was taken to the top of a steep hillock. His legs and arms were tied and he was rolled down the hill. These practices have now been abandoned. A common vow taken in honour of the Mata is to burn seven hills or to burn seven houses. When the grass in the jungle is dry they set fire to it in seven different places so as to destroy as much as possible. These acts are done presumably to obtain help of the Mata or to thank her for the success of a plundering expedition'.[1]

Such behaviour was probably due rather to a reaction against the cruel and savage treatment the Bhil suffered at the hands of the Maratha than to any inborn viciousness in the race. So too the rebellions of the Santal, Munda, Maria and other tribes are evidence not so much of their own lawlessness as of the lawlessness of those who oppressed them and drove them to despair.

II

For in India generally the aboriginals have had a high reputation for their pacific and kindly character. Hutton speaks of 'the natural truthfulness and honesty' of the tribesmen. Forsyth declares that 'the aborigine is the most truthful of beings and rarely denies either a money obligation or a crime really chargeable against him'.[2] Majumdar quotes Major Roughsedge as being so pleased with the independent bearing of the Ho that he declared them to be as much superior to their brethren of Chota Nagpur as 'wild buffaloes to the village herd'. Colonel Tickell also was so much impressed with 'their love for truth, their honesty, their obliging willingness and their happy ingenous disposition, that he would rather see them remain lawless than be brought

[1] C. S. Venkatachar in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III-B, p. 56.
[2] J. Forsyth, *The Highlands of Central India* (London, 1871), p. 164.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

under British courts of justice which might end in destroying their virtues'.[1] Of the Kachari, the missionary Endle speaks very highly. Apart from their love of rice-beer, he observes,

> It is pleasing to be able to say that among them are to be found many simple virtues of great price, honesty, truthfulness, straightforwardness and a general trustworthiness deserving of all honour. In illustration of their simple truthfulness, even when involving serious consequences to themselves, the writer recalls a story told him some years ago by an officer in charge of the subdivision of Mangaldai, the late A. J. Primrose, I.C.S. A Kachari of Sekhar Mauza was brought before this magistrate on a charge (manslaughter) involving a very heavy penalty, when he without hesitation admitted his guilt, though the evidence against him was of the slightest, or at least utterly insufficient to secure a conviction. The relations of the sexes too are on the whole of a very sound and wholesome character, far more so probably than in many countries boasting of a higher civilization.[2]

Colonel Ward described the Baiga in 1870 as 'wild as the forests they live in . . . they are independent, high spirited . . . very well behaved, ready to oblige, and deserving every consideration for their orderly manner of life'.[3]

'Excepting the Dhombs', says R. H. Campbell, 'the Agency hillmen are the most-honest and law-abiding people that I have ever had to deal with, and are singularly truthful. In the Gudeme Hills, there are practically no police stations. Thefts and robberies are unknown, and the only crime ever committed is an occasional murder induced by jealousy.'[4]

Unhappily these virtues disappear at the first touch of 'improvement' and civilization. 'The Bhil', says C. S. Venkatachar, 'are truthful unless spoilt by being "civilized".'[5] P. O. Bodding says that the Santal are truthful and honest so long as they speak their own tongue but they 'are especially lying when they use not their own, but the Bengali or Hindi languages which they are taught at school'.[6]

[1] D. N. Majumdar, *A Tribe in Transition* (London, 1937), p. 13.
[2] Sidney Endle, *The Kacharis* (London, 1911), pp. 2 f.
[3] R. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mandlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 36.
[4] R. H. Campbell, 'The Wild Tribes of the Vizagapatam Hills', *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society* (Bangalore, 1917), Vol. VIII, pp. 2 ff.
[5] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III-B, p. 56.
[6] Ibid., p. 105.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

K. Govinda Menon has a sombre picture of the Kadar of Cochin.

> If the physical health of the Kadar has been undermined and ruined almost permanently as a result of their contact with the people of the low country, their moral health has been deeply tainted by the same influence. When the dark avenues of the primeval forests echoed under the tread of the greedy contractor and his assistants, and the screech of the steam-engine of the Forest Tramway first reverberated through the hills and vales, they proclaimed that Civilized Man, the Destroyer, had set his foot within the fair precincts of the Kadar's domains. It was observed that the lust of the people from the plains did not leave Kadar women alone. Promiscuous intercourse for years between the new arrivals and these women has infected the whole tribe with syphilis, the first fruits of civilization. The primitive purity of the Kadar women was tainted for ever and their ideals of chastity have been brought into adjustment with those of the low class people of the plains with whom they were brought into touch. Moral and physical deterioration has followed and the rising generations show mixed and tainted blood. The employment of Kadar labour in the coffee estates of the Nelliampathi Hills has very much aggravated the evil. In the estates the Kadar come into contact with Tamil labourers of the lowest classes. The surroundings, food, and other influences in this new sphere are entirely different from those the Kadar are generally accustomed to. There is free scope to indulge in arrack and opium in the estates, and the Kadar try to ape the filthy ways of the dissolute Tamil labourers. The Kadar children born in the estates are all tainted and cannot be distinguished from the puny and sickly progeny of the Tamil labourer.[1]

C. von Fürer-Haimendorf gives an interesting account of the effect of official interference on the incidence of violent crime among the Chenchu.

> Within the last few years numerous cases of murder and manslaughter committed by the Chenchu of Kurnool have come into court and the majority were crimes passionels, both victims and accused being Chenchu. Rape and attempted rape are by no means rare occurrences and are summarily dealt with by the Foresters in charge of the settlements. Cases of incendiarism out of revenge of personal hate are fairly frequent but they seldom steal from each other.

[1] K. G. Menon in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III-B, pp. 215 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

It would appear that economic motives play little part in the cases of murder and incendiarism, and we may therefore question how it is that the Chenchu, who in the jungles of Hyderabad are quite capable of settling their quarrels peacefully, should have so many murderers within their ranks in Kurnool. The only answer which presents itself to this disturbing question is that the process of gathering into large settlements has undermined their own social organization and no new system has yet been evolved to replace the old order. In their pristine state there are individualists and any man in disagreement with the other members of his group separates from them and joins another group. Thus friction is avoided and the expedient of flight saves many the bitterness of a long drawn out quarrel, absence of blunting hate and personal jealousies. But in Kurnool the Chenchu are unable and indeed forbidden to leave their villages and settle elsewhere while their traditional customs, which were sufficient to check outbreaks of violence in the case of small groups of closely related families, prove inadequate to govern the relations between the members of large communities. In the old times, for instance, interference with married women was limited by the fact that the women of a man's local group were usually either his clan-sisters or the wives of his brothers or first cousins and that distance rendered intrigues with other women comparatively difficult. Nowadays, however, the inhabitants of a settlement consist of members of many clans between whom there appears to exist little of the cohesion and mutual loyalty necessary for a healthy community life.[2]

III

The Committee for the Study of Suicide established in New York in 1936 included in its aims Ethnological Studies, or 'comprehensive investigation of suicide among primitive races, for this is a rather frequent occurrence among many primitive races still extant and when studied may throw some light on suicide as a psycho-biological phenomenon'.[3] At about the same time, Laubscher in South Africa was also urging the importance of such studies; 'It is generally believed that the rate of suicide increases with civilization. For this reason I consider that whatever evidence can be produced about

[1] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 'The Fortunes of a Primitive Tribe', *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. III (1943), pp. 402 f.
[3] *Medical Review of Reviews* (New York, April 1936), pp. 169 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

suicide in a primitive culture is of great importance to psychiatry'.[1]

For aboriginal India, however, this subject has been almost entirely neglected. The attention of scholars has been diverted by the better documented and sensational examples of ceremonial or religious suicide. Thus there is ample literature on Sati, the custom whereby a widow devoted herself on her husband's funeral pyre;[2] on the ceremony of Traga, a form of suicide in defence of property or principle;[3] on the process of Dharna, sometimes practised by a creditor to extort his dues from a recalcitrant debtor;[4] on the 'awful rite of Johur' wherein thousands of Rajput women died rather than face captivity; on the ceremonial suicides beneath the wheels of the car of Jagannatha at Puri.[5] A place famous for suicides was the Daitya Ka Har, or Devil's Bone, whence those desiring children hurled themselves down and occasionally escaped.[6] Another such place was behind the peak of Kedar, where the Pandava devoted themselves.[7]

But of suicide as the fruit of ordinary despair or domestic tragedy we have few records from India, least of all from among her primitive people. The great volumes of the Ethnographic Survey are practically silent; there is not a word about the subject in the works of Sarat Chandra Roy. For the tribes of peninsular India we not only have no detailed study; there is hardly a hint about the suicide situation. For the tribes on India's borders, we have a little more information. Man declares that suicide was unknown among

[1] Laubscher, op. cit., p. 290.

[2] A full account of the literature will be found in N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1925), Vol. IV, pp. 235 ff.

[3] R. V. Russell and Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), Vol. II, pp. 250 ff.

[4] ibid., Vol. II, pp. 285 f.

[5] Sir W. W. Hunter, *Orissa* (London, 1872), Vol. I, pp. 305 ff. Hunter rightly contrasts the Cruickshank-illustrated exaggerations of Thackeray, who describes 'the hideous moving palace, the horrible body-crusher, under which unhappy millions were crushed to death' with the 'insignificant' number of actual cases 'registered by the dispassionate candour of English officials'. Another writer who exploited this theme was Charlotte Brontë who speaks of 'the prostrate votary' before the 'annihilating crunch'.

[6] J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (London, 1829-32), Vol. II, p. 681, who also gives several accounts of the Johur.

[7] W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), Vol. I, p. 256; G. W. Traill and J. H. Batten, *Statistical Sketch of Kumaun* (Agra, 1851), p. 58; E. T. Atkinson, *The Himalayan Districts* (Allahabad, 1882), Vol. II, pp. 773 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

the Andaman Islanders, until after they had come into contact with 'the alien population', Hindus and Europeans.[1] Among the Vedda, the Seligmans tell us, suicide is rare: they record one case where a wife openly insulted her husband over his intrigue with another woman—he felt so disgraced by the publicity that he shot himself with a gun.[2] Among the Lepcha, however, suicide is said to be 'fairly frequent'. Every one of the six cases recorded by Gorer were 'immediately subsequent to a public reproof'. Five of the six were relatively young men, the sixth was a young girl who drowned herself after being reproved for laziness and promiscuity. Gorer heard of one case of suicide from grief. Women kill themselves by drowning, men generally with the aconite poison they use on their arrows.[3]

In Assam, suicide is common only among the Lhota Naga. Mills speaks of 'the extraordinary readiness' and the extremely trivial grounds of the suicides in this tribe. 'I have known a man hang himself because the elders of his village fined him fifteen rupees—a sum he could well afford to pay. Usually, however, a love affair is the cause, and cases of lovers, who for some reason cannot marry, taking poison together, are common. Little though he knows or cares of the details of the life hereafter, the Lhota never doubts that there is such a life, and lovers die professing their sure faith that they will be united beyond the grave'.[4] The method of suicide is to take poison made from the root of a common flowering plant called rhisa.[5] It is taken in liquor, and death follows intoxication.[6]

Among the other Naga tribes suicide is said to be rare. It is an apodis death, accursed and contagious. The body must be buried at the back of the house or in broken ground where men do not walk about.[7] Hutton only knew of three such deaths among the Angami Naga; one of them was that of a man heavily indebted.[8] To the Rengma Naga in their natural

[1] E. H. Man, 'On the Aboriginal Inhabitants of the Andaman Islands', *J.A.I.*, Vol. XII, p. 111.
[2] C. G. and B. Z. Seligman, *The Veddas* (Cambridge, 1911), p. 88.
[3] G. Gorer, *Himalayan Village* (London, 1938), pp. 280 f.
[4] J. P. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas* (London, 1922), p. 20.
[5] Ibid., p. 82.
[6] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas* (London, 1921), p. 229.
[7] J. H. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas* (London, 1921), p. 262.
[8] *The Angami Nagas*, p. 229.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

state 'suicide seems to be absolutely unknown'. Mills knew of only one case, that of a Rengma who had become a Baptist Christian.[1] Among the Lakher also, suicide is very rare; after an experience of many years Parry could only recollect one case.[2]

Suicide for erotic causes has been reported for the Badaga girls of the Nilgiri Hills who sometimes poison themselves when betrothed against their will—'very little provocation is needed to induce a Badaga woman to destroy herself',[3] and in old Tamil love-poems there are allusions to an ancient practice of a disappointed lover proclaiming his love in public before committing suicide.[4] And of the Ho, Dalton writes—

> The extreme sensitiveness of both men and women is sometimes very painfully exhibited in the analysis of the numerous cases of suicide that every year occur. A harsh word to a woman never provokes a retort, but it causes in the person offensively addressed, a sudden depression of spirits or vehement outbreak of grief, which few persons would a second time care to provoke. If a girl appears mortified by anything that has been said, it is not safe to let her go away till she is soothed. A reflection on a man's honesty or veracity may be sufficient to send him to self-destruction. In a recent case, a young woman attempted to poison herself, because her uncle would not partake of the food she had cooked for him. The police returns of Singbhum show that in nine years, from 1860 to 1869, 186 men and women committed suicide in that district.[5]

[1] J. P. Mills, *The Rengma Nagas* (London, 1937), p. 221.
[2] N. E. Parry, *The Lakhers* (London, 1932), p. 265.
[3] J. F. Metz, *The Tribes Inhabiting the Neilgherry Hills* (Mangalore, 1864), p. 75.
[4] Kanakasabhai Pillai, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago* (Madras, 1904), p. 122.
[5] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1871), p. 200.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWO

THE BISON-HORN MARIA

1

The so-called Maria of Bastar fall naturally into two divisions distinguished by many details of culture and tradition, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains and the Bison-horn Maria living to the south of the Indrawati River. A full account of both these tribes has been given by W. V. Grigson, and his book should be read by those who wish to have a fuller background of Maria life than the present volume can supply. In this chapter I will only give a brief summary of the life and customs of the Bison-horn Maria.

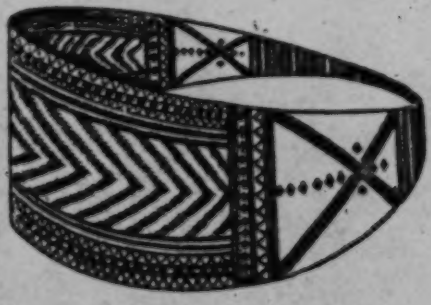
The Bison-horn Maria, who are distinguished from the other aboriginals of Bastar by the splendid head-dress they use for their marriage dances, numbered about 156,000 in 1931, and I estimate their present strength at about 175,000. They are distributed all over southern Bastar, among the entrancing hills of Dantewara, in the dry forests of Bijapur, among the hot but lovely lowlands of Konta, in the remote Sukma and Kutru Zamindaris. On the borders of the main Maria stock are a number of communities which really belong to it, the Koya of the extreme south, the Dorla who claim to be a superior caste and the mixed population along the banks of the Indrawati and reaching up towards the Muria country beyond Barsur. The Dorla and Koya dance in Bison-horn Maria fashion; the mixed people to the north combine the customs of the Hill Maria with their own. In the neighbourhood of Jagdalpur, the Maria gradually lose their distinctiveness as they approach the town and merge into the southern Muria.

There are few people in India more attractive than the Bison-horn Maria, physically charming, of good stature, perfect figure, finely featured with carefully tended hair, often a lovely golden-brown in colour. Both men and women are very strong; the men can carry heavy loads great distances, endure long and arduous hunting expeditions and dance all night bearing their great drums. Their health is fairly good, but they are afflicted with yaws, though the work of the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

State Medical Department has done much to check the spread of the disease. Malaria, as everywhere in the Indian forests, is endemic, but few suffer from enlarged spleen. Leprosy and the venereal diseases are very rare. Skin diseases are also much less common than among the more elaborately clothed and thus dirtier people of the north.

Men wear a small loin-cloth and sometimes a little turban. The women tie a sort of skirt, very short, round their waists: it hangs down to the knees. The breasts are covered only with ornaments; when visiting a bazaar girls may tie a small piece of cloth round their shoulders. They often wear a thin brass fillet round the hair, and the older women use a large snood which is most becoming. Round the neck are masses of bead-necklaces, and iron or brass torcs. The bright colours of the beads and the shining brass fillets against the rich brown skin make a sight of unforgettable beauty.



Brass fillet worn by Maria women

The Bison-horn Maria village is laid out on the same lines as the Gond village of the Central Provinces, unlike the communal settlements of the Hill Maria, Baiga or Juang. Each house stands in its own garden which is sometimes a substantial field, and a village may cover a very large area in consequence. Often a village is composed of anything from six to twelve small hamlets, each of which represents the grouping of a family round its patriarchal head. The little huts stand among woods, on rocky hill-sides, in the shade of spreading trees. Sometimes they appear almost submerged by waves of yellow sarson flowers or red jhira vegetable. Each village has a substantial building for the accommodation of travellers and this is used by the unmarried boys as a dormitory. The unmarried girls also sleep together, some-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.

Maria women's dancing-stick (3½' long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brush-wood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live. There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

241
342
291
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301

Girls threshing grain with their feet at Mokhpal

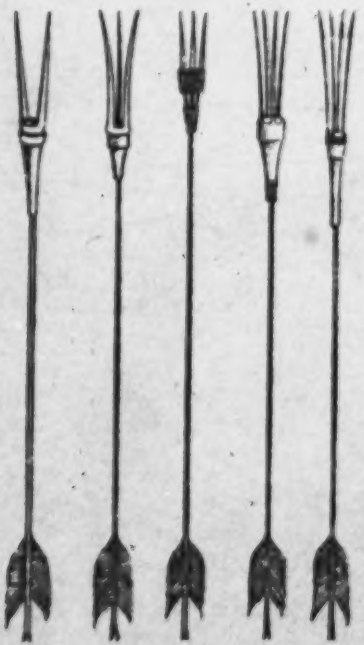
[FACING p. 14]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there [796 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped 787] and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 262 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.



Engram arrows
(*Length about 3'*)

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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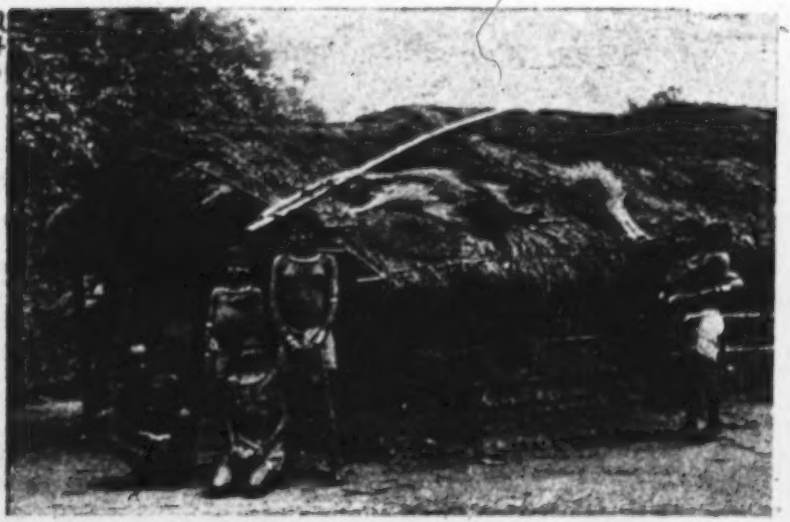

Oyami Masa with family on the scene of the death of the younger wife

142
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Oyami Masa with his surviving wife

[Facing p. 15]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make
285 baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
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[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan-priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

796 in praise of the mahua tree, before which the new mahua flowers must not be eaten or used for liquor. Then comes a similar ceremony in honour of the mango. This generally falls in March. It may be preceded by a ceremonial fishing expedition. In April, preceded by a ritual hunt, comes the great Seed Festival, the Wijja Pandum, at which the seed then to be sown is consecrated.

At the beginning of the rains many of the Maria now observe the Halba festival of Hareli or Amavas. As the crops ripen, there begins a series of Harvest Festivals or (as a literal translation of their Gondi name would have it) 'New Eating' Festivals. The first of these is for the small millets that ripen early. The next is for the new gourds and cucumbers. It is followed, at about the beginning of November, by the Nuka Nordana Pandum, a festival which falls at about the time of Diwali and is concerned with the new rice. Before this ceremony, the rice of the new harvest must not be husked or washed.

Towards the end of the year comes the Jata Pandum for new beans and pulses, and the Kare Pandum before which no one is allowed to cut grass or bamboo, or begin making clearings for cultivation in the forest.

In addition to this round of celebrations there are the festivals of the clan-gods, the Pen Karsita or Divine Games, which may be held at any time, and the commercial Mandai which are often combined with the clan festivals but are mainly great bazaars.

Dassara is the chief official festival of the State. It lasts fifteen days and is attended by elaborate ceremonies in which each of the aboriginal tribes has its special part to play. All the Maria headmen attend the celebrations in their official capacity, and there is a special Darbar at which they have the opportunity to place their grievances before the administration.

IV

585 The great dance that has given the Bison-horn Maria their
535 name is really a marriage dance. At its best it is a superb spectacle. The men, in their splendid head-dresses of bison horns and carrying their long drums, move in a large circle

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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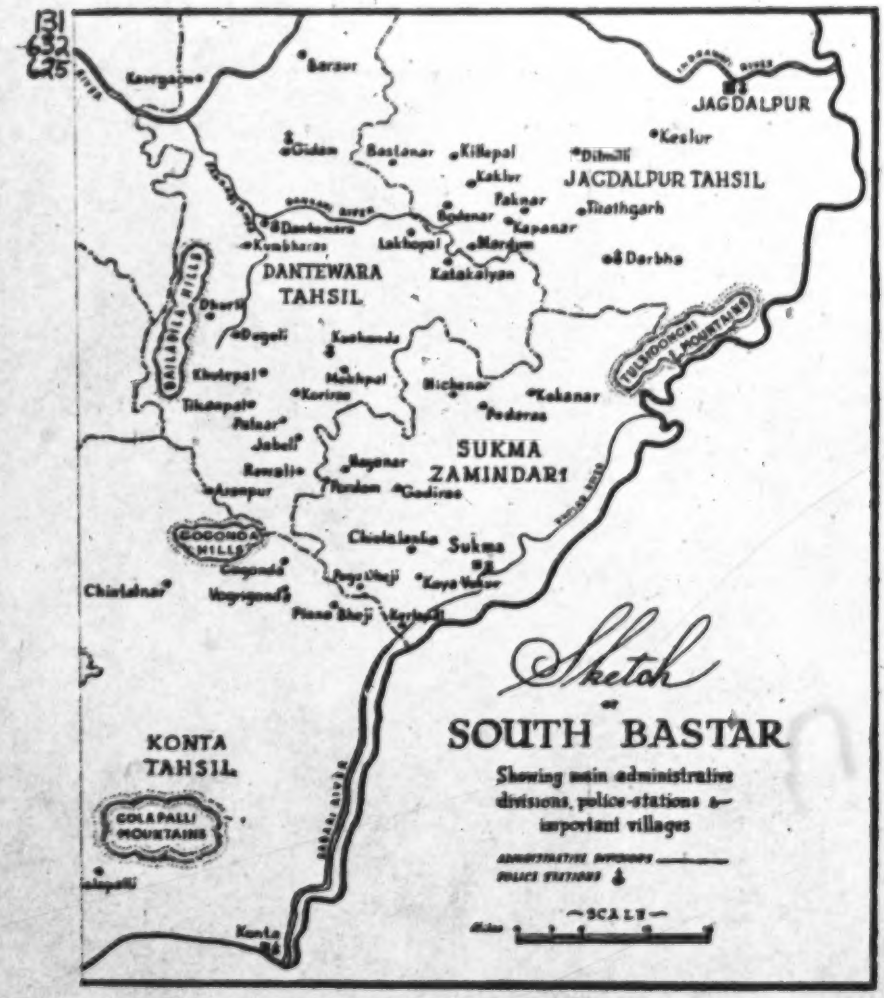
[facing p. 18(A)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria



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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

535 but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison'
585 charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum.* Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

293 The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic
[237] cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered
[787] unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

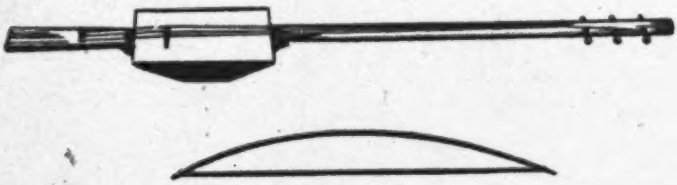
428 A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after
682 his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heir-
762 looms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

184 In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison
535 horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

534 The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called *kikir*, a Jews-harp made of iron or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

534 bamboo and the usual flute. They are fond of gongs, but these are not now so common as they were. At the great Pen Karsita at Ghotpal in 1942, the dancers used slabs of



Kikir Fiddle
(*Length 2'*)

coloured wood, bits of old tin and indeed anything that would make a noise instead of the traditional gongs. Like the Muria, at festivals and even for amusement the Maria use a hunting horn, either a real horn or one made of brass.

541 Besides dancing, the chief Maria relaxation is the cock-fight. At the conclusion of all the bigger bazaars, the men retire to a grove of trees and set their cocks against each other. The cocks are armed with sharp and deadly little knives tied to their feet and fights are to the death. The victor has the privilege of taking the defeated bird, but the real excitement comes from the betting.

V

844 [843] The ceremonies attending birth and marriage are very simple. The pregnant mother is not hampered by many restrictions on her movements. After the birth of the child the placenta is buried in a pit behind the house. Logs are placed above it and the arrow with which the cord was cut is driven into the ground near by. A small shed is made and the 846 mother lives here for some weeks with her child, taking a daily bath above the placenta-pit. At the end of this period of segregation, the husband gives a feast to the neighbours, [551] the child is named and the mother is permitted to return to her household duties. It was to such a feast that the unhappy victim of the Mardum sacrifice was enticed.[1]

881 There are no ceremonies of initiation at puberty, though a

[1] Case No 51.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

14-2
291
516
252
301

A girl cleans grain in a field at Garmiri; failure in preparing food is sometimes a cause of tragedy

[FACING p.20]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummmation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
291
301
516

Bandi of Mokhpal: the typical Maria wife

142
301

Habka Masa, jealous of his wife

[Facing p. 21]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 primitive opinion is that the soul goes to dwell with the ancestral Dead with whom it is mingled by appropriate ceremonies. These Dead are imagined as being in close touch with their kinsfolk living still on earth and are able to influence their affairs.

But side by side with this belief is a rudimentary theory of transmigration and rebirth, and at every funeral there are special rites to ensure that the soul will be reborn in the same family and will not go elsewhere. This theory is not necessarily inconsistent with the first, though it is not easy to see how once a soul is reborn again on earth it can continue to hold the office and perform the functions of an Ancestor. But the third theory is contradictory of the others. It is borrowed from the graveyard traditions of popular Hinduism. After death the soul is pictured as turning into a dangerous malignant ghost who has to be kept away from the house at all costs and be appeased from time to time with small offerings. We thus have the ridiculous situation that at a funeral some of the rites are directed to bringing the dead man's soul back to the house and settling him there in the Pot of the Departed while others are directed at keeping him at a distance, if possible beyond the village boundary. After death, in fact, the dead man becomes both soul and ghost, and suitable but different arrangements have to be made for each of these aspects of his personality.

769 We have seen that in the inner room of every Maria house
775 there is kept an earthen pot specially dedicated to the Dead; in the same room is the Hearth of the Departed. It is round this little shrine that there centres an extensive cult of the ancestral Dead. At the end of the funeral ceremonies the soul of the deceased is mingled with the other Dead through ceremonies connected with this Pot. Into it the woman of the house puts a little flour in honour of the Dead when she grinds, and here she cooks new grain at the harvest festivals. The Dead are very touchy and excitable. If the soul of a murdered man or a suicide or anyone who has died by tiger, snake, cholera, small-pox, drowning or a fall from a tree is sent to keep them company, there will be quarrels and in their annoyance they may cause great trouble to the living. They are specially sensitive to any infidelity on the part of the wife whose special duty it is to tend their shrine. They

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

indicate their will to the living through the Siraha or Waddai 769
and by appearing to them in dreams, and it is considered 775
highly dangerous to ignore their behests.

The necessity for their propitiation has affected every aspect 769
of Maria life. Offerings are made to them at every festival and at every domestic or village ceremony. They are remembered as a matter of routine in every magic formula along with the Earth Mother, Danteshwari and other deities. A few drops of liquor are offered to them every time a Maria drinks. Fire from the hearth of the Pot of the Departed in the Gaita's house is used to light the first fire in the forest clearings and the sacred fires at festivals. The importance of the Ancestors, who remain as a sort of conservative society to safeguard the traditions of the tribe, will appear throughout this book and need not be elaborated now.

VII

Women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried, so are 764
the victims of small-pox and of such other diseases as the 766
Siraha may from time to time direct. All others are cremated, a fact which often makes police investigation difficult and even impossible.

At one time (I am not sure how far the custom survives) 766
the Waddai was buried naked and in an upright posture. The first child of a house, if it dies under five years old, is buried in the same erect posture, with face to the east—as [787]
there is light there, and beneath a mahua tree—for it is fertile of flowers and fruit, a good omen for the family.

In a funeral the chief actors are the Hanagunda or Hanal- 764
gaita, who is the master of ceremonies, and the sister's son or son-in-law of the deceased. The Hanagunda has to tie a thread round the corpse and hang the cow's-tail on the menhir. It is his wife's duty to wash the body, and to take cooked rice and haldi to the pyre. The sister's son has to climb on the roof to beat a drum to summon the relatives: he sits on the uraskal while it is being carried to its place; he makes the appointed offerings before the stone: he kills the sacrificial and festal cow.

After death the dead man is laid with his head to the east in the living room of his house. His sister's son takes a stick

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and measures straight upwards from the corpse's chest to the roof, poking the stick through the thatch. Then he climbs up to the roof and makes a hole which is intended symbolically to allow the message of death to spread out through the world. He puts his dhol drum above the hole, waves a stick thrice round his head and then beats his drum with the rhythm *dung dung-dung*. He beats with one hand, though the normal method is to beat with two. After the drumming has continued for a while, he comes down from the roof and continues it on the ground.

The Hanagunda's wife now husks some rice, makes it into four packets with leaves and ties two of these under the arms of the corpse and two at its waist. She applies to the chest black dust from the bottom of one of the cooking utensils so that they may be able to recognize him when he is reborn. The grand-daughter of the dead man, if available, or some girl in the same relationship, passes a string seven times round his three middle fingers and middle toes, again with the intention of ensuring his return.

It will be most convenient if I describe the actual course of a ceremony which occurred at Penta on 10 February 1942. This funeral is of special interest as the mourners had reason to believe that the dead man was the victim of black magic.

Sori Kosa of Penta had a love affair with the daughter-in-law of Markami Bando which resulted in a serious quarrel between the two families. Kosa's father paid the necessary fine and a special ceremony of peace and friendship was performed. But Bando was not really reconciled—and soon trouble began for Kosa's family. His son by his first wife died; shortly afterwards another of his sons died. One day Bando spat on Kosa's father in the bazaar. A week later the old man fell ill and died. Kosa's wife and daughter were also taken ill but recovered. The villagers whispered that this [154] was due to Bando's magic, and described how he had made a small doll of earth, wrapped it up in a leaf-cup and carried it away into the jungle. But there was no case for police interference, and the villagers proceeded with the funeral for Kosa's father.

After the preliminary rites that I have already described, all Kosa's father's relatives assembled. The women brought

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

brass rings and beads and placed them on the corpse; the 764
men brought bits of cloth. The members of the household fasted from the time of the old man's death until he was cremated. The ceremonies were marked by violent manifestations of grief. When the bamboo bier was brought to the house, the wives of the Waddai, Gaita and Hanagunda fell upon it and lay there. They said that this meant that they too wanted to be taken out and burnt, a curious echo of the Sati tradition. Straw was spread on the bier and when the corpse had been placed there, bits of cloth were laid on it by the male relatives present. The women gathered round the corpse again, kissing it and weeping bitterly. It had been lying with its legs towards the door of the house, but now it was lifted up by the bearers and its position changed so that the head was pointing to the door. They touched the door thrice with it saying, 'You made this house, come here again in your next birth'.

Then, led by the drummers, the corpse was carried out to the cremation-ground. The grand-daughter with her hair undone followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice upon it as she went along. As they passed a path that [782 crossed theirs, they dropped a little rice so that if any other 785] ghost came he would eat it and go away. Everyone went to the funeral. Menstruating women are not normally allowed [841] to attend, though sometimes they may come if they stand at a little distance.

When the party reached the pyre, they went round it anticlockwise once and placed the bier on the ground. Once again the women fell upon the corpse weeping and kissing it. They lay down beside the pyre and had to be pushed away before the business of the funeral could proceed.

Then one of the women put a little tobacco in the mouth of the corpse. The body was placed upon the pyre. Some of the bits of cloth with which it was covered were left there; the rest was distributed between the drummers and the relatives by marriage. The Hanagunda removed the packets of rice which had been tied to the waist of the corpse and threw them to left and right. The body was entirely covered with a cloth and the Hanagunda ripped this open just over the mouth. A piece of grass which had been brought from the roof of the house was put into the mouth of the corpse and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 then thrown aside. It is very important that this grass should not be burnt. The aim of the rite was to ensure that the [134] man would be able to breathe on his journey to the next world, though other informants said that it was to allow the soul to escape. The brother-in-law of the dead man then lit a bundle of grass with fire brought from the house and after taking a turn round the pyre set fire to the pile of wood by the head. Another man went round in the opposite direction and fired the wood by the legs.

After the pyre was well alight, the whole company went to a stream and washed themselves. The grand-daughter soaked part of her sari in water and holding the wet portion in her hand came home and rinsed it out on the very place where the coffin had lain inside the house so that the dead man could drink it.

Early next morning, the dead man's son-in-law went to the cremation-ground to examine the ashes and there found an [754] earthen doll tied in a leaf-cup. This led the Waddai to declare that the death was due to black magic done by Bando and concealed by him in the jungle.

Later in the morning a cow was brought and its legs washed by the deceased's daughter-in-law. After touching its forehead with a little rice she said to it, "We have given you your share, now don't make us suffer any longer'. One of the drum-beaters touched the cow with his stick and a marriage-relative killed it by a heavy blow with the blunt end of his axe. He then cut the tail, removed the liver and made it into twenty-four pieces in equal shares of six pieces each. Each share was wrapped up in a leaf and roasted. The party took these to the cremation-ground. On reaching the place some of the women picked out the bones from the pyre and kissed them. The dead man's son collected any half-burnt pieces of wood and kicked them towards the centre of the pyre. Then they cleared the ash where the corpse's head had been, cow-dunged the place and put the leaf-cups there.

The packets containing the liver were now opened and three pieces from each packet were placed on the ground and three in each of the leaf-cups. The twelve pieces on the ground were for the Earth and the twelve pieces in the leaf-cups for the Dead. The Waddai made seven piles of rice. He held a

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

piece of wood in his hand and lifting it over each pile several 764
times from right to left uttered charms calling on the soul of the deceased to be content. The dead man's son brought a chicken and made it eat the rice, going from right to left three times. The Waddai passed his stick quickly over the chicken each time. However, when the fowl was eating the [757]
rice, it did not follow the proper order, but started to eat the sixth pile after the fourth. The Waddai declared that this was because two persons were involved in the fatal magic. After this had been done three times, the dead man's son passed the chicken between his legs backwards and twisted its neck till it was severed from the trunk. This he threw behind him, holding the head in his hands. He ripped open the head by cutting it through the beak and threw it into the fire. If this was not done, the head might turn into what is [825]
called in Gondi *vispitte* (a kind of bird which is known as *jiv chirai* in Hindi) and if this came to the village and called 'jiv, jiv' the people would die.

They then dug a hole in the earth close to the leaf-cups with a knife and placed a forked saja stick there. The dead man's son stood in front of the stick with his back to it, holding the cow's tail in his hand. He pointed it first at the sun, then to the four corners of the world and lastly to the place where the dead body had been cremated. He did this thrice and then tied the tail to the stick and poured a little landa on it. The dead man's wife offered some mahua liquor in a leaf-cup, because when her husband was alive one day when they were drinking they had agreed to die together. The Waddai, therefore, said as she was giving the liquor, 'Do not also take her away with you; release her from her promise; let her live for a while and look after the other members of the family'. Then the deceased's son and brother-in-law, who had carried the rice and pulse, threw it down near the stick. The dead man's son who had also taken with him a little thatch from the roof of his house now threw this at the stick saying, 'You built the house, now accept this'. Similarly, all the other things of which the old man had been fond when he was alive were thrown there. His son-in-law, however, picked up his bow and arrow and his knife was taken by one of the drummers. The drummers then threw away their drum-sticks into the ashes of the pyre.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

252
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285
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Girl cleaning grain at Tikanpal before a decorated door

301
182

Hinge, a Maria girl of Rewali

[facing p. 28]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 Once again the party went to the stream, but the Gaita and the Waddai stayed behind and addressed the saja stick: 'For one month more you will get nothing, don't go to your house, but stay here'. After a bath they all (with the exception of the drummers) went to the deceased's house. The drummers, who are regarded as unclean for the duration of the ceremony, bathed and washed their drums. They applied and placed some rice on the drums. To them they also sacrificed a chicken and offered the blood and some liquor. The drummers were then given rice, which they cooked separately, and a shoulder of the cow. After eating their food they went to their own houses.

789 The conclusion of the story is worth recording. A month later, the Waddai went with the villagers to the boundary of the village carrying a chicken, a pig, an egg, egg-shells, a bamboo bow and arrow, burnt earth from below the hearth, charcoal powder, rice, pulse and haldi. All these things were taken in separate leaf-cups. The Waddai arranged them in seven rows and made a chicken eat the rice, calling on Markami Bando's magic to go away. The chicken ate the rice quickly. But this was not sufficient proof that the black magic had really been driven away, 'because every hungry creature will naturally feed upon what it can get'. The Waddai, therefore, tortured the chicken, first by breaking one leg, and still it ate; he broke another leg, and again it ate; then he broke the wings and the fowl though in pain and agony went on eating. It was now beyond doubt that Bando's magic had been dealt with successfully and the chicken was thrown away, still alive, and not sacrificed. The pig was then sacrificed and the Waddai drew a line on the boundary of the village where the seven rows were arranged, spat there and said, 'Away from this line' and they all departed without looking back. In this ceremony the household members did not take part.

The next day the Waddai sacrificed under a mahua tree near the house a white chicken and broke an egg in honour of the ancestral ghost of Kosa's father. After this he entered the house and sprinkled it with a mixture of milk, saja bark,
769 and dab grass to purify it and sacrificed a black chicken for the Ancestors of the family.

775 Special precautions must, of course, be taken when anyone

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

285
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Girl with basket at Marenda

Girls breaking pods at Khutepal

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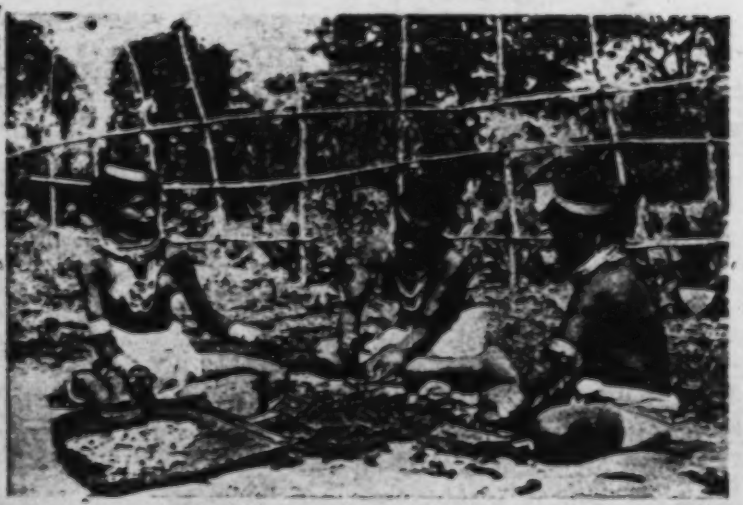

[facing p. 29]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 dies a violent death. The ghost of a man killed by a tiger may possess the animal and drive it to take vengeance on other members of the community: the victim of snake-bite dwells in the snake's tail and drives it to homicidal fury.[1]

775 789 Women dying in pregnancy and childbirth become very dangerous after death and their ghosts must be laid by special ceremonies which include the driving of nails into the knees and elbows of the corpse and at the four corners of the grave over which a herd of buffaloes may sometimes be driven.

VIII

764 In the neighbourhood of almost every Maria village will be found a row of menhirs erected in memory and for the appeasement of the Dead. Sometimes these stones are very large; sometimes they are quite small and are expected to grow bigger in course of time. The majority of clans erect an upright pillar which is called uraskal. But a number of them place instead a danyakal, a large flat stone supported on four smaller ones.

In the ceremonies attending the bringing of a menhir, the sister's son again plays a leading part. Led by him a party of three drummers and a man beating a gong and twenty or thirty men go out to the quarry where the stone has already been cut out or to some hill where a suitable rock has been observed. The sister's son touches the stone and addresses the dead man. 'In your name', he says, 'we are bringing this stone; let it be light, let not the burden be too heavy'. They place poles below and above the stone, lashing them together with rope. Then the sister's son with a drum in his hand climbs on to the stone and begins to drum with a new rhythm which goes *gul-gucha, gul-gucha, gul-gucha*. Some twenty men lift up the stone whistling loudly, *soor, soor, whee, whee*, and swing it to and fro. Then they move towards the place where the menhir is to be erected, the drummers dancing and drumming in

[1] Such accidental deaths are far from uncommon. In 1938, in the whole State 55 persons were killed by tigers, 10 by panthers, 4 by bears, 53 by drowning, 102 by snake-bite, 53 by falling from trees (chiefly the tall toddy and sago palms). The great majority of these accidents were to aboriginals and every one involved the relatives in complex and hazardous ceremonies for their protection.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

front, the sister's son beating his drum above. From time to 764
time they put their burden on the ground to rest, and are refreshed with rice-beer.

When the party reaches the pit that has been prepared, the drummers throw the castor-sticks which they have been using hitherto on to the pyre, and take new sticks, which may be made of any kind of wood. Before the stone is erected the Gaita addresses the dead, 'You are dead and you must forget your father, your mother, your brother and your family. This is your house. Live here and do not trouble us or our pigs and cattle. We are giving you rice and pulse and everything that you had at home, so that you may be satisfied'.

In the hole which has been dug by the sister's son, the relatives put something or other, rice, small coins, rings or ornaments, whatever they can afford. The bearers untie the stone from its poles and all push and lift it into position. Earth and stones are rammed round the bottom and a small cromlech is placed in front. On this stone offerings are made by the sister's son with his back to the menhir. The women of the household come and put cooked rice and haldi in leaf-cups on the cromlech, and pour upon it grain, roots, or anything that the dead man used to like when he was alive.

Then the whole party returns to the house and one or more cows are sacrificed. These were probably selected by the dead man during his life-time. They remove the liver and cut it in pieces. Rice is prepared in the house of the dead and divided into four portions and put in leaf-cups. These cups, with the tail of the sacrificed cow and a pot of rice-beer, are carried out in a specially-made basket to the menhir. One portion is put on the ground for Mother Earth and the rest for the dead man on the cromlech. The tail is hung over the menhir and rice-beer poured upon it. At the same time a little rice-beer must be offered to the old menhirs. If this is omitted the ancient dead will [769]
be angry and will quarrel with the new spirit that has gone to join them.

Rice-beer must be given both to the menhir and to the 764
mourners. It must be made fresh in the room where death 273
occurred and served with a gourd with a long handle that

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

767 has been specially hollowed out for this purpose. Usually
273 there is no stock of rice-beer at hand and it cannot be made so quickly. The Maria then mix a little mandia flour with water and give this instead.

If for any reason in the course of the ceremony some rite or custom is omitted the spirit of the dead man may attack one or other of the mourners in order to show his displeasure. For example, at Gadapal, Burka Peda told me that they once forgot to give landa to the old menhirs and the insulted Dead attacked his father's sister and she fell down in a fit. They quickly gave both landa and mahua liquor to all the menhirs and she recovered. Again in Mahara-Karka one Kuhrami Eriya was hurled into the fire by the angry ghost and his leg was burnt. If this happens it is a good plan for the victim to run and catch
[709] hold of the bamboo poles with which the stone was carried. The Gaita pours water upon him and the angry ghost leaves him alone.

IX

322 When a very well-known or wealthy man dies his family
766 sometimes erects a carved wooden pillar to his memory.
554 There are very few of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

322 These pillars are called by Grigson urasgatta, a word that
766 is obviously formed on the same plan as uraskal, from *urasna* meaning 'to bury' and *gatta*—'a pillar'. I have not myself found any Maria using the word or even recognizing it when it has been put to them. It may be that its use has died out. The Maria to whom I have spoken call these pillars either *munde* (Gondi) or *kambha* (Halbi or Hindi).

The pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. It should simply be near any road or path that is constantly used by the people. The pillars are usually made of saja or sarai wood and are erected with ceremonies very similar to those for a stone.

There are not many of these pillars, but they are worth looking at. There is a very fine one near Dilmilli

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

312
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291
142
301
302

Girls fetching water at Bastanar

[Facing p.32]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

322 on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. Near
766 Massenar at the end of a long line of menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa, which has a carving of the old man wearing his jubilee medal. There are others at Chinger, on the way to Chitrakot and in a few other places.

322 Each pillar attempts to be a biography in wood of the
766 deceased. We see him important carrying the symbols of
532 wealth and power and riding on a horse or elephant; we see the dancers that delighted him and the landa pot which never failed to give him pleasure. We are shown the knives and axes that he used; the animals that he saw or hunted in the forest. The pillar for Oyami Masa, the homicide, had several carvings illustrating his work as a Siraha.

X

623 Every Maria village has a panel of secular and religious
632 officials. There is the headman (often called the Peda), his assistant (the Kandki) and a Kotwar, who has the duty of reporting to the police all births and deaths within his jurisdiction. Each group of villages belongs to what is called a Pargana, a relic of the older administrative system of the State, and at the head of each Pargana there is a Pargana Manjhi. Each village has its panchayat presided over by the village headman, and each Pargana has a Pargana panchayat which is a Court of Appeal. In 1932, the village panchayats among all the aboriginals in Bastar were entrusted with a certain amount of criminal and civil work. The regular Courts were deprived of jurisdiction over the tribesmen for no fewer than seventeen Sections of the Indian Penal Code, including those dealing with simple hurt and assault, thefts of property up to five rupees, mischief, trespass and adultery. The panchayats were permitted to deal with claims for civil damages that might arise out of the criminal offences, and in other civil claims not exceeding twentyfive rupees. They were permitted to impose fines of not more than twentyfive, and in marriage cases to allow expenses up to fifty rupees. The Kotwar had the business of reporting panchayat decisions to the police. An appeal

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
301
302

Maria girl of Mokhpal. Domestic life is usually happy: the rare infidelities quickly lead to revenge

[facing p. 33]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

623 lay to the Pargana Manjhi and his panchayat which consisted
[633] of four headmen chosen from his group of villages.

In the ten years since these panchayats were established, they have done a great deal of work, and on the whole may be said to have functioned very well. A few headmen have abused their positions; there has been a certain amount of diversion of fines to uses for which they were not intended; probably a number of less influential people have not always had the justice that they might have expected. But this might have happened even in the ordinary Courts, and there is no doubt whatever that the establishment of these panchayats has done a great deal to build up the self-respect of Maria and Muria, and has developed leadership among them.

622 The importance of the panchayat for our subject is
623 obvious. In the first place, it provides a body of semi-official elders in every village whose duty it is to assist the police, and indeed whenever a suspicious death occurs in a village, the investigating officer calls the panchayat for a sort of inquest to which he acts as coroner and they as jury. On the other hand, the establishment of the village elders in a position of considerable authority makes it easy for them, when they wish to do so, to conceal a crime or deal with it themselves. Where a headman is himself the culprit, he may force the people to hush up his guilt; and the solidarity that is created by allowing the village under its own elders to settle many of its own affairs helps the headman to attain this end. This is no argument against the establishment of the panchayat. But it does mean that it is important for the authorities to hold the confidence of the headmen, and to inspire them constantly with a sense of their civic duties.

793 Side by side with the secular leaders are the religious elders of the village, though there is no reason why spiritual and secular functions should not be, as they often are, combined in the same persons. The priests and medicine-men naturally have more influence than the official headmen, the most powerful combination being when the headman himself is a Waddai or Siraha.

Chief among the religious elders is the Bhum-Gaita or Perma, the priest of the soil whose duty it is to see to all the sacrifices concerned with the village and its festivals, and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

to perform the worship of the Village Mother. The Pen-793
Waddai or Waddai is the priest of the clan who fulfils spiritual duties for its members. There may be more than one Waddai in a village or, on the other hand, one Waddai may have jurisdiction over several villages. Everything depends on the distribution of the clan members in the locality. The Waddai is of great importance because of his association with the Ancestors and the Dead. He has to purify offenders against the clan rules, and those who have done anything which might conceivably offend the Dead. The Hanagunda may be the Waddai or some lesser personage. His duty is to act as master of ceremonies at a funeral and to perform the special rites of appeasement for the ghost. He becomes of great importance when anyone has met an unnatural death such as being killed by a tiger or has been executed.

In addition to these regular priests, there are a large 791
number of men who are regarded as being in a special way the servants and interpreters of the gods. These men have the power of falling into ecstacy and in this condition divine the will and proclaim the wishes of unseen beings. They are called Siraha or Gunia. They are chiefly in demand for the cure of disease. Since disease is believed to be the result of supernatural activity on the part of some ghost or demon, it is by supernatural means that it must be diagnosed and cured. The Siraha often has houses round his compound for in-patients, and a celebrated medicine-man may attract sick and anxious people from a wide area.

These men, civil or religious, are the real rulers of the 623
Bastar village. Their influence is more far-reaching, their 674x
word is of greater effect than that of the most popular officials. Only the Maharaja, from whom they derive their power, is greater. Today their power is greatly circumscribed, but, as we will see, it has not altogether disappeared. They can still make unbearable the life of witch or sorcerer; they can still ostracize the social rebel; they can still fine the domestic tyrant and subdue the village bully. The ordeal by fire or burning oil still remains a weapon in their hands, and the threat of excommunication is a greater deterrent than many of the provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

The religious leaders insist on the supernatural dangers of crime, the defilement of jail or handcuffs, the painful death

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

623 674 that may follow an unatoned adultery, the offence to the Ancestors of division within the clan. The secular leaders are more concerned with the fatiguing inconvenience of a police enquiry, and the embarrassment and waste of time of going as witnesses to a distant court. Village officialdom, it may be safely said, is anxious to prevent crime. It is equally anxious, when a crime has been committed, to hush it up. But hushing up does not mean that crimes will go unpunished. This might well bring on a village the vengeance of the Dead.

657 Behind this intense belief and organized activity native to the soil rises the massive and alien structure of the Indian Penal Code. This majestic formulary was first drafted in 1837 by a Law Commission under the presidentship of Lord Macaulay. Its provisions extend throughout British India, and it has been applied with certain modifications to Bastar State. The Civil Code of British India is also largely operative in the State. We thus have the remarkable, but not unusual, picture of tribesmen still deeply attached to their own ethical and penal system, still regulating their lives by their own laws of ownership, partition and inheritance, but unable to invoke any sanctions to enforce them and compelled in time of need to turn to a foreign Code that was made without any reference to their traditions and the conditions under which they live. J. H. Hutton has called attention to the result:

> Tribal customs which regulate the ownership, usufruct or transfer of land are normally superseded by a code in the application of which the tribe is deprived of its property, generally in the name of law, either by alienation to foreigners or by transferring the trusteeship of a tribal chief into absolute ownership of a kind quite foreign to the customs of a tribe. This has befallen both the Munda and the hill tribes of Chittagong, while even in Rajputana a somewhat similar process has been at work. A similar application of alien law also usually disturbs the tribal customs of debt. The criminal law of a civilized community is often at variance with what is felt to be just and proper by tribal custom. The complicated system of administration of justice has tended to impair the natural truthfulness and honesty of the people and social solidarity of the tribes and has weakened the authority of the social heads and the respect they formerly commanded.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER THREE

THE STATISTICS OF VIOLENT CRIME

I

The Bison-horn Maria have long had a bad reputation for violence and drunkenness. But before this reputation is accepted as scientific fact we should examine the matter statistically and in detail. I will give first a Table which will show the total homicidal crimes in Bastar State under Sections 302 and 304 of the Indian Penal Code during the 10 years 1931 to 1940.

TABLE ONE

Number of homicide cases in Bastar State (under Sections 302 and 304 I.P.C.) for 10 years, 1931-40

	Bison-horn Maria	Ghotul Muria of the North	Others (whole State)	Total
1931	8	1	7	16
1932	14	3	10	27
1933	8	1	10	19
1934	19	2	16	37
1935	14	2	7	23
1936	8	—	14	22
1937	8	2	12	22
1938	13	2	13	28
1939	15	1	9	25
1940	14	7	18	39
Total ...	121	21	116	258

The next Table will relate these figures to the estimated population, both for the tribes and for the State.

The striking difference in the number of murders committed by the Bison-horn Maria and their neighbours, the Ghotul Muria, is probably to be explained by the fact that the Muria have in their Ghotul or dormitory system an ideal method of training the youth of the tribe in the civic virtues, in eliminating jealousy and in teaching everyone to live together as a family. Even the few murders that do take place among the Ghotul Muria occur, for the most part, in villages which

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

X 674 184

TABLE TWO

Illustrating the relation of homicide cases to the estimated population

	Population in 1941	Annual average of homicides	Average annual incidence of homicides to the million[1]
Bison-horn Maria ...	175,000	12·1	69·14
Ghotul Muria ...	100,000	2·1	21·00
Others ...	360,000	11·6	32·22
Total ...	635,000	25·8	40·63

have for one reason or another lost their dormitories. 'Reformers' who would banish the dormitory from tribal India should very carefully consider this fact before they do so.

X 674 171 184 It is not easy to obtain comparative figures for other tribes or communities in India. There is a Maria (but not Bison-horn Maria) population in the Chanda District: here there were 26 cases of homicide in 10 years among a population of 34,776—which works out near the Bison-horn Maria figure of 69 to the million. In Mayurbhanj State, in 1935-36 there were 25 similar cases from a population of about 890,000 or about 28 to the million. In 1939, there were 184 persons found guilty under Sections 302 and 304 I.P.C. in the Central Provinces and Berar, which gives a figure of approximately 11 to the million. In the same Province, with its total population of some eighteen millions, 53 persons were sentenced to death and 131 to transportation in 1941. The figures for 1942 were 59 and 127.

X 674 171 Against these figures, the incidence of 69 homicides to the million among Bison-horn Maria seems very high, but it must be remembered that the inhabitants of the Central Provinces and the Eastern States are among the most peaceful people on this planet. Laubscher gives some comparative statistics from various parts of the world. The rate of homicide among South African Pagans was 171 per million in 1935. In 1924, Canada had a homicide rate of 15 per million. In 1926, the rate for England and Wales was 7 per million.

[1] Based on the population estimates for 1941.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

In the same year the rate for U.S.A. was 52 per million for the white population and 454 per million for the Negroes.[1]

In India at least all such calculations are bound to be rough and ready. The population figures for individual tribes and areas are often in doubt: some police statistics include all cases of violent death, some only the 'true' homicides. There can be no doubt that many crimes are concealed from the police. But the figures may serve as a basis of discussion.

II

I have already spoken of the 100 files of homicide cases which I have examined. Brief epitomes of these are given in an Appendix. These cases covered a period of 30 years, during which the total number of homicides could not have been more than 250—there were 121 Maria homicides in the last 10 years and the amount of crime was certainly not greater in the first decade than in the second. I have included only those cases which ended in the conviction of one or more of the accused.

The 100 cases involved the conviction of 117 people as follows:—

TABLE THREE

Punishments awarded in 100 cases, involving the conviction of 117 persons

Sentenced to death under S. 302, I.P.C.	21
Executed	18
Transportation for life (14 years imprisonment under S. 302, I.P.C.)	57
Various terms of imprisonment under S. 304, I.P.C. ...	39
Acquitted but detained as insane under S. 471, Cr.P.C.[2]	3

The great majority of persons convicted were men, as the next Table shows.

[1] Laubscher, op. cit., p. 307.

[2] This Section provides for the detention in safe custody of a person whose act would "but for the incapacity found, have constituted an offence". It does not involve detention in an asylum though it may lead to this. Deaf and dumb persons guilty of murder have been proceeded against under this Section.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TABLE FOUR

Sex-ratio in 100 cases, involving 117 convictions	
Male	112
Female	5

The Bison-horn Maria do not live in complete isolation. They are in contact with other people, what are often called civilized people. But this contact is mainly a business and commercial contact; it is not an emotional one. Normally there are few chances in any relationship between a Maria and a Hindu or Mussalman for the development of those intense and passionate feelings that may lead to murder. This will probably account for the very small number of people murdered who belonged to other communities.

TABLE FIVE

Illustrating caste of victims in 107 cases	
Fellow-Maria	99
Other castes	8

Two of these were killed for their possessions in straightforward robbery—very unusual incidents. One of the victims was a Kalar who was going to report a cattle-theft. One was a boy caught in a madman's fury. But it might have been anyone. Another was a Rawat. But the Rawat, who are the herdsmen of the Maria, live so closely with them as to count almost as members of the tribe. Once during a gambling quarrel a Mahara beat a Maria, a serious matter involving the Maria's excommunication. In one case a Mahara woman was chosen as a human sacrifice. In only one case was a member of another caste involved with a Maria woman. A Dhobi tried to seduce a Maria girl, but it was the girl who was murdered.

I have heard, however, of another case (not among the 100) where the wife of a Maria, one Poyami Masa, at Kodenar had an intrigue with a Kalar liquor-vendor. One night very late the woman—according to previous arrangement—got up and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

went behind the house, ostensibly to relieve herself, thinking her husband asleep. But he was really watching and when she did not return, he went in search for her and found her in sexual congress with the Kalar. He returned to the house, got his bow and double-pointed *engram* arrow and killed her. The Kalar made his escape.

III

SEASONAL VARIATIONS

The relative predominance of constitutional factors in crimes of violence and lust are believed by European criminologists to explain the very striking differences in the seasonal frequency of these crimes. Sullivan gives a Table based on the police reports of indictable offences for 1909 in England which shows that, while there is comparatively little variation in the frequency of crimes of acquisitiveness from month to month, there is a marked degree of seasonal frequency in crimes of violence and lust, giving a curve of incidence which rises to a maximum in the hot months. This may be explained by the fact that in these forms of delinquency biological factors play an important part.[1] Among the Bison-horn Maria seasonal variations, though less striking, do exist, as the following Table shows.

TABLE SIX

Showing the incidence of 100 homicides by the time of year

January	9
February	9
March	5
April	10
May	10
June	3
July	9
August	8
September	10
October	12
November	9
December	6

[1] W. C. Sullivan, *Crime and Insanity* (London, 1924), pp. 21 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 There is a definite increase in the hottest months of the year, April and May, and a corresponding increase in September and October which are also hot and enervating. On the other hand these variations may not be due entirely to climatic causes. The figure for June and July, for example, is only half that of the figure for September and October, but June and July are the months during which everybody is hard at work in their fields. June, in which only 3 murders occurred, is the busiest month of the year and sees the breaking of the monsoon. April and October, which show a heavy incidence of homicides, are festival periods, which are not only occasions for heavy drinking, but by providing opportunities for people to meet together make it possible for disputes to arise and old grievances to be remembered. Yet the influence of festivals must not be exaggerated, as Table Seven will show.

TABLE SEVEN

Festivals at which homicides occurred	
January (Bhimul or Gaddi Pandum)	2
February (Irpu Pandum)	1
April (Wijja or Marka Pandum)	3
October (Korta Pandum)	4
November (Nuka Nordana Pandum)	2

Only 12 murders occurred at festivals and not a single one at a marriage—a fact which in itself should dispose of the myth that landa rice-beer is the most important cause of homicide. For festivals and marriages are the chief occasions when this refreshing but potent drink is brewed and consumed.

IV

METHODS OF MURDER

Maria murders are generally straightforward enough: in only 4 cases were people killed while asleep and is only 6 from behind. There was only 1 case of poisoning. The following Table gives the methods used in 100 cases—

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674X

TABLE EIGHT

Means employed in 100 homicides	
Beating with godel axe	32
pharsi axe	1
gagra blade	1
log from fire	10
heavy stick	14
rice-husker	2
korki hoe	1
fists	1
Shooting with arrow	17
Stabbing with knife	2
arrow	5
trident	1
Strangling	4
Twisting neck	4
Drowning	2
Cutting throat	1
Poisoning	1
Dashing a child to the ground	1

TABLE NINE

Means employed by women in 5 cases	
Beating and twisting neck	1
Killing husband with axe	2
Killing co-wife with axe	1
Poisoning	1

Among these methods of murder we should especially remark two. Markami Hinga was the Siraha of his village; he had only recently begun his duties and seems to have been very proud of them. One day he had a sudden quarrel with his brother who was annoyed, as not infrequently happens, at having the whole work of the farm thrown upon him as a result of the other's sacred duties. As a result of his abuse Hinga got so angry that he rushed into the temple

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

of his god, took up the trident and chain and stabbed his brother twice in the chest, and so killed him.

There are only 4 cases of murder by throttling in the 100 under review, and it is remarkable that 3 of these occurred within 9 months of one another during the year 1933. The first was on 6 January near Nakulnar, the second on 21 February at Garmiri and the third on 3 August at Kaurgaon. Moreover, in each case the homicide tried to disguise his murder as a suicide by stringing the corpse of his victim to a tree. The first two villages in which these events occurred are close together and the third within gossip distance, and it is obvious that a sort of epidemic of murder by throttling spread among the people and then disappeared.[1]

V

THE STATISTICS OF SUICIDE

In any discussion of violent crime among aboriginals the light thrown by a consideration of suicide must not be ignored. Murder is to the Maria almost a kind of suicide, for discovery is generally inevitable but a man may willingly ruin his life provided at the same time he destroys his enemy. The Maria, as Table Nine shows, are more prone to suicide just as they are more prone to murder than the other tribesmen, and obviously the light hold that life has upon them and their impetuous and passionate temperament is the cause in either case. The reasons for murder or suicide sometimes coincide, and it is interesting to see how one type of personality reacts to a given situation by killing someone else and another type by killing himself. For example, it was a dispute about

[1] Adam gives an account of unusual methods of murder in the hill areas of Europe. 'In mountainous and other districts where the inhabitants are often endowed with exceptional strength and exceptional brutality, strange things sometimes happen. One day a woodcutter in the midst of a quarrel seized a large piece of wood over nine feet long, part of a tree which he had just cut down, and holding it in front of him like a ram rushed on his assailants, inflicting no fewer than five serious wounds (fracture of ribs, fracture of collar bone, dislocation of hip joint). In a quarrel in a tavern a young man of gigantic height seized the heavy top of the inn table and brandishing it in the air brought it down on the heads of the young men who were fighting with him, inflicting a dozen grave wounds on the skull'. – J. C. Adam, *Criminal Investigation* (London, 1924), p. 420.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

possession of a dancing outfit that led Wango to murder his betrothed Paike. But when Alami Mata had his splendid bison-horn head-dress, which he loved and cared for with devotion, stolen he did not seek out and kill the thief but was so miserable that he hanged himself. In several cases disputes about the right of a girl to visit her mother's house led to murder. In as many others it led to suicide. Sometimes a girl hangs herself because she is not allowed to go home. Sometimes the husband hangs himself out of loneliness and misery when his wife deserts him for her parents. A public insult caused Marvi Hinga to murder his mother-in-law. Had he been of a different temperament like Markami Pandu, who was abused and insulted by his wife for not working properly, he would have hanged himself. Fatigue drives some Maria to murder in a fit of exhausted rage, but others hang themselves instead.

Some sick people murder the magician who they believe has sent affliction upon them. Others commit suicide in order to escape from him. The Maria themselves identify homicide and suicide in so far that both lead to a violent disturbance of village life. Both involve them in various supernatural dangers, and the ghosts of both can be dealt with in much the same way.

R. S. Cavan discusses the relations of widow suicide and human sacrifice. The voluntary sacrifice of widows at the funerals of their husbands has been recorded in India and China, throughout the central portion of Negro Africa and among certain aristocratic American Indian tribes. These areas are also the areas of human sacrifice.

> In the Orient the sacrifices are a matter of history and are often recorded as accompanying the widow suicide. Among the preliterates, the sacrifices were noted in conjunction with the suicides by early white observers. Moreover, in few parts of the world was human sacrifice found except in the groups which also had Sati. Human sacrifice and Sati went hand in hand.[1]

The Maria do not have the custom of widow suicide, and human sacrifice is equally rare among them.

I will begin, as in the case of the homicides, with general statistics about suicide in Bastar during the last 10 years.

[1] R. S. Cavan, *Suicide* (Chicago, 1928), p. 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TABLE NINE

762

Number of suicides in Bastar in 10 years, 1931-40

Tribe or Caste	Number of Cases	Annual average of suicides to the million[1]
Bison-horn Maria ...	93	53·14
Ghotul Muria ...	22	22·00
Others (whole State) ...	130	36·11
Total ...	245	38·58

It is notable again that the highest figure is for the Bison-horn Maria and the lowest for the Ghotul Muria. The Muria, however, are more prone to suicide than murder, which is perhaps what we might expect from a tribe so singularly free of jealousy and passion.

TABLE TEN

Methods of suicides used by all tribes and castes (245 cases)

By cutting the throat	1
By hanging	214
By drowning	15
By poisoning	9
By means not fully reported	6

Every case, except one of drowning, of aboriginal suicide in Bastar has been by hanging. This may be due to the fact that the people are not adept at poisons—murder by poison is very rare among them—and because there are few wells in aboriginal villages, and the tanks and streams where they get their water are fairly shallow.

762 171 It is said that in India generally, drowning is the most common method of achieving suicide, and then hanging. In England, hanging comes first, then poisoning, then cutting the throat, and lastly drowning. In India men resort to hanging and drowning in about equal numbers but six out of seven

[1] Based on the population estimates of 1941.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

female suicides prefer drowning.[1] But this is not so among the Maria. One woman preferred to hang herself even on the very banks of the Indrawati, though the deep waters of the river were at hand.

In the 50 cases of which I have detailed information, 19 suicides were committed inside a building, 16 of them inside the dwelling-place of the family. In 7 other cases death occurred near the house. In the other 24 cases the suicide took place in the jungle, a rope or cloth being attached to the branch of a tree. Among trees the mahua (*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.) was the most popular with 6 cases, and after it the mango with 3. Otherwise there is a very great variety in the trees selected for this gloomy purpose; there do not seem to be any taboos observed, though I notice the sacred saja (*Terminalia tomentosa*, W. & A.) is not used—but this may be for the entirely practical reason that it does not have suitable overhanging branches.

The method of self-execution seems to be to climb up the tree, to attach and arrange the cord and then jump down. When the suicide occurs inside a house, the person stands on a fish-trap or basket and kicks it away. In many cases, the rope consists of the victim's own loin-cloth, turban or sari, but several different kinds of rope are also used. Rope made of the twisted siari (*Bauhinia vahlii*, W. & A.) creeper is perhaps the most common. Jute cords for tethering cattle, and ropes made of various kinds of bark are also used.

TABLE ELEVEN

Analysis of 50 Maria suicides by sex

Men	26
Women	24

The contrast between homicide and suicide in respect of the sex-ratio is very striking; 5 per cent stands against 48 per cent. There may be many reasons for this, chiefly that

[1] R. Ranchhodas and D. K. Thakore, *The Law of Crimes* (Bombay, 1911), p. 601, in the author's comment on Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code. But in the U.S.A., the order is said to be—for men—firearms, hanging, poisonous gas, corrosives, and—for women—gas, corrosives, firearms, drowning. In Japan, hanging first and then drowning are the favourite methods for both sexes.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 a woman ought not to kill and often lacks the means of killing —she does not usually learn to be expert with the bow and arrow or with the axe. It is possible that some of the suicides would have been murder, had there been the means and opportunity.

The suicide sex-ratio is remarkable when compared to the situation elsewhere. In Europe and America, there has been over a long period of years a far less equal ratio, varying from one woman to every three or five men. That these figures do vary suggests, however, that 'the propensity of men to commit suicide is probably not inherent in their sex, a conclusion further supported by figures for the Orient. For instance, [171] in Japan the proportion of women who commit suicide is much higher than for Europe or America. The situation in India is yet more at variance with the relations noted for the Occident'.[1]

TABLE TWELVE

Analysis of 50 Maria suicides by age

Under 15	1
Between 15 and 20	12
Between 20 and 25	9
Between 25 and 30	1
30 and over	5
40 and over	8
50 and over	8
Age not specified	6

There is not anything significant in the above Table except that we should notice that nearly half the suicides were of young people. The older men and women, by the time they have reached some position of dignity in the tribe, have consolations that help them to cling to life. Many of the suicides of the older people are due to insanity and intolerable disease believed to be the result of witchcraft.

[1] Cavan, op. cit., p. 308.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

133

Scenery in Dantewara Tahsil

[facing p. 48]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TABLE THIRTEEN

762

Analysis of 50 Maria suicides by the time of year

January	3
February	5
March	3
April	2
May	3
June	4
July	6
August	7
September	2
October	3
November	7
December	5

Here again there is nothing very significant, probably because there are not sufficient figures to indicate large variations. But we may note that July and August, which are the most gloomy months of the rains, months also that are filled with heavy and exacting work, show the largest number of suicides. If we take the figures for homicide and suicide together the highest figures are shown by July and August, and then again by October and November.

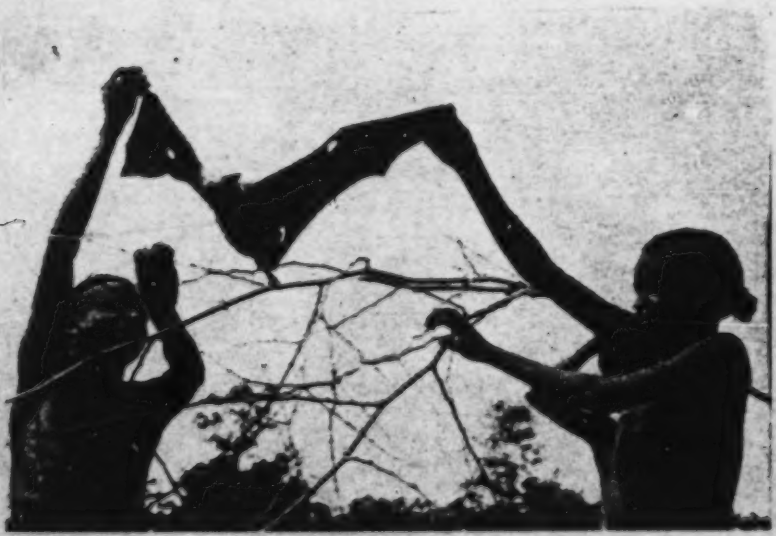
3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411
302
301

Dulha of Gadapal with bow and arrow

Boys catching a bat at Khutepal

224
302



[facing p.49]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CAUSES OF VIOLENT CRIME

I

HOMICIDE

674 I have divided the crimes rather arbitrarily, and, of course, other divisions in many cases would be possible. For example, some of the murders which I have put down under the heading of 'alcohol' might also be classified as quarrels over property, because it is anxiety about possession which seems to come to the front of a Maria's mind when he becomes intoxicated. 'Family quarrels' is also a large subject. The following Table gives a rough analysis of the causes of murder in 100 cases.

TABLE FOURTEEN

Causes of homicide in 100 cases

Robbery or accusation of robbery	8
Quarrels over property	15
Suspicion of magic or witchcraft	5
Insanity	5
Resentment at abuse or 'word-magic'	9
Revenge	6
Family quarrels	16
Sex motives	17
Alcohol	19

I have used the word 'cause' rather than 'motive', for motive implies premeditation, and comparatively few of these crimes were premeditated. Indeed some were little more than tragic accidents. For this reason it is not easy to fit many of them into such a scheme as that proposed, for example, by F. Tennyson Jesse who declares that 'every murder falls into one of six classes; it may belong in a greater or less degree to perhaps two of those classes, but in one of them it comes logically to rest'.[1] The six classes are as follows:—

[1] F. Tennyson Jesse, *Murder and its Motives* (London, 1924), p. 13.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I. Murder for gain. 674x
II. Murder from revenge.
III. Murder for elimination.
IV. Murder from jealousy.
V. Murder from lust of killing.
VI. Murder from conviction.

Among the Maria there are very few murders for gain, 674x
for where is the property to be acquired? It would be 152
laughable to imagine in a Maria village the situation so dear to the writer of detective stories, the murder of an elderly person by his heirs for the sake of his money. Murder from revenge occurs, but in not more than half a dozen cases. I describe later a remarkable case of murder for elimination. Murder from jealousy covers a number of the tragedies which involve relations between husband and wife. I am doubtful whether any of the Maria murders could be included under the heading 'Murder from lust of killing'.

Tennyson Jesse's sixth class 'Murder from conviction' is, I believe, much more common among the aboriginals and leads us to the vexed and difficult problem of how to deal with persons whose ideas of right and wrong vary in certain remarkable respects from those of the modern world. Without exception, every Maria believes that it is the right and [683]
proper thing to kill a witch or sorcerer. In this the Maria is not criminal; he is merely out-of-date. Two hundred years ago the best brains in Europe believed the same. Almost all Maria consider that a wife caught in the act of adultery with [684]
her lover deserves immediate execution, and here again the Maria are simply out-of-date, though in this case they are rather more behind the times than they are about witchcraft. Kinberg has an interesting passage on this subject. 685

> A comparison between the judgements passed on one type of action by different peoples, or by one people at different periods of its history, brings out how purely relative moral evaluations are. If a man catches his wife *in flagranti* with her lover and kills them both, he will in Sweden be condemned to a long term of penal servitude for manslaughter and his action will be strongly disapproved. In Latin countries, on the other hand, the same action would in the majority of cases be declared by the jury not to be culpable, and would cause no general moral indignation. Such is the difference in the moral evalua-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

tion of one and the same action in two civilized European countries at the same period. And there have even been times when, if a man has failed in such circumstances to kill both his wife and her lover, this has been so strongly disapproved that he has been punished with loss of life. Such an instance is quoted by Galo Sanchez from the old 14th century Castilian law. In a collection of judgements, one is described in which a knight was condemned to the gallows because, when he surprised his wife *in flagranti*, he was content with castrating the lover. He did not punish his wife at all. He ought to have killed both. This omission brought him to the gallows.[1]

This point has, of course, often been made, and Havelock Ellis quotes one criminologist as suggesting that, 'The criminal of today is the hero of our old legends. We put in prison the man who in another century would have been the dreaded and respected chief of a clan or a tribe' and another as saying, 'How many of Homer's heroes would today be in a convict prison!' It was on a theory of atavism that Lombroso erected his famous structure of criminology. Havelock Ellis properly reminds us that, 'If we are wise we shall be very tender in arousing our indignation against the social habits of lower races, even when these involve such an act as parricide, for the distance between ourselves and even the lowest races is quite measurable. Our social code is not far removed from that of the Maori who considered that it was murder to kill the man to whom he had given hospitality, but not murder to run his spear through the stranger whom he met on his morning walk. We today regard it as a great crime to kill our own fathers or children: but even the most civilized European nation—whichever that may be—regards it as rather glorious to kill the fathers and children of others in war. We are not able yet to grasp the relationship between men. In the same way, while we resent the crude thefts practised by some lower races, we are still not civilized enough to resent the more subtle thefts practised among ourselves which do not happen to conflict with the letter of any legal statute'.[2]

Ten years earlier Stanley Hall had declared in even more striking phrases, 'Extreme views of the abnormality of crime may well make us pause, when we reflect on its relativity.

[1] O. Kinberg, *Basic Problems of Criminology* (London, 1935), p. 50.
[2] Havelock Ellis, *The Criminal* (London, 1914), p. 251.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Socrates and Jesus were criminals according to the legal standards of their day. We confine and kill those who in the days of Abraham and Ulysses or in positions of power and influence would be heroes. Of the ten chief crimes of the Hebrews of old, only one is now a crime. Many of the knights and barons of the Middle Ages were brigands, but were not then outlawed by public sentiment as abnormal. There is deep and wide-spread feeling in every community that in extreme hunger all things belong to all. The thought of killing our own fathers or children is monstrous, but we kill the fathers and children of other people with impunity in war. Many of our greatest criminals would have been normal and perhaps eminently useful citizens in other ages and places. Judged by severe and inner standards of morals, most of us have committed every crime'.[1]

So also many of the Maria homicides described in this book will be recognized not as anti-social crimes, but as expressions of the strongly social instinct of the murderer. A father seduces the wives of his sons, and in order to enjoy them in freedom drives the boys and their mother out of his house and refuses them support. The murder of such a man expresses a social, rather than an anti-social, instinct. To the Maria the witch is the greatest menace to the order and security of daily life. When he murders a witch, therefore, he is the victim of intellectual error rather than of murderous passion. Adam gives an interesting example from Europe. 'A case is reported by M. Friedmann, of Weisbaden, of two soldiers who agreed that the one should shoot the head off the other. The victim firmly believed that the survivor could with certain words of sorcery charm his head on again and that after the operation the latter would be able to discover hidden treasure. The first half of the experiment was duly performed and apparently without any difficulty, but the sorcerer dismally failed to replace his comrade's head as agreed upon. It was established that he did not intend to kill his friend, but, with his assistance, expected them both to discover hidden treasure. Nor could he be considered negligent or careless as he did what he did carefully and on purpose, being convinced of the harmlessness of the act. If

[1] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence* (London and New York, 1904), Vol. I, pp. 340 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

he was punished for anything it was for mere ignorance and stupidity. This incident actually took place as recently as 1900'.[1]

Sir Cecil Walsh advances the view that many Indian village crimes are of a 'judicial character', and that the people are driven to commit them by the law's delays.

> A very large proportion of the cases of violence in northern India arise out of hot blood, ungovernable temper, and the natural inclination of the villager, who is generally miles away from any police, to take the law into his own hands and to fight out his quarrel on the spot. There is nothing like this in agricultural districts in England. It has been said that the agricultural classes are not inferior in intelligence to the English peasant. If natural acumen, rapidity of thought, and liveliness of imagination are meant, it may be so. But whether the cause be their lack of education, the narrowness of their religion, the climate, or, as I have often thought, their lack of association with men of attainments superior to their own, the fact is that they fail to use their intelligence, and upon slight provocation lose all power of reasoning and self-control. It is not much good having an equivalent of intelligence if you don't use it when it is wanted. Whether it is a question of cattle trespass, irrigation, family enmity, an old personal grudge, a sexual difficulty, or some quite trivial dispute, the average cultivator will break out at once into abuse, often of the most disgusting character, which develops rapidly into a fight, in which the relations and friends on either side will join in substantial numbers if they happen to be near. If one disputant, finding himself seriously outnumbered, a disadvantage which the villager invariably hopes to impose upon his enemy, should discreetly retire, the fight will take place later on, more or less in cold blood, when both sides are ready. It is impossible to regard these law-breakers and disturbers of the peace as criminals in the ordinary signification of that term. They are probably as honest and industrious as the average respectable citizen in a civilized centre of industry. They want speedy justice, or, what they regard as the same thing, the vindication of their own opinion. They prefer the British variety. But it takes time, and they can't wait. They are great believers in getting in the first blow, and,

[1] Adam, op. cit., p. 262. A remarkable parallel is provided by a case that occurred at Nagpur in 1923, when a constable and a pious friend made a pact to offer their heads to Kali in order to obtain immortality. They mistook a statue of the Virgin Mary for the goddess and the constable stabbed himself to death before it.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

to tell the truth, few of them have learned anything else. And they know that they are pretty certain to get it if they don't give it.[1]

How far this opinion applies to Bastar the reader must judge for himself after a perusal of the cases examined in this book.

II

SUICIDE

On the reasons for aboriginal suicide Briffault has some insufferable words. 'Suicide', he says, 'for all sorts of absurdly frivolous reasons is exceedingly common among all primitive peoples. The chief reason lies probably in the fact that, while the mind of individualistic civilized man is constantly projected into the future and occupied with schemes, primitive man, like the child, is destitute of foresight and lives almost entirely in the present; hence the impulse of the moment, however trifling in itself the object of it may be, determines action uncounteracted by any far-reaching consideration'.[2] Briffault mocks at the idea that primitive people, who usually have little real affection for one another, could possibly kill themselves for love, and he quotes Detzner as saying of the suicides of Melanesia and Papua that every heroic motive is lacking. 'The momentary despair caused by the natural or violent death of wife or husband, the complete lack of energy to take up the battle of life singly, alone induce these resourceless people to take the step, and love for the deceased, which in our sense of the word is unknown to them, lends no higher, hallowing significance to the wretched deed'.[3]

To the unsympathetic missionary without desire to understand or the hurried traveller with no time to enquire, reports of suicides casually heard and indifferently explored must often seem trivial enough. But does it never occur to these reporters that the triviality of motive so often advanced is really a screen to protect the real significance of the deed from official or merely inquisitive eyes? That primitive man does not take suicide lightly is shown by the extraordinary

[1] Sir C. Walsh, *Indian Village Crimes* (London, 1929), pp. 10 f.
[2] R. Briffault, *The Mothers* (London, 1927), Vol. II, pp. 143 ff.
[3] H. Detzner, *Vier Jahre unter Kannibalen* (Berlin, 1920), p. 198.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

000 precautions he takes against the ghost, while the very fact—which Briffault mentions—that suicide can be made a deadly weapon against an enemy indicates what a serious business it is.

762 For the Maria of Bastar, suicide is a wretched deed; it certainly has no higher, hallowing significance; but it is no light or trivial matter due to lack of foresight. Rather it is caused by an all too clear vision of the future: the leper looks across a wilderness of ever-deepening misery; the widow sees her whole life shadowed by irreparable loss; wife or husband see their home's happiness wrecked about them; a man sees his future darkened by the memory of an unforgiveable insult. The people themselves have no desire to glorify the deed, neither do they condemn it. In perhaps the majority of cases psychoneurotic or psychotic symptoms have been recognized by the people themselves, and they regard the unhappy victims as driven to death by their own disordered minds.

The following Table gives the reasons for suicide among all tribes and castes for the 245 incidents in the last 10 years. The classification is one made by the police.

TABLE FIFTEEN

Reasons for suicide in 245 cases in Bastar State

Insanity	20
Disease	52
Leprosy	6
Grief on account of bereavement	17
Love-affairs	11
Quarrels over property	3
Quarrels between wife and husband	55
Other domestic quarrels	43
Fear of scandal	11
Intoxication	1
Economic: starvation and financial ruin	3
Fear of courts and officials	3
Bad treatment by employers	2
Failing in a school examination	1
Not properly reported	17

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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

When we turn to the 50 sample cases (details of which are given in an Appendix) we find the following. 762

TABLE SIXTEEN

Reasons for suicide in 50 Maria cases

Insanity	7
Disease and fear of magic	9
Grief and loneliness	4
Fear of officials	2
Regret for harsh behaviour to someone loved ...	3
Resentment at a rebuke	7
An intolerable home	4
Antagonism between wife and husband	9
Intoxication	1
Economic causes	1
Special cases	3

There is no evidence for supposing any of the suicides were due to a desire for 'identification with the dead', although in one case a youth slept all night before his death in the granary where the sacred Pot of the Dead was kept. Nor is the desire for revenge specially evident, though it may, of course, have been concealed from the authorities. No doubt the feeling that one's death will cause trouble to one's relatives and so pay them out is often present in suicides that are due to temper. Not one case appears to have been due to sexual jealousy, though several were due to sexual disappointment. The majority seem to have been caused by a desire to escape from a physical or domestic situation that had become intolerable. The insult, as in other primitive cultures, is a very potent stimulus to suicide. This too creates an intolerable situation from which escape is necessary, but I do not notice any stress on the protest which a death makes against those who have done harm.

Suicide has been studied with some care among the Indian tribes of North America. The older view was that it was exceptional among primitive people. Thus Hrdlicka says that it was rare on the San Carlos reservation, "infrequent" among the Jicarillas: 'among the Navaho rare instances occur from destitution, despondency or drink'. Among the Papago, Pima, Zuni and other tribes suicide 171

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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

was equally rare. Among the Tarahumare occasionally a despondent individual ended his life by hanging. Everywhere it was said to be specially rare among women. Where it occurred it was said to be due to despondency.[1] It was reported as unusual among the Havasupai.[2]

Recent research, however, suggests that the tendency to self-destruction is commoner than was formerly supposed, and Voegelin says that 'modern inquiry into the subject is revealing a growing number of tribes in northeastern California in which suicide was practised'. For both the Klamath and Modoc 'suicide is a romantic gesture, motivated by disappointment in love and, indirectly, jealousy. Women hang themselves, men in some instances drown themselves. Among the Atsugewi, Achomawi and Surprise Valley Paiute, suicide was usually motivated either through jealousy or quarrelling; eating wild parsnip root was one of the more generally accepted modes; the bodies of suicides were accorded the same disposal as the bodies of persons dying natural deaths, but only close relatives wailed'.[3]

Among the Tanaina, suicide is said to have become more common 'when old men lived to see the last of their sons die'.[4] Among the Mohave 'the conflict between longing for the dead and the impossibility of catching up with them should one live too long after they died led to an appalling number of suicides'.[5] W. N. Fenton traces the increase to contact with civilization. In a study of the Seneca and Mohawk Indians, he writes, 'Public opinion condemned as cowardice male suicides to avoid physical suffering, such as torture, but condoned cases of women who were mistreated by lovers. The greatest frequency came during the period immediately following white contact when conditions were ripe for social disorganization. The principal motive with women was revenge of mistreatment by husbands who deserted them at middle age; children resented restraint,

[1] A. Hrdlicka, *Physiological and Medical Observations*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bull. XXXIV, 1908, p. 171.
[2] L. Spier, *Havasupai Ethnography*, Anthropological Papers of the American Bureau of Natural History, Vol. XXIX, 1928, p. 343.
[3] E. W. Voegelin, 'Suicide in Northeastern California', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXIX (New Series), p. 456.
[4] C. Osgood, 'Tanaina Culture', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXV (New Series), p. 714.
[5] G. Devereux, 'Mohave Soul Concepts', *American Anthropologist*, Vol XXXIX (New Series), p. 422.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and men sought to avoid physical suffering, either martyrdom or blood revenge; some cases involve loss of status . . . Avoidance remains the dominating motive of Iroquois suicide."[1]

Suicide among the Trobriand Islanders, says Malinowski, 'is certainly not a means of administering justice, but it affords the accused and oppressed one—whether he be guilty or innocent—a means of escape and rehabilitation. It looms large in the psychology of the natives, is a permanent damper on any violence of language or behaviour, on any deviation from custom or tradition, which might hurt or offend another. Thus suicide, like sorcery, is a means of keeping the native to the strict observance of the law, a means of preventing people from extreme and unusual types of behaviour. Both are pronounced conservative influences and as such are strong supports of law and order'.[2]

This is a little too emphatic for the situation in Bastar, but duly modified might apply there also. But whatever primitive suicide may be, it is not trivial. Nor is it altogether dishonourable. The man insulted escapes, it is true, but he restores his honour. The girl forced into an unwelcome marriage runs away from it, but she preserves her dignity and prestige.

[1] W. N. Fenton, *Iroquois Suicide*, Bureau of American Ethnology; Anthropological Papers, Washington, 1941, p. 134.
[2] B. Malinowski, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (London, 1932), p. 98.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC

I

THE ORIGIN OF MAGIC

754 713 The origin of black magic has been described by the Maria in a number of villages and the reports generally agree. 'The first man in the world to practise magic was Nandraj Guru. All the gods[1] and the Dead went to him to learn the art. At one time seven gods were being taught by him daily. One day a Maria of the Maja clan was digging roots in the jungle when he heard voices and went stealthily to see what was happening. From behind a tree he saw Nandraj Guru teaching the seven gods. Every day the Maria went to the place and overheard everything that was said. On the last day the pupils brought offerings of pigs and chickens for their Guru. He sacrificed them and divided the meat into seven equal shares. But to his surprise after a few moments he noticed that the number of shares had grown to eight. He called his disciples and said, "Search the jungle around, for there must surely be a ghost or an animal hiding near". The search revealed the presence of the Maria on the branch of a tree and he was brought before the Guru.

'Nandraj said, 'Listen, everyone here is a god and you are the only human being who has learned our magic. Unless you give an offering as the gods have done, your son will die". "What offering should I give?" asked the Maria "In your house" said the Guru, "there is a pigeon. Offer that to me". Now by the word "pigeon" the Guru meant the Maria's only son and the reason why he demanded him was that his knowledge could only be imparted to immortal beings who would use it in the proper way. But the Guru feared that now that a human being had discovered the secret, he would make use of the magic at all times. There would be no deaths. Pain would be banished, and the gods would have

[1] God, spelt without a capital, represents the Hindi *deo*. The Gondi *pen* is translated 'clan-god'. A *deo* is little more than what the Middle Ages called a 'demon'.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

no Dead to people their kingdom. But if this human being were to eat a bit of the liver of his own son, then there would be deaths in the world and the Maria himself would have learned the knowledge of evil and death and would become a magician.

'The Maria, little knowing that when Nandraj Guru said "pigeon", he meant his son, asked one of the gods to go to his

A typical Anga Pen, a clan-god. Carried by four men, it is sometimes used to detect witches.

house and fetch the bird. The god killed the boy, removed the liver, and the Maria and the seven gods ate it together. As the Maria unwittingly ate the liver of his own son, he was filled with the knowledge of death and evil, and became the first sorcerer. Before he died, he taught his own disciples the art and today many men know how to harm and kill their enemies. But in every case the liver must be obtained, for the liver is the *jiua* (soul) of all beings.'

In Khutepal the Maria said that they began learning magic in the month of June. The young disciples must go to the jungle and set up a small stone which represents an uraakal menhir. To the left of the pillar they place another stone flat on the ground to represent a danyakal. Then between the uraakal and the danyakal a number of small stones are placed in line from right to left. This line of stones represents one kind of magic, say the magic for curing the sick. Parallel to this they place a second line of small stones. This represents another kind of magic, say doing injury to an enemy.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754A third line is put for making women barren, a fourth line for destroying crops and cattle, and so on.

Then the Guru begins to teach the young men in the name of Nandraj, Bodhraj, Kirkod, Markod, Indor and Bandor. He holds a bamboo stick in his hand and as he recites his mantra he beats the stones in turn, beginning with the uraskal and striking each stone from left to right. He must not, however, touch the danyakal with his stick. The disciples chant the mantra after him, and then one by one they stand up and strike the stones with the stick. By December the whole art of black magic is acquired.

At the beginning of the course of study, the disciples subscribe to buy a pig and chicken for their Guru. At the end they also bring offerings and a pot of rice-beer. On the last day a little rice is placed on the danyakal stone and the chicken brought by the disciples is made to eat it. Then it is killed and the boys feast with their Guru.

X 674 754 One homicide not in our list, which occurred at Dhurli, was connected with such a school of magic. A youth named Telami Dhurwa used to go daily to Dogi Para to learn magic from an older man of the same name. The rule here was that from time to time the students should subscribe for a pig and that each should take their instructor a pot of rice-beer. One day Dhurwa and his fellow-students took the required pig and rice-beer, and after their class was finished they feasted with their Guru. On their way home the boys began to quarrel, and Dhurwa and another boy killed a third boy named Hunga. The people at Dhurli said that Hunga's soul [775] was not mingled with the dead because he was learning black magic, and a memorial stone was not erected for the same reason. Hunga in fact became a very dangerous ghost, a Rau [682] Bhut. The two boys were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment as no intention to murder was proved. When [783] Dhurwa was released he had to offer, in addition to the usual ceremonies, a special and expensive sacrifice to his clan-god.

II

THE SORCERER'S METHODS

754 The Maria sorcerer goes about his business in much the same way as elsewhere in India or the world. He may attack

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

his enemy directly by blowing something at him, by putting 754
a charm into his food, by performing certain rites or by the evil eye. He may turn into an animal and attack his foe in wild and bestial guise. He may obtain the services of a ghost or a godling to do his work for him.

Stories illustrating all these different methods are common in the Maria villages. At Khutepal I was told 'how a man there could transform himself into a tiger. He would then lie hid in the jungle and when any human being or cow came by, he used to kill and devour him. He then took his human form again and came home and lay with his wife'. After he had killed five or six people in this way, the villagers finally summoned up courage to track down the 'tiger' and kill it. A watch was kept and one day to their surprise and horror they saw the man actually changing into a tiger and then back to human form. They rushed at him and killed him instantly. Similar stories were told me in Dhurli, but here they said that it was most common for such things to happen in the great Zamindari of Jeypore. It is generally believed that if a were-tiger is injured, similar marks will appear on the human body of the man who has possessed it.

Sometimes instead of turning into an animal the sorcerer 754
sends an animal to do his business for him. There are many 825
stories of how people have been attacked by bears and tigers on this account. Indeed many Maria believe that no animal or snake will ever attack a human being unless it is incited to do so by magic. Once on the way from Pordem to Rewali I saw the funeral pyre of a snake. A little while previously a very long snake marked with alternate black and yellow bands had been sent to Rewali by a magician to kill one of his enemies, Nupo Bira. Bira, however, was able to kill the snake in time, and its body was then carried out of the village and cremated beyond the boundary-line. Four pegs of tendu wood were driven into the ground at the four corners of the pyre, and the people claimed that the ritual cremation together with the pegs would effectively protect Bira from any further attack.[1]

[1] An extraordinary case occurred at Bhandara in 1929. A Kunbin (Hindu) woman was bitten by a snake and to avoid further trouble installed the image of Nagoba (the cobra god) in her house. This deity used to possess her and she gained a wide reputation as a healer. One day a fisherwoman, haunted by evil spirits, came for treatment.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 Witches seem to prefer the direct attack. At Mokhpal I was given a vivid description of how a witch performed her hideous rites. 'She goes out of her house at night and finds an ant-hill. She takes off all her clothes and removes even the waist-band. Seven times she goes round the hill. She appears more like a ghost than a human being. Anyone who looks at her goes blind at the sight. She goes to her victim's house, places a bit of grass on his breast and sucks his blood through it. She takes it back to the ant-hill and mixes the blood with milk. Then she can tell by looking at it whether that man will be lucky or unlucky. If the milk is red, he will die, but if it is white wealth will come to his house. If a man dies the witch goes to the grave, revives him and cuts off his head'.

At Tikanpal I was given another account. 'A witch sees a youth and desires him, but she is not content to lie with him as a lover. She must devour his whole body. She goes to him at night and turns his liver over inside his body. After he has been buried, she takes the body out of the grave. She eats the flesh and drinks the blood and puts the bones back into the grave. Sometimes when she robs a man of his blood, she puts it in a bit of broken pot and cooks it on a fire which must be made of a single piece of wood'.

Thirdly, and most sinister, a sorcerer is able to employ the services of a ghost or an evil spirit. Here the danger to the intended victim is, of course, twofold, for there is not only the malice of the magician but also the power of a supernatural being who has become his ally. It is notable that the ghosts of executed murderers are specially liable to be so used by the magicians.

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Witches also have the power of affecting the domestic life of their victims. At Samgiri the Maria described how the witch could destroy a man's seed and, even though he were not impotent, he would never be able to have a child. This happened at Kuchepal where a man was in love with a widow who was a witch. After a time he left her, and in revenge she destroyed his seed. When after a long time he found

The Kunbin stripped herself and her patient and then overwhelmed with frenzy thrust a burning log into her unfortunate victim's belly and killed her. She removed all the internal organs of the thorax and abdomen and offered them to Nagoba, claiming that in this way the hostile spirits had been destroyed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

133
343

Distant view of the Baladila Hills.

[facing p. 64]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 that his wife did not bear him a child, he went to the Waddai who discovered the real reason, performed the proper rites and soon a large family came into being.

754 755 841 Witches can injure women by prolonging their menstrual periods. The Siraha can counter this by offering sacrifices to the Dead and to the Mirchuk. In Kameli a woman who was suffering from mennhorragia was cured by this means. [762] But sometimes the Siraha can do nothing, and in despair the unhappy woman may hang herself.

754 At Borgum I was told that only widows can perform black magic and that they usually call on the ghosts of the dead to help them in their wicked deeds. Here they gave me an interesting account of how a witch can take precautions against discovery. She takes her familiar, say the ghost of a murderer or suicide, with her to an ant-hill and there she 'binds its mouth' by removing some of the earth from the hill and uttering charms. She says to the ghost, 'When the Siraha questions you, do not disclose my name'. Then she replaces the earth. It is believed that, just as any earth that is removed from an ant-hill is automatically filled up the next day, so misfortune will enter the house of the ghost she has bound if it betrays her.

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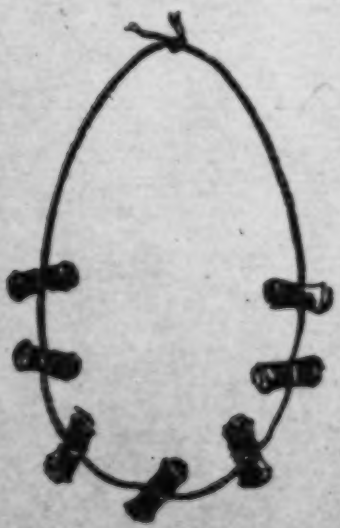

Charm against disease, made of small bits of chicken-bone.

Dread of this witchcraft or enchantment is a very powerful factor driving men to violence, for the fear is still a live one and the dangers are supposed to be great. Guma Hunga left his home and village because he believed that his family was being bewitched by a man called Burgi. A year afterwards he saw his enemy in the new village to which he had moved, and murdered him in a sudden access

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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'Rice in the mouth and curry in the hand.'
Mother and child figure in several murder cases

[Facing p. 65]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 693 of fear. Sori Bhima killed a neighbour Kosa, who suffered from yaws, believing him to be a wizard and responsible for the death of his children.

Vedta Sukra murdered his uncle Kola, the headman of Surguda, for being a wizard. Three years before, Sukra's three-year old daughter had died, and the cause had been diagnosed as Kola's magic. Immediately before the tragedy, Sukra's little son died after a month's illness, and members of the family went to a Siraha at Sarjiguda to find out why. The Siraha invoked the deity Madin Deo onto his person, and the deity declared through him that the death was the result of Kola's magic. The next day Sukra went with a number of villagers to the place where his child had been cremated. Heaps of rice were placed in front of the ashes, in the names of Mirchuk (which kills children), the Village Mother, the Departed, Bhagavan and the suspect Kola. A chicken was allowed to make its choice among the heaps, and it pecked up rice from those of Mirchuk and Kola. From this the people deduced that Kola had killed the child with the help of Mirchuk Deo.

The following day Kola was found lying dead in a pool of blood on his own thrashing-floor. Sukra admitted his crime and no doubt considered that his action was justified and indeed laudable.

754 578 One day the sago palm belonging to Hunga of Gudse village ceased to give the usual juice. Hunga went to the village Siraha, a young man called Kosa, to find out what was the matter, and received the reply that it was due to the magic of Pandru, one of the neighbours. Sometime later, Pandru and Kosa met in the local liquor shop and had a drink together, and presently Kosa accused Pandru to his face of doing magic against Hunga's tree. Pandru became very angry at this, and abused Kosa and his gods. Expressing himself in typical Maria fashion, he pulled out a few of his pubic hairs and threw them on Kosa's head. Kosa slapped Pandru's face twice and went away.

Nothing happened for five months. But then on the evening of 14 April 1922, Kosa went out to look for a straying cow. His way took him near Pandru's house who, when he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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saw his enemy, got out his bow and arrow and shot him in the stomach.[1]

III

THE POWER OF BLOOD

The belief in the magical power of blood is world-wide, and has been so fully studied that I need only briefly refer to it here. Its virtues are imparted by the blood-covenant, by drinking, by bathing in it and by being baptized in it. Charms against sickness are sometimes written in blood in China. The blood bath was believed to be a cure for leprosy down to the Middle Ages; the idea even occurs in Grimm's fairy-tales where leprosy is treated by a bath of the blood of innocent maidens. Constantine the Great was advised to bathe in the blood of virgin children to cure an illness, but the parents' cries dissuaded him and he was miraculously healed instead.

'In the past', says Haikerwal, 'the custom of human sacrifice was common in India chiefly amongst the Dravidians. One of its forms was Purusamedha, which was celebrated for the attainment of supremacy over all created beings and at which eleven human beings and eleven barren cows were offered up. The Puranas and Tantras also contain frequent references to Narabali or human sacrifice to the goddess Chandika. These Tantrik sacrifices to Kali or Chandika were formerly common. People were freely offered in the days of Maharatta rule, and in Western India there are many temples existing even today at which such sacrifices were common only a century ago. In the North-East of India also human sacrifice to Kali was very common'.[2]

Crooke gives a number of modern examples. 'In 1870, a Mohammedan butcher losing his child was told by a Hindu

[1] This fear of witchcraft is by no means confined to the aboriginals. In 1881, a Gwara schoolmaster in the Central Provinces lost several of his cattle and his children fell ill. He traced the cause to a Powar sorcerer. He dressed up in a green skirt, green shirt, green cap, and put bells on his feet to make himself appear like his goddess and killed the sorcerer with a trident from the village temple. In 1935, some Hindus killed a Gond medicine-man in the Amraoti District because he threw a charmed lemon (believed to be infected with disease) into their compound. In Mandla District in 1935, a Mohammedan Sub-Inspector of Police, believing a Panka woman had "overlooked" his child, sent his constables to force her to remove the charm. She was beaten with castor plants, made to drink water from a Chamar's shoe and subjected to other indignities.

[2] Haikerwal, op. cit., p. 68.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

conjuror that if he washed his wife in the blood of a boy, his next infant would be healthy. To ensure this result a child was murdered. A similar case occurred in Muzaffarnagar, where a child was killed and the blood drunk by a barren woman'. Later, in the same locality, 'a childless Jat woman was told that she would attain her desire if she bathed in water mixed with the blood of a Brahman child. A Hindu coolie at Mauritius bathed in and drank the blood of a girl, thinking that thereby he would be gifted with supernatural powers'.[1] More recently three cases of the murder of children in order to obtain offspring occurred in the Punjab in 1921, and in one of these a barren woman bathed in the child's blood.

In a small village in Chanda District in 1935, a Maria and a Marar planned to sacrifice a boy or girl at the Holi festival to improve the crops. The other villagers objected, but on the night of the festival, as the Holi fire was dying down, they forced an elderly Marar to stand before the fire, stripped him naked and threw him into the flames. In the following year a little Kurmi girl was killed by two women on behalf of the priest of a Mahadeo temple on the bank of the Narbada River in Hoshangabad District. They cut out a little of the left lobe of the liver while the child was still alive—the liver was needed for the treatment of a merchant.

In the *Katha Sarit Sagara* of Somadeva a pregnant queen asked her husband to gratify her craving by making a tank full of blood for her to bathe in. In order to avoid taking human life, he had a tank filled with the juice of lac, and the woman thinking it was blood, was satisfied. In the tale of Devasmita in the same collection a king is told by the Brahmins that, if he wished to have a large number of children, he must kill his son and offer up his flesh in the fire. When his wives smelt the smell of the sacrifice, each bore the king a son.[2]

Here blood is effective for the fertilization of the human body, but among the aboriginals (as in the Meriah sacrifice of the Khond) it is chiefly valued for its enrichment of the soil. This belief is probably still very widely held in Bastar and

[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 172 f. See Halliday, *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXXV (1934), p. 404.
[2] Penzer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 98.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Grigson quotes an interesting example reported by the police from Madder in the Bhopalpatnam Zamindari. On the night of 13 June 1937, a Mohammedan woman asleep in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a sharp instrument, and woke to see what she believed to be two Maria running away. 'The police enquiry elicited information that many Maria in Kutru Zamindari before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice seed before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot'.[1]

Cases of human sacrifice are not common, and in the whole of Bastar only 3 have been proved in the last 10 years, though there is reasonable ground to suppose that in 2 other cases, which did not proceed to a conviction, such sacrifice was the real motive of the crime.[2]

The most notorious example of human sacrifice occurred in 1940. The Raj Gond Zamindar of Bhopalpatnam had been removed from office because he was insane, and his nephew wanted to succeed him. He made a number of representations to the Darbar which were rejected. As a last resort, he decided to offer a sacrifice to the family deity, Bhumsaria Deo, whose temple is situated in a remote part of the Zamindari. A fatherless child about five years old was kidnapped and taken to the shrine. The usual worship was performed and red powder applied to the image of the god. A chicken was killed. The boy's hands and feet were washed, and the Zamindar's nephew himself applied red powder to the child's forehead and put into his mouth rice that had been offered to the deity. He prayed with folded hands that he should be given the Zamindari. He then, with the help of his assistants, laid the child on the ground before the

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 221.

[2] The memory of the Meriah sacrifices is preserved in a game played by the Maria and Muria of North Bastar. In this Meriah Karsana, a gang of boys kidnap their victims and 'sacrifice' them to an imaginary goddess.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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image, and with a long sharp knife cut his throat until the head was completely severed from the body. This is the normal method of sacrificing a pig or chicken. The crime was discovered and the would-be Zamindar and two of his assistants were hanged.

The second case, which occurred among the Bison-horn Maria, I will describe immediately. The third example was in 1934 when a Muria of the north, who had not been getting good harvests, was accused of vowing to the goddess of his irrigation tank that, if the winter crops were good, he would offer her a child. That year he had unusually good crops, and in fulfilment of his vow he is said to have killed his nephew, an orphan boy of fourteen years, whom he had reared from infancy. The accused was sentenced to death by the Sessions Judge, but was acquitted by the Appellate Court, and the murder went undiscovered.

A very mysterious crime occurred in Jhoriabadhan in 1923. A little boy named Sukra about two-and-a-half years old disappeared and was never seen again. An elderly Maria of the village was accused of his murder, but was acquitted for lack of evidence. I have little doubt that this was a case of human sacrifice. It was proved in Court that about a month before the child's disappearance the accused told some friends while they were crossing over his embankment that he had promised to sacrifice a male child if the dam did not burst. He warned them that they should not allow their children to pass that way for fear they should fall in. At this stage he was probably thinking that the deity of the tank would herself push a child into the water. But later when this did not happen, he himself probably drowned the child.

IV

THE HUMAN SACRIFICE AT MARDUM

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Kuhrami Guddi of Mardum near Katakalian had built a tank for irrigating his fields. Finding that he was not getting such good crops as he wanted, he plotted to find a pregnant woman[1] and sacrifice her to the spirits presiding over the

[1] Crimes against pregnant women are probably always motivated by superstition. Some extraordinary examples are found in *A Hangman's Diary*, edited by Albrecht Keller (London, 1928).
In 1577 at Bamberg (Germany) Nicklauss Stuller of Aydtsfeld was

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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782

tank, Mirchuk Deo and the Yer Kanyang or Water Maiden.

On Wednesday, 20 April 1938, the usual ceremonies for the newly-born daughter of Guddi's nephew, Hirma, were being celebrated at Guddi's house. About midday a Mahara woman named Bote, who was four months pregnant, came to the house and joined the party. It was suggested later that Guddi had met the woman that morning while he had been engaged on repairs to the village Rest-house. She had been working there and when she left with her axe and crowbar, Guddi followed her and persuaded her to come home with him. Whether it happened just like this or not, it certainly seems probable that Guddi had already determined that Bote was to be his victim. He made her drink rice-beer and when the other visitors prepared to leave, persuaded her to stay on and take some food. The food (since, as a Mahara, Bote would not have eaten from the Maria's hands) was probably more rice-beer and it looks as though Guddi succeeded in making the woman more or less fuddled, for she stayed on in the house till evening and Guddi persuaded her not to go away by promising presents for her children.

Early in the evening Guddi left the house and found his brother Nari, who was joint owner with him of the tank, and his nephew Hirma sitting in a small open shed outside. He told them that he had decided to make a sacrifice of a foetal child, and that Bote was to provide it. It will be noted that the important part of the sacrifice was not the mother so much as the unborn child. Nari later claimed that he tried to dissuade Guddi from this plan, but Guddi, who was the head

drawn out on a sledge and his body was torn thrice with red-hot tongs before he was executed on the wheel. He and two associates had committed eight murders. First he shot a horse-soldier; secondly he cut open alive a pregnant woman in whom was a dead child; thirdly he cut open a pregnant woman in whom was a female child; fourthly he cut open a pregnant woman in whom were two male children. One of his associates said they had committed a great sin and that he would take the infants to a priest for baptism but the other associate, saying that he would act as priest and baptise them, took them by the legs and dashed them to the ground.

In 1530 at Nuremberg Hans Muller aged 60 was executed on the wheel for the murder of his sister who was pregnant. After the murder he "dealt lustfully" with her and buried the body in a field.

In 1601 at Nuremberg Bastian Grübl, a thief, was executed. He confessed to twenty murders and among his victims were five pregnant women. These he had caused to live in debauchery with his companions, then cut them open and cut off the hands of the infants and made candles of the hands to be used in burglaries.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 762 of the family, said that he would take all responsibility and that he had already prepared the woman by making her drunk.

When it became dark Bote picked up her axe and crowbar, and at last insisted on going home. Guddi said that, as it was dark, he would go with her for part of the way. He took a knife and an axe and persuaded Nari to accompany them. After they had gone some two hundred and fifty yards, Guddi caught hold of the woman and when she began to scream, pressed her throat to silence her. The two men then dragged her about half a mile to the tank. They took her into the water and Guddi pushed her head under and held her there until she was drowned. He then cut open her belly with his knife, half removed the foetus and slit its neck. Nari's nerve seems to have failed him at this point and he ran away home.

[HI]

Maria knife (*Length of blade* 10")

Shortly after Nari's return Bote's husband came with a party of neighbours searching for her. He asked Nari if his wife had been there, and he said she had not. Very late at night Guddi returned. His wife asked him where he had been, and he beat her. In spite of his late night, however, Guddi got up very early before dawn, and abused his nephews Hirma and Rainu for over-sleeping. He told them to get up quickly and plough the field by the tank. He went ahead with his bullocks, and the two boys and Nari followed. After ploughing for a little while, Guddi left his bullocks and took the others to the tank. There he showed them the body of Bote floating in the water, and told them that he had killed her as a sacrifice. He pulled the corpse to the bank, and the others saw how the belly had been cut and the foetus partly pulled out and its neck slit. Guddi then persuaded the others to help him carry the corpse to a place nearby called Ital Lata where there was thick undergrowth. That night the four men went again and took the corpse to a hillside in the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674X
782

Koder forest some miles away, dragging it along so that it should appear as if a tiger had killed it.

The search for Bote continued. The husband went to everyone in authority in the neighbourhood, and called the villagers to help him, continuing distractedly to search all Friday and Saturday. A Sub-Inspector of Police was touring nearby and his aid was also enlisted. For three days more they searched. On 27 April, a week after the murder, Hirma and Rainu went to the Koder jungle ostensibly to get bamboos, probably really to see what had happened to the corpse. When they returned they said that it had not yet decomposed, and Guddi suggested that they should report that they had noticed a very unpleasant smell in the forest. The next day the villagers went to the place and found the body. It was, however, considerably decomposed and was only identified by the ornaments and combs.

By 1 May the police were in full charge. It is not quite clear what happened, but it seems to me probable that Nari immediately gave his brother away. In the first fright and confusion, Guddi also lost his head. He took the Sub-Inspector to the place where he had hidden Bote's basket, axe and crowbar. He brought from his house some thread, which the woman had given him on the day of her death, and the knife that he had used to kill her. The Sub-Inspector found stains on his loin-cloth and on Nari's cloth, and seized them. The Imperial Serologist later established that the stains on Guddi's clothes were of human blood; those on Nari's could not be determined owing to disintegration.

After his first fright, however, Guddi denied everything, but Nari, who all along seems to have been an unwilling participant in the crime, turned approver. At the trial Guddi declared that on the day of the Chatti ceremony after drinking a great deal of rice-beer, he had become unconscious and had slept till morning. He denied that he went out at dawn; denied that he ever ploughed the land or made the sacrifice. He claimed that the stains on his loin-cloth were due to the red earth of his field, and declared that he showed the Sub-Inspector the woman's possessions, the knife and the thread, only because he was beaten and forced to make a false confession.

There can be no doubt whatever of Guddi's guilt. The

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

evidence of Nari alone would have hardly been sufficient, but Guddi's two nephews corroborated it and Hirma was present when Guddi declared his decision to sacrifice his unfortunate victim.

All the circumstantial evidence was against Guddi. There was the blood on his loin-cloth; the condition of the corpse was consistent with death by drowning; none of the bones were fractured and there were no signs that the woman had been killed by a wild animal. Unless Guddi had been concerned in the matter, how did he know where Bote's axe and crowbar were hidden? It may well be that he was forced by the police to reveal their hiding-place, but it is equally clear that what he showed was true. Evidence was led to show that on the day of her death Bote took some thread which she had spun to Guddi's house.

This crime is notable for two things. First the motive is a very deep and ancient one. Nari described at the trial how, as Guddi was drowning the woman, he called on the Mirchuk and the Yer Kanyang by name, telling them that he was fulfilling his vow by sacrificing a pregnant woman, and praying to them to bless his fields and give them increase. Some of the blood was scattered on the ground, and this blood-stained land was ploughed before dawn the following morning in order to ensure its fertility.

The second remarkable point about the case is the extraordinary stupidity of Guddi which cost him his life. He had a whole week in which to wash his loin-cloth, yet he left it marked with the most damaging evidence against him. He could not leave the body alone, but sent his nephews off to inspect it and then told them to make a report. Had he said nothing, it would have been comparatively easy to dispose of the bones so that they would never have been discovered. When the police arrived, he immediately went to pieces and implicated himself so thoroughly that his later protestations of innocence were of no avail. He was sentenced to death and hanged on 5 September 1938.

Westermarck suggests that the ultimate reason of human sacrifice is to effect a sort of life-insurance.

> A comparative study of the practice of human sacrifice shows that human victims are frequently offered in war, before a battle, or during a siege: for the purpose of

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

stopping or preventing an epidemic; in order to put an end to a devastating famine; when the earth fails to supply the people with water; with a view to averting perils arising from the sea or from rivers; and in order to prevent the death of some particular person, especially a chief or a king. From these facts I have thought it justifiable to draw the conclusion that human sacrifice is, largely at least, a method of life-insurance, based upon the idea of substitution; and though the human sacrifice offered as a means of putting an end to or averting a ravaging famine and securing an abundant crop has been explained as serving as a magical manure, it may be asked why this particular gruesome kind of manure was chosen if not because human life was in danger.[1]

But in the Bastar cases, there was no danger to life: the sacrifices seem to have been motived by a straightforward desire of gain and to have depended for their efficacy on the power of blood which as the source of life is also a cause of fertility. The connection with irrigation tanks is noteworthy.

V

THE SIRAHA AND HOMICIDE

It is a curious fact that the leaders of the powers of good against the forces of black magic, especially the Siraha and Gunia, seem to cause quite as many murders as the witch or sorcerer.

The Siraha with his magic winnowing-fan and lamp and broomsticks appears in case after case, not always, of course, as the criminal or victim, but as an influential force in the background.

For example, it is the Siraha who diagnoses the cause of death or disease and who, by naming some living person as the author, directly incites to crime. Equally, by his failure to treat a sick person who believes that he is suffering from witchcraft, he may drive him to despair and suicide.

The Siraha is very proud of his position and his connection with the gods. He is extremely touchy, and immediately resents the least hint of criticism. When Markami Ganga

[1] E. Westermarck, 'Methods in Social Anthropology', *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LXVI (1936), p. 222, and *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (London, 1912), Vol. I. p. 440. See also R. Karsten, *The Civilization of the South American Indians* (London, 1926), p. 408.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 abused his brother who had recently taken up his sacred duties,
791 criticizing him as an economic liability to the family, the latter seized the trident in the village temple and killed his critic with it.

Another incident of the same kind occurred in Kosalnar. An old man Hemla Mukka had a leprous wife. He used to call the Siraha, Jhoria Hunga, to his house to treat her. One day when she was feeling specially ill, she asked her husband to go and fetch him. He went for him, but found him asleep. He woke him up and told him what he wanted. But Jhoria, who was tired after watching his fields was annoyed at being woken, and got up and hit the old man saying he was not going to give up his own work in order to treat other people. Mukka went away, but just outside the house he said loudly that his wife could be cured without the help of any Siraha. This Siraha, he said, was a *chor mailotia* (a thief who lay with his mother). When Hunga heard this insult to his profession, he came out of the house with a heavy bamboo stick and beat Mukka till he died.

Iron trident

791 One of the features of any
343 Siraha's house is the little hut for 'in-patients' built a short distance away in the garden or under trees. Especially when a Siraha gets some kind of reputation for diagnosis and cure, he is visited by patients from many different villages. These come laden with dark and unknown infections and must not be admitted into his house. Little huts of leaves and branches are made for them outside, where they

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

live in some discomfort and under unnatural and strained conditions. These abnormal strains have resulted, more than once, in murder being committed. 791 [343]

Barse Chappe was a polygamous invalid. After suffering for some time from giddiness and trouble with his heart and eyes, he went to the village Siraha named Pocha for treatment. He became an 'in-patient' and was accommodated in a little hut. After Chappe had spent three days there, he felt better and went to Jagdalpur to give evidence in a police case. Here again he got ill and fell to the ground in a fit, and the Public Prosecutor was compelled to give him up. He returned to his own house, but when he reached it he had to spend the night outside on the verandah, as his wives told him that he would have to offer certain sacrifices in gratitude for his previous recovery before he could enter the house. The following day he again went to the Siraha for treatment and camped under a mango tree nearby. He was accompanied by his senior wife Sukhi and his little daughter Bode. From time to time his junior wife Chule, who remained in charge of the home, came to see him. After a week, one afternoon when Chule had brought food, Chappe asked both his wives to have intercourse with him in the hut. They refused saying that the place was too open, and that it was daytime and everyone would see them. Chappe got angry and beat both the women. 674X 791

A few days later, at about 5 o'clock in the evening, Chappe again asked his senior wife to have intercourse with him in the hut. But Bode and two women were sitting only a few paces away on the verandah of the Siraha's hut—whence the hut was in full view—again they were able to overhear Chappe's conversation. Sukhi again refused and told her husband that he ought to be ashamed of himself for suggesting such a thing in the hearing of three other women, especially when one of them was his own daughter.

At this Chappe lost his temper. He picked up a heavy bamboo stick and beat his wife so heavily that she died.

In his defence Chappe gave evidence of delusions. He denied that his reason for beating Sukhi was that she refused to have intercourse with him. He said that for the past week she had been giving him contaminated food. He had asked her not to cook in the Siraha's house where anybody might 674X 158

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

infect the food magically, but in a special place where only she herself would have access to it. This she refused to do.[1] She was also trying, he said, to have him out-casted for some moral offence. But the nature of this was not made clear in evidence.

The Court decided that Chappe was undoubtedly at the time of the murder a sick and unbalanced person. Although on that very day every able-bodied man in the village had gone out on a ceremonial hunt, Chappe did not feel well enough to do so, a clear sign that he considered himself in a serious condition. It is probable that a number of factors combined to bring about the tragedy. The very fact of being unable to attend the great occasion of the hunt must have been depressing. His wife had refused him access to her for several days. It is more than likely that he attributed his illness to someone's tampering with his food. At last the accumulated frustration and anxiety exploded within him, and murder was the result.

VI

MAGIC AND SUICIDE

In some cases, the torment of disease, the fear of the sinister and hostile magic causing it, and the failure of the magicians to effect a cure, led—not to the murder of the sorcerer or of the doctor—but to the suicide of the patient. The reason why all this misery resulted in suicide rather than murder is generally evident: the suicides were so wretched and so weak that it was impossible for them either to protect themselves against their supernormal enemies or to revenge themselves upon the human representatives of an unhappy fate.

For example, Markami Hunga suffered from yaws. She was old and covered with ulcers, unable to eat for pain and misery. One night, when all were asleep, she hanged herself from a rafter of her house.

Atami Kosa, a Maria of Poyali, had a septic ulcer on his left calf. Sori Hirma of Korra got very drunk at a harvest festival and dislocated his hip. For eighteen months he lay

[1] A similar delusion drove a Dhurwa of Darbha to commit suicide in 1939. He believed that his wife was poisoning his food, and he used to wait till she went to work in the fields when he would stealthily go into the house and get what food he could.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

in his house, pulling himself up by a rope tied to the roof. 762
But at last he could bear it no longer and managed to hang himself with the very rope that had been so long his friend.

Menstrual troubles are always due to the magic of a jealous 762
woman, usually a frustrated and malicious widow. The 841
catamenial period in any case is regarded as a time of contagious danger and taboo, and any irregularity is sufficient to cause a strong psychotic disturbance.[1] Karti Sukri, a young girl of only fifteen years, apparently suffered from menorrhagia; she bore it for six months and then hanged herself with her own cloth from a mahua tree near her home. Markami Kosi had been married for twenty years, but she suffered acutely during menstruation—'the pain was so great she behaved as if she were mad'—and she too committed suicide. As is often the case when a woman suffers from menstrual troubles, the husband had married a second wife and I have little doubt that the jealousy and annoyance inevitable in a polygynous household played its part in hastening Markami Kosi's death. The younger wife, however, did her best to save the other woman; she cut her down while still breathing and tried to revive her.

In all these cases, matters were made worse by the failure 762
of the magicians to effect a cure. This naturally added fear and depression to the physical suffering of the patient. Whenever the Siraha is found helpless, an atmosphere of deep gloom and apprehension is created: the supernatural powers arrayed against the sufferer take on a new majesty and horror.

VII

CRIME AND SUPERSTITION

I have not found many superstitions about crime, probably 777
because there are so few professional criminals among the Maria. We have already seen how valuable blood is as a fertilizer. In one case I heard of women throwing their rings on a murdered man's memorial stone as it was being carried to the grave. Afterwards they picked up these rings and wore them believing them to be extremely lucky. But

[1] Havelock Ellis goes so far as to say that 'whenever a woman commits a deed of criminal violence it is extremely probable that she is at her monthly periods', but Stanley Hall assembles evidence to show that this view is over-stated. Hall, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 500.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I am not sure that a ring associated with any kind of death is not equally useful.

The Maria magicians believe themselves able to foretell a child's destiny by certain signs at birth. If, at the place where the placenta is buried, there appear the footprints of a tiger or the marks of a snake, they declare that the child will be either killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. If the water in the pot that is placed above the placenta-pit runs out of its own accord, it means that the child will be drowned. If a baby is born with a strangulating cord, it means that, when it grows up, it will either be hanged or will commit suicide by hanging.

But there is nothing to compare with the superstitions in Europe; the belief, for example, that the heart of a still-born child eaten while yet warm renders the eater invisible, thus aiding him to steal. Adam gives a number of beliefs from the Western world that equal the most bizarre of those recorded in Asia. He describes the soporiferous candles made of the fat of virgin children and used to see whether anyone was still awake in a house about to be burgled. The left thumb of a corpse nine weeks in the grave enables a thief to enter a house at night without rousing the occupants. In Poland the right hand of the corpse of a suicide may be used to discover stolen goods. In Italy, especially in Sicily, it is still believed that treasure can be unearthed with the assistance of the blood of innocent children.[1]

[826] [1] Adam, op. cit., pp. 261 ff. In Mandla District I have met Gond who believe that when a man is hanged a few drops of *jiu-tel*, or "life-oil", fall from his body. If this oil can be obtained and applied to a dying man, he will be restored to life. At one time Mr Hivale was believed to possess a few drops of this precious liquid. The 'Hand of Glory' idea has its parallel in India. In Chittagong it was at one time customary for dacoits (mostly Mohammedan) to spread a shroud stolen from a corpse over the roof of a house to prevent the inhabitants from waking. See E. O. Sherborne, *Man*, Feb. 1934.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Hill Maria

293
142

Youth with Hill Maria dancing-dress

Markami Marka wearing head-dress

293
516

Boys preparing head-dress

[Facing p. 80]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER SIX

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: MARITAL INFIDELITY

I

[§36] The Maria allow their women a great deal of freedom in
157 their pre-nuptial period, but for matrimonial relationships they have a strict regard. They are jealous and possessive by temperament, passionate as lovers,[1] suspicious and

[301]

Maria girls' neck-band

exacting husbands. Divorce is rare; adultery is dangerous, a crime the end of which cannot be foreseen.

§37 Adultery is dangerous, for unless proper precautions are taken the ancestors of the household and the clan-god may

[1] But as elsewhere in India 'lust-murder' does not occur. 'Lust-murder, as one of the phenomena of psychopathia sexualis, appears to be better known in the more highly cultured countries of the West than in the East, where capital offences have their basis in less recondite mental processes'. S. M. Edwardes, *Crime in India* (Oxford, 1924), p. 28.

[p. 81]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

221
532

Detail of Machaki Hunga's pillar at Dilmilli

Newly-erected pillar near Chitrakot

[Facing p. 81]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

837 get offended, and in their anger kill the cattle and other livestock. When an animal dies for this cause, its tongue protrudes and a watery discharge issues from its mouth. In Dhurli the Maria said that the guilty person might go blind, and in Mathadi we were told how an old woman did actually become blind as a result of betraying her husband. If a wife commits adultery when her husband is absent on a hunting expedition, her act will 'defile the earth' and the hunt will be ruined. The arrows will fly crookedly, and the husband himself may trip over a stump. He may be bitten by a snake or hit with an arrow. If the deceived husband is a magician, his vision will be clouded. If the proper ceremonies are not performed, he may be afflicted with a watery swelling that may cause death.

674 783 If a murder is committed on account of adultery, the families both of the murderer and his victim may suffer from this swelling. To prevent the danger, the elders of each house gather together; they mix milk and water in a leaf-cup of mahua leaves and say, 'These sinned; but let not their sin be on us'. Then a representative of each house drinks a little. The family of the murdered man gives a present (which is called in Halbi *bhul-karcha*) to the family of the murderer. A measure of rice is put under the eaves of the victim's house. In the rice there is placed some thread, a ring and an arrow. The two families feast together on pork and rice, and swear friendship with each other. The arrow remains as witness to their oath. Then the murderer's family [769] take the *bhul-karcha* home, and offer it to the Departed in their own house.

578 787 Quarrels are always dangerous, for they disturb tribal solidarity and may earn the vengeance of the Departed. Indeed it is dangerous even to dream of a quarrel; if you do, you should sacrifice to the Earth the next morning. If husband and wife are known to be constantly at odds with one another, a panchayat is held and one or both may be fined.

783 When Oyami Anda of Harmamunda carried off and married a girl for whom another youth was serving as Lamhada, he not only had to pay compensation for the work done by the other boy, but a ceremony was performed to purify both parties of enmity. Anda stood with the Lamhada

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

under the thatch by the door of his house. The palm of 783
his right hand was placed below the Lamhada's right hand.
On the ground, below their hands, a pile of rice was made,
and an arrow placed in it. Then the Waddai climbed on to
the roof and poured down water which fell through the
thatch on to their hands, and thence to the rice. After this
a pig and two chickens were given to the Lamhada to be
offered to his ancestors. The Waddai as clan-priest officiated [769]
since the Dead of the clan were to be appeased.

A curious story related by Oyami Harma of the same 539
village illustrates the manner in which the Maria expect 773
supernatural punishment to fall upon the criminal. 'Long
ago', said Oyami Harma, 'my ancestors, who were a family
of seven brothers and one sister, were living beyond
Bailadila. A youth of the Uika clan came as Lamhada for
the girl, and in due time she was married to him. Twin
boys were born, but after a few days one of them died.
During Dassara the husband went to Jagdalpur at the
invitation of the eldest brother and while he was away his
wife together with the wives of the seven brothers went to
reap the harvest, taking their two hunting-dogs. The
surviving twin was taken with them, and as they were
working, he was put to sleep in a swing. While the women
were busy in the field, a hare jumped out of a bush and
ran towards the baby. The two hunting-dogs chased it, and
mistaking the baby for the hare bit him and killed him.

'When the husband returned he asked for his baby, and
his wife said, "He has been taken out by our neighbour.
First eat your food and then you can play with the child".
The husband sat down and ate, and his wife told him what
had happened. In the meantime the other brothers told
their eldest brother of the child's death, and he was afraid
that the bereaved father would revenge himself on him,
because it was at his invitation that he had gone to Jagdalpur.
So they all decided to run away. The father pursued them
saying that it was they who were responsible for the death
of his child. They went to Gadapal closely pursued by the
angry father. In Gadapal there was a shrine for Kas Pona
Pen which was in the form of a bird. This god hid the
eldest brother under its wings, and when the father arrived
at the shrine, he could find no trace of him. But as he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

539 773 had seen him entering, he knew that he was hiding somewhere and so he set fire to the building and went away. The fire did not harm the man, but some of the bird's feathers were burnt. The soul of the clan-god in Gadapal is in that bird, and to this day the bird can be seen, though now it is made of iron, and on its body the marks made by the burns remain.

'The eldest brother then went to Mailawada and lived there. He consulted the Waddai about the death of his sister's child, and it was revealed to him that the girl had been committing adultery with another man, and that on the very day she had bathed after her menstrual period, she had had intercourse both with her husband and her lover. [945] The result of this was twins. But the Departed were offended at her conduct, and as a result one of the twins died after a few days and the second was killed by the Departed who first took the form of a hare and excited the dogs, and then possessed the dogs and killed the child in the swing'.

Such stories are not mere fairy-tales. They are part of the actual life of the people, vividly believed and actually experienced. To aboriginals who live in such an atmosphere and depend so entirely on the supernatural, the cumbersome and vulgar machinery of human courts of justice seems comparatively unimportant. It is said that many murderers find a sort of relief in going to jail, since they believe that this earthly punishment may save them from the vengeance of the Departed.

782 937 But as often in the aboriginal world there are regular methods of evading these dangers. If a man wishes to commit adultery, he makes offerings to the Departed and prays, 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on the husband of this girl and not on me', and then he addresses his ancestors, 'Away with you. Go to water and to wind. Go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me whatever happens'.

684 There is no doubt, however, that many Maria are not satisfied with such ceremonies, and that they consider themselves entirely justified in killing a wife who is disloyal. In particular, the discovery of a woman actually in the arms of her lover appears to have so overwhelming an emotional effect that the husband is almost bound to strike

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and kill.[1] A few young husbands keep careful guard over 684
their wives and when they see them going to an assignation, do not stop them then, but follow, watch and at the critical moment intervene.

Poyami Masa had two wives, Gadme and Dome. One day 674.X
Dome found her elder co-wife in conversation with a Dhobi 682
who was trying to seduce her. In order to get him to go away Gadme told him to come at night to the house and promised to meet him. When Masa came home from his work, the younger wife told him everything, probably only too glad to make trouble. He became very angry and beat Gadme and took her immediately to confront the Dhobi, but was unable to find him. Then he went to the headman to ask him to take action against the Dhobi. All day long he was in a passion of rage, clenching his teeth and continually talking about his wife's scandalous behaviour. When she tried to give him food, he refused to take it. After supper Gadme and her three children went to bed, but Masa lay awake in the dark brooding until he could contain himself no longer. Just before dawn he got up and stabbed Gadme with an arrow. He was probably intending by this to make it look as though Gadme had committed suicide out of remorse for her behaviour. But he did not do his work properly, and the woman lived long enough to say what had happened to her. In this case the Court took into consideration the fact not only that Masa had been wronged, but that he believed himself to have been wronged by a member of a caste which the Maria despise.

In Chhindgaon a man of about thirty-five years, Burka 674X
by name, began to suspect his wife of deceiving him with 684
Hirma, a neighbour who lived opposite his house. One afternoon—it was Tuesday, 16 December 1924—the woman told her husband that she was going to catch fish in a tank. Burka was suspicious and secretly watched her.

[1] By the Kanikar of Travancore, 'adultery is viewed with great abhorrence, and punishment for this offence varies in different localities. At Kulathupula the punishment inflicted on the adulterer is this. His legs are tied to the branch of a tree with the head hanging down. Straw strewn with chillies is spread on the ground and burned. The body of the culprit is swung to and fro and he is in the meanwhile given twenty-five lashes with a cane on the buttocks. The guilty woman is given fifteen lashes by a man who marries her, even though he may have already been married'. L. A. Krishna Iyer and N. Kunjan Pillai in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III-B, p. 224.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 684 He saw her go across the road to where Hirma was winnowing grain, and after a word with him proceed towards the tank. After a little while, Burka went over to Hirma's house to see if he was there, but did not find him. So he got his axe and went off in pursuit. Below the tank he saw Hirma and his wife going into the jungle together. He crept quietly to the place, and there discovered the two lovers in the act of sexual congress. He struck Hirma on the back with his axe and rolled him over, and then gave him four blows on the head and left him for dead. His wife sprang up, but he gave her a heavy blow with the back of his axe behind the left ear. She fell to the ground and he gave her a second blow just above the first, and she died.

Burka then went and told the Kotwar of the village what he had done, and with the Kotwar went to the Manjhi. When they went to see the bodies, they found Hirma still alive and Burka tried to get his axe in order to finish him off. But he was prevented.

Poriami Podiya was a young man of about twenty years who had been married only for a year. He either suspected or (as he himself claimed) actually discovered his wife having intercourse with another man. He beat her with his fists and dragged her to the jungle in spite of several remonstrances from the neighbours, and went on beating her there till she fell to the ground. Even then, as he himself admitted, when he found she still had some life in her, he determined to make an end of her and her intrigues with her lover. He twisted a creeper-thong round her neck, but finding it was not long enough for the purpose, tied a cloth round her neck and to a tree. Probably he first strangled her, and then tied her up to give the impression of suicide. During his trial Podiya showed no sign of appreciating the enormity of his crime, which he seems to have regarded as a just retribution for his wife's unchastity.

Marvi Deva killed his little daughter about four years old and tried to kill his wife, because he suspected her of betraying him. He declared that he had twice caught her in the arms of men whom he was unable to identify, and that on the night of the murder he had seen her talking to a man in a neighbour's compound. The man had run away

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

before he could catch him. He took his wife home and tried to force her to give him the name of her lover. When she refused, he took his axe and struck his little daughter who was standing by and crying with fright, and killed her instantly. He then tried to kill his wife who was carrying her baby in a cloth passed round her shoulder, but she managed to escape. Deva picked up the body of his dead child and carried it into the jungle where he left it under a tree covered with a cloth. The Court was sceptical about Deva's accusations of his wife's unchastity, particularly because he could not give the names of her lovers. But this seems to me entirely in keeping with a Maria's pride, particularly if Deva knew that the seducer was someone in a forbidden relationship or someone whom he disliked. Although some aboriginals have no shame in these matters, others are very reluctant to admit the actual names of men who have seduced their wives.

There is the curious point that, according to one version of the incident, Deva asked his wife to give him tobacco or, in other words, to have sexual intercourse with him, and her refusal to do so was the final spark that caused the explosion. This again is, I think, in line with primitive psychology. The husband would have been powerfully excited sexually by the thought of his wife being possessed by another man; he would desire to reassert his rights over her and perhaps to test her. Her refusal to do what he wanted proved to him that his suspicions were well founded.

A very influential man named Nanda, who was the Siraha of Killepal, met his death on the night of the festival of the Village Mother in April 1932. Nanda and Poyami Panda had married two sisters and both families lived in one compound with the old father-in-law. For some time past Panda had suspected Nanda of an intrigue with his wife Hirme. He had been foolish enough to go to the Tea Gardens leaving her behind in too close an association with the exciting and important personality of the Siraha. When he returned he displayed many of the symptoms of pathological jealousy. He was continually asking his wife whether she had had intercourse with Nanda, and he tried hard to get her to leave the village, where she lived in such

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

an undesirable proximity to her lover, and go to live elsewhere. This, however, she refused to do.

It is very difficult to discover what really happened on the night of the festival, for everybody was drunk on rice-beer. Several different versions of the incident were given. It seems probable that early in the evening Panda found his wife standing in the courtyard and slapped her; perhaps he suspected that she was looking for her lover. Nanda saw what happened and told Panda not to hit his wife, for the child she was holding in her arms might fall down and be injured. A little later, Panda wanted to get a bamboo tube to keep his tobacco in. He started to cut a bit from a pole on which bunches of maize were hanging. Nanda again interfered and told him not to cut it, for the maize would fall down. Panda took no notice and went on cutting the bamboo. Nanda then lost his temper, and told him that he was a very quarrelsome person and no one could live with him. He suggested that he should go away to another village and live with his brother. At this Panda retorted that the real reason why Nanda wanted him to go away was because he was in love with Hirme.

Godel axe

There was no violence in the quarrel at this piont, and Nanda went away to his own house in the same compound. Hirme was making leaf-cups in her father's house, and later—it was dark and everyone was drunk—Nanda seems to have taken the opportunity of slipping into the room and embracing her. Suddenly Panda entered, and finding his wife and her lover together—he claims that they were actually enjoying sexual intercourse—he lost all control of himself, picked up an axe and killed his rival.

Hemla Gunda was the Dhurwa or clan-priest of the Hemla clan-god. He was also a well-known medicine-man and, although he was excommunicated for reasons that will

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Muria

appear immediately, was a person of great influence among the Maria of Bijapur Tahsil. 674x 684

He was, however, a cruel and unnatural man. About a year before his murder, he seduced the wives of each of his two sons, and not content merely to seduce them drove out of his house his own wife and his two sons, and lived there openly with the two young girls. He refused to do anything to maintain his wife and would not give his sons any share in the family property, although by tribal custom he should have allowed its partition, since he was doing nothing to support his family.

When the sons applied to the panchayat for justice, that body met, but so great was Gunda's influence that they were afraid to take any strong line against him. But they did excommunicate him for his relations with the wives of his own sons and for the even more serious offence of keeping a Ghasia woman. [686]

In May 1928, one of the sons, Hemla Mundra, went to his father's house and attempted to get some share of the property. He failed then, but on the afternoon before the murder, returned and tried to take away two cows from the family herd. His father caught him and abused him, and the boy was so annoyed that he struck the older man on the face with a lathi, a blow that probably fractured the jaw. Gunda prepared to go to the police station to make a report against his son. Mundra, reflecting that his father had not only robbed him of his wife and property, but was now going to deprive him of his liberty as well, decided to kill him and prevent him from going to the police. He managed to get ahead of Gunda on the path, and the moment he appeared broke his skull with several blows of a heavy stick.

The murder was regarded by the other Maria as justified, and they hushed up the whole affair, reporting to the police that Gunda had died of smallpox. Indeed the case would never have come to light, had it not been that a prisoner in jail in the vain hope of getting his own sentence mitigated reported the matter. Mr Grigson, who tried the case, sentenced the accused to one month's imprisonment.[1]

[1] A similar case was reported from the north of the State in 1940. Kanda, a Muria boy, killed his father near Pupgaon. The father had

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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[674 836 [948] Murders committed on account of an unwelcome and unexpected pregnancy are not common, because of the high standard of domestic morals among the Maria and because if an unmarried girl is found pregnant, she is immediately married and the child is thus legitimized. But there is one authentic case in which a man was driven to kill his lover, though it may be said that it was her stupidity rather than her pregnancy that caused the tragedy. Mase was the wife of a man who deserted her for the Tea Gardens, leaving her alone and unsupported with three little children. She used to make some sort of living as a coolie. But presently Poriami Hirma fell in love with her and used constantly to visit her in her house, although he never officially kept her as his wife. In time she became pregnant and a panchayat was called to consider the matter. The elders decided to send information to Mase's husband's elder brother, an ex-convict and a harsh violent man, of whom the girl was greatly afraid.

Early in the morning of Tuesday, 21 February 1933, Mase left her three children in the house and went to tell Hirma what had happened. She expected that her husband's elder brother would come that day and beat her and she suggested that Hirma should run away with her and hide. Hirma agreed and they went some way into the jungle and sat down under a tamarind tree. The weather was cold and they lit a fire, beside which they sat and talked. Mase was very frightened and depressed. She wept and threatened to kill herself. Hirma very properly asked her to come and live with him as his wife, and promised to look after her and the children. But the girl, who was obviously in

[674 684] seduced Kande's first wife, and the proper ceremonies of purification had been conducted. But when Kande took another wife, the father again attempted or, as some say, succeeded in seducing her, and this time there was a violent quarrel between father and son while they were catching birds in the jungle. The father actually complained to his son that the girl did not respond properly to his advances. Kande was assaulted by his father and killed him in return. When I saw this boy in jail a year later, the extraordinary sadness of his face contrasted strikingly with the expression of many of the more regular criminals. The villagers concealed the crime and when it was by chance discovered five months later, were very backward in co-operating with the police. Obviously as in the Mundra case, they considered it a very proper murder. But Kande was not so fortunate as Mundra and was sentenced not to a month, but to five years' imprisonment. This was later reduced to three years, and he was released in 1943.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

a hysterical condition, rebuked him and said that she would not go to his house or to any other, accusing him of having brought the trouble on her. Hirma got annoyed and kicked her violently in the stomach and the vagina. Mase was three months pregnant, and it is probable that the kick which was simply intended to bring her to her senses was the real cause of her death.

II

Only rarely do the complications of infidelity lead to suicide. A girl called Kare of Kosalnar came one day to Kadti Pandu as a Paitu wife. This means that she forcibly entered his house of her own accord, and he had to agree to accept her as his wife. They lived together for five months. Then there was a quarrel, and Kare went off to another village, Pharaspal, where she repeated the same trick with another man. Pandu ordered her to come home and she refused. So he beat her and brought her back by force. The following day the girl disappeared, and a search discovered her hanging from a mahua tree.

The reaction of Barse Konda to unchastity in his family circle was remarkable. He had one daughter named Jabbo. This girl was that very rare thing, a Maria girl of promiscuous habits. She was first married to a man of Samgiri. Then she went to a man at Gongpal. From him she went to a man at Molasnar. From him she went to a man at Palnar. Some time in 1937 she left her Palnar husband and went to live with Kawasi Kosa of Rewali. For the Korta Pandum, the harvest festival of the new cucumbers and gourds, Jabbo went to her home at Nakulnar, and after three days her father Konda took her back to Rewali. Rewali is a notoriously ill-tempered village, and when Konda arrived he was badly received and abused by several of the people for his daughter's behaviour. He went home, angry and depressed, told his wife what had happened, and got very drunk. At supper he caught his wife by the hair and beat her. She ran away to a neighbour's house. Then Konda got out his drum and danced with it all night long. As the first cocks crew, he went into his house and hanged himself from the central beam of the roof.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: THE DESIRE TO ELIMINATE

I

000 The murder for elimination is described by Tennyson Jesse. 'The range is wide—from the lovers who plot to remove an inconvenient spouse, as did Jeanne Weiss and her lover, Roques, at Ain Fezza, to the removal of an inconvenient lover or a blackmailer. The case of a husband or wife who kills a rival comes under the heading of jealousy, since that would be the dominating motive—as the dominating motive behind the removal of someone who stands in the way of an inheritance comes under that of murder for gain. The dominating motive of a pure murder for elimination is to remove someone who is inconveniencing the potential murderer by his presence and conduct, as L'Angelier certainly inconvenienced Madeleine Smith. Indeed, the killing of a blackmailer is a pure murder for elimination; and so is the killing of a householder who chances to disturb burglars at their work. A classic murder for elimination is that of Harriet Lane by Wainwright, whose mistress she had been. He cherished his respectability, and it became impossible to retain both that and Harriet, therefore he eliminated the woman'.[1]

x 674 This type of crime is not very common in Bastar. But a few cases have occurred. Two murders were inspired by fear, when the threat to the murderer's security could only be eliminated by death. Six Maria were involved in a robbery during a famine year, and when two of them were caught, they were murdered by the others to prevent them turning approver.[2] In another case two men were on their way to make a report at the Kuakonda police station about the theft of a cow, and in order to avoid arrest and imprisonment the thieves followed and murdered them. Here there was probably a strong feeling that a matter of this kind ought to be settled by the tribal elders, and not

[1] Tennyson Jesse, *op. cit.*, pp. 14 f. [2] Case No 30.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

to go to the police. There was then the murder of Markami Handa by a young Maria Lohar in 1923. Handa had two wives and the younger, Bandi, fell in love with the young and attractive Masa who was employed as a farm labourer in a neighbour's house, and one day they eloped together. Some time previously Handa had warned the girl that, if she continued her friendship with the boy, he would kill them both. Indeed he took the intrigue so seriously that he moved his entire household to another village, but to no avail. Bandi seems to have been terrified for her lover's safety and when she heard how Handa was searching everywhere for her, she told Masa of the danger they were in, and Masa made up his mind to remove the dangerous husband so that he would be able to live freely with his girl. For four days and nights they enjoyed a sort of happiness in the jungle, then they went together under cover of darkness to Handa's house and climbed a tree outside the compound. Here they sat for a long time until they were sure that everyone was asleep. About midnight Masa went to the house, opened the bamboo door and shot Handa who was lying asleep on the ground near the entrance. Masa probably hoped to get away without being noticed, but unfortunately for him Handa's elder wife woke up and saw him clearly in the moonlight. He was arrested by the villagers the following day, and in due course was hanged. But Bandi, who was a young girl only eighteen years old, was acquitted.

This is, as far as I can see, a pure example of the murder for elimination. The only motive was fear of Bandi's husband. The difference between this and many European crimes is simply that it is more usual for civilized people to eliminate the inconvenient husband or wife first. Masa in true Maria fashion first got the girl, and then set to work to deal with the husband.

II

THE SIRISGUDA POISONING

Marvi Boti and his lover Mase, his elder 'brother's' wife, set about eliminating her inconvenient and rather useless husband, Marvi Bododi, in a more civilized fashion. Mase

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and Bododi married each other rather late in life, and both had been married before. Mase's first husband died leaving her with five children, and one of her daughters Dallo had been married three years at the time of the tragedy. Bododi also was a widower and had five children by his former wife, the youngest of whom, a boy named Hunga, was about twelve years old and lived with his father. The two lonely people met and married. They lived for some months in Mase's house at Maolibata, and then moved to Sirisguda in April 1940, where they were entertained by Bododi's younger 'brother' Boti. After a time they built a hut of their own close to Boti's house and went to live there.

Bododi's profession was that of a Siraha, but he seems to have been as poor a magician as he was a husband. Mase was a large vigorous woman, who expected much of life, and already by this time was getting tired of her elderly husband who produced so little money to run the household. Boti, as Bododi's younger 'brother', stood in a privileged relationship to Mase. Tribal custom regards an intrigue between those who stand to each other in this relationship very lightly and readily forgives it. Mase soon found herself fascinated by the young Boti, though when I saw him he was unattractive enough, with a broad stupid face and a very large flat nose.

Bododi's duties as Siraha always kept him on the move, and he was continually going from place to place treating his patients. In his absence Mase and Boti were naturally free to develop their friendship to the full. One night Bododi came home unexpectedly and found his wife absent. Mase's son-in-law Gagru, the husband of Dallo, had come there for a New Eating festival, and Bododi asked him where Mase was. He said she had gone to drink rice-beer somewhere. Bododi went to look for her, but failing to find her came back and sent Gagru in search instead. Gagru found Mase and Boti coming together out of a field of maize. Mase begged Gagru not to say anything about it, and went straight to Boti's house. Gagru went and told Bododi where his wife was hiding, and there was a violent quarrel.

Patients who came to Bododi's house for treatment reported other quarrels between Bododi and his wife. One

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

day Mase accused her husband of doing nothing to earn his living, and he slapped her. She took up a piece of burning wood and tried to hit him with it, and Bododi took refuge in Boti's house. About a week after this quarrel, during a festival, Mase again abused Bododi for wandering about doing the work of a Siraha, and urged him to do something more profitable for the support of the children. Bododi again beat her, and she went away to stay for a time with her daughter Dallo at Kurenga. During this visit she confided in her daughter how miserable she was with Bododi, and told her that Boti had promised to give her poison so that they could get rid of him. Boti, she said, had promised to marry her and care for the children. Dallo begged her to do nothing of the kind. Mase returned home and a few days later her daughter, perhaps anxious about the situation that was developing, came to Sirisguda. Bododi was away and Dallo slept with her mother in the same room. During the night the older woman had a visitor and when the daughter asked who it was, she admitted it was Boti. During this week's visit, Boti visited his lover three times.

A few days later Boti gave some oleander seeds to Mase, and told her to pound them up, mix the powder with vegetables and give them to her husband. It was typical of the carelessness with which the whole affair was planned, that he did this in the presence of Mase's little daughter who was about six years old. Mase pounded the seeds on a stone with a big wooden spoon, and hid the powder in a leaf-packet in the roof of the house. Boti said that he knew that pigs died when they ate these seeds, but he did not know whether they would be fatal to human beings. As the taste was bitter, it was decided to cook the powder with the bitter vegetable called karela.

Accordingly on Saturday, 28 September 1940, Mase cooked rice in one pot and karela greens and mushrooms together in another. When Bododi came in for supper, Mase served rice to him, his son Hunga and her own little girl. She poured the cooked vegetables into three leaf-cups mixing the powdered seeds in one of them. She gave the poisoned cup to Bododi and the other two cups to his son and her own daughter. Bododi remarked on the bitterness of the vegetable, and gave some of it to his son. A little

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

while afterwards they both began to vomit and purge, and cried out that they felt as though their livers were being cut to pieces. One of the patients was staying in the house, and Bododi called him and told him that he had been poisoned and was going to die. He staggered over to Boti's house and told him the same thing. All night the two unhappy men were in agony, rolling on the ground and tearing at themselves with their hands. Bododi died the following morning at about 8 o'clock and Hunga at midday.

The Kotwar was informed, and taking specimens of the vomited matter went at once with Boti and others to the police station at Jagdalpur. Boti's behaviour then was extraordinary. He reported that Bododi had come to him in the night vomiting and in pain and had told him that his wife had cooked karela and mushrooms, that he had found them bitter in taste, and that immediately after eating them he had begun to vomit. The police went at once to Sirisguda. As usual the nerve of the criminals broke under examination, and they both confessed. The Sub-Inspector seized the cooking utensils, the stone, the leaf-cup and the spoon with which the poison had been prepared, and arrested both Boti and Mase.

Traces of oleander powder were found in the organs of the dead men, as well as on the stone, the wooden spoon and the leaf-packet in which it had been kept. In their first confessions before the Tahsildar at Jagdalpur both Boti and Mase admitted everything, but later in Court Boti denied having given his lover any seeds, and said that he had been forced by the police to make his previous confession. Mase, however, stuck to her story that Boti had been her lover, that he had made her pregnant, that Bododi had ill-treated her for that reason and that Boti had given her the seeds and promised to keep her as his wife after her husband's death. In Court evidence was given by Dallo, Mase's own daughter, and by her husband Gagru; even Mase's little daughter Nande described how she had seen Boti giving the seeds to her mother. It is remarkable that these close relatives should have been willing to testify against the woman. It is probable that they were frightened into believing that, if they did not do so, they also would be arrested.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Apparatus for distilling mahua spirit

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Detail of memorial piller of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar, showing people serving rice-beer

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285
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Woman making rice-beer

[FACING P. 96]

3:/Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 Mase denied that she had any intention of giving poison to the boy Hunga. There is no evidence that she did so. She had nothing to gain from his death, and she herself said that she put the poison in only one leaf-cup and then Bododi himself, finding the vegetable bitter, gave some of it to his son to eat with the result that he unwittingly killed him.

Here is another futile crime. Mase and Boti did not take even the most elementary precautions. Boti told Mase what she was to do in the presence of a witness, a very stupid act even though he may have thought that the little girl would never testify against them. Mase had plenty of time to burn the leaf-packet in which the powder had been kept, and to clean the stone and spoon with which it had been prepared. The actual deed was performed at a time when other people were staying in the house. There was no need for Boti to have gone to the police station at all, nor for him to have made an incriminating report against his own lover at the very outset. With all their attempts, therefore, to eliminate the inconvenient husband, the murderers only succeeded in eliminating themselves.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Maria climbing toddy tree to extract the juice

[Facing p. 97]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: DISPUTES ABOUT PROPERTY

I

674 In Europe, and indeed wherever modern civilization has made its way, the great majority of murders are murders for gain. Among the Maria also many acts of violence arise in sequel to disputes about property. But there is a great difference between Maria homicide and civilized murder with this motive.

422 428 How few are the possessions of the Maria! There are some little huts of mud and thatch, some weedy cattle, land which is ultimately the property of the State, a few knives and axes, some pots, perhaps a store of grain and a handful of rupees hidden somewhere. When a man dies, questions of inheritance only rarely arise, for after a few valuables have been buried in the grave there is hardly anything left to distribute. Rules of inheritance do, however, exist. After the death of a father his fields are jointly owned by his sons, his brothers and his brothers' sons. Widows and daughters do not usually inherit, though there are a few examples where there is either no obvious rival claimant or the widow is of strong character and has refused to hand over the property of her dead husband to anyone else.

578 429 Quarrels more often arise over the partition of the family goods while the head of the household is alive. The traditional idea was clearly not to partition the family property during the father's lifetime. But nowadays elder sons often desire a share of land or cattle when they set up a separate establishment. Brothers who, after the death of their father, have shared his possessions sometimes quarrel with one another, and desire a formal separation and partition. Where such partition is permitted in the father's lifetime the youngest son, who often remains at home when the older boys go away to live elsewhere, has a special claim over his father's remaining goods.

674 Murders connected with property are not generally

Murders connected with property are not generally 674X 578
committed for gain in the ordinary sense. They rather arise out of disputes about rights and privileges, and the actual murder is the result of anger and resentment rather than a desire for possession. In several cases indeed murder has been a form of self-defence against someone who tries to take away land or other property that the murderer believes to be his by right. Thus Marvi Buti was the elder brother of 674X 578 427
Marvi Chule, and for some time they lived in separate villages. Two years before the tragedy, Chule came to live next-door to his elder brother at Bara Gudra and got two of his fields and two tanks for irrigation. Chule cultivated them and paid two rupees as rent. Buti spent the money and when the time for the next payment came round, demanded and recovered four rupees from his younger brother. The following year Buti refused to give Chule any land at all. But Chule, claiming that he had already paid in advance for that year since he had actually paid six rupees and had only cultivated for one year, ploughed up the fields in spite of Buti's protests, and sowed grain in one of them. Buti countered this by giving the fields and the tanks to another brother who used the tanks, but was unable to get possession of the land. Then Buti threatened that he would drive the village cattle into the fields where Chule had sown his crop and would thus destroy it. Chule seems to have felt that it was no use carrying on the unequal struggle any longer, and he decided to leave the village and go elsewhere. He actually built a house in another village, and at the beginning of the rains went to move his possessions. When he reached his old house, he found one of his plantain trees cut down; he was told that Buti had been there and had cut the tree saying that he would cut down Chule in the same way. As he was removing his mahua seed from the building, someone came running to say that Buti was approaching with a knife in his hand. Chule got his axe and faced his enemy. Apparently Buti tried to run away, but Chule followed him and killed him.

Now here, although the tragedy arose out of a question 674X
about property, it is evident that Chule was not moved by the desire of gain. Indeed he had abandoned his claim to the fields in dispute, for he had already moved to another village where he would get new land. I think it is probable

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 that he never intended to kill Buti. But when he reached his old house and found his tree cut down, and when on top of this he saw his enemy approaching with a knife in his hand, the double passions of revenge and fear so moved him that he lost all control and went out to kill his adversary. It is said indeed that, as he pursued him, he shouted that they would both die together.

674 578 Another incident developed on similar lines. Dudhi Bhima and his uncle Marvi Deva lived on opposite sides of a field at Pordem, and cultivated it jointly. The real owner of the land had abandoned the field on the death of his father some eight years previously. Four years later Deva's father also died, and when Deva himself fell ill, he decided that whatever good or evil spirit was in occupation there was dangerous and he too abandoned the land and moved to another village. For four years Bhima cultivated the land as a sub-tenant of the original owner, Sori Masa. According to the State Law Masa forfeited his right to his land by sub-letting it for a period longer than three years, and Bhima actually had, by virtue of long residence, become the real owner, though in typical aboriginal fashion he never thought of getting this officially recorded. All went well, however, until in the middle of 1929 Marvi Deva, apparently persuaded that the supernatural danger from the field was not as great as he had feared, or perhaps as a result of performing the necessary prophylactic sacrifices, returned to the village and claimed the land. Bhima refused to surrender it, and in the summer and rains of 1930 he ploughed it and sowed and reaped his crop. After the field was cleared Marvi Deva decided on forcible measures, and one morning he started ploughing the field with the idea of sowing rape seed on it. His nephew did nothing at the moment, but that evening he went to his uncle's house and killed him while he was sitting by the fire after supper.

674 In this case it might conceivably be said that Bhima's crime was a crime for gain, because once the uncle was out of the way, he would be left in undisturbed possession of the field. But it is much more likely that the crime was one of sheer anger and revenge. In the first place, as we have seen, the land belonged legally to Bhima and he could easily have asserted his right to it by preferring a claim to any

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

State official. Secondly he must have known that after killing his uncle so openly—he made confession immediately to the Zamindar of Sukma—he would not be able to enjoy the fruit of his crime. Bhima's action was indeed judicial and an expression of his indignation against the anti-social conduct of his uncle. Unhappily he chose far too drastic a means of indicating his displeasure.

The case of Marvi Khotla arose out of a dispute about the partition of property. After the death of Manjhi Wijja, his sons Bande and Khotla inherited his property and continued to share the land and cattle. At the time of the murder Bande was about sixty years old and had succeeded his father as headman or Peda of the village. All the family cattle, though actually the joint property of the two brothers, were in his hands. The younger brother was anxious to have his own share separate. But since he and Bande were married to two sisters and were practically one family of which Bande regarded himself as the patriarchal head, the villagers and Bande himself did not consider that there was a sufficient case for partition. Khotla, however, was continually badgering his elder brother, and one day at the beginning of the monsoon he went at sunset to Bande's house and standing before it demanded his share. Bande as usual put him off on some pretext, and there was the usual quarrel. Khotla went home and had his supper. During supper his wife, who was, it will be remembered, the sister of Bande's wife, urged him not to quarrel about the cattle. But directly after supper Khotla again went back to Bande's house and abused him violently. He sat down by the fire, and continued for some time shouting at him. Bande was gradually getting more and more annoyed, and it is said that he exclaimed that he would kill Khotla if he did not keep quiet. A little later he declared, 'I am the Peda of this village, and I will have to beat you if you abuse me like this'. Presently Khotla's own wife came and begged her husband to stop quarrelling and come home to bed. But the man took no notice, and continued shouting every sort of foul abuse until at last Bande came quietly out of his house and knocked him senseless to the ground. The next day shortly after noon he died, and his wife beat a drum in order to give the alarm.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 It is not easy to say whether Bande's motive here was
578 primarily to keep control of the family property or not. His feelings were probably very mixed. He was an elderly man and the Peda of the village. Division of his herd of cattle might do something to lower his prestige. As Peda he was accustomed to give abuse, not to receive it. He believed, and in this he had the support of the villagers, that his brother's claim was unreasonable. Outraged dignity, wounded pride and sheer exasperation probably played as strong a part in his catastrophic revenge as any other motives.

Sometimes the quarrels arise about what may seem to the outsider quite trivial matters, though we should never fall into the error of judging the value of things to an aboriginal by our own standards. For example, two murders were committed on account of cocks, one a cock that was needed at a feast in honour of a brother-in-law and the other a fighting-cock.[1] In another case the quarrel arose between two brothers about the possession of a drum which was sold for two rupees ten annas, out of which the real owner only got a rupee.[2] In yet another case a youth murdered his own father as a result of a dispute over a tobacco crop. The son had a debt of four rupees to pay, and he asked his father to give him the tobacco so that he could sell it and pay off his debt. The father wanted the proceeds to buy clothes for himself. Tempers rose quickly and soon the father was saying that his son could sell the children to pay off his debt, but he would never part with his tobacco, a remark that cost him his life.[3]

II

762 Suicides from economic causes are extremely rare. This remarkable fact has been noticed also for the Bantu in South Africa. 'Conditions of starvation, prolonged droughts and disease among live-stock', says Laubscher, 'are common, and still no cases of suicides are known to magistrates of as much as thirty years' experience which can be considered as the result of despair in the face of economic difficulties'.[4] Only one Bison-horn Maria, Veko Lakhma, killed himself as the

[1] See Case Nos 52 and 18.
[2] Case No 86.
[3] Case No 40.
[4] Laubscher, op. cit., p. 290.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

result of the burden of a debt. Yet his debt was not762 especially heavy. He had engaged himself to work for a Thakur as a Kabari against a loan of seventeen khandi-measures of paddy. He worked for a year, and then wearied of it. The Thakur beat him for his slackness, and Lakhma hanged himself in his employer's field—probably as much from a desire for revenge as from despair.

The story of Alami Mata throws some light on the attachment of the Bison-horn Maria to their cherished institutions. This youth, about twenty years of age, was devoted to dancing and used to preserve his magnificent hereditary bison-horn head-dress with the greatest care. In a neighbouring village lived a beautiful girl, unmarried and in love with him, whom he used to meet during the dances. One day he found his splendid horns and feathers stolen. He would not go to dance without his finery; he could not meet his girl; on top of it all his father abused him for not working hard enough. Life without music, rhythm and love was not worth living, and he ended it.

Another young Maria boy, Poyami Kosa, hanged himself after a dispute about clothes. He went with a group of others to cut grass; they all put their clothes together, but when the time came for recovering them, Kosa's cloth was claimed by another boy. In spite of everything Kosa could say the other boy went off with it. This may seem a trivial enough matter, but to people as poor as the Maria the loss of a cloth is serious and during the dispute Kosa was greatly insulted. The combination of loss and insult was too much for him, and he hanged himself.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER NINE

CRIME IN THE RELATIONSHIPS OF FAMILY LIFE

I

000 Not only to the aboriginals, but to all the inhabitants of India family relationships mean far more than to the dispersed and individualistic peoples of the West. People live together and share things; they control one another and interfere with each other; they are connected by rules of jest or taboo; proximity sometimes leads on to disaster. The following Table illustrates the number of murders resulting from such relationships.

674

TABLE SEVENTEEN

Illustrating the relationships of 107 victims in 100 cases

Wives killed by husbands	18
Husbands killed by wives	3
Fathers-in-law killed by sons-in-law	5
Mothers-in-law killed by sons-in-law	3
Young children killed by parents	6
Brothers killed by brothers	9
Fathers killed by sons	3
Mother killed by son	1
Sisters-in-law killed by brothers-in-law	3
Son killed by father	1
Other murders where the parties were related ...	10

581 To a Maria youth and his wife marriage is a real partnership in living and not merely an association for the production of children. Husband and wife share far more of life together than is common in the ordinary Indian village. They work together in the fields. They go to the jungle for wood. They eat in company. They sit together to drink rice-beer. Women even attend funerals with the men and help them to erect memorial pillars. Their life together is happy and united, and woe to the man who disturbs it.

[p. 104]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Man and wife generally settle down at first in a small hut of their own. But there is a sort of joint family system with the father or elder brother as the patriarchal head, and sometimes a large family occupies an entire hamlet of its own in one part of the village territory. The institution of the cross-cousin marriage tends to unite families very closely.

This happy and united family life is disturbed by several causes. One, as we have seen, is the commonplace invasion of the happiness of two people by a third. Another is the presence of the husband's younger brother in the house, and the privileged relationship which he has with the elder brother's wife. Another is the custom that allows a married girl to visit her mother's house. Yet another is man's insatiable passion for domestic experiment which leads to the complicated and dubious joys of plural marriage.

It will be of interest to compare with this the situation in ordinary Hindu families, where the common disparity of age between husband and wife creates stresses from which the Maria are free. 'There are tendencies at work within the family institution itself which sometimes lead to criminal action. The joint family rests upon the mutual toleration and sacrifice of the different members of the household. While forbearance is the outcome of long discipline in joint family life, it is put to a severe test as a result of the growth of individualism. Again, the disparity between the ages of husband and wife, of parents-in-law and girl-wife, offers opportunities of exploitation and even cruelty. The custom of infant marriage is apt to promote oppression, especially where there is a striking difference in age between the husband and the wife. Cases of cruelty to young wives are often brought to the courts in India.

'In 1929 a Hindu weaver in Hyderabad, who had married a young girl, chained her like an animal to a big mill-stone to prevent her making frequent attempts to run away. She subsequently died.

'In another case in the same year a young girl-wife who was being forcibly taken to her husband's house managed to free herself, jumped into a wayside well, and was drowned'.[1]

[1] Halkerwal, op. cit., p. 35.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

II

HUSBAND AND WIFE

X 674 578 The murder by Veko Chamru of his wife and two children and his subsequent execution which thus removed a whole family from the world, makes a strange and sombre tale. Chamru and his wife Hirme had two young children, a daughter of ten called Lakhmi and a son of six named Hando. Apparently for some time they had not been getting on very well. One day Chamru asked his wife to husk rice, as he had to give his share of the Maharaja's tribute at Dassara, but she refused to do it. He brought some sweets for his children and dried fish from the Alnar bazaar. But when he gave them to his daughter, Hirme snatched them out of her hand and threw them away. The woman was evidently suffering from an extreme form of sulks. She refused to husk rice for supper and she did not cook food that evening or the next morning. The husband went to bathe in the river taking his little daughter with him, but she fetched the child back, and when he returned to the house he found that Hirme had gone away with the two children. She went to a friend's house and told her that she was frightened of her husband, and stayed there two days. She then went to another friend and again stayed two days and went away in the night. At last she went to the house of Chamru's uncle, and he advised her not to quarrel with her husband and told her to go home. The woman came back, but sat at a distance of about a hundred yards from the house and shouted to Chamru that she was going to leave him. He had to go out to get his cattle, and on his return found that his wife had disappeared. After a few days he left his house in charge of a boy, and went to the Alnar bazaar. He met a friend, drank some liquor with him and the two men did not start home till evening. On the way they met Hirme with the two children. Chamru scolded her asking her where she had been and saying he would kill her. When they came to the cross-roads near their village, Chamru went home with his wife and children and his friend turned off by another path. When they got home the boy, who had been left in charge of the house, was there and in his

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

presence Chamru twice struck his wife on the back with the handle of his axe. 674x 578

That night one of the neighbours was watching his crops as usual and as he was going home after making a round of the fields, he heard a noise in Chamru's house. He went there and found the man sitting near the door supporting his dead wife in his arms and weeping loudly. Chamru declared that he had killed her. The neighbour went away and brought his friends, and before them Chamru declared that he had hanged his wife and children because they had run away. He said that he would get another wife the next morning, and tried to borrow rice and bullocks for her bride-price.

The people then went to the house, and found the dead body of Hirme lying near the door and the little boy and girl hanging from a rafter. The next day they went to the police station and reported that Hirme had hanged herself, and the two children had followed her example, during Chamru's absence at the Alnar bazaar.

It is evident that Chamru intended to make a deal with the villagers. He supposed that, if he frankly admitted what he had done and paid suitable compensation, they would agree to hush the matter up, and indeed it is obvious that they did agree to do so. What they did not realize was that a police investigation was bound to discover the weak points in their story. Directly the police came to investigate the alleged suicides, they found suspicious inconsistencies. For example, the knot by which the rope round the boy's neck was tied was not a slip-knot, and it would have been difficult for him to have died by strangulation under the circumstances. The girl's neck was tied with a cloth which was hardly adapted to kill her, and her feet were hanging close to a heap of rice on which she could easily have supported herself. The medical evidence immediately disposed of any idea that the three victims had met their deaths by hanging. The usual marks of such a death—constriction of the neck, ligature mark in the neck interrupted at one side, open eyes, protruding tongue, clenched hands, dislocation of the second vertebra from the first—were absent. Medical opinion was that the cause of death in all three cases was congestion of 674x [626]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 the chest due to shock, but it was certainly not due to hanging.

[626] When these facts were put to the villagers they, seeing that the matter was known, changed their attitude; and three different lots of people, none of whom apparently had any kind of enmity towards Chamru in spite of his allegations to that effect, described how on the night of the murder he had admitted killing his wife and children. Chamru, however, insisted that he had not met his wife and children on the way back from the bazaar as the witnesses described, but that on reaching home late at night he had, as he entered, collided against the naked corpse of his wife hanging from the roof. He had taken a blazing piece of wood and had discovered his son and daughter in a similar plight. He had cut down his wife's naked body and wrapped it in the cloth with which she had hanged herself, and had sat there weeping and wondering whether he himself should not commit suicide.

There was abundant evidence, however, that Chamru had met his wife and children on the way home from the Alnar bazaar and had gone with them to the house. He was seen in their company by the boy who had been left to guard the building. Nobody saw what happened from sunset until late at night when his perhaps not wholly hypocritical cries of distress attracted the attention of a neighbour. But it is obvious that he was present in the house, and that no other person could have come in and killed his wife and children. Frustrated sexual desire, injured pride, jealousy at the children's affection for their mother, hunger and fatigue (for Hirme's absence meant there was no one to cook or do the house-work) drove the distracted man to a shocking vengeance and his own death on the scaffold in the end.

674 578 Marvi Paklu and his wife Dallo had been married for about three years, and had two children who died. They got on fairly well together for some time. But particularly after the death of the children disagreements arose; Dallo appears to have been that rather unusual type among aboriginals, a frigid woman who refused full sexual privileges to her husband and yet at the same time was jealous of him and possessive. Two years after their marriage she went to an uncle at Dilmilli without any proper clothes and only

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

wearing a small bit of cloth for decency. She declared that she had been beaten by her husband and turned out of the house. According to one version of what happened, she stayed at Dilmilli for a whole year. According to Paklu's own story, he went for her after a week and brought her home. This is, I think, more likely. But it is quite possible that Dallo then for a whole year refused to live with him as his wife.

Paklu's home was at Muskonta, a little hamlet of only three houses among rocks and woods near Mutanpal. One of the houses belonged to an old widow called Wage, whose widowed daughter Jimme had come to live with her. Jimme was an attractive girl, and she and Dallo became great friends; they used to go out together to get leaves, fruit and mushrooms. As Dallo got more and more frigid towards her husband, she used to go every night to sleep in Jimme's house. The result was what perhaps might be expected. Paklu, rejected by his wife, fell in love with his wife's friend. One afternoon in July 1939 Paklu and Jimme arranged to meet in a cave among the rocks of a hill about half a mile from the hamlet. That afternoon as one of the neighbours was sitting on his verandah, he saw Paklu going to the place and a little afterwards Jimme following him. But then to his dismay he observed Dallo going in the same direction with a basket in her hand.

The prosecution story was that Paklu and Jimme were together in the cave and were in the act of intercourse when Dallo discovered them. She asked her husband what he was doing there and struck Jimme with a thin bamboo stick. Paklu, naturally enraged at the interruption, got up and pulled off his wife's cloth, trying to shame her by making her naked. He struck her on the head twice with the blunt side of his axe. She fell down, and then Paklu knelt on her chest and twisted her neck till she died. He dragged her out into the forest and left her body there. Her combs and ornaments and the basket were hidden by Jimme. Paklu went to get some bamboos and returned home. When the body was found, he declared that his wife had been killed by a tiger.

But later Paklu first declared that he had caught his wife having intercourse with another man, who ran away as he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 approached, and that in a fit of rage at his wife's infidelity he had killed her; and then later admitted that he had gone to the cave, but denied that he ever approached Jimme sexually. He said that he had been sitting on the rocks above when his wife threw a stone at him. He slapped her, and she fell accidentally from the rocks and was killed.

There can be little doubt, however, that the prosecution story was true. When the police searched the cave, they found on the dust of the floor the clear signs of a woman lying on her back and a pair of footprints on either side [833] of the marks made by the woman's buttocks. This clearly shows that intercourse practised according to the normal aboriginal technique had been in progress, and Jimme confirmed the fact.

Paklu, when I saw him in jail, was still young, a man of [697] fine physique and good-looking. He has behaved well in jail, for he has been made a Lambardar and wears the tall yellow cap which indicates his office.

762 578 Nine cases of suicide were due to disputes between wife and husband. Thus Kome is said to have been quick-tempered, a person who always exaggerated things. She was a young wife, only twenty years old, and when her husband came in one day tired and wet from the fields, and found no food ready, and abused her, she took a rope and slipped out of the house. Her husband, also young, found some stale food and took it back to the field. When he came home in the evening his wife was dead.

Mate had a row with her husband over lighting the fire. He was drunk and beat her, and she attacked him. But her [607] husband's elder brother, to whom she was strictly taboo and who had no business to touch her, intervened and beat her also. During the night, she left the house and tried to get across the Indrawati River in order to reach her mother's house. But there was no ferry and she hanged herself with her clothes. It is worthy of note that although there was a deep river at hand, the girl preferred to end her life by hanging.

An unusually tragic incident occurred at Metapal in February 1937. Kuhrami Hurra returned one day from the bazaar and found that one of his calves had been killed by a panther. Rightly or wrongly he considered that this was

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

the fault of his wife and daughter, who had not tied the calf up properly in the evening. Hurra's wife was well known for her quick temper; she was continually quarrelling, especially if her husband ventured to interfere with household matters, and it is said that the daughter had learnt to take her mother's side. After the quarrel about the calf, the older woman set fire to their house and took her daughter away to the field-house out in their clearing. Here she first hanged her daughter and then herself.

Yet another wife from the same area, Galle, was obviously a bad housewife; she used to tell her husband that she would throw their child on the ground if he ordered her to do any work. On the day of her death she had been asked to prepare leaf-cups and food for the whole family—a large one. This seems to have been the immediate cause of disturbance, and she hanged herself. But there was undoubtedly a long and miserable tale of domestic unhappiness behind it.

In three remarkable cases it was the husband who committed suicide from remorse and sorrow. Barse Chewa asked his wife, a sick and miserable woman, to light the fire early in the morning. She was rather slow about it and Chewa beat and kicked her, knocking her unconscious. He was so ashamed and frightened that he killed himself. Sori Deva, angry at the loss of two of his cows, miserable because he had beaten his wife, did the same. So did Marvi Dhodsa who beat his wife, who was suffering from sore eyes, for not keeping the baby quiet. That night Dhodsa felt very miserable; he realized that his wife was ill, that he had no right to beat her, and that the child too had sore eyes and was bound to cry. He crept out of the house and hanged himself on a mahua tree with his own cloth.

III

THE POLYGAMOUS HOME

The strains and stresses of a polygamous household do not appear to result in tragedy so often as we might expect. Polygamy is not perhaps very common among the Maria, for the simple reason that there are not enough women to make it often possible. Those men who do keep more than one

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

595 wife at a time are generally the sort of people who would make a success of anything, even of so complicated a matrimonial adventure as this. The rough, dominating Goge, for example, was exactly the sort of person who would have had three wives.[1] Oyami Masa, who killed his younger wife at Khutepal, was again a strong, powerful, interesting character, a typical polygamist. And indeed provided the husband treats his wives with more or less equal consideration, and provided he is sufficiently potent to satisfy them all, there is a chance that such a domestic arrangement may succeed. But woe betide the 'good' husband, whose virtues are those that civilization may applaud, who enters on this experiment.

674 595 578 The failures that come to light are not many, but they are interesting. Sometimes the jealousies and quarrels lead to murder, sometimes to suicide. At Khutepal I visited the family of Oyami Masa, and met the charming old lady who was his senior wife. He was just out of jail after a year's imprisonment for killing his younger wife, Tokki. Tokki was a widow and by no means young, for her son by her previous husband had been old enough to go to the Tea Gardens of Assam. At the beginning of 1940, when Tokki had been living with Masa for about six months, the son returned from the Tea Gardens bringing three bits of cloth with him as a present for his mother. Masa, as one would expect, took possession of the cloth and this naturally upset Tokki very much. She declared that the older wife had persuaded him to keep the cloth simply in order to be vexatious. Masa replied that, since he was the head of the house and was feeding her and her son and everyone else, it did not matter whether he kept the cloth or she did. The quarrel—as such quarrels do—went on and on and at last during supper one evening Masa got so angry at the woman's nagging on the subject that he picked up a stick and beat her. It is not known how hard he beat her or whether he intended to kill her or not, since he had the body cremated immediately. For the woman died. No report was made to the police for three weeks by which time all the evidence had disappeared, and it was impossible for the court to do more than to sentence Masa to a year's imprisonment under

[1] See Case No 71.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

112

Wife and sons at Doriras await the return of their father Borga from life-imprisonment.

Kawasi Borga in jail

[facing p. 112]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 578 595 Section 323, I.P.C. for what he admitted, voluntarily causing hurt to his wife.

At Dugeli I met Bugori and his senior wife Jimme. Bugori, a most attractive young man, had been able to win the affection of two women both of whom appear to have loved him devotedly. Unfortunately Jimme's jealousy knew no bounds, and one day, when the two women were out together working in the jungle, Jimme, who was robust and powerful, tried to kill the younger girl with her axe. But she survived, and Jimme went to jail for three years. During [626] her absence the younger wife remained with Bugori. But when Jimme was due for release, the village held a panchayat and decided that the younger wife must go to live at her mother's house for fear that Jimme might try to kill her again. When Jimme came home, therefore, after Bugori had [783] given the usual feast to the villagers and had purified her of jail defilement, he took her to his house where she has lived very happily and borne him children. He visits his younger wife in her mother's village from time to time, but does not allow her to come to his house for fear of another tragedy.

Markami Handa had two wives, but does not seem to have been able to keep the affection of the younger, an attractive girl about twenty-four years old. She fell in love with another man and he killed the husband to prevent him taking revenge. Marvi Kesa had three wives, and ill-treated the youngest. One day, after he had beaten her, she ran away to her father's house. There was a quarrel there, and Kesa killed his father-in-law. Poyami Masa had two wives, and a Dhobi tried to seduce the elder. The younger discovered the intrigue, and probably thought it was an excellent opportunity to get rid of her rival. She told her husband, and he was so angry that he stabbed the older woman with an arrow and was himself sentenced to life imprisonment.

Tati Harma had three wives. At the time of the tragedy which brings his name into this record, only two were living. The younger wife had borne him four children, but Harma used to beat her constantly saying that she did not work properly and ate too much. So serious were the disputes in the home that a panchayat fined husband and wife four

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

H2

Marvi Boti (48) who, for love of his elder 'brother's' wife, assisted her to murder.

Mase (48) who, helped by her husband's younger 'brother' poisoned her husband

Tati Dora (90), who killed his elder brother's wife.

[Facing p. 113]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 annas each for not living happily together. One morning
578 the elder wife went to fetch Harma from the field-hut where
595 he had been sleeping, and found him dead, killed by the younger woman who could not endure his ill-treatment longer.

The complications and petty miseries of a polygamous home are illustrated in the story of how Sori Dome murdered her elder co-wife, Chule. Even while their husband was alive, the two women were always quarrelling. Three years before his death Dome beat Chule over the head with a bit of a broken plough, and Chule took a whole month to recover from the blow. Dome used continually to threaten the older woman that one day she would kill her. After the husband's death, matters got even worse. Chule was old and feeble and suffered from yaws, which made her irritable and exacting. But the two women continued to live together, along with their husband's elder brother, in their husband's house. Just before the tragedy, Chule made peevish complaints that Dome had been extravagant in using up the rice, to which the other replied that, since she had eaten it, it was not wasted. One evening, after they had been working in the fields and quarrelling all the time, they set out to go home. Dome had an axe in her hand and her two children were with her. Chule was carrying a bamboo basket. Dome urged the old woman to hurry up, but she replied that her feet were hurting her and she would follow later. Exasperated, Dome pushed Chule by the back of her neck and then struck her a blow with the axe. The old woman fell down, and Dome hit her again and she seems to have died on the spot. Medical examination, however, showed that there was no fracture and no dislocation either in the head or ribs where the blows had fallen. Dome did not use the sharp edge of the axe, and it is possible that she did not intend to kill the woman, but only wanted to teach her a lesson. On the other hand, of course, it was greatly to her advantage that Chule should be eliminated.

578 It is perhaps rather surprising that there is not more
595 suicide in polygamous households. But it does, of course,
762 occur. Bandi, headman of Khutepal, had two wives. They quarrelled and the elder woman hanged herself. Masa of Samgiri also had two wives, and the younger girl quarrelled

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

with him saying that he did not give her proper clothing or ornaments and that he did not sleep with her often enough. Jealous and frustrated, she hanged herself in a fit of despair. Poyami Gupe of Bastanar, a girl of about eighteen years, was widowed at sixteen and remarried two years later as the junior wife of Guddi. One day, about seven months after the new marriage, Gupe went to collect young bamboo shoots—a great delicacy to the aboriginal—and came home rather late in the evening. For this she was scolded by her co-wife and no doubt accused of every crime that jealousy could suggest. She left the house and went to stay with her maternal uncle. Guddi went to bring her back, but rather than go with him she hanged herself.

Kawasi Dulga's reaction was unusual. He appears to have been one of those husbands who should never have tried such an experiment; a man of weak character who could not keep his two wives in order. The women were always quarrelling and made his home and life a misery. One day he went with the younger to the bazaar and, as they were coming home, they quarrelled and Dulga slapped her. Presently he told her to go ahead as he wanted to relieve himself. She walked on a little way, but he did not appear and when she went back to look for him she found him hanging from a tree.

IV

The relationship between the wives of brothers is carefully regulated. Between an elder brother and his younger brother's wife there is an absolute taboo: there is no stronger rule of avoidance in all primitive society. But the younger brother stands in a special and privileged relationship to his elder brother's wife: he can flirt with her; he can make indecent jokes; he can become her lover; after her husband's death he has the first claim on her person and if she marries anyone else he has a right to compensation.[1]

It is obvious that among a people where brothers often live together, sharing house and lands, where jealousy is strong and sexual desire passionate and keen, such a tradition may

[1] For a detailed study, see Shamrao Hivale, 'The Dewar-Bhauji Relationship', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 157-67.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

607 sometimes lead to trouble. To the younger man, his elder brother's wife is delightful because she is accessible and does not burden his conscience. To the elder man, the younger girl is doubly attractive because she is forbidden. The word [601] 'brother', of course, under the classificatory system of relationship, includes also male relations who are more usually called cousins.

674 578 607 A youth Hemla Bakka killed his wife Jimme for having betrayed him with his elder cousin Hemla Dhurwa. During the season when the mangoes ripen, Jimme had gone with Dhurwa to collect and eat the fruit, and the husband suspecting them followed and watched them secretly. Dhurwa climbed the tree and shook it; the woman collected the fallen mangoes, and they ate them together. Then Dhurwa took her behind some bushes and was about to have intercourse with her, when Bakka appeared and separated them. Some time later Bakka returned suddenly from his field to drink water and discovered Dhurwa coming out of his house. He said that he would report the matter to the village elders. When he scolded his wife for her behaviour, she retorted that she would live with the man she loved and that nothing could prevent her. There was then a regular family quarrel, in which Bakka's father was beaten, and this so enraged the boy that he struck his wife a heavy blow on the head and killed her. There can be no doubt that in this case Bakka's feelings were outraged not only because his wife was unfaithful, but because she was unfaithful with a forbidden person, an act which might bring all manner of supernatural vengeance upon him—cattle might die and he himself might be afflicted with a psycho-dropsical swelling.

Another case of the same kind is that of Marvi Boti of Telam. Boti and his younger brother Kosa were living with their father, and were both married. Boti's wife died and he fell in love with his younger brother's wife, though the villagers said that it was really the girl who made overtures to Boti and threatened to commit suicide if he did not marry her. Kosa suspected his wife and beat her, and this seems to have decided Boti, for a week later he ran away with the girl to the Jeypore Zamindari. After about three weeks Boti

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

decided to go to his father's house to get his children by his former wife. The girl insisted on going with him. As they were approaching Telam they had the misfortune to meet Kosa coming along the same path. Apparently some people returning from a bazaar had told him that Boti had returned, and he had set out to seek vengeance armed with a *gagra*. When the boy saw his elder brother, he said, 'My fate is good, for it has sent you to me, since you have run away with my wife'. And so saying he struck Boti across the face. At that Boti seized his brother by his arms, and there was a struggle in the course of which Kosa was killed.

Gagra knife (Length 18")

When Boti returned from jail, he had to make special offerings in addition to undergoing the usual ceremony of purification. Since he had kept his younger brother's wife, he had to sacrifice to the Departed of his house, and to his clan-god. If he had not done this, his body would have swollen and he would have died. As it was, he was impotent for a whole year after he was released from jail.

V

It is perhaps surprising that there are not more murders as a result of the liberties allowed a youth with his elder brother's wife. Boti stood in this pleasant relation to Mase and as a result they poisoned Mase's husband, in order that they could be regularly married. The murder of Tati Hirme was due to her rejection of her dead husband's younger brother when he came to claim her.

It is possible that the remarkable forbearance shown by Ujji Poda towards Kopa, his younger cousin-brother, who was in love with his wife, Ragho, was due to his realization that Kopa was not breaking any tribal or social conventions;

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 607 he was only outraging his personal marital feelings. Kopa was working as Poda's Kabari or farm-servant at Kaurgaon on the banks of the Indrawati River. Five years before the murder Poda discovered that the boy was enjoying a love affair with his wife, taking advantage of the privileged relationship in which he stood to her. A ceremony of purification and appeasement was performed and Kopa left Ragho alone for a time. But they were evidently really in love with one another, and soon their intimacy began again. In July 1933, Poda discovered this and turned Kopa out of his house and service. Kopa went to live with another cousin in the same village.

On the night of Sunday 30 July, Kopa crept into Poda's house in the middle of the night in order to lie with Ragho. But while they were together, her hand accidentally knocked against her husband who was sleeping by her side and woke him. Kopa ran for his life, but not before he had been recognized.

The following day news came that a member of the family in another village, Chota Karka, had died, and Poda with Ragho, Kopa and other relatives went to the place for the funeral ceremonies. On the Wednesday there was an open quarrel there between the two men, and Poda told the elders of the village of Kopa's behaviour and beat him publicly. Kopa ran away and hid in the forest. Then on the Thursday everyone went home.

That afternoon three of Poda's servants were working in his field, weeding the kosra crop. In the field there was [343] the usual field-hut in which the cultivators rest and guard the crops. It was raining that day, and at about 4-30 in [293] the afternoon Kopa arrived there carrying a bamboo umbrella and sat down by the fire in the field-hut to dry himself. A little later Poda came and when he saw who was sitting there he fell into a great rage. He beat Kopa several times with his bare fists, knocked him on his back, sat on his chest and throttled him with both hands. The three servants did not dare to interfere, but stood watching.

Then Poda had the body taken to another hut in someone else's field, tied a rope round the neck of the corpse, and strung it up to the roof to give the impression that the dead man had committed suicide. He bribed the witnesses and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

told everyone who knew anything about the matter to make a report of suicide, and since he was a man of great influence this was done.

The remarkable thing about this case is not the violence with which the murder was committed, but the very great forbearance shown by Poda. After forgiving Kopa the first time, he himself went to the expense of marrying him to a young girl, perhaps with the idea that this would divert his attention. Even on the second occasion he refrained from physical violence, and contented himself with turning the boy out of his house. Few Maria would have failed to kill Kopa immediately after discovering him in the house at night. But all Poda did was to put the matter before the village elders. It seems to have been Kopa's impertinence in going to the hut and sitting there as if nothing had happened that suddenly deprived Poda of his self-control. The Court, taking these matters into consideration, sentenced him to only five years' imprisonment.

VI

THE MOTHER'S HOUSE

Another very common source of domestic friction is the custom that allows a girl to visit her mother's house. These visits are an exciting and important part in the life of every aboriginal girl. During her marriage ceremony many of the songs deal with the happiness of her childhood home, and th misery of a life with a husband under the domination of her parents-in-law. After marriage the mother's house acquires a sweet and romantic memory. Its hardships and quarrels are easily forgotten, and the love of one's own parents appears tender and kind compared to the constant friction of the new home. It is generally considered correct for girls to go to their parents' house for important domestic events such as the ceremonies for the birth of children, marriages and funerals, for some of the chief festivals and to help in the more urgent work of the fields. Husbands, especially young husbands, resent this, for it means one pair of hands the less to work in their own house. Girls are not always very tactful in the enthusiasm they show at returning

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

574 to their old homes, and some girls make a regular habit of
593 going there, far too often for the comfort of their husbands.

574 There have been several suicides arising out of this
578 situation, but only one of our hundred murders. This was the tragedy of Habka Masa who, when I saw him in jail, was a sad gaunt man utterly crushed by the tragedy that had befallen him. He had been married to his wife Pakli for some three years, and was living with his old blind parents at Hallur in the Kutru Zamindari. In June his wife went home to Gangalur for the Pen Karsita festival. Masa insisted on going with her. Two days after the festival, Masa told his father-in-law that he wanted to go back to his house, for it was the beginning of the rains and there was a lot to do. The older man was agreeable, and gave him the customary clothes and a basket of oil-seed, which is the usual present to a son-in-law when he leaves the house. But Pakli refused to go. Her parents were on the point of going to work as coolies, and she wanted to go with them. Masa, fearing that he might lose his wife altogether, decided to accompany her. The party set out and went to Gidam, a prosperous little country town on the main road, and again Masa tried to get his wife to go home. From Gidam they went to Tirthum and worked at the construction of a bridge for the P.W.D. When the bridge was ready, they all went on to Silakjhori where they got work as farm-servants. The parents-in-law built a little hut for themselves, and Masa and Pakli occupied a deserted hut belonging to sawyers. From the day of their arrival there were constant quarrels between Masa and his wife, for Masa was anxious about his cultivation—he was the only able-bodied man in the family. Pakli used to put forward every possible excuse for not going back. One day it was raining heavily. The next the rivers were flooded and she was afraid to cross them. A third day she promised to go when the rains were over.

On the night of 10 July 1939, there was heavy rain and a strong wind. After supper with the family Masa and Pakli struggled through the wind to their little hut. According to Masa's own account they then began to quarrel violently. He again asked Pakli to go home and she refused. Then he asked her to give him some tobacco, or, in other words, to have intercourse with him, and this also she

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

refused. She abused him saying, '*Puk nak*, lick my privates', and told him to go home without her. This, he said, was impossible and she again abused him. He got so angry that he hit her on the head with a heavy piece of wood and she died immediately.

More frequently these disputes have ended in suicide. The wife of Markami Pide was in love with another man, and frequently used to leave her husband and go to stay at her mother's house where it was possible for her to meet her lover. Pide as frequently would go and bring her back and beat her. At last she killed herself in despair. Mundri, the wife of the headman of Kaklur, frequently quarrelled with her husband over the question of visiting her parents, and one day when she wished to go and her husband stopped her, she became so miserable that she hanged herself from a mango tree.

Wooden tobacco box (Length 3½")

In two cases it was the husband who committed suicide. Marvi Gutami, a young man of twenty-two years, married a girl to whom he was much attached. Indeed it is said that he loved her so much that he was quite unable to control her, and she got on the nerves of the older women in the house who lost no opportunity of venting their spite upon her. As a result she often used to go away to her mother's house, and Gutami would have to go and bring her back. One day when this happened, the youth found that she had gone into hiding elsewhere. Despairing of happiness, he returned home and hanged himself behind his house. Kawasi Hurra's wife Lakhmi did not care for him and was always slipping away to her parents' house. He brought her back five or six times, but she would run away again after staying with him for a few days. Hurra seems to have been very fond

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 of the girl, and her constant absence made him so miserable
577 that he ended his life.
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A situation where the roles of the characters were reversed, and it was the mother who wished to visit the daughter's house, led to an even more pathetic tragedy.

In November 1939, a mother at Killepal was rebuked by her son and daughter-in-law for not helping them with the reaping of the kosra crop. She had been a widow for ten years and seems to have got a certain amount of pleasure and relaxation from paying visits to her married daughter at Dilmilli. This was resented by the son and brother with whom she lived. When she found that she was to be robbed even of this happiness, she killed herself.

VII

PARENTS-IN-LAW

X 674 The relationship between a man and his parents-in-law is
606 always difficult. But the general tradition in Maria, as in Hindu society, is that the older people should treat a son-in-law with respect and consideration. Neglect of this rule is apt to arouse very strong feelings in a man's mind. Marvi Kesa had three wives, the youngest of whom ran away to her parents' house after a beating. This is a common practice of aboriginal wives, and causes great annoyance to their husbands especially if the parents take their daughters' side. On this occasion Kesa followed his wife to the house and found her enjoying a drink of rice-beer with the neighbours. He went to his father-in-law and asked him why he had not sent his wife back. The older man replied casually that she had only arrived that morning, and this answer so annoyed Kesa that he struck him on the head with his axe and killed him.

In another case it was the mother-in-law who was the victim. Marvi Hinga took his wife Hirme, who was suffering from fever, to a neighbouring village to a Siraha for treatment. He stayed with her during the night and the next morning returned to his house, where he was seen by his mother-in-law. She, thinking that he had left her daughter uncared for and was now wandering about the village seeking enjoyment, abused the youth saying that he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

was an eater of excreta and urine, and that though he had married her daughter he did not take the least care of her. Hinga, who was apparently a very good husband, was so annoyed at receiving this insult from a woman who should have treated him with respect, especially as the words were shouted at him in the hearing of the village from a distance of about twentyfive paces, that he rushed at her and battered her to death with his axe.

The relationship between a son-in-law and the father of a wife who had betrayed him, was at the bottom of the Aranpur murder of 1941. In 1937 Barse Chewa kept Bandi, daughter of Tati Pandu, a Maria blacksmith, as his wife. For the bride-price he paid a cow with a calf and a basketful of rice. About a year later Chewa's house caught fire, and his elder brother who was then living with them lodged a complaint with the police that Bandi herself had set fire to the building. She was prosecuted, but acquitted. After the disposal of the case against her, Chewa sent the girl back to her parents, and some time afterwards she married a man at Kondasauli. Chewa now went to his original father-in-law Pandu, and demanded a refund of the expense he had incurred in marrying his daughter. Pandu refused to pay anything on the ground that Chewa had turned her out of his house, and that he himself had had to maintain her for two years. He further claimed that any money that could be extracted from the new husband must come to him and not to Chewa. The quarrel went on for some time until at last Chewa grew so exasperated that he went at night to Pandu's house and shot him in the stomach. All Chewa's attempts to exonerate himself and implicate other people were frustrated by the fact that when the blacksmith removed the arrow from his stomach, he was able to recognize it as one which he himself had made for Chewa in his own smithy.

In this case tribal opinion was divided about the question in dispute. The normal rule is that if a woman leaves a husband for another man, he must repay the bride-price (possibly with certain reductions) to the original husband, and that the father of the girl is only entitled to receive money or goods from the first husband and not from his successors. But in this case the question was complicated

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

586 by the fact that Chewa had himself turned the girl out and that between her first and second marriages she had spent two years in her father's house. The matter was thus a difficult one, and was still further complicated by Pandu being a blacksmith who probably did not anticipate fair treatment from the tribal panchayat.

X 674 604 There was a very curious and tragic murder when young sixteen-year old Marvi Hunga killed Hirma, a boy three years younger than himself. These two boys were related as uncle and nephew; Hunga's mother was married to the uncle of Hirma's father. This relationship is a privileged one. Just as a grandson may joke with his grandmother, so an uncle may abuse his nephew and even threaten to sleep with his mother, and neither uncle nor nephew is supposed to take any notice of it.

But on this occasion when Hunga met his young nephew Hirma in a field and asked him where he was going, the younger boy abused his uncle's mother and wife saying that he would keep them both as his wives; this annoyed Hunga and he drew his bow and shot the boy with an arrow. The incident apparently had nothing whatever behind it. The boys were not drunk and were on good terms. Hunga seems to have been suddenly, but quite improperly, excited by the abuse given by his nephew, and in a few moments two lives were ruined.

VIII

THE LAMHADA

583 Among the Maria, as in many other parts of tribal India, there is an arrangement whereby youths from poor families who cannot afford the price of a bride can serve for her for three, five or seven years. In Bastar such a youth is known as Lamhada, Lamanai, Lamsena or Gharjamai. The relations between the Lamhada and his future parents-in-law is not always a happy one, and it is complicated by the intimate proximity in which he has to live with the girl to whom he is not yet married. Sometimes, however, especially if the Lamhada happens to make the girl pregnant, the marriage

X 674 578 583 is celebrated before the end of his term of service.

Only two cases of murder have arisen out of a Lamhada

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

situation. The first reproduced incidents that are constantly happening all over India. Kalmumi Masa was living as a Lamhada in the house of his mother-in-law, a widow named Hungi. He was already married to the girl, Kohale, though he was still fulfilling his contract of service. The two women, as often happens when they deal with a youth of this kind (for the Lamhada as a poor boy and often without relatives is generally despised), were careless in their treatment of him, and did not bother to cook his meals properly. A few days before the tragedy they went out for a funeral ceremony, and Hungi only sent Kohale home very late in the evening to see to her husband's food. When he found that nothing had been prepared, he was very angry and for fear of being beaten the girl ran away and spent the night in a fig tree.

The next day a panchayat was called to consider the relations of Masa and his wife. Masa objected to his affairs being discussed in public, and probably suspected that his mother-in-law had too much influence with the panchayat. He had to be forcibly brought to the meeting which decided that the women were not cooking properly for the boy, and ordered them to behave better in future. But Masa was also reproved. He was slapped by the Gaita (priest) and ordered not to beat his wife who was six months with child. Masa was very angry at this, and removed his things from Hungi's house. He no longer took his meals there, but only went there to sleep. He did not go away immediately to another village, because he wanted to take his wife with him, get his share of the rice crop and make arrangements for removing his cattle.

Hungi, of course, did not want to lose Masa's services. As a widow she was entirely dependent on him for the cultivation of her land. She persuaded her daughter to refuse to go away with him, and did everything she could to stop him removing his rice. On the eve of the tragedy the boy filled three baskets with the grain, and put them ready for removal the following morning. Hungi said that she would on no account let him take the rice, and spent the night sleeping in front of it, on guard with her two children. Early in the morning Masa went to get his property. The old woman tried to prevent him; Masa flew

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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into a rage, struck her heavily and killed her. Kohale tried to intervene, and he so injured her also that she died a fortnight later.

Marvi Risami was the Maria blacksmith of Bastanar. Towards the end of 1934 he brought a youth, Markami Wango, to serve as a Lamhada for his young daughter Paike. The boy worked in the house for about a year and a half, and Risami intended to celebrate the marriage in 1936.

All went well at first. But there was living in the house a youth of about Wango's age, Marvi Kuma, a son of Risami's elder brother, whose parents had died when he was a child and who had been, for all practical purposes, adopted by the Bastanar household. This boy was thus, according to the classificatory system of relationship, Paike's brother and, of course, belonged to the same clan. Any relationship between the two would be regarded by tribal custom as extremely serious, as a form of incest. In spite of this, however, Kuma and Paike were greatly attracted by each other and Paike soon found that she had little time to give to her betrothed Wango. One day at the end of the hot weather, Wango and Paike went with Kuma and another youth, Kosa, to the hill near Lakhapal to get ore for smelting in the smithy. When they arrived there, Kosa went to the village on some business of his own and Wango accompanied him to get a drink of water. It is possible that he deliberately left Kuma and Paike together with the idea of spying on them and catching them *in flagranti*. He returned quietly and claims that he caught them actually in the act of intercourse. He threw a stone at his rival but missed him, and then chased him with a knife. Kuma ran away, and when Kosa rejoined the party, he found Wango quarrelling with Paike and throwing stones at her. Wango declared that he would kill all the people of the Marvi clan, and would either be hanged or run away to the Tea Gardens.

About a month later, the whole family with a number of other relatives and neighbours went to Handa Khodra to fetch grass for the thatching of their houses at the beginning of the rains (it was 2 June 1936), and when they got home late in the afternoon they found Risami with a pot of rice-beer and everyone had a little. Apparently no one was actually intoxicated, but they were at least revived after

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

their long day's work. That night at supper Wango accused Kuma of allowing Paike to flirt with him and of distracting her affections from himself. The boy seems to have been

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Necklace in Muria style, part of a dancing outfit

genuinely upset at his betrothed's lack of interest in him and her frigid attitude. He threatened to shoot her with an arrow. Kuma told his uncle Risami about this, and the old man got angry and declared that it was disgraceful of Wango to accuse a girl betrothed to him of so serious a crime as incest, and hit the boy twice. Wango caught hold of his future father-in-law, but the others separated them. So Wango walked out of the house. Risami followed to bring him back, for he had no desire to lose such a useful person

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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as a Lamhada. But Wango threw a stone at him, hitting him on the back of the head and making it bleed. Risami then went to the village headman and reported the matter, and they arranged with the Kotwar to hold an enquiry the next morning.

While Risami and the others were at the headman's house, Wango returned home to fetch his dancing kit. This was not the usual bison-horn outfit, but a collection of small and big bells, waist-band and necklaces. It looks as though he had decided to leave the house and abandon his duties as Lamhada out of disgust with the family that seemed allied against him. While he was removing the dancing things, Paike came out of the house and stopped him, saying that they belonged to her and had been given her by her parents. Paike's mother, who was eight months pregnant and was lying in the house, also seems to have shouted to the boy abusively to return the things. Wango, already in a towering rage, drew his bow and shot the girl just below the left breast. She lived till the following morning but then died of an acute generalized peritonitis.

In Court Wango declared that on the night of the quarrel he had again caught Kuma having intercourse with Paike, and that this had so enraged him that he had gone to remove his possessions from the house. But when Paike and her mother tried to stop him he shot the girl. This part of the story was doubted, since the other members of the party declared that Kuma had gone with Risami to make a report to the headman. But obviously everybody was concerned to hush up the matter of Paike's intimacy with her cousin-brother, and it is possible that Wango, who appears to have had something of the voyeur's temperament, may have again been hanging about to catch them together and may have again succeeded.

It is interesting that the immediate cause of this murder, like the last, was the attempt by the women of the house to prevent a Lamhada from going away and removing his property. It is not easy to say whether Wango found the loss of his property, or the sight of his betrothed in the arms of another man the more provocative. I think probably it was the struggle over the dancing outfit that really provoked the murder.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
301

Such young girls are very sensitive, unkindness or abuse may quickly drive them to suicide

[FACING p. 128]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 583 With these cases we may compare the tragic destiny of Dome, a young unmarried Dhurwa girl aged about seventeen. A youth called Joga had been living as her Lamhada for the past five years, and their marriage had been arranged to take place at the next harvest. Dome did not care for Joga, but like any other Maria girl she was prepared to follow her parents' wishes in regard to her marriage and become his wife.

[513] One night the girl found herself alone in her house. Joga was not supposed to sleep indoors, but outside in the courtyard. The girl went to bed and shut the door of her room. Late that night Joga went to her and asked her to have sexual intercourse with him. She refused, saying that, if she did, the gods would be angry with her and her cattle would die, and Joga went away. Fearing that the boy might ravish her, she got her axe and kept it by her side. Presently she fell sleep and again Joga came into the house and caught hold of her. She started up and struck him a violent blow with her axe, making a deep wound from which he died in a few minutes.

The Court held that Dome had acted according to her right of self-defence when she was unprotected in the house at dead of night. It is not known why Dome rejected her [834] future husband, for it is not really a very common habit among girls for whom Lamhada are serving. It is possible that she was in her menstrual period, a thought that is suggested by her saying that the gods would be angry and the cattle die if she had intercourse. On the other hand, it may merely be that she disliked the boy and did not wish to have anything to do with him until she had to after marriage.

Another Lamhada, who is now serving a sentence of life imprisonment in Jagdalpur, is Khuja, a Muria boy from Esalnar. He is a cheerful and rather stupid youth who, when he described his crime to me, laughed heartily at what he considered the amusing bits. Khuja was living with his father-in-law and though the girl was very young had already been married to her. One day a Ghasia beggar woman came to the house and said to him, 'Come along boy'. He asked her what she wanted him for, and she replied, 'For your wife's head'. A fortnight later she came again and complain-

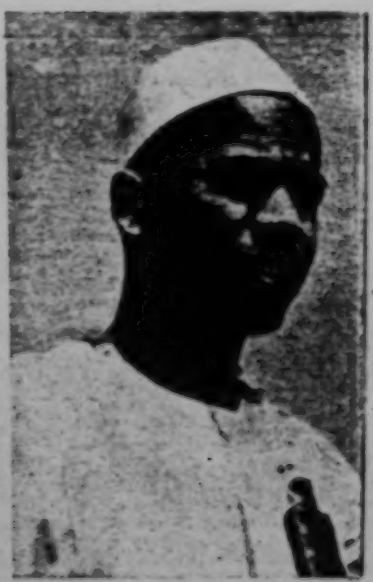
3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Kande Maria, whose father seduced his two wives

Marvi Kama (58), who killed his son

Punem Pidga (86), who killed his father

Padami Guddi (72), who killed his mother



[facing p. 129]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

ed to the father-in-law that Khuja had abused her, repeating the words that he had used. This annoyed Khuja so much that he followed her home, and when they came to the boundary of the village, threw her down and beat her to death. Khuja's anger may have been due to the fact that he was sensitive about being a Lamhada, particularly as he had married a very young wife.

In two cases conflict between a Lamhada and his father-in-law led to suicide. Ghasia went to dance with the other boys and girls of the village when he should have been working at home.* Akali Modi had served three years for his wife, to whom he was married four months before his death. As is often the case he was continuing to serve his father-in-law until the payment of the bride-price was completed. On the night before his suicide, two cows broke their tethering cords and damaged the crops. On such occasions it is almost routine to blame the Lamhada, and the father-in-law doubtless bewailed his mistake in giving his daughter to such a fool and made offensive remarks about the boy's mother. Modi, who is said to have been a sensitive, quick-tempered youth waited till the rest of the family went into the fields and then hanged himself from a tree outside the village.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TEN

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: ALCOHOL

THE special and characteristic drink of the Bison-horn Maria is rice-beer. Mahua spirit and the surem that is made from mahua[1] flowers, and the fermented sap of the toddy,[2] sago[3] and date[4] palms is also drunk. But landa rice-beer is not only obligatory on most festival occasions; it is also the favourite drink of boon companions. The Maria regards it both as an intoxicant and as a food—which indeed it is. It accompanies him from birth to death. It is drunk first at the ceremonies when he is named, again at his betrothal, again in large quantities at his marriage, and it is finally poured over his memorial stone after he is dead. At every great festival and at every point of the agricultural year, this nourishing and potent drink is made and enjoyed.

Mahua spirit, which is the ceremonial drink of the northern Gond, is also offered by the Bison-horn Maria at the time of sacrifice, and in small quantities on most ceremonial and domestic occasions. The juice of the toddy and sago palms is used almost entirely for happiness—as a stimulant and for recreation—though gourds full of the refreshing juice are often supplied at weddings and funerals to supplement the supply of rice-beer. A poor man who cannot provide sufficient mahua spirit or landa for his son's betrothal or marriage, may provide toddy instead. When Muka went to ask for the hand of the beautiful Kume in marriage, he took with him a gourdful of this juice. Surem, which is made by boiling the mahua flowers, is sometimes taken as a substitute for the properly distilled spirit.

All these drinks are gifts of the gods. Liquor comes from heaven, and who could resist so gracious a blessing? Mahua was discovered much as in Muria and Baiga tradition. An ancient hero went out to find some means of entertaining his guests. He came to a mahua tree with a hole full of water beneath it, into which many of the flowers had fallen.

[1] *Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.
[2] *Caryota urens*, Linn.
[3] *Borassus flabellifer*, Linn.
[4] *Phoenix sylvestris*, Roxb.

[p. 131]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 All round the little pond were sitting rame birds singing,
773 wagging their heads to and fro and flapping their wings in great excitement. The hero tasted the water and soon he too was singing, dancing and flapping his arms in company with the birds.

The recipe for rice-beer was given to the Maria by the Supreme Being for no other purpose apparently but to cheer them up.

273 The origin of sago and toddy juice is more elaborately
773 described.
539

Long ago there was a Maria called Iro Kawachi who had two beautiful daughters, Ilo and Palo. He made a seat of mahua wood and covered it with the skins of lice. He proclaimed that anyone who could first lift it up and put it where he could bathe upon it, and who could say what kind of wood it was made of, and what skin covered it, would get his daughters. All the boys of the neighbourhood came to try but none could tell what the seat was and none could lift it up. At last came a lame boy called Mad Moda from the Irma Raj with an open sore upon his leg. He too was unable to guess what the seat was made of until a fly came and said, 'Let me sit on your sore and eat it and then I will tell you what the wood is'. The boy let the fly settle upon him and after it had taken its fill it told him that the seat was of mahua wood and covered with the skins of lice. Then the boy was able to lift up the seat and put it where Iro Kawachi could bathe.

Now Mad Moda was lame and ugly and covered with hideous sores. When the two girls Ilo and Palo saw him, they ran away in terror but the boy went stumbling along after them and dropped his dancing-stick. He went on and at last caught the girls by the strings with which they tied their hair into a bun. He pulled the cloth off their shoulders and tore out some of their hair. Then he threw them down in the bed of the Indaltom River and enjoyed them. Afterwards the river divided and flowed onwards in two streams.

The boy's bell-stick turned into a toddy tree; the strings from the girls' hair became sago palms; the hair itself grew up as a date palm; the cloth became the broad-leaved plantain tree. Because on that day the girls' cloth fell from their shoulders, they now do not cover their breasts.

This is the story as it was told in Garmiri village. It is known in its main outlines in many other places, though

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

with small variations. In Dulkarka it was Ira Dhurwa, 273
who made the seat and its covering was of cloth. In Muskal 773
it was Gaja Bhimul who made it and the end of the story 539
is that Ilo and Palo jumped into the river at Dantewara and were drowned.

A few stories resemble the tales of the northern Muria. The Pen Kaina come down to bathe in the Godaveri river; they come singing to eat jamun fruit; or they simply come to dance. They sing, 'Whoever can tell what our names are, we will go with him'. When the village boys find they cannot tell their names they get angry and try to catch them. As the girls run away their bell-sticks fall and become toddy trees. The boys throw their sticks at them and these become sago palms. As the girls run away the kardan-belts round their waists break and turn into the date palm. The knots on these belts are its fruit. The god cuts off the testicles of the boys and sticks them on to the end of the dancing-sticks and these become toddy fruit. That is why, the Maria say, their women beat the sticks so vigorously as they dance. This version of the story is from Bara Harmamunda. In Palnar the situation is reversed. When the boys begin to flirt with the girls, the girls beat them with their bell-sticks and it is the boys who run away. Here they add that the toddy trees said, 'We won't stay here', and went down below the hills. But the sago palms remained on the Dantewara plateau.

Another completely different type of story is told in the neighbourhood of Bailadila. Long ago a group of Maria were hunting on the Bailadila Hills. They grew very thirsty and went searching for water. A rat had nibbled at the peduncle of a sago palm and a jungle cock had scratched a hole in the ground at its foot. The juice dropped into this hole and filled it. When the hunters came to the place they found a hole full of refreshing juice and drank it and thus learnt to tap the tree.

The comparative strength of these drinks is given in 273
Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual*. The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 of tests made with toddy from all parts of the Madras Presidency were:

		Percentage by volume
Cocoanut	85·7° U.P.[A]	8·1
Palmyra	90·6° U.P.	5·2
Date	91·4° U.P.	4·9
Sago	89·6° U.P.	5·9

Toddy exposed for sale in Bengal in 1909 was found generally to range in alcoholic strength from about 93° to 94° U.P. When reasonably fresh it is said to have a food value somewhat comparable with that of well-made malt beer.

The strength of country beers (which include landa) made generally from rice or millet varies from about 75° U.P. to 93° U.P. (14.3 to 4.0 per cent by volume) and the average may be taken at about 85° U.P. (8.6 per cent by volume). *Rasi* liquor made of mahua is permitted to be sold between the strengths of 50° to 70° U.P. and *phuli* liquor between 15° to 35° U.P., and although the strength of liquor offered for sale at shops in the south of Bastar is stronger than that in the north, the average strength of *rasi* liquor may be taken as 60° U.P. (22.8 per cent by volume) and that of *phuli* as 25° U.P. (42.8 per cent by volume).

The Maria themselves say that it is the mixture of drinks that is most dangerous. I have everywhere heard it said that they do not consider the rice-beer to be the most intoxicating. Mahua spirit is that. Rice-beer is a food which fills the stomach.[1] But when a man drinks first rice-beer, then a little mahua spirit and finishes off with a gourd or two of sago or toddy juice, he will get drunk on a grand scale. It is also said that it is when the juice of male and female toddy palms is mixed together that it becomes very intoxicating. It apparently makes no difference to the potency of rice-beer whether it is made with rice or with the smaller millets. Indeed it is generally a mixture of several grains.

Excise Sub-Inspectors whom I have consulted support the Maria in their opinion that mahua spirit is more intoxicating

[1] Dalton was impressed by the way Uraon boys and girls could go to work after a night's dancing "as cheerfully and vigorously as if their night had been passed in sound sleep. This says much for the wholesomeness of the beverage (rice-beer) that supplies them with the staying power", *Descriptive Ethnology*, p. 249.

[A] [i.e., underproof.—Analyst]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

than rice-beer or the fermented palm juices. They have added that the mahua liquor is much more rapid in its effect; rice-beer must be taken in large quantities and acts slowly; men do not usually become violent unless they take some liquor as well. A seer of rice-beer is considered equivalent to a bottle of liquor at 70° U.P. Intoxication from rice-beer lasts longer and has a much less deleterious effect. Since it has a high food value, the beer-drinker does not weaken like the mahua-addict. The Sub-Inspectors were unanimously of opinion that Maria did not drink to excess and did not consider that intoxication was a major cause of homicide.

The making of rice-beer is to some extent a ceremonial act. It should be done by a woman in the relation of daughter-in-law to the head of the household or the priest of the village, and she should work on 'a hungry belly'. It is made of a mixture of rice or kosra,[1] and mandia.[2] The mandia is pounded, soaked in water and put in a basket covered with a leaf which is kept in place with a stone. After two or three days in the basket the grain begins to sprout. It is then washed and dried and ground. In the meantime the kosra or rice, or kosra and rice mixed together, are husked and cleaned, and then husked or ground in an ordinary mill. The flour is mixed with hot water into a paste. A very large earthenware pot of water is kept boiling, and into the mouth of this pot is placed a bamboo funnel called the *jib*, and the paste is put into this and steamed. Now the pot of water is removed from the fire, and the mandia flour is put into another pot. The steamed rice or kosra paste is put above this and then above it again more mandia flour. The pot is filled to the top with cold water, the lid is closed with leaves, and it is put aside to ferment. After three or four days it begins to bubble and when, as Grigson says, 'there is a smell like a fowl-house that badly needs cleaning, they know that it is ready'.

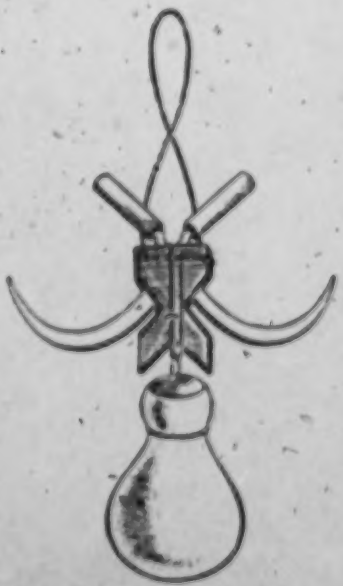
There are many rules and superstitions about the use of sago and toddy juice. Women must not take it when a tree is first tapped. It should not be drunk when it is too sweet, and so on. Careful precautions are taken to guard the trees against theft. Sometimes a large bamboo mat is tied round

[1] *Paspalum milliaceum.* [2] *Eleusine coracana.*

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed 477 by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the 481 summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree. Once in Gogonda I saw a Maria getting up a very tall sago palm with great ingenuity. At the foot there was a pole eight feet high fixed in the ground. The climber had to get to the top of this and then, supporting himself upon it with his legs, had to catch the hook twenty feet above him with a long double bamboo pole with a loop at its end. This was no mean feat, and when it was done he had to tie the end of the swinging stick to the pole on which he had been standing and climb up to where he was able to hoist himself to the top of the tree by the branches.

In the Konta Tahsil the method of climbing is the same as that recorded for [273] the Kadir, which again compares with that of the Dyak of Borneo. Long lengths of bamboo are tied to the trunk. The climber ties round his waist an ingenious gadget, called kach pirik, holding two knives and a gourd, and he then climbs straight up the tree. In other villages the mohukum is used. This is a beautifully made arrangement of ropes by which the climber's body is attached to the trunk, and can be



Kach-pirik apparatus for extracting toddy-juice

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

slipped up it. Between his feet is tied another rope which holds them against the tree. He is thus able to get up the tree like a humping caterpillar. A Maria told me that in the evening the people go up the trees 'like a company of monkeys'. When villagers go to drink sago or toddy, they often take with them little leaf-bundles containing dry fish, roasted crabs, red ants or mahua paste.

It is impossible to say how much alcohol is drunk by the Maria. According to the Excise figures in the Dantewara Tahsil and Sukma Zamindari where the population is overwhelmingly Maria, the consumption per 100 in proof gallons is 46.48 and 50.51 respectively. In the Muria Tahsil to the north it is 32.43 in Kondagaon and 58.90 in Narayanpur. Narayanpur, it must be remembered, has a large population of Hill Maria who do not drink rice-beer which may explain why there is a higher consumption of mahua spirit. In the Bison-horn Maria area, there are —according to the Settlement records—about 75,000 toddy trees. The number of sago palms is not known, but is—I believe—considerably smaller.

Mohukum ropes for climbing toddy trees

Illicit distillation was a feature of two at least of the murders. In the last five years 143 cases were detected in the Dantewara Tahsil, 91 in Bijapur, 65 in Jagdalpur as against only 11 in Kondagaon and 18 in Narayanpur. This certainly suggests that the Bison-horn Maria are much more given to illicit distillation than their brethren of the north. But, of course, these figures may only reflect greater energy

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

on the part of the Excise staff in certain areas, or greater willingness of informers to come forward with their tale of what is going on.

Although drunkenness usually is a marked feature of festivals, marriages and funerals, habitual drunkenness is never common among the aboriginals. For one thing they are too poor for it; for another it is too much trouble. A certain proportion of the people are teetotal, and others never touch mahua spirit and do not drink at any times except on privileged and ceremonial occasions.

II

How far does this drinking of alcohol explain the heavy incidence of homicide among the Bison-horn Maria? It is commonly said that drinking, and especially the drinking of landa rice-beer, is the main cause. It is true that a plea of drunkenness is frequently put forward by accused persons in the Court. But there is reason to suppose that frequently this is suggested to them by their counsel. In many cases the excuse of intoxication was not made by the accused in his confession to the police, or before the lower Court. It was introduced as an afterthought before the Sessions Judge. In the 100 cases the Court only accepted as true a plea of drunkenness in 19 instances. Of these 19, 13 cases of intoxication were due to landa beer, 4 to mahua spirit and 2 to palm juice. Landa intoxication usually occurred during festivals, but there is no record of any murder at a marriage or funeral, the other occasions when this drink is consumed in large quantities.

TABLE EIGHTEEN

Showing the occasions of homicide committed through intoxication

At festivals	13
At marriages	None
At funerals	None
After visiting a liquor shop	4

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TABLE NINETEEN

Illustrating the influence of liquor on homicide in 100 cases

Due to drinking lunda beer	13
" " mahua spirit	4
" " sago juice	1
" " toddy juice	1
Due to other causes	81

The question of alcoholism as a cause of crime has been discussed in an important article by Dr Norwood East, a former Commissioner of Prisons in England. He describes how he examined a series of 100 unselected cases of men and youths, who had been tried for murder in post-war years and had been examined by him. Alcohol was a predominant or contributing cause of homicide in 19 cases. Dr East concludes from this and from a study of other investigations that there appears to be no reason at the present time to consider alcohol as 'more than an occasional factor in the causation of crime in England'.

'Every practical criminologist' he says, 'will attach some importance to the association of alcoholism and crime. It is, however, very easy to over-emphasize the connection'.[1]

Another investigation into the influence of alcohol on crime was made recently by Dr J. C. M. Matheson, Governor of Holloway Prison for Women. In an analysis of all the women received into the prison charged with homicide from 1935 to 1939, he found that in only 3 out of 55 cases did alcohol appear as a direct factor, and in one of them the accused was acquitted. The youngest of these women was 39 years old. In 3 there was a family history of alcoholism, but no history of alcoholic habit in the person herself.[2]

Kinberg gives an even more impressive judgement. 'Many see in the use of alcoholic liquors perhaps the worst social cancer, if not the root of all social evils, and are therefore inclined to consider drink one of the main causes of criminality too. It is most unlikely that such a schematic

[1] W. Norwood East, 'The Problem of Alcohol in Relation to Crime', *The British Journal of Inebriety*, Vol. XXXVII (1939), pp. 55 ff.
[2] J. C. M. Matheson, 'Alcohol and Female Homicides', *The British Journal of Inebriety*, Vol. XXXVII (1939), pp. 87 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and uncomplicated view is correct. Social problems are usually very intricate and very simple solutions have so far always been found wanting.

'It cannot be denied, however, that alcoholic liquor is liable to change an individual's mode of reaction, and therefore plays an important part as a crimino-etiological factor. The most prominent psychological effects of alcohol are: emotional changes, usually in the direction of euphoria and increased irritability, but occasionally towards dysphoria (especially in the later stages of intoxication); reduced inhibition of drive impulses, particularly of a sexual nature; more optimistically coloured judgements; a reckless disposition; reduced control of actions; increased physical mobility, with a tendency to impulsive and thoughtless actions; a general lowering of the moral level. These effects indicate that intoxication is conducive to certain kinds of criminality, such as acts of violence—assault, manslaughter, rape and other sexual crimes, defamation and resistance to the police. Alcohol is, as a matter of fact, a more or less important contributory cause in many such crimes'.[1]

Typical crimes of drunkenness among the Maria may be briefly illustrated. A man and his wife were illegally distilling mahua liquor in a field. They both got very drunk on the fresh spirit and as they went staggering home, the woman fell and broke the pot, and her husband beat and killed her in a drunken fury.[2] One day a party of men met to gamble. One of them (as is generally the case, since gambling is not an aboriginal vice) was a Mahara. The party drank a lot of salphi juice, and perhaps some mahua spirit as well. There was a quarrel and the Mahara beat one of the Maria, a serious matter involving the latter's excommunication. The Maria in his drunken rage killed the Mahara and then gave himself up to the police.[3]

Twelve out of the thirteen cases where murder was due to drinking landa rice-beer occurred at festivals. For example, at one festival a man abused his elder brother's wife for not tethering the cattle properly or clearing away the cow-dung. She abused him in return, and in his drunken fit he stabbed her with an arrow.[4] At another festival party,

[1] Kinberg, op. cit., p. 211.
[2] Case No 26.
[3] Case No 35.
[4] Case No 43.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

one of the revellers got hungry and asked his mother for food. She told him to ask his wife, and his wife said she was too busy. The man picked up a hoe and killed his mother.[1] Sori Pandu of Mokhpal was notorious for the fits of rage to which he was subject when he was drunk. One day he went to play his sarangi-fiddle at a beer party. There was a drunken quarrel, and Pandu tried to kill his uncle with an axe, but the others intervened. So he went home and got out his bow and arrow and shot him.

Kurki hoe

In most of these cases intoxication was the immediate cause of the murder. There does not seem to have been any long-standing enmity between the parties, and most of the incidents should really be regarded as tragic accidents. It is only occasionally that the Maria uses landa deliberately to free himself from his inhibitions. Poyami Panda had suspected his wife of intimacy with the village Siraha, Nanda, for months past, but he had not taken any serious action about it until on the night of a festival, after he had drunk a lot of landa, he caught Nanda and his wife together and, his inhibitions and fears of punishment having been removed by the alcohol he had taken, he killed his wife's seducer.

Toddy was responsible for only one homicide and that a very tragic one. Father and son were living together amicably. One evening the father tapped his toddy tree and brought home a gourdful of the juice. They drank it together. Over supper the son asked his father for a loan, and when the old man refused, the youth fell into a drunken

[1] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 rage and killed his father while he was still eating.

762 Remorse for drunkenness was the rather unusual cause of a suicide at Dualkarka. Sori Hura was a heavy and reckless drinker. One day as he was indulging himself as usual, a friend, the Kandki of Kuakonda, a rather influential man, happened to visit him and gave him a little lecture on the evils of alcoholism. Hura expressed himself as greatly moved by his advice, and arranged for him to be rewarded with a feast. But directly the Kandki went away, Hura set to work to drink again. By midnight he was in a sorry condition of intoxication and remorse, and went into an inner room and hanged himself. It was about midnight, and his wife was husking grain in the next room for a festival on the morrow. Hearing a suspicious sound, she went to see what had happened and found her husband dead.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: FATIGUE

An important individual and mesological cause of crime which is largely overlooked in discussions of the subject in India is fatigue. This is so relevant that I make no apology for quoting Kinberg at length upon the subject. Fatigue is the result of environment conditions, work, or other circumstances that strain the working capacity and willingness of the individual and may in its turn produce serious psychical changes, sometimes of a pathological kind.

'Great exhaustion will occasionally produce actual psychoses of a confusive type. A disturbed consciousness of externals, the presence of hallucinations and delusional ideas, may then naturally enough produce criminal actions. But even in cases where fatigue does not give rise to such pronounced mental disorders, it may produce a change of personality which, under certain circumstances, may result in criminal actions.

'The psychological fatigue-phenomena that are of special importance as crime factors are a strong feeling of dysphoria, dejection and irritability, worry, desperation, and an unreflecting, vague wish to escape from a situation which seems intolerable. Any intensification of the complicated emotional condition may cause a tendency to obnubilation, which weakens further the automatic action control.

'In recent years I have seen many cases by which my attention has been drawn to the crimino-etiological significance of fatigue. Most of these belonged to the agricultural classes—daughters or wives of small farmers. As a rule, small farmers in Sweden, whether freehold or tenant, cannot afford to hire sufficient labour. All the members of the family, husband, wife and children, must therefore strain every nerve to keep the whole going. This labour is particularly hard on the married women, who, besides tending the cattle and working in the fields, must also do all the domestic work, and to whom, above all, pregnancy is an additional burden'.[1]

[1] Kinberg, op. cit., p. 215.

[p. 143]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

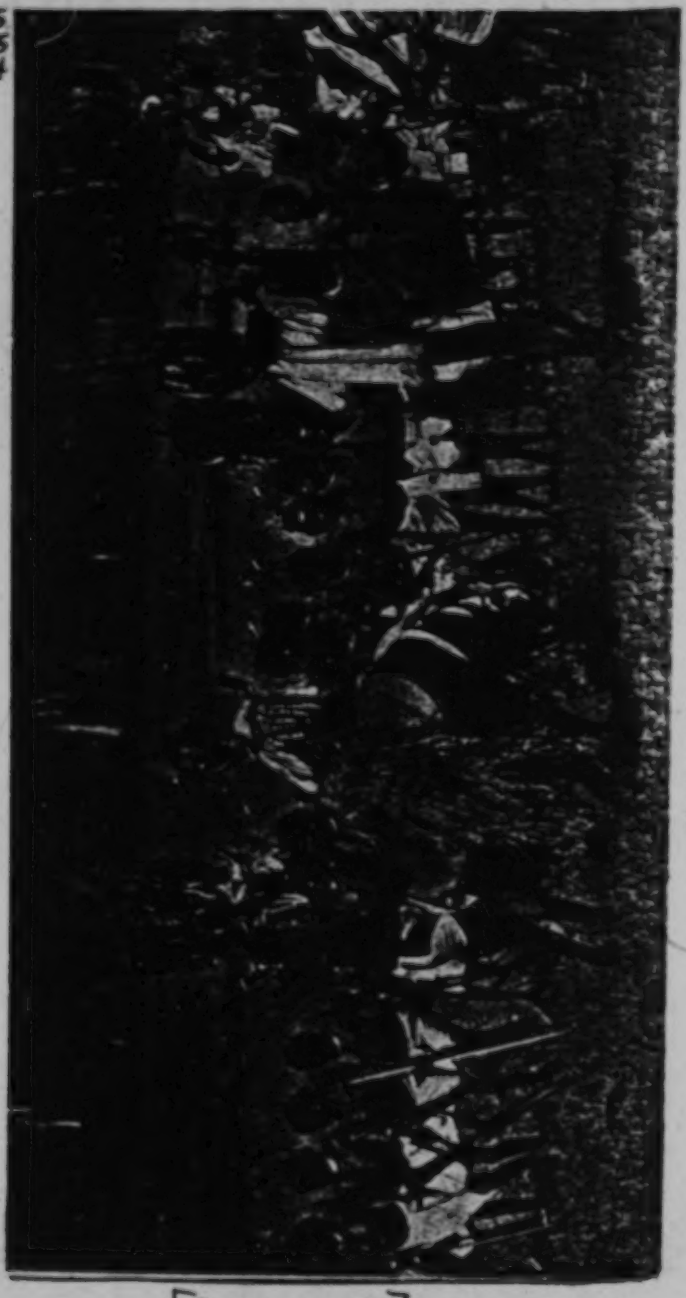
I believe that this may explain some of the apparently inexplicable aboriginal crimes in Bastar where, for example, a man kills a dearly-loved wife in a flash of temper simply because his dinner is not ready in time. Marvi Mundra and his wife came home very late one evening in October after working all day in the fields. When they reached the house, the girl at once began to cook their supper, and after a short time Mundra asked if it was ready. She said rather crossly that it was on the fire, and that directly it was ready she would give it to him. Mundra, exhausted by his long day in the fields and by the prospect of a still longer night watching the crops, lost his normal 'automatic control', picked up a stick from the fire and gave his wife three heavy blows which killed her.

Barse Kama, a man about thirty-five years old, earned his living by grazing the village cattle. His wife who was eight months with child had been out collecting young bamboo shoots for food. Kama came in at midday exhausted, and found that his food was not ready and his wife was lying down for a brief rest. She explained that she had only just returned from the jungle, and was very tired. He abused her and she replied that she could not prepare the meal any faster, and that if he wanted food more quickly he had better find another woman. Kama experienced a sudden explosion of rage, picked up his axe and struck his wife as she was lying on the mat. She died that night. Kama claimed that he was drunk at the time, but this was not accepted by the Court. In fact, he was intoxicated with fatigue.

Veko Dome, about twenty-five years old, was very busy gathering the kosra grain in his fields. On the eve of the tragedy, in the last week of November 1922, there was no rice in his house, and the family took gruel in the morning and in the evening drank a little of what was left. They all went to sleep without any proper food. Dome himself did not even get the stale gruel in the evening. Early next morning he went to his field again, and while he was away the rest of the family had some gruel. Then Dome's wife and his aunt Torka went to the fields to work. It had by now begun to drizzle. Dome asked his aunt if she had brought his food. She said as it was raining she had not brought any, and told him to go home and get it. At this he grumbled

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

535
535
534



The famous 'bison-horn' marriage dance

[facing p. 144]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and the old woman was annoyed and said, 'What have you been doing in the field? Have you been eating excreta?' The women squatted down and began to reap the kosra Dome quietly went and got his axe, walked up behind his aunt and struck her several times on the head, and she died without a sound. Dome went into the jungle for a time but returned home in the evening, drank some gruel and went to sleep in a hut behind the house. He had been working hard in the fields since the middle of the preceding day, and had had no food at all. His exhaustion drove him as surely as any alcoholic orgy to commit his crime.

Murders arising because a wife or other relation fails to give food in time may also be connected with the powerful oral needs of all aboriginals, which reflect the infantile nature of their culture. Laubscher has studied the underlying causes for the large number of stock thefts in South Africa. He finds that these are ultimately based on the people's craving for meat. The Tembu tribesman places a great value on meat as a food and whenever it is available he gorges himself to the utmost. 'There is something ravenously sadistic in his attitude towards meat. It is not only a great delicacy, but it is credited with great health-giving qualities. Elders have frequently remarked that the change of the times, the paucity of cattle, sheep and goats, have reduced to a minimum the meat supplies of the people. Once upon a time when cattle roamed in huge herds and they had plenty of meat to eat, their people were strong and healthy, but now they only have meat once or twice a month, and then not sufficient is available to make them feel they need not eat again for a few days'.[1]

Cattle theft is similarly very common among the Maria, and I have little doubt that a denial of oral needs that are commonly fulfilled without difficulty, throws them off their balance and drives them to violence. As among the Tembu, these oral activities are shown in the Maria's craving for bulk in food—their love of tobacco to smoke and chew and their delight in alcohol.

Oral needs are closely connected with the sexual impulse. It is remarkable that in no fewer than six cases, murder directly followed a wife's refusal to allow her husband sexual

[1] Laubscher, op. cit., p. 303.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142

Veko Dome (98), who was very hungry

Kuhrami Hirme (132), who, hungry & exhausted, killed a child of ten.

Marvi Mandra (61), who killed his wife at the end of a long day

[Facing p. 145]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

congress. Habka Masa killed his wife Pakli in consequence of a long dispute, but immediately before the tragedy she refused to lie with him. Barse Chappe, a polygamous invalid, was first refused by both his wives and later by his senior wife because he desired to perform the act in a semi-public place. Marvi Deva saw his wife with a man and when, probably to test her, he asked her to give herself to him and she refused, he killed his baby daughter and tried to kill her. Kosa, an almost imbecile paralytic, asked his wife to have intercourse with him; she abused him and he stabbed her to death. Doga, rejected sexually by his elder brother's widow, was so affronted that he killed her. Mundra, who so brutally treated his wife Pande, asked her to have sexual congress with him and was refused only an hour before he met his death at her hands.

Decorated banda knife (Length 3')

Such a refusal may also drive a man to suicide. Marvi Joga, the Waddai of Mathadi, was always quarrelling with his wife and threatening to remarry. One day at the funeral ceremony of his brother's son, he drank a lot of surem, and when he came home he tried to have intercourse with his wife. But she refused saying, 'You are always talking about another wife. Why don't you go and get one?' and she went away to sleep in the Room of the Departed. Joga, intoxicated and desperate at his wife's refusal, hanged himself.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE CRIME OF REVENGE

I

Motives of revenge and implacable enmity operate in many cases. The Maria have various symbolic methods of expressing their hatred. One of these is to remove three handfuls of straw from an enemy's roof. This was done in a case where the murderer had a long-standing enmity with his victim, which came to a head over a quarrel about the cutting of an embankment. Another symbol is to pull out a few of the pubic hairs and to whistle loudly with one finger in the mouth. This was done by Muchaki Dasru shortly before he killed a man for not giving him the tribute that was due to him as Siraha of the village, and by Marvi Oyami Masa as he led his party to murder his cousin. Kartami Aitu dipped his hand in his victim's blood and made a mark on his own head. He cut the ground of the threshold with his axe in dramatic symbol of his triumph over the dead man's family.[1]

In some cases hostility between two Maria may continue for years before it breaks out into open conflict. Thus Vetti Hirma had been on bad terms for several years with Rawa Hirma, who was ultimately to be his victim. It began by a quarrel over land. Then when both were probably a little drunk at a Chikma New Eating festival, they tried to shoot each other with arrows, but missed their aim. It was only after three years that at last the theft of a pumpkin aroused Vetti Hirma to such a state of revengeful anger that he beat his enemy to death.

Outraged family pride that craved revenge, desire to eliminate a tiresome suitor, and a chivalrous sense of protectiveness towards a girl were combined in the murder of Muka, the young Siraha of Surnar. He was in love with Kume, the daughter of Poyami Irma and one day in March 1935 he went to Ghatom with a pot of sago palm juice to ask

[1] In 1939, in a Telanga case, the murderer stabbed his victim with an arrow, disembowelled him with a knife, extracted the liver, and bit off a portion of it. But was this for revenge or magic?

[p. 147]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

for her in marriage. When he reached the house and Irma asked him his business, Muka said, 'I have started work in my fields and I have need of a cow. I hear you have a good one in your shed and I have come to buy it from you'.

'We have no cow here', said Irma—who did not understand what Muka was talking about, for the Maria normally use the symbolism of a flower in their betrothal dialogues, saying 'I have come to pick a flower and put it in my hair'—'I am sorry you have troubled yourself unnecessarily. You must be tired and hungry. Take some rice and pulse, and cook your food and eat it'. For Muka being a Siraha could not eat from the hands of other people, but had to cook his own meals. He took the grain and gave Irma the palm juice which he had brought. Irma accepted it and took it into the house to drink. But then his wife told him that Muka had not come for a real cow, but to ask for their daughter in marriage. When he heard this, Irma was furious and abused Muka saying '*Thu re mailotis*, I don't want your gift nor will I give you my daughter', and he threw the juice away and turned the youth out of the house.

As Muka was going home, he saw Kume collecting mahua flowers in the forest. She was so beautiful that he could not restrain himself. He went to her and said, 'Come away with me' and took the basket of mahua flowers out of her hands. But the girl screamed, and some men who were working nearby ran to the place and abused Muka asking him whether he was betrothed to the girl that he should take her away by force.

Two days later Muka again came to the village, and found Kume returning from the forest with a bundle of leaves. He caught her by the hand, and tried to carry her off. A neighbour saw the incident and rescued her. Muka hid himself in the village rest-house. Presently Kume's brother Usodi came home and hearing what had happened, went to Muka and killed him with his axe.

In a case at Michenar in 1939 when Poyami Kaner was accused of murdering his uncle but was acquitted, it is said that while he was asleep in his house someone came into the room and tried to throttle him. As the unfortunate man

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
A-W32 Gond A W32
Bison Horn Maria

was struggling in agony he managed to catch hold of his wife, who was sleeping close by, and woke her. She got up and catching hold of the assailant by the neck, dragged him outside. The would-be murderer shouted that he would apply his victim's blood to his forehead. From his voice they recognized who it was: it was a close relative, an uncle, who had sworn revenge after a dispute about partition of the family property. He again tried to attack, but Kaner managed to get hold of his bow and arrow and shot him. The Court held that Kaner was justified in protecting himself, and acquitted him. The interesting thing here is the assailant's declaration that he would place the blood of his victim on his own forehead in dramatic symbol of revenge.

II

Some of the murders for revenge were the result of the deliberate conspiracy of several people to eliminate the person who had offended them. We will consider two of these cases. The first occurred in 1930 at Jabeli at the time of the Wijja Pandum, the festival when, after a ceremonial hunt, the Maria consecrate the seed that is to be sown in the coming season.

Marvi Oyami Masa was a well-to-do and influential man and the Siraha of his village. He had a large family of whom Handa was his elder brother, Gutta his nephew, Doga his son-in-law, and Mundra and Tangra his sons. Oyami Masa was the leader of this family group, who were economically dependent upon him, and with whom he had joint cultivation. Elsewhere in the village was Oyami Masa's first cousin, Marvi Masa, who was the clan-uncle of Gutta, Mundra and Tangra, but lived with his own near relations separately; the two groups were not perhaps on very good terms with each other.

On the night of the festival, when as usual large quantities of rice-beer were being consumed everywhere, Gutta and Handa came to the village as the cattle were being driven in with loud shoutings and clouds of dust. They saw Masa in his house and demanded some rice-beer. But Masa said that he had not made any for the festival, and was not drinking that day. This annoyed the two youths who began

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

to abuse the old man, calling him *mailotia* and thief. Masa did not mind the reflection on his relations with his mother who had been dead for many years. But he greatly objected to being called a thief, for this came nearer home and he replied hotly that it was Oyami Masa who was the real thief, since he had stolen seven cattle from a village in Sukma Zamindari. The boys were very angry at this—possibly the accusation was true and therefore dangerous—and went off threatening that they would tell Oyami Masa and take their revenge. Already drunk, the boys went to Oyami Masa's house and there the relatives gathered together and plotted to give Masa a good beating; they may even have decided to get rid of him altogether. At about 10 o'clock that night the six men armed with sticks came to Masa's house. Oyami Masa led the way in and began to beat his cousin. The stick he had was a rotten one and broke immediately. But as bad luck would have it, his eye fell on a heavy rice-pestle, and he picked this up and delivered several heavy blows which fractured Masa's skull in two places and would alone have been sufficient to kill him. Masa's son and brother tried to save him. But the other men knocked them down, and then belaboured Masa with their sticks until they were certain he was dead. When examined the body was a mass of injuries—there were nine fractures of the ribs, the left ear was torn and the spleen badly ruptured; there were bruises everywhere. When their work was done, the men departed doing the *sui* whistle which, indeed, one witness declared Oyami Masa whistled as he led the attack on his cousin.

Rice-pestle (Length 4')

Perhaps the most notable thing about this incident was the way Oyami Masa tried to save his fellow-conspirators by taking all the blame upon himself. He said that, as he was going for the night worship in connection with the festival, Masa shouted at him and accused him of instigating some Mahara

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

weavers to report to the police that he had burnt their houses. He was slapped by Masa, lost his temper, picked up the pestle and hit his cousin over the head. He said that nobody else was present except Mundra and Doga who tried to intervene in the quarrel. There was no evidence at all, however, to support Oyami Masa's story, and he was sentenced to life-imprisonment along with the two older men, all three of whom died in jail. But the respect with which Marvi Oyami Masa was regarded, the respect which from his behaviour at the trial does not seem to have been altogether unjustified, is shown in the elaborate funeral arrangements that were made for him after his death. He was given a large danyakal stone, an earthen tomb was made above his clothes and ornaments and an elaborately carved pillar was erected to his memory. It was from seeing this pillar that the villagers of Massenar got the idea of erecting a similar pillar to the famous Kopa Dhurwa.

Another case of murder for revenge by a body of men was the Phulpar tragedy of 1931, a murder which is remarkable for the behaviour of the accused.

For a long time there had been ill-feeling between the landlord of Phulpar, a wealthy Maria, and Pandu, one of his tenants. At the beginning of May 1931, a cowherd in the village lost a goat and reported the fact to his landlord who called for the Kotwar and others and started an enquiry. They went to Pandu's house and questioned him about the missing animal, for apparently the goat used to wander into Pandu's garden, and Pandu was known as a cattle thief—he had previously been beaten by the landlord for this. There was a report too that a few days before Pandu had killed and eaten a goat. But Pandu said that it was his own goat that had died, and produced a white goatskin and some bits of meat threaded on a stick. When the cowherd saw the skin, he admitted that it was not his. But another member of the company claimed it instead. At this the landlord told Pandu that he was a thief and brought his village into disgrace. He further accused him of not paying his rent, and said that he would have him turned out of his house. Pandu replied that he could turn him out if he wanted to, but he would take care to have his revenge before he went.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 A few days afterwards, a man called Nanda came with a friend to Pandu's house to borrow a rupee, bringing a pot of toddy juice with him. That evening, as they were sitting, drinking and talking, Pandu offered Nanda two rupees if he would kill the landlord. Nanda said this was not enough, but at last agreed to commit the murder for five rupees. Accordingly that night Pandu and Nanda went with a farm-servant, a youth of about nineteen called Bhima, to find their victim. Bhima was left in a field some distance away to keep watch, while Pandu and his helper tried to get into the house. But the dogs barked and they had to go home with their plan frustrated for that night.

The next day was bazaar day. Pandu collected Nanda and Bhima, and they decided to kill the landlord as he was going to the bazaar. Bhima's duty was to get the landlord's axe out of his hands; Nanda was to do the actual killing and was armed with a heavy stick for this purpose; Pandu came last to direct operations.

They found the landlord sitting in his field-hut, and Bhima and Nanda joined him there saying that they had come to settle the matter of the stolen goat amicably and that Pandu was on his way with a bottle of liquor. This was at about 8 o'clock in the morning. Bhima then said he wanted to skin some mangoes and on this pretext got possession of the landlord's axe. Just then a number of neighbours came by, and this seems to have suggested to the murderers that the place was too public. Nanda told the landlord that Pandu was bringing the liquor to a mahua tree some distance away. The three men, therefore, got up and proceeded towards the tree where they sat down. At the same time Pandu approached cautiously by a different route. He stopped first under a kumi tree and then went on towards the mahua tree. Directly Pandu arrived, Nanda struck the landlord, as he was sitting down, on the left side of the head with his stick, and the unfortunate man fell over. Nanda struck him again, and then Bhima hit him behind the left ear with the blunt side of his axe. After delivering the blow the boy began to tremble, and got hold of a small jamun tree to support himself. It is said that he trembled so violently that the tree shook to and fro. At this moment Pandu pushed by saying, 'Beat him, beat him. This is not

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

the time for trembling'. He took the axe out of Bhima's hand and struck the landlord two more blows with the sharp edge. Just then they caught sight of two men coming by. They hurriedly dropped their weapons and stood upright with their hands straight down round the landlord's body so that the passers-by could not see what was happening. These men were going to get some meat from a dead cow which was lying near a tank in the next village. They do not seem to have seen anything, and went on their way. Another witness came by and he saw Pandu look cautiously round and then rub the blade of his axe in the earth and throw it down beside the landlord's body. This witness was so frightened that he did not go to get meat from the dead cow as he originally intended, but went home and lay down.

This story shows on the one hand an unusual degree of premeditation and a careful adherence to plan, and on the other a rather unusual susceptibility on the part of some of those concerned in the affair. The youth Bhima, who was Pandu's bond-servant, evidently had no heart in the business and trembled so much after striking one blow that he could do no more. One witness was so frightened that he could hardly walk and had to go home and lie down. Without the urging of Pandu, who seems to have been an unusual type of criminal, the other men would certainly have never carried out the plan. For this reason Pandu was sentenced to death and was executed, and the other murderers went for life-imprisonment.

III

The subject of aboriginal abuse or gali is obscure, and outsiders often find it hard to understand why expressions that are continually used in ordinary conversation should sometimes arouse the most passionate feelings of indignation. The most abusive terms are sometimes actually used in love-making, and a Maria employs the word *mailotia*, for example, which means 'cohabit with your mother' as freely as a British soldier uses the word 'bloody' and generally with as little meaning.

For gali to be offensive everything depends on the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 occasion, the tone of voice and the relationship of the people 578 concerned. Word-magic is an important and dangerous 195 element in Maria life. A witch can make a man impotent by giving him 'corpse-abuse'. It is possible for a man to use a normally inoffensive expression in a certain tone of voice, which under the circumstances is so dangerous and insulting as to lead to murder. A mother-in-law, for example, may abuse her son-in-law privately as much as she wishes. But if she shouts an insulting epithet at him in the presence of half the village, she has committed an unbearable insult.

674 Two types of abuse are not used in ordinary conversation. You do not call somebody a thief, unless you want trouble. You certainly do not call anyone a witch or a wizard. In a number of our cases the allegation that someone was a thief or a wizard led to murder.

Excreta-abuse is also not very common in daily life. In several cases it has led to murder. Thus the elder of two brothers told the younger that he was eating excreta. A son-in-law killed his father-in-law when he told him that he ate the excreta and drank the urine of his wife. A nephew killed his aunt for accusing him of eating excreta.

On two occasions fathers were killed by sons for insulting them. One father told his son to 'get out of the house' and was killed for it. Another father, who was asked by his son for a loan of money, replied that the boy might sell his own children for the money, but he would not get it from him. Such remarks were not to be endured.

Markami Turka killed his elder brother's wife Kosi for abusing him. He told her that if she did not do her work properly he would not give her cattle for cultivation, and she replied that 'her pubic hairs would not be pulled up' if she did not get them. This ought not to have greatly offended someone in that relationship, but it did: probably it was the way she said it.

Yet another case (not in our list) in which a father was murdered by his son was when a youth about nineteen years old, Poyami Lakhma, killed his father Linga in 1940. The two men had a drunken quarrel, and the father abused his son and told him to get out of his house. As before, this seems to have been regarded by the boy as an almost

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

unbearable insult. He replied, 'Why did you not kill me and throw me away while I was a child, if you want to turn me out of your house now?' The father replied, 'I will kill you even now and throw you away'. He also called the boy *chor* (thief), *mailotia* (one who cohabits with his mother) and Dher (a member of the despised Mahara caste). Finally he said, 'You are not my son, and whose son you are I cannot say'. At last the boy, driven to madness by these insults, struck his father with an axe and killed him.

The most common abuse in everyday life is based on straightforward natural sex—there are no words, as in Europe, associated with perversion—the words *mailotia* and *baplotia*, suggestions that somebody should lick the private parts or eat the pubic hairs, insinuations about the chastity of wife or sisters. Such abuses are so common that they should not normally rouse anyone to the pitch of intense excitement necessary for committing homicide. But in several of our cases, though it was these expressions that were reported in Court as the cause of provocation, I think probably many other unpleasant expressions were actually employed. Some Maria are sufficiently intelligent, when they are pleading provocation, to mention the things which they think would provoke the Court rather than the things that really provoked them.

Educated people are sometimes puzzled why the rude, coarse aboriginal should be so offended at a little bad language. But the truth is that there is a strict etiquette in these matters, and while a lot of filthy talk is tolerated provided the conditions are right, any breach of the rules will cause an explosion of temper that may end in tragedy. It is probable too that the abuse releases an instinct for revenge that is unconscious. Stanley Hall says,

> The instinct of revenge is very deep-seated, and not entirely eradicable. In abnormal cases it is instantaneous and perhaps unconscious. I have myself talked with perhaps a score of youthful murderers under sentence of death, who, I believe, were in every way as good by nature as I am, but who in an instant of fulminating anger struck the fatal blow, possibly harder than they knew or because a weapon was at hand, and killed, it may be, their best friend with a regret no less than

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

000 if sudden death had come without their agency, and with a self-reproach equal to that which they would have visited upon any wretch who had slain their friend. When we reflect that the entire administration of criminal law up to recent date was based upon vengeance, we cannot wonder that its impulse is so strong and passionate in the heart of man, and when we read the horror of some American lynching scenes, we realize that collective man can with impunity be as vindictive as those on whom we inflict the worst punishments.[1]

IV

RECIDIVIST CRIMES

x 674 The two examples of serious recidivism in our list where men committed double murders—that is to say, after being convicted of one murder and serving a sentence for it, they committed another shortly after release—give rise to serious speculations about the value of imprisonment as a cure for a disordered and homicidal mind. These cases, both of which can be classed as crimes of revenge, are so important that we must consider them in a little detail.

Murami Dhurwa was sentenced to transportation for life for murdering the Kandki of his village, and was released from jail in 1929. After his release he went to live jointly with his elder brother Hurra at Palnar. For about ten months everything went well. But then in the middle of December 1929 Dhurwa had a violent quarrel with his wife ostensibly for not keeping the house clean. He pushed her out of the door, and declared that he was going to kill his brother and his nephew, Wella, for not giving evidence in his favour at the trial at which he had been sentenced. He left his house and went to find Wella, though it was late at night. Wella was living in a hut nearby; he heard Dhurwa's threats and tried to escape. But he had hardly gone a few paces from the building when Dhurwa caught him and struck him a blow with a heavy stick that knocked him to the ground. Wella's wife shouted for help and his father Hurra ran to the rescue, but not before Dhurwa had given two more heavy blows. Hurra managed to disarm his brother whereupon Dhurwa went away to a field-hut

[1] Hall, op. cit., p. 356.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and slept, but afterwards absconded. Wella was taken into the house by his wife, and the next day carried to the police station. But as they were going along the unfortunate man died.

Dhurwa's own version of the story differed considerably from this. He declared that he and his brother were not on very good terms for, while he had been in prison, Hurra had sold several of his cattle and when he had asked for the money, he had told him to get out of his house. He was trying, but without success, to get partition of the family property. On the night of the tragedy he had quarrelled with his wife for not lighting the fire, and for refusing to have intercourse with him. Soon afterwards his brother and Wella had come to beat him, and there had been a violent quarrel in the course of which he had, admittedly, killed his nephew. He had then gone to try to get jungle-medicine to treat Wella and his brother who had been slightly injured. This story would have been more credible if he had not, instead of getting medicines, absconded to Orissa and then to the Tea Gardens.

The Sessions Judge doubted the truth of either story. He considered that it was incredible that a man should live in close contact with a nephew and brother for ten months without revealing his anger for their failure to support him at his trial. Moreover, Dhurwa was on perfectly good terms with Wella after his release, and had even given him a cow and a bullock. It is probable that there was some deeper reason for the sudden flaring up of anger against Wella, and I am inclined to suspect that it was connected with the quarrel with his wife and her refusal to allow him intercourse. Supposing there had been some intrigue between the woman and the nephew, Dhurwa would have been outraged not only by his wife's infidelity but by the considerable danger that this unlawful relationship would bring upon the whole family. This would also account for the reticence of the witnesses who invariably try to conceal any kind of incestuous or unlawful relationship from the Courts. Even so the murder will remain a crime of revenge. With remarkable clemency the Judge sentenced Dhurwa to life-imprisonment and not to death.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

v

674 Another double homicide occurred at Garmiri. Kadti Hunga was the owner of a plantation of sago palms and an irrigation tank, the fish of which he regarded as his own preserve. One evening at the beginning of November 1934 a group of men, one of whom himself had served a sentence for homicide, were distilling mahua spirit in a field. Somebody suggested that there might be something in one of the traps set by Hunga in his tank, and two of the men went to the place and brought back a handful of fish. They were at the business of distillation all night and at cock-crow they had two bottles ready. They roasted the fish for breakfast and began to eat and drink. Suddenly, as the first light of dawn came into the sky, Hunga appeared on the scene. It is always exceedingly annoying to have fish stolen from your traps, still more actually to see the thieves eating your fish and drinking the juice from your palm trees. Full of rage Hunga attacked the party. Three of the men ran away, but the fourth, Markami Dorga, was lying drunk on the ground. Hunga sat on his chest and killed him, probably by throttling him. Unfortunately the post-mortem was conducted too late for a definite opinion to be given. But those who saw the body shortly after death described a swollen neck, protruding tongue and coagulated blood which is not inconsistent with a death by strangling.

The three men who ran away told nobody what had happened, and Hunga himself kept quiet about it. The following evening, however, he was seen carrying Dorga's body over his shoulder to a tank where he threw it into the water. Later that night he called the village elders together, admitted that he had killed Dorga and told them where they would find the body. He probably thought that he would be able to arrange matters with the village panchayat, and get off on payment of suitable compensation. But a report was made to the police and Hunga was arrested. He himself admitted attacking the men who had stolen his fish, but denied that he had carried the body to the tank or that he ever confessed the killing before the villagers. He was sentenced to transportation for life. But the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Appellate Court did not consider that the evidence was sufficiently definite to prove that Hunga really intended to kill his victim. Since Dorga was intoxicated he may have died more by accident than by design. Hunga's sentence was, therefore, reduced to one of five years. This was on 9 May 1935. On 12 April 1939, Hunga was released and went home to Garmiri where he found his wife Gangi awaiting him. The usual ceremonies of purification were performed; the villagers enjoyed a feast; Hunga was sprinkled with water in which gold had been dipped and he was then free to enter his house and assume once again his tribal privileges.

For three months everything went well. Hunga had his old mother in the house with his wife and two little daughters, Malla and Kosi, aged eleven and twelve respectively. But after a while the happiness of the house was clouded. Hunga had left a certain amount of money with his wife when he went to jail. He himself claimed that it was Rs 100. But this seems to me doubtful. At all events, there was a certain amount and the probability is that it was spent. Hunga began demanding the return of the money or at least a part of it, and named Rs 20 as the minimum which must be paid. He continued nagging his wife about this for a long time, and she retaliated by sulking and refusing to give him proper food. Hunga, who seems to have been an exceptionally early riser, generally took a meal very early in the morning, and on 18 July Gangi brought him his usual breakfast of rice and pulse. But a chicken had been killed and cooked the previous night, and Hunga demanded why he was not given meat with his rice, probably suspecting that his wife was again keeping food from him. Gangi replied that she had put some of the chicken aside for him, but that it had been eaten by a cat. Hunga got very angry and threw the rice at her and slapped her twice. She went out of the room muttering that she would tell her brothers and get the panchayat to see that he was sent back to prison.

This was to an ex-convict a very terrible threat. Hunga got out his knife, and went to the front of his house, standing there for a little while and looking round to see if there was anyone about. But his house was in a lonely place,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
. Bison Horn Maria

x 674 and there war only one building belonging to his brother nearby. At this time of the year everyone was busy in the fields. Hunga therefore caught hold of his wife by the hair, threw her down and prepared to cut her throat. She tried her best to snatch the knife from his hand, but was unable to. The two little girls, Malla and Kosi, who had been sitting in the kitchen, came screaming and tried to save their mother. They cried for help, but there was no one to hear. As they tried to pull their father's hands away from their mother, they themselves got slightly injured. Then Hunga put his knee on Gangi's waist and sat above her holding her hair by one hand, while he sawed through her throat with the knife in exactly the same manner as the priest, at a Maria festival, slowly cuts through the neck of a dedicated pig. When he had cut almost right through the throat and was sure that Gangi was dead, he picked up a rope and went behind the house.

A little while later Hunga's mother, who had been to fetch water, returned to the house. She saw Gangi lying dead and Kosi beside her weeping. The child said that her [762] father had gone behind the house with a rope, and the old woman hurried round and found her son hanging from a rafter of the house, his feet about a cubit and a half above the ground. The knife covered with his wife's blood was lying below. She picked it up and cut through the cord, and Hunga fell to the ground unconscious but still breathing. He recovered, but only to be sentenced to death and hanged. The clothes of Hunga and Gangi, partners in this unnatural tragedy, were buried together and an earthen tomb was raised above them.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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482
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Married Maria girl. The love of such young wives for the 'mother's house' sometimes leads to disaster

[facing p. 160]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CRIMES OF WOMEN

I

It is notorious that women are everywhere less criminal than men. 'The proportion varies, however, greatly in different countries. In France it is usually about 4 to 1; in the United States it is about 12 to 1; in Italy and Spain the proportion of women is very small. In Great Britain, on the other hand, the proportion of criminal women is extremely large, especially for the greater crimes'.[1] In Bastar the proportion is 23 men to 1 woman.

Havelock Ellis points out that woman is protected from crime by certain physical and psychological characteristics—her physical weakness, sexual selection, domestic seclusion, prostitution and maternity. Among Maria women, however, the only one of these forms of protection to operate is maternity. The women are often of considerable physical strength and are as capable of striking a murderous blow with an axe as are the men. Since every Maria woman is married, sexual selection is of no assistance in removing from the place of danger and temptation the more degenerate and abnormal types.

As far as the domestic seclusion of women is concerned, the Maria situation resembles that in the Baltic provinces of Russia of former days, where the women shared the occupations of men and the level of feminine criminality was comparatively high. In England also, which has taken the lead in enlarging the sphere of women's work, 'the level of feminine criminality has for half a century been rising'. The Maria woman is not only free to assist her husband in the tasks of daily life, but she also frequently participates in those very occasions which are regarded as most provocative to murder, the drinking parties when large quantities of rice-beer are consumed. There is no prostitution among the Maria. But on the other hand women do not, as in Europe, fall out of the social ranks.

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 261 f.

[p. 161]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Sori Bhima (19), who feared his victim was a sorcerer.

Vedta Sukra (96), who believed his uncle to be a sorcerer

Kartami Bira (19), who also feared his victim as a sorcerer.

Vetti Rupe (100) who killed a man in a drunken quarrel

[Facing p. 161]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 562 For the Maria (as for the European woman) maternity is the great protection. The reason for the low incidence of homicide among Maria women is possibly connected with the strong aboriginal belief that it is supernaturally dangerous for a woman to take life. This is the ultimate reason why there are no women priests, for the priest has to offer sacrifice. Maria women are not supposed to kill goats or even chickens. They are not permitted to join in hunting. The only pursuit of the kind which is not taboo to them is fishing—but fish are cold-blooded creatures.

762 It will be noted, however, that the number of Maria women who commit suicide is almost as high as that of Maria men.

II

674 Five of the 100 homicides were committed by women, and in one of them the woman was helped by a man. Two of these were typical women's crimes arising out of annoyance and exasperation over comparatively small matters. In the first two women, both of whom had been married to the same man and were now widows, were living together. The older widow was so tiresome and so continually nagged the younger that at last the girl could stand it no longer, and gave her three blows with an axe whereon she died. In the second, a man and his wife were collecting red ants for food when they heard the cries of a child in extremity. They went to the place and found a little girl about ten years old lying on the ground with her neck broken. She had been killed by her step-mother for not doing what she was told. The older woman had climbed up a tree and was picking the leaves and throwing them down. She called to the child and asked her to bring her basket closer so that she could drop the leaves directly into it. When the child disobeyed, her step-mother came down from the tree and beat and kicked her, then twisted her neck till she died. Both the older woman and the girl were weak and hungry for want of food. There was no rice in their house and they had been living on mahua for days. Fatigue and hunger played their part in this tragedy, as so often happens.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

In 3 cases wives murdered their husbands. If this seems a large percentage, it must be remembered that in no fewer than 18 cases did husbands murder their wives. Tati Hirma had three wives. One was dead and the other two were living at the time of the tragedy. The youngest wife Mase was frequently beaten by her husband who said she did not work properly and ate too much. Their constant quarrels attracted the notice of the villagers, and a panchayat was held which fined them four annas each. One day in January 1940, when the two wives were reaping the rice crop together, their husband went to the field and beat Mase. Late that night when everyone was asleep, the girl got up and killed her husband with an axe. The injuries were severe. There were several fractures in the skull, the face was mutilated and the brain congested. The Court found that the girl had received great provocation, her body had many marks of injuries and it was shown that sometimes she was so severely beaten that her whole body would be swollen, and she would have to foment her injuries with hot water. She had a baby only five months old, and so she was given the terrible mercy of life-imprisonment.

The murder of Marvi Bododi by his wife and younger brother is considered in detail in Chapter Seven as a typical carefully premeditated but clumsily executed crime of elimination.

III

The murder of Tati Mundra by his wife Pande at Bodenar on 25 October 1935, was the sequel to a long tale of unhappiness and cruelty. Pande was deserted by her first husband, who went away to the Tea Gardens leaving her behind, and she was persuaded by her mother's sister, with whom she had taken refuge, to marry Mundra, a thing she herself claimed she never wanted to do. During the first part of their association, Pande and Mundra lived, if not happily, at least in peace. Then Pande's daughter by her first husband died, and she began to feel more and more distaste for the husband whom she never seems to have really loved. She made several fruitless attempts to escape from him. But every time he pursued her and brought

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 her back. Then he would beat her ferociously and helped by his relatives would rub into the wounds the juice [824] of the marking-nut (*Semecarpus anacardium*, Linn.). This juice is a powerful irritant and when applied to the skin desiccates strongly, raising black blisters. Months after Mundra's death the marks of injuries were clearly visible on the unfortunate woman's body.

The last week of Mundra's life was fully occupied in chasing his wife. It appears as though he was really fond [839] of her or at least really desired her in a sadistic manner, and he probably got considerable pleasure out of torturing her. On 20 October he went with his father to Lakhopal where they had heard Pande was hiding. They sent a villager ahead to call the girl, and she came trembling out of the house and hid below a tree. Mundra and his party then forcibly took her home to Tikanpal. That same night she ran away again. On the third day Mundra set out once more in search of her. They heard that she had again gone to Lakhopal and this time, when Mundra found her, he decided not to go home but to take her to a Siraha at Killepal in order to get her exorcized of the evil spirit which, he had decided, was the real cause of her continually leaving him. This is sometimes done when a cow refuses to stay with the herd or fails to return to its own shed at night. The Siraha is called in and divines what ancestor or godling is causing the trouble, whereupon suitable remedies are adopted. Sometimes these remedies may be unpleasant, including the burning of chillies under the nose, beating with an old shoe or making the patient drink urine.[1] It is little wonder that poor Pande regarded this suggestion with alarm.

On the evening of that day a witness remembered meeting an unknown man and woman on the boundary of Kakkur

[1] How severe these remedies sometimes are may be seen in the circumstances of a case at Mandla in 1925. A Rajput youth became strange in his manner after witnessing a melodrama and his trouble was diagnosed as spirit-possession. He was first tied to a pole in the courtyard. Then his elder sister fell into a frenzy; she swallowed a live bit of coal, declared she was possessed by Kali, and sacrificed her little daughter to that goddess in an attempt to restore her brother's sanity. This remedy failing, the unfortunate youth's hands were burned and he was tied naked in a place generally used by a harmless lunatic with a local reputation for sanctity. Here he died of exposure.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and Bodenar. The man was carrying an axe and told him he was travelling from Tikanpal to Killepal, and he asked for and obtained a cucumber to eat for supper. The witness noticed that the woman looked angry and sat at some distance, refusing to speak to her companion. Later that same evening the villagers of Bodenar saw a man carrying an axe and cucumber and followed by a woman enter the village, and they allowed them to sleep in the village Rest-house. The following morning they discovered the man lying dead with a deep wound going right into the brain. The woman had disappeared.

Later Pande described the continual torture and mutilation to which she was subjected by Mundra. She said that on the night of the tragedy, in the Rest-house Mundra had forcibly attempted to have intercourse with her and she had prevented him. He had declared that if she did not consent, he would cut her to pieces with an axe. They then lay down separately and both tried to keep awake, she in order to prevent him from approaching her in her sleep and he to ensure that she did not run away. But at cock-crow, exhausted by his long journey, he fell asleep and Pande killed him with the axe and made her escape. She was sentenced to transportation for life but the Sessions Judge made a strong recommendation for mercy, and in appeal her punishment was reduced to one year's imprisonment.

In this murder several factors operated simultaneously. There was the desire for revenge for years of cruelty. There was the imperative necessity for Pande to eliminate a man who would not leave her alone, and who would neither allow her to live happily with him or to go anywhere else. There was the fear of treatment by the Siraha. There was the extreme fatigue and exhaustion of her attempted flight, the misery of her capture, the further long journey with little food, and finally a long night's vigil.

IV

Dislike of the husband may equally result in suicide when the woman is weaker or the social odds against her are too heavy. Budri did not love her husband and whenever she was taken to his house ran away from it. After this had

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 happened several times, she hanged herself. Kunjami Burji, a widow, was desired by Konda who sent seven men, according to custom, to bring her to his house. In spite of her remonstrances, she was taken forcibly, but managed to escape with her three little children and hanged herself in the house while they were asleep. A young girl, Poyami Pande, was given to her mother's brother's son in marriage. After the feast, the couple were shut up together in a room as usual for the consummation of the marriage. But Pande objected, fought her way out of the room, and ran home where she was thoroughly scolded for such improper conduct. That night she hanged herself.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CRIMINAL LUNACY

CRIMINAL lunacy is not a serious problem in Bastar.[1] During the 22 years from 1919 to 1941, only 8 criminal lunatics were sent to the Mental Hospital at Nagpur. Two of the 8 were released cured, and 6 remained. More recently from 1935 to 1941, 17 persons were examined for insanity in the jail at Jagdalpur. Five of these, all murderers, were sent to Nagpur; five were found to be falsely pleading insanity and were convicted of violent crime; one was found to have committed a murder while insane, but was released as cured in 1937. The others were sent in for observation as harmless lunatics under the provisions of the Lunacy Act.

Of the 6 criminal lunatics sent to Nagpur, only 2 were Bison-horn Maria. But in 2 other cases Bison-horn Maria, who were convicted of culpable homicide not amounting to murder under Section 304, showed marked psychotic characteristics.

Marvi Bhima was a melancholic and murdered his wife in a fit of manic-depressive insanity. For two days before the tragedy he had behaved very strangely, walking in and out of the house and going round and round it; and it was actually while the relatives were calling the village elders to deal with the matter that he went into his house and stabbed his younger wife Kondi in the stomach with an arrow. After stabbing her he tried to pull the arrow out, but finding this difficult he pushed it right through her body and removed it from the back. In the meantime the village elders were on the way to the house, and when they got there they saw Bhima wandering about with a bow and arrow in his hand. They sent the unfortunate woman to the police station where she expired while making a dying declaration. No one dared to go near Bhima. But the next morning he went into a neighbour's house and they hastily

[1] It is often said that mental disorders are very rare among primitive people. This has been questioned, but little evidence has yet been accumulated. See E. Winston, 'The Alleged Lack of Mental Diseases among Primitive Groups', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVI (New Series, 1934), pp. 234 ff.

674
158
[p.167]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closed the door and bolted it from outside. When the headman got there, he found Bhima hiding inside a large bamboo bin used for storing grain. The villagers kept him locked up until the police came and took him away.

Before the Court Bhima admitted stabbing his wife, but declared that he did not properly remember why he did so. Everybody testified to the fact that he had been very fond of Kondi and had always treated her well, though for the whole year his behaviour had been strange. After the murder he showed no sign of realizing what he had done, and during his trial he wept not because he had killed his wife, but because he feared 'that in his absence his cattle were being distributed like fowls'. He tried to escape from the Court two or three times during the trial, for he was filled with fear that he would be thrown into a pit, and begged the Judge that he might be hanged or given any imprisonment rather than that. The medical evidence was that Bhima was suffering from melancholia. He was acquitted of the charge of murder, but was detained under Section 471 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

'The periodic mental disorders of epilepsy', says Sullivan, 'are divisible, according to their relation to the characteristic paroxysms, into those preceding the fit, or pre-epileptic disorders, usually in the direction of morbid irritability, those following the fit—post-epileptic dream states or maniacal outbursts of longer or shorter duration—and those occurring in lieu of a fit, or possibly after a very slight and unobserved attack of petit mal. Criminal conduct, and particularly acts of homicidal violence—for homicide is par excellence the crime of the epileptic—may occur in connection with any of these disordered conditions. Its most frequent and characteristic form is the homicide committed in the phase of obscured consciousness which may follow or replace a fit or an attack of epileptic vertigo'.[1]

Hemla Chewa was an epileptic, and his left hand was a fingerless stump. On 18 January 1922, as he was going through the jungle near Hirana, he saw a Halba boy about sixteen years old cutting fire-wood. He had never seen the boy before, and there was no suggestion that he had any relations with him. In the Court he produced a story of

[1] Sullivan, op. cit., p. 133.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

being chased through the forest by three men and said that as he was running away he met the boy and seized his axe and killed him with it. Later the same evening he assaulted and injured a woman with his axe, and hit her nephew when he ran to her assistance. Chewa was tied up by the villagers but escaped during the night, and went to his uncle's house in the same village. The next morning he was again caught and taken to the police. In the Court he showed complete indifference to his trial, and talked throughout in a low tone. He was acquitted of murder, but was detained in jail as a lunatic.

Another epileptic who exhibited the characteristic signs of obscured consciousness and amnesia was an elderly man named Khotlu who killed his wife Mase on the evening of 12 December 1920 at Kawargaon. For a year before the tragedy he had been getting attacks every Sunday. He used to shiver uncontrolably, froth at the mouth, suffer violent convulsions and fall to the ground unconscious for two or three hours. At such times he had the delusion that a rebellion was about to take place and he would call on everyone to run away. Sometimes he himself armed with a stick would run into the jungle. On two occasions he had to be tied up, and was taken first to Torwa and then to Pondum to be treated by medicine-men.

Khotlu's wife Mase was nearly as old as himself, and had borne him ten children. They were apparently on the best of terms. But on the day of the tragedy, which was a Sunday, when they went out with their little boy to cut the kosra crop in their fields, Khotlu fell down in a fit. After lying unconscious for some hours he got up and shouted 'Run, run, the Bhumkal (Rebellion) is coming'. He told his wife to go home at once. But she said that their work was not finished and she would first pick some leaves and then come. Khotlu accused her of being in love with someone whom she wanted to meet in the forest. At that she agreed to go with him. He began to push her along and as she was walking home before him, he shot her with an arrow from behind.

The woman somehow reached the village, and died three days later. Khotlu stayed out in the fields and in the evening came and sat in his house. When he was asked the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674/158 following day where his wife was, he said she had gone to fetch water. Presently he pointed at something and said that it was his wife coming. When he was taken to see the dying woman, at first he declared that she was not his wife at all, then later insisted that he had no recollection of the incident.

The case of Puriami Kosa is one in which we approach very near to the boundaries of insanity, although the Court considered that he was sufficiently responsible and sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment. He was a man who was regarded as almost imbecile by his fellow Maria. He was incapable of ploughing his fields or of buying things in the bazaar. His wife seems to have treated him as a grown-up child. He suffered from some form of paralysis. On the day of the murder, shortly before sunset, when 'the sun was only three bamboos above the horizon', Kosa asked his wife to lie with him. But she refused and abused him, taunting him with his illness and saying that he would never get better. He then attempted to have congress with her forcibly, and she resisted. In the struggle her wooden combs and cloth fell to the ground, and Kosa full of rage stabbed her with a small pointed knife on the face and neck. She ran for about forty paces and fell dead to the ground.

Kawasi Chamru had a curious fit of madness which lasted several days. On the first day he wandered about the jungle. On the next he climbed up a tree and sat there all day. On the third day he killed two of his bullocks and rubbed their blood on his body. Nothing then happened for several years. But shortly before his tragedy he again began to act strangely. He had always been on good terms with his wife. But now he developed delusions that she was unfaithful to him. One day he suddenly began to beat her. Holding her by the tuft of her hair, he struck her three times on the head with a heavy bit of wood from a plough. She fell down and Chamru went on beating her till she died. Then he dragged the body into the house and, pulling a handful of grass from the roof, lit it and set fire to the building. Everything there, all the clothes, grain and the dead body, were destroyed. Chamru took a bamboo pole in his hand and sat under a mango tree in the jungle where he remained until he was arrested.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

It is possible that in this case some important evidence was suppressed by the witnesses, for there was a suggestion that the murdered woman had committed incest with her brother. The fear of excommunication and fines would be sufficiently strong to induce everyone to keep quiet about this. On the other hand, it is equally possible that the suspicion of his wife's infidelity was a delusion of Chamru's disordered mind.

Other Maria have been content to take their own way out of the world, when the psychotic disturbance became too strong for them. Many different symptoms are recorded as preceding such suicides. Baiha Ganga, for some days before his death, refused to eat and when people approached him attacked them with his stick. Bongi Maria was subject to periodic attacks of insanity; he tried to kill himself three times before he finally succeeded. Others displayed a marked narcissistic attitude, wandering aimlessly in the jungle, refusing to talk or work; such were Saradu, a northern Muria, who used to wander naked, Nari Maria, Pakli, a little girl about ten years old, and Marvi Mundi, a woman who had suffered since childhood from attacks during which she refused to eat and wandered about aimlessly, neglecting the dozen children she had borne.

There is finally the strange and sombre case of Markami Hirme, mother of four children and about to bear a fifth. In her pre-pubertal period she had been subject to epileptic fits, but was treated by the local Siraha, and was believed cured. On 22 October 1935, at her home at Gonderas, the epilepsy recurred, and she became 'strange in her behaviour'. She was in the eighth month of pregnancy. Two days later, when her husband was out watching the crops, and her eldest daughter had gone for water, she hanged herself from a rafter of the house in the presence of her three little children.

Now such a death is the most dangerous in the world. The woman who dies in pregnancy or childbirth is known throughout India as the Churelin or Churin; in Bastar she is often called the Ondar Muttai, the Old Bee Woman, who attacks men with the fury of a swarm of bees. Hirme's husband and the village elders seem to have been unable to decide what to do. Not one of them dared to touch the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

155 762 corpse, and it remained hanging for two days in the house. Then, so the villagers declare, the foetus of the unborn child automatically discharged itself from the womb. By this time the necessary ceremonies of protection had been performed, and the body was cut down.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE HOMICIDE'S BEHAVIOUR AFTER HIS CRIME

I

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THE normal behaviour of a Maria after he has committed homicide is to do nothing at all. He may run away into the jungle for a few hours. He may go to see a friend in another village. But in the great majority of cases, he either stays at home quietly or he returns home in a very short time. It is unusual for him to try to abscond, though this was done by 4 of the 117 persons involved. In 81 cases the accused confessed after being arrested by the police, and in 9 cases he voluntarily gave himself up.

TABLE TWENTY

Behaviour of homicides after the crime in 117 instances

Attempted to escape	6
Absconded to another Province	4
Attempted to conceal crime	
By making it look like suicide	6
" " an accident	1
" " a tiger-kill	2
By burying the bodies	3
By arson	2
Attempted to implicate others	4
Himself tried to commit suicide	1
Persuaded or threatened villagers to hush up the matter	12
Gave himself up	9
Confessed after arrest	81
Denied the crime	36

The few cases, therefore, where a Maria homicide has tried to evade the consequences of his crime are of special interest. It cannot be said that the Maria are very expert at concealment. Sometimes there are clumsy attempts to make the murder look like suicide. This was done in each of the three throttling cases of 1933. In the first, the murderer after throttling a young boy tied a cloth tightly

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

677 round his neck, and strung him to a tree. In the next, where according to the medical evidence the murderer strangled a girl with a thin rope, he tied the body to the branch of a tamarind tree, but so carelessly that she was not found hanging but sitting on the ground. In the third, Ujji Poda tied a rope round his victim's neck and broke it. He then tied the broken end to the roof of a field-shed and left it dangling, the idea being to suggest that the man had hanged himself, but that the rope had snapped and allowed the body to fall on the ground. Poda then bribed everybody to make a report of suicide to the police.

Again, when Poyami Masa stabbed his wife with an arrow, his idea seems to have been to suggest suicide; but unfortunately for him he did not do his work properly and the poor woman lived long enough to tell the villagers the truth.

In two other cases the murderers arranged the bodies of their victims to look as though they had been attacked by tigers.

In three cases the murderers attempted to hide the body. In one, the concealment was done so clumsily that marks of blood and every trace of a violent crime was left on the scene of the crime. In another case an attempt was made to suggest that the deceased had met a natural death by drowning, and in another a report was made that the dead man was an epileptic and had killed himself by falling in a fit onto a stump of wood.

674 626 The Maria's attempts to put their crimes on to innocent people are less discreditable than they appear. The idea seems to be that, if an obviously innocent person is accused, he will be able to clear himself in Court, and the police may then drop their investigation and both the innocent and guilty will escape. In 1940, in a village near Aranpur a man was arrested for shooting someone with an arrow, and the prosecution witnesses actually testified that they saw him do so. He denied the crime, and presently another man went to the police and confessed that he was the real culprit. But there was no evidence against the second man and both persons were acquitted. The following year at Aranpur when Barse Chewa was arrested for the murder of his father-in-law, his relatives tried to involve Chewa's brother

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

in the case. They declared that the brother had gone to a Siraha, and had asked him to perform sacrifices which would protect him from the consequences of the crime of which he was the real culprit. It was easily proved, however, that he could have had nothing to do with the matter, and it is probable that the Aranpur people were hoping by this trick to secure the release of both the brothers. This will explain other attempts to involve young men in crimes of which they were obviously innocent. In one case the accused, a youth of only eighteen, tried to involve his brother, though in the end he confessed his crime before the Court. In another, the villagers tried to force a young man to admit the crime and the youth's own father actually took him to the police station for this purpose. The Sub-Inspector refused to accept his confession.

In the Gumiapal murder, however, where the real murderer was the Gaita of the village, the people combined to protect their priest and put the blame on an innocent man. They forced the Kotwar to implicate him and make a false report. When I met the murderer fourteen years afterwards in jail, he was still insisting on his innocence and that the real murderer was the man whom he had tried to implicate so many years before.

But these attempts to shift responsibility are uncommon. It is remarkable how quickly, once the police have arrived on the scene, a Maria admits his guilt, and in 81 of our 100 cases such confession was made.

We should not perhaps assume that these confessions are necessarily evidence of the truthfulness and simplicity of the aboriginals. They may be, but we would do well to take into account the judgment of Sir Cecil Walsh.

> The Indian police are past masters in detective work amongst their own kith and kin, and are endowed with exceptional gifts of insight into the mentality of the average uneducated villager. They are without scruple, and extraordinarily clever in their methods of extracting information. To take what is probably a fairly frequent example, they will tell the man as soon as he is arrested that his only chance of escape is to make a full and candid statement. The majority of men, in such circumstances, are cowardly, and only too ready to sell their associates, if they think by doing so they can purchase immunity. When the statement has been made, the next step is

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

simple. The accused man is told, 'But this is no good to me as it stands. I must have corroboration. No judge will act upon the statement of a guilty party, unless it is corroborated by some independent fact, and unless your evidence is made acceptable to the court how can you be given a pardon?' This absolutely correct statement of the law may itself be corroborated by the simple method of reading to the accused extracts, perhaps embellished by the wily officer, from the printed instructions issued to the police, in which the principles on which the courts act in requiring corroboration are carefully explained. The simple-minded villager finds no difficulty in following this argument, and proceeds to give chapter and verse, describing the places in which the loot, or the weapon used for the murder, can be found. When this happens, how can one suppose the man to be innocent?[1]

This does not mean that the police are corrupt or unduly oppressive. The tricking of a criminal into an admission of his crime is applauded in many famous detective stories. M. Poirot was an adept at this particular art and so have been many others of the great detectives of fiction. It is probable that unless some such methods were used a majority of Maria criminals would go unconvicted, for it is notable that, while 81 accused out of 117 confessed after arrest, only 9 gave themselves up voluntarily before it. In more than one case the accused took the police to the scene of his crime and himself provided them with all the clues and proofs they wanted, and then afterwards, probably on the advice of the defending counsel, withdrew his confession.

II

The number of cases where even the villagers have been ignorant of the real author of a murder are so few that it is worth discussing one of them in detail.

Goge, a burly, rough, quarrelsome man of about fifty years was the headman of Kasturpal. He had three wives. On 4 March 1922, his two elder wives went to another village to drink rice-beer. His younger wife was sleeping in the kitchen, and he himself on a cot in his house was alone except for his little daughter who was on the ground

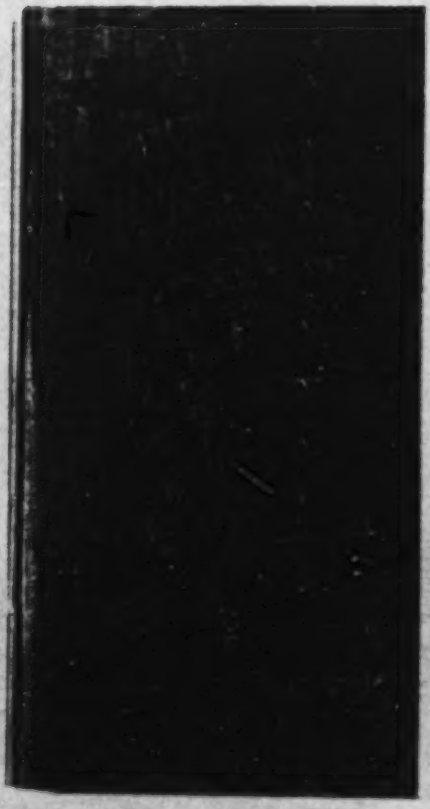
[1] Sir C. Walsh. *Indian Village Crimes*, pp. 30 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

221
532

A murderer's memorial. Wooden pillar in memory of Oyami Marvi Masa at Jabeli

Detail of Marvi Masa's memorial pillar, showing him as a Sirahu sitting on his swing



[Facing p. 116]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 beside him. About midnight someone came quietly into the house and stabbed him, making a deep wound on the right side of the neck and killing him instantly.

The youngest wife was wakened, not by any cry from her husband, but by the noise of a man running past her room. It was a dark night and she could not see who it was. She thought nothing of it, and turned over and went to sleep again. But a little while afterwards the two senior wives returned and when they entered the house they saw the cot covered with blood and a great pool on the floor being eagerly licked up by a dog. They cried for help, and a few of the neighbours with torches of flaming straw gathered to see what had happened.

Then the three wives sat down together to discuss who could have been the murderer. There is, I think, something at once pathetic and bizarre in the picture of these three women, each of whom had linked her life to the dominating and far from agreeable personality now lying dead before them, sitting round the fire at midnight and wondering which of their friends or neighbours could have hated their man so bitterly as to murder him.

Their suspicions first fell upon a neighbour called Guddi. A little while previously Goge's son had killed one of Guddi's goats, and the two men had quarrelled. They had made friends again, but within a week of the incident two of Guddi's children had died. Guddi declared that Goge had killed them by his magic, and had gone so far as to say at a bazaar that one day he would kill his enemy. Two days later, therefore, a report was made to the police, and in order to implicate Guddi properly the two elder wives declared that they were in the house at the time of the incident and that Goge had declared before he died that it was Guddi who had injured him. One of the women said that she had actually seen Guddi running away with a spear in his hand.

Guddi was arrested, but investigation showed that he had never left his house that night, and there was no evidence against him. He was released and the police had to continue their search. For five months there was no clue to the identity of the murderer, and apparently not even the villagers knew who it was.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943

AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

Poriami Hirma, (75), who killed a tiresome lover

Mavvi Pahlu (63), who killed a tiresome wife

Tati Masa (91), whose husband tormented her and drove her to despair

Habba Masa (9), whose wife refused to obey him

[Facing p. 177]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 But Guddi was not the only enemy that Goge had made. Indeed it appears that the dead man, as a result of his rude and dominating ways, had so many enemies that it was impossible to choose between them. A few days before the murder, a man from another village had come to him to report that a cow and a bullock had been stolen. He asked Goge in his capacity of village headman to discover the thieves. Goge sent for a man called Mado who was in the service of Oyami Kola as a Kabari farm-labourer. When Mado came, Goge tied his hands together and beat him with a stick. But Mado declared that he was innocent of the theft and since nothing could be proved against him he had to be released. Goge, however, insisted on his belief that Mado and Kola had taken the cattle and eaten them. The next day Goge went to Kola's house and again beat Mado while Kola hid himself indoors. After that Mado disappeared. Two days later Goge came to the house again, this time with three or four companions for the purpose of beating Kola. But his wife warned him in time, and he was able to hide in the garden. Goge once more accused Kola and his servant of stealing the cattle, and declared that, if he could have got Kola then, he would have beaten him to death. For the next two days Kola remained indoors, afraid to venture out for fear of being attacked. At last he decided that such an existence was intolerable, and he went quietly out of the house at night and killed Goge with his axe.

Kola is one of the few Maria criminals who acted with intelligence. Immediately after the deed he washed his axe, and saw that there were no blood-stains on his person. He buried the axe in a rat-hole near his house. He swore his wife to secrecy, and neither of them said anything, they went nowhere, they did nothing. They kept quiet. No suspicion fell upon Kola, nor would it have done but for the fact that he was unable to bring himself to come forward and help the police in their investigations.

Kola had taken a line which in a city would have been entirely successful. He decided to keep quiet, have nothing to do with the affair, and show no interest in it. But that is not the way to behave in an aboriginal village. In a place where so little ever happens, where life is so dull, where the humblest visitor is a momentous break in the monotony,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

for a man not to be present to listen to all the absorbing details of a police investigation shows that he must have something on his mind. Kola's absence from the investigations made some of the neighbours suspicious, and they began to talk. One of them went to Kola and began to discuss the murder. Kola with incredible folly said that he knew who the murderer was. It was someone from outside the village, he said, and when he was asked how he knew, he declared that there were two murderers, one of them being the original suspect, Guddi, and the other a stranger. He knew about it because, he said, he had been present at the time, standing outside the house and had seen all that had happened.

Talk continued and in due time reached the ears of the police. A constable came to Kasturpal and questioned Kola and his wife. He repeated his original statement, and was brought to Jagdalpur. Here, as the record says naively, 'he was questioned again and again' until at last he took the entire blame on himself. He was taken back to his village, and showed the police where the axe was buried. At his trial he maintained his confession, but claimed that he was afraid that Goge was going to kill him and had acted in self-defence. He was sentenced to life-imprisonment.

It is hard to understand how Kola, five months after his crime, should have lost his nerve and involved himself in the case just because somebody expressed a suspicion of him. His conduct up till that moment had been technically flawless. But it appears to be a characteristic of the aboriginal criminal to break down at the first hint of pressure.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE ATTITUDE OF SOCIETY

I

THE SANCTION OF MYTH

THE place of myth in sanctioning tribal custom and inspiring and controlling tribal action has become a commonplace of anthropology. How far then is murder regarded with approval in the mythology of tribal India? To the aboriginal mind the supernatural world is populated with beings whose conduct, if they were on earth, would speedily lead them to the gallows. The revered and honoured Dead behave to the living with a spitefulness and cruelty that they never showed on earth. The clan-gods and village deities are irascible, touchy beings, ready to take offence over the most trivial matters, greedy and exacting. The Supreme Being himself appears in a far from creditable light. He is jealous of mankind. He despairs of getting sufficient souls for his kingdom, and kills men by treachery and deceit. According to Birhor[1] and Asur[2] legend he burns the first man and woman alive in a furnace for no other reason than that he dislikes the smell of their smithy. The Kharia tell how he destroyed men by flood and fire, being annoyed because they cut down fruit-trees.[3] A Kol story from Bonai shows the Supreme Chando so exasperated at the sight of the parents of mankind enjoying sexual intercourse that he killed them out of jealousy. A Kuruk tale describes how Mahapurub destroyed his own children for making too much noise. It was from their dead bodies that the world came into being.

In Juang mythology, history begins with a cowardly and deceitful murder by the gods, who created the world from their dead victim's blood and bones. The Bhuiya story of creation is on the same lines. The son of the first human couple is murdered by a tiger sent by Dharam Deo. His head becomes the sun, his chest the moon and his blood gives the red earth its colour.

[1] S. C. Roy, *The Birhors* (Ranchi, 1925), p. 402.
[2] Verrier Elwin, *The Agaria* (Bombay, 1942), p. 181.
[3] S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), p. 415.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Death comes into the world by the treachery of the gods. 000
The Baiga describe how Bhagavan grew tired of men, but did not know how to kill them. So he gave Nanga Baiga itch and the old man began to scratch. But he was unable to reach the small of his back, and one day when he picked up a stick to scratch himself there, Bhagavan turned it into a cobra and it bit him and he died.[1] The Juang say that formerly men did not die because they did not sleep, and Bhagavan had to send a woman to sell them curds mixed with sleep-medicine. When they ate the curds, they slept and died. The Bhuiya story describes how so long as Jug Budha and his wife were living, no one died and the world was becoming over-populated. So the Supreme Being sent a centipede to bite them, and thus introduced death into the world.

The Muria too, in the north of Bastar, associate the coming 761
of death with the murder of a son. 773

In the Middle World no man died, and Mahapurub 539
wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He had a son. He killed him and prepared to carry him out for burial. But when his wife heard of it, she ran weeping to the place and, taking her son from him, sat with the corpse in her lap. Mahapurub said, 'We must bury the child, don't be foolish'. But she said, 'No, I'll never give him to you'.

Mahapurub then planted a jamun tree behind her. One day some of the berries fell to the ground before her. She picked them up and as she ate her mouth was reddened with the juice. Mahapurub came again and said, 'Give me the boy. You are a witch, you are eating his flesh'. He brought a mirror and when she saw her reddened mouth, she thought she really was eating her son. She wept bitterly, but gave the body to Mahapurub. He buried it and from that day, death has been in the world.

A similar sacrifice accounts for the origin of the sun and 821
moon. The Muria, in a story which is known in a slightly 773
different version to the Bison-horn Maria, describe how after the great wooden circles for the sun and moon were made, there was the problem of how to put life into them. Mahapurub had a son, and Lingo declared that only by killing him and giving his blood to the sun and moon to

[1] Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), p. 329.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

821 drink, would they become alive and be man and woman.
773 One day while Mahapurub was working in his fields, his wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. He sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon and they became alive.

000 Both the Baiga and Muria have stories to account for the disappearance of human sacrifice.

> Now Nanga Baiga and Nanga Baigin had nothing to sacrifice for the steadying of the world. So they took their own three sons and daughters, and were carrying them along. Then they met a jungle hen. 'Where are you going?' she asked. And when she heard, 'You musn't kill your own children. Take two pairs of mine. Offer one pair, and keep the other for breeding'. So said the jungle hen. Then Nanga Baiga lifted one son and daughter out of the kawar and left them with the hen, and put the chickens in instead.
> A little later they met a sow. She also begged them not to sacrifice their children, and gave two pairs of sucklings in exchange for two more of the children. Then they met a barking deer, and made a similar exchange.[1]

782 The Muria story runs as follows:—
539
773 ' The Muria was thinking, 'How am I to worship the earth for I have nothing to give her?'. He had one daughter. He covered her whole body with soot to make her black and forced her to walk on all fours like a black cow.

[1] *The Baiga*, p. 315. 'At Nasik, in the Deccan, when cholera appears, a woman of the Mang (menial tribe) is solemnly led out of the city as a scapegoat. She remains outside the city bounds till the next day, when she bathes and returns. The ceremonial, which closely resembles that of bringing a victim to a shrine, doubtless implies an earlier rite of human sacrifice.

'Another rite resembles that of the self-immolation of pilgrims, who used, in former times, to fling themselves, in the name of Siva, over the cliff known as Bhairava Jhamp, near the famous shrine of Kedar Nath in the lower Himalayas. This rite has now been commuted into the paying for the service of a bedi or rope dancer, who slides on a wooden saddle upon a cable hung over a precipitous cliff as a means of propitiating Siva.

'In the form of the "Bihunda" rite the same custom prevails in the Punjab, on the River Sutlej.

'In Baroda also, at the worship of Vagh Deo, the tiger god, a man is covered with a blanket; he bows to the image and walks round it seven times. During this performance the worshippers slap him on the back. He then tries to escape to the forest, pursued by children, who fling balls of clay at him, and finally bring him back, the rite ending with feasting and drinking. The above are instances of attenuated forms of the custom of human sacrifice and immolation which has become intolerable under the conditions of modern society.' Haikerwal, op. cit., pp. 68 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Then he went to the jungle to worship Mother Earth. On the way he met Lingo driving a cow. Lingo said, 'O man, where are you going?' 'I am going to worship Mother Earth'. 'What are you going to sacrifice?' 'I have nothing to give but my own daughter and I am going to sacrifice her'. Then Lingo said, 'Give me your daughter, and I will give you my cow'. From that day the Muria have not offered human beings to the Earth Mother but, taught by Lingo, have sacrificed their cattle.

A Bison-horn Maria account of creation tells of the great deluge and how the earth came into existence from mud that dropped from the hairs of the great boars that then lived in the world. There were two deities, Irisirma and Markaraja. They had two daughters, Iro and Palo. The girls both wanted to marry Koyabhimul, but the parents were unwilling and tried to kill the boy. They first sent a great snake to bite him as he returned from the jungle. But the girls warned him in time, and told him to invoke the name of their father and the snake would be unable to harm him. The parents then tried to kill him by asking him to sacrifice a chicken, planning to behead him as he bent down to do so. But the girls again warned him, and the boy said to Markaraja that he must first show him how the sacrifice was to be performed. As the older man bent down, the boy picked up a sword and beheaded him. 'In those days there were few gods and so there were few deaths on earth. The mortality on earth has increased because of the great increase in the number of deities.'

We have already seen how the origin of magic among men is connected with a human sacrifice and cannibalism. The Maria are acquainted with similar stories of the origin of the sun and moon through the sacrifice of a living being. Some of the Maria iron-smelters describe how at the beginning they were unable to extract iron from the ore. They killed a Maria and put his body into the furnace, after which their craft prospered.

Maria folk-tales are full of the usual murders, treacheries and deceits. But it is worth noting that generally these are attributed to outsiders and members of other castes. The Maria themselves usually appear virtuous and honourable.

I do not suppose anyone was ever incited to murder by these stories and legends. I doubt if anyone would ever

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

consciously quote them as justification for his acts. But they do give an amoral background to the life of the tribe. This, combined with the character of the gods, does not help men to behave better. Budtha killed his wife because she did not give him chicken for breakfast. But in tribal belief a hundred godlings and ancestors have killed and tormented men because of some irregularity in offering them their beloved fowls.

II

THE ATTITUDE OF SOCIETY: CO-OPERATION WITH THE POLICE

Throughout tribal India in the old days it was probably the universal custom for the villagers to try cases of homicide on the spot, to impose a penalty and to demand suitable compensation.

It is noted in the Kurnool Manual that in former times the Chenchu headman used to 'dispose of murder cases, the murderer, on proof of guilt, being put to death with the same weapons with which the murder was committed. Captain Newbold, writing in 1846, says that, passing through the jungle near Pacharla, he observed a skull bleached by the sun dangling from the branch of a tamarind tree, which he was informed was that of a murderer and hill-robber put to death by the headman. In the time of the Nabobs, some of the Chenchu murderers were caught and punished, but the practice seems to have prevailed among them more or less till the introduction of the new police in 1860, since which time all cases are said to be reported to the nearest police officer'.[1]

An interesting account of the attitude of tribal society to murder in Assam is given by Hodson.

> Murder within the clan is so rare an event that I have no information concerning the attitude of these groups towards the offender in such a case. The murder of a member of another clan or village would occasion a feud which would only be ended with the slaughter of a member of the murderer's clan or village, and it is known that some of the worst village feuds have originated in this manner. Accidental homicide is punished among

[1] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 28.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

the Tangkhul by fine, amounting to six cows. At Jessami in the Mao group the offender has to make a short sojourn away from his house, but not necessarily outside the village; while at Liyai he is banished from the village. At Mao his punishment is seven years' banishment from the village and a fine of five cows. At Maikel banishment for one year and a fine of five cows, while murder ensuing in the heat of passion in a quarrel is punished with seven years' banishment and a fine of ten cows. The Mayang Khong people exact only a fine of one cow in cases of accidental homicide. Both the Chiru and the Marring impose a heavy fine in such cases, part of the fine being compensation to the relatives of the dead man and the rest being consumed by the village in the course of the settlement of the matter.

In some cases the weapon or other lethal instrument is forfeited to the relatives—a proceeding reminiscent of the law of Deodand.[1]

In former years adultery was commonly punished, so far as the male offender was concerned, with death and this proceeding gave no occasion for a feud. Among the Tangkhul theft was at one time punished with death, if the offender was caught in the act. Nowadays a fine is held sufficient. Arson is penalized and is considered so serious that even when it is accidental, a heavy fine is demanded.

In Bastar also it was formerly the custom for the people to take the law into their own hands and where necessary to pay compensation for doing so to the local authorities. In fact, the older Maria still remember how in the days of their grandparents compensation for murder was paid to the Jia (the high priest) of Dantewara or to the Nengi and Hikmi (State representatives) at Mailawada. A very old man at Harmamunda described how, 'In the old days when a witch was caught, her hands were cut off; and she was taken to the Nengi and Hikmi who were paid eight female calves. If a man was found practising black magic, his teeth were first knocked out with a large bone, and then the bone itself was pushed into his mouth until he died'. The idea was that he had done his evil with the purpose of 'eating' or gain and so he was given a bone to eat. When this happened, the

[1] T. C. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), pp. 106 f. For an account of the attitude of society and 'judicial murder' in Papua, see F. E. Williams, 'Group Sentiment and Primitive Justice', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII (New Series), pp. 523 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

627 Nengi and Hikmi received eight male calves. 'Sometimes
683 the witch or sorcerer had all their teeth knocked out, their mouths were burnt with hot oil, and they were banished from their village. With this mark upon them no one would shelter them. Yet another method of dealing with a witch was to tie her up in a sack and throw her into the river'. In another village I was told how a witch was wrapped up in straw and burnt alive.

An old man at Dhurli described how his brother had been killed by a witch's magic. When the Waddai confirmed this, his father killed the witch and paid compensation of four female calves to the Jia.

At Phulpar the headman said that in the old days they used to break the teeth of a witch, shave her head, cut her forehead with a broken bangle and so drive her from the village. Similarly I was told in several places in Konta Tahsil that the people used to cut a witch's nails, shave her head and drive her away. They would confiscate her property and often kill her. There has never been any doubt whatever in the minds of Maria with whom I have discussed this matter that a witch or a sorcerer ought to be punished with death, and that the public were perfectly justified in taking the law into their own hands in a proved case of witchcraft.[1]

627 There are probably many cases never discovered by the
682 police that are settled by the Maria panchayat. In others, after everything has been settled by the panchayat, the police have discovered that a crime has been committed. There were as many as 12 such cases out of our 100. And they are instructive. For example, when Mundra killed his wife the villagers fined him a feast of rice and a calf, and then assisted him in cremating the corpse. When Koliha

[1] An interesting parallel is furnished in a note by the late Rai Bahadur Hira Lal on a Report by a certain Captain Simnock about conditions in the Surguja State in 1818, of which he was then in charge. A landholder named Parbal Sahy had ordered a witch to be put to death. During his trial the Court asked him, 'Do you know that he who is the author of murder commits a great crime?', to which he replied, 'I know that it is a very great crime to commit a murder, but in my country, Surguja, it is no crime to kill a witch'. Simnock reported the most drastic witch-tests, including the ordeal by water and a test wherein the suspect had to spout milk from the mouth onto a pipal leaf. Hira Lal 'Witches and their Ordeals', *Man in India*, Vol. VI (1926), pp. 286 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

killed Bondki, the wife of Dasru, a panchayat was held by the Pargana Manjhi, and the husband of the murdered woman was given five rupees, a bullock, a pig and some rice. The panchayat received twenty rupees, of which the Pargana Manjhi and the village Peda took five each, the Kandki (headman's assistant) four and the Kotwar one. The villagers then decided to hush up the incident, and it only came to the ears of the police through an informer. When Kartami Hirma killed his baby daughter while he was beating his wife, the panchayat demanded a fine of twentyfive rupees in consideration of which they agreed to hush the matter up. The accused paid five rupees on account and promised the rest within a month. The panchayat even seized the stick with which the beating had been done. Then the Kotwar reported that the child had been still-born.

When Poriami Handa was killed, the villagers forced his widow to accept compensation from the murderer and to keep the matter a secret. But she told what had happened to her brother-in-law, and he reported the matter to the police. In another case a group of men who had been involved in a robbery killed two of their number to prevent them giving them away. The headman was the cousin of one of the murderers. He called the people of the village together and persuaded them to agree to say nothing about the incident, and it was only through the efforts of the father of one of the victims that the matter came to light. Even then the headman attempted to bribe the police. In this case the only reason for concealment seems to have been the friendship of the headman for one of the people involved. A similar reason seems to have influenced the villagers in another murder. When Miriami Harma fell into a rage at being accused of theft at a panchayat, he snatched his baby daughter out of the arms of his wife, and holding her by the legs dashed her on the ground, killing her immediately. Possibly the members of the panchayat feared that they would be involved, and the next day the murderer and the Kotwar went to the police station and reported that the child had been bitten by a cobra.

Where the murderer is a man of influence in the village, such as one of the civil or religious headmen, he may attempt to force the people to conceal his crime. Manjhi Banda was

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

626 the Peda of Turri village, and he said that it was his own brother he had killed and it was nobody else's affair. He even forbade the ferrymen to take the body across the Indrawati, and had it buried himself. It is probable that the villagers were influenced by the circumstances of the case. The murder occurred as a result of a quarrel about the partition of the family property which the dead man demanded. But local opinion seems to have been that, since the two brothers were married to two sisters and were thus practically one family of which the elder brother was the patriarchal head, the dead man was wrong in demanding a separate share. Ujji Poda was a well-to-do man and persuaded the villagers to make a false report to the police. Here too there was probably a general belief that Poda had acted rightly in killing the man who had interfered with his wife's chastity. When Gunda was killed by his son, the villagers hushed up the matter partly because the murdered man was the clan-priest of the Hemla Clan, and his son automatically succeeded him, and partly because of the justifiable nature of the crime. Even the Court considered the murder so excusable that it awarded a sentence of only one month's imprisonment.

In another case the murderer so terrorized the village that nobody dared to go to report the crime. At first the villagers refused to cremate the corpse. But the murderer threatened to kill the headman and burn him with the corpse, and insisted upon it being cremated. It was only after a week that the Peda was able to slip out of the village and make a report. When Oyami Masa of Khutepal killed his junior wife by beating her, he first of all told the villagers that the woman had died of fever. But when they examined the body and found marks of beating, Masa, who was the Waddai of the village and a very domineering and influential man, prevented them from making a report and insisted that the body should be cremated immediately. It was not till three weeks later that any report was made at the police station, and by this time, of course, it had become impossible to prove that Masa had intended to murder his wife or had used sufficient force to kill her. He was, therefore, sentenced to only one year's imprisonment: his presence of mind probably saved him from the gallows.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

An ingenious attempt to hoodwink the police occurred at Jhoriahadhan in 1923. After the mysterious disappearance of a little boy aged two-and-a-half years the police came to investigate, and the villagers took the constable to the threshing-floor whence the child had disappeared, and there showed him a boy about six years old. They told him that this was the missing boy and that he had been found wandering in the fields. Even the child's own mother declared that this was the lost boy, and since all the members of the family as well as the villagers supported her, the police went away. There is no doubt, however, that a child did disappear and it is probable that he was offered as a human sacrifice.

In one case, but only one, a prosecution witness was so troubled by his family that he committed suicide. On the whole, however, the Maria appear to co-operate with the police very well. In 88 cases out of 100, they assisted in some way or other. Sometimes they reported the matter at the police station. Sometimes they themselves arrested the murderer and kept him in custody until the police arrived. They co-operated by assisting at the inquest which is held in a village when the police arrive to investigate a suspicious death. In one case the villagers took an active and dangerous part in pursuing a convict who had escaped from jail with the result that one of their number was killed.

TABLE TWENTY-ONE

Illustrating the kind of assistance given to police in 100 cases

Information withheld from police	...	...	12
Homicide reported by villagers	...	...	79
Accused arrested by villagers	...	...	25
Accused gives himself up to police	...	...	9

This was the exciting pursuit of Markami Mundra in 1934. Mundra was convicted in 1933 and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for an act of violence. On 3 May 1934, he escaped from jail with another convict and a proclamation was issued for their arrest. A Sub-Inspector of Police went at once to Gudra, Mundra's own village, and told the people that a reward of fifty rupees had been offered for his

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

626 capture, and some constables went from village to village
648 looking for him. Very daringly Mundra in his prisoner's clothes went to his house in Gudra, and stayed there till his mother came home from a bazaar. Thence he went to a Kalar's house near Nayanar. The police heard that he was somewhere about, and without knowing that Mundra was hiding there, went to the house to get fire to light their cigarettes. Mundra seeing them and supposing that he was discovered rushed out with a knife in his hand, and tried to stab one of the constables. But they caught him and tied him up with the help of the villagers. They took him to the Kuakonda police station, which they reached at dawn. Thence they went on to Dantewara, which they reached late at night and put up in the Kotwar's house. They tied Mundra's feet to the leg of the cot on which one of the constables was sleeping, and his handcuffed hand to a pillar. But while they were all asleep, Mundra managed to escape again. This time he went to his maternal uncle and got his handcuffs broken. Then dressed in a small loin-cloth and carrying a bow and arrow, he went to his house and took away his wife Kase.

Meanwhile the police went back to Gudra and with the help of the villagers searched the surrounding forest. For eight days the search went on, the Maria taking a leading part in it. At last they got information that Mundra had been seen in someone's field. They again beat the forest and at last found Mundra and his wife. Mundra threatened them with his arrows and managed to escape. But the villagers caught his wife and brought her home. Another week passed with Mundra lurking in the jungle, and one day when Kase went to work in the fields, he took her away again. The Maria, led by Markami Bhima, their headman, again searched for him, but without success, until at last they found him and his wife on the Kopli Hill. Mundra turned upon his pursuers and shot at one of them, his arrow hitting the ground a little in front of him. Once again the search-party succeeded in capturing the unfortunate Kase, and she was beaten and tied up inside her house with a large party of Maria guarding her.

During the night the woman wept loudly, and attracted by her cries Mundra came and stood before the house and said

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

that he would kill the men who were pursuing him and troubling her. He accused his fellow-Maria of doing more than the police for his arrest. Then he struck a beam of the house with his axe in token of revenge and went away. After some days—it was now over two months since he escaped from Dantewara—Mundra again went to look for his wife, but was unable to find her. Markami Bhima the headman, who had been threatened with death by Mundra, had been taking many precautions. But Mundra somehow managed to get into his house at night and killed him by shooting him at close range with an arrow. A week later Mundra went into the Madras Presidency. His hiding-place was betrayed by a woman who met some Maria from the original village who were still searching for him, and the police managed to arrest him on 2 February 1935.

The most remarkable thing about this case was the very large part taken by the Maria in assisting the police. They were no doubt influenced by the reward of fifty rupees that was offered, but even so their help was remarkable and Mundra greatly resented it.

III

Why do the villagers conceal murders from the police? We should not too hastily attribute this to a merely savage absence of the civic instinct. There are many other reasons. First and foremost they still consider that they should settle everything themselves. They believe that it is only in a tribal Court that the real facts can be known. We have seen that they are generally unwilling to testify against a powerful priest or magician who might revenge himself on them. They are equally unwilling to assist the police where they believe a murder has been justified.

Then they fear the annoyance and expense of having police subordinates quartered on them and the expense and waste of time of having to go to a distant Court, especially at the more busy periods of the agricultural year. Again the real reason for a crime is often something which the Maria dislike revealing in Court and which they despair of making outsiders understand. Another powerful factor is the supernatural danger—and the expense of avoiding it—of a post-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

mortem examination, and of allowing the corpse to be buried outside the proper territory of its clan.

Memories of past oppression die slowly and Grigson has a remarkable passage on the conflict between State and people in former times. He points out how in the old days in Bastar (as in many parts of India at the present time) everything conspired to limit the authority and lower the prestige of the tribal elders. He describes the extreme inconvenience to the villagers of a police investigation.

> A badly trained police, often singularly lacking in common sense, would descend on a village and waste days in pointless investigation of petty cases, expecting not only to be fed on rice, mutton and poultry by the villagers during their stay, but also to be provided with stores of grain under the old bisaha system to take away with them at the end of the investigation. Villagers would be compelled to carry the supplies thus forcibly taken from them to the police station, perhaps two or three days' march distant, and would rarely be given even the nominal payment prescribed under the old bisaha rules. Then would follow a protracted trial at the still more distant tahsil headquarters, ten witnesses being summoned where three or four would have been ample; and probably all these witnesses at the end of the trial would have to accompany the police party back to the police station to carry their impediments, and might be kept even longer as 'athpaharia begar' labourers to clean the police office and lines and do domestic work for the constables.

Even today when the Bastar police force has been trained in traditions that are in many respects admirable, it is impossible to keep a check on the conduct of all subordinates, and their very presence in a village is disturbing to the aboriginals. Grigson continues,

> It is not surprising that, as the result of these methods of dealing with the aboriginals, their panchayats tended to co-operate as little as possible with the State; their object became to conceal crime from the police and in general to comply with State requirements only so far as was necessary in order to avoid trouble, and, above all, visits of subordinate State officials to their villages. The records of murder and other trials show many cases of the village elders meeting and deciding to hush up a crime, especially if it had occurred at harvest or any other busy agricultural season, rather than have the whole life of the village community disorganized by police

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

316

Quarrying memorial stones at Dugeli

764

Row of mathal stones

[Facing p. 192]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

investigation, committal proceedings and Sessions trial. Such crimes may have come to light later through the panchayat reporting them at their own convenience, or through the widow or other relative of a murdered man being dissatisfied with the compensation which the murderer had been ordered to give, while in some Parganas informers arose who subsequently used their supposed prestige with the police to become petty local tyrants. Conversely on occasions panchayats, disgusted with the failure of the police to investigate thefts or with the acquittal of guilty persons by the Tahsildars, took the law into their own hands and had the thieves killed.[1]

I make no apology for quoting Grigson at length on this subject, for it was largely due to his efforts that a new tradition was established in Bastar, and that the Maria began, however slowly and imperfectly, to co-operate with the administration. The new attitude is indeed a remarkable tribute to the sympathy and intelligence of the Bastar police and the understanding and courtesy of the committing Magistrates and Sessions Judges. Even so I doubt whether the Maria will ever be able to overcome the tribal and religious objections to revealing their inmost thoughts in the public Court.

This fear of the outside world is revealed in a number of examples where Maria have committed suicide rather than be involved in police enquiries and legal proceedings.

The aboriginal is not alone in finding litigation and contact with officialdom trying to the nerves. Hunga of Kothiagura was involved in a cattle-theft case and believed himself badly treated by the constable investigating it. He prepared a petition to the Superintendent of Police and wrapping it carefully in a parsa leaf set out to Jagdalpur to present it. But on the way, his fears, his grievance, his sense of lost prestige overwhelmed him, and he hanged himself from a parsa tree by the roadside.[2]

Marvi Mundra of Cholnar had some of his cattle stolen and

[1] Grigson, op. cit., pp. 284 ff.

[2] The case of Saradu, a young Maria landlord of Bermakot, in 1933, belongs to the bad old days before the taking of free supplies and labour had been prohibited. An Excise Sub-Inspector came to the village to enquire into a case of illicit distillation. He does not seem to have received all the supplies he wanted, and so he threatened the landlord, who came of a leading Muria family, with prosecution on some false charge. Saradu hanged himself rather than face the indignity and disgrace.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Miriami Doga (64), exasperated by a creditor.

Kubrami Tonda (33), the dwarf who revenged himself on a bullying younger brother

Vetti Hirma (99)

[Facing p. 193]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 reported the matter to the police. The case proceeded normally, and Mundra was summoned as complainant to the court. The accused called two defence witnesses, a matter which seems to have shocked Mundra profoundly, who being simple and honest himself and knowing his case to be true, seems to have expected it to be settled in his favour immediately. In the evening, under the great trees of the travellers' camp at Dantewara, he expressed his concern to his companions and while all were asleep went away and committed suicide.

In case No 1, Lakhmu of Erpund, an old timid Maria who may have himself been involved in the crime, was called by the police as a prosecution witness against his step-son. The boy's mother was so angry at his being willing to give evidence against her son, and she and the family abused the old man so much that before the matter came to trial he hanged himself.

Another case, this time of attempted suicide, occurred in connection with a police investigation as recently as 1941. An elderly Maria, Poyami Masa by name, who lived in the beautiful village of Kaklur among the mountains, had a quarrel with his nephew Kosa. Kosa struck the old man with his axe, and was sentenced to imprisonment. While in jail, in order to revenge himself, he made a report to the Administrator that his uncle had murdered a Banjara gypsy some years before, had placed his dead body in the village temple, and had given a feast to the villagers who had hushed up the whole affair. The police investigated the matter and found that actually seven years previously an unknown Banjara had died in the village, and his body had been quietly disposed of by the people in order to avoid the bother of a police enquiry. No one ever knew who the man was, nor was his body ever found. But Poyami Masa was so alarmed at the arrival of the police that he hanged himself on a branch of a tree behind his house, but was cut down by his son before he died. At his trial he was acquitted, the Sessions Judge finding that there was no real evidence against him.

763 The extreme care that is needed in dealing with primitive people, who may easily misinterpret official action, is seen in a deplorable incident that occurred among the Chenchu

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

about ten years ago. 'It was the mahua season and the Chenchu were in the process of distilling liquor when two policemen arrived in the village and arrested the *peddamanchi* and three other men for illicitly distilling liquor. Unused to dealing with aboriginals they failed to reassure the other people that nothing very serious would happen to the four offenders, and apparently even made them believe that more policemen would come and arrest all the villagers. This threat caused, probably much to their own surprise, a general and immediate stampede, and so terrified were the Chenchu that they did not even stop to pick up their small children, but left them wherever they happened to be, and fled into the jungle. The whole day they dared not return to the village, and when they stole back in the evening they found that several of the smallest infants had died from exposure to the burning sun. Yidgaru (Tokal) says that altogether eight children perished on that occasion, and though this may be an exaggeration, it is certain that the child of his brother, who was one of the arrested men, died at that time. Only two of the four men were found guilty and condemned to one month's imprisonment, and strangely enough both died of fever within eight days of their return from jail'.[1]

IV

BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE RELEASED CONVICT

When a murderer comes out of jail, before he is admitted to the ordinary privileges of tribal life and sometimes even before he is allowed to enter his house, ceremonies of purification must be performed. These are of two kinds. The first is a straightforward ceremony to purge a man from the defilement of having been in jail and in the hands of the police. This is probably a Hindu idea,[2] and is connected with the fact that in jail prisoners must take food from members of any caste. It is likely that they may be beaten by

[1] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Hyderabad, 1943), pp. 267 f.
[2] It is said of a Hindu Sessions Judge in the Central Provinces that after passing sentence of death he would break the pen with which he wrote the judgement and destroy the clothes he wore. He would not eat till he had bathed and undergone a ceremony of purification.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

783 constables, who again may be men of low caste, and they are almost certainly forced at some time to wear handcuffs which is regarded by most Hindus as degrading. A term of imprisonment involves, of course, culture-contact in its most concentrated form, and we need not be surprised to find aboriginal prisoners bringing back from the capital of the State Hindu notions of this kind.

The ceremony, it is interesting to note, bears no relationship at all to the kind of crime that has been committed. For stealing a cow or for the illicit distilling of mahua liquor a man has to undergo the same purification as if he had committed a brutal murder. Even if he is acquitted, the jail contagion is on him and he must free himself of it.

The ceremonies vary from place to place. At Jabeli, where they have had a lot of experience of this sort of thing, the Maria told me that when a man returns from jail he is not at first allowed to enter his house, but must remain outside and the family gives him his food at a distance. He must then go to his Waddai and give him five rupees for some of the water in which his clan-god has been bathed. The priest sprinkles him with this and gives him a little to drink. He sprinkles some of it over the house. Then the released prisoner gives a feast of beef or pork to the village, he is allowed to go into his house, and from that day 'everybody forgets all about it'.

[823] Sometimes the water must be brought from Dantewara. Hemla Bakka, for example, had to get from the Jia water in which the goddess Danteshwari had been bathed. When Doga came out of jail, the Gaita heated a bit of gold in the fire and touched his forehead, mouth, wrists, knees and toes. He dipped the gold in water and sprinkled it over the body. In Pogu Bheji, the priest burnt with a bit of gold the murderer's tongue, the back of his neck and the upper part of his left arm. He made a fire above the gold with branches of the mango, dumar, karanji and mahua trees and sprinkled the hot ashes over his head. Then the people washed him with ghee, milk and haldi water. When he had given a feast he was free of the contagion of the jail.

When Nendi Muya of Dhanikarka was flogged for stealing a cow, he had to sacrifice a pig and a white chicken to Mati Dao, and bring water from the shrine of Lakshmi Devi at

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Kuakonda. When Telami Dhurwa returned from jail after killing a man in a drunken quarrel, he offered his clan-god Uru Maru, a pig, a cow and a hen, and had to undergo the usual ceremonies of purification. 783

Apart from these ceremonies, however, the fact that a man has served a sentence for murder has singularly little influence on his social position and domestic happiness. It is true that imprisonment, if it is for a very long term, sometimes acts as an automatic divorce, and women feel that they are at liberty to marry again. But generally wives wait for their husbands to be released, as I found Deve, the wife of Kawasi Borga, waiting for her husband at Doriras. Borga, ten years before, had gone to jail with a life-sentence for killing his uncle. His wife had all the time been well looked after by the villagers, and I found her house substantial and prosperous. Her two sons had been successfully married and were carrying on the business of their home with the help of their wives. 554 558 [584] [593]

People, however, are sometimes afraid to marry a released murderer. Doga of Jabeli must be one of the luckiest young men alive, for after being sentenced to transportation for one murder he was released after three years; whereupon he is said to have killed his wife, was sentenced to death and again got off on appeal. He came to see me armed with a ferocious-looking axe, which had actually been put in evidence at one of his trials as the weapon with which he had committed murder. He was trying to get a new wife, but without success. 'They are all afraid of me', he said, 'for fear I might kill them as well'. But he thought he might possibly get a widow. Another youth who found it very difficult to get a new wife was Hemla Bakka, who killed his wife for committing adultery, and got three years' imprisonment for it. At Aranpur all the girls were frightened of the charming Gutte, who had been in jail for killing a man in a drunken quarrel after a cock-fight. They thought if they displeased him, he might murder them too. 554 582

At Khutepal, Oyami Masa, who was imprisoned for killing his junior wife, seems to have suffered no loss of prestige on account of it. He is a Waddai, and when I was there he 554 558

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

554 559 went over to Tikanpal to offer sacrifice on behalf of that village.

At Muler I visited the widow of Ido Deva, an unpleasant quarrelsome fellow who had recently been hanged for murdering one of the most popular men in the village. In spite of this, his widow was well treated. She was not excommunicated and was allowed to share in the usual feasts. But she always remained inside her house, and generally refused to talk to people; the headman told me that there would probably be some difficulty in getting her two sons married, for people would say, 'After all, their father was a murderer'.

000 The relationship between the families of a murderer and his victim is always a delicate one, and Frazer has collected many examples from all over the world in illustration. The Uraon make sacrifices to the angry ghost of a murdered man, and sometimes even reckon him among the ancestral spirits of his murderer. Roy records that two Uraon, related to each other as cousins, had a quarrel over a piece of land; and one of them, in a sudden fit of anger, thrust his axe into the bowels of his companion. The man, thus struck, at once ran to his assailant's house and, pressing his wounded stomach with his hands, sat down at one corner of the hut and exclaimed, 'Here I establish myself', and then ran out again to the field in dispute and dropped down dead. To this day, the descendants of the murderer propitiate the murdered man's spirit. After the harvest, the first sheaf of paddy from the field where he fell dead is offered to his spirit at the same corner of the house where he sat down before his death. The descendants of the murdered man too are allowed access to the spot in order to make similar offerings.[1]

682 571 I have not found this custom in Bastar, though that does not mean that it does not exist. But I have found everywhere an anxiety that there should not be any enmity between the families. Compensation is often paid to the victim's widow or family, and the murderer's family may contribute to the expenses of the funeral. Both families should always have a feast together. In Gamawada the family of an imprisoned homicide, Barse Mata, gave every kind of help to the relatives of his victim: among other

[1] S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 69 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

things they provided a pot of rice-beer and a pig for his funeral rites.

V

BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE DEAD

The reaction of society to violent crime may be seen from the funerary arrangements that are made both for the murderer and his victim.[1]

In the great majority of cases these arrangements are complicated by the fact that the corpse of the deceased is not available. It is generally taken to headquarters for post-mortem examination, and when a man is hanged in jail his body is disposed of by the prison authorities. This does not mean, however, that the funeral ceremonies are omitted. Clothes and other property belonging to the dead are brought back from the Magistrate's Court or from the jail, and these are used to represent the corpse. When Markami Deva killed his wife at Darbha the people brought her clothes, necklace and armlets to the village. These relics were not brought into the house, but were put outside in the yard. The usual funeral drum was not beaten, but the relatives gathered and the brother of the husband (the husband himself was in police custody) put haldi and oil on the things, and a relative by marriage carried them in a basket to a pyre which had been prepared outside the village. Men and women walked behind throwing seeds of rice, maize and pulse mixed together in the basket.

The pyre was under a tree over which a great camel's-foot creeper was growing. They carried the basket round it seven times. Relatives put small pieces of cloth upon it in the usual way and removed them. They hung a bit of cloth on the tree. Then they lit the pyre and went away. They did not erect an uraskal, though here they said that they would

[1] Everywhere in India the ghost of a murdered man or a suicide is dangerous. The Lushai think a victim's ghost will haunt the murderer and drive him mad. J. Shakespear, *The Lushai Kuki Clans* (London, 1912), p. 76. Both the Lushai and Lakher perform ceremonies to make the dead man's ghost harmless and to ensure that it becomes the servant of the slayer in the other world. If this is not done, the ghost may blind, lame or paralyse the man who killed him. *N. E. Parry, The Lakhers* (London, 1932), p. 213. Frazer gives many examples from other parts of the world. Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III, pp. 103 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 have done so if they had been able to afford it. When Doga of Jabeli killed his wife, but was acquitted on appeal, no ceremony was performed for the dead woman at the time. But when Doga returned home, he himself made a small pyre and carried his wife's clothes and ornaments in his own hands, and thus performed the usual ceremonies.

The day after the burning of the pyre two men go to inspect the ashes. When Oyami Anda was hanged they found 'signs of hanging'—the marks of a rope—among the ashes.

765 The funeral drum is not beaten for the ceremonies of a man who is hanged or of his victim or when somebody commits suicide. Otherwise the ceremonies are largely the same as usual.

After Kadti Hunga was hanged for murdering his wife Gangi, the clothes of both murderer and victim were put together and covered with earth, and a small pillar of cotton wood was erected nearby.

Sometimes the dead man's clothes are not brought to the house, but are kept outside the village for fear that they may bring the angry ghost along with them. At Killepal and other villages it was the custom to burn the clothes at a cross-roads outside the village.

In the Konta Tahsil, the Maria have a custom of making a small doll or image to serve as a corpse. An unpleasant, quarrelsome fellow called Ido Deva committed a murder at Muler and was hanged. After his death the villagers did not fetch his clothes from the jail but when the fact of his hanging was confirmed, they cut a bit of the gongum tree 'about the length of your forearm', dressed it up in some of Deva's old cloth, put a pair of his ear-rings where the ears might be, and one of his necklaces round the 'neck'. Then just as if it was a real corpse they put it on a bier, covered it with a cloth and carried it out to the pyre (which was in the ordinary cremation-ground) and burnt it. At the head of the pyre they placed a forked saja branch and hung a cow's tail upon it. When I went to the cremation-ground I saw Deva's ashes still fresh and only a few yards away an older pile of ashes for the man he had murdered. Nearby still lay the pots and a specially-made basket for offering rice to the offended ghost.

Sometimes the corpse is cremated near the menhirs. At

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Aranpur I saw a large pile of ashes and half-burnt logs of [764]
wood in front of the uraskal stones erected in memory of members of the Barse clan. These were the remains of the pyre for Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged. In this case it was considered of ill omen that, although two attempts were made to burn the pyre, a lot of the wood remained unburnt. In other villages, however, we were told that such ceremonies must not be performed in the neighbourhood of the menhirs.

There seems to be no objection to erecting an uraskal or danyakal stone either for murderers or for their victims. At Palnar an uraskal was mounted for Mulami Bella. At Dugeli an uraskal was erected for a murdered man. In other villages such as Metapal (where there is no uraskal for Banjami Irma who was murdered by his own son) or at Gandarguda (where there is no danyakal for Rawa Hirma) the absence of these memorials is said to be due to the fact that the deceased were poor men and their relatives could not afford them. But at Dugeli, Kunjami Pandu told us that an uraskal for a murdered man can only be erected after the case against the murderer is settled. When his own brother was murdered, he did not at first erect a stone for [767]
him, and he was continually troubled by the restless ghost who came in dreams to reproach him for not 'mingling his soul with the dead, and for his failure to give him a stone'. Once Pandu did this, he had no more bad dreams.

The ceremonies of erecting a menhir for a murderer are exactly the same as for anyone else. When the villagers were carrying the stone for Mulami Bella at Palnar, they halted and put it on the ground, and the women of the house threw rings on to it. Afterwards the women eagerly collected these [771]
rings, for it is considered very lucky to wear them.

On the forest road between Palnar and Jabeli there is a row of the flat memorial stones called danyakal, and at one end a tall carved wooden pillar and a large earthen tomb. The tomb, the pillar and one of the stones are in honour of Marvi Oyami Masa who died in jail while serving a sentence for the murder of his uncle. Masa was a very important man in Jabeli. He was rich, he was the Waddai of the village and he was a Siraha medicine-man. His death seemed to be far more important to the villagers than that of the man

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 he murdered. The stone next to his is for Marvi Buta who was also sentenced for this murder and also died in jail. But there was nothing at all in honour of the murdered man.

764 532 The erection of a carved memorial pillar is probably the greatest honour that the Maria can pay to the dead. It is the equivalent of being buried in Westminster Abbey. Masa's pillar is a very fine one. It shows him as a Siraha sitting on a swing: a streamer of untidy hair blows out from his head. Another carving shows him mounted on an elephant. Another portrays him riding on a horse attended by his wives. All round him are the symbols of his life; deer and tigers represent his love of the chase; axes, swords and knives symbolize his valour and enterprise; two men carry a pot of rice-beer in memory of his drinking prowess.

775 789 The business of keeping the ghost of the murderer or his victim quiet naturally greatly exercises the minds of the village medicine-men and priests. There is danger either that the ghost will cause trouble among the other ghosts of the family, and thus by annoying the ancestors may bring trouble upon the living: or it may inspire another member of the family also to commit a murder; or it may return and simply make itself troublesome. At Phulpar, after Pandu had been hanged and the usual ceremonies performed, the village priest sacrificed a hen near the pyre saying, 'Now we make your home here: live here with your ancestors peacefully'. If they fail to do this, they said, they think someone else in the house will also commit a murder. Then they erected a saja pole and after sacrificing a cow to appease the ghost of the dead man, each relative in turn picked up the cow's tail, saluted it and hung it on the pole. The Waddai went to a corner of the room where the Pot of the Departed was kept, sprinkled liquor there and addressed the ghost: 'Live now with your sons. Do not go to your daughters. Care for the people of your house. See that your children prosper'.

Often, after the ceremony of burning the clothes and ornaments, a man sits in the house of the deceased and the ghost comes upon him. He is led out to the pyre, and there he buries a *bhut kukri*, a ghost hen, to ensure that the ghost will not come to the house and trouble its relatives.

The ghost of the murderer or his victim becomes a Mirchuk.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Sometimes it is supposed that this Mirchuk possesses a man and makes him commit a murder. At Gudra, when Kawachi Linga returned from jail after serving a homicide sentence, a black chicken was sacrificed to the Mirchuk of his victim. But the chicken refused to eat the rice that is always offered to test it before it is killed, and the people thought that this meant that Linga would be possessed by the spirit of his first victim and thus be driven to commit another murder. To avert this danger they sacrificed a pig and a cow, and only then readmitted him to their society.

The Mirchuk, whatever its origin may be, may be employed by a witch as her familiar and servant. She gets control over it and uses it to assist her in her wicked designs.

The Mirchuk is very quarrelsome, and the spirit of a man who has been hanged must not be mingled with the other ancestors in the Room of the Departed, for it is sure to cause trouble. So the Mirchuk is generally located outside the village under a large stone, in an ant-hill or in a mahua tree. At Dhurli we were told that, when Telami Hunga was murdered, his ghost was kept apart, for he was a student of magic and such persons turn into Rao Bhut. For such no uraskal should be erected, nor should the ghost be mingled with the other Departed.

Indeed it is often held that the ghosts of the slain and of executed criminals should not be 'mingled with the Departed' and nothing should be put for them in the sacred Pot in the ordinary way.[1] When the boy Ando was murdered by his uncle Irma, this precaution was taken. Ando's ghost still roams the village, an axe in its hands, seeking vengeance. Irma's ghost is said to have possessed itself of the rope with which he was hanged and people were afraid it might use it to hang the other Departed of his clan or to steal their cows.

It is very dangerous for a murderer to see the ghost of his victim while he is in jail, perhaps because it is impossible there to perform the proper ceremonies of protection. Pandu

[1] Mateer reported that in Travancore the ghosts of executed murderers were regarded as specially dangerous and were believed to haunt the place of execution. To prevent this the executioner used to cut off the criminal's heels with a sword or hamstring him as he was thrown off. S. Mateer *The Land of Charity* (London, 1871), pp. 203 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 of Chichari described how this happened to three of his
753 fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

768 In several places I found that a house or a village had been
14 moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

764 The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the
762 same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death,
[787] and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

762 In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pide committed
766 suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

for this is your home'. When the chicken had pecked at the rice, he twisted its neck and threw it on the still-burning pyre. A pig and a cow were then sacrificed and an uraskal erected the same day. After returning to the house they made a rough drawing with flour of the garden and of the house with its various rooms on the floor. On this pattern they again offered rice to a hen saying, 'We have now made a house for you; don't stay outside any longer, but remain here'.

The ghost of the suicide, like that of a murderer, becomes a Mirchuk and lives in an ant-hill. If the Mirchuk gets angry, it may possess a member of the family, and he too may commit suicide unless the proper offerings are not made at once. The suicide's ghost may also come to the village and cause trouble in a variety of ways. As we have seen elsewhere, the Mirchuk is often used as a familiar by witches. It is most important that the soul of a suicide should not be 'mingled with the Dead'. In some villages they say that this prohibition is absolute. In Dugeli, they said that they should wait a year. A menhir should not be erected. A remarkable double suicide at Khutepal illustrates the danger of ignoring these rules. Bandi, the headman of this village, had two wives. One day they quarrelled, and the elder wife hanged herself in a rage. Her funeral ceremony was performed as though the death had been a natural one. Her soul was mingled with the Dead, and an uraskal memorial pillar was erected for her in the place used by other members of the clan. It is believed that, when this is done, the suicide's ghost quarrels with the other ghosts of the clan and annoys them. In this case the angry Dead so troubled the wife of Bandi's younger son, who was living in the same house, that she too committed suicide after a quarrel with her mother-in-law. This second suicide was regarded by the villagers as the immediate result of having erected a memorial pillar and mingled the soul of the older woman with the ancestral Dead. When the girl's ceremonies were performed, therefore, they carefully burnt her clothes in a place away from the usual crematorium and, although they gave her an uraskal, they did not sacrifice a cow or hang its tail in the usual manner round the stone.

At Dualkarka, however, they said that an uraskal should

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762
766 never be made for anyone who commits suicide or is killed by violence. Here they described how, when the members of the household in which a suicide has occurred are feasting at the close of the funeral ceremonies, they suddenly feel as though somebody is strangling them, and to get rid of this unpleasant feeling they have to go to the village boundary and make the usual offerings. If the dead man has been killed by a tiger or has been murdered, the relatives feel that they are being mauled by some great animal or that an unseen hand is belabouring them with a heavy stick.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE ABORIGINAL PRISONER

I

How do the Maria get on in jail? This is a question that only a Jailor can answer, but I have been told by those responsible for aboriginal prisoners what an appalling ordeal prison life is for people accustomed to the great freedoms of the hills and forests. 'If a Maria is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment', says Grigson, 'he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls: and few of the wilder Bison-horn Maria survive long imprisonment'.[1] The grim forbidding walls, the stone beds, the rule of silence, the attitude of suppliant and obsequious deference before officials, the absence of any kind of recreation, the lack of all religious comfort, the denial of human companionship, the appalling monotony oppress and crush them. The Maria is perhaps insensitive to mental suffering, but on the other hand he has no reserve of philosophical or intellectual fortitude to draw on in a crisis. To him life with a woman and daily intercourse with her, a good supply of tobacco, the rough simple food of his village and the not infrequent stimulus of alcohol are perhaps the only necessities of existence. But they are necessary, and many prisoners have told me that they missed these things far more than the restraint upon their liberty.

How do the prisoners themselves look back on their experience? I will attempt to discover this by quoting their own sayings. Markami Doga said, 'I felt very sad in jail, and my thoughts were always in my house'. Another man said that he was continually worrying about his children and who would look after them. Another was distracted lest in his absence his cattle would be distributed like fowls among the neighbours. Many of the prisoners with whom I talked in jail had an extremely sad and pitiable look. I particularly remember the suffering on the face of Habka Masa who had

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 96. Since this was written, improved conditions in the Jagdalpur jail have increased the life-expectation of all the prisoners.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

killed his wife, and of Marvi Kuma who described how much he missed his wife and children and was always wondering whether they got enough food to eat. Vetti Rupe told me that he was continually thinking of his family. Dasru, himself a magician, was worried because in prison there was no Siraha to consult about the various untoward things that happened. The three men who had been sentenced from Pinna Bheji and whom I met after their release said, 'The worst thing was we always were thinking of our cattle and our homes, and to feel that we had got into prison by accident. We could hardly eat for the memory of our children'.

These aboriginal prisoners are remarkable in not finding sex a problem while they are in jail. This statement will probably be received with incredulity by many of my readers. I can only say that I have gone into the matter as fully as anyone could who was not himself a jail official or a prisoner setting out to investigate this particular point. The jail officials, who know their people at least as well as officials elsewhere, some of whom have had very long experience, have told me that cases of homosexuality are unknown and that even masturbation is not practised by the aboriginal prisoners. When I have discussed the same matter with released convicts they have all said the same thing, and I am inclined to believe them, because they have shown no reticence in speaking freely and even coarsely about other sexual matters. I think it is possible that the Maria who in his natural state is, as far as I can discover, completely innocent of any kind of sexual deviation simply would not think it possible that any substitute could give him satisfaction or indeed could be practised. The thing just would not occur to him.[1]

What is generally believed is that medicine is put in the food. I do not suggest this is so, but it is what is supposed. One after another has described how he never got any erection at all while in jail, and several people have found themselves impotent for a time after their release. Barse Mata of Gamawada declared that he had never even felt

[1] It would be hard to imagine a greater contrast to this than, for example, the conditions described by J. F. Fishman in his *Sex in Prison* (London, 1935).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142

Bagori and Jimma who tried to kill her co-wife, after her release from jail

Assami Gotta

The lucky Dogs

[Facing p. 208]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 desire while in jail. Boti of Telam declared that the doctor
881 had made them all impotent by medicine put in the food. On the other hand, Pandru of Chichari said that he frequently suffered from erections in jail and from nocturnal emissions. Naturally, however, the worst thing about jail-life is the deprivation of the company of women, though many Maria would modify this by saying that it is rather the whole family atmosphere, houses, children, cattle as well as the wife, that was missed. When I asked one youth what jail-life was like, he said, 'No wife, no bazaar, no children, no family'. But the thing that most oppressed him in jail was the silence.

697 The food in jail is excellent, far better than the prisoners get in their own homes. Since 1935, a special effort has been made to improve the health of the prisoners among whom at one period there had been a rather heavy mortality. The result has been highly satisfactory. There was only 1 death in 1938, 2 in 1939 and 4 in 1940. Accommodation in the jail is for 308 prisoners and the daily average is between 210 and 230. Special measures are taken against respiratory diseases, notably influenza. Phyrnoderma (toad-skin), which was one of the chief causes of reduced vitality among aboriginal prisoners, has been practically banished by the prophylactic administration of meat and cod liver oil. The ex-convicts generally grumble at the food and declare that they are continually unwell, but all reports agree in saying that they actually eat heartily and keep very fit. I think the real fact is that the food is unfamiliar to them and that many of them suffer from nervousness and a general psychic depression which makes them feel wretched, even though their actual bodily health is excellent. Several prisoners have declared how they long for roots and the gruels prepared in the ordinary way at home.

697 The work given to the prisoners varies. Some of the
564 Maria work in the kitchens, and it is interesting that the Hindu prisoners respect their social status and agree to eat from them. Ghasia and Panka are not admitted into the jail kitchen. Maria and Muria do not do sweepers' work in the jail,[1] though when a man is hanged Maria prisoners deal

[1] But I believe that Gond prisoners in the Central Provinces are made to work as sweepers, a thing that should never be allowed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

THE PINNA BHEJI TRAGEDY
Poriami Hirma (76)

Poriami Ganga

Poriami Hunga

[Facing p. 209]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 with the corpse. Short-term prisoners, suitably shackled,
564 are allowed beyond the walls to work in the gardens of the Palace and the higher State officials. Other prisoners learn to make baskets and chiks. But the main prison industry in Jagdalpur, as throughout India, is weaving. Some of the Maria have become experts at this art. I was told that Kunjami Malle and Marvi Tibru were excellent at it, and that Marami Dhurwa of Palnar was so good that he was sent to Raipur for training. In 1940 the receipts from jail industries exceeded Rs 10,000.

697 Unfortunately no aboriginal prisoner is able to take
286 advantage after his release of the training he receives in jail.
564 For weaving is regarded as the monopoly of the low caste Ganda and Mahara, and no aboriginal will ever degrade himself by practising it. Should he do so, he would be excommunicated, he would be unable to marry his daughters and he would be forbidden access to his clan and village festivals. I have constantly enquired about this and especially as to whether there is any reason behind it. Nobody seems to know the origin of the taboo. It may date from the days when the aboriginals did not use cloth at all, and regarded it as something foreign and alien. It may have simply come into being because of the Maria's dislike and scorn for the particular castes which practise weaving. It is not impossible, of course, that the Mahara and the Ganda themselves have encouraged the idea so as to enjoy the monopoly of trade. If all the Maria ex-convicts were to set up looms and make their own cloth, the existing weavers would be hard hit financially. I met one Maria who had tried to carry on his weaving work after a term in jail. But there had been such a commotion about it that he had to abandon the project.

000 It is a pity, I think, that some art or craft could not be taught to aboriginal prisoners, not only in Bastar but throughout India, which would be of value to them after their release. In five, ten or fifteen years a man could become an expert carpenter or wood-carver, a first-rate cook, an admirable market gardener. The Maria do learn a little gardening but they might do more, and carpentry on a large scale would be invaluable. For the aboriginal blacksmiths, whether they be Maria Lohar in Bastar or Agaria and Asur

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

in central India, a certain amount of training in blacksmithery might lead to their introducing new technical methods into the work of their tribe. Basket-making, rope-making and so on are all very well in their way. But the profits to be made from such work in remote aboriginal villages, where there is no one to buy at a proper rate, are pitiable, and few people can make such business pay. This is seen very clearly among the Juang, a few of whom have had to fall back on basket-making for a living and have become some of the most pathetically impoverished people in all India.

II

The question of dreaming among criminals was studied by De Sanctis who is quoted by Havelock Ellis. He specially investigated the contents of the dreams with reference to their emotional content.

> The former class dealt with quarrels, falls from a height, persecutions, fearful visions, often of mystical character, and were frequently concerned with the sexual sphere; while the latter class merely repeated the unimportant events of the day, or insignificant scenes from past life. A special inquiry was made in regard to dreams dealing with the crime which had led to imprisonment; 22 acknowledged such dreams, 16 men and 6 women; while, however, the majority of the men's dreams concerning their crimes were emotional, the majority of the women (4 out of 6) experienced no emotion in dreaming of their crimes. The rarity of emotional dreams generally was very remarkable, only a third of the criminal dreamers having often such dreams, and many of those who dreamed of their crimes without emotion were murderers. The conclusion reached by De Sanctis is that the criminal, or at all events the criminal guilty of crimes of blood, during the nights following the deed and during imprisonment, sleeps quietly and deeply, unless special causes (such as disease, nervous conditions, egoistic preoccupation, or the state of the weather) interfere with natural conditions. The habitual sleep of criminals resembles that which De Sanctis has found usually among old epileptic cases and imbeciles. Idiots have a similar dreadless sleep, and De Sanctis points out a probable connection between an unemotional dream-life and a general anaesthesia of sensibility in the waking life. There undoubtedly exists a small class of hyperaesthetic and emotional criminals, who exhibit their characteris-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

tics both waking and sleeping, but they form a very small proportion of criminals. On the whole, the dream-life of criminals shows that they are insensitive and unemotional, true imbeciles in feeling and partly so in intelligence.[1]

The dreams of Maria prisoners mainly agree with this. The aboriginal theory of dreams is that the *jiwa* or soul leaves the body in sleep and goes out to seek adventure. The dream is what it sees as it goes to and fro about the world. In prison the soul takes every opportunity to leave the confined and frustrated body, and goes home to visit the family or roams abroad in search of variety. Barse Mata said, 'In my sleep I really feel as though the soul was leaving my body. It runs to the house and sees all my people there'. Another man described how his wife came and slept with him in his dream, and how he would go out and see his family and his dead father whom he had murdered. But, he added, his father never reproached him for what he had done. Boti described how he saw dances, bazaars, his relatives and wife and children. Marvi Kuma said that his soul frequently went home to visit his wife. Muchaki Dasru sees his wife and children at night. He sits up and wants to weep. But on another occasion he finds, as he said, that 'the dream is the chutney of sleep' and by its help he has been able, in spite of imprisonment, to see all that is going on in the outside world. Munda sees girls, fighting-cocks, horses (which are bad), snakes (which are good). His soul constantly seeks rice-beer and tobacco. Vetti Rupe said that he saw his family in dreams, and sometimes a witch or a sorcerer. 'Even now our enemies can trouble us from outside the jail'. He said that he found dreams alarming, for in the ordinary way if a Maria has an inauspicious dream, he can make suitable offerings and free himself of the danger. In the jail there is no shrine and no chaplain for this purpose.

Very tender experiences between husband and wife occur in dreams, and one boy described how his young wife came to him in sleep and gave him the food he loved and slept with him. More moving still, reminding one of a famous incident in Browning's *Ring and the Book*, was the experience of a boy who killed his wife in a drunken rage. 'When I

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 152 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Markami Nanda (74), who was employed to beat up a landlord.

Mavami Dhurwa (69), twice imprisoned for homicide.

[facing p.212]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

824 saw her dead, I wept and was very sad. I killed her by mistake. It was not from the heart'. He went on to describe how she still came to sleep with him in dreams. She, his victim, catches him by the hand and says, 'Come. Why do we stay here in this prison?'

787 But normally it is considered extremely dangerous to see in a dream the ghost of the person you have murdered, or to be visited by the Departed. Pandru of Chichari described how he had a dream in prison in which two people were pressing his shoulders very hard when suddenly a third man came and pushed them aside. These two people represented the Departed, and the man who pushed them away was a friendly ancestor who thus saved him from a serious illness. He said that while he was in jail three of his fellow-prisoners saw in dreams the ghosts of the men they had killed and all three died. Boti of Telam was also visited by the ghost of his victim, and as a result he was ill for a whole year. This suggests a strongly emotional element in dreams about violent crime.

This is a convenient point to refer to the very interesting dream seen by Pandru shortly before the fatal quarrel with his brother which led to murder and imprisonment. In his dream he saw an Anga clan-god and a drum and village trumpet. The clan-god stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested that the people were weeping and mourning. In *The Maria and Their Ghotul* I suggest a close connection between the uses of the Anga clan-god and the corpse for purposes of divination. The Anga, which is carried on the shoulders by four men and in many cases resembles a bier, is a suitable harbinger of doom.

A Jailor of thirty years' experience told me that usually the Maria murderers went to their fate bravely and seldom had to be dragged or forced. They were asked to say *Ram Ram Ram* as they went to their death. The executions have a profound effect on other prisoners. Doga of Jabali was condemned to death and was confined in a solitary cell next door to Marvi Chewa. He told me how terrified he was when Chewa was hanged, since he knew that the same fate was in store for him. All night before his execution, Doga listened to the unhappy man weeping and heard the struggle as he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TRAGEDIES OF THE
SERVING MARRIAGE
Kalmami Masa (17)

Markami Wanpe (44)

[Facing p. 213]

3: Elwin · E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

787 was dragged out of his cell by the warders. The Maria from Pinna Bheji described to me how terrified they were when the nephew of the Zamindar of Bhopalpatnam and his two companions were hanged. The Zamindar's nephew went to his death crying *Ram Ram*, but at the gallows he lost control of himself and covered the Magistrate who was present with the foulest abuse.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

CONCLUSION

I

THE reader who has examined the many different crimes 157
recorded in this book cannot fail to be struck by the astonishing innocence of many of them. Compared to the dark and complicated wickedness of so many European murders, compared to the fundamental savagery of the actions of such men as Palmer or Orsini, most of these crimes appear almost accidental. In some cases the culprit regards himself as an executioner rather than a murderer. He believes his act to have been entirely justified. In others simple people despairing of making their cause understood in the courts, which use another language and whose ways and outlook are so different from theirs, take the law into their own hands. But of criminals, in the real sense of the word, there are few. Few of the convicts in the Jagdalpur jail would be fit heroes or villains of a detective story.

No one should suppose that, because this book is concerned with violent crime, the Maria themselves are equally preoccupied with the subject. There are a great many Maria, at least 175,000 of them. They live scattered over a vast area half the size of Holland. There are on an average only 12 true homicides every year. The great majority of the people live quiet, peaceful, hard-working lives. Even on the most uncharitable evaluation, their addiction to violence is only remarkable when compared to their immediate neighbours, who are some of the most pacific and gentle people on this planet. It is no doubt true that the Maria are jealous, quick-tempered, passionate, revengeful. Their faults and their virtues are those of strength, not of weakness. It is from such a tribe that we might look one day for creative genius, for positive, explosive, advanced ideas.

It is sometimes debated in Bastar whether anything can 158
be done to wean the Maria from violence. I doubt it. For example, an important cause of murder is fear of witchcraft and magic. Eliminate this fear, and the number of murders

[p. 215]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

will decrease. But the belief in witchcraft can only be removed by education. And how is the Maria to receive the kind of education that will achieve this end? Even if schools were opened all over southern Bastar, they would only be little village schools which would teach up to an elementary standard and be staffed by schoolmasters, themselves semi-educated. In the last ten years I have had a wide experience of village schoolmasters, and I do not know a single one who does not believe in magic and witchcraft as firmly as any aboriginal. Those acquainted with the small towns of central India will agree that even university graduates and men holding responsible positions in Government service are equally affected by this belief. Education, in fact, would do nothing to lessen the fear of witchcraft. It might, on the other hand, stimulate other kinds of crime. Not a few educated aboriginals take to blackmail, impersonation and cheating once they have gained the power that literacy gives them.

Another important cause of homicide is alcohol. Suppose prohibition was introduced. Would this reduce the amount of violent crime? I think it most unlikely. In the first place the Maria, angry and resentful, would tend to co-operate less and less with the State in preserving law and order. Illicit distillation would begin everywhere. The brewing of rice-beer, which can be done in the secret part of a house, would be very difficult to detect. An endless procession of short-term prisoners convicted for excise offences would come from Jagdalpur to infect the Maria area with criminal ideas picked up from other prisoners.

Jealousy and the desire for revenge is probably the third most important cause of murder. I know of no method by which these passions can be eradicated from the human heart. It must, however, be remembered that Maria jealousy is the great safeguard of the Maria home. The women are chaste and faithful not only because most aboriginal women at this stage of development are so, but because of the terrible danger of infidelity. When we move to the more gentle tribesmen of Mandla or Bilaspur we find little jealousy and very few murders, but a woeful lack of attachment to the marriage bond and a marked indifference to female chastity.

Interference in the life of a tribe is almost always attended

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

by disastrous results. I have already quoted von Fürer-Haimendorf's account of what has happened among the Chenchu. This could be paralleled by similar situations in many parts of the world.

Propaganda by State officials on tour designed to impress upon the Maria the value of human life and the wrong of taking it; some means of making the civil courts more readily accessible in order to remove from the tribesmen the temptation to take the law into their own hands; and special attempts at the annual Dassara festival, when thousands of Maria come in to Jagdalpur to honour the Maharaja, to influence the headmen to set their face against violence; would probably improve the situation a little.

How far would deterrent measures influence the Maria? Comparatively few death sentences are passed or executed. Out of 117 persons convicted on our list, only 21 were sentenced to death and only 18 were hanged, although 75 were convicted of actual murder under Section 302. If the death sentence were imposed more frequently, would it deter the Maria from murder? When I have discussed this with the people themselves, they have declared that it would not. They say that they commit murder for only two reasons. The first is accidental, when they are drunk or when they give someone a beating without intending to kill and the victim dies on their hands. The second is when a man is driven to such despair that he decides to destroy his enemy and himself at the same time. Here murder becomes a sort of suicide. But the people think, and probably rightly, that in neither of these cases would fear of the death penalty have any effect. I myself would not venture on an opinion. But I think that, if the death penalty is to be given at all, it should be given consistently and that wherever a premeditated murder has been proved, it should follow as a matter of course. In some villages, the Maria suggested that the headman and Kotwar should be very severely punished whenever they fail to report an act of violence. So long as the people think that they can kill and then, by paying compensation to the panchayat, can avoid punishment, there is definite encouragement to crime.

But in the main I think the Bastar tradition, which is merciful and lenient, is wise. Indeed Sir Cecil Walsh,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

discussing violent criminals in the United Provinces, goes so far as to say that 'I have sometimes wondered whether such men ought to be punished at all, beyond being bound over to keep the peace. If three stalwart and useful cultivators happen to lose their lives in a sudden village fight, those who caused the deaths are generally guilty of murder, but it seems harsh and uneconomic to hang three more, to send another six to transportation for life, and to break up and ruin several homes. Of course, the magistracy, which enjoys a good deal of control over the police, is responsible for the peace of the district, and a magistrate who did not take the only steps open to him under the codes to punish such disorder and destruction of life would be transferred, and probably black-marked. "Grievous hurt", which includes knocking out a tooth and involves severe, rigorous imprisonment, the equivalent of hard labour, is almost invariably inflicted. It has always seemed to me that these cases are punished with terrible severity. There is certainly no relation between the moral gravity of the offence and the punishment usually awarded, and imprisonment is absolutely no deterrent, so that severity loses much of its value. Personally, I tried to treat these cases when they came before me on appeal with leniency, and went out of my way to encourage others to do likewise. I think this principle is sound, though it has no application to deliberate brutality, which, in England, used to be treated too lightly. But the point is, as it seems to me, that the presence amongst criminal statistics of these cases of loss of self-control in sudden quarrels between illiterate people is misleading to anyone who seeks to draw an inference from figures in an attempt to form an opinion of the criminal instincts and tendencies of a community'.[1]

II

Not only in Bastar but throughout India, there is urgent need for reform in the treatment of the aboriginal prisoner. There will have to be, of course, the most drastic and far-reaching changes before the present penal system of India is brought into line with that of civilized administrations. But I suggest that the aboriginals, here as everywhere, present a

[1] Walsh, *Indian Village Crimes*, p. 12.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

rather special problem and might be considered separately.

In jail, the aboriginal, as we have seen, suffers in acute and subtle ways. His ordinary life is so free; his needs are so few and simple yet always fulfilled; his life depends so entirely on certain stimulants to existence that without them he quickly loses the desire to live and, even though he survives his sentence, he comes out of jail with his faith broken and his nature permanently twisted.

The aboriginal prisoner everywhere has no religious consolation, even on the eve of his execution. He does not even have the emotional outlet that the European prisoner gets from singing hymns in Sunday chapel. Although his life is full of the fear of hostile supernatural beings and of his ancestors who may be deeply offended with him for his crime, he has no means of propitiating them in the proper manner. If he has an ill-omened dream in prison, if a god or ancestor appears to him and makes a demand of him, there is nothing that he can do about it. It would be a good thing in Bastar, if criminals, on the eve of their execution, were allowed to visit the temple of Danteshwari, tutelary goddess of the State, and make a suitable sacrifice to her.

The aboriginal depends greatly on his recreations. These are entirely stopped in jail. In Europe and America the authorities have realized the futility and danger of such a deprivation. Is there no way by which aboriginal prisoners in certain places should be allowed the singing or dancing that is so dear to them?

What is really needed is a special prison for aboriginals only, to which all those with, say, sentences of more than seven years should be sent from every part of India. It should be situated among the hills, and run more as a camp than an ordinary prison. The aboriginals should be taught crafts which will be useful to them after their release, not occupations like weaving which are taboo. They should be given, as far as possible, food to which they are accustomed. If there were only aboriginals, it would be possible to arrange for their own priests to perform sacrifices at the time of the great festivals and whenever it was necessary to make some private act of propitiation. Regular times could be set apart for corporate singing and for dancing—which incidentally is splendid exercise and in tribal India takes the place

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

of organized games and physical training. I cannot see the point of depriving long-term aboriginal prisoners of the thing which many of them value as the chief comfort of their hard existence, tobacco. Short-term prisoners should certainly be without it. But for men whose lives are obviously ruined and broken, some concession in this respect could do nothing but good. In any aboriginal prison the rule which makes a convict stand before an official in a penitential attitude, with head bowed and hands held before him, should be abolished. Nothing should be done to make the aboriginal servile and obsequious. His spirit should be re-created, not broken. There is in him a great fund of natural innocence on which to build.

For what great areas of crime and semi-criminal human activity are untouched by these simple aboriginals! Unnatural vice is unknown to them. Rape is extremely rare. Infanticide and abortion is so unusual as to merit special record. They are almost entirely ignorant of cheating and blackmail. They do not tread the mean and devious ways of untruth.

These tribesmen—and it is important to emphasize this for the Maria—do not cheat and exploit the poor and the weak. They are mostly ignorant of caste and race prejudice. They do not prostitute their women or degrade them by foolish laws and customs. They do not form themselves into armies and destroy one another by foul chemical means. They do not tell pompous life over the radio. Many of their darkest sins are simply the result of ignorance. A few of them are cruel and savage, but the majority are kind and loving, admirable in the home, steadfast in their tribal loyalties, manly, independent, honourable.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

APPENDIXES

I

TABLE OF 100 MARIA HOMICIDES

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

*679

No	Name of murderer	Name and relationship of victim	Date of crime	Section of I. P. C. and sentence
1	(*a*) Banda of Hitulkudum (*b*) Pandru of Erpbund	Two victims, a Sikalgir and a Mahara, both petty traders	Feb. 1921	(*a*) 302. Death. Executed, 13.10.21. (*b*) 302. Death. Executed, 13.10.21.
2	Barse Chappe of Gamawada	His senior wife, Sukhi	4.5.32	304. 7 years. Died in jail.
3	Barse Chewa of Arampur	The father of a wife who had left him, Tati Pandu, a Maria blacksmith	25.10.40	302. Death. Executed.
4	Barse Dhurwa of Gamawada	His younger brother, Barse Bododi	18.5.35	302. Transportation for life.
5	Barse Kama, 35, of Michenar	His wife, Hungi, 30	12.9.25	302. Death. On appeal, life imprisonment. Died in jail, 20.12.26.
6	Dodhi Bhima of Pordem	His uncle, Marvi Deva	27.9.30	302. Transportation for life. On appeal, 10 years.
7	Gunna Hunga of Teiner	Burgi, a supposed sorcerer	10.3.27	302. Transportation for life.
8	Habka Doga of Nerli	His friend and creditor, Muka	28.4.33	302. Transportation for life. Died in jail, 27.7.34.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674x

Brief history of the crime	Attitude of the murderer and of society
The two traders had about Rs 100 and were going from village to village to buy cattle. Banda and Pandru persuaded them to go to the Indrawati for fish and there killed them with axes and robbed them. They buried their victims in the sand and the crime was not discovered for a fortnight.	An old man, step-father of Banda, gave evidence against him. He was abused by his wife and hanged himself. Pandru's young brother was chief witness for prosecution. Both confessed, but in Court partly retracted.
Chappe was a sick man, supposed to be possessed by a spirit. Went to Siraha for treatment and camped in open hut. Had delusions that Sukhi was giving him contaminated food. Asked both wives to have intercourse with him in hut. They refused. Three days later he asked Sukhi, and when she refused he beat and killed her.	Confessed to the murder, but claimed it was because Sukhi was trying to outcaste and poison him.
Chewa married Bandi, Pandu's daughter. A year later Chewa's house was burnt down: Bandi was suspected and sent home. After two years she married again. Chewa demanded compensation from Pandu. There were many quarrels and at last Chewa shot Pandu while he was asleep.	Chewa tried to prove alibi. A relative tried to implicate another man. In 1939 a similar trick had saved two men in a neighbouring village.
The two brothers were living together. Dhurwa sold a bullock but failed to give Bododi any share of the money. This annoyed Bododi who frequently asked for it. On day of tragedy, he demanded a rupee and Dhurwa called him into an inner room and shot him with an arrow.	Dhurwa admitted the deed, but claimed first that it was done in self-defence, then in mistake for a thief.
Hungi, eight months pregnant, had brought home bamboo shoots and was resting. Kama came in tired from grazing cattle and demanded food. Hungi answered sharply and Kama killed her with an axe as she was lying on the mat.	Kama ran to jungle and hid up a tree. Manjhi persuaded him to come down and the villagers tied him up and called the police. Kama confessed.
Uncle and nephew lived on opposite sides of a field which they cultivated jointly. Original owner abandoned field when his father died. In 1926, Deva fell ill and his father died, so he too left the field. Bhima cultivated it for 4 years and thus became the legal owner. Deva returned and claimed the land, but Bhima refused. Then Deva began ploughing the land and Bhima killed him.	Bhima confessed, but though evidence proved the murder was done with an arrow, he insisted that he beat his victim with a pestle—which would not have shed blood.
Hunga left his village because he believed Burgi was bewitching him. One day Burgi visited Toinar and Hunga, afraid that he had followed him to do further mischief, killed him with his axe.	Hunga confessed.
Muka gave three friends drinks of mahua spirit in the liquor shop at Kamali. One bottle was divided between the four. On their way home Muka demanded Re 1/2 as rent, but Doga's real debt was only As 4. There was a quarrel and a fight and Muka was killed. The Judge did not consider Doga was drunk.	Police were informed at once. Doga confessed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

X 674

9	Habka Masa of Halur	His wife, Pakli	10.7.39	302. Transportation for life.
10	Hemla Dukka of Arbe	His wife, Jimme	21.8.37	302. Transportation for life. On appeal, 5 years.
11	Hemla Chewa of Ronje	A Halba boy of 16, a complete stranger	18.1.23	Acquitted, but detained as a lunatic.
12	Hemla Mundra of Talnar	His father, Hemla Gunda	13.5.28	304. One month.
13	Jhoria Hunga of Kosalnar	An old man, Hemla Mukka, whose wife was his patient	25.7.34	304. 7 years.
14	Kadti Hunga of Garmiri	A farm servant, Markami Dorga	5.11.34	302. Transportation for life. On appeal, 5 years under 304. Released 12.4.39.
15	Kadti Hunga of Garmiri	His wife, Gangi	18.7.39	302. Death. Executed.
16	Kadti Pandu of Molawnar	Aitu, an 11 year old boy, son of Pandu's wife's sister	6.1.33	302. Transportation for life.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674X

Mana supported his old parents at Balur. His wife, to whom he had been married three years, went to her mother's house for the Pen Kanaia festival. Mana went too, but Pakli refused to return with him. Her parents went from place to place as coolies: Pakli accompanied them and Mana followed. After 6 weeks of this, in a little hut, on a night of heavy rain and a strong wind, there was a final quarrel. Pakli used very coarse abuses and Mana killed her.	After killing his wife, Mana returned home to see to his old parents and the affairs of his farm which had suffered by his absence at the start of the rains. He confessed after his arrest.
Bakka suspected his wife of an intrigue with her *elder* cousin, a serious tribal offence, and indeed claimed that he had caught her in actual guilt. There was a family quarrel, and Bakka got enraged and killed Jimme with a bamboo pole.	Bakka confessed, but claimed there was serious provocation.
Chewa was an epileptic. He met the boy in the woods and killed him with an axe. The same evening he assaulted a woman.	He confessed, but claimed he was mad and could remember nothing. The villagers arrested and tied him up.
Gunda kept the wives of his two sons and drove his own wife and the sons from his house. He refused to divide the property. Mundra beat his father in a quarrel, and Gunda was on his way to report him when he was killed.	The villagers, considering Gunda had only got what he deserved, hushed up the matter and reported a death from small-pox. Mundra confessed after his arrest.
Mukka's wife was a leper. Mukka took her for treatment to Hunga, a Siraha-magician. One day he called him while he was resting and Hunga refused to go. Mukka abused him and Hunga, indignant at the insult to his sacred office, killed him.	The villagers reported the matter. Hunga confessed after arrest.
There was a mahua-liquor party in the evening out in the fields; four friends were there. They stole fish from Hunga's traps. Hunga found them eating it and beat them. All ran away but Hunga caught Dorga and killed him by twisting his neck. Dorga had previously stolen juice from Hunga's sago palms.	Hunga threw the body into a tank, but admitted the deed to the villagers. Later he denied this.
A chicken had been killed the previous night. When Gangi gave the morning meal, she said a cat had eaten it. Hunga threw the food at her and beat her. She threatened to tell the panchayat and send him back to prison. He took a knife and, despite the attempts of his two little daughters to prevent him, cut Gangi's throat.	After seeing his wife dead Hunga hanged himself behind his house. His mother cut him down and he was revived and arrested. He claimed that he was drunk, but this was proved to be untrue.
Pandu, who was fond of his nephew, wanted Aitu's cock for a cock-fight. Aitu refused, but they went together to the bazaar. On the way, Pandu tried to get the cock and throttled the boy during the struggle.	Pandu tried to make the death look like suicide. He denied the deed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

17	Kalmami Mana of Dugeli	His mother-in-law, Hungi, and his wife, Kohale	21.5.32	302. Transportation for life.
18	Kartami Aitu of Bara Badam	His 'brother', Kartami Chale	20.12.34	302. Death. Executed.
19	(a) Kartami Birra (b) Sori Bhima of Nayanar	Birra's own brother, Kosa	25.12.35	(a) 302. Transportation for life. (b) 325 with 109. 5 years.
20	Kartami Hirma of Killepal	His infant daughter, 5 months old	10.2.37	304. 2 years.
21	Kawasi Borga of Dorinar	His uncle, Boti	6.7.32	302. Transportation for life.
22	Kawasi Chamru of Nagul	His wife, Budhri	27.2.21	302. Transportation for life. Died in jail, 3.9.26.
23	Kawasi Handa of Pondum	An old servant of his father, Marvi Gotta	25.7.31	302. Transportation for life.
24	Kawasi Hurra of Dumnaar	A neighbour, Poriami Handa	23.7.34	304. 10 years.
25	Kawasi Kana of Dilmilli	His wife, Kawasi Chappe	20.2.38	302. Transportation for life.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674X

Mana was a Lambada and his mother-in-law did not treat him well. He planned to go with his wife to live elsewhere. The two women tried to stop him. At last, when he was trying to remove his property from the house and Hungi obstructed him, there was a violent quarrel and he killed both women.	—
There was a long-standing quarrel between the two men over a sago palm. The murder was one of revenge and very cruel and deliberate.	Pleaded not guilty, though he admitted striking Chule once when gravely provoked.
Bira and Kosa used to quarrel about the division of land and cattle. Bhima feared Kosa as a sorcerer who had killed his children. Kosa suffered from yaws and was staying in an open hut. The two men beat him to death as he was sitting there.	They threw the body under a toddy tree to give impression Kosa had fallen. Bhima later confessed.
Hirma came home one evening with bamboos and demanded supper. Chule, his wife, said she could not give him any because there was no rice. She had the baby in her arms. Hirma lost his temper and beat Chule violently, breaking her arm and hit the child by accident, killing her.	The panchayat demanded Rs 25 compensation and hushed up the matter. The Kotwar reported a child still-born. Hirma said he was drunk, but the Court decided this was an 'afterthought'.
Borga was headman; P.W.D. work was in progress and more men were wanted. Boti, who used to do the headman's work for Borga, came to fetch them. Borga lost his temper and beat his uncle so heavily that he died by sunset.	Borga run away. He confessed, but claimed he was drunk—a plea not accepted by the Court.
Chatera had once been insane. Was very queer and excited shortly before the tragedy. Seems to have suspected Badhri's relations with her own brother. One day he asked her to husk rice, she refused, and he beat her to death. Then he burnt the house above her body.	The Court considered the witnesses were all concealing something. Accused pleaded not guilty and said his wife burnt the house.
Handa quarrelled with his father whose cattle had done some damage to his crops, and beat him. Gutta intervened. Handa abused him, then went quietly away, got his axe, came back and killed him.	Handa confessed, but claimed he was drunk. No evidence of this, though he may have taken a little at a bazaar some hours before.
A large party of men were ploughing someone's field and were rewarded by a feast. Hurra served the food and Handa complained he did not get enough. He attacked Hurra, who killed him, though probably he never intended to.	Hurra threw the body into a stream and threatened to kill anyone who gave him away. But later he confessed. Villagers tried to hush up the crime and forced the widow to accept compensation.
Kana came home late in afternoon after grazing cattle and asked for pej. His wife did not give it to him immediately, so he struck her on the head with his axe and killed her. Kana was rather dull mentally and had been treated by a Siraha.	Kana gave himself up to the villagers and they took him to the police. He said he and his wife were on good terms. 'I do not know what came over me. I was very hungry.'

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

25	Kawasi Hunga of Pedaras	His uncle, Kawasi Deva	26.1.28	304. 5 years.
27	Kawasi Koliha of Kapanar	Bondki, in mistake for his sister-in-law Hungi	24.5.37	304. 3 years.
28	Kawasi Masa of Badam	His father-in-law, Marvi Kosa	19.11.36	304. 7 years.
29	Khotlu of Kaurgaon	His wife, Mase	12.12.20	Acquitted, but detained as a lunatic.
30	(a) Kiske Nanda (b) Dirdo Bandi, nephew of Nanda (c) Kiske Kuma (d) Kiske Hirma, son of Nanda	Two men, fellow-thieves, of Gogonda	Aug. 1921	All sentenced to death under 302 and executed on 28.6.22. Father and son died together.
31	Kuhrami Guddi of Mardum	Botse, a pregnant Mahara woman	20.4.38	302. Death. Executed, 5.9.38.
32	Kuhrami Hirme of Godpi	Her step-daughter, 10, Jumne.	6.6.35	302. Transportation for life.
33	Kuhrâmi Tonda of Killepal	His younger brother, Kuhrami Gajru	28.9.39	302. Transportation for life.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674x

On evening of the Bhimul Pandum, when everyone had been drinking landa, Deva went to bed, but was aroused by his nephew. They began to quarrel and fight, both drunk, and Hunga killed his uncle by twisting his neck. There was probably an old grudge about an unpaid bride-price.	—
Bondki and her husband came to the house to borrow a cow. They brought a pot of landa and everyone drunk it. There was a sudden quarrel over Hungi's failure to provide food. Koliha shot at her, but the arrow struck Bondki instead. She was pregnant and died a fortnight later.	Villagers hushed up the matter, and compensation was paid. Koliha confessed.
A Waddai came for house-sacrifice and Masa invited Kosa and others to drink landa. He was drunk in the morning, slept till evening, woke and beat his wife for not feeding the Waddai properly. His father-in-law intervened and beat him in his wife's presence and, enraged, he killed him.	Masa confessed.
Khotlu, 55, was epileptic. Used to declare Rebellion was coming. Food of Masu, 45, who had borne him 10 children. Had a fit in the fields and killed her while insane.	Villagers had him arrested. Khotlu denied all knowledge of the incident.
They had all been involved in a robbery of grain. Two were caught and were murdered to prevent them implicating the rest.	They buried the corpses. The villagers met and decided to conceal the murder. The accused pleaded not guilty.
Guddi took Botse to a tank and sacrificed her to its deities. He cut open the belly and offered the foetus also. He sprinkled some of the blood on a neighbouring field and ploughed it in.	There was an attempt to make the murder look like a tiger kill. Guddi pleaded not guilty.
Hirme took the little girl with her to the jungle for leaves. Jimme did not obey her, and Hirme beat her and twisted her neck.	Villagers reported that Jimme had fallen from a mahua tree. The house in which the body was placed was burnt down. Hirme admitted she beat the girl but not that she twisted the neck.
Gajru was a very quarrelsome fellow and was several times fined by the panchayat for beating people. Tonda was a hideous dwarf, whose condition was aggravated by Gajru's bullying. At last he could bear it no more and killed his brother while he was asleep.	Tonda confessed, but later claimed he was forced to it by the villagers.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

X 674

34	Kunjami Gencha of Guniapal	His father, Kunjami Makka	10.5.34	304. 10 years. In appeal, 4 years.
35	Kunjami Malla of Chilmalawa	His wife, Jimme	7.11.34	302. Transportation for life.
36	Lekhami Gagru of Alnar	A gambling crony, Thadgu Panka or Mahara	17.8.31	302. Transportation for life.
37	Manjhi Bande of Turri	His younger brother, Khotla Manjhi	24.7.27	302. Transportation for life. On appeal, 5 years under 304.
38	Markami Ganga of Potali	Marvi Masa	4.8.30	304. 1 year.
39	Markami Hinga of Gumma	His brother, Markami Ganga	17.4.28	304. 6 years.
40	Markami Kola of Sornar	His younger step-brother, Markami Harma	10.5.37	302. Transportation for life.
41	Markami Masa of Adwal	Markami Handa, husband of the girl Bandi, who became Masa's mistress	30.9.23	302. Death. Executed, 4.4.34.
42	Markami Mendra of Gudra	Markami Bhima, a headman	20.8.34	302. Death. Executed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674x

There was very little rice in Gencha's house and the family had agreed to eat only once in the evening. Gencha came home hungry, found nothing ready and smacked his sister for spending her time playing with the other girls and not cooking in time. Makka rebuked him, beat him and refused to let him get what food there was.	Gencha confessed, but did not intend to kill his father. 'He was very hungry.'
Malla and Jimme distilled mahua liquor in a field. They both got very drunk. As they were going home, Jimme fell and broke the pot and Malla beat and killed her.	Malla terrorised the people and made them cremate the body and say Jimme had died of small-pox. He denied everything.
There was a gambling dispute—everyone had drunk a lot of salphi juice and perhaps some mahua spirit as well. Thadgu beat Gagru, a serious matter for a Maria leading to his excommunication and Gagru full of rage killed him.	Gagru gave himself up.
Khotla had long been demanding partition of the family property; but the two brothers had married two sisters and Bande did not admit his claim. On day of murder, Khotla abused Bande who was an old man of 60 all day till late in the evening he met his fate.	Bande was headman of the village and insisted no report should be made.
Ganga and Masa had a dispute about land. They met in a liquor-shop. Ganga had had his drink, but there was none for Masa. Masa abused and beat him and in the heat of the quarrel Ganga killed him.	Ganga pleaded guilty.
Hinga was a new Siraha and proud of it. One day Ganga abused him and his profession which was a financial liability in the farm. Hinga took the trident and chain from his hut-temple and stabbed him.	—
The two brothers lived happily together. Harma sold Kola's drum for Rs 2.10.0 and only gave him Re 1. There was a quarrel over this and Harma slapped Kola and in the fight Harma was killed.	Kola gave out that Harma had gone to the Tea Gardens, and threatened to kill anyone who reported to the police. Confessed after arrest.
Handa had two wives. The younger, Bandi, 18, fell in love with Masa, 24. She eloped with him and Handa threatened to kill them both, but was killed first, while he was sleeping.	The villagers arrested Masa, and he confessed.
Mundra, who had been imprisoned for assault, escaped from jail and in the course of an exciting chase killed the leader of the pursuing Maria.	Perhaps because of Rs 50 reward, the Maria showed enthusiasm for Mundra's capture. He denied killing Bhima.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

*674

43	Markami Turka of Potali Darbha	His elder brother's wife, Kosi	16.10.35	302. Transportation for life. He died in jail.
44	Markami Wango of Hande Khodra	His betrothed, Marvi Paike	May 1936	302, Transportation for life.
45	Marvi Aita of Paknar	A neighbour, Marvi Kamlu Masa	21.1.30	302. Death. Executed, 25.7.30.
46	Marvi Bhima of Kapanar	His wife, Kondi	4.10.39	Acquitted, but detained under 471 Cr. P. C.
47	Marvi Boti of Telam	His younger brother, Marvi Kosa	14.4.26	302. Transportation for life.
48	(a) Marvi Boti (b) Mase of Siringuda	Mase's husband, Marvi Bododi, and his son, Hunga	30.9.40	(a) 302. Transportation for life. (b) 302. Death. On appeal, transportation for life.
49	Marvi Chule of Bara Gudra	His elder step-brother, Marvi Buti	9.7.34	302. Transportation for life. Died in jail, 17.3.41.
50	Marvi Deva of Gadhia	His daughter 4 years old. Tried to kill wife	8.1.26	302. Transportation for life. Died in jail, 30.1.27.
51	Marvi Hinga of Gariapal	His mother-in-law, Kawasi Mude	17.11.34	304. 7 years.
52	Marvi Hirma of Benglur	His cousin-brother's son, a boy, Hando	17.4.32	302. Death. Executed, 30.9.32.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674-X

Two brothers lived together and shared their cattle though they had different fields. On the Korta Pandum festival, they all drank landa. Turka abused Kosi for not tethering the cattle properly or clearing the cow-dung. She answered him back and he stabbed her with an arrow.	The villagers arrested Turka, and he confessed.
Wango was a Lambada serving for Paika. He suspected her of intimacy with a forbidden relation. After a violent quarrel with his father-in-law, he shot her.	Wango confessed and said he shot the girl when he found her having intercourse with her 'brother.'
Aita and Kamlu had quarrelled about the cutting of an embankment. Aita pulled straw from Kamlu's roof and whistled in token of enmity, and shot him as he was coming home from the fields.	Aita denied the crime and said Kamlu fell accidentally on the arrow which impaled him.
Bhima suffered from melancholia and in one of his fits stabbed his wife with an arrow.	Villagers called the police. Bhima confessed, but said he could not remember properly.
Boti was in love with his younger brother's wife, a forbidden relationship. He took her to Jeypore, but returned and met Kosa in the jungle. There was a fight and Kosa was killed.	Boti went away to Jeypore, but he was arrested and confessed.
Bododi was a Sirahu. His wife wanted to get rid of him because he was poor and she wanted to live with Boti. She gave him oleandar seeds in his food.	They both confessed.
Buti was a provocative person. He gave Chule land and charged double rent. Then he took the land away from him. Then he threatened to get his crop damaged by cattle. At last he quarrelled so violently that he got killed.	Chule confessed killing Buti, but claimed self-defence.
Deva suspected his wife's chastity. On the night of the tragedy he said he saw her with someone. After food he asked her for tobacco (that is, intercourse). She refused and in rage he killed his child and tried to kill her.	Deva hid for a time, then being hungry came home. He was arrested by the villagers and confessed.
Hinga's wife had fever and he took her to a Waddai in another village. He left her there and came home. Mude saw him and publicly abused him for neglecting her daughter. The insult so enraged him that he killed her.	The villagers arrested Hinga and he confessed.
Hirma promised a cock to Hando's father for the entertainment of a guest. Then he refused to give it. Hando took it forcibly. Next day, Hirma enticed the boy out of the village and killed him.	Hirma was a syphilitic. He confessed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674

53	Marvi Hunga of Maroki	His nephew, Hemla Hirma	18.9.35	302. Transportation for life.
54	Marvi Joga of Phulpar	His wife, Pise	14.10.33	302. Transportation for life.
55	Marvi Kesa of Killepal	His father-in-law, Sori Hirma	21.9.23	302. Death. Executed, 28.3.24.
56	Marvi Khotia of Kodenar	A neighbour, Marvi Hurra	30.1.39	304. 7 years.
57	Marvi Konda of Bagmundi	A distant relative, Kunjami Bhima	3.11.30	302. Transportation for life. Died in jail, 11.2.33.
58	Marvi Kuma of Bastanar	His son, Marvi Konda	3.9.40	304. 5 years.
59	Marvi Mangru of Pakhnar	His neighbour, Kesa.	22.2.26	302. Transportation for life.
60	Marvi Modu of Bara Gudra	His younger nephew, a boy of 12, Marvi Anda	9.9.38	304. 7 years. On appeal, 4 years.
61	Marvi Mundra of Munga	His wife, Kosi	30.10.32	302. Transportation for life. Died in jail.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674X

Hunga was 16, Hirma only 13. They had a sudden quarrel and the younger boy used a lot of dirty language. Hunga shot at him and killed him.	Hunga confessed.
Joga was suffering from swollen feet and went to Jabeli for treatment. Pise wanted to go home to look after the fowls. Joga said he would kill her if she did. Early one morning he asked her for water, she failed to get it, and he stabbed her with an ARROW.	Joga ran away but was captured by the villagers, whereon he lay flat with eyes shut. Said he could not remember what had happened.
Kesa had three wives; the youngest was Hirma's daughter, Mase. One day he beat her and she went to her father's house. He followed and found them all drinking landa. He asked Hirma why he had not sent Mase home: there was a quarrel and Hirma was killed.	Kesa and the villagers tried to put the crime on to a youth who was even persuaded to confess.
Many quarrels: Hurra's son stole Khotla's iron lamp; Hurra shot Khotla's pregnant cow which went into his field. On the day of Gaddi Pandum everyone drank landa: all day Hurra annoyed and abused Khotla and at last the latter beat and killed him. He was probably drunk.	Khotla confessed.
The two men went to a bazaar, came home and Konda slept all evening. When he woke, he tried to beat his wife and slapped Bhima's wife. Bhima objected and Konda took a pestle and killed him.	Konda confessed.
Konda came home hungry in the evening and asked his mother for food. It was not ready and his father abused him for demanding it. Konda picked up a stick, but the father struck first.	The family tried to hush the matter up by reporting that Konda fell on a peg in an epileptic fit, but the villagers reported to the police and then Kuma confessed.
Mangru, a boy of 18, was the son of the village Pujari. There was a harvest feast and the Pujari started it without waiting for Kesa, one of the elders. There was a quarrel: Mangru thought his father was insulted. He lay in wait for Kesa and killed him as he was going home.	At first Mangru tried to put the crime on his brother, but later he confessed.
Modu and Anda were working in the fields. Modu rebuked the younger boy for not working properly, and Anda abused him and threw a clod of earth at him. Modu beat him with his fists and the boy died.	Modu tried to make the death look like suicide. Tied body to a small bhilwan tree, but this did not look convincing so he took it to a char tree.
Mundra and his wife worked very late and came home together. Mundra was impatient for his supper and there was a quarrel. He picked up a log from the fire and killed her.	Mundra gave a feast to the villagers and they agreed to hush the matter up. But after arrest, Mundra confessed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

X 674

62	(*a*) Marvi Oyami Masa (*b*) Marvi Gutta (*c*) Marvi Handa (*d*) Marvi Mundra (*e*) Hundami Doga (*f*) Marvi Tangra all of Jabeli	Marvi Masa, first cousin of Oyami Masa and clan-uncle of Gutta, Mundra and Tangra	27.4.30	All 302. Transportation for life. On appeal, (*d*) 3 years. (*e*) 3 years. (*f*) 4 years. The first 4 died in jail.
63	Marvi Paklu of Mutanpal	His wife, Dallo	16.7.39	304. 7 years.
64	Miriami Doga of Gampur	His elder cousin, Miriami Hurra	10.10.39	302. Transportation for life.
65	Miriami Harma of Kindul	His baby daughter, 1½ years old	30.10.25	302. Death. On appeal, transportation for life.
66	Muchaki Dasru of Gumiapal	His friend, Poyami Harma	20.1.38	302. Transportation for life.
67	Muchaki Muda of Gogonda	Muchaki Harma	16.10.35	302. Transportation for life.
68	Mundru of Kosalnar	A friend, Raghu	16.4.32	304. 5 years. Died in jail.
69	Murami Dhurwa of Palnar	His nephew, Murami Wella	17.12.29	302. Transportation for life.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674*

Masa accused Oyami Masa of cattle theft. On the evening of the Wija Pandum, all having taken landa, they went to Masa's house and beat him to death, doing the *sai* whistle.	They all confessed.
Paklu had an affair with Jimme. One afternoon he took her to a cave. Dallo followed and abused him and beat Jimme. Paklu beat Dallo, knocked her down and strangled her.	Paklu hid the body and threatened to kill Jimme if she reported the matter. Tried to make it look like a tiger-kill. Later, he confessed.
Hurra had given Doga two cows on hire and complained that for two years he had had nothing from him in return. One evening Hurra went to Doga's house and again demanded payment. Doga asked where he could get rice before the harvest and on a sudden impulse picked up a bit of wood and struck his creditor so hard that he died.	Doga gave himself up to the Kotwar.
Two Maria were caught stealing rice. Before the village court, they implicated Harma. He denied the charge, but the villagers held him guilty and his uncle beat *him*. Harma seized his baby from his wife's arms and dashed her to the ground.	Harma went with the Kotwar to report his child had died of cobra-bite. Afterwards he confessed.
Dasru had borrowed a cart and bullocks and invited the owners to a landa party. Harma, his friend, came also. As they were drinking, Dasru and Harma quarrelled because Dasru said Harma had not paid him his Pujari dues. Harma went away and Dasru followed him and whistled and then killed him.	Dasru told the villagers that as he was their Pujari they should not report against him and he tried to implicate an innocent man. He pleaded not guilty.
Muda, a boy of 18, served Harma for 3 years as a Kabari farm-servant, and was married at Harma's expense. A few days before the Korta Pandum festival he stopped work and went to live with his father. On the festival day, Harma went and beat him. That night he stabbed Harma with an arrow in revenge. He was not drunk.	Muda confessed, but pleaded justification, that he had been beaten and that Harma was going to take away his wife.
Mundru owed Raghu a little salt. The two men drunk mahua spirit together quite amiably, but then they quarrelled. Raghu attacked Mundru who snatched the axe from his hand and killed him.	Mundru confessed and pleaded drunkenness.
Dhurwa had been imprisoned for murder before: he was released in 1929. Ten months later he quarrelled with his wife and in his rage declared he would kill his nephew for not supporting him during his trial, which he did. The Court doubted this motive.	Dhurwa went away to Orissa and thence to the Tea Gardens. The villagers made the usual report. He did not confess.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

x 674

70	Nendi Hirma of Silakjori	His neighbour, Ganda	24.2.24	302. Transportation for life.
71	Oyami Kola of Kasturpal	His maternal uncle, Goge	4.3.22	302. Transportation for life. Died in jail, 25.7.34.
72	Padami Gaddi of Naktola	His mother, Pande	30.11.36	302. Transportation for life.
73	Pandru of Godse,	The village Siraha, Kosa	14.4.22	302. Transportation for life.
74	(a) Pandu (b) Nanda (c) Bhima of Phulsur	Nanda, Maria Thekedar (landlord) of the village	8.5.31	(a) 302. Death. Executed. 3.9.31. (b) 302. Transportation for life. (c) 302. Transportation for life.
75	Porlami Hirma of Garmiri	His lover, Mase	21.2.33	302. Transportation for life.
76	(a) Porlami Hirma (b) Ganga (c) Deva (d) Hunga of Pinna Bheji	Marvi Joga	5.3.38	304. (a) 7 years (b) (c) (d) 5 years. On appeal, (a) 4 years (b) (c) (d) 2 years.
77	Porlami Kosa of Morathpal	His wife, Gagri	4.2.32	304. 7 years. Died in jail.
78	Porlami Podiya of Pinna Bheji	His wife, Bandi	5.2.27	302. Transportation for life. Died in jail, 15.5.32

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674x

Hirma was searching for a lost cow when Ganda, who seems to have been on bad terms with him, accused him of stealing his plantains. There was a sudden quarrel and Ganda was killed.	The villagers arrested and tied Hirma up. As he was being taken in a cart, he broke his ropes and escaped. He said the people had forced him to confess.
Gogo accused Kola of stealing his cattle: he tied up and beat his servant, and Kola had to hide to escape punishment himself. At last in despair Kola went at night to Gogo's house and killed him while he was asleep.	Suspicion fell first on another man. Kola evaded arrest for 5 months by doing nothing, but he roused suspicion by avoiding the police when they came for enquiries. At last he confessed.
There was a landa party to celebrate the kosra harvest. Guddi asked his mother for food; she said she was busy and told him to ask his wife. She said she too was busy. Guddi got angry, picked up a hoe and beat and killed his mother.	He confessed, but pleaded that he was drunk and that he thought the hoe was a stick.
A sago palm ceased giving juice. Kosa diagnosed Pandru's magic as a cause. There was a violent quarrel: Pandru abused Kosa and his god, plucked out his pubic hairs; Kosa slapped him. Five months later Pandru shot his enemy.	Pandru hid in the jungle for a time, but returned next day and was arrested. He confessed.
Nanda and Pandu were on bad terms. Nanda used to accuse Pandu of stealing and once beat him. Pandu bribed the others to help him and tried to kill Nanda but could not get into the house. Next day they lured him into the forest and killed him.	All three confessed.
Mase, deserted by her husband, was in love with Hirma and became pregnant. The panch met and frightened her. She went to Hirma for help; he proposed she should live with him as his wife. She refused and annoyed him and he throttled her.	He tied her up, apparently to make it look like suicide. Later he confessed.
The reason for this did not come out in court. The four men beat Joga with their fists and he died nine days later	They denied killing Joga and claimed that he died of boils.
Kosa was a paralytic and almost imbecile. One day he asked his wife to have sexual congress with him: she abused him and refused and he stabbed her.	He confessed, but pleaded loss of memory.
Podia was a young man, only married a year. He found his wife unfaithful and beat her nearly to death, then hanged her with a creeper.	He admitted the crime and thought it a proper punishment for his wife's infidelity.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

79	Poriami Usodi of Gatam	Marvi Muka	25.3.35	304. Transportation for life. On appeal, 10 years.
80	Poyami Burka of Chhindgaon	His wife, Kosi	16.12.24	304. 7 years. On appeal, 4 years.
81	Poyami Chalki of Kodenar	Poyami Pitai	8.4.36	302. Transportation for life.
82	Poyami Kola of Gudra	Samaru, a Rawat	27.10.22	302. Transportation for life.
83	Poyami Masa of Kumharsadra	His wife, Gadme	3.6.30	302. Transportation for life.
84	Poyami Panda of Killepal	A neighbour, Nanda	19.4.32	304. 3 years.
85	Punem Masa of Pusnar	Gaita Hunga, his father-in-law	15.8.34	304. 7 years.
86	Punem Pidga of Burji	His father, Punem Doga	22.3.36	302. Transportation for life.
87	(a) Sori Dhurwa of Mokhpal (b) Kartami Masa of Gudra	Marvi Poriami and Banda Kalar	1.8.37	(a) 302. Death. Executed. (b) 302. Transportation for life.
88	Sori Dome of Mokhpal	Her co-widow, Chule	9.11.32	304. 5 years.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674*

Muka wanted to marry Usodi's younger sister, but the family objected. He twice tried to carry her off. Usodi killed him for it in a fit of rage.	He confessed.
Burka caught his wife in sexual intimacy with another man. He at once killed her and nearly killed the man.	He gave himself up to the village elders, who took him to the police.
On the Wijja Pandum day, Chalki's father was sacrificing. Someone brought his chicken too late. There was a quarrel and everyone was drunk. During the disturbance Chalki got his bow and arrow and shot Pital.	Chalki confessed and pleaded drunkenness.
Samaru was having a drink in the liquor-shop at Dilmilli. Kola asked him for some; Samaru said he had no money. There was a quarrel. Kola whistled and abused and later beat the Rawat to death with his axe.	Kola confessed, but said he was drunk and that the Rawat had kicked him. But in fact, Kola was angry because he could *not* get drunk.
A Dhobi tried to seduce Masa's senior wife, Gadme. To get rid of him she told him to meet her at night. The younger wife told Masa. All day he brooded in rage and all night; he stabbed Gadme with an arrow just before dawn.	Masa tried to make it look like suicide. He pleaded not guilty.
Panda had suspected his wife of intimacy with Nanda for months. On the Mati Devi festival, when everyone had drunk landa, he caught Nanda and his wife together.	He confessed, and seems to have thought his action justified.
Masa owed Hunga eight annas rent. Hunga constantly demanded it. On day of tragedy, Masa tried to get the money, but failed and Masa abused him and threw a bit of burning wood at him. In the ensuing quarrel Masa stabbed and killed the older man.	Masa confessed.
Father and son were living together amicably. One evening, they tapped toddy and drank it together. Over supper Pidga asked his father for a loan, but the old man refused, and the son suddenly lost his temper, got up and killed his father as he was eating.	Pidga confessed.
The two victims were on their way to the Kuakonda police station to report against the accused for cattle theft. Dhurwa and Masa followed and killed them.	They hid the bodies under stones, but later confessed.
Chule and Dome were co-wives of Sori Deva. After his death, they continued to live together. Chule was old, suffered from yaws, a tiresome and plaguey woman. She grumbled at Dome for a year until in exasperation Dome killed her.	Dome denied the charge, and said the villagers were planting the crime on her.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

89	Sori Pandu of Mokhpal	Kamlu Hunga, his uncle	3.10.29	302. Transportation for life.
90	Tati Doga of Todka	His sister-in-law, Tati Hirme	27.5.37	302 Transportation for life.
91	Tati Mase of Kodenar	Her husband, Tati Harma	16.1.40	302. Transportation for life.
92	Tati Pande of Bodenar	Her husband, Tati Mundra	25.10.35	302. Transportation for life. On appeal, 1 year.
93	Uika Toka of Mundher	Telami Sika	1.11.22	302. Transportation for life. On appeal, 2 years.
94	Ujji Poda of Kaurgaon	His cousin brother, Kopa	3.8.33	304. 5 years.
95	Vedta Hirma of Kodenar	Vilia	11.6.25	302. Transportation for life. Released on special remission.
96	Vedta Sukra of Surguda	His uncle, Vedta Kola	4.1.41	302. Death. On appeal, transportation for life.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674x

Pandu had been playing his sarangi-fiddle at a landa party. There was a drunken quarrel, and Pandu tried to kill his uncle with an axe. He was prevented, so he got his bow and arrow and shot him. Pandu was notorious for his fits of rage when drunk.	He confessed.
Doga was the younger step-brother of Hirma's husband. After the latter's death, Doga expected the land and perhaps the person of the widow, over whom he had claims. On the day of the tragedy, he asked her for 'tobacco': she refused; and he killed her by stunning and then drowning her.	He left the body in a pool. Later, he confessed.
Mase was the youngest of three wives. Harma often beat her for doing no work and eating too much. The panchayat fined both. The beatings were very severe and after seven years she could bear it no more and took her revenge.	She confessed.
Pande's first husband deserted her. She then married Tati Mundra, and lived with him happily for two years. Then she began to run away to other villages. He would fetch her back, beat her and rub her with bhilwan juice. At last, when he was about to get her exorcised by a medicine-man, she killed him as he was sleeping.	She partly confessed.
Sika and others were stealing grain. Toka, a youth of 17, was guarding the fields and shot him, while the thieves were running away.	He confessed, but pleaded that he thought he was shooting at pigs.
There was a long history of love-intrigue between the younger Kopa and his elder 'brother's' wife. Poda showed remarkable forebearance but at last on unbearable provocation killed the youth.	He tried to make the death appear like suicide, and ordered and bribed everyone to make a report to this effect. Pleaded not guilty.
Villa wanted a chicken for sacrifice, as his son was ill. He asked Hirma who had not got one, then he went to another house and drank landa. Hirma's brother went by and Villa abused him for not giving the chicken: he replied and Villa knocked him down. Then Hirma came, struck Villa on back with his axe and killed him.	Hirma confessed and pleaded drunkenness.
Three years before Sukra's daughter died and Kola's magic was suspected. Then Sukra's son died and a Siraha diagnosed the same cause.	Sukra gave himself up to the villagers who took him to the police.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

97	Veko Chamru of Nenganar	His wife, Hirme, his son Hando, 6, and his daughter Lakhmi, 10	28.10.36	302. Death. Executed, 3.6.37.
98	Veko Dome of Jangaon	His aunt, Torka	25.11.22	302. Transportation for life. Died in jail, 11.4.25.
99	Vetti Hirma of Bara Satti	Rawa Hirma	8.12.39	304. Transportation for life.
100	Vetti Rupe of Parcheli	Kawasi Hirma	23.9.36	302. Transportation for life.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674X

There was a long history of friction between husband and wife. Chamru at last strangled his wife and killed the children for fear they would say what they had seen.	He hung all three bodies in the house to make it look like suicide. Pleaded not guilty.
Everyone in the house was hungry. Doma had less food than anyone. Torka failed to bring him his food in the field and he struck her with his axe from behind.	Doma confessed.
There was long-standing enmity between the two men over land. Once they shot arrows at each other. Then there was a sudden quarrel over the theft of a pumpkin.	Hirma went to the police station and gave himself up.
There was a family landa party at the Korta Pandum festival, and in the course of it a quarrel arose between Rupe and his brother over a debt. They came to blows: Hirma intervened and was killed.	The villagers arrested Rupe. Rupe confessed, but said it was an accident.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

II

TABLE OF 50 MARIA SUICIDES

762

No	Name, sex, age and place	Date	Brief history
1	Akali Modi, 18, of Kosalnar	14.8.38	He was a Lamhada and badly treated. Just before the tragedy his father-in-law scolded him for not tethering the cattle properly.
2	Alami Mata, 25, of Pahurnar	16.11.31	His dancing outfit was stolen. He was scolded by his father. He was unable to meet his girl.
3	Atami Kosa, 50, of Potali	31.1.35	He suffered from a painful ulcer and stomach trouble.
4	Baiba Ganga, 50, of Kukanar	22.6.32	He was regarded as mad and taken by his family for treatment to the Siraha.
5	Barse Chewa, 40, of Gamawada	23.7.34	He beat his wife and thought he had killed her.
6	Barse Konda, 35, of Hitawar	8.10.38	His daughter misconducted herself and he was defamed for it. He danced all night and hanged himself at dawn.
7	Bodri (f.), 24, of Bodenar	8.1.33	She could not bear living with her husband.
8	Galle (f.), 9, of Goriapal	18.3.32	She was very independent of her husband, and when he tried to force her to cook against her will, she hanged herself.
9	Hunga, of Kothagudda	17.8.37	He was accused of receiving stolen property, had lost his cattle and was troubled by the police.
10	Karti Kave (f.), 18, of Kosalnar	8.8.39	She was newly married, but after a quarrel ran away to another man. Her husband forced her to come home.
11	Karti Sukri (f.), 15, of Pondum	10.10.36	She was suffering from severe pains and undue prolongation of her menstrual period.
12	Kalamma Boti, 40, of Pondum	22.5.33	His son had died.
13	Kawasi Deve (f.), 45, of Killepal	4.11.39	She was a widow living with her son and brother. They abused her for not working hard enough.

[p. 246]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762

14	Kawasi Dulga, 30, of Dilmili	22.1.37	He had two wives who were always quarrelling.
15	Kawasi Hurra, 21, of Siriguda	4.6.40	His wife, whom he loved, did not care for him and was always running away and did not even cook properly.
16	Kawasi Marka, 50, of Maolibhata	29.7.38	He had been blind for seven years, and had long been gloomy and depressed.
17	Kome (f.), 20, of Kodher	13.8.32	She was a sensitive, quick-tempered girl. Her husband scolded her for not cooking in time.
18	Kunjami Baidi (f.), of Gadiras	3.3.39	She suffered from severe pains in chest and stomach.
19	Kunjami Burji (f.), 28, of Perpa	21.3.34	On her husband's death, a man who was her younger cousin claimed her. She was taken to his house, but escaped and hanged herself.
20	Kuhrami Pide (f.), 40, of Metapal	6.2.37	Mother and daughter (No 21) were very quick-tempered and specially resented any interference in household matters from Hurra, Pide's husband.
21	Kuhrami Pande (f.), 16, of Metapal	6.2.37	One day Hurra found a calf had been killed by a panther. He scolded the women and they hanged themselves.
22	Lakhmi (f.), 15, of Badrenga	9.11.40	She disliked her husband, tried to escape, but was always brought back.
23	Markami Hirme (f.), 35, of Gonderas	24.10.35	She was an epileptic. She hanged herself when eight months pregnant.
24	Markami Hunga (f.), 55, of Gongpal	1.5.37	She suffered from yaws and was very miserable.
25	Markami Kosi (f.), 35, of Rasawahi	11.7.37	The pain at menstruation drove her mad.
26	Markami Pandu, 50, of Parcheli	16.2.38	His wife scolded him for not thrashing the crop and for drinking too much. He may have been intoxicated at the time.
27	Marvi Dhodra, 24, of Gorlapal	17.5.39	He beat his sick wife for not caring for their child and felt very sorry for it.
28	Marvi Gutami, 22, of Katakanda	24.8.38	He loved his wife very much, but she was careless and used to leave him for her parents' house.
29	Marvi Mundi (f.), 45, of Oriyapal	9.11.32	She had fits of insanity from childhood.
30	Marvi Mundra, of Cholnar	29.12.35	He went to Dantewara as a prosecution witness in a cattle-lifting case, and got frightened.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762

31	Mate (f.), 20, of Kosalnar	17.8.35	She was beaten by her husband and his elder brother, and ran away, hanging herself on the banks of the Indrawati River.
32	Mundri (f.), 30, of Kaklur	26.11.32	She was a quarrelsome woman and used to run off to her parents' house. Her husband stopped her and she hanged herself.
33	Muke (f.), 40, of Bhejripadar	1.8.35	She had suffered acutely from pains in head and stomach. Her husband took her to a Siraha, but it did no good.
34	Nadi, 20, of Mandar	12.12.35	He had been insane since childhood.
35	Padami Dhudi, 42, of Naktoka	2.12.33	His old mother used to scold him for not working properly; he had severe headaches.
36	Pakli, (f.), 10, of Takhapal	19.7.32	She was probably an imbecile. The Siraha had tried to treat her, but to no avail.
37	Poriami Bire (f.), of Kondre	21.9.36	Her husband was sick and she did not look after him properly. For this her son rebuked her severely.
38	Poyami Gupe (f.), 18, of Bastanar	29.7.39	She had been widowed and then became the second wife of a man. Her co-wife quarrelled and she ran away.
39	Poyami Hirma, 22, of Kokalpal	21.9.40	He was probably insane. He could not work properly.
40	Poyami Kosa, 15, of Sargipal	16.12.39	Someone took his clothes and he was greatly upset by the loss.
41	Poyami Lakhma, 45, of Gumiapal	24.12.24	He was ill. His two wives and a daughter died. He was sad and lonely.
42	Poyami Mangru, 50, of Dilmilli	20.7.33	He had leprous and very painful ulcers; he could neither eat nor drink.
43	Poyami Pande (f.), 18, of Kawargaon	17.6.36	She hanged herself rather than sleep with her 'cousin-brother'.
44	Sori Deva, 25, of Kokalwada	9.6.39	His two cows died; he quarrelled with his wife and beat her. She ran away. He felt repentant and miserable.
45	Sori Hirma, 60, of Korra	26.2.32	He injured himself at a festival and was a confirmed invalid.
46	Thadgu, 50, of Gadhia	30.4.40	He loved his son who was ill and took him to a Siraha, with no result.
47	Tiro (f.), 22, of Karka	6.4.39	Her first two babies died. Then the third got burnt and her husband beat her.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

48	Veko Lakhma, of Haram	24.11.31	He was a Kabari bond-servant. He did not know how to pay his debt.
49	Veko Mukka, of Adhkariras	5.11.34	He was probably insane.
50	Wanjami Mase, (f.), 22, of Pujari Palli	5.2.34	She was weak and lazy. She could not feed her baby properly. Her mother-in-law used to scold her constantly.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

III

NOTE ON THE INDIAN PENAL CODE

177 671 The law dealing with offences affecting human life is fully set out in Sections 299 to 311 of the Indian Penal Code, and I will quote a part of this for the convenience of Western readers.

299. Whoever causes death by doing an act with the intention of causing death, or with the intention of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, or with the knowledge that he is likely by such act to cause death, commits the offence of culpable homicide.

300. Except in the cases hereinafter excepted, culpable homicide is murder, if the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or—

Secondly—If it is done with the intention of causing such bodily injury as the offender knows to be likely to cause the death of the person to whom the harm is caused, or—

Thirdly—If it is done with the intention of causing bodily injury to any person and the bodily injury intended to be inflicted is sufficient in the ordinary course of nature to cause death, or—

Fourthly—If the person committing the act knows that it is so imminently dangerous that it must in all probability cause death, or such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, and commits such act without any excuse for incurring the risk of causing death or such injury aforesaid.

Exception 1.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, whilst deprived of the power of self-control by grave and sudden provocation, causes the death of the person who gave the provocation, or causes the death of any other person by mistake or accident.

The above exception is subject to the following provisos:—

First—That the provocation is not sought or voluntarily provoked by the offender as an excuse for killing or doing harm to any person.

Secondly—That the provocation is not given by anything done in obedience to the law, or by a public servant in the lawful exercise of the powers of such public servant.

Thirdly—That the provocation is not given by anything done in the lawful exercise of the right of private defence.

Exception 2.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, in the exercise in good faith of the right of private defence of person or property, exceeds the power given to him by law and causes the death of the person against whom he is exercising such right of defence without premeditation, and without any intention of doing more harm than is necessary for the purpose of such defence.

Exception 3.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, being a public servant or aiding a public servant acting for the advancement of public justice, exceeds the powers given to him by law, and causes death by doing an act which he, in good faith, believes to be lawful and necessary for the due discharge of his duty as such public servant and without ill-will towards the person whose death is caused.

Exception 4.—Culpable homicide is not murder if it is committed without premeditation in a sudden fight in the heat of passion upon

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

a sudden quarrel and without the offender's having taken undue advantage or acted in a cruel or unusual manner. 177 671

Exception 5.—Culpable homicide is not murder when the person whose death is caused, being above the age of eighteen years, suffers death or takes the risk of death with his own consent.

302. Whoever commits murder shall be punished with death, or transportation for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

304. Whoever commits culpable homicide not amounting to murder, shall be punished with transportation for life, or imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine, if the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death;

or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine, or with both, if the act is done with the knowledge that it is likely to cause death, but without any intention to cause death or to cause such bodily injury as is likely to cause death.

Sir Cecil Walsh considered that these definitions were too complicated for the situations to which they were normally applied. 'The Indian Penal Code has always been considered a masterpiece of codification, and is the admiration of experts in jurisprudence. The beautifully moulded definitions of murder, and of culpable homicide not amounting to murder, set out every phase of thought through which a man's mind may pass when he is engaged in a fight and burning to defeat and injure his enemy. But men do not think aloud in a confused fight when they are "seeing red" and expecting every minute to be knocked out themselves. How are you to apply almost metaphysical processes of reasoning to the mental processes of half-mad savages, when you are not quite sure what the real facts are? In practice, these works of art in draftsmanship break down, and the simple English dichotomy of "murder" or "manslaughter" is to be preferred'.[1]

[1] Walsh, *Crime in India*, pp. 29 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

GLOSSARY

109 **Bhut**	..	A ghost or evil spirit
Dasyakal	..	A cromlech, a flat stone put by certain clans for the tendance of the Dead
Gaita	..	The priest and religious headman of a village.
Ghotul	..	The village dormitory of the Muria of northern Bastar
Gunia	..	A magician
Jawa	..	A gruel, called also pej, which is the staple food of the Maria
Jiwa	..	The soul
Kosra	..	A small millet, *panicum miliaceum*
Lamkada	..	A youth who serves a period of years for his wife
Landa	..	Rice-beer
Mahua	..	*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb, the corolla of which is used for making liquor
Mandia	..	A grain, *eleusine coracana*, used in the brewing of rice-beer
Manjhi	..	The petty chief or headman of a group of villages
Mirchuk	..	The ghost of a suicide, an executed murderer or a man killed by human violence
Paita	..	A girl who comes of her own accord to co-habit with a man
Panchayat	..	A court of village elders
Pandum	..	A festival, usually celebrating the gathering and first eating of a crop
Pedia	..	A village headman
Pen	..	A clan-god
Salphi	..	The Halbi word for the sago palm, *Caryota urens*, Linn.
Sirsha	..	A medicine-man and diviner
Tahsil	..	A territorial division of a State or District, in charge of a Magistrate at whose head-quarters post-mortems are conducted and who commits prisoners for trial at Sessions
Urnakal	..	A menhir set upright for the tendance of the Dead
Waddai	..	A clan-priest and medicine-man

[p. 254]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

INDEX

Agumbras Hills, 11, 19.
Abuse exciting to violence, 153 ff.
Accidental deaths, 30, 206.
Adam, J. C., qu., 44, 53 f., 80.
Adultery, estimation of, 51, 81 ff.
Aperia, The, qu., 180.
Alarni Mata (S.C. No 2), 45, 103.
Alcohol, effect of, 50, 78, 131 ff., 216.
Amraoti District, 67.
Anantakrishna Iyer, qu., 3.
Andaman Islanders, suicide-rate among, 9.
Anga clan-god, 17, 60 f., 83, 88, 117, 197, 213; illustrated, 61.
Angami Naga, 9.
Arson, 6, 179, 173.
Assam, 3, 9, 184.
Asur legend, 180.
Atarni Kosa (S.C. No 3), 78.
Atkinson, E. T., qu., 8.

Bagasa, 10.
Baiga, 5, 12, 131, 181.
Baiga, The, qu., 161 f.
Baiha Ganga (S.C. No 4), 171.
Bantu, 102.
Barse Chappe (H.C. No 2), 77, 146.
Barse Chewa (H.C. No 3), 123, 174, 201, 204.
Barse Chewa (S.C. No 5), 111.
Barse Kama (H.C. No 5), 144.
Barse Konda (S.C. No 6), 91.
Barse Mata, his views on sex in jail, 208; his dreams, 212.
Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual*, qu., 133.
Behaviour of Maria towards the Dead, 189 ff.; towards the released convict, 195; towards the police, 194 ff.
Betrothal customs, 21, 147 f.
Bhandara, extraordinary case at, 63.
Bhantu, 2.
Bhil, 4, 8.
Bhopalpatnam, human sacrifice at, 69, 214.
Bhuiya legend, 180.
Birhor legend, 180.
Birth ceremonies, 20, 71.
Bison-horn dance, 18 f., 103.
Blood, power of, 1, 67 ff., 80.
Bodding, P. O., qu., 5.
Bonington, C. J., qu., 3.
Briffault, R., qu., 55.
Bronte, Charlotte, 8.
Brothers, and their wives, 113 ff.
Burial, methods of, 23 ff., 199 ff.
Burka (H.C. No 80), 85.

Campbell, J., qu., 1.
Campbell, R. H., qu., 5.
Canada, homicide rate in, 38.
Cannibalism, 180 ff.
Castilian law, 52.
Cattle theft, 145, 193, 196.
Cavan, R. S., qu., 45, 48.
Central Provinces and Berar, homicide in, 38.
Ceremonies of purification, 82, 117, 195 ff.
Chanda, homicide in, 38; human sacrifice in, 68.
Chenchu, 6, 184, 194 f.
Child-marriage, 105.
China, Sati in, 45; use of blood in, 67.
Churelin, 171.
Clans, 17.
Clan-territory, theory of, 17, 192.
Cocks, disputes about, 102.
Cock-fighting, 20.
Colleries (Kallans), 1.
Confessions, 175 f.
Constantine the Great, 67.
Corpse-abuse, 154.
Courts, village, 33; Maria fear of regular, 191 f.
Criminal tribes, 3.
Crooke, W., qu., 8, 68.

Daitya Ka Har, 8.
Dalton, E. T., qu., 10, 134.
Dancing, 12, 91, 133.
Danteshwari, 23, 196, 219.
Darbar, the Muria, 18.
Dassara, 18, 217.
Date palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*, Roxb.), 139 ff.
Deodand, law of, 185.
Departed, the, 13, 21 ff., 35, 57, 60, 82, 117, 146, 180.
Deterrent effect of death sentence, 217 f.
Detzner, H., qu., 55.
Devasmita, tale of, 68.
Devereux, G., qu., 58.
Dharna, custom of sitting, 8.

[p. 255]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

000 Dhobi, 40, 85.
Dhurwa, 78.
Divorce, 21.
Doga of Jabeli, 146, 149 f., 197, 200, 207, 213.
Doria, 11.
Dormitory, 12, 37 f.
Dreaming among prisoners, 211 ff., 219.
Drum, dispute about a, 102.
Drunkenness, typical crimes of, 140 ff.
Dudhi Bhima, (H.C. No 6), 100 f.

East, W. N., qu., 139.
Economic reasons for suicide rare, 102.
Education, value of, 216.
Edwardes, S. M., qu., 81.
Endle, S., qu., 5.
England, homicide rate in, 38.
Engram arrows, 15 f., 41; illustrated, 15.
Epilepsy, 188 ff.
Erotic reasons for suicide, 9 f., 58.
Exiles Sub-Inspectors, opinions of, 134 ff.
Executions, 39, 213 f., 217, 219.

Father, as a cause of crime, 143 ff.
Fenton, W. N., qu., 59.
Festivals, 17, murder at, 42, 140 f.
Fishman, J. F., 208.
Forsyth, J., qu., 4.
France, women's crimes in, 161.
Fraser, Sir J. G., qu., 1, 198 f.
Funeral ceremonies, 21, 23 ff., 199 ff.
Fürer-Haimendorf, C. von, qu., 6, 198, 217.

Gaile (H.C. No 9), 111.
Gambling quarrels, 68, 148.
Ghotni Muria, 37, 48, 66, 131, 169.
Gogo (H.C. No 11), 112, 176.
Golden Bough, The, qu., 1.
Gonga, 20.
Gover, C., qu., 8.
Great Britain, large number of women criminals in, 161.
Grievous hurt, 218.
Grigson, W. V., qu., 11, 12, 17, 22, 60, 135, 189 f., 207.
Gudenus Hills, 6.
Gunia Hunga (H.C. No 7), 65.

Hanka Mara (H.C. No 9), 129, 146, 207.
Haikerwal, B. S., qu., 3, 67 f., 105, 182.
Hall, Stanley, qu., 52 f., 79, 155 f.
Hand of Glory, 80.
Hanging, as a means of suicide, 46 f., 58, 61.
Havelock Ellis, qu., 52, 79, 161, 211 f.
Head-hunters, 3.
Health of prisoners, 209.
Hemla Bakka (H.C. No 10), 116, 196.
Hemla Chewa (H.C. No 11), 168.
Hemla Gunda (H.C. No 12), 88, 188.
Hinduism, influence of, 22, 195 ff.
Hira Lal, qu., 186.
Hivale, Shamrao, 80, 115.
Ho tribe, 4, 10.
Hodson, T. C., qu., 185.
Homosexuality, 208.
Hrdlicka, A., qu., 37 f.
Hunga, 66.
Hunt, ceremonial, 15, 18, 78.
Hunter, Sir W. W., qu., 8.
Hutton, J. H., qu., 4, 9, 36.
Hyderabad, 105.

Illicit distillation, 137, 158.
Indian Penal Code, 32, 36, 250 f.
Indrawati River, 11, 47, 110, 118.
Industries, subsidiary, 18.
Infanticide, 1, 220.
Innocent, attempts to involve the, 174.
Ironwork, Maria attitude to, 18.
Irula, 1.
Italy, women's crimes in, 161.

Jabeli village, 18, 149 ff., 196 f., 201.
Jagannatha, 8.
Jail, defilement from, 195 ff; experiences in, 207 ff.
Japan, methods of suicide in, 47.
Jealousy, 51, 57 f., 81, 166, 216.
Jesse, F. Tennyson, qu., 50 f., 92.
Jews-harp, 19.
Jeypore Zamindari, 19, 62, 116.
Jhoria Hunga (H.C. No 13), 78.
Jimma, 113.
Jobur, 8.
Juang, 12, 190, 211.

Kabasi, 14, 103.
Kachari, 5.
Kadar, 6.
Kadir, 136.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Kadti Hunga (H.C. Nos 14 & 15), 158, 209.
Kalar, 49 f.
Kali, 54, 67, 184.
Kallan, 1.
Kalmami Mana, 125.
Kande Muria, 89.
Kanikar, 85.
Kare (S.C. No 19), 91.
Karsten, R., qu., 75.
Kartami Aitu (H.C. No 18), 147.
Kartami Hirma (H.C. No 20), 187.
Karti Sukri (S.C. No 11), 79.
Kawasi Chamru (H.C. No 22), 170.
Kawasi Dulga (S.C. No 14), 115.
Kedar, 8.
Keller, A., qu., 70.
Kharia legend, 180.
Khond, 1, 93.
Khotiu (H.C. No 29), 169.
Kinberg, O., qu., 51 f., 139 f., 143.
Kol legend, 180.
Kome (S.C. No 17), 116.
Konta Tahsil, 11, 126, 186.
Kopa Dhurwa, 33, 151.
Korava, 3.
Kosa (H.C. No 77), 146, 170.
Koya, 11.
Kuhrami Guddi, 70 ff.
Kunjami Burji (S.C. No 19), 186.
Kurnool, 6, 124.
Kuruk legend, 180.
Kutru Zamindari, 11, 69, 120.

Lakshmi, 19, 199.
Lambada, 14, 21, 82 f., 124 ff.
Landa, see rice-beer.
L'Angelier, 92.
Leubecher, B. J. F., qu., 7 f., 38 f., 102, 145.
Lepcha, 9.
Lhota Naga, 8.
Linga, 181.
Liver, magical importance of, 61, 64, 68, 147.
Lombroso, 52.
Lunacy, 30, 69, 167 ff.
Lushai, attitude to ghosts, 199.
Lust-murder, 81.

Macaulay, Lord, 36.
Macpherson, S. C., qu., 1.
Madura District, 1.
Magic, origin of, 59 ff.; study of, 61 f.; at a funeral, 24, 29; and murder, 69; and suicide, 78.
Mahara, 48, 70 ff, 140, 210.
Mahua (*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.), 18, 47, 131 ff, 158, 162.
Majumdar, D. N., qu., 4.
Malinowski, B., qu., 39.
Man, E. H., qu., 9.
Mandla District, 64, 67, 80, 216.
Men in India, qu., 1, 115, 186.
Manjhi Bande (H.C. No 37), 101, 187.
Maria, Hill, 11, 137.
Maria, Bison-horn: statistics, 11, 37 ff.; physical characteristics, 11; dress and ornaments, 12; villages, 12; dormitory, 12 f.; houses, 13; cultivation, 14; food, 14; hunting and fishing, 15; tools and weapons, 15; religion, 16; clans, 17; festivals, 17 f.; dancing, 18 f.; birth ceremonies, 20; betrothal and marriage ceremonies, 21; ideas about death, 21 f; funeral rites, 23 ff.; secular and religious officials, 33 ff.; bad reputation perhaps undeserved, 37; attitude to women, 81, 104, 161 ff; poverty of, 98 143 ff; polygamy uncommon, 111; tradition of fraternal relationships, 115 ff.; love of alcohol, 131 ff.; love of meat, 145; lunacy among, 167; high character of majority, 215, 220.
Markami Handa (H.C. No 41), 113.
Markami Hinga (H.C. No 39), 43, 75 f.
Markami Hirma (S.C. No 23), 171.
Markami Hunga (S.C. No 24), 78.
Markami Kosi (S.C. No 25), 79.
Markami Mundra (H.C. No 42), 189 ff.
Markami Pandu (S.C. No 26), 45.
Markami Turka (H.C. No 43), 154.
Markami Wango (H.C. No 44), 128.
Marriage, 21, 42.
Marvi Bhima (H.C. No 46), 167.
Marvi Boti (H.C. No 48), 93 ff., 117, 163.
Marvi Boti of Telam (H.C. No 47), 116, 204, 209.
Marvi Chule (H.C. No 49), 99.
Marvi Deva (H.C. No 50), 88, 146.
Marvi Dhodia (S.C. No 27), 111.
Marvi Gutami (S.C. No 28), 121.
Marvi Hinga (H.C. No 51), 45, 122.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Marvi Hunga (H.C. No 53), 124.
Marvi Kesa (H.C. No 55), 113, 122.
Marvi Mundra (H.C. No 61), 144.
Marvi Mundra (S.C. No 30), 193 f.
Marvi Oyami Masa (H.C. No 62), 16, 33, 147, 149 ff, 201 f.
Marvi Pakiu (H.C. No 63), 108 f.
Masa, 93.
Masturbation, 206.
Mate (S.C. No 31), 110.
Mateer, S., qu., 203.
Matheson, J. C. M., qu., 139.
Mauritius, 68.
Mayurbhanj State, homicide in, 38.
Meadows Taylor, 3.
Meat, attitude to, 145.
Medicine-men, 35.
Menhirs, 30, 62, 200 ff, 205 f.
Menon, K. Govinda, qu., 6.
Menstruation, 21, 25, 65, 79.
Meriah sacrifices, 1, 68 f.
Metz, J. F., qu., 10.
Mills, J. P., qu., 9 f.
Miriami Harma (H.C. No 65), 187.
Mortality among aboriginal prisoners, 207, 209.
Mother's house, 119 ff.
Muchaki Dasru (H.C. No 66), 147; his dreams, 212.
Munda tribe, 4, 36.
Murami Dhurwa (H.C. No 69), 158 f., 210.
Muria legend, 181.
Mysore, 3.
Myth, 180 ff, 131 ff, 180 ff.

Naga, 3.
Nagpur, 54, 167.
Nanda (H.C. No 84), 87 f.
Nanda (H.C. No 74), 151 ff.
Nandraj Guru, 60.
Narabali sacrifice, 67.
Nilgiri Mountains, 1, 10.

Oscoca, C., qu., 58.
Oyami Masa of Jabeli, see Marvi Oyami Masa.
Oyami Masa of Khutepal, 112, 188, 197.

Panchayats, work of, 33 f., 186 ff., 217.
Pandava, 8.
Papua, 35, 185.
Pardhan, 3.
Parents-in-law, 122 ff.
Pargana system in Bastar, 33.
Parry, N. E., qu., 10, 199.
Penzer, N. M., 8, qu., 68.
Phratries, 17.
Phrynoderma (toad-skin) among aboriginals, 209.
Pillai, Kanakasabhai, qu., 10.
Pillars, memorial, 32, 151, 202.
Poison, 42; in suicide, 9, 46 f.; in murder, 93 ff.
Police, 184 ff., 193 ff.
Polygyny, and murder, 77; and suicide, 79, 111 ff.
Port Blair, 2.
Poriami Hirma (H.C. No 75), 90.
Poriami Kosa (H.C. No 77), 170.
Poriami Podiya (H.C. No 78), 86.
Poyami Gupe (S.C. No 38), 115.
Poyami Kosa (S.C. No 40), 103.
Poyami Masa (H.C. No 83), 85, 113, 174.
Poyami Panda (H.C. No 84), 87 ff.
Poyami Pande (S.C. No 43), 166.
Pregnancy, women dying in, 30, 171; unwanted, 90; crimes against women in, 70 ff.
Priests, village, 34 ff.
Prisoner, the aboriginal, 207 ff.
Prohibition, uselessness of, 216.
Property, disputes about, 96 ff.
Pubic hairs, insulting use of, 66, 147, 154.
Puri, 8.
Purushamedha sacrifice, 67.

Ranchhodas, R. and Thakore, D. K., qu. 47.
Rape, 2, 4, 220.
Recidivism, 156 ff.
Recreations, need of in jail, 219.
Religion, Maria, 16; in jail, 219.
Rengma Naga, suicide among the, 9.
Reputation of aboriginals, 4 ff.
Revenge, 2, 51, 57, 100, 147, 155, 216.
Rewali village, 63, 91.
Rice-beer (landa), 5, 21, 42, 62, 71, 121 ff., 176.
Rings, lucky, 79.
Roughedge, Major, qu., 4.
Roy, S. C., qu., 1, 8, 180, 198.
Russell, R. V. and Hiralal, qu., 8.
Russia, women's crimes in, 161.

Sacrifice, human, 1, 4, 60 f., 67 ff., 182, 198.
Sago palm (Caryota urens, Linn.), 66, 121 ff.
Santal, 4, 5.
Sati, 8, 23, 45.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Seasonal variations, in homicide, 41 f.; in suicide, 49.
Seligman, C. G. and B. Z., qu., 9.
Sex, not a problem in jail, 208 f.; intercourse refused before crime, 97, 120, 145 ff.
Sex-ratio, 47 f.
Shakespear, L., 198.
Sherborne, E. O., qu., 80.
Shifting villages after crime, 204.
Singhbhum, 10.
Siraha and homicide, 75.
Snake in magic, 63.
Soporiferous candles, 80.
Sorcerers, methods of, 62.
Sori Deva (S.C. No 44), 111.
Sori Dome (H.C. No 88), 114.
Sori Hirma (S.C. No 45), 78.
Sori Pandu (H.C. No 89), 141.
Soul, destiny of the, 21 ff.
Spain, women's crimes in, 161.
Spier, L., qu., 58.
Suicide, murder disguised as, 44, 108, 118, 173.
Sukma, 101.
Sullivan, W. C., qu., 41, 168.
Superstition and crime, 79 f.
Surguja, 196.
Syphilis, the 'first-fruit of civilization', 6.

Tamil labourers, 6.
Tanks, disputes about, 14; sacrifices to, 70, 75.
Tati Harma (H.C. No 91), 113, 163.
Tati Pande (H.C. No 92), 163.
Telanga, 147.
Thackeray, 8.
Thag, 2.
Throttling, 44, 173.
Thurston, E., qu., 1 f., 184.
Tickell, Col., qu., 4.
Tiger-men, 63.
Tobacco, symbolic meaning of, 87; a dispute over, 102; in jail, 220.
Tod, J., qu., 8.
Toda, 1.
Toddy-palm (*Borassus flabellifer*, Linn.), 131 ff.
Totems, 17.
Traga suicide, 8.
Traill, G. W. and Batten, J. H., qu., 8.
Travancore, 85.
Trees used by suicides, 47.
Trident, use of in murder, 43, 76.
Trobriand Islanders, suicide among the, 59.
Turmeric, sacrifices in cultivation of, 1
Twins, 84.

Ujji Poda (H.C. No 94), 117, 174, 188.
Uraon, 134, 196.
U.S.A., homicide rate in, 39; methods of suicide in, 47; women's crimes in, 161.

Vedda, 9.
Vedia Sukra (H.C. No 96), 66.
Veko Chamru (H.C. No 97), 106.
Veko Dome (H.C. No 98), 144.
Veko Lakhma (S.C. No 48), 102.
Venereal diseases, rare, 12.
Venkatachar, C. S., qu., 4, 5.
Vetti Hirma (H.C. No 99), 147.
Vetti Rupe (H.C. No 100), 206, 212.
Voegelin, E. W., qu., 58.

Walsh, Sir C., qu., 54, 175 f., 217 f., 251.
Ward, H. C. E., qu., 5.
Weapons used by Maria, 15.
Weaving, taboo, 16; in jail, 210 f.
Westermarck, E., qu., 74 f.
Whistling in token of revenge, 147 ff.
Widows, as witches, 65, 79; as homicides, 162.
Williams, F. E., qu., 185.
Winston, E., qu., 167.
Witches, general attitude to, 51, 53, 60 ff., 215 f.; methods of, 64 ff., 134; fear of leading to suicide, 48; punishments of, 185 ff.
Work of aboriginal convicts, 209 f.
Women, position of, in Maria society, 104; crimes of, 161 ff.
Word-magic, 154.
Wynad Paniyan, 2

Yaws, 78.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

THE ABORIGINAL TRIBES

OF

HYDERABAD

Volume III

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OF

ADILABAD

Book I

MYTH AND RITUAL

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[p. ii]

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4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
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THE RAJ GONDS OF ADILABAD

A Peasant Culture of the Deccan

Book I

MYTH AND RITUAL

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With a Foreword

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[p. iii]

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

INTRODUCTION

101 NO aboriginal people of India has attained greater prominence on the political scene of past centuries than the large group of tribes commonly known by the generic term Gond. When the mist that still veils long periods in the history of the Deccan finally lifts, Gonds appear not only as the main population of wide areas in the very heart of India, described after them as Gondwana, but also as a ruling race equal in power and material status to many contemporary Hindu princes. Lacking unity and leadership the Gond states collapsed before the successive onslaughts of Moghul and Maratha armies, but the Gond populations remained, the old feudal system continued to function in [21] many remote tracts and several Gond rajas enjoy up to this day the status of ruling chiefs. But besides the advanced sections of the Gonds who vied with Hindus in the fields of war and statesmanship, there were and still are the great masses of primitive peasants and forest dwellers on a cultural level no higher than that of other aboriginal populations in the Central Indian zone. Of their economics, social organization and religion, historical sources tell us next to nothing, and the study of Gond culture, as a distinct element in the culture pattern of India, falls to the anthropologist, who finds an almost overwhelming wealth of material among the many vigorous branches of the Gond family.

184 101 [149] Spread over an area considerably larger than the British Isles and extending from the Godavari gorges in the south to the Vindhya Mountains in the north, the Gonds are neither racially, nor culturally, nor linguistically a homogeneous population. So great are the differences in custom and material circumstances between many of the widely scattered tribal groups that one may well wonder what causes them to be considered, and indeed to consider themselves, as members of the same race. Wherever we find Gonds, unless they are totally detribalized and merged with Hindu populations, they describe themselves as Gond or, if speaking Gondi, as Koitur, the universal equivalent of that name in all Gondi dialects. Were it not for those large groups of eastern Gonds, who speak Chhattisgarhi Hindi, the Gonds in the north-west of the Central Provinces, who speak western Hindi and the far smaller groups of Telugu speaking Gonds, better known as Koyas, in Hyderabad and Madras Presidency, it would probably be most satisfactory to replace, at least in ethnological usage, the general name "Gond" by the term "Gondi speaking populations," thus leaving it open whether there exists such an entity as a Gond people or only a group of peoples who to-day speak related languages. Indeed, I believe that we shall fail in

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

our approach to the Gond problem—one of the cardinal problems of Deccan ethnology—unless we envisage the possibility that the tribes now known as Gonds, far from being the dispersed off-shoots of a once homogeneous people, attained a certain and very limited measure of cultural uniformity only when they came under the sway of the same dominant linguistic influence.

Gondi with its many local dialects is a Dravidian language of the so-called intermediate group, and stands, according to Grierson, closer to Tamil and Kanarese than to Telugu. But it seems highly improbable that the Dravidian tongues, which were no doubt associated with the representatives of the pre-Aryan high-civilizations of Southern India, should have been the original languages of tribal populations as primitive in racial and cultural make-up as the Hill Marias of Bastar and certain Koyas of Hyderabad. Just as such widely separated aboriginal tribes as the Chenchus of the Nallamallai Hills, the Hill Reddis of the Eastern Ghats and some, though not all, Naikpods and Kolams in the hills of Adilabad have adopted Telugu to the exclusion of any other tongue, without anyone considering Telugu as their original language[1] or claiming the present linguistic uniformity as proof of a genetic connection between all those tribes, so the peoples now speaking Gondi may, in times past, have abandoned older tribal tongues in favour of a Dravidian language spoken by neighbouring populations or the members of a ruling class. J. H. Hutton believes that by a similar process the Oraons of Chota Nagpur have adopted their present Dravidian tongue[2] in place of a Munda language, and I fully agree with his assumption that a large-scale Dravidianization of aboriginal tribes occurred partly previous and partly parallel to the Aryanization of which we are still witnesses.[3]

The idea that Dravidian Gondi represents a comparatively recent element in the linguistic pattern of the Central Indian belt has already been voiced by R. V. Russell, who put forward the theory of a Gond incursion into the Central Provinces from the south between the ninth and the thirteenth century A.D. This probably goes too far and is not supported by ethnological evidence; in solving the language problem it is not even necessary to assume a wholesale migration of all the Gond tribes from Dravidian lands south of the Godavari to the Central Provinces and the hill-tracts of Bastar. It is sufficient to postulate the invasion of a people limited in numbers but superior to the older tribal folks in organization and material equipment, and the subsequent spread of its Dravidian language and perhaps certain elements of its culture among the tribes previously speaking one or several older tongues. Indian history provides numerous examples of such an imposition of a foreign

1. In the case of Naikpods and Kolams an older tribal language is still spoken by other groups.
2. Oraon belongs to the same intermediate group as Gondi.
3. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Part I, p. 358.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

language on aboriginal populations, and it seems more probable that such tribes as the Muria Gonds, with their close cultural and racial affinities to the Austroasiatic Gadabas of Orissa, were subject to a change of language than that they immigrated from distant parts of Southern India.

We are not yet in a position to surmise which population may have been responsible for the spread of Gondi or which pre-Dravidian languages Gondi may have replaced. Both questions will perhaps remain for ever unanswered, but linguistic research among the Gondi speaking peoples, the still entirely mysterious Khonds, and the neighbouring Austroasiatic tribes may still lead to surprising results. Since the days of Grierson's Linguistic Survey few trained linguists have done fieldwork among the tribal populations of Peninsular India, and the most admirable descriptive works of amateurs cannot compensate for the absence of comparative studies by experts.[1]

The replacement of an older language by one of more recent introduction, is an accomplished fact among many of the eastern and northern Gonds, who speak now the Chhattisgarhi dialect of Hindi and various other local dialects. But there can be no doubt that these Aryan languages were adopted from neighbouring Hindu populations instead of tribal tongues, and certain place-names are to-day the only evidence that the languages previously spoken were related to the Gondi spoken by other sections of the Gond family.

According to the Census of India the total number of Gonds in 1931[2] was 3,063,753. With their strong tribal consciousness they are the premier aboriginal race of India, exceeding by more than one million the number of Bhils and dwarfing such tribes as Oraons, Mundas, Hos and Santals.

The majority of Gonds—2,261,138 in 1931—are found in the Central Provinces and Berar, which contain practically all the territories known to the early Moghul writers as Gondwana. Except for Buldana in the extreme south-west, there is no district in the Central Provinces

1. The limited value of linguistic material contained in the writings of anthropologists is to some extent obvious even to the authors; such texts, for instance, as given in this volume may facilitate the linguist's approach to an unwritten language, but they are insufficient as a basis for linguistic conclusions. For very relevant phonetic peculiarities may entirely escape the attention of the untrained observer, or defeat his attempts at recording them. In linguistics as in anthropology there is no substitute for field work. The dearth of authoritative works on the tribal languages of India was lamented by J. H. Hutton in his Census report: "There is, however, a serious void in our knowledge in that no intensive work appears to have been done on the tribal dialects of southern India, so that it is impossible to say whether the Munda languages ever penetrated to the extreme south of India or not. The linguistic survey unfortunately did not include southern India in its scope, and there is therefore a crying need for an intensive study of the dialects spoken by such tribes as the Kadar, Kurumans, Paliyans, Panians and Thanda Paliyans, with the object of discovering whether or no any Munda survivals are to be found." (Op. cit., p. 159). Hutton's call to linguists has, to my knowledge, remained largely unheeded. M. B. Emeneau who worked among the Todas being a laudable exception. But equally urgent as the study of the tribal dialects of South India is intensive work on the tribal languages of the Central belt.

2. No later figures for individual tribes are available, the Census operations of 1941 having been curtailed for reasons of economy.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

101 without a considerable Gond population, but the main strongholds of
162 the Gonds are to-day the Satpura plateau including the districts of Betul,
197 Chhindwara and Seoni, where the western type of Gondi is spoken, Mandla and Chhattisgarh in the east, where the Gonds have adopted the local dialect of eastern Hindi but retained their tribal identity, and in the south Chanda and the neighbouring Yeotmal, where the language is Gondi, but of a dialect somewhat different from the Gondi of Betul.

101 To the north-west the Gonds extend across the Narbada River into
691 Central India, and are particularly numerous in Indore State; to the
197 east of the Central Provinces lie the states of Gond princes, such as
[619] Kawardha, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, to-day known as the Chhattisgarh States. Although neither these Gond rajas, nor indeed the Gonds among their subjects speak Gondi, they are fully conscious of their tribal associations and the high status of the ruling princes adds no doubt to tribal prestige in the whole of Chhattisgarh.

Further south, bordering on Chanda, Drug and Raipur, extend the two States of Kanker and Bastar, where Gonds constitute the majority of the population. Bastar in particular is the home of three important groups of Gonds: the Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias, all of which differ in language and custom very considerably from the Gonds of the Central Provinces.[1] Their colourful and complex cul-
[174] tures are representative of ancient aboriginal India and show obvious affinities with the Austroasiatic cultures of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Bastar has also part in the Koyas or Dorlas of the Godavari area, the most southern branch of the Gond family occurring in considerable strength in Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State and stretching across the barrier of the Eastern Ghats into the vicinity of Rajahmundry. Most Koyas still speak a dialect of Gondi, but those surrounded by Telugu populations, have changed over to Telugu.

Another substantial group of Gonds, closely akin to the Gonds of Yeotmal and Chanda, is found in the hilly country between the Godavari and the Penganga Rivers constituting the Adilabad District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, and it is these Gonds who form the subject of the present work.

101 All the Gonds of Adilabad, except for an insignificant overflow of
186 Dhurwe Gonds from Chanda, consider themselves Raj Gonds, and this brings us to the still somewhat problematic division between Raj Gonds and Dhur or Dhurwe Gonds, which runs through the greater part of the Gond population within the Central Provinces. There seems to be no uniformity in the principles ruling this division; in Chhattisgarh only the members of ruling, or formerly ruling families are described as Raj Gond, while in other parts most of the land-holding Gonds aspire to this denomination. In recent times the name Raj Gond has also been
[64] claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status by

1. The Hill Murias extend into the hills of the neighbouring Chanda District.

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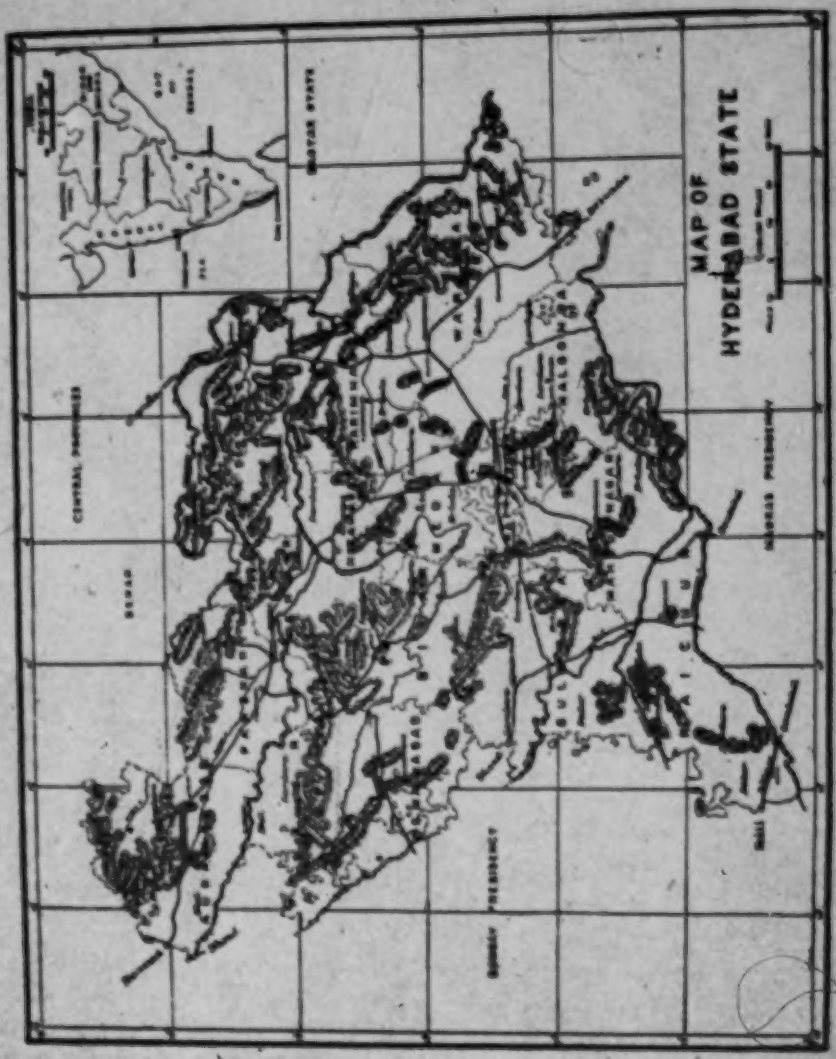
AW32 Gond AW32



[Facing p. 4]

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

compliance with Hindu customs, and "Raj-Gond" reform movements have made their appearance in the Central Provinces.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the distinction between Raj Gonds and the other sections of the Gond peoples. C. B. Lucie-Smith writing of the Raj Gonds of Chanda suggested that either "the epithet Raj was originally applied to royal and noble Gond families, from which the distinction spread to their followers and the governing class generally; or it may describe the leading Gond tribe which in ancient days conquered the land from other aboriginal clans."[1] But Captain Forsyth believed that Raj Gonds are in many cases the descendants of alliances between Rajput adventurers and Gonds, and R. V. Russell quotes this view with qualified approval.[2]

W. V. Grigson on the other hand lays emphasis rather on the social than the historical causes for the distinction and suggests that such names as Raj Gond arose from "the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names."[3] The situation in Adilabad seems rather to accord with the second suggestion advanced by Lucie-Smith; for here the Raj Gonds do not form a ruling class or even a class of privileged economic status, but an entire tribal group comprising all strata of society from the feudal chiefs down to the poorest labourer. We will see in a later chapter that the once powerful Gond Kings of Chanda belonged to this group, and their kinsmen in the Adilabad hills were as early as the 17th century referred to as Raj Gonds in patents of the Emperor Aurangzeb.

Here the Raj Gonds, far from aspiring to inclusion in the Hindu fold, consider themselves the true exponents of Gond culture and Gond language, and above all of the traditional Gond religion which involves the sacrifice of cows at the rites for the clan-gods. Many of them have never met a Dhurwe Gond, but those who have come in contact with the few groups of Dhurwe Gonds who have recently drifted across the Chanda border, look down upon them as speaking a corrupt form of Gondi intermixed with much Marathi, and as following different customs; somewhat sweepingly and apparently unjustly they assert that the Dhurwe Gonds have no cult of clan deities "only worshipping Bhimsens like Kolams."

It seems indeed that the Raj Gonds of Adilabad, who have lived for almost a century and a half under Muslim rule, and have in consequence been less exposed to the influence of the more intolerant exponents of Hinduism, have retained more of their old culture than

1. *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Chanda District, Central Provinces.* 1869. Nagpur 1870, p. 46.
2. *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India.* London 1916. Vol. III, p. 45.
3. W. V. Grigson. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar.* London, 1938 p. 30.

4: Führer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

most of their tribesmen in the Central Provinces.

In order to understand the historical position of the Gonds both in Hyderabad and in the Central Provinces we must briefly review the course of political events during the last five centuries, and in doing so, anticipate, the fuller discussion of historical developments contained in Book II.

Reliable information on the early history of the Gonds is scarce and not until Muslim times do Gond states figure in contemporary chronicles and the works of historians. There can indeed be little doubt that throughout ancient and mediæval times the larger part of the Gond country east of Berar remained a land of vast forests and poor communications. Few foreign travellers seem to have traversed it and the old literature contains but the scantiest references to its inhabitants. Yet, its 'wildness' should not be exaggerated. Buddhist relics have been found in various places and it is not unlikely that there were times when pioneers of advanced civilizations settled among the aboriginal tribesmen just as there were periods when such outposts of higher culture shrank into insignificance. In Chanda District, for instance, Bhandak near the Wardha River seems to have been a centre of Buddhism and various authorities identify this place with the old Kosala capital visited in the seventh century by Hiuen Tsiang.[1] In Bhandak has also been discovered an inscription of the Rashtrakuta King, Krishna I, the builder of the Kailasa Temple at Ellora, dealing with the grant of a village when the King was camping in Yeotmal.[2] From Buddhist times date also the Pandrolena cave-temples at Mahur in the westernmost corner of the Adilabad District, and the famous Dev Deshwar temple at Mahur—mentioned in the Garur Purana and for the last seven centuries under the guardianship of monks of the Mahanubhau sect—proves that Mahur, formerly known as Matapur, retained its importance into Hindu times.

From inscriptions and old coins we know moreover that from the 9th century A.D. onwards Rajput princes were established in various parts of the Central Provinces. Tripuri, the heart of the later Gond Kingdom of Garha-Mandla, and Chhattisgarh, for instance, were for centuries ruled by the Rajput dynasty of Haihaiya bansi. Although further archæological finds may gradually add to our knowledge of the colonies founded by such Rajput chieftains, little elucidation of the early fortunes of its Gond population can be expected from that side.

We must therefore turn to the early Muslim writers who, from the 14th century on, comment in their chronicles on campaign and political developments in the territories described by them as Gond-

1. S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, London 1906, Vol. II, pp. 209, 214.—R. B. Hira Lal, 'Prehistoric Berar,' *Shivaji Jubilee Number*, Vol. I, Yeotmal, 1933, pp. 2, 3.

2. Hashid Jafri, 'Materials for Historic Research in Berar,' *Shivaji Jubilee Number*, Vol. I, p. 12.

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AW32 Gond AW32

wana.[1] The dawn of the 15th century finds a Gond dynasty firmly 175
established in Garha, close to the Narbada River and Jubbulpore. The Maharajas of Garha exercised overlordship over the local Gond petty chieftains of the present districts of Jubbulpore, Mandla, Seoni, Chhindwara and Balaghat, Damoh, and parts of Hoshangabad and Betul, and retained their independence until the year 1564 A.D., when a Moghul army under Asaf Khan conquered Garha and the famous queen-regent Durgavati was slain in battle. After a period of administration by Mahommedan officers or jagirdars, the government reverted to all practical purposes to the Gond Rajas of the old family and their subordinate chiefs, who had, however, to recognize the sovereignty of the Moghul emperors. The end of the Gond dynasty of Garha came in 1780 A.D. when the Marathas imprisoned the last ruler and brought the state under direct control. South and west of Garha another Gond State arose early in the 17th century: the Kingdom of Deogarh. Its rulers, tributaries of the Maharajas of Garha, took advantage of the decline of their overlords' power subsequent to the Moghul conquest and secured for themselves a large part of the territories of Garha.

The third great Gond dynasty of the Central Provinces was that of Chanda, and it is this dynasty with which we are most directly concerned in our study of the Gonds of Hyderabad. For the Rajas of Chanda ruled over a large part of what is to-day the Adilabad District and many of the Hyderabad Gonds still recognize their authority in tribal matters. When the chieftains residing at Chanda, a fortified town on the banks of the Wardha River, first attained prominence cannot be said for certain. C. U. Wills, the author of a history of the Gond dynasties of Garha-Mandla and Deogarh[2] declares that for the south of the Central Provinces, namely Chanda and Bastar, the record of events is so meagre and inconsistent that he despaired of compiling a local history of any kind. He evidently considers the historical data contained in C. B. Lucie-Smith's *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Chanda District, Central Provinces*, 1869, entirely unreliable and based on late Brahmanical fabrications of a kind similar to the Ramnagar inscription of Mandla whose trustworthiness he has convincingly refuted.[3] The chronicle of the Chanda Rajas, as outlined by Lucie-Smith, is no doubt largely legendary and the date 870 A.D. for the establishment of the Gond dynasty as well as most of the subsequent dates belong to the realm of imagination. Notwithstanding its character as a fairly recent fabrication by Brahmins attached to the court of Chanda, the chronicle contains,

1. I do not propose to add to the unconvincing derivations of the names 'Gond' and 'Gondwana,' these appearing for the first time in literature, and confess that I have to offer no explanation for these terms, which have their origin in some of the Gondi dialects.

2. *The Raj Gond Mahoraja of the Satpura Hills*, Nagpur, 1925.

3. Op. cit. pp. 13-24.—The Ramnagar inscription, which was found 10 miles south-east of Mandla, is written in Sanskrit and professes to give the family tree of the Gond Rajas of Garha, tracing back the dynasty through 54 generations.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

175 a number of traditions which are probably of considerable age and not entirely without foundation. Thus it reports that the first Gond Raja of Chanda was of Atram clan and that the fortress of Manikgarh, which lies in the hills of Rajura Taluq, was his main stronghold. Of one of his descendants, Hir Sing the chronicle says that he first "levied an impost on occupied ground," while "previous to his accession land had been like air, untaxed and free to all";—this seems to reflect the memory of a time when the Gonds paid not land-revenue but nominal tribute to their tribal chieftains. The stories of various encounters between the later Rajas of Chanda and the Emperors of Delhi are in line with the epics still sung by the Pardhans, the bards of the Raj Gonds of Adilabad, but we reach firmer ground when we find Chanda mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl. Chanda, like the other Gond states, then formed part of the Moghul empire, and when during Shah Jahan's reign Khan Dauran undertook an expedition against rebellious Gonds of Deogarh, he was reinforced by troops of the Gond Raja of Chanda. In Aurangzeb's times both Chanda and Deogarh were included in the *subah* of Berar, and Sir A. Lyall mentions that according to old revenue papers of 1666, "tribute was collected from the zamindars of those tracts, that is the Gond Rajas, and carried to the treasury at Aurangabad."[1] Some of the Gonds of the Adilabad highlands still possess patents (*sanads*) bestowed upon their ancestors by Aurangzeb, and according to these documents Utnur Taluq belonged then to the *subah* of Bidar and not to Berar. After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D. the Gond Rajas seem to have repudiated their allegiance to the Emperor of Delhi, but their newly gained independence was short-lived. They were far too weak and too divided among themselves to resist the rising power of the Marathas. Soon after Raghoji Bhonsla of Berar had established himself at Nagpur in 1739, he undertook the conquest of the Gond States and in 1749 the city of Chanda fell to a besieging Maratha army. For two years a shadow of power remained to the Gond Raja, but in 1751 the state was incorporated in the Bhonsla Kingdom, and the ruler Nilkant Shah was imprisoned. In recounting the end of the Chanda kingdom Lucie-Smith pays tribute to the achievement of its ancient dynasty: "Originally petty Chiefs of a savage tribe, they spread their sway over a wide dominion, reclaiming and peopling the wild forests in which they dwelt, and, save a nominal allegiance to the Delhi throne, preserving their soil for nine hundred years inviolate of foreign rule.[2] When at length they fell, they left, if we forget the few last years, a well-governed and contented kingdom, adorned with admirable works of engineering skill, and prosperous to a point no after time has reached.

1. *Gazetteer for the Hyderabad Assigned Districts (Berar)*, edited in 1870 by A. Lyall.

2. As mentioned above the chronology accepted by Lucie Smith is subject to doubt, but though no definite period for their reign can be given, the prominence of the chiefly house of Chanda is certainly of considerable antiquity.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

Other dynasties in the great drama of Indian story have played parts far more striking, but few have deserved so well of those they governed as the ancient house whose power passed away with Nilkant Shah."[1] The respect commanded by the chiefly house among their Gond subjects can be judged by the influence the rajas retained even when their secular power came to an end, for they continued to function as tribal headmen and their authority in all questions concerning custom and ritual remained unimpaired. 175

Until 1853, when the whole of the Nagpur State was taken under British administration, Raghoji's descendants ruled over Chanda, but the tract west of the Wardha river, containing the important fortress of Manikgarh and constituting to-day the Rajura Taluq, was ceded to the *Subahs* of the Deccan by the treaty of Deogaon in 1803 A.D.,[2] and has ever since formed part of the Nizam's Dominions.

From the scanty historical information available on the Chanda Kingdom it is not clear how far it extended towards the south west. Manikgarh Fort is frequently mentioned as one of the main strongholds of the Chanda Rajas, but no data appear to exist on the rest of the hill-tracts of the present Adilabad District. A family of Kumra clan now living in Utnur taluq claims descent from Gond chieftains who once held the Mahur fortress and it is possible that the Chanda Rajas exerted at one time or other overlordship over the whole of the Gond country between the Penganga and the Godavari, but written history affords no proof for such an assumption and we will have to reconsider this question later in the light of local tradition. For certain we know only that in the years before the conclusion of the treaty of Deogaon, the territory now forming the taluqs of Sirpur, Chinnur, Asifabad, Lakshetipet, Utnur, Adilabad and Both, *i.e.*, practically the whole of the Adilabad District except the taluqs of Rajura and Nirmal was included in Berar,[3] which was then jointly administered by the Nizam and the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur. We know too that this territory contains a number of ruined forts, inferior it is true, to that of Manikgarh, but not unlike it in style, and that these are believed to have been the seats of

1. *Op. cit.*, pp. 69, 70.

2. C. U. Wills, *British Relations with the Nagpur State in the 18th century*. Nagpur 1924, p. 248-251.

3. Under the Bahmani Kings the province of Berar was larger than it is to-day and extended as far South as the Godavari. In 1480 A.D. during the reign of Mahammad Shah III and the prime-ministership of the famous Persian Mahmud Gawan, it was divided into two sub-provinces: Gawil and Mahur. The latter included the whole of the present Yeotmal District as well as the tract between the Penganga, Pranhita and Godavari Rivers, now forming the Adilabad District of Hyderabad. During the disturbances following the execution of Mahmud Gawan, the Governor of Gawil declared his independence and founded the Imad Shahi kingdom of Berar, annexing also the sub-province of Mahur, which had remained a separate administrative unit only for fifteen years. Cf. Syed Abdur Razzaque, "Divisions of Berar," *Shivalakhram Varshik*, Vol. I, 1944, pp. 47-51. It is very unlikely, however, that the Imad Shahi Kings were able to establish effective rule in the hill-tracts of Adilabad. Nothing is known about their relations with the neighbouring Gond Rajas of Chanda, nor about the circumstances under which the present Rajura Taluq with the fort of Manikgarh was again separated from Berar and included in the domain of the Chanda Kings.

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AW32 Gond AW32

175 local Gond Rajas. As to the political status of these petty chieftains *vis-à-vis* the Raja of Chanda on the one side and the Nizam and the Rajas of Nagpur on the other, the chronicles are silent. None of the early European travellers whose records shed a certain amount of light on other parts of the Deccan seem to have visited this hill-tract, and the confusion on Rennell's map of 1780 A.D.[1] shows that it was then still largely *terra incognita*.[2] However, a short reference to the present Adilabad District is contained in the account of Captain J. T. Blunt, who travelled in 1795 through Chanda and Bastar and then crossed the Godavari into the Samasthan of the Raja of Paloncha.[3] He mentions a trade route running from Chanda through Chinnur and Paloncha to Rajahmundry; he did not follow this himself but kept further east, "skirting along the east side of the Seerpur Pargunnah" which evidently corresponds to the present Sirpur Taluq. According to Blunt "the districts adjoining to the eastern parts of the *Mahratta* territory," through which he passed on that occasion, "were at this time under Jukut Row, a *Goand* chief who had formerly been the principal *Rajah* in the southern parts of *Goandwannah*, and who held them as a Jagheer from the *Berar* government.....He is a *surdar* of five hundred horse in the *Mahratta service*, and was at this time absent, in command of an expedition against the districts of Adilabad and Neermul, belonging to the Nizam: these are separated from *Chanda* only by a range of hills; the passes of which had been already secured, to prevent supplies of grain being carried into the enemy's country."[4] At the time of Captain Blunt's journey the Nizam was at war with the Maratha Empire, and it appears from his account that the Gonds of the frontier districts were drawn into the struggle. This tallies with the local tradition among the Gonds of Utnur Taluq, who tell of a war in which they fought on the side of the Subedar of Nirmal against the Maratha Kings of Nagpur. Another remark of Captain Blunt tends also to show that these frontier tracts, then only lightly held by the Nizam's forces were often the scene of fighting and unrest. Thus, referring to the present taluq of Chinnur, he writes as follows: "The Purgunnah I should first enter upon, subject to the *Nizam*, was Chinnoor; the capital town of which, bearing the same name, is situated on the north bank of the river Godavari. I was informed that this was the only inhabited place in the whole district, for the Zameendar who rented the country, having rebelled about seven

1. Reproduced in C. U. Wills, *British Relations with the Nagpur State in the 18th Century*, Nagpur 1926.

2. As late as 1859 it was stated before the Royal Asiatic Society that "at present the Gondwana highlands and jungle comprise such a large tract of unexplored country that they form quite an oasis on our maps." Quoted in *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Central Provinces*, Calcutta, 1908.

3. "Narrative of a Route from Chunarpur to Yettapuddum in the Ellore Circar," reprinted in *Early European Travellers in the Nagpur Territories*, Nagpur 1924.

4. *Op. cit.*, pp. 143, 144.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

years before, the *Nizam* had sent a large body of troops to subdue him; but not being able to get possession of his person, had laid waste the country, and had encouraged his vassal to pillage it likewise. This warfare had continued about four years, when the refractory Zameendar was at last betrayed by his own adherents, and murdered; after which all his strongholds were reduced. But the calamity occasioned by this scene of rapine, and murder, fell heaviest upon the peasantry, who had fled and sought refuge in the neighbouring districts and, for the last three years, there had not been an inhabitant in the whole district, excepting a few matchlockmen in the fort of Chinnoor."[1] We do not know whether the Zamindar of Chinnoor was a Gond chief, but there can be no doubt that the turbulent conditions in this and other frontier areas had very serious repercussions on the local Gond population, which probably withdrew more and more into the hills and forests.[2]

None of the standard works on the history of Hyderabad contains any reference to the developments in the area now constituting the Adilabad District subsequent to the treaty of Deogaon in 1803, when the important taluq of Rajura was added to the Nizam's Dominions, and all my attempts to obtain relevant information from unpublished records or historical treatises in Urdu, have remained unsuccessful. Such records may exist in collections of old Persian documents, but to unearth them and reconstruct with their help the history of the district in the early 19th century would be a lengthy task.[3] It is safe to assume, however, that Hyderabad rule did not bring about any immediate change in the existing order. Until 1866 the present district of Adilabad was a sub-district consisting of two divisions: the taluq of Adilabad, then called Edlabad, and a division comprising the taluqs of Sirpur and Rajura; the revenues of Edlabad and Sirpur were farmed out and Rajura was a jagir taluq granted for the payment of troops. Thus Government control was comparatively light and interfered little with the customary mode of life of the population. The officer at the head of the district was called *Amaldar* and very old men still talk of the days of the *Amaldari* when the Gonds enjoyed the use of the land untrammelled by forest-laws, and the revenue was, at least in the hill-tracts, no more than a nominal cess.

But gradually the administration was tightened, communications were improved and Government encouraged the influx of new settlers into tracts hitherto the undisputed domain of the aboriginals. The effects

1. Op. cit., p. 142.

2. Cf. R. V. Russel's remark on the fate of the Gonds under Maratha rule: "..... the Gonds were driven to take refuge in the inaccessible highlands, where the Marathas continued to pillage and harass them, until they obtained an acknowledgement of their supremacy and the promise of an annual tribute. Under such treatment the hill Gonds soon lost every vestige of civilization, and became the most treacherous savages depicted by travellers of this period....." (*Imperial Gazetteer of India, Central Provinces*, Calcutta 1908, p. 139.)

3. Mr. W. V. Colgan, I.C.S., tells me that he failed to find in the old records of the Hyderabad Residency any reference to conditions in the country which is now the Adilabad District.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

175 on the economic and social position of the Gonds were far reaching, and the repercussions attendant on the opening up of the District will be discussed in Book II, while reference to the newly established culture-contacts with non-aboriginal immigrants from both Telingana and Marathwara are contained in Chapter III.

162 In 1941 the Gonds of Hyderabad numbered 141,335, which is only a fraction of India's entire Gond population of more than 3,000,000. If we remember that this is about ten times the strength of the aboriginal population of the Australian continent at the time of discovery, and far exceeds in numbers the Red Indians in North America, it is indeed surprising to find only a slender volume of literature on this remarkable group of peoples.

114 The first reference to the Gonds in scientific literature is perhaps the small list of Gondi words communicated in 1844 by Dr. Voysey to the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.[2] A somewhat larger one, together with a few grammatical notes was given in 1847 by Dr. O. Manager,[3] and the following year B. H. Hodgson published in the same journal a comparative vocabulary of Dravidian dialects containing among others Gondi and Oraon words.[4] Fuller, though by no means complete, are the grammar and vocabulary of the Gondi spoken in the Chindwara District, compiled by the Rev. James Dawson in 1872.[5]

But the earliest ethnological account of the Gonds is contained in the Rev. Stephen Hislop's remarkable *Papers on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*, edited by Sir R. Temple in 1866.[6] This book, though somewhat confusing in the presentation of material, is a mine of information for the initiated, and will be of permanent value for its very full version of a cycle of Gond myths both in Gondi and English. Fairly lengthy notes on various sections of Gonds are found in the administrative reports and papers of several of Hislop's contemporaries, notably Captain C. I. R. Glassford,[7] Major C. B. Lucie-Smith,[8] Sir R. Temple,[9] Sir C. Grant,[10] and Col. Ward,[11] but the information contained in these is of very uneven character. The next impor-

1. Vol. XIII. p. 19.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI. p. 286.
3. "The Aborigines of Central India," *Ibid.*, Vol. XVII, Part I, pp. 330—338.
4. *Ibid.* Vol. XXXIX, pp. 108—117, 173—198.
5. Nagpur 1866.
6. *Report on the Dependency of Berar*. 1862, Selection from Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department No. XXXIX, Calcutta 1863.—*Report on Land Revenue Settlement of Upper Godavari District*, Nagpur 1868.
7. *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Chanda District*, Nagpur 1870.
8. *Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces up to August 1862*, (Reprint) Nagpur 1923.—*Report on the Zamindaris and other Petty Chieftainships in the Central Provinces in 1863* (Reprint) Nagpur 1923.
9. *Gazetteer of the Central Provinces*, Nagpur 1870.
10. *Mandla Settlement Report 1868*.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

tant contribution to the ethnology of the Gonds were the articles by the Rev. J. Cain, who spent a lifetime among the Koyas of the Godavari valley and published reliable, though limited information on their culture and their peculiar dialect, which is strongly influenced by Telugu.[1]

After the publication of these pioneer works interest in the Gonds waned and except for some useful notes in Captain J. Forsyth's *The Highlands of Central India*,[2] the usual paragraphs on population in various District Gazetteers published in the early years of the 20th century, and in the Census of India, 1901, little of any relevance was written on the tribe during the next fifty years. Then followed the publication of Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, which contains in Volume IV,[3] a discussion of the position of Gondi among the Dravidian languages, and of E. Thurston's *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*[4] with a useful article on the Koyas. More complete than any previous account of Gonds is R. V. Russell's article 'Gond' in *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*[5] but even this suffers to some extent from the faults of all such compilations, and, though full of interesting details, fails to draw a clear distinction between the individual Gond tribes.

C. G. Chevenix Trench's *Grammar of Gondi*,[6] on the other hand, is a work of great thoroughness and is as yet the most systematic description of a Gondi dialect. While confined to the language of Betul and the surrounding area, it is also a useful guide to the study of other Gondi dialects, and its collection of legends, stories and songs lends it considerable ethnological value.

Another approach to the Gond problem was made by C. U. Wills, the author of *The Raj-Gond Maharajas of the Satpura Hills*[7] and the *Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Mediaeval Chattisgarh*.[8] Wills' writings are mainly based on early Mohammedan sources, and throughout his history of the Gond states of the Central Provinces, he relies only on the authority of written documents, excluding, as it would seem consciously, all ethnological material. His book on the Raj-Gond Maharajas, while an excellent compilation of old records, suffers there-

1. "The Bhadrachalam Taluka, Godavari District, S. India" *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V. 1876.—"The Bhadrachalam and Rekapalli Taluks" *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. VIII, 1879, and Vol. X. 1881.—"The Koi a Southern Tribe of the Gonds." *Journal Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XIII, 1881.

2. New edition, London 1889.—Forsyth gives in this book a poetical version of the Linga myth which is based on Hislop's text.

3. *Munda and Dravidian Languages*. Calcutta 1906.

4. Madras 1909.

5. London 1916. Vol. III, pp. 39-143.

6. Madras 1919.

7. Nagpur 1913.

8. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XV. 1919, pp. 197-262.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

fore from a certain one-sidedness; it does not, for instance, give even the clan-names of the Gond rajas of Garha-Mandla, Deogarh and Chanda.

The Census reports of 1931 contain various useful notes on the Gonds,[1] and among them a detailed description of the Muria's dormitory-system by W. V. Grigson. But it was not until 1938 that the same author gave us with his book *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*[2] the first full-scale monograph on any section of the Gond race. In the Introduction to this important volume, which puts the Bastar Gonds at last on the ethnographic map, J. H. Hutton expresses astonishment "that Indian administrators and British anthropologists should have had to wait a century for any detailed authoritative account of the Gonds of Central India." This sentiment must be shared by all who consider that during that same century numerous ethnological and anthropological expeditions passed the shores of India on their way to the Malayan Archipelago, the South Sea Islands and Australia, all of which are to-day ethnologically far better known than the mainland of India. "What one regrets most," continues Professor Hutton, "is that an early study of the Gonds might have prevented much suffering and many misfortunes, at least, that is, if it had led to the taking of measures in their interests such as Mr. Grigson was able to initiate in Bastar State during the term of his office there as Administrator and Diwan."

Grigson's book stimulated further research among Gonds both inside and outside Bastar, and recent years have seen the publication of various articles and papers by D. N. Majumdar[3] and M. P. Buradkar[4] and of an excellent grammar of the Maria language by A. N. Mitchell.[5] But by far the most important contribution to Gond studies since the publication of Grigson's monograph has come from Verrier Elwin. Already his earlier popular books[6] have given us a vivid picture of the Gonds of the Central Provinces, while his monographs *The Baiga* and *The Agaria*[7] contain many references to Gond custom. *Maria Murder and Suicide*[8] is a fascinating account of Gond life and death in Bastar,

1. 'Notes on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces,' *Census of India* 1931, Vol. I, Part III, Section B.—W. H. Shoobert, *ibidem*, Vol. XII, Central Provinces and Berar, Part I, Report.

2. London, 1938.

3. *Tribal Cultures and Acculturation*, Presidential Address, Anthropology Section of the Indian Science Congress, 1939.—'Racial Affiliations of the Gonds of the Central Provinces,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal*, Vol. VII, 1941, pp. 35-56.

4. 'Totemism among the Gonds,' *Man in India*, Vol. XX, 1940, pp. 114-143, 268-289.—Kinship among the Gonds,' *Nagpur University Journal*, 1940, No. 6, pp. 147-180.

5. *A Grammar of Maria Gondi*, Jagdalpur 1942.

6. *Leaves from the Jungle*, London 1936;—*Phulmat of the Hills, a tale of the Gonds*, London 1937;—*A Cloud that's Dragonish*, London 1938.

7. Bombay 1942.

8. Bombay 1943.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

and many of Elwin's recent articles deal partly or entirely with Gonds.[1] Numerous specimens of the oral literature of Gondwana are recorded in Elwin's excellent collections *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* and *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*[2] and Shamrao Hivale, the co-author of the latter book, has made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Gond culture by his monograph *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbhada Valley*.[3] But the most important work so far written on any Gond tribe is Verrier Elwin's monumental volume, *The Muria and their Gotul*.[4]

Grigson's and Elwin's great monographs both deal with the Gonds of Bastar, and no comparable account exists of the Raj Gonds of the Central Provinces and Hyderabad.[5] While perhaps less colourful than the hill-folks of Bastar, they occupy so important and central a position among the Gondi speaking tribes that lacking a detailed knowledge of Raj Gond culture and tradition we seem far from a solution of the Gond problem.

It was this idea which first led me to the study of the Raj Gonds in the country between the Godavari and the Penganga. When I had completed my work among the Hill Reddis of the Eastern Ghats it might have seemed logical to embark on a study of the Koyas, who are the immediate neighbours of the Reddis both on the Hyderabad and on the British side of the Godavari. For this would have rounded off the work among those aboriginal tribes of the Nizam's Dominions which lie entirely within the Telugu sphere. But judging from my limited experience of Koyas, both Gondi and Telugu speaking, I felt that it would be difficult to understand their cultural life without some knowledge of Gond culture in an area less exposed to the influence of a dominant alien civilization. So I turned northwards to where the Adilabad District, with its more than 70,000 Gonds, promised a rich field for ethnological research. I hoped that a study of these Gonds would lead more directly to the heart of the Gond problem than work among the Koyas on the periphery of the Gondi speaking area.

In December 1941 my wife and I arrived in Asifabad and undertook an informative tour through the three taluqs Asifabad, Utnur and Rajura. Travelling on foot westwards through the Pedda Vagu valley as far as Kerimeri we gained a first impression of villages where Gonds

1. 'I married a Gond,' *Man in India*, Vol. XX, 1940, pp. 228-235;—'Primitive Ideas on Menstruation and the Climacteric in Central India,' in *Essays in Anthropology presented to R. B. Sarat Chandra Roy*, Lucknow 1942, pp. 141—157.—'Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Bengal*, Vol. IX., 1943, pp. 99-148.—'The Attitude of Indian Aboriginals to Sexual Impotence,' *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII, 1943, pp. 127-146.—'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods,' *Man*, Vol. XLIII, 1943, pp. 97-104.—'Salt-Working among the Muria of Bastar State,' *Man* Vol. XLIV, 1944, pp. 38-41.

2. Bombay 1944.

3. Bombay 1945.

4. Bombay 1947.

5. Syed Siraj-ul-Hassan's *The Castes and Tribes of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions* (Bombay 1920) contains only a brief article on the Raj Gonds of Adilabad District, pp. 216-232.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

114 live side by side with Kolams as well as with non-aboriginal settlers, then climbed to the higher plateau and were fortunate enough to watch a clan-god feast at Pangri. On our way from Pangri to Utnur we passed Marlavai and decided on this village as our future base-camp. Early
[54] in February we went to the Keslapur Jatra, a great Gond feast and fair, held annually fifteen miles north-west of Utnur. From there we turned north and then east into Rajura Taluq, where we visited tht famous fort of Manikgarh, now deserted and overgrown by jungle. Camping in
[54] various villages of the higher plateau we gathered piecemeal information from both Gonds and Kolams, and by the end of our tour realized that a study of the aboriginals of Adilabad might lead to the very heart of the Gond problem.

123 A sligltly embarrassing circumstance during our first tour was the rapidly spreading rumour that I was a recruiting officer and had come to take young Gonds to the war. The general excitement following the Japanese invasion of Malaya, had reached even the Gonds and they interpreted my taking of notes and photographs as a preliminary selection of all the fittest men. And when at the same time the Director-General of Revenue visited Adilabad and Utnur, they took our tours for a concerted movement and thought the lorries with his camp-kit were meant to carry off the recruits. Many hid in the forest and the fields when we passed by and in the villages it was difficult to establish confidence.

But once settled in Marlavai in a house built in Gond style just outside the village, we were soon faced by a difficulty of exactly the opposite nature. For now rumour ran that I was a revenue officer, specially sent to the District to investigate the grievances of Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods, and to give land to all those whom the influx of new settlers had rendered landless. All through the hot weather and the greater part of the rains aboriginals from all parts of the district, some in delegations of thirty and forty, flocked to Marlavai, all wanting their difficulties heard and remedied. Unable to give them any concrete assistance, I had at least to listen to their tales of woe, and many a day passed when the only anthropological information swelling my note-books was the distressingly monotonous account of a culture-contact resulting invariably in the expropriation and economic enslavement of the aboriginal.[1]

114 From March to the middle of December Marlavai was our headquarters, but several tours led us to the surrounding villages and ultimately to the Tilani area as far as Rompalli and Mangi. We left the district at Christmas and returned again early in March 1943, when we toured the taluqs of Both, Kinwat and Adilabad, reaching Marlavai in the middle of April. While in Hyderabad I had succeeded in obtaining the sanction of H.E.H. the Nizam's Government for a Gond Education

1. A full account of the conditions then prevailing in the Adilabad District is contained in my reports and diaries published under the title *Tribal Hyderabad* by the Revenue Department, Government of H.E.H. the Nizam, Hyderabad 1945.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

Scheme under which instruction in reading and writing Gondi and later Marathi and Urdu was to be provided for both children and adults. On my return to Marlavai we started work on a small scale with a school where adult Gonds were to be trained as teachers and village-officers. The work on this Scheme kept us in Marlavai until the end of January 1944, and it was there that most of the chapters contained in Book I were written. After an absence of five months in Assam, we returned in the rains for a short period and this gave me the opportunity of checking my Gondi texts with the help of the Headmaster of the Marlavai Training Centre Mr. S. B. Jogalkar and the Gond teachers, some of whom had meanwhile opened schools in their own villages.[1]

The division of the present work into two books was necessitated by its bulk and by the fact that a sudden opportunity for two expeditions into one of the least known tribal areas of the North-East Frontier prevented us from concentrating on the completion of the second part.

In the presentation of facts we have departed from the usual order of a straight monograph; instead of grouping them under such headings as material culture, agriculture, or religion, we have attempted an arrangement which, we hope, will give a better idea of Gond life as an organic entity. After the introductory chapters, which describe the physical and cultural environment, we have set a section outlining the mythical background of Gond culture and the cult of the clan-deities; for in this cult and the sacred myths lies the mainspring of the social order. Then follows a section describing the economic and ritual activities of a village community throughout the cycle of the year, and the three chapters of this section contain also most of the information on agriculture, the basis of Gond economics. Book II will open with an account of the phases of life, from childhood to death, and this will set the stage for a general discussion of the social organization and the principles of Gond religion, all details of ritual having been described already in their proper setting. The old feudal system looms still in the background of the social order, and I am attempting a reconstruction based on the existing remnants and local traditions contained mainly in the stories and songs of Pardhans. Read together with Wills' history of the Gond States of the Central Provinces this will perhaps give a certain idea of political and social life prevailing in Gondwana throughout the greater part of mediæval times.

The final chapters of the book will be concerned with the developments of the last fifty years, when increased contact with other populations broke up the Gonds' feudal organization and land-hungry immigrants drove many families from the lands where they had lived since the times of their ancestors. It is a dismal tale of the decline of a once proud and happy people, the loss of economic freedom, and the birth

[1] Cf. my article 'Aboriginal Education in Hyderabad.' *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. V., 1944.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

of a timid and resigned outlook in place of the manly spirit of old. Finally I propose to discuss the results of the more liberal policy towards the aboriginals which H.E.H. the Nizam's Government has pursued since 1944, and to outline the principles and the first stages of the Gond Education Scheme, which is designed to help the Gonds in the struggle for existence and to restore to them self-respect and pride in their own ancient culture.

In an account of a culture as rich and complex as that of the Raj Gonds the anthropologist must needs concentrate on certain aspects, and in this book I have given first place to the Gonds' mythology and their complex ritual, sanctioned and sustained in almost every phase by mythical precedents. This part of Gond culture is rapidly disintegrating and its study, still possible in the hills of Utnur and Asifabad Taluqs, would come too late in the more open parts of the District. Problems of psychology and the more intimate matters of the individual's life, on the other hand, are only fleetingly touched upon, but I believe that changes in this sphere are not as rapid and the time left for their study is consequently far less limited.

Although this book is not a treatise on linguistics, Gondi texts of some length have found a place in many chapters. I noted them when collecting my material and as they are the first recorded specimens of the pecular Gondi spoken in Adilabad, I do not feel justified in withholding them from the student of Indian languages. All have been checked and rechecked with several informants, but this is no guarantee of absolute accuracy, for Gonds, like the speakers of most unwritten languages, are often careless about rules of grammar and not very sensitive to slight slips in a text read out to them. The recording, moreover, is not in accordance with the exigent demands of modern phonetics, which only the trained linguist can fulfil. Consonants are used with their values in English, and vowels with their values in Italian, long and short signs being added only where confusion might otherwise arise between two words of similar sound. Diacritical signs have been used only in the consonants ṭ, ṛ and ḥ. While the dental t, rendered by the Nagri character त , is transcribed by simple t, the cerebral t rendered in Nagri by ट, is transcribed by ṭ. Similarly the soft r, र in Nagri, is transcribed r, and the hard r, ड़ in Nagri, as ṛ. The letter ḥ stands for a sound closely resembling the German ch in Bach (pronounced like the composer). This sound occurs mainly in words of Marathi origin, and in such words most Gonds not familiar with Marathi pronounce it not as sh, but h; examples are *goḥti* (word, speech) and *paḥti* (favour) pronounced in pure Marathi as *goshti* and *pashti*; but I have transcribed these and similar words as pronounced by the Gonds in the hills.

Following the spelling of the Linguistic Survey and Trench's Grammar, I have used *iv* for all *v*-sounds, except in proper names occurring in the English text, and in words borrowed from Hindi in which *v* is

1: Grigson G-5 · (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

rail-head below the Eastern Ghat mountains to Jeypore and the Bastar border was continued thence to Jagdalpur; subsequently roads have gradually been driven westward to Dantewara, Bijapur, Kutru and Bhopalpatnam, and southward to Sukma and Konta; the most recent development has been many miles of forest roads, constructed either as feeder roads to the Raipur and Rajnandgaon roads, or to link up the forests of Dantewara and the south with the Godavari at Tarlagudam, Cherla and Dummagudam or the Kolab-Sabari at Mismagudam and Konta. The Raipur road is now motorable throughout the year, and there is a daily mail and passenger service by it to Kanker and Dhamtari. A railway connexion with the new Raipur-Vizianagram line has been surveyed, and would have been under construction but for the world-wide financial depression. The revenue of the State has risen from about Rs. 30,000 in 1855, then received in kind or in cowry shells at a rate of 2,880 to the rupee, to well over a million rupees.

So the old order is doomed; and with the motor-bus abroad in the land and scores of aboriginals every month seeking work on the public works of the State, in the Assam tea gardens or in the towns of the Godavari valley, with the railway administration feeling this last great blank of 300 miles from Raipur to Salur by 250 from Titlagarh in Kalahandi State to Singareni in Hyderabad a slur to be removed as soon as funds permit, change comes ever faster. My successors and I, like our predecessors, are guilty of accelerating change; but we can on the one hand plead that when we came a return to the old isolation was not practical politics, and on the other that we have tried before it was too late to strengthen and revive the old tribal *panchayat* organization and restore its jurisdiction in civil and in all but serious criminal offences, to check the drunkenness made rampant by a bad excise system, to prevent the further bestowal of aboriginal villages on alien *thekadars* (lessees) and to make the post of village headman one of honour and responsibility instead of one to be held reluctantly by some dummy with no influence in the village, to abolish *bisaha*, to deprive village lessees of the right of taking forced labour, to minimize the right of officials to take it and to regulate the still necessary State demands for road and other labour so as to inconvenience the cultivator as little as possible, to see that it is paid for, and to abolish bondservice. Much of great interest could be written on the effects and reactions of the administrative measures of the last fifty years sketched in these last few pages. But the purpose of this book is to place on record while there is yet time an account of the way of life prevalent among the Maria tribes of Bastar, perhaps now the most primitive

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

tribes between the Godavari and the Ganges. Little has been written about them, or indeed about the great Gond race as a whole. My experience has been in going from the backwoods of Bastar to a modern Indian district like Nagpur that even there there is a great substratum of primitive thought, religion and practice which has been illuminated for me by what I learnt in Bastar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PREFACE

THE subject of this book is the ghotul, the village dormitory, the bothie, the bachelors' hall—*Jünglingshaus* is an attractive German word used recently by Ruben—of the Muria of Bastar State. Similar institutions are widely distributed among communities of the Austro-Asiatic cultures, though none have been studied in sufficient detail for full comparison. But on the existing evidence it seems probable that the Bastar ghotul is one of the most highly developed and carefully organized in the world. For what is a village guardroom for the Naga, a boys' club among the Uraon, a refuge for temporary sexual association in Indonesia, is for the Muria the centre of social and religious life.

The study of an institution that is related functionally to every aspect of a tribe's life presents certain technical difficulties of presentation. The culture pattern must be developed in due order; but this means that there will be many references in the earlier chapters that can only be explained later on. A book of this kind, where everything fits in, which describes a culture that is integrated and intelligible, has to be read in bulk—as it were—rather than in sequence. For the reader's convenience, therefore, I give here a brief introductory account of the ghotul in the light of which Part I must be read.

The Muria ghotul is an institution, tracing its origin to Lingo Pen, a famous cult-hero of the Gond, of which all the unmarried boys and girls of the tribe must be members. This membership is carefully organized; after a period of testing, boys and girls are initiated and given a special title which carries with it a graded rank and social duties. Leaders are appointed to organise and discipline the society; throughout this book I call the boys' leader the Sirdar and the girls' leader the Belosa. Boy members are known as chelik and girl members as motiari. The relations between chelik and motiari are governed by the type of ghotul to which they belong. Two distinct types of organization are recognized. In the older, classical, type of ghotul, boys and girls pair off in a more or less permanent relationship which lasts till marriage. They are often 'married' and cohabit in the dormitory for several years. In the more modern form of ghotul, such exclusive associations are forbidden and partners must constantly be changed.

Chelik and motiari have important duties to perform on all social occasions. The boys act as acolytes at festivals, the girls as bridesmaids at weddings. Both dance before the clan-god and at the great fairs. They form a choir at the funerals of important people. Their games and dances enliven village life and redeem it from the crushing monotony that is its normal characteristic in other parts of India.

The intimate association of the ghotul with every aspect of Muria life means, of course, that we must study the whole of that life in less or greater detail. The ghotul must be put in its place. For this reason I have divided the book into two Parts. Part I gives the setting and background, Part II describes the life of the chelik and motiari in detail.

In Part I, I begin with a description of the geopolitical background of the tribe, and give a brief account of the three elements that compose it—the Dhoria, who are Hill Maria now settled in the plains, the Muria immigrants from the north, and the very old aboriginal population of eastern Kondagaon. In Chapter II, I describe the economic life of the Muria; the ghotul is only a night club; all day its members are engrossed in the quest for food and drink. The chelik are kept busy in both axe- and plough-cultivation, hunting, fishing,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943

AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

Muria

PREFACE

[2] This book is a contribution to social anthropology rather than to the study of crime. For many of the tragedies here are not crimes in any intelligible sense, though in our present state of dealing with such matters we treat them as if they were. In the second place, I have naturally approached the subject from the angle that was most familiar to me. I am neither an administrator, a lawyer nor a policeman. In dealing with crime this is a great disadvantage. It is specially so in India where these simple village crimes offer few problems of detection, and where it is impossible to study the general reaction of society through the columns of the daily press or in such revealing impulses of compassion as petitions for reprieve. It is only rarely that anything like a detective problem with clues and counter-clues is set for the police. It is equally rare for interesting points of law to arise during a trial. In the great majority of cases the accused confesses. But this does not mean that these aboriginal crimes have no importance. It is of absorbing sociological and psychological interest to study the reasons that drive unsophisticated, primitive men to kill and wound their fellows; and their behaviour afterwards, as well as the conduct of everyone concerned, is of almost equal importance.

184 While I was collecting material for my book *The Muria and their Ghotul*, I was greatly struck by the difference in the incidence of crime between them and the great Maria tribe to the south. For homicide the annual incidence to the million is only 21 among the Muria, while it is 69 among the Bison-horn Maria; for suicide it is 22 against 53. In the last 10 years there have only been 21 Muria murders, and a large number of these have occurred either on the boundaries of the State or in the Mardapal Pargana in the extreme south of the Muria area, bordering on the Maria territory. The Muria differ from the Maria in the quite extraordinary absence of jealousy among them, in their lack of attachment to property and personal possessions, in their very strong civic and social instincts, in their gentleness and kindness. I believe that this difference is largely due to the

[p. xiv]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

past taken the title of Dorla. Others again are known as Koya, and a few call themselves Gond. When I was in Konta, the very wild Maria there said, 'We are not Maria. That is the name of the uncivilized fellows in Dantewara'. When I was in Dantewara, the equally wild Maria there indignantly rejected the old name which, they said, was only properly given to the savages of Konta. The expression 'Bison-horn Maria' is an obvious linguistic makeshift. Another name for the tribe is Dandami Maria. But I have never heard this used by the people themselves, and many do not know what it means. The name 'Bison-horn Maria' is derived from the tribe's custom of using a magnificent head-dress of bison-horns for their marriage dances, and possibly 'Tallagulda Maria' or even 'Sing Maria' (an expression in actual use) would preserve both the descriptiveness of the title and linguistic propriety. But for the time being I have continued to use the very convenient term, Bison-horn Maria, and throughout this book it will be understood that, wherever the word 'Maria' is used without qualification, it is to the Bison-horn and not the Hill variety of the tribe that I refer.

It will be evident, however, that official records, which are not concerned with scientific classification, were not likely to preserve these nice distinctions between one tribe and another, and I was at first provided with a very large number of files, many of which had nothing to do with the Bison-horn Maria at all. I think it is not unlikely that the bad reputation of this tribe for violence is, to some extent, due to the fact that a number of people who do not belong to it are included when statistics are compiled. However, at last, after much sifting and sorting, I found that I had a collection of 103 records of Bison-horn Maria homicides covering the years 1921 to 1941. During this period there must have been nearly 250 such cases altogether, but some of the files had been eliminated and others for one reason or another were not available. However, 103 was a very fair sample. For convenience I omitted the last 3 cases, and was thus left with a set of 100 taken entirely at random, distributed throughout the period under review and taken from every part of the area.

It was rather more difficult to get records of suicide, for

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

127 these were not kept at the headquarters of the State, but
121 distributed in the police stations and many of them had been eliminated. But the State Superintendent of Police called in as many aboriginal files as could be found, and again after much sifting I found myself with exactly 50 unselected Bison-horn Maria suicide records. These extended over a period of 10 years.

114 Between 1935 and 1942 I made many tours in this enchanting land among these enchanting people. On the earlier tours I was accompanied by my friend Mr Shamrao Hivale whose amazing sympathy and insight helped me to catch my first vision of Maria culture. Later I had the support of my wife who, being herself a Gond, was able to get quickly in touch with the people and immediately established a friendly atmosphere. Particularly in the later tours I tried to see as many scenes of violence as possible, to talk to released convicts and to discover the general attitude of a village towards any crime that had been committed within its boundaries. In Aranpur I stood beside the still warm ashes of the ritually-cremated clothes of Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged in jail. At Khutepal, I watched Oyami Masa's children playing on the very floor once stained by the blood of his murdered wife. In the forest near Jabeli [211] I had a clearing made so that I could photograph the carved pillar erected in memory of a famous murderer. In Rewali I was visited by a ferocious-looking youth who had twice stood on trial for his life and had twice preserved it. Here too I talked with Hemla Bakka who killed his wife for infidelity and was now unable to get another. In Doriras I saw the grave of the murdered Boti which had been desecrated by [764] Ghasia for the sake of the purse of money which had been buried to help the dead man on his journey to the other world. In the same village I visited the home of Kawasi Borga then serving a life sentence, and talked to his fine sons and his sad pathetic wife.

124 Later I spent many hours in the Jagdalpur Jail talking to Maria who were serving terms of life-imprisonment for homicide. Some of them were as informative as the limits of their psychology allowed, for it must always be remembered that aboriginals are not accustomed to discussing those matters which are of special interest to anthropologists. Other

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

and many of Elwin's recent articles deal partly or entirely with Gonds.[1] Numerous specimens of the oral literature of Gondwana are recorded in Elwin's excellent collections *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* and *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills*[2] and Shamrao Hivale, the co-author of the latter book, has made a valuable contribution to our knowledge of Gond culture by his monograph *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbhada Valley*.[3] But the most important work so far written on any Gond tribe is Verrier Elwin's monumental volume, *The Maria and their Gotul*.[4]

Grigson's and Elwin's great monographs both deal with the Gonds of Bastar, and no comparable account exists of the Raj Gonds of the Central Provinces and Hyderabad.[5] While perhaps less colourful than the hill-folks of Bastar, they occupy so important and central a position among the Gondi speaking tribes that lacking a detailed knowledge of Raj Gond culture and tradition we seem far from a solution of the Gond problem.

It was this idea which first led me to the study of the Raj Gonds in the country between the Godavari and the Penganga. When I had completed my work among the Hill Reddis of the Eastern Ghats it might have seemed logical to embark on a study of the Koyas, who are the immediate neighbours of the Reddis both on the Hyderabad and on the British side of the Godavari. For this would have rounded off the work among those aboriginal tribes of the Nizam's Dominions which lie entirely within the Telugu sphere. But judging from my limited experience of Koyas, both Gondi and Telugu speaking, I felt that it would be difficult to understand their cultural life without some knowledge of Gond culture in an area less exposed to the influence of a dominant alien civilization. So I turned northwards to where the Adilabad District, with its more than 70,000 Gonds, promised a rich field for ethnological research. I hoped that a study of these Gonds would lead more directly to the heart of the Gond problem than work among the Koyas on the periphery of the Gondi speaking area.

In December 1941 my wife and I arrived in Asifabad and undertook an informative tour through the three taluqs Asifabad, Utnur and Rajura. Travelling on foot westwards through the Pedda Vagu valley as far as Kerimeri we gained a first impression of villages where Gonds

1. 'I married a Gond.' *Man in India*, Vol. XX, 1940, pp. 228-253;—'Primitive Ideas on Menstruation and the Climacteric in Central India,' in *Essays in Anthropology presented to R. B. Sarat Chandra Roy*, Lucknow 1942, pp. 141—157.—'Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Bengal*, Vol. IX, 1943, pp. 99-148.—'The Attitude of Indian Aboriginals to Sexual Impotence,' *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII, 1943, pp. 127-146.—'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods,' *Man*, Vol. XLIII, 1943, pp. 97-104.—'Salt-Walking among the Muria of Bastar State,' *Man* Vol. XLIV, 1944, pp. 38-41.

2. Bombay 1944.

3. Bombay 1945.

4. Bombay 1947.

5. Syed Siraj-al-Hassan's *The Castes and Tribes of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions* (Bombay 1920) contains only a brief article on the Raj Gonds of Adilabad District, pp. 216-232.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PREFACE

THE Administration of Bastar State has generously subsidized the publication of this book, and for this practical sympathy I must thank Colonel Meek, the Agent to the Governor-General for the Eastern States, and Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., Administrator of Bastar State. I hope that it will not be the last book to be written about the Marias. More systematic field-work will without doubt correct and supplement many of my statements; I shall be content if my book tempts any trained worker to visit the ethnologically unexplored lands of Bastar and Jeypore.

My four years as Administrator of Bastar State kept me busy in camp and office with administrative problems of all kinds. The primary object of my enquiries was to ascertain grievances, especially those caused by the adoption in a primitive State of criminal, civil and revenue laws framed for British Indian districts some centuries more 'advanced'. In getting the aboriginal to show me his house and his possessions, in watching his domestic and agricultural routine, and in attending his simple social and religious ceremonies I found the readiest path to his confidence and to appreciation of his real feelings about the administration. Question begat counter-question, and attempts to explain the domestic life of the English to Marias were interesting and amusing. If because I was primarily an administrator I have sometimes dwelt at length on administrative problems, I do not repent: for, despite such views as those advanced by Mr. N. M. Joshi and Mr. M. S. Aney in the Indian Legislative Assembly debate of February 18th, 1936, on the areas to be wholly or partially excluded under the recent Government of India Act, when they heartily damned all anthropologists as wishing to keep the primitive races of India 'uncivilized' and 'in a state of barbarism' as raw material for their science and 'in order to add to their blessed stock of scientific knowledge', anthropology has a very practical value to all charged with the administration of other races if it can discover the thoughts and need of those races. The results of the divorce of administration from anthropology as seen in the system of land revenue, police and judicial administration applied to the Maria tracts of Bastar have been as strikingly revealed on a larger scale by the post-1919 attempts in Bombay and the Central Provinces to force prohibition upon the Bhil, the Gond and the Korku.

Few now are the regions of India where the white man is unknown, and fewer still those in which the Hindu has not yet

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Satyanarayan who is believed by the Maria to perform some medical magic to free them from erotic desires. Rai Saheb Niranjan Singh, Assistant Administrator, who himself has tried and sentenced a large number of Maria criminals, threw much light on the social conditions that give rise to crimes in Bastar. To the police I must give a special word of thanks. Instead of resenting the intrusion of an amateur, Mr A. C. Mayberry, M.B.E., State Superintendent, and his staff gave me every possible assistance. Thakur Manbahal Singh particularly gave me information about the psychology of the homicide which revealed his very deep knowledge of the people. To many other policemen, Circle-Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Constables, who aided me in my tours and enquiries, I must express my gratitude. Mr Qudratulla Khan gave me valuable information on Excise matters. Mr Janardhan Joshi and Mr Ramakrishna took great trouble to find records for me, and helped me in every way. Mr S. M. Ishaque's experience of the Maria is unique. He accompanied me on one important tour, and even when lying in great pain in hospital gave me guidance and advice. Mr Q. Huq and Mr M. M. Khirey, who were at the time Tahsildars of Jagdalpur and Dantewara respectively, exerted themselves in every way to assist me in my tours, and greatly encouraged me by their support.

Mr Sampat Singh acted as my interpreter and teacher in Gondi on most of the later tours. His help was quite invaluable. He himself had been present as a clerk at many murder trials, and was often able to expose the real points at issue. I am very grateful for his company and for the intelligence and energy which he put into a difficult and exacting task. Gulabdas, my assistant, who has been under training for many years and can now be regarded as an expert in his particular sphere of enquiry, did excellent exploratory work, and by his affable and insinuating address won the confidence of many Maria and persuaded them to reveal their secrets.

Part of the expenses of research were covered by a research grant from Merton College: I owe a heavy debt of gratitude to the Warden and Fellows for their assistance. The actual publication of the book was made possible by the enthusiasm and practical assistance of my friend Mr Jehangir

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

P. Patel. The deeper realities of friendship and alliance are not matters for public acknowledgement: this book is itself a token and a proof of them. Mr Patel's share in it has been complete.

Mr C. R. Hemeon, I.C.S., and Mrs Hemeon read the manuscript and made important comments and suggestions. Mr Hemeon adds to an extensive legal and judicial experience an ardent interest in criminology and Mrs Hemeon's unique gifts of understanding and insight make her the kind of critic that an author prays for.

Mrs Maeve Wood made two beautiful drawings (the Anga Pen and the Bison-horn head-dress) and gave much help in the preparation of the maps and half-tones. Mr R. D. Motaframm's ready and expert hand was responsible for the other line-drawings. The picture of the Meriah sacrifices was discovered for me by Mr Evelyn Wood.

To Mr C. R. Gerrard I am specially indebted for the dust-cover which takes the book out into the world with beauty and significance.

Mr W. V. Grigson, I.C.S., first inspired me to visit Bastar and then helped to make it possible for me to stay there. A Foreword from him is peculiarly appropriate: his knowledge and love of Bastar is unprecedented and he himself handled with understanding and justice many of the incidents in this book.

Mr Grigson was succeeded in Bastar by Mr D. R. Rutnam, I.C.S., who established administrative principles which have been of the utmost advantage to the aboriginals and from whom I have learnt much about the mentality of the Maria criminal.

I must not conclude without a word of thanks to the Manager and staff of the India Printing Works who devoted themselves to the task of producing this book with accuracy and despatch; to the staff of Messrs. Wagle who made the half-tones; and to Mr P. N. V. Nathan for his faithful and enthusiastic work on a difficult manuscript.

VERRIER ELWIN

Patangarh,
Mandla District, India
1 July 1943

[p. xxx is blank]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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PREFACE

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

primitive education. Havelock Ellis would, I think, have found much to interest him in the sexual relations of the boys and girls of primitive societies, but he too seems to have considered the existing literature as lacking in detail and authority. 114

Yet—as a glance at this book will show—the ghotul, and presumably the village dormitory elsewhere, provides the most important evidence for any discussion on group-marriage, group-concubinage, pre-nuptial chastity, pre-nuptial infertility, experimental marriage, the union of near kin and the value of the rules of exogamy. For the general reader, uninterested in technical anthropological problems, the ghotul raises equally interesting questions about co-education, the influence of punishment, the expediency of marriage between those who have grown up together, the relegation of parental responsibility, the relation of discipline and freedom, and the elimination of jealousy. It opens up the widest problems of sex and marriage; and even though Muria society may not provide solutions, it does at least put the questions.

The ghotul does not yield up its secrets readily. It is easy enough to obtain a superficial knowledge of its organization, but the Muria have no conscience at all about misleading the inquirer, and it is almost routine for them to give incorrect information at first. They invariably deny—if you ask them questions—that chelik and motiari have intimate relations; they told Grigson that girls never slept in the ghotul of the Narayanpur Tahsil; I have often been wearied by their lies. Every statement must be weighed and checked; the anthropologist has to be both a detective and a magistrate; he must be ready to follow the slightest clue, but he must test with the greatest care the evidence that is put before him. 123

We must not blame the Muria for their reticence. It is the natural and proper barrier set up against prying eyes; it is their ultimate refuge against the inroads of civilization. Moreover chelik and motiari are bound to secrecy, to conceal everything not only from the stranger but from their own relatives, when they are admitted to the ghotul fellowship.

How then was it possible to gather the vast amount of detailed information presented in this book? The answer is simple; the Muria cannot resist affection. They are the most friendly people in the world—once you have learnt how to set about them. They immediately respond to respect. For years they have been scolded, peered at, ridiculed by every visitor to their villages; their first reaction to a newcomer is naturally to throw up a barrier of reticence and falsehood. But directly they find that the visitor knows something about them and likes what he knows, there is a wonderful change and he is overwhelmed with intimacies.

I first visited the Muria country in 1935, and repeated my visits for several years till 1942. In 1940 I was appointed Census Officer of Bastar State and a little later Honorary Ethnographer with the status of a Head of a Department—a position that greatly facilitated my inquiries. In an Appendix I give a list of all the ghotul in the State, and note those that I visited personally and what I saw. I have also recorded those which I was not able to visit myself, but about which I believe I have exact and authentic information—information collected by more than one of my colleagues and which has stood the test of check and counter-check. It seems to me essential that an ethnographer should present his credentials in as precise a manner as possible and should confess his failures. I must admit, for example, that I have not lived in the Muria area during the rains. I have personally witnessed, however, at least examples of everything described in the book, and the total number of ghotul visited comes to no fewer than 347. 114

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

114 live side by side with Kolams as well as with non-aboriginal settlers, then climbed to the higher plateau and were fortunate enough to watch a clan-god feast at Pangri. On our way from Pangri to Utnur we passed Marlavai and decided on this village as our future base-camp. Early [54] in February we went to the Keslapur Jatra, a great Gond feast and fair, held annually fifteen miles north-west of Utnur. From there we turned north and then east into Rajura Taluq, where we visited tht famous fort of Manikgarh, now deserted and overgrown by jungle. Camping in [129] various villages of the higher plateau we gathered piecemeal information from both Gonds and Kolams, and by the end of our tour realized that a study of the aboriginals of Adilabad might lead to the very heart of the Gond problem.

123 A slightly embarrassing circumstance during our first tour was the rapidly spreading rumour that I was a recruiting officer and had come to take young Gonds to the war. The general excitement following the Japanese invasion of Malaya, had reached even the Gonds and they interpreted my taking of notes and photographs as a preliminary selection of all the fittest men. And when at the same time the Director-General of Revenue visited Adilabad and Utnur, they took our tours for a concerted movement and thought the lorries with his camp-kit were meant to carry off the recruits. Many hid in the forest and the fields when we passed by and in the villages it was difficult to establish confidence.

But once settled in Marlavai in a house built in Gond style just outside the village, we were soon faced by a difficulty of exactly the opposite nature. For now rumour ran that I was a revenue officer, specially sent to the District to investigate the grievances of Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods, and to give land to all those whom the influx of new settlers had rendered landless. All through the hot weather and the greater part of the rains aboriginals from all parts of the district, some in delegations of thirty and forty, flocked to Marlavai, all wanting their difficulties heard and remedied. Unable to give them any concrete assistance, I had at least to listen to their tales of woe, and many a day passed when the only anthropological information swelling my note-books was the distressingly monotonous account of a culture-contact resulting invariably in the expropriation and economic enslavement of the aboriginal.[1]

114 From March to the middle of December Marlavai was our headquarters, but several tours led us to the surrounding villages and ultimately to the Tilani area as far as Rompalli and Mangi. We left the district at Christmas and returned again early in March 1943, when we toured the taluqs of Both. Kinwat and Adilabad, reaching Marlavai in the middle of April. While in Hyderabad I had succeeded in obtaining the sanction of H.E.H. the Nizam's Government for a Gond Education

1. A full account of the conditions then prevailing in the Adilabad District is contained in my reports and diaries published under the title *Tribal Hyderabad* by the Revenue Department, Government of H.E.H. the Nizam, Hyderabad 1945.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

understanding. Of Gondi as spoken in the plateaux of the Central Provinces I had a smattering, but the Maria dialects were as different from it as Spanish and Portuguese from Italian, and the Hill Maria gutturals are beyond the compass of an English voice. Yet one cannot but acquire a considerable vocabulary and power of following the gist of a speech from constant hearing of witnesses in court and association with tribesmen in village and camp; and thus, though never able to dispense with an interpreter, I could check his interpretation of replies, and see that he put my questions in my own way, and not in a leading form. Nothing needs more care than the training of interpreters. I am especially grateful for the help, as interpreter and as enquirer, of the late Circle Inspector Chaitan Singh, of the State Police, a Bastar Rajput with all the traditional virtues of the Rajput. Descended from an ancestor who had once narrowly escaped being sacrificed as a Meriah victim in Jeypore (Orissa), he was passionately interested in the aboriginal, knew all the '36' languages of Bastar, was a mine of information about Bastar customs, religions, songs, dances and games, and was, because he never did an injustice but was simple and reliable in all his ways, loved by the wild tribes of Bastar. His sense of humour, broad like that of the tribesmen, of whom at heart he was one, would overcome disappointment or the short temper bred of heat and exhaustion in gales of laughter; nor was it a respecter of persons, for his tales would chide the follies alike of raja or ryot, political agent or diwan. His sudden death soon after I left Bastar meant the loss of a dear friend, and of an Indian of a type more fitted to a past age but unlikely to be bettered in any succeeding generation. They say that in the forests around Kondagaon, where he shot so many man-eating tigers and organized so many successful tiger beats, the Murias already revere him as Chaitan Deo, a god of good hunting without whose favour no beat will yield game. Nothing could have appealed more to his sense of humour. Wherever he may be, may he have boon companions to laugh at his rhymes and tales, to drink from his silver glass, to take betel from his silver box, and to handle the hunting-knife and the silver-mounted cane given him by successive Governors, and may he live long in the folk memories of Bastar!

For other help I must thank Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S., Political Agent for the Central Provinces States when I went to Bastar, who has also kindly allowed me to reproduce some of his Bastar photographs; Mr. D. R. Rutnam, I.C.S., my successor as Administrator, who was my host in Bastar twice in 1932 and greatly facilitated my 1934 tour in various ways; Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, M.B.E., for more than twenty years Chief Medical Officer

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

● 124 I have always been annoyed by the use of the words 'always', 'commonly', 'universally', 'rarely' in anthropological literature, and even though I have used them often enough myself, I have longed for more precision of statement. This dissatisfaction drove me to prepare a questionnaire about some of those matters on which Westermarck and Briffault, for example, make their most confident assertions. I decided that out of a population of a little over 100,000, a sample of 2,000 cases would not be regarded as insufficient even by mathematicians. I had forms printed at the Jagdalpur Press and questions were asked by members of my party under my close supervision. I believe that the results of this inquiry are among the most valuable conclusions of this book. There must always be a margin of error, but on the whole I believe that a high degree of accuracy has been obtained. It is possible, I know, to lie convincingly by statistics more easily than by any other method, but in the realm of social anthropology I must confess to a great feeling of relief, when instead of having to say, for example, 'The institution of the marriage by service (Lamhada) is not very common' I can observe that 'Out of 2,000 cases examined only 113 were Lamhada'.

000 All the photographs in this book were taken by me except Plates LIX-LXV which were given me by Dr C. von Fürer-Haimendorf (my own Bondo and Gadaba pictures were not ready in time) and Plate CV which was made specially by Mr F. Berko from specimens collected by Mr Shamrao Hivale. I used a Contax camera with a 5 cm. Sonnar lens for ordinary work and an 8·5 cm. Triotar for long-distance and close-ups. Developing and enlargements were done by Messrs Kodak, Bombay, whose staff showed great interest in my work and at all times gave me every consideration.

With a few exceptions (Figs. 123-4, 127-9) all the line-drawings in the text are by Mr R. F. Motofram, for whose work I cannot sufficiently express my admiration and who is responsible not only for the drawings but also for the beautiful colour-plates and for some improvements in the half-tones. Most of the drawings were made from specimens collected by me and taken down to Bombay, but Figs. 20, 22, 30, 44, 45 and 46 were drawn from my own photographs, Fig. 38 from a photograph given me by Mr G. F. Ramsden, C.I.E., I.C.S., and Fig. 40 from a photograph by Dr C. von Fürer-Haimendorf. Figs. 34-9, 41, 76, 116 and 137 were copied from books and journals; acknowledgements will be found in the text.

It was A. E. Housman's ambition that one day a copy of *The Shropshire Lad* taken into battle should stop a bullet aimed at a soldier's heart. I have a similar desire for this, as for all my other books, that in the battle for existence which the Indian aboriginal now has to wage, it may protect him from some of the deadly shafts of exploitation, interference and repression that civilization so constantly launches at his heart. If this book does anything to help the Muria to continue as they are today, happy, free and innocent, I shall be content.

V.E.

Patangarh Village
Mandla District, India
11 July 1942

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

127 these were not kept at the headquarters of the State, but
121 distributed in the police stations and many of them had been eliminated. But the State Superintendent of Police called in as many aboriginal files as could be found, and again after much sifting I found myself with exactly 50 unselected Bison-horn Maria suicide records. These extended over a period of 10 years.

114 Between 1935 and 1942 I made many tours in this enchanting land among these enchanting people. On the earlier tours I was accompanied by my friend Mr Shamrao Hivale whose amazing sympathy and insight helped me to catch my first vision of Maria culture. Later I had the support of my wife who, being herself a Gond, was able to get quickly in touch with the people and immediately established a friendly atmosphere. Particularly in the later tours I tried to see as many scenes of violence as possible, to talk to released convicts and to discover the general attitude of a village towards any crime that had been committed within its boundaries. In Aranpur I stood beside the still warm ashes of the ritually-cremated clothes of Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged in jail. At Khutepal, I watched Oyami Masa's children playing on the very floor once stained by the blood of his murdered wife. In the forest near Jabeli
[211] I had a clearing made so that I could photograph the carved pillar erected in memory of a famous murderer. In Rewali I was visited by a ferocious-looking youth who had twice stood on trial for his life and had twice preserved it. Here too I talked with Hevala Bakka who killed his wife for infidelity and was now unable to get another. In Doriras I saw the
[164] grave of the murdered Boti which had been desecrated by Ghasia for the sake of the purse of money which had been buried to help the dead man on his journey to the other world. In the same village I visited the home of Kawasi Borga then serving a life sentence, and talked to his fine sons and his sad pathetic wife.

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prisoners clearly suspected some trick and told me very little. On the whole I was impressed by the great sadness of their life, even though in the jail they are well and kindly treated. Most of them, I think, felt that an inexplicable tragedy had befallen them. They did not feel like criminals. Their lives had been destroyed by a capricious destiny.

It was naturally more difficult to get information about the suicides, for, in the nature of the case, the person of most interest could not be present to tell his story. Relatives also and the villagers were more reticent, I thought, in discussing this subject, possibly because they feared that any revelations might lead to further police investigation. But even so I was able to get a certain amount of information about the Maria's attitude to self-murder.

But enquiries among the Maria are never easy. The people say that, as a result of Mr Grigson's investigations when he was writing his book on the tribe, their villages have suffered an invasion of man-eating tigers. In one village where I myself took photographs it was declared afterwards that I had made all the women barren. The Maria are friendly people, and I was able to make many friends among them. But particularly on matters which have a police reference they are naturally inclined to be secretive and prefer to claim ignorance rather than by confiding in the investigator perhaps expose themselves to later difficulties. Moreover, there is undoubtedly throughout aboriginal India a belief that talking about tribal affairs may anger the ancestors of the clan or disturb some godling's peace of mind. It is said of Korava children, members of a criminal tribe in Mysore, that they are taught from infancy to say 'I do not know' in reply to questions put to them.[1] Many Maria adopt the same attitude.

The presence of my wife, whom everyone (incorrectly) regarded as a Maria but who has a Maria name, was of great assistance in removing suspicion, as was the fortunate chance that I always go barefoot in the villages. I learnt later that the Maria believe that one reason why the crops are so poor nowadays is that officials defile Mother Earth by trampling on her with their shoes. 'At first,' they said, 'when anyone

[1] L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes* (Mysore, 1930), Vol. III, p. 612.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

114 live side by side with Kolams as well as with non-aboriginal settlers, then climbed to the higher plateau and were fortunate enough to watch a clan-god feast at Pangri. On our way from Pangri to Utnur we passed Marlavai and decided on this village as our future base-camp. Early [54] in February we went to the Kesiapur Jatra, a great Gond feast and fair, held annually fifteen miles north-west of Utnur. From there we turned north and then east into Rajura Taluq, where we visited tht famous fort of Manikgarh, now deserted and overgrown by jungle. Camping in [129] various villages of the higher plateau we gathered piecemeal information from both Gonds and Kolams, and by the end of our tour realized that a study of the aboriginals of Adilabad might lead to the very heart of the Gond problem.

123 A slightly embarrassing circumstance during our first tour was the rapidly spreading rumour that I was a recruiting officer and had come to take young Gonds to the war. The general excitement following the Japanese invasion of Malaya, had reached even the Gonds and they interpreted my taking of notes and photographs as a preliminary selection of all the fittest men. And when at the same time the Director-General of Revenue visited Adilabad and Utnur, they took our tours for a concerted movement and thought the lorries with his camp-kit were meant to carry off the recruits. Many hid in the forest and the fields when we passed by and in the villages it was difficult to establish confidence.

But once settled in Marlavai in a house built in Gond style just outside the village, we were soon faced by a difficulty of exactly the opposite nature. For now rumour ran that I was a revenue officer, specially sent to the District to investigate the grievances of Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods, and to give land to all those whom the influx of new settlers had rendered landless. All through the hot weather and the greater part of the rains aboriginals from all parts of the district, some in delegations of thirty and forty, flocked to Marlavai, all wanting their difficulties heard and remedied. Unable to give them any concrete assistance, I had at least to listen to their tales of woe, and many a day passed when the only anthropological information swelling my note-books was the distressingly monotonous account of a culture-contact resulting invariably in the expropriation and economic enslavement of the aboriginal.[1]

114 From March to the middle of December Marlavai was our headquarters, but several tours led us to the surrounding villages and ultimately to the Tilani area as far as Rompalli and Mangi. We left the district at Christmas and returned again early in March 1940, when we toured the taluqs of Both, Kinwat and Adilabad, reaching Marlavai in the middle of April. While in Hyderabad I had succeeded in obtaining the sanction of H.E.H. the Nizam's Government for a Gond Education

1. A full account of the conditions then prevailing in the Adilabad District is contained in my reports and diaries published under the title *Tribal Hyderabad* by the Revenue Department, Government of H.E.H. the Nizam, Hyderabad 1945.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

settled. The Hill Maria and part of the Bison-horn Maria country are such regions; and often in our stay in Bastar my wife and I were able to recapture something of the surprise and variety of experience that our pioneer ancestors knew so much more than their descendants of these humdrum and standardized days. This alone would justify some record of what we saw.

For encouragement to attempt such a record I must first thank His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler, K.C.S.I., C.B., C.I.E., C.V.O., C.B.E., now Lieutenant-Governor of the Isle of Man, for nine years Governor of the Central Provinces and in political charge of the Central Provinces States, to whom I owed my appointment as Administrator of Bastar, and who was the wisest and most helpful of chiefs and the best and most stimulating of friends. Mr. R. A. Wilson, who was then Chief Secretary to the Government of the Central Provinces, wrote to me suggesting a study of the Marias even before I went to Bastar. I am very grateful also for the advice and encouragement of three friends: Dr. J. H. Hutton, C.I.E., I.C.S., the last Census Commissioner for India, who has put me further in his debt by reading through my manuscript and contributing so interesting an Introduction; Baron Egon von Eickstedt, Professor of Ethnology at Breslau University, who visited Bastar while I was there and has kindly allowed me to reproduce some of his excellent photographs; and the Right Reverend Alex Wood, D.D., O.B.E., Lord Bishop of Nagpur, the doyen of Gondi scholars and sanest of critics. My interest in the Gond, first aroused by contact with him in the Nagpur, Seoni and Hoshangabad districts, was stimulated by early talks with Mr. C. G. Chenevix Trench, C.I.E., then serving in the Central Provinces Commission, the author of a fascinating Gondi grammar and of certain contributions to Blackwood which vividly portray the Indian aboriginal, and by that mine of ethnological material, Russell and Hiralal's *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*. I have in the succeeding pages often disagreed with their statements on Marias in their article 'Gond'; but theirs was a pioneer work, being largely a compilation of statements gleaned from a mass of papers contributed by officials, pleaders and others, supplemented by the personal enquiries of the authors and their wide knowledge of almost all that had been previously written on their subjects. Mistakes and mis-statements were thus inevitable; but their great book is remarkable for its general reliability, its sustained interest and its power of stimulating further investigation.

[126]

I must state how I made my enquiries. Throughout my time in Bastar I kept notes and took photographs of what I heard or saw. Between 1927 and 1931 I made four long tours among the Hill

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias, and paid several shorter visits to the fringes of their hills; since 1931 I have three times revisited Bastar, seeing some Marias each time, and spending March 1934 in revisiting the Abujhmar hills villages seen in my 1929-31 tours, and the Bison-horn Maria villages above and below the Aranpur pass. I had similarly often toured before across the Bison-horn Maria country, and made many friends among the villages around the Bailadila hills, which, in return for a reduced assessment of land revenue, had the duty of sending relays of men up to the hills during the summer recess there of the Ruling Chief and leading State officials.

Notes and Queries on Anthropology, published by the Royal Anthropological Institute, was of constant value, even though, as explained in Chapter XIII, the poor memories of the Marias prevented me from getting the results expected from the geneological method. My work made it impossible for me to be in Maria villages at all seasons and to see all Maria ceremonies, and therefore I supplemented my enquiries by getting detailed reports from selected State officials whom I tried to train roughly for this by taking them with me during my personal enquiries on tour. I have almost always checked their reports by personal investigation; and in the few cases where I could not so check them, I have repeated nothing reported by them unless it was confirmed by the independent reports of two or more other reliable observers. These enquiries did impose much extra work on them, but gave them a much-needed knowledge of the aboriginal and did much to raise the morale and co-operation of the enquirers and to raise the standard of the administration. I could not have had a happier and friendlier family of colleagues than those of all ranks who served under me my last two years in the State. All were helpful, but especially Pandit Ghasiram Dane, then a subdivisional officer, the late Mr. H. N. Dutt, then tahsildar of Dantewara, since a victim of black-water fever, Mr. Niranjan Singh, then tahsildar of Bijapur and manager of Kutru, now Assistant Administrator, Mr. Sant Prasad, formerly tahsildar of Konta, Circle Inspector Manbahal Singh of the State Police, and Mr. Dikshitulu of the State Medical Service, who did remarkable anti-yaws work in the Abujhmar hills in my second tour and in later independent tours.

Language was always a difficulty. Halbi is the *lingua franca* of Bastar. The differences between Maria dialects are great, and the very guttural hill dialect is so unintelligible to the Bison-horn Marias that at their rare meetings they communicate with Hill Marias through those of them who understand Halbi. And there are many variations of both the Hill and the Bison-horn Maria dialects. Of Halbi, everyone serving in Bastar must acquire some

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

197 It may be observed that in these specimens and in the *Linguistic Survey* records there is far less borrowing from Aryan languages than in the Gondi folk-tales, stories and songs printed in Volume II 192 of Trench's *Grammar*. In my specimens there are two corruptions of English words which have become current through excise and police practice respectively, ***bōtēl*** (bottle) and ***rapōṭ*** (report). Fairly recent Hindi or Halbi borrowings (as distinct from long acclimatized words of Sanskrit origin like ***mīn*** (fish), ***wijjā*** (seed) or ***bēsh*** (good)) found in my specimens are ***ḍōkrā*** (old man), ***ḍōkrī*** (old woman), ***dinām*** and ***dināl*** (daily), ***kabār*** (work), ***khush*** (pleased), ***tiyār*** (ready), ***bichār*** (thought), ***milē-māsī*** (together), ***sarkār*** (authorities), ***lagē*** (fastened), and ***rāzī*** (contented).

126 I have not collected any specimens of Bison-horn Maria language, nor have I the qualifications to attempt any sketch of the grammars of the two dialects. The Hill Maria specimens that follow were recorded under my supervision by Sampat Singh, my interpreter, in the villages of Orcha and Hikul in the Abujhmar hills in March 1934, the records being corrected with the aid of the Hill Marias in my camp.

Two Stories, from Hikul Village

539 *I. The Monkey Son-in-law*

Unḍ nāgā mattā. Ḍōkrī- mu'ittā mattā, ōrā unḍ miyāṛ
One village was. Old-woman-old-woman was, hers a daughter

mattā. Ad pīkī 'layā mattā. Ḍōkrī- mu'ittā ad pīkī-tun
was. That girl maiden was. Old-woman-old-woman that girl

bōn-kē hēwā mattā. Unḍ mēṭā-tā unḍ kōwē ḍōkrī-mu'ittā-
anyone-to giving-not was. A mountain-from a monkey old-woman-

nagā pīkī-may^dē lām wātā. Ḍōkrī-mu'ittā
old-woman-to girl-for bride-servitor came. Old-woman-old-woman

kēttā, 'Nimā bārī-klyā wāttōq, kōwā?' Kōwā ittoq, 'Illē,
said, 'You what-for have-come, monkey?' Monkey said, 'No,

māmō, bēnōkē lām tās^tāq, nannā paṛī tūṇgānā-may^dē
father's-sister, anyone bride-servitor will-keep, I work doing-for

mandākān.' Ḍōkrī-mu'ittā bichār kittā, 'Māwā-igā paṛī kiyānōr bōgh
will-stay.' Old-woman thought-made, 'Me-with work doer anyone

illē; pīkīn-may^dē kōwī baranjā-tun tās^kān.' Injōr vēāttā,
not; girl-for monkey son-in-law-for I-will-keep.' Then she-said,

'Mākā paṛī kis, tibtānūr.' Kōwī-ku tāstōq. Kōwā vēāttōq,
'Me-for work do, I-will-feed.' Monkey she-kept. Monkey said,

'Mimā, nā-kū unḍ maqsu par-ām; pēndī naṛkān.'
'Father-in-law, me-to an axe made-give; penda-clearing I-will-cut.'

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

past taken the title of Dorla. Others again are known as Koya, and a few call themselves Gond. When I was in Konta, the very wild Maria there said, 'We are not Maria. That is the name of the uncivilized fellows in Dantewara'. When I was in Dantewara, the equally wild Maria there indignantly rejected the old name which, they said, was only properly given to the savages of Konta. The expression 'Bison-horn Maria' is an obvious linguistic makeshift. Another name for the tribe is Dandami Maria. But I have never heard this used by the people themselves, and many do not know what it means. The name 'Bison-horn Maria' is derived from the tribe's custom of using a magnificent head-dress of bison-horns for their marriage dances, and possibly 'Tallaguda Maria' or even 'Sing Maria' (an expression in actual use) would preserve both the descriptiveness of the title and linguistic propriety. But for the time being I have continued to use the very convenient term, Bison-horn Maria, and throughout this book it will be understood that, wherever the word 'Maria' is used without qualification, it is to the Bison-horn and not the Hill variety of the tribe that I refer.

It will be evident, however, that official records, which are not concerned with scientific classification, were not likely to preserve these nice distinctions between one tribe and another, and I was at first provided with a very large number of files, many of which had nothing to do with the Bison-horn Maria at all. I think it is not unlikely that the bad reputation of this tribe for violence is, to some extent, due to the fact that a number of people who do not belong to it are included when statistics are compiled. However, at last, after much sifting and sorting, I found that I had a collection of 103 records of Bison-horn Maria homicides covering the years 1921 to 1941. During this period there must have been nearly 250 such cases altogether, but some of the files had been eliminated and others for one reason or another were not available. However, 103 was a very fair sample. For convenience I omitted the last 3 cases, and was thus left with a set of 100 taken entirely at random, distributed throughout the period under review and taken from every part of the area.

It was rather more difficult to get records of suicide, for

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943

AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

127 these were not kept at the headquarters of the State, but
121 distributed in the police stations and many of them had been eliminated. But the State Superintendent of Police called in as many aboriginal files as could be found, and again after much sifting I found myself with exactly 50 unselected Bison-horn Maria suicide records. These extended over a period of 10 years.

114 Between 1935 and 1942 I made many tours in this enchanting land among these enchanting people. On the earlier tours I was accompanied by my friend Mr Shamrao Hivale whose amazing sympathy and insight helped me to catch my first vision of Maria culture. Later I had the support of my wife who, being herself a Gond, was able to get quickly in touch with the people and immediately established a friendly atmosphere. Particularly in the later tours I tried to see as many scenes of violence as possible, to talk to released convicts and to discover the general attitude of a village towards any crime that had been committed within its boundaries. In Aranpur I stood beside the still warm ashes of the ritually-cremated clothes of Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged in jail. At Khutepal, I watched Oyami Masa's children playing on the very floor once stained by the blood of his murdered wife. In the forest near Jabeli
[211] I had a clearing made so that I could photograph the carved pillar erected in memory of a famous murderer. In Rewali I was visited by a ferocious-looking youth who had twice stood on trial for his life and had twice preserved it. Here too I talked with Hemla Bakka who killed his wife for infidelity and was now unable to get another. In Doriras I saw the
[764] grave of the murdered Boti which had been desecrated by Ghasia for the sake of the purse of money which had been buried to help the dead man on his journey to the other world. In the same village I visited the home of Kawasi Borga then serving a life sentence, and talked to his fine sons and his sad pathetic wife.

124 Later I spent many hours in the Jagdalpur Jail talking to Maria who were serving terms of life-imprisonment for homicide. Some of them were as informative as the limits of their psychology allowed, for it must always be remembered that aboriginals are not accustomed to discussing those matters which are of special interest to anthropologists. Other

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter VII

Agriculture

The whole life of the Maria is primarily directed towards the raising of food from the earth, either by cultivation, or by gathering the fruits of the forest, or by fishing, hunting or trapping. His agriculture, as we have seen, determines the sites of his villages, and regulates his relations with his wife. His festivals, it will be seen, are designed either to ensure the benevolence of the earth and the ancestors and the clan-god towards the crops about to be sown, or to celebrate the first eating of each of the main crops, and the final harvest-home, in a spirit of communal thanksgiving. The human population to him is the crop of men that the *Bhum* or Earth raises for the clan, or for the Ruling Chief.

The Hill Maria still regards the crops as the result of the combined labours of the village rather than of the labours of individuals. If one suffers, all suffer, and all combine to support the old and the needy, and to help each fellow villager to get through the heaviest parts of the yearly agricultural round. The young man on marriage, or the fellow clansman settling in the village, must have his share of the village lands for cultivation. In the raising of crops, then, the village and not the individual cultivator is the unit, even now, in the Abujhmar hills. But the Bison-horn Maria is an individualist. He has lived long in contact with semi-Hinduized neighbours, and has long begun to practise the more advanced methods of the settled cultivator. Permanent cultivation fosters individualism. Even in the Abujhmar hills the few permanent rice fields are definitely the private property of individuals; and as the use of the plough spreads and more and more of the wet lands become permanent rice fields, the owners of these fields begin more and more to assert in their shifting cultivation plots the rights of permanent private ownership already admitted in their rice fields. This has already happened among the Bison-horn Marias, aided by the rapid growth of population increasing the pressure on the land and reducing the land available for distribution to newcomers to the villages. The indications are that formerly they shared the communal attitude of the Hill Maria. In describing, therefore, the agricultural life of the community, I shall deal primarily with that of the Hill Marias, indicating where necessary the different developments among the Bison-horn Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It will be convenient to describe here the religious ceremonies of the Hill Marias, so bound up are they with their agriculture; but as the agricultural ceremonies of the Bison-horn Marias are much more elaborate, it will be more appropriate to describe them in dealing with religion in Part IV. Unless, therefore, I state otherwise, the ceremonies mentioned in this chapter will be those of the Hill Marias only.

In previous chapters, when speaking of the shifting cultivation of the Marias, the term which I have generally used is *penda*.

Systems of cultivation

Central Provinces literature has used the general terms *dahia* or *bewar* indiscriminately for all forms of cultivation in which crops are raised on the ashes of trees felled and burned for that purpose. In Bastar *dahi* is the Halbi term applied to the system of cutting trees or brushwood in the forest, and bringing them to an old unembanked field, where they are spread out to dry and then fired just before the rains break. Such fields are always level, and not hill slopes. The practice is known to the Hill and the Bison-horn Marias, and called *parka*; but as it is usually applied to old fields that have lain fallow (or occasionally to a rice field which is to be sown with a dry crop), the Hill Marias make little use of it, but will take more to it now that the substitution of a poll-tax for the former attempt to impose a regular land revenue settlement is encouraging them to re-cultivate old rice fields and to bring the flat *marhan* lands under cultivation. It can be seen in the villages between Orcha and Chhota Dongar, on the edge of the Hill Maria country, where the hills begin to open out into broad valleys.

Flat lands covered with forest growth which is cleared from time to time and burned for shifting cultivation are known in the Halbi language as *marhan*. The forest growth is felled *in situ* and spread out to dry in January or February; it is fired towards the end of May, and the ashes are spread evenly over the soil with an instrument like a squeegee with a handle eleven or twelve feet long, called *dosna-dang* in Halbi and *parka-lathi* by the Marias; as the name makes it clear, this is used for spreading the ashes in *parka* or *dahi* cultivation also. The ashes are ploughed into the ground after the first fall of rain. *Marhan* cultivation is called *dippa* by Murias and Hill Marias, and *erka* by the Bison-horn Marias, who subdivide it further into *mudur-erka* or timber forest *marhan*, and *marram-erka* or scrub-jungle *marhan*. These flat lands can be cultivated for only two years normally; in the first year the undergrowth is cut, the smaller trees and some boughs of big trees, while the big trees are girdled. To provide ashes for the second year, the big trees girdled the year before are felled, after piles of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PREFACE

THE subject of this book is the ghotul, the village dormitory, the bothle, the bachelors' hall—*Jünglingshaus* is an attractive German word used recently by Ruben—of the Muria of Bastar State. Similar institutions are widely distributed among communities of the Austro-Asiatic cultures, though none have been studied in sufficient detail for full comparison. But on the existing evidence it seems probable that the Bastar ghotul is one of the most highly developed and carefully organized in the world. For what is a village guardroom for the Naga, a boys' club among the Uraon, a refuge for temporary sexual association in Indonesia, is for the Muria the centre of social and religious life.

The study of an institution that is related functionally to every aspect of a tribe's life presents certain technical difficulties of presentation. The culture pattern must be developed in due order; but this means that there will be many references in the earlier chapters that can only be explained later on. A book of this kind, where everything fits in, which describes a culture that is integrated and intelligible, has to be read in bulk—as it were—rather than in sequence. For the reader's convenience, therefore, I give here a brief introductory account of the ghotul in the light of which Part I must be read.

The Muria ghotul is an institution, tracing its origin to Lingo Pen, a famous cult-hero of the Gond, of which all the unmarried boys and girls of the tribe must be members. This membership is carefully organized; after a period of testing, boys and girls are initiated and given a special title which carries with it a graded rank and social duties. Leaders are appointed to organize and discipline the society; throughout this book I call the boys' leader the Sirdar and the girls' leader the Belosa. Boy members are known as chelik and girl members as motiari. The relations between chelik and motiari are governed by the type of ghotul to which they belong. Two distinct types of organization are recognized. In the older, classical, type of ghotul, boys and girls pair off in a more or less permanent relationship which lasts till marriage. They are often 'married' and cohabit in the dormitory for several years. In the more modern form of ghotul, such exclusive associations are forbidden and partners must constantly be changed.

Chelik and motiari have important duties to perform on all social occasions. The boys act as acolytes at festivals, the girls as bridesmaids at weddings. Both dance before the clan-god and at the great fairs. They form a choir at the funerals of important people. Their games and dances enliven village life and redeem it from the crushing monotony that is its normal characteristic in other parts of India.

The intimate association of the ghotul with every aspect of Muria life means, of course, that we must study the whole of that life in less or greater detail. The ghotul must be put in its place. For this reason I have divided the book into two Parts. Part I gives the setting and background, Part II describes the life of the chelik and motiari in detail.

In Part I, I begin with a description of the geopolitical background of the tribe, and give a brief account of the three elements that compose it—the Jhoria, who are Hill Maria now settled in the plains, the Muria immigrants from the north, and the very old aboriginal population of eastern Kondagaon. In Chapter II, I describe the economic life of the Muria; the ghotul is only a night club; all day its members are engrossed in the quest for food and drink. The chelik are kept busy in both axe- and plough-cultivation, hunting, fishing,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

● 128 gathering honey, tapping the sago-palm, collecting fuel. The motiari not only work very hard at home, but they go out for roots, wild fruit and myrabolams, to pick broad leaves for plates, cups and pipes, to fish and to express oil.

Chapter III describes the organization of the tribe by clans and families, a matter of absorbing interest to the chelik and motiari since it controls their relations with one another and directs their ultimate matrimonial alliances. I then give three chapters to discussing the course of Muria life, and take the reader right through a Muria's history from birth to death. It was difficult to decide where to put the long and rather tedious chapter on the marriage ceremonies, but I finally decided to put it here rather than in Part II where it would have unduly disturbed the sequence of my argument. This section, though tedious enough, is of great importance, for throughout it the ghotul members are in the centre of the stage and are rarely seen to better advantage.

Chapters VII and VIII describe Muria religion and mythology. The ghotul system derives from and is vitalized by the legend of Lingo Pen, which I discuss in the greatest detail. The dormitory is itself a shrine protected by supernatural forces and full of uncanny power; I show how intimately it is connected with the religious life of the tribe.

We are now in a position to turn to the main subject of the book—the ghotul itself. Chapter IX discovers many parallels to the Bastar institution in other cultures and suggests reasons for its origin; one of the most interesting of these is the Muria's desire to prevent his children from witnessing 'the primal scene'. This leads to an account of the relations of parents and children. I then describe the ghotul buildings, the different types of ghotul organization, ceremonies of initiation and the appointment of leaders, and in Chapter XIII I give a typical evening in the ghotul according to its jealously preserved procedure. Other chapters deal with dress and fashions, dreams, games and dances, riddles and folk-tales.

In Chapter XVI, I describe frankly, but I trust without offence, the ghotul's attitude to sex, and in the following chapter attempt a solution of the problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity. Final chapters attempt to relate the ideas of this remarkable institution to the tribe's attitude to marriage and morality.

It is little wonder that the Muria should regard their ghotul with passionate and loyal devotion. The word so often used to describe it, *parmakoro* or *parmangkor*, 'lovely as the horns of bison', reveals its tender and romantic associations. Its joys are celebrated in a score of songs.

Pupal kusir bida he dewa,	Good as the taste of *urad* pulse,
Laya ra udna bida helo.	So was your life with the chelik, sister.

The road leading to its door is like a jackal's tail; the first ghotul had a roof of peacock feathers and a door of ogre's bones. It was 'beautiful as a horse's throat'. If a Muria wants to describe water that is fresh and sparkling, he calls it *chelik sundar pāni*, 'water beautiful as a chelik'.

My chapters on life in the ghotul will probably be of greater interest to the general reader, but throughout the book I have tried to find the synthesis of the whole culture, to see Muria life as a coherent living entity, as a thing logical, dignified and beautiful. In every investigation of a civilization not one's own, there comes—usually only after months or years of routine investigation, tedious checking and the patient accumulation of facts—a moment of sudden glory when one sees everything fall into place, when the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

colours of the pattern are revealed, and one finds oneself no longer an alien and an outsider, but within. 128●

It is easier to reach this point among the Muria than in other tribes, for Muria life revolves round the ghotul and the problem is thus simplified. I doubt indeed if the ghotul could exist in another kind of society, a society less free from rivalry and competition, less subject to jealousy, less gentle and tolerant. It could not, I think, be a feature of a disintegrating tribal society; if the ghotul should disappear, we should know that the Muria had begun the long descent to degradation and collapse that has affected many Indian tribes. At present Muria culture and society is complete, close-knit, organized, loyal to itself; the Muria has a full and happy life; and a great part of his unity and happiness depends on the ghotul. There has never been official interference in his religion and culture; the reformer and missionary have been kept far from him. For he has the advantage of living under an administration that has been conducted for many years by officials with scholarship, sympathy and imagination, and his life has been little disturbed, except—as we shall see—by occasional travellers and subordinates.

To the outsider, whether he be a subordinate official, a wandering merchant or a casual visitor to the State, the most important thing about the ghotul, the thing that at once arouses his sniggering curiosity and excitement—is the sexual relation between chelik and motiari. It is probably true to say that many people who live all their lives among the Muria hardly ever realize that the sexual relation is secondary and the magical, religious and social aspects of ghotul life predominant in the Muria's mind. I hope that no one will put down this book without reading, if he reads nothing else, the chapter on 'Moral Standards in the Ghotul'; he will then see that his suspicions of the ghotul as a place of sexual licence are unfounded. If there is licence there is also taboo; if youth has freedom it moves on into a life of strictest decorum. Muria life may be described as having in its pre-nuptial period many of the features of Huxley's *Brave New World*, but in its post-nuptial period the atmosphere of the poems of Tennyson.

But there is, of course, a simple, sensuous and passionate sex-life in the ghotul, and I have described it fully. As it still seems necessary to justify such freedom of description, I will quote the words of two great scholars which, with the quotations that I have put at the beginning of the book, should surely be enough to satisfy all but the most unintelligent. The Rev. E. W. Smith is one of the greatest of African missionaries and was for many years Literary Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society. His book on the Ba-ila is a model of scientific research. On the subject of the relations of the sexes, he writes,

> There is much that is unpleasant in this part of our subject—much that we would fain pass over in silence. But if we are to be faithful to our purpose to give a true picture of the Ba-ila, we must not dwell upon what R. L. Stevenson called 'the prim, obliterated, polite surface of life', but must lay bare 'the broad, bawdy and orgiastic—or maenadic—foundations'. To write of the Ba-ila and omit all reference to sex would be like writing of the sky and leaving out the sun; for sex is the most pervasive element of their life. It is the atmosphere into which the children are brought. Their early years are largely a preparation for the sexual function; during the years of maturity it is their most ardent pursuit, and old age is spent in vain and disappointing endeavours to continue it. Sex overtowers all else. . . We desire to look at even these things from their point of view. Our object is not to hold them

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

128 up to reprobation, but simply to describe and understand. To them, the union of the sexes is on the same plane as eating and drinking, to be indulged in without stint on every possible occasion.[1]

Among the Muria, where sex is regarded as something much higher than eating and drinking and the technique of love has been developed to an almost ideal level, it is obviously still more necessary that we should study this subject. To such a study we may also apply wise words of Malinowski.

> In anthropology the essential facts of life must be stated simply and fully, though in scientific language, and such a plain statement cannot really offend the most delicately minded nor the most prejudiced reader; nor can it be of any use to the seeker after pornography; least of all can it entice the unripe interest of the young. For pruriency consists in oblique day-dreaming and not in simple and direct statement. The reader will find that the natives treat sex in the long run not only as a source of pleasure, but, indeed, as a thing serious and even sacred. Nor do their customs and ideas eliminate from sex its power to transform crude material fact into wonderful spiritual experience, to throw the romantic glamour of love over the technicalities of love-making.[2]

114 The neglect of the village dormitory as a subject of research, not only in Bastar but throughout the world, is astonishing.[3] In English, Hutton Webster's *Primitive Secret Societies* deals only with the men's houses from which women are rigorously omitted. In German there is the standard work by Schurtz, *Altersklassen und Männerbünde* on age-groups and men's societies, a study by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Das Junggesellenhaus im Westlichen Hinterindien*,[4] on the social functions of the dormitories in Further India, and a chapter in *Völker und Kulturen* by Schmidt and Koppers which deals with age-grades and the social functions of the dormitories. For the institution as maintained by specific tribes, we have hints and scattered details in many books, but full-dress accounts are rare. In India the most detailed are C. von Fürer-Haimendorf's on the Konyak Naga and S. C. Roy's on the Uraon. In Africa Leakey has given some valuable information about the intimate life in the *manyatta* of the Masai, and Malinowski has an illuminating account of the Trobriand *bukumatula*. But compared to what might have been written on so fascinating and important a subject comparatively little has yet been attempted.

Moreover the great museums of ethnographic fact also ignore the subject. There is only a passing reference in Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage* to the institution, though one would have thought it highly relevant to his discussion of the hypothesis of primitive promiscuity. Briffault is equally silent, so is Frazer. Nor does Unwin, in a book largely devoted to a study of pre-nuptial chastity, *Sex and Culture*, pay any attention to the evidence (scanty enough, yet of great importance) from the village dormitory. Hambly, in his *Origins of Education among Primitive People*, mentions the dormitory, but hardly accords it its rightful place as one of the most powerful agents of

[1] E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 36.

[2] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages* (London, 1932), p. xiv.

[3] Long ago Peal noticed the same thing. : 'The paucity of references to the Morong in many standard works relating to the Indo-Pacific region, is most extraordinary.'—S. E. Peal, 'On the Morong as possibly a Relic of Pre-marriage Communism', *JAI*, Vol. XXII (1893), p. 255.

[4] In *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik*, Vol. I (1930). I owe the references to the continental literature to C. von Fürer-Haimendorf.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

'impulse, opposite in aim to the first, such as a fear of consequences, but it must be a fear stimulated by something present at the moment. Resultingly, the intellectual mechanisms of foresight, judgement and self-control are readily submerged by the instinctive impulse.[1]

I have described the two maps given in this book as 'Sketches', for that is what they are. It is in any case difficult to plot the Maria village-area, for many of the larger villages consist of a dozen or so hamlets spread over four or five miles yet all bearing the same name. Moreover, war conditions make it desirable that exact and informative maps should not be prepared at the present time. The reader, therefore, must accept these Sketches as being only rough indications of the location of the more important villages and the general lay-out of the countryside.

I have not burdened these pages with many cross-references. The two Summaries at the end of the book give the names of the murderers and suicides in alphabetical order, the clan-name in each case coming first. The Summary of homicides enables the reader to trace the sentence and subsequent history of each of the main characters in the book and also to see at a glance the entire outline of Maria crime.

My first friend in Bastar was Mr E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., a life-long champion of the aboriginals and the ally of every sincere supporter of their cause. The assistance given by him and Mr A. N. Mitchell was continued by their successor, Mr K. Radhakrishnan, I.C.S. At every stage of my enquiries I had the sympathetic interest of Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, M.B.E. Dr Mitchell has been for many years the Superintendent of the Jail at Jagdalpur and is extremely popular among the prisoners. Every ex-convict with whom I have talked has praised him, and indeed he reminds me of what Dostoeffsky says about the good-natured Russian Prison Governor who treated his men as equals. 'They did not love him, they adored him. I do not remember that they ever permitted themselves to be disrespectful or familiar. On the contrary when he met the Governor the convict's face suddenly lighted up; he smiled largely, cap in hand, even to see him approach.' Another popular figure in the Bastar Jail was Dr

[1] B. J. F. Laubscher, *Sex, Custom and Psychopathology* (London, 1937), p. 302.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

Scheme under which instruction in reading and writing Gondi and later Marathi and Urdu was to be provided for both children and adults. On my return to Marlavai we started work on a small scale with a school where adult Gonds were to be trained as teachers and village-officers. The work on this Scheme kept us in Marlavai until the end of January 1944, and it was there that most of the chapters contained in Book I were written. After an absence of five months in Assam, we returned in the rains for a short period and this gave me the opportunity of checking my Gondi texts with the help of the Headmaster of the Marlavai Training Centre Mr. S. B. Jogalkar and the Gond teachers, some of whom had meanwhile opened schools in their own villages.[1]

The division of the present work into two books was necessitated by its bulk and by the fact that a sudden opportunity for two expeditions into one of the least known tribal areas of the North-East Frontier prevented us from concentrating on the completion of the second part.

In the presentation of facts we have departed from the usual order of a straight monograph; instead of grouping them under such headings as material culture, agriculture, or religion, we have attempted an arrangement which, we hope, will give a better idea of Gond life as an organic entity. After the introductory chapters, which describe the physical and cultural environment, we have set a section outlining the mythical background of Gond culture and the cult of the clan-deities; for in this cult and the sacred myths lies the mainspring of the social order. Then follows a section describing the economic and ritual activities of a village community throughout the cycle of the year, and the three chapters of this section contain also most of the information on agriculture, the basis of Gond economics. Book II will open with an account of the phases of life, from childhood to death, and this will set the stage for a general discussion of the social organization and the principles of Gond religion, all details of ritual having been described already in their proper setting. The old feudal system looms still in the background of the social order, and I am attempting a reconstruction based on the existing remnants and local traditions contained mainly in the stories and songs of Pardhans. Read together with Wills' history of the Gond States of the Central Provinces this will perhaps give a certain idea of political and social life prevailing in Gondwana throughout the greater part of mediæval times.

The final chapters of the book will be concerned with the developments of the last fifty years, when increased contact with other populations broke up the Gonds' feudal organization and land-hungry immigrants drove many families from the lands where they had lived since the times of their ancestors. It is a dismal tale of the decline of a once proud and happy people, the loss of economic freedom, and the birth

[1] Cf. my article 'Aboriginal Education in Hyderabad.' *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. V, 1944.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

of a timid and resigned outlook in place of the manly spirit of old. Finally I propose to discuss the results of the more liberal policy towards the aboriginals which H.E.H. the Nizam's Government has pursued since 1944, and to outline the principles and the first stages of the Gond Education Scheme, which is designed to help the Gonds in the struggle for existence and to restore to them self-respect and pride in their own ancient culture.

In an account of a culture as rich and complex as that of the Raj Gonds the anthropologist must needs concentrate on certain aspects, and in this book I have given first place to the Gonds' mythology and their complex ritual, sanctioned and sustained in almost every phase by mythical precedents. This part of Gond culture is rapidly disintegrating and its study, still possible in the hills of Utnur and Asifabad Taluqs, would come too late in the more open parts of the District. Problems of psychology and the more intimate matters of the individual's life, on the other hand, are only fleetingly touched upon, but I believe that changes in this sphere are not as rapid and the time left for their study is consequently far less limited.

Although this book is not a treatise on linguistics, Gondi texts of some length have found a place in many chapters. I noted them when collecting my material and as they are the first recorded specimens of the pecular Gondi spoken in Adilabad, I do not feel justified in withholding them from the student of Indian languages. All have been checked and rechecked with several informants, but this is no guarantee of absolute accuracy, for Gonds, like the speakers of most unwritten languages, are often careless about rules of grammar and not very sensitive to slight slips in a text read out to them. The recording, moreover, is not in accordance with the exigent demands of modern phonetics, which only the trained linguist can fulfil. Consonants are used with their values in English, and vowels with their values in Italian, long and short signs being added only where confusion might otherwise arise between two words of similar sound. Diacritical signs have been used only in the consonants ṭ, ṛ and ḥ. While the dental t, rendered by the Nagri character त , is transcribed by simple t, the cerebral t rendered in Nagri by ट, is transcribed by ṭ. Similarly the soft r, र in Nagri, is transcribed r, and the hard ṛ, ड़ in Nagri, as ṛ. The letter ḥ stands for a sound closely resembling the German ch in Bach (pronounced like the composer). This sound occurs mainly in words of Marathi origin, and in such words most Gonds not familiar with Marathi pronounce it not as sh, but h; examples are (*goḥti* (word, speech) and *paḥti* (favour) pronounced in pure Marathi as *goshti* and *pashti*; but I have transcribed these and similar words as pronounced by the Gonds in the hills.

Following the spelling of the Linguistic Survey and Trench's Grammar, I have used *w* for all *v*-sounds, except in proper names occurring in the English text, and in words borrowed from Hindi in which *v* is

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

more familiar. Deviating from Trench, who employs double-consonants to indicate the shortness of the preceding vowels, thus spelling *wittana* (to run) in contrast to *witana* (to sow), I have dispensed with double-consonants; in words such as *waṭtana* (to put) the two consonants represent different sounds. Diacritical signs are confined to the Gondi texts, and are not used when an italicized Gondi word occurs in the English text.[1]

Those familiar with Gondi will notice that the language spoken by the Raj Gonds of Adilabad differs both from the Betul Gondi of Trench's Grammar and the Gondi spoken in South Chanda outlined by the Rev. S. B. Patwardhan.[2] A distinctive feature of Adilabad Gondi is the frequent substitution of an initial *s* for the initial *h* of both the Betul and the Chanda dialects. Thus the Adilabad Gond pronounces *surana* (to see) instead of *hurana*, and 'no' is *sile* in Adilabad but *halle* in Betul. While in the nominative the Gonds of Betul usually drop the initial *n* inherent in the first and second person of the personal pronoun and say *ana* (I) and *imma* (thou) the Gonds of Adilabad use the full form *nana* (I) and *nime* (thou).

The Gondi of southern Chanda described by Patwardhan, follows in the choice of the initial *s* and *h* the Betul usage, but has often *l* where both Adilabad and Betul Gonds pronounce *r*. Thus the Chanda Gond, like the Hill Maria says *lon* (house), while the Adilabad Gond pronounces the word clearly with *r*, *ron*.

Further comparisons between the three dialects would be beyond the scope of this work, but although Betul Gondi contains a good many words not familiar to the Gonds of Adilabad and probably *vice-versa*, and the language of South Chanda is strongly influenced by Telugu, speakers of the three dialects have on the whole no great difficulty in understanding each other.

Raj Gonds of Adilabad on the other hand find it almost impossible to understand or make themselves understood to Hill Marias of Chanda but in going through the texts given in Grigson's *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* I found that with a knowledge of Adilabad Gondi it is easy to recognize many Maria words, some being identical and most very similar in both dialects. The pronunciation and intonation seem however, to be so divergent that to those familiar with the Adilabad idiom Maria is more easily understood written than spoken. Ethnologically it would be extremely important to ascertain the affinities of those words in the Bastar dialects which do not occur in the Gondi of the Central Provinces

1. The student of Dravidian languages will find an extensive selection of Gondi texts in Nagri script in the series "Hyderabad Gondi Literature," which I am editing in collaboration with Mr. S. B. Jogalkar for use in Gond schools. So far the following numbers have been published: *Hyderabad Gondi Reading Chart for Adults* 1, 2, and 3 (Hyderabad, 1943); *First Reader for Adults* containing stories and Riddles (Hyderabad 1944); *Gondi Primer* (Hyderabad 1944); *First Gondi Reader* (Hyderabad 1946); *Three Epic Poems* (Hyderabad 1946); *The Legend of the Surpe Folk* (Hyderabad 1947); *The Myth of Manko* (Hyderabad 1946).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING IN TIME; THE HISTORICAL ISOLATION OF BASTAR

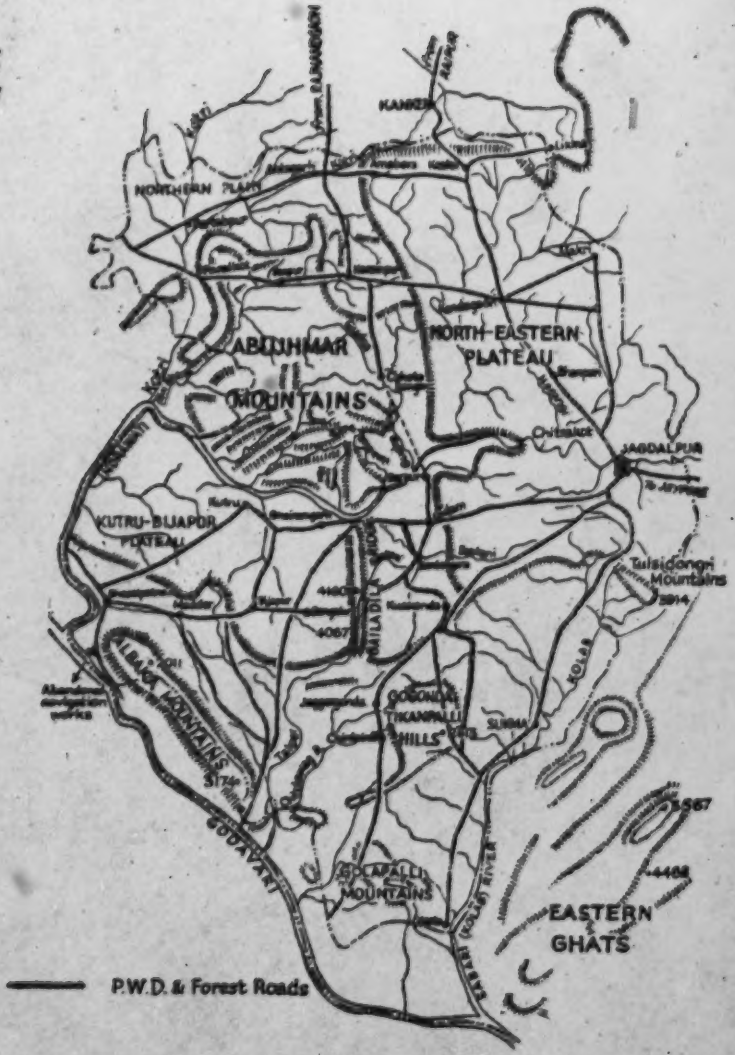
BASTAR STATE lies at the extreme south-east corner of the Central Provinces of India, between 17° 46′ and 20° 14′ north, and 80° 15′ and 82° 1′ east. Its area, according to the recently revised Survey of India figures, of 13,725 square miles makes it the tenth state in India in size, larger than Belgium and nearly as large as Holland. It is far larger than any of the old Central Provinces and Orissa States, with which it has recently been brought into the new Eastern States Agency. But it is one of the most sparsely peopled tracts of India, the 1931 population of 524,721 giving a density of only 34 to the square mile. If any part of India is still *terra incognita* to nearly all British officials and travellers, it is the vast tract covered by Bastar and the huge Jeypore zamindari recently transferred from the Vizagapatam Agency of Madras to the new province of Orissa. To the ordinary Indian of neighbouring districts, even to many of the few immigrant Hindu and Mussalman traders, this remains a land of savages, seeking still for human victims to sacrifice to their fetishes, skilled in herbs and simples, and potent practitioners of magic and witchcraft. Their view is little changed from that held 110 years ago by Maratha officials who described the Marias of the Abujhmar mountains to Sir Richard Jenkins, then Resident at the Court of Nagpur, as 'naked savages, living on roots and sprigs, and hunting for strangers to sacrifice'.

Bastar has in fact always been an almost unknown backwater of the river of Indian history. The late Chief, Maharani Prafulla Kumari Devi, at her accession in 1924 was the last legitimate survivor of one of the most ancient royal families of southern India, the Kakatiya, which reigned at Warangal from about A.D. 1150 to 1425, first possibly as feudatories of the Chalukya kings and then independently. In Bastar folk-song, Annam Deo, the first to reign in Bastar, is spoken of as 'Chalkibans Raja', which may be a corruption of 'Chalukya-bans' and indicate that the Kakatiya family was a cadet branch of the Chalukya. Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE I

131
133
491

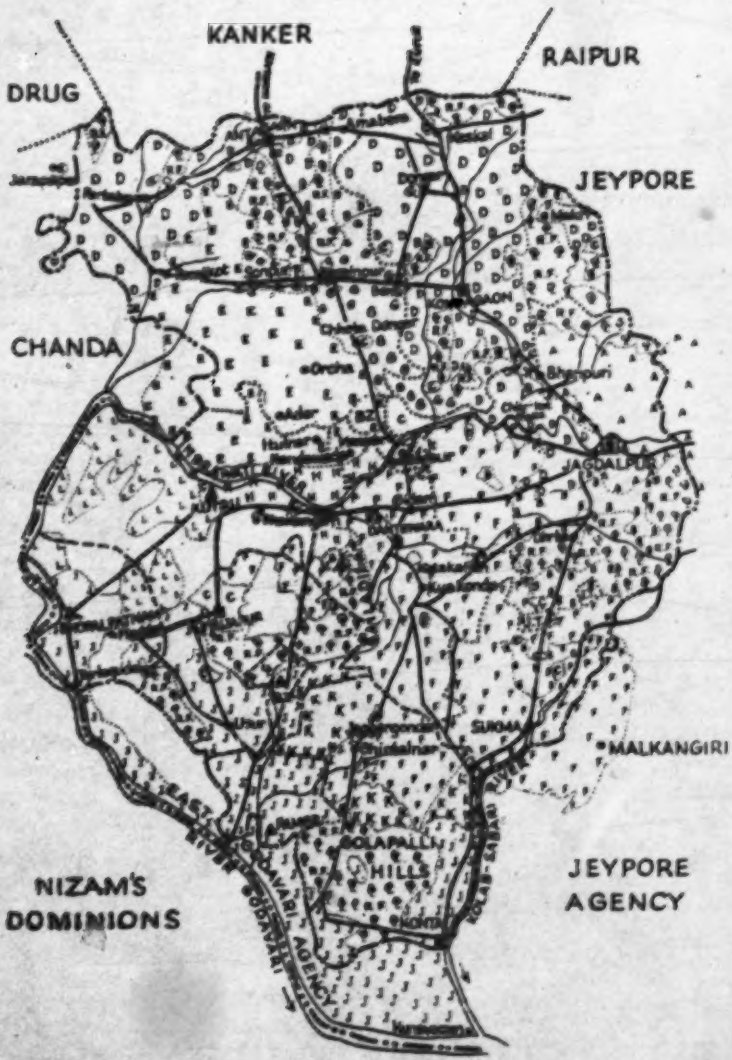


BASTAR STATE—NATURAL DIVISIONS
Scale (approx.) : 1 inch= 32 miles

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

●131
162

PLATE IV



BASTAR STATE ETHNOGRAPHIC MAP
Scale (approx.) : 1 inch = 32 miles

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
A W32 Gond A W32

Bison-horn Maria and Muria neighbours, and seldom learnt even by those State officials who are excellent interpreters in other dialects; and I fancy that the Hindi admixture is considerably less in ordinary use than in the specimens collected for the Linguistic Survey. It is certainly untrue of Parji that the name indicates rather a tribal than a linguistic difference from Gondi proper. The most marked difference of customs is their style of dancing, which resembles that of the small remnant of the Munda tribe of Gadbas still surviving in two or three villages between them and the Bhattras; they dance in rollicking circles accompanied by their own whistling or by wooden flutes, in a manner reminiscent of certain figures of the 'Lancers', and as different as their dancing dress from the Bison-horn dances of their Maria neighbours, and pleasanter to see and hear than any other dances of Bastar except the Gadba.

105

KEY TO PLATE IV

State or Provincial Boundary
Tribal Boundary .....
Roads, Forest
Tahsil Headquarters ■
Bhattras A
Halbas C
Marias, Abujhmar or Hill E
"Jhorias" or Murias probably ones Hill Marias, now lowlanders G
Koitor of the riverain tract or Dorlas J

Tahsil or Zamindari Boundary ----
Roads, P.W.D.
Reserved Forests
Zamindari Headquarters A
Parjas B
Murias D
Marias, Bison-horn or Dandami F
Hill Marias influenced by Bison-horn Marias H
Mixed Dorla & Bison-horn Maria, or latter exposed to Telugu influence K

Mixed Dorla & Hill Maria, or Hill Maria who have almost become Dorla L

131
162

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 often difficult to say where the Koitor begin or cease to be Maria. Much depends on the idiosyncrasies of the census enumerators. Moreover just as in Bastar there is really no hard and fast ethnological boundary line between Hill Maria and the tribes generally referred to as 'Muria', so in Chanda to the north and west of the zamindaris many now classed as Gond would undoubtedly at one time have been regarded as Maria, while where Chanda district borders on the west of the Narainpur (Antagarh) tahsil of Bastar the villagers are ethnically identical on both sides of the border, but on the Chanda side are called Maria and on the Bastar side Muria: of this I had a remarkable instance on my journey north from Surjagarh[1] in Ahiri zamindari to Jarawandi,[2] where the forest track crosses the two small west-protruding tongues of Bastar shown near the north-west corner of Bastar in the ethnographic map on page 40, near the Antagarh villages of Udcha[3] and Irpanar[4] in the southern tongue and Markanar[5] in the northern tongue; men of one clan living in the tongues called themselves Muria while their fellow-clansmen in the adjacent Ahiri villages called themselves Maria.

101 Drug district, Chanda district and Bastar State all meet at the north-west corner of Bastar, as the map on page 40 makes clear. At
161 this corner of Drug are the Drug Partially Excluded Areas, the zamindaris of Aundhi, Koracha, Panabaras and Ambagarh-Chauki transferred to Drug from Chanda in 1907. These zamindaris had in 1941 a population of 82,202, of whom aboriginals numbered 51,452, or 626 in every thousand. Of the latter some 16,750 were returned as practising the tribal religion, and the bulk of these must have been Gond. No 'Marias' were returned. Yet again, especially in Aundhi and Koracha, there is no racial difference between those returned there as 'Gond', their Chanda neighbours returned as 'Maria' and their Bastar neighbours returned as 'Muria'. Reference to land revenue and settlement records even in Panabaras zamindari[6] shows that down to the great famines at the end of the nineteenth century and even later the local headmen and ryots were frequently recorded as Maria by tribe.

101 All that in fact can safely be predicated of the country covered
131 by my tour in the Chanda and Drug zamindaris is that according to

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Qr. Inch Sheet 5A. ref. MV4774.
[2] Ibidem, ref. MQ5121.
[3] Ibidem, ref. MV4898.
[4] Ibidem, ref. MV5298.
[5] Ibidem, ref. MQ5314.
[6] See for example Grigson, *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar* (Nagpur, 1944), pp. 79-81.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Central Provinces terminology it was Maria country, or had till recently been thus considered; according to modern Bastar terminology it would be considered Muria country. To this there is one exception. The map on page 20 shows a projection westward into Chanda district of the Abujhmar Mountains between the western border of the State and the Kotri River, north of the Indrawati, just west of the junction of the Behra Mar, Jatwada and Farsal *parganas* of Narainpur (Antagarh tahsil) shown in the sketch-map on page 33. On this projection of the hills there are, speaking from memory, seven or eight villages which are definitely Hill Maria like the adjacent Abujhmar villages of Bastar, completely Hill Maria in culture, peopled by tribesmen who, like the Hill Maria of Bastar, call themselves Meta (Highland) Koitor, and despise the Maria of Lahiri and the other plains villages of Ahiri zamindari below their fastnesses.

I was able to make a rapid tour through much of this Chanda and Drug country in December 1940, and January 1941; certain preliminary investigations before my visit were made for me in Chanda by Mr. J. D. Kerawala of the Central Provinces and Berar Civil Service, who was then the Sub-divisional Officer, and he was with me throughout my tour. Some of the administrative and economic notes made on this tour were incorporated in various chapters of my book *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar*[1] to which I shall refer hereafter as *The Aboriginal Problem*, for the sake of brevity. I also filled a thick note-book with ethnographic and anthropological material, and had intended to use that material for this Note. Unfortunately the note-book perished when my house at Hyderabad was burnt down in a sudden senseless riot on the Ides of March 1946, along with almost all my Chanda photographs, the note-books, manuscripts and photographs of twenty-five years in India, and the whole of my library. No doubt this has simplified packing to quit India, but so far as this Note is concerned it has meant depriving it of what would have made it most valuable. It has therefore to be written from memory, and references in *The Aboriginal Problem*.

Let me now describe the tour generally, mentioning the places visited and the persons and things seen. My first halt was at Allapilli[2] in Sironcha tahsil, the site of the teak saw-mills of the provincial Forest Department, a few miles from Ahiri,[3] the headquarters of the Ahiri zamindari, which I visited from Allapilli.

[1] Nagpur, Government Printing, Central Provinces and Berar, 1944.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV0852.
[3] Ibidem, ref. MV0149.

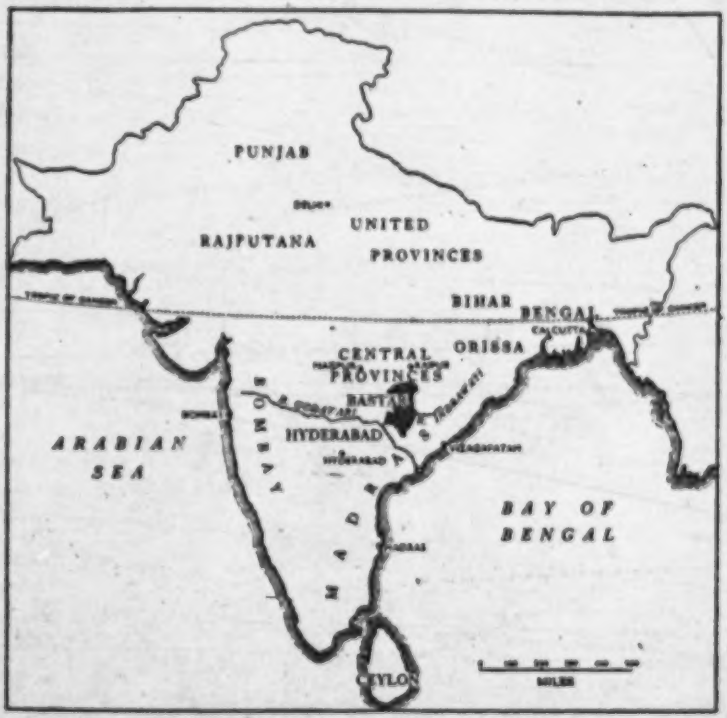
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. Bastar State

● 131 THE great plain of Chhattisgarh stretches down past Raipur and Dhamtari in hot and dusty monotony till it spends itself against the hills of Kanker. Thenceforward the journey is a never-failing delight; as the traveller moves towards the Bastar plateau the countryside breaks into song about him; he is greeted by hardy smiling woodmen singing at their work; the skyline is broken by fantastic piles of rock; all around is the evergreen sal forest. Presently he sees looming up before him a row of sharply-rising hills, the sentinels that stand on guard before the country of the ghotul. The white pillars that mark the boundary of the State are soon passed, and the long steep ascent of the Keskal Ghat must be essayed. From the summit there is a magnificent view of the great sea of hill and forest below.



INDIA, SHOWING THE POSITION OF BASTAR STATE

Bastar is a large State of 13,725 square miles lying between 17° 46′ and 20° 14′ North and 80° 15′ and 82° 1′ East. It is bounded on the north by Kanker

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

131 State and the Drug District of the Central Provinces, on the west by the Ahiri Zamindari of the Chanda District, on the east by the great Jeypore Zamindari of Orissa, and to the south by the Nizam's Dominions. In 1931 its population was 524,721 giving a density of only 34 to the square mile, but in the last ten years the figure has risen to 634,912. The State is divided into six tahsils and four zamindaris, and is at present administered by a Diwan resident at Jagdalpur, the capital, in the minority of the Maharaja.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF BASTAR STATE

An admirable account of the geography and administration of the State is given by Grigson in his standard *Maria Gonds of Bastar*, which should be consulted by every reader of this book.[1] Bastar is roughly bisected by the great Indrawati river which flows west from Kalahandi through the Jagdalpur Tahsil and the south of the Abujhmar Mountains to the Chanda border. Here we are not concerned with the beautiful and fascinating country south of the river; our business is with the north.

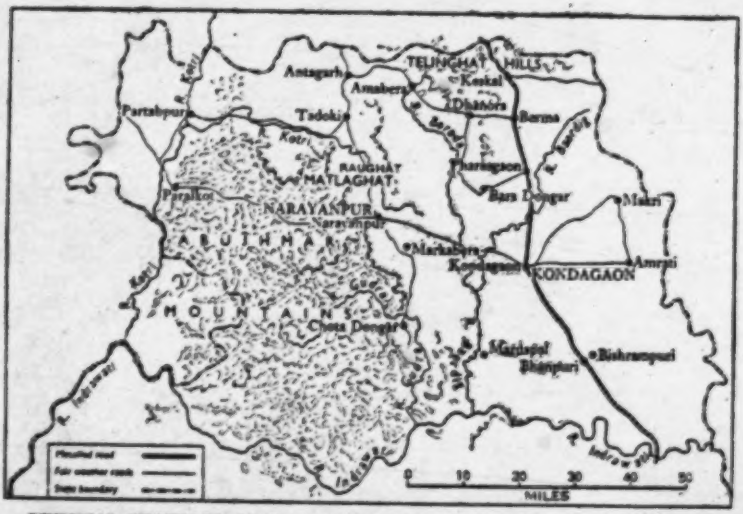
[1] W. V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* (Oxford, 1938).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

131 The territory north of the Indrawati is divided into three administrative divisions. The first, in the north-east, is the Kondagaon Tahsil; the second, in the north-west, is the Narayanpur, formerly the Antagarh, Tahsil, and the third, to the south, is the Jagdalpur Tahsil. Of these only the first two are inhabited by the type of Muria whose institutions and life are the subject of this book; in the heavily populated and fertile lowlands of the Jagdalpur Tahsil the Muria have no ghotul and, under Palace and other influences, have largely abandoned their characteristic beliefs and practices.

133 The Kondagaon Tahsil occupies the great north-eastern plateau of Bastar. This plateau, which is some 2400 feet above sea-level, runs south from the Telinghat Hills as far as Tulsidongri below Jagdalpur. To the east it extends



PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE NARAYANPUR AND KONDAGAON TAHSILS

into Jeypore and Kalahandi, and on the west is bordered by the Matlaghat and a range of hills extending south from Benur to Karikot. The scenery is green and pleasant, but rather monotonous except round Bara Dongar—where there are picturesque hills—and in the Chalka Pargana in the neighbourhood of the Boroda and Baordig rivers, where great rocks rising above the fields and forest combine with the quiet river views to make many pictures of serene beauty.

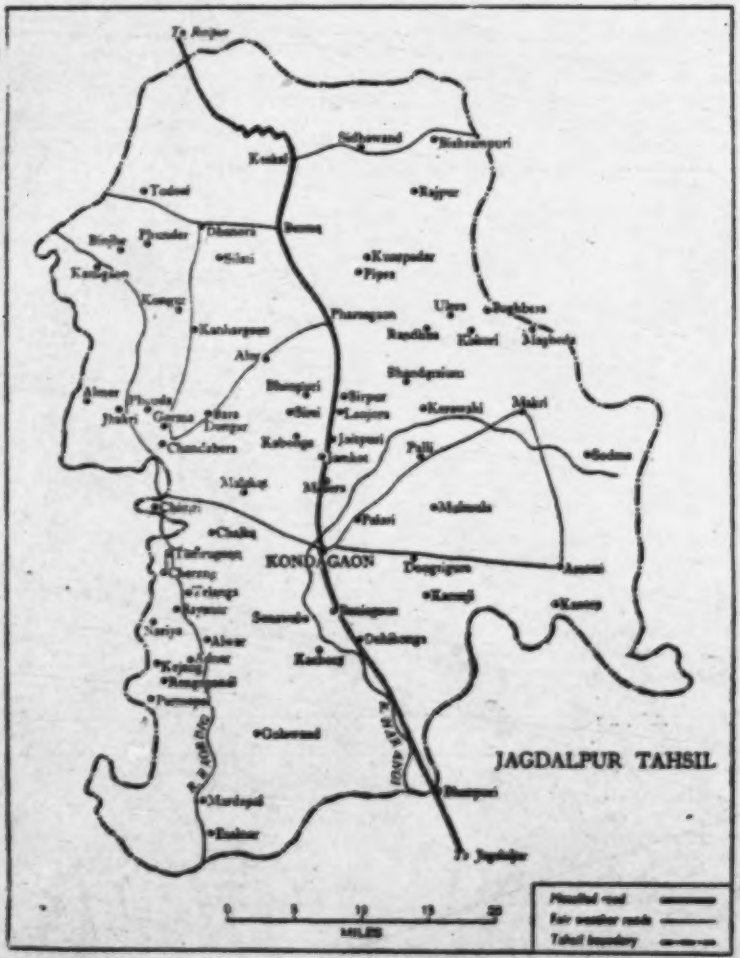
There are two main rivers in the tahsil. The Baordig flows from the north-east corner of the plateau, crosses the main road at Lanjora, winds round by Malakot, cuts the Kondagaon-Narayanpur road at Alwa, passing mostly through scrubby jungle and open tracts of embanked rice-fields, with occasional hills strewn with rocky boulders. Finally it forces its way between steep banks and large rocks till it joins the Boroda near Bayanar. The Boroda comes down through the Amabera Pargana, into the Kongur Pargana, across very similar country, then flows on with the Baordig to join the Indrawati at Karikot.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

133 491 These are the main features of the Kondagaon Tahsil: a main road, open all the year round and vibrating day and night to the rumble of lorries connecting the capital with the greater world. A high plateau, broken by one range of hills running north from Bara Dongar and to the south and east.

●[131 491]



KONDAGAON TAHSIL

Two main rivers and many streams. Forest everywhere, mainly sal forest, green all the year. Four fair-weather roads; one east from Keskal along the northern border to Bishrampuri and on into Jeypore and the Likma Forest

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWO

THE BISON-HORN MARIA

I

The so-called Maria of Bastar fall naturally into two divisions distinguished by many details of culture and tradition, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains and the Bison-horn Maria living to the south of the Indrawati River. A full account of both these tribes has been given by W. V. Grigson, and his book should be read by those who wish to have a fuller background of Maria life than the present volume can supply. In this chapter I will only give a brief summary of the life and customs of the Bison-horn Maria.

The Bison-horn Maria, who are distinguished from the other aboriginals of Bastar by the splendid head-dress they use for their marriage dances, numbered about 156,000 in 1931, and I estimate their present strength at about 175,000. They are distributed all over southern Bastar, among the entrancing hills of Dantewara, in the dry forests of Bijapur, among the hot but lovely lowlands of Konta, in the remote Sukma and Kutru Zamindaris. On the borders of the main Maria stock are a number of communities which really belong to it, the Koya of the extreme south, the Dorla who claim to be a superior caste and the mixed population along the banks of the Indrawati and reaching up towards the Muria country beyond Barsur. The Dorla and Koya dance in Bison-horn Maria fashion; the mixed people to the north combine the customs of the Hill Maria with their own. In the neighbourhood of Jagdalpur, the Maria gradually lose their distinctiveness as they approach the town and merge into the southern Muria.

There are few people in India more attractive than the Bison-horn Maria, physically charming, of good stature, perfect figure, finely featured with carefully tended hair, often a lovely golden-brown in colour. Both men and women are very strong; the men can carry heavy loads great distances, endure long and arduous hunting expeditions and dance all night bearing their great drums. Their health is fairly good, but they are afflicted with yaws, though the work of the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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632
625

[Facing p. 18(A)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

[Facing p. 18(B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

131

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

plateau from Antagarh tahsil. The northern half of this north-eastern plateau is Kondagaon tahsil, and the southern Jagdalpur. The height of the plateau varies from 2,500 or 2,400 feet at its northern and southern edges to about 1,800 feet near Jagdalpur. It is a region of evergreen forests, with the beautiful sal (*Shorea robusta*) as its characteristic tree. The temperature seldom exceeds 104° in the summer, and at Jagdalpur descends to 40° in the winter, while hoar frosts are not uncommon in the forests. Kondagaon tahsil is under-developed and jungly, much of it and Antagarh having been comparatively recently settled by Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh. Jagdalpur, on the other hand, has miles of excellent rice cultivation in its extensive open plains, and is the only heavily populated part of the State, except adjacent parts of Dantewara. On its south-eastern and southern edges, however, it has hilly country heavily forested or inhabited by primitive Parjas and Bison-horn Marias.

The north-west corner of the State is the Antagarh tahsil. The north of this is a continuation of the Chhattisgarh-Kanker plain 800 or 900 feet above sea-level, bounded on the west and north by the Chanda and Drug districts of the Central Provinces and by Kanker State. This plain, the second main natural division of Bastar, is reached from Keskal and north Kondagaon through the Amabera *pargana*, which, though on the 2,000 feet plateau, is in Antagarh, by a forest road descending the steep Matlaghat by a recently re-aligned and easily-graded descent. The main road from Jagdalpur and Kondagaon through Antagarh to Rajnandgaon rail-head enters the tahsil in the Benur *pargana* on the 2,000 feet plateau and descends 200 or 300 feet to Narainpur which, with the adjacent *parganas* of Kurangal, Dugal, Baragaon, Ghat Jhorian and Bare Jhorian, as well as Benur and the lowland or 'Kalpatti' villages of Chhote Dongar *pargana*, are an intermediate stage between the true 2,000 feet plateau and the plain of north Antagarh. The inhabitants are mostly what were called by Glasfurd and other early writers Jhorias, in appearance scarcely distinguishable from the Marias of the Abujhmar hills, with similar dancing dress, and customs similar, but considerably modified by sojourn in the lowlands and contact with other tribes. From Narainpur a forest road runs westward along the Nei Bherat valley to Sonpur, with an extension thence to Paralkot and Maroda, where it meets another forest road that comes westward from Taroki on the Narainpur-Antagarh road across the north Antagarh plain. The Sonpur, Paralkot and Paralkot-Kalpatti *parganas* are really lowland *parganas* in the middle of highland Maria *parganas*, and the two latter belong properly speaking to the north Antagarh plain. The

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 Madras if it had been reasonably managed. The few 'Dorla' villages are the most miserable in Bastar.

The third sub-division is the Kolab-Sabari valley from the southern slopes of the hills at the edge of the 2,000 feet plateau and the Dantewara valley plateau to the border of the Bhadrachalam taluq of Madras on the south. The northern portion of this, the Sukma zamindari, is a punchbowl ringed by the high edges of the Jagdalpur and Dantewara plateaux from Tulsidongri in the north-east counter-clockwise to a point in the south-west of the zamindari where the foot-hills of the Gogonda-Tikanpalli hills approach the Kolab-Sabari near Chikpalli; the hills are continued across the river and the Bastar border still counter-clockwise towards Malkangiri, and thence back to Tulsidongri. There are two small detached portions of Jagdalpur tahsil in the north of the zamindari, around Kukanar and the lower waters of the Thakawara and Kumakoleng rivers respectively. South of Sukma zamindari the valley opens out again to form the main block of Konta tahsil, including the former Bhiji zamindari, the level of which falls nearly to 250 feet above the sea by Konta at its south-east corner; here the Bastar portion of the valley is very narrow, as nearly all the south of Konta tahsil is occupied by the ranges of the Golapalli mountains which at one point reach a height of more than 2,800 feet.

132 133 137 In contrast with north Bastar, with its evergreen moist forests, cool climate, abundant water-supply and often thick population, south Sukma, almost all Konta, the Pamer-Kotapalli zamindari and much of south Bijapur are hot dry regions of deciduous forests, deficient water and sparse population. The rivers are short stony torrents rushing down in the monsoon to the adjacent Godavari, Talper or Kolab-Sabari, and drying up often before January. Teak is the characteristic timber tree.

135 162 There will be found in Appendix I a statement of the areas and populations of the six tahsils and four zamindaris into which modern Bastar is divided. Each of these administrative units is called after the name of its headquarters; except Jagdalpur with a (1931) population of 10,128, the other headquarters are only villages, and not always large villages; in 1931, of the 2,442 villages in Bastar only five had populations between 2,000 and 2,500, and forty-two populations between 1,000 and 2,000.

634 Frequent mention was made in this chapter of the smaller *pargana* unit. The first use that I can find of this word is in Appendix IX of Glasfurd's 1862 report, in which, of the forty-three non-zamindari sub-divisions of Bastar, seventeen are called *parganas* and twenty-six *garhs*. In Elliot's 1855 report the names are given of forty-eight *garhs* and nine taluqs into which the non-zamindari

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills, and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE I

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133
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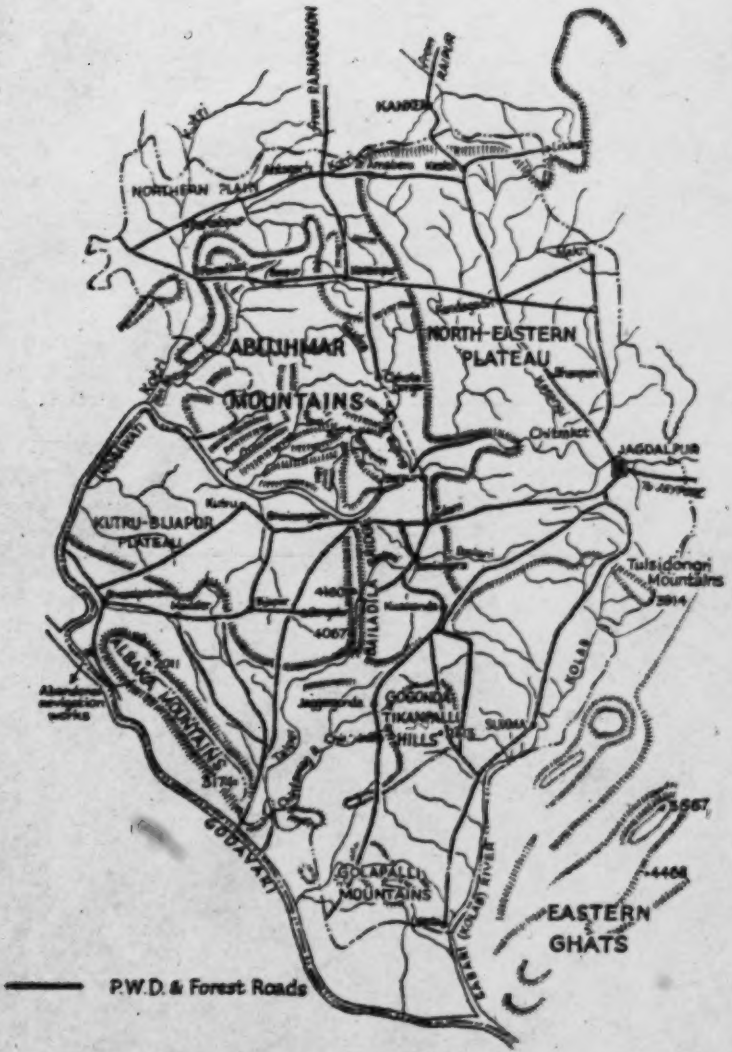


BASTAR STATE—NATURAL DIVISIONS
Scale (approx.): 1 inch = 32 miles

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Chapter II

The Setting in Space; the Physical and Administrative Geography of Bastar

Before dealing with the Maria Gonds, I propose to describe in this and the following chapter the main features of the physical and administrative geography and the ethnography of Bastar. The political divisions frequently are founded on the old tribal organization of the country, to which I have alluded in the first chapter; and in discussing the distribution of the tribes it is impossible to avoid constantly referring to them.

The great river Indrawati, which flows across the centre of the State from east to west with a winding course within the State of about 240 miles, almost bisects the State, and is its main geographical feature. It rises near Rampur Thuamul in Kalahandi, one of the former Orissa States, whence it flows south-west some thirty miles till, after forming the boundary between Kalahandi and the Orissa Province for eight or nine miles, it crosses the south-east corner of the Naurangpur taluq of the latter, and then for a winding course of some sixty miles divides the Naurangpur from the Jeypore taluq of Jeypore zamindari, till it enters the Jagdalpur tahsil of Bastar near the confluence of the Bhaskel tributary, thirteen miles above Jagdalpur. At Chitrakot, twenty-four miles by road and thirty-five by river below Jagdalpur, the Indrawati plunges off the edge of the great 2,000 feet plateau of north-east Bastar and northern Jeypore in a beautiful horseshoe fall ninety-four feet high, followed by a series of wild rapids down a valley rapidly descending between high cliff ramparts. In its course across Jeypore zamindari and Jagdalpur tahsil it is a deep sluggish river, winding along in great S-bends through field and evergreen sal forest, and always more or less rusty in colour from flowing over deep beds of red laterite or *murram*. It receives no large tributaries from the south above Chitrakot, as here it flows close to the watershed dividing it from the Kolab-Sabari, the great tributary of the Godavari that rises in the Eastern Ghats above Jeypore and for many miles forms the eastern boundary of Bastar; at one point a tributary of the Kolab is less than a mile from the main current of the Indrawati. But just above Chitrakot falls it is joined by the Narangi, and about ten miles below the falls by the Baordig, which drain most of north-east Bastar (the Kondagaon tahsil).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

●133 For the rest of its course from Chitrakot to its junction with the Godavari near Bhadrakali in Bhopalpatnam zamindari on the western border it is typical of any great river draining mountainous country. It loses its rusty colour at Chitrakot, and becomes a series of rapids and deep pools, giving way to fresh rapids wherever it passes over sheets of rock or pierces through successive mountain barriers in wild gorges. The pools are often great land-locked lakes, with deeply wooded islands, the haunts of tiger, sambar and wild buffalo. It receives various tributaries, of which the chief Bastar rivers are the Gudra, the Nei Bherat[1] and the Kotri on the north bank, and on the south bank the Dantewara, the Berudi and the Bhopalpatnam Chintawag. The Gudra and the Nei Bherat take most of the drainage of the wild tangle of the Abujhmar hills, save for smaller mountain torrents, such as the Goinder that descends from Hikul over the magnificent Handawada falls (not marked on the maps), and the Komra that for much of its length forms the Bastar-Central Provinces (Chanda) boundary. The Gudra drains the Tulagotal, Farsigotal, Farsal, Bardal and Chudala (Chhota) Dongar *parganas* of the Abujhmar mountains and other adjacent *parganas* of the Antagarh tahsil; the gorge near Chhota Dongar where it leaves the Abujhmar mountains in a narrow loch between forested peaks, its banks deep in bamboo, *Osmunda regalis* and other ferns, is beautiful. The Nei Bherat rises near Narainpur in the Kurangal *pargana* of Antagarh, the north-western tahsil, and flows due west past Sonpur and through the Nurbhum Maria *pargana*; then turning south-west through the Tapalibhum (Chhotemar) and Behramar (Baremar) Maria *parganas* of Antagarh, it crosses the south-east corner of the Ahiri zamindari in Chanda district to join the Indrawati and the Kotri or Paralkot river in a trijunction of unforgettable beauty 'beneath the fortified rock of Bhamragarh, in a wild expanse of hill and forest unbroken by a single clearing'.[2] Besides the Maria *parganas* of Antagarh already mentioned, it drains the Hukkagotal and Jatawada and parts of the Bardal and Farsal Maria *parganas* of Antagarh, and the portion of the Abujhmar mountains that extends beyond Bastar

[103]

[1] Wrongly marked 'Nibra' on the old Topographical Survey maps of the sixties, slightly revised modern editions of which are still the only maps available of most of Bastar. 'Nei Bherat' means in the Maria dialect 'Dog River', so called after the numbers of otters in the river.

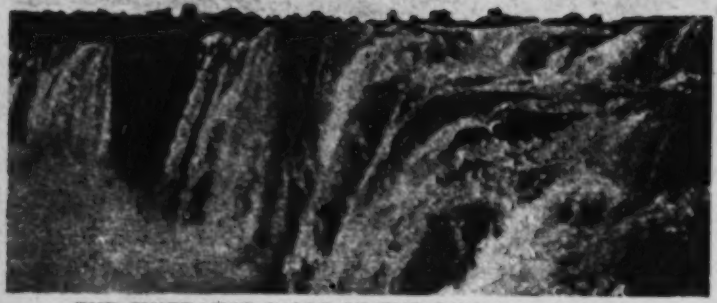
The names on these old maps are often wrong, and represent the efforts of Telugu or Bengali surveyors to reproduce the difficult guttural and other sounds of Maria. The maps are full of other inaccuracies, and seem often to have been drawn from the imagination of surveyors afraid of fever, tigers and aboriginal magic.

[2] Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report, para. 56. He calls the Nibra River by the name 'Pamla Ghootum'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

PLATE II

133



THE CHITRAKOT FALLS OF THE RIVER INDRAWATI

CONFLUENCE OF RIVERS INDRAWATI AND KOMRA.
BORDER OF BASTAR AND CHANDA

THE ARANPUR PASS

[Facing p. 22]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

133 into the south-east corner of Chanda district and is inhabited by the same hill Marias as the Bastar *parganas* in these mountains. The Kotri is far the largest of the tributaries of the Indrawati. Its main stream rises far north, in the Pannabaras zamindari of Drug district; it is joined at Gudumpara in Kanker State by the Kandra which drains the Sambalpur tahsil of Kanker; below Partabpur in the north-west corner of Bastar by a large branch also called the Kotri which rises from two main sources in the Matlaghat and Raoghat mountains and drains all the north of Antagarh tahsil, including the Maria *parganas* of Padalbhum (Pataldesh), Tapalibhum and Behramar; and by another large stream a little west of Paralkot. It then crosses south-east Chanda to the west of the Nei Bherat, to meet the latter and the Indrawati at Bhamragarh.

As these northern tributaries between them drain the country of the Abujhmar Maria, so the southern tributaries drain the northern lands of the Bison-horn or Dandami Maria, the Indrawati and its small tributary near Barsur, the Mander, being roughly the boundary between them. The chief southern tributary is the Dantewara, made up of the Sankani and the Dankani, which unite just by the famous Dantewara temple. The Sankani rises near the lofty (4,067 feet) Nandiraj peak of the Bailadila mountains, and drains the Aranpur, Bacheli and Dugeli *parganas* of Dantewara tahsil, while the Dankani rises from the Tangri Dongri ghats on the south edge of the great north-eastern plateau, from sources near Killepal and Paknar, and drains the Katakalian and Knakonda tracts of Dantewara tahsil. The other southern tributaries of the Indrawati do not call for remark here; except the Dantewara, the Berudi and the Bhopalpatnam Chintawag, they are as small as the southern tributaries above the Chitrakot falls, the Indrawati being close to the watersheds that separate it from the Kolab-Sabari and the main Godavari except in the areas drained by the three tributaries named above.

Apart from a few streams in the north-east of Bastar which flow off the northern slopes of the Telinghat hills near Keskal into the Mahanadi system, and in the south-west the Talper-Chintawag system draining the western slopes of the Bailadila mountains and the Bijapur tahsil directly into the Godavari, the only other important river-system is that of the Kolab-Sabari (the river is known in Jeypore and in most of Bastar as the Kolab, and as the Sabari or Savari in the Konta tahsil of Bastar and the adjacent taluqs of the Jeypore and East Godavari Agencies). Rising on the 3,000 feet Korapat plateau of the Eastern Ghats between Jeypore and Korapat, it cascades down on to the Jeypore-Bastar plateau, flows north a few miles to its junction with the Jaura near the Bastar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

133 Irredenta town of Kotapad, and then south to Korokpur. Thence for eighteen miles it divides the Kanker State Forest of Bastar from the Jeypore taluq, but from the confluence of the Kanker river it turns south away from the Bastar border into the Malkangiri taluq of Jeypore and then west past the Bastar Irredenta *pargana* of Salmigarh for about twenty-six miles; it flows west then for another five miles, as the Bastar border, as far as the confluence of the Kumakoleng and Thakawada rivers. For the next thirty-five miles, as far as Sukma, it enters the Sukma zamindari of Bastar, and from Sukma southwards for ten miles it is the Sukma-Malkangiri boundary, and thence still on the whole southwards for forty-four miles as far as Konta it divides the Konta tahsil of Bastar from Malkangiri. Just below Konta, after its junction with the Sileru, it enters the Bhadrachalam taluq of the East Godavari Agency of Madras, and after another twenty miles of southward course flows into the Godavari at Kunavaram. Konta is a river port accessible to small steamers from the rainy season till January. The trade of south-east Bastar therefore passes through it, and it is a focus of Telugu influence. The Kolab-Sabari is altogether about 202 miles in length, for seventy-seven of which it forms the Bastar boundary, and for thirty-five of which it flows inside the State, while in another thirty or thirty-five miles of its course it receives the drainage of parts of Bastar. Where it falls from the 2,000 foot plateau to Salmigarh beneath the heights of Tulsidongri (3,915 feet) it resembles the Indrawati in its wild beauty; the two rivers, indeed, are much alike in their scenery and the levels through which they pass. On its right bank it receives all the drainage of the Parja country in the south-east of Jagdalpur tahsil and the north of Sukma zamindari; that of the Bison-horn Maria country of the adjacent parts of Jagdalpur, a small portion of Dantewara, and western Sukma; and all that of the 'Koya' and Bison-horn Maria country in Konta tahsil east of the Gogonda-Tikanpalli hills (2,000 to 2,600 feet) and the Golapalli hills (1,200 to 2,800 feet).

With the river-systems thus outlined, it is easy to demonstrate the main physical and administrative divisions of the country. First there is the great north-eastern plateau, stretching from the Telinghat hills about 2,500 feet high and a few miles south of the northern border to the Tangri Dongri and Tulsidongri ranges that divide Jagdalpur tahsil from Sukma zamindari and Dantewara tahsil. The plateau extends eastward into Jeypore and Kalahandi, while on the west the Matlaghat hills and the hills that run roughly south from Benur on the Kondagaon-Antagarh-Rajnandgaon road to Kanjkot on the Indrawati below the Chitrakot Falls divide the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

133 Sonpur *pargana*, however, has many Hill Maria villages, and a sprinkling of Halbas and 'Jhorias'.

[491] The road from Narainpur to Antagarh descends the Raoghat near Aturbera village between a spur of the Abujhmar mass of hills 2,938 feet in height and the Matlaghat hills, down the sal-clad valley of a stream that drains into the Kotri river. The Antagarh plain has the 'Muria' *parganas* of Antagarh, Kolar, Surebahi, Bomra, Kirangal, Kalpatti, and Bandadesh, besides Paralkot and Paralkot-Kalpatti already mentioned.

The third great natural division of the State is the Abujhmar mountain mass. Roughly speaking, this is composed of all the wild hill country bounded on the south by the Indrawati, on the north by the Antagarh plain, on the east by the Jhoria country described above and the Gudra valley from Chhota Dongar to Mangnar near the Indrawati and Barsur, and on the west by the Kotri river from Partabpur to its junction with the Indrawati at Bhamragarh in the Ahiri zamindari of the Chanda district. This tangle of hills is roughly rectangular, but at its north-eastern corner throws two great spurs into the Antagarh plain by Raoghat (already mentioned) and Kolar, and at its north-western corner projects a bastion of hill almost to the Kotri valley between Partabpur and Koilibera. The north-eastern spurs are now in the Matla State Forest, but the north-western bastion has as its northern face the Padalibhum *pargana*, with the Tapalibhum and Nurbhum *parganas* to the side and south of this, all three occupied by Hill Marias. The hill mass is so cracked and seamed with valleys running in all directions, that it is not possible to point out any main hill systems; the only clues that help to a conception of its features are the watersheds. The northern slopes drain into the Bastar branch of the Kotri, and the north-western into the main Kotri after the junction of the Drug-Kanker and Bastar branches. Below this, the great trough of the Nei Bherat valley cleaves the mountains from Narainpur on the north-eastern edge westward for thirty-five miles through Sonpur into the Nurbhum *pargana*, where it turns south-west through the Behramar *pargana* and the Chanda Hill Maria country to Bhamragarh. The watershed dividing this from the streams that flow into the Gudra runs roughly south-west from the north-western corner of the Hukkagotal *pargana* just south of the Nei Bherat valley along a line of crests to Kutul village in Bardal *pargana*, thence south to Dhurbera, the village of the headman of the Farsal *pargana*, and slightly east of south from there to Adeq in Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*. From the hills between Dhurbera and Adeq some smaller streams flow south-west direct into the Indrawati. From the crests running first eastwards

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from Adeq and then south-eastwards towards the Maria villages of Mangnar *pargana*, streams flow southwards or south-westwards into the Indrawati. 133

Though this block of hills is a homogeneous tract, peopled entirely by Hill Marias, it unfortunately is split up administratively. The south-western corner above Bhamragarh and Lahir is British territory, part of the Ahiri zamindari of Chanda district. All the *parganas* north of the watershed between the Nei Bherat and Indrawati on the one hand and the Gudra on the other are in Antagarh tahsil. The slopes draining into the Indrawati from the Chanda border eastwards to a line running north from the confluence of the Indrawati and the Dantewara form the Kutru Mar and the Bhairamgarh Mar *parganas* of Kutru zamindari; the Hikul-Toinar-Hendawada group of eight hill villages east of this is part of Dantewara tahsil, and the few hill villages at the south-east corner are part of the outlying Mangnar *pargana* of the Bhopalpatnam zamindari.

The peaks of the Abujhmar vary in height from 2,050 feet on the northern fringes to 3,322, the highest point near Tadanar in Mangnar *pargana*. Fourteen peaks exceed 3,000 feet in height. Except the Marias themselves, few persons in Bastar know the tract at all; and before I visited it, all the old tales served up to Glasfurd in the sixties were again cooked up for my benefit; the country was so rugged that I should have to climb on my hands and knees; it was impossible for elephants and quite out of the question for horses; I should be unable to get bearers for my camp kit; fever was rampant; distances were enormous; and so on. Some of the marches are difficult; but then a car can be taken now up to Orcha, the chief village of Chhota Dongar Mar; the people are friendly in the extreme, and if properly treated and reimbursed in salt, beads, mirrors, cloth and pork, and allowed to dance at every camp, they will turn out in numbers to carry all necessary equipment. It is not difficult to arrange camps at distances at once reasonable for the walker and far enough apart to make it unnecessary to detain bearers from the previous camp to carry luggage on to the next camp. There are no cart tracks and no carts; and there are many steep ascents and descents on the hill tracks. Good water is everywhere available from clear perennial springs. The hills are far freer from mosquitoes and fever than the plains below; but the traveller who brings a medical assistant and simple medicines with him will find the Marias in great need of elementary medical relief and very grateful for it. [489]

The scenery varies. On the edges of the hills there are often fine views of the plains below, while on the northern and eastern

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 slopes and in the Mangnar and Dantewara Mar villages there are often fine patches of sal and other evergreen trees. On the hill-tops and on slopes exhausted by shifting cultivation, high grass and stunted trees make the country monotonous to the eye and tiring through lack of shade. Where the slopes are newly cleared and have once been burnt for shifting *penda* cultivation, often a small grove of trees is left on the summit, like nothing so much as the top-knot of hair on the crown of a Maria's otherwise roughly-shaved head. But the moment you descend off the rocky plateaux you meet green glades and hurrying streams, or may feel the sudden amaze of a prospect such as that of the blue apex of the lofty Bailadila ridge seen beyond the haze of the Indrawati valley down the valley of a stream that far below the ridge between Itulnar and Hikul races due south to the Indrawati.

161 There are only between 150 and 160 villages inhabited in all this area of about 1,500 square miles, and there are only 11,500 361 Hill Marias. This means one village in every ten square miles, and less than eight persons to the square mile. In few places can you lose yourself in such solitudes.

635 North Bastar thus consists administratively of the Antagarh, Kondagaon and Jagdalpur tahsils, half of the Jagdalpur tahsil being south of the Indrawati, and of the portions of the Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris and the Dantewara tahsil north of the Indrawati.

635 In South-Bastar there are the Dantewara, Bijapur and Konta tahsils, and the Sukma, Kutru, Bhopalpatnam and Kotapalli-491 Pamer zamindaris; these four zamindaris alone survive out of the seventeen or eighteen of old times. A great western road runs 134 miles from Jagdalpur through Gidam, Karli, Matawara, Bijapur and Bhopalpatnam to Timer on the Indrawati, opposite Patagudam in Chanda district, whence there is a forest road to Sironcha; branches south from Gidam and Karli run to Dantewara, with a further extension to Kameli at the foot of the Bailadila hills; north from Gidam to Barsur, and from Matawara to Kutru; and south from Bhopalpatnam to Tarlagudam on the Godavari and thence over the Latpatkandi pass into the Nugur and Albaka taluqs of Madras. A great southern road runs 114 miles from Jagdalpur to Sukma and Konta. A network of forest roads of recent construction links these roads together between Tirathgarh in Jagdalpur tahsil, Katakalian, Kuakonda and Dantewara, or southward from Kuakonda to the Kolab-Sabari at Misma on the Konta road, and to Konta via the Aranpur pass, Jaggergonda and Golapalli; while Bijapur is linked to Cherla and Jaggergonda to Dummagudam, both on the Godavari. With these and other

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

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forest roads there are now few places in south Bastar out of reach of a motor-car, in the fair weather.

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Dantewara tahsil is a horseshoe plain between the Tangri Dongri ghats at the edge of Jagdalpur tahsil on the east, the Abujhmar mountains on the north, and the great sword-blade north and south ridge of Bailadila on the west. Its general level is about 400 feet below that of the Jagdalpur tahsil, and it is an intermediate step between the north-eastern plateau and the great plains of South Bastar. The main road descends steeply to it from Killepal and Bastanar. This Dantewara valley may almost be regarded as the fourth natural division of Bastar; though small portions of the east of Kutru zamindari and the north of Bijapur tahsil are on the same level, there is between them and Dantewara tahsil the great barrier of the Bailadila ridge, except where the narrow Indrawati valley separates the northern end of the ridge from the Abujhmar mountains.

The rest of Bastar is sometimes described as one great southern plain varying in level from 600 to 300 feet according to the proximity of the Godavari. Actually, however, there is yet another plateau to be crossed on the western road (and on its forest branches that strike off towards the Godavari) before the traveller descends on to the real Godavari plain. Its level varies from 1,100 to 900 feet (leaving out of account, in this as in all the plateaux and plains of Bastar, the frequent spurs and isolated hills). On the southern road to Konta, and on the forest roads descending from Dantewara to Konta tahsil and Sukma zamindari by the Aranpur, Koriras and Mokpal passes, on the other hand, the traveller gets at once off the northern 2,000 feet plateau, in the case of the southern road, and off the Dantewara valley level in those of the forest roads, to the Godavari or southern plain. This intermediate western plateau may be regarded as the fifth natural division, and called the Kutru-Bijapur plateau. On the north and north-west the Indrawati is its boundary, so far as Bastar is concerned, as far as the hills which begin north of Desli in Sironcha tahsil and cross the Indrawati into Bastar to form the boundary of the Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris; the gorge in which the Indrawati boils through these hills, the last barrier to its union with the Godavari, is sinister in its magnificence. The hills run thence south-west along the border of the two zamindaris, cross the western road a little west of Bijapur village and continue south-west to the Isalnar pass on the Nelasnar-Cherla forest road, and thence westward till they merge with the foot-hills at the southern end of the Bailadila ridge, a little north of the Aranpur pass.

This Kutru-Bijapur plateau comprises all Kutru zamindari

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

except the two Hill Maria *parganas* north of the Indrawati already mentioned; the isolated Mirthul *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam zamindari sandwiched between the Dantewara tahsil and the south-eastern corner of Kutru zamindari along the western slopes of the Bailadila ridge; and the northern and greater portion of Bijapur tahsil. 133

The riverain tract spoken of above as the Godavari plain may be treated as the sixth and last natural division. 'Riverain region' would be a better name, as it is not all plain or Godavari valley; there are high hill ranges and other important river valleys. It falls into three sub-divisions. The first and northern is the area drained by the Bhopalpatnam Chintawag, which joins the Indrawati a little south of Bhopalpatnam, and the Indrawati and Godavari valleys from the Kutru-Bhopalpatnam boundary on the north to the tri-junction of Bastar, Hyderabad and Madras near Kothagudam on the Godavari in the south. All of this area except the upper valleys of the Chintawag is in the main territory of the Bhopalpatnam zamindari; the upper valleys are part of Bijapur tahsil. A lofty range of hills begins from the confluence of the Indrawati and Chintawag and runs south-east thence parallel to and at a distance of a few miles from the Godavari as far as the Talper valley; the Bastar-Madras boundary runs along the crests of this range. Its highest peaks are more than 3,000 feet above sea-level. This barrier effectively shuts southern Bijapur off from the Godavari.

The second sub-division is the area drained by the Talper and its tributary the Chintalnar Chintawag. The Talper rises in the highest valley of the Bailadila ridge, almost from the 4,000 feet level, and within a few hundred yards of the source of the Sankani. Thence it flows slightly west of south to join the Godavari a few miles below Cherla. It drains the south of the Bailadila hills and of the hills at the southern edge of the Kutru-Bijapur plateau; the Chintawag takes the drainage of the Aranpur pass and the eastern slopes of the Gogonda-Tikanpalli hills (p. 24 *supra*) and of the Golapalli hills. This sub-division comprises the remainder of southern Bijapur, the outlying Lingagiri block of Bhopalpatnam, the whole of the Kotapalli-Pamer zamindari, and, of the Konta tahsil, that western portion which was once the Chintalnar zamindari. Much of this region is extremely sparsely populated, and wide areas are marked in the new maps as 'dense forest and bamboos' or 'high grass'. The Kotapalli-Pamer zamindari has been almost depopulated by the maladministration of its zamindar, and is therefore now under management by the State; as at one point it is barely three miles from the Godavari at Sirur it has natural advantages which would have attracted settlers from

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 Madras if it had been reasonably managed. The few 'Dorla' villages are the most miserable in Bastar.

The third sub-division is the Kolab-Sabari valley from the southern slopes of the hills at the edge of the 2,000 feet plateau and the Dantewara valley plateau to the border of the Bhadrachalam taluq of Madras on the south. The northern portion of this, the Sukma zamindari, is a punchbowl ringed by the high edges of the Jagdalpur and Dantewara plateaux from Tulsidongri in the north-east counter-clockwise to a point in the south-west of the zamindari, where the foot-hills of the Gogonda-Tikanpalli hills approach the Kolab-Sabari near Chikpalli; the hills are continued across the river and the Bastar border still counter-clockwise towards Malkangiri, and thence back to Tulsidongri. There are two small detached portions of Jagdalpur tahsil in the north of the zamindari, around Kukanar and the lower waters of the Thakawara and Kumakoleng rivers respectively. South of Sukma zamindari the valley opens out again to form the main block of Konta tahsil, including the former Bhiji zamindari, the level of which falls nearly to 250 feet above the sea by Konta at its south-east corner; here the Bastar portion of the valley is very narrow, as nearly all the south of Konta tahsil is occupied by the ranges of the Golapalli mountains which at one point reach a height of more than 2,800 feet.

132 In contrast with north Bastar, with its evergreen moist forests, 133 cool climate, abundant water-supply and often thick population, south Sukma, almost all Konta, the Pamer-Kotapalli zamindari 137 and much of south Bijapur are hot dry regions of deciduous forests, deficient water and sparse population. The rivers are short stony torrents rushing down in the monsoon to the adjacent Godavari, Talper or Kolab-Sabari, and drying up often before January. Teak is the characteristic timber tree.

135 There will be found in Appendix I a statement of the areas and populations of the six tahsils and four zamindaris into which modern 162 Bastar is divided. Each of these administrative units is called after the name of its headquarters; except Jagdalpur with a (1931) population of 10,128, the other headquarters are only villages, and not always large villages; in 1931, of the 2,442 villages in Bastar only five had populations between 2,000 and 2,500, and forty-two populations between 1,000 and 2,000.

634 Frequent mention was made in this chapter of the smaller '*pargana*' unit. The first use that I can find of this word is in Appendix IX of Glasfurd's 1862 report, in which, of the forty-three non-zamindari sub-divisions of Bastar, seventeen are called *parganas* and twenty-six *garhs*. In Elliot's 1855 report the names are given of forty-eight *garhs* and nine taluqs into which the non-zamindari

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Verrier Elwin]

Scenery on the Sabari River near Kinta

Typical scenery of the Abujhmar Mountains

[Verrier Elwin

[Fod Plate A]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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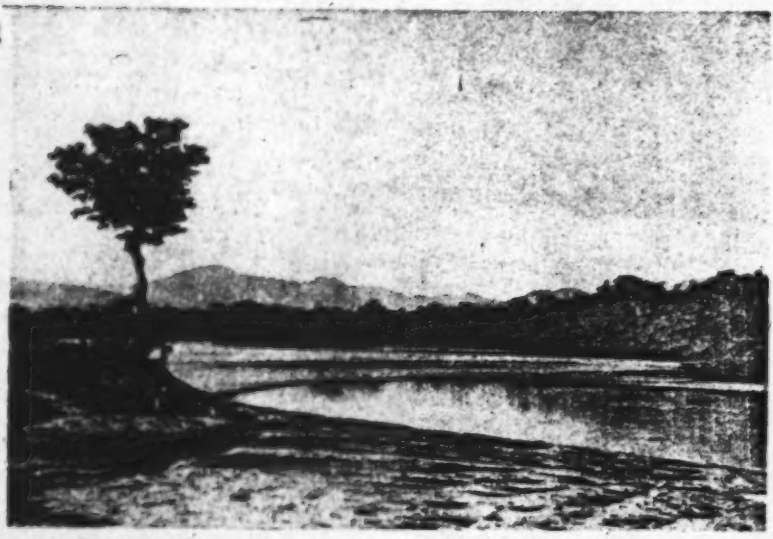


Scene on the Indrawati River

The Chitrakot Falls in Flood

Plate I

[p. 4 (a)]

Plate 11

●133

The Kotri River

[346]

Lingo's shrine at Semurgaon

View from the Keskal Ghat

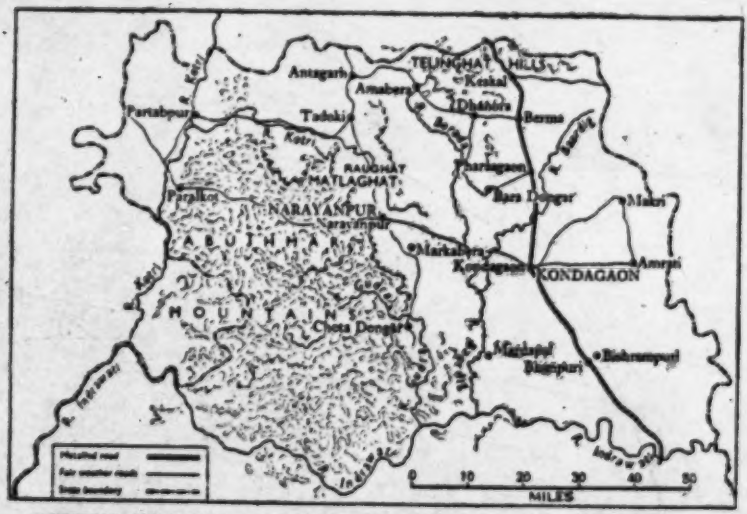
[p. 4 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

131 The territory north of the Indrawati is divided into three administrative divisions. The first, in the north-east, is the Kondagaon Tahsil; the second, in the north-west, is the Narayanpur, formerly the Antagarh, Tahsil, and the third, to the south, is the Jagdalpur Tahsil. Of these only the first two are inhabited by the type of Muria whose institutions and life are the subject of this book; in the heavily populated and fertile lowlands of the Jagdalpur Tahsil the Muria have no ghotul and, under Palace and other influences, have largely abandoned their characteristic beliefs and practices.

● 133 The Kondagaon Tahsil occupies the great north-eastern plateau of Bastar. This plateau, which is some 2400 feet above sea-level, runs south from the Telinghat Hills as far as Tulsidongri below Jagdalpur. To the east it extends



PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE NARAYANPUR AND KONDAGAON TAHSILS

into Jeypore and Kalahandi, and on the west is bordered by the Matlaghat and a range of hills extending south from Benur to Karikot. The scenery is green and pleasant, but rather monotonous except round Bara Dongar—where there are picturesque hills—and in the Chalka Pargana in the neighbourhood of the Boroda and Baordig rivers, where great rocks rising above the fields and forest combine with the quiet river views to make many pictures of serene beauty.

There are two main rivers in the tahsil. The Baordig flows from the north-east corner of the plateau, crosses the main road at Lanjora, winds round by Malakot, cuts the Kondagaon-Narayanpur road at Alwa, passing mostly through scrubby jungle and open tracts of embanked rice-fields, with occasional hills strewn with rocky boulders. Finally it forces its way between steep banks and large rocks till it joins the Boroda near Bayanar. The Boroda comes down through the Amabera Pargana, into the Kongur Pargana, across very similar country, then flows on with the Baordig to join the Indrawati at Karikot.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

133 491 These are the main features of the Kondagaon Tahsil: a main road, open all the year round and vibrating day and night to the rumble of lorries connecting the capital with the greater world. A high plateau, broken by one range of hills running north from Bara Dongar and to the south and east.

[131 491]

KONDAGAON TAHSIL

Two main rivers and many streams. Forest everywhere, mainly sal forest, green all the year. Four fair-weather roads; one east from Keskal along the northern border to Bishrampuri and on into Jeypore and the Likma Forest

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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491

Railway; another from Kondagaon itself round the Makri Reserved Forest, a hunter's paradise. A third goes west from Berma to Antagarh, skirting the south of the Telinghat Hills. A fourth and most important connects the two tahsil headquarters of Kondagaon and Narayanpur.

There are no towns and few important villages. Kondagaon itself has a court with a First Class Magistrate, a police-station, dispensary, middle school, forest, excise and revenue offices and a headquarters of a timber company, a few shops, and an important bi-weekly bazaar. Thousands of Muria visit the place for the Marhai festival in March. There is only one other police-station, at Keskal, an important village at the head of the pass leading down to the lowlands. There are schools here and at Baniagaon, Mardapal, Pharasgaon and Bara Dongar. Bara Dongar is a beautiful village with important Hindu temples and a special connexion with the Maharaja, who is ceremonially enthroned here, when a smaller version of the royal Dassera festival is observed every year.

The population of the Kondagaon Tahsil in 1941 was 111,428. The area is 1880 square miles. It has 511 villages, of which 23 are deserted. In 1942 I counted 278 ghotul in the tahsil, but this figure is probably an underestimate.

The headquarters of the western tahsil have recently been moved from Antagarh to Narayanpur. The Narayanpur Tahsil is much larger than Kondagaon, being 2885 square miles, but its population is only 62,305. It has 831 villages, of which however only 565 are inhabited. In 1942 there were about 244 Muria ghotul. The tahsil has much more character and diversity than Kondagaon and it is not easy to describe. It will be most convenient to follow its roads.

From Berma on the main Keskal-Jagdalpur road, there branches a forest road through heavily-wooded and attractive country to Amabera and thence to Antagarh. In its course the road passes the village of Penjori at the edge of the high plateau: two miles away at the end of a path winding through magnificent trees and wild mountain scenery is the famous shrine of Lingo at Semurgaon. Thence the road begins an abrupt descent down the Matlaghat to the Antagarh plain. Unhappily a fringe of trees and tall bamboos, as nearly everywhere in Bastar, hides the view from the traveller's eyes. At the foot of the mountains the road is only 900 feet above sea-level and has reached the northern plain which is simply a continuation southward of the Chhattisgarh-Kanker lowlands. Here is Antagarh, the old administrative centre of the tahsil, where there is still a large bazaar, a police-station and a school. The population of this area is very mixed, for the Muria are influenced both by the wild Maria of the hills and the sophisticated Gond of the lowlands. There are many immigrants from British India.

From Antagarh runs a beautiful road to Narayanpur. On the right are hills of vitrified sandstone that glow pink like dolomite rocks in the evening sun, and half-way along the road climbs the magnificent Raughat between the Abujhmar and Matlaghat Hills. In the woods on either side are charming Muria villages, Padbera, Aturbera, Phulpar and many others.

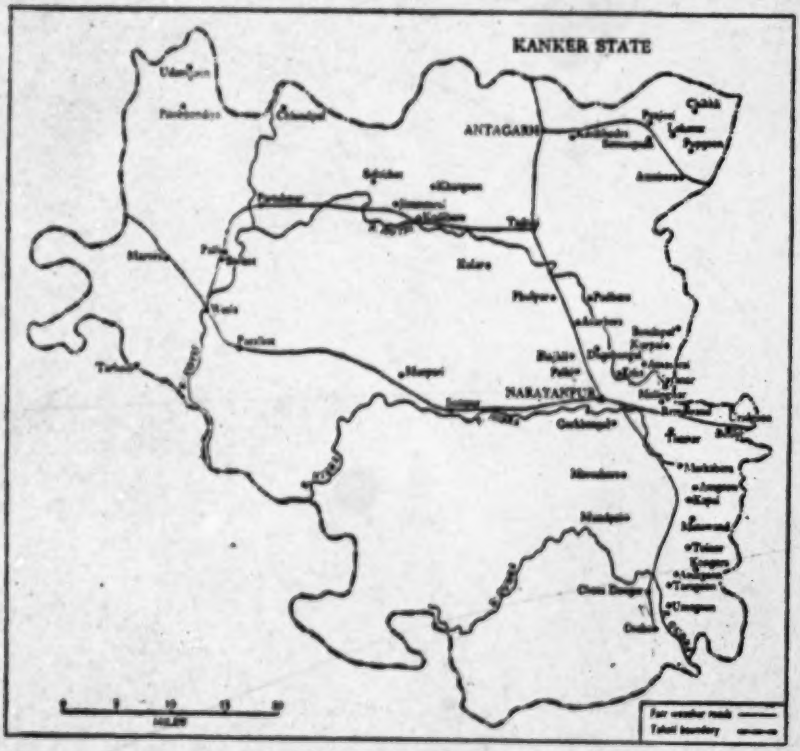
Narayanpur itself is a very large village not yet grown into a town. It is fresh and open, surrounded by hills in the near distance. Near by is Binjhli among its great mango groves and palms.

From Narayanpur roads go west, south and east. The western road is one of the loneliest and most exciting in Bastar. After passing the Halba centre of Sonpur, it forces its way into the very heart of the Abujhmar through wild and majestic scenery, and on to Parakot and Partabpur. Here is the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947. AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

133
491

most striking landmark of all Bastar, the great mass of the Abujhmar Mountains, an impregnable fortress, wild, lonely, exalted, exhilarating, home of the Hill Maria. To the west of the mountains, in sharp and striking contrast, is one of the most 'civilized' areas of Bastar, the north-western plain, where the ghotul still flourishes, but a little shyly, and the children have none of the decorations that make their fellows to the south such a delight to see.



NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

The road curves round at Partabpur and runs east back to Antagarh. For a great part of its journey it runs near and parallel to the beautiful Kotri river. The Kotri, which has its source in the Raughat and Matlaghat Hills, flows west through Koilibera to meet another river of the same name that comes down through Kanker from Drug. They meet near Partabpur and travel on together through the Muria tracts of the extreme west into Sironcha, until at last they join the Indrawati at Bhairamgarh. This is the river that makes glad the heart of the Muria of the north-west. It is a lovely river, wide and open, with glorious sands, and every now and then a glimpse of distant mountains. Some of the happiest days of my life have been spent on its banks.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

South and east of Narayanpur is the true Jhoria country, home of the most charming and friendly people in Bastar. Between Narayanpur and Chota Dongar, the villages of the Abujhmar foothills, Kapsi, Markabera, Metawand, Kongera are probably Hill Maria in origin. Beyond Chota Dongar a road goes up into the real Maria country and Orcha village, passing through the wonderful Marian gorge, where the Gudra river emerges through enormous wooded rocks out of the hills.

THE PARGANAS OF THE NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

The area east of the Antagarh-Narayanpur road is equally attractive. Here are the villages of Nayanar, Bandopal, Almer and Jhakri which frequently appear in this book. The country is well-wooded and hilly, more varied and beautiful than the Kondagaon Tahsil into which it leads. The old Hindu centre of Benur is near the road half-way between the two tahsils.

I have spoken throughout of roads, for they provide a convenient means of finding places on a map, and actually divide up the two northern tahsils very well. But it should not be supposed that these roads are great highways of traffic. Except for the Keskal-Jagdalpur road, not one of them is open during the rains. Several cannot be used by cars before December. The roads are important as agents of culture-change, however, because along them come the slow-moving trains of bullock-wagons, the ever-touring chaprasi and constable, the merchant on his laden horse. These are not, of course, confined to the official roads; the inter-village communications of north Bastar

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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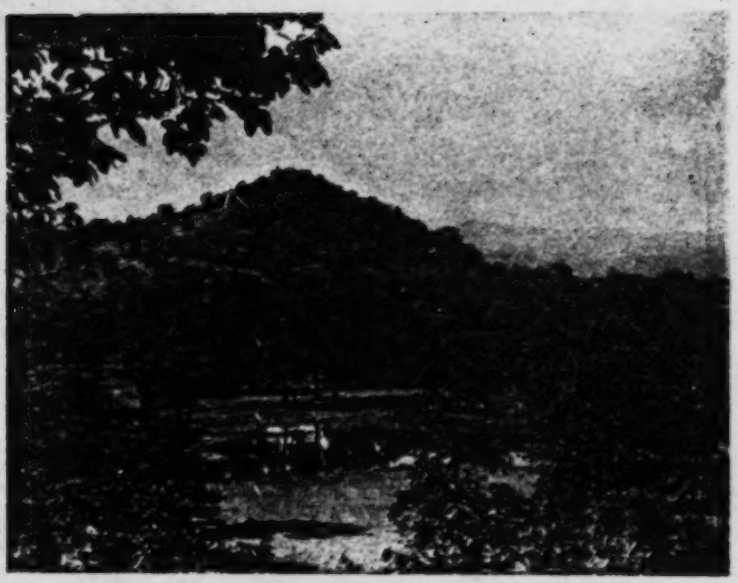

Scenery in Dantewara Tahsil

[facing p. 48]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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343

Distant view of the Bailadila Hills

[facing p. 64]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Chapter II

The Setting in Space; the Physical and Administrative Geography of Bastar

Before dealing with the Maria Gonds, I propose to describe in this and the following chapter the main features of the physical and administrative geography and the ethnography of Bastar. The political divisions frequently are founded on the old tribal organization of the country, to which I have alluded in the first chapter; and in discussing the distribution of the tribes it is impossible to avoid constantly referring to them.

The great river Indrawati, which flows across the centre of the State from east to west with a winding course within the State of about 240 miles, almost bisects the State, and is its main geographical feature. It rises near Rampur Thuamul in Kalahandi, one of the former Orissa States, whence it flows south-west some thirty miles till, after forming the boundary between Kalahandi and the Orissa Province for eight or nine miles, it crosses the south-east corner of the Naurangpur taluq of the latter, and then for a winding course of some sixty miles divides the Naurangpur from the Jeypore taluq of Jeypore zamindari, till it enters the Jagdalpur tahsil of Bastar near the confluence of the Bhaskel tributary, thirteen miles above Jagdalpur. At Chitrakot, twenty-four miles by road and thirty-five by river below Jagdalpur, the Indrawati plunges off the edge of the great 2,000 feet plateau of north-east Bastar and northern Jeypore in a beautiful horseshoe fall ninety-four feet high, followed by a series of wild rapids down a valley rapidly descending between high cliff ramparts. In its course across Jeypore zamindari and Jagdalpur tahsil it is a deep sluggish river, winding along in great S-bends through field and evergreen sal forest, and always more or less rusty in colour from flowing over deep beds of red laterite or *murram*. It receives no large tributaries from the south above Chitrakot, as here it flows close to the watershed dividing it from the Kolab-Saberi, the great tributary of the Godavari that rises in the Eastern Ghats above Jeypore and for many miles forms the eastern boundary of Bastar; at one point a tributary of the Kolab is less than a mile from the main current of the Indrawati. But just above Chitrakot falls it is joined by the Narangi, and about ten miles below the falls by the Bacordig, which drain most of north-east Bastar (the Kondagaon tahsil).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

326 564 cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

[135] 326 316 423 Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyaq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyaq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

[754]

325 Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bagi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

294 reveal their true colour and beauty; they were then rubbed smooth with sand and polished with mustard oil. The edges of the horns where they had originally sprung on their cores from the bison's head were cut down and trimmed clean and straight, so that they would fit closely on to the sides of the basketry cap, a little to the front of and above the ears. Holes were bored at regular intervals about an inch from the rim of the horns with a piece of heated brass wire, and widened with the point of a knife used as a drill by rolling the wooden handle between the palms of the hands. Palm [283] fibre twine[1] was stitched through these holes and the basketry, the end of the twine being then whipped three or four times round the end of the horn, passed through the basketry again and knotted inside the cap to the other end. Meanwhile the peacock's tail-feathers had had all their lower feathering trimmed off and had been gathered into a tight round bunch of the eyed ends, all round and below which were added great numbers of the tail-feathers of the red jungle-cock or his domesticated cousin. The stalks were then plaited together with horizontal twilled wefts of thin slices of green bamboo rind, the ends being cut flush, and bound round twice with bamboo rind. The plume so made was fastened vertically to the peak of the basketry cap by a bamboo rod passing through the peak and running into the bunched feather stems, and by stitches of twine. The further adornment of the *tallagulla* depends largely on means and taste. The stem of the plume of feathers is wound round with coloured cloth, the ends of which hang as streamers down to the centre of the back. *Pagri* cloth of bright colours is criss-crossed tightly over the basketry cap and the brow ends of the horns, and often ends of this are left as streamers behind the head. Ideally, a brow piece of red or blue cloth, with a fringe, single or double, of closely-stitched cowries along its lower edge, and from five to ten tassels of strings of cowries hanging from it over the face, is tied over the lower rim of the head-dress; the brow piece is often further adorned in the centre or edges with flakes of mica, or groups of cowries, or brass studs, or a pattern of small pieces of cloth of contrasting colours. Now cowries being unobtainable, often this brow-piece is replaced by extra folds of *pagri* cloth.

●130 Bison must in the old days have been very plentiful; this was, indeed, recorded as the case by Glasfurd in 1862, but his son Colonel A. I. R. Glasfurd, in the fascinating chapter on a shoot in Bastar in his *Musings of an Old Shikari*,[2] states that he took his father's old diaries with him to Bastar and found no game at all in

[1] 'Twine' is used in its technical sense.
[2] pp. 127-48 (London, The Bodley Head, 1928).
[See cat. 116, p. 48. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

many of the places where game of all kinds was plentiful in his father's time. Every Maria has his bow and arrow, the population has multiplied, and miles of jungle have been beaten annually for game in the great spring hunts. Wild buffalo and bison had been so reduced in numbers that they were declared protected thirty years ago, and heavy fines have been imposed for shooting them. The supply of bison-horns is thus not equal to the demand, and the head-dress is therefore a highly prized hereditary possession. No one should try to buy them from their owners; if a specimen is needed, the collector should provide the horns and other materials and see it made up for him. Bison-horns being now rare, and obtainable only from a bison found dead or by purchase from the State Forest Department, various substitutes are being used, such as domestic bullocks' or small buffaloes' horns, wild boars' tushes, the long beaks of the hornbill, and, occasionally, the antlers of the spotted deer (*Cervus axis*). The most interesting substitutes are brass patterned horns, of the shape and size of bison-horns, made by the *cire-perdue* process by the local Gharwa (Ghasia) brass workers.

Except occasional dancing anklets of hollow iron with pebbles inside, the Bison-horn Maria wears no special dancing dress; in fact he girds up his loin-cloth higher than usual and generally discards his singlet or '*waskat*', so as to leave himself as free as possible for his antics, while the heavy drum that he carries slung from his right shoulder across his abdomen necessitates as much freedom as possible.

The women wear no special dancing dress, but put on every available ornament, and carry in their right hands *tirdudi* or bamboo staves to which are fastened bunches of iron pellet-bells, shaped something like short but plump pea-pods, which they clash in time with the drums as they dance by striking their butts on the ground. Similar bells sometimes adorn the drum-stick with which the left hand of the male dancer beats the cowskin membrane at the left end of his drum.

Weapons and tools

The universal *vade mecum* of the Hill Marias is the knife or *hasyaq* carried tucked into the loin-cloth, with or without a wooden sheath. Of this, as of all weapons and tools used by Hill or Bison-horn Marias, it has to be remembered that they are not always made by blacksmiths working exclusively for Marias, but often by blacksmiths in or near the bazaar villages of the plains who cater for Murias, Halbas and other tribes also. The most distinctive types are possibly, in the case of the Hill Marias, those made by the few blacksmiths living in their hills; but there are only slight differences, often of mere

[see cat. 116 p. 419]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

plateau from Antagarh tahsil. The northern half of this north-eastern plateau is Kondagaon tahsil, and the southern Jagdalpur. The height of the plateau varies from 2,500 or 2,400 feet at its northern and southern edges to about 1,800 feet near Jagdalpur. It is a region of evergreen forests, with the beautiful sal (*Shorea robusta*) as its characteristic tree. The temperature seldom exceeds 104° in the summer, and at Jagdalpur descends to 40° in the winter, while hoar frosts are not uncommon in the forests. Kondagaon tahsil is under-developed and jungly, much of it and Antagarh having been comparatively recently settled by Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh. Jagdalpur, on the other hand, has miles of excellent rice cultivation in its extensive open plains, and is the only heavily populated part of the State, except adjacent parts of Dantewara. On its south-eastern and southern edges, however, it has hilly country heavily forested or inhabited by primitive Parjas and Bison-horn Marias.

The north-west corner of the State is the Antagarh tahsil. The north of this is a continuation of the Chhattisgarh-Kanker plain 800 or 900 feet above sea-level, bounded on the west and north by the Chanda and Drug districts of the Central Provinces and by Kanker State. This plain, the second main natural division of Bastar, is reached from Keskal and north Kondagaon through the Amabera *pargana*, which, though on the 2,000 feet plateau, is in Antagarh, by a forest road descending the steep Matlaghat by a recently re-aligned and easily-graded descent. The main road from Jagdalpur and Kondagaon through Antagarh to Rajnandgaon rail-head enters the tahsil in the Benur *pargana* on the 2,000 feet plateau and descends 200 or 300 feet to Narainpur which, with the adjacent *parganas* of Kurangal, Dugal, Baragaon, Ghat Jhorian and Bare Jhorian, as well as Benur and the lowland or 'Kalpatti' villages of Chhote Dongar *pargana*, are an intermediate stage between the true 2,000 feet plateau and the plain of north Antagarh. The inhabitants are mostly what were called by Glasfurd and other early writers Jhorias, in appearance scarcely distinguishable from the Marias of the Abujhmar hills, with similar dancing dress, and customs similar, but considerably modified by sojourn in the lowlands and contact with other tribes. From Narainpur a forest road runs westward along the Nei Bherat valley to Sonpur, with an extension thence to Paralkot and Maroda, where it meets another forest road that comes westward from Taroki on the Narainpur-Antagarh road across the north Antagarh plain. The Sonpur, Paralkot and Paralkot-Kalpatti *parganas* are really lowland *parganas* in the middle of highland Maria *parganas*, and the two latter belong properly speaking to the north Antagarh plain. The

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 Madras if it had been reasonably managed. The few 'Doria' villages are the most miserable in Bastar.

The third sub-division is the Kolab-Sabari valley from the southern slopes of the hills at the edge of the 2,000 feet plateau and the Dantewara valley plateau to the border of the Bhadrachalam taluq of Madras on the south. The northern portion of this, the Sukma zamindari, is a punchbowl ringed by the high edges of the Jagdalpur and Dantewara plateaux from Tulsidongri in the north-east counter-clockwise to a point in the south-west of the zamindari where the foot-hills of the Gogonda-Tikanpalli hills approach the Kolab-Sabari near Chikpalli; the hills are continued across the river and the Bastar border still counter-clockwise towards Malkangiri, and thence back to Tulsidongri. There are two small detached portions of Jagdalpur tahsil in the north of the zamindari, around Kukanar and the lower waters of the Thakawara and Kumakoleng rivers respectively. South of Sukma zamindari the valley opens out again to form the main block of Konta tahsil, including the former Bhiji zamindari, the level of which falls nearly to 250 feet above the sea by Konta at its south-east corner; here the Bastar portion of the valley is very narrow, as nearly all the south of Konta tahsil is occupied by the ranges of the Golapalli mountains which at one point reach a height of more than 2,800 feet.

132 In contrast with north Bastar, with its evergreen moist forests, cool climate, abundant water-supply and often thick population,
133 south Sukma, almost all Konta, the Pamer-Kotapalli zamindari
● 137 and much of south Bijapur are hot dry regions of deciduous forests, deficient water and sparse population. The rivers are short stony torrents rushing down in the monsoon to the adjacent Godavari, Talper or Kolab-Sabari, and drying up often before January. Teak is the characteristic timber tree.

135 There will be found in Appendix I a statement of the areas and populations of the six tahsils and four zamindaris into which modern
162 Bastar is divided. Each of these administrative units is called after the name of its headquarters; except Jagdalpur with a (1931) population of 10,128, the other headquarters are only villages, and not always large villages; in 1931, of the 2,442 villages in Bastar only five had populations between 2,000 and 2,500, and forty-two populations between 1,000 and 2,000.

634 Frequent mention was made in this chapter of the smaller '*pargana*' unit. The first use that I can find of this word is in Appendix IX of Glasfurd's 1862 report, in which, of the forty-three non-zamindari sub-divisions of Bastar, seventeen are called *parganas* and twenty-six *garhs*. In Elliot's 1855 report the names are given of forty-eight *garhs* and nine taluqs into which the non-zamindari

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

712 has now disappeared. The gates of the fort are lying on the top, and there is a stone platform, on which are images of horses and elephants sacred to the presiding deity, Thakur Deo. Previous to the Gond conquest Surjagarh was a noted Mana fortress, and about the end of the 17th century was occupied by two famous chieftains, Sādho Vuria and Mula Vuria, who rebelled against the Chanda king, Ram Shah, and, secure in their strong fortresses, harried the low lands with impunity. At length Ram Shah granted the tract to a relative named Kokshah, who after some years of desultory warfare stormed the hill and put the insurgent leaders to the sword. Kokshah then made Surjagarh his citadel, and under its shadow his descendants, the present Ahiri family, have extended their possession, east and west, and south and north, until nearly 3,000 miles of country own them masters. The scenery of these hills is very wild, and the black glittering mass of Surjagarh, streaked here and there with patches of bright green and red, stands out grandly against the sky. The upper cliffs have a beautiful shrub, with dark green leaves and clusters of lovely blue flowers.'

There were still 38,650 Manas in Chanda district in 1931, and Thakur Deo on the summit of Surjagarh remains their tutelary deity. Also named after them is the fortress of Manikgarh in the Rajura taluq of Adilabad district. Russell and Hiralal[1] speak of them as a Dravidian caste of cultivators and labourers, possibly an offshoot of the Gonds, and associated in the popular mind with Gonds and Gowaris. They are now completely Hinduized, and have generally adopted Maratha customs. The Thakur Deo platform on the Surjagarh summit had a wealth of clay images, mostly horses, in type precisely similar to the horse images associated with Aiyyenar in South India.

● 137 If you stand on the summit, in whatever direction you look, north, south, east or west, all the Sironcha and Garchiroli tahsils and the Abujhmar Mountains of Bastar still seem to be one vast forest, with only occasional small yellow patches indicating village sites and cultivation. Speaking of the Chanda Marias' shifting cultivation 241 (*podu*) Lucie-Smith wrote in 1869[2] :—

'For the vast wilderness east of the Wyngunga it is the very best that could be devised. By it, year by year, more and more land is cleared of forest and made ready for the plough, and thus every Maria village has around it a very much larger area of open ground than would be the case if the plough only were used. No one who has passed through these great wastes, shut in by lofty trees and dense masses of bamboo, and seeing, sometimes for days, not a trace of human habitation, can fail to rejoice at the work fire and axe are doing. It is of course important to prevent the destruction of forest containing valuable timber, and to arrange for reserves of jungle wood, grass and bamboos near the cultivated tracts, but, this done, *dahi* cultivation should be encouraged. It would be idle to speculate upon the changes in temperature and in rainfall the clearance of the forests would entail, for even if the population increase to the full, and coal mines, railways and river navigation bring all the prosperity we hope they will, yet in all human probability the youngest teak seedling now springing into life will have grown old and withered to dust before the eastern wilderness shall have sensibly decreased.'

[1] Vol IV, p. 172, *et seq.*
[2] Loc. cit. para. 232.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

XII. The Sago-Palm

273 Another very popular drink is the juice of the sago-palm, and since the
137 Muria have developed many legends round it I will give the subject a section of its own.[1]

The sago-palm (*Caryota urens*, Linn.), which is known as *gorga marra* in Gondi and as *salpi rukh* in Halbi, is widely distributed over the greater part of the State. It is an erect monoecious tree, with axillary spadices, which sometimes grows to the height of sixty or eighty feet. Its long bipinnate leaves with their fish-tail ends are sometimes twenty feet long. The aboriginals, whether Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria or Muria,[2] regard the trees primarily as a source of liquor, though they use the inner tissues of the stem and the wood for other purposes. The popularity of the tree is shown in the riddle,
[524] 'Above sits the parrot, below is the thrashing-floor', suggesting that under the beautiful sago-palm a great crowd of people gather, and in such songs as *'Waliya wāto gorga ale māmāle*—O uncle, the sago-palms are everywhere you go'. Unlike mahua spirit, however, salphi juice is not usually used in worship or on other ceremonial occasions.[3] It is rather a drink for one's private and friendly hours, though it may often supplement a failing supply of mahua at a marriage or funeral.

824 As always, legends and stories gather about anything that is intimately
538 connected with the life of the people. There are several different accounts of the origin of the sago-palm, but all agree in connecting it with youth and gaiety. It came into being when maidens danced together or when boys pursued their loves. In the north of the State the most common legend traces its origin to an expedition of boys and girls from the house of Bhagavan, which came down to earth to dance and bathe.[4] One such party came to Chikhli village on the northernmost plateau of the State and after bathing, the girls left behind the cowrie ornaments of their hair. These ornaments are very popular among the motiari; sometimes a mass of cowries covers the whole of the back of their heads. When the girls found they had lost their ornaments they were angry and cursed the cowries saying, 'Now turn into sago-palms and we will always live with you and will never lose you again.' For this reason it is said that the cowrie is the tuft of feathers that fell from Lingo's turban. Yet again it is said that the tree was a feather stuck in the hair of a motiari which fell off as she was going to Penjori village to dance the Diwali dances, and turned into a tree when she got angry with it. But everywhere it is agreed that the tree springs up in all those places where the girls either from the house of Bhagavan or from some earthly ghotul used to go to dance. In the forests above the Raughat and all along the northern plateau there are a great many of these trees and these were the very parts where the girls went for their dancing in the dawn of the world.

There are, however, some other versions of the origin of the palm. In Mule village the Muria say that when the seven salphi maidens (Gorga Kanyang) were born they only had one placenta between them. This was cut off and

[1] For a fuller account see my article 'The Sago-Palm in Bastar State', *JRAS. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII (N.S. 1942), pp. 69–78.

[2] Grigson is not quite correct in saying that Hill and Bison-horn Maria 'almost alone in Bastar use salphi liquor'.—Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. The Muria of the north are among the most enthusiastic drinkers of salphi juice in the whole State.

[3] According to Thurston, the fermented juice is used ceremonially at marriages and festivals by the Poroja and Savara.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 216, 322.

[4] The seven heavenly damsels who came down to dance and bathe on earth is a common motif in Indian folk-tales. See Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 100.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER IV

PERSONAL APPEARANCE; PHYSICAL POWERS AND ENDURANCE; BODILY ATTITUDES; CLEANLINESS; HAIR-DRESSING; DRESS AND ORNAMENTS OF (A) HILL, (B) BISON-HORN MARIAS; WEAPONS AND TOOLS

142 To the amateur observer few things are so hard as correctly to record the physical appearance of tribes, and I must leave the reader to draw his own conclusions from the illustrations of individuals in Plates I, V to VII, XI, XV, XVII to XIX and XXIII, and the Appendix on anthropometric measurements by Mr. R. C. Roy. Certain very general remarks may, however, be made. In stature Marias of both types seem greater than the average Central Provinces Gond; though the general average for men may not exceed 5 ft. 5 in., yet tall individuals are by no means unknown, especially among the Bison-horn Marias of the Dantewara valley and the adjacent parts of the Jagdalpur tahsil; there were two convict warders undergoing twelve years' sentences for murder in Jagdalpur Jail until recently from near Palnar, between Kuakonda and Aranpur, who were fine physical specimens and nearly 6 ft. in height. Among the Hill Marias it is perhaps rare to see anyone more than 5 ft. 8 in. high.

Appearance

141

142 The ordinary Gond type, dark-skinned, with straight, coarse, black hair, little or no beard and moustache, platyrrhine nose, prognathous, wide, downward-curving mouth with thick lips, in fact 'india-rubber faced', with squat but fairly proportioned body, is not unknown among the Marias, especially the Hill Marias towards the fringes of the hills, and the Bison-horn Marias in contact with the Telugu in the south. But the absence of facial hair has been exaggerated by past observers, possibly because at least in the Abujhmar mountains it is usually the unmarried youths on the verge of manhood who are deputed by the villages as camp followers; men with moustaches or small pointed beards are not uncommon. The growth of hair is much less than that of the European, and a shave is not a frequent necessity. Possibly the Bison-horn Maria grows more than the Hill Maria. Flat noses are not as common as among the Central Provinces Gonds, and at times an almost aquiline nose will be met. The nostrils are, however, always distended, and presumably most Marias of both types would be mesorrhine, tending to platyrrhine with a few leptorrhine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Appendix V

Anthropometric Analysis of the Hill and Bison-horn Marias

By Mr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, M.Sc., B.L.,
Joint Editor, *Man in India*

I accompanied Mr. W. V. Grigson in his March 1934 tour in the Hill and Bison-horn Maria country of the Bastar State, and was able to measure 100 Hill Maria and 50 Bison-horn Maria males; a severe attack of fever unfortunately prevented me from measuring as many Bison-horn as Hill Marias. I measured the Hill Marias in the Abujhmar hills camps at Orcha, Adeq, Itulnar, Hikul and Handawada from these and adjacent Hill villages in the *parganas* of Chhota Dongar Mar, Kutru Mar, Bhairamgarh Mar, and Barsur (Dantewara) Mar. The Bison-horn Marias were nearly all measured in the camp at Aranpur in Dantewara tahsil, near the head of the pass leading down from the Dantewara plateau to the Dorla country of the Konta tahsil; the men were mostly from Aranpur and Chameli *parganas*. I append tables summarizing the results of my measurements; space has forbidden the reproduction here of the long tables of individual measurements, which I hope subsequently to publish elsewhere. I have followed R. Martin's anthropometric technique.

General description

Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias are generally of medium stature, though tall and short individuals are not uncommon. The mean heights of those measured were 162·7 cm. Hill, and 161·7 cm. Bison-horn Maria. They are very well built, with well-proportioned body and limbs. Their skin colour varies from pale wheat to light black (the actual figures were: out of 100 Hill Marias, 9 light brown, 60 brown, 16 dark brown and 15 light black; out of 50 Bison-horn Marias, 3 pale wheat, 5 light brown, 26 brown, 9 dark brown and 7 light black). They have a thick growth of hair on the head, but often cut it short or even shave it in front and round the peripheral region of the head, leaving a long crown-tuft. They have very little facial and body hair, and even those who can grow sparse beards and moustaches often have them clean shaved. The hair is black or dark brown, and is wavy or curly.

Their foreheads are retreating, but straight foreheads are not rare; of 100 Hill Maria foreheads 16 were straight, 57 slightly

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

retreating and 27 retreating. The corresponding figures for 50 Bison-horn foreheads were 4, 35 and 11. The supra-orbital ridges are not generally as well developed as those of some other Pre-Dravidian tribes.

The eye-slits are straight, but oblique eyes occasionally occur. I did not see a single epicanthic fold, or even a tendency to one. The eyes are generally black, often with a reddish hue, but grey and dark brown eyes also occur. The nasal root is slightly or moderately depressed, with a straight nasal bridge, though a concave nasal bridge is not uncommon. The nose is rather broad with fairly broad nostrils.

The lips are as a rule thick, but thin and medium lips are also occasionally found. The lower lip is often slightly or moderately everted, or tends to be everted.

The face is frequently oval and prognathous, and the malars and zygomatic arches are generally well marked. The usual chin is oval, but square chins occur. The mandibular angle is rather broad, and the face in consequence pentagonal, round or square.

The women have generally a round or oval face, concave platyrrhine noses and everted lips. Their nipples are very big and plug-like, resembling those of Negro women.

Indices

Analysis of the metric data gives the following results[1] :—

Cephalic Index. The classification of the men measured was :—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Dolichocephalic	75	30, or 60%
Mesocephalic	22	17, or 34%
Brachycephalic	3	3, or 6%
TOTAL	100	50

The Hill Maria cephalic index averaged 76·16 ± ·22, ranging from 67·5 to 83·2, and the Bison-horn Maria 76·21 ± ·27, ranging from 68·8 to 86·0.

Length-Height Head Index. The classification of the men measured was :—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Hypsicephalic	77	36, or 72%
Orthocephalic	18	14, or 28%
Platycephalic	5	Nil
TOTAL	100	50

[1] For classifications, see Haddon, *Races of Man*, pp. 10-12.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

[141] *Altitudinal Index* averaged 65·11 ± ·24 for Hill Marias, ranging from 55·3 to 78·3, and 64·81 ± ·31 for Bison-horn Marias, ranging from 58·3 to 71·7.

Nasal Index. The classification of the men measured was :—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Leptorrhine	8	1, or 2%
Mesorrhine	58	30, or 60%
Platyrrhine	34	19, or 38%
TOTAL	100	50

The Hill Maria nasal index averaged 81·51 ± ·48, ranging from 61·1 to 97·7, and the Bison-horn Maria 82·9 ± ·65, ranging from 65·4 to 98·0.

Morphological Facial Index.[1] The classification of the men measured was :—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Hyper-europrosopy	11	5, or 10%
Europrosopy	28	18, or 36%
Mesoprosopy	31	18, or 36%
Leptoprosopy	26	8, or 16%
Hyper-leptoprosopy	4	1, or 2%
TOTAL	100	50

The Hill Maria morphological facial index averaged 85·63 ± ·33, ranging from 73·4 to 97·4, and the Bison-horn Maria 84·6 ± ·36, ranging from 76·1 to 96·7.

How far are the Hill and Bison-horn Marias alike in their physical features?

[142] **Comparison of Hill and Bison-horn Marias** At first sight one notices that the Bison-horn Marias are a little lighter in skin colour than the Hill Marias. But if we look to the comparative tables (Tables I and II below) of the means with probable errors for the different absolute measurements and indices, we shall not hesitate to say that there is very little difference between the two. No doubt if we calculated the probable errors of the respective mean differences and co-efficients of racial likeness our calculations would reveal dissimilarities in most of their characteristics; but these dissimilarities would not be great enough to show any real difference between Hill and Bison-horn Marias. I have, however, refrained from calculating the respective probable errors of the mean differences and co-efficients of racial likeness, because if I

[text continues on p. 317]

[1] Martin, *Anthropometry*, Vol. I.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

TABLE I

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF ANTHROPOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS OF 100 ADULT MALE HILL MARIAS

141

Measurement	Unit	Mean	Probable error of mean	Standard deviation	Probable error of standard deviation	Coefficient of variation	Probable error of variation
ABSOLUTE MEASUREMENTS							
Stature	cm.	162·70	±·37	5·56	±·27	3·41	±·16
Head height	mm.	119·93	±·46	6·79	±·32	5·66	±·27
Head length	mm.	185·39	±·41	6·11	±·29	3·30	±·18
Head breadth ..	mm.	138·71	±·30	4·51	±·21	3·25	±·15
Least frontal breadth	mm.	101·66	±·29	4·44	±·21	4·36	±·22
Bizygomatic breadth	mm.	132·17	±·37	5·54	±·26	4·19	±·20
Bi-gonial breadth ..	mm.	88·03	±·40	5·93	±·28	6·74	±·32
Inter-orbital length ..	mm.	32·23	±·17	2·58	±·12	8·00	±·32
Bi-orbital length ..	mm.	94·62	±·30	4·38	±·21	4·63	±·22
Nasal length	mm.	48·97	±·23	3·45	±·16	7·04	±·34
Nasal breadth ..	mm.	39·68	±·17	2·46	±·12	6·20	±·30
Nasal height	mm.	16·33	±·12	1·78	±·09	10·90	±·53
Nasion-prosthion length	mm.	65·60	±·29	4·22	±·20	9·26	±·44
Nasion-gnathion length	mm.	113·22	±·43	6·30	±·30	5·56	±·27
Nasal arc	mm.	110·05	±·40	5·87	±·28	5·33	±·25
INDICES							
Cephalic	—	76·16	±·22	3·30	±·18	4·33	±·21
Altitudinal	—	65·11	±·24	3·57	±·17	5·48	±·26
Nasal	—	81·51	±·48	7·06	±·34	8·66	±·41
Facial	—	85·63	±·33	4·93	±·23	5·73	±·27

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

TABLE II

141

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF ANTHROPOMETRIC MEASUREMENTS OF 50 ADULT MALE BISON-HORN MARIAS

Measurement	Unit	Mean	Probable error of mean	Standard deviation	Probable error of standard deviation	Coefficient of variation	Probable error of variation
ABSOLUTE MEASUREMENTS							
Stature	cm.	161·70	±·47	4·90	±·33	3·05	±·21
Head height ..	mm.	117·14	±·47	4·90	±·33	4·18	±·28
Head length	mm.	181·38	±·52	5·50	±·37	3·03	±·20
Head breadth ..	mm.	138·46	±·53	5·53	±·37	3·99	±·27
Least frontal breadth	mm.	100·16	±·36	3·77	±·25	3·74	±·25
Bizygomatic breadth	cm.	130·68	±·49	5·10	±·34	3·90	±·26
Bi-gonial breadth ..	mm.	86·50	±·43	4·54	±·31	5·25	±·35
Inter-orbital length ..	mm.	30·44	±·30	3·18	±·21	10·45	±·72
Bi-orbital length ..	mm.	92·82	±·34	3·60	±·24	3·42	±·23
Nasal length	mm.	49·04	±·31	3·24	±·22	6·61	±·45
Nasal breadth ..	mm.	39·84	±·25	2·57	±·17	6·45	±·44
Nasal height	mm.	15·86	±·17	1·74	±·12	1·10	±·07
Nasion-prosthion length	mm.	63·84	±·37	3·87	±·26	6·06	±·41
Nasion-gnathion length	mm.	110·40	±·46	4·81	±·32	4·38	±·30
Nasal arc	mm.	107·92	±·45	4·66	±·31	4·32	±·29
INDICES							
Cephalic	—	76·21	±·27	2·81	±·19	1·56	±·11
Altitudinal	—	64·81	±·31	3·23	±·22	4·98	±·34
Nasal	—	82·90	±·65	6·86	±·46	8·26	±·56
Facial	—	84·60	±·36	3·76	±·25	4·44	±·30

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

had been able to measure 100 instead of only 50 Bison-horn Marias, their measurements might have averaged the same as those of the 100 Hill Marias measured. Yet from the data obtained we can fairly say that on the average both Hill and Bison-horn Marias are dolichocephalic, hypsicephalic, mesorrhinic (leaning towards platyrrhinic), europrosopic and medium-statured peoples.

What is the cause of the mesocephalic and mesorrhinic elements actually present in both the peoples? Is it not the outcome of the mixture of the dolichocephalic and brachycephalic elements on the one hand, and the leptorrhine and platyrrhine elements on the other, actually present in both? The dolichocephaly and platyrrhiny, the dark brown skin and other elements are probably the real characteristics of these pre-Dravidian (proto-Australoid) peoples. But how are we to explain the small proportion of leptorrhiny and brachycephaly and the large and mutually equal proportions of europrosopy, leptoprosopy and mesoprosopy in these two predominantly dolichocephalic and mesorrhine peoples?

Racial Affinities

Dr. Haddon[1] finds in the original pre-Dravidian Gond a Pareoean strain, which causes the brachycephalic head form, the broad prognathous face and the occasional obliquity of the eye-slits.[2] As against this theory it may be pointed out that there is an absence of the true epicanthic fold (at least I have found none), and of the yellowish skin, which are the main characteristics of the Pareoeans.[3] Moreover, the leptorrhine element in the Hill and Bison-horn Marias cannot be explained by such an assumption.

It is interesting to note that a good percentage of Marias also conform to Dr. Haddon's Dravidian[4] group in all essential characteristics, namely dolichocephaly, medium stature, oval face, mesorrhiny, plentiful wavy or curly hair, and brown skin of varying shades.

[1] Haddon, *Races of Man*, 1929, p. 20.

[2] Cf. Hutton, *India Census Report*, 1931, Vol. I: 'It also seems possible that the vague suggestion of the mongoloid, which is so often given by the appearance of the hillmen of Chota Nagpur, of Bastar State in the Central Provinces and of the Madras Agency tracts, may be due to a strain of Pareoean blood which has come in by sea from the east. One is insistently reminded in these areas of the Assam hill tribes, and both Haddon and Buxton have drawn attention to this strain, which struck the present writer quite independently and contrary to his expectations; and the admitted proto-australoid element in these tribes is no obstacle to this, since it must have extended at some period through what is now the archipelago to the Australian Continent, apart from the probability of its absorption on the mainland.'

[3] Haddon, ibidem, p. 32.

[4] Ibidem, p. 21.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It may thus not be unreasonable to infer that a basic pre-Dravidian (proto-Australoid) element in the Hill and Bison-horn Marias has been modified by a considerable Dravidian element, and tinged either with a Pareoean element, or, probably, with some Alpinic[1] element (cf. the presence of leptorrhine, hypsicephalic and brachycephalic elements in both Hill and Bison-horn Marias), or with both a Pareoean and an Alpine element.

[1] Haddon, *Races of Man*, 1929, p. 26.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

619 given up eating beef, and either never had or have abandoned the ghotul system. Their influence is gradually making itself felt in the south of Kondagaon to the east of the road, where the Ghotul Muria call those who have separated themselves from them 'Bhattra'. This is probably the best name for the Raja Muria of Jagdalpur. Indeed it would be a great convenience if we could call the western Muria 'Jhoria', the Muria of Kondagaon 'Muria' and the Muria of Jagdalpur 'Bhattra'. It may be that one day they will call themselves by these titles, and then we can follow suit.

582

However, there is no intermarriage between the Raja Muria or Bara Bhattra of Jagdalpur, but it continues naturally enough with the Bhattra Muria or ordinary Muria just across the border of the tahsil. It is evident, however, that the Muria think of themselves as a single people, related (it is true) to several others, but having one common rallying point in the ghotul founded by Lingo Pen, the father of the tribe.

IV. Physical Characters of the Muria

142 At the end of February 1942, Dr B. S. Guha, of the Zoological Survey of India, accepted my invitation to visit Bastar in order to examine the physical characters of the Muria. He joined me at Dongrigura in the Kondagaon Tahsil, where he measured 52 adult male Muria, and we then went on to Markabera in the Abujhmar foothills. Here he measured 51 adult male Muria of this and surrounding villages. He has written a detailed account which is printed elsewhere, but the following brief description may be inserted here.

'The difference', he writes, 'between the plains Muria of Kondagaon and the Abujhmar foothills Muria, in all essential physical characters, is hardly significant except to a small extent in the shape of the nose. The latter have a slightly longer, narrower and more prominent nose as compared to the former. This difference may be fortuitous and may disappear if larger samples are taken, a view to which I am provisionally inclined, though the possibility of some genuine difference in this respect between the two cannot be altogether ruled out.

'Taking the two groups together the Muria are a short-statured long-headed race with broad cheek bones and rather short pearish type of face. Alike in the absolute measurements (mean H.L. 185·56±0·35; H.B. 138·56 ±0·29 and mean C.I. 74·72±0·18) and the bulging of the occiput, the head is essentially dolichocephalic; there is hardly any true brachycephaly noticeable. The forehead is on the average well-arched but in an appreciable number it tends to be vertical. The supraorbital ridges vary from moderate to well-marked—in a few they are very prominent. On the whole the face tends to project forwards—approximately one-half of the people being prognathic. The nose is usually flat and broad and the nasal root depressed, the lips thick and the chin retreating. In a small number, however, the face is longish, the lips thin, and the chin well developed and some even show a prominent nose with a tendency to aquilinity.

[141]

'The skin colour is on the average dark chocolate brown, though individuals with brown and even yellowish brown skin colour are not wanting. The hair is black and varies between straight and wavy with a few persons showing curly hair. It is usually very rich on the head but only moderate on the lips and face. The body hair is rather slight.

'The eye colour is generally black and the eye is horizontal but in seven men examined it was undoubtedly oblique and in a few cases traces of the

TABLE 13

Showing the averages of the different Somatic measurements of some tribes of India

Name of tribes	Kharia	Kol	Uraon	Santal	Munda	Oraon	Hill Marias	Bison Horn Marias	Mal Paharia	Santal	Santal
Locality	Chota Nagpur	U.P.	S. India	Bengal	Chota Nagpur	Chota Nagpur	Bastar State	Bastar State	Bengal	Santal Parganas	Santal Parganas
Number of subjects Measured by	78 Risley	32 Risley	50 Guha	100 Risley	100 Risley	100 Risley	100 Roy	50 Roy	100 Risley	100 Chatterji & Kumar	100 Biswas
Stature	1601.0	1650.0	1594.90 ±4.33	1614.0	1589.0	1621.0	1627.0	1617.0	1577.0	1604.78 ±4.74	1593.0 ±3.40
Max. Head Length	184.5	183.1	190.02 ±0.48	184.8	185.9	184.6	185.39	181.38	183.4	185.27 ±0.65	185.0 ±0.06
Max. Head Breadth	137.4	132.6	139.34 ±0.30	140.7	138.6	139.3	138.71	138.46	139.1	138.35 ±0.51	137.0 ±0.05

585

4: Biswas D, E-3,4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
GOND AW32

GS 141

Name of tribes	Khasis	Kol	Hoya	Santal	Munda	Oraon	Hill Maria	Bison Horn Maria	Mal Pahariya	Santal	Santal
Locality	Chota Nagpur	U.P.	S. India	Bengal	Chota Nagpur	Chota Nagpur	Bastar State	Bastar State	Bengal	Santal Parganas	Santal Parganas
Auricular height	129.8	127.2	129.62 ±0.84	128.5	129.2	129.2	129.93	127.14	126.5	123.37 ±0.37	129.0 ±0.10
Min. Frontal breadth	101.0	97.1	101.22 ±0.36	102.1	101.3	101.9	101.66	100.16	100.5	101.27 ±0.60	100.2 ±0.12
Max. Bizygomatic breadth	130.8	130.8	128.76 ±0.43	132.5	130.7	130.4	132.17	130.68	130.9	130.64 ±0.38	132.0 ±0.50
Bigonial Breadth	—	—	96.64 ±0.55	—	—	—	88.03	86.50	—	97.29 ±0.43	92.0 ±0.60
Inter Orbital	—	—	31.22 ±0.16	—	—	—	32.73	30.44	—	30.99 ±0.13	—
Orbitonasal Arc	—	—	111.12 ±0.50	—	—	—	110.05	107.92	—	112.13 ±0.43	113.0 ±0.60
Nasal Height	45.3	44.0	49.38 ±0.31	45.7	44.7	46.2	48.07	49.04	44.1	45.30 ±0.36	48.0 ±0.40

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
GOND AW 32 •
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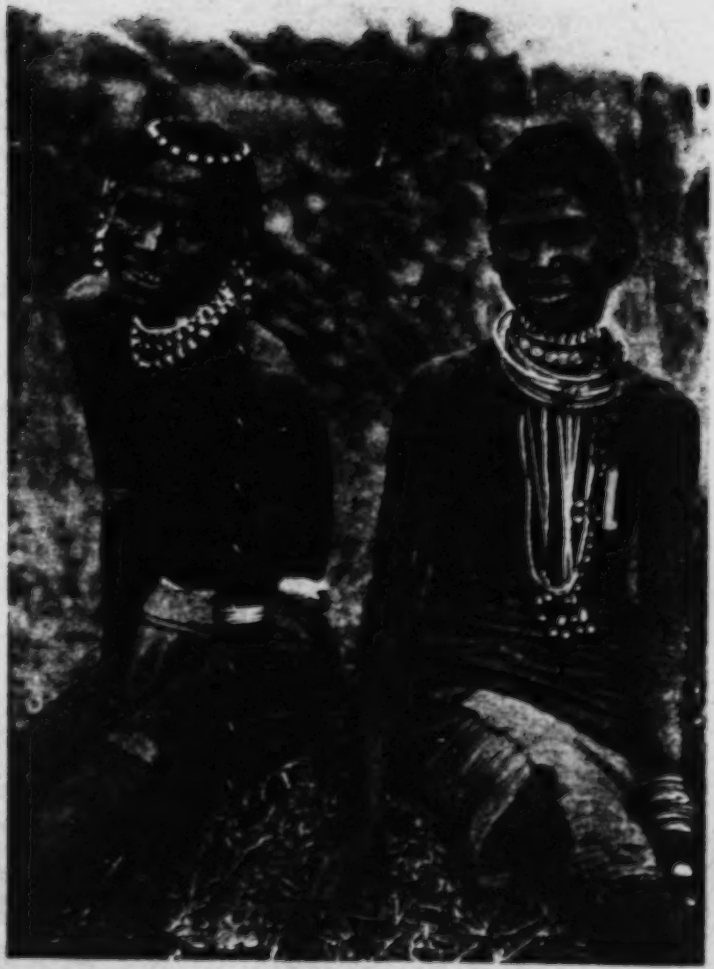
141 •

Nasal Breadth	40.1	39.2	39.95 ±0.22	40.6	40.2	39.8	39.65	39.84	41.0	37.60 ±0.20	37.0 ±0.30
Nasal depth	...	...	23.32 ±0.21	...	...	...	16.33	15.86	...	16.30 ±0.13	...
Superior Facial Height	...	...	64.26 ±0.35	...	...	...	63.60	63.84	...	55.13 ±0.41	71.0 ±0.30
Total Facial Height	...	...	113.44 ±0.60	...	...	...	113.22	110.40	...	111.70 ±0.62	113.0 ±0.50
Horizontal circumference of Head	...	...	534.44 ±1.48	...	...	...	...	...	...	534.10 ±0.12	...
Transverse Arc	...	...	331.46 ±0.91	...	...	...	...	...	...	326.00 ±0.12	...
Sagittal Arc	...	...	307.12 ±1.13	...	...	...	...	...	...	334.60 ±0.13	...

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
~~Dixon Hoyn Maria~~

142
291
301



HILL MARIA YOUTH AND GIRL
(Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt)

[facing p. 111]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison horn Maria

Koyas, since it alone, being greatly corrupted by Telugu, presents any marked difference from the Maria and Muria dialects.

Intermarriage is frequent between the Bison-horn Marias of the plateaux and those at the foot of the passes, but now never occurs between them and the Dorla, the latter having become a true endogamous group.[1]

The Koyas of the Malkangiri taluq of Jeypore, across the Bastar border from the Sukma zamindari and north-east Konta, seem on the contrary to be Bison-horn Marias.[2] Intermarriage still takes place between the Marias of Sukma and the 'Koyas' of Malkangiri; and these same Sukma clans intermarry with the clans on the Dantewara and Jagdalpur plateaux. In fact, intermarriage is not unknown between Dantewara and Malkangiri clans, and it is not unusual for a man wanted by the police in Dantewara to abscond to his fellow-tribesmen, possibly relatives, in Malkangiri. The headmen of Edpal and Dodpal on the Dantewara-Sukma border stated that the Koitor of Malkangiri had migrated there some generations back from the Bailadila mountains, and named relatives among them belonging to the Sodi clan. Bailadila had in fact been practically deserted long before its inclusion in the Bailadila Forest Reserve; and some superstition attaches to it which prevents surrounding Maria clans from settling there, though more than one attempt has been made to found permanent forest villages so as to obviate the labour now entailed on the villages below when the Maharaja and his officials go there for the hot weather. The most tempting offers fail to attract settlers; even as labourers the Marias profess fear of staying on the hills unless accompanied by a European, over whom Elma Pen, the god of the mountain, has no power. The only chance, they say, of re-settling the place is to get hold of a descendant of the original inhabitant, preferably of the clan-priest (*modul-waddai*), who knows the godlings and demons of the hills.

[p.58 is blank]

[1] Glasfurd in the ethnological papers already quoted commented thus on physical differences between the lowlanders and highlanders of South Bastar. 'The Koys are very dark, quite as much so as the Telingas; while the Gottawars and Marias are generally copper-coloured, some being quite fair. Their faces are rather broad than long, and they have small eyes, which, with the almost entire absence of hair on the face, gives these altogether a strongly marked Tartar-like physiognomy.'

[2] It is important to remember that the Dorla also use bison-horn or buffalo-horn dancing head-dresses, and in other ways also show that they were once the same people as those whom I term Bison-horn Marias, as indeed the traditions of both peoples have been seen to assert.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter IV

Personal Appearance; Physical Powers and Endurance; Bodily Attitudes; Cleanliness; Hair-dressing; Dress and Ornaments of (a) Hill, (b) Bison-horn Marias; Weapons and Tools

142 To the amateur observer few things are so hard as correctly to record the physical appearance of tribes, and I must leave the reader to draw his own conclusions from the illustrations of individuals in Plates I, V to VII, XI, XV, XVII to XIX and XXIII, and the Appendix on anthropometric measurements by Mr. R. C. Roy. Certain very general remarks may, however, be made. In stature Marias of both types seem greater than the average Central Provinces Gond; though the general average for men may not exceed 5 ft. 5 in., yet tall individuals are by no means unknown, especially among the Bison-horn Marias of the Dantewara valley and the adjacent parts of the Jagdalpur tahsil; there were two convict warders undergoing twelve years' sentences for murder in Jagdalpur Jail until recently from near Palnar, between Kuakonda and Aranpur, who were fine physical specimens and nearly 6 ft. in height. Among the Hill Marias it is perhaps rare to see anyone more than 5 ft. 8 in. high.

Appearance

141

142 The ordinary Gond type, dark-skinned, with straight, coarse, black hair, little or no beard and moustache, platyrrhine nose, prognathous, wide, downward-curving mouth with thick lips, in fact 'india-rubber faced', with squat but fairly proportioned body, is not unknown among the Marias, especially the Hill Marias towards the fringes of the hills, and the Bison-horn Marias in contact with the Telugu in the south. But the absence of facial hair has been exaggerated by past observers, possibly because at least in the Abujhmar mountains it is usually the unmarried youths on the verge of manhood who are deputed by the villages as camp followers; men with moustaches or small pointed beards are not uncommon. The growth of hair is much less than that of the European, and a shave is not a frequent necessity. Possibly the Bison-horn Maria grows more than the Hill Maria. Flat noses are not as common as among the Central Provinces Gonds, and at times an almost aquiline nose will be met. The nostrils are, however, always distended, and presumably most Marias of both types would be mesorrhine, tending to platyrrhine with a few leptorrhine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 439 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk [462] take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhaurai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE V

142
291
301
516

A HILL MARIA, OF THE GOND TYPE
Usendi Muka of Orcha

GROUP OF HILL MARIA GIRLS
(Photograph by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.)

[FACING p. 62]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
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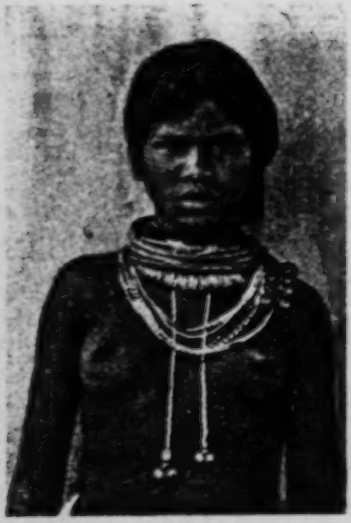

Full-face, Jugho Chero, of Itulnar

Hill Maria of Handawada
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)

Kutru Mar youths, wearing *taghali* bark overcoats

[Facing p. 70]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

482
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291
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415

HILL MARIA WOMEN CARRYING GOURDS OF WATER

HILL MARIA WOMAN CARRYING A LEAF-BOX OF GRAIN

(Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt)

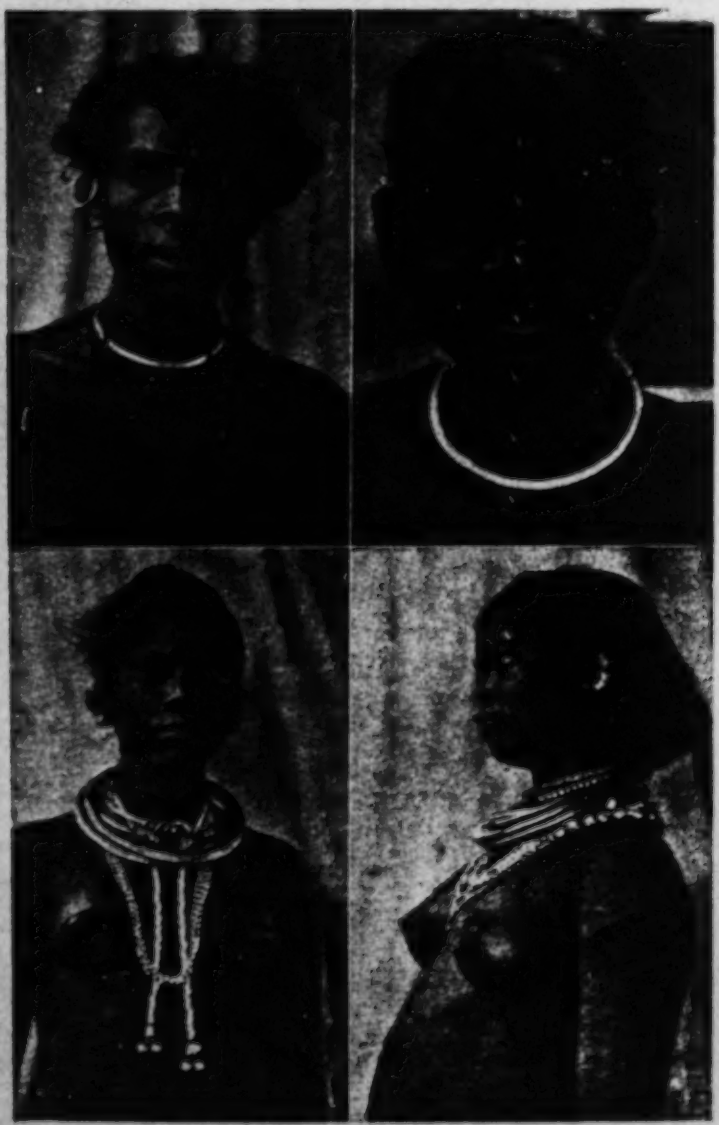
361
342

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE STREET, TELAM, NEAR KATAKALIAN

[FACING p. 118]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVII



142
301
304

HILL MARIA TYPES

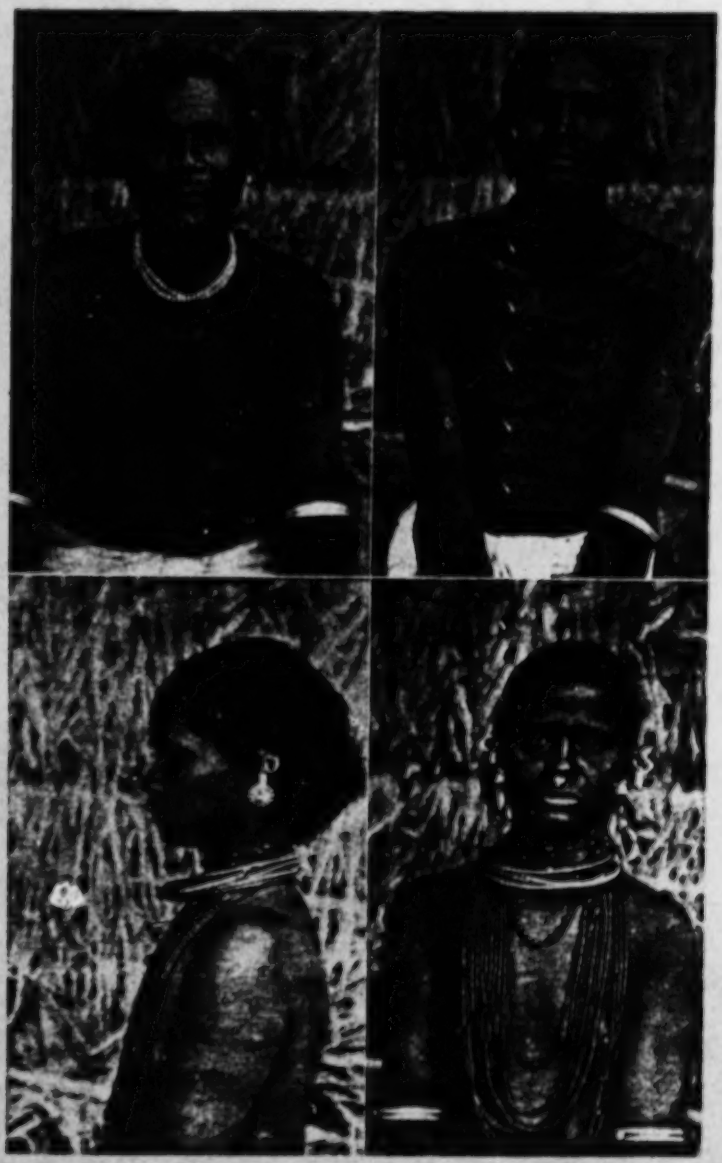
Above Arki Baiyya of Korswaya — Gecha Poia of Chudala Tondawada
Below Jugho Buke of Itulnar — Guma Ewado of Goti

[FACING p. 226]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVIII



142
291
301
304
302

BISON-HORN MARIA TYPES

Above Markami Harma of Burgum Markami Joga, headman of Burgum

Below Mase, wife of Markami Muka of Kakadi

[facing p. 240]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
301
304

An old Bison-horn Maria from Gudra, between Katakalian and Kuakonda [Face p. 254]

585

PLATE XIX

The pouring of water over the bridegroom and bride at the Bison-horn Maria wedding described at p. 258

[facing p.254]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Appendix V

Anthropometric Analysis of the Hill and Bison-horn Marias

By Mr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, M.Sc., B.L.,
Joint Editor, *Man in India*

I accompanied Mr. W. V. Grigson in his March 1934 tour in the Hill and Bison-horn Maria country of the Bastar State, and was able to measure 100 Hill Maria and 50 Bison-horn Maria males; a severe attack of fever unfortunately prevented me from measuring as many Bison-horn as Hill Marias. I measured the Hill Marias in the Abujhmar hills camps at Orcha, Adeq, Itulnar, Hikul and Handawada from these and adjacent Hill villages in the *parganas* of Chhota Dongar Mar, Kutru Mar, Bhairamgarh Mar, and Barsur (Dantewara) Mar. The Bison-horn Marias were nearly all measured in the camp at Aranpur in Dantewara tahsil, near the head of the pass leading down from the Dantewara plateau to the Dorla country of the Konta tahsil; the men were mostly from Aranpur and Chameli *parganas*. I append tables summarizing the results of my measurements; space has forbidden the reproduction here of the long tables of individual measurements, which I hope subsequently to publish elsewhere. I have followed R. Martin's anthropometric technique.

General description

Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias are generally of medium stature, though tall and short individuals are not uncommon. The mean heights of those measured were 162·7 cm. Hill, and 161·7 cm. Bison-horn Maria. They are very well built, with well-proportioned body and limbs. Their skin colour varies from pale wheat to light black (the actual figures were: out of 100 Hill Marias, 9 light brown, 60 brown, 16 dark brown and 15 light black; out of 50 Bison-horn Marias, 3 pale wheat, 5 light brown, 26 brown, 9 dark brown and 7 light black). They have a thick growth of hair on the head, but often cut it short or even shave it in front and round the peripheral region of the head, leaving a long crown-tuft. They have very little facial and body hair, and even those who can grow sparse beards and moustaches often have them clean shaved. The hair is black or dark brown, and is wavy or curly.

Their foreheads are retreating, but straight foreheads are not rare; of 100 Hill Maria foreheads 16 were straight, 57 slightly

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

retreating and 27 retreating. The corresponding figures for 50 Bison-horn foreheads were 4, 35 and 11. The supra-orbital ridges are not generally as well developed as those of some other Pre-Dravidian tribes.

The eye-slits are straight, but oblique eyes occasionally occur. I did not see a single epicanthic fold, or even a tendency to one. The eyes are generally black, often with a reddish hue, but grey and dark brown eyes also occur. The nasal root is slightly or moderately depressed, with a straight nasal bridge, though a concave nasal bridge is not uncommon. The nose is rather broad with fairly broad nostrils.

The lips are as a rule thick, but thin and medium lips are also occasionally found. The lower lip is often slightly or moderately everted, or tends to be everted.

The face is frequently oval and prognathous, and the malars and zygomatic arches are generally well marked. The usual chin is oval, but square chins occur. The mandibular angle is rather broad, and the face in consequence pentagonal, round or square.

The women have generally a round or oval face, concave platyrrhine noses and everted lips. Their nipples are very big and plug-like, resembling those of Negro women.

Indices

Analysis of the metric data gives the following results[1]:—

Cephalic Index. The classification of the men measured was:—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Dolichocephalic	75	30, or 60%
Mesocephalic	22	17, or 34%
Brachycephalic	3	3, or 6%
TOTAL	100	50

The Hill Maria cephalic index averaged 76·16 ± ·22, ranging from 67·5 to 83·2, and the Bison-horn Maria 76·21 ± ·27, ranging from 68·8 to 86·0.

Length-Height Head Index. The classification of the men measured was:—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Hypsicephalic	77	36, or 72%
Orthocephalic	18	14, or 28%
Platycephalic	5	Nil
TOTAL	100	50

[1] For classifications, see Haddon, *Races of Man*, pp. 10-12.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Altitudinal Index averaged 65·11 ± ·24 for Hill Marias, ranging from 55·3 to 78·3, and 64·81 ± ·31 for Bison-horn Marias, ranging from 58·3 to 71·7.

Nasal Index. The classification of the men measured was :—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Leptorrhine	8	1, or 2%
Mesorrhine	58	30, or 60%
Platyrrhine	34	19, or 38%
TOTAL	100	50

The Hill Maria nasal index averaged 81·51 ± ·48, ranging from 61·1 to 97·7, and the Bison-horn Maria 82·9 ± ·65, ranging from 65·4 to 98·0.

Morphological Facial Index.[1] The classification of the men measured was :—

	Hill Maria	*Bison-horn Maria*
Hyper-europrosopy	11	5, or 10%
Europrosopy	28	18, or 36%
Mesoprosopy	31	18, or 36%
Leptoprosopy	26	8, or 16%
Hyper-leptoprosopy	4	1, or 2%
TOTAL	100	50

The Hill Maria morphological facial index averaged 85·63 ± ·33, ranging from 73·4 to 97·4, and the Bison-horn Maria 84·6 ± ·36, ranging from 76·1 to 96·7.

How far are the Hill and Bison-horn Marias alike in their physical features?

Comparison of Hill and Bison-horn Marias

At first sight one notices that the Bison-horn Marias are a little lighter in skin colour than the Hill Marias. But if we look to the comparative tables (Tables I and II below) of the means with probable errors for the different absolute measurements and indices, we shall not hesitate to say that there is very little difference between the two. No doubt if we calculated the probable errors of the respective mean differences and co-efficients of racial likeness our calculations would reveal dissimilarities in most of their characteristics; but these dissimilarities would not be great enough to show any real difference between Hill and Bison-horn Marias. I have, however, refrained from calculating the respective probable errors of the mean differences and co-efficients of racial likeness, because if I

[text continues on p. 317]

[1] Martin, *Anthropometry*, Vol. I.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
301
302
224

Verrier Elwin

Muchaki Pandu, Bison-horn Maria of Gogonda with hunting-horn

Bison-horn Maria of Lakhapal

142
301
304

Verrier Elwin

[End Plate B]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142 ●
622
301

Markami Hunga, Bison-horn Maria headman of Maranda

[End Plate C]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

●142
292
301
534

Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria youth of Kakhar in Hill Maria festival dress

[End Plate D]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
292
534

Bison-horn Maria dancer

[End Plate E]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
301
304

Hill Maria children

Verrier Elwin

142
301

Muchaki Kondi, Bison-horn Maria girl, of Bergum

Verrier Elwin

[End Plate F]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
291
516
301

Bison-horn Maria girls of Mohlipasi

[End Plate 6]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

142
291
301

Group of Maria girls from Lahiri, Chanda district

W. V. Grigson

142
291
301
853
854

Hill Maria mother and child

Warrior Elwin

[End Plate H]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
301

Bison-horn Maria girl brings in the harvest

[Verrier Elwin]

[End Plate J]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

142
291
S34

Hill Maria playing stringed instrument

[End Plate ZC]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142
291
301
415
516

The shells are around

[frontispiece]

142
301
302

Plate III

ABOVE: Motiari of Sirpuri, showing method of arranging combs

BELOW: The Gujaro, Sulk and Mularo of the Barko ghotul

[p.12 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate IV

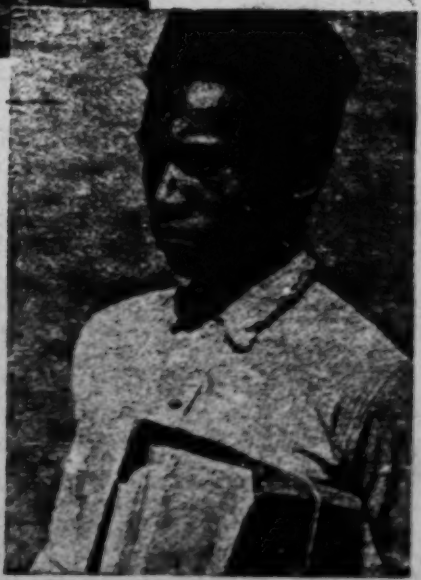
147
291
516
415

A Muria of Nayanar greets his friends before drinking salphi juice

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142
301
291
534

Plate V



A study in contrasts. The two boys are brothers, but one goes to school

[p. 18 (a)]

Plate VI

142
291
301

Nati, the priest and landlord of Nayanar

[p. 18 (B)]

INTRODUCTION

619 given up eating beef, and either never had or have abandoned the ghotul system. Their influence is gradually making itself felt in the south of Kondagaon to the east of the road, where the Ghotul Muria call those who have separated themselves from them 'Bhattra'. This is probably the best name for the Raja Muria of Jagdalpur. Indeed it would be a great convenience if we could call the western Muria 'Jhoria', the Muria of Kondagaon 'Muria' and the Muria of Jagdalpur 'Bhattra'. It may be that one day they will call themselves by these titles, and then we can follow suit.

582

However, there is no intermarriage between the Raja Muria or Bara Bhattra of Jagdalpur, but it continues naturally enough with the Bhattra Muria or ordinary Muria just across the border of the tahsil. It is evident, however, that the Muria think of themselves as a single people, related (it is true) to several others, but having one common rallying point in the ghotul founded by Lingo Pen, the father of the tribe.

IV. Physical Characters of the Muria

●142 At the end of February 1942, Dr B. S. Guha, of the Zoological Survey of India, accepted my invitation to visit Bastar in order to examine the physical characters of the Muria. He joined me at Dongrigura in the Kondagaon Tahsil, where he measured 52 adult male Muria, and we then went on to Markabera in the Abujhmar foothills. Here he measured 51 adult male Muria of this and surrounding villages. He has written a detailed account which is printed elsewhere, but the following brief description may be inserted here.

'The difference', he writes, 'between the plains Muria of Kondagaon and the Abujhmar foothills Muria, in all essential physical characters, is hardly significant except to a small extent in the shape of the nose. The latter have a slightly longer, narrower and more prominent nose as compared to the former. This difference may be fortuitous and may disappear if larger samples are taken, a view to which I am provisionally inclined, though the possibility of some genuine difference in this respect between the two cannot be altogether ruled out.

'Taking the two groups together the Muria are a short-statured long-headed race with broad cheek bones and rather short pearish type of face. Alike in the absolute measurements (mean H.L. 185·56±0·35; H.B. 138·56 ±0·29 and mean C.I. 74·72±0·18) and the bulging of the occiput, the head is essentially dolichocephalic; there is hardly any true brachycephaly noticeable. The forehead is on the average well-arched but in an appreciable number it tends to be vertical. The supraorbital ridges vary from moderate to well-marked—in a few they are very prominent. On the whole the face tends to project forwards—approximately one-half of the people being prognathic. The nose is usually flat and broad and the nasal root depressed, the lips thick and the chin retreating. In a small number, however, the face is longish, the lips thin, and the chin well developed and some even show a prominent nose with a tendency to aquilinity.

[141]

'The skin colour is on the average dark chocolate brown, though individuals with brown and even yellowish brown skin colour are not wanting. The hair is black and varies between straight and wavy with a few persons showing curly hair. It is usually very rich on the head but only moderate on the lips and face. The body hair is rather slight.

'The eye colour is generally black and the eye is horizontal but in seven men examined it was undoubtedly oblique and in a few cases traces of the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142 epicanthic fold were found in one or both eyes. Among the Hill Muria observed at Markabera, light brown skin colour, high cheek bones and the unmistakable presence of the epicanthic fold were also noticed.

144 'Taking all the characters together, I am inclined to the view that the Muria are not different from the Bhil of the Vindhyan ranges measured by me and belong essentially to what we have termed the Proto-Australoid group. While this is really the basic-type, it is possible that they have absorbed a little of the blood of a finer racial type (as a result probably of their contact with higher caste Hindus across the Godavari) as shown in the occasional occurrences of a longish face, thin lips, prominent chin and well-developed prominent nose. In addition there is unmistakably a Mongoloid element, though very small, and it appears to be more marked in the Hill Maria and the Muria of the foothills than the Muria of the plains. How exactly this has to be accounted for, remains to be seen but I am inclined to agree with Hutton that the intrusion probably came from the eastern coastal regions.'

V. Muria Migrations

174 As we have seen, there are probably at least three different elements in the composition of the Muria tribe. The first is the Hill Maria migration from the mountains into the hills and forests of the south and east, from which has emerged the Jhoria of today. The second is a probable migration of Gond from the Central Provinces into the northern parganas, to which testify common traditions, the legend of Lingo and the continued intermarriage between Kanker Gond and Bastar Muria. The third element is that of east Kondagaon, which may represent the true Bastar autochthon, where the Muria —having been longer in the country than the others—have lost more of their original customs and language.

173 All three elements have traditions of migrations from Warangal in the south and Lanji-Dhamda in the north. Many try to blend the two.

Warangal is, of course, the original home of the ruling family of Bastar, whose ancestors reigned there from about A.D. 1150 to 1425. This Kakatiya family was probably originally feudatory to the Chalukya kings and only later ruled independently. 'Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had been an outlying and loosely-held group of feudal dependencies of Warangal.'[1]

It will be of interest to give a few of the stories still current in Muria villages. Suko Manjhi told me at Bandopal that his family first lived in Lanji-Dhamda and then went to Warangal. In Warangal, he went on,

> The Raja was one day going to court when Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a vision saying, 'Where are you going?' The Raja replied, 'To my court'. The goddess said, 'This is not your court, nor your kingdom. I will show you where your real kingdom is; if you stay here both house and kingdom will be lost. Come with me; you go ahead and I will follow, but do not look behind; your kingdom will extend as far as you can go!' The Raja went on and on into Bastar and up as far as the Pairi river where there is now the Kanker boundary. As he went along he listened all the time to the sound of Danteshwari

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 3.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

291
142
301

Mottari of Munjmeta listening to the gramophone

[p. 30 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The Nero of the Tarbaili ghotul

291
301
●142

Plate XLI

Two great friends: Pilsai and his *kosava* at Sidhawand

142
291
301

Plate XLIX

Uraon dhangar

Uraon dhangri

[p. 242 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32

Plate I.

142
291
301

Iryo, a Hill Maria girl of Bolimori

[p. 242 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Bison-horn Maria

●142
291
301

Bison-horn Maria girl from Gudra,
Bastar State

[p. 278 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Bison-Horn Maria

142
291
301
535
516

Hirmo, a Bison-horn Maria girl washing her hands

Plate LIV

Bison-horn Maria dancers

[p. 278(a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria
Oraon AW39

Uraon dhangri

O.
142
291
301

Plate LXVII

Motiari of Kongera grinding

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291
301
252
412

[E 330(4)]

•142

A Lohar boy: the Chowkidar of the Berma ghotul

Plate LXXVI

342
356

Hetiari cleaning the Bandopal ghotul

[p. 364 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXX

X
983
291
●142
301

The Malko of the Koilibera ghotul

[?.396(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXXVIII

142
291
301
415

The Nero of Tarhaili with bamboo water-contain

[p. 428(2)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWO

THE BISON-HORN MARIA

I

The so-called Maria of Bastar fall naturally into two divisions distinguished by many details of culture and tradition, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains and the Bison-horn Maria living to the south of the Indrawati River. A full account of both these tribes has been given by W. V. Grigson, and his book should be read by those who wish to have a fuller background of Maria life than the present volume can supply. In this chapter I will only give a brief summary of the life and customs of the Bison-horn Maria.

The Bison-horn Maria, who are distinguished from the other aboriginals of Bastar by the splendid head-dress they use for their marriage dances, numbered about 156,000 in 1931, and I estimate their present strength at about 175,000. They are distributed all over southern Bastar, among the entrancing hills of Dantewara, in the dry forests of Bijapur, among the hot but lovely lowlands of Konta, in the remote Sukma and Kutru Zamindaris. On the borders of the main Maria stock are a number of communities which really belong to it, the Koya of the extreme south, the Dorla who claim to be a superior caste and the mixed population along the banks of the Indrawati and reaching up towards the Muria country beyond Barsur. The Dorla and Koya dance in Bison-horn Maria fashion; the mixed people to the north combine the customs of the Hill Maria with their own. In the neighbourhood of Jagdalpur, the Maria gradually lose their distinctiveness as they approach the town and merge into the southern Muria.

There are few people in India more attractive than the Bison-horn Maria, physically charming, of good stature, perfect figure, finely featured with carefully tended hair, often a lovely golden-brown in colour. Both men and women are very strong; the men can carry heavy loads great distances, endure long and arduous hunting expeditions and dance all night bearing their great drums. Their health is fairly good, but they are afflicted with yaws, though the work of the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

241
342
291
142
301

Girls threshing grain with their feet at Mokhpal

[FACING p. 14]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

342
854
516

Oyami Masa with family on the scene of the death of the younger wife

192
301
304

Oyami Masa with his surviving wife

[Facing p. 15]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
291
516
252
301

A girl cleans grain in a field at Garmiri; failure in preparing food is sometimes a cause of tragedy

[FACING p.20]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
291
301
516

Bandi of Mokhpal: the typical Maria wife

142
301

Habba Masa, jealous of his wife

[Facing p. 21]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

252
531
516
301
285
302

Girl cleaning grain at Tikanpal before a decorated door

301
142

Hinga, a Marie girl of Rewali

[facing p. 28]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

312
H5
291
142
301
302

Girls fetching water at Bastanar

[Facing p.32]

3:-Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
301
302

Maria girl of Mokhpal. Domestic life is usually happy: the rare infidelities quickly lead to revenge

[facing p. 33]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

853
301
142

'Rice in the mouth and curry in the hand.'
Mother and child figure in several murder cases

[Facing p. 65]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Hill Maria

293
142

Youth with Hill Maria dancing-dress

Markam Maria wearing head-dress

293
516

Boys preparing head-dress

[Facing p. 80]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142

Wife and sons at Dorinai await the return of their father Borga from life-imprisonment.

Kawati Borga in jail

[facing p. 112]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142

Mavvi Boti (48) who, for love of his elder 'brother's' wife, assisted her to murder.

Masu (48) who, helped by her husband's younger 'brother' poisoned her husband

Tati Dōga (90), who killed his elder brother's wife.

[Facing p. 113]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
301

Such young girls are very sensitive, unkindness or abuse may quickly drive them to suicide

[FACING p. 128]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142

Kande Maria, whose father seduced his two wives

Marvi Kuma (58), who killed his son

Panem Pidga (86), who killed his father

Padami Gaddi (72), who killed his mother

[facing p. 129]

3: Elwin, E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

● 142

Veko Dome (98), who was very hungry

Kuhrami Hirmé (32), who, hungry & exhausted, killed a child of ten.

Mavvi Mandra (61), who killed his wife at the end of a long day

[Facing p. 145]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Bagori and Jimme who tried to kill her co-wife, after her release from jail

Atami Gatu

The lucky Dogo

[Facing p. 208]

TABLE I

Phenotype and Genotype Frequencies of the Santals compared with other Allied Ethnic Categories :

Ethnic Category	Phenotype Frequency					Genotype Frequency			Investigator
	No.	O	A	B	AB	p	q	r	
1. (a) Santal	407	31.70	21.38	35.63	11.30	.166	.258	.563	Sarkar and Sen
(b) Santal	339	33.04	20.94	34.81	11.21	.160	.240	.579	Sarkar
(c) Santal	68	25.00	23.53	39.71	11.76	...	...	...	Sarkar and Sen
2. Hill Male	242	41.32	24.79	27.27	6.61	.170	.185	.643	Sarkar and Sen
3. Plains Male	109	39.45	22.02	30.28	8.26	.156	.207	.628	Sarkar and Sen
4. Malpaharia	58	31.03	24.12	31.03	13.79	.186	.231	.557	Sarkar and Sen
5. Birjia	129	10.85	17.05	61.24	10.86	.298	.519	.329	Sarkar
6. Birhor	39	20.51	17.94	51.30	10.25	...	...	...	Sarkar
7. Bathudi	102	31.37	35.29	23.53	9.80	...	...	...	Majumdar
8. Kurku	140	20.00	28.57	37.86	21.05	.250	.313	.447	Macfarlane
9. Maria Gond	123	28.50	26.00	34.10	11.40	.204	.257	.534	Macfarlane
10. Munda	130	35.38	29.23	28.46	6.92	.219	.214	.577	Macfarlane
11. Ho	186	34.95	31.72	27.96	5.38	...	...	...	Majumdar
12. Lepcha	83	30.30	36.40	27.30	6.06	.241	.183	.550	Macfarlane

41 Biswas D, F-1,4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS
GOND AW32
LEPCHA AK 5
SGS
L
143

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

had been able to measure 100 instead of only 50 Bison-horn Marias, their measurements might have averaged the same as those of the 100 Hill Marias measured. Yet from the data obtained we can fairly say that on the average both Hill and Bison-horn Marias are dolichocephalic, hypsicephalic, mesorrhinic (leaning towards platyrrhinic), europrosopic and medium-statured peoples.

What is the cause of the mesocephalic and mesorrhinic elements actually present in both the peoples? Is it not the outcome of the mixture of the dolichocephalic and brachycephalic elements on the one hand, and the leptorrhine and platyrrhine elements on the other, actually present in both? The dolichocephaly and platyrrhiny, the dark brown skin and other elements are probably the real characteristics of these pre-Dravidian (proto-Australoid) peoples. But how are we to explain the small proportion of leptorrhiny and brachycephaly and the large and mutually equal proportions of europrosopy, leptoprosopy and mesoprosopy in these two predominantly dolichocephalic and mesorrhine peoples?

Racial Affinities

Dr. Haddon[1] finds in the original pre-Dravidian Gond a Pareocan strain, which causes the brachycephalic head form, the broad prognathous face and the occasional obliquity of the eye-slits.[2] As against this theory it may be pointed out that there is an absence of the true epicanthic fold (at least I have found none), and of the yellowish skin, which are the main characteristics of the Pareocans.[3] Moreover, the leptorrhine element in the Hill and Bison-horn Marias cannot be explained by such an assumption.

It is interesting to note that a good percentage of Marias also conform to Dr. Haddon's Dravidian[4] group in all essential characteristics, namely dolichocephaly, medium stature, oval face, mesorrhiny, plentiful wavy or curly hair, and brown skin of varying shades.

[1] Haddon, *Races of Men*, 1929, p. 20.

[2] Cf. Hutton, *India Census Report*, 1931, Vol. I: 'It also seems possible that the vague suggestion of the mongoloid, which is so often given by the appearance of the hillmen of Chota Nagpur, of Bastar State in the Central Provinces and of the Madras Agency tracts, may be due to a strain of Pareocan blood which has come in by sea from the east. One is insistently reminded in these areas of the Assam hill tribes, and both Haddon and Buxton have drawn attention to this strain, which struck the present writer quite independently and contrary to his expectations; and the admitted proto-australoid element in these tribes is no obstacle to this, since it must have extended at some period through what is now the archipelago to the Australian Continent, apart from the probability of its absorption on the mainland.'

[3] Haddon, *ibidem*, p. 31.

[4] Ibidem, p. 21.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142 epicanthic fold were found in one or both eyes. Among the Hill Muria observed at Markabera, light brown skin colour, high cheek bones and the unmistakable presence of the epicanthic fold were also noticed.

● 144 'Taking all the characters together, I am inclined to the view that the Muria are not different from the Bhil of the Vindhyan ranges measured by me and belong essentially to what we have termed the Proto-Australoid group. While this is really the basic-type, it is possible that they have absorbed a little of the blood of a finer racial type (as a result probably of their contact with higher caste Hindus across the Godavari) as shown in the occasional occurrences of a longish face, thin lips, prominent chin and well-developed prominent nose. In addition there is unmistakably a Mongoloid element, though very small, and it appears to be more marked in the Hill Maria and the Muria of the foothills than the Muria of the plains. How exactly this has to be accounted for, remains to be seen but I am inclined to agree with Hutton that the intrusion probably came from the eastern coastal regions.'

V. Muria Migrations

174 As we have seen, there are probably at least three different elements in the composition of the Muria tribe. The first is the Hill Maria migration from the mountains into the hills and forests of the south and east, from which has emerged the Jhoria of today. The second is a probable migration of Gond from the Central Provinces into the northern parganas, to which testify common traditions, the legend of Lingo and the continued intermarriage between Kanker Gond and Bastar Muria. The third element is that of east Kondagaon, which may represent the true Bastar autochthon, where the Muria —having been longer in the country than the others—have lost more of their original customs and language.

173 All three elements have traditions of migrations from Warangal in the south and Lanji-Dhamda in the north. Many try to blend the two.

Warangal is, of course, the original home of the ruling family of Bastar, whose ancestors reigned there from about A.D. 1150 to 1425. This Kakatiya family was probably originally feudatory to the Chalukya kings and only later ruled independently. 'Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had been an outlying and loosely-held group of feudal dependencies of Warangal.'[1]

It will be of interest to give a few of the stories still current in Muria villages. Suko Manjhi told me at Bandopal that his family first lived in Lanji-Dhamda and then went to Warangal. In Warangal, he went on,

> The Raja was one day going to court when Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a vision saying, 'Where are you going?' The Raja replied, 'To my court'. The goddess said, 'This is not your court, nor your kingdom. I will show you where your real kingdom is; if you stay here both house and kingdom will be lost. Come with me; you go ahead and I will follow, but do not look behind; your kingdom will extend as far as you can go!' The Raja went on and on into Bastar and up as far as the Pairi river where there is now the Kanker boundary. As he went along he listened all the time to the sound of Danteshwari

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 3.

INTRODUCTION

101 NO aboriginal people of India has attained greater prominence on the political scene of past centuries than the large group of tribes commonly known by the generic term Gond. When the mist that still veils long periods in the history of the Deccan finally lifts, Gonds appear not only as the main population of wide areas in the very heart of India, described after them as Gondwana, but also as a ruling race equal in power and material status to many contemporary Hindu princes. Lacking unity and leadership the Gond states collapsed before the successive onslaughts of Moghul and Maratha armies, but the Gond populations remained, the old feudal system continued to function in [21] many remote tracts and several Gond rajas enjoy up to this day the status of ruling chiefs. But besides the advanced sections of the Gonds who vied with Hindus in the fields of war and statesmanship, there were and still are the great masses of primitive peasants and forest dwellers on a cultural level no higher than that of other aboriginal populations in the Central Indian zone. Of their economics, social organization and religion, historical sources tell us next to nothing, and the study of Gond culture, as a distinct element in the culture pattern of India, falls to the anthropologist, who finds an almost overwhelming wealth of material among the many vigorous branches of the Gond family.

184 101 [19] Spread over an area considerably larger than the British Isles and extending from the Godavari gorges in the south to the Vindhya Mountains in the north, the Gonds are neither racially, nor culturally, nor linguistically a homogeneous population. So great are the differences in custom and material circumstances between many of the widely scattered tribal groups that one may well wonder what causes them to be considered, and indeed to consider themselves, as members of the same race. Wherever we find Gonds, unless they are totally detribalized and merged with Hindu populations, they describe themselves as Gond or, if speaking Gondi, as Koitur, the universal equivalent of that name in all Gondi dialects. Were it not for those large groups of eastern Gonds, who speak Chhattisgarhi Hindi, the Gonds in the north-west of the Central Provinces, who speak western Hindi and the far smaller groups of Telugu speaking Gonds, better known as Koyas, in Hyderabad and Madras Presidency, it would probably be most satisfactory to replace, at least in ethnological usage, the general name "Gond" by the term "Gondi speaking populations," thus leaving it open whether there exists such an entity as a Gond people or only a group of peoples who to-day speak related languages. Indeed, I believe that we shall fail in

252 with wood and fired; pots are placed in rows upon them. The motiari husk and clean the rice, and make the leaf-cups and plates, but the boys do the actual cooking. When the rice is ready it is tipped out in a great pile on bamboo mats. A pig, which is killed by being beaten on the head with a rice husker, is roasted in the fire till its hair is burnt off; it is skinned and cleaned. Flesh, bones and skin are cut up into little squares of equal size—an important matter, for it is essential that everyone should receive exactly the same amount. These pieces are fried in mahua oil, and put into large earthen pots with rice-water, salt, haldi and chilli and boiled till ready. Fish is prepared in much the same way, except that usually something sour is added to flavour it. Fowls are cooked in leaf-cups. The intestines are squeezed out, and the whole chicken with head and feet is roasted with a little salt. Eggs are wrapped in leaves and baked in the fire. Mongoose flesh is roasted and spiced with dried mangoes. Crocodile is boiled.

264 At the ghotul feasts and marriages I have attended everyone sits round in a big circle, and the boys (sometimes assisted by a few motiari) serve the food. The bits of meat are carefully counted out into leaf-cups and distributed. Rice is served from baskets or winnowing-fans direct onto leaf-plates.

At home, the family sits round the pot of jawa, which is taken straight off the fire and placed in the middle of the floor. Each has a little chutney on a leaf in front of him and an empty leaf-cup. The mother dips a gourd into the pot and helps the little children; then each member of the family helps himself. There is no idea that men should eat before women or elders before the children.

262 Doctors say that the Muria's food lacks fat and protein and criticize them for not taking more milk, ghee and vegetable. No doubt the Muria, like other
●146 people, would eat more of these things if they could get them. But there is no doubt that they do not like milk, and rarely take it themselves or give it to their children.

731 Famine is not common in Bastar, for the people can fall back on the almost limitless products of the forests. But it has been known, and a sombre song preserves its memory.

539

Nimāre weho dāntona rawnāni	Vulture, whither away, vulture?
Dori bhumi dāntona dāda le	I am going towards the west, brother,
Bhumi dukhār dukhār roy dāda le	For the day of want has dawned.
Bhumi te dukhār arit roy dāda le	The famine is over all the world
Hihāt huro bhaiso roy dāda le	Black, black are the buffaloes,
Sarpana bhaiso arit roy dāda le	And all of them have died, brother.
Podor pungār doyo roy dāda le	White as cotton flowers are the cows,
Sarpana doyo arin roy dāda le	And all of them have fallen in summer.
Pukla dhelāt rawnāl roy dāda le	On the broken clod the vulture,
Watla marāla kawrāl roy dāda le	On the withered tree the crow,
Kawar woker insa roy dāda le	The crow is cawing, brother.
Raiyaka reyon kawrāl roy dāda le	It is ready to fly down.

VI. Honey

222 Honey was discovered by a Maria named Waddai who also gave his name to
539 the whole succession of Waddai diviners. Waddai went one day to a medinas, with a gift of char nuts, seeking help for his sick son. On the way he met a monkey which had been outcasted for falling while jumping from a tree and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills, and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Raughat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle.

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhirni*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'.

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari puda*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths.

FIG. 1. Kuvi digging-stick of iron
Length 1' 7"

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*.

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the rains. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] The other villagers come and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *harlat* or *balla* (*dhoona* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *harpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes called *kutuak* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun at the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

[1] The young keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandagarh* dormitory, and usually ignite their clearings from it.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWO

THE BISON-HORN MARIA

I

The so-called Maria of Bastar fall naturally into two divisions distinguished by many details of culture and tradition, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains and the Bison-horn Maria living to the south of the Indrawati River. A full account of both these tribes has been given by W. V. Grigson, and his book should be read by those who wish to have a fuller background of Maria life than the present volume can supply. In this chapter I will only give a brief summary of the life and customs of the Bison-horn Maria.

The Bison-horn Maria, who are distinguished from the other aboriginals of Bastar by the splendid head-dress they use for their marriage dances, numbered about 156,000 in 1931, and I estimate their present strength at about 175,000. They are distributed all over southern Bastar, among the entrancing hills of Dantewara, in the dry forests of Bijapur, among the hot but lovely lowlands of Konta, in the remote Sukma and Kutru Zamindaris. On the borders of the main Maria stock are a number of communities which really belong to it, the Koya of the extreme south, the Dorla who claim to be a superior caste and the mixed population along the banks of the Indrawati and reaching up towards the Muria country beyond Barsur. The Dorla and Koya dance in Bison-horn Maria fashion; the mixed people to the north combine the customs of the Hill Maria with their own. In the neighbourhood of Jagdalpur, the Maria gradually lose their distinctiveness as they approach the town and merge into the southern Muria.

There are few people in India more attractive than the Bison-horn Maria, physically charming, of good stature, perfect figure, finely featured with carefully tended hair, often a lovely golden-brown in colour. Both men and women are very strong; the men can carry heavy loads great distances, endure long and arduous hunting expeditions and dance all night bearing their great drums. Their health is fairly good, but they are afflicted with yaws, though the work of the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria,
Bison Horn Maria

411 to the marksman's right. He stands obliquely to his target, with feet slightly apart and body bending forward over the left hip. The nock in the arrow shaft is held to the string of the bow, in the Abujhmar hills by the index and middle fingers only of the right hand unless the marksman is not strong enough not to use his third finger also; the Bison-horn Marias always use all three. The left thumb rests perpendicularly along the inner edge of the belly of the stave, the arrow resting, on the left of the stave, in the arch between the left thumb and index finger. The latter is laid lightly along the top of the shaft and pointed as a sight towards the target. The other left fingers are brought round the back of the stave. The string is then drawn to the rear by the right hand and released. No ring or other protector is worn on the thumb, though it is sometimes cut on the inner side a little above the knuckle.

Glasfurd, in para. 87 of his report, thus describes another form of release :—

> 'All the Marias . . . often use the feet in bending the bow, while they pull the string with both hands. An arrow discharged in this manner, it is said, would almost pass through the body of a man or deer: this method is only had recourse to in elevated positions, such as from the tops of rocks, hills, and precipices, upon any object below.'

Despite many enquiries, I never found a modern hill or plain Maria who could use this method. A few old men said it was used by wandering 'Nahal' hunters, now very rarely met in Bastar; none could remember it ever being used by Marias.

415 No quivers are used by any Marias. Arrows are carried in the hand, or by fixing the point of a barb in the hair-tuft, or in a cord tied round the head if bald.

534 No Marias appear ever to use a musical bow on a winnowing-fan
171 over a pot of water as is done by low Hindu castes and Murias around Kondagaon for the *Tija* festival in the month of Bhadon.

151 The Hill Maria slays a very occasional panther or barking-deer with his bow, but is not a good shot. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is often a deadly shot up to forty or fifty yards. A young man in a village just below the Aranpur pass, with a powerful bow of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood at fifty paces range sent an arrow through the bullseye of a target which I set up for him against a *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) tree; it penetrated 4 cm. into the very hard wood of that tree.

411 No other actual weapons are used by Marias, save for an occasional old sword of one of the traditional Indian *talwar* patterns which has survived the general disarming after the 1910 rebellion. But it is as well to describe here the few digging hand-tools used.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

609 a large party of women who had assembled to keen over an old
157 woman who had just died. Pigs also were driven off, and a youth, who was caught lurking near us to 'rescue' three stray cows and brought to me, advanced to me as delicately as Agag, with his knife unsheathed and held in readiness to defend his life. This lad was quickly reassured and shouted out, whereupon to our surprise four or five other lads came down from trees around us, where they had taken shelter, their curiosity being on the whole stronger than their fear. Ultimately the women felt that the corpse could not be left unmourned any longer, and came back in twos and threes to be reassured by the boys. They were then in two minds whether to resume keening or to see as much as possible of the queer ways of so unheard-of an apparition as a white man. When I came to see the keening it was altogether too much, and they at once left the body and crowded round me; when I had it explained that I wanted to see how funerals were conducted and to photograph them, they very obligingly squatted down in their original places, and began even more doleful keenings than before. It seemed only proper to remove my distracting presence as soon as I could, but the keepers were with difficulty dissuaded from seeing me on my way to Adeq.

Timidity of this kind is unusual among the Bison-horn Marias; but there are many villages among them where few women can have seen a white man. To appear on foot or on a car along a forest road where groups of women are gathering forest fruits is usually the signal for them to rush off into the thickets, leaving their baskets and gear: but if you return that way later after having spent an hour or two in neighbouring villages, they will come timidly out to you on the road, and gradually lose their earlier fears.

152 The highlanders and lowlanders alike are extremely curious. In the Abujhmar hills I have frequently had parties of men, youths and girls coming into my tent or hut to see my strange ways of getting up, shaving and dressing, and their curiosity has been embarrassing when they have tried to watch even the performance of natural functions. I have had to brush my hair a dozen times over to satisfy those who had not seen me do it the first time, and to demonstrate the use of every article on my dressing or office tables. They will sit for hours watching a typewriter, and speculating on how it works. A motor-car is a source of endless delight, whether it be the distorted reflections seen in the polished radiator, or the noises of the bulb and electric horns. They thump it to test its materials, or crawl underneath to be fascinated by the strange sights that reward their trouble. But it takes time to get them to agree to try a ride inside, and when they do, they start off with

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a fearful pride, but soon lose their fear, and try to crowd into the seats; their women, however, are as reluctant to risk entering a car as any old village woman in Cornwall thirty-five years ago. It was a pleasure later in the day to see the bold adventurers of the morning who watched the white man's toilet operations conducting parties of sight-seers into the tent and pantomiming the use of brush, razor and everything there. The Bison-horn Maria is more sophisticated, and will not intrude without being asked, nor is he so curious about small things; but a motor-car is as great a draw to him as to the hill men. Both are very interested in seeing a carburettor stripped and assembled or a tyre changed, or any mechanical repairs; they show quick intelligence, and could soon be taught. In the spate of bridge building on the State roads in recent years they have been quick to grasp methods of sinking piles or getting great beams into position, and have not been slow to offer suggestions that have sometimes been practicable. The newly built road bridge over the Indrawati at Jagdalpur is really built according to the same method as the bridges which even Hill Marias construct across their rivers, with modern and stronger materials and other improvements.

My inquisitiveness about their houses, habits, possessions, agriculture and customs in their eyes must seem much like their curiosity about my ways. Actually their mental processes are not unlike ours, when allowance is made for their centuries of isolation; they are certainly more receptive than the ordinary villager of British India, whose thought has for generations been stunted by the cumbrous wrappings of caste and debased Hinduism. A striking instance of this is the comparative ease with which vaccination was made compulsory years ago throughout the State and is welcomed by the Marias, in strong contrast to the keen opposition to it even in the cities of British India and to the caution venturing on timidity with which provincial Governments make tentative advances in the direction of universal compulsion. Not only is vaccination really universal even in the hill villages, but the Marias are keenly alive to the advantages of inoculation for cholera and yaws, and, in fact, are inclined to demand '*tika*' or inoculation for every ailment, those of them, that is, who have seen for themselves cholera checked or yaws cured by injections; for till recently no medical relief other than vaccination had reached the hills.

In natural cheerfulness few races can surpass the Hill Marias, who, like all Gonds, are quick to see the fun of things, whether it be something that spontaneously appeals to their sense of humour, or a joke put to them by some outsider. Their humour is apt to be broad. Very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *taranh taranh tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Beloea in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tita*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tita de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking puda, peking puda* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligundi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dussera festival in Jagdalpur.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 539 During the day, material preparations keep the family busy and excited. Rice must be husked and cleaned, pulses prepared; the men must arrange for liquor, the women for oil and haldi. As they grind the haldi the women sing:

Māyo balum jamudi.	O Jamidarin mother, we call on you.
Kākor ghare niy utra,	Don't go elsewhere, O mother,
Maniya daniya ghare je.	But come to Maniya Daniya's house.
Tuke neuta pārila,	We invite you here,
Dandik bale yiha se,	Come for a little while,
Haldi pura dihāse.	Let there be full measure of haldi and flour.
Asa māyo asa je.	Do not betray our faith in you.
Māyo balum bangārām.	O mother Bangaram!
Tuke neuta pārila.	We invite you also.
Kākor ghare neuta je?	Whose is this invitation?
Maniya daniya ghare je.	It is to Maniya Daniya's house.
Haldi pura dihāse.	May there be full measure of haldi and flour.

And so on, endlessly, through a score of deities. Maniya Daniya simply means 'so-and-so' and is altered to the actual name of the householder in each case.

The Bridegroom's Farewell Dance

585 Shortly after my arrival, a roll of drums heralded the approach of the bridegroom, attended by a party of chelik and motiari, who made a temporary camp under a mango tree outside the boundary of the village. This night they cooked for themselves, but three of them came on deputation to the headman to ask for assistants to help with water and cooking. Later, the bridegroom's party began to dance, led by the boy himself; it was his farewell and final dance as an unmarried man.

The Preparation of the Bride

At about nine in the evening, the elders of the village assembled outside the headman's house for a preliminary drink, and two hours later the chelik and motiari gathered in the same place. The elders had now gone away, and the boys made a big fire, and brought out the bride. The girl, who had been Belosa, was covered with a cloth and made to sit in the lap of the Tiloka, her own sister, and was supported on either side by the Sirdar and Kandki. [152] She began to weep loudly and mournfully: she was in good voice, for she had been practising in the ghotul every day for the past week. Today she must continue to cry all night. The boys and girls sang to drown the painful noise, to instruct her in her new duties and themselves to mourn the loss of their Belosa. All night they continued weeping, singing, sometimes dancing, though unlike the bridegroom the bride had no heart for this. From time to time they took a little liquor. It was a moving sight, for the girl's sorrow was genuine, as well it might be—she was leaving a world of freedom and romance for the unfamiliarity of a strange house. The ghotul children also felt the departure of one of their number very deeply; they had lived with her for years; as Belosa she had been the lover of the boys and controlled the destiny of the girls.

585 533 The sequence of the songs was fascinating; with Pilsai's help I was able to get a lot of it down. It was sung in a mixture of Gondi, Halbi and Chhattisgarhi.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

776
539

Paik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's father's brother's son]
Aik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Tograjdeo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Perma Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's brother]
Bhumrandari Penur Rai [Lingo's elder brother's wife]
Pordegumal Penur Rai [Lingo's daughter's husband]
Nulemuttai Penur Rai [Lingo's sister]
Poche Dokara Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Maria Moghraj Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kokal Bidral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kurumtala Penur Rai [Lingo's brother [1]]

776

By this time the reader probably feels that he has had enough. But he need not fear that I propose to take him much further into the intricate and often contradictory relationships of the Muria gods. The subject needs a book to itself and an investigator deeply interested in the theology of primitive peoples. All I wish to do here is to impress on the reader the great complexity of the Muria pantheon, and the intimate human way in which its various members are interrelated.

The gods then come into being by migration from outside and by the division of the tribe into various clans. Many of the gods named in the song are clan-gods, and as the clans split up new gods come into being. But this is not the only way that gods are born. We already have a hint of a fundamental Muria belief in the statement that Tallur Muttai sent her servant to trouble men with disease in order to get food-sacrifice to keep her quiet. The gods are troublesome and expensive, and the more troublesome they are the more they are honoured. This is, of course, the normal Gond method of attracting attention. A Gond wife, who is devoted to her husband, sulks and makes a nuisance of herself, not because she is in a temper, but simply because she judges that to be the best way of getting herself noticed.

[152
593]

776
773

Some of the gods, however, have come into being as a result of actual incidents, no doubt greatly magnified by the course of time. I have only room for a few examples of this tendency. In a village near Bishrampuri there is the shrine of Pendrawandin Pen, a goddess about whom there has been much controversy. Long ago, so runs the local legend, a Muria of the Naitami clan had a daughter called Hidde for whose hand a Poyami boy called Kuria was serving as Lamhada. Hidde's father made a dam across a stream, but the water kept breaking through. Then one day a dream came to him, 'Worship me and I will stop the water'. The Muria thought in his heart 'Whom shall I sacrifice?' He decided to offer the Lamhada boy, Kuria. He took him to the stream, pushed him in and piled earth above his body. At once the dam became firm and strong. But now Hidde began to search for her lover, and when she came to the dam she saw one finger sticking out of the earth. When she saw this she jumped into the stream and was drowned also.[2] After a few days, her ghost began to trouble her father, and when he asked who it was, she replied, 'I am Pendrawandin, your daughter; worship me and I will trouble you no more'. Then began the cult of Pendrawandin and her consort Kuria Pen. Unfortunately, at the time of her death Hidde was in

[1] The word 'brother' is used in both its actual and classificatory senses: the Muria are very confused over these relationships.

[2] With this story compare the legend of Ganga and Beni, who are associated with the source of the Wainganga river at Mundara.—R. V. Russell, *Seoni District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 178.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of a chelik's absence from the ghotul to seduce his motiari. These things happen, but they are condemned. 883X

The chelik themselves consider that this type of ghotul has several great advantages. The first, characteristically, is the very practical one that if a girl becomes pregnant 'they know the thief'. Elsewhere it is naturally often difficult to fix the responsibility of fatherhood. Again, the chelik say that a great deal of trouble is saved. 'We know what to do; there is no jealousy or dispute; everything is settled, and there is no more to be said.' I think it is true that there is less strain and anxiety in these ghotul; and there is room for the development of deep intimacy and romantic attachment. In the pre-nuptial period, however, it may be argued that these things are not altogether desirable. 836

They certainly lead to greater conflict with the parents over marriage. Many chelik and motiari look forward with misery to separation from the partner who has shared with them the happy days of youth, and occasionally—but only occasionally—ghotul partners elope together rather than face a separation. Statistics here are striking. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 1884 were celebrated according to the wishes of the parents and the great majority of cases were of the cross-cousin type. Of the 116 irregular marriages, 77 were those of chelik who married their 'ghotul-wives'. Only 39 irregular marriages were reported from the other type of ghotul. In view of the smaller number of men from the *joddār* ghotul, these figures indicate a proportion of about 1 in every 9 of chelik in this type of ghotul who had conflict with their parents, and only 1 in about 32 from the other type of ghotul. 883X 836 583

Of those who married their 'ghotul-wives', 9 out of 77 divorced them later, giving a proportion of 11·6 per cent against a proportion of 2·9 per cent of divorces for the whole 2000 marriages. It is interesting that the proportion of divorces among Lamhada—the other type of chelik who live in close contact with their future wives before marriage—is almost exactly the same, 11·5 per cent. And although 77 and 113 cases respectively are not sufficient for us to draw far-reaching conclusions, it is undoubtedly striking that there should be so high an incidence of divorce among these and only among these two classes of people. 883X 836 586

Yet even though a passionate ghotul attachment is not the best preparation for a life-long union, at the time separation seems tragic indeed. A girl especially, whose chelik marries someone else, is a pathetic figure. 'Her life has left her'—so they put it in Munjmeta—'she lies alone on her mat and pines for him; she has no heart to take another lover.' Often she sleeps with a girl friend who is herself in the arms of a boy, but she lies with her back to them, turning away from all that happiness. In Ulera they said that when a girl's lover leaves her, she cannot sing for many days. When the Mukhwan of Banjora died, the Mukhwanin's face was 'destroyed by sorrow'. 883X 836 152

Boys are often, but not always, more philosophical. 'Yes, for a month you feel wretched', said a chelik in Markabera. 'Then you forget all about it. One may be able to meet her again, but that is difficult and dangerous. But at least you can always get another girl in the ghotul.' Yet at Bopna the Silledar was called a 'widower', so miserable was he after his 'wife's' marriage last year. At Markabera, Dasru took to drink after his ghotul wife was married and Gurti, who was deeply attached to the beautiful and vivacious Malko, looked very lonely and miserable when I saw him nearly a year after her marriage to a boy in another village.

It is remarkable, however, how few actual tragedies there have been from this cause. In the last ten years, only one case of suicide has been registered. 883X 836 762

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
553

and they are soon ordering about those unfortunate children who have not yet received their names.

III

In time the little boy will grow up and may become Sirdar or Diwan; the little girl may one day be Belosa. How are these appointments made? The choosing of the leaders is a serious matter, for they not only have great power over the happiness of the children, but they are also responsible for the smooth working of village life. The elders of the village, as well as the boys and girls, are anxious that the best appointments should be made.

883X
554

How is the leader chosen? The Muria have not discovered the principle of voting, which I do not think would appeal to a people so devoid of jealousy and the spirit of rivalry. Generally the new leader is an obvious choice; the boy who has acted as second-in-command has been well trained, and if he is a good boy will naturally step into the old leader's place. If all the leaders are married in the same year, the matter is more difficult; but if he is available, the position usually goes to the boy whose special duty it has been to look after the motiari. If he can fill that, he can fill any office. The choice is made easier by the fact that the old leader does not relinquish his office immediately after marriage; he continues in it for six to twelve months longer. Sometimes he remains permanently: at Masora, the Diwan is Lakmu, a married man with sons in the ghotul. But Lakmu still retains his title and is the final court of appeal in all disputes. Under these circumstances there is plenty of time for the ghotul to make up its mind. In a serious case of dispute, the village headman or the Pargana Manjhi is asked to intervene and decide.

[52]

The leader of the girls is appointed in much the same way, though here the influence of the boys' leader counts for a great deal. Especially in those ghotul where the chelik and motiari pair off, the Sirdar's motiari is often made leader of the girls.

What sort of boy or girl is chosen to be Sirdar or Belosa? Except in the Kalpatti and Bandadesh Pargana of the north-west, where the son or a near relative of the Kaser-Gaita must be appointed, no one has any claim on office by reason of the wealth or position of his parents. To become the head of a ghotul is a simple triumph of character. We may gain some idea of the qualities expected from the following descriptions. The first is from Binjhli. 'A good man is one who helps in difficulty and sympathizes in sorrow. Dhansai Muria was like that. He never told a lie. He spoke kindly and gently to everyone. He was never seen angry. Even when he was drunk he never swore at people.' And in Kuntpadar we were told about Nattu Babu, a Mussalman. 'He thinks everyone equal to him. He loves humble people, he loves the ugly, he loves the destitute. You would never think he was a Mussalman.' On the other hand, a bad man, like Mundra Muria, is 'friends with no one. He speaks friendly to your face, then goes away and does you an injury. When there is work he avoids it, he is rough and abusive in speech. When he sees a good harvest in another's field, he burns with jealousy.'

A leader therefore must be gentle, friendly, not quick to anger or abuse, a good worker himself. He must be able to organize the work at a marriage or festival, and arrange for an official's camp. He must be popular with the girls, who naturally have a lot to say in his appointment. And in most ghotul, the leader admirably fulfils these conditions. You could not find anywhere boys more intelligent, gentle and hard-working than the boys who

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

passion and the passion of the female. Throughout nature sexual conjugation only takes place after much expenditure of energy.'[1] And so the ghotul evening usually begins with vigorous dances and games, many of them frankly provocative of the sexual emotions. The splendid parade of the Mandri dance, the intimacies of the Hulki, the suggestiveness of some of the games are invaluable as a preparation for tumescence. There is a proverb *Rela rela bonde pelo*—'If you start with singing Rela you end with the satisfaction of desire'. It must be noted that it is not only the chelik who by the energy of their display excite the motiari; the girls' games and dances are equally powerful stimulants. In one of these games, the girls bend forward, each holding a stick in her hand to represent a penis, and dance with jerky movements of the buttocks that closely simulate the sexual process. As they dance they sing,

Nān nān chingro,	Little little prawn hairs,
Bare lāmi hānia,	Very long thorn,
Kaha gai ho,	Where has he gone,
Nandpurihār Rāja?	The Nandpurihar Raja?

The 'little prawn hairs' are the pubic hairs and the long thorn is the penis of the chelik. In the Jhoria Endanna, the girls also sing songs about sexual congress.

V

We have already seen, particularly in Chapter XI, something of the scope of sexual opportunity offered by the ghotul as also the limitations it imposes on the normal process of sexual selection. Under these conditions do the chelik and motiari really 'fall in love'? What happens to the tenderness of devotion, the tensions and despairs of passion, the idealizing of the adored object which is still, to the majority of Europeans, essential to any proper relationship between the sexes? Or does life in the ghotul, as Dalton said of the Uraon dormitory, 'sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'?

It is possible that the Muria, in the diffused tenderness of corporate affection, in their simple and natural view of sexual congress, in their rational and realistic attitude to one another, have achieved something better than the sentimental raptures of the lover in the novelette 'sighing like furnace' for an impossible ideal.

Many chelik and motiari seem to pass through their ghotul period without any very passionate love-affairs, content and happy with the ghotul tradition of love. Others, in the course of their seven or eight ghotul years, experience one or two vivid and exciting adventures which may last only a few months and which interrupt but illuminate the general course of their less intense amours. Others again, of a different temperament, are always falling in love and out of it, coveting other cheliks' 'wives', arranging to meet girls outside in the forest or visiting them when the others are asleep. 'Love often makes us break the rules,' said a chelik at Kuntpadar.

For across the calm sea of unstrained, unfrustrated affection, there blow sudden gales and storms. A new girl comes to the village; a boy suddenly awakes to the charm of a motiari he has known for years; a chelik displays himself as a popular hero and draws every heart; little girls and boys grow up

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 32. The sex-dance of the sub-human primates 'consists of an erect swaggering waddle quite different from the usual mode of locomotion. No doubt its function is to intimidate and prepare the female for sexual submission to the dominant male.'—Clifford Allen, *The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities* (Oxford, 1940), p. 27. See also H. Bingham, *The Sex Development in Apes* (Baltimore, 1928).

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

and in their maturity reveal new opportunities. Chelik and motiari are then disturbed, devastated, broken just like anyone else; they fall in love. 'The best love is the first; that is the work of a madman. The rest is the result of an arrangement.' How do boys set about satisfying their passion? And even when it is far less intense than this, how do they approach a new girl whom they desire to win? How do they even persuade the girl with whom they regularly sleep to allow them consummation—for in most ghotul, though a girl is bound to sleep with one of the chelik, she need not have congress with him unless she wants to.

Love-making begins, said a chelik at Bandopal, 'with laughing, smiling and dancing together. Then we arrange to meet in the fields or forest, perhaps by a stream. The boy gives her a carved comb. She steals a little money from her parents, and buys beads to make him a necklace. When it is dark she gives it to him. He wears it at night, but in the day he keeps it carefully hidden.'

In the remote approach to the beloved, gifts play an important part. The chelik make hair-pins, wooden blocks for the back hair, pretty little combs and small tobacco-pouches. The motiari respond with bead-necklaces, head-bands, ear-pendants, and even mats. Mirrors are popular gifts on either side. The gift of a comb is regarded as a sign that one's intentions are really serious; in some ghotul it may not be given directly, but must pass through the Kotwar's hands so that he may keep a check on ghotul romance. Some girls accumulate a great number of these ornaments; it does not necessarily mean that they have many, but rather that they have devoted, lovers. The Likhen of Kanhargaon made twelve combs for his beloved Surtao; when she danced, she used to remove them and give them to him for safe keeping.

Many of these gifts promote a chelik's suit not only by pleasing the girl, but by a more direct solicitation. The boys carve tiny symbols of the vagina or of a penis in erection, they draw breasts and even the pimples round the areola. They make these drawings or carvings on combs or tobacco pouches, and on the walls or pillars of the ghotul and on trunks of trees in the forest. Sometimes they carve breasts on the wooden pillows they use at night. These symbols, they say, often make it easier to open a conversation.

When girls fall in love with boys, they show their devotion by doing things for them. They take their dirty clothes to the stream for washing. They do their hair with special attention. They carry their drums. They bring secret presents of liquor or tobacco from their homes. They go to the jungle for little gifts of fruit. Such attentions quickly win the chelik's heart.

The pangs and sorrows of frustrated love are rarely, I think, experienced. Even where desire is strong, it is tempered by the great range of sexual opportunity. 'Is there a lack of tigers in the jungle?' A girl who is attracted by a boy but who, for some reason, cannot win him, says philosophically enough, 'What is the use of rice in someone else's grain-bin?' and finds another lover. A boy says, 'If not today, I will plough the field tomorrow'.

VI

Such is the remote approach to what the Muria regard as the really important thing in human relations, sexual congress. We must now consider the more immediate approach to this critical and definite expression of love, without which no friendship can be real.

Motiari are often shy and unwilling; they are afraid of pregnancy; sometimes they are just not interested in that particular boy; they are well aware

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

586 40 of the divorces were due to the women. To these we might perhaps add another 9 cases where divorce followed a polygynous marriage.

It is noticeable that in no case has childlessness been put forward as a reason for divorce, though I have found this outside the circle of informants examined for statistical purposes. It is also notable that out of 2,000 men only 11 were [333] suffering from some kind of impotence. It is possible to assert this since it is almost axiomatic that divorce should follow impotence. 'As soon as the penis weakens, the vagina runs to the jungle.'

In this particular set of divorces no case of witchcraft is mentioned. But this too I have found elsewhere, and the legends tell how Lingo himself had to drive away five of his seven wives because they were suspected of being witches.

The 25 cases of wives who 'ran away' are probably to be classed as love-affairs. There is no case of a man driving out his wife for adultery. 'A Muria never gets angry with his wife unless with his own eyes he sees her in the arms of another man.' Nor does the Muria husband listen to scandal. 'All the village knows where the cow is at pasture—except the cowherd.'

593 The paucity of material makes a study of divorce difficult. Generally the Muria husband and wife remain together through all vicissitudes. I heard of a beautiful example of fidelity at Bargaon. A former Chalki described how after he had been married a year, his wife's 'privates came out' and he was unable to have intercourse with her. His friends advised him to marry someone else. 'But I considered how she had given me great happiness for that year. How could I leave her then? What would she have done? Who would give her happiness? So I stayed with her, and married no one else, but sometimes visited the ghotul.'

If there is any possible excuse for forgiveness, the Muria forgive a sexual lapse—not because they are complacent but because their philosophy forces them to tolerance. If there is any kind of doubt in an accusation, they give their partner the benefit of it. Through poverty and sorrow, despite the malice of witch and warlock or the mysterious hostility of the unseen gods, through doubt and temptation, heedless of the swift death of beauty and the passing of desire, they stand by one another and in their old age are not without reward. Muria domestic life might well be a model and example to the whole world.

VIII. Jealousy

●152 Jealousy, which was defined by Descartes as 'a kind of fear related to a desire to preserve a possession', is generally used in a much wider sense and covers, as Westermarck says, such different emotions as rage at a rival, revenge for stolen property and anguish at the knowledge or suspicion of violated chastity and outraged conjugal affection.[1] Hartland in his study of jealousy among 'savages' considered that the sense of ownership was the seed-plot of jealousy,[2] but Westermarck rightly points out that this is not enough; 'If jealousy has anything to do with the sense of ownership the reason is that it is primarily connected with the desire of possession, which is something different. Moreover sexual jealousy springs from sexual love.' One of the best recent descriptions is by Stekel. Jealousy, he says, is 'the expression of the desire to possess an object wholly. It is primordial, is born with man and dies with him. It is still a tragic characteristic of all people, to be unable

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 302.
[2] E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (London, 1910), Vol. II, p. 102.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

to share: and each development, each advance on the part of mankind can be traced back to the opposite formula: ability to share'.[1] 152

The absence of jealousy among primitive people has often been noticed and Hartland has given a long list of tribes remarkable for this amiable trait. Since he connects it, however, with general promiscuity, indifference to the marriage tie and a fundamental belief that primitive man is incapable of real love, his study does not throw very much light on Muria conditions. Westermarck and Briffault have also each filled a chapter with rather dubious evidence on the subject from all parts of the world, which would have had greater value had there been an agreed definition of jealousy among their authorities.

As with the problem of pre-nuptial chastity, so with jealousy, our evidence is confused, contradictory and little of it would be admitted in a court of law. The result is that it is possible to produce equally imposing lists both of those peoples who are temperamentally jealous and of those who are not.

Even in Bastar two tribes living side by side present a notable contrast in this matter; the Bison-horn Maria of Dantewara and Sukma are notorious for the violence of their jealous and suspicious temperament which fills the jail at Jagdalpur with homicides; the Muria are no less remarkable for an almost complete absence of this passion. I do not think it is possible to lay down a rule; doubtless some tribes are more attached to possession, dignity, prestige than others. Jealousy always has its roots in something else.

But what is so interesting about the Muria is that they recognize jealousy as a problem, accept it as a danger to marital happiness, and direct the education of their children towards eliminating it from their psychology.

The ghotul trains its members in a strict equality; on the whole, just as in a big family, it manages fairly successfully to laugh out of countenance dignity and prestige; it sets its face against possessiveness and the desire for the exclusive enjoyment of anything; it insists on things being shared. Even the *jodidār* ghotul, where girls are allotted to their partners in a fairly permanent relation, achieves this in no small measure; and the newer type succeeds in an unusual degree in eliminating jealousy. Undoubtedly, as I have said already, there is a very remarkable general diffused affection among the boys and girls. The sense of property and possession is certainly lessened; policemen have told me that they believe the small amount of crime in the north of Bastar is due to the fact that Muria children learn while still in the ghotul to share things with everybody else and not to grab them for themselves. As the chelik said at Ulera, 'There is equal love for all, just as in a family'. 883X 152 867

Naturally there will be moments of strain, particularly when there are a few boys and girls of outstanding physical attraction in the ghotul; yet sexual jealousy between boys is certainly lessened. An old Muria of Jaitpuri, recalling his ghotul days, said that there was a girl in the ghotul whom he loved very much. 'When she slept with other boys I used to feel a little jealous, but I said to myself, "This ghotul life is only for four days and in any case if I don't have her today, I'll have her tomorrow".' In the ghotul two friends will lie down with a girl between them, and sometimes—as at Sidhawand—a group of boys occupies a corner of the ghotul with a group of girls, every one of whom is shared among them. Several of my chelik friends have told me that they have slept again and again with every girl in the ghotul.

There are, of course, exceptions. Ghotul differ from one another, a few deviating widely from the classical model. The younger boys are sometimes jealous of their seniors; I have noticed this at Masora and Markabera. As 883X 152

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy', Forbath, op. cit., p. 359.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883 I have remarked elsewhere, the situation in the Binjhli ghotul at the end of 1940 was in many ways unique. Here was a large number of girls including 852 several between the ages of seventeen and twenty, and the tension was often rather acute between the drab-looking older girls, some of whom had had more than one abortion, and the fresh, bright, lovely, younger motiari. These naturally wanted to sleep with the younger and more attractive boys, but so also did the older girls. One of the younger girls told my wife how the older girls are always jealous of the young and beautiful motiari. Sometimes they catch hold of their hands and forcibly pull them away from the more handsome and amusing boys, saying, "I know you want to sleep with him, *bāplotia*, but you're not to. You go and sleep over there". And the younger girls have to go away, disappointed, to some other boy. There is a lot of hatred between beautiful motiari and the Belosa. The chelik can say nothing. A chelik must never ask a girl to sleep with him. The ghotul is ruled by girls." I remember very vividly the tense atmosphere in this ghotul one Friday night (the night they sleep together) when the allotment of partners was going on.

Another girl said that when she was forced to sleep with a boy she disliked and saw some of the older girls lying down on the mat of her special friend, she would sometimes scream with temper and lie awake all night burning with jealousy.

The situation in the Binjhli ghotul at that particular time, however, was, I think, exceptional and I have not found anything to parallel it elsewhere. Generally the girls and boys live together very happily.

The ghotul system is well adapted to train both boys and girls in sexual self-confidence. Pathological jealousy is often due to a sort of psychic impotence; it is a symptom of self-mistrust and of dread that one is sexually or otherwise incompetent. 'Jealousy is the projection of one's own insufficiency upon the partner.' But chelik and motiari do not generally feel insufficient: their life is so full and happy, so supported by mutual love and admiration that they approach their life-partners with natural confidence that they can satisfy and thus possess them wholly.

Another possible reason why the Muria are so free from jealousy is the absence of homosexuality, the importance of which in this matter has been stressed by Stekel in an acute analysis.[1]

The ghotul attacks jealousy partly by its tradition that it is a passion unworthy of chelik or motiari, partly by a frank sexual communism, sometimes—as in the *jodidār* ghotul—by the opposite method of making infidelity so difficult and so condemned that no boy or girl need worry about their exclusive possession. But in every case I believe that the strong sense of ghotul solidarity is the most powerful agent against jealousy.

After marriage, the fellowship of the ghotul widens out into the fellowship 152 of the tribe. Sexual communism is no longer practised, but a great deal of the fear that Descartes noticed as a root of jealousy is eliminated by the strong social feeling against adultery; Muria simply do not commit this crime just as they do not commit the crime of theft, and therefore there is no need to fill one's mind with fears about the safety of one's possessions. Since love is not afraid, it is not possessive. Adultery is not only socially condemned, it is very dangerous; it casts a blight on the village, it ruins the ritual hunt, it diverts the fisherman from his catch, it brings wild beasts upon the cattle, and it causes the offenders to swell all over and perhaps even die. Social and supernatural sanctions alike make it unnecessary to be jealous.

[1] Stekel, op. cit., pp. 360ff.

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

626 Quarrels are equally dangerous. They not only destroy one of the chief of the Muria's treasures—his sense of tribal solidarity—but like adultery they bring the vengeance of heaven upon the village that indulges in them. They must, therefore, be avoided and if they do occur peace must be made at once. In Binjhli Tetku and his brother Maria had a row over a field and beat each other. Their *saga*-relatives hurried to the village, they got salphi and mahua liquor, and held a panch. The Gaita dipped a gold ear-ring in water and sprinkled it over the two offenders; he dipped the ear-ring also in the liquor. Each brother gave the other a drink and peace was established. When Dandu and Aitu quarrelled in Masora, everyone was afraid that some epidemic would attack the village. They both did indeed fall ill, their bodies swelling mysteriously. They called the Gaita and gave him a pig, five measures of rice and a rupee's worth of liquor to sacrifice. He did so, praying, 'O Mahapurub, you are the earth, you are our mother. We have made a mistake. Even an elephant with four feet sometimes slips; what can we men with only two feet do? We give you this offering, let there be no more trouble.' And he warned the quarrellers that next time it would cost them ten rupees to make peace.

152 Everything in Muria society is thus calculated to render jealousy unnecessary, dangerous and undignified. Its absence is further proved, not only by a mass of statements and absence of the criminal cases that would certainly arise from it, but by concrete instances of social practice. For example, the Muria does not insist on his wife coming to him as a virgin, nor does she expect that her husband should find in her the first girl he has ever loved. When we consider the vast number of peoples who have required an exactly opposite state of things, we see how free the Muria must be from jealousy affecting the period before marriage.

593 After marriage, says the best Muria opinion, husband and wife should never
152 refer to their lives in the ghotul, still less should they rebuke each other with their old love-affairs. The very fact that exceptions to this are so carefully noted shows how rare they are. A Saidar of Botha is said to have forced his wife to swear that she never slept with any boy in her ghotul. The Diwan of Nayanar is said to have constantly nagged his young wife about a former lover till she stopped him by saying, 'Very well, if it is true—as you say—that I love him so much, I will go and live with him'. At Alor the Gaita said, 'A boy may try to get his wife to confess what she did in her ghotul, but he has no right to, and she can always say "Whatever I did, you did the same or more" '. It was considered a very severe rebuke indeed when the Kotwar of Almer shouted at his lazy wife, 'Why don't you get up earlier to work? Didn't your parents teach you how to work, or did they only train you to sleep with the chelik night and day?'

593 A husband is generally very good to a wife who as a motiari got a child by
152 another man. He takes the child as his own and the convention is that no reference should ever be made to the matter. This would not be so astonishing
837 if it only happened when a girl conceived in the ghotul, for any sensible man would regard it as the logical conclusion of what he had already accepted, that his wife was sleeping with other youths throughout the period of their engagement. But it is remarkable, I think, when a boy accepts a girl who has run away with another man whom she obviously loves and is going to have a child who will constantly remind her of this former lover. An incident at Samalpur is typical of scores of others which I have recorded. In this village the Sirdar of the ghotul made a girl pregnant and ran away with her. They were brought back and he was fined five rupees and the girl was married to her betrothed.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby? Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilizing him to some extent.

We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it is as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. Quarrels and their Causes

For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiari during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude: every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

be distributed equally; no one boy must do more than another; no one may shirk, but no one may be unduly burdened.[1]

In the home, after marriage, quarrels usually arise about the distribution of work. This, rather than sexual jealousy, is the real cause of dispute in polygamous households. Where brothers live together, their wives quarrel about the serving of the food. To say *tohirsa* of a girl implies that 'she stares at other people eating' in a suggestive way; 'she peeps in from the door when other folk sit down for a meal, hoping to get some' but she will do no work herself. The real sting of the expression *jutaha*, 'eater of another's leavings', is that it suggests that the *jutaha* never works for himself, but goes cadging round ready to eat anything, even the scraps off dirty plates.

Men beat their wives for not cooking properly, but rarely for any other cause. Here again, the reason for a man's anger is not that he feels he has missed a good meal, but that he thinks his wife is not doing her fair share of work of the home. He himself has been out all day working in the fields; his wife has been enjoying herself at home, chatting with her gossips, wasting her time; otherwise she would certainly have cooked properly.

The actual records of these quarrels are instructive. At Jhakri I overheard a man quarrelling with his wife. 'Why didn't you make the rice soft, you *jutaha*?' he shouted. 'You haven't even yet learnt to cook. When you were a girl did you do nothing but dance at marriages?' To which his wife replied, 'Of course, all through my youth I sat still in the house, and my food was brought to me in bed. Ever since I married you, you have done all the work and I have just sat filling my belly. Come along, *mailotia*, turn me out of your house, you can get another cook, and I'll live somewhere else.'

At Palli, Shamrao Hivale was privileged to listen to a wife abusing her drunken husband for chronic idleness. It was an epic row, which went on and on, and of which every detail was so often repeated that it was easy to record.

> You can only live, screamed the woman, where there is a smell of liquor. That is your real home—the out-still—there is your bed and hearth; you have no home here. What will you do if I die? Who will feed you, who will look after the children? If you won't work, I will leave you and I will take away my children. You wander all day like a goat and all night like a thief. There is no salt in the house, there are no chillies; suppose the landlord comes and asks for some, or suppose a constable comes and wants food, what shall we do? If visitors come, what food can we give them? How are you going to pay the taxes? You shameless creature, a woman has sense but you have none. When there is work to be done, there is no life in you, but when you see liquor you are full of vigour. Then you are like a pig when it catches sight of excrement.
>
> You child of a Ghasnin's vagina, go and wash your dirty face and eyes; go and see how other people work. If I had known what you were like, I would never have come to your house, you corpse. When there is work to be done in the house, then your back begins to ache, your penis is sore. Look, your son is ill, but you won't go to the Siraha—

[1] The Santal also insist on the exact division of food at festivals—P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 78—and I have noticed it also among the Oriya tribes. So keen are the Savara on the precise allocation of labour that when I have required porters to shift camp, every man in the village has turned up—many more than necessary—to ensure that no one does more, or less, work than anyone else.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

593
578
152

for you would have to give him liquor. The children are old enough for marriage but you can't spare the liquor to betroth them. Yet there's always plenty of liquor for your own genitals. If you at least had a sister, I would go to her house and forcibly bring her daughter for our boy—but what other family would give a girl to marry a son of yours unless they had the proper gifts of liquor? You eater of excrement, eater of dog's-flesh, I have spent my life telling you how to live, and now in a year or two you will go to your grave, yet you have never taken note of what I say. We have no place in the house to dry tendu or mahua; we have no garden and the manure is lying useless in the house. Everyone else has beans and vegetable and even sago palms, but we never have anything. You come quarrelling for better food, the children cry for cucumbers, there is no maize, and the children have to go and watch other people eating—while your hands and feet are being eaten by white ants. May a tiger eat you, then I can marry another man. If you die there will be less evil in the world.

Yet, as a boy at Phauda said, 'We may quarrel for *pej* and *pāni* in the day, but we become one at night', and at Kehalakot the Chalan said, 'Our life is never full unless we quarrel'.

This enjoyment of a quarrel, at least between lovers, is shown in a proverbial rhyme.

Tor gāri to mor kān ke bārī,
Tor mutha to mor chutka,
Mārbe lāt to mor dār bhāt,
Jitna mārbe panihi tatnāhi banihi.

Your abuse is the ring in my ear,
Your blows are my toe-rings,
If you kick me, it is my pulse and rice,
The more you beat me with your shoes, the more we are united.

Just as between husband and wife, so between parents and children quarrels arise about the distribution of work. On the whole relations in the home are friendly and happy; it is notable too that any attempt of parents to punish their children is spoken of as a 'quarrel'—something that arises between equals.

Parents indeed rarely complain about their children's sexual activities; the thing that worries them is that the ghotul interferes with the work of the house. The average Muria parent, it seems to me, does make real sacrifices for his children. He must experience considerable financial loss as a result of letting them go on so many expeditions, attend so many marriages and festivals and divert so many of their deeper interests from their home. But no one can say that he likes it. He usually complains that the boys and girls are guilty of four main faults—they don't obey their parents, for they have more consideration for the ghotul leaders than for them; they steal family property, little bits of wood and tobacco, and take it to the ghotul; they get uppish, answer their parents back and are afraid of no one; they don't get up early enough in the morning and they don't do enough work. Among the forms of abuse and examples of domestic quarrels that I have been able to collect, nearly all are concerned with this one point of not doing enough work. A mother says to her daughter, 'You *nakti mailotia*, all day long you are laughing with your boy friends; so and so's mother was telling me that you were ruining him; he never does any work now. If you don't work properly at home, how will you work in your husband's house? He will turn you out and our honour

412

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

will be ruined'. Or a father says to his son, 'I spit on your ghotul friends; all you can do is to dance and sing; you have no idea of how to work; when I tell you to do some work you always have a pain in the stomach. When you see a plough you at once get fever, but when you hear a drum your pains and fever disappear at once'.

At Jhakri Raunu gave us some examples of how angry parents talk to their children. Here is a mother telling her daughter what she thinks of her: 'You *jutkhi*, why can't you work? If you don't begin to use your limbs now, what will you do later?' And the girl replies, 'Why are you always bothering me? If you don't want to give me food, don't; if I have got to starve, I will starve, or I will go away and beg'. Then the father joins in: 'After you are married you are going to ruin our name; you will go changing from husband to husband, for not one will put up with your idleness; and everywhere you go people will laugh at us. Has not your mother taught you to do anything but to dance in the ghotul? Must you spend all your life in the ghotul? You cannot even cook the rice properly.'

In the same way the mother says to the son, 'Why can't you go to the fields? Why can't you look after the bullocks? Your one desire is to eat without moving your limbs; your hands and feet are broken. Yet this is your own house; this is your own property; how are you going to look after it when we are dead? How are you going to bury us properly if you never do any work?'

But the Muria believe that the mother is generally very kind and loving to her son. As Nari said at Nayanar, 'The father is always saying to himself that the girl is going to leave him and go to her husband's house and therefore he is tender to her, but the mother does not seem to mind her going away. She thinks of her own reputation. Unless she is nasty to the girl, she cannot teach her anything and so she has to nag her continually'.

These quarrels about work lead, in a few rare cases, to the serious consequence of suicide. During the past ten years there have been 20 suicides among the Muria of the ghotul area, and a study of the causes leading to them confirms what I have written in this chapter. The suicides have been due to the following causes.

Cause of Suicide	Number	Percentage
Insanity	2	10
Sickness	3	15
Fear due to breach of tribal rules ..	1	5
Fear of prosecution	1	5
Conflict with parents over marriage ..	2	10
Sorrow for the death of a son	1	5
Quarrel over childlessness	1	5
Quarrels about work	9	45

This is a very small number of suicides, only 2 a year, for so large a population, working out at about 20 to the million annually. The method of suicide, in every case but one, was hanging; the single exception was the young wife who drowned herself at Korhabera.

The suicides due to quarrels and disputes number 12, or 60 per cent. This, which would be surprising in other communities, is less so here in view of what we have seen of the sense of outrage that a quarrel gives to a Muria.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

I will give a few case-histories to illustrate this. Ghasia was a Lamhada boy. He went to dance at a tribal festival and on his return was violently abused by his 'father-in-law' for neglecting his work. He went out and hanged himself.

Karu of Todopal was a lazy, ill-tempered youth. One day his father abused him. 'You *mailotia*, I have fed you all your life; when will you start feeding me? All you can do is to sit about and eat' and doubtless a lot more. The boy lost his temper; there was a violent quarrel; he rushed out of the house and hanged himself on a mango tree.

Sukta was a fifteen-year-old chelik of Baghbera. In October 1931 he was beaten by his father for allowing the cattle to get into the *bāri*-enclosure and spoil the green chillies growing there. The boy ran away and hanged himself on a tamarind tree just outside the village.

Bhadu, a Muria of about 30 years, was the youngest of four brothers living together at Burbal. The eldest, Rupji, had to take his wife to a Siraha for treatment. This usually takes time; it is expensive, and involves a lot of drinking. After a few days Rupji came home in a rage and found his brothers had been neglecting the field-work in his absence. He quarrelled violently with them and was so upset that that night he hanged himself with his own turban from a mahua tree near the house.

Kaharu, a man of about 35, was a habitual drunkard. He worked for a Mussalman settled in the village, Dhoundai. One evening in July 1940 he got his wages and went to the liquor shop. When he returned home drunk, his wife scolded him for spending all their money on liquor and for doing no work. He got angry, beat her, and went back to drink again. His wife followed him quarrelling violently. Kaharu took her home and hit her with his axe. She managed to escape, but Kaharu being very drunk thought he had killed her and hanged himself with one of her cloths in front of the house.

Sukaro, a middle-aged Muria woman of Killam, is described in the police reports as thin-skinned and hot-tempered, suffering from an ulcer on the left knee that did not make her any more amiable. One day when she was supposed to be watching the standing crops she went to another village. Her husband made a great to-do about her neglect of her work, and she got so angry that she hanged herself.

Dhonya was a young chelik of about 15 belonging to the Kurasnar ghotul, who did not get on well with his father. So constantly did they quarrel that at last the boy went to Jodenga to live with his uncle. A month later the father followed him and abused him publicly, saying that he had become a vagabond and would do anything but work. The boy got very angry, refused to eat and went out with his bow and arrows. But he only went as far as the Thanagudi. A few minutes later the father followed and found him hanging from a beam inside the building. He cut him down at once, but the boy was dead.

The apparent cause of suicide in these cases seems trivial enough at first sight. I have little doubt, however, that deeper reasons were usually present. The triviality of motive so often advanced by the villagers who report these tragedies is really a screen to protect the real significance of the deed from official or merely inquisitive eyes. In the majority of cases, also, psychoneurotic or psychotic symptoms have been recognised by the people themselves. So deeply rooted is the faith in work and its equal distribution that a public rebuke on such a subject is an insult not to be borne and suicide is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

less the expression of outraged temper than a final and complete protest against a loss of dignity.[1]

It must not be supposed that because quarrels arise over work, chelik and motiari are slack or lazy. They are in fact singularly laborious and the disputes about work stand out because they occur against a background of a very high tradition of industry.

It is very rare that these quarrels end in murder. One day at the end of the rains in 1932, Kodu came home tired and hungry from the fields. His elder brother's wife, Babe, had only got *jāwa* ready for him: he demanded rice, and she retorted that 'since his arms and legs were not broken, he might cook his food himself'. He replied that as long as there was a woman in the house he was not going to do woman's work and he gave her such a severe beating that she died after a few days.

Balsai, a former Chalki of the Umargaon ghotul, lost his temper with his wife Rupoti because though he had a bad throat and cough, she cooked the irritating *dhoba* vegetable for him. He was drunk at the time and gave her a heavy blow with a wooden stool. When I saw him in jail he said that he loved his wife—'it was a mistake, not from my heart'—and that she often visited him in dreams.

Bandi (a thin big-eyed youth, formerly the Kajanchi of Kanera) had two wives. He too quarrelled with them over food. He came hungry and there was nothing ready. He got out his razor and said he was going to kill them. The elder wife ran away, but he gave two deep cuts on the arm and belly of his younger wife. She survived, but was in hospital for months.[2]

I have seen only one record of murder on account of a wife's infidelity. Manglu was the former Kandki of the Amgaon ghotul and his wife had been the Manjaro of the same ghotul. But the girl did not like him and, it is said, would never give herself to him. She ran away twice to the house of a lover at Bamkot. The second time a group of people went to fetch her back. As they were returning at night they met Manglu and handed the girl over to him. He gave her a very severe beating then and there in the forest, and a week later she died. Manglu was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

X. The Vocabulary of Abuse

The Muria's vocabulary of abuse is meagre and unenterprising compared to that of other aboriginal tribes. Perhaps we ought not to regret this; it may be a sign of the genial and pacific temper of the people that they put so little of their imagination and colour into their swearing. But I sometimes think that their continual use of one standard and now almost meaningless expression has dulled their inventive powers.

This expression, as common as the English 'bloody' and as meaningless, is the universal *mailotia*. This is a Halbi word meaning 'to lie with your mother', but very few of those who use it so freely intend seriously to suggest that an act of incest has occurred or could occur. Indeed, the way all meaning has been drained from the expression is clearly seen in the fact that a mother can apply it to her own daughter. Girls shout it at other girls, aunts at their nieces, grandmothers at their granddaughters. There is certainly no Lesbian suggestion here; it probably simply implies 'you are capable of anything'.

[1] For a full discussion of this subject, see my book *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943).

[2] The elder wife had been the Salan of Sabapal, the younger Belose of Metawand. Both marriages were regular, the first arranged by the parents, the second a love-match. Bandi told me the two girls got on very well together.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32 -
Bison Horn Maria

I. Murder for gain. 674x
II. Murder from revenge.
III. Murder for elimination.
IV. Murder from jealousy.
V. Murder from lust of killing.
VI. Murder from conviction.

Among the Maria there are very few murders for gain, 674x 152
for where is the property to be acquired? It would be laughable to imagine in a Maria village the situation so dear to the writer of detective stories, the murder of an elderly person by his heirs for the sake of his money. Murder from revenge occurs, but in not more than half a dozen cases. I describe later a remarkable case of murder for elimination. Murder from jealousy covers a number of the tragedies which involve relations between husband and wife. I am doubtful whether any of the Maria murders could be included under the heading 'Murder from lust of killing'.

Tennyson Jesse's sixth class 'Murder from conviction' is, I believe, much more common among the aboriginals and leads us to the vexed and difficult problem of how to deal with persons whose ideas of right and wrong vary in certain remarkable respects from those of the modern world. Without exception, every Maria believes that it is the right and [683] proper thing to kill a witch or sorcerer. In this the Maria is not criminal; he is merely out-of-date. Two hundred years ago the best brains in Europe believed the same. Almost all Maria consider that a wife caught in the act of adultery with [684] her lover deserves immediate execution, and here again the Maria are simply out-of-date, though in this case they are rather more behind the times than they are about witchcraft. Kinberg has an interesting passage on this subject. 688

> A comparison between the judgements passed on one type of action by different peoples, or by one people at different periods of its history, brings out how purely relative moral evaluations are. If a man catches his wife *in flagranti* with her lover and kills them both, he will in Sweden be condemned to a long term of penal servitude for manslaughter and his action will be strongly disapproved. In Latin countries, on the other hand, the same action would in the majority of cases be declared by the jury not to be culpable, and would cause no general moral indignation. Such is the difference in the moral evalua-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CAUSES OF CRIME; FATIGUE

An important individual and mesological cause of crime which is largely overlooked in discussions of the subject in India is fatigue. This is so relevant that I make no apology for quoting Kinberg at length upon the subject. Fatigue is the result of environment conditions, work, or other circumstances that strain the working capacity and willingness of the individual and may in its turn produce serious psychical changes, sometimes of a pathological kind.

'Great exhaustion will occasionally produce actual psychoses of a confusive type. A disturbed consciousness of externals, the presence of hallucinations and delusional ideas, may then naturally enough produce criminal actions. But even in cases where fatigue does not give rise to such pronounced mental disorders, it may produce a change of personality which, under certain circumstances, may result in criminal actions.

'The psychological fatigue-phenomena that are of special importance as crime factors are a strong feeling of dysphoria, dejection and irritability, worry, desperation, and an unreflecting, vague wish to escape from a situation which seems intolerable. Any intensification of the complicated emotional condition may cause a tendency to obnubilation, which weakens further the automatic action control.

'In recent years I have seen many cases by which my attention has been drawn to the crimino-etiological significance of fatigue. Most of these belonged to the agricultural classes—daughters or wives of small farmers. As a rule, small farmers in Sweden, whether freehold or tenant, cannot afford to hire sufficient labour. All the members of the family, husband, wife and children, must therefore strain every nerve to keep the whole going. This labour is particularly hard on the married women, who, besides tending the cattle and working in the fields, must also do all the domestic work, and to whom, above all, pregnancy is an additional burden'.[1]

[1] Kinberg, op. cit., p. 215.

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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I believe that this may explain some of the apparently inexplicable aboriginal crimes in Bastar where, for example, a man kills a dearly-loved wife in a flash of temper simply because his dinner is not ready in time. Marvi Mundra and his wife came home very late one evening in October after working all day in the fields. When they reached the house, the girl at once began to cook their supper, and after a short time Mundra asked if it was ready. She said rather crossly that it was on the fire, and that directly it was ready she would give it to him. Mundra, exhausted by his long day in the fields and by the prospect of a still longer night watching the crops, lost his normal 'automatic control', picked up a stick from the fire and gave his wife three heavy blows which killed her.

Barse Kama, a man about thirty-five years old, earned his living by grazing the village cattle. His wife who was eight months with child had been out collecting young bamboo shoots for food. Kama came in at midday exhausted, and found that his food was not ready and his wife was lying down for a brief rest. She explained that she had only just returned from the jungle, and was very tired. He abused her and she replied that she could not prepare the meal any faster, and that if he wanted food more quickly he had better find another woman. Kama experienced a sudden explosion of rage, picked up his axe and struck his wife as she was lying on the mat. She died that night. Kama claimed that he was drunk at the time, but this was not accepted by the Court. In fact, he was intoxicated with fatigue.

Veko Dome, about twenty-five years old, was very busy gathering the kosra grain in his fields. On the eve of the tragedy, in the last week of November 1922, there was no rice in his house, and the family took gruel in the morning and in the evening drank a little of what was left. They all went to sleep without any proper food. Dome himself did not even get the stale gruel in the evening. Early next morning he went to his field again, and while he was away the rest of the family had some gruel. Then Dome's wife and his aunt Torka went to the fields to work. It had by now begun to drizzle. Dome asked his aunt if she had brought his food. She said as it was raining she had not brought any, and told him to go home and get it. At this he grumbled

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and the old woman was annoyed and said, 'What have you been doing in the field? Have you been eating excreta?' The women squatted down and began to reap the kosra. Dome quietly went and got his axe, walked up behind his aunt and struck her several times on the head, and she died without a sound. Dome went into the jungle for a time but returned home in the evening, drank some gruel and went to sleep in a hut behind the house. He had been working hard in the fields since the middle of the preceding day, and had had no food at all. His exhaustion drove him as surely as any alcoholic orgy to commit his crime.

Murders arising because a wife or other relation fails to give food in time may also be connected with the powerful oral needs of all aboriginals, which reflect the infantile nature of their culture. Laubscher has studied the underlying causes for the large number of stock thefts in South Africa. He finds that these are ultimately based on the people's craving for meat. The Tembu tribesman places a great value on meat as a food and whenever it is available he gorges himself to the utmost. 'There is something ravenously sadistic in his attitude towards meat. It is not only a great delicacy, but it is credited with great health-giving qualities. Elders have frequently remarked that the change of the times, the paucity of cattle, sheep and goats, have reduced to a minimum the meat supplies of the people. Once upon a time when cattle roamed in huge herds and they had plenty of meat to eat, their people were strong and healthy, but now they only have meat once or twice a month, and then not sufficient is available to make them feel they need not eat again for a few days'.[1]

Cattle theft is similarly very common among the Maria, and I have little doubt that a denial of oral needs that are commonly fulfilled without difficulty, throws them off their balance and drives them to violence. As among the Tembu, these oral activities are shown in the Maria's craving for bulk in food—their love of tobacco to smoke and chew and their delight in alcohol.

Oral needs are closely connected with the sexual impulse. It is remarkable that in no fewer than six cases, murder directly followed a wife's refusal to allow her husband sexual

[1] Laubscher, op. cit., p. 303.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

congress. Habka Masa killed his wife Pakli in consequence of a long dispute, but immediately before the tragedy she refused to lie with him. Barse Chappe, a polygamous invalid, was first refused by both his wives and later by his senior wife because he desired to perform the act in a semi-public place. Marvi Deva saw his wife with a man and when, probably to test her, he asked her to give herself to him and she refused, he killed his baby daughter and tried to kill her. Kosa, an almost imbecile paralytic, asked his wife to have intercourse with him; she abused him and he stabbed her to death. Doga, rejected sexually by his elder brother's widow, was so affronted that he killed her. Mundra, who so brutally treated his wife Pande, asked her to have sexual congress with him and was refused only an hour before he met his death at her hands.

Decorated banda knife (Length 3')

Such a refusal may also drive a man to suicide. Marvi Joga, the Waddai of Mathadi, was always quarrelling with his wife and threatening to remarry. One day at the funeral ceremony of his brother's son, he drank a lot of surem, and when he came home he tried to have intercourse with his wife. But she refused saying, 'You are always talking about another wife. Why don't you go and get one?' and she went away to sleep in the Room of the Departed. Joga, intoxicated and desperate at his wife's refusal, hanged himself.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a fearful pride, but soon lose their fear, and try to crowd into the seats; their women, however, are as reluctant to risk entering a car as any old village woman in Cornwall thirty-five years ago. It was a pleasure later in the day to see the bold adventurers of the morning who watched the white man's toilet operations conducting parties of sight-seers into the tent and pantomiming the use of brush, razor and everything there. The Bison-horn Maria is more sophisticated, and will not intrude without being asked, nor is he so curious about small things; but a motor-car is as great a draw to him as to the hill men. Both are very interested in seeing a carburettor stripped and assembled or a tyre changed, or any mechanical repairs; they show quick intelligence, and could soon be taught. In the spate of bridge building on the State roads in recent years they have been quick to grasp methods of sinking piles or getting great beams into position, and have not been slow to offer suggestions that have sometimes been practicable. The newly built road bridge over the Indrawati at Jagdalpur is really built according to the same method as the bridges which even Hill Marias construct across their rivers, with modern and stronger materials and other improvements.

My inquisitiveness about their houses, habits, possessions, agriculture and customs in their eyes must seem much like their curiosity about my ways. Actually their mental processes are not unlike ours, when allowance is made for their centuries of isolation; they are certainly more receptive than the ordinary villager of British India, whose thought has for generations been stunted by the cumbrous wrappings of caste and debased Hinduism. A striking instance of this is the comparative ease with which vaccination was made compulsory years ago throughout the State and is welcomed by the Marias, in strong contrast to the keen opposition to it even in the cities of British India and to the caution venturing on timidity with which provincial Governments make tentative advances in the direction of universal compulsion. Not only is vaccination really universal even in the hill villages, but the Marias are keenly alive to the advantages of inoculation for cholera and yaws, and, in fact, are inclined to demand '*tika*' or inoculation for every ailment, those of them, that is, who have seen for themselves cholera checked or yaws cured by injections; for till recently no medical relief other than vaccination had reached the hills.

In natural cheerfulness few races can surpass the Hill Marias, who, like all Gonds, are quick to see the fun of things, whether it be something that spontaneously appeals to their sense of humour, or a joke put to them by some outsider. Their humour is apt to be broad. Very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

There was a disputed boundary between the village of Kurmer in the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* and the adjacent Kutru Mar village of Jatalur; the Jata clan asserted possession over a strip of land belonging to the Parllo clan of Kurmer. I suggested, on the strength of a tale I had heard of former Chiefs' methods of justice, that the head of each village should come with a cock to the land, and that the land should go to the clan whose cock crowed first. This was hailed by both sides as a sound solution, and off we went to the land; but just before we reached it the Jata headman began to hang back, and finally backed out of the test; I awarded the land to the Parllo clan to the approval of men present from other clans, and on going over the land found that it contained a *pagh'ai* or alternative village site of the Parllo clan besides the cromlech left to mark the site of the Village Mother's 'temple', the *hasyaq-gaita's udam-garia* or seat of honour, and the *kotokal* or line of menhirs erected in the name of the Parllo dead. Here the Jata clan finally abandoned their claim when challenged by the Parllo *hasyaq-gaita* to eat earth from under the Village Mother's cromlech.

To be left to live the free life of the hills, untrammelled by restrictions on his user of forest, earth and water or his right to shift his village and his *penda* cultivation, is the unconscious ideal of the Hill Maria. If he is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls; and few of them or of the wilder Bison-horn Marias survive long imprisonment.

The Hill Maria shows great artistry in his bead-work, and is never at fault in his discrimination between colours and shades, though he uses for all shades of green and blue the one word *kaqarondla*. He has general terms also for red, white, black and yellow, but none for intermediate shades. In his houses he draws rude cup-marking patterns, *swastikas* and strange creatures in white earth on his mud plaster, or makes rough clay representations of women's breasts. His songs are low and rather melancholic in sound, the youths' voices verging on contralto; but they are far easier for an English ear to understand than Hindu music, and have often a haunting refrain. Both he and the Bison-horn Maria love to hear European records on a gramophone, especially a good soprano or contralto, sea shanties, and violins or trios and quartets playing light chamber music; but operatic fireworks merely provoke laughter, Chaliapin singing the 'Song of Prince Igor' making them ache with laughter, but being often encored. The Marias as a whole have no musical instruments except drums. Though the Bison-horn Maria does not show the Hill Maria's artistry and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

colour sense in bead-work, it is noticeable that the best carpet weavers in Jagdalpur Jail are almost invariably Bison-horn Marias. They are quick to grasp intricacies of pattern, and there is hardly any pattern that they cannot copy. For years the chief instructor in the jail was the double murderer from Palnar already mentioned in this chapter.

The Marias of both kinds are very hospitable. On entering a Hill Maria village you are met by the elders and offered little gifts, an uncouth yam, or dried tobacco leaves and forest fruits. The whole village co-operates to get your camp ready, and to entertain you at night with song and dance. The occasional stranger from other Koitor villages or minor State official is housed and fed, provided he does not outstay his welcome or attempt to be exacting in his demands. Co-operation, in service to the State, in village festivals, in felling of forest for *penda* cultivation, in allotment of *penda* areas, in sowing, reaping, winnowing and storing of grain, in fishing and hunting, is the key to the social life of the Hill Maria, who is a natural communist; his hospitality is perhaps mainly an expression of his ingrained co-operation, though he is genuinely glad to see you after a long absence, and will greet you with tears of joy. The Bison-horn Maria is more of an individualist, or, rather, less of a communist, than the hill man, but he likes to entertain for a wedding or to celebrate the completion of a new *munda* (small rice irrigation tank) and similar occasions on a lavish scale, keeping open house. All Marias are extremely grateful for any benefit received and for sympathy and interest.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

pargana not only acquired a yet younger brother of Pat Raja, Verma Mo'itto Pen, as their clan-god, but also a family of Pat Raja's clan, the Jaterom,[1] as hereditary clan-priests because, the Jaterom being *alomama*[2] (wife-clan) to the Gumelor, the new god was related to them as *mama* or maternal uncle and had to have a priest or *waddai* of his own clan or one *dadabhai*[2] (brother-clan) to it. They say in fact that all clan-gods are mutually related, if they are sometimes very hazy as to the actual relationship; and they add that the gods, being Koitor, must have a full set of brother-clans and wife-clans like any other Koitor. Memories are, however, so poor that it is often difficult to ascertain the name of a man's dead father and quite impossible to ascertain the name of his grandfather and the clan and village of his grandmother, if, indeed, even of his mother; and it would be altogether out of the question to disentangle the descents and relationships of the clans by deduction from the traditional kinship of the clan-gods to Pat Raja and each other.

That old clans split up into new clans is clear, especially among the Hill Marias, from the fact that several of the larger clans have attached to them smaller clans which have no separate clan-god of their own, but attend the celebrations of the god of the large and presumably parent clan; certain other clans, though they have new clan-gods of their own, acknowledge their origin from another clan by taking the permission of the god of that clan before holding their own clan festivals. The way in which these clans split up is a matter belonging rather to the chapter in Part V, where the clan and phratry organization is dealt with as a matter of social organization, than to this chapter on religion. Here the point is that new clans are breaking off, and that their separation from the parent clan is signalized by the birth of a son or daughter (a son in the cases that I have seen) to the god of the parent clan. Thus Tumirgunda, in the plains between Handawada, still a true Hill Maria village, and the river Indrawati, near Barsur, belongs to the Tamo clan, and is the seat of their god Hurra Gunda Mo'itto[3] Pen. The *modul-waddai* of this clan-god was in 1930 still the *modul-waddai* of neighbouring villages of the Atami clan; and of the Tamo and Atami villages in his 'see' some were, like Tumirgunda itself, still mainly Hill Maria in culture, dancing in Hill Maria style, and some had changed to Bison-horn culture and dancing, and were recognized as Bison-horn

[1] Jāterom is the plural of Jāte; the clan is distinct from the Jātā, plural Jātālēr, and the Jāti clan of Jātwara *pargana*.

[2] Clans are *alomama* to clans with which they may intermarry, but *dadabhai* to all others.

[3] '*Mo'itto*' ('old man') or '*mutta'i*' ('old woman') is always added to the clan-god's name.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XIII

Social Organization; the Phratries and Clans

114 The investigations that have resulted in the materials for this book have had perforce to be made piecemeal in the intervals of a busy administrative task. Here the professional ethnologist who is able to make a prolonged stay among the subjects of his studies has a profound advantage over the administrator; and in no direction is this advantage more pronounced than in tracing the ramifications of a system of social organization. Even where the genealogical method of enquiry can be profitably employed it is useless for this wide purpose, unless the collection of pedigrees and of information on laws and customs based upon them can be spread over as wide a field as possible. Apart from the lack of leisure from which an official administering a State so large and with such a tradition of personal rule as Bastar must suffer, there is a further difficulty [153] about genealogical enquiries, namely the poor memories of the Marias as to their ancestors, sometimes even as to their own parents and uncles. It is very seldom that anyone can remember the names of ancestors earlier than his grandparents; many cannot even remember their grandmother's name, much less her clan, unless the family has regularly followed the tradition of cross-cousin marriage. When, as among the Hill Marias, there is so little individual property to pass by inheritance, land being the property of the clan, cattle being scarce, and the contents of the houses being either food or not made of durable materials, some of which have to be buried with their owner or destroyed at his death, the genealogical method may not lead the enquirer very far. Very old men and women are, moreover, not common. The only pedigree covering more than three generations that I was able to collect is printed in Appendix II after the lists of clans. Two circumstances favoured it. There were two very old but intelligent men, Usendi Baiyya and Usendi Dangi, living when the pedigree was first taken in 1930; their nephew Usendi Moda, a man of unusual intelligence, was then about fifty, and all three had a good memory of the clans and villages with which the family had intermarried for three generations; even then Baiyya and Dangi could not remember their paternal grandmother's name or the clan and village from which

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

eat black *gur*' she fills his mouth with black stones and so kills him, then removes his brain and eats it. 775

She is said to be most powerful on the night of the anniversary of her death.

Sometimes, however, the Ondar Muttai approaches men in very different guise. In her enchanting aspect, one is tempted to describe her as the personification of the erotic dream. Thus the headman of Ulera village described how once in a dream a lovely girl came to him. Her hair beautifully combed, her neck adorned with necklaces, many combs in her head, she sat down beside him and smiled at him. 'Seeing her my mind was for her and I wondered if I could get her. Then she came and sat very close to me. She seemed to have large and lovely breasts. I caught them with my hand but there was nothing there. Then I went to her but found she had no vagina. All my power went from me and then I saw that she was a hideous ghost with one long breast across her shoulder and I awoke. All the next day I felt very ill.' This dream is typical of scores of similar experiences. 775 154

There is another very curious type of encounter with this ghost. All over Bastar (and I have found the same tradition in the Central Provinces) there is the belief that a man can capture an Ondar Muttai, 'bind' her with his charms and keep her as a wife.[1] I will give a few examples of this: 775

> In Patlabera, near Keskal, a Halba was sitting in his field playing on his *chikhāra*. A Churlin came and sat on his instrument. As he sang he closed his eyes and she danced invisible upon it. He did this for many days until at last he opened his eyes and saw her. Then he 'bound' her with his charms and married her. She lived with him for twenty years and several children were born to them. But on the day of the marriage of their youngest child she rose into the air with a cry and disappeared.

A similar story, this time of a Ganda called Khokoya, comes from Bakrabera; another of a Rawat or Ahir from Chingnar, another of a Marar in Kolur, yet another of a Rawat from Milkulnar. A realistic tale comes from Kumli village:

> One day a Rawat was playing his flute as he sat in the fields grazing cattle. As he played a Raksin came and danced to the music. When the Rawat saw her he 'bound' her by his charms to the ground and drove iron nails into her head, thus destroying her power of evil. He married her and had seven daughters from her. He married them all. One day he brought the youngest daughter to his house. Her mother said to her, 'Clean my hair and catch the lice that are tickling my head'. The girl began to clean the hair; she found the nails that had been driven into the skull and pulled them out. The woman immediately became a Raksin again and disappeared.

It will be noticed that in every case the man who keeps the ghost is not an aboriginal but a member of one of the lower Hindu castes living in an aboriginal village. These people are generally credited by the aboriginals

[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 367ff. Rathoven, whose reports are sometimes to be received with caution, says that in Bombay there are three classes of 'Chudels'. The Poshi Chudel, a woman who has not enjoyed the pleasures of life, fondles children and renders good service to her bereaved husband. The Soshi Chudel was persecuted in life: she dries up the blood of men and revenges herself upon her family. The Toshi Chudel was a woman who loved her husband and still, as a ghost, brings him pleasure.—R. E. Rathoven, *The Folklore of Bombay* (Oxford, 1924), p. 196.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

781 Not only religious functions and duties are revealed in dreams. In Alor a chelik said that he sometimes dreamt the songs and dances that were to be performed on the morrow. Another chelik in Nayanar said that he dreamt once that he was able to do a new kind of dance and sing a song that he had never been able to learn in fact. After his dream he found that he could do both. At Kabonga, the Village Mother sometimes comes in a dream to tell the boys to dance, and next day they go to a neighbouring village and perform the Hulki.

154 Of the dreams recorded from chelik and motiari the majority were frankly sexual in their manifest content. This was perhaps what was to be expected; although the ghotul is hardly a home of repressed wishes there are some which from time to time pass through periods of stress and tension, and there are boys and girls in both types of ghotul who suffer the frustration of their desires. But where among ourselves such desires express themselves in discreet symbolism, the ghotul's frank and open attitude to sex permits the censor mechanism to lie unused. The most common ghotul dreams are those of 'eating, playing, dancing and sexual congress'.

A very interesting series of dreams were recorded for me by my wife from two motiari in the Binjhli ghotul. At that time (December 1940) this ghotul, which is one of those which does not permit permanent attachments, was passing through a difficult phase. There were about a dozen girls of eighteen years or more who were for various reasons unable to get married; they had been in the ghotul for a long time; young and beautiful motiari were growing up and diverting the attention of the chelik. Angry scenes between the motiari were not uncommon and some of the older girls were restless and unhappy. Such was the situation in which two of the senior motiari had the following dreams. I will give first those of the head girl of the ghotul, a motiari of about nineteen years.

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik I love. I have often wept as I remembered the dream.
>
> I have often dreamt that I was married.
>
> On a dancing expedition I borrowed all the combs of a young and beautiful motiari.
>
> I dreamt I was sleeping with the chelik I loved. He combed my hair. The next morning he gave me eight combs, for he saw I hadn't any.

And these are the dreams of her assistant, a motiari perhaps seventeen years old, a pretty girl.

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik outside the ghotul. We were caught and I was fined three bottles of liquor.
>
> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik on separate mats side by side. I held him in my hands all night. He never took his hands off my breast.
>
> I often dream of intercourse. When the boy approaches me I say, 'Hush, what's the matter with you?'
>
> A chelik slept with me in my dream. He held my breasts tightly in his hands. I said, 'Don't do that, let me go'. He said, 'How can I help it? I always do it'. I said, 'You chelik have no mercy on us'.

In the Binjhli ghotul, the motiari sleep with their chelik only once a week. On other days, after an evening of strong sexual stimulation, the girls return to their separate house. Several of these dreams appear to show the influence of this. The longing for combs revealed in the first set of dreams and the obvious jealousy of the young girl who had many of them, reflects a common

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

motive in ghotul life: the comb is the treasured gift of a lover and to have many combs is a proof of attractiveness and sexual power. The first dream of the second girl, where she slept with her lover outside the ghotul and was fined, reflects one of the methods by which the rule against too passionate an association with a particular person is avoided. 154

It is very difficult to obtain the dreams of motiari; I cannot, therefore, say whether the fact that every one of those recorded has a sexual motif is of significance or not. But the dreams themselves are interesting and rather pathetic.

Everywhere I have found many dreams of frustration among the chelik. This is not perhaps what we should expect, but it may be that the only dreams they remember are those about an experience which is so unusual to them. Naturally, even in the ghotul, where sexual opportunity is so free, a boy or a girl will from time to time have sexual desires that cannot be satisfied at the moment. Such desires will give rise to dreams, but these must not be regarded as suggesting that the ghotul is generally a place of lost opportunities and frustrated desires.

Gadru of the Chapai ghotul had the following dreams:

> After a heavy meal one night, I dreamt that I had visited a neighbour's house and was smoking a leaf-pipe. A beautiful motiari sat down beside me and said, '*Eh dāda*, give me some tobacco'. But as I was looking for a mat on which we might sleep, I awoke.
>
> One day when I was sleeping outside the ghotul, a pretty motiari came and lay down beside me. I said to her, 'O girl, let me do what I desire'. Her breasts appeared flat to the eye but when I pressed them I found they were *gatto dudo*, hard as pegs, to the touch. I mounted her but could not find her vagina, and while I was searching for it my water left me and I awoke.
>
> One day I dreamt that I was going to another village and saw a motiari bringing water from the river. I said to her, 'Give me something; promise you won't refuse'. She caught hold of me and dragged me along; but when I looked at my clothes I saw they were stained with blood that was flowing from her, and I awoke. After this dream I went the following day to the bank of the river and made offerings to the Yer Kanyang.

This dreamer Gadru was nearly drowned when he was a little boy and was only saved with great difficulty. The Siraha declared that the boy's accident was due to his father's failure to fulfil a vow he had made to the Yer Kanyang to sacrifice a pig when he had been out fishing. Probably this old association appears in his third dream.[1]

Here are some more dreams of frustration. In Chandabera, the Mukhwan dreamt

> One night I was making love to the Alosa, but when I was about to have intercourse with her, she got up and ran away.

This dream actually materialized after three days, although before that the boy had never had anything to do with the Alosa. He said that if he had dreamt that he was actually having intercourse with the girl, he would never

[1] The belief in a 'drowning spirit' or Dubha and in the Jate Burhi, the old woman who lives in tanks and drowns the unwary, is probably still common in Bengal and Bihar, and is reflected in Muria ideas about the Yer Kanyang. See S. C. Mitra, 'Water Spirits in North Bihar', *Man in India*, Vol. III (1923), pp. 196ff. and the same writer's article, 'Superstitions Regarding Drowning and Drowned Persons', *JASB*, Vol. LXII.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

● 154 have won her later on. The dream of frustration, therefore, is sometimes a lucky one.

Then again, at Kokori the ghotul Kotwar dreamt that,

> I went with the chelik and motiari to dance. All the other boys had combs in their hair and necklaces round their throats, but I had forgotten my comb and ran home to get it. As I was going, Dulosa caught hold of me and said, 'Come, *dāda*, come'. Just as I was going with her into the jungle a lot of people came by and I pretended that I was simply going to piss. The people went on, and as I was pissing Dulosa pushed me over and ran away. Dulosa was not a special lover of mine either before or after the dream.
>
> One day Nirosa said to me, 'O *dāda*, I want to sleep with you'. She combed my hair that night, but afterwards when we were about to lie down together, another of the boys came and pulled her away, and I awoke.

This experience must be fairly common in the ghotul. The Kotwar of Kabonga described the following dream:

> One day I dreamt that I was ploughing in my field and felt hungry. I went to bathe in the stream and sat down on a stone. The fish bit my feet. Presently a girl came to fetch water, and I said, 'O girl, where have you been all this time that you only come now?' Then I found that I was eating *jāwa*, but when I lifted the leaf-cup to my lips there was nothing in it but water. I was just going to speak to the girl when I awoke.

A curious incident occurred in Kabonga. Here the Diwan of the ghotul had been married for several years, but still held his office. He described one day how:

> I spent the night in the ghotul and when I went home in the morning my wife was very angry. She said, 'Last night you took the Belosa by force, and the girl has told the whole village'. I was annoyed, but as I was going to find the Belosa, I awoke.

Two days afterwards the Diwan learnt the meaning of this dream. A boy actually did go to the Belosa when she was asleep. She had no idea who it was, and in the morning accused the Kotwar saying, 'He did not let me sleep all night'. Fortified by his dream, which told him that the girl was obviously in the habit of making false accusations, the Diwan ordered that she should be expelled from the ghotul, for she had brought disgrace on them by her lies.

I will give a few other dreams with a manifest sexual content. A chelik in Koilibera told me of a dream in which he saw boys and girls dancing in front of the ghotul. He caught hold of one of the girls and had intercourse with her. While he was with her, a tiger (which is of ill-omen in this village) came and disturbed them.

In Nayanar a chelik said that he often dreamt that he was sleeping with girls from other ghotul.

The younger boys' conflict with their seniors is probably the motive of this dream from Binjhli, given by a rather unattractive boy:

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with the Silo [the most attractive and beautiful girl in the ghotul]. I had my life in her. In the middle of the night she made me get up and lay my body on hers. But just then the Salya woke and said, 'A visitor has come. Give him

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

your mat to sleep on'. So I had to get up and give him the mat on which we were sleeping together. I was very sorry, but when I came back, she took off her sari and spread it for me to lie on, and I covered her with my blanket. 154

In Markabera the head of the chelik said, 'If my ghotul-wife is away, I dream of sleeping with her. I chase her and often have her'. He sometimes experienced orgasm during such dreams. 'I once dreamt that I was going to dance in another village. I walked along the road with a girl I had always wanted. That night I was able to sleep with her in the other village.'

A chelik at Chandabera said, 'We generally dream of our earliest loves in the ghotul, for these are girls whom we never forget. We dream that they are sleeping by our side or running away from us. Sometimes we dream that we have gone out fishing with them or that we are on our way to a marriage dance'.

The seriousness with which the Muria treat their dreams and the reality they ascribe to them is clearly shown in the precautions taken the following day. I have already referred to various cures for nightmare. I will add a few more. At Bhopna a Muria said, 'If I dream that I have gone down under the water, I consult the Siraha and he says that it means that an evil ghost is coming. This once happened to me, so I got seven different kinds of wood and made a bonfire of them by the bank of a stream. I put some gur and ghee on the fire. Then I and my wife went round it three times, entered the water and ducked below it. We took off our old clothes and left them there on the bank, dressed in new clothes and went home without looking round.' This was rather a drastic and expensive cure. An easier means of averting the possible danger of a dream is this from Chingnar: 781 782

> A dream of a fight between two people suggests danger from black magic. To avert this the figure of a man with a bow and arrow should be made with grass and a bad egg, a pig or a chicken should be offered to it. The little image should be thrown away outside the village and the danger will disappear. [754]

Gadru of Chaniyagaon once dreamt,

> A beautiful woman came to my children and said to them, 'I am going to devour you, because your parents give me nothing to eat'. The next day my children fell ill, and the Siraha declared that their sickness was due to Lagar Deo, who was angry because the customary offering to him three years after the first child had not been made, and he therefore wanted to kill all my children. So I dedicated two pigs to Lagar Deo to be allowed to wander freely and killed three years later. Once I had done this my children recovered. 781 753 782

At Palnar, the Suel once dreamt that he was climbing up a huge stone. Suddenly he saw a chaprasi, he was frightened and tried to run away. He fell down and broke his teeth. When he awoke he found he had fever and only recovered after he had sacrificed a pig and made other offerings.

In Chandabera, a Muria jealous of the happiness of the chelik performed hostile magic against the ghotul. The Sirdar dreamt that one of the boys had died and his corpse was being carried away for burial. Soon afterwards he himself got an attack of fever. He was sleeping at home and dreamt that a chelik came to him saying, 'Come, let us go to dance at a wedding'. The Sirdar replied, 'I am suffering from fever and cannot go'. The chelik said, 'The fever has been sent you by such and such a person, you must drive it

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER V

CHARACTER

'Without exception they are the most cheerful, light-hearted people I have met with, always laughing and joking among themselves. Seldom does a Maria village resound with quarrels or wrangling among either sex: and in this respect they present a marked contrast to those in more civilized tracts. They, in common with many other wild races, bear a singular character for truthfulness and honesty, and when once they get over the feeling of shyness, which is natural to them, they are exceedingly frank and communicative. Curious as all savages, the commonest article of domestic use is to them an object of interest; they are quick to observe and to learn.'—Glasfurd's 1862 Report, para. 89.

'In their own hills they are a bold and hardy race, industrious as cultivators, and truthful to a proverb; and, though shy and timid with those they do not know, are quickly won over by kindness. They form, indeed, not only one of the most interesting, but one of the most improvable of the aboriginal tribes of India.'—Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report, para. 111.

MERCIFULLY the Hill Marias and, to a less extent, the Bison-horn Marias have been spared the attention of the improver, and hitherto have been left fairly free to develop on their own lines and to adjust themselves to the increasing impact of modern India on the surrounding lowlands. The shyness already mentioned is still very marked in the hills, and also among the remoter villages not only of Bison-horn Marias and Koyas, but also of Parjas and Murias. But the ordinary Bison-horn Maria of the open tracts, with the steady expansion of communications and frequent visits by the Chief and the Diwan to the Bailadila hills, has come more and more into contact with the outer world; he often comes into Jagdalpur for Dasehra or market or to work on the public works, or even to show his children the sights of the '*sahar*' or 'city', especially the power-house and the pumps of the new waterworks.

In the Abujhmar hills all is well if visitors are expected. Otherwise, as in Glasfurd's day, all the inhabitants are liable to rush off into the jungle on the sudden appearance of an unusual number of persons or a white man. When marching from Orcha to Adeq (Ader) in Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* in February 1930, I left the main path to see the village of Tondawada. I was not expected in the village, and though I had with me a number of Maria youths from Orcha well known to several women of Tondawada, yet my approach was the signal for a general *sauve-qui-peut*; the dogs barked, the few cattle were hastily driven off into the hills, and women and boys fled helter-skelter to the hills, even including

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

609 a large party of women who had assembled to keen over an old woman who had just died. Pigs also were driven off, and a youth, 157 who was caught lurking near us to 'rescue' three stray cows and brought to me, advanced to me as delicately as Agag, with his knife unsheathed and held in readiness to defend his life. This lad was quickly reassured and shouted out, whereupon to our surprise four or five other lads came down from trees around us, where they had taken shelter, their curiosity being on the whole stronger than their fear. Ultimately the women felt that the corpse could not be left unmourned any longer, and came back in twos and threes to be reassured by the boys. They were then in two minds whether to resume keening or to see as much as possible of the queer ways of so unheard-of an apparition as a white man. When I came to see the keening it was altogether too much, and they at once left the body and crowded round me; when I had it explained that I wanted to see how funerals were conducted and to photograph them, they very obligingly squatted down in their original places, and began even more doleful keenings than before. It seemed only proper to remove my distracting presence as soon as I could, but the keeners were with difficulty dissuaded from seeing me on my way to Adeq.

Timidity of this kind is unusual among the Bison-horn Marias; but there are many villages among them where few women can have seen a white man. To appear on foot or on a car along a forest road where groups of women are gathering forest fruits is usually the signal for them to rush off into the thickets, leaving their baskets and gear: but if you return that way later after having spent an hour or two in neighbouring villages, they will come timidly out to you on the road, and gradually lose their earlier fears.

152 The highlanders and lowlanders alike are extremely curious. In the Abujhmar hills I have frequently had parties of men, youths and girls coming into my tent or hut to see my strange ways of getting up, shaving and dressing, and their curiosity has been embarrassing when they have tried to watch even the performance of natural functions. I have had to brush my hair a dozen times over to satisfy those who had not seen me do it the first time, and to demonstrate the use of every article on my dressing or office tables. They will sit for hours watching a typewriter, and speculating on how it works. A motor-car is a source of endless delight, whether it be the distorted reflections seen in the polished radiator, or the noises of the bulb and electric horns. They thump it to test its materials, or crawl underneath to be fascinated by the strange sights that reward their trouble. But it takes time to get them to agree to try a ride inside, and when they do, they start off with

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a fearful pride, but soon lose their fear, and try to crowd into the seats; their women, however, are as reluctant to risk entering a car as any old village woman in Cornwall thirty-five years ago. It was a pleasure later in the day to see the bold adventurers of the morning who watched the white man's toilet operations conducting parties of sight-seers into the tent and pantomiming the use of brush, razor and everything there. The Bison-horn Maria is more sophisticated, and will not intrude without being asked, nor is he so curious about small things; but a motor-car is as great a draw to him as to the hill men. Both are very interested in seeing a carburettor stripped and assembled or a tyre changed, or any mechanical repairs; they show quick intelligence, and could soon be taught. In the spate of bridge building on the State roads in recent years they have been quick to grasp methods of sinking piles or getting great beams into position, and have not been slow to offer suggestions that have sometimes been practicable. The newly built road bridge over the Indrawati at Jagdalpur is really built according to the same method as the bridges which even Hill Marias construct across their rivers, with modern and stronger materials and other improvements.

My inquisitiveness about their houses, habits, possessions, agriculture and customs in their eyes must seem much like their curiosity about my ways. Actually their mental processes are not unlike ours, when allowance is made for their centuries of isolation; they are certainly more receptive than the ordinary villager of British India, whose thought has for generations been stunted by the cumbrous wrappings of caste and debased Hinduism. A striking instance of this is the comparative ease with which vaccination was made compulsory years ago throughout the State and is welcomed by the Marias, in strong contrast to the keen opposition to it even in the cities of British India and to the caution venturing on timidity with which provincial Governments make tentative advances in the direction of universal compulsion. Not only is vaccination really universal even in the hill villages, but the Marias are keenly alive to the advantages of inoculation for cholera and yaws, and, in fact, are inclined to demand '*tika*' or inoculation for every ailment, those of them, that is, who have seen for themselves cholera checked or yaws cured by injections; for till recently no medical relief other than vaccination had reached the hills.

In natural cheerfulness few races can surpass the Hill Marias, who, like all Gonds, are quick to see the fun of things, whether it be something that spontaneously appeals to their sense of humour, or a joke put to them by some outsider. Their humour is apt to be broad. Very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

for a tooth; but nowadays this is generally satisfied by invoking the police and the courts. But distances are great in Bastar, and in the rains, when the early hill grains are ripe, communications are bad; often the villagers conspire to hush up a murder or leave it to those affected to take their own direct action, rather than disorganize agricultural work by the troubles of a long police enquiry followed by committal proceedings and a sessions trial.

It is a relief to return from this darker side of the Bison-horn Maria's character to the light-heartedness of all Marias, but especially the Hill Maria. An engaging feature of this is his readiness to burlesque himself. A village *gaita* (headman) at Tondawada set the whole camp in fits of laughter by his description of his first vain attempts to use a pair of bullocks in the plough, mimicking himself pulled hither and thither by these wild-cat animals; at Hikul I was treated to a similar comic representation of what would happen if a Maria attempted to milk a cow. They are quick to seize on any foibles or peculiarities of individuals, without respect of persons, and have a happy knack of inventing apposite nicknames; this trait is common throughout the State, where there are nicknames for almost every State official current among all the primitive tribes, while few of the leading Hindu and Mohammedan settlers are referred to by their true names.

Frankness and honesty are still as characteristic as ever of the hill men and the wilder Bison-horn Marias, and many a man arraigned for homicide will state in court perfectly frankly why it was essential to kill his victim and how it was done. I have very seldom found any hesitate to answer any questions, even about the most intimate domestic matters. The Bison-horn Maria, however, being, at least in the open tracts, more sophisticated, is inclined to be suspicious; and he certainly is learning the ways of the courts, and how to defeat a justice administered on the evidence and not according to the facts; many know, for example, that the death penalty may be escaped if you can convince your judge that you murdered your victim because you believed him to be bewitching you. But in general a Maria witness can still be relied upon to speak the truth, although it involve his dearest relatives or himself in trouble; and the occasional pleader from British India is soon hopelessly at sea if he tries his usual methods of cross-examination even on a Bison-horn Maria who knows Halbi. Fortunately, the restoration of the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the village and *pargana* panchayats will considerably reduce Maria experience of the law courts. The Hill Maria never has had much recourse to them, petty theft being almost unknown and murder rare. His attitude may to some extent be gauged by the following example.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

We may then consider how the ghotul boys and girls are almost completely free from those furtive and unpleasant vices that so mar our Western civilization. There is hardly any masturbation, the scourge of the English Public Schools; where it is practised, it is due to the mistaken efforts of reformers to improve the ghotul. Prostitution is unknown, unthinkable. No motiari has ever given her body for money. Homosexuality, sodomy, bestiality are shocking things, unworthy of chelik or motiari and never indulged by them. Nor does Muria society know the thin frustrated spinster or the male neurotic so prolific in the modern Indian 'ashram', with his desiccated outlook and censorious judgements.

These are great gains. At the same time we must not forget that there are many things in our own society which would shock and offend the Muria. A chelik would be scandalized by the Public Schools in England—the atmosphere of competition, the corporal punishment, the bullying, the petty tyranny of senior boys, the segregation with its attendant vices, the common homosexual interests, the furtiveness of association with girls, the worship of sport which has no connexion with real life. The prostitution in our cities would seem to him an abomination, and he would be filled with pity for the unmarried together with a dread of what would happen to them after death.

He would find a wholesale disregard of right and proper taboos. The missionary probably kisses his mother and sister, and certainly allows his wife to cook and touch water during her menstrual period—things which would horrify the Muria. The Hindu is often criticized by the Muria for allowing his children to sleep in the same room as their parents, which the Muria thinks far more immoral than sending them to sleep with other children in the ghotul. The sanitary arrangements of many a Brahmin home offend the Muria and he considers the Hindu attitude to untouchables, widow-remarriage and purdah as unworthy and degrading. If he is reflective enough, he will equally insist that the Westerner whose civilization is characterized by all the anti-social vices, violence, jealousy, adultery, and war, is not in a position to criticize his quiet, peaceful, happy, useful ghotul.

Although observers of similar institutions in other cultures have generally been impressed by their virtues and social value, there have been exceptions. In an early work S. C. Roy called the Uraon dormitory an 'abomination',[1] though I believe his opinion altered later. Dalton thought that intercourse in a dormitory 'must sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'.[2] In a very early account of the Seneca Indians of Canada, Cartier says, 'They have a very bad custom with their daughters, for as soon as they are of age to go to man, they put them in a bawdy-house, and abandon them to anyone who will take them, until they meet with a suitable party. And this we have seen by experience, for we saw those houses as full of girls as a school in France is full of children'.[3]

In the Marianne Islands, the missionaries found themselves opposed by the Uritoi *maisons des célibataires* and, regarding only the sexual relations of the girls and boys, declared that '*le Démon a établi icy des Seminaires de débauche*', while another writer described the purpose of the Uritoi societies of Guam as '*un épicurisme grossier*'.[4]

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 211.
[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 248.
[3] J. Cartier, *Brief récit de la navigation faict en MCDXXXV et MCDXXXVI*, first published in Paris in 1654. Quoted by Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 34.
[4] Quoted from Le Gobien, *Histoire des Iles Mariones*, p. 61, and L. de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du Monde* (Paris, 1826–44), Vol. II, p. 369 by Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 169.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER SIX

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: MARITAL INFIDELITY

I

836 157 The Maria allow their women a great deal of freedom in their pre-nuptial period, but for matrimonial relationships they have a strict regard. They are jealous and possessive by temperament, passionate as lovers,[1] suspicious and

[301]

Maria girls' neck-band

exacting husbands. Divorce is rare; adultery is dangerous, a crime the end of which cannot be foreseen.

837 Adultery is dangerous, for unless proper precautions are taken the ancestors of the household and the clan-god may

[1] But as elsewhere in India 'lust-murder' does not occur. 'Lust-murder, as one of the phenomena of psychopathia sexualis, appears to be better known in the more highly cultured countries of the West than in the East, where capital offences have their basis in less recondite mental processes'. S. M. Edwardes, *Crime in India* (Oxford, 1924), p. 28.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

CONCLUSION

I

The reader who has examined the many different crimes recorded in this book cannot fail to be struck by the astonishing innocence of many of them. Compared to the dark and complicated wickedness of so many European murders, compared to the fundamental savagery of the actions of such men as Palmer or Orsini, most of these crimes appear almost accidental. In some cases the culprit regards himself as an executioner rather than a murderer. He believes his act to have been entirely justified. In others simple people despairing of making their cause understood in the courts, which use another language and whose ways and outlook are so different from theirs, take the law into their own hands. But of criminals, in the real sense of the word, there are few. Few of the convicts in the Jagdalpur jail would be fit heroes or villains of a detective story.

No one should suppose that, because this book is concerned with violent crime, the Maria themselves are equally preoccupied with the subject. There are a great many Maria, at least 175,000 of them. They live scattered over a vast area half the size of Holland. There are on an average only 12 true homicides every year. The great majority of the people live quiet, peaceful, hard-working lives. Even on the most uncharitable evaluation, their addiction to violence is only remarkable when compared to their immediate neighbours, who are some of the most pacific and gentle people on this planet. It is no doubt true that the Maria are jealous, quick-tempered, passionate, revengeful. Their faults and their virtues are those of strength, not of weakness. It is from such a tribe that we might look one day for creative genius, for positive, explosive, advanced ideas.

It is sometimes debated in Bastar whether anything can be done to wean the Maria from violence. I doubt it. For example, an important cause of murder is fear of witchcraft and magic. Eliminate this fear, and the number of murders

157
[p. 215]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a
674 murder is extremely rare and due usually to some suspicion of
572 black magic. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is subject to sudden fits of blind rage, especially after he has been taking large quantities of his intoxicating gruel, *landa*, which is anathema to the Hill Marias. In that state he will seize any weapon that comes to hand, whether it be his wife's heavy rice pestle, a log of wood, an axe or a bow and arrow, and murder for the most trivial of reasons; the State Jail at Jagdalpur has always a high percentage of Bison-horn Marias doing time for homicide. He also is capable of nursing his revenge for a long time; a recent example was given by a strapping Bison-horn Maria from Palnar, who, after serving twelve years of a commuted death sentence, soon after his release took the first chance of picking a quarrel with a man whom he considered deliberately to have let him down by not giving evidence in his defence twelve years before, and battered his head in with a heavy bamboo stick. The Bison-horn Maria will in his fury declare an implacable enmity by stalking round his foe's house three times, either plucking straws from the thatch, or whistling the peculiar *su'i* whistle, or throwing some of his own pubic hairs at the house; and murder is the inevitable result. There were twenty-seven murder trials in Bastar between 1917 and 1923, and in eighteen of them the murderers were Bison-horn Marias, but only two of the murders were committed by Hill Marias. About half the Bison-horn Maria murders are committed in *landa* intoxication, and almost the same proportion in sudden fits of rage about nothing; for example, wives often are killed when the husband dislikes his food or it is not ready for him; one even lost her life for refusing to cook for her husband when he woke up hungry in the middle of the night. But there are on record Bison-horn Maria murders committed for all the ordinary sordid and criminal murder motives; the Bison-horn Maria is a man of far stronger feelings
[158] than the Hill Maria. The former actually runs amuck on occasion like the Malay; in two such cases the offender pleaded that he suffered from fits and ran amuck under the delusion, in the one case, of pursuit and, in the other, of possession by evil spirits and of the
628 imminence of a new rebellion. Cain indeed wrote in 1876 that 'blood revenge' had hardly died out in the Godavari valley, and was said to be 'in full exercise' in Bastar. The only apparent case of a hereditary vendetta of which I am aware occurred in Orcha, a Hill Maria village, where a grandfather and his son were murdered at long intervals for suspected witchcraft, while the grandson conveniently fell off a sago-palm tree as soon as he was old enough to claim the hereditary post of *pargana* headman.
692 There is a strong feeling everywhere of an eye for an eye and a tooth

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

live in some discomfort and under unnatural and strained conditions. These abnormal strains have resulted, more than once, in murder being committed. 791 [349]

Barse Chappe was a polygamous invalid. After suffering for some time from giddiness and trouble with his heart and eyes, he went to the village Siraha named Pocha for treatment. He became an 'in-patient' and was accommodated in a little hut. After Chappe had spent three days there, he felt better and went to Jagdalpur to give evidence in a police case. Here again he got ill and fell to the ground in a fit, and the Public Prosecutor was compelled to give him up. He returned to his own house, but when he reached it he had to spend the night outside on the verandah, as his wives told him that he would have to offer certain sacrifices in gratitude for his previous recovery before he could enter the house. The following day he again went to the Siraha for treatment and camped under a mango tree nearby. He was accompanied by his senior wife Sukhi and his little daughter Bode. From time to time his junior wife Chule, who remained in charge of the home, came to see him. After a week, one afternoon when Chule had brought food, Chappe asked both his wives to have intercourse with him in the hut. They refused saying that the place was too open, and that it was daytime and everyone would see them. Chappe got angry and beat both the women. 674x 791

A few days later, at about 5 o'clock in the evening, Chappe again asked his senior wife to have intercourse with him in the hut. But Bode and two women were sitting only a few paces away on the verandah of the Siraha's hut—whence the hut was in full view—again they were able to overhear Chappe's conversation. Sukhi again refused and told her husband that he ought to be ashamed of himself for suggesting such a thing in the hearing of three other women, especially when one of them was his own daughter.

At this Chappe lost his temper. He picked up a heavy bamboo stick and beat his wife so heavily that she died.

In his defence Chappe gave evidence of delusions. He denied that his reason for beating Sukhi was that she refused to have intercourse with him. He said that for the past week she had been giving him contaminated food. He had asked her not to cook in the Siraha's house where anybody might 674x 158

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

infect the food magically, but in a special place where only she herself would have access to it. This she refused to do.[1] She was also trying, he said, to have him out-casted for some moral offence. But the nature of this was not made clear in evidence.

The Court decided that Chappe was undoubtedly at the time of the murder a sick and unbalanced person. Although on that very day every able-bodied man in the village had gone out on a ceremonial hunt, Chappe did not feel well enough to do so, a clear sign that he considered himself in a serious condition. It is probable that a number of factors combined to bring about the tragedy. The very fact of being unable to attend the great occasion of the hunt must have been depressing. His wife had refused him access to her for several days. It is more than likely that he attributed his illness to someone's tampering with his food. At last the accumulated frustration and anxiety exploded within him, and murder was the result.

VI

MAGIC AND SUICIDE

In some cases, the torment of disease, the fear of the sinister and hostile magic causing it, and the failure of the magicians to effect a cure, led—not to the murder of the sorcerer or of the doctor—but to the suicide of the patient. The reason why all this misery resulted in suicide rather than murder is generally evident: the suicides were so wretched and so weak that it was impossible for them either to protect themselves against their supernormal enemies or to revenge themselves upon the human representatives of an unhappy fate.

For example, Markami Hunga suffered from yaws. She was old and covered with ulcers, unable to eat for pain and misery. One night, when all were asleep, she hanged herself from a rafter of her house.

Atami Kosa, a Maria of Poyali, had a septic ulcer on his left calf. Sori Hirma of Korra got very drunk at a harvest festival and dislocated his hip. For eighteen months he lay

[1] A similar delusion drove a Dhurwa of Darbha to commit suicide in 1939. He believed that his wife was poisoning his food, and he used to wait till she went to work in the fields when he would stealthily go into the house and get what food he could.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CRIMINAL LUNACY

CRIMINAL lunacy is not a serious problem in Bastar.[1] During the 22 years from 1919 to 1941, only 8 criminal lunatics were sent to the Mental Hospital at Nagpur. Two of the 8 were released cured, and 6 remained. More recently from 1935 to 1941, 17 persons were examined for insanity in the jail at Jagdalpur. Five of these, all murderers, were sent to Nagpur; five were found to be falsely pleading insanity and were convicted of violent crime; one was found to have committed a murder while insane, but was released as cured in 1937. The others were sent in for observation as harmless lunatics under the provisions of the Lunacy Act.

Of the 6 criminal lunatics sent to Nagpur, only 2 were Bison-horn Maria. But in 2 other cases Bison-horn Maria, who were convicted of culpable homicide not amounting to murder under Section 304, showed marked psychotic characteristics.

Marvi Bhima was a melancholic and murdered his wife in a fit of manic-depressive insanity. For two days before the tragedy he had behaved very strangely, walking in and out of the house and going round and round it; and it was actually while the relatives were calling the village elders to deal with the matter that he went into his house and stabbed his younger wife Kondi in the stomach with an arrow. After stabbing her he tried to pull the arrow out, but finding this difficult he pushed it right through her body and removed it from the back. In the meantime the village elders were on the way to the house, and when they got there they saw Bhima wandering about with a bow and arrow in his hand. They sent the unfortunate woman to the police station where she expired while making a dying declaration. No one dared to go near Bhima. But the next morning he went into a neighbour's house and they hastily

[1] It is often said that mental disorders are very rare among primitive people. This has been questioned, but little evidence has yet been accumulated. See E. Winston, 'The Alleged Lack of Mental Diseases among Primitive Groups', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXVI (New Series, 1934), pp. 234 ff.

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[p.167]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closed the door and bolted it from outside. When the headman got there, he found Bhima hiding inside a large bamboo bin used for storing grain. The villagers kept him locked up until the police came and took him away.

Before the Court Bhima admitted stabbing his wife, but declared that he did not properly remember why he did so. Everybody testified to the fact that he had been very fond of Kondi and had always treated her well, though for the whole year his behaviour had been strange. After the murder he showed no sign of realizing what he had done, and during his trial he wept not because he had killed his wife, but because he feared 'that in his absence his cattle were being distributed like fowls'. He tried to escape from the Court two or three times during the trial, for he was filled with fear that he would be thrown into a pit, and begged the Judge that he might be hanged or given any imprisonment rather than that. The medical evidence was that Bhima was suffering from melancholia. He was acquitted of the charge of murder, but was detained under Section 471 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

'The periodic mental disorders of epilepsy', says Sullivan, 'are divisible, according to their relation to the characteristic paroxysms, into those preceding the fit, or pre-epileptic disorders, usually in the direction of morbid irritability, those following the fit—post-epileptic dream states or maniacal outbursts of longer or shorter duration—and those occurring in lieu of a fit, or possibly after a very slight and unobserved attack of petit mal. Criminal conduct, and particularly acts of homicidal violence—for homicide is par excellence the crime of the epileptic—may occur in connection with any of these disordered conditions. Its most frequent and characteristic form is the homicide committed in the phase of obscured consciousness which may follow or replace a fit or an attack of epileptic vertigo'.[1]

Hemla Chewa was an epileptic, and his left hand was a fingerless stump. On 18 January 1922, as he was going through the jungle near Hirana, he saw a Halba boy about sixteen years old cutting fire-wood. He had never seen the boy before, and there was no suggestion that he had any relations with him. In the Court he produced a story of

[1] Sullivan, op. cit., p. 133.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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being chased through the forest by three men and said that as he was running away he met the boy and seized his axe and killed him with it. Later the same evening he assaulted and injured a woman with his axe, and hit her nephew when he ran to her assistance. Chewa was tied up by the villagers but escaped during the night, and went to his uncle's house in the same village. The next morning he was again caught and taken to the police. In the Court he showed complete indifference to his trial, and talked throughout in a low tone. He was acquitted of murder, but was detained in jail as a lunatic.

Another epileptic who exhibited the characteristic signs of obscured consciousness and amnesia was an elderly man named Khotlu who killed his wife Mase on the evening of 12 December 1920 at Kawargaon. For a year before the tragedy he had been getting attacks every Sunday. He used to shiver uncontrolably, froth at the mouth, suffer violent convulsions and fall to the ground unconscious for two or three hours. At such times he had the delusion that a rebellion was about to take place and he would call on everyone to run away. Sometimes he himself armed with a stick would run into the jungle. On two occasions he had to be tied up, and was taken first to Torwa and then to Pondum to be treated by medicine-men.

Khotlu's wife Mase was nearly as old as himself, and had borne him ten children. They were apparently on the best of terms. But on the day of the tragedy, which was a Sunday, when they went out with their little boy to cut the kosra crop in their fields, Khotlu fell down in a fit. After lying unconscious for some hours he got up and shouted 'Run, run, the Bhumkal (Rebellion) is coming'. He told his wife to go home at once. But she said that their work was not finished and she would first pick some leaves and then come. Khotlu accused her of being in love with someone whom she wanted to meet in the forest. At that she agreed to go with him. He began to push her along and as she was walking home before him, he shot her with an arrow from behind.

The woman somehow reached the village, and died three days later. Khotlu stayed out in the fields and in the evening came and sat in his house. When he was asked the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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158

following day where his wife was, he said she had gone to fetch water. Presently he pointed at something and said that it was his wife coming. When he was taken to see the dying woman, at first he declared that she was not his wife at all, then later insisted that he had no recollection of the incident.

The case of Poriami Kosa is one in which we approach very near to the boundaries of insanity, although the Court considered that he was sufficiently responsible and sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment. He was a man who was regarded as almost imbecile by his fellow Maria. He was incapable of ploughing his fields or of buying things in the bazaar. His wife seems to have treated him as a grown-up child. He suffered from some form of paralysis. On the day of the murder, shortly before sunset, when 'the sun was only three bamboos above the horizon', Kosa asked his wife to lie with him. But she refused and abused him, taunting him with his illness and saying that he would never get better. He then attempted to have congress with her forcibly, and she resisted. In the struggle her wooden combs and cloth fell to the ground, and Kosa full of rage stabbed her with a small pointed knife on the face and neck. She ran for about forty paces and fell dead to the ground.

Kawasi Chamru had a curious fit of madness which lasted several days. On the first day he wandered about the jungle. On the next he climbed up a tree and sat there all day. On the third day he killed two of his bullocks and rubbed their blood on his body. Nothing then happened for several years. But shortly before his tragedy he again began to act strangely. He had always been on good terms with his wife. But now he developed delusions that she was unfaithful to him. One day he suddenly began to beat her. Holding her by the tuft of her hair, he struck her three times on the head with a heavy bit of wood from a plough. She fell down and Chamru went on beating her till she died. Then he dragged the body into the house and, pulling a handful of grass from the roof, lit it and set fire to the building. Everything there, all the clothes, grain and the dead body, were destroyed. Chamru took a bamboo pole in his hand and sat under a mango tree in the jungle where he remained until he was arrested.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

It is possible that in this case some important evidence was suppressed by the witnesses, for there was a suggestion that the murdered woman had committed incest with her brother. The fear of excommunication and fines would be sufficiently strong to induce everyone to keep quiet about this. On the other hand, it is equally possible that the suspicion of his wife's infidelity was a delusion of Chamru's disordered mind.

Other Maria have been content to take their own way out of the world, when the psychotic disturbance became too strong for them. Many different symptoms are recorded as preceding such suicides. Baiha Ganga, for some days before his death, refused to eat and when people approached him attacked them with his stick. Bongi Maria was subject to periodic attacks of insanity; he tried to kill himself three times before he finally succeeded. Others displayed a marked narcissistic attitude, wandering aimlessly in the jungle, refusing to talk or work; such were Saradu, a northern Muria, who used to wander naked, Nari Maria, Pakli, a little girl about ten years old, and Marvi Mundi, a woman who had suffered since childhood from attacks during which she refused to eat and wandered about aimlessly, neglecting the dozen children she had borne.

There is finally the strange and sombre case of Markami Hirme, mother of four children and about to bear a fifth. In her pre-pubertal period she had been subject to epileptic fits, but was treated by the local Siraha, and was believed cured. On 22 October 1935, at her home at Gonderas, the epilepsy recurred, and she became 'strange in her behaviour'. She was in the eighth month of pregnancy. Two days later, when her husband was out watching the crops, and her eldest daughter had gone for water, she hanged herself from a rafter of the house in the presence of her three little children.

Now such a death is the most dangerous in the world. The woman who dies in pregnancy or childbirth is known throughout India as the Churelin or Churin; in Bastar she is often called the Ondar Muttai, the Old Bee Woman, who attacks men with the fury of a swarm of bees. Hirme's husband and the village elders seem to have been unable to decide what to do. Not one of them dared to touch the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

158
782

corpse, and it remained hanging for two days in the house. Then, so the villagers declare, the foetus of the unborn child automatically discharged itself from the womb. By this time the necessary ceremonies of protection had been performed, and the body was cut down.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING IN TIME; THE HISTORICAL ISOLATION OF BASTAR

[13] BASTAR STATE lies at the extreme south-east corner of the Central Provinces of India, between 17° 46′ and 20° 14′ north, and 80° 15′ and 82° 1′ east. Its area, according to the recently revised Survey of India figures, of 13,725 square miles makes it the tenth state in India in size, larger than Belgium and nearly as large as Holland. It is far larger than any of the old Central Provinces and Orissa States, with which it has recently been brought into the new Eastern States Agency. But it is one of the most sparsely peopled tracts of [161] India, the 1931 population of 524,721 giving a density of only 34 to the square mile. If any part of India is still *terra incognita* to nearly all British officials and travellers, it is the vast tract covered by Bastar and the huge Jeypore zamindari recently transferred from the Vizagapatam Agency of Madras to the new province of Orissa.

[18] To the ordinary Indian of neighbouring districts, even to many of the few immigrant Hindu and Mussalman traders, this remains a land of savages, seeking still for human victims to sacrifice to their fetishes, skilled in herbs and simples, and potent practitioners of magic and witchcraft. Their view is little changed from that held 110 years ago by Maratha officials who described the Marias of the Abujhmar mountains to Sir Richard Jenkins, then Resident at the Court of Nagpur, as 'naked savages, living on roots and sprigs, and hunting for strangers to sacrifice'.

[175] Bastar has in fact always been an almost unknown backwater of the river of Indian history. The late Chief, Maharani Prafulla Kumari Devi, at her accession in 1924 was the last legitimate survivor of one of the most ancient royal families of southern India, the Kakatiya, which reigned at Warangal from about A.D. 1150 to 1425, first possibly as feudatories of the Chalukya kings and then independently. In Bastar folk-song, Annam Deo, the first to reign in Bastar, is spoken of as 'Chalkibans Raja', which may be a corruption of 'Chalukya-bans' and indicate that the Kakatiya family was a cadet branch of the Chalukya. Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 slopes and in the Mangnar and Dantewara Mar villages there are often fine patches of sal and other evergreen trees. On the hill-tops and on slopes exhausted by shifting cultivation, high grass and stunted trees make the country monotonous to the eye and tiring through lack of shade. Where the slopes are newly cleared and have once been burnt for shifting *penda* cultivation, often a small grove of trees is left on the summit, like nothing so much as the top-knot of hair on the crown of a Maria's otherwise roughly-shaved head. But the moment you descend off the rocky plateaux you meet green glades and hurrying streams, or may feel the sudden amaze of a prospect such as that of the blue apex of the lofty Bailadila ridge seen beyond the haze of the Indrawati valley down the valley of a stream that far below the ridge between Itulnar and Hikul races due south to the Indrawati.

161 361 There are only between 150 and 160 villages inhabited in all this area of about 1,500 square miles, and there are only 11,500 Hill Marias. This means one village in every ten square miles, and less than eight persons to the square mile. In few places can you lose yourself in such solitudes.

635 North Bastar thus consists administratively of the Antagarh, Kondagaon and Jagdalpur tahsils, half of the Jagdalpur tahsil being south of the Indrawati, and of the portions of the Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris and the Dantewara tahsil north of the Indrawati.

635 491 In South Bastar there are the Dantewara, Bijapur and Konta tahsils, and the Sukma, Kutru, Bhopalpatnam and Kotapalli-Pamer zamindaris; these four zamindaris alone survive out of the seventeen or eighteen of old times. A great western road runs 134 miles from Jagdalpur through Gidam, Karli, Matawara, Bijapur and Bhopalpatnam to Timer on the Indrawati, opposite Patagudam in Chanda district, whence there is a forest road to Sironcha; branches south from Gidam and Karli run to Dantewara, with a further extension to Kameli at the foot of the Bailadila hills; north from Gidam to Barsur, and from Matawara to Kutru; and south from Bhopalpatnam to Tarlagudam on the Godavari and thence over the Latpatkandi pass into the Nugur and Albaka taluqs of Madras. A great southern road runs 114 miles from Jagdalpur to Sukma and Konta. A network of forest roads of recent construction links these roads together between Tirathgarh in Jagdalpur tahsil, Katakalian, Kuakonda and Dantewara, or southward from Kuakonda to the Kolab-Sabari at Misma on the Konta road, and to Konta via the Aranpur pass, Jaggergonda and Golapalli; while Bijapur is linked to Cherla and Jaggergonda to Dummagudam, both on the Godavari. With these and other

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

under the generic name Gond. In 1931 the tribes enumerated as Gonds in the previous three censuses were separately enumerated under the names Bhattra, Gond, Maria, Muria, Koya and Parja. The totals for these must be added both for 1931 and 1891 in order to see how far the primitive races of Bastar have been increasing. The 1921 figure for Gonds was only 107,503 persons, compared with 285,519 in 1911, and was obviously wrong; the 113,100 persons enumerated in 1921 under Minor Castes should be added to the 107,503 Gonds, though even then the total of 220,603 is below the correct figure. Excluding the Halbas and certain minor aboriginal tribes, the comparative figures are then :—

Year	Gonds
1891	128,442
1901	204,841
1911	285,519
1921	220,603
1931	359,637

The increase in forty years has been 181 per cent. In the same period the total population rose by 69 per cent. from 310,884 to 524,721. The primitive population is more than holding its own.

Halbas were also classified at the census, not altogether rightly, as primitive, and with them and certain other minor primitive tribes added, the primitive population rises to 379,082. Even this does not tell the full tale. Large numbers of the persons returned as members of the Hindu functional castes, the graziers, potters, fishermen, weavers (Mahras), blacksmiths and others, are in reality members of primitive tribes speaking their languages and only differentiated from them by their occupation. There is nothing in outward appearance to distinguish these persons from other aboriginals; they follow their tribal religions whether enumerated as such or as Hindus. I consider that on this account the 1931 primitive total can safely be regarded as 400,000, or 76 per cent.; the census report puts the percentage at 73·6.

The totals given for the tribes formerly treated as Gonds but separately enumerated in 1931 are :—

Bhattra	36,611
Gond	24,407
Maria	146,070
Muria	124,993
Koya	9,988
Parja	17,568

Unfortunately even now, as will be shown later, the classification has been over-simplified, and is of little use for scientific purposes. The only categories about which no doubt can arise are Bhattra

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

and Parja, and it is therefore easy first of all to describe their distribution; only the briefest of general remarks will be made about them; I hope at a later date to publish a separate account, at least of the Parjas.

In the ethnographic map on page 40 the Bhattras are shown by the letter A and the Parjas by the letter B. The former alone among the races of Bastar have abandoned whatever Munda or Dravidian tongue they may have once spoken, and now use a corrupt Uriya dialect. In Bastar, except for one or two villages at the south-east corner of the Kondagaon tahsil, the Bhattras are confined to the north-east corner of Jagdalpur, along the Jeypore border, across which they overflow in large numbers into Jeypore and, beyond, Kalahandi State. Their Bastar number in 1891 was 21,477. The use of their language is spreading to other tribes, chiefly the Parjas; it was spoken by 45,830 persons in 1931, which means that 9,219 non-Bhattras speak it. The spread of its use among the Parjas is shown by the fact that only 12,363 Parji-speakers were returned out of 17,568 Parjas. Actually, as Sir George Grierson has admitted, Bhattri might as well be classified as one of the many forms of Halbi as a dialect of Uriya; to the outward ear they sound very similar, and the two languages are mutually intelligible. Halbi always varies according to its proximity to Chhattisgarhi, Telugu or Gondi; and to me Bhattri seems only Halbi influenced by its proximity to Uriya-speaking tracts. Nor are local census enumerators by any means to be relied upon effectively to distinguish Halbi and Bhattri. Grierson's remark of Gondi dialects that the names indicate tribal rather than linguistic differences is true of Halbi and Bhattri at all events.

Bhattras and Parjas

The Bhattras live in open country with miles of good rice cultivation. They are gradually giving up even their very modified form of *dahya* or shifting cultivation, consisting now mainly of the occasional cutting and carting to their rice fields of forest undergrowth, and burning it there as manure. All but twenty-six of them were returned in 1931 as following their tribal religion; and this is really the correct account, though they are considerably more Hinduized than any other tribe classed as primitive in 1931 except the Halbas. The latter, whose religion preserves only slightly less of the tribal element than the Bhattra, are, however, in contrast, all but thirty-six recorded as Hindu. No anthropometric work has been done among the Bastar Bhattras; and there are no data for accepting or rejecting on physical grounds the Central Provinces habit of classifying them as a branch of the Gond race. Traditionally they came with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal, while over

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 Koitor, all meaning Lowland Koitor, and the plains below are either Dorbhum, Hatiyabhum or Kalpatti; Dor Koitor and Dorbhum, the terms most commonly used, are probably the source of the expression Dhur Koitor said to be used fairly generally in the Central Provinces to designate the ordinary Gond as distinct from the one who gives himself social airs as a Raj-Gond; a Gondi word has been assimilated to the Hindi '*dhur*' or '*dhul*' meaning 'dust', and the Gond commoner referred to as the 'Dust' Gond. Hatiya-bhum is simply the land of the *hat* or bazaar. *Kalpatti* is the ordinary Halbi term for lowlands, which we have already seen applied as the name of two *parganas* in Antagarh. Hatiya is similarly the name of a *pargana* in the north of Kondagaon.

●161 The Hill Maria tracts are shown by the letter E in the ethnographic map. An account of their country and distribution has been given already in Chapter II, pages 26-8. The estimate of 11,500 population is fairly accurate; I examined the actual census returns of all the Hill Maria villages except the five included in the outlying Mangnar *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam zamindari, and obtained a total of 11,361 (5,702 males and 5,659 females). There can only be 140 or 150 persons at the most in the Mangnar villages. Since the census, many Hill Marias have come back to the Abujhmar, chiefly from the Ahiri zamindari; it was found when the poll-tax settlement was effected in 1932 that 240 able-bodied males had so returned; probably, therefore, the Hill Maria population is now just over 12,000 in Bastar. There had in the past been a considerable exodus of Marias from the old Paralkot zamindari, owing to the zamindar's oppression. As they consider the new conditions in Bastar better than those in Ahiri, more may be expected to drift back into Bastar.

Hill Marias

The tract is extremely homogeneous. In 22 Hill Maria villages in Kutru with 1,443 Hill Marias the only non-Marias are 38 Rawats and 1 Halba; in 9 Hill Maria villages in Dantewara there are 879 Marias to 3 Telanga, 98 Rawats and 19 Mahras. The Rawats are only in the villages near the plains where they are employed by Marias to tend cattle and are beginning to teach them the use of the plough and the milking of cattle; they speak Maria as fluently as Halbi, and in outward appearance are scarcely distinguishable from Marias. Most of the Hill Maria villages are in Antagarh, and have hardly any outsiders except occasional Rawats or liquor contractors. The few blacksmiths are really Marias, knowing no 564 other language than Maria, having the same clans as the Marias and still occasionally marrying Maria girls; though, as among other tribes, there is always a tendency to look down on the blacksmith,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and to make him live by himself on the outskirts of the village, so that in the end he becomes almost a separate low caste. This, however, has not gone nearly as far among the Hill Marias as among the Bison-horn.

To the south, along the Indrawati valley, the Hill Marias are influenced strongly by the Bison-horn Marias, and the area concerned is marked on the map by the letter H. The influence of the Bison-horn Marias gets less as you go west down the valley towards Kutru, and beyond Kutru is replaced by that of the Telugu-influenced Koitor of the riverain tract, known generally in those parts as Dorlas. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of most of these villages near the river were once Hill Marias. They seem to have been enumerated as Murias in the 1931 census, and are included in the 15,000 persons whom I have indicated at the end of my account of the Murias as wrongly enumerated at census as Murias. Where the Hill Marias are the immediate neighbours of the Bison-horn Marias, the influence of the latter is strong. In theory, according to local legend the Mander, a tributary running more or less east to west and joining the Indrawati on its *southern* bank near Barsur, is the boundary between the two kinds of Marias, with the Indrawati as the boundary west of the confluence. Here the Hill Marias know the Bison-horn Marias as Dandami Koitor; but the name is not universal in Bastar, and I have therefore preferred to call them Bison-horn because the wearing of bison-horns by their male dancers is so obvious a peculiarity of the tribe. Formerly, the legend says, Pat Raja, the log-god of Mornar in the Mangnar *pargana* who is regarded almost as the overlord of all the log-gods of the Hill Marias, and his wife's brother Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan at Ghotpal, a large Bison-horn village south of the Indrawati, between Barsur and G[illegible], divided up the Hill and Bison-horn Marias into *dadabhai* and *akomama* clans (brother-clans and wife-clans), and in those days the Hill Marias used to intermarry with the Bison-horn, and each used to attend the other's festivals. One day, as the Gumelor clan of Hill Marias, which occupies a group of villages in Bhairamgarh Mar, Dantewara Mar and Mangnar, was trooping to Ghotpal to dance at the Koqsar festival there, carrying their axes on their shoulders, a Gume with his axe accidentally severed the *sem* bean vine of the Old Widow (*Kuram Mutta'i*), who thereupon put a curse on all the Hill Marias and forbade them ever again to come south of the Mander river for social or religious purposes. Since then, according to the Hill Marias, intermarriage and participation in each other's festivals has ceased. On the other

Hill Marias of Indrawati valley, influenced by Bison-horn Marias or Dorla Koitor

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

as Muria at the census, while the actual Dorla Koitor appear to have been shown under Gond.

Bison-horn Marias, Koyas and Dorlas

The census total of Marias was 146,070. I estimated at the end of my account of the Murias that 15,000 Marias and Koyas had been wrongly enumerated as Murias. This raises the total of Marias to 161,070, counting all the 15,000 whether Koyas or not as Marias, for reasons which will appear below. My adjusted census figure for the Hill Marias was 11,500. The mixed Hill-Bison-horn villages except Tumirgunda were excluded from this, and for demographic purposes may be regarded as Bison-horn. The valley villages occupied by Hill Maria stock and the villages of mixed Hill Maria and Dorla stock at the most have 3,500 inhabitants, though spread over a large area. Excluding them and the 11,500 pure Hill Marias from the 161,070, we get a balance of 146,070 as the strength of the Bison-horn Marias. To this I would add the 9,988 returned at census as Koyas, giving a total of 156,058 Bison-horn Marias. Of these, about 50,000 are in Jagdalpur, 60,000 in Dantewara, 7,000 in Konta, 3,000 in Kutru, 1,000 in Bhopalpatnam, 26,000 in Sukma, and 9,000 in Bijapur.

The southern borders of this race are fairly clear when enquiry is made on the spot, but very difficult to ascertain from previous literature owing to the lack of precision of nomenclature. Much trouble has arisen from the word Koya. Glasfurd did not define Koyas or give their habitat in the report already quoted. In a report on the ethnography of the old Upper Godavari District including Bastar, printed in a collection of papers for a Central Provinces ethnographic exhibition in the sixties, he wrote :—

> 'Along the southern boundary we find the Telingas tolerably pure, but with a large mixture of intermediate castes, such as the Koys and Naikwars, which last the late Mr. Hislop classed among the Gonds. Proceeding inward we find the Telingas cease, and the Koys and Gottawars become the sole inhabitants. The former belong also to the Gond family; but from their vicinity to the Telingas they have acquired many of their words, and as the latter are the superior race, the Koys ape their manners a good deal. The Gottawars are inferior to the Koys in caste; but not so in appearance nor in physical conformation. Where they live close to Telingas, they also have acquired many of the Telugoo words; but they do not, as the Koys, ape Telinga manners.
>
> 'Proceeding still farther towards the interior, we find the Gottawars the prevailing class, and in the centre they appear merely to change their name; for the Maria is in no wise different from the Gottawar.'

In the classified list of races annexed to his report he gives as habitat for Koys the 'banks of the Godavery, Pranheeta and Savery rivers, and the Beejee, Potukul, Kotapilly, Veejapore, Soonkoom and Bhopalputnum Talooks of Bustar'; for Gottawars

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

631
161

APPENDIX I

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS OF BASTAR STATE

	Area[1] (*sq. miles*)	*Population* (1931 *Census*)
TAHSILS:		
Jagdalpur	1,996	198,640
Kondagaon	1,880	83,992
Antagarh	2,885	51,703
Dantewara	1,016	75,872
Konta	1,336	14,206
Bijapur	989	24,135
ZAMINDARIS:		
Kutru	1,360	14,836
Bhopalpatnam	720	17,596
Sukma	650	40,171
Kotapalli-Pamer	230	1,132
TOTAL	13,062[1]	522,283[2]

[1] The areas are given according to the figures current before recent surveys. These surveys have only covered portions of the State, and will not be completed till 1944. In May 1934 the Survey of India, computing from the old maps of the Trigonometrical Survey (which I have often found surprisingly inaccurate for the wilder parts of the State) and from the revised figures of recent surveys, calculated the true area to be 13,725 square miles for the whole State. Revised calculations for each tahsil and zamindari are not available.

[2] The populations of each tahsil and zamindari given above were calculated in the State from preliminary census returns; but separate figures were not isolated by the Central Provinces Census Office. The true population of the State was finally returned as 524,721.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

invasion by land-hungry Hindus of the highlands and backwoods, with its accompaniment of money-lenders, cloth pedlars, lawyers' touts, landlords and forest contractors.

The terms of reference for my aboriginal enquiry directed my special attention to the conditions in the tribal tracts which had been declared Partially Excluded Areas under the Government of India Act of 1935. Those are the tracts, speaking generally, where the tribes still constitute a majority of the population and by thus being able to preserve much of their own traditional way of life can still present something of a united front to the invasion of new settlers and new ideas.[1] The Partially Excluded Areas of Chanda district include the huge Ahiri zamindari of Sironcha tahsil and the Garchiroli tahsil zamindaris of Dhanora, Dudhmala, Jharapapara, Khutgaon, Kotgal, Muramgaon, Palasgarh, Rangi, Sirsundi, Sonsari, Chandala, Gilgaon, Pai-Muranda, Potegaon and Gewardha. My enquiries therefore gave me a long desired chance of seeing the Marias of Chanda. These zamindaris have a total area of 4,013 square miles, mostly of hill and forest, and had in 1941 a population of 115,031; this figure included 70,821 'aboriginals', so that out of every 1,000 persons, 607 were tribal. In the 1931 census 34,776 of the Gonds of these zamindaris were returned as Marias, against a total of 34,986[2] Marias for all the British districts of the Central Provinces, leaving only some 210 Marias for the *khalsa* areas of Chanda district and the zamindaris of the Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district. The total strength of the Maria tribe in the British districts of the province is given in the 1941 census summary as 39,553,[3] district figures not being shown. Almost all of these will have been returned from the Chanda Partially Excluded Areas.

It has been indicated in this book how vague are the terms 'Maria' and 'Muria',[4] and how all the tribes thus vaguely designated speak of themselves as Koitor or Koi, distinguishing between one group and another by such terms as Highland Koitor, or Lowland or Plains Koitor. Let it be remembered that the word Maria is not a Gondi word and that *all* Gondi-speaking Gonds throughout the Central Provinces and Berar and Hyderabad State speak of themselves as Koitor; then it will be realized how unprecise, unscientific a term 'Maria' really is. Here in these Chanda zamindaris it is

[1] Any investigator of tribal conditions soon realizes that the tribesmen inside the Partially Excluded Areas are not yet in as bad a plight as their kinsmen outside those areas, in the more 'advanced' districts, where they are steadily losing such land as is left to them and sinking to the status of landless labourers in the service of those who have expropriated them.

[2] and [3] *Census of India*, 1941, Vol. I, Part I, Table XIV, p. 118.

[4] See pp. 35-6, 42, 44, 46-50.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

often difficult to say where the Koitor begin or cease to be Maria. Much depends on the idiosyncrasies of the census enumerators. Moreover just as in Bastar there is really no hard and fast ethnological boundary line between Hill Maria and the tribes generally referred to as 'Muria', so in Chanda to the north and west of the zamindaris many now classed as Gond would undoubtedly at one time have been regarded as Maria, while where Chanda district borders on the west of the Narainpur (Antagarh) tahsil of Bastar the villagers are ethnically identical on both sides of the border, but on the Chanda side are called Maria and on the Bastar side Muria: of this I had a remarkable instance on my journey north from Surjagarh[1] in Ahiri zamindari to Jarawandi,[2] where the forest track crosses the two small west-protruding tongues of Bastar shown near the north-west corner of Bastar in the ethnographic map on page 40, near the Antagarh villages of Udcha[3] and Irpanar[4] in the southern tongue and Markanar[5] in the northern tongue; men of one clan living in the tongues called themselves Muria while their fellow-clansmen in the adjacent Ahiri villages called themselves Maria.

Drug district, Chanda district and Bastar State all meet at the north-west corner of Bastar, as the map on page 40 makes clear. At this corner of Drug are the Drug Partially Excluded Areas, the zamindaris of Aundhi, Koracha, Panabaras and Ambagarh-Chauki transferred to Drug from Chanda in 1907. These zamindaris had in 1941 a population of 82,202, of whom aboriginals numbered 51,452, or 626 in every thousand. Of the latter some 16,750 were returned as practising the tribal religion, and the bulk of these must have been Gond. No 'Marias' were returned. Yet again, especially in Aundhi and Koracha, there is no racial difference between those returned there as 'Gond', their Chanda neighbours returned as 'Maria' and their Bastar neighbours returned as 'Muria'. Reference to land revenue and settlement records even in Panabaras zamindari[6] shows that down to the great famines at the end of the nineteenth century and even later the local headmen and ryots were frequently recorded as Maria by tribe.

All that in fact can safely be predicated of the country covered by my tour in the Chanda and Drug zamindaris is that according to

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Qr. Inch Sheet 5A. ref. MV4774.
[2] Ibidem, ref. MQ5121.
[3] Ibidem, ref. MV4898.
[4] Ibidem, ref. MV5296.
[5] Ibidem, ref. MQ5314.
[6] See for examples Grigson, *The Aboriginal Problem in the Central Provinces and Berar* (Nagpur, 1944), pp. 79-81.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 The Zamindar, Mr. Dharamrao Bhujangrao, is himself a Raj-Gond, Atrāmi (6-god) by clan (*pari*); he was then a member of the provincial Legislative Assembly and had been for a short time a Minister in the Provincial Government. His huge estate comprises 2,545 square miles in Sironcha tahsil and 55 square miles in Garchiroli tahsil. The *District Gazetteer*[1] describes almost the whole estate as consisting of 'one unbroken range of forests', drained by the great Wainganga, Pranhita and Indrawati rivers and their tributaries. 'On the extreme east stretches a simple maze of hills of considerable height, which fill almost the whole of the large tract east of the junction of the Palmāgotam,[2] Paralkot and Indrawati rivers at Bhamragarh.[3] These hills[4] attain a height of from 2,000 to 3,000 feet and are absolutely inaccessible to any kind of vehicle. Some distance south of Ahiri itself are situated the Bhimaram and the Dewalmāri hills, and to the east of these lies another range of hills known locally as the Mallanāgutta range. The greatest length and breadth of the estate are each about eighty miles, and, with the exception of Government forests of an area of about 82,000 acres which have been acquired in its interior, it is altogether uninterrupted by other properties.'

161 In the 1931 census Ahiri had in all its 2,600 square miles only 358 villages, 7,748 occupied houses and 40,450 inhabitants,
162 a population, that is, of only sixteen to the square mile. It is thus by far the most thinly populated area of the Province. Even the other Chanda zamindaris had 38 persons to the square mile, and the zamindaris of the Sanjari (Balod) tahsil of Drug district 94. Ahiri's population included 28,968 followers of tribal religion, of whom only 43 were literate, 97 Brahmans, 8,842 Hindus, 2,042 Depressed Classes, 427 Muslims and 72 others. The followers of tribal religion nearly all were 'Maria'. The Hindus would include some hinduized Gonds near Ahiri and along the Pranhita Valley and the Chanda-Sironcha road; but of all the 34,776 Maria enumerated in Chanda district only 274 returned their religion as Hindu and even of the 95,358 other Gonds in the district only 25,302 were Hindu.

It is remarkable to contrast the effect on the tribal population

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 449.

[2] The quarter-inch *Ordnance Survey of India* sheet does not record this name. The three rivers which meet at Bhamragarh are the Indrawati, the Kotri (which is the Paralkot here mentioned) and the Nibra, which in this book (p. 25-7), I have called by its Maria name Nei Bherat ('Dog River').

[3] *Ordnance Survey of India*, rel. 65A, MV6750. See p. 22 for an account. The confluence of the Indrawati and Kotri or Paralkot rivers is illustrated facing p. 182 of *The Aboriginal Problem*.

[4] These are the projections into Ahiri of the Abujhmar Mountains already mentioned.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

595 161 The Census of 1931 showed that 'women generally preponderate in the more primitive tracts and men in the more advanced areas'. The aboriginal tribes have 'a high proportion of women'.[1] This was certainly true among Gond, Bharia, Binjhwar and Kawar in the Central Provinces, but the returns for the Maria and the Uraon show a lower figure for women. Here I suspect the accuracy of the returns, for there has often been a tendency among aboriginals to return lower figures of women on account of the curious suspicion that the Census inquiries are leading to a wholesale deportation of girls to England for the pleasure of the sahibs or, as I was once told, 'for the honour of Queen Victoria'.

In 1941, the figures for the chief aboriginal communities in Bastar were as follows.

	Males	Females	Total
Maria	60,015	60,095	120,110
Muria	109,512	110,142	219,654
Bhattra	5,471	5,398	10,869
Dorla	7,097	7,508	14,605
Dhurwa (incl. Parja) ..	13,208	12,611	25,819
Gond	8,344	8,276	16,620

My suspicion about the accuracy of the low returns for Maria women in 1931 is confirmed by the fact that 10 years later women outnumbered the men. Women also outnumber men among the Muria, but it must be remembered that at least 50,000 of those returning themselves as Muria were in reality Bison-horn Maria. When we turn to the Ghotul and Jhoria Muria we find another picture.

	Muria males	Muria females
Narayanpur Tahsil—North	8,390	7,975
West	691	631
South	8,647	7,833
Kondagaon Tahsil— North	16,596	16,550
South	17,049	16,506
Total ..	51,373	49,495

There is thus a deficit among the Ghotul Muria of 1,878 women, out of a rough total of 100,000, or 18 per 1,000. There is little scope, therefore, for polygynous enterprise, even though I again suspect that there are actually more women in the tribe than the Census returns admit. Wherever, as Census Officer, I was able to check returns, I found a tendency to conceal the real number of motiari.

595 In the 2,000 marriages examined, only 44 were or had been polygamous. Of these 29 men claimed that they had lived happily with two wives at a time, but 9 admitted that their experiment had not lasted very long. In 5 cases the first wife left the husband, in 4 the first wife succeeded in driving out the

[1] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XII, Part 1, p. 131.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWO

THE BISON-HORN MARIA

I

The so-called Maria of Bastar fall naturally into two divisions distinguished by many details of culture and tradition, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains and the Bison-horn Maria living to the south of the Indrawati River. A full account of both these tribes has been given by W. V. Grigson, and his book should be read by those who wish to have a fuller background of Maria life than the present volume can supply. In this chapter I will only give a brief summary of the life and customs of the Bison-horn Maria.

The Bison-horn Maria, who are distinguished from the other aboriginals of Bastar by the splendid head-dress they use for their marriage dances, numbered about 156,000 in 1931, and I estimate their present strength at about 175,000. They are distributed all over southern Bastar, among the entrancing hills of Dantewara, in the dry forests of Bijapur, among the hot but lovely lowlands of Konta, in the remote Sukma and Kutru Zamindaris. On the borders of the main Maria stock are a number of communities which really belong to it, the Koya of the extreme south, the Dorla who claim to be a superior caste and the mixed population along the banks of the Indrawati and reaching up towards the Muria country beyond Barsur. The Dorla and Koya dance in Bison-horn Maria fashion; the mixed people to the north combine the customs of the Hill Maria with their own. In the neighbourhood of Jagdalpur, the Maria gradually lose their distinctiveness as they approach the town and merge into the southern Muria.

There are few people in India more attractive than the Bison-horn Maria, physically charming, of good stature, perfect figure, finely featured with carefully tended hair, often a lovely golden-brown in colour. Both men and women are very strong; the men can carry heavy loads great distances, endure long and arduous hunting expeditions and dance all night bearing their great drums. Their health is fairly good, but they are afflicted with yaws, though the work of the

114
[161]
131
184
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147
164
[p. 11]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 Madras if it had been reasonably managed. The few 'Dorla' villages are the most miserable in Bastar.

The third sub-division is the Kolab-Sabari valley from the southern slopes of the hills at the edge of the 2,000 feet plateau and the Dantewara valley plateau to the border of the Bhadrachalam taluq of Madras on the south. The northern portion of this, the Sukma zamindari, is a punchbowl ringed by the high edges of the Jagdalpur and Dantewara plateaux from Tulsidongri in the north-east counter-clockwise to a point in the south-west of the zamindari where the foot-hills of the Gogonda-Tikanpalli hills approach the Kolab-Sabari near Chikpalli; the hills are continued across the river and the Bastar border still counter-clockwise towards Malkangiri, and thence back to Tulsidongri. There are two small detached portions of Jagdalpur tahsil in the north of the zamindari, around Kukanar and the lower waters of the Thakawara and Kumakoleng rivers respectively. South of Sukma zamindari the valley opens out again to form the main block of Konta tahsil, including the former Bhiji zamindari, the level of which falls nearly to 250 feet above the sea by Konta at its south-east corner; here the Bastar portion of the valley is very narrow, as nearly all the south of Konta tahsil is occupied by the ranges of the Golapalli mountains which at one point reach a height of more than 2,800 feet.

132 In contrast with north Bastar, with its evergreen moist forests, cool climate, abundant water-supply and often thick population,
133 south Sukma, almost all Konta, the Pamer-Kotapalli zamindari
137 and much of south Bijapur are hot dry regions of deciduous forests, deficient water and sparse population. The rivers are short stony torrents rushing down in the monsoon to the adjacent Godavari, Talper or Kolab-Sabari, and drying up often before January. Teak is the characteristic timber tree.

135 There will be found in Appendix I a statement of the areas and populations of the six tahsils and four zamindaris into which modern
● 162 Bastar is divided. Each of these administrative units is called after the name of its headquarters; except Jagdalpur with a (1931) population of 10,128, the other headquarters are only villages, and not always large villages; in 1931, of the 2,442 villages in Bastar only five had populations between 2,000 and 2,500, and forty-two populations between 1,000 and 2,000.

634 Frequent mention was made in this chapter of the smaller '*pargana*' unit. The first use that I can find of this word is in Appendix IX of Glasfurd's 1862 report, in which, of the forty-three non-zamindari sub-divisions of Bastar, seventeen are called *parganas* and twenty-six *garhs*. In Elliot's 1855 report the names are given of forty-eight *garhs* and nine taluqs into which the non-zamindari

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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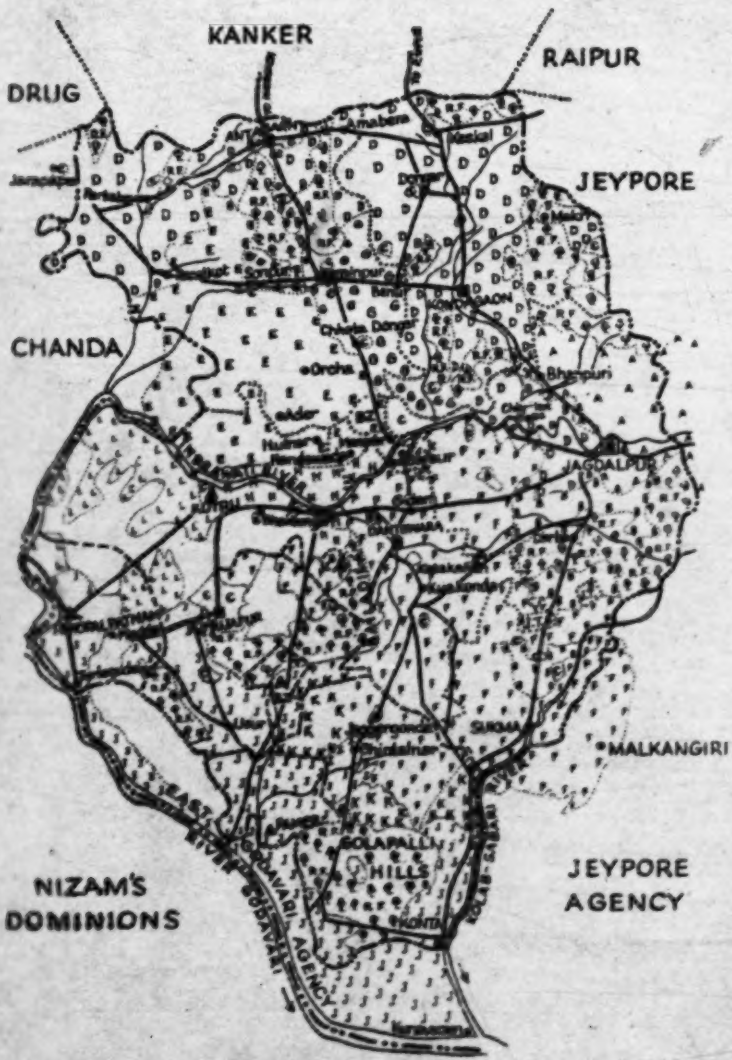
162

PLATE IV



BASTAR STATE ETHNOGRAPHIC MAP
Scale (approx.) : 1 inch= 32 miles

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
A W32 Gond A W32

Bison-horn Maria and Muria neighbours, and seldom learnt even by those State officials who are excellent interpreters in other dialects; and I fancy that the Hindi admixture is considerably less in ordinary use than in the specimens collected for the Linguistic Survey. It is certainly untrue of Parji that the name indicates rather a tribal than a linguistic difference from Gondi proper. The most marked difference of customs is their style of dancing, which resembles that of the small remnant of the Munda tribe of Gadbas still surviving in two or three villages between them and the Bhattras; they dance in rollicking circles accompanied by their own whistling or by wooden flutes, in a manner reminiscent of certain figures of the 'Lancers', and as different as their dancing dress from the Bison-horn dances of their Maria neighbours, and pleasanter to see and hear than any other dances of Bastar except the Gadba.

KEY TO PLATE IV

State or Provincial Boundary
Tribal Boundary .....
Roads, Forest
Tahsil Headquarters ■
Bhattras A
Halbas C
Marias, Abujhmar or Hill E
"Dhorias" or Murias probably once Hill Marias, now lowlanders G
Koitor of the riverain tract or Dorlas J

Tahsil or Zamindari Boundary
Roads, P.W.D.
Reserved Forests
Zamindari Headquarters A
Parjas B
Murias D
Marias, Bison-horn or Dandami F
Hill Marias influenced by Bison-horn Marias H
Mixed Dorla & Bison-horn Maria, or latter exposed to Telugu influence K

Mixed Dorla & Hill Maria, or Hill Maria who have almost become Dorla L

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of the inferiority complex palmed off his name Dor Koi or Lowland Koi on the ignorant Telugu as Dora Koi, and has proceeded to object to the name Koi and demand always the name Dora or Dorla, simultaneously impressing on the Telugu how superior he is to the Highlander.

I have verified these points by personal investigation supplemented by reliable information from assistants directed to make enquiries on specified lines. When the traveller descends the Aranpur pass, he finds the villagers at the foot of the pass in such villages as Gumadasaka, Bikrampalli, Kondasaoli, Kamargudem, Kodmair, Karrigudem, Bayampalli, Kundair, Ursangal, Durandarbha, Michiguda, Vadri, Silger, Mandimarka, Singaram, Tarlaguda Banjepalli and Durma inhabited by people indistinguishable from the Bison-horn Marias above the pass, or by Maria Lohars. The only difference is a noticeable Telugu influence on their Maria dialect. At Jaggergonda, six or seven miles beyond the foot of the pass, he meets the first Telugu-speaking non-Koitor village, and just beyond this comes to the first Dorla villages, Rajpenta, Achkat and Kamaram. Southwards in the country covered by the new Ordnance Survey one-inch maps, on sheet 65 F/3, Singaram in square B1, Puvarti, Junaguda and Rayagudem in A2, Chimili, Surpanguda, Kistaram and Morpalli in B2, all the villages in A3, and Tadmetla, the only village in B3, are Dorla villages. Generally speaking, all the riverain tracts of Bhopalpatnam zamindari, Bijapur tahsil, Kotapalli-Pamer zamindari and southern Konta tahsil are Dorla villages, though here and there will be found Gottor Koya, i.e. Bison-horn Maria villages in Konta Dorla country such as Tokanpalli, Burkapalli and Chintaguppa (in map 65 F/3, square C3).

These Dorla at census refused to call themselves Koya, and were not returned as such but as Gonds; and they are the principal element in the 19,426 professing tribal religion out of the 24,407 Bastaris returned as Gonds in the 1931 census. The 4,981 Hindu Gonds returned are mostly Dorlas from the Lingagiri *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam and the adjacent parts of Bijapur, who have become Lingayats, wearing a *rudraksha* bead in a silver box or a Shiva *lingam* slung on a thread.

It will be clear, therefore, that the 9,988 persons returned at the census as Koyas are not the Dorla or lowland Koyas returned as Koyas in the East Godavari Agency. They are the Bison-horn Marias living at the foot of the passes in Konta and Sukma and slightly influenced by Telugu contacts. Of the Koya dialect of Gondi returned in 1931 as spoken by 6,172 persons in Bastar, however, it is probable that it represents the speech of the Dorla

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison-horn Maria

Koyas, since it alone, being greatly corrupted by Telugu, presents any marked difference from the Maria and Muria dialects.

Intermarriage is frequent between the Bison-horn Marias of the plateaux and those at the foot of the passes, but now never occurs between them and the Dorla, the latter having become a true endogamous group.[1]

The Koyas of the Malkangiri taluq of Jeypore, across the Bastar border from the Sukma zamindari and north-east Konta, seem on the contrary to be Bison-horn Marias.[2] Intermarriage still takes place between the Marias of Sukma and the 'Koyas' of Malkangiri; and these same Sukma clans intermarry with the clans on the Dantewara and Jagdalpur plateaux. In fact, intermarriage is not unknown between Dantewara and Malkangiri clans, and it is not unusual for a man wanted by the police in Dantewara to abscond to his fellow-tribesmen, possibly relatives, in Malkangiri. The headmen of Edpal and Dodpal on the Dantewara-Sukma border stated that the Koitor of Malkangiri had migrated there some generations back from the Bailadila mountains, and named relatives among them belonging to the Sodi clan. Bailadila had in fact been practically deserted long before its inclusion in the Bailadila Forest Reserve; and some superstition attaches to it which prevents surrounding Maria clans from settling there, though more than one attempt has been made to found permanent forest villages so as to obviate the labour now entailed on the villages below when the Maharaja and his officials go there for the hot weather. The most tempting offers fail to attract settlers; even as labourers the Marias profess fear of staying on the hills unless accompanied by a European, over whom Elma Pen, the god of the mountain, has no power. The only chance, they say, of re-settling the place is to get hold of a descendant of the original inhabitant, preferably of the clan-priest (*modul-waddas*), who knows the godlings and demons of the hills.

[p.58 is blank]

[1] Glasfurd in the ethnological papers already quoted commented thus on physical differences between the lowlanders and highlanders of South Bastar. 'The Koys are very dark, quite as much so as the Telingas; while the Gottawars and Marias are generally copper-coloured, some being quite fair. Their faces are rather broad than long, and they have small eyes, which, with the almost entire absence of hair on the face, gives these altogether a strongly marked Tartar-like physiognomy.'

[2] It is important to remember that the Dorla also use bison-horn or buffalo-horn dancing head-dresses, and in other ways also show that they were once the same people as those whom I term Bison-horn Marias, as indeed the traditions of both peoples have been seen to assert.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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[3] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. 65A, MV6750. See p. 22 for an account. The confluence of the Indrawati and Kotri or Paralkot rivers is illustrated facing p. 182 of *The Aboriginal Problem*.

[4] These are the projections into Ahiri of the Abujhmar Mountains already mentioned.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

563 Pendri is now mainly a Marar village, its 451 inhabitants including only some forty Marias and sixty Halbas. They seem able to live in easy symbiosis with all Gonds, to whom they impart much of their agricultural skill. Their intrusion into these tribal areas, provided it is controlled, is therefore not a bad thing.

178 At Jharapapra there was a once familiar sight, the Halba log-god of the zamindari family, in type precisely similar to the clan-gods of the Hill Marias and the Halba log-gods at Chingnur near Bare Dongar and at other Halba centres in Bastar. The *Kutumb-Naik* headman of the Bare Dongar Halbas had told me in 1929 how some years before the then zamindar of Jharapapra had sent a party of Halbas to carry off the Chingnur log-god to Jharapapra, and how the god had resented this and 'flown' back to Chingnur from the first halting place of the god-snatchers.

000 Of the visits to Aundhi[1] and, next day, to Manpur[2] in Koracha zamindari and some way along the Manpur-Panabaras road, there is little to say except that, generally speaking, the Drug Court of Wards regime in Panabaras and Aundhi seemed to be progressive, and the Drug District Council to do more for the Partially Excluded Areas than its Chanda counterpart.

●[162] In the four Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug the aboriginals form well over sixty per cent. of the population. The 427 worst feature of these estates is that there is a *thekadari* system, originally akin to that once prevalent in Bastar, and that many of the *thekadars*, especially those on whom the semi-permanent 'protected' status has been conferred, are non-aboriginal oppressors of the local Gonds and Marias, while comparatively few aboriginal headmen, except in Panabaras and Ambagarh-Chauki zamindaris, have been declared protected. The whole original conception was wrong in that it involved conversion of the tribal headman or *gaontia* into a lessee or *thekadar* of his village. Various examples have been given in *The Aboriginal Problem*[3] of the way in which these Maria headmen were thus transformed into *thekadars*, and then lost their villages in the great famines, or for other causes, to non-aboriginal intruders, who now rack-rent and oppress the surviving aboriginal tenants. We may give here one example, that of the village of Dokhla in Panabaras zamindari. This village was settled before 1861 by a Maria headman and ten other Marias. The headman absconded during the great famines at the turn of the century. Another Gond was then given the lease, but ultimately could not pay the lease-money and had to surrender the village.

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. MQ5349.
[2] Ibidem, Sheet 64D, ref. MQ8366.
[3] Pp. 79-81.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

are excellent, and there are few places to which a bullock-cart and even a car cannot be taken with a little care.

Although the Muria area is divided officially into the two tahsils I have described, the people themselves think much more in terms of the smaller administrative unit, the pargana, the Manjhi or Chief of which is the court of appeal in all tribal disputes. The parganas of Narayanpur are clearly defined blocks of territory with considerable homogeneity of custom and fashion within their borders. But in Kondagaon, the parganas are very broken up. The Keskal, Kongur, Chalka and Mardapal Parganas are well defined, but the Hatiya and Sonawal Parganas, to name no others, are scattered all over the tahsil, and it must be hard for the Pargana Manjhi to exercise any sort of control over the area in his charge.

It has always been a tradition of the State to allow the village panchayats, which we may call judicial committees of village elders, to have jurisdiction over most tribal offences with a final appeal to the Maharaja. Since 1932 the jurisdiction of the village courts has been greatly extended to include cases of simple hurt and assault, minor thefts, mischief, trespass, adultery and enticement. They can also settle civil claims up to a value of twenty-five rupees. The Pargana Manjhi are not personally members of these courts, but to them lies any appeal from their findings. These men, who have the privilege of wearing red turbans, are a useful link between the aboriginals and the Administration. Though some of them abuse their position and tend to divert fines to their own use, they are on the whole a first-rate body of men, and their friendship is invaluable to the investigator.

The tradition of local self-government, so firmly established in the State, is an important factor in the conditions that make the ghotul and its organization and discipline possible.

II. The Tribal Population of Bastar

The tribal population of Bastar is varied and interesting. In order to simplify my description I will adopt the names given to the tribes by Grigson, though it must be remembered that, convenient though these often are, they are not always the names used by the people themselves.

The Hill Maria are the least influenced by the outside world and have retained most of their religious and cultural institutions. They live in the Abujhmar Mountains and there were 11,500 of them in 1931, and probably some 13,000 now. They are both shy and friendly, an attractive people, cultivating their desolate and lonely hills with axe and fire; their life and customs have been fully described by Grigson.

The Bison-horn Maria, a great tribe of some 175,000 persons, live south of the Indrawati in the Dantewara, Konta, Jagdalpur and Bijapur Tahsils and in the Sukma Zamindari. Grigson has studied them in less detail than the Hill Maria.[1] They have very little contact with the Muria of the north, except that they meet parties of them coming down from the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas to dance at the great Marhai at Ghotpal. Their characteristic dance is the marriage dance with a splendid bison-horn headdress. A megalithic culture survives among them, and there are traces of a ghotul system long since moribund.

[1] A detailed study of one aspect of their life will be found in my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); some of their folk-tales are given in my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

The Bhattra. In 1931 the Bhattra numbered 36,611 in Bastar, but there are many more of them in Jeypore and Kalahandi. In Bastar they are strongest in the north-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil, but a 'Bhattra movement' is spreading

THE DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINAL TRIBES IN BASTAR STATE

among the Muria of Kondagaon. Its main features are the wearing of a sacred thread and the abolition of the ghotul. They are said to have come with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal, and they are rapidly becoming a Hindu caste like the Raj Gond, to whom they are probably related.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

101 *The Dhurwa*, or Parja, live in the south-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari. In Bastar there are about 20,000 of them, but there [162] are many more of the allied Poroja across the border in Orissa. Their dancing is distinctive, but many of its elements can be paralleled among the Muria.

The Gadaba. There are very few of these left in Bastar. In 1931 only 398 were returned. The Bastar Gadaba have retained little that is characteristic of their tribe. They have no connexion with the Muria of the north.

The Halba. This is a powerful and important near-Hindu caste, probably descended from the old military garrisons stationed in the larger villages. [162] There were 18,427 of them in 1941, of whom 4599 were in the Narayanpur and 3149 in the Kondagaon Tahsil. Their language, Halbi, is used throughout the State; many of the Gondi-speaking Muria use it as a second language, though Chhattisgarhi is now competing with it. The best folk-poetry there is in Bastar is composed in Halbi. The Halba sometimes serve as priests of the Anga clan-gods in the Muria country and the caste has its own Anga similar to those of the Muria.

[162] *The Dhakar* is a new caste—9596 strong—recruited from the offspring of mixed Halba and Kshattri unions. Many of its members, by their intelligence and ability, have won good positions in the State.

The Jagdalpur Muria, or Raja Muria, are in my opinion the least attractive people in Bastar. Like the Raj Gond, they consider themselves superior to the Maria or Muria of the north; like the Raj Gond they have lost most of their own culture without assimilating that of the Hindus. It is possible that the Raja Muria are civilized Bison-horn Maria rather than civilized Muria, but it is impossible to be sure. They have been greatly exposed to external influence, from the Palace, from Orissa, from the cult of Danteshwari; many of their villages are leased to outsiders. Grigson estimated that there were about [162] 32,000 Raja Muria in 1931; there may be some 40,000 now.

Of these tribes the most important in their influence on the Muria are the Hill Maria. The Bhattra and Raja Muria exercise a disintegrating effect upon them in the south. The Halba live in scattered little communities throughout the Muria area and influence those who live in their immediate neighbourhood.

Other castes living among the Muria are the Rawat, the Mahara, the Kalar, the Lohar, the Ghasia, the Ganda, the Nahar and the Pardhan.

The Rawat are the cowherds living in almost every village. They are also known as Ahir or Kopa. Their children are usually admitted to membership of the ghotul. The Rawat's association with the cow ensures him a good social position. As Eha says, 'His family having been connected for many generations with the sacred animal, the cow, he enjoys a certain consciousness of moral respectability, like a man whose uncles are deans or canons'.

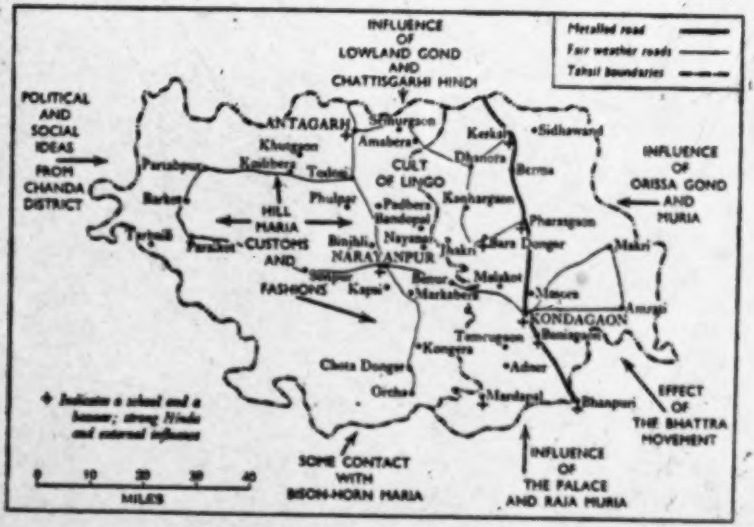
[162] *The Mahara*, who numbered 32,787 in 1941, the *Ganda* (7130) and the *Panka* (4178), on the other hand, have officially a very low status. No one is 'untouchable' in a Muria village, but children of these castes are not usually [58] welcomed in the ghotul and a liaison or marriage with a Mahara or Ganda is regarded as unforgivable. Once at Lamkhanar I met a Muria, Duaru, who went out of his mind because his wife eloped with a Ganda. On the other hand, these people have an important place in tribal life. They are the spinners and weavers of the countryside and supply the Muria with much of their cloth. They generally provide the village watchman or Kotwar and they thus have the duty of reporting Muria births and deaths. Mahara musicians attend the more sophisticated Muria weddings. More important still, they are famous for their powers of divination as Siraha. Scores of Mahara mediums appear at the greater Muria festivals and at the Dassera

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

celebrations in Jagdalpur. Many—but not all—of these people are aboriginal in everything but name; in feature, colour, dress and manners they are hardly to be distinguished from their Muria neighbours.

The Lohar living in Muria villages are generally tribal Lohar, not members of the great Hindu caste that bears this name. Muria and Maria who take to iron-work are separated from the rest of the tribe and have now been formed into an endogamous community of their own. The Muria generally regard the Muria-Lohar as somewhat inferior, but their antagonism does not go so far as to ban Lohar boys and girls from the ghotul. In 1941 there were 7877 Lohar in the whole State and 2718 in the two Muria tahsils.



SKETCH-MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCES AFFECTING THE LIFE AND CUSTOMS OF THE MURIA

Many *Kalar* are obviously aboriginals who have taken to the liquor business. Well-to-do Muria occasionally take contracts for distilling and selling mahua spirit. There are 13,451 Kalar in the whole State.

The Ghasia, of whom there are only 1704, are regarded with considerable scorn by the aboriginals who suspect them of desecrating their graves to obtain the 'grave-furniture' buried with the corpses. Yet they owe much to this caste, which is responsible for making, by the *cire-perdue* process, the brass images and horns used in Muria worship, buttock-bells for dancing and ladles for serving liquor.

The Pardhan. There are only a few members of this most interesting tribe, allied to but distinct from the Gond, in Bastar. But there is a Pardhan

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

181 Pujari for the shrine of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon and Pardhan minstrels and priests are to be found in some Muria villages. Pardhan boys and girls are admitted to membership of the ghotul.

I found *Nahar* at Kuntpadar and at Kabonga and neighbouring villages. Their boys and girls had joined the ghotul and were taking a leading part in its affairs. Elsewhere this tribe has a very low position: it is mainly to be found in the west Central Provinces and Berar and is regarded as derived from a mixture of Bhil and Korku.

III. The Muria

Kariya mur ke manse ān. We are the dark people.—Muria saying

The word 'Muria' is used in Bastar to mean, generally, an aboriginal. In this sense it has long been applied by State officials to all the primitive tribes except the Maria of the Abujhmar. In recent years the people themselves have also widely adopted it. Throughout the Dantewara Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari, the tribe which Grigson calls 'Bison-horn Maria' returned themselves as 'Muria' at the 1941 Census. There are also the Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil. There is thus a good deal of confusion about the proper classification of the Bastar aboriginals. Let me therefore say at once that when I use the term 'Muria' in this book, I apply it to the aboriginals of the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils whose culture centres round the ghotul. Grigson estimated that there were some 78,000 of these in 1931; there are about 100,000 now. [162]

The name Muria has been derived from *mur*, the palas tree, or from *mur*, a root.[1] There is no apparent reason why the Muria should be named after the palas tree, which is neither a totem, nor specially honoured by them, nor even common in their territory. But the derivation of the word from *mur*, a root, has much to commend it. *Mur* may also mean 'permanent', as in *mur podor*, a permanent or regular name as opposed to a nickname: the Muria, in contrast to the Hill Maria, have permanent settlements and dwellings.

Early writers were impressed by the industry and cleanliness of the Muria. They are good cultivators, said Sir Benjamin Robertson in 1891, 'active, hardy and well-behaved and their villages are generally clean and comfortable'.[2] Hislop describes them as more civilized than the Maria, forming 'the bulk of the agricultural population in the north and centre'. Beyond the eastern frontier, however, 'where they mix with the Khonds in Patna, Kharond and Jeypur, they are somewhat wilder and devoted to the chase'.[3]

184 We must now survey these Muria of the north, for they are not all of one family, and the differences between them are interesting and significant. I will begin with the western parganas, lying to the west and north of the great mass of the Abujhmar Hills. It is in these hills that the key to many a Muria custom will be found. The people of these parganas seem to be Hill Maria who first settled in the plains and then came under strong alien

[1] R. V. Russell and R. B. Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), Vol. III, p. 64.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 186.
[3] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces* (Nagpur, 1866), Part I, p. 22.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

184 and Drug Districts. How far the institution was distributed in former times must remain a mystery. Hislop describes the Gaiti Gond as 'calling themselves Koitars . . . Their chief peculiarity, which I have not found among common Gonds, though it may exist even among them, is to have in each village a separate tenement set apart for the occupancy of unmarried men during the night. This they call a *gotalghar* (empty bed house). In some villages there is a like provision made for the unmarried Gaiti women . . . When the Gaitis have returned in the evening from their work in the jungle, where they are very industrious in cultivation and cutting timber, all the families go to their respective houses for their supper, after which the young men retire to their common dwelling, where around a blazing fire, they dance for an hour or two, each having a small drum suspended in front from his waist, which he beats as he moves about while the young women sit at no great distance accompanying the performance with a song.'[1]

●[162] The Census of 1891 returned 5521 of these Gaiti who were then distributed in the Sakoli Tahsil of Bhandara (where they numbered 665), the Brahmapuri Tahsil of Chanda (215) and the north of Bastar (4535).[2] About this W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'The reference to Brahmapuri Tahsil dates back to the time before the separate Garhchiroli Tahsil was created. The reference therefore is probably to the people of the Garhchiroli Zamindaris such as Jharapara and Murramgaon, and possibly to the zamindaris of Karacha, Aundhi and Pannabaras now in Drug District which were in Chanda before the foundation of Drug. Some of these zamindaris border on Antagarh Tahsil and the local Gond is sometimes referred to as Maria and sometimes as Gaita, just as in Sironcha Tahsil the Hill Maria is sometimes called Gaita because his headman is known as the Gaita of the village.'

619 582 With all these differences do the Muria regard themselves as a single tribe? Can any Muria intermarry with any other Muria family? Do they eat together? Have they any connexion with the outside world?

Such problems as these are not easy to solve, for they do not often arise in practice and there are few precedents. Geographical factors tend to split the Muria up into roughly endogamous groups, but there is no rule about this. A Muria boy from the extreme west can go to a ghotul in the east of Kondagaon and find himself at home and perhaps find himself a wife. The ghotul is a fundamental bond, and in theory at least all Muria who have it as part of their culture can marry each other. In practice, the Jhoria Muria of the south-west do not often come into touch with the Gond Muria of the north and east, and marriages between them are rare.

As for different tribes and tribes outside Bastar—the Muria of the northern parganas often intermarry with the Kanker Gond (who also have the ghotul system and are really Muria). The Jhoria Muria marry Hill Maria of the appropriate clans whenever geographical conditions allow them to do so. The same is sometimes true of the Muria of the Paralkot area. Those Muria who have migrated from Jeypore naturally marry their relations who have remained in the Orissa territory. Bindo, the old Muria leader of Benur, told me that 'we marry Kanker Gond and the Bhattra Muria of Jagdalpur (but not the Raja Muria) for we are of the same family; but now we live in the hills and they on the plains. Those who live near the Raja are the true Raja Muria, and they look down on us.' Bindo is here referring to the thirty or forty thousand Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil to the south of Kondagaon. These Muria have

[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part I, p. 22.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 183.

22

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX ONE

CLASSIFIED LIST OF GHOTUL VILLAGES

X883
361
162

This Appendix gives a fairly complete list of ghotul-villages, so far as I was able to discover them during the Census operations of 1940-1: the figures in the third and fourth columns are those for chelik and motiari at that date. They were obtained through the revenue officials and in all the marked villages were carefully checked by members of my party. I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the figures in the unmarked villages.

In order that the reader can see the extent of my inquiries, and the amount of research achieved or unavoidably omitted in any area, I have added to the list of ghotul the following information:

*** means that I myself have visited the ghotul or that I am intimately acquainted with its members. Two or more of my colleagues also have visited the place, and all information has been carefully checked. Those ghotul that I know better than others have their names printed in large type. The initials S.H. stand for Mr Shamrao Hivale.

** means that the village has been visited by two or more members of my party, and that I have reasonably full and confirmed knowledge of the ghotul and its affairs.

* means that the village has been visited by members of the party, but that I have only general information about it.

The letter 'J' in the second column means that the ghotul is of the older *jodidār* type; the letters 'AB' mean that it is of the *adal-badal* type where partners are changed.

Any future investigator should not rely too much on these notes. A ghotul which was large and flourishing in 1941 may have entirely changed its character by 1947. Boys and girls grow up and make a once dull ghotul interesting: others marry and deprive a formerly lively ghotul of its most prominent members.

The Kondagaon Tahsil

Amrawati Pargana

A pargana to the extreme east of Kondagaon, lying in and round the Makri Reserved Forest. There are not many Muria villages and most of them are under Oriya or Bhattra influence.

Dadi ..	..	9	7
* Gudsara ..	AB	10	8
Gumri ..	..	7	7

Aonri Pargana

This pargana comprises villages scattered over the northern plateau to the east of the Keskal and Kongur Parganas. The ghotul are said to be of the *adal-badal* type, and the chelik dance the Mahna Dandar and not the Pus Kolang. Marriages are celebrated in the bride's house.

Aonri ..	..	18	15
Charbera ..	..	10	8
Herwakodo	..	7	4
Khetarpal	..	15	12
Kongera ..	..	8	6
Kosmi ..	..	10	9
Nawagarh	..	20	15
Nayanar ..	..	12	10

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
361
162

Nirachhindli	..	..	15	11
Palora	..	..	9	9
Sawala	..	..	16	15
Sonpur	..	..	8	7

Bamni Pargana

A small pargana south-west of Kondagaon town, in the neighbourhood of the Golawand Reserved Forest.

*** Bamni	..	J	30	22
* Borgaon	..	AB	8	7
* Dhansuli	..	AB	9	9
* Totar	..	AB	10	9

Bangoli Pargana

The Bangoli Pargana consists of a few villages in the west-central area, adjoining the Narayanpur Tahsil. Chelik and motiari dress in almost Jhoria fashion.

** Banchapai		AB	10	9	
** Bangoli	..	AB	10	8	
*** CHINGRI	..	J	15	14	Camped here 21-3-41. Many small *kotokal* stones.
** Chiyanar	..	AB	10	9	
** Kehalakot	..	AB	11	10	Met and talked with several boys in 1941.
** Morenga	..	J	18	14	

Chalka Pargana

This is one of the Jhoria Parganas, and its villages are friendly and attractive. It lies to the west of the tahsil, parallel to the Narayanpur-Chota Dongar road, which is only five miles away across low hills. The river Baordig runs through the pargana.

*** ADNAR	..	AB	14	12	An important religious centre. Camped here on 31-3-41 for festival described at pp. 218ff.
*** Alwar Jogi		AB	5	4	Camped here 30-3-41.
* Alwar Karati		J	7	5	
* Banagaon	..	AB	7	8	
* Barko	..	AB	8	8	
* Bawri	..	J	7	5	
*** BAYANAR	..	J	18	16	A pretty village under a hill, whereon are many shrines. Camped here in March, 1941.
** Cherang	..	J	10	9	
* Chichdongri		AB	12	11	
* Junganiban		AB	15	12	
*** KEJANG	..	AB	15	13	Very charming and interesting boys of whom I saw a lot at Bayanar and Telanga.
* Kongera	..	AB	8	7	
* Korobera	..	J	7	7	
* Maragaon	..	AB	10	10	
** Mungwal	..	AB	12	9	
*** NARIYA	..	AB	14	12	An interesting ghotul with friendly boys. Visited 22-3-41.
* Nugali	..	AB	9	7	
* Pala	..	AB	12	12	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
361
162●

APPENDIX ONE

*** Temrugaon	J	13	14	On the banks of the Baordig. Camped 22-24-3-41.
*** Telanga ..	J	12	11	Visited 27-3-41. Saw a wedding and incident described on p. 521.
* Toram ..	J	9	7	

Hatiya Pargana

This pargana, whose name implies a 'bazaar' or civilized area, is a very large and scattered one, extending over the whole area north of Kondagaon. It includes Dongrigarh only four miles from Kondagaon, and Sidhawand forty miles to the north. Generally the Pus Kolang and Diwali dances are not performed; marriages are at the bride's house; and the megalithic culture has practically disappeared.

*** Alor ..	AB	72	58	Magnificent ghotul and dancing. S.H. visited on 17-4-41 and V.E. on 15-11-41. Pillar to Lingo Pen.
Arandi ..	..	30	24	
Baijanpuri	..	13	14	
Bail ..	..	10	10	
*** Bara Dongar	AB	7	6	Beautiful village with Hindu temples. Bazaar and school. Small Muria hamlet with ghotul. Visited in 1937 and several times afterwards.
* Barbatar ..	AB	15	12	
Bayalpur ..	..	7	6	
* Belgaon ..	AB	8	7	
*** Berma ..	J	23	17	Friendship begun on 12-11-40, other contacts on 3-7-3-41 and 1-3-12-41. Admirable headman and friendly children.
* Bhandarwandi	AB	13	12	
** Bhiragaon	J	10	10	
* Bhumka ..	AB	11	9	
*** Bisrampuri	AB	79	57	Visited on 7-11-40.
** Chandagaon	AB	10	11	
Chhindli ..	..	23	12	
Chichari ..	..	8	9	
* Chilputi ..	AB	23	22	
* Dariya ..	AB	5	6	
Deodongar	..	16	14	
Deohardull	..	9	8	
* Deokhargaon	AB	9	11	
Dondra ..	..	10	8	
*** Dongrigura	AB	17	16	Camped here with B. S. Guha 22-2-41. Guha took measurements of Muria here and in neighbouring villages.
Gare ..	..	16	14	
Guhaborand	..	9	8	
Hakla ..	..	7	7	
Hatma ..	..	9	8	
Honarwandi	..	9	6	
Jorekura ..	..	11	10	
Kalgaon ..	..	8	8	
** Karagaon ..	J	13	14	
* Karmari ..	AB	8	4	
Khairawand	..	14	17	
Khalari ..	..	12	18	
* Khargaon	AB	21	15	
Kilra ..	..	8	8	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
361
162

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

** Kohkametta	J	9	7	
*** KOKORI ..	AB	15	14	Camped here 22-31-12-41. A good headman, but ghotul disturbed as result of scandal the previous year. Good boys' dancing.
* Korabargaon	J	6	7	
Kosahadnli	..	12	13	
Kumarbargaon	..	11	6	
Machhli ..	..	5	8	
*** MAGHEDA ..	AB	20	15	Delightful village near the Jeypore border. Visited 30-12-41.
* Manjhlborand	AB	13	11	
Manjhichera	..	21	19	
Masukokori	..	15	8	
Nalajhar ..	..	6	7	
Narna ..	..	8	5	
*** PALARI ..	J	26	23	Visited on 26-2-42 with B. S. Guha. Very friendly ghotul.
Parond ..	..	14	15	
Patla ..	..	8	5	
*** Pendrawand	AB	10	9	Visited 6-11-40.
Pitechuwa..	..	7	5	
* Pusapal ..	AB	8	6	
*** SIDHAWAND	AB	20	14	Visited 3-7-11-40 and 3-7-3 41 for a wedding. Many other contacts with chelik.
Siwnipal ..	..	10	8	
* Taragaon ..	J	9	8	
Tewsa ..	..	8	10	
** Themgaon..	AB	10	8	
Toskopal ..	..	27	18	
*** ULERA ..	AB	21	16	Pretty village, visited 26-12-41, with excellent headman and large ghotul. Near Jeypore border. Falconry and fairly good dancing.
Undri ..	..	11	6	
Yeranga ..	..	27	30	

Keskal Pargana

The Keskal Pargana is fairly homogeneous, in the north-west corner of the tahsil. Much of it is composed of the hills known as the Mari Hills on the edge of the plateau overlooking Kanker State. As always where external influence is strong the Muria here are suspicious and unfriendly. The chelik dance the Pus Kolang, know the legend of Lingo, but marriages are in the bride's house, and memorial menhirs are not erected.

*** Amgaon ..	J	20	15	Visited 7-11-40. Good dancing and games.
Amaguhan	..	5	7	
Badra ..	..	6	6	
* Batrali ..	AB	11	12	
Chikladih ..	..	8	9	
Harwel ..	..	12	10	
Jamgaon ..	..	6	6	
Khale Chandeli	..	13	12	
Kodobhat	..	8	7	
Kudalwahi	..	9	5	
Manikpur ..	..	12	13	
Matenga ..	..	16	12	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

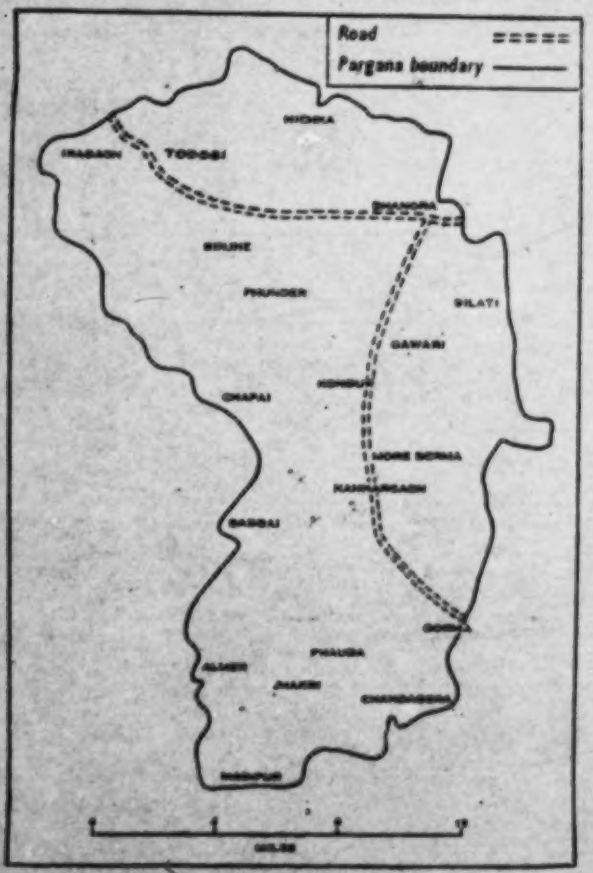
APPENDIX ONE

** Mokpal	..	AB	10	9
* Salebhat	..	AB	12	9
* Sargipal	..	AB	7	8
Umradah	..	..	7	3
Upamurmend		..	11	9

883 X
361
162

Konqur Pargana

This delightful pargana contains some of the most characteristic ghotul in the State. It lies between Bara Dongar to the east and the Bara Jhorian, Kolur, Baragaon and Benur Parganas to the west. As you move across it you leave



SKETCH-MAP OF THE KONQUR PARGANA

[491]

typical Koudagaon villages where the Chait Dandar is danced and the boys have little decoration, and come to as typical Jhoria villages, where the Lingo legend

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X383
361
167

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

is known, the Pus Kolang and Diwali are danced, marriages are celebrated in the bridegroom's house, and a full megalithic culture survives. There is a range of pleasant hills in the east of the pargana.

***	Almer ..	AB	17	15	Visited 23-4-41.
	Amgaon ..	..	9	8	
*	Badgai ..	AB	23	25	
*	Baniagaon	AB	10	9	
*	Banjora ..	AB	10	5	
*	Barda ..	AB	13	8	
**	Bargaon ..	AB	23	17	
	Barwar ..	..	11	12	
*	Belgaon ..	AB	8	7	
*	Bhatgaon ..	J	11	8	
	Bhongapal ..	..	12	10	
***	BINJHE ..	AB	41	37	Camped here 10-12-41.
**	Bokrabera ..	AB	22	19	
*	Botha ..	J	9	7	
**	Buiki Junganar	AB	15	13	
***	CHANDABERA	AB	24	17	Visited with S.H. 12-14-11-41. Admirable headman and ghotul.
***	Chaniyagaon	AB	34	23	
**	Chapai ..	J	15	13	
	Chhindlibera	..	9	9	
*	Churegaon	AB	20	17	
*	Daure ..	J	8	7	
*	Deogaon ..	AB	12	9	
***	Dhanora ..	AB	20	28	Visited 11-12-41. Shrine of Kanda Dokara, Lingo's brother.
	Dundaberma	..	11	9	
*	Eragaon ..	AB	14	12	
*	Gadar ..	AB	10	9	
**	Gawari ..	AB	14	11	
***	GORMA ..	J	20	22	An important village. Saw funeral on 10-11-41. Camp from 7-12-11-41 with S.H.
	Hichka ..	..	10	9	
*	Iragaon ..	AB	9	7	
	Jamgaon ..	..	7	8	
***	JHAKRI ..	AB	17	11	A fascinating village among hills. Friendly and informative ghotul. Visited with S.H. on 11-11-41.
*	Kalepal ..	AB	8	6	
**	Kanagaon	AB	18	16	
***	KANHARGAON	J	13	8	Camp here from 4-12-41 to 22-12-41. Most friendly and interesting.
*	Karmari ..	AB	12	13	
	Karraormetta	..	21	19	
*	Kawagaon	AB	9	9	
**	Khandsara	AB	9	9	
	Khanlikurd	..	10	11	
	Khawlikala	..	9	7	
*	Kokarajunganar	AB	8	9	
*	Kondapakhna	AB	7	8	
***	Kongur ..	AB	62	49	An important village, the headquarters of the pargana.
*	Korgaon ..	AB	19	14	
*	Korkoti ..	AB	10	10	
*	Kotpar ..	J	8	6	
*	Mainpur ..	AB	7	7	

853 X
361
162

APPENDIX ONE

* Markara ..	AB	16	14	
Misri ..	..	6	5	
* More ..	AB	5	7	
*** More Berma	J	24	21	One of the friendliest villages in Bastar. Adjoins Kanhargaon, where I camped 4-22-12-41.
* Net ..	AB	6	5	
* Oragaon ..	AB	7	7	
* Padde ..	AB	8	6	
** Palna ..	AB	10	8	
Parali ..	..	5	3	
** Pharsagaon	J	14	12	
*** Phauda ..	AB	20	15	Visited with S.H. 9-11-41. A large lively Jhoria village. Chelik danced at Dongrigura, 25-2-42.
*** Phunder ..	AB	45	39	Visited 8-12-41.
* Randhna ..	AB	13	9	
** Silati ..	AB	11	7	
Timri ..	..	11	9	
*** Todosi ..	AB	27	25	Visited 9-3-38 with S.H. A rather dull village.
* Torand ..	J	9	8	
* Toyapal ..	AB	6	5	
Turki ..	..	7	3	
Umla ..	..	10	10	
* Uramdbera	AB	9	9	

Kopra Pargana

A small pargana east of the main Keskal-Jagdalpur road, and a little north of Pharsagaon.

* Kopra ..	AB	27	21	
* Korhobera .	J	15	12	
Kuldadih ..	..	6	5	
Nawkabera	..	17	11	
* Taraibera ..	AB	16	15	

Makri Pargana

This pargana lies north of the Amrawati Pargana, in and around the Makri Reserved Forest and a forest reserve described by Grigson as 'a sportsman's paradise full of buffalo, bison, barasing and all the deer of Central India'.

*** Baghbera ..	AB	19	15	A pleasant village, with very friendly ghotul near the Jeypore border. Visited 28-12-41.
Khuri ..	..	8	5	
Lubha ..	..	16	11	
Pirhapal ..	..	7	7	
*** Randhna	AB	21	18	A pretty place among hills. Megalithic substitutes. Legend of Usarengi Palli. Visited 30-12-41.
Sarsa ..	AB	5	4	
** Sorna ..	AB	15	13	

Mardapal Pargana

A large pargana in the extreme south-west of the tahsil. Chota Dongar and the approach to the Abujhmar is only a few miles from its western boundary. It has

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
361
162

the Golawand Forest on its eastern side and the Baordig river flows through it. Although it is a typical Jhoria pargana, the ghotul has almost entirely disappeared, probably through the influence of Raja Muria from Jagdalpur Tahsil which borders it. But chelik and motiari in full dress go to dance at marriages and festivals. They go as far as the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Marhai in the north and the Ghotpal Marhai in the south. All the intimacies of ghotul life appear to be preserved, even though the buildings have gone.

***	Esalnar ..	AB	18	16	An important and interesting ghotul. Met the chelik and motiari of this and Rengagondi on several occasions. Since the establishment of the Golawand Forest Reserve, Esalnar has been placed in the Bhanuni Pargana.
***	Rengagondi	J	18	15	

Sampur Pargana

A pargana with very scattered villages in the area to the north of Kondagaon.

*	Athgaon ..	AB	6	9	
*	Babai ..	AB	25	19	
*	Badra ..	AB	8	9	
	Balenga ..	..	22	19	
*	Balond ..	AB	25	23	
	Bamskot ..	..	28	23	
***	Bhanpuri	AB	21	18	Visited 31-10-41-2-11-41. A good village. Saw the 'Diwali-Werk' and appointment of a Diwan.
*	Bhiragaon	J	10	9	
	Budra ..	..	14	13	
**	Charkai ..	AB	23	19	
	Chichari ..	..	12	15	
	Gattipalna	..	10	3	
*	Girola ..	AB	12	11	
	Jarkongera	..	14	12	
***	Jungani ..	AB	27	19	Witnessed the boys and girls doing the Malma Dandar on 2-4-41.
	Kibaibalenga	..	10	7	
*	Kokori ..	AB	24	19	
	Kosagaon ..	..	4	3	
**	Libagaon ..	AB	31	31	
*	Lubha ..	AB	8	7	
**	Otenda ..	AB	34	29	
	Pasangi ..	..	10	6	
	Pirhapal ..	..	11	12	
**	Rajpur ..	AB	20	18	
	Satgaon ..	..	5	4	
***	Sirai ..	AB	17	15	Saw the motiari dance the Diwali on 29-10-41.
***	Sirpur ..	AB	18	23	Visited 28-30-10-41. Good stilt-walking and falconry.
	Termunda	..	5	6	

Sonamal Pargana

A pargana with villages so widely scattered all over the tahsil that its name has no geographical significance.

***	Bastagaon	AB	38	33	Large mixed village on main road with school. Visited often.

883.1
361
162

APPENDIX ONE

* Banjora ..	AB	9	8	
* Baphna ..	AB	9	9	
* Bhandarwasi	AB	42	38	
* Bunagaon	J	11	9	
* Chawrang	AB	12	14	
* Chema ..	AB	8	7	
* Chikalputi ..	AB	5	5	
*** Dahikonga	AB	20	16	Mixed village on main road; ghotul closed in 1941 by landlord's orders.
Gaseri ..	..	7	5	
* Golawand	AB	9	8	
** Haddigaon	AB	14	13	
** Hangwar ..	AB	15	10	
*** Hathipakna	AB	20	18	Met chelik on 3-11-41 when they danced magnificently.
*** Jaitpuri ..	AB	20	13	Frequent contacts.
* Jhara ..	AB	8	6	
*** Kadonga ..	AB	27	22	Camped 3-6-11-41 with S.H. One of the most interesting villages.
*** Kachora ..	AB	12	10	Visited 9-11-3-41. A small ghotul but full of life and wonderful dancing.
** Kanera ..	AB	8	6	
* Karanji ..	J	14	12	
*** Kerawahi ..	AB	36	29	Interesting and informative people.
* Khandam	AB	12	11	
*** Kondagaon	AB	32	29	Ghotul in Jamkot Para. First visited in February 1935 with S.H. W Kaufmann recorded dance music here in February 1941.
* Kunna ..	J	11	9	
*** Lanjora ..	AB	63	56	Figures are for two hamlets. On main road. Bazaar. Visited in 1937 and 1940. My son, three weeks old, made his first acquaintance with the Muria at this camp.
*** Malakot ..	AB	27	21	Visited with S.H. 1-3-4-41. Saw two weddings. Lovely open scenery and nice people.
** Maranar ..	AB	19	15	
*** Magora ..	AB	44	39	First visited by S.H. in March 1938. Made a small permanent camp here and used it as headquarters 1940-2 for Kondagaon Tahsil. Friendly, unspoilt, though on main road.
** Mulmula ..	AB	21	16	
* Newta ..	AB	8	10	
*** Palli ..	J	64	42	Visited by S.H. 6-4-41. Contacts also in 1942.
Permapal ..	J	12	11	
*** Pipra ..	J	130	137	Figures are for several hamlets, one of which is Kuntpadar where I camped 11-13-11-40.
* Polang ..	AB	12	11	
** Punewand	AB	10	7	
** Rajegaon ..	AB	8	7	
* Sambalpur	AB	16	13	
* Singanpur	AB	27	25	
** Sonawal ..	AB	15	14	
Tikarwand ..	..	3	4	
			675	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

THE NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

X983
361
162

Amabera Pargana

This pargana occupies the north-east corner of the tahsil. The countryside is hilly, wild and beautiful. The Lingo legend is known and the Pus Kolang dance performed everywhere, as we would expect seeing that this pargana is the scene of many of Lingo's exploits and his central shrine is at Semurgaon. Ghotul buildings here are draughty and uncomfortable, and the people, especially those near the Kanker border, suspicious and unfriendly.

Bara Teora	AB	8	7	
* Boragaon ..	AB	6	5	
* Changori ..	AB	21	19	
* Chichgaon	AB	8	7	
*** Chikhli ..	AB	18	16	A very dull ghotul. Visited 14-16-12-41, and was ill there, but witnessed an interesting elopement.
* Gergaon ..	AB	9	7	
** Kesarbera	AB	8	10	
* Kohchur ..	AB	5	4	
* Kolihari ..	AB	8	9	
*** Lohatar ..	AB	6	7	A mixed village with small ghotul.
* Matla ..	AB	5	5	
Nagarbera..	..	15	11	
Nilgundi ..	..	6	5	
Padargaon	..	10	11	
*** PENJORI ..	AB	17	15	Wild and beautiful village, visited 10-6-40. Good ghotul.
*** PUPGAON ..	AB	20	22	Visited 2-4-12-40.
* Pusaghati	AB	11	9	
Rajpur ..	..	8	7	
*** Semurgaon	AB	9	7	Visited 4-12-40. Shrine of Lingo Pen. Triennial festival.
* Tumasnar	AB	15	14	
Vetegaon ..	..	6	5	

Antagarh Pargana

Antagarh was formerly the headquarters of the tahsil, until Narayanpur supplanted it in 1940. The pargana runs along the northern boundary of the State. Ghotul customs are similar to those of Amabera, which adjoins Antagarh and is reached by a road descending over 1,000 feet down the Matlaghat. The Antagarh plain is only about 800 feet above sea level, the Chhattisgarhi language is popular and many ideas and customs of the lowlands are gradually invading this and the neighbouring parganas of the northern plain.

Bulawand	..	10	10	
Garda ..	..	8	7	
* Gawrekhasgaon	AB	19	17	
* Ghumsimunda	AB	9	7	
Godri ..	..	11	9	
* Gondbenapal	AB	18	16	
Himora ..	..	12	10	
* Hirribori ..	AB	8	9	
Jaitanawagaon	..	7	7	
*** Kalgaon ..	AB	14	17	
Kamta ..	..	13	12	
* Kanagaon	AB	11	9	
*** KARIKHODRA	AB	24	23	A charming village three miles from Antagarh with a well-built and flour-

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX ONE

				ishing ghotul. Visited 9-6-40 and 4-12-40. The traditional scene of Lingo's final ordeal. Name means 'black hole'.
Kanrokhasgaon	..	7	8	
* Khorpani ..	AB	11	10	
* Konechur	AB	7	6	
* Koragaon ..	AB	10	10	
* Kotankhor	AB	11	12	
* Kuhche ..	AB	5	5	
*** Lamkanar	AB	9	9	Visited 8-6-40.
Masbafar ..	..	14	13	
Nawagaon ..	..	8	8	
Paiwari ..	..	4	6	
Pondgaon	..	14	8	
Pungaon ..	..	7	6	
Sureli ..	..	10	10	
* Sore ..	AB	16	14	
* Temrupani	AB	11	12	
Topal ..	..	9	8	
Yetebalka	..	4	3	

Bondadesh Pargana

This pargana is in the extreme north-west corner of Bastar, and has Drug District on its northern boundary. It is difficult of access, and though the ghotul exists, I am told that the people have become shy and sensitive about it. There are said to be a few ghotul across the border in Drug.

Bargaon ..	..	15	13
Bara Kapsi	..	11	10
Chhindpal	..	8	8
Deora ..	..	6	7
Dhorkatta ..	..	10	10
Ergutta ..	..	7	6
Herangarh	..	10	11
Jugani ..	..	11	9
Murawandi	..	14	12
Murjhar ..	..	9	9
Palamureli	..	10	9
Pitobhondiya	..	18	16

Baragaon Pargana

This is one of the typical 'Jhoria' parganas. It is situated near the eastern border of the tahsil, immediately south of the Jhorian Pargana with the Kolar Forest Reserve to the west.

*** Amasara ..	J	15	10	Visited 12-4-41 for a marriage.
*** Borpal ..	J	25	23	Visited 11-4-41.
*** Deogaon ..	AB	17	15	Met chelik in December 1940.
*** Erka ..	AB	10	10	Visited several times in 1941.
*** Gawari ..	AB	19	18	Met chelik in March 1941.
Huchari ..	..	12	10	
Irko ..	..	6	4	
** Kanagaon	AB	14	14	
** Kharkagaon	AB	17	15	
*** Khurpal ..	AB	13	12	Met the chelik of this village several times during 1941.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
162
361

Benur Pargana

A beautiful pargana on the eastern borders of the tahsil, by which the road from Kondagaon approaches Narayanpur. Here we are still on the high northern plateau, and the scenery is one of rugged hills and splendid forest. The ghotul are often carefully built and carved; chelik and motiari wear the full 'Jhoria' attire; memorial menhirs are erected. The Lingo legend is known and some villages dance the Pus Kolang: all send the motiari out for the Diwali dances.

*** Arpal ..	AB	16	12	Met chelik in December 1940.
Baghjhar ..	..	10	11	
*** Benur ..	AB	7	7	Formerly an important Muria village, it has now declined.
** Bhatpal ..	J	13	9	Many contacts in 1940.
* Borand ..	AB	9	8	
*** Chandagaon	AB	10	8	Met chelik in December 1940.
* Chhinari ..	AB	7	5	
* Dandwan ..	AB	5	4	
** Gohra ..	AB	13	12	
Gulumkodo ..	..	6	4	
*** Kalepal ..	AB	12	11	Met chelik in December 1940.
* Karhagaon	AB	8	9	
** Khargaon	AB	11	10	
** Koliyari ..	AB	14	12	
* Kulanar ..	AB	17	13	
** Kulhargaon	AB	14	12	
*** Malingnar	J	13	10	Visited 23-11-40.
Mandoki ..	..	11	9	
*** METAWAND	J	25	27	Visited with S.H. 13-18-12-40. Saw Pupal Korta Tindana and festival of clan-god on 15-12-40.
* Mundpal ..	J	9	6	
*** NAVANAR ..	AB	27	21	Visited 23-11-40, 12-14-4-41, and 26-4-41 with S.H.
** Netanar ..	J	9	8	
*** Panigaon ..	J	11	10	Met a number of chelik in December 1940.
*** REMAWAND	AB	17	16	Visited 21-24-11-40. Saw Diwali dancers from Markabera. Again visited with S.H., 23-4-41.
** Sonapal ..	AB	14	12	
Sirpur ..	..	8	6	
*** Turtha ..	J	13	11	Met several chelik in December 1940
** Uridgaon ..	AB	9	8	

Bhowra Pargana

This is really an Abujhmar Pargana, but there are Muria in some of the low-lying villages.

Chilparas ..	..	7	8	
* Gundul ..	AB	8	6	
Panidobri ..	..	13	12	

Chota Dongar Pargana

The great Chota Dongar Pargana lies half way across the southern part of the tahsil. The bulk of it is in the Abujhmar Mountains and is inhabited by Hill Maria. The road from Chota Dongar to Orcha through the Marian gorge has magnificent scenery. The Muria here are undoubtedly Hill Maria who have settled in the less inaccessible villages of the pargana. A large assembly of chelik

APPENDIX ONE

and motiari in dancing dress, such as I witnessed in Koogera, is an unforgettable sight.

***	Aturgaon ..	J	28	19	Met many Muria from here on 6-2-41.
*	Bargaon ..	AB	19	14	
	Barma ..	..	8	6	
*	Chemeli ..	AB	9	7	
	Dhanora ..	..	9	8	
*	Durmi ..	AB	19	16	
**	Gaurdand	J	14	12	
*	Hevenar ..	AB	12	11	
*	Kanera ..	AB	24	21	
***	Kowasra ..	AB	50	45	Visited with W. Kaufmann 5-7-2-41.
**	Kosabar ..	AB	22	19	
*	Kumarl ..	J	18	18	
*	Machonar ..	AB	12	8	
*	Palli ..	J	13	11	
***	Rajpur ..	J	12	9	Visited 6-2-41.
*	Sulga ..	AB	8	7	
***	Turagaon ..	J	18	11	Many contacts in 1940-1.
*	Temrugaon	J	9	9	
***	Toinar ..	AB	18	16	Many contacts in 1940-2.

Dugal Pargana

The Dugal Pargana, which lies north of Narayanpur town and across the road to Antagarh, has some flourishing ghotul of the Jhoria type, though those near Narayanpur itself like Binjhli and Palki have modified their ornamentation considerably.

**	Aturbera ..	AB	15	12	
***	BINJHLI ..	AB	37	32	An important village, where I built a permanent camp. Stayed here with S.H. during November and December 1940 and often visited.
	Biriyabera ..		9	7	
***	Dugabangal	J (now AB)	19	17	Many contacts in 1940-1.
***	Garhbangal	J (now AB)	22	19	Many contacts in 1940-1.
	Kurlabba ..	..	17	11	
**	Kurlapal ..	AB	9	6	
	Kharkagaon ..	..	12	10	
**	Mahka ..	AB	25	23	
***	PALKI ..	AB	31	28	Frequent visits in November and December 1940 with S.H.
*	Salanga ..	J	11	10	

Jhorian Pargana

There were formerly two Jhorian Parganas, the Ghat Jhorian and the Bara Jhorian but the bulk of the former was included in the Kolar or Matia Forest Reserve. The present Jhorian Pargana lies on the eastern border of the tahsil and opens onto the Kongur Pargana of Kondagaon, with the western villages of which it has much in common. The ghotul are well built, carving is common, chelik and motiari adorn themselves in Jhoria style and dance like Hill Maria but with many embellishments. The Lingo legend is popular, boys dance the Pus Kolang and girls the Diwali. Marriages are in the bridegroom's house. Menhirs are erected to the dead.

*	Alnar ..	AB	12	10	

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

***	BANDOPAL	AB	27	21	Visited 28-30-11-40 and again with S.H. 22-25-4-41.
	Bartanar ..	..	8	8	
	Garda ..	..	5	4	
*	Halainar ..	AB	6	5	
*	Karmari ..	AB	7	5	
	Kongera ..	..	8	4	
**	Kursai ..	AB	12	11	
**	Mule ..	J	12	9	
	Palarmeta	..	4	3	
	Pipra ..	..	3	2	
	Royi ..	..	4	3	
	Telanga ..	..	4	4	

Karangal Pargana

This pargana lies between Chota Dongar and Narayanpur. The chelik and motiari are of the Jhoria type and the customs throughout the pargana are similar to those described for the Jhorian Pargana, except that the cult of Lingo is weaker and only occasionally do the chelik go to dance the Deo Kolang. The motiari, however, dance the Diwali dances from village to village.

***	Amgaon ..	J	14	12	Visited with S.H. 10-12-40.
	Bara Jamri	..	10	9	
*	Baghdongri	AB	15	11	
***	Bakulwahi	J	29	27	Many contacts in 1940.
	Bamni ..	..	27	20	
***	Bangal ..	J	14	11	Many contacts in 1940-1.
*	Bawri ..	J	7	6	
**	Borand ..	J	9	8	
*	Borgaon ..	AB	8	8	
*	Deogaon ..	J	16	15	
	Derdul ..	..	12	7	
	Gotabenur	..	5	3	
***	Halami Munjmeta	J	11	10	Met chelik on 12-12-40.
***	KAPSI ..	J	29	19	Visited 9-12-40; contacts in February 1941 and 1942.
*	Karmari ..	AB	8	7	
**	Kharkagaon	J	13	12	
	Kochwahi	..	11	9	
*	Kokori ..	J	10	6	
*	Kukrajhor	AB	12	10	
**	Kumli ..	J	16	13	
*	Lalsuhnar	AB	7	6	
*	Malechur ..	J	9	8	
***	MARKABERA	J	16	17	Visited with S.H. 7-12-12-40; with W. Kaufmann 6-2-41; with B. S. Guha 28-2-42-2-3-42.
**	Moroskodo	J	12	11	
	Naumunmeta	..	6	7	
*	Nelwar ..	J	9	8	
	Sargipal ..	..	5	3	
*	Siwni ..	AB	13	9	
*	Tadopal ..	J	10	8	
***	Timnar ..	J	21	19	Many contacts during 1940-2.

Kalpatti Pargana

Kalpatti means 'lowlands' and this pargana is on the northern plain connecting with Chhattisgarh. Yet it has many links with the Hill Maria and the Abujhmar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX ONE

Menhirs are erected, and the Pus Kolang is danced. The Lingo legend is known. Chhattisgarhi Hindi is generally spoken along with Gondi.

* Darwisalebbhat	AB	13	12	
*** Jiramtarai	AB	14	10	Met the chelik and motiari on 26-1-41 at Kollibera
* Kastura ..	AB	7	6	
* Kaurosalebbhat	AB	11	10	
*** KHUTGAON	AB	16	13	Visited 27-28-1-41. Remarkable Muria landlord.
*** KOLLIBERA	AB	23	21	Visited 25-26-1-41. Unforgettable river scenery. Saw Pus Kolang dance and ceremonies.
* Kurusbori	AB	7	8	
* Maragaon ..	AB	13	12	
Masur ..	..	6	3	
* Murawandi	AB	8	5	
* Murnar ..	AB	7	7	
Nawge ..	..	3	2	
*** Partapur ..	AB	14	12	Visited 29-1-41, but have no detailed knowledge of ghotul.
Pipli ..	..	8	6	
* Sulgi ..	AB	10	6	
* Tursani ..	AB	15	9	

Kiringal Pargana

This interesting pargana belongs properly to the Abujhmar, and the Muria here are obviously Hill Maria who have come down from the heights. The women often go bare-breasted, and the ghotul—though allowing full membership to girls—is still the centre of the male life of the village.

*** Barkot ..	J	14	12	Visited 30-1-41. Charming wooded village and nice people.
Ghoragaon ..		4	3	
Karekatta ..		7	4	
Kheregaon ..		7	3	
Maapi ..	..	6	4	
*** PALLI ..	J	17	14	Visited 29-1-41. Well-built ghotul and good dancing.

Kolar Pargana

A large pargana lying between Antagarh and Narayanpur with much fine mountain scenery. The hills above the magnificent Ranghat rise to 2,938 feet. The Abujhmar and Matlaghat hills join across the Pargana. Jhoria influence here is not very strong. The Pus Kolang is danced everywhere; menhirs are erected; marriages are celebrated in the bridegroom's house; the Lingo legend is known.

* Badrengi ..	AB	18	16	
* Bailasalebbhat	AB	18	15	
*** Bondanar ..	AB	15	13	Visited 7-6-40.
** Chingnar ..	AB	10	9	
Chipori ..	..	12	11	
** Hoychur ..	AB	8	5	
** Hurtarai ..	AB	9	6	
Kachwar ..	..	16	13	
* Kasadand	AB	12	9	
** Khaleparas	AB	19	15	
*** Kolar ..	AB	8	6	A large mixed village. Visited 22-1-41.
Kursel ..	..	4	2	
* Malmeta	AB	18	17	
* Murnar ..	AB	8	7	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●162
361

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

*** Padbera ..	J	21	19	A friendly and beautiful village in the hills. Visited 19-12-41.
*** PHULPAR ..	AB	47	39	Visited 22-24-1-41. Saw Pus Kolang dancing.
* Pusawahi ..	AB	24	13	
** Sarandi ..	AB	25	21	
* Sirsangi ..	AB	10	10	
** Talabera ..	AB	15	12	
Taralkatta ..	..	12	11	
* Tumapal ..	AB	8	5	
Veranar ..	..	15	13	

Narayanpur Pargana

A small pargana in the open country surrounding Narayanpur, the headquarters of the tahsil, where there are courts, a dispensary and school, and a very big bazaar to which come Hill Maria from the Abujhmar as well as large numbers of Jhoria Muria. I would not now call this a Jhoria pargana; external influence which first attacks externals has stripped the Muria of their delightful ornaments. The ghotul at Narayanpur is drab and rather corrupt.

* Garanji ..	AB	25	19	
*** Narayanpur	AB	34	31	Frequently visited with S.H. from 1937 to 1941.

Paralkot-Kalpatti Pargana

This pargana occupies the western end of the tahsil and includes the old zamindari of Paralkot. This is the gateway by which the influence of Chanda Hindus and Congressmen enters the State. The lovely Kotri river passes through the pargana and the hilly scenery on its eastern side which leads into the Abujhmar is attractive. Chelik and motiari on the east of the road and at Tarbaili are hardly to be distinguished from Hill Maria; the girls often go bare-breasted. But to the west, the people get more and more drab and uninteresting.

*** Betiya ..	AB	6	4	Visited 30-1-41–1-2-41.
Ghotanbera	..	11	9	
Irpanar ..	..	9	8	
Kanhargaon	..	8	7	
Karakoda	..	6	6	
* Kurenar ..	..	15	13	
* Markanar ..	..	9	9	
* Marora ..	..	12	11	
Mausamtola	..	10	10	
Nagaldand	..	11	10	
Parenga ..	..	7	8	
*** TARBAILI ..	..	15	13	A very attractive company came from this ghotul to dance at Betiya on 31-1-41.

Surewahi Pargana

This lies on the northern boundary of the State between the Antagarh and Khalpatti parganas, and is said to be very like them.

* Alkanhar ..	AB	16	14
* Amoli ..	AB	20	18
* Chargaon ..	AB	9	8
* Durpipli ..	AB	10	9
* Jethagaon	AB	9	5
* Maragaon ..	AB	14	12
* Nawagarh	AB	17	15
* Surewahi ..	AB	19	15

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX FOUR

CENSUS RETURNS

It may be of interest to give the Census returns for the different aboriginal tribes in Bastar. But it must be remembered that these figures are of unequal value. Any Census in a tribal area has to face unusual difficulties. There is first the muddle over the names of tribes—aboriginals are always changing their names to get a social lift; then the dislike of the people numbered to telling the truth; then the incapacity of the enumerators; and finally the very ancient objection of primitive people to being counted at all.[1]

But the figures for Bastar, such as they are, will be found below. In 1891, they were as follows:

Bhattra	21,459
Gond	70,069
Gotte	5,070
Halba	13,865
Jhoria	936
Koi	7,281
Maria	25,855
Muria	53,960
Parja	13,467
Tagara	396

In the next three enumerations all the aboriginals of Bastar—the Halba cannot really be counted as aboriginal—were counted together under the name Gond. In 1931 there was a fresh attempt at a more scientific classification, though this too was over-simplified and thus failed of its purpose. In 1931 the official figures were:

Bhattra	36,611
Gond	24,407
Koya	9,988
Maria	146,070
Muria	124,993
Parja	17,568

Fortunately the 1931 figures were collected in Jagdalpur and not (as in 1941) in Nagpur and hence it was possible for Grigson to examine them and make additional estimates which have much more scientific value. I will make a table of the figures taken from various parts of his book.

Bhattra	36,611
Bison-horn Maria	146,070
Gadaba	398
Ghotul Muria	61,000
Hill Maria	11,500
Jagdalpur Muria	32,000
Jhoria Muria	17,000
Koya	9,988
Parja	17,568

[1] In 1881, internal dissensions in Bastar 'brought the census operations to a standstill'. But May's Census of 1921 was 'conspicuous', as was Grigson's in 1931. Among the causes for public hostility, the C.P. Reports give such beliefs as that Government wanted the names of young girls for immoral purposes, that every tenth man was to be

APPENDIX FOUR

Nothing more vividly reveals the inadequacy of Census figures for ethnographic purposes, than a comparison of the 1931 official totals with those of 1941. There was no great epidemic, famine or migration to account for the changes.

	1931	1941
Bhattra	36,611	10,869
Dorla	..	14,605
Gond	24,407	16,620[1]
Koya	9,988	nil
Maria	146,070	120,110
Muria	124,993	219,654
Ojha	..	137
Pardhan or Pathari	..	960
Parja	17,568	25,820

The Northern Muria were distributed in 1941 as follows:

	Narayanpur Tahsil	Kondagaon Tahsil
North	16,365	33,146
West	1,322	..
South	16,480	33,555
TOTAL	34,167	66,701
GRAND TOTAL		100,868

The great majority of this 100,868 are Muria whose culture centres round the ghotul, though a few hundreds must be deducted for those under Bhattra influence in southern Kondagaon. The number of Jagdalpur Muria are now given as 36,682 as against the 32,000 estimated in 1931.

Grigson gives:

Jhoria Muria	17,000
Other Ghotul Muria	61,000

which makes a total for Ghotul Muria of 78,000, a figure which has now risen to roughly 100,000—the rate of increase is not unparalleled in other parts of the State. I think that Grigson probably underestimated the number of Jhoria Muria, as he did not include those living in the Kongur and Chalka Parganas. My very rough estimate for 1941 would therefore be:

Jhoria Muria	30,000
Other Ghotul Muria	70,000

Of the total number of 219,654 Muria, only 1,430 returned themselves as following the Hindu religion: in Narayanpur there were 246, in Kondagaon 12 and in Jagdalpur 336. It is curious that out of the heavily Hinduized Bhattra tribe only 34 out of 10,869 returned themselves as Hindus in 1941.

The figures for several of the other tribes have been thrown into confusion by the general custom of Bastar aboriginals calling themselves Muria, a term which is much more popular than Gond or even Raj Gond—words which are sometimes

sent to colonize Upper Burma and that human sacrifices were required for a goddess in Raigarh. Even now special offerings are made by Maria and Muria to purify their villages from the contagion of the Census.

[1] Even adding 933 Raj Gond, 96 Dhur Gond, 536 Mir Gond and 20 Dhurwa Gond, the total is only 17,225.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

162

used contemptuously in the State. Thus 44,048 Bison-horn Maria in the Dantewara Tahsil returned themselves as Muria in 1941 (though another 25,212 continued to call themselves Maria), and all but 4 of the 9,001 Bison-horn Maria in the Konta Tahsil returned themselves as Muria. The remarkable decrease in the number of Bhattra is probably due to the same cause, and the 9,988 Koya of 1931 have disappeared altogether. On the other hand, 14,605 persons in southern Bastar preferred to call themselves Dorla, and I have accordingly entered them under that name in the map at p. 21.

The present number of Hill Maria is probably in the neighbourhood of 13,000. My guess for the Bison-horn Maria, which is perhaps as good as anyone else's guess, is 175,000.

We may note finally that in 1941 there were in Bastar:

Banias	228
Brahmins	3,948[1]
Christians	2,704[2]
Kshatriyas	805
Mussalmans	2,060
Sondis	3,453
Telangas	11,734
Telis	1,619

[1] Of whom 3,307 were in the Jagdalpur Tahsil.
[2] Of whom 1,527 were 'Issi' and the rest 'Christian'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX FIVE

STATISTICAL INQUIRY

An inquiry was made into certain specific matters relating to marriage from 2,000 adult married Muria men distributed in 220 villages. The total population of Muria who maintain ghotul is about 100,000, and the number of genuine Muria villages containing a ghotul in 1941 was 522. The villages chosen were distributed over the whole area except the extreme west and north-west, which it was not possible to visit and where indeed the ghotul tradition has been somewhat obscured by external influence.

I have given figures from this inquiry in many parts of the book, but for convenience I will re-assemble some of them here.

1

The Ages of the Men Consulted		
Between 20 and 30	..	445
,, 30 and 40	..	728
,, 40 and 50	..	567
50 and over	..	260

2

Number of Men who had Lived in Different Types of Ghotul	
Those living in *jodidār* ghotul	720
Those living in 'modern' ghotul	1,280

3

Marriage		
No. marrying girl to whom they were betrothed		1,884
No. of 'romantic' or forced marriages	..	116
No. marrying girls in their own ghotul	..	765
No. marrying girls in a different ghotul	..	1,235
No. marrying their ghotul wives	..	77
No. of Lamhada or service-marriages	..	113

4

Cousin Marriages			
No. of *gudumol* marriages	..	..	1,189
No. of *butiyāri* marriages	..	..	805
Marriages between totally unrelated persons		..	6

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

5

162

Divorces

No. of men still living with original wife	1,765
No. of widowers	176
Total number of successful marriages	1,941
No. of divorces	59
No. divorced of 765 who married girls of the same ghotul ..	21
No. divorced of 1,235 who married girls of different ghotul ..	38
No. divorced among 720 belonging to *jodidār* ghotul	27
No. divorced among 1,280 belonging to 'modern' ghotul	32
No. divorced among 1,884 who married their betrothed	49
No. divorced out of 116 'romantic' marriages	10
No. divorced out of 316 who had connexion before marriage ..	14
No. divorced out of 113 Lamhada	13
No. divorced out of 77 who married their ghotul wives	9
No. divorced out of 26 who married the girls they made pregnant in the ghotul	Nil

6

Pregnancies

No. of men who made a girl pregnant in the ghotul	80
No. of these living in *jodidār* ghotul	25
No. of these living in 'modern' ghotul	55
No. of men marrying girls already made pregnant by someone else ..	49
No. of men marrying girls made pregnant by themselves	26
No. of 113 Lamhada making their own betrothed pregnant ..	5

7

Polygyny

No. of Muria males (1941 Census)	51,373
No. of Muria females	49,495
No. of plural marriages	44
No. out of these 44 claiming to be successful ..	29

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

language on aboriginal populations, and it seems more probable that such tribes as the Muria Gonds, with their close cultural and racial affinities to the Austroasiatic Gadabas of Orissa, were subject to a change of language than that they immigrated from distant parts of Southern India.

We are not yet in a position to surmise which population may have been responsible for the spread of Gondi or which pre-Dravidian languages Gondi may have replaced. Both questions will perhaps remain for ever unanswered, but linguistic research among the Gondi speaking peoples, the still entirely mysterious Khonds, and the neighbouring Austroasiatic tribes may still lead to surprising results. Since the days of Grierson's Linguistic Survey few trained linguists have done fieldwork among the tribal populations of Peninsular India, and the most admirable descriptive works of amateurs cannot compensate for the absence of comparative studies by experts.[1]

The replacement of an older language by one of more recent introduction, is an accomplished fact among many of the eastern and northern Gonds, who speak now the Chhattisgarhi dialect of Hindi and various other local dialects. But there can be no doubt that these Aryan languages were adopted from neighbouring Hindu populations instead of tribal tongues, and certain place-names are to-day the only evidence that the languages previously spoken were related to the Gondi spoken by other sections of the Gond family.

According to the Census of India the total number of Gonds in 1931[2] was 3,063,753. With their strong tribal consciousness they are the premier aboriginal race of India, exceeding by more than one million the number of Bhils and dwarfing such tribes as Oraons, Mundas, Hos and Santals.

The majority of Gonds—2,261,138 in 1931—are found in the Central Provinces and Berar, which contain practically all the territories known to the early Moghul writers as Gondwana. Except for Buldana in the extreme south-west, there is no district in the Central Provinces

1. The limited value of linguistic material contained in the writings of anthropologists is to some more obvious than to the authors; such texts, for instance, as given in this volume may facilitate the linguist's approach to an unwritten language, but they are insufficient as a basis for linguistic conclusions. For very relevant phonetic peculiarities may entirely escape the attention of the untrained observer, or defeat his attempts at recording them. In linguistics as in anthropology there is no substitute for field work. The dearth of authoritative works on the tribal languages of India was lamented by J. H. Hutton in his Census report: "There is, however, a serious void in our knowledge in that no intensive work appears to have been done on the tribal dialects of southern India, so that it is impossible to say whether the Munda languages ever penetrated to the extreme south of India or not. The linguistic survey unfortunately did not include southern India in its scope, and there is therefore a crying need for an intensive study of the dialects spoken by such tribes as the Kadar, Kurumans, Paliyans, Panians and Thanda Pulayans, with the object of discovering whether or no any Munda survivals are to be found." (*Op. cit.*, p. 158). Hutton's call to linguists has, to my knowledge, remained largely unheeded. M. B. Emeneau who worked among the Todas being a laudable exception. But equally urgent as the study of the tribal dialects of South India is intensive work on the tribal language of the Central belt.

2. No later figures for individual tribes are available, the Census operations of 1941 having been curtailed for reasons of economy.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

101 without a considerable Gond population, but the main strongholds of
162 the Gonds are to-day the Satpura plateau including the districts of Betul,
197 Chhindwara and Seoni, where the western type of Gondi is spoken, Mandla and Chhattisgarh in the east, where the Gonds have adopted the local dialect of eastern Hindi but retained their tribal identity, and in the south Chanda and the neighbouring Yeotmal, where the language is Gondi, but of a dialect somewhat different from the Gondi of Betul.

101 To the north-west the Gonds extend across the Narbada River into
691 Central India, and are particularly numerous in Indore State; to the
197 east of the Central Provinces lie the states of Gond princes, such as
[619] Kawardha, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, to-day known as the Chhattisgarh States. Although neither these Gond rajas, nor indeed the Gonds among their subjects speak Gondi, they are fully conscious of their tribal associations and the high status of the ruling princes adds no doubt to tribal prestige in the whole of Chhattisgarh.

Further south, bordering on Chanda, Drug and Raipur, extend the two States of Kanker and Bastar, where Gonds constitute the majority of the population. Bastar in particular is the home of three important groups of Gonds: the Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias, all of which differ in language and custom very considerably from the Gonds of the Central Provinces.[1] Their colourful and complex cul-
[174] tures are representative of ancient aboriginal India and show obvious affinities with the Austroasiatic cultures of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Bastar has also part in the Koyas or Dorlas of the Godavari area, the most southern branch of the Gond family occurring in considerable strength in Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State and stretching across the barrier of the Eastern Ghats into the vicinity of Rajahmundry. Most Koyas still speak a dialect of Gondi, but those surrounded by Telugu populations, have changed over to Telugu.

Another substantial group of Gonds, closely akin to the Gonds of Yeotmal and Chanda, is found in the hilly country between the Godavari and the Penganga Rivers constituting the Adilabad District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, and it is these Gonds who form the subject of the present work.

101 All the Gonds of Adilabad, except for an insignificant overflow of
186 Dhurwe Gonds from Chanda, consider themselves Raj Gonds, and this brings us to the still somewhat problematic division between Raj Gonds and Dhur or Dhurwe Gonds, which runs through the greater part of the Gond population within the Central Provinces. There seems to be no uniformity in the principles ruling this division; in Chhattisgarh only the members of ruling or formerly ruling families are described as Raj Gond, while in other parts most of the land-holding Gonds aspire to this denomination. In recent times the name Raj Gond has also been
[66] claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status by

1. The Hill Marias extend into the hills of the neighbouring Chanda District.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

on the economic and social position of the Gonds were far reaching, and the repercussions attendant on the opening up of the District will be discussed in Book II, while reference to the newly established culture-contacts with non-aboriginal immigrants from both Telingana and Marathwara are contained in Chapter III.

In 1941 the Gonds of Hyderabad numbered 141,335, which is only a fraction of India's entire Gond population of more than 3,000,000. If we remember that this is about ten times the strength of the aboriginal population of the Australian continent at the time of discovery, and far exceeds in numbers the Red Indians in North America, it is indeed surprising to find only a slender volume of literature on this remarkable group of peoples.

The first reference to the Gonds in scientific literature is perhaps the small list of Gondi words communicated in 1844 by Dr. Voysey to the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.[2] A somewhat larger one, together with a few grammatical notes was given in 1847 by Dr. O. Manager,[3] and the following year B. H. Hodgson published in the same journal a comparative vocabulary of Dravidian dialects containing among others Gondi and Oraon words.[5] Fuller, though by no means complete, are the grammar and vocabulary of the Gondi spoken in the Chindwara District, compiled by the Rev. James Dawson in 1872.[4]

But the earliest ethnological account of the Gonds is contained in the Rev. Stephen Hislop's remarkable *Papers on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*, edited by Sir R. Temple in 1866.[5] This book, though somewhat confusing in the presentation of material, is a mine of information for the initiated, and will be of permanent value for its very full version of a cycle of Gond myths both in Gondi and English. Fairly lengthy notes on various sections of Gonds are found in the administrative reports and papers of several of Hislop's contemporaries, notably Captain C. I. R. Glasfurd,[6] Major C. B. Lucie-Smith,[7] Sir R. Temple,[8] Sir C. Grant,[9] and Col. Ward,[10] but the information contained in these is of very uneven character. The next impor-

1. Vol. XIII. p. 19.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI. p. 286.
3. "The Aborigines of Central India." *Ibid.*, Vol. XVII. Part I. pp. 550—558.
4. *Ibid.* Vol. XXXIX. pp. 108—117, 172—198.
5. Nagpur 1866.
6. *Report on the Dependency of Bastar.* 1862, Selection from Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department No. XXXIX, Calcutta 1863.—*Report on Land Revenue Settlement of Upper Godavari District*, Nagpur 1868.
7. *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Chanda District*, Nagpur 1870.
8. *Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces up to August 1862.* (Reprint) Nagpur 1923.—*Report on the Zamindaris and other Petty Chiefships in the Central Provinces in 1863* (Reprint) Nagpur 1923.
9. *Gazetteer of the Central Provinces*, Nagpur 1870.
10. Mandla Settlement Report 1868.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949

AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 479 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk [462] take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhanrai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

name because its founder and members, whenever grain was being given out, were found always to have extra long tail flaps (here pronounced *toka*) to their loin-cloths. A broader-woven cloth makes it possible for it to be taken once round the waist in its full unfolded width, so as to cover the buttocks and private parts. The *toga* hangs sometimes over the left buttock, and, in the south of the hills, sometimes in front of the body in the Godavari fashion.

Tucked into the girdle or the loin-cloth are knives with or without wooden sheaths, razors (as already seen), hollow bamboo tubes filled with tobacco, or little tobacco boxes of carved wood or tree-seeds, or of basketry (the last kind is sometimes worn on the left shoulder on a cord passing round the neck and under the left arm-pit); a comb may hang over the buttock from a cord; and occasionally on the Dantewara side a larger knife approximating to the *banda* or dao used by the Bison-horn Marias and Parjas.

The older Marias wear no cloth on their heads, and no ornaments in their hair. But it is general now to wear an apology for a *pagri* or turban consisting of one folded Mahra cloth wound round the forehead and tied at the back of the head. Youths wear between this and the back or side of their heads tail feathers of jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo (which they stick into their crown-tuft knots if they have no *pagri*). This head-cloth is often dirty and worn, and looks suspiciously like all that is left of an old friend of a loin-cloth.

Men and women almost invariably go unshod; but occasionally a pair of very coarse sandals of untanned cowskin with a thong over the big toe and another over the four small toes is worn, generally only when there is a cut or a heel-crack to be protected from the ground.

Short of complete nakedness, man could hardly wear less than the Hill Maria in his most primitive state. His scanty frontal covering often leaves little to the imagination in its utter inadequacy. But it is to the fact that he wears so little that he owes it that he is far freer from scabies, itch and ringworm than the Bison-horn Maria, and the Murias and others of the plains, who more and more are imitating Hindu clothes, but are too poor to afford either much washing or spare suits. At the numerous State dispensaries these are the commonest complaints, and treatment is useless because the patients will not leave off the dirty, infected clothing. Luckily, cost and 'waskat' are still rarities in the hills; Bardal Chamru of Kutul, the headman or *majhi* of Bardal *pargana*, and his brother Bardal Boranga, who used to accompany me when I toured near their villages, always arrived coated and waistcoated above their loin-cloths, but would discard the obnoxious and unnecessary

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter IX

Domestic Life; Miscellaneous

A. Treatment of Sickness

164 758 Amongst the Hindus of the plains the Hill Maria has a great but totally undeserved reputation for his skilful use of herbs and roots to treat the sick. A few chronic sufferers may be met who have migrated to the Abujhmar hills in the fond hope of getting their sufferings mitigated by Maria medicine; they will readily tell you that the Marias were more ignorant than they themselves, though some have stayed on, finding the simple life and the climate of the hills tonic in themselves. Actually, the helplessness of the Hill Maria in the face of the simplest injury or ailment is pathetic. A simple sore beginning from a thorn in the buttock is neglected, till the whole buttock becomes one vast sore. The commonest and worst disease among them is, or was, yaws; whole households suffered, and many for the moment apparently free bore on their persons obvious indications that it was only a matter of time before the disease would reappear in the secondary or tertiary state. Innumerable cases came to my camp doctor for treatment in my 1930 tours. I sent him again in the summer of 1930 to tour in the area, and of 280 cases treated by him in 26 villages, 79 were yaws cases; in his next tour in the same villages, 69 new yaws cases were brought to him. Later tours were undertaken by him and other doctors for injecting yaws patients with salvarsan preparations, with great success; in my March 1934 return visit to this area I did not see one case, and everywhere the villagers were profuse in their thanks for deliverance from the scourge, for which they had known no antidote or alleviative. It is common also in the hilly parts of the Bison-horn country, and in the lower Indrawati and Godavari valleys, where the Bastar dispensaries get many a yaws patient from the Chanda and East Godavari districts of British India.

164 Syphilis is extremely rare among the Hill Marias; the 280 cases already mentioned as treated in summer 1930 did not include one case of venereal disease. Where it is common in Bastar the carriers have invariably been either police constables and forest guards or Rohilla and Telugu traders. Hill Marias have luckily been comparatively immune from the attentions of minor State

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

servants. Though the Bison-horn Marias are not free from either venereal disease or the visits of these gentry, yet they have been fairly successful in keeping their women to themselves, and have suffered little except in the south, where many of them go at times to Dummagudem and other Madras towns for work. If, however, the Telugus have given them venereal disease, they have more than repaid them with yaws. 164

Skin diseases, such as scabies, ringworm and eczema, are common, especially among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, who under Hindu influence are taking to the use of clothes. They cannot afford a change of clothing, and dispensary treatment is defeated at once if the old infected clothing cannot be discarded. Hill Marias wearing only scanty loin-cloths are far less affected; but even among them the 280 cases treated included 10 of scabies, 9 of ringworm and 7 of eczema. [177]

Eye complaints are frequent, owing largely, no doubt, to the habit of living and sleeping in dark unventilated huts and dormitories thick with smoke. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 16 of conjunctivitis, 5 of cataract, and 5 of other eye complaints.

Malaria is very common among the Bison-horn Marias, and in the Bijapur tahsil blackwater fever occurs. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 26 of malaria, only 4 of which were of children with badly enlarged spleens.

Old men and women are frequently seen crippled with rheumatism, and 17 of the 280 cases were of young men suffering from rheumatic complaints. Of the rest of the 280 cases, 24 were badly neglected ulcers, 6 bad foot-cracks, 25 simple stomach complaints, and 9 (including 3 of pyorrhoea) neuralgia from badly decayed teeth. No figures were kept of what is now the most obviously prevalent complaint, hydrocele, because it was impossible to treat this in camp. Glasfurd noted the prevalence of this in the sixties, and wrote in paragraph 66 of his Report that :—

'Hydrocele . . . is exceedingly common in the Chintulnar and Soonkum (i.e. Sukma) Talooks, and also around Dantewara and in all parts, indeed, lying adjacent to the Baila Deela range of hills. I should say that from 10 to 20 per cent. of the population in these parts are afflicted in this manner. Their own account of it is that it is caused by drinking the water of nullahs during the freshes.'

To me it now seems commoner in the Hill Maria country than elsewhere. The victims know no cure, and are only beginning to realise that something can be done for it in the dispensaries.

The idea that Marias are expert physicians is an amazing example of the general Hindu ignorance and superstitious dread of the aboriginal. In actual fact the Maria has only a few queer 757 752

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 brides, yet in the census of Bastar they were recorded as Murias.

000 Bhamragarh village itself had few Maria residents. Celebrated though it is as a beauty spot, to my mind the junction of the three rivers there can only be appreciated in its full beauty from the Bastar shore or, better still, from midstream, as I saw it first in 1927. This time we stayed in a forest rest-house on the Indrawati bank, and the Zamindar who had motored out to join me talked under the moon till late at night on tribal problems.

164 744 Yaws has long been a scourge of the Marias, in Chanda as in Bastar, but whereas the campaigns against yaws, begun when I was in Bastar and carried on with unremitting energy ever since by Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, have now almost eradicated the disease in Bastar save for fresh infection from contacts with Chanda Marias or Hyderabad Gonds and Koyas, in Chanda it is still very rife. Bhamragarh gave us an example typical of the difficulties which may beset schemes for helping the aboriginal in the absence of constant supervision of local minor officials. In 1936 the Government had opened a dispensary at Bhamragarh, primarily with the idea that it would become a centre for yaws treatment. Mr. Kerawala visiting Bhamragarh just before my tour, finding that hardly any yaws or other patients attended the dispensary, inquired why, and was told that the Assistant Medical Officer posted there was demanding a fowl and eggs from every Maria as a fee for each injection. His plea was that he had extreme difficulty in getting supplies, so that unless he could 'live on' the Marias he often had to go back by cart the 38 miles of forest track to Allapilli to get supplies, which meant closing the dispensary for nearly a week at a time. One of many things into which I was looking during this tour was the progress in Chanda of the first year of an anti-yaws campaign financed from a Government of India grant. Before that campaign began such anti-yaws work as had been attempted had been haphazard and unplanned, and nothing had been done to ensure that each patient took the full number of injections needed for a permanent cure. At all my camps in the Marias country patients streamed in for treatment, and as the Sub-assistant Health Officer deputed to accompany me for yaws work travelled in my lorry and had to stop in every village on our way to treat yaws patients, our arrival in camp was generally long after dark. The incidence of yaws seemed far greater than the Public Health Department had imagined. We had cases, as I have said, at every camp, perhaps especially among the Hill Marias at Kuvakodi, in Lahiri, and in all the villages between Pirmeli and Surjagarh, and thence on into Aundhi zamindari in Drug district;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias, Gonds, Marars, Mahras, Halbas, almost all communities were infected. At Jarawandi and in the villages of the Jharapapra and Aundhi zamindaris along the Bastar border many Maria and Halba villagers contrasted the Central Provinces Government's lack of care for them in Chanda and Drug districts with the anti-yaws and other public health work over the border in Bastar. It is of course only comparatively recently that doctors have recognized the existence of yaws as a distinct (and easily curable) disease which responds to treatment similar to the usual syphilis treatment; the *District Gazetteer*, for example, refers to the disease as 'a mild form of leprosy named "Gondi rog"'.[1]

Another thirteen miles of forest track, fairly easily negotiated by cars, brought us from Bhamragarh to the large village of Lahiri,[2] the headquarters of a *Sendhia's patti*, as mentioned at page 287. Lahiri lies at the foot of the Abujhmar Mountains, and beyond it no wheeled vehicles could proceed. Between Bhamragarh and Lahiri we saw several examples of the skilful *gatta* cultivation of the Marias, thus described in Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report:—

'In *gattas* the land above the dam is cultivated. To construct a *gatta*, a miniature valley with gently sloping sides through which a stream flows, is chosen. The space between the banks of the stream is built up in the hot weather with trunks of trees, having their thinner end towards the point from which the current flows, and across these are fixed smaller logs and brushwood. The upstream face has thus a gentle slope to the front, while the rear face is almost perpendicular, and is sometimes strengthened by vertical stakes. The barricade is carried from four to eight feet above the level of the banks, and is then heaped with earth. As soon as the first rains have softened the ground, sods, about fifteen inches long by twelve broad and five thick, are dug with a heavy teak implement called a *katwa*, and with the sods wing embankments are built. These are run out in continuation of, and level with the log barricade, until the rise of the valley reduces their height to about a foot, when they are sloped off to the front and flanks; and pipes of *mohwa*, *en* or *gongool* are put through. Similar *gattas* are constructed at convenient distances at other points of the stream, and if the situation be favourable, twenty of these *gattas* may be seen spanning the valley in regular series. Surplus water passes round the flanks of the *gatta*, and sometimes in floods, the stream tops the dams and cascades over. Rice is planted in the wet ground above the dam, and, where there is a succession of *gattas*, water, if required, is passed from a higher to a lower level through the wooden pipes in the embankment. Some of the *gattas* rise to twenty feet above the stream bed, and are very substantial structures, flooding large areas.'

This skill is slowly making its way among the Hill Marias, and the illustrations facing page 146 of this book of a Hill Maria dam at Tondawada in Bastar are really of a typical *gatta*, including the hollow tree-trunk pipe. That this traditional skill persists and has developed into a real irrigation technique has been shown by Rao

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.
[2] Spelt Lahir on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV8455.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Mother Earth. The Gaita offered eggs and chickens, first making the chickens eat the rice and then killing them. The juice in the leaf-cups was offered to the Earth Mother and the Kanyang and then everyone drank a little. After this the owner was free to tap the tree in the ordinary way.

Failure of the sago-palm may be due either to black magic and witchcraft or to the hostility of one of the Gorga Kanyang. The Kanyang, if she is not happy in a particular village, may twist the branches at the top of the tree and cause them to wither. It is generally believed that the tree gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul. Then she marries and the juice ceases to flow. The motiari of the palm tree is afraid of marrying too soon. If we touch the tree with a cloth yellowed by haldi it will stop giving juice till the new shoots come, for the shadow of haldi (that is, of marriage) is upon it.'

For gonorrhoea, a very rare disaster among these aboriginals, the sufferer stands below holding a leaf-cup into which a friend pours a little of the juice from the top of the tree. The patient offers a few drops to the Gorga Kanyang and then drinks it without allowing it to touch the ground.

The wood of the palm is not usually used for building in Bastar but the Hill Maria make their *turam* drums out of its hollow dried-up trunk. The Muria also make combs and drum-sticks out of the dry wood. Some of the Muria in the Abujhmar foothills make necklaces of the fibre. The leaves are often used as hair-ornaments or to decorate the village dormitories. Sometimes the flowers are pounded into flour, mixed with water and drunk as a sort of gruel. When it is evident that the tree will give no more juice, it is cut down and the pith is removed. This is pounded into a sort of flour and steamed in the usual way into cakes which are popular eaten with honey or sugar. This practice is common across the whole of the sago-palm country. I have found it among Hill Maria, Bondo, Gadaba, and Juang and it has been recorded for the Kadir and Khasi.[1]

The salphi juice is either brought back to the house and stored there until by fermentation it becomes much more intoxicating than in its fresh condition or it is drunk immediately at the foot of the tree. Little groups of people, generally men, go out to the trees, taking with them roasted crabs or frogs, little bits of chicken, various kinds of chutney, carefully wrapped in leaf-cups. The liquor is drunk from leaves, generally simply folded to make a sort of cup, and it is sometimes poured direct into the mouth. Many delightful hours are thus spent by the villagers out among the woods or on the hills.

When a tree is specially planted by seeds or cuttings it is very carefully tended. A fence of wood is built round it and it is watered regularly. Sometimes a tree is associated with the memory of a particular person. In Kanhargaon, a village in the Chota Dongar area, a Muria planted salphi and mango trees fifty years ago and they still preserve his memory. When the people go in the evening to drink the juice, they offer a few drops in the name of Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal to the sago-palm and a few drops in the name of the dead man who planted the trees to the mango, 'so that as we drink you can drink also'.

Generally speaking the tree belongs to the man in whose field or garden it is growing. Where the trees are out in the jungle, or standing in the common land of the village, disputes sometimes arise. The headman or the more influential priests generally claim these trees as their own, but there is also a

[1] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 171.; P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), p. 52. See also Grigson, op. cit., p. 152.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

In Kuntpadar, the people stressed the virtue of a democratic outlook, the estimating of everyone as equal to yourself. In Metawand, they thought more of generosity. To help a man in need and be kind to those who come to you in trouble is the sign of a good man. Courage is also admired, but not specially so. Yet it is said of Kurwal Kumoti of Palki that 'where the English only venture into the jungle armed with guns and protected by many people, he goes anywhere without a weapon and has no fear of bears or tigers'.

Is sexual morality in our Western sense an ingredient of the good man's character? When I have raised this point in conversation, the reply has always referred to forbidden relations. 'The greatest sin'—this is the view of Lakmu of Masora—'is to have something to do with your younger brother's wife. Or for a girl to have intercourse with a Ganda.' Elsewhere, in several villages, I was told how serious it was to break the laws of exogamy, to have intercourse with a forbidden relation and to commit adultery. In Masora, when I asked if they thought it wrong for the unmarried to have intercourse with each other, for a long time they could not understand the question. When they did, they answered, 'Only if he sleeps with the same girl too often: he must change'.

Here then we have a general picture of the moral qualities that are considered desirable and the vices that are deplored. Let us now come nearer to the ghotul. 'In the ghotul no sin can be committed.' This is not strictly true, but it is sufficiently true to explain the wonderful innocence and simplicity of the chelik and motiari. There is no sin in sex, provided—as I have said before—sexual relations are enjoyed with the right people, at the right time, in the right place and in the right way.

Chelik and motiari must choose the right partner. They must strictly avoid the inner circle of forbidden relatives. Intercourse within the clan is forbidden, but is not regarded as very serious so long as no one knows about it and it does not result in pregnancy. In the *jodidār* ghotul, chelik and motiari must be faithful to one another; in the other, they must avoid too great attachments to special individuals. It is practically unknown for a motiari to have an affair with someone outside the tribe. One of the first lessons taught to a young girl in the ghotul is that she must avoid Ghasia, Ganda, Mahara and Lohar. It is probably safe to say that no European has ever had anything to do with a Muria girl, and I am told by State officials that in the old days when, in the more 'advanced' areas round Jagdalpur, it was the custom for the village headman to bring women for touring subordinates, this was never done in the ghotul villages of the north. I am told that chaprasis, forest guards and constables, who are sometimes such a menace to rural virtue, are never able to seduce the motiari of the ghotul, where the village dormitory remains to protect tribal honour. This opinion is confirmed by the fact that venereal disease is almost unknown among the Muria. In fact, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, has told me that in thirty years' service he had never seen a straight case of venereal disease among the Bastar aboriginals.

The rules governing the sexual life of the ghotul are strict and appear to be generally observed. Breaches of the rules are sufficiently rare to be talked of for many years and to be severely punished.

But sexual intercourse must not only be with the right people: it must be at the right time. It is tabooed before the greater festivals, before a hunting expedition, during the Pus Kolang dance and, most important of all, during a girl's menstrual period.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWO

THE BISON-HORN MARIA

I

The so-called Maria of Bastar fall naturally into two divisions distinguished by many details of culture and tradition, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains and the Bison-horn Maria living to the south of the Indrawati River. A full account of both these tribes has been given by W. V. Grigson, and his book should be read by those who wish to have a fuller background of Maria life than the present volume can supply. In this chapter I will only give a brief summary of the life and customs of the Bison-horn Maria.

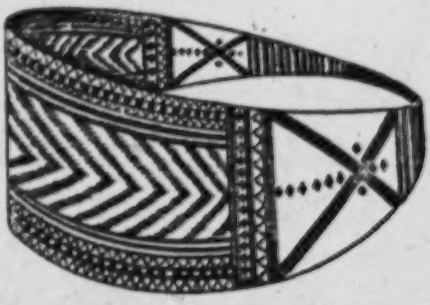
The Bison-horn Maria, who are distinguished from the other aboriginals of Bastar by the splendid head-dress they use for their marriage dances, numbered about 156,000 in 1931, and I estimate their present strength at about 175,000. They are distributed all over southern Bastar, among the entrancing hills of Dantewara, in the dry forests of Bijapur, among the hot but lovely lowlands of Konta, in the remote Sukma and Kutru Zamindaris. On the borders of the main Maria stock are a number of communities which really belong to it, the Koya of the extreme south, the Dorla who claim to be a superior caste and the mixed population along the banks of the Indrawati and reaching up towards the Muria country beyond Barsur. The Dorla and Koya dance in Bison-horn Maria fashion; the mixed people to the north combine the customs of the Hill Maria with their own. In the neighbourhood of Jagdalpur, the Maria gradually lose their distinctiveness as they approach the town and merge into the southern Muria.

There are few people in India more attractive than the Bison-horn Maria, physically charming, of good stature, perfect figure, finely featured with carefully tended hair, often a lovely golden-brown in colour. Both men and women are very strong; the men can carry heavy loads great distances, endure long and arduous hunting expeditions and dance all night bearing their great drums. Their health is fairly good, but they are afflicted with yaws, though the work of the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

State Medical Department has done much to check the spread of the disease. Malaria, as everywhere in the Indian forests, is endemic, but few suffer from enlarged spleen. Leprosy and the venereal diseases are very rare. Skin diseases are also much less common than among the more elaborately clothed and thus dirtier people of the north.

Men wear a small loin-cloth and sometimes a little turban. The women tie a sort of skirt, very short, round their waists: it hangs down to the knees. The breasts are covered only with ornaments; when visiting a bazaar girls may tie a small piece of cloth round their shoulders. They often wear a thin brass fillet round the hair, and the older women use a large snood which is most becoming. Round the neck are masses of bead-necklaces, and iron or brass torcs. The bright colours of the beads and the shining brass fillets against the rich brown skin make a sight of unforgettable beauty.



Brass fillet worn by Maria women

The Bison-horn Maria village is laid out on the same lines as the Gond village of the Central Provinces, unlike the communal settlements of the Hill Maria, Baiga or Juang. Each house stands in its own garden which is sometimes a substantial field, and a village may cover a very large area in consequence. Often a village is composed of anything from six to twelve small hamlets, each of which represents the grouping of a family round its patriarchal head. The little huts stand among woods, on rocky hill-sides, in the shade of spreading trees. Sometimes they appear almost submerged by waves of yellow sarson flowers or red jhira vegetable. Each village has a substantial building for the accommodation of travellers and this is used by the unmarried boys as a dormitory. The unmarried girls also sleep together, some-

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

Koyas, since it alone, being greatly corrupted by Telugu, presents any marked difference from the Maria and Muria dialects.

Intermarriage is frequent between the Bison-horn Marias of the plateaux and those at the foot of the passes, but now never occurs between them and the Dorla, the latter having become a true endogamous group.[1]

The Koyas of the Malkangiri taluq of Jeypore, across the Bastar border from the Sukma zamindari and north-east Konta, seem on the contrary to be Bison-horn Marias.[2] Intermarriage still takes place between the Marias of Sukma and the 'Koyas' of Malkangiri; and these same Sukma clans intermarry with the clans on the Dantewara and Jagdalpur plateaux. In fact, intermarriage is not unknown between Dantewara and Malkangiri clans, and it is not unusual for a man wanted by the police in Dantewara to abscond to his fellow-tribesmen, possibly relatives, in Malkangiri. The headmen of Edpal and Dodpal on the Dantewara-Sukma border stated that the Koitor of Malkangiri had migrated there some generations back from the Bailadila mountains, and named relatives among them belonging to the Sodi clan. Bailadila had in fact been practically deserted long before its inclusion in the Bailadila Forest Reserve; and some superstition attaches to it which prevents surrounding Maria clans from settling there, though more than one attempt has been made to found permanent forest villages so as to obviate the labour now entailed on the villages below when the Maharaja and his officials go there for the hot weather. The most tempting offers fail to attract settlers; even as labourers the Marias profess fear of staying on the hills unless accompanied by a European, over whom Elma Pen, the god of the mountain, has no power. The only chance, they say, of re-settling the place is to get hold of a descendant of the original inhabitant, preferably of the clan-priest (*modul-waddai*), who knows the godlings and demons of the hills.

[p.58 is blank]

[1] Glasfurd in the ethnological papers already quoted commented thus on physical differences between the lowlanders and highlanders of South Bastar. 'The Koys are very dark, quite as much so as the Telingas; while the Gottawars and Marias are generally copper-coloured, some being quite fair. Their faces are rather broad than long, and they have small eyes, which, with the almost entire absence of hair on the face, gives these altogether a strongly marked Tartar-like physiognomy.'

[2] It is important to remember that the Dorla also use bison-horn or buffalo-horn dancing head-dresses, and in other ways also show that they were once the same people as those whom I term Bison-horn Marias, as indeed the traditions of both peoples have been seen to assert.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

166 361 787 791 778 When shifting is to begin, all the parish lands being lands of the clan, the *wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god is usually consulted; he is generally himself the *leshi* or medium whom the god possesses, and if the god through him directs that the village should be shifted, he leads the villagers to the new site; sometimes the *wadda'i* himself is not a medium, but keeps a *leshi* as an assistant. At the new site the *kasyeq-gaita* clears a small patch of ground in honour of the Village Mother, and on this offers an egg, some grain and flowers in her name, over which he places stones in a basketry cylinder or as a cairn. This will remain as her shrine in the new village, sometimes, as we have seen, inside the dormitory fencing, sometimes outside it but in the main village street, or sometimes right outside the village in a grove, a shed being erected over it. The removal of the cairn would be an omen of disaster, only to be avoided by shifting the village. The Orcha villagers had only a small table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree in a grove to mark their Village Mother. Handawada, besides a cairn, had a forked stick of *saja* wood oiled and polished, and whipped round the fork with *kosa* silk whipping, with a leaning thatched roof to protect her from the elements. Whatever form her shrine or representation may take, it is left behind when the village is deserted, and not shifted to the new village; for it is regarded as valuable evidence of the clan or parish property in the land. The only things removed are the pots in which grain, etc., is cooked at the Mother's feasts, the cooking utensils and the knives, which the *kasyeq-gaita* or [184] religious headman must himself carry under his arm, *not* on his head, which is taboo, to the shed erected to house them near the Mother's shrine in the new village.

361 166 In the villages which I have seen being shifted, the earliest buildings to be erected have been the village dormitory, the houses of the 'advance guard', the religious and the secular headmen, and the menstruation hut. Villagers often put up their pig-sties before their own houses. A temporary dormitory is often put up to house the bachelors, and replaced after the houses have been built by a more permanent and elaborate structure.

The villagers remove all their utensils and household goods from their old to their new houses when the village is shifted. But they move no building materials; they leave the deserted houses to the mercy of the elements, which means that they are soon choked in the mass of high grass and scrub jungle that immediately springs up on the deserted site, and probably burnt down when the forest undergrowth is fired in the following spring.

[text continues on p. 112]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The population is comparatively small, and the land available for the shifting *penda* cultivation is very extensive. There is practically no individual property in *penda* land, and it is recognized only in permanent rice fields.

In comparison, the Bison-horn Maria country is thickly populated; there is far more permanent rice cultivation; much old *penda* land has lost its forest growth, or is getting steadily slower in recuperating it after each time when it is felled and burnt for *penda* cultivation; and each villager likes to have a large *bari* or garden enclosure at the back of his house or in the immediate neighbourhood of the village where he can grow tobacco, maize, chillies, tomatoes and sesamum, and can pen his cattle for the sake of their manure. In consequence, economic considerations now operate in favour of the permanency of Bison-horn Maria villages and against their being shifted; as the pressure on the land has become greater the alternative sites (*padar*), to which in past generations a village was from time to time shifted, have been permanently occupied by hamlets (*para*) of that village, and the settlers in the hamlets have permanently occupied the adjacent *penda* sites once cultivated in rotation by the shifting village. Many big Bison-horn villages have six or seven hamlets, some of which are virtually separate villages, and are beginning to assert a separate identity by having their own headmen and sometimes their own village priests, though on formal occasions all will still gather together at the original *padar* of the village and its hamlets, and acknowledge there the authority of the headman and priest of the parent village. In the Abujhmar hills, moreover, each village is still inhabited almost entirely by members of one clan, and all the lands of the villages are regarded as the lands of the clan. But in the Bison-horn country, though each parish is still said to be the *bhum* (earth) of the clan which first settled there, yet there are generally in the village many houses of other clans and wife-clans, from whom the first settlers and their descendants have taken wives. Though they will still say that a certain village is the *bhum* of the clan that founded it, yet in consequence of the many representatives of other clans settled there now the village and its lands are not looked on as that clan's property in anything like the same degree as among the Hill Marias, nor in actual fact is the original clan so free to shift the village as it was before it allowed its wife-clans to share its village site and cultivable lands. Often, too, the headman is no longer a member of the settler clan. If, therefore, a Bison-horn village does shift in these days, the move is probably due to superstitious motives, or to epidemic or epizootic disease.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

343 841 that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut 342 for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *pedas* (headmen) and *permas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

361 Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in [487 the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring 443] their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias [492] have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. [491] They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

361 The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory 787 of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

Shifting villages

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

Houses

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Telam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

565 177 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally therefore on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 466 ● 166 The Allapilli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen, etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

[1] For example, the suppression of *podu* cultivation, or the deliberate curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

622 791

> 'The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village; sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*. Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> 'This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official, and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

interior villages send down their young men in relays to work for wages at Allapilli. There they get prompt and regular payment and just and fair treatment. There are resting-sheds where the Marias can sleep, leave their scanty personal possessions and take their meals in clean surroundings, not divorced from their own kind. The Forest Department are arranging ever-improving facilities for them to purchase cloth, grain, salt and ornaments at fair prices. Forest work is in itself a technical training. At one time also the local officials tried to establish at Allapilli a small carpentry and basketry school.[1] Everywhere on this tour I met Marias who were on their way either to or from Allapilli, or had worked there from time to time in the past and looked upon it as a place to which they could always go to earn quickly any cash needed for payments of rent, fines or bride-price. More than one passage in *The Aboriginal Problem*[2] describes the Marias' consciousness of the fact that the Allapilli departmental forest operations have saved them from debt and distress; the establishment throughout the Chanda zamindari forests of similar 'Allapillis' was one of my recommendations. Allapilli has further been the one thing that has saved the Marias from the economic ruin that they feared when the Court of Wards and district authorities by a sudden ukase stopped their *podu* or *dahi* cultivation.

From Allapilli we motored eastwards by forest road and by estate forest tracks, generally motorable after slight repair in the open season, to Bhamragarh, halting a night on the way at Pirmeli; it was some fifteen miles from Allapilli to Pirmeli, and another twenty-three on to Bhamragarh. I had been preceded on this tour by Mr. Kerawala inquiring into debt at each big village, and the neighbouring village *bhumias* and *gaitas* and the *patli Sendhias*[3] from miles around gathered again to repeat to me what they had already told him. The first such gathering was at Mirkal[4] and the next at Pirmeli itself. At both places we heard much about money-lenders and their methods, and I therefore reproduce from *The Aboriginal Problem*[5] the gist of Mr. Kerawala's report on what he was told at Mirkal and Wateli;[6] those whom he saw at Wateli came to my camp at Pirmeli.

At Mirkal he enquired particularly into the economic and social conditions of the Marias of Mirkal, Sagangatta and Kasampalli villages. He found that many were heavily in debt to Hindu

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 283.
[2] Pp. 257, 332 and 366.
[3] See p. 287.
[4] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV2148.
[5] Pp. 180-2.
[6] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. MV4935.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

of Chichari described how this happened to three of his fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

In several places I found that a house or a village had been moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death, and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pide committed suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

platyrrhine; a Dravidian element, which some would prefer to call Mediterranean—dolichocephalic leptorrhine; and a slight brachycephalic element, which Mr. Roy is clearly inclined to ascribe to an alpine or palaeo-alpine source rather than a mongoloid one. He states that, although he found instances of oblique eyes, he never found a case of the epicanthic fold in Bastar. Personally, I am still unconvinced. My own impression of the Marias is that there is a slight but definite mongoloid element. Of course, these impressions are merely the result of optical observation, and unsupported by any sort of scientific measurement, and it is possible that I have been prejudiced by a certain psychological resemblance between the Marias and their neighbours and the submongoloid hillmen of Assam.

Culturally, the parallels afforded by the Maria Gonds are often interesting and suggestive, though it is possible here to mention only a few. Some of them are definitely reminiscent of tribes farther south in the peninsula. Thus the use of separate huts or shelters for the segregation of menstruating women is a custom shared with several of the Travancore hill tribes, while the objection to performing the sexual act inside a dwelling is shared with the Kadar of Cochin State, and probably with other tribes. It may perhaps be referred to a period when, as with the Andamanese to-day, the only permanent dwelling-house was an unpartitioned communal hut.

Other traits there are which recall tribes of Munda affinities. The association of peacocks with the dead and the use of kettle-drums and dish-shaped gongs are shared with the Munda-speaking Sawara of the Madras Agency Tracts, and the use of the multiple cord belts for women with the Bondo Parja of the same area and with the Chagyik Konyak of the Naga hills in Assam, items of culture, of course, which may just as well have passed from west to east as vice versa, or which may merely have been drawn by various tribes from a common source. The practices of erecting a dolmen as a seat for a village elder, for the 'Village Mother' or for the ghost of a dead person to sit on, a circle of stones for the village *panchayat* and a memorial menhir in the village of ancestral origin, together with a belief in a collective clan soul and what amounts to a form of ancestor-worship recall very strongly the Sawara, Munda and Khasi cultures, while they link up with other similar practices of the megalithic cultures farther east, e.g. in the Naga hills, Mentawi, Farther Asia generally and even the Pacific. The same group of cultures is again suggested by the use of a communal bachelors' hall, of the sago palm and of grass rain-coats, by stilt-walking and by the making of fire by means of a fire-saw instead of a drill. This

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

particular fire-saw used by Mr. Grigson's Marias would seem to be much nearer the original implement than the saw-thong form used in Assam or (e.g.) Borneo, for the Maria fire-saw needs three men to manipulate it, while one Naga or Kayan can make fire with a thong worked by his two hands under a hearth held in place by one foot; the Mikir and Nicobarese types, usually worked by two men, forming links between the Maria and the Naga types. On the other hand, Maria ceremonial fire *must* apparently be obtained from an existing household fire; the Naga tribes, on the contrary, must employ thong-ignited need-fire, while their neighbours the Kuki tribes, who seldom use such an apparatus, may obtain it from flint and steel, but not from matches. One is tempted to infer a reminiscence of a time when the making of fire was unknown in the Abujhmar hills, as in the Andaman islands, and the importation of a primitive form of the fire-saw which has developed elsewhere into a simpler and more useful apparatus. In contrast to the fire-saw the Maria blacksmith's bellows have South Indian and African rather than Indonesian affinities, while the bamboo ideochord is not played by the Maria, as by the Thado or the Kayan, by plucking the raised bark 'strings' but by tapping them, making the instrument in their hands rather a xylophone than a guitar.

Reference has already been made to the megalithic culture of the Maria, now apparently rapidly decaying. Here again, much is suggestive of various Assam and Indonesian cultures. Menhirs are transported as by Lhota Nagas and erected as by the Angami, while stone cists are put up by the village path. Seed is fertilised with blood, suggesting not only the Khond *meriah* sacrifice, but also the general theory underlying the head-hunting practices of Naga, Wa, Kayan, Igorot or Taigal from Assam to Formosa. A water-dwelling snake-demon like that of the Maria pervades Thado superstition; shooting stars are 'star dung' alike to the Sema Naga and the Maria; like the Maria, the Ao Naga dances with bells on his buttocks. That incest and other breaches of taboo are visited on the offenders or their kin by man-eating tigers is a typical Naga belief, and the inheritance of his father's house by the youngest son a common Naga practice, though Mr. Grigson's account of it among his Gonds suggests that the reason is to be found in the small value of the building and site, which would certainly not hold good for the Angami. The capture of fish by beating noxious or intoxicating plant juices into the river, like the use of beetle grubs for food, is a very widespread practice indeed, but there is something particularly suggestive of Tibeto-Burmese affinities in the termination of so many Maria clan names in *-mi*, which in Naga or Kuki languages means 'men'. Indeed, several of these Maria clan names, e.g.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Wachawi, are so like those of Naga clans as to tempt one to infer a connexion from a similarity or even identity which is probably merely fortuitous.

More than enough has probably been said to indicate to the reader the interest and importance of the work that follows. It is only to be regretted that no written word, even of Mr. Grigson himself nor yet even his admirable illustrations, can convey the peculiar attraction the Maria has for the stranger that enters into his gates, an attraction sensible at once even to a casual visitor among them, such as I have been, and obviously felt very strongly by the author of the monograph that follows. Let him now speak for himself.

J. H. HUTTON

Cambridge
October 11th, 1936

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Indonesia and, in India, among the Oraons and others in Chhota Nagpur and among the Nagas of Assam. In Bastar the Murias and Jhorias of Antagarh have sleeping dormitories for boys only, and repudiate with heat any suggestion that boys and girls share the same dormitory, as is the case among the Murias of north Kondagaon.[A] Nevertheless, the girls assemble every evening by the boys' *gotul*, to join in song, dance and games, and not infrequently in sexual games, and, like the boys, have *gotul* names and ranks some of which involve special duties and responsibilities. The elder boys and girls are almost prefects, charged with the duty of teaching the young the elements of the tribal culture, while all the youth have certain definite fagging to do for the whole village. The Marias of the Abujhmar have a *gotul* in every village, but it is little more than a real dormitory where all unmarried males over the age of ten or so sleep; and, except in the Fadalbhum *pargana* and portions of adjacent Maria country abutting on the plain of north-western Antagarh, the distinctive and specialized *gotul* system of training for the young of both sexes is absent. It seems almost completely absent among the Bison-horn Marias and Koyas of Bastar. Lucie-Smith does not mention it in the account of the Marias and other Gonds of Chanda district in the 1869 Settlement Report (one of the indications that the 'Marias' described by him were Koitor of the plains and foot-hills of the Ahiri and other zamindaris, not the Hill Marias of the portion of the Abujhmar mountains that overflows into south-east Chanda). It is only briefly mentioned by Russell and Hiralal in para. 71 of their article 'Gond', where it is said that 'many Gond villages in Chhattisgarh and the Feudatory States' have these '*gotalghar*' (*sic*). There is no definite record of the distribution of the *gotul* outside Bastar in the Central Provinces and the old Central Provinces States. In the *States Gazetteer* it is recorded only in Bastar and Kanker States among the 'Gonds'. I doubt whether it exists anywhere among the Gonds[1] of the Satpura mountains and other parts of the Central Provinces, including Chhattisgarh. It is a possible indication of the existence among these Muria, Jhoria and Hill Maria Koitor of Antagarh and Kondagaon Tahsils who now speak dialects of Dravidian Gondi of a strong element of pre-Dravidian or Austro-Asiatic culture; but it is contrary to expectation, if this be the case, that the *gotul* exists in embryo only among the very primitive Hill

[1] Enquiry among the Gonds along the Nagpur-Chhindwara border showed no sign of anything resembling a *gotul*; I was told, however, by an intelligent Gond that he had heard many years ago that some such thing existed somewhere beyond Deogarh in Chhindwara District. This is unverified. There is no mention of the *gotul* in any published grammars and vocabularies of Central Provinces Gondi dialects.

[A] [see cat. 116, p. 418. - Ed./pt]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 to the marksman's right. He stands obliquely to his target, with feet slightly apart and body bending forward over the left hip. The nock in the arrow shaft is held to the string of the bow, in the Abujhmar hills by the index and middle fingers only of the right hand unless the marksman is not strong enough not to use his third finger also; the Bison-horn Marias always use all three. The left thumb rests perpendicularly along the inner edge of the belly of the stave, the arrow resting, on the left of the stave, in the arch between the left thumb and index finger. The latter is laid lightly along the top of the shaft and pointed as a sight towards the target. The other left fingers are brought round the back of the stave. The string is then drawn to the rear by the right hand and released. No ring or other protector is worn on the thumb, though it is sometimes cut on the inner side a little above the knuckle.

Glasfurd, in para. 87 of his report, thus describes another form of release :—

> 'All the Marias . . . often use the feet in bending the bow, while they pull the string with both hands. An arrow discharged in this manner, it is said, would almost pass through the body of a man or deer: this method is only had recourse to in elevated positions, such as from the tops of rocks, hills, and precipices, upon any object below.'

Despite many enquiries, I never found a modern hill or plain Maria who could use this method. A few old men said it was used by wandering 'Nahal' hunters, now very rarely met in Bastar; none could remember it ever being used by Marias.

415 No quivers are used by any Marias. Arrows are carried in the hand, or by fixing the point of a barb in the hair-tuft, or in a cord tied round the head if bald.

534 No Marias appear ever to use a musical bow on a winnowing-fan
● 171 over a pot of water as is done by low Hindu castes and Murias around Kondagaon for the *Tija* festival in the month of Bhadon.

151 The Hill Maria slays a very occasional panther or barking-deer with his bow, but is not a good shot. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is often a deadly shot up to forty or fifty yards. A young man in a village just below the Aranpur pass, with a powerful bow of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood at fifty paces range sent an arrow through the bullseye of a target which I set up for him against a *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) tree; it penetrated 4 cm. into the very hard wood of that tree.

411 No other actual weapons are used by Marias, save for an occasional old sword of one of the traditional Indian *talwar* patterns which has survived the general disarming after the 1910 rebellion. But it is as well to describe here the few digging hand-tools used.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 the ordinary axe, and there is little or no 'waist' by the socket. It is, on a smaller scale, like the Cornish biddox.

Though this is used by some Bison-horn Marias in the remoter tracts, its use is now definitely a sign of the Hill Maria. The Bison-horn Maria uses the ordinary *korki* of the plains, which the Hill Maria calls *koṭ-gudari*; the villages on the edge of the Abujhmar hills are beginning to use it instead of the *gudari*, but it is never seen in the villages in the interior of the hills. This is a shouldered iron hoe, the blade from the shoulders to the digging edge being almost square, the sides being only slightly longer than the edge. It scores over the *gudari* because it can also be used to scoop and shovel earth.

Last must be mentioned the solid iron crowbar or digging-stick, found in all Maria houses, and throughout Bastar. But in the Abujhmar hills it is interesting to find that it is sometimes shouldered and is in form very like the Madras Sawaras' shouldered iron hoe illustrated at p. 361 of Hutton's *India Census Report* (1931). This is known to the Hill Marias as *pulu*. I have seen similar shouldered specimens occasionally among the Bison-horn Marias, and was told that they had been imported from the Malkangiri taluq of the Jeypore Agency; but there is no coming and going between that Agency and the Abujhmar hills. Of all the Marias' iron weapons and implements the *pulu* is the dearest, owing to the weight of iron used. The blacksmiths charge a rupee, the price of three *gudari* or two axes. It is generally about a metre long, and the shouldered portion is about a quarter of the total length. Plain unshouldered specimens are more common. Its chief use is for digging up the various yams and jungle roots in the rains that form so important a part of the diet of all Bastar Koitor. Or it is useful for digging holes for the posts of houses, or grubbing up stumps, etc.; it never is used as a hoe.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

764 porcupines, peacocks, fish and tigers. The carpenter had put
532 in a representation of Hanuman, but the Marias, knowing little of him, supposed it was a policeman included to emphasize Kopa's dignity.

The pillar also has, or had, pigeons on the top and there was a trident, though the Marias were ignorant of its meaning. 'It is the pole's turban,' they said. 'It is made of iron to save us the trouble of renewing it.'

It is obviously impossible to describe all these pillars[1]; in 1942 they were to be found near Chitrakot, near Killepal, at Lalaguda, near Sirisguda, at Taragaon, at Kumalnar and at Garda. I saw a very simple one at Chingner in honour of an important member of the Lekhami clan. It was standing out in the jungle by itself; there were three rows of lozenges cut in the wood near the top and a single carved pigeon above. It was still red with oil mixed with *geru*. At its foot was a flat stone supported on two others, the *hanal-garya*. From the top there hung a strip of cloth, possibly a bit of the dead man's dancing dress.

It is important to note that these pillars are closely associated with the megalithic culture of the Marias. Sometimes both a menhir and pillar are erected for the same man; sometimes the pillar stands at the end of a row of stone monuments. It is not, therefore, in any sense a substitute for the *urakhal* but a supplement to it. I have noticed a similar combination of stone and wooden monuments among the Lanjhia Saoras who have come under Kond influence. [171]

It is tempting to suppose that the various animals and birds carved on the pillar have some totemic significance, but I doubt if this is so. In the first place, every pillar has a wide variety of animals portrayed upon it; in the second the people themselves say that these animals simply represent the ordinary objects of the chase and are carved to indicate some of the interests of the dead man. Each pillar in fact attempts to be a biography in wood of the deceased.

114 These notes are desultory enough, but they do at least give me an opportunity of paying some tribute to the man whose endless docility to facts has enabled him to make so striking a contribution to science and whose great-hearted affection for the aboriginals has led him to propose a policy and establish principles which, if adopted by the National Governments of the future, will preserve freedom and happiness in the hills and forests of India. There is much that is tedious in anthropology, much that hardly seems worth while,

[1] The pillar of Marvi Oyami Masa, the homicide, is described in detail in *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 201.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

on their heads. They must not remove rice from the Pot of the Departed.

Page 169, *line* 33. Of the 100 cases of homicide examined in *Maria Murder and Suicide* 13 were due to intoxication by rice-beer and 6 to other liquors. In a further 14 cases of which Grigson kept notes, *landa*-intoxication led to 2 murders and other intoxicants to 3.

Page 174, *line* 5. The Murias still remember this camp and recall how Sir Montague Butler gave one of the headmen a ten rupee note as a present. That was seventeen years ago, when ten rupee notes were seldom seen. The Muria showed the note to a Forest Guard and asked him what it was. The Guard offered to buy it for a rupee, saying that was all it was worth. The Muria accepted the bargain and went off full of gratitude to the kindly Guard but doubtful of the Governor's generosity in giving him such a small reward. Quite recently a Mussalman merchant of Narayanpur was prosecuted for cheating a Muria with coloured labels which he declared were hundred rupee notes.

Page 174, *line* 9. At Dugeli I saw in 1942 a small carefully-fenced enclosure round a group of plantain trees, among which was a tall plant not unlike a sugar cane, which I was told was the 'Baiha Danda' and was used as an antidote to the bite of a mad dog. It was grown entirely for this purpose, in case the emergency should arise.

Page 174, *line* 15. The custom of blowing away disease may be illustrated by the experience of Oyami Harma of Bara Harma-munda. 'Once when I was working in my fields with some labourers I had employed, they performed magic against me and a lot of mud went into my mouth and filled my whole body. The Waddai discovered what had happened and cured me by blowing the mud out of my stomach. Another day, some people came to ask for rice. I refused at first, but they persisted and at last I had to let them have some. But they were annoyed with me and with my own rice they made hostile magic and filled my belly with it. The Waddai cured me by blowing it out.' Sucking is also practised. A Siraha places his lips on a patient's stomach and sucks. If he finds only blood in his mouth, it means a Rau has sent the disease; if there is a little earth with the blood, it indicates the Earth Mother.

Page 182, *line* 24. I have seen split-string instruments similar to the *vaddur-dol* among the Bondos and Saoras in Orissa, as well as among the Jhoria-Murias; they have been noticed for the Reddis by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Reddis of the Bison Hills*, p. 348. Meerwarth reports that they are common in Malaya and Indonesia

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and are found in the Shan States—A. M. Meerwarth, *A Guide to the Collection of Musical Instruments exhibited in the Indian Museum, Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1917), pp. 5f. But the Shan instrument improves its sounding-board with a hole in the bamboo and it, as with the Reddis and Bondos, is beaten with only one hand. But the Marias and Murias use plectra in both hands, with the instrument on the ground.

Page 183, *line* 17. Beside the iron jews-harp, which is also known to the Ghotul Murias, the Bison-horn Marias use a small bamboo harp of a pattern common to the Bondos, Saoras and several Assamese tribes.

Page 183, *line* 21. The *kikir* is illustrated on page 20 of *Maria Murder and Suicide*.

Page 183, *line* 34. Hill Maria dancing is rather monotonous unless there is a great deal of it. But when several thousand gather for the festival, the scene is magnificent. Grigson has described the pattern of their dance as a long curved line moving slowly in a circle, while a group of 'song fellows' move up and down before it. On a great occasion this group of singers gradually develops into a procession as boys and girls leave the line and form up behind them. This 'column of fours' may in fact entirely absorb the line; when both remain they revolve about each other.

I saw a very attractive variant on the usual Bison-horn dance in the Konta tahsil, where the women shouldered their sticks and went round with a skip and a jump. In the Dantewara tahsil I recorded five different steps used by the women.

(1) The circle moves anti-clockwise singing '*Nowile wayale*' and the steps are: right foot to right, left foot swings back behind with a pause in mid-air while the dancing stick is thumped twice on the ground. Then right foot again, and three thumps of the stick. This step is also done to a refrain '*So-lo rela re rela*' and '*So rela re rela*'.

(2) A very simple anti-clockwise circular movement. Right foot to right and left foot to right behind it. The song is about cattle and the fields.

(3) Another circular dance with the steps going right to right, left behind to right, right to right, then left over in front of right.

(4) The feet go: left, right, left to right, a pause, the right is wagged over in front of the left and towards the left for three beats of the stick. Then it is put back on the ground to the right of the left and then left right left quickly.

(5) Left in front of right, right to right behind it, then the left in front of the right and so on. In this dance the sticks are not thumped with three beats at a time, but with single beats.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Sori, Miriami, Kalmumi and Markami clans. My impression was that the *danyakal* stone was becoming more and more popular; it is supposed to confer a certain dignity on the family that has it; and for some reason it is said to be cheaper. Other clans which often use the *danyakal* stones are the Tati, Muchaki, Vetti, Hemla, Oyami, Birya Barse, Punem, Durro and Rawa.

Supplementary material concerning Hill and Bison-horn Maria funerary rites, will be found in my article 'Funerary Customs in Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXV. In the same volume is an important discussion on the megalithic culture of Bastar in relation to other parts of India by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf.

Page 282. Koppers has made the interesting suggestion that the unbloody sacrifice of horned cattle for the dead when an *uraskal*-menhir is erected by the Marias, is a widespread custom. 'In this matter of the unbloody killing of animals destined as a sacrifice for ancestors, there is complete agreement between Gonds, Mundas and Santals', and he refers to Bodding who says that 'sacrifices to *bongas* are performed by beheading the sacrificial animal, whilst to the forefathers it is always done by a stroke of an axe-head on the neck'. The Munda also kills horned cattle for the dead in this way. (See W. Koppers, 'Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils', *Annali Lateranensi*, Vol. VI, 1942, p. 193). But how far is this distinction really due to a desire to save the skins of horned cattle? In Orissa at least the vendors of cattle for sacrifice charge an additional sum (up to ten rupees) if the skin is not returned to them intact, with the result that in many cases the sacrifice of a cow or buffalo is unbloody while that of a goat or pig is bloody. At the erection of a menhir by the Bondos I witnessed on the same day and on the same occasion the sacrifice of a pig and a bullock for the ancestors: the first had its throat cut, the second was killed by a blow from the back of an axe in order to save the skin. The Saoras usually make unbloody sacrifices of buffaloes to the ancestors but I have seen a goat (also for the ancestors) decapitated by a sword. I suspect the economic interest is primary.

[p. 428 is blank]

[For comparison of the ghotul (communal dwelling) and its features, with those in other cultures, see category 116, pp. 269-320.]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In
222 the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs
252 before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs, regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful [278] remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

262 The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith
276 that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands
524 and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams; a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

262 Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries' when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

262 Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja
843 Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, [171] eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. 'The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Salees in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If [171] you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moss, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 108.

[3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for [278] ear-aches.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honey-comb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitka ondār* and the *lokti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognise four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mashu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sathapuri mashu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mashu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nihiti mashu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'In a golden box bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 499.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Gudding ada hidu ra,	It came hiding in the grass,
Hupa lakha poyindu ra.	It caught him like a rat.
Hojir rupiya ta jiua ra.	The soul is worth a thousand rupees.
Jiua nukain kili ra.	You have destroyed the soul.
Ade jiua pallo ra.	The soul cannot return again.
Bada diya ta puja ra?	What offering did he fail to give?
Puja badu barah matar ra?	Did he fail to give what he had promised?
Adenk ise titi ra?	Was that why you ate him?
Nima gala tinavi ra.	But it wasn't you who ate him.
Nikuna ijor itan ra.	I said it was you (but I was wrong).
Hongu dapu dyma ra:	Don't be angry:
Sili barang johar ra.	I give you a sevenfold greeting.

Use Mudial Pen is acquitted, and now Hirto Mudial Pen is accused in exactly the same words. He too is found innocent and the singers, afraid that they may have angered him, beg him not to be offended and greet him seven times with their Johar. Then in the song as I have it recorded, Muyang Waddai is accused—presumably of black magic—then Lingo Mudial Pen, Kara Harra Pen, the Rau of Tipagarh, the Kandra Kaniya, the Rau of Raughat, the Mata of the man's own home, and finally Ispural. Of Ispural, which is a variant on Mahapurub or Bhagavan, the Supreme Being in whose hands are the issues of life and death, it is said,

Nimdy ise titi ra.	It was you who ate him.
Hayna hago asatu ra;	The time of his death had come;
Adenk ise oti ra.	That was why you took him.

But even Ispural is proved innocent, and at last the singers decide that it was the dead man's own ancestors, the Departed of his own house, who desired his company and sent the tiger to bring him.

Lota ise mudiyilor ra,	The ancient of the house,
Abo ise titur ra,	It was he who ate him,
Jori jandila otung ra.	To gain a companion for himself.
Mithun jori titur ra,	He left our companion behind,
Tenko ise otung ra.	That was why he took him.[1]

XVII. The Danger of the Abnormal: The Ondar Muttai

Throughout India the ghost of a woman who has died in pregnancy, in child-birth or immediately after child-birth is feared and dreaded.[2] The

[1] Russell and Hiralal have many accounts of the precautions taken by various tribes after a man has been killed by a tiger, some of which resemble those of the Muria. They describe the rites of the Baiga (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 84), Bhattra (II, p. 274), Dumal (II, p. 536), Gond (III, p. 81 and III, p. 93), Halba (III, p. 274), Kalanga (III, p. 308), Kawar (III, p. 396), Kurmi (IV, p. 79), Panwar (IV, p. 346), Samia (IV, p. 496) and Sevara (IV, p. 483). There is no particular reason in most cases why the customs recorded should be peculiar to the various tribes, nor why they should be recorded for some tribes and not for others. Probably very similar rites are common throughout the Central Provinces and indeed most of aboriginal India.

S. C. Roy has described the rites of the Uraon and I have described a Baiga ceremony that I personally witnessed in the Pendaria Zamindari (*The Baiga*, pp. 298ff.). According to Russell and Hiralal, the Gond and Halba resemble the Muria in suspending a ring over a pot of water, which they watch till it falls. The Bhattra, Kawar, Uraon and others dress a man as a tiger and either tie him up, banish him or force him to release his prey, with the idea that what is done in symbol will be achieved in effect.

[2] The Churails or Churel, as this ghost is called elsewhere, is a familiar figure in Indian ethnographic literature. One of the earliest accounts is by Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

115 reason for this may be that just as the ghosts of virgins and the unmarried are dangerous because they have missed the most delightful, the most exciting, the most interesting thing in life and are therefore supposed to be anxious after death to revenge themselves on mankind, so also the woman who dies during the process of parturition is suddenly deprived of the chief privilege and wonder of womanhood—the joy of being a mother. Bitter and disappointed she seeks an appalling vengeance upon men.

In Bastar this fearful being is known in Halbi as Churlin or Bandrini and sometimes as Raksin or Banra-raksin. The Muria, however, know her as Ondar Muttai. This means the Old Bee Woman, implying I think that she comes upon a man with the ferocity and speed of a swarm of bees.

The Ondar Muttai is described with every circumstance of fear and horror.[1] She has only one breast, so long that it is usually slung over her shoulder. She has teeth long as the palm of your hand, an enormous head, great round eyes, a bulbous nose and ears like winnowing-fans. Her feet are red as fire, but curiously enough are not described as turned back to front as in the rest of India. She dances with her breast flung across her back and calls to men to come to her. When they hear her voice their legs tremble and fail beneath them. She lives in the forest or on the bank of a lake, and on the day the cuckoo first sings you can see her eyes across the water. In some villages, there is a belief that you are safe as long as you are in the company of buffaloes.

The Ondar Muttai appears to human beings in several different forms. Towards women and children she nearly always displays her dangerous and terrifying aspect. When a child is born and the placenta is not expelled, the ghost of the mother after death pursues young children. She catches them and carries them about, holding them against her breast. This is so terrible that the children weep and weep and cannot be consoled.

When the Ondar Muttai catches a man, sometimes she tickles him until he is so weak and exhausted that she can do her will upon him. Sometimes she says to him, 'Will you eat black *gur* or white *gur*?' If he answers, 'I'll

171 pp. 264ff., who stresses her reversed feet and her power of destroying young men. Russell and Hiralal describe Churel superstitions and precautions among the Gurao who bury a lemon under the corpse, and the Kurmi who place thorns above it. Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 18of. and IV, p. 78.

The Uraon believe that the Churel destroys men by tickling them—S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), p. 96—and Dehon describes how they prevent the return of the ghost by twisting round the feet of the corpse and driving long thorns into them. They bury the body face downwards with the bones of a donkey.—P. Dehon, *The Religion and Customs of the Uraons, Mem. ASB*, Vol. I (1905-7), pp. 139f. The Birhor, like the Muria, do not admit the Churel to the company of the ancestral dead and only women may bury the corpse.—S. C. Roy, *The Birhors* (Ranchi, 1925), pp. 267ff. The Santal Churin licks the flesh from a man's bones. At burial long thorns are driven into her feet to prevent her running after her victims.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 411. The Chenchu appear almost unique in burying such women 'in the usual manner'.—C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Bombay, 1943), p. 154.

Frazer has collected many references to similar beliefs for the Lushai, Kachin, Shan, Palaung as well as for the Malaya, the Kayan of Borneo and the Kiwai of British New Guinea among others. Similar ideas are found again among the peoples of Northern Nigeria and Rhodesia and even among the ancient Mexicans. Possibly the fears and superstitions gathering about this ghost are world-wide. See, for full references, J. G. Frazer, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III, pp. 182ff.

[1] The Kharia believe that her malignant power 'is believed to be foreshadowed by the trouble she gave to her people in her last days of life, the degree of deformity and fearfulness that her features assume on death and the trouble that her corpse, by the violent contortions of its limbs on its way to the grave, gives to the pall-bearers'.—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), p. 302.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

The Gods of the Home

Among the Muria, specially those towards the east and round Kondagaon, there is a definite belief that certain gods are attached to men and women and go about with them sharing their life and helping when help is needed. At Kanera the Muria said that Dokara Deo lives with men and aids them in distress, while Kondi or Lagar Deo lives with women. At Dongrigura the Pujari said that the gods themselves do not accompany men everywhere but 'their shadows come to them on the wind' always ready to help in danger. At Karanji the people said that whatever god receives special honour rewards his worshippers by living with them but that Budha Deo, Kondi Deo and Lagar Deo, who came with the Raja of Bastar from Warangal to protect him, are the special gods who go here and there to guard human beings.

The fact that this belief is mainly confined to the more sophisticated (though still truly Muria) villages near Kondagaon suggests that it is a Hindu importation along the main road from the Central Provinces.

Kondi Deo goes with a girl[1] to her husband's house on the day she is married. After the birth of the first child, any misfortune that comes is attributed to this god and the family has to promise to worship him on condition that he troubles them no more. They wait for a year and then the woman's married sisters come to visit her and subscribe sufficient money to buy a pig.

On a Saturday the house is cleaned and the next morning a *chok* pattern is made in the compound with rice-flour, in the middle of which some rice is placed. A small earthen pot is put there and a knife. The head of the family offers incense and makes the pig eat the rice saying, 'O Kondi Deo, protect and preserve my family and children. It is for their sake that this offering is made to you, and we will repeat it every second year'. When the pig has eaten the rice, the husband of either the eldest or the youngest sister kills it. They cook the pig and invite the village elders to the feast. A pit is dug inside the house into which, when the feast is over, the leaf-plates, the pig's bones and even the water in which the cooking-pots are washed, must be thrown. They then hang the earthen pot and the knife near the Pot of the Departed.

The worship of Lagar Deo is not unlike that of Narayan Deo to whom the Laru pig is dedicated in the Central Provinces.[2] Lagar Deo is also a special god of women and is indeed often identified with Kondi Deo. He first lives with the mother of a household, but after the marriage of the eldest daughter he goes with her to her new home. When her child is born he first troubles the mother and then goes to each of her married sisters and troubles their female children. When they decide to appease him they ask all the female members of the family, sisters, sister's daughters, grand-daughters, all of them, and

her. The Koyi dance is an imitation of Bhimador's pursuit of his enemies); R. B. Bainbridge, 'The Sacrifice of the Rajmahal Hills', *Mem. ASB.* Vol. II, pp. 468.

Other legends about Bhimsen may be found in *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, pp. 29 and 135 (for Bhimsen's romance with a Devi); A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Reports*, Vol. XXII, p. 53 (the pillar of Asoka near Betiya locally regarded as Bhimsen's walking-stick); ibid., Vol. XVI, p. 16 (the lion pillar at Rakhra known as the pole of the bedstead of Bhimsen); an interesting and well-told story in R. A. Sterndale, *Seonee* (Calcutta, 1877), p. 97.

[1] Among the Uraon, Achrael and her companion Joda are the special deities of women. Once in a generation, every family must perform a ceremony for the well-being of its female children. As in Bastar, all female relatives and their husbands attend. For a full description, see S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 65ff.

[2] See *The Baiga*, pp. 403ff. and articles by Shamrao Hivale and Durga Bhagwat in *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 92–119.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

776 dedicate a pig by castrating it and removing a bit of the ear and tail. They wash its legs and throw rice at it saying, 'If you are a true god, give us prosperity, keep us safe and after so many years we will give you gifts'. Then the pig is set free and allowed to go where it will. The rice which was thrown at it is carefully divided and given to each of the husbands of the woman's younger sisters. They are to sow this every year, and at the end of three years to bring whatever has been produced. The men sow this seed in a special patch of ground, harvest it and store it separately, repeating the process every year. When they are ready they appoint a certain member of the family as the Kotwar for this special duty and he goes round to the houses of all those relations who three years before had shared in the ceremony. Once again all the female members of the family must come. Every household invited must bring a chicken.

On the appointed day each of the husbands comes with the rice that he has grown. They dig a pit and bring the dedicated pig. After making it eat rice as usual, they beat it over the head with a rice-husker and so kill it. The men invited to the feast may eat the pork, but the only women who may do so are those who were present at the original ceremony. Sometimes an interval of five years is allowed between the dedication of the pig and its sacrifice.

In some places the earthen pot with rice, pulse and a small knife is always kept near the House of the Departed to satisfy Kondi Pen.

The Divine Motiári

776 Throughout India the villagers dread and take endless trouble to placate the
●171 Matal or Village Mothers.[1] These dangerous and malignant beings are the cause of disease, domestic tragedy and accident. It would be an interesting subject for psycho-analytic research to discover why the beautiful name 'Mother' should be given to these bloodthirsty deities.

But beside the Mothers there are the Maidens. These too are known in other parts of India.[2] In northern Bastar at least, as we might expect in a country populated by charming and graceful motiari, the Maidens or Kanyang are generally regarded as benevolent though, like the motiari, they expect to receive proper attention. It is not, I think, fanciful to call these the 'Divine Motiari' and indeed the seven chief Kanyang Sisters have the names Belosa, Dulosa, Alosa, Sulki, Lahari, Jalko and Malko, all of which are the titles of motiari. It is said that in the ghotul these titles are specially treasured and fortunate since they are the names of the Kanyang in whose honour the girls dance the Diwali dances.

776 There are Naiads, Kanyang, Divine Motiari—call them what you will—of the forest and of the water. One Kanyang lives in the sago-palm; another flashes across the sky in the shape of lightning; another presides over the salt-lick. In all they number seven score.

Let us examine some of them and their character more carefully. Perhaps the most important of the Kanyang is the Yer Kanyang, the rather lonely maiden who lives in streams and rivers. When she hears the music of the dance floating across at night from the nearest ghotul, she grows very sad and goes to find some motiari living wretched and ashamed because of the menstrual contagion that is on her. Then the two dance together in the world of dreams all night. This maiden is honoured by the Muria when they go to fish. Gifts are promised before they begin and if the catch is good they always remember her. When Gadru of Chaniyagaon was nearly drowned as a child, the Siraha

[1] See Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 112ff.
[2] See Dalton, op. cit., p. 248; Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 112.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

791 considerably weakened and the sensations become very dull and dim. The higher
781 centres of the brain seem to be partially split off from the incoming sensory currents, on the one hand, and from the motor centres, on the other'.[1] At the same time, the mental state becomes more and more simple and the many objects of normal consciousness gradually tend to give way to a state of monoideism. These mediums are undoubtedly out of their wits; they can hurl themselves about and fall with a force that would injure men in an ordinary state of consciousness.[2]

825 It is interesting to find that in Bastar as elsewhere throughout the world this ecstatic condition is associated with the horse. 'It is not only in Java
●171 and Bali', writes Beryl de Zoëte, 'that the hobby-horse is associated with trance. The wonderful Roumanian Calusari, the little horsemen, the Good Fairies who dramatically fight the Wicked One in their ecstatic dance, have as one of their principal functions the exorcism of evil spirits who bring disease, just like the Koeda Kepand (rattan horses) of Java and the Sanghyang Djaran of Bali. And this function is exercised through an abnormal state of consciousness which at a certain degree of intensity we call trance, and in some cases through the medium of a wooden or rattan horse, or merely the head and tail of a horse united by some kind of rod . . . Perhaps there is no continent in which the hobby-horse is unknown. In England he seems innocent enough, ambling along among the mysterious antlered figures of Abbot's Bromley, or through many a French folk-dance.'[3]

The horse has long been used in magic. Tacitus and Camden referred to augury by the horse in the ancient world. It has been said that the Wooden Horse of Troy was 'an instrument of magic rather than military tactics'.[4] Armed horsemen in Arabia in more recent times are quoted as riding round the tent in which a child is to be born and showing clearly by their arms, horses and movements that they are trying to frighten away evil spirits at a vitally important time.[5] In India the worship of the horse has been recorded for certain aboriginal tribes. For example, Hislop says that throughout the Nagpur District at his time (*circa* 1860) everyone worshipped Koda Pen, and a god named Kola Sur was worshipped with an offering of earthen horses on the top of a hill near Great Ambora.[6] The mare-headed goddess, Basali, represented with a horse's head or as a wooden horse, is worshipped by the Keots and allied tribes in Orissa.[7] The Bhil represent their dead as riding on

[1] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1923), p. 424.

[2] With the Bastar trance we may compare the 'jerks' which have been described by a contemporary in a revival in South Carolina in 1803. Persons would 'suddenly fall to the ground, and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backwards and forwards with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a woman's head might be heard to crack . . And then there was the jumping exercise in which several persons might be seen standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies.' —N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 43, quoting Bishop Capers. This would be a good description of the Muria trance.

[3] W. Spies and B. de Zoëte, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London, 1938), p. 78.

[4] W. F. J. Knight, 'Myth and Legend of Troy' in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVI, p. 98, who cites L. Malten in *Jarkb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.*, Vol. XIX (1905), pp. 179ff. as authority for 'the dangerous and demoniac associations of the horse in early times'.

[5] Ibid., p. 109.

[6] Hislop, *op. cit.*, Part IV, p. iii. See also V. Ball, *Jungle Life in India* (London, 1880), p. 83.

[7] P. Sen, 'A Basali Folk-Song', *Man in India*, Vol. XII, pp. 173ff. and S. C. Mitra, 'On a Curious Cult of Orissa', *JASB*, Vol. XXX, p. 19.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

825
171

horseback; so do the Korku on their carved memorial tablets.[1] The Muria often offer horses of clay or brass (Fig. 24) at their shrines. Sir Lewis Fermor

[532
718]

After a photograph by G. F. Ramadier

FIG. 25. Gond shrine near Naghir, Chanda District

discovered a remarkable iron horse among clay horses offered to a village god on the top of a hill of manganese-ore in the Chhindwara District, which he thought might be compared with the horse offered to the Southern Indian deity Iyenar.[2]

One of the oldest of Indian sacrifices is the *aswamedha*, or horse-sacrifice, which has been traced to Scythia. 'There has always', says Penzer, 'been a close connexion between horses and the sea-god, and also with the sun. The latter connexion is due not merely, I think, to the fact that the horse was the "vehicle"—of the sun-god, but because, through its swiftness, strength and activity, it was itself a symbol of the sun.' Penzer gives an account of the rite, which included the horse's consecration and its release for a year's wandering before the actual sacrifice. After its death, the queen lay with the animal so that its great powers of fertility might be transferred to her.[3] Frazer describes rites for the horse among the Russians and Chinese.[4] The Greeks sacrificed horses to the sea-god.

This association of the horse with magic, worship and sacrifice provides a background to its connexion with divination and ecstatic trance among the

[1] See W. Koppers, 'Monuments to the Dead of the Hills and Other Primitive Tribes in Central India', *Annali Lateranensi*, Vol. VI (1942), passim; D. H. Gordon, 'Korku Memorial Tablets', *Man*, 1936, Vol. XIX.

[2] L. Fermor, 'An Iron Horse from the Central Provinces', *JRASB*, Vol. II (1936), pp. 211–14.

[3] *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. IV, pp. 14–16.

[4] *Pantheon*, Vol. IV, pp. 1971.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

825 Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Gurusala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the
171 Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

825 I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two
532 horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of
787 trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's
791 head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite home for spirit-influence.'[3]

IX. The Cure of Disease

765 Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 122.
[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agapitoff and Khangalof.
[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 100.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the four corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chelik-baireg* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central pargunas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and no one would steal from it.

As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more, and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The *chelik* desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Kober and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has *siddari* birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidhs*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidhs* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.

Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

[1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bondya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of hemata right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. Hatton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of sexual excitement' in Naga morung.—Hutton, *Diaries*, op. cit., p. 48.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
836

and gave me liquor to drink. I made Johar to all the chelik and motiari and never entered the ghotul again.

Three years after marriage I gave birth to a male child, but with great difficulty, for the Sirdar who loved me very much after all the years we were together in the ghotul and who had wanted me to run away with him, was angry at my marrying someone else and sent magic to trouble me. When I recovered, the Sirdar made my husband ill instead, but the Siraha cured him.

Another old woman over sixty years old, Kachari of Kanhargaon, remembers the ghotul of that village while it was still *jodidār*; a few years later the rules were changed on account of a scandal.

My ghotul husband was the Likhen; I was the Chaiko. But the boy I really loved was the Salya. One day while I was going to the ghotul, I met the Salya and went with him to a field. The Sirisdar and Beldar saw us and reported the matter to the Kotwar. That night the chelik refused to let me enter the ghotul, and the Kotwar and some others questioned me outside the door, accusing me of having had intercourse with the Salya in the field.

The Diwan said that as a punishment every chelik would have me that night, but just then a constable came to the Paik-gudi and the Diwan had to go and fetch him wood, so I escaped. But the Kotwar tried to have intercourse with me during the night. I resisted him, and in the morning he was very angry and told the Diwan what had happened. The next evening five of the chelik had me one after another, and in spite of all my cries and struggles I could not get free. The other motiari watched, but did nothing to help me.[1]

When I was sixteen years old I was betrothed to a chelik at Bara Dongar, but I eloped with the Salya. We were about to get married at Bandopal, when a search party caught us, and I was taken home and immediately married to my betrothed. Later I left him for a very handsome chelik from my old ghotul whom I met in the bazaar. Four years later I went mad as a result of the magic of my first husband, but the Siraha cured me.

IV

Yet in spite of such occasional breaches of the rules, the *jodidār* ghotul remains a school of marital fidelity. Severe penalties attach to the discovery of the cloth of a girl other than your own on a mat or to the taking advantage

[171]

[1] Roy describes a similar act of corporate violation as a punishment inflicted on a girl in the Oraon *dhumkuria*. 'Should a girl refuse to come when sent for, a number of young boys are dispatched to bring her by force. When she is brought, should she refuse to elect a mate, a number of older boys violate her one after the other, until she names the boy she would have for her mate.'—S. C. Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 246. Sir E. A. Gait wrote: 'I have been told that if an Oraon girl is thought unduly coy all the youths of the village combine against her and get her deflowered by one or more of their number.'—J. G. Fraser, *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. II, p. 287n. In the Kondabera ghotul, there was once a 'strike' and the girls, so the chelik told me, 'decided not to let us have them. We all decided to take them by force one night, and so we did'. But I doubt if this often happens either in Bastar or Chota Nagpur. I have, however, found parallel incidents among the Gond and Pardhan of Mandla. It is perhaps worth noting that if a Bororo Indian suspected his wife of infidelity, he put her at the disposal of the young men in the *bakito*-dormitory.—V. Frič and F. Radin, 'Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians', *JAI*, Vol. XXXVI (1906), p. 290.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Betle marrāla pungār pay ānta

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

[1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The eaters lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'

[2] Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 276.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAS* (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 306ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poesy* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Mnduvar.—Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

VII

Y883
861
171

It may be of interest to compare these penalties with the disciplinary measures taken in other village dormitories. There is a curious account in an old book on the Chittagong Hill Tract by Captain Lewin, who was Deputy Commissioner of this area and seems to have been a man of considerable sympathy and knowledge.

> In the village communities, even as the adults have a recognised head, so also is there a head boy appointed to control the boys of the village. This head of the juvenile community is called the *goung*. I shall give here, as illustration of their village customs, a recital which I heard told at the camp fire one night in the jungles, by one of our policemen of the Palaingtsa clan. He said: 'I was formerly *goung* over the unmarried lads of Hmraphroo village; this was when I was about seventeen years old. At night all who were unmarried, and weaned from their mothers, used to sleep in the *khiong*. One night Ougjyn, and Reyphaw, and Chaindra, came to me and got leave to go and sleep with their sweethearts. The girls were named Aduhbyn, Hlapyn, and Aduhsheay. I remember their names quite well; they are married now, and two of them have children. Our lads went by stealth, of course: if the parents had known it there would have been a row. Next day a little girl told me that Pynhla, another of our lads, who had not got leave to sleep out, had passed the night with her sister. This was quite contrary to rule, and it was therefore determined to punish him. Next day we all went to the Raja's *joom* to help to build his house, and in the evening, when we returned, we made a big fire on the bank of the stream that runs through the village; and I sent and called Pynhla, but he was afraid, and would not come; he stayed in his father's house, and said he had fever. I knew this was only an excuse; so I sent three lads to bring him forcibly, and they went and brought him, although his mother abused them much; but the father and mother could not hurt them, as they were acting by the *goung*'s order. When he came, I called upon him to say why he had slept away from the *khiong* without leave. At first he denied all about it, and then I brought forward the little girl, and he asked her, 'How did you know it was I? It was dark'; and she said, 'The moon shone on your face in the early morning when you opened the door to go away'. When he heard this he saw there was no escape, and he fell at my feet and asked forgiveness; but I fined him three rupees on the spot for the sake of discipline.[1]

In the Uraon *dhumkuria*, as in Bastar, many different punishments are inflicted. In Mandar the boys described the penalty for not keeping the dormitory clean; if any animal or bird dirtied the place they had to make the excrement into little balls with their own hands and throw it away. If a boy wet his bed, they said, the others stuck a pin into the ground and spat on it; the offender had to pick it up with his own teeth. In the middle of the ruined dormitory at Agru I saw a fine stone pillar. Boys who failed to attend the dances were forced to hop round this five times with two bits of bamboo tied tightly to their legs. Fines were also inflicted.

Roy has described the 'slit' in the central pillar of 'some of the *dhumkuria*' and connects it with a fertility ceremony in which the boys insert their 'penile

[1] T. H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India* (London, 1870), pp. 118ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

organs' into a slit in a sal sapling.[1] In *Oraon Religion*[2] he says that this is to be found 'in most *dhumkuria* houses'. He only mentions the name of one village, however, Borhambey. We saw the slit there, but did not find it in any of the other dormitories we visited, nor has W. G. Archer been able to find any trace of the custom elsewhere.

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FIG. 111. A tortoise tobacco-box
Height 4½"

FIG. 112. *Marka-batta-gota* or mango tobacco-box
Height 2½"

It is probable that the 'dormitory slit' was chiefly used for punishing refractory boys. According to the *dhangar* who talked to Shamrao Hivale at Mandar, it was used as a punishment for boys who were shy or sulky and refused to join in the communal games and dances. 'A lump of red earth is put on the pillar, and the Mahato stands by with a stick, and hits us on the legs and tells us to push our penis into the earth, and then he pushes us against it again and again till we become red. If a boy is sulky, we bring him at night to the *dubri* (mistress) and we push his penis into the slit until he cries and promises not to offend again. We all hit him and push him to and fro against the pillar till his penis hurts and he cries.'

Discipline in the Naga morung is, as we might expect, more rigorous and the punishments more drastic. 'Among the boys of the village', says Mills,

> there is a certain amount of rough play, and a bumptious or obnoxious youngster is taught his place exactly as he is in an English Public School. He may sit down in the dark and find stinging leaves have been put ready for him. Or a more elaborate punishment may be inflicted which many a mother in England would not approve of for her darling. A plank is laid like a see-saw over a log. One end is weighted down with a wooden pillow. The boy has to jump on the other end and the wooden pillow flies up and hits him on the back of the neck.[3]

There is nothing in Bastar to compare with the Naga bullying, a process by which young boys are hardened to face every kind of danger and difficulty.

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 243. [2] p. 53.
[3] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 52.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

'Men who are now middle-aged say that when they first entered the *morung* they were very severely disciplined, not to say bullied. They were, for instance, held over the fire and compelled to endure the heat without a cry. Or they were made to show their pluck by being sent alone on a dark night to fetch a bamboo from a certain clump. The boy sent was allowed no torch or weapon, and had to gnaw the bamboo through with his teeth or hack it off with a sharp stone. Or, again, a boy would be sent to leave a torch at some particular spot far away in the jungle and come back alone in the dark without a light. In the morning the older boys would go and see if the burnt remains of the torch were in the proper place. Nowadays boys have an easier time, but a considerable number of duties falls to their lot, and for the first three years a boy's life is very like that of a fag at an English Public School. Boys of the lowest class must keep a supply of torches in the *morung* for travellers passing through the village late in the evening; they have to massage the bigger boys' legs when they come in tired from the fields; they are responsible for the wood and water needed for cooking; they must make pipes and sharpen *daos* for their seniors. In fact, for three years they have to do what they are told, and do it quickly—a most excellent system.' [1]

VIII

Hitherto we have considered only the trivialities of ghotul discipline. The sexual relationships of chelik and motiari give rise to far more serious problems. I discuss the large question of ghotul pregnancies in a separate chapter: here we must consider how far life in the dormitories encourages breach of the clan-laws or leads to incest between near kin.

There are the strictest rules against clan-incest. Do they work? It is not easy to give an answer. That clan-incest is possibly not uncommon may be gathered from such sayings as 'When the door is shut there are no clans, we are only chelik and motiari'; 'Once the door is shut and the fire dies down, all relationships are levelled out'; 'Our tribal rules extend to the border of the sleeping-mat; we watch the youngsters as far as that; what happens inside that country no one knows'. It was the opinion of an educated Muria that the chief danger of the ghotul was that it promoted intimacy between members of the same clan and even exposed near relatives to unnecessary temptation.

It is impossible to say. Even if I filled pages with village gossip it would prove nothing. Only an exact statistical inquiry could answer the question whether the Muria chelik was prone to incest or no. And that could never be obtained. But certain things may be affirmed.

At first sight considerable freedom appears to be allowed. A motiari may comb the hair of a boy of her own clan, and may massage him. Even a close relation like an 'own sister' may do this. In Kabonga the Muria said that girls and boys of the same clan might sleep together, but must not have sexual intercourse. At Kajen in 1940, all the boys and girls were of the Halami sept, except one girl who was a Kuhrami. Yet they went daily to the ghotul and slept together there. They denied that they had sexual intercourse. This may be true, but no reliance can ever be put on a denial in Bastar. In the Metawand ghotul I found the following pairs 'married' to each other—Partabi and Maravi, Wadder and Maravi, Maravi and Maravi, Maravi and Katlami, Maravi and Wadder, Maravi and Maravi, Kuhrami and Maravi. In Dongrigura, in 1940, nearly all the ghotul members were Sori, save one or two Naitami and Kuhrami. The Pahardar and Pahardarin were 'married':

[1] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, pp. 179f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

838
585
539

Aga baga da dhoti roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the dhoti that looks so smart?
Gāndon kaiyada dhoti roy saiya sona.	The Ganda made the dhoti.
Aga waga dāng muyāng roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the bells that tinkle so merrily?
Kaser kaiyadāng muyāng roy saiya sona.	The Kaser made the bells.
Aga baga dāng paniya saiya sona ?	Whence came the comb that looks so fine?
Layon kaiyada paniya roy saiya sona.	The chelik made the comb that looks so fine.

Finally, I will give two examples of the many obscene songs that are sung during this dance, for otherwise it is impossible to get a clear picture of the meaning and atmosphere of the rite.

Nana jhoriyāna waiwoy gāto tinuāna.	I am Jhoria: I will not eat half-cooked rice.
Nana jhoriyāna dais dudo poyuāna.	I am Jhoria: jumping up and down I hold her breast.
Nana jhoriyāna podoh monde dehuāna.	I am Jhoria: I break the girdle round her waist.
Nana jhoriyāna hārspoche tenāuāna.	I am Jhoria: I quickly pull off her cloth.
Nana jhoriyāna pudete bonde nehyāna.	I am Jhoria: into her I press myself.
Nana jhoriyāna tēks bura mihackwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will pluck out my pubic hairs and throw them away.

In the same style is a Halbi Jhoria Git.

Go to sweep the booth, Belosa.
Where has the bridegroom gone?
He is nowhere in the house.
What can be be frightened of?
He is dying for his penis.
He is going to have his sister.
Where has he taken her?
He has taken her to the river bank.
What leaves has he spread for her?
He has made a bed of *jam* leaves.
Jham-jham he swings to and fro.
Bathing, bathing, he inserts it.
Get off, get off, brother, she cries.

These songs are sung by the bride herself and by a party of unmarried girls. They have changed their sex for the occasion and imagine themselves performing the sexual act as men. The significance of this will be seen when we discuss the ultimate basis of the rite.

838
171
182

Various reasons have been advanced by scholars to explain this custom in different parts of the world. Frazer has emphasized the difficulty of the problem. 'The religious or superstitious interchange of dress between men and women is an obscure and complex problem, and it is unlikely that any

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

838
171
182

single solution would apply to all the cases.'[1] He has suggested that the custom of the bride dressing as a male may be a magical means of ensur-

From a photograph in *Natural Man* by Charles Hose, by kind permission of the publishers, Macmillan & Co., Ltd

FIG. 116. Klemantan women dressed as men

ing a male heir. Certainly it is possible that cross-dressing has something to do with fertility. In Sarawak the Klemantan women dance in turbans and a sort of dhoti at a harvest festival which has been described as 'a celebration or cult of the principle of fertility and vitality—that of the women no less than that of the rice grain'.[2] Zulu women dress in men's clothes and go to herd their cattle to save them from disease.[3] Crawley refers to a custom of the Ngeuts of Assam when men dressed as women dance in honour of the children

[1] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1911–15), Vol. VI, p. 260. See also J. Abercromby, 'An Amazonian Custom in the Caucasus', *Folk-Lore*, Vol. II (1891), pp. 179ff.

[2] Hose, *Natural Man* (London, 1926), p. 128. Hose gives a charming photograph, upon which Fig. 116 is based.

[3] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 320.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

838
171
187

born during the year.[1] In the Mandla District of the Central Provinces of India, Gond and Baiga women from time to time dress up as men and go from village to village with spears and axes on a sort of ceremonial hunt. In each place they catch and kill a pig, an act normally taboo to women. That this is a fertility rite is indicated partly by the fact that it is practised in times of dearth and also by the songs used for the occasion. One of these is as follows:

Kutki kodon ke bharti hoe!	May kutki and kodon increase!
Kukra bilai ke jharti hoe!	May dogs and cats decrease!
Gai garua ke bharti hoe!	May cows and cattle increase!
Kukra bilai ke jharti hoe!	May dogs and cats decrease!

This is called Stiria-raj[2]; the custom is also known among the Maria and Muria. At Toskapal I was told how women made moustaches of lampblack, put on dhoti and turban and went armed from place to place sacrificing goats and pigs. Kond women also dress as men and sacrifice fowls.

Frazer again suggested that the wife wears husband's garments in order to transfer to him her future pains at child-birth.[3] But there is no tradition of the couvade among the Muria, and it seems rather far-fetched to suppose that the young bride will already be so anxious about her pains as to wish to be rid of them even on her marriage day.

Another suggestion is that the marriage disguise is aimed at averting danger from the evil eye at a moment when the bride is particularly susceptible to the influence of hostile magic.[4] The marriage disguise has been noted for different peoples in Africa and India as well as in antiquity; sometimes it is carried so far as to substitute a mock bride for the real one. This was the view of Crooke,[5] after a survey of the Indian evidence, and the final opinion of Frazer.[6] Westermarck, however, who gives many examples of the marriage disguise, doubts whether all these practices can be explained as attempts to deceive evil spirits. 'Facts of this sort seem better to agree with Mr Crawley's theory of "inoculation", according to which the bride or bridegroom assumes the dress of the opposite sex in order to lessen the sexual danger by wearing the same kind of clothes as "the loved and dreaded person", and the greatest possible assimilation between them would best serve the purpose of neutralizing that danger'.[7]

But the Muria practice of not only disguising the bride, but also her companions, so that not even the husband can tell which is which, does appear to aim in some way at averting hostile magic or the enmity of the dead or evil spirits.

[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 105.

[2] There was a similar custom among the Kol. 'In October, 1880,' says Haldar, 'I witnessed at Ranchi a curious sight of bands of Munda girls, wearing turbans, going about in procession armed with sticks, spears and axes. All the girls of a village so equip themselves and make a descent upon the next village to the east, carrying off whatever fowls, kids, pigs, and lambs they can secure. The village thus devastated takes its chance by sending a similar expedition of Amasons to the next village eastwards and so on. Retaliation is forbidden, nor is any resistance offered; and, moreover, it is quite legitimate for the invaders to seek their booty wherever they may be concealed. This festival, called *Jani-shikar*, takes place once every twelve years, and is supposed to have been started by a Raja of the Nag-bansi family, named Ganes Sahi, in the twelfth year of his reign.'—S. Haldar, 'A Curious Kol Festival', *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 98.

[3] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. III, p. 216.

[4] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 406f. and 318ff.

[5] Crooke, op. cit., p. 8.

[6] Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. IV, pp. 255ff.

[7] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. II, pp. 318ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

938
171
182

In an interesting account of the women's hunt in the Ranchi District of Chota Nagpur, W. G. Archer has traced the mythological basis of the custom, but he points out that it also fulfils a psychological need. 'We shall only be grasping its real value if we regard it not as fact but as poetry, as the expression of a need rather than a statement of a truth.'

> This need may be defined as follows. In Uraon society, the principles of succession are male, the method of government is male, the salient offices are male. The men are by convention and tradition the social superiors of the women. But if this is the convention, it is only partly the fact. In Uraon villages, the actual relation is one of equality. It is as equals that the men and women dance. It is as equals that a wife and her husband order their family affairs. And it is as equals that they work and live together. There is thus a stress between the formal structure of tribal life and the actual feelings and emotions that thrust upon it. To relieve this stress is the function of the hunt and the myth.
>
> The myth shows that although the men may rule, it is the women who are also men. In its reliance on the success of a simple trick, it expresses Uraon pleasure in naive cleverness and under this typically Uraon cover, it mildly pokes fun at male incompetence. The balance is therefore righted. The women are recognized to be the equals of men.[1]

It is possible that we may have to connect the custom very deep down with the same tendency that has produced the eonist deviation. The last Jhoria songs that I have quoted give some point to the supposition that cross-dressing is an expression of 'penis-envy'. I have only given two songs of this nature, but there are many on the same lines which suggest that for once the motiari are able to assert themselves against the chelik who so constantly establish their sexual domination in normal times.

Probably several different reasons have combined to produce the rite. The Muria girls dance disguised at the marriage partly to protect the bride, partly to avert hostile magic or the evil eye, partly to restore the sexual balance of the tribe and partly too, simply because they love dressing up and get a lot of fun out of it. It is very amusing to see the unfortunate bridegroom trying to guess which of the many girls before him, all looking exactly alike, is his own wife. If he chooses the wrong girl everyone is delighted; when the right girl darts out of the group and beats him it is an occasion not to be forgotten.

But such cross-dressing is always ceremonial. There are strict taboos on men and women wearing each other's clothes on ordinary occasions, and this makes the rite, when it does occur, all the more exciting and impressive.[2]

[1] W. G. Archer, 'The Women's Hunt' in *Essays in Anthropology Presented to S. C. Roy* (1942), pp. 187ff. The same feeling is revealed in the widespread myth of the Island and Country of Women, which goes back to the *Mahabharata* and was recorded by Hiuen Tsang. For an account of this interesting subject and full references to the literature, see W. Crooke, 'The Land and Island of Women', *Man in India*, Vol. II (1942), pp. 276ff; J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 263 and my *Myths of Middle India*.

[2] In an account of prophylactic disguises for averting evil in the Bombay Presidency, J. J. Modi gives three types of sex disguise—

(1) Proclaiming the birth of a boy as that of a girl.
(2) Performing the sons or the ear of a boy like a girl's.
(3) Allowing the growth of long hair in a boy so as to make him appear like a girl.

See J. J. Modi, 'Prophylactic Disguise for Averting Evil', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), pp. 186ff.

2: Elwin E/-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

842
171

RECENT controversies about the sex life of primitive peoples, which have centred mainly on such questions as the extent of their ignorance of physiological paternity and the pre-marital licence they permit, have tended to obscure the equally interesting and important problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity.

This problem, which arises in an acute form among the Muria, has often puzzled anthropologists. They have observed that many societies allow the unmarried complete freedom of sexual opportunity, that 'illegitimate' births are rare, but that after marriage the women generally prove remarkably fertile. It is to writers on the Pacific area that we are indebted for a clear statement of this problem. African observers have tried to find some solution in the contraceptive practices and restraints of their peoples and have generally, I think, evaded the main issue. In India there is little evidence of value to illustrate the sex life of its aboriginals. It is astonishing that none of the writers on the village dormitories or men's houses throughout the world have seriously tackled a question so fundamental to any discussion of the institutions they have described.

One of the first to draw attention to the question was Seligman, who wrote in 1910 that a puzzling feature of the licence undoubtedly permitted throughout the Massim area of British New Guinea was the very small number of illegitimate births which took place.

> Wherever the confidence of the natives was gained it was admitted that abortion was induced, but the most careful inquiries failed to produce evidence that the practice was as frequent as might be expected considering the prevailing liberty. In fact, with every *a priori* reason for expecting abortion to be commonly produced I came to the conclusion that in fact it was a somewhat infrequent event.[1]

Rivers noticed the same thing among the Eddystone Islanders.

> The very free relations existing before marriage might have been expected to lead to the birth of many children and to the existence of definite regulations for assigning such children to their proper place in society. Such births seemed, however, to be extremely rare, and in the whole of the pedigrees collected by us only one such case was given, and that many generations ago.[2]

Writing in *Oceania* on the culture of the people of Wogeo, one of the New Guinea islands, Hogbin says that,

> Single girls do sometimes have children, but illegitimacy is not nearly so common as one might have expected. Just why this is so it is impossible to say. I observed one fact that bears directly upon the problem, namely that it is extremely rare for women to have children until they are, I judge, more than twenty-one years of age, by which time most of them are safely married. I have noticed that even when a girl is married directly after her first menstruation, which does not

[1] C. G. Seligman, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 500.
[2] W. H. R. Rivers, *Psychology and Ethnology* (London, 1926), p. 76.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

842
171

regularly take place until almost certainly after the seventeenth year, it is most unusual for her to have a child for several years.[1]

Barton notes that in the Ifugao *agamang* 'conception results less frequently than one would expect. The surprising intensity of the sex life of the *agamang* period seems to create physiological conditions unfavourable to conception: possibly the excessive intercourse keeps the female organs in a state of hyperemia'.[2]

The classical statement of the problem is by Malinowski. In his great study of the Trobriand Islanders—who have in their *bukumatula* an institution for pre-marital congress not wholly unlike the ghotul—he says,

> Since there is so much sexual freedom, must there not be a great number of children born out of wedlock? If this is not so, what means of prevention do the natives possess?
>
> As to the first question, it is very remarkable to note that illegitimate children are rare. The girls seem to remain sterile throughout their period of licence, which begins when they are small children and continues till they marry; when they are married they conceive and breed, sometimes quite prolifically. I express myself cautiously about the number of illegitimate children, for in most cases there are special difficulties even in ascertaining the fact . . . so that only an approximate estimate can be made even in a community with which one is very well acquainted.
>
> I was able to find roughly a dozen illegitimate children recorded genealogically in the Trobriands, or about one per cent.[3]

Malinowski goes on to say that contraceptive methods are completely unknown in the Trobriands. Two years later Rentoul, in a communication to *Man*, declared that the Trobriand women were 'specially endowed or gifted with ejaculatory powers, which may be called upon after an act of coition to expel the male seed'.[4] Though Malinowski poured scorn on Rentoul's suggestion, describing it as 'one of the typical myths which circulate among the semi-educated white residents', Himes is not prepared to reject it altogether.

> What is undoubtedly the same technique, seminal expulsion by violent bodily movements, is reported as used by Australian natives. Therefore its occasional use by some Trobriand women is a possibility. Other circumstances being equal, a positive declaration of use seems more credible than a denial by natives in conversation with an anthropologist.[5]

Yet even if some of the Trobriand women do practise this means of contraception, as some of them undoubtedly limit the number of their offspring by abortion, the problem still remains—the extreme disparity between the extent of the sexual licence allowed and what is usually regarded as its inevitable sequence. Malinowski says again,

> Can there be any physiological law which makes conception less likely when women begin their sexual life young, lead it indefatigably, and mix their lovers freely? This, of course, cannot be answered here,

[1] H. I. Hogbin, 'The Native Culture of Wogeo', *Oceania*, Vol. V (1935), pp. 320f.
[2] R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans* (London, 1938), p. 11.
[3] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, third edition (London, 1932), pp. 166ff.
[4] A. C. Rentoul, 'Physiological Paternity and the Trobrianders', *Man*, Vol. XXXI (1931), p. 153.
[5] N. E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception* (London, 1936), p. 33.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it is a purely biological question; but some such solution of the difficulty seems to me the only one, unless I have missed some very important ethnological clue.[1]

The problem thus posed presents itself in a peculiarly acute form when we consider conditions of life in the ghotul. For here, boys and girls—in spite of various checks and disciplines—cohabit from the period of their first tentative experiments, through full sexual maturity, for five to eight years until their freedom is ended by marriage. Yet here too pregnancies are comparatively rare and, though various contraceptive means are practised, few of them have physiological properties.

The incidence of pregnancy, however, is higher than that discovered by Malinowski in the Trobriands. Out of 2000 cases, 80 men admitted to having made their ghotul partners pregnant, and in the 220 ghotul examined, I found a history of 327 pregnant girls.

I believe that these figures are reasonably accurate. Although there is a strict rule against any member of the ghotul revealing even to the elders of the tribe, let alone to an inquisitive outsider, the fact that a motiari is pregnant at the moment, this reticence is no check on the loquacity of older men about matters long since past. As we shall see, there is no moral or social stigma attaching to pre-marital pregnancy; it is rather a matter of business, a complicated financial transaction. Everyone in the ghotul hushes it up rather as one might hush up a friend's mistakes or follies, anxious only to get him off. But once it is all over, the bills paid, the girl married, the child accepted as a full member of its legal father's family and clan, the real father allows himself the pleasures of retrospection; he recalls the potency of former days and finds it not ungratifying to remember what a lad he was.

Eighty pregnancies out of 2000 is 4 per cent, much more than Malinowski's figure, astonishingly more than Rivers'—and this in spite of the fact that the Muria admit to contraceptive practices that are denied in the Trobriand and Eddystone Islands. It is possible that a statistical, instead of a genealogical, inquiry would have yielded higher figures, at least in the Eddystone Islands. The genealogical method is not the best way to discover 'illegitimate' births among primitive people, for the whole trend of primitive society is to legitimatise births wherever possible.

Yet although the older Muria are not unwilling to admit the scandals of long ago, it is regarded as vitally important for a Muria girl to avoid conception. Pre-nuptial intercourse is socially recognized, and even tacitly approved, yet pre-nuptial pregnancy is at the moment of its occurrence a major social disaster, the chief anxiety of ghotul life, the one cloud upon its dreamland. It brings disgrace upon the ghotul, it endangers the girl's normal marriage prospects, it imposes a heavy financial burden upon the boy's parents and it casts a momentary shadow over the whole village. It is sometimes believed that a youth who has 'wasted his seed'[2] in making a motiari pregnant will be sterile later in life. On joining the ghotul the little chelik and motiari are solemnly warned both by their parents and by the ghotul leaders of the risks of pregnancy and are told how to avoid it.

For the Muria have a vivid appreciation of the fact of physiological paternity. The answer to the riddle 'Out of water, bones' is 'Semen and a child'.

[1] Malinowski, op. cit., p. 168.

[2] The expression used for a girl is *mee bigad gaya*, 'her nerve is broken', if this conception out of due time.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
842
X 883
842
171

eager youth and splendid physical vigour the chelik and motiari cohabit, employing few precautions worth the name, and yet achieve so low a pregnancy rate as 4 per cent? What explanations have been advanced to solve the problem in other cultures?

Our first point must be to insist that there really is a problem. When chelik and motiari sleep together, do they really have sexual intercourse, or do they seek some other form of sexual gratification that does not involve the penetration of the male seed into the vagina? This question has been raised for the Bantu by Torday who believes that he has solved the problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity by showing that it is not promiscuity at all.

> It is scarcely credible that Bantu parents and elders should be devoid of common sense to such an extent as to permit their children to have promiscuous intercourse and yet visit them with dire penalties when the natural consequence, pregnancy, follows. When this question has been fully investigated (an extremely delicate task) it will be found, no doubt, that what is generally described as free sexual intercourse between unmarried youngsters is nothing more than one form or another of mutual masturbation.[1]

African tradition undoubtedly favours some form of unconsummated sexual excitement. Laubscher has described the practice of *metsha* among the Tembu and Fingo peoples. This is performed by the boy facing the girl and placing his penis between her thighs, but penetration must be avoided and every three days the girls are examined to ensure that they remain virgins. Laubscher says that this early erotic form of hetero-sexual adaptation does not, at the pre-pubertal period, replace masturbation.[2] Leakey describes a somewhat similar practice of the Masai warriors in their *manyatta*-dormitories. Although a girl cannot refuse an invitation to sleep with the men, 'she is not necessarily expected to allow a man full sexual intercourse, and, in fact, often does not do so. Thus—strange as it may seem—Masai girls do sometimes go to their husbands as virgins in the physical sense of the word, although they have slept with men in the *manyattas* countless times.'[3] Similar sexual play without consummation is known as *ngwiko* by the Wakikuyu[4] and as *simbo* by the Akikuyu. Driberg describes Lango intrigues with unmarried girls as 'platonic' in so far that, although a couple may spend a whole night together, they must not enjoy full sexual relations.[5]

Such practices must involve considerable strain, both physical and psychological, and it is notable that Leakey says that in the dormitory Masai girls 'usually have no objection to full intercourse' except on certain days. The Muria certainly seek to limit the amount of intercourse. Some ghotul send their girls to sleep at home or in a separate house; in these the boys sometimes practise masturbation after the girls have gone, but far more often have intercourse with them on their way home. As in the Masai dormitory, a girl is not bound to have intercourse with the boy she sleeps with on any particular day, but—unlike the Masai tradition—she cannot refuse to have intercourse with him at all. A few girls manage to avoid intercourse for several years, but they are not approved, and the very fact that they are discussed and criticized indicates their rarity. Chelik and motiari do, however,

[1] E. Torday, 'The Principles of Bantu Marriage', *Africa* (London, 1929), Vol. II, p. 256.
[2] B. J. F. Laubscher, *Sex, Custom and Psychopathology* (London, 1937), p. 79.
[3] L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *JRAI*, Vol. LX, p. 194.
[4] C. Dundas, 'Native Laws of some Bantu Tribes', *JRAI*, Vol. LI, p. 246.
[5] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango* (London, 1923), p. 155.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

often sleep together without sexual congress. The girls have a practice, called *dinga-dinga*, of playing with the penis, and the great prominence given to the clitoris in drawings suggests that they indulge in some form of clitoridical stimulation. But full sexual intercourse is everywhere the rule, and is normal through all divergences and for every type of ghotul.

How far does infanticide and abortion solve the problem? Hutton suggests this for the Angami Naga.

> The licence allowed to unmarried girls raises another question. What of their children? Here accurate information is exceedingly difficult to obtain. Illegitimate children are very rare, and Mr Davis remarks that 'it is impossible to resist the conclusion that they are made away with immediately after birth, or that abortion is procured before the birth of the child'.[1]

Yet few cases come to the courts, and even Hutton with his great experience was unable to find examples. For the Muria I have described an attempt at abortion as a routine measure in cases of ghotul pregnancy, but its ineffectiveness is shown not only by definite statements to that effect, but also by the number of children actually born. Infanticide is, I am certain, unknown.

The Muria themselves, as we have seen, place considerable reliance on a frequent change of partners. Pitt-Rivers suggested that promiscuity sterilizes by mixing the sperms of different males.[2] Westermarck considered that promiscuity resulted in a pathological condition of the vagina that resulted in barrenness.[3] But the theory of a spermotoxin has not been endorsed by any responsible scientist, and is not supported by the Muria statistics, for there are more pregnancies in the ghotul where partners are frequently changed than in those where each motiari remains faithful to a single partner.

Not altogether unsound is the Muria belief that contraception is secured by spacing acts of congress and that pregnancy cannot follow single or casual coitus. 'Conception often in the writings of novelists', says Zuckerman, 'results from an isolated sexual act, but in real life this is probably exceptional',[4] and he quotes Meaker as saying that:

> Undoubtedly there are human matings in which a single act of coitus, or at most coitus repeated at intervals throughout one menstrual month, would infallibly produce conception, but these are exceptions. Most couples who succeed in reproducing do so in spite of certain imperfections in the conceptive mechanism .... most people are relatively and not absolutely fertile.[5]

The Muria belief has naturally arisen from an observation of what actually happens. A girl who remains infertile in the ghotul quickly conceives after marriage. 'A motiari', said a chelik at Bhanpuri, 'is an unenclosed clearing; a wife is fenced and irrigated land. As you care for it, it soon bears a harvest, and becomes more and more easy to plough.' And the Jholer of Moroskoro said, 'We had a child within a year of our marriage, for we loved each other and had congress without fear'.

This belief seems to be common in the Pacific. Of the Melanesians of British New Guinea, Seligman says,

[1] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 171.
[2] G. H. L. Pitt-Rivers, *The Clash of Cultures* (London, 1927), p. 148.
[3] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. I, p. 334.
[4] S. Zuckerman, 'The Physiology of Fertility in Man and Monkey', *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XXVIII (1936), p. 48.
[5] S. R. Meaker, *Human Sterility* (London, 1934), p. 41.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 583
842
171

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

> I believe that . . . Papuasian girls are less easily impregnated than the women of the white race. Whether this is in any degree due to early coitus, early and strenuous work in the gardens, or is a racial peculiarity I do not venture to surmise, but the point of view taken becomes perhaps more comprehensible when it is remembered that the Sinaugolo hold that a single act of coitus is insufficient to produce conception, so that a Sinaugolo girl does not expect to have a child unless visited fairly regularly for a comparatively lengthy time, perhaps not less than a month.[1]

The Tikopia also believe that,

> A child cannot be conceived by a single act of impregnation, but only by a repeated series of acts. This is in line with the view that the child is formed by the coagulation of semen, hence several deposits at close intervals are necessary. The habit of young people of copulating once then missing some days before the next time of intercourse is a corollary of this.[2]

The Muria belief in a safe, or rather unsafe, period is widely shared by other communities. Ancient Indian tradition regarded the *ritu*, or the period extending from the fourth to the twelfth day after the beginning of the menses, as particularly favourable to conception. A husband must approach his wife at this time; if he does not he will suffer the pains of hell.[3] The same belief is universally distributed in modern India, with an emphasis on the first or the first two days after the close of the period. Many aboriginal tribes insist on their women behaving with special restraint and care on these days.

Hollis reports that the Nandi girls are careful not to visit the huts of the warriors for some days after their period 'for fear of becoming pregnant after intercourse with the men'.[4] Himes quotes a report on the Isleta Indians of New Mexico that 'if a woman does not wish to conceive she will not have intercourse for nine days after menstruation'.[5] The great gynaecologist Soranos warned his readers to abstain from coitus directly before and after menstruation.[6] Aetios of Amida, a Greek physician of the sixth century, gave the same advice.[7]

The Muria belief that conception is a girl's own fault and that it can be avoided by the proper psychological attitude during coitus—'Let her not want it, let her not give herself, let her be quiet and not respond—and there will be no danger'—resembles the ancient Chinese practice known as Kong-fou, a sort of self-hypnosis by which the thoughts during intercourse were directed elsewhere. Kisch quotes Riedel as authority for a statement that the women of the island of Buru often had intercourse with strange men, 'but maintained a passive and indifferent state, for the purpose of avoiding conception', and adds that 'it is well known' that

> An active participation on the part of the woman in the sexual act, by increasing her voluptuous sensations, gives rise to certain reflex actions—descent of the uterus, rounding of the os uteri, induration of the portio vaginalis, and, finally, ejaculation of the secretion of the cervical

[1] Seligman, op. cit., p. 500.
[2] Firth, op. cit., p. 492.
[3] J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. I, pp. 215ff., where references to the classical texts are given.
[4] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 82.
[5] Himes, op. cit., p. 15, quoting E. C. Parsons in *47th Ann. Rep. B.A.E.*, p. 213.
[6] Ibid., p. 90.
[7] Ibid., p. 94.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 X
842
171

glands and of the glands of Bartholin; these changes accelerate the entrance of the semen into the cavity of the uterus, and increase the motility of the spermatozoa.[1]

But Kisch considers that sufficient dependence cannot be placed on this belief that the uterine reflexes are under the conscious will. Himes thinks that the idea simply 'proceeds from a sense of guilt in coitus; if it is not enjoyed, the consequences will not be so unfortunate'.[2] This might well apply to European women, but it is rare to find this sense of guilt among the Muria, though once a chelik at Moroskoro admitted that when, after marriage, he copulated without fear of the consequences his wife quickly became pregnant.

883 X
842

We may note finally that the Muria are not exceptionally fertile. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 150 were infertile, though some of these may have been fruitful later. Of these 150, only 1 husband had previously caused a ghotul pregnancy, and his subsequent sterility was regarded by his wife (who was probably the real person at fault) as a punishment. This infertility may be due to dietary factors; but it is interesting that the inflammatory diseases, such as mumps and epididymitis, which usually cause sterility in the male, are practically unknown among the Muria.

All these different factors have probably contributed to the low conception- and birth-rate in the Muria ghotul. A certain number of abortions are procured by not very efficient means; *coitus interruptus* is occasionally practised; certain disciplines and restraints undoubtedly play their part. But the Muria have no form of contraception, that is sufficiently widely practised, that can account for only 80 pregnancies caused by 2000 males copulating at least twice a week (to give the lowest figure for the most disciplined ghotul) for the period between the ages of 12 and 17.

The most satisfactory general explanation is to be found in the theory, usually associated with the name of Hartman, of a period of adolescent sterility. This explanation was first promulgated by Crew in his Presidential Address on 'Puberty and Maturity' before the Second International Congress for Sex Research held in London in 1930. From experiments conducted on 100 female mice at the first oestrous Crew found that while 20 refused to mate, only 24 of the 80 who did mate became pregnant. But three or six months later, the fertility rate rose to 80 or 90 per cent. 'It is seen, therefore', says Crew, 'that though pregnancy can occur at the time of the first oestrous, it is relatively uncommon.'[3] The following year Hartman developed this theory as a result of his observations on the sex life of rhesus monkeys, and in a number of important publications[4] has since established the fact that there is not only a 'very high incidence of non-ovulatory cycles in young mammals but that human beings also have an infecund period for some years after the menarche'. Ashley-Montagu has given an admirably lucid summary of this and subsequent literature on the subject. 'It has long been known', he points out, 'that puberty is by no means coincident with the development of the reproductive powers, that in the girl menstruation may long precede the

[1] R. H. Kisch, *The Sexual Life of Women*, Eng. trans. by M. E. Paul. (New York, 1926), p. 403.
[2] Himes, op. cit., p. 21.
[3] F. A. E. Crew, 'Puberty and Maturity' in *Proceedings of the Second International Congress for Sex Research* (London, 1930), p. 9.
[4] C. G. Hartman, 'On the Relative Sterility of the Adolescent Organism', *Science*, Vol. LXXIV (1931), pp. 226-7; *Contributions to Embryology*, No. 134 (Washington, 1932), pp. 1-164; *Time of Ovulation in Women* (Baltimore and London, 1936); *Sex and Internal Secretions* (Baltimore, 1932).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
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X 674 184

TABLE TWO

Illustrating the relation of homicide cases to the estimated population

	Population in 1941	Annual average of homicides	Average annual incidence of homicides to the million[1]
Bison-horn Maria ...	175,000	12·1	69·14
Ghotul Maria ...	100,000	2·1	21·00
Others ...	360,000	11·6	32·22
Total ...	635,000	25·8	40·63

have for one reason or another lost their dormitories. 'Reformers' who would banish the dormitory from tribal India should very carefully consider this fact before they do so.

X 674 ● 171 184

It is not easy to obtain comparative figures for other tribes or communities in India. There is a Maria (but not Bison-horn Maria) population in the Chanda District: here there were 26 cases of homicide in 10 years among a population of 34,776—which works out near the Bison-horn Maria figure of 69 to the million. In Mayurbhanj State, in 1935-36 there were 25 similar cases from a population of about 890,000 or about 28 to the million. In 1939, there were 184 persons found guilty under Sections 302 and 304 I.P.C. in the Central Provinces and Berar, which gives a figure of approximately 11 to the million. In the same Province, with its total population of some eighteen millions, 53 persons were sentenced to death and 131 to transportation in 1941. The figures for 1942 were 59 and 127.

X 674 171

Against these figures, the incidence of 69 homicides to the million among Bison-horn Maria seems very high, but it must be remembered that the inhabitants of the Central Provinces and the Eastern States are among the most peaceful people on this planet. Laubecher gives some comparative statistics from various parts of the world. The rate of homicide among South African Pagans was 171 per million in 1935. In 1924, Canada had a homicide rate of 15 per million. In 1926, the rate for England and Wales was 7 per million.

[1] Based on the population estimates for 1941.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

In the same year the rate for U.S.A. was 52 per million for the white population and 454 per million for the Negroes.[1]

In India at least all such calculations are bound to be rough and ready. The population figures for individual tribes and areas are often in doubt: some police statistics include all cases of violent death, some only the 'true' homicides. There can be no doubt that many crimes are concealed from the police. But the figures may serve as a basis of discussion.

II

I have already spoken of the 100 files of homicide cases which I have examined. Brief epitomes of these are given in an Appendix. These cases covered a period of 20 years, during which the total number of homicides could not have been more than 250—there were 121 Maria homicides in the last 10 years and the amount of crime was certainly not greater in the first decade than in the second. I have included only those cases which ended in the conviction of one or more of the accused.

The 100 cases involved the conviction of 117 people as follows:—

TABLE THREE

Punishments awarded in 100 cases, involving the conviction of 117 persons

Sentenced to death under S. 302, I.P.C.	21
Executed	18
Transportation for life (14 years imprisonment under S. 302, I.P.C.)	57
Various terms of imprisonment under S. 304, I.P.C. ...	39
Acquitted but detained as insane under S. 471, Cr.P.C.[2]	3

The great majority of persons convicted were men, as the next Table shows.

[1] Laubscher, op. cit., p. 307.

[2] This Section provides for the detention in safe custody of a person whose act would "but for the incapacity found, have constituted an offence". It does not involve detention in an asylum though it may lead to this. Deaf and dumb persons guilty of murder have been proceeded against under this Section.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

possession of a dancing outfit that led Wango to murder his betrothed Paike. But when Alami Mata had his splendid bison-horn head-dress, which he loved and cared for with devotion, stolen he did not seek out and kill the thief but was so miserable that he hanged himself. In several cases disputes about the right of a girl to visit her mother's house led to murder. In as many others it led to suicide. Sometimes a girl hangs herself because she is not allowed to go home. Sometimes the husband hangs himself out of loneliness and misery when his wife deserts him for her parents. A public insult caused Marvi Hinga to murder his mother-in-law. Had he been of a different temperament like Markami Pandu, who was abused and insulted by his wife for not working properly, he would have hanged himself. Fatigue drives some Maria to murder in a fit of exhausted rage, but others hang themselves instead.

Some sick people murder the magician who they believe has sent affliction upon them. Others commit suicide in order to escape from him. The Maria themselves identify homicide and suicide in so far that both lead to a violent disturbance of village life. Both involve them in various supernatural dangers, and the ghosts of both can be dealt with in much the same way.

R. S. Cavan discusses the relations of widow suicide and human sacrifice. The voluntary sacrifice of widows at the funerals of their husbands has been recorded in India and China, throughout the central portion of Negro Africa and among certain aristocratic American Indian tribes. These areas are also the areas of human sacrifice.

> In the Orient the sacrifices are a matter of history and are often recorded as accompanying the widow suicide. Among the preliterates, the sacrifices were noted in conjunction with the suicides by early white observers. Moreover, in few parts of the world was human sacrifice found except in the groups which also had Sati. Human sacrifice and Sati went hand in hand,[1]

The Maria do not have the custom of widow suicide, and human sacrifice is equally rare among them.

I will begin, as in the case of the homicides, with general statistics about suicide in Bastar during the last 10 years.

[1] R. S. Cavan, *Suicide* (Chicago, 1928), p. 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943.
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762

TABLE NINE

Number of suicides in Bastar in 10 years, 1931-40

Tribe or Caste	Number of Cases	Annual average of suicides to the million[1]
Bison-horn Maria ...	97	53·14
Ghotul Muria ...	12	22·00
Others (whole State) ...	130	36·11
Total ...	245	38·58

It is notable again that the highest figure is for the Bison-horn Maria and the lowest for the Ghotul Muria. The Muria, however, are more prone to suicide than murder, which is perhaps what we might expect from a tribe so singularly free of jealousy and passion.

TABLE TEN

Methods of suicides used by all tribes and castes (245 cases)

By cutting the throat	1
By hanging	214
By drowning	15
By poisoning	9
By means not fully reported	6

Every case, except one of drowning, of aboriginal suicide in Bastar has been by hanging. This may be due to the fact that the people are not adept at poisons—murder by poison is very rare among them—and because there are few wells in aboriginal villages, and the tanks and streams where they get their water are fairly shallow.

762 171 It is said that in India generally, drowning is the most common method of achieving suicide, and then hanging. In England, hanging comes first, then poisoning, then cutting the throat, and lastly drowning. In India men resort to hanging and drowning in about equal numbers but six out of seven

[1] Based on the population estimates of 1941.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

female suicides prefer drowning.[1] But this is not so among the Maria. One woman preferred to hang herself even on the very banks of the Indrawati, though the deep waters of the river were at hand.

In the 50 cases of which I have detailed information, 19 suicides were committed inside a building, 16 of them inside the dwelling-place of the family. In 7 other cases death occurred near the house. In the other 24 cases the suicide took place in the jungle, a rope or cloth being attached to the branch of a tree. Among trees the mahua (*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.) was the most popular with 6 cases, and after it the mango with 3. Otherwise there is a very great variety in the trees selected for this gloomy purpose; there do not seem to be any taboos observed, though I notice the sacred saja (*Terminalia tomentosa*, W. & A.) is not used—but this may be for the entirely practical reason that it does not have suitable overhanging branches.

The method of self-execution seems to be to climb up the tree, to attach and arrange the cord and then jump down. When the suicide occurs inside a house, the person stands on a fish-trap or basket and kicks it away. In many cases, the rope consists of the victim's own loin-cloth, turban or sari, but several different kinds of rope are also used. Rope made of the twisted siari (*Bauhinia vahlii*, W. & A.) creeper is perhaps the most common. Jute cords for tethering cattle, and ropes made of various kinds of bark are also used.

TABLE ELEVEN

Analysis of 50 Maria suicides by sex

Men	26
Women	24

The contrast between homicide and suicide in respect of the sex-ratio is very striking; 5 per cent stands against 48 per cent. There may be many reasons for this, chiefly that

[1] R. Ranchhodas and D. K. Thakore, *The Law of Crimes* (Bombay, 1911), p. 601, in the author's comment on Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code. But in the U.S.A., the order is said to be—for men—firearms, hanging, poisonous gas, corrosives, and—for women—gas, corrosives, firearms, drowning. In Japan, hanging first and then drowning are the favourite methods for both sexes.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 a woman ought not to kill and often lacks the means of killing —she does not usually learn to be expert with the bow and arrow or with the axe. It is possible that some of the suicides would have been murder, had there been the means and opportunity.

The suicide sex-ratio is remarkable when compared to the situation elsewhere. In Europe and America, there has been over a long period of years a far less equal ratio, varying from one woman to every three or five men. That these figures do vary suggests, however, that 'the propensity of men to commit suicide is probably not inherent in their sex, a conclusion further supported by figures for the Orient. For instance, [171] in Japan the proportion of women who commit suicide is much higher than for Europe or America. The situation in India is yet more at variance with the relations noted for the Occident'.[1]

TABLE TWELVE

Analysis of 50 Maria suicides by age

Under 15	1
Between 15 and 20	12
Between 20 and 25	9
Between 25 and 30	1
30 and over	5
40 and over	8
50 and over	8
Age not specified	6

There is not anything significant in the above Table except that we should notice that nearly half the suicides were of young people. The older men and women, by the time they have reached some position of dignity in the tribe, have consolations that help them to cling to life. Many of the suicides of the older people are due to insanity and intolerable disease believed to be the result of witchcraft.

[1] Cavan, op. cit., p. 308.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Socrates and Jesus were criminals according to the legal standards of their day. We confine and kill those who in the days of Abraham and Ulysses or in positions of power and influence would be heroes. Of the ten chief crimes of the Hebrews of old, only one is now a crime. Many of the knights and barons of the Middle Ages were brigands, but were not then outlawed by public sentiment as abnormal. There is deep and wide-spread feeling in every community that in extreme hunger all things belong to all. The thought of killing our own fathers or children is monstrous, but we kill the fathers and children of other people with impunity in war. Many of our greatest criminals would have been normal and perhaps eminently useful citizens in other ages and places. Judged by severe and inner standards of morals, most of us have committed every crime'.[1]

So also many of the Maria homicides described in this book will be recognized not as anti-social crimes, but as expressions of the strongly social instinct of the murderer. A father seduces the wives of his sons, and in order to enjoy them in freedom drives the boys and their mother out of his house and refuses them support. The murder of such a man expresses a social, rather than an anti-social, instinct. To the Maria the witch is the greatest menace to the order and security of daily life. When he murders a witch, therefore, he is the victim of intellectual error rather than of murderous passion. Adam gives an interesting example from Europe. 'A case is reported by M. Friedmann, of Weisbaden, of two soldiers who agreed that the one should shoot the head off the other. The victim firmly believed that the survivor could with certain words of sorcery charm his head on again and that after the operation the latter would be able to discover hidden treasure. The first half of the experiment was duly performed and apparently without any difficulty, but the sorcerer dismally failed to replace his comrade's head as agreed upon. It was established that he did not intend to kill his friend, but, with his assistance, expected them both to discover hidden treasure. Nor could he be considered negligent or careless as he did what he did carefully and on purpose, being convinced of the harmlessness of the act. If

[1] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence* (London and New York 1904), Vol. I, pp. 340 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

he was punished for anything it was for mere ignorance and stupidity. This incident actually took place as recently as 1900'.[1]

Sir Cecil Walsh advances the view that many Indian village crimes are of a 'judicial character', and that the people are driven to commit them by the law's delays.

> A very large proportion of the cases of violence in northern India arise out of hot blood, ungovernable temper, and the natural inclination of the villager, who is generally miles away from any police, to take the law into his own hands and to fight out his quarrel on the spot. There is nothing like this in agricultural districts in England. It has been said that the agricultural classes are not inferior in intelligence to the English peasant. If natural acumen, rapidity of thought, and liveliness of imagination are meant, it may be so. But whether the cause be their lack of education, the narrowness of their religion, the climate, or, as I have often thought, their lack of association with men of attainments superior to their own, the fact is that they fail to use their intelligence, and upon slight provocation lose all power of reasoning and self-control. It is not much good having an equivalent of intelligence if you don't use it when it is wanted. Whether it is a question of cattle trespass, irrigation, family enmity, an old personal grudge, a sexual difficulty, or some quite trivial dispute, the average cultivator will break out at once into abuse, often of the most disgusting character, which develops rapidly into a fight, in which the relations and friends on either side will join in substantial numbers if they happen to be near. If one disputant, finding himself seriously outnumbered, a disadvantage which the villager invariably hopes to impose upon his enemy, should discreetly retire, the fight will take place later on, more or less in cold blood, when both sides are ready. It is impossible to regard these law-breakers and disturbers of the peace as criminals in the ordinary signification of that term. They are probably as honest and industrious as the average respectable citizen in a civilized centre of industry. They want speedy justice, or, what they regard as the same thing, the vindication of their own opinion. They prefer the British variety. But it takes time, and they can't wait. They are great believers in getting in the first blow, and,

[1] Adam, op. cit., p. 262. A remarkable parallel is provided by a case that occurred at Nagpur in 1923, when a constable and a pious friend made a pact to offer their heads to Kali in order to obtain immortality. They mistook a statue of the Virgin Mary for the goddess and the constable stabbed himself to death before it.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

When we turn to the 50 sample cases (details of which are given in an Appendix) we find the following.

TABLE SIXTEEN

Reasons for suicide in 50 Maria cases

Insanity	7
Disease and fear of magic	9
Grief and loneliness	4
Fear of officials	2
Regret for harsh behaviour to someone loved ...	3
Resentment at a rebuke	7
An intolerable home	4
Antagonism between wife and husband	9
Intoxication	1
Economic causes	1
Special cases	3

There is no evidence for supposing any of the suicides were due to a desire for 'identification with the dead', although in one case a youth slept all night before his death in the granary where the sacred Pot of the Dead was kept. Nor is the desire for revenge specially evident, though it may, of course, have been concealed from the authorities. No doubt the feeling that one's death will cause trouble to one's relatives and so pay them out is often present in suicides that are due to temper. Not one case appears to have been due to sexual jealousy, though several were due to sexual disappointment. The majority seem to have been caused by a desire to escape from a physical or domestic situation that had become intolerable. The insult, as in other primitive cultures, is a very potent stimulus to suicide. This too creates an intolerable situation from which escape is necessary, but I do not notice any stress on the protest which a death makes against those who have done harm.

Suicide has been studied with some care among the Indian tribes of North America. The older view was that it was exceptional among primitive people. Thus Hrdlicka says that it was rare on the San Carlos reservation, "infrequent" among the Jicarillas: 'among the Navaho rare instances occur from destitution, despondency or drink'. Among the Papago, Pima, Zuni and other tribes suicide

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

17! was equally rare. Among the Tarahumare occasionally a despondent individual ended his life by hanging. Everywhere it was said to be specially rare among women. Where it occurred it was said to be due to despondency.[1] It was reported as unusual among the Havasupai.[2]

Recent research, however, suggests that the tendency to self-destruction is commoner than was formerly supposed, and Voegelin says that 'modern inquiry into the subject is revealing a growing number of tribes in northeastern California in which suicide was practised'. For both the Klamath and Modoc 'suicide is a romantic gesture, motivated by disappointment in love and, indirectly, jealousy. Women hang themselves, men in some instances drown themselves. Among the Atsugewi, Achomawi and Surprise Valley Paiute, suicide was usually motivated either through jealousy or quarreiling; eating wild parsnip root was one of the more generally accepted modes; the bodies of suicides were accorded the same disposal as the bodies of persons dying natural deaths, but only close relatives wailed'.[3]

Among the Tanaina, suicide is said to have become more common 'when old men lived to see the last of their sons die'.[4] Among the Mohave 'the conflict between longing for the dead and the impossibility of catching up with them should one live too long after they died led to an appalling number of suicides'.[5] W. N. Fenton traces the increase to contact with civilization. In a study of the Seneca and Mohawk Indians, he writes, 'Public opinion condemned as cowardice male suicides to avoid physical suffering, such as torture; but condoned cases of women who were mistreated by lovers. The greatest frequency came during the period immediately following white contact when conditions were ripe for social disorganization. The principal motive with women was revenge of mistreatment by husbands who deserted them at middle age; children resented restraint,

[1] A. Hrdlicka, *Physiological and Medical Observations*, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bull. XXXIV, 1908, p. 171.
[2] L. Spier, *Havasupai Ethnography*, Anthropological Papers of the American Bureau of Natural History, Vol. XXIX, 1928, p. 143.
[3] E. W. Voegelin, 'Suicide in Northeastern California', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXIX (New Series), p. 456.
[4] C. Osgood, 'Tanaina Culture', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXV (New Series), p. 714.
[5] G. Devereux, 'Mohave Soul Concepts', *American Anthropologist*, Vol XXXIX (New Series), p. 422.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and men sought to avoid physical suffering, either martyrdom or blood revenge; some cases involve loss of status . . . Avoidance remains the dominating motive of Iroquois suicide.'[1]

Suicide among the Trobriand Islanders, says Malinowski, 'is certainly not a means of administering justice, but it affords the accused and oppressed one—whether he be guilty or innocent—a means of escape and rehabilitation. It looms large in the psychology of the natives, is a permanent damper on any violence of language or behaviour, on any deviation from custom or tradition, which might hurt or offend another. Thus suicide, like sorcery, is a means of keeping the native to the strict observance of the law, a means of preventing people from extreme and unusual types of behaviour. Both are pronounced conservative influences and as such are strong supports of law and order'.[2]

This is a little too emphatic for the situation in Bastar, but duly modified might apply there also. But whatever primitive suicide may be, it is not trivial. Nor is it altogether dishonourable. The man insulted escapes, it is true, but he restores his honour. The girl forced into an unwelcome marriage runs away from it, but she preserves her dignity and prestige.

[1] W. N. Fenton, *Iroquois Suicide*, Bureau of American Ethnology; Anthropological Papers, Washington, 1941, p. 134.
[2] B. Malinowski, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (London, 1932), p. 98.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Man and wife generally settle down at first in a small hut of their own. But there is a sort of joint family system with the father or elder brother as the patriarchal head, and sometimes a large family occupies an entire hamlet of its own in one part of the village territory. The institution of the cross-cousin marriage tends to unite families very closely.

This happy and united family life is disturbed by several causes. One, as we have seen, is the commonplace invasion of the happiness of two people by a third. Another is the presence of the husband's younger brother in the house, and the privileged relationship which he has with the elder brother's wife. Another is the custom that allows a married girl to visit her mother's house. Yet another is man's insatiable passion for domestic experiment which leads to the complicated and dubious joys of plural marriage.

It will be of interest to compare with this the situation in ordinary Hindu families, where the common disparity of age between husband and wife creates stresses from which the Maria are free. 'There are tendencies at work within the family institution itself which sometimes lead to criminal action. The joint family rests upon the mutual toleration and sacrifice of the different members of the household. While forbearance is the outcome of long discipline in joint family life, it is put to a severe test as a result of the growth of individualism. Again, the disparity between the ages of husband and wife, of parents-in-law and girl-wife, offers opportunities of exploitation and even cruelty. The custom of infant marriage is apt to promote oppression, especially where there is a striking difference in age between the husband and the wife. Cases of cruelty to young wives are often brought to the courts in India.

'In 1929 a Hindu weaver in Hyderabad, who had married a young girl, chained her like an animal to a big mill-stone to prevent her making frequent attempts to run away. She subsequently died.

'In another case in the same year a young girl-wife who was being forcibly taken to her husband's house managed to free herself, jumped into a wayside well, and was drowned'.[1]

[1] Haikerwal, op. cit., p. 39.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CRIMES OF WOMEN

I

674 171 It is notorious that women are everywhere less criminal than men. 'The proportion varies, however, greatly in different countries. In France it is usually about 4 to 1; in the United States it is about 12 to 1; in Italy and Spain the proportion of women is very small. In Great Britain, on the other hand, the proportion of criminal women is extremely large, especially for the greater crimes'.[1] In Bastar the proportion is 23 men to 1 woman.

674 Havelock Ellis points out that woman is protected from crime by certain physical and psychological characteristics—her physical weakness, sexual selection, domestic seclusion, prostitution and maternity. Among Maria women, however, the only one of these forms of protection to operate is maternity. The women are often of considerable physical strength and are as capable of striking a murderous blow with an axe as are the men. Since every Maria woman is married, sexual selection is of no assistance in removing from the place of danger and temptation the more degenerate and abnormal types.

462 562 As far as the domestic seclusion of women is concerned, the Maria situation resembles that in the Baltic provinces of Russia of former days, where the women shared the occupations of men and the level of feminine criminality was comparatively high. In England also, which has taken the lead in enlarging the sphere of women's work, 'the level of feminine criminality has for half a century been rising'. The Maria woman is not only free to assist her husband in the tasks of daily life, but she also frequently participates in those very occasions which are regarded as most provocative to murder, the drinking parties when large quantities of rice-beer are consumed. [548] There is no prostitution among the Maria. But on the other hand women do not, as in Europe, fall out of the social ranks.

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 261 f.

[p. 161]

1: Koppers--215 E-5 (1938-1939) 1948 AW25 Bhil AW25
Gond AW32

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796
171

The Kali Durga Novena (Jawara) among the Gonds

Among the Gonds who live in the Maikal Mountains (about 100 miles east of Jubbelpur), the Zwārā ceremony enjoys special popularity. This is less the case among the Baiga, as Elwin declares. (434) This

434. (Footnote 215), p. 64.

is significant because the Baigas, contrary to the Gonds, represent the more primitive and older population on the spot. Instead of Zwārā, the Hindi word Jawārā (barley) is used among the Gonds.

A sorcerer (called panda in this region) named Phulsa and living in the village Batondha, promulgated a Jawārā festival there in May of the year 1939. With regard to all essentials, the novena of the Gonds is comparable to that of the Bhils. Nevertheless the ceremony has its own coloring among the Gonds.

The magician (panda) of the Gonds, at least nowadays, only sows wheat although the ceremony bears the name Jawārā (barley). Thus he does not also sow wheat and barley as the Bhil magician does. Our panda Phulsa had gotten the wheat in earthen jugs (kaltsa) and in bamboo stands (chatura), which previously had been filled with dirt naturally. In this case one pot and one bamboo stand came from Phulsa himself; about 10 more had been contributed by other families. When the Panda is consulted in cases of illness, he frequently gives the direction that participation is necessary at the time of the next Jawārā festival. For this, the panda receives a goat or a chicken as a sacrificial offering. Panda Phulsa, to be sure, asserted that his Mata, who is naturally identical with Kālī Durgā, desires no bloody sacrifice from [182] him, but requires instead only the offering of coconuts. But that is by no means the case with all Gond pandas. With Phulsa there is only a greater degree of Hinduization recognizable, for he himself also explained that he had directly implored the mother goddess to demand no bloody sacrifices from him, but to be satisfied with coconuts.

The bamboo stands mentioned show two or even three "stories" (Plate XIV/2) to a certain extent. This is attained by splitting in various places, the strong bark of a bamboo pole which is as thick as an arm. These sections are then made into the shape of a funnel,

1:Koppers--216 E-5 (1938-1939) 1948 AW25 Bhil AW25
Gond AW32

E.
796
171

in which other, and specifically thinner, bamboo splices are used. The basket-weaver does this job for a negligible compensation. Panda Phulsa had pots and bamboo stands standing in a little building supplementary to his house which was his cult place in general, as was demonstrated by the trident and other things.

The bamboo stands show a striking similarity to that remarkable structure over which the "unicorn" steer often extends his head in the well-known representations of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. Already much effort has been expended in order to interpret this representation. Up to this point no one has been able to offer a satisfactory explanation. (435) The bamboo stands used at the Jawārā festival of the

435. Last treated by H. Mode, Indische Frühkulturen und ihre Beziehungen zum Westen (Basel, 1944), p. 54 f.

Gonds caused me immediately and on the spot to think of the puzzling implements of the Indus culture. Meanwhile, I believe that in a special study, "Zentralindische Fruchtbarkeitsrieten und ihre Beziehung zur Indus-Kulture," (436) I have determined more closely the relations

436. Appeared in Geographica Helvetica, Vol. I (Zürich, 1946), p. 165-177.

between the complexes named, and in any case have made their reality rather probable. The possibility is not excluded that the funnel-shaped sacrificial baskets, which are made of bamboo, and which are widespread from Assam to Eastern Indonesia, belong to the same group. (437)

437. Heine-Geldern in G. Buschan, Illustrierte Völkerkunde Vol. II (Stuttgart, 1923), p. 860. "The funnel-shaped sacrificial baskets are widespread from Assam to Eastern Indonesia which they make by cutting lengthwise incisions into one end of a bamboo pole, bending these slits outward, and weaving bamboo strips or rotang through them horizontally. Planted in the ground at the other end, they serve as a sort of altar. Among the Was in Burma, the Kalingas

E.
796
171

and Tinggian in North Luzon and the Bataks in Sumatra, it also serves as a temporary or permanent receptacle for the skulls acquired head-hunting."

/183/ Let us return to our Panda Phulsa himself. During the nine Jawārā days he wears an iron ring around his neck. He does this because the Kālī Mātā of Calcutta is also decked out with such a ring. At the same time Phulsa has a pierced fruit hanging on a neck cord. The sādhu (438), he claims, placed it there. On the eighth day of

438. Sādhu = pious man ("saint").

the novena, the sacrifice of breads is carried out. The main celebration takes place on the ninth day. I had the opportunity to attend just this one on the spot.

The final celebration began around four o'clock in the afternoon. In front of the door of Panda Phulsa's house a so-called chauk (a magic square) was drawn on the ground with meal. In the vicinity stand three, four or up to five poles one meter tall. They represent the mother goddesses (Kālī Mātā and so forth). As a matter of fact, seven poles should be standing here, for seven mata's. But since Panda Phulsa has been living here only for a short time, this is explained by the fact that his arrangements are still incomplete, as was stated. At the feet of those mata's and, at the same time facing the chauk, lies the son of the Panda on his knees and ("possessed" by a mata) rotating his head back and forth. He is obviously supposed to succeed his father in office some day. Let it be mentioned here also that, according to the statement of the Gonds, the sorcerer is always "possessed" by only one deity, hence never by several deities. The baskets and bamboo stands are fetched out of the sanctuary and placed on the chauk.

In the procession which then takes place, the Panda's sister plays a chief role. If necessary she can also be represented by some other female. The Panda's sister carries the pot of wheat which he himself has prepared. (439) Previously the sister has already rubbed her

439. The Panda's sister naturally reminds one of the girls among the Bhils who carries the water jug on which the wheat of the "little evil

spirits" stands or stood.

brother thoroughly with milk and turmeric dye (440); this mitigates,

440. The reddish-yellow color plays a significant role in the life of the Bhils, as well as other primitive tribes of India. We encounter its use especially in the wedding (footnote 230), p. 25 ff. and at the Tdoe (further below, p. 256 f.).

as they say, the otherwise easily aroused deities.

A younger man carries the pole fashioned after a standard, which represents the Marhai (441)-Mātā. In order to cause the /184/ bearer

441. The Marhai-Mātā is one of the seven mātā's of the panda. It seems that precisely her pole is gladly decorated with peacock tail feathers. As far as she is concerned, the Marhai-Mātā is considered a good goddess.

of this pole to be "possessed" by the Marhai-Mātā, the Panda has previously thrown rice kernels at the pole. The bearer of the Marhai-Mātā pole then rather rapidly shows that he is restless and runs jerkily here and there with it, as though a secret power were driving him. The end of the pole threatens several times to come into contact with the ground—it looks as if an invisible power were driving it. At such moments it is the wife of the Panda especially who raises a great hue and cry. Such contact actually may not take place. Otherwise all sorts of misfortune would have to come especially to the Panda's house.

The procession now proceeds to the nearest watering place, about 1,000 meters away. Apart from the pot which the Panda's sister carries, the other jugs and bamboo stands are distributed to a number of persons. The young people especially are there with hands ready to help. All at once the Panda swings up onto the shoulders of a strong and still younger man. He rides him as a horse (Plate XIV/3). As he told later, the Mātā suddenly suggested that to him. To the question what would have happened if her choice had fallen upon a weaker person, he answered quickly and certainly that nothing would

have happened; for in such a case the Mātā would surely have come to his aid with the necessary strength. This bearer, incidentally, is afterwards paid for his effort with a coconut. Fortunately for him, the Panda Phulsa is a slight and light person.

On the way, the procession has to pass the house of the somewhat more respected Gond, Churaman by name. At the suggestion of the Mātā, as he says again, Phulsa causes the procession to halt here. Actually everything had certainly been agreed upon previously with the pious Churaman. Churaman wears the Brahman band, and thus shows he is relatively greatly Hinduized. In his house everything is well prepared. Churaman has two wives: the first is barren, and the second presented him with a son who is sickly. On a brass dish, the first wife brings the following gifts to the Panda who is sitting in the foreyard of the house: a coconut, two pineapples, milk and greens, on which holdi (turmeric) is sprinkled. The Panda accepts these gifts, but they are intended for the mātā. Over the head of the childless woman the Panda swings his scourge made of cowtail hair and says: "I will give you children." In this way the evil spirits (bhūts) are supposed to be driven out, and thus the barrier in the way of children made to disappear. Above the sickly boy of the second wife Phulsa makes similar motions and says: "I will make you healthy!"

/185/ The stop at Churaman's house lasted about one-quarter of an hour. Immediately afterwards the procession is continued. About 200 meters before the watering place there is again a pause for three to five minutes, and a smoke sacrifice is quickly offered.

Having arrived at the watering place, all participants stick a few of the delicate wheat plants behind their ears. Everything else—hence the plants along with the dirt sticking to them—is sunk in the water, but to be sure the earthen jugs are carefully spared; they are taken home in order to make them serviceable again for practical life. But since no profane usuage is known for the bamboo stands, they are simply left lying on the spot after they have been emptied. No difficulties were encountered when I picked them up and took them along for my collections. A general greeting (embrace) forms the conclusion of the Jawārā celebration.

In summary, the following is given as the purpose of the exercise: the Mātā is supposed to protect everyone and everything and to allow them to grow and thrive in health and prosperity.

Jawārā Song

B.
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1. Behind the bar (tree) stands the pipal tree.
   By the door stands the fruit-bearing nim tree.
   Ho Mata, you are good.
2. Under the nim tree hangs a swing.
   Who is to be swung?
   Ho Mata, you are good.
3. The Dewi (mata) sits on the swing,
   And the servant swings.
   Hanuman (the monkey) speaks: Swing to (i.e., he murmurs hm, hm).
   Ho Mata, you are good.
4. Swinging, swinging, she (Dewi) became unconscious,
   And the neckband tore apart.
   Ho Mata, you are good.
5. Who will pick up the beads (which have fallen on the ground)?
   Who will put the string of beads back together?
   Ho Mata, you are good.
6. The goddess has picked them up.
   And the servant helped her.
   The gardener put it (the string of beads) back together.
   Ho Mata, you are good.

/186/ 7. Well, well, Mata, I have sung this song.
O goddess Hinglaj (442), bless (us)!

442. "Hinglaj, said to be derived from Sanskrit hingula, a preparation of mercury with sulphur, vermilion: possibly, on account of the smearing of a sacred stone with red pigment, . . ." W. Crooke, ERE, Vol. VI, p. 715. Under the name Hinglaj the great mother goddess is venerated in Baluchistan, west of the Hingol River, near its mouth. The Hinglaj Mātā is widely known in India.

Ho Mata, you are good.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 614 615 The elders of the villages can actually often give the names of each of the gods whom they say that each of the five Bison-horn phratries worships: the Markami phratry worships Harma Pen; the Kuhrami phratry give varying names for their god, Hermraj Pen, Perambhoi (the name applied by the Dorlas to their corresponding Perambhoi phratry) or Banian Muttai; the Kawasi phratry worships Babo Herma Pen; the Marvi phratry Handa Kosa Pen; and the Sodi phratry Tul-Muttai Pen, whose *pen-rawar* is at Kamkanar in the Gangalur *pargana* in Bijapur tahsil, where Sodi Harma the *mokdul-waddai*, was regarded as the headman of all the surrounding Bison-horn villages. But other names are also given, such as Hirangraj, Hingaraj and Belraj for the Kartami clan, Hirmaraj for the Kawasi, Sodi, Markami and Marvi clans, and Hing-hunga and Mundaraj for the Beko and Kalmu clans. I have used the word 'clan' advisedly, because in this list some gods are shared by clans belonging to different phratries; thus Hirmaraj is shared by the Markami and Kartami clans of the Markami phratry and by the Sodi and Marvi clans of the Sodi and Marvi phratries, while of the worshippers of Hing-hunga and Mundaraj the Beko clan belongs to the Kuhrami phratry and the Kalmu clan to the Markami. Use Modia Pen of Ghotpal is restricted to the Lekami clan of that and surrounding villages, which is now considered part of the Kuhrami phratry. Other local log-gods will be found in the heart of the Bison-horn country at such places as Dugeli; some may be the true *pen-rawars* of the phratries, but I have been unable to verify this.

614 615 173 The whole position is, it must be admitted, somewhat confused, but it would be wrong to expect to systematize it. The same confusion will be found again over the totems of the phratries and clans; there are two phratries with the tortoise as totem, and inside the same phratry will be found clans with totems of their own or the totem of other phratries, or no totem at all. The traditions of the Bison-horn Marias all point to their having descended southwards from the Abujhmar hills to colonize their present country, and the presence in their midst of ruined Hindu cities at Dantewara, Barsur, and Bhairamgarh, of traces of forgotten kingdoms at Tirathgarh and Kuakonda, and of isolated villages of Jhari Telangas descended from the subjects of early medieval Telugu kings, point to the truth of the traditions. We have seen how new clans are forming to-day on the southern fringes of the Abujhmar hills, and how the Bison-horn culture is gradually absorbing the southernmost Hill Maria clans, which have, however, not fitted themselves fully as yet into the five-phratry organization, but retain their own clan-gods. The five phratries are named after five principal clans,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the names of which recur not only among Murias in north Bastar, but also among all the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Possibly strong bodies of these clans were the original colonizers, and with the growth of population in their new surroundings have either thrown off sub-clans or absorbed clans newly descending from the hills or acquiring their culture. It is not surprising that settlers in the tracts farthest from their first settlement should find it difficult to worship at the original shrines of their *pen*, and should either forget them, or here and there make fresh log-gods for themselves, perhaps sharing them with other adjacent clans not necessarily of their own phratries, just as they have learnt, unlike the Hill Marias, to share with other brother-clans and wife-clans village lands which are the *bhum* of their own clan.

The cult of the *pen* log-god of the clan is thus, as may be expected, considerably weaker among the Bison-horn than among the Hill Marias. Often he is neglected almost entirely in the annual feasts, or vaguely associated with the Departed in the expressions *pen-hanal* or *dhums-deo* used of the ancestors. Where there is a log-god, he tends to be regarded merely as one of the local godlings that are becoming as numerous among the Bison-horn Marias as among the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Where there is none, occasionally at festivals before the Village Mother or other manifestations of the Earth a stone or two may be set up in his name under a *saja* tree and receive its share of the sacrificial blood and libations. It is not surprising that, therefore, the *waddai* of the clan-god is more purely a medium among the Bison-horn Marias, and less of a clan-priest than he is among the Hill Marias, and that most Bison-horn villages have at least one *waddai* who may be possessed not only by the clan-god but by other godlings also; even when he is attached definitely to a log-god at a festival, he may be possessed by him and give oracle on his behalf, but the *perma* of the village is the principal celebrant, and the *waddai*, when not possessed, degenerates into a mere *mantram*-reciting assistant of the *perma*.

Often there is no hut-temple for any deity among the Bison-horn Marias except one for Danteshwari Mai or Maoli or Mata, whose cults have spread from the Hindu temple of Dantewara, and in time will reach every village of Bastar. The Earth cult, however, remains, as among the Hill Marias, the essential cult. Its chief form is thus the cult of the Village Mother, called Tallin Ochur in the Bison-horn dialect. For all the village ceremonies there is a fixed plot of land in a field belonging to the *perma* and known as the *bhum-jaga*, *hadvi-bera* or *wijj-erbu*; *bhum-jaga*

The Village Mother and other gods among the Bison-horn Murias

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142 epicanthic fold were found in one or both eyes. Among the Hill Muria observed at Markabera, light brown skin colour, high cheek bones and the unmistakable presence of the epicanthic fold were also noticed.

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V. Muria Migrations

174 As we have seen, there are probably at least three different elements in the composition of the Muria tribe. The first is the Hill Maria migration from the mountains into the hills and forests of the south and east, from which has emerged the Jhoria of today. The second is a probable migration of Gond from the Central Provinces into the northern parganas, to which testify common traditions, the legend of Lingo and the continued intermarriage between Kanker Gond and Bastar Muria. The third element is that of east Kondagaon, which may represent the true Bastar autochthon, where the Muria —having been longer in the country than the others—have lost more of their original customs and language.

● 173 All three elements have traditions of migrations from Warangal in the south and Lanji-Dhamda in the north. Many try to blend the two.

Warangal is, of course, the original home of the ruling family of Bastar, whose ancestors reigned there from about A.D. 1150 to 1425. This Kakatiya family was probably originally feudatory to the Chalukya kings and only later ruled independently. 'Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had been an outlying and loosely-held group of feudal dependencies of Warangal.'[1]

It will be of interest to give a few of the stories still current in Muria villages. Suko Manjhi told me at Bandopal that his family first lived in Lanji-Dhamda and then went to Warangal. In Warangal, he went on,

> The Raja was one day going to court when Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a vision saying, 'Where are you going?' The Raja replied, 'To my court'. The goddess said, 'This is not your court, nor your kingdom. I will show you where your real kingdom is; if you stay here both house and kingdom will be lost. Come with me; you go ahead and I will follow, but do not look behind; your kingdom will extend as far as you can go!' The Raja went on and on into Bastar and up as far as the Pairi river where there is now the Kanker boundary. As he went along he listened all the time to the sound of Danteshwari

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 3.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Mai's anklets, but as they were crossing the river some sand got into them and she stopped to clean them. When the music of the anklets ceased, the Raja turned round to see what was the matter. Danteshwari was very angry and cried, 'You have disobeyed me. You might have been the greatest of all kings, but now your kingdom must stop here.' 173

Bhikari Muria, the Gaita of Kerawahi, gave a different account:

> Our ancestors came from Warangal driven by hunger and thirst, and were searching for a home and food to live. Seven brothers reached Jarandi village and slept near a threshing-floor. The next morning they saw a great heap of kodon chaff. Their wives examined it and found there was still much grain left there, so they told their husbands to fetch bullocks from the village. The brothers each gathered a bin full of grain and went to the villagers saying, 'Look, how much grain we have found, take it, for it is yours'. But the villagers said, 'No, we had thrown away the chaff, and there was no grain there; what you have got is a gift of the gods'. Then with what they had found the seven brothers scattered in the villages of Otenda, Jarandi, Magenda, Kerawahi, Bandasemal, Umargaon and Uridgaon. These were the first Muria villages. The brothers were of the Kawachi clan and these villages are their *bhum* (clan-territory).

This story comes from the east of the State. Many of the accounts given in the west describe how the Muria first settled in the Abujhmar and were originally Maria. Eighty-year-old Bindo of Benur, for example, describes how,

> My ancestors lived in Warangal. One of them had a dream. The god Raja Dokara appeared to him and told him to go to Bastar, for the god himself was going there. So my ancestor followed the god and settled at Teknar in the land of the Maria.
>
> Some time later my ancestor went to the lowlands to buy bullocks. The Maria there said to him, 'Come and live with us here and we will make you our leader'. My ancestor agreed to do so, but when he returned to Teknar to fetch his belongings, the Maria would not let him go.
>
> But after a time, Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Come down to the lowlands and I will help you; I will give you a Maria wife and will make you the chief of the village'. When he heard this, my ancestor left Teknar and came to settle in Benur. Here the Maria gave him a wife and he became one of them and the chief of that village.

In Sidhawand, a Muria village on the Kanker border, the headman, who belongs to the Kasai Maravi clan, said that his ancestors came from Garha-Mandla,[1] but where this was he could not say.

The tradition of a migration from Lanji-Dhamda[2] is vaguer and less detailed than that of the royal pilgrimage from Warangal. Yet it persists. Bara Pen

[1] Garha and Mandla are often mentioned together as if they were one place. Mandla was the capital of the Gond Raja, Hirde Shah, from 1650 to 1706, after which the Gond Rajas were known as 'kings of Garha-Mandla' until the kingdoms collapsed before the Marathas.

[2] Lanji is also connected with ancient Gond history. A Rajput adventurer—according to one tradition—named Jadhu Rai took service in the court of one of the original Gond Rajas at Lanji and, marrying his daughter, occupied the throne and thus started the Gond

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

● 173 was born from a stone in Lanji-Dhamda. The Poyami Gaita at Jamkot claimed that 'the Poyami clan came from Dhamda, but is now scattered everywhere'. In Ulera and neighbouring villages the Muria said that they were really Gond from Lanji-Dhamda and that they intermarried with Kanker and Jeypore Gond.

Rajput dynasty which continued for hundreds of years. In comparatively modern times a fort was built at Lanji by one of the Gond Rajas of Garha-Mandla. 'While engaged in the excavations, a spirit appeared who declared herself to be the goddess Lanjkoi and she promised to constitute herself protectrix of the fort, provided a human sacrifice was yearly offered at her shrine. It was consequently named after her. Many years later, Chimanjee Bhonsla on his Cuttack expedition took the Lanjee road. He saw and valued the position of the fort and erected a small temple in honour of Lanjkoi. Though human sacrifices are not now offered, the Gond Raja of Kawurdah, on visiting the Nagpore Exhibition in 1865, found it necessary to sacrifice goats at the shrine that his ancestors had dedicated to Lanjkoi.'—A. J. Lawrence, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Bhandara District* (Bombay, 1867), p. 29.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

to death.[1] Tallur Muttai asks him to marry her, but he refuses and runs away to Semurgaon, where 'being weary' he turns into a stone, and has ever since been worshipped.

This rather tedious account yet gives an exact picture of the working of the Muria's mind when he turns it to theology The distribution of the gods probably represents very ancient migrations of the tribe. As the different Muria families moved here and there, it was necessary that their gods also should move and, in order to emphasize the unity of the tribe, should be related to one another. A Pus Kolang chant sung by the chelik of Phulpar gives a good picture of the multiplicity, variety and confusion of the Muria pantheon.

Aho revaloyo revala vav loyo vav loyo aha revala!

O the sixteen divisions of the earth,
The nine divisions of the sky!
Who is lord of the earth?
The lord of the earth is Tallur Rai.
Give him a good Johar.

O the hoar-frost and Pati Pen!
Give him a good Johar.

O the tiger and Kadrengal!
Give him a good Johar.

Oho the red Sun like a blazing log
Oho the haldi-coloured Moon!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in a corner is the bed,
In the midst is the ocean
Nearby is the Kutala.
Oho the many baby stars!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in the ghotul Madan Matai Rai!
In the village Jamadevia Meta!
Oho Nelo Maria Rai!
Give him a good Johar.

[1] For a full account of the Lingo legend, see Chapter VIII.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615 618 114 advanced' areas further north, faced by Brahman ridicule of his culture, has more and more withdrawn into his shell and learnt to conceal the more intimate features of his tribal religion and culture.

174 61 618 Until we have before us the records of such systematized and widespread field-work it is impossible to form any reliable general theory of the origin of this god-grouping. My tentative view, so far as the Chanda Marias are concerned, for what it is worth, is that the god-grouping is a comparatively recent importation from their northern and western Gond (especially Raj-Gond) neighbours. As I have pointed out on pages 194-5, the Bastar Marias and Murias have neither god-grouping nor *chuddur penk*. I added that none of the Chanda Marias who had come to my camps in Bastar had these institutions. This may appear inconsistent with the definite proof of the existence at least of god-grouping among the Chanda Marias, as recorded from Lucie-Smith's time onwards, and verified by Bishop Wood and Rev. Patwardhan and in this tour of mine. But here again one must distinguish between the Chanda Marias of the hills above Lahiri and those of the plains and foothills. Those who came to my Bastar camps were all Chanda Hill Marias: those among whom god-grouping was verified were plains Marias. I camped for four days at Kuvakodi, a hill village high above Lahiri, and visited other hill villages close by both in Chanda and in Bastar. The Chanda Hill Marias are identical in culture with the Bastar Hill Marias, and like them had, at least at Christmas 1940, no god-grouping and no *chuddur penk*. The Hill Marias of Chanda in fact appear to be what the *Gazetteer*[1] describes as the Gaita sub-tribe of Gonds, and the speakers of the dialect referred to by it[2] and in the *Linguistic Survey* as Gattu, the language of the 'Kois or Gonds of the hills, especially in Sironcha', who 'are known as Gattu or Gotte Kois'; for it speaks of the Gaita Gonds as being 'almost alone in retaining the old Gondi custom, once universal, of building their village in two long barracks lying east and west facing each other about eighty feet apart' in which the married people dwell, while the bachelors, and in some villages unmarried girls also, have separate barracks. This description clearly fits the Hill Marias of Kuvakodi and adjacent hill villages, as it would do the villages of the neighbouring Hill Maria *parganas* of Bastar.

So we start with these, the most primitive of the Marias of Chanda, and find among them no trace of god-grouping or *chuddur penk*. Down the hill we come to Lahiri, and we find god-grouping (which, however, includes a three-god group absent among the Chanda and Adilabad Raj-Gonds), but, so far as I could ascertain, no *chuddur*

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 97, 98.
[2] Ibidem, p. 73.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

penk corresponding in number to the number of gods of the god-group, and apparently no domestic cult except of the Departed. As you go northwards beyond Surjagarh or north-westwards towards Chand the Marias begin to understand the meaning of god-grouping and of *chuddur penk*, but even there seemed to me—admittedly my enquiries were superficial—to have no such vital interest in these things as a typical Raj-Gond or Dhurve Gond. This would be explicable on a theory that this god-grouping was something gradually imposed, not necessarily deliberately, but by infiltration and imitation, by the Gonds of the ruling house of Chanda and the aristocratic Gond zamindars, under the feudal system grouped about the Chanda Maharaja, upon the whole 'Maria' substratum of the Gonds of Chanda. The Marias probably represent one or two early waves of Gond migration southwards or, at least the Hill Marias, an earlier pre-Gond race with Veddid, Malid or Munda affinities.[1] There are differences between Chanda Hill Maria and plains Maria speech, the former being as guttural as Bastar Hill Maria; but all Chand Marias speak a form of Gondi very different from the Gondi of the Raj and Dhruve Gonds of Chanda, which would support the view that the latter represent different waves of migration, later moreover in view of their very advanced social and political organization and their aristocratic elements: compare also the position of the Pardhan bards and musicians in Raj-Gond life with their rarity in Maria villages. It is probable also that the ancestors of many who now are called Raj-Gonds a few generations back were Maria. The *Gazetteer*[2] mentions that though Marias do not now (1909) intermarry with Raj-Gonds, the records of the Ahiri family show that they once did so. The very term Raj-Gond in my view, as expressed on page 36, arose from the process still common whereby as sections of aboriginal tribes became Hindnized or acquired political power they distinguish themselves from the main body of their original tribe, so as to fit into the caste system. There can be little doubt that as the Raj-Gond kingdom of Chanda grew in power leading local Gond or Maria headmen or elders who fitted into the social organization of the kingdom came to be regarded as Raj-Gond: compare also the discussion earlier in this Note[3] of the meaning of the term 'Maria' and its disappearance in Drug district terminology in very recent times.[4] What, therefore, could be more

[1] Comparable with, for example, the Kolams of Hyderabad and Berar, or the Hill Reddis of Hyderabad, Madras and Orissa. The late Bishop Wood on hearing Bastar Marias talk said that to him it sounded like Gondi spoken with Mundari accent and intonation. See also R. C. Roy on pp. 317-18

[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909) p. 101

[3] P. 377.

[4] P. 378.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

natural than for the backward Marias aspiring to raise themselves to Raj-Gond status to copy gradually the Raj-Gond social organization? It is equally possible that *pari passu* the Raj-Gond ruler and nobles encouraged this: in all these semi-feudal, semi-tribal states and sub-states, as to this day in the States and zamindaris of Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the Maharajah of the State or the Rajah of the zamindari remains the final arbiter in caste matters, even often conferring the right to wear the sacred thread on communities actively hinduizing themselves. At Surjagarh and Jarawandi camps, various *Sendhias* and headmen practically admitted to me that god-grouping was not originally a Maria institution.[1]

From Lahiri there was a long climb of thirteen miles to the Hill Maria village of Kuvakodi, when we halted for four days, including Christmas Day. The track led at first up the valley of the Lahiri river, then up the side valley of a small tributary, and so by an exceptionally steep ascent on to an undulating plateau, across which we reached Kuvakodi at dusk, our camp equipment all being carried on poles by Marias, whom on arrival we rewarded not only in cash but, in Bastar fashion, with salt and beads, and a feast of pork: the Marias sat ranged by clan and village, and those who killed and cooked the pork distributed to every man and child, and to the women of Kuvakodi, a portion of the meat off each joint of the pig. On the way up a slight detour took us through the small village of Gudumundi, and from Kuvakodi we visited Podewara and the Bastar village of Nelangari, some five miles from our camp.

Each day started with a parade of yaws patients for inoculation, all from Chanda villages: the Bastar Marias, who came in to see me and to join in the dancing each evening, looked tolerantly on, having themselves long before had the benefit of the Bastar anti-yaws parties.

The whole cultivation system of the Chanda Hill Marias is identical with the Bastar system described in Chapter VII of this book: it is, that is to say, *penda* cultivation and not what is generally known in the Central Provinces as *dahi*, or its Chanda plains variations of *bhamori*, *jalapod*, *podu* or *sampod* (these terms will be explained later in this Note). There is the same broadcast sowing on the same kind of clearings of seed of all the minor millets and beans. The

[1] Haimendorf in reviewing Shamrao Hivale's *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley* has pointed out that the fact that the Pardhans' clan organization is everywhere based on that of the local Gond, does not disprove the different origin of the two peoples, for there are many examples of other tribes adopting their Gond neighbours' system of phratries and clans. He instances from Chanda district and Hyderabad State not only the aboriginal castes as certain Maratha blacksmiths and brass-workers who have the same clan names as the Gonds, *Man in India*, Vol. XXVI, 1946, p. 231. Compare also the Kuruk fishing tribe in Bastar, pp. 163-4.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142 epicanthic fold were found in one or both eyes. Among the Hill Muria observed at Markabera, light brown skin colour, high cheek bones and the unmistakable presence of the epicanthic fold were also noticed.

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V. Muria Migrations

● 174 As we have seen, there are probably at least three different elements in the composition of the Muria tribe. The first is the Hill Maria migration from the mountains into the hills and forests of the south and east, from which has emerged the Jhoria of today. The second is a probable migration of Gond from the Central Provinces into the northern parganas, to which testify common traditions, the legend of Lingo and the continued intermarriage between Kanker Gond and Bastar Muria. The third element is that of east Kondagaon, which may represent the true Bastar autochthon, where the Muria —having been longer in the country than the others—have lost more of their original customs and language.

173 All three elements have traditions of migrations from Warangal in the south and Lanji-Dhamda in the north. Many try to blend the two.

Warangal is, of course, the original home of the ruling family of Bastar, whose ancestors reigned there from about A.D. 1150 to 1425. This Kakatiya family was probably originally feudatory to the Chalukya kings and only later ruled independently. 'Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had been an outlying and loosely-held group of feudal dependencies of Warangal.'[1]

It will be of interest to give a few of the stories still current in Muria villages. Suko Manjhi told me at Bandopal that his family first lived in Lanji-Dhamda and then went to Warangal. In Warangal, he went on,

> The Raja was one day going to court when Danteshwari Mai appeared to him in a vision saying, 'Where are you going?' The Raja replied, 'To my court'. The goddess said, 'This is not your court, nor your kingdom. I will show you where your real kingdom is; if you stay here both house and kingdom will be lost. Come with me; you go ahead and I will follow, but do not look behind; your kingdom will extend as far as you can go!' The Raja went on and on into Bastar and up as far as the Pairi river where there is now the Kanker boundary. As he went along he listened all the time to the sound of Danteshwari

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 3.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The similarity between this description and the account which I have just given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mān ta pen nahi ta pāthar.—If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under saja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adwer, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

[1] See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
[2] Dey, op. cit., p. 318.
[3] Ibid., p. 344.
[4] J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

4: Führer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

our approach to the Gond problem—one of the cardinal problems of Deccan ethnology—unless we envisage the possibility that the tribes now known as Gonds, far from being the dispersed off-shoots of a once homogeneous people, attained a certain and very limited measure of cultural uniformity only when they came under the sway of the same dominant linguistic influence.

Gondi with its many local dialects is a Dravidian language of the so-called intermediate group, and stands, according to Grierson, closer to Tamil and Kanarese than to Telugu. But it seems highly improbable that the Dravidian tongues, which were no doubt associated with the representatives of the pre-Aryan high-civilizations of Southern India, should have been the original languages of tribal populations as primitive in racial and cultural make-up as the Hill Marias of Bastar and certain Koyas of Hyderabad. Just as such widely separated aboriginal tribes as the Chenchus of the Nallamallai Hills, the Hill Reddis of the Eastern Ghats and some, though not all, Naikpods and Kolams in the hills of Adilabad have adopted Telugu to the exclusion of any other tongue, without anyone considering Telugu as their original language[1] or claiming the present linguistic uniformity as proof of a genetic connection between all those tribes, so the peoples now speaking Gondi may, in times past, have abandoned older tribal tongues in favour of a Dravidian language spoken by neighbouring populations or the members of a ruling class. J. H. Hutton believes that by a similar process the Oraons of Chota Nagpur have adopted their present Dravidian tongue[2] in place of a Munda language, and I fully agree with his assumption that a large-scale Dravidianization of aboriginal tribes occurred partly previous and partly parallel to the Aryanization of which we are still witnesses.[3]

The idea that Dravidian Gondi represents a comparatively recent element in the linguistic pattern of the Central Indian belt has already been voiced by R. V. Russell, who put forward the theory of a Gond incursion into the Central Provinces from the south between the ninth and the thirteenth century A.D. This probably goes too far and is not supported by ethnological evidence; in solving the language problem it is not even necessary to assume a wholesale migration of all the Gond tribes from Dravidian lands south of the Godavari to the Central Provinces and the hill-tracts of Bastar. It is sufficient to postulate the invasion of a people limited in numbers but superior to the older tribal folks in organization and material equipment, and the subsequent spread of its Dravidian language and perhaps certain elements of its culture among the tribes previously speaking one or several older tongues. Indian history provides numerous examples of such an imposition of a foreign

1. In the case of Naikpods and Kolams an older tribal language is still spoken by other groups.
2. Oraon belongs to the same intermediate group as Gondi.
3. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Part I, p. 358.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

language on aboriginal populations, and it seems more probable that such tribes as the Muria Gonds, with their close cultural and racial affinities to the Austroasiatic Gadabas of Orissa, were subject to a change of language than that they immigrated from distant parts of Southern India.

We are not yet in a position to surmise which population may have been responsible for the spread of Gondi or which pre-Dravidian languages Gondi may have replaced. Both questions will perhaps remain for ever unanswered, but linguistic research among the Gondi speaking peoples, the still entirely mysterious Khonds, and the neighbouring Austroasiatic tribes may still lead to surprising results. Since the days of Grierson's Linguistic Survey few trained linguists have done fieldwork among the tribal populations of Peninsular India, and the most admirable descriptive works of amateurs cannot compensate for the absence of comparative studies by experts.[1]

The replacement of an older language by one of more recent introduction, is an accomplished fact among many of the eastern and northern Gonds, who speak now the Chhattisgarhi dialect of Hindi and various other local dialects. But there can be no doubt that these Aryan languages were adopted from neighbouring Hindu populations instead of tribal tongues, and certain place-names are to-day the only evidence that the languages previously spoken were related to the Gondi spoken by other sections of the Gond family.

According to the Census of India the total number of Gonds in 1931[2] was 3,063,753. With their strong tribal consciousness they are the premier aboriginal race of India, exceeding by more than one million the number of Bhils and dwarfing such tribes as Oraons, Mundas, Hos and Santals.

The majority of Gonds—2,261,138 in 1931—are found in the Central Provinces and Berar, which contain practically all the territories known to the early Moghul writers as Gondwana. Except for Buldana in the extreme south-west, there is no district in the Central Provinces

1. The limited value of linguistic material contained in the writings of anthropologists is to some more obvious than to the authors; such texts, for instance, as given in this volume may facilitate the linguist's approach to an unwritten language, but they are insufficient as a basis for linguistic conclusions. For very relevant phonetic peculiarities may entirely escape the attention of the untrained observer, or defeat his attempts at recording them. In linguistics as in anthropology there is no substitute for field work. The dearth of authoritative works on the tribal languages of India was lamented by J. H. Hutton in his Census report: "There is, however, a serious void in our knowledge in that no intensive work appears to have been done on the tribal dialects of southern India, so that it is impossible to say whether the Munda language ever penetrated to the extreme south of India or not. The linguistic survey unfortunately did not include southern India in its scope, and there is therefore a crying need for an intensive study of the dialects spoken by such tribes as the Kadar, Kurumans, Paliyans, Panians and Thanda Pulayans, with the object of discovering whether or no any Munda survivals are to be found." (Op. cit., p. 158). Hutton's call to linguists has, to my knowledge, remained largely unheeded. M. B. Emeneau who worked among the Todas being a laudable exception. But equally urgent as the study of the tribal dialects of South India is intensive work on the tribal language of the Central belt.

2. No later figures for individual tribes are available, the Census operations of 1941 having been curtailed for reasons of economy.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

101 without a considerable Gond population, but the main strongholds of
162 the Gonds are to-day the Satpura plateau including the districts of Betul,
197 Chhindwara and Seoni, where the western type of Gondi is spoken, Mandla and Chhattisgarh in the east, where the Gonds have adopted the local dialect of eastern Hindi but retained their tribal identity, and in the south Chanda and the neighbouring Yeotmal, where the language is Gondi, but of a dialect somewhat different from the Gondi of Betul.

101 To the north-west the Gonds extend across the Narbada River into
691 Central India, and are particularly numerous in Indore State; to the
197 east of the Central Provinces lie the states of Gond princes, such as
[619] Kawardha, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, to-day known as the Chhattisgarh States. Although neither these Gond rajas, nor indeed the Gonds among their subjects speak Gondi, they are fully conscious of their tribal associations and the high status of the ruling princes adds no doubt to tribal prestige in the whole of Chhattisgarh.

Further south, bordering on Chanda, Drug and Raipur, extend the two States of Kanker and Bastar, where Gonds constitute the majority of the population. Bastar in particular is the home of three important groups of Gonds: the Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias, all of which differ in language and custom very considerably from the Gonds of the Central Provinces.[1] Their colourful and complex cul-
● [174] tures are representative of ancient aboriginal India and show obvious affinities with the Austroasiatic cultures of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Bastar has also part in the Koyas or Dorlas of the Godavari area, the most southern branch of the Gond family occurring in considerable strength in Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State and stretching across the barrier of the Eastern Ghats into the vicinity of Rajahmundry. Most Koyas still speak a dialect of Gondi, but those surrounded by Telugu populations, have changed over to Telugu.

Another substantial group of Gonds, closely akin to the Gonds of Yeotmal and Chanda, is found in the hilly country between the Godavari and the Penganga Rivers constituting the Adilabad District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, and it is these Gonds who form the subject of the present work.

101 All the Gonds of Adilabad, except for an insignificant overflow of
186 Dhurwe Gonds from Chanda, consider themselves Raj Gonds, and this brings us to the still somewhat problematic division between Raj Gonds and Dhur or Dhurwe Gonds, which runs through the greater part of the Gond population within the Central Provinces. There seems to be no uniformity in the principles ruling this division; in Chhattisgarh only the members of ruling or formerly ruling families are described as Raj Gond, while in other parts most of the land-holding Gonds aspire to this denomination. In recent times the name Raj Gond has also been
[68] claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status by

1. The Hill Murias extend into the hills of the neighbouring Chanda District.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

compliance with Hindu customs, and "Raj-Gond" reform movements have made their appearance in the Central Provinces.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the distinction between Raj Gonds and the other sections of the Gond peoples. C. B. Lucie-Smith writing of the Raj Gonds of Chanda suggested that either "the epithet Raj was originally applied to royal and noble Gond families, from which the distinction spread to their followers and the governing class generally; or it may describe the leading Gond tribe which in ancient days conquered the land from other aboriginal clans."[1] But Captain Forsyth believed that Raj Gonds are in many cases the descendants of alliances between Rajput adventurers and Gonds, and R. V. Russell quotes this view with qualified approval.[2]

W. V. Grigson on the other hand lays emphasis rather on the social than the historical causes for the distinction and suggests that such names as Raj Gond arose from "the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names."[3] The situation in Adilabad seems rather to accord with the second suggestion advanced by Lucie-Smith; for here the Raj Gonds do not form a ruling class or even a class of privileged economic status, but an entire tribal group comprising all strata of society from the feudal chiefs down to the poorest labourer. We will see in a later chapter that the once powerful Gond Kings of Chanda belonged to this group, and their kinsmen in the Adilabad hills were as early as the 17th century referred to as Raj Gonds in patents of the Emperor Aurangzeb.

Here the Raj Gonds, far from aspiring to inclusion in the Hindu fold, consider themselves the true exponents of Gond culture and Gond language, and above all of the traditional Gond religion which involves the sacrifice of cows at the rites for the clan-gods. Many of them have never met a Dhurwe Gond, but those who have come in contact with the few groups of Dhurwe Gonds who have recently drifted across the Chanda border, look down upon them as speaking a corrupt form of Gondi intermixed with much Marathi, and as following different customs; somewhat sweepingly and apparently unjustly they assert that the Dhurwe Gonds have no cult of clan deities "only worshipping Bhimana like Kolams."

It seems indeed that the Raj Gonds of Adilabad, who have lived for almost a century and a half under Muslim rule, and have in consequence been less exposed to the influence of the more intolerant exponents of Hinduism, have retained more of their old culture than

1. *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Chanda District. Central Provinces.* 1869, Nagpur 1870, p. 46.
2. *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India.* London 1916. Vol. III. p. 63.
3. W. V. Grigson. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar.* London. 1938 p. 36.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

most of their tribesmen in the Central Provinces.

In order to understand the historical position of the Gonds both in Hyderabad and in the Central Provinces we must briefly review the course of political events during the last five centuries, and in doing so, anticipate, the fuller discussion of historical developments contained in Book II.

Reliable information on the early history of the Gonds is scarce and not until Muslim times do Gond states figure in contemporary chronicles and the works of historians. There can indeed be little doubt that throughout ancient and mediæval times the larger part of the Gond country east of Berar remained a land of vast forests and poor communications. Few foreign travellers seem to have traversed it and the old literature contains but the scantiest references to its inhabitants. Yet, its 'wildness' should not be exaggerated. Buddhist relics have been found in various places and it is not unlikely that there were times when pioneers of advanced civilizations settled among the aboriginal tribesmen just as there were periods when such outposts of higher culture shrank into insignificance. In Chanda District, for instance, Bhandak near the Wardha River seems to have been a centre of Buddhism and various authorities identify this place with the old Kosala capital visited in the seventh century by Hiuen Tsiang.[1] In Bhandak has also been discovered an inscription of the Rashtrakuta King, Krishna I, the builder of the Kailasa Temple at Ellora, dealing with the grant of a village when the King was camping in Yeotmal.[2] From Buddhist times date also the Pandrolena cave-temples at Mahur in the westernmost corner of the Adilabad District, and the famous Dev Deshwar temple at Mahur—mentioned in the Garur Purana and for the last seven centuries under the guardianship of monks of the Mahanubhau sect—proves that Mahur, formerly known as Matapur, retained its importance into Hindu times.

From inscriptions and old coins we know moreover that from the 9th century A.D. onwards Rajput princes were established in various parts of the Central Provinces. Tripuri, the heart of the later Gond Kingdom of Garha-Mandla, and Chhattisgarh, for instance, were for centuries ruled by the Rajput dynasty of Haihaiya bansi. Although further archæological finds may gradually add to our knowledge of the colonies founded by such Rajput chieftains, little elucidation of the early fortunes of its Gond population can be expected from that side.

We must therefore turn to the early Muslim writers who, from the 14th century on, comment in their chroniclts on campaign and political developments in the territories described by them as Gond-

1. S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, London 1906, Vol. II, pp. 209, 214.—R. B. Hira Lal, 'Prehistoric Berar,' *Sharadashram-Varshik*, Vol. I, Yeotmal, 1933, pp. 2, 3.

2. Hiralal Jain, 'Materials for Historic Research in Berar,' *Sharadashram Varshik*, Vol. I, p. 12.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Chapter I

The Setting in Time; the Historical Isolation of Bastar

[3] Bastar State lies at the extreme south-east corner of the Central Provinces of India, between 17° 46′ and 20° 14′ north, and 80° 15′ and 82° 1′ east. Its area, according to the recently revised Survey of India figures, of 13,725 square miles makes it the tenth state in India in size, larger than Belgium and nearly as large as Holland. It is far larger than any of the old Central Provinces and Orissa States, with which it has recently been brought into the new Eastern States Agency. But it is one of the most sparsely peopled tracts of India, the 1931 population of 524,721 giving a density of only 34 to the square mile. If any part of India is still *terra incognita* to nearly all British officials and travellers, it is the vast tract covered by Bastar and the huge Jeypore zamindari recently transferred from the Vizagapatam Agency of Madras to the new province of Orissa.

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[8] To the ordinary Indian of neighbouring districts, even to many of the few immigrant Hindu and Mussalman traders, this remains a land of savages, seeking still for human victims to sacrifice to their fetishes, skilled in herbs and simples, and potent practitioners of magic and witchcraft. Their view is little changed from that held 110 years ago by Maratha officials who described the Marias of the Abujhmar mountains to Sir Richard Jenkins, then Resident at the Court of Nagpur, as 'naked savages, living on roots and sprigs, and hunting for strangers to sacrifice'.

[17] Bastar has in fact always been an almost unknown backwater of the river of Indian history. The late Chief, Maharani Prafulla Kumari Devi, at her accession in 1924 was the last legitimate survivor of one of the most ancient royal families of southern India, the Kakatiya, which reigned at Warangal from about A.D. 1150 to 1425, first possibly as feudatories of the Chalukya kings and then independently. In Bastar folk-song, Annam Deo, the first to reign in Bastar, is spoken of as 'Chalkibans Raja', which may be a corruption of 'Chalukya-bans' and indicate that the Kakatiya family was a cadet branch of the Chalukya. Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175 been an outlying and loosely-held group of feudal dependencies of Warangal. For inscriptions show that before this, in the eleventh century, a Telugu line of Nagvansi kings ruled at Barsur in Dantewara tahsil and at Kuruspal near the Chitrakot falls of the river Indrawati in Jagdalpur tahsil over central Bastar, then known as Chakrakot; there are also clear signs of another chiefship comprising the Sukma zamindari and the former zamindaris of Chintalnar and Bhiji, now in the Konta tahsil; the late zamindar of Sukma always claimed that Chintalnar and Bhiji had been given to cadet branches of his family by his ancestors and that his family, though dependent on Warangal, was established in Bastar at Sukma before Annam Deo left Warangal. There are traditions of a Karna king in northern Bastar and of a Karnatak king at Jagdalpur; and legend still speaks of rajas of Kuakonda and Katakalian in Dantewara tahsil, of the tailed rajas of Tirathgarh in Jagdalpur tahsil, and of Annam Deo fighting to subdue the chiefs of Paralkot, Bhairamgarh and Barsur. The so-called Koyas of southern Bastar still have traditions of visiting King Pratap Rudra's court at Warangal. Till 200 years ago or less, Bastar retained several zamindaris south of the Godavari and in the present East Godavari Agency of Madras, while lists survive of the numerous petty garhs and taluqs, each loosely administered for the Chief of Bastar by Diwans, or alienated to the various zamindars or sub-chiefs, of whom only Bhopalpatnam, Sukma, Kutru and Kotapalli-Pamer now remain. In Kutru, moreover, there remain three or four sub-zamindars holding under the zamindar. All these facts indicate that before Annam Deo's arrival there was a nominal suzerainty of Warangal over most of Bastar, the real authority resting with local chiefs or in the heads of the old tribal organization that was so marked a feature of the medieval kingdoms of the eastern Central Provinces and some of the Chhota Nagpur and the Orissa States. This organization has been ably outlined by Mr. C. U. Wills, I.C.S., in his monograph on 'The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chhattisgarh', published at pp. 197-262 of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, new series, Vol. XV, 1919.

The ruined temples at Barsur, Bhairamgarh, Dantewara, Kuruspal and elsewhere indicate an advanced Hindu civilization in the areas directly administered by the Telugu Nagvansi chiefs of Chakrakot. It was a country worth invading in quite early times; inscriptions tell of many raids between A.D. 844 and 1150 by Eastern Chalukya, Chola, Western Chalukya and Hoysala princes. There must have been a strong early Telugu infiltration, lasting till the Mohammedan conquest of Warangal and Annam Deo's flight into Bastar, after which the curtain fell upon the country till

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

1853, when it came into direct political relations with the British on the escheat of the Bhonsla Maratha kingdom, to which it had become nominally tributary. Of that infiltration the strongest remaining signs are the groups of Telanga villages that still survive like islands in the heart of Bison-horn Maria and Koya tracts, chiefly in and around the administrative or religious centres of the old Telugu kingdoms such as Dantewara, Barsur, Bhairamgarh, Bijapur and Jaggergonda. They were cut off from Telingana when the south of the state was abandoned to Maria and Koya tribes as a barrier against the Mohammedan. They have forgotten Telugu, and speak Gondi or Halbi; they observe most of the Maria customs and festivals; in fact there is little to distinguish them from their Maria and Koya neighbours, and they are rightly known as the Jhadi (i.e. jungly) Telanga caste, under which name they are described in the article at pp. 238-42 of Russell and Hiralal's *Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces*, Vol. III.[1] But they still provide the priests and servitors of the tutelary deities of the old dynasties, such as Manikeshwari at Barsur and even Danteshwari and Pedamma at Dantewara, and keep up the old ritual in a degraded form. The Marias of the Abujhmar hills seem to be the most primitive and isolated 'aboriginal' race of the Central Provinces; yet only a few miles of mountain and forest separate their habitat from these old centres of Telugu civilization.

The present Maharaja is the twentieth of his line to reign in Bastar. History has little to relate of his predecessors, as their actions had practically no effect upon the outer world. They tended always at first to move farther northward, probably to put as many miles as possible between them and the Mohammedan conquerors, who indeed in 1610 made an abortive raid into Bastar, to be defeated by heavy rain, the difficulty of communications and dearth of provisions in this heavily forested and thinly-peopled tract rather than by the arms of Raja Pratap Raj Deo (Briggs' *Ferishta*, Vol. III, p. 481). To the north they came into contact with the Rajput kingdoms of Raipur and Ratanpur (Chhattisgarh) and Kanker, from the last of which they conquered eighteen *garhs* or *parganas* around Bare Dongar in the present Kondagaon tahsil; and they extended their territory to Sihawa and the borders of Chhattisgarh. To this expansion was probably due the substitution of Hindi or Halbi influences for Telugu. The *garhs* around Bare Dongar are a stronghold of the Halba tribe, whose *Kutumb-Naik* or headman and chief log-god Kachchua Deo live at Chingnur, near Bare Dongar. The tribe has special privileges in the adjacent Kanker State, where a Halba invests each new chief with the royal

[1] Referred to subsequently as 'Russell and Hiralal'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175 robes and affixes the *tika* or sign of office on his forehead. Probably on the conquest of the Bare Dongar country many of them entered the Bastar Raja's service, and supplied most of his troops or militia. The chief Halba villages of the North, such as Bare Dongar, Chhota Dongar, Kolur, Sonpur, Antagarh, Partabpur and Narainpur, are the headquarters of old *garhs* or modern *parganas*, and are islanded in a surrounding sea of 'Muria' or 'Maria' tribes like the Jhadi Telanga villages of the south; the Halba villagers seem to be the descendants of the old garrisons of *paik* militia. To this day the Halbas admit outsiders into their community, while the modern Hindu immigrants commonly take women of the country. The Halbas are thus a mixture, probably, of foreign and aboriginal blood. Their language is the *lingua franca* of Bastar, and, whether classed as a dialect of Marathi with Grierson or of Eastern Hindi with Sten Konow, is at all events an Aryan dialect, and a principal agent in the modification of aboriginal habits and thought; at [191] the 1931 census it was found that 207 *per mille* of the 262,988 Bastaris speaking Gondi dialects as their mother-tongue also spoke Halbi. Its influence is far greater than that of Telugu, which was spoken only by 36·4 out of every thousand speakers of Gondi. Actually there were only 11,662 with Telugu as mother-tongue, against 171,293 with Halbi and 25,774 with Hindustani, Chhattisgarhi and Rajasthani. Hindi influence from Chhattisgarh and the north is now the main foreign influence at work in Bastar.

The State had few dealings with the outer world from 1450 to 1860. A Maratha army under Nilu Pandit intervened on behalf of Raja Dalpat Deo's younger brother in about 1750 and captured Bastar, the old capital, only to be surprised and cut to pieces by Dalpat Deo, Nilu Pandit escaping with the help of a Banjara who sewed him up in a sack and carried him out of Bastar on his pack bullock. But in 1780 Dalpat Deo's son and successor Daryao Deo had to seek Maratha aid against his brother Ajmir Singh, and bound himself to pay a small annual tribute of Rs. 4,000 to the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur. The Bastar chiefs, however, retained full local independence and powers of life and death, and there was no direct interference in the routine management of the State by the Nagpur authorities. Such interference as there was was either to settle the frequent quarrels between Raja Bhopal Deo and his brother and Diwan, Lal Dalganjan Singh, or was dictated by the Government of India in furtherance of their policy of suppressing Meriah or ritual human sacrifice. The history of the measures taken to suppress this practice in Orissa, especially among the Khonds of Gumsur and Kalahandi, and in Jeypore zamindari, is well known. From 1837 onwards hearsay reports were collected

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

either by Madras Presidency officials or by the special staff deputed for this purpose to the Orissa hill tracts of the prevalence of this practice in Bastar. In consequence, at the instance of the British Resident at Nagpur Lal Dalganjan Singh was summoned to Nagpur in 1842 and examined, and a guard of Nagpur Raj police was stationed at Dantewara to prevent human sacrifices in the temple of the State goddess Danteshwari. But it was never proved that such sacrifices had ever taken place. Writing in 1862 after a prolonged tour in Bastar and after special enquiries into this matter in both Kalahandi and Bastar States, of which as Deputy Commissioner of Sironcha he was then in political charge, Captain C. Glasfurd stated that the guard had continued to be posted at Dantewara ever since 1842, and that ' even if the abominable rite ever existed, which is doubtful, it has altogether fallen into disuse '. The matter is not really relevant to the subject of this book, save that to these suspicions were due the first visits of British officials to the State, and the ultimate decision to insist on Raja Bhairon Deo accepting officials from British India as his Diwans. I personally doubt whether such sacrifices ever took place; if they did they were semi-State ceremonies connected with the Raja's yearly Dasehra celebrations, the celebrants were Telangas, and the Marias had nothing to do with them.[1] In actual fact, despite many past

[1] It is so commonly asserted that these sacrifices were prevalent in Bastar at Dantewara that it is of interest to note the evidence. The 1842 action of the Nagpur Raj was based merely on a few hearsay reports collected through the Agency for the Orissa Hill Tracts, to the effect that victims were kidnapped from outside Bastar, that in Bastar often twenty men were sacrificed at a time, the worst case being said to have been the sacrifice in 1826 of twenty-five or twenty-seven men by the Bastar Raja before setting out on a visit to His Highness the Raja of Nagpur, which was still referred to in 1838 as ' the great sacrifice '; the latter report, however, goes on in the usual *omne ignotum pro magnifico* strain that then and now distinguishes outside Hindu statements about the ' wild jungles ' of ' Kanksri-Bastar ', to suggest that the practice was rife also in Kanker and adjoining tracts north of Bastar, and that ' in some of the wilder jungles bordering on Chhattisgarh the Gonds add cannibalism to this horrid deed and eat the flesh by sacrifice '. Captain J. MacVicar, the Agent in the Orissa Hill Tracts, in 1855 visited Bastar, saw the Raja and the Lal and visited Dantewara to test the truth of various reports. Beyond the grovelling terror which the goddess Danteshwari inspired throughout the parts visited by him, and the assertions of a man in his camp that sacrificers had recently tried to kidnap him, and of a woman that six years before a man had been sacrificed during some disturbances by the Lal Sahib's orders, he left nothing on record to justify his conclusion that it was beyond all doubt that human sacrifices had never ceased to be offered in spite of the orders of the Nagpur Darbar and successive British Residents at Nagpur. Had he found any real evidence, it is scarcely conceivable that action would not have been taken against the Raja and the Lal Sahib. Actually, all that was done was a visit late that year from Lieut. C. Elliot, the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur, who made no further enquiries, but substituted for the old police guard guards of entirely Mussalman police at Jagdalpur and Dantewara, and straitly warned the Raja that he must do his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175 assertions to the contrary, and although it was almost an article of faith with the Political Department of the Central Provinces that Danteshwari was the chief and most dreaded goddess of all the peoples of Bastar and that her high priest the Jia of Dantewara was the one man who could influence the 'wild Maria tribes', yet she is almost unknown to the Marias of the Abujhmar hills save in a village or two on the Dantewara edge of the hills, while even the more sophisticated Bison-horn Marias of the Dantewara tahsil pay only nominal respect to the goddess in villages where a thatched temple has been erected in her name by non-Maria settlers. The Jia may have influence over the Jhari Telanga and Halba residents of Dantewara tahsil; over the Marias he has none. Hindu State

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782 utmost to suppress the rite and to establish a more just system of administration. In 1859 the same officer, now Captain Elliot, informed the Raja of the intention of the Commissioner of the Nagpur Province to recommend the extension to Bastar of the operations of the Agent for the Orissa Hill Tracts for enquiring into the prevalence of human sacrifice; but the Raja protested again, as always before, that no such thing had ever occurred; and Captain Elliot stated that he had never had any report of any sacrifice, nor had anything ever come to his notice by rumour or otherwise to lead him to believe that such a thing had happened since the province had come under British rule. No action seems to have been taken, and in 1862 Captain Glasfurd, whose personal opinion has been quoted above to the effect that it was doubtful if such sacrifices had ever taken place, reported that no special agency was necessary for this purpose in Bastar beyond the temple guard. Even this police guard was discontinued in 1863, and five years later the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces reported to the Government of India that there had been no practice of human sacrifice in the Central Provinces 'of late years, if indeed within the memory of man'.

There was thus never a single authenticated instance of human sacrifice in Bastar. Nearly all the stories emanated from Jeypore, the Maharaja of which was at bitter enmity with the Chief of Bastar. In fact, the latter frequently protested that the Jeypore Maharaja was the source of these slanders.

In 1885-6 the whole question was revived in consequence of alarming reports emanating from the Madras police in Jeypore of gangs of Bastar kidnappers being abroad in Jeypore looking for victims for sacrifice at Dantewara. Initial enquiries by Sardar Rattan Singh, the Raipur District Superintendent of Police, suggested that the reports were fabrications and that there was not the slightest particle of evidence to implicate the Bastar authorities. While the enquiries were in progress, the Madras authorities were scared by a further report that an excise peon had been kidnapped near the Bastar border, and urged the immediate despatch of police and troops into Bastar. The Jeypore District Superintendent of Police with some Jeypore police, and the Political Agent of the Chhattisgarh States with fifty military police, proceeded at once to Bastar. Masses of statements were taken implying the existence of a regular organization to kidnap victims and keep them in various hiding-places till wanted for sacrifice; it was suggested that in twelve villages the ryots held their land free of land revenue for the service of kidnapping victims. No proof could be obtained of these allegations, and not one of the alleged hiding-places was traced. Though Raja Bhairon Deo was removed from the State during the enquiry, nothing was found to implicate him. There was not any evidence of Bastar having caused the disappearance of the persons alleged to have been kidnapped from Jeypore. In consequence of

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

officials incline to claim the aboriginals as Hindus and to deprecate census classification of their religion as animistic or tribal. It has always been easy for such persons to identify the Maria's cult of the Earth or *Bhum* in its aryanized form Mati Deo with Mata or Mai, of whom Danteshwari is the Bastar incarnation; and another source of confusion has been the presence in every aboriginal village of a *gudi* (hedge-temple) or other rough shrine of the *Nar Taluri* ('Village Mother'), known to the Hindus as Gāoṇ Devī, and easily identified with Mata Devi or Maoli. Actually the Marias, whether of the Abujhmar hills or Bison-horn, do not even know Dantewara by that name, but by its older and pre-Danteshwari name of Jatawada.

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various statements made, Shamsundar, the Jia or hereditary high priest of the Dantewara temple, the representative of a Rajput family that by tradition had come from Warangal with Raja Annam Deo, was committed for trial on a charge of murdering a Parja who was proved to have disappeared from a Bastar village in 1883, and it was alleged that the Jia had confessed that he had sacrificed him. The Commissioner of Chhattisgarh, Mr. Chisholm, tried the case as Sessions Judge. The Jia had all along refused to sign the confession and stated that he had only said what he did to avoid the indignity of handcuffs. The other witnesses alleged that the statements made in the enquiry had been false, and inspired by fear of the Jeypore police, who had grossly ill-treated them. The Judge held that the witnesses had deliberately made false and tutored statements under the influence of threats, and that the prosecution case completely failed. The Jia was therefore acquitted. In his report to the Chief Commissioner, he said that he considered that the Raja had been wrongly accused, that there was no proof that any human sacrifices had been offered in recent years in Bastar, and that there was scarcely anything tangible enough to justify even suspicion. This view was accepted by the Chief Commissioner, though he was still doubtful about the Jia's confession, which had contained new details of the alleged sacrifice not given by other witnesses, since he considered the Jia too intelligent to be thrown off his balance by a threat of being handcuffed. The kidnapping scare, he pointed out, could be paralleled by various examples in other parts of India, and it was natural for popular rumour to attribute the several disappearances to agents kidnapping victims for Danteshwari because of the old tradition of such sacrifices, while there was nothing strange about disappearances in a country swarming like Bastar with tiger; but there was bound to remain some suspicion over the purpose of attempts that were proved to have been made to kidnap various persons.

In Dantewara they will still show you where the police dug in vain near the temples for the skeletons of the alleged victims, but found not a bone to substantiate the stories of the informers. There were no villages held revenue-free, and no cages for the destined victims. So far as the older inhabitants remember the enquiry, they think the Raja was badly treated. There is no one who even now can give any information about human sacrifices in former days; they deny that there ever were any. Certainly the Meriah rite was never celebrated in Bastar.

Old rumours die hard; in 1913 the Madras police interested themselves in the matter once again, when an Inspector reported his personal belief that the sacrifices still took place at the occasional visits of the late Raja Rudra Pratap Deo to Dantewara, and that a sacrifice was likely at his then impending visit, as he had no son to succeed him! This was at a time when the Raja had lost his powers after the 1910 rebellion and had to follow the advice of a resident European Diwan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

●175 The earliest recorded attempt of any European to enter Bastar was made by Captain Blunt in 1795, when journeying from Chunarghur in the United Provinces to Yertnagudam in the 'Ellore Circar' of Madras. His report, which has recently been reprinted in a Central Provinces Government publication, 'Early English Travellers in the Nagpur Territories', was referred to as late as 1853 by Sir Erskine Perry, addressing the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, as still giving almost all the information then known not only about Bastar, but of many other parts of Gondwana (the modern Central Provinces), the highlands and jungles of which then comprised 'such a large tract of unexplored country that they form quite an oasis in our maps'. Before his attempt he was warned by both Ittul Pandit, the Maratha governor of Chhattisgarh, and by the Raja of Kanker that he would find it difficult if not impossible to march across Bastar from Kanker to Jeypore, the country being wild and mountainous and the Gond inhabitants very savage. The people were said to be naturally quiet; but the Marathas had never succeeded in doing more than persuade Bastar to pay an occasional small tribute. At that time this had been withheld for four or five years, and the Marathas had only just made the Bastar Chief pay Rs. 5,000 after a series of raids on Bastar territory, which they had persuaded the various 'Gond zemeendars' and neighbours of Bastar to make in order to wrest from him as much territory as possible; in the course of these raids many villages along the Kanker-Jagdalpur-Jeypore road had been plundered, and even the Banjara carriers had abandoned that route to Jeypore. In retaliation, raiding parties from Bastar often descended to plunder the plains villages.[1] Captain Blunt therefore turned west and marched through the zamindaris of the present Drug and Chanda districts, but ultimately attempted to pass from the Ahiri zamindari in the far south-east of the Chanda district across the Indrawati river into the Bhopalpatnam zamindari of Bastar, some miles upstream from the confluence of the Indrawati and the Godavari. He was fiercely attacked by the 'Bastar Gonds' both by day and night, and though their bows, arrows and axes were no match for his firearms, he abandoned the attempt to enter

[18] [1] Compare the following extract from Firminger's Edition of the Fifth Report on East India Affairs, 1812, Vol. III, page 109 et seq., referring to the people of Bastar, Rampa and Kalahandi:—

'The people in general, although rude and barbarous, may yet be denominated warlike, as they have always distinguished themselves as bold persevering champions of the great law of nature. Being driven to their wild unwholesome fastnesses among the mountains, they frequently descend in harvest time into the lowlands, to dispute the produce of their ancient rightful inheritance with the present possessors, but their incursions are desultory and simply impelled by the pressing want of subsistence.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Bastar, and learned later from the Maratha *amil* of Deolmari that he had retired only just in time, as word had been passed from zamindar to zamindar in Bastar to combine to plunder his party. Unless there has been since then a wide displacement of population—which is quite possible in view of the chronic mismanagement of the Bhopalpatnam and Kutru zamindaris of Bastar—it is unlikely that his assailants were Abujhmar or Bison-horn Marias or Koyas; they were probably members of the gangs of ruffians at that time maintained by all the petty chieftains of the Godavari valley, or else Gonds of the type known in that part of Bastar to the Telugus as Dorla, probably Bison-horn Marias who, on descending to the Godavari valley, had come into contact with the outside world. This Maratha Amil, in congratulating Blunt on his escape from the mountains and jungles in which several of the Amil's men had been lost, added some remarks about the men of the jungle which rightly gave the wandering Banjara the credit of being the first civilizing influence in Bastar; his remarks, with the necessary modifications, are certainly true of a later period in the Abujhmar hills and the wilder parts of Central Bastar. He represented the Banjaras as having done much to conciliate and partially civilize the 'Gonds', 'for the traffic which they carry on among them, particularly in salt and sugar, had introduced a taste for luxuries, which many of them now could not easily dispense with. This had also induced them to be more industrious in collecting the produce of their jungles, such as lac, iron ore, and other articles for barter, and had necessitated their affording protection to the Brinjaries (*sic*). In the course of this traffic, which had now lasted about twenty-five years, the desire of the Goands (*sic*) for salt and sugar had considerably increased, and tended more to their civilization than any other means: for before they had tasted or acquired a relish for these articles, no man could venture among them; and be assured me that it had a more powerful effect than the whole force of the Mahratta arms in rendering them obedient to their government.'

The first Europeans actually to visit Bastar seem to have been Captain Fenwick in 1850 and Mr. Take in 1855; they made only short trips up a portion of the Kolab-Sabari river that forms for many miles the eastern boundary of Bastar. I have not seen their reports. Captain MacVicar's brief visit early in 1855 and the important visit of Colonel (then Lieut.) C. Elliot, the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur, later that year have been mentioned above in the footnote on human sacrifice. Elliot's report was reprinted in 1861 as 'Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. XXX. Report on the Bustar and Kharonde Dependencies of the Raepore District'. He

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175
114

entered Bastar from Sihawa in the south of the Raipur district, near the trijunction of Raipur, Kanker and Bastar, marched south-east to Jagdalpur and thence to Dantewara, leaving all the zamindari country south of Dantewara and the Abujhmar hills and the present Antagarh tahsil untouched. His report gives some details of the races in the State, much of which, however, repeats obvious *omne ignotum pro magnifico* tales of local Hindus; but he saw nothing of the Abujhmar hills, and, though he visited Dantewara, little of the Bison-horn Marias of that tahsil. He was, on the whole, more interested in the economic and administrative problems of Bastar than in its people. There was also a visit at about this time by Captain Stewart, Explorer of Forests, while in 1855 and 1856 respectively Lieut. Goddard and Lieut. (afterwards Major-General) F. T. Haig explored the Godavari valley in the investigation of Sir A. Cotton's ambitious but largely abortive scheme for making the Godavari and its affluent the Wardha river navigable from Wardha to the sea. Haig's Report on the Navigability of the River Godavari was published at Madras in 1856; I have found also at p. 357 of the *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V, 1876, an allusion to a report of a visit by him, when a Colonel, to Jagdalpur; but I have been unable to obtain copies of either report, though both are said to contain ethnographic notes.

The most valuable and thorough of the early reports, especially from the ethnographic point of view, is that of Captain C. L. R. Glasfurd, Deputy Commissioner of the former Sironcha District and Political Agent for Bastar, published in 1863 in No. XXXIX of *Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department*. He spent much of the touring seasons of 1861 and 1862 in Bastar, and was probably the first European to visit the then numerous zamindaris of the south, certainly the first to explore any part of the Abujhmar hills. His report is the entire source of the article on Bastar in Grant's 1870 *Central Provinces Gazetteer*, and many of his statements are repeated, unfortunately not always in their true context, in the article 'Gond' in Russell and Hiralal, Vol. III. In February 1930 I found his name still remembered as Gilaspat Sahib in two Abujhmar villages which did not appear to have been visited in the interval by any other European. An example of his accuracy is that he noted the distinction between the Marias of the Abujhmar, whom he termed Marees, and the Marias of Jagdalpur, Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils, whom he termed Marias, but who are known to some of the Abujhmar Marias as Dandami Marias and are generally referred to in this book as Bison-horn Marias. His visit laid the lines of the future policy of the Central Provinces Administration in Bastar State, and it is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

worth while to reproduce some of his concluding remarks in paragraph 175 of the report :—

' In most English Maps " unexplored territory " is inscribed on the very centre of the Dependency ; while the best Indian Map by Colonel Scott, Quarter-Master General of the Madras Presidency, gives but few details, and those few incorrect. The country, it will be perceived, is an interminable forest, with the exception of a small cultivated tract around Jugdalpore, intersected by high mountain ranges, which present serious obstacles to traffic. Its insalubrity is proverbial ; the inhabitants are composed of rude, uncivilized tribes of Gonds ; in some parts almost savages, who shun contact with strangers, have but few wants which they cannot supply themselves ; honest and interesting to the Ethnologist perhaps, but a race who prefer the solitude of forests to the bustle of towns, and the freedom of the savage to all the allurements and comforts of civilization. With such a country and such inhabitants, rapid progress and improvement cannot be looked for ; and any efforts to open out the Dependency, with the hope of immediately stimulating trade, or rather creating it where it never existed, would end in disappointment. Our efforts for the present should be to open up a few important lines on which traffic already exists, and to ameliorate the condition of the people by the introduction of a better system of criminal and judicial procedure than that at present in force at Jugdalpore, and, above all, by opening up the Sironcha District, which intervenes between Bustar and the Godavery. The opening up of this river will do more to improve the condition of the Bustar Dependency than the most elaborate system of roads would without it. A demand would be created, which would send traders into parts they never ventured before, and the inhabitants would receive cloth, salt, tobacco and other articles in exchange for their rice, lakh, wax, etc., in the interior. The fact is that the Dependency must be civilised, and the improvement to be material and lasting must have the navigable Godavery and the districts on its banks as its base line ; the former once open, and the latter profiting by the facilities of communication with the coast, the bars to civilization in Bustar will soon be broken down, and that from the direction of the Godavery. In the meantime, however, the road carried on by the Madras Government as far as Jeypore should be opened out to Jugdalpore, and eventually thence to Sironcha ; and the great Brinjara route from the southern portions of the Raepore District, which passes through a part of Bustar, should also be cleared. These, with vaccination and the introduction of copper coin, might be at once commenced, and subsequently other steps as they suggest themselves. The Police now distributed over the Dependency will also be of great use in gradually accustoming the people to us, and the location of a news-writer at Jugdalpore would be attended with equally good results.'

As the Maratha Amil sixty-seven years before, so now the Victorian Englishman ; develop trade, and civilization would follow. The isolation of centuries was to end, Bastar to be opened to the world by land and by water, and its ' savages ' to exchange their freedom for ' the allurements and comforts of civilization ', trade and traders, clothes, tobacco, a better system of criminal and judicial procedure, vaccination and copper coin. Did, and do, the ghosts of the old builders of the ruins of Barsur, Bhairamgarh and Kuruspal smile to hear a newer race decree that ' Bastar must be civilized ! ' ?

A land free from rules and regulations and a race that had no use for copper coin did not square with that passion for uniformity

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000
● 175
648

that characterized the Victorian rulers of India and still marks the framers of constitutions for the India of to-day. It could not be seen that there must have been some institutions or system in this apparently unordered Bastar to have kept her together and free from Mohammedan or Maratha interference for all those centuries. So from Glasfurd onwards Political Agents, Commissioners and Chief Commissioners sought to modernize the economics and the administration of this lovely and still lonely land. An alien police from 'civilized' India was soon followed along the gradually expanding lines of communication by Bania and Rohilla tradesmen, and by low-paid esurient subordinate officials 'lent' to the State, who regarded service in a native state only as a means to the rapid acquisition of wealth. Cultivation was to be expanded by the formation of new villages by alien immigrants; instead, the aliens were given long established Bhattra, Muria, Parja or Maria villages, nominally as lessees, over the heads of the traditional village headmen; and the lessees at once proceeded as fast as possible to get the best land into their own hands, to make the headmen's lives a burden by their repeated demands for forced labour and supplies, to ignore the use and wont of village life, especially the *sari-bori* or co-operation in supplies and labour for village bread-winning and village festivals, to introduce Hindu and Mussalman settlers, and to turn the natives of Bastar into bondservants little better than slaves by advancing them money, on terms which made repayment practically impossible, in return for their labour or that of their sons. Every immigrant trader even considered it his right to demand the labour of half a dozen 'Murias' to carry his wares for him. Consequent risings in 1876 and trouble in succeeding years led to the virtual supersession of the old Raja Bhairam Deo in 1886, and the State passed under full management on his death in 1891. From 1886 to 1891 and for the first few years of the long (1891-1908) minority of Raja Rudra Pratap Deo, a series of subordinate officials was lent as Diwans to the State, and a further evil arose in the growing array of minor State officials, few of whom were natives and none aboriginals of Bastar, abusing the ancient custom of *bisaha*, or the payment by villagers of a twentieth of their crops for the feeding of the Raja's servants, by interpreting it as a right to commandeer any aboriginal's produce at an arbitrarily fixed and often nominal price, and generally forgetting to pay even that. The newly-cleared roads soon seemed to run through wildernesses, for on villagers of roadside villages the burden of *begar*, or forced labour, and *bisaha* fell with especial severity. Being 184 miles from Raipur, the headquarters of the Commissioner and the Political Agent, Bastar was seldom visited, and the people were far too much

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

at the mercy of the incompetency or knavery of the local officials. The latter meanwhile were carrying on the prescribed policy of opening communications, introducing the criminal police and judicial system of British India, and exploiting the forests (again by forced labour). Though with the growth of trade there was much to be said for applying the Penal, Criminal Procedure and Civil Procedure Codes and the Evidence Act of British India to the open parts of the Jagdalpur tahsil and northern Bastar, they were far too advanced for most of the tribes, and remain so to this day. No notice was taken of the old system of caste or tribal or *pargana* panchayats presided over by the caste or *pargana* headman appointed by the Chief or the zamindar, which had for centuries administered rough and ready justice far more to the liking of the people than the troubles of a long investigation by a corrupt police, followed by a cumbersome magisterial enquiry and perhaps then the protracted agony of a sessions trial, to their minds unnecessary and unintelligible, with the farcical addition of assessors, chosen, so as to fulfil the requirements of a procedure code designed for a British India at least 1,000 years further advanced in civilization, from a few obsequious immigrants with no knowledge of aboriginal life or psychology. A similar attempt was made to improve on the old excise arrangements by which the local Kalar or Sundi was a village or *pargana* servant kept to distil liquor when needed for social or religious festivities, and remunerated in grain by the villagers every harvest; a system of auctioning outstills was introduced, the letter but not the spirit of arrangements in British India being copied, and the result was a number of contractors and sub-contractors all distilling and hawking liquor, and drunkenness on a scale previously unknown in Bastar and with few parallels in India. Of course trade was increasing, and more land was being cleared, *pari passu* with these growing abuses; but the moral effect of the changes was not good, and there can be few more striking examples of policy sound in motives but utterly wrong because of the divorce of administration from anthropology.

Sir Andrew Fraser, then Commissioner, in an able inspection note written after a long tour of the State in 1892, spotted much of the evil, particularly the State officials' utter ignorance of all but the villages adjacent to Jagdalpur and their headquarters, and their complete lack of touch with the people. He of course strongly advocated the policy of opening up the State, but saw that a just and active administration was necessary if the policy was to succeed. This was ultimately secured by the appointment in 1896 of Colonel (later Major-General) Fagan as Administrator. During his three years of rough and ready justice he toured the length and breadth

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175
648

of the State, and he and his wife are still remembered with affection. The aboriginal, if he had to work on the new roads, yet saw that everyone else had to; but he no longer had to work for the alien trader and village-lessee, and he could get redress for oppression. Under Colonel Fagan and his successor, Mr. G. W. Gayer of the Indian Police, though roads were built and regular land revenue settlements effected on simplified Central Provinces lines, efficient administration kept the tribes satisfied; and for the first time medical relief and vaccination were organized in the State by Surgeon-Major Mitchell. But Mr. Gayer was succeeded by an Indian Superintendent, who held charge for the last few years of the minority and then continued till 1910 as Raja Rudra Pratap Deo's Diwan. He had served successfully as Diwan of Kalahandi State, and his intentions were admirable. Unfortunately he was unable to control his subordinates or to see that his excellent orders were enforced. The old abuses crept back into the swept and garnished State. He was responsible also for two unpopular innovations. The first was a policy of planting new primary schools all over the State, the masters being assisted by attendance peons who bullied the ryots into sending their children to school, while masters and peons levied forced labour and supplies freely. The second was the reservation of large areas as State forests, a measure very necessary as a check to the wholesale destruction of valuable timber by the aboriginals practising shifting cultivation, but bound by its very nature and its interference with long-cherished rights to arouse suspicion. It called, therefore, for great tact, and the people should have been carefully prepared for the measure, and protected from any avoidable hardship in its execution. Instead, it was carried out abruptly. Every village in the reserved areas was destroyed, though provision ought to have been made for forest villages as a source of forest labour, and if this had been done few of the villages need have been disturbed; the old village lands still often remain treeless in the forests, and in recent years it has been necessary to try and tempt settlers back to found much-needed forest villages. Oppression by State officials and by immigrant settlers, excessive levy of forced labour and supplies, unpopular new measures, and the apparent blindness of the Raja and his Diwan to popular grievances produced keen discontent, which was worked up by Lal Kalendra Singh, the first cousin and former Diwan of Raja Bhairam Deo, in the hope of securing the succession for himself. The Murias, Bhattras, and Parjas of Jagdalpur tahsil and some of the Bison-horn Marias and others in Dantewara tahsil and farther south broke into rebellion, in which the Murias of Antagarh and Kondagaon tahsils joined, only the zamindaris and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the Marias of the Abujhmar hills abstaining. The tribes converged on Jagdalpur, the Diwan who had been touring in the South fleeing into the Chanda district. A half battalion of regular Panjabi troops and large detachments of armed Central Provinces police soon suppressed and disarmed the rebels. A few ringleaders who had been guilty of cruel murders of isolated State officials were hanged, and several hundred men flogged, a punishment really more humane for such primitive men than imprisonment. Lal Kalendra Singh and a few of his associates were banished. The Raja was deprived of his powers, and an experienced Englishman, Mr. James May, appointed Diwan. The rebellion had been marked by keen hostility towards the immigrant exploiters, and a movement to keep Bastar for Bastaris. *Pari passu* with the punishment of the rebels, full enquiry was made into their undoubted grievances, and stern action taken against their oppressors. From 1910 till the Raja's death in 1921 the State was under virtual Government management; it has since then been under direct management, owing to the minority and the subsequent illness of the late Maharani.[1]

Save, therefore, for the short period 1908-10 the State has virtually been under Government management since 1886. Great progress has been made in developing communications. The Godavari navigation scheme referred to in the quotation above from Glasfurd's report was abandoned in 1871 after the works on the first barrier at Dummagudem in the present East Godavari district of Madras had been completed and much money had been spent on the works at the second barrier, where the river forms the boundary between Bastar and Hyderabad. This must be one of the very few great engineering works abandoned uncompleted by the British in India, defeated by the fever and sweltering heat of the valley, the difficulty of recruiting labour, lack of funds and the improbability of an adequate return for the great cost; and there are few more desolate sights than the vast ruins of the half-finished anicut, lock-gates and guard-walls that still resist the annual floods of this mighty river, and in the dry weather stand gaunt and futile in the baking wilderness of rocks and sands in which the united Godavari and Indrawati there lose themselves. With the transference of the Political Agency for Bastar from Sironcha to Raipur, all idea of the Godavari as the base-line for its communications was abandoned. Emphasis was placed on linking the north of the State with the main Nagpur-Calcutta railway line by roads from Raipur and Rajnandgaon to Jagdalpur, and the Vizagapatam Agency road from Salur

[1] The hereditary title of the Ruling Chief of Bastar was raised from Raja to Maharaja in 1932.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

rail-head below the Eastern Ghat mountains to Jeypore and the Bastar border was continued thence to Jagdalpur; subsequently roads have gradually been driven westward to Dantewara, Bijapur, Kutru and Bhopalpatnam, and southward to Sukma and Konta; the most recent development has been many miles of forest roads, constructed either as feeder roads to the Raipur and Rajnandgaon roads, or to link up the forests of Dantewara and the south with the Godavari at Tarlagudam, Cherla and Dummagudam or the Kolab-Sabari at Mismagudam and Konta. The Raipur road is now motorable throughout the year, and there is a daily mail and passenger service by it to Kanker and Dhamtari. A railway connexion with the new Raipur-Vizianagram line has been surveyed, and would have been under construction but for the world-wide financial depression. The revenue of the State has risen from about Rs. 30,000 in 1855, then received in kind or in cowry shells at a rate of 2,880 to the rupee, to well over a million rupees.

So the old order is doomed; and with the motor-bus abroad in the land and scores of aboriginals every month seeking work on the public works of the State, in the Assam tea gardens or in the towns of the Godavari valley, with the railway administration feeling this last great blank of 300 miles from Raipur to Salur by 250 from Titlagarh in Kalahandi State to Singareni in Hyderabad a slur to be removed as soon as funds permit, change comes ever faster. My successors and I, like our predecessors, are guilty of accelerating change; but we can on the one hand plead that when we came a return to the old isolation was not practical politics, and on the other that we have tried before it was too late to strengthen and revive the old tribal *panchayat* organization and restore its jurisdiction in civil and in all but serious criminal offences, to check the drunkenness made rampant by a bad excise system, to prevent the further bestowal of aboriginal villages on alien *thekadars* (lessees) and to make the post of village headman one of honour and responsibility instead of one to be held reluctantly by some dummy with no influence in the village, to abolish *bisaha*, to deprive village lessees of the right of taking forced labour, to minimize the right of officials to take it and to regulate the still necessary State demands for road and other labour so as to inconvenience the cultivator as little as possible, to see that it is paid for, and to abolish bondservice. Much of great interest could be written on the effects and reactions of the administrative measures of the last fifty years sketched in these last few pages. But the purpose of this book is to place on record while there is yet time an account of the way of life prevalent among the Maria tribes of Bastar, perhaps now the most primitive

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

174 most of their tribesmen in the Central Provinces.

● 175 In order to understand the historical position of the Gonds both in Hyderabad and in the Central Provinces we must briefly review the course of political events during the last five centuries, and in doing so, anticipate, the fuller discussion of historical developments contained in Book II.

Reliable information on the early history of the Gonds is scarce and not until Muslim times do Gond states figure in contemporary chronicles and the works of historians. There can indeed be little doubt that throughout ancient and mediæval times the larger part of the Gond country east of Berar remained a land of vast forests and poor communications. Few foreign travellers seem to have traversed it and the old literature contains but the scantiest references to its inhabitants. Yet, its 'wildness' should not be exaggerated. Buddhist relics have been found in various places and it is not unlikely that there were times when pioneers of advanced civilizations settled among the aboriginal tribesmen just as there were periods when such outposts of higher culture shrank into insignificance. In Chanda District, for instance, Bhandak near the Wardha River seems to have been a centre of Buddhism and various authorities identify this place with the old Kosala capital visited in the seventh century by Hiuen Tsiang.[1] In Bhandak has also been discovered an inscription of the Rashtrakuta King, Krishna I, the builder of the Kailasa Temple at Ellora, dealing with the grant of a village when the King was camping in Yeotmal.[2] From Buddhist times date also the Pandrolena cave-temples at Mahur in the westernmost corner of the Adilabad District, and the famous Dev Deshwar temple at Mahur—mentioned in the Garur Purana and for the last seven centuries under the guardianship of monks of the Mahanubhau sect—proves that Mahur, formerly known as Matapur, retained its importance into Hindu times.

From inscriptions and old coins we know moreover that from the 9th century A.D. onwards Rajput princes were established in various parts of the Central Provinces. Tripuri, the heart of the later Gond Kingdom of Garha-Mandla, and Chhattisgarh, for instance, were for centuries ruled by the Rajput dynasty of Haihaiya bansi. Although further archæological finds may gradually add to our knowledge of the colonies founded by such Rajput chieftains, little elucidation of the early fortunes of its Gond population can be expected from that side.

We must therefore turn to the early Muslim writers who, from the 14th century on, comment in their chronicles on campaign and political developments in the territories described by them as Gond-

1. S. Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, London 1906, Vol. II. pp. 209, 214.—R. B. Hira Lal, 'Prehistoric Berar,' *Sharadashram-Varshiki*, Vol. I. Yeotmal, 1933, pp. 2, 3.

2. Hiralal Jain, 'Materials for Historic Research in Berar,' *Sharadashram Varshiki*, Vol. I. p. 12.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

wana.[1] The dawn of the 15th century finds a Gond dynasty firmly established in Garha, close to the Narbada River and Jubbulpore. The Maharajas of Garha exercised overlordship over the local Gond petty chieftains of the present districts of Jubbulpore, Mandla, Seoni, Chhindwara and Balaghat, Damoh, and parts of Hoshangabad and Betul, and retained their independence until the year 1564 A.D., when a Moghul army under Asaf Khan conquered Garha and the famous queen-regent Durgavati was slain in battle. After a period of administration by Mahommedan officers or jagirdars, the government reverted to all practical purposes to the Gond Rajas of the old family and their subordinate chiefs, who had, however, to recognize the sovereignty of the Moghul emperors. The end of the Gond dynasty of Garha came in 1780 A.D. when the Marathas imprisoned the last ruler and brought the state under direct control. South and west of Garha another Gond State arose early in the 17th century: the Kingdom of Deogarh. Its rulers, tributaries of the Maharajas of Garha, took advantage of the decline of their overlords' power subsequent to the Moghul conquest and secured for themselves a large part of the territories of Garha.

The third great Gond dynasty of the Central Provinces was that of Chanda, and it is this dynasty with which we are most directly concerned in our study of the Gonds of Hyderabad. For the Rajas of Chanda ruled over a large part of what is to-day the Adilabad District and many of the Hyderabad Gonds still recognize their authority in tribal matters. When the chieftains residing at Chanda, a fortified town on the banks of the Wardha River, first attained prominence cannot be said for certain. C. U. Wills, the author of a history of the Gond dynasties of Garha-Mandla and Deogarh[2] declares that for the south of the Central Provinces, namely Chanda and Bastar, the record of events is so meagre and inconsistent that he despaired of compiling a local history of any kind. He evidently considers the historical data contained in C. B. Lucie-Smith's *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Chanda District, Central Provinces*, 1869, entirely unreliable and based on late Brahmanical fabrications of a kind similar to the Ramnagar inscription of Mandla whose trustworthiness he has convincingly refuted.[3] The chronicle of the Chanda Rajas, as outlined by Lucie-Smith, is no doubt largely legendary and the date 870 A.D. for the establishment of the Gond dynasty as well as most of the subsequent dates belong to the realm of imagination. Notwithstanding its character as a fairly recent fabrication by Brahmins attached to the court of Chanda, the chronicle contains,

1. I do not propose to add to the unconvincing derivations of the names 'Gond' and 'Gondwana,' them appearing for the first time in literature, and confess that I have to offer no explanation for these terms, which have their origin in some of the Gondi dialects.

2. *The Raj Gond Maharajas of the Satpura Hills*. Nagpur, 1925.

3. Op. cit. pp. 13-24.—The Ramnagar inscription, which was found 10 miles south-east of Mandla, is written in Sanskrit and professes to give the family tree of the Gond Rajas of Garha, tracing back the dynasty through 54 generations.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

175 a number of traditions which are probably of considerable age and not entirely without foundation. Thus it reports that the first Gond Raja of Chanda was of Atram clan and that the fortress of Manikgarh, which lies in the hills of Rajura Taluq, was his main stronghold. Of one of his descendants, Hir Sing the chronicle says that he first "levied an impost on occupied ground," while "previous to his accession land had been like air, untaxed and free to all";—this seems to reflect the memory of a time when the Gonds paid not land-revenue but nominal tribute to their tribal chieftains. The stories of various encounters between the later Rajas of Chanda and the Emperors of Delhi are in line with the epics still sung by the Pardhans, the bards of the Raj Gonds of Adilabad, but we reach firmer ground when we find Chanda mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl. Chanda, like the other Gond states, then formed part of the Moghul empire, and when during Shah Jahan's reign Khan Dauran undertook an expedition against rebellious Gonds of Deogarh, he was reinforced by troops of the Gond Raja of Chanda. In Aurangzeb's times both Chanda and Deogarh were included in the *subah* of Berar, and Sir A. Lyall mentions that according to old revenue papers of 1666, "tribute was collected from the zamindars of those tracts, that is the Gond Rajas, and carried to the treasury at Aurangabad."[1] Some of the Gonds of the Adilabad highlands still possess patents (*sanads*) bestowed upon their ancestors by Aurangzeb, and according to these documents Utnur Taluq belonged then to the *subah* of Bidar and not to Berar. After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D. the Gond Rajas seem to have repudiated their allegiance to the Emperor of Delhi, but their newly gained independence was short-lived. They were far too weak and too divided among themselves to resist the rising power of the Marathas. Soon after Raghoji Bhonsla of Berar had established himself at Nagpur in 1739, he undertook the conquest of the Gond States and in 1749 the city of Chanda fell to a besieging Maratha army. For two years a shadow of power remained to the Gond Raja, but in 1751 the state was incorporated in the Bhonsla Kingdom, and the ruler Nilkant Shah was imprisoned. In recounting the end of the Chanda kingdom Lucie-Smith pays tribute to the achievement of its ancient dynasty: "Originally petty Chiefs of a savage tribe, they spread their sway over a wide dominion, reclaiming and peopling the wild forests in which they dwelt, and, save a nominal allegiance to the Delhi throne, preserving their soil for nine hundred years inviolate of foreign rule.[2] When at length they fell, they left, if we forget the few last years, a well-governed and contented kingdom, adorned with admirable works of engineering skill, and prosperous to a point no after time has reached.

1. *Gazetteer for the Hyderabad Assigned Districts (Berar)*, edited in 1870 by A. Lyall.

2. As mentioned above the chronology accepted by Lucie Smith is subject to doubt, but though no definite period for their reign can be given, the prominence of the chiefly house of Chanda is certainly of considerable antiquity.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

175

Other dynarties in the great drama of Indian story have played parts far more striking, but few have deserved so well of those they governed as the ancient house whose power passed away with Nilkant Shah."[1] The respect commanded by the chiefly house among their Gond subjects can be judged by the influence the rajas retained even when their secular power came to an end, for they continued to function as tribal headmen and their authority in all questions concerning custom and ritual remained unimpaired.

Until 1853, when the whole of the Nagpur State was taken under British administration, Raghoji's descendants ruled over Chanda, but the tract west of the Wardha river, containing the important fortress of Manikgarh and constituting to-day the Rajura Taluq, was ceded to the *Subahs* of the Deccan by the treaty of Deogaon in 1803 A.D.,[2] and has ever since formed part of the Nizam's Dominions.

From the scanty historical information available on the Chanda Kingdom it is not clear how far it extended towards the south west. Manikgarh Fort is frequently mentioned as one of the main strongholds of the Chanda Rajas, but no data appear to exist on the rest of the hill-tracts of the present Adilabad District. A family of Kumra clan now living in Utnur taluq claims descent from Gond chieftains who once held the Mahur fortress and it is possible that the Chanda Rajas exerted at one time or other overlordship over the whole of the Gond country between the Penganga and the Godavari, but written history affords no proof for such an assumption and we will have to reconsider this question later in the light of local tradition. For certain we know only that in the years before the conclusion of the treaty of Deogaon, the territory now forming the taluqs of Sirpur, Chinnur, Asifabad, Lakshetipet, Utnur, Adilabad and Both, *i.e.*, practically the whole of the Adilabad District except the taluqs of Rajura and Nirmal was included in Berar,[3] which was then jointly administered by the Nizam and the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur. We know too that this territory contains a number of ruined forts, inferior it is true, to that of Manikgarh, but not unlike it in style, and that these are believed to have been the seats of

1. Op. cit., pp. 69, 70.

2. C. U. Wills, *British Relations with the Nagpur State in the 18th century*, Nagpur 1924, p. 248-251.

3. Under the Bahmani Kings the province of Berar was larger than it is to-day and extended as far South as the Godavari. In 1480 A.D. during the reign of Mahammed Shah III and the prime-ministership of the famous Persian Mahmud Gawan, it was divided into two sub-provinces: Gawil and Mahur. The latter included the whole of the present Yeotmal District as well as the tract between the Penganga, Pranhita and Godavari Rivers, now forming the Adilabad District of Hyderabad. During the disturbances following the execution of Mahmud Gawan, the Governor of Gawil declared his independence and founded the Imad Shahi kingdom of Berar, annexing also the sub-province of Mahur, which had remained a separate administrative unit only for fifteen years. Cf. Syed Abdur Razzaque, 'Divisions of Berar,' *Sharadashram Varshik*, Vol. I, 1944, pp. 47-51. It is very unlikely, however, that the Imad Shahi Kings were able to establish effective rule in the hill-tracts of Adilabad. Nothing is known about their relations with the neighbouring Gond Rajas of Chanda, nor about the circumstances under which the present Rajura Taluq with the fort of Manikgarh was again separated from Berar and included in the domain of the Chanda Kings.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

175 local Gond Rajas. As to the political status of these petty chieftains *vis-à-vis* the Raja of Chanda on the one side and the Nizam and the Rajas of Nagpur on the other, the chronicles are silent. None of the early European travellers whose records shed a certain amount of light on other parts of the Deccan seem to have visited this hill-tract, and the confusion on Rennell's map of 1780 A.D.[1] shows that it was then still largely *terra incognita*.[2] However, a short reference to the present Adilabad District is contained in the account of Captain J. T. Blunt, who travelled in 1795 through Chanda and Bastar and then crossed the Godavari into the Samasthan of the Raja of Paloncha.[3] He mentions a trade route running from Chanda through Chinnur and Paloncha to Rajahmundry; he did not follow this himself but kept further east, "skirting along the east side of the Seerpur Pargunnah" which evidently corresponds to the present Sirpur Taluq. According to Blunt "the districts adjoining to the eastern parts of the *Mahratta* territory," through which he passed on that occasion, "were at this time under Jukut Row, a *Goand* chief who had formerly been the principal *Rajah* in the southern parts of *Goandwannah*, and who held them as a Jagheer from the *Berar* government.....He is a *surdar* of five hundred horse in the *Mahratta service*, and was at this time absent, in command of an expedition against the districts of Adilabad and Neermul, belonging to the Nizam: these are separated from *Chanda* only by a range of hills; the passes of which had been already secured, to prevent supplies of grain being carried into the enemy's country."[4] At the time of Captain Blunt's journey the Nizam was at war with the Maratha Empire, and it appears from his account that the Gonds of the frontier districts were drawn into the struggle. This tallies with the local tradition among the Gonds of Utnur Taluq, who tell of a war in which they fought on the side of the Subedar of Nirmal against the Maratha Kings of Nagpur. Another remark of Captain Blunt tends also to show that these frontier tracts, then only lightly held by the Nizam's forces were often the scene of fighting and unrest. Thus, referring to the present taluq of Chinnur, he writes as follows: "The Purgunnah I should first enter upon, subject to the *Nizam*, was Chinnoor; the capital town of which, bearing the same name, is situated on the north bank of the river Godavari. I was informed that this was the only inhabited place in the whole district, for the Zameendar who rented the country, having rebelled about seven

1. Reproduced in C. U. Wills, *British Relations with the Nagpur State in the 18th Century*, Nagpur 1926.

2. As late as 1853 it was stated before the Royal Asiatic Society that "at present the Gondwana highlands and jungle comprise such a large tract of unexplored country that they form quite an oasis on our maps." Quoted in *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Central Provinces*, Calcutta, 1908.

3. "Narrative of a Route from Chumargher to Yettanagoodum in the Ellore Circar," reprinted in *Early European Travellers in the Nagpur Territories*, Nagpur 1924.

4. *Op. cit.*, pp. 143, 144.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

years before, the *Nizam* had sent a large body of troops to subdue him; but not being able to get possession of his person, had laid waste the country, and had encouraged his vassal to pillage it likewise. This warfare had continued about four years, when the refractory Zameendar was at last betrayed by his own adherents, and murdered; after which all his strongholds were reduced. But the calamity occasioned by this scene of rapine, and murder, fell heaviest upon the peasantry, who had fled and sought refuge in the neighbouring districts and, for the last three years, there had not been an inhabitant in the whole district, excepting a few matchlockmen in the fort of Chinnoor."[1] We do not know whether the Zamindar of Chinnoor was a Gond chief, but there can be no doubt that the turbulent conditions in this and other frontier areas had very serious repercussions on the local Gond population, which probably withdrew more and more into the hills and forests.[2]

None of the standard works on the history of Hyderabad contains any reference to the developments in the area now constituting the Adilabad District subsequent to the treaty of Deogaon in 1803, when the important taluq of Rajura was added to the Nizam's Dominions, and all my attempts to obtain relevant information from unpublished records or historical treatises in Urdu, have remained unsuccessful. Such records may exist in collections of old Persian documents, but to unearth them and reconstruct with their help the history of the district in the early 19th century would be a lengthy task.[3] It is safe to assume, however, that Hyderabad rule did not bring about any immediate change in the existing order. Until 1866 the present district of Adilabad was a sub-district consisting of two divisions: the taluq of Adilabad, then called Edlabad, and a division comprising the taluqs of Sirpur and Rajura; the revenues of Edlabad and Sirpur were farmed out and Rajura was a jagir taluq granted for the payment of troops. Thus Government control was comparatively light and interfered little with the customary mode of life of the population. The officer at the head of the district was called *Amaldar* and very old men still talk of the days of the *Amaldari* when the Gonds enjoyed the use of the land untrammelled by forest-laws, and the revenue was, at least in the hill-tracts, no more than a nominal cess.

But gradually the administration was tightened, communications were improved and Government encouraged the influx of new settlers into tracts hitherto the undisputed domain of the aboriginals. The effects

1. Op. cit., p. 142.

2. Cf. R. V. Russel's remark on the fate of the Gonds under Maratha rule: ".....the Gonds were driven to take refuge in the inaccessible highlands, where the Marathas continued to pillage and harass them, until they obtained an acknowledgement of their supremacy and the promise of an annual tribute. Under such treatment the hill Gonds soon lost every vestige of civilization, and became the cruel treacherous savages depicted by travellers of this period....." (*Imperial Gazetteer of India, Central Provinces*, Calcutta 1908, p. 139.)

3. Mr. W. V. Grigson, I.C.S., tells me that he failed to find in the old records of the Hyderabad Residency any references to conditions in the country which is now the Adilabad District.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

175 on the economic and social position of the Gonds were far reaching, and the repercussions attendant on the opening up of the District will be discussed in Book II, while reference to the newly established culture-contacts with non-aboriginal immigrants from both Telingana and Marathwara are contained in Chapter III.

162 In 1941 the Gonds of Hyderabad numbered 141,335, which is only a fraction of India's entire Gond population of more than 3,000,000. If we remember that this is about ten times the strength of the aboriginal population of the Australian continent at the time of discovery, and far exceeds in numbers the Red Indians in North America, it is indeed surprising to find only a slender volume of literature on this remarkable group of peoples.

114 The first reference to the Gonds in scientific literature is perhaps the small list of Gondi words communicated in 1844 by Dr. Voysey to the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*.[2] A somewhat larger one, together with a few grammatical notes was given in 1847 by Dr. O. Manager,[3] and the following year B. H. Hodgson published in the same journal a comparative vocabulary of Dravidian dialects containing among others Gondi and Oraon words.[4] Fuller, though by no means complete, are the grammar and vocabulary of the Gondi spoken in the Chindwara District, compiled by the Rev. James Dawson in 1872.[5]

But the earliest ethnological account of the Gonds is contained in the Rev. Stephen Hislop's remarkable *Papers on the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*, edited by Sir R. Temple in 1866.[6] This book, though somewhat confusing in the presentation of material, is a mine of information for the initiated, and will be of permanent value for its very full version of a cycle of Gond myths both in Gondi and English. Fairly lengthy notes on various sections of Gonds are found in the administrative reports and papers of several of Hislop's contemporaries, notably Captain C. I. R. Glasfurd,[7] Major C. B. Lucie-Smith,[8] Sir R. Temple,[9] Sir C. Grant,[10] and Col. Ward,[11] but the information contained in these is of very uneven character. The next impor-

1. Vol. XIII. p. 19.
2. *Ibid.*, Vol. XVI. p. 286.
3. "The Aborigines of Central India," *Ibid.*, Vol. XVII, Part I, pp. 550—558.
4. *Ibid.* Vol. XXXIX, pp. 108—117, 172—198.
5. Nagpur 1866.
6. *Report on the Dependency of Bastar*. 1862, Selection from Records of the Government of India, Foreign Department No. XXXIX, Calcutta 1863.—*Report on Land Revenue Settlement of Upper Godavari District*, Nagpur 1868.
7. *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Chanda District*, Nagpur 1870.
8. *Report on the Administration of the Central Provinces up to August 1862*. (Reprint) Nagpur 1923.—*Report on the Zamindaris and other Petty Chieftaincies in the Central Provinces in 1863* (Reprint) Nagpur 1923.
9. *Gazetteer of the Central Provinces*, Nagpur 1870.
10. Mandla Settlement Report 1868.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

rail-head below the Eastern Ghat mountains to Jeypore and the Bastar border was continued thence to Jagdalpur; subsequently roads have gradually been driven westward to Dantewara, Bijapur, Kutru and Bhopalpatnam, and southward to Sukma and Konta; the most recent development has been many miles of forest roads, constructed either as feeder roads to the Raipur and Rajnandgaon roads, or to link up the forests of Dantewara and the south with the Godavari at Tarlagudam, Cherla and Dummagudam or the Kolab-Sabari at Mismagudam and Konta. The Raipur road is now motorable throughout the year, and there is a daily mail and passenger service by it to Kanker and Dhamtari. A railway connexion with the new Raipur-Vizianagram line has been surveyed, and would have been under construction but for the world-wide financial depression. The revenue of the State has risen from about Rs. 30,000 in 1855, then received in kind or in cowry shells at a rate of 2,880 to the rupee, to well over a million rupees.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and to make him live by himself on the outskirts of the village, so that in the end he becomes almost a separate low caste. This, however, has not gone nearly as far among the Hill Marias as among the Bison-horn.

To the south, along the Indrawati valley, the Hill Marias are influenced strongly by the Bison-horn Marias, and the area concerned is marked on the map by the letter H. The influence of the Bison-horn Marias gets less as you go west down the valley towards Kutru, and beyond Kutru is replaced by that of the Telugu-influenced Koitor of the riverain tract, known generally in those parts as Dorlas. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of most of these villages near the river were once Hill Marias. They seem to have been enumerated as Murias in the 1931 census, and are included in the 15,000 persons whom I have indicated at the end of my account of the Murias as wrongly enumerated at census as Murias. Where the Hill Marias are the immediate neighbours of the Bison-horn Marias, the influence of the latter is strong. In theory, according to local legend the Mander, a tributary running more or less east to west and joining the Indrawati on its *southern* bank near Barsur, is the boundary between the two kinds of Marias, with the Indrawati as the boundary west of the confluence. Here the Hill Marias know the Bison-horn Marias as Dandami Koitor; but the name is not universal in Bastar, and I have therefore preferred to call them Bison-horn because the wearing of bison-horns by their male dancers is so obvious a peculiarity of the tribe. Formerly, the legend says, Pat Raja, the log-god of Mornar in the Mangnar *pargana* who is regarded almost as the overlord of all the log-gods of the Hill Marias, and his wife's brother Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan at Ghotpal, a large Bison-horn village south of the Indrawati, between Barsur and Gidam, divided up the Hill and Bison-horn Marias into *dalelkai* and *akomawa* clans (brother-clans and wife-clans), and in those days the Hill Marias used to intermarry with the Bison-horn, and each used to attend the other's festivals. One day, as the Gumelor clan of Hill Marias, which occupies a group of villages in Bhairamgarh Mar, Dantewara Mar and Mangnar, was trooping to Ghotpal to dance at the Koqsar festival there, carrying their axes on their shoulders, a Gume with his axe accidentally severed the sem beam vine of the Old Widow (*Kuram Mutia's*), who thereupon put a curse on all the Hill Marias and forbade them ever again to come south of the Mander river for social or religious purposes. Since then, according to the Hill Marias, intermarriage and participation in each other's festivals has ceased. On the other

Hill Marias of Indrawati valley, influenced by Bison-horn Marias or Dorla Koitor

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

582 hand some Hill Marias say that there is no theoretic obstacle to intermarriage, but that actually 'it isn't done', though they occasionally take part in each other's festivals. The Bison-horn ●177 style of dancing with long *dol* drums is gradually spreading among 535 the lower villages just north of the Indrawati. Hudala Karka, for example, some eight miles from Barsur and on the northern bank of the river, now dances entirely in Bison-horn style, and claims to be a Bison-horn village, the claim being admitted by the Bison-horn Maria *pargana* headman in theory, and in practice by intermarriage with undoubted Bison-horn villages; but in several houses I found old Hill Maria dancing shields (*moghi*) and buttock-bells, and the older men admitted that when they were young they 177 danced in the Hill Maria style. Another sign of this is that Hurra [176] Gunda, the log-god of the Tamo clan at Tumirgunda, near Hudala Karka, is also the log-god of the Atami clan of Hudala Kārka and of two other Atami villages south of the Indrawati. The clan-priest of the god is a Tamo, and the Tamo villages of Tumirgunda and Padmeta still dance in Hill Maria style. In a few years, therefore, the Bison-horn Marias will have adopted the valley villages north of the Indrawati; the *pargana* headman already virtually claims them as such, since they are under his direct jurisdiction and not that of the Hill Maria *chalki* or assistant appointed to help him [197] manage the eight Hill Maria villages of his *pargana*. In speech, too, they are approximating more and more to the Bison-horn Marias, as there is a marked absence of the harsh guttural sounds so characteristic of the Hill Maria language, and they use the Bison-horn technical social and religious terms.

101 Westward along the valley, as observed above, Bison-horn 177 Maria influence gets less. For a few miles, roughly from Nelasnar to Jegur on the Matawara-Kutru road, and in the village of Ketulnar beyond Jegur, the people are now known as Murias but are really Hill Maria stock, and still dance in Hill Maria style. Ketulnar still intermarries with the hill villages of the Kutru Mar *pargana*. The villagers of Bheriabhum, on the south bank opposite their former village of Pali, five or six miles north of Bhairamgarh, are of the Hill Farsal clan, and cannot be distinguished from Farsalor of the hills. In the hill villages above the valley I verified occasional marriages with girls from the valley villages and vice versa.

101 The tract west and south-west of Kutru, marked by the letter L on the ethnographic map, contains a very scanty population, which appears to be Hill Maria in origin, much modified by contact with the Telugu-influenced Dorla Koitor from the south, who are shown by the letter K. These mixed elements also were returned

[See cat. 46, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

292 garments as soon as possible. In their youth they had been sent with a party of men and women as exhibits to the Allahabad Exhibition, where Boranga had celebrated his marriage *coram publico Indico*; they brought back with them from Allahabad a bigger suspicion of the *Kosor*, as they, like Gonds all over the Central Provinces, call all Hindus, a coat and waistcoat and blankets, and a taste for *kappu* or opium which luckily was not inherited by Baranga's son, the present headman, or any of the villagers.

291 As in Glasfurd's day, the women go with breasts uncovered. Very old women occasionally hobble about inside their huts completely naked. The square patch of cloth suspended between the legs from a waist-cord on which bamboo rings were strung, which Glasfurd saw as the sole garment of some children and elderly women, is the garment known as *mudang*, worn only by females. It is to-day definitely intimate underwear, to be seen by no one save the husband, except in the case of very little girls who, when six or so, wear it for the first time as their only garment. Brass rings made by the Ghasia (Gharwá) brass-workers in bazaar places in the plains such as Gidam, Dhaurai and Narainpur, have replaced the bamboo rings of Glasfurd's time. The cord on which they are strung is sometimes a thin piece of cane. A mother buys a few rings for her little girls whenever she has a pice or two to spare at her visits to the markets; and the cord becomes nearly full of rings when the girl is nubile. The *mudang* cord is never removed, even at child-birth. The cloth attached to it is usually a strip of old rag torn off a worn-out loin-cloth. It has already been stated that women keep it on when bathing. The *mudang* is buried or burned with the woman.

The cord full of rings is obvious under the top of every woman's loin-cloth, as a sort of ridge. The cloth itself is folded over the rings, and hangs down all round over the loins and buttocks, without being passed between the legs. It is therefore not revealing like the men's cloth. Occasionally women wear a small sheet thrown carelessly across the breasts and over the left shoulder in imitation of the custom gradually spreading in the Bison-horn country; and a cloth of this kind is used for supporting a baby, who rides on his mother's right or left hip with the cloth drawn tight over his little buttocks and up to his armpits and thence fastened over her other shoulder. Even for dancing a woman has no other clothes.

301 Glasfurd noted in 1862 that few of the Hill Marias possessed the beads that other Marias liked so much. The older men still wear little of this kind; a few have a single necklet of dirty yellow beads made of small chopped sections of pea-fowl's lower leg-bone about 5 mm. in length. Occasionally

Ornaments

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

301 they have similar necklets of little sections of wood or of seeds. The middle-aged and particularly the young have now made up for any former lack of beads by going to the opposite extreme in the profusion and variety of their ornaments. They have borrowed ●[177] freely from the fashions of the Jhorias and Murias on the one side and on the other from the Bison-horn Marias, but in an eclectic way, and showing marked individual taste. They have no use for the humming-top shaped greenish-yellow glass or the tubular scarlet beads so popular with the Bison-horn Maria, nor for the small speckled beads which Czecho-Slovakia is now sending to the bazaars of the north; they like small primary coloured beads of the old 'hundreds and thousands' type, but large enough to be threaded with ease, while their women still prefer the large, almost cylindrical but rounded-edge pure white beads of uneven size that seventy years ago were the fashion among the Marias of the plains. On the whole the women have borrowed mostly from the Bison-horn fashions, and the men from those of the north, particularly the Jhorias. On their arms the men have tight-fitting armlets of brass or 'jarman' (an aluminium alloy) just above their elbows, from one to five in number. Round their necks they have up to six collars of coloured beads sometimes six-deep, arranged according to individual colour tastes, but generally in vertical bars of colour with alternate bars of white. From large ear-rings 4 or 5 cm. in [304] diameter worn in a slit-hole pierced in the cartilage just below the helix and above the front upper insertion point of the auricle, hang nearly to the shoulders tassels made of three or four strings of beads threaded singly with a similar colour arrangement, ending with little tufts of bright wool; and fillets of the same bead-work are worn either loosely over the forehead and temples, or higher round the crest of the head, or looped from ears to hair-tuft. The intricacy and symmetry of the bright bead-work produces very pleasing patterns; the 'girl friend' usually arranges the beads for the youth. Older men more often wear small brass chains round the ears and hair-tuft than bead fillets. The large ring already referred to is first made in the form of a crescent blade of aluminium alloy, one of the tapered ends being passed through the slit-hole in the cartilage and hooked into the loop formed by bending the other tapered end to form a little eyelet, the remaining metal being then whipped spirally round the metal from which it tapered. Sometimes smaller rings of the same type are made of brass, a blue or red glass bead being threaded just inside the eyelet, and worn in a hole in the 304 tragus of the ear, or the antitragus. Innumerable holes are pierced 301 through the fold of the helix, in which are worn little rings of thin, plain brass wire; there may even be a double row of these right

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be severed, trimming the break with the knife held and used in the normal cutting position; he carves patterns in relief with the sharp point, or, holding the knife vertically, rolls the handle between the flat palms of his hand so as to drill holes with the point, trimming the edges of the holes with a burning ember. 411

The Bison-horn Maria uses a similar knife, often much larger, and seldom with a sheath. His *banda* is like a dao, but it is really a glorified and enlarged knife, with a thick end, and sometimes a pronounced bend or angle in the centre of the cutting edge; he uses this for lopping thick saplings or bamboo culms. But the use of the *banda* is not universal, and may be borrowed from Parjas or other tribes to the east. Similar weapons, but socketed on to long shafts of bamboo, and known as *gagra*, are used by the northern Murias and Jhorias, occasionally by Hill Marias, as weapons of offence and defence or billhooks for bamboo and saplings; the ordinary *gagra* has a concavely curved edge and a point, the *chhuri gagra* a convex edge and no point, while the *bhalu gagra* has an edge curving concavely from the top to a bend about half way along its length, and thence concavely to the socket. [177] ●

The Hill Maria calls his axe *maq'su*, which is the hill gutturalized version of the ordinary Gondi word *maras* used all over the Central Provinces. The Bison-horn Maria uses a totally different word for his axe of this shape, *godal*. The Halbi word is *tangya*. Like the Naga axe, the *maq'su* or *godal*[1] is an iron blade, decidedly suggestive of a long stone celt in form ⁷; but unlike that axe, the butt of the blade ends in a socket for the haft, not in a tang inserted in a hole in the haft. The cutting edge of the blade among the Hill Marias seldom exceeds 7 cm. width, and 15 cm. is the maximum length of the blade from the cutting edge to the socket, which encloses a haft 4 or 5 cm. in diameter. It has a pronounced 'waist' just before the socket, but this is far more marked on the longer Muria *maras* than on *maq'su* or *godal*. The *godal* is usually rather more massive than the *maq'su*. The blacksmith, when giving an axe its first edge or a new edge to a blunt axe, heats the axe well in his forge, and thoroughly hammers the actual edge. He then heats it again, and hammers it flat on each side till he forms a new edge. He repeats the heating, and grinds down the edge by rubbing each side down a lump of stone. After a further slight heating he dips it in cold water to temper the edge, which is then ready for use. The haft is set at slightly less than a right-angle to the blade, the thick socket being wedged with a thin slip of wood. 412 412 326

A type of axe found still sometimes in the hill villages, where it is known as *pata andawna maq'su* (the song-and-dance axe, because 412 535

[1] Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, p. 65.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER V

CHARACTER

'Without exception they are the most cheerful, light-hearted people I have met with, always laughing and joking among themselves. Seldom does a Maria village resound with quarrels or wrangling among either sex: and in this respect they present a marked contrast to those in more civilized tracts. They, in common with many other wild races, bear a singular character for truthfulness and honesty, and when once they get over the feeling of shyness, which is natural to them, they are exceedingly frank and communicative. Curious as all savages, the commonest article of domestic use is to them an object of interest; they are quick to observe and to learn.'—Glasfurd's 1862 Report, para. 89.

'In their own hills they are a bold and hardy race, industrious as cultivators, and truthful to a proverb; and, though shy and timid with those they do not know, are quickly won over by kindness. They form, indeed, not only one of the most interesting, but one of the most improvable of the aboriginal tribes of India.'—Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report, para. 111.

MERCIFULLY the Hill Marias and, to a less extent, the Bison-horn Marias have been spared the attention of the improver, and hitherto have been left fairly free to develop on their own lines and to adjust themselves to the increasing impact of modern India on the surrounding lowlands. The shyness already mentioned is still very marked in the hills, and also among the remoter villages not only of Bison-horn Marias and Koyas, but also of Parjas and Murias. But the ordinary Bison-horn Maria of the open tracts, with the steady expansion of communications and frequent visits by the Chief and the Diwan to the Bailadila hills, has come more and more into contact with the outer world; he often comes into Jagdalpur for Dasehra or market or to work on the public works, or even to show his children the sights of the '*sahar*' or 'city', especially the power-house and the pumps of the new waterworks.

In the Abujhmar hills all is well if visitors are expected. Otherwise, as in Glasfurd's day, all the inhabitants are liable to rush off into the jungle on the sudden appearance of an unusual number of persons or a white man. When marching from Orcha to Adeq (Ader) in Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* in February 1930, I left the main path to see the village of Tondawada. I was not expected in the village, and though I had with me a number of Maria youths from Orcha well known to several women of Tondawada, yet my approach was the signal for a general *sauve-qui-peut*; the dogs barked, the few cattle were hastily driven off into the hills, and women and boys fled helter-skelter to the hills, even including

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is 364 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the ● 177 greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-
361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page 121) must have their *bari* opposite them across the street. Each [351] *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many [231] pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among
841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Piki-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE

THE whole life of the Maria is primarily directed towards the raising of food from the earth, either by cultivation, or by gathering the fruits of the forest, or by fishing, hunting or trapping. His agriculture, as we have seen, determines the sites of his villages, and regulates his relations with his wife. His festivals, it will be seen, are designed either to ensure the benevolence of the earth and the ancestors and the clan-god towards the crops about to be sown, or to celebrate the first eating of each of the main crops, and the final harvest-home, in a spirit of communal thanksgiving. The human population to him is the crop of men that the *Bhum* or Earth raises for the clan, or for the Ruling Chief.

The Hill Maria still regards the crops as the result of the combined labours of the village rather than of the labours of individuals. If one suffers, all suffer, and all combine to support the old and the needy, and to help each fellow villager to get through the heaviest parts of the yearly agricultural round. The young man on marriage, or the fellow clansman settling in the village, must have his share of the village lands for cultivation. In the raising of crops, then, the village and not the individual cultivator is the unit, even now, in the Abujhmar hills. But the Bison-horn Maria is an individualist. He has lived long in contact with semi-Hinduized neighbours, and has long begun to practise the more advanced methods of the settled cultivator. Permanent cultivation fosters individualism. Even in the Abujhmar hills the few permanent rice fields are definitely the private property of individuals; and as the use of the plough spreads and more and more of the wet lands become permanent rice fields, the owners of these fields begin more and more to assert in their shifting cultivation plots the rights of permanent private ownership already admitted in their rice fields. This has already happened among the Bison-horn Marias, aided by the rapid growth of population increasing the pressure on the land and reducing the land available for distribution to newcomers to the villages. The indications are that formerly they shared the communal attitude of the Hill Maria. In describing, therefore, the agricultural life of the community, I shall deal primarily with that of the Hill Marias, indicating where necessary the different developments among the Bison-horn Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

perpendicular slopes two or three miles from the village have to be cleared; the wood and scrub spread over the ground, which, in the Bison-horn country, has beforehand been dug over with the hoe or, perhaps, on the lower and less steep slopes, ploughed with great difficulty; field-houses, sheds and watching platforms have to be built on the *penda* slopes. The firing of the *penda* is particularly arduous; the stumps have to be cleared of the shoots that spring up when the rains have set in; and where deer or bison are numerous the clearings have to be fenced with heavy timber fencing. Man and woman here have unaided to do all that regular plains cultivators do with the aid of ox and plough, and much more besides. They do not weed their crops, and they broadcast their seed; here alone they save labour which falls to the regular cultivator, not out of laziness, but from ignorance.

For convenience the names which the Hill Maria gives to the months may here be stated :—

	English	*Maria*
The cultivator's year	December-January	Pusi
	January-February	Mah
	February-March	Phagur
	March-April	Chaita
	April-May	Mur
	May-June	Na
	June-July	Ha'i
	July-August	Hagh
	August-September	Eranj
	September-October	Eram
	October-November	Orna
	November-December	Pa, or Pandi

The Bison-horn Maria uses generally the local Hindu names for the months. The calendar is, of course, lunar, the word *lenj* meaning either moon or month. Of the above names the first four are obvious corruptions of the Hindu names Pus, Magh, Phalgun and Chait. Mur is explained as meaning 'beginning'; 'to begin' is *mur kiyana*. Na is a shortened form of *nalung*, the numeral 4, Ha'i of *ha'ingu* (5), Hagh of *argu* (6), while the other four names are derived from forms akin to the Telugu words for 7, 8, 9 and 10, namely *eru* (7), *ermori* (8), *ormadu* (9) and *padu* (10); it is interesting to note that although ordinarily the Hill Maria, except on the southern edge of the Abujhmar hills, has Gondi forms only for numbers 1 to 6, and after that uses the Hindi numerals, in the nomenclature of the months he remembers Dravidian forms for numbers 7 to 10. He counts the year as beginning in Mur, though some will say Na. (The Bison-horn Maria uses the local Hindu names for the months.) But as the actual round of agricultural operations begins with the felling of trees for the coming *penda*

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

servants. Though the Bison-horn Marias are not free from either venereal disease or the visits of these gentry, yet they have been fairly successful in keeping their women to themselves, and have suffered little except in the south, where many of them go at times to Dummagudem and other Madras towns for work. If, however, the Telugus have given them venereal disease, they have more than repaid them with yaws. 164

Skin diseases, such as scabies, ringworm and eczema, are common, especially among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, who under Hindu influence are taking to the use of clothes. They cannot afford a change of clothing, and dispensary treatment is defeated at once if the old infected clothing cannot be discarded. Hill Marias wearing only scanty loin-cloths are far less affected; but even among them the 280 cases treated included 10 of scabies, 9 of ringworm and 7 of eczema. [177]

Eye complaints are frequent, owing largely, no doubt, to the habit of living and sleeping in dark unventilated huts and dormitories thick with smoke. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 16 of conjunctivitis, 5 of cataract, and 5 of other eye complaints.

Malaria is very common among the Bison-horn Marias, and in the Bijapur tahsil blackwater fever occurs. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 26 of malaria, only 4 of which were of children with badly enlarged spleens.

Old men and women are frequently seen crippled with rheumatism, and 17 of the 280 cases were of young men suffering from rheumatic complaints. Of the rest of the 280 cases, 24 were badly neglected ulcers, 6 bad foot-cracks, 25 simple stomach complaints, and 9 (including 3 of pyorrhoea) neuralgia from badly decayed teeth. No figures were kept of what is now the most obviously prevalent complaint, hydrocele, because it was impossible to treat this in camp. Glasfurd noted the prevalence of this in the sixties, and wrote in paragraph 66 of his Report that :—

'Hydrocele . . . is exceedingly common in the Chintulsar and Sucmiram (i.e. Sukma) Talooks, and also around Duntewara and in all parts, indeed, lying adjacent to the Baila Deela range of hills. I should say that from 10 to 20 per cent. of the population in these parts are afflicted in this manner. Their own account of it is that it is caused by drinking the water of nullahs during the freshes.'

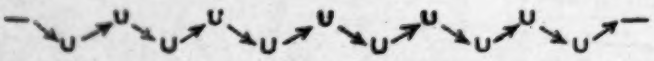
To me it now seems commoner in the Hill Maria country than elsewhere. The victims know no cure, and are only beginning to realise that something can be done for it in the dispensaries.

The idea that Marias are expert physicians is an amazing example of the general Hindu ignorance and superstitious dread of the aboriginal. In actual fact the Maria has only a few queer 757 752

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

534 attached by criss-cross thongs of the same material to rings of the same material tied round the outside of the bowl in its centre and just above its base. The thongs are passed through holes pierced in the overlap of the membrane with the point of the knife or of an arrow, and pulled taut without anything being done to guard the edge of the membrane from tearing. Occasionally pottery bowls are used instead of *salphi* or *bija* wood, a practice learnt both from [177] the Teluguized Gonds of the south and the northernmost Murias of Antagarh tahsil.

533 The *turam* drum is placed on the ground between the outspread legs of the player, who sits on his buttocks with legs bent at the knee. The drum-sticks are held lightly between the index and middle fingers, the right stick being somewhat larger than the left. [784] It is taboo to beat a *turam* except at Koqsar and weddings, though nowadays most of them regard the taboo as lifted for a dance at a high official's camp. The ordinary rhythm at Koqsar and weddings is :— .



The rhythm thus begins and ends on a long beat with the right hand, with six short left hand and five short right hand beats alternately in between.

534 I saw once at Nugur a small drum of the *turam* shape made with a hollow gourd bowl.

When it is taboo to use the *turam* drums, boys use what are called by them *pak-dol* or *veddur-dol*, literally 'bamboo-drums', which are really split-stringed instruments. They are made of two-foot lengths of the thick bamboo called *noli-veddur* by the Marias, or *bendri-bans* in Halbi. The outer rind of the bamboo is prised apart from the rest of the bamboo for a length of about eighteen inches, three inches being left joined at each end. The prised rind is about one-eighth of an inch thick and an inch and a half wide. It is raised from the body of the bamboo by two small bridges (*barga*) of bamboo inserted at each end as near its junctions with the body of the bamboo as possible, and is made into three 'strings' by two longitudinal cuts. The drum is laid on the ground and rubbed firmly into position in the dust, and dust is poured along its sides; the 'strings' are then struck with light drum-sticks in the same way as the *turam*. The Bison-horn Marias do not make this.

Brass dish-shaped gongs (*gatta*) struck with sticks used, till a few years ago, to be an indispensable part of the bride-price or

1 [See cat. 116, pp. 421-422, - Analysis]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

372 his ***kanda*** by the sharp edge between their hands across the split in the ' hearth ' and at right angles to the ' hearth ', rapidly increasing the speed of his sawing; this friction soon engenders smoke and a spark, which falls through the ' hearth ' on to the little heap of inflammable bamboo sawdust that has fallen with the sawing on to the dead leaves or rag. Sawing is at once stopped, and the ' hearth ' lifted off the sawdust with great care by the kneeling men, who gently blow on the spark till it spreads and kindles the sawdust, when they fold the leaves carefully over sawdust and sparks and take the packet off to the place where a fire is to be lit, kindling first heaps of dry grass, and with this small sticks and finally logs. They are very quick in the process. I introduced a race in the tribal sports at the Maharani Sahiba's Dasehra celebrations, in which teams of three had to run fifty yards, make fire, and run with it another fifty yards to kindle a bonfire; and Hill Maria teams invariably won; the timing of the whole process, from the start till the bonfire was well alight, was eighty-seven seconds. In the [177] Muria and some Bison-horn Maria tracts the use of matches is coming in.

There appears to be no ritual occasion on which fire has to be kindled in this way. The first pile of dry wood at the firing of the [176] ***penda*** fields, and the fires for cooking sacrificial meals, are kindled from a burning log brought from the Hearth of the Departed in the *kasyeq-gaita's* or *perma's* house.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

perma with three or four mediums officiating at the former, and the priest of Mata (*Mata-pujari*) at the latter. In some villages there is a separate hut close to the shrine (*pen-rawar*) of the log-god or clan-god and to the *Mataguri*, and a separate priest of the Departed called generally *Pitar-gaita*, but sometimes *Dhuma-gaita* or *Hanal-gaita*, the use of the Hindu term *pitar* for the local terms *dhuma* and *hanal* being significant of the way in which Hinduism is gradually modifying tribal religion. At the Ghotpal Kurum Pandum, for example, on the 9th September 1930, the men assembled with the *perma* outside the *pen-rawar* of Use Modia Pen along with the men of two adjacent Lekami villages. The *pen* log-god was brought out and set down on four stone slabs set up as posts. The proceedings started with the *Pitar-gaita* bringing two new earthen pots and about half a pound each of new *chikma* and new mountain rice to a separate shed at the side of the *pen-rawar*. He kindled a fire, and in one pot cooked small quantities of the new *chikma*, set this out on three *mahua* leaves as an offering to the Departed, and attached a fringe of rice plants in ear to the roof of the shed. He then started to cook the rest of the new *chikma* and new rice in the other pot, sitting in the shed, while the others present went to attend the sacrifices in front of the log-god. These were conducted in much the same way as those already described as made usually before the Village Mother; but there was no sprinkling of blood on *saja* leaves or burial of the leaves in the fields, the *perma*, who acted as clan-priest, washed the mouths and feet of the pigs and cocks before applying the *tohana* test, and a *wadde* medium sat by the side of the log-god reciting '*mantram*' as the *perma* sacrificed each cock and pig. The *perma* then poured three libations each of *mahua* spirit and *landa* in front of the log-god. All the men then returned to the *Pitar-gaita's* shed, and sat in a circle round it, while the *Pitar-gaita* stuck a pinch of the cooked *chikma* and rice on the centre of each man's forehead, just as Hindus apply the *tika*. Thereafter all went back to the *pen-rawar*, and first the *perma*, then the *Pitar-gaita*, then the *pada* headmen of the three villages taking part in the ceremony, and last eleven or twelve village elders saluted everyone present and drank a leaf-cupful first of *mahua* spirit and then of *landa*. Then the sacrificed cocks and pigs were cooked, and all the men sat in a circle and were given each two leaf-cupfuls of *landa* to drink and two pieces of the cooked meat. All ended by drinking some *mahua* spirit and the whole feast was over by 9 p.m., when they dispersed to their houses without dancing. No females had been present. They had the usual family new-eating next day, with offerings to the Departed inside the house. Ghotpal and some other villages have no dancing at this *pandum*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Jatra, which is held generally about the full moon of Magh, but in some villages is part of the round of festivities and hunting connected with the Wijja Pandum in the month of Chait. The Mandai is a Hinduization of the old Pen-karsita. Throughout Northern Bastar a Mandai Jatra is held at all big centres at about this time, culminating in the great Mandai in the open space called Kodo Bhata in Jagdalpur, which the Chief should attend in state, processing on elephant seven times round the fair, accompanied by innumerable mediums leaping and dancing possessed by their gods. The Hill Maria counterpart is the Koqsar on the day after the Pupal Korta Tindana. The Bison-horn Pen-karsita tends to resemble the Mandai of the bigger villages of the north, all the local gods being brought out and the *waddi* mediums, possessed by their godlings, leaping and dancing wildly about. The special Pen-karsita drum rhythm and dance have already been referred to.

The Mandai

These are the main festivals, though here and there there are further *pandum*, such as the sacrifice offered at the base of the first toddy-palm to be tapped among the southern Bison-horn Marias. Nor must it be expected that in every *pargana* or village the local *pandum* will conform exactly to the descriptions in this chapter, which represent the principal features of *pandum* actually seen in Dugeli, villages around Kuakonda, Aranpur, Ghotpal and villages in Sukma zamindari. The festivals are far more numerous and more elaborate than those of the Hill Marias. It is an obvious suggestion that if the Bison-horn Maria tradition of migration from the Abujhmar hills be correct, the accretions to the hill cults represent entirely the influence of the old Telanga Hindu centres of Dantewara, Barsur and Bhairamgarh. But this does not account for such features as the soaking of the first seeds to be sown in the coming harvest in the blood of the animals sacrificed in the Wijja Pandum, or the burial of the blood-stained *saja* leaves in the fields during the Kurum Pandum, which have suggestions of connexion with the Khond Meriah ritual; or for such magico-religious pieces of ritual as the gathering of *mahua* leaves in the baskets used for collecting *mahua* flowers, the dancing of the *perma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head, or the spilling of milk on the *mahua* buds. Primitive cults are influenced by Hinduism, but also react on it; and it seems to have been part of the policy of the Bastar Chiefs to identify themselves as much as they could with the religious life of their primitive subjects, save those in the inaccessible Abujhmar hills. Much of the long Dasehra ritual at Jagdalpur is elaborated from primitive ideas. Tribal gods have been recognized, and many are allowed to join in the Mandai

Conclusion

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

procession at Jagdalpur. The Dantewara temple observes several of the local *pandum*, if in a Hinduized form, while the ceremonies of the isolated Telanga villages now surrounded by a sea of Bison-horn Maria villages have become little different from those of the Bison-horn Marias. Hinduization there is, and has long been; but that alone does not account for the differences between the ritual of the Bison-horn Maria and that of the Hill Maria and his Muria neighbours. The physical differences between the two sections of Marias are slight, but their traditions are different, and at least it is clear that they represent different waves of migration. The remarkable differences of dancing, drumming, singing and ritual, and in the intonation, words and inflexions of their dialects, which make them mutually unintelligible, cannot be explained merely by saying that the Bison-horn Marias are 'more advanced' and more in contact with Hinduism and Telugu influences than the Hill Marias.

Note.

Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., has, since this book went to the press, kindly sent me a note of an interesting recent investigation by the police at Madder in Bhopalpatnam zamindari. A Mohammedan woman asleep on the night of June 13th, 1937 in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a knife or arrow over her right ribs, and woke to see what she believed to be two Marias running away. The police enquiry elicited information that many Marias in Kutru zamindari (i.e. Bison-horn Marias or Hill Marias of the plains in long contact with Dorla or Bison-horn influence; the true Hill Marias would not venture down to Madder), before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice seed before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip. All Marias agree that the dead are somewhere underground; men, animals, trees, and perhaps rivers and streams have in them *jiwa*, a principal of life, and some say that when a man dies his *jiwa* goes to Pogho Bhum, the sky, while that part which is cremated or buried goes below the earth and is his *hanal*. There is a belief that the menhirs erected at the *kotohal* or *urashal* increase in size if the *hanal* commemorated by it is happy.[1] There are traces of an embryo belief in reincarnation in the practice among Hill Marias of examining a new-born baby to see if it has the same birth-marks as a dead ancestor and, if so, of naming it after the ancestor if of the same sex, or his spouse if of the other sex.[2] Hindu ideas are beginning to influence Bison-horn Marias; tombs are erected sometimes by the side of the menhir in the *urashal*, thatched over to protect the dead from the heat of the sun, and with a pot of cold water, replenished from time to time, hung over the memorial to drip through a small hole in the pot to cool him further. But, like their ideas about the earth and the gods, the Marias' ideas about the Departed and the after-life are very indefinite and vary from place to place; it is safe only to go on their actual practice, and not on what some of them will say by way of generalization or theory; the latter are certain to be those who have had most contact with the outer world and persons of other faiths. There is one practical way in which old Bison-horn men show their belief in some future existence. They often choose before death the cow or bullock to be sacrificed when their menhir is erected in the *urashal*; and it is alleged that if the heir thinks it better to slay some other animal, the animal chosen by the dead man always pines to death. The graves of Hill and Bison-horn Marias are adorned with strips of cloth, spears, fishing-rods and other things they may need hereafter, and their ornaments are buried often with them.

B. Magic and Witchcraft

We have seen before that such is the ignorance of the local Hindus about the Marias that, in the words used by Glasfurd in 1862,[1] 'the simple and unsophisticated Gond tribes are believed to be expert necromancers, and on the most intimate footing with evil spirits'; and that the Marias have a totally undeserved reputation as physicians, although their general idea of sickness

[1] Report, p. 32.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

787 825 584 be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. Beliefs about Natural Phenomena

821 To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any under-world or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; [761] falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-wil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with [846 177] a hare-lip '*garhar-handya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 this supper both parties assemble in front of the bride's house, the men and youths in dancing-dress, and there is dancing and singing till dawn, all men, women, youths and girls present being free to take part, whether married or single, old or young. Soon after dawn the pig, grain and liquor brought by the bridegroom's parents as part of the bride-price are divided into a portion for the bride's village and a portion for the visiting village, cooked and partaken of by all present; any deficiency is made up by the girl's parents, this being their only expense; they do not even decorate their house or put up booths for the guests.

This wedding breakfast over, the bride is brought out by her parents and made over to the bridegroom's parents. She is not washed or given special clothes, though if funds permit she sometimes gets a new loin-cloth. She is expected to weep profusely in token of reluctance to leave her father's home. The bridegroom's parents take her on foot through the forest to their village, arriving always in the evening. The bridegroom stays in his house; to go out to meet the bride would be immodest. She is escorted to his house, thrust inside, and the marriage is thus completed without further ceremony. There is no present from the bridegroom to the bride, not even a ring as among the Bison-horn Marias. Supper that night is cooked for the couple by the bridegroom's mother.

582 177 Pre-puberty marriage never occurs among the Hill Marias, who look upon it as an utterly abhorrent custom of the Kosor or Hindus. Unfortunately a few Bison-horn Marias are beginning to ape their Hindu neighbours in this as in other matters; but even now probably only three in a hundred Bison-horn marriages are child marriages.

Child marriage

583 It is very common for the bridegroom to serve his future father-in-law for his bride instead of paying the bride-price. If at the second *talq-da'ina* his parents have to admit to the girl's parents that they cannot afford the bride-price, it is arranged for the bridegroom to go as *lamana'i* or suitor-servant to the girl's parents for a term of years that varies from three years to seven or eight, though when the term exceeds three years the girl usually becomes the *lamana'i's* wife for the last two years. For the first part of his service the *lamana'i* is not supposed to have intercourse with the girl, but, provided that the girl agrees (and she is seldom reluctant), he generally does so after a time. It is, however, considered a disgrace to her parents if in consequence she becomes pregnant, and they are fined a pig, which is eaten by all their and the *lamana'i's* clansmen, after which the girl is regarded as the *lamana'i's* wife. Often at the end of the agreed period of service the father-in-law is unwilling

Serving for a wife

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

553 Yete Mura, the headman of Hoinar, was born hare-lipped and was therefore named after his hare-lipped paternal grandfather; and Jugho Dallu, the headman of Hitulnar, recognized on his son the birth-marks of his dead mother Pora'i and therefore gave him the name of her dead husband Dugha. This practice is a sign of some sort of belief in the reincarnation of the Departed. The second exception is the practice of giving a name immediately after birth when birth has coincided with some natural phenomenon or incident. Usendi Ippo of Orcha was called Ippo because born when the *mahua* tree (*ippa marra* in Maria) was in flower; Usendi Irka was born when the cucumbers (*irka*) were ripening in the *penda* fields; Usendi Ghasi was so named because, just before he was born, a *patwari* rode into Orcha and ordered his father Moda to go and cut grass (*ghas* in Halbi) for his pony. Oyami Gursha, headman of Komu, was born when his father and uncles were making a wicker-work bin (*gursha*) for storing grain. Yete Mura named his daughter Reko because she was born when the *reka marra* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) was in fruit. The third exception, which, like the first, indicates some belief, if not in reincarnation, at least in a previous existence, is the practice when a new-born baby cries loudly for three or four days of reciting to it all the names that the parents can remember and giving it the last name uttered before it stops crying, on the theory that it has stopped crying on recognizing its name. Normally, however, the name is not given till the child is two or three, and then depends on such things as whether it is fat or thin, slow or smart, learnt to walk or speak quickly, and so on. Thus a boy was named Morlel or 'hare' because he used to double suddenly like a hare when running about the village; Bunge is a name given to a boy with a huge stomach; Baiyya or 'mad' to a harum-scarum boy; Banga to a shy, untalkative child; and U'ile or 'thin' to a child thin through much illness in his early years.

[775]

551 177 Russell and Hiralal state (III, p. 87) of the Gond race as a whole that names derived from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and, on this assumption, actually suggest that perhaps the Gonds had not advanced to the stage of having individual names before they came into contact with the Hindus! This is certainly not true of either Hill or Bison-horn Marias. Of 103 male and 38 female Hill Maria names collected from 215 men and 107 women, and 103 male and 23 female Bison-horn Maria names collected from 236 men and 68 women, very few, not 5 per cent., were Hindu, the proportion of Hindu names being, as might be expected, slightly higher among the Bison-horn Marias. Only about 27 per cent. of the Hill Maria men's names and 8 per cent. of their women's names occur also, in the same or a modified form, in the lists of Bison-horn

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Maria names, though, of course, very few Bison-horn women's names were collected. A noticeable difference is the absence from the Hill Maria of names given according to the day of the week on which the person named was born, such as Budhi (Wednesday), Mangru (Tuesday) and Lakhmu (Thursday); it has already been noted that the Hill Marias have no names for the days of the week. 551 177

Weaning

A child is breast-fed until it can both walk and take its own food by hand, sometimes as long as three years. Unlike the Bison-horn Marias, the Hill Marias have no weaning ceremony. 862

Education

There is no system of training Hill Maria children corresponding to the *Gotul* or *Dormitory system of the Murias, except in the* northernmost Hill Maria *parganas* of Padalbhum and Nurbhum. In the greater part of the Maria country, children learn simply by accompanying and imitating their parents and the elder boys of the village. At night the boys who are old enough to leave their mothers sleep in the communal dormitory, and in the evenings they sit outside the dormitory round the fire with the men of the village. When the corn is ripening and the men sleep in the field-houses, in many villages the dormitory is closed, and the boys sleep with their fathers or elder brothers in the fields. Thus from his earliest days the child learns the routine of village and tribal life from constant association with his elders. He is made to do his share of the field work, and taught the use of the bow and arrow and the setting of snares. Children of six and seven of both sexes join in the village and clan dances, very quickly mastering the steps. We have seen how they use bamboo *pak-dol* drums to master the rhythm of drumming. In the ordinary hill village there is nothing corresponding to the Muria custom of the dormitory owning and cultivating a field or fields and applying the proceeds either to dormitory feasts or to the purchase of beads; but in the Barsur Mar villages and, therefore, probably elsewhere in the Abujhmar hills fathers encourage children to keep their own pigs, which they sometimes sell to procure money or grain for buying beads and knives. Girls similarly soon learn domestic routine from their constant association with their mothers. They cannot associate with boys in the manner of the Murias, among whom every girl must attend the boys' dormitory every night and has her own *gotul* 'boy-friend' to serve, since these *gotul* unions must be between couples who could legitimately marry under the rules of exogamy, and in nearly all Hill Maria villages all the boys and girls are of the same clan and therefore kindred. Yet the girls make bead fillets, ear-tassels and necklaces for the boys, and the latter carve wooden combs for the girls. 861

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

861 The complete *gotul* organization is a feature of Muria and not of Hill Maria culture. But as it has extended to Padalibhum and Nurbhum (possibly also to parts of Tapalibhum and Behra Mar) among the Hill Marias, a brief account of its salient features will not be out of place; it may be expected to spread into the hills with the gradual improvement of communications. A fairly full account from my notes on the Murias has been printed in the *Census of India* 1931 *Report*, Vol. I, Part III B., pp. 81-3. It may be added that it is easier for the Marias of Padalbhum to copy their Muria neighbours because Padalibhum not only has two or three villages which are not Padali villages but belong to the Nuroti and Usendi clans, but even in Padali villages has settlers of these two clans, which are *akomama* (wife-clan) to them.

[858] Boys and girls of an age to visit the *gotul* dormitories are known as *leyur* and *leyas* respectively. All the boys assemble at the 857 dormitory in the evening for dancing, games and social and sexual 571 training, sleeping on there after the departure of the girls to their homes late in the night. The girls attend at the dormitory in the 864 evening, each girl being paired off with a boy of an *akomama* clan. The girls have to comb their boys' hair and massage their arms and legs, to dance with them, and to be initiated into the mysteries of sex with them. Marriage frequently follows these dormitory unions, but by no means always does. Children are expected to attend the dormitory from the age of eleven or twelve, and the parents may be fined for not sending them. Every boy and girl has a special dormitory name or rank; the smaller children have designations which are little more than names, but those of the elder boys change as they are promoted, and involve special duties. The Hill Marias seem to have adopted the ranks for the boys only, the girls retaining the name given them on their entry until they leave the dormitory organization on marriage, but taking among their fellows the precedence of their boy-mates in the dormitory. In Padalibhum the head boy of the dormitory is always known as [171] the *leyur-gaita*, and below him the *gotul* officials are the *leyur-majhi*, the *silledar*, the *jaliarsi*, the *laharu*, the *baiddar* and the *kamdar*; of these, *silledar*, *baiddar* and *kamdar* are Hindi terms copied from the titles of State or zamindari servants; in many a Muria dormitory all the office-holders have such designations instead of the old native names. Besides these names or designations to which [557] special duties and privileges are attached, they have for the boys the names Jalka, Jolsai and Joria, and probably others. The girls' dormitory names ascertained were Jaliaru, Lahari, Manjaro, Nirosa, Jhalo, Gujaro, Piyosa and Belosa. At a camp at Partabpur attended by Hill Marias from Padalibhum, the *leyur-gaita* of three

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *wraskal*.

On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *wraskal* menhir. There are *wraskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs. On the Jagdalpur side, however, and around Paknar, though every village has its *wraskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kutki*, *wad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[See cat. 116, p. 426, — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

themselves socially they not only cease to follow old Maria customs, but begin to resent being called Marias and to claim the designation of Muria. In some places, especially in villages where it is hard to find suitable menhir stones, they erect in their stead posts of *saja* wood, which they call *wrazgatta*. The upper illustration on plate XXI shows a very elaborate *wrazgatta* from a roadside village near the Chitrakot falls, on the northernmost fringe of the Bison-horn country. It is carved on each of its carefully squared sides with representations of hunting scenes, and the objects of the chase. Originally these were picked out in red and blue paint. Plate XXII shows part of a large row of *wraskal* menhirs by the side of the road from Dantewara to Kameli, at the foot of the bridle-path ascending to the Bailadila guest-house; such enormous menhirs as those shown behind the women in this illustration are seldom set up in these days; the tallest shown was thirteen feet high, and the broadest over six feet wide at the base. The normal size of those nowadays erected is shown in the lower illustration on plate XXI; this portrays part of the *wraskal* of Aranpur village, by the side of the forest road from Kuakonda to Dummagudem, and at the head of the Aranpur pass. In this photograph the interesting thing is the large flat stone resting on four boulders. This is known as a *dawya-kal*, and was placed there as the memorial of Birya-Marvi Hurra Wadde, who in his life-time was *parma* and *bhum-gaita* of Aranpur, as well as a *wadde*. The Birya-Marvi and the Kuhrami clans are the only two which always make *dawyakal* and never set up *wraskal* stones; all the other clans, even in the Marvi and Kuhrami phratries, and including the small or Chudala Marvi clan, erect *wraskal* stones. This Aranpur *wraskal* was not restricted to the Birya-Marvi clan, although the village was founded by that clan; the *dawyakal* stone on the right edge of the photograph was the last stone at the south end of the row; next to it on the north were fifteen *wraskal* stones of the Kunjami clan, and after them three of the Chudala Marvi clan. The small stones at the foot of the menhirs are known as *kawal-kutul* or ghost stools, and serve the same function as the *kawal-garya* cromlechs of the Hill Marias. Any recently erected stone can usually be detected either by the presence of a cow's or pig's tail hung over its apex by a loop of cord, or by the dirty white stains of libations of *lauda* poured over the stone when it was set up.

The stone is selected and carried from the quarry to the place where it is to be erected in much the same way as that already described for the Hill Marias. I use the word quarry advisedly, for these great slabs or pillars cannot be found as surface boulders. I have not seen the actual quarrying; but they understand how to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

841 or fowls. She must not take grain from the bins or approach the Hearth of the Departed. Except at the menarche, however, she may fetch wood and leaves which may be used by other members of the household; she may fish so long as it is not in a pond; she may even dance so long as it is not at a Penkarsita and she does not touch any man.

When I was taking photographs in Maria villages I frequently came up against these taboos. At Mokhpal I was unable to photograph a girl with strikingly Mongolian features because she was in her period—the people seemed genuinely afraid that the menstrual exhalations would break the lens. At Tikanpal, where I wanted to stage a group of girls making leaf-cups, I was not permitted to do so because one of them was in her period and must not sit on a mat. At Doriras a married girl refused to be photographed standing in front of the girls' dormitory because menstruating women were accustomed to sleep there.

During a wife's period a husband is subject to the laws of a 'little couvade'. No one will eat from his hands; no one will accept tobacco from his pouch. He must not cook or fetch water. He too must not go to the grain bins or approach the symbols of the Departed. He may go to a shrine, but he must not enter it; he may cut his clearing, but he must not fire it or sow seed. He may not hunt, carry a *kawar*-pole, climb a tree, cut grass or reap a crop. If he is a Perma or Gaita he may not perform any religious rite, and if he is a Gunia he cannot divine the cause of sickness.

842 It is generally believed by the Marias, as by the rest of India, that a woman is most likely to conceive if she has intercourse on the day she has her ceremonial bath at the close of the period.

836 As by other aboriginals the climacteric is accepted by the Marias as a matter of course. 'As it appears, so it disappears.' If an elderly woman or her husband dreams of a dried-up tank or stream, it means that this crisis is approaching.

V

843 Pregnancy is diagnosed by the cessation of the menses, vomiting, swelling of the breasts and a darkening of the nipples. 'The face dries a little.' It is generally supposed that a boy is more exacting and makes the mother look fragile and exhausted, while a girl keeps her fresh and well.

843 177 During pregnancy, Bison-horn Maria taboos are not exacting and my suspicion is that originally they were as few and as casual as those of the Hill Maria, and that any elaboration is due to the influence of the local Hindus who, on the whole, pay more attention to the pregnancy than to the menstrual taboos. In other words,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *bauhinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bhimsul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

These pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. They are usually made of the wood of *terminalia tomentosa* or *shorea robusta* and are erected with ceremonies similar to those used for a menhir. 764 [824]

As far as I know, the pillars are always made by non-aboriginals, but since the Marias give their instructions to the carpenters about the patterns they want carved, they do thus throw some light on Maria psychology even if they do not illustrate their sense of art. For example, the pillar in memory of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar was made by Bharto, an Oriya carpenter of Jagdalpur. The pillars for Barse Marka at Barrem and for Marvi Masa at Jabeli were both made by Anda Kalar of Potali. For Barse Marka's pillar his sister's son gave a bull calf worth twenty rupees, cloth worth five rupees, two rupees in cash and daily rations for the fifteen days while the carpenter was working. 764 532 [435]

There was a fine pillar to a wealthy Maria named Muchaki Hunga near Dilmilli on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. It is a fat, thick pillar, carefully squared, standing some fifteen feet high with elaborate carvings round the base and a decoration of crocodiles and pigeons at the top. The whole is surmounted by a trident, obviously suggested by the carpenter, and on this again is a small bird. On the west face of the pillar there are carvings of dancers wearing bison horns and six girls who are realistically portrayed with breasts and genitalia. Below them is a tiger, a crane and a peacock. On the south side is a picture of the dead man riding an elephant, an umbrella in his hand and bags of money at the saddle. Five women follow him with pots of rice-beer and spoons. Below them are rats. At the foot are men ploughing, deer and tigers. On the east side is a man riding a horse and fish, horses and a tortoise. To the north is a man and wife with their children, a gourd for taking beer from a pot and representations of snakes and birds. Below this are two pairs of dogs apparently copulating, and at the very bottom some men are carrying a pot of rice-beer.

Near the pillar is a grave built up in the modern Hinduized fashion and protected by a little shed. [177]

Near Massenar, at the end of a long row of *wasikal* menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa. This is much more slender than the one at Dilmilli and is not so well carved. But it has carvings of Kopa himself on his elephant with the inevitable umbrella, a gun and a tobacco pouch. On his chest is a small circle which I was told represented his Jubilee Medal. The pillar is further decorated with carvings of men dancing with the bison-horn head-dress, boys and girls dancing with a pot of rice-beer, a man trying to drag away a girl by the hand, crocodiles,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It is remarkable, to contrast the effect on the tribal population 565
of Ahiri of two influences, that of the zamindar and his administra- 177
tion at Ahiri and that of the Allapilli forest depot. The zamindar as a practising Raj-Gond, related both to the former royal house of Chanda and to the neighbouring zamindari families of Kutru and Bhopalpatnam in Bastar State, might be expected to be in some sense a focus or rallying point of tribal culture. But he and his relatives and agents (so far as the latter are Gond) are representatives of what Verrier Elwin describes as culturally the fourth class of aboriginals, the old aristocracy of the country who 'retain the old tribal name and their clan and totem rules and observe elements of tribal religion though they generally adopt the full Hindu faith and live in modern and even in European style'. He adds that the members of this fourth class may be said to have won the battle of culture-contact, since 'aristocratic tradition, economic stability or affluence, outside encouragement, a certain arrogance and self-confidence characteristic alike of ancient families and modern enterprise, have enabled them to assimilate the blessings of civilization without injury to themselves'; but he wisely reminds us that 'such educated progressive persons are not necessarily, simply because they are of aboriginal stock, the best qualified to represent their poorer brethren, of whose needs they often have only an elementary knowledge'.[1] The zamindar of Ahiri at least on the economic side has done much to preserve his tribal ryots from the evil effects of such sudden contacts as have reduced to 'despair and degradation' Elwin's third class of aboriginals, 'those who under the influence of external contact have begun to lose their hold on tribal culture, religion and social organization'.[2] He has accordingly himself been active in efforts to save his people from alien money-lenders, and was, for example, an active and valuable member of a voluntary debt conciliation board that worked in Sironcha tahsil in 1935-6.[3] Yet the fact that Ahiri, as the headquarters of the estate administration, especially when the estate has been under the Court of Wards, has become a centre of the modern way of life, has brought to Ahiri and Allapilli and all the adjacent villages a steady influx of outsiders, mostly Hindu, as officials, contractors, cloth and salt dealers, money-lenders and cultivators. The Dasehra festival, attended by ryots from all villagers coming to honour the zamindar as their Raja, has accustomed even remote Maria villagers to certain fundamental Hindu ideas. The Court of Wards administration has proceeded on its ruthless, standardized lines, to impose on the

[1] The quotations are from *The Aboriginals* (Oxford Pamphlet on India Affairs, No. 14, Bombay, 1943), pp. 10-11.
[2] Ibidem, p. 10.
[3] *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 283-6.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

565 177 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally therefore on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 466 166 The Allapilli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen, etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

622 791 [1] For example, the suppression of *podu* cultivation, or the deliberate curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

> 'The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village; sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*. Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> 'This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official, and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 735 economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again.'[2]

● 177 291 Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

342 The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

273 656 [405] On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa*.
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

pen corresponding in number to the number of gods of the god-group, and apparently no domestic cult except of the Departed. As you go northwards beyond Surjagarh or north-westwards towards Chand the Marias begin to understand the meaning of god-grouping and of *shoulder pen*, but even there seemed to me—admittedly my enquiries were superficial—to have no such vital interest in these things as a typical Raj-Gond or Dhurve Gond. This would be explicable on a theory that this god-grouping was something gradually imposed, not necessarily deliberately, but by infiltration and imitation, by the Gonds of the ruling house of Chanda and the aristocratic Gond zamindars, under the feudal system grouped about the Chanda Maharaja, upon the whole 'Maria' substratum of the Gonds of Chanda. The Marias probably represent one or two early waves of Gond migration southwards or, at least the Hill Marias, an earlier pre-Gond race with Veddid, Malid or Munda affinities.[1] There are differences between Chanda Hill Maria and plains Maria speech, the former being as guttural as Bastar Hill Maria; but all Chand Marias speak a form of Gondi very different from the Gondi of the Raj and Dhruve Gonds of Chanda, which would support the view that the latter represent different waves of migration, later moreover in view of their very advanced social and political organisation and their aristocratic elements: compare also the position of the Pardhan bards and musicians in Raj-Gond life with their rarity in Maria villages. It is probable also that the ancestors of many who now are called Raj-Gonds a few generations back were Maria. The *Gazetteer*[2] mentions that though Marias do not now (1909) intermarry with Raj-Gonds, the records of the Ahiri family show that they once did so. The very term Raj-Gond in my view, as expressed on page 36, arose from the process still common whereby [177] as sections of aboriginal tribes became Hinduised or acquired political power they distinguish themselves from the main body of their original tribe, so as to fit into the caste system. There can be little doubt that as the Raj-Gond kingdom of Chanda grew in power leading local Gond or Maria headmen or elders who fitted into the social organisation of the kingdom came to be regarded as Raj-Gond: compare also the discussion earlier in this Note[3] of the meaning of the term 'Maria' and its disappearance in Drug district terminology in very recent times.[4] What, therefore, could be more

[1] Comparable with, for example, the Kolams of Hyderabad and Berar, or the Hill Reddis of Hyderabad, Madras and Orissa. The late Bishop Wood on hearing Bastar Marias talk said that to him it sounded like Gondi spoken with Mundari accent and intonation. See also R. C. Roy on pp. 317-18.

[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909) p. 101

[3] P. 377.

[4] P. 378.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to be a definite infiltration of Bison-horn Maria influences from Bastar. The illustration in this Supplement shows some of the Lahiri Maria girls and gives some indication of the quantity and Bison-horn style of the ornaments.

Before climbing to Kuvakodi I had sent some Marias up the valley to Nugur village in Kutru Mar, on the Indrawati banks, to invite to my camp the Kuruk boatmen who had taken Dr. Mitchell and myself in their canoes in November 1927, down the river from Nugur to the Jitam rapids.[1] Tati Ogha and Rajintappa, the leaders of our 1927 ' fleet ', and several of the boatmen arrived at Lahiri that evening, and recognized me, after thirteen years, with tears of joy. They were received and made at home with the utmost courtesy—that almost stately courtesy so characteristic of the Gond, whether of Marias at a feast or of Betul Gonds receiving the bride's party at the bridegroom's village; although the Bastar Hill Marias look down on Kuruks or ' Jharaman ' (netters), the Lahiri headmen could not do enough for these Kuruks, giving them the best of the food, refilling their leaf-cups with *mahua* spirit, and showing a real delight when I tied a *pagri* on each Kuruk's head, and presented them with cloth and beads, while they insisted on the strangers getting the best places from which to watch the dancing.

The motor journey from Lahiri to Surjagarh, about 59 miles in all, involved a return on our outward tracks through Bhamragarh to a point three miles east of Pirmeli, thence roughly north or north-west through Kandar, Burgi and Markel villages to Chukmitapalli, and thence due east through Hitawara to Surjagarh; despite a very early start we reached Surjagarh after dark, thanks to ' receptions ' in every intervening village and, above all, to delays for treating yaws patients. All these Maria villages have excellent human material, and some surprises for the visitor. At Burgi, for example, a boy dashed off to his house to emerge as a uniformed boy scout! Some years before an attempt to start a boy scout movement in Ahiri zamindari had met with some initial success, but had apparently died out. Yet this boy had carefully preserved his uniform in a leaf-box, and, more hopeful, he and some other boys had preserved the memory of the lessons they had had on cleanliness and hygiene and in a minor way were still influencing the villages to carry out what they had learnt. It is often assumed that the Marias and similar men of the backwoods have never seen anything of the outer world. Comparable with the visit of a party of Bastar Hill Marias to the Allahabad Exhibition mentioned on page 71, was the fact that this boy and some other Maria youths had been taken two or three years before to a scout jamboree at Delhi. When I asked

[1] See p. 164.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

him his chief impression of Delhi, he spoke of the Kutb Minar, which he told me was almost as fine and tall as the factory chimney of the Allapilli saw-mills! Either at Burgi or the next village another phenomenon was a Maria in a good tweed coat above khaki shorts and stockings with flashes, wearing over all an excellent fawn Curzon topi with a dark brown pugaree, far smarter than I have ever owned. I discovered that his clothes had all been given him by the zamindari of Ahiri, when he had become a member of the Sironcha Independent Local Board. That night, still in his fine feathers, he came to see the dancing in my camp at Surjagarh: but as the drumming swelled and the dances warmed up he found himself unable to keep up the detachment appropriate to his pseudo-*sahib* status, and gradually divested himself of topi, coat, shirt and shoes, finally peeling off his shorts to reveal beneath them the usual abbreviated loin-cloth of the Maria, seizing a drum, and joining in the dance: he was then indistinguishable from any other Maria but for his air of authority as a headman, and his 'undress' was typically Maria, as described in the *Gazetteer*[1]:—

> 'Their dress is scanty, consisting of a compromise between a *langoti* and a *dhoti*, a strip of cloth wound tightly round the waist in rope-like folds and passed between the legs with the spare end hanging down in front below the knees. Often this garment diminishes to the scantiest rag. They adorn their necks with handsome strings of beads and their arms occasionally with metal and glass bangles. Their ears are pulled out of shape by the weight of numerous brass rings with which they are usually garnished, and occasionally they wear *pagris*.'

This Independent Local Board for the Sironcha taluq consisted then of eighteen members, of whom only six were aboriginals, although there were 3,354 aboriginal to 2,850 non-aboriginal voters. The aboriginal members were almost all returned unopposed, and were *de facto* the nominees of the zamindar, who had had to use his full influence to persuade them to join this peculiar body! It was in the circumstances no surprise discovery that the open, mainly non-aboriginal, country around Sironcha and Ahiri got far more benefit from the Board's expenditure and services than the wild interior of Ahiri zamindari. But the Maria members were utterly illiterate and at sea in the Board meetings. It was the zamindar's influence alone that secured for the Maria areas such services as the Board gave them. Nevertheless, the mere fact that there is an independent local authority for Sironcha tahsil secures that at least this tahsil does get spent on it all that it pays in cesses and other local taxes, and a fair share of Government grants to local bodies, in marked contrast to the fate of the zamindaris of Garchiroli tahsil, who come under the tender mercies of the Chanda District Council

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the later waves of Gonds and Raj-Gonds which set up the kingdom of the Gond Maharajas of Chanda. It would be very interesting also to see whether anything survives of the peculiarly Hill Maria and Muria cult of the clan-god as distinct from the more developed religious system of the Raj-Gonds, with its wonderful foundation of myth, the full richness and religious and cultural significance of which the world will begin to realize when Haimendorf's epoch-making book on the Raj-Gonds of Adilabad is published in the near future, and when it is followed up by similar detailed investigation of Gond life and custom in all parts of Gondwana. How far there is any common mythological basis of Raj-Gond and Maria culture would be a factor of great significance. I am conscious that the weakest side of this book has been its failure to probe into the mythology and folk-songs of the Bastar Marias. I do not believe Hill Maria culture to be nearly as rich in that respect as Muria culture is shown to be by Verrier Elwin's book, *The Muria and their Ghotul*. Yet there must be more to be said of the folk-tales and mythology of the Marias of Bastar than has appeared in the first edition of this book; indeed the second section of Elwin's Comment in this edition gives some indication of the wealth of Maria myth awaiting record in Bastar.

Another question clearly needing investigation is the extent to which the *gotul* as an institution is a real factor in Chanda Maria life. I have implied in this Note that it survives, but is gradually being relegated into obscurity as a result of the impact of Hindu ideas and of Hindu ridicule. That would, however, apply more in the northern zamindaris than in the country along the Bastar border from the River Indrawati north to Jharapapra. This part of Ahiri zamindari is landlocked and largely protected from the influx of Hindu ideas save in so far as these are brought in by zamindari and government subordinates. The fact moreover that the *Sendhia* and *patti panchayat* organization is still vigorous in Ahiri zamindari should be an indication that there has been no psychological inhibition on these Marias preserving their tribal life and cultural inheritance unimpaired. It would be interesting, however, to trace the outer boundaries of the *gotul* system and to see what has happened to it, when, and why, in these outer fringes.

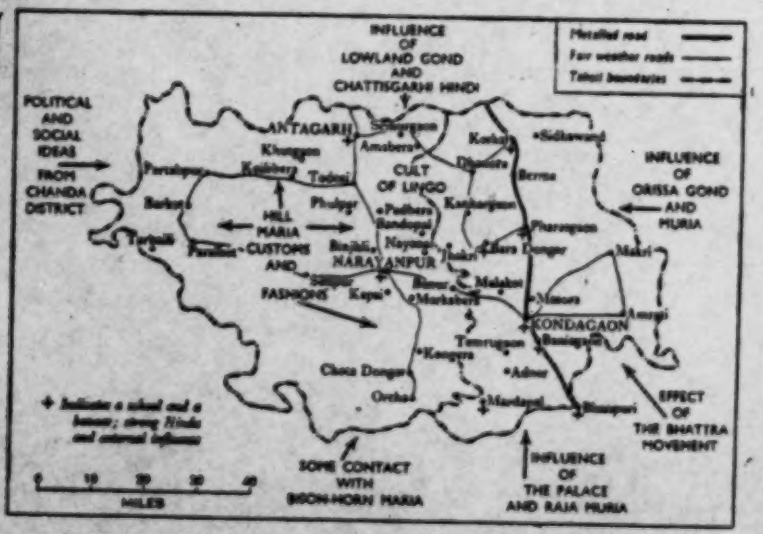
This Note is stronger in its picture of economic conditions. Here the most significant fact has been the banning of *jalapod* or shifting cultivation during and after the Great War of 1914-18. One would like, given the time and opportunity, to get at the psychological reaction of the Maria to this as expressed in his folk-songs; one would like also to be able to go through the records of criminal

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

celebrations in Jagdalpur. Many—but not all—of these people are aboriginal in everything but name; in feature, colour, dress and manners they are hardly to be distinguished from their Muria neighbours.

The Lohar living in Muria villages are generally tribal Lohar, not members of the great Hindu caste that bears this name. Muria and Maria who take to iron-work are separated from the rest of the tribe and have now been formed into an endogamous community of their own. The Muria generally regard the Muria-Lohar as somewhat inferior, but their antagonism does not go so far as to ban Lohar boys and girls from the ghotul. In 1941 there were 7877 Lohar in the whole State and 2718 in the two Muria tahsils.



SKETCH-MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCES AFFECTING THE LIFE AND CUSTOMS OF THE MURIA

Many *Kalar* are obviously aboriginals who have taken to the liquor business. Well-to-do Muria occasionally take contracts for distilling and selling mahua spirit. There are 13,451 Kalar in the whole State.

The Ghasia, of whom there are only 1704, are regarded with considerable scorn by the aboriginals who suspect them of desecrating their graves to obtain the 'grave-furniture' buried with the corpses. Yet they owe much to this caste, which is responsible for making, by the *cire-perdue* process, the brass images and horns used in Muria worship, buttock-bells for dancing and ladles for serving liquor.

The Pardhan. There are only a few members of this most interesting tribe, allied to but distinct from the Gond, in Bastar. But there is a Pardhan

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*kotul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

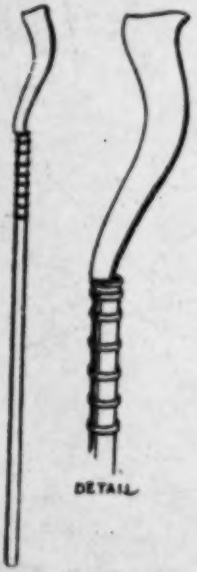


FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchelar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

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Muria

to its prey, to protect the boys and girls going out on dancing expeditions, to ensure that the drum gives its accustomed thunder. Life and death are thus united by these beliefs and rites, and the whole of existence is seen as a single sequence where physical death is but an incident which in no way disturbs the continuity of interest or relationship. 769

V. Funerary Rites

In the west, Muria death customs are dominated by Hill Maria influence. In Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria said that their funerary rites were 'things of the Maria Raj'. As we move east, where the Muria population probably represents an earlier Gond immigration from the north, customs are not unlike those typical of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The north-east of Bastar, however, has been more open to Hindu influence and it is not always easy to tell what the original traditions were. 764 177

The Muria bury important people, little children, chelik and motiari, and the victims of small-pox. They cremate all others. They lay the corpse, whether of man or woman, on its back with the head to the east. At Padbera, the Gaita said, 'It is because we came from the east. East is "up" and west is "down".' 764 766

Members of each clan and either sex are disposed in separate places. Those who die from unusual causes are taken far away into the jungle. In Palari I was told that the remains of a tiger's victim should be burnt on the actual scene of death. Usually the corpse is placed under a mahua tree. 764

I will first describe one of the several funerals that I have witnessed, and then give any variations that I have recorded elsewhere.

On the night of 8 December 1940, in Bauri, a village of the Abujhmar foothills, a woman of about forty years named Dhako, the wife of Genjru of the Wadder clan, died and was carried home on a rough litter to her husband's house at Amgaon. She had died of 'a watery swelling of the body', perhaps dropsy, which is generally regarded as a punishment for adultery. The people were very reticent about speaking of the cause of her death and I never was able to hear the real story.

Since it is taboo for a woman to sleep on a cot, Dhako died on the ground and was again laid on the floor of her own house covered with a sheet. Many women, assembled in the house and outside in the street, wailed loudly from time to time. Gradually the relatives gathered and, when all were there, the corpse was carried out on a bamboo mat into the courtyard. Six women sat round weeping. An old woman of the Wadder clan (which can marry with the Partabi clan to which the dead woman originally belonged), but not a member of the family, now tied a little rice and a cowrie in knots on either side of the cloth. There were three knots on each side joined by a thread which ran criss-cross over the body. They did not bathe the corpse nor close the eyes, but the woman's little daughter, a child about five years old, put haldi on her mother's face, and the other female relatives present did the same.

Meanwhile a group of chelik, most of whom were related to Genjru, were busy making a sort of ladder to serve as bier. This they covered with dry grass. The corpse was lifted out and placed upon it. The chelik took it on their shoulders and went into the jungle followed by both men and women. Genjru's younger sister followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice over it. Another woman carried a basket containing three different roots and bits of haldi.

2: Elwin .E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

her catamenial period, and so Pendrawandin is considered by many an untouchable goddess. 776

The famous Kanda Dokara, father of Lingo, came into being in a very simple way. This is the story they tell at Kuntpadar. 773

> There were seven brothers and their wives. One day the women went to the jungle for grass to make brooms. Six of them made big bundles and put them on their heads to carry home, but the youngest wife only made a very small bundle and was unable to lift it. She called the others and they could not lift it either. Then she said, 'Whether you are god or devil, let me lift this bundle and when I get home I'll give you food-sacrifice'.
>
> When she reached home she was afraid that her husband would be angry with her for bringing such a small bundle, so she threw it into the pigsty. When her husband asked her where her grass was, she said, 'Who knows what was the matter; there was some god or ghost in it; I threw it into the pigsty'. The husband went laughing to get it, but when he too could not lift it up, he said, 'If you are really a god, give me a son'. Then he undid the grass and found inside a root, and they all worshipped it. Afterwards the Muria had twelve sons, the eldest of whom was Kanda Dokara and the youngest Lingo. He used to carry the root with him as a weapon. This is why we swear by the grass in a broom and use it to find out why we are ill and where our cattle have strayed.

Such is a typical account of the origin of the gods. There is a difficulty: sometimes it is an epidemic, sometimes it is some lighter matter as in the story I have just recounted. But always the god manifests himself by causing some hitch in the smooth working of human life. In Adner in 1940, there was an outbreak of cattle disease and the Siraha-mediums declared that a new god had been born, and was not receiving his due honour. A great festival, which I will presently describe, was held to appease the affronted deity and stop the disease.

Any strange or inexplicable event may bring a new god into being; the subdivisions of clans, the migration of peoples, the desire to imitate the Hindus are equally potent in the creation of gods. We must now consider the nature of these gods and who they are.

III. The Nature of the Gods

776
[524]

There is only one tree, but it gives many kinds of leaves—
A god (deo) that causes many kinds of trouble.—Muria riddle.

The gods of the Muria, as we have seen, are many and varied. The majority of them are, I think, comparatively modern. Some have been imported, some are the result of Hindu influence, some have come into being as a result of dreams, some at a magician's whim. It is only the Earth, the Dead, the clan-god and the Maharaja which are ancient and fundamental to Muria worship and belief. [171]

But many other gods are worshipped, the extent of their cult and the notice they receive depending on the instructions given by the Siraha from time to time. For just as Muria ceremonies are not arranged in a precise formulary but rather make up a repertory from which the priest on the instructions of the Siraha will draw what he requires, so also the vast pantheon of the Muria may be regarded as a sort of repertory of deities out of which, from

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Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

In a certain number of ghotul, particularly those all round the boundary of the Muria area, where the villagers have come under strong Chhattisgarhi and Oriya or Jagdalpur influence, the girls probably never sleep in the ghotul, but this is the sort of thing about which it is impossible to be sure. In some Hindu villages also, where there is only a small Muria population, the motiari return home regularly in order to avoid the ridicule of their Hindu neighbours. This is particularly true of the north and east of the Kondagaon Tahsil.

In some villages the ghotul has been abandoned altogether. The reasons for this vary. In the south-east of Kondagaon, where many of the Muria in villages approaching the borders of Jagdalpur Tahsil are becoming Bhattra, they naturally have given up the ghotul as an institution. In Kanera, for example, where the Bhattra movement is strong, there is no ghotul building though the boys sleep together in somebody's house and the girls still come to dance and to massage them. In the Amrati and Makri Parganas a number of villages have gone Bhattra with a consequent closing of the ghotul.

Then throughout the Mardapal Pargana, except in one or two villages, Esalnar for example, there have been no ghotul within living memory. This is more curious because the Mardapal Pargana is closely linked to the Chota Dongar and other Jhoria Parganas. The boys and girls dress and dance in Jhoria fashion; they have the same games; they go to the same festivals as the chelik and motiari of the villages to the north and west of them, but they do not have the ghotul system.

Sometimes magic or the fear of it is the cause of a dormitory being abandoned. There is no ghotul in Barbatta, for at one time many of the chelik and motiari died of an epidemic. It is said, however, that they still sleep together in a private house in the village. In Barkai a jealous Kalarin witch made black magic against the ghotul and many of the boys and girls were taken ill. They made the necessary sacrifices and all was well for two months. They fell ill again and this time they built a new ghotul, but there was still trouble. So now the dormitory is closed altogether. At Lihagaon continued epidemics, which naturally spread quickly in the confined conditions of the dormitory, combined with several scandals, resulted in the abandonment of any special building, though the chelik and motiari continue much of their life without it. At Morohnar, the Malik made his motiari pregnant and went to live in Kanera. At Kanera he eloped with another girl and married her. 'This angered the gods, and the chelik and motiari of Morohnar fell ill.' The ghotul was shut for two months, re-opened, the members fell ill again, and it was finally closed.

Sometimes outside interference is the cause. At Dahikonga, the Hindu landlord forced the Muria to destroy their ghotul. At Selnar, where there is a primary school, the teachers have succeeded in driving the ghotul life underground and all that clean, healthy, happy existence has yielded to furtive meetings on verandahs and in the fields. In Pendrawand, the ghotul was closed under the influence of outsiders from across the border, but the boys and girls use a dilapidated Thana-gudi when it is unoccupied.[1]

[1] Somewhat similar causes have led to the abandonment of the *dhumkuria* dormitories in several Uraon villages. In Kumbhar Tola, a Hinduized Uraon village only four miles from Ranchi, there was no *dhumkuria*. In a village near the Jashpur border, where there was a large Church, and in another village near Lohadaga, the people professed that they had not even heard the word *dhumkuria* and an elderly Uraon became quite offensive at the suggestion that there was such a thing in his village. At Agru I saw the ruined building of a dormitory which had been abandoned, because they could not afford, so they said, to replace the roof. But since at Agru there was a fine dancing-floor, there was probably some other reason—a mysterious death, or a scandal—which accounted for the *dhumkuria*'s collapse. Roy says that 'in one village we were told that long ago a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

X 883 with flour. At Karanji the Sirdar and Baidar had to escort the motiari when they went to the forest to gather leaves for plates and cups, and the Jamadar had to arrange for small boys and girls to carry the drums when they went to some other village for a dance. At Baniagaon, the Matatgar had to look after the drums; the Baidarin arranged how the motiari were to comb and massage the boys in the evenings; the Kotwar and Chalan were the lawyers who regularly appeared to defend girls accused of some breach of ghotul discipline.

X 883 539 In a song recorded at Gawari, there is a reference to the duty of the Jaramkal and Supedar, who in this ghotul have to escort the girls when they go to fetch leaves. This is the Aking Koyana Karse Pata and, as they sing it, the motiari pretend to be picking leaves.

Sir pula helo dori ned weke dākāt roy sango ned weke dākāt roy?	Where are you going today, friends?
Sir pula helo dori marm āking dākāt roy sango marm āking dākāt roy.	We are going to pick leaves for the wedding.
Sir pula helo dori won tori oykāt roy sango won tori oykāt roy?	Who are you taking with you, friends?
Sir pula helo dori jaramkal supedār sango jaramkal supedār roy.	We are taking Jaramkal and Supedar.

X 883 551 In some ghotul, boys' titles are given to girls. At Taragaon and Atargaon, the two leading girls are called Malik and Chalan; they are the 'ghotul wives' of boy-leaders bearing the same names. At Rengagondi, the three chief girls are called Malik, Kotwar and Chalau for the same reason. In Nariha, the girls' leader is called Chalau. These villages are in the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas, and the custom seems confined to that area. But in ghotul, especially in the neighbourhood of Kondagaon, where the boys and girls 'pair off', it is not uncommon (as we have already seen at Esalnar) for girls to take names which are really equivalent to the English 'Mrs'. Thus, in Pirapal and Haddigaon, girls are called Kotwarin (or Mrs Kotwar, the ghotul-wife of the Kotwar), Supedarin (or Mrs Supedar) and Mukhwanin.

X 883 551 177 The ghotul titles are linguistically a very mixed collection. A. N. Mitchell, who has traced the derivation and meanings of a list drawn from over a hundred ghotul in every part of the Muria area, has derived them from Urdu, Hindi, Halbi, Gondi and English. The English titles are generally corruptions of names used by State officials; thus Captan, or Captain, is the name by which the State Superintendent of Police is usually known in the villages; Engineer is the head of the P.W.D.; Dakdar is the local Assistant Surgeon; Orsel is the Overseer of work on the roads. Urdu and Hindi titles for excise, revenue and military officers are common, and so are the Hindi titles for such subordinates as the constable, watchman, headman, or forest-guard. It is curious that the title Kotwar, which in Muria villages is often held by a despised Ganda or Mahara, is in the ghotul usually an indication of importance.

X 883 551 Gondi names are more common among girls than boys. Among boys' titles we may notice Belumdar, owner of a *bāri* or garden, Ghotulsai—lord of the ghotul, Neliya—a good fellow, and the very common variants of Laharu which seems to imply in Gondi a 'dandy' or Don Juan, the word being derived from the Hindi *lahariya*, striped cloth, the wearing of which is regarded as very fast and 'advanced'. Some of the Gondi titles seem more like nicknames than anything else—thus Uden or Kude, meaning someone who sits down

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

boys and girls. They dance clasped in each other's arms; they go about together, chelik with his arm round the neck of motiari. How revealing are Plates LXXV and XCI. In one a chelik lies on a cot with his arm on his motiari's shoulder, while she sits almost on top of him making leaves. They were not posed for the photo, and they showed no embarrassment at my approach with the mysterious camera, even though they were from a village I did not know well. In the other Plate two chelik and a motiari are listening to the gramophone outside my tent. They are completely absorbed in it and in each other. One of the boys embraces the girl with both his arms. You would not see this natural innocence in the more 'advanced' parts of aboriginal India.

But this refreshing freedom never degenerates into immodesty in public. It would be unthinkable for a chelik to dance naked—as I have seen older men do—in the presence of women or of his elders. The motiari never indulge in the cheerful vulgarity of the old women at a wedding. A chelik never catches hold of a girl immodestly in general company, though he will embrace her and walk with his arms about her. The great festival dances, though the air is full of romantic suggestion and the older men dance with the greatest licence, are conducted by chelik and motiari with complete decorum.

The sympathetic reader will realize how hopeless it is to bring our cut-and-dried judgments of sexual morality to bear upon a situation such as this. But he will also realize that even on his own standards the ghotul cannot be called immoral in the sense that it has no rules or laws or that it ignores those it has. Its regulations are as far-reaching and as strict as our own, and they are often better kept. For the rules are not imposed from without, but have been made by the ghotul-members themselves. Thus they are reasonable, adapted to the actual situation, and so easy to obey.

It is curious that while a Western visitor to a Muria village, if he is of a Puritan turn, will probably be chiefly concerned about the pre-nuptial relations of the children, the Hindu visitor—who is, of course, by far the more frequent—will be scandalized by the casual attitude of the Muria towards cows. Many years ago earnest efforts were made by Hindu reformers in the State to stop cow-sacrifice, and still today—though the majority of State officials preserve an admirable restraint in interfering with tribal customs—landlords, merchants, schoolmasters and travellers do what they can to put an end to the practice. But, except for a few centres where Hindu influence is strong, bulls and cows continue to be sacrificed and eaten all over the northern part of the State. The Muria cannot believe that this is wrong, for the gods demand it. There is nothing in their culture or mythology to forbid it—and indeed we here have a good example of the difficulty of importing a new idea into a system that has no provision for it. Yet if the Muria ever does ponder about 'moral' problems it is this that perplexes him and not any question about pre-nuptial chastity.

Stealing is generally condemned, but it is licensed on some special occasions. The chelik are expected to steal a cock when they take the newly-wedded bride and bridegroom to bed; they appear to have similar licence when they perform ceremonial dances round the village.

The incidence of crime is very low. An experienced police officer, who had served in the ghotul area for twelve years, told me that in all this time there had been no case of murder, riot, assault, hurt, or rape in connexion with the ghotul. There has not been a single case of rape against a Muria, though non-aboriginals have been arrested for raping Muria women. It is a remarkable thing that most of the crime in the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils occurs

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

considered the psychological aspect of the matter.' The *morung*, in Mills' view, takes the place of the father as a disciplinarian and thus relieves for the Naga one of the 'great stresses of the family complex'.[1] 'It is unfortunate', says J. H. Hutton, 'that the change of faith which attends missionary effort should lead to the abandonment of art in wood-carving, dancing, song (hymns, of course, excepted), and ornament, while even more serious perhaps in the Assam Hills is the Christian opposition to the institution of the bachelors' house, where the male youths of the tribe are educated in the conduct and the traditions which enable them to live a life suited to their environment and to continue the social organization on which the communal life of the village depends. The inevitable result is the disintegration of the village community and the sacrifice of communal to personal interests.'[2]

In Bastar, the ghotul may in years to come be threatened not so much by missionaries as by well-meaning but rather unintelligent social reformers and politicians in a hurry. It is doubtful also how long this aboriginal fortress will be able to hold out, not against true civilization, but against that parody of it which characterises the low-caste non-aboriginal villages of the vicinity.

Even if the ghotul were something far less valuable, instead of being the focus of all that is most vital in Muria life, interference with it would be undesirable. Any who wish to 'improve' or 'uplift' such people as the Muria should consider the wise words of Henry Balfour:

> The decay of old customs too often involves for the [people] loss of pride and interest in themselves and their past traditions; virility gives way to listlessness and apathy, a state which is now recognized as one of the potent factors in promoting depopulation. The arbitrary suppression of all traditional customs, ceremonies, and dances . . . is a short-sighted and retrograde policy. It strikes at the root of practically the whole social structure of the people, and its effects are apt to prove disastrous.[3]

The village dormitory is a symptom of a certain stage of cultural development. We ourselves consider that we have outgrown it; we may grow into it again. In the days when I shared the free and happy life of the Muria I used sometimes to wonder whether I was a hundred years behind the times or a hundred years ahead. I do not suggest that we should replace the Public Schools by ghotul and turn our own children into chelik and motiari, but I do suggest that there are elements in ghotul life and teaching which we should do well to ponder and that an infection of the Muria spirit would do few of us any harm.

The message of the ghotul—that youth must be served, that freedom and happiness are more to be treasured than any material gain, that friendliness and sympathy, hospitality and unity are of the first importance, and above all that human love—and its physical expression—is beautiful, clean and precious, is typically Indian. The ghotul is no Austro-asiatic alien in the Indian scene. Here is the atmosphere of the best old India; here is something of the life (though on a humble scale) portrayed at Ajanta; here is something (though now altogether human) of the Krishna legend and its ultimate significance; this is the same life, the same tradition that inspired the Pahari paintings. Of these paintings, Coomaraswamy, in a passage which might almost have been written about the ghotul, says,

[1] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 49.
[2] J. H. Hutton, in *Modern India and the West* (Oxford, 1941), p. 441.
[3] H. Balfour, Foreword to Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. xii.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan-priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

III

NOTE ON THE INDIAN PENAL CODE

177
671 The law dealing with offences affecting human life is fully set out in Sections 299 to 311 of the Indian Penal Code, and I will quote a part of this for the convenience of Western readers.

299. Whoever causes death by doing an act with the intention of causing death, or with the intention of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, or with the knowledge that he is likely by such act to cause death, commits the offence of culpable homicide.

300. Except in the cases hereinafter excepted, culpable homicide is murder, if the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or—

Secondly—If it is done with the intention of causing such bodily injury as the offender knows to be likely to cause the death of the person to whom the harm is caused, or—

Thirdly—If it is done with the intention of causing bodily injury to any person and the bodily injury intended to be inflicted is sufficient in the ordinary course of nature to cause death, or—

Fourthly—If the person committing the act knows that it is so imminently dangerous that it must in all probability cause death, or such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, and commits such act without any excuse for incurring the risk of causing death or such injury aforesaid.

Exception 1.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, whilst deprived of the power of self-control by grave and sudden provocation, causes the death of the person who gave the provocation, or causes the death of any other person by mistake or accident.

The above exception is subject to the following provises:—

First—That the provocation is not sought or voluntarily provoked by the offender as an excuse for killing or doing harm to any person.

Secondly—That the provocation is not given by anything done in obedience to the law, or by a public servant in the lawful exercise of the powers of such public servant.

Thirdly—That the provocation is not given by anything done in the lawful exercise of the right of private defence.

Exception 2.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, in the exercise in good faith of the right of private defence of person or property, exceeds the power given to him by law and causes the death of the person against whom he is exercising such right of defence without premeditation, and without any intention of doing more harm than is necessary for the purpose of such defence.

Exception 3.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, being a public servant or aiding a public servant acting for the advancement of public justice, exceeds the powers given to him by law, and causes death by doing an act which he, in good faith, believes to be lawful and necessary for the due discharge of his duty as such public servant and without ill-will towards the person whose death is caused.

Exception 4.—Culpable homicide is not murder if it is committed without premeditation in a sudden fight in the heat of passion upon

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

a sudden quarrel and without the offender's having taken undue advantage or acted in a cruel or unusual manner. 177 671

Exception 5.—Culpable homicide is not murder when the person whose death is caused, being above the age of eighteen years, suffers death or takes the risk of death with his own consent.

302. Whoever commits murder shall be punished with death, or transportation for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

304. Whoever commits culpable homicide not amounting to murder, shall be punished with transportation for life, or imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine, if the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death;

or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine, or with both, if the act is done with the knowledge that it is likely to cause death, but without any intention to cause death or to cause such bodily injury as is likely to cause death.

Sir Cecil Walsh considered that these definitions were too complicated for the situations to which they were normally applied. 'The Indian Penal Code has always been considered a masterpiece of codification, and is the admiration of experts in jurisprudence. The beautifully moulded definitions of murder, and of culpable homicide not amounting to murder, set out every phase of thought through which a man's mind may pass when he is engaged in a fight and burning to defeat and injure his enemy. But men do not think aloud in a confused fight when they are "seeing red" and expecting every minute to be knocked out themselves. How are you to apply almost metaphysical processes of reasoning to the mental processes of half-mad savages, when you are not quite sure what the real facts are? In practice, these works of art in draftsmanship break down, and the simple English dichotomy of "murder" or "manslaughter" is to be preferred'.[1]

[1] Walsh, *Crime in India*, pp. 29 f.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 535 178 This dress was in regular use in every village in Metabhum until a year or two ago. At my last visit in March 1934, I was amazed to find that, almost as in obedience to some decree that had gone forth, the youth of the hills had abandoned the rib-dress, the shield and the gaily-coloured head-dress and skirt, sometimes wearing in lieu cheap bazaar singlets and a *dhoti*, retaining, however, the buttock-bells, the songs and the dance-steps. The older men all said that it was a spontaneous decision of the younger generation, decided upon because of the cost of buying the expensive yards of cloth needed for the dress; but this would not account for the abandonment of the shield, which they make themselves, and for which peacock tails are better than cloth streamers. Many have actually thrown away their cloth and shields. But some still think it necessary to hang them up round fresh graves, and I found that all the youths still know how to make them, and were willing to make them in camp. In 1932 a rumour went through all the tribes 203 of Jeypore and spread thence into Bastar that a god had descended 184 on one of the mountains of the Eastern Ghats and commanded all men to give up keeping black poultry and goats, wearing clothes or 178 using umbrellas or blankets with any black in them, and using beads or articles made of aluminium alloy. The message was rapidly bruited abroad, and everywhere villages had '*bohoranî*' ceremonies for purifying themselves from disease, and cast out black goats, cocks, hens, umbrellas, blankets, 'waskats', beads, aluminium ornaments and domestic utensils on the village boundary. Mohammedans began to make a good thing out of slaughtering the goats or exporting them. Strenuous propaganda by the State soon stopped this impoverishing rumour, and some of the villagers in the end recovered much of their property from the police, who had been ordered to take charge of it. At the time, the Bison-horn Marias seemed to have been only a little affected and the Hill Marias not at all; possibly this sudden abandonment of the most picturesque features of their dancing costume may be a late repercussion. Such sudden moves amongst Indian primitive tribes are not uncommon; the Gonds of Nagpur and adjacent districts a few years ago suddenly decided to give up keeping poultry and pigs as a measure of social uplift.

292 The *taghali* or bark cloak used by the Hill Maria for warmth or, primarily, protection against heavy dew and rain, has already been mentioned as deputizing occasionally for the sleeping-mat. Hutton speaks of the Angami Nagas making 'a large hat of leaves and basket work . . . as well as a rain-coat of plaited grass, the ends of which hang out loose, to

Rain-clothes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The population is comparatively small, and the land available for
[423] the shifting *penda* cultivation is very extensive. There is practically no individual property in *penda* land, and it is recognized only in permanent rice fields.

361 In comparison, the Bison-horn Maria country is thickly
241 populated; there is far more permanent rice cultivation; much old *penda* land has lost its forest growth, or is getting steadily
● 178 slower in recuperating it after each time when it is felled and burnt for *penda* cultivation; and each villager likes to have a large *bari*
621 or garden enclosure at the back of his house or in the immediate neighbourhood of the village where he can grow tobacco, maize, chillies, tomatoes and sesamum, and can pen his cattle for the sake of their manure. In consequence, economic considerations now operate in favour of the permanency of Bison-horn Maria villages and against their being shifted; as the pressure on the land has become greater the alternative sites (*padar*), to which in past generations a village was from time to time shifted, have been permanently occupied by hamlets (*para*) of that village, and the settlers in the hamlets have permanently occupied the adjacent *penda* sites once cultivated in rotation by the shifting village. Many big Bison-horn villages have six or seven hamlets, some of which are virtually separate villages, and are beginning to assert a separate identity by having their own headmen and sometimes their own village priests, though on formal occasions all will still gather together at the original *padar* of the village and its hamlets, and acknowledge there the authority of the headman and priest of the parent village. In the Abujhmar hills, moreover, each village is still inhabited almost entirely by members of one clan, and all the lands of the villages are regarded as the lands of the clan. But in the Bison-horn country, though each parish is still said to be the *bhum* (earth) of the clan which first settled there, yet there are generally in the village many houses of other clans and wife-clans, from whom the first settlers and their descendants have taken
[423] wives. Though they will still say that a certain village is the *bhum* of the clan that founded it, yet in consequence of the many representatives of other clans settled there now the village and its lands are not looked on as that clan's property in anything like the same degree as among the Hill Marias, nor in actual fact is the original clan so free to shift the village as it was before it allowed its wife-clans to share its village site and cultivable lands. Often, too, the headman is no longer a member of the settler clan. If,
[166] therefore, a Bison-horn village does shift in these days, the move is probably due to superstitious motives, or to epidemic or epizootic disease.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Where, as in Orcha and most of the surrounding villages of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, *kotokal* menhirs are no longer erected, a cow or pig is nevertheless sacrificed in this way in the village on the night after the funeral at the heir's house, and portions of the flesh or the liver when cooked are placed under the cromlech at the base of the *kanal-gutta* post, or, if there is no cromlech, on the grave, while the tail, and sometimes also a lower leg, from hock to hoof, are fastened by a cord from an overhanging *saja* bough. The usual feast and dance then follow.

One reason for the abandonment of the custom of erecting menhirs may be that the clans which have abandoned it have in fairly recent times abandoned their traditional for their present clan-areas; for it was the rule that the menhir should always be erected in the village from which the dead man or his ancestors had originally come, not in the village at which he was living at the time of his death.

Treatment of abnormal deaths

A person who has killed himself, or who dies from cholera or small-pox, is not buried or cremated at the regular funeral ground, but in the forest at some distance from it. There had been no recent case in any village which I visited of a woman dying when pregnant or in child-birth, and no one could say what would be done in such a case. Persons killed by tigers or other wild animals must be burned, not buried, at the place where their remains are found, or to which they are brought for the inquest. They must never be brought into a village, for otherwise the dead man's *kanal* may bring the tiger there. The remains, if scattered, are collected and placed in a cloth brought from the dead man's house; but such bodies should be touched as little as possible. Logs are piled under the body where it lies and kindled, and anything found with the body or at the place where the tiger attacked the dead man is burnt with it; but no dancing dresses or other property are brought from his house to be burned with him, and no offerings of grain or *mahua* spirit are made at the grave. No *marma-hal* cairn and no *kotokal* menhir are set up for him; but there is nothing to prevent this being done for the victims of cholera or smallpox.

B. Bison-horn Marias

The true Bison-horn Marias, as distinguished from members of clans once Hill Maria in culture but now adopting Bison-horn customs, cremate all their dead except those who die from abnormal causes. When a man dies, his son-in-law is sent for, and on arrival climbs on to the roof of the house with a *dol* drum, which he beats

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *wraskal*.

On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *wraskal* menhir. There are *wraskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs.[1] On the Jagdalpur side, however, and around Paknar, though every village has its *wraskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kathi*, *wad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 426, — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

538 not far distant from the Abujhmar. The Kuruk stories are almost certainly current also among the Bison-horn Maria. Two of the five specifically Bison-horn Maria tales, like one of the two Maria tales, are about monkeys. The first describes a helpful monkey which is treated with great ingratitude by human beings; in the second—as in Grigson's tale—a monkey marries a human girl and does not make a very great success of the union. In neither case, however, is there any reference to the dispareunia which the Baigas delight to emphasize in stories of the 'Beast Marriage' type. Two of the other tales, 'The Magic Eyes' and 'The Loving Ghost' are exceptionally charming and, while full of conventional folk-lore clichés, strike a note of some originality. In my *Myths of Middle India*, I give Bison-horn Maria legends of the creation of the world, the making of the sun and moon, the origin of fire and several stories of the Vagina Dentata cycle.

Page 280, *line* 34. In the country round Gidam and Barsur, 178 many clans that follow the megalithic tradition elsewhere have abandoned the practice of erecting menhirs, though the Barse, Kalmu and Kunjami clans continue it and erected twenty-six menhirs within the limits of the Gidam Revenue Circle in the years 1938-42. In the Jagdalpur tahsil, though the custom is less well maintained here than elsewhere, the Poyami, Vetti, Bekor, Kuharami, Marvi Padami and Muchaki at least continue to erect *uraskal* stones. Near Jagdalpur, however, and in the neighbourhood of Paknar, there has been some falling off of the practice.

Whatever may be the reason for the abandonment of megalithic customs—and I am rather sceptical about the influence of the Hindu taboo on beef-eating—certain clans have been affected by the warnings of their priests. In Vagriguda, for example, a village in the heart of an area where these customs flourish undisturbed, no menhirs are erected now because once when the village was overwhelmed by an epidemic, the Siraha declared that it was because the Village Mother was annoyed at the practice. The [187] Telami clan have abandoned the practice in the Dhurli area because once when they were quarrying a stone to serve as a menhir, a snake wriggled out of the crack, and this was taken as a sign of the divine displeasure. I believe that many culture changes in India are not due to the spread of civilization but are caused by incidents like these.

Page 281, *line* 24. The upper stone is called *danya-kal* and its 000 supports *odiyal*. In the Kutru zamindari, the Akri clan calls the upper stone *gariyakal*. The Chudala Marvi clan erects both *uraskal* and *danyakal* stones throughout the Konta tahsil and in ...h villages as Gogonda, Mankapal and Koya Vekur. So do the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The stone erected by the Muria is an upright menhir called *uraskal* (from Gondi *urasna*—to bury, and *kal*—a stone) or *kotokal*. At Surewahi, near Antagarh, the villagers called the 240 menhirs of their memorial field *khamakal*. They stand from 2 to 8 feet high, and may be 1 foot to 4 feet broad and 6 to 10 inches thick. The Muria of eastern Kondagaon sometimes set up little menhirs not more than a foot tall. 769

The menhirs are erected for men, women and children, and usually stand in long rows by the roadside, near the village boundary, in the neighbourhood of the cemetery, or even in the village itself. Nearly always a small flat stone supported on two other stones is placed at the foot. This little cromlech is called the *kandi-garya*, or 'ghost-throne', and is used as an altar of sacrifice. Stones for men and women are usually put separately, and anyone who has died a suspicious death has his menhir apart from the others.

Hutton has referred to the megalithic culture of Bastar as 'now apparently rapidly decaying',[1] but the Jhoria Muria continue to erect menhirs everywhere and so do the other Muria of Narayanpur Tahsil and western Kondagaon. As we move east, however, and come more and more into the midst of Muria whose ancestors migrated south from the Central Provinces, the megalithic tradition tends to disappear, though it survives here and there, as we shall see, in curious and interesting forms. 769 178●

Why should a practice so widespread, so reasonable and so harmless to mankind have disappeared in the areas I have mentioned? The answer is not an easy one. Sometimes there is an actual difficulty in getting stones, and the Muria naturally do not care to transport great slabs of rock across great distances. The reason most commonly given is expense. This is probably the true reason, for the cost of erecting a menhir is considerable. A great feast has to be given; one or more cows must be sacrificed, and perhaps pigs and chickens as well; large quantities of liquor must be provided; and the carriers of the stone must be properly rewarded. Grigson, however, discussing this problem among the Maria, thinks that the question of expense is not the real reason, pointing out that many aboriginals spend a great deal of money on their marriages; he suggests that the true reason is contact with Hinduism 'with its veneration of the cow'.[2] This may be true of a few villages near Jagdalpur or Dantewara or of those Maria and Muria who have come under the strong influence of the Palace or the cult of Danteshwari. But I believe that in spite of ardent denials to officials and visitors, beef is still eaten from one end of Bastar to the other. In fact, there is evidence that the last few years have seen a revival of beef-eating. In any case, where a forked stick takes the place of a menhir, the fork is intended as a holder over which the tail of the cow should be hung.

It is more likely, certainly along the main roads and in the east, that there is a desire to imitate the Hindu custom of erecting elaborate tombs for the dead. Many of these may now be seen, with a small shelter over them, and a pot hanging above.

The break-up of the clan system, according to which in the old days the country was divided into definite clan areas, each with a central shrine for the clan god and one central place for the erection of all the menhirs of the clan, has been an important factor. The clans now are so scattered and their *illaqa* or territory is so divided up that many Muria have never been to their original *pen-runnur* or clan headquarters. The menhirs are no longer erected

[1] J. H. Hutton, Introduction to Grigson, op. cit., p. xv.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. xlii.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769 at the spiritual capital of the clan-*bhum*, but are often placed in the village where the dead man used to live. I will return to this point immediately; it will ● 178 be sufficient to say now that the break-up of any form of organization is likely to cause a parallel decline in custom.

The association of the dead with the clan god is seen not only in the custom of erecting menhirs in the clan-*bhum*, and the use of an expression like Penhanal, but also in the Muria practice of taking the soul from the house to the Hanalkot which is always connected with one special clan. This was clearly illustrated at Phunder, where an earthen pot, full of rice, hangs above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any member of the clan dies, the mourners take his soul here, sprinkle the blood of a sacrificed chicken above the clan-pot, and thus leave the soul of the dead with his clan ancestors. Once a year, at the first New Eating ceremony, the Gaita removes the pot and changes the rice in the name of the Departed.

XI. The Erection of a Menhir

769 The Muria regard it as necessary to bring the stone for their menhirs and the wood for the manufacture of the clan gods from special forests and hills. At Kokori the Naitami clan bring their stones from Chapadongri, the Maravi from Mahadeodongri. The Kalo clan of Mahurpat used to fetch their *kotokal* stones from Boga in Kanker State. One of their ancestors, they say, turned into stone (*kal*) on a hill near this place: they stole the stone and since then have been known as Kalo.

Since the Muria generally use small stones they seldom have to quarry them, but pick them off the ground. When people go to the forest for wood or to hunt they keep a look out for suitable surface stones.

The actual erection of the stone is done by the Jhoria Muria in largely Hill Maria fashion,[1] but here it is the chelik and motiari who escort the menhir to its place with their drums and dances. In the Paralkot area, when an old man dies, an *akomāma* relative dances with an axe over his shoulder in front of the stone and the boys and girls follow drumming and singing. In Phulpar they said that on this occasion, which here they called Kal Ursana or stone-burying, an *akomāma* relative beats the *hātur-dhol* or death-drum in front of the house of the deceased and chants a refrain: 'You are dead now; today we will devour your wealth with pleasure.'

I will give an example of the procedure followed at Kehalakot village. Birju Kaudo decided, as a result of dreams which troubled him, to erect a stone in memory of his parents. Stones for this clan have to be brought from a hill called Deodongri. He took with him the Gaita of the Hichami clan which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kaudo clan, for it is the rule that the removal of the stone must be performed by a member of such a clan. The Gaita made a *chok* in front of the stone and offered liquor, pulse and rice, then dug it up. At first they could not get it out of the ground and the Gaita declared that the dead man was annoyed about something and they offered a black chicken to appease him. Once they had got the stone out of the ground they placed it on a specially prepared litter, covered it with fresh cloth and brought it to the *bhum* of the Kaudo clan, being careful not to take it through any village on the way.

As they brought it near, the dead man's sister and daughters stopped them, standing in a line across the path, and demanded rings. Birju gave them a

[1] See Grigson's description, *op. cit.*, pp. 270ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

I

BEFORE proceeding further it is essential that we distinguish carefully between two different types of ghotul, for these are so sharply differentiated by rule and custom and the psychological conditions of each are so distinct that until this is done we can get no clear picture of the intimate relations between chelik and motiari.

The fundamental principle of the first type of dormitory, which is sometimes called the *jodidār*[1] or 'yoking' ghotul, is that of fidelity to a single partner during the whole of the pre-marital period. Each chelik is paired off with a motiari; he is formally 'married' to her; she may even take the feminine form of his title as her own. Divorce is allowed, though infidelity is punished.

In the second type of ghotul, which is probably a later development of the classic model, any kind of lasting attachment between chelik and motiari is forbidden. No one can say that such and such a motiari is *his* girl; if anyone sleeps with a particular girl for more than three days at a time, he is punished.

In all other matters, whether of discipline, routine, social duty or recreation, there is no difference between the two types of ghotul. We must, however, carefully distinguish them for their sexual customs and psychological conditions.

The *jodidār* ghotul is, I think, the original form of the Muria dormitory. In the first place, it is most widely distributed in the more primitive parganas—the Chota Dongar, Dugal and Karangal—and in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar Mountains. It has retained its place most successfully among the Jhoria, who are undoubtedly the oldest of the Muria groups. Secondly, the Muria themselves describe the other type of ghotul as a modern improvement intended to eliminate scandals and the danger of pregnancy. The change from one type to the other is still going on. At Karangaon, which was formerly

FIG. 57. Carving on the pillars of the ghotul at Almer

[1] A *jodi* or *jori* is the word used for a life-long friend, yoke-fellow or husband and wife. A *jodi* is something definitely more than a temporary lover. It is the person yoked to whom one will pull the heavy plough of life. See V. Elwin and S. Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 24ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

a *jodidār* ghotul, a pregnancy scandal caused the chelik and motiari to adopt the other rule of partnership. Twenty years ago, Masora was a *jodidār* ghotul; today its members insist on change. I believe that originally all over the ghotul area the dormitories were of the older type; then in order to avoid the scandals and elopements that naturally arose from such intense and lasting attachments, and as a result of the belief that conception was less likely when the cycle of coitus was frequently broken, the rules were changed.

The ghotul, therefore, gives no support to those who believe in what Westermarck called the 'hypothesis of primitive promiscuity'. Promiscuity is the last thing permitted in the *jodidār* ghotul. It might even be argued that it is the result of culture-contact, for the ghotul in the neighbourhood of towns and schools, or along the roads, are generally of the modern, promiscuous, type.

This gradual change from one tradition to another probably accounts for the very haphazard distribution of the two types at the present time. The old tradition persists in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar and among the Jhoria; elsewhere there is no rule. Here and there throughout the whole area, *jodidār* ghotul survive in the midst of dormitories which, as the result of scandal or example, have changed their rules. In the Kongur Pargana, for example, More Berma, Kanhargaon and Gorma are ghotul of the old type surrounded by others, as are Chimri and Morenga in the Bangoli Pargana. At the present time, the newer type of ghotul seems to be in the majority; out of the 2000 married men examined, 720 had grown up in *jodidār* dormitories, and 1280 in the others, while out of 347 dormitories of which I have information on this point 269 have adopted the new rules, 78 retaining the older customs.

II

In the *jodidār* ghotul, the pairing-off of chelik and motiari in a more or less permanent relationship, only to be dissolved by the marriage or death of one partner, is taken very seriously. In most villages there is a custom of the ghotul marriage, which is celebrated after the children have attained ghotul maturity and received their titles. In Metawand the chelik gave me a detailed description of the ceremony.

The members of the ghotul are allotted their various parts in the marriage. First of all, the boy's 'parents' go to the girl's 'parents' for the betrothal ceremony, carrying two leaf-pipes to represent bottles of liquor. The girl's parents say—in strict accordance with tradition—'Why have you come, samdhi?' 'O there's nothing special, we were going this way and looked in for a few moments.' 'No, no, there must be some reason.' 'Well, we did hear that a flower had blossomed in your house; we would pick it to adorn our hair.' 'Ah, how truly they say that a dog is fed many years only to be taken by a panther in the end, and a daughter is cherished only to be carried off by the samdhi.' There follows the usual dispute about the bride-price and, when that is agreed, the two parties sit together and smoke.

The following day comes the 'marriage'. Ashes are used instead of haldi. A little booth is made in the ghotul court. The marriage ritual is briefly recapitulated. Water is poured from the roof over the two children. Eager hands catch them and shut them up in an inner room. The bride screams, 'Open the door, let me out'. The others, shouting with laughter, at last let them go. That night the two sleep together, and will probably continue to do so until one of them is married.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

Scheme under which instruction in reading and writing Gondi and later Marathi and Urdu was to be provided for both children and adults. On my return to Marlavai we started work on a small scale with a school where adult Gonds were to be trained as teachers and village-officers. The work on this Scheme kept us in Marlavai until the end of January 1944, and it was there that most of the chapters contained in Book I were written. After an absence of five months in Assam, we returned in the rains for a short period and this gave me the opportunity of checking my Gondi texts with the help of the Headmaster of the Marlavai Training Centre Mr. S. B. Jogalkar and the Gond teachers, some of whom had meanwhile opened schools in their own villages.[1]

The division of the present work into two books was necessitated by its bulk and by the fact that a sudden opportunity for two expeditions into one of the least known tribal areas of the North-East Frontier prevented us from concentrating on the completion of the second part.

In the presentation of facts we have departed from the usual order of a straight monograph; instead of grouping them under such headings as material culture, agriculture, or religion, we have attempted an arrangement which, we hope, will give a better idea of Gond life as an organic entity. After the introductory chapters, which describe the physical and cultural environment, we have set a section outlining the mythical background of Gond culture and the cult of the clan-deities; for in this cult and the sacred myths lies the mainspring of the social order. Then follows a section describing the economic and ritual activities of a village community throughout the cycle of the year, and the three chapters of this section contain also most of the information on agriculture, the basis of Gond economics. Book II will open with an account of the phases of life, from childhood to death, and this will set the stage for a general discussion of the social organization and the principles of Gond religion, all details of ritual having been described already in their proper setting. The old feudal system looms still in the background of the social order, and I am attempting a reconstruction based on the existing remnants and local traditions contained mainly in the stories and songs of Pardhans. Read together with Wills' history of the Gond States of the Central Provinces this will perhaps give a certain idea of political and social life prevailing in Gondwana throughout the greater part of mediæval times.

The final chapters of the book will be concerned with the developments of the last fifty years, when increased contact with other populations broke up the Gonds' feudal organization and land-hungry immigrants drove many families from the lands where they had lived since the times of their ancestors. It is a dismal tale of the decline of a once proud and happy people, the loss of economic freedom, and the birth

1 Cf. my article 'Aboriginal Education in Hyderabad.' *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. V., 1944.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

of a timid and resigned outlook in place of the manly spirit of old. Finally I propose to discuss the results of the more liberal policy towards the aboriginals which H.E.H. the Nizam's Government has pursued since 1944, and to outline the principles and the first stages of the Gond Education Scheme, which is designed to help the Gonds in the struggle for existence and to restore to them self-respect and pride in their own ancient culture.

In an account of a culture as rich and complex as that of the Raj Gonds the anthropologist must needs concentrate on certain aspects, and in this book I have given first place to the Gonds' mythology and their complex ritual, sanctioned and sustained in almost every phase by mythical precedents. This part of Gond culture is rapidly disintegrating and its study, still possible in the hills of Utnur and Asifabad Taluqs, would come too late in the more open parts of the District. Problems of psychology and the more intimate matters of the individual's life, on the other hand, are only fleetingly touched upon, but I believe that changes in this sphere are not as rapid and the time left for their study is consequently far less limited.

Although this book is not a treatise on linguistics, Gondi texts of some length have found a place in many chapters. I noted them when collecting my material and as they are the first recorded specimens of the pecular Gondi spoken in Adilabad, I do not feel justified in withholding them from the student of Indian languages. All have been checked and rechecked with several informants, but this is no guarantee of absolute accuracy, for Gonds, like the speakers of most unwritten languages, are often careless about rules of grammar and not very sensitive to slight slips in a text read out to them. The recording, moreover, is not in accordance with the exigent demands of modern phonetics, which only the trained linguist can fulfil. Consonants are used with their values in English, and vowels with their values in Italian, long and short signs being added only where confusion might otherwise arise between two words of similar sound. Diacritical signs have been used only in the consonants ṭ, ṛ and ḥ. While the dental t, rendered by the Nagri character त , is transcribed by simple t, the cerebral t rendered in Nagri by ट, is transcribed by ṭ. Similarly the soft r, र in Nagri, is transcribed r, and the hard r, ड़ in Nagri, as ṛ. The letter ḥ stands for a sound closely resembling the German ch in Bach (pronounced like the composer). This sound occurs mainly in words of Marathi origin, and in such words most Gonds not familiar with Marathi pronounce it not as sh, but h; examples are *goḥti* (word, speech) and *paḥti* (favour) pronounced in pure Marathi as *goshti* and *pashti*; but I have transcribed these and similar words as pronounced by the Gonds in the hills.

Following the spelling of the Linguistic Survey and Trench's Grammar, I have used *w* for all *v*-sounds, except in proper names occurring in the English text, and in words borrowed from Hindi in which *v* is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING IN TIME; THE HISTORICAL ISOLATION OF BASTAR

BASTAR STATE lies at the extreme south-east corner of the Central Provinces of India, between 17° 46′ and 20° 14′ north, and 80° 15′ and 82° 1′ east. Its area, according to the recently revised Survey of India figures, of 13,725 square miles makes it the tenth state in India in size, larger than Belgium and nearly as large as Holland. It is far larger than any of the old Central Provinces and Orissa States, with which it has recently been brought into the new Eastern States Agency. But it is one of the most sparsely peopled tracts of India, the 1931 population of 524,721 giving a density of only 34 to the square mile. If any part of India is still *terra incognita* to nearly all British officials and travellers, it is the vast tract covered by Bastar and the huge Jeypore zamindari recently transferred from the Vizagapatam Agency of Madras to the new province of Orissa. To the ordinary Indian of neighbouring districts, even to many of the few immigrant Hindu and Mussalman traders, this remains a land of savages, seeking still for human victims to sacrifice to their fetishes, skilled in herbs and simples, and potent practitioners of magic and witchcraft. Their view is little changed from that held 110 years ago by Maratha officials who described the Marias of the Abujhmar mountains to Sir Richard Jenkins, then Resident at the Court of Nagpur, as 'naked savages, living on roots and sprigs, and hunting for strangers to sacrifice'.

Bastar has in fact always been an almost unknown backwater of the river of Indian history. The late Chief, Maharani Prafulla Kumari Devi, at her accession in 1924 was the last legitimate survivor of one of the most ancient royal families of southern India, the Kakatiya, which reigned at Warangal from about A.D. 1150 to 1425, first possibly as feudatories of the Chalukya kings and then independently. In Bastar folk-song, Annam Deo, the first to reign in Bastar, is spoken of as 'Chalkibans Raja', which may be a corruption of 'Chalukya-bans' and indicate that the Kakatiya family was a cadet branch of the Chalukya. Pratap Rudra, the greatest and the last independent Kakatiya king of Warangal, lost his life and independence in battle with the Mohammedan invaders of the Deccan under Ahmad Shah Bahmani early in the fifteenth century and, according to Bastar tradition and folk-song, his brother Annam Deo fled across the Godavari into Bastar, which had

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175 The earliest recorded attempt of any European to enter Bastar was made by Captain Blunt in 1795, when journeying from Chunarghur in the United Provinces to Yertnagudam in the 'Ellore Circar' of Madras. His report, which has recently been reprinted in a Central Provinces Government publication, 'Early English Travellers in the Nagpur Territories', was referred to as late as 1853 by Sir Erskine Perry, addressing the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, as still giving almost all the information then known not only about Bastar, but of many other parts of Gondwana (the modern Central Provinces), the highlands and jungles of which then comprised 'such a large tract of unexplored country that they form quite an oasis in our maps'. Before his attempt he was warned by both Ittul Pandit, the Maratha governor of Chhattisgarh, and by the Raja of Kanker that he would find it difficult if not impossible to march across Bastar from Kanker to Jeypore, the country being wild and mountainous and the Gond inhabitants very savage. The people were said to be naturally quiet; but the Marathas had never succeeded in doing more than persuade Bastar to pay an occasional small tribute. At that time this had been withheld for four or five years, and the Marathas had only just made the Bastar Chief pay Rs. 5,000 after a series of raids on Bastar territory, which they had persuaded the various 'Gond zemeendars' and neighbours of Bastar to make in order to wrest from him as much territory as possible; in the course of these raids many villages along the Kanker-Jagdalpur-Jeypore road had been plundered, and even the Banjara carriers had abandoned that route to Jeypore. In retaliation, raiding parties from Bastar often descended to plunder the plains villages.[1] Captain Blunt therefore turned west and marched through the zamindaris of the present Drug and Chanda districts, but ultimately attempted to pass from the Ahiri zamindari in the far south-east of the Chanda district across the Indrawati river into the Bhopalpatnam zamindari of Bastar, some miles upstream from the confluence of the Indrawati and the Godavari. He was fiercely attacked by the 'Bastar Gonds' both by day and night, and though their bows, arrows and axes were no match for his firearms, he abandoned the attempt to enter

[18] [1] Compare the following extract from Firminger's Edition of the Fifth Report on East India Affairs, 1812, Vol. III, page 109 et seq., referring to the people of Bastar, Rampa and Kalahandi:—

'The people in general, although rude and barbarous, may yet be denominated warlike, as they have always distinguished themselves as bold persevering champions of the great law of nature. Being driven to their wild unwholesome fastnesses among the mountains, they frequently descend in harvest time into the lowlands, to dispute the produce of their ancient rightful inheritance with the present possessors, but their incursions are desultory and simply impelled by the pressing want of subsistence.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

695 There was a disputed boundary between the village of Kurmer in the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* and the adjacent Kutru Mar village of Jatalur; the Jata clan asserted possession over a strip of land belonging to the Parlio clan of Kurmer. I suggested, on the strength of a tale I had heard of former Chiefs' methods of justice, that the head of each village should come with a cock to the land, and that the land should go to the clan whose cock crowed first. This was hailed by both sides as a sound solution, and off we went to the land; but just before we reached it the Jata headman began to hang back, and finally backed out of the test; I awarded the land to the Parlio clan to the approval of men present from other clans, and on going over the land found that it contained a *pagh'ai* or alternative village site of the Parlio clan besides the cromlech left to mark the site of the Village Mother's 'temple', the *kasyeq-gaita's udam-garia* or seat of honour, and the *kotokal* or line of menhirs erected in the name of the Parlio dead. Here the Jata clan finally abandoned their claim when challenged by the Parlio *kasyeq-gaita* to eat earth from under the Village Mother's cromlech.

● 181 To be left to live the free life of the hills, untrammelled by restrictions on his user of forest, earth and water or his right to shift his village and his *penda* cultivation, is the unconscious ideal of the Hill Maria. If he is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls; and few of them or of the wilder Bison-horn Marias survive long imprisonment.

517 [823] The Hill Maria shows great artistry in his bead-work, and is never at fault in his discrimination between colours and shades, though he uses for all shades of green and blue the one word *kaqarondla*. He has general terms also for red, white, black and yellow, but none for intermediate shades. In his houses he draws 532 rude cup-marking patterns, *swastikas* and strange creatures in white earth on his mud plaster, or makes rough clay representations of women's breasts. His songs are low and rather melancholic in 533 sound, the youths' voices verging on contralto; but they are far easier for an English ear to understand than Hindu music, and have often a haunting refrain. Both he and the Bison-horn Maria love to hear European records on a gramophone, especially a good soprano or contralto, sea shanties, and violins or trios and quartets playing light chamber music; but operatic fireworks merely provoke laughter, Chaliapin singing the 'Song of Prince Igor' making them [534] ache with laughter, but being often encored. The Marias as a whole have no musical instruments except drums. Though the 517 Bison-horn Maria does not show the Hill Maria's artistry and 153

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE ABORIGINAL PRISONER

I

How do the Maria get on in jail? This is a question that only a Jailor can answer, but I have been told by those responsible for aboriginal prisoners what an appalling ordeal prison life is for people accustomed to the great freedoms of the hills and forests. 'If a Maria is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment', says Grigson, 'he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls: and few of the wilder Bison-horn Maria survive long imprisonment'.[1] The grim forbidding walls, the stone beds, the rule of silence, the attitude of suppliant and obsequious deference before officials, the absence of any kind of recreation, the lack of all religious comfort, the denial of human companionship, the appalling monotony oppress and crush them. The Maria is perhaps insensitive to mental suffering, but on the other hand he has no reserve of philosophical or intellectual fortitude to draw on in a crisis. To him life with a woman and daily intercourse with her, a good supply of tobacco, the rough simple food of his village and the not infrequent stimulus of alcohol are perhaps the only necessities of existence. But they are necessary, and many prisoners have told me that they missed these things far more than the restraint upon their liberty.

How do the prisoners themselves look back on their experience? I will attempt to discover this by quoting their own sayings. Markami Doga said, 'I felt very sad in jail, and my thoughts were always in my house'. Another man said that he was continually worrying about his children and who would look after them. Another was distracted lest in his absence his cattle would be distributed like fowls among the neighbours. Many of the prisoners with whom I talked in jail had an extremely sad and pitiable look. I particularly remember the suffering on the face of Habka Masa who had

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 96. Since this was written, improved conditions in the Jagdalpur jail have increased the life-expectation of all the prisoners.

[p.207]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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or to abuse her as he may do freely to the married women. There is no doubt about it: these girls and boys are set apart. They must not be touched by sophisticated adult hands.

VII. The Significance of the Marriage Ceremony

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182

Where both boy and girl belong to the same village and come from the same ghotul, the procedure is simplified and shortened, but otherwise follows the same lines as in the foregoing accounts. It will be seen that, in spite of various differences, the essentials of the rite are everywhere the same. The fundamental things seem to me to be these—the preparation and instruction of the bride in the ghotul, the ceremonial fetching of the bride by the bridegroom and his party, the building of a marriage-booth with its associated magical materials and patterns, the exchange of gifts and payment of a bride-price, the liberal use of oil and haldi to consecrate the bride and bridegroom, the procession round a marriage pole or booth seven times (the last two items are obvious borrowings from Hinduism), the tying together of the bridal pair, the pouring water over them (probably a development of a Maria custom), minor rituals designed to emphasize the unity of the couple and to ensure the potency of the bridegroom, the last visit to the ghotul and the official bedding of the couple by the chelik.

Let us consider the meaning of these essentials in more detail. In a brilliant analysis of the marriage ritual of the Bihari Kayasth, W. G. Archer takes a comparison from modern art. 'If we are to find an analogy for this wedding ritual, the nearest would be a surrealist poem, ballet or novel. In a surrealist work the action has a strange power and a mysterious charm. Strange persons develop their intriguing contacts and the action has an air of irrational urgency. On analysis it is seen that many of the actions are symbolic and the poem, novel or the ballet generates its power from the semi-conscious associations which its dialogue, gestures, scenery and action evoke. In the ritual of a Kayasth wedding, there is a similar use of irrational action, a similar use of persons with a strangely inflated power, and a similar use of semi-conscious symbols. The meaning of the ritual may be submerged and, for many, may be scarcely comprehended but its basis is in a symbolic system and its total effect is overpowering.'[1]

This will apply also to a Muria wedding, though the meaning here is sometimes more obvious; the Kayasth is a highly developed community and naturally resorts more to symbolic concealment of its real interests and desires. The different elements in a Muria marriage can be easily distinguished. There are first the many rites that emphasize the break with the old life and the entry to the new. There are the symbolic actions and materials to express the sexual aspect of the marriage and to ensure its fertility. There are the symbolic or overt arrangements to protect bride and bridegroom at this critical moment of their fortunes. The social and business aspect of the union of the two families is always prominent.

The length, complexity and extravagance of the marriage ritual is necessary to impress on boys and girls who are so used to love and sex the importance of the step they are now taking. Marriage here does not, as in so many other cultures, mark an initiation into the mysteries of sex. It is not, usually, the binding together of two people who have fallen in love with each

[1] From *The Wedding of the Writers*, the manuscript of which I have been privileged to see before publication.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
182

other. It represents instead the end of a life of sexual and domestic freedom and the companionship of young people. It marks the beginning of economic responsibility, a change of residence, a transformation of the whole way of life. The ritual is adapted to emphasize this. There is the long week of preparation in the ghotul and the vigil of song and weeping that ends it; there is the parental fuss; the obvious trouble and expense for everyone; the solemn regard for omens; the new clothes and ornaments. I have often been reminded of the preliminaries to an operation—the bathing and shaving of the body, the tests and examinations, the rendering of the person aseptic, the creation of a sense that the patient is a being already separate and apart who will never be quite the same again. So now chelik and motiari are prepared for an operation that will sever them for ever from the carefree joys of youth.

The importance of this operation is further emphasized by the treatment of bridegroom and bride as the Raja and Rani of their brief matrimonial court. They are crowned; the leaders of their community defer to them and treat them with respect; their 'army' and 'police' accompany them everywhere, even when they go to perform their natural functions; they must never walk but always be carried about; at the time of tika everyone salutes them; they are 'Raja and Rani for two days and a half'.

This is a time of peculiar supernatural danger and the measures taken to avoid it find their parallels in many parts of the world. The crowns are not only symbols of royalty but correspond to the wedding-veil. Bride and bridegroom are also covered with a cloth both at the crisis of the Lagir and other important moments of the ceremony. This, and the refusal of bride and groom to look at each other, is connected partly with sexual modesty, partly with the belief that it is dangerous even to see dangerous persons.[1] Bride and bridegroom remain silent for most of the ceremony; certainly they never speak to one another. 'This is a common taboo upon persons passing through a critical period, and the principle behind it is a natural impulse of egoistic sensibility, a sort of recognition of the importance of the occasion, combined with more or less of spiritual fear, either of general danger, or in this case, of danger from each other.'[2]

The ceremonial beating of the bride by the bridegroom and of the bridegroom by the bride, which occurs several times during the ceremony, is regarded by Westermarck as intended to drive away evil influences and may also be connected 'with the idea of gaining power'.[3] Protection from evil spirits is probably also the aim, or one of the aims, of the Jhoria Endanna when a group of motiari including the bride dress up as boys and the bridegroom has to try to recognise his future wife.

Among the demon-scarers employed during the ceremony may be mentioned the brooms tied to the booth, the oil so freely used, the tying of the hair in plaits, the carrying of bride and groom over the threshold and the ceremonial bath. Brooms are important as sweeping away ghosts and spirits; sticks or grass from a broom are often used in magic or divination. All over the world bride and bridegroom are carried during their wedding[4] and in particular are never allowed to touch with their feet the threshold which is generally haunted by spirits. The ceremonial bath is regarded by Crawley as intended 'to neutralise the mutual dangers of contact'.[5] The magical

[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 44.
[2] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage* (London, 1903), Vol. II, p. 518.
[3] Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 532ff.
[4] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 39.
[5] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 58.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585 182 importance of the Muria bath is emphasized by the use of the winnowing-fan (universally important in magic) to fan and drive away all risk of evil.

The red ants scattered over the marriage party are perhaps intended merely as a joke; they may, however, represent a survival of some former custom of ordeal. In British Guiana a man before marriage had to show his fitness for it by allowing himself to be sewn into a hammock full of fire ants.[1]

Yet to the participants in the marriage it is probable that its financial and social aspect is of even greater importance than the supernatural atmosphere into which they have projected themselves. The alliance of the two families is emphasized by the little rite of *samdki-bhet* at the very beginning and by the farewell of the new relations-in-law at the end. Their prayer—'Let there be no quarrels. Let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'—and again—'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it'—indicates the importance of the ceremony for the family, the clan and the ancestors. This is still further shown by the presents made to various relatives and, above all, by the gifts offered to the Departed—to the Pot in the old home to compensate the ancestors for the loss of a girl, to the Pot in the new family to indicate that the bride has left her old clan and joined that of her husband.

But it is not only family and village that the motiari must now desert; she has to leave her ghotul. So gifts and compensations are given: there is a feast, a farewell massage, and marriage-crowns are often put up on the ghotul pillar. Bride and groom bid ceremonial farewell to their old companions as they set out for their new home.

So far we have dealt mainly with rites of parting and separation: other ceremonies stress the social and sexual union of bride and groom and attempt to ensure its natural fertility. The giving of the bridal ring is a world-wide symbol of union, so is the ceremony of eating together. At the end of the Lagir circumambulation (itself a rite of aggregation with a subsidiary cathartic or prophylactic purpose [2]), bride and groom are tied together and water is poured over them. On two occasions, the bridegroom or his friends carry off the bride; this may be a survival of an older tradition of marriage by capture or may merely be intended to stress the emphatic break with the old life and entry into the new.

582 182 831 The sexual interest is both manifest and latent. There is little concealment or symbolism about the ceremonial bedding of the married pair, the vagina carved on the main pillar of the booth, the obscene horseplay between relatives, the constant cries of 'Penis' and 'Vagina', the songs, the jokes, the abuse. In such sexual jokes, says W. G. Archer, 'is a release of repressed energy which when applied to the marriage must necessarily make it fertile'.[3]

Other of the incidents and objects in the ritual are of a symbolic character. Some are directly sexual: thus the motiari bang the mahua branch up and down on the site of the booth just as Bison-horn Maria girls use their dancing-sticks, professedly in imitation of sexual intercourse. The pouring of water over bride and groom is a symbol of world-wide distribution, and the breaking of wooden poles links up with many examples given by Westermarck,[4] where

[1] Sir E. F. Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), p. 221.
[2] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 513ff.
[3] *The Wedding of the Writers.* And Westermarck says, 'The sexual indulgence of the wedding guests may, on the principle of homoeopathic magic, be a means of assisting bride and bridegroom in achieving the reproductive aims of their union'.—Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 590.
[4] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 457.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

things are broken to ensure or facilitate the consummation of the marriage. The Berber blow a cane to pieces. The Zulu bride breaks a spear. Among the Yakut dry rods are broken and burnt.

Haldi, with its yellow colour, is both a ghost scarer and a sex-symbol. It is significant that one of its forty-six ancient synonyms is *kewala*, 'lustful' and others refer to it as 'night'.[1] The oil with which it is mixed is, to the Muria mind at least, another sex-symbol, recalling the oil used in massage and that traditionally put on a lover's mat 'to make it slippery'.

Other objects are concerned more with the fruit of intercourse, for the fertility so carefully avoided in the ghotul is now passionately desired. The kalsa-pitcher is an obvious symbol of the womb: it is filled with fertile grain and a lamp (which stands for the act of love in folk-poetry as in Pahari paintings) covers its mouth. The arrow is another obvious sex-symbol[2]; the very interesting song on p. 119 connects the marriage arrow with the arrow used to cut the umbilical cord of the first child: here too the kalsa-pitcher becomes the pot from which the mother is bathed during the ceremonial uncleanness of the puerperium. The decorations of the booth, the strings of mango leaves so green and fertile, the coconut, the grain, the burning lamps, all hint at love and love's fruit. Even the curious rite where the bride and groom throw away their toilet-twigs and spit at each other may aim at ensuring union and productiveness. Most obvious of all the symbols are those connected with earth, for woman is everywhere the earth whom man must plough and sow.

The incidents and furniture of a Muria marriage, therefore, have not come together by chance. They are purposeful and charged with meaning. They express in vivid and dramatic form the working of the Muria mind. There could hardly be a more emphatic means of bringing home to a young couple their social, sexual and domestic union.

[1] See *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 39.
[2] Westermarck gives many examples, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 490; so does Arthur, *The Blue Grove*, pp. 172ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

796 he could not keep away from motiari; he chased them round and round the field. A Sirahe-medium collected a brass ring from every woman present to offer to the gods; this may have been a token of compensation for the presence of women at the festival, for in strict Muria tradition no woman should have been there.

XIII. Conclusion

771 182 This chapter has dealt with the theological and ceremonial aspects of Muria religion. This is far from being the whole story, for religion is for the Muria a very wide thing, consecrating every aspect of life, inspiring a comprehensive ethical system and linking gods and men, living and dead into a single family that even the intrusion of death cannot destroy.

Muria religion is not unlike that of other tribes—Bison-horn Maria, Raja Muria, Halba, Bhattra—in Bastar (though it has an advantage of the others in possessing a noble hero-god whose example is an inspiration), but it is very different from that of its neighbours. Its elaborate, rich and picturesque character is in striking contrast to the drab and languid faith of the Central Provinces Gond. The tribes of western Orissa near the Bastar border—Kond, Bondo, Gadaba—fully endowed as to personal culture, have a less developed and satisfying religion. The rites of the Maria of the Abujhmar and Chanda are stark and austere beside those of the Muria.

Muria religion, like Muria institutions, has probably reached the peak of its development. In its action on the Muria mind, Hinduism has had a fertilizing and energizing effect, far different from the Puritan destructiveness of its influence to the north. So long as the tribe and its institutions hold together, so long as they remain free from external interference, there is hope that this religion may continue to satisfy Muria needs and interpret Muria aspirations. Otherwise, I fear, now that the peak is reached, change will only bring decline.

Muria religion today is not without dignity and power. It has its distortions and abuses—many have been noted in the present chapter—but we must not confound the corruptions of a religion with religion itself. Even its superstitions may have their value. George Tyrrell once suggested that the superstitions of Catholicism provided 'harmless and healthy outlets for humours otherwise dangerous and morbid'.

Religion must fulfil and answer human needs. There is hardly a greater need among aboriginals than freedom from fear, and Muria ceremonial by aiming at the placation of god and ghost (the ultimate source of all fears) brings the great gift of solace. The desire for continuity is met by the elaborate funerary rites which bring the Departed home. The marriage ceremonial consecrates the Muria's passionate interest in the family. The fundamental longing for tribal unity and solidarity is expressed and strengthened by the great festivals when many villages dance together, share a common meal and unite in the worship of the gods. The gods intermarry and are related just as men are.

To the Muria, is God the rewarder of them that seek him? There is little that can be called love in the Muria's attitude to any of his gods. But there is gratitude often and sometimes a belief that a god takes a special interest in a man, furthers his cause and goes about with him. There is pride too; a powerful and important clan-god is a source of credit to a village, a fine litter of Danteshwari awakes feelings of patriotic delight. But generally the gods are feared; like the Departed they are dangerous and must be kept in their place. There is many a god who is never noticed except when he makes a nuisance of himself.

2:Elwin Es (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 GondAW32 Muria

MURIA RELIGION

Morals are not usually closely linked with aboriginal theology and ritual. Muria ethics, as we see elsewhere, are fully developed and reach a lofty standard. Part of the system undoubtedly derives from Lingo who during his earthly sojourn is believed to have taught many lessons of domestic fidelity and daily conduct, and whose own life and character is not ignoble. The other gods are less highly moralised, yet their worship probably has a moral influence. For example, when they return home after dancing all night at a festival, are the chelik and motiari better boys and girls? Probably. Their social instincts have been strengthened. Their whole life—gay, colourful, united, peaceful—has appeared more than ever attractive and desirable, and they know that it can only be enjoyed by the practice of certain virtues. They have learnt, in the common dance and common meal, the futility of jealousy, greed and pride.

This fulfilment of the need for moral growth is not, of course, a conscious one; nor is the satisfaction of the sense of beauty in the dancing, music and drum rhythm at festival, marriage and funeral. But it is there and it is most important. The phallic element is not obtruded, but that too is there and its presence reassures the people that this necessary and beautiful aspect of human life is not alien to the divine interest.

A few other points may be noted. I have already stressed the absence of fixed forms and even of a defined pantheon. There is no sacred book, no canon, no deposit of faith committed to a central authorised guardian, no regular liturgy. Religion is always on the move. Even the legends change from village to village. The living voice of the prophet is more important than the convention of the priest. The dream of today is more urgent than the tradition of yesterday. The position and reputation of the gods is constantly changing. As the Muria become more State-conscious, more patriotic and nationalist, as the opening of communications brings them more in touch with the Palace and the Dussera traditions, the worship of Danteshwari is likely to grow ever stronger. By contrast I think the cult of Bara Deo will wane more and more as it has done already in the Central Provinces. Indeed in the neighbouring Bindra Nawagarh Zamindari I have recorded a legend that the decline of Bara Deo was directly due to the British occupation; the old god was captured by the British who still hold him and derive their power from him. As more and more forests are reserved the ancient jungle gods tend to disappear; Kadrengal, lord of the hunt, is already a mere shadow of his former self. There is no need for missionary effort; the advance of civilisation will automatically change the character of the gods. I anticipate a considerable increase in the cult of Mahapurub and Bhagavan who are above earthly changes. Modern civilisation tends to push men's aspirations and their divinities up into the sky.

The Muria attitude to the gods is a curiously ambivalent blend of familiarity and terror, of humour, affection and abuse. Often they do not so much pray to the gods as talk things over with them, usually at the top of their voices. If they are not satisfied they abuse their gods with point and wit, or treat them very casually in an attempt to bring them to their senses. I was unable to obtain many *mantra*; I believe few exist; the expressions used for the harvest on page 25 and at the time of the hunt on page 42 are definitely intercessory rather than mandatory. The idea that the priest, by virtue of his position or his abstinence, can force the gods to his will, is alien to Muria thought. Yet along with the familiarity and homeliness, there is sometimes a very real sense of awe. In some of the hill temples, when a famous medium is possessed, when the Anga moves so mysteriously to show

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

771
182

its will, at the crises of the bull-sacrifice, at the dance of the dead, the urgent and catastrophic nature of the unseen is emphasized and the worshippers are hushed into dread and reverence.

Muria religion, then, which anticipates the vast developments of Hinduism, is not unworthy of the great religious system which has grown up on the same soil and out of the same traditions. Of that system it is of course a simple and childlike version, yet it does not lack dignity, power and beauty, and the modern Hindu—if he is wise—will treat it with the reverence that is always due to children's things.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

when the father may be drunk and the mother tired and both ill-tempered, family life runs more smoothly and is more permanent.

In some cases, particularly in Africa and Assam, the dormitory has undoubtedly a military purpose. Sometimes this end is sought by sexual abstinence and segregation from the girls; sometimes, the people appear to think that their warriors will fight better if they have no frustrations.

Roy summarized the aim of the Uraon dormitory as having been in its time 'an effective economic organization for purposes of food-quest, a useful seminary for training young men in their social and other duties, and an institution for magico-religious observances calculated to secure success in hunting and to augment the procreative power of the young men'.[1]

I do not think we can ignore the magical aspect of the dormitory, though I doubt if this provides a reason for its foundation. For example, Shakespear reports of the Lushei Kuki clans that if a man kills a rhinoceros, his family will die unless he goes straight to the *zawlbuk* or to the forge and remains there for a day and a night.[2] The connexion of the dormitory and the magical forge is interesting. So also among the Chang, when a man kills a tiger, he must stay in the *morung* for thirty days.[3] When boys are initiated into the *darimu* of the Kiwai, they are shown a small image of a naked woman; this is expected to improve the supply of sago.[4] The chelik of the Muria ghotul have a special connexion with fertility rites.

Combined with these, there are entirely practical and straightforward reasons for the establishment of dormitories. Everywhere we find the need of a rest-house for visitors in a village and a special tradition of hospitality. In village life everywhere, it is useful and convenient to have the younger members of the tribe organized and available for work. Nor should we forget the apparently universal human tendency to form clubs. Where society is organized on an age-grade basis, this naturally leads to special clubs for the younger people and the unmarried. The aim of the Bondo, and possibly of some other tribal, dormitories in Orissa appears to have been to enable girls to find suitable husbands and to test their desirability.

No doubt all these causes have been, in their way and according to circumstances, operative in different parts of the world. The Bastar ghotul is peculiar in its elaborate organization of the sexual life of its members, in allowing close relations to live together in the same ghotul, and in having no military purpose.

III. The Muria's Own Theory

The Muria themselves explain the origin of their ghotul in several different ways. First and most important they trace its beginning back into the mythological past of the Gond race.[5] Some also stress the desire to segregate the youth of the tribe and thus prevent them being an embarrassment to their parents; others emphasize the need of providing a sort of Boy Scout troop which will always be available to look after visitors to the village.

The last is the least likely reason. The Muria country has only been visited by officials in the last sixty years and by officials in any number during the

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 211.
[2] Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 380.
[3] Shakespear, *The Lushai Kuki Clans*, p. 103.
[4] Beaver, op. cit., p. 184.
[5] The ghotul is possibly very old. A Jain text of the first or second century A.D., the *Brihat-Kalpasutra-bhashya* (Vol. IV, verse 3446), refers to the *Vijapharana*-shala of Tosali (or Bastar State) among the places to be avoided by Jain monks. This was a hut erected in the centre of the village where a fire was kept burning, and where a great number of lowly persons congregated to make selections for marriage.—Private communication from Mr V. S. Agrawala, Lucknow Museum.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
182

present century. The statement is one of those that are so often made with the idea that they will please the inquirer. 'We had to start the ghotul', said the headman of Binjhli, 'because we were ordered to maintain huts in which touring officers and subordinates could stay. It was a great problem how to look after these huts and how to serve the needs of the officers, who devoured more than a herd of buffaloes, whose ponies had to be fed with buckets of ghee, and at last we decided to put them in charge of the boys and girls.' It is true, of course, that though properly the ghotul and the Paik-gudi or Thana-gudi (official rest-hut) should be distinct, in practice most villages have no separate building for touring subordinates, and when these visit the village the chelik and motiari vacate their little club and turn it over to them. It is also true that the chelik have to see to the pitching of tents and to the supply of firewood for more exalted visitors. But the bulk of the work is done by the village Atpariha (drudge) and the Rawat (cowherd) from whose hands Hindu visitors are able to take water.

But this is an excuse, not a reason, for the existence of the ghotul. The same may be said of a suggestion made in Markabera that the ghotul was established to keep the tribe together, to maintain its culture and to protect its girls from the seduction of outsiders. The ghotul certainly achieves this end. It is an ideal instrument of the laws of endogamy. It is a powerful preservative of the old culture. But I doubt if the danger of intermarriage with outsiders has ever been acute.

In Markabera I also heard the interesting suggestion that the ghotul was founded 'to get the girls used to it'. We ourselves are so accustomed to the idea that a girl should be a virgin on her wedding-night, that it is hard for us to realise that many primitive people would very much prefer her not to be. Hence the *jus primae noctis*. Hence the ceremonial deflowering of girls by men other than their husbands. The ghotul might possibly—though I doubt if it could be the sole reason—have arisen from a desire that husbands should not have to face the magical infection of hymeneal blood.

We begin to approach the real reason for the ghotul in a statement by a very old Muria named Yogi who lived in Jaitpuri. The ghotul began, he said, 'because we didn't know what to do with these offspring of a vixen's vagina'—indicating everybody present. 'We were tired of settling their quarrels, and we didn't want their noise. So we said, "You all go off and play and spend your time together. You can do what you like provided you do the work we want from you, bring wood and water, tend the cattle, nurse the babies". At first we gave them a place on the verandah of someone's house, but there were too many of them and we got no peace, so at last we gave them a special house to live in away from the rest of us.'

The Lingo legend suggests that the ghotul serves the useful purpose of removing the younger brothers of a household from their dangerous proximity to the elder brothers' wives.

This is part of the truth but not the whole truth. I believe the fundamental reason for the ghotul is to prevent children watching what Freud called 'the primal scene' and to commit to the older boys and girls the task of educating the younger children, for which the parents have not the time or inclination.[1]

[1] Among the Tanaina, when a boy reached the age of nine he went to live with his maternal uncle, for it was feared his father would be too indulgent and not force his child into the stern training for a life of bear-spearing and on the sea. The uncle would throw the child into cold water and harden him till he was grown and he returned to his parents. C. Osgood, 'Tanaina Culture', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXIII (New Series), p. 720.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
182

To understand this, we must consider in some detail the relation of Muria parents to their children.

IV. Avoiding the Primal Scene

X883
182
593

At about the time when children become capable of something more than games and food, they also become something of an embarrassment about the house. There is nowhere for them to sleep at night. They are always clamouring to go and play with the other children. They are apt to surprise the intimacies of marital life. The parents decide that it is time they went to the ghotul. At the age of six or seven, then, a child begins its dormitory life. In most ghotul there is a group of very small children, sent by their parents 'to get them out of the way'. They are not given ghotul names or any ghotul privileges, but the house serves as a sort of crèche, and after all most of the little children have older brothers or sisters there who can look after them.

One of the reasons often given by Muria to explain the existence of the ghotul is that 'it is sinful for parents to sleep in the presence of their children'. 'As soon as a child understands what it [that is, sexual intercourse] is, we send it to the ghotul.' Apparently the Muria parent does not consider the child capable of understanding the meaning of the 'primal scene' till it is about six or seven. But it is interesting and significant that the Muria should consider the point at all. It is indeed of such importance that I will quote all the statements that have been made to me about it. 'The very reason for the ghotul', said the headman of Jhakri, 'is that it is sinful to sleep before a daughter or a son. They must never see the parents sleeping on one mat, either by day or night. Suppose a little girl comes home late at night for some reason and finds her parents holding each other on the mat, they are very angry and abuse her saying, "Haven't you your ghotul to live in? Why do you want to come here?"'

In Malakot, the village Gaita told me that 'young children are only kept at home while they are too young to understand pleasure and pain. Very little children may sleep with their mothers, but then they must go somewhere else. They are always getting frightened, so we send them as soon as we can to the ghotul.'

Here is another opinion from one of the elders of Kongera. 'Suppose the child is two or three years old and suddenly wakes up to find its father copulating with the mother. The father goes on, he takes no notice, but the mother pats the child's chest saying, "I'll give you something to eat in a moment, but keep quiet now, my darling". The father also speaks sweet words to the child in order to deceive it about what is happening. But suppose it is a big child, of five or six years, then it is difficult. The father ceases his work and goes away. Next day they send it to the ghotul.'

And this from Binjhli: 'The ghotul was made simply to stop children watching their parents copulating. As soon as boys or girls understand what that is, we send them to the ghotul. It is a great shame to watch one's own parents at it. "What are they doing?" the little children say, wondering. "Why is my father throwing my mother about like that?" So we take them to the ghotul, and they ask no more questions. But what do the Hindu children do and the sahibs, where all live in one house and they have no ghotul?'

And finally from Alor: 'How difficult it is for parents to tell their bigger children, whom they have not yet sent to the ghotul, to go and sleep in another room. Some children are very good and understand, but others are stupid and insist on crowding into the parents' room. We daren't, even while

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE ORIGIN OF THE GHOTUL

883 X
192
593

they are asleep, pick them up and put them on the verandah. We feel very pleased when they begin to say, "This or that little girl has gone to the ghotul. I used to play with her, and now I feel lonely. Do let me go too". We send them to the ghotul very willingly.'

This desire to prevent the child from witnessing the 'primal scene' is interesting and important, though modern psycho-analysts are inclined to believe that Freud over-emphasized its dangers, and certainly any harm likely to be done to the child would have been done long before it reached the ghotul age. But it is at least significant that the parents are aware of the danger, that they think it not only embarrassing for themselves but harmful to the children, and that so many should trace the foundation of the ghotul to a cause which Freud would surely have applauded.[1]

But not only does the ghotul save the child from the psychological dangers of witnessing the 'primal scene'; it alters the entire parent-child complex by putting in the place of the father a new disciplinarian and in the place of the mother a new object of sensual attraction. 'When a boy or girl enters the ghotul', said a leading cheiik at Masora, 'he usually forgets his relations altogether. They say they have no relations. The head of the ghotul is the father, and the Belosa is the mother.' However strict the father may be at home, however insistent on the fulfilment of domestic and economic duties, his authority is nothing before that of the dreaded Sirdar, who can fine you, truss your legs up to the roof, make you a mockery to your fellows. The father fades into the background; if he comes home drunk and beats up the family, the children will not be there; his orders and curses are feeble before those of the Sirdar. The father may still control a boy's work and duty, but his emotional life is dominated by the Sirdar. The result of this has been well put by J. P. Mills. Speaking of the policy of the American Baptist Mission in Assam which has, of course, been to discourage the dormitories which formerly flourished there as in Bastar, he writes,

> In forbidding their converts to use the *morung* and in undermining it as an institution the Mission are taking a very dangerous step, from which they would surely have shrunk if they had considered the psychological aspect of the matter. A boy goes to the *morung* when he is very small—as soon, that is to say, as he 'feels shame' at sleeping in the same room as his parents. It is in the *morung* that he fags for other boys and is taught his duties in life and generally hammered into shape. This means that the *morung* tends to take the place of his father as a disciplinarian. This is most important, for it is from a son's feeling towards his father as disciplinarian that one of the great stresses of the family complex arises. Looking back over the thousands of Naga disputes that have been brought before me in the course of my service, it certainly seems to me that violent quarrels between fathers and sons are more frequent in tribes which have no *morungs*.[2]

Mills illustrates this by showing that in the Sema tribe where, as we have seen, there are no *morung*, such quarrels are disastrously common; Angami boys, who also do not grow up in dormitories, resent any form of discipline,

[1] The same desire is said to be at the bottom of the custom recorded of the Savara of Orissa who, it is claimed, never have sexual congress after nightfall, but go out together during the day to special places in the jungle. The tribe has no dormitory, and the whole family has to sleep together in a single hut. See S. N. Roy, 'The Savaras of Orissa', *Man in India*, Vol. VII, p. 331. But I believe the taboo on intercourse at night to be an invention. I discuss it in my *Myths of Middle India*.

[2] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 49f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 913
182
593

yet among the Ao, where the *morung* plays an important part, quarrels between father and son are rare.

Muria parents are tolerant and understanding. 'Whenever we hear the music of a drum', said a boy at Kabonga, 'we feel restless; we leave everything we are doing and go at once to dance and sing.' Here I was told a story, that is often repeated, of a boy who was sowing seed in his father's field. He had a whole measure of rice to sow, but when he heard drums beating in a neighbouring village he forgot all about it and went off to join the dance, leaving the pile of rice on the ground. Three days later he returned expecting to be beaten, but his father had understood the boy's feelings and had himself gone to the field and sown the rice instead. I have been told in various villages that for recognized festivals and marriages, parents are very sympathetic to their children.

[689] And indeed if the parents interfere with the life and discipline of the ghotul, if they stop their children going to it without sufficient excuse, they are fined—and so firmly established is the institution that they pay up.

There is very generally a convention that the parents know nothing of what happens in the ghotul. They are not even supposed to know their children's titles though, of course, they actually know everything that goes on. But the conventions must be observed. The children do not sing ghotul songs at home. A girl should not let her parents see her as she goes out to the ghotul or when she comes back. That is one reason why she returns home very early in the morning. She ought to be at work husking rice or cleaning the house when her parents get up. Should a girl meet her father as she is going to the ghotul, she should turn her head aside and walk away as quickly as possible. They should not greet or say anything to each other. But in some villages, in Kabonga for example, and at Jhakri, the older people have told me that when a girl gets engaged, her mother advises her to be very careful about allowing boys to take liberties with her. It is said, however, that the parents never warn a girl or boy against any particular person. At Jhakri, Raunu said that the mother says to the daughter at this time, 'Don't play and laugh too much with the boys; be happy, but don't let your hands and feet get into trouble. I never got into trouble nor did your grandmother; we were always known to be good girls for we never became pregnant. Never run away with a boy but marry the one we choose for you and don't quarrel with your girl friends.' So also a father advises his son to be very careful in his relations with girls who are already engaged to other boys. The reasons for this attitude are purely financial: 'Don't make a girl pregnant. We are poor people; I shall not be able to pay the fine; if you get into mischief you will have to go and work as someone's servant and pay the fine that way. Be happy but don't always run after the same girl.'

It will be seen that this kind of advice is very practical, and for that reason the boys and girls do not resent it. The parents are not concerned with the 'morals' of their children and, indeed, even when a boy makes a girl pregnant the parents generally stand by him and help him. When I asked a chelik at Markabera whether his parents ever got angry with him for sexual indulgence in the ghotul, he replied, 'Why should they, didn't they do the same when they were young?'

It is not easy to obtain information about the mother-son relationship. I have not heard of any 'possessive' mothers and the general circumstances of Muria life are such as to eliminate the dangers of the mother-fixation. Naturally, mothers tend to spoil their sons and fathers their daughters. 'A boy may be frightened of his father but he is never afraid of his mother. If

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

he does not work properly his father chases him with a stick and he hides until he knows the danger is past and then his mother receives him lovingly and gives him special food.'

It is said that a mother often accuses the father of jealousy, saying, 'You cannot bear seeing that boy's happiness when he goes to the ghotul dance; can't you remember that you were a young boy yourself once and you too went to the ghotul?'

Widows' sons and only sons are often spoilt and indulged—'*Rînd ke beta sênd*, a widow's son is a bull': he does what he likes and no one can control him. So too it is said of an only son that 'he brings home all the quarrels of the world: if he is given a pot to urinate in, he does it on the floor'.

On the whole the relation of children and parents is a happy one. This may be at least one reason why there is so little conflict and jealousy, so little strain, among the Muria.

In many respects, Muria practice corresponds to what Seligman once described as the psycho-analytic ideal of education. Melanie Klein, speaking of children rather younger than many of those in the ghotul, describes the upbringing of the future generation. 'We shall be more sparing of compulsory ethical requirements in regard to the tiny developing creature than people were with us. We shall allow him to remain for a longer period uninhibited and natural, less interfered with than has hitherto been the case, to become conscious of his different instinctive impulses and of his pleasure therein, without immediately whipping up his cultural tendencies against this ingenuousness. We shall aim at a slower development that allows room for his instincts to become partially conscious, and together with this for their possible sublimation. At the same time, we shall not refuse expression to his awakening sexual curiosity and shall satisfy it step by step, even—in my opinion—withholding nothing. We shall know how to give him sufficient affection, and yet avoid a harmful superfluity: above all, we shall reject physical punishment and threats, and secure obedience necessary for upbringing by means of withdrawing affection.'[1]

Of this passage Seligman says that 'my experience suggests that further investigation will show a very small number of psychotics among the less advanced of the primitive races, and here it is interesting to note that in the upbringing of their children these races do, to a considerable extent, conform to the psycho-analytic ideal' set out above. He adds that 'there is, however, one desideratum laid down by the author, which I believe is only occasionally fulfilled, "that the child from birth shall not share the parental bedroom"'.[2]

[1] Melanie Klein, 'The Development of a Child', *The International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, Vol. IV (1923), p. 445.

[2] C. G. Seligman, 'Anthropological Perspective and Psychological Theory', *JRAI*, Vol. LXII, p. 221. A terrible picture of the effect on a boy's mind and character caused by witnessing scenes in his parents' bedroom is given by Graham Greene in his novel *Brighton Rock*.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Aga baga da dhoti roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the dhoti that looks so smart?
Gāndou kaiyada dhoti roy saiya sona.	The Ganda made the dhoti.
Aga waga dīng muyāng roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the bells that tinkle so merrily?
Kaser kaiyadīng muyāng roy saiya sona.	The Kaser made the bells.
Aga baga dīng paniya saiya sona ?	Whence came the comb that looks so fine?
Layon kaiyada paniya roy saiya sona.	The chelik made the comb that looks so fine.

Finally, I will give two examples of the many obscene songs that are sung during this dance, for otherwise it is impossible to get a clear picture of the meaning and atmosphere of the rite.

Nana jhoriyāna waiwoy gīlo tinwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will not eat half-cooked rice.
Nana jhoriyāna dais dudo poywāna.	I am Jhoria: jumping up and down I hold her breast.
Nana jhoriyāna podoh monde dekwāna.	I am Jhoria: I break the girdle round her waist.
Nana jhoriyāna hārspoche tendwāna.	I am Jhoria: I quickly pull off her cloth.
Nana jhoriyāna pudets bonde nekyāna.	I am Jhoria: into her I press myself.
Nana jhoriyāna teks bura mi-kachwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will pluck out my pubic hairs and throw them away.

In the same style is a Halbi Jhoria Git.

Go to sweep the booth, Belosa.
Where has the bridegroom gone?
He is nowhere in the house.
What can he be frightened of?
He is dying for his penis.
He is going to have his sister.
Where has he taken her?
He has taken her to the river bank.
What leaves has he spread for her?
He has made a bed of *jam* leaves.
Jham-jham he swings to and fro.
Bathing, bathing, he inserts it.
Get off, get off, brother, she cries.

These songs are sung by the bride herself and by a party of unmarried girls. They have changed their sex for the occasion and imagine themselves performing the sexual act as men. The significance of this will be seen when we discuss the ultimate basis of the rite.

Various reasons have been advanced by scholars to explain this custom in different parts of the world. Frazer has emphasized the difficulty of the problem, 'The religious or superstitious interchange of dress between men and women is an obscure and complex problem, and it is unlikely that any

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32, Gond A W32
Muria

838
171
182

single solution would apply to all the cases.'[1] He has suggested that the custom of the bride dressing as a male may be a magical means of ensur-

From a photograph in *Natural Man* by Charles Hose, by kind permission of the publishers, Macmillan & Co., Ltd

FIG. 116. Klemantan women dressed as men

ing a male heir. Certainly it is possible that cross-dressing has something to do with fertility. In Sarawak the Klemantan women dance in turbans and a sort of dhoti at a harvest festival which has been described as 'a celebration or cult of the principle of fertility and vitality—that of the women no less than that of the rice grain'.[2] Zulu women dress in men's clothes and go to herd their cattle to save them from disease.[3] Crawley refers to a custom of the Ngaete of Assam when men dressed as women dance in honour of the children

[1] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1911-15), Vol. VI, p. 260. See also J. Abercromby, 'An Armenian Custom in the Caucasus', *Folk-Lore*, Vol. II (1891), pp. 179ff.

[2] Hose, *Natural Man* (London, 1926), p. 128. Hose gives a charming photograph, upon which Fig. 116 is based.

[3] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 320.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

838
171
187

born during the year.[1] In the Mandla District of the Central Provinces of India, Gond and Baiga women from time to time dress up as men and go from village to village with spears and axes on a sort of ceremonial hunt. In each place they catch and kill a pig, an act normally taboo to women. That this is a fertility rite is indicated partly by the fact that it is practised in times of dearth and also by the songs used for the occasion. One of these is as follows:

Kutki kodon ke bharti hoe!	May kutki and kodon increase!
Kukra bilai ke jharti hoe!	May dogs and cats decrease!
Gai garua ke bharti hoe!	May cows and cattle increase!
Kukra bilai ke jharti hoe!	May dogs and cats decrease!

This is called Stiria-raj[2]; the custom is also known among the Maria and Muria. At Toakapal I was told how women made moustaches of lamp-black, put on dhoti and turban and went armed from place to place sacrificing goats and pigs. Koud women also dress as men and sacrifice fowls.

Frazer again suggested that the wife wears husband's garments in order to transfer to him her future pains at child-birth.[3] But there is no tradition of the couvade among the Muria, and it seems rather far-fetched to suppose that the young bride will already be so anxious about her pains as to wish to be rid of them even on her marriage day.

Another suggestion is that the marriage disguise is aimed at averting danger from the evil eye at a moment when the bride is particularly susceptible to the influence of hostile magic.[4] The marriage disguise has been noted for different peoples in Africa and India as well as in antiquity; sometimes it is carried so far as to substitute a mock bride for the real one. This was the view of Crooke,[5] after a survey of the Indian evidence, and the final opinion of Frazer.[6] Westermarck, however, who gives many examples of the marriage disguise, doubts whether all these practices can be explained as attempts to deceive evil spirits. 'Facts of this sort seem better to agree with Mr Crawley's theory of "inoculation", according to which the bride or bridegroom assumes the dress of the opposite sex in order to lessen the sexual danger by wearing the same kind of clothes as "the loved and dreaded person", and the greatest possible assimilation between them would best serve the purpose of neutralizing that danger'.[7]

But the Muria practice of not only disguising the bride, but also her companions, so that not even the husband can tell which is which, does appear to aim in some way at averting hostile magic or the enmity of the dead or evil spirits.

[1] Crawley, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 105.

[2] There was a similar custom among the Kol. 'In October, 1880,' says Haldar, 'I witnessed at Ranchi a curious sight of bands of Munda girls, wearing turbans, going about in procession armed with sticks, spears and axes. All the girls of a village so equip themselves and make a descent upon the next village to the east, carrying off whatever fowls, kids, pigs, and lambs they can secure. The village thus devastated takes its chance by sending a similar expedition of Amazons to the next village eastwards and so on. Retaliation is forbidden, nor is any resistance offered; and, moreover, it is quite legitimate for the invaders to seek their booty wherever they may be concealed. This festival, called *Jani-sikar*, takes place once every twelve years, and is supposed to have been started by a Raja of the Nag-bansi family, named Ganes Sahi, in the twelfth year of his reign.'—S. Haldar, 'A Curious Kol Festival', *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 98.

[3] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. III, p. 216.

[4] Crawley, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 498f. and 318ff.

[5] Crooke, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[6] Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. IV, pp. 235ff.

[7] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. II, pp. 318ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

In an interesting account of the women's hunt in the Ranchi District of Chota Nagpur, W. G. Archer has traced the mythological basis of the custom, but he points out that it also fulfils a psychological need. 'We shall only be grasping its real value if we regard it not as fact but as poetry, as the expression of a need rather than a statement of a truth.'

> This need may be defined as follows. In Uraon society, the principles of succession are male, the method of government is male, the salient offices are male. The men are by convention and tradition the social superiors of the women. But if this is the convention, it is only partly the fact. In Uraon villages, the actual relation is one of equality. It is as equals that the men and women dance. It is as equals that a wife and her husband order their family affairs. And it is as equals that they work and live together. There is thus a stress between the formal structure of tribal life and the actual feelings and emotions that thrust upon it. To relieve this stress is the function of the hunt and the myth.
>
> The myth shows that although the men may rule, it is the women who are also men. In its reliance on the success of a simple trick, it expresses Uraon pleasure in naive cleverness and under this typically Uraon cover, it mildly pokes fun at male incompetence. The balance is therefore righted. The women are recognized to be the equals of men.[1]

It is possible that we may have to connect the custom very deep down with the same tendency that has produced the eonist deviation. The last Jhoria songs that I have quoted give some point to the supposition that cross-dressing is an expression of 'penis-envy'. I have only given two songs of this nature, but there are many on the same lines which suggest that for once the motiari are able to assert themselves against the chelik who so constantly establish their sexual domination in normal times.

Probably several different reasons have combined to produce the rite. The Muria girls dance disguised at the marriage partly to protect the bride, partly to avert hostile magic or the evil eye, partly to restore the sexual balance of the tribe and partly too, simply because they love dressing up and get a lot of fun out of it. It is very amusing to see the unfortunate bridegroom trying to guess which of the many girls before him, all looking exactly alike, is his own wife. If he chooses the wrong girl everyone is delighted; when the right girl darts out of the group and beats him it is an occasion not to be forgotten.

But such cross-dressing is always ceremonial. There are strict taboos on men and women wearing each other's clothes on ordinary occasions, and this makes the rite, when it does occur, all the more exciting and impressive.[2]

[1] W. G. Archer, 'The Women's Hunt' in *Essays in Anthropology Presented to S. C. Roy* (1941), pp. 187ff. The same feeling is revealed in the widespread myth of the Island and Country of Women, which goes back to the *Mahabharata* and was recorded by Hiuen Tsang. For an account of this interesting subject and full references to the literature, see W. Crooke, 'The Land and Island of Women', *Man in India*, Vol. II (1942), pp. 274ff; J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 263 and my *Myths of Middle India*.

[2] In an account of prophylactic disguises for averting evil in the Bombay Presidency, J. J. Modi gives three types of sex disguise—

> (1) Proclaiming the birth of a boy as that of a girl.
> (2) Perforating the nose or the ear of a boy like a girl's.
> (3) Allowing the growth of long hair in a boy so as to make him appear like a girl.

See J. J. Modi, 'Prophylactic Disguise for Averting Evil', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), pp. 282ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883 In some places there is a boy called Pargana Manjhi who exercises the same functions as that official actually does in the life of the tribe. Normally, however, appeals against the decisions of the ghotul leaders go to some older man who has retained his association with the ghotul for that very purpose.

The girl leader is generally appointed by the older boys in consultation with the Kotwar and the motiari. This is an entirely informal matter, there is no election, there is rarely a dispute. In some places the ghotul 'wife' of the leading boy becomes the head of the girls, especially in those ghotul where the girls' names are the same as those of the boys. Thus, where the Diwan is the head of the boys the Diwanin will lead the girls. In those villages where the Gaita's son has the right to leadership of the boys, the Gaita's daughter has a similar privilege among the girls.

The actual ceremony of appointment of a Belosa is similar to that of a Sirdar or Diwan but omits, of course, the tying of a turban. The elders say to the girl, 'Greet the boys with Johar, give them tobacco, comb their hair, massage their limbs, keep the ghotul clean, look after the younger girls, see there is no scandal; this is your responsibility and charge'.

IV

863 In some villages, specially in those of the north-west (in the Kalpatti-Bandadesh and Paralkot-Kalpatti Parganas) there is a rule that the son of the village 551 Gaita must be the head of the ghotul. Thus in Koilibera and Barkot I found that the Gaita's son ranked, even when he was a little boy, above the son of the Pargana Manjhi and this boy or some other relative of the Gaita was always the head of the ghotul. In Sarandi the son of the Dhurwa and in Padbera the son of the Manjhi were the leaders of their ghotul. The head of the Barkot ghotul was called Gaita and was the Gaita's son. The head of the Mannegaon ghotul was also called Gaita and the post was held by the son of Kandru, the Gaita of that village. In a Ghotul Pata recorded at Markabera, the village Gaita's son is leader of the chelik and the Gaita's daughter leader of the motiari.

883 But in other villages throughout the whole Muria area such an idea is unheard of and, when I have suggested it, has been indignantly rejected. The 183 only leadership is that of character; the whole principle of the ghotul, I have been told again and again, is that everyone is equal, rich or poor, the son of priest, headman or landlord, all are one in this fellowship which knows no wealth-distinction or privilege of inherited rank. And this, I think, is true. The Muria belief in equality is often carried to quite fantastic lengths. If work is demanded from a village by the Government, every family contributes the same amount. If in any ghotul all the boys have titles and there are thus no probationers to bring wood in the evenings, all the boys go together to fetch wood in a cart; each cuts exactly the same quantity and all bring the wood home. If one boy is not able to be present, they postpone the task till another day. If the village gets any present it must be exactly distributed and at feasts exact measurements are made of parched rice, meat or liquor. The Muria of Chandabera said that 'if one of our tribe were to pile up heaps of gold before us, we would still say "O, he is only a relation; our sons can marry his daughters"', and in Phunder the headman said, 'Of all the good things our children learn in the ghotul, one of the best is that everyone is equal'. In Phulpar, the leader was the son of the Atpariha or village drudge. At Chandabera, the Kotwar was deformed; at Bhanpuri, the Daroga was blind. Both had important duties and every privilege.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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even her kicks are sweet.' A study of ghotul offences and the type of punishment awarded, therefore, may be expected to throw some light on Muria notions of morality and the inner life of chelik and motiari.

Their offences, of course, cannot be understood properly except against the background of the general moral and social life of the tribe. To the Muria, as to most aboriginals, tribal solidarity is the supreme good, and anything that breaks this precious unity and fellowship must be condemned. Individualism is the great sin. For this reason, quarrelling and homicide are rare, theft is almost as uncommon. There are few who refuse to share the common work and interests of the community. Adultery is bad, not only because it infringes the rights of another Muria, but because it breaks up the carefully regulated domestic system of the people, and threatens to disrupt it by jealousy and hatred.

We have already seen the stress laid by the Muria on work. Slackness and laziness are very severely regarded, and are the commonest sources of friction between wife and husband. Cleanliness, decency, decorum and modesty are virtues much prized. A quiet and kindly attitude is expected of the tribal leaders; the bully and the coward are equally disliked.

Against this background, what sort of actions are condemned by ghotul opinion and punishable in ghotul law? Let us first consider those actions that are held to betray the common interest. They are doubly important, for in the highly specialized and concentrated fellowship of the ghotul, the general tribal instinct for unity becomes intensified.

II

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Quarrels in the dormitory are strongly condemned. They are disturbing to the peace of ghotul life and specially offensive to so gentle and uncontentious a people. Children are fined for this, and may even be expelled. In Khutgaon there was once a very quarrelsome chelik. After a time, the leaders of the ghotul called him and said, 'Do you want to be in the ghotul or outside it?' The dreaded threat of expulsion brought him to his senses and he gave no more trouble.

The betrayal of the ghotul fellowship by repeating outside anything that happens within its walls, especially any stories of the intimate relations of chelik and motiari or some scandal about a pregnancy, is one of the greatest of ghotul crimes, for 'that which comes from the mouth bears fruit throughout the world'. Once at Gorma, the Kotwar and Belosa revealed to the village that a girl was pregnant; they were expelled and told that they would never be readmitted. Only when they brought a lot of liquor and fell at the feet of each chelik in turn, promising never to offend again, were they allowed to return.

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Ghotul solidarity is constantly emphasized by the use of the ghotul title, and proper names may never be used between members. If a young child forgets this and addresses, say, his elder brother by the name that is always used at home, the others explain the custom to him; but if he offends again, he is punished.

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The dormitory has to be kept clean. Though spitting is permitted, anyone who urinates inside the building is punished. This prohibition extends, in some places, to the court outside. To break wind is not a very serious offence; the children laugh at the offenders and call them *badva* or *badvi*. Only a light punishment is imposed. At Ilaibar the culprit had to salute

2: Elwin E-S (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

181 Pujāri for the shrine of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon and Pardhan minstrels and priests are to be found in some Muria villages. Pardhan boys and girls are admitted to membership of the ghotul.

I found *Nahar* at Kuntpadar and at Kabonga and neighbouring villages. Their boys and girls had joined the ghotul and were taking a leading part in its affairs. Elsewhere this tribe has a very low position: it is mainly to be found in the west Central Provinces and Berar and is regarded as derived from a mixture of Bhil and Korku.

III. The Muria

Kariya mur he manse ōn. We are the dark people.—Muria saying

The word 'Muria' is used in Bastar to mean, generally, an aboriginal. In this sense it has long been applied by State officials to all the primitive tribes except the Maria of the Abujhmar. In recent years the people themselves have also widely adopted it. Throughout the Dantewara Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari, the tribe which Grigson calls 'Bison-horn Maria' returned themselves as 'Muria' at the 1941 Census. There are also the Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil. There is thus a good deal of confusion about the proper classification of the Bastar aboriginals. Let me therefore say at once that when I use the term 'Muria' in this book, I apply it to the aboriginals of the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils whose culture centres round the ghotul. Grigson estimated that there were some 76,000 of these in 1931; there are about 100,000 now. [163]

The name Muria has been derived from *mur*, the palas tree, or from *mur*, a root.[1] There is no apparent reason why the Muria should be named after the palas tree, which is neither a totem, nor specially honoured by them, nor even common in their territory. But the derivation of the word from *mur*, a root, has much to commend it. *Mur* may also mean 'permanent', as in *mur poder*, a permanent or regular name as opposed to a nickname: the Muria, in contrast to the Hill Maria, have permanent settlements and dwellings.

Early writers were impressed by the industry and cleanliness of the Muria. They are good cultivators, said Sir Benjamin Robertson in 1891, 'active, hardy and well-behaved and their villages are generally clean and comfortable'.[2] Hislop describes them as more civilised than the Maria, forming 'the bulk of the agricultural population in the north and centre'. Beyond the eastern frontier, however, 'where they mix with the Khonds in Patna, Kharond and Jeypur, they are somewhat wilder and devoted to the chase'.[3]

184 We must now survey these Muria of the north, for they are not all of one family, and the differences between them are interesting and significant. I will begin with the western parganas, lying to the west and north of the great mass of the Abujhmar Hills. It is in these hills that the key to many a Muria custom will be found. The people of these parganas seem to be Hill Maria who first settled in the plains and then came under strong alien

[1] R. V. Russell and R. B. Hiralal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India* (London, 1916), Vol. III, p. 64.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 186.
[3] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces* (Nagpur, 1866), Part I, p. 22.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

influence from across the Chanda border. Their villages are a compromise between the communalism of the Maria and the individualism of the Gond; the houses are arranged in streets and open on to one another, but they have substantial independent gardens behind. The women often dress in almost Maria fashion, exposing the breasts, but wearing few ornaments, and the men imitate the fashions of the Chanda border. Ten years ago, at the time of a Satyagraha agitation, many of them bought Gandhi caps. These are still worn, but pulled out of all shape to make them politically respectable. The ghotul is used mainly by boys and men; in Maria fashion it is the centre of the male life of the village, a tendency which the external influences across the border tend to strengthen. 184

In the northern parganas, the Muria have many links with their fellows in Kanker State and the Drug District. There are ghotul in both these areas, but in Drug ghotul life has become furtive and obscene, strumpeted by the contagion of the plains. The people in these northern parganas look and dress like the Gond of the Central Provinces; they have no affinities with the Maria of the neighbouring Padalibhum, whom they regard with amused astonishment. But they have the ghotul system very fully developed, although some of them vehemently deny the fact at a first conversation.

To the east, the Antagarh and Amabera Parganas are very similar—the people in dress and manners akin to the Gond of the Central Provinces. Here the cult of Lingo is at its strongest, and the Muria appear to be immigrants from the north. Although the ghotul flourishes, the people here are perhaps the least attractive of the Muria, for they are suspicious, timid and ill-mannered.

There is a striking contrast between these drab and sullen northern Muria and the people south of Narayanpur. This is the country of the best, most beautiful, most charming of all the peoples of Bastar, the so-called Jhoria Muria. These Muria are, according to their own account, Maria of the Abujhmar who have settled in the plains. They have retained a great deal of their original Maria culture but, where they have altered, they have improved and developed it—an astonishing variant of the normal result of culture-change.

In Bastar, says Hislop, 'the Madias are also called Jhorias, probably from *jhodi*, a 'brook'.[1] Dalton, deriving the word Maria from the Gondi term for a tree, says the Maria 'are also called Jhoria, from *jhodi*, a brook. This is the name given to the gold-washers in Chutia Nagpur, who are in all probability Gonds likewise'. The word Jharia is found as the name of the wilder sub-divisions of several tribes in the Central Provinces,[2] and there is a section of the Poroja of Orissa called Jhoria.[3] I visited some Jhoria villages in Koraput District in 1944. They are an attractive people, with a fully developed megalithic culture and the village dormitory, but they bear no resemblance to the Bastar Jhoria. 101 184

The first to describe these 'Jhoorias' was Glasfurd who, writing in 1862, says that they 'are found principally in the north-western parts about Narayenpoor and Partabpore, and extend towards Kakeir; they are a numerous 184

1 Hislop, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 7.

2 P. N. Bose gives Kolta or Jhoria among his classes of Gond, 'to which class', he says, 'the hill Gonds belong almost exclusively. Jhoria literally means "hungry".'—P. N. Bose, 'Chottisgur: Notes on its tribes, casts and castes' in *JASB.*, Vol. LIX (1890), Part I, p. 283.

3 *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 197. A note by M. W. M. Yeatts on the Poroja and Sooras. See also G. Ramadas, 'Porojas', *Man in India*, Vol. XI, p. 257, and E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), Vol. VI, pp. 209ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

● 184 class, and subsist partly by cultivation and partly by hunting and on the fruits of the forest. Their dress resembles that of the following caste, the Marias, with whom they may be said to constitute about a third or more of the population of the Bastar Dependency, and whom they resemble in customs and appearance.'[1] But in the 1891 Census only 936 people returned themselves as Jhoria; the 'numerous class' had probably by that time been merged in the Muria. Sir Benjamin Robertson writes of them that 'the Jhorias are more akin to the Marias than to the Murias; they resemble the former in dress and like them prefer a life in the woods to the attractions of a civilization even so mild as that of the Bastar country'.[2]

Unfortunately the word 'Jhoria' is no longer in general use, for it would have been a convenient term to describe this distinctive and delightful people. At the present time, some eighty years after Glasfurd wrote, the Muria of Partabpur do not seem to be properly classed with the 'Jhoria', nor should the word 'Narayanpur' be used in this connexion. Both in the Partabpur Tahsil and the immediate vicinity of Narayanpur, alien influence has been too strong; the characteristic signs of the Jhoria are there, but they are sadly weakened. At the present time, there are Jhoria living in the Ghat Jhorian, Jhorian, Baragaon, Narayanpur (except near the town), Dugal and Karangal Parganas, the west of the Benur Pargana, the east or plains area of the Chota Dongar Pargana, and the Mardapal, Chalka and a few villages of the Sonawal and Bamni Parganas in the Kondagaon Tahsil.

What are the characteristics of these Jhoria Muria? They are Hill Maria who have descended from the Abujhmar and have come into cultural contact, not with any 'superior' aliens but with a sympathetic and allied people. The Muria of the plains taught these Hill Maria to develop their ghotul system; hitherto they had confined it to boys and men—the plains Muria transformed it by admitting the motiari. The Muria taught them new dances, but preserved the old hill dances for the worship of the gods. Even these they developed, extending the monotonous Maria 'round' into a procession. The Gond of the north would have soon stripped off the feathers and profusion of bead necklaces and cowrie belts from their new neighbours; not so the Muria. The new and exciting theory of a 'co-educational' ghotul stimulated these Maria; it made them wash—the Jhoria are some of the cleanest people in Bastar, though their ancestral Maria are among the dirtiest; it awoke their artistic sense, impelling them to make ever better necklaces and combs, wooden supports for the hair of their motiari, tobacco pouches so carved that they would inform a girl at a glance of your intention.

It is impossible to say at this date whether the custom of erecting monoliths for the dead, the allocation of territory to each clan, the making of clan-gods, the observance of agricultural festivals spread through the Muria country as a result of Maria influence, or whether similar customs always existed and merely reacted on one another.

These Muria, even those so far away as in the Jhorian Pargana, say, 'We are Maria' and admit that they intermarry with the hillmen. They call their funerary rites 'a thing of the Maria Raj' and their special festival dances the 'Maria-endanna'.

It is always with a heavy heart that I bid farewell to these charming children of the foothills and turn to the Muria of the plains. Yet these Muria too have great and many virtues and a culture well worth our study. As we

[1] C. L. R. Glasfurd, *Report on the Dependency of Bastar*, 1862, par. 86.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part 1, pp. 182 and 186.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

move into the Kondagaon Tahsil, into the Kongur and Sonawal Parganas, we find the influence of the Abujhmar steadily decreasing. The gay feathers disappear from the turban, the pretty headbands go from the brow; bells are still tied in Maria fashion over the buttocks for a religious dance, but the boys waggle them horizontally instead of in the striking and effective vertical rhythm of the hills. We begin to find marriages celebrated in the house of the bride instead of the bridegroom; on the other hand, the parade round the pole is done outside the marriage-booth in old Gond fashion instead of inside after the Hindu use. The ghotul theory changes a little. Probably the majority of Jhoria ghotul are of the older 'pairing-off' type, in which a chelik 'marries' a motiari and remains faithful to her. But now we begin to find the rule coming more and more into force that boys and girls must not combine in this fashion, but must change; a chelik is fined if he sleeps with the same girl for more than three days in succession. 184

A third cultural area extends from the middle of the Kondagaon Tahsil, past the hills of Bara Dongar, across the main road and away to the east and south towards the Jeypore boundary. The first area is that of the north, from Partabpur to Keskal, where there is a large admixture of Drug and Kanker Gond; the second is the area of the south and west, where the people are mainly Maria who have settled in the foothills; this third area may be called that of the aboriginal Gond of Bastar. The Muria of this part conform physically, as Grigson rightly says, 'more to the standard type of Central Provinces Gond than any other Koitor in Bastar; they are short in stature but well-proportioned, with roundish heads, flat noses, distended nostrils, ugly features, straight black hair and scanty beard and moustaches'.[1] Dress and fashions have become rather mediocre; there is not a trace of Maria influence. The girls wear cheap bazaar ornaments in the ears, no headbands, and none of the elaborate necklace-wear that is so beloved of the Jhoria. They put a few combs in their hair and sling a number of red and white necklaces about their necks. The boys sometimes put on a lot of red, white and black necklaces, but they seem to have none of the sense of colour that characterizes their brethren to the west. The ghotul system flourishes; there is perhaps a majority of the ghotul of the modern type. Round Kondagaon especially, the ghotul building is often out in the jungle with a small and secret door. Marriages are a curious blend of old Gond and new Hindu elements, but are generally more splendid in display and consistent in ritual than among the Jhoria, who only a few generations ago celebrated a wedding with nothing more than a dance and a heavy meal. Religion and worship have the misfortune to lack the magnificent Maria festal dancing; on the other hand, secular dances are much more varied and exciting. A few Hindu gods have crept into the pantheon and many villages engage low-caste Hindu drummers and trumpeters who torture the air with their cacophanies. But it should not be supposed that the Kondagaon Muria are more 'Hindulized' than those to the west. Hindu influence is still a very local matter: an ardent Hindu schoolmaster or forest-guard may influence the people of his immediate neighbourhood, but his effect does not travel far. Funerary customs, however, are almost universally on the Hindu pattern, though the practice of erecting memorial monoliths has not yet wholly disappeared.

The ghotul continues to exist immediately beyond the Bastar border at many points. In Kanker State there are still nearly 80 of these dormitories with a ghotul population of 1218. There are a few ghotul in the Chanda

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 42.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and Drug Districts. How far the institution was distributed in former times must remain a mystery. Hislop describes the Gaiti Gond as 'calling themselves Koitars . . . Their chief peculiarity, which I have not found among common Gonds, though it may exist even among them, is to have in each village a separate tenement set apart for the occupancy of unmarried men during the night. This they call a *gotalghar* (empty bed house). In some villages there is a like provision made for the unmarried Gaiti women . . . When the Gaitis have returned in the evening from their work in the jungle, where they are very industrious in cultivation and cutting timber, all the families go to their respective houses for their supper, after which the young men retire to their common dwelling, where around a blazing fire, they dance for an hour or two, each having a small drum suspended in front from his waist, which he beats as he moves about while the young women sit at no great distance accompanying the performance with a song.'[1]

The Census of 1891 returned 5521 of these Gaiti who were then distributed in the Sakoli Tahsil of Bhandara (where they numbered 665), the Brahmapuri Tahsil of Chanda (215) and the north of Bastar (4535).[2] About this W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'The reference to Brahmapuri Tahsil dates back to the time before the separate Garhchiroli Tahsil was created. The reference therefore is probably to the people of the Garhchiroli Zamindaris such as Jharapara and Murramgaon, and possibly to the zamindaris of Karacha, Aundhi and Pannabaras now in Drug District which were in Chanda before the foundation of Drug. Some of these zamindaris border on Antagarh Tahsil and the local Gond is sometimes referred to as Maria and sometimes as Gaita, just as in Sironcha Tahsil the Hill Maria is sometimes called Gaita because his headman is known as the Gaita of the village.'

With all these differences do the Muria regard themselves as a single tribe? Can any Muria intermarry with any other Muria family? Do they eat together? Have they any connexion with the outside world?

Such problems as these are not easy to solve, for they do not often arise in practice and there are few precedents. Geographical factors tend to split the Muria up into roughly endogamous groups, but there is no rule about this. A Muria boy from the extreme west can go to a ghotul in the east of Kondagaon and find himself at home and perhaps find himself a wife. The ghotul is a fundamental bond, and in theory at least all Muria who have it as part of their culture can marry each other. In practice, the Jhoria Muria of the south-west do not often come into touch with the Gond Muria of the north and east, and marriages between them are rare.

As for different tribes and tribes outside Bastar—the Muria of the northern parganas often intermarry with the Kanker Gonds (who also have the ghotul system and are really Muria). The Jhoria Muria marry Hill Maria of the appropriate clans whenever geographical conditions allow them to do so. The same is sometimes true of the Muria of the Paralkot area. Those Muria who have migrated from Jeypore naturally marry their relations who have remained in the Orissa territory. Bindo, the old Muria leader of Benur, told me that 'we marry Kanker Gond and the Bhattra Muria of Jagdalpur (but not the Raja Muria) for we are of the same family; but now we live in the hills and they on the plains. Those who live near the Raja are the true Raja Muria, and they look down on us.' Bindo is here referring to the thirty or forty thousand Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil to the south of Kondagaon. These Muria have

[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part I, p. 22.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part 1, p. 183.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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PREFACE

121 This book is a contribution to social anthropology rather than to the study of crime. For many of the tragedies here are not crimes in any intelligible sense, though in our present state of dealing with such matters we treat them as if they were. In the second place, I have naturally approached the subject from the angle that was most familiar to me. I am neither an administrator, a lawyer nor a policeman. In dealing with crime this is a great disadvantage. It is specially so in India where these simple village crimes offer few problems of detection, and where it is impossible to study the general reaction of society through the columns of the daily press or in such revealing impulses of compassion as petitions for reprieve. It is only rarely that anything like a detective problem with clues and counter-clues is set for the police. It is equally rare for interesting points of law to arise during a trial. In the great majority of cases the accused confesses. But this does not mean that these aboriginal crimes have no importance. It is of absorbing sociological and psychological interest to study the reasons that drive unsophisticated primitive men to kill and wound their fellows; and their behaviour afterwards, as well as the conduct of everyone concerned, is of almost equal importance.

● 184 While I was collecting material for my book *The Muria and their Ghotul*, I was greatly struck by the difference in the incidence of crime between them and the great Maria tribe to the south. For homicide the annual incidence to the million is only 21 among the Muria, while it is 69 among the Bison-horn Maria; for suicide it is 22 against 53. In the last 10 years there have only been 21 Muria murders, and a large number of these have occurred either on the boundaries of the State or in the Mardapal Pargana in the extreme south of the Muria area, bordering on the Maria territory. The Muria differ from the Maria in the quite extraordinary absence of jealousy among them, in their lack of attachment to property and personal possessions, in their very strong civic and social instincts, in their gentleness and kindness. I believe that this difference is largely due to the

[p. xix]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Muria

184 existence among the Muria of the Ghotul or village dormitory, in which the boys and girls of the tribe grow up from childhood under a high degree of discipline and are trained in the tribal virtues. A system of what is practically pre-nuptial sexual communism teaches them from an early age the impropriety of jealousy. The habit of sharing everything all through childhood and youth in the dormitory weakens their individualistic attachment to personal property. The result is that several of the main causes of murder only lightly press upon them. The Bison-horn Maria probably had a similar dormitory club at one period and traces of it may still be found today. But it no longer exists as a social force, and the result is that the Maria—compared to their northern neighbours—grow up passionate and jealous, strongly attached to individual goods, undisciplined and revengeful. The Muria do not seem to consume any less
[273] alcohol than the Maria. Indeed the consumption of mahua spirit per head in the Muria area is higher than in the south. The Maria, however, drink more rice-beer, and there are many more cases of illicit distillation detected among them.

When my friend Mr A. N. Mitchell was Administrator of Bastar, he was troubled by this problem, and one day in conversation about it, one of us—I forget which—suggested that I might make some sort of survey of Maria homicides from my own independent angle. Mr Mitchell, with his unique zeal for everything affecting the life and welfare of aboriginals, gave me all possible facilities for my enquiry, and I was thus able not only to study official documents but also to visit the jail and discuss matters with many criminals.

101 The first task in my enquiry was to get at the records. I decided to confine myself to the exclusive study of the Bison-horn Maria, and here we were immediately faced by our first difficulty which was to decide who were to be included under this name. The name has come to be used in Bastar and in anthropology as a result of Mr W. V. Grigson's memorable book, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*. But it is not, of course, a word that is used by the people of themselves. Many of them now do not call themselves Maria at all. At the 1941 Census, thousands of Maria returned themselves as Maria, because they thought it sounded more respectable. Many others in the south have for some time

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I.P.C. Was the crime premeditated? Was it provoked by a serious and unbearable insult? The difficulty here, which every Sessions Judge admits, is that what seems an extreme provocation to him or the Assessors may hardly be noticed by the aboriginal, and incidents that seem quite trifling to the 'civilized' mind may rouse the Maria or Naga to a fit of homicidal rage. The matter is complicated by the fact that the tribes vary greatly from one to another. The Bison-horn Marias, for example, are passionately concerned about female chastity, and a wife's infidelity is constantly a cause of murder. But in this their Gond and Baiga neighbours to the north have a much lower standard. Love is comparatively free. Divorce is easy and a wife's betrayal is readily compensated by the payment of a small fine. It is obvious, therefore, that a Gond or Baiga who suspects his wife of infidelity is not put to anything like the same degree of provocation as that suffered by a Bison-horn Maria under similar circumstances.

Premeditation may be indicated by tribal customs. The Bison-horn Maria express the spirit of implacable revenge by certain dramatic symbols. They pull out their pubic hairs; they remove a few handfuls of grass from an enemy's roof; they whistle loudly the dreaded *sui* whistle. In any case where an accused is proved to have indulged in one or other of these acts, it may be assumed that his crime was premeditated.

A Bastar tragedy, the murder of Tati Hirme by her deceased husband's younger brother Doga, provides an interesting example of how a knowledge of local custom can explain an otherwise meaningless crime. According to tribal practice a younger brother has a right over his elder brother's widow, a right which extends not only to her person, but to her property. This right Tati Hirme refused to Doga, and there is evidence that for a long time the youth bitterly resented her behaviour. On the day of the tragedy he went to her house and asked her for some tobacco. She refused, and he murdered her.

At first sight here is precisely one of those motiveless crimes which have so often puzzled outside observers. It is true that there was hostility between the parties, but the refusal of a small gift of tobacco was hardly sufficient for so disastrous a result. But in Maria practice to ask a woman

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWO

THE BISON-HORN MARIA

I

The so-called Maria of Bastar fall naturally into two divisions distinguished by many details of culture and tradition, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains and the Bison-horn Maria living to the south of the Indrawati River. A full account of both these tribes has been given by W. V. Grigson, and his book should be read by those who wish to have a fuller background of Maria life than the present volume can supply. In this chapter I will only give a brief summary of the life and customs of the Bison-horn Maria.

The Bison-horn Maria, who are distinguished from the other aboriginals of Bastar by the splendid head-dress they use for their marriage dances, numbered about 156,000 in 1931, and I estimate their present strength at about 175,000. They are distributed all over southern Bastar, among the entrancing hills of Dantewara, in the dry forests of Bijapur, among the hot but lovely lowlands of Konta, in the remote Sukma and Kutru Zamindaris. On the borders of the main Maria stock are a number of communities which really belong to it, the Koya of the extreme south, the Dorla who claim to be a superior caste and the mixed population along the banks of the Indrawati and reaching up towards the Muria country beyond Barsur. The Dorla and Koya dance in Bison-horn Maria fashion; the mixed people to the north combine the customs of the Hill Maria with their own. In the neighbourhood of Jagdalpur, the Maria gradually lose their distinctiveness as they approach the town and merge into the southern Muria.

There are few people in India more attractive than the Bison-horn Maria, physically charming, of good stature, perfect figure, finely featured with carefully tended hair, often a lovely golden-brown in colour. Both men and women are very strong; the men can carry heavy loads great distances, endure long and arduous hunting expeditions and dance all night bearing their great drums. Their health is fairly good, but they are afflicted with yaws, though the work of the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison' charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum.* Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heirlooms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called *kikir*, a Jews-harp made of iron or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 then thrown aside. It is very important that this grass should not be burnt. The aim of the rite was to ensure that the [194] man would be able to breathe on his journey to the next world, though other informants said that it was to allow the soul to escape. The brother-in-law of the dead man then lit a bundle of grass with fire brought from the house and after taking a turn round the pyre set fire to the pile of wood by the head. Another man went round in the opposite direction and fired the wood by the legs.

After the pyre was well alight, the whole company went to a stream and washed themselves. The grand-daughter soaked part of her sari in water and holding the wet portion in her hand came home and rinsed it out on the very place where the coffin had lain inside the house so that the dead man could drink it.

Early next morning, the dead man's son-in-law went to the cremation-ground to examine the ashes and there found an [754] earthen doll tied in a leaf-cup. This led the Waddai to declare that the death was due to black magic done by Bando and concealed by him in the jungle.

Later in the morning a cow was brought and its legs washed by the deceased's daughter-in-law. After touching its forehead with a little rice she said to it, 'We have given you your share, now don't make us suffer any longer'. One of the drum-beaters touched the cow with his stick and a marriage-relative killed it by a heavy blow with the blunt end of his axe. He then cut the tail, removed the liver and made it into twenty-four pieces in equal shares of six pieces each. Each share was wrapped up in a leaf and roasted. The party took these to the cremation-ground. On reaching the place some of the women picked out the bones from the pyre and kissed them. The dead man's son collected any half-burnt pieces of wood and kicked them towards the centre of the pyre. Then they cleared the ash where the corpse's head had been, cow-dunged the place and put the leaf-cups there.

The packets containing the liver were now opened and three pieces from each packet were placed on the ground and three in each of the leaf-cups. The twelve pieces on the ground were for the Earth and the twelve pieces in the leaf-cups for the Dead. The Waddai made seven piles of rice. He held a

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER THREE

THE STATISTICS OF VIOLENT CRIME

I

The Bison-horn Maria have long had a bad reputation for violence and drunkenness. But before this reputation is accepted as scientific fact we should examine the matter statistically and in detail. I will give first a Table which will show the total homicidal crimes in Bastar State under Sections 302 and 304 of the Indian Penal Code during the 10 years 1931 to 1940.

TABLE ONE

Number of homicide cases in Bastar State (under Sections 302 and 304 I.P.C.) for 10 years, 1931-40

	Bison-horn Maria	Ghotul Muria of the North	Others (whole State)	Total
1931	8	1	7	16
1932	14	3	10	27
1933	8	1	10	19
1934	19	2	16	37
1935	14	2	7	23
1936	8	—	14	22
1937	8	2	12	22
1938	13	2	13	28
1939	15	1	9	25
1940	14	7	18	39
Total ...	121	21	116	258

The next Table will relate these figures to the estimated population, both for the tribes and for the State.

The striking difference in the number of murders committed by the Bison-horn Maria and their neighbours, the Ghotul Muria, is probably to be explained by the fact that the Muria have in their Ghotul or dormitory system an ideal method of training the youth of the tribe in the civic virtues, in eliminating jealousy and in teaching everyone to live together as a family. Even the few murders that do take place among the Ghotul Muria occur, for the most part, in villages which

[1: 37]

-3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

X 674 184

TABLE TWO

Illustrating the relation of homicide cases to the estimated population

	Population in 1941	Annual average of homicides	Average annual incidence of homicides to the million[1]
Bison-horn Maria ...	175,000	12·1	69·14
Ghotul Muria ...	100,000	2·1	21·00
Others ...	360,000	11·6	32·22
Total ...	635,000	25·8	40·63

have for one reason or another lost their dormitories. 'Reformers' who would banish the dormitory from tribal India should very carefully consider this fact before they do so.

X 674 171 184 It is not easy to obtain comparative figures for other tribes or communities in India. There is a Maria (but not Bison-horn Maria) population in the Chanda District: here there were 26 cases of homicide in 10 years among a population of 34,776—which works out near the Bison-horn Maria figure of 69 to the million. In Mayurbhanj State, in 1935-36 there were 25 similar cases from a population of about 890,000 or about 28 to the million. In 1939, there were 184 persons found guilty under Sections 302 and 304 I.P.C. in the Central Provinces and Berar, which gives a figure of approximately 11 to the million. In the same Province, with its total population of some eighteen millions, 53 persons were sentenced to death and 131 to transportation in 1941. The figures for 1942 were 59 and 127.

X 674 171 Against these figures, the incidence of 69 homicides to the million among Bison-horn Maria seems very high, but it must be remembered that the inhabitants of the Central Provinces and the Eastern States are among the most peaceful people on this planet. Laubscher gives some comparative statistics from various parts of the world. The rate of homicide among South African Pagans was 171 per million in 1935. In 1924, Canada had a homicide rate of 15 per million. In 1926, the rate for England and Wales was 7 per million.

[1] Based on the population estimates for 1941.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

INTRODUCTION

101 NO aboriginal people of India has attained greater prominence on the political scene of past centuries than the large group of tribes commonly known by the generic term Gond. When the mist that still veils long periods in the history of the Deccan finally lifts, Gonds appear not only as the main population of wide areas in the very heart of India, described after them as Gondwana, but also as a ruling race equal in power and material status to many contemporary Hindu princes. Lacking unity and leadership the Gond states collapsed before the successive onslaughts of Moghul and Maratha armies, but the Gond populations remained, the old feudal system continued to function in [21] many remote tracts and several Gond rajas enjoy up to this day the status of ruling chiefs. But besides the advanced sections of the Gonds who vied with Hindus in the fields of war and statesmanship, there were and still are the great masses of primitive peasants and forest dwellers on a cultural level no higher than that of other aboriginal populations in the Central Indian zone. Of their economics, social organization and religion, historical sources tell us next to nothing, and the study of Gond culture, as a distinct element in the culture pattern of India, falls to the anthropologist, who finds an almost overwhelming wealth of material among the many vigorous branches of the Gond family.

184 101 [194] Spread over an area considerably larger than the British Isles and extending from the Godavari gorges in the south to the Vindhya Mountains in the north, the Gonds are neither racially, nor culturally, nor linguistically a homogeneous population. So great are the differences in custom and material circumstances between many of the widely scattered tribal groups that one may well wonder what causes them to be considered, and indeed to consider themselves, as members of the same race. Wherever we find Gonds, unless they are totally detribalized and merged with Hindu populations, they describe themselves as Gond or, if speaking Gondi, as Koitur, the universal equivalent of that name in all Gondi dialects. Were it not for those large groups of eastern Gonds, who speak Chhattisgarhi Hindi, the Gonds in the north-west of the Central Provinces, who speak western Hindi and the far smaller groups of Telugu speaking Gonds, better known as Koyas, in Hyderabad and Madras Presidency, it would probably be most satisfactory to replace, at least in ethnological usage, the general name "Gond" by the term "Gondi speaking populations," thus leaving it open whether there exists such an entity as a Gond people or only a group of peoples who to-day speak related languages. Indeed, I believe that we shall fail in

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

our approach to the Gond problem—one of the cardinal problems of Deccan ethnology—unless we envisage the possibility that the tribes now known as Gonds, far from being the dispersed off-shoots of a once homogeneous people, attained a certain and very limited measure of cultural uniformity only when they came under the sway of the same dominant linguistic influence.

Gondi with its many local dialects is a Dravidian language of the so-called intermediate group, and stands, according to Grierson, closer to Tamil and Kanarese than to Telugu. But it seems highly improbable that the Dravidian tongues, which were no doubt associated with the representatives of the pre-Aryan high-civilizations of Southern India, should have been the original languages of tribal populations as primitive in racial and cultural make-up as the Hill Marias of Bastar and certain Koyas of Hyderabad. Just as such widely separated aboriginal tribes as the Chenchus of the Nallamallai Hills, the Hill Reddis of the Eastern Ghats and some, though not all, Naikpods and Kolams in the hills of Adilabad have adopted Telugu to the exclusion of any other tongue, without anyone considering Telugu as their original language[1] or claiming the present linguistic uniformity as proof of a genetic connection between all those tribes, so the peoples now speaking Gondi may, in times past, have abandoned older tribal tongues in favour of a Dravidian language spoken by neighbouring populations or the members of a ruling class. J. H. Hutton believes that by a similar process the Oraons of Chota Nagpur have adopted their present Dravidian tongue[2] in place of a Munda language, and I fully agree with his assumption that a large-scale Dravidianization of aboriginal tribes occurred partly previous and partly parallel to the Aryanization of which we are still witnesses.[3]

The idea that Dravidian Gondi represents a comparatively recent element in the linguistic pattern of the Central Indian belt has already been voiced by R. V. Russell, who put forward the theory of a Gond incursion into the Central Provinces from the south between the ninth and the thirteenth century A.D. This probably goes too far and is not supported by ethnological evidence; in solving the language problem it is not even necessary to assume a wholesale migration of all the Gond tribes from Dravidian lands south of the Godavari to the Central Provinces and the hill-tracts of Bastar. It is sufficient to postulate the invasion of a people limited in numbers but superior to the older tribal folks in organization and material equipment, and the subsequent spread of its Dravidian language and perhaps certain elements of its culture among the tribes previously speaking one or several older tongues. Indian history provides numerous examples of such an imposition of a foreign

1. In the case of Naikpods and Kolams an older tribal language is still spoken by other groups.
2. Oraon belongs to the same intermediate group as Gondi.
3. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Part I, p. 398.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

called Gommu Koi, or Koi of the river bank, *gomma* being a Telugu word for horn or tusk, used in the Upper Godavari district to mean the banks of the Godavari. He says that the Gutta Koi also generally refer to the lowlanders as '*mayalotilu* or rogues' and say that long ago their ancestors lived with them on the Bastar plateau, but went once to visit a zamindar in the plains, and so liked his country that they settled there and persuaded many others to follow them, and thereafter often harried the plateau in secret marauding expeditions. He refers to the lowlanders as calling themselves Doralu, from the Telugu honorific *Dora* or 'lord', and being called by the Telugus Koi Doralu. The specimens he gives of their language show it to be a Gond dialect very greatly corrupted by Telugu influences, not only the vocabulary but even verb and noun inflexions being Teluguized.

In the *Godavari District Gazetteer* the article on Koyas clearly deals with the lowlanders only, and speaks of the self-importance with which they know that their title *Dora* means 'lord' and insist on being given it, tolerating the alternative '*Mama*' (maternal uncle) from other castes, but disliking being called Koyas.

The designation Gottor is now common among the Telugus and Telugu Koyas of south Bastar for the Marias of the plateaux and the 'Koyas' at the foot of the plateau in Konta tahsil and Sukma zamindari. No one need worry about it as indicating any special race; it is simply a Telugu term for Hill Koitor. Glasfurd, though he wrongly spoke of the Gottor as a separate division, yet righted matters by pointing out that there was no real difference between them and the Marias of Dantewara. Naturally, Bison-horn Marias living on both sides of the southern edges of the plateau would be more influenced by the Telugus than those in the centre and north of the plateaux.

But there remains a real distinction between the Bison-horn Marias, even those who live along the southern fringes of their country, below the passes, and the Koyas of the plains. The latter are known as Doria, but this is obviously a corruption of Dor Koitor, their lands being to the Bison-horn Marias of the Dantewara and Jagdalpur plateaux, Dorbhum or lowlands. Your Telugu or Englishman writing in Telugu surroundings may say that the social status of the lowland Koya is greater than that of the Hill Koya; but your hill man will always look down with a healthy contempt on the plains man. Cain indeed realized this, but perhaps hardly understood the foulness of the abusive Chhattisgarhi term *mailotia* which he gives with a capital initial letter as the Hill Koya's name for the lowland Koya. The latter knew he was despised by the highlander, and with the self-assertiveness that is the typical fruit

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of the inferiority complex palmed off his name Dor Koi or Lowland Koi on the ignorant Telugu as Dora Koi, and has proceeded to object to the name Koi and demand always the name Dora or Dorla, simultaneously impressing on the Telugu how superior he is to the Highlander.

I have verified these points by personal investigation supplemented by reliable information from assistants directed to make enquiries on specified lines. When the traveller descends the Aranpur pass, he finds the villagers at the foot of the pass in such villages as Gumadasaka, Bikrampalli, Kondasaoli, Kamargudem, Kodmair, Karrigudem, Bayampalli, Kundair, Ursangal, Durandarbha, Michiguda, Vadri, Silger, Mandimarka, Singaram, Tarlaguda Banjepalli and Durma inhabited by people indistinguishable from the Bison-horn Marias above the pass, or by Maria Lohars. The only difference is a noticeable Telugu influence on their Maria dialect. At Jaggergonda, six or seven miles beyond the foot of the pass, he meets the first Telugu-speaking non-Koitor village, and just beyond this comes to the first Dorla villages, Rajpenta, Achkat and Kamaram. Southwards in the country covered by the new Ordnance Survey one-inch maps, on sheet 65 F/3, Singaram in square B1, Puvarti, Junaguda and Rayagudem in A2, Chimili; Surpanguda, Kistaram and Morpalli in B2, all the villages in A3, and Tadmetla, the only village in B3, are Dorla villages. Generally speaking, all the riverain tracts of Bhopalpatnam zamindari, Bijapur tahsil, Kotapalli-Pamer zamindari and southern Konta tahsil are Dorla villages, though here and there will be found Gottor Koya, i.e. Bison-horn Maria villages in Konta Dorla country such as Tokanpalli, Burkapalli and Chintaguppa (in map 65 F/3, square C3).

These Dorla at census refused to call themselves Koya, and were not returned as such but as Gonds; and they are the principal element in the 19,426 professing tribal religion out of the 24,407 Bastaris returned as Gonds in the 1931 census. The 4,981 Hindu Gonds returned are mostly Dorlas from the Lingagiri *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam and the adjacent parts of Bijapur, who have become Lingayats, wearing a *rudraksha* bead in a silver box or a Shiva *lingam* slung on a thread.

It will be clear, therefore, that the 9,988 persons returned at the census as Koyas are not the Dorla or lowland Koyas returned as Koyas in the East Godavari Agency. They are the Bison-horn Marias living at the foot of the passes in Konta and Sukma and slightly influenced by Telugu contacts. Of the Koya dialect of Gondi returned in 1931 as spoken by 6,172 persons in Bastar, however, it is probable that it represents the speech of the Dorla

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

101 without a considerable Gond population, but the main strongholds of
162 the Gonds are to-day the Satpura plateau including the districts of Betul,
197 Chhindwara and Seoni, where the western type of Gondi is spoken, Mandla and Chhattisgarh in the east, where the Gonds have adopted the local dialect of eastern Hindi but retained their tribal identity, and in the south Chanda and the neighbouring Yeotmal, where the language is Gondi, but of a dialect somewhat different from the Gondi of Betul.

101 To the north-west the Gonds extend across the Narbada River into
191 Central India, and are particularly numerous in Indore State; to the
197 east of the Central Provinces lie the states of Gond princes, such as
[619] Kawardha, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, to-day known as the Chhattisgarh States. Although neither these Gond rajas, nor indeed the Gonds among their subjects speak Gondi, they are fully conscious of their tribal associations and the high status of the ruling princes adds no doubt to tribal prestige in the whole of Chhattisgarh.

Further south, bordering on Chanda, Drug and Raipur, extend the two States of Kanker and Bastar, where Gonds constitute the majority of the population. Bastar in particular is the home of three important groups of Gonds: the Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias, all of which differ in language and custom very considerably from the Gonds of the Central Provinces.[1] Their colourful and complex cul-
[179] tures are representative of ancient aboriginal India and show obvious affinities with the Austroasiatic cultures of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Bastar has also part in the Koyas or Dorlas of the Godavari area, the most southern branch of the Gond family occurring in considerable strength in Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State and stretching across the barrier of the Eastern Ghats into the vicinity of Rajahmundry. Most Koyas still speak a dialect of Gondi, but those surrounded by Telugu populations, have changed over to Telugu.

Another substantial group of Gonds, closely akin to the Gonds of Yeotmal and Chanda, is found in the hilly country between the Godavari and the Penganga Rivers constituting the Adilabad District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, and it is these Gonds who form the subject of the present work.

101 All the Gonds of Adilabad, except for an insignificant overflow of
● 186 Dhurwe Gonds from Chanda, consider themselves Raj Gonds, and this brings us to the still somewhat problematic division between Raj Gonds and Dhur or Dhurwe Gonds, which runs through the greater part of the Gond population within the Central Provinces. There seems to be no uniformity in the principles ruling this division; in Chhattisgarh only the members of ruling or formerly ruling families are described as Raj Gond, while in other parts most of the land-holding Gonds aspire to this denomination. In recent times the name Raj Gond has also been
[64] claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status by

1. The Hill Murias extend into the hills of the neighbouring Chanda District.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

compliance with Hindu customs, and "Raj-Gond" reform movements have made their appearance in the Central Provinces.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the distinction between Raj Gonds and the other sections of the Gond peoples. C. B. Lucie-Smith writing of the Raj Gonds of Chanda suggested that either "the epithet Raj was originally applied to royal and noble Gond families, from which the distinction spread to their followers and the governing class generally; or it may describe the leading Gond tribe which in ancient days conquered the land from other aboriginal clans."[1] But Captain Forsyth believed that Raj Gonds are in many cases the descendants of alliances between Rajput adventurers and Gonds, and R. V. Russell quotes this view with qualified approval.[2]

W. V. Grigson on the other hand lays emphasis rather on the social than the historical causes for the distinction and suggests that such names as Raj Gond arose from "the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hindu-ized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names."[3] The situation in Adilabad seems rather to accord with the second suggestion advanced by Lucie-Smith; for here the Raj Gonds do not form a ruling class or even a class of privileged economic status, but an entire tribal group comprising all strata of society from the feudal chiefs down to the poorest labourer. We will see in a later chapter that the once powerful Gond Kings of Chanda belonged to this group, and their kinsmen in the Adilabad hills were as early as the 17th century referred to as Raj Gonds in patents of the Emperor Aurangzeb.

Here the Raj Gonds, far from aspiring to inclusion in the Hindu fold, consider themselves the true exponents of Gond culture and Gond language, and above all of the traditional Gond religion which involves the sacrifice of cows at the rites for the clan-gods. Many of them have never met a Dhurwe Gond, but those who have come in contact with the few groups of Dhurwe Gonds who have recently drifted across the Chanda border, look down upon them as speaking a corrupt form of Gondi intermixed with much Marathi, and as following different customs; somewhat sweepingly and apparently unjustly they assert that the Dhurwe Gonds have no cult of clan deities "only worshipping Bhimana like Kolams."[4]

It seems indeed that the Raj Gonds of Adilabad, who have lived for almost a century and a half under Muslim rule, and have in consequence been less exposed to the influence of the more intolerant exponents of Hinduism, have retained more of their old culture than

1. *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Chanda District, Central Provinces.* 1869. Nagpur 1870, p. 46.
2. *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India.* London 1916. Vol. III. p. 63.
3. W. V. Grigson, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar.* London, 1938 p. 36.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175 robes and affixes the *tika* or sign of office on his forehead. Probably on the conquest of the Bare Dongar country many of them entered the Bastar Raja's service, and supplied most of his troops or militia. The chief Halba villages of the North, such as Bare Dongar, Chhota Dongar, Kolur, Sonpur, Antagarh, Partabpur and Narainpur, are the headquarters of old *garhs* or modern *parganas*, and are islanded in a surrounding sea of 'Muria' or 'Maria' tribes like the Jhadi Telanga villages of the south; the Halba villagers seem to be the descendants of the old garrisons of *paik* militia. To this day the Halbas admit outsiders into their community, while the modern Hindu immigrants commonly take women of the country. The Halbas are thus a mixture, probably, of foreign and aboriginal blood. Their language is the *lingua franca* of Bastar, and, whether classed as a dialect of Marathi with Grierson or of Eastern Hindi with Sten Konow, is at all events an Aryan dialect, and a principal agent in the modification of aboriginal habits and thought; at [191] the 1931 census it was found that 207 *per mille* of the 262,988 Bastaris speaking Gondi dialects as their mother-tongue also spoke Halbi. Its influence is far greater than that of Telugu, which was spoken only by 36·4 out of every thousand speakers of Gondi. Actually there were only 11,662 with Telugu as mother-tongue, against 171,293 with Halbi and 25,774 with Hindustani, Chhattisgarhi and Rajasthani. Hindi influence from Chhattisgarh and the north is now the main foreign influence at work in Bastar.

The State had few dealings with the outer world from 1430 to 1860. A Maratha army under Nilu Pandit intervened on behalf of Raja Dalpat Deo's younger brother in about 1750 and captured Bastar, the old capital, only to be surprised and cut to pieces by Dalpat Deo, Nilu Pandit escaping with the help of a Banjara who sewed him up in a sack and carried him out of Bastar on his pack bullock. But in 1780 Dalpat Deo's son and successor Daryao Deo had to seek Maratha aid against his brother Ajmir Singh, and bound himself to pay a small annual tribute of Rs. 4,000 to the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur. The Bastar chiefs, however, retained full local independence and powers of life and death, and there was no direct interference in the routine management of the State by the Nagpur authorities. Such interference as there was was either to settle the frequent quarrels between Raja Bhopal Deo and his brother and Diwan, Lal Dalganjan Singh, or was dictated by the Government of India in furtherance of their policy of suppressing Meriah or ritual human sacrifice. The history of the measures taken to suppress this practice in Orissa, especially among the Khonds of Gumsur and Kalahandi, and in Jeypore zamindari, is well known. From 1837 onwards hearsay reports were collected

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

more familiar. Deviating from Trench, who employs double-consonants to indicate the shortness of the preceding vowels, thus spelling *wittana* (to run) in contrast to *witana* (to sow), I have dispensed with double-consonants; in words such as *wattana* (to put) the two consonants represent different sounds. Diacritical signs are confined to the Gondi texts, and are not used when an italicized Gondi word occurs in the English text.[1]

Those familiar with Gondi will notice that the language spoken by the Raj Gonds of Adilabad differs both from the Betul Gondi of Trench's Grammar and the Gondi spoken in South Chanda outlined by the Rev. S. B. Patwardhan.[2] A distinctive feature of Adilabad Gõndi is the frequent substitution of an initial *s* for the initial *h* of both the Betul and the Chanda dialects. Thus the Adilabad Gond pronounces *surana* (to see) instead of *hurana*, and 'no' is *sile* in Adilabad but *halle* in Betul. While in the nominative the Gonds of Betul usually drop the initial *n* inherent in the first and second person of the personal pronoun and say *ana* (I) and *imma* (thou) the Gonds of Adilabad use the full form *nana* (I) and *nime* (thou).

The Gondi of southern Chanda described by Patwardhan, follows in the choice of the initial *s* and *h* the Betul usage, but has often *l* where both Adilabad and Betul Gonds pronounce *r*. Thus the Chanda Gond, like the Hill Maria says *lon* (house), while the Adilabad Gond pronounces the word clearly with *r*, *ron*.

Further comparisons between the three dialects would be beyond the scope of this work, but although Betul Gondi contains a good many words not familiar to the Gonds of Adilabad and probably *vice-versa*, and the language of South Chanda is strongly influenced by Telugu, speakers of the three dialects have on the whole no great difficulty in understanding each other.

Raj Gonds of Adilabad on the other hand find it almost impossible to understand or make themselves understood to Hill Marias of Chanda but in going through the texts given in Grigson's *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* I found that with a knowledge of Adilabad Gondi it is easy to recognize many Maria words, some being identical and most very similar in both dialects. The pronunciation and intonation seem however, to be so divergent that to those familiar with the Adilabad idiom Maria is more easily understood written than spoken. Ethnologically it would be extremely important to ascertain the affinities of those words in the Bastar dialects which do not occur in the Gondi of the Central Provinces

1. The student of Dravidian languages will find an extensive selection of Gondi texts in Nagri script in the series "Hyderabad Gondi Literature," which I am editing in collaboration with Mr. S. B. Jogalekar for use in Gond schools. So far the following numbers have been published: *Hyderabad Gondi Reading Chart for Adults* 1, 2, and 3 (Hyderabad, 1943); *First Reader for Adults* containing stories and Riddles (Hyderabad 1944); *Gondi Primer* (Hyderabad 1944); *First Gondi Reader* (Hyderabad 1946); *Three Epic Poems* (Hyderabad 1946); *The Legend of the Surpa Folk* (Hyderabad 1947); *The Myth of Manko* (Hyderabad 1946).

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

and Hyderabad. If any pre-Dravidian substratum in the languages of the Hill Marias and the Murias could be discovered we would indeed be a long step nearer to the solution of the Gond problem, which cannot be solved by ethnology alone but only by a concerted effort of ethnological linguistic, and anthropometric research.

The time for such a synthesis of Gond studies has perhaps not yet come, and linguistics as well as physical anthropology have still to make their full contribution. To the ethnologist in the meantime falls the task of detailed investigations into all the regional branches of Gond culture, and such a regional study is presented in the following chapters.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

use very powerful staves of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood, the bow when strung measuring 6 feet from horn to horn. Of the Hill Maria staves measured by me, the thickest circumference varied from 6·5 to 9 cm. All the bows which I have seen are plain bows, used for spear-arrows and club-arrows; I have never seen any compound, composite or pellet bows. The back of the stave is the natural curved exterior of the bamboo; the belly is pared flat. The string is a carefully sliced piece of the outside of a green bamboo cut with a portion of the natural knots at each end trimmed into knobs, round which loops of twine[1] made from the fibre of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper are tied in notches (*kiddi* in both dialects) 25 to 40 mm. from the tips of the horns. One loop is permanently bound to the notch of the lower horn, the free loop being only sprung into the upper notch when the bowman strings the bow by resting the lower horn on the ground and bending the stave by holding his knee in its belly and pulling the upper horn towards him. The *lower* horn is called *modol* or *talla*, i.e. head, and the *upper* horn *kodi* ('point') or *toqa* ('tail').

In the Abujhmar mountains the longest bowstring which I measured was 135 cm. from notch to notch, and the shortest, a child's bow, 110 cm. The greatest distance from the belly of the stave to the string of a bow strung but not drawn was 10 cm.

Arrows are called *handi* by the Hill and *kar* by the Bison-horn Marias; this refers to spear-arrows only. *Kar* strictly means the arrow-head only, the Bison-horn Marias having no separate word for the whole arrow. The other terms used are:—

Term	Hill Maria	Bison-horn Maria
Arrow-head	*kani*	*kar*
Barb	*kewu*	*kew*
Shaft	*kand-mari*	*kara*
Shaft-nock	*ihsal*	*pisel*
Feathering	*kand-toqoshu*	*kar-gerring*
Club-arrow	*bilo*	*milom-kara*
Head of club-arrow	*bonka*	*milom*

The Hill Maria spear-arrows have a total length of 56 to 59 cm., that of their club-arrows varying from 51 to 64 cm. The Bison-horn arrows are longer in shaft and head, like their bows. Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, Figure 2, on page 86, are full-size representations of typical Abujhmar arrow-heads. The wings curve convexly or concavely from point to tips of barbs. The Bison-horn Maria arrows are similar in shape, but are far larger, often measuring 15 cm. or more from the point of the blade to the head of the tang, have longer barbs, and are therefore slenderer in both blade and barb. All

[1] Used in the technical sense of the word.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It may be observed that in these specimens and in the *Linguistic Survey* records there is far less borrowing from Aryan languages than in the Gondi folk-tales, stories and songs printed in Volume II of Trench's *Grammar*. In my specimens there are two corruptions of English words which have become current through excise and police practice respectively, *bōtāl* (bottle) and *rapōṭ* (report). Fairly recent Hindi or Halbi borrowings (as distinct from long acclimatized words of Sanskrit origin like *mīn* (fish), *wijjā* (seed) or *bēsh* (good)) found in my specimens are *ḍōkrā* (old man), *ḍōkrī* (old woman), *dinām* and *dināl* (daily), *kabāṛ* (work), *khush* (pleased), *tiyār* (ready), *bichār* (thought), *milē-māsī* (together), *sarkār* (authorities), *lagā* (fastened), and *rāzī* (contented).

I have not collected any specimens of Bison-horn Maria language, nor have I the qualifications to attempt any sketch of the grammars of the two dialects. The Hill Maria specimens that follow were recorded under my supervision by Sampat Singh, my interpreter, in the villages of Orcha and Hikul in the Abujhmar hills in March 1934, the records being corrected with the aid of the Hill Marias in my camp.

Two Stories, from Hikul Village

I. The Monkey Son-in-law

Uṇḍ nāgā mattā. Ḍōkrī- mu'ittā maṭṭā, ōrā uṇḍ miyāṛ
One village was. Old-woman-old-woman was, hers a daughter

mattā. Ad pīkī layā mattā. Ḍōkrī- mu'ittā ad pīkī-tun
was. That girl maiden was. Old-woman-old-woman that girl

bōn-kē hēwī mattā. Uṇḍ mēṭā-tā uṇḍ kōwē ḍōkrī-mu'ittā-
anyone-to giving-not was. A mountain-from a monkey old-woman-

nagā pīkī-may-dē lām wātā. Ḍōkrī-mu'ittā
old-woman-to girl-for bride-servitor came. Old-woman-old-woman

kētā, 'Nīmā bārā-kīyā wātōq. kōwā?' Kōwā ittoq, 'Illē,
said, 'You what-for have-come, monkey?' Monkey said, 'No,

māmō, bēnōrē lām tā'tēq, nannā paṛī tūngānā-may-dē
father's-sister, anyone bride-servitor will-keep, I work doing-for

mandākān.' Ḍōkrī-mu'ittā bichār kitā, 'Māwā-igā paṛī kiyānōr bōgh
will-stay.' Old-woman thought-made, 'Me-with work doer anyone

illē; pīkīn-may-dē kōwā baranjā-tun tā'kān.' Injōr vēāktā,
not; girl-for monkey son-in-law-for I-will-keep.' Then she-said,

'Mākū paṛī kis, tihtānūr.' Kōwā-ku tāstōq. Kōwā vēāṭtōq,
'Me-for work do, I-will-feed.' Monkey she-kept. Monkey said,

'Māmā, nā-kū uṇḍ maqsu par-ēm; pēndī naṛkān.'
'Father-in-law, me-to an axe made-give; penda-clearing I-will-cut.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

At midnight the umagaji bird cried *Ha huhu*. The girl shrieked with fright and said, 'O Lakari, let me sleep near you, for I am afraid'. Then the bird cried again and the girl said, 'What is the bird saying?' Lakari replied, 'It says "Drive on, drive on!"'. So now there was no mother, no father, there was no one in the world, and he went to her. From the bird's talk came the boy's copulation. Every time the bird cried, the girl clung again to Lakari.

In this way Lakari took each of the girls in turn, and at last every one was pregnant and he had seven score sons. When the boys were old enough to earn their living, Lakari got bullocks for them. In this way family life began and villages were formed, because a girl was frightened of a bird.

II. The Anatomy and Mythology of Sex

The Muria seem to have a rather sketchy knowledge of the sexual organs and their functions. They have no idea of the purpose of the testes or of the existence of the hymen. They do, however, recognize the clitoris and understand its function. Their vocabulary is limited, but sufficient to cover the main points of the external genitalia.[1] They have half-a-dozen words for the penis, three or four for the vagina (the most popular simply means 'the lower part of something'), and words for the labia majora (*pude adawing*, vagina flesh), the urethra (*urkul bukha*, urine hole) and the clitoris (*titiguta*, a word which like its Graeco-English equivalent probably has reference to the organ's power of erection and excitement). The Muria word for orgasm is *pusi* or *wijja pesina*, 'the coming out of the seed'.

There is no word for love in Gondi. The Muria use the Chhattisgarhi word *māya* and sometimes *pirit* or *perem*, which are simply corruptions of the ordinary Hindi words. But neither do they have any words for lust or desire, and for erotic excitement use expressions that are only descriptive of the physical sensations of sex—*penda hohalta* said of a girl means that her 'vagina is itching'; *bonde dohalta* that the 'penis is quivering'. The expression *girda kiyāna* is sometimes used for 'making love'; *girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'. *Girda ator* can be used in the sense of 'being in love'. But abstract and emotional terms are rare in Gondi, as in most primitive languages.

Sexual riddles are interesting as showing how direct and forthright are the Muria's references to the genitals and sexual intercourse.

Chapti pakna gohivailaisek.
The flat stone itches.

—The vagina.

Sulung dandi bundle burza.
The pole is long, its bottom is black.

—The penis.

Kondāng lewa boteng.
The fish that has no eyes.

—The penis.

[1] I notice that our authorities often confuse the names of the genitalia, perhaps because the tribes themselves, like the British and French, use a bewildering variety of synonyms for them. Ward gives as Gondi words *prasi* or *munchelse* for the 'affections', *aiya halatur* for 'beloved', and *natilla* for 'to kiss'. There are no such words in Trench's vocabulary.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

less the expression of outraged temper than a final and complete protest against a loss of dignity.[1]

It must not be supposed that because quarrels arise over work, chelik and motiari are slack or lazy. They are in fact singularly laborious and the disputes about work stand out because they occur against a background of a very high tradition of industry.

It is very rare that these quarrels end in murder. One day at the end of the rains in 1932, Kodu came home tired and hungry from the fields. His elder brother's wife, Bahe, had only got *jāwa* ready for him: he demanded rice, and she retorted that 'since his arms and legs were not broken, he might cook his food himself'. He replied that as long as there was a woman in the house he was not going to do woman's work and he gave her such a severe beating that she died after a few days.

Balsai, a former Chalki of the Umargaon ghotul, lost his temper with his wife Rupoti because though he had a bad throat and cough, she cooked the irritating *dhoba* vegetable for him. He was drunk at the time and gave her a heavy blow with a wooden stool. When I saw him in jail he said that he loved his wife—'it was a mistake, not from my heart'—and that she often visited him in dreams.

Bandi (a thin big-eyed youth, formerly the Kajanchi of Kanera) had two wives. He too quarrelled with them over food. He came hungry and there was nothing ready. He got out his razor and said he was going to kill them. The elder wife ran away, but he gave two deep cuts on the arm and belly of his younger wife. She survived, but was in hospital for months.[2]

I have seen only one record of murder on account of a wife's infidelity. Manglu was the former Kandki of the Amgaon ghotul and his wife had been the Manjaro of the same ghotul. But the girl did not like him and, it is said, would never give herself to him. She ran away twice to the house of a lover at Banakot. The second time a group of people went to fetch her back. As they were returning at night they met Manglu and handed the girl over to him. He gave her a very severe beating then and there in the forest, and a week later she died. Manglu was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

X. The Vocabulary of Abuse

The Muria's vocabulary of abuse is meagre and unenterprising compared to that of other aboriginal tribes. Perhaps we ought not to regret this; it may be a sign of the genial and pacific temper of the people that they put so little of their imagination and colour into their swearing. But I sometimes think that their continual use of one standard and now almost meaningless expression has dulled their inventive powers.

This expression, as common as the English 'bloody' and as meaningless, is the universal *mailotia*. This is a Halbi word meaning 'to lie with your mother', but very few of those who use it so freely intend seriously to suggest that an act of incest has occurred or could occur. Indeed, the way all meaning has been drained from the expression is clearly seen in the fact that a mother can apply it to her own daughter. Girls abuse it at other girls, aunts at their nieces, grandmothers at their granddaughters. There is certainly no Lesbian suggestion here; it probably simply implies 'you are capable of anything'.

[1] For a full discussion of this subject, see my book *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943).

[2] The elder wife had been the Salan of Sukepal, the younger Belosa of Metawand. Both marriages were regular, the first arranged by the parents, the second a love-match. Bandi told me the two girls got on very well together.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

578 The expression can be varied into *bāplotia* when it is applied to a girl, but this is less common.

●192 Halbi terms of abuse, used by the Muria but not confined to them, are the usual *nakia* or *nakti*—'noseless', a reference to the habit of removing someone's nose as a penalty for adultery; *pachmār*, a girl who goes to five men; *jutaha*, eater of the leavings of others, a thing forbidden by tribal law; and such words as *tolhi*, slacker, and *gadhi*, donkey. As in Chhattisgarh, references to the pubic hairs are common. 'You can't shave my pubic hairs', 'Can you pull out five of my pubic hairs?', 'Do you want to copulate with my hairs?' are expressions sufficiently insulting, but actually to pull out one or two of these hairs and throw them at an adversary is unforgivable.

The Muria can be very rude if he feels inclined—'Come and eat my penis'; 'Eat your mother's excreta'; 'Come and lick my plate'. *Gukhai* means 'eater of human excrement', *masaha* means 'a gluttonous eater of meat'. 'You have nothing in your own house, but run about licking others' plates.' The Muria are perhaps better at taunts than at abuse, a fact which explains the large number of taunt-songs which, sung amicably enough in the ghotul, equip the singers with weapons suitable for sterner business later on.

In Gondi almost the only abusive expressions have an incestuous reference. There are a few others, but I doubt if they are taken very seriously. I once heard a chelik say quite amiably to a motiari who had failed to clean the ghotul, '*Korka men armi hatteke galla ni pendāna jāhano*, A shed-full of buffaloes are scratching your privates'. And in the songs a not uncommon taunt is 'A jungle boar is rolling in your vagina'. I am told that a word *laria* is used with the same intention as the Chhattisgarhi *bhosri*, and means the penis. But more common is the simple *makka*—a hillman may call the people of the foothills *Jhoria-makka* or 'offspring of a lowlander's penis'; a conceited Raj Gond may be told that he is *Ganda-makka* or 'born of a Ganda', one of the despised weaving castes.

But these are rather unusual. When the Muria gets annoyed, he calls to mind the Table of Affinity and works through it, with special reference to forbidden relatives. Thus we get *niya āwān getha*, 'I will copulate with your mother', which is usually said by a man to his own son, or classificatory son, to his daughter or younger brother's daughter; and *niya didi na getha*, 'I will copulate with your elder sister', said by a man to his wife (the elder sister is, of course, in an 'avoidance' relationship).

To a sister's husband, a man may say *Niya ajin penda getha*, or 'I will copulate with your father's mother' and *Niya halena getha*, 'I will copulate with your sister'.

These expressions, it will be noted, do not suggest that the person abused has committed incest or any tribal offence. The speaker proclaims his own intention of doing so—suggesting, I suppose, that his enemy is too weak or too acquiescent to interfere.

Another formula, which can be used in a great many different ways, is a reference to the private parts of various relatives. The Muria go into this with some anatomical detail. They say, for example, *Niya miyar na penda* or 'Your daughter's vagina' but they can also refer to her clitoris—*Niya miyar na titi gutta*—or her *labia majora*, her urethra and her breasts. I am told that a man abuses his sister's son or daughter by reference to their daughter (who is in a forbidden relation to him), and his wife's brother's son by reference to his father's sister who is, of course, his own wife.

These references to one's own wife are the strangest feature of primitive abuse. Nothing rouses stronger passions; nothing—on the face of it—is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

more absurd. A father tells his son or daughter that he will copulate with their mother, an uncle tells his nephew that he will sleep with his aunt. And so he may. But he ought not to talk about it. 598 192

Such a vocabulary of abuse could only effect its object in a society where great stress was laid on family relationships and where the rules of those relationships are strictly observed. It is just because a man never does intrigue with a forbidden relation that the accusation becomes effective and even amusing. If a Muria thought it was really true, he would not say so; for he is a decent fellow, and even in his hottest moments does not want to cause trouble.

The most significant thing about this vocabulary is in its omissions. There are no religious oaths—for they would be too dangerous. There is no suggestion of unnatural offences—for they are practically unknown. There are no references to prostitution—for there are no Muria whores.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX THREE

GHOTUL TITLES

The following is a list of titles collected from over a hundred ghotul in every part of the Muria country. I owe many of the derivations and meanings to Mr A. N. Mitchell.

551
192

TITLES OF CHELIK

Achhoy	Hindi. *Achhā* means 'good'.
Adhikar, or Adhker	Hindi. *Adhikār* means 'authority'.
Akilasi	Probably a Mussalman name, Aqal Shah. The latter word always becomes Sai in Gondi and either in its original or corrupt form is common among the Gond.
Aliram	A curiously mixed Hindu and Mussalman name.
Alorsing or Alursi	Gondi. *Alor* is 'one who makes a disturbance'.
Apkari or Atkari	Urdu. An excise man.
Athpahariya	Hindi. 'One who is on duty for eight watches', day and night. Used in Bastar for the village drudge.
Baidar	Hindi. *Bahidār*, a money-lender's accountant.
Baksi	Urdu. *Bakshi*. A common title in northern India among Mussalmans and Hindus. Also a Parsi surname, 'treasurer'.
Bandobast Sabeb	Urdu. A Settlement Officer. Here probably given after a visit to the village of Mr S. M. Ishaque who is widely known in Bastar under this title.
Bandukdar	Urdu. One who carries a gun.
Barko	
Beldar	Urdu. A digger, one who wields a spade.
Belumdar	Gondi. One who owns a *belum* or garden.
Budhker	Hindi. A clever fellow, one who has *budh*, intelligence, used of village officials.
Captan	English. A title usually used of the State Superintendent of Police.
Chajen	Gondi. One who roams about.
Chālau, Chāluk, or Chalān	Gondi borrowing from Hindi *chalāna*, meaning organizer.
Chalki	Hindi. Assistant to a headman.
Chaprāsi	Hindi. A peon; one who wears a *chaprās* or badge.
Chelik-sai	Lord of the chelik.
Chelik-sunder	*Chelik* is Gondi. meaning a 'good-looking, unmarried youth'. *Sundar* is Hindi *sundar*, beautiful.
Chowkidar	Hindi, watchman.
Chutukdar	
Constibail	English. A constable.
Dafedar	Urdu. One in charge of a section.
Daidar	A corruption, through Halbi, of Hindi *dawan*, oppression. Means a 'bully'.
Dakdar	English. Doctor.
Dandasi	Rare.
Dāroga	Urdu. An inspector.
Dewān	Urdu. A Diwan, or Prime Minister.
Dubey	A Brahmin name, contraction of Dwivedi.
Dulor or Dulorsing	Gondi. The word means 'love'.
Engineer	English.
Gaidar	Cowherd(?), from Hindi *gai*.
Gāita	Gondi. A priest.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Gangedar	Perhaps from Ganga, the Ganges.
Gâred	English. A Forest Guard.
Garhi	From Hindi, *garh* fort, or headquarters (?). Perhaps *chhâlalain*.
Gotul-sai	Gondi and Urdu. 'Lord of the ghotul.'
Gurti	Gondi. Strong.
Hagru	A nickname having reference to defaecation, usually given by parents to deceive hostile demons as to a child's true value. Here it is rather a nickname than a title.
Hardi-garbo	Hindi and Halbi. Refers to turmeric powder.
Havaldar	Urdu. A sergeant.
Hikmi	A Halbi social title.
Ijardar or Ijeldar	Urdu. From *ijara*, a monopoly. Used in Bastar of excise contractors.
Issaldar	Probably from Urdu Risaldar, an officer of cavalry.
Jailer	English.
Jalansai	Gond name, probably corruption of Urdu Jalim Shah.
Jalla or Jallam	Hindi. Means a 'spider's web'.
Jamadar	Urdu. An infantry rank above Havildar.
Jangel Saheb	Forest Officer.
Jelkar	Gondi. A ripple on water.
Jelu or Jeluk	Gondi. An obstructive fellow.
Jhakajhol	
Jhalakwar	Hindi. One who glitters.
Jilen	Perhaps from Hindi, *jila*, thin or fine. Compare English 'skinny'.
Jilmil	Hindi. Mica.
Joler	Hindi. This and the following title suggest a cheat, but Joler is not quite so strong as this. Perhaps 'fibber' would put it better.
Jolma	Probably a variant of the above.
Julpi	Hindi. From *julupâ*, a curl of the hair. Hence curly-haired.
Jhalakrai Jhulukrai	Hindi. From *jhalakna*, to glisten. Hence, one who glistens. Like Lingo, founder of the ghotul.
Jumukdar	Hindi. From *jhumka*, little bells on the ear or ankle, and thus one who carries such bells. These are often worn as ornaments, especially by the Jhoria Muria.
Kajanti	Corruption of *khajânchi*, a treasurer.
Kalbot	
Kâlikdar	Hindi. From *kâlâ*, black.
Kalingsai	Corruption of Hindi *kalgi*, an aigrette on a turban, and *shah*.
Kâmâdar or Kâmdar	Hindi. An agent.
Kandki	Hindi. Village officer in charge of a *khut*, a section.
Kanjus	Hindi. A miser.
Kapatdar	Hindi. From *kapaddâr*, a dressing-boy.
Karu	
Katlami	A Gondi clan-name.
Khuti Manjhi	
Kilârsing	From Hindi *killâna*, to scream.
Kisimsai	Probably a corruption of the name Kasim Shah.
Kopki	
Kosa	Hindi. A silk cocoon.
Kotiya	Hindi. One in charge of the *kothi* or granary.
Kotwar	Hindi. A village watchman.
Kude	Gondi. From *kudâna*, to sit. Thus, one who is always sitting.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX THREE

Kusel	Hindi. From *kushal*, happiness. Thus, the happy boy.
Lahardar, Laharu, Laharchi or Laharsing	Used in Gondi to mean a 'dandy', from Hindi *lahariya*, striped cloth. The wearing of some unspeakable striped shirt is regarded as very fast and 'advanced' by the Muria.
Likin or Likhen	One who carves hair combs, from Hindi *likhna*, to write.
Malik	Urdu. A master.
Manikdar	Hindi. One who owns a ruby: precious stones often are girl-symbols.
Manager	English.
Manjhi	Hindi. A boatman or skipper. Used in Bastar for the Headman of a Pargana.
Master	English.
Meliyā	From Gondi *melāna*, to wander.
Mitchell Saheb	Scotch.
Mingur	From Gondi *mirāna*, to run.
Muharrir	Urdu. A clerk.
Mukhwan	From Hindi *mukh*, a face; one who produces people before a panchayat.
Mukkadam	Urdu. A village headman.
Mallyāsing	From Gondi *mal*, a peacock and the name Singh.
Munshi	Urdu. A reader.
Mutra	Hindi. One who urinates. Probably given to a boy who was caught urinating inside the ghotul, or to a bed-wetter.
Nāchem	Hindi. From *nāchna*, to dance. A dancer.
Nākedar	A subordinate in charge of an outpost, *nāka*.
Narhar	A Hindu name.
Nāzir	Urdu. A tahsil official.
Neliya	Gondi. *Nela* means good, hence 'a good fellow'.
Nengi	A Halbi social title.
Nispettar	English. Inspector.
Odsel	English. Overseer.
Oppal	Probably from Hindi, *uppam*, best.
Padru	From Hindi *pādna*, to pass wind. Probably given to a boy who had the habit of doing this inside the ghotul.
Pahardar	Hindi. From *pahar*, a watch. Hence a watchman.
Pāgen	Hindi. From *pāgā*, a turban. Hence one who has a turban.
Pagan-meliya	See above. *Meliyā* is a Gondi word meaning a wanderer.
Paik	Hindi. Paik is a foot soldier. The word is used in Bastar of all subordinate officials.
Pande-Pardhan	The Pardhan are the priests and musicians of the Gond. Pande-Pardhan appears as a court official in some of the Ghotul Pata.
Paseldar	Gondi. *Pasel* is the mung pulse. Hence the title means 'one who owns mung'. Probably given because of the assonance with Tahsildar or Issaldar.
Patwāri	Hindi. A village land record official, originally an accountant.
Pitorka	Gondi. The bulbul.
Pohap Singh	Probably from the Hindi root *phoph*, which in various forms means 'lung', hence anything spongy, hence 'fatty'. The late Willy Forbes, Secretary of the Nagpur Club, was very fat. He was known to the servants as '*Phophas Sahib*' (A.N.M.).
Raje Saheb	Hindi. A king.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Rânger	Forest official.
Rengo	Hindi. *Rengna* means 'to stroll'.
Rupedar	One who owns rupees or silver.
Saidar	A Hindi social title.
Salâm	An Urdu greeting.
Saledar or Silledar	Urdu Ziledar, one in charge of a district. The Silledar was the armour-bearer of the old Maratha chivalry, and the breeder of mares for the army.
Salho	From Hindi *chalna*, to go. One who goes.
Sâligrâm or Sâligrâi	A Hindi name, Shaligram, described as meaning a stone linga of the Hindu god Mahadeo.
Salya or Selya	A local, but not Gondi, word *sal*, meaning (?) pangolin.
Sanker	Eastern Hindi, meaning morning.
Sikandâr	A Mussalman name.
Sileh	Gondi *sile*, clothing (Hindi *sina*, to sew).
Singga	From Hindi *sing*, a horn.
Sipâhi	Urdu, a soldier.
Sirdâr	Urdu, a chief.
Sirajdâr or Sirasdar	Urdu, Sarishtedar, a judicial moharrir.
Sirkil	English, Circle Inspector of Police, probably named after the popular Thakur Manbahal Singh, who for long held this position.
Subedâr	Urdu, a military officer.
Sudher	Halbi, *sudh*, cleverness, hence a clever fellow.
Suen or Suwel	Gondi corruption of Hindi *kuâ*, a well.
Sulhi	Probably corruption of Hindi *chula*, an oven. Hence 'cook'.
Suluksai	A Gondi name. Sai is the same as Shah.
Sunder	Hindi. *Sundar*, beautiful.
Surjut	Hindi *suraj ki jyoti*, the brightness of the sky.
Tabu	
Tahsildar	Urdu. Revenue official.
Tekedar	Hindi. A Tekadar is one who farms the revenues of a village on payment of a quit-rent.
Tel-dundi	Hindi. An oil-press.
Tindka	From Gondi *tindâna*, to eat, perhaps 'hungry or greedy one'.
Uden	From Gondi, *udâna*, to sit. Hence one who sits down. Compare Kude.
Ukwar	Gondi. A mattock.
Vakil	Urdu. A pleader.

Titles of Motiari

Achboke	Gondi adjective, good.
Aloss	Gondi adjective, pleasant-spoken.
Anbaiko	Perhaps from Marathi *ana*, bring, and *wah*, root of Gondi *wehnânâ*, to say, and female termination *ko*. Hence 'she who tells one to bring things'.
Beldarin	Feminine of Beldar, q.v.
Beloss	Perhaps derived from the bel tree.
Chaiko	Gondi. One who talks nonsense.
Desoda	Hindi name.
Duloss	Corruption of Hindi *dulocha*, soft.
Galje	Gondi. The noisy one.
Gandri	Hindi and Halbi, one who smells bad. Probably a derisive nickname rather than a proper title.
Haliyâro	Hindi *haliya*, a herd or flock, hence cowherd or shepherdess.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX THREE

Jaimo	
Jalaro, Jalāri or Jaliyāro	From Hindi *jalna*, to burn, perhaps 'hot stuff'.
Jalko	Gondi. A ripple. Compare Jelkar.
Jamadarin	Feminine of Jamadar, q.v.
Janakrāi, Janko, Jaunko or Jankāi	Hindi names.
Jhelo	Gondi. A splash of water.
Jilmili	Hindi. Mica. Compare Jilmil.
Junki	Gondi. Tinkling.
Kotwarin	Feminine of Kotwar, q.v.
Lahari or Laharo	From Hindi, *lahar*, a wave.
Malko or Malkārose	Gondi. *Mal*, a peacock, a girl like a peahen.
Manjāro	From Hindi root *manj*, middle. Perhaps the second of three sisters, or one who holds a secondary place after the ghotul leaders.
Mankai	Hindi *mānāna*, to obey, hence the obedient one.
Mette	English mate in a gang, with a Gondi feminine termination.
Mulāri or Mulāro	Probably from Hindi *mulya*, value, hence 'precious'.
Mulki	From Urdu *mulk*, country. Thus 'country lass'.
Mutri	Feminine of Mutra, q.v. But not necessarily, in this case, his ghotul mate.
Nirosa	A Sanskritic word meaning 'clean'. There does not seem to be such a word in Hindi, but the meaning is definite. The word exists in Halbi, and it may be connected with *niraj*.
Piosa	From Hindi *pina*, to drink. Perhaps one who drinks a lot of palm-wine or 'the thirsty one'.
Rani	Hindi. A queen.
Saidarin	Feminine of Saider, q.v.
Saile	Gondi. Friendly.
Salko	Feminine of Salya, q.v.
Samsāro	The patient one. *Samsar* is Halbi for patient.
Sargi	Hindi for the sal tree.
Siliyāro	Gondi *siliya*, a vegetable.
Silo	Hindi cloth or clothing (*sina*).
Singāro	Hindi *shringār*, adorned.
Sulāko	From Hindi *chula*, an oven. Hence perhaps 'cook'.
Surtān	Hindi *surta*, thought. Hence 'thoughtful'.
Surti, Surto or Surtel	Hindi, tobacco. One who distributes tobacco to the chelik.
Tiliyāro	From a pulse. Probably given for its assonance with Jaliyaro or Siliyaro.
Tiloka	From the Hindi name, *triloki*.
Tulki	
Tusro or Tusāro	
Ujhro or Ujhāro	Gondi. White.

551
192

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104 **parās, kal-buriya (orki)** A small gourd ladle kept in the pot.

siti (kari or **katki)** The leaf-pipe that directs the juice into the pot.

Love and Love-making

[192] The Muria are inarticulate on this subject. There seem to be few, if any, Gondi words to express emotional or abstract conceptions. They borrow from Halbi or Chhattisgarhi when they wish to do so.

bichār wātu (man, bane) Desire.

girda ātor To be in love.

girda kiyāna To make love. *Girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'.

jugti bikti, mohini (H) A love-charm. **Jugti** suggests an invisible being adept at playing conjuring-tricks, **yukti**, in the cause of love.

maya kiyāna To love.

maya pirit, perem (H) Love.

Marriage Ceremonies

beni pehchāna (beni guthto) Tying the plaits.

bohala, chaura Earthen platform below the booth.

dulha, dulhi (Ha) The bridegroom and bride. It is curious that there are no Gondi words for this.

ghari wersāna, chawk Pattern drawn on the **chaura** platform.

harpān pārin (samdhin bhet) Formal greeting between mothers-in-law.

kalsa (Ha) A decorated pot with a **diwa** lamp above it.

lagin, lagir The final ceremony, the essential binding part of the rite.

mānda (Ha) Marriage booth.

marmi, marming (bihao) Marriage.

neyi rehāna (tel utrāto) Anointing with oil from head to feet; making the oil come down.

neyi tarhāna (tel chaghāto) Anointing with oil from feet to head; making the oil climb up.

pargeh, pargāw (Ha) Ceremonial bringing in of the marriage party.

pārin johār (samdhi bhet) Formal greeting between fathers-in-law.

pungār mihchna The betrothal, lit. 'Plucking the Flower'. Also called **talk dāyna** or 'Going to Beg' and **pungār kurki** or 'Seeing the Flower'. In Halbi **mahala** or **sagai**.

rupiyān payāna, karch yetāna To pay or take the bride-price.

sikla karsana, toli usna (chikal mundi) Bride and groom play in the mud together.

tika (H) Ritual greeting of bride and groom by placing a mark on their foreheads.

torun (Ha) String of mango leaves tied round the booth.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

197 to that of other Gondi dialects and of Hindi, of which the latter at least is widely known.

OUTLINE GRAMMAR

193 *Nouns.* These are never inflected and there is no distinction of form between singular and plural. The oblique cases are indicated by postpositions. Genders are very rarely indicated and play little part in the grammar of the language, though they do exist in the minds of the speakers. They are two in number, masculine and feminine-neuter. The former includes only males of the human species and the latter covers the rest of creation, whether male, female or inanimate. The commonest postpositions are as follows:

tun, he, or *nu,* indicate the accusative
nu, na, ta, or *nad* meaning 'of' (genitive)
tun or *he* meaning 'to' (dative)
te or *tena* meaning 'with' or 'from' (comitative and ablative)
de meaning 'with' (instrumental) is only used of things
te or *taga* meaning 'in' or 'on' (locative)

All these can be used with any noun, the choice of alternatives apparently being governed by considerations of euphony. For example *lon,* a house, usually takes those postpositions which begin with 't' and elides its final 'n'; thus, *lota* = of a house, *lote* = in a house, and so on. There is no justification for distinguishing declensions.

Adjectives. These also are inflected neither for number, gender nor case. The language is well supplied with simple and compound adjectives, but the primitive feature of the language is that simple adjectives sometimes have to be expressed in a compound form, e.g. *bata hilwa* = poor, its literal meaning being 'without anything'.

The verbal noun is sometimes used as an adjective in the same way as the passive past participle in other languages, e.g. *murcha,* shut, from *murchana,* to shut.

Comparison is normally expressed, as in other Indian languages, by using the positive form of the adjective followed by the postposition *tena,* from. There is, however, a single interesting exception, *nela,* 'good', having the comparative and superlative form *nslator.* Syntactically this is used as other adjectives are with *tena.*

The superlative is expressed similarly to the comparative, as in Hindi with the use of the words *sabe mul,* 'all'; e.g. *sabe mul tena perke,* 'last of all'.

Pronouns and Pronominal Adjectives. The only remarkable feature of these is that there is a distinct word for 'we', namely *mamat,* usually shortened in conversation to *mat.* This is one of the very few plural forms in the language. I = *nana,* thou and you = *nima* and *or* = he, she, or they. Another interesting feature is that pronouns have inflected forms. *Nona* produces *na, nima* produces *ni, or* produces *on,* and *mamat* produces *ma.*

Pronominal adjectives are distinct adjectives and not merely the genitives of pronouns, except in the case of *ona,* his. They are *nana* or *na* = my, *nima* or *ni* = yours, and *mama* or *ma* = ours.

Numerals. Up to and including 6, the cardinal numbers are almost identical with those in Telugu. From 7 to 19 inclusive the Hindi numerals are used, after which comes *koreh,* 20. Beyond this the word *kovi* = score, is used in combination with other numbers. This word is of wide distribution in Eastern India, being used in Oriya among other languages, but is probably Dravidian in origin. For 100 the Hindi word *sau* is frequently used, as is the Urdu word *hazar,* a thousand, to denote vaguely large numbers. An interesting feature of the numerals is that the word for 2 has a masculine form *iru* and a neuter form *rend* or *rand.* This is one of the few cases where gender is distinguished.

Ordinals are the same as cardinals with the sole exception of *onde,* first.

Frequency is expressed by the word *wela,* time, probably borrowed from Marathi, which is added to the cardinal number; and multiplicity is expressed in the same way.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX TWO

Demonstrative, Interrogative, and Relative Pronouns and Adjectives. The demonstrative pronouns do not inflect but distinguish genders. The demonstrative adjectives are the same. *This-aor* or *aen* masculine, and *id*, feminine-neuter. *That-or*, masculine, and *od*, feminine-neuter.

The interrogative pronoun 'who' has various forms in different areas, those which I have heard being *benov*, *bor*, *benon*, and *ben*. There is also a feminine and neuter form *bed* or *bad*, which.

There are no true relative pronouns. Relative clauses are avoided completely by such means as 'that man came, to him I said', for 'I said to the man who came'.

There are no reflexive pronouns, the sense of 'self' being rendered by an emphatic suffix 'i' or 'e'.

Postpositions and Adverbs. The structure of the language in this respect is precisely the same as that of Hindi and other similar Indian languages. Thus there are a number of true postpositions and a number of adverbs used as postpositions by being linked to the noun either by the genitive or ablative postpositions. For example 'in front of the house' would be *lon ta muns*. There are also pure adverbs of place, time and manner, which have no peculiar features.

Verbs. There are no regular conjugations in this language, though all the verbs are conjugated with a remarkable degree of similarity. In many respects the conjugation of verbs is close in manner to Hindi and other Indian languages, and so calls for no particular mention in an outline of this type. One or two peculiarities, however, are of importance.

Normally the second person singular and plural are the same and make no distinction of gender. The first person has different forms for the singular and plural but makes no distinction of gender. The third person is the same for singular and plural but has different forms for the masculine on the one hand and the feminine-neuter on the other.

The tenses which have no particularly interesting features are the aorist present, the continuing present, the simple future, the imperfect, the past aorist, and the pluperfect.

The continuing present, the imperfect, and the pluperfect tenses are constructed by means of participles used with the auxiliary verb 'to be' as in Hindi.

The imperative, the infinitive, the participles and the verbal nouns are for the most part unremarkable.

A peculiar feature of the language is the existence of a conditional tense. An example of this from the verb *poytana*, to seize, is typical of all verbs:

1st person singular	*poyon*
2nd person singular	*poyin*
3rd person singular	*poyor*
1st person plural	*poyorom*

This tense can be used equally for future or past conditional clauses, but in Bastar State it can only be used in the apodosis of a conditional sentence, not in the protasis. The protasis is always expressed by a rather clumsy participial construction, the compound parts of which are not found elsewhere in the language. Thus, 'if he had come' is *or wakke. Ke* is a postposition meaning 'by way of' or 'by reason of'. *Wat* appears to be a past participle active, which is never used in any other construction. The words might, therefore, be literally translated 'by reason of him having come'.

Although it is convenient to regard the infinitive as normal and regular, in fact there is no real infinitive in the language in the English grammatical sense of the word. *Poytana* meaning 'to seize' is really the genitive of a verbal noun *poyta*, and this fact is extremely clear from the general use of this so-called infinitive in the language. Occasionally, however, this genitive form is itself used as a verbal noun and also as a supine similar to the Latin supine terminating in 'um'.

Participles normally in use are the present and the past participles active and past participle passive. Apart from the latter there is no such thing in this language as the passive voice, and any such idea has to be expressed either by an intransitive verb, a paraphrase introducing an active verb, or a paraphrase containing the passive past participle.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

193

The language has a noun of agency formed from the verb, e.g. *poylalur* meaning 'one who seizes'. An unusual participle is that of resemblance, e.g. *poylap* meaning 'as if seizing'.

Typical of Gondi dialects in general and also found in the Muria dialect are the negative tenses and the negative imperative. The former is used to express negative action in past, present, or future without the addition of any negative particle. The negative imperative is formed by adding the prohibitive suffix *ma* to the root of the verb, and this suffix may be of Sanskrit derivation and related to the forms *mat* in Hindi and *ma* in Pushtu and Persian. Very rarely one hears a negative gerund formed from the root of the verb and the termination *mahah*.

Causal verbs are formed according to regular rules, as are compound verbs. There are no inceptive or desiderative verbs, but there is a potential verb *parana* which is used in a variety of ways corresponding to the Hindi *sakna* and *parna*.

44B

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

But in many villages instead of a communal *padawo'gha'i* there is a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *padawo'gha'i* room known generally as *hala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *hala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable att ached.

The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *kasyeg-gaita's* house, near the latter's *adam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-rawar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parllo clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street;

[1] Or *ala*; the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Appendix VI

Language

In Volume IV of the *Linguistic Survey of India*, Maria is somewhat briefly discussed and considered to be a mere local dialect of Gondi, 'almost identical with the ordinary Gondi of the district'. The only authority on the language mentioned in the *Survey* is Glasfurd's *Report on the Dependency of Bastar* (Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. XXXIX, Calcutta, 1863); Appendix II of the report contains a 'Maria' vocabulary. But as Glasfurd called the Hill Maria 'Maree', his vocabulary obviously was not collected in the Abujhmar hills, but probably among the Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils. The specimen printed in the survey seems to me to be one from the Bison-horn Maria country, while the sketch of the Maria dialect at pp. 532-3 of Vol. IV of the *Linguistic Survey* deals obviously with the Bison-horn Maria dialect. In fact, I do not think that it has before anywhere been stated that there is a marked difference between the two dialects, so marked, indeed, that, as I have observed before, a Hill Maria and a Bison-horn Maria cannot understand each other's mother-tongue and have to communicate in Halbi. I am not qualified to speak in any detail of the differences between the two dialects. A collection of words will often show very marked similarities or identities, but the same word will often be very differently pronounced by a Hill and by a Bison-horn Maria. Inflexions are different, those of the Hill Maria being more similar to those used by the Gond of the plateaux of the Central Provinces, though much gutturalized, while those of the Bison-horn Marias are, presumably, influenced by Telugu contacts. And in general towards the north of Bastar the Hill Maria and the Muria indent on Hindi for words wanting in their mother-tongue, while the farther south you go the more you find the Bison-horn Maria indenting upon Telugu, though he also draws considerably on Halbi. The Bison-horn Maria's speech seems far more guttural than standard Central Provinces Gondi, but even he is amazed at the difficulty of the Hill Maria gutturals, and always compares Hill Maria speech to that of crows.

The volume of transcriptions and translations of Gramophone Records of Languages and Dialects spoken in the Central Provinces and Berar, edited by the late Rai Bahadur Hiralal and published

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

194 in 1920 at the Madras Government Press, gives two Maria records, which appear to me to be Hill Maria, probably from the south of the Abujhmar hills. They are full of the gutturals *gh*, *kh* and *q* (of which the sounds are similar to the corresponding Arabic gutturals), but do not clearly distinguish the short, almost clipped short, sound of the vowel o (sometimes a also) which I have transliterated in the Glossary and elsewhere as ŏ and ă respectively, as in *ghatŏ* and *păghai*; unfortunately, there are few examples of these in my specimens below, though they certainly occurred in the speech of the storytellers; but my Hindi scribe had no sign to distinguish short o from long o, or this clipped ă from the ordinary short a which is understood between two consonants in Devanagari script. Undoubtedly, also, the vowel e is sometimes short and sometimes long in Maria, as in all Gondi, but it is almost invariably shown as long both in the gramophone record transcriptions and in my specimens.

114 194 The *Linguistic Survey* does not mention the only Maria grammar which then existed, *A Manual of the Mardia Language* by A. A. Lind, published in 1913 at the Mukti Mission Press, Kedgaon. This is a useful work in Bastar, but often exasperating in its deficiencies; the vocabularies and inflexions were collected in different parts among different tribes, and thus are often of little use when most needed. It does, however, attempt to record the gutturals of Hill Maria, and whenever the vocabulary gives alternative forms, one with a guttural and one without, the gutturalized form may be taken to be the Hill Maria form, and the other probably the Bison-horn Maria. The author rightly points out that the guttural Hill *gh* and *kh*, corresponding to Arabic *ghain* and *khe*, are often 'interchanged with' r and y respectively, meaning that where the Hill Maria e.g. calls his bark cloak *taghāli*, the Bison-horn Maria will say *tarūli*. He points out also the existence of a gutturalized h, which is pronounced almost like *kh*; for example the verb *vēhnā*, to say, is by many Hill Marias pronounced practically as *vēkhnā*, and I have so transcribed it in my specimens.

194 No authority has, so far as I recollect, pointed out one peculiarity that to some extent affects all Gondi speech, but is most marked in the pronunciation of Hill and Bison-horn Maria. That is the check, almost click, so common in the middle of long words, especially between the root of a verb and its inflexion. Sometimes I have indicated this by inserting a small a above and between two consonants; I think that an apostrophe in the same position would be sounder.

Towards the south, the Hill Maria often drops an initial h, and softens his gutturals nearly as much as his Bison-horn neighbour.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

I have tried in the specimens below and in transcribing the vernacular words used in the text of the book to follow the same orthography as the *Linguistic Survey*, with modifications as noted above. When no long or short sign is printed above a vowel, it is pronounced as an ordinary short vowel, not clipped. As a rough guide to pronunciation :—

104
194

Pronounce short a as the final a in America
" long a as in fast
" short e as in when
" long e as the ea in great
" short i as in bit
" long i as ee in meet
" short o as the first o in bottom
" long o as in pope
" short u as in put
" long u as the oo in foot
" ai as the English affirmative ay
" au as the ow in cow

When a small a is printed above the line between two consonants, it is generally little more than a pause between syllables, the check already mentioned; when it is so printed at the end of a word, it represents the short a sound without which, for example, it is almost impossible to pronounce a final consonantal y.

Cerebral t, d and r are printed with a dot below them, and nasal n with a long sign above it. The following points observed at pp. 4-5 of Volume I of Mr. C. G. Chenevix Trench's *Grammar of Gondi* apply to the Hill Maria dialect of Gondi also :—

(a) 'The -r is frequently rolled in Gondi as in English, and even before a consonant. . . . To avoid the appearance of affectation, single -r is written in the latter contingency. Thus, . . . though the -r in Dörtönā, = I am tired, first person singular perfect tense of Dörrānā, = to be tired, is strongly rolled, it is written single. This tripping -r is characteristic of the language.'

(b) In all southern dialects of Gondi there is a tendency to cerebralise all -r's, i.e. to pronounce r as ṛ. (The Hill Maria goes further, and gutturalises ṛ to *ghain*.)

(c) 'Similarly, in the oblique cases of nouns, d and ḍ are often interchanged and t and ṭ sometimes.'

(d) 'It is often impossible to say whether a vowel should be marked long or short.'

(e) It is doubtful whether initial o or e exist in the language. 'There is always a faint w sound before the o, and generally a half-uttered y precedes the e. Thus the Gond betrays his affinity to the Madrasi butler who pronounces "eight" "Yeight."'

(f) 'A similar "Madrasi" tendency is the addition of ū to final t, ṭ, d, ḍ and l. Ādū is often heard for ād, ōlū for ōl, ammātū for ammāt, tākālū for tākāl, the third person neuter singular of the future of tākānā, to walk.' Compare Hill Maria *magsu* for Gondi mārs, = axe, himatu for himat as second person plural of the imperative of *hiydnā*, to go, in my specimens

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

of a timid and resigned outlook in place of the manly spirit of old. Finally I propose to discuss the results of the more liberal policy towards the aboriginals which H.E.H. the Nizam's Government has pursued since 1944, and to outline the principles and the first stages of the Gond Education Scheme, which is designed to help the Gonds in the struggle for existence and to restore to them self-respect and pride in their own ancient culture.

In an account of a culture as rich and complex as that of the Raj Gonds the anthropologist must needs concentrate on certain aspects, and in this book I have given first place to the Gonds' mythology and their complex ritual, sanctioned and sustained in almost every phase by mythical precedents. This part of Gond culture is rapidly disintegrating and its study, still possible in the hills of Utnur and Asifabad Taluqs, would come too late in the more open parts of the District. Problems of psychology and the more intimate matters of the individual's life, on the other hand, are only fleetingly touched upon, but I believe that changes in this sphere are not as rapid and the time left for their study is consequently far less limited.

Although this book is not a treatise on linguistics, Gondi texts of some length have found a place in many chapters. I noted them when collecting my material and as they are the first recorded specimens of the peculiar Gondi spoken in Adilabad, I do not feel justified in withholding them from the student of Indian languages. All have been checked and rechecked with several informants, but this is no guarantee of absolute accuracy, for Gonds, like the speakers of most unwritten languages, are often careless about rules of grammar and not very sensitive to slight slips in a text read out to them. The recording, moreover, is not in accordance with the exigent demands of modern phonetics, which only the trained linguist can fulfil. Consonants are used with their values in English, and vowels with their values in Italian, long and short signs being added only where confusion might otherwise arise between two words of similar sound. Diacritical signs have been used only in the consonants ṭ, ṛ and ḥ. While the dental t, rendered by the Nagri character त , is transcribed by simple t, the cerebral t rendered in Nagri by ट, is transcribed by ṭ. Similarly the soft r, र in Nagri, is transcribed r, and the hard r, ऱ in Nagri, as ṛ. The letter ḥ stands for a sound closely resembling the German ch in Bach (pronounced like the composer). This sound occurs mainly in words of Marathi origin, and in such words most Gonds not familiar with Marathi pronounce it not as sh, but h; examples are *goḥti* (word, speech) and *paḥti* (favour) pronounced in pure Marathi as *goshti* and *pashti*; but I have transcribed these and similar words as pronounced by the Gonds in the hills.

Following the spelling of the Linguistic Survey and Trench's Grammar, I have used *w* for all *v*-sounds, except in proper names occurring in the English text, and in words borrowed from Hindi in which *v* is

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

more familiar. Deviating from Trench, who employs double-consonants to indicate the shortness of the preceding vowels, thus spelling *wittana* (to run) in contrast to *witana* (to sow), I have dispensed with double-consonants; in words such as *waṭṭana* (to put) the two consonants represent different sounds. Diacritical signs are confined to the Gondi texts, and are not used when an italicized Gondi word occurs in the English text.[1]

Those familiar with Gondi will notice that the language spoken by the Raj Gonds of Adilabad differs both from the Betul Gondi of Trench's Grammar and the Gondi spoken in South Chanda outlined by the Rev. S. B. Patwardhan.[2] A distinctive feature of Adilabad Gõndi is the frequent substitution of an initial *s* for the initial *h* of both the Betul and the Chanda dialects. Thus the Adilabad Gond pronounces *surana* (to see) instead of *hurana*, and 'no' is *sile* in Adilabad but *halle* in Betul. While in the nominative the Gonds of Betul usually drop the initial *n* inherent in the first and second person of the personal pronoun and say *ana* (I) and *imma* (thou) the Gonds of Adilabad use the full form *nana* (I) and *nime* (thou).

The Gondi of southern Chanda described by Patwardhan, follows in the choice of the initial *s* and *h* the Betul usage, but has often *l* where both Adilabad and Betul Gonds pronounce *r*. Thus the Chanda Gond, like the Hill Maria says *lon* (house), while the Adilabad Gond pronounces the word clearly with *r*, *ron*.

Further comparisons between the three dialects would be beyond the scope of this work, but although Betul Gondi contains a good many words not familiar to the Gonds of Adilabad and probably *vice-versa*, and the language of South Chanda is strongly influenced by Telugu, speakers of the three dialects have on the whole no great difficulty in understanding each other.

Raj Gonds of Adilabad on the other hand find it almost impossible to understand or make themselves understood to Hill Marias of Chanda but in going through the texts given in Grigson's *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* I found that with a knowledge of Adilabad Gondi it is easy to recognize many Maria words, some being identical and most very similar in both dialects. The pronunciation and intonation seem however, to be so divergent that to those familiar with the Adilabad idiom Maria is more easily understood written than spoken. Ethnologically it would be extremely important to ascertain the affinities of those words in the Bastar dialects which do not occur in the Gondi of the Central Provinces

1. The student of Dravidian languages will find an extensive selection of Gondi texts in Nagri script in the series "Hyderabad Gondi Literature," which I am editing in collaboration with Mr. S. B. Jogalkar for use in Gond schools. So far the following numbers have been published: *Hyderabad Gondi Reading Chart for Adults* 1, 2, and 3 (Hyderabad, 1943); *First Reader for Adults* containing stories and Riddles (Hyderabad 1944); *Gondi Primer* (Hyderabad 1944); *First Gondi Reader* (Hyderabad 1946); *Three Epic Poems* (Hyderabad 1946); *The Legend of the Serpe Folk* (Hyderabad 1947); *The Myth of Manko* (Hyderabad 1946).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

224 sprung free of the ' tap ' of the *dim-kola* and so released the back end of the *mirpos-kola*, the front end of which would have given way beneath the weight of the *adam-guryu* cross-beam and brought the stone-weighted *kalk-panj* fall beams crashing down on to the animal, while the *adam-guryu* fell into the slot prepared for it in the ground. The trap had been set for six weeks with no result, and they had not tried making a trap of this kind for years. It looked too fragile for any but a very small panther ; the bait-stick was barely 2½ feet from the mouth of the trap ; and the fall even at the mouth was only 20 inches. Kalmu Boda, the expert *shikari* who is *pargana* headman of the Bison-horn villages around Barsur, was openly scornful.

Snares and springes for pea-fowl, jungle-fowl and snipe, and bird-lime for other birds, with occasional nets for birds or deer complete the Hill Maria's hunting equipment. I have not seen him using nets ; the villages where most nets are to be seen are those near the Bison-horn country, and their users presumably copy Bison-horn methods.

Bison-horn Maria hunting

In the most advanced and thickest populated parts of the Bison-horn Maria country, such as the Paknar, Katakalian and Kuakonda tracts, it is difficult to find any wild creature except birds and insects. In Hindu India the monkey is always present, being sacred and so free to devour anyone's crops. The Maria eats monkey as readily as any other animal, and the monkey long ago decided to avoid his lands. At my camp at Katakalian there was a sudden shout and dozens of Marias left me to rush at a tree on which someone had seen a luckless flying squirrel (*Pteromys petaurista*). Even hares and rats are said to be less common here than elsewhere. Like Hill Marias, Bison-horn Marias spend hours digging out field rats and [252] mice, carefully wrapping each victim in grass before carrying them home in glee to roast them whole skewered on bamboo spits, singeing off the fur. They sell and buy rat meat in the markets, either raw, or in little jerked squares on bamboo spits ; but that [195] they are getting sensitive to ridicule on this account is shown by the fact that the buyer must ask for ' earth-roots ', not rats or mice. Frogs are another delicacy, also spitted and roast. Python, *daman* [253] and non-poisonous snakes are eagerly sought after ; for ordinary eating they skin, slice and fillet the snake and stew it with spices, when they say it tastes midway between fish and chicken. Small portions of python separately cooked are regarded as a valuable cure for ' pot-belly '.

The great round of ritual vernal hunts preceding sowing have been the chief cause of the extermination of game. The religious

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 house, and are given *landa* to drink. At the meal in the Place of the Departed the couple are exhorted by the bridegroom's father to live together in unity and concord, and to be faithful. All night the drums roll and guests pour in to dance and drink *landa* or sing around the bride and bridegroom, the men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses. Ultimately next morning the couple are made to stand on a hurdle under the eaves of the hut constructed for them, and a kinsman of the girl's father climbs on the roof and tips a pot of water over them. The boy then drags the girl into
[353] the hut, both pushed by willing hands, and the door is fastened on them and a bamboo-matting curtain hung over it. After a while they emerge, and the bride takes a ceremonial farewell of the girls of her village, and the guests disperse. Finally in the evening she is thrust into the bridal hut by her husband's younger brothers and his friends, her husband being already inside awaiting her.

In the account of the Ganjenar-Massenar wedding which follows, naturally no description can be given of the scenes in the *narma-lon* rooms of the bride's and bridegroom's fathers, to which outsiders are not admitted, or of other parts of the wedding ceremonies which I did not actually see. The bridegroom was the son of Atrami Hunga of Massenar, the younger brother of Atrami Kopa Dhurwa, a very influential headman who was decorated by the late Raja of Bastar for keeping that *pargana* quiet during the 1910 rebellion, and the bride was the daughter of Kunjami Harma, the headman of Ganjenar. When I reached the latter's house, which was about two miles from my camp at Massenar, the bridegroom and his party had arrived, and the relatives' dinner was over. The bride had gone to a tank to be bathed by her elder sister and her brother's wife; the bridegroom and his father were walking about talking to the guests and the bride's male relatives. There were not many persons present, perhaps 150 all told; a few men were beating their dancing drums, but none were wearing their bison-horn head-dresses. Around the door of the separate sleeping hut used
[533 by Kunjami Harma's daughters and other womenfolk, some thirty
831 women were standing shoulder to shoulder, swaying to and fro and
● 195] singing a choral refrain of '*Kokolin-waya*' to obscene verses sung by a laughing woman in the centre of the group. Another band of women hurled abuse at them at intervals, when the leader of each band tried to out-Billingsgate the other.

535 When the bride had been bathed, she emerged from the sleeping
585 hut with a cloth wrapped over her shoulders, and was dragged into a chain of dancing and singing girls with their arms closely linked, while the bridegroom, also with a cloth over his shoulders, was pushed into another chain. These chains of girls circled and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

the time for trembling'. He took the axe out of Bhima's hand and struck the landlord two more blows with the sharp edge. Just then they caught sight of two men coming by. They hurriedly dropped their weapons and stood upright with their hands straight down round the landlord's body so that the passers-by could not see what was happening. These men were going to get some meat from a dead cow which was lying near a tank in the next village. They do not seem to have seen anything, and went on their way. Another witness came by and he saw Pandu look cautiously round and then rub the blade of his axe in the earth and throw it down beside the landlord's body. This witness was so frightened that he did not go to get meat from the dead cow as he originally intended, but went home and lay down.

This story shows on the one hand an unusual degree of premeditation and a careful adherence to plan, and on the other a rather unusual susceptibility on the part of some of those concerned in the affair. The youth Bhima, who was Pandu's bond-servant, evidently had no heart in the business and trembled so much after striking one blow that he could do no more. One witness was so frightened that he could hardly walk and had to go home and lie down. Without the urging of Pandu, who seems to have been an unusual type of criminal, the other men would certainly have never carried out the plan. For this reason Pandu was sentenced to death and was executed, and the other murderers went for life-imprisonment.

III

The subject of aboriginal abuse or gali is obscure, and outsiders often find it hard to understand why expressions that are continually used in ordinary conversation should sometimes arouse the most passionate feelings of indignation. The most abusive terms are sometimes actually used in love-making, and a Maria employs the word *mailotia*, for example, which means 'cohabit with your mother' as freely as a British soldier uses the word 'bloody' and generally with as little meaning.

For gali to be offensive everything depends on the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

x 674
578
195

occasion, the tone of voice and the relationship of the people concerned. Word-magic is an important and dangerous element in Maria life. A witch can make a man impotent by giving him 'corpse-abuse'. It is possible for a man to use a normally inoffensive expression in a certain tone of voice, which under the circumstances is so dangerous and insulting as to lead to murder. A mother-in-law, for example, may abuse her son-in-law privately as much as she wishes. But if she shouts an insulting epithet at him in the presence of half the village, she has committed an unbearable insult.

x 674

Two types of abuse are not used in ordinary conversation. You do not call somebody a thief, unless you want trouble. You certainly do not call anyone a witch or a wizard. In a number of our cases the allegation that someone was a thief or a wizard led to murder.

Excreta-abuse is also not very common in daily life. In several cases it has led to murder. Thus the elder of two brothers told the younger that he was eating excreta. A son-in-law killed his father-in-law when he told him that he ate the excreta and drank the urine of his wife. A nephew killed his aunt for accusing him of eating excreta.

On two occasions fathers were killed by sons for insulting them. One father told his son to 'get out of the house' and was killed for it. Another father, who was asked by his son for a loan of money, replied that the boy might sell his own children for the money, but he would not get it from him. Such remarks were not to be endured.

Markami Turka killed his elder brother's wife Kosi for abusing him. He told her that if she did not do her work properly he would not give her cattle for cultivation, and she replied that 'her pubic hairs would not be pulled up' if she did not get them. This ought not to have greatly offended someone in that relationship, but it did: probably it was the way she said it.

Yet another case (not in our list) in which a father was murdered by his son was when a youth about nineteen years old, Poyami Lakhma, killed his father Linga in 1940. The two men had a drunken quarrel, and the father abused his son and told him to get out of his house. As before, this seems to have been regarded by the boy as an almost

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias, and paid several shorter visits to the fringes of their hills; since 1931 I have three times revisited Bastar, seeing some Marias each time, and spending March 1934 in revisiting the Abujhmar hills villages seen in my 1929-31 tours, and the Bison-horn Maria villages above and below the Aranpur pass. I had similarly often toured before across the Bison-horn Maria country, and made many friends among the villages around the Bailadila hills, which, in return for a reduced assessment of land revenue, had the duty of sending relays of men up to the hills during the summer recess there of the Ruling Chief and leading State officials.

Notes and Queries on Anthropology, published by the Royal Anthropological Institute, was of constant value, even though, as explained in Chapter XIII, the poor memories of the Marias prevented me from getting the results expected from the geneological method. My work made it impossible for me to be in Maria villages at all seasons and to see all Maria ceremonies, and therefore I supplemented my enquiries by getting detailed reports from selected State officials whom I tried to train roughly for this by taking them with me during my personal enquiries on tour. I have almost always checked their reports by personal investigation; and in the few cases where I could not so check them, I have repeated nothing reported by them unless it was confirmed by the independent reports of two or more other reliable observers. These enquiries did impose much extra work on them, but gave them a much-needed knowledge of the aboriginal and did much to raise the morale and co-operation of the enquirers and to raise the standard of the administration. I could not have had a happier and friendlier family of colleagues than those of all ranks who served under me my last two years in the State. All were helpful, but especially Pandit Ghasiram Dane, then a subdivisional officer, the late Mr. H. N. Dutt, then tahsildar of Dantewara, since a victim of black-water fever, Mr. Niranjan Singh, then tahsildar of Bijapur and manager of Kutru, now Assistant Administrator, Mr. Sant Prasad, formerly tahsildar of Konta, Circle Inspector Manbahal Singh of the State Police, and Mr. Dikshitulu of the State Medical Service, who did remarkable anti-yaws work in the Abujhmar hills in my second tour and in later independent tours.

Language was always a difficulty. Halbi is the *lingua franca* of Bastar. The differences between Maria dialects are great, and the very guttural hill dialect is so unintelligible to the Bison-horn Marias that at their rare meetings they communicate with Hill Marias through those of them who understand Halbi. And there are many variations of both the Hill and the Bison-horn Maria dialects. Of Halbi, everyone serving in Bastar must acquire some

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

understanding. Of Gondi as spoken in the plateaux of the Central Provinces I had a smattering, but the Maria dialects were as different from it as Spanish and Portuguese from Italian, and the Hill Maria gutturals are beyond the compass of an English voice. Yet one cannot but acquire a considerable vocabulary and power of following the gist of a speech from constant hearing of witnesses in court and association with tribesmen in village and camp; and thus, though never able to dispense with an interpreter, I could check his interpretation of replies, and see that he put my questions in my own way, and not in a leading form. Nothing needs more care than the training of interpreters. I am especially grateful for the help, as interpreter and as enquirer, of the late Circle Inspector Chaitan Singh, of the State Police, a Bastar Rajput with all the traditional virtues of the Rajput. Descended from an ancestor who had once narrowly escaped being sacrificed as a Meriah victim in Jeypore (Orissa), he was passionately interested in the aboriginal, knew all the '36' languages of Bastar, was a mine of information about Bastar customs, religions, songs, dances and games, and was, because he never did an injustice but was simple and reliable in all his ways, loved by the wild tribes of Bastar. His sense of humour, broad like that of the tribesmen, of whom at heart he was one, would overcome disappointment or the short temper bred of heat and exhaustion in gales of laughter; nor was it a respecter of persons, for his tales would chide the follies alike of raja or ryot, political agent or diwan. His sudden death soon after I left Bastar meant the loss of a dear friend, and of an Indian of a type more fitted to a past age but unlikely to be bettered in any succeeding generation. They say that in the forests around Kondagaon, where he shot so many man-eating tigers and organized so many successful tiger beats, the Murias already revere him as Chaitan Deo, a god of good hunting without whose favour no beat will yield game. Nothing could have appealed more to his sense of humour. Wherever he may be, may he have boon companions to laugh at his rhymes and tales, to drink from his silver glass, to take betel from his silver box, and to handle the hunting-knife and the silver-mounted cane given him by successive Governors, and may he live long in the folk memories of Bastar!

For other help I must thank Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S., Political Agent for the Central Provinces States when I went to Bastar, who has also kindly allowed me to reproduce some of his Bastar photographs; Mr. D. R. Rutnam, I.C.S., my successor as Administrator, who was my host in Bastar twice in 1932 and greatly facilitated my 1934 tour in various ways; Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, M.B.E., for more than twenty years Chief Medical Officer

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

and Parja, and it is therefore easy first of all to describe their distribution; only the briefest of general remarks will be made about them; I hope at a later date to publish a separate account, at least of the Parjas.

In the ethnographic map on page 40 the Bhattras are shown by the letter A and the Parjas by the letter B. The former alone among the races of Bastar have abandoned whatever Munda or Dravidian tongue they may have once spoken, and now use a corrupt Uriya dialect. In Bastar, except for one or two villages at the south-east corner of the Kondagaon tahsil, the Bhattras are confined to the north-east corner of Jagdalpur, along the Jeypore border, across which they overflow in large numbers into Jeypore and, beyond, Kalahandi State. Their Bastar number in 1891 was 21,477. The use of their language is spreading to other tribes, chiefly the Parjas; it was spoken by 45,830 persons in 1931, which means that 9,219 non-Bhattras speak it. The spread of its use among the Parjas is shown by the fact that only 12,363 Parji-speakers were returned out of 17,568 Parjas. Actually, as Sir George Grierson has admitted, Bhattri might as well be classified as one of the many forms of Halbi as a dialect of Uriya; to the outward ear they sound very similar, and the two languages are mutually intelligible. Halbi always varies according to its proximity to Chhattisgarhi, Telugu or Gondi; and to me Bhattri seems only Halbi influenced by its proximity to Uriya-speaking tracts. Nor are local census enumerators by any means to be relied upon effectively to distinguish Halbi and Bhattri. Grierson's remark of Gondi dialects that the names indicate tribal rather than linguistic differences is true of Halbi and Bhattri at all events.

Bhattras and Parjas

The Bhattras live in open country with miles of good rice cultivation. They are gradually giving up even their very modified form of *dahya* or shifting cultivation, consisting now mainly of the occasional cutting and carting to their rice fields of forest undergrowth, and burning it there as manure. All but twenty-six of them were returned in 1931 as following their tribal religion; and this is really the correct account, though they are considerably more Hinduized than any other tribe classed as primitive in 1931 except the Halbas. The latter, whose religion preserves only slightly less of the tribal element than the Bhattra, are, however, in contrast, all but thirty-six recorded as Hindu. No anthropometric work has been done among the Bastar Bhattras; and there are no data for accepting or rejecting on physical grounds the Central Provinces habit of classifying them as a branch of the Gond race. Traditionally they came with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal, while over

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

582 hand some Hill Marias say that there is no theoretic obstacle to intermarriage, but that actually 'it isn't done', though they occasionally take part in each other's festivals. The Bison-horn 177 style of dancing with long *dol* drums is gradually spreading among 535 the lower villages just north of the Indrawati. Hudala Karka, for example, some eight miles from Barsur and on the northern bank of the river, now dances entirely in Bison-horn style, and claims to be a Bison-horn village, the claim being admitted by the Bison-horn Maria *pargana* headman in theory, and in practice by intermarriage with undoubted Bison-horn villages; but in several houses I found old Hill Maria dancing shields (*moghi*) and buttock-bells, and the older men admitted that when they were young they 177 danced in the Hill Maria style. Another sign of this is that Hurra [176] Gunda, the log-god of the Tamo clan at Tumirgunda, near Hudala Karka, is also the log-god of the Atami clan of Hudala Karka and of two other Atami villages south of the Indrawati. The clan-priest of the god is a Tamo, and the Tamo villages of Tumirgunda and Padmeta still dance in Hill Maria style. In a few years, therefore, the Bison-horn Marias will have adopted the valley villages north of the Indrawati; the *pargana* headman already virtually claims them as such, since they are under his direct jurisdiction and not that of the Hill Maria *chalki* or assistant appointed to help him [197] manage the eight Hill Maria villages of his *pargana*. In speech, too, they are approximating more and more to the Bison-horn Marias, as there is a marked absence of the harsh guttural sounds so characteristic of the Hill Maria language, and they use the Bison-horn technical social and religious terms.

101 Westward along the valley, as observed above, Bison-horn 177 Maria influence gets less. For a few miles, roughly from Nelasnar to Jegur on the Matawara-Kutru road, and in the village of Ketulnar beyond Jegur, the people are now known as Murias but are really Hill Maria stock, and still dance in Hill Maria style. Ketulnar still intermarries with the hill villages of the Kutru Mar *pargana*. The villagers of Bheriabhum, on the south bank opposite their former village of Pali, five or six miles north of Bhairamgarh, are of the Hill Farsal clan, and cannot be distinguished from Farsalor of the hills. In the hill villages above the valley I verified occasional marriages with girls from the valley villages and vice versa.

101 The tract west and south-west of Kutru, marked by the letter L on the ethnographic map, contains a very scanty population, which appears to be Hill Maria in origin, much modified by contact with the Telugu-influenced Dorla Koitor from the south, who are shown by the letter K. These mixed elements also were returned

[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

APPENDIX VI

LANGUAGE

IN Volume IV of the *Linguistic Survey of India*, Maria is somewhat briefly discussed and considered to be a mere local dialect of Gondi, 'almost identical with the ordinary Gondi of the district'. The only authority on the language mentioned in the *Survey* is Glasfurd's *Report on the Dependency of Bastar* (Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. XXXIX, Calcutta, 1863); Appendix II of the report contains a 'Maria' vocabulary. But as Glasfurd called the Hill Maria 'Maree', his vocabulary obviously was not collected in the Abujhmar hills, but probably among the Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils. The specimen printed in the survey seems to me to be one from the Bison-horn Maria country, while the sketch of the Maria dialect at pp. 532-3 of Vol. IV of the *Linguistic Survey* deals obviously with the Bison-horn Maria dialect. In fact, I do not think that it has before anywhere been stated that there is a marked difference between the two dialects, so marked, indeed, that, as I have observed before, a Hill Maria and a Bison-horn Maria cannot understand each other's mother-tongue and have to communicate in Halbi. I am not qualified to speak in any detail of the differences between the two dialects. A collection of words will often show very marked similarities or identities, but the same word will often be very differently pronounced by a Hill and by a Bison-horn Maria. Inflexions are different, those of the Hill Maria being more similar to those used by the Gond of the plateaux of the Central Provinces, though much gutturalized, while those of the Bison-horn Marias are, presumably, influenced by Telugu contacts. And in general towards the north of Bastar the Hill Maria and the Muria indent on Hindi for words wanting in their mother-tongue, while the farther south you go the more you find the Bison-horn Maria indenting upon Telugu, though he also draws considerably on Halbi. The Bison-horn Maria's speech seems far more guttural than standard Central Provinces Gondi, but even he is amazed at the difficulty of the Hill Maria gutturals, and always compares Hill Maria speech to that of crows.

The volume of transcriptions and translations of Gramophone Records of Languages and Dialects spoken in the Central Provinces and Berar, edited by the late Rai Bahadur Hiralal and published

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

197 It may be observed that in these specimens and in the *Linguistic Survey* records there is far less borrowing from Aryan languages than in the Gondi folk-tales, stories and songs printed in Volume II 192 of Trench's *Grammar*. In my specimens there are two corruptions of English words which have become current through excise and police practice respectively, *bōtēl* (bottle) and *rapōṭ* (report). Fairly recent Hindi or Halbi borrowings (as distinct from long acclimatized words of Sanskrit origin like *mīn* (fish), *ṿijjā* (seed) or *bēsh* (good)) found in my specimens are *ḍōkrā* (old man), *ḍōkrī* (old woman), *dinām* and *dināl* (daily), *kabāṛ* (work), *khush* (pleased), *tiyār* (ready), *bichār* (thought), *milē-māsī* (together), *sarkār* (authorities), *lagē* (fastened), and *rāzī* (contented).

126 I have not collected any specimens of Bison-horn Maria language, nor have I the qualifications to attempt any sketch of the grammars of the two dialects. The Hill Maria specimens that follow were recorded under my supervision by Sampat Singh, my interpreter, in the villages of Orcha and Hikul in the Abujhmar hills in March 1934, the records being corrected with the aid of the Hill Marias in my camp.

Two Stories, from Hikul Village

539

I. The Monkey Son-in-law

Unḍ nāgā mattā. Ḍōkrī- mu'ittā mattā, ōrā unḍ miyār
One village was. Old-woman-old-woman was, hers a daughter

mattā. Ad pīkī layā mattā. Ḍōkrī- mu'ittā ad pīkī-tun
was. That girl maiden was. Old-woman-old-woman that girl

bōn-kē hēwā mattā. Unḍ mēṭā-tī unḍ kōwē ḍōkrī-mu'ittā-
anyone-to giving-not was. A mountain-from a monkey old-woman-

nagā pīkī-may^dē lām wātā. Ḍōkrī-mu'ittā
old-woman-to girl-for bride-servitor came. Old-woman-old-woman

kē^tā, 'Nimā bārā-kiyā wātōq, kōwā?' Kōwā ittoq, 'Illē,
said, 'You what-for have-come, monkey?' Monkey said, 'No,

māmō, bēnōrē lām tā^ṭtēq, nannā paṛī tūngānā-may^dē
father's-sister, anyone bride-servitor will-keep. I work doing-for

mandākān.' Ḍōkrī-mu'ittā bichār kitā, 'Māwā-iṛā paṛī kiyānōr bōgh
will-stay.' Old-woman thought-made, 'Me-with work doer anyone

illē; pīkīn-may^dē kōwā baranjā-tun tā^kān.' Injōr vāhātā,
not; girl-for monkey son-in-law-for I-will-keep.' Then she-said,

'Mākū paṛī kis, tihtānūr.' Kōwā-kn tāstōq. Kōwā vāhātōq,
'Me-for work do, I-will-feed.' Monkey she-kept. Monkey said,

'Māmā, nā-kū unḍ maqsu par-dīm; pēndā narkān.'
'Father-in-law, me-to an axe made-give; penda-clearing I-will-cut.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX TWO

THE LANGUAGE OF THE MURIA

By A. N. Mitchell, O.B.E., I.C.S.

197

Introductory

In the year 1940 when I was Administrator of Bastar, I began, at Dr Elwin's suggestion, a linguistic survey of the State. This survey was intended to be one of many subsidiary inquiries in connexion with the decennial Census, and it started from the assumption, which was then generally believed to be correct, that Bastar State was the home of a large number of different languages and dialects. It is still true to say that the number of languages spoken is remarkable in proportion to the area of the State, which is 13,725 square miles and may be roughly compared to that of Belgium. There is the official language, Hindi, and in the south of the State large numbers of people also speak Telugu. It is correct to say, however, that there are practically no people whose mother-tongue is Telugu, and very few with whom Hindi comes more easily than Halbi, which is probably the most commonly spoken language of all. This Halbi is in my opinion properly to be classified as a dialect of Marathi, but its vocabulary is a synthetic one of Gondi, Hindi, Oriya, and Marathi words.[1] It is not only the mother-tongue of the Halbas, who traditionally accompanied the first Raja of Bastar when he fled into the State from Warangal early in the fifteenth century, but also of a number of semi-aboriginal castes such as the Bhattra and Dhakar, all of whom mainly inhabit the east central portion of the northern plateau. In addition there are many thousands of Muria who no longer speak anything but Halbi, while a minority of Muria, Jhoria, Maria, and Dorla all over the State have learnt it as a second language. The Dhurwa, who are mainly found in the south-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and the extreme north of the Sukma Zamindari, have a distinct dialect of their own, which is, however, recognizably related to other Gondi dialects. Finally there are a few scattered villages of Gadaba, mainly in the Jagdalpur Tahsil, who speak their own language, which belongs not to the Dravidian group as Gondi does, but to the Kolarian group of which few examples are normally to be found south of the Mahanadi river.

2. With the exception of Halbi, all these languages between them account for only a small proportion of the total population of the State, which now stands at about 630,000. The most interesting fact which emerged from my linguistic survey was that in a great arc running from the north-east corner of the State westwards, southwards and finally south east, a dialect of Gondi is spoken, which is for practical purposes one and the same dialect whether it is spoken by Muria, Jhoria, Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria, Koya, or Dorla. The number of speakers is probably about 300,000 out of a total population for the State of 630,000. For this reason and because the exigencies of service during war-time cut short my time in Bastar, I finally concentrated on this dialect, especially as spoken by the Bison-horn Maria, and produced a grammar thereof which was published at the Bastar State Press in 1942.

3. This amount of preliminary explanation is necessary before I proceed to give some account of the language of the Muria in order that two points may be made clear. The first is that the Maria language is essentially the same as that

[1] 'Halbi, says Grierson, 'can hardly be called a true dialect. It is a mechanical mixture of bad Marathi, bad Oriya and bad Chhattisgarhi, which varies in the proportions of its constituents from place to place. On the whole Marathi inflexions form its most prominent feature'. It is the language of the Palace and used by clerks and others in Jagdalpur for polite correspondence. Its use has now spread widely throughout Bastar where over 170,000 persons returned it as their mother-tongue in 1931.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

● 197

of other Gond, or more properly Koitor, in Bastar State.[1] The second is that I have not been able to make as close a study of the language as spoken by the Muria as I have of that spoken by the Bison-horn and Hill Maria. This note should, therefore, not be taken as in any sense the last word on the subject, but rather as an illustrative introduction. One more reservation is necessary. I have mentioned above that many Muria can now only speak Halbi, and I would make this more clear by pointing out that no form of Gondi is now spoken in the areas enclosed on the north by the Makri river in Kondagaon Tahsil, on the west by the main road from Jagdalpur, and on the south by the Indrawati river from the eastern border of the State to the point where it is crossed at Jagdalpur by the main road. Even to the west of that road in an area about twenty miles in depth between Jagdalpur and Kondagaon the same remark applies. It is round this block that the arc to which I referred above is described.

4. This view of the essential unity of the dialect of Gondi spoken in Bastar State is not that which was held by Sir George Grierson in Volume IV of *The Linguistic Survey of India*. At page 532 thereof he stated that the Maria dialect of Bastar 'seems to be almost identical with the ordinary Gondi of the (Chanda) district'. On page 473 also he expressed the opinion that Maria does not differ so much from ordinary Gondi that it should be classed as a separate dialect. When referring to the Gondi spoken in the north of the State, that is, by the Muria and Jhoria, he came to the conclusion that this was the same as that spoken by their neighbours to the north and west in Kanker State and the Drug and Chanda Districts of the Central Provinces. I believe both these views to be incorrect, and to be based on incorrect material supplied to him by the Bastar State authorities at the time. Among other reasons for this belief of mine I would place first the undoubtedly erroneous geography from which Grierson started. A comparison of what Dr Elwin has written in this book of the distribution of the Muria and Jhoria, and of what Mr W. V. Grigson has written in his *Maria Gonds of Bastar* regarding the distribution of the Maria, with what Grierson has written on the same subject, for example, at page 529 of Volume IV, will serve to prove this fact. On many points of grammatical detail, also, his information was undoubtedly wrong. In giving examples I adhere to my view that Muria and Maria Gondi are for practical purposes the same language. Grierson, then, at page 528 of Volume IV refers to the existence of separate forms of the dative and accusative cases. There are no such separate forms. The personal terminations of verbs are not the same in Bastar as those mentioned by Grierson on pages 528-9 and 533. The personal pronouns mentioned on page 532 are not identical with those which he, erroneously, says are used in the Gondi of the north of the State. There is no negative infinitive as stated by him (p. 533). There is no passive voice, which he states to exist generally in Gondi (p. 482). On page 473 he has admitted the existence of typical southern features in the language spoken by the Muria when he mentions the use of initial 'l' for 'r' and 'h' for 's'. On the same page he speaks of the form *ana* = 'I' being used among Muria as among Gond elsewhere, but I have not heard anything but the form *nana*. His citation of the words *dana* or *danwa* meaning 'her' also appears incorrect. I have heard *tana* among Maria, but *dana* appears to be a simple transposition of consonants for *adna*, the genitive of *ad*. On page 528 again he speaks of a second person plural ending in *ir* which I have not heard. On page 529 he quotes a form *lohioh* = 'he sent', and *hitoh* for *hitor* = 'he did'. These are obvious mistakes in transliteration committed in an attempt to reproduce the guttural 'r' or uvular trill, a feature of the speech of Hill Maria in particular. They are not plural forms at all as he suggests. Similarly the form *himtu* = 'give' (imperative) seems to be a mistake of transcription for the universal form in Bastar *himut*. He gives the form *hayatona* = 'I die'

[1] One Muria, when asked to give an example of the difference between his language and Maria, said that for the imperative 'Come' Muria say *Daywara* while Maria say *Way*. The latter is, of course, the singular imperative from *wayana*, while *wara* is the plural imperative. *Daywara* means literally 'go come', an inverted form of the Hindi *Ā jao*. Not a very significant difference.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

which is not found in Bastar, where moreover the verb *dolitana* is used. He speaks of *ki* and *ku* as dative terminations 'confounded' with the accusative *in su*, whereas in my experience all three are interchangeable postpositions. He speaks of an ablative termination *agada*, which is rarely heard, and which is an instrumental postposition used by the Muria. He mentions plural terminations in 'ng' and 'r' as used by the Muria, and on page 532, speaking of the Maria dialect, he says that he has not found plurals in 'or' and 'ng' but that there is no reason for supposing that they are lacking. They are in fact almost entirely lacking both among Muria and Maria. On page 530 he speaks of separate plural forms for the second and third person of the various tenses of the verb. These do not exist, and I have not found the plural imperative termination in 'at', except in the negative imperative, nor the past negative tense, which he mentions.

5. Grierson's material can thus hardly be described as reliable, and it has led him into a curious position. On the basis of apparently wrong information he has linked the Gondi dialect of North Bastar with Gondi in general, and refuses to admit that it is a separate dialect at all. This seems to me incorrect. But his incorrect material being the same for the language spoken among the Muria, the Hill Maria, and the Bison-horn Maria, he has arrived at the correct conclusion from wrong premises that these three peoples, with the Jhoria, speak for practical purposes the same language. But it is not the statements alone in *The Linguistic Survey of India* which have led to a wrong conclusion. There are also omissions in the description of the Maria dialect of certain points which more clearly define its right to be described as an independent dialect. I would mention particularly the following. Nouns never inflect in oblique cases, and a variety of postpositions can all be used with the appropriate case, subject to no law except very rough standards of euphony. There is thus no ground for distinguishing declensions. There is no distinction between singular and plural in the second and third personal pronouns. In the conjugation of verbs, gender is only distinguished in the third person and then not always and number is only distinguished in the first person. There are other less striking points which tend to prove the same thing.

6. A final proof of the distinct entity of this common Bastar dialect can be found by looking further afield and comparing it in general with those dealt with by Lind[1] and Chenevix Trench.[2] From such a comparison it seems justifiable to conclude that there are at least three main dialects of Gondi at the present time. Trench has dealt with a dialect which appears to cover practically the whole of the central plateau of the Central Provinces. Lind has dealt with a dialect which appears to cover the whole of the southern portion of Chanda District, and probably (though I have no proof of this) extends into the Godavari Basin between Bastar State and the Nizam's Dominions. A modified form of this dialect, which is full of Telugu influences, appears to be spoken in the southern and western portions of Bastar State. The Bastar dialect is the third.

7. For historical and physical reasons there is nothing surprising in the independent existence and survival of this dialect. Lind has suggested, without giving reasons, that the Maria language, as he heard it, was the source of the various forms and dialects of Gondi all over the Central Provinces and Berar, but I have not been able to find any evidence for holding this view. Nor is it clear to me whether the Bastar dialect possesses in its grammar embryonic or vestigial forms. But the history of the country would justify the view that the dialect is very old, since it has had little or no contact with the outside world for centuries. Grierson, in Chapter VII of the *Imperial Gazetteer* (1907–9), has shown that it is not established whether the Dravidian languages entered India from the north-west where the Brahuis would therefore form the 'rear guard'; or whether they came from the south from the hypothetical 'Lemurian Continent'. Anthropology does not seem to have solved this problem during the past 30 years. But in either case the geographically central position of the Bastar dialect among Dravidian languages might give grounds for thinking that it constitutes an isolated survival

[1] A. A. Lind, *A Manual of Mudia* (Mukti Mission Press, Kedgaon, 1913).
[2] C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

● 197

of an ancient form of speech. The only certain fact, however, is the age-long isolation of the Maria and Muria, and on the whole I am inclined to deduce from this fact that the peculiar structure of their grammar is a development from archaic Gondi in the direction of extreme simplification.[1] An example of archaism is to be found in the very few indications of gender, and those on the principle that males of the human species are masculine, and the rest of creation neuter. The absence of declensions shows no crystallization of convention in respect of the use of postpositions, which both Lind and Trench have called case endings. Again, there are only scanty traces of plural forms. These are entirely confined to proper names of places and peoples. Thus, the Maria and Muria like other so-called Gond, refer to themselves as Koitor. Place names such as Kaklur and Chitalur probably illustrate the same termination, as does the clan name Tokalur among Maria. The third personal pronoun 'or' was probably originally an honorific plural. And the verbal noun of agency, e.g. *kwalor* = 'doer', is almost certainly a plural form, since Lind has found the singular form *kwal* in Chanda District. The paucity of these forms suggests that they are a survival, but there is no sign of any tendency to add any suffix to them to make a new distinct plural, such as the termination 'ork' found in other dialects. Finally, there is the exceedingly clumsy method of constructing conditional sentences, which seems to be a primitive feature of the language, while the absence of many grammatical forms found in the Gondi of Betul District shows the latter language to have developed from an archaic and primitive condition in the direction not perhaps of simplicity, but of greater flexibility than that found among Maria and Muria.

8. Grigson has described Bastar State as 'an almost unknown backwater of the river of Indian history'. The present ruling family is descended from the Kakatia kings of Warangal, of whom the last was killed in battle with Mohammedan invaders early in the fifteenth century. His brother fled across the Godavari into Bastar, and from his time until very recent years the country has been practically without history and almost without contact with the outside world. Before the fifteenth century it appears from inscriptions that a Telugu line of Nagwanshi kings ruled in the eleventh century at Barsur, which lies in the centre of the State in the Bison-horn Maria country, and whose ruined temples indicate that there was then an advanced Hindu civilization in that area. Grigson has shown that up to the time of the Mohammedan conquest of the Deccan there must have been much Telugu infiltration, of which many signs still remain; but since that time the country has been largely undisturbed. There can never have been much Telugu or other Hindu influence on the Hill Maria or Muria; and the eight centuries which have elapsed since there can have been any strong Telugu influence on the Bison-horn Maria have given ample time for independent development of dialect, free from the outside influences to which Gondi has been exposed elsewhere. To this day Bastar State continues to be a very isolated area. On the north and north-east borders there is a certain amount of traffic with the adjoining British Indian districts and the Kanker State and the Jeypore Zamindari, which has brought the influence of Chhattisgarhi speech to bear on the Muria, but even this does not affect the Bison-horn Maria, whose contact with other peoples on the east is confined to the least developed portions of the Jeypore Zamindari. On the west and south of the State there is still not much intercourse across the Godavari river with the Chanda District, the Nizam's Dominions, and the Madras Province, in all of which areas the people are, in any case, similar to their Bastar neighbours and act as a buffer between them and more developed peoples. Although communications have been greatly improved in recent years, more than 11,000 square miles of the State's total area of 13,725 square miles are under forest, so that communication even between one tribe and another is still a matter of some difficulty. That this must have been very much more so in the past is obvious. The Maria and Muria still lead a laborious life, mainly dependent for their existence on

[1] A similar tendency towards simplification of grammar is mentioned by Allan Crawford, in connexion with the English of the inhabitants of Tristan da Cunha in his book *I went to Tristan* (London, 1941), p. 137, 'They seldom use the past tense'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX TWO

197

shifting cultivation of various types and, except in certain areas where the Bison-horn and Hill Maria have exterminated all game, on hunting.

9. All these factors must have combined to produce physical conditions capable in turn of producing marked individual changes and development in their language. One such condition is illustrated by a well-substantiated theory advanced by the American ethnologist Horatio Hale, and quoted by Otto Jespersen.[1] Hale found that in Oregon, a region not much larger than France, at least thirty different families of languages exist. This he explained by the fact that, among the hunting tribes of America, in which single families frequently were separated from the main tribe, in a vast and largely uninhabited country, language was much influenced by children, who were either left much to themselves owing to their parents' preoccupation with agriculture and hunting, or were actually left alone as the result of disease or the casualties of a hunter's life. Or again, where the men either died or were killed, the women left behind had little time for domestic life, and the children were neglected not only in respect of their physical welfare but also in respect of the correctness of their speech. From these circumstances arose fundamental changes of language, whereby actual new families of languages came into existence among ethnologically cognate peoples. I do not suggest that such extreme circumstances have ever been present among the tribes of Bastar, but they must have been present to some extent among the Bison-horn Maria and the Muria and to a greater extent among the small and isolated communities of the Maria of the Abujhmar Hills. The institution of the ghotul, where children of both sexes live together from an early age until marriage, separate from their parents for much of the day and the whole of the night, may also have led to great changes in the language. How important the influence of the ghotul has been it is not easy to judge, as the institution no longer exists among the Bison-horn and Hill Maria in the form in which it is now found among the Muria. But among the latter it is a fact, as Dr Elwin has discovered, that the children of the tribe have developed their own songs and stories and, to a very large extent, their own habits of conversation.

10. The foregoing arguments would explain the marked grammatical differences between the Bison-horn Maria and the Maria of the Bhopalpatnam Zamindari and of Chanda District as recorded by Lind. It would also explain the relative rarity of Hindi words in the Bastar dialect as a whole, while the earlier history of the race would explain the more numerous Sanskrit survivals and signs of Telugu influence; if indeed explanation of such features is necessary in view of the fact that Telugu and Gondi are closely related in the Dravidian family. It would also explain the differences of pronunciation which make it almost impossible for tribes who are fairly close neighbours to understand one another. For example, the speech of the Hill Maria is compared by the Bison-horn Maria to that of crows, owing to its numerous gutturals and glottal stops. One of these gutturals is the letter 'r' mentioned above, pronounced in the same way as a Frenchman pronounces the 'r' in Paris. Leonard Bloomfield calls this the 'uvular trill'.[2] The comparison with the speech of crows is reminiscent of Virgil's description of the young crows in their nests uttering *Pressae ter gutture voces*, which may be confirmation of the accurate observation of natural phenomena by the Bison-horn Maria. The Bison-horn Maria themselves speak in a guttural manner, the Muria less so; and another feature of the pronunciation of both is its extremely staccato nature. They almost invariably fail to pronounce initial 'h' and there is a tendency to interchange the cerebral and trilled 'r'. In other respects the pronunciation is very much as described by Trench for the Betul Gondi, initial 'e' being often preceded by a 'y' sound, and 'e' and 'o' being pronounced sometimes short and sometimes long. Orthography, is not, therefore, an easy matter. I adopted the Nagri script in my grammar as being adequate for the purpose, but the Telugu script, according to Grierson, is better suited to the language.

11. An outline of the grammar of this language follows. There is little to say about syntax, beyond what I have indicated therein, since its syntax is similar

[1] O. Jespersen, *Language*, pp. 180–8.

[2] Ibid., p. 470.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

197 to that of other Gondi dialects and of Hindi, of which the latter at least is widely known.

Outline Grammar

193 *Nouns.* These are never inflected and there is no distinction of form between singular and plural. The oblique cases are indicated by postpositions. Genders are very rarely indicated and play little part in the grammar of the language, though they do exist in the minds of the speakers. They are two in number, masculine and feminine-neuter. The former includes only males of the human species and the latter covers the rest of creation, whether male, female or inanimate. The commonest postpositions are as follows:

tun, *hs*, or *nu*, indicate the accusative
nu, *na*, *ta*, or *nad* meaning 'of' (genitive)
tun or *hs* meaning 'to' (dative)
te or *tuna* meaning 'with' or 'from' (comitative and ablative)
de meaning 'with' (instrumental) is only used of things
te or *tage* meaning 'in' or 'on' (locative)

All these can be used with any noun, the choice of alternatives apparently being governed by considerations of euphony. For example *lon*, a house, usually takes those postpositions which begin with 't' and elides its final 'n'; thus, *lota* = of a house, *lote* = in a house, and so on. There is no justification for distinguishing declensions.

Adjectives. These also are inflected neither for number, gender nor case. The language is well supplied with simple and compound adjectives, but the primitive feature of the language is that simple adjectives sometimes have to be expressed in a compound form, e.g. *bata hilwa* = poor, its literal meaning being 'without anything'.

The verbal noun is sometimes used as an adjective in the same way as the passive past participle in other languages, e.g. *murcha*, shut, from *murchana*, to shut.

Comparison is normally expressed, as in other Indian languages, by using the positive form of the adjective followed by the postposition *tuna*, from. There is, however, a single interesting exception, *nsla*, 'good', having the comparative and superlative form *nslator*. Syntactically this is used as other adjectives are with *tuna*.

The superlative is expressed similarly to the comparative, as in Hindi with the use of the words *sabe mul*, 'all'; e.g. *sabe mul tuna porho*, 'last of all'.

Pronouns and Pronominal Adjectives. The only remarkable feature of these is that there is a distinct word for 'we', namely *momat*, usually shortened in conversation to *mst*. This is one of the very few plural forms in the language. *I* = *nana*, thou and you = *nima* and *or* = he, she, or they. Another interesting feature is that pronouns have inflected forms. *Nana* produces *na*, *nima* produces *ni*, *or* produces *on*, and *momat* produces *ma*.

Pronominal adjectives are distinct adjectives and not merely the genitives of pronouns, except in the case of *ona*, his. They are *nawa* or *na* = my, *niwa* or *ni* = yours, and *mawa* or *ma* = ours.

Numerals. Up to and including 6, the cardinal numbers are almost identical with those in Telugu. From 7 to 19 inclusive the Hindi numerals are used, after which comes *korsh*, 20. Beyond this the word *kori* = score, is used in combination with other numbers. This word is of wide distribution in Eastern India, being used in Oriya among other languages, but is probably Dravidian in origin. For 100 the Hindi word *sau* is frequently used, as in the Urdu word *hazar*, a thousand, to denote vaguely large numbers. An interesting feature of the numerals is that the word for 2 has a masculine form *iru* and a neuter form *rend* or *rend*. This is one of the few cases where gender is distinguished.

Ordinals are the same as cardinals with the sole exception of *onds*, first.

Frequency is expressed by the word *wela*, time, probably borrowed from Marathi, which is added to the cardinal number; and multiplicity is expressed in the same way.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

our approach to the Gond problem—one of the cardinal problems of Deccan ethnology—unless we envisage the possibility that the tribes now known as Gonds, far from being the dispersed off-shoots of a once homogeneous people, attained a certain and very limited measure of cultural uniformity only when they came under the sway of the same dominant linguistic influence.

Gondi with its many local dialects is a Dravidian language of the so-called intermediate group, and stands, according to Grierson, closer to Tamil and Kanarese than to Telugu. But it seems highly improbable that the Dravidian tongues, which were no doubt associated with the representatives of the pre-Aryan high-civilizations of Southern India, should have been the original languages of tribal populations as primitive in racial and cultural make-up as the Hill Marias of Bastar and certain Koyas of Hyderabad. Just as such widely separated aboriginal tribes as the Chenchus of the Nallamallai Hills, the Hill Reddis of the Eastern Ghats and some, though not all, Naikpods and Kolams in the hills of Adilabad have adopted Telugu to the exclusion of any other tongue, without anyone considering Telugu as their original language[1] or claiming the present linguistic uniformity as proof of a genetic connection between all those tribes, so the peoples now speaking Gondi may, in times past, have abandoned older tribal tongues in favour of a Dravidian language spoken by neighbouring populations or the members of a ruling class. J. H. Hutton believes that by a similar process the Oraons of Chota Nagpur have adopted their present Dravidian tongue[2] in place of a Munda language, and I fully agree with his assumption that a large-scale Dravidianization of aboriginal tribes occurred partly previous and partly parallel to the Aryanization of which we are still witnesses.[3]

The idea that Dravidian Gondi represents a comparatively recent element in the linguistic pattern of the Central Indian belt has already been voiced by R. V. Russell, who put forward the theory of a Gond incursion into the Central Provinces from the south between the ninth and the thirteenth century A.D. This probably goes too far and is not supported by ethnological evidence; in solving the language problem it is not even necessary to assume a wholesale migration of all the Gond tribes from Dravidian lands south of the Godavari to the Central Provinces and the hill-tracts of Bastar. It is sufficient to postulate the invasion of a people limited in numbers but superior to the older tribal folks in organization and material equipment, and the subsequent spread of its Dravidian language and perhaps certain elements of its culture among the tribes previously speaking one or several older tongues. Indian history provides numerous examples of such an imposition of a foreign

1. In the case of Naikpods and Kolams an older tribal language is still spoken by other groups.
2. Oraon belongs to the same intermediate group as Gondi.
3. *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Part I, p. 358.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

language on aboriginal populations, and it seems more probable that such tribes as the Muria Gonds, with their close cultural and racial affinities to the Austroasiatic Gadabas of Orissa, were subject to a change of language than that they immigrated from distant parts of Southern India.

We are not yet in a position to surmise which population may have been responsible for the spread of Gondi or which pre-Dravidian languages Gondi may have replaced. Both questions will perhaps remain for ever unanswered, but linguistic research among the Gondi speaking peoples, the still entirely mysterious Khonds, and the neighbouring Austroasiatic tribes may still lead to surprising results. Since the days of Grierson's Linguistic Survey few trained linguists have done fieldwork among the tribal populations of Peninsular India, and the most admirable descriptive works of amateurs cannot compensate for the absence of comparative studies by experts.[1]

The replacement of an older language by one of more recent introduction, is an accomplished fact among many of the eastern and northern Gonds, who speak now the Chhattisgarhi dialect of Hindi and various other local dialects. But there can be no doubt that these Aryan languages were adopted from neighbouring Hindu populations instead of tribal tongues, and certain place-names are to-day the only evidence that the languages previously spoken were related to the Gondi spoken by other sections of the Gond family.

According to the Census of India the total number of Gonds in 1931[2] was 3,063,753. With their strong tribal consciousness they are the premier aboriginal race of India, exceeding by more than one million the number of Bhils and dwarfing such tribes as Oraons, Mundas, Hos and Santals.

The majority of Gonds—2,261,138 in 1931—are found in the Central Provinces and Berar, which contain practically all the territories known to the early Moghul writers as Gondwana. Except for Buldana in the extreme south-west, there is no district in the Central Provinces

1. The limited value of linguistic material contained in the writings of anthropologists is to none more obvious than to the authors; such texts, for instance, as given in this volume may facilitate the linguist's approach to an unwritten language, but they are insufficient as a basis for linguistic conclusions. For very relevant phonetic peculiarities may entirely escape the attention of the untrained observer, or defeat his attempts at recording them. In linguistics as in anthropology there is no substitute for field work. The dearth of authoritative works on the tribal languages of India was lamented by J. H. Hutton in his Census report: "There is, however, a serious void in our knowledge in that no intensive work appears to have been done on the tribal dialects of southern India, so that it is impossible to say whether the Munda languages ever penetrated to the extreme south of India or not. The linguistic survey unfortunately did not include southern India in its scope, and there is therefore a crying need for an intensive study of the dialects spoken by such tribes as the Kadar, Kurumans, Paliyans, Panians and Thanda Pulayans, with the object of discovering whether or no any Munda survivals are to be found." (Op. cit., p. 158). Hutton's call to linguists has, to my knowledge, remained largely unheeded. M. B. Emeneau who worked among the Todas being a laudable exception. But equally urgent as the study of the tribal dialects of South India is intensive work on the tribal language of the Central belt.

2. No later figures for individual tribes are available, the Census operations of 1941 having been curtailed for reasons of economy.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

101 without a considerable Gond population, but the main strongholds of
162 the Gonds are to-day the Satpura plateau including the districts of Betul,
197 Chhindwara and Seoni, where the western type of Gondi is spoken,
Mandla and Chhattisgarh in the east, where the Gonds have adopted the local dialect of eastern Hindi but retained their tribal identity, and in the south Chanda and the neighbouring Yeotmal, where the language is Gondi, but of a dialect somewhat different from the Gondi of Betul.

101 To the north-west the Gonds extend across the Narbada River into
691 Central India, and are particularly numerous in Indore State; to the
197 east of the Central Provinces lie the states of Gond princes, such as
[619] Kawardha, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, to-day known as the Chhattisgarh States. Although neither these Gond rajas, nor indeed the Gonds among their subjects speak Gondi, they are fully conscious of their tribal associations and the high status of the ruling princes adds no doubt to tribal prestige in the whole of Chhattisgarh.

Further south, bordering on Chanda, Drug and Raipur, extend the two States of Kanker and Bastar, where Gonds constitute the majority of the population. Bastar in particular is the home of three important groups of Gonds: the Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias, all of which differ in language and custom very considerably from the Gonds of the Central Provinces.[1] Their colourful and complex cul-
[174] tures are representative of ancient aboriginal India and show obvious affinities with the Austroasiatic cultures of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Bastar has also part in the Koyas or Dorlas of the Godavari area, the most southern branch of the Gond family occurring in considerable strength in Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State and stretching across the barrier of the Eastern Ghats into the vicinity of Rajahmundry. Most Koyas still speak a dialect of Gondi, but those surrounded by Telugu populations, have changed over to Telugu.

Another substantial group of Gonds, closely akin to the Gonds of Yeotmal and Chanda, is found in the hilly country between the Godavari and the Penganga Rivers constituting the Adilabad District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, and it is these Gonds who form the subject of the present work.

101 All the Gonds of Adilabad, except for an insignificant overflow of
186 Dhurwe Gonds from Chanda, consider themselves Raj Gonds, and this brings us to the still somewhat problematic division between Raj Gonds and Dhur or Dhurwe Gonds, which runs through the greater part of the Gond population within the Central Provinces. There seems to be no uniformity in the principles ruling this division; in Chhattisgarh only the members of ruling or formerly ruling families are described as Raj Gond, while in other parts most of the land-holding Gonds aspire to this denomination. In recent times the name Raj Gond has also been
[648] claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status by

1. The Hill Marias extend into the hills of the neighbouring Chanda District.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

of a timid and resigned outlook in place of the manly spirit of old. Finally I propose to discuss the results of the more liberal policy towards the aboriginals which H.E.H. the Nizam's Government has pursued since 1944, and to outline the principles and the first stages of the Gond Education Scheme, which is designed to help the Gonds in the struggle for existence and to restore to them self-respect and pride in their own ancient culture.

In an account of a culture as rich and complex as that of the Raj Gonds the anthropologist must needs concentrate on certain aspects, and in this book I have given first place to the Gonds' mythology and their complex ritual, sanctioned and sustained in almost every phase by mythical precedents. This part of Gond culture is rapidly disintegrating and its study, still possible in the hills of Utnur and Asifabad Taluqs, would come too late in the more open parts of the District. Problems of psychology and the more intimate matters of the individual's life, on the other hand, are only fleetingly touched upon, but I believe that changes in this sphere are not as rapid and the time left for their study is consequently far less limited.

Although this book is not a treatise on linguistics, Gondi texts of some length have found a place in many chapters. I noted them when collecting my material and as they are the first recorded specimens of the pecular Gondi spoken in Adilabad, I do not feel justified in withholding them from the student of Indian languages. All have been checked and rechecked with several informants, but this is no guarantee of absolute accuracy, for Gonds, like the speakers of most unwritten languages, are often careless about rules of grammar and not very sensitive to slight slips in a text read out to them. The recording, moreover, is not in accordance with the exigent demands of modern phonetics, which only the trained linguist can fulfil. Consonants are used with their values in English, and vowels with their values in Italian, long and short signs being added only where confusion might otherwise arise between two words of similar sound. Diacritical signs have been used only in the consonants ṭ, ṛ and ḥ. While the dental t, rendered by the Nagri character त , is transcribed by simple t, the cerebral t rendered in Nagri by ट, is transcribed by ṭ. Similarly the soft r, र in Nagri, is transcribed r, and the hard r, ड़ in Nagri, as ṛ. The letter ḥ stands for a sound closely resembling the German ch in Bach (pronounced like the composer). This sound occurs mainly in words of Marathi origin, and in such words most Gonds not familiar with Marathi pronounce it not as sh, but h; examples are *goḥti* (word, speech) and *paḥti* (favour) pronounced in pure Marathi as *goshti* and *pashti*; but I have transcribed these and similar words as pronounced by the Gonds in the hills.

Following the spelling of the Linguistic Survey and Trench's Grammar, I have used *w* for all *v*-sounds, except in proper names occurring in the English text, and in words borrowed from Hindi in which *v* is

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

more familiar. Deviating from Trench, who employs double-consonants to indicate the shortness of the preceding vowels, thus spelling *wittana* (to run) in contrast to *witana* (to sow), I have dispensed with double-consonants; in words such as *wattana* (to put) the two consonants represent different sounds. Diacritical signs are confined to the Gondi texts, and are not used when an italicized Gondi word occurs in the English text.[1]

Those familiar with Gondi will notice that the language spoken by the Raj Gonds of Adilabad differs both from the Betul Gondi of Trench's Grammar and the Gondi spoken in South Chanda outlined by the Rev. S. B. Patwardhan.[2] A distinctive feature of Adilabad Gondi is the frequent substitution of an initial *s* for the initial *h* of both the Betul and the Chanda dialects. Thus the Adilabad Gond pronounces *surana* (to see) instead of *hurana*, and 'no' is *sile* in Adilabad but *halle* in Betul. While in the nominative the Gonds of Betul usually drop the initial *n* inherent in the first and second person of the personal pronoun and say *ana* (I) and *imma* (thou) the Gonds of Adilabad use the full form *nana* (I) and *nime* (thou).

The Gondi of southern Chanda described by Patwardhan, follows in the choice of the initial *s* and *h* the Betul usage, but has often *l* where both Adilabad and Betul Gonds pronounce *r*. Thus the Chanda Gond, like the Hill Maria says *lon* (house), while the Adilabad Gond pronounces the word clearly with *r*, *ron*.

Further comparisons between the three dialects would be beyond the scope of this work, but although Betul Gondi contains a good many words not familiar to the Gonds of Adilabad and probably *vice-versa*, and the language of South Chanda is strongly influenced by Telugu, speakers of the three dialects have on the whole no great difficulty in understanding each other.

Raj Gonds of Adilabad on the other hand find it almost impossible to understand or make themselves understood to Hill Marias of Chanda but in going through the texts given in Grigson's *The Maria Gonds of Bastar* I found that with a knowledge of Adilabad Gondi it is easy to recognize many Maria words, some being identical and most very similar in both dialects. The pronunciation and intonation seem however, to be so divergent that to those familiar with the Adilabad idiom Maria is more easily understood written than spoken. Ethnologically it would be extremely important to ascertain the affinities of those words in the Bastar dialects which do not occur in the Gondi of the Central Provinces

1. The student of Dravidian languages will find an extensive selection of Gondi texts in Nagri script in the series "Hyderabad Gondi Literature," which I am editing in collaboration with Mr. S. B. Jogalekar for use in Gond schools. So far the following numbers have been published: *Hyderabad Gondi Reading Chart for Adults* 1, 2, and 3 (Hyderabad, 1943); *First Reader for Adults* containing stories and Riddles (Hyderabad 1944); *Gondi Primer* (Hyderabad 1944); *First Gondi Reader* (Hyderabad 1946); *Three Epic Poems* (Hyderabad 1946); *The Legend of the Serpa Folk* (Hyderabad 1947); *The Myth of Manko* (Hyderabad 1946).

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

and Hyderabad. If any pre-Dravidian substratum in the languages of the Hill Marias and the Murias could be discovered we would indeed be a long step nearer to the solution of the Gond problem, which cannot be solved by ethnology alone but only by a concerted effort of ethnological linguistic, and anthropometric research.

The time for such a synthesis of Gond studies has perhaps not yet come, and linguistics as well as physical anthropology have still to make their full contribution. To the ethnologist in the meantime falls the task of detailed investigations into all the regional branches of Gond culture, and such a regional study is presented in the following chapters.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I.P.C. Was the crime premeditated? Was it provoked by a serious and unbearable insult? The difficulty here, which every Sessions Judge admits, is that what seems an extreme provocation to him or the Assessors may hardly be noticed by the aboriginal, and incidents that seem quite trifling to the 'civilized' mind may rouse the Maria or Naga to a fit of homicidal rage. The matter is complicated by the fact that the tribes vary greatly from one to another. The Bison-horn Maria, for example, are passionately concerned about female chastity, and a wife's infidelity is constantly a cause of murder. But in this their Gond and Baiga neighbours to the north have a much lower standard. Love is comparatively free. Divorce is easy and a wife's betrayal is readily compensated by the payment of a small fine. It is obvious, therefore, that a Gond or Baiga who suspects his wife of infidelity is not put to anything like the same degree of provocation as that suffered by a Bison-horn Maria under similar circumstances.

Premeditation may be indicated by tribal customs. The Bison-horn Maria express the spirit of implacable revenge by certain dramatic symbols. They pull out their pubic hairs; they remove a few handfuls of grass from an enemy's roof; they whistle loudly the dreaded *sui* whistle. In any case where an accused is proved to have indulged in one or other of these acts, it may be assumed that his crime was premeditated.

A Bastar tragedy, the murder of Tati Hirme by her deceased husband's younger brother Doga, provides an interesting example of how a knowledge of local custom can explain an otherwise meaningless crime. According to tribal practice a younger brother has a right over his elder brother's widow, a right which extends not only to her person, but to her property. This right Tati Hirme refused to Doga, and there is evidence that for a long time the youth bitterly resented her behaviour. On the day of the tragedy he went to her house and asked her for some tobacco. She refused, and he murdered her.

At first sight here is precisely one of those motiveless crimes which have so often puzzled outside observers. It is true that there was hostility between the parties, but the refusal of a small gift of tobacco was hardly sufficient for so disastrous a result. But in Maria practice to ask a woman

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE CRIME OF REVENGE

I

Motives of revenge and implacable enmity operate in many cases. The Maria have various symbolic methods of expressing their hatred. One of these is to remove three handfuls of straw from an enemy's roof. This was done in a case where the murderer had a long-standing enmity with his victim, which came to a head over a quarrel about the cutting of an embankment. Another symbol is to pull out a few of the pubic hairs and to whistle loudly with one finger in the mouth. This was done by Muchaki Dasru shortly before he killed a man for not giving him the tribute that was due to him as Siraha of the village, and by Marvi Oyami Masa as he led his party to murder his cousin. Kartami Aitu dipped his hand in his victim's blood and made a mark on his own head. He cut the ground of the threshold with his axe in dramatic symbol of his triumph over the dead man's family.[1]

In some cases hostility between two Maria may continue for years before it breaks out into open conflict. Thus Vetti Hirma had been on bad terms for several years with Rawa Hirma, who was ultimately to be his victim. It began by a quarrel over land. Then when both were probably a little drunk at a Chikma New Eating festival, they tried to shoot each other with arrows, but missed their aim. It was only after three years that at last the theft of a pumpkin aroused Vetti Hirma to such a state of revengeful anger that he beat his enemy to death.

Outraged family pride that craved revenge, desire to eliminate a tiresome suitor, and a chivalrous sense of protectiveness towards a girl were combined in the murder of Muka, the young Siraha of Surnar. He was in love with Kume, the daughter of Poyami Irma and one day in March 1935 he went to Ghatom with a pot of sago palm juice to ask

[1] In 1939, in a Telanga case, the murderer stabbed his victim with an arrow, disembowelled him with a knife, extracted the liver, and bit off a portion of it. But was this for revenge or magic?

[p. 147]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 This dress was in regular use in every village in Metabhum until a year or two ago. At my last visit in March 1934, I was 535 amazed to find that, almost as in obedience to some decree that had gone forth, the youth of the hills had abandoned the rib-dress, the 178 shield and the gaily-coloured head-dress and skirt, sometimes wearing in lieu cheap bazaar singlets and a *dhoti*, retaining, however, the buttock-bells, the songs and the dance-steps. The older men all said that it was a spontaneous decision of the younger generation, decided upon because of the cost of buying the expensive yards of cloth needed for the dress; but this would not account for the abandonment of the shield, which they make themselves, and for which peacock tails are better than cloth streamers. Many have actually thrown away their cloth and shields. But some still think it necessary to hang them up round fresh graves, and I found that all the youths still know how to make them, and were willing to make them in camp. In 1932 a rumour went through all the tribes 203 of Jeypore and spread thence into Bastar that a god had descended 784 on one of the mountains of the Eastern Ghats and commanded all 178 men to give up keeping black poultry and goats, wearing clothes or using umbrellas or blankets with any black in them, and using beads or articles made of aluminium alloy. The message was rapidly bruited abroad, and everywhere villages had '*bohorani*' ceremonies for purifying themselves from disease, and cast out black goats, cocks, hens, umbrellas, blankets, 'waskats', beads, aluminium ornaments and domestic utensils on the village boundary. Mohammedans began to make a good thing out of slaughtering the goats or exporting them. Strenuous propaganda by the State soon stopped this impoverishing rumour, and some of the villagers in the end recovered much of their property from the police, who had been ordered to take charge of it. At the time, the Bison-horn Marias seemed to have been only a little affected and the Hill Marias not at all; possibly this sudden abandonment of the most picturesque features of their dancing costume may be a late repercussion. Such sudden moves amongst Indian primitive tribes are not uncommon; the Gonds of Nagpur and adjacent districts a few years ago suddenly decided to give up keeping poultry and pigs as a measure of social uplift.

292 The *taghali* or bark cloak used by the Hill Maria for warmth or, primarily, protection against heavy dew and rain, has already been mentioned as deputizing occasionally for the sleeping-mat. Hutton speaks of the Angami Nagas making 'a large hat of leaves and basket work . . . as well as a rain-coat of plaited grass, the ends of which hang out loose, to

Rain-clothes

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

127 these were not kept at the headquarters of the State, but
121 distributed in the police stations and many of them had been eliminated. But the State Superintendent of Police called in as many aboriginal files as could be found, and again after much sifting I found myself with exactly 50 unselected Bison-horn Maria suicide records. These extended over a period of 10 years.

114 Between 1935 and 1942 I made many tours in this enchanting land among these enchanting people. On the earlier tours I was accompanied by my friend Mr Shamrao Hivale whose amazing sympathy and insight helped me to catch my first vision of Maria culture. Later I had the support of my wife who, being herself a Gond, was able to get quickly in touch with the people and immediately established a friendly atmosphere. Particularly in the later tours I tried to see as many scenes of violence as possible, to talk to released convicts and to discover the general attitude of a village towards any crime that had been committed within its boundaries. In Aranpur I stood beside the still warm ashes of the ritually-cremated clothes of Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged in jail. At Khutepal, I watched Oyami Masa's children playing on the very floor once stained by the blood of his murdered wife. In the forest near Jabeli
[211] I had a clearing made so that I could photograph the carved pillar erected in memory of a famous murderer. In Rewali I was visited by a ferocious-looking youth who had twice stood on trial for his life and had twice preserved it. Here too I talked with Hemla Bakka who killed his wife for infidelity and was now unable to get another. In Doriras I saw the
[764] grave of the murdered Boti which had been desecrated by Ghasia for the sake of the purse of money which had been buried to help the dead man on his journey to the other world. In the same village I visited the home of Kawasi Borga then serving a life sentence, and talked to his fine sons and his sad pathetic wife.

124 Later I spent many hours in the Jagdalpur Jail talking to Maria who were serving terms of life-imprisonment for homicide. Some of them were as informative as the limits of their psychology allowed, for it must always be remembered that aboriginals are not accustomed to discussing those matters which are of special interest to anthropologists. Other

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

241 *Dhusir jâki wâykom sângo* — We will come to press the grain into the bin.
539 *Miya wây n dy jâkiorom sângo.* — Before you came we had pressed the grain.

III. The Muria's Year

221 It is very difficult to give any sort of general time-table, for events vary
196 in their incidence and in their order from place to place and from year to year. Everything depends on the orders of the Gaita and Siraha, and dreams, economic factors and 'inspirations' combine to disturb the course of events. However, the following table may be taken as giving a rough picture of a normal year:

January .. Bhimul Pandum, the festival of the rain-god. Pupul Korta Tindana and Pen Karsita, the New Eating Festival of pulses, also known as Jata Pandum. Chelik go from village to village dancing the Pus Kolang or Chherta. The people reap the til oil-seed.

February .. Kare Pandum, after which the people may cut grass, bamboos and may begin felling trees for their *dippa* and *parka* clearings. The chelik begin collecting wood and grass for the ghotul. The Marhai festivals, great semi-religious commercial fairs, begin now and continue in various places until April.

March .. Irpu Pandum, the festival of the mahua tree, Marka Pandum, the festival of the new mangoes, and Til Khani, the festival of oil-seed, are held about this time. The marriage season begins and continues until May. Boys and girls go out dancing the Chait and Mahua Dandar. The people are busy collecting mahua flowers, tendu leaves and wood.

April .. Wijja Pandum, the seed festival, preceded by a ceremonial hunt. Ceremonies to purify and protect the villages. People begin breaking myrabolams. Hot weather begins. Many marriages everywhere.

May .. Timber spread over *parka* clearings. Local ceremonies to ensure a good harvest and rainfall.

June .. Timber in clearings fired. Rains begin. Ploughing and sowing. Fencing of gardens and repairs to houses, thatching and protection against rain.

July .. Amawas or Hareli festival. Chelik make stilts.

August .. Heavy rain during the month. Tur Korta Tindana or Kurum Pandum, when the first millets are eaten.

September Rains are clearing. At the end of the month is the Korta Pandum, the first eating of the new rice, cucumbers and gourds. On the day after this festival, the chelik break their stilts and pile them on the stone of Dito or Bhimul Pen.

October .. Cheru or Nuka Nordana Pandum, before which the new rice must not be washed. The Dassera festival attracts thousands to Jagdalpur and Bara Dongar, and is celebrated in a few ghotul. Diwali comes a little later:

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

• 221
796

the Muria do not illuminate their houses for it, but tie ears of grain in long strings over their doors. Road work begins, and everybody is busy reaping.

November.. A busy month in the fields. Since September the ghotul have been almost deserted by the chelik, who spend their time in little huts watching the crops. Reaping, thrashing, winnowing and storing grain occupies everyone. From the end of October the motiari have been going out dancing the Diwali and, where this practice is unknown, boys and girls go together for the Hulki dances.

December.. In some villages the Jata Pandum is held in this month. People cut their sarson crops and store them. They collect myrabolams till the end of January.

IV. Cultivation and the Ghotul

883 241 At Padbera and a number of villages in the neighbourhood of Antagarh the ghotul has its own property. The villagers give the chelik a piece of land for cultivation which is known as *chelik-parka*. The boys bring the wood from the neighbouring forest, spread it on the field, burn it and sow the seed. The girls see to the weeding and when the crop is ready all join in the harvest. The girls husk the rice in the ghotul itself and when it is ready give a feast to the village. The following day they offer an egg, red and black powder and liquor to the Kanyang and Rau of the field for the protection of the ghotul.

The chelik and motiari sometimes go to work as a ghotul. Should a party of visitors arrive from another village for a dance and there is no food or liquor for their entertainment, the boys approach one of the wealthier villagers (who of course may have several of his own children in the ghotul) and ask him to advance them rice and pulse, some liquor and a pig, promising they will go to work for him when he needs help in weeding his fields, gathering his harvest or mending a broken embankment. At other times villagers who are in urgent need of help employ the ghotul children and pay them with gifts of grain and pulse. I am told that money is rarely given. Sometimes the boys and girls only receive their food, though this food at least in the evening must be good and should include pork and liquor. When the children receive gifts of grain they save it up, storing it in the house of the leader, till there is enough for a big feast. This is prepared and eaten near the ghotul, or helps to augment the feast at the end of a dancing expedition. The parents are also invited; since the mothers may not go inside the ghotul, the feast is enjoyed outside.

V. The Muria's Food

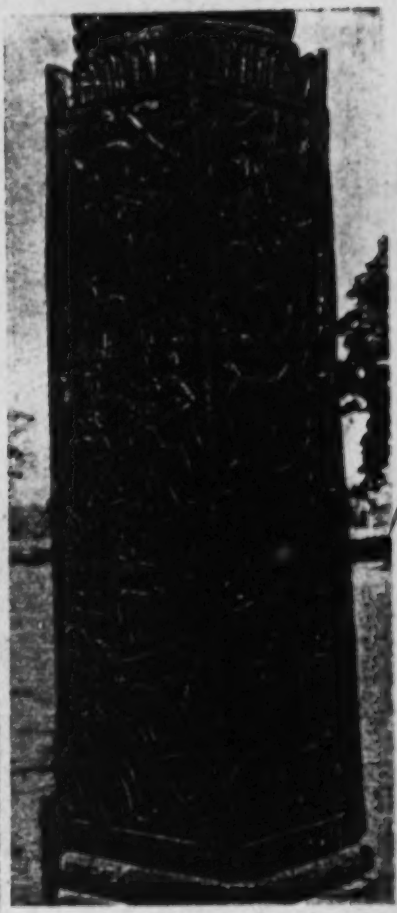
Kare ahār ta pele pahār. If you get enough to eat you can push a mountain aside.—Muria proverb

883 In addition to work in the fields, chelik and motiari are kept busy all day long, in and around their homes. The motiari must fetch water from the well or stream, collect leaves from the jungle for leaf-cups and plates, nurse the babies, clean and cow-dung the buildings, husk rice and grain, help in the cooking, feed goats, pigs and cattle. The boys must fetch firewood from the forest, make string from hemp and bark, prepare the ploughs and carts, keep the buildings in repair, and look after the cattle and other animals.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

221
532

Detail of Machaki Hunga's pillar at Dilmilli



Newly-erected pillar near Chitrakot

[Facing p. 81]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273
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Apparatus for distilling mahua spirit

● 221
532
273

Detail of memorial pillar of Kopa Dhorua at Massenar, showing people serving rice-beer

273
235
415
417

Woman making rice-beer

[FACING p. 96]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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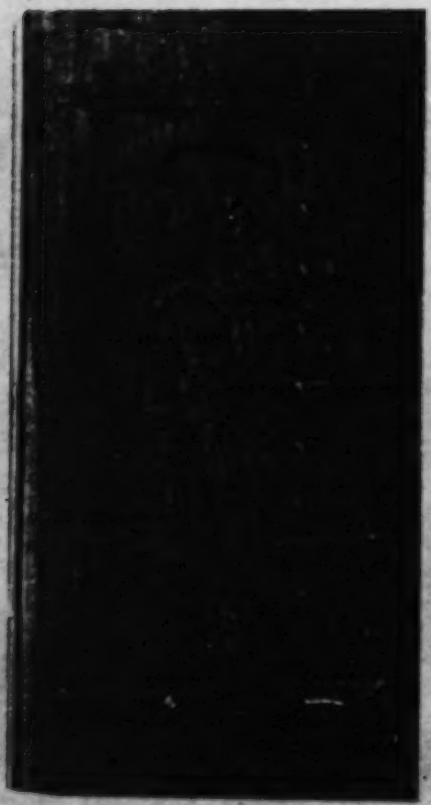
532

A murderer's memorial. Wooden pillar in memory of Oyami Marvi Masa at Jabeli

Detail of Marvi Masa's memorial pillar, showing him as a Siraha sitting on his swing



[Facing p. 176]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER VIII

PROCURING OF OTHER FOOD AND DRINK

'Whatever came across them they must needs kill and eat it ;
They made no distinction. If they saw a jackal they killed
And ate it ; no distinction was observed ; they respected not antelope,
sambhar and the like.
They made no distinction in eating a sow, a quail, a pigeon,
A crow, a kite, an adjutant, a vulture,
A lizard, a frog, a beetle, a cow, a calf, a he- and a she-buffalo,
Rats, bandicoots, squirrels—all these they killed and ate.
So began the Gonds to do. They devoured raw and ripe things.'
(Hislop's version of the Lingo epic of the Gonds.)

A. Food Gathering

FAMINE has never been a problem in Bastar, as the Marias and other tribes have always been able to draw half of their food supplies from the innumerable edible products of the vast forests. The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not ; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department, and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list. At page 124 above, many of the more important forest products collected and garnered were enumerated. *Mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*) is not common in the Abujhmar hills, where consequently little *mahua* spirit is distilled or drunk ; where it does occur, the Hill Marias collect its flowers and fruit as eagerly as cultivators throughout India. It is common in the Bison-horn country. The women and children gather the fallen flowers in the mornings. It is dried in the sun, and then stored in bamboo wicker baskets ; it keeps a long time. It is used to flavour *pej* and *guto*, or roasted. Oil is pressed in the plains from the fruit. Tamarind trees are not really wild, but were originally planted around village sites ; the fruit is carefully gathered from all the unoccupied village sites. The fruits of the *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*) and *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) are two of the main sources of food supply. They collect also fruit of the *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*) and *aonla* (*Phyllanthus emblica*). Wild mangoes are common, and they are learning to cultivate the tree ; they store whole fruit, dried pulp, and kernels whole or crushed. In the south of the State the toddy palm (*Borassus flabelliformis*) is the mainstay of the economic life of the people, but

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

it is not much used among Bison-horn and Hill Marias in comparison to the *salphi* or sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*) which is found wild and is extensively propagated. When the *salphi*, after much cutting of the spadix for the intoxicating sap, ceases to flower, the interior of the stem yields a fibrous pith. This the Hill Maria women (probably the Bison-horn also) pound on a large flat stone with a heavy oval pebble held in their right hand, to separate pith from fibre. The resultant pith 'grain' looks like lime, and is steamed into cakes; an earthenware pot has a little water poured into it, and over the water bamboo sticks are criss-crossed and covered with *siari* leaves as a platform for the pith to be steamed; no salt or sugar is added.

Actually most of the fruit already mentioned is collected by women and children; the men, of course, deal with the toddy and sago palm sap, and their methods will be described in the section on drinking and intoxicants. The men collect those forest products which they need for basketry or rope making, or in finding which there is an element of the chase. They like to roam about with their bows and arrows while their women are busy gathering fruit.

The women gather also various leaves, flowers and seeds as vegetables. They use the young green leaves and the seeds of the sal (*Shorea robusta*); the flowers of the *giril marra* shrub (*Indigofera arborea*); the young curled fronds of bracken in the Abujhmar hills, possibly also on the Bailadila mountains, where, too, it is common (the Hill Marias call it *handa jabba* and the Bison-horn *anda koser*); the seeds of the marking nut tree (*Semecarpus anacardium*; *bhelwa*); the young green shoots, pith and seeds of the bamboo; the fruits of the *ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*). The digging of forest roots and yams in the rains is one of the women's chief occupations; there are many varieties, and some are now cultivated. In the early rains a much sought after foods are the *khudrati* or *bora* fungus, and the mushroom. Various wild plants are gathered as vegetables from marsh and river valley, especially the *chiur*, the long thin leaves of which are like small hyacinth leaves, and are a favourite food of wild buffalo and bison. Women and men collect large supplies of *siari* or elephant creeper leaves for use as plates and drinking vessels. *Aki* is the Gondi word for a leaf, and the assonance *aking-waking* is commonly used as covering all produce which the Maria collects from the forest.

In August and September the Bison-horn Maria women spend hours swishing a basket[1] over the tops of certain wild grasses in the fields to collect the seeds, which are eaten like the small hill grains.

[1] Hill Maria women also do this, using little wicker-work shields fastened to bamboo sticks to beat the grass seeds into a basket.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A little later they collect *kapani*, the wild bearded rice common in all old rice fields and fallows and at the edges of standing water, by holding a winnowing-fan in one hand and beating the grain of the standing ripe plants into it with the other; the bearded ears are sometimes plaited into '*sela*' fringes for ornamenting doors of houses at the new-eating festivals.

The men are adept in collecting the honey of various kinds of bees, though sometimes, despite forest rules, too prone to save trouble by felling rather than climbing a fine tree. For this purpose, and for tapping palm trees, they often fasten to the trunks of trees long thick bamboos, cutting the side shoots down to stumps four or five inches long to serve as ladder rungs. Gums are collected from many species of trees, for use as bird-lime or in securing the *kosa* silk whipping of arrow-heads, etc. In Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils the Forest Department has quantities of *tasar* silk cocoons collected by Bison-horn Maria men when, in the rains in the intervals between sowing and reaping their various crops, they go out to the forests in search of such delicacies as red ants' nests, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs. The cocoons are high on sal or *saja* trees; where the climbers cannot reach them they use long bamboo poles with a piece of bamboo fastened at an acute angle at the end to serve as a hook. They get about Rs. 3 a thousand cocoons from the Koshta weavers who employ them; the Hill Maria, however, generally collects only what cocoons he needs for his own purposes. Red ants' nests are cooked, leaves, ants and all, either with *pej* or *gato*, or by themselves and eaten with pulses as a vegetable. They are also a favourite febrifuge; a rough and ready remedy is to shake out the live red ants on to the patient's skull, when the formic acid of their stings is said to reduce the fever; the more elaborate method is to boil the nest, ants and all, and to strain off and use the juice as a febrifuge in small doses; this juice is said to taste sharper than any lime and believed to be invaluable for a long-standing fever. In collecting the palms of the dwarf palms *chhind* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *P. acaulis*, and *buta chhind* (*P. farinifera*) for use for thatching, basketry or making rough cords for binding fences, the men not only collect the small dates or the flowers (according to season) and the edible pith of the *buta chhind*, but also the fat white grub of a certain beetle, which is also found in the stems of the toddy palm and in fresh green monsoon bamboo shoots. This is eaten fried in ghee or oil with a little spice and chillies, and is regarded as a great delicacy; it is sold in the Jagdalpur market for three or four pice, and even high-caste Hindus buy it. When white ants emerge in flying swarms early in the monsoon they collect them after they have shed their wings, or pull the wings

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

off, and eat them raw. The men gather the edible bean-pods of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper when cutting its stems for rope fibre and gathering its leaves for plates, rain hats and shields, but generally light a fire then and there in the forest and roast the beans in the pods, when it is easy to extract them to eat.

B. Hunting and Trapping

The Hill Maria is as omnivorous as all Gonds, and it is difficult to discover what he will not eat if he can get it. But there is little game left in the Abujhmar hills, except where the hills descend to the Indrawati, Gudra and Kotri valleys. The *shikaris par excellence* of Bastar are the Murias of the northern plateaux and the Bison-horn Marias of the *parganas* around Barsur and the Indrawati valley, where there is still fairly plentiful game. The Hill Maria is therefore not an expert beater, though twenty-four hours spent by any would-be sportsman in Kutru territory in training Hill Marias to beat will be amply rewarded, not only by the quick way in which they learn, even if taught only by pantomime, but by the fun and humour with which they will take their lesson. They have memories of hunting tiger, panther, bison, buffalo, deer of all kinds, and even, very shadowy, of rhinoceros.[1] But the appearance in the hills of one or two tiger after the 1931 census for the first time within human memory was interpreted as a sign of divine displeasure, and all the census house numbers painted by the enumerators on little squares of wood prepared *ad hoc* by the Marias and preserved in many houses for each census from 1911 onwards were collected together and burnt on the village boundaries to placate the Departed. Outside Tondawada village a panther was shot by the village lads with arrows thirty years or more ago; three small stone menhirs about twenty inches high were driven then into the ground at the spots where its head, the root and the tip of its tail had lain when it fell dead; the feat is still spoken of as a deed of prowess. Orcha is the only Hill Maria village, so far as I am aware, that follows the practice of the spring hunt before sowing the crops, which is so marked and important a feature of tribal life among the Bison-horn Marias, the Parjas and Bhattras; but the Orcha people seem to have copied the hunt from the Bison-horn Marias without its religious significance; there is no sprinkling of blood on the first seeds sown, no ceremony before and after the hunt, women take no part in the proceedings to drive unwilling men out to the hunt, and no portion of the slain quarry is offered to the clan-god, the

Hill Marias

[1] Compare *Gazetteer*, p. 32. The rhinoceros tradition still existed in 1928.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

222
481

Plate XI

The fermented sap of the toago-palm is a favourite drink

[p. 44 (2)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brushwood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live. There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol. 883

> Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
> At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

A broom is 'the thing that licks quickly and then falls flat'; a leaf-plate is 'the little tank full of thorns' or 'the boy that morning and evening gives a share to all'; a pot of curds hawked round the village is described as 'the white cock going from house to house'.

But the main interest of chelik and motiari—for after all they are still only boys and girls—is in food. *'Bhaio bihān handiya ma dhyān.* As soon as morning comes, his mind is in the cooking-pot.' Of things to eat the Muria have a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the State has not yet interfered with their right to natural roots, fruit and leaves—they may take what they want so long as they do no damage. 262

As Grigson says of the Maria: 'The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list.'[1] I do not propose to give such a list here; but I will briefly mention the things that chelik and motiari like best. Meat and fish probably stand first in popularity—I will describe them later.

FIG. 5. Unpal rice husker. Length 5'8"

Among fruit trees, the mahua is supreme. When the flowers begin to fall, the cattle are kept tied up until the women and children have gathered them. They spread them in bright yellow patches swiftly turning brown on rocks, before their houses, in specially-made enclosures. When dry enough, the flowers are beaten with heavy sticks, sometimes with the wooden doors of a pigsty. The pulp is made into chutney with dried khamer fruit and tamarind kernels, and eaten with rice or gruel. The oil is used for cooking and lighting. The flowers are stored in baskets, and make one of the most eagerly demanded gifts when the chelik make a dance tour of a village. 262 252 222 [373] 262 222 [563]

Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with chilli and salt to the chelik.

Acura fruit is liked, and there are many riddles about it. 'A green pigeon came from Porrobbum and laid its eggs on a leaf.' 'The white bird hides its eggs under its wings.' Other popular fruits are those of the thorny bhoir—'Mother bites, but daughter invites'; the kurin—'The little sparrow's liver is sweet'; the sinna, the char, the jamun and the tamarind. Tendu fruit is picked while still unripe and put in kodon chaff to mature. Sometimes it is buried in the ground and a fire is lit above it. When ripe, it is eaten raw. Wild figs are eaten ripe or dried and ground up with flour. [524] [251]

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 151.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In
● 222 the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs
252 before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and
stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs,
[278] regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

762 The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith
226 that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands
524 and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams; a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

262 Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries'
when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

262 Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja
843 Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[171] [1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. 'The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Saiwa in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[171] [2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 10ff.

[278] [3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

with wood and fired; pots are placed in rows upon them. The motiari husk and clean the rice, and make the leaf-cups and plates, but the boys do the actual cooking. When the rice is ready it is tipped out in a great pile on bamboo mats. A pig, which is killed by being beaten on the head with a rice husker, is roasted in the fire till its hair is burnt off; it is skinned and cleaned. Flesh, bones and skin are cut up into little squares of equal size—an important matter, for it is essential that everyone should receive exactly the same amount. These pieces are fried in mahua oil, and put into large earthen pots with rice-water, salt, haldi and chilli and boiled till ready. Fish is prepared in much the same way, except that usually something sour is added to flavour it. Fowls are cooked in leaf-cups. The intestines are squeezed out, and the whole chicken with head and feet is roasted with a little salt. Eggs are wrapped in leaves and baked in the fire. Mongoose flesh is roasted and spiced with dried mangoes. Crocodile is boiled.

At the ghotul feasts and marriages I have attended everyone sits round in a big circle, and the boys (sometimes assisted by a few motiari) serve the food. The bits of meat are carefully counted out into leaf-cups and distributed. Rice is served from baskets or winnowing-fans direct onto leaf-plates.

At home, the family sits round the pot of jawa, which is taken straight off the fire and placed in the middle of the floor. Each has a little chutney on a leaf in front of him and an empty leaf-cup. The mother dips a gourd into the pot and helps the little children; then each member of the family helps himself. There is no idea that men should eat before women or elders before the children.

Doctors say that the Muria's food lacks fat and protein and criticize them for not taking more milk, ghee and vegetable. No doubt the Muria, like other people, would eat more of these things if they could get them. But there is no doubt that they do not like milk, and rarely take it themselves or give it to their children.

Famine is not common in Bastar, for the people can fall back on the almost limitless products of the forests. But it has been known, and a sombre song preserves its memory.

Nimāre weke dāntona rawnāni	Vulture, whither away, vulture?
Dori bhumi dāntona dāda le	I am going towards the west, brother,
Bhumi dukār dukār roy dāda le	For the day of want has dawned.
Bhumi te dukār arit roy dāda le	The famine is over all the world
Hikāt huro bhaiso roy dāda le	Black, black are the buffaloes,
Sarpane bhaiso arit roy dāda le	And all of them have died, brother.
Podor pungār doyo roy dāda le	White as cotton flowers are the cows,
Sarpane doyo artu roy dāda le	And all of them have fallen in summer.
Puhle dhelāt rawnāl roy dāda le	On the broken clod the vulture,
Wetle marāte kawrāl roy dāda le	On the withered tree the crow,
Kawar woher inta roy dāda le	The crow is cawing, brother.
Raiyaha reyon kawrāl roy dāda le	It is ready to fly down.

VI. Honey

Honey was discovered by a Maria named Waddai who also gave his name to the whole succession of Waddai diviners. 'Waddai went one day to a medium, with a gift of char nuts, seeking help for his sick son. On the way he met a monkey which had been outcasted for falling while jumping from a tree and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honey-comb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitka ondār* and the *lokti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognize four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mohu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sattapuri mohu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nikiti mohu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1919), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'In a golden box bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 430.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *sagrâw*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats.

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongra* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hâyna mânjhi*).

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachâr*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

FIG. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

224 539

Māligondi tupak tun bor payal āndur ho?	Who holds the Maligondi gun?
Māligondi tupak tun singāl payal āndur.	Singal holds the Maligondi gun.
Adu bādu patār tun singāl weli āndur ho.	Singal took the gun to the jungle.
Ikla hur dulki patār singāl weli āndur ho.	Singal went to hunt by a spring.
Ghotiya mara daram te bodāl hunjil māta ho.	He found a bison asleep by a ghotiya tree.
Barbara hursi manji singāl udil āndur ho.	Seeing it Singal prepared to fire.
Jirra barga tiksi tun singāl mānde kindur ho.	Singal placed the support for his aim.
Saw sawa hursi manjil singāl dābe kindur ho	Singal fired the gun with care.
Ting tohli tohli lariyo bodāl mutil ānd ho.	By that shot was the bison killed.
Ringri kāpa linga laya gorkā-wātil ānd ho.	Linga boy stood like a small brinjal ready to kill it.

4

Are tina nāmur nāna re nāna nāmur nāna na ho tina nāmur O nāna nāmur nāho, tina nāmur nānāho tina nāmur na. Hurre, hurre, hurre

Ho bhālu keto dera re ho kahān okar dera.	Where is the bear's home, where can it be?
Are bhālu keto dera re ho jhāpi khāle dera.	Under the bushes the bear has its home.
Achchha okar khāna pina, achchha okar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Are kodri keto dera re ho, kahān okar dera.	Where is the deer's home, where can it be?
Kodri ke dera re ho gudri upar dera.	On the low hills the deer has its home.
Achchha okar khāna pina, achchha okar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Hurre, hurre, hurre.	

IX. Falconry

223 While cock-fighting is rare in the east and common to the west, hunting with a hawk is known all over eastern Kondagaon, but is rare among the Jhoria Muria and in the west.

Muria boys get the hawks when they are very young and train them carefully. They teach them to catch small chicks, keep mice for them in little bamboo cages and train them by withholding food and then rewarding them with morsels of frog and lizard. They 'hood' them by closing their eyes with feathers thrust through the lids. When mature the birds are able to catch quail, partridge, snipe and sparrows, though it is said that they are not able to kill a wood-pigeon.

A hawk is kept in the verandah of the house perched on a specially made pole round which an old bit of fishing-net is wrapped. It is tied by an ingenious

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

223 arrangement of strings attached to a wooden rod called the *pawala* which keeps them from tangling. This is illustrated in Fig. 11. When a boy is going to take the hawk to hunt, he wears a goatskin finger-glove to protect his hand from being scratched by the claws. He hangs round his neck a little bamboo fish-basket containing frogs and lizards. This is carefully closed with a cloth tied round the mouth. He goes with the hawk sitting either on his hand or on his head, and with his free hand he holds the bough of a tree to beat the undergrowth for birds. Generally two or three boys go out together and when they have started any game they release the hawk from the slip-knot by which it has been tied and throw it into the air with the right hand from behind the shoulder. The hawk flutters wildly for a moment and then darts for its prey. When it catches anything, it sits down perfectly still on the ground. The boys run after it and recover it without difficulty. On hunting days the hawk is kept hungry and is only rewarded after it has made a kill.

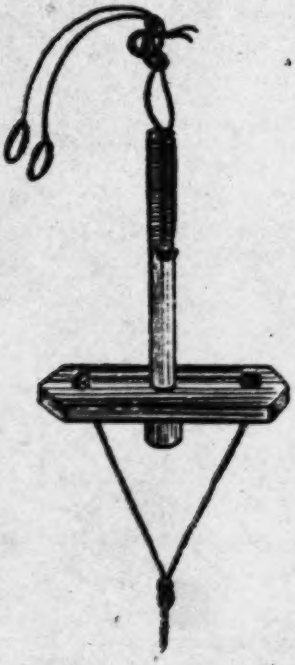


FIG. 11. Elaborate arrangement of strings and a wooden peg attached to the leg of a falcon, intended to prevent the strings from tangling
Length of upright rod 3½"

[524]

'A riddle—' He makes a snare for others, but his own feet are caught'—refers to the hovering hawk which appears to have been caught in an invisible snare. There is a saying that an idle man who does no work yet always turns up punctually for food is like 'the vulture who finds it easy enough to eat a dead bullock and the hawk who can always catch a little bird'.

The following Ghotul Pata about Lingo's son, Netturgundi, throws an interesting light on traditional Muria falconry:[1]

539
223

The Song of Netturgundi

Who was that Raja? He was Netturgundi.
He had a hawk. He was wondering what to do.
He took the hawk to hunt; here and there he went.
The hawk sat on his head. He took his gold and silver stick.
He slung the fish-basket behind his back.
So, with his hawk on his head, the Raja went to hunt.

To the Field of the Frogs the Raja took the hawk.
There he hunted, there he got nothing.
He thought 'Now where shall I go?' and went to the Fallow Field.
'I will hunt there; some animals are grazing there.

[1] A hawk plays an important part in the Pardhan tale of Mara Kshattri. Its body was golden and it was fed on ghee and sweets. *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 70ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

223
231

Plate XIV

The falconer

[p. 52 (R)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

many of the places where game of all kinds was plentiful in his father's time. Every Maria has his bow and arrow, the population has multiplied, and miles of jungle have been beaten annually for game in the great spring hunts. Wild buffalo and bison had been so reduced in numbers that they were declared protected thirty years ago, and heavy fines have been imposed for shooting them. The supply of bison-horns is thus not equal to the demand, and the head-dress is therefore a highly prized hereditary possession. No one should try to buy them from their owners; if a specimen is needed, the collector should provide the horns and other materials and see it made up for him. Bison-horns being now rare, and obtainable only from a bison found dead or by purchase from the State Forest Department, various substitutes are being used, such as domestic bullocks' or small buffaloes' horns, wild boars' tushes, the long beaks of the hornbill, and, occasionally, the antlers of the spotted deer (*Cervus axis*). The most interesting substitutes are brass patterned horns, of the shape and size of bison-horns, made by the *cire-perdue* process by the local Gharwa (Ghasia) brass workers.

Except occasional dancing anklets of hollow iron with pebbles inside, the Bison-horn Maria wears no special dancing dress; in fact he girds up his loin-cloth higher than usual and generally discards his singlet or '*waskat*', so as to leave himself as free as possible for his antics, while the heavy drum that he carries slung from his right shoulder across his abdomen necessitates as much freedom as possible.

The women wear no special dancing dress, but put on every available ornament, and carry in their right hands *tirdudi* or bamboo staves to which are fastened bunches of iron pellet-bells, shaped something like short but plump pea-pods, which they clash in time with the drums as they dance by striking their butts on the ground. Similar bells sometimes adorn the drum-stick with which the left hand of the male dancer beats the cowskin membrane at the left end of his drum.

Weapons and tools

The universal *sine qua non* of the Hill Marias is the knife or *kasyaq* carried tucked into the loin-cloth, with or without a wooden sheath. Of this, as of all weapons and tools used by Hill or Bison-horn Marias, it has to be remembered that they are not always made by blacksmiths working exclusively for Marias, but often by blacksmiths in or near the bazaar villages of the plains who cater for Murias, Halbas and other tribes also. The most distinctive types are possibly, in the case of the Hill Marias, those made by the few blacksmiths living in their hills; but there are only slight differences, often of mere

[see cat. 116 p. 419]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

412 when the old men of to-day were young it was the decorated axe carried by all Hill Maria men dancers), is similar to the *pharsi* 535 battle-axe of the plains tribes. The blade is crescent-shaped, the concave being the cutting edge, and the convex outer edge being socketed in the centre to receive the haft, which fits in the same vertical plane as the cutting edge. I have seen one of these axes measuring 41 cm. between the horns of the crescent.

411 The Hill Marias use small throwing spears made in one piece of iron, of the same type as the much larger solid spears used by the Murias of Amabera and north Kondagaon. They have leaf-shaped but very long blades, shafts with a knob counterpoise and, below the knob, spiked butts about a foot long. They are not nowadays very skilled throwers, there being scarcely any game in the hills. The thrower stands at a right incline to his target, and, holding the spear by the point of balance, uses much the same action as the javelin thrower of modern athletics.

411 The Bison-horn Maria uses a long and powerful stabbing spear for killing the big game, including tiger and panther, that his beaters drive into his nets. This is about 8½ to 9 feet (2·6 to 2·8 ●224 metres) long, and consists of an iron head socketed on to a long bamboo shaft. The head consists of a blade about 30 cm. long and 7 cm. wide at the greatest width just above the shank, whence the wings taper with a slight convexity to the point; a shank nearly as long, slightly thinner where it leaves the blade than where it ends in the socket; and a socket about 22 cm. long, generally with one or more iron or brass rings which are forced down over the socket from the shank when the shaft has been inserted, to tighten the grip of the socket on the shaft. The socket below these rings often forms a convenient grip for the right hand, when the huntsman leans on his upright spear with his right upper arm extended horizontally from his elbow, and the elbow bent for the hand to grip the spear above the plane of the crown of the head. When the quarry is netted, the spear has its point lowered to the front pointing slightly downwards, the left arm is bent for the hand to grasp the spear well below the socket, while the right hand grasps it about a foot from the butt-end of the shaft, and the spearman sprints forward and stabs the quarry with a smart two-handed downward thrust.

411 The last weapons to be described are bows and arrows. The Hill Marias call the bow *villu*, and the Bison-horn Marias *ville*; the word, strictly speaking, means the stave only, the cord being *ha'undi* in the former and *panti* in the latter language. The stave is nearly always of bamboo, but the Bison-horn Marias, who generally use more powerful weapons than the hill men, sometimes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

important, for then the *kasyeq-gaita* and, in a minor degree, the secular headman have their hour of glory, and something of the honour that might be paid to real chieftains. The *kasyeq-gaita* as intermediary between the Village Mother and her children sacrifices to her a pig and a cock, and sets before her a basket of new *kutki*, pulses and beans. A feast similar to that before the clan-god follows. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* proceeds to his *udam-garia* or seat-of-honour, next to which may be a smaller seat for the secular headman (*gaita* or *pada*); it is either a long, flat boulder, or a flat stone supported on stone legs, as in Plate XXIII. He wears no insignia, and is to all appearance as naked and poor a Maria as all his villagers. The men seat themselves around in a circle on little stone cromlechs. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* formally announces the programme for the next year, what *penda* slope is to be cultivated, what arrangements are to be made to meet State or zamindari demands for land revenue or labour, and so on; the announcements, it is true, are the results of previous informal village discussions, and not the *kasyeq-gaita's* orders independently conceived by him, but his formal promulgation is needed before they can be brought into effect.

After *Koqsar* they are free to cut grass and bamboos, and to collect forest produce, or to hunt; it is true that in most villages there is little game but hares and field-mice, but a Maria thinks a field-mouse the rarest of delicacies, and will stop any occupation to chase a mouse or dig them out.[1] But the long year is over at last, and till the next sowing, though there is ahead the labour of felling, spreading and firing the wood for the *penda*, taboos are lifted, and there is no fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex. So now is the season of new marriages and of conjugal life in the home, and the seed is sown for the raising of the human crop.

Assessment and payment of land revenue among the Hill Marias

It has been indicated that there are the beginnings of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias. As a matter of fact, several villages have traces of old rice embanked fields. Two things long effectively checked the spread of permanent cultivation. One, before the 1910 rebellion, was the presence of a police station at Kutul, the headquarter village of the Bardal clan and *pargana* in the very heart of the Abujhmar hills. This meant a constant demand from the Kutul police for rice as *bisaha*,[2] and

[1] I had a carefully arranged beat for a family of man-eating tigers at Kutru ruined because the Hill Maria beaters rushed in wild enthusiasm to catch two or three mice disturbed by the beat.

[2] See p. 14 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

222 off, and eat them raw. The men gather the edible bean-pods of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper when cutting its stems for rope fibre and gathering its leaves for plates, rain hats and shields, but generally light a fire then and there in the forest and roast the beans in the pods, when it is easy to extract them to eat.

B. Hunting and Trapping

224 The Hill Maria is as omnivorous as all Gonds, and it is difficult to discover what he will not eat if he can get it. But there is little game left in the Abujhmar hills, except where the hills descend to the Indrawati, Gudra and Kotri valleys. The *shikaris par excellence* of Bastar are the Murias of the northern plateaux and the Bison-horn Marias of the *parganas* around Barsur and the Indrawati valley, where there is still fairly plentiful game. The Hill Maria is therefore not an expert beater, though twenty-four hours spent by any would-be sportsman in Kutru territory in training Hill Marias to beat will be amply rewarded, not only by the quick way in which they learn, even if taught only by pantomime, but by the fun and humour with which they will take their lesson. They have memories of hunting tiger, panther, bison, buffalo, deer of all kinds, and even, very shadowy, of rhinoceros.[1] But the appearance in the hills of one or two tiger after the 1931 census for the first time within human memory was interpreted as a sign of divine displeasure, and all the census house numbers painted by the enumerators on little squares of wood prepared *ad hoc* by the Marias and preserved in many houses for each census from 1911 onwards were collected together and burnt on the village boundaries to placate the Departed. Outside Tondawada village a panther was shot by the village lads with arrows thirty years or more ago; three small stone menhirs about twenty inches high were driven then into the ground at the spots where its head, the root and the tip of its tail had lain when it fell dead; the feat is still spoken of as a deed of prowess. Orcha is the only Hill Maria village, so far as I am aware, that follows the practice of the spring hunt before sowing the crops, which is so marked and important a feature of tribal life among the Bison-horn Marias, the Parjas and Bhattras; but the Orcha people seem to have copied the hunt from the Bison-horn Marias without its religious significance; there is no sprinkling of blood on the first seeds sown, no ceremony before and after the hunt, women take no part in the proceedings to drive unwilling men out to the hunt, and no portion of the slain quarry is offered to the clan-god, the

Hill Marias

[787]

[1] Compare *Gazetteer*, p. 32. The rhinoceros tradition still existed in 1928.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Village Mother or the Departed. Bowmen are posted in advance, and they beat the game up to them. They share and share alike in the bag, no special limb being reserved for first arrow or first spear or anyone.

They all have bows, and arrows of varying sizes and shapes for every kind of living thing, but are not very expert in their use, save in the lower country where game still abounds. There is no bird and no animal that they will not shoot or trap and eat if they can get it.

But in most of their country the only creatures that they can trap are hare, jungle-fowl and pea-fowl. A sure sign of the nearness of a Hill Maria village is the presence of numerous hare-traps (*morsi-guda*) by the side of a path. A small oval of ground is cleared of growth and surrounded either with small boulders or with sticks driven into the ground, and about eighteen inches above it. A passage is left unfenced at each narrow end of the oval wide enough for a hare to enter by one and go out by the other without turning round. The trapper urinates in the oval, and it is a considerate act for any passer-by to do so; in some villages a common urinal pot is kept by the dormitory for use at night, and the urine is divided in the morning between the hare-trappers. The ground inside the oval is soon impregnated by the salt, and hares begin, therefore, to frequent it. When this is known from the droppings which they leave there, the inner passage is blocked up with sticks or boulders, and behind it a bamboo is fixed in the ground to serve as a spring. Two strings are tied to the top of the bamboo, one for the release trigger of the trap, and the other passed through a hollow bamboo tube four or five inches long, to end in a running noose. The release-trigger is a length of thin bamboo stick which is laid more or less horizontally across the oval, one end resting lightly against the inside of one wall of the trap, and the other placed under the 'tap' of a bamboo stick fastened in the ground by the opposite wall of the trap; the 'tap' is a short length of stick branching downwards from the main stick. The tap stick is called *dim-kola*.[1] The noose is looped over the entrance to the trap, the bamboo tube being hung on one of the wall sticks or rested on one of the boulders. The hare enters through the noose to get his salt, dislodges the release trigger from the side of the wall opposite the tap stick, and so releases the spring. As this flies up, the bamboo tube slides down the other string towards the noose and helps to tighten it around the hare.

Pitfalls covered lightly with earth and leaves on criss-crossed sticks, and with spears or bamboo spikes planted in the bottom,

[1] *Dim* means penis.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

224 are made in game paths for deer. A form of trap made by Hill Marias, but commoner among Jhoria Murias and Bison-horn Marias, is the *bewar*; the *penda* or *dippa* plot is surrounded by a high fence or stockade, called *bewar* in Halbi and *ganao* by Murias and Marias. A space wide enough for a sambhar or two to enter is left in one wall of the enclosure, and this is cleared of all growth, swept clean daily, and sometimes spread with sand; this is called the 'road' (*sarak*). At another point in the fence, generally the corner remotest from the 'road', they leave a narrow exit passage, 6 or 7 feet long and 1½ feet wide at ground level. The whole floor of this passage is dug out to a depth of 6 feet, and spears and sharpened bamboo stakes are planted in the bottom. The sides of the passage are walled with slanting poles, the top of which is 7 or 8 feet in vertical distance from the ground level; these lean on vertical posts about 4 feet high, and have horizontal pole struts lashed on both sides by *siari* thongs; the passage is thus 1½ feet wide at ground level and 4½ feet wide at the top of the walls. At ground level, tufts of grass are fastened under the bottoms of the slanting walls to form fringes meeting in the centre of the trench and concealing its existence. This passage and trench are called *korrpanch* in Gondi and *onkakodra* or *kalkodra* in Halbi. At dawn the cultivators creep up to the 'road', and if there are any deer-tracks in the sand they make all the noise they can, and the deer, if still inside the fence, dash for the trenched passage, and fall through the grass floor into the spiked trench.

The illustration opposite shows a panther trap erected at Handawada in 1934 to catch a small panther that had been carrying off village poultry. Between a double row of thick bamboo stockading standing from 50 to 53 inches above the ground and roughly lashed together about 32 inches above the ground, with lengths of split bamboo twisted round every fourth or fifth bamboo, were two fall beams weighted in the middle with heavy stones, and a little over 18 feet long, called *kalk-panj*. The stockading was strengthened by boulders piled around its base. The farther end of the *kalk-panj* beams rested on the ground and the front end was raised about 20 inches above the mouth of the stockading by a cross-beam of timber 7½ feet long called *adam-guryu*. The farther end of this cross-beam itself rested on the ground beyond the off side of the mouth of the stockading, whence it slanted upwards at an angle of 30 degrees between the second and third posts of the stockading walls, resting 19 inches above the ground on a horizontal bamboo pole 34 inches long called *mirpos-kola*. The *mirpos-kola* ran along and parallel to the near wall of the stockading, with its centre resting in a fork half-way up a post planted in the ground, the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

mirpos-rai. The *adam-guryu* cross-beam rested on the front end of the *mirpos-kola* bamboo; to the back end was tied a piece of *siari* twine about 9 inches long with a short stick at the end to serve as a release-trigger. As in the hare-trap, one end of this trigger was held vertically under the 'tap' of a bamboo *dim-kola*, while the other end was held from escaping inwards from under the 'tap' by being thrust outwards by the near end of a piece of bamboo laid as a bait-stick across the floor of the trap; the off end of the bait-stick was fixed against the inside off wall of the stockading. The *dim-kola* tap-stick was 12 inches from top to ground, into which it

224

FIGURE 8
(Drawn by Mrs. A. M. Boyes)

was firmly driven outside the near wall of the stockading and between the stockading and the retaining boulders; the 'tap' was about 4 inches above the ground-level. The ground was slotted across the mouth of the stockading from the point where the *adam-guryu* cross-beam rested on the ground, so that that beam, when released, might fall into the slot. The bait-stick and the floor of the trap below it were baited with very 'high' dead mice and their guts; the Marias evidently believed that panthers shared their own partiality for these delicacies. If any animal had put his head inside the stockading and touched the bait, he would have been bound to dislodge the bait-stick. This would have deprived the lower end of the trigger of its support; the upper end, deprived of the resistance of the lower end against the bait-stick, would have

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

sprung free of the ' tap ' of the *dim-kola* and so released the back end of the *mirpos-kola*, the front end of which would have given way beneath the weight of the *adam-guryu* cross-beam and brought the stone-weighted *kalk-panj* fall beams crashing down on to the animal, while the *adam-guryu* fell into the slot prepared for it in the ground. The trap had been set for six weeks with no result, and they had not tried making a trap of this kind for years. It looked too fragile for any but a very small panther ; the bait-stick was barely 2½ feet from the mouth of the trap ; and the fall even at the mouth was only 20 inches. Kalmu Boda, the expert *shikari* who is *pargana* headman of the Bison-horn villages around Barsur, was openly scornful.

Snares and springes for pea-fowl, jungle-fowl and snipe, and bird-lime for other birds, with occasional nets for birds or deer complete the Hill Maria's hunting equipment. I have not seen him using nets ; the villages where most nets are to be seen are those near the Bison-horn country, and their users presumably copy Bison-horn methods.

Bison-horn Maria hunting

In the most advanced and thickest populated parts of the Bison-horn Maria country, such as the Paknar, Katakalian and Kuakonda tracts, it is difficult to find any wild creature except birds and insects. In Hindu India the monkey is always present, being sacred and so free to devour anyone's crops. The Maria eats monkey as readily as any other animal, and the monkey long ago decided to avoid his lands. At my camp at Katakalian there was a sudden shout and dozens of Marias left me to rush at a tree on which someone had seen a luckless flying squirrel (*Pteromys petaurista*). Even hares and rats are said to be less common here than elsewhere. Like Hill Marias, Bison-horn Marias spend hours digging out field rats and mice, carefully wrapping each victim in grass before carrying them home in glee to roast them whole skewered on bamboo spits, singeing off the fur. They sell and buy rat meat in the markets, either raw, or in little jerked squares on bamboo spits ; but that they are getting sensitive to ridicule on this account is shown by the fact that the buyer must ask for ' earth-roots ', not rats or mice. Frogs are another delicacy, also spitted and roast. Python, *daman* and non-poisonous snakes are eagerly sought after ; for ordinary eating they skin, slice and fillet the snake and stew it with spices, when they say it tastes midway between fish and chicken. Small portions of python separately cooked are regarded as a valuable cure for ' pot-belly '.

The great round of ritual vernal hunts preceding sowing have been the chief cause of the extermination of game. The religious

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison horn Maria

aspect of these will be explained in a later chapter. But for these *parad* (Halbi) or *weta* (Bison-horn Maria) whole villages or *parganas* used to turn out all their able-bodied males, and beat over a stretch of jungle ten miles long and a mile wide into nets with spearmen standing ready behind them to slay every animal that escaped the arrows of the beaters, who often fired the forest grasses as they went. Stops were put out along the flanks, and the beating was expert. It is not unnatural that game was rapidly exterminated. For some years they attempted to come in large *weta* parties to the well-stocked jungles in the Muria country of the northern plateau; 500 bowmen and spearmen from Chhitapur and Killepal *parganas* were stopped in 1929 by the Bhanpuri police from raiding the Amraoti Forest Reserve in Kondagaon tahsil, a sportsman's paradise full of buffalo, bison, barasing and all the deer of Central India. They now know that they must confine their *weta* to their own *pargana*, but they feel this to be a hardship. In the Kuakonda *pargana* they have had perforce, as there is no game left, to give up the *Jur-weta*, the hunt in which the whole *pargana* joined a week after the chief village hunt, the *Wijja-weta* or Seed-Hunt. At Killepal in 1930 they said that for some years they had secured no game except a hare in the *Wijja-weta*, though they had gone out for it; in a little while in such regions the ceremonial hunts will end, except the *Kare-weta* or Grass Hunt, which precedes the *Kare Pandum* or Grass-cutting Festival some time before the *Wijja-weta*, and in which they beat the fields for hares, rats and quail.

Where there is still ample game, they hold the *weta* as of old, if perhaps on a smaller scale, with the *Jur-weta* becoming a thing of the past. Kalmu Boda, the *pargana* headman of Barsur *pargana*, and the Bison-horn Marias of the *pargana*, especially those of Boda's village of Pharaspal and the surrounding villages, have the hereditary reputation of being the most skilful netters of tiger and other game in the State, and for many years the State authorities have requisitioned their willing help in getting rid of man-eating tigers in northern Bastar. They hunt in this way for sheer sport, not merely as part of the ritual round of the year. In May 1932, I was a guest with others at a shoot arranged by my successor at Koilibera in North Antagarh to get rid of some troublesome man-eaters; and, to assist, Kalmu Boda had marched over 100 miles from Pharaspal with 140 Bison-horn netmen. As it was essential to get rid of the pests, we could not, unfortunately let Boda organize the beats as he would have done if left to himself; a line of guns in the usual *machans* was posted in front, but Boda posted his nets and men behind them. The nets are arranged in a line about five feet above the ground on bamboo props, and secured at intervals to trees;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison horn Maria

224 they must be loose enough to fall on any animal driven into them by the beaters and entangle it. Some twenty paces behind the nets the Marias make little shelters of leaves, about fifteen yards apart, carefully camouflaged from the front, and in these shelters groups of four or five spearmen stand motionless. They do not move till an animal is clearly entangled in the net, but then there is a rush of men to have the honour of the first spear. The first man stabs and holds the animal down with his spear, while the others blood their spears. He gets as his portion the off hind leg from buttock to hough, the headman gets the saddle, and the *waddai* or clan-priest the liver, the portion usually given to the Departed. At Koilibera I saw deer, four-horned antelope and a panther netted in this way and duly dispatched. On the last day a tiger, shot at but missed twice from the *machans* in front, hurled itself at full gallop into the net twenty yards to the right front of the shelter where I was standing with a group of spearmen. It fell headlong, and the net fell on to it according to rule; but unfortunately at that point the rope meshes were old and brittle, and the ground rocky and grassless; the tiger's weight and speed smashed the retaining rope and burst a hole through the net. There was a brief vision of a mighty forearm sweeping aside the encumbrance, and the tiger was free; he rushed roaring by the side of the next clump of spearmen, so close that they could have touched him. Wisely all stood stock still from the moment when the tiger entered the net till it had passed them; but then one of the guns from a back *machan* not so wisely fired over the heads of the line of spearmen. Whether he hit the tiger or not, he enraged it, and it swung round to charge. Those of us on the ground with rifles could not fire at first because the tiger was not clear of the line of spearmen; but a rain of rather wild bullets, one of which broke the tiger's near forearm, checked him, and Kalmu Boda gave it the *coup de grâce* (possibly saving more than one life) by hitting it in the neck with a contractile bullet fired from an ancient twelve-bore gun, rusty and unoiled, with barrels patched with rough iron bands and held together with wire, and as loose in the breech and stock as a gun could be. The bullet killed the tiger outright. Boda had missed twice and misfired once before the final shot. The Murias and Marias present drummed the tiger back to camp with their usual anapaestic rhythm, and the Marias broke into a dance, advancing and retreating before the dead tiger to the same anapaestic drumbeats.

The Bison-horn Maria is an adept at nets and snares of all kinds and sizes for all manner of game. Kalmu Boda has recipes for poisoning tiger and other game. For poisoning arrows they use occasionally the crushed seeds of the *Abrus precatorius* shrub;

411
278

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia neriifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Pigs

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*merrsheng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charhal padi* and *kural padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Korr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

Poultry

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar
[2] See pp. 103 and 130.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandum* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandum*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Neniŏr new-eating feast.

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue.

Dogs and cats Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Darra, darra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bámboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *konda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralur are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasnar to Bhamragarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

heap offers an egg and a tooth-stick (*datun*), sometimes also a miniature bow and arrow; he then takes up each tooth-stick in turn, splits it and throws down the split halves to test the omens in the way already described, after praying with folded hands to the Forest-maidens for success in the hunt and protection from wild beasts. Then he takes an arrow off the altar, and, holding it by the shaft just above the feathering, cuts the top of each egg with the sharp edge of the arrow-head.

The omens having thus been taken, and the bows and arrows of the altar, if any, reclaimed by their owners, all the men go off with their weapons in the *weta* ritual hunt to beat the forest for game. The women appear with pots full of cow-dung and water, into which they dip sprays of leaf and shower the foul water with fouler abuses on any laggards. If any animal is slain, the shedding of much blood on the ground is regarded as foreshadowing plentiful rainfall and a rich harvest; on the spot where it falls they cut little bits off the tips of its ears, nose, tongue, feet and tail, place each bit on a separate *saja* leaf on the ground in the name of the Forest-maidens or of Karenga Deo, and pray for a continuance of this good fortune. At the end of the hunt they take the carcasses of the animals back to the *mahua* bough erected in the name of the Village Mother in the *kadri-bera* field, and leave them there. They then go home for supper.

Towards midnight each man returns to the *kadri-bera* with his bow and arrows, a small packet of *kutki* and other grain seeds wrapped up in leaves, a little *mahua* liquor and a white cock; a pig is also brought for all the villagers. Some villages do not expect each man to bring a cock, but purchase a number of cocks by *sari-bori* subscription. The men hand over the packets of seed to the *perma*, who piles them on the ground in front of the *mahua* bough and places his sacrificial knife beside them. He then prostrates himself before the *mahua* bough and prays to the Village Mother for good and timely rain and bumper crops. He then puts each cock and the pig through the *tokana* rice-eating test, and sacrifices them one by one, cutting their heads off from the throat upwards, piling the heads all together near the *mahua* bough, and holding each body over the pile of seed-packets and the *mahua* bough to soak them well with blood; he then throws the bodies aside. Next he breaks with his knife in the Mother's name the egg which he had set up in the morning, and pours some *mahua* spirit on the ground before the *mahua* bough. The *perma* and the men of his family then roast and eat the heads of the cocks and the pig, and each other family the body of the cock contributed by it; when cocks have been bought by subscription, the *perma* slices

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
301
302
224

Verrier Elwin

Muchaki Pandu, Bison-horn Maria of Gogonda with hunting-horn

Bison-horn Maria of Lakhopal

142
301
304

Verrier Elwin

[End Plate B]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *tarank tarank tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tila*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tila de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking puda, peking puda* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligumdi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dassera festival in Jagdalpur.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *angrâw*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats.

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongara* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hâyna mânjhi*).

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachâr*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

Fig. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

224 796 787 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonra rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 796 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khamma Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every [782] three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate.

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 841 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt. As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Bezur, Dansa Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sambhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered.

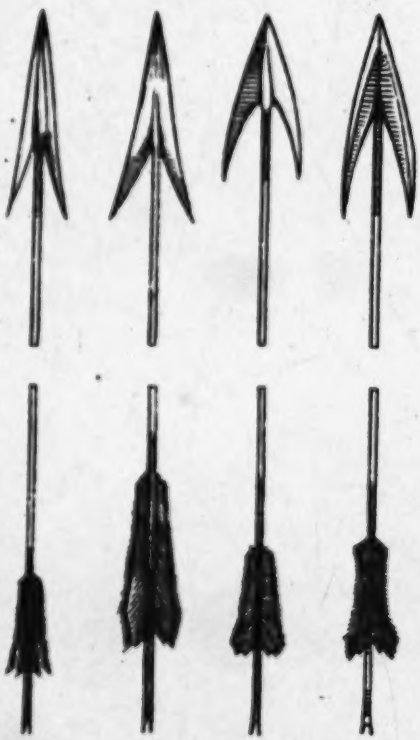


FIG. 10. ARROWS AND ARROW-HEADS
Length 2' 5"

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chaniyagaon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection.

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul.

I

Chikhal mälli kariya mäma khärigär khärigär shikäri shikäri!
Tupak säja kiwa mäma.
Mälli gondi tupäk mäma.

Gopär kewar tova mäma.

O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!
Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
The name of the gun is Maligondi, uncle shikari.
Make gunpowder with gum from the mode tree, uncle shikari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

539
224

Tumór mara jhāka māma.
The machan is on the ebony tree, uncle shikari.

Jhāka sāje kimu māma.
Make the machan there, uncle shikari.

Ghotiya kāya goli māma.
Make bullets like ghotiya fruit, uncle shikari.

Jhāḥą udi dākat māma.
We will go and sit on the machan, uncle shikari.

Nāwa suda waiki bāncha.
You must come with me, nephew shikari.

Wāteh icha waiki bāncha.
If you are ready, come with me, nephew shikari.

Māoku wāteh pehchhāt bāncha.
When the sambhar comes we will shoot it, nephew shikari.

Hāle mara māri bāncha.
On the hill of sal trees, nephew shikari.

Akey khojin oyhāt bāṇcha.
We will go to search there, nephew shikari.

2

Kainākе gulel dai kainākе dori wo dai sona kainākе gunel?
What is the *gulel* made of, what is the rope, mother?

Bāns ke to gulel bābu san sutri doriga bābu.
The *gulel* is made of bamboo, and the rope of hemp, my son.

Kainākе ghora dai kaịnākе phata wo dai?
What is the horse made of, and what is the bridle, mother?

Bans ke to ghora bābu sut ke to phata bābu.
The horse is made of bamboo, the bridle of thread, my son.

Kainākе dhuti dai hainākе ke gulla?
What is the basket made of, and what are the pellets, mother?

Bāns ke to ḍhuti bāḍu māti ke gulla.
The basket is made of bamboo, and the pellets of earth, my son.

Koni hāt men gulel dai koni hāt men gulla?
In which hand is the *gulel*, and in which the pellets, mother?

Deri hāt men gulel bābu jewni hāt men gulla.
The *gulel* is in the left hand, the pellets in the right, my son.

3

Taina nāmar nāna re nān nāmar nān ho

Māligondi tupak tun bor sāje kindur ho?
Who made the Maligondi gun?

Māligondi tupak tun mistri sāje kindur.
The carpenter made the Maligondi gun.

Teka marra hata tun bor sāje kindur ho?
Who made the stock of teak?

Teka marra hata tun bar-ki sāje kindur.
The carpenter made the stock of teak.

Kokre kil bakre tun bor sāje kindur ho?
Who made the trigger of the gun?

Kokre kil bakre tun mistri sāje kindur.
The carpenter made the trigger of the gun.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

224
539

Māligondi tupak tun bor payal ūndur ho?	Who holds the Maligondi gun?
Māligondi tupak tun singāl payal ūndur.	Singal holds the Maligondi gun.
Adu bādu patār tun singāl weli ūndur ho.	Singal took the gun to the jungle.
Ikla kur dulki patār singāl weli ūndur ho.	Singal went to hunt by a spring.
Ghotiya mara daram te bodāl hunjil māta ho.	He found a bison asleep by a ghotiya tree.
Barbara kursi manji singāl udil ūndur ho.	Seeing it Singal prepared to fire.
Jirra barga tikti tun singāl mūnde kindur ho.	Singal placed the support for his aim.
Saw sawa kursi manjil singāl dābe kindur ho	Singal fired the gun with care.
Ting tokli tokli lariyo bodāl mutil ūnd ho.	By that shot was the bison killed.
Ringri hāpa linga laya gorhā-wātil ūnd ho.	Linga boy stood like a small brinjal ready to kill it.

4

Are tina nāmur nāna re nāna nāmur nāna na ho tina nāmur O nāna nāmur nāho, tina nāmur nānāho tina nāmur na. Hurre, hurre, hurre

Ho bhālu heto dera re ho kahān ohar dera.	Where is the bear's home, where can it be?
Are bhālu heto dera re ho jhāpi khāle dera.	Under the bushes the bear has its home.
Achchha ohar khāna pina, achchha ohar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Are kodri heto dera re ho, kahān ohar dera.	Where is the deer's home, where can it be?
Kodri ke dera re ho gudri upar dera.	On the low hills the deer has its home.
Achchha ohar khāna pina, achchha ohar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Hurre, hurre, hurre.	

IX. Falconry

223 While cock-fighting is rare in the east and common to the west, hunting with a hawk is known all over eastern Kondagaon, but is rare among the Jhoria Muria and in the west.

Muria boys get the hawks when they are very young and train them carefully. They teach them to catch small chicks, keep mice for them in little bamboo cages and train them by withholding food and then rewarding them with morsels of frog and lizard. They 'hood' them by closing their eyes with feathers thrust through the lids. When mature the birds are able to catch quail, partridge, snipe and sparrows, though it is said that they are not able to kill a wood-pigeon.

A hawk is kept in the verandah of the house perched on a specially made pole round which an old bit of fishing-net is wrapped. It is tied by an ingenious

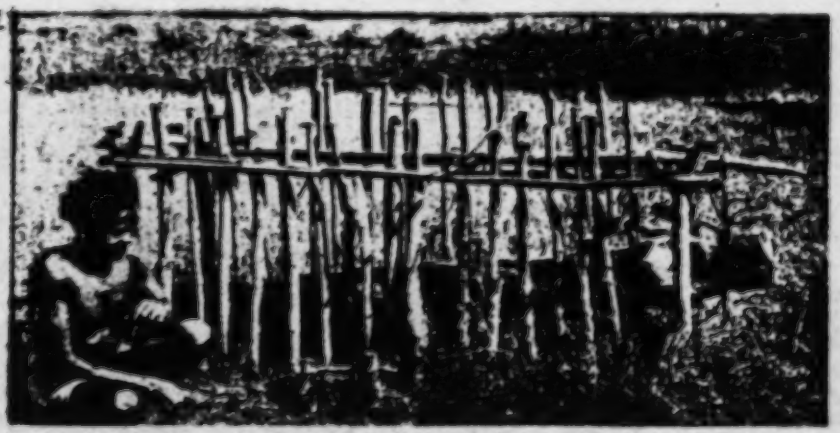
Plate XIII

516
252

Sheik of Macora roasting a rat

A porcupine trap near Lohatar

224



[P. 52(N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLIV

796
411
224

The Hikmi strings his bow in the ceremonial hunt

The Almer Gaita worships axe, bow and arrows before a hunt

[p. 208(B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brush-wood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live. There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

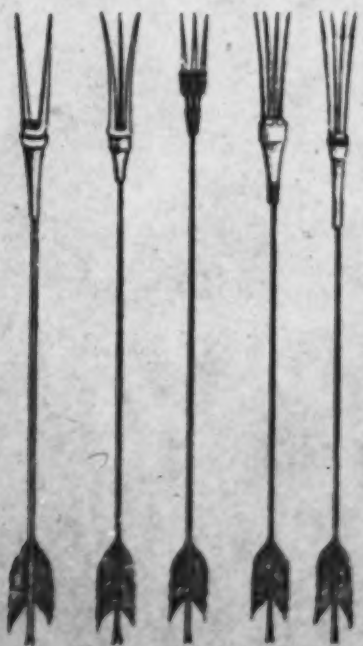
[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there 796 787 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 262 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.



Engrum arrows
(Length about 3')

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

441
302
301

Dulha of Gadapal with bow and arrow

Boys catching a bat at Khutepal

224
302

[facing p.49]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandwa* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandwa*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Nennor new-eating feast.

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue.

Dogs and cats Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Darra, darra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bamboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *konda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralur are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasanar to Bhairamgarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

226 564 markets. The Kuruks go up into the hills to collect these dues, and they also dry fish and bring it round from village to village in the hills, bartering it for grain, generally at the rate of five pieces the size of a finger for a *paili*[1] of *kuthi*; the Hill Marias allow them to sleep in the *pash-gotul* rest-house. They are expert with net and with rod and line. Frequently they stretch a cord over the head of a pool with several short lengths of line ending in baited hooks depending at intervals in the water, while they go across the tail of the pool in their dug-out canoes spanking the surface of the water with their paddles or with long bamboos to drive the fish up towards the baits. They fish simultaneously several little rods tied to clumps of rushes or reeds. They certainly catch fish at all times except in high floods, and send them alive to your camp in water in little dug out sections of trees. As boatmen they are expert in [501] managing their clumsy and heavy dug-outs, which are generally made of *Bombax malabaricum* wood owing to the heavy duty [651] charged by the Forest Department for the far more durable teak. I spent nearly three weeks in their charge in November 1927 with Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the State Medical Officer, journeying in their dug-outs down the Indrawati from Kutru to the Jitam rapids, whence they returned to their villages. They were expert in [501] shooting rapids even with two dug-outs lashed together, which they sometimes took through the wild tangle of rapids above Bhamragarh with two paddlers standing in the bows and two in the stern. The paddles are rectangles of teak nailed to teak handles. One dug-out would shoot ahead to explore the rapids, and its owner appear suddenly on the top of a rock to shout directions to the rest; old Kuruks and their grey-headed wives would appear out of tributary streams from riparian villages and croak away their greetings in the guttural Hill Maria dialect, and then paddle back upstream in the morning mist with charcoal or wood smoking around them in [374] broken earthen crocks at the bottom of their boats, carried for warmth. At dusk, after escorting us to our camp on the Bastar bank, they invariably would paddle croaking off to rocky islands in midstream, whence at night the eye would be delighted with their numerous fires of driftwood and the ear with the melodious refrains of their songs.

226 The Hill Marias make various forms of fish cages and traps with reeds and cane. They dam river shallows in the hot weather and poison the pools. In the rains they make *gorla* piers of boulders in cylindrical wicker-work baskets, like the piers of their bridges, between which is laid a platform of wicker-work, the upstream end of which rests on the bed of the stream, and is weighted down with

[1] A measure containing about 4 lb. weight of grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

stones; the platform is thus sloped against the stream, and small fish coming down are unable to get through the meshes of the wicker-work, and are thrown by the water high and dry on to the downstream end of the platform; this is merely an elaboration of the *dandar* trap regularly made in the plains by other Koitor at corners of rice-fields where there is any considerable fall in the level of a main irrigation current. 226

The Bison-horn Marias have four or five different kinds of nets, and field fish traps of three or four kinds varying in size from the big field *dandar* above to the *bisar*, a small cylindrical trap of reeds or canes fastened together with wefts of cord, with inverted cones of similar construction inside; the narrow mouth at one end of the trap is fixed close to a small hole made through the embankment of a flooded rice field, and the small fry washed through the hole into the trap cannot escape through the cones. Women make a series of small mud dams across the swampy ends of tanks or pools, and dry out the space enclosed by each dam in turn by throwing the water out with winnows or baskets; they then collect what fish are left in the mud.

In the north of the State the Bhattras, Parjas, Murias and low-caste Hindus always precede the ceremonial eating of new mangoes at Aktai, the local name for the Hindu festival of Akshya Trittya, which falls usually in the second fortnight of April, by a ceremonial *parad* for fish; their general method is for all the men to go into the forest to gather the leaves, roots and fruits used for poisoning fish, then to poison the selected and previously dammed rivulet or small tank; after the stupefied fish have been collected and divided, each family cooks and eats the fish with the new mangoes, and the head of the family goes to the source of their usual water-supply and offers water in a new *handi* with a little grain in the name of the ancestors. In Gondi this is called the ceremony of *' Yer upihana pen hanal '* (offering water to the clan-god and the Departed). Some Bison-horn Marias observe this practice also before their own Marka Pandum, or New Mango Festival, but they prefer having a real beat for fish to poisoning pools, though both they and the Hill Marias frequently poison pools. But most Bison-horn Marias beat for fish at all times of the year, except the rains, when there is too much water, just for sport, and join for this with villagers of other castes, such as Jhari Telanga, Halba or Parja. As many as fifty or sixty square-meshed nets are collected, about four feet deep, and the bottoms of the nets are weighted with stones, while pieces of wood are fastened on the top edge to act as floats. Before the nets are arranged in the water, the *perma* (village priest or spiritual headman, corresponding in Bison-horn villages to the 226 769 226

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

●226 Hill Maria *kasyep-gaita*) of the village where the beat is to take place sets up a small bough of *jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*) or *jamela* (*Eugenia heyneana*) on the bank of the river, beneath which he places an egg and a little husked *kutki* in an egg shell, and prays to *Jalkanya*, the Water-maiden, for good fishing; if the beat is successful, the *perma* after it is over breaks the egg and spills the yoke and the *kutki* on the ground in her name. The nets are lowered into the water tied together in a long line across the river, with side-nets (*kanasi*) at right angles on both sides of the main net towards the line of beaters, if the river is too wide or there is much water near the banks too shallow for the main net to be stretched from bank to bank. A line of men stands behind the nets, and three or four hundred yards away the beaters form a line across the river from bank to bank, and advance towards the line of nets, beating the water with hands, sticks and bamboos, and shouting and beating drums. The fish are divided up in the village, the *perma* and *peda* and those who have provided nets getting double shares; if a tank is beaten, the owner of the tank gets a double share. These beats are at times quite exciting and the catch is heavy, as shown by the following account of an eyewitness, Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell:—

'On Christmas Day 1921 we were encamped at Salnar, a village on the banks of the Indrawati about nine miles from Barsur. The river here is only 3½ or 4 feet deep, and breaks up into two streams divided by a sand spit. The surroundings are beautiful, with a clear view of the Korekal Mad waterfall seven or eight miles away. The river was ideal for the fishing *parad*, which began early in the morning and lasted till sundown, with a short break for a midday meal. We spent the whole day on the sand spit, watching the great catches of fish. The people of this locality are Bison-horn Marias, and the method of the *parad* was very like that of an ordinary beat for game; a main net about 15 yards wide was sunk across the river upstream, its bottom weighted with stones and the ends tied with cords to enable it to be lifted, while some ten men held the top. From the ends of the net other cords, to which were fastened at every few inches bunches of dry palm leaves and stone weights, were strung out by men in dug-out canoes in a semi-circle for 30 or 40 yards on each side, and placed in charge of stops aligned from one end to the other of each string; the task of these stops was slowly to draw in the strings towards the main net after the beat had begun, and so keep the fish within a circumscribed area. The main line of beaters numbered about twenty, each armed with a small triangular net fastened on a triangle of stout sticks, with a fourth stick fastened at the apex as a handle. Behind them a second line of beaters, but fewer in number, followed at a distance of two yards, carrying triangular nets of the same type but without handles. As the first line beaters advanced they held their nets in front of them under the water by the handles, while those in the second line advanced with their nets held straight out in front of them and against their bodies. The object of the front line was only to drive the fish forward into the main net, and to sweep up with their own nets any fish which might try to rush back at the end of the beat; the second line had to be on the look out for any fish which might jump clear over the backs of the front line when collared in their nets. It was only the large fish, generally mahseer, which when backing from the main net to meet the nets of the front line beaters jumped clear out of the water towards the second line. It was really wonderful to watch the dexterity

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

with which the second line dealt with these fish, some of which weighed from ten to fifteen pounds, and required all the handling that the men were capable of; even then many were dropped from sheer weight. In all, more than 300 fish, of all sizes, were caught in the day, enough to provide ample food for a week for everyone present. The Marias were delighted.'

For poisoning fish all or some of the following[1] are used:— *korkoti* (3, 5) leaves and twigs; fruit of the *masiya* (1), *kirach* (1) (*Cassaria graveolens*), *kothewa* (1), *pendra* (1) (*Randia uliginosa*), *kotma* (3), *iriya* (5), *waza* (5) or *vachcha* (5), and *kue* (6) (*Randia dumetorum*); roots of the *sirindi* (1, 2), *agya* (1, 3, 4) (*Millettia auriculata*), *korti* (1), *timra* (1, 2) (root-bark), *hewu* (5) (pounded with earth from a white-ant hill), *kumbhi* (1, 5) (root-bark; *Careya arborea*), *tumsi* (5), *basemati* (6), and *batte* (6); bark of the *karra* (1, 3, 6) or *karla*, *kirangi* (4), *kuchali* (5) (*Strychnos nux vomica*) and *muchi-tumri*[2] (5) (*Diospyros montana*), *kodra-marra* (6) and *chil*[3] (6); and the ground oil-cake (1, 5, 6) made from *tora*, the seeds of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*).

The ingredients are pounded together with stones or axe-heads on a rock in or near the pool or tank; if the water is deep, they are thrown into it the night before the fish are collected; if it is shallow, the poisons act in an hour or two and can safely be thrown into the water in the morning. The fish are stupefied by them, and are easily collected floating on the surface.

In the Kolab-Sabari in Sukma zamindari and Konta tahsil, Bison-horn Marias and others have night beats for fish in the hot weather; they call the beats '*chingra parad*' and '*hola parad*'. The late Circle Inspector Chaitan Singh gave the following description of these:—

'The beat must be held on a dark moonless night, and not in a tank or a small nullah or in water flowing over mud which would be stirred up by the feet of the beaters, but in clear shallow water flowing over sand or shingle, not more than thigh-deep. Four or five men enter the water carrying each a bamboo torch, and a basket; the torch is held not more than a foot above

[1] The numbers 1 to 6 stand for lists of poisons supplied from 1, Jagdalpur; 2, Sukma; 3, Kondagaon; 4, Dantewara; 5, Konta; and 6, Bijapur. There is almost certainly some duplication owing to the different names prevailing in different parts of Bastar for the same plants. Bastar plant names so differ from those in the Central Provinces that identification is difficult without sending actual specimens to Dehra Dun. The Central Provinces forest lists give as known fish poisons roots of *Millettia auriculata*, fruit of *Cassaria graveolens*, *Cassaria tomentosa* and *Randia dumetorum*, bark of *Ougeinia dalbergioides*, and leaves and bark of *Cleistanthus collinus*. *Strychnos nux vomica* and *Diospyros montana* are well known as poisonous plants.

[2] *Muchi-tumri* is possibly the same as *timra* in lists 1 and 2.

[3] *Chil*, which occurs only in the Bijapur list, may be the Telugu word *chil* for *Strychnos potatorum*, the clearing nut. The seeds of this are used for clearing muddy water.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

226 the water. On each side of each torch-bearer goes a man armed with bow and arrows; for small fish the arrows have heads like the handles of spoons, but for large fish they use arrows with heads with only one wing and barb, like an ordinary arrow-head bisected from point to shank. The torch-bearers and bowmen wade up against the current, and the fish, which at night are feeding in these shallows and not in the deep pools, are attracted or stupefied by the glare and are easily shot with the arrows or caught in the baskets.'

E. Intoxicants and Other Drinks

273 The commonest intoxicant in the Abujhmar hills is the fermented juice of the sago-palm (*Caryota urens*), and the tree is common also in many parts of the Bison-horn Maria country. It is now propagated freely by Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The tree, unlike the toddy-palm, is monoecious. The flowering peduncles, which appear like thin elephant trunks, have their ends cut off before they flower, and act as taps, bamboo tubes being fastened below the cut to catch the sap; the Bison-horn Marias often use earthenware pots. The tubes are emptied in the morning and evening, bamboo poles still retaining the stumps of side-shoots being tied on to the trees as rough ladders. When [272] fresh, the sap is not intoxicating and has a pleasant dry taste, not unlike champagne. After two or three years' tapping the tree dies, when the inner tissue of the stem yields the starchy food substance 757 already mentioned. If the ends of the peduncle get worm- or grub-eaten before they are tapped, it is considered a sure sign of witchcraft, and more than one murder has been recorded on this account. The bottom of the trunk of the dead tree is commonly 534 used as the hollow body of the Hill Maria single-membrane *turam* or kettle-drums.

Sago-palm

273 The toddy-palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is not grown or tapped in the Abujhmar hills, but is common in the south of the Bison-horn country especially among the so-called Koyas and the Dorlas, and in Sukma and Konta. In this teluguized region whole villages camp out in the toddy groves from March till June in a perpetual state of semi-intoxication, taking solid food only in the evening, and sometimes going without that for three or four days or even a week. The sap is tapped by cutting the ends of the flowering spadices, in much the same way as the sago-palm; the spadix appears in the male trees from November to March, while the female tree yields sap from April to June. The vessels used to catch the sap are generally thick bamboo tubes three or four feet long, of about three gallons capacity. Excessive tapping soon shortens the life of the trees. The juice rapidly ferments, though not intoxicating when drawn, and fermentation is expedited by the habit of mixing the fresh juice with that left

Toddy-palm

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

539
223

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.'
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill.
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish that live in tanks and flooded fields. 226

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *kurangra*, *ndri* (or *bilmi*), *kots* (or *khoka*), *dandwa*, *lawa* (or *turu*) and *bigwa*. 825 821 614

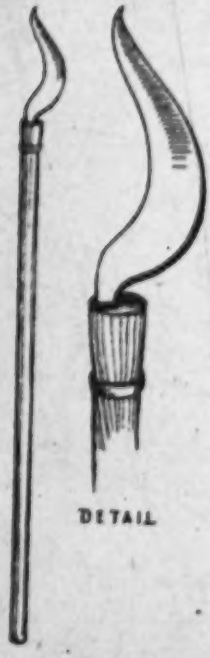
The gall-bladder of the *bigwa* is regarded as an important remedy for snake-bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by filling it with the small kusra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient to drink. 278

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 227 226

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

241 they still make a small *parha* plot somewhere in their fields so that some of the grain will mature quickly and they will have enough to eat at home.

Their big fields are generally embanked, often irrigated with some ingenuity. They are distinguished according to the soil and location—*dhar neli* or *galhār* is a low-lying rice field, a *tikra* is a field on a slope, a *dobha* or *mal* is an ordinary level field—and they are often given names, the Cat-stone Field, the Field of the Frogs, the Field of the Ghost.[1]



DETAIL

FIG. 4. York used in the same way as the gagra, but of a different pattern
Length 3′ 10″

Perhaps the most treasured thing, and often actually the most profitable, in a Muria's agricultural life is the *bāri* or garden enclosure near his house. This is carefully fenced with a stockade or with bamboo wattle-work, and is manured and enriched with the sweepings of the house and the droppings of the cattle throughout the year.

Here the Muria sows the profitable oil-seeds, sarson, til or arsi; here he sets beans by the fence, and a broad patch of red *jira* spinach. Often he plants some castor trees, or a sago-palm, sometimes plantain and papaya. One specially guarded patch contains his tobacco supply for the year.

Once the seed is sown, the attention of chelik and motiari is largely diverted from the ghotul to the fields. Ghotul life is almost suspended, though the smaller children go and solemnly imitate the habits of their elders. Little fires twinkle in the fields and the sweet music of the flute comes through the darkness.

When the first grain appears on the shoots, the Gaita offers an egg to Tallur Muttai to ensure its safety.

During the season, in the permanent fields there is a lot to be done. The embankments must be constantly repaired. The sprouting rice must be puddled with a board dragged by bullocks. The girls must go to weed. The boys set fish-traps where the water escapes through the embankments. It is a time of danger and taboo: an act of adultery may blight the grain, a quarrel discourage its growth.

[226] [184]

Everybody goes to reap the crop. They use the ordinary iron sickle. Before threshing, the bundles are piled up on wooden platforms, heaped into rough bins, sometimes just stacked in neat circles on the ground.

The first sheaf cut is tied to a tree overlooking the field or clearing.

252 The *kura* threshing-floor is prepared by men, for in many villages it is taboo for women to do this, and so the men clear the ground in or near the field, plaster and cow-dung it. In the middle they place a pole (*mer-gutta*) to the top of which they often tie a sheaf (Plate X). If they are going to use oxen, they attach a pole to the *mer-gutta* and drive the animals round in the usual way. Often, however, the Muria thrash with their feet (Plate X). If there

[1] For an account of names of fields in India, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1890), pp. 113 and 141.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In
222 the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs
252 before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and
[278] stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs, regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

262 The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith
● 226 that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands
524 and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams; a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

262 Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries' when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

262 Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja
843 Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[171] [1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. 'The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Saises in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[171] [2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 108ff.

[278] [3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.' 539
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill. 223
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon 226 ●
the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish that live in tanks and flooded fields.

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally 825
that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps 821
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of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *kawangra*, *nāri* (or *bāwi*), *bote* (or *khoksi*), *dundum*, *lowe* (or *turu*) and *bāgum*.

The gall-bladder of the *bāgum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake- 278
bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by filling it with the small kosra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient to drink.

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a 227
hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 226

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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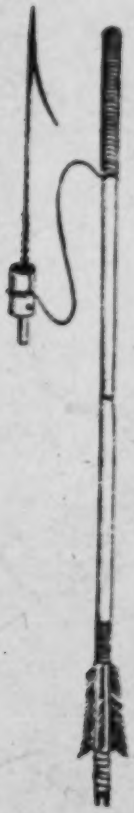
worms and a peacock feather is attached to the line as a float. There are riddles about both hook and float. The hook is 'the bullock with the broken horn that drinks the water of twelve villages'; the float is represented as saying to the fish, 'You are eating secretly, but I'll tell brother what you're up to'.



Nets are also used. The *changori* is a net with a very fine mesh which takes at least a year to make. It is weighted with little balls of baked earth or iron and thrown into the water. Other nets are the *jhorli*, the *tāngra* and the *sarka*. These are pushed or dragged through the water, or stretched across the narrow part of a stream and the fish beaten into them.

The *mānder* is a net of hemp cord attached to a bamboo trap which is set in rapids and narrow streams. The *kurjār* is a rigid net. Ten bamboos joined at one end radiate outwards and a net is spread over their points. The middle of the net is raised by a cord attached to the top of the trap, and it is then thrust down into the water. The *jalna* is the net attached to a triangular bamboo frame which is pushed through the water, the fish being caught in the belly of the net simply by the pressure of the stream. The *chargod* (Plate XIX) is attached to bamboos tied together at the end of a long pole and is dipped into the water.

The *dundka* or *sondri* is a bamboo basket with a wide bottom tapering sharply towards the top with holes in the upper side. It is used (Plate XVIII) in conjunction with the *dandar* (also called *talai* and *bissar*), a long bamboo cylinder measuring about five and a half feet, about two feet wide at the large open end and gradually narrowing: inside is a spiral with bamboo points projecting inwards.[1] The small end is placed in the hole at the side of the *dundka*, and the water drives the fish down the trap and thus into the basket.

The *thāpa* (Halbi) or *otād* (Gondi) is a circular plunge-trap, three feet wide at the bottom. A Chherta song refers to it:

[539]

FIG. 12. Arrow with detachable head, used for shooting fish
Length of shaft 21'

Thāpa re thāpa, māchh māriya thāpa,	O trap, trap, fish-killing trap,
Ye gāon cho laka manke, bāts nenwe chāpa.	Take the boys of this village and press them down.

The *chadiya* is a bamboo scoop two-and-a-half feet long leading into a pocket extending another one-and-a-half feet. It is placed in a field at some point where the water escapes, and catches crabs, frogs and little fish. 'In the middle of the field Gango's son is weeping *chir chir*.' This scoop may some-

[1] This trap resembles the Finland eel-trap used in the Severn near Worcester. It is known as a grig in Finland, and is made of split osiers. In Worcester the narrow end is called the starling. It has two cones of pointed sticks called inchins in Worcester and chairs in Finland. Chair is an old word for the narrow part of a river.—See *Man*, 1934, p. 176 and 1936, p. 179.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long.

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, *'Netānch korinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: 'It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'.

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes.

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden.

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first.

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2]

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election

[1] R. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Keya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 32.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate XVIII

Chelik at Tamrugaon fishing with rod and line from a specially prepared pier

Chelik setting dandia and dandar traps in a small stream

[p. 66 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Dasru of Markabera with his chargod net

[p. 78 (2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

Plate XX

●226
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Chelik at Koilibera fishing with a net

Boys setting a sonūri trap in the River Kotri

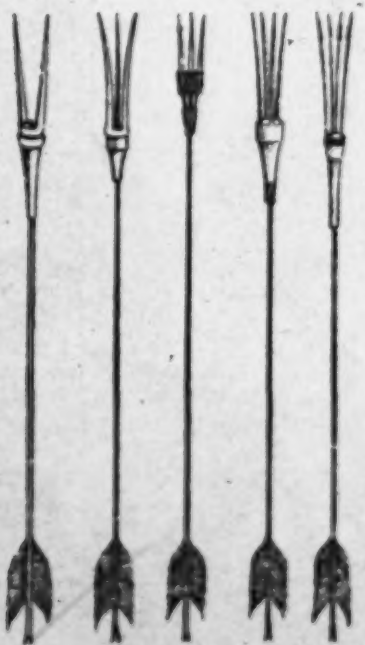
[P, 78 (B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there 796 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped 787 and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 262 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.



Engram arrows
(*Length about 3'*)

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandum* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandum*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Nennor new-eating feast.

Dogs and cats

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue. Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Dorra, dorra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets

Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bamboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *konda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralnr are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasnar to Bhairamgarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

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223

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.'
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill.
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Mîlo mîlo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Mîlo mîlo*, but he found no trace.
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He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
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The daughters of Ispural were living there.
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Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
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278

The gall-bladder of the *bigum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake-bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by filling it with the small kosri grain. They keep this carefully and when it is needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient to drink.

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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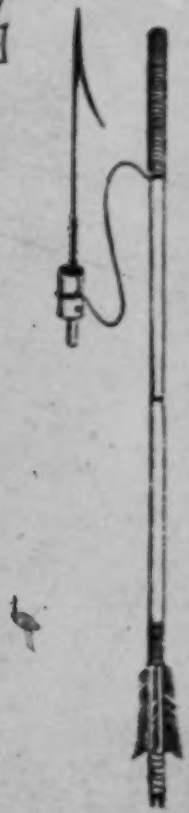

[537]

FIG. 11. Arrow with detachable head, used for shooting fish
Length of shaft 21'

Thâpa re thâpa, mâchh mârriya thâpa,
Ye gâon cho loka manke, bâte nawan châpa.

O trap, trap, fish-killing trap,
Take the boys of this village and press them down.

The *chodiya* is a bamboo scoop two-and-a-half feet long leading into a pocket extending another one-and-a-half feet. It is placed in a field at some point where the water escapes, and catches crabs, frogs and little fish. 'In the middle of the field Gango's son is weeping *chir chir*.' This scoop may some-

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Natânek horinta muruus tagai ke peshinta*: It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'.

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes.

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden.

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first.

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2]

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The *Koya* put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 52.

Plate XIX

226
● 227

Dasru at Markabera with his charged net

[p. 78 (4)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A#32 Gond A#32
Muria

Plate XX

226
● 227

Chelik at Kokhera fishing with a net

Boys setting a sonori trap in the River Kori

[P. 78 (B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

This traditional arrangement of the Hill Maria villages is far from being always observed. I have seen a village constructed in this way on one of its traditional sites (*pagh* or *pagha'i*; Murias say *pare*, while Bison-horn Marias generally use the Halbi word *padar*), and then four years later found it reconstructed on one of the alternative sites with little sign of the traditional grouping; and I have also seen the converse occur. In fact, the configuration of the site may make the traditional arrangement difficult. It is also being gradually abandoned in the villages on the edges of the hills into which the individualism of surrounding plains villages is creeping, and in the few villages such as Orcha and Hikul which have good permanent rice cultivation; in the latter villages there is a growing tendency not to shift the sites when the surrounding *ponda* slopes are exhausted, but to cultivate even remote slopes from the village site in the vicinity of the permanent rice fields. As the old feeling of village community weakens, houses are no longer built as long-houses, each containing groups of three or four houses occupied by brothers or near paternal cousins, but are built detached, each with its own granary close to it, instead of the householder having one compartment in the long granary row; even then, however, the detached houses tend to group themselves roughly into lines flanking a central open space, at one end of which is the village dormitory (*gotul-lon*), in its usual position. Even when a village site is becoming permanent, as at Orcha and Hikul, any sudden calamity, such as crop failure, epidemic or epizootic, will probably induce the villagers to shift. In several villages the *kotyoq-gaita* always keeps a hen sitting on eggs inside his house, and the addling of an undue proportion of these is frequently a signal for the shifting of the village; but a wise *gaita* does not let his eggs get addled unless there is really sound economic or religious reason for shifting, when the omens can be made to suit the occasion.

Behind each line of houses will be found rows of pig-sties, at least one for each house; and the pigs often seem better housed than their masters. Where, as around Orcha, sal (*Shorea robusta*) or other timber is plentiful, the pig-sties are generally made of sections of tree trunk or large boughs laid horizontally between vertical stays, with an opening in front which can be closed by dropping vertical posts over it between horizontal stays at the top and bottom of the opening. These sties are sheltered from the sun by grass-thatched roofs sloping back from two or more vertical posts about 6 feet high to similar posts about 4 feet high in the rear. Dug-out troughs of sal wood are kept outside or just inside the sties for water and food for the pigs; the commonest food is a mash made from the chaff or husks of *kosra* (*kutki*; *Panicum miliaceum*) and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 other minor grains. Where timber is not available, these sties are made from bamboos, or even from stones. Similar but, of course, ●231 far smaller structures are made to serve as hen-coops, resting generally against the side or front of the houses.

778 The shrine of the Village Mother, as has been stated above, is sometimes actually inside the village dormitory, sometimes just 361 outside it, and sometimes at a considerable distance from the actual village, in a grove, if possible of *saja* (*Terminalia tomentosa*—every- [824] where the sacred tree of the Gond) trees. Sometimes there is also in the village, often at the end of the street opposite the dormitory, the hut-temple of the *pen* or clan-god, containing the log-frame image of the god. This will normally be found only in the village of the *pen-wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god; but sometimes, where the villages of the clan are far apart, there may be two copies of the clan-god, or the god may go to visit other villages, and have a resting-shed in each; or he may have begotten a son to deputize for him in the distant village; I have seen in a *pen-ruwar* (clan-god's temple) both the *pen* himself and an embryo 'son' in the second of his three years' 'gestation'. The *pen* is always covered by a shed; but the Village Mother sometimes is just a cairn or a basket-cylinder filled with stones, or a low table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree, and close by there is a small shed of grass thatch with open sides in which are kept the cooking pots, ladles and sacrificial knife used at ceremonial feasts. The sacred grove may in very rare cases, in villages near the edge of the lowlands, have also a hut-temple of Danteshwari Mai or Maolai, the most revered or feared Hindu deities of Bastar.

343 There will be found well apart from the houses and the rest of 841 the village a menstruation hut in many villages, known as *pedawo'-gha'i* to the Hill Marias, or sometimes as *dola-lon*. Here all menstruating women are secluded from the village for a week every month. Sometimes the hut has a single room, about 6 by 5 feet, with walls 3 feet high, with no windows and only a small door little bigger than the entrance to an English kennel; sometimes there are two rooms separated from each other by a partition, so that when a girl is afraid of being secluded by herself a duenna may sleep within sound of her without actual contact. The door of the seclusion room always opens away from the village, so that the affected woman may get out at night to answer the call of nature without overlooking the village or being visible to any villager. Special cooking pots and utensils are kept in the seclusion room, or else [589 the woman's food is cooked outside and left by her door for her. The roof is often covered with seed-bearing twigs of castor-oil plants, 824] in all parts of India regarded as very efficacious against magic.

[text continues on p. 106]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is 364 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the 177 greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-
361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page 121) must have their *baris* opposite them across the street. Each *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

[351]

[231]

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among
841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Pikh-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 In his *mudur erka* (big tree *erka*) he raises *chikma* (*Panicum miliare*), *gatka* (*Panicum frumentaceum*) and *sama*, all crops of the first sowing, ripening by early August, and, as main crops, *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) which he calls *gurra*, and *kulthi*, which he, like the Hill Maria, calls *kohala*, both of which ripen with the *penda kulthi* in early December; with him *Eleusine coracana* is an important [273] crop, as he uses it as a principal ingredient in his *landa* intoxicant. In his *marram erka* (brushwood *erka*) he sows only the pulses *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), which he calls *popul*, and *kulthi* (*Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*) which he calls *koreng*. The '*os kosra*' millets which the Hill Maria sows as a second crop after the crops reaped in August he calls '*mach kohala*', and sows not only similarly as a second crop, but also as the main crop in his *erka* land for the third and last year of its cultivation, when it is too exhausted to bear anything else.

241 Besides the fact observed on page 128 above that, unlike the Hill Maria, he ploughs the ashes, or digs them with his hoe, into his 423 *erka* and *penda* lands, these lands have, therefore, this further great difference from the Hill Maria *penda* lands, that each crop has its own appropriate type of cultivation, and is therefore sown separately, not jumbled up with every other kind of crop in a hopeless welter. He is, moreover, careful to preserve any mango or other fruit trees on his plot. As he retains permanent rights over his plot, whether it is tilth or forest at the moment, he has to be more careful over its boundaries than the Hill Maria, and cannot be content with the temporary sowing of a line of *til* or roselle. At each burning, therefore, he spares important trees or stumps at boundary junctions, which he calls *sarkari* or 'authority' trees, and sometimes he leaves a thin line of trees standing along his boundary when he fells the forest. He generally grows his beans and gourds on these and other trees, not on poles stuck up in the middle of other crops like the Hill Maria.

241 It has been seen that he has always a *bari* garden enclosure [417] round or near his house in the village, which he calls *lon-welung* or 'house fencing', and generally fences with either bamboo wattle-● [231] work (*wadur-welung*) or a fence of brushwood tied slantwise between horizontal struts (*jhat-welung*). Here at night he pens his cattle, and the ground is thus richly manured to bear maize (*jonna*), *sarson* or mustard (*tarson*) and tobacco (*pogo*)[1] as essential crops, with in these days frequent patches of chillies, tomatoes and other vegetables. *Sarson* is the most paying crop exported from Bastar.

[1] The Hill Maria grows tobacco and a few poor chillies and tomatoes in little plots left clear of dab grasses when *penda* land is useless for grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia neriifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Pigs

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*merrsheng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charhal padi* and *kuval padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Korr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

Poultry

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar.
[2] See pp. 103 and 129.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Cock-fighting is the favourite pastime of the Bison-horn Marias, well-known venues being the weekly markets at Kuakonda, Paknar, Kukanar, Bastanar Ghat and near Karli, among several others. They tie iron knives to the cocks' legs. If the cocks break away, their owners pick them up and rub their hackles or spit into their beaks to get their blood up. The defeated cock always becomes the property of the victor's owner. On any market morning you can see scores of Bison-horn Marias walking to market with cocks tucked under their arms. Hill Marias do not themselves go in much for this pastime; only a few of them even stay to watch cock-fighting at Dhaurai market. Some of the Kutru Hill Marias attend cock-fighting every week at Oikal in the Ahiri zamindari of Chanda.

Goats

Goats are seldom kept by the Hill Marias, though at Nugur in the Indrawati valley the Parlio clan, despite the fact that its totem is the goat, kept goats for the Teli tradesmen who owned the village rice bins described on page 102; but they could not eat goat flesh or even take goat milk.

Among the Bison-horn Marias, many, including even those who belong to the goat phratry and goat clans, keep goats and use goat milk; but totemistic rules prohibit members of goat clans and phratry from eating goat flesh.

Cattle and buffaloes

As has been seen, the Hill Marias are not rich in cattle, do not milk them or yoke them to carts or ploughs, and generally keep Rawat herdsmen to tend them. Nearly all eat beef whenever they can afford it. Bullock or cow-sacrifice is almost an essential part of funeral ceremonies, and all present eat the meat. Dead cattle are divided up and eaten; at Kutru, Hill Marias ate all that remained of a cow killed by a family of man-eating tigers, though the mangled remains had been gnawed by hyaenas and jackals, and exposed to the sun for four or five days till full of flies and maggots. The headmen of the villages of Padalibhum, Tapalibhum, Behramar, Nurbhum and Sonpur Mar *pargana*s frankly admitted that they liked eating beef when they could get it; at Handawada, on the other side of the hills, the headmen of the Dantewara Mar and Mangnar *pargana* villages asserted that they never eat dead cattle, and only eat the beef of sacrificed animals. There are practically no buffaloes in the Abujhmar hills.

The Bison-horn Marias are great stock-raisers, both of cattle and buffaloes, and they export many head of cattle to Chanda and Raipur, as well as over the Madras border; in fact the land revenue is often paid out of the price received for cattle, and one of their favourite grievances is the cattle export duty of a rupee or two imposed by the State. They use cattle for ploughing and are

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandum* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandum*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Nennor new-eating feast.

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue.

Dogs and cats Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Darra, darra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bamboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *kanda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralur are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasnar to Bhairamgarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Little boys practise the bison-horn dance with head-dresses made of bamboo rings which have bamboo 'horns' sticking up in front and at the back a spike ornamented with feathers. They beat their stomachs or use bits of wood instead of drums.

Page 189, *line* 31. But I found everywhere that both kinds of Marias were also accustomed to use the fire-drill. The fire-saw of the Hill Marias can easily be worked by two men; there is no difference between it and the Baiga or Juang saw, which is always handled by two persons.

When Bison-horn Marias go to fire their clearings, they should as far as possible approach them with their faces towards the east. The Perma and Gaita break two small branches, the Perma a dry and the Gaita a green or 'living' branch, and drive them into the ground. They light these with a burning log from the Hearth of the Departed in one or other of their houses. If both branches burn well, it is a sign that the clearing also will burn properly; but if one burns and the other does not, it means that the clearing will only burn in patches and will thus be insufficiently manured. Special offerings must then be made.

Page 225, *line* 9; *page* 278, *line* 25. In one village—but only one—at Mokhpal, I found scepticism about the tradition that the menhirs grow in size. Here the Bison-horn Marias laughed at the idea and said that, if—for example—a stone grew smaller, it was probably because the ground was damp and it sank down.

Page 225, *line* 11. The Bison-horn Marias believe that the Dead are reborn, if at all, in their own homes; they generally deny that they ever reappear as animals. Yet an animal may be born in, or have a powerful influence over, a human being. A girl at Mokhpal was born with the left side of her face covered with a sort of fur; the Marias said that an ancestor who was killed by a bear had been reborn in the child. As a result the wearing of dancing-masks covered with bear-fur has been abandoned, for fear that the wearers should be affected in some future birth. A man killed by a tiger may reappear in one of his descendants with marks of the claws on the neck. It may be that to people who live so near to nature rebirth in animal form does not seem specially distasteful. Marias and Murias live close to their animals and love them. At Lakhopal there is a small menhir in memory of a faithful dog.

Page 227, *line* 12. In 1939, Soma Ganda-Maria of Gomagal killed a man, who had seduced his wife, in the most brutal manner by squeezing his testicles till they burst. He then seized his penis saying, 'It was with this that you copulated with my wife,' and tore the skin from it. Finally he throttled him. Anyone who

I. Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

231
343

Bison-horn Marias at Bastanar struggle to get a goat into its shed [Verrier Elwin

[End Plate L]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

231
241

Bison-horn Maria
girl feeds a parrot
on a head-rope at
Mandla

[End Plate N]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWO

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

I. The Muria Village

BEFORE approaching the main subject of this book, it is necessary to see how the chelik and motiari live at home. In a sense, there is no such thing as a typical Muria village any more than there is a typical Muria house. But most of the villages conform to the Gond pattern: they are set among trees—the Muria seem fonder of shade than wind and do not often choose the hill-tops beloved of the Maria and Baiga—and each house is enclosed within a separate fence that also surrounds its garden. There is thus a sharp distinction between a Muria and a Hill Maria village: the latter, like the Baiga village, consists of a row of houses joined together and opening on to a common street. Traces of this survive among the Muria in the enclosures of some of their leading men; at Markabera, for example, the headman's house is like a little village, a long enclosure with a small street on to which face many dwelling-places and granaries. In Palli-Barkot, and other western villages also, groups of related families build their houses to open round a square.

But generally the houses are scattered about, sometimes widely scattered, to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens, and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul are ever in a special or recognized position.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small courtyard, are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs. As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the east of Kondagaon the verandah of the main house is often deeper than the room inside. Where houses are built like this, there is no need for special menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar, where there is no room to seclude a woman on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and cleanness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of Mother Earth, and a love of animals. The pigsties are substantial, often with a double roof; the cattle-sheds are sometimes raised on pillars; sitting hens are given comfortable nests raised well above the ground. The houses themselves are cosy and homely, crammed with every sort of basket, leaf-bundle and utensil. Fish-traps, drums, wooden clogs hang from the roof, and flutes and bows and arrows are stuck under the thatch. Inside, in an inner room, is kept the mysterious Pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and placated.

These houses are the work-rooms of the chelik and motiari; they are the homes only of the married. The life and interest of chelik and motiari centre in the ghotul. But life there is definitely regarded as a preparation and training for the home. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

Most of the Muria are undoubtedly very poor. I was one day discussing with W. V. Grigson, who had visited Mandla after several years in Bastar, whether the Bastar villagers were poorer than those in the Central Provinces. I suggested—and he agreed—that probably the Bastar villagers were actually poorer, but that their lives were so much richer that they seemed far more

Plate VIII

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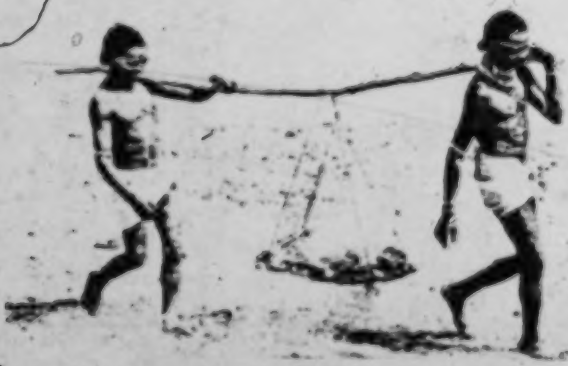
231

482



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493

1 Motiari ploughing at Bayanar | 2 Carrying earth to embank a field | 3 Chalk at Sirpur in solid-wheeled cart

[p. 306]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

223
231

Plate XIV

The Saint

[p. 52 (2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

boys and girls. They dance clasped in each other's arms; they go about together, chelik with his arm round the neck of motiari. How revealing are Plates LXXV and XCI. In one a chelik lies on a cot with his arm on his motiari's shoulder, while she sits almost on top of him making leaves. They were not posed for the photo, and they showed no embarrassment at my approach with the mysterious camera, even though they were from a village I did not know well. In the other Plate two chelik and a motiari are listening to the gramophone outside my tent. They are completely absorbed in it and in each other. One of the boys embraces the girl with both his arms. You would not see this natural innocence in the more 'advanced' parts of aboriginal India.

But this refreshing freedom never degenerates into immodesty in public. It would be unthinkable for a chelik to dance naked—as I have seen older men do—in the presence of women or of his elders. The motiari never indulge in the cheerful vulgarity of the old women at a wedding. A chelik never catches hold of a girl immodestly in general company, though he will embrace her and walk with his arms about her. The great festival dances, though the air is full of romantic suggestion and the older men dance with the greatest licence, are conducted by chelik and motiari with complete decorum.

The sympathetic reader will realise how hopeless it is to bring our cut-and-dried judgements of sexual morality to bear upon a situation such as this. But he will also realise that even on his own standards the ghotul cannot be called immoral in the sense that it has no rules or laws or that it ignores those it has. Its regulations are as far-reaching and as strict as our own, and they are often better kept. For the rules are not imposed from without, but have been made by the ghotul-members themselves. Thus they are reasonable, adapted to the actual situation, and so easy to obey.

It is curious that while a Western visitor to a Muria village, if he is of a Puritan turn, will probably be chiefly concerned about the pre-nuptial relations of the children, the Hindu visitor—who is, of course, by far the more frequent—will be scandalized by the casual attitude of the Muria towards cows. Many years ago earnest efforts were made by Hindu reformers in the State to stop cow-sacrifice, and still today—though the majority of State officials preserve an admirable restraint in interfering with tribal customs—landlords, merchants, schoolmasters and travellers do what they can to put an end to the practice. But, except for a few centres where Hindu influence is strong, bulls and cows continue to be sacrificed and eaten all over the northern part of the State. The Muria cannot believe that this is wrong, for the gods demand it. There is nothing in their culture or mythology to forbid it—and indeed we here have a good example of the difficulty of importing a new idea into a system that has no provision for it. Yet if the Muria ever does ponder about 'moral' problems it is this that perplexes him and not any question about pre-nuptial chastity.

Stealing is generally condemned, but it is licensed on some special occasions. The chelik are expected to steal a cock when they take the newly-wedded bride and bridegroom to bed; they appear to have similar licence when they perform ceremonial dances round the village.

The incidence of crime is very low. An experienced police officer, who had served in the ghotul area for twelve years, told me that in all this time there had been no case of murder, riot, assault, hurt, or rape in connexion with the ghotul. There has not been a single case of rape against a Muria, though non-aboriginals have been arrested for raping Muria women. It is a remarkable thing that most of the crime in the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils occurs

3: Elwin . E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brush-wood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live. There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia scrivifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Pigs

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*merrikong*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charhal padi* and *kural padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Korr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

Poultry

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar.
[2] See pp. 103 and 120.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

535 but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison'
585 charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum.* Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

293 The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic
[237] cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered
[737] unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

428 A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after
682 his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heir-
762 looms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

184 In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison
535 horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

534 The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called kikir, a Jews-harp made of iron or

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

439 Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from
484 Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill
[483] and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to
481 walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain
● 241 path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

481 Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

147 The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on
536 the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry
482 stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari
492 valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

291 The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton
147 in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills,
[132] and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241

The chief agricultural implement of the Hill Marias, with which he hacks up the surface of his *penda* slopes and his occasional patches of permanent cultivation, is his *gudari*, known to the Bison-horn Marias as *hargudar*, and in the Halbi language as *bhalu korhi* or 'bear hoe'. This, like the *maq'su* axe, is an iron blade in form suggestive of a long stone celt. It is in form very like the *maq'su* axe, but the socket is reversed so that the long handle is fixed in the same way as the handle of an adze, at an angle of about 80° to the blade when laid flat on the ground. The blade is rather bigger than that of

Hoes (see Figure 4)

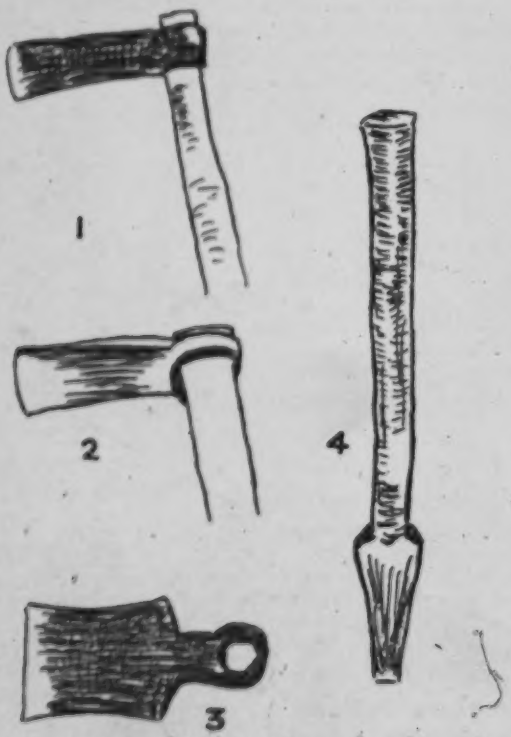

FIGURE 4.
1. Hill Maria axe (maq'su).
2. Hill Maria hoe (gudari).
3. Bison-horn hoe (korhi).
4. Hill Maria digging iron (pulu).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 the ordinary axe, and there is little or no 'waist' by the socket. It is, on a smaller scale, like the Cornish biddox.

Though this is used by some Bison-horn Marias in the remoter tracts, its use is now definitely a sign of the Hill Maria. The Bison-horn Maria uses the ordinary *korki* of the plains, which the Hill Maria calls *koq-gudari*; the villages on the edge of the Abujhmar hills are beginning to use it instead of the *gudari*, but it is never seen in the villages in the interior of the hills. This is a shouldered iron hoe, the blade from the shoulders to the digging edge being almost square, the sides being only slightly longer than the edge. It scores over the *gudari* because it can also be used to scoop and shovel earth.

Last must be mentioned the solid iron crowbar or digging-stick, found in all Maria houses, and throughout Bastar. But in the [171] Abujhmar hills it is interesting to find that it is sometimes shouldered and is in form very like the Madras Sawaras' shouldered iron hoe illustrated at p. 361 of Hutton's *India Census Report* (1931). This is known to the Hill Marias as *pulu*. I have seen similar shouldered specimens occasionally among the Bison-horn Marias, and was told that they had been imported from the Malkangiri taluq of the Jeypore Agency; but there is no coming and going between that [435] Agency and the Abujhmar hills. Of all the Marias' iron weapons and implements the *pulu* is the dearest, owing to the weight of iron used. The blacksmiths charge a rupee, the price of three *gudari* or two axes. It is generally about a metre long, and the shouldered portion is about a quarter of the total length. Plain unshouldered specimens are more common. Its chief use is for digging up the various yams and jungle roots in the rains that form so important a part of the diet of all Bastar Koitor. Or it is useful for digging holes for the posts of houses, or grubbing up stumps, etc.; it never is used as a hoe.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

This traditional arrangement of the Hill Maria villages is far from being always observed. I have seen a village constructed in this way on one of its traditional sites (*pagh* or *pagha'i*; Murias say *pare*, while Bison-horn Marias generally use the Halbi word *padar*), and then four years later found it reconstructed on one of the alternative sites with little sign of the traditional grouping; and I have also seen the converse occur. In fact, the configuration of the site may make the traditional arrangement difficult. It is also being gradually abandoned in the villages on the edges of the hills into which the individualism of surrounding plains villages is creeping, and in the few villages such as Orcha and Hikul which have good permanent rice cultivation; in the latter villages there is a growing tendency not to shift the sites when the surrounding *ponda* slopes are exhausted, but to cultivate even remote slopes from the village site in the vicinity of the permanent rice fields. As the old feeling of village community weakens, houses are no longer built as long-houses, each containing groups of three or four houses occupied by brothers or near paternal cousins, but are built detached, each with its own granary close to it, instead of the householder having one compartment in the long granary row; even then, however, the detached houses tend to group themselves roughly into lines flanking a central open space, at one end of which is the village dormitory (*gotul-lon*), in its usual position. Even when a village site is becoming permanent, as at Orcha and Hikul, any sudden calamity, such as crop failure, epidemic or epizootic, will probably induce the villagers to shift. In several villages the *kasyeq-gaita* always keeps a hen sitting on eggs inside his house, and the addling of an undue proportion of these is frequently a signal for the shifting of the village; but a wise *gaita* does not let his eggs get addled unless there is really sound economic or religious reason for shifting, when the omens can be made to suit the occasion.

Behind each line of houses will be found rows of pig-sties, at least one for each house; and the pigs often seem better housed than their masters. Where, as around Orcha, sal (*Shorea robusta*) or other timber is plentiful, the pig-sties are generally made of sections of tree trunk or large boughs laid horizontally between vertical stays, with an opening in front which can be closed by dropping vertical posts over it between horizontal stays at the top and bottom of the opening. These sties are sheltered from the sun by grass-thatched roofs sloping back from two or more vertical posts about 6 feet high to similar posts about 4 feet high in the rear. Dug-out troughs of sal wood are kept outside or just inside the sties for water and food for the pigs; the commonest food is a mash made from the chaff or husks of *kosra* (*kutki*; *Panicum miliaceum*) and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

and every Maria house was occupied by members of the Parllo clan, the only partial exception being the empty house (no. 1-a) which had till recently been occupied by a youth of the Deda clan, which may intermarry with the Parllo clan, serving as *lamana'i* to win the niece of Parllo Murra, occupant of house no. 1-d. It will be observed that some long-houses have a joint menstruation hut at the rear of the house, while in some there is a separate *kala* for each house in the long-house. The *karyap-gaita's* house is at the dormitory end of the street, a very usual position.

The shifting of villages

It has already been implied that though a village site may be abandoned for superstitious reasons, the predominant reason is economic, the exhaustion of the *penda* slopes that can be conveniently cultivated from the existing village. If three or more *kaghai* (*penda* sites) can be dealt with from one *paghai* or village site, then the village may remain on that site for seven or eight years, even though there are other *paghai* in the other *penda* sites cultivated from it; or if any portion of the last *penda* site to be cultivated is very remote from it, then a few houses may be shifted there. What makes the old topographical survey maps so useless for finding a modern village is that they mark only the village site occupied in the sixties, generally, too, by the particular name of that site, not by the general name of the village. The big village of Orcha, for example, is not marked as such, but by the name of its *paghai* Hoinar. A reference to the sketch map of the parish (to use a term more suitable than 'village') of Handawada in Dantewara Mar (opposite p. 108) will make the position clear. The parish has ten alternative *kaghai* cultivation sites, viz.:—

1. Kawar *kaghai*, 1st half.
2. Ditto, 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta *kaghai*.
4. Hotangpal *kaghai*.
5. Kurmelnar *kaghai*.
6. Rekarai *kaghai*.
7. Handawada *kaghai*, 1st half.
8. Ditto, 2nd half.
9. Ahekole *kaghai*, 1st half.
10. Ditto, 2nd half.

Of these, nos. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 only contained *paghai* village sites. In February 1930 the main village was still settled in no. 9, but the *penda* slopes in nos. 9 and 10 had been exhausted, and those in no. 1 had been partly cultivated for the first year and were being reaped. Nos. 9 and 10 had lasted for six years and, though the villagers had started to cultivate no. 1 a long way below the village site in no. 9 and on the other side of the Goinder river, they were only then at harvest time starting to shift the village to the *paghai* in no. 2; in fact, the labour of the first year's work of clearing and cultivating a fresh *penda* slope is so heavy that the shifting of the village itself is, when necessitated by the distance of the existing site

[text continues on p. 109]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

361
241
621
427

Key to Figure 6

Kaghai Names (see p. 107).

1. Kawar, 1st half.
2. Do., 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta.
4. Hitangpal
5. Kurmalnar.
6. Rekarai.
7. Handawada, 1st half.
8. Do., 2nd half.
9. Ahekele, 1st half.
10. Do., 2nd half.

The letters against fields in nos. 2 and 3 and houses and granaries in nos. 1, 3, 9 and 10 refer to the tenants in the list below. Tenants A to N are Gume by clan, O to Q, Tamo.

(*Abbreviations.*—M = mother, W = wife, S = grown-up son, b = boy child, g = girl child, D = marriageable daughter.)

Letter	*Tenant*	*Family*	*Area in acres*	*Rent* Rs. a.
A	Modi s/o Malla	M., cousin's widow	5·00	2 4
B	Lalu s/o Banda, Bhum-gaita	W., 1 b.	4·50	1 12
C	Banda s/o Bursai	W., 2 g.	6·25	3 8
D	Horra s/o Musra	W., 1 g.	3·50	2 4
E	Masa s/o Kulo-gaita	W., 1 S., 1 g.	7·50	4 12
F	Pido s/o Doga	W., 1 b.	3·50	2 0
G	Irpa s/o Karanje	W.	1·50	1 8
H	Rama s/o Peda Junga s/o Rama	W., 1 S., 2 g.	4·50	2 4 1 8
I	Kohla s/o Pahandi	W., 1 D., 1 man serving to win daughter's hand	4·00	1 8
J	Doga s/o Wijja	W., 2 b., 1 g.	4·00	1 12
K	Kuma s/o Boda	W., 1 g.	4·50	1 4
L	Juga s/o Wijja	M.	1·50	2 0
M	Malla s/o Gorra, Kasyeq-gaita	W., 1 S., 1 b., 1 g.	5·50	2 4
N	Pahandi s/o Karanje	W., M.	2·50	2 12
O	Hara s/o Pandu	W.	3·00	2 4
P	Bandi s/o Kuli	W., M., 2 b.	5·00	2 12
Q	Musra s/o Pandu	W.	2·25	2 4
		Total Acres	68·50	Rs. 40 12

There was also in Ahekele Kaghai no. 9 a house shared by a Rawat and a Telugu with a small tobacco plot paying 4 annas rent 4

Rs. 41 0

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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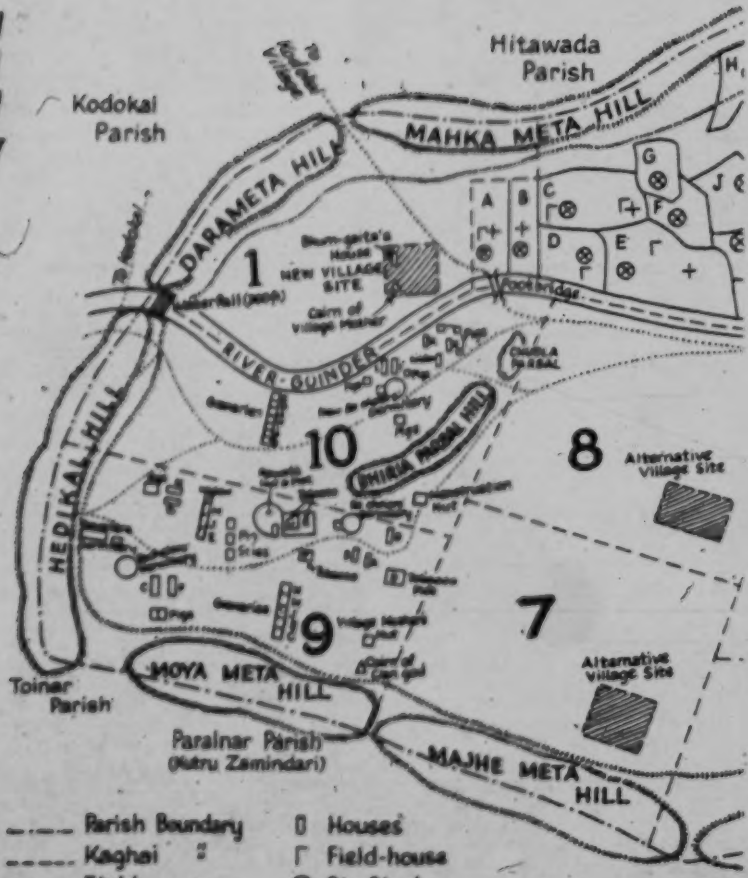

Parish Boundary
Kaghai
Field
Footpaths
Houses
Field-house
Big Shed
Small Shed

The buildings etc. in Kaghai Nos 9 & 10 are of course drawn too large in comparison to the areas of the Fields in Nos 2 & 3; actually they left ample room for Fields in Nos 9 & 10, but had become more scattered when those Fields became exhausted

FIGURE 6
PARISH MAP OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(A)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949 ·
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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241
621
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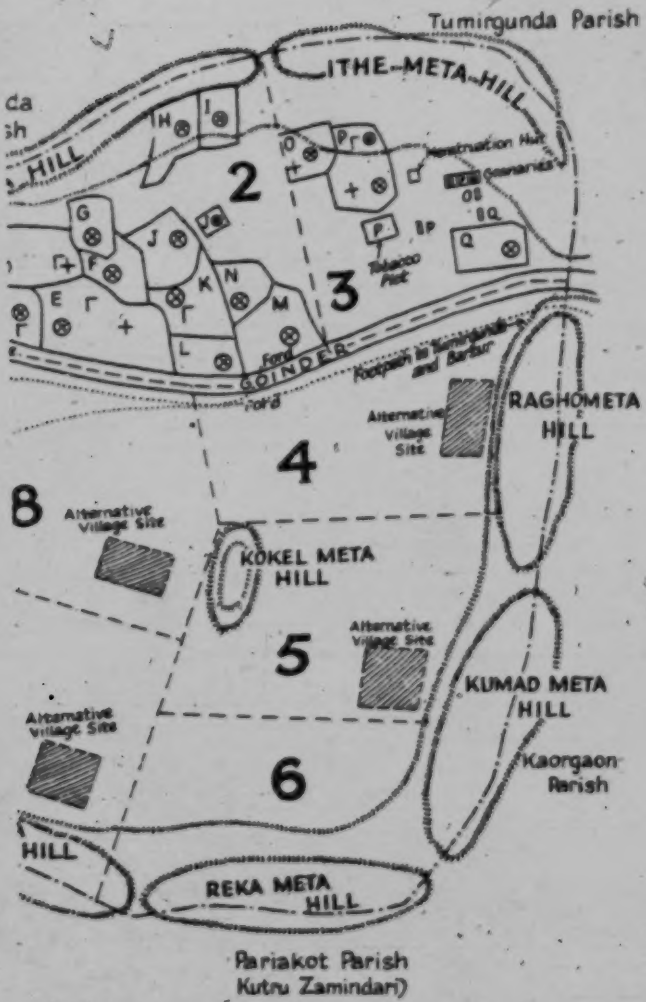

OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from the fresh cultivation site, postponed till after the first harvest has been raised on the latter. This is inconvenient only to the women, as from the time when the new *kosra* comes into ear till the harvest is over all the men sleep apart from their wives in their fields, while their womenfolk have to sleep in the village, it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to have sexual intercourse during this period. As it was inconvenient for the bachelors to sleep in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) on the hill-top village in Ahekele *paghai*, a temporary dormitory had been made near the river, actually in Ahekele *kaghai* no. 10, but close to the bridge by which the villagers crossed the river to their *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai*; and there were also four houses there, and a row of granaries, that site having been more convenient for some of the villagers whose fields had been on the lower slopes of *kaghai* no. 10 when that was being cultivated. Handawada is a village of the Gume clan; and all the houses in the village on Ahekele *paghai*, those by the river in *kaghai* no. 10, and the one advance-guard house in Kawar *paghai*, as well as all the *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1, belonged to members of the Gume clan: but in the small Irpmeta *kaghai* no. 3 three families of the Tamo clan, with which the Gume clan may intermarry, had been allowed to have *penda* cultivation and to build houses and granaries; the wives had all been Gume girls. In the new village site, Kawar *paghai*, one villager had already built his house, to which I referred above as the advance-guard house, because he had been sent to make an experimental *penda* field in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1 a year in advance of the rest of the villagers, in accordance with custom; on the success of this experimental cultivation depends the villagers' decision whether to migrate *en masse* in the following year. There was also a newly made cairn close by where a ceremony in honour of the Village Mother had been performed as an essential preliminary to the shifting of the village. When I next camped in the parish in March 1934, the villagers had for three years occupied Kawar *paghai*, and the houses were dirty and smoke-blackened; the villagers had found the site feverish and unhealthy owing to its proximity to the river, there had been several deaths, and Kawar *kaghai* nos. 1 and 2 had each been exhausted in two years. Their Tamo relatives had exhausted Irpmeta *kaghai* and left the parish. The *Bhum-gaita* and another villager had been sent ahead to make experimental *penda* plots in Hitangpal *kaghai* (no. 4), and the villagers proposed to shift the village during 1935 to the village site in that *kaghai* or the adjacent Kurmelnar *kaghai* (no. 5); the experiments in Hitangpal had succeeded, and the villagers were to start their *penda* felling in a few days.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The population is comparatively small, and the land available for
[423] the shifting *penda* cultivation is very extensive. There is practically no individual property in *penda* land, and it is recognized only in permanent rice fields.

361 In comparison, the Bison-horn Maria country is thickly
● 241 populated; there is far more permanent rice cultivation; much old *penda* land has lost its forest growth, or is getting steadily
178 slower in recuperating it after each time when it is felled and burnt
621 for *penda* cultivation; and each villager likes to have a large *bari* or garden enclosure at the back of his house or in the immediate neighbourhood of the village where he can grow tobacco, maize, chillies, tomatoes and sesamum, and can pen his cattle for the sake of their manure. In consequence, economic considerations now operate in favour of the permanency of Bison-horn Maria villages and against their being shifted; as the pressure on the land has become greater the alternative sites (*padar*), to which in past generations a village was from time to time shifted, have been permanently occupied by hamlets (*para*) of that village, and the settlers in the hamlets have permanently occupied the adjacent *penda* sites once cultivated in rotation by the shifting village. Many big Bison-horn villages have six or seven hamlets, some of which are virtually separate villages, and are beginning to assert a separate identity by having their own headmen and sometimes their own village priests, though on formal occasions all will still gather together at the original *padar* of the village and its hamlets, and acknowledge there the authority of the headman and priest of the parent village. In the Abujhmar hills, moreover, each village is still inhabited almost entirely by members of one clan, and all the lands of the villages are regarded as the lands of the clan. But in the Bison-horn country, though each parish is still said to be the *bhum* (earth) of the clan which first settled there, yet there are generally in the village many houses of other clans and wife-clans, from whom the first settlers and their descendants have taken wives. Though they will still say that a certain village is the *bhum*
[423] of the clan that founded it, yet in consequence of the many representatives of other clans settled there now the village and its lands are not looked on as that clan's property in anything like the same degree as among the Hill Marias, nor in actual fact is the original clan so free to shift the village as it was before it allowed its wife-clans to share its village site and cultivable lands. Often, too, the headman is no longer a member of the settler clan. If,
[166] therefore, a Bison-horn village does shift in these days, the move is probably due to superstitious motives, or to epidemic or epizootic disease.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE

THE whole life of the Maria is primarily directed towards the raising of food from the earth, either by cultivation, or by gathering the fruits of the forest, or by fishing, hunting or trapping. His agriculture, as we have seen, determines the sites of his villages, and regulates his relations with his wife. His festivals, it will be seen, are designed either to ensure the benevolence of the earth and the ancestors and the clan-god towards the crops about to be sown, or to celebrate the first eating of each of the main crops, and the final harvest-home, in a spirit of communal thanksgiving. The human population to him is the crop of men that the *Bhum* or Earth raises for the clan, or for the Ruling Chief.

The Hill Maria still regards the crops as the result of the combined labours of the village rather than of the labours of individuals. If one suffers, all suffer, and all combine to support the old and the needy, and to help each fellow villager to get through the heaviest parts of the yearly agricultural round. The young man on marriage, or the fellow clansman settling in the village, must have his share of the village lands for cultivation. In the raising of crops, then, the village and not the individual cultivator is the unit, even now, in the Abujhmar hills. But the Bison-horn Maria is an individualist. He has lived long in contact with semi-Hinduized neighbours, and has long begun to practise the more advanced methods of the settled cultivator. Permanent cultivation fosters individualism. Even in the Abujhmar hills the few permanent rice fields are definitely the private property of individuals; and as the use of the plough spreads and more and more of the wet lands become permanent rice fields, the owners of these fields begin more and more to assert in their shifting cultivation plots the rights of permanent private ownership already admitted in their rice fields. This has already happened among the Bison-horn Marias, aided by the rapid growth of population increasing the pressure on the land and reducing the land available for distribution to newcomers to the villages. The indications are that formerly they shared the communal attitude of the Hill Maria. In describing, therefore, the agricultural life of the community, I shall deal primarily with that of the Hill Marias, indicating where necessary the different developments among the Bison-horn Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It will be convenient to describe here the religious ceremonies of the Hill Marias, so bound up are they with their agriculture; but as the agricultural ceremonies of the Bison-horn Marias are much more elaborate, it will be more appropriate to describe them in dealing with religion in Part IV. Unless, therefore, I state otherwise, the ceremonies mentioned in this chapter will be those of the Hill Marias only.

In previous chapters, when speaking of the shifting cultivation of the Marias, the term which I have generally used is *penda*.

Systems of cultivation

Central Provinces literature has used the general terms *dahia* or *bewar* indiscriminately for all forms of cultivation in which crops are raised on the ashes of trees felled and burned for that purpose. In Bastar *dahi* is the Halbi term applied to the system of cutting trees or brushwood in the forest, and bringing them to an old unembanked field, where they are spread out to dry and then fired just before the rains break. Such fields are always level, and not hill slopes. The practice is known to the Hill and the Bison-horn Marias, and called *parka*; but as it is usually applied to old fields that have lain fallow (or occasionally to a rice field which is to be sown with a dry crop), the Hill Marias make little use of it, but will take more to it now that the substitution of a poll-tax for the former attempt to impose a regular land revenue settlement is encouraging them to re-cultivate old rice fields and to bring the flat *marhan* lands under cultivation. It can be seen in the villages between Orcha and Chhota Dongar, on the edge of the Hill Maria country, where the hills begin to open out into broad valleys.

Flat lands covered with forest growth which is cleared from time to time and burned for shifting cultivation are known in the Halbi language as *marhan*. The forest growth is felled *in situ* and spread out to dry in January or February; it is fired towards the end of May, and the ashes are spread evenly over the soil with an instrument like a squeegee with a handle eleven or twelve feet long, called *dosna-dang* in Halbi and *parka-lathi* by the Marias; as the name makes it clear, this is used for spreading the ashes in *parka* or *dahi* cultivation also. The ashes are ploughed into the ground after the first fall of rain. *Marhan* cultivation is called *dippa* by Murias and Hill Marias, and *erka* by the Bison-horn Marias, who subdivide it further into *mudur-erka* or timber forest *marhan*, and *marram-erka* or scrub-jungle *marhan*. These flat lands can be cultivated for only two years normally; in the first year the undergrowth is cut, the smaller trees and some boughs of big trees, while the big trees are girdled. To provide ashes for the second year, the big trees girdled the year before are felled, after piles of

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

dry brushwood have been burnt round their feet if the girdling has not prevented some sap again rising. Ultimately, if these lands do not have a long enough rest between successive clearings, the forest loses its power of regeneration; and it is to such former *dippa* or *erka* lands that the *parka* or *dahi* system described above is applied. *Dippa* is fairly common between Orcha and Chhota Dongar, and it is because there is plenty of land still available to ensure each *dippa* an adequate rest that *parka* cultivation is so uncommon. But in the more open country of the large Bison-horn Maria villages much land seems to have lost its forest regenerative power, and every remaining non-fruit tree has its boughs lopped year after year to provide fuel to be carted off to the old *erka* lands for *parka* cultivation till it looks, when its new leaves sprout, like a Lombardy poplar in shape. The raking of the ashes with the *parka-lathi* in the height of the hot weather is very exhausting, and the men who do this work often suffer for some days later from very dark-coloured urine.

Both *dippa* (*erka*) and *parka* are more advanced methods of cultivation than the Hill Maria's favourite *penda* or hill slope cultivation. For this he fells and burns the forest growth on the hill slopes, which are often very steep. Beyond roughly distributing the unburnt material over the slope, and, wearing wooden clogs or strips of *saja* bark to protect the soles of his feet, poking unburnt logs into a burning patch with long bamboo poles, he does not try to spread the ashes evenly, or use the *parka-lathi*, and consequently adjacent patches of crops vary greatly in height and density. He sows the seed broadcast in the ashes after the rains have broken, and does not attempt to dig up the soil of the slopes with his *gudari* hoe except in the few patches where the sown seed does not germinate; these he roughly scarifies and resows. The *Gazetteer* (p. 54) repeats the story that the seed is 'sown along the top of the slope from which the rain water washes it down and spreads it over the field'; the bare idea of this makes Hill and Bison-horn Maria laugh, and it is obvious that if sowing were so much left to chance, the only parts of the slope producing any crops would be the sides of the natural drainage channels. The Hill Maria does scarify his rare permanent rice fields and sometimes his *dippa* land with his hoe, and one man in three hundred may use a plough on them; but the Bison-horn Maria uses his plough on rice field, *parka* and *erka* and even occasionally on the lower and less steep parts of his *penda* slopes, while he scarifies with his hoe all that he does not plough.

In most Hill Maria parishes *penda* is the only kind of cultivation, and though in much of the Bison-horn country permanent

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 rice cultivation, semi-permanent *parka* fields, and the less ephemeral *erka* cultivation have displaced it, yet tracts remain like those round Katakalian and Kuakonda, from Paknar to Massenar, where *penda* still reigns supreme, and in late May hillside after hillside here is speckled grey with the fresh ashes of the newly burned timber, or there is dotted with the vivid green of the fresh undergrowth shooting up from the old roots and stumps which have somehow survived the last three years of fire and axe; hard by are patches of pole forest ready for their turn of *penda*, when the newly fired plots are exhausted. Though maps show such areas in the Bison-horn country as forest, they are really all cultivated areas, on which forest is grown in rotation with other crops as a source of fertilizing nitrates; and here every slope and every patch of forest has passed into the separate possession of individuals. The extent of *penda* cultivation in the Abujhmar hills is less apparent to the eye, as the population is far sparser and the parish lands far wider. The slopes successively cultivated get a longer fallow period, and are farther apart.

This shifting forest cultivation is criticized from two points of view. The forestry enthusiast laments the passing of much fine forest, and foretells desiccation and erosion. Others condemn *penda* as a lazy method of cultivation. The former forgets that in most of this area the forests have been too remote and inaccessible ever to be exploited, and that, even though some fine timber has been sacrificed, much that has gone was hopelessly over-mature. Vast areas of forest have been reserved by the State, and it has not been possible to work half of these reserves. The Maria does not range through his forests clearing patches for cultivation at random; he has more or less definite rotations, and the clearings after two or three years' cultivation may get twelve or fourteen years' rest, at the end of which they have a dense forest growth. Few signs are apparent of erosion, save in the more open parts of the Bison-horn country where *erka* has cleared the plains below the hills of forest; and there are no signs of any reduction in the heavy rainfall. In the remaining *penda* lands of the Bison-horn Marias no good timber is destroyed; whether these lands are at the moment growing grain or bush, they should now be regarded as lands under cultivation. The axe and fire of the *penda* cultivator have let light and civilization penetrate slowly but surely into the Bison-horn country as nothing else would have done for centuries; they alone have prevented the Abujhmar hills remaining a trackless wilderness.

It is a superficial criticism that condemns *penda* cultivation as lazy. The clearing of the land, especially if it be covered with heavy timber, is most arduous. Remote and sometimes almost

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

perpendicular slopes two or three miles from the village have to be cleared; the wood and scrub spread over the ground, which, in the Bison-horn country, has beforehand been dug over with the hoe or, perhaps, on the lower and less steep slopes, ploughed with great difficulty; field-houses, sheds and watching platforms have to be built on the *penda* slopes. The firing of the *penda* is particularly arduous; the stumps have to be cleared of the shoots that spring up when the rains have set in; and where deer or bison are numerous the clearings have to be fenced with heavy timber fencing. Man and woman here have unaided to do all that regular plains cultivators do with the aid of ox and plough, and much more besides. They do not weed their crops, and they broadcast their seed; here alone they save labour which falls to the regular cultivator, not out of laziness, but from ignorance.

For convenience the names which the Hill Maria gives to the months may here be stated:—

	English	*Maria*
The cultivator's year	December-January	Pusi
	January-February	Mah
	February-March	Phagur
	March-April	Chaita
	April-May	Mur
	May-June	Na
	June-July	Ha'i
	July-August	Hagh
	August-September	Eranj
	September-October	Eram
	October-November	Orma
	November-December	Pa, or Pand

The Bison-horn Maria uses generally the local Hindu names for the months. The calendar is, of course, lunar, the word *lenj* meaning either moon or month. Of the above names the first four are obvious corruptions of the Hindu names Pus, Magh, Phalgun and Chait. Mur is explained as meaning 'beginning'; 'to begin' is *mur kiyana*. Na is a shortened form of *nalung*, the numeral 4, Ha'i of *ha'ingu* (5), Hagh of *argu* (6), while the other four names are derived from forms akin to the Telugu words for 7, 8, 9 and 10, namely *eru* (7), *ermori* (8), *ormadu* (9) and *padu* (10); it is interesting to note that although ordinarily the Hill Maria, except on the southern edge of the Abujhmar hills, has Gondi forms only for numbers 1 to 6, and after that uses the Hindi numerals, in the nomenclature of the months he remembers Dravidian forms for numbers 7 to 10. He counts the year as beginning in Mur, though some will say Na. (The Bison-horn Maria uses the local Hindu names for the months.) But as the actual round of agricultural operations begins with the felling of trees for the coming *penda*

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 805 cultivation, it will be convenient to start this account from the new moon of Phagur, that is to say, the new moon nearest to the end of February, before which it is not considered right to start cutting forest for *penda*, though the work is started two or three weeks earlier for *dippa* cultivation. The choice of the *kaghai* site (see p. 107 above) for the *penda* will have been made beforehand, either in informal discussion among the village elders or at the ceremony after *Koqsar*, the great concluding harvest festival, at which the *kasyeq-gaita* seated on his *udam-garia* seat of honour with the villagers seated around him, confirms by formal pronouncement the decisions probably already reached in informal discussions with the elders about the village arrangements for the coming year.

241 Before the felling of the forest may begin, a further ceremony takes place. I attended the ceremony at Orcha on March 11th, 1934, when the moon of Phagur was nearly full. At about 1 p.m. the *kasyeq-gaita* with the elders proceeded to the selected *kaghai*, which was covered with a dense growth of sapling sal trees; the oldest villager present, a man of about fifty, said that he was a small child when it had last been cultivated. There Usendi Delu, the *kasyeq-gaita*, cleared a small piece of ground at the foot of a *saja* tree, set up a stone on it against a root of the tree, and placed an egg upright on its pointed end in front of the stone. He then squatted on the ground before the stone to the right of the egg, and Usendi Moda, the *gaita* or secular headman, to the left of the egg. Both put their hands together, palm to palm, touched the ground below the egg with them and raised them to their foreheads, uttering in unison the formula, '*Bhum kenji! Talugh kenji! Jimme jaga kenji! Anam pirka a'i, nehna nehna manna a'i! Kohla pandi! irka gumur hadi!*' (Earth hearken! Mother hearken! All that is here and around hearken! Let our crops and vegetables grow here, let them grow and yield full increase! Let our *kutki* ripen! Let our cucumbers and pumpkins mature!) They repeated the formula in unison, again saluted the earth in front of the egg, and then arose. The congregation of elders which had squatted around them and kept silence all through the ceremony also arose, and everyone returned to the village, leaving the egg there unbroken. There was no formal felling of the first tree, and no allotment of the different plots of *penda* land.

241 423 From this ceremony onwards all are free to start felling. There is no formal allotment, but villagers divide up the land by mutual discussion, the size of each plot depending on the number of persons in the household to be fed and capable of doing a full day's work with axe and hoe. It is largely a matter of one man volunteering to clear one plot and another man the next, and so on;

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the preparation of the *kaghai* site is a task to be accomplished by the whole village. Disputes are practically unknown, owing to this strong feeling of community of interest. There is, moreover, in the Abujhmar hills ample land for all, and any man is free to work harder than others if he likes to cultivate a larger plot; but he seldom does so unless he either is a newly married newcomer to the village, bent on building up a reserve of grain, or has a large number of dependents. There is no guarantee that a man will have the same plot as that allotted to him when the *kaghai* was last previously cultivated, or even a plot of the same area; but in villages where land is not so ample as in others, and a *kaghai* may be cultivated therefore at shorter intervals, each man as far as possible is allowed the same plot that he occupied at the previous cutting, though he may have to contribute a part of his former land to accommodate newcomers or newly married youths. There are villages where either the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita* is a strong man and has arrogated to himself a right to allot the *penda* plots; but he would get short shrift if he were unfair in his allotting: he is not a chief, but only *primus inter pares* among the village elders.

Plots once allotted and cultivated are for the time the private property of the householder who cultivates them, and he marks the limits of his cultivation either by leaving certain tree stumps to serve as boundary marks (the Bison-horn Marias who retain permanent rights over their *penda* plots are especially careful about this, the boundary trees often being left intact and not even lopped, save in so far as necessary to keep birds off the *penda*), or by planting lines of roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) or of *til* (*Sesamum indicum*) along the edges of his plot; roselle with its crimson seed-vessels and *til* with its deep yellow blossoms make very vivid boundaries.

Each family fells its own *penda* plots, and the villagers do not combine to clear each plot in turn as they combine in threshing. The work takes two or three weeks, and the men do all the heavy work, though women and children assist in cutting small trees and undergrowth and in arranging them for firing. Any fruit trees are carefully spared. If any of the ground is dug up with *gudari* hoes, men do most of the work, though they leave it to women on the flat *dippa* lands or on the gentler *penda* slopes. The iron *pulu* digging stick is used for grubbing up roots large enough to be a serious impediment. Much timber, when the growth is heavy, is reserved for fencing the *penda* against wild animals, where any herds of deer survive. The wood is left to dry through the heat of April and May, which are holiday months.

When the wood is dry, the *kasyeq-gaita* calls a meeting in the village dormitory to fix a day for firing. All the villagers combine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to fire all the *penda* plots simultaneously, and the women take no part in this work. There is no public ceremony before the firing; but the *kasyeq-gaita* starts it for the whole village by firing the first bundle of dried brushwood in his own plot with a bundle of dried grass kindled from a glowing ember brought from his own house; he makes fire with a fire-saw only if no ember is available or if it has died on its way to the *penda*. At Handawada in May 1930, heavy rain fell, and so delayed the firing of the *penda* that the *kasyeq-gaita* and village elders went in deputation to the clan-god Verma Pen of the Gume clan at Toinar and promised to sacrifice a cock to him if he would stop the rain; he only received his cock after he had fulfilled the condition and it had been possible to fire the *penda*. The firing takes only three or four days if the wood is really dry.

241 417 Between firing and sowing there is only a short interval in which the villagers must work hard to prepare their fences and field houses. There are no fences between individual plots as a rule, these being marked off either by lines of *til* or roselle at sowing, as already explained, or by laying a few poles lengthwise along the edge of the plots; but there is a general fence around each block of plots, except where there is no risk of animals damaging the crops. A type of fencing found only around Orcha and the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*, known as *kokor* (crooked) *garpi*, is a zig-zag stockading of logs laid horizontally on each other, the sides of each projecting angle being fifteen or twenty feet long; it looks like a vast herringbone pattern climbing the hillside. Grass *tum* fences, made in the same way as the *tum* partitions of houses already described, are used where the need for protection from animals is less, and, where bamboo is very plentiful, bamboo wattle-work fences. Another type of substantial timber fence is the *welma* fence consisting of poles laid horizontally one on another, held in position between pairs of bamboo uprights driven into the ground, and tied together at intervals between the horizontal poles; the upright bamboos are generally the two halves of a thick bamboo split lengthwise. I have not noticed in the hill villages the stockades of sal piles driven into the ground which are common among the Murias of the north and are met in Bison-horn Maria villages also.

241 342 513 [374] The chief field-house is really a sleeping platform raised high above the level of the crops on wooden piles, similar to the field watchers' *machan* found throughout Central India, but far more elaborate; the space between the piles below the platform is walled round with bamboo wicker-work or *tum*, and there is a thick thatched roof. As in the dormitories, a fire is kept burning at night below the platform to warm those sleeping on it. Tools and weapons, and cooking pots and food, are kept in the room below the platform,

PLATE XIII

[facing p. 132]

HILL MARIA *PENDA* FIELD, JUST HARVESTED, DUDMARKA, KUTRU MAR

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Plate p. 132

241

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate
342 cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in
513 various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian
241 wigwams, known as *panambaksha*. They may also erect big and
343 small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

241 Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

[834] **Sowing** From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory.
241 Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-ahk*).
769 These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit kenjat! Miku har kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemasi mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

241 On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyeq-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

● 241

The people of Bastar are apt to use the Halbi word *kosra* as a generic term for all grains raised by *penda* cultivation. Strictly speaking, it applies only to *kutki*, *Panicum miliaceum*, which the Marias and Murias call *kohala*, to which they also give the same wider meaning as *kosra*. The early sown grains are called generically ' small *kosra* ', and those most sown are *Panicum frumentaceum*, known as *sawa* or *ghatka* or, to the Hill Marias, as *amu*, and *Panicum miliare*, known as *sika* or *chikma*, which seems also to be the grain known to the Hill Marias as *turya-kohala* ; others sown are *kodon* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) and *hikka*, a Hill Maria word which I have not been able to identify ; the Bison-horn Marias, and, to a much smaller extent, some Hill Marias, also sow much *haruna* or light mountain rice. All these are sown generally without any pulses, but cucumbers, marrows and gourds are sown early near the field-houses. *Panicum frumentaceum* and *Panicum miliare* ripen generally in time for their New Eating festivals to take place at the end of Hagh (July-August) ; the mountain rice and other early grains are reaped a little later, at the beginning of Eranj (August-September).

Crops

The second main sowing is of the later crops known collectively as ' big *kosra* ', chief of which is the true *kosra* or *kutki* (*Panicum miliaceum*), with which will be met *kodon*, *kang* (*Setaria italica*) and *bajra* (*Penicillaria spicata*). These are sown in Ha'i (June-July), to be harvested in Pa (November-December). No attempt is made to keep the different crops separate, and the confusion is made worse by broadcasting with them seeds of various pulses, especially *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus* ; Maria, *pupal*), *arhar* (*Cajanus indicus*), and *sem* (*Dolichos lablab* ; Maria, *jata*).

The third sowing is the ' *Os kosra* ' sowing of a second crop in August-September on the land from which the ' small *kosra* ' harvest has already been reaped. About a quarter of this is sown with ' *os kosra* ' millets, the remaining three-quarters being devoted to pulses, including not only varieties of the ' big *kosra* ' pulses, but also *mung* (*Phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (both *Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*). This crop is harvested in Pusi (December-January).

241
834
513

The rains bring out a plentiful crop of shoots from the stumps of the trees felled for the *penda*, and before these get too big a day is appointed for all the villagers to cut and get rid of them. As soon as the ears form on the growing crops it is taboo for the men to have sexual intercourse or to sleep in the village. This taboo remains in force until the final combined New Urad and Koqsar festival, when it is held at the end of Pusi

After sowing

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
· AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 [417] the midst of the grain crops to support them. The cut crops which are to be threshed are stacked on the wooden platforms prepared before sowing, in beehive shaped stacks, called *paki* by the Hill Marias and *kupa* in Halbi.

The women prepare the threshing-floor (*karanu* in the hill dialect), clearing a piece of ground near the stacks of grain, and plastering it with mud. In the centre of this the men erect a thick [784] bamboo railing on posts. It is *polo* for women to take part in the actual threshing. Oxen are never used. For each cultivator in [476] turn, beginning with the *kasyeq-gaita*, all the men and boys in the village combine to thresh (*wisna*). They range themselves in two rows facing each other, with the bamboo railing between them.[1] Holding this with both their hands and supporting themselves by it, they dance up and down, rubbing the ears of corn between their feet. They thresh in this way only *kodon*, *kutki*, rice, *ghatka*, *chikma* and *hikka*; the women pick the ears of grains like *kang* and *bajra* in baskets, and rub them in their hands to extract the grain. The cultivator whose grain is being threshed is expected to feed all the villagers helping him for that day, and if possible to give them [273] a good drink of *salphi*, the fermented sap of the sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*), which is raised from cuttings in large numbers all over the Hill Maria country. The threshed grain is winnowed by men only, winnowing being as taboo to women as sleeping in the fields or threshing. One man stands on a rough wooden platform and pours the grain from a basket held above his head, while another, if there is not wind enough, winnows the falling grain with a basketry winnowing fan of the usual Indian type (*het* in Maria). All the men and women of the village combine to carry the threshed and winnowed grain of each cultivator to his compartment in the long granary. They never measure their produce, but there is no taboo on this account; it simply is that they grow crops for their own sustenance, and not for sale, and it is easy to see whether the grain garnered is adequate for the coming year or 804 not. They do indeed understand something of bazaar measures, for some of their pulses and oil seeds are sold annually to raise the money needed to pay their poll-tax; they make their own measures of basketry, with different traditional shapes for each kind of produce that they sell; and at the bazaar you may see them measuring out their produce in these in front of the Hindu tradesmen to whom they are selling it. Their measures are very accurate, and need never be challenged. If they make them a little too large, they plaster a little mud over the bottom to reduce the capacity.

[1] I have since seen *kodon* and *kutki* threshed in the same way by Korkus on the Betul border of Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The Bison-horn Marias (and, I believe, many of the Murias also) have similar ideas of it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to thresh or winnow. They are not so particular about the cessation of conjugal life between the sowing and sprouting of the crops, and between their coming into ear and being garnered. They use bullocks to tread out the grain on a threshing floor. Each cultivator has to take the help of his fellow villagers to carry his corn, but it is a service for which he hires them, and not a routine piece of communal village service in gathering the village crop as in the Abujhmar hills.

It is taboo to eat any of the new crops until the appropriate new-eating festival has been celebrated. These are very similar to the *pandum* festivals of the Bison-horn Marias, which will be described in the chapter on religion; but they are less elaborate and are fewer in number; the Bison-horn Maria seems to have a *pandum* as an essential preliminary to almost every act of gathering the produce of field or forest. The Hill Maria has only three, or, in villages where the last festival is held as late as March or early April, four of these festivals. The first is known either as *Tur Korta Tindana* or *Amu Korta Tindana*, according as the chief of the early ripening rains crops is *Panicum miliare* (*turya-kohala*) or *Panicum frumentaceum* (*amu*), and is held at the end of Hagh, that is about the middle of August. In Eranj (September) comes *Hikka Korta Tindana* in villages, like Handawada, where there is no rice cultivation, and *hikka* (see p. 134 above) is the chief crop ripening next after the August crops; where much rice (*wanj*) is grown, *Wanj Korta Tindana* is celebrated instead at the end of Eram (middle of October). This is followed in Pusi (January) in the villages where the final festival is celebrated after February by *Kohala Korta Tindana*, the first eating of the main *Panicum miliaceum* (*kutki*) crop. The last and greatest festival, held on dates varying from the end of January till early April in different clan-areas, is *Pupal Korta Tindana*, combined with *Koqsar*, the clan-god's festival; when this takes place early enough in the year to be economically convenient, it is the new-eating festival not only of *urad* (*pupal*; *Phaseolus radiatus*) and other pulses and beans, but also of *kutki* and the other late ripening hill grains. '*Korta Tindana*' is Hinduized literally as '*nawa khana*', 'new eating'. A main reason for the varying dates of this last festival is that dancing is permissible only at it, at weddings and at the camps of touring officials. The round of festivities after the final harvest-home is prolonged by celebrating the festival clan after clan; all the youths of neighbouring clans go to dance at each other's *Koqsar*,

The new-eating festivals of the Hill Marias

241 ● 796 [535]

[see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

important, for then the *kasyeq-gaita* and, in a minor degree, the secular headman have their hour of glory, and something of the honour that might be paid to real chieftains. The *kasyeq-gaita* as intermediary between the Village Mother and her children sacrifices to her a pig and a cock, and sets before her a basket of new *kutki*, pulses and beans. A feast similar to that before the clan-god follows. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* proceeds to his *udam-garia* or seat-of-honour, next to which may be a smaller seat for the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*); it is either a long, flat boulder, or a flat stone supported on stone legs, as in Plate XXIII. He wears no insignia, and is to all appearance as naked and poor a Maria as all his villagers. The men seat themselves around in a circle on little stone cromlechs. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* formally announces the programme for the next year, what *penda* slope is to be cultivated, what arrangements are to be made to meet State or zamindari demands for land revenue or labour, and so on; the announcements, it is true, are the results of previous informal village discussions, and not the *kasyeq-gaita's* orders independently conceived by him, but his formal promulgation is needed before they can be brought into effect.

After *Koqsar* they are free to cut grass and bamboos, and to collect forest produce, or to hunt; it is true that in most villages there is little game but hares and field-mice, but a Maria thinks a field-mouse the rarest of delicacies, and will stop any occupation to chase a mouse or dig them out.[1] But the long year is over at last, and till the next sowing, though there is ahead the labour of felling, spreading and firing the wood for the *penda*, taboos are lifted, and there is no fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex. So now is the season of new marriages and of conjugal life in the home, and the seed is sown for the raising of the human crop.

Assessment and payment of land revenue among the Hill Marias

It has been indicated that there are the beginnings of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias. As a matter of fact, several villages have traces of old rice embanked fields. Two things long effectively checked the spread of permanent cultivation. One, before the 1910 rebellion, was the presence of a police station at Kutul, the headquarter village of the Bardal clan and *pargana* in the very heart of the Abujhmar hills. This meant a constant demand from the Kutul police for rice as *bisaha*,[2] and

[1] I had a carefully arranged beat for a family of man-eating tigers at Kutru ruined because the Hill Maria beaters rushed in wild enthusiasm to catch two or three mice disturbed by the beat.

[2] See p. 14 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the few who grew it soon abandoned its cultivation and returned to the hill grains which the police would not eat. The second thing, even more potent than the demand for *bisaha* because of its universality, was the land revenue policy. In the remotest times the hill villages paid what little assessment the Chiefs imposed on them in kind, royal granaries being situated at centres like Barsur, Partabpur and Narainpur. There is no need to believe the picturesque story told first to Elliot in 1853 and since repeated by writers down to Russell and Hiralal, that 'their tribute to the Raja of Bastar, paid in kind, was collected once a year by an officer who beat a tom-tom outside the village and forthwith hid himself, whereupon the inhabitants brought out whatever they had to give and deposited it on an appointed spot'[1]; this is one of the typical tales with which the old State officials used to try to disguise their utter ignorance of every part of their charge except the handful of villages in their immediate vicinity. But in actual fact there was no regular assessment. The secular headman of the village (*gaita* or *peda*) collected as a rough poll-tax from every able-bodied male cultivator whatever he could fairly be called upon to contribute in kind, and delivered the village contribution at the royal granary. Even when the Chief in 1865 and 1872 attempted for the first time to settle villages with outside lessees and to assess the land revenue on the basis of fixed payments partly in cash and partly in kind for every plough, his officers made no effort to interfere with the traditional system in the Abujhmar hills. But after the State came under management in 1891, the authorities aimed at gradually introducing improved settlement methods based on the experience of British districts in the Central Provinces. The general method was to ascertain the rate per plough imposed at the late Raja's last settlement, to decide what enhancement per plough each village could bear, and then to ascertain the number of ploughs in each cultivator's possession and in the whole village. The number of ploughs was estimated from a rough calculation of the seed capacity of each field, and further checked by comparison with the number of cattle, counted when brought home to the village in the evening. In the better cultivated parts of Bastar, seed capacity of 7½ *khandis*[2] was regarded as a plough of land, and in the jungly parts seed capacity of 5½ *khandis*. Simultaneously, every effort was made to extend to all parts of the State the leasing of villages to *thekadars* or lessees, who were available in numbers in the open and settled parts and only too ready to seize the chance of getting the aboriginal

[1] Russell and Hiralal, Vol. III, p. 120.

[2] The Bastar *khandi* is a measure equivalent to 40 *paili* or 160 *soli*; a *soli* contains 40 *tolas*, or approximately 1 lb.'s weight of rice.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

villages there for nothing, with the hope of appropriating the best village lands for themselves and getting them tilled by the forced labour of the villagers. The theory was that good and substantial cultivators from outside the State would bring capital and improved methods into Bastar and play something of the part played by the landlord in the development of English agriculture. In practice the *thekedari* system was the cause of untold harm even in the permanent villages of the State, where the alien *thekedar* destroyed the solidarity of village and tribal life besides mercilessly exploiting the aboriginals, whom indeed he goaded into rebellion in 1910. Luckily, I was able to secure its abolition for the future, and every opportunity has been taken to resume management of the villages through the headmen when a lease has fallen in or in cases of mismanagement.

When the authorities tried to apply the system to wild regions like the Abujhmar hills, fortunately for the Hill Marias their reputation as sorcerers was such, and their cultivation was so primitive, that no foreigners would take leases of their villages. There were hardly any ploughs, and the problem of estimating the seed capacity of *penda* plots on remote and steep hillsides was too much for the wits and energy of badly paid Hindu *patwaris*. A farcical record was, however, prepared of the number of 'hoe-ploughs' of land cultivated by each Hill Maria on the basis of a seed capacity assumed in nine cases out of ten by pure guess-work, the *patwari* and his superior officials never going near the villages. Individual assessments were then made on each man, in spite of the communal feeling in regard to the land. These assessments varied in their incidence without rhyme or reason, except that they had been based on guess-work. Men deserted their villages in large numbers and migrated into the Chanda part of the hills or into the Bastar zamindaris, with which the authorities were not so concerned. As it was felt that every good village should have a lessee, and no outsider would come near, the hapless headman of many a village was made to put his thumb-mark to a lease deed of his village, only to find himself in consequence legally responsible for the whole village assessment, even if his villagers had absconded or were unable to pay. The post of headman became one to be avoided or nominally given to the simpleton of the village, whom the villagers would put forward as a figurehead, while the *kasyeq-gaita* retained the religious headmanship and was the real headman so far as the villagers were concerned. No allowance was made for the vagaries of shifting cultivation; though one year a man newly married or with a large growing family to support might be allowed by the village a larger *penda* area than others, and after a year or two

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

241
651

would get only the normal share, yet, if the settlement took place in the first year, he might find himself saddled for all the period of settlement with a rent estimated on the seed capacity of that year. If a man dies, his widow is maintained by the village community and does not have her own cultivation; the taboo customs make any other arrangement impossible: but the State authorities would expect her, till the end of the settlement, to pay the rent assessed on her husband in his lifetime, and in practice this became a charge on the village. Villages themselves shift, as we have seen; and sometimes some villagers settle in one *paghai* and some in another. The *patwaris* would report these as two villages, and the settlement arrangements would be made accordingly. When *patwaris* came to prepare the annual rent papers, they might find that the villagers were cultivating a new *paghai* and say that they had not only to pay the rent assessed on the *paghai* that they were cultivating at settlement, but also an additional rent because they had also taken up 'new' land.

These are examples of the absurdities of the blind application to this most primitive race of assessment ideas evolved from those built up on long experience of other parts of India where there is little trace left of the old feelings of village solidarity. Fortunately, *patwaris* were too few, too tired and too afraid of 'Maria magic' to spend a moment longer in the Abujhmar hills than they could help; and those who should have checked their work shared their fears and found that there was more need of their presence in the tracts where assessments were considerable. A high and remote *penda* slope would never be visited at settlement, and even if the *patwari* made enquiries in his camp from assembled villagers they soon began to learn the virtues of concealment; the system, in fact, dealt a severe blow to the natural frankness of the people. The only kind of land that could not be concealed from the *patwari*, because always on the lower levels and close to the approach paths of the village, was the occasional patch of two or three permanent rice fields, on which promptly a very high rate of rent was assessed, little less than that applied in the rice lands of the good villages of the plains. The breaking of land into permanent cultivation should be regarded as an improvement in such tracts and exempted from enhancement of assessment. Cultivators with little use or understanding of money were scared at once by the prospect of more market bickering than ever to raise the cash to pay the enhanced rent, and before the 1927 Antagarh tahsil re-settlement practically all permanent rice cultivation had disappeared from the Abujhmar hills.

That 1927 settlement was, I hope, the last that will ever be attempted on such lines. The Settlement Officer did not personally

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

241
651

visit any Maria village or check the work of his subordinates on the ground. He called in the headmen to camps in the plains below, and announced the new rents. All had been enhanced on the basis of these seed capacity statements. These were of the usual guess-work type. The *patwaris* did not even visit each village, but called all the villagers from three or four villages to one camp and asked them how much land they cultivated. If a man said that he was cultivating a large area, his word was accepted, and he was assessed accordingly. If he equally truly said that he was cultivating four or five acres, the *patwari* refused to believe it and wrote him down as holding a 'hoe-plough' of thirteen or fourteen acres. Naturally, many villagers deserted to other lands of their clans in the zamindaris. In the years following the settlement, *patwaris* went to each village to prepare the annual papers, and a *patwari* who wanted to make a show of zeal generally reported that more land was being cultivated than at settlement, and had the alleged new areas assessed. In 1930 I found many examples of this; at Handawada the villagers had been assessed at settlement to Rs. 33 for 124 acres, and, as in the next two years the *patwari* had reported new cultivation, the assessment had been raised to Rs. 41. On measuring the cultivation on the spot, I found that seventeen able-bodied cultivators in all had 68½ acres. Four or five acres is, in fact, enough *penda* land to provide sustenance for the ordinary Hill Maria family.

Government accepted my recommendation to cancel this settlement in the Hill Maria country, and in its place to impose a poll-tax on every able-bodied male over sixteen years of age. The number of assessees is to be checked every fifth year, and every other check will thus coincide with the decennial census, and save duplication of work. The headman and elders are made responsible for collection and payment, and arrears are leviable from the village as a whole, not from individuals; it is left to the village community to decide what to do to any individual slacker. A commission of 1¼ annas in the rupee is paid to the headman for prompt full payment. Rice or other permanent cultivation is not specially assessed. No annual papers are prepared. *Pari passu* with the quinquennial count of able-bodied men, cattle are to be counted for assessing grazing rates, the annual enumeration of cattle being abolished; the rates will not be varied during the five years, whatever the increase in the number of cattle. The changes apply to the whole of the Hill Maria country in Bastar, in whatever administrative division it is situated.

The re-settlement of the whole area on this basis was carried out after I had left Bastar, in 1932, and was everywhere welcomed

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 651

by the Marias. It deals with the village community through its mouthpieces, the headmen and the elders. Many have returned to Bastar from the Chanda Maria country. The best sign which I observed when I spent the first month of my 1934 furlough in the Abujhmar hills was that the long abandoned rice fields are all being restored to cultivation. It is interesting to note that the headman has never ventured to keep the commission for himself, but always either divides it among the villagers, or by common consent spends it on pork or liquor for a village feast.

241

In the Bison-horn country as a whole there is now as much permanent and semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, and the *patwaris* have always been more accurate in their records. The people are more sophisticated and ready to safeguard their interests. The *penda* lands are fairly accessible, except in the hilliest parts. It has been pointed out already that each piece of each *penda* site, whether at the moment under bush or under crop, is now regarded as the individual holding of some cultivator. The people have many markets in their midst, and understand measures and seed capacities. It has not, therefore, been necessary to apply the poll-tax system there. A great deal could be done even there to turn the people from shifting to permanent cultivation by recognizing new permanent cultivation as an improvement.

Where the Hill Marias have started permanent cultivation they have in general adopted the methods of surrounding Murias or Bison-horn Marias, save that very few of them have mastered or attempted to master ploughing, but prepare the land with their *gudari* digging hoes. A few now keep hired Rawat herdsmen, but do not themselves tend, milk or work their cattle. If the recognition of permanent cultivation as an improvement could be combined with a determined attempt by the State to teach carting, ploughing and milking, even among the Bison-horn Marias, shifting cultivation would be greatly diminished.

Methods of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias

243 312

When he does grow rice, the Hill Maria generally does not irrigate it with water led from a storage reservoir or tank; his method is rather to build his dam across a stream or waterway and to cultivate the land above it. The illustration opposite shows both sides of the dam made in 1930 for cultivation of this kind at Tondawada; the deep hole below the dam was made when its predecessor was washed away by an abnormal flood. No water flows here in the cold weather. First a wall of grass *tum*[1] was erected along the length of the dam, and behind this a wall of *welma*[1] horizontal pole fencing, supported behind with thicker pole piles

[1] See p. 132 for definition of *tum* and *welma*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

243 312

driven into the ground; these were buttressed further with slanting pole props with forked ends bearing against the vertical piles, while smaller forked poles were at intervals driven into the dam on either side of the piles, but below the slanting props. This vertical pole-revetting faced downstream. Against the upstream face of the grass *tum* earth was banked with a gentle slope and gently sloped off to ground level upstream. A large and nearly hollow tree-trunk was left in the middle of the dam, to act as a pipe to carry off excess water. They called the dam *nadi*, and the tank *ote*. It was not built to store water, but to retain moisture in the tank-bed, and it was the bed which was cultivated, being dug all over with the *gudari* before the rains. The dam was still serviceable when I visited Tondawada in 1934, four years later, and other small rice plots had been made higher up the waterway by placing low mud dams across it. Though the village had shifted from the adjacent site and the *penda* slopes under cultivation in 1934 were far away, these rice patches were being prepared for cultivation in readiness for the 1934 monsoon.

241

Though it has been said above that the Bison-horn Maria has as much permanent or semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, there are many tracts in his country where *penda* is his main occupation. All Gonds or Koitor, wherever I have met them, seem at heart to long to revert to the raising of the light millets off the ashes of felled timber; though it is prohibited in the British districts of the Central Provinces, I have seen it in the *jagir* estates of the Chhindwara and Hoshangabad districts, and in the Nagpur district the prospect of being allowed to do this for the first year or two was in 1932 the best bait for attracting Gond settlers to a forest village in Ramtek tahsil and even to a malguzar's waste lands village in Saoner tahsil. So it would take little to make the far less advanced Bison-horn Maria abandon permanent rice cultivation and stick to *penda* on the hill slopes or *erka* on the plains; and much of his semi-permanent cultivation is only *parka* cultivation of former *erka* lands necessitated by their final refusal to bear any more forest after years of shifting cultivation; instead of at once applying permanent methods to the land, he cuts brushwood from other forests and brings them to the deforested land to burn instead of the brushwood it bore in former years. But in these *parka* fields he can raise only rice, not his beloved small millets. In his *penda* fields he sows only *kuthi*, *Panicum miliaceum*, of the type sown as the main crop in the Abujhmar hills; but in many places the forest growth felled for his *penda* is almost pure bamboo, and here instead of *kuthi* he sows what he calls *gondku*, which I have not had identified.

Bison-horn Maria cultivation

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 In his *mudur erka* (big tree *erka*) he raises *chikna* (*Panicum miliare*), *gatka* (*Panicum frumentaceum*) and *sama*, all crops of the first sowing, ripening by early August, and, as main crops, *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) which he calls *gurra*, and *kulthi*, which he, like the Hill Maria, calls *kokala*, both of which ripen with the *penda kulthi* in early December; with him *Eleusine coracana* is an important crop, as he uses it as a principal ingredient in his *landa* intoxicant. In his *marram erka* (brushwood *erka*) he sows only the pulses *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), which he calls *popul*, and *kulthi* (*Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*) which he calls *koreng*. The '*os kosra*' millets which the Hill Maria sows as a second crop after the crops reaped in August he calls '*mach kokala*', and sows not only similarly as a second crop, but also as the main crop in his *erka* land for the third and last year of its cultivation, when it is too exhausted to bear anything else.

[273]

241 423 Besides the fact observed on page 128 above that, unlike the Hill Maria, he ploughs the ashes, or digs them with his hoe, into his *erka* and *penda* lands, these lands have, therefore, this further great difference from the Hill Maria *penda* lands, that each crop has its own appropriate type of cultivation, and is therefore sown separately, not jumbled up with every other kind of crop in a hopeless welter. He is, moreover, careful to preserve any mango or other fruit trees on his plot. As he retains permanent rights over his plot, whether it is tilth or forest at the moment, he has to be more careful over its boundaries than the Hill Maria, and cannot be content with the temporary sowing of a line of *til* or roselle. At each burning, therefore, he spares important trees or stumps at boundary junctions, which he calls *sarkari* or 'authority' trees, and sometimes he leaves a thin line of trees standing along his boundary when he fells the forest. He generally grows his beans and gourds on these and other trees, not on poles stuck up in the middle of other crops like the Hill Maria.

241 [417] [231] It has been seen that he has always a *bari* garden enclosure round or near his house in the village, which he calls *lon-welung* or 'house fencing', and generally fences with either bamboo wattle-work (*wadur-welung*) or a fence of brushwood tied slantwise between horizontal struts (*jhat-welung*). Here at night he pens his cattle, and the ground is thus richly manured to bear maize (*jonna*), *sarson* or mustard (*tarson*) and tobacco (*pogo*)[1] as essential crops, with in these days frequent patches of chillies, tomatoes and other vegetables. *Sarson* is the most paying crop exported from Bastar.

[1] The Hill Maria grows tobacco and a few poor chillies and tomatoes in little plots left clear of dab grasses when *penda* land is useless for grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

and its cultivation has spread among all lowland Gonds, who expect to pay their land revenue out of its proceeds.

Lastly there are the permanent rice lands, for wet cultivation. There are wide areas of permanently embanked and irrigated rice fields (*weda*), the use of which the Bison-horn Marias have learnt from their Hindu neighbours; more typical of them are the embankments of little hill-side watercourses into a series of descending little fields, which they call *jhorki weda*. The only fields which they consider can really be cultivated year after year, without resting fallow or the refreshment of wood ash or cow-dung ash, are the fields with good deep black soil; but too frequently the Maria has been elbowed out of such lands by the Hindu lessee of his village, or by Halba settlers. The other rice lands the Bison-horn Maria believes to become exhausted or 'develop sand' after two or three years' cultivation, and he then leaves them fallow for four or five years or more till they are covered with a thick growth of grasses and weeds, especially a grass he calls *chimmia*. The grass, although not burnt like forest in *erka* and *penda*, is looked upon by him in much the same way as a fertilizing agent to be ploughed into the soil; and so in a considerable degree even the cultivation of his *weda* rice fields must be regarded as shifting.

He ploughs these fallow lands up during the rains, unless, owing to their position, they are too wet to be ploughed till the end of the rains, and he repairs the embankments so that each field may retain ample water to rot the grass and weeds. At the end of the rains he gives them a second and more thorough ploughing, and leaves them alone all through the dry season. Just before the monsoon bursts he broadcasts rice seed, and then, when it has sprouted and there is adequate water in the fields, he follows the Chhattisgarhi practice of *biasi*; that is to say, he puddles up the field, young plants and all, by working all over it a flat log, on which he stands, yoked to a pair of oxen. When the land has been ploughed both before and at the end of the rains, the system is called *kohana*; where only the ploughing at the end of the rains has been possible, it is called *karhatti*. The second system is, of course, applied to all fields that have borne a crop just before being ploughed.

If it rains heavily before *kohana* and *karhatti* lands prepared in this way can be sown broadcast, they resort to the '*lai*' system. The seed is soaked in cold water and placed in baskets lined with the sacred *saja* leaves, filled with thick liquid cow manure, and covered over with *palas* (*Butea frondosa*) leaves; it is left thus for three or four days to sprout. The sprouted seed is washed out of the cow-dung with warm water, and is then sown broadcast. A

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

to the shed where the animals killed in the second ritual hunt were kept and cut up, and there they are cooked along with the head, intestines and lower legs of those animals, and eaten by the men of the village.

This should be followed on the next Sunday by the *Jur-weta* for the whole *pargana* at the chief village of the *pargana*, the *perma* of that village acting as the officiant before the altar of bows and arrows erected in the name of the Forest-maidens, and the *perma* and elders of each village offering an egg and a tooth-stick to be placed by the officiating *perma* in the bran-heap of each of the three Forest-maidens. The *weta* is sometimes followed by worship of the clan-god and the *Pen-harsita* festival, except in villages where that takes place at the Mandai or Deogudi Jatra on or about the full moon day of Magh. It has already been said that the *Jur-weta* is now abandoned in most *parganas* because nearly all except small game has been exterminated. Actually, however, the photograph illustrating the sacrifice to the Forest-maidens, facing page 211, was taken at a *Jur-weta* and not at the *wijja-weta* of the preceding week.

It remains to state what each man does with the packet of consecrated seed which he takes back from the Wijja Pandum to his house. Before seed-time, he calls in a medium (*waddé*), through whom he consults the oracle as to the propitious day and hour for the field sowing ceremony. At the appointed time, taking care to be overlooked by no one, he takes to his field a sowing basket containing the consecrated seed mixed with other seed, a little cooked rice and a cock. In the field he clears a little plot of ground, spreads rice on it and, as soon as the cock starts to eat it, cuts its head off from the throat upwards in the name of the Earth-god, and sprinkles its blood on the ground and on the seed in the basket. He prepares a small piece of the field for sowing, and on it sows three handfuls of the blood-sprinkled seed. He then cooks and eats the body of the cock in the field, leaving the head there, and makes his way back to his house, still trying to avoid being seen. After this ceremony he is free to complete his sowing when he likes.

Hareli

Hareli is not observed by all Bison-horn Marias, but is universal among Parjas and Bhattras and the Jagdalpur Murias, and, under its common local name of Amavas, amongst Halbas and other Hindus of the State. The Dantewara and Barsur temples have spread its observance among the Bison-horn villages of Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils, and the villagers generally wait till the temples have celebrated the festival before celebrating it in their villages. On the morning of the day on which they have decided to hold it, the village elders assemble at the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

procession at Jagdalpur. The Dantewara temple observes several of the local *pandum*, if in a Hinduized form, while the ceremonies of the isolated Telanga villages now surrounded by a sea of Bison-horn Maria villages have become little different from those of the Bison-horn Marias. Hinduization there is, and has long been; but that alone does not account for the differences between the ritual of the Bison-horn Maria and that of the Hill Maria and his Muria neighbours. The physical differences between the two sections of Marias are slight, but their traditions are different, and at least it is clear that they represent different waves of migration. The remarkable differences of dancing, drumming, singing and ritual, and in the intonation, words and inflexions of their dialects, which make them mutually unintelligible, cannot be explained merely by saying that the Bison-horn Marias are 'more advanced' and more in contact with Hinduism and Telugu influences than the Hill Marias.

Note.

Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., has, since this book went to the press, kindly sent me a note of an interesting recent investigation by the police at Madder in Bhopalpatnam zamindari. A Mohammedan woman asleep on the night of June 13th, 1937 in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a knife or arrow over her right ribs, and woke to see what she believed to be two Marias running away. The police enquiry elicited information that many Marias in Kutru zamindari (i.e. Bison-horn Marias or Hill Marias of the plains in long contact with Dorla or Bison-horn influence; the true Hill Marias would not venture down to Madder), before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice seed before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

would never be able to repay during his lifetime, and the debt would devolve on his sons. Another Maria from Irakdumme village had borrowed Rs. 20 bride-price from an Echli money-lender ten years before and had so far paid him paddy worth Rs. 22-8 as interest, but nothing towards principal, and had no idea what the final demand of his creditor would be. Another Maria from Batanfundi village had borrowed Rs. 12 from an Ahiri money-lender six or seven years ago and though he had repaid the principal was still being dunned for Rs. 40 worth of grain as interest, and was afraid that this high rate would now be doubled, as owing to the crop failure of 1939 he had been unable to repay any grain that year. 426 563

Throughout this area a crying need is an agency for advancing small seed-loans. The Government have seldom done this, on the theory that the zamindar should meet his tenants' needs; but we could not find one who had ever been given a seed-loan by the estate. The rates of interest extorted by the nests of money-lenders at Ahiri, Rajaram, Allapilli, Indaram, Echli and other centres are preposterous. The need for these seed-loans has been imposed on the Marias largely by the arbitrary stopping of their *podu* (*dahi*) shifting cultivation; *podu* fields always produced seed grain at least. Such is the pathetic honesty of the Marias that when the Debt Conciliation Board was working they readily acceded to the money-lenders' request to place their thumb-marks by the hundred on application after application begging the Board not to interfere between them and their money-lenders: it was only by persistent effort that the Board secured nearly 800 applications. In our camps the Maria elders opposed debt relief measures on the ground that if a man borrowed it was only right that he and his heirs after him should go on repaying. The final report of the Debt Conciliation Board of 1936 mentioned some fantastic cases. In one a Telugu Komti of Indaram had lent a Maria of Koreli a bullock on hire in 1920, at the usual fee of Rs. 4 worth of paddy. For twelve years the Maria went on paying Rs. 5 worth of paddy. In 1932 the Komti made out that the Maria still owed him Rs. 700 worth of paddy, and proceeded to show against him further compound interest of 50 per cent., until, when the Board took up the case, the Komti claimed as much as Rs. 2,320 worth of grain—all this for the hire of a single indifferent bullock. This, however, pales into insignificance against an Echli case of a money-lender lending Rs. 32 to finance a wedding a few years before, and in his accounts showing this debt, despite a repayment of Rs. 20, as having risen to Rs. 17,519!

At every halting place and camp the Marias' chief grievance, however, was not so much the exactions of money-lenders as the 241 735

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 735 economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again."[2]

177 291 Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

342 The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

273 656 [415] On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa.*
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias, Gonds, Marars, Mahras, Halbas, almost all communities were infected. At Jarawandi and in the villages of the Jharapapra and Aundhi zamindaris along the Bastar border many Maria and Halba villagers contrasted the Central Provinces Government's lack of care for them in Chanda and Drug districts with the anti-yaws and other public health work over the border in Bastar. It is of course only comparatively recently that doctors have recognized the existence of yaws as a distinct (and easily curable) disease which responds to treatment similar to the usual syphilis treatment; the *District Gazetteer*, for example, refers to the disease as 'a mild form of leprosy named "Gondi rog"'.[1]

Another thirteen miles of forest track, fairly easily negotiated by cars, brought us from Bhamragarh to the large village of Lahiri,[2] the headquarters of a *Sendhia's patti*, as mentioned at page 287. Lahiri lies at the foot of the Abujhmar Mountains, and beyond it no wheeled vehicles could proceed. Between Bhamragarh and Lahiri we saw several examples of the skilful *gatta* cultivation of the Marias, thus described in Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report:—

'In *gattas* the land above the dam is cultivated. To construct a *gatta*, a miniature valley with gently sloping sides, through which a stream flows, is chosen. The space between the banks of the stream is built up in the hot weather with trunks of trees, having their thinner end towards the point from which the current flows, and across these are fixed smaller logs and brushwood. The upstream face has thus a gentle slope to the front, while the rear face is almost perpendicular, and is sometimes strengthened by vertical stakes. The barricade is carried from four to eight feet above the level of the banks, and is then heaped with earth. As soon as the first rains have softened the ground, sods, about fifteen inches long by twelve broad and five thick, are dug with a heavy teak implement called a *katwa*, and with the sods wing embankments are built. These are run out in continuation of, and level with the log barricade, until the rise of the valley reduces their height to about a foot, when they are sloped off to the front and flanks; and pipes of *mohwa*, *ain* or *gougool* are put through. Similar *gattas* are constructed at convenient distances at other points of the stream, and if the situation be favourable, twenty of these *gattas* may be seen spanning the valley in regular series. Surplus water passes round the flanks of the *gatta*, and sometimes in floods, the stream tops the dams and cascades over. Rice is planted in the wet ground above the dam, and, where there is a succession of *gattas*, water, if required, is passed from a higher to a lower level through the wooden pipes in the embankment. Some of the *gattas* rise to twenty feet above the stream bed, and are very substantial structures, flooding large areas.'

This skill is slowly making its way among the Hill Marias, and the illustrations facing page 146 of this book of a Hill Maria dam at Tondawada in Bastar are really of a typical *gatta*, including the hollow tree-trunk pipe. That this traditional skill persists and has developed into a real irrigation technique has been shown by Rao

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.
[2] Spelt Lahir on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV8455.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 312 Bahadur D. Lakshmanswamy in his 1922-4 Sironcha and Garchiroli Settlement Report, paragraph 31 :—

'Agriculture in parts of these zamindaris is as thorough as in the most advanced *khalsa* tracts. One has simply to look at the extensive rice fields and *gattas* of the Madias [*sic*] to admire the almost mathematical levelling of their field embankments. The Maria Gond has a genius for rice cultivation. He selects the best *silas* position area, and with an intuition for irrigation lays out his fields one below the other so as to utilise water from the field above to that lower down. A natural stream or spring of water is generally never allowed to go waste by him. He so embanks and diverts the supply by a system of well arranged water-channels as to utilise the whole supply for his rice area, however distant it may be. Even in the remotest part of the zamindaris agriculture has now developed beyond the domestic stage and assumed the commercial stage. The aboriginals constituting the greater part of the population of these zamindaris mostly live on the early rice, small millets and beans, while the heavy rice grown in the big *gattas* and embanked areas is exported to the markets.'

241 Now it should be noted that this means that for his own subsistence the Maria still relied on the grains and beans dear to his heart, and grown by *dahi* or *jalapod* cultivation, which had not then been stopped except in parts of Ahiri. The growth of heavy rice as a commercial crop is yet another sign of the transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Of this the money-lender takes full advantage.

241 426 563 For in these plains villages around Bhamragarh and Lahiri, besides Marias and Gonds there are nests of Teli exploiters, notably in the six villages of Lahiri, Mallampodur,[1] Kukurmeta,[2] Arawara,[3] Dodrai[4] and Idadapalli.[5] Many of these Teli money-lenders are now wealthy, as a result of small grain loans to the plains Marias and Gonds. The *modus operandi* is repayment indefinitely at rates of interest so high that the principal can never be repaid, while interest takes the form of a steady and heavy share of the debtors' harvest. Some of the Telis resort habitually to molestation of their debtors until the latter satisfy their yearly demand, but though molestation of debtors is now a cognizable offence under the Debtors' Protection Act, the police in their far distant police station at Etapalli never take action against molesting money-lenders. We have seen already on page 102 how these Telis' tentacles had spread to such Bastar villages as Nugor in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, where there were big matting paddy bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored on behalf of the Telis, who were free from time to time to remove all paddy from the bins surplus to the Marias' seed requirements, while each Maria villager was free to help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest

[1] References on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A :
1. MV7951
2. MV7854
3. MV7955
4 and 5. Not marked.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

he would repay with 50 per cent. interest.[1] Although it is clear that these Teli, Kalar and Telugu money-lenders do levy an exorbitant toll on the Maria villagers' produce, it is equally clear that they are fulfilling a necessary function, which has become the more necessary since the stopping of *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation below the hills has restricted the Marias in most villages to permanent rice cultivation on small acreages always dependent on seasonal rainfall evenly distributed in time. If such money-lenders are excluded, then they must be replaced by Government grain depots and village grain banks.

Of Maria funeral rites the *Gazetteer* observes that a stone or a carved post about five feet high is usually put up to mark the spot where a man's body has been cremated, and that 'sometimes one comes across a forest glade strewn with these memorials, the only sign of some deserted village, the very name of which has perished'.[2] Many rows of carved wooden posts may be seen between Bhamragarh and Lahiri, while at Lahiri itself I saw scores of such posts and of the small cromlechs (*hanal-garya* or 'thrones of the Departed') described on page 273, and mentioned in the *Gazetteer*[3] as built on the spot where the body was burned. The top of one of these very substantial funerary posts, or *hanal-gutta*, photographed at Lahiri, is reproduced as one of the illustrations in this Supplement. Noticeable are the carved wooden horns, between which is a carved wooden bird, probably a hornbill. The wooden horns are common, and probably are a modern symbol of the cow formerly sacrificed at the erection of a menhir or wooden *hanal-gutta* by Hill Marias[4] and Bison-horn Marias[5] throughout Bastar: the funerary customs of the Chanda Marias seemed, however, to be Hill Maria in type, and this was confirmed by oral enquiries at Lahiri.

The addiction of the Bison-horn Marias and of the Kutru Hill Marias of Bastar to cock-fighting has been described on page 162. I particularly inquired if the weekly cock-fights at Oikal in Ahiri zamindari, there mentioned, and at Lahiri itself still went on. But all cock-fighting among Chanda Marias had for some years been stopped under orders from an inexperienced young European District Superintendent of Police on the theory that it contravened the Gambling Act. But the Marias maintained that, as in Bastar, so here, there had never been cash betting (as, indeed, one might expect in a region where all transactions are still so largely in kind), but the defeated bird had passed to the owner of the winning bird.

[1] For further details, see *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 183-4.
[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 106.
[3] Ibidem, loc. cit.
[4] See pp. 278-9.
[5] See p. 281.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

174 natural than for the backward Marias aspiring to raise themselves to Raj-Gond status to copy gradually the Raj-Gond social organization? It is equally possible that *pari passu* the Raj-Gond ruler and nobles encouraged this: in all these semi-feudal, semi-tribal states and sub-states, as to this day in the States and zamindaris of Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the Maharajah of the State or the Rajah of the zamindari remains the final arbiter in caste matters, even often conferring the right to wear the sacred thread on communities actively hinduizing themselves. At Surjagarh and Jarawandi camps, various *Sendhias* and headmen practically admitted to me that god-grouping was not originally a Maria institution.[1]

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264 From Lahiri there was a long climb of thirteen miles to the Hill Maria village of Kuvakodi, when we halted for four days, including Christmas Day. The track led at first up the valley of the Lahiri river, then up the side valley of a small tributary, and so by an exceptionally steep ascent on to an undulating plateau, across which we reached Kuvakodi at dusk, our camp equipment all being carried on poles by Marias, whom on arrival we rewarded not only in cash but, in Bastar fashion, with salt and beads, and a feast of pork: the Marias sat ranged by clan and village, and those who killed and cooked the pork distributed to every man and child, and to the women of Kuvakodi, a portion of the meat off each joint of the pig. On the way up a slight detour took us through the small village of Gudumundi, and from Kuvakodi we visited Podewara and the Bastar village of Nelangari, some five miles from our camp.

751 Each day started with a parade of yaws patients for inoculation, all from Chanda villages: the Bastar Marias, who came in to see me and to join in the dancing each evening, looked tolerantly on, having themselves long before had the benefit of the Bastar anti-yaws parties.

241 The whole cultivation system of the Chanda Hill Marias is identical with the Bastar system described in Chapter VII of this book: it is, that is to say, *penda* cultivation and not what is generally known in the Central Provinces as *dahi*, or its Chanda plains variations of *khamori*, *jalapod*, *podu* or *sampod* (these terms will be explained later in this Note). There is the same broadcast sowing on the same kind of clearings of seed of all the minor millets and beans. The

[1] Haimendorf in reviewing Shamrao Hivale's *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley* has pointed out that the fact that the Pardhans' clan organization is everywhere based on that of the local Gond, does not disprove the different origin of the two peoples, for there are many examples of other tribes adopting their Gond neighbours' system of phratries and clans. He instances from Chanda district and Hyderabad State not only the aboriginal castes as certain Maratha blacksmiths and brass-workers who have the same clan names as the Gonds, *Man in India*, Vol. XXVI, 1946, p. 231. Compare also the Kuruk fishing tribe in Bastar, pp. 163-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

same ceremonies and festivals are observed in connexion with cutting and firing of the *penda*, sowing, harvesting and first eating of the new crops. Most of the reaping of the 'big *kosra*' crops had been completed, but that of the '*os kosra*' millets and pulses was still in progress. For many of the *penda* plots in the current *kaghai* cultivation clearing (see p. 107) this was the second and last year of cultivation, and the *kutki* crop raised was known as *hiwar*, a term, according to the *Gazetteer*,[1] always technically applied to these second year crops. I sent specimens of both *hiwar* and *kosra* or *kohala* (see p. 134) for identification to the Nagpur Agricultural College: botanically both were identical. These villages have never had the advantage of the special system of poll-tax assessment on every able-bodied axeman in the village which I devised for Bastar (p. 145). The system followed in these hill villages of Ahiri is roughly this. Each *penda* is cut by a number of villagers with the approval of the *gaita*, and the portion cut by each of them is roughly marked by one or other of the methods indicated on page 131. Help is taken from other villagers, who are always ready to give this mutual aid, and at harvest the produce is divided among the different share-holders of the *penda*, with something also for all who helped to clear the *penda*; sometimes a number of plots are specially earmarked for division of the produce by the *gaita* and elders amongst all who joined in clearing the whole *kaghai* and in watching and fencing the crops; a part of the produce is also allocated to villagers too old and feeble to work. The zamindar's *kamdar* or agent is paid rent, usually in kind, by the *gaita* for the whole village, for paying which the *gaita* takes a share of the produce of each *penda* plot. The village cultivation is in fact a truly co-operative enterprise.

I have alluded above to the arbitrary stopping in the plains Maria villages of the Chanda zamindaris of *dahi* cultivation, and the consequent increase of debt among the Marias. This Kuvakodi hill tract is fortunate, however, in having escaped this prohibition; it is the only Ahiri area where *penda* reigns undisturbed. It was therefore no surprise to find not a single case of old debt among the fifty or sixty Hill Maria cultivators who assembled at my camp from Kuvakodi and the other hill villages. Occasionally when crops are poor and the *kamdar* has to be paid rent in cash, the *gaita* goes to a Teli money-lender in the plains to borrow the money. But the villagers look on this as the debt of the whole village, not of the *gaita*, and though the Teli is as unscrupulous here as in any plains village in exacting high interest, yet the combined villagers are usually able to repay in kind in a year or two. Nowadays sometimes not only they, but even their Bastar neighbours, instead of resorting

[1] *Chanda Districts Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 170.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 426 621 to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *penda* must not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The 661 first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant 439 cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

535 292 Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatikarhana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-bhita* or 'song fellows' and the dance-steps.[1]

535 The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed 534 in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence. 301 Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of 'jewellery' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 75-6 and 183-4

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

712 has now disappeared. The gates of the fort are lying on the top, and there is a stone platform, on which are images of horses and elephants sacred to the presiding deity, Thakur Deo. Previous to the Gond conquest Surjagarh was a noted Mana fortress, and about the end of the 17th century was occupied by two famous chieftains, Sādho Vuria and Mula Vuria, who rebelled against the Chanda king, Ram Shah, and, secure in their strong fortresses, harried the low lands with impunity. At length Ram Shah granted the tract to a relative named Kokshah, who after some years of desultory warfare stormed the hill and put the insurgent leaders to the sword. Kokshah then made Surjagarh his citadel, and under its shadow his descendants, the present Ahiri family, have extended their possession, east and west, and south and north, until nearly 3,000 miles of country own them masters. The scenery of these hills is very wild, and the black glittering mass of Surjagarh, streaked here and there with patches of bright green and red, stands out grandly against the sky. The upper cliffs have a beautiful shrub, with dark green leaves and clusters of lovely blue flowers.'

There were still 38,650 Manas in Chanda district in 1931, and Thakur Deo on the summit of Surjagarh remains their tutelary deity. Also named after them is the fortress of Manikgarh in the Rajura taluq of Adilabad district. Russell and Hiralal[1] speak of them as a Dravidian caste of cultivators and labourers, possibly an offshoot of the Gonds, and associated in the popular mind with Gonds and Gowaris. They are now completely Hinduized, and have generally adopted Maratha customs. The Thakur Deo platform on the Surjagarh summit had a wealth of clay images, mostly horses, in type precisely similar to the horse images associated with Aiyyenar in South India.

137 If you stand on the summit, in whatever direction you look, north, south, east or west, all the Sironcha and Garchiroli tahsils and the Abujhmar Mountains of Bastar still seem to be one vast forest, with only occasional small yellow patches indicating village sites and cultivation. Speaking of the Chanda Marias' shifting cultivation ●241 (*podu*) Lucie-Smith wrote in 1869[2] :—

'For the vast wilderness east of the Wyngunga it is the very best that could be devised. By it, year by year, more and more land is cleared of forest and made ready for the plough, and thus every Maria village has around it a very much larger area of open ground than would be the case if the plough only were used. No one who has passed through these great wastes, shut in by lofty trees and dense masses of bamboo, and seeing, sometimes for days, not a trace of human habitation, can fail to rejoice at the work fire and axe are doing. It is of course important to prevent the destruction of forest containing valuable timber, and to arrange for reserves of jungle wood, grass and bamboos near the cultivated tracts, but, this done, *dahi* cultivation should be encouraged. It would be idle to speculate upon the changes in temperature and in rainfall the clearance of the forests would entail, for even if the population increase to the full, and coal mines, railways and river navigation bring all the prosperity we hope they will, yet in all human probability the youngest teak seedling now springing into life will have grown old and withered to dust before the eastern wilderness shall have sensibly decreased.'

[1] Vol IV, p. 172, *et seq.*
[2] Loc. cit. para. 232.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Railways have still, eighty years later, not penetrated the wilderness: the river navigation schemes proved a failure: the coal mines are well to the west. The prophecy has thus been fulfilled, but with a difference: the clearings are fewer and farther between than in Lucie-Smith's day owing to the virtual cessation in Chanda, except around Kuvakodi, of *podu* or *dahi*.[1]

His wise and discriminating approval of *podu* was overlooked soon after the 1922-4 land revenue settlement of the zamindaris in Ahiri and the Garchiroli zamindaris, when, without apparently any order from Government, the local authorities stopped *podu*. The *Settlement Report* had only said that the miscellaneous income received by the zamindars from *jalapod* had under standing orders been omitted from the assets on which land revenue was to be assessed, so that in case it damaged the forests, Government interference might be justified. In every Garchiroli zamindari except Gewardha *jalapod* had gone on until the 1922-4 settlement, but the total area had been found to be only 993 acres. Rao Bahadur Lakshmanswamy, the Settlement Officer, reported that it was never allowed in good quality timber forests, but only where there was a sparse unmarketable forest growth; even then there was a ten years rest between successive fellings and burnings. The rent on each clearing was recovered in grain and not in cash, the quantity per axe varying from 60 lb. in Kotgal zamindari to 200 lb. in Rangi zamindari: the rent was always substantially less for the second than for the first year of a clearing. The Settlement Officer considered that the privilege of carrying on this shifting cultivation contributed indirectly to the expansion of settled cultivation, and believed that the withdrawal of the privilege would probably unsettle the present occupants: he urged therefore no interference; the area was small, the forest valueless, the privilege kept the Marias happy, and the zamindars, alive to the increasing value of their forests since the advent of the railway and road communications, were sufficiently alive to the need of restricting *podu* and charged higher rates for it in the areas nearer the open parts of the district and the railway than in the remote zamindaris.

[1] This has been mentioned already in this Note on pp. 390-1 and 397. *Podu* strictly speaking is the *dippa* or *marhan* of the Hill Marias (p. 126), while *jala* or *khamori*, which is really the *dahi* of most of the province and the *parka* of the Bastar Marias, consists in the sowing of rice on low-lying plots where water naturally collects in the rains, after these plots, which generally have no forest growth, have been fertilised in May with the ashes of grass and wood cut beforehand from the adjacent forests and spread over them. On the *podu* plots, light rice, all the minor millets and beans and pulses are sown. When *mandia* (*eleusine coracana*) is sown, the cultivation is known as *samped*. As general terms in Chanda either *podu* or *jalapod* are used. *Podu* is also the common term in Hyderabad State.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241
656

In Ahiri zamindari *podu* had been stopped even earlier. In 1917 the then Deputy Commissioner inaugurated an active policy of discouraging it in favour of plough cultivation. He decided to allow no *podu* outside village areas, to make each village *gaita* responsible for reporting the name of each *podu* cultivator and the area, as measured by bamboos, cut and sown by him, and to charge rent at the same rate for *podu* as for plough land. Failure to report any cultivation contravening the orders was to be punished in the first instance by a heavy penal rent, and, if repeated, by total prohibition of all *podu* in the village at fault. This drastic restriction was introduced in all the zamindari except the Kuvakodi Hill Maria tract. The proposals were expounded by the Deputy Commissioner at the end of his tour to several hundred *gaitas* assembled for the purpose at Ahiri. This thoughtlessly wide-sweeping measure soon led to the universal cessation of *podu*: the orders gave great scope to minor zamindari officials for harassing the Marias by alleging that their *podu* contravened the restrictions, and in the end it seemed safer to have no *podu* at all. It seems also that ultimately some Deputy Commissioner finally prohibited *podu*, though the order had disappeared when his successor looked for it in 1930.

In all my camps, especially near the Bastar border, across which *podu* is permissible in every village, the bitter complaints of every Maria showed how harshly this had operated: we have already seen how it has delivered them to the tender mercies of the money-lenders. That, moreover, Rao Bahadur Lakshmanswamy's warning that such interference would unsettle the present occupants had been justified, was proved by the widespread migration of Marias to their kinsmen's villages over the Bastar border, with their greater freedom; of this several *gaitas* and zamindars complained, notably in Jharapapra zamindari. I had a conference with the Garchiroli and Drug zamindars at Murumgaon later in the tour, on New Year's Day, 1941. Several of them complained that in the past the district officers had fined them for allowing *jalapod*, and, yet worse, that they were still often being fined for alleged felling, without the Deputy Commissioner's permission, of high tree forest whenever their ryots broke up new lands even for plough cultivation; the ryots then always burn the felled forest growth and raise the first crops on the new land by the traditional method, but officials stigmatize this as *podu*. The zamindars considered that the stopping of *jalapod* had been quite unjustified, and that if it were again allowed, but confined to commercially worthless miscellaneous forest from which at present they derived no income, it would at least bring in something to them, and above all would save the Marias from the effects

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of rice failures such as those of 1939 and 1940. In the former year the Marias, dismayed by the failure of rice on their plough-lands, took the law into their own hands and started cutting *podu* in the east of Garchiroli tahsil and the adjacent Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district, being to some extent incited by emissaries of the leader of an agrarian agitation in the Dondi-Lohara zamindari. It seemed to me that in their present mood they would before long again defy the restrictions and cut *podu* on a wide scale.

I recommended accordingly that their wishes should be met, as it should not be difficult to regulate *podu* by fixing a regular series of sites to be felled in two-yearly rotations. Silviculturally too there was much to be gained by this. When *podu* was first restricted and then prohibited, the miscellaneous forests were allowed to grow up just as they had been left after the last *podu* fellings, with all the old high stumps and crooked or double or treble stems. Even the patches of teak were often useless because the trees had been left to shoot from old undressed stumps. Most of this vast forest around Bhamragarh, Surjagarh and Jarawandi has no commercial value at all, and never will have unless good teak can be grown. In the neighbouring Panabaras zamindari of Drug I found that some forty years before the Court of Wards had initiated a practice of requiring *podu* cultivators to sow teak seed in the *podu* clearings before abandoning them. This did much to produce the fine forest that is now so valuable an asset of that estate. The Marias whom I met in Ahiri, Jharapapra, Aundi, Koracha, Murumgaon, Rangi and Dhanora zamindaris were most appreciative of the idea of *podu* being allowed with this condition of the sowing of teak seed in the second and last year of cultivation. All knew how the Allapilli departmental forest operation had saved the local Marias from economic ruin, and they were quick to realize that conservation of the surviving teak and the growth of teak in areas now to be selected for that purpose and sown with teak at the end of *podu* cultivation would bring teak forests, and therefore ultimately operations such as those at Allapilli, far nearer to their villages in the days of their grandchildren. Besides areas thus earmarked for teak regeneration after *podu*, there should also be fixed areas around each village where *podu* should be allowed indefinitely. The Marias also would welcome the extension to other parts of Ahiri and the other zamindaris of the precedent of the leasing by Government from the Ahiri zamindar of the forests around Allapilli: the surviving teak areas around Surajgarh would for example be suitable leased areas. In all these measures the fullest co-operation of the Marias could without much difficulty be obtained by enlisting the sympathy and support of the *bhumias*, *gaitas*, and *Sendhias*, whose authority remains real and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

unchallenged. I emphasize the word sympathy: the method of threatening and punishing the headmen must be given up, and every effort made to win their understanding support for the new measures and even to entrust them with their execution.

The walks and talks at Surjagarh delayed the start on the 32 miles journey to Jawarwandi, and the car and lorry were more than once bogged on the way, so that once again we arrived in camp long after dark. It was on this journey that we crossed the tongues of Bastar territory mentioned on page 378 of this Note: in the southern tongue, in fact, we were bogged for an hour or more, but, as in Bastar, were readily helped to extricate ourselves. I noticed and stopped in *gotul* or bachelors' dormitories in several villages before and after Surjagarh. Many of these are treated by touring officers as though they were rest-huts built for their special convenience, like the *chauri* of Hyderabad or Berar villages. They use them also for posting up legal notices, and in two I found nailed to the wooden posts copies of the *Yudda Samachar* or War News in the Marathi edition published by the provincial War Purposes Fund for dissemination of accurate war information in all villages; this showed singular lack of inteliigence on the part of those who controlled such propaganda in Chanda district, for in these Maria villages not a person was literate and very few could speak Marathi. The *gotul* culture here must be similar to that among the Murias just across the Bastar border in North Antagarh, but in the short time available I did not overcome the Marias' natural reluctance to discuss this intimate social organization, a reluctance heightened, I suspect, by the fact that here on the fringes of the *gotul* country the institution is the butt of Hindu ridicule or prurient curiosity. But there certainly are *gotul* in these villages, at least for the youths, and I found one, with some difficulty owing to the reticence of the local Marias in these mixed villages, at Erka in Rangi zamindari. So far as I could make out, they are still to be found in the Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug.

Jarawandi is the headquarters of a sub-zamindar holding under Ahiri a taluq of twenty-three villages: the rival claims of Ahiri and Jarawandi to the seignorial dues have been a nuisance to the local Marias. Here there was a large gathering of headmen and *Sendhias* of *patti* groups of villages. Enquiries from them and later at Murumgaon showed that the *panchayat* system described in the extract on pages 286-8 of this book is not only as vigorous as ever, but is more widespread than previously recorded, there being *Sendhias* in almost every Chanda zamindari. It had been stated to me that the zamindars outside Ahiri had usurped the authority of the *Sendhia* and his *patti panchayat*, but I doubt the truth of this, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The Court of Wards finally gave the lease to a Hindu of the Kurmi caste, on a premium of Rs. 211. The present lessee, his son, was made protected in 1923. Though the aboriginals as a whole have not actually lost land since 1902, the lessee had been very oppressive, forcing the aboriginals who borrowed from him to surrender their fields to him and then selling them to new tenants.

In Panabaras the departmental working of the five teak forests, largely built up, as already stated, by the Court of Wards insisting from 1900 onwards on *podu* cultivators sowing teak-seed on their plots in the second year of cultivation, has done something on Allapilli lines to bring economic relief to the local aboriginals. These four estates have been special targets for the agrarian agitation already mentioned, which started from the adjacent non-excluded Dondi-Lohara zamindari and made a special feature of inciting the Gonds and Marias to burn *podu*.

In the Garchiroli zamindaris on the whole the Marias and other aboriginals continue to hold their own and to take gradually to permanent cultivation, though far more slowly than outsiders: in the twenty years after the 1922-3 settlement aboriginal cultivation had increased by only 23 per cent., but non-aboriginal by 50 per cent., there being 6,523 aboriginal tenants of 76,113 acres against 4,012 other tenants of 46,863 acres. The aboriginals still have miles and miles of land available for extending their cultivation, but always hanker after their beloved *podu*.

This *podu* question, as I have already said, was the principal topic at the conference of the Drug and Chanda Partially Excluded Areas zamindars at Murumgaon on New Year's Day, 1940. Other topics were the neglect of the Garchiroli zamindaris by the Chanda District Council, and the future of the zamindars, in view of the political threat to the whole zamindari system. To deal first with the last topic, let me say that while there may be much to be said for 'liquidation' of big landed estates, especially of absentee proprietors, the policy towards aboriginal zamindars should be different. Most of them are descendants of long lines of tribal chieftains holding estates on very ancient tenures dating back to the semi-tribal, semi-feudal systems[1] under which most of middle India was organized centuries ago. Properly speaking these chiefs in relation to their ryots and fellow tribesmen are *primi inter pares*. Some of the wealthier aboriginal proprietors of the huge Chhattisgarh estates may have aped the princeling: but most of the Chanda zamindars are closely akin to their people—the Rangi chief, for example, is frankly a Maria among Marias—and do their utmost to protect their ryots. Legally, so long as the proprietary rights in any

[1] See p. 4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the later waves of Gonds and Raj-Gonds which set up the kingdom of the Gond Maharajas of Chanda. It would be very interesting also to see whether anything survives of the peculiarly Hill Maria and Muria cult of the clan-god as distinct from the more developed religious system of the Raj-Gonds; with its wonderful foundation of myth, the full richness and religious and cultural significance of which the world will begin to realize when Haimendorf's epoch-making book on the Raj-Gonds of Adilabad is published in the near future, and when it is followed up by similar detailed investigation of Gond life and custom in all parts of Gondwana. How far there is any common mythological basis of Raj-Gond and Maria culture would be a factor of great significance. I am conscious that the weakest side of this book has been its failure to probe into the mythology and folk-songs of the Bastar Marias. I do not believe Hill Maria culture to be nearly as rich in that respect as Muria culture is shown to be by Verrier Elwin's book, *The Muria and their Ghotul*. Yet there must be more to be said of the folk-tales and mythology of the Marias of Bastar than has appeared in the first edition of this book; indeed the second section of Elwin's Comment in this edition gives some indication of the wealth of Maria myth awaiting record in Bastar.

Another question clearly needing investigation is the extent to which the *gotul* as an institution is a real factor in Chanda Maria life. I have implied in this Note that it survives, but is gradually being relegated into obscurity as a result of the impact of Hindu ideas and of Hindu ridicule. That would, however, apply more in the northern zamindaris than in the country along the Bastar border from the River Indrawati north to Jharapapra. This part of Ahiri zamindari is landlocked and largely protected from the influx of Hindu ideas save in so far as these are brought in by zamindari and government subordinates. The fact moreover that the *Sendhia* and *patti panchayat* organization is still vigorous in Ahiri zamindari should be an indication that there has been no psychological inhibition on these Marias preserving their tribal life and cultural inheritance unimpaired. It would be interesting, however, to trace the outer boundaries of the *gotul* system and to see what has happened to it, when, and why, in these outer fringes.

This Note is stronger in its picture of economic conditions. Here the most significant fact has been the banning of *jalapod* or shifting cultivation during and after the Great War of 1914-18. One would like, given the time and opportunity, to get at the psychological reaction of the Maria to this as expressed in his folk-songs; one would like also to be able to go through the records of criminal

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and civil litigation in which Maria parties have been involved since this interference with their way of life, and to see also if it has had any bearing on suicide. Quite clearly, however, it has had a tremendous and adverse effect on their economics. It has accentuated their transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy and, by virtually forcing them to grow rice, a commercial food crop, as their principal crop, it has played into the hands of the *bania* and the money-lender who naturally desire to buy up rice for export. It may be suspected also that this has had an adverse effect on the diet and physique of the Maria. The small millets, which are the characteristic and favourite food of the Marias and were best grown in the *podu* clearings, are dietetically of higher value than rice. Their market value was small, but so long as the Marias' granary had ample stores of these millets, he had not to depend upon the money-lender for seed or cattle, nor to bother about marketing his produce. The only partial remedy so far provided for the economic ills caused by the stopping of *podu* has been the departmental forest work at Allapilli. Here the Maria, doing work of a type for which his life in the forest suits him and receiving fair and prompt cash payment for his labour, has been able to earn money which could keep him out of the clutches of the money-lender and the bribe-taker. But this too has had its detribalizing effect, accustoming him to working far from his home village and in close contact with an alien civilization and culture.

The next difficulties that the Maria has to solve in assimilating himself to the life of modern India are the problems resulting from the impact of political India with its steady tendency to seek to reduce all things and all institutions throughout India to a drab uniformity. There is no doubt that the Maria is not ready to exercise the vote. It is equally clear that he has his own vigorous tribal organization and that his *patti panchayat* could easily be entrusted with the same powers that have been given to the village and *pargana panchayats* in Bastar. It seems obvious also that on these *panchayats* could be based some sort of system whereby Marias could handle the problems of local self-government in their country. These *panchayats*, for example, if entrusted with the selection of local Marias for a zamindari *panchayat*, could produce a body in real touch with tribal life in all its facets. Tribal village life is still naturally co-operative, even though in the plains individualism is now stronger than in the largely collective villages of the Hills. In fact the whole *podu* system was an incentive to the co-operation of all the villagers; rice cultivation, in contrast, drives villagers into individualism and ideas of private property as indeed does the whole land revenue system which has been

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Little boys practise the bison-horn dance with head-dresses made of bamboo rings which have bamboo 'horns' sticking up in front and at the back a spike ornamented with feathers. They beat their stomachs or use bits of wood instead of drums.

Page 189, *line* 31. But I found everywhere that both kinds of Marias were also accustomed to use the fire-drill. The fire-saw of the Hill Marias can easily be worked by two men; there is no difference between it and the Baiga or Juang saw, which is always handled by two persons.

When Bison-horn Marias go to fire their clearings, they should as far as possible approach them with their faces towards the east. The Perma and Gaita break two small branches, the Perma a dry and the Gaita a green or 'living' branch, and drive them into the ground. They light these with a burning log from the Hearth of the Departed in one or other of their houses. If both branches burn well, it is a sign that the clearing also will burn properly; but if one burns and the other does not, it means that the clearing will only burn in patches and will thus be insufficiently manured. Special offerings must then be made.

Page 225, *line* 9; *page* 278, *line* 25. In one village—but only one—at Mokhpal, I found scepticism about the tradition that the menhirs grow in size. Here the Bison-horn Marias laughed at the idea and said that, if—for example—a stone grew smaller, it was probably because the ground was damp and it sank down.

Page 225, *line* 11. The Bison-horn Marias believe that the Dead are reborn, if at all, in their own homes; they generally deny that they ever reappear as animals. Yet an animal may be born in, or have a powerful influence over, a human being. A girl at Mokhpal was born with the left side of her face covered with a sort of fur; the Marias said that an ancestor who was killed by a bear had been reborn in the child. As a result the wearing of dancing-masks covered with bear-fur has been abandoned, for fear that the wearers should be affected in some future birth. A man killed by a tiger may reappear in one of his descendants with marks of the claws on the neck. It may be that to people who live so near to nature rebirth in animal form does not seem specially distasteful. Marias and Murias live close to their animals and love them. At Lakhopal there is a small menhir in memory of a faithful dog.

Page 227, *line* 12. In 1939, Soma Ganda-Maria of Gomagal killed a man, who had seduced his wife, in the most brutal manner by squeezing his testicles till they burst. He then seized his penis saying, 'It was with this that you copulated with my wife,' and tore the skin from it. Finally he throttled him. Anyone who

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

231
241

Bison-horn Maria girl looks a married on a bison-skull at shrine

[End Plate N]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

511 prosperous than their fellows in a district like Mandla. In Mandla, for example, or Bilaspur, the worst poverty is the poverty of the spirit, the decay of art and culture, the disappearance of tribal religion, the dying-out of dance and song. Against this background, material want stands out stark and bare. But the Muria of Bastar has a full rich life; every day brings its delightful and absorbing pursuits; at least twice a month there is a sharp break in the monotony, the colour and music of a festival, the excitement of a hunt, the romance of a dancing expedition—and all the time, if you are young, there is the ghotul which you would not exchange for any offer of material wealth.

II. Cultivation

241 'It is as bad for a Muria to fail in his cultivation as for a monkey to slip from a branch,' but it is not necessary to spend very much time on this subject, important as it is. The axe-cultivation of the Maria, which closely resembles that of the Muria, has been fully discussed by Grigson,[1] and for its wider implications my own account of bewar in *The Baiga* may be consulted.[2] The Muria's permanent rice-cultivation hardly differs from that elsewhere in India and need not be described in detail.

For the sake of completeness, however, and because we must never forget that the ghotul exists in a setting of agriculture, food-gathering and hunting, I will give a brief outline of the Muria's methods of cultivation.

There are three kinds of axe-cultivation and the Muria practise them all, for 'the axe is our milk-giving cow':

1. *Penda* is cut on the steep slopes of hills. The Muria fells the trees and undergrowth, fires them when dry, and sows his seed in the ashes after the first rains have fallen. In a *penda* clearing there is no digging or ploughing of the earth. After two or three years a *penda* plot is abandoned and a new clearing made. This is the most common form of axe-cultivation among the Hill Maria: it is the bewar of the Baiga. No plough or hoe is used. For beans and pulses, holes are dibbled with a primitive digging-stick.

2. *Dippa*, also called *markân* and *erka*, differs from *penda* in three ways—

   (*a*) The clearings are made on fairly level ground, not on the side of hills.

   (*b*) After the fellings have been fired the ashes are evenly distributed over the whole area; in a *penda* clearing no one bothers to do this. The result is a much more even and regular crop.

   (*c*) When the rains fall, the ashes are ploughed into the ground, or dug into it with a hoe, and only then is the seed sown.

3. *Parka* or *dahi* differs again: in *dippa* and *penda* clearings, the trees are felled in the very place where it is desired to sow. They are burnt on the spot. But in *parka*, trees and brushwood are cut elsewhere and are carried on to an already existing field. Here they are spread over the field and fired. After raking the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria plough them into the ground and sow their seed.

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–30.
[2] Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), pp. 100–31.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Raughat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle.

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhārni*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'.

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari pude*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths.

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*.

FIG. 1. Kunj digging-stick of iron *Length 1' 7"*

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the rains. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] The other villagers come and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *korlat* or *balla* (*dhosna* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *harpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes called *hatwak* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun at the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

[1] The Juang keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandapwk* dormitory, and usually ignite their clearings from it.

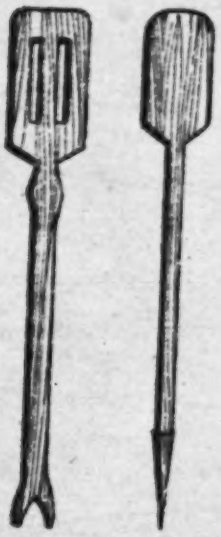
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

●241 When this is done and the ground is cooled, the bullocks are brought and chelik and motiari with their ploughs drive the ashes deep into the soil.

The plough is 'the lizard that runs into its hole in the dry tree': it has 'three heads and ten legs': the cowhide reins of the oxen are described as 'the dead bullocks that go before a living man'.

[796] Before the seed can be sown, the Wijja Pandum must be celebrated. This festival, which is preceded by a ceremonial hunt, is held at any time from April to June. Essential to the festival, one version of which I [787] describe in detail in Chapter VII, is the hunt which foretells the success or failure of the crops, the feast on the animals killed, and the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the seed—some of which is taken away by every householder. In some villages, at the end of the ceremonies, the chelik roll the Gaita in mud from an ant-hill.

The night before the actual sowing, which is sometimes fixed when new leaf-shoots appear on the bhoir tree, all the men again sleep in the ghotul and the motiari stay at home to ensure chastity and thus avoid any possible infection of menstrual blood. On their way to the fields in the morning, they put a small heap of seed at any cross-roads they pass. Each householder has a leaf-cup of the seed that was consecrated with blood at the Wijja Pandum, and sows this after the Gaita has sacrificed a chicken in his field.



417 FIG. 2. *Dayi* wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking. *Length 2' 9"*

The Muria, unlike the Hill Maria, sows different kinds of seed in different places, but like the Hill Maria he sows them at different times. In the west and central areas there are three main sowings.

The first sowing, immediately after the first rains, is of small millets—*turo kohala* or *kosra*, *hikma* and *mandia*. *Rahar dāl* is sown with the *mandia*. Gourds and pumpkins are sown at the same time.

The next sowing is in early July of rice, *kuthi* and *urad dāl* as well as beans.

The last sowing, of what is called *os kosra*, is done in August, though not on ground that has already been used that year. Rice is again sown and *mung* and *kulthi* pulses.

Before the actual sowing of the seed, the Muria prepare their fences, and the field-huts and watching-platforms for the guarding of their crops. The fences are not, of course, as in civilized areas, to keep out their fellow-men but to protect the crops against wild animals: bison and deer are plentiful in north Bastar, especially in the Makri area, and can do much damage to the fields.

There are many kinds of fencing. Sometimes there is none at all; in the jungle clearings a line of poles is enough, in the permanent fields the embankments make a clear division. Sometimes a strong *gannao* stockade is made by placing hundreds of logs upright in the ground. Fences of bamboo wattle are also made.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*kotul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brush-wood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchadar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his small in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

241 they still make a small *parka* plot somewhere in their fields so that some of the grain will mature quickly and they will have enough to eat at home.

Their big fields are generally embanked, often irrigated with some ingenuity. They are distinguished according to the soil and location—*dhar neli* or *gabhār* is a low-lying rice-field, a *tikra* is a field on a slope, a *dobha* or *mal* is an ordinary level field—and they are often given names, the Cat-stone Field, the Field of the Frogs, the Field of the Ghost.[1]

FIG. 4. Yerk used in the same way as the gagra, but of a different pattern
Length 3' 10"

Perhaps the most treasured thing, and often actually the most profitable, in a Muria's agricultural life is the *bāri* or garden enclosure near his house. This is carefully fenced with a stockade or with bamboo wattle-work, and is manured and enriched with the sweepings of the house and the droppings of the cattle throughout the year.

Here the Muria sows the profitable oil-seeds, sarson, til or arsi; here he sets beans by the fence, and a broad patch of red *jira* spinach. Often he plants some castor trees, or a sago-palm, sometimes plantain and papaya. One specially guarded patch contains his tobacco supply for the year.

Once the seed is sown, the attention of chelik and motiari is largely diverted from the ghotul to the fields. Ghotul life is almost suspended, though the smaller children go and solemnly imitate the habits of their elders. Little fires twinkle in the fields and the sweet music of the flute comes through the darkness.

When the first grain appears on the shoots, the Gaita offers an egg to Tallur Muttai to ensure its safety.

During the season, in the permanent fields there is a lot to be done. The embankments must be constantly repaired. The sprouting rice must be puddled with a board dragged by bullocks. The girls must go to weed. The boys set fish-traps where the water escapes through the embankments. It is a time of danger and taboo: an act of adultery may blight the grain, a quarrel discourage its growth.

[276] [184]

Everybody goes to reap the crop. They use the ordinary iron sickle. Before thrashing, the bundles are piled up on wooden platforms, heaped into rough bins, sometimes just stacked in neat circles on the ground.

The first sheaf cut is tied to a tree overlooking the field or clearing.

252 The *hara* thrashing-floor is prepared by men, for in many villages it is taboo for women to do this, and so the men clear the ground in or near the field, plaster and cow-dung it. In the middle they place a pole (*mer-gutta*) to the top of which they often tie a sheaf (Plate X). If they are going to use oxen, they attach a pole to the *mer-gutta* and drive the animals round in the usual way. Often, however, the Muria thrash with their feet (Plate X). If there

[1] For an account of names of fields in India, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1892), pp. 113 and 141.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

A Cultivation Song

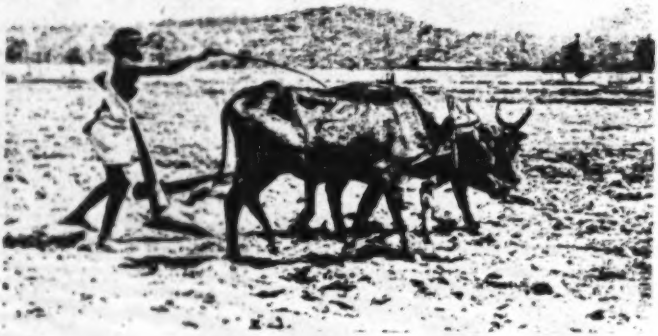
241
539

A song sung to accompany the Korak Dahiya Karsana illustrates the various processes of cultivation and life in the fields.

Warpendoy pendoy rāmo rāmo!	In the Wendpendoy jungle is the hill Ramo!
Korak pchchi wāykom sāngo.	We will come to cut the tree branches, *sāngo.*
Miya wāy wāy pchchtorom sāngo	Before you came we had cut the branches.
Korak hāh wāykom sāngo	We will come to spread the branches in the field.
Miya wāy wāy hāhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had spread the branches.
Hurri tāsi wāykom sāngo	We will come to set fire to it with straw.
Miya wāy wāy hurri tāstorom sāngo	Before you came we had set fire to it.
Lāting tata wāykom sāngo	We will come to bring the rake.
Miya wāy wāy lating tatorom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the rake.
Parka puhi wāykom sāngo	We will come to plough the *parka* clearing.
Miya wāy wāy puhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had ploughed the clearing.
Goräng witi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sow the mandia seed.
Miya wāy wāy wititom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the seed.
Hāmo witi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sow the *hāmo* seed.
Miya wāy wāy wititom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the seed.
Goräng kichi wāykom sāngo	We will come to pick the mandia crop.
Miya wāy wāy kichtorom sāngo	Before you came we had picked the crop.
Goräng jāhi wāykom sāngo	We will come to thrash the grain with a stick.
Miya wāy wāy jāhtorom sāngo	Before you came we had thrashed the grain.
Goräng hemi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sift the grain in a basket.
Miya wāy wāy hemtom sāngo	Before you came we had sifted the grain.
Goräng taddi wāykom sāngo	We will come to gather the mandia grain.
Miya wāy wāy taddihtom sāngo	Before you came we had gathered the grain.
Goräng widing wāykom sāngo	We will come to make a rope-bin for the grain.
Miya wāy wāy widihitom sāngo	Before you came we had stored the grain.

Plate VIII

241
231



482

492
493

[1] Motiari ploughing at Bayanar

[2] Carrying earth to embank a field

[3] Chelik at Sirpuri in solid-wheeled cart

[p. 30(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

241 539

Dhusir jāki wāykom sāngo — We will come to press the grain into the bin.

Miya wāy wāy jākiorom sāngo. — Before you came we had pressed the grain.

III. The Muria's Year

221 196

It is very difficult to give any sort of general time-table, for events vary in their incidence and in their order from place to place and from year to year. Everything depends on the orders of the Gaita and Siraha, and dreams, economic factors and 'inspirations' combine to disturb the course of events. However, the following table may be taken as giving a rough picture of a normal year:

January .. Bhimul Pandum, the festival of the rain-god. Pupul Korta Tindana and Pen Karsita, the New Eating Festival of pulses, also known as Jata Pandum. Chelik go from village to village dancing the Pus Kolang or Chherta. The people reap the til oil-seed.

February .. Kare Pandum, after which the people may cut grass, bamboos and may begin felling trees for their *dippa* and *parka* clearings. The chelik begin collecting wood and grass for the ghotul. The Marhai festivals, great semi-religious commercial fairs, begin now and continue in various places until April.

March .. Irpu Pandum, the festival of the mahua tree, Marka Pandum, the festival of the new mangoes, and Til Khani, the festival of oil-seed, are held about this time. The marriage season begins and continues until May. Boys and girls go out dancing the Chait and Mahua Dandar. The people are busy collecting mahua flowers, tendu leaves and wood.

April .. Wijja Pandum, the seed festival, preceded by a ceremonial hunt. Ceremonies to purify and protect the villages. People begin breaking myrabolams. Hot weather begins. Many marriages everywhere.

May .. Timber spread over *parka* clearings. Local ceremonies to ensure a good harvest and rainfall.

June .. Timber in clearings fired. Rains begin. Ploughing and sowing. Fencing of gardens and repairs to houses, thatching and protection against rain.

July .. Amawas or Hareli festival. Chelik make stilts.

August .. Heavy rain during the month. Tur Korta Tindana or Kurum Pandum, when the first millets are eaten.

September Rains are clearing. At the end of the month is the Korta Pandum, the first eating of the new rice, cucumbers and gourds. On the day after this festival, the chelik break their stilts and pile them on the stone of Dito or Bhimul Pen.

October .. Cheru or Nuka Nordana Pandum, before which the new rice must not be washed. The Dassera festival attracts thousands to Jagdalpur and Bara Dongar, and is celebrated in a few ghotul. Diwali comes a little later:

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

221
796

the Muria do not illuminate their houses for it, but tie ears of grain in long strings over their doors. Road work begins, and everybody is busy reaping.

November.. A busy month in the fields. Since September the ghotul have been almost deserted by the chelik, who spend their time in little huts watching the crops. Reaping, threshing, winnowing and storing grain occupies everyone. From the end of October the motiari have been going out dancing the Diwali and, where this practice is unknown, boys and girls go together for the Hulki dances.

December.. In some villages the Jata Pandum is held in this month. People cut their sarson crops and store them. They collect myrabolams till the end of January.

IV. Cultivation and the Ghotul

883 At Padbera and a number of villages in the neighbourhood of Antagarh the ghotul has its own property. The villagers give the chelik a piece of
● 241 land for cultivation which is known as *chelik-parha*. The boys bring the wood from the neighbouring forest, spread it on the field, burn it and sow the seed. The girls see to the weeding and when the crop is ready all join in the harvest. The girls husk the rice in the ghotul itself and when it is ready give a feast to the village. The following day they offer an egg, red and black powder and liquor to the Kanyang and Rau of the field for the protection of the ghotul.

The chelik and motiari sometimes go to work as a ghotul. Should a party of visitors arrive from another village for a dance and there is no food or liquor for their entertainment, the boys approach one of the wealthier villagers (who of course may have several of his own children in the ghotul) and ask him to advance them rice and pulse, some liquor and a pig, promising they will go to work for him when he needs help in weeding his fields, gathering his harvest or mending a broken embankment. At other times villagers who are in urgent need of help employ the ghotul children and pay them with gifts of grain and pulse. I am told that money is rarely given. Sometimes the boys and girls only receive their food, though this food at least in the evening must be good and should include pork and liquor. When the children receive gifts of grain they save it up, storing it in the house of the leader, till there is enough for a big feast. This is prepared and eaten near the ghotul, or helps to augment the feast at the end of a dancing expedition. The parents are also invited; since the mothers may not go inside the ghotul, the feast is enjoyed outside.

V. The Muria's Food

Kare ahār ta pele pahār. If you get enough to eat you can push a mountain aside.—Muria proverb

883 In addition to work in the fields, chelik and motiari are kept busy all day long, in and around their homes. The motiari must fetch water from the well or stream, collect leaves from the jungle for leaf-cups and plates, nurse the babies, clean and cow-dung the buildings, husk rice and grain, help in the cooking, feed goats, pigs and cattle. The boys must fetch firewood from the forest, make string from hemp and bark, prepare the ploughs and carts, keep the buildings in repair, and look after the cattle and other animals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

24
482

Chelik bringing wood for dahi cultivation

Plate IX

Muria firing a marhan clearing near Antagarh

241
291
301

Chelik of Bayanar digging

Plate XII

The Maiya of Phanda spinning rope

[283]

[p.44(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
796

village, they give him a fowl and some rice in compensation. They offer some of this liquor to the village gods, the boys and girls dance from house to house, and they eat and drink in honour of the mahua tree.

In Palli-Barkot, and other villages of that neighbourhood, when the villagers first cut the rice crop, each householder thrashes a handful of grain in his hands and takes it to the ghotul. There the Gaita ties it up in a bundle with paddy string—to imitate the usual household grain-bin—and hangs it up in the roof. In the month of Magh, a little of this grain is taken out, husked on a stone, and offered to Thakur Deo for the protection of the village. There is a feast that night in the ghotul, and the whole village comes for it, only the married women sitting outside. Here they say that it is not the presence of Lingo that keeps the married women out of the ghotul, but the blessed rice-seed which might otherwise be ruined. Later, at the first fall of the rains, the Gaita distributes a little of the seed to every householder.

II. Ceremonial Axe-cultivation

883X
796
241

Everywhere the chelik are specially associated with the cutting of timber for *parka* or *dippa* cultivation. For *parka*, it will be remembered, wood is cut at a distance and brought and strewed over a field and then fired for manure. In *dippa* the trees and undergrowth are cut on the spot and fired there, and the seed is sown in the ashes. In Bandopal, in April 1941, and in Nayanar two days later I saw a ceremony that combined the cleaning of the village with the consecration of the first *parka* plot. At dawn the chelik assembled in the ghotul. The four leading boys carried large baskets and were unadorned; the rest were fantastically attired with turbans of old rope, fronds of broom-grass stuck in the hair, smeared with ash, and already hung about with old baskets, winnowing-fans and scraps of matting. When they were ready, the party set out waving long sticks in the air. They visited every house in the village, including those of non-Muria. Outside each house, the boys formed into a long line and began to push their sticks along the ground, digging it up a little and clearing the ash and leaves in one direction. When possible they dug up the neatly-plastered courtyards to the great annoyance of the house-wives. As they danced they sang,

Reka pindi kokko kokko.
Marka pindi kokko kokko.
Irpu pindi kokko kokko.

And so on with every sort of variation. The meaning of this was 'Break up and grind the char, mango, mahua' and then in the various changes—*Mao pindi* (grind the bison), *Dudo* (grind the breasts) or *Puda pindi* (grind the vagina). *Kokko* is said to represent the pounding and breaking of myrabolams against a stone; the elder dancers tapped their sticks on the ground 'as if they were breaking harra'.

While this demonstration was in progress before the house, the elder boys went inside with their baskets and were given mandia flour, mahua flowers, perhaps a copper coin. In some houses the people were far from friendly and threw dirty water and abuse at the boys. In every house where a motiari was living there was tremendous fun. The girls, some of whom ran round from house to house ahead of the boys, hid behind the door and when the boys approached jumped out with dirty water and threw it over them. In one house the two leaders were shut up inside with the Belosa and Dulosa,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

N883
796
241

'as if they were bride and bridegroom' the others said. In another the boys shut the girls in, piling brushwood against the door. In two places the boys were able to steal chickens. One was a Muria chicken, and the owner let it go with a laugh; but the other was taken by way of revenge on a surly Hindu who abused the boys and gave them a stingy contribution of flour. They got the hen and hid it in a basket. The owner followed them round protesting, but he never found it.

From every house the boys took some old basket, broom, bit of matting, broken winnowing-fan, so that by the time they had done their round they looked an extraordinary collection of scarecrows. This, of course, was part of the clearing of the village of disease.

By now the boys had several baskets full of flour and mahua flowers. They took the mahua to the out-still where it was exchanged for liquor, and carried the flour and the two chickens out into the fields. Here they threw down in a corner of the Gaita's field all the rubbish they had collected and their dancing-sticks, and some of them gathered brushwood and a little timber and strewed it over a patch some five yards square.

Other boys brought water and large pipal leaves, and two of them mixed the flour and water and made thin cakes spreading the mixture on one pipal leaf and covering it with another. Then the Sirdar fired the first *parka* of the year with a bit of straw-rope brought from the ghotul fire.

After the wood and rubbish had blazed up, the boys threw three of the mandia-flour cakes into the ashes as an offering to the Kis Kanyang (Fire Maiden) and placed the others in the embers to cook. The Gaita offered the two chickens to the Earth. All looked eagerly to see how the bodies fell; if they fall on one side it is a good omen, if downward, bad. Today one omen was bad. The Gaita sat by the fire with chelik on either side, and offered liquor to the spirits of the dead Gaita of the village, praying, 'Give us good wind and no rain when we fire the *parka*; give us sound sleep in the ghotul with our motiari, and let them not conceive'.

[187]

Then they all drank. The leaves were pulled out of the fire, the bread was distributed and little bits of roast chicken. I got one of the chickens' heads and a bit of bread. Now this was done, the villagers could cut and fire their *parka*. After the rains began, the Gaita would sow in this spot and after him the other villagers.

In Khutgaon and the villages of that area, this festival does not seem to be kept, but on the eve of the day that they decide to cut the wood for the *parka* or *dippa*, the Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure that all are chaste. After the usual offerings in the village temples, he takes the people to the forest. As the chelik cut the wood they cry *Kiddari pude!* upon which the Gaita says to the other villagers who sit watching, 'Give them something to eat'. They have brought pots with burnt rice at the bottom, water and gourds. They chase the chelik, catch them, smear their faces with black soot from the pots and give them each a little burnt rice to eat. If there is any left it is taken to the ghotul and the motiari are similarly treated in the evening.

The *bohorani* ceremonies for the protection of the village must not ignore the ghotul, though theoretically such rites should not be necessary. At Chingnar, every three years the Gaita goes round the ghotul seven times, drives slag 'nails' into the threshold and buries a ring before it to keep off witchcraft. At Surma, they tie seven mokha leaves over the door with the same purpose.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

prisoners clearly suspected some trick and told me very little. On the whole I was impressed by the great sadness of their life, even though in the jail they are well and kindly treated. Most of them, I think, felt that an inexplicable tragedy had befallen them. They did not feel like criminals. Their lives had been destroyed by a capricious destiny.

It was naturally more difficult to get information about the suicides, for, in the nature of the case, the person of most interest could not be present to tell his story. Relatives also and the villagers were more reticent, I thought, in discussing this subject, possibly because they feared that any revelations might lead to further police investigation. But even so I was able to get a certain amount of information about the Maria's attitude to self-murder.

But enquiries among the Maria are never easy. The people say that, as a result of Mr Grigson's investigations when he was writing his book on the tribe, their villages have suffered an invasion of man-eating tigers. In one village where I myself took photographs it was declared afterwards that I had made all the women barren. The Maria are friendly people, and I was able to make many friends among them. But particularly on matters which have a police reference they are naturally inclined to be secretive and prefer to claim ignorance rather than by confiding in the investigator perhaps expose themselves to later difficulties. Moreover, there is undoubtedly throughout aboriginal India a belief that talking about tribal affairs may anger the ancestors of the clan or disturb some godling's peace of mind. It is said of Korava children, members of a criminal tribe in Mysore, that they are taught from infancy to say 'I do not know' in reply to questions put to them.[1] Many Maria adopt the same attitude.

The presence of my wife, whom everyone (incorrectly) regarded as a Maria but who has a Maria name, was of great assistance in removing suspicion, as was the fortunate chance that I always go barefoot in the villages. I learnt later that the Maria believe that one reason why the crops are so poor nowadays is that officials defile Mother Earth by trampling on her with their shoes. 'At first,' they said, 'when anyone

[1] L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes* (Mysore, 1930), Vol. III, p. 612.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

crossed a field in shoes a tiger ate him, but now the god which possessed the tiger only ruins our crops.' Even though I made the human women barren, therefore, I did not injure the fertility of Mother Earth!

I do not suggest that in this book I have discovered anything new. But the transition from a social order where everything was settled by the tribe to a state of affairs where everything is settled by outsiders and nothing at all by the tribe, is of obvious interest. The tragedies described here throw light on many aspects of tribal life, and are specially valuable as indicating what things are emotionally disturbing to the Maria mind. When we read a monograph on a tribe, its whole life is laid out before us. Some things are interesting and exciting to the reader, but it is not always easy to discover what is interesting to the people themselves. Supplementary studies like this help us to appreciate the actual realities of, for example, a polygamous household or the real difficulties of the serving-marriage. The impact of witchcraft on the minds of the people, the extent of their attachment to property, their jealousy and desire for revenge are vividly illustrated here.

The value of such a study as this is not, however, only for the student. As the tribal areas are opened up, and as the aboriginals come more and more into touch with the outside world, it will become ever more essential for administrators and magistrates to understand tribal mentality. It is hard enough sometimes to understand any kind of aboriginal action. There is nothing more baffling than aboriginal crime. The Courts are all too ready to save time and energy by accepting a plea of drunkenness as an explanation of what seems incomprehensible. Undoubtedly a proportion of aboriginal crime, like the crime of civilized people, is due to alcohol. But I do not believe the proportion is large and there is reason to suppose that the plea of drunkenness so frequently put forward is often suggested to the accused by his advisers.

The importance of anthropological knowledge for the proper evaluation of aboriginal crime hardly needs illustration. One of the most difficult things that a Court has to decide in a case of homicide is whether the deed that it is evaluating comes under any of the Exceptions to Section 300 of the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brushwood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live. There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

241
342
291
142
301

Girls threshing grain with their feet at Mokhpal

[FACING p. 14]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

conjuror that if he washed his wife in the blood of a boy, his next infant would be healthy. To ensure this result a child was murdered. A similar case occurred in Muzaffarnagar, where a child was killed and the blood drunk by a barren woman'. Later, in the same locality, 'a childless Jat woman was told that she would attain her desire if she bathed in water mixed with the blood of a Brahman child. A Hindu coolie at Mauritius bathed in and drank the blood of a girl, thinking that thereby he would be gifted with supernatural powers'.[1] More recently three cases of the murder of children in order to obtain offspring occurred in the Punjab in 1921, and in one of these a barren woman bathed in the child's blood.

In a small village in Chanda District in 1935, a Maria and a Marar planned to sacrifice a boy or girl at the Holi festival to improve the crops. The other villagers objected, but on the night of the festival, as the Holi fire was dying down, they forced an elderly Marar to stand before the fire, stripped him naked and threw him into the flames. In the following year a little Kurmi girl was killed by two women on behalf of the priest of a Mahadeo temple on the bank of the Narbada River in Hoshangabad District. They cut out a little of the left lobe of the liver while the child was still alive—the liver was needed for the treatment of a merchant.

In the *Katha Sarit Sagara* of Somadeva a pregnant queen asked her husband to gratify her craving by making a tank full of blood for her to bathe in. In order to avoid taking human life, he had a tank filled with the juice of lac, and the woman thinking it was blood, was satisfied. In the tale of Devasmita in the same collection a king is told by the Brahmins that, if he wished to have a large number of children, he must kill his son and offer up his flesh in the fire. When his wives smelt the smell of the sacrifice, each bore the king a son.[2]

Here blood is effective for the fertilization of the human body, but among the aboriginals (as in the Meriah sacrifice of the Khond) it is chiefly valued for its enrichment of the soil. This belief is probably still very widely held in Bastar and

[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 172 f. See Halliday, *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXXV (1924), p. 404.
[2] Penzer, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 98.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 782 image, and with a long sharp knife cut his throat until the head was completely severed from the body. This is the normal method of sacrificing a pig or chicken. The crime was discovered and the would-be Zamindar and two of his assistants were hanged.

The second case, which occurred among the Bison-horn Maria, I will describe immediately. The third example was in 1934 when a Muria of the north, who had not been getting good harvests, was accused of vowing to the goddess of his irrigation tank that, if the winter crops were good, he would offer her a child. That year he had unusually good crops, and in fulfilment of his vow he is said to have killed his nephew, an orphan boy of fourteen years, whom he had reared from infancy. The accused was sentenced to death by the Sessions Judge, but was acquitted by the Appellate Court, and the murder went undiscovered.

A very mysterious crime occurred in Jhoriabadhan in 1923. A little boy named Sukra about two-and-a-half years old disappeared and was never seen again. An elderly Maria of the village was accused of his murder, but was acquitted for lack of evidence. I have little doubt that this was a case of human sacrifice. It was proved in Court that about a month before the child's disappearance the accused told some friends while they were crossing over his embankment that he had promised to sacrifice a male child if the dam did not burst. He warned them that they should not allow their children to pass that way for fear they should fall in. At this stage he was probably thinking that the deity of the tank would herself push a child into the water. But later when this did not happen, he himself probably drowned the child.

IV

THE HUMAN SACRIFICE AT MARDUM

674 782 241 Kuhrami Guddi of Mardum near Katakalian had built a tank for irrigating his fields. Finding that he was not getting such good crops as he wanted, he plotted to find a pregnant woman[1] and sacrifice her to the spirits presiding over the

[1] Crimes against pregnant women are probably always motivated by superstition. Some extraordinary examples are found in *A Hangman's Diary*, edited by Albrecht Keller (London, 1928).
In 1577 at Bamberg (Germany) Nicklauss Stuller of Aydtsfeld was

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

tank, Mirchuk Deo and the Yer Kanyang or Water Maiden.

On Wednesday, 20 April 1938, the usual ceremonies for the newly-born daughter of Guddi's nephew, Hirma, were being celebrated at Guddi's house. About midday a Mahara woman named Bote, who was four months pregnant, came to the house and joined the party. It was suggested later that Guddi had met the woman that morning while he had been engaged on repairs to the village Rest-house. She had been working there and when she left with her axe and crowbar, Guddi followed her and persuaded her to come home with him. Whether it happened just like this or not, it certainly seems probable that Guddi had already determined that Bote was to be his victim. He made her drink rice-beer and when the other visitors prepared to leave, persuaded her to stay on and take some food. The food (since, as a Mahara, Bote would not have eaten from the Maria's hands) was probably more rice-beer and it looks as though Guddi succeeded in making the woman more or less fuddled, for she stayed on in the house till evening and Guddi persuaded her not to go away by promising presents for her children.

Early in the evening Guddi left the house and found his brother Nari, who was joint owner with him of the tank, and his nephew Hirma sitting in a small open shed outside. He told them that he had decided to make a sacrifice of a foetal child, and that Bote was to provide it. It will be noted that the important part of the sacrifice was not the mother so much as the unborn child. Nari later claimed that he tried to dissuade Guddi from this plan, but Guddi, who was the head

drawn out on a sledge and his body was torn thrice with red-hot tongs before he was executed on the wheel. He and two associates had committed eight murders. First he shot a horse-soldier; secondly he cut open alive a pregnant woman in whom was a dead child; thirdly he cut open a pregnant woman in whom was a female child; fourthly he cut open a pregnant woman in whom were two male children. One of his associates said they had committed a great sin and that he would take the infants to a priest for baptism but the other associate, saying that he would act as priest and baptise them, took them by the legs and dashed them to the ground.

In 1580 at Nuremberg Hans Muller aged 60 was executed on the wheel for the murder of his sister who was pregnant. After the murder he "dealt lustfully" with her and buried the body in a field.

In 1601 at Nuremberg Bastian Grilbl, a thief, was executed. He confessed to twenty murders and among his victims were five pregnant women. These he had caused to live in debauchery with his companions, then cut them open and cut off the hands of the infants and made candles of the hands to be used in burglaries.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

one of the revellers got hungry and asked his mother for food. She told him to ask his wife, and his wife said she was too busy. The man picked up a hoe and killed his mother.[1] Sori Pandu of Mokhpal was notorious for the fits of rage to which he was subject when he was drunk. One day he went to play his sarangi-fiddle at a beer party. There was a drunken quarrel, and Pandu tried to kill his uncle with an axe, but the others intervened. So he went home and got out his bow and arrow and shot him.

Korki hoe

In most of these cases intoxication was the immediate cause of the murder. There does not seem to have been any long-standing enmity between the parties, and most of the incidents should really be regarded as tragic accidents. It is only occasionally that the Maria uses landa deliberately to free himself from his inhibitions. Poyami Panda had suspected his wife of intimacy with the village Siraha, Nanda, for months past, but he had not taken any serious action about it until on the night of a festival, after he had drunk a lot of landa, he caught Nanda and his wife together and, his inhibitions and fears of punishment having been removed by the alcohol he had taken, he killed his wife's seducer.

Toddy was responsible for only one homicide and that a very tragic one. Father and son were living together amicably. One evening the father tapped his toddy tree and brought home a gourdful of the juice. They drank it together. Over supper the son asked his father for a loan, and when the old man refused, the youth fell into a drunken

[1] Case No 72.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

and its cultivation has spread among all lowland Gonds, who expect to pay their land revenue out of its proceeds.

Lastly there are the permanent rice lands, for wet cultivation. There are wide areas of permanently embanked and irrigated rice fields (*weda*), the use of which the Bison-horn Marias have learnt from their Hindu neighbours; more typical of them are the embankments of little hill-side watercourses into a series of descending little fields, which they call *jhorki weda*. The only fields which they consider can really be cultivated year after year, without resting fallow or the refreshment of wood ash or cow-dung ash, are the fields with good deep black soil; but too frequently the Maria has been elbowed out of such lands by the Hindu lessee of his village, or by Halba settlers. The other rice lands the Bison-horn Maria believes to become exhausted or 'develop sand' after two or three years' cultivation, and he then leaves them fallow for four or five years or more till they are covered with a thick growth of grasses and weeds, especially a grass he calls *chimmia*. The grass, although not burnt like forest in *erka* and *penda*, is looked upon by him in much the same way as a fertilizing agent to be ploughed into the soil; and so in a considerable degree even the cultivation of his *weda* rice fields must be regarded as shifting.

He ploughs these fallow lands up during the rains, unless, owing to their position, they are too wet to be ploughed till the end of the rains, and he repairs the embankments so that each field may retain ample water to rot the grass and weeds. At the end of the rains he gives them a second and more thorough ploughing, and leaves them alone all through the dry season. Just before the monsoon bursts he broadcasts rice seed, and then, when it has sprouted and there is adequate water in the fields, he follows the Chhattisgarhi practice of *biasi*; that is to say, he puddles up the field, young plants and all, by working all over it a flat log, on which he stands, yoked to a pair of oxen. When the land has been ploughed both before and at the end of the rains, the system is called *kohana*; where only the ploughing at the end of the rains has been possible, it is called *karhatti*. The second system is, of course, applied to all fields that have borne a crop just before being ploughed.

If it rains heavily before *kohana* and *karhatti* lands prepared in this way can be sown broadcast, they resort to the '*lai*' system. The seed is soaked in cold water and placed in baskets lined with the sacred *saja* leaves, filled with thick liquid cow manure, and covered over with *palas* (*Butea frondosa*) leaves; it is left thus for three or four days to sprout. The sprouted seed is washed out of the cow-dung with warm water, and is then sown broadcast. A

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 651 by the Marias. It deals with the village community through its mouthpieces, the headmen and the elders. Many have returned to Bastar from the Chanda Maria country. The best sign which I observed when I spent the first month of my 1934 furlough in the Abujhmar hills was that the long abandoned rice fields are all being restored to cultivation. It is interesting to note that the headman has never ventured to keep the commission for himself, but always either divides it among the villagers, or by common consent spends it on pork or liquor for a village feast.

241 In the Bison-horn country as a whole there is now as much permanent and semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, and the *patwaris* have always been more accurate in their records. The people are more sophisticated and ready to safeguard their interests. The *penda* lands are fairly accessible, except in the hilliest parts. It has been pointed out already that each piece of each *penda* site, whether at the moment under bush or under crop, is now regarded as the individual holding of some cultivator. The people have many markets in their midst, and understand measures and seed capacities. It has not, therefore, been necessary to apply the poll-tax system there. A great deal could be done even there to turn the people from shifting to permanent cultivation by recognizing new permanent cultivation as an improvement.

Methods of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias

Where the Hill Marias have started permanent cultivation they have in general adopted the methods of surrounding Murias or Bison-horn Marias, save that very few of them have mastered or attempted to master ploughing, but prepare the land with their *gudari* digging hoes. A few now keep hired Rawat herdsmen, but do not themselves tend, milk or work their cattle. If the recognition of permanent cultivation as an improvement could be combined with a determined attempt by the State to teach carting, ploughing and milking, even among the Bison-horn Marias, shifting cultivation would be greatly diminished.

243 312 When he does grow rice, the Hill Maria generally does not irrigate it with water led from a storage reservoir or tank; his method is rather to build his dam across a stream or waterway and to cultivate the land above it. The illustration opposite shows both sides of the dam made in 1930 for cultivation of this kind at Tondawada; the deep hole below the dam was made when its predecessor was washed away by an abnormal flood. No water flows here in the cold weather. First a wall of grass *tuwe*[1] was erected along the length of the dam, and behind this a wall of *welma*[1] horizontal pole fencing, supported behind with thicker pole piles

[1] See p. 132 for definition of *tuwe* and *welma*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE XIV

312
243

TONDAWADA, HILL MARIA DAM FOR RICE CULTIVATION

Above Downstream face *Below* Upstream face

[Facing p. 146]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

243 312 driven into the ground; these were buttressed further with slanting pole props with forked ends bearing against the vertical piles, while smaller forked poles were at intervals driven into the dam on either side of the piles, but below the slanting props. This vertical pole-revetting faced downstream. Against the upstream face of the grass *tum* earth was banked with a gentle slope and gently sloped off to ground level upstream. A large and nearly hollow tree-trunk was left in the middle of the dam, to act as a pipe to carry off excess water. They called the dam *nadi*, and the tank *ore*. It was not built to store water, but to retain moisture in the tank-bed, and it was the bed which was cultivated, being dug all over with the *gudari* before the rains. The dam was still serviceable when I visited Tondawada in 1934, four years later, and other small rice plots had been made higher up the waterway by placing low mud dams across it. Though the village had shifted from the adjacent site and the *penda* slopes under cultivation in 1934 were far away, these rice patches were being prepared for cultivation in readiness for the 1934 monsoon.

241 Though it has been said above that the Bison-horn Maria has as much permanent or semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, there are many tracts in his country where *penda* is his main occupation. All Gonds or Koitor, wherever I have met them, seem at heart to long to revert to the raising of the light millets off the ashes of felled timber; though it is prohibited in the British districts of the Central Provinces, I have seen it in the *jagir* estates of the Chhindwara and Hoshangabad districts, and in the Nagpur district the prospect of being allowed to do this for the first year or two was in 1932 the best bait for attracting Gond settlers to a forest village in Ramtek tahsil and even to a malguzar's waste lands village in Saoner tahsil. So it would take little to make the far less advanced Bison-horn Maria abandon permanent rice cultivation and stick to *penda* on the hill slopes or *erka* on the plains; and much of his semi-permanent cultivation is only *parka* cultivation of former *erka* lands necessitated by their final refusal to bear any more forest after years of shifting cultivation; instead of at once applying permanent methods to the land, he cuts brushwood from other forests and brings them to the deforested land to burn instead of the brushwood it bore in former years. But in these *parka* fields he can raise only rice, not his beloved small millets. In his *penda* fields he sows only *kutki*, *Panicum miliaceum*, of the type sown as the main crop in the Abujhmar hills; but in many places the forest growth felled for his *penda* is almost pure bamboo, and here instead of *kutki* he sows what he calls *gondku*, which I have not had identified.

Bison-horn Maria cultivation

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

and its cultivation has spread among all lowland Gonds, who expect to pay their land revenue out of its proceeds.

Lastly there are the permanent rice lands, for wet cultivation. There are wide areas of permanently embanked and irrigated rice fields (*weda*), the use of which the Bison-horn Marias have learnt from their Hindu neighbours; more typical of them are the embankments of little hill-side watercourses into a series of descending little fields, which they call *jhorki weda*. The only fields which they consider can really be cultivated year after year, without resting fallow or the refreshment of wood ash or cow-dung ash, are the fields with good deep black soil; but too frequently the Maria has been elbowed out of such lands by the Hindu lessee of his village, or by Halba settlers. The other rice lands the Bison-horn Maria believes to become exhausted or 'develop sand' after two or three years' cultivation, and he then leaves them fallow for four or five years or more till they are covered with a thick growth of grasses and weeds, especially a grass he calls *chimmia*. The grass, although not burnt like forest in *erka* and *penda*, is looked upon by him in much the same way as a fertilizing agent to be ploughed into the soil; and so in a considerable degree even the cultivation of his *weda* rice fields must be regarded as shifting.

He ploughs these fallow lands up during the rains, unless, owing to their position, they are too wet to be ploughed till the end of the rains, and he repairs the embankments so that each field may retain ample water to rot the grass and weeds. At the end of the rains he gives them a second and more thorough ploughing, and leaves them alone all through the dry season. Just before the monsoon bursts he broadcasts rice seed, and then, when it has sprouted and there is adequate water in the fields, he follows the Chhattisgarhi practice of *biasi*; that is to say, he puddles up the field, young plants and all, by working all over it a flat log, on which he stands, yoked to a pair of oxen. When the land has been ploughed both before and at the end of the rains, the system is called *kohana*; where only the ploughing at the end of the rains has been possible, it is called *harhatti*. The second system is, of course, applied to all fields that have borne a crop just before being ploughed.

If it rains heavily before *kohana* and *harhatti* lands prepared in this way can be sown broadcast, they resort to the '*lai*' system. The seed is soaked in cold water and placed in baskets lined with the sacred *saja* leaves, filled with thick liquid cow manure, and covered over with *palas* (*Butea frondosa*) leaves; it is left thus for three or four days to sprout. The sprouted seed is washed out of the cow-dung with warm water, and is then sown broadcast. A

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

243 *kopar* or flat log is dragged by oxen over the field according as the seed has sprouted vigorously or slightly. In many parts of Bijapur and Dantewara tahsils the *lai* system of sowing is the normal rule. Bison-horn Marias also often take a *kopar* over their *parka* and *erka* fields after they have ploughed in the ashes after the first showers of rain, so as to ensure thorough mixing of the soil and ashes. Light or heavy rice is sown in the *weda* and *jhorki weda* fields according to its position; light rice ripening early is thus generally sown in the *jhorki weda*, which drains rapidly, and always in the dry *parka* lands. The mountain rices sown in *penda* and high-level *erka* lands cannot be acclimatized in the plains.

312 In the *Gazetteer* it was stated that the people of Bastar generally were very slow to understand the advantages of irrigation; land and rain are abundant everywhere except in the south. But of recent years many Bison-horn Maria villages have constructed small *mundas* or tanks, partly for irrigation, and partly to water their cattle; and tank-bed cultivation such as that in the Hill Maria village of Tondawada described earlier in this chapter is much commoner among them.

000 This completes this account of Hill and Bison-horn Maria agriculture. The Bison-horn Maria has a number of agricultural ceremonies to sanctify his various operations and of taboos like the Hill Maria, but far more, and, like his agricultural methods, more elaborate. They will be described in the chapter on religion; their recital in this chapter would have overburdened an already long account.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

824 538 buried by their mother. Almost immediately the seven sisters ran away, and when the mother could not find them, she went to the place where the placenta was buried and let the milk from her breasts fall upon it. As the days went by there gradually grew up from the placenta a tree which was full of milk. This was the sago-palm that was born from milk and always [524] gives milk. There is a riddle—'Milk comes from the horns of the buffalo'.

Another story comes from Pharasgaon. Long ago there were eleven brothers and one day as they went hunting in the jungle they grew very thirsty. They came to a group of palm trees and rested in their shade. The youngest brother looked up at the tree and said, 'This is a very fine tree. Surely there is water hidden in its branches! I can see a pot tied there. Who can climb up and get it?' Each of the brothers tried to climb the tree and failed, for when they were nearly at the top they saw that the pot was full of blood. But the youngest boy made a rope of siari fibre and climbed up and when he looked in the pot the juice appeared to him as milk. He brought it down and they all drank of it. The ten elder brothers fell senseless but the youngest boy was intoxicated with pleasure. But he grew afraid thinking that his brothers would die. Then his god said to him, 'Offer a pig to the Gorga Kanyang and they will recover'. He sacrificed a pig and his brothers sat up again.

[782] This is the origin of the sacrifices that are made to the tree before it is tapped. It is believed that if no offerings are made the juice turns into blood and makes the people ill. If offerings are withheld for a long time, the tree dries up.

In the Chota Dongar area, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar and the Muria of their immediate neighbourhood trace the palm to Tallur Muttai or Mother Earth herself. At the beginning of the world, Tallur Muttai came with Kadrengal (whom some call her brother and some her husband) to the forest of Bastar. Kadrengal was innocent of sexual desire, and so Tallur Muttai created sago-palms with the hope that their juice would excite him. When Kadrengal first went to tap the trees, he tied a thread from the cut peduncle down to a hole which he dug below, but the wind blew it to and fro and the juice was scattered. Then Tallur Muttai taught him how to tie a gourd to catch the juice and place a leaf to guide it safely. Kadrengal drank a great quantity; desire came to him; and he went to Tallur Muttai.

But the Hill Maria of Jharagaon and Nalnar say that the palms originated when the seven Kanyang, daughters of Bhagavan, came down to Singardip (the world) to bathe. They combed their hair, and wherever their hairs fell the trees sprang up. They give the names of three of the Maidens of the sago-palm—Fuse Kanyang, Ganganangi Kanyang and Kondakalbuli Kanyang.

●245 The palms are carefully guarded. Sometimes a large bamboo mat is tied round the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree.

This is the method of extracting the juice. The ends of the flowering spadices are cut and hollow bamboos, gourds or earthen pots are fixed where they can catch the flow of sap. Bamboos or gourds are simply tied to the tree, but a pot may be fixed in position with a couple of poles below it tied round the trunk and fixed together supported by a string tied to a bough above. The pot is placed inside a basket and its mouth tied to the spadix, to the end

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of which a folded leaf of the date palm is attached to ensure that the juice trickles down into the pot. A small gourd with a hole at either end is kept in the pot, which is finally protected with a bamboo cover to guard it from wind and birds. 245

When the climber has reached the pot, he removes the leaf and scrapes the end of the cut spadix with a knife that is kept among the branches. Sometimes he rubs it with a little marking-nut juice. Then he removes the sap from the pot and puts it in a gourd tied round his waist. Sometimes if the tree is very high, he lowers this gourd down to the ground with a cord. Then he replaces the leaf at the end of the spadix, puts the cover over the pot and descends.

There are various rules and customs about the use of the juice. It is not considered good to drink it when it is too sweet, as it has a laxative effect. For this reason a little of the old juice is always left in the pot to ferment it. To increase its power a little of the root of the danbaher tree is added. When the weather is cloudy it is considered that it will not be good. The juice of a newly tapped tree should not be given to a pregnant woman or she may abort. In fact, at the beginning, when a new tree is tapped only men drink. The Hill Maria do not give the juice at any time to a woman in her menstrual period. 273 [843] [841]

There is a curious idea that the sago-palm itself is subject to a menstrual period.[1] Every month there is a space of two or three days during which the juice does not flow properly and it is not considered safe at this time to drink even what little there is. So, too, for the first week or so after a new tree is tapped the juice should be avoided, for it is then, they say, like semen. At Phunder, the Muria said that the end of the tree's menstrual period is indicated by the presence of a lotus leaf in the pot. 824

In some villages, the Muria believe that two Kanyang visit the palms. One is Jal Kanyang, and is a motiari; the other, Kaudo Kanyang, is regarded with characteristic inconsistency as a chelik. When Kaudo Kanyang comes to play in a tree, the juice is scanty but good; when Jal Kanyang comes, the juice flows like a river but it is less potent. Sometimes then a little sand and even fish are found in the pot.

This belief in the fish that get into the pot is widespread. Once in the days of Chaitu Gaita of Alor, a chelik climbed a sago-palm and found two *turu* fish and some sand at the bottom of the gourd. At Palli I was told that such fish were 'sometimes caught by the Salphi Maiden and taken up into the tree'. I have recorded the same idea among the Hill Maria.[2]

When a tree is tapped for the first time offerings are made to the Gorga Kanyang. In some villages a hollow bamboo full of water is brought from a stream and leant against the foot of the palm. It is believed that a Kanyang lives in this water and probably there is an idea that the tree will give as much juice as there is water in the bamboo. In order to improve the flow of juice the villagers sometimes promise the Gorga Kanyang a pig or a chicken. 245

At Adnar on the day they first tapped a new tree the village Gaita, followed by all the villagers, came to its foot. With red and black powder he made a row of three circles, inside each of which he drew a cross. Rice was piled on these crosses and two leaf-cups full of salphi juice were placed by them. One pile of rice was for the Gorga Kanyang, one for Kaudo Kanyang, and one for

[1] This idea is widespread: I have found it among Juang, Kond, Gadaba, Bondo and, in Bastar, among the Bison-horn Maria.

[2] Compare B. L. Hora, 'Rains of Fishes in India', *JRASB.*, Vol. XXIX (1933), pp. 93ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Mother Earth. The Gaita offered eggs and chickens, first making the chickens eat the rice and then killing them. The juice in the leaf-cups was offered to the Earth Mother and the Kanyang and then everyone drank a little. After this the owner was free to tap the tree in the ordinary way.

Failure of the sago-palm may be due either to black magic and witchcraft or to the hostility of one of the Gorga Kanyang. The Kanyang, if she is not happy in a particular village, may twist the branches at the top of the tree and cause them to wither. It is generally believed that the tree gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul. Then she marries and the juice ceases to flow. The motiari of the palm tree is afraid of marrying too soon. If we touch the tree with a cloth yellowed by haldi it will stop giving juice till the new shoots come, for the shadow of haldi (that is, of marriage) is upon it.'

For gonorrhoea, a very rare disaster among these aboriginals, the sufferer stands below holding a leaf-cup into which a friend pours a little of the juice from the top of the tree. The patient offers a few drops to the Gorga Kanyang and then drinks it without allowing it to touch the ground.

The wood of the palm is not usually used for building in Bastar but the Hill Maria make their *turam* drums out of its hollow dried-up trunk. The Muria also make combs and drum-sticks out of the dry wood. Some of the Muria in the Abujhmar foothills make necklaces of the fibre. The leaves are often used as hair-ornaments or to decorate the village dormitories. Sometimes the flowers are pounded into flour, mixed with water and drunk as a sort of gruel. When it is evident that the tree will give no more juice, it is cut down and the pith is removed. This is pounded into a sort of flour and steamed in the usual way into cakes which are popular eaten with honey or sugar. This practice is common across the whole of the sago-palm country. I have found it among Hill Maria, Bondo, Gadaba, and Juang and it has been recorded for the Kadir and Khasi.[1]

The salphi juice is either brought back to the house and stored there until by fermentation it becomes much more intoxicating than in its fresh condition or it is drunk immediately at the foot of the tree. Little groups of people, generally men, go out to the trees, taking with them roasted crabs or frogs, little bits of chicken, various kinds of chutney, carefully wrapped in leaf-cups. The liquor is drunk from leaves, generally simply folded to make a sort of cup, and it is sometimes poured direct into the mouth. Many delightful hours are thus spent by the villagers out among the woods or on the hills.

When a tree is specially planted by seeds or cuttings it is very carefully tended. A fence of wood is built round it and it is watered regularly. Sometimes a tree is associated with the memory of a particular person. In Kanhargaon, a village in the Chota Dongar area, a Muria planted salphi and mango trees fifty years ago and they still preserve his memory. When the people go in the evening to drink the juice, they offer a few drops in the name of Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal to the sago-palm and a few drops in the name of the dead man who planted the trees to the mango, 'so that as we drink you can drink also'.

Generally speaking the tree belongs to the man in whose field or garden it is growing. Where the trees are out in the jungle, or standing in the common land of the village, disputes sometimes arise. The headman or the more influential priests generally claim these trees as their own, but there is also a

[1] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 171.; P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), p. 32. See also Grigson, op. cit., p. 152.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

custom that the man who goes to the trouble of tapping the tree, protecting it with thorns, and making a bamboo ladder, has a right over it, especially when it is growing far away in the forest. The trees are not taxed but the villagers are not allowed to sell the juice. Disputes simply arise over the right to take the liquor for personal use. 245 ● 423

The salphi juice, however, is not generally so intoxicating as to cause quarrels in the same degree as landa rice-beer or mahua spirit. Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual* (par. 263) gives some account of the comparative alcoholic strengths of these drinks. 'The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number of tests made with toddy from all parts of the Madras Presidency were: 273

		Percentage by Volume
Coconut ..	.. 85·7° U.P.	8·1
Palmyra ..	.. 90·8° U.P.	5·2
Date ..	.. 91·4° U.P.	4·9
Sago ..	.. 89·6° U.P.	5·9

Toddy exposed for sale in Bengal in 1909 was found generally to range in alcoholic strength from about 93° to 94° U.P. When reasonably fresh it has a food value somewhat comparable with that of well-made malt beer.' The average strength of landa rice-beer may be taken at about 85° U.P. (8·6% by volume). Mahua spirit is much stronger—*rasi* may be sold at strengths of 50° to 70° U.P. and *phuli* of 5° to 35° U.P. The average for *rasi* is 60° U.P. (22·8% by volume) and for *phuli* 25° U.P. (42·8%).

XIII

With all these varied economic and social activities how far do chelik and motiari meet one another during the day? Does tribal custom allow them to share the same tasks or are the functions of men and women sharply differentiated? 462 883

The girls, of course, have the major part of the house-work to see to. They cook, bring water, clean the buildings with cow-dung and whitewash, husk the grain, grind wheat or spices. They generally make the *masni* mats, tie grass into brooms, prepare leaf-plates and cups. In the house a woman must not climb on the roof and she must not take grain out of the dhusir grain-bin, although it may only be removed at her command. A motiari before the menarche may go into the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept, but not afterwards—for she is going to join another clan and has no part with these ancestors; her spirit will mingle with those of her husband's family.

The chelik, on the other hand, have comparatively little to do in the house. They may cook and bring water when the womenfolk are in their periods; they have the business of erecting the framework of the building which the girls will later plaster with mud, and they thatch the roof.

But their main work is outside. In male hands is all the business of the fields and forest. They make and use the ploughs; they cut wood for fuel or cultivation; they embank the fields; they tend the cattle, make and drive their carts; they go to hunt and fish; they watch the crops and thrash and winnow them.

Yet there remain many chances for sharing of labour between chelik and motiari. A boy does not always see his motiari in the dark. Both can repair

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pipes. These are lit with little bits of glowing coal picked from the fire, and when half-smoked or not in use are generally kept tucked into the turban or hidden in a hole in the ghotul wall.

But the chelik do not rely only on the tobacco supplied them in the ghotul. Any enterprising boy has tucked into his loin-cloth or hanging (sometimes with a bunch of bells or cowries) at his waist a specially-made tobacco-pouch. These *gota* are, as a glance at the illustrations in Figs. 82-4, 93-5, 99, 103-4, and 109-14 will show, elaborate and varied. They are of every size and shape. One is like a fish, another carved like a wheel, a third resembles a mango. Some are of garud, moda or koraya wood, others are cut from the kernel of a fruit, a few are of brass. The stoppers are fitted tightly with a little lac. Some are covered with the testes of a goat or sambhar. Most are elaborately carved.

Many of the *gota*-pouches are named. There is the *dudong-gota*, round as a girl's breast; the *chakka-gota* (Fig. 77), a beautifully carved wheel; the *kemul*, or tortoise pouch (Fig. 79) with its elaborate designs; the charming *marka-batta-gota* (Fig. 112) shaped like a mango; the *kalări-gota* (Fig. 83); the *min-hĭp-gota*, with its decoration of fish bones; the *tumur-gota*, whose carving resembles the flowers of the ebony tree; the *girne* or lizard *gota* (Fig. 82); and the *damera-ăching-singăr gota* (Fig. 110) with its elaborate silver decorations. Some of the *gota* have a deliberately sexual purpose; the *pudo-gota* (Figs. 94 and 99) has small representations of the vagina carved on it and the *dudo-muri* (Fig. 101) has marks that are supposed to resemble the pimples round the nipples of a woman's breast. The chelik show these to girls to excite them. But, indeed, as I show in another chapter, to ask for tobacco is itself a polite way of asking a girl for sexual congress.

The Muria grow tobacco in specially fenced gardens near their houses and sometimes in enclosures made on the banks of stream or river. When it is ready, it is cut and allowed to dry in the garden. Then it is placed between layers of kodon straw 'which turns it red in a few days'. After this it is dried again, this time on the roof of the house, and finally tied up in bundles with home-made string.

VI. The Sleeping-mat

The *gik* or *mansi*-mat is an important piece of ghotul furniture. When a boy joins the ghotul for the first time he is expected to bring a mat which is usually made for him by his mother or an aunt. Later on, especially in the *jodidăr* ghotul, a girl ought always to make a mat for her special chelik, but elsewhere the mats seem to be made by a boy's mother, sister or some other female relative. At a marriage a new mat is usually presented to the bridegroom.

The mat is not difficult to make. A rectangle is marked out and pegs driven into the ground at its four corners. Bits of bamboo are tied between the pegs at opposite ends of the rectangle and a dozen or more strings of hemp or grass are tied from one end to the other so as to form the warp. Before they are attached, they are threaded through the holes of the *ăch*, a wooden instrument illustrated in Fig. 96 which is used to beat the grass into place. The woman sits down with the *ăch* before her and threads bits of reed or grass over and under the strings. After she has threaded two or three she sprinkles them with water and pulls the *ăch* sharply towards her several times, thus pressing the grass into position. This is done over and over again until finally the mat is complete.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

487 the bed of the stream; these are held in position between upright
491 poles set V-wise in the boulders, to which are fastened horizontal
[327] bamboo poles as railings. As they have no saws, the 'plank' is a tree trunk with one side trimmed flat with the axe. Even more elaborate bridges are sometimes made at high levels over streams liable to flood, from tree-fork to tree-fork on opposite banks.

361 Though, as has been said above, agricultural conditions nowadays determine village sites, hill-tops or rocky slopes remain favourite sites, and become commoner as you penetrate farther into the Abujhmar hills. The traditional arrangement is a street some
[363] twenty-five yards wide between parallel lines of long-houses; at one end of the street is the *gotul-lon* or village dormitory, generally within a rounded bamboo fence, and sometimes in front of this dormitory will be seen the *udam-garia* or seat of honour of the *kasyeq-gaita* and possibly also of the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*), as well as the stones on which the other village elders sit around with them in conclave; but the *udam-garia* custom is not found in
[778] all parts of the hills. Sometimes the shrine of the *Nar-Talughi* or Village Mother is actually inside the dormitory fencing, and she is often housed there for a while when a village is being shifted. There are, as a rule, no *bari* (vegetable gardens) attached to each house as amongst most Gonds, including the Bison-horn Marias and the Murias of Bastar; but sometimes the *kasyeq-gaita* has a small tobacco *bari* attached to the dormitory in the centre of the main street. The *Gazetteer* (p. 50) speaks of the 'common granary' as standing in the broad street; but with one partial exception, Nugur village in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, I have never
343 seen this. The villagers generally construct a row of granaries
251 (*manda* or *wijja-dodi*) on piles at the side or rear of the main village street, sometimes nearer the *penda* fields than the village; this row can hardly be called a 'common granary', as each villager has his own granary in the row for his own private food and seed store, the granaries being built together only for convenience, as they can then be watched at night by one watchman for the whole village, sleeping in a special hut at the side of the granaries or under a granary. At Nugur there were big matting bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored; but here
[426] the village had come under the economic thraldom of some Teli tradesmen, who for years had advanced rice to the cultivators. The bins were left in the collective charge of the headman and elders, and any villager could help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest he would replace it with 50 per cent. interest, the Teli owners being also free to remove the surplus from time to time.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949.
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Lohu
1 *alpanji* platform for storing produce.
10 large baskets, containing grain and forest fruits.
1 blue dancing skirt or *kachi*.
5 gourd bottles.
1 axe.
2 sickles.
4 large earthenware pots.
1 ditto, used as *Hanal Kunda*.
1 hearth, used as *Hanal O'idal*.
3 very small earthenware pots of pigs' fat.
6 thick bamboo oil-tubes.

422

Most houses have, besides these, a number of drums, more bows and arrows, fishing-rods, lines and hooks, snares, nets of varying mesh for fish, birds and animals, throwing spears, fibre for making string and rope, hemp or grass for the same purpose, sandals of raw cow-hide, thongs of cow-hide, and *korr-guda*, or funnel-shaped hen's nests on bamboo posts about two feet high. They keep the bulk of their grain and forest fruits in their granaries, and the baskets in the house contain only what has been removed from the granary for current consumption; there are generally to be found quantities of new baskets made for sale at the bazaar. The baskets are of all shapes and sizes, and amongst other items include flat baskets something like winnows for use as platters, which they hold up full of food to their mouths.

[351] ●

[285]

343

Granaries

The granaries, whether built singly or in a long row, are almost invariably built on piles, the floor being 3 or 3½ feet above the ground. This not only protects the grain and dried fruit stored in the granary from damp and white ants, but, as already remarked, provides an extra sleeping place for the males of the family and any male guests. There are three rows of piles, the two outer ones being tree trunks, seven or eight feet high, cut with a piece of a bough forking off at the floor height and trimmed short as a rest for the horizontal beams which support the flooring; the central piles have similar forks turned inwards at floor-height to support the floor beams, but are two or three feet higher above the floor than the outer piles, as they have to support the roof-tree. The upper ends of these long piles are either naturally forked or else notched to support the horizontal roof beams, which bear a thatched roof constructed in the same way as the roofs of dwelling-houses. Planks are laid across the floor beams at the points where these rest on the lower forks of the piles, and a flooring of bamboo wicker-work is laid on them. The walls are made of bamboo check wicker-work, the wefts being carried on around each corner of the building, where a thin pole resting on a floor plank forms the corner warp; the other warps are unsplit bamboos, but

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 the wefts are of split bamboo. The corners of the walls are further secured by cords stitched through the two wicker walls round the
[283] corner warp and the corner pile. Wherever beams cross, they are lashed with *siavi* twine or thicker rope. The door of a single granary is usually a sliding piece of bamboo wicker-work; but in the long granaries it is a section of *tass* grass fence or bamboo wicker-work fastened in position by obliquely crossing bamboos.

● 251 These granaries contain immense quantities of *kosra* and other hill grains, rice, beans, dried forest fruits, etc., in big bins of bamboo basketry, smaller baskets, and large *chiptis* or lidded boxes of leaves on a framework of cane or twigs. The bins are all lidded with stitched-leaf tops, tied round the rim with creeper cord, like the paper top of an English jam-jar. The Marias store here also dried rolls of tobacco leaves, coils of creeper and other ropes, and gourds of all shapes and sizes for making spoons, ladles and water-bottles; and when they used *moghi* dancing shields and peacock plumes attached to them they used to hang them under the eaves except when they wrapped them in leaves and hung them in the tops of trees.

342 513 The village dormitory, as has been said above, is generally in the centre and at one end of the village street. It is a long-house made with no partitions, surrounded generally with a bamboo wattle-work fence; and it is practically a roofed *alpanji* or sleeping platform, the criss-cross bamboo framework of which covers almost the whole floor at a height of about 2½ feet above the floor. Often it is entered from in front by a door under the highest point of the eaves, to which access is gained by a narrow horizontal gangway of logs raised the same height above the ground as the sleeping platform and extending from the outer fence to the door; persons entering the dormitory climb on to the gangway by a rough stile, consisting of a tree stump set in the ground between two vertical posts which serve as railings.

The 'gotul-lon'

[374] The interior is badly grimed with smoke, as log fires are lit at night under the sleeping platform, the only door is fastened, and there is no window or vent for the escape of smoke. I have never found anything inside a dormitory except two or three drums and occasionally the shrine of the Village Mother.

B. Bison-horn Maria Villages, Houses, and their Contents

361 Of Hill Maria villages the essential thing to remember is that they shift as the cultivation shifts, and so seldom remain more than four or five years in one place. The few villages that have good permanent rice fields tend now to become more or less permanent.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

Houses

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Teiam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *ahhi* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc. If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orka*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do.

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing.

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it.

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath.

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground.

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'.

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bari*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals.

Irpa Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Kurum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Korta or *Puna Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol. 883

> Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
> At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

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But the main interest of chelik and motiari—for after all they are still only boys and girls—is in food. *'Bhaio bihān handiya ma dhyān.* As soon as morning comes, his mind is in the cooking-pot.' Of things to eat the Muria have a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the State has not yet interfered with their right to natural roots, fruit and leaves—they may take what they want so long as they do no damage. 262

As Grigson says of the Maria: 'The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list.'[1] I do not propose to give such a list here; but I will briefly mention the things that chelik and motiari like best. Meat and fish probably stand first in popularity—I will describe them later.

FIG. 5. Uspal rice husker. Length 5' 9"

Among fruit trees, the mahua is supreme. When the flowers begin to fall, the cattle are kept tied up until the women and children have gathered them. They spread them in bright yellow patches swiftly turning brown on rocks, before their houses, in specially-made enclosures. When dry enough, the flowers are beaten with heavy sticks, sometimes with the wooden doors of a pigsty. The pulp is made into chutney with dried khamer fruit and tamarind kernels, and eaten with rice or gruel. The oil is used for cooking and lighting. The flowers are stored in baskets, and make one of the most eagerly demanded gifts when the chelik make a dance tour of a village. 262 252 222 [373]

Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with chilli and salt to the chelik. 262 222 [563]

Aonla fruit is liked, and there are many riddles about it. 'A green pigeon came from Porrobhum and laid its eggs on a leaf.' 'The white bird hides its eggs under its wings.' Other popular fruits are those of the thorny bhoir—'Mother bites, but daughter invites'; the kurlu—'The little sparrow's liver is sweet'; the sirna, the char, the jamun and the tamarind. Tendu fruit is picked while still unripe and put in kodon chaff to mature. Sometimes it is buried in the ground and a fire is lit above it. When ripe, it is eaten raw. [524] [251] Wild figs are eaten ripe or dried and ground up with flour.

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 151.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*akhi*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[1] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write :—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

it is not much used among Bison-horn and Hill Marias in comparison to the *salphi* or sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*) which is found wild and is extensively propagated. When the *salphi*, after much cutting of the spadix for the intoxicating sap, ceases to flower, the interior of the stem yields a fibrous pith. This the Hill Maria women (probably the Bison-horn also) pound on a large flat stone with a heavy oval pebble held in their right hand, to separate pith from fibre. The resultant pith 'grain' looks like lime, and is steamed into cakes; an earthenware pot has a little water poured into it, and over the water bamboo sticks are criss-crossed and covered with *siari* leaves as a platform for the pith to be steamed; no salt or sugar is added.

Actually most of the fruit already mentioned is collected by women and children; the men, of course, deal with the toddy and sago palm sap, and their methods will be described in the section on drinking and intoxicants. The men collect those forest products which they need for basketry or rope making, or in finding which there is an element of the chase. They like to roam about with their bows and arrows while their women are busy gathering fruit.

The women gather also various leaves, flowers and seeds as vegetables. They use the young green leaves and the seeds of the sal (*Shorea robusta*); the flowers of the *giril marra* shrub (*Indigofera arborea*); the young curled fronds of bracken in the Abujhmar hills, possibly also on the Bailadila mountains, where, too, it is common (the Hill Marias call it *handa jabba* and the Bison-horn *anda koser*); the seeds of the marking nut tree (*Semecarpus anacardium*; *bhelwa*); the young green shoots, pith and seeds of the bamboo; the fruits of the *ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*). The digging of forest roots and yams in the rains is one of the women's chief occupations; there are many varieties, and some are now cultivated. In the early rains a much sought after foods are the *khudrati* or *bora* fungus, and the mushroom. Various wild plants are gathered as vegetables from marsh and river valley, especially the *chiur*, the long thin leaves of which are like small hyacinth leaves, and are a favourite food of wild buffalo and bison. Women and men collect large supplies of *siari* or elephant creeper leaves for use as plates and drinking vessels. *Aki* is the Gondi word for a leaf, and the assonance *aking-waking* is commonly used as covering all produce which the Maria collects from the forest.

In August and September the Bison-horn Maria women spend hours swishing a basket[1] over the tops of certain wild grasses in the fields to collect the seeds, which are eaten like the small hill grains.

[1] Hill Maria women also do this, using little wicker-work shields fastened to bamboo sticks to beat the grass seeds into a basket.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A little later they collect *kapani*, the wild bearded rice common in all old rice fields and fallows and at the edges of standing water, by holding a winnowing-fan in one hand and beating the grain of the standing ripe plants into it with the other; the bearded ears are sometimes plaited into '*sela*' fringes for ornamenting doors of houses at the new-eating festivals.

The men are adept in collecting the honey of various kinds of bees, though sometimes, despite forest rules, too prone to save trouble by felling rather than climbing a fine tree. For this purpose, and for tapping palm trees, they often fasten to the trunks of trees long thick bamboos, cutting the side shoots down to stumps four or five inches long to serve as ladder rungs. Gums are collected from many species of trees, for use as bird-lime or in securing the *kosa* silk whipping of arrow-heads, etc. In Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils the Forest Department has quantities of *tasar* silk cocoons collected by Bison-horn Maria men when, in the rains in the intervals between sowing and reaping their various crops, they go out to the forests in search of such delicacies as red ants' nests, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs. The cocoons are high on sal or *saja* trees; where the climbers cannot reach them they use long bamboo poles with a piece of bamboo fastened at an acute angle at the end to serve as a hook. They get about Rs. 3 a thousand cocoons from the Koshta weavers who employ them; the Hill Maria, however, generally collects only what cocoons he needs for his own purposes. Red ants' nests are cooked, leaves, ants and all, either with *pej* or *gato*, or by themselves and eaten with pulses as a vegetable. They are also a favourite febrifuge; a rough and ready remedy is to shake out the live red ants on to the patient's skull, when the formic acid of their stings is said to reduce the fever; the more elaborate method is to boil the nest, ants and all, and to strain off and use the juice as a febrifuge in small doses; this juice is said to taste sharper than any lime and believed to be invaluable for a long-standing fever. In collecting the palms of the dwarf palms *chhind* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *P. acaulis*, and *buta chhind* (*P. farinifera*) for use for thatching, basketry or making rough cords for binding fences, the men not only collect the small dates or the flowers (according to season) and the edible pith of the *buta chhind*, but also the fat white grub of a certain beetle, which is also found in the stems of the toddy palm and in fresh green monsoon bamboo shoots. This is eaten fried in ghee or oil with a little spice and chillies, and is regarded as a great delicacy; it is sold in the Jagdalpur market for three or four pice, and even high-caste Hindus buy it. When white ants emerge in flying swarms early in the monsoon they collect them after they have shed their wings, or pull the wings

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

224 sprung free of the ' tap ' of the *dim-kola* and so released the back end of the *mirpos-kola*, the front end of which would have given way beneath the weight of the *adam-guryu* cross-beam and brought the stone-weighted *kalk-panj* fall beams crashing down on to the animal, while the *adam-guryu* fell into the slot prepared for it in the ground. The trap had been set for six weeks with no result, and they had not tried making a trap of this kind for years. It looked too fragile for any but a very small panther ; the bait-stick was barely 2½ feet from the mouth of the trap ; and the fall even at the mouth was only 20 inches. Kalmu Boda, the expert *shikari* who is *pargana* headman of the Bison-horn villages around Barsur, was openly scornful.

Snares and springes for pea-fowl, jungle-fowl and snipe, and bird-lime for other birds, with occasional nets for birds or deer complete the Hill Maria's hunting equipment. I have not seen him using nets ; the villages where most nets are to be seen are those near the Bison-horn country, and their users presumably copy Bison-horn methods.

Bison-horn Maria hunting

In the most advanced and thickest populated parts of the Bison-horn Maria country, such as the Paknar, Katakalian and Kuakonda tracts, it is difficult to find any wild creature except birds and insects. In Hindu India the monkey is always present, being sacred and so free to devour anyone's crops. The Maria eats monkey as readily as any other animal, and the monkey long ago decided to avoid his lands. At my camp at Katakalian there was a sudden shout and dozens of Marias left me to rush at a tree on which someone had seen a luckless flying squirrel (*Pteromys petaurista*). Even hares and rats are said to be less common here than elsewhere. Like Hill Marias, Bison-horn Marias spend hours digging out field rats and mice, carefully wrapping each victim in grass before carrying them home in glee to roast them whole skewered on bamboo spits, singeing off the fur. They sell and buy rat meat in the markets, either raw, or in little jerked squares on bamboo spits ; but that they are getting sensitive to ridicule on this account is shown by the fact that the buyer must ask for ' earth-roots ', not rats or mice. Frogs are another delicacy, also spitted and roast. Python, *daman* and non-poisonous snakes are eagerly sought after ; for ordinary eating they skin, slice and fillet the snake and stew it with spices, when they say it tastes midway between fish and chicken. Small portions of python separately cooked are regarded as a valuable cure for ' pot-belly '.

[252] [195] [253]

The great round of ritual vernal hunts preceding sowing have been the chief cause of the extermination of game. The religious

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

pig, sprinkles their blood over the goddess and over each of the *saja* leaves, and breaks the top of each of the eggs with his knife. Then he offers the goddess ears of *chikma*, other early millets, and mountain rice; if the latter is not yet in ear, he offers a flowering rice stalk. He then prostrates himself with the palms of his hands flat on the ground, belches, and prays the goddess as their mother to accept these first-fruits, to grant them grace to have their new-eating feast, and to save her witless children from all troubles and adversity. He then hands each man one of the bloodstained *saja* leaves, and, leaving someone to watch over the slain victims, all go and bury the leaves in their fields. Each man then brings a handful of old rice from his house to the *kadri-bera* field, and hands it over to the *perma*, who cooks the bodies of the victims and the rice separately, and distributes them to the men, who eat their share there.

Meanwhile the women, for whom it has been taboo to attend the ceremony in the *kadri-bera* field and the burial of the leaves, will have prepared meal from the new millets and mountain rice; the grains are still rather green, and are roughly threshed, parched in a broken earthen crock held over the fire, pounded with the *uspal* husker, winnowed free of husks, and ground between two hand mill-stones with a quantity of salt; some mix in a little *gur* sugar. The wife of each head of a family cooks the new flour in a Hanal Kunda or Pot of the Departed (not, of course, that in which oil, etc., is placed in the name of the newly dead), along with new vegetables from the *bari*, other than gourds, beans and cucumbers. When the head of the family returns from the sacrificial meal already described, he brings with him the junior members of his family, but *not* his wife-clan relatives, and some of them bring small chickens. He sacrifices these to the Departed, offers them some of the new flour and vegetables, and pours a libation of *mahua* spirit and *landa* on the floor of the corner of the *wijja-lon* room that is dedicated to the cult of the Departed. The new flour and vegetables are then eaten in his house by them, their wives and their unmarried children; but no one of any other clan may participate, and on that day no one must give anything out of his house, not even fire from his hearth, to anyone of another clan.

On the next day, however, there is the usual remains-eating feast (*Hava Tindana*) in their houses, to which they are free to invite friends, brother-clan and wife-clan relatives, whom they regale on *mahua* spirit and on *landa*. In the evening they dance the *kortam* dance without their bison-horn head-dresses, but with men and women dancing separately in their usual way.

In villages where there is a log-god and a *Mataguri* or hut-shrine of Mata, the sacrifices on the first day are made before each, the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

241 they still make a small *parka* plot somewhere in their fields so that some of the grain will mature quickly and they will have enough to eat at home.

Their big fields are generally embanked, often irrigated with some ingenuity. They are distinguished according to the soil and location—*dhar neli* or *gabhār* is a low-lying rice-field, a *tikra* is a field on a slope, a *dobka* or *mal* is an ordinary level field—and they are often given names, the Cat-stone Field, the Field of the Frogs, the Field of the Ghost.[1]

FIG. 4. Yerk used in the same way as the gagra, but of a different pattern
Length 3′ 10″

Perhaps the most treasured thing, and often actually the most profitable, in a Muria's agricultural life is the *bāri* or garden enclosure near his house. This is carefully fenced with a stockade or with bamboo wattle-work, and is manured and enriched with the sweepings of the house and the droppings of the cattle throughout the year.

Here the Muria sows the profitable oil-seeds, sarson, til or arsi; here he sets beans by the fence, and a broad patch of red *jira* spinach. Often he plants some castor trees, or a sago-palm, sometimes plantain and papaya. One specially guarded patch contains his tobacco supply for the year.

Once the seed is sown, the attention of chelik and motiari is largely diverted from the ghotul to the fields. Ghotul life is almost suspended, though the smaller children go and solemnly imitate the habits of their elders. Little fires twinkle in the fields and the sweet music of the flute comes through the darkness.

When the first grain appears on the shoots, the Gaita offers an egg to Tallur Muttai to ensure its safety.

During the season, in the permanent fields there is a lot to be done. The embankments must be constantly repaired. The sprouting rice must be puddled with a board dragged by bullocks. The girls must go to weed. The boys set fish-traps where the water escapes through the embankments. It is a time of danger and taboo: an act of adultery may blight the grain, a quarrel discourage its growth.

[226]
[184]

Everybody goes to reap the crop. They use the ordinary iron sickle. Before thrashing, the bundles are piled up on wooden platforms, heaped into rough bins, sometimes just stacked in neat circles on the ground.

The first sheaf cut is tied to a tree overlooking the field or clearing.

252 The *kara* thrashing-floor is prepared by men, for in many villages it is taboo for women to do this, and so the men clear the ground in or near the field, plaster and cow-dung it. In the middle they place a pole (*mer-gutta*) to the top of which they often tie a sheaf (Plate X). If they are going to use oxen, they attach a pole to the *mer-gutta* and drive the animals round in the usual way. Often, however, the Muria thrash with their feet (Plate X). If there

[1] For an account of names of fields in India, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1891), pp. 113 and 141.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do.

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing.

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it.

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath.

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground.

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'.

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bīri*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals.

Irpu Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Kurum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Koria or *Puna Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol. 883

Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

A broom is 'the thing that licks quickly and then falls flat'; a leaf-plate is 'the little tank full of thorns' or 'the boy that morning and evening gives a share to all'; a pot of curds hawked round the village is described as 'the white cock going from house to house'.

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FIG. 5. Uspal rice husker. Length 5' 9"

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Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with chilli and salt to the chelik. 262 227 [563]

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[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 151.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 222 252 [278] The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs, regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

262 276 524 The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams; a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

262 Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries' when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

262 843 Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[171] [1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. 'The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Saises in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[171] [2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 1 *ff*.

[278] [3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chelik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

252 with wood and fired; pots are placed in rows upon them. The motiari husk and clean the rice, and make the leaf-cups and plates, but the boys do the actual cooking. When the rice is ready it is tipped out in a great pile on bamboo mats. A pig, which is killed by being beaten on the head with a rice husker, is roasted in the fire till its hair is burnt off; it is skinned and cleaned. Flesh, bones and skin are cut up into little squares of equal size—an important matter, for it is essential that everyone should receive exactly the same amount. These pieces are fried in mahua oil, and put into large earthen pots with rice-water, salt, haldi and chilli and boiled till ready. Fish is prepared in much the same way, except that usually something sour is added to flavour it. Fowls are cooked in leaf-cups. The intestines are squeezed out, and the whole chicken with head and feet is roasted with a little salt. Eggs are wrapped in leaves and baked in the fire. Mongoose flesh is roasted and spiced with dried mangoes. Crocodile is boiled.

264 At the ghotul feasts and marriages I have attended everyone sits round in a big circle, and the boys (sometimes assisted by a few motiari) serve the food. The bits of meat are carefully counted out into leaf-cups and distributed. Rice is served from baskets or winnowing-fans direct onto leaf-plates.

At home, the family sits round the pot of jawa, which is taken straight off the fire and placed in the middle of the floor. Each has a little chutney on a leaf in front of him and an empty leaf-cup. The mother dips a gourd into the pot and helps the little children; then each member of the family helps himself. There is no idea that men should eat before women or elders before the children.

262 Doctors say that the Muria's food lacks fat and protein and criticize them for not taking more milk, ghee and vegetable. No doubt the Muria, like other 146 people, would eat more of these things if they could get them But there is no doubt that they do not like milk, and rarely take it themselves or give it to their children.

731 Famine is not common in Bastar, for the people can fall back on the almost limitless products of the forests. But it has been known, and a sombre song preserves its memory.

539

Nimâre weke dântona rawnâni	Vulture, whither away, vulture?
Dori bhumi dântona dâda le	I am going towards the west, brother,
Bhumi dukhâr dukâr roy dâda le	For the day of want has dawned.
Bhumi te dukâr arit roy dâda le	The famine is over all the world
Hikâl kuro bhaiso roy dâda le	Black, black are the buffaloes,
Sarpane bhaiso arit roy dâda le	And all of them have died, brother.
Podor pungâr doyo roy dâda le	White as cotton flowers are the cows,
Sarpane doyo arit roy dâda le	And all of them have fallen in summer.
Puhle dhelât rawnâl roy dâda le	On the broken clod the vulture,
Wetle marâte kawrâl roy dâda le	On the withered tree the crow,
Kawar woker inta roy dâda le	The crow is cawing, brother.
Raiyaka reyon kawrâl roy dâda le	It is ready to fly down.

VI. Honey

222 Honey was discovered by a Maria named Waddai who also gave his name to
539 the whole succession of Waddai diviners. 'Waddai went one day to a medium, with a gift of char nuts, seeking help for his sick son. On the way he met a monkey which had been outcasted for falling while jumping from a tree and

● 252

Cheik at Markabera threshing with their feet

Plate X

Winnowing grain. Note the first sheaf tied to the threshing pole

[p. 36 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

524

Wori wori singār,
Bāni bāni pungār.
Rows and rows of decorations,
There are many kinds of flowers.
—A honeycomb.

Tutri bukāte bāri perek.
In a small hole is a small seed.
—*Lokti* bees.

Untie the she-buffalo and milk the peg.
—Getting honey from a hive.

A herd of cattle has one leader.
—The swarm and its queen.

Many flowers grow in the tank.
—A honeycomb.

Flower, flower, how it flowers!
What comes out of the flower?
—Bees.

I have recorded one song about bees, but I was unable to discover any games that illustrated the taking of a hive.

539

Song

The bees suck the kosra flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The bees suck the paddy flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The Manjhi says he'll give his daughter
To the boy who kills the bees.
An orphan chelik kills the bees,
He brings the hive and shows the Manjhi.
The Manjhi gives the boy his daughter.
The bees suck the mandia flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.

VII. Oil

Awa kare motai, tel kare chiknai, kapare kare barai. Food fattens, oil adorns, clothes dignify.—Muria saying

● 252

The Muria make many different kinds of oil; some for use in their carts, some for light, some for medicine, but most, of course, for food. The *gdraneyi* is extracted from mahua seed and is used mainly for cooking. So is the oil gained from the usual oil-seed crops, 'the slender trees that have a hundred babies', which are often raised in the *bāri* gardens. Seeds of the sarai tree are collected and make a useful oil. The fat of lizards and the grubs that live in the date-palm and the fat of cow, buffalo, goat, pig, cock, and several kinds of deer all yield oil which can be used for cooking and to mix with food. For lighting purposes and to oil the wheels of bullock-carts, oil made from the seed of the karanji, bandgul or aosom is used. Oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and

[373 493]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and for the hair and body for toilet purposes is made from the mahua seed or indeed from any of the oils used in cooking.

The method of extracting oil from the mahua seed is as follows. A pot of water is placed on a fire near the oil-press and heated. Then into a bamboo cone, exactly like the *jib* in which rice-beer is prepared, is put the ground and dried seed. Covered with a small basket this is placed above the water-pot and the seed is steamed for about fifteen minutes. The steamed oil-seed is then tipped out into a small basket called *kora* and the operator presses it down with a rice-husker. When this small basket is full of closely pressed oil-seed, it is carried over to the press. This is called *gêramel*,[1] and is of a very primitive kind. A long forked branch is inserted into a hole made in a living tree about two feet above the ground. Underneath is placed the *gêratots*, a block of wood with lines carved on its upper surface to carry off the oil. The basket of oil-seed is placed on top of this and the bough is laid upon it. The women place large stones on the forked end of the bough, thus forming a heavy weight to press down the seed. In the fork is a peg to keep it in position. After about half an hour the oil begins to flow and drips down into an earthen pot below.

This work is generally done by women, often by the motiari. In Masora I once saw two motiari extracting oil from the seeds of the keuti tree. These girls fetched the seed from the jungle, broke it up with their feet, ground it, steamed it and then put it into the press. They said that the chelik had no oil for their hair and they were doing this, entirely on their own, to please them.

VIII. Hunting

The Muria will eat almost anything. They profess to despise the Maria for eating monkeys and in Koilibera they still talk about the time when W. V. Grigson camped along the northern road near the Abujhmar and the Maria of the Barsur Pargana, who came to see him, left not a single monkey

Fig. 7. Characteristic Muria bow
Length 3′ 6″

in the hills and stripped the whole forest of red ants. But near Jungani I saw a monkey's skin hanging up in a house and the people admitted that 'the children had eaten it'.[2] Crocodile is not disliked; after the skin is removed, the flesh, which is a little coarse, can yet be cooked and eaten

[1] This press resembles that reported as used in Assam and by the Korku.—K. P. Chattopadhyaya, 'Indian Oil Presses,' *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Institute*, Vol. I (1938), p. 43.

[2] Bison-horn Maria say that 'though its skin is black, the monkey's flesh is white as rice-beer'. They often roast the monkey in its skin and eat everything. If a man eats a monkey's placenta he will be as active as a monkey and able to jump from tree to tree. It is said that Kodaya Pedā's great-grandfather did this. The Weddai and Gaita of Dualkarka (and perhaps other villages) do not eat the flesh because the monkey helps them in their priestly duties—an obvious reference to Hanuman.

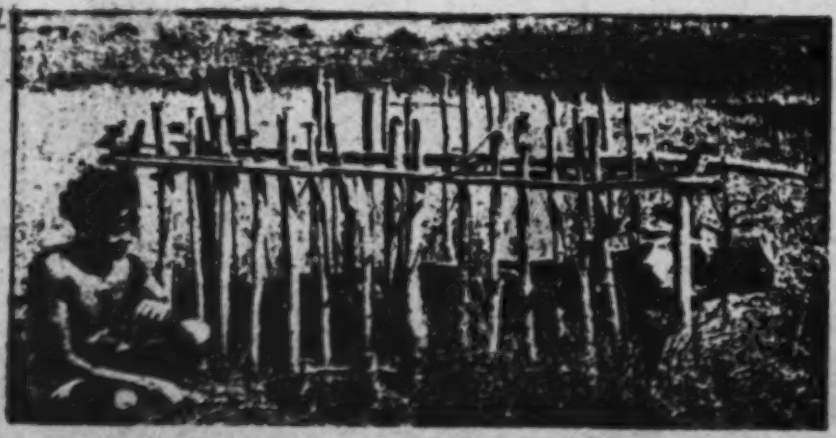
Plate XIII

516
252

Thelik of Mauora roasting a rat

A porcupine trap near Lohator

224



[p. 52(a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria
Oraon AW39

Uraon dhangri

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142
291
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Plate LXVII

Motiari of Kongera grinding

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142
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301
252
412

[R 320(6)]

Plate CXXVIII

A883
524

Wanjing Karsana : Rice-husking game, at Temrugaon

Rice-husking in fact

[253]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
291
516
252
301

A girl cleans grain in a field at Garmiri; failure in preparing food is sometimes a cause of tragedy.

[facing p. 20]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

252
531
516
301
285
302

Girl cleaning grain at Tikanpal before a decorated door

301
142

Hinga, a Maria girl of Rewali

[facing p. 28]

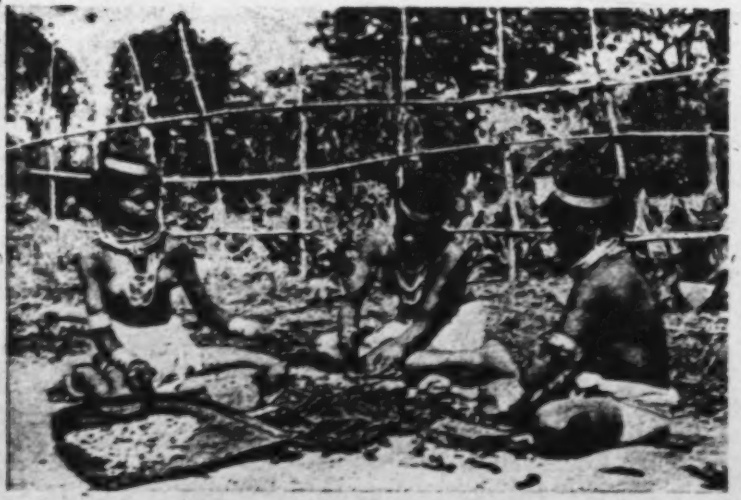
3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

285
301
482

Girl with basket at Marenda

Girls breaking pods at Khutepal

417
252
285
516



[facing p. 29]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *tarank tarank tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tila*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tila de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking pude, peking pude* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligundi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dussera festival in Jagdalpur.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

important, for then the *kasyeq-gaita* and, in a minor degree, the secular headman have their hour of glory, and something of the honour that might be paid to real chieftains. The *kasyeq-gaita* as intermediary between the Village Mother and her children sacrifices to her a pig and a cock, and sets before her a basket of new *kuthi*, pulses and beans. A feast similar to that before the clan-god follows. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* proceeds to his *udam-garia* or seat-of-honour, next to which may be a smaller seat for the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*); it is either a long, flat boulder, or a flat stone supported on stone legs, as in Plate XXIII. He wears no insignia, and is to all appearance as naked and poor a Maria as all his villagers. The men seat themselves around in a circle on little stone cromlechs. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* formally announces the programme for the next year, what *penda* slope is to be cultivated, what arrangements are to be made to meet State or zamindari demands for land revenue or labour, and so on; the announcements, it is true, are the results of previous informal village discussions, and not the *kasyeq-gaita's* orders independently conceived by him, but his formal promulgation is needed before they can be brought into effect.

After *Koqsar* they are free to cut grass and bamboos, and to collect forest produce, or to hunt; it is true that in most villages there is little game but hares and field-mice, but a Maria thinks a field-mouse the rarest of delicacies, and will stop any occupation to chase a mouse or dig them out.[1] But the long year is over at last, and till the next sowing, though there is ahead the labour of felling, spreading and firing the wood for the *penda*, taboos are lifted, and there is no fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex. So now is the season of new marriages and of conjugal life in the home, and the seed is sown for the raising of the human crop.

Assessment and payment of land revenue among the Hill Marias

It has been indicated that there are the beginnings of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias. As a matter of fact, several villages have traces of old rice embanked fields. Two things long effectively checked the spread of permanent cultivation. One, before the 1910 rebellion, was the presence of a police station at Kutul, the headquarter village of the Bardal clan and *pargana* in the very heart of the Abujhmar hills. This meant a constant demand from the Kutul police for rice as *bisaha*,[2] and

[1] I had a carefully arranged beat for a family of man-eating tigers at Kutru ruined because the Hill Maria beaters rushed in wild enthusiasm to catch two or three mice disturbed by the beat.

[2] See p. 14 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER VIII

PROCURING OF OTHER FOOD AND DRINK

539

'Whatever came across them they must needs kill and eat it;
They made no distinction. If they saw a jackal they killed
And ate it; no distinction was observed; they respected not antelope, sambhar and the like.
They made no distinction in eating a sow, a quail, a pigeon,
A crow, a kite, an adjutant, a vulture,
A lizard, a frog, a beetle, a cow, a calf, a he- and a she-buffalo,
Rats, bandicoots, squirrels—all these they killed and ate.
So began the Gonds to do. They devoured raw and ripe things.'
(Hislop's version of the Lingo epic of the Gonds.)

A. Food Gathering

222
262 ●

FAMINE has never been a problem in Bastar, as the Marias and other tribes have always been able to draw half of their food supplies from the innumerable edible products of the vast forests. The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department, and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list. At page 124 above, many of the more important forest products collected and garnered were enumerated. *Mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*) is not common in the Abujhmar hills, where consequently little *mahua* spirit is distilled or drunk; where it does occur, the Hill Marias collect its flowers and fruit as eagerly as cultivators throughout India. It is common in the Bison-horn country. The women and children gather the fallen flowers in the mornings. It is dried in the sun, and then stored in bamboo wicker baskets; it keeps a long time. It is used to flavour *poj* and *gato*, or roasted. Oil is pressed in the plains from the fruit. Tamarind trees are not really wild, but were originally planted around village sites; the fruit is carefully gathered from all the unoccupied village sites. The fruits of the *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*) and *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) are two of the main sources of food supply. They collect also fruit of the *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*) and *aonla* (*Phyllanthus emblica*). Wild mangoes are common, and they are learning to cultivate the tree; they store whole fruit, dried pulp, and kernels whole or crushed. In the south of the State the toddy palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is the mainstay of the economic life of the people, but

[273]

[263]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

it is not much used among Bison-horn and Hill Marias in comparison to the *salphi* or sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*) which is found wild and is extensively propagated. When the *salphi*, after much cutting of the spadix for the intoxicating sap, ceases to flower, the interior of the stem yields a fibrous pith. This the Hill Maria women (probably the Bison-horn also) pound on a large flat stone with a heavy oval pebble held in their right hand, to separate pith from fibre. The resultant pith 'grain' looks like lime, and is steamed into cakes; an earthenware pot has a little water poured into it, and over the water bamboo sticks are criss-crossed and covered with *siari* leaves as a platform for the pith to be steamed; no salt or sugar is added.

Actually most of the fruit already mentioned is collected by women and children; the men, of course, deal with the toddy and sago palm sap, and their methods will be described in the section on drinking and intoxicants. The men collect those forest products which they need for basketry or rope making, or in finding which there is an element of the chase. They like to roam about with their bows and arrows while their women are busy gathering fruit.

The women gather also various leaves, flowers and seeds as vegetables. They use the young green leaves and the seeds of the sal (*Shorea robusta*); the flowers of the *giril marra* shrub (*Indigofera arborea*); the young curled fronds of bracken in the Abujhmar hills, possibly also on the Bailadila mountains, where, too, it is common (the Hill Marias call it *handa jabba* and the Bison-horn *anda koser*); the seeds of the marking nut tree (*Semecarpus anacardium*; *bhelwa*); the young green shoots, pith and seeds of the bamboo; the fruits of the *ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*). The digging of forest roots and yams in the rains is one of the women's chief occupations; there are many varieties, and some are now cultivated. In the early rains a much sought after foods are the *khudrati* or *bora* fungus, and the mushroom. Various wild plants are gathered as vegetables from marsh and river valley, especially the *chiur*, the long thin leaves of which are like small hyacinth leaves, and are a favourite food of wild buffalo and bison. Women and men collect large supplies of *siari* or elephant creeper leaves for use as plates and drinking vessels. *Aki* is the Gondi word for a leaf, and the assonance *aking-waking* is commonly used as covering all produce which the Maria collects from the forest.

In August and September the Bison-horn Maria women spend hours swishing a basket[1] over the tops of certain wild grasses in the fields to collect the seeds, which are eaten like the small hill grains.

[1] Hill Maria women also do this, using little wicker-work shields fastened to bamboo sticks to beat the grass seeds into a basket.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A little later they collect *kapani*, the wild bearded rice common in all old rice fields and fallows and at the edges of standing water, by holding a winnowing-fan in one hand and beating the grain of the standing ripe plants into it with the other; the bearded ears are sometimes plaited into '*sela*' fringes for ornamenting doors of houses at the new-eating festivals.

The men are adept in collecting the honey of various kinds of bees, though sometimes, despite forest rules, too prone to save trouble by felling rather than climbing a fine tree. For this purpose, and for tapping palm trees, they often fasten to the trunks of trees long thick bamboos, cutting the side shoots down to stumps four or five inches long to serve as ladder rungs. Gums are collected from many species of trees, for use as bird-lime or in securing the *kosa* silk whipping of arrow-heads, etc. In Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils the Forest Department has quantities of *tasar* silk cocoons collected by Bison-horn Maria men when, in the rains in the intervals between sowing and reaping their various crops, they go out to the forests in search of such delicacies as red ants' nests, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs. The cocoons are high on sal or *saja* trees; where the climbers cannot reach them they use long bamboo poles with a piece of bamboo fastened at an acute angle at the end to serve as a hook. They get about Rs. 3 a thousand cocoons from the Koshta weavers who employ them; the Hill Maria, however, generally collects only what cocoons he needs for his own purposes. Red ants' nests are cooked, leaves, ants and all, either with *pej* or *gato*, or by themselves and eaten with pulses as a vegetable. They are also a favourite febrifuge; a rough and ready remedy is to shake out the live red ants on to the patient's skull, when the formic acid of their stings is said to reduce the fever; the more elaborate method is to boil the nest, ants and all, and to strain off and use the juice as a febrifuge in small doses; this juice is said to taste sharper than any lime and believed to be invaluable for a long-standing fever. In collecting the palms of the dwarf palms *chhind* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *P. acaulis*, and *buta chhind* (*P. farinifera*) for use for thatching, basketry or making rough cords for binding fences, the men not only collect the small dates or the flowers (according to season) and the edible pith of the *buta chhind*, but also the fat white grub of a certain beetle, which is also found in the stems of the toddy palm and in fresh green monsoon bamboo shoots. This is eaten fried in ghee or oil with a little spice and chillies, and is regarded as a great delicacy; it is sold in the Jagdalpur market for three or four pice, and even high-caste Hindus buy it. When white ants emerge in flying swarms early in the monsoon they collect them after they have shed their wings, or pull the wings

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bilo* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia neriifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Pigs

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*merrsheng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charhal padi* and *kural padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Korr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

Poultry

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar.
[2] See pp. 103 and 120.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol. 883

> Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
> At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

A broom is 'the thing that licks quickly and then falls flat'; a leaf-plate is 'the little tank full of thorns' or 'the boy that morning and evening gives a share to all'; a pot of curds hawked round the village is described as 'the white cock going from house to house'.

But the main interest of chelik and motiari—for after all they are still only boys and girls—is in food. *'Bhaio bihân handiya ma dhyân.* As soon as morning comes, his mind is in the cooking-pot.' Of things to eat the Muria have a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the State has not yet interfered with their right to natural roots, fruit and leaves—they may take what they want so long as they do no damage. 262

As Grigson says of the Maria: 'The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list.'[1] I do not propose to give such a list here; but I will briefly mention the things that chelik and motiari like best. Meat and fish probably stand first in popularity—I will describe them later.

Fig. 5. Uspal rice husker. Length 5'9"

Among fruit trees, the mahua is supreme. When the flowers begin to fall, the cattle are kept tied up until the women and children have gathered them. They spread them in bright yellow patches swiftly turning brown on rocks, before their houses, in specially-made enclosures. When dry enough, the flowers are beaten with heavy sticks, sometimes with the wooden doors of a pigsty. The pulp is made into chutney with dried khamer fruit and tamarind kernels, and eaten with rice or gruel. The oil is used for cooking and lighting. The flowers are stored in baskets, and make one of the most eagerly demanded gifts when the chelik make a dance tour of a village. 262 252 222 [373]

Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with chilli and salt to the chelik. 262 222 [563]

Aonra fruit is liked, and there are many riddles about it. 'A green pigeon came from Porrobhum and laid its eggs on a leaf.' 'The white bird hides its eggs under its wings.' Other popular fruits are those of the thorny bhoir—'Mother bites, but daughter invites'; the kurlu—'The little sparrow's liver is sweet'; the sinna, the char, the jamun and the tamarind. Tendu fruit is picked while still unripe and put in kodon chaff to mature. Sometimes it is buried in the ground and a fire is lit above it. When ripe, it is eaten raw. [524] [251] Wild figs are eaten ripe or dried and ground up with flour.

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

3

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 222 252 [278] The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs, regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

262 276 524 The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams; a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

262 Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries' when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

262 843 Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[171] [1] Crooks has an interesting note on frog-eating. The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. 'The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Saises in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[171] [2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 10ff.

[278] [3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

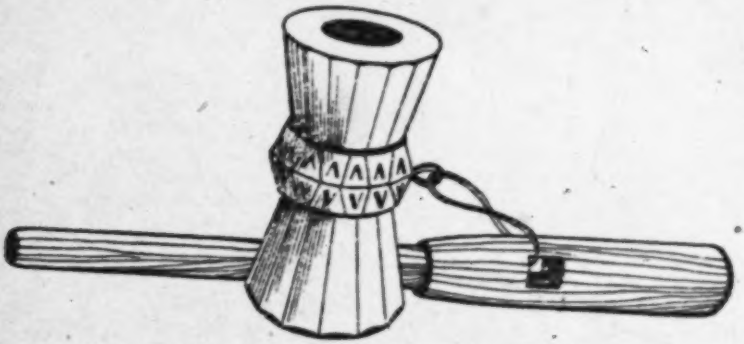


FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. 'The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chelik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

252 with wood and fired; pots are placed in rows upon them. The motiari husk and clean the rice, and make the leaf-cups and plates, but the boys do the actual cooking. When the rice is ready it is tipped out in a great pile on bamboo mats. A pig, which is killed by being beaten on the head with a rice husker, is roasted in the fire till its hair is burnt off; it is skinned and cleaned. Flesh, bones and skin are cut up into little squares of equal size—an important matter, for it is essential that everyone should receive exactly the same amount. These pieces are fried in mahua oil, and put into large earthen pots with rice-water, salt, haldi and chilli and boiled till ready. Fish is prepared in much the same way, except that usually something sour is added to flavour it. Fowls are cooked in leaf-cups. The intestines are squeezed out, and the whole chicken with head and feet is roasted with a little salt. Eggs are wrapped in leaves and baked in the fire. Mongoose flesh is roasted and spiced with dried mangoes. Crocodile is boiled.

264 At the ghotul feasts and marriages I have attended everyone sits round in a big circle, and the boys (sometimes assisted by a few motiari) serve the food. The bits of meat are carefully counted out into leaf-cups and distributed. Rice is served from baskets or winnowing-fans direct onto leaf-plates.

At home, the family sits round the pot of jawa, which is taken straight off the fire and placed in the middle of the floor. Each has a little chutney on a leaf in front of him and an empty leaf-cup. The mother dips a gourd into the pot and helps the little children; then each member of the family helps himself. There is no idea that men should eat before women or elders before the children.

262 Doctors say that the Muria's food lacks fat and protein and criticize them for not taking more milk, ghee and vegetable. No doubt the Muria, like other 146 people, would eat more of these things if they could get them But there is no doubt that they do not like milk, and rarely take it themselves or give it to their children.

731 Famine is not common in Bastar, for the people can fall back on the almost limitless products of the forests. But it has been known, and a sombre song preserves its memory.

539

Nimâre weke dântona rawnâni	Vulture, whither away, vulture?
Dori bhumi dântona dâda le	I am going towards the west, brother,
Bhumi dukhr dukhr roy dâda le	For the day of want has dawned.
Bhumi te dukhr arit roy dâda le	The famine is over all the world
Hikli huro bhaiso roy dâda le	Black, black are the buffaloes,
Sarpane bhaiso arit roy dâda le	And all of them have died, brother.
Podor pungâr doyo roy dâda le	White as cotton flowers are the cows,
Sarpane doyo artu roy dâda le	And all of them have fallen in summer.
Puhle dhelât rawnâl roy dâda le	On the broken clod the vulture,
Watle marâte kawrâl roy dâda le	On the withered tree the crow,
Kawar wohar insta roy dâda le	The crow is cawing, brother.
Raiyaka royon kawrâl roy dâda le	It is ready to fly down.

VI. Honey

222 Honey was discovered by a Maria named Waddai who also gave his name to
539 the whole succession of Waddai diviners. 'Waddai went one day to a medium, with a gift of char nuts, seeking help for his sick son. On the way he met a monkey which had been outcasted for falling while jumping from a tree and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and 252 [302]
for the hair and body for toilet purposes is made from the mahua seed or indeed from any of the oils used in cooking.

The method of extracting oil from the mahua seed is as follows. A pot of water is placed on a fire near the oil-press and heated. Then into a bamboo cone, exactly like the *jib* in which rice-beer is prepared, is put the ground and dried seed. Covered with a small basket this is placed above the water-pot and the seed is steamed for about fifteen minutes. The steamed oil-seed is then tipped out into a small basket called *kora* and the operator presses it down with a rice-husker. When this small basket is full of closely pressed oil-seed, it is carried over to the press. This is called *gāramā*,[1] and is of a very primitive kind. A long forked branch is inserted into a hole made in a living tree about two feet above the ground. Underneath is placed the *gāraiota*, a block of wood with lines carved on its upper surface to carry off the oil. The basket of oil-seed is placed on top of this and the bough is laid upon it. The women place large stones on the forked end of the bough, thus forming a heavy weight to press down the seed. In the fork is a peg to keep it in position. After about half an hour the oil begins to flow and drips down into an earthen pot below.

This work is generally done by women, often by the motiari. In Masora I once saw two motiari extracting oil from the seeds of the keuti tree. These girls fetched the seed from the jungle, broke it up with their feet, ground it, steamed it and then put it into the press. They said that the chelik had no oil for their hair and they were doing this, entirely on their own, to please them.

VIII. Hunting

The Muria will eat almost anything. They profess to despise the Maria for eating monkeys and in Koilibera they still talk about the time when W. V. Grigson camped along the northern road near the Abujhmar and the Maria of the Barsur Pargana, who came to see him, left not a single monkey 262 [411]

Fig. 7. Characteristic Muria bow
Length 5′ 6″

in the hills and stripped the whole forest of ted anta. But near Jungani I saw a monkey's skin hanging up in a house and the people admitted that 'the children had eaten it'.[2] Crocodile is not disliked; after the skin is removed, the flesh, which is a little coarse, can yet be cooked and eaten

[1] This press resembles that reported as used in Assam and by the Korku.—K. P. Chattopadhyaya, 'Indian Oil Presses,' *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Institute*, Vol. I (1938), p. 43.

[2] Bison-horn Maria say that 'though its skin is black, the monkey's flesh is white as rice-beer'. They often roast the monkey in its skin and eat everything. If a man eats a monkey's placenta he will be as active as a monkey and able to jump from tree to tree. It is said that Kodaya Pedā's great-grandfather did this. The Waddai and Gaita of Dudkarka (and perhaps other villages) do not eat the flesh because the monkey helps them in their priestly duties—an obvious reference to Hanuman.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *taranh taranh tour tour*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tila*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tila de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *pehing pude, pehing pude* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligundi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dussera festival in Jagdalpur.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Mother Earth. The Gaita offered eggs and chickens, first making the chickens eat the rice and then killing them. The juice in the leaf-cups was offered to the Earth Mother and the Kanyang and then everyone drank a little. After this the owner was free to tap the tree in the ordinary way.

Failure of the sago-palm may be due either to black magic and witchcraft or to the hostility of one of the Gorga Kanyang. The Kanyang, if she is not happy in a particular village, may twist the branches at the top of the tree and cause them to wither. It is generally believed that the tree gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul. Then she marries and the juice ceases to flow. The motiari of the palm tree is afraid of marrying too soon. If we touch the tree with a cloth yellowed by haldi it will stop giving juice till the new shoots come, for the shadow of haldi (that is, of marriage) is upon it.'

For gonorrhoea, a very rare disaster among these aboriginals, the sufferer stands below holding a leaf-cup into which a friend pours a little of the juice from the top of the tree. The patient offers a few drops to the Gorga Kanyang and then drinks it without allowing it to touch the ground.

The wood of the palm is not usually used for building in Bastar but the Hill Maria make their *turam* drums out of its hollow dried-up trunk. The Muria also make combs and drum-sticks out of the dry wood. Some of the Muria in the Abujhmar foothills make necklaces of the fibre. The leaves are often used as hair-ornaments or to decorate the village dormitories. Sometimes the flowers are pounded into flour, mixed with water and drunk as a sort of gruel. When it is evident that the tree will give no more juice, it is cut down and the pith is removed. This is pounded into a sort of flour and steamed in the usual way into cakes which are popular eaten with honey or sugar. This practice is common across the whole of the sago-palm country. I have found it among Hill Maria, Bondo, Gadaba, and Juang and it has been recorded for the Kadir and Khasi.[1]

The salphi juice is either brought back to the house and stored there until by fermentation it becomes much more intoxicating than in its fresh condition or it is drunk immediately at the foot of the tree. Little groups of people, generally men, go out to the trees, taking with them roasted crabs or frogs, little bits of chicken, various kinds of chutney, carefully wrapped in leaf-cups. The liquor is drunk from leaves, generally simply folded to make a sort of cup, and it is sometimes poured direct into the mouth. Many delightful hours are thus spent by the villagers out among the woods or on the hills.

When a tree is specially planted by seeds or cuttings it is very carefully tended. A fence of wood is built round it and it is watered regularly. Sometimes a tree is associated with the memory of a particular person. In Kanhargaon, a village in the Chota Dongar area, a Muria planted salphi and mango trees fifty years ago and they still preserve his memory. When the people go in the evening to drink the juice, they offer a few drops in the name of Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal to the sago-palm and a few drops in the name of the dead man who planted the trees to the mango, 'so that as we drink you can drink also'.

Generally speaking the tree belongs to the man in whose field or garden it is growing. Where the trees are out in the jungle, or standing in the common land of the village, disputes sometimes arise. The headman or the most influential priests generally claim these trees as their own, but there is also a

[1] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 176; P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), p. 52. See also Grigson, op. cit., p. 152.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

pandum	Festival.
penkarsana, karsār (deo kheini)	'The games of the gods' at the clan festivals.
pohchāni, bohorāni	Ceremony for removing evil from the village.
polhāna (jogāni)	The offering of first-fruits.
punāng tindāna (nāwa khāni)	New Eating Ceremony.
singoti, sela	The fringe of ears of grain tied over doors at festivals, especially Diwali.

Fire-making

hāhak	The 'hearth' of a fire-drill.
khanda	The saw. In Hindi this word means 'sword'.
khanda-achāna	Making fire by a saw.
nogho-kodiya, ate	The 'hearth' of a saw.
nur-achāna	Making fire by a drill.
nurkia	Fire made by a drill.
usmal	The drill.
wadur kia	Fire made in a hearth.

Food

alainj (chapora)	Red ants.
gāto	The ordinary **bhāt** or boiled rice.
gondka	'Crab's eyes' or **kekra ankhi**.
gorānj, gorra	**Mandia** (*eleusine coracana*).
guge (batar kira)	Edible flying ants.
hāring	The ordinary wheat-cake or chapatti.
harsum	**Sarson** oil-seed, the profitable crop *sinapis alba rape*.
hind porak (chhind kira)	Edible grubs living in the *phoenix sylvestris* palm.
jandrān	**Jondra** maize (*zea mays*).
jata	Beans (*dolichos lablab*).
jāwa	A gruel, called elsewhere **pej**, the staple food of the aboriginals of central India, made of rice or millet.
kāng, ārk	*Setaria italica*. Also called **kollya lengri**.
kohola, kosra (Ha)	These are words applied rather widely to the small millets beloved of the aboriginals. **Kosra** applies most particularly perhaps to **kutki**, *panicum miliaceum*. Other popular small grains are— **mai kohola** or **bara kosra** **turo kohola** **os kosra** **mach** or **hudala kosra** **koda** (*paspalum scrobiculatum*) **rende, hamu, gatka** or **sawa** (*panicum frumentaceum*) **ragda, dusa, kapni**, wild rice. **chikma** or **turiya kohola** (*panicum miliare*).
kore (harwa)	The pulse *glycine hispida*.
kotum kukh	A mushroom (*kukh* is an umbrella). The Muria distinguish several varieties, such as the **bodāng**, the **pud-kukh** which grows on an ant-hill, the

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	mundur-kukh which appears at Dassera time, and the **hichra-kukh**, a small fungus generally growing on an ant-hill.
kusir	**Sāg** or curry.
māti	Roots. A great many of these are eaten; common among them are the **kāndul māti** or sweet potato, the **hind māti** or root of the *phoenix sylvestris*, the **bhurka** or **bhaina deti māti.**
nuka	Husked rice.
nung	Oil from the seed of *til, sesamum indicum.*
pande, panne	Frog.
pesel (mung)	The pulse *phaseolus mungo.*
pupul (urad)	The pulse *phaseolus radiatus.*
rahar (arhar)	The pulse *cajanus indicus.*
toskār māt (tikur)	The wild arrowroot, *curcuma angustifolia.*
wark	Parched rice, also **wakuhāk** (GN) and **chiura** (H), the poor man's delicacy eaten between meals.
wanji	**Dhān** or rice.
yete	Crab.

Ghotul Buildings

bāndra	The fence round the ghotul enclosure.
dinda rāj (Ha)	'The kingdom of the Unmarried.'
ghotul	The village dormitory.
ghotul rascha (khor duār)	The dancing ground.
kirki bukān (kāna polka, bhulka)	Holes in the walls for storing tobacco and small possessions.
kodasār	The stable.
kupāhi ghotul	The outer room of the dormitory.
kutul (pirha)	A wooden pillow.
mandak	The open shed in the ghotul court.
murwis harai (mongri deri)	The central pillar of the building.
nata harai (oona deri)	The side pillars.
parmāngkor ghotul	'The dormitory beautiful as a bison's horns.'
romi (akori)	A long bamboo with a catch on one end, used by chelik to pull down fruit and often kept in the ghotul.
sojāhi ghotul	The inner room.
walkor (akoos)	Wooden bracket for hanging drums.
wark bād (dāru mācha)	The wood stack.

Hair-dressing

bang-māhana (pāti)	Parting, either for boy or girl.
bechāng (tapra)	Boy's fringe.
julpia	The hair on either side of the parting.
kaigi khopa, kunjār	Method by which girls tie their hair in a bun.
kunjār balla	Wooden block under the hair kept in place by wooden hair pins.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brush-wood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live. There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

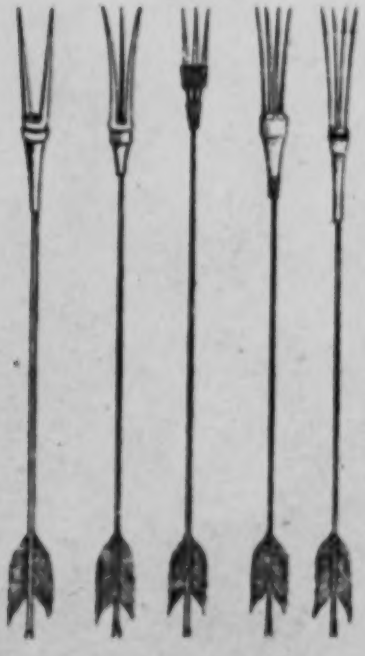
[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there [796 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped 787] and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water 262 from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.



Engram arrows
(*Length about 3'*)

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

slipped up it. Between his feet is tied another rope which holds them against the tree. He is thus able to get up the tree like a humping caterpillar. A Maria told me that in the evening the people go up the trees 'like a company of monkeys'. When villagers go to drink sago or toddy, they often take with them little leaf-bundles containing dry fish, roasted crabs, red ants or mahua paste.

It is impossible to say how much alcohol is drunk by the Maria. According to the Excise figures in the Dantewara Tahsil and Sukma Zamindari where the population is overwhelmingly Maria, the consumption per 100 in proof gallons is 46.48 and 50.51 respectively. In the Muria Tahsil to the north it is 32.43 in Kondagaon and 58.90 in Narayanpur. Narayanpur, it must be remembered, has a large population of Hill Maria who do not drink rice-beer which may explain why there is a higher consumption of mahua spirit. In the Bison-horn Maria area, there are —according to the Settlement records—about 75,000 toddy trees. The number of sago palms is not known, but is—I believe—considerably smaller.

Mahukum ropes for climbing toddy trees

Illicit distillation was a feature of two at least of the murders. In the last five years 143 cases were detected in the Dantewara Tahsil, 91 in Bijapur, 65 in Jagdalpur as against only 11 in Kondagaon and 18 in Narayanpur. This certainly suggests that the Bison-horn Maria are much more given to illicit distillation than their brethren of the north. But, of course, these figures may only reflect greater energy

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter VIII

Procuring of Other Food and Drink

'Whatever came across them they must needs kill and eat it;
They made no distinction. If they saw a jackal they killed
And ate it; no distinction was observed; they respected not antelope,
sambhar and the like.
They made no distinction in eating a sow, a quail, a pigeon,
A crow, a kite, an adjutant, a vulture,
A lizard, a frog, a beetle, a cow, a calf, a he- and a she-buffalo,
Rats, bandicoots, squirrels—all these they killed and ate.
So began the Gonds to do. They devoured raw and ripe things.'
(Hislop's version of the Lingo epic of the Gonds.)

A. Food Gathering

Famine has never been a problem in Bastar, as the Marias and other tribes have always been able to draw half of their food supplies from the innumerable edible products of the vast forests. The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department, and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list. At page 124 above, many of the more important forest products collected and garnered were enumerated. *Mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*) is not common in the Abujhmar hills, where consequently little *mahua* spirit is distilled or drunk; where it does occur, the Hill Marias collect its flowers and fruit as eagerly as cultivators throughout India. It is common in the Bison-horn country. The women and children gather the fallen flowers in the mornings. It is dried in the sun, and then stored in bamboo wicker baskets; it keeps a long time. It is used to flavour *pej* and *gaja*, or roasted. Oil is pressed in the plains from the fruit. Tamarind trees are not really wild, but were originally planted around village sites; the fruit is carefully gathered from all the unoccupied village sites. The fruits of the *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*) and *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) are two of the main sources of food supply. They collect also fruit of the *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*) and *aonla* (*Phyllanthus emblica*). Wild mangoes are common, and they are learning to cultivate the tree; they store whole fruit, dried pulp, and kernels whole or crushed. In the south of the State the toddy palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is the mainstay of the economic life of the people, but

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol.

> Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
> At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

A broom is 'the thing that licks quickly and then falls flat'; a leaf-plate is 'the little tank full of thorns' or 'the boy that morning and evening gives a share to all'; a pot of curds hawked round the village is described as 'the white cock going from house to house'.

But the main interest of chelik and motiari—for after all they are still only boys and girls—is in food. *'Bhaio bikha handiya ma dhyda.* As soon as morning comes, his mind is in the cooking-pot.' Of things to eat the Muria have a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the State has not yet interfered with their right to natural roots, fruit and leaves—they may take what they want so long as they do no damage.

As Grigson says of the Maria: 'The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list.'[1] I do not propose to give such a list here; but I will briefly mention the things that chelik and motiari like best. Meat and fish probably stand first in popularity—I will describe them later.

FIG. 5. Usual rice husker. Length 5'9"

Among fruit trees, the mahua is supreme. When the flowers begin to fall, the cattle are kept tied up until the women and children have gathered them. They spread them in bright yellow patches swiftly turning brown on rocks, before their houses, in specially-made enclosures. When dry enough, the flowers are beaten with heavy sticks, sometimes with the wooden doors of a pigsty. The pulp is made into chutney with dried khamer fruit and tamarind kernels, and eaten with rice or gruel. The oil is used for cooking and lighting. The flowers are stored in baskets, and make one of the most eagerly demanded gifts when the chelik make a dance tour of a village.

Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with chilli and salt to the chelik.

Acorn fruit is liked, and there are many riddles about it. 'A green pigeon came from Porrobhum and laid its eggs on a leaf.' 'The white bird hides its eggs under its wings.' Other popular fruits are those of the thorny bhoir—'Mother bites, but daughter invites'; the kurlu—'The little sparrow's liver is sweet'; the sinna, the char, the jamun and the tamarind. Tendu fruit is picked while still unripe and put in kodon chaff to mature. Sometimes it is buried in the ground and a fire is lit above it. When ripe, it is eaten raw. Wild figs are eaten ripe or dried and ground up with flour.

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *gawji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chulik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honey-comb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitka ondār* and the *lokti ondār or mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognise four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mohu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sollapuri mohu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nihiti mohu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Nagas actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'In a golden box bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 450.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeg-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

fetching water, but that now she was to go to a life that was both sweet and bitter. Finally, a group of quite little girls arrived on the scene with bundles of food tied up in cloth on their heads and the bride, still weeping loudly, was carried off by her girl companions across the fields into the sunset. It was a moving sight, this taking away of the bride to her new life, but it was noticeable that no member of the bridegroom's family came to fetch her. She was simply taken away by her own people to his village.

Next morning I started before dawn with my assistant Mr. Sampat Singh on the long descent to Sirsitti. The scenery on the way was magnificent. From the brow of the hill we could see stretching away almost to Orissa the great plain of Konta and Sukma with the peaks of hills rising above the mist just touched by the morning sun. When we reached the village we found the two marriages in progress, though everyone was a little jaded having been up dancing all night. There were little camps outside the village for the two brides and the bridegrooms' families sent food and liquor out to them. During the morning there was some desultory dancing in the middle of the village, and a group of girls sat round each bride who wailed loudly from time to time as the girls sang to her about the sorrows and hardships of the married life to which she was now going. Young men from Gogonda, the brides' village, cooked the food supplied by the bridegrooms and this was ready about three o'clock in the afternoon. The visitors assembled beneath a magnificent mango tree outside the village, and the feast was very carefully served by the young men; an exact number of leaf-cups was prepared and each contained the same number of bits of pork; an equal number contained identical portions of rice. The boys then served the cups, first to the women and then to the men. Others went round pouring gravy on the rice and they all ate together. When the meal was over they went to a stream near by and drank, kneeling down and putting their faces right into the water to suck it up.

Then the girls assembled round the first bride, who was still covered with the shawl which all through that sweltering day she had not once laid aside, and danced with her into the centre of the village. Another party escorted the second bride and soon the scene was very lively with two separate dances whirling round the square. Presently the first party danced up to the future husband's house. They gathered in a very tight block before the door and began to sing loudly and rapidly, jerking their bodies to and fro from the hips, a song which meant, 'Come and get her if you can, brother; come and catch her if you can'. For some time the bridegroom stood in a rather embarrassed fashion in the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

natural than for the backward Marias aspiring to raise themselves to Raj-Gond status to copy gradually the Raj-Gond social organization? It is equally possible that *pari passu* the Raj-Gond ruler and nobles encouraged this: in all these semi-feudal, semi-tribal states and sub-states, as to this day in the States and zamindaris of Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the Maharajah of the State or the Rajah of the zamindari remains the final arbiter in caste matters, even often conferring the right to wear the sacred thread on communities actively hinduizing themselves. At Surjagarh and Jarawandi camps, various *Sendhias* and headmen practically admitted to me that god-grouping was not originally a Maria institution.[1]

From Lahiri there was a long climb of thirteen miles to the Hill Maria village of Kuvakodi, when we halted for four days, including Christmas Day. The track led at first up the valley of the Lahiri river, then up the side valley of a small tributary, and so by an exceptionally steep ascent on to an undulating plateau, across which we reached Kuvakodi at dusk, our camp equipment all being carried on poles by Marias, whom on arrival we rewarded not only in cash but, in Bastar fashion, with salt and beads, and a feast of pork: the Marias sat ranged by clan and village, and those who killed and cooked the pork distributed to every man and child, and to the women of Kuvakodi, a portion of the meat off each joint of the pig. On the way up a slight detour took us through the small village of Gudumundi, and from Kuvakodi we visited Podewara and the Bastar village of Nelangari, some five miles from our camp.

Each day started with a parade of yaws patients for inoculation, all from Chanda villages: the Bastar Marias, who came in to see me and to join in the dancing each evening, looked tolerantly on, having themselves long before had the benefit of the Bastar anti-yaws parties.

The whole cultivation system of the Chanda Hill Marias is identical with the Bastar system described in Chapter VII of this book: it is, that is to say, *penda* cultivation and not what is generally known in the Central Provinces as *dahi*, or its Chanda plains variations of *khamori*, *jalapod*, *podu* or *sampod* (these terms will be explained later in this Note). There is the same broadcast sowing on the same kind of clearings of seed of all the minor millets and beans. The

[1] Haimendorf in reviewing Shamrao Hivale's *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley* has pointed out that the fact that the Pardhans' clan organization is everywhere based on that of the local Gond, does not disprove the different origin of the two peoples, for there are many examples of other tribes adopting their Gond neighbours' system of phratries and clans. He instances from Chanda district and Hyderabad State not only the aboriginal castes as certain Maratha blacksmiths and brass-workers who have the same clan names as the Gonds, *Man in India*, Vol. XXVI, 1946, p. 231. Compare also the Kuruk fishing tribe in Bastar, pp. 163-4.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

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FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chelik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

252 with wood and fired; pots are placed in rows upon them. The motiari husk and clean the rice, and make the leaf-cups and plates, but the boys do the actual cooking. When the rice is ready it is tipped out in a great pile on bamboo mats. A pig, which is killed by being beaten on the head with a rice husker, is roasted in the fire till its hair is burnt off; it is skinned and cleaned. Flesh, bones and skin are cut up into little squares of equal size—an important matter, for it is essential that everyone should receive exactly the same amount. These pieces are fried in mahua oil, and put into large earthen pots with rice-water, salt, haldi and chilli and boiled till ready. Fish is prepared in much the same way, except that usually something sour is added to flavour it. Fowls are cooked in leaf-cups. The intestines are squeezed out, and the whole chicken with head and feet is roasted with a little salt. Eggs are wrapped in leaves and baked in the fire. Mongoose flesh is roasted and spiced with dried mangoes. Crocodile is boiled.

● 264 At the ghotul feasts and marriages I have attended everyone sits round in a big circle, and the boys (sometimes assisted by a few motiari) serve the food. The bits of meat are carefully counted out into leaf-cups and distributed. Rice is served from baskets or winnowing-fans direct onto leaf-plates.

At home, the family sits round the pot of jawa, which is taken straight off the fire and placed in the middle of the floor. Each has a little chutney on a leaf in front of him and an empty leaf-cup. The mother dips a gourd into the pot and helps the little children; then each member of the family helps himself. There is no idea that men should eat before women or elders before the children.

262 Doctors say that the Muria's food lacks fat and protein and criticize them for not taking more milk, ghee and vegetable. No doubt the Muria, like other 146 people, would eat more of these things if they could get them But there is no doubt that they do not like milk, and rarely take it themselves or give it to their children.

731 Famine is not common in Bastar, for the people can fall back on the almost limitless products of the forests. But it has been known, and a sombre song preserves its memory.

539

Nimāre uche dāntona rawnāni	Vulture, whither away, vulture?
Dori bhumi dāntona dāda le	I am going towards the west, brother,
Bhumi dukār dukār roy dāda le	For the day of want has dawned.
Bhumi le dukār arit roy dāda le	The famine is over all the world
Hihāt huro bhaiso roy dāda le	Black, black are the buffaloes,
Sarpane bhaiso arit roy dāda le	And all of them have died, brother.
Podor pungār doyo roy dāda le	White as cotton flowers are the cows,
Sarpane doyo arit roy dāda le	And all of them have fallen in summer.
Puhle dhelāt rawnāl roy dāda le	On the broken clod the vulture,
Wetle marāte kawrāl roy dāda le	On the withered tree the crow,
Kawar woker inta roy dāda le	The crow is cawing, brother.
Raiyaka reyon kawrāl roy dāda le	It is ready to fly down.

VI. Honey

222 539 Honey was discovered by a Maria named Waddai who also gave his name to the whole succession of Waddai diviners. 'Waddai went one day to a medium, with a gift of char nuts, seeking help for his sick son. On the way he met a monkey which had been outcasted for falling while jumping from a tree and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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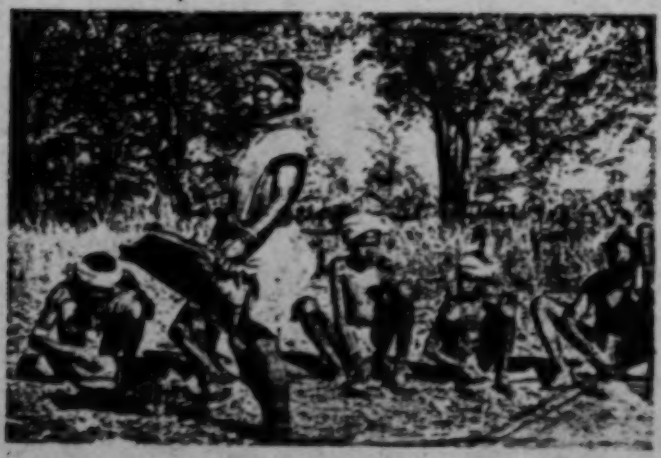
At Kongera a motiari passes on her drink to a chelik

Motiari serving food to the chelik at Nayanar



[p. 368(1)]

2. Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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381

A motiari serves the boys

The ghotul Kotwar, son of Nari, serving food at Nayanar

[p. 388 (B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

273 water, and the latter on the fire, so that the contents of the upper *handi* may be well steamed. When they have been steamed long enough, they are mixed in another *handi* with water to the consistency of *pej* gruel, and left in a cool place to ferment for five or six days, with the top lidded with leaves; when there is a smell like a fowl-house that badly needs cleaning they know that it is ready. *Landa* has to be provided in large quantities for all the guests at a wedding, when open house is kept; all present at funeral ceremonies need it, and some is poured over the menhir erected in the name of the dead man at the *Urathal*; it is given to all who have worked on a new tank at the completion ceremony; a *handi* full is carried by a lad's father and party when going to ask a man for his daughter as wife for the lad; on the sixth day after a child is born *landa* is given to the man and woman called from each house for the naming: at sowing, reaping, threshing and ploughing a little is given to every helper; and at each *pandum* each household makes and consumes some. At the Kuram Pandum, when the new *kuthi* is eaten, the *landa* should be made from new *kuthi*.

273 There is said to be some creeper from the flowers or sap of which an intoxicating liquor is made by the Bison-horn Marias in
● 271 Other drinks the Sukma zamindari, below the Tulsidongri mountains; of this no proof was forthcoming. Possibly the rumour referred to the known habit of the Marias drinking the sap of the wild vine *Vitis repanda* as a substitute for water. Otherwise water is their sole other drink, always from clear running streams, save in the dry southern fringes of the Bison-horn country in Konta tahsil.

271 The Hill Maria and the Bison-horn drink after meals. The latter drinks in the normal Indian way, and often from a brass *lota*,
Drinking or at least a leaf-cup. The former, however, in the remoter villages still almost steals to the edge of the stream like a shy animal, kneels down, and puts his mouth to the water. Otherwise he stands in the water and scoops up water into his mouth with rapid moves of alternate hands.

273 [169] When Bison-horn Marias drink *mahua* spirit, either the head of the family, in case of domestic ceremonies, or every drinker in general drinking bouts, before drinking pours a drop or two on the ground in the name of the Departed. Hill Marias follow the same practice in general drinking bouts, but the libation may be made before or after drinking. The liquor is brought in large earthen pots or in gourd bottles from the nearest liquor-shop. Hill Marias fill large leaf-cups from it, which they take round to all present and from them fill the small leaf-cups which each person has ready for himself; the Bison-horn Maria doles out his liquor either with the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

fetching water, but that now she was to go to a life that was both sweet and bitter. Finally, a group of quite little girls arrived on the scene with bundles of food tied up in cloth on their heads and the bride, still weeping loudly, was carried off by her girl companions across the fields into the sunset. It was a moving sight, this taking away of the bride to her new life, but it was noticeable that no member of the bridegroom's family came to fetch her. She was simply taken away by her own people to his village.

Next morning I started before dawn with my assistant Mr. Sampat Singh on the long descent to Sirsitti. The scenery on the way was magnificent. From the brow of the hill we could see stretching away almost to Orissa the great plain of Konta and Sukma with the peaks of hills rising above the mist just touched by the morning sun. When we reached the village we found the two marriages in progress, though everyone was a little jaded having been up dancing all night. There were little camps outside the village for the two brides and the bridegrooms' families sent food and liquor out to them. During the morning there was some desultory dancing in the middle of the village, and a group of girls sat round each bride who wailed loudly from time to time as the girls sang to her about the sorrows and hardships of the married life to which she was now going. Young men from Gogonda, the brides' village, cooked the food supplied by the bridegrooms and this was ready about three o'clock in the afternoon. The visitors assembled beneath a magnificent mango tree outside the village, and the feast was very carefully served by the young men; an exact number of leaf-cups was prepared and each contained the same number of bits of pork; an equal number contained identical portions of rice. The boys then served the cups, first to the women and then to the men. Others went round pouring gravy on the rice and they all ate together. When the meal was over they went to a stream near by and drank, kneeling down and putting their faces right into the water to suck it up.

Then the girls assembled round the first bride, who was still covered with the shawl which all through that sweltering day she had not once laid aside, and danced with her into the centre of the village. Another party escorted the second bride and soon the scene was very lively with two separate dances whirling round the square. Presently the first party danced up to the future husband's house. They gathered in a very tight block before the door and began to sing loudly and rapidly, jerking their bodies to and fro from the hips, a song which meant, 'Come and get her if you can, brother; come and catch her if you can'. For some time the bridegroom stood in a rather embarrassed fashion in the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the water. On each side of each torch-bearer goes a man armed with bow and arrows; for small fish the arrows have heads like the handles of spoons, but for large fish they use arrows with heads with only one wing and barb, like an ordinary arrow-head bisected from point to shank. The torch-bearers and bowmen wade up against the current, and the fish, which at night are feeding in these shallows and not in the deep pools, are attracted or stupefied by the glare and are easily shot with the arrows or caught in the baskets.'

E. Intoxicants and Other Drinks

The commonest intoxicant in the Abujhmar hills is the fermented juice of the sago-palm (*Caryota urens*), and the tree is common also in many parts of the Bison-horn Maria country. It is now propagated freely by Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The tree, unlike the toddy-palm, is monoecious. The flowering peduncles, which appear like thin elephant trunks, have their ends cut off before they flower, and act as taps, bamboo tubes being fastened below the cut to catch the sap; the Bison-horn Marias often use earthenware pots. The tubes are emptied in the morning and evening, bamboo poles still retaining the stumps of side-shoots being tied on to the trees as rough ladders. When fresh, the sap is not intoxicating and has a pleasant dry taste, not unlike champagne. After two or three years' tapping the tree dies, when the inner tissue of the stem yields the starchy food substance already mentioned. If the ends of the peduncle get worm- or grub-eaten before they are tapped, it is considered a sure sign of witchcraft, and more than one murder has been recorded on this account. The bottom of the trunk of the dead tree is commonly used as the hollow body of the Hill Maria single-membrane *turam* or kettle-drums.

Sago-palm

The toddy-palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is not grown or tapped in the Abujhmar hills, but is common in the south of the Bison-horn country especially among the so-called Koyas and the Dorlas, and in Sukma and Konta. In this teluguized region whole villages camp-out in the toddy groves from March till June in a perpetual state of semi-intoxication, taking solid food only in the evening, and sometimes going without that for three or four days or even a week. The sap is tapped by cutting the ends of the flowering spadices, in much the same way as the sago-palm; the spadix appears in the male trees from November to March, while the female tree yields sap from April to June. The vessels used to catch the sap are generally thick bamboo tubes three or four feet long, of about three gallons capacity. Excessive tapping soon shortens the life of the trees. The juice rapidly ferments, though not intoxicating when drawn, and fermentation is expedited by the habit of mixing the fresh juice with that left

Toddy-palm

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

273 This seems to mean, 'When drunk a Gond is like the hind-quarters of a buffalo,
539 which you can cut with a knife but nothing happens. The Kalar and his wife are the thieves of the liquor-pots and so they have to beg from door to door for beef-soup.' The song reveals the usual scorn for and unpopularity of the Kalar.

276 The Muria do not approve of drugs. 'We will seduce the Kalar's daughter (mahua spirit), but we won't even look at the Raja's sister (opium).' They do not drink *gānja* or *bhāng*—'those are for the Hindus'—though Lingo is said to have distributed *gānja* to chelik and motiari in the ghotul he founded. Kotha, an old Muria of Kuntpadar, recalled what happened to him when he drank *gānja* as a chelik. 'Once as I was ploughing my field, I took off my cloth and put it under a tree, where a cow found and ate it. In the evening I felt cold and took a lot of *gānja* to warm myself. I got very drunk and shouted in the ghotul that I was going to die. That night I took several motiari and they were all angry with me. Next morning I felt very ashamed and have never taken *gānja* or even tobacco since.'

272 The Muria sometimes make what is called *surem*, a concoction of mahua flowers which have been boiled in water again and again, sometimes with slices of mango added. They occasionally tap the date palm and drink its sweet heavy juice. In the east and south of the ghotul country, they
273 occasionally make the landa rice-beer so beloved of the Bison-horn Maria.

Landa, which tastes like an imaginary mixture of dynamite and Sanatogen, is the most potent intoxicant in Bastar. It is also the most deceptive. It does not produce its effect at once. The thick tasty fluid slips down the throat, and the drinker deceives himself into thinking he is having a good meal; before he knows what has happened he is dangerously drunk, and he remains drunk for a long time. Not a few of the homicidal crimes of the Bison-horn Maria are due to or are at least occasioned by the drinking of landa.[1]

To the Hill Maria, landa is *polo*, or taboo, and the Jhoria and northern Muria under Maria influence do not make it. Its use appears to be confined to the Muria of the centre, east and south. It is made by mixing kosra or rice and mandia. The rice or kosra is first soaked in water, then dried and ground in an ordinary hand-mill. The resulting flour is mixed with hot water into a paste. A woman places a large earthenware pot full of boiling water on the fire and fixes an inverted conical basket (called the *jib*) over its mouth. She fills this with the paste and steams it for about a quarter of an hour and then puts it aside.

Previously the mandia grain has been soaked in water, set aside for two or three days till it has sprouted and then dried and ground. The woman pours some of it into a very large pot, puts the rice paste above it, and adds more mandia flour in the proportion of one part of mandia to two of rice or kosra. She then fills the pot up with cold water and puts it aside in a corner of the room. Here it stands for five or six days; when it is seen to be obviously fermenting and there is a bitter smell, they know it is ready.

The Muria do not use landa for ritual purposes; it is made by just those Muria who do not erect memorial menhirs to their dead—which is the time when the Bison-horn Maria chiefly use it ceremonially. The Muria take it at marriages and funerals; they give it to their labourers at seed-time or harvest; it is generally regarded as a sort of supplementary drink to be used when the supply of mahua spirit or salphi juice is insufficient.

[1] Elwin, *Maria Murder and Suicide*, pp. 135ff.

1: Grigson G-5, (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *ahki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc. If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orka*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 [417] the midst of the grain crops to support them. The cut crops which are to be threshed are stacked on the wooden platforms prepared before sowing, in beehive shaped stacks, called *paki* by the Hill Marias and *kupa* in Halbi.

The women prepare the threshing-floor (*karanu* in the hill dialect), clearing a piece of ground near the stacks of grain, and plastering it with mud. In the centre of this the men erect a thick [784] bamboo railing on posts. It is *polo* for women to take part in the actual threshing. Oxen are never used. For each cultivator in [476] turn, beginning with the *kasyeq-gaita*, all the men and boys in the village combine to thresh (*wisna*). They range themselves in two rows facing each other, with the bamboo railing between them.[1] Holding this with both their hands and supporting themselves by it, they dance up and down, rubbing the ears of corn between their feet. They thresh in this way only *kodon*, *kutki*, rice, *ghatka*, *chikma* and *hikka*; the women pick the ears of grains like *kang* and *bajra* in baskets, and rub them in their hands to extract the grain. The cultivator whose grain is being threshed is expected to feed all the villagers helping him for that day, and if possible to give them ● [273] a good drink of *salphi*, the fermented sap of the sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*), which is raised from cuttings in large numbers all over the Hill Maria country. The threshed grain is winnowed by men only, winnowing being as taboo to women as sleeping in the fields or threshing. One man stands on a rough wooden platform and pours the grain from a basket held above his head, while another, if there is not wind enough, winnows the falling grain with a basketry winnowing fan of the usual Indian type (*het* in Maria). All the men and women of the village combine to carry the threshed and winnowed grain of each cultivator to his compartment in the long granary. They never measure their produce, but there is no taboo on this account; it simply is that they grow crops for their own sustenance, and not for sale, and it is easy to see whether the grain garnered is adequate for the coming year or 804 not. They do indeed understand something of bazaar measures, for some of their pulses and oil seeds are sold annually to raise the money needed to pay their poll-tax; they make their own measures of basketry, with different traditional shapes for each kind of produce that they sell; and at the bazaar you may see them measuring out their produce in these in front of the Hindu tradesmen to whom they are selling it. Their measures are very accurate, and need never be challenged. If they make them a little too large, they plaster a little mud over the bottom to reduce the capacity.

[1] I have since seen *kodon* and *kutki* threshed in the same way by Korkus on the Betul border of Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen. When making his offerings, the *kasyeq-gaita* adjures the Mother to remain favourable to the village.

All return then to the clan-god, and here the clan-priest offers for each village some of the new grain and cuts the throat of the cocks and pigs brought by each *kasyeq-gaita*, sprinkling blood from each victim on the clan-god, on whom he calls to be ever present to help them, in weal or woe, in field or forest, at home or abroad. In the less important new-eatings, if the practice among the Bardal clan observed in August 1930 at Kutul is universal, the flesh of the sacrificed animals is not then eaten in a communal feast, but divided among the men present, each of whom takes it to his home, where the male members of the family alone eat it with new grain. Some liquor is drunk in the houses by the men and the unmarried girls, but this is not an essential part of the proceedings. The fermented rice gruel, *landa*, which is always freely consumed at Bison-horn Maria *pandums*, is never even manufactured by Hill Marias, who say that it is taboo to them. After the return of each village delegation to its village, the local *kasyeq-gaita* (whether there is a *bhum-gaita* or not) performs a similar ceremony on a smaller scale before his Village Mother; this in some clan-areas is attended by the clan-priest also, as a guest, but not as a celebrant except in a few large villages to which the clan-god is brought for the occasion; in some other villages a cairn or table-stone is set up near the Village Mother's shrine, and, like her shrine, sprinkled with blood. Nor are the Departed forgotten, for they, too, can harm the garnered crops or the next harvest. The housewife pounds the new grain before the festival in a specially made mortar hole with a pestle (*uspal*) washed in water newly drawn from a running stream. She cooks it in the *lonu* room on the Hearth of the Departed (see p. 114 above), and the ashes of this fire are never swept away. In the evening, before the new food is eaten, she places a little as an offering on the floor just in front of the Pot of the Departed, with some appropriate adjuration; and some she places in three *siari* leaves, which in the early morning her husband deposits outside the village by the side of some path (never, apparently, at the cemetery or the Stones of the Dead (*kotokal*)), saying, '*Kopa-kopi muneta tado-pepi hisor mator, ade hintoram*,' meaning, 'We give what our grandfathers and great-grandfathers used to give to their ancestors of old.'

The association of the clan-god with the three first new-eatings is not so marked as at the last, which is the harvest-home celebration. The tendency is to regard them more as domestic than even village ceremonies. No dancing or drumming is allowed at them, and no

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 In his *mudur erka* (big tree *erka*) he raises *chikma* (*Panicum miliare*), *gatka* (*Panicum frumentaceum*) and *sama*, all crops of the first sowing, ripening by early August, and, as main crops, *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) which he calls *gurra*, and *kulthi*, which he, like the Hill Maria, calls *kohala*, both of which ripen with the *penda kulthi* in early December; with him *Eleusine coracana* is an important [273] crop, as he uses it as a principal ingredient in his *landa* intoxicant. In his *marram erka* (brushwood *erka*) he sows only the pulses *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), which he calls *popul*, and *kulthi* (*Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*) which he calls *koreng*. The '*os kosra*' millets which the Hill Maria sows as a second crop after the crops reaped in August he calls '*mach kohala*', and sows not only similarly as a second crop, but also as the main crop in his *erka* land for the third and last year of its cultivation, when it is too exhausted to bear anything else.

241 423 Besides the fact observed on page 128 above that, unlike the Hill Maria, he ploughs the ashes, or digs them with his hoe, into his *erka* and *penda* lands, these lands have, therefore, this further great difference from the Hill Maria *penda* lands, that each crop has its own appropriate type of cultivation, and is therefore sown separately, not jumbled up with every other kind of crop in a hopeless welter. He is, moreover, careful to preserve any mango or other fruit trees on his plot. As he retains permanent rights over his plot, whether it is tilth or forest at the moment, he has to be more careful over its boundaries than the Hill Maria, and cannot be content with the temporary sowing of a line of *til* or roselle. At each burning, therefore, he spares important trees or stumps at boundary junctions, which he calls *sarkari* or '*authority*' trees, and sometimes he leaves a thin line of trees standing along his boundary when he fells the forest. He generally grows his beans and gourds on these and other trees, not on poles stuck up in the middle of other crops like the Hill Maria.

241 [417] [231] It has been seen that he has always a *bari* garden enclosure round or near his house in the village, which he calls *lon-welung* or '*house fencing*', and generally fences with either bamboo wattlework (*wedur-welung*) or a fence of brushwood tied slantwise between horizontal struts (*jhat-welung*). Here at night he pens his cattle, and the ground is thus richly manured to bear maize (*jonna*), *sarson* or mustard (*tarson*) and tobacco (*pogo*)[1] as essential crops, with, in these days frequent patches of chillies, tomatoes and other vegetables. *Sarson* is the most paying crop exported from Bastar.

[1] The Hill Maria grows tobacco and a few poor chillies and tomatoes in little plots left clear of dab grasses when *penda* land is useless for grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter VIII

Procuring of Other Food and Drink

539

'Whatever came across them they must needs kill and eat it;
They made no distinction. If they saw a jackal they killed
And ate it; no distinction was observed; they respected not antelope,
sambhar and the like.
They made no distinction in eating a sow, a quail, a pigeon,
A crow, a kite, an adjutant, a vulture,
A lizard, a frog, a beetle, a cow, a calf, a he- and a she-buffalo,
Rats, bandicoots, squirrels—all these they killed and ate.
So began the Gonds to do. They devoured raw and ripe things.'
(Hislop's version of the Lingo epic of the Gonds.)

A. Food Gathering

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Famine has never been a problem in Bastar, as the Marias and other tribes have always been able to draw half of their food supplies from the innumerable edible products of the vast forests. The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department, and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list. At page 124 above, many of the more important forest products collected and garnered were enumerated. *Mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*) is not common in the Abujhmar hills, where consequently little *mahua* spirit is distilled or drunk; where it does occur, the Hill Marias collect its flowers and fruit as eagerly as cultivators throughout India. It is common in the Bison-horn country. The women and children gather the fallen flowers in the mornings. It is dried in the sun, and then stored in bamboo wicker baskets; it keeps a long time. It is used to flavour *pej* and *gato*, or roasted. Oil is pressed in the plains from the fruit. Tamarind trees are not really wild, but were originally planted around village sites; the fruit is carefully gathered from all the unoccupied village sites. The fruits of the *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*) and *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) are two of the main sources of food supply. They collect also fruit of the *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*) and *aonla* (*Phyllanthus emblica*). Wild mangoes are common, and they are learning to cultivate the tree; they store whole fruit, dried pulp, and kernels whole or crushed. In the south of the State the toddy palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is the mainstay of the economic life of the people, but

[273]

[263]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

226 the water. On each side of each torch-bearer goes a man armed with bow and arrows; for small fish the arrows have heads like the handles of spoons, but for large fish they use arrows with heads with only one wing and barb, like an ordinary arrow-head bisected from point to shank. The torch-bearers and bowmen wade up against the current, and the fish, which at night are feeding in these shallows and not in the deep pools, are attracted or stupefied by the glare and are easily shot with the arrows or caught in the baskets.'

E. Intoxicants and Other Drinks

273 The commonest intoxicant in the Abujhmar hills is the fermented juice of the sago-palm (*Caryota urens*), and the tree is common also in many parts of the Bison-horn Maria country. It is now propagated freely by Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The tree, unlike the toddy-palm, is monoecious. The flowering peduncles, which appear like thin elephant trunks, have their ends cut off before they flower, and act as taps, bamboo tubes being fastened below the cut to catch the sap; the Bison-horn Marias often use earthenware pots. The tubes are emptied in the morning and evening, bamboo poles still retaining the stumps of side-shoots being tied on to the trees as rough ladders. When [272] fresh, the sap is not intoxicating and has a pleasant dry taste, not unlike champagne. After two or three years' tapping the tree dies, when the inner tissue of the stem yields the starchy food substance 757 already mentioned. If the ends of the peduncle get worm- or grub-eaten before they are tapped, it is considered a sure sign of witchcraft, and more than one murder has been recorded on this 534 account. The bottom of the trunk of the dead tree is commonly used as the hollow body of the Hill Maria single-membrane *turam* or kettle-drums.

Sago-palm

273 The toddy-palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is not grown or tapped in the Abujhmar hills, but is common in the south of the Bison-horn country especially among the so-called Koyas and the Dorlas, and in Sukma and Konta. In this teluguized region whole villages camp out in the toddy groves from March till June in a perpetual state of semi-intoxication, taking solid food only in the evening, and sometimes going without that for three or four days or even a week. The sap is tapped by cutting the ends of the flowering spadices, in much the same way as the sago-palm; the spadix appears in the male trees from November to March, while the female tree yields sap from April to June. The vessels used to catch the sap are generally thick bamboo tubes three or four feet long, of about three gallons capacity. Excessive tapping soon shortens the life of the trees. The juice rapidly ferments, though not intoxicating when drawn, and fermentation is expedited by the habit of mixing the fresh juice with that left

Toddy-palm

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

over from previous days. The female trees bear fruit in May, and the pulp of this is eaten, generally after roasting the fruit on an earthenware crock and breaking off the rind. They also eat the unripe seeds and seedlings, as well as the roots. They collect the seed and leave it to germinate in pits; they propagate the trees also from root cuttings. 273

Individual ownership in the trees is to some extent recognized, not necessarily, however, in the owner of the land. There is a sort of village arrangement as to the trees to be tapped by each family, permitting a rough rotation where trees are plentiful, so as to give them a much needed rest from tapping. The Koyas and Dorlas sacrifice a fowl or a goat at the foot of the first tree tapped, and the sacrificial victims are then taken to the Village Mother's shrine and eaten there by the men. 273 423

Date-palm The *sindi* (*Phoenix sylvestris*) is occasionally tapped in the Bison-horn country by making an incision in the bark below the crown of the tree. 273

Mahua The *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*) is common everywhere except in the Abujhmar hills, and it is the spirit distilled from it that is sold at the State excise shops, except for a few toddy shops around Konta. There is very little illicit distillation, the State liquor distilled by licensees at outstills being very cheap, and the pass rules enabling Marias fairly easily to get an adequate supply of the spirit for the religious and domestic or social occasions at which its consumption is obligatory. The State does not tax the tapping of the sago-palm and toddy-palm, but merely tries to prohibit the sale and to limit the quantity of the resulting spirit which individuals may possess. [656] [651]

The Parjas and Bison-horn Marias sometimes make a wine from *mahua*, said to be red in colour, by several successive boilings and strainings of *mahua* flowers. It is called *suram*; I have never been able to get hold of any.

Landa *Landa*, a cause of half the homicide committed in Bastar, is the favourite intoxicant of the Bison-horn Marias, but is taboo to the Hill Maria. It is made of equal portions of husked rice or *kuthi* and *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*). The rice or *kuthi* is soaked well in water, strained off and pounded to a paste. The *mandia* grain is first damped and allowed to sprout, then dried in the sun for three or four days, and soaked, strained and pounded like the rice or *kuthi*. Both are then well mixed. They then take an earthenware *handi*, with holes in the bottom, and cover the holes with a lattice of bamboo slices, on which they place *siari* leaves. The mixed rice or *kuthi* and sprouted *mandia* are piled on these leaves. The *handi* is then placed on a *handi* of

[see cat. 116 | p. 421. – Rural 75]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

273 water, and the latter on the fire, so that the contents of the upper *handi* may be well steamed. When they have been steamed long enough, they are mixed in another *handi* with water to the consistency of *pej* gruel, and left in a cool place to ferment for five or six days, with the top lidded with leaves; when there is a smell like a fowl-house that badly needs cleaning they know that it is ready. *Landa* has to be provided in large quantities for all the guests at a wedding, when open house is kept; all present at funeral ceremonies need it, and some is poured over the menhir erected in the name of the dead man at the *Urashal*; it is given to all who have worked on a new tank at the completion ceremony; a *handi* full is carried by a lad's father and party when going to ask a man for his daughter as wife for the lad; on the sixth day after a child is born *landa* is given to the man and woman called from each house for the naming; at sowing, reaping, threshing and ploughing a little is given to every helper; and at each *pandum* each household makes and consumes some. At the Kuram Pandum, when the new *kuthi* is eaten, the *landa* should be made from new *kuthi*.

273 271 **Other drinks**

There is said to be some creeper from the flowers or sap of which an intoxicating liquor is made by the Bison-horn Marias in the Sukma zamindari, below the Tulsidongri mountains; of this no proof was forthcoming. Possibly the rumour referred to the known habit of the Marias drinking the sap of the wild vine *Vitis repanda* as a substitute for water. Otherwise water is their sole other drink, always from clear running streams, save in the dry southern fringes of the Bison-horn country in Konta tahsil.

271 **Drinking**

The Hill Maria and the Bison-horn drink after meals. The latter drinks in the normal Indian way, and often from a brass *lota*, or at least a leaf-cup. The former, however, in the remoter villages still almost steals to the edge of the stream like a shy animal, kneels down, and puts his mouth to the water. Otherwise he stands in the water and scoops up water into his mouth with rapid moves of alternate hands.

273 [169]

When Bison-horn Marias drink *mahua* spirit, either the head of the family, in case of domestic ceremonies, or every drinker in general drinking bouts, before drinking pours a drop or two on the ground in the name of the Departed. Hill Marias follow the same practice in general drinking bouts, but the libation may be made before or after drinking. The liquor is brought in large earthen pots or in gourd bottles from the nearest liquor-shop. Hill Marias fill large leaf-cups from it, which they take round to all present and from them fill the small leaf-cups which each person has ready for himself; the Bison-horn Maria doles out his liquor either with the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

orka gourd ladle mentioned on page 66 above, or, in these days of sophistication, with a more or less exact imitation, known as a *hal-burria* or wine-ladle, made in bronze by the *cire perdue* process by the Gharwas, about the size of a large meerschaum pipe, with a hollow stem holed on the top of what would be the mouthpiece if it were a pipe; the 'bowl' is filled with liquor, which is poured out into the drinker's leaf-cup through this hole. Men, young women and girls, and boys drink; and mothers give liquor to their children except those only just born. Girls soon know when they have had enough, but even then never let the wine-bearer pass them without refilling their leaf-cup, which as soon as he has passed by they take over to the youth of their fancy.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535 dance, which makes everyone laugh, while all the mediums of neighbouring villages attend, and, possessed by their godlings, leap wildly to and fro, carrying bunches of *soja* leaves in their hands or holding them over their matted hair, to the general merriment. The chief wedding dance is the bison dance, every male turning at intervals in his paces to smile and 'glad-eye' the next dancer, and each then pretending to butt the other with his bison-horns; in another figure they similarly mimic two cocks fighting. The greatest sign of skill is to be able to impale on the tip of the horns a piece of grass twisted into a ring and thrown on the ground; the dancer may before this pretend to be a young and frisky bull, butting at wisps of grass or trees, or hurling them into the air to toss them on his horns. I have seen a dancer pick a small finger ring off the ground on the tip of his horns. As among the Hill 535 Marias, and indeed most Central Provinces Gonds, there is always 831 a comic and obscene element; men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear or goat fur, and carrying clubs, nets and dummy guns, rush in and out amongst the dancers, making obscenely suggestive gestures with their clubs at the dancing or onlooking girls, and provoking roars of laughter.

[273] There is generally a pause for *landa* or *mahua* spirit sooner or later, after which the girls sometimes, before resuming the dance, sit in a bunch swaying from their hips and singing short catchy refrains, with either frankly sexual meaning or no meaning at all; and often the lads opposite make the whole company laugh by imitating them in falsetto.

The dancing and singing, it need hardly be said, lead on frequently to love-making, couples retiring into the darkness, or else starting an affair ending in experimental union and perhaps, later, in matrimony.

E. Other Amusements

524 The Bison-horn Marias' favourite pastime of cock-fighting has already been described (see page 162 above). Small wooden toys are made for the children, very crude representations of tigers or [164] other animals; and a pathetic sight at the graves of children are these toys left there for the *hawal*[1] of the children to play with. I have never found any Marias making string figures; and they have 526 shown no interest in attempts to demonstrate them. The Murias and Bhattras have innumerable games in which all the village youth takes part in the cold weather and spring nights, many of which

[1] Literally the "Gone" used of the spirits of the dead.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and [784] girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* [535] dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion [273] in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise [834] rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinia argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village [515] Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, [787] and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens 796 does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the 798 place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwarin or Forest-maidens, and on each

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 735 economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again."[2]

177 291 Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

342 The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

273 656 [405] On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa.*
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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Gond element had been scheduled, and many others omitted. It was unsound also to confine the privilege to Marias and Gonds, for there are many other aboriginal or semi-aboriginal tribes, such as Pardhan, Halba, Nagarchi, Thoti and Ojha, and artisan, grazier and untouchable castes living in close symbiosis with the Marias, who should get this concession; such an extension would reduce cases of illegal tapping, possession, sale and transfer, and minimise excise subordinate officials' opportunities for harassment and extortion. One of the worst agents of exploitation in aboriginal areas has been the Kalar excise contractor. The Maria here, thanks to this toddy and sago-palm concession, and the availability therefore in his village of this free source of mild intoxicant and the yeast vitamin, has long been far freer of economic thraldom to the Kalar than the other aboriginals in the province who have not had this concession. Moreover the Maria does not seriously abuse this privilege, except perhaps by occasionally selling or giving toddy to non-Marias. I strongly opposed a Nagpur proposal that 'a beginning should be made in the direction of regulating the drinking of toddy by the Marias of Sironcha' who, it was said, 'literally subsist on toddy for some months of the year and are drunk most of the time'. There may be some truth in this theory of drunkenness in regard to the teluguized plains, villages of Sironcha outside the zamindari, as noted of similar South Bastar villages on page 168. But of the Ahiri Marias it is quite false. For one thing the morning and evening climb of the palm-trees by rough bamboo ladders calls for nerve, and would be impossible for a drunkard. All through this tour I never saw a Maria drunk on toddy. Nor in the average Maria village are there enough tappable trees available to cause a tenth of this alleged general intoxication.

Just near Bhamragarh in one village bitter weeping came from a woman whose husband had been hauled off that morning for illicit tapping of toddy in an excise raid. As usual the main lament was not so much against this being treated—to my mind needlessly—as an offence, as against the social consequences of being handcuffed and imprisoned. Here we were close to the Kasansogh Togh or Kasansur Turri and other islands of the Indrawati formerly the subject of a boundary dispute between Chanda and Bastar, which I had settled in my voyage down the Indrawati from Kutru in 1927; across the river lay Pharasnar, headquarters of a sub-zamindari of Kutru zamindari, where I had then camped. The ethnographic map on page 40 marks the population of the Bastar bank here as mixed Dorla and Hill Maria, or Hill Maria who have almost become Dorla; and on page 52 I have noted that though on both sides of the river the villagers seem to be of Hill Maria origin and still exchange

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long. 226 227

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Natânsh horinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'. [524]

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes. 226 278

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden. 226 776 782

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first. 273●

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2] 273 824

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election 273 883

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Koya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 52.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

of ghotul leaders; it is distributed when a boy or girl leaves the ghotul after marriage; it is a convenient and compendious means of paying a fine. The chelik offer it to their drums before a wedding, and drink it in honour of Lingo at the end of the Pus Kolang dance.

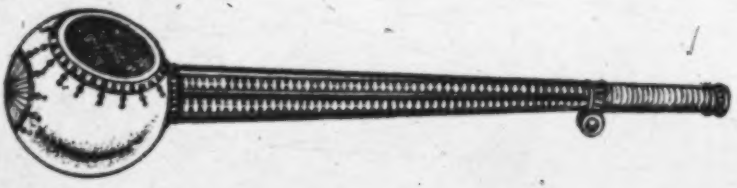

FIG. 13. Brass *orki* used for ladling liquor
Length 8"-9"

This homely drink, so intimately connected with every aspect of their lives, so accessible to the forest-dwellers, so readily and cheaply prepared, may not be distilled by the Muria in Bastar or by the aboriginals anywhere. Its profits must be divided between the State and the middleman. Home-distillation is everywhere forbidden, and the privilege of the manufacture and sale of the spirit is farmed out to contractors in open auction. The business has thus passed into the hands of the most degenerate type of Hindu and Mussalman adventurer, for few aboriginals have either the means or the enterprise to compete with the sophisticated aggression of the outside world in the open market. These adventurers rob both the aboriginals and the State. They dilute the spirit; they put soda in it to cover the fact of their tampering; they make false returns; they use filthy water in unclean pots;[1] their shops are centres of the most degraded type of alien immigrant into tribal territory.

When the National Congress came into power in 1938, they declared that they would not apply their Prohibition laws to Europeans or aboriginals. It would have been more consistent had they allowed the aboriginal to distil his own liquor and had thus ceased to draw revenue from his drinking habits. The real evil of the present system is not that the aboriginal gets drunk, but that in order to get his liquor he is forced into contact with the worst type of alien and outsider.

In this respect conditions in Bastar are better than in many other parts of India. The Excise Department is efficient and understanding; the State controls the mahua trade, but allows the aboriginal great freedom in the use of toddy and salphi. But nothing can atone for the evil of depriving a primitive people of a natural right.

However, once that has been done, the arrangements in Bastar are as good as can be imagined. The spirit is cheap, only two annas a bottle,[2] and passes are freely granted to the Muria and Maria to purchase whatever is needed for ceremonial and social occasions. As a result there appears to be very little illicit distillation in either Kondagaon or Narayanpur. The figures of prosecutions for the five years, 1937–41, are these:

[1] The riddle 'Man and wife piss in the same lane', to which the answer is 'The two pipes of the still', probably hints at the dirt of the Kalar's out-still.
[2] This was in 1941.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

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Tahsil	Population in 1941	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	Total
Kondagaon ..	111,428	3	1	1	..	6	11
Narayanpur ..	62,305	13	..	2	..	3	18
Jagdalpur ..	236,931	16	4	14	5	26	65
Dantewara ..	90,345	58	20	35	10	20	143
Bijapur ..	25,587	4	17	29	18	23	91

Such a table does not, of course, mean quite what it says. An increase in the number of cases detected may imply greater zeal on the part of the Excise and Police staff rather than an outbreak of illicit distillation. Moreover, as the Excise Officer writes to me, 'The number of cases detected represents only a small fraction of those actually occurring, especially in the south of the State'.

Yet even so, the contrast between the Muria of the north and the more civilized Muria of Jagdalpur and the Bison-horn Maria of Dantewara and Bijapur is striking. In the ghotul, the peace-loving Muria are taught to observe the laws.

On the other hand, the incidence of the consumption of mahua spirit in 1942 was greater in the Narayanpur Tahsil than anywhere in Bastar. There is only one way of calculating this, and that is on the basis of the licence fees, which are in turn based on the presumed out-turn of the still; such figures cannot be altogether reliable, but they give at least some indication, as the following table will show: 273

Tahsil	Population in 1941	Presumed out-turn in gallons	Consumption per 100 of the population in proof gallons
Kondagaon ..	111,428	36,137	32·43
Narayanpur ..	62,305	36,700	58·90
Jagdalpur ..	236,931	63,581	26·84
Dantewara ..	90,345	42,000	46·48
Bijapur ..	25,587	11,275	44·06
Sukma Zamindari	47,914	24,200	50·51

The Muria recognize the danger of drinking to excess, and indeed they have few drunkards. 'Liquor is dangerous, even a wise woman falls through drinking.' 'An out-still in the village—quarrels in the ghotul.' But it is irresistible. 'At first it tastes nasty, but afterwards you know it for the sweetest thing on earth. You would sell everything to get it.' There is a song about drunkenness:

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Gond bond bhaisa pond
Lei kadri katin pond,
Kalär kalärin chuniya chor,
Ghar ghar mangai burga jor.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

273 This seems to mean, 'When drunk a Gond is like the hind-quarters of a buffalo, which you can cut with a knife but nothing happens. The Kalar and his 539 wife are the thieves of the liquor-pots and so they have to beg from door to door for beef-soup.' The song reveals the usual scorn for and unpopularity of the Kalar.

276 The Muria do not approve of drugs. 'We will seduce the Kalar's daughter (mahua spirit), but we won't even look at the Raja's sister (opium).' They do not drink *gānja* or *bhāng*—'those are for the Hindus'—though Lingo is said to have distributed *gānja* to chelik and motiari in the ghotul he founded. Kotla, an old Muria of Kuntpadar, recalled what happened to him when he drank *gānja* as a chelik. 'Once as I was ploughing my field, I took off my cloth and put it under a tree, where a cow found and ate it. In the evening I felt cold and took a lot of *gānja* to warm myself. I got very drunk and shouted in the ghotul that I was going to die. That night I took several motiari and they were all angry with me. Next morning I felt very ashamed and have never taken *gānja* or even tobacco since.'

272 The Muria sometimes make what is called *surem*, a concoction of mahua flowers which have been boiled in water again and again, sometimes with slices of mango added. They occasionally tap the date palm and drink its sweet heavy juice. In the east and south of the ghotul country, they 273 occasionally make the landa rice-beer so beloved of the Bison-horn Maria.

Landa, which tastes like an imaginary mixture of dynamite and Sanatogen, is the most potent intoxicant in Bastar. It is also the most deceptive. It does not produce its effect at once. The thick tasty fluid slips down the throat, and the drinker deceives himself into thinking he is having a good meal; before he knows what has happened he is dangerously drunk, and he remains drunk for a long time. Not a few of the homicidal crimes of the Bison-horn Maria are due to or are at least occasioned by the drinking of landa.[1]

To the Hill Maria, landa is *polo*, or taboo, and the Jhoria and northern Muria under Maria influence do not make it. Its use appears to be confined to the Muria of the centre, east and south. It is made by mixing kosra or rice and mandia. The rice or kosra is first soaked in water, then dried and ground in an ordinary hand-mill. The resulting flour is mixed with hot water into a paste. A woman places a large earthenware pot full of boiling water on the fire and fixes an inverted conical basket (called the *jib*) over its mouth. She fills this with the paste and steams it for about a quarter of an hour and then puts it aside.

Previously the mandia grain has been soaked in water, set aside for two or three days till it has sprouted and then dried and ground. The woman pours some of it into a very large pot, puts the rice paste above it, and adds more mandia flour in the proportion of one part of mandia to two of rice or kosra. She then fills the pot up with cold water and puts it aside in a corner of the room. Here it stands for five or six days; when it is seen to be obviously fermenting and there is a bitter smell, they know it is ready.

The Muria do not use landa for ritual purposes; it is made by just those Muria who do not erect memorial menhirs to their dead—which is the time when the Bison-horn Maria chiefly use it ceremonially. The Muria take it at marriages and funerals; they give it to their labourers at seed-time or harvest; it is generally regarded as a sort of supplementary drink to be used when the supply of mahua spirit or salphi juice is insufficient.

[1] Elwin, *Maria Murder and Suicide*, pp. 135ff.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

XII. The Sago-Palm

273 137 Another very popular drink is the juice of the sago-palm, and since the Muria have developed many legends round it I will give the subject a section of its own.[1]

The sago-palm (*Caryota urens*, Linn.), which is known as *gorga marra* in Gondi and as *salpi rukh* in Halbi, is widely distributed over the greater part of the State. It is an erect monoecious tree, with axillary spadices, which sometimes grows to the height of sixty or eighty feet. Its long bipinnate leaves with their fish-tail ends are sometimes twenty feet long. The aboriginals, whether Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria or Muria,[2] regard the trees primarily as a source of liquor, though they use the inner tissues of the stem and the wood for other purposes. The popularity of the tree is shown in the riddle, [524] 'Above sits the parrot, below is the thrashing-floor', suggesting that under the beautiful sago-palm a great crowd of people gather, and in such songs as *'Waliya wāto gorga ale māmāle*—O uncle, the sago-palms are everywhere you go'. Unlike mahua spirit, however, salphi juice is not usually used in worship or on other ceremonial occasions.[3] It is rather a drink for one's private and friendly hours, though it may often supplement a failing supply of mahua at a marriage or funeral.

824 538 As always, legends and stories gather about anything that is intimately connected with the life of the people. There are several different accounts of the origin of the sago-palm, but all agree in connecting it with youth and gaiety. It came into being when maidens danced together or when boys pursued their loves. In the north of the State the most common legend traces its origin to an expedition of boys and girls from the house of Bhagavan, which came down to earth to dance and bathe.[4] One such party came to Chikhli village on the northernmost plateau of the State and after bathing, the girls left behind the cowrie ornaments of their hair. These ornaments are very popular among the motiari; sometimes a mass of cowries covers the whole of the back of their heads. When the girls found they had lost their ornaments they were angry and cursed the cowries saying, 'Now turn into sago-palms and we will always live with you and will never lose you again.' For this reason it is said that the cowrie is the tuft of feathers that fell from Lingo's turban. Yet again it is said that the tree was a feather stuck in the hair of a motiari which fell off as she was going to Penjori village to dance the Diwali dances, and turned into a tree when she got angry with it. But everywhere it is agreed that the tree springs up in all those places where the girls either from the house of Bhagavan or from some earthly ghotul used to go to dance. In the forests above the Raughat and all along the northern plateau there are a great many of these trees and these were the very parts where the girls went for their dancing in the dawn of the world.

There are, however, some other versions of the origin of the palm. In Mule village the Muria say that when the seven salphi maidens (Gorga Kanyang) were born they only had one placenta between them. This was cut off and

[1] For a fuller account see my article 'The Sago-Palm in Bastar State', *JRAS. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII (N.S. 1942), pp. 69-78.

[2] Grigson is not quite correct in saying that Hill and Bison-horn Maria 'almost alone in Bastar use salphi liquor'.—Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. The Muria of the north are among the most enthusiastic drinkers of salphi juice in the whole State.

[3] According to Thurston, the fermented juice is used ceremonially at marriages and festivals by the Poroja and Savara.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 216, 322.

[4] The seven heavenly damsels who came down to dance and bathe on earth is a common motif in Indian folk-tales. See Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 100.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of which a folded leaf of the date palm is attached to ensure that the juice trickles down into the pot. A small gourd with a hole at either end is kept in the pot, which is finally protected with a bamboo cover to guard it from wind and birds.

When the climber has reached the pot, he removes the leaf and scrapes the end of the cut spadix with a knife that is kept among the branches. Sometimes he rubs it with a little marking-nut juice. Then he removes the sap from the pot and puts it in a gourd tied round his waist. Sometimes if the tree is very high, he lowers this gourd down to the ground with a cord. Then he replaces the leaf at the end of the spadix, puts the cover over the pot and descends.

There are various rules and customs about the use of the juice. It is not considered good to drink it when it is too sweet, as it has a laxative effect. For this reason a little of the old juice is always left in the pot to ferment it. To increase its power a little of the root of the danbaher tree is added. When the weather is cloudy it is considered that it will not be good. The juice of a newly tapped tree should not be given to a pregnant woman or she may abort. In fact, at the beginning, when a new tree is tapped only men drink. The Hill Maria do not give the juice at any time to a woman in her menstrual period.

There is a curious idea that the sago-palm itself is subject to a menstrual period.[1] Every month there is a space of two or three days during which the juice does not flow properly and it is not considered safe at this time to drink even what little there is. So, too, for the first week or so after a new tree is tapped the juice should be avoided, for it is then, they say, like semen. At Phunder, the Muria said that the end of the tree's menstrual period is indicated by the presence of a lotus leaf in the pot.

In some villages, the Muria believe that two Kanyang visit the palms. One is Jal Kanyang, and is a motiari; the other, Kaudo Kanyang, is regarded with characteristic inconsistency as a chelik. When Kaudo Kanyang comes to play in a tree, the juice is scanty but good; when Jal Kanyang comes, the juice flows like a river but it is less potent. Sometimes then a little sand and even fish are found in the pot.

This belief in the fish that get into the pot is widespread. Once in the days of Chaitu Gaita of Alor, a chelik climbed a sago-palm and found two *turu* fish and some sand at the bottom of the gourd. At Palli I was told that such fish were 'sometimes caught by the Salphi Maiden and taken up into the tree'. I have recorded the same idea among the Hill Maria.[2]

When a tree is tapped for the first time offerings are made to the Gorga Kanyang. In some villages a hollow bamboo full of water is brought from a stream and leant against the foot of the palm. It is believed that a Kanyang lives in this water and probably there is an idea that the tree will give as much juice as there is water in the bamboo. In order to improve the flow of juice the villagers sometimes promise the Gorga Kanyang a pig or a chicken.

At Adnar on the day they first tapped a new tree the village Gaita, followed by all the villagers, came to its foot. With red and black powder he made a row of three circles, inside each of which he drew a cross. Rice was piled on these crosses and two leaf-cups full of salphi juice were placed by them. One pile of rice was for the Gorga Kanyang, one for Kaudo Kanyang, and one for

[1] This idea is widespread: I have found it among Juang, Kond, Gadaba, Bondo and, in Bastar, among the Bison-horn Maria.

[2] Compare S. L. Hora, 'Rains of Fishes in India', *JRASB.*, Vol. XXIX (1933), pp. 93ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Mother Earth. The Gaita offered eggs and chickens, first making the chickens eat the rice and then killing them. The juice in the leaf-cups was offered to the Earth Mother and the Kanyang and then everyone drank a little. After this the owner was free to tap the tree in the ordinary way.

Failure of the sago-palm may be due either to black magic and witchcraft or to the hostility of one of the Gorga Kanyang. The Kanyang, if she is not happy in a particular village, may twist the branches at the top of the tree and cause them to wither. It is generally believed that the tree gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul. Then she marries and the juice ceases to flow. The motiari of the palm tree is afraid of marrying too soon. If we touch the tree with a cloth yellowed by haldi it will stop giving juice till the new shoots come, for the shadow of haldi (that is, of marriage) is upon it.'

For gonorrhoea, a very rare disaster among these aboriginals, the sufferer stands below holding a leaf-cup into which a friend pours a little of the juice from the top of the tree. The patient offers a few drops to the Gorga Kanyang and then drinks it without allowing it to touch the ground.

The wood of the palm is not usually used for building in Bastar but the Hill Maria make their *turam* drums out of its hollow dried-up trunk. The Muria also make combs and drum-sticks out of the dry wood. Some of the Muria in the Abujhmar foothills make necklaces of the fibre. The leaves are often used as hair-ornaments or to decorate the village dormitories. Sometimes the flowers are pounded into flour, mixed with water and drunk as a sort of gruel. When it is evident that the tree will give no more juice, it is cut down and the pith is removed. This is pounded into a sort of flour and steamed in the usual way into cakes which are popular eaten with honey or sugar. This practice is common across the whole of the sago-palm country. I have found it among Hill Maria, Bondo, Gadaba, and Juang and it has been recorded for the Kadir and Khasi.[1]

The salphi juice is either brought back to the house and stored there until by fermentation it becomes much more intoxicating than in its fresh condition or it is drunk immediately at the foot of the tree. Little groups of people, generally men, go out to the trees, taking with them roasted crabs or frogs, little bits of chicken, various kinds of chutney, carefully wrapped in leaf-cups. The liquor is drunk from leaves, generally simply folded to make a sort of cup, and it is sometimes poured direct into the mouth. Many delightful hours are thus spent by the villagers out among the woods or on the hills.

When a tree is specially planted by seeds or cuttings it is very carefully tended. A fence of wood is built round it and it is watered regularly. Sometimes a tree is associated with the memory of a particular person. In Kanhargaon, a village in the Chota Dongar area, a Muria planted salphi and mango trees fifty years ago and they still preserve his memory. When the people go in the evening to drink the juice, they offer a few drops in the name of Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal to the sago-palm and a few drops in the name of the dead man who planted the trees to the mango, 'so that as we drink you can drink also'.

Generally speaking the tree belongs to the man in whose field or garden it is growing. Where the trees are out in the jungle, or standing in the common land of the village, disputes sometimes arise. The headman or the more influential priests generally claim these trees as their own, but there is also a

[1] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 171.; P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), p. 52. See also Grigson, op. cit., p. 152.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

custom that the man who goes to the trouble of tapping the tree, protecting it with thorns, and making a bamboo ladder, has a right over it, especially when it is growing far away in the forest. The trees are not taxed but the villagers are not allowed to sell the juice. Disputes simply arise over the right to take the liquor for personal use.

The salphi juice, however, is not generally so intoxicating as to cause quarrels in the same degree as landa rice-beer or mahua spirit. Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual* (par. 263) gives some account of the comparative alcoholic strengths of these drinks. 'The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number of tests made with toddy from all parts of the Madras Presidency were:

		Percentage by Volume
Coconut ..	85·7° U.P.	8·1
Palmyra ..	90·8° U.P.	5·2
Date ..	91·4° U.P.	4·9
Sago ..	89·6° U.P.	5·9

Toddy exposed for sale in Bengal in 1909 was found generally to range in alcoholic strength from about 93° to 94° U.P. When reasonably fresh it has a food value somewhat comparable with that of well-made malt beer.' The average strength of landa rice-beer may be taken at about 85° U.P. (8·6% by volume). Mahua spirit is much stronger—*rasi* may be sold at strengths of 50° to 70° U.P. and *phuli* of 5° to 35° U.P. The average for *rasi* is 60° U.P. (22·8% by volume) and for *phuli* 25° U.P. (42·8%).

XIII

With all these varied economic and social activities how far do chelik and motiari meet one another during the day? Does tribal custom allow them to share the same tasks or are the functions of men and women sharply differentiated?

The girls, of course, have the major part of the house-work to see to. They cook, bring water, clean the buildings with cow-dung and whitewash, husk the grain, grind wheat or spices. They generally make the *masni* mats, tie grass into brooms, prepare leaf-plates and cups. In the house a woman must not climb on the roof and she must not take grain out of the dhusir grain-bin, although it may only be removed at her command. A motiari before the menarche may go into the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept, but not afterwards—for she is going to join another clan and has no part with these ancestors; her spirit will mingle with those of her husband's family.

The chelik, on the other hand, have comparatively little to do in the house. They may cook and bring water when the womenfolk are in their periods; they have the business of erecting the framework of the building which the girls will later plaster with mud, and they thatch the roof.

But their main work is outside. In male hands is all the business of the fields and forest. They make and use the ploughs; they cut wood for fuel or cultivation; they embank the fields; they tend the cattle, make and drive their carts; they go to hunt and fish; they watch the crops and thrash and winnow them.

Yet there remain many chances for sharing of labour between chelik and motiari. A boy does not always see his motiari in the dark. Both can repair

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Muria

184 existence among the Muria of the Ghotul or village dormitory, in which the boys and girls of the tribe grow up from childhood under a high degree of discipline and are trained in the tribal virtues. A system of what is practically pre-nuptial sexual communism teaches them from an early age the impropriety of jealousy. The habit of sharing everything all through childhood and youth in the dormitory weakens their individualistic attachment to personal property. The result is that several of the main causes of murder only lightly press upon them. The Bison-horn Maria probably had a similar dormitory club at one period and traces of it may still be found today. But it no longer exists as a social force, and the result is that the Maria—compared to their northern neighbours—grow up passionate and jealous, strongly attached to individual goods, undisciplined and revengeful. The Muria do not seem to consume any less
[273] alcohol than the Maria. Indeed the consumption of mahua spirit per head in the Muria area is higher than in the south. The Maria, however, drink more rice-beer, and there are many more cases of illicit distillation detected among them.

When my friend Mr A. N. Mitchell was Administrator of Bastar, he was troubled by this problem, and one day in conversation about it, one of us—I forget which—suggested that I might make some sort of survey of Maria homicides from my own independent angle. Mr Mitchell, with his unique zeal for everything affecting the life and welfare of aboriginals, gave me all possible facilities for my enquiry, and I was thus able not only to study official documents but also to visit the jail and discuss matters with many criminals.

101 The first task in my enquiry was to get at the records. I decided to confine myself to the exclusive study of the Bison-horn Maria, and here we were immediately faced by our first difficulty which was to decide who were to be included under this name. The name has come to be used in Bastar and in anthropology as a result of Mr W. V. Grigson's memorable book, *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*. But it is not, of course, a word that is used by the people of themselves. Many of them now do not call themselves Maria at all. At the 1941 Census, thousands of Maria returned themselves as Maria, because they thought it sounded more respectable. Many others in the south have for some time

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

front, the sister's son beating his drum above. From time to time they put their burden on the ground to rest, and are refreshed with rice-beer. 764

When the party reaches the pit that has been prepared, the drummers throw the castor-sticks which they have been using hitherto on to the pyre, and take new sticks, which may be made of any kind of wood. Before the stone is erected the Gaita addresses the dead, 'You are dead and you must forget your father, your mother, your brother and your family. This is your house. Live here and do not trouble us or our pigs and cattle. We are giving you rice and pulse and everything that you had at home, so that you may be satisfied'.

In the hole which has been dug by the sister's son, the relatives put something or other, rice, small coins, rings or ornaments, whatever they can afford. The bearers untie the stone from its poles and all push and lift it into position. Earth and stones are rammed round the bottom and a small cromlech is placed in front. On this stone offerings are made by the sister's son with his back to the menhir. The women of the household come and put cooked rice and haldi in leaf-cups on the cromlech, and pour upon it grain, roots, or anything that the dead man used to like when he was alive.

Then the whole party returns to the house and one or more cows are sacrificed. These were probably selected by the dead man during his life-time. They remove the liver and cut it in pieces. Rice is prepared in the house of the dead and divided into four portions and put in leaf-cups. These cups, with the tail of the sacrificed cow and a pot of rice-beer, are carried out in a specially-made basket to the menhir. One portion is put on the ground for Mother Earth and the rest for the dead man on the cromlech. The tail is hung over the menhir and rice-beer poured upon it. At the same time a little rice-beer must be offered to the old menhirs. If this is omitted the ancient dead will be angry and will quarrel with the new spirit that has gone to join them. [769]

Rice-beer must be given both to the menhir and to the mourners. It must be made fresh in the room where death occurred and served with a gourd with a long handle that 764 273

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 has been specially hollowed out for this purpose. Usually
273 there is no stock of rice-beer at hand and it cannot be made so quickly. The Maria then mix a little mandia flour with water and give this instead.

If for any reason in the course of the ceremony some rite or custom is omitted the spirit of the dead man may attack one or other of the mourners in order to show his displeasure. For example, at Gadapal, Burka Peda told me that they once forgot to give landa to the old menhirs and the insulted Dead attacked his father's sister and she fell down in a fit. They quickly gave both landa and mahua liquor to all the menhirs and she recovered. Again in Mahara-Karka one Kuhrami Eriya was hurled into the fire by the angry ghost and his leg was burnt. If this happens it is a good plan for the victim to run and catch
[789] hold of the bamboo poles with which the stone was carried. The Gaita pours water upon him and the angry ghost leaves him alone.

IX

322 When a very well-known or wealthy man dies his family
766 sometimes erects a carved wooden pillar to his memory.
554 There are very few of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

322 These pillars are called by Grigson urasgatta, a word that
766 is obviously formed on the same plan as uraskal, from *urasna* meaning 'to bury' and *gatta*—'a pillar'. I have not myself found any Maria using the word or even recognizing it when it has been put to them. It may be that its use has died out. The Maria to whom I have spoken call these pillars either *munde* (Gondi) or *kambha* (Halbi or Hindi).

The pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. It should simply be near any road or path that is constantly used by the people. The pillars are usually made of saja or sarai wood and are erected with ceremonies very similar to those for a stone.

There are not many of these pillars, but they are worth looking at. There is a very fine one near Dilmilli

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Apparatus for distilling mahua spirit

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532
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Detail of memorial pillar of Kopa Dhurua at Massenar, showing people serving rice-beer

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285
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417

Woman making rice-beer

[FACING P. 96]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Maria climbing toddy tree to extract the juice

[Facing p. 97]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TEN

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: ALCOHOL

1

THE special and characteristic drink of the Bison-horn Maria 273
is rice-beer. Mahua spirit and the surem that is made from mahua[1] flowers, and the fermented sap of the toddy,[2] sago[3] and date[4] palms is also drunk. But landa rice-beer is not only obligatory on most festival occasions; it is also the favourite drink of boon companions. The Maria regards it both as an intoxicant and as a food—which indeed it is. It accompanies him from birth to death. It is drunk first at the ceremonies when he is named, again at his betrothal, again in large quantities at his marriage, and it is finally poured over his memorial stone after he is dead. At every great festival and at every point of the agricultural year, this nourishing and potent drink is made and enjoyed.

Mahua spirit, which is the ceremonial drink of the northern Gond, is also offered by the Bison-horn Maria at the time of sacrifice, and in small quantities on most ceremonial and domestic occasions. The juice of the toddy and sago palms is used almost entirely for happiness—as a stimulant and for recreation—though gourds full of the refreshing juice are often supplied at weddings and funerals to supplement the supply of rice-beer. A poor man who cannot provide sufficient mahua spirit or landa for his son's betrothal or marriage, may provide toddy instead. When Muka went to ask for the hand of the beautiful Kume in marriage, he took with him a gourdful of this juice. Surem, which is made by boiling the mahua flowers, is sometimes taken as a substitute for the properly distilled spirit.

All these drinks are gifts of the gods. Liquor comes 273 ●
from heaven, and who could resist so gracious a blessing? 773
Mahua was discovered much as in Muria and Baiga tradition. An ancient hero went out to find some means of entertaining his guests. He came to a mahua tree with a hole full of water beneath it, into which many of the flowers had fallen.

[1] *Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.
[2] *Borassus flabellifer*, Linn.
[3] *Caryota urens*, Linn.
[4] *Phoenix sylvestris*, Roxb.

[p. 131]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 All round the little pond were sitting rame birds singing,
773 wagging their heads to and fro and flapping their wings in great excitement. The hero tasted the water and soon he too was singing, dancing and flapping his arms in company with the birds.

The recipe for rice-beer was given to the Maria by the Supreme Being for no other purpose apparently but to cheer them up.

273 The origin of sago and toddy juice is more elaborately
773 described.

539 Long ago there was a Maria called Iro Kawachi who had two beautiful daughters, Ilo and Palo. He made a seat of mahua wood and covered it with the skins of lice. He proclaimed that anyone who could first lift it up and put it where he could bathe upon it, and who could say what kind of wood it was made of, and what skin covered it, would get his daughters. All the boys of the neighbourhood came to try but none could tell what the seat was and none could lift it up. At last came a lame boy called Mad Moda from the Irma Raj with an open sore upon his leg. He too was unable to guess what the seat was made of until a fly came and said, 'Let me sit on your sore and eat it and then I will tell you what the wood is'. The boy let the fly settle upon him and after it had taken its fill it told him that the seat was of mahua wood and covered with the skins of lice. Then the boy was able to lift up the seat and put it where Iro Kawachi could bathe.

Now Mad Moda was lame and ugly and covered with hideous sores. When the two girls Ilo and Palo saw him, they ran away in terror but the boy went stumbling along after them and dropped his dancing-stick. He went on and at last caught the girls by the strings with which they tied their hair into a bun. He pulled the cloth off their shoulders and tore out some of their hair. Then he threw them down in the bed of the Indaltom River and enjoyed them. Afterwards the river divided and flowed onwards in two streams.

The boy's bell-stick turned into a toddy tree; the strings from the girls' hair became sago palms; the hair itself grew up as a date palm; the cloth became the broad-leaved plantain tree. Because on that day the girls' cloth fell from their shoulders, they now do not cover their breasts.

This is the story as it was told in Garmiri village. It is known in its main outlines in many other places, though

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

with small variations. In Dualkarka it was Ira Dhurwa 273
who made the seat and its covering was of cloth. In Muskel 773
it was Gaja Bhimul who made it and the end of the story 539
is that Ilo and Palo jumped into the river at Dantewara and were drowned.

A few stories resemble the tales of the northern Muria. The Pen Kaina come down to bathe in the Godaveri river; they come singing to eat jamun fruit; or they simply come to dance. They sing, 'Whoever can tell what our names are, we will go with him'. When the village boys find they cannot tell their names they get angry and try to catch them. As the girls run away their bell-sticks fall and become toddy trees. The boys throw their sticks at them and these become sago palms. As the girls run away the kardan-belts round their waists break and turn into the date palm. The knots on these belts are its fruit. The god cuts off the testicles of the boys and sticks them on to the end of the dancing-sticks and these become toddy fruit. That is why, the Maria say, their women beat the sticks so vigorously as they dance. This version of the story is from Bara Harmamunda. In Palnar the situation is reversed. When the boys begin to flirt with the girls, the girls beat them with their bell-sticks and it is the boys who run away. Here they add that the toddy trees said, 'We won't stay here', and went down below the hills. But the sago palms remained on the Dantewara plateau.

Another completely different type of story is told in the neighbourhood of Bailadila. Long ago a group of Maria were hunting on the Bailadila Hills. They grew very thirsty and went searching for water. A rat had nibbled at the peduncle of a sago palm and a jungle cock had scratched a hole in the ground at its foot. The juice dropped into this hole and filled it. When the hunters came to the place they found a hole full of refreshing juice and drank it and thus learnt to tap the tree.

The comparative strength of these drinks is given in 273
Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual*. The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 of tests made with toddy from all parts of the Madras Presidency were :

			Percentage by volume
Cocoanut	85·7°	U.P.[A]	8·1
Palmyra	90·8°	U.P.	5·2
Date	91·4°	U.P.	4·9
Sago	89·6°	U.P.	5·9

Toddy exposed for sale in Bengal in 1909 was found generally to range in alcoholic strength from about 93° to 94° U.P. When reasonably fresh it is said to have a food value somewhat comparable with that of well-made malt beer.

The strength of country beers (which include landa) made generally from rice or millet varies from about 75° U.P. to 93° U.P. (14.3 to 4.0 per cent by volume) and the average may be taken at about 85° U.P. (8.6 per cent by volume). *Rasi* liquor made of mahua is permitted to be sold between the strengths of 50° to 70° U.P. and *phuli* liquor between 15° to 35° U.P., and although the strength of liquor offered for sale at shops in the south of Bastar is stronger than that in the north, the average strength of *rasi* liquor may be taken as 60° U.P. (22.8 per cent by volume) and that of *phuli* as 25° U.P. (42.8 per cent by volume).

The Maria themselves say that it is the mixture of drinks that is most dangerous. I have everywhere heard it said that they do not consider the rice-beer to be the most intoxicating. Mahua spirit is that. Rice-beer is a food which fills the stomach.[1] But when a man drinks first rice-beer, then a little mahua spirit and finishes off with a gourd or two of sago or toddy juice, he will get drunk on a grand scale. It is also said that it is when the juice of male and female toddy palms is mixed together that it becomes very intoxicating. It apparently makes no difference to the potency of rice-beer whether it is made with rice or with the smaller millets. Indeed it is generally a mixture of several grains.

Excise Sub-Inspectors whom I have consulted support the Maria in their opinion that mahua spirit is more intoxicating

[1] Dalton was impressed by the way Uraon boys and girls could go to work after a night's dancing "as cheerfully and vigorously as if their night had been passed in sound sleep. This says much for the wholesomeness of the beverage (rice-beer) that supplies them with the staying power", *Descriptive Ethnology*, p. 249.

[A] [i.e., underproof.-Analyst]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

than rice-beer or the fermented palm juices. They have added that the mahua liquor is much more rapid in its effect; rice-beer must be taken in large quantities and acts slowly; men do not usually become violent unless they take some liquor as well. A seer of rice-beer is considered equivalent to a bottle of liquor at 70° U.P. Intoxication from rice-beer lasts longer and has a much less deleterious effect. Since it has a high food value, the beer-drinker does not weaken like the mahua-addict. The Sub-Inspectors were unanimously of opinion that Maria did not drink to excess and did not consider that intoxication was a major cause of homicide.

The making of rice-beer is to some extent a ceremonial act. It should be done by a woman in the relation of daughter-in-law to the head of the household or the priest of the village, and she should work on 'a hungry belly'. It is made of a mixture of rice or kosra,[1] and mandia.[2] The mandia is pounded, soaked in water and put in a basket covered with a leaf which is kept in place with a stone. After two or three days in the basket the grain begins to sprout. It is then washed and dried and ground. In the meantime the kosra or rice, or kosra and rice mixed together, are husked and cleaned, and then husked or ground in an ordinary mill. The flour is mixed with hot water into a paste. A very large earthenware pot of water is kept boiling, and into the mouth of this pot is placed a bamboo funnel called the *jib*, and the paste is put into this and steamed. Now the pot of water is removed from the fire, and the mandia flour is put into another pot. The steamed rice or kosra paste is put above this and then above it again more mandia flour. The pot is filled to the top with cold water, the lid is closed with leaves, and it is put aside to ferment. After three or four days it begins to bubble and when, as Grigson says, 'there is a smell like a fowl-house that badly needs cleaning, they know that it is ready'.

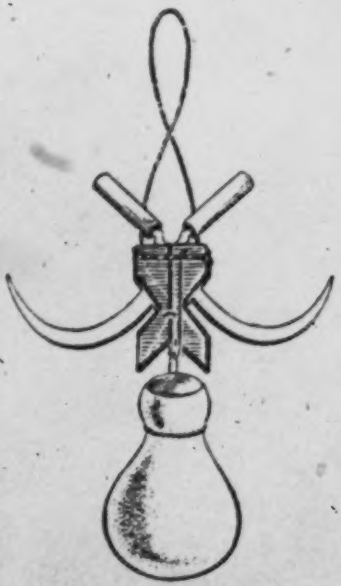
There are many rules and superstitions about the use of sago and toddy juice. Women must not take it when a tree is first tapped. It should not be drunk when it is too sweet, and so on. Careful precautions are taken to guard the trees against theft. Sometimes a large bamboo mat is tied round

[1] *Panicum miliaceum.* [2] *Eleusine coracana.*

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed 417 by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the 481 summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree. Once in Gogonda I saw a Maria getting up a very tall sago palm with great ingenuity. At the foot there was a pole eight feet high fixed in the ground. The climber had to get to the top of this and then, supporting himself upon it with his legs, had to catch the hook twenty feet above him with a long double bamboo pole with a loop at its end. This was no mean feat, and when it was done he had to tie the end of the swinging stick to the pole on which he had been standing and climb up to where he was able to hoist himself to the top of the tree by the branches.

In the Konta Tahsil the method of climbing is the same as that recorded for [273] the Kadir, which again compares with that of the Dyak of Borneo. Long lengths of bamboo are tied to the trunk. The climber ties round his waist an ingenious gadget called *kach pirik*, holding two knives and a gourd, and he then climbs straight up the tree. In other villages the *mohukum* is used. This is a beautifully made arrangement of ropes by which the climber's body is attached to the trunk, and can be



Kach-pirik apparatus for extracting toddy-juice

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

slipped up it. Between his feet is tied another rope which holds them against the tree. He is thus able to get up the tree like a humping caterpillar. A Maria told me that in the evening the people go up the trees 'like a company of monkeys'. When villagers go to drink sago or toddy, they often take with them little leaf-bundles containing dry fish, roasted crabs, red ants or mahua paste.

It is impossible to say how much alcohol is drunk by the Maria. According to the Excise figures in the Dantewara Tahsil and Sukma Zamindari where the population is overwhelmingly Maria, the consumption per 100 in proof gallons is 46.48 and 50.51 respectively. In the Muria Tahsil to the north it is 32.43 in Kondagaon and 58.90 in Narayanpur. Narayanpur, it must be remembered, has a large population of Hill Maria who do not drink rice-beer which may explain why there is a higher consumption of mahua spirit. In the Bison-horn Maria area, there are —according to the Settlement records—about 75,000 toddy trees. The number of sago palms is not known, but is—I believe—considerably smaller.

Mohukum ropes for climbing toddy trees

Illicit distillation was a feature of two at least of the murders. In the last five years 143 cases were detected in the Dantewara Tahsil, 91 in Bijapur, 65 in Jagdalpur as against only 11 in Kondagaon and 18 in Narayanpur. This certainly suggests that the Bison-horn Maria are much more given to illicit distillation than their brethren of the north. But, of course, these figures may only reflect greater energy

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 273 on the part of the Excise staff in certain areas, or greater willingness of informers to come forward with their tale of what is going on.

733 Although drunkenness usually is a marked feature of festivals, marriages and funerals, habitual drunkenness is never common among the aboriginals. For one thing they are too poor for it; for another it is too much trouble. A certain proportion of the people are teetotal, and others never touch mahua spirit and do not drink at any times except on privileged and ceremonial occasions.

II

674 273 How far does this drinking of alcohol explain the heavy incidence of homicide among the Bison-horn Maria? It is commonly said that drinking, and especially the drinking of landa rice-beer, is the main cause. It is true that a plea of drunkenness is frequently put forward by accused persons in the Court. But there is reason to suppose that frequently this is suggested to them by their counsel. In many cases the excuse of intoxication was not made by the accused in his confession to the police, or before the lower Court. It was introduced as an afterthought before the Sessions Judge. In the 100 cases the Court only accepted as true a plea of drunkenness in 19 instances. Of these 19, 13 cases of intoxication were due to landa beer, 4 to mahua spirit and 2 to palm juice. Landa intoxication usually occurred during festivals, but there is no record of any murder at a marriage or funeral, the other occasions when this drink is consumed in large quantities.

TABLE EIGHTEEN

Showing the occasions of homicide committed through intoxication

At festivals	12
At marriages	None
At funerals	None
After visiting a liquor shop	4

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TABLE NINETEEN

674X
273

Illustrating the influence of liquor on homicide in 100 cases

Due to drinking landa beer	...	...	13
" " mahua spirit	...	...	4
" " sago juice	...	...	1
" " toddy juice	...	...	1
Due to other causes	...	...	81

The question of alcoholism as a cause of crime has been discussed in an important article by Dr Norwood East, a former Commissioner of Prisons in England. He describes how he examined a series of 100 unselected cases of men and youths, who had been tried for murder in post-war years and had been examined by him. Alcohol was a predominant or contributing cause of homicide in 19 cases. Dr East concludes from this and from a study of other investigations that there appears to be no reason at the present time to consider alcohol as 'more than an occasional factor in the causation of crime in England'.

'Every practical criminologist' he says, 'will attach some importance to the association of alcoholism and crime. It is, however, very easy to over-emphasize the connection'.[1]

Another investigation into the influence of alcohol on crime was made recently by Dr J. C. M. Matheson, Governor of Holloway Prison for Women. In an analysis of all the women received into the prison charged with homicide from 1935 to 1939, he found that in only 3 out of 55 cases did alcohol appear as a direct factor, and in one of them the accused was acquitted. The youngest of these women was 39 years old. In 3 there was a family history of alcoholism, but no history of alcoholic habit in the person herself.[2]

Kinberg gives an even more impressive judgement. 'Many see in the use of alcoholic liquors perhaps the worst social cancer, if not the root of all social evils, and are therefore inclined to consider drink one of the main causes of criminality too. It is most unlikely that such a schematic

[1] W. Norwood East, 'The Problem of Alcohol in Relation to Crime', *The British Journal of Inebriety*, Vol. XXXVII (1939), pp. 55 ff.
[2] J. C. M. Matheson, 'Alcohol and Female Homicides', *The British Journal of Inebriety*, Vol. XXXVII (1939), pp. 87 ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand; it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chelik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

273 539 This seems to mean, 'When drunk a Gond is like the hind-quarters of a buffalo, which you can cut with a knife but nothing happens. The Kalar and his wife are the thieves of the liquor-pots and so they have to beg from door to door for beef-soup.' The song reveals the usual scorn for and unpopularity of the Kalar.

● 276 The Muria do not approve of drugs. 'We will seduce the Kalar's daughter (mahua spirit), but we won't even look at the Raja's sister (opium).' They do not drink *gānja* or *bhāng*—'those are for the Hindus'—though Lingo is said to have distributed *gānja* to chelik and motiari in the ghotul he founded. Kotla, an old Muria of Kuntpadar, recalled what happened to him when he drank *gānja* as a chelik. 'Once as I was ploughing my field, I took off my cloth and put it under a tree, where a cow found and ate it. In the evening I felt cold and took a lot of *gānja* to warm myself. I got very drunk and shouted in the ghotul that I was going to die. That night I took several motiari and they were all angry with me. Next morning I felt very ashamed and have never taken *gānja* or even tobacco since.'

272 The Muria sometimes make what is called *surem*, a concoction of mahua flowers which have been boiled in water again and again, sometimes with slices of mango added. They occasionally tap the date palm and drink its sweet heavy juice. In the east and south of the ghotul country, they 273 occasionally make the landa rice-beer so beloved of the Bison-horn Maria.

Landa, which tastes like an imaginary mixture of dynamite and Sanatogen, is the most potent intoxicant in Bastar. It is also the most deceptive. It does not produce its effect at once. The thick tasty fluid slips down the throat, and the drinker deceives himself into thinking he is having a good meal; before he knows what has happened he is dangerously drunk, and he remains drunk for a long time. Not a few of the homicidal crimes of the Bison-horn Maria are due to or are at least occasioned by the drinking of landa.[1]

To the Hill Maria, landa is *polo*, or taboo, and the Jhoria and northern Muria under Maria influence do not make it. Its use appears to be confined to the Muria of the centre, east and south. It is made by mixing kosra or rice and mandia. The rice or kosra is first soaked in water, then dried and ground in an ordinary hand-mill. The resulting flour is mixed with hot water into a paste. A woman places a large earthenware pot full of boiling water on the fire and fixes an inverted conical basket (called the *jib*) over its mouth. She fills this with the paste and steams it for about a quarter of an hour and then puts it aside.

Previously the mandia grain has been soaked in water, set aside for two or three days till it has sprouted and then dried and ground. The woman pours some of it into a very large pot, puts the rice paste above it, and adds more mandia flour in the proportion of one part of mandia to two of rice or kosra. She then fills the pot up with cold water and puts it aside in a corner of the room. Here it stands for five or six days; when it is seen to be obviously fermenting and there is a bitter smell, they know it is ready.

The Muria do not use landa for ritual purposes; it is made by just those Muria who do not erect memorial menhirs to their dead—which is the time when the Bison-horn Maria chiefly use it ceremonially. The Muria take it at marriages and funerals; they give it to their labourers at seed-time or harvest; it is generally regarded as a sort of supplementary drink to be used when the supply of mahua spirit or salphi juice is insufficient.

[1] Elwin, *Maria Murder and Suicide*, pp. 135ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

each other's arms on the sleeping-mat. They often have to lie very close together; sometimes two boys have one girl between them; many of the couples actually touch each other. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the compound.

In ghotul where the motiari always sleep in the ghotul, bedtime is a simple matter of routine. In places where they only stay on sometimes, they go singing to their own house or verandah. When they are not sure what to do, they stay on till the Sirdar says, 'Well, girls, are you going to sleep here or are you going home?' The Belosa answers, 'It's very late, I think we'd better stay here' or 'There's a tiger about, it's not safe to go'. The Sirdar says, 'Then go to your mats at once and don't keep us awake any longer'.

FIG. 77. Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel
Width 4½"

In Chandabera, the boys told me that the girls often said, 'Let's go home tonight' and ran away. But if a boy was anxious to sleep with his girl, he would ask the Kotwar to keep them and he always did.

FIG. 78. Comb with carved leopard
Width 5"

FIG. 79. The *kmul-gota* or tortoise box
Height 4"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

276
531
301

FIG. 82. Tobacco-box from the Mardapal Pargana
Height 5"

FIG. 83. *Kalari-gota* from Borpal
Height 7¼"

FIG. 84. *Dudang-gota*. A small tobacco-box 'as round as a girl's breast'
Height 1¾"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

514 For defecation, the Muria go into the fields or jungle. Their villages are always clean of human excreta; if a child relieves itself in the house, the mother immediately cleans the place and sprinkles ash over it. One of the instructions given by Lingo in the first ghotul was that the boys and girls should never relieve themselves on the paths. Moreover since they do not wash themselves with water after defecation, the banks of streams or rivers are usually clean—in striking contrast to the horrible condition of streams near many a more 'advanced' village.

[824] After defecation the Muria clean themselves with leaves, but they do not use siari, saja, char, sarai, tendu or karmata leaves for this. The saja is, of course, sacred; the tendu also is connected with Lingo. Sarai, karmata and siari leaves are used as leaf-plates.

A strict rule against urinating in the ghotul greatly helps to preserve its cleanliness and freshness. The rule is not, however, universal. In a few ghotul there are little holes in the wall down near the floor which are used as urinals. In others, though the children are not allowed to urinate inside the building, they may do so against the fence. Generally both boys and girls [524] stand to urinate—a fact which gives point to the riddle: 'Shoot the arrow with all your might, yet it still falls beneath your feet.'[1]

V. Tobacco

276 In many ghotul, the distribution of tobacco is an important part of the evening ritual. As the girls go round for Johar, the Belosa and her assistant 883 put a few pinches of finely-powdered tobacco into the chelik's hands. One of the boys has the special duty of seeing that there is a proper supply and that the girls prepare it daily.

The legendary origin of tobacco is described in a story from Kachora.

> Long ago a party of Muria went to visit the Maharaja during Dassera. On their way they came to a spot where a barren woman had been cremated. This woman had been very beautiful, but no one cared for her—for who goes to a withered tree for shelter from the sun? She complained to Nandraj and he said, 'Though they take no notice of you now, once you are dead they won't be able to get on without you.' So after her death, a beautiful plant sprung from her ashes.
>
> One of the party went to relieve himself and saw the plant. He picked a leaf and began to chew it. He found it sweet and distributed it to the others. On his way home, he went to get more leaves, but found the plant had dried. So he took the seeds and planted them in his garden. When the leaves were ready he chewed them and felt a little drunk. The feeling was so pleasant that whenever he had no leaves in his mouth he longed for them. This is why tobacco is called *surli* [after the Chhattisgarhi word *surta*, longing or remembrance].
>
> Every morning tobacco plants give off a sort of smoke because of the dew that settles on the leaves during the night. So the tobacco used in a leaf-pipe is called *dungya*, or smoke.[2]

The chelik, and still more their elders, suffer to the full this *surta*, or longing for tobacco, which they either chew or smoke in small tightly rolled leaf-

[1] The Muria ghotul is generally much less odorous than the Uraon *dhumkuria* I visited. A writer has described the inner room of the Ao Naga *morung* which is used as a urinal as 'emitting such an obnoxious smell that it makes even the second room unfit for entrance'.—S. N. Majumdar, 'The Ao Nagas', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 53.

[2] Cf. the Kond story on p. 308.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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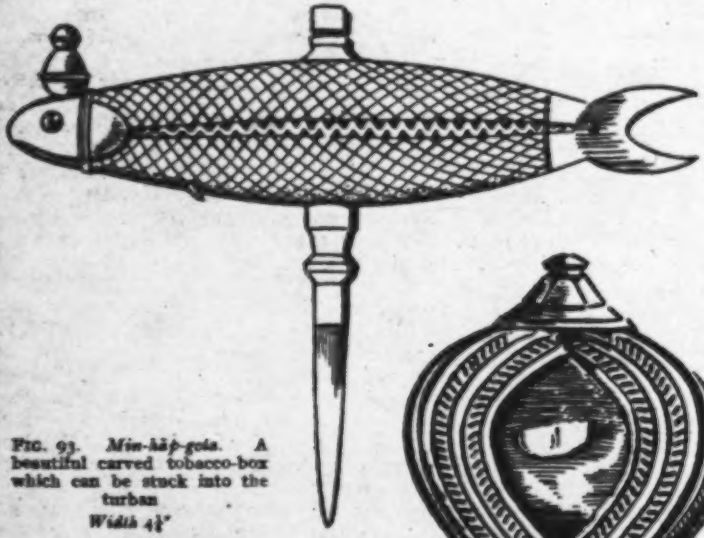

FIG. 93. *Min-hāṛ-gota.* A beautiful carved tobacco-box which can be stuck into the turban
Width 4½"

[831]

FIG. 94. *Pude-gota,* with an obvious representation of the vagina
Height 3½"

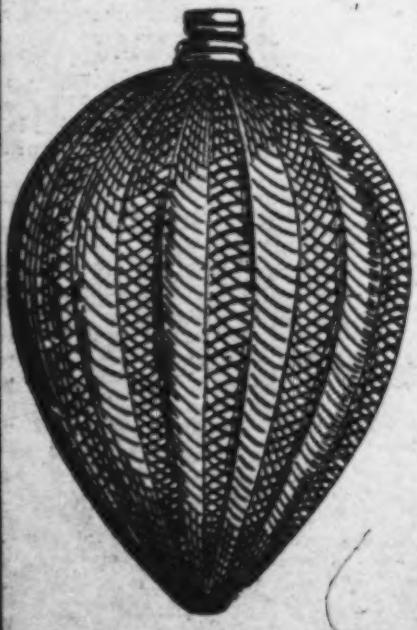

FIG. 95. Tobacco-box from Panjori decorated with carvings supposed to represent the bones of the *mīn* fish
Height 4½"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pipes. These are lit with little bits of glowing coal picked from the fire, and when half-smoked or not in use are generally kept tucked into the turban or hidden in a hole in the ghotul wall.

But the chelik do not rely only on the tobacco supplied them in the ghotul. Any enterprising boy has tucked into his loin-cloth or hanging (sometimes with a bunch of bells or cowries) at his waist a specially-made tobacco-pouch. These *gota* are, as a glance at the illustrations in Figs. 82-4, 93-5, 99, 103-4, and 109-14 will show, elaborate and varied. They are of every size and shape. One is like a fish, another carved like a wheel, a third resembles a mango. Some are of garud, moda or koraya wood, others are cut from the kernel of a fruit, a few are of brass. The stoppers are fitted tightly with a little lac. Some are covered with the testes of a goat or sambhar. Most are elaborately carved.

Many of the *gota*-pouches are named. There is the *dudong-gota*, round as a girl's breast; the *chakka-gota* (Fig. 77), a beautifully carved wheel; the *kemul*, or tortoise pouch (Fig. 79) with its elaborate designs; the charming *mavka-batta-gota* (Fig. 112) shaped like a mango; the *kalāri-gota* (Fig. 83); the *min-hāp-gota*, with its decoration of fish bones; the *tumur-gota*, whose carving resembles the flowers of the ebony tree; the *girna* or lizard *gota* (Fig. 82); and the *damera-āching-singār gota* (Fig. 110) with its elaborate silver decorations. Some of the *gota* have a deliberately sexual purpose; the *pude-gota* (Figs. 94 and 99) has small representations of the vagina carved on it and the *āudo-muri* (Fig. 101) has marks that are supposed to resemble the pimples round the nipples of a woman's breast. The chelik show these to girls to excite them. But, indeed, as I show in another chapter, to ask for tobacco is itself a polite way of asking a girl for sexual congress.

The Muria grow tobacco in specially fenced gardens near their houses and sometimes in enclosures made on the banks of stream or river. When it is ready, it is cut and allowed to dry in the garden. Then it is placed between layers of kodon straw 'which turns it red in a few days'. After this it is dried again, this time on the roof of the house, and finally tied up in bundles with home-made string.

VI. The Sleeping-mat

The *gik* or *masni*-mat is an important piece of ghotul furniture. When a boy joins the ghotul for the first time he is expected to bring a mat which is usually made for him by his mother or an aunt. Later on, especially in the *jodidār* ghotul, a girl ought always to make a mat for her special chelik, but elsewhere the mats seem to be made by a boy's mother, sister or some other female relative. At a marriage a new mat is usually presented to the bridegroom.

The mat is not difficult to make. A rectangle is marked out and pegs driven into the ground at its four corners. Bits of bamboo are tied between the pegs at opposite ends of the rectangle and a dozen or more strings of hemp or grass are tied from one end to the other so as to form the warp. Before they are attached, they are threaded through the holes of the *āch*, a wooden instrument illustrated in Fig. 96 which is used to beat the grass into place. The woman sits down with the *āch* before her and threads bits of reed or grass over and under the strings. After she has threaded two or three she sprinkles them with water and pulls the *āch* sharply towards her several times, thus pressing the grass into position. This is done over and over again until finally the mat is complete.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

I

'We obey our ghotul laws more faithfully than the laws of Government; for we ourselves made the ghotul laws, and so we love them.'

—Common Muria saying

X883
867

THE life of the chelik and motiari is strictly regulated, and when a leader is appointed one of the powers with which he is entrusted is that of judging and punishing offenders against the ghotul code. It is surprising how important a place these punishments hold in the minds of the

[301
412
531]

[276]

FIG. 97. Comb from Palari. The two horns are of bees-wax
Width 2½"

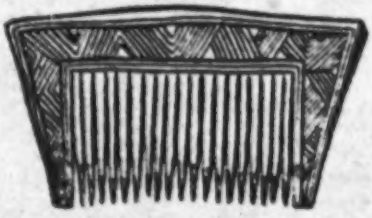

FIG. 98. Comb from Antagarh
Width 5"

FIG. 99. The *Pude-gota*
Actual size

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

children. When they are initiated, the little boys are told—'You must come every day, or you'll be punished'. The girls are likewise told—'You must

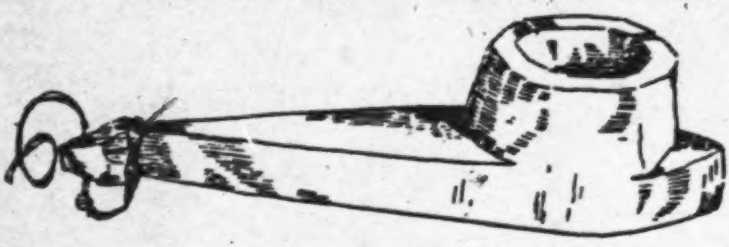

FIG. 100. Tobacco pounder
Length 12"

come every day, or you'll be punished. You must massage the chelik, or you'll be punished.' And when a girl leaves the ghotul at marriage, her

FIG. 101. The *Dudu-murigan*
Height 6"

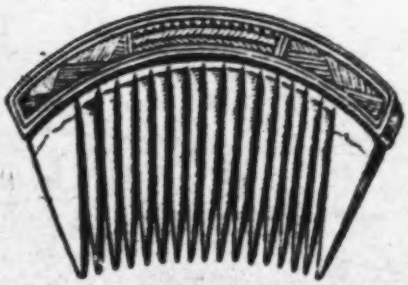

FIG. 102. A Jhoria comb from Markabera
Width 3½"

most tender memories, as revealed in the farewell songs, seem to be connected with punishments. *'Dudhle gai he lit saithai*—The cow that gives milk:

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

every boy in turn saying, 'Johar, *mahārāj*, I have farted'. An interesting rule prohibits the other boys and girls from laughing at the offender too much. The name *padva* may be used three times but not more; anyone who carries the joke too far is fined.

FIG. 103. A brass tobacco-box made by the local Ghasia
Actual size

A bed-wetter is punished with the *khotla-pahara* described below; if incurable, he may be expelled.

Most ghotul are actually kept beautifully clean; occasional lapses are severely penalized. It is the special duty of the girls to sweep and cow-dung the building, but often the Kotwar in charge of them is punished instead. At Kabonga, when the Diwan found that the ashes of the previous day's fires had not been cleared away, he reported the matter to the Inspector who called the Kotwar and threw ash all over him. The Kotwar insisted that it was the girls' fault, not his, and so the girls were called and ash was thrown over them and pushed into their private parts. At Kokori also, two girls were tied to the roof by their feet and ashes put into their vaginae. 'As you've let the ghotul be dirty, we are making your privates dirty', said the boys.

It is generally the chelik who have to see to the surroundings of the ghotul. At Palari in 1941, the Munshi, Sipahi and Likandar were told to clear a space in front of the building for a dance, but they failed to do so. They were hung together from the roof until they begged forgiveness and promised to do the work at once. The younger boys are often punished for failing to bring their daily tribute of wood—a task they all dislike. In the Jamkot

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

was similarly punished for failing in his duty to make the chelik and motiari work at a wedding. As a boy Bindo punished the ghotul Kotwar for disobeying his orders to fetch the motiari in the evening; fifty years afterwards he still remembers the incident with satisfaction.

When the head of the ghotul is penalized, it is a convention in some ghotul that the motiari should beg to be punished in his stead. This happened at Chandabera when I was there, and the Sirdar was fined for not making proper arrangements for his visitors. The girls implored to be allowed to suffer for him.

FIG. 104. A sun and moon tobacco-box
Height 2½"

FIG. 103. Boy's necklace, from Kajen, of cowries strung together with red and 'silver' beads

Should the head of the ghotul turn out a bully or a slacker, the chelik and motiari take the help of the village headman and remove him. This does not happen very often because there is plenty of time to test a boy before he is appointed. But it is not always possible to judge how far power is likely to corrupt character, and scandals do occur. I have recorded a number of cases from the history of the last few years. In Mannegaon, the Leyur-Gaita was removed for bullying and abusing the children. The Malik of Esalnar was once degraded for bullying. The Kotwar of the Berma ghotul a few years ago got very much above himself and used 'to punish for four hours instead of one' until the members rebelled. They fined him a rupee, deprived him of office, made him a 'subject' with the name of Silledar, and appointed the Kandiki in his place. Recently in Kehalakot the Kotwar gave so much trouble to the girls that he was fined eight annas and removed.

Laziness also disqualifies a boy from holding high office. In Atargaon the Manjhi was dismissed 'for not working properly'. The Kokori Chalki was degraded to the rank of Kotwar for laziness and the Kotwar was appointed

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

883X
861

Kanning taliyana is the very common Indian punishment of making someone squat down on the ground and get up and down holding his ears with his

[276
531]

FIG. 109. Tobacco pouch with bell and tusk ornaments
Height of pouch 3½"

hands. It is difficult, exhausting and undignified. But it is not very painful and it leaves no trace, which probably accounts for its popularity among subordinate officials. In Lihagaon, pebbles were held to the ears while the culprit was pushed up and down twenty-five to fifty times. This was how the Manjhi punished Dursal Rani in the song recorded at p. 608.

At Nanipodar, the chelik connected this punishment with a story of a Raja and a dancing girl of the Mirdangiya caste—whose girls are famous for their wit and beauty.

> There was a Mirdangiya. She danced before a Raja. He was so pleased that he said, 'Ask what you will and I'll give it to you'. She said, 'Spit on the floor and then lick up the mess'. The Raja said, 'How can a Raja do such a thing?' Then the Mirdangiya said, 'Very well then, give me the turban from your head'. He did so and she wore it herself and went away well pleased.

The movements of a girl jumping up and down holding her ears are supposed to resemble the Mirdangiya dancing before the Raja, and the chelik taunt the girls saying, 'Ho re Mirdangiya! Today you've become Mirdangiya'. To which the girls reply, 'We are Kanchnin [good and beautiful] girls. If we were Mirdangiya we would be dancing and you'd have to give us your turbans.'

●276

Motiari of Palli pounding tobacco in a wooden mortar for the chelik

Plate LXXXIV

534

The Chalan of Jhakri preparing a pitorka drum

[p. 410 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

X883
861

clan and relationship rules may lead to this extreme penalty. It is indeed extreme, for it means the death of youth, the loss of company and the shame of a wedding without dancers.

[276
531]

FIG. 110. Carved tobacco-box from Nayanar
Actual size

That is, in fact, the final sanction of the ghotul rules—the fear that the chelik and motiari will refuse to attend one's wedding. It is no idle threat; it has been done; it has been still more often threatened, and the parents have had to pay a fine. Once at Jhakri the Piosa failed to do her share of bringing leaves at someone's marriage, and the boys said, 'This girl is too great for us. She evidently likes to be alone. Well, she shall marry alone'. When her marriage day arrived there was a great disturbance and the elders of several villages had to pacify the offended boys. But at last, after her parents had given a gift of liquor, they agreed to assist.

No reader of Chapter V can fail to see the importance of this threat. No wedding can proceed without chelik and motiari. Their absence would mean that on the greatest day of one's life there was drabness, mockery and disgrace. So long as this ultimate sanction remains, the youngsters submit cheerfully to all the penalties, harsh as they may sometimes seem, that the leaders of the ghotul may inflict.[1]

[1] Anyone who thinks the ghotul discipline too hard should read a curious paper by Thurston on 'Corporal Punishment in Vernacular Schools' in India, in which forty-two different manifestations of pedagogic sadism are listed.—*Ethnographic Notes*, pp. 433–40.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

organs' into a slit in a sal sapling.[1] In *Oraon Religion*[2] he says that this is to be found 'in most *dhumkuria* houses'. He only mentions the name of one village, however, Borhambey. We saw the slit there, but did not find it in any of the other dormitories we visited, nor has W. G. Archer been able to find any trace of the custom elsewhere.

383 V
661
171
[276
531]

FIG. 111. A tortoise tobacco-box
Height 4¼"

FIG. 112. *Mavha-batta-gola* or mango tobacco-box
Height 2¾"

It is probable that the 'dormitory slit' was chiefly used for punishing refractory boys. According to the *dhangăr* who talked to Shamrao Hivale at Mandar, it was used as a punishment for boys who were shy or sulky and refused to join in the communal games and dances. 'A lump of red earth is put on the pillar, and the Mahato stands by with a stick, and hits us on the legs and tells us to push our penis into the earth, and then he pushes us against it again and again till we become red. If a boy is sulky, we bring him at night to the *dubri* (mistress) and we push his penis into the slit until he cries and promises not to offend again. We all hit him and push him to and fro against the pillar till his penis hurts and he cries.'

Discipline in the Naga morung is, as we might expect, more rigorous and the punishments more drastic. 'Among the boys of the village', says Mills,

> there is a certain amount of rough play, and a bumptious or obnoxious youngster is taught his place exactly as he is in an English Public School. He may sit down in the dark and find stinging leaves have been put ready for him. Or a more elaborate punishment may be inflicted which many a mother in England would not approve of for her darling. A plank is laid like a see-saw over a log. One end is weighted down with a wooden pillow. The boy has to jump on the other end and the wooden pillow flies up and hits him on the back of the neck.[3]

There is nothing in Bastar to compare with the Naga bullying, a process by which young boys are hardened to face every kind of danger and difficulty.

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 243.
[2] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 52.
[3] p. 53.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

both were Sori. So were the Beldar and Beldarin, the Sirdar and Sirdarin and the Supedar and Supedarin. If members of the same sept could be 'married' to each other, the feeling against clan-incest *inside the ghotul* cannot be very strong. So long as the relation does not result in pregnancy it does not seem to matter greatly. No one knows except the chelik and motiari—and they never tell.

883 X
835
[276
531]

FIG. 113. Carved tobacco-box from Markabera
Height 2½"

But if there is a pregnancy it is a serious matter. In such a case, I was told at Kabonga, the members of the ghotul assemble and pass judgement. 'Look, brother, look, sister, you are both of the same clan; you are brother-sister to each other, yet you have done this evil. If the elders hear of it, we can give them no answer. We ourselves do not think it sin; it was the lust of youth, you were mad with love; but the elders will think it sin.' And they insist that the boy should bring an abortifacient. In Munjmeta when a Katlami boy fell in love with a girl of the Wadder clan—these are forbidden to one another—the ghotul members held a meeting and solemnly warned them that they would be fined if they continued to sleep together and that if the girl became pregnant it would be most serious for them both. But I heard that they took no notice.

The offence is usually condoned by a heavy fine, anything from six to twelve rupees to the panchayat and a calf or pig to the clan-god. But so long as the lovers are willing to separate, they are not barred from marrying in the usual

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

For months everyone must have known all about it. Before the girl's marriage Kule's breach of the clan laws was complete and open; it must constantly have been discussed in the ghotul, and the elders must have known of it. Yet until the day of the 'trial' it had never been openly proclaimed in the village that he had offended against the laws of the tribe. That was too much for him, he saw his girl lost to him, a life-long shame, and heavy penalties. So he killed himself.

FIG. 114. Carved tobacco-box from Metawand
Height 2¾"

There was another case in 1936 in Kerawahi when a chelik and motiari[1] who belonged to the same clan fell in love with one another. They often used to slip outside the ghotul at night and sleep together. After a time the girl found herself pregnant. When the matter became known, there was a great scandal and the elders announced that they would hold a panchayat. The boy was so ashamed and so afraid of paying the fine that was certain to be inflicted, that he hanged himself. The girl was afterwards married to another boy, but was punished—the people said—by excessive menorrhagia. She grew thinner and thinner, and after a year her husband left her and married someone else.

IX

I have heard of very few cases of incest between near relatives. In spite of all the joking, in spite also of the close proximity in which near relatives grow up together in the ghotul, I think that the rules are kept. On the rare occasions that they are broken, the act is regarded with severe censure. At Sahimunda a girl was made pregnant by her own *mâma*, her mother's brother. She publicly accused him and he was fined. In Adenga, a Muria kept his own father's junior wife. He was excommunicated and banned from all tribal privileges. He and the woman were not even allowed to get water from the usual place. I am told that he is never to be admitted into the tribe. In the same village the Gaita kept his mother's sister, and was excommunicated.

A tale of incest from Kapsi is obviously satirical and hardly suggests approval of what was done.

> Long ago there lived an old man who married his son to a very lovely girl. When she came to his house the father at once fell in love with her. He sent his old wife and son to another village to get rice, and that evening he himself pretended to get high fever and lay groaning on his bed. The poor daughter-in-law came to him and said, 'What can I do for you?' He said, 'Ask the Departed in the granary what they want you to do'. She went to them and asked, 'What can I do for my

[1] According to the police report, the chelik was Lati, son of Dhanaji, and the motiari was Koli, daughter of Bhimsen. Lati was Koli's paternal uncle. I do not know their ghotul titles.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

refused. She abused him saying, '*Puk nak*, lick my privates', and told him to go home without her. This, he said, was impossible and she again abused him. He got so angry that he hit her on the head with a heavy piece of wood and she died immediately.

More frequently these disputes have ended in suicide. The wife of Markami Pide was in love with another man, and frequently used to leave her husband and go to stay at her mother's house where it was possible for her to meet her lover. Pide as frequently would go and bring her back and beat her. At last she killed herself in despair. Mundri, the wife of the headman of Kaklur, frequently quarrelled with her husband over the question of visiting her parents, and one day when she wished to go and her husband stopped her, she became so miserable that she hanged herself from a mango tree.

Wooden tobacco box
(*Length* 3¾")

In two cases it was the husband who committed suicide. Marvi Gutami, a young man of twenty-two years, married a girl to whom he was much attached. Indeed it is said that he loved her so much that he was quite unable to control her, and she got on the nerves of the older women in the house who lost no opportunity of venting their spite upon her. As a result she often used to go away to her mother's house, and Gutami would have to go and bring her back. One day when this happened, the youth found that she had gone into hiding elsewhere. Despairing of happiness, he returned home and hanged himself behind his house. Kawasi Hurra's wife Lakhmi did not care for him and was always slipping away to her parents' house. He brought her back five or six times, but she would run away again after staying with him for a few days. Hurra seems to have been very fond

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison horn Maria

224 they must be loose enough to fall on any animal driven into them by the beaters and entangle it. Some twenty paces behind the nets the Marias make little shelters of leaves, about fifteen yards apart, carefully camouflaged from the front, and in these shelters groups of four or five spearmen stand motionless. They do not move till an animal is clearly entangled in the net, but then there is a rush of men to have the honour of the first spear. The first man stabs and holds the animal down with his spear, while the others blood their spears. He gets as his portion the off hind leg from buttock to hough, the headman gets the saddle, and the *waddai* or clan-priest the liver, the portion usually given to the Departed. At Koilibera I saw deer, four-horned antelope and a panther netted in this way and duly dispatched. On the last day a tiger, shot at but missed twice from the *machans* in front, hurled itself at full gallop into the net twenty yards to the right front of the shelter where I was standing with a group of spearmen. It fell headlong, and the net fell on to it according to rule; but unfortunately at that point the rope meshes were old and brittle, and the ground rocky and grassless; the tiger's weight and speed smashed the retaining rope and burst a hole through the net. There was a brief vision of a mighty forearm sweeping aside the encumbrance, and the tiger was free; he rushed roaring by the side of the next clump of spearmen, so close that they could have touched him. Wisely all stood stock still from the moment when the tiger entered the net till it had passed them; but then one of the guns from a back *machan* not so wisely fired over the heads of the line of spearmen. Whether he hit the tiger or not, he enraged it, and it swung round to charge. Those of us on the ground with rifles could not fire at first because the tiger was not clear of the line of spearmen; but a rain of rather wild bullets, one of which broke the tiger's near forearm, checked him, and Kalmu Boda gave it the *coup de grâce* (possibly saving more than one life) by hitting it in the neck with a contractile bullet fired from an ancient twelve-bore gun, rusty and unoiled, with barrels patched with rough iron bands and held together with wire, and as loose in the breech and stock as a gun could be. The bullet killed the tiger outright. Boda had missed twice and misfired once before the final shot. The Murias and Marias present drummed the tiger back to camp with their usual anapaestic rhythm, and the Marias broke into a dance, advancing and retreating before the dead tiger to the same anapaestic drumbeats.

The Bison-horn Maria is an adept at nets and snares of all kinds and sizes for all manner of game. Kalmu Boda has recipes for poisoning tiger and other game. For poisoning arrows they use occasionally the crushed seeds of the *Abrus precatorius* shrub;

411
279

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia neriifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pigs

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*merrskeng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charhal padi* and *kural padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

Poultry

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Korr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar.
[2] See pp. 103 and 120.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

with which the second line dealt with these fish, some of which weighed from ten to fifteen pounds, and required all the handling that the men were capable of; even then many were dropped from sheer weight. In all, more than 300 fish, of all sizes, were caught in the day, enough to provide ample food for a week for everyone present. The Marias were delighted.'

For poisoning fish all or some of the following[1] are used:— *korkoti* (3, 5) leaves and twigs; fruit of the *masiya* (1), *kirach* (1) (*Cassaria graveolens*), *kothewa* (1), *pendra* (1) (*Randia uliginosa*), *kotma* (3), *iriya* (5), *wasa* (5) or *vachcha* (5), and *kue* (6) (*Randia dumetorum*); roots of the *sirindi* (1, 2), *agya* (1, 3, 4) (*Milletia auriculata*), *korti* (1), *timra* (1, 2) (root-bark), *hewu* (5) (pounded with earth from a white-ant hill), *kumbhi* (1, 5) (root-bark; *Careya arborea*), *tumsi* (5), *basemati* (6), and *batte* (6); bark of the *karra* (1, 3, 6) or *karla*, *kirangi* (4), *kuchali* (5) (*Strychnos nux vomica*) and *muchi-tumri*[2] (5) (*Diospyros montana*), *kodra-marra* (6) and *chil*[3] (6); and the ground oil-cake (1, 5, 6) made from *tora*, the seeds of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*).

The ingredients are pounded together with stones or axe-heads on a rock in or near the pool or tank; if the water is deep, they are thrown into it the night before the fish are collected; if it is shallow, the poisons act in an hour or two and can safely be thrown into the water in the morning. The fish are stupefied by them, and are easily collected floating on the surface.

In the Kolab-Sabari in Sukma zamindari and Konta tahsil, Bison-horn Marias and others have night beats for fish in the hot weather; they call the beats '*chingra parad*' and '*kola parad*'. The late Circle Inspector Chaitan Singh gave the following description of these:—

'The beat must be held on a dark moonless night, and not in a tank or a small nullah or in water flowing over mud which would be stirred up by the feet of the beaters, but in clear shallow water flowing over sand or shingle, not more than thigh-deep. Four or five men enter the water carrying each a bamboo torch, and a basket; the torch is held not more than a foot above

[1] The numbers 1 to 6 stand for lists of poisons supplied from 1, Jagdalpur; 2, Sukma; 3, Kondagaon; 4, Dantewara; 5, Konta; and 6, Bijapur. There is almost certainly some duplication owing to the different names prevailing in different parts of Bastar for the same plants. Bastar plant names so differ from those in the Central Provinces that identification is difficult without sending actual specimens to Dehra Dun. The Central Provinces forest lists give as known fish poisons roots of *Milletia auriculata*, fruit of *Cassaria graveolens*, *Cassaria tomentosa* and *Randia dumetorum*, bark of *Ongeinia dalbergioides*, and leaves and bark of *Cleistanthus collinus*. *Strychnos nux vomica* and *Diospyros montana* are well known as poisonous plants.

[2] *Muchi-tumri* is possibly the same as *timra* in lists 1 and 2.

[3] *Chil*, which occurs only in the Bijapur list, may be the Telugu word *chil* for *Strychnos potatorum*, the clearing nut. The seeds of this are used for clearing muddy water.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs, regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams; a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries' when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. 'The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Saises in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 106.

[3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.' 539
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill. 223
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon the Kurmk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish that live in tanks and flooded fields. 226

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *kavangra*, *nāri* (or *bāmi*), *bele* (or *khoksi*), *dundum*, *luwe* (or *turu*) and *bāgum*. 825 821 614

The gall-bladder of the *bāgum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake-bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by filling it with the small kosra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient to drink. 278 ●

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 227 226

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long.

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Netānch horinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'.

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes.

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden.

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first.

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2]

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election

[1] R. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Koya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 52.

4

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Anga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thua* is performed.

A *thua* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahapurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means. Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescription of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

For impotence. The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *tej-rāl* and *bhoj-rāl* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

For dropsy. This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

summer or the work of burning *dahi*, saying, 'O the summer has brought this burning for me'. They eat onions as a cure. 757

For pain in the stomach. The root of the arandi shrub, or the small green shoots of the bahera tree. 755

For wounds. The bark of the mendla tree. 278

For rheumatism. There are several different remedies:

(1) Put some leaves of the kumi tree on the affected place and blow the pain away.

(2) Powder the roots of the karanji and sarpho plants. Mix with oil and rub it in.

(3) Touch the painful swelling with a bit of 'seed-iron' (*bij-loha*), or a thunderbolt.

For fever. The classic treatment is with red ants, which are sprinkled over the patient's body—the stings act as a counter-irritant. Sometimes, however, the ants are put in a pot of water, the lid is closed and the water is boiled for an hour. Then it is strained out and salt, chilli and garlic are mixed in it and it is given to the patient to drink. The residue of red ants is cleaned, ground up with salt and chilli and made into a chutney and given to the patient with his first food.

Another common febrifuge is to pound the leaves of the chill tree, and make a drink by mixing them with salt and chilli in water.

Red ants are also given as a cure for biliousness. A chutney of red ants, haldi and chilli is said to act very quickly on the stomach.

For headache.

(1) Pull each of your toes in turn. When you have found the toe that is connected with whatever part of the head is aching, tie it up and the pain will cease.

(2) Grind up the roots of makar and tikur with fresh haldi. Make a hot poultice of this and apply it to the head.

For diarrhoea. Take seven grains of rice and seven grains of urad pulse and the dry leaf of any old bamboo in the house. Grind them up together, boil in water, strain and take on an empty stomach.

For itch. Make an ointment of the white underskin of a snake and karanji oil.

For sores.

(1) Collect some harra fruit (myrabolams), dry and grind them to powder. Make a paste with a little oil, and apply to the sores.

(2) Remove the dirt from the patient's own ears, mix it in a paste of rice-flour and apply to the sores.

For the bite of a mad dog. Get a bit of the flesh of a mad dog which has died, dry it carefully and store it. When needed, it may be given mixed with gur not less than two years old.

Several different kinds of medicinal oil are made by the Muria. For cracked feet, and wounds in the ears of a bullock, they extract oil from the *dhaman* snake or the cobra. The fat is removed and melted in a pot and kept carefully in a small gourd. For rheumatism, oil made from the fatty parts of the tiger, the leopard or the bear is said to be effective.

X. Muria Festivals

Muria festivals are of several different kinds. The great Marhai are commercial festivals; in the larger Hindu-ised villages the old Pen Karsita or 'Sport of the Gods' has been turned into a large bazaar, at which the religious element 527

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

the lightning is the flash from his anvil. The thunderbolt is the hot slag he throws away.[1]

In Badgai the Muria said that the lightning was the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden) playing in the sky. As she laughs, her teeth flash. When she laughs in the north, then comes the rain.

Lightning is useful to the world. Lightning warns us of rain and even brings the rain. When it strikes a plant or a tree the Muria collect the bark and burn it in their houses as a remedy against bugs and lice. The bark of a tree struck by lightning is a valuable medicine in cases of delayed delivery.

Thunder is even more useful. It is caused either by the noise of the heavenly smithy or by Lingo or Bhimul dragging their water-skins across the sky. At Aturgaon the Muria said that thunder is the noise made when Mahapurub sits on one of the bullocks made by potters at the Pola festival and rides on it across the sky. In Dongrigura they said that 'Mahapurub goes out to work in his fields or to fetch wood. He sees a storm coming and jumps into his cart and drives hard for home. The rumble of the wheels is the thunder.[2] Mahapurub's iron axe or sickle falls down to the earth with a great crash. If people can find it, it is an invaluable cure for rheumatism or headache.' In Kokori the Muria added the detail that Mahapurub's cart is dragged by sterile women. There is generally the idea that thunder has a beneficial effect on sterility.

For the Muria call the thunderbolt, 'the seed'. In Palari they said, 'Thunder is very useful, it means that the heavenly semen is falling to earth; all the small sprouts of rice and the small vegetables on which this seed falls become pregnant and so bear good fruit.' In Karanji also the Muria said that rice, vegetables and trees only bear fruit after hearing thunder. If there is no thunder the crop is always poor. 'We know this must be so, for it is the same with hens. The hen must hear the cock crow, otherwise its eggs will not be fertile.' It is said that if a thunderbolt falls or lightning strikes the earth near a barren woman, she will soon become pregnant.

Here is another account, from Kokori. 'Bhimul is man; Earth is woman. When Bhimul is on heat, he tries to approach Earth. But there is no road or path, and he rushes about trying to find the way, he hurls rocks and mountains to and fro—and this makes the thunder. At last he can contain his seed no longer: it spurts out—and a thunderbolt falls. From this seed man gets his food. Unless Bhimul gets on heat there is no rain or harvest.'

Rain is described as the chaprasi of Mahapurub who goes ahead of him when he sets out on tour. The rainbow is Lingo's *agindan*, or magic arrow of fire. The rain-giver is either Lingo or Bhimul. The people of the north-west generally beg rain from Lingo, for it is here that Lingo's cult is strongest. In the east they approach Bhimul. In Chikhli village at a time of drought in 1941, the Muria went to Lingo and offered him a bull, but he only gave them three days' rain. When they asked him why this was he said, 'In the old days the Raja himself honoured me with sacrifice, but now I am forgotten and so I am not giving rain'. In Markabera they had the curious notion that the first rain is the marriage of Mother Earth and the frogs come to make music for it. Frogs fall from the sky: if they fall into the water they remain frogs; if they fall into a field they turn into tortoises; if they fall under ebony trees they turn into hares.

[1] In Bastar the Hindus say that during a thunderstorm the *titi* bird lies on its back with its feet in the air in order to protect the earth. Many Muria say the same.

[2] This is a common Hindu notion. Thunder is the voice of Indra, or the roar of the wheels of Bhagavan's chariot. See Enthoven, op. cit., p. 76.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 842

must not have intercourse with their 'wives' more than once or twice a week. They sleep together daily, but the ghotul leaders do not permit sexual congress; in such a close-knit society, control is not difficult. It is interesting that the natural sequence of a 'scandal' is the adoption of a rule that the motiari must not stay in the ghotul all night, or that they may only remain there before festivals and marriages, or on certain days of the week. This indicates the Muria belief that by breaking up the cycle of intercourse, conception is less likely to occur.

The Muria believe strongly that conception cannot follow an act of casual intercourse. A woman must remain with the same partner for at least a month, and during this time congress must be frequent.[1]

Coitus interruptus is known, but I have recorded it as practised in only two ghotul, Binjhli and Padde. I would not ordinarily pay much attention to the negative evidence in such a case, but in this matter inquiries have been made widely and with great care. There does not seem to be any reason why people who are prepared to discuss freely the most intimate sexual matters, even those that are taboo, should deny the method unless it really did not exist. In the majority of ghotul, it had not even been heard of, and a description of it was greeted with astonishment and even mirth. 'How should anyone withdraw at the very moment we want it to stay longer and go deeper?' asked a chelik at Kabonga, and at Markabera the comment was, 'After you have entered with so much trouble, how can you leave before your work is over?' Even at Binjhli the girls said that they disliked it and tried to prevent the boys' doing it except immediately after menstruation.[2]

X 883 842 278

Certain supposedly contraceptive herbs are taken orally. In Siuni the Muria Gaita prescribed as follows:

'Get an anagondri [the white garlic tied to the tall festal poles used by the Rawat at a Marhai bazaar]; let it dry; powder it and give it to a girl at her first menstruation in a little tobacco. This will keep her infertile for several years.'

Another remedy comes from Kuntpadar. The creeper called *keksa* is carefully watched until one is found which gives flowers but no fruit. The chelik goes to this 'barren creeper' on a Saturday and offers a little rice and *urad* pulse to it saying, 'I give you this: now come to help me'. The next day, early in the morning before cock-crow, he sacrifices a black chicken and coconut to the creeper. He sprinkles some of the blood over it and lets a little fall on the kernel of the coconut, a small bit of which he burns.

Now comes a delicate and difficult moment. He must uproot the creeper with a single jerk. If he is hesitant and fumbles with it, the root may turn into a snake and bite him. But if all is well, he takes the root home and waits until his girl's post-catamenial bath falls on a Sunday. On this day she must fast till evening when she is given a bit of the root mixed with the coconut and rice. After this, she will not conceive, just as the creeper, though it gave flowers (menstruation), bore no fruit. It is important, however, to

[1] The Gadaba of Orissa also believe that occasional intercourse in the dormitory cannot lead to conception; 'the field must be tilled for a long time before it can bear a crop'.

[2] It is curious that *coitus interruptus* is not practised more commonly by primitive people. The Baiga take the same attitude as the Muria: 'the sowing of the seed is the happiest moment in one's life'—how should one resist it?—*The Baiga*, p. 221. But the Tikopia practise it freely.—R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia* (London, 1936), pp. 490f. It has also been recorded for the Thonga (Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. I, p. 55), the Masai and generally in Africa (Himes, op. cit., pp. 5ff.). Himes quotes Margaret Mead for its existence among the Samoans (ibid., p. 23).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

see that the root of the creeper has no side-shoots, for these impair its efficacy.

Another orally administered drug is supposed to confer permanent sterilization.

'On a Sunday pick a few pieces of a parasite growing on a tilai tree. Dry them and heat in the fire till they can be powdered easily. Make into small pills with gur and give them to the woman—without her knowing—to eat with parched rice.' This is sometimes given by a chelik to his motiari. 'When there is great love between a boy and girl, he gives it to her so that they can love one another without danger.'

I do not know how commonly these remedies are used, but there is no doubt that chelik and motiari are expected to avoid conception somehow. A pregnancy is regarded as a gross piece of carelessness. There is a general belief that no one need conceive unless they want to, that a definite psychological factor is involved. If a boy and girl do not give themselves to one another with too oblivious a passion, if they hold back a little, if they are careful not to love too constantly or too long, conception need never follow. We have seen that too much love is not approved in the ghotul: conception is the punishment of an over-passionate attachment.

But when all precautions fail, and a girl finds herself pregnant, what happens? Directly she finds that 'the moon has come again, but the stream of blood is dry', she tells her chelik. There is no difficulty in the old type of ghotul; her ghotul-husband will look after her. In the newer type, where during the course of the month the girl may have been sleeping with a dozen different boys, she chooses either the one she likes best or the one with whom she first had congress after her last period. His immediate duty is to bring abortifacients.

Abortions are probably fairly common. In one village I was told that they mixed gur, ashes and the strongest mahua spirit available and gave it to the girl to drink. In another place the Muria said that they used gunpowder [1] mixed with mahua spirit. In Kokori, the Gaita recommended the obviously magical remedy of taking a bit of bark from a mahua tree which had been struck by lightning. This was burnt and the ashes mixed with liquor. In Berma, an eighty-year-old Muria recalled how when he was Nengi of the ghotul he made the Niross pregnant. He first dosed her with *keksa* root, but without success, apparently because he did not know the correct ritual of obtaining it, and then on a Monday he bought a bottle of *phuli* liquor. 'On that day we both fasted and in the evening, after bathing, I offered an egg and some liquor to Lingo Pen saying, "O Mahapurub Lingo, if you are a true god, let this girl abort: if you don't, the sin is yours and not mine. You founded the ghotul and if you truly live there till this day, show proof of it and I will offer you another egg". I then made the girl drink the rest of the liquor and in her drunkenness she aborted. As I had promised I gave the second egg to Lingo Pen.'

In one ghotul, about which I believe I have entirely authentic information, six of the girls had procured abortions; one had achieved it three times, twice in the third month and once in the fourth; another girl had achieved it twice. But the motiari do not like using abortifacients, for they believe that they lead to sterility later on, and this ghotul was probably exceptional. There

[1] Himes (op. cit., p. 8) quotes an unpublished report by W. B. Cline that 'it is the custom among the natives of the Oasis of Siwa in the Lybian Desert to drink infusions of gunpowder' as a contraceptive measure.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

294 reveal their true colour and beauty; they were then rubbed smooth with sand and polished with mustard oil. The edges of the horns where they had originally sprung on their cores from the bison's head were cut down and trimmed clean and straight, so that they would fit closely on to the sides of the basketry cap, a little to the front of and above the ears. Holes were bored at regular intervals about an inch from the rim of the horns with a piece of heated brass wire, and widened with the point of a knife used as a drill by rolling the wooden handle between the palms of the hands. Palm
● [283] fibre twine[1] was stitched through these holes and the basketry, the end of the twine being then whipped three or four times round the end of the horn, passed through the basketry again and knotted inside the cap to the other end. Meanwhile the peacock's tail-feathers had had all their lower feathering trimmed off and had been gathered into a tight round bunch of the eyed ends, all round and below which were added great numbers of the tail-feathers of the red jungle-cock or his domesticated cousin. The stalks were then plaited together with horizontal twilled wefts of thin slices of green bamboo rind, the ends being cut flush, and bound round twice with bamboo rind. The plume so made was fastened vertically to the peak of the basketry cap by a bamboo rod passing through the peak and running into the bunched feather stems, and by stitches of twine. The further adornment of the *tallagulla* depends largely on means and taste. The stem of the plume of feathers is wound round with coloured cloth, the ends of which hang as streamers down to the centre of the back. *Pagri* cloth of bright colours is criss-crossed tightly over the basketry cap and the brow ends of the horns, and often ends of this are left as streamers behind the head. Ideally, a brow piece of red or blue cloth, with a fringe, single or double, of closely-stitched cowries along its lower edge, and from five to ten tassels of strings of cowries hanging from it over the face, is tied over the lower rim of the head-dress; the brow piece is often further adorned in the centre or edges with flakes of mica, or groups of cowries, or brass studs, or a pattern of small pieces of cloth of contrasting colours. New cowries being unobtainable, often this brow-piece is replaced by extra folds of *pagri* cloth.[A]

136 Bison must in the old days have been very plentiful; this was, indeed, recorded as the case by Glasfurd in 1862, but his son Colonel A. I. R. Glasfurd, in the fascinating chapter on a shoot in Bastar in his *Musings of an Old Shikari*,[2] states that he took his father's old diaries with him to Bastar and found no game at all in

[1] 'Twine' is used in its technical sense.
[2] pp. 127-48 (London, The Bodley Head, 1928).
[A] [see cat. 116 p. 419. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

use very powerful staves of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood, the bow when strung measuring 6 feet from horn to horn. Of the Hill Maria staves measured by me, the thickest circumference varied from 6·5 to 9 cm. All the bows which I have seen are plain bows, used for spear-arrows and club-arrows; I have never seen any compound, composite or pellet bows. The back of the stave is the natural curved exterior of the bamboo; the belly is pared flat. The string is a carefully sliced piece of the outside of a green bamboo cut with a portion of the natural knots at each end trimmed into knobs, round which loops of twine[1] made from the fibre of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper are tied in notches (*kiddi* in both dialects) 25 to 40 mm. from the tips of the horns. One loop is permanently bound to the notch of the lower horn, the free loop being only sprung into the upper notch when the bowman strings the bow by resting the lower horn on the ground and bending the stave by holding his knee in its belly and pulling the upper horn towards him. The *lower* horn is called *modol* or *talla*, i.e. head, and the *upper* horn *kodi* ('point') or *toga* ('tail').

In the Abujhmar mountains the longest bowstring which I measured was 135 cm. from notch to notch, and the shortest, a child's bow, 110 cm. The greatest distance from the belly of the stave to the string of a bow strung but not drawn was 10 cm.

Arrows are called *kandi* by the Hill and *kar* by the Bison-horn Marias; this refers to spear-arrows only. *Kar* strictly means the arrow-head only, the Bison-horn Marias having no separate word for the whole arrow. The other terms used are:—

Term	Hill Maria	Bison-horn Maria
Arrow-head	*kani*	*kar*
Barb	*kewa*	*kew*
Shaft	*kand-meri*	*kara*
Shaft-nock	*iksal*	*pisel*
Feathering	*kand-toqoshu*	*kar-gerring*
Club-arrow	*bilo*	*milom-kara*
Head of club-arrow	*bonka*	*milom*

The Hill Maria spear-arrows have a total length of 56 to 59 cm., that of their club-arrows varying from 51 to 64 cm. The Bison-horn arrows are longer in shaft and head, like their bows. Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, Figure 2, on page 86, are full-size representations of typical Abujhmar arrow-heads. The wings curve convexly or concavely from point to tips of barbs. The Bison-horn Maria arrows are similar in shape, but are far larger, often measuring 15 cm. or more from the point of the blade to the head of the tang, have longer barbs, and are therefore slenderer in both blade and barb. All

[1] Used in the technical sense of the word.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 the wefts are of split bamboo. The corners of the walls are further secured by cords stitched through the two wicker walls round the corner warp and the corner pile. Wherever beams cross, they are [283] lashed with *siari* twine or thicker rope. The door of a single granary is usually a sliding piece of bamboo wicker-work; but in the long granaries it is a section of *tum* grass fence or bamboo wicker-work fastened in position by obliquely crossing bamboos.

251 These granaries contain immense quantities of *kosra* and other hill grains, rice, beans, dried forest fruits, etc., in big bins of bamboo basketry, smaller baskets, and large *chiptis* or lidded boxes of leaves on a framework of cane or twigs. The bins are all lidded with stitched-leaf tops, tied round the rim with creeper cord, like the paper top of an English jam-jar. The Marias store here also dried rolls of tobacco leaves, coils of creeper and other ropes, and gourds of all shapes and sizes for making spoons, ladles and water-bottles; and when they used *moghi* dancing shields and peacock plumes attached to them they used to hang them under the eaves except when they wrapped them in leaves and hung them in the tops of trees.

342 513 The village dormitory, as has been said above, is generally in the centre and at one end of the village street. It is a long-house made with no partitions, surrounded generally with a bamboo wattle-work fence; and it is practically a roofed *alpanji* or sleeping platform, the criss-cross bamboo framework of which covers almost the whole floor at a height of about 2½ feet above the floor. Often it is entered from in front by a door under the highest point of the eaves, to which access is gained by a narrow horizontal gangway of logs raised the same height above the ground as the sleeping platform and extending from the outer fence to the door; persons entering the dormitory climb on to the gangway by a rough stile, consisting of a tree stump set in the ground between two vertical posts which serve as railings. [374] The interior is badly grimed with smoke, as log fires are lit at night under the sleeping platform, the only door is fastened, and there is no window or vent for the escape of smoke. I have never found anything inside a dormitory except two or three drums and occasionally the shrine of the Village Mother.

The 'gotul-lon'

B. Bison-horn Maria Villages, Houses, and their Contents

361 Of Hill Maria villages the essential thing to remember is that they shift as the cultivation shifts, and so seldom remain more than four or five years in one place. The few villages that have good permanent rice fields tend now to become more or less permanent.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

241
291
301

Chelik of Bayanar digging

Plate XII

The Meliya of Phanda spinning rope

[283]

[p.44(B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make
285 baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
614

[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

female suicides prefer drowning.[1] But this is not so among the Maria. One woman preferred to hang herself even on the very banks of the Indrawati, though the deep waters of the river were at hand.

In the 50 cases of which I have detailed information, 19 suicides were committed inside a building, 16 of them inside the dwelling-place of the family. In 7 other cases death occurred near the house. In the other 24 cases the suicide took place in the jungle, a rope or cloth being attached to the branch of a tree. Among trees the mahua (*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.) was the most popular with 6 cases, and after it the mango with 3. Otherwise there is a very great variety in the trees selected for this gloomy purpose; there do not seem to be any taboos observed, though I notice the sacred saja (*Terminalia tomentosa*, W. & A.) is not used—but this may be for the entirely practical reason that it does not have suitable overhanging branches.

The method of self-execution seems to be to climb up the tree, to attach and arrange the cord and then jump down. When the suicide occurs inside a house, the person stands on a fish-trap or basket and kicks it away. In many cases, the rope consists of the victim's own loin-cloth, turban or sari, but several different kinds of rope are also used. Rope made of the twisted siari (*Baukinia vahlii*, W. & A.) creeper is perhaps the most common. Jute cords for tethering cattle, and ropes made of various kinds of bark are also used.

TABLE ELEVEN

Analysis of 50 Maria suicides by sex

Men	26
Women	24

The contrast between homicide and suicide in respect of the sex-ratio is very striking; 5 per cent stands against 48 per cent. There may be many reasons for this, chiefly that

[1] R. Ranchhodas and D. K. Thakore, *The Law of Crimes* (Bombay, 1911), p. 601, in the author's comment on Section 300 of the Indian Penal Code. But in the U.S.A., the order is said to be—for men—firearms, hanging, poisonous gas, corrosives, and—for women—gas, corrosives, firearms, drowning. In Japan, hanging first and then drowning are the favourite methods for both sexes.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

883 X
524

flying in the wind. Two had bows and arrows; two were magicians with winnowing-fan and measuring-sticks to discover by divination where their quarry was; one imitated a dog with a bell on his neck; and there was an old man carrying a pot and a basket to take the meat home.

The party chased the gaur round and round the field. Sometimes they lost it, and then the magicians sat down, fell into trance, measured their sticks, and shook the winnowing-fan. The dog ran round with his nose to the ground; it was a great joke to beat and kick him. After a time they shot the gaur and it rolled over on the ground. The hunters ran to it, patted, stroked, embraced it, congratulated each other; they danced round and round with delight. It was a charming scene and reminded one of the passion for the chase that still dominates the heart of every Muria. The dog fell upon the gaur and began to eat it; it had to be beaten off. Then the magicians ordered the party to pick up the great animal and carry it to a stream where they would cut it up and eat it. But the gaur came to life and chased them away.

In Kuntpadar, the magicians blew into the sambhar's ear to see if it was alive or not. The magicians there were very lively, turning somersaults and shaking their heads in trance. At Palli (Kondagaon) there was an interesting variation. One of the boys—practically naked save for a scrap round his loins—represented the *jiwa* or soul of the gaur. When the animal was injured and lay dying on the ground, its soul came to perform a strange and uncanny dance above and round the body. The boy contorted himself like a wounded worm and twisted and turned in the strangest manner. At last it fell on the body, a sign that the life had after all returned, and the gaur got to its feet and ran away.

[411
284]

FIG. 145. Sling used in hunting

In other villages I have seen this game take another form. A boy plays the part of cowherd and takes the boys (bulls and bullocks) and girls (cows) out to graze in the jungle. They crawl along pretending to nibble grass and roots. Then the tiger or leopard appears: in Pupgaon he was an almost naked boy whose body was covered with stripes and stars made by applying white earth and charcoal with the splayed end of a castor twig; in Kuntpadar and Markabera I saw a tiger made by tying a boy round and round with strips of bark to represent the stripes, and a large cloth round the head. The tiger

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

slipped up it. Between his feet is tied another rope which holds them against the tree. He is thus able to get up the tree like a humping caterpillar. A Maria told me that in the evening the people go up the trees 'like a company of monkeys'. When villagers go to drink sago or toddy, they often take with them little leaf-bundles containing dry fish, roasted crabs, red ants or mahua paste.

It is impossible to say how much alcohol is drunk by the Maria. According to the Excise figures in the Dantewara Tahsil and Sukma Zamindari where the population is overwhelmingly Maria, the consumption per 100 in proof gallons is 46.48 and 50.51 respectively. In the Muria Tahsil to the north it is 32.43 in Kondagaon and 58.90 in Narayanpur. Narayanpur, it must be remembered, has a large population of Hill Maria who do not drink rice-beer which may explain why there is a higher consumption of mahua spirit. In the Bison-horn Maria area, there are —according to the Settlement records—about 75,000 toddy trees. The number of sago palms is not known, but is—I believe—considerably smaller.

Mohukum ropes for climbing toddy trees

Illicit distillation was a feature of two at least of the murders. In the last five years 143 cases were detected in the Dantewara Tahsil, 91 in Bijapur, 65 in Jagdalpur as against only 11 in Kondagaon and 18 in Narayanpur. This certainly suggests that the Bison-horn Maria are much more given to illicit distillation than their brethren of the north. But, of course, these figures may only reflect greater energy

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It is generally asserted that all Marias are dirty, and object to washing. It is true that Maria women dancing late at night after lying on ground covered with the ashes of camp-fires, or men and women in the *penda* fields or after a long march, are dirty; and anyone who has tried to dress a Maria's wounds knows how dirt-encrusted they can be. Sleeping between fires, or over fires in an enclosed and low-roofed hut, does not promote cleanliness. But the real reason for the idea is the fact that the Hill Maria seldom washes his loin-cloth. On this, Russell and Hiralal say (III, p. 124):— 515

Cleanliness

'In Bastar they seldom wash their clothes, as they think this impious, or else that the cloth would wear out too quickly if it were often washed. Here they set great store by their piece of cloth, and a woman will take it off before she cleans up her house, and do her work naked. It is probable that these wild Gonds, who could not weave, regarded the cloth as something miraculous and sacred, and, as already seen, the god Palo is a piece of cloth.'

This passage is all wrong. Palo is unknown to Maria or Muria Murias and Bison-horn Marias wash their clothes, and there are occasions when even a Hill Maria is bound to do so. He may not weave, himself, but he makes nets and baskets and twine, and always accepts the manufacturing processes of Kumhar potters, Kammar blacksmiths, Gharwa brass founders or Mahra weavers in a commonsense, rational way; he sees the work done quite often, and indeed there are many Marias who, in jail for homicide, have themselves become expert weavers of cloth or carpets. The reasoning processes of the savage are not unlike our own, and it is always safe to reject any such explanation as that he does not wash his cloth because he regards it as impious to wash something so sacred and miraculous, when there is available the commonsense economic explanation that he himself gives, that cloth costs money, of which he has never much, and that the oftener it is washed the sooner it wears out. So ordinarily, when a Hill Maria has his dip in a pool or river he takes off his filthy and inadequate loin-cloth and hangs it on a bush or rock while he washes his limbs, fastening it again all dirty on his clean body when he emerges. The women remove their loin-cloth, but not their *mudang*[1] and the cloth attached to it. Both husband and wife, however, must bathe in the morning after sexual intercourse and wash their loin-cloths; and a woman must invariably bathe and wash her loin-cloth, beating it out well on a stone, on leaving the menstruation hut or room at the end of her courses and of the four weeks following the birth of a child. Generally men and women wash or bathe every morning, and more often than not in the evening also. There are separate pools in [285 286] [833] [841 846]

[1] The *mudang* is explained below, under dress.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 Sometimes the 'fig-box' is made of a lattice of split bamboo strips.
535 Generally a streamer or two of red or blue cloth hangs down from the back of the *topi* or turban. Over the chest a sort of sleeveless vest of red cloth is worn, almost neck-high, and over this from breast to waist, strands of white cloth are twisted, back and front, so as to produce a rib-like effect, the ribs radiating from a central double plait of cloth running vertically from navel to breast, then passing on either side of the neck and repeating the pattern in the rear. The 'ribs' vary from five to nine in number, according to the means or taste of the dancer. This cloth arrangement is known as *gatikar-hana*. Below is worn a long skirt of red-edged white or dark blue cotton, called a *kochi*, with a white or coloured sash round the waist over the bottom of the 'ribs' and the top of the skirt; the sash is called *poriya*. Over the sash round the waist runs a cord, from which is suspended over the rump a great bunch of large and small pellet-bells (*muyang*), in the middle of which two or three large clapper-bells often are prominent. From the neck is hung over the back of the shoulders a basketry dancing-shield or *moghi*, made to slant downwards away from the back by two hoops of bamboo protruding underneath. Over the top of the shield either streamers of coloured cloth reaching nearly to the ground, or peacock's tails are looped. The shield is made of two targes of twined basketry
292 joined together so that the rough edges are in the middle; the
535 warps are flat slices of bamboo about 13 mm. wide, radiating from
285 the centre of the targes, and the wefts, the twining of which begins from the centre, are for the most part thin rods of bamboo pared to the thickness of a straw; but at intervals bands of red are made on the targes by using red yarn from the markets as wefts for three or four rounds of twining; flakes of shining mica are worked into this yarn, and over the outermost red band often cowry shells are sewn. The ends of the bamboo hoops are forced through the joined targes and held either by horizontal pieces of bamboo tied across them, or by ornamental studs of *cire-perdue* brass-work. When not
292 in use, the dancing-shield is never kept inside the house, but either
535 sewn up in leaves and hung high in the boughs of a tree, or on the outer wall of the *manda* or granary under the eaves; this is to protect it from smoke, sun and rain. Each dancer makes his own dancing head-dress and shield. Formerly every dancer held in his left hand the handle of an axe, of which the head, decked with coloured cloth streamers, protruded behind his back; and the axe was a *pharsi* with blade shaped like vulture wings. Now even the ordinary Maria workaday axe is ceasing to be used, a twisted tree-root, or plume of peacock feathers with the stalks plaited together in a basketry pattern, or a stick, taking its place.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Lohu

1 *alpanji* platform for storing produce.
10 large baskets, containing grain and forest fruits.
1 blue dancing skirt or *kochi*.
5 gourd bottles.
1 axe.
2 sickles.
4 large earthenware pots.
1 ditto, used as *Hanal Kunda*.
1 hearth, used as *Hanal O'idal*.
3 very small earthenware pots of pigs' fat.
6 thick bamboo oil-tubes.

422

Most houses have, besides these, a number of drums, more bows and arrows, fishing-rods, lines and hooks, snares, nets of varying mesh for fish, birds and animals, throwing spears, fibre for making string and rope, hemp or grass for the same purpose, sandals of raw cow-hide, thongs of cow-hide, and *korr-guda*, or funnel-shaped hen's nests on bamboo posts about two feet high. They keep the bulk of their grain and forest fruits in their granaries, and the baskets in the house contain only what has been removed from the granary for current consumption; there are generally to be found quantities of new baskets made for sale at the bazaar. The baskets are of all shapes and sizes, and amongst other items include flat baskets something like winnows for use as platters, which they hold up full of food to their mouths.

[251]

[285]

343

Granaries

The granaries, whether built singly or in a long row, are almost invariably built on piles, the floor being 3 or 3½ feet above the ground. This not only protects the grain and dried fruit stored in the granary from damp and white ants, but, as already remarked, provides an extra sleeping place for the males of the family and any male guests. There are three rows of piles, the two outer ones being tree trunks, seven or eight feet high, cut with a piece of a bough forking off at the floor height and trimmed short as a rest for the horizontal beams which support the flooring; the central piles have similar forks turned inwards at floor-height to support the floor beams, but are two or three feet higher above the floor than the outer piles, as they have to support the roof-tree. The upper ends of these long piles are either naturally forked or else notched to support the horizontal roof beams, which bear a thatched roof constructed in the same way as the roofs of dwelling-houses. Planks are laid across the floor beams at the points where these rest on the lower forks of the piles, and a flooring of bamboo wicker-work is laid on them. The walls are made of bamboo check wicker-work, the wefts being carried on around each corner of the building, where a thin pole resting on a floor plank forms the corner warp; the other warps are unsplit bamboos, but

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

nostrums like the use of red-ants for fever or python-flesh for pot-belly already mentioned, and cauterization is the only treatment he knows for simple injuries or foot-crack (just as he brands the flanks of ailing cattle). A Maria bitten by a rabid dog at His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler's Christmas camp at Kondagaon in 1927 refused point blank to be sent out of Bastar to Raipur for Pasteur treatment, but ultimately as a concession to the general anxiety asked to be given the body of the dog, and ate its liver.[1] To Marias illness is generally a manifestation of something malignant, either the magic of a human enemy or the ill-will of a god or spirit. At funerals, steps are taken to ascertain whether magic was the cause of death; in illness a medium is called in, or a *wede* or *gunia* with knowledge either of spells to defeat the spirits of evil or of the white magic means of blowing away illness, *jhara phukna*; epidemic or epizootic disease may be defeated either by palisading the village after sweeping it clean, and posting guards with bows and arrows to shoot the demons of illness, as was done by Hill Marias in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, or by special disease-riddance ceremonies like the annual ceremony described on page 140. Yet such is the Hindu's faith in their 'medicine' that in 1930 the late zamindar of Sukma hastened his death when in the last stages of diabetes by taking the advice of Bison-horn Maria 'doctors' or *gunia* to the effect that he had two intestines, one of which had withered like a dead plant, while the other, though withering, was still partly green and could be revived if the patient fed it with lumps of black earth.

Maria treatment of disease

B. Manufactures

In the preceding chapters frequent mention has been made of basketry, for Maria measures, grain bins, walls of houses and fences, dancing shields and so on. The Hill Marias are great basket-workers, men and women. The men make all the big basketry bins for storing grain and the large baskets sold at the markets, as well as dancing shields and fencing and matting; the women make the basketry measures, basketry plates and the smaller domestic baskets, as well as brooms of various grasses, which are generally plaited together at the top by basketry methods. In camps, Hill Maria youths almost invariably employ any spare time in basket-making. Bison-horn Marias on the contrary leave it almost entirely to their women, except that the men make the basketry caps that are the basis of the *tallagulla* bison-horn dancing headdress, and fencing.

1. Basketry

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 421. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The favourite basketry material is bamboo, in thin strips varying from half an inch to three-quarters in width. Occasionally the wefts are of reed, coloured twine, or bamboos pared down to the thickness of twigs. Patterns are produced by using warps of dry bamboo strips from the heart-wood, and wefts of green strips from the outer rind. Nearly all the Hill Maria basketry is twilled, with each weft passing over and then under two or three warps, the topmost edge or rim being twilled-twined with a weft of thin bamboo pared to the size of twigs; and sometimes an ornamental plaited ring is worked around the central circumference. The measure baskets made by the Hill Marias and brought by them to the markets for sale or for measuring out the grain which they sell or the salt which they buy are of different shapes and sizes for each commodity. The grain measure is a *bhurki*, eight of which make a *soli*[1] or half a seer, i.e. a measure containing about a pound's weight of rice. There are slightly different sizes for rice, *kutki*, mustard and pulses, according to the size of the different grains; all *bhurki* measures are little round baskets with slightly convex bottoms and uniform in diameter at top and bottom. For salt, a rather similar basket called a *kochli* is made, sufficient to hold one pice worth of salt, of roughly the same capacity as a *bhurki*; they are graduated for smaller quantities by being plastered inside with varying quantities of mud or cow-dung. *Mahua* flowers are measured by being heaped on shallow dishes called *kurli*, shaped like inverted cones or Annamese hats; each should contain 4 *pailis*, or 128 *bhurkis*, and those that I tested were remarkably accurate. The Hill Marias sell also the flat basket dishes already referred to, but rather larger than those they use for their own plates; they are called *bediya*.

2. Iron-work

Frequent mention has already been made of the Maria blacksmiths, and some of their tempering and manufacturing methods have been described in the section dealing with weapons and tools. These blacksmiths appear to be of Maria stock, speaking the Maria language, indistinguishable physically, having the same phratries and clans, and following the same customs. Enquiry in the big blacksmith settlements at Bagmundi Panera in Jagdalpur tahsil, at Kamargudem below the Aranpur ghat in Konta tahsil (both Bison-horn blacksmith villages), and from the Hill Maria blacksmiths at Nugur in Kutru zamindari, showed in every case that some of the blacksmiths either had themselves once been cultivators or had fathers who were originally

[1] 3 *tola* or Government rupees' weight of rice is contained in one *bhurki*: 8 *bhurki* = 1 *soli*, 4 *soli* = 1 *paili*, 2 *paili* = 1 *ori*, 2 *ori* = 1 *kurli*, 20 *ori* = 1 *khandi* = 40 *paili*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

285

Bison-Horn Maria women making a mat

[End Plate K]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pipes. These are lit with little bits of glowing coal picked from the fire, and when half-smoked or not in use are generally kept tucked into the turban or hidden in a hole in the ghotul wall.

But the chelik do not rely only on the tobacco supplied them in the ghotul. Any enterprising boy has tucked into his loin-cloth or hanging (sometimes with a bunch of bells or cowries) at his waist a specially-made tobacco-pouch. These *gota* are, as a glance at the illustrations in Figs. 82-4, 93-5, 99, 103-4, and 109-14 will show, elaborate and varied. They are of every size and shape. One is like a fish, another carved like a wheel, a third resembles a mango. Some are of garud, moda or korsya wood, others are cut from the kernel of a fruit, a few are of brass. The stoppers are fitted tightly with a little lac. Some are covered with the testes of a goat or sambhar. Most are elaborately carved.

Many of the *gota*-pouches are named. There is the *dudong-gota*, round as a girl's breast; the *chakka-gota* (Fig. 77), a beautifully carved wheel; the *hemul*, or tortoise pouch (Fig. 79) with its elaborate designs; the charming *marka-batta-gota* (Fig. 112) shaped like a mango; the *kalāri-gota* (Fig. 83); the *min-hāp-gota*, with its decoration of fish bones; the *tumur-gota*, whose carving resembles the flowers of the ebony tree; the *girna* or lizard *gota* (Fig. 82); and the *damera-āching-singār gota* (Fig. 110) with its elaborate silver decorations. Some of the *gota* have a deliberately sexual purpose; the *pudo-gota* (Figs. 94 and 99) has small representations of the vagina carved on it and the *dudo-muri* (Fig. 101) has marks that are supposed to resemble the pimples round the nipples of a woman's breast. The chelik show these to girls to excite them. But, indeed, as I show in another chapter, to ask for tobacco is itself a polite way of asking a girl for sexual congress.

The Muria grow tobacco in specially fenced gardens near their houses and sometimes in enclosures made on the banks of stream or river. When it is ready, it is cut and allowed to dry in the garden. Then it is placed between layers of kodon straw 'which turns it red in a few days'. After this it is dried again, this time on the roof of the house, and finally tied up in bundles with home-made string.

VI. The Sleeping-mat

The *gik* or *mansi*-mat is an important piece of ghotul furniture. When a boy joins the ghotul for the first time he is expected to bring a mat which is usually made for him by his mother or an aunt. Later on, especially in the *jodidār* ghotul, a girl ought always to make a mat for her special chelik, but elsewhere the mats seem to be made by a boy's mother, sister or some other female relative. At a marriage a new mat is usually presented to the bridegroom.

The mat is not difficult to make. A rectangle is marked out and pegs driven into the ground at its four corners. Bits of bamboo are tied between the pegs at opposite ends of the rectangle and a dozen or more strings of hemp or grass are tied from one end to the other so as to form the warp. Before they are attached, they are threaded through the holes of the *ăch*, a wooden instrument illustrated in Fig. 96 which is used to beat the grass into place. The woman sits down with the *ăch* before her and threads bits of reed or grass over and under the strings. After she has threaded two or three she sprinkles them with water and pulls the *ăch* sharply towards her several times, thus pressing the grass into position. This is done over and over again until finally the mat is complete.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

These mats are kept at home and boys or girls bring them rolled up under their arms at night to the ghotul. In some villages this is the special duty of the girls. When they arrive they go round saluting the boys and presenting them with their mats. This is known as *Masni-johar*.

FIG. 96. The wooden *ácá* used for making a *masni*-mat
Length 2' 10"

The mat is very definitely a sexual symbol and many ribald jokes are connected with it. The new mat given to a bridegroom at his marriage is generally smeared with oil 'to make it slippery'. Once when I was sitting down in the village of Amgaon a chelik brought me a *masni* but an old man said, 'Don't sit on it, it is covered with semen', and everyone thought it very amusing. It is supposed to be a great honour to be given a mat by the chelik, probably just because it is a symbol of so much excitement and romance.

Plate LXXXII

306

Motiari at Bandopal making bead necklaces

A woman at Remawand makes a mat

285

[p. 406 (B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

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283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
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285 baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
614

[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

252
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Girl cleaning grain at Tikampal before a decorated door

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Hinga, a Maria girl of Rewali

[facing p. 28]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

285
301
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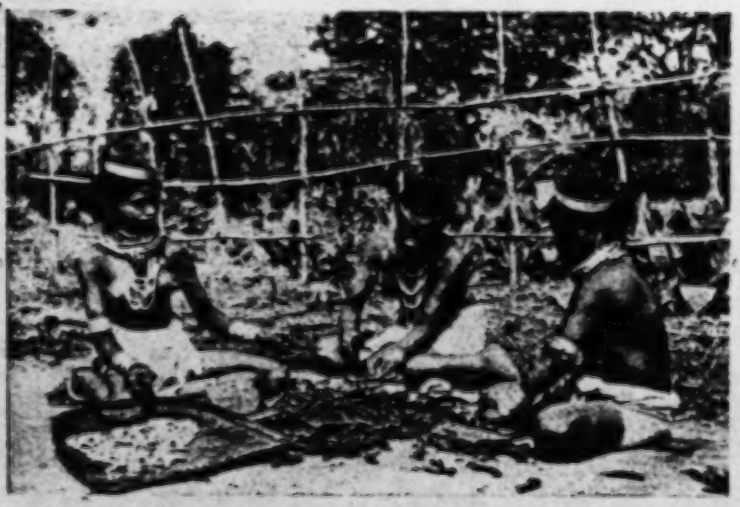
Girl with basket at Marenda

Girls breaking pods at Khutepal

417
252
285
516



[facing p. 29]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Apparatus for distilling mahua spirit

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Detail of memorial piller of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar, showing people serving rice-beer

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Woman making rice-beer

[FACING p. 96]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Cleanliness

It is generally asserted that all Marias are dirty, and object to washing. It is true that Maria women dancing late at night after lying on ground covered with the ashes of camp-fires, or men and women in the *penda* fields or after a long march, are dirty; and anyone who has tried to dress a Maria's wounds knows how dirt-encrusted they can be. Sleeping between fires, or over fires in an enclosed and low-roofed hut, does not promote cleanliness. But the real reason for the idea is the fact that the Hill Maria seldom washes his loin-cloth. On this, Russell and Hiralal say (III, p. 124):— 515

> 'In Bastar they seldom wash their clothes, as they think this impious, or else that the cloth would wear out too quickly if it were often washed. Here they set great store by their piece of cloth, and a woman will take it off before she cleans up her house, and do her work naked. It is probable that these wild Gonds, who could not weave, regarded the cloth as something miraculous and sacred, and, as already seen, the god Palo is a piece of cloth.'

This passage is all wrong. Palo is unknown to Maria or Muria Murias and Bison-horn Marias wash their clothes, and there are occasions when even a Hill Maria is bound to do so. He may not weave, himself, but he makes nets and baskets and twine, and always accepts the manufacturing processes of Kumhar potters, Kammar blacksmiths, Gharwa brass founders or Mahra weavers in a commonsense, rational way; he sees the work done quite often, and indeed there are many Marias who, in jail for homicide, have themselves become expert weavers of cloth or carpets. The reasoning processes of the savage are not unlike our own, and it is always safe to reject any such explanation as that he does not wash his cloth because he regards it as impious to wash something so sacred and miraculous, when there is available the commonsense economic explanation that he himself gives, that cloth costs money, of which he has never much, and that the oftener it is washed the sooner it wears out. So ordinarily, when a Hill Maria has his dip in a pool or river he takes off his filthy and inadequate loin-cloth and hangs it on a bush or rock while he washes his limbs, fastening it again all dirty on his clean body when he emerges. The women remove their loin-cloth, but not their *mudang*[1] and the cloth attached to it. Both husband and wife, however, must bathe in the morning after sexual intercourse and wash their loin-cloths; and a woman must invariably bathe and wash her loin-cloth, beating it out well on a stone, on leaving the menstruation hut or room at the end of her courses and of the four weeks following the birth of a child. Generally men and women wash or bathe every morning, and more often than not in the evening also. There are separate pools in [285 286] [833] [841 846]

[1] The *mudang* is explained below, under dress.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

286
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Making a fishing net

[P. 66 (N)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 564 with the corpse. Short-term prisoners, suitably shackled, are allowed beyond the walls to work in the gardens of the Palace and the higher State officials. Other prisoners learn to make baskets and chiks. But the main prison industry in Jagdalpur, as throughout India, is weaving. Some of the Maria have become experts at this art. I was told that Kunjami Malle and Marvi Tibru were excellent at it, and that Marami Dhurwa of Palnar was so good that he was sent to Raipur for training. In 1940 the receipts from jail industries exceeded Rs 10,000.

697 286 564 Unfortunately no aboriginal prisoner is able to take advantage after his release of the training he receives in jail. For weaving is regarded as the monopoly of the low caste Ganda and Mahara, and no aboriginal will ever degrade himself by practising it. Should he do so, he would be excommunicated, he would be unable to marry his daughters and he would be forbidden access to his clan and village festivals. I have constantly enquired about this and especially as to whether there is any reason behind it. Nobody seems to know the origin of the taboo. It may date from the days when the aboriginals did not use cloth at all, and regarded it as something foreign and alien. It may have simply come into being because of the Maria's dislike and scorn for the particular castes which practise weaving. It is not impossible, of course, that the Mahara and the Ganda themselves have encouraged the idea so as to enjoy the monopoly of trade. If all the Maria ex-convicts were to set up looms and make their own cloth, the existing weavers would be hard hit financially. I met one Maria who had tried to carry on his weaving work after a term in jail. But there had been such a commotion about it that he had to abandon the project.

000 It is a pity, I think, that some art or craft could not be taught to aboriginal prisoners, not only in Bastar but throughout India, which would be of value to them after their release. In five, ten or fifteen years a man could become an expert carpenter or wood-carver, a first-rate cook, an admirable market gardener. The Maria do learn a little gardening but they might do more, and carpentry on a large scale would be invaluable. For the aboriginal blacksmiths, whether they be Maria Lohar in Bastar or Agaria and Asur

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
~~Dhoen Hoon Maria~~

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HILL MARIA YOUTH AND GIRL
(Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt

[Facing p. iii]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE V

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A HILL MARIA, OF THE GOND TYPE
Usendi Muka of Orcha

GROUP OF HILL MARIA GIRLS
(Photograph by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.)

[facing p. 62]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills, and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

302 and 5 cm. over the ears; this runs right round the head except just below the hair-knot. It is not the natural edge of the hair, as a little is shaved over the centre of the forehead and a good deal over the temples. From a parting (*paya*) just above this the hair is drawn back, like a European's hair brushed straight back from the forehead over the crown, into a top-knot knotted at the back of the head to hang down considerably lower than the Hill Maria crown-tuft knot. The knot is called *kupa-kelk*. The vernacular words used in describing this coiffure are from the Bison-horn dialect used around Aranpur. I have not seen Bison-horn Marias having their hair trimmed; but they say they use razors in the same way as the Hill Marias.

Women's hair is never cut. The hill women all part their hair in front in the centre and bring it back and down over their ears, the whole of which is left visible, into a great pendulous bunch at the back, like bobbed hair, but with the ends not trimmed off but apparently brought over some kind of stuffing and tucked under it. They wear wooden combs made by the young men and often ornamented above the teeth with patterns worked with criss-cross strands of *kosa* silk. These are sometimes as high as Spanish combs, but never as broad. So, too, the man often wears a comb in his crown-tuft. The Bison-horn Maria women do their hair similarly, but frequently wear round the centre of the forehead and the back of the head a horizontal fillet of plain, thin, polished brass about 2 cm. wide, called *utari*, and over this a snood, almost a tiara, of brass, patterned in relief with hammered suns and moons, vertical and oblique hatching lines, saltires, etc., of which the broadest portion fits closely over the skull between the crown and the forehead, the tapering sides descending obliquely over the *utari*, passing behind the ears and ending in cusps which are linked together under the bun. This is called a *talutar*; it, too, is brightly polished. At its greatest width, where it passes over the top of the head, it is 9 or 10 cm. wide. Some women do not wear both *utari* and *talutar*, but either one or the other; the *talutar* can often be seen hung up on the veranda when the woman is busy in the fields; but in the warm spring and hot weather months when you meet bands of women gathering forest fruits, most of them are wearing their *talutar*.

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Before I visited the Abujhmar hills I was regaled with the tale told to Glasfurd in 1862 that many of the Hill Marias wore leaves, being too poor to buy any cloth. It was even then a fable; Glasfurd states that he made enquiries about this and was told by the Marias invariably that they had never seen or heard of any people so poor that they covered themselves with teak leaves; however poor they

Dress and ornaments: (a) Hill Maria

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

might be, they could always obtain a small cloth. Of the men, Glasfurd observed only that they were certainly more scantily clad than any he had hitherto seen; of the women, that their clothing, like that of the men, was scantier than that of other Maria women, consisting only 'of a very small cloth wrapped once round the loins', while 'some of the elder women and children wore only a square patch of cloth, suspended on a cord fastened round the waist, upon which bamboo rings were strung'.

The Hill Marias are now gradually learning to dress in the same fashion as the Jhorias and Murias of Antagarh or the Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara, and are wearing their loin-cloths, turbans and ornaments. But in the villages of the interior, and everywhere among the older inhabitants, the old fashions still survive. The loin-cloth is little more than a length of cloth a foot or fourteen inches broad, twisted or rolled so that it makes a strip round the waist about five inches wide or sometimes much less, passed between the legs tightly, so that in front it seems like a bag for the private parts and that behind it disappears between the buttocks, brought out and wound again round the waist, the end being passed through the waist fold and allowed to hang down over the right buttock; this end is called *toqa* (tail), and in the case of small boys reaches nearly to their ankles, getting shorter as the wearer ages. Above this there should be a girdle of cowry shells, worn so close to the loin-cloth as to be partly concealed by it; but cowries have become unobtainable, now that for forty years or more they have ceased to be currency, and the wearing of the cowry girdle is, as they admit, dying out, though old girdles are jealously preserved. Some wear just a cord instead of the girdle. Glasfurd says that in 1862 Marias sometimes wore, instead of the cowry girdle, a girdle of about ten or fifteen cords of the same form but smaller than those worn then by Gadba women, which he described thus:—

'The girdle is somewhat singular; it is composed of forty to fifty separate cords of about eighteen or twenty inches in length, which are lashed at the ends; it is fastened in front. From the number and size of the cords, this girdle gives the wearer a strange appearance.'

I have not seen anything of this kind among the Hill or Bison-horn Marias of to-day. Sometimes cloth is so short that there is only a cord round the waist supporting a strip of cloth passing between the legs with a flap hanging down over the cord in front and behind. But generally now there is a tendency to widen the loin-cloth, and not to wear much of a *toqa*; it used to fulfil the useful purpose of a bag for receiving grain allotted for food at harvest and feasts, and indeed, the end of the loin-cloth is still so used. The Tokalor clan of Erpanar in Mangnar *pargana* is said to have obtained its

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

name because its founder and members, whenever grain was being ●291 given out, were found always to have extra long tail flaps (here pronounced *toka*) to their loin-cloths. A broader-woven cloth makes it possible for it to be taken once round the waist in its full unfolded width, so as to cover the buttocks and private parts. The *toga* hangs sometimes over the left buttock, and, in the south of the hills, sometimes in front of the body in the Godavari fashion.

Tucked into the girdle or the loin-cloth are knives with or without wooden sheaths, razors (as already seen), hollow bamboo [415] tubes filled with tobacco, or little tobacco boxes of carved wood or tree-seeds, or of basketry (the last kind is sometimes worn on the left shoulder on a cord passing round the neck and under the left arm-pit); a comb may hang over the buttock from a cord; and occasionally on the Dantewara side a larger knife approximating to the *banda* or dao used by the Bison-horn Marias and Parjas.

The older Marias wear no cloth on their heads, and no ornaments in their hair. But it is general now to wear an apology for a *pagri* or turban consisting of one folded Mahra cloth wound round the forehead and tied at the back of the head. Youths wear [301] between this and the back or side of their heads tail feathers of jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo (which they stick into their crown-tuft knots if they have no *pagri*). This head-cloth is often dirty and worn, and looks suspiciously like all that is left of an old friend of a loin-cloth.

Men and women almost invariably go unshod; but occasionally a pair of very coarse sandals of untanned cowskin with a thong over the big toe and another over the four small toes is worn, generally only when there is a cut or a heel-crack to be protected from the ground.

Short of complete nakedness, man could hardly wear less than the Hill Maria in his most primitive state. His scanty frontal covering often leaves little to the imagination in its utter inadequacy. [164] But it is to the fact that he wears so little that he owes it that he is far freer from scabies, itch and ringworm than the Bison-horn Maria, and the Murias and others of the plains, who more and more are imitating Hindu clothes, but are too poor to afford either much washing or spare suits. At the numerous State dispensaries these are the commonest complaints, and treatment is useless because the patients will not leave off the dirty, infected clothing. Luckily, 292 coat and 'waskat' are still rarities in the hills; Bardal Chamru of Kutul, the headman or *majhi* of Bardal *pargana*, and his brother Bardal Boranga, who used to accompany me when I toured near their villages, always arrived coated and waistcoated above their loin-cloths, but would discard the obnoxious and unnecessary

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Full-face, Jugho Chero, of Itulnar

Hill Maria of Handawada
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)

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Kutru Mar youths, wearing *tagkali* bark overcoats

[Facing p. 70]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

292 garments as soon as possible. In their youth they had been sent with a party of men and women as exhibits to the Allahabad Exhibition, where Boranga had celebrated his marriage *coram publico Indico*; they brought back with them from Allahabad a bigger suspicion of the *Kosor*, as they, like Gonds all over the Central Provinces, call all Hindus, a coat and waistcoat and blankets, and a taste for *kappu* or opium which luckily was not inherited by Baranga's son, the present headman, or any of the villagers.

● 291 As in Glasfurd's day, the women go with breasts uncovered. Very old women occasionally hobble about inside their huts completely naked. The square patch of cloth suspended between the legs from a waist-cord on which bamboo rings were strung, which Glasfurd saw as the sole garment of some children and elderly women, is the garment known as *mudang*, worn only by females. It is to-day definitely intimate underwear, to be seen by no one save the husband, except in the case of very little girls who, when six or so, wear it for the first time as their only garment. Brass rings made by the Ghasia (Gharwa) brass-workers in bazaar places in the plains such as Gidam, Dhaurai and Narainpur, have replaced the bamboo rings of Glasfurd's time. The cord on which they are strung is sometimes a thin piece of cane. A mother buys a few rings for her little girls whenever she has a pice or two to spare at her visits to the markets; and the cord becomes nearly full of rings when the girl is nubile. The *mudang* cord is never removed, even at child-birth. The cloth attached to it is usually a strip of old rag torn off a worn-out loin-cloth. It has already been stated that women keep it on when bathing. The *mudang* is buried or burned with the woman.

The cord full of rings is obvious under the top of every woman's loin-cloth, as a sort of ridge. The cloth itself is folded over the rings, and hangs down all round over the loins and buttocks, without being passed between the legs. It is therefore not revealing like the men's cloth. Occasionally women wear a small sheet thrown [117] carelessly across the breasts and over the left shoulder in imitation of the custom gradually spreading in the Bison-horn country; and [854] a cloth of this kind is used for supporting a baby, who rides on his mother's right or left hip with the cloth drawn tight over his little buttocks and up to his armpits and thence fastened over her other shoulder. Even for dancing a woman has no other clothes.

301 Glasfurd noted in 1862 that few of the Hill Marias possessed the beads that other Marias liked so much. The older men still wear little of this kind; a few have a single necklet of dirty yellow beads made of small chopped sections of pea-fowl's lower leg-bone about 5 mm. in length. Occasionally

Ornaments

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

keep off the water'.[1] The Maria cloak is made from long, thin strips of the bark of the *wara marra* (*Kydia calycina*); when this bark has been well retted in a stream it is pounded, and the long strips peel off like blades of a broad dry grass. They are gathered round the neck into a close plaited yoke over twine strings used for tying it in front, under the chin, and the ends hang loose. It is known as *tarali* to the Bison-horn Marias, some of the remoter of whom also use it. Besides these, the Hill Maria has a large hat of a very flat conical shape, like the Annamese headgear, made of leaves on a bamboo framework, called *rehing* (it is almost an umbrella, with the head used as the stick, rather than a hat), and a similar leaf waterproof shield called *deda'imo* for his back and shoulders, in shape like an elongated winnowing fan, or an English dustpan, the enclosed end resting on his shoulders. Similar rain-hats and shields are worn by Gonds and others in various parts of the Central Provinces, though the Maria shapes are distinctive.

The account in paragraph 87 of Glasfurd's report obviously refers more to the Marias living 'in the wilder and more unfrequented parts, such as among the valleys of the Baila Deelas and towards the Indrawutty and Kootroo Talook' than to the Bison-horn Marias of the Jagdalpur and Dantewara plateaux; the description which follows the words quoted applies far more to the Hill Maria styles of dress and ornamentation than to those in vogue among the Bison-horn Marias either now, or when the *Gazetteer* was prepared in 1907-9, or at the time of certain earlier photographs taken at the end of the nineties when Colonel Fagan was administering the State. Even so far as Glasfurd's remarks apply to Kutru and the Indrawati valley, they strengthen the contention already advanced in this book of the steady spread of Bison-horn culture among villages in the valley once Hill Maria in culture. He notes, however, that towards Bhopalpatnam and Bijapur the Bison-horn Marias are better clad, but gives no details.

Dress and ornaments: (b) Bison-horn Maria

Their loin-cloth is more ample than that worn in the Abujhmar, and, except when girded up for hunting or work in jungle and field, completely covers their buttocks. It is gathered up into a knot just below the navel, and usually a fold is left, varying in length, to hang down over the piece that has, as with the Hill Marias, been passed tightly over their private parts and between their legs. There is no *toya* or tail behind, consequently, as in the Abujhmar. Towards the Godavari valley the front flap gets very long. The Bison-horn Maria of to-day often wears a mill-made singlet of cotton mesh or gauze, or a '*waskat*', and a coat of some cheap

[1] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 26.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

●291 cotton material cut in European style; or instead of these has at least an extra round or two of his loin-cloth which he can throw loosely over his shoulder, or a small cotton sheet to answer the same purpose.

The women's loin-cloth is worn like that of their men, but in front is not knotted in such a way as to make a long flap necessary to cover the front of their thighs; it looks, therefore, like a short skirt from their waists to just above their knees. In the fields and jungles and in their own homes they still go with their breasts uncovered save for their masses of ornaments; but they have become somewhat self-conscious, owing to misguided officials suggesting that it was improper for them to appear like this before their Chief or at high officials' camps; and they frequently, when going to a bazaar or festival, or to dance at a wedding or camp, start off with their breasts loosely covered with a cotton sheet or one or two folds of their loin-cloth wrapped loosely from one hip over the opposite shoulder, their beads and finery resting on top of this cloth. Generally, however, the cloth is too small or too loosely thrown over the body really to conceal the breasts. They have this favourite riddle :— [538]

'Bara patte lote kerem honda podo',

meaning, 'What is the pair of bullocks that cannot be confined within the byre of the twelve parts of the body?' to which the answer is '*Dūdo*', or 'Woman's breasts'. They explained this as referring to the refusal of the breasts to be concealed by any wrap. Moreover, as soon as women warm to the dance they rapidly divest themselves of the unwonted wrap.

Most men now wear a *pagri* or turban, tied in the usual fashion of the Hindu population of the adjacent Chhattisgarh districts, and far more ample than the rag worn by the Hill Marias. They do not adorn it with feathers; nor do they wear bead chains or fillets on their heads like the Hill Marias. They use far fewer 301 ornaments; they do not wear the brass wire *maggawadang* rings in 304 the helix of the ear, but sometimes a single small ring like the tasselled ring of the Hill Marias, but worn in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, from which a small gilt chain depends. In the lobe a small ear plug of gold or gilded brass, often with a little red or green stone or glass set in it, may anchor two or three gilt chains fastened at the top to a similar plug vertically above it in the helix. Most men content themselves with one or two small 301 bead necklaces (*mungya*) round their necks, the beads being all of one shape, scarlet or royal blue tubular glass, or pale green humming-top-shaped, both kinds considerably larger than the Hill Marias'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XI

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HILL MARIA WOMEN CARRYING GOURDS OF WATER

HILL MARIA WOMAN CARRYING A LEAF-BOX OF GRAIN

(Photographs by Baron E. von Eichstedt)

361
342

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE STREET, TELAM, NEAR KATAKALIAN

[FACING p. 118]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVIII

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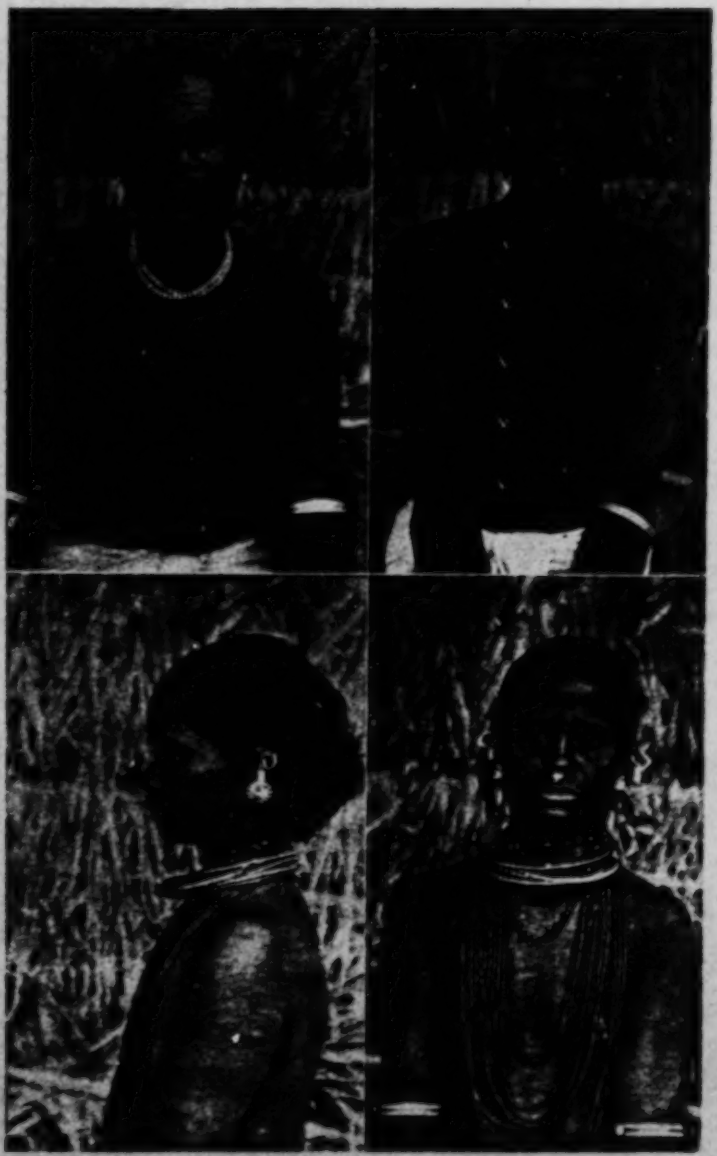

BISON-HORN MARIA TYPES

Above Markami Harma of Burgum Markami Joga, headman of Burgum

Below Mase, wife of Markami Muka of Kakadi

[facing p. 240]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 735 economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again."[2]

177 291 Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

342 The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

273 656 405 On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa*.
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

him his chief impression of Delhi, he spoke of the Kutb Minar, which he told me was almost as fine and tall as the factory chimney of the Allapilli saw-mills! Either at Burgi or the next village another phenomenon was a Maria in a good tweed coat above khaki shorts and stockings with flashes, wearing over all an excellent fawn Curzon topi with a dark brown pugaree, far smarter than I have ever owned. I discovered that his clothes had all been given him by the zamindari of Ahiri, when he had become a member of the Sironcha Independent Local Board. That night, still in his fine feathers, he came to see the dancing in my camp at Surjagarh: but as the drumming swelled and the dances warmed up he found himself unable to keep up the detachment appropriate to his pseudo-*sahib* status, and gradually divested himself of topi, coat, shirt and shoes, finally peeling off his shorts to reveal beneath them the usual abbreviated loin-cloth of the Maria, seizing a drum, and joining in the dance: he was then indistinguishable from any other Maria but for his air of authority as a headman, and his 'undress' was typically Maria, as described in the *Gazetteer*[1]:—

'Their dress is scanty, consisting of a compromise between a *langoti* and a *dhoti*, a strip of cloth wound tightly round the waist in rope-like folds and passed between the legs with the spare end hanging down in front below the knees. Often this garment diminishes to the scantiest rag. They adorn their necks with handsome strings of beads and their arms occasionally with metal and glass bangles. Their ears are pulled out of shape by the weight of numerous brass rings with which they are usually garnished, and occasionally they wear *pagris*.'

This Independent Local Board for the Sironcha taluq consisted then of eighteen members, of whom only six were aboriginals, although there were 3,354 aboriginal to 2,850 non-aboriginal voters. The aboriginal members were almost all returned unopposed, and were *de facto* the nominees of the zamindar, who had had to use his full influence to persuade them to join this peculiar body! It was in the circumstances no surprise discovery that the open, mainly non-aboriginal, country around Sironcha and Ahiri got far more benefit from the Board's expenditure and services than the wild interior of Ahiri zamindari. But the Maria members were utterly illiterate and at sea in the Board meetings. It was the zamindar's influence alone that secured for the Maria areas such services as the Board gave them. Nevertheless, the mere fact that there is an independent local authority for Sironcha tahsil secures that at least this tahsil does get spent on it all that it pays in cesses and other local taxes, and a fair share of Government grants to local bodies, in marked contrast to the fate of the zamindaris of Garchiroli tahsil, who come under the tender mercies of the Chanda District Council

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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Bison-horn Maria girl of Mohlipal

[End Plate 6]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Group of Maria girls from Lahiri, Chanda district

W. V. Grigson

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Hill Maria mother and child

Verrier Elwin

[End Plate H]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Hill Maria playing stringed instrument

[End Plate ZC]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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The chalk are annual

[frontispiece]

Plate IV

142
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A Muria of Nayanar greets his friends before drinking mahua juice

[p. 12 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate V

A study in contrasts. The two boys are brothers, but one goes to school

[p. 18 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate VI

142
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Nari, the priest and landlord of Nayanar

[p. 18 (8)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Raughat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle.

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhārni*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'.

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari pudo*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths.

FIG. 1. Kuvi digging-stick of iron. *Length 1' 7"*

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*.

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the rains. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] The other villagers come and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *korlat* or *balla* (*dhoona* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *kurpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes called *katwah* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun at the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

[1] The Juang keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandagwā* dormitory, and usually ignite their clearings from it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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Motiari of Munjmeta listening to the gramophone

[p. 30 (N)]

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Chelik of Bayana? digging

Plate XII

The Meliya of Phanda spinning rope

[283]

[p. 44 (B)]

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Two motiari
from Kapsi

Plate XVI

The Pelma of the
Bisonpuri ghotul

[p. 60 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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Making a fishing net

[P. 66 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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The arrow and stone above the pit in which a child's placenta is buried

Plate XXI

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Mother with her two children at Phonda

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

841 Nahani Deo. In some villages, however, the older women do not allow the girl to go to a stream or tank at all. They bring her water and let her bathe and wash her clothes on a stone in the compound.

We can understand how the rules affecting the menstruating motiari must be particularly strict when we remember that the ghotul is a shrine built by Lingo Pen, still sacred to him, and that the children within its walls are not only specially protected from marauding ghost or evil nightmare, but are also subject to the taboos and disciplines of *le monde sacré*. The girl therefore is forbidden for a period varying from four to seven days to enter the ghotul or even touch its fence. She must never, of course, touch a chelik at this time. If she did, they told us at Kajen, he would go mad. Even if her shadow fell on him while he was drinking, he would fall senseless to the ground. Should a girl go into the ghotul concealing her condition, the ashes of the ghotul fire would scatter in all directions and might continue to do so for two or three days, a sure sign that Lingo Pen is offended. When the culprit is discovered, she must offer a bottle of liquor to the insulted deity.

There is naturally considerable risk that a girl may begin her period during the night or evening while she is in the ghotul. A chelik in Munjmeta described what is done. 'She feels the warm blood, she shows it to her chelik and goes away at once.' 'Once', he said, 'his motiari did not realize what had happened and spent the night in the ghotul. When it was discovered in the morning, he himself was fined three long pieces of wood.'

The motiari is not, of course, allowed to go on the Diwali, Chherta and Mahua Dandar excursions while she is in this condition. If the period only begins after she has started out, she must make an offering to the local god and return home. Should any motiari begin her period at the moment when the chelik are about to start for their Pus Kolang dances, they abandon the trip. If during a boy's absence on this expedition his 'ghotul wife' should menstruate, he is warned of the fact by a dream and must make offerings to Lingo Pen. A chelik may go to the ghotul even while his special partner is in her period, but no one may take tobacco from him. The others tease him, saying, 'Don't worry, she'll be all right in two or three days. Perhaps you dug a little too deeply last night'.

If a girl is to be married, and her period begins on the eve of her marriage, this is postponed for a day; then she takes a bath and declares that officially all is well. Once when I went to Borgaon for a wedding, the bride entered her period on the critical day and the ceremony was postponed. On another occasion, when the omens did not come right, the people made a search through the wedding party to see if any relative was concealing this condition.

841 A girl does not bathe her whole body until the flow of blood ceases, but she does change and wash her pubic cloth, though she has to be very careful where 515 she puts it to dry for fear a witch should steal it. This cloth must never be touched by a man. It is either thrown away after every period or hidden in a safe place outside the house. Along the banks of the Boroda river near ● 291 Temrugaon I noticed many earthen pots, some floating in a backwater, others hidden in bushes. These were the pots in which the menstrual cloths were boiled to get them clean.

841 At the end of the period the girl goes as secretly as possible to a stream for her bath. She must be careful not to meet any man on this day, for should 515 his shadow fall upon her, her first child will resemble him. In some villages the girl must take two baths, in others she must take three. After the first bath she cleans and cow-dungs the room where she will sleep, washes all her clothes and sprinkles oil and haldi in the house and on her body. She then

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Motiari attending the bridegroom at Nayanar

[p.102 (A)]

The Hero of the Tarhalli ghotul

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Plate XLI

Two great friends: Pilmi and his Asura at Sidhawand

[p. 204 (1)]

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Plate XLIX

Uraon dhangar

Uraon dhangri

[p. 242 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32

Plate I.

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Irpe, a Hill Maria girl of Bellmori

[p. 242 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Bisonhorn Maria

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Bison-horn Maria girl from Gudra,
Bastar State

[p. 278 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Bison-Horn Maria

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Hirme, a Bison-horn Maria girl washing her hands

Plate LIV

Bison-horn Maria dancers

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria
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Uraon dhangri

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Plate LXVII

Motiari of Kongera grinding

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Phirtu the Chowkidar of the Masora ghotul

Plate LXIX

The ghotul near Malakot

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[p.338 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Chelik of Toinar with his ghotul 'wife'

[p. 364 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

I. Dress and Fashions

THE chelik and motiari, as we have seen, pay a lot of attention to their charming persons, so much attention indeed and of such a varied nature that it is not easy to describe their fashions in a single chapter. But the task is made somewhat easier by the tradition of ghotul solidarity. To be in the fashion, according to Muria ideas, it is essential that all the girls of any one village should look exactly alike. They must have the same coloured cloth round their loins, the same ornaments in their ears, the same bangles on their wrists, the same kind of beads about their necks. The Belosa sets the fashion and all her subjects follow it. There is a little more latitude allowed to boys, especially to the leaders. The Malik of Jungani can wear a wonderful comb fashioned with a chelik and motiari on horseback; the Kotwar of Chandabera can have a tobacco-pouch shaped like a fish in his turban; the Manjhi of Kabonga can go about with a beautifully-carved wooden bird perched on the comb in his hair. But girls cannot do that sort of thing; for them originality is bad taste.

There are five main fashion areas—the villages along the northern border, the Jhoria of the south and centre, the Muria of the north-west near the Abujhmar, the villages round Kondagaon and along the main road and the eastern forest approaching the Jeypore boundary. Each of these areas has its own special style.

There are, however, certain general observations that may be made of Muria everywhere. All Muria wear the same kind of cloth. It is taboo for a Muria to weave, and most of their cloth comes from the local Ganda and Mahara weavers. The cloth is good, but unenterprising, generally plain white with a red stripe or band. The chelik rarely wear a dhoti; all they can usually afford is a loin-cloth tied round the waist, passed between the legs and allowed to hang down in front. Well-to-do boys use a broader cloth that covers the buttocks, but most leave them bare and only conceal the private parts with a narrow strip that forms a sort of bag.

Girls wear a small cloth, supported back and front by their waist-string, to cover the private parts. Over it they wind round the loins a small strip of cloth like a very short skirt, carrying the end up and over one shoulder so as somewhat to conceal the breasts, and tucking it in again behind. In the Jhoria and north-western parganas, both breasts are often left exposed when no stranger is near, and nearly always one breast is visible—a fact that gives point to the riddle: 'The cow-shed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get inside.'

Muria boys and men usually wear a turban, and this varies not so much from a desire to be in the fashion but according to what one can afford. The classical Muria turban is tied round and round to form a sort of box on the head; in eastern Kondagaon the overhanging flaps are carefully decorated with coloured fringes. This box is rightly so named, for it not only covers the head, but serves as a receptacle for combs, mirrors, leaf-pipes and anything else that a boy may wish to take about.

Neither motiari nor married women cover their heads in conventional village fashion. It is a mark of a Muria girl that her head should be proudly free.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

In the north-west, in the villages of the remote Partabpur and Paralkot areas, where Hill Maria influence is still strong, the chelik of the Paralkot area distinguished two types of necklace: the cat's foot pattern and the rat's foot. (Compare Figs. 71 and 72.) Some of the motiari here wore necklaces usually characteristic of the Hill Maria, with large white beads, and little bells at the end. I have seen motiari with both breasts exposed in Maria fashion, though others have been very fully dressed in smart red saris. Head-bands are not worn, but boys and girls stick flowers and feathers in their hair. The girls usually have few combs.

One may still see necklaces and head-bands of fibre, either sago or date palm, carefully made (Figs. 87 and 88).

To move north from the Jhoria country is to receive an unforgettable impression of drabness. The bright head-bands disappear: the smart tight bead-collars yield to floppy monotonous necklaces. The beads are big, cheap and red; almost everything is bazaar-purchased. One particularly misses the girls' decorations. The Kalpatti, Surebahi, Antagarh and Amabera are the least colourful of all the ghotul parganas. Contact with Chhattisgarhi Gond has ruined their taste and destroyed their artistic enterprise.

FIG. 85. Jhoria head-band of red, blue and white beads

Round Kondagaon and along the main road, the chelik and motiari have a charm of their own, though there is little in their dress or ornament to emphasise it. Both wear a great many necklaces, of red and white beads, getting the effect from quantity rather than from anything artistic in the design. They distinguish the *gir-gatti*, a necklace of small black beads, *moti-mala*, made of white beads, *jug-jugi*, of red and white beads, *jāl-mungiya*, of red beads, *tew-mala*, a decorated neck-band and *kiri*, a thin black necklace.

Occasionally you will see a solitary head-band; girls often have masses of combs.

In the ears, the motiari wear cheap yellow *bisma* from the bazaar, or *dhāl* shields. The boys have little brass rings in the helix.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

301 The cowrie belt is almost unknown, but the chelik carry strings of cowries, bells, beads and tobacco-pouches at the waist.

In this area, the girls have either floppy brass *pairi* slipping down over the heels, or the thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the ankles.

Finally, in the extreme east of Kondagaon, the chelik recapture something of the aesthetic attractiveness of the Jhoria. Once more elaborate necklaces of small red and blue beads appear; a head-band of cowries and black sago palm fibre is often worn (Fig. 89). The chelik's turban is specially attractive: 291 it is tied straight round into a box with one flap hanging over the top, the other falling behind. The boys themselves attach pretty fringes of pink, mauve and red tassels to these flaps.

For protection against rain, all the Muria make large round hats of leaves placed between a double bamboo framework, and long shields of the same material to hang from their shoulders. In a few villages near the Abujhmar they make the *tarali*-cloak of strips of retted bark characteristic of the Hill Maria.

II. Hair-dressing

302 The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria. 832 You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive.

302 Care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render to a chelik; it is during the hair-combing in the evening that friendships become 515 intimate and proposals are made; wherever she is, in camp for a marriage or festival, resting in the heat of the day while working on the roads, or just 524 sitting in the house, a girl takes any chance she can of cleaning a boy's head, and examining it for lice, 'the thousand babies housed in a dry tree', 'the black cows that live in the thick forest, bothering everyone and drinking red water', 'the tigers that breed so quickly in the jungle'. She catches them with the end of her comb, or with her fingers, and kills them with thumb and forefinger. 'Ten went to hunt', says the riddle, 'but two did the killing.'

302 The chelik keep their hair fairly long. A straight fringe is cut across the forehead, and from the parting above it the hair is brushed back and tied in a bun usually covered by the turban. Some of the Muria living under the shadow of the Abujhmar follow the Hill Maria custom of shaving the whole head except for a patch on the crown which is carefully combed back and tied in a knot.

The chelik cut and trim their hair once every month or so, when the motiari who comb it tell them to. They cut and shave each other's heads with small razors made by the village Lohar. The motiari keep their boys closely shaven as to their chins, but they seem to like a good moustache. There is no other reason for shaving: the Muria, except those who have begun to imitate Hindu customs, do not shave at funerals or other religious occasions.

Girls do not cut their hair. They part it down the centre, and very carefully smooth it down and back. Behind the head they wind it over the small wooden blocks called *kunjar halla* (Fig. 91) which are carved for them by the chelik, and tuck it in underneath, fixing it in place with the *kunjar kota*, beautifully made wooden pins (Fig. 90)—also the gifts of chelik—to which are often attached bunches of cowries, coloured wool or strings of beads.

Both boys and girls treat their hair with oil, generally oil specially expressed by a motiari, a mother or sister. Many Muria now carry little bazaar mirrors which they constantly use.

252

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Jhoria have the most elaborate hair-ornaments. Bands of beads (Fig. 85) are made by the motiari with great art and taste, and are worn round

FIG. 86. A cowrie belt from the Jhoria area
(See p. 383)

the head by both boys and girls. Thick bands of blue, white and red beads, or three narrower bands, give the children a distinctive and delightful appearance. Sometimes long strings of beads are also wound over and round the turban. Boys and girls alike delight to stick feathers in their hair—feathers of junglecock, peacock, the racket-tailed drongo. Girls often wear tufts of the sago or date palms and any flowers that may be available; they have a special affection for the marigold, which is 'the most beautiful of flowers', and the crimson velvety *siliyâri*.

The motiari in the Jhoria country tie great masses of cowries over the bun into which their hair is tied, mixing them with balls of red, green and blue wool.

There is a pretty game called Atoi-mal-mal Karsana in which the girls stand in a half-circle singing 'Make my hair soft and *mal-mal*'. Each girl in turn goes round the circle smoothing and parting the hair of her fellows.

In the east of the State, in the villages round Ulera, I found many boys using hair-retainers (Fig. 90) made out of old umbrella ribs by the local Muria Lohar.

But, of course, the chief hair-ornament is the comb, a subject of such importance that I describe it in a separate section.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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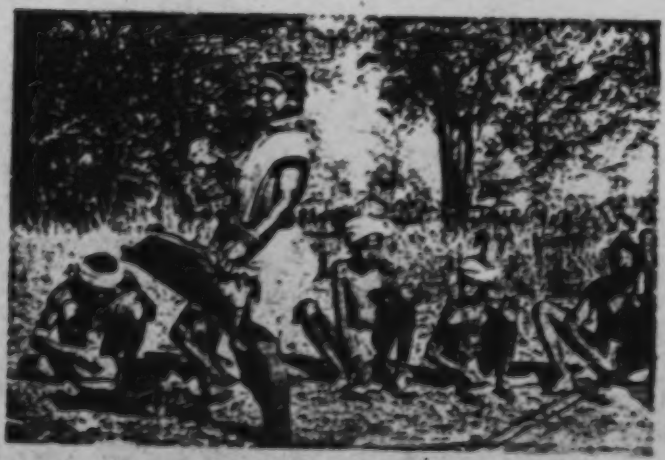
At Kongera a motiari passes on her drink to a chelik

Motiari serving food to the chelik at Nayanar



2. Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
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Plate LXXVIII

A mother serves the boys

The ghotul Kotwar, son of Nari, serving food at Nayanar

[p. 388 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXX

X 883
● 291
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The Malho of the Kolibera ghotul

[1.396(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXXVI

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Chelik with face decorations

The Likhan of the Tinnur ghotul

[p. 420 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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Motiari of Palli with leaf-cup

Plate LXXXVII

532

Pola festival earthen bullocks put on the road for luck

[p. 428 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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The Nero of Tarbaili with bamboo water-contain

[p. 428(a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
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Chelik of Temrugaon wearing typical Hill Maria cap and playing the hunting-horn

Plate CVI

X883
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Chelik panchayat denouncing a would-be reformer

[p. 532(a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
● 291
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Plate CXII

The Kotwarin of the Kongera ghotul

The Malko of the Markabera ghotul

[p. 554(B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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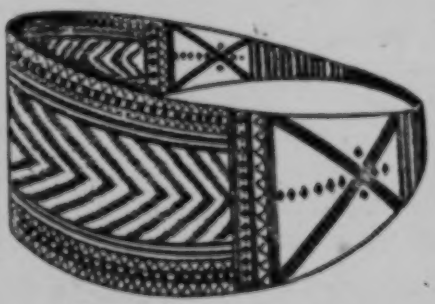
A Sirahu treats his patient at Tikanpal; medical treatment led to several murders

[facing p. iii]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

[64] State Medical Department has done much to check the spread of the disease. Malaria, as everywhere in the Indian forests, is endemic, but few suffer from enlarged spleen. Leprosy and the venereal diseases are very rare. Skin diseases are also much less common than among the more elaborately clothed and thus dirtier people of the north.

● 291 Men wear a small loin-cloth and sometimes a little turban. The women tie a sort of skirt, very short, round their waists: it hangs down to the knees. The breasts are covered only with [632 ornaments; when 301] visiting a bazaar girls may tie a small piece of cloth round their shoulders. They often wear a thin brass fillet round [302] the hair, and the older women use a large snood which is most becoming. Round the neck are masses of bead-necklaces, and iron or brass torcs. The bright colours of the beads and the shining brass fillets against the rich brown skin make a sight of unforgettable beauty.



Brass fillet worn by Maria women

361 The Bison-horn Maria village is laid out on the same lines as the Gond village of the Central Provinces, unlike the communal settlements of the Hill Maria, Baiga or Juang. Each house stands in its own garden which is sometimes a substantial field, and a village may cover a very large area in consequence. Often a village is composed of anything from six to twelve small hamlets, each of which represents the grouping of a family round its patriarchal head. The little huts stand among woods, on rocky hill-sides, in the shade of spreading trees. Sometimes they appear almost submerged [485 by waves of yellow sarson flowers or red jhira vegetable. 373 Each village has a substantial building for the accommodation 361 of travellers and this is used by the unmarried boys as a dormitory. The unmarried girls also sleep together, some-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Girls threshing grain with their feet at Mokhpal

[FACING p. 14]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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A girl cleans grain in a field at Garmiri; failure in preparing food is sometimes a cause of tragedy

[facing p.20]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Bandi of Mokhpal: the typical Maria wife

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Habka Maca, jealous of his wife

[Facing p. 21]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Girls fetching water at Bastemar

[Facing p.32]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

name because its founder and members, whenever grain was being given out, were found always to have extra long tail flaps (here pronounced *toks*) to their loin-cloths. A broader-woven cloth makes it possible for it to be taken once round the waist in its full unfolded width, so as to cover the buttocks and private parts. The *toga* hangs sometimes over the left buttock, and, in the south of the hills, sometimes in front of the body in the Godavari fashion.

Tucked into the girdle or the loin-cloth are knives with or without wooden sheaths, razors (as already seen), hollow bamboo tubes filled with tobacco, or little tobacco boxes of carved wood or tree-seeds, or of basketry (the last kind is sometimes worn on the left shoulder on a cord passing round the neck and under the left arm-pit); a comb may hang over the buttock from a cord; and occasionally on the Dantewara side a larger knife approximating to the *banda* or dao used by the Bison-horn Marias and Parjas.

The older Marias wear no cloth on their heads, and no ornaments in their hair. But it is general now to wear an apology for a *pagri* or turban consisting of one folded Mahra cloth wound round the forehead and tied at the back of the head. Youths wear between this and the back or side of their heads tail feathers of jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo (which they stick into their crown-tuft knots if they have no *pagri*). This head-cloth is often dirty and worn, and looks suspiciously like all that is left of an old friend of a loin-cloth.

Men and women almost invariably go unshod; but occasionally a pair of very coarse sandals of untanned cowskin with a thong over the big toe and another over the four small toes is worn, generally only when there is a cut or a heel-crack to be protected from the ground.

Short of complete nakedness, man could hardly wear less than the Hill Maria in his most primitive state. His scanty frontal covering often leaves little to the imagination in its utter inadequacy. But it is to the fact that he wears so little that he owes it that he is far freer from scabies, itch and ringworm than the Bison-horn Maria, and the Murias and others of the plains, who more and more are imitating Hindu clothes, but are too poor to afford either much washing or spare suits. At the numerous State dispensaries these are the commonest complaints, and treatment is useless because the patients will not leave off the dirty, infected clothing. Luckily, coat and 'waskat' are still rarities in the hills; Bardal Chamru of Kutul, the headman or *majhi* of Bardal *pargana*, and his brother Bardal Boranga, who used to accompany me when I toured near their villages, always arrived coated and waistcoated above their loin-cloths, but would discard the obnoxious and unnecessary

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

292 garments as soon as possible. In their youth they had been sent with a party of men and women as exhibits to the Allahabad Exhibition, where Boranga had celebrated his marriage *coram publico Indico*; they brought back with them from Allahabad a bigger suspicion of the *Kosor*, as they, like Gonds all over the Central Provinces, call all Hindus, a coat and waistcoat and blankets, and a taste for *kappu* or opium which luckily was not inherited by Baranga's son, the present headman, or any of the villagers.

291 As in Glasfurd's day, the women go with breasts uncovered. Very old women occasionally hobble about inside their huts completely naked. The square patch of cloth suspended between the legs from a waist-cord on which bamboo rings were strung, which Glasfurd saw as the sole garment of some children and elderly women, is the garment known as *mudang*, worn only by females. It is to-day definitely intimate underwear, to be seen by no one save the husband, except in the case of very little girls who, when six or so, wear it for the first time as their only garment. Brass rings made by the Ghasia (Gharwa) brass-workers in bazaar places in the plains such as Gidam, Dhaurai and Narainpur, have replaced the bamboo rings of Glasfurd's time. The cord on which they are strung is sometimes a thin piece of cane. A mother buys a few rings for her little girls whenever she has a pice or two to spare at her visits to the markets; and the cord becomes nearly full of rings when the girl is nubile. The *mudang* cord is never removed, even at child-birth. The cloth attached to it is usually a strip of old rag torn off a worn-out loin-cloth. It has already been stated that women keep it on when bathing. The *mudang* is buried or burned with the woman.

The cord full of rings is obvious under the top of every woman's loin-cloth, as a sort of ridge. The cloth itself is folded over the rings, and hangs down all round over the loins and buttocks, without being passed between the legs. It is therefore not revealing like the men's cloth. Occasionally women wear a small sheet thrown [117] carelessly across the breasts and over the left shoulder in imitation of the custom gradually spreading in the Bison-horn country; and [854] a cloth of this kind is used for supporting a baby, who rides on his mother's right or left hip with the cloth drawn tight over his little buttocks and up to his armpits and thence fastened over her other shoulder. Even for dancing a woman has no other clothes.

301 Glasfurd noted in 1862 that few of the Hill Marias possessed the beads that other Marias liked so much. The older men still wear little of this kind; a few have a single necklet of dirty yellow beads made of small chopped sections of pea-fowl's lower leg-bone about 5 mm. in length. Occasionally

Ornaments

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

301 from behind, it makes her appear very thick-, in fact bull-necked, and creates a false impression of her often slender build.

304 What beauty the girls have they mar to Western eyes by excessive tattooing over all the face and forehead, and often the breasts also. Mothers begin to tattoo their daughters when they are eight or nine years old, using lengths of the brass wire used for the rings in the helix of the ear, sharpened into rough needles, and black charcoal powder. The girl lies on her side with one cheek flat on the ground while the mother operates on the other cheek. Sometimes only one breast is tattooed, often neither. They seem never to tattoo legs or arms, though Glasfurd speaks of their arms and thighs being covered with tattooing. A swastika with the corners slightly rounded and not right-angled, and a pair of very small parallel vertical lines between each arm is a common motive, on face and breast. On the centre of the forehead, vertically one below the other, are usually tattooed a circle with a dot in the centre, for the sun, a circle and a crescent for the full and crescent moon respectively. Thence fairly symmetrically vertical hatching alternates with horizontal round and round the face, becoming oblique at the corners and down the sides of the nose; and over the corners of the cheekbones three dots are made triangle-wise. This is only one common pattern. The only tattooing on men is single, double or treble horizontal rows of dots, varying in number from three to nine, over the glabella. I did not ascertain at what age or by whom these marks are made. There are no special tattoo marks for the different clans. There seems to be no significance behind tattooing; it is considered merely an adornment. The Nagpur Gonds speak of tattooing as marks by which ancestors and clan-gods can identify [775] persons in the next world; but the Marias have no formulated idea of another world.

● 292 535 The dancing dress of the Hill Maria men is completely different from that of the Bison-horn Marias and most other tribes. The women have no special dancing dress. The young men wear on their heads either red and white turbans, or, more often, curious Chinese fig-box head-dresses which they call by the Hindi word *topi*, covered with red or blue cloth, and piped at the edges and centre with peacock feather quills. Often a peacock, jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo's feather is stuck in the *topi*, or spiral coils of feather quill fastened on both sides of a stick; or scarlet 'Scissors' cigarette packets found empty at the bazaars, lead seals from petrol tins, old brass cog-wheels from watches, little tins, cheap mirrors, the round of bright tin-foil cut out when an airtight cigarette tin is opened; dried snipe or woodcock neck and skull; or anything bright-coloured or interesting to the Maria.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE VII

Hill Maria dancers. Note, in 2, the use of bark rain-coat as dancing skirt
(*Photographs by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.*)

Hill Maria dancers, showing dancing-crinkle and bunches of pellet-bells worn over the rump

A Hill Maria of Kurmar, using his rain-hat and rain-shield, as he works with his *godavi* digging hoe

[Facing p. 74]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 535 Sometimes the 'fig-box' is made of a lattice of split bamboo strips. Generally a streamer or two of red or blue cloth hangs down from the back of the *topi* or turban. Over the chest a sort of sleeveless vest of red cloth is worn, almost neck-high, and over this from breast to waist, strands of white cloth are twisted, back and front, so as to produce a rib-like effect, the ribs radiating from a central double plait of cloth running vertically from navel to breast, then passing on either side of the neck and repeating the pattern in the rear. The 'ribs' vary from five to nine in number, according to the means or taste of the dancer. This cloth arrangement is known as *gatikar-kawa*. Below is worn a long skirt of red-edged white or dark blue cotton, called a *kachi*, with a white or coloured sash round the waist over the bottom of the 'ribs' and the top of the skirt; the sash is called *poriya*. Over the sash round the waist runs a cord, from which is suspended over the rump a great bunch of large and small pellet-bells (*muyang*), in the middle of which two or three large clapper-bells often are prominent. From the neck is hung over the back of the shoulders a basketry dancing-shield or *mogh*, made to slant downwards away from the back by two hoops of bamboo protruding underneath. Over the top of the shield either streamers of coloured cloth reaching nearly to the ground, or peacock's tails are looped. 292 535 285 The shield is made of two targes of twined basketry joined together so that the rough edges are in the middle; the warps are flat slices of bamboo about 13 mm. wide, radiating from the centre of the targes, and the wefts, the twining of which begins from the centre, are for the most part thin rods of bamboo pared to the thickness of a straw; but at intervals bands of red are made on the targes by using red yarn from the markets as wefts for three or four rounds of twining; flakes of shining mica are worked into this yarn, and over the outermost red band often cowry shells are sewn. The ends of the bamboo hoops are forced through the joined targes and held either by horizontal pieces of bamboo tied across them, or by ornamental studs of *cire-perdue* brass-work. 292 535 When not in use, the dancing-shield is never kept inside the house, but either sewn up in leaves and hung high in the boughs of a tree, or on the outer wall of the *manda* or granary under the eaves; this is to protect it from smoke, sun and rain. Each dancer makes his own dancing head-dress and shield. Formerly every dancer held in his left hand the handle of an axe, of which the head, decked with coloured cloth streamers, protruded behind his back; and the axe was a *pharsi* with blade shaped like vulture wings. Now even the ordinary Maria workaday axe is ceasing to be used, a twisted tree-root, or plume of peacock feathers with the stalks plaited together in a basketry pattern, or a stick, taking its place.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 535 178 This dress was in regular use in every village in Metabhum until a year or two ago. At my last visit in March 1934, I was amazed to find that, almost as in obedience to some decree that had gone forth, the youth of the hills had abandoned the rib-dress, the shield and the gaily-coloured head-dress and skirt, sometimes wearing in lieu cheap bazaar singlets and a *dhoti*, retaining, however, the buttock-bells, the songs and the dance-steps. The older men all said that it was a spontaneous decision of the younger generation, decided upon because of the cost of buying the expensive yards of cloth needed for the dress; but this would not account for the abandonment of the shield, which they make themselves, and for which peacock tails are better than cloth streamers. Many have actually thrown away their cloth and shields. But some still think it necessary to hang them up round fresh graves, and I found that all the youths still know how to make them, and were willing to make them in camp. In 1932 a rumour went through all the tribes 203 184 178 of Jeypore and spread thence into Bastar that a god had descended on one of the mountains of the Eastern Ghats and commanded all men to give up keeping black poultry and goats, wearing clothes or using umbrellas or blankets with any black in them, and using beads or articles made of aluminium alloy. The message was rapidly bruited abroad, and everywhere villages had '*bohorani*' ceremonies for purifying themselves from disease, and cast out black goats, cocks, hens, umbrellas, blankets, 'waskats', beads, aluminium ornaments and domestic utensils on the village boundary. Mohammedans began to make a good thing out of slaughtering the goats or exporting them. Strenuous propaganda by the State soon stopped this impoverishing rumour, and some of the villagers in the end recovered much of their property from the police, who had been ordered to take charge of it. At the time, the Bison-horn Marias seemed to have been only a little affected and the Hill Marias not at all; possibly this sudden abandonment of the most picturesque features of their dancing costume may be a late repercussion. Such sudden moves amongst Indian primitive tribes are not uncommon; the Gonds of Nagpur and adjacent districts a few years ago suddenly decided to give up keeping poultry and pigs as a measure of social uplift.

292 Rain-clothes The *taghali* or bark cloak used by the Hill Maria for warmth or, primarily, protection against heavy dew and rain, has already been mentioned as deputizing occasionally for the sleeping-mat. Hutton speaks of the Angami Nagas making 'a large hat of leaves and basket work . . . as well as a rain-coat of plaited grass, the ends of which hang out loose, to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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keep off the water'.[1] The Maria cloak is made from long, thin strips of the bark of the *wara marra* (*Kydia calycina*); when this bark has been well retted in a stream it is pounded, and the long strips peel off like blades of a broad dry grass. They are gathered round the neck into a close plaited yoke over twine strings used for tying it in front, under the chin, and the ends hang loose. It is known as *tarali* to the Bison-horn Marias, some of the remoter of whom also use it. Besides these, the Hill Maria has a large hat of a very flat conical shape, like the Annamese headgear, made of leaves on a bamboo framework, called *reking* (it is almost an umbrella, with the head used as the stick, rather than a hat), and a similar leaf waterproof shield called *dela'iko* for his back and shoulders, in shape like an elongated winnowing fan, or an English dustpan, the enclosed end resting on his shoulders. Similar rain-hats and shields are worn by Gonds and others in various parts of the Central Provinces, though the Maria shapes are distinctive.

291

The account in paragraph 87 of Glasfurd's report obviously refers more to the Marias living 'in the wilder and more unfrequented parts, such as among the valleys of the Baila Deelas and towards the Indrawutty and Kootra [illegible]look' than to the Bison-horn Marias of the Jagdalpur and Dantewara plateaux; the description which follows the words quoted applies far more to the Hill Maria styles of dress and ornamentation than to those in vogue among the Bison-horn Marias either now, or when the *Gazetteer* was prepared in 1907-9, or at the time of certain earlier photographs taken at the end of the nineties when Colonel Fagan was administering the State. Even so far as Glasfurd's remarks apply to Kutru and the Indrawati valley, they strengthen the contention already advanced in this book of the steady spread of Bison-horn culture among villages in the valley once Hill Maria in culture. He notes, however, that towards Bhopalpatnam and Bijapur the Bison-horn Marias are better clad, but gives no detail.

Dress and ornaments: (b) Bison-horn Maria

Their loin-cloth is more ample than that worn in the Abujhmar, and, except when girded up for hunting or work in jungle and field, completely covers their buttocks. It is gathered up into a knot just below the navel, and usually a fold is left, varying in length, to hang down over the piece that has, as with the Hill Marias, been passed tightly over their private parts and between their legs. There is no *toya* or tail behind, consequently, as in the Abujhmar. Towards the Godavari valley the front flap gets very long. The Bison-horn Maria of to-day often wears a mill-made singlet of cotton mesh or gauze, or a '*maskat*', and a coat of some cheap

[1] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 26.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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BISON-HORN MARIA DANCERS

PLATE VIII

[Facing p. 78]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

301 favourite beads. They are fond also of necklaces of small, brightly gilded beads, which they call *mirako-mungya*. They may wear one or two armlets (*dando-bhats*) on one arm above the elbow, or a pair of bracelets on one wrist (*ha'i-bara*), of silver, brass, or aluminium, and similar in type to those bought by the Hill Marias. They wear a plain waist-cord (*para-nori*) instead of the cowry-cord of the hills for carrying knives and tobacco boxes. A comb is attached to this, for regular use. They may have hanging from a fastener of aluminium wire, shaped like the eye of the hooks-and-eyes of ladies' dresses, two thin aluminium toothpicks, and an aluminium ear-scoop; the Hill Marias also use these. They hang like a pendant on the chest.

The women's hair ornaments have been described along with their hair-dressing; it need only be added here that occasionally, instead of the polished brass fillet there mentioned, they wear bead fillets like those of the Hill Maria women. Armlets and wristlets are worn on the same arm, and are similar to those of the hill women. Instead of the white-bead ropes and the coloured-bead collars worn by the hill women, they wear long ropes of red, red and green, or gamboge beads; and over these they wear a vast number of the iron and brass rings of the type already described as borrowed by the hill women from them; they here call the iron neck-rings *tiya*, not *sutia* as in the hills. Their ear plugs are similar to those 301 used in the hills, but from the lobe plug to a ring worn, as by their 304 men, in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, is often fastened a cord on which is threaded between two blue or green beads a slightly oblong, cube-shaped bead of brass or aluminium. The nose is symmetrically adorned by two gold or gilt rings in the wing of each nostril, and, between them, hanging from a small ring in the septum, a small gold or gilt ornament like a leaf pointing downwards, sometimes with a piece of red glass set in the middle.

297 I have taken the wearing of the Bison-horn dancing head-dress
535 as the most obvious distinction between the two kinds of 'Marias'.

Dancing-dress This is known as a *tallagulla*. I had one made from horns and peacock feathers supplied by me. After my head had been measured round the plane of the temples, a basketry 'cap' was made, fitting loosely round the brows, and sloping backwards and upwards into a low peak. It is made loose, 297 as it has to support the horns and the plume of feathers, as well as strings of cowries and many folds and streamers of cloth of various colours, which subsequently tighten it and make it fit snugly round the head. The basketry is of twilled bamboo strips running diagonally from the edge that fits over the brows. The bison-horns were pared with a sharp knife to remove outer dirt or callosities and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE IX

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BISON-HORN MARIA DANCERS AT BAILADILA

Above Four men. (*Photograph by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.*)

Below Women. Note the clothes, the masses of ornaments, and the *tirdudi* bamboo dancing-staves

[FACING p. 80]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

many of the places where game of all kinds was plentiful in his father's time. Every Maria has his bow and arrow, the population has multiplied, and miles of jungle have been beaten annually for game in the great spring hunts. Wild buffalo and bison had been so reduced in numbers that they were declared protected thirty years ago, and heavy fines have been imposed for shooting them. The supply of bison-horns is thus not equal to the demand, and the head-dress is therefore a highly prized hereditary possession. No one should try to buy them from their owners; if a specimen is needed, the collector should provide the horns and other materials and see it made up for him. Bison-horns being now rare, and obtainable only from a bison found dead or by purchase from the State Forest Department, various substitutes are being used, such as domestic bullocks' or small buffaloes' horns, wild boars' tushes, the long beaks of the hornbill, and, occasionally, the antlers of the spotted deer (*Cervus axis*). The most interesting substitutes are brass patterned horns, of the shape and size of bison-horns, made by the *cire-perdue* process by the local Gharwa (Ghasia) brass workers.

Except occasional dancing anklets of hollow iron with pebbles inside, the Bison-horn Maria wears no special dancing dress; in fact he girds up his loin-cloth higher than usual and generally discards his singlet or '*waskat*', so as to leave himself as free as possible for his antics, while the heavy drum that he carries slung from his right shoulder across his abdomen necessitates as much freedom as possible.

The women wear no special dancing dress, but put on every available ornament, and carry in their right hands *tirdudi* or bamboo staves to which are fastened bunches of iron pellet-bells, shaped something like short but plump pea-pods, which they clash in time with the drums as they dance by striking their butts on the ground. Similar bells sometimes adorn the drum-stick with which the left hand of the male dancer beats the cowskin membrane at the left end of his drum.

Weapons and tools

The universal *vade mecum* of the Hill Marias is the knife or *kasyaq* carried tucked into the loin-cloth, with or without a wooden sheath. Of this, as of all weapons and tools used by Hill or Bison-horn Marias, it has to be remembered that they are not always made by blacksmiths working exclusively for Marias, but often by blacksmiths in or near the bazaar villages of the plains who cater for Murias, Halbas and other tribes also. The most distinctive types are possibly, in the case of the Hill Marias, those made by the few blacksmiths living in their hills; but there are only slight differences, often of mere

[see cat. 116 p. 419]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE XV

535
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HILL MARIA DANCERS

482
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HILL MARIA DOMESTIC LIFE
Fetching water from river
(Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt)

[Facing p. 184]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

535 by a few men with kettle-drums and more with clanging brass gongs; to this babel of sound must be added the clatter of the innumerable iron neck-rings and the bracelets of the girls, and the clangour of the great bunches of bells on the buttocks of the male dancers. The whole scene is lit up by blazing torches and log fires.

535 831 Often a slight element of obscenity is introduced by one or two men dressed as tiger-men with large imitation *membra virilia* which they brandish at each other and at the women, girls and youths, rushing ludicrously here, there, and everywhere, and provoking such laughter that often the dancers have to break off their singing to join in.

535 868 There is no formal dancing teaching. Boys are allowed to join in the dances when they are about six, and girls when nine or ten. They learn simply by imitating their elders.

535 574 Men of all ages, married and unmarried, youths, boys, young wives and girls join in the Bison-horn Maria dances. There appears to be no time of year at which they are forbidden to dance, though naturally the spring and the summer, when they are freest from field-work, see most of their dancing. If at this time of year you invite villagers to dance at your camp, the throb of the drums attracts more and more men and girls from surrounding villages; for the tradition is that no invitation is needed, and that open house should be kept at a wedding or any other occasion when there will be dancing.

2. Bison-horn Maria

535 292 There is no mixing of men and girls as in the Abujhmar hills. The girls, in their ordinary finery of beads and iron and brass neck-rings, and wearing their head snoods and fillets of polished brass, have no special dancing apparatus except the *tirdudi* dancing-sticks ornamented with iron bells which they hold upright in their right hands, clashing the bells in unison by striking the ground with the butts of the sticks on their left front as they bring their left foot across in front of their right; each girl rests her left arm on the back of the left shoulder of the girl on her left. They gyrate to the right, like the Hill Marias, but the Bison-horn women have a far more rapid step; the right foot is moved to the right and slightly to the rear, and the left foot is then brought across the right leg to the right front, while the ground is struck with the butts of the jingling dancing-sticks. The girls in this way dance fast around the outside of the dancing men, sometimes singing as they go; but the unceasing throb of the men's great drums drowns their song.

535 The women's step never varies, whatever the dance; but the men have many different dances and steps, and can improvise a dance on practically any theme, such as asking for pork or *landa*. Their *pen-karsita* or Koqsar dance is a very fast, side-stepping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *ponda* must not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatiharhana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-bhita* or 'song fellows' and the dance-steps.[1]

The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum, more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence. Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of 'jewellery' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 73-6 and 183-4

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
292
301
534

Bison-horn Maria youth of Kakker in Hill Maria festival dress

[End Plate D]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
292
534

Bison horn Maria dancer

[End Plate E]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

534
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292

Bison-horn Marias dancing

[End Plate ZE]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXVI

585
242

Motiari carrying the crowned bride groom at Sidhawind

585

Bridegroom sitting in the lap of an attendant

[p. 102 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 triumph. He dropped a little oil over the boy's head and shoulders, and applied haldi to his body with mango leaves. He was followed by everyone present.

[292]

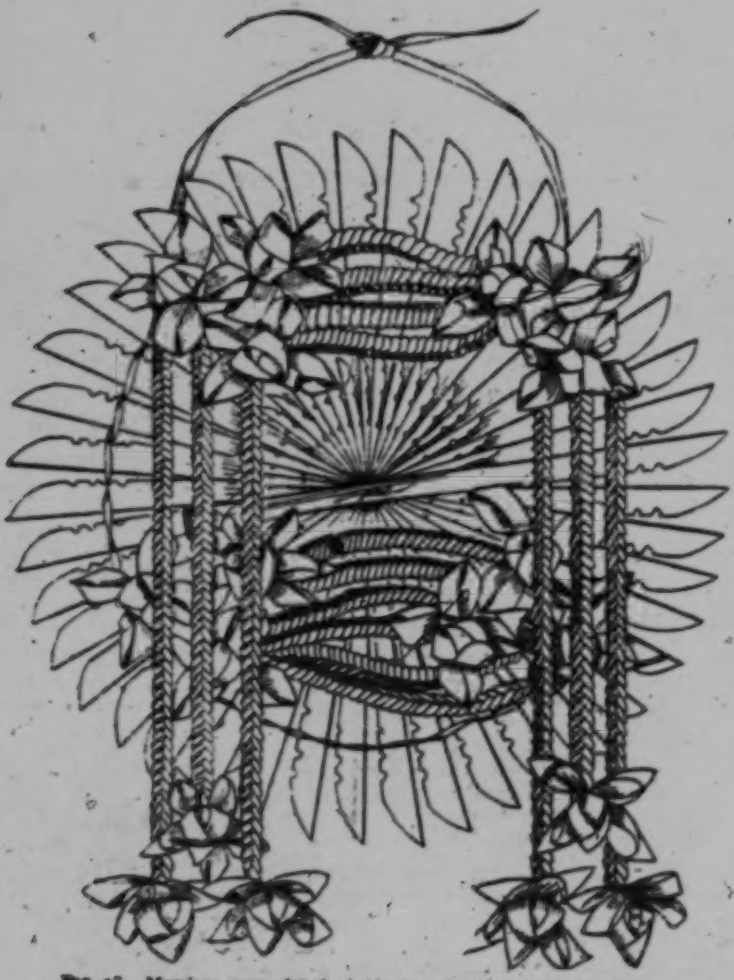


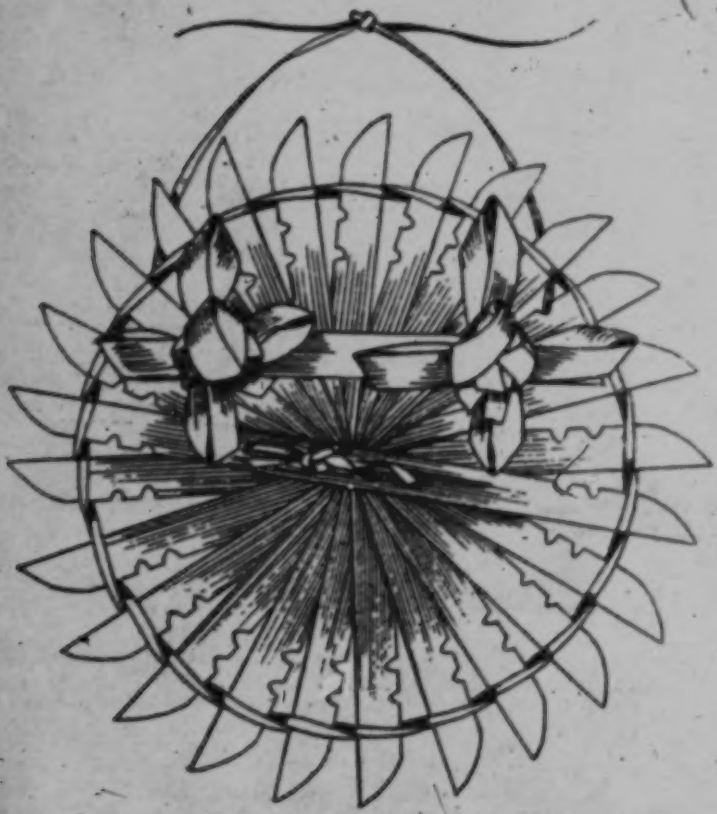
FIG. 18. Marriage crown for the bridegroom made of date-palm leaves
Breadth 1'

Meanwhile, the motiari sang songs about the date-palm, from whose leaves the crowns are made.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

was made by tying poles round the square and criss-cross over it. This was again covered with leafy branches. Round the poles was tied a haldi coloured string, or sometimes simply a rope of paddy-chaff, and a string of mango leaves. This string is called *towas* (Halbi) and is mentioned in another *manda* song. This has the refrain *Rivi loyo virilo virilo riri loyo virilo*, and is addressed apparently to the village mother.

585



[292]

FIG. 19. Marriage crown for bride
Breadth 6"

Bilo kumulr jobhna dai,
Sukhwa dukhwa koha wo dai.
Gachar machar dyma roy dai?
Kiwjlo tode dyo wo dai?

Haryar manda yatiwo dai.
Tirli tamar lamar wo dai.

O Mother of this young boy,
Reveal his happiness and sorrow.
Why do you stay silent, Mother?
Because nothing has been promised you?
Take our offerings willingly.
He has no brothers, Mother.

585
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THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585 539

Bavel ẽkí chhẽti;
Chhẽti gala nindoye.
Kãrcha hẽya tala;
Tala gala nindoye.
Kãrwul mẽti danda;
Danda gala nindoye.
Nehẽ jhuloh howa

Danda dole mẽydr.

His chest is a banyan leaf;
His chest too is not yet ripe.
His head is a kadam fruit;
His head is not yet ripe.
His hand too is a tundri root;
His hand is not yet ripe.
O boy, don't shake your hand too much
Or it will be broken, boy.

2

Huh dusẽr dusẽr buba huh dusẽr roy buba

Neyuva dusẽr reha buba.
Kẽnde hẽwar bojha buba.
Reh teke bojha buba,
Teh teke bojha buba.
Nẽwa bojha reha buba.

The haldi oil has been rubbed down, father.
A heavy load for a small *hẽwar*, father.
Its weight is the same though you bring it down,
Its weight is the same though you raise it up.
Bring down the weight, father.

585 Then while a circle of motiari stood singing, others bathed the boy and re-tied his hair in three or four plaits. They decorated him, painting his eyes with black and white powder, and making stars of yellow haldi on his face with a splayed castor-twig. They put a new crown, the Lagir Maur, over his head and face. So attired he went round greeting everyone. A pot of haldi-water was hung from the roof of the booth.

The Lagir

Now the drums began to sound; the chelik moved out in formation from the bridegroom's camp and began to move round the booth. The whole place began to stir. Soon with grand display the bride's drummers came down the road. They were led by two lines of boys waving antlers in the air; one boy was dressed in peacock's feathers, another had a gay cowrie jacket. They advanced, placed the horns on the ground, raised them with loud cries, retired, then came on again. They reached the booth and danced near by.

[292]

The bride's elder sister's husband came out of the house with the bride on his shoulders and a group of men held a canopy over them. A man similarly related brought out the bridegroom from his camp. As the two parties approached the booth, the drumming increased in volume, rows of girls singing and clashing their cymbals followed, a 'bison' appeared pursued by hunters, and a dummy giant whirled into the centre of the scene.

The two parties, the boy's party leading, now went round the booth, outside, seven times anti-clockwise. The drummers went ahead, the girls followed, clouds of dust rose in the air. When this was done, bride and bridegroom were made to stand at the west side of the booth, and their clothes were knotted together. The girl's elder brother and four other men climbed the booth, and poured a little liquor and then a whole potful of haldi-water over the pair. In Malakot, where brooms were tied to the tops of the nine poles, the men threw them down and shook the booth violently.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769
292
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Plate XXXII

[P. 144 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769
292
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Scenes from the Dance of the Ghost

[p. 144 (E)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The near relatives of the deceased then go into the water crying on the dead to come to them and try to catch any kind of living thing. Whoever first catches a fish or prawn or frog, whatever it may be, is regarded as being specially loved by the dead and is rewarded with extra drinks and small presents. They put the fish into one of the pots together with a ring. The pot is covered with a bamboo cover on which is a new sari. The *ahomāma* relative applies haldi and oil to the pot and as he is doing this someone else catches hold of every member of the party in turn, both men and women, and smears their private parts with haldi-oil. Then a girl (daughter or daughter-in-law to the dead) lifts the pot, puts it on her head, carries it up to the house and puts it down near the Pot of the Departed. A samdhi sacrifices a chicken after testing it in the usual way; when the chicken eats the rice offered it is a sign that the soul of the dead man loves his family as before. Then they pour the water together with the fish and ring on to the ground and tie the ring, which represents the man's soul, from the roof above the Pot of the Departed. Sometimes the ring is tied to a broom. They hang the pot itself up to the roof of the house. They eat the sacrificed chicken and drink and dance and then disperse. A samdhi makes a mixture of the water in which rice has been cleaned, the bark of the mango tree and a little cow's milk and sprinkles the whole house in order to purify it. 769

Some time afterwards, at one of their clan festivals, the members of the family take either the pot or simply the ring that has been hung in the Room of the Departed to the clan shrine or Hanalkot, which must be located at the clan headquarters or at least in some village within the clan territory. In some villages, as at Gudla, this is only done for men; women stay in the house. But at Sirsi the souls of both men and women were taken to the Hanalkot. In Kerawahi they said that at the special festival for Bara Pen, which occurs every two or three years, the members of the Poyami clan take the pots in which the soul has been brought from the river along with the rings to the shrine of their clan god. They sacrifice fowls saying, 'Here is the god of Lanji-Dhamda, go to him and you will become like him. As he helps us, so you too help us'. They tie the ring to a tree overlooking the shrines and break the pot. Then after the usual feast they go home.

Sometimes, however, the people take the soul direct to the Hanal. This is a small shrine for the dead, generally under a saja tree. They put the pot containing the soul and the ring down near the tree and sacrifice two hens, one for the dead man's family and one for his *ahomāma* relatives. They feed these saying, 'Have you come happily today? Don't trouble us, you are to become a god. Always help us and don't trouble us'. When the chickens eat, thus showing that the soul is pleased, a member of the family kills one chicken and a samdhi kills the other. On the place where the chickens are sacrificed, they pour out the water and soul from the pot. They tie the ring by a single thread to the tree thus 'mixing him with the dead'. Everyone who came should have brought a chicken; these are now killed with sticks and roasted. The two sacrificed chickens may only be eaten by those who killed them. They drink liquor and dance and sing, and then go dancing home.

In the Bara Dongar Pargana the Muria have a very impressive death-dance for this occasion. A man wearing a beard of bear's hair, four *gutri*[1] horns tied on his forehead, a fishing-net round his loins, a wooden doll in one hand, a bent stick in the other, leads the way from the river up to the house. In 769 535 [293]

[1] *Cervulus Muntjac*, the barking deer.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

793
292

Gaita of Almer in trance, wearing cowrie jacket

Priest of Pandrawandin at the Kondagaon Mathai

[188a]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLIII

791
292
755

Siraha medium at Adner, scourging himself

Siraha treating the author for fever, at Metawand

[p. 208 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Plate LII

292
535

Hill Maria cholik in dancing dress

[p. 254 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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492

Jhoria dancers at Kabonga

Jhoria dancers at Amasara

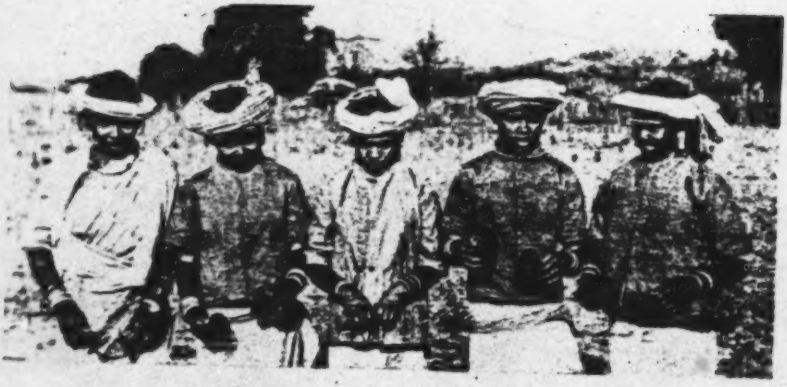

Plate LXXXV

[p.420 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

is a part of the regular ceremonial of a festival or marriage; sometimes it is due to 'supernatural' inspiration.[1]

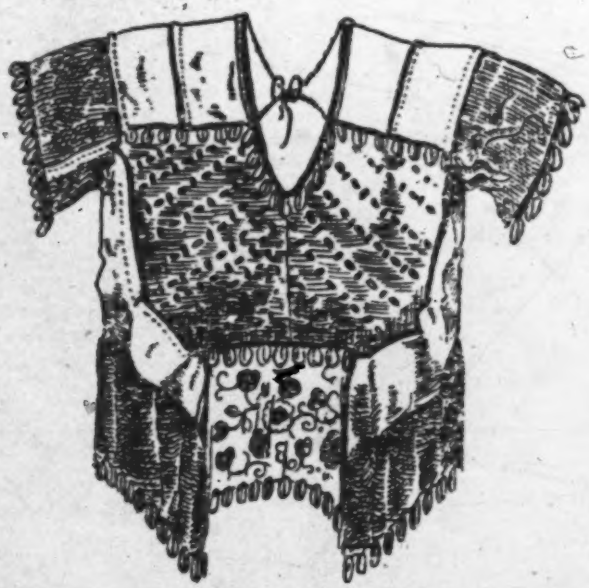

FIG. 115. Lamana woman's jacket adorned with cowries and used by Muria men for the purposes of divination

In Bastar I have noted two forms of this cross-dressing. Men sometimes put on women's jackets adorned with cowries when they go to prophesy in trance before a god and reveal his will to their fellows. At the bigger clan-festivals you may see a dozen or more mediums dancing and gesticulating in a state of ecstatic excitement, all wearing round their bodies these gaily-coloured and rather incongruous blouses.

But this is the only occasion, I think, where the male aboriginals of Bastar put on women's dress. It is more common for women to dress up as men. Bison-horn Maria women of Dantewara sometimes put on male garments at the great Wijja Pandum and drive their men-folk out to the hunt which precedes the main business of the festival. The Muria have the same custom, and the unmarried girls, dressed up as boys, dismiss the men of the tribe for a ceremonial hunt on the success of which will depend the value of the annual harvest.[2]

[1] For the 'Change of Sex' motif in Indian fiction, see Frazer, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 231ff. and W. N. Brown, 'Change of Sex as a Hindu Story Motif' in *JAOS*, Vol. XLVII (1927), pp. 3ff.

[2] Thurston speaks of a similar custom among the Koyi, where the women 'dressed in their lords' clothes' drive the men out to hunt at the Bhudevi Pandaga or Festival of the Earth Goddess. He describes a procession held before such a hunt: 'About the middle of the day, we saw a procession approaching as on the previous day, but it consisted entirely of women, the drummers and swordsmen being women dressed up as

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

838 585 292 535 On the third day of a marriage, the motiari retire to the ghotul or their camp and dress up as chelik. They put on turbans, waistcoats and loin-cloths. They borrow boys' armlets for their arms, put knives in their waist-bands, and approach the marriage-booth carrying axes, branches of mango leaves and bunches of *dab* grass. They dance up to the marriage-booth, under which the bridegroom is seated, and ceremonially sweep it. Among the dancers is the bride disguised as a boy. All the dancers are in fact disguised, for they wind their turbans round and round their faces to make it as difficult as possible to tell them apart. As the girls go round and round the booth, they challenge the bridegroom to pick out his bride. He is supposed to be unable to do this, so at last, as the girls draw closer and closer to him, the bride suddenly darts out from among them and hits him on the back with her clenched fist. He jumps up and attempts to hit her back but she escapes and her fellow motiari do their best to protect her. After this the girls continue dancing for some time, then retire to their homes and remove their male disguise.[1]

This practice is called the Nenuldwar, the 'army of the bride and bridegroom', and the dance is the Choli Endanna or the Jhoria Endanna. The name Choli Endanna simply means 'the waistcoat dance' and refers to the male disguise. The word Jhoria probably means lowlander[2] and has been fully explained in Chapter I. It is now no longer used as the title of the tribe, which has become merged with the Muria. There is, however, a Jhorian Pargana or sub-division and it is said that the dance is so called because it originated here. Although the word Jhoria means 'lowlander' in comparison with the Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains, to the Muria and Gond of eastern Bastar it is the name of an older and more primitive people. The expression Jhoria Endanna, therefore, suggests a dance of old time and ancient tradition. It is the most primitive of all the marriage dances.

838 585 535 539 As the motiari approach and dance round the marriage-booth, which they do very slowly in a long straight line, each girl clutching her left-hand neighbour round the neck with one arm, while with the other she waves her bunch of grass and mango leaves to and fro as if she were sweeping a floor, they sing a number of songs. There is a considerable variety of these and I will give a few examples of different kinds. The first song refers to the ceremonial sweeping of the marriage-booth.

Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Wāyu dewa wāyu roy dewo!	Come girl, come Dewo!
Wiyār hayu wāyu roy dewo!	Come to sweep, girl, come Dewo!
Naling cao gorāng roy dewo.	The mandia is like aonra fruit.
Gorāng nori ola roy dewoni.	She went to grind the mandia.

men. The chaunt and dance were as before, except that the pantomime abounded in the most indecent gestures and attitudes, all illustrative of sexual relations. One girl slipped (or pretended to) and fell. Whereupon, one of those playing a man's part fell upon her to ravish her. A rescue ensued amidst roars of merriment, and the would-be ravisher was in process of being stripped when our modesty compelled us to call an interval'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 66ff.

According to Santal tradition, witchcraft began through a transvestite expedition. Marang Buru had decided to teach men witchcraft, but the women made them drunk and then 'put on pagris and dhoties and stuck goats' beards on their faces' and went to learn the magic art instead.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 422.

[1] At Pardhan marriages in Mandla, the bride is sometimes disguised as a boy and her future husband is challenged to find her. I found a similar test among the Binjhwar of Chhattisgarh. The custom is doubtless widely distributed.

[2] See pp. 15–17.

398

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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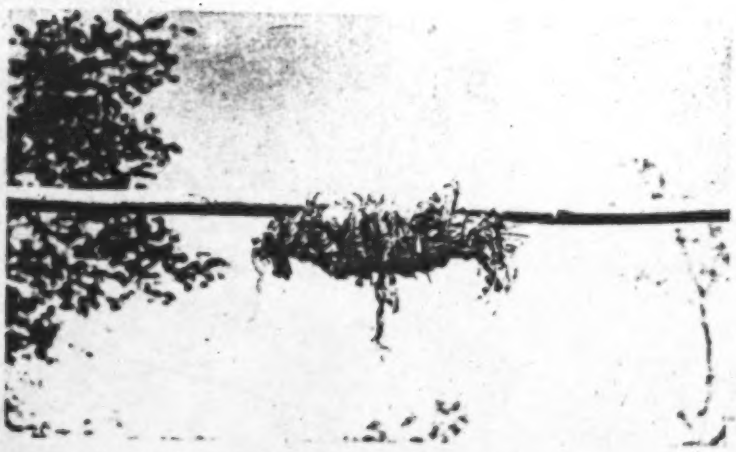

Rubbish hung over the road to purify a village

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292
778

Plate LXXXIX

Leader of the Diwali dance

Chelik with sacred fire

[p. 464 (1)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

II. The Pus Kolang Expeditions

The Pus Kolang expeditions undertaken by boys during the Hindu month of Pus (Jan.-Feb.) are among the more serious of the ghotul's annual diversions. Attired in special costume, the chelik visit a number of villages, dancing and singing in honour of Lingo Pen, who is said to have inaugurated the custom. Their behaviour is strictly regulated by rules and taboos; they carry a god with them and sacred fire. Unlike the girls' Diwali dance, there is no sexual purpose behind these expeditions; indeed the strictest taboos are enforced and there is a general sense of danger; everyone has to be very careful; breach of the rules earns catastrophic punishment. 'The dances are for the gods', said the boys at Phulpar. 'We don't feel inclined for girls; besides, many have died for sex at the Pus Kolang.'

This sense of danger probably accounts for the rather haphazard distribution of the custom. In Udanpur, for example, Kurumtalla Pen ordered the chelik not to dance, but they disobeyed; as they left their village, one of the boys died. In Chiyanar, the boys' dog once bit another dog and when they got home a chelik died. In Bhanpuri, the dancers were once warned by a tiger's print in the ashes of the Pus Kolang fire not to go, but they went and a pair of chelik died. Since then they have abandoned the custom altogether. Generally, south of the Narayanpur-Kondagaon road and east of the Keskal-Kondagaon road the Muria do not dance the Pus Kolang, but everywhere in the north it is common. In the Chota Dongar area they say, 'We don't dance it because we are really Maria'. It is significant that in this part the cult of Lingo is at its weakest.

As the cool refreshing season of Pus approaches, the ghotul leaders consult the Gaita about the time and direction of the expedition. They remember the villages where they were well entertained last year; they recall the food they were given and the omens they saw, and they draw up a programme. In the dark half of Pus, they begin to practise. The dances are difficult and must be carefully taught to the younger boys, for it is dangerous to make mistakes. The chelik prepare their clothes, masks and toys. For weeks they study the rhythm of the sticks and the movements of their feet, but always outside the fence of the ghotul compound.

On the first day of the time decided, the chelik light a fire and dance round it. In the morning they examine the ashes; if these are undisturbed or if they are marked by panther, dog or bullock, all is well; if there is the footprint of a man, tiger, cat or hen, it means that Lingo is warning them not to go. In some villages, however, the ashes should not be disturbed at all. Any mark is regarded as a warning. The boys consult the Siraha, who sometimes forbids the expedition altogether and sometimes allows it on certain conditions. The next day they look again, and again on the third day. If for three days the ashes are well-omened they accept the signs and prepare to go.

During this period they have been deciding who are to be the Gain and Jokta, the leaders of the singing; how they are to pair off; they have been getting their clothes and *Lingo-singār* (ornaments) into order. These clothes and ornaments include feminine elements: the boys wear skirts and many necklaces and neck-bands borrowed from the motiari, but I do not think this involves any element of cross-dressing—it is simply due to a desire to be as ornamental as possible.

When Lingo led the chelik on the first Pus Kolang expedition, he took a tiger with him. In memory of this the boys in many villages now take a dog,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

532
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293

Pus Kolang mask

[p. 528 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CIV

535
V47
793

The Malik of the Kongera ghotul in dancing dress

[P. 528 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

throw it behind them as they go. They also tie a little to each drum, pushing the ends of the grass under the strings. As they enter the village, they drum what is called the Bhimul Par or the rhythm in honour of Bhimul, and go once round the marriage-booth. Then they go apart and stack the drums in a row or pile and the leading drummer, who is called the Mandri Guru, offers liquor and the usual gifts of rice, haldi and flour to the drums in the name of Bhimul, Lingo or Danteshwari Matal, according to the local custom, and always in the name of the Dead. 'Let the sounds of the drum be good', they say, 'and let the variety of our dance-steps and rhythms be right. O Mandri Guru Bhimul, as your drum used to sound, so may ours.' As they finish the offerings the boys gather round and each stoops down and catches hold of his drum by its cords; then at a given signal they all together lift the drums into the air and, with a loud cry, sling them across their shoulders and begin to beat them vigorously.

When a drum is broken, the owner asks the Siraha why, and only repairs it after making the appropriate offerings to whatever god or ancestor caused the trouble.

Some of the riddles about this drum are picturesque:

'The seed is outside, the bark inside.'
'In the elephant's stomach buzzes a fly.'
'It cries *tihito*, this bird with no teeth.'
'The bullocks come from Porrobhum [the Upper World] crying *burum burum*.' [1]

IV. Dancing Dress

Chelik and motiari wear no special dancing dress for weddings or any ordinary occasion. They simply put on as many ornaments as they can, stick feathers in their hair and occasionally tattoo their faces with white dots and stars.

Even for festivals the Muria of the east have no special dress and they go out on their Hulki and Dandar expeditions in their ordinary clothes. But the Jhoria have a very elaborate and distinctive dress for the festivals of the clan-god; and the Muria of the north and west wear a special uniform (which I describe elsewhere) for the Pus Kolang and Chait Dandar expeditions. Here I shall confine myself to a description of the Jhoria festival attire, which closely resembles the dancing dress of the Hill Maria.

[1] It is interesting to compare these riddles about drums with those current in other tribes. The following are Uraon:

'A brown cow lows in the middle of a field.'
'The boy who only speaks when beaten.'
'Outside pretty
Inside empty.'
'Put down silent—picked up noisy.'
'The fishes gather when the dry tree is beaten.'

These are Kharia:

'The jack-fruit tree is a tree full of mandri drums.'
'The little fishes gather at the sound of the clouds.'

These are Baiga:

'At the least touch, it growls.'
'An orphan boy with a big belly cries all night.'
'He is brought and hung up. When the crowd gathers, they beat him.'

See Archer, op. cit., pp. 181ff.; Roy, *The Kharias*, pp. 450ff.; *The Baiga*, pp. 464ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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The basis of this dress is a very commonplace shirt and a white skirt with red bands, held in place by a wide sash, all of bazaar cloth. The chelik wear on their heads either turbans tied straight round to make a sort of box or a round cap of bamboo lattice-work covered with red cloth with one end hanging down behind as a streamer. This *topi*, as it is called, is decorated with feathers, cowries, coloured balls borrowed from the motiari and anything else available. When a turban is worn, it is similarly decorated and has one or two long streamers, or strings of cowries hanging down behind.

Round their waists the chelik tie a cord and attach to it bunches of small and big bells which hang above their buttocks.[1] I once saw a boy with a large wooden cow-bell. From the shoulders hangs the very distinctive dancing-shield called *moghi*. This is a circular shield of carved wood or basketwork, with bamboo hoops underneath to support it away from the back and often four smaller hoops of bamboo or brass on the upper side, through which are threaded more streamers of red, white or blue cloth (see Fig. 33).

[534]

Sometimes coloured shawls are thrown over the shoulders spoiling the effect, since they conceal the shields. I have only once seen the older type of Hill Maria 'rib-waistcoat', and that was at Bandopal where the boys covered their waistcoats with folded strips of white cloth so arranged as to look like a series of ribs down the body. Round their necks the boys wear masses of ornaments, many of them borrowed for the occasion from their sisters and cousins.

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Every dancer must carry something over his shoulder. Nowadays this is often an umbrella, though an umbrella decorated with strings of cowries or even bunches of fruit. Traditionally the Hill Maria carried a large pharsa battle-axe over his shoulder: the Muria still sometimes make exaggeratedly large wooden pharsa, carved wooden godel axes, sticks with bunches of peacock feathers tied to the top; the less enterprising carry ordinary pharsa and godel axes and even wooden sticks.

Fig. 138. Iron Jew's harp
Length 3½"

The most interesting objects carried by the Muria for their festival dances are the 'horses', or *kokti* as they are called (Figs. 27, 29). These are roots of trees chosen because their shape roughly resembles the head of a horse, often a fringe of smaller roots being left on the upper side to indicate the mane. This 'horse' is given horns or ears by fixing pointed bits of wood, barking-deer horns, or the tusks of the wild boar to the front of the 'head'. From its nose hang long streamers of white feathers, and the nose itself is often decorated with crisscross patterns. Into the back of the *kokti* are fixed three or four ornamented sticks each with a tuft of feathers at the end. The general effect, specially when a very large number of these 'horses' appear together, is magnificent.

[1] These buttócks-bells, which are characteristic of the Hill Maria, have also been recorded in the Coorg area of the Western Ghats. See M. B. Emeneau, *JAOS*, Vol. LIX, p. 132.

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Plate CXIX

Chelik and motiari of Aturgaon and Kongera doing a variation of the Maria dance

Chelik of Toinar doing samdhi-par

[p.572 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

OTHER RECREATIONS

I. Muria Humour

522 THE humour of the Muria is probably more fully developed than that of any other tribe in Bastar or the Central Provinces; the ghotul is a natural school of wit; the constant association of young people forces them to devise many forms of entertainment. The first and most elementary expression of Muria humour is plain buffoonery. They love throwing dirty water at each other, sprinkling people with red ants, creeping up behind someone and clasping muddy hands round his face. In Nayanar, the chelik had bamboo squirts (Fig. 21) with which they projected streams of water at the motiari. At a marriage, old men and women get great fun out of pouring haldi-water over the buttocks of their relatives as they bend down to greet the bridal pair. They enjoy poking each other's genitals and catching hold of them, and if anyone dances naked, especially if this is in front of forbidden relatives, they laugh till they can hardly stand. The reader will note that here it is the social rather than the sexual aspect of the ribaldry that appeals; it is the notion of doing something unusual and improper before people in whose presence the strictest decorum is usually practised. Jokes about incest are funny because it is almost unknown in Muria society; it is possible to be humorous about adultery simply because it is so rare. The obscene jokes of a Muria marriage do not by any means imply a general standard of obscenity; indeed they suggest the opposite. It is in the most rigidly correct middle classes of English society that the vulgar postcard has its widest circulation, for it is the sense of contrast and incongruity that is amusing. In this connexion George Orwell has recently drawn attention to the difference between obscenity and immorality. The obscene is based on the implication that 'marriage is something profoundly exciting and important, the biggest event in the average human being's life. So also with jokes about nagging wives and tyrannous mothers-in-law. They do at least imply a stable society in which marriage is indissoluble and family loyalty taken for granted...A dirty joke is not, of course, a serious attack upon morality, but it is a sort of mental rebellion, a momentary wish that things were otherwise.'[1] So, in this sense Muria jokes are obscene, but they are not immoral.

522 ●292 The Muria get a great deal of fun out of dressing up. At weddings, especially at the critical moment of the Lagir, many people—both young and old—appear in fantastic array. One man performs as a giant; another has an enormous rope penis; a third is covered with ash and goes about imitating the Siraha-mediums. In Malakot the villagers were highly amused at the antics of an old man dressed in a bear-skin who was led about by his keeper, himself swathed from head to foot in paddy-rope. The village headman, ordinarily the soberest of beings, appeared riding a hobby-horse and flourishing an umbrella. At Sidhawand there was a 'sadhu' with a long tail and an ash-covered fisherman who burlesqued Muria fishing methods. Masks are sometimes worn, especially during the Pus Kolang and Chherta expeditions. In Kachora two boys wearing gourd masks played at man and wife, the wife causing great mirth by a pair of artificial breasts. In Phulpar a chelik wore an artificial beard of squirrel's hair which he combed before a mirror. In

[1] G. Orwell, 'The Art of Donald McGill', *Horizon*, Vol. IV (1941), pp. 153ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

522 Gorma, the Muria Atpariha dressed up as a straw man, with a whitened face
● 292 and beard of bear's fur. He carried about an enormous bow and a wooden spade as arrow. Even an old solar topi is thought amusing—when it is on a chelik's head. The desire to create a sharp dramatic contrast prompted a Muria at Masora to dance with a dog in his arms (Plate CXLIII).

522 But beside a delight in sudden contrasts, the Muria have a special attraction to the grotesque. In one story a girl with a huge umbilical stump buries herself in the bed of a river, but the stump sticks up and a bullock cart is caught on it. The first motiari had a vagina so large that a wild boar could roll about in it. She looked like a sack of salt from Nandgaon. In a song, a boy has a penis as long as a cucumber and testicles as fat as pumpkins.

In Gorma I saw an extraordinary dance, when the performer, distorting his face and body, pranced about the ghotul like an obscene bird. With his hand he poked his bottom, privates, chest and head, smelt his supposedly soiled and stinking fingers, then pushed them in the faces of the onlookers. It was done so well that you forgot the indecency in a sort of horror as at some perverted creation of the mind. In the same category are the 'panthers' or 'lizards' that so often appear at a dance or wedding. A boy covers himself with a blanket, and with an ingenious arrangement of twigs makes himself a head and beak which opens and shuts. He then crawls about in what I can only call an abominable manner which never fails to give a thrill of fear.

More purely humorous was a great bird made at Phauda. A chelik lay on the ground with his hands stretched out before him. The others covered his body with a blanket and his hands with cloth. They decorated the cloth-covered hands with ornaments, gave them a beak and ears, and produced a grotesque bird. Then the boy by moving his hands made the bird peck about very divertingly (Plate CXLVII).

If we turn to verbal wit we find a similar tendency. In the songs are references to moustached peacocks[1] and tusked hares.

[539] On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
Its teeth are as long as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustache is like jungle grass, chelik.
Its hairs like bamboo shavings, chelik.

In the Ghotul Pata there are many such diverting descriptions. How excellent, for example, is the account of the Kotwar who is fed on gruel twelve years old and full of frogs and lizards[2]

[539] His moustaches said *suyi suyi* as he drank,
His throat cried *gurgur gurgur*.
As he ate the frogs and lizards, his mouth went *pitos pitos*.

The descriptions of the chelik and motiari at Siri Somni's marriage and of the treatment given to Bai Dursal Rani by the Manjhi[3] are funny even to Western ears.

[1] Compare the Uraon poem:

The cobra comes
With his hood raised
Asking alms.
The heron comes
With his neck straight
Twirling his moustaches. (Archer, op. cit., p. 122.)

[2] The antics of the village Kotwar are a favourite theme of the Gond and Pardhan story-teller in the Central Provinces. See my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 88f., 108f., and Elwin and Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 372ff.

[3] See p. 608.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

535
292

Plate CXLV

Dancer dressed in peacock's feathers

A dummy giant at Sidhawand

[p. 646 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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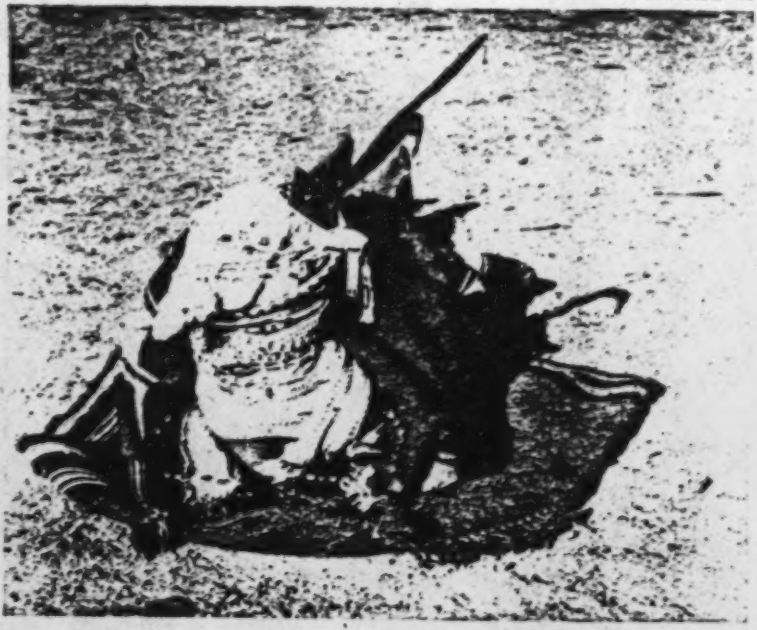

A chelik at Phauda dressed up as a monstrous bird

The chelik reveals himself

[p. 650 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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585 Maur or Oil Crown, which is worn during the period when the bride and bridegroom are anointed with oil and haldi, and the Lagir Maur, which is put on immediately before the critical moment of the marriage.

The customs vary from place to place. After the marriage the Oil Crown is generally thrown into a stream with some small offerings to the Yer Kanyang. The other crown is sometimes tied to the central pillar of the bridegroom's house. In Palari members of the Marrai clan bury the crown by this pillar and make offerings of liquor to the Departed above it, in order that the wife will always be faithful to her husband. In Kokori the Naitami and Marrai clans put the crowns in a hollow tamarind tree standing in the village. Other clans tie them to the pillars of their houses. Here they throw pulse and rice on the crowns in the name of the Departed. In the north of the State, at Penjori for example, when they are grinding haldi, preparing oil and husking rice in preparation for the marriage, the chelik and motiari go in procession to the ghotul and tie a little crown to the pillar in the name of Lingo. They then go to the Hanalkot and tie another crown there in the name of the Departed. In the Bara Dongar Pargana they sometimes tie the crown after the marriage in the shrine of the clan-god.

Even when a chelik or motiari has left one ghotul and joined another, his old ghotul may remember him at the time of his marriage by tying a crown to their pillar. This was done in 1940 at Penjori when the chelik put up a crown for a boy who had left them a year before to work as Lamhada for a girl in Kanker.

THE FOURTH DAY

I was not able to see the ceremonies of the fourth day at Sidhawand, but at Malakot I saw them twice; the procedure was, I believe, the same at Sidhawand.

293

Fig. 21. Squirt, used in fun for spraying people with water at a marriage
Length 5′ 7″

After the ceremonies of welcome to the new daughter-in-law were concluded, or on the following morning, bride and bridegroom were brought out of the house and made to stand together on an old mat.

Wherever I have seen this done, the couple affected the greatest distaste and stood averted from each other's presence. The attendant motiari first handed the boy a toilet-twig; he gave it to the girl and she threw it away. He gave her another one, and she threw that away also. Then she gave him one and he threw it away. He took a fourth and cleaned his teeth with it, and gave it to her. She cleaned her teeth and threw it down.

This rite may symbolize the intimacy of married life—I am not sure. The next appears to be a test of potency. The chelik gave the bridegroom a number of stout poles about six feet long. He handed them to his wife; she threw some away and returned others to him and he had to break them. The boys had already notched them half way down so this was not very difficult.

Suddenly without warning the boy seized his bride and spat in her mouth. When she had recovered, she handed him a gourd of water; he filled his mouth

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

791 787 When these mediums carry a clan-god or the litter of a Matal (Village Mother) on their shoulders, they seem to act quite involuntarily and in an astonishing unison. I have seen four men bearing an Anga perform the most complicated evolutions, twisting and turning in every direction, and all in

[293 787]

FIG. 27. Decorated wooden 'horse', with horns of the barking deer, used for ceremonial dances
Length of wooden section 3′ 4″

unison without a word of command or hint where they are to go next. It is little wonder that the Muria place implicit faith in the movements of these men and accept the divinations of the Anga as final.

What is the explanation of this trance? It is well known that in the condition of 'ligature', as Pratt observes, the 'voluntary control of the muscles is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and for this reason the dance is sometimes known as Nei Kolang or Kukur Kolang.

At Phulpar the chelik said that they took with them whatever dog wandered round their fire and sat down near its ashes, but in other villages I have been told that they only take a dog which is carefully trained, for it is essential that it should not bark or bite or have anything to do with other dogs. In Udanpur they said that the dog was taught to dance.

The dog serves both as a mascot and to take the omens. The boys remove a bell from the shrine of the Village Mother and tie it round its neck in the name of Lingo. When they dance in a circle the dog must sit in the middle. At meal-times, the Gain gives it three handfuls of rice before anybody else is fed.

When the dancing party enters a village the chelik wait to see what the dog will do. If all is well, it sits down quietly and they stay. If it wanders off into the village and enters someone's house, it means that a pair of boys will die. If it runs out into the fields even late in the evening, it is a sign that they must move on at once. If it fights with another dog, someone will die. Should the dog leave the party and return home, it is taken as a warning of great danger.

When the chelik return to their village they sacrifice two chickens for the dog, though a boy has to be content with one, and they place stones for it on a cairn. They remove the bell from its neck and replace it in the shrine of the Village Mother. From the time the bell is tied round the dog's neck to the time it is removed, no member of the party may have sexual intercourse. But once the bell is removed, it is a sign that they are free.

In most villages the same dog accompanies the party for three years running, but at the end of that period it is expected to go mad or to be carried away by a tiger. The theory is that for three years Lingo 'possesses' the dog for the brief period of the expedition, but at the end of the time he takes the form of a tiger and carries it away.

FIG. 117. Ornamental stick carried on dancing expeditions
Full length 2' 7½"

When all is ready, about a week before Cherta-puni, the chelik put on their full dress and dance all day. They are rather solemn about this; they talk to no one and take a very superior attitude towards their girls and have nothing to do with them. The next morning, the Gaita takes them to the Village Mother's shrine where the spear of Maria Pen is kept. They dance before the shrine in a straight line, not in a circle; this is the 'Lingo Par'. The Gaita brings fire from his house in a length of smouldering rope spun from paddy-stalk fibre. With the aid of this he offers incense saying, 'These youngsters are going out to dance. Let no disease attack them on the way. Bring them home safely. Let the spear be their aid and Maria Pen go with them. If they return in safety I will give food-sacrifice'. He fixes the smouldering rope on the point of the spear and brings it out.

This was the custom in Phulpar and Kollibera; in the latter village the Gaita went on to the shrine of Thakur Deo and worshipped there with the same

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Song

Whose sticks are these, mother-in-law?
The sticks of our clan, mother-in-law.
The sticks shine in the sun, mother-in-law.
Come out to see the sticks, mother-in-law.
In your left hand bring a lamp, mother-in-law.
In your right hand bring water, mother-in-law.
Quickly, quickly give us greeting, mother-in-law.

Probably to the Muria mind the constant repetition of 'mother-in-law' is amusing; a second song is also humorous.

On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
The hare has teeth as big as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustaches are like spear grass, chelik.
Its hairs are like a pile of bamboo shavings, chelik.[1]

From the Gaita's house the chelik move round the village, dancing before each house in turn and collecting a little rice. Meanwhile the motiari are busy collecting rice themselves; they cook this in the ghotul, and later serve it to the boys in their camp. At night boys and girls dance together, but without their sticks.

In the morning, the boys give the girls two or four pice and try to hit them when they accept it. When they reach the village boundary on their way to the next village, the little rite of crossing over a sacred line is repeated. Before reaching the new village, they halt somewhere by a stream and cook the food that they have just collected, lighting the fire from the need-fire on their spear. Then they go on and repeat the same programme.

At last the expedition is over; the days of taboo will soon be at an end; the boys approach once more their own village. News of their coming has preceded them and their motiari have not been idle. In Khutgaon I was told that they went out with the rest of the village to catch hares for the boys' feast. But everywhere the girls take the Gaita out into the jungle and make him cut one or two small semur trees. The semur tree is chosen because it was a semur which grew up out of the stump of the gold-covered

[293]

FIG. 118. Dummy guns carried on dancing expeditions

bamboo which Lingo himself cut down at the end of the first Pus Kolang expedition. In some villages the boys say that the semur is chosen because Lingo

[1] For similar humour, see my *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, pp. 150ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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used to shelter beneath it when he was alive. Obviously there is a reference to Semurgaon, the village where Lingo is said to have turned into a stone and now has his shrine. The semur has the added advantage that its spikes frighten off magic and demons. A small semur is chosen because a bigger one might be inhabited by the ghost of some dead chelik. The bare branches of the tree that suddenly blossom with bright red flowers may symbolize the menarche or nuptial fertility.

[293]

FIG. 119. Dancing-sticks from Remawand

The semur must be cut very carefully. The motiari offer rice and pulse before it saying, 'As our boys went out well and happy, so well and happy may they return'. As the Gaita cuts it the girls stop it falling to the ground, for should it do so, it is believed that a pair of dancers will die on the way and not return.

They then tie a saja leaf round the stumps of the trees and carry them back either to the ghotul compound, or to an open space in the middle of the village, wherever the ashes of the fire by which the omens were originally tested are to be found. If the trees, after being planted, do not stand up straight it is believed that disaster is in store for the boys. The motiari make small mud platforms, whiten them with clay and sometimes decorate them with drawings of the chelik.

These platforms are to be left for three years, though I doubt if this is often done, but it is important that at the end of the proceedings the semur trees should be pulled up. Should they sprout with renewed life it means that the Gain and his mate will die. In Ghotulbera this actually happened and now the trees are always pulled up and thrown away.

After the platforms have been made, the motiari prepare a lot of leaf-pipes, bundles of tobacco and toilet-twigs. Where there are two trees, one is for the leaders of the party, the Gain and Jokta, the other for the rest. This is an anxious and exciting day for the motiari; their chelik have been away amidst unknown dangers to the heart and spirit; they must do all they can to please them. This evening they cook in the ghotul or near the boys' camp in an enclosure of branches.

When the boys reach home, they go first to the Gaita's house and dance there. They then proceed to the ghotul or to their camp, where they put the spear into the ground near the semur trees and dance round them. After a time they gather about the trees and suddenly all cry *Hurrî* and hang their dancing-sticks on the branches. They remove their special clothes and hang these too on the branches. They take the pipes and tobacco from the trees and smoke them. The next morning they clean their teeth with the toilet-twigs which the motiari have provided. They are home again.

In Koilibera in 1941, the boys reached the village in the morning and spent the day dancing and collecting grain. In the evening, after they had danced round the semur trees, the Kaser-Gaita made little squares with coal-dust, rice-flour and haldi at the foot of each tree, and offered incense with the aid of the need-fire that the boys had now brought home. The chelik gathered round him and their leader offered him the sacred bunch of peacock's feathers and after exchanging this three times, the priest hung it on the first tree. Then the boys hung up their dancing-sticks and turbans. The rest of their attire was packed in little baskets and put under a tree.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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You would not see that sort of thing on a Pus Kolang expedition. As a chelik described it at Chandabera, 'We all go together for the Mahua Dandar and have great fun. No one has a right over any girl and all play with each other'. Occasionally boys and girls of different villages fall in love and run away together.

V.. The Diwali Dances

But of all the opportunities for romantic adventure so liberally provided by Muria society, none is more exciting than the girls' Diwali dance. The word 'Diwali' is here simply an indication of date; the dances have nothing to do with the Hindu festival. Even the dates are usually wrong; I saw Diwali dances on 18 November 1940 at Binjhli, on 24 November at Remawand and on 27 November at Bandopal. The actual Diwali that year was on 24 October. I saw it again at Sirpur on 30 October 1941, though the real festival was a fortnight earlier.

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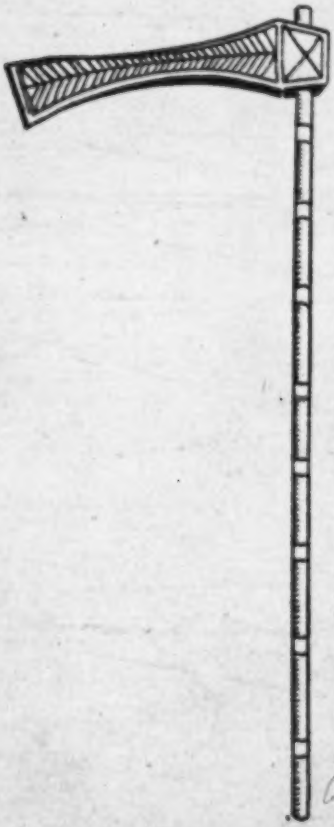

Fig. 122. Ornamented wooden axe carried by the leader of the girls on a Diwali expedition

During this season the motiari go from village to village, singing and dancing. But to the east of the main road, the Diwali is only danced in a few villages; to the south of Kondagaon it is almost unknown. Instead boys and girls go together for the Hulki.

Sometimes, the Diwali is abandoned for a time because of a scandal, sometimes on supernatural grounds. In Talabera, the girls cannot dance or sing at all, for if they do a god (*deo*) attacks them. He makes the girls tremble and fall to the ground: the Gaita has to spit and beat them with a stick to get rid of him.

There does not seem to be any special religious or magical purpose in these expeditions; they are simply for enjoyment and amorous adventure. Only girls go, led by their Belosa, and when they visit any village, only the boys of that village may be present to entertain them. The visitors dance first at the Gaita's house, then through the village; they camp in the ghotul; the local boys cook for them and entertain them. In the evening, the visiting girls and the local boys dance and play together and the dancing often lasts all night. During those long hours every one of the visitors is taken away into the jungle; the more attractive ones may be taken several times. The evenings are fruitful of love-affairs and sometimes a chelik now meets his future wife. A boy from Kapsi told me that he met

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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FIG. 123. Toy used on Chhetia expeditions
Length 6' 8"

FIG. 124. Toy used on Pus Kolang and other expeditions
Length 4' 6"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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In Alor Shamrao Hivale found some very elaborate gongs. They are illustrated in Plate CV and Fig. 125. Each gong is a single piece of wood hollowed out in the middle with a carved beak at one end and at the other a flat strip with a hole in the centre. Into this slot there fits a 4″ peg projecting from a small support on which stands the wooden figure. Through the peg there is a small hole to take a wooden pin which fixes the figure firmly in position. The figures are male and female. The male is slightly taller, standing 15½″ from the base. The female is ¼″ shorter. The two figures are differentiated by the shape of the genital organs and by small breasts in the female and a lozenge-shaped pattern on her body, probably intended to represent the womb. The hair is roughly indicated by carved lines and is different in the two images. The man has the five fingers of each hand carved on either side of his thighs where he is supposed to be holding his hands. This feature is absent in the female image. The male rectum is shown but not the female. The entire length of each gong is 2′ 6½″ from end to end. The slot in the middle is 10½″ long, ¾″ broad and 2″ deep.

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FIG. 126. Dancing-stick from Remawand

Among other things taken out for the Chherta and Pus Kolang expeditions, I have seen masks[1] of various kinds (illustrated in Plates XCIX, CII, CIII) and dancing-sticks. At Gorma I saw a *Chherta-gujir*, very like the dancing-sticks of the Bison-horn Maria, made of an old umbrella rod, with a bunch of iron bells at the top. At Remawand was a stick called *jarar-bargar*; it had an iron crown fitted with rings.[2] Decorated wooden guns are also carried.

The songs used during the Chherta are confused and obscure, a series of disconnected images and symbols, though there is always one song concerned with straightforward begging. I will give examples of both kinds.

Songs

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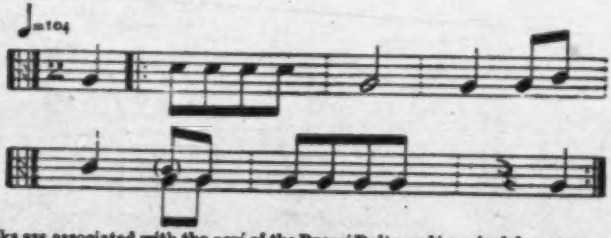

[1] Masks are associated with the *ravi* of the Purari Delta and 'masked dances or ceremonial parades are a common institution in New Guinea'. In the *ravi* masks are worn during the initiation of boys, when there is a taboo upon garden produce and in a mortuary ceremony in which a masked figure represents the spirit of the dead revisiting his home.—R. Firth, *Art and Life in New Guinea* (London, 1936), p. 26.

[2] This type of musical stick is similar to that carried by postal runners in the neighbouring Jeypore Zamindari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate CIII

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Pus Kolang mask

[p. 528 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate CIV

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The Malik of the Kongera ghotul in dancing dress

[p. 528 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The basis of this dress is a very commonplace shirt and a white skirt with red bands, held in place by a wide sash, all of bazaar cloth. The chelik wear on their heads either turbans tied straight round to make a sort of box or a round cap of bamboo lattice-work covered with red cloth with one end hanging down behind as a streamer. This *topi*, as it is called, is decorated with feathers, cowries, coloured balls borrowed from the motiari and anything else available. When a turban is worn, it is similarly decorated and has one or two long streamers, or strings of cowries hanging down behind.

Round their waists the chelik tie a cord and attach to it bunches of small and big bells which hang above their buttocks.[1] I once saw a boy with a large wooden cow-bell. From the shoulders hangs the very distinctive dancing-shield called *moghi*. This is a circular shield of carved wood or basketwork, with bamboo hoops underneath to support it away from the back and often four smaller hoops of bamboo or brass on the upper side, through which are threaded more streamers of red, white or blue cloth (see Fig. 33).

FIG. 138. Iron Jew's harp
Length 3½"

Sometimes coloured shawls are thrown over the shoulders spoiling the effect, since they conceal the shields. I have only once seen the older type of Hill Maria 'rib-waistcoat', and that was at Bandopal where the boys covered their waistcoats with folded strips of white cloth so arranged as to look like a series of ribs down the body. Round their necks the boys wear masses of ornaments, many of them borrowed for the occasion from their sisters and cousins.

Every dancer must carry something over his shoulder. Nowadays this is often an umbrella, though an umbrella decorated with strings of cowries or even bunches of fruit. Traditionally the Hill Maria carried a large pharsa battle-axe over his shoulder: the Muria still sometimes make exaggeratedly large wooden pharsa, carved wooden godel axes, sticks with bunches of peacock feathers tied to the top; the less enterprising carry ordinary pharsa and godel axes and even wooden sticks.

The most interesting objects carried by the Muria for their festival dances are the 'horses', or *hokti* as they are called (Figs. 27, 29). These are roots of trees chosen because their shape roughly resembles the head of a horse, often a fringe of smaller roots being left on the upper side to indicate the mane. This 'horse' is given horns or ears by fixing pointed bits of wood, barking-deer horns, or the tusks of the wild boar to the front of the 'head'. From its nose hang long streamers of white feathers, and the nose itself is often decorated with crisscross patterns. Into the back of the *hokti* are fixed three or four ornamented sticks each with a tuft of feathers at the end. The general effect, specially when a very large number of these 'horses' appear together, is magnificent.

[1] These buttocks-bells, which are characteristic of the Hill Maria, have also been recorded in the Coorg area of the Western Ghats. See M. B. Emeneau, *JAOS*, Vol. LIX, p. 132.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.

Maria women's dancing-stick (3½' long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

535 but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison'
585 charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum.* Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

293 The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic
[237] cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered
[197] unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

428 A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after
682 his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heir-
762 looms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

184 In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison
535 horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

534 The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called kikir, a Jews-harp made of iron or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Hill Maria

293
142

Youth with Hill Maria dancing-dress

Markami Marka wearing head-dress

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Boys preparing head-dress

[FACING p. 80]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 he was only outraging his personal marital feelings. Kopa
607 was working as Poda's Kabari or farm-servant at Kaurgaon on the banks of the Indrawati River. Five years before the murder Poda discovered that the boy was enjoying a love affair with his wife, taking advantage of the privileged relationship in which he stood to her. A ceremony of purification and appeasement was performed and Kopa left Ragho alone for a time. But they were evidently really in love with one another, and soon their intimacy began again. In July 1933, Poda discovered this and turned Kopa out of his house and service. Kopa went to live with another cousin in the same village.

On the night of Sunday 30 July, Kopa crept into Poda's house in the middle of the night in order to lie with Ragho. But while they were together, her hand accidentally knocked against her husband who was sleeping by her side and woke him. Kopa ran for his life, but not before he had been recognized.

The following day news came that a member of the family in another village, Chota Karka, had died, and Poda with Ragho, Kopa and other relatives went to the place for the funeral ceremonies. On the Wednesday there was an open quarrel there between the two men, and Poda told the elders of the village of Kopa's behaviour and beat him publicly. Kopa ran away and hid in the forest. Then on the Thursday everyone went home.

That afternoon three of Poda's servants were working in his field, weeding the kosra crop. In the field there was
[343] the usual field-hut in which the cultivators rest and guard the crops. It was raining that day, and at about 4-30 in
● [293] the afternoon Kopa arrived there carrying a bamboo umbrella and sat down by the fire in the field-hut to dry himself. A little later Poda came and when he saw who was sitting there he fell into a great rage. He beat Kopa several times with his bare fists, knocked him on his back, sat on his chest and throttled him with both hands. The three servants did not dare to interfere, but stood watching.

Then Poda had the body taken to another hut in someone else's field, tied a rope round the neck of the corpse, and strung it up to the roof to give the impression that the dead man had committed suicide. He bribed the witnesses and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

301 favourite beads. They are fond also of necklaces of small, brightly gilded beads, which they call *mirako-mungya*. They may wear one or two armlets (*danda-bhata*) on one arm above the elbow, or a pair of bracelets on one wrist (*ka'i-bara*), of silver, brass, or aluminium, and similar in type to those bought by the Hill Marias. They wear a plain waist-cord (*para-nori*) instead of the cowry-cord of the hills for carrying knives and tobacco boxes. A comb is attached to this, for regular use. They may have hanging from a fastener of aluminium wire, shaped like the eye of the hooks-and-eyes of ladies' dresses, two thin aluminium toothpicks, and an aluminium ear-scoop; the Hill Marias also use these. They hang like a pendant on the chest.

The women's hair ornaments have been described along with their hair-dressing; it need only be added here that occasionally, instead of the polished brass fillet there mentioned, they wear bead fillets like those of the Hill Maria women. Armlets and wristlets are worn on the same arm, and are similar to those of the hill women. Instead of the white-bead ropes and the coloured-bead collars worn by the hill women, they wear long ropes of red, red and green, or gamboge beads; and over these they wear a vast number of the iron and brass rings of the type already described as borrowed by the hill women from them; they here call the iron neck-rings *tiya*, not *suta* as in the hills. Their ear plugs are similar to those
301 used in the hills, but from the lobe plug to a ring worn, as by their
304 men, in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, is often fastened a cord on which is threaded between two blue or green beads a slightly oblong, cube-shaped bead of brass or aluminium. The nose is symmetrically adorned by two gold or gilt rings in the wing of each nostril, and, between them, hanging from a small ring in the septum, a small gold or gilt ornament like a leaf pointing downwards, sometimes with a piece of red glass set in the middle.

297 I have taken the wearing of the Bison-horn dancing head-dress
535 as the most obvious distinction between the two kinds of 'Marias'.

Dancing-dress This is known as a *tallagulla*. I had one made from horns and peacock feathers supplied by me. After my head had been measured round the plane of the temples, a basketry 'cap' was made, fitting loosely round the brows, and
● 294 sloping backwards and upwards into a low peak. It is made loose, as it has to support the horns and the plume of feathers, as well as strings of cowries and many folds and streamers of cloth of various colours, which subsequently tighten it and make it fit snugly round the head. The basketry is of twilled bamboo strips running diagonally from the edge that fits over the brows. The bison-horns were pared with a sharp knife to remove outer dirt or callosities and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

reveal their true colour and beauty; they were then rubbed smooth with sand and polished with mustard oil. The edges of the horns where they had originally sprung on their cores from the bison's head were cut down and trimmed clean and straight, so that they would fit closely on to the sides of the basketry cap, a little to the front of and above the ears. Holes were bored at regular intervals about an inch from the rim of the horns with a piece of heated brass wire, and widened with the point of a knife used as a drill by rolling the wooden handle between the palms of the hands. Palm fibre twine[1] was stitched through these holes and the basketry, the end of the twine being then whipped three or four times round the end of the horn, passed through the basketry again and knotted inside the cap to the other end. Meanwhile the peacock's tail-feathers had had all their lower feathering trimmed off and had been gathered into a tight round bunch of the eyed ends, all round and below which were added great numbers of the tail-feathers of the red jungle-cock or his domesticated cousin. The stalks were then plaited together with horizontal twilled wefts of thin slices of green bamboo rind, the ends being cut flush, and bound round twice with bamboo rind. The plume so made was fastened vertically to the peak of the basketry cap by a bamboo rod passing through the peak and running into the bunched feather stems, and by stitches of twine. The further adornment of the *tallagulla* depends largely on means and taste. The stem of the plume of feathers is wound round with coloured cloth, the ends of which hang as streamers down to the centre of the back. *Pagri* cloth of bright colours is criss-crossed tightly over the basketry cap and the brow ends of the horns, and often ends of this are left as streamers behind the head. Ideally, a brow piece of red or blue cloth, with a fringe, single or double, of closely-stitched cowries along its lower edge, and from five to ten tassels of strings of cowries hanging from it over the face, is tied over the lower rim of the head-dress; the brow piece is often further adorned in the centre or edges with flakes of mica, or groups of cowries, or brass studs, or a pattern of small pieces of cloth of contrasting colours. Now cowries being unobtainable, often this brow-piece is replaced by extra folds of *pagri* cloth.

Bison must in the old days have been very plentiful; this was, indeed, recorded as the case by Glasfurd in 1862, but his son Colonel A. I. R. Glasfurd, in the fascinating chapter on a shoot in Bastar in his *Musings of an Old Shikari*,[2] states that he took his father's old diaries with him to Bastar and found no game at all in

[1] 'Twine' is used in its technical sense.
[2] pp. 127-48 (London, The Bodley Head, 1928).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The Muria wash their houses with a solution of cow-dung and water. When this has dried they apply a whitewash of clean mud from the jungle. A good

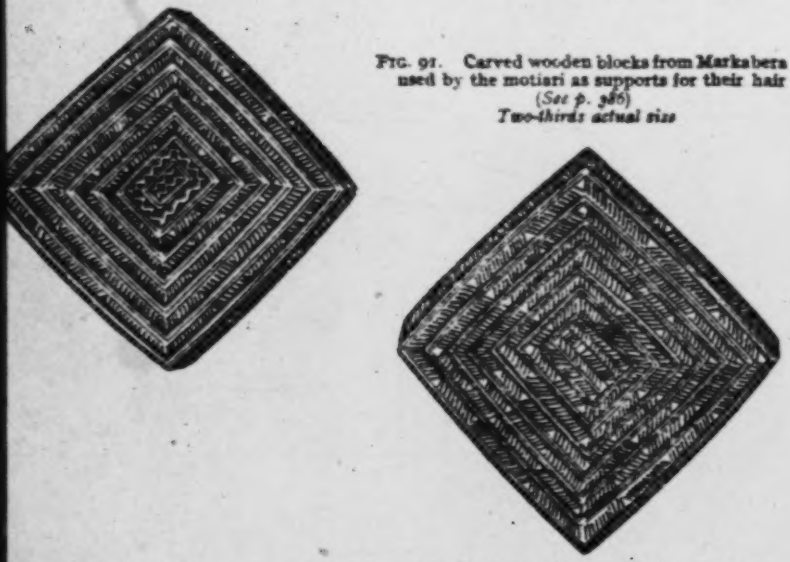

FIG. 91. Carved wooden blocks from Markabera used by the motiari as supports for their hair
(See p. 386)
Two-thirds actual size

housewife should do this every day. The motiari must keep the ghotul spotlessly clean—'This is how she learns to keep her husband's house clean when she leaves us', explained the boys at Berma.

Chelik and motiari wash their clothes frequently, almost as often as they bathe; the older people, naturally less concerned about their personal appearance, more anxious about economy, wash them less. The clothes are put in a pot with the ash of saja, dhaura, sesamum, siari-creeper or rice-chaff, and are boiled. When ready the pot is carried to the river, the clothes removed and washed by being beaten with the hands on a stone and rinsed again and again in the water. The clothes of a woman in her period, and especially her pubic cloth, are boiled on the river bank. At Temrugaon I saw many empty pots lying on the bank and even floating in the pools which were used for this purpose, for they cannot of course be taken back to the house.

FIG. 92. Boys' hair-retainer made by a local blacksmith out of the ribs of an old umbrella
(See p. 387)

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
~~Dhoen Hoss Maria~~

142
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HILL MARIA YOUTH AND GIRL
(Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt)

[Facing p. 111]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE V

142
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A HILL MARIA, OF THE GOND TYPE
Usendi Muka of Orcha

GROUP OF HILL MARIA GIRLS
(Photograph by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.)

[FACING p. 62]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

302 and 5 cm. over the ears; this runs right round the head except just below the hair-knot. It is not the natural edge of the hair, as a little is shaved over the centre of the forehead and a good deal over the temples. From a parting (*paya*) just above this the hair is drawn back, like a European's hair brushed straight back from the forehead over the crown, into a top-knot knotted at the back of the head to hang down considerably lower than the Hill Maria crown-tuft knot. The knot is called *kupa-kelk*. The vernacular words used in describing this coiffure are from the Bison-horn dialect used around Aranpur. I have not seen Bison-horn Marias having their hair trimmed; but they say they use razors in the same way as the Hill Marias.

Women's hair is never cut. The hill women all part their hair in front in the centre and bring it back and down over their ears, the whole of which is left visible, into a great pendulous bunch at the back, like bobbed hair, but with the ends not trimmed off but apparently brought over some kind of stuffing and tucked under it. 301 They wear wooden combs made by the young men and often 302 ornamented above the teeth with patterns worked with criss-cross strands of *kosa* silk. These are sometimes as high as Spanish combs, but never as broad. So, too, the man often wears a comb in his crown-tuft. The Bison-horn Maria women do their hair similarly, but frequently wear round the centre of the forehead and the back of the head a horizontal fillet of plain, thin, polished brass about 2 cm. wide, called *utari*, and over this a snood, almost a tiara, of brass, patterned in relief with hammered suns and moons, vertical and oblique hatching lines, saltires, etc., of which the broadest portion fits closely over the skull between the crown and the forehead, the tapering sides descending obliquely over the *utari*, passing behind the ears and ending in cusps which are linked together under the bun. This is called a *talutar*; it, too, is brightly polished. At its greatest width, where it passes over the top of the head, it is 9 or 10 cm. wide. Some women do not wear both *utari* and *talutar*, but either one or the other; the *talutar* can often be seen hung up on the veranda when the woman is busy in the fields; but in the warm spring and hot weather months when you meet bands of women gathering forest fruits, most of them are wearing their *talutar*.

291 Before I visited the Abujhmar hills I was regaled with the tale told to Glasfurd in 1862 that many of the Hill Marias wore leaves, being too poor to buy any cloth. It was even then a fable; Glasfurd states that he made enquiries about this and was told by the Marias invariably that they had never seen or heard of any people so poor that they covered themselves with teak leaves; however poor they

Dress and ornaments: (a) Hill Maria

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

might be, they could always obtain a small cloth. Of the men, Glasfurd observed only that they were certainly more scantily clad than any he had hitherto seen; of the women, that their clothing, like that of the men, was scantier than that of other Maria women, consisting only 'of a very small cloth wrapped once round the loins', while 'some of the elder women and children wore only a square patch of cloth, suspended on a cord fastened round the waist, upon which bamboo rings were strung'. 291

The Hill Marias are now gradually learning to dress in the same fashion as the Jhorias and Murias of Antagarh or the Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara, and are wearing their loin-cloths, turbans and ornaments. But in the villages of the interior and everywhere among the older inhabitants, the old fashions still survive. The loin-cloth is little more than a length of cloth a foot or fourteen inches broad, twisted or rolled so that it makes a strip round the waist about five inches wide or sometimes much less, passed between the legs tightly, so that in front it seems like a bag for the private parts and that behind it disappears between the buttocks, brought out and wound again round the waist, the end being passed through the waist fold and allowed to hang down over the right buttock; this end is called *toqa* (tail), and in the case of small boys reaches nearly to their ankles, getting shorter as the wearer ages. Above this there should be a girdle of cowry shells, worn so close to the loin-cloth as to be partly concealed by it; but cowries have become unobtainable, now that for forty years or more they have ceased to be currency, and the wearing of the cowry girdle is, as they admit, dying out, though old girdles are jealously preserved. Some wear just a cord instead of the girdle. Glasfurd says that in 1862 Marias sometimes wore, instead of the cowry girdle, a girdle of about ten or fifteen cords of the same form but smaller than those worn then by Gadba women, which he described thus:— [301]

'The girdle is somewhat singular; it is composed of forty to fifty separate cords of about eighteen or twenty inches in length, which are lashed at the ends; it is fastened in front. From the number and size of the cords, this girdle gives the wearer a strange appearance.'

I have not seen anything of this kind among the Hill or Bison-horn Marias of to-day. Sometimes cloth is so short that there is only a cord round the waist supporting a strip of cloth passing between the legs with a flap hanging down over the cord in front and behind. But generally now there is a tendency to widen the loin-cloth, and not to wear much of a *toqa*; it used to fulfil the useful purpose of a bag for receiving grain allotted for food at harvest and feasts, and indeed, the end of the loin-cloth is still so used. The Tokalor clan of Erpanar in Mangnar *pargana* is said to have obtained its [415]

[see col. 116, p. 49. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

name because its founder and members, whenever grain was being given out, were found always to have extra long tail flaps (here pronounced *toka*) to their loin-cloths. A broader-woven cloth makes it possible for it to be taken once round the waist in its full unfolded width, so as to cover the buttocks and private parts. The *toga* hangs sometimes over the left buttock, and, in the south of the hills, sometimes in front of the body in the Godavari fashion.

Tucked into the girdle or the loin-cloth are knives with or without wooden sheaths, razors (as already seen), hollow bamboo tubes filled with tobacco, or little tobacco boxes of carved wood or tree-seeds, or of basketry (the last kind is sometimes worn on the left shoulder on a cord passing round the neck and under the left arm-pit); a comb may hang over the buttock from a cord; and occasionally on the Dantewara side a larger knife approximating to the *banda* or dao used by the Bison-horn Marias and Parjas.

The older Marias wear no cloth on their heads, and no ornaments in their hair. But it is general now to wear an apology for a *pagri* or turban consisting of one folded Mahra cloth wound round the forehead and tied at the back of the head. Youths wear between this and the back or side of their heads tail feathers of jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo (which they stick into their crown-tuft knots if they have no *pagri*). This head-cloth is often dirty and worn, and looks suspiciously like all that is left of an old friend of a loin-cloth.

Men and women almost invariably go unshod; but occasionally a pair of very coarse sandals of untanned cowskin with a thong over the big toe and another over the four small toes is worn, generally only when there is a cut or a heel-crack to be protected from the ground.

Short of complete nakedness, man could hardly wear less than the Hill Maria in his most primitive state. His scanty frontal covering often leaves little to the imagination in its utter inadequacy. But it is to the fact that he wears so little that he owes it that he is far freer from scabies, itch and ringworm than the Bison-horn Maria, and the Murias and others of the plains, who more and more are imitating Hindu clothes, but are too poor to afford either much washing or spare suits. At the numerous State dispensaries these are the commonest complaints, and treatment is useless because the patients will not leave off the dirty, infected clothing. Luckily, coat and 'waskat' are still rarities in the hills; Bardal Chamru of Kutul, the headman or *majhi* of Bardal *pargana*, and his brother Bardal Boranga, who used to accompany me when I toured near their villages, always arrived coated and waistcoated above their loin-cloths, but would discard the obnoxious and unnecessary

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE 91

Full-face, Jugho Chero, of Itulnar

Hill Maria of Handawada
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)

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Kutru Mar youths, wearing *taghali* bark overcoats

[Facing p. 70]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

292 garments as soon as possible. In their youth they had been sent with a party of men and women as exhibits to the Allahabad Exhibition, where Boranga had celebrated his marriage *coram publico Indico*; they brought back with them from Allahabad a bigger suspicion of the *Kosor*, as they, like Gonds all over the Central Provinces, call all Hindus, a coat and waistcoat and blankets, and a taste for *happu* or opium which luckily was not inherited by Baranga's son, the present headman, or any of the villagers.

291 As in Glasfurd's day, the women go with breasts uncovered. Very old women occasionally hobble about inside their huts completely naked. The square patch of cloth suspended between the legs from a waist-cord on which bamboo rings were strung, which Glasfurd saw as the sole garment of some children and elderly women, is the garment known as *mudang*, worn only by females. It is to-day definitely intimate underwear, to be seen by no one save the husband, except in the case of very little girls who, when six or so, wear it for the first time as their only garment. Brass rings made by the Ghasia (Gharwa) brass-workers in bazaar places in the plains such as Gidam, Dhaurai and Narainpur, have replaced the bamboo rings of Glasfurd's time. The cord on which they are strung is sometimes a thin piece of cane. A mother buys a few rings for her little girls whenever she has a pice or two to spare at her visits to the markets; and the cord becomes nearly full of rings when the girl is nubile. The *mudang* cord is never removed, even at child-birth. The cloth attached to it is usually a strip of old rag torn off a worn-out loin-cloth. It has already been stated that women keep it on when bathing. The *mudang* is buried or burned with the woman.

The cord full of rings is obvious under the top of every woman's loin-cloth, as a sort of ridge. The cloth itself is folded over the rings, and hangs down all round over the loins and buttocks, without being passed between the legs. It is therefore not revealing like the men's cloth. Occasionally women wear a small sheet thrown [117] carelessly across the breasts and over the left shoulder in imitation of the custom gradually spreading in the Bison-horn country; and [854] a cloth of this kind is used for supporting a baby, who rides on his mother's right or left hip with the cloth drawn tight over his little buttocks and up to his armpits and thence fastened over her other shoulder. Even for dancing a woman has no other clothes.

● 301 Glasfurd noted in 1862 that few of the Hill Marias possessed the beads that other Marias liked so much. The older men still wear little of this kind; a few have a single necklet of dirty yellow beads made of small chopped sections of pea-fowl's lower leg-bone about 5 mm. in length. Occasionally

Ornaments

301 they have similar necklets of little sections of wood or of seeds. The middle-aged and particularly the young have now made up for any former lack of beads by going to the opposite extreme in the profusion and variety of their ornaments. They have borrowed [177] freely from the fashions of the Jhorias and Murias on the one side and on the other from the Bison-horn Marias, but in an eclectic way, and showing marked individual taste. They have no use for the humming-top shaped greenish-yellow glass or the tubular scarlet beads so popular with the Bison-horn Maria, nor for the small speckled beads which Czecho-Slovakia is now sending to the bazaars of the north; they like small primary coloured beads of the old 'hundreds and thousands' type, but large enough to be threaded with ease, while their women still prefer the large, almost cylindrical but rounded-edge pure white beads of uneven size that seventy years ago were the fashion among the Marias of the plains. On the whole the women have borrowed mostly from the Bison-horn fashions, and the men from those of the north, particularly the Jhorias. On their arms the men have tight-fitting armlets of brass or 'jarman' (an aluminium alloy) just above their elbows, from one to five in number. Round their necks they have up to six collars of coloured beads sometimes six-deep, arranged according to individual colour tastes, but generally in vertical bars of colour with alternate bars of white. From large ear-rings 4 or 5 cm. in [304] diameter worn in a slit-hole pierced in the cartilage just below the helix and above the front upper insertion point of the auricle, hang nearly to the shoulders tassels made of three or four strings of beads threaded singly with a similar colour arrangement, ending with little tufts of bright wool; and fillets of the same bead-work are worn either loosely over the forehead and temples, or higher round the crest of the head, or looped from ears to hair-tuft. The intricacy and symmetry of the bright bead-work produces very pleasing patterns; the 'girl friend' usually arranges the beads for the youth. Older men more often wear small brass chains round the ears and hair-tuft than bead fillets. The large ring already referred to is first made in the form of a crescent blade of aluminium alloy, one of the tapered ends being passed through the slit-hole in the cartilage and hooked into the loop formed by bending the other tapered end to form a little eyelet, the remaining metal being then whipped spirally round the metal from which it tapered. Sometimes smaller rings of the same type are made of brass, a blue or red glass bead being threaded just inside the eyelet, and worn in a hole in the 304 tragus of the ear, or the antitragus. Innumerable holes are pierced 301 through the fold of the helix, in which are worn little rings of thin, plain brass wire; there may even be a double row of these right

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

round the whole helix, giving a total of over forty for the ear, and making it green with verdigris. These are called *maqqawadang*. The lobe is pierced and a plug of wood or a rolled leaf worn in it by those who cannot afford something more ornate or are old-fashioned; others fit on to the wooden plugs, by means of a hollow brass socket-stalk, brass circles about 15 mm. in diameter made by the Ghasias by *cire-perdue* process, ornamented with spiral whorls or concentric circles, or like little shields bossed at the centre. Some wear, instead of these, a ring of thick brass or even silver or gold, heavy and fitting closely around the end of the lobe. Lobe ear-rings or plug ornaments are generally called *porskeng*. The effect of these is greatly to distend the lobe. A few rings are worn on the fingers, generally a treble spiral of brass, or a plain aluminium band; the Jhorias are fond of Ghasia-made rings with small brass pellet-bells, but few Hill Marias wear these rings, though many hill women wear strings of such bells round their necks; they also are made by *cire perdue*. It is amusing to see the Hill Maria women haggling with Ghasia women for these bells and other brass ornaments at Dhaurai bazaar. A comb or two, and perhaps a cheap Japanese mirror, stuck in his hair, complete the finery of a young Hill Maria.

The woman wears perhaps one or two bead collars, and sometimes seven or eight bead fillets, as well as bead tassels depending from the lobes of her ears, or from a smaller cartilage-ring of the type already described. She has also ear-plugs with small brass circular plate heads in her lobes, and sometimes little plugs in one or both of her nostrils. She, like the men, wears *maqqawadang* wire rings in the helices of her ears. Round her neck she has ropes of the large white uneven beads already referred to, sometimes ending in a short single string of beads with one or two brass pellet-bells at the bottom. The ropes vary in length, the longest reaching her navel. Over these and the coloured bead collars she has large iron neck hoops or *suta* in Bison-horn Maria style, on which brass rings may be threaded of any number up to 100 or more. She is fond also of necklets of brass circles made by *cire perdue* with spiral whorls like the ear-plug caps; a few plain iron and aluminium hoops may complete her neckware. The beads hang between her breasts, but partially cover them when worn in profusion. On her wrists she has a number of loose bracelets of cylindrical aluminium and brass, and, when she dances, dancing anklets on both legs, arched over her ankle-bones. Her carved and ornamented combs at the top or side of her hair bun add to her finery. Needless to say, much of this ironmongery and brassware is left in the house when she is working in the fields, but she would not be without any of it when she sets off on her long freks to the markets in the plains. Seen

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

301 from behind, it makes her appear very thick-, in fact bull-necked, and creates a false impression of her often slender build.

304 What beauty the girls have they mar to Western eyes by excessive tattooing over all the face and forehead, and often the breasts also. Mothers begin to tattoo their daughters when they are eight or nine years old, using lengths of the brass wire used for the rings in the helix of the ear, sharpened into rough needles, and black charcoal powder. The girl lies on her side with one cheek flat on the ground while the mother operates on the other cheek. Sometimes only one breast is tattooed, often neither. They seem never to tattoo legs or arms, though Glasfurd speaks of their arms and thighs being covered with tattooing. A swastika with the corners slightly rounded and not right-angled, and a pair of very small parallel vertical lines between each arm is a common motive, on face and breast. On the centre of the forehead, vertically one below the other, are usually tattooed a circle with a dot in the centre, for the sun, a circle and a crescent for the full and crescent moon respectively. Thence fairly symmetrically vertical hatching alternates with horizontal round and round the face, becoming oblique at the corners and down the sides of the nose ; and over the corners of the cheekbones three dots are made triangle-wise. This is only one common pattern. The only tattooing on men is single, double or treble horizontal rows of dots, varying in number from three to nine, over the glabella. I did not ascertain at what age or by whom these marks are made. There are no special tattoo marks for the different clans. There seems to be no significance behind tattooing ; it is considered merely an adornment. The Nagpur Gonds speak of tattooing as marks by which ancestors and clan-gods can identify [775] persons in the next world ; but the Marias have no formulated idea of another world.

292 The dancing dress of the Hill Maria men is completely different from that of the Bison-horn Marias and most other tribes. The 535 women have no special dancing dress. The young men wear on their heads either red and white turbans, or, more often, curious Chinese fig-box head-dresses which they call by the Hindi word *topi*, covered with red or blue cloth, and piped at the edges and centre with peacock feather quills. Often a peacock, jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo's feather is stuck in the *topi*, or spiral coils of feather quill fastened on both sides of a stick ; or scarlet 'Scissors' cigarette packets found empty at the bazaars, lead seals from petrol tins, old brass cog-wheels from watches, little tins, cheap mirrors, the round of bright tin-foil cut out when an airtight cigarette tin is opened ; dried snipe or woodcock neck and skull ; or anything bright-coloured or interesting to the Maria.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE VII

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Hill Maria dancers. Note, in 2, the use of bark rain-coat as dancing skirt
(*Photographs by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.*)

Hill Maria dancers, showing dancing-shields and bunches of pellet-bells worn over the rump

A Hill Maria of Kurmer, using his rain-hat and rain-shield, as he works with his *gudari* digging hoe

[*facing p. 74*]

[facing p. 74]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

291 cotton material cut in European style; or instead of these has at least an extra round or two of his loin-cloth which he can throw loosely over his shoulder, or a small cotton sheet to answer the same purpose.

The women's loin-cloth is worn like that of their men, but in front is not knotted in such a way as to make a long flap necessary to cover the front of their thighs; it looks, therefore, like a short skirt from their waists to just above their knees. In the fields and jungles and in their own homes they still go with their breasts uncovered save for their masses of ornaments; but they have become somewhat self-conscious, owing to misguided officials suggesting that it was improper for them to appear like this before their Chief or at high officials' camps; and they frequently, when going to a bazaar or festival, or to dance at a wedding or camp, start off with their breasts loosely covered with a cotton sheet or one or two folds of their loin-cloth wrapped loosely from one hip over the opposite shoulder, their beads and finery resting on top of this cloth. Generally, however, the cloth is too small or too loosely thrown over the body really to conceal the breasts. They have this favourite riddle :— [538]

'Bara pattu lote heren honda podo',

meaning, 'What is the pair of bullocks that cannot be confined within the byre of the twelve parts of the body?' to which the answer is '*Dudo*', or 'Woman's breasts'. They explained this as referring to the refusal of the breasts to be concealed by any wrap. Moreover, as soon as women warm to the dance they rapidly divest themselves of the unwonted wrap.

Most men now wear a *pagri* or turban, tied in the usual fashion of the Hindu population of the adjacent Chhattisgarh districts, and far more ample than the rag worn by the Hill Marias. They do not adorn it with feathers; nor do they wear bead chains or fillets on their heads like the Hill Marias. They use far fewer ornaments; they do not wear the brass wire *maqqawadang* rings in the helix of the ear, but sometimes a single small ring like the tasselled ring of the Hill Marias, but worn in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, from which a small gilt chain depends. In the lobe a small ear plug of gold or gilded brass, often with a little red or green stone or glass set in it, may anchor two or three gilt chains fastened at the top to a similar plug vertically above it in the helix. Most men content themselves with one or two small bead necklaces (*mungya*) round their necks, the beads being all of one shape, scarlet or royal blue tubular glass, or pale green humming-top-shaped, both kinds considerably larger than the Hill Marias'

301 304 301

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

301 favourite beads. They are fond also of necklaces of small, brightly gilded beads, which they call *mirako-mungya*. They may wear one or two armlets (*danda-bhata*) on one arm above the elbow, or a pair of bracelets on one wrist (*ka'i-bara*), of silver, brass, or aluminium, and similar in type to those bought by the Hill Marias. They wear a plain waist-cord (*para-nori*) instead of the cowry-cord of the hills for carrying knives and tobacco boxes. A comb is attached to this, for regular use. They may have hanging from a fastener of aluminium wire, shaped like the eye of the hooks-and-eyes of ladies' dresses, two thin aluminium toothpicks, and an aluminium ear-scoop; the Hill Marias also use these. They hang like a pendant on the chest.

The women's hair ornaments have been described along with their hair-dressing; it need only be added here that occasionally, instead of the polished brass fillet there mentioned, they wear bead fillets like those of the Hill Maria women. Armlets and wristlets are worn on the same arm, and are similar to those of the hill women. Instead of the white-bead ropes and the coloured-bead collars worn by the hill women, they wear long ropes of red, red and green, or gamboge beads; and over these they wear a vast number of the iron and brass rings of the type already described as borrowed by the hill women from them; they here call the iron neck-rings *tiya*, not *suta* as in the hills. Their ear plugs are similar to those 301 used in the hills, but from the lobe plug to a ring worn, as by their 304 men, in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, is often fastened a cord on which is threaded between two blue or green beads a slightly oblong, cube-shaped bead of brass or aluminium. The nose is symmetrically adorned by two gold or gilt rings in the wing of each nostril, and, between them, hanging from a small ring in the septum, a small gold or gilt ornament like a leaf pointing downwards, sometimes with a piece of red glass set in the middle.

292 I have taken the wearing of the Bison-horn dancing head-dress 535 as the most obvious distinction between the two kinds of 'Marias'.

Dancing-dress This is known as a *tallagulla*. I had one made from horns and peacock feathers supplied by me. After my head had been measured round the plane of the temples, a basketry 'cap' was made, fitting loosely round the brows, and sloping backwards and upwards into a low peak. It is made loose, 294 as it has to support the horns and the plume of feathers, as well as strings of cowries and many folds and streamers of cloth of various colours, which subsequently tighten it and make it fit snugly round the head. The basketry is of twilled bamboo strips running diagonally from the edge that fits over the brows. The bison-horns were pared with a sharp knife to remove outer dirt or callosities and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE IX

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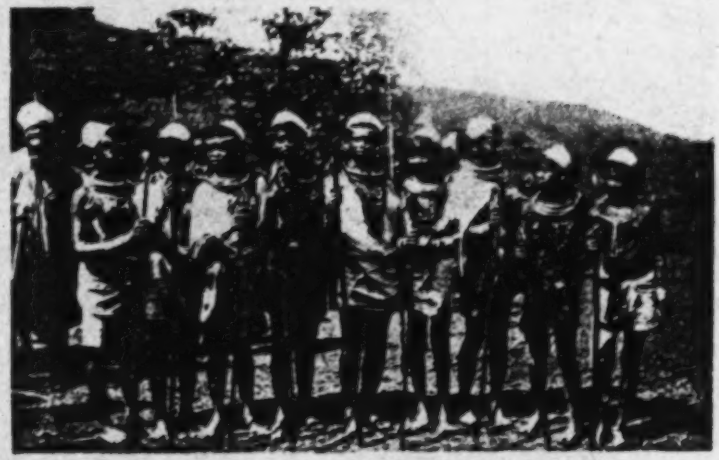

BISON-HORN MARIA DANCERS AT BAILADILA

Above Four men. *(Photograph by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.)*

Below Women. Note the clothes, the masses of ornaments, and the *tirdudi* bamboo dancing-staves

[FACING p. 80]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XI

482
142
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HILL MARIA WOMEN CARRYING GOURDS OF WATER

HILL MARIA WOMAN CARRYING A LEAF-BOX OF GRAIN

(Photographs by Baron E. von Eichstedt)

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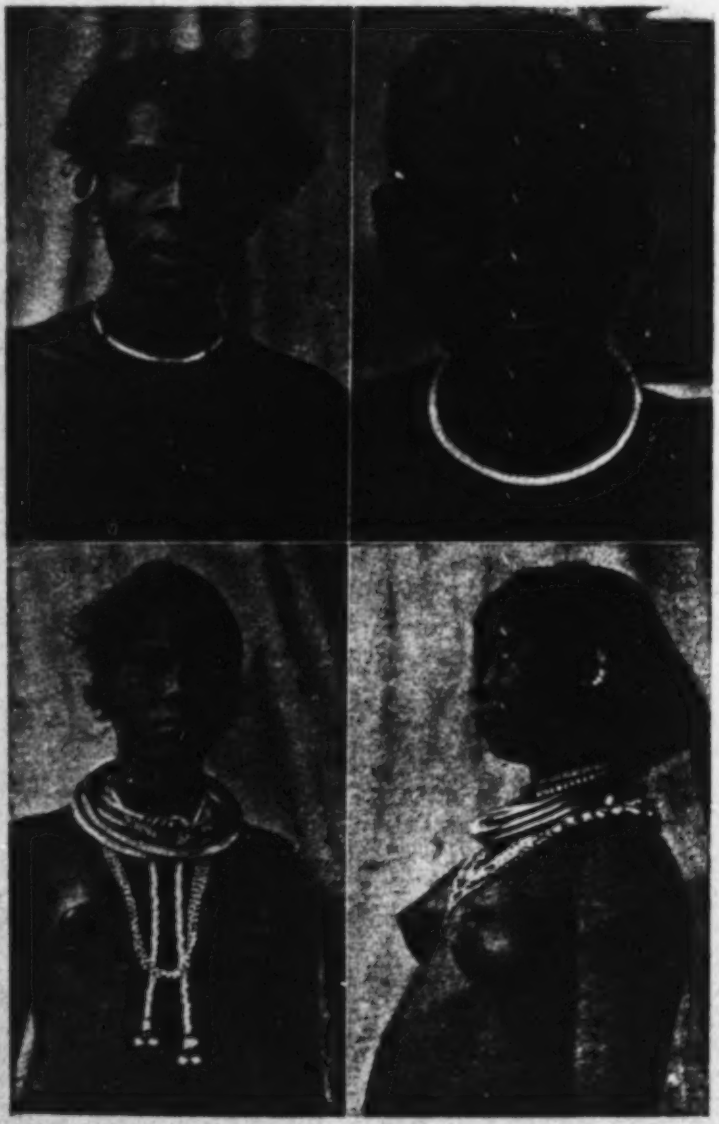
BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE STREET, TELAM, NEAR KATAKALIAN

[FACING p. 118]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVII



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HILL MARIA TYPES

Above Arki Baiyya of Korawaya — Gecha Poia of Chudala Tondawada
Below Jugho Buke of Ituinar — Guma Ewado of Goti

[FACING p. 226]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVIII

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BISON-HORN MARIA TYPES

Above Markami Harma of Burgum Markami Joga, headman of Burgum

Below Mase, wife of Markami Muka of Kakadi

[facing p. 240]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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The pouring of water over the bridegroom and bride at the Bison-horn Maria wedding described at p. 258

An old Bison-horn Maria from Gudra, between Katakalian and Kuakonda

[face p. 254

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by
426 working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not
621 regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *penda* must not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The
661 first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant
439 cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

535 Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria
292 style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatiharhana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-bhita* or 'song fellows' and the dance-steps.[1]

535 The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The
534 *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence.
●301 Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of 'jewellery' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 75-6 and 183-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to be a definite infiltration of Bison-horn Maria influences from Bastar. The illustration in this Supplement shows some of the Lahiri Maria girls and gives some indication of the quantity and Bison-horn style of the ornaments.

Before climbing to Kuvakodi I had sent some Marias up the valley to Nugur village in Kutru Mar, on the Indrawati banks, to invite to my camp the Kuruk boatmen who had taken Dr. Mitchell and myself in their canoes in November 1927, down the river from Nugur to the Jitam rapids.[1] Tati Ogha and Rajintappa, the leaders of our 1927 ' fleet ', and several of the boatmen arrived at Lahiri that evening, and recognized me, after thirteen years, with tears of joy. They were received and made at home with the utmost courtesy—that almost stately courtesy so characteristic of the Gond, whether of Marias at a feast or of Betul Gonds receiving the bride's party at the bridegroom's village; although the Bastar Hill Marias look down on Kuruks or ' Jharaman ' (netters), the Lahiri headmen could not do enough for these Kuruks, giving them the best of the food, refilling their leaf-cups with *mahua* spirit, and showing a real delight when I tied a *pagri* on each Kuruk's head, and presented them with cloth and beads, while they insisted on the strangers getting the best places from which to watch the dancing.

The motor journey from Lahiri to Surjagarh, about 59 miles in all, involved a return on our outward tracks through Bhamragarh to a point three miles east of Pirmeli, thence roughly north or north-west through Kandar, Burgi and Markel villages to Chukmitapalli, and thence due east through Hitawara to Surjagarh; despite a very early start we reached Surjagarh after dark, thanks to ' receptions ' in every intervening village and, above all, to delays for treating yaws patients. All these Maria villages have excellent human material, and some surprises for the visitor. At Burgi, for example, a boy dashed off to his house to emerge as a uniformed boy scout! Some years before an attempt to start a boy scout movement in Ahiri zamindari had met with some initial success, but had apparently died out. Yet this boy had carefully preserved his uniform in a leaf-box, and, more hopeful, he and some other boys had preserved the memory of the lessons they had had on cleanliness and hygiene and in a minor way were still influencing the villages to carry out what they had learnt. It is often assumed that the Marias and similar men of the backwoods have never seen anything of the outer world. Comparable with the visit of a party of Bastar Hill Marias to the Allahabad Exhibition mentioned on page 71, was the fact that this boy and some other Maria youths had been taken two or three years before to a scout jamboree at Delhi. When I asked

[1] See p. 164.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
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302
224

Muchaki Pándu, Bison-horn Maria of Gogonda with hunting-horn

Bison-horn Maria of Lakhopal

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[End Plate B]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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Mariaiyi Hiraga, Bison-horn Maria headman of Marandia

[End Plate C]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
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Elwin

Elwin-born Maria youth of Kakker in Hill Maria festival dress

[End Plate D]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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●301
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Hill Maria children

Verrier Elwin

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Muchaki Kondi, Bison-horn Maria girl, of Bergum

Verrier Elwin

[End Plate F]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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Bison-horn Maria girl of Mohlipal

[End Plate 6]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Group of Maria girls from Lahiri, Chanda district

W. V. Grigson

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Hill Maria mother and child

Warrior Elwin

[End Plate H]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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Bison-horn Maria girl brings in the harvest

(Verrier Elwin

[End Plate J]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

● 301
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854

[Verrier Elwin

Jugho Chero, of Ituinar, shown in Plate VI (*facing p. 70*), photographed ten years later

[End Plate Q]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142
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The chiefs are amused

[frontispiece]

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●301
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ABOVE: Motiari of Sirpuri, showing method of arranging combs

BELOW: The Gujaru, Sulk and Mularo of the Barko ghotul

[p.12 (A)]

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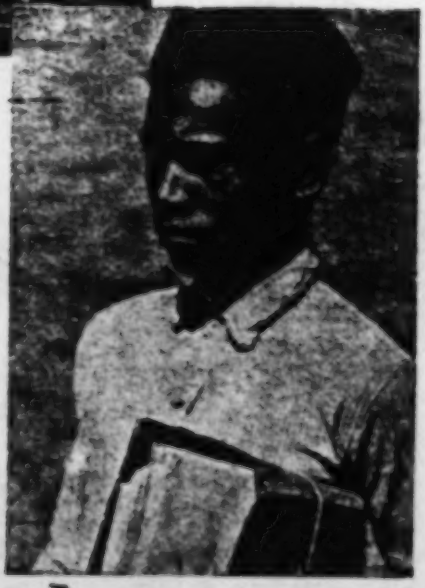
Plate V



A study in contrasts. The two boys are brothers, but one goes to school

[p. 18 (a)]

Plate VI

142
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Nari, the priest and landlord of Nayanar

[p. 18 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

291
142
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Motiari of Munjmeta listening to the gramophone

[p. 30 (A)]

241
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● 301

Chelik of Bayana? digging

Plate XII

The Meiya of Phanda spinning rope

[283]

[p.44(B)]

2. Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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●301

Two motiari from Kapsi

Plate XVI

The Belosa of the Bhanpuri ghotul

[p. 60 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

584 agrees, they accept the liquor brought and drink it together. If the parents are unwilling, but the girl desires the match, it is said that they usually have to give in to her.

Here too they offer liquor on leaves to the Departed inside the house and watch the leaves to see whether the omens are favourable or not.

At the next visit, the boy's parents bring four baskets of rice and more liquor. The boy's mother washes the girl's feet with liquor and offers a ring. In some villages they drop liquor in the rice-husking cavity; in others they make an offering of cowries or their equivalent to the Pot of the Departed. As they do so, the boy's father says, 'O Departed, accept this offering. We take this girl into our clan and give you cowries in her stead'. At Esalnar the people said that in the old days the Duga sept used to give five cowries, and now give fifteen pice, and the Sori sept used to give three cowries and now nine pice.[1] These are put into the Pot of the Departed. From this day the girl is regarded as belonging to the clan of her betrothed, and must obey its rules and taboos. In some places it is considered proper that a girl should go, even before marriage, for New Eating ceremonies to her future husband's house.

At Chimri I was told that as the boy's parents go home, the motiari stop them and demand 'ring-cowrie', a small present of rings or cowries to compensate the ghotul for the loss that it will suffer when the girl is married. In other places, this is done during the marriage ceremony.

●[301]

Fig. 17. Brass rings with small bells attached
Actual size

At this second visit, the bride-price is fixed. If the engagement is made many years before marriage the boy's parents generally pay an annual visit to the girl's house, taking her presents of liquor and ornaments.

[801] The bride-price should be in terms of odd numbers, three, five, seven or eleven. Even numbers are *jori hi jori* and so unlucky: you must have something over a pair. The number nine is also unlucky: a man may die of it.

There are many games about this betrothal ceremony and it is often mentioned in the songs; during their slow tedious dance round the marriage-booth the chelik sing a mixed Gondi and Halbi song about it.

[1] The Muria clans do not now appear to worship different numbers of gods, but the above practice suggests that perhaps they once did. Ward says that the Gond marriage contract was generally to the effect 'that the father of the bridegroom elect should give the father of the bride as many rupees as he worships Deos (the latter never exceed nine in number, but vary from that number to five)'.—H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mundlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 136.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Bride at Amasara with braided hair

[p. 94 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Motiari attending the bridegroom at Nayanar

[p.102 (A)]

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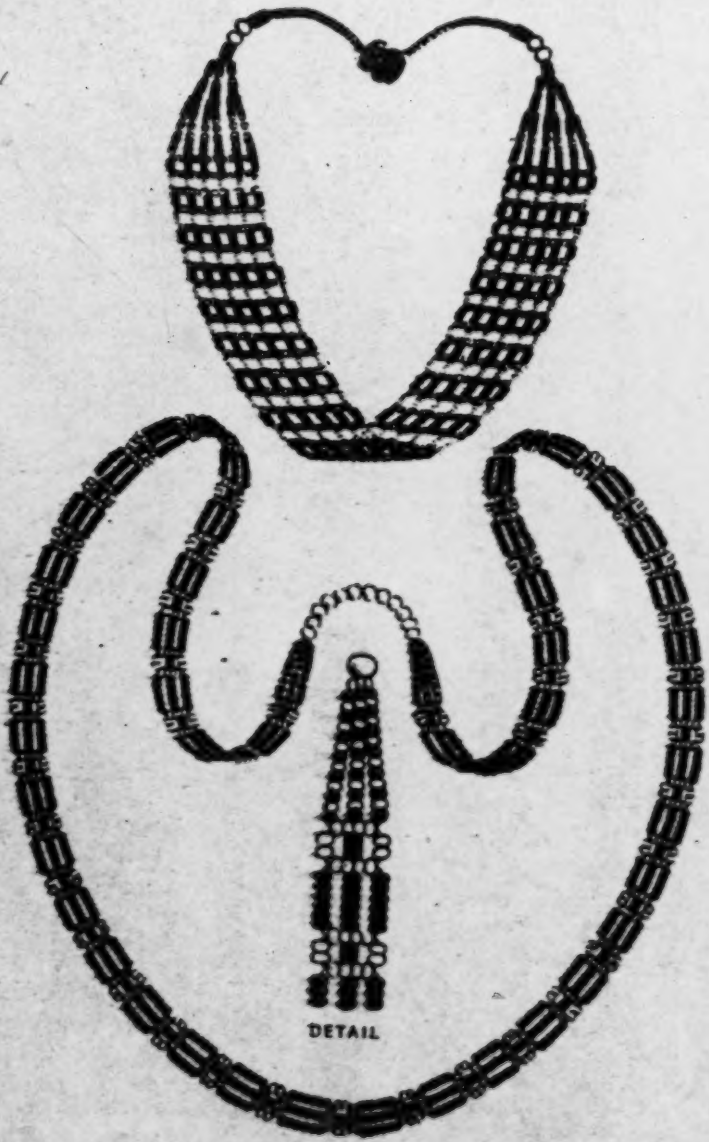

TYPICAL JHORIA NECKLACE AND HEAD-BAND FROM MARKABERA

[facing p. 125]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
883

towards the end, I did not once see them strained or quarrelsome. Their tremendous vitality kept the thing on the move and made everyone cheerful and happy.

In return for all this work, the chelik and motiari seem to get very little, one meal a day and a little liquor. The bride and bridegroom distribute small keepsakes, rings and beads. The motiari of the bride's ghotul demand and receive four annas as *mundi*-cowrie. The chelik also demand a new mandri drum from the bridegroom in compensation for the loss of one of their girls. They are generally given eight annas instead. This present is called *sakta*. The boy also has to give *chilkul*-cymbals, or four annas, to his own chelik.

People treat the chelik and motiari with great respect, for there is great fear of offending them—a strike, which is not unknown, can upset the entire proceedings. It is

[301]

DETAIL

FIG. 23. *Chapaki-mundi* necklace, from Kuntpedar, of red, white and blue beads
Length 5' 8"

[831] noteworthy also that there is no exchange of obscenities between the older people and the ghotul members. When the old women smear their dirty hands on all available male faces, catching hold of their private parts or pouring haldi over their buttocks, they never do it to the chelik. It would be considered equally shocking for a married man to poke his stick at a motiari

The Nero of the Tarhalli ghotul

291
301
142

Plate XLI

Two great friends: Pilsai and his horse at Sidhawand

[p. 204 (A)]

142
291
301

Plate XLIX

Uraon dhangar

Uraon dhangri

[p. 242 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32

Plate I.

142
291
301

Iype, a Hill Maria girl of Bolimori

[p. 242 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Bison-horn Maria

142
291
301

Bison-horn Maria girl from Godra, Bastar State

[p. 278 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Bison-Horn Maria

142
291
301
535
516

Hirmo, a Bison-horn Maria girl washing her hands

Plate LIV

Bison-horn Maria dancers

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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Uraon dhangri

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Plate LXVII

Motiari of Kongera grinding

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252
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[B 330(4)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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291

Phirtu, the Chowkidar of the Maseva ghotul

Plate LXIX

The ghotul near Malakot

342

[p. 338 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

301

FIG. 63. Karajarner necklace from Palli. The beads are dark blue

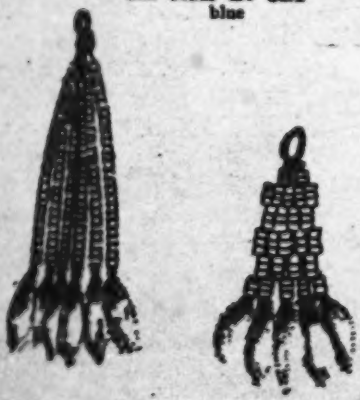

FIG. 64. Jhoria ear-drops from Nayanar, of red, white and blue beads, with small tufts of red wool at the bottom

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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553

to Dorga the attractive title Chelik-sunder. Then the Sirdar called the leading boys aside and they whispered together for a few minutes. The Sirdar went to the group of girls, picked up two of them and brought them into the middle of the company. He lifted each in turn and hit her with his clenched fist. To the first, Sukmi, he gave the name Jankai and to the second, Pakli, the name Mankai. This was all done, as it should be done, in the presence of the people, in the face of the village elders, who yet by an absurd fiction are not supposed to know that such a thing as a ghotul name exists.

301]

FIG. 63. Ear-ring with pendant of red, blue and white beads
Actual size

The motiari now did Johar, first to the Sirdar, then to all the chelik and elders and visitors, but not to any women. Then the Sirdar, followed by the three boy initiates, did the same. This is the only occasion when the Sirdar salutes his 'subjects'—it is a kind action, to make the little boys feel at home. It is the last time the initiates perform the Johar rite. After the Johar, the Sirdar gave a little sermon to the new boys. He waved a siari stalk round them three times and said, 'Bear this *kāwar* [pole for carrying loads]. Serve the [ghotul] government. Give food to the official and the stranger. Serve and feed your father and mother. Now you have a new name. Grow up quickly and live till you are an old man.' He put rice-marks on their foreheads and gave them a leaf-cup of liquor. In Aturgaon, the leader gives the initiates a ring, but this was not done here.

In many villages, when he gets his name, the initiate gives a bottle of liquor to the ghotul, of which he then becomes a full member. He is then excused the tiresome duties of childhood. He no longer has to bring wood daily: he no longer salutes anyone. But in some places, the little boy has to continue doing this even after he has got his title until he is 'grown up' and makes a formal offering of liquor to the ghotul. For a girl, a title means less change, for she still has to salute the boys every night and perform her obligations in tobacco, leaves and cleaning. But boys and girls alike gain a new dignity,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

352
291
301

Chelik of Toinar with his ghotul 'wife'

[p. 364 (W)]

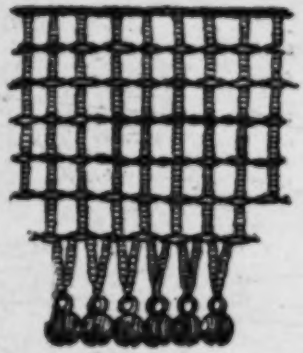
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AN EVENING IN THE GHOTUL

THE ghotul is very literally a night-club; it is only in the evening that there is 'a noise in the belly of the elephant'; during the day, except on festivals, it is deserted. The real life of the ghotul is in the firelight.

The conventions and routine of a ghotul evening are almost everywhere the same. I have spent a hundred evenings in all parts of the Muria area with the chelik and motiari and have found, on the whole, a remarkable similarity of custom. The Muria explain this by saying that all ghotul have developed from the first house at Semurgaon where Lingo himself prescribed the routine that should be followed.



DETAIL

In the afternoon, motiari come to sweep, clean and cow-dung the buildings and court-yard. Their grass brooms are soon raising clouds of dust; rubbish is collected in basket or winnowing-fan and thrown away; cow-dung mixed with water is spread by hand over the floor. At sunset, someone often comes to arrange and light the fire; where there are no matches to light your pipe or lanterns to show you your way about, a fire serves more purposes than warmth and is needed even in the hot weather.

At any time after supper, it may be from 7.30 up to 9 p.m. according to the season and the circumstances of the village, the chelik begin to arrive.

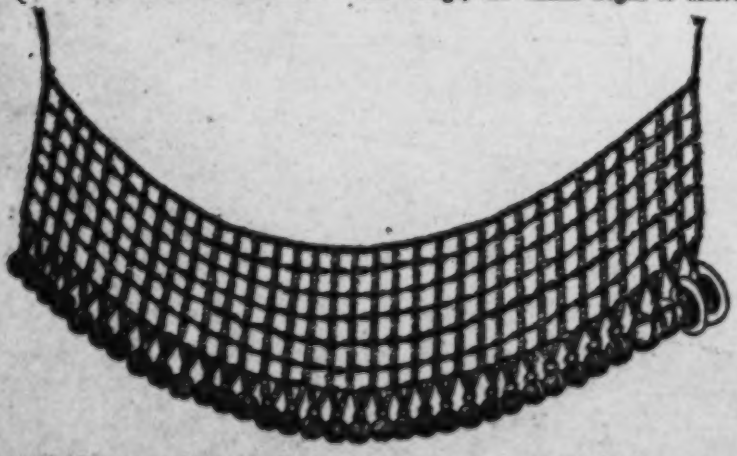


FIG. 66. Bead belt with bells and cowries from Ramawand. The beads are blue and white

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Muria

māma' and so on. As they give the salute they stretch out their hands, sometimes both hands, lower and then raise them in a pretty gesture. Often

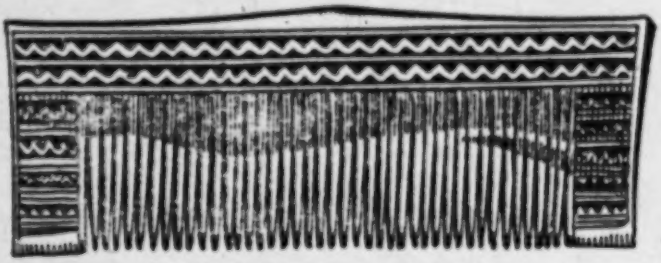


Fig. 67. Carved wooden comb from Toinar
Length 6"

they only use one hand, laying it on head or shoulder; in the east of Kondagaon they put both hands on the head.

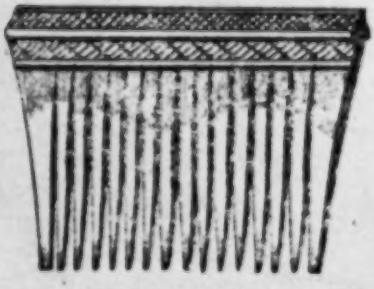


Fig. 68 A comb from the Narayanpur Tahsil
Width 2¾"

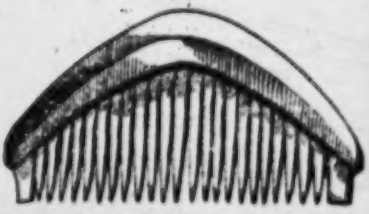


Fig. 69. A comb from Phulpar
Width 3¼"

When the boys have finished, the motiari go round in the same way, with the same gestures and salutes, generally speaking in high, almost artificial voices. In Phulpar the girls did not say Johar, but repeated the ghotul title twice, thus—'Gaita, Gaita' or 'Kotwar, Kotwar'. A girl should not salute a boy to whom she is betrothed or her Lamhada, and she must be very careful about using the proper terms of relationship—for by this means she is reminded of the tribal laws of avoidance. In some ghotul this ceremony is performed twice, once when the company first assembles and

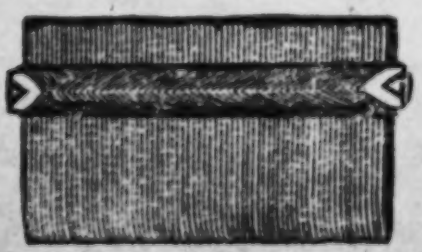


Fig. 70. A bamboo comb, of a type sometimes made by Muria for sale in the bazaars
Width 2¾"

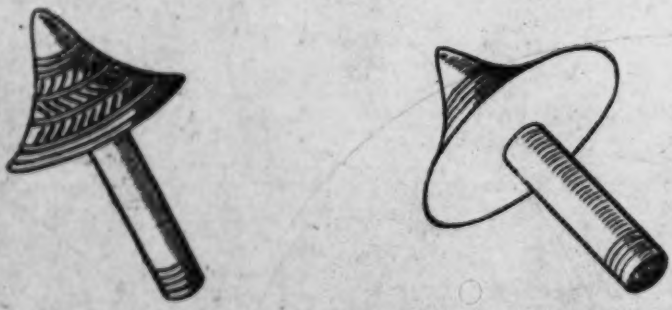
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

301

FIG. 71. The *pusai hoji* or cat's footprint necklace. The beads in the centre are white and red and the cat's footprint itself is made of white, blue and yellow beads. The rest of the necklace is composed of a number of beads, orange, brown, pink, mauve, green and scarlet
Length 18"

FIG. 72. The *hupe hoji* or rat's footprint necklace of blue and white beads
Length 31"

FIG. 73. Carved wooden ear-plugs from Kanhargaon



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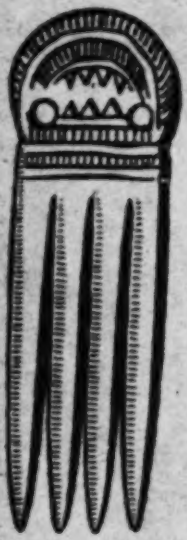


FIG. 74. Comb of a type often used in the Abujhmar foothills
Length 3½″

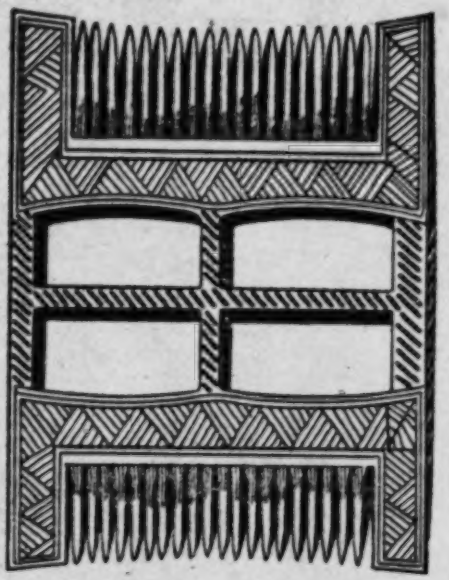
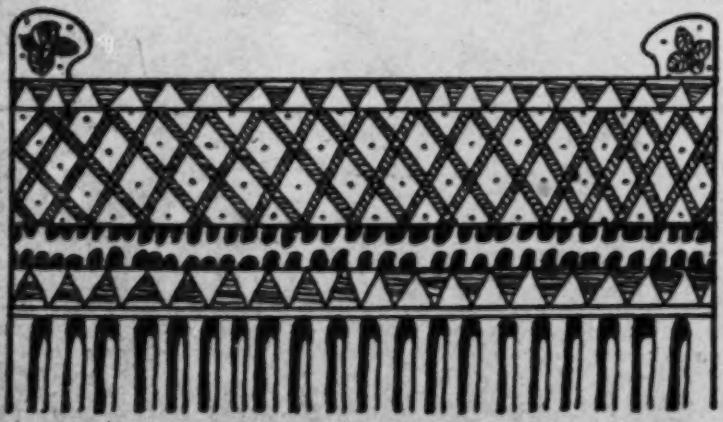


FIG. 75. Double comb from Bhanpuri
Height 4¼″



From Paul Schebesta's article 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula' in *JRAS* (1929), p. 758
FIG. 76. Malayan comb
(*See p. 568n*)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
513

each other's arms on the sleeping-mat. They often have to lie very close together; sometimes two boys have one girl between them; many of the couples actually touch each other. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the compound.

In ghotul where the motiari always sleep in the ghotul, bedtime is a simple matter of routine. In places where they only stay on sometimes, they go singing to their own house or verandah. When they are not sure what to do, they stay on till the Sirdar says, 'Well, girls, are you going to sleep here or are you going home?' The Belosa answers, 'It's very late, I think we'd better stay here' or 'There's a tiger about, it's not safe to go'. The Sirdar says, 'Then go to your mats at once and don't keep us awake any longer'.

[276
531]

FIG. 77. Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel
Width 4½"

In Chandabera, the boys told me that the girls often said, 'Let's go home tonight' and ran away. But if a boy was anxious to sleep with his girl, he would ask the Kotwar to keep them and he always did.

FIG. 78. Comb with carved leopard
Width 5"

[301
412
531
415]

FIG. 79. The *kansul-gota* or tortoise box
Height 4"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

I. Dress and Fashions

THE chelik and motiari, as we have seen, pay a lot of attention to their charming persons, so much attention indeed and of such a varied nature that it is not easy to describe their fashions in a single chapter. But the task is made somewhat easier by the tradition of ghotul solidarity. To be in the fashion, according to Muria ideas, it is essential that all the girls of any one village should look exactly alike. They must have the same coloured cloth round their loins, the same ornaments in their ears, the same bangles on their wrists, the same kind of beads about their necks. The Belosa sets the fashion and all her subjects follow it. There is a little more latitude allowed to boys, especially to the leaders. The Malik of Jungani can wear a wonderful comb fashioned with a chelik and motiari on horseback; the Kotwar of Chandabera can have a tobacco-pouch shaped like a fish in his turban; the Manjhi of Kabonga can go about with a beautifully-carved wooden bird perched on the comb in his hair. But girls cannot do that sort of thing; for them originality is bad taste.

There are five main fashion areas—the villages along the northern border, the Jhoria of the south and centre, the Muria of the north-west near the Abujhmar, the villages round Kondagaon and along the main road and the eastern forest approaching the Jeypore boundary. Each of these areas has its own special style.

There are, however, certain general observations that may be made of Muria everywhere. All Muria wear the same kind of cloth. It is taboo for a Muria to weave, and most of their cloth comes from the local Ganda and Mahara weavers. The cloth is good, but unenterprising, generally plain white with a red stripe or band. The chelik rarely wear a dhoti; all they can usually afford is a loin-cloth tied round the waist, passed between the legs and allowed to hang down in front. Well-to-do boys use a broader cloth that covers the buttocks, but most leave them bare and only conceal the private parts with a narrow strip that forms a sort of bag.

Girls wear a small cloth, supported back and front by their waist-string, to cover the private parts. Over it they wind round the loins a small strip of cloth like a very short skirt, carrying the end up and over one shoulder so as somewhat to conceal the breasts, and tucking it in again behind. In the Jhoria and north-western parganas, both breasts are often left exposed when no stranger is near, and nearly always one breast is visible—a fact that gives point to the riddle: 'The cow-shed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get inside.'

Muria boys and men usually wear a turban, and this varies not so much from a desire to be in the fashion but according to what one can afford. The classical Muria turban is tied round and round to form a sort of box on the head; in eastern Kondagaon the overhanging flaps are carefully decorated with coloured fringes. This box is rightly so named, for it not only covers the head, but serves as a receptacle for combs, mirrors, leaf-pipes and anything else that a boy may wish to take about.

Neither motiari nor married women cover their heads in conventional village fashion. It is a mark of a Muria girl that her head should be proudly free.

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Muria

412
531
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Fig. 80. Bird-comb from Chandabera
Height 4½"

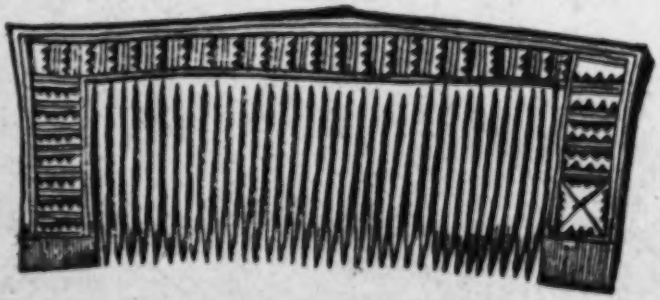

Fig. 81. Comb from Bhorpal
Length 5½"

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Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria everywhere are at the mercy of the merchants in the bazaar, though these are not entirely indifferent to popular demand. They supply cheap aluminium armlets and anklets, glass and lac bangles, aluminium and silver neck-bands, the *kauri* necklaces of rupees known throughout Central India, and many varieties of beads. Muria chelik and motiari buy these in the bazaars and wear them. They indicate nothing except perhaps the way in which the natural taste and intelligence of the aboriginals is degraded in the interests of big business.

We may now turn to the special ornaments worn by the Muria in the different fashion areas I have named. We will begin with the Jhoria, for these are the most distinctive and interesting of all the Muria.

The Jhoria, as we have seen, are simply Hill Maria who have settled in the foothills. You can distinguish a Maria from a Jhoria girl by her breasts so charmingly displayed and the tattoo marks less charmingly marring the beauty of her face. It is not so easy to distinguish between a Jhoria chelik and a young Hill Maria boy.

Like the Hill Maria, the Jhoria give the impression of being a little over-dressed.[1] They are 'dolled up', smart, tight, fresh, alert, vivacious—altogether charming. Their clothes are worn tightly round their bodies, revealing the grace and energy of the figure. Their ornaments and especially their necklaces do not hang about them, but are drawn tight round their heads and necks. The feathers in their hair give them the perky bright appearance of young birds.

Most striking of all are their gaily coloured bead decorations. They wear head-bands, sometimes three or four of them, round the head, keeping the hair in place. Round the neck are two or more broad bead collars and a profusion of necklaces; their beautiful and elaborate designs are fully illustrated in the colour plates in this book.

Jhoria boys and girls wear ear-pendants of coloured beads (Fig. 64): some girls also wear large circular shields (*dhâr*) without the usual chains, or home-made wooden *hinua* (Fig. 73) covered with silver paper.

Bangles are not made by the Muria, and those worn by boys or girls are the usual bazaar products.

Rings play an important part in ghotul life. A boy or girl on being appointed to high office is presented with a ring: at a marriage the bride and bridegroom give rings to their old companions: a ring is buried in front of the Gaita's house before a Deo-Dandar or Pen Kolang expedition and is later given to the leader of the dance: rings are collected at a festival and offered to the clan-god.

The rings are of brass or aluminium: some are decorated with little bells (Fig. 17). Girls often wear a great many which the boys beg them to remove before beginning the massage.

Girls often wear rows of combs in their hair, with thick bunches of cowries,[2] and balls of red and green wool. Both chelik and motiari love to put flowers in their hair or over their ears.

The Jhoria chelik wear cowrie belts just above their loin-cloths. There seems no shortage of these; they may be found everywhere. Sometimes the son of well-to-do people wears a broad silver *kardan*, bought in the bazaar, of a kind used by girls.

[1] The word is W. V. Grigson's; it exactly describes my own impression—if such a phrase can be applied to people who hardly wear any clothes at all.

[2] For the use of cowries, almost universal in Bastar, see my article 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII (1942), pp. 121–4.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

276
531
301

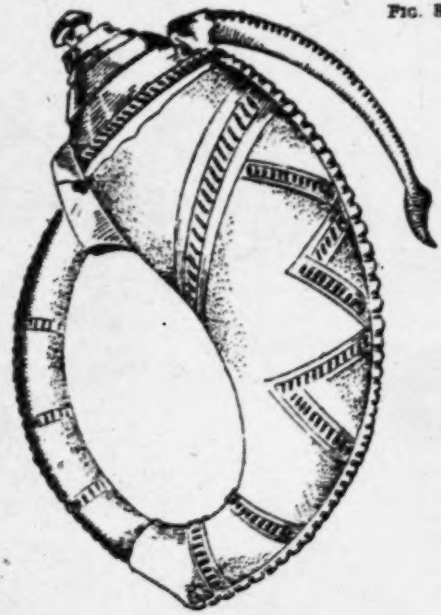

FIG. 82. Tobacco-box from the Mardapal Pargana
Height 5"

FIG. 83. *Kalsi-gola* from Borpal
Height 7¼"

FIG. 84. *Dudong-gola.* A small tobacco-box 'as round as a girl's breast'
Height 1¾"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

In the north-west, in the villages of the remote Partabpur and Paralkot areas, where Hill Maria influence is still strong, the chelik of the Paralkot area distinguished two types of necklace: the cat's foot pattern and the rat's foot. (Compare Figs. 71 and 72.) Some of the motiari here wore necklaces usually characteristic of the Hill Maria, with large white beads, and little bells at the end. I have seen motiari with both breasts exposed in Maria fashion, though others have been very fully dressed in smart red saris. Head-bands are not worn, but boys and girls stick flowers and feathers in their hair. The girls usually have few combs.

FIG. 85. Jhoria head-band of red, blue and white beads

One may still see necklaces and head-bands of fibre, either sago or date palm, carefully made (Figs. 87 and 88).

To move north from the Jhoria country is to receive an unforgettable impression of drabness. The bright head-bands disappear: the smart tight bead-collars yield to floppy monotonous necklaces. The beads are big, cheap and red; almost everything is bazaar-purchased. One particularly misses the girls' decorations. The Kalpatti, Serebahi, Antagarh and Amabera are the least colourful of all the ghotul parganas. Contact with Chhattisgarhi Gond has ruined their taste and destroyed their artistic enterprise.

Round Kondagaon and along the main road, the chelik and motiari have a charm of their own, though there is little in their dress or ornament to emphasize it. Both wear a great many necklaces, of red and white beads, getting the effect from quantity rather than from anything artistic in the design. They distinguish the *gīr-gatti*, a necklace of small black beads, *moti-māla*, made of white beads, *jug-jugi*, of red and white beads, *jāl-mungiya*, of red beads, *tan-suta*, a decorated neck-band and *kāri*, a thin black necklace.

Occasionally you will see a solitary head-band; girls often have masses of combs.

In the ears, the motiari wear cheap yellow *kinwa* from the bazaar, or *dhār* shields. The boys have little brass rings in the helix.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

301 The cowrie belt is almost unknown, but the chelik carry strings of cowries, bells, beads and tobacco-pouches at the waist.

In this area, the girls have either floppy brass *pairi* slipping down over the heels, or the thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the ankles.

Finally, in the extreme east of Kondagaon, the chelik recapture something of the aesthetic attractiveness of the Jhoria. Once more elaborate necklaces of small red and blue beads appear; a head-band of cowries and black sago palm fibre is often worn (Fig. 89). The chelik's turban is specially attractive: 291 it is tied straight round into a box with one flap hanging over the top, the other falling behind. The boys themselves attach pretty fringes of pink, mauve and red tassels to these flaps.

For protection against rain, all the Muria make large round hats of leaves placed between a double bamboo framework, and long shields of the same material to hang from their shoulders. In a few villages near the Abujhmar they make the *tarali*-cloak of strips of retted bark characteristic of the Hill Maria.

II. Hair-dressing

302 The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria. You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, 832 but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive.

Care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render 302 to a chelik; it is during the hair-combing in the evening that friendships become intimate and proposals are made; wherever she is, in camp for a marriage or 515 festival, resting in the heat of the day while working on the roads, or just 524 sitting in the house, a girl takes any chance she can of cleaning a boy's head, and examining it for lice. 'the thousand babies housed in a dry tree', 'the black cows that live in the thick forest, bothering everyone and drinking red water', 'the tigers that breed so quickly in the jungle'. She catches them with the end of her comb, or with her fingers, and kills them with thumb and forefinger. 'Ten went to hunt', says the riddle, 'but two did the killing.'

302 The chelik keep their hair fairly long. A straight fringe is cut across the forehead, and from the parting above it the hair is brushed back and tied in a bun usually covered by the turban. Some of the Muria living under the shadow of the Abujhmar follow the Hill Maria custom of shaving the whole head except for a patch on the crown which is carefully combed back and tied in a knot.

The chelik cut and trim their hair once every month or so, when the motiari who comb it tell them to. They cut and shave each other's heads with small razors made by the village Lohar. The motiari keep their boys closely shaven as to their chins, but they seem to like a good moustache. There is no other reason for shaving: the Muria, except those who have begun to imitate Hindu customs, do not shave at funerals or other religious occasions.

Girls do not cut their hair. They part it down the centre, and very carefully smooth it down and back. Behind the head they wind it over the small wooden blocks called *kunjar balla* (Fig. 91) which are carved for them by the chelik, and tuck it in underneath, fixing it in place with the *kunjar koto*, beautifully made wooden pins (Fig. 90)—also the gifts of chelik—to which are often attached bunches of cowries, coloured wool or strings of beads.

Both boys and girls treat their hair with oil, generally oil specially expressed by a motiari, a mother or sister. Many Muria now carry little bazaar mirrors which they constantly use.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Jhoria have the most elaborate hair-ornaments. Bands of beads (Fig. 85) are made by the motiari with great art and taste, and are worn round

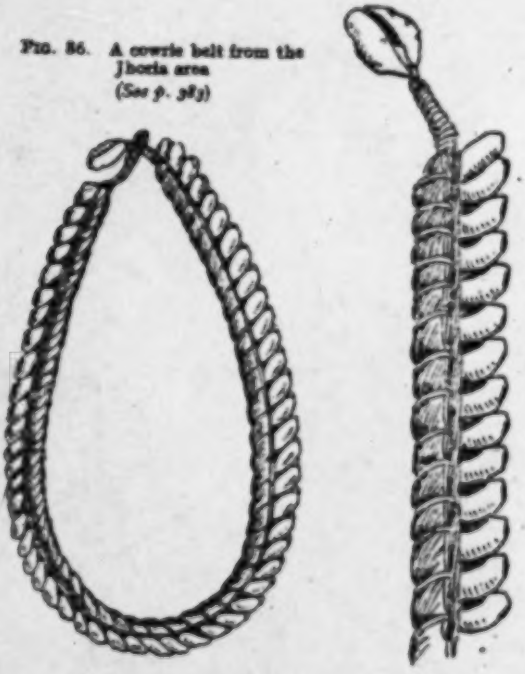

FIG. 86. A cowrie belt from the Jhoria area
(See p. 383)

the head by both boys and girls. Thick bands of blue, white and red beads, or three narrower bands, give the children a distinctive and delightful appearance. Sometimes long strings of beads are also wound over and round the turban. Boys and girls alike delight to stick feathers in their hair—feathers of junglecock, peacock, the racket-tailed drongo. Girls often wear tufts of the sago or date palms and any flowers that may be available; they have a special affection for the marigold, which is 'the most beautiful of flowers', and the crimson velvety *siliyāri*.

The motiari in the Jhoria country tie great masses of cowries over the bun into which their hair is tied, mixing them with balls of red, green and blue wool.

There is a pretty game called Atoi-mal-mal Karsana in which the girls stand in a half-circle singing 'Make my hair soft and *mal-mal*'. Each girl in turn goes round the circle smoothing and parting the hair of her fellows.

In the east of the State, in the villages round Ulera, I found many boys using hair-retainers (Fig. 92) made out of old umbrella ribs by the local Muria Lohar.

But, of course, the chief hair-ornament is the comb, a subject of such importance that I describe it in a separate section.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Belle marrâte pungâr puy ânla

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

[1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The essence lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'

[2] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 27f.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAS* (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 396ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poesy* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, op. cit., p. 180.

[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Muduvar.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, op. cit., p. 47.

2. Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate LXXVIII

A motiari serves the boys

The ghotul Kotwar, son of Nari, serving food at Nayanar

[p. 388 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

[38]

Fig. 87. Head-billid of sago palm fibre from Malakot (see p. 385)
Length 23"

Fig. 88. Neck-band of date palm fibre from Bayanar (see p. 385)
Length 16"

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devoted lover. Every comb, however, is a gift. When a girl wants a new one she brings two annas' worth of silver metal from the bazaar and that

[301]

Fig. 89. Cowrie head-band from Ulera. The cowries are attached to a cord made of carefully woven sago palm fibre
(See p. 388)

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

night goes to comb the hair of the boy from whom she desires a present. She does his hair with special care and whispers in his ear, 'Look, boy, I have brought some silver, make me a nice comb'. The boy says, 'I don't know how to'. The girl says, 'But of course you know'. Then the boy says, 'Well, what will you give me? Will you....?' The girl says, 'Never', meaning 'Yes', and the boy makes the comb.

In well-disciplined ghotul a boy cannot give a comb to a motiari without the permission of the Kotwar; sometimes it has actually to pass through the Kotwar's hands. For such a gift seems to be regarded as a very definite and important step in the love relations between a boy and girl, and it is considered necessary by the ghotul authorities to keep a check on such intimacies in case there is any scandal or trouble. To this witness some lines in a Paskna Pata from Bandopal:

> Where did you get a comb like that?
> You got it from the embrace of a chelik.
> One comb for once, two combs for twice.

If a comb is lost or broken, the chelik must make a new one. Otherwise his motiari says, 'How can I comb his hair?' If the Kotwar hears about it, he orders the boy to make one, and he does so at once.

Most combs are made of mahua or karraha wood. Implements used in their manufacture are a small saw, ¾" broad and 6" long, rather like a fret-saw; a *kadri* knife; a *hujji* chisel and a *tatti* adze.

The Kotwar of the Phunder ghotul made a comb for me. He took a piece of mahua wood 2' long and 3" broad, supported one end on a bit of wood and gradually planed down one end, first with the adze and then with his knife. He stood it on end and trimmed the top; then with the saw cut a number of slits 1" deep, measuring them with a twig to ensure that they were even He cut them again and again to enlarge the slits, leaving on either side of the wood a space uncut.

Now another boy came and held the wood firmly, and the Kotwar cut off 1¼" from the top with his saw, first cutting half through on one side, then turning the wood over and doing it from the other. Finally he broke the piece off and trimmed it with his knife. So far the process had taken half an hour, but the small piece of wood had taken shape as a comb. The boy now spent fifteen minutes shaping the sides, then with his chisel he enlarged the slits again and carefully cleaned the apertures between the spikes. After this, he held the comb in the hollow of his left hand and grasping the chisel firmly in the right and pressing it down hard began to decorate the comb with various patterns. By the time he had finished, he had spent two-and-a-half hours on the work, the greater part of the time being spent on the decoration.

The next morning the Kotwar went to a wild fig tree to extract its sticky, milky gum. He struck a branch with the blunt end of his axe and caught some drops of gum in a leaf-cup. He brought this back and sat down by a fire. He spread the gum on either side of the comb with a bit of straw, warmed it on the fire, applied more gum, laid the silver paper over it and rubbed it in hard with the handle of his chisel till the pattern showed. He repeated the process on the opposite side toasting the comb before the fire by sticking it on the end of his chisel. Finally he brought out the pattern clearly by pressing in the silver paper with his own finger-nails, and washed it with a straw dipped in water.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

In some villages of the Bomra Pargana, if a comb falls down, it must be left where it is for a whole day. No one else may pick it up, and the owner should say nothing to anybody.

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Fig. 90. Wooden hair-pins from the Jhoria area
Longest pin 4½"
(*See p. 386*)

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In most places, there is a rule that when a motiari marries she should remove her combs within a certain time. Naturally if she has a dozen or more in her hair, the presents of a ghotul lover, it is only proper for her to return them to him when she marries someone else. But suppose it was her own husband who gave them to her, or another girl? Then she continues to wear them. It is not safe to say that a girl with combs is a motiari, one without combs a wife. I have seen women with three children wearing them. But usually the smart silvered ones are removed within a year of marriage.[1]

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IV. Cleanliness

The Muria are, on the whole, a clean and tidy people. The chelik and motiari especially are devoted to their toilet, wash their clothes frequently,

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[1] The Lakher and Lushai share the Muria objection to other people using their combs. 'They fear that if a man who is subject to headaches or who has a vampire soul uses another's comb', the owner may suffer in the same way.—Parry, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria wash their houses with a solution of cow-dung and water. When this has dried they apply a whitewash of clean mud from the jungle. A good

FIG. 91. Carved wooden blocks from Markabera used by the motiari as supports for their hair
(See p. 386)
Two-thirds actual size

housewife should do this every day. The motiari must keep the ghotul spotlessly clean—'This is how she learns to keep her husband's house clean when she leaves us', explained the boys at Berma.

Chelik and motiari wash their clothes frequently, almost as often as they bathe; the older people, naturally less concerned about their personal appearance, more anxious about economy, wash them less. The clothes are put in a pot with the ash of saja, dhaura, sesamum, siari-creeper or rice-chaff, and are boiled. When ready the pot is carried to the river, the clothes removed and washed by being beaten with the hands on a stone and rinsed again and again in the water. The clothes of a woman in her period, and especially her pubic cloth, are boiled on the river bank. At Tenrugaon I saw many empty pots lying on the bank and even floating in the pools which were used for this purpose, for they cannot of course be taken back to the house.

FIG. 92. Boys' hair-retainer made by a local blacksmith out of the ribs of an old umbrella
(See p. 387)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXX

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The Malko of the Koilibera ghotul

[P.396(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

I

"We obey our ghotul laws more faithfully than the laws of Government; for we ourselves made the ghotul laws, and so we love them."

—Common Muria saying

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THE life of the chelik and motiari is strictly regulated, and when a leader is appointed one of the powers with which he is entrusted is that of judging and punishing offenders against the ghotul code. It is surprising how important a place these punishments hold in the minds of the

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FIG. 97. Comb from Palari. The two horns are of bees-wax
Width 2½"

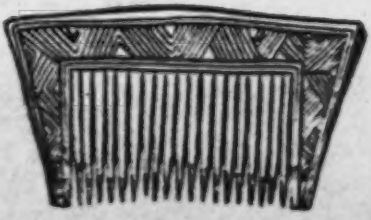

FIG. 98. Comb from Antagarh
Width 5"

FIG. 99. The *Pushpata*
Actual size

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

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children. When they are initiated, the little boys are told—'You must come every day, or you'll be punished'. The girls are likewise told—'You must

[276]

FIG. 100. Tobacco pounder
Length 18"

come every day, or you'll be punished. You must massage the chelik, or you'll be punished.' And when a girl leaves the ghotul at marriage, her

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[276]

FIG. 102. A Jhoria comb from Markabera
Width 3¾"

FIG. 101. The *Dudawari-gota*
Height 6"

most tender memories, as revealed in the farewell songs, seem to be connected with punishments. '*Dudhdy gai ke lili mithai*—The cow that gives milk:

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

was similarly punished for failing in his duty to make the chelik and motiari work at a wedding. As a boy Bindo punished the ghotul Kotwar for disobeying his orders to fetch the motiari in the evening; fifty years afterwards he still remembers the incident with satisfaction.

When the head of the ghotul is penalized, it is a convention in some ghotul that the motiari should beg to be punished in his stead. This happened at Chandabera when I was there, and the Sirdar was fined for not making proper arrangements for his visitors. The girls implored to be allowed to suffer for him.

FIG. 104. A sun and moon tobacco-box
Height 2½"

FIG. 105. Boy's necklace, from Kajen, of cowries strung together with red and 'silver' beads

Should the head of the ghotul turn out a bully or a slacker, the chelik and motiari take the help of the village headman and remove him. This does not happen very often because there is plenty of time to test a boy before he is appointed. But it is not always possible to judge how far power is likely to corrupt character, and scandals do occur. I have recorded a number of cases from the history of the last few years. In Mannegaon, the Leyur-Gaita was removed for bullying and abusing the children. The Malik of Esalnar was once degraded for bullying. The Kotwar of the Berma ghotul a few years ago got very much above himself and used 'to punish for four hours instead of one' until the members rebelled. They fined him a rupee, deprived him of office, made him a 'subject' with the name of Silledar, and appointed the Kandiki in his place. Recently in Kehalakot the Kotwar gave so much trouble to the girls that he was fined eight annas and removed.

Laziness also disqualifies a boy from holding high office. In Atargaon the Manjhi was dismissed 'for not working properly'. The Kokori Chalki was degraded to the rank of Kotwar for laziness and the Kotwar was appointed

Plate LXXXIII

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The turban as box

Girls wearing cowrie head-dress

[p. 410 (a)]

Plate LXXXVI

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Chelik with face decorations

The Likhen of the Timnar ghotul

[p.420 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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The Nero of Tarbaili with bamboo water-contain

[p. 428(b)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

The boys then sit down and the motiari feed them. They must not, however, go to the ghotul that night; there are still ceremonies to be performed.

FIG. 120. Anklet of bells worn on dancing expeditions

The next morning the motiari husk in the ghotul the grain that the chelik have brought home. On the verandahs of some ghotul there are permanent mortars for this purpose. In the evening boys and girls will cook this together. The boys then begin to dance; they go to the Gaita's house—at Koilibera they came to my camp; but fairly soon they go home to collect chickens and pigs for sacrifice. When they have all re-assembled they set off in a ragged procession, led by the Kaser-Gaita, towards the village boundary. On the way every boy picks up a stone and carries it along with him.

When they reach the boundary, the Kaser-Gaita goes for water; others clear a space under a tree by the roadside; the boys make a pile of stones in honour of Lingo Pen near by. In some villages, each pair of boys put down two stones and one above them. The Gaita's stones are put first and then all the others in a line with finally three stones for the dog. The chickens are sacrificed before the appropriate stones. The following day the boys go to inspect the stones and if any of them have fallen over it is regarded as a fatal omen and that particular pair of dancers will die. When the Gaita returns he sprinkles a little water on the cleared space, smooths it over, makes seven piles of rice and offers incense.

The chelik stretch a rope of siari creeper across the road and tie their dancing-sticks to it. The sacred bundle of peacock feathers is tied at one end. Two chelik climb trees on opposite sides and haul up the rope until it stretches taut across the road.

Now the Gaita offers chickens, eggs and two small pigs in the usual way. At Koilibera I was interested to see how he taught two of the boys, allowing them to practise with a few of the chickens and a pig. When this was over, the boys went to the road and rather formally stripped themselves of the *Lingo-singār*, the dress worn in honour of Lingo, packing the turbans, skirts and bells into little bamboo baskets.

The Pus Kolang is almost over. The chelik return home to the village and the Gaita goes with a few of the leading boys to the shrine of the Village Mother and replaces the sacred spear of Maria Pen. Everyone has returned safely, so the priest offers a goat. The rest of the day is spent preparing for the evening feast, which is taken at about five o'clock. At Koilibera, on 25 January 1941, I attended this feast; it was a very pleasant affair. A great crowd of people sat round in a half-circle, mothers with their children, old men, little boys. The older boys served the food; the motiari saw to arrangements behind the scenes. There was an excellent meal of rice (of several different kinds collected on the trip), pork, goat and pulses. My wife and I sat with the Chowkidar and Kalingsai. Presents of meat were sent to the whole village, to Kalar, Halba and Mahara without distinction. Last of all the older chelik and the motiari got their food, and that evening they went to sleep in the ghotul.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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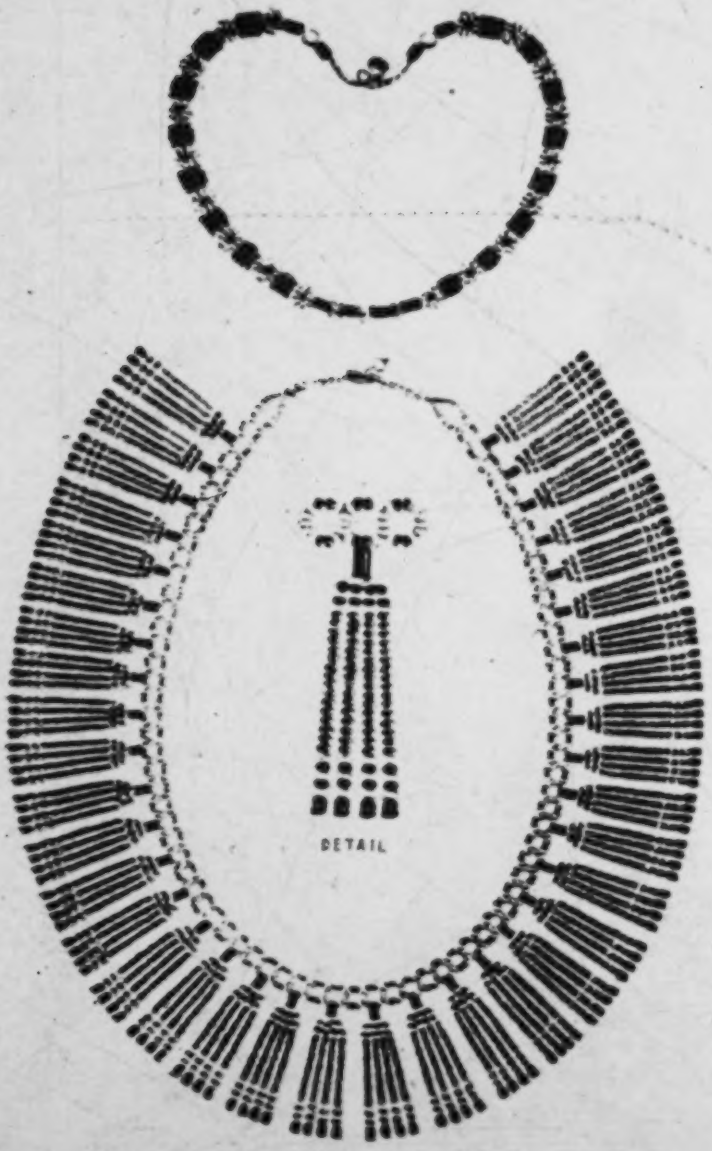

JHORIA NECKLACE AND HEAD-BAND FROM BEBAWAND

[facing p. 534]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate CXII

The Kotwarin of the Kongera ghotul

The Malko of the Markabera ghotul

[p.554(B)]

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FIG. 144. *Nawgal Pannivar* necklace. The large beads are white and the small are mainly white but occasionally light blue

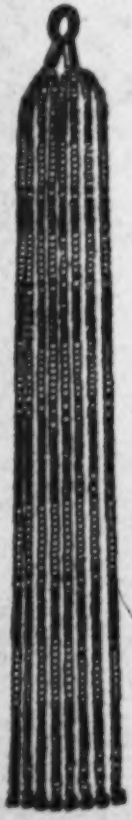

FIG. 143.
Pendant of red and white beads, attached to a ring in the ear

DETAIL

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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The Salho of the Munjmeta ghotul

Plate CXXVI

The Jhaliyaro of the Kurikhodra ghotul

[p.594(2)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

756
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A Siraha treats his patient at Tikanpal; medical treatment led to several murders

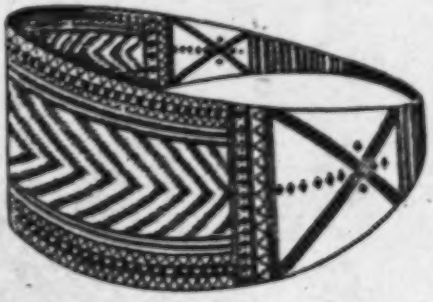
[facing p. iii]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

164 State Medical Department has done much to check the spread of the disease. Malaria, as everywhere in the Indian forests, is endemic, but few suffer from enlarged spleen. Leprosy and the venereal diseases are very rare. Skin diseases are also much less common than among the more elaborately clothed and thus dirtier people of the north.

291 Men wear a small loin-cloth and sometimes a little turban. The women tie a sort of skirt, very short, round their waists: it hangs down to the knees. The breasts are covered only with ornaments; when visiting a bazaar girls may tie a small piece of cloth round their shoulders. They often wear a thin brass fillet round the hair, and the older women use a large snood which is most becoming. Round the neck are masses of bead-necklaces, and iron or brass torcs. The bright colours of the beads and the shining brass fillets against the rich brown skin make a sight of unforgettable beauty.

[532 301] [302]



Brass fillet worn by Maria women

361 The Bison-horn Maria village is laid out on the same lines as the Gond village of the Central Provinces, unlike the communal settlements of the Hill Maria, Baiga or Juang. Each house stands in its own garden which is sometimes a substantial field, and a village may cover a very large area in consequence. Often a village is composed of anything from six to twelve small hamlets, each of which represents the grouping of a family round its patriarchal head. The little huts stand among woods, on rocky hill-sides, in the shade of spreading trees. Sometimes they appear almost submerged by waves of yellow sarson flowers or red jhira vegetable. Each village has a substantial building for the accommodation of travellers and this is used by the unmarried boys as a dormitory. The unmarried girls also sleep together, some-

[485 883 361]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Girls threshing grain with their feet at Mokhpal

[FACING p. 14]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Oyami Masa with family on the scene of the death of the younger wife

192
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Oyami Masa with his surviving wife

[Facing p. 15]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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A girl cleans grain in a field at Garmiri; failure in preparing food is sometimes a cause of tragedy

[FACING p.20]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Bandi of Mokhpal: the typical Maria wife

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Habka Masa, jealous of his wife

[Facing p. 21]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Girl cleaning grain at Tikanpal before a decorated door

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Hingo, a Maria girl of Kowali

[facing p. 28]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

285
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Girl with basket at Marenda

Girls breaking pods at Khutepal

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[facing p. 29]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Girls fetching water at Bastenar

[Facing p. 32]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Maria girl of Mokhpal. Domestic life is usually happy: the rare infidelities quickly lead to revenge

[Facing p. 33]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Dulha of Gadapal with bow and arrow

Boys catching a bat at Khutepal

224
302

[facing p.49]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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142

'Rice in the mouth and curry in the hand.'
Mother and child figure in several murder cases

[Facing p. 65]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER SIX

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: MARITAL INFIDELITY

I

[836] The Maria allow their women a great deal of freedom in
157 their pre-nuptial period, but for matrimonial relationships they have a strict regard. They are jealous and possessive by temperament, passionate as lovers,[1] suspicious and

[301]

Maria girls' neck-band

exacting husbands. Divorce is rare; adultery is dangerous, a crime the end of which cannot be foreseen.

837 Adultery is dangerous, for unless proper precautions are taken the ancestors of the household and the clan-god may

[1] But as elsewhere in India 'lust-murder' does not occur. 'Lust-murder, as one of the phenomena of psychopathia sexualis, appears to be better known in the more highly cultured countries of the West than in the East, where capital offences have their basis in less recondite mental processes'. S. M. Edwardes, *Crime in India* (Oxford, 1924), p. 28.

[p. 81]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

their long day's work. That night at supper Wango accused Kuma of allowing Palke to flirt with him and of distracting her affections from himself. The boy seems to have been

[301]

Necklace in Muria style, part of a dancing outfit

genuinely upset at his betrothed's lack of interest in him and her frigid attitude. He threatened to shoot her with an arrow. Kuma told his uncle Risami about this, and the old man got angry and declared that it was disgraceful of Wango to accuse a girl betrothed to him of so serious a crime as incest, and hit the boy twice. Wango caught hold of his future father-in-law, but the others separated them. So Wango walked out of the house. Risami followed to bring him back, for he had no desire to lose such a useful person

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

1942
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Such young girls are very sensitive, unkindness or abuse may quickly drive them to suicide

[FACING p. 128]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Married Maria girl. The love of such young wives for the 'mother's house' sometimes leads to disaster

[FACING p. 160]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' ● [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 479 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk [462] take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhanrai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *ponda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiwa* and making it useless for any magic.

Hair-dressing

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

302 and 5 cm. over the ears; this runs right round the head except just below the hair-knot. It is not the natural edge of the hair, as a little is shaved over the centre of the forehead and a good deal over the temples. From a parting (*paya*) just above this the hair is drawn back, like a European's hair brushed straight back from the forehead over the crown, into a top-knot knotted at the back of the head to hang down considerably lower than the Hill Maria crown-tuft knot. The knot is called *kupa-kelk*. The vernacular words used in describing this coiffure are from the Bison-horn dialect used around Aranpur. I have not seen Bison-horn Marias having their hair trimmed; but they say they use razors in the same way as the Hill Marias.

Women's hair is never cut. The hill women all part their hair in front in the centre and bring it back and down over their ears, the whole of which is left visible, into a great pendulous bunch at the back, like bobbed hair, but with the ends not trimmed off but apparently brought over some kind of stuffing and tucked under it.
301 They wear wooden combs made by the young men and often
302 ornamented above the teeth with patterns worked with criss-cross strands of *kosa* silk. These are sometimes as high as Spanish combs, but never as broad. So, too, the man often wears a comb in his crown-tuft. The Bison-horn Maria women do their hair similarly, but frequently wear round the centre of the forehead and the back of the head a horizontal fillet of plain, thin, polished brass about 2 cm. wide, called *utari*, and over this a snood, almost a tiara, of brass, patterned in relief with hammered suns and moons, vertical and oblique hatching lines, saltires, etc., of which the broadest portion fits closely over the skull between the crown and the forehead, the tapering sides descending obliquely over the *utari*, passing behind the ears and ending in cusps which are linked together under the bun. This is called a *talutar*; it, too, is brightly polished. At its greatest width, where it passes over the top of the head, it is 9 or 10 cm. wide. Some women do not wear both *utari* and *talutar*, but either one or the other; the *talutar* can often be seen hung up on the veranda when the woman is busy in the fields; but in the warm spring and hot weather months when you meet bands of women gathering forest fruits, most of them are wearing their *talutar*.

291 Before I visited the Abujhmar hills I was regaled with the tale told to Glasfurd in 1862 that many of the Hill Marias wore leaves, being too poor to buy any cloth. It was even then a fable; Glasfurd states that he made enquiries about this and was told by the Marias invariably that they had never seen or heard of any people so poor that they covered themselves with teak leaves; however poor they

Dress and ornaments: (a) Hill Maria

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE VI

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Full-face, Jugho Chero, of Itulnar

Hill Maria of Handawada
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)

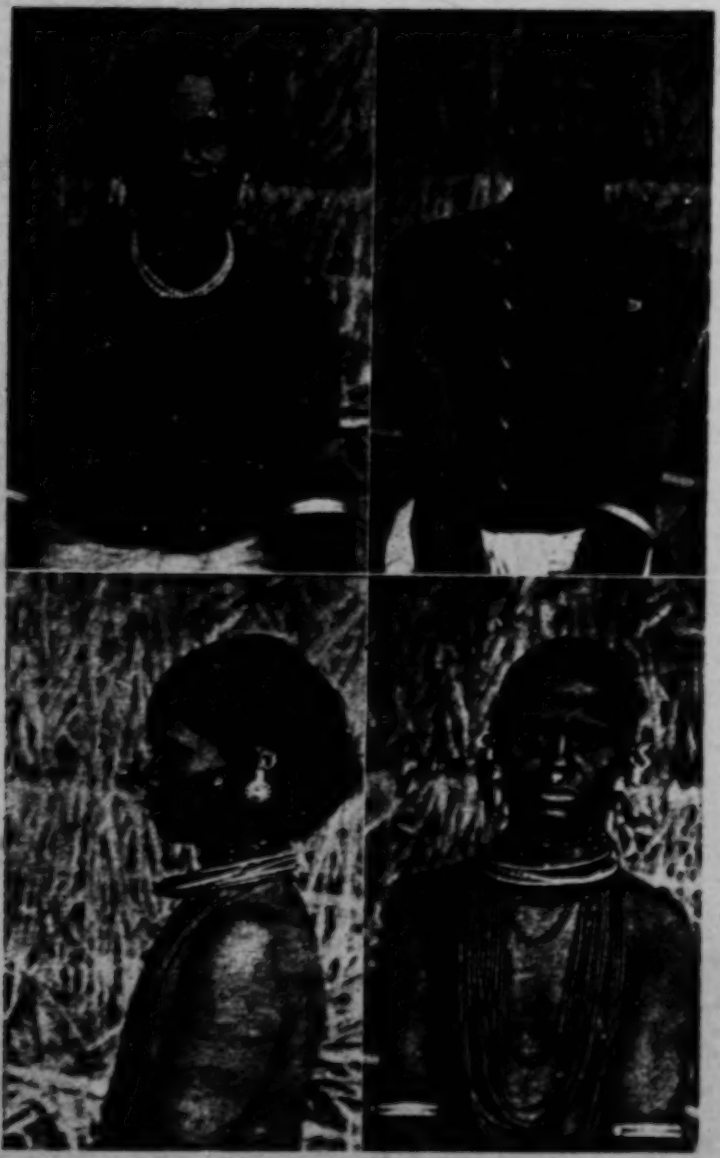
Kutru Mar youths, wearing *taghali* bark overcoats

[Facing p. 70]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVIII



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BISON-HORN MARIA TYPES

Above Markami Harma of Burgum Markami Joga, headman of Burgum

Below Mase, wife of Markami Muka of Kakadi

[facing p. 240]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Appendix V

Anthropometric Analysis of the Hill and Bison-horn Marias

By Mr. Ramesh Chandra Roy, M.Sc., B.L.,
Joint Editor, *Man in India*

I accompanied Mr. W. V. Grigson in his March 1934 tour in the Hill and Bison-horn Maria country of the Bastar State, and was able to measure 100 Hill Maria and 50 Bison-horn Maria males; a severe attack of fever unfortunately prevented me from measuring as many Bison-horn as Hill Marias. I measured the Hill Marias in the Abujhmar hills camps at Orcha, Adeq, Itulnar, Hikul and Handawada from these and adjacent Hill villages in the *parganas* of Chhota Dongar Mar, Kutru Mar, Bhairamgarh Mar, and Barsur (Dantewara) Mar. The Bison-horn Marias were nearly all measured in the camp at Aranpur in Dantewara tahsil, near the head of the pass leading down from the Dantewara plateau to the Dorla country of the Konta tahsil; the men were mostly from Aranpur and Chameli *parganas*. I append tables summarising the results of my measurements; space has forbidden the reproduction here of the long tables of individual measurements, which I hope subsequently to publish elsewhere. I have followed R. Martin's anthropometric technique.

General description

Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias are generally of medium stature, though tall and short individuals are not uncommon. The mean heights of those measured were 162·7 cm. Hill, and 161·7 cm. Bison-horn Maria. They are very well built, with well-proportioned body and limbs. Their skin colour varies from pale wheat to light black (the actual figures were: out of 100 Hill Marias, 9 light brown, 60 brown, 16 dark brown and 15 light black; out of 50 Bison-horn Marias, 3 pale wheat, 5 light brown, 26 brown, 9 dark brown and 7 light black). They have a thick growth of hair on the head, but often cut it short or even shave it in front and round the peripheral region of the head, leaving a long crown-tuft. They have very little facial and body hair, and even those who can grow sparse beards and moustaches often have them clean shaved. The hair is black or dark brown, and is wavy or curly.

Their foreheads are retreating, but straight foreheads are not rare; of 100 Hill Maria foreheads 16 were straight, 57 slightly

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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Verrier Elwin

Muchaki Pandu, Bison-horn Maria of Gogonda with hunting-horn

Bison-horn Maria of Lakhapal

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Verrier Elwin

[End Plate B]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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[End Plate ZB]

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Plate III

ABOVE: Motiari of Sirpuri, showing method of arranging combs

BELOW: The Gujara, Solk and Mularo of the Barka ghotul

[p.12 (1)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

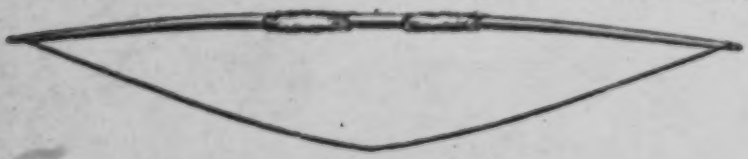
oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and 252 [302]
for the hair and body for toilet purposes is made from the mahua seed or indeed from any of the oils used in cooking.

The method of extracting oil from the mahua seed is as follows. A pot of water is placed on a fire near the oil-press and heated. Then into a bamboo cone, exactly like the *jib* in which rice-beer is prepared, is put the ground and dried seed. Covered with a small basket this is placed above the water-pot and the seed is steamed for about fifteen minutes. The steamed oil-seed is then tipped out into a small basket called *kora* and the operator presses it down with a rice-husker. When this small basket is full of closely pressed oil-seed, it is carried over to the press. This is called *gêrawat*,[1] and is of a very primitive kind. A long forked branch is inserted into a hole made in a living tree about two feet above the ground. Underneath is placed the *gêratata*, a block of wood with lines carved on its upper surface to carry off the oil. The basket of oil-seed is placed on top of this and the bough is laid upon it. The women place large stones on the forked end of the bough, thus forming a heavy weight to press down the seed. In the fork is a peg to keep it in position. After about half an hour the oil begins to flow and drips down into an earthen pot below.

This work is generally done by women, often by the motiari. In Masora I once saw two motiari extracting oil from the seeds of the keuti tree. These girls fetched the seed from the jungle, broke it up with their feet, ground it, steamed it and then put it into the press. They said that the chelik had no oil for their hair and they were doing this, entirely on their own, to please them.

VIII. HUNTING

The Muria will eat almost anything. They profess to despise the Maria for eating monkeys and in Koilibera they still talk about the time when W. V. Grigson camped along the northern road near the Abujhmar and the Maria of the Barsur Pargana, who came to see him, left not a single monkey 262



[411]

FIG. 7. Characteristic Muria bow
Length 5′ 4″

in the hills and stripped the whole forest of red ants. But near Jungani I saw a monkey's skin hanging up in a house and the people admitted that 'the children had eaten it'.[2] Crocodile is not disliked; after the skin is removed, the flesh, which is a little coarse, can yet be cooked and eaten

[1] This press resembles that reported as used in Assam and by the Koiku.—K. P. Chattopadhyaya, 'Indian Oil Presses,' *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Institute*, Vol. I (1938), p. 43.

[2] Bison-horn Maria say that 'though its skin is black, the monkey's flesh is white as rice-beer'. They often roast the monkey in its skin and eat everything. If a man eats a monkey's placenta he will be as active as a monkey and able to jump from tree to tree. It is said that Kodaya Pedo's great-grandfather did this. The Weddal and Gaita of Dualkachu (and perhaps other villages) do not eat the flesh because the monkey helps them in their priestly duties—an obvious reference to Hanuman.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate XXIII

Bride at Amaara with braided hair

[p.94(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

then again at the usual time. At Palari, where the girls take the boys' *massi*-mats home with them every morning and bring them in the evening, the first salutation is called *Massi-johar*, for it is then they give the mats to their chelik.

In some ghotul, especially those where they do not massage every night, the two leading girls crack the boys' fingers as they go round.

[376] Immediately after the Joharni, a girl distributes finely-powdered tobacco and sometimes a supply of leaf-pipes to the boys. The tobacco is taken from the ghotul store, to which all must contribute.

The motiari often go outside for a few minutes. The Belosa may now arrange how the massage is to be done and decide whether they will sleep in the ghotul that night and, if so, how they will pair off. When they are ready they come back into the ghotul and each girl goes straight to a boy to comb his hair and massage him. There does not seem to be any rule about this. A girl is not bound to massage her own ghotul partner, nor does the fact of massaging imply that the two will sleep together. In practice, however, the elder girls generally massage the elder boys.

In the Chota Dongar Pargana, the girls go to massage the chelik in the very place where they are going to sleep. Elsewhere they sit in a circle or grouped round the fire, sometimes scattered about the room. If the boy is asleep the motiari rouses him and makes him sit up; she sits or kneels behind him, very close, with her knees round his body. With her comb she begins to shake out and arrange the boy's hair.

The combs are small and it is often difficult to get them through the long unruly locks of the chelik. In Masora the method of combing was to tap the head rather roughly, then to twist the comb round, digging it into the skull; then the hair was pulled out and fretted and at last tied again into a bun. The digging in of the edge of the comb is known as *pitis pitis kiyāna*; [515] it is intended to kill lice and clear away scurf.

In Pupgaon, the combing was much gentler, and was only done every three days. In Bandopal, the girls did not tap the head but twisted the comb through the hair and rubbed the scalp in a very soothing way. When we were at Binjhli they were not combing at all, and in Khutgaon after a dog had relieved itself on the leader's turban, the Siraha forbade the girls to touch the chelik's heads. But generally the combing is done in the way I have described. When a lot of girls are at it together, the clicking of the combs against a score of hard heads makes a remarkable noise, reminding me of a phrase by Roy Campbell:

> While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,
> Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

But this is not the end of the comb's work. The motiari now uses it to titillate the skin of the back and arms. She rubs the points of the comb very gently to and fro, up and down, over the back and then when she has massaged that, takes each arm in turn and runs the comb up and down the skin.

Now the massage begins. In many ghotul (in Binjhli, for example, and in Bandopal and Almer among many others) this is done with the oily waste of the mahua or karanji seed, and cleans as well as refreshes. In Gorma, in May when they burn *dahi*, they massage the whole body with karanji waste. 'For in the old days this is how Tallur Muttai used to massage Kadrengal.' In other ghotul and at other seasons the massage is done with the hands alone.

The motiari begins by passing her open hands gently over the back, rubs a little harder, presses back on the ball of the hand, pushes more and more vigorously and always upward till the chelik nearly falls forward on his face,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
302

then rubs down more gently, soothes and quietens the whole body. If oil-seed is used, she rubs this off gradually and cleans the back by ever more gentle movements of the hands. Sometimes, as at Chandabera, the girl catches a boy's shoulder with one hand and rubs and pushes his back very vigorously with the other. In eastern Kondagaon the girls often stand beside the boy and rub the back downwards.

Then the girl takes the boy's left arm and places it over her shoulder, squatting back on her heels and pulling him towards her. The comb is again brought into play, and the skin is soothed by gentle stroking with the hand, before she begins a very vigorous massage of the arm, gripping it with both hands and pulling downwards, then moving the hands in opposite directions with a twisting motion. When a girl is wearing a large number of rings this can be painful. It is impossible to say that the movement of the massage is away from the heart or towards it; it moves in both directions. There is obviously no rule.

When the left arm is finished, the girl removes it from her shoulder, lays the hand in her lap and cracks the fingers one by one. Then she repeats the process for the right arm. In Koilibera the girl did not put the boy's arm on her shoulder but on the ground, and rubbed it up and down.

In some ghotul there now follows a very intimate form of massage. In Binjhli the girl kneels upright or stands behind the boy and bends over him putting her arms round his neck and massages the chest with downward thrusts of the hands, while the boy leans back against her body in great enjoyment. This generally excites ribald comment and cries of 'Catch hold of her breasts!' or 'How big are her breasts?' In Almer, the girl puts her hands under the boy's arms and rubs his chest and stomach. In Phulpar and Koilibera I saw a girl crack a boy's fingers by putting her arms round his neck from behind to catch his hands.

A few other variations may be noted. It is not uncommon for two girls to massage a boy together. One does the back while another massages the arms. In Binjhli and a few other ghotul the girls do not put the arms over their shoulders but in their laps; here too they begin with the arms and afterwards do the back and chest.

In many places it is taboo for the motiari to massage the boys' legs, and where Hill Maria influence is strong even after marriage a wife does not massage her husband's legs unless he is ill. But in the central area, in Gorma, Berma, Jogi Alwar, and doubtless elsewhere, and in Chargaon and Korkoti to the north, the girls massage the boys' legs every now and then, at Jogi Alwar every three days, at Berma every fifteen. The girl sits in front of the boy and rubs right up the leg almost to the groin.

When a girl has finished her massage, she often lays her hand on the boy's head or shoulder and says Johar.

In the majority of ghotul this is the daily programme, but sometimes the combing and massage is done less frequently. In Binjhli, it was once a week—on Fridays; in Pupgaon, the girls cracked the boys' fingers every day, combed their hair every three days and massaged once a week.

X883
513

It is now fairly late and boys and girls prepare for bed. In fine weather they may scatter about the compound and in the various huts; when it is cold or wet they seem to prefer crowding into the main ghotul building. The little boys and girls lie down in a long row, two boys, then a girl, a boy, two girls and so on. Boys without partners—and there are often fewer girls than boys—lie down two and two on their little mats. Those who have permanent or temporary partners lie down with them, side by side facing each other in

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

301 The cowrie belt is almost unknown, but the chelik carry strings of cowries, bells, beads and tobacco-pouches at the waist.

In this area, the girls have either floppy brass *pairi* slipping down over the heels, or the thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the ankles.

Finally, in the extreme east of Kondagaon, the chelik recapture something of the aesthetic attractiveness of the Jhoria. Once more elaborate necklaces of small red and blue beads appear; a head-band of cowries and black sago palm fibre is often worn (Fig. 89). The chelik's turban is specially attractive:
291 it is tied straight round into a box with one flap hanging over the top, the other falling behind. The boys themselves attach pretty fringes of pink, mauve and red tassels to these flaps.

For protection against rain, all the Muria make large round hats of leaves placed between a double bamboo framework, and long shields of the same material to hang from their shoulders. In a few villages near the Abujhmar they make the *tarali*-cloak of strips of retted bark characteristic of the Hill Maria.

II. Hair-dressing

302 The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria.
832 You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive.

Care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render
302 to a chelik; it is during the hair-combing in the evening that friendships become
515 intimate and proposals are made; wherever she is, in camp for a marriage or festival, resting in the heat of the day while working on the roads, or just
524 sitting in the house, a girl takes any chance she can of cleaning a boy's head, and examining it for lice. 'the thousand babies housed in a dry tree', 'the black cows that live in the thick forest, bothering everyone and drinking red water', 'the tigers that breed so quickly in the jungle'. She catches them with the end of her comb, or with her fingers, and kills them with thumb and forefinger. 'Ten went to hunt', says the riddle, 'but two did the killing.'

302 The chelik keep their hair fairly long. A straight fringe is cut across the forehead, and from the parting above it the hair is brushed back and tied in a bun usually covered by the turban. Some of the Muria living under the shadow of the Abujhmar follow the Hill Maria custom of shaving the whole head except for a patch on the crown which is carefully combed back and tied in a knot.

The chelik cut and trim their hair once every month or so, when the motiari who comb it tell them to. They cut and shave each other's heads with small razors made by the village Lohar. The motiari keep their boys closely shaven as to their chins, but they seem to like a good moustache. There is no other reason for shaving: the Muria, except those who have begun to imitate Hindu customs, do not shave at funerals or other religious occasions.

Girls do not cut their hair. They part it down the centre, and very carefully smooth it down and back. Behind the head they wind it over the small wooden blocks called *kunjar balla* (Fig. 91) which are carved for them by the chelik, and tuck it in underneath, fixing it in place with the *kunjar kato*, beautifully made wooden pins (Fig. 90)—also the gifts of chelik—to which are often attached bunches of cowries, coloured wool or strings of beads.

Both boys and girls treat their hair with oil, generally oil specially expressed by a motiari, a mother or sister. Many Muria now carry little bazaar mirrors which they constantly use.

152

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Jhoria have the most elaborate hair-ornaments. Bands of beads (Fig. 85) are made by the motiari with great art and taste, and are worn round

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FIG. 86. A cowrie belt from the Jhoria area
(See p. 383)

[291]

the head by both boys and girls. Thick bands of blue, white and red beads, or three narrower bands, give the children a distinctive and delightful appearance. Sometimes long strings of beads are also wound over and round the turban. Boys and girls alike delight to stick feathers in their hair—feathers of junglecock, peacock, the racket-tailed drongo. Girls often wear tufts of the sago or date palms and any flowers that may be available; they have a special affection for the marigold, which is 'the most beautiful of flowers', and the crimson velvety *siliyâri*.

The motiari in the Jhoria country tie great masses of cowries over the bun into which their hair is tied, mixing them with balls of red, green and blue wool.

There is a pretty game called Atoi-mal-mal Karsana in which the girls stand in a half-circle singing 'Make my hair soft and *mal-mal*'. Each girl in turn goes round the circle smoothing and parting the hair of her fellows.

[524]

In the east of the State, in the villages round Ulera, I found many boys using hair-retainers (Fig. 90) made out of old umbrella ribs by the local Muria Lohar.

But, of course, the chief hair-ornament is the comb, a subject of such importance that I describe it in a separate section.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Belle marrâte pungîr pay ênta

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

[1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The lovers lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'

[2] Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 271.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAS* (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 306ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poesy* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Muduvar.—Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 47

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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302

ABOVE: The Baiga combs the hair of the senior Kotwar at Nayanar

BELOW: The Alosa massages the junior Kotwar at Nayanar

[p. 396 (A)]

Plate LXXXVI

302
291
301

Chelik with face decorations

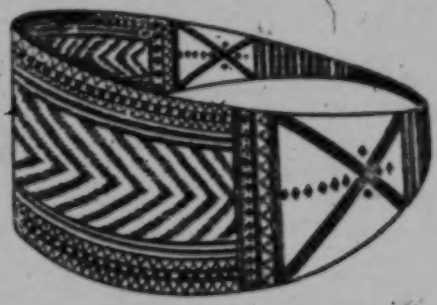
The Likhan of the Timnar ghotul

[p. 420 (B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

State Medical Department has done much to check the spread of the disease. Malaria, as everywhere in the Indian forests, is endemic, but few suffer from enlarged spleen. Leprosy and the venereal diseases are very rare. Skin diseases are also much less common than among the more elaborately clothed and thus dirtier people of the north.

Men wear a small loin-cloth and sometimes a little turban. The women tie a sort of skirt, very short, round their waists: it hangs down to the knees. The breasts are covered only with ornaments; when visiting a bazaar girls may tie a small piece of cloth round their shoulders. They often wear a thin brass fillet round the hair, and the older women use a large snood which is most becoming. Round the neck are masses of bead-necklaces, and iron or brass torcs. The bright colours of the beads and the shining brass fillets against the rich brown skin make a sight of unforgettable beauty.



Brass fillet worn by Maria women

The Bison-horn Maria village is laid out on the same lines as the Gond village of the Central Provinces, unlike the communal settlements of the Hill Maria, Baiga or Juang. Each house stands in its own garden which is sometimes a substantial field, and a village may cover a very large area in consequence. Often a village is composed of anything from six to twelve small hamlets, each of which represents the grouping of a family round its patriarchal head. The little huts stand among woods, on rocky hill-sides, in the shade of spreading trees. Sometimes they appear almost submerged by waves of yellow sarson flowers or red jhira vegetable. Each village has a substantial building for the accommodation of travellers and this is used by the unmarried boys as a dormitory. The unmarried girls also sleep together, some-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

252
531
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Girl cleaning grain at Tikanpal before a decorated door

301
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Hinga: a Maria girl of Rewali

[facing p. 28]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

312
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Girls fetching water at Bastanar

[FACING p.32]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Maria girl of Mokhpal. Domestic life is usually happy: the rare infidelities quickly lead to revenge

[facing p. 33]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Dulha of Gadapal with bow and arrow

Boys catching a bat at Khutepal

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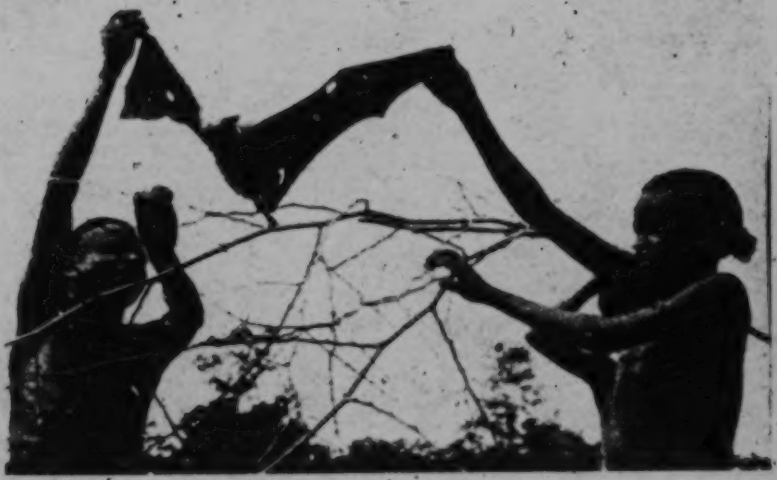


[facing p.49]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

night goes to comb the hair of the boy from whom she desires a present. She does his hair with special care and whispers in his ear, 'Look, boy, I have brought some silver, make me a nice comb'. The boy says, 'I don't know how to'. The girl says, 'But of course you know'. Then the boy says, 'Well, what will you give me? Will you....?' The girl says, 'Never', meaning 'Yes', and the boy makes the comb.

In well-disciplined ghotul a boy cannot give a comb to a motiari without the permission of the Kotwar; sometimes it has actually to pass through the Kotwar's hands. For such a gift seems to be regarded as a very definite and important step in the love relations between a boy and girl, and it is considered necessary by the ghotul authorities to keep a check on such intimacies in case there is any scandal or trouble. To this witness some lines in a Paskna Pata from Bandopal:

> Where did you get a comb like that?
> You got it from the embrace of a chelik.
> One comb for once, two combs for twice.

If a comb is lost or broken, the chelik must make a new one. Otherwise his motiari says, 'How can I comb his hair?' If the Kotwar hears about it, he orders the boy to make one, and he does so at once.

Most combs are made of mahua or kartaha wood. Implements used in their manufacture are a small saw, ¾" broad and 6" long, rather like a fret-saw; a *kadri* knife; a *hujji* chisel and a *tatti* adze.

The Kotwar of the Phunder ghotul made a comb for me. He took a piece of mahua wood 2' long and 3" broad, supported one end on a bit of wood and gradually planed down one end, first with the adze and then with his knife. He stood it on end and trimmed the top; then with the saw cut a number of slits 1" deep, measuring them with a twig to ensure that they were even. He cut them again and again to enlarge the slits, leaving on either side of the wood a space uncut.

Now another boy came and held the wood firmly, and the Kotwar cut off 1½" from the top with his saw, first cutting half through on one side, then turning the wood over and doing it from the other. Finally he broke the piece off and trimmed it with his knife. So far the process had taken half an hour, but the small piece of wood had taken shape as a comb. The boy now spent fifteen minutes shaping the sides, then with his chisel he enlarged the slits again and carefully cleaned the apertures between the spikes. After this, he held the comb in the hollow of his left hand and grasping the chisel firmly in the right and pressing it down hard began to decorate the comb with various patterns. By the time he had finished, he had spent two-and-a-half hours on the work, the greater part of the time being spent on the decoration.

[314] The next morning the Kotwar went to a wild fig tree to extract its sticky, milky gum. He struck a branch with the blunt end of his axe and caught some drops of gum in a leaf-cup. He brought this back and sat down by a fire. He spread the gum on either side of the comb with a bit of straw, warmed it on the fire, applied more gum, laid the silver paper over it and rubbed it in hard with the handle of his chisel till the pattern showed. He repeated the process on the opposite side toasting the comb before the fire by sticking it on the end of his chisel. Finally he brought out the pattern clearly by pressing in the silver paper with his own finger-nails, and washed it with a straw dipped in water.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 479 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk [462] take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhaurai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

301 they have similar necklets of little sections of wood or of seeds. The middle-aged and particularly the young have now made up for any former lack of beads by going to the opposite extreme in the profusion and variety of their ornaments. They have borrowed [177] freely from the fashions of the Jhorias and Murias on the one side and on the other from the Bison-horn Marias, but in an eclectic way, and showing marked individual taste. They have no use for the humming-top shaped greenish-yellow glass or the tubular scarlet beads so popular with the Bison-horn Maria, nor for the small speckled beads which Czecho-Slovakia is now sending to the bazaars of the north; they like small primary coloured beads of the old 'hundreds and thousands' type, but large enough to be threaded with ease, while their women still prefer the large, almost cylindrical but rounded-edge pure white beads of uneven size that seventy years ago were the fashion among the Marias of the plains. On the whole the women have borrowed mostly from the Bison-horn fashions, and the men from those of the north, particularly the Jhorias. On their arms the men have tight-fitting armlets of brass or 'jarman' (an aluminium alloy) just above their elbows, from one to five in number. Round their necks they have up to six collars of coloured beads sometimes six-deep, arranged according to individual colour tastes, but generally in vertical bars of colour with alternate bars of white. From large ear-rings 4 or 5 cm. in ● [304] diameter worn in a slit-hole pierced in the cartilage just below the helix and above the front upper insertion point of the auricle, hang nearly to the shoulders tassels made of three or four strings of beads threaded singly with a similar colour arrangement, ending with little tufts of bright wool; and fillets of the same bead-work are worn either loosely over the forehead and temples, or higher round the crest of the head, or looped from ears to hair-tuft. The intricacy and symmetry of the bright bead-work produces very pleasing patterns; the 'girl friend' usually arranges the beads for the youth. Older men more often wear small brass chains round the ears and hair-tuft than bead fillets. The large ring already referred to is first made in the form of a crescent blade of aluminium alloy, one of the tapered ends being passed through the slit-hole in the cartilage and hooked into the loop formed by bending the other tapered end to form a little eyelet, the remaining metal being then whipped spirally round the metal from which it tapered. Sometimes smaller rings of the same type are made of brass, a blue or red glass bead being threaded just inside the eyelet, and worn in a hole in the 304 tragus of the ear, or the antitragus. Innumerable holes are pierced 301 through the fold of the helix, in which are worn little rings of thin, plain brass wire; there may even be a double row of these right

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

round the whole helix, giving a total of over forty for the ear, and making it green with verdigris. These are called *maqqawadang*. The lobe is pierced and a plug of wood or a rolled leaf worn in it by those who cannot afford something more ornate or are old-fashioned; others fit on to the wooden plugs, by means of a hollow brass socket-stalk, brass circles about 15 mm. in diameter made by the Ghasias by *cire-perdue* process, ornamented with spiral whorls or concentric circles, or like little shields bossed at the centre. Some wear, instead of these, a ring of thick brass or even silver or gold, heavy and fitting closely around the end of the lobe. Lobe ear-rings or plug ornaments are generally called *porskeng*. The effect of these is greatly to distend the lobe. A few rings are worn on the fingers, generally a treble spiral of brass, or a plain aluminium band; the Jhorias are fond of Ghasia-made rings with small brass pellet-bells, but few Hill Marias wear these rings, though many hill women wear strings of such bells round their necks; they also are made by *cire perdue*. It is amusing to see the Hill Maria women haggling with Ghasia women for these bells and other brass ornaments at Dhaurai bazaar. A comb or two, and perhaps a cheap Japanese mirror, stuck in his hair, complete the finery of a young Hill Maria.

The woman wears perhaps one or two bead collars, and sometimes seven or eight bead fillets, as well as bead tassels depending from the lobes of her ears, or from a smaller cartilage-ring of the type already described. She has also ear-plugs with small brass circular plate heads in her lobes, and sometimes little plugs in one or both of her nostrils. She, like the men, wears *maqqawadang* wire rings in the helices of her ears. Round her neck she has ropes of the large white uneven beads already referred to, sometimes ending in a short single string of beads with one or two brass pellet-bells at the bottom. The ropes vary in length, the longest reaching her navel. Over these and the coloured bead collars she has large iron neck hoops or *suta* in Bison-horn Maria style, on which brass rings may be threaded of any number up to 100 or more. She is fond also of necklets of brass circles made by *cire perdue* with spiral whorls like the ear-plug caps; a few plain iron and aluminium hoops may complete her neckware. The beads hang between her breasts, but partially cover them when worn in profusion. On her wrists she has a number of loose bracelets of cylindrical aluminium and brass, and, when she dances, dancing anklets on both legs, arched over her ankle-bones. Her carved and ornamented combs at the top or side of her hair bun add to her finery. Needless to say, much of this ironmongery and brassware is left in the house when she is working in the fields, but she would not be without any of it when she sets off on her long treks to the markets in the plains. Seen

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from behind, it makes her appear very thick-, in fact bull-necked, and creates a false impression of her often slender build.

What beauty the girls have they mar to Western eyes by excessive tattooing over all the face and forehead, and often the breasts also. Mothers begin to tattoo their daughters when they are eight or nine years old, using lengths of the brass wire used for the rings in the helix of the ear, sharpened into rough needles, and black charcoal powder. The girl lies on her side with one cheek flat on the ground while the mother operates on the other cheek. Sometimes only one breast is tattooed, often neither. They seem never to tattoo legs or arms, though Glasfurd speaks of their arms and thighs being covered with tattooing. A swastika with the corners slightly rounded and not right-angled, and a pair of very small parallel vertical lines between each arm is a common motive, on face and breast. On the centre of the forehead, vertically one below the other, are usually tattooed a circle with a dot in the centre, for the sun, a circle and a crescent for the full and crescent moon respectively. Thence fairly symmetrically vertical hatching alternates with horizontal round and round the face, becoming oblique at the corners and down the sides of the nose; and over the corners of the cheekbones three dots are made triangle-wise. This is only one common pattern. The only tattooing on men is single, double or treble horizontal rows of dots, varying in number from three to nine, over the glabella. I did not ascertain at what age or by whom these marks are made. There are no special tattoo marks for the different clans. There seems to be no significance behind tattooing; it is considered merely an adornment. The Nagpur Gonds speak of tattooing as marks by which ancestors and clan-gods can identify persons in the next world; but the Marias have no formulated idea of another world.

The dancing dress of the Hill Maria men is completely different from that of the Bison-horn Marias and most other tribes. The women have no special dancing dress. The young men wear on their heads either red and white turbans, or, more often, curious Chinese fig-box head-dresses which they call by the Hindi word *topi*, covered with red or blue cloth, and piped at the edges and centre with peacock feather quills. Often a peacock, jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo's feather is stuck in the *topi*, or spiral coils of feather quill fastened on both sides of a stick; or scarlet 'Scissors' cigarette packets found empty at the bazaars, lead seals from petrol tins, old brass cog-wheels from watches, little tins, cheap mirrors, the round of bright tin-foil cut out when an airtight cigarette tin is opened; dried snipe or woodcock neck and skull; or anything bright-coloured or interesting to the Maria.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

cotton material cut in European style; or instead of these has at least an extra round or two of his loin-cloth which he can throw loosely over his shoulder, or a small cotton sheet to answer the same purpose.

The women's loin-cloth is worn like that of their men, but in front is not knotted in such a way as to make a long flap necessary to cover the front of their thighs; it looks, therefore, like a short skirt from their waists to just above their knees. In the fields and jungles and in their own homes they still go with their breasts uncovered save for their masses of ornaments; but they have become somewhat self-conscious, owing to misguided officials suggesting that it was improper for them to appear like this before their Chief or at high officials' camps; and they frequently, when going to a bazaar or festival, or to dance at a wedding or camp, start off with their breasts loosely covered with a cotton sheet or one or two folds of their loin-cloth wrapped loosely from one hip over the opposite shoulder, their beads and finery resting on top of this cloth. Generally, however, the cloth is too small or too loosely thrown over the body really to conceal the breasts. They have this favourite riddle :—

'Bara patte lois keren konda podo',

meaning, 'What is the pair of bullocks that cannot be confined within the byre of the twelve parts of the body?' to which the answer is '*Dūdo*', or 'Woman's breasts'. They explained this as referring to the refusal of the breasts to be concealed by any wrap. Moreover, as soon as women warm to the dance they rapidly divest themselves of the unwonted wrap.

Most men now wear a *pagri* or turban, tied in the usual fashion of the Hindu population of the adjacent Chhattisgarh districts, and far more ample than the rag worn by the Hill Marias. They do not adorn it with feathers; nor do they wear bead chains or fillets on their heads like the Hill Marias. They use far fewer ornaments; they do not wear the brass wire *maggawalang* rings in the helix of the ear, but sometimes a single small ring like the tasselled ring of the Hill Marias, but worn in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, from which a small gilt chain depends. In the lobe a small ear plug of gold or gilded brass, often with a little red or green stone or glass set in it, may anchor two or three gilt chains fastened at the top to a similar plug vertically above it in the helix. Most men content themselves with one or two small bead necklaces (*mungya*) round their necks, the beads being all of one shape, scarlet or royal blue tubular glass, or pale green humming-top-shaped, both kinds considerably larger than the Hill Marias'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

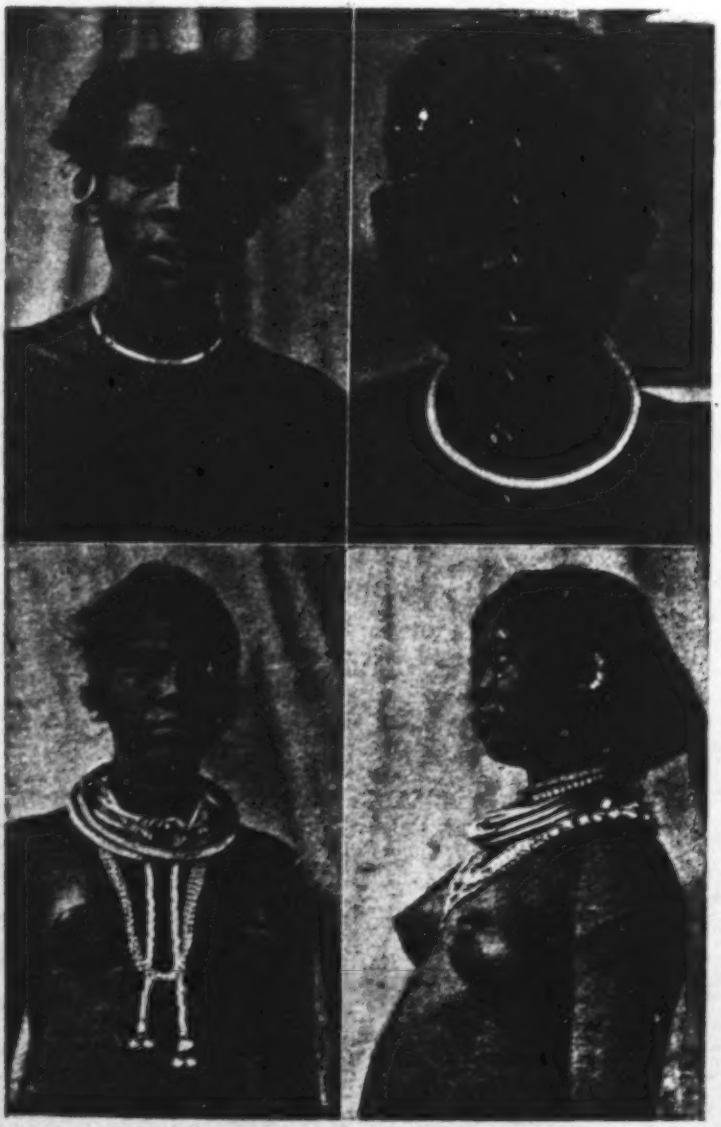
301 favourite beads. They are fond also of necklaces of small, brightly gilded beads, which they call *mirako-mungya*. They may wear one or two armlets (*danda-bhata*) on one arm above the elbow, or a pair of bracelets on one wrist (*ka'i-bara*), of silver, brass, or aluminium, and similar in type to those bought by the Hill Marias. They wear a plain waist-cord (*para-nori*) instead of the cowry-cord of the hills for carrying knives and tobacco boxes. A comb is attached to this, for regular use. They may have hanging from a fastener of aluminium wire, shaped like the eye of the hooks-and-eyes of ladies' dresses, two thin aluminium toothpicks, and an aluminium ear-scoop; the Hill Marias also use these. They hang like a pendant on the chest.

The women's hair ornaments have been described along with their hair-dressing; it need only be added here that occasionally, instead of the polished brass fillet there mentioned, they wear bead fillets like those of the Hill Maria women. Armlets and wristlets are worn on the same arm, and are similar to those of the hill women. Instead of the white-bead ropes and the coloured-bead collars worn by the hill women, they wear long ropes of red, red and green, or gamboge beads; and over these they wear a vast number of the iron and brass rings of the type already described as borrowed by the hill women from them; they here call the iron neck-rings *tiya*, not *suta* as in the hills. Their ear plugs are similar to those 301 used in the hills, but from the lobe plug to a ring worn, as by their ●304 men, in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, is often fastened a cord on which is threaded between two blue or green beads a slightly oblong, cube-shaped bead of brass or aluminium. The nose is symmetrically adorned by two gold or gilt rings in the wing of each nostril, and, between them, hanging from a small ring in the septum, a small gold or gilt ornament like a leaf pointing downwards, sometimes with a piece of red glass set in the middle.

292 I have taken the wearing of the Bison-horn dancing head-dress as the most obvious distinction between the two kinds of 'Marias'.
535 **Dancing-dress** This is known as a *tallagulla*. I had one made from horns and peacock feathers supplied by me. After my head had been measured round the plane of the temples, a basketry 'cap' was made, fitting loosely round the brows, and sloping backwards and upwards into a low peak. It is made loose, 294 as it has to support the horns and the plume of feathers, as well as strings of cowries and many folds and streamers of cloth of various colours, which subsequently tighten it and make it fit snugly round the head. The basketry is of twilled bamboo strips running diagonally from the edge that fits over the brows. The bison-horns were pared with a sharp knife to remove outer dirt or callosities and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVII



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304

HILL MARIA TYPES

Above Arki Baiyya of Korawaya — Gecha Poia of Chudala Tondawada
Below Jugho Buke of Itulnar — Guma Ewado of Goti

[Facing p. 226]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XVIII

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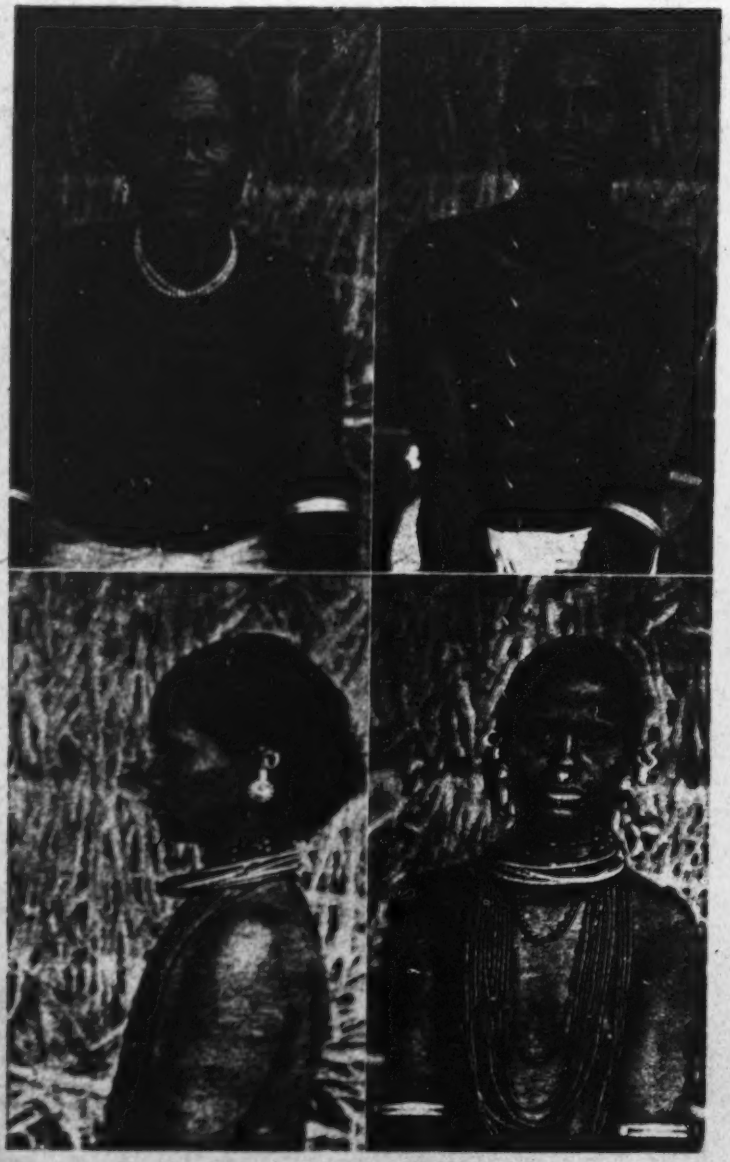

BISON-HORN MARIA TYPES

Above Markami Harma of Burgum Markami Joga, headman of Burgum
Below Mase, wife of Markami Muka of Kakadi

[facing p. 240]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
301
304

585

The pouring of water over the bridegroom and bride at the Bison-horn Maria wedding described at p. 258

An old Bison-horn Maria from Gudra, between Katakalian and Kuakonda

[*face p.* 254

[facing p.254]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

[883] 177 him his chief impression of Delhi, he spoke of the Kutb Minar, which he told me was almost as fine and tall as the factory chimney of the Allapilli saw-mills! Either at Burgi or the next village another phenomenon was a Maria in a good tweed coat above khaki shorts and stockings with flashes, wearing over all an excellent fawn Curzon topi with a dark brown pugaree, far smarter than I have ever owned. I discovered that his clothes had all been given him by the zamindari of Ahiri, when he had become a member of the Sironcha Independent Local Board. That night, still in his fine feathers, he came to see the dancing in my camp at Surjagarh: but as the drumming swelled and the dances warmed up he found himself unable to keep up the detachment appropriate to his pseudo-*sahib* status, and gradually divested himself of topi, coat, shirt and shoes, finally peeling off his shorts to reveal beneath them the usual abbreviated loin-cloth of the Maria, seizing a drum, and joining in the dance: he was then indistinguishable from any other Maria but for his air of authority as a headman, and his 'undress' was typically Maria, as described in the *Gazetteer*[1]:—

291 ●304 'Their dress is scanty, consisting of a compromise between a *langoti* and a *dhoti*, a strip of cloth wound tightly round the waist in rope-like folds and passed between the legs with the spare end hanging down in front below the knees. Often this garment diminishes to the scantiest rag. They adorn their necks with handsome strings of beads and their arms occasionally with metal and glass bangles. Their ears are pulled out of shape by the weight of numerous brass rings with which they are usually garnished, and occasionally they wear *pagris*.'

632 This Independent Local Board for the Sironcha taluq consisted then of eighteen members, of whom only six were aboriginals, although there were 3,354 aboriginal to 2,850 non-aboriginal voters. The aboriginal members were almost all returned unopposed, and were *de facto* the nominees of the zamindar, who had had to use his full influence to persuade them to join this peculiar body! It was in the circumstances no surprise discovery that the open, mainly non-aboriginal, country around Sironcha and Ahiri got far more benefit from the Board's expenditure and services than the wild interior of Ahiri zamindari. But the Maria members were utterly illiterate and at sea in the Board meetings. It was the zamindar's influence alone that secured for the Maria areas such services as the Board gave them. Nevertheless, the mere fact that there is an independent local authority for Sironcha tahsil secures that at least this tahsil does get spent on it all that it pays in cesses and other local taxes, and a fair share of Government grants to local bodies, in marked contrast to the fate of the zamindaris of Garchiroli tahsil, who come under the tender mercies of the Chanda District Council

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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Verrier Elwin

Muchaki Pandu, Bison-horn Maria of Gogonda with hunting-horn

Bison-horn Maria of Lakhopal

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Verrier Elwin

[End Plate B]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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301
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Hill Maria children

[Verrier Elwin

142
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Muchaki Kondi, Bison-horn Maria girl, of Borgum

[Verrier Elwin

[End Plate F]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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[Verrier Elwin

Jugho Chero, of Itulaar, shown in Plate VI (*facing p. 70*), photographed ten years later

[End Plate Q]

1

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Life of Young Children

In youth the spider's web is the sky.—Muria proverb

[953] Muria babies, who are suckled for at least two years and then often weaned at the Jata Pandum, seem to be happy and contented. The Muria are good parents, proud of their children, tolerant towards them in many ways, anxious to teach them things, delighted as they see them grow. 'When a young child walks for the first time, the earth trembles for two-and-a-half days.' But directly a child is old enough to play, he is regarded as old enough to work. The early stage of 'eating while playing and playing while eating' is soon over and the little girls and boys have to take their share of the work of the house. Tiny girls may often be seen staggering about with the youngest baby in their arms or helping their mothers to cow-dung the house. Sometimes you may see a line of boys and girls following their elders back from the jungle, each with a tiny basket of fruit or a minute bundle of leaves on their heads. During this period the children are very dependent on their parents and go everywhere with them. A boy takes his little axe and follows his father to the jungle. A girl takes a pot and goes with her mother to the well.

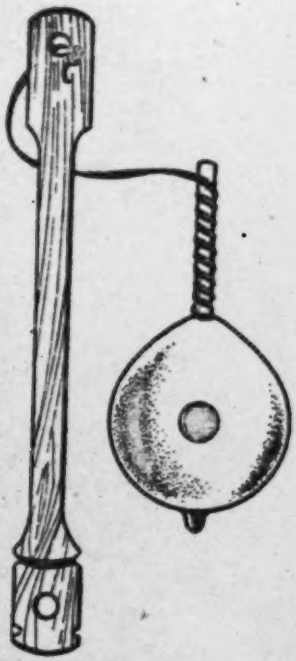

Fig. 16. Spinning-top
Length of upright wooden stick, 8¾"

It is now that the parents, and especially the fathers, enjoy the happiest relations with their children. You may often see a father carrying his baby son to the ghotul and sleeping with him there, or taking him to a festival, sometimes even encouraging him to dance as a medium before the clan-god. The father may give a boy a tiny drum or axe, toys that are just like the real thing, or he may make his children little wooden carts or ploughs.

From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. Tattooing

304 The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

that girls should be tattooed before marriage and if possible before they are betrothed. If a girl is not done till after marriage, her parents-in-law can demand the cost from her own parents. There is some idea that the marks are a sort of passport to heaven. 'If she dies without being tattooed, Mahapurub will punish her. But if she brings him beautiful drawings from the Middle World, he will keep her with him and look after her.'

In the western parganas the tattooing is often done by a girl's own mother or by some elderly woman of the tribe. A crude needle is made out of the brass wire used for an ear-ornament and charcoal dust is mixed with til or mahua oil. In the central and eastern areas, however, most of the tattooing is done by wandering Ojha women.[1] These are the wives of semi-aboriginal professional musicians. They have various stories to account for the origin of tattooing which, as we should expect, are generally Hindu in tone. In Narayanpur the Ojha described how

> At the beginning of the world there was no caste distinction among mankind. Mahapurub decided to divide men up into castes by giving them appropriate presents. A man who was given a net became a fisherman; a man who was given a plough became a Gond; a man who was given a pen became a Brahmin. At last Mahapurub found that he had given away everything except a drum, and he looked round to see who would take it. A number of men were passing along the road and one of them was lagging behind the others. Mahapurub gave him the drum telling him that his name was henceforth to be Ojha, and thus the caste began.
>
> The Ojha now began to earn his living by wandering from village to village beating his drum, telling stories and begging. One day when he went home in the evening his food was not ready and he beat his wife saying, 'All day I go from place to place earning our living; you stay at home doing nothing and yet you cannot even cook my food'. The woman replied, 'I go to the tank for water, I fetch wood from the forest, I clean the house, I cook the food. What other work am I supposed to do?' In the manner of women she began to sulk, saying to herself that she would only eat what she earned. After she had fasted for eight days Budi Matal's carpet began to shake and she sent her messenger to find out what was the matter. The messenger took the Ojha woman to the goddess. 'I have no work to do and so my husband beats me', said the Ojha woman. Budi Matal replied, 'Very well, I will give you special work to do, provided you always worship me'. She took the Ojha woman to the forest and found a sarai tree; she removed some of the gum and put it on a bit of earthenware, covering it with another bit. Then she smeared both pieces with cow-dung and put them on a fire. After a little while she removed the lid and found a black deposit there. She scraped this off with a bit of wood and put it in the broken half of a coconut shell. Into this she put some water and stirred it well. She fixed three needles in the knot of a bamboo and made the Ojha woman lie down with one cheek to the ground. So she tattooed her. Afterwards she washed the place with cow-dung and rubbed in oil and haldi.

[1] In their article 'Ojha' Russell and Hiralal do not mention tattooing as one of the Ojha's activities.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 296ff. The name is applied to the soothsayers and minstrels of several tribes, but the Ojha of Bastar are probably of Gond origin. There were 137 Ojha in Bastar in 1941.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Then said the Matal, 'I have done this for you but you yourself must do more than this. First of all tattoo, then wash the place with cow-dung, then sprinkle haldi oil and offer rice in my name. Then holding the needles and some haldi and pulse in your right hand, catch hold of the first fingers of the woman you have tattooed in your left hand and with your right make three passes round her body. Put the haldi and pulse in her sari and let her go. By this means the burning of the marks will be cooled.'

At Palari in the Kondagaon Tahsil the Ojha gave a different version of their origin. Here they described how

Bara Deo was the son of Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai. He had six brothers and seven sisters. One day the seven sisters went to Tallur Muttai and asked her for ornaments such as would last even after death. Kadrengal gave Bara Deo a dhol and a dhamru drum. Then two sons were born to Bara Deo. One was called Murha and the other Ojha. Bara Deo taught Murha to beat the dhol with wooden sticks on the ground. Because he beat with wood on the ground Murha became a ploughman but Ojha played his dhamru slung from his shoulder, and spent his life hunting and drawing patterns on the walls of houses.

In this way the Ojha's wife learnt how to tattoo and once a year the Ojha gives a goat to Bara Deo saying, 'Behold, we go all over the world tattooing. From the marks we make let there be no wound, no pus, no swelling. Let no evil magic attack us as we work.' Because of this, Bara Deo lives with the Ojha and no witch can injure them at the time of tattooing.

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The method of tattooing is still today very much what is supposed to have been taught the first Ojha woman by Budi Matal. Lamp-black, charcoal, pounded incense is mixed with either castor, til or mahua oil. This is put in the broken half of an earthen pot, covered, and burnt over a lamp or a small fire. The black deposit is removed with a shell and kept in a small pot or bit of coconut.

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The Ojha woman makes a pen of bamboo and draws the desired pattern on the skin. Then with three or four needles she pricks in the black colour. Before beginning she takes the names of the Seven Sisters of Bara Deo. At the end she receives from her victim's relatives rice, haldi, oil, chillies and salt. This she waves round the girl and sometimes performs the little rite with the needles that I have already described. She offers part of what she has received to the Seven Sisters. This helps the pricks to cool quickly and not hurt too much.

Muria girls are tattooed on the forehead, chin, arms and the calves of the legs. Most of the patterns are conventional—squares, triangles, and lozenges. Sometimes you may see two little figures representing a chelik and a motiari. There is no magical significance or even special meaning in the marks. 'It is for pleasure', say some Muria; others declare that it is simply a decoration, but a permanent one. 'Your words', a girl may whisper to her chelik, 'will remain like the tattoo marks on my breast.'[1]

[1] It is curious to find Crawley saying that it is 'erroneous' to attribute the painful processes of tattooing, boring and scarification to the desire for ornament. 'There is ample evidence that "savage mutilation" is never due to this desire; the savage does not hold with the maxim—*il faut souffrir pour être belle.*' This evidence is not given, but Crawley insists that tattooing and other mutilations are for the protection of the parts affected from supernatural dangers. I doubt if this is so in India.—E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. II, pp. 168ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

304 There are not generally any taboos on a girl during the day that she is tattooed, but in Kokori I found that a girl was not allowed to go to the
522 ghotul the following night. This is probably a practical rule made because the girl is likely to be in some pain on that day. But when a girl does return to the ghotul after her tattooing the boys laugh at her and make the old joke about *godan* and *chodan*. 'If you could bear the pricks of *godan* (tattooing) surely you won't be afraid of the pricks of *chodan* (intercourse).' The girl naturally says that she cannot bear either. Then her boy may say, 'Look, there is pain when one is being tattooed, but in intercourse there is nothing but fun', and the girl replies, 'Well, if a mountain were to fall on me I would die, but if you fall on me I suppose I shall go on living, so you had better do what you want'. This conversation was recorded at Padbera.

314 There are a few songs about tattooing. One is in the nature of a prayer to
539 cool the pain of the marks.

Arji binthi mān hamāra.	Listen to our prayer.
Us dinki bachan tumāra.	Yours is the promise we made that day.
Sujiki jhār uthāra.	Let the burning of the needles cease.

Two other songs are sung during the 'tattooing' of the *kalsa*-pot during a wedding. The first has a refrain continually repeated, *Main wāna godendā āya*, 'Mother, I want to be tattooed'.

1

God jāle godende nuni.	If you wish, you may be, daughter.
Kon rājcho gogin nuni?	What land has the Gogin come from, daughter?
Dongarcho gogin āya.	The Gogin is from Dongar, mother.
Duār barhāte rale āya,	I was sweeping the yard,
Jabre wasala āya	She forced me to sit down.
Main nahin bol le āya.	I said I wouldn't, mother.
Kitro kitro mole re nuni?	How much did you pay her, daughter?
Nito āgar dugāni wo āya.	Double the usual sum, mother.

2

Aga bagādāng dumki dai?	Where do the tattooers come from?
Raigarh da dumking dai.	From Raigarh they come.
Aga baga wātāng dai?	Why have they come here?
Singār koti wātāng dai.	They have come to tattoo you.
Singār koti punong dai.	They don't know how to tattoo.
Danda mola kintāng dai?	What is their charge for tattooing the arm?
Huj tāsi punong dai.	They don't know how to use the needles.
Māt mola hewom dai.	We won't pay their wages.
Māt koti hewāk dai,	If they would let us do it,
Māt singār hoterom dai.	We would tattoo ourselves.[1]

[1] The Bison-horn Maria regard tattooing as a comparatively modern innovation, intended mainly as a means of attraction. The work is still done chiefly by the Maria themselves: they make needles of thorns and the colour is made by mixing the ash of pothar bark, date palm or myrabolams with mahua oil. Lamp-black is also used.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria everywhere are at the mercy of the merchants in the bazaar, though these are not entirely indifferent to popular demand. They supply cheap aluminium armlets and anklets, glass and lac bangles, aluminium and silver neck-bands, the *kawal* necklaces of rupees known throughout Central India, and many varieties of beads. Muria chelik and motiari buy these in the bazaars and wear them. They indicate nothing except perhaps the way in which the natural taste and intelligence of the aboriginals is degraded in the interests of big business. 301 439

We may now turn to the special ornaments worn by the Muria in the different fashion areas I have named. We will begin with the Jhoria, for these are the most distinctive and interesting of all the Muria. 301

The Jhoria, as we have seen, are simply Hill Maria who have settled in the foothills. You can distinguish a Maria from a Jhoria girl by her breasts so charmingly displayed and the tattoo marks less charmingly marring the beauty of her face. It is not so easy to distinguish between a Jhoria chelik and a young Hill Maria boy. [304]

Like the Hill Maria, the Jhoria give the impression of being a little over-dressed.[1] They are 'dolled up', smart, tight, fresh, alert, vivacious—altogether charming. Their clothes are worn tightly round their bodies, revealing the grace and energy of the figure. Their ornaments and especially their necklaces do not hang about them, but are drawn tight round their heads and necks. The feathers in their hair give them the perky bright appearance of young birds.

Most striking of all are their gaily coloured bead decorations. They wear head-bands, sometimes three or four of them, round the head, keeping the hair in place. Round the neck are two or more broad bead collars and a profusion of necklaces; their beautiful and elaborate designs are fully illustrated in the colour plates in this book.

Jhoria boys and girls wear ear-pendants of coloured beads (Fig. 64): some girls also wear large circular shields (*dhār*) without the usual chains, or home-made wooden *hiwa* (Fig. 73) covered with silver paper.

Bangles are not made by the Muria, and those worn by boys or girls are the usual bazaar products.

Rings play an important part in ghotul life. A boy or girl on being appointed to high office is presented with a ring: at a marriage the bride and bridegroom give rings to their old companions: a ring is buried in front of the Gaita's house before a Deo-Dandar or Pen Kolang expedition and is later given to the leader of the dance: rings are collected at a festival and offered to the clan-god. [585]

The rings are of brass or aluminium: some are decorated with little bells (Fig. 17). Girls often wear a great many which the boys beg them to remove before beginning the massage.

Girls often wear rows of combs in their hair, with thick bunches of cowries,[2] and balls of red and green wool. Both chelik and motiari love to put flowers in their hair or over their ears.

The Jhoria chelik wear cowrie belts just above their loin-cloths. There seems no shortage of these; they may be found everywhere. Sometimes the son of well-to-do people wears a broad silver *hawlan*, bought in the bazaar, of a kind used by girls.

[1] The word is W. V. Grigson's; it exactly describes my own impression—if such a phrase can be applied to people who hardly wear any clothes at all.

[2] For the use of cowries, almost universal in Bastar, see my article 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII (1942), pp. 121–4.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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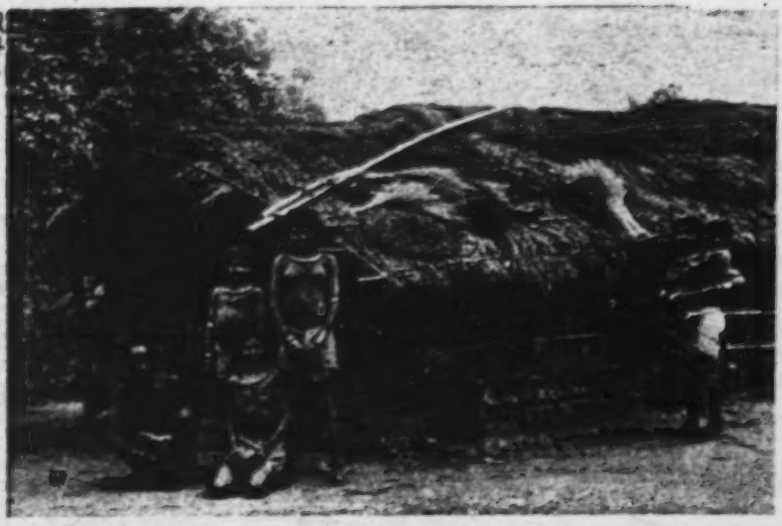

Oyami Masa with family on the scene of the death of the younger wife

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Oyami Masa with his surviving wife

[Facing p. 15]

Plate LXXXII

306

Motiari at Bandopal making bead necklaces

A woman at Remawand makes a mat

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[p. 406 (B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

plateau from Antagarh tahsil. The northern half of this north-eastern plateau is Kondagaon tahsil, and the southern Jagdalpur. The height of the plateau varies from 2,500 or 2,400 feet at its northern and southern edges to about 1,800 feet near Jagdalpur. It is a region of evergreen forests, with the beautiful sal (*Shorea robusta*) as its characteristic tree. The temperature seldom exceeds 104° in the summer, and at Jagdalpur descends to 40° in the winter, while hoar frosts are not uncommon in the forests. Kondagaon tahsil is under-developed and jungly, much of it and Antagarh having been comparatively recently settled by Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh. Jagdalpur, on the other hand, has miles of excellent rice cultivation in its extensive open plains, and is the only heavily populated part of the State, except adjacent parts of Dantewara. On its south-eastern and southern edges, however, it has hilly country heavily forested or inhabited by primitive Parjas and Bison-horn Marias.

The north-west corner of the State is the Antagarh tahsil. The north of this is a continuation of the Chhattisgarh-Kanker plain 800 or 900 feet above sea-level, bounded on the west and north by the Chanda and Drug districts of the Central Provinces and by Kanker State. This plain, the second main natural division of Bastar, is reached from Keskal and north Kondagaon through the Amabera *pargana*, which, though on the 2,000 feet plateau, is in Antagarh, by a forest road descending the steep Matlaghat by a recently re-aligned and easily-graded descent. The main road from Jagdalpur and Kondagaon through Antagarh to Rajnandgaon rail-head enters the tahsil in the Benur *pargana* on the 2,000 feet plateau and descends 200 or 300 feet to Narainpur which, with the adjacent *parganas* of Kurangal, Dugal, Baragaon, Ghat Jhorian and Bare Jhorian, as well as Benur and the lowland or 'Kalpatti' villages of Chhote Dongar *pargana*, are an intermediate stage between the true 2,000 feet plateau and the plain of north Antagarh. The inhabitants are mostly what were called by Glasfurd and other early writers Jhorias, in appearance scarcely distinguishable from the Marias of the Abujhmar hills, with similar dancing dress, and customs similar, but considerably modified by sojourn in the lowlands and contact with other tribes. From Narainpur a forest road runs westward along the Nei Bherat valley to Sonpur, with an extension thence to Paralkot and Maroda, where it meets another forest road that comes westward from Taroki on the Narainpur-Antagarh road across the north Antagarh plain. The Sonpur, Paralkot and Paralkot-Kalpatti *parganas* are really lowland *parganas* in the middle of highland Maria *parganas*, and the two latter belong properly speaking to the north Antagarh plain. The

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The Court of Wards finally gave the lease to a Hindu of the Kurmi caste, on a premium of Rs. 211. The present lessee, his son, was made protected in 1923. Though the aboriginals as a whole have not actually lost land since 1902, the lessee had been very oppressive, forcing the aboriginals who borrowed from him to surrender their fields to him and then selling them to new tenants.

In Panabaras the departmental working of the five teak forests, largely built up, as already stated, by the Court of Wards insisting from 1900 onwards on *podu* cultivators sowing teak-seed on their plots in the second year of cultivation, has done something on Allapilli lines to bring economic relief to the local aboriginals. These four estates have been special targets for the agrarian agitation already mentioned, which started from the adjacent non-excluded Dondi-Lohara zamindari and made a special feature of inciting the Gonds and Marias to burn *podu*.

In the Garchiroli zamindaris on the whole the Marias and other aboriginals continue to hold their own and to take gradually to permanent cultivation, though far more slowly than outsiders: in the twenty years after the 1922-3 settlement aboriginal cultivation had increased by only 23 per cent., but non-aboriginal by 50 per cent., there being 6,523 aboriginal tenants of 76,113 acres against 4,012 other tenants of 46,863 acres. The aboriginals still have miles and miles of land available for extending their cultivation, but always hanker after their beloved *podu*.

This *podu* question, as I have already said, was the principal topic at the conference of the Drug and Chanda Partially Excluded Areas zamindars at Murumgaon on New Year's Day, 1940. Other topics were the neglect of the Garchiroli zamindaris by the Chanda District Council, and the future of the zamindars, in view of the political threat to the whole zamindari system. To deal first with the last topic, let me say that while there may be much to be said for 'liquidation' of big landed estates, especially of absentee proprietors, the policy towards aboriginal zamindars should be different. Most of them are descendants of long lines of tribal chieftains holding estates on very ancient tenures dating back to the semi-tribal, semi-feudal systems[1] under which most of middle India was organized centuries ago. Properly speaking these chiefs in relation to their ryots and fellow tribesmen are *primi inter pares*. Some of the wealthier aboriginal proprietors of the huge Chhattisgarh estates may have aped the princeling: but most of the Chanda zamindars are closely akin to their people—the Rangi chief, for example, is frankly a Maria among Marias—and do their utmost to protect their ryots. Legally, so long as the proprietary rights in any

[1] See p. 4.

1. Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 651 by the Marias. It deals with the village community through its mouthpieces, the headmen and the elders. Many have returned to Bastar from the Chanda Maria country. The best sign which I observed when I spent the first month of my 1934 furlough in the Abujhmar hills was that the long abandoned rice fields are all being restored to cultivation. It is interesting to note that the headman has never ventured to keep the commission for himself, but always either divides it among the villagers, or by common consent spends it on pork or liquor for a village feast.

241 In the Bison-horn country as a whole there is now as much permanent and semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, and the *patwaris* have always been more accurate in their records. The people are more sophisticated and ready to safeguard their interests. The *penda* lands are fairly accessible, except in the hilliest parts. It has been pointed out already that each piece of each *penda* site, whether at the moment under bush or under crop, is now regarded as the individual holding of some cultivator. The people have many markets in their midst, and understand measures and seed capacities. It has not, therefore, been necessary to apply the poll-tax system there. A great deal could be done even there to turn the people from shifting to permanent cultivation by recognizing new permanent cultivation as an improvement.

Methods of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias

Where the Hill Marias have started permanent cultivation they have in general adopted the methods of surrounding Murias or Bison-horn Marias, save that very few of them have mastered or attempted to master ploughing, but prepare the land with their *gudari* digging hoes. A few now keep hired Rawat herdsmen, but do not themselves tend, milk or work their cattle. If the recognition of permanent cultivation as an improvement could be combined with a determined attempt by the State to teach carting, ploughing and milking, even among the Bison-horn Marias, shifting cultivation would be greatly diminished.

243 312 When he does grow rice, the Hill Maria generally does not irrigate it with water led from a storage reservoir or tank; his method is rather to build his dam across a stream or waterway and to cultivate the land above it. The illustration opposite shows both sides of the dam made in 1930 for cultivation of this kind at Tondawada; the deep hole below the dam was made when its predecessor was washed away by an abnormal flood. No water flows here in the cold weather. First a wall of grass *tum*[1] was erected along the length of the dam, and behind this a wall of *welma*[1] horizontal pole fencing, supported behind with thicker pole piles

[1] See p. 132 for definition of *tum* and *welma*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE XIV

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TONDAWADA, HILL MARIA DAM FOR RICE CULTIVATION
Above Downstream face *Below* Upstream face

[Facing p. 146]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

243 312 driven into the ground; these were buttressed further with slanting pole props with forked ends bearing against the vertical piles, while smaller forked poles were at intervals driven into the dam on either side of the piles, but below the slanting props. This vertical pole-revetting faced downstream. Against the upstream face of the grass *tum* earth was banked with a gentle slope and gently sloped off to ground level upstream. A large and nearly hollow tree-trunk was left in the middle of the dam, to act as a pipe to carry off excess water. They called the dam *nadi*, and the tank *ore*. It was not built to store water, but to retain moisture in the tank-bed, and it was the bed which was cultivated, being dug all over with the *gudari* before the rains. The dam was still serviceable when I visited Tondawada in 1934, four years later, and other small rice plots had been made higher up the waterway by placing low mud dams across it. Though the village had shifted from the adjacent site and the *penda* slopes under cultivation in 1934 were far away, these rice patches were being prepared for cultivation in readiness for the 1934 monsoon.

241 Though it has been said above that the Bison-horn Maria has as much permanent or semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, there are many tracts in his country where *penda* is his main occupation. All Gonds or Koitor, wherever I have met them, seem at heart to long to revert to the raising of the light millets off the ashes of felled timber; though it is prohibited in the British districts of the Central Provinces, I have seen it in the *jagir* estates of the Chhindwara and Hoshangabad districts, and in the Nagpur district the prospect of being allowed to do this for the first year or two was in 1932 the best bait for attracting Gond settlers to a forest village in Ramtek tahsil and even to a malguzar's waste lands village in Saoner tahsil. So it would take little to make the far less advanced Bison-horn Maria abandon permanent rice cultivation and stick to *penda* on the hill slopes or *erka* on the plains; and much of his semi-permanent cultivation is only *parka* cultivation of former *erka* lands necessitated by their final refusal to bear any more forest after years of shifting cultivation; instead of at once applying permanent methods to the land, he cuts brushwood from other forests and brings them to the deforested land to burn instead of the brushwood it bore in former years. But in these *parka* fields he can raise only rice, not his beloved small millets. In his *penda* fields he sows only *kutki*, *Panicum miliaceum*, of the type sown as the main crop in the Abujhmar hills; but in many places the forest growth felled for his *penda* is almost pure bamboo, and here instead of *kutki* he sows what he calls *gondku*, which I have not had identified.

Bison-horn Maria cultivation

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

243 *kopar* or flat log is dragged by oxen over the field according as the seed has sprouted vigorously or slightly. In many parts of Bijapur and Dantewara tahsils the *lai* system of sowing is the normal rule. Bison-horn Marias also often take a *kopar* over their *parka* and *erka* fields after they have ploughed in the ashes after the first showers of rain, so as to ensure thorough mixing of the soil and ashes. Light or heavy rice is sown in the *weda* and *jhorki weda* fields according to its position; light rice ripening early is thus generally sown in the *jhorki weda*, which drains rapidly, and always in the dry *parka* lands. The mountain rices sown in *penda* and high-level *erka* lands cannot be acclimatized in the plains.

●312 In the *Gazetteer* it was stated that the people of Bastar generally were very slow to understand the advantages of irrigation; land and rain are abundant everywhere except in the south. But of recent years many Bison-horn Maria villages have constructed small *mundas* or tanks, partly for irrigation, and partly to water their cattle; and tank-bed cultivation such as that in the Hill Maria village of Tondawada described earlier in this chapter is much commoner among them.

000 This completes this account of Hill and Bison-horn Maria agriculture. The Bison-horn Maria has a number of agricultural ceremonies to sanctify his various operations and of taboos like the Hill Maria, but far more, and, like his agricultural methods, more elaborate. They will be described in the chapter on religion; their recital in this chapter would have overburdened an already long account.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias, Gonds, Marars, Mahras, Halbas, almost all communities were infected. At Jarawandi and in the villages of the Jharapapra and Aundhi zamindaris along the Bastar border many Maria and Halba villagers contrasted the Central Provinces Government's lack of care for them in Chanda and Drug districts with the anti-yaws and other public health work over the border in Bastar. It is of course only comparatively recently that doctors have recognized the existence of yaws as a distinct (and easily curable) disease which responds to treatment similar to the usual syphilis treatment; the *District Gazetteer*, for example, refers to the disease as 'a mild form of leprosy named "Gondi rog".'[1]

Another thirteen miles of forest track, fairly easily negotiated by cars, brought us from Bhamragarh to the large village of Lahiri,[2] the headquarters of a *Sendhia's patti*, as mentioned at page 287. Lahiri lies at the foot of the Abujhmar Mountains, and beyond it no wheeled vehicles could proceed. Between Bhamragarh and Lahiri we saw several examples of the skilful *gatta* cultivation of the Marias, thus described in Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report:—

'In *gattas* the land above the dam is cultivated. To construct a *gatta*, a miniature valley with gently sloping sides, through which a stream flows, is chosen. The space between the banks of the stream is built up in the hot weather with trunks of trees, having their thinner end towards the point from which the current flows, and across these are fixed smaller logs and brushwood. The upstream face has thus a gentle slope to the front, while the rear face is almost perpendicular, and is sometimes strengthened by vertical stakes. The barricade is carried from four to eight feet above the level of the banks, and is then heaped with earth. As soon as the first rains have softened the ground, sods, about fifteen inches long by twelve broad and five thick, are dug with a heavy teak implement called a *hatwa*, and with the sods wing embankments are built. These are run out in continuation of, and level with the log barricade, until the rise of the valley reduces their height to about a foot, when they are sloped off to the front and flanks; and pipes of *mohua*, *ex* or *gougool* are put through. Similar *gattas* are constructed at convenient distances at other points of the stream, and if the situation be favourable, twenty of these *gattas* may be seen spanning the valley in regular series. Surplus water passes round the flanks of the *gatta*, and sometimes in floods, the stream tops the dams and cascades over. Rice is planted in the wet ground above the dam, and, where there is a succession of *gattas*, water, if required, is passed from a higher to a lower level through the wooden pipes in the embankment. Some of the *gattas* rise to twenty feet above the stream bed, and are very substantial structures, flooding large areas.'

This skill is slowly making its way among the Hill Marias, and the illustrations facing page 146 of this book of a Hill Maria dam at Tondawada in Bastar are really of a typical *gatta*, including the hollow tree-trunk pipe. That this traditional skill persists and has developed into a real irrigation technique has been shown by Rao

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.
[2] Spelt Lahir on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV8455.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 Bahadur D. Lakshmanswamy in his 1922-4 Sironcha and Garchiroli
312 Settlement Report, paragraph 31 :—

'Agriculture in parts of these zamindaris is as thorough as in the most advanced *khalsa* tracts. One has simply to look at the extensive rice fields and *gattas* of the Madias [*sic*] to admire the almost mathematical levelling of their field embankments. The Maria Gond has a genius for rice cultivation. He selects the best *zilas* position area, and with an intuition for irrigation lays out his fields one below the other so as to utilize water from the field above to that lower down. A natural stream or spring of water is generally never allowed to go waste by him. He so embanks and diverts the supply by a system of well arranged water-channels as to utilize the whole supply for his rice area, however distant it may be. Even in the remotest part of the zamindaris agriculture has now developed beyond the domestic stage and assumed the commercial stage. The aboriginals constituting the greater part of the population of these zamindaris mostly live on the early rice, small millets and beans, while the heavy rice grown in the big *gattas* and embanked areas is exported to the markets.'

241 Now it should be noted that this means that for his own sub-
sistence the Maria still relied on the grains and beans dear to his heart, and grown by *dahi* or *jalapod* cultivation, which had not then been stopped except in parts of Ahiri. The growth of heavy rice
241 as a commercial crop is yet another sign of the transition from an
426 economy in kind to a cash economy. Of this the money-lender takes full advantage.

563 For in these plains villages around Bhamragarh and Lahiri, besides Marias and Gonds there are nests of Teli exploiters, notably in the six villages of Lahiri, Mallampodur,[1] Kukurmeta,[2] Arawara,[3] Dodrai[4] and Idadapalli.[5] Many of these Teli money-lenders are now wealthy, as a result of small grain loans to the plains Marias and Gonds. The *modus operandi* is repayment indefinitely at rates of interest so high that the principal can never be repaid, while interest takes the form of a steady and heavy share of the debtors' harvest. Some of the Telis resort habitually to molestation of their debtors until the latter satisfy their yearly demand, but though molestation of debtors is now a cognizable offence under the Debtors' Protection Act, the police in their far distant police station at Etapalli never take action against molesting money-lenders. We have seen already on page 102 how these Telis' tentacles had spread to such Bastar villages as Nugor in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, where there were big matting paddy bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored on behalf of the Telis, who were free from time to time to remove all paddy from the bins surplus to the Marias' seed requirements, while each Maria villager was free to help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest

[1] References on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A :
1. MV7952
2. MV7854
3. MV7955
4 and 5. Not marked.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

343 substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in
[23] funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

241 The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brush-wood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and
[312] irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some
[464 583] of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live.
[222 262] There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and
224 ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

312
415
291
142
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Girls fetching water at Bastanar

[Facing p. 32]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

dry brushwood have been burnt round their feet if the girdling has not prevented some sap again rising. Ultimately, if these lands do not have a long enough rest between successive clearings, the forest loses its power of regeneration; and it is to such former *dippa* or *erka* lands that the *parka* or *dahi* system described above is applied. *Dippa* is fairly common between Orcha and Chhota Dongar, and it is because there is plenty of land still available to ensure each *dippa* an adequate rest that *parka* cultivation is so uncommon. But in the more open country of the large Bison-horn Maria villages much land seems to have lost its forest regenerative power, and every remaining non-fruit tree has its boughs lopped year after year to provide fuel to be carted off to the old *erka* lands for *parka* cultivation till it looks, when its new leaves sprout, like a Lombardy poplar in shape. The raking of the ashes with the *parka-lathi* in the height of the hot weather is very exhausting, and the men who do this work often suffer for some days later from very dark-coloured urine.

Both *dippa* (*erka*) and *parka* are more advanced methods of cultivation than the Hill Maria's favourite *penda* or hill slope cultivation. For this he fells and burns the forest growth on the hill slopes, which are often very steep. Beyond roughly distributing the unburnt material over the slope, and, wearing wooden clogs or strips of *saja* bark to protect the soles of his feet, poking unburnt logs into a burning patch with long bamboo poles, he does not try to spread the ashes evenly, or use the *parka-lathi*, and consequently adjacent patches of crops vary greatly in height and density. He sows the seed broadcast in the ashes after the rains have broken, and does not attempt to dig up the soil of the slopes with his *gudari* hoe except in the few patches where the sown seed does not germinate; these he roughly scarifies and resows. The *Gazetteer* (p. 54) repeats the story that the seed is 'sown along the top of the slope from which the rain water washes it down and spreads it over the field'; the bare idea of this makes Hill and Bison-horn Maria laugh, and it is obvious that if sowing were so much left to chance, the only parts of the slope producing any crops would be the sides of the natural drainage channels. The Hill Maria does scarify his rare permanent rice fields and sometimes his *dippa* land with his hoe, and one man in three hundred may use a plough on them; but the Bison-horn Maria uses his plough on rice field, *parka* and *erka* and even occasionally on the lower and less steep parts of his *penda* slopes, while he scarifies with his hoe all that he does not plough.

In most Hill Maria parishes *penda* is the only kind of cultivation, and though in much of the Bison-horn country permanent

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of rice failures such as those of 1939 and 1940. In the former year the Marias, dismayed by the failure of rice on their plough-lands, took the law into their own hands and started cutting *podu* in the east of Garchiroli tahsil and the adjacent Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district, being to some extent incited by emissaries of the leader of an agrarian agitation in the Dondi-Lohara zamindari. It seemed to me that in their present mood they would before long again defy the restrictions and cut *podu* on a wide scale.

I recommended accordingly that their wishes should be met, as it should not be difficult to regulate *podu* by fixing a regular series of sites to be felled in two-yearly rotations. Silviculturally too there was much to be gained by this. When *podu* was first restricted and then prohibited, the miscellaneous forests were allowed to grow up just as they had been left after the last *podu* fellings, with all the old high stumps and crooked or double or treble stems. Even the patches of teak were often useless because the trees had been left to shoot from old undressed stumps. Most of this vast forest around Bhamragarh, Surjagarh and Jarawandi has no commercial value at all, and never will have unless good teak can be grown. In the neighbouring Panabaras zamindari of Drug I found that some forty years before the Court of Wards had initiated a practice of requiring *podu* cultivators to sow teak seed in the *podu* clearings before abandoning them. This did much to produce the fine forest that is now so valuable an asset of that estate. The Marias whom I met in Ahiri, Jharapapra, Aundi, Koracha, Murumgaon, Rangi and Dhanora zamindaris were most appreciative of the idea of *podu* being allowed with this condition of the sowing of teak seed in the second and last year of cultivation. All knew how the Allapilli departmental forest operation had saved the local Marias from economic ruin, and they were quick to realize that conservation of the surviving teak and the growth of teak in areas now to be selected for that purpose and sown with teak at the end of *podu* cultivation would bring teak forests, and therefore ultimately operations such as those at Allapilli, far nearer to their villages in the days of their grandchildren. Besides areas thus earmarked for teak regeneration after *podu*, there should also be fixed areas around each village where *podu* should be allowed indefinitely. The Marias also would welcome the extension to other parts of Ahiri and the other zamindaris of the precedent of the leasing by Government from the Ahiri zamindar of the forests around Allapilli: the surviving teak areas around Surajgarh would for example be suitable leased areas. In all these measures the fullest co-operation of the Marias could without much difficulty be obtained by enlisting the sympathy and support of the *bhumias*, *gaitas*, and *Sendhias*, whose authority remains real and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 313 unchallenged. I emphasize the word sympathy: the method of threatening and punishing the headmen must be given up, and every effort made to win their understanding support for the new measures and even to entrust them with their execution.

883 The walks and talks at Surjagarh delayed the start on the 32 miles journey to Jawarwandi, and the car and lorry were more than once bogged on the way, so that once again we arrived in camp long after dark. It was on this journey that we crossed the tongues of Bastar territory mentioned on page 378 of this Note: in the southern tongue, in fact, we were bogged for an hour or more, but, as in Bastar, were readily helped to extricate ourselves. I noticed and stopped in *gotul* or bachelors' dormitories in several villages before and after Surjagarh. Many of these are treated by touring officers as though they were rest-huts built for their special convenience, like the *chauri* of Hyderabad or Berar villages. They use them also for posting up legal notices, and in two I found nailed to the wooden posts copies of the *Yudda Samachar* or War News in the Marathi edition published by the provincial War Purposes Fund for dissemination of accurate war information in all villages; this showed singular lack of intelligence on the part of those who controlled such propaganda in Chanda district, for in these Maria villages not a person was literate and very few could speak Marathi. The *gotul* culture here must be similar to that among the Murias just across the Bastar border in North Antagarh, but in the short time available I did not overcome the Marias' natural reluctance to discuss this intimate social organization, a reluctance heightened, I suspect, by the fact that here on the fringes of the *gotul* country the institution is the butt of Hindu ridicule or prurient curiosity. But there certainly are *gotul* in these villages, at least for the youths, and I found one, with some difficulty owing to the reticence of the local Marias in these mixed villages, at Erka in Rangi zamindari. So far as I could make out, they are still to be found in the Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug.

632 Jarawandi is the headquarters of a sub-zamindar holding under Ahiri a taluq of twenty-three villages: the rival claims of Ahiri and Jarawandi to the seignorial dues have been a nuisance to the local Marias. Here there was a large gathering of headmen and *Sendhias* of *patti* groups of villages. Enquiries from them and later at [623] Murumgaon showed that the *panchayat* system described in the extract on pages 286-8 of this book is not only as vigorous as ever, but is more widespread than previously recorded, there being *Sendhias* in almost every Chanda zamindari. It had been stated to me that the zamindars outside Ahiri had usurped the authority of the *Sendhia* and his *patti panchayat*, but I doubt the truth of this, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The Court of Wards finally gave the lease to a Hindu of the Kurmi caste, on a premium of Rs. 211. The present lessee, his son, was made protected in 1923. Though the aboriginals as a whole have not actually lost land since 1902, the lessee had been very oppressive, forcing the aboriginals who borrowed from him to surrender their fields to him and then selling them to new tenants.

In Panabaras the departmental working of the five teak forests, largely built up, as already stated, by the Court of Wards insisting from 1900 onwards on *podu* cultivators sowing teak-seed on their plots in the second year of cultivation, has done something on Allapilli lines to bring economic relief to the local aboriginals. These four estates have been special targets for the agrarian agitation already mentioned, which started from the adjacent non-excluded Dondi-Lohara zamindari and made a special feature of inciting the Gonds and Marias to burn *podu*.

In the Garchiroli zamindaris on the whole the Marias and other aboriginals continue to hold their own and to take gradually to permanent cultivation, though far more slowly than outsiders: in the twenty years after the 1922-3 settlement aboriginal cultivation had increased by only 23 per cent., but non-aboriginal by 50 per cent., there being 6,523 aboriginal tenants of 76,113 acres against 4,012 other tenants of 46,863 acres. The aboriginals still have miles and miles of land available for extending their cultivation, but always hanker after their beloved *podu*.

This *podu* question, as I have already said, was the principal topic at the conference of the Drug and Chanda Partially Excluded Areas zamindars at Murumgaon on New Year's Day, 1940. Other topics were the neglect of the Garchiroli zamindaris by the Chanda District Council, and the future of the zamindars, in view of the political threat to the whole zamindari system. To deal first with the last topic, let me say that while there may be much to be said for 'liquidation' of big landed estates, especially of absentee proprietors, the policy towards aboriginal zamindars should be different. Most of them are descendants of long lines of tribal chieftains holding estates on very ancient tenures dating back to the semi-tribal, semi-feudal systems[1] under which most of middle India was organised centuries ago. Properly speaking these chiefs in relation to their ryots and fellow tribesmen are *primi inter pares*. Some of the wealthier aboriginal proprietors of the huge Chhattisgarh estates may have aped the princeling: but most of the Chanda zamindars are closely akin to their people—the Rangi chief, for example, is frankly a Maria among Marias—and do their utmost to protect their ryots. Legally, so long as the proprietary rights in any

[1] See p. 4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and civil litigation in which Maria parties have been involved since this interference with their way of life, and to see also if it has had any bearing on suicide. Quite clearly, however, it has had a tremendous and adverse effect on their economics. It has accentuated their transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy and, by virtually forcing them to grow rice, a commercial food crop, as their principal crop, it has played into the hands of the *banis* and the money-lender who naturally desire to buy up rice for export. It may be suspected also that this has had an adverse effect on the diet and physique of the Maria. The small millets, which are the characteristic and favourite food of the Marias and were best grown in the *podu* clearings, are dietetically of higher value than rice. Their market value was small, but so long as the Marias' granary had ample stores of these millets, he had not to depend upon the money-lender for seed or cattle, nor to bother about marketing his produce. The only partial remedy so far provided for the economic ills caused by the stopping of *podu* has been the departmental forest work at Allapilli. Here the Maria, doing work of a type for which his life in the forest suits him and receiving fair and prompt cash payment for his labour, has been able to earn money which could keep him out of the clutches of the money-lender and the bribe-taker. But this too has had its detribalizing effect, accustoming him to working far from his home village and in close contact with an alien civilization and culture.

The next difficulties that the Maria has to solve in assimilating himself to the life of modern India are the problems resulting from the impact of political India with its steady tendency to seek to reduce all things and all institutions throughout India to a drab uniformity. There is no doubt that the Maria is not ready to exercise the vote. It is equally clear that he has his own vigorous tribal organization and that his *patti panchayat* could easily be entrusted with the same powers that have been given to the village and *pargana panchayats* in Bastar. It seems obvious also that on these *panchayats* could be based some sort of system whereby Marias could handle the problems of local self-government in their country. These *panchayats*, for example, if entrusted with the selection of local Marias for a zamindari *panchayat*, could produce a body in real touch with tribal life in all its facets. Tribal village life is still naturally co-operative, even though in the plains individualism is now stronger than in the largely collective villages of the Hills. In fact the whole *podu* system was an incentive to the co-operation of all the villagers; rice cultivation, in contrast, drives villagers into individualism and ideas of private property as indeed does the whole land revenue system which has been

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A little later they collect *kapani*, the wild bearded rice common in all old rice fields and fallows and at the edges of standing water, by holding a winnowing-fan in one hand and beating the grain of the standing ripe plants into it with the other; the bearded ears are sometimes plaited into '*sela*' fringes for ornamenting doors of houses at the new-eating festivals.

The men are adept in collecting the honey of various kinds of bees, though sometimes, despite forest rules, too prone to save trouble by felling rather than climbing a fine tree. For this purpose, and for tapping palm trees, they often fasten to the trunks of trees long thick bamboos, cutting the side shoots down to stumps four or five inches long to serve as ladder rungs. Gums are collected from many species of trees, for use as bird-lime or in securing the *kosa* silk whipping of arrow-heads, etc. In Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils the Forest Department has quantities of *tasar* silk cocoons collected by Bison-horn Maria men when, in the rains in the intervals between sowing and reaping their various crops, they go out to the forests in search of such delicacies as red ants' nests, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs. The cocoons are high on sal or *saja* trees; where the climbers cannot reach them they use long bamboo poles with a piece of bamboo fastened at an acute angle at the end to serve as a hook. They get about Rs. 3 a thousand cocoons from the Koshta weavers who employ them; the Hill Maria, however, generally collects only what cocoons he needs for his own purposes. Red ants' nests are cooked, leaves, ants and all, either with *pej* or *gato*, or by themselves and eaten with pulses as a vegetable. They are also a favourite febrifuge; a rough and ready remedy is to shake out the live red ants on to the patient's skull, when the formic acid of their stings is said to reduce the fever; the more elaborate method is to boil the nest, ants and all, and to strain off and use the juice as a febrifuge in small doses; this juice is said to taste sharper than any lime and believed to be invaluable for a long-standing fever. In collecting the palms of the dwarf palms *chhind* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *P. acaulis*, and *buta chhind* (*P. farinifera*) for use for thatching, basketry or making rough cords for binding fences, the men not only collect the small dates or the flowers (according to season) and the edible pith of the *buta chhind*, but also the fat white grub of a certain beetle, which is also found in the stems of the toddy palm and in fresh green monsoon bamboo shoots. This is eaten fried in ghee or oil with a little spice and chillies, and is regarded as a great delicacy; it is sold in the Jagdalpur market for three or four pice, and even high-caste Hindus buy it. When white ants emerge in flying swarms early in the monsoon they collect them after they have shed their wings, or pull the wings

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

night goes to comb the hair of the boy from whom she desires a present. She does his hair with special care and whispers in his ear, 'Look, boy, I have brought some silver, make me a nice comb'. The boy says, 'I don't know how to'. The girl says, 'But of course you know'. Then the boy says, 'Well, what will you give me? Will you....?' The girl says, 'Never', meaning 'Yes', and the boy makes the comb.

In well-disciplined ghotul a boy cannot give a comb to a motiari without the permission of the Kotwar; sometimes it has actually to pass through the Kotwar's hands. For such a gift seems to be regarded as a very definite and important step in the love relations between a boy and girl, and it is considered necessary by the ghotul authorities to keep a check on such intimacies in case there is any scandal or trouble. To this witness some lines in a Paskna Pata from Bandopal:

Where did you get a comb like that?
You got it from the embrace of a chelik.
One comb for once, two combs for twice.

If a comb is lost or broken, the chelik must make a new one. Otherwise his motiari says, 'How can I comb his hair?' If the Kotwar hears about it, he orders the boy to make one, and he does so at once.

Most combs are made of mahua or karraha wood. Implements used in their manufacture are a small saw, ¾" broad and 6" long, rather like a fret-saw; a *kadri* knife; a *hujji* chisel and a *tatti* adze.

The Kotwar of the Phunder ghotul made a comb for me. He took a piece of mahua wood 2' long and 3" broad, supported one end on a bit of wood and gradually planed down one end, first with the adze and then with his knife. He stood it on end and trimmed the top; then with the saw cut a number of slits 1" deep, measuring them with a twig to ensure that they were even. He cut them again and again to enlarge the slits, leaving on either side of the wood a space uncut.

Now another boy came and held the wood firmly, and the Kotwar cut off 1¾" from the top with his saw, first cutting half through on one side, then turning the wood over and doing it from the other. Finally he broke the piece off and trimmed it with his knife. So far the process had taken half an hour, but the small piece of wood had taken shape as a comb. The boy now spent fifteen minutes shaping the sides, then with his chisel he enlarged the slits again and carefully cleaned the apertures between the spikes. After this, he held the comb in the hollow of his left hand and grasping the chisel firmly in the right and pressing it down hard began to decorate the comb with various patterns. By the time he had finished, he had spent two-and-a-half hours on the work, the greater part of the time being spent on the decoration.

[314] The next morning the Kotwar went to a wild fig tree to extract its sticky, milky gum. He struck a branch with the blunt end of his axe and caught some drops of gum in a leaf-cup. He brought this back and sat down by a fire. He spread the gum on either side of the comb with a bit of straw, warmed it on the fire, applied more gum, laid the silver paper over it and rubbed it in hard with the handle of his chisel till the pattern showed. He repeated the process on the opposite side toasting the comb before the fire by sticking it on the end of his chisel. Finally he brought out the pattern clearly by pressing in the silver paper with his own finger-nails, and washed it with a straw dipped in water.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
415
●314

Motiari drying mahua flowers at Temrugaon

Motiari collecting and sifting mahua flowers

Plate XCVI

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyeq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyeq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bugi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

themselves socially they not only cease to follow old Maria customs, but begin to resent being called Marias and to claim the designation of Muria. In some places, especially in villages where it is hard to find suitable menhir stones, they erect in their stead posts of *saja* wood, which they call *urasgatta*. The upper illustration on plate XXI shows a very elaborate *urasgatta* from a roadside village near the Chitrakot falls, on the northernmost fringe of the Bison-horn country. It is carved on each of its carefully squared sides with representations of hunting scenes, and the objects of the chase. Originally these were picked out in red and blue paint. Plate XXII shows part of a large row of *uraskal* menhirs by the side of the road from Dantewara to Kameli, at the foot of the bridle-path ascending to the Bailadila guest-house; such enormous menhirs as those shown behind the women in this illustration are seldom set up in these days; the tallest shown was thirteen feet high, and the broadest over six feet wide at the base. The normal size of those nowadays erected is shown in the lower illustration on plate XXI; this portrays part of the *uraskal* of Aranpur village, by the side of the forest road from Kuakonda to Dummagudem, and at the head of the Aranpur pass. In this photograph the interesting thing is the large flat stone resting on four boulders.[A] This is known as a *danya-kal*, and was placed there as the memorial of Birya-Marvi Hurra Wadde, who in his life-time was *perma* and *bhum-gaita* of Aranpur, as well as a *wadde*. The Birya-Marvi and the Kuhrami clans are the only two which always make *danyakal* and never set up *uraskal* stones; all the other clans, even in the Marvi and Kuhrami phratries, and including the small or Chudala Marvi clan, erect *uraskal* stones. This Aranpur *uraskal* was not restricted to the Birya-Marvi clan, although the village was founded by that clan; the *danyakal* stone on the right edge of the photograph was the last stone at the south end of the row; next to it on the north were fifteen *uraskal* stones of the Kunjami clan, and after them three of the Chudala Marvi clan. The small stones at the foot of the menhirs are known as *hawal-kutul* or ghost stools, and serve the same function as the *hawal-garya* cromlechs of the Hill Marias. Any recently erected stone can usually be detected either by the presence of a cow's or pig's tail hung over its apex by a loop of cord, or by the dirty white stains of libations of *landa* poured over the stone when it was set up.

The stone is selected and carried from the quarry to the place where it is to be erected in much the same way as that already described for the Hill Marias. I use the word quarry advisedly, for these great slabs or pillars cannot be found as surface boulders. I have not seen the actual quarrying; but they understand how to

[A] [See col. 116, pp. 426-427. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

316 crack boulders by burning piles of logs on and around them, and use their iron digging-sticks as crowbars to assist the work. The [483] stones are too heavy to be carried merely by the ends of the two long poles to which the Hill Maria lashes the short cross-pieces of wood on which the stone rests; the Bison-horn cross-pieces project beyond the stone, and on the ends they attach long loops of twisted bamboo rind, through the upper ends of those they pass cross-poles over the top of the stone, and the ends of these cross-poles, like those of the two long poles, are borne on the bearers' shoulders. 764 The heir of the dead man has to provide food and drink for the bearers, as in the Abujhmar hills. The stone is taken to the place where it is to be set up, and the heir sacrifices a cock on the other side of the road on the spot where the body was cremated, and buries it in a hole dug under the ashes.

All proceed thence to the dead man's house, and there in the *wijja-lon* by the Pot of the Departed the heir sacrifices another cock to the dead man. The latter's son-in-law, or, if there is none, his *erramtogh* or some other affine, in the name of the dead man kills, with blows from the blunt head of an axe on its head, the cow or cows selected by the dead man during his lifetime; they believe that if these cows are not sacrificed in fulfilment of his wishes they pine away and die, and then the dead man is said to have come and fetched them away. Pigs are sometimes sacrificed as a substitute for or in addition to cows. The sacrificed animals are then skinned and cut up for roasting, the liver being cooked separately for the dead man. They take the liver, the tails tied to loops of cord, and a pot of *landa* to the *uraskal*, and there the affines of the dead man see to the erection of the stone. The heir hangs the tails over the top of the stone, after pouring *landa* over it, and sometimes milk also. He then places the roasted liver on the *hanal-kutul* cromlech, and with his back turned to the menhir sacrifices a chicken and places it under the cromlech, in much the same way as the Hill Maria heir. All present fling rice, *kuthi*, *urad* and *mung* at and around the menhir, and then follow the heir to the nearest pool to bathe, without looking back at the menhir. They eat the roast beef and pork of the sacrificial victims either on the banks of the pool or at the dead man's house, with boiled rice and pulses, and *landa* and *mahua* spirit to drink. The son-in-law or other affine who beat the funeral drum is presented by the heir with a brass dish and a piece of cloth, or, more often, with the cloth only. All then disperse.

At the first Marka Pandum following this, a final offering of mangoes and grain is made to the dead man's *hanal* at his *uraskal*.

In some villages a forked bough is erected instead of an *uraskal* or an *urasgatta*. It is always cut from the sacred *saja* tree.

9 [see cat. 116, p. 427. – Ayyhyst]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

316

Quarrying memorial stones at Dugeli

764

Row of mashal stones

[Facing p. 192]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 size, from those used in the plains. The plains blacksmith does recognize the Hill Maria's individual taste in such matters, but that
326 taste is always being modified by the sight, occasional use and occasional purchase of plains types, particularly if, when a new weapon is wanted in a hurry, only the latter are immediately available.

411 The blade of the average Maria knife measures 13 to 15 cm. from the point to the beginning of the tang. It is about 2·5 cm. broad where the tang begins, and from there the cutting edge curves inwards for a quarter or a fifth of its length, thence tapering with a slight convex curve to the point, which is 2 or 3 cm. to the side of the axis of the handle. The reverse edge is about 3 mm. thick in the tang, the thickness gradually diminishing towards the point. The tang is a continuation of the thick side of the blade, about 8 mm. wide where it leaves the blade and tapering for about 3·5 or 4 cm. to a pointed end. Except where it is continued in this tang, the blade has a horizontal bottom. The tang is heated and so burned into the wooden handle; the blacksmith, with this as all iron tools and weapons, supplies only the iron, and the buyer makes his own handle. The edge is produced in the first place by hammering on each side, followed by rubbing down a whet-stone. Being made of soft iron smelted from local ore, these knives can be given an extremely sharp point and fine edge. They are not usually
[412] taken back to the smith to be sharpened, but are whetted on a stone; there is often a flat, black, polished, communal whet-stone outside the men's dormitory (*gotal*) in a hill village.

411 Besides fitting the tang into a short, cylindrical, wooden handle, about 6·5 to 7·5 cm. long, and in diameter 2 cm. at the base and
● 322 somewhat thinner where the tang enters it, the Hill Maria makes a wooden sheath of two flat pieces of wood trimmed roughly to the shape of the blade, each of which has on one side a low flange slightly more than half as thick as the thick edge of the blade. The two flat pieces are laid on each other, the flanged edges together, and are joined by whipping of twine, *kosa* silk or millimetre-wide thin thongs of hide at the broad top, over a groove round the centre
[531] of the sheath, and near its point. The sheath is often carved, favourite designs being rough lozenges in relief on a bar, or a bar indented, or bands of three parallel lines.

411 This knife the Maria uses for slicing bamboo and all ordinary cutting purposes; holding the handle loosely in his hand he uses its full weight for chopping with the concave portion of the blade pieces of wood up to 3 cm. in diameter, getting a surprisingly straight cross-section; he usually chops all round the circumference to a depth of a third of the diameter, then breaks off the portion to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the bed of the stream; these are held in position between upright poles set V-wise in the boulders, to which are fastened horizontal bamboo poles as railings. As they have no saws, the 'plank' is a tree trunk with one side trimmed flat with the axe. Even more elaborate bridges are sometimes made at high levels over streams liable to flood, from tree-fork to tree-fork on opposite banks.

Though, as has been said above, agricultural conditions nowadays determine village sites, hill-tops or rocky slopes remain favourite sites, and become commoner as you penetrate farther into the Abujhmar hills. The traditional arrangement is a street some twenty-five yards wide between parallel lines of long-houses; at one end of the street is the *gotul-lon* or village dormitory, generally within a rounded bamboo fence, and sometimes in front of this dormitory will be seen the *udam-garia* or seat of honour of the *kasyeq-gaita* and possibly also of the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*), as well as the stones on which the other village elders sit around with them in conclave; but the *udam-garia* custom is not found in all parts of the hills. Sometimes the shrine of the *Nar-Talughi* or Village Mother is actually inside the dormitory fencing, and she is often housed there for a while when a village is being shifted. There are, as a rule, no *bari* (vegetable gardens) attached to each house as amongst most Gonds, including the Bison-horn Marias and the Murias of Bastar; but sometimes the *kasyeq-gaita* has a small tobacco *bari* attached to the dormitory in the centre of the main street. The *Gazetteer* (p. 50) speaks of the 'common granary' as standing in the broad street; but with one partial exception, Nugur village in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, I have never seen this. The villagers generally construct a row of granaries (*manda* or *wijja-dodi*) on piles at the side or rear of the main village street, sometimes nearer the *penda* fields than the village; this row can hardly be called a 'common granary', as each villager has his own granary in the row for his own private food and seed store, the granaries being built together only for convenience, as they can then be watched at night by one watchman for the whole village, sleeping in a special hut at the side of the granaries or under a granary. At Nugur there were big matting bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored; but here the village had come under the economic thraldom of some Teli tradesmen, who for years had advanced rice to the cultivators. The bins were left in the collective charge of the headman and elders, and any villager could help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest he would replace it with 50 per cent. interest, the Teli owners being also free to remove the surplus from time to time.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Chelik at Bandopal making a kutul head-rest

Chelik at Phunder making a comb

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 has been specially hollowed out for this purpose. Usually
273 there is no stock of rice-beer at hand and it cannot be made so quickly. The Maria then mix a little mandia flour with water and give this instead.

If for any reason in the course of the ceremony some rite or custom is omitted the spirit of the dead man may attack one or other of the mourners in order to show his displeasure. For example, at Gadapal, Burka Peda told me that they once forgot to give landa to the old menhirs and the insulted Dead attacked his father's sister and she fell down in a fit. They quickly gave both landa and mahua liquor to all the menhirs and she recovered. Again in Mahara-Karka one Kuhrami Eriya was hurled into the fire by the angry ghost and his leg was burnt. If this happens it is a good plan for the victim to run and catch
[789] hold of the bamboo poles with which the stone was carried. The Gaita pours water upon him and the angry ghost leaves him alone.

IX

322 When a very well-known or wealthy man dies his family
766 sometimes erects a carved wooden pillar to his memory.
554 There are very few of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

322 These pillars are called by Grigson urasgatta, a word that
766 is obviously formed on the same plan as uraskal, from *urasna* meaning 'to bury' and *gatta*—'a pillar'. I have not myself found any Maria using the word or even recognizing it when it has been put to them. It may be that its use has died out. The Maria to whom I have spoken call these pillars either *munde* (Gondi) or *kambha* (Halbi or Hindi).

The pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. It should simply be near any road or path that is constantly used by the people. The pillars are usually made of saja or sarai wood and are erected with ceremonies very similar to those for a stone.

There are not many of these pillars, but they are worth looking at. There is a very fine one near Dilmilli

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

322 766 on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. Near Massenar at the end of a long line of menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa, which has a carving of the old man wearing his jubilee medal. There are others at Chinger, on the way to Chitrakot and in a few other places.

322 766 532 Each pillar attempts to be a biography in wood of the deceased. We see him important carrying the symbols of wealth and power and riding on a horse or elephant; we see the dancers that delighted him and the landa pot which never failed to give him pleasure. We are shown the knives and axes that he used; the animals that he saw or hunted in the forest. The pillar for Oyami Masa, the homicide, had several carvings illustrating his work as a Siraha.

X

623 632 Every Maria village has a panel of secular and religious officials. There is the headman (often called the Peda), his assistant (the Kandki) and a Kotwar, who has the duty of reporting to the police all births and deaths within his jurisdiction. Each group of villages belongs to what is called a Pargana, a relic of the older administrative system of the State, and at the head of each Pargana there is a Pargana Manjhi. Each village has its panchayat presided over by the village headman, and each Pargana has a Pargana panchayat which is a Court of Appeal. In 1932, the village panchayats among all the aboriginals in Bastar were entrusted with a certain amount of criminal and civil work. The regular Courts were deprived of jurisdiction over the tribesmen for no fewer than seventeen Sections of the Indian Penal Code, including those dealing with simple hurt and assault, thefts of property up to five rupees, mischief, trespass and adultery. The panchayats were permitted to deal with claims for civil damages that might arise out of the criminal offences, and in other civil claims not exceeding twentyfive rupees. They were permitted to impose fines of not more than twentyfive, and in marriage cases to allow expenses up to fifty rupees. The Kotwar had the business of reporting panchayat decisions to the police. An appeal

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

326 *pichki* for the making of these thin wax threads. The *pichki* consists of two parts each shaped like the letter T, but with a short stem and the cross-piece or handle three times as long as the stem. One T-piece is entirely of hard wood, handle and stem being cylindrical and smoothly rounded; but the stem of the second T-piece is hollowed so that the solid stem of the first may fit closely in it, and at its bottom it has a brass cap with holes like the lid of a pepper pot. A lump of soft wax is placed in this hollow stem, and then the solid stem of the other T-piece is fitted into the hollow socket, and the Gharwa presses the two cross-piece handles together in one hand, so as to force wax through the perforations like meat through a mincing machine.

When the core has been covered with wax and the wax pattern, it is known as *main-kutan*, *main* meaning wax. The *main-kutan* is covered over closely with another layer of white-ant clay with a drain-hole left at one end; this clay must be pressed firmly on to the wax pattern, to take the impress of it. It is dried and heated enough to melt the wax, which is run off from the drain-hole. It remains to replace the melted wax with molten metal. The *main-kutan* as it stands is not strong enough, and so it is again covered over with a thick coating of white-ant clay mixed with water in which certain leaves and grasses have been cooked, which gives the clay a greenish colour. At the top, over the drain-hole through which the wax was poured out, a large clay-cup or *khondi* is plastered as part of this new clay covering, and the whole affair is now known as a *kaskut-chancha*. This is hardened in the sun, and then baked in a furnace with the *khondi* uppermost; the metal melts and falls through the drain-hole into the place occupied by the wax, and takes the pattern left by the wax on the clay that was plastered over it.

323 There are no potters in the heart of the Abujhmar hills, partly because in the valleys of the clear rocky mountain streams there is no suitable clay, and partly because the Hill Maria still grows and uses gourds for many purposes, or else uses bamboo tubes. But all now use earthen pots at least for cooking, and for the Pot of the Departed, many also for drawing and storing water. At every market, therefore, in the valleys and plains below there are potters who do a considerable trade with the Hill Marias, and some have settled in their villages like Nugur and Lakka between the Kutru foot of the hills and the Indrawati, while, of course, potters are plentiful in the Bison-horn country. The potters belong to the great Kumhar potter caste, at least in name, though here again many differ little in type from surrounding Marias. They use the common type of Indian potters' wheel, and

4. Pottery

[564]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

each of which they split in two. These are piled on dry faggots, and covered over with dry brushwood, and burnt; when they think that they have been burnt long enough, they plaster wet mud over the heaps to prevent the escape of smoke, and leave them all night. Meanwhile they make the *mahua* charcoal, burning the heaps of dry logs and pouring water over the glowing embers; this can be collected overnight, but the *karra* charcoal is not ready till the morning.

They build a cylindrical furnace (*garum*) of clay, generally some 3½ feet high and tapering upwards, with a circumference at the base of nearly 5 feet and at the top of nearly 3 feet. At the back of the furnace a bamboo matting plastered with mud about 6 feet long and 3 feet broad is inclined from the mouth of the furnace at an angle of 35 or 40 degrees, and supported on four sticks fixed in the ground; this is called a *dikki*, and serves as a feeder. In front of the base of the furnace a hole is made for the blast, and at the side of the base a hole to serve as a flue for the slag; this flue is called *kachping*. It is plugged at first with wet clay, when the furnace is filled with fuel. The bellows (*arrangang*) are made from two sections of tree trunk about a foot in diameter and three inches thick; these are 'dug out' with axes or burnt out till the bottom is about an inch thick, and the tops are then lidded with cow-hide tied round the edge like the paper tops of English jam-jars. In the centre of each hide a small hole (*bukka*) is made, and one end of a two feet length of cord is passed through this and fixed to a short stick resting against the inside of the hide; the other end is tied to the end of a bamboo springe stick fastened at an angle to the ground in the earth behind the bellows. Each hide is soaked in water before use. The two bellows are placed side by side flat on the ground, and from holes in the front of their wooden walls two hollow bamboo tubes about two feet long converge to meet at the blast hole of the furnace, or rather at an earthen pipe made in prolongation of this hole; the pipe is made of wet clay plastered round a core of leaves; one end is plastered to the blast hole with clay, and the leaf core is then removed.

The bottom of the furnace is filled with a mixture of rice chaff and about a pound of *karra* charcoal broken small; this is fired through the bellows hole by blowing lighted charcoal through the earth pipe or *tuyère*, but the furnace is first filled to the brim with *karra* charcoal piled on the mixture of charcoal and chaff. The smith stands with one foot on each bellows, and depresses each in turn with alternate foot, supporting himself with a stick held in each hand; as his foot descends it closes the *bukka* hole, and the air is forced through the bamboo pipe and the earth *tuyère* into the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

325 furnace, which is soon in full blast: the depression of the bellows also depresses the end of the springe stick, which springs up as soon as the pressure of the foot is released and so lifts the hide with it and allows the bellows to get a fresh charge of air.

Meanwhile the iron ore after its preliminary burning in *saja* bark has been broken up with the hammer into small lumps and mixed with charcoal, the mixture being placed in readiness on the *dikki* feeder platform. When the furnace has been in blast for about fifteen minutes and the charcoal in it about half burnt, the assistant slowly passes the mixed ore and charcoal down the feeder into the mouth of the furnace, until none is left. After an hour, one of the men clears the clay plaster from the mouth of the slag flue, below which a little trench about six inches wide has been dug, and the slag falls through the flue into this trench. The heat is sometimes so great that the bellows man, instead of holding a support stick in both hands, holds in one a winnow or a piece of matting which he uses as a fan on his body. The whole furnace is generally roofed over as a protection from the sun; and in the hot weather, if smelting is unavoidable, it is done at night, though during the *mahua* and forest fruit collection season in March and April all the forges and furnaces are closed down. Smelting takes 3½ hours, and in the winter one lot of ore is smelted at dawn and another in the afternoon. They keep a small stock of ore for smelting in the rains, when they believe it useless to look for good ore.

After the 3½ hours' smelting the rough spongy bloom of iron that results is removed from the furnace to an ordinary open forge, where it is re-smelted in *mahua* charcoal and beaten out with the *mutti* hammer on a boulder of stone; this refining takes about an hour.

A furnace of this kind takes about 50 lb. of charcoal and 26 lb. of ore; it yields about 3 lb. of bloom, which on refining produces 4 lb. of iron, still more waste comes from which when it is worked up into implements.

326 The open forge which he uses for refining or for ordinary smithy work the Maria smith calls *o'idel*, the word used for the domestic hearth. He digs a small hole with the pointed end of his *mutti* hammer, crushes the earth so excavated with the blunt end of the hammer and makes it into mud with water. A little mud is smeared on the lip of the hole and the end of a stick laid on this, over which more mud is plastered till it is covered with a firm little mound of mud; the stick must slope downwards towards the centre of the hole. The stick is then worked round and round in the little mound of mud to make a firmly consolidated air passage through it,

326

326 SMITHS AND THEIR CRAFTS--nonindustrialized specialization in metallurgical crafts; types of specialists (e.g., blacksmiths, coppersmiths, tinsmiths, silversmiths, goldsmiths, gunsmiths); special skills and services of each; products not elsewhere described; organization (e.g., guilds); social status of smiths; etc. See also:

Tools, weapons, utensils, and appliances . . . 41
Jewelers 306
Industrial specialization in metallurgical processes 327, 328

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *penda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiwa* and making it useless for any magic.

Hair-dressing

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

many of the places where game of all kinds was plentiful in his father's time. Every Maria has his bow and arrow, the population has multiplied, and miles of jungle have been beaten annually for game in the great spring hunts. Wild buffalo and bison had been so reduced in numbers that they were declared protected thirty years ago, and heavy fines have been imposed for shooting them. The supply of bison-horns is thus not equal to the demand, and the head-dress is therefore a highly prized hereditary possession. No one should try to buy them from their owners; if a specimen is needed, the collector should provide the horns and other materials and see it made up for him. Bison-horns being now rare, and obtainable only from a bison found dead or by purchase from the State Forest Department, various substitutes are being used, such as domestic bullocks' or small buffaloes' horns, wild boars' tushes, the long beaks of the hornbill, and, occasionally, the antlers of the spotted deer (*Cervus axis*). The most interesting substitutes are brass patterned horns, of the shape and size of bison-horns, made by the *cire-perdue* process by the local Gharwa (Ghasia) brass workers.

Except occasional dancing anklets of hollow iron with pebbles inside, the Bison-horn Maria wears no special dancing dress; in fact he girds up his loin-cloth higher than usual and generally discards his singlet or '*wasket*', so as to leave himself as free as possible for his antics, while the heavy drum that he carries slung from his right shoulder across his abdomen necessitates as much freedom as possible.

The women wear no special dancing dress, but put on every available ornament, and carry in their right hands *tirdudi* or bamboo staves to which are fastened bunches of iron pellet-bells, shaped something like short but plump pea-pods, which they clash in time with the drums as they dance by striking their butts on the ground. Similar bells sometimes adorn the drum-stick with which the left hand of the male dancer beats the cowskin membrane at the left end of his drum.

Weapons and tools

The universal *vade mecum* of the Hill Marias is the knife or *kanyaq* carried tucked into the loin-cloth, with or without a wooden sheath. Of this, as of all weapons and tools used by Hill or Bison-horn Marias, it has to be remembered that they are not always made by blacksmiths working exclusively for Marias, but often by blacksmiths in or near the bazaar villages of the plains who cater for Murias, Halbas and other tribes also. The most distinctive types are possibly, in the case of the Hill Marias, those made by the few blacksmiths living in their hills; but there are only slight differences, often of mere

[see cat. 116 p. 419]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 size, from those used in the plains. The plains blacksmith does recognize the Hill Maria's individual taste in such matters, but that ●326 taste is always being modified by the sight, occasional use and occasional purchase of plains types, particularly if, when a new weapon is wanted in a hurry, only the latter are immediately available.

411 The blade of the average Maria knife measures 13 to 15 cm. from the point to the beginning of the tang. It is about 2·5 cm. broad where the tang begins, and from there the cutting edge curves inwards for a quarter or a fifth of its length, thence tapering with a slight convex curve to the point, which is 2 or 3 cm. to the side of the axis of the handle. The reverse edge is about 3 mm. thick in the tang, the thickness gradually diminishing towards the point. The tang is a continuation of the thick side of the blade, about 8 mm. wide where it leaves the blade and tapering for about 3·5 or 4 cm. to a pointed end. Except where it is continued in this tang, the blade has a horizontal bottom. The tang is heated and so burned into the wooden handle; the blacksmith, with this as all iron tools and weapons, supplies only the iron, and the buyer makes his own handle. The edge is produced in the first place by hammering on each side, followed by rubbing down a whet-stone. Being made of soft iron smelted from local ore, these knives can be given an extremely sharp point and fine edge. They are not usually [442] taken back to the smith to be sharpened, but are whetted on a stone; there is often a flat, black, polished, communal whet-stone outside the men's dormitory (*gotul*) in a hill village.

411 Besides fitting the tang into a short, cylindrical, wooden handle, about 6·5 to 7·5 cm. long, and in diameter 2 cm. at the base and 322 somewhat thinner where the tang enters it, the Hill Maria makes a wooden sheath of two flat pieces of wood trimmed roughly to the shape of the blade, each of which has on one side a low flange slightly more than half as thick as the thick edge of the blade. The two flat pieces are laid on each other, the flanged edges together, and are joined by whipping of twine, *kosa* silk or millimetre-wide thin thongs of hide at the broad top, over a groove round the centre of the sheath, and near its point. The sheath is often carved, [531] favourite designs being rough lozenges in relief on a bar, or a bar indented, or bands of three parallel lines.

411 This knife the Maria uses for slicing bamboo and all ordinary cutting purposes; holding the handle loosely in his hand he uses its full weight for chopping with the concave portion of the blade pieces of wood up to 3 cm. in diameter, getting a surprisingly straight cross-section; he usually chops all round the circumference to a depth of a third of the diameter, then breaks off the portion to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be severed, trimming the break with the knife held and used in the normal cutting position; he carves patterns in relief with the sharp point, or, holding the knife vertically, rolls the handle between the flat palms of his hand so as to drill holes with the point, trimming the edges of the holes with a burning ember. 411

The Bison-horn Maria uses a similar knife, often much larger, and seldom with a sheath. His *banda* is like a dao, but it is really a glorified and enlarged knife, with a thick end, and sometimes a pronounced bend or angle in the centre of the cutting edge; he uses this for lopping thick saplings or bamboo culms. But the use of the *banda* is not universal, and may be borrowed from Parjas or other tribes to the east. Similar weapons, but socketed on to long shafts of bamboo, and known as *gagra*, are used by the northern Murias and Jhorias, occasionally by Hill Marias, as weapons of offence and defence or billhooks for bamboo and saplings; the ordinary *gagra* has a concavely curved edge and a point, the *chhuri gagra* a convex edge and no point, while the *bhalu gagra* has an edge curving concavely from the top to a bend about half way along its length, and thence concavely to the socket. [177]

The Hill Maria calls his axe *mag'su*, which is the hill gutturalized version of the ordinary Gondi word *maras* used all over the Central Provinces. The Bison-horn Maria uses a totally different word for his axe of this shape, *godel*. The Halbi word is *tangya*. Like the Naga axe, the *mag'su* or *godel*[1] is an iron blade, decidedly suggestive of a long stone celt in form "1"; but unlike that axe, the butt of the blade ends in a socket for the haft, not in a tang inserted in a hole in the haft. The cutting edge of the blade among the Hill Marias seldom exceeds 7 cm. width, and 15 cm. is the maximum length of the blade from the cutting edge to the socket, which encloses a haft 4 or 5 cm. in diameter. It has a pronounced 'waist' just before the socket, but this is far more marked on the longer Muria *maras* than on *mag'su* or *godel*. The *godel* is usually rather more massive than the *mag'su*. The blacksmith, when giving an axe its first edge or a new edge to a blunt axe, heats the axe well in his forge, and thoroughly hammers the actual edge. He then heats it again, and hammers it flat on each side till he forms a new edge. He repeats the heating, and grinds down the edge by rubbing each side down a lump of stone. After a further slight heating he dips it in cold water to temper the edge, which is then ready for use. The haft is set at slightly less than a right-angle to the blade, the thick socket being wedged with a thin slip of wood. 412 412 326

A type of axe found still sometimes in the hill villages, where it is known as *pata endemma mag'su* (the song-and-dance axe, because 412 535

[1] Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, p. 65.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

342 of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner
251 where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of
[769] the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain ; their *penda* slopes are
[432] far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

342 The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small
[513] children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *akki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc.
[273] If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like
[415] an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction
● 326] in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orka*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or ' wine-ladle ' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

343 There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

422 The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The favourite basketry material is bamboo, in thin strips varying from half an inch to three-quarters in width. Occasionally the wefts are of reed, coloured twine, or bamboos pared down to the thickness of twigs. Patterns are produced by using warps of dry bamboo strips from the heart-wood, and wefts of green strips from the outer rind. Nearly all the Hill Maria basketry is twilled, with each weft passing over and then under two or three warps, the topmost edge or rim being twilled-twined with a weft of thin bamboo pared to the size of twigs; and sometimes an ornamental plaited ring is worked around the central circumference. The measure baskets made by the Hill Marias and brought by them to the markets for sale or for measuring out the grain which they sell or the salt which they buy are of different shapes and sizes for each commodity. The grain measure is a *bhurki*, eight of which make a *soli*[1] or half a seer, i.e. a measure containing about a pound's weight of rice. There are slightly different sizes for rice, *kutki*, mustard and pulses, according to the size of the different grains; all *bhurki* measures are little round baskets with slightly convex bottoms and uniform in diameter at top and bottom. For salt, a rather similar basket called a *kochli* is made, sufficient to hold one pice worth of salt, of roughly the same capacity as a *bhurki*; they are graduated for smaller quantities by being plastered inside with varying quantities of mud or cow-dung. *Mahua* flowers are measured by being heaped on shallow dishes called *kurli*, shaped like inverted cones or Annamese hats; each should contain 4 *pailis*, or 128 *bhurkis*, and those that I tested were remarkably accurate. The Hill Marias sell also the flat basket dishes already referred to, but rather larger than those they use for their own plates; they are called *bediya*.

2. Iron-work

Frequent mention has already been made of the Maria blacksmiths, and some of their tempering and manufacturing methods have been described in the section dealing with weapons and tools. These blacksmiths appear to be of Maria stock, speaking the Maria language, indistinguishable physically, having the same phratries and clans, and following the same customs. Enquiry in the big blacksmith settlements at Bagmundi Panera in Jagdalpur tahsil, at Kamargudem below the Aranpur ghat in Konta tahsil (both Bison-horn blacksmith villages), and from the Hill Maria blacksmiths at Nugur in Kutru zamindari, showed in every case that some of the blacksmiths either had themselves once been cultivators or had fathers who were originally

[1] 5 *tola* or Government rupees' weight of rice is contained in one *bhurki*: 8 *bhurkis* = 1 *soli*, 4 *solis* = 1 *paili*, 2 *pailis* = 1 *ori*, 2 *oris* = 1 *kurli*, 20 *oris* = 1 *khandi* = 40 *pailis*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyeq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyeq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bugi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

325 furnace, which is soon in full blast: the depression of the bellows also depresses the end of the springe stick, which springs up as soon as the pressure of the foot is released and so lifts the hide with it and allows the bellows to get a fresh charge of air.

Meanwhile the iron ore after its preliminary burning in *soja* bark has been broken up with the hammer into small lumps and mixed with charcoal, the mixture being placed in readiness on the *dikki* feeder platform. When the furnace has been in blast for about fifteen minutes and the charcoal in it about half burnt, the assistant slowly passes the mixed ore and charcoal down the feeder into the mouth of the furnace, until none is left. After an hour, one of the men clears the clay plaster from the mouth of the slag flue, below which a little trench about six inches wide has been dug, and the slag falls through the flue into this trench. The heat is sometimes so great that the bellows man, instead of holding a support stick in both hands, holds in one a winnow or a piece of matting which he uses as a fan on his body. The whole furnace is generally roofed over as a protection from the sun; and in the hot weather, if smelting is unavoidable, it is done at night, though during the *mahua* and forest fruit collection season in March and April all the forges and furnaces are closed down. Smelting takes 3½ hours, and in the winter one lot of ore is smelted at dawn and another in the afternoon. They keep a small stock of ore for smelting in the rains, when they believe it useless to look for good ore.

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A furnace of this kind takes about 50 lb. of charcoal and 26 lb. of ore; it yields about 8 lb. of bloom, which on refining produces 4 lb. of iron, still more waste comes from which when it is worked up into implements.

● 326 The open forge which he uses for refining or for ordinary smithy work the Maria smith calls *o'idal*, the word used for the domestic hearth. He digs a small hole with the pointed end of his *mutti* hammer, crushes the earth so excavated with the blunt end of the hammer and makes it into mud with water. A little mud is smeared on the lip of the hole and the end of a stick laid on this, over which more mud is plastered till it is covered with a firm little mound of mud; the stick must slope downwards towards the centre of the hole. The stick is then worked round and round in the little mound of mud to make a firmly consolidated air passage through it,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and removed. This air passage serves for the forge the same purpose as the earthen pipe *tuyère* for the smelting furnace, and the bamboo pipes of the bellows are arranged to converge at its entrance. The hole originally excavated is filled with *mahua* charcoal. 326

The smiths' only tools, which they make themselves, are the pointed and blunt ended hammer or *mutti* already mentioned, and long iron pincers with long noses, which they call *andes*. They generally have large and small hammers. The haft is inserted in a hole right through the maximum thickness of the head, at a point about a third of its length from the broad flat end; the remaining two-thirds tapers to a rough point.

3. Brass-work

The brass workers already frequently mentioned, unlike the blacksmiths, are by now practically a distinct caste. Hindus and Murias call them Ghasias, which is the name applied elsewhere in Central India, Chhota Nagpur and Orissa to one of the lowest and most degraded of the untouchable castes, whose usual occupation is grass-cutting and horse-tending, while some sections make combs for the hair or for weavers' looms. Even in Bastar, where many of them are skilled artisans, the wildest Maria holds them in profound contempt. The Maria calls them Gharwa. In outward appearance there is little difference between them and their Muria or Maria neighbours, and probably in the remote past they may have been recruited from these or other aboriginal stocks. Rohilla traders and oppressive zamindari managers in the past have often employed Ghasia duns to extract money from Marias; such is the Maria's feeling of degradation if a Ghasia comes near his house that the villagers would combine to pay a miserable rupee or two to these extortioners to get rid of their foul presence. 326 564

The Gharwas buy old brass or bronze in the markets or through Hindu middlemen. They make their brass ornaments, spoons, bells and Muria hunting horns by the *cire-perdue* process. The first or inner core of their moulds is made of earth from white-ants' hills, and known as *mati-kutan*; the earth is puddled with water and moulded to the needed shape in the hands. This is dried in the sun, and when hard covered with a coating of beeswax, on which the desired pattern is made in relief with long thin threads or small pellets of beeswax; various patterns can be produced by whipping these threads round the circumference of the *mati-kutan* core, or applying them on the sides of its plain wax covering in coils, spirals, suns, moons, lozenges, twined, or in any other pattern; and the pellets are used to produce bands of dots. The wax is warmed till it is pliant in the hands, and then forced through a tool called a 326 [439]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

326 *pichki* for the making of these thin wax threads. The *pichki* consists of two parts each shaped like the letter T, but with a short stem and the cross-piece or handle three times as long as the stem. One T-piece is entirely of hard wood, handle and stem being cylindrical and smoothly rounded; but the stem of the second T-piece is hollowed so that the solid stem of the first may fit closely in it, and at its bottom it has a brass cap with holes like the lid of a pepper pot. A lump of soft wax is placed in this hollow stem, and then the solid stem of the other T-piece is fitted into the hollow socket, and the Gharwa presses the two cross-piece handles together in one hand, so as to force wax through the perforations like meat through a mincing machine.

When the core has been covered with wax and the wax pattern, it is known as *main-kutan*, *main* meaning wax. The *main-kutan* is covered over closely with another layer of white-ant clay with a drain-hole left at one end; this clay must be pressed firmly on to the wax pattern, to take the impress of it. It is dried and heated enough to melt the wax, which is run off from the drain-hole. It remains to replace the melted wax with molten metal. The *main-kutan* as it stands is not strong enough, and so it is again covered over with a thick coating of white-ant clay mixed with water in which certain leaves and grasses have been cooked, which gives the clay a greenish colour. At the top, over the drain-hole through which the wax was poured out, a large clay-cup or *khondi* is plastered as part of this new clay covering, and the whole affair is now known as a *kashut-chancha*. This is hardened in the sun, and then baked in a furnace with the *khondi* uppermost; the metal melts and falls through the drain-hole into the place occupied by the wax, and takes the pattern left by the wax on the clay that was plastered over it.

323 There are no potters in the heart of the Abujhmar hills, partly because in the valleys of the clear rocky mountain streams there is no suitable clay, and partly because the Hill Maria still grows and uses gourds for many purposes, or else uses bamboo tubes. But all now use earthen pots at least for cooking, and for the Pot of the Departed, many also for drawing and storing water. At every market, therefore, in the valleys and plains below there are potters who do a considerable trade with the Hill Marias, and some have settled in their villages like Nugur and Lakka between the Kutru foot of the hills and the Indrawati, while, of course, potters are plentiful in the Bison-horn country. [564] The potters belong to the great Kumhar potter caste, at least in name, though here again many differ little in type from surrounding Marias. They use the common type of Indian potters' wheel, and

4. Pottery

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

there is no need to describe their processes in this book. The potter, like the Gharwa, expects immediate payment for his goods and is not a tribal servant remunerated with a retainer of grain at harvest like the blacksmith; but he often takes payment in grain. For a Bison-horn Maria marriage, the potter will make and supply as many pots as are required, but after the marriage is paid a bullock, cow or calf for his work. 326 ●

C. *Musical Instruments*

The Bison-horn Marias use the large double-membrane drums called *birya-dol*, of which typical specimens are shown in the illustrations in Plates VIII and IX. The hollow cylindrical body of these drums is a section of the trunk of a *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) or a *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*) tree up to sixteen or seventeen inches in diameter. The right hand membrane is made of goat-skin, even by those who have the goat as totem, and this is struck by the finger-tips of the open right hand. The other membrane is of cow- or bullock-hide, and this is struck with a bamboo stick carried in the left hand, and sometimes adorned at the end with a bunch of the pea-pod iron pellet-bells that are attached to the *tirdudi* bamboo dancing-sticks of their women. The membranes are stitched to each other by thongs of cow-hide criss-crossed over the outside of the wooden cylinder. That cylinder is sometimes as much as three feet long, and the weight is very considerable. The drum is slung over the right shoulder by a sling of hide or cord, sometimes adorned with cowries, and is carried obliquely across the stomach, the right end being the higher. There is no season among them when drum-beating is taboo or *melo* (their term for the Hill Maria *polo*). They have different drum rhythms for different dances, for weddings, for success in the chase, and a dactylic beat, for the drum beaten from the roof of the house to announce death; for the *pen-harsila* dance at their festival corresponding to the Hill Maria Koqsar they use the drum-stick only, and not their right hands, the rhythm being seven short beats followed by two long beats. 534 [824] [533]

1. Drums

These *dol* drums are occasionally found in Hill Maria villages also, but are a sign of cultural contact with the Bison-horn Marias. The essential Hill Maria drum is the single-membrane *turam* drum. The body is a wooden bowl, generally the rounded base of the hollow trunk of an exhausted *salphi* (*Caryota urens*) tree, trimmed with the waist-knife to bowl-shape; sometimes a section of *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) trunk is similarly whittled into bowl-shape. The membrane is dried untanned cow-hide, hair outwards, and this is [824]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make
285 baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
614

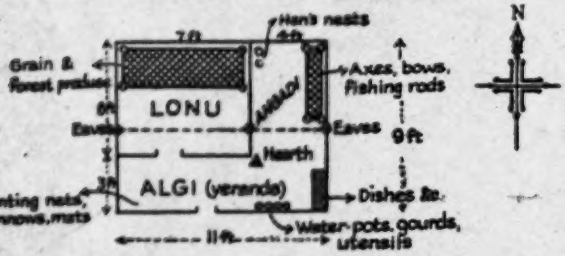
[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

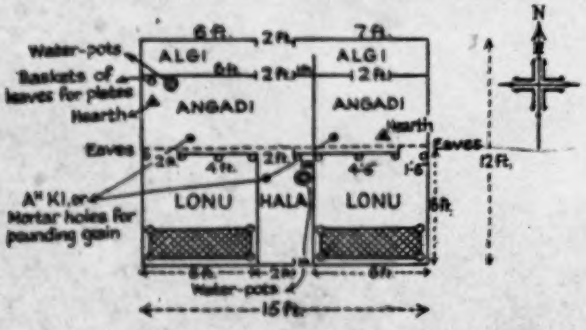
HILL MARIA HOUSES

(a) Nugur, Kutru Mar, Kasyeq-gaita's house, Nov. 1927

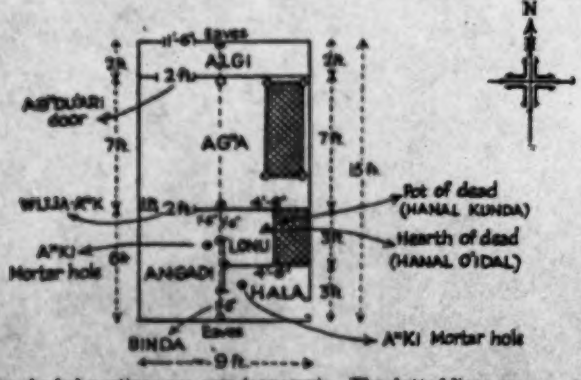
● 342



(b) Kurmer, Chhota Dongar Mar, house of Dedha Keye, wife, 2 children, and extra rooms for widowed mother, Feb. 1930



(c) Handawada, Dantewara Mar, Peda's house, March 1934



The shaded portions are cots (ALPANJI). The dotted lines represent line of roof-tree

FIGURE 7

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

● 342 Rough ground-plans of three typical Hill Maria houses are given in the illustration on page 111. The Nugur house was the end house of a long-house, and faced south on to the main village street. It differs from the other two in having no partition wall between the veranda (*algi*) and the *angadi*, or women's kitchen and sleeping room; the *angadi* in this case is in fact almost a continuation of the veranda round the eastern side of the *lonu*. The husband actually slept in the veranda and his wife in the *angadi* in warm weather, but in the *lonu* in winter and rains. This house had no *hala* or menstruation room, because the village had a communal menstruation hut; so also the house had no back door.

Houses

The Kurmer house faced north on to the main street, and was the central house of a long-house of three houses; its western and eastern walls were thus only partitions separating it from the other two houses. It was itself almost two houses, as the widowed mother [592] of Dedha Keye, the occupant, had the eastern *algi*, *angadi* and *lonu* for her exclusive use; but there was no door between her portion of the *algi* and Keye's portion, only a partial continuation across the veranda of the partition wall between her and Keye's rooms. The widow was too old to need a *hala*, and so there was only one for Keye's wife in his part of the house, and this had a back door. Like the Nugur house, this house had no *agha* room.

The Handawada secular headman's (*pedā's*) house was at the north end of a long-house containing three houses and facing west on to the village street; the other two houses had their verandas (*algi*) and entrances on the street side, facing west. His *algi* was therefore very small, and only nominally walled off from the open ground to the north of the house by a bamboo wicker-work fence [351] about 3½ feet high, being thus useless for keeping property. Where, as in the other houses illustrated, the veranda is in front of the house and parallel to the roof-tree, it is easy to construct a front wall as high as the roof, which is there barely 3½ feet above the ground.

342 The *agha* is the husband's living and sleeping room, and it is
513 taboo (*polo*) for his wife, a mature daughter or any woman to sleep
784 in it; but boys too small to sleep in the bachelors' dormitory and immature daughters may sleep there. In hot weather the males of the family often sleep under the granary, which is built on piles, and when houses have no *agha* this is the usual sleeping place at all times for the men of the family, and for male guests except when the latter can be accommodated in the village dormitory
342 (*gotal-lon*). It is strictly taboo for any female to enter a granary,
513 or to sleep under one. Every *agha* has a large *alpanji* or sleeping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*akki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[1] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

are made either of similar but lighter pole stockading, or of what the Hill Marias call *tuss*, that is, fencing of grass fastened in vertical bundles between pairs of horizontal bamboo struts, which themselves are fastened at intervals to poles planted in the ground. The floors, walls and partitions are plastered with mud, the walls on the inside, and the partitions on both sides; the women do the plastering, while their men look on. They often do not plaster the veranda wall at all. They sometimes make the side walls of bamboo wattlework instead of pole stockading. They do not char or otherwise treat the bases of the poles before fixing them in the ground. The first post of the house is almost always of the sacred *saja* tree; I have not seen this adorned with bundles of thatching grass in the manner of other Gonds (cf. Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 122), but I have seen two *saja* trees near a house under construction so adorned. The youths sometimes paint the plastered partitions in white with rows of dots, with swastikas like those tattooed on girls' faces (see p. 74 above), or with crude crocodiles or tigers; I have seen women's breasts represented in relief.

The grass (rarely palm) thatch rests on bamboos tied across the roof beams, and is secured against wind by bamboos criss-crossed outside the thatch. The grass generally used is *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) which appears in the *penda* fields after the first harvest has been reaped, and in the second or third year covers them so thickly that they have to be abandoned. In March, after the harvest has been finished, you will see near all the recently abandoned *penda* clearings extensive *dab* cuttings, the grass being stacked on rough log platforms about a foot and a half above the ground in readiness for re-thatching the houses just before the break of the monsoon. The men re-thatch houses, granaries, pig-sties and temples every year.

The usual form of door is a rectangle of split bamboo wickerwork sliding between two pairs of upright wooden posts. The doorway has often a wicker-work threshold from one to two feet high, over which the sliding door fits. There are always doors in the doorways leading from outside into the veranda, from the veranda to the *angadi*, and at the back of the menstruation room; generally also in the doorways leading into the *loss*; but I have never seen a door in the front doorway of the menstruation room. Sometimes the whole of this room is not taboo to men, the *binda* or mud threshold that marks the limit of the tabooed ground (see p. 106) being constructed across the floor of the room some two feet beyond the front entrance. Occasionally more elaborate doors will be seen, made of a small hewn wooden plank with tangs of wood left

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

342 projecting about two inches at the top and bottom of the inner edge, to work in the eyes of staples cut out of wood and fastened into the door-post; the other end has a roughly squared strip of wood six inches long, which rests in a slot in the opposite door-post and is fastened to it by a horizontal peg passing through holes in the door-post and the strip of wood.

422 The contents of the Kurmer house represented in ground-plan (b) on page 111 were typical of Hill Maria houses; the list that follows enumerates the contents only of the rooms occupied by Dedha Keye himself, his wife and children; his mother had her own property in her own *angadi* and *lonu* :—

VERANDA

1 sambar horn used as a peg.
1 *taghali* bark overcoat.
4 bundles of firewood.
[824] 1 broom of *phulbehari* (*Thysanolaena agrostis*) grass.

ANGADI

2 earthen cooking pots.
10 gourd ladles.
5 gourds for making bottles.
2 earthen pots full of drinking water.
1 bow.
2 arrows.
3 axes.
1 broken axe.
1 bamboo tobacco tube.
1 pair wooden clogs.
3 small wooden sitting stools.
4 coils of dried *siari* bark for twisting into twine.
1 bundle of peacock's feathers, and 2 cock feathers.
4 *rahing* bamboo and leaf rain-hats.
1 *dala'ino* leaf rain-shield for the back.
3 small iron sickles.
2 baskets of leaves for plates, etc.
29 baskets of various types, mostly empty, but some containing meal grain and forest fruits.

MENSTRUATION ROOM

(a) *Outside the taboo limit*
2 *uspal*, or grain pestles.
2 winnows.
1 shouldered digging iron (*pulu*).
1 *gudari* hoe.
2 arrows.

(b) *Inside the taboo limit*
1 hearth.
1 cooking pot.
1 axe.
1 *uspal*.
2 gourd water-bottles.
1 *phulbehari* broom.
2 bamboo tubes of oil.
8 baskets of different sizes, used for storing food, leaves, etc., when the room is in occupation.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 the wefts are of split bamboo. The corners of the walls are further secured by cords stitched through the two wicker walls round the [283] corner warp and the corner pile. Wherever beams cross, they are lashed with *siari* twine or thicker rope. The door of a single granary is usually a sliding piece of bamboo wicker-work; but in the long granaries it is a section of *tum* grass fence or bamboo wicker-work fastened in position by obliquely crossing bamboos.

251 These granaries contain immense quantities of *kosra* and other hill grains, rice, beans, dried forest fruits, etc., in big bins of bamboo basketry, smaller baskets, and large *chiptis* or lidded boxes of leaves on a framework of cane or twigs. The bins are all lidded with stitched-leaf tops, tied round the rim with creeper cord, like the paper top of an English jam-jar. The Marias store here also dried rolls of tobacco leaves, coils of creeper and other ropes, and gourds of all shapes and sizes for making spoons, ladles and water-bottles; and when they used *moghi* dancing shields and peacock plumes attached to them they used to hang them under the eaves except when they wrapped them in leaves and hung them in the tops of trees.

342 513 The village dormitory, as has been said above, is generally in the centre and at one end of the village street. It is a long-house made with no partitions, surrounded generally with a bamboo wattle-work fence; and it is practically a roofed *alpanji* or sleeping platform, the criss-cross bamboo framework of which covers almost the whole floor at a height of about 2½ feet above the floor. Often it is entered from in front by a door under the highest point of the eaves, to which access is gained by a narrow horizontal gangway of logs raised the same height above the ground as the sleeping platform and extending from the outer fence to the door; persons entering the dormitory climb on to the gangway by a rough stile, consisting of a tree stump set in the ground between two vertical posts which serve as railings. [374] The interior is badly grimed with smoke, as log fires are lit at night under the sleeping platform, the only door is fastened, and there is no window or vent for the escape of smoke. I have never found anything inside a dormitory except two or three drums and occasionally the shrine of the Village Mother.

The 'gotul-los'

B. Bison-horn Maria Villages, Houses, and their Contents

361 Of Hill Maria villages the essential thing to remember is that they shift as the cultivation shifts, and so seldom remain more than four or five years in one place. The few villages that have good permanent rice fields tend now to become more or less permanent.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XI

482
142
291
301
415

HILL MARIA WOMEN CARRYING GOURDS OF WATER

HILL MARIA WOMAN CARRYING A LEAF-BOX OF GRAIN

(Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt)

361
342

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE STREET, TELAM, NEAR KATAKALIAN

[Facing p. 118]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is 364 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the 177 greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

● 342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-
361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page [351] 121) must have their *bari* opposite them across the street. Each *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many [231] pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among
841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Piki-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

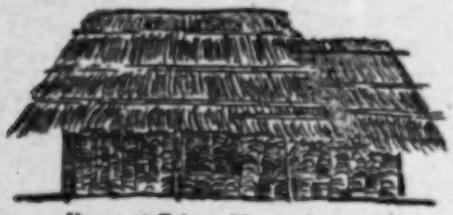
1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

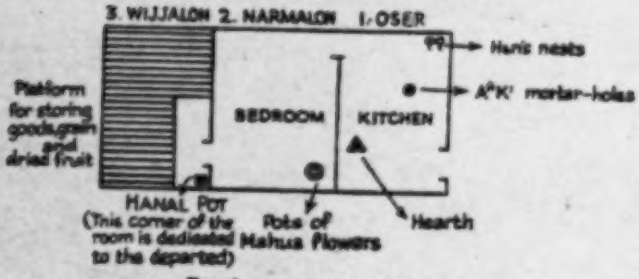
PLATE XII

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE AND HOUSE

342

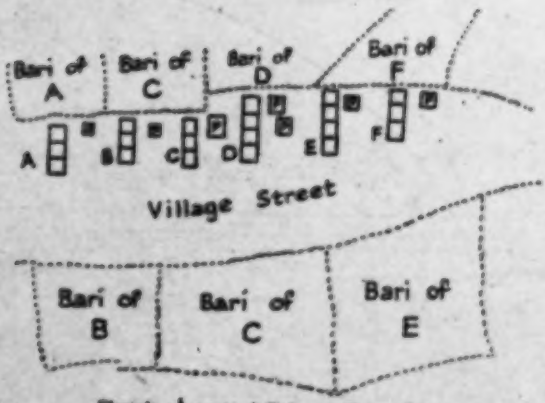


House at Telam, May 11th, 1930.



Rough ground-plan of house.

361



Sketch of part of Telam village street.

KEY

P = Pig-sty H = House

—— = Bamboo wattlework fence

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *pedas* (headmen) and *permas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

Shifting villages

The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

Houses

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Telam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

342 of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner
251 where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of
[769] the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are
[432] far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

342 The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small
[513] children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *ahhi* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc.
[473] If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interest-
[415] ing utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction
326] in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orka*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

343 There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

422 The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to fire all the *penda* plots simultaneously, and the women take no part in this work. There is no public ceremony before the firing; but the *kasyeq-gaita* starts it for the whole village by firing the first bundle of dried brushwood in his own plot with a bundle of dried grass kindled from a glowing ember brought from his own house; he makes fire with a fire-saw only if no ember is available or if it has died on its way to the *penda*. At Handawada in May 1930, heavy rain fell, and so delayed the firing of the *penda* that the *kasyeq-gaita* and village elders went in deputation to the clan-god Verma Pen of the Gume clan at Toinar and promised to sacrifice a cock to him if he would stop the rain; he only received his cock after he had fulfilled the condition and it had been possible to fire the *penda*. The firing takes only three or four days if the wood is really dry.

241 417 Between firing and sowing there is only a short interval in which the villagers must work hard to prepare their fences and field houses. There are no fences between individual plots as a rule, these being marked off either by lines of *til* or roselle at sowing, as already explained, or by laying a few poles lengthwise along the edge of the plots; but there is a general fence around each block of plots, except where there is no risk of animals damaging the crops. A type of fencing found only around Orcha and the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*, known as *kokor* (crooked) *garpi*, is a zig-zag stockading of logs laid horizontally on each other, the sides of each projecting angle being fifteen or twenty feet long; it looks like a vast herringbone pattern climbing the hillside. Grass *tum* fences, made in the same way as the *tum* partitions of houses already described, are used where the need for protection from animals is less, and, where bamboo is very plentiful, bamboo wattle-work fences. Another type of substantial timber fence is the *welma* fence consisting of poles laid horizontally one on another, held in position between pairs of bamboo uprights driven into the ground, and tied together at intervals between the horizontal poles; the upright bamboos are generally the two halves of a thick bamboo split lengthwise. I have not noticed in the hill villages the stockades of sal piles driven into the ground which are common among the Murias of the north and are met in Bison-horn Maria villages also.

241 342 513 [374] The chief field-house is really a sleeping platform raised high above the level of the crops on wooden piles, similar to the field watchers' *machan* found throughout Central India, but far more elaborate; the space between the piles below the platform is walled round with bamboo wicker-work or *tum*, and there is a thick thatched roof. As in the dormitories, a fire is kept burning at night below the platform to warm those sleeping on it. Tools and weapons, and cooking pots and food, are kept in the room below the platform,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian wigwams, known as *panambaksha*. They may also erect big and small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

Sowing

From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory. Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-akk*). These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit kenjat! Miku kar kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemasi mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyeq-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again.'[2]

Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa*.
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWO

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

I. The Muria Village

BEFORE approaching the main subject of this book, it is necessary to see how the chelik and motiari live at home. In a sense, there is no such thing as a typical Muria village any more than there is a typical Muria house. But most of the villages conform to the Gond pattern: they are set among trees—the Muria seem fonder of shade than wind and do not often choose the hill-tops beloved of the Maria and Baiga—and each house is enclosed within a separate fence that also surrounds its garden. There is thus a sharp distinction between a Muria and a Hill Maria village: the latter, like the Baiga village, consists of a row of houses joined together and opening on to a common street. Traces of this survive among the Muria in the enclosures of some of their leading men; at Markabera, for example, the headman's house is like a little village, a long enclosure with a small street on to which face many dwelling-places and granaries. In Palli-Barkot, and other western villages also, groups of related families build their houses to open round a square.

But generally the houses are scattered about, sometimes widely scattered, to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens, and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul are ever in a special or recognized position.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small courtyard, are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs. As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the east of Kondagaon the verandah of the main house is often deeper than the room inside. Where houses are built like this, there is no need for special menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar, where there is no room to seclude a woman on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and cleanness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of Mother Earth, and a love of animals. The pigsties are substantial, often with a double roof; the cattle-sheds are sometimes raised on pillars; sitting hens are given comfortable nests raised well above the ground. The houses themselves are cosy and homely, crammed with every sort of basket, leaf-bundle and utensil. Fish-traps, drums, wooden clogs hang from the roof, and flutes and bows and arrows are stuck under the thatch. Inside, in an inner room, is kept the mysterious Pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and placated.

These houses are the work-rooms of the chelik and motiari; they are the homes only of the married. The life and interest of chelik and motiari centre in the ghotul. But life there is definitely regarded as a preparation and training for the home. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

Most of the Muria are undoubtedly very poor. I was one day discussing with W. V. Grigson, who had visited Mandla after several years in Bastar, whether the Bastar villagers were poorer than those in the Central Provinces. I suggested—and he agreed—that probably the Bastar villagers were actually poorer, but that their lives were so much richer that they seemed far more

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*hetul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the fields'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchodar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond
Oraon AW39

532

ABOVE: Uraon village elephant of Saparam

BELOW: Uraon dhumkuria at Borbambey

342

[p. 224 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

883
842

Hill Maria boys in front of the Ituinar ghotul

Bison-horn Maria girls in the court of the Dugeli ghotul

[p.254(A)]

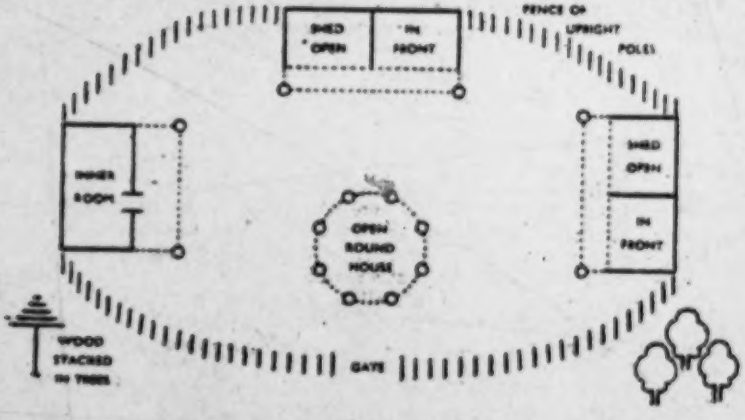
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TEN

THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

X 883
342

THE position and architecture of the ghotul is largely determined by one simple fact. In every village in Bastar, as we have seen, the people have to build and maintain a hut for the use of travellers and touring officials. This is an excellent arrangement: it prevents the invasion of aboriginal homes by outsiders, and it means that in every village there is some clean and roomy place where disputes can be settled and official business transacted. This Paik-ghotul or Thana-gudi, as it is called, is supposed to be separate from the Koitur-ghotul or Ghotul-gudi, the club of the boys and girls, and in some Muria villages it is. But in many others the elders of the village seem to have decided that it would save them a great deal of trouble if they combined the Paik-ghotul and the Koitur-ghotul in one compound. It would take up less room, means less building, and the young men would be always there to do the work. I have already quoted some Muria elders as saying that this was actually how the ghotul originated. If the young men were kept together in one place they would always be ready to serve visitors and could hand over their house to them for the night. This situation is of course comparatively modern. Old Muria like Yogi and Bindo remember the day when there was no revenue staff and they never saw a touring officer.



DANCING-GROUND
The Markabera Ghotul
(See p. 327)

X 883
342

The original ghotul, then, was probably a small building on the outskirts of the village, among trees, perhaps originally in some sacred grove, aloof from the public eye, with a small secret door. You may still see this kind of ghotul in predominantly Hindu villages and in parts of Kondagaon, at Realnar and Sonawal, for example, in the south, and Kerawahi, Majhlboran, Lihagaon in the north. But there is no rule. Near the eastern boundary, there was a small ghotul at Baghbera, and a combined Thana-gudi and Koitur-ghotul at the neighbouring Ulera. Where a village consists, administratively,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXVI

X
893
342

The Palli ghotul

[p. 326 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

883 X
342

of several hamlets, there will probably be a large ghotul in the main village (where officials usually halt) and small ones in the hamlets.

883 X
361
342

In all such villages there is a separate building in the middle of the village for officials. In Masora, for example, there was a large Thana-gudi inside the village, and away on the outskirts, among trees, is a small hut with a fenced compound in front. This is the home of the chelik and motiari. In Baniagaon, a predominantly Hindu village with a school, the ghotul is similarly separated from the officials' halting-place, and is a single building with a small door facing away from the village towards the forest. In Kachora, near by, you may see the same type of ghotul, even further removed from the ordinary dwelling-places of the village, beyond the shrine of the Village Mother, perhaps because an aggressive Brahmin lives there and tries to dominate the Muria. I obviously cannot give a list of all such villages, though there are not very many of them. In the Chalka Pargana, I think of Kajen, Naria and Maranar as places where the Thana-gudi was separate from the ghotul. In such villages there is sometimes not even a fence to isolate the compound; that is not necessary, forest and field keep the children separate from the world. But in all there is a small secret door, a hatch which you have to bend down to and climb over—not unlike the door by which Alice entered Wonderland.

883 X
342

But, as I have said, in the majority of Muria villages the Thana-gudi is combined with the Koitur-ghotul, and this influences both its plan and its location. Officials will not want to camp outside the village in the jungle; they will need a hut for their horses, and accommodation for servants. And so we get the large ghotul with its spacious compound, standing in the very heart of the village, which is familiar to every touring officer in the north of Bastar. This arrangement is unsatisfactory and was never contemplated by the Administration. Into the very heart of Muria life is injected the all-too-often poisonous contact of every casual wanderer. There is a type of touring subordinate who makes a point of halting in ghotul where it is known that there are pretty motiari and pesters the chelik to pimp for them—which to their honour, be it said, they never do. Contractors for myrabolams or tendu leaves camp for days in the ghotul, making it impossible for the boys and girls to live their normal lives. I once found an opium-seller permanently established in a ghotul with his wife, thus outraging the fundamental Muria rule that the presence of a married woman there is an offence to Lingo Pen. He was removed at once by the Administrator, but Bastar is a big place and it is impossible to say in how many other places the integrity of the ghotul is thus destroyed. This is, of course, the Muria's own fault. It is due to the slackness and selfishness of the older men who want the youngsters to do all the work. It is thus difficult to do anything about it.

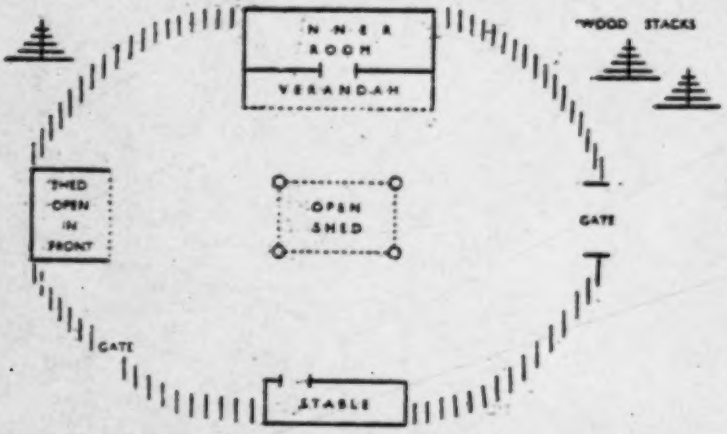
Let us examine some of the villages which have ghotul of this type. Often, so long as there are no visitors, the enlarged ghotul is all to the advantage of the boys and girls. In Markabera, for example, chelik and motiari have in all five different sleeping-places and a spacious compound. The house with the very deep verandah is, of course, the original ghotul and the other buildings have developed from it to meet the pressure of outside visitations. But the extra room thus provided and the open sheds available as dormitories are a boon to the children's health. The one-room ghotul with its tiny door and no windows and its crowded floor, its stuffy smoky atmosphere, cannot be good for anyone.

Fortunately—from this point of view—the larger type of ghotul is far the most common. This model with its central house with deep verandah, spacious inner room, large door, open hut for conference or sleep in the hot

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria
Maria

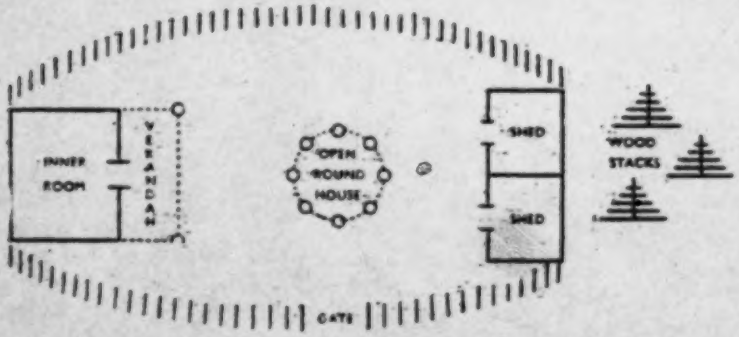
X 883
342

weather, and several small sheds, the whole surrounded by a fence, may be seen in scores of Muria villages. There is the same arrangement at Bandopal, at Ulera, at Amgaon, at Jhakri, at Almer, at More Berma. This is the plan of the ghotul at Almer in the Bara Dongar Pargana:



This ghotul stands in the middle of the village, in a grove of tamarind trees.

In a third type of ghotul, its position in the middle of the village is possibly due to Maria influence. The traditional Maria ghotul is the centre of the male life of the village. The men assemble there in the evenings, and talk, smoke, drink and sleep. But girls do not normally attend. In villages like Palli Barkot, Watia, Phulpar, Koilibera, on the fringe of the Abujhmar Maria country, the ghotul is in the heart of the village; it is generally (except at Koilibera) not so spacious as those we have been considering. The plan below of the ghotul at Palli Barkot is typical.



These ghotul are often beautifully kept. At Khutgaon, there is a spotlessly clean compound forty paces square; in it are three open sheds, one with a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

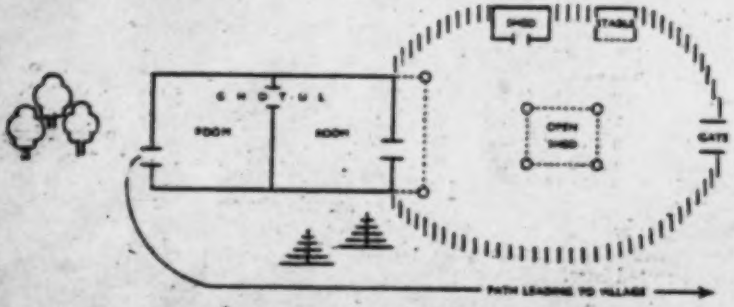
THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

finely-constructed round roof, and two large houses with thick mud walls. One of these is the Thana-gudi, the other has an inner and an outer room for the boys and girls. The Telenga, Temrugaon and Chureng ghotul are of the same pattern, like Palli Barkot; a big house with a small or deep verandah, a central open hut with often a rounded roof and two small open sheds, the whole surrounded by a high wooden fence.

In the north of the State, on the Amabera plateau and generally to the north of the forest road from Berma to Antagarh and up to the Kanker border are to be found the least attractive ghotul—and ghotul members—in Bastar. The buildings are mean, dilapidated and draughty. The dormitory actually used by the boys and girls rarely has a door and thus loses its intimacy and cosiness. My memories of Pupgaon, Chikhli, even Penjori, are not happy.

It remains to mention a few special dormitories. Semurgaon is traditionally the site of the first ghotul, built there by Lingo himself. He could hardly have chosen a lonelier or more charming spot. But the ghotul today is small and almost unique in having unplastered walls made of bare logs. On a pillar in the centre are carvings of chelik and motiari, horses and combs. From the door you look out over a wild expanse of forest and *dippa* clearings.

No visitor to Nayanar can ever forget the ghotul there—the long building with its little windows and two doors, at one end like a hatch, at the other large and dignified, its carved pillars, its charming site at the edge of the village among great trees. This is its general plan—



One of the most delightful and original of all the ghotul is at the Budakasa Para of Malakot. Here outside the village, in the woods, shadowed by tall sago-palms, is a house lifted well above the ground on pillars eight feet high. Above the wooden floor is a low wall two feet high all round, then an open space to the roof. This platform is reached by a ladder. Both the upper room and the space below it are used; there are fires kept burning in each.

The ghotul is built by the chelik themselves, though the boys often get the help of the older men by promising to help in their fields at sowing-time or harvest. The motiari bring grass for the roof, stones and earth for the floor and, when the walls are ready, plaster them with mud. Before they begin the work, the boys mark out on the ground the proposed plan of the building and put there a little pile of rice covered with a leaf-cup. They leave it all night and in the morning go to examine it, sometimes only for one day, sometimes for three days running. Should the rice be scattered, it is taken as a bad omen and they build the ghotul elsewhere. But if the rice remains just

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the four corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chelik-bairag* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central parganas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and no one would steal from it.

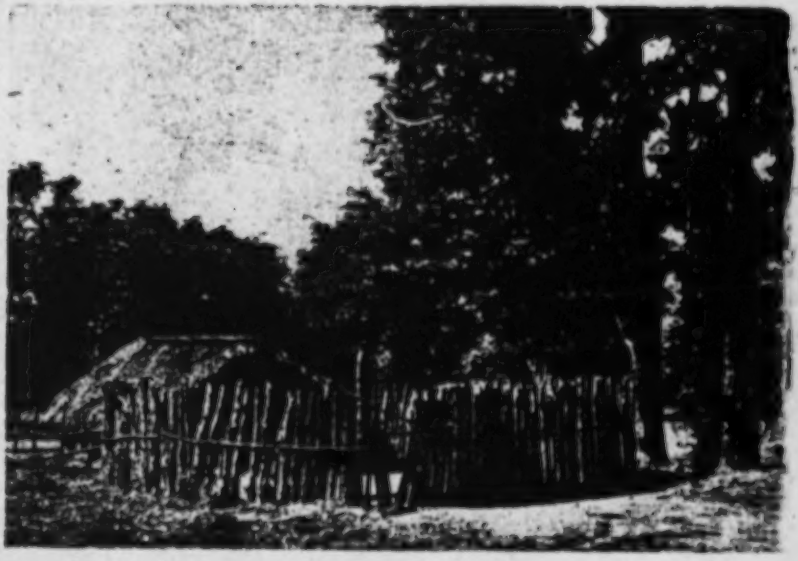
As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more, and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The chelik desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Kober and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has siddari birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidha*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidha* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.

Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

[1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bhuiya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of breasts right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. Hatton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of sexual excitement' in Naga *morung*.—Hutton, *Diaries*, op. cit., p. 48.

X 883
● 342
417

Plate LXVIII



The ghotul at Mason

Black and red wall-paintings in the More Berma ghotul

X 883
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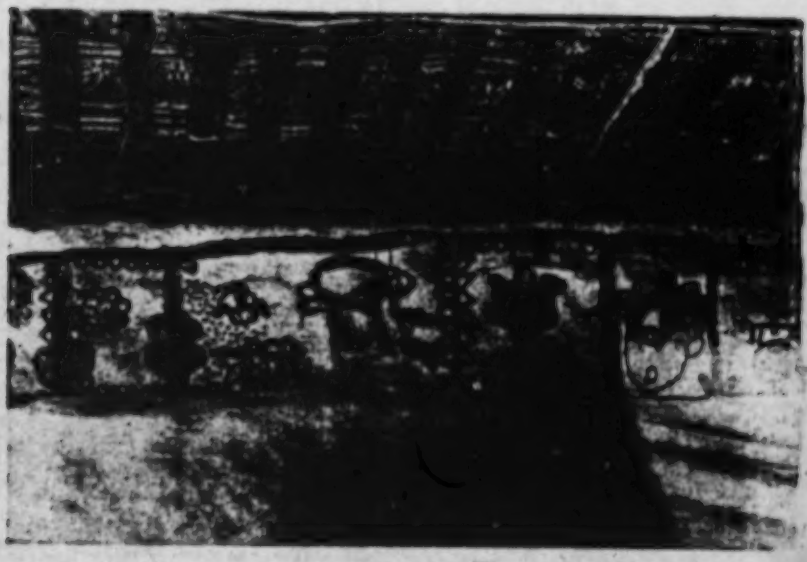


2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

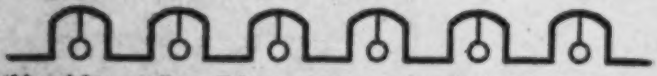
883 X
342
353
531
831

on the central pillar. In the small Kolur ghotul there is one slender pillar covered with carvings of the vagina, as always showing the clitoris, but here there was a double clitoris and a clitoris upside down.

At Markabera there were similar carvings of the vagina with the clitoris.

Often a chelik may be seen with an enormous penis, a motiari in his arms. The boys say that these carvings are very useful as an approach to girls. It may be that the vagina in the central pillar is the relic of a custom now forgotten of initiating smaller boys by pressing them against it.[1]

The walls of the ghotul are often decorated with drawings and paintings. In 1940 there was a fine display in the Remawand ghotul. The following year I saw a frieze of fantastic paintings (illustrated in Plate LXVIII) at Mote Berma. At Netagaon there were models of motiari, tigers and a monkey. In Urdabera there was a model of a chelik with his motiari, and over the door a mud model of a horse. In Deogaon, there were modellings of a chelik and motiari riding on a horse. At Kuntpadar, one wall was well decorated with drawings of a boy, a vagina, a girl, a bow and arrow and the sun and moon. At Palki there was the representation of a bird trap:



But this might equally well be a sexual symbol, similar to the design of the phallus within the vagina that I noted at Metawand:

883 X
352
[531]

The day-time visitor to a ghotul will find little enough there by way of furniture. Cots are never used; everyone sleeps on the ground. Seats and stools are rare, but in many ghotul are to be found long narrow pieces of wood raised some two inches from the ground. These are the *katul* which may be used either as seats or pillows. Some are very long and suggest the custom of several boys and girls sleeping together. They are often carved with geometric designs, figures of boys and girls, crude representations of the vagina. I have one with four breasts carved on its under-side. Occasionally you may see a *katul* with a little drawer hollowed out below for storing necklaces or other ornaments during the night. As far as I know these head-rests are the corporate property

FIG. 54. *Katul* from Talabera showing small drawer for keeping ornaments. *Length 1' 7"*

[1] A remarkable parallel from an English Public School (Repton) is provided in Denton Welch's *Maiden Voyage* (London, 1943), p. 42. The author is describing the House dormitory. 'Two lips had been painted on one of the beams and all new boys had to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Phirta, the Chowkidar of the Maseora ghotul

Plate LXIX

The ghotul near Malakot

[P.338(N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 342

Plate LXX

The Baghhera

The Bandogal ghotul

[417]

[p. 338 (R)]

531
342

Carved pillar at
Chandabera

Plate LXXII

Carved pillar at
Remawand

[p.350(R)]

142

A Lohar boy: the Chowkidar of the Berma ghotul

Plate LXXVI

342
356

Jootiari cleaning the Rondepal ghotul

[p. 364 (B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.

Maria women's dancing-stick (3½' long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

241
342
291
142
301

Girls threshing grain with their feet at Mokhpal

[FACING p. 14]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

342
854
516

Oyami Masa with family on the scene of the death of the younger wife

142
301
304

Oyami Masa with his surviving wife

[Facing p. 15]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the bed of the stream; these are held in position between upright poles set V-wise in the boulders, to which are fastened horizontal bamboo poles as railings. As they have no saws, the 'plank' is a tree trunk with one side trimmed flat with the axe. Even more elaborate bridges are sometimes made at high levels over streams liable to flood, from tree-fork to tree-fork on opposite banks.

Though, as has been said above, agricultural conditions nowadays determine village sites, hill-tops or rocky slopes remain favourite sites, and become commoner as you penetrate farther into the Abujhmar hills. The traditional arrangement is a street some twenty-five yards wide between parallel lines of long-houses; at one end of the street is the *gotul-lon* or village dormitory, generally within a rounded bamboo fence, and sometimes in front of this dormitory will be seen the *udam-garia*, or seat of honour of the *kasyeq-gaita* and possibly also of the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*), as well as the stones on which the other village elders sit around with them in conclave, but the *udam-garia* custom is not found in all parts of the hills. Sometimes the shrine of the *Nar-Talughi* or Village Mother is actually inside the dormitory fencing, and she is often housed there for a while when a village is being shifted. There are, as a rule, no *bari* (vegetable gardens) attached to each house as amongst most Gonds, including the Bison-horn Marias and the Murias of Bastar; but sometimes the *kasyeq-gaita* has a small tobacco *bari* attached to the dormitory in the centre of the main street. The *Gazetteer* (p. 50) speaks of the 'common granary' as standing in the broad street; but with one partial exception, Nugur village in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, I have never seen this. The villagers generally construct a row of granaries (*manda* or *wijja-dodi*) on piles at the side or rear of the main village street, sometimes nearer the *penda* fields than the village; this row can hardly be called a 'common granary', as each villager has his own granary in the row for his own private food and seed store, the granaries being built together only for convenience, as they can then be watched at night by one watchman for the whole village, sleeping in a special hut at the side of the granaries or under a granary. At Nugur there were big matting bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored; but here the village had come under the economic thraldom of some Teli tradesmen, who for years had advanced rice to the cultivators. The bins were left in the collective charge of the headman and elders, and any villager could help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest he would replace it with 50 per cent. interest, the Teli owners being also free to remove the surplus from time to time.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

This traditional arrangement of the Hill Maria villages is far from being always observed. I have seen a village constructed in this way on one of its traditional sites (*pagh* or *pagha'i*; Murias say *pare*, while Bison-horn Marias generally use the Halbi word *padar*), and then four years later found it reconstructed on one of the alternative sites with little sign of the traditional grouping; and I have also seen the converse occur. In fact, the configuration of the site may make the traditional arrangement difficult. It is also being gradually abandoned in the villages on the edges of the hills into which the individualism of surrounding plains villages is creeping, and in the few villages such as Orcha and Hikul which have good permanent rice cultivation; in the latter villages there is a growing tendency not to shift the sites when the surrounding *penda* slopes are exhausted, but to cultivate even remote slopes from the village site in the vicinity of the permanent rice fields. As the old feeling of village community weakens, houses are no longer built as long-houses, each containing groups of three or four houses occupied by brothers or near paternal cousins, but are built detached, each with its own granary close to it, instead of the householder having one compartment in the long granary row; even then, however, the detached houses tend to group themselves roughly into lines flanking a central open space, at one end of which is the village dormitory (*gotul-lon*), in its usual position. Even when a village site is becoming permanent, as at Orcha and Hikul, any sudden calamity, such as crop failure, epidemic or epizootic, will probably induce the villagers to shift. In several villages the *kasyeq-gaita* always keeps a hen sitting on eggs inside his house, and the addling of an undue proportion of these is frequently a signal for the shifting of the village; but a wise *gaita* does not let his eggs get addled unless there is really sound economic or religious reason for shifting, when the omens can be made to suit the occasion.

Behind each line of houses will be found rows of pig-sties, at least one for each house; and the pigs often seem better housed than their masters. Where, as around Orcha, sal (*Shorea robusta*) or other timber is plentiful, the pig-sties are generally made of sections of tree trunk or large boughs laid horizontally between vertical stays, with an opening in front which can be closed by dropping vertical posts over it between horizontal stays at the top and bottom of the opening. These sties are sheltered from the sun by grass-thatched roofs sloping back from two or more vertical posts about 6 feet high to similar posts about 4 feet high in the rear. Dug-out troughs of sal wood are kept outside or just inside the sties for water and food for the pigs; the commonest food is a mash made from the chaff or husks of *kosra* (*kutki*; *Panicum miliaceum*) and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 other minor grains. Where timber is not available, these sties are
231 made from bamboos, or even from stones. Similar but, of course, far smaller structures are made to serve as hen-coops, resting generally against the side or front of the houses.

778 The shrine of the Village Mother, as has been stated above, is sometimes actually inside the village dormitory, sometimes just
361 outside it, and sometimes at a considerable distance from the actual village, in a grove, if possible of *saja* (*Terminalia tomentosa*—every-
[824] where the sacred tree of the Gond) trees. Sometimes there is also in the village, often at the end of the street opposite the dormitory, the hut-temple of the *pen* or clan-god, containing the log-frame image of the god. This will normally be found only in the village of the *pen-wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god; but sometimes, where the villages of the clan are far apart, there may be two copies of the clan-god, or the god may go to visit other villages, and have a resting-shed in each; or he may have begotten a son to deputize for him in the distant village; I have seen in a *pen-rawar* (clan-god's temple) both the *pen* himself and an embryo 'son' in the second of his three years' 'gestation'. The *pen* is always covered by a shed; but the Village Mother sometimes is just a cairn or a basket-cylinder filled with stones, or a low table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree, and close by there is a small shed of grass thatch with open sides in which are kept the cooking pots, ladles and sacrificial knife used at ceremonial feasts. The sacred grove may in very rare cases, in villages near the edge of the lowlands, have also a hut-temple of Danteshwari Mai or Maolai, the most revered or feared Hindu deities of Bastar.

343 There will be found well apart from the houses and the rest of
841 the village a menstruation hut in many villages, known as *pedawo'-gha'i* to the Hill Marias, or sometimes as *dola-lon*. Here all menstruating women are secluded from the village for a week every month. Sometimes the hut has a single room, about 6 by 5 feet, with walls 3 feet high, with no windows and only a small door little bigger than the entrance to an English kennel; sometimes there are two rooms separated from each other by a partition, so that when a girl is afraid of being secluded by herself a duenna may sleep within sound of her without actual contact. The door of the seclusion room always opens away from the village, so that the affected woman may get out at night to answer the call of nature without overlooking the village or being visible to any villager. Special cooking pots and utensils are kept in the seclusion room, or else
[789 the woman's food is cooked outside and left by her door for her.
824] The roof is often covered with seed-bearing twigs of castor-oil plants, in all parts of India regarded as very efficacious against magic.

[text continues on p. 106]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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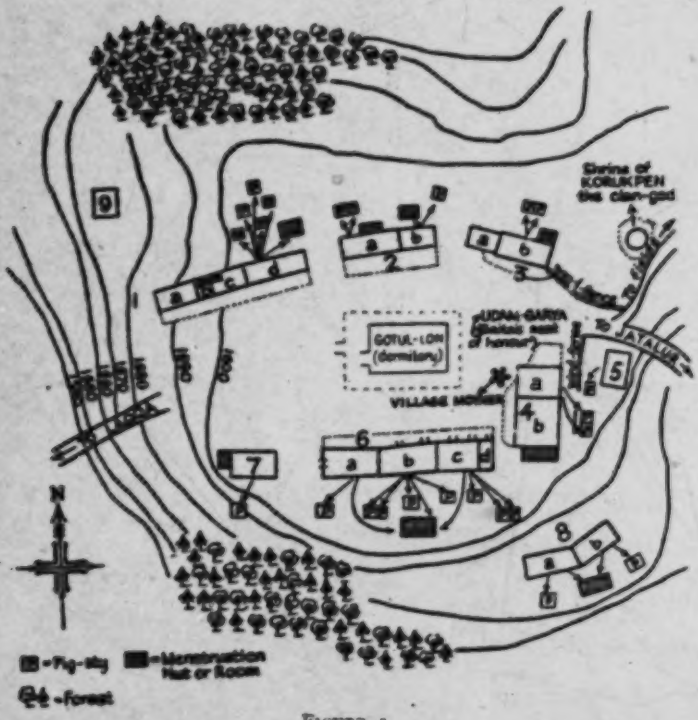

FIGURE 5

MAP OF KARANGAL VILLAGE OF THE PARLLO HILL MARIA CLAN, as occupied in February 1930. (Contours approximate.)

House-group 1 (*a*) Empty; built for Deda HUNGA, when serving for MURRA's niece, since marrying her, lives in KURMER. (*b*) P. BAIYYA's mother. (*c*) P. BAIYYA, wife and son. (*d*) P. MURRA, brother of BAIYYA, his wife, his son P. BANDE, wife and daughter.

2. (*a*) P. DOGA and wife. (*b*) P. KUTTA, wife, son. DOGA and KUTTA are elder and younger brothers, but separate in cultivation.
3. (*a*) Empty, since death of P. MURRA's elder brother's widow. (*b*) P. MURRA and wife.
4. (*a*) P. BAIYYA, kasveq-gaita, and wife. (*b*) his son P. GURRA, wife and son.
5. Ruined house of P. KUTTO, who had left village.
6. (*a*) P. MURRA and wife. (*b*) P. KUTA, 2 wives, 1 son. (*c*) P. KEYE, wife and 2 sons. (*d*) KEYE's mother. KUTA, MURRA and KEYE regard themselves as brothers, KUTA being the eldest; they are paternal third cousins. Their fields and pigs are separate, but menstruation hut common.
7. P. PANDA, wife, 1 son, 2 daughters, widowed mother.
8. (*a*) P. HEODA, wife and son. (*b*) P. MASA (his wife had eloped). HEODA is the elder, MASA the younger brother.
9. The house of a Rawat (herdsman), well apart from Maria houses.

The wind-fence is a stockade of thick poles.
The dotted lines are bamboo wickerwork fences.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 But in many villages instead of a communal *pedawo'gha'i* there is
841 a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *pedawo'gha'i* room known generally as *hala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely [784] *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *hala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

485 There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable attached.

361 The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria
[35] village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The [778] Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *kasyeq-gaita's* house, near the latter's *udam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-rawar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parlio clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal
361 the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who
624 was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street;
[194]

[1] Or *ala*; the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

and every Maria house was occupied by members of the Parllo clan, the only partial exception being the empty house (no. 1-a) which had till recently been occupied by a youth of the Deda clan, which may intermarry with the Parllo clan, serving as *lamana'i* to win the niece of Parllo Murra, occupant of house no. 1-d. It will be observed that some long-houses have a joint menstruation hut at the rear of the house, while in some there is a separate *kala* for each house in the long-house. The *kasyeq-gaita's* house is at the dormitory end of the street, a very usual position.

The shifting of villages

It has already been implied that though a village site may be abandoned for superstitious reasons, the predominant reason is economic, the exhaustion of the *penda* slopes that can be conveniently cultivated from the existing village. If three or more *kaghai* (*penda* sites) can be dealt with from one *paghai* or village site, then the village may remain on that site for seven or eight years, even though there are other *paghai* in the other *penda* sites cultivated from it; or if any portion of the last *penda* site to be cultivated is very remote from it, then a few houses may be shifted there. What makes the old topographical survey maps so useless for finding a modern village is that they mark only the village site occupied in the sixties, generally, too, by the particular name of that site, not by the general name of the village. The big village of Orcha, for example, is not marked as such, but by the name of its *paghai* Hoinar. A reference to the sketch map of the parish (to use a term more suitable than 'village') of Handawada in Dantewara Mar (opposite p. 108) will make the position clear. The parish has ten alternative *kaghai* cultivation sites, viz.:—

1. Kawar *kaghai*, 1st half.
2. Ditto, 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta *kaghai*.
4. Hitangpal *kaghai*.
5. Kurmelnar *kaghai*.
6. Rekarai *kaghai*.
7. Handawada *kaghai*, 1st half.
8. Ditto, 2nd half.
9. Ahekele *kaghai*, 1st half.
10. Ditto, 2nd half.

Of these, nos. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 only contained *paghai* village sites. In February 1930 the main village was still settled in no. 9, but the *penda* slopes in nos. 9 and 10 had been exhausted, and those in no. 1 had been partly cultivated for the first year and were being reaped. Nos. 9 and 10 had lasted for six years and, though the villagers had started to cultivate no. 1 a long way below the village site in no. 9 and on the other side of the Goinder river, they were only then at harvest time starting to shift the village to the *paghai* in no. 2; in fact, the labour of the first year's work of clearing and cultivating a fresh *penda* slope is so heavy that the shifting of the village itself is, when necessitated by the distance of the existing site

[text continues on p. 109]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE X

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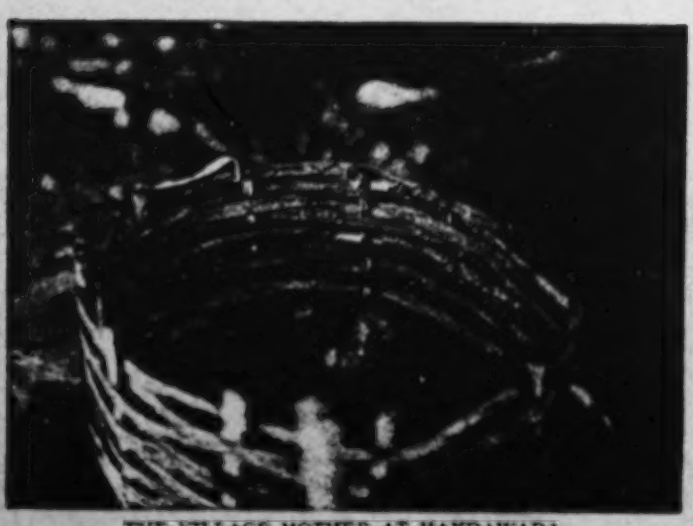
THE VILLAGE MOTHER'S SHRINE AT ORCHA

The stone at the foot of the *saja* tree trunk on the right is the Village Mother; the shed contains her cooking pots, utensils, etc.



THE VILLAGE MOTHER AT HANDAWADA

consisting of an oiled forked *saja* stick, bound with *kosa* silk. The lean-to thatched roof was removed to enable the photograph to be taken

[FACING p. 110]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949.
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Lohu

1 *alpanji* platform for storing produce.
10 large baskets, containing grain and forest fruits.
1 blue dancing skirt or *hochi*.
5 gourd bottles.
1 axe.
2 sickles.
4 large earthenware pots.
1 ditto, used as *Hanal Kunda*.
1 hearth, used as *Hanal O'idal*.
3 very small earthenware pots of pigs' fat.
6 thick bamboo oil-tubes.

Most houses have, besides these, a number of drums, more bows and arrows, fishing-rods, lines and hooks, snares, nets of varying mesh for fish, birds and animals, throwing spears, fibre for making string and rope, hemp or grass for the same purpose, sandals of raw cow-hide, thongs of cow-hide, and *korr-guda*, or funnel-shaped hen's nests on bamboo posts about two feet high. They keep the bulk of their grain and forest fruits in their granaries, and the baskets in the house contain only what has been removed from the granary for current consumption; there are generally to be found quantities of new baskets made for sale at the bazaar. The baskets are of all shapes and sizes, and amongst other items include flat baskets something like winnows for use as platters, which they hold up full of food to their mouths.

Granaries

The granaries, whether built singly or in a long row, are almost invariably built on piles, the floor being 3 or 3½ feet above the ground. This not only protects the grain and dried fruit stored in the granary from damp and white ants, but, as already remarked, provides an extra sleeping place for the males of the family and any male guests. There are three rows of piles, the two outer ones being tree trunks, seven or eight feet high, cut with a piece of a bough forking off at the floor height and trimmed short as a rest for the horizontal beams which support the flooring; the central piles have similar forks turned inwards at floor-height to support the floor beams, but are two or three feet higher above the floor than the outer piles, as they have to support the roof-tree. The upper ends of these long piles are either naturally forked or else notched to support the horizontal roof beams, which bear a thatched roof constructed in the same way as the roofs of dwelling-houses. Planks are laid across the floor beams at the points where these rest on the lower forks of the piles, and a flooring of bamboo wicker-work is laid on them. The walls are made of bamboo check wicker-work, the wefts being carried on around each corner of the building, where a thin pole resting on a floor plank forms the corner warp; the other warps are unsplit bamboos, but

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 the wefts are of split bamboo. The corners of the walls are further secured by cords stitched through the two wicker walls round the corner warp and the corner pile. Wherever beams cross, they are [283] lashed with *siāri* twine or thicker rope. The door of a single granary is usually a sliding piece of bamboo wicker-work; but in the long granaries it is a section of *tum* grass fence or bamboo wicker-work fastened in position by obliquely crossing bamboos.

251 These granaries contain immense quantities of *kosra* and other hill grains, rice, beans, dried forest fruits, etc., in big bins of bamboo basketry, smaller baskets, and large *chiptis* or lidded boxes of leaves on a framework of cane or twigs. The bins are all lidded with stitched-leaf tops, tied round the rim with creeper cord, like the paper top of an English jam-jar. The Marias store here also dried rolls of tobacco leaves, coils of creeper and other ropes, and gourds of all shapes and sizes for making spoons, ladles and water-bottles; and when they used *moghi* dancing shields and peacock plumes attached to them they used to hang them under the eaves except when they wrapped them in leaves and hung them in the tops of trees.

342 513 The village dormitory, as has been said above, is generally in the centre and at one end of the village street. It is a long-house made with no partitions, surrounded generally with a bamboo wattle-work fence; and it is practically a roofed *alpanji* or sleeping platform, the criss-cross bamboo framework of which covers almost the whole floor at a height of about 2½ feet above the floor. Often it is entered from in front by a door under the highest point of the eaves, to which access is gained by a narrow horizontal gangway of logs raised the same height above the ground as the sleeping platform and extending from the outer fence to the door; persons entering the dormitory climb on to the gangway by a rough stile, consisting of a tree stump set in the ground between two vertical posts which serve as railings. [374] The interior is badly grimed with smoke, as log fires are lit at night under the sleeping platform, the only door is fastened, and there is no window or vent for the escape of smoke. I have never found anything inside a dormitory except two or three drums and occasionally the shrine of the Village Mother.

The 'gotul-lon'

B. Bison-horn Maria Villages, Houses, and their Contents

361 Of Hill Maria villages the essential thing to remember is that they shift as the cultivation shifts, and so seldom remain more than four or five years in one place. The few villages that have good permanent rice fields tend now to become more or less permanent.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria
364 villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is
177 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-
361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page 121) must have their *bari* opposite them across the street. Each [351] *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many [231] pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among
841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Pilo-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *padas* (headmen) and *pormas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

Shifting villages

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

342 of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner
251 where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of
[769] the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are
[832] far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

342 The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small
[513] children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *akhi* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *sapal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc.
[873] If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like
[845] an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction
326] in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orka*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

343 There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

422 The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate cords of *siavi* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian wigwams, known as *panambakska*. They may also erect big and small sheds called *kotul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

Sowing

From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory. Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-akk*). These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit henjat! Miku har hikanom, inje henjatu; aru maki nahna nahna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemasi mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyap-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *Saukinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bhimsul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together

I. Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

231
343

Bison-horn Marias at Bastanar struggle to get a goat into its shed [illegible]

[End Plate L]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

V. MENSTRUATION

561 Neither in the ghotul nor outside are the age-grades of Muria children very strictly defined. There are, for example, no rites of transfer from one age-grade to another, but generally four different stages in a child's growth to maturity are recognized. The first stage for a boy or girl is babyhood; the boy is called *pila*, the girl *pili* or *noni* (daughter). This stage lasts a year. The child then becomes a *tākna peka* or *peda* (feminine *tākna peki* or *pedi*), the word *tākna* meaning 'a toddler'. This stage lasts for two or three years till the child begins to play about the house and perform little tasks, when it is known as a *leka* or *leki*. At the age of seven or eight the boy becomes a *lāyor peka* or *nangriya*, the second word implying that he is now able to go along with his father behind the plough. A girl of the same age is known as *lāya peki*, *nerwa lāya* (meaning 'immature', a girl who does not yet have to wash after her menstrual period) or in Halbi *tāndak pāni ānu leki*. Finally a girl on passing her menarche becomes a *lāya*, *torita*, *tarni*, *dhāngri*. She is now *juwān* or *mast juwān*, mature. A boy too is now called *lāyor*, *dhāngra*, *dinda* (meaning unmarried) or *juwān* (meaning mature).

841 The significant moment in these stages of growth is obviously a girl's first menstruation. This is a crisis of enormous importance to her both socially and psychologically. The fact that she is subject to this monthly cycle sets her as woman in an entirely different category to man. Menstrual blood makes her dangerous, infectious while alive; it may turn her into a ghost of dread and horror after death. A dozen names and expressions for this condition testify to the importance it has in the Muria mind. It will be most convenient to give them in tabular form: all, except the last three, are Gondi.

Pendawaghai	'Her private parts are flowing.'
Kata pongta	'The bank of the field is broken.'
Natur dawta	'Blood is flowing.'
Tera pongta	'Blood is flowing.'
Arro āta	'She is taboo.'
Atāna āyo	'She is not cooking.'
Arka chhande hita	'She's in the position of one who may not touch cooking-pots.'
Pirita	'She is wrung out like a dhoti.'
Ghāt utaris	'She can't go to the water-place.'
Bhāta me hona	'To be outside,' i.e. she cannot enter the house.
Dhār lohta	'Blood is flowing.'

The first menstruation is called *yete arta* ('the call to water') in Gondi and *phulwardi* ('the blossoming of the flower') in Halbi.

841 In many villages, especially those to the west where the influence of the Abujhmar Maria is strong, the Muria build separate huts where their women can
● 343 be segregated at this period.[1] Sometimes they make one communal hut for the whole village; sometimes there is one hut for a group of houses; occasionally a big house with a large family has a hut to itself. The Muria do not generally build such huts outside the village, but in some isolated spot within its borders. The huts are usually wretched little buildings with small doors. Inside may be seen a bed, a cooking-hearth, a few pots, some strips of cloth, a little firewood. The hut is built by the chelik—no married man may help—who are paid by the village women with liquor for their services. Every year at

[1] Among many other villages may be mentioned Sarondi, Chingnar, Kaleparas, Hoshur, Nelnara and Talshera. The huts are called in Gondi *nilla-kowas* (the hut that must not be touched) or *yer nayāna kot* (the hut for bathing in water).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

841
[343]

the beginning of the rains only the young chelik in the *nangriya* age-grade may re-thatch the roof. When they have finished, they have to pay a 'fine' of seeds or liquor to the ghotul. Girls must never touch the roof.

The motiari's life in this hut is miserable enough. At Padbera a girl exclaimed, 'You feel as if you were in jail; why has God sentenced us girls to such a punishment as this?' While she is segregated in the hut a girl must not go to a well for water, though she may go to the nearest stream. She must not go about the village for fear that her shadow may fall on a man and destroy him. She may, however, go to the forest for wood or leaves. Another girl at Talabera said, 'When we stay in the hut we always feel very hungry; sometimes we cook for ourselves, but generally the family brings it for us. Someone puts it down outside and runs away. If it is not enough, we cannot ask for more. My knees always ache, my stomach hurts, I feel lazy and unhappy, my head is heavy and in my breast is that *dak dak dak* feeling.' She went on to describe how at night they were very frightened lest some Ondar Muttai attacked them. 'We sit up together comforting one another for many hours. When we dream, we see ourselves singing and playing with the chelik and motiari. When at last we have a dream of the embankment of a tank being repaired, we know that the period is over and we will be able to return home.'

In the centre and east of the State, segregation huts are not erected. Their distribution seems to depend not only on the strength of Maria influence, but also on the style of village architecture. As we move east, we find the houses built with very large and deep verandahs where there is plenty of room for a girl to feed and sleep without coming into contact with the rest of the family. It will generally be found that where special menstruation huts are made, the village houses are small and without adequate verandah space. This is one of the reasons why the Hill Maria make a special menstruation room in their houses, even where they do not make a special hut.

But although the girls are less strictly isolated and their lot is thus less wretched than where they have to spend their days and nights away from everyone, the taboos controlling their work and movements are very strict and are enforced by stringent sanctions. These rules indeed are common throughout India,[1] though adapted to the special circumstances of Muria life. The motiari during her period may not cook or fetch water or touch the grain-bins or approach any cultivated field or clearing for shifting cultivation. If she goes into a field where the rice is sprouting it will never reach maturity. She must not step across even the mark of a plough on the ground. She cannot attend a marriage or festival. She must not go near the shrine of the Village Mother. If she is present at any occasion where liquor is being distributed, she must not accept it from the hands of a man; another girl takes it for her and hands it to her in a leaf-cup. She must not take part in any games or dances, particularly in any ceremonial dances.

The most stringent taboo is on her relations with men. Sexual intercourse is absolutely forbidden; though the woman does not seem to be affected, the man who goes to a menstruating woman will die. There is no cure for him, magician and priest are alike helpless. He is lost. The woman must not even touch a man or let her shadow fall upon him. Should a man be accidentally touched he is excommunicated and must be purified by passing through 'a ring of fire' before anyone will accept food or tobacco from him.

[1] For a full account of these, see my paper, 'Primitive Ideas of Menstruation and the Climacteric', *Essays in Anthropology Presented to S. C. Roy* (Calcutta, 1945), pp. 141–57.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.

Maria women's dancing-stick (3½' long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

343 substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in [23] funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

241 The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brush-wood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and [312] irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some [444 583] of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live. [222 262] There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and 224 ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

3: Elwin E-S (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

133
943

Distant view of the Baiadila Hills

[facing p. 64]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

abused his brother who had recently taken up his sacred duties, criticizing him as an economic liability to the family, the latter seized the trident in the village temple and killed his critic with it.

Another incident of the same kind occurred in Kosalnar. An old man Hemla Mukka had a leprous wife. He used to call the Siraha, Jhoria Hunga, to his house to treat her. One day when she was feeling specially ill, she asked her husband to go and fetch him. He went for him, but found him asleep. He woke him up and told him what he wanted. But Jhoria, who was tired after watching his fields was annoyed at being woken, and got up and hit the old man saying he was not going to give up his own work in order to treat other people. Mukka went away, but just outside the house he said loudly that his wife could be cured without the help of any Siraha. This Siraha, he said, was a *chor mailotia* (a thief who lay with his mother). When Hunga heard this insult to his profession, he came out of the house with a heavy bamboo stick and beat Mukka till he died.

Iron trident

One of the features of any Siraha's house is the little hut for 'in-patients' built a short distance away in the garden or under trees. Especially when a Siraha gets some kind of reputation for diagnosis and cure, he is visited by patients from many different villages. These come laden with dark and unknown infections and must not be admitted into his house. Little huts of leaves and branches are made for them outside, where they

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

live in some discomfort and under unnatural and strained conditions. These abnormal strains have resulted, more than once, in murder being committed.

Barse Chappe was a polygamous invalid. After suffering for some time from giddiness and trouble with his heart and eyes, he went to the village Siraha named Pocha for treatment. He became an 'in-patient' and was accommodated in a little hut. After Chappe had spent three days there, he felt better and went to Jagdalpur to give evidence in a police case. Here again he got ill and fell to the ground in a fit, and the Public Prosecutor was compelled to give him up. He returned to his own house, but when he reached it he had to spend the night outside on the verandah, as his wives told him that he would have to offer certain sacrifices in gratitude for his previous recovery before he could enter the house. The following day he again went to the Siraha for treatment and camped under a mango tree nearby. He was accompanied by his senior wife Sukhi and his little daughter Bode. From time to time his junior wife Chule, who remained in charge of the home, came to see him. After a week, one afternoon when Chule had brought food, Chappe asked both his wives to have intercourse with him in the hut. They refused saying that the place was too open, and that it was daytime and everyone would see them. Chappe got angry and beat both the women.

A few days later, at about 5 o'clock in the evening, Chappe again asked his senior wife to have intercourse with him in the hut. But Bode and two women were sitting only a few paces away on the verandah of the Siraha's hut—whence the hut was in full view—again they were able to overhear Chappe's conversation. Sukhi again refused and told her husband that he ought to be ashamed of himself for suggesting such a thing in the hearing of three other women, especially when one of them was his own daughter.

At this Chappe lost his temper. He picked up a heavy bamboo stick and beat his wife so heavily that she died.

In his defence Chappe gave evidence of delusions. He denied that his reason for beating Sukhi was that she refused to have intercourse with him. He said that for the past week she had been giving him contaminated food. He had asked her not to cook in the Siraha's house where anybody might

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 607 he was only outraging his personal marital feelings. Kopa was working as Poda's Kabari or farm-servant at Kaurgaon on the banks of the Indrawati River. Five years before the murder Poda discovered that the boy was enjoying a love affair with his wife, taking advantage of the privileged relationship in which he stood to her. A ceremony of purification and appeasement was performed and Kopa left Ragho alone for a time. But they were evidently really in love with one another, and soon their intimacy began again. In July 1933, Poda discovered this and turned Kopa out of his house and service. Kopa went to live with another cousin in the same village.

On the night of Sunday 30 July, Kopa crept into Poda's house in the middle of the night in order to lie with Ragho. But while they were together, her hand accidentally knocked against her husband who was sleeping by her side and woke him. Kopa ran for his life, but not before he had been recognized.

The following day news came that a member of the family in another village, Chota Karka, had died, and Poda with Ragho, Kopa and other relatives went to the place for the funeral ceremonies. On the Wednesday there was an open quarrel there between the two men, and Poda told the elders of the village of Kopa's behaviour and beat him publicly. Kopa ran away and hid in the forest. Then on the Thursday everyone went home.

That afternoon three of Poda's servants were working in his field, weeding the kosra crop. In the field there was [343] the usual field-hut in which the cultivators rest and guard the crops. It was raining that day, and at about 4-30 in [293] the afternoon Kopa arrived there carrying a bamboo umbrella and sat down by the fire in the field-hut to dry himself. A little later Poda came and when he saw who was sitting there he fell into a great rage. He beat Kopa several times with his bare fists, knocked him on his back, sat on his chest and throttled him with both hands. The three servants did not dare to interfere, but stood watching.

Then Poda had the body taken to another hut in someone else's field, tied a rope round the neck of the corpse, and strung it up to the roof to give the impression that the dead man had committed suicide. He bribed the witnesses and

Plate 11

133

The Kotri River

[346]

Lingo's shrine at Semurgaon

View from the Keakal Ghat

[p. 4 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

The similarity between this description and the account which I have just given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mān to pen nahi to pāthar.—If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under asja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

[1] See *Muria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
[2] Dey, op. cit., p. 318.
[3] Ibid., p. 344.
[4] J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The buildings vary greatly. Some are solid mud houses with strong doors, others are open sheds, a few stand in substantial compounds of their own with pillars and swings before the entrance. The furniture and symbols inside vary as greatly. In the solid buildings there is generally something that might be damaged by cattle or blown away in a storm—little brass images of horses, elephants and bulls, elaborate litters for Danteshwari, bunches of peacock feathers. Flags and very small images are wrapped up and put into an earthen pot hung from the roof. The long Gutal poles (with a big bunch of peacock feathers at the top) are slung from the roof, and the Anga Deo are hung on ropes from the roof or placed resting on bamboos. Other symbols of the gods are chains, spears, axes, digging tools, whips of cow-hair, shields.

Fig. 24. Brass horse, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines *Height* 9½"

In the more open sheds, the symbols of the gods have to be slung high up very near the roof. At the foot of the central pillar there is generally a flat stone which serves as the seat of the god, and there are several big stones placed together to form a hearth for the cooking of the new grain and pulses or sacrificial animals. The gods are often taken out of their temples to be worshipped, at least on all major festivals, but the sacramental cooking is done inside. So you may often see big wooden spoons stuck in the roof. Outside the temple, there may be a swing with a spiked seat on which the mediums can prophesy; there is often a row of wooden pillars, each with a stone seat before it, to which certain visiting gods can be tied, and there may be a stone for special offerings to the dead.

On the wooden pillars, there are often phallic symbols. At Metawand I saw an elaborately carved vagina showing the clitoris and labia; there are similar carvings at Markabera and Bayanar.

I will describe one or two representative shrines, for this will give a better idea of them than any general account. At Markabera is the *pen-ravar* of the Wadder clan, and near the temple is a row of menhirs erected for members of the clan who have died in the neighbourhood. But Markabera is not the original *pen-ravar* of this clan. That is at Kakori, where the clan-god, the Anga Bope Harma, has his residence. Many years ago, Bope Harma had a son at Kakori who was named Bhumiriya; two brothers of the Wadder clan lived there as the Dhurwa Pujari. After a time Bope Harma ordered one of the Wadder brothers to go to Markabera and make a new *pen-ravar* there with a temple to Bhumiriya.

The temple is built with nine wooden pillars, fixed in place by the clan-priest who put iron slag at the bottom of each hole. Bundles of grass called *gubba* were prepared by a Karanga, a clan *akoudwa* to the Wadder clan; mahua flowers and water were offered them and they were tied to the top of the pillars before thatching. The roof was then thatched, but no walls were made. Every ten years, the *pen-ravar* building is renewed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

346 Just inside the gate of the enclosure there is a line of pillars and four stone seats. These poles are for the convenience of such visiting deities as are

[532]

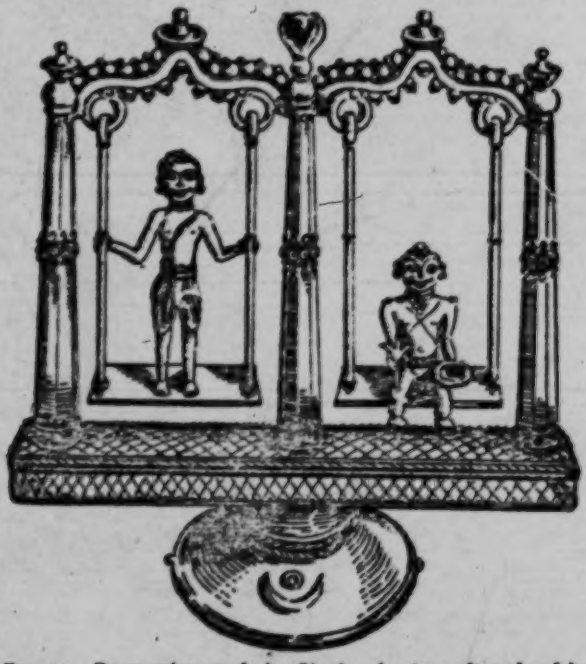


Fig. 25. Brass swing, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines
Breadth 8½"

represented by poles or flags and can be tied to the pillars; the stones also are seats for those gods who have a traditional or family right to come to the temple. Such are Kustirmago Pen, a cousin of Bhumiriya, an Uika god from Kasabahi; Lath Kuar, Bhumiriya's son, a Wadder god from Tadopal; Inde Muitar, a Karanga god of Suhnar and Son Kuar, son of Kanda Dokara, a Maravi god from Garhbangal. Near the gate of the enclosure is another stone [719] of sacrifice where black hens are offered to the dead. One of the pillars is used to tie the buffaloes and bulls which are to be sacrificed to Bhumiriya.

Entering the temple, we find a clean open shed with broad wooden pillars [831] on which are carved crude representations of the sun and the vagina. Here too are four stone seats. The chief is, of course, for the lord of the temple Bhumiriya himself. The second is for his father Bope Harma who is brought every ten years to sit with his son. The third is for Dhursai Kuar, a son of the Pat Deo in Jagdalpur, who comes at festivals from Timnar, and the fourth is for Lalsai Kuar of Metawand.

From the roof hangs an earthen pot containing little bells and a bundle of peacock feathers. Another pot has in it a piece of cloth used as a flag at festivals. In the roof are ten large wooden spoons, which are used for the

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

346 New Eating ceremonies and made ceremonially every ten years, and a large gourd kept for pouring water. Piled round one of the pillars is a heap of dancing-sticks of dhaman wood called Bhumiriya Kolang; these are kept in the shrine for the Pen Kolang dances and at the end of three years are taken to the village boundary and hung up on a rope across the road. There is a *kakam* hunting-horn, not a brass one, but the real horn of a wild buffalo.

883 This description is not irrelevant to a book on the ghotul. The spoons and
796 gourd are used by the chelik, who have the responsibility for cooking at the festivals. The dancing-sticks are made by the chelik and used for their ceremonial dances. The hunting-horn is sounded by chelik to summon the people for festivals. Every visiting deity means a corresponding visit from the chelik and motiari of its village: Markabera is thus in close touch with several villages—Timnar, Metawand, Kokori, Kasabahi, Tadopal, Garhbangal and Suhnar. The Markabera god visits Metawand and Kokori, and possibly other villages. The visits of the gods with their attendant chelik and motiari, many of them of clans different to the Markabera Wadder clan, play a very important part in bringing boys and girls of these villages into touch with one another.

346 In Markabera there was only one temple. In Bayanar there are eight grouped together round a wooded hill covered with fantastic rocks amid which the little shrines are built. A narrow path leads steeply up the hill to the first shrine standing up sharply on a rocky mound of its own. This shrine is the home of Pandi Dokara Gutal (represented by a pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the end) and his two sons Mundi Kuar Gutal and Lalit Kuar Gutal. The three poles are slung high up beneath the roof, for the shed is an open one. At the foot of the centre pillar of the hut is a stone seat, with gongs and an iron lamp. This is a Naitami shrine and there are two stone hearths at either end of it, one for the clan-priest of the Naitami and the other for the husbands of women in their menstrual periods and women who have very recently given [831] birth to a child. On one pillar is a carving of the vagina, on another the sun and moon and a crude horse.

By the little path along the hillside are two sets of pillars with flat stones in front of them to support Pandi Dokara at festivals. A little further on is a small temple for Hinglajin Dokari. This goddess is represented by a closed litter, and there is the usual stone and hearth for her worship.

A little way down the hill is a temple of the Sori clan which houses two more Gutal (poles)—Dawdi Dokara and Lalsai Dokara. Going still further down the hill we reach a large rock on which is a fourth shrine which is empty save for a stone representing Mundi Kuar; this is in charge of a Hindu (Kalar) Pujari from Mungwal.

These little temples on the hillside were curiously impressive; old gods of hill and forest seemed very present there. Down the hill in a shed was a bamboo pole and a flag in an earthen pot representing Son Kuar, the son of the Anga Deo at Narayanpur—another Naitami shrine. One of the most interesting things I saw on this visit was in the temple to Son Kuar. Here was a very small earthen pot tied up in dub grass, in which the *jiwa* of a dead priest was dwelling. For a long time even the Pargana Manjhi hesitated to tell me his name, especially in that potentially dangerous spot, but at last I got it—it was Tota Muria.

We went on towards a great grove of mango trees till we came to a closed temple, again of the Naitami, in which was a characteristic Anga Deo, Baiba the mad god, a stone to represent Bangaram consort of Danteshwari, and two other stones for Kotgudin Matal and Dulardei Matal. Here we were in a definitely Hindu atmosphere. There was a large clay elephant for Bangaram,

[Description of temple buildings see pp 196-198, cat 116—Analyst]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and in front of the shrine a pile of old clay elephants, bulls and horses. And indeed I was told that the Anga used to live up on the hillside but was offended by the rough Muria habits and moved down to the plain where he

FIG. 26. A typical carved wooden pigeon often found in Muria shrines
Length 9½'

would not be offended by the sight of his worshippers eating beef. Here, in vivid symbol, was the god leading the hillmen down into the plains, from the open free hut to the enclosed house, to a reform of diet and a change of religious custom and the use of ephemeral images made by low-caste Hindu artisans.

There are two other small temples, both open sheds, to visit; both are for the Naitami clan. The first is for Paknabundin Matal, who is represented by a big stone, and the other for Tallur Muttai, the Village Mother, also represented by a stone. These four temples of the plain are not without their charm; set among great trees they look towards the grim rocks of the hills above them. But they have not the hard clear light and freedom of the shrines that brave the rocks and mountain.

VI. THE MURIA PRIESTHOOD

Who are the priests that officiate at these temples? In a sense every Muria is a priest; for the head of each family tends the dead of his house and can make offerings to his personal gods, but there are priestly families of greater or less influence which have performed the worship of the gods for generations.

Notable among these is the priest of the clan-god or Anga, often now called the Pen-Pujari or Pen-Gaita. In the Chota Dongar and Partabpur areas, he is called the Pen-Waddai. He is also known as the Dhurwa, which is the name of a tribe in the south of the State and possibly has associations with the Dhur Gond. This use of a tribal name as a priestly title is paralleled by the use of the word Baiga to denote a village-priest. It suggests that the Dhurwa tribe like the Baiga is regarded by the people as of great antiquity.

Then there is the priest of the *bhum* or earth. The Kaser-Gaita (knife-priest), also known as the Bhum-Gaita or Mati-Gaita (earth-priest), has the duty of offering sacrifices to the earth and keeping the village free of disease. It is he who must go to the fields and clearings when they are prepared and must make offerings at sowing time and harvest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter VI

Villages, Houses and their Contents

A. Hill Maria Villages, Houses and their Contents

361 The site of the Hill Maria village is in these days almost entirely determined by its convenience as a centre from which to cultivate the *penda* slopes of the year. Peace has reigned in the Abujhmar hills from time immemorial, and no question of defence arises when a village is built. A possible relic of former unsettled times [349] is the custom of building stone cairns and seats as look-outs at the head of passes or the summits of hills on the paths leading to villages; but these are convenient watching places for herdsmen when their cattle are grazing around the hill-tops, and serve also to mark the line of the paths which, in the rains, are overgrown with rank grass, or fall into disuse when villages or *penda* slopes 487 are abandoned for alternative sites. Certain well-defined tracks through the hills are cleared annually by the villagers; these often avoid the actual village sites, to which side tracks connect them. There are no carts in the hills, and therefore the tracks are only foot-paths, generally wide enough only for a party to walk in single file, though at the periodic clearings the grass is cut down to a width of two or three feet on each side of the path. The village 361 boundary is usually marked by a cairn of stones, in the centre of which may be planted a pole ornamented at the top with bunches of grass or peacock or jungle-cock feathers, the pole being further adorned by peeling off bands of bark at intervals throughout its length. The boundary itself is usually a stream, and the cairns of the two villages are usually twenty or thirty yards apart, so that [783] when the annual *pira-manaka* (called by the Bison-horn Marias *reg-burria* and by Halbi-speakers *boharani*) ceremony of ridding the village of disease takes place, the old winnowing-fans with the sweepings of each house can be hung up beyond the boundary on this no-man's-land without leaving them on the lands of the neighbouring village.

487 These paths cross streams by stepping-stones, by logs felled 491 across the stream, by small raised embankments pierced by hollowed tree trunk pipes for the passage of the water and revetted with horisontally laid logs, or by bridges consisting of a plank supported by bamboo wicker-work cylinders filled with boulders resting on

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

But in many villages instead of a communal *pedawo'gha'i* there is a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *pedawo'gha'i* room known generally as *kala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *kala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable attached.

The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *kotyoq-gaita's* house, near the latter's *udam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-rawar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parlio clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street;

[1] Or *ala*: the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

342 Rough ground-plans of three typical Hill Maria houses are given in the illustration on page 111. The Nugur house was the end house of a long-house, and faced south on to the main village street. It differs from the other two in having no partition wall between the veranda (*algi*) and the *angadi*, or women's kitchen and sleeping room; the *angadi* in this case is in fact almost a continuation of the veranda round the eastern side of the *lowa*. The husband actually slept in the veranda and his wife in the *angadi* in warm weather, but in the *lowa* in winter and rains. This house had no *kala* or menstruation room, because the village had a communal menstruation hut; so also the house had no back door.

Houses

The Kurmer house faced north on to the main street, and was the central house of a long-house of three houses; its western and eastern walls were thus only partitions separating it from the other two houses. It was itself almost two houses, as the widowed mother [592] of Dedha Keye, the occupant, had the eastern *algi*, *angadi* and *lowa* for her exclusive use; but there was no door between her portion of the *algi* and Keye's portion, only a partial continuation across the veranda of the partition wall between her and Keye's rooms. The widow was too old to need a *kala*, and so there was only one for Keye's wife in his part of the house, and this had a back door. Like the Nugur house, this house had no *agha* room.

The Handawada secular headman's (*pedal's*) house was at the north end of a long-house containing three houses and facing west on to the village street; the other two houses had their verandas (*algi*) and entrances on the street side, facing west. His *algi* was therefore very small, and only nominally walled off from the open ground to the north of the house by a bamboo wicker-work fence [351] about 3½ feet high, being thus useless for keeping property. Where, as in the other houses illustrated, the veranda is in front of the house and parallel to the roof-tree, it is easy to construct a front wall as high as the roof, which is there barely 3½ feet above the ground.

342 The *agha* is the husband's living and sleeping room, and it is
513 taboo (*polo*) for his wife, a mature daughter or any woman to sleep
784 in it; but boys too small to sleep in the bachelors' dormitory and immature daughters may sleep there. In hot weather the males of the family often sleep under the granary, which is built on piles, and when houses have no *agha* this is the usual sleeping place at all times for the men of the family, and for male guests except when the latter can be accommodated in the village dormitory
342 (*gotal-lowa*). It is strictly taboo for any female to enter a granary,
513 or to sleep under one. Every *agha* has a large *alpanji* or sleeping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is 364 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the 177 greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page 121) must have their *bari* opposite them across the street. Each [351] *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many [231] pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among 841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Piki-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of the ghotul, though they are usually appropriated by particular boys for the period of their membership.

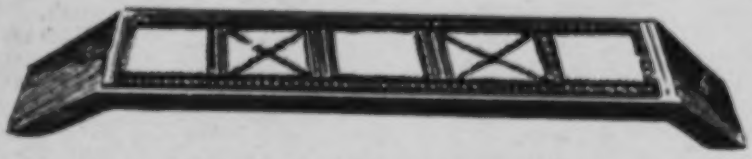


FIG. 55. Carved head-rest from Markabera
Length 3' 6"

In eastern Kondagaon drums are usually kept in the ghotul; at Masora a dhol-drum hangs under the verandah roof—it is the local habitation of Lingo

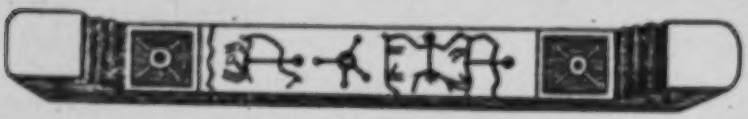


FIG. 56. Carved underside of wooden head-rest from Kumli
Length 4'

Pen. At Dongrigura and other villages in this area, the whole ceiling is of drums, a fine and impressive sight. Special officers are appointed to provide rope for hanging them up and to see that they are kept in good order.

Flutes are often pushed into the thatch, but dancing-sticks are kept in the shrine of the Village Mother. I have never seen the emblem of a god, a flag or a 'horse' in the ghotul, nor any village symbol, but in Palli Barkot there was a bundle of blessed seed hanging from the roof.

There are often little holes in the wall for keeping tobacco and other small treasures. Sometimes too there are holes in the floor—for husking the rice that is brought home from the Pus Kolang and other expeditions. In one or two ghotul I have seen holes low down in the wall to serve as urinals. Outside in the courtyard there may be a large flat stone for washing clothes, but this is probably an innovation for the benefit of outsiders.

Inside the ghotul compound there is generally a stack of grass for thatching the roofs. Outside are tall piles of firewood, which may be stacked criss-cross about a central pole or piled up in the forked branches of a tree. Sometimes long poles are stood upright against and round a tree. In Jhakri I saw near the ghotul four different ways of storing the chelik's wood—it was stacked horizontally criss-cross round a tree; it was laid in parallel rows between two trees; it was criss-crossed between two upright poles tied together at the top by a rope; and it was stacked upright against a tree.

These stores of wood play an important part in the consciousness of every Muria boy, for his earliest ghotul memories are of his duty to add one or two pieces to them every evening, failure to do so earning dreaded punishments.

pull themselves up by their arms, to kiss them. I remember straining up, and at last reaching the yellow pitch pine and the two crimson lips. They looked indecent, for some reason; as if they were the drawing of another part of the body.' If the boys were not quick or could not reach the lips, they were flicked with wet towels as an encouragement.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 42°. But he feels the cold, and at night, when walking, may be met
513 carrying a glowing ember held close to his navel for warmth, while
374 in camp he sleeps on the ground between two fires, and in house, field-hut or village dormitory sleeps generally on a platform of criss-crossed bamboos or creeper rope with a fire beneath it. He
513 has usually also a sleeping mat or *masni* (Halbi) made of a special grass, which is easily rolled up and carried about when he visits Jagdalpur or a touring officer's camp; or he may use instead of it his *taghali* or bark rain coat. He sleeps generally on his side with his head resting on his arm, the other arm resting on the ground in front with the elbow bent; and he will shift from side to side. It is *polo*, that is taboo, for a woman to sleep on a cot or platform, and she must sleep on the ground in her room in the house.

Bodily attitudes

The Bison-horn Maria has generally a cot to sleep on, and even his wife often has one. In such matters he is getting more and more like the ordinary Hindu villager.

516 For eating or social conversation or resting, the Hill Maria often sits with his buttocks on the ground and his knees drawn up, though he sometimes uses the familiar Indian squatting position, and his women usually squat in this way for mourning at funerals or singing at weddings. The men have also little wooden stools to
● [352] sit on, or sit on a stone, as at the commensal feasts; while in the villages where there is the custom of the *gaita* or headman and the *kasyeq-gaita* or Village Mother priest sitting on an *uddamgarya* or seat of honour to preside over meetings of the elders, it is often a flat stone resting on stone legs, on which he sits in ordinary sitting posture. In any group of Hill Marias resting after a meal or on a march you will see almost every attitude that might be adopted by English schoolboys except lying prone on back or stomach. If standing, a favourite position of all the tribes in Bastar is to stand on one foot, the other knee being bent so that the sole of the foot may rest against the outer side of the standing leg, the arm on the same side as the bent knee catching hold of a bough or something for steadiness. Another favourite position is to stand with the left leg braced, the right slightly flexed so that the left hip is extended sideways; the left wrist or knuckles rest on this hip, while the right hand rests on the left shoulder, the right arm being bent at the elbow to look like a V over the chest; or else the right arm is hung loosely at the side, or held in that of the next youth. For fire-
[372] making they kneel on their knees. They stand to urinate and squat to defecate.

[514] The Bison-horn Maria uses mostly the same positions, but is more prone to imitate Hindu habits; he squats to urinate.*
*[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

HILL MARIA *PANCHAYAT*, ITULNAR
showing religious and secular headmen seated on stone udam-garya seats

[face p. 190

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

623
516
352

[facing p. 290]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

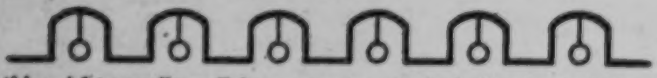
883 X
342
353
31
831

on the central pillar.[1] In the small Kolur ghotul there is one slender pillar covered with carvings of the vagina, as always showing the clitoris, but here there was a double clitoris and a clitoris upside down.

At Markabera there were similar carvings of the vagina with the clitoris.

Often a chelik may be seen with an enormous penis, a motiari in his arms. The boys say that these carvings are very useful as an approach to girls. It may be that the vagina in the central pillar is the relic of a custom now forgotten of initiating smaller boys by pressing them against it.[1]

The walls of the ghotul are often decorated with drawings and paintings. In 1940 there was a fine display in the Remawand ghotul. The following year I saw a frieze of fantastic paintings (illustrated in Plate LXVIII) at More Berma. At Netagaon there were models of motiari, tigers and a monkey. In Urdabera there was a model of a chelik with his motiari, and over the door a mud model of a horse. In Dengaon, there were modellings of a chelik and motiari riding on a horse. At Kuntpadar, one wall was well decorated with drawings of a boy, a vagina, a girl, a bow and arrow and the sun and moon. At Palki there was the representation of a bird trap:



But this might equally well be a sexual symbol, similar to the design of the phallus within the vagina that I noted at Metawand:

883 X
352
[531]

The day-time visitor to a ghotul will find little enough there by way of furniture. Cots are never used; everyone sleeps on the ground. Seats and stools are rare, but in many ghotul are to be found long narrow pieces of wood raised some two inches from the ground. These are the *kutul* which may be used either as seats or pillows. Some are very long and suggest the custom of several boys and girls sleeping together. They are often carved with geometric designs, figures of boys and girls, crude representations of the vagina. I have one with four breasts carved on its under-side. Occasionally you may see a *kutul* with a little drawer hollowed out below for storing necklaces or other ornaments during the night. As far as I know these head-rests are the corporate property

FIG. 54. *Kutul* from Talabera showing small drawer for keeping ornaments. *Length 1' 7"*

[1] A remarkable parallel from an English Public School (Repton) is provided in Dunton Welch's *Maiden Voyage* (London, 1943), p. 42. The author is describing the House dormitory. 'Two lips had been painted on one of the beams and all new boys had to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of the ghotul, though they are usually appropriated by particular boys for the period of their membership.

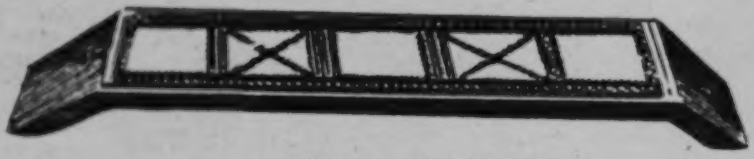


FIG. 55. Carved head-rest from Markabera
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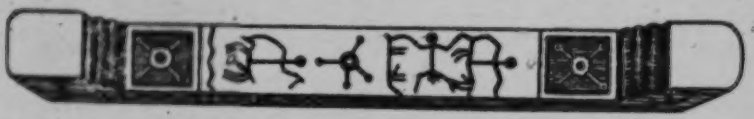

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXI

352
291
301

Chelik of Toinar with his ghotul 'wife'

[p. 364 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pipes. These are lit with little bits of glowing coal picked from the fire, and when half-smoked or not in use are generally kept tucked into the turban or hidden in a hole in the ghotul wall.

But the chelik do not rely only on the tobacco supplied them in the ghotul. Any enterprising boy has tucked into his loin-cloth or hanging (sometimes with a bunch of bells or cowries) at his waist a specially-made tobacco-pouch. These *gota* are, as a glance at the illustrations in Figs. 82-4, 93-5, 99, 103-4, and 109-14 will show, elaborate and varied. They are of every size and shape. One is like a fish, another carved like a wheel, a third resembles a mango. Some are of garud, moda or koraya wood, others are cut from the kernel of a fruit, a few are of brass. The stoppers are fitted tightly with a little lac. Some are covered with the testes of a goat or sambhar. Most are elaborately carved.

Many of the *gota*-pouches are named. There is the *dudong-gota*, round as a girl's breast; the *chakka-gota* (Fig. 77), a beautifully carved wheel; the *hemul*, or tortoise pouch (Fig. 79) with its elaborate designs; the charming *marka-batta-gota* (Fig. 112) shaped like a mango; the *kaldri-gota* (Fig. 83); the *min-kap-gota*, with its decoration of fish bones; the *lumur-gota*, whose carving resembles the flowers of the ebony tree; the *girna* or lizard *gota* (Fig. 82); and the *damera-iching-singar gota* (Fig. 110) with its elaborate silver decorations. Some of the *gota* have a deliberately sexual purpose; the *pude-gota* (Figs. 94 and 99) has small representations of the vagina carved on it and the *dudo-muri* (Fig. 101) has marks that are supposed to resemble the pimples round the nipples of a woman's breast. The chelik show these to girls to excite them. But, indeed, as I show in another chapter, to ask for tobacco is itself a polite way of asking a girl for sexual congress.

The Muria grow tobacco in specially fenced gardens near their houses and sometimes in enclosures made on the banks of stream or river. When it is ready, it is cut and allowed to dry in the garden. Then it is placed between layers of kodon straw 'which turns it red in a few days'. After this it is dried again, this time on the roof of the house, and finally tied up in bundles with home-made string.

VI. The Sleeping-mat

The *pir* or *mahsi*-mat is an important piece of ghotul furniture. When a boy joins the ghotul for the first time he is expected to bring a mat which is usually made for him by his mother or an aunt. Later on, especially in the *jodidar* ghotul, a girl ought always to make a mat for her special chelik, but elsewhere the mats seem to be made by a boy's mother, sister or some other female relative. At a marriage a new mat is usually presented to the bridegroom.

The mat is not difficult to make. A rectangle is marked out and pegs driven into the ground at its four corners. Bits of bamboo are tied between the pegs at opposite ends of the rectangle and a dozen or more strings of hemp or grass are tied from one end to the other so as to form the warp. Before they are attached, they are threaded through the holes of the *ach*, a wooden instrument illustrated in Fig. 96 which is used to beat the grass into place. The woman sits down with the *ach* before her and threads bits of reed or grass over and under the strings. After she has threaded two or three she sprinkles them with water and pulls the *ach* sharply towards her several times, thus pressing the grass into position. This is done over and over again until finally the mat is complete.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

These mats are kept at home and boys or girls bring them rolled up under their arms at night to the ghotul. In some villages this is the special duty of the girls. When they arrive they go round saluting the boys and presenting them with their mats. This is known as *Marni-johar*.

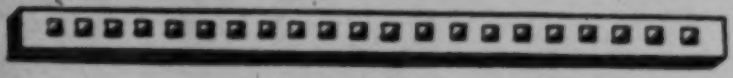


Fig. 56. The wooden dab used for making a *marni*-mat
Length 2' 10"

The mat is very definitely a sexual symbol and many ribald jokes are connected with it. The new mat given to a bridegroom at his marriage is generally smeared with oil 'to make it slippery'. Once when I was sitting down in the village of Angaon a chelik brought me a *marni* but an old man said, 'Don't sit on it, it is covered with semen', and everyone thought it very amusing. It is supposed to be a great honour to be given a mat by the chelik, probably just because it is a symbol of so much excitement and romance.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

house, and are given *landa* to drink. At the meal in the Place of the Departed the couple are exhorted by the bridegroom's father to live together in unity and concord, and to be faithful. All night the drums roll and guests pour in to dance and drink *landa* or sing around the bride and bridegroom, the men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses. Ultimately next morning the couple are made to stand on a hurdle under the eaves of the hut constructed for them, and a kinsman of the girl's father climbs on the roof and tips a pot of water over them. The boy then drags the girl into the hut, both pushed by willing hands, and the door is fastened on them and a bamboo-matting curtain hung over it. After a while they emerge, and the bride takes a ceremonial farewell of the girls of her village, and the guests disperse. Finally in the evening she is thrust into the bridal hut by her husband's younger brothers and his friends, her husband being already inside awaiting her.

In the account of the Ganjenar-Massenar wedding which follows, naturally no description can be given of the scenes in the *narma-lon* rooms of the bride's and bridegroom's fathers, to which outsiders are not admitted, or of other parts of the wedding ceremonies which I did not actually see. The bridegroom was the son of Atrami Hunga of Massenar, the younger brother of Atrami Kopa Dhurwa, a very influential headman who was decorated by the late Raja of Bastar for keeping that *pargana* quiet during the 1910 rebellion, and the bride was the daughter of Kunjami Harma, the headman of Ganjenar. When I reached the latter's house, which was about two miles from my camp at Massenar, the bridegroom and his party had arrived, and the relatives' dinner was over. The bride had gone to a tank to be bathed by her elder sister and her brother's wife; the bridegroom and his father were walking about talking to the guests and the bride's male relatives. There were not many persons present, perhaps 150 all told; a few men were beating their dancing drums, but none were wearing their bison-horn head-dresses. Around the door of the separate sleeping hut used by Kunjami Harma's daughters and other womenfolk, some thirty women were standing shoulder to shoulder, swaying to and fro and singing a choral refrain of '*Kokolin-saya*' to obscene verses sung by a laughing woman in the centre of the group. Another band of women hurled abuse at them at intervals, when the leader of each band tried to out-Billingsgate the other.

When the bride had been bathed, she emerged from the sleeping hut with a cloth wrapped over her shoulders, and was dragged into a chain of dancing and singing girls with their arms closely linked, while the bridegroom, also with a cloth over his shoulders, was pulled into another chain. These chains of girls circled and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the four corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chelik-bairag* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central parganas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and no one would steal from it.

As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The chelik desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Kober and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has Siddari birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidhs*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidhs* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.

Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

[1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bhuiya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of breasts right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. Hutton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of sexual excitement' in Naga morung.—Hutton, *Diaries*, op. cit., p. 46.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

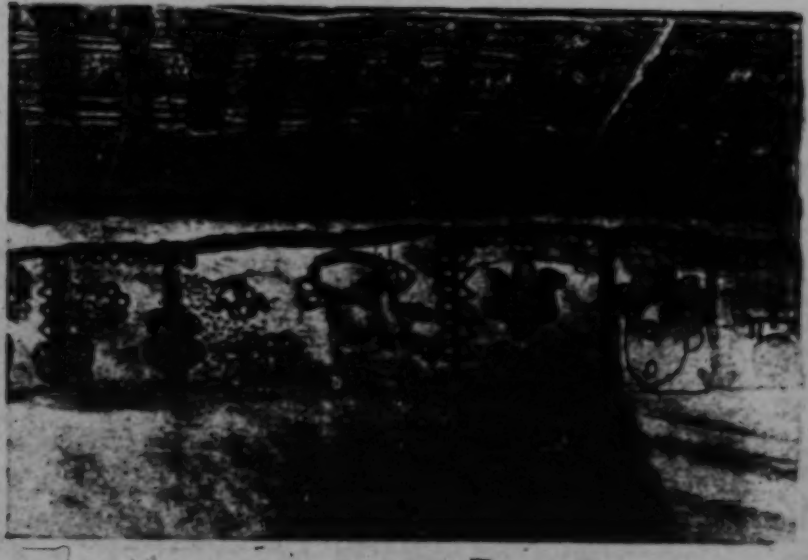
Plate LXVIII

X
883
342
417

The ghotul at Maram

Black and red wall-paintings in the More Berma ghotul

X
883
053
532



2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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883 X
342
353
31
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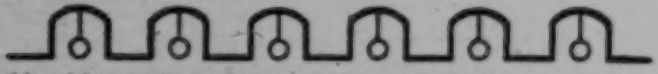

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

I

BEFORE proceeding further it is essential that we distinguish carefully between two different types of ghotul, for these are so sharply differentiated by rule and custom and the psychological conditions of each are so distinct that until this is done we can get no clear picture of the intimate relations between chelik and motiari.

The fundamental principle of the first type of dormitory, which is sometimes called the *jodidár*[1] or 'yoking' ghotul, is that of fidelity to a single partner during the whole of the pre-marital period. Each chelik is paired off with a motiari; he is formally 'married' to her; she may even take the feminine form of his title as her own. Divorce is allowed, though infidelity is punished.

In the second type of ghotul, which is probably a later development of the classic model, any kind of lasting attachment between chelik and motiari is forbidden. No one can say that such and such a motiari is *his* girl; if anyone sleeps with a particular girl for more than three days at a time, he is punished.

In all other matters, whether of discipline, routine, social duty or recreation, there is no difference between the two types of ghotul. We must, however, carefully distinguish them for their sexual customs and psychological conditions.

The *jodidár* ghotul is, I think, the original form of the Muria dormitory. In the first place, it is most widely distributed in the more primitive parganas—the Chota Dongar, Dugal and Karangal—and in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar Mountains. It has retained its place most successfully among the Jhoria, who are undoubtedly the oldest of the Muria groups. Secondly, the Muria themselves describe the other type of ghotul as a modern improvement intended to eliminate scandals and the danger of pregnancy. The change from one type to the other is still going on. At Karangaon, which was formerly

FIG. 37. Carving on the pillars of the ghotul at Almer

[1] A *jodi* or *jori* is the word used for a life-long friend, yoke-fellow or husband and wife. A *jodi* is something definitely more than a temporary lover. It is the person yoked to whom one will pull the heavy plough of life. See V. Elwin and S. Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 24ff.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*ahki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[a] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[a] [see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chelik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585

[354]

585
522

585

FIG. 22. Iron lamp-stand placed in the centre of the marriage booth
Height 5'

In the evening, after everyone had eaten their supper, the chelik and motiari went singing to escort the bridal pair to their new house, which had been entirely deserted for their benefit. All the other people had gone away. The chelik and motiari danced before the house for some time, the newly-married pair dancing with them. Then the little boys and girls were sent away, and the seniors caught hold of the bride and groom and pushed them into the house. Here the girl stood still while the husband was taken into a small inner room. The Sirdar spread a new mat, placed a cloth on it (they sometimes put oil on it 'to make it slippery') and made him lie down on one side. Then they pulled the girl into the room and made her lie down beside him. The boys patted them farewell, and ran out shutting the door behind them.

Outside they ran to the wall of the house, trying to peep in and hear what was going on, laughing and excited. The boys ought now to have caught a cock and taken it away, plucking its feathers all along the road, to roast it in the ghotul. But the groom's old mother had been too clever for them and had hidden all her poultry.

This cock is known variously as the *lod-kor* or 'sleeping cock', *pussi-kor* or 'semen cock', *honda-kor* or 'pubic-hairs cock', *pude-kor* or 'vagina cock', and *get-kor* or 'copulation cock'. The usual custom, as we shall see at Nayanar, is to catch this cock, pluck the feathers going along the road, roast it in or near the ghotul or the ghotul camp, and then when everyone is asleep to push burnt feathers, entrails, bits of bone, into the mouths, ears, noses and private parts of the sleeping children—a joke that never fails to cause the greatest mirth and delight.

The theory seems to be that the cock is some sort of compensation. 'He is eating her vagina; we are eating the vagina cock.'

In Atungaon I was told that the ghotul leaders gave a little sermon to the husband when they shut him up with his bride. 'Take this girl; she is now your property. Give us a sleeping-cock in exchange. Sleep with the girl in happiness and joy; may she bear a child within a year; it is your duty.'

The chelik of Mumjmeta told me that where boy and girl belonged to the same ghotul, and where that ghotul was one in which boys and girls paired off in some kind of permanent relationship, they had a different custom. When the marriage was over, the bride returned to the ghotul and combed the hair and massaged the limbs of her old ghotul-husband for the last time. She slept with him for an hour, and then the chelik took her to her husband and shut them up together. The cock in this

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

515 the streams for the sexes, and they never bathe together. But the Hill Maria does not know the use of soap; occasionally his women follow the practice of the plains women and scour their hair with a plaster of black earth well rinsed out later. His nails are generally long and very dirty. The infant and the toddler are occasionally washed with water from a gourd. Where there is no stream near or water is scarce, the daily ablutions are often [415] performed with water dipped from an earthen water-pot with a gourd ladle, called *paghas* by the Hill Marias and *orka* in the plains, made from a gourd shaped like a large European smoking pipe; the straight stem is hollow and holed at the end; the stem is held near the bowl between the chin and collar-bone or shoulder and water tilted down from the bowl on to the body by dropping the other shoulder, while the hands rub the limb thus wetted. Needless to say, ablutions thus performed are not very effective.

The Bison-horn Maria also on occasion 'washes' with the ladle, but generally is cleaner than the Hill Maria, and is beginning to buy cheap soap in the bazaars. He will wash his hands before a meal, unlike the hill man. He has his daily dip, but generally in the evening only; and the women definitely bathe only in the evening on their way back from the fields. Both bathe naked, but they wash their clothes far more readily than the Hill Maria, living indeed in the 'bazaar' plains with several Mahra weavers in their midst.

514 The Hill Maria, unlike the Hindu, does not wash after defeca-
515 tion, but wipes himself with leaves. The plainsman is learning the Hindu habit. Neither a Hill nor a Bison-horn village is ever as noisome as the average Hindu village of so 'advanced' a tract as the Maratha country of Nagpur or Berar, where at night the village streets are used as a public latrine and it is difficult to pass clean-shod in the morning. The Hill Maria generally retires into the jungle to ease himself, and the Bison-horn either does the same or uses the *bari* or vegetable garden at the back of his house.

● 356 A Hill Maria's house is really clean only for the first month or
361 two after it is made, and there is no regular re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung and mud. The interior is rapidly grimed with smoke and dust; and if the Maria has any article he wishes to keep clean he stores it up a tree or in his granary. But his house seldom has to last him more than four or five years, after which, his *penda* slope being exhausted, he and the other villagers move their houses to one of the alternative village sites, and his old house is ultimately burnt, either deliberately or as a matter of course in the annual firing of the forest grasses. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is now a dweller in permanent habitations, save for an occasional shift for superstitious reasons. His houses are therefore

[see CA 1.116 MP 418-419. - Analysis]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *penda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiwa* and making it useless for any magic.

Hair-dressing

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

142

A Lohar boy: the Chowkidar of the Berma ghotul

Plate LXXVI

342
356

Mótiari cleaning the Bandopal ghotul

[p. 364 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The Muria wash their houses with a solution of cow-dung and water. When this has dried they apply a whitewash of clean mud from the jungle. A good

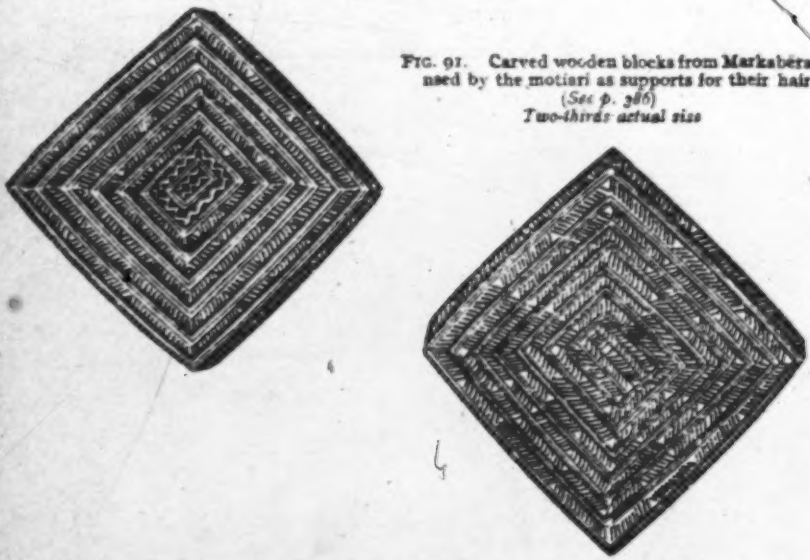

FIG. 91. Carved wooden blocks from Markabera used by the motiari as supports for their hair
(See p. 386)
Two-thirds actual size

housewife should do this every day. The motiari must keep the ghotul spotlessly clean—'This is how she learns to keep her husband's house clean when she leaves us', explained the boys at Berma.

Chelik and motiari wash their clothes frequently, almost as often as they bathe; the older people, naturally less concerned about their personal appearance, more anxious about economy, wash them less. The clothes are put in a pot with the ash of saja, dhaura, sesamum, siari-creeper or rice-chaff, and are boiled. When ready the pot is carried to the river, the clothes removed and washed by being beaten with the hands on a stone and rinsed again and again in the water. The clothes of a woman in her period, and especially her pubic cloth, are boiled on the river bank. At Temrugaon I saw many empty pots lying on the bank and even floating in the pools which were used for this purpose, for they cannot of course be taken back to the house.

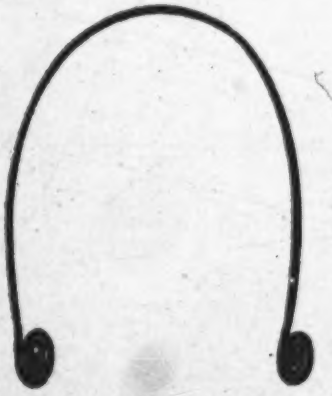

FIG. 92. Boys' hair-retainer made by a local blacksmith out of the ribs of an old umbrella
(See p. 387)

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 slopes and in the Mangnar and Dantewara Mar villages there are often fine patches of sal and other evergreen trees. On the hill-tops and on slopes exhausted by shifting cultivation, high grass and stunted trees make the country monotonous to the eye and tiring through lack of shade. Where the slopes are newly cleared and have once been burnt for shifting *penda* cultivation, often a small grove of trees is left on the summit, like nothing so much as the top-knot of hair on the crown of a Maria's otherwise roughly-shaved head. But the moment you descend off the rocky plateaux you meet green glades and hurrying streams, or may feel the sudden amaze of a prospect such as that of the blue apex of the lofty Bailadila ridge seen beyond the haze of the Indrawati valley down the valley of a stream that far below the ridge between Itulnar and Hikul races due south to the Indrawati.

161 There are only between 150 and 160 villages inhabited in all this area of about 1,500 square miles, and there are only 11,500 ●361 Hill Marias. This means one village in every ten square miles, and less than eight persons to the square mile. In few places can you lose yourself in such solitudes.

635 North Bastar thus consists administratively o. .he Antagarh, Kondagaon and Jagdalpur tahsils, half of the Jagdalpur tahsil being south of the Indrawati, and of the portions of the Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris and the Dantewara tahsil north of the Indrawati.

635 In South Bastar there are the Dantewara, Bijapur and Konta tahsils, and the Sukma, Kutru, Bhopalpatnam and Kotapalli-
491 Pamer zamindaris; these four zamindaris alone survive out of the seventeen or eighteen of old times. A great western road runs 134 miles from Jagdalpur through Gidam, Karli, Matawara, Bijapur and Bhopalpatnam to Timer on the Indrawati, opposite Patagudam in Chanda district, whence there is a forest road to Sironcha; branches south from Gidam and Karli run to Dantewara, with a further extension to Kameli at the foot of the Bailadila hills; north from Gidam to Barsur, and from Matawara to Kutru; and south from Bhopalpatnam to Tarlagudam on the Godavari and thence over the Latpatkandi pass into the Nugur and Albaka taluqs of Madras. A great southern road runs 114 miles from Jagdalpur to Sukma and Konta. A network of forest roads of recent construction links these roads together between Tirathgarh in Jagdalpur tahsil, Katakalian, Kuakonda and Dantewara, or southward from Kuakonda to the Kolab-Sabari at Misma on the Konta road, and to Konta via the Aranpur pass, Jaggergonda and Golapalli; while Bijapur is linked to Cherla and Jaggergonda to Dummagudam, both on the Godavari. With these and other

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of the inferiority complex palmed off his name Dor Koi or Lowland Koi on the ignorant Telugu as Dora Koi, and has proceeded to object to the name Koi and demand always the name Dora or Dorla, simultaneously impressing on the Telugu how superior he is to the Highlander.

I have verified these points by personal investigation supplemented by reliable information from assistants directed to make enquiries on specified lines. When the traveller descends the Aranpur pass, he finds the villagers at the foot of the pass in such villages as Gumadasaka, Bikrampalli, Kondasaoli, Kamargudem, Kodmair, Karrigudem, Bayampalli, Kundair, Ursangal, Durandarbha, Michiguda, Vadri, Silger, Mandimarka, Singaram, Tarlaguda Banjepalli and Durma inhabited by people indistinguishable from the Bison-horn Marias above the pass, or by Maria Lohars. The only difference is a noticeable Telugu influence on their Maria dialect. At Jaggergonda, six or seven miles beyond the foot of the pass, he meets the first Telugu-speaking non-Koitor village, and just beyond this comes to the first Dorla villages, Rajpenta, Achkat and Kamaram. Southwards in the country covered by the new Ordnance Survey one-inch maps, on sheet 65 F/3, Singaram in square B1, Puvarti, Junaguda and Rayagudem in A2, Chimili, Surpanguda, Kistaram and Morpalli in B2, all the villages in A3, and Tadmetla, the only village in B3, are Dorla villages. Generally speaking, all the riverain tracts of Bhopalpatnam zamindari, Bijapur tahsil, Kotapalli-Pamer zamindari and southern Konta tahsil are Dorla villages, though here and there will be found Gottor Koya, i.e. Bison-horn Maria villages in Konta Dorla country such as Tokanpalli, Burkapalli and Chintaguppa (in map 65 F/3, square C3).

These Dorla at census refused to call themselves Koya, and were not returned as such but as Gonds; and they are the principal element in the 19,426 professing tribal religion out of the 24,407 Bastaris returned as Gonds in the 1931 census. The 4,981 Hindu Gonds returned are mostly Dorlas from the Lingagiri *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam and the adjacent parts of Bijapur, who have become Lingayats, wearing a *rudraksha* bead in a silver box or a Shiva *lingam* slung on a thread.

It will be clear, therefore, that the 9,988 persons returned at the census as Koyas are not the Dorla or lowland Koyas returned as Koyas in the East Godavari Agency. They are the Bison-horn Marias living at the foot of the passes in Konta and Sukma and slightly influenced by Telugu contacts. Of the Koya dialect of Gondi returned in 1931 as spoken by 6,172 persons in Bastar, however, it is probable that it represents the speech of the Dorla

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

515 the streams for the sexes, and they never bathe together. But the Hill Maria does not know the use of soap; occasionally his women follow the practice of the plains women and scour their hair with a plaster of black earth well rinsed out later. His nails are generally long and very dirty. The infant and the toddler are occasionally washed with water from a gourd. Where there is no stream near or water is scarce, the daily ablutions are often [415] performed with water dipped from an earthen water-pot with a gourd ladle, called *paghas* by the Hill Marias and *orka* in the plains, made from a gourd shaped like a large European smoking pipe; the straight stem is hollow and holed at the end; the stem is held near the bowl between the chin and collar-bone or shoulder and water tilted down from the bowl on to the body by dropping the other shoulder, while the hands rub the limb thus wetted. Needless to say, ablutions thus performed are not very effective.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

CHAPTER VI

VILLAGES, HOUSES AND THEIR CONTENTS

A. Hill Maria Villages, Houses and their Contents

361 THE site of the Hill Maria village is in these days almost entirely determined by its convenience as a centre from which to cultivate the *penda* slopes of the year. Peace has reigned in the Abujhmar hills from time immemorial, and no question of defence arises when a village is built. A possible relic of former unsettled times [349] is the custom of building stone cairns and seats as look-outs at the head of passes or the summits of hills on the paths leading to villages; but these are convenient watching places for herdsmen when their cattle are grazing around the hill-tops, and serve also to mark the line of the paths which, in the rains, are overgrown with rank grass, or fall into disuse when villages or *penda* slopes 487 are abandoned for alternative sites. Certain well-defined tracks through the hills are cleared annually by the villagers; these often avoid the actual village sites, to which side tracks connect them. There are no carts in the hills, and therefore the tracks are only foot-paths, generally wide enough only for a party to walk in single file, though at the periodic clearings the grass is cut down to a width of two or three feet on each side of the path. The village 361 boundary is usually marked by a cairn of stones, in the centre of which may be planted a pole ornamented at the top with bunches of grass or peacock or jungle-cock feathers, the pole being further adorned by peeling off bands of bark at intervals throughout its length. The boundary itself is usually a stream, and the cairns of the two villages are usually twenty or thirty yards apart, so that [783] when the annual *pira-mansha* (called by the Bison-horn Marias *bog-burria* and by Halbi-speakers *boharani*) ceremony of ridding the village of disease takes place, the old winnowing-fans with the sweepings of each house can be hung up beyond the boundary on this no-man's-land without leaving them on the lands of the neighbouring village.

487 These paths cross streams by stepping-stones, by logs felled across the stream, by small raised embankments pierced by hollowed 491 tree trunk pipes for the passage of the water and revetted with horizontally laid logs, or by bridges consisting of a plank supported by bamboo wicker-work cylinders filled with boulders resting on

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the bed of the stream; these are held in position between upright poles set V-wise in the boulders, to which are fastened horizontal bamboo poles as railings. As they have no saws, the 'plank' is a tree trunk with one side trimmed flat with the axe. Even more elaborate bridges are sometimes made at high levels over streams liable to flood, from tree-fork to tree-fork on opposite banks.

Though, as has been said above, agricultural conditions nowadays determine village sites, hill-tops or rocky slopes remain favourite sites, and become commoner as you penetrate farther into the Abujhmar hills. The traditional arrangement is a street some twenty-five yards wide between parallel lines of long-houses; at one end of the street is the *gotul-lon* or village dormitory, generally within a rounded bamboo fence, and sometimes in front of this dormitory will be seen the *udam-garia* or seat of honour of the *kasyeq-gaita* and possibly also of the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*), as well as the stones on which the other village elders sit around with them in conclave; but the *udam-garia* custom is not found in all parts of the hills. Sometimes the shrine of the *Nar-Talughi* or Village Mother is actually inside the dormitory fencing, and she is often housed there for a while when a village is being shifted. There are, as a rule, no *bari* (vegetable gardens) attached to each house as amongst most Gonds, including the Bison-horn Marias and the Murias of Bastar; but sometimes the *kasyeq-gaita* has a small tobacco *bari* attached to the dormitory in the centre of the main street. The *Gazetteer* (p. 50) speaks of the 'common granary' as standing in the broad street; but with one partial exception, Nugur village in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, I have never seen this. The villagers generally construct a row of granaries (*manda* or *wijja-dodi*) on piles at the side or rear of the main village street, sometimes nearer the *penda* fields than the village; this row can hardly be called a 'common granary', as each villager has his own granary in the row for his own private food and seed store, the granaries being built together only for convenience, as they can then be watched at night by one watchman for the whole village, sleeping in a special hut at the side of the granaries or under a granary. At Nugur there were big matting bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored; but here the village had come under the economic thraldom of some Teli tradesmen, who for years had advanced rice to the cultivators. The bins were left in the collective charge of the headman and elders, and any villager could help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest he would replace it with 50 per cent. interest, the Teli owners being also free to remove the surplus from time to time.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

This traditional arrangement of the Hill Maria villages is far from being always observed. I have seen a village constructed in this way on one of its traditional sites (*pagh* or *pagha'i*; Murias say *pare*, while Bison-horn Marias generally use the Halbi word *padar*), and then four years later found it reconstructed on one of the alternative sites with little sign of the traditional grouping; and I have also seen the converse occur. In fact, the configuration of the site may make the traditional arrangement difficult. It is also being gradually abandoned in the villages on the edges of the hills into which the individualism of surrounding plains villages is creeping, and in the few villages such as Orcha and Hikul which have good permanent rice cultivation; in the latter villages there is a growing tendency not to shift the sites when the surrounding *penda* slopes are exhausted, but to cultivate even remote slopes from the village site in the vicinity of the permanent rice fields. As the old feeling of village community weakens, houses are no longer built as long-houses, each containing groups of three or four houses occupied by brothers or near paternal cousins, but are built detached, each with its own granary close to it, instead of the householder having one compartment in the long granary row; even then, however, the detached houses tend to group themselves roughly into lines flanking a central open space, at one end of which is the village dormitory (*gotul-lon*), in its usual position. Even when a village site is becoming permanent, as at Orcha and Hikul, any sudden calamity, such as crop failure, epidemic or epizootic, will probably induce the villagers to shift. In several villages the *kasyeq-gaita* always keeps a hen sitting on eggs inside his house, and the addling of an undue proportion of these is frequently a signal for the shifting of the village; but a wise *gaita* does not let his eggs get addled unless there is really sound economic or religious reason for shifting, when the omens can be made to suit the occasion.

Behind each line of houses will be found rows of pig-sties, at least one for each house; and the pigs often seem better housed than their masters. Where, as around Orcha, sal (*Shorea robusta*) or other timber is plentiful, the pig-sties are generally made of sections of tree trunk or large boughs laid horizontally between vertical stays, with an opening in front which can be closed by dropping vertical posts over it between horizontal stays at the top and bottom of the opening. These sties are sheltered from the sun by grass-thatched roofs sloping back from two or more vertical posts about 6 feet high to similar posts about 4 feet high in the rear. Dug-out troughs of sal wood are kept outside or just inside the sties for water and food for the pigs; the commonest food is a mash made from the chaff or husks of *kosra* (*kutki*; *Panicum miliaceum*) and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 231 other minor grains. Where timber is not available, these sties are made from bamboos, or even from stones. Similar but, of course, far smaller structures are made to serve as hen-coops, resting generally against the side or front of the houses.

778 361 [824] The shrine of the Village Mother, as has been stated above, is sometimes actually inside the village dormitory, sometimes just outside it, and sometimes at a considerable distance from the actual village, in a grove, if possible of *saja* (*Terminalia tomentosa*—everywhere the sacred tree of the Gond) trees. Sometimes there is also in the village, often at the end of the street opposite the dormitory, the hut-temple of the *pen* or clan-god, containing the log-frame image of the god. This will normally be found only in the village of the *pen-wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god; but sometimes, where the villages of the clan are far apart, there may be two copies of the clan-god, or the god may go to visit other villages, and have a resting-shed in each; or he may have begotten a son to deputize for him in the distant village; I have seen in a *pen-rawar* (clan-god's temple) both the *pen* himself and an embryo 'son' in the second of his three years' 'gestation'. The *pen* is always covered by a shed; but the Village Mother sometimes is just a cairn or a basket-cylinder filled with stones, or a low table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree, and close by there is a small shed of grass thatch with open sides in which are kept the cooking pots, ladles and sacrificial knife used at ceremonial feasts. The sacred grove may in very rare cases, in villages near the edge of the lowlands, have also a hut-temple of Danteshwari Mai or Maolai, the most revered or feared Hindu deities of Bastar.

343 841 There will be found well apart from the houses and the rest of the village a menstruation hut in many villages, known as *pedawo'-gha'i* to the Hill Marias, or sometimes as *dola-lon*. Here all menstruating women are secluded from the village for a week every month. Sometimes the hut has a single room, about 6 by 5 feet, with walls 3 feet high, with no windows and only a small door little bigger than the entrance to an English kennel; sometimes there are two rooms separated from each other by a partition, so that when a girl is afraid of being secluded by herself a duenna may sleep within sound of her without actual contact. The door of the seclusion room always opens away from the village, so that the affected woman may get out at night to answer the call of nature without overlooking the village or being visible to any villager. Special cooking pots and utensils are kept in the seclusion room, or else the woman's food is cooked outside and left by her door for her. [789 824] The roof is often covered with seed-bearing twigs of castor-oil plants, in all parts of India regarded as very efficacious against magic.

[text continues on p. 106]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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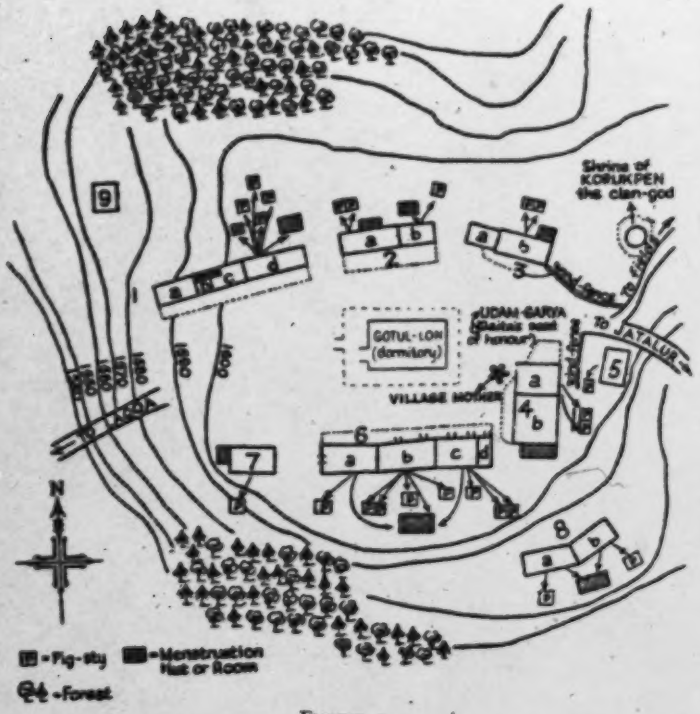

FIGURE 3

MAP OF KARANGAL VILLAGE OF THE PARLLO HILL MARIA CLAN, as occupied in February 1930. (Contours approximate.)

House-group 1 (*a*) Empty; built for Deda HUNGA, when serving for MURRA's niece; since marrying her, lives in KURMER. (*b*) P. BAIYYA's mother. (*c*) P. BAIYYA, wife and son. (*d*) P. MURRA, brother of BAIYYA, his wife, his son P. BANDE, wife and daughter.

2. (*a*) P. DOGA and wife. (*b*) P. KUTTA, wife, son. DOGA and KUTTA are elder and younger brothers, but separate in cultivation.
3. (*a*) Empty, since death of P. MURRA's elder brother's widow. (*b*) P. MURRA and wife.
4. (*a*) P. BAIYYA, kasveq-gaita, and wife. (*b*) his son P. GURSA, wife and son.
5. Ruined house of P. KUTTO, who had left village.
6. (*a*) P. MURKA and wife. (*b*) P. KUTA, 2 wives, 1 son. (*c*) P. KEYE, wife and 2 sons. (*d*) KEYE's mother. KUTA, MURKA and KEYE regard themselves as brothers, KUTA being the eldest; they are paternal third cousins. Their fields and pigs are separate, but menstruation hut common.
7. P. PANDA, wife, 1 son, 2 daughters, widowed mother.
8. (*a*) P. HEODA, wife and son. (*b*) P. MASA (his wife had eloped). HEODA is the elder, MASA the younger brother.
9. The house of a Rawat (herdsman), well apart from Maria houses.

The wind-fence is a stockade of thick poles.
The dotted lines are bamboo wickerwork fences.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 But in many villages instead of a communal *pedawo'gha'i* there is a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the 841 residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *pedawo'gha'i* room known generally as *hala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely [784] *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *hala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

485 There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable attached.

361 The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria [351] village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The [178] Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *kasyeq-gaita's* house, near the latter's *udam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-rawar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parllo clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal 361 the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who 621 was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street; [194]

[1] Or *ala*; the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

and every Maria house was occupied by members of the Parllo clan, the only partial exception being the empty house (no. 1-a) which had till recently been occupied by a youth of the Deda clan, which may intermarry with the Parllo clan, serving as *lamana'i* to win the niece of Parllo Murra, occupant of house no. 1-d. It will be observed that some long-houses have a joint menstruation hut at the rear of the house, while in some there is a separate *kala* for each house in the long-house. The *kasyaq-gaita's* house is at the dormitory end of the street, a very usual position.

The shifting of villages

It has already been implied that though a village site may be abandoned for superstitious reasons, the predominant reason is economic, the exhaustion of the *penda* slopes that can be conveniently cultivated from the existing village. If three or more *kaghai* (*penda* sites) can be dealt with from one *paghai* or village site, then the village may remain on that site for seven or eight years, even though there are other *paghai* in the other *penda* sites cultivated from it; or if any portion of the last *penda* site to be cultivated is very remote from it, then a few houses may be shifted there. What makes the old topographical survey maps so useless for finding a modern village is that they mark only the village site occupied in the sixties, generally, too, by the particular name of that site, not by the general name of the village. The big village of Orcha, for example, is not marked as such, but by the name of its *paghai* Hoinar. A reference to the sketch map of the parish (to use a term more suitable than 'village') of Handawada in Dantewara Mar (opposite p. 108) will make the position clear. The parish has ten alternative *kaghai* cultivation sites, viz.:—

1. Kawar *kaghai*, 1st half.
2. Ditto, 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta *kaghai*.
4. Hitangpal *kaghai*.
5. Kurmelnar *kaghai*.
6. Rekarai *kaghai*.
7. Handawada *kaghai*, 1st half.
8. Ditto, 2nd half.
9. Ahekele *kaghai*, 1st half.
10. Ditto, 2nd half.

Of these, nos. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 only contained *paghai* village sites. In February 1930 the main village was still settled in no. 9, but the *penda* slopes in nos. 9 and 10 had been exhausted, and those in no. 1 had been partly cultivated for the first year and were being reaped. Nos. 9 and 10 had lasted for six years and, though the villagers had started to cultivate no. 1 a long way below the village site in no. 9 and on the other side of the Goinder river, they were only then at harvest time starting to shift the village to the *paghai* in no. 2; in fact, the labour of the first year's work of clearing and cultivating a fresh *penda* slope is so heavy that the shifting of the village itself is, when necessitated by the distance of the existing site

[text continues on p. 109]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

361
241
621
427

Key to Figure 6

Kaghai Names (see p. 107).

1. Kawar, 1st half.
2. Do., 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta.
4. Hitangpal.
5. Kurmelnar.
6. Rekarai.
7. Handawada, 1st half.
8. Do., 2nd half.
9. Ahekele, 1st half.
10. Do., 2nd half.

The letters against fields in nos. 2 and 3 and houses and granaries in nos. 1, 3, 9 and 10 refer to the tenants in the list below. Tenants A to N are Gume by clan, O to Q, Tamo.

(*Abbreviations.*—M = mother, W = wife, S = grown-up son, b = boy child, g = girl child, D = marriageable daughter.)

Letter	*Tenant*	*Family*	*Area in acres*	*Rent* Rs. a.
A	Modi s/o Malla	M., cousin's widow	5·00	2 4
B	Lalu s/o Banda, Bhum-gaita	W., 1 b.	4·50	1 12
C	Banda s/o Bursai	W., 2 g.	6·25	3 8
D	Horra s/o Musra	W., 1 g.	3·50	2 4
E	Masa s/o Kule, gaita	W., 1 S., 1 g.	7·50	4 12
F	Pido s/o Doga	W., 1 b.	3·50	2 0
G	Irpa s/o Karanje	W.	1·50	1 8
H	Rama s/o Peda Junga s/o Rama	W., 1 S., 2 g.	4·50	2 4 1 8
I	Kohla s/o Pahandi	W., 1 D., 1 man serving to win daughter's hand	4·00	1 8
J	Doga s/o Wijja	W., 1 b., 1 g.	4·00	1 12
K	Kuma s/o Boda	W., 1 g.	4·50	1 4
L	Juga s/o Wijja	M.	1·50	2 0
M	Malla s/o Gorra, Kasyeq-gaita	W., 1 S., 1 b., 1 g.	5·50	2 4
N	Pahandi s/o Karanje	W., M.	2·50	2 12
O	Hara s/o Pandu	W.	3·00	2 4
P	Bandi s/o Kuli	W., M., 2 b.	5·00	2 12
Q	Musra s/o Pandu	W.	2·25	2 4
		Total Acres	68·50	Rs. 40 12
	There was also in Ahekele Kaghai no. 9 a house shared by a Rawat and a Telugu with a small tobacco plot paying 4 annas rent			4
				Rs. 41 0

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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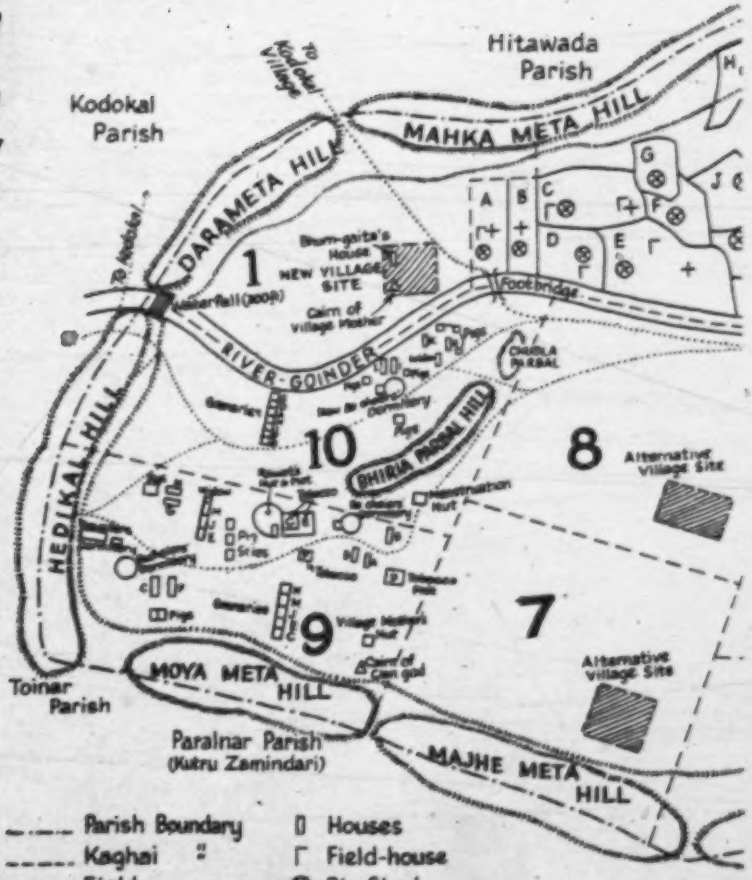

The buildings etc. in Kaghai Nos 9 & 10 are of course drawn too large in comparison to the areas of the Fields in Nos 2 & 3; actually they left ample room for fields in Nos 9 & 10, but had become more scattered when those fields became exhausted

FIGURE 6
PARISH MAP OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(A)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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427

FIGURE 6
OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from the fresh cultivation site, postponed till after the first harvest has been raised on the latter. This is inconvenient only to the women, as from the time when the new *kosra* comes into ear till the harvest is over all the men sleep apart from their wives in their fields, while their womenfolk have to sleep in the village, it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to have sexual intercourse during this period. As it was inconvenient for the bachelors to sleep in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) on the hill-top village in Ahekele *paghai*, a temporary dormitory had been made near the river, actually in Ahekele *haghai* no. 10, but close to the bridge by which the villagers crossed the river to their *penda* fields in Kawar *haghai*; and there were also four houses there, and a row of granaries, that site having been more convenient for some of the villagers whose fields had been on the lower slopes of *haghai* no. 10 when that was being cultivated. Handawada is a village of the Gume clan; and all the houses in the village on Ahekele *paghai*, those by the river in *haghai* no. 10, and the one advance-guard house in Kawar *paghai*, as well as all the *penda* fields in Kawar *haghai* no. 1, belonged to members of the Gume clan: but in the small Irpmeta *haghai* no. 3 three families of the Tamo clan, with which the Gume clan may intermarry, had been allowed to have *penda* cultivation and to build houses and granaries; the wives had all been Gume girls. In the new village site, Kawar *paghai*, one villager had already built his house, to which I referred above as the advance-guard house, because he had been sent to make an experimental *penda* field in Kawar *haghai* no. 1 a year in advance of the rest of the villagers, in accordance with custom; on the success of this experimental cultivation depends the villagers' decision whether to migrate *en masse* in the following year. There was also a newly made cairn close by where a ceremony in honour of the Village Mother had been performed as an essential preliminary to the shifting of the village. When I next camped in the parish in March 1934, the villagers had for three years occupied Kawar *paghai*, and the houses were dirty and smoke-blackened; the villagers had found the site feverish and unhealthy owing to its proximity to the river, there had been several deaths, and Kawar *haghai* nos. 1 and 2 had each been exhausted in two years. Their Tamo relatives had exhausted Irpmeta *haghai* and left the parish. The *Bhum-gaita* and another villager had been sent ahead to make experimental *penda* plots in Hitangpal *haghai* (no. 4), and the villagers proposed to shift the village during 1935 to the village site in that *haghai* or the adjacent Kurmelnar *haghai* (no. 5); the experiments in Hitangpal had succeeded, and the villagers were to start their *penda* felling in a few days.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

166 When shifting is to begin, all the parish lands being lands of
• 361 the clan, the *wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god is usually consulted;
787 he is generally himself the *laski* or medium whom the god possesses,
791 and if the god through him directs that the village should be shifted,
778 he leads the villagers to the new site; sometimes the *wadda'i* himself is not a medium, but keeps a *laski* as an assistant. At the new site the *kasyeq-gaita* clears a small patch of ground in honour of the Village Mother, and on this offers an egg, some grain and flowers in her name, over which he places stones in a basketry cylinder or as a cairn. This will remain as her shrine in the new village, sometimes, as we have seen, inside the dormitory fencing, sometimes outside it but in the main village street, or sometimes right outside the village in a grove, a shed being erected over it. The removal of the cairn would be an omen of disaster, only to be avoided by shifting the village. The Orcha villagers had only a small table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree in a grove to mark their Village Mother. Handawada, besides a cairn, had a forked stick of *saja* wood oiled and polished, and whipped round the fork with *kasa* silk whipping, with a leaning thatched roof to protect her from the elements. Whatever form her shrine or representation may take, it is left behind when the village is deserted, and not shifted to the new village; for it is regarded as valuable evidence of the clan or parish property in the land. The only things removed are the pots in which grain, etc., is cooked at the Mother's feasts, the cooking utensils and the knives, which the *kasyeq-gaita* or [184] religious headman must himself carry under his arm, *not* on his head, which is taboo, to the shed erected to house them near the Mother's shrine in the new village.

361 In the villages which I have seen being shifted, the earliest
166 buildings to be erected have been the village dormitory, the houses of the 'advance guard', the religious and the secular headmen, and the menstruation hut. Villagers often put up their pig-sties before their own houses. A temporary dormitory is often put up to house the bachelors, and replaced after the houses have been built by a more permanent and elaborate structure.

The villagers remove all their utensils and household goods from their old to their new houses when the village is shifted. But they move no building materials; they leave the deserted houses to the mercy of the elements, which means that they are soon choked in the mass of high grass and scrub jungle that immediately springs up on the deserted site, and probably burnt down when the forest undergrowth is fired in the following spring.

[text continues on p. 112]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 the wefts are of split bamboo. The corners of the walls are further secured by cords stitched through the two wicker walls round the corner warp and the corner pile. Wherever beams cross, they are [283] lashed with *siari* twine or thicker rope. The door of a single granary is usually a sliding piece of bamboo wicker-work; but in the long granaries it is a section of *tum* grass fence or bamboo wicker-work fastened in position by obliquely crossing bamboos.

251 These granaries contain immense quantities of *kosra* and other hill grains, rice, beans, dried forest fruits, etc., in big bins of bamboo basketry, smaller baskets, and large *chiptis* or lidded boxes of leaves on a framework of cane or twigs. The bins are all lidded with stitched-leaf tops, tied round the rim with creeper cord, like the paper top of an English jam-jar. The Marias store here also dried rolls of tobacco leaves, coils of creeper and other ropes, and gourds of all shapes and sizes for making spoons, ladles and water-bottles; and when they used *moghi* dancing shields and peacock plumes attached to them they used to hang them under the eaves except when they wrapped them in leaves and hung them in the tops of trees.

342 513 The village dormitory, as has been said above, is generally in the centre and at one end of the village street. It is a long-house made with no partitions, surrounded generally with a bamboo wattle-work fence; and it is practically a roofed *alpanji* or sleeping platform, the criss-cross bamboo framework of which covers almost the whole floor at a height of about 2½ feet above the floor. Often it is entered from in front by a door under the highest point of the eaves, to which access is gained by a narrow horizontal gangway of logs raised the same height above the ground as the sleeping platform and extending from the outer fence to the door; persons entering the dormitory climb on to the gangway by a rough stile, consisting of a tree stump set in the ground between two vertical posts which serve as railings. [374] The interior is badly grimed with smoke, as log fires are lit at night under the sleeping platform, the only door is fastened, and there is no window or vent for the escape of smoke. I have never found anything inside a dormitory except two or three drums and occasionally the shrine of the Village Mother.

The 'gotul-lon'

B. Bison-horn Maria Villages, Houses, and their Contents

• 361 Of Hill Maria villages the essential thing to remember is that they shift as the cultivation shifts, and so seldom remain more than four or five years in one place. The few villages that have good permanent rice fields tend now to become more or less permanent.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XI

482
142
291
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415

HILL MARIA WOMEN CARRYING GOURDS OF WATER

HILL MARIA WOMAN CARRYING A LEAF-BOX OF GRAIN

(Photographs by Baron E. von Eichstedt)

361 ●
342

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE STREET, TELAM, NEAR KATAKALIAN

[FACING p. 118]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 [423] The population is comparatively small, and the land available for the shifting *penda* cultivation is very extensive. There is practically no individual property in *penda* land, and it is recognized only in permanent rice fields.

361 241 178 621 In comparison, the Bison-horn Maria country is thickly populated; there is far more permanent rice cultivation; much old *penda* land has lost its forest growth, or is getting steadily slower in recuperating it after each time when it is felled and burnt for *penda* cultivation; and each villager likes to have a large *bari* or garden enclosure at the back of his house or in the immediate neighbourhood of the village where he can grow tobacco, maize, chillies, tomatoes and sesamum, and can pen his cattle for the sake of their manure. In consequence, economic considerations now operate in favour of the permanency of Bison-horn Maria villages and against their being shifted; as the pressure on the land has become greater the alternative sites (*padar*), to which in past generations a village was from time to time shifted, have been permanently occupied by hamlets (*para*) of that village, and the settlers in the hamlets have permanently occupied the adjacent *penda* sites once cultivated in rotation by the shifting village. Many big Bison-horn villages have six or seven hamlets, some of which are virtually separate villages, and are beginning to assert a separate identity by having their own headmen and sometimes their own village priests, though on formal occasions all will still gather together at the original *padar* of the village and its hamlets, and acknowledge there the authority of the headman and priest of the parent village. In the Abujhmar hills, moreover, each village is still inhabited almost entirely by members of one clan, and all the lands of the villages are regarded as the lands of the clan. But in the Bison-horn country, though each parish is still said to be the *bhum* (earth) of the clan which first settled there, yet there are generally in the village many houses of other clans and wife-clans, from whom the first settlers and their descendants have taken wives. Though they will still say that a certain village is the *bhum* [423] of the clan that founded it, yet in consequence of the many representatives of other clans settled there now the village and its lands are not looked on as that clan's property in anything like the same degree as among the Hill Marias, nor in actual fact is the original clan so free to shift the village as it was before it allowed its wife-clans to share its village site and cultivable lands. Often, too, the headman is no longer a member of the settler clan. If, [166] therefore, a Bison-horn village does shift in these days, the move is probably due to superstitious motives, or to epidemic or epizootic disease.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is 364 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the 177 greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-
361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page 121) must have their *bari* opposite them across the street. Each [351] *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many [231] pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among
841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Piki-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

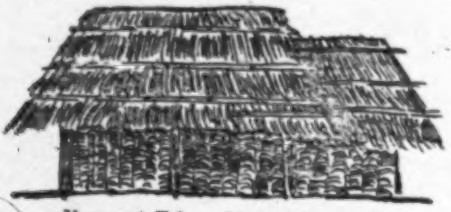
1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

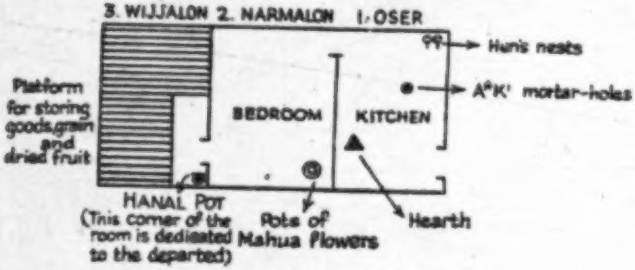
PLATE XII

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE AND HOUSE

342

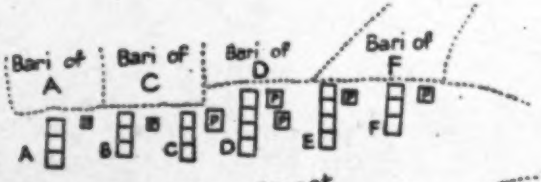


House at Telam, May 11th, 1930.

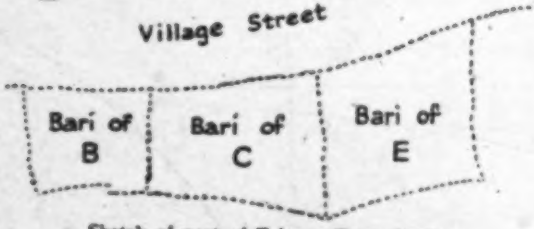


Rough ground-plan of house.

361



Village Street



Sketch of part of Telam village street.

KEY

P - Pig-sty

H - House

----- - Bamboo wattlework fence

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

343 841 that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut 342 for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *pedas* (headmen) and *permas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

● 361 Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in [487] the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these 443 are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias [492] have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. [491] They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

361 787 166 The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

Shifting villages

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

Houses

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Telam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

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Muria

CHAPTER TWO

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

I. The Muria Village

BEFORE approaching the main subject of this book, it is necessary to see how the chelik and motiari live at home. In a sense, there is no such thing as a typical Muria village any more than there is a typical Muria house. But most of the villages conform to the Gond pattern: they are set among trees—the Muria seem fonder of shade than wind and do not often choose the hill-tops beloved of the Maria and Baiga—and each house is enclosed within a separate fence that also surrounds its garden. There is thus a sharp distinction between a Muria and a Hill Maria village: the latter, like the Baiga village, consists of a row of houses joined together and opening on to a common street. Traces of this survive among the Muria in the enclosures of some of their leading men; at Markabera, for example, the headman's house is like a little village, a long enclosure with a small street on to which face many dwelling-places and granaries. In Palli-Barkot, and other western villages also, groups of related families build their houses to open round a square.

But generally the houses are scattered about, sometimes widely scattered, to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens, and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul are ever in a special or recognized position.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small courtyard, are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs. As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the east of Kondagaon the verandah of the main house is often deeper than the room inside. Where houses are built like this, there is no need for special menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar, where there is no room to seclude a woman on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and cleanness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of Mother Earth, and a love of animals. The pigsties are substantial, often with a double roof; the cattle-sheds are sometimes raised on pillars; sitting hens are given comfortable nests raised well above the ground. The houses themselves are cosy and homely, crammed with every sort of basket, leaf-bundle and utensil. Fish-traps, drums, wooden clogs hang from the roof, and flutes and bows and arrows are stuck under the thatch. Inside, in an inner room, is kept the mysterious Pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and placated.

These houses are the work-rooms of the chelik and motiari; they are the homes only of the married. The life and interest of chelik and motiari centre in the ghotul. But life there is definitely regarded as a preparation and training for the home. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

Most of the Muria are undoubtedly very poor. I was one day discussing with W. V. Grigson, who had visited Mandla after several years in Bastar, whether the Bastar villagers were poorer than those in the Central Provinces. I suggested—and he agreed—that probably the Bastar villagers were actually poorer, but that their lives were so much richer that they seemed far more

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

883 X 342

of several hamlets, there will probably be a large ghotul in the main village (where officials usually halt) and small ones in the hamlets.

In all such villages there is a separate building in the middle of the village for officials. In Masora, for example, there was a large Thana-gudi inside the village, and away on the outskirts, among trees, is a small hut with a fenced compound in front. This is the home of the chelik and motiari. In Baniagaon, a predominantly Hindu village with a school, the ghotul is similarly separated from the officials' halting-place, and is a single building with a small door facing away from the village towards the forest. In Kachora, near by, you may see the same type of ghotul, even further removed from the ordinary dwelling-places of the village, beyond the shrine of the Village Mother, perhaps because an aggressive Brahmin lives there and tries to dominate the Muria. I obviously cannot give a list of all such villages, though there are not very many of them. In the Chalka Pargana, I think of Kajen, Naria and Maranar as places where the Thana-gudi was separate from the ghotul. In such villages there is sometimes not even a fence to isolate the compound; that is not necessary, forest and field keep the children separate from the world. But in all there is a small secret door, a hatch which you have to bend down to and climb over—not unlike the door by which Alice entered Wonderland.

883 X 342

But, as I have said, in the majority of Muria villages the Thana-gudi is combined with the Koitur-ghotul, and this influences both its plan and its location. Officials will not want to camp outside the village in the jungle; they will need a hut for their horses, and accommodation for servants. And so we get the large ghotul with its spacious compound, standing in the very heart of the village, which is familiar to every touring officer in the north of Bastar. This arrangement is unsatisfactory and was never contemplated by the Administration. Into the very heart of Muria life is injected the all-too-often poisonous contact of every casual wanderer. There is a type of touring subordinate who makes a point of halting in ghotul where it is known that there are pretty motiari and pesters the chelik to pimp for them—which to their honour, be it said, they never do. Contractors for myrabolams or tendu leaves camp for days in the ghotul, making it impossible for the boys and girls to live their normal lives. I once found an opium-seller permanently established in a ghotul with his wife, thus outraging the fundamental Muria rule that the presence of a married woman there is an offence to Lingo Pen. He was removed at once by the Administrator, but Bastar is a big place and it is impossible to say in how many other places the integrity of the ghotul is thus destroyed. This is, of course, the Muria's own fault. It is due to the slackness and selfishness of the older men who want the youngsters to do all the work. It is thus difficult to do anything about it.

Let us examine some of the villages which have ghotul of this type. Often, so long as there are no visitors, the enlarged ghotul is all to the advantage of the boys and girls. In Markabera, for example, chelik and motiari have in all five different sleeping-places and a spacious compound. The house with the very deep verandah is, of course, the original ghotul and the other buildings have developed from it to meet the pressure of outside visitations. But the extra room thus provided and the open sheds available as dormitories are a boon to the children's health. The one-room ghotul with its tiny door and no windows and its crowded floor, its stuffy smoky atmosphere, cannot be good for anyone.

Fortunately—from this point of view—the larger type of ghotul is far the most common. This model with its central house with deep verandah, spacious inner room, large door, open hut for conference or sleep in the hot

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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APPENDIX ONE

CLASSIFIED LIST OF GHOTUL VILLAGES

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162

This Appendix gives a fairly complete list of ghotul-villages, so far as I was able to discover them during the Census operations of 1940-1; the figures in the third and fourth columns are those for chelik and motiari at that date. They were obtained through the revenue officials and in all the marked villages were carefully checked by members of my party. I cannot guarantee the accuracy of the figures in the unmarked villages.

In order that the reader can see the extent of my inquiries, and the amount of research achieved or unavoidably omitted in any area, I have added to the list of ghotul the following information:

*** means that I myself have visited the ghotul or that I am intimately acquainted with its members. Two or more of my colleagues also have visited the place, and all information has been carefully checked. Those ghotul that I know better than others have their names printed in large type. The initials S.H. stand for Mr Shamrao Hivale.

** means that the village has been visited by two or more members of my party, and that I have reasonably full and confirmed knowledge of the ghotul and its affairs.

* means that the village has been visited by members of the party, but that I have only general information about it.

The letter 'J' in the second column means that the ghotul is of the older *jodidār* type; the letters 'AB' mean that it is of the *adal-badal* type where partners are changed.

Any future investigator should not rely too much on these notes. A ghotul which was large and flourishing in 1941 may have entirely changed its character by 1947. Boys and girls grow up and make a once dull ghotul interesting: others marry and deprive a formerly lively ghotul of its most prominent members.

The Kondagaon Tahsil

Amrawati Pargana

A pargana to the extreme east of Kondagaon, lying in and round the Makri Reserved Forest. There are not many Muria villages and most of them are under Oriya or Bhattra influence.

Darli ..	..	9	7
* Gudsara ..	AB	10	8
Gumri ..	..	7	7

Aonri Pargana

This pargana comprises villages scattered over the northern plateau to the east of the Keskal and Kongur Parganas. The ghotul are said to be of the *adal-badal* type, and the chelik dance the Mahua Dandar and not the Pus Kolang. Marriages are celebrated in the bride's house.

Aonri ..	..	18	15
Charbera ..	..	10	8
Harwakodo	..	7	4
Khetarpal	..	13	12
Kongera ..	..	8	6
Kosmi ..	..	10	9
Nawagarh	..	20	15
Nayanar ..	..	12	10

X883
●361
162

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Nirachhindli ..	..	15	11
Palora ..	..	9	9
Sawala ..	..	16	15
Sonpur ..	..	8	7

Bamni Pargana

A small pargana south-west of Kondagaon town, in the neighbourhood of the Golawand Reserved Forest.

*** Bamni ..	J	30	22	
* Borgaon ..	AB	8	7	
* Dhansuli ..	AB	9	9	
* Totar ..	AB	10	9	

Bangoli Pargana

The Bangoli Pargana consists of a few villages in the west-central area, adjoining the Narayanpur Tahsil. Chelik and motiari dress in almost Jhoria fashion.

** Banchapai	AB	10	9	
** Bangoli ..	AB	10	8	
*** CHIMRI ..	J	15	14	Camped here 21-3-41. Many small *kotokal* stones.
** Chiyanar ..	AB	10	9	
** Kehalakot ..	AB	11	10	Met and talked with several boys in 1941.
** Morenga ..	J	18	14	

Chalha Pargana

This is one of the Jhoria Parganas, and its villages are friendly and attractive. It lies to the west of the tahsil, parallel to the Narayanpur-Chota Dongar road, which is only five miles away across low hills. The river Baordig runs through the pargana.

*** ADNAR ..	AB	14	12	An important religious centre. Camped here on 31-3-41 for festival described at pp. 218ff.
*** Alwar Jogi	AB	5	4	Camped here 30-3-41.
* Alwar Karati	J	7	5	
* Banagaon ..	AB	7	8	
* Barko ..	AB	8	8	
* Bawri ..	J	7	5	
*** BAYANAR ..	J	18	16	A pretty village under a hill, whereon are many shrines. Camped here in March, 1941.
** Cherang ..	J	10	9	
* Chichdong ..	AB	12	11	
* Junganiban	AB	15	12	
*** KEJANG ..	AB	15	13	Very charming and interesting boys of whom I saw a lot at Bayanar and Telanga.
* Kongera ..	AB	8	7	
* Korobera ..	J	7	7	
* Maragaon ..	AB	10	10	
** Mungwal ..	AB	12	9	
*** NARIVA ..	AB	14	12	An interesting ghotul with friendly boys. Visited 22-3-41.
* Nugali ..	AB	9	7	
* Pala ..	AB	12	12	

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Muria

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162

APPENDIX ONE

*** TEMRUGAON	J	13	14	On the banks of the Baordig. Camped 22–24-3-41.
*** Telanga ..	J	12	11	Visited 27-3-41. Saw a wedding and incident described on p. 521.
* Toram ..	J	9	7	

Hatiya Pargana

This pargana, whose name implies a 'bazaar' or civilized area, is a very large and scattered one, extending over the whole area north of Kondagaon. It includes Dongrigura only four miles from Kondagaon, and Sidhawand forty miles to the north. Generally the Pus Kolang and Diwali dances are not performed; marriages are at the bride's house; and the megalithic culture has practically disappeared.

*** ALOR ..	AB	72	58	Magnificent ghotul and dancing. S.H. visited on 17-4-41 and V.E. on 15-11-41. Pillar to Lingo Pen.
Arandi ..	..	20	24	
Baijanpuri	..	13	14	
Bail ..	..	10	10	
*** Bara Dongar	AB	7	6	Beautiful village with Hindu temples. Bazaar and school. Small Muria hamlet with ghotul. Visited in 1937 and several times afterwards.
* Barbatar ..	AB	15	12	
Bayalpur ..	..	7	6	
* Belgaon ..	AB	8	7	
*** BERMA ..	J	23	17	Friendship begun on 12-11-40, other contacts on 3-7-3-41 and 1-3-12-41. Admirable headman and friendly children.
* Bhandarwandi	AB	13	12	
** Bhiragaon	J	10	10	
* Bhumka ..	AB	11	9	
*** Bisrampuri	AB	79	57	Visited on 7-11-40.
** Chandagaon	AB	10	11	
Chhindli ..	..	23	12	
Chichari ..	..	8	9	
* Chilputi ..	AB	23	22	
* Dariya ..	AB	5	6	
Deodongar	..	16	14	
Deoharduli	..	9	8	
* Deokhargaon	AB	9	11	
Dondra ..	..	10	8	
*** DONGRIGURA	AB	17	16	Camped here with B. S. Guha 22-2-41. Guha took measurements of Muria here and in neighbouring villages.
Gare ..	..	16	14	
Guhaborand	..	9	8	
Halda ..	..	7	7	
Hatma ..	..	9	8	
Honawandi	..	9	6	
Jorekera ..	..	11	10	
Kalgaon ..	..	8	8	
** Karagaon ..	J	13	14	
* Karmari ..	AB	8	4	
Khajrawand	..	14	17	
Khalari ..	..	12	18	
* Khargaon	AB	21	15	
Kibra ..	..	8	8	

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Muria

X883
361
162

**	Kohkametta	J	9	7	
***	KOKORI ..	AB	15	14	Camped here 22-31-12-41. A good headman, but ghotul disturbed as result of scandal the previous year. Good boys' dancing.
*	Korabargaon	J	6	7	
	Kosahaduli	..	12	13	
	Kumarbargaon	..	11	6	
	Machhli ..	..	5	8	
***	MAGHEDA ..	AB	20	15	Delightful village near the Jeypore border. Visited 30-12-41.
*	Manjhiborand	AB	13	11	
	Manjhichera	..	21	19	
	Masukokori	..	15	8	
	Nalajhar ..	..	6	7	
	Narna ..	..	8	5	
***	PALARI ..	J	26	23	Visited on 26-2-42 with B. S. Guha. Very friendly ghotul.
	Parond ..	..	14	15	
	Patla ..	..	8	5	
***	Pendrawand	AB	10	9	Visited 6-11-40.
	Pitechuwa..	..	7	5	
*	Pusapal ..	AB	8	6	
***	SIDHAWAND	AB	20	14	Visited 3-7-11-40 and 3-7-3 41 for a wedding. Many other contacts with chelik.
	Siwnipal ..	..	10	8	
*	Taragaon ..	J	9	8	
	Tewsa ..	..	8	10	
**	Themgaon..	AB	10	8	
	Toskopal ..	..	27	18	
***	ULERA ..	AB	21	16	Pretty village, visited 26-12-41, with excellent headman and large ghotul. Near Jeypore border. Falconry and fairly good dancing.
	Undri ..	..	11	6	
	Yeranga ..	..	27	30	

Keskal Pargana

The Keskal Pargana is fairly homogeneous, in the north-west corner of the tahsil. Much of it is composed of the hills known as the Mari Hills on the edge of the plateau overlooking Kanker State. As always where external influence is strong the Muria here are suspicious and unfriendly. The chelik dance the Pus Kolang, know the legend of Lingo, but marriages are in the bride's house, and memorial menhirs are not erected.

***	Amgaon ..	J	20	15	Visited 7-11-40. Good dancing and games.
	Amaguhan	..	5	7	
	Badra ..	..	6	6	
*	Batrali ..	AB	11	12	
	Chikladih ..	..	8	9	
	Harwel ..	..	12	10	
	Jamgaon ..	..	6	6	
	Khale Chandeli	..	15	12	
	Kodobhat	..	8	7	
	Kudalwahi	..	9	5	
	Manikpur ..	..	12	13	
	Matenga ..	..	16	12	

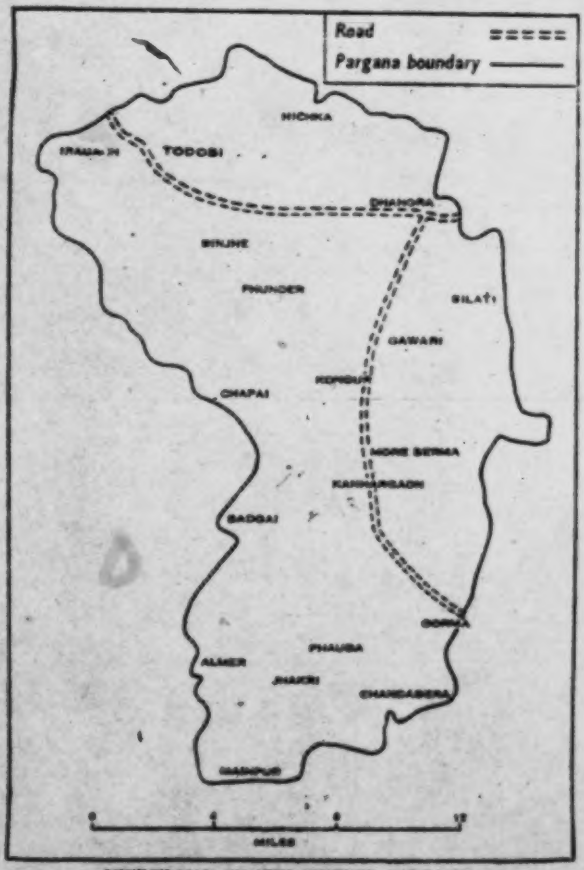
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX ONE

** Mohpal	..	AB	10	9
* Salebhat	..	AB	12	9
* Sargipal	..	AB	7	8
Umradah	..	..	7	3
Uparmurmend		..	11	9

Kongur Pargana

This delightful pargana contains some of the most characteristic ghotul in the State. It lies between Bara Dongar to the east and the Bara Jhorian, Kolur, Baragaon and Benur Parganas to the west. As you move across it you leave



SKETCH-MAP OF THE KONGUR PARGANA

typical Kondagaon villages where the Chait Dandar is danced and the boys have little decoration, and come to as typical Jhoria villages, where the Lingo legend

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X383
361
162

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

is known, the Pus Kolang and Diwali are danced, marriages are celebrated in the bridegroom's house, and a full megalithic culture survives. There is a range of pleasant hills in the east of the pargana.

***	Almer ..	AB	17	15	Visited 23-4-41.
	Amgaon ..	..	9	8	
*	Badgai ..	AB	23	25	
*	Baniagaon	AB	10	9	
*	Banjora ..	AB	10	5	
*	Barda ..	AB	13	8	
**	Bargaon ..	AB	23	17	
	Barwar ..	..	11	12	
*	Belgaon ..	AB	8	7	
*	Bhatgaon ..	J	11	8	
	Bhongapal ..	..	12	10	
***	BINJHE ..	AB	41	37	Camped here 10-12-41.
**	Bokrabera ..	AB	22	19	
*	Botha ..	J	9	7	
**	Bulki Junganar	AB	15	13	
***	CHANDABERA	AB	24	17	Visited with S.H. 12-14-11-41. Admirable headman and ghotul.
***	Chaniyagaon	AB	34	23	
**	Chapai ..	J	15	13	
	Chhindlibera	..	9	9	
*	Churegaon	AB	20	17	
*	Daure ..	J	8	7	
*	Deogaon ..	AB	12	9	
***	Dhanora ..	AB	20	28	Visited 11-12-41. Shrine of Kanda Dokara, Lingo's brother.
	Dundaberma	..	11	9	
*	Eragaon ..	AB	14	12	
*	Gadar ..	AB	10	9	
**	Gawari ..	AB	14	11	
***	GORMA ..	J	20	22	An important village. Saw funeral on 10-11-41. Camp from 7-12-11-41 with S.H.
	Hichka ..	..	10	9	
*	Iragaon ..	AB	9	7	
	Jamgaon ..	..	7	8	
***	JHAKRI ..	AB	17	11	A fascinating village among hills. Friendly and informative ghotul. Visited with S.H. on 11-11-41.
*	Kalepal ..	AB	8	6	
**	Kanagaon	AB	18	16	
***	KANHARGAON	J	13	8	Camp here from 4-12-41 to 22-12-41. Most friendly and interesting.
*	Karmari ..	AB	12	13	
	Karraormetta	..	21	19	
*	Kawagaon	AB	9	9	
**	Khandsara	AB	9	9	
	Khanlikurd	..	10	11	
	Khawlikala	..	9	7	
*	Kokarajunganar	AB	8	9	
*	Kondapakhna	AB	7	8	
***	Kongur ..	AB	62	49	An important village, the headquarters of the pargana.
*	Korgaon ..	AB	19	14	
*	Korkoti ..	AB	10	10	
*	Kotpar ..	J	8	6	
*	Mainpur ..	AB	7	7	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
361
162

APPENDIX ONE

* Markara ..	AB	16	14	
Misri ..	..	6	5	
* More ..	AB	5	7	
*** Morr Berma	J	24	21	One of the friendliest villages in Bastar. Adjoins Kanhargaon, where I camped 4-22-12-41.
* Net ..	AB	6	5	
* Oragaon ..	AB	7	7	
* Padde ..	AB	8	6	
** Palna ..	AB	10	8	
Parali ..	..	5	3	
** Pharagaon	J	14	12	
*** Phauda ..	AB	20	15	Visited with S.H. 9-11-41. A large lively Jhoria village. Chelik danced at Dongrigura, 25-2-42.
*** Phunder ..	AB	45	39	Visited 8-12-41.
* Randhna ..	AB	13	9	
** Silati ..	AB	11	7	
Timri ..	..	11	9	
*** Todosi ..	AB	27	25	Visited 9-3-38 with S.H. A rather dull village.
* Torand ..	J	9	8	
* Toyapal ..	AB	6	5	
Turki ..	..	7	3	
Umla ..	..	10	10	
* Urandbera	AB	9	9	

Kopra Pargana

A small pargana east of the main Keskal-Jagdalpur road, and a little north of Pharagaon.

* Kopra ..	AB	27	21	
* Korhobera	J	15	12	
Kuldadih ..	..	6	5	
Nawkabera	..	17	11.	
* Taraibera ..	AB	16	15	

Makri Pargana

This pargana lies north of the Amrawati Pargana, in and around the Makri Reserved Forest and a forest reserve described by Grigson as 'a sportsman's paradise full of buffalo, bison, barasing and all the deer of Central India'.

*** Baghbera ..	AB	19	15	A pleasant village, with very friendly ghotul near the Jeypore border. Visited 28-12-41.
Khuri ..	..	8	5	
Lubha ..	..	16	11	
Pirhapal ..	..	7	7	
*** Randiha	AB	21	18	A pretty place among hills. Megalithic substitutes. Legend of Usarengi Palli. Visited 30-12-41.
Sarsa ..	AB	3	4	
** Sorma ..	AB	15	13	

Mardapal Pargana

A large pargana in the extreme south-west of the tahsil. Chota Dongar and the approach to the Abujhmar is only a few miles from its western boundary. It has

X883
●361
162

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

the Golawand Forest on its eastern side and the Beordig river flows through it. Although it is a typical Jhoria pargana, the ghotul has almost entirely disappeared, probably through the influence of Raja Muria from Jagdalpur Tahsil which borders it. But chelik and motiari in full dress go to dance at marriages and festivals. They go as far as the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Marhai in the north and the Ghotpal Marhai in the south. All the intimacies of ghotul life appear to be preserved, even though the buildings have gone.

***	Esalnar ..	AB	18	16	An important and interesting ghotul. Met the chelik and motiari of this and Rengagondi on several occasions. Since the establishment of the Golawand Forest Reserve, Esalnar has been placed in the Bhanpuri Pargana.
***	Rengagondi	J	18	15	

Sampur Pargana

A pargana with very scattered villages in the area to the north of Kondagaon.

*	Athgaon ..	AB	6	9	
*	Babai ..	AB	25	19	
*	Badra ..	AB	8	9	
	Balenga ..	..	22	19	
*	Balond ..	AB	25	23	
	Bansikot ..	..	28	23	
***	Bhanpuri	AB	21	18	Visited 31-10-41-2-11-41. A good village. Saw the 'Diwali Werk' and appointment of a Diwan.
*	Bhiragaon	J	10	9	
	Budra ..	..	14	13	
**	Charkai ..	AB	25	19	
	Chichari ..	..	12	15	
	Gattipalna	..	10	3	
*	Girola ..	AB	12	11	
	Jarkongera	..	14	12	
***	Jungani ..	AB	27	19	Witnessed the boys and girls doing the Mahua Dandar on 2-4-41.
	Kilsilbalenga	..	10	7	
*	Kokori ..	AB	24	19	
	Kosagaon ..	..	4	3	
**	Lihagaon ..	AB	31	31	
*	Lohar ..	AB	8	7	
**	Otenda ..	AB	34	29	
	Pasangi ..	..	10	6	
	Pirhapal ..	..	11	12	
**	Rajpur ..	AB	20	18	
	Satgaon ..	..	3	4	
***	Sirai ..	AB	17	15	Saw the motiari dance the Diwali on 29-10-41.
***	Sirpur ..	AB	18	23	Visited 28-30-10-41. Good stilt-walking and falconry.
	Termenda	..	5	6	

Semenal Pargana

A pargana with villages so widely scattered all over the tahsil that its name has no geographical significance.

***	Baniagaon	AB	38	33	Large mixed village on main road with school. Visited often.

418

883
361
162

APPENDIX ONE

* Banjora ..	AB	9	8	
* Baphna ..	AB	9	9	
* Bhandarjuni	AB	42	38	
* Bunagaon	J	11	9	
* Chawrang	AB	12	14	
* Chema ..	AB	8	7	
* Chikalpatti..	AB	5	5	
*** Dahikonga	AB	20	16	Mixed village on main road; ghotul closed in 1941 by landlord's orders.
Gamri ..	..	7	5	
* Golawand	AB	9	8	
** Haddigaon	AB	14	13	
** Hangwar ..	AB	15	10	
*** HATHIPAKNA	AB	20	18	Met chelik on 5-11-41 when they danced magnificently.
*** Jaitpuri ..	AB	20	13	Frequent contacts.
* Jhara ..	AB	8	6	
*** KADONGA ..	AB	27	22	Camped 3-6-11-41 with S.H. One of the most interesting villages.
*** KACHORA ..	AB	12	10	Visited 9-11-3-41. A small ghotul but full of life and wonderful dancing.
** Kanera ..	AB	8	6	
* Karanji ..	J	14	12	
*** Kerawahi ..	AB	36	29	Interesting and informative people.
* Khandam	AB	12	11	
*** Kondagaon	AB	32	29	Ghotul in Jamkot Para. First visited in February 1935 with S.H. W Kaufmann recorded dance music here in February 1941.
* Kusma ..	J	11	9	
*** Lanjora ..	AB	63	56	Figures are for two hamlets. On main road. Bazaar. Visited in 1937 and 1940. My son, three weeks old, made his first acquaintance with the Muria at this camp.
*** MALAKOT ..	AB	27	21	Visited with S.H. 1-5-4-41. Saw two weddings. Lovely open scenery and nice people.
** Maranar ..	AB	19	15	
*** MASORA ..	AB	44	39	First visited by S.H. in March 1938. Made a small permanent camp here and used it as headquarters 1940-2 for Kondagaon Tahsil. Friendly, unspoilt, though on main road.
** Mulmula ..	AB	21	16	
* Newta ..	AB	8	10	
*** PALLI ..	J	64	42	Visited by S.H. 6-4-41. Contacts also in 1942.
Permapal ..	J	12	11	
*** PIPRA ..	J	150	137	Figures are for several hamlets, one of which is Kuntpadar where I camped 11-13-11-40.
* Polang ..	AB	12	11	
** Punewand	AB	10	7	
** Rajagaon ..	AB	8	7	
* Sambalpur	AB	16	13	
* Singarpur	AB	27	25	
** Sonawal ..	AB	15	14	
Tikarwand..	..	3	4	
			675	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

THE NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

Amabera Pargana

This pargana occupies the north-east corner of the tahsil. The countryside is hilly, wild and beautiful. The Lingo legend is known and the Pus Kolang dance performed everywhere, as we would expect seeing that this pargana is the scene of many of Lingo's exploits and his central shrine is at Semurgaon. Ghotul buildings here are draughty and uncomfortable, and the people, especially those near the Kanker border, suspicious and unfriendly.

Bara Teora	AB	8	7	
* Boragaon ..	AB	6	5	
* Changori ..	AB	21	19	
* Chichgaon	AB	8	7	
*** Chikhli ..	AB	18	16	A very dull ghotul. Visited 14-16-12-41, and was ill there, but witnessed an interesting elopement.
* Gergaon ..	AB	9	7	
** Kesarbera	AB	8	10	
* Kohchur ..	AB	5	4	
* Koliheri ..	AB	8	9	
*** Lohatar ..	AB	6	7	A mixed village with small ghotul.
* Matla ..	AB	5	5	
Nagarbera..	..	15	11	
Nilgundi ..	..	6	5	
Padargaon	..	10	11	
*** PENJORI ..	AB	17	15	Wild and beautiful village, visited 10-6-40. Good ghotul.
*** PUPGAON ..	AB	20	22	Visited 2-4-12-40.
* Pusaghati	AB	11	9	
Rajpur ..	..	8	7	
*** Semurgaon	AB	9	7	Visited 4-12-40. Shrine of Lingo Pen. Triennial festival.
* Tumasnar	AB	15	14	
Vetrgaon ..	..	6	5	

Antagarh Pargana

Antagarh was formerly the headquarters of the tahsil, until Narayanpur supplanted it in 1940. The pargana runs along the northern boundary of the State. Ghotul customs are similar to those of Amabera, which adjoins Antagarh and is reached by a road descending over 1,000 feet down the Matlaghat. The Antagarh plain is only about 800 feet above sea level, the Chhattisgarhi language is popular and many ideas and customs of the lowlands are gradually invading this and the neighbouring parganas of the northern plain.

Bulawand	..	10	10	
Garda ..	..	8	7	
* Gawrekhasgaon	AB	19	17	
* Ghumsimunda	AB	9	7	
Godri ..	..	11	9	
* Gondbenapal	AB	18	16	
Himora ..	..	12	10	
* Hirriburi ..	AB	8	9	
Jaitanawagaon	..	7	7	
*** Kalgaon ..	AB	14	17	
Kamta ..	..	13	12	
* Kanagaon	AB	11	9	
*** KARIKHODRA	AB	24	23	A charming village three miles from Antagarh with a well-built and flour-

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 X
361 ●
162

APPENDIX ONE

				ishing ghotul. Visited 9-6-40 and 4-12-40. The traditional scene of Lingo's final ordeal. Name means 'black hole'.
Kanrokhasgaon	..	7	8	
* Khorpani ..	AB	11	10	
* Konechur	AB	7	6	
* Koragaon ..	AB	10	10	
* Kotankhor	AB	11	12	
* Kulchie ..	AB	5	5	
*** Lamkanar	AB	9	9	Visited 8-6-40.
Masbarar ..	..	14	13	
Nawagaon ..	..	8	8	
Paiwari ..	..	4	6	
Pondgaon	..	14	8	
Pungaon ..	..	7	6	
Sureli ..	..	10	10	
* Sore ..	AB	16	14	
* Temrupani	AB	11	12	
Topal ..	..	9	8	
Yetebalka	..	4	3	

Bandadesh Pargana

This pargana is in the extreme north-west corner of Bastar, and has Drug District on its northern boundary. It is difficult of access, and though the ghotul exists, I am told that the people have become shy and sensitive about it. There are said to be a few ghotul across the border in Drug.

Bargaon ..	..	15	13	
Bara Kapsi	..	11	10	
Chhindpal	..	8	8	
Deora ..	..	6	7	
Dhorkatta ..	..	10	10	
Ergutta ..	..	7	6	
Harangarh	..	10	11	
Jugani ..	..	11	9	
Murawandi	..	14	12	
Murjhar ..	..	9	9	
Palamureli	..	10	9	
Pitobhondiya	..	18	16	

Baragaon Pargana

This is one of the typical 'Jhoria' parganas. It is situated near the eastern border of the tahsil, immediately south of the Jhorian Pargana with the Kolar Forest Reserve to the west.

*** Amanera ..	J	15	10	Visited 12-4-41 for a marriage.
*** Borpal ..	J	25	23	Visited 11-4-41.
*** Deogaon ..	AB	17	15	Met chelik in December 1940.
*** Erka ..	AB	10	10	Visited several times in 1941.
*** Gawari ..	AB	19	18	Met chelik in March 1941.
Huchari ..	..	12	10	
Irko ..	..	6	4	
** Kanagaon	AB	14	14	
** Khatkagaon	AB	17	15	
*** Khurpal ..	AB	13	12	Met the chelik of this village several times during 1941.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
162
361

Benur Pargana

A beautiful pargana on the eastern borders of the tahsil, by which the road from Kondagaon approaches Narayanpur. Here we are still on the high northern plateau, and the scenery is one of rugged hills and splendid forest. The ghotul are often carefully built and carved; chelik and motiari wear the full 'Jhoria' attire; memorial menhirs are erected. The Lingo legend is known and some villages dance the Pus Kolang; all send the motiari out for the Diwali dances.

***	Arpal ..	AB	16	12	Met chelik in December 1940.
	Baghjhar ..	..	10	11	
***	Benur ..	AB	7	7	Formerly an important Muria village, it has now declined.
**	Bhatpal ..	J	13	9	Many contacts in 1940.
*	Borand ..	AB	9	8	
***	Chandagaon	AB	10	8	Met chelik in December 1940.
*	Chhinari ..	AB	7	5	
*	Dandwan ..	AB	5	4	
**	Gohra ..	AB	13	12	
	Gulumkodo	..	6	4	
***	Kalepal ..	AB	12	11	Met chelik in December 1940.
*	Karhagaon	AB	8	9	
**	Khargaon	AB	11	10	
**	Koliyari ..	AB	14	12	
*	Kulanar ..	AB	17	13	
**	Kulhargaon	AB	14	12	
***	Malingnar	J	13	10	Visited 23-11-40.
	Mandoki ..	..	11	9	
***	METAWAND	J	25	27	Visited with S.H. 13-18-12-40. Saw Pupal Korta Tindana and festival of clan-god on 15-12-40.
*	Mundpal ..	J	9	6	
***	NAVANAR ..	AB	27	21	Visited 23-11-40, 12-14-4-41, and 26-4-41 with S.H.
**	Netanar ..	J	9	8	
***	Panigaon ..	J	11	10	Met a number of chelik in December 1940.
***	REMAWAND	AB	17	16	Visited 21-24-11-40. Saw Diwali dancers from Markabera. Again visited with S.H., 25-4-41.
**	Sonapal ..	AB	14	12	
	Sirpur ..	..	8	6	
***	Turtha ..	J	13	11	Met several chelik in December 1940
**	Uridgaon ..	AB	9	8	

Bhanpur Pargana

This is really an Abujhmar Pargana, but there are Muria in some of the low-lying villages.

	Chilparas ..	..	7	8
*	Gundul ..	AB	8	6
	Panidobri ..	..	13	12

Chota Dongar Pargana

The great Chota Dongar Pargana lies half way across the southern part of the tahsil. The bulk of it is in the Abujhmar Mountains and is inhabited by Hill Maria. The road from Chota Dongar to Orcha through the Marian gorge has magnificent scenery. The Maria here are undoubtedly Hill Maria who have settled in the less inaccessible villages of the pargana. A large assembly of chelik

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and motiari in dancing dress, such as I witnessed in Kongera, is an unforgettable sight.

***	Aturgaon ..	J	28	19	Met many Muria from here on 6-2-41.
*	Bargaon ..	AB	19	14	
	Barma ..	..	8	6	
*	Chamali ..	AB	9	7	
	Dhanora ..	..	9	8	
*	Dumal ..	AB	19	16	
**	Gaurkhand	J	14	12	
*	Hevenur ..	AB	12	11	
*	Kanera ..	AB	24	21	
***	KONGERA ..	AB	50	45	Visited with W. Kaufmann 5-7-2-41.
**	Kosalnar ..	AB	22	19	
*	Kumari ..	J	18	18	
*	Marhonar ..	AB	12	8	
*	Palli ..	J	13	11	
***	Rajpur ..	J	12	9	Visited 6-2-41.
*	Salga ..	AB	8	7	
***	Taragaon ..	J	18	11	Many contacts in 1940-1.
*	Temrugaon	J	9	9	
***	Toinar ..	AB	18	16	Many contacts in 1940-2.

Dugal Pargana

The Dugal Pargana, which lies north of Narayanpur town and across the road to Antagarh, has some flourishing ghotul of the Jhoria type, though those near Narayanpur itself like Binjhli and Palki have modified their ornamentation considerably.

**	Aturbera ..	AB	15	12	
***	BINJHLI ..	AB	37	32	An important village, where I built a permanent camp. Stayed here with S.H. during November and December 1940 and often visited.
	Birlyebera ..		9	7	
***	Dugabangal	J (now AB)	19	17	Many contacts in 1940-1.
***	Gorhbangal	J (now AB)	22	19	Many contacts in 1940-1.
	Karlakha ..	..	17	11	
**	Karlapal ..	AB	9	6	
	Kharkagaon	..	12	10	
**	Mahka ..	AB	25	23	
***	PALKI ..	AB	31	28	Frequent visits in November and December 1940 with S.H.
*	Salanga ..	J	11	10	

Jhorian Pargana

There were formerly two Jhorian Parganas, the Ghat Jhorian and the Bara Jhorian, but the bulk of the former was included in the Kolar or Matla Forest Reserve. The present Jhorian Pargana lies on the eastern border of the tahsil and opens onto the Kongur Pargana of Kondagaon, with the western villages of which it has much in common. The ghotul are well built, carving is common, chelik and motiari adorn themselves in Jhoria style and dance like Hill Maria but with many enrichments. The *Lingo* legend is popular, boys dance the Pus Kolang and girls the Diwali. Marriages are in the bridegroom's house. Menhirs are erected to the dead.

*	Alnar ..	AB	12	10	

X983
361
162

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

***	Bandopal	AB	27	21	Visited 28-30-11-40 and again with S.H. 22-25-4-41.
	Bartanar ..	..	8	8	
	Garda ..	..	5	4	
*	Halainar ..	AB	6	5	
*	Karmari ..	AB	7	5	
	Kongera ..	..	8	4	
**	Kursai ..	AB	12	11	
**	Mule ..	J	12	9	
	Palarmeta	..	4	3	
	Pipra ..	..	3	2	
	Royi ..	..	4	3	
	Telanga ..	..	4	4	

Karangal Pargana

This pargana lies between Chota Dongar and Narayanpur. The chelik and motiari are of the Jhoria type and the customs throughout the pargana are similar to those described for the Jhorian Pargana, except that the cult of Lingo is weaker and only occasionally do the chelik go to dance the Deo Kolang. The motiari, however, dance the Diwali dances from village to village.

***	Amgaon ..	J	14	12	Visited with S.H. 10-12-40.
	Bara Jamri	..	10	9	
*	Baghdongri	AB	15	11	
***	Bakulwahi	J	29	27	Many contacts in 1940.
	Bamni ..	..	27	20	
***	Bangal ..	J	14	11	Many contacts in 1940-1.
*	Bawri ..	J	7	6	
**	Borand ..	J	9	8	
*	Borgaon ..	AB	8	8	
*	Deogaon ..	J	16	15	
	Derdul ..	..	12	7	
	Gotabenur	..	5	3	
***	Halami Munjmeta	J	11	10	Met chelik on 12-12-40.
***	Kapsi ..	J	29	19	Visited 9-12-40; contacts in February 1941 and 1942.
*	Karmari ..	AB	8	7	
**	Kharkagaon	J	13	12	
	Kochwahi	..	11	9	
*	Kokori ..	J	10	6	
*	Kukrajhor	AB	12	10	
**	Kumli ..	J	16	13	
*	Lalsuhnar	AB	7	6	
*	Malechur ..	J	9	8	
***	Markabera	J	16	17	Visited with S.H. 7-12-12-40; with W. Kaufmann 6-2-41; with B. S. Guha 28-2-42-2-3-42.
**	Moroskodo	J	12	11	
	Naunumeta	..	6	7	
*	Nelwar ..	J	9	8	
	Sargipal ..	..	5	3	
*	Siwni ..	AB	13	9	
*	Tadopal ..	J	10	8	
***	Tiumar ..	J	21	19	Many contacts during 1940-2.

Kalpatti Pargana

Kalpatti means 'lowlands' and this pargana is on the northern plain connecting with Chhattisgarh. Yet it has many links with the Hill Maria and the Abujhmar.

APPENDIX ONE

Menhirs are erected, and the Pus Kolang is danced. The Lingo legend is known. Chhattisgarhi Hindi is generally spoken along with Gondi.

* Darwisalebhat	AB	13	12	
*** Jiramtarai	AB	14	10	Met the chelik and motiari on 26-1-41 at Koilibera.
* Kastura ..	AB	7	6	
* Kasurasalebhat	AB	11	10	
*** Khutgaon	AB	16	13	Visited 27-28-1-41. Remarkable Muria landlord.
*** Kolleksa	AB	23	21	Visited 25-26-1-41. Unforgettable river scenery. Saw Pus Kolang dance and ceremonies.
* Kurusbori	AB	7	8	
* Maragaon ..	AB	13	12	
Masur ..	..	6	3	
* Murawandi	AB	8	5	
* Murnar ..	AB	7	7	
Nawge ..	..	3	2	
*** Partapur ..	AB	14	12	Visited 29-1-41, but have no detailed knowledge of ghotul.
Pipli ..	..	8	6	
* Salgi ..	AB	10	6	
* Tursani ..	AB	15	9	

Kiringal Pargana

This interesting pargana belongs properly to the Abujhmar, and the Muria here are obviously Hill Maria who have come down from the heights. The women often go bare-breasted, and the ghotul—though allowing full membership to girls—is still the centre of the male life of the village.

*** Barkot ..	J	14	12	Visited 30-1-41. Charming wooded village and nice people.
Ghoragaon ..		4	3	
Karekatta ..		7	4	
Kheregaon ..		7	3	
Maapi		6	4	
*** Palli ..	J	17	14	Visited 29-1-41. Well-built ghotul and good dancing.

Kolar Pargana

A large pargana lying between Antagarh and Narayanpur with much fine mountain scenery. The hills above the magnificent Ranghat rise to 2,938 feet. The Abujhmar and Matlaghat hills join across the Pargana. Jhoria influence here is not very strong. The Pus Kolang is danced everywhere; menhirs are erected; marriages are celebrated in the bridegroom's house; the Lingo legend is known.

* Badrungi ..	AB	18	16	
* Ballasalebhat	AB	18	15	
*** Bondanar ..	AB	15	13	Visited 7-6-40.
** Chingnar ..	AB	10	9	
Chipori ..	..	12	11	
** Hoychur ..	AB	8	5	
** Hurtarai ..	AB	9	6	
Kachwar ..	..	16	12	
* Kasadand	AB	12	9	
** Khalepara	AB	19	15	
*** Kolar ..	AB	8	6	A large mixed village. Visited 22-1-41.
Kurel ..	..	4	2	
* Malmeta	AB	18	17	
* Murnar ..	AB	8	7	

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

*** Padbera ..	J	21	19	A friendly and beautiful village in the hills. Visited 19-12-41.
*** PHULPAR ..	AB	47	39	Visited 22-24-1-41. Saw Pus Kolang dancing.
* Pusawahi ..	AB	24	13	
** Sarandi ..	AB	25	21	
* Sirsangi ..	AB	10	10	
** Talabera ..	AB	15	12	
Taralkatta ..	..	12	11	
* Tumapal ..	AB	8	5	
Yeranar ..	..	15	13	

Narayanpur Pargana

A small pargana in the open country surrounding Narayanpur, the headquarters of the tahsil, where there are courts, a dispensary and school, and a very big bazaar to which come Hill Maria from the Abujhmar as well as large numbers of Jhoria Muria. I would not now call this a Jhoria pargana; external influence which first attacks externals has stripped the Muria of their delightful ornaments. The ghotul at Narayanpur is drab and rather corrupt.

* Garanji ..	AB	25	19	
*** Narayanpur	AB	34	31	Frequently visited with S.H. from 1937 to 1941.

Paralkot-Kalpatti Pargana

This pargana occupies the western end of the tahsil and includes the old zamindari of Paralkot. This is the gateway by which the influence of Chanda Hindus and Congressmen enters the State. The lovely Kotri river passes through the pargana and the hilly scenery on its eastern side which leads into the Abujhmar is attractive. Chelik and motiari on the east of the road and at Tarbaili are hardly to be distinguished from Hill Maria; the girls often go bare-breasted. But to the west, the people get more and more drab and uninteresting.

*** Betiya ..	AB	6	4	Visited 30-1-41-1-2-41.
Ghotanbera ..	..	11	9	
Irpanar ..	..	9	8	
Kanhargaon ..	..	8	7	
Karakoda ..	..	6	6	
* Kurenar ..	..	15	13	
* Markanar ..	..	9	9	
* Marora ..	..	12	11	
Mausamtola ..	..	10	10	
Nagaldand ..	..	11	10	
Parenga ..	..	7	8	
*** TARBAILI ..	..	15	13	A very attractive company came from this ghotul to dance at Betiya on 31-1-41.

Surwahi Pargana

This lies on the northern boundary of the State between the Antagarh and Khalpatti parganas, and is said to be very like them.

* Alkanhar ..	AB	16	14	
* Amoli ..	AB	20	18	
* Chargaon ..	AB	9	8	
* Durpalli ..	AB	10	9	
* Jethagaon	AB	9	5	
* Maragaon ..	AB	14	12	
* Nawagarh	AB	17	15	
* Surewahi ..	AB	19	15	

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

impulse, opposite in aim to the first, such as a fear of consequences, but it must be a fear stimulated by something present at the moment. Resultingly, the intellectual mechanisms of foresight, judgement and self-control are readily submerged by the instinctive impulse.[1]

I have described the two maps given in this book as 'Sketches', for that is what they are. It is in any case difficult to plot the Maria village-area, for many of the larger villages consist of a dozen or so hamlets spread over four or five miles yet all bearing the same name. Moreover, war conditions make it desirable that exact and informative maps should not be prepared at the present time. The reader, therefore, must accept these Sketches as being only rough indications of the location of the more important villages and the general lay-out of the countryside.

I have not burdened these pages with many cross-references. The two Summaries at the end of the book give the names of the murderers and suicides in alphabetical order, the clan-name in each case coming first. The Summary of homicides enables the reader to trace the sentence and subsequent history of each of the main characters in the book and also to see at a glance the entire outline of Maria crime.

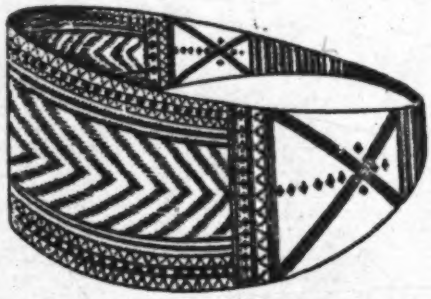
My first friend in Bastar was Mr E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., a life-long champion of the aboriginals and the ally of every sincere supporter of their cause. The assistance given by him and Mr A. N. Mitchell was continued by their successor, Mr K. Radhakrishnan, I.C.S. At every stage of my enquiries I had the sympathetic interest of Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, M.B.E. Dr Mitchell has been for many years the Superintendent of the Jail at Jagdalpur and is extremely popular among the prisoners. Every ex-convict with whom I have talked has praised him, and indeed he reminds me of what Dostoeffsky says about the good-natured Russian Prison Governor who treated his men as equals. 'They did not love him, they adored him. I do not remember that they ever permitted themselves to be disrespectful or familiar. On the contrary when he met the Governor the convict's face suddenly lighted up; he smiled largely, cap in hand, even to see him approach.' Another popular figure in the Bastar Jail was Dr

[1] B. J. F. Laubscher, *Sex, Custom and Psychopathology* (London, 1937), p. 302.

3:Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

164 State Medical Department has done much to check the spread of the disease. Malaria, as everywhere in the Indian forests, is endemic, but few suffer from enlarged spleen. Leprosy and the venereal diseases are very rare. Skin diseases are also much less common than among the more elaborately clothed and thus dirtier people of the north.

291 Men wear a small loin-cloth and sometimes a little turban. The women tie a sort of skirt, very short, round their waists: it hangs down to the knees. The breasts are covered only with [532 ornaments; when 301] visiting a bazaar girls may tie a small piece of cloth round their shoulders. They often wear a thin brass fillet round [302] the hair, and the older women use a large snood which is most becoming. Round the neck are masses of bead-necklaces, and iron or brass torcs. The bright colours of the beads and the shining brass fillets against the rich brown skin make a sight of unforgettable beauty.



Brass fillet worn by Maria women

361 The Bison-horn Maria village is laid out on the same lines as the Gond village of the Central Provinces, unlike the communal settlements of the Hill Maria, Baiga or Juang. Each house stands in its own garden which is sometimes a substantial field, and a village may cover a very large area in consequence. Often a village is composed of anything from six to twelve small hamlets, each of which represents the grouping of a family round its patriarchal head. The little huts stand among woods, on rocky hill-sides, in the shade of spreading trees. Sometimes they appear almost submerged [485 by waves of yellow sarson flowers or red jhira vegetable.
993 Each village has a substantial building for the accommodation
361 of travellers and this is used by the unmarried boys as a dormitory. The unmarried girls also sleep together, some-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.

Maria women's dancing-stick (3½′ long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the bed of the stream; these are held in position between upright poles set V-wise in the boulders, to which are fastened horizontal bamboo poles as railings. As they have no saws, the 'plank' is a tree trunk with one side trimmed flat with the axe. Even more elaborate bridges are sometimes made at high levels over streams liable to flood, from tree-fork to tree-fork on opposite banks.

Though, as has been said above, agricultural conditions nowadays determine village sites, hill-tops or rocky slopes remain favourite sites, and become commoner as you penetrate farther into the Abujhmar hills. The traditional arrangement is a street some twenty-five yards wide between parallel lines of long-houses; at one end of the street is the *gotul-lon* or village dormitory, generally within a rounded bamboo fence, and sometimes in front of this dormitory will be seen the *udam-garia* or seat of honour of the *kasyeq-gaita* and possibly also of the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*), as well as the stones on which the other village elders sit around with them in conclave; but the *udam-garia* custom is not found in all parts of the hills. Sometimes the shrine of the *Nar-Talughi* or Village Mother is actually inside the dormitory fencing, and she is often housed there for a while when a village is being shifted. There are, as a rule, no *bari* (vegetable gardens) attached to each house as amongst most Gonds, including the Bison-horn Marias and the Murias of Bastar; but sometimes the *kasyeq-gaita* has a small tobacco *bari* attached to the dormitory in the centre of the main street. The *Gazetteer* (p. 50) speaks of the 'common granary' as standing in the broad street; but with one partial exception, Nugur village in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, I have never seen this. The villagers generally construct a row of granaries (*manda* or *wijja-dodi*) on piles at the side or rear of the main village street, sometimes nearer the *penda* fields than the village; this row can hardly be called a 'common granary', as each villager has his own granary in the row for his own private food and seed store, the granaries being built together only for convenience, as they can then be watched at night by one watchman for the whole village, sleeping in a special hut at the side of the granaries or under a granary. At Nugur there were big matting bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored; but here the village had come under the economic thraldom of some Teli tradesmen, who for years had advanced rice to the cultivators. The bins were left in the collective charge of the headman and elders, and any villager could help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest he would replace it with 50 per cent. interest, the Teli owners being also free to remove the surplus from time to time.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is
●364 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the
177 greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-
361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page
[351] 121) must have their *bari* opposite them across the street. Each *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement
[231] of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among
841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Piki-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 42°. But he feels the cold, and at night, when walking, may be met
513 carrying a glowing ember held close to his navel for warmth, while
374 in camp he sleeps on the ground between two fires, and in house, field-hut or village dormitory sleeps generally on a platform of criss-crossed bamboos or creeper rope with a fire beneath it. He
513 has usually also a sleeping mat or *maini* (Halbi) made of a special grass, which is easily rolled up and carried about when he visits Jagdalpur or a touring officer's camp; or he may use instead of it his *taghali* or bark rain coat. He sleeps generally on his side with his head resting on his arm, the other arm resting on the ground in front with the elbow bent; and he will shift from side to side. It is *polo*, that is taboo, for a woman to sleep on a cot or platform, and she must sleep on the ground in her room in the house.

Bodily attitudes

The Bison-horn Maria has generally a cot to sleep on, and even his wife often has one. In such matters he is getting more and more like the ordinary Hindu villager.

516 For eating or social conversation or resting, the Hill Maria often sits with his buttocks on the ground and his knees drawn up, though he sometimes uses the familiar Indian squatting position, and his women usually squat in this way for mourning at funerals or singing at weddings. The men have also little wooden stools to [352] sit on, or sit on a stone, as at the commensal feasts; while in the villages where there is the custom of the *gaita* or headman and the *kasyeq-gaita* or Village Mother priest sitting on an *uddamgarya* or seat of honour to preside over meetings of the elders, it is often a flat stone resting on stone legs, on which he sits in ordinary sitting posture. In any group of Hill Marias resting after a meal or on a march you will see almost every attitude that might be adopted by English schoolboys except lying prone on back or stomach. If standing, a favourite position of all the tribes in Bastar is to stand on one foot, the other knee being bent so that the sole of the foot may rest against the outer side of the standing leg, the arm on the same side as the bent knee catching hold of a bough or something for steadiness. Another favourite position is to stand with the left leg braced, the right slightly flexed so that the left hip is extended sideways; the left wrist or knuckles rest on this hip, while the right hand rests on the left shoulder, the right arm being bent at the elbow to look like a V over the chest; or else the right arm is hung loosely at the side, or held in that of the next youth. For fire-making, they kneel on their knees. They stand to urinate and squat to defecate.

[372]

[514] The Bison-horn Maria uses mostly the same positions, but is more prone to imitate Hindu habits; he squats to urinate.*

*[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Bhainsā-andhyār (Ha.)		'Buffalo-darkness', when the evening has become as dark as a buffalo's hide.
Tindā-tindānā (G.) / *Bhāt-kurā* (Ha.)		9.30 p.m., the time of eating (*tindānā*) the supper of boiled rice (*bhāt*).
Bhāt-ulad-kurā (Ha.)	..	The time when drowsiness (*nīnd*) comes over one after supper.
Narjāt (G.)	..	Midnight. The Hill Marias say *narjūm*.

The routine of the Bison-horn family's day is roughly as follows. The woman rises at cock-crow, and arranges her hair, but does not wash. She then pounds grain with the *usṭal* husker. Her husband gets up when it is time to yoke the bullocks, and goes off to plough. She then sweeps out the house and its surroundings, and goes to the river to fetch water, and on her return cooks the *ṭej* gruel for her husband's meal; any spare time is occupied in basket-making. He generally comes home for this meal, but when the field-work is heavy, she takes it to him there. If they have had their meal in the house (the women always eat after their men have been satisfied), they return together to the field, where the wife works as hard as the husband, often even ploughing. She stays in the field till 'parrot-time' and then goes back to the house to prepare the evening meal, bathing naked on her way in a river pool. Her husband comes back at dusk, and ties up the cattle in the *bari* or in the byre; the children bring them home, calling stray animals with a kind of shrill yodelling. He then bathes naked in the men's pool, and returns for his supper and sleep.

I have not attempted to recapitulate the daily routine of the Hill Maria, most of which, including his four meals, has been detailed in the preceding pages, which have generally dealt primarily with him rather than the Bison-horn Maria.

H. Fire-Making

All Marias and most Murias make fire by means of a fire-saw.[a] A piece of bamboo about 1½ or 1¾ inches in diameter and about 16 inches long is split down the centre for about half its length, and wedged open with a pebble or a bit of stick at the split end. This 'hearth' stick is called by Hill Marias a *negho*, and is explained by them as the 'mother' of the fire. Another length of bamboo, perhaps a little longer than the 'hearth', is split in half, and one half is trimmed along the top of the split to a clean, sharp edge; this trimmed half they call the *kanda*. A flat boulder is selected and firmly planted on the ground. On top of this are placed dry leaves, or a bit of old rag, if available; and two men hold the 'hearth' down by its ends on the stone and the leaves, so that the leaves are under the V formed by the wedged split. The third man then saws

[a] [See cat. 116, p. 423.—Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

372 his *kunda* by the sharp edge between their hands across the split in the 'hearth' and at right angles to the 'hearth', rapidly increasing the speed of his sawing; this friction soon engenders smoke and a spark, which falls through the 'hearth' on to the little heap of inflammable bamboo sawdust that has fallen with the sawing on to the dead leaves or rag. Sawing is at once stopped, and the 'hearth' lifted off the sawdust with great care by the kneeling men, who gently blow on the spark till it spreads and kindles the sawdust, when they fold the leaves carefully over sawdust and sparks and take the packet off to the place where a fire is to be lit, kindling first heaps of dry grass, and with this small sticks and finally logs. They are very quick in the process. I introduced a race in the tribal sports at the Maharani Sahiba's Dasehra celebrations, in which teams of three had to run fifty yards, make fire, and run with it another fifty yards to kindle a bonfire; and Hill Maria teams invariably won; the timing of the whole process, from the start till the bonfire was well alight, was eighty-seven seconds. In the [177] Muria and some Bison-horn Maria tracts the use of matches is coming in.

There appears to be no ritual occasion on which fire has to be kindled in this way. The first pile of dry wood at the firing of the *penda* fields, and the fires for cooking sacrificial meals, are kindled [178] from a burning log brought from the Hearth of the Departed in the *kasyeq-gaita's* or *penna's* house.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Raughat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle.

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare-Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhârni*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'.

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari pudo*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths.

FIG. 1. Kunj digging-stick of iron
Length 1' 7"

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*.

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the rains. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] The other villagers come and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *harlat* or *halla* (*dhosna* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *karpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes called *katwah* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun of the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

[1] The Juang keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandapwk* dormitory, and usually ignite their clearings from it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

But I was able to see it at Almer a few days later on 23 April. This hunt is mainly the business of the chelik directed by the Kaser-Gaita, but other and more experienced hunters join in, for success in the hunt is the best of omens, not only for a plentiful supply of wild fruit but later for a fine harvest. A crowd therefore of chelik and older men led by the Kaser-Gaita with their axes and bows and arrows, some with gourds of gruel to refresh them on the way, gathered on the path leading towards the jungle. 196

The Gaita laid his own bow and arrows and axe together with a chelik's bow and arrows and axe across the path. He made a small doll out of dub grass and a grass bow and arrow and placed these in front. He made three piles of earth and on each of these placed a ring of aonra leaf and a branch of tendu. He made fire with a fire-drill (not a saw) and lit a little incense which he offered to Tallur Muttai the Earth Mother, Mundri Dokari the wife of Budha Deo, and the Departed, crying to the earth to give good hunting. He waved the fire over the arrows, pressed his right hand hard on the ground, then carried away the grass doll and bow and arrow towards the village and threw them to the side of the path. At the same time the ghotul Sirdar picked up the bows and arrows and axes with a cry of triumph, crossed the line and went quickly down the path without looking back. [372]

That day in Almer they got nothing, but the following evening, in Bandopal, the chelik returned with a jungle-fowl and a young chital. As they cut the chital up, they removed the tip of the ears, the tongue, the hoofs and liver; these bits were done up in three leaf-packets and cooked separately. The Kaser-Gaita took these packets and offered them to the local gods; a little was left over and put aside for himself. The flesh was cooked where it was cut up—in the fields outside the village—and a little wrapped up in leaves was given to every household.

We now return to Masora for the Marka Pandum. The different clans in this village kept the festival in different places, each with their own clan-gods; I went with the Poyami people and their Anga Deo to a sacred grove near a small stream in the jungle about a mile from the village. Here we found the gods—the Anga Deo whose name was Lal Sai, the Gutal pole called Lalu, and the tall flag-staff and flag of white cloth, with sun and moon and nine little men worked on it in red which represents Budha Deo—placed in position under a saja tree. A brass horse for the Rau was under another tree, and a broken sword and shield for ancestors who had died in battle long ago. [718]

Not far from the gods the chelik had cleared and cow-dunged a patch of ground and were busy cooking rice and koera. There were baskets of mangoes, char and karmata fruit ready for the pot. In front of the gods also 'these three sisters, mango, char and karmata', had been placed.

Presently three of the chelik took their hunting-horns and blew them as a sign that the proceedings were to start. The mediums obtained leave to begin and the gods were taken up and carried to the stream. There the Gaita first offered eggs, liquor and aonra rings to the Water Maidens and took the gods down into the stream and washed them thoroughly. The Gaita crossed the stream and offered eggs and rings and liquor to the Forest Maidens for the safety of the cattle that might graze there.

After the bathing the gods were brought back and anointed with mahua oil. Then two of the Sirahs-mediums sat in trance before the gods and discussed with them in a curiously intimate and homely way what offerings were to be made and what the gods would do in return. The clan-priest took chickens that were brought for every Poyami household and two pigs and persuaded them to eat a little of the rice that was piled in small heaps before the gods.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXI

883.4
372

The Hikmi of Almer removes wood from the ghotul stack

[p. 350(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol.

> Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
> At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

A broom is 'the thing that licks quickly and then falls flat'; a leaf-plate is 'the little tank full of thorns' or 'the boy that morning and evening gives a share to all'; a pot of curds hawked round the village is described as 'the white cock going from house to house'.

But the main interest of chelik and motiari—for after all they are still only boys and girls—is in food. *'Bhaio bihān handiya ma dhyān.* As soon as morning comes, his mind is in the cooking-pot.' Of things to eat the Muria have a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the State has not yet interfered with their right to natural roots, fruit and leaves—they may take what they want so long as they do no damage.

FIG. 5. Usual rice husker. Length 5'9"

As Grigson says of the Maria: 'The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list.'[1] I do not propose to give such a list here; but I will briefly mention the things that chelik and motiari like best. Meat and fish probably stand first in popularity—I will describe them later.

Among fruit trees, the mahua is supreme. When the flowers begin to fall, the cattle are kept tied up until the women and children have gathered them. They spread them in bright yellow patches swiftly turning brown on rocks, before their houses, in specially-made enclosures. When dry enough, the flowers are beaten with heavy sticks, sometimes with the wooden doors of a pigsty. The pulp is made into chutney with dried khamer fruit and tamarind kernels, and eaten with rice or gruel. The oil is used for cooking and lighting. The flowers are stored in baskets, and make one of the most eagerly demanded gifts when the chelik make a dance tour of a village.

Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with chilli and salt to the chelik.

Acura fruit is liked, and there are many riddles about it. 'A green pigeon came from Porrobhum and laid its eggs on a leaf.' 'The white bird hides its eggs under its wings.' Other popular fruits are those of the thorny bhoir—'Mother bites, but daughter invites'; the kurin—'The little sparrow's liver is sweet'; the sāma, the char, the jamun and the tamarind. Tendu fruit is picked while still unripe and put in kodon chaff to mature. Sometimes it is buried in the ground and a fire is lit above it. When ripe, it is eaten raw. Wild figs are eaten ripe or dried and ground up with flour.

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

524

Wori wori singār,
Bāni bāni pungār.
Rows and rows of decorations,
There are many kinds of flowers.
—A honeycomb.

Tutri bukāte bāri perek.
In a small hole is a small seed.
—*Lokti* bees.

Untie the she-buffalo and milk the peg.
—Getting honey from a hive.

A herd of cattle has one leader.
—The swarm and its queen.

Many flowers grow in the tank.
—A honeycomb.

Flower, flower, how it flowers!
What comes out of the flower?
—Bees.

I have recorded one song about bees, but I was unable to discover any games that illustrated the taking of a hive.

539

Song

The bees suck the kosra flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The bees suck the paddy flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The Manjhi says he'll give his daughter
To the boy who kills the bees.
An orphan chelik kills the bees,
He brings the hive and shows the Manjhi.
The Manjhi gives the boy his daughter.
The bees suck the mandia flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.

VII. Oil

Ann kare motai, tel kare chikmai, kapare kare barai. Food fattens, oil adorns, clothes dignify.—Muria saying

252

The Muria make many different kinds of oil; some for use in their carts, some for light, some for medicine, but most, of course, for food. The *gdrangyi* is extracted from mahua seed and is used mainly for cooking. So is the oil gained from the usual oil-seed crops, 'the slender trees that have a hundred babies', which are often raised in the *bāri* gardens. Seeds of the sarai tree are collected and make a useful oil. The fat of lizards and the grubs that live in the date-palm and the fat of cow, buffalo, goat, pig, cock, and several kinds of deer all yield oil which can be used for cooking and to mix with food. For lighting purposes and to oil the wheels of bullock-carts, oil made from the seed of the karanji, bandgul or kusum is used. Oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and

[373 493]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 42°. But he feels the cold, and at night, when walking, may be met
513 carrying a glowing ember held close to his navel for warmth, while
374 in camp he sleeps on the ground between two fires, and in house,
field-hut or village dormitory sleeps generally on a platform of
criss-crossed bamboos or creeper rope with a fire beneath it. He
513 has usually also a sleeping mat or *masni* (Halbi) made of a special
grass, which is easily rolled up and carried about when he visits
Jagdalpur or a touring officer's camp; or he may use instead of it
his *taghali* or bark rain coat. He sleeps generally on his side with
his head resting on his arm, the other arm resting
on the ground in front with the elbow bent; and he
will shift from side to side. It is *polo*, that is taboo,
for a woman to sleep on a cot or platform, and she must sleep on
the ground in her room in the house.

Bodily attitudes

The Bison-horn Maria has generally a cot to sleep on, and even his wife often has one. In such matters he is getting more and more like the ordinary Hindu villager.

516 For eating or social conversation or resting, the Hill Maria
often sits with his buttocks on the ground and his knees drawn up,
though he sometimes uses the familiar Indian squatting position,
and his women usually squat in this way for mourning at funerals
or singing at weddings. The men have also little wooden stools to
[352] sit on, or sit on a stone, as at the commensal feasts; while in the
villages where there is the custom of the *gaita* or headman and the
kasyeq-gaita or Village Mother priest sitting on an *uddamgarya* or
seat of honour to preside over meetings of the elders, it is often
a flat stone resting on stone legs, on which he sits in ordinary sitting
posture. In any group of Hill Marias resting after a meal or on
a march you will see almost every attitude that might be adopted
by English schoolboys except lying prone on back or stomach. If
standing, a favourite position of all the tribes in Bastar is to stand
on one foot, the other knee being bent so that the sole of the foot
may rest against the outer side of the standing leg, the arm on the
same side as the bent knee catching hold of a bough or something
for steadiness. Another favourite position is to stand with the left
leg braced, the right slightly flexed so that the left hip is extended
sideways; the left wrist or knuckles rest on this hip, while the right
hand rests on the left shoulder, the right arm being bent at the
elbow to look like a V over the chest; or else the right arm is hung
[372] loosely at the side, or held in that of the next youth. For fire-
making, they kneel on their knees. They stand to urinate and
squat to defecate.

[514] The Bison-horn Maria uses mostly the same positions, but is
more prone to imitate Hindu habits; he squats to urinate.*
*[See cat. 116, p. 419. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 the wefts are of split bamboo. The corners of the walls are further secured by cords stitched through the two wicker walls round the corner warp and the corner pile. Wherever beams cross, they are [283] lashed with *siari* twine or thicker rope. The door of a single granary is usually a sliding piece of bamboo wicker-work; but in the long granaries it is a section of *tum* grass fence or bamboo wicker-work fastened in position by obliquely crossing bamboos.

251 These granaries contain immense quantities of *kosra* and other hill grains, rice, beans, dried forest fruits, etc., in big bins of bamboo basketry, smaller baskets, and large *chiptis* or lidded boxes of leaves on a framework of cane or twigs. The bins are all lidded with stitched-leaf tops, tied round the rim with creeper cord, like the paper top of an English jam-jar. The Marias store here also dried rolls of tobacco leaves, coils of creeper and other ropes, and gourds of all shapes and sizes for making spoons, ladles and water-bottles; and when they used *mogki* dancing shields and peacock plumes attached to them they used to hang them under the eaves except when they wrapped them in leaves and hung them in the tops of trees.

342 513 The village dormitory, as has been said above, is generally in the centre and at one end of the village street. It is a long-house made with no partitions, surrounded generally with a bamboo wattle-work fence; and it is practically a roofed *alpanji* or sleeping platform, the criss-cross bamboo framework of which covers almost the whole floor at a height of about 2½ feet above the floor. Often it is entered from in front by a door under the highest point of the eaves, to which access is gained by a narrow horizontal gangway of logs raised the same height above the ground as the sleeping platform and extending from the outer fence to the door; persons entering the dormitory climb on to the gangway by a rough stile, consisting of a tree stump set in the ground between two vertical posts which serve as railings.

The 'gotul-lon'

● [374] The interior is badly grimed with smoke, as log fires are lit at night under the sleeping platform, the only door is fastened, and there is no window or vent for the escape of smoke. I have never found anything inside a dormitory except two or three drums and occasionally the shrine of the Village Mother.

B. Bison-horn Maria Villages, Houses, and their Contents

361 Of Hill Maria villages the essential thing to remember is that they shift as the cultivation shifts, and so seldom remain more than four or five years in one place. The few villages that have good permanent rice fields tend now to become more or less permanent.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to fire all the *penda* plots simultaneously, and the women take no part in this work. There is no public ceremony before the firing; but the *kasyeq-gaita* starts it for the whole village by firing the first bundle of dried brushwood in his own plot with a bundle of dried grass kindled from a glowing ember brought from his own house; he makes fire with a fire-saw only if no ember is available or if it has died on its way to the *penda*. At Handawada in May 1930, heavy rain fell, and so delayed the firing of the *penda* that the *kasyeq-gaita* and village elders went in deputation to the clan-god Verma Pen of the Gume clan at Toinar and promised to sacrifice a cock to him if he would stop the rain; he only received his cock after he had fulfilled the condition and it had been possible to fire the *penda*. The firing takes only three or four days if the wood is really dry.

241 417 Between firing and sowing there is only a short interval in which the villagers must work hard to prepare their fences and field houses. There are no fences between individual plots as a rule, these being marked off either by lines of *til* or roselle at sowing, as already explained, or by laying a few poles lengthwise along the edge of the plots; but there is a general fence around each block of plots, except where there is no risk of animals damaging the crops. A type of fencing found only around Orcha and the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*, known as *kokor* (crooked) *garpi*, is a zig-zag stockading of logs laid horizontally on each other, the sides of each projecting angle being fifteen or twenty feet long; it looks like a vast herringbone pattern climbing the hillside. Grass *tum* fences, made in the same way as the *tum* partitions of houses already described, are used where the need for protection from animals is less, and, where bamboo is very plentiful, bamboo wattle-work fences. Another type of substantial timber fence is the *welma* fence consisting of poles laid horizontally one on another, held in position between pairs of bamboo uprights driven into the ground, and tied together at intervals between the horizontal poles; the upright bamboos are generally the two halves of a thick bamboo split lengthwise. I have not noticed in the hill villages the stockades of sal piles driven into the ground which are common among the Murias of the north and are met in Bison-horn Maria villages also.

241 342 513 The chief field-house is really a sleeping platform raised high above the level of the crops on wooden piles, similar to the field watchers' *machan* found throughout Central India, but far more elaborate; the space between the piles below the platform is walled round with bamboo wicker-work or *tum*, and there is a thick thatched roof. As in the dormitories, a fire is kept burning at night below the platform to warm those sleeping on it. Tools and weapons, and cooking pots and food, are kept in the room below the platform,

● [374]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

226 564 markets. The Kuruks go up into the hills to collect these dues, and they also dry fish and bring it round from village to village in the hills, bartering it for grain, generally at the rate of five pieces the size of a finger for a *paili*[1] of *kuthi*; the Hill Marias allow them to sleep in the *paik-gotul* rest-house. They are expert with net and with rod and line. Frequently they stretch a cord over the head of a pool with several short lengths of line ending in baited hooks depending at intervals in the water, while they go across the tail of the pool in their dug-out canoes spanking the surface of the water with their paddles or with long bamboos to drive the fish up towards the baits. They fish simultaneously several little rods tied to clumps of rushes or reeds. They certainly catch fish at all times except in high floods, and send them alive to your camp in water in little dug out sections of trees. As boatmen they are expert in [501] managing their clumsy and heavy dug-outs, which are generally made of *Bombax malabaricum* wood owing to the heavy duty [651] charged by the Forest Department for the far more durable teak. I spent nearly three weeks in their charge in November 1927 with Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the State Medical Officer, journeying in their dug-outs down the Indrawati from Kutru to the Jitam rapids, whence they returned to their villages. They were expert in [501] shooting rapids even with two dug-outs lashed together, which they sometimes took through the wild tangle of rapids above Bhamragarh with two paddlers standing in the bows and two in the stern. The paddles are rectangles of teak nailed to teak handles. One dug-out would shoot ahead to explore the rapids, and its owner appear suddenly on the top of a rock to shout directions to the rest; old Kuruks and their grey-headed wives would appear out of tributary streams from riparian villages and croak away their greetings in the guttural Hill Maria dialect, and then paddle back upstream in the morning mist with charcoal or wood smoking around them in [374] broken earthen crocks at the bottom of their boats, carried for warmth. At dusk, after escorting us to our camp on the Bastar bank, they invariably would paddle croaking off to rocky islands in midstream, whence at night the eye would be delighted with their numerous fires of driftwood and the ear with the melodious refrains of their songs.

226 The Hill Marias make various forms of fish cages and traps with reeds and cane. They dam river shallows in the hot weather and poison the pools. In the rains they make *gorla* piers of boulders in cylindrical wicker-work baskets, like the piers of their bridges, between which is laid a platform of wicker-work, the upstream end of which rests on the bed of the stream, and is weighted down with

[1] A measure containing about 4 lb. weight of grain.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

then again at the usual time. At Palari, where the girls take the boys' *masni*-mats home with them every morning and bring them in the evening, the first salutation is called *Masni-johar*, for it is then they give the mats to their chelik.

In some ghotul, especially those where they do not massage every night, the two leading girls crack the boys' fingers as they go round.

Immediately after the Joharni, a girl distributes finely-powdered tobacco and sometimes a supply of leaf-pipes to the boys. The tobacco is taken from the ghotul store, to which all must contribute.

The motiari often go outside for a few minutes. The Belosa may now arrange how the massage is to be done and decide whether they will sleep in the ghotul that night and, if so, how they will pair off. When they are ready they come back into the ghotul and each girl goes straight to a boy to comb his hair and massage him. There does not seem to be any rule about this. A girl is not bound to massage her own ghotul partner, nor does the fact of massaging imply that the two will sleep together. In practice, however, the elder girls generally massage the elder boys.

In the Chota Dongar Pargana, the girls go to massage the chelik in the very place where they are going to sleep. Elsewhere they sit in a circle or grouped round the fire, sometimes scattered about the room. If the boy is asleep the motiari rouses him and makes him sit up; she sits or kneels behind him, very close, with her knees round his body. With her comb she begins to shake out and arrange the boy's hair.

The combs are small and it is often difficult to get them through the long unruly locks of the chelik. In Masora the method of combing was to tap the head rather roughly, then to twist the comb round, digging it into the skull; then the hair was pulled out and fretted and at last tied again into a bun. The digging in of the edge of the comb is known as *pitis pitis kiyāna*; it is intended to kill lice and clear away scurf.

In Pupgaon, the combing was much gentler, and was only done every three days. In Bandopal, the girls did not tap the head but twisted the comb through the hair and rubbed the scalp in a very soothing way. When we were at Binjhli they were not combing at all, and in Khutgaon after a dog had relieved itself on the leader's turban, the Siraha forbade the girls to touch the chelik's heads. But generally the combing is done in the way I have described. When a lot of girls are at it together, the clicking of the combs against a score of hard heads makes a remarkable noise, reminding me of a phrase by Roy Campbell:

> While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,
> Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

But this is not the end of the comb's work. The motiari now uses it to titillate the skin of the back and arms. She rubs the points of the comb very gently to and fro, up and down, over the back and then when she has massaged that, takes each arm in turn and runs the comb up and down the skin.

Now the massage begins. In many ghotul (in Binjhli, for example, and in Bandopal and Almer among many others) this is done with the oily waste of the mahua or karanji seed, and cleans as well as refreshes. In Gorma, in May when they burn *dahi*, they massage the whole body with karanji waste. 'For in the old days this is how Tallur Muttai used to massage Kadrengal.' In other ghotul and at other seasons the massage is done with the hands alone.

The motiari begins by passing her open hands gently over the back, rubs a little harder, presses back on the ball of the hand, pushes more and more vigorously and always upward till the chelik nearly falls forward on his face,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

773
304

Then said the Matal, 'I have done this for you but you yourself must do more than this. First of all tattoo, then wash the place with cow-dung, then sprinkle haldi oil and offer rice in my name. Then holding the needles and some haldi and pulse in your right hand, catch hold of the first fingers of the woman you have tattooed in your left hand and with your right make three passes round her body. Put the haldi and pulse in her sari and let her go. By this means the burning of the marks will be cooled.'

At Palari in the Kondagaon Tahsil the Ojha gave a different version of their origin. Here they described how

Bara Deo was the son of Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai. He had six brothers and seven sisters. One day the seven sisters went to Tallur Muttai and asked her for ornaments such as would last even after death. Kadrengal gave Bara Deo a dhol and a dhamru drum. Then two sons were born to Bara Deo. One was called Murha and the other Ojha. Bara Deo taught Murha to beat the dhol with wooden sticks on the ground. Because he beat with wood on the ground Murha became a ploughman but Ojha played his dhamru slung from his shoulder, and spent his life hunting and drawing patterns on the walls of houses.

In this way the Ojha's wife learnt how to tattoo and once a year the Ojha gives a goat to Bara Deo saying, 'Behold, we go all over the world tattooing. From the marks we make let there be no wound, no pus, no swelling. Let no evil magic attack us as we work.' Because of this, Bara Deo lives with the Ojha and no witch can injure them at the time of tattooing.

304 The method of tattooing is still today very much what is supposed to have been taught the first Ojha woman by Budi Matal. Lamp-black, charcoal, 386 pounded incense is mixed with either castor, til or mahua oil. This is put in the broken half of an earthen pot, covered, and burnt over a lamp or a small fire. The black deposit is removed with a shell and kept in a small pot or bit of coconut.

304 The Ojha woman makes a pen of bamboo and draws the desired pattern on the skin. Then with three or four needles she pricks in the black colour. Before beginning she takes the names of the Seven Sisters of Bara Deo. At the end she receives from her victim's relatives rice, haldi, oil, chillies and salt. This she waves round the girl and sometimes performs the little rite with the needles that I have already described. She offers part of what she has received to the Seven Sisters. This helps the pricks to cool quickly and not hurt too much.

Muria girls are tattooed on the forehead, chin, arms and the calves of the legs. Most of the patterns are conventional—squares, triangles, and lozenges. Sometimes you may see two little figures representing a chelik and a motiari. There is no magical significance or even special meaning in the marks. 'It is for pleasure', say some Muria; others declare that it is simply a decoration, but a permanent one. 'Your words', a girl may whisper to her chelik, 'will remain like the tattoo marks on my breast.'[1]

[1] It is curious to find Crawley saying that it is 'erroneous' to attribute the painful processes of tattooing, boring and scarification to the desire for ornament. 'There is ample evidence that "savage mutilation" is never due to this desire; the savage does not hold with the maxim—*il faut souffrir pour être belle*.' This evidence is not given, but Crawley insists that tattooing and other mutilations are for the protection of the parts affected from supernatural dangers. I doubt if this is so in India.—E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. II, pp. 168ff.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

many of the places where game of all kinds was plentiful in his father's time. Every Maria has his bow and arrow, the population has multiplied, and miles of jungle have been beaten annually for game in the great spring hunts. Wild buffalo and bison had been so reduced in numbers that they were declared protected thirty years ago, and heavy fines have been imposed for shooting them. The supply of bison-horns is thus not equal to the demand, and the head-dress is therefore a highly prized hereditary possession. No one should try to buy them from their owners; if a specimen is needed, the collector should provide the horns and other materials and see it made up for him. Bison-horns being now rare, and obtainable only from a bison found dead or by purchase from the State Forest Department, various substitutes are being used, such as domestic bullocks' or small buffaloes' horns, wild boars' tushes, the long beaks of the hornbill, and, occasionally, the antlers of the spotted deer (*Cervus axis*). The most interesting substitutes are brass patterned horns, of the shape and size of bison-horns, made by the *cire-perdue* process by the local Gharwa (Ghasia) brass workers.

Except occasional dancing anklets of hollow iron with pebbles inside, the Bison-horn Maria wears no special dancing dress; in fact he girds up his loin-cloth higher than usual and generally discards his singlet or '*waskat*', so as to leave himself as free as possible for his antics, while the heavy drum that he carries slung from his right shoulder across his abdomen necessitates as much freedom as possible.

The women wear no special dancing dress, but put on every available ornament, and carry in their right hands *tirdudi* or bamboo staves to which are fastened bunches of iron pellet-bells, shaped something like short but plump pea-pods, which they clash in time with the drums as they dance by striking their butts on the ground. Similar bells sometimes adorn the drum-stick with which the left hand of the male dancer beats the cowskin membrane at the left end of his drum.

Weapons and tools

The universal *vade mecum* of the Hill Marias is the knife or *kasyeq* carried tucked into the loin-cloth, with or without a wooden sheath. Of this, as of all weapons and tools used by Hill or Bison-horn Marias, it has to be remembered that they are not always made by blacksmiths working exclusively for Marias, but often by blacksmiths in or near the bazaar villages of the plains who cater for Murias, Halbas and other tribes also. The most distinctive types are possibly, in the case of the Hill Marias, those made by the few blacksmiths living in their hills; but there are only slight differences, often of mere

[see cat. 116 p. 419]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 size, from those used in the plains. The plains blacksmith does recognize the Hill Maria's individual taste in such matters, but that 326 taste is always being modified by the sight, occasional use and occasional purchase of plains types, particularly if, when a new weapon is wanted in a hurry, only the latter are immediately available.

411 The blade of the average Maria knife measures 13 to 15 cm. from the point to the beginning of the tang. It is about 2·5 cm. broad where the tang begins, and from there the cutting edge curves inwards for a quarter or a fifth of its length, thence tapering with a slight convex curve to the point, which is 2 or 3 cm. to the side of the axis of the handle. The reverse edge is about 3 mm. thick in the tang, the thickness gradually diminishing towards the point. The tang is a continuation of the thick side of the blade, about 8 mm. wide where it leaves the blade and tapering for about 3·5 or 4 cm. to a pointed end. Except where it is continued in this tang, the blade has a horizontal bottom. The tang is heated and so burned into the wooden handle; the blacksmith, with this as all iron tools and weapons, supplies only the iron, and the buyer makes his own handle. The edge is produced in the first place by hammering on each side, followed by rubbing down a whet-stone. Being made of soft iron smelted from local ore, these knives can be given an extremely sharp point and fine edge. They are not usually [442] taken back to the smith to be sharpened, but are whetted on a stone; there is often a flat, black, polished, communal whet-stone outside the men's dormitory (*gotal*) in a hill village.

411 Besides fitting the tang into a short, cylindrical, wooden handle, about 6·5 to 7·5 cm. long, and in diameter 2 cm. at the base and 322 somewhat thinner where the tang enters it, the Hill Maria makes a wooden sheath of two flat pieces of wood trimmed roughly to the shape of the blade, each of which has on one side a low flange slightly more than half as thick as the thick edge of the blade. The two flat pieces are laid on each other, the flanged edges together, and are joined by whipping of twine, *kosa* silk or millimetre-wide thin thongs of hide at the broad top, over a groove round the centre of the sheath, and near its point. The sheath is often carved, [531] favourite designs being rough lozenges in relief on a bar, or a bar indented, or bands of three parallel lines.

411 This knife the Maria uses for slicing bamboo and all ordinary cutting purposes; holding the handle loosely in his hand he uses its full weight for chopping with the concave portion of the blade pieces of wood up to 3 cm. in diameter, getting a surprisingly straight cross-section; he usually chops all round the circumference to a depth of a third of the diameter, then breaks off the portion to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be severed, trimming the break with the knife held and used in the normal cutting position; he carves patterns in relief with the sharp point, or, holding the knife vertically, rolls the handle between the flat palms of his hand so as to drill holes with the point, trimming the edges of the holes with a burning ember. 411 ●

The Bison-horn Maria uses a similar knife, often much larger, and seldom with a sheath. His *banda* is like a dao, but it is really a glorified and enlarged knife, with a thick end, and sometimes a pronounced bend or angle in the centre of the cutting edge; he uses this for lopping thick saplings or bamboo culms. But the use of the *banda* is not universal, and may be borrowed from Parjas or other tribes to the east. Similar weapons, but socketed on to long shafts of bamboo, and known as *gagra*, are used by the northern Murias and Jhorias, occasionally by Hill Marias, as weapons of offence and defence or billhooks for bamboo and saplings; the ordinary *gagra* has a concavely curved edge and a point, the *chhuri gagra* a convex edge and no point, while the *bhalu gagra* has an edge curving concavely from the top to a bend about half way along its length, and thence concavely to the socket. [177]

The Hill Maria calls his axe *maq'su*, which is the hill gutturalized version of the ordinary Gondi word *maras* used all over the Central Provinces. The Bison-horn Maria uses a totally different word for his axe of this shape, *godel*. The Halbi word is *tangya*. Like the Naga axe, the *maq'su* or *godel*[1] is an iron blade, decidedly suggestive of a long stone celt in form; but unlike that axe, the butt of the blade ends in a socket for the haft, not in a tang inserted in a hole in the haft. The cutting edge of the blade among the Hill Marias seldom exceeds 7 cm. width, and 15 cm. is the maximum length of the blade from the cutting edge to the socket, which encloses a haft 4 or 5 cm. in diameter. It has a pronounced 'waist' just before the socket, but this is far more marked on the longer Muria *maras* than on *maq'su* or *godel*. The *godel* is usually rather more massive than the *maq'su*. The blacksmith, when giving an axe its first edge or a new edge to a blunt axe, heats the axe well in his forge, and thoroughly hammers the actual edge. He then heats it again, and hammers it flat on each side till he forms a new edge. He repeats the heating, and grinds down the edge by rubbing each side down a lump of stone. After a further slight heating he dips it in cold water to temper the edge, which is then ready for use. The haft is set at slightly less than a right-angle to the blade, the thick socket being wedged with a thin slip of wood. 412 412 326

A type of axe found still sometimes in the hill villages, where it is known as *pata endanna maq'su* (the song-and-dance axe, because 412 535

[1] Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, p. 65.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

412 when the old men of to-day were young it was the decorated axe carried by all Hill Maria men dancers), is similar to the *pharsi* 535 battle-axe of the plains tribes. The blade is crescent-shaped, the concave being the cutting edge, and the convex outer edge being socketed in the centre to receive the haft, which fits in the same vertical plane as the cutting edge. I have seen one of these axes measuring 41 cm. between the horns of the crescent.

411 The Hill Marias use small throwing spears made in one piece of iron, of the same type as the much larger solid spears used by the Murias of Amabera and north Kondagaon. They have leaf-shaped but very long blades, shafts with a knob counterpoise and, below the knob, spiked butts about a foot long. They are not nowadays very skilled throwers, there being scarcely any game in the hills. The thrower stands at a right incline to his target, and, holding the spear by the point of balance, uses much the same action as the javelin thrower of modern athletics.

411 The Bison-horn Maria uses a long and powerful stabbing spear for killing the big game, including tiger and panther, that his 224 beaters drive into his nets. This is about 8½ to 9 feet (2·6 to 2·8 metres) long, and consists of an iron head socketed on to a long bamboo shaft. The head consists of a blade about 30 cm. long and 7 cm. wide at the greatest width just above the shank, whence the wings taper with a slight convexity to the point; a shank nearly as long, slightly thinner where it leaves the blade than where it ends in the socket; and a socket about 22 cm. long, generally with one or more iron or brass rings which are forced down over the socket from the shank when the shaft has been inserted, to tighten the grip of the socket on the shaft. The socket below these rings often forms a convenient grip for the right hand, when the huntsman leans on his upright spear with his right upper arm extended horizontally from his elbow, and the elbow bent for the hand to grip the spear above the plane of the crown of the head. When the quarry is netted, the spear has its point lowered to the front pointing slightly downwards, the left arm is bent for the hand to grasp the spear well below the socket, while the right hand grasps it about a foot from the butt-end of the shaft, and the spearman sprints forward and stabs the quarry with a smart two-handed downward thrust.

411 The last weapons to be described are bows and arrows. The Hill Marias call the bow *villu*, and the Bison-horn Marias *ville*; the word, strictly speaking, means the stave only, the cord being *ha'undi* in the former and *panti* in the latter language. The stave is nearly always of bamboo, but the Bison-horn Marias, who generally use more powerful weapons than the hill men, sometimes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

use very powerful staves of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood, the bow when strung measuring 6 feet from horn to horn. Of the Hill Maria staves measured by me, the thickest circumference varied from 6·5 to 9 cm. All the bows which I have seen are plain bows, used for spear-arrows and club-arrows; I have never seen any compound, composite or pellet bows. The back of the stave is the natural curved exterior of the bamboo; the belly is pared flat. The string is a carefully sliced piece of the outside of a green bamboo cut with a portion of the natural knots at each end trimmed into knobs, round which loops of twine[1] made from the fibre of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper are tied in notches (*kiddi* in both dialects) 25 to 40 mm. from the tips of the horns. One loop is permanently bound to the notch of the lower horn, the free loop being only sprung into the upper notch when the bowman strings the bow by resting the lower horn on the ground and bending the stave by holding his knee in its belly and pulling the upper horn towards him. The *lower* horn is called *modol* or *talla*, i.e. head, and the *upper* horn *kodi* ('point') or *toqa* ('tail').

In the Abujhmar mountains the longest bowstring which I measured was 135 cm. from notch to notch, and the shortest, a child's bow, 110 cm. The greatest distance from the belly of the stave to the string of a bow strung but not drawn was 10 cm.

Arrows are called *kandi* by the Hill and *kar* by the Bison-horn Marias; this refers to spear-arrows only. *Kar* strictly means the arrow-head only, the Bison-horn Marias having no separate word for the whole arrow. The other terms used are:—

Term	Hill Maria	Bison-horn Maria
Arrow-head	*kani*	*kar*
Barb	*kewu*	*kew*
Shaft	*kand-meri*	*kara*
Shaft-nock	*iksal*	*pisel*
Feathering	*kand-toqoshu*	*kar-gerring*
Club-arrow	*beto*	*milom-kara*
Head of club-arrow	*bonka*	*milom*

The Hill Maria spear-arrows have a total length of 56 to 59 cm., that of their club-arrows varying from 51 to 64 cm. The Bison-horn arrows are longer in shaft and head, like their bows. Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, Figure 2, on page 86, are full-size representations of typical Abujhmar arrow-heads. The wings curve convexly or concavely from point to tips of barbs. The Bison-horn Maria arrows are similar in shape, but are far larger, often measuring 15 cm. or more from the point of the blade to the head of the tang, have longer barbs, and are therefore slenderer in both blade and barb. All

[1] Used in the technical sense of the word.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 spear arrow-heads have, whether seen from the obverse or the reverse, a groove in the thickness of the right wing starting deep between the tang and the barb, and becoming shallower as it tapers upwards to a point a little below the point of the blade. No. 2, Figure 2 below shows a bare arrow-head with typical pointed tang, which is heated and then worked like a gimlet into the head of the shaft almost to its full length. It is then pulled out of the hollowed

FIGURE 2

shaft, and melted lac, if available, is poured into the hollow as packing before the tang is finally re-inserted; a little piece of rag is used when lac is not to be had. The shaft is then whipped with *kosa* silk or thin strips of hide as shown in No. 1. The head of a typical club-arrow is shown in No. 3; it is a natural bamboo knot tapered with a knife from the natural thickness at SS' to that at PP'. The head of the shaft is fitted at PP' into the natural

a/n [see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

hollow of the knot, and packed in one of the ways already explained. Club-arrows are used to kill small birds, and to teach boys to shoot. The blacksmith will charge 1 anna or a pound of *kuthi* grain for a spear arrow-head.

Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias use only peacock or peahen tail-feathers to feather their arrows. No. 4, Figure 2, shows the method. First the nock M is made by splitting the end of the shaft and removing a little wood and pith; the nock and the shaft

FIGURE 3

are then whipped with *kosa* silk or thin hide strips as far as the point SS' inside the feathering. Seven or nine pieces of peafowl's brown feather are then whipped by the quill around the shaft at X, so that the trimmed edges of the feathers protrude fanwise from the shaft. The quills are also tied round the shaft at SS' with cotton thread.

The release is shown in the drawing above. The bow is held a little out of the perpendicular, the upper horn being canted a little

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 to the marksman's right. He stands obliquely to his target, with feet slightly apart and body bending forward over the left hip. The nock in the arrow shaft is held to the string of the bow, in the Abujhmar hills by the index and middle fingers only of the right hand unless the marksman is not strong enough not to use his third finger also; the Bison-horn Marias always use all three. The left thumb rests perpendicularly along the inner edge of the belly of the stave, the arrow resting, on the left of the stave, in the arch between the left thumb and index finger. The latter is laid lightly along the top of the shaft and pointed as a sight towards the target. The other left fingers are brought round the back of the stave. The string is then drawn to the rear by the right hand and released. No ring or other protector is worn on the thumb, though it is sometimes cut on the inner side a little above the knuckle.

Glasfurd, in para. 87 of his report, thus describes another form of release :—

> 'All the Marias . . . often use the feet in bending the bow, while they pull the string with both hands. An arrow discharged in this manner, it is said, would almost pass through the body of a man or deer: this method is only had recourse to in elevated positions, such as from the tops of rocks, hills, and precipices, upon any object below.'

Despite many enquiries, I never found a modern hill or plain Maria who could use this method. A few old men said it was used by wandering 'Nahal' hunters, now very rarely met in Bastar; none could remember it ever being used by Marias.

415 No quivers are used by any Marias. Arrows are carried in the hand, or by fixing the point of a barb in the hair-tuft, or in a cord tied round the head if bald.

534 171 No Marias appear ever to use a musical bow on a winnowing-fan over a pot of water as is done by low Hindu castes and Murias around Kondagaon for the *Tija* festival in the month of Bhadon.

151 The Hill Maria slays a very occasional panther or barking-deer with his bow, but is not a good shot. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is often a deadly shot up to forty or fifty yards. A young man in a village just below the Aranpur pass, with a powerful bow of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood at fifty paces range sent an arrow through the bullseye of a target which I set up for him against a *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) tree; it penetrated 4 cm. into the very hard wood of that tree.

411 No other actual weapons are used by Marias, save for an occasional old sword of one of the traditional Indian *talwar* patterns which has survived the general disarming after the 1910 rebellion. But it is as well to describe here the few digging hand-tools used.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Village Mother or the Departed. Bowmen are posted in advance, and they beat the game up to them. They share and share alike in the bag, no special limb being reserved for first arrow or first spear or anyone.

They all have bows, and arrows of varying sizes and shapes for every kind of living thing, but are not very expert in their use, save in the lower country where game still abounds. There is no bird and no animal that they will not shoot or trap and eat if they can get it.

But in most of their country the only creatures that they can trap are hare, jungle-fowl and pea-fowl. A sure sign of the nearness of a Hill Maria village is the presence of numerous hare-traps (*moral-guda*) by the side of a path. A small oval of ground is cleared of growth and surrounded either with small boulders or with sticks driven into the ground, and about eighteen inches above it. A passage is left unfenced at each narrow end of the oval wide enough for a hare to enter by one and go out by the other without turning round. The trapper urinates in the oval, and it is a considerate act for any passer-by to do so; in some villages a common urinal pot is kept by the dormitory for use at night, and the urine is divided in the morning between the hare-trappers. The ground inside the oval is soon impregnated by the salt, and hares begin, therefore, to frequent it. When this is known from the droppings which they leave there, the inner passage is blocked up with sticks or boulders, and behind it a bamboo is fixed in the ground to serve as a spring. Two strings are tied to the top of the bamboo, one for the release trigger of the trap, and the other passed through a hollow bamboo tube four or five inches long, to end in a running noose. The release-trigger is a length of thin bamboo stick which is laid more or less horizontally across the oval, one end resting lightly against the inside of one wall of the trap, and the other placed under the 'tap' of a bamboo stick fastened in the ground by the opposite wall of the trap; the 'tap' is a short length of stick branching downwards from the main stick. The tap stick is called *dim-kola*.[1] The noose is looped over the entrance to the trap, the bamboo tube being hung on one of the wall sticks or rested on one of the boulders. The hare enters through the noose to get his salt, dislodges the release trigger from the side of the wall opposite the tap stick, and so releases the spring. As this flies up, the bamboo tube slides down the other string towards the noose and helps to tighten it around the hare.

Pitfalls covered lightly with earth and leaves on criss-crossed sticks, and with spears or bamboo spikes planted in the bottom,

[1] *Dim* means penis.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison horn Maria

they must be loose enough to fall on any animal driven into them by the beaters and entangle it. Some twenty paces behind the nets the Marias make little shelters of leaves, about fifteen yards apart, carefully camouflaged from the front, and in these shelters groups of four or five spearmen stand motionless. They do not move till an animal is clearly entangled in the net, but then there is a rush of men to have the honour of the first spear. The first man stabs and holds the animal down with his spear, while the others blood their spears. He gets as his portion the off hind leg from buttock to hough, the headman gets the saddle, and the *waddai* or clan-priest the liver, the portion usually given to the Departed. At Koilibera I saw deer, four-horned antelope and a panther netted in this way and duly dispatched. On the last day a tiger, shot at but missed twice from the *machans* in front, hurled itself at full gallop into the net twenty yards to the right front of the shelter where I was standing with a group of spearmen. It fell headlong, and the net fell on to it according to rule; but unfortunately at that point the rope meshes were old and brittle, and the ground rocky and grassless; the tiger's weight and speed smashed the retaining rope and burst a hole through the net. There was a brief vision of a mighty forearm sweeping aside the encumbrance, and the tiger was free; he rushed roaring by the side of the next clump of spearmen, so close that they could have touched him. Wisely all stood stock still from the moment when the tiger entered the net till it had passed them; but then one of the guns from a back *machan* not so wisely fired over the heads of the line of spearmen. Whether he hit the tiger or not, he enraged it, and it swung round to charge. Those of us on the ground with rifles could not fire at first because the tiger was not clear of the line of spearmen; but a rain of rather wild bullets, one of which broke the tiger's near forearm, checked him, and Kalmu Boda gave it the *coup de grâce* (possibly saving more than one life) by hitting it in the neck with a contractile bullet fired from an ancient twelve-bore gun, rusty and uncoiled, with barrels patched with rough iron bands and held together with wire, and as loose in the breech and stock as a gun could be. The bullet killed the tiger outright. Boda had missed twice and misfired once before the final shot. The Murias and Marias present drummed the tiger back to camp with their usual anapaestic rhythm, and the Marias broke into a dance, advancing and retreating before the dead tiger to the same anapaestic drumbeats.

The Bison-horn Maria is an adept at nets and snares of all kinds and sizes for all manner of game. Kalmu Boda has recipes for poisoning tiger and other game. For poisoning arrows they use occasionally the crushed seeds of the *Abrus precatorius* shrub;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia neriifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Pigs

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*merrsheng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charhal padi* and *kural padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Korr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

Poultry

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar.
[2] See pp. 103 and 120.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and 252 [302]
for the hair and body for toilet purposes is made from the mahua seed or indeed from any of the oils used in cooking.

The method of extracting oil from the mahua seed is as follows. A pot of water is placed on a fire near the oil-press and heated. Then into a bamboo cone, exactly like the *jib* in which rice-beer is prepared, is put the ground and dried seed. Covered with a small basket this is placed above the water-pot and the seed is steamed for about fifteen minutes. The steamed oil-seed is then tipped out into a small basket called *kora* and the operator presses it down with a rice-husker. When this small basket is full of closely pressed oil-seed, it is carried over to the press. This is called *gāramot*,[1] and is of a very primitive kind. A long forked branch is inserted into a hole made in a living tree about two feet above the ground. Underneath is placed the *gāratota*, a block of wood with lines carved on its upper surface to carry off the oil. The basket of oil-seed is placed on top of this and the bough is laid upon it. The women place large stones on the forked end of the bough, thus forming a heavy weight to press down the seed. In the fork is a peg to keep it in position. After about half an hour the oil begins to flow and drips down into an earthen pot below.

This work is generally done by women, often by the motiari. In Masora I once saw two motiari extracting oil from the seeds of the keuti tree. These girls fetched the seed from the jungle, broke it up with their feet, ground it, steamed it and then put it into the press. They said that the chelik had no oil for their hair and they were doing this, entirely on their own, to please them.

VIII. Hunting

The Muria will eat almost anything. They profess to despise the Maria for eating monkeys and in Koilibera they still talk about the time when W. V. Grigson camped along the northern road near the Abujhmar and the Maria of the Barsur Pargana, who came to see him, left not a single monkey 262

[411]

Fig. 7. Characteristic Muria bow
Length 3′ 4″

in the hills and stripped the whole forest of red ants. But near Jungani I saw a monkey's skin hanging up in a house and the people admitted that 'the children had eaten it'.[2] Crocodile is not disliked; after the skin is removed, the flesh, which is a little coarse, can yet be cooked and eaten

[1] This press resembles that reported as used in Assam and by the Korku.—K. P. Chattopadhyaya, 'Indian Oil Presses.' *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Institute*, Vol. I (1938), p. 43.

[2] Bison-horn Maria say that 'though its skin is black, the monkey's flesh is white as rice-beer'. They often roast the monkey in its skin and eat everything. If a man eats a monkey's placenta he will be as active as a monkey and able to jump from tree to tree. It is said that Kodaya Pedā's great-grandfather did this. The Waddal and Gaita of Dualkarka (and perhaps other villages) do not eat the flesh because the monkey helps them in their priestly duties—an obvious reference to Hanuman.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *taranh taranh tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tila*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tila de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking pude, peking pude* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mans*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligundi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dassera festival in Jagdalpur.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *engrâw*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats.

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongara* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hâyna mânjhi*).

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachâr*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

Fig. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32 Muria

menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Benur, Dansa Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sambhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered.

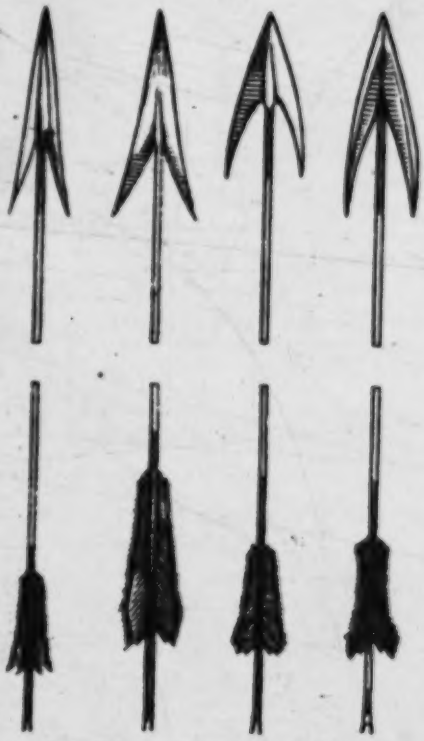


FIG. 10. ARROWS AND ARROW-HEADS
Length 2' 5"

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chaniyagaon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection.

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul.

I

Chikkal mâti kariya mâmâ hîrigir hîrigir shikâri shikâri!
Tupak sêja hima mâmâ.
Mâli gondi tupâk mâmâ.

Gopir kenur sava mâmâ.

O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!
Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
The name of the gun is Maligondi, uncle shikari.
Make gunpowder with gum from the mode tree, uncle shikari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

● 411

Chebi with bow and arrow

Returning from the ceremonial hunt

[p. 60 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

614 There are other clans which I have not been able to fit into the scheme of
615 phratries—the Hurra clan with its clan-god Lingo Mudial at Semurgaon, the Karati with its *bhum* at Phunder, the Vetti which has the lizard as its totem and the Kodovetti which has the mongoose. These, of course, fit into the scheme of *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relationships of their own neighbourhood.

There are not many songs about the clans. I give one Jhoria Pata from Sirpuri.

Those who kindle fire in the field
are boys of the Uika clan.
How strong the Uika boys are!
Those who make a hearth with
brinjals from the Panara's
house are boys of the Maravi
clan.
Those who sit on a gate and call
it a horse are boys of the
Maravi clan.
How strong the Maravi
boys are!
Those who build a hearth of
pig's droppings are boys of the
Halami clan.
Those who sit to clean their
teeth with a twig are boys
of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami
boys are!
Those who blow the buffalo horn
are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who throw fine rice on
the road are boys of the
Halami clan.
How strong the Halami
boys are!

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531]

FIG. 15 Decorated Muria knife
Length 1' 5"

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CLANS

614 Many of the clans derive their origin from some historic journey in the course of which a river had to be crossed. Others have local and special reasons for their origin.

This legend of crossing a river is known throughout central India. Many Gond, Baiga and Agaria trace their clans and the attachment of those clans to certain totems from this.[1] In Muria mythology we are sometimes told

[1] Compare, for such tales in the Central Provinces alone, Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 61ff.; Grigson, op. cit., p. 241; C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919), Vol. II, pp. 8ff.; Elwin, *The Agaria*, p. 75; M. P. Buradkar, 'Totemism among the Gonds', *Man in India*, Vol. XX (1940), pp. 120 and 277f.; *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 77 (the Gond emigrating from Phuljhar cross the Gondki river in flood).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLIV

796
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The Hikmi strings his bow in the ceremonial hunt

The Almer Gaita worships axe, bow and arrows before a hunt

[p. 208 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

527 is present but not obtruded. The Kondagaon Marhai lasts four or five days, but only on one of these is there any serious spiritual business. Then clan-gods from the surrounding villages attend, scores of Siraha fall into ecstasy, and a great procession goes round the booths of the fair. In the Muria country, similar Marhai are held in Keskal, Narayanpur and Antagarh.

[411]

FIG. 31. Axes of a type used to kill sacrificial animals

Dassera is a national festival. If the Marhai corresponds to St Giles Fair or the Lord Mayor's Procession, Dassera is for the people of Bastar the King's Birthday, the Aldershot Tattoo and Primrose Day combined. Pargana headmen from all over the State assemble at Jagdalpur to pay tribute to the Maharaja and attend the Muria Darbar. The ceremonies last a fortnight and the aboriginals play a major part in them; among other things they kidnap the Maharaja and have the right to pull his ceremonial car. Central in the Dassera ritual is the royal worship of Danteshwari: her priest and litter come all the way from Dantewara; and no Muria who sees the regal attention the goddess receives at Jagdalpur but wants to introduce her to a shrine in his own village.

The great Jatra may be classified as tribal festivals. These are the religious pilgrimages to the shrines of the clan-gods and to notable gods in celebrated temples. They are sometimes celebrated annually and sometimes every three years. They are very great and exciting occasions; gods are brought by their devotees from surrounding villages; hundreds of chelik and motiari come to dance; and scores of Siraha enliven the scene by their antics. In villages where there is no clan-god, there is usually a small Deo-jatra, an assembly of the villagers to do honour to the local gods. These are brought out of their shrines, bathed, exercised and worshipped. Such ceremonies often occur shortly before the Wijja Pandum in April or May.

796 I have already given an outline of the agricultural festivals which, with the festivals of the clan-gods, are the most important events of the year. All these festivals are of the same pattern; at one the first pulses are eaten; at another the freshly reaped millets; at a third mangoes and other fruits. It will be sufficient, therefore, to describe in detail one of these celebrations, and I will now give an account of the Marka Pandum, or the ceremonial eating of the first mangoes of the year, which I saw at Masora on 17 April 1941. This feast is preceded by a ceremonial hunt. I missed this at Masora, arriving only in time to see the chelik return with a fine hare slung over a boy's shoulder.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

796 As they did so they all yelled at the animals, 'Don't trouble us or we'll give you nothing next time'. One pig refused to eat—it had been offered as a fine: the donor's wife was a witch—and this showed the enormity of the offence which it was expected to condone. But the people did not take it back; they cried, 'We offered it willingly, but you refused, yet we give it all the same'. One man asked for a son, but they shouted to the gods, 'No, give him a daughter'.

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FIG. 32. Muria knife and sheath, of a type often used in sacrifice

796 After the animals had been fed, the priest offered three brass rings for three
782 men who had died during the past year, saying 'Let them now be mingled with the Departed'. Then the animals were killed. The priest put his knife upright between the toes of his right foot, plucked some of the feathers, cut off the head of the chick and sprinkled the blood over the rice and the gods. He killed the pigs by holding them down firmly and sawing off the heads, which he placed facing outwards before the line of rice. As the first pig was killed the worshippers stood with folded hands crying, 'Let the village folk be well; let there be good crops this year; let our animals, cows, pigs, goats and hens be well.' As they killed the second pig, they cried, 'Though it didn't eat, show whether you accept it or no'. They watched eagerly to see how many times the automatic action of the muscles would open the mouth of the decapitated head. Slowly the mouth opened and shut three times and the people were pleased, for this was a sign that the penalty pig had been accepted and all was well.

Similar offerings were made to all the gods, or at least a little blood was sprinkled on them. After a pause, the priest offered the mango, char and karmata fruits, cutting them in half, and removing the stones.

796 Now the women and motiari approached and the Anga went dancing to meet them. He stood before them, and they offered him liquor—'When a Gondi god drinks even one cup of liquor, he talks and dances very well', said one of my guides. Then the chelik picked up their big dhol drums and danced in a long straight line, shuffling to and fro, drumming very vigorously and crying loudly as they changed their direction. The women and girls also danced in a line, and all the Siraha-mediums began to throw themselves about and play and dance, generally carrying one of the gods in their hands. A Naitami boy had come to the wrong place and he picked up the Gutal Lalu and was dancing with it. But the Poyami people resented this, and took it from him with loud abuse.

The dancing, drumming and drinking continued till sundown, when the meat with the fruit and rice was cooked. Then the people—men and women—

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

In the first week of November, 1940, the older boys of the Masora ghotul were away watching the field-crops and the Chalan was in charge. For several

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FIG. 106. The ghotul Kotwar's wooden spears
Lengths 6' 1" and 5' 1"

FIG. 107. Iron spears used by the chelik in hunting
Lengths 6' 6" and 5' 5"

days five of the girls—Beloss, Tiloka, Piosa, Janka and Alosa—had reported to him that they too were going to watch the crops. Actually, however, they went to sleep at home. Probably they found the ghotul dull without

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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flying in the wind. Two had bows and arrows; two were magicians with winnowing-fan and measuring-sticks to discover by divination where their quarry was; one imitated a dog with a bell on his neck; and there was an old man carrying a pot and a basket to take the meat home.

The party chased the gaur round and round the field. Sometimes they lost it, and then the magicians sat down, fell into trance, measured their sticks, and shook the winnowing-fan. The dog ran round with his nose to the ground; it was a great joke to beat and kick him. After a time they shot the gaur and it rolled over on the ground. The hunters ran to it, patted, stroked, embraced it, congratulated each other; they danced round and round with delight. It was a charming scene and reminded one of the passion for the chase that still dominates the heart of every Muria. The dog fell upon the gaur and began to eat it; it had to be beaten off. Then the magicians ordered the party to pick up the great animal and carry it to a stream where they would cut it up and eat it. But the gaur came to life and chased them away.

In Kuntpadar, the magicians blew into the sambhar's ear to see if it was alive or not. The magicians there were very lively, turning somersaults and shaking their heads in trance. At Palli (Kondagaon) there was an interesting variation. One of the boys—practically naked save for a scrap round his loins—represented the *jiwa* or soul of the gaur. When the animal was injured and lay dying on the ground, its soul came to perform a strange and uncanny dance above and round the body. The boy contorted himself like a wounded worm and twisted and turned in the strangest manner. At last it fell on the body, a sign that the life had after all returned, and the gaur got to its feet and ran away.

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FIG. 143. Sling used in hunting

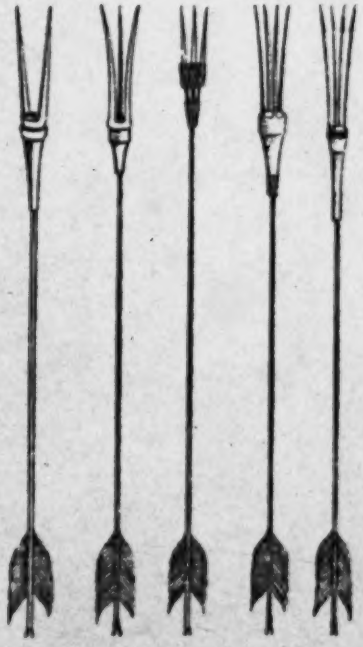
In other villages I have seen this game take another form. A boy plays the part of cowherd and takes the boys (bulls and bullocks) and girls (cows) out to graze in the jungle. They crawl along pretending to nibble grass and roots. Then the tiger or leopard appears: in Pupgaon he was an almost naked boy whose body was covered with stripes and stars made by applying white earth and charcoal with the splayed end of a castor twig; in Kuntpadar and Markabera I saw a tiger made by tying a boy round and round with strips of bark to represent the stripes, and a large cloth round the head. The tiger

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there [796 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped 787] and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 262 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.



Engram arrows
(*Length about 3'*)

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make
285 baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
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[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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302
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Dulha of Gadapal with bow and arrow

Boys catching a bat at Khutepal

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[facing p. 49]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

of the family, said that he would take all responsibility and that he had already prepared the woman by making her drunk.

When it became dark Bote picked up her axe and crowbar, and at last insisted on going home. Guddi said that, as it was dark, he would go with her for part of the way. He took a knife and an axe and persuaded Nari to accompany them. After they had gone some two hundred and fifty yards, Guddi caught hold of the woman and when she began to scream, pressed her throat to silence her. The two men then dragged her about half a mile to the tank. They took her into the water and Guddi pushed her head under and held her there until she was drowned. He then cut open her belly with his knife, half removed the foetus and slit its neck. Nari's nerve seems to have failed him at this point and he ran away home.

Maria knife (*Length of blade* 10")

Shortly after Nari's return Bote's husband came with a party of neighbours searching for her. He asked Nari if his wife had been there, and he said she had not. Very late at night Guddi returned. His wife asked him where he had been, and he beat her. In spite of his late night, however, Guddi got up very early before dawn, and abused his nephews Hirma and Rainu for over-sleeping. He told them to get up quickly and plough the field by the tank. He went ahead with his bullocks, and the two boys and Nari followed. After ploughing for a little while, Guddi left his bullocks and took the others to the tank. There he showed them the body of Bote floating in the water, and told them that he had killed her as a sacrifice. He pulled the corpse to the bank, and the others saw how the belly had been cut and the foetus partly pulled out and its neck slit. Guddi then persuaded the others to help him carry the corpse to a place nearby called Ital Lata where there was thick undergrowth. That night the four men went again and took the corpse to a hillside in the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

an undesirable proximity to her lover, and go to live elsewhere. This, however, she refused to do.

It is very difficult to discover what really happened on the night of the festival, for everybody was drunk on rice-beer. Several different versions of the incident were given. It seems probable that early in the evening Panda found his wife standing in the courtyard and slapped her; perhaps he suspected that she was looking for her lover. Nanda saw what happened and told Panda not to hit his wife, for the child she was holding in her arms might fall down and be injured. A little later, Panda wanted to get a bamboo tube to keep his tobacco in. He started to cut a bit from a pole on which bunches of maize were hanging. Nanda again interfered and told him not to cut it, for the maize would fall down. Panda took no notice and went on cutting the bamboo. Nanda then lost his temper, and told him that he was a very quarrelsome person and no one could live with him. He suggested that he should go away to another village and live with his brother. At this Panda retorted that the real reason why Nanda wanted him to go away was because he was in love with Hirme.

Godel axe

There was no violence in the quarrel at this point, and Nanda went away to his own house in the same compound. Hirme was making leaf-cups in her father's house, and later—it was dark and everyone was drunk—Nanda seems to have taken the opportunity of slipping into the room and embracing her. Suddenly Panda entered, and finding his wife and her lover together—he claims that they were actually enjoying sexual intercourse—he lost all control of himself, picked up an axe and killed his rival.

Hemla Gunda was the Dhurwa or clan-priest of the Hemla clan-god. He was also a well-known medicine-man and, although he was excommunicated for reasons that will

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 size, from those used in the plains. The plains blacksmith does recognise the Hill Maria's individual taste in such matters, but that
326 taste is always being modified by the sight, occasional use and occasional purchase of plains types, particularly if, when a new weapon is wanted in a hurry, only the latter are immediately available.

411 The blade of the average Maria knife measures 13 to 15 cm. from the point to the beginning of the tang. It is about 2·5 cm. broad where the tang begins, and from there the cutting edge curves inwards for a quarter or a fifth of its length, thence tapering with a slight convex curve to the point, which is 2 or 3 cm. to the side of the axis of the handle. The reverse edge is about 3 mm. thick in the tang, the thickness gradually diminishing towards the point. The tang is a continuation of the thick side of the blade, about 8 mm. wide where it leaves the blade and tapering for about 3·5 or 4 cm. to a pointed end. Except where it is continued in this tang, the blade has a horizontal bottom. The tang is heated and so burned into the wooden handle; the blacksmith, with this as all iron tools and weapons, supplies only the iron, and the buyer makes his own handle. The edge is produced in the first place by hammering on each side, followed by rubbing down a whet-stone. Being made of soft iron smelted from local ore, these knives can be given an extremely sharp point and fine edge. They are not usually
● [442] taken back to the smith to be sharpened, but are whetted on a stone; there is often a flat, black, polished, communal whet-stone outside the men's dormitory (*gotal*) in a hill village.

411 Besides fitting the tang into a short, cylindrical, wooden handle, about 6·5 to 7·5 cm. long, and in diameter 2 cm. at the base and
322 somewhat thinner where the tang enters it, the Hill Maria makes a wooden sheath of two flat pieces of wood trimmed roughly to the shape of the blade, each of which has on one side a low flange slightly more than half as thick as the thick edge of the blade. The two flat pieces are laid on each other, the flanged edges together, and are joined by whipping of twine, *kosa* silk or millimetre-wide thin thongs of hide at the broad top, over a groove round the centre
[531] of the sheath, and near its point. The sheath is often carved, favourite designs being rough lozenges in relief on a bar, or a bar indented, or bands of three parallel lines.

411 This knife the Maria uses for slicing bamboo and all ordinary cutting purposes; holding the handle loosely in his hand he uses its full weight for chopping with the concave portion of the blade pieces of wood up to 3 cm. in diameter, getting a surprisingly straight cross-section; he usually chops all round the circumference to a depth of a third of the diameter, then breaks off the portion to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be severed, trimming the break with the knife held and used in the normal cutting position; he carves patterns in relief with the sharp point, or, holding the knife vertically, rolls the handle between the flat palms of his hand so as to drill holes with the point, trimming the edges of the holes with a burning ember.

The Bison-horn Maria uses a similar knife, often much larger, and seldom with a sheath. His *banda* is like a dao, but it is really a glorified and enlarged knife, with a thick end, and sometimes a pronounced bend or angle in the centre of the cutting edge; he uses this for lopping thick saplings or bamboo culms. But the use of the *banda* is not universal, and may be borrowed from Parjas or other tribes to the east. Similar weapons, but socketed on to long shafts of bamboo, and known as *gagra*, are used by the northern Murias and Jhorias, occasionally by Hill Marias, as weapons of offence and defence or billhooks for bamboo and saplings; the ordinary *gagra* has a concavely curved edge and a point, the *chhuri gagra* a convex edge and no point, while the *bhalu gagra* has an edge curving concavely from the top to a bend about half way along its length, and thence concavely to the socket.

The Hill Maria calls his axe *maq'su*, which is the hill gutturalized version of the ordinary Gondi word *maras* used all over the Central Provinces. The Bison-horn Maria uses a totally different word for his axe of this shape, *godel*. The Halbi word is *tangya*. Like the Naga axe, the *maq'su* or *godel*[1] is an iron blade, decidedly suggestive of a long stone celt in form[1]; but unlike that axe, the butt of the blade ends in a socket for the haft, not in a tang inserted in a hole in the haft. The cutting edge of the blade among the Hill Marias seldom exceeds 7 cm. width, and 15 cm. is the maximum length of the blade from the cutting edge to the socket, which encloses a haft 4 or 5 cm. in diameter. It has a pronounced 'waist' just before the socket, but this is far more marked on the longer Muria *maras* than on *maq'su* or *godel*. The *godel* is usually rather more massive than the *maq'su*. The blacksmith, when giving an axe its first edge or a new edge to a blunt axe, heats the axe well in his forge, and thoroughly hammers the actual edge. He then heats it again, and hammers it flat on each side till he forms a new edge. He repeats the heating, and grinds down the edge by rubbing each side down a lump of stone. After a further slight heating he dips it in cold water to temper the edge, which is then ready for use. The haft is set at slightly less than a right-angle to the blade, the thick socket being wedged with a thin slip of wood.

A type of axe found still sometimes in the hill villages, where it is known as *pata endawna maq'su* (the song-and-dance axe, because

[1] Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, p. 65.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

when the old men of to-day were young it was the decorated axe carried by all Hill Maria men dancers), is similar to the *pharsi* battle-axe of the plains tribes. The blade is crescent-shaped, the concave being the cutting edge, and the convex outer edge being socketed in the centre to receive the haft, which fits in the same vertical plane as the cutting edge. I have seen one of these axes measuring 41 cm. between the horns of the crescent.

The Hill Marias use small throwing spears made in one piece of iron, of the same type as the much larger solid spears used by the Murias of Amabera and north Kondagaon. They have leaf-shaped but very long blades, shafts with a knob counterpoise and, below the knob, spiked butts about a foot long. They are not nowadays very skilled throwers, there being scarcely any game in the hills. The thrower stands at a right incline to his target, and, holding the spear by the point of balance, uses much the same action as the javelin thrower of modern athletics.

The Bison-horn Maria uses a long and powerful stabbing spear for killing the big game, including tiger and panther, that his beaters drive into his nets. This is about 8½ to 9 feet (2·6 to 2·8 metres) long, and consists of an iron head socketed on to a long bamboo shaft. The head consists of a blade about 30 cm. long and 7 cm. wide at the greatest width just above the shank, whence the wings taper with a slight convexity to the point; a shank nearly as long, slightly thinner where it leaves the blade than where it ends in the socket; and a socket about 22 cm. long, generally with one or more iron or brass rings which are forced down over the socket from the shank when the shaft has been inserted, to tighten the grip of the socket on the shaft. The socket below these rings often forms a convenient grip for the right hand, when the huntsman leans on his upright spear with his right upper arm extended horizontally from his elbow, and the elbow bent for the hand to grip the spear above the plane of the crown of the head. When the quarry is netted, the spear has its point lowered to the front pointing slightly downwards, the left arm is bent for the hand to grasp the spear well below the socket, while the right hand grasps it about a foot from the butt-end of the shaft, and the spearman sprints forward and stabs the quarry with a smart two-handed downward thrust.

The last weapons to be described are bows and arrows. The Hill Marias call the bow *villu*, and the Bison-horn Marias *ville*; the word, strictly speaking, means the stave only, the cord being *ha'undi* in the former and *panti* in the latter language. The stave is nearly always of bamboo, but the Bison-horn Marias, who generally use more powerful weapons than the hill men, sometimes

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

the embankment of a field, both can join in spreading brushwood over a clearing.

A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. But she must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife, or thrust the plunge-traps into the water.

FIG. 14. *Baras* or *lotti* used for cutting up meat and planing wood
Length of upright 9"

A motiari, once she is mature, must not sleep on a machan to watch the fields. She must never go with a boy to sleep there—if she does a tiger will shake it and perhaps kill them both. In some villages, she may cow-dung the thrashing-floor, provided it is of her own clan, but she cannot thrash with her feet, or winnow the grain from a fan though she may do it with her hands. She must not sow seeds of rice or millet, though she does sometimes sow beans and vegetables.

The motiari gather mahua flowers with the boys; they collect myrabolams, and extract oil. Very important, they take food to the boys while they are working in the fields. This is a constant motive of romance in folk-tales.

The motiari may attend a funeral and most of the festivals. At the New Eating ceremonies they prepare the plates and cups for the feast, and are eager spectators of the ceremonies. They dance at most festivals with the boys. But I know of no Muria women Siraha-mediums or Gunia-diviners, though these are not unknown in Chhattisgarh. I am told, however, that there is a female Siraha of Pendrawandin in Gudabera, and there is a tradition that in former times it was the women who sacrificed to the gods. 'In those days, they used to cut the tail instead of the head and the bird or animal instead of dying would escape. Men soon got annoyed at this and said, "You women do not know how to do it; from now we will sacrifice". Men then began to cut off the heads of the birds and animals and the sacrifices were complete. This is why women do not eat the head of any bird or animal offered to the gods. They said to their husbands, "Now the head is yours, ours is the tail".'

There are not many absolute taboos. A man must not husk grain or grind it. He must not wash women's clothes or wear them—except at night. Girls must not wear boys' turbans and clothes except on ceremonial occasions.

On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

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Plate LXVII

Motiari of Kongera grinding

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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māma' and so on. As they give the salute they stretch out their hands, sometimes both hands, lower and then raise them in a pretty gesture. Often

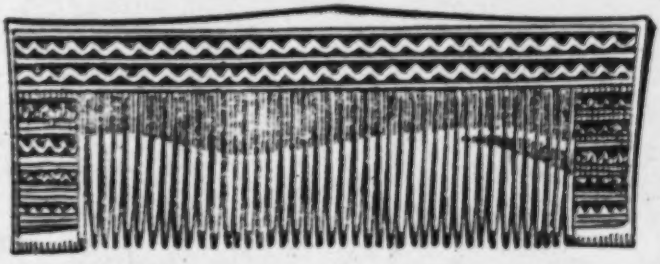

FIG. 67. Carved wooden comb from Toinar
Length 6"

they only use one hand, laying it on head or shoulder; in the east of Kondagaon they put both hands on the head.

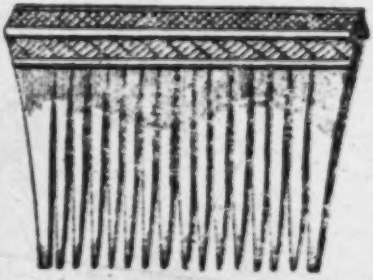

FIG. 68 A comb from the Narayanpur Tahsil
Width 2¾"

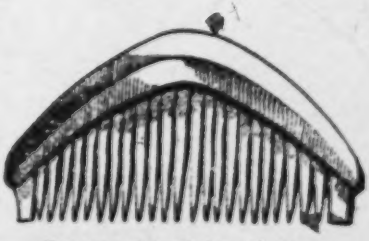

FIG. 69. A comb from Phulpar
Width 3¼"

When the boys have finished, the motiari go round in the same way, with the same gestures and salutes, generally speaking in high, almost artificial voices. In Phulpar the girls did not say Johar, but repeated the ghotul title twice, thus—'Gaita, Gaita' or 'Kotwar, Kotwar'. A girl should not salute a boy to whom she is betrothed or her Lamhada, and she must be very careful about using the proper terms of relationship—for by this means she is reminded of the tribal laws of avoidance. In some ghotul this ceremony is performed twice, once when the company first assembles and

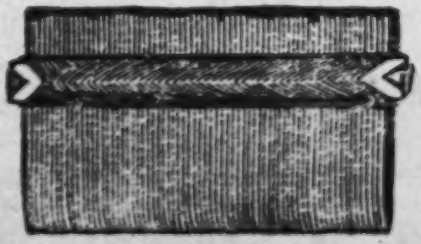

FIG. 70. A bamboo comb, of a type sometimes made by Muria for sale in the bazaars
Width 2¾"

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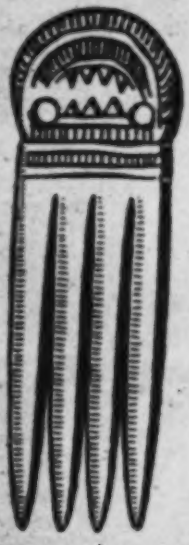


FIG. 74. Comb of a type often used in the Abujhmar foothills
Length 3½"

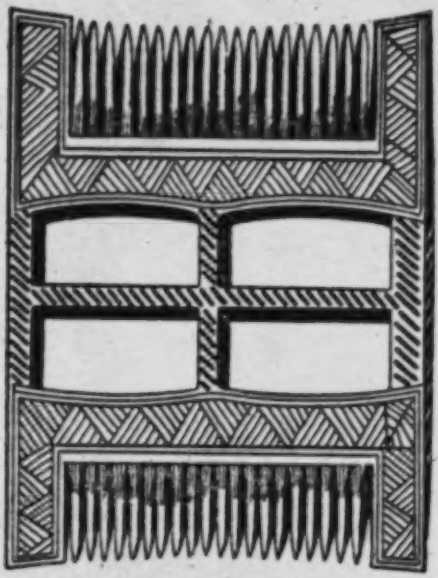
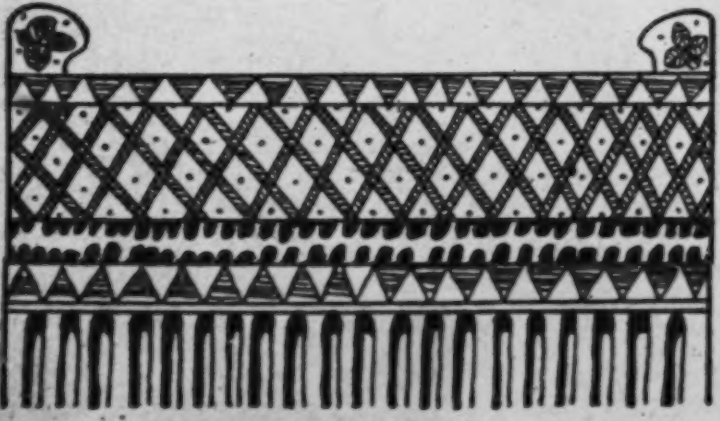


FIG. 73. Double comb from Bhanpuri
Height 4½"



From Paul Schebesta's article 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula' in *JRAS* (1929), p. 738
FIG. 76. Malayan comb
(*See p. 388n*)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

each other's arms on the sleeping-mat. They often have to lie very close together; sometimes two boys have one girl between them; many of the couples actually touch each other. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the compound.

FIG. 77. Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel
Width 4½'

In ghotul where the motiari always sleep in the ghotul, bedtime is a simple matter of routine. In places where they only stay on sometimes, they go singing to their own house or verandah. When they are not sure what to do, they stay on till the Sirdar says, 'Well, girls, are you going to sleep here or are you going home?' The Bekoa answers, 'It's very late, I think we'd better stay here' or 'There's a tiger about, it's not safe to go'. The Sirdar says, 'Then go to your mats at once and don't keep us awake any longer'.

In Chandabera, the boys told me that the girls often said, 'Let's go home tonight' and ran away. But if a boy was anxious to sleep with his girl, he would ask the Kotwar to keep them and he always did.

FIG. 78. Comb with carved leopard
Width 5'

FIG. 79. The kasua-gota or tortoise box
Height 4'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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FIG. 80. Bird-comb from Chandabera
Height 4½"

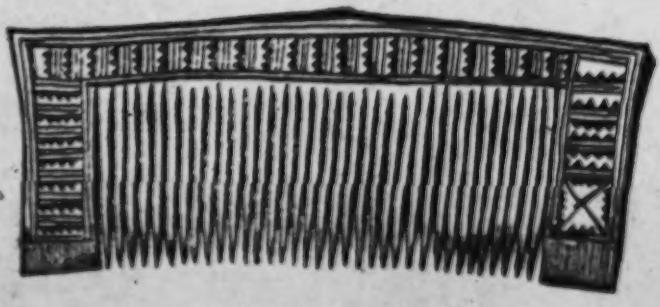

FIG. 81. Comb from Bhorpal
Length 3½"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Betle marrāte pungār puy ānta

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

[1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The eavers lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'

[2] Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 271.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAS* (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 396ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poesy* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Muduvar.—Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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FIG. 87. Head-band of sago palm fibre from Malakot (*see p. 383*)
Length 23"

FIG. 88. Neck-band of date palm fibre from Bayanar (*see p. 383*)
Length 16"

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devoted lover. Every comb, however, is a gift. When a girl wants a new one she brings two annas' worth of silver metal from the bazaar and that

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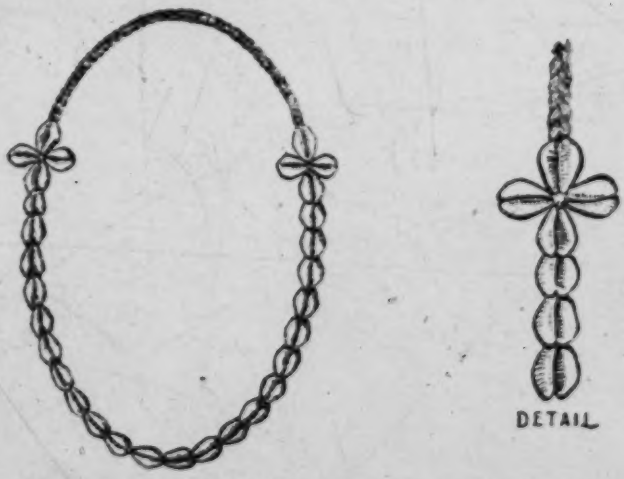

FIG. 89. Cowrie head-band from Ulera. The cowries are attached to a cord made of carefully woven sago palm fibre
(*See p. 386*)

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

night goes to comb the hair of the boy from whom she desires a present. She does his hair with special care and whispers in his ear, 'Look, boy, I have brought some silver, make me a nice comb'. The boy says, 'I don't know how to'. The girl says, 'But of course you know'. Then the boy says, 'Well, what will you give me? Will you....?' The girl says, 'Never', meaning 'Yes', and the boy makes the comb.

In well-disciplined ghotul a boy cannot give a comb to a motiari without the permission of the Kotwar; sometimes it has actually to pass through the Kotwar's hands. For such a gift seems to be regarded as a very definite and important step in the love relations between a boy and girl, and it is considered necessary by the ghotul authorities to keep a check on such intimacies in case there is any scandal or trouble. To this witness some lines in a Paskna Pata from Bandopal:

> Where did you get a comb like that?
> You got it from the embrace of a chelik.
> One comb for once, two combs for twice.

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If a comb is lost or broken, the chelik must make a new one. Otherwise his motiari says, 'How can I comb his hair?' If the Kotwar hears about it, he orders the boy to make one, and he does so at once.

Most combs are made of mahua or karraha wood. Implements used in their manufacture are a small saw, ¾" broad and 6" long, rather like a fret-saw; a *kadri* knife; a *hujji* chisel and a *tatti* adze.

The Kotwar of the Phunder ghotul made a comb for me. He took a piece of mahua wood 2' long and 3" broad, supported one end on a bit of wood and gradually planed down one end, first with the adze and then with his knife. He stood it on end and trimmed the top; then with the saw cut a number of slits 1" deep, measuring them with a twig to ensure that they were even. He cut them again and again to enlarge the slits, leaving on either side of the wood a space uncut.

Now another boy came and held the wood firmly, and the Kotwar cut off 1¼" from the top with his saw, first cutting half through on one side, then turning the wood over and doing it from the other. Finally he broke the piece off and trimmed it with his knife. So far the process had taken half an hour, but the small piece of wood had taken shape as a comb. The boy now spent fifteen minutes shaping the sides, then with his chisel he enlarged the slits again and carefully cleaned the apertures between the spikes. After this, he held the comb in the hollow of his left hand and grasping the chisel firmly in the right and pressing it down hard began to decorate the comb with various patterns. By the time he had finished, he had spent two-and-a-half hours on the work, the greater part of the time being spent on the decoration.

[314]

The next morning the Kotwar went to a wild fig tree to extract its sticky, milky gum. He struck a branch with the blunt end of his axe and caught some drops of gum in a leaf-cup. He brought this back and sat down by a fire. He spread the gum on either side of the comb with a bit of straw, warmed it on the fire, applied more gum, laid the silver paper over it and rubbed it in hard with the handle of his chisel till the pattern showed. He repeated the process on the opposite side toasting the comb before the fire by sticking it on the end of his chisel. Finally he brought out the pattern clearly by pressing in the silver paper with his own finger-nails, and washed it with a straw dipped in water.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

In some villages of the Bomra Pargana, if a comb falls down, it must be left where it is for a whole day. No one else may pick it up, and the owner should say nothing to anybody.

FIG. 90. Wooden hair-pins from the Jhoria area
Longest pin 4½"
(See p. 386)

In most places, there is a rule that when a motiari marries she should remove her combs within a certain time. Naturally if she has a dozen or more in her hair, the presents of a ghotul lover, it is only proper for her to return them to him when she marries someone else. But suppose it was her own husband who gave them to her, or another girl? Then she continues to wear them. It is not safe to say that a girl with combs is a motiari, one without combs a wife. I have seen women with three children wearing them. But usually the smart silvered ones are removed within a year of marriage.[1]

IV. CLEANLINESS

The Muria are, on the whole, a clean and tidy people. The chelik and motiari especially are devoted to their toilet, wash their clothes frequently,

[1] The Lakher and Lushai share the Muria objection to other people using their combs. 'They fear that if a man who is subject to headaches or who has a vampire soul uses another's comb', the owner may suffer in the same way.—Parry, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

I

"We obey our ghotul laws more faithfully than the laws of Government; for we ourselves made the ghotul laws, and so we love them."

—Common Muria saying

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THE life of the chelik and motiari is strictly regulated, and when a leader is appointed one of the powers with which he is entrusted is that of judging and punishing offenders against the ghotul code. It is surprising how important a place these punishments hold in the minds of the

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FIG. 97. Comb from Palari. The two horns are of bees-wax
Width 2½"

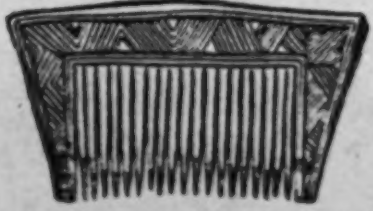

FIG. 98. Comb from Antagarh
Width 5"

FIG. 99. The *Pudo-gota*
Actual size

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

children. When they are initiated, the little boys are told—'You must come every day, or you'll be punished'. The girls are likewise told—'You must

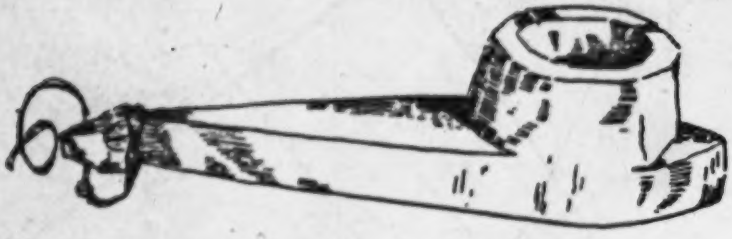

FIG. 100. Tobacco pounder
Length 18'

come every day, or you'll be punished. You must massage the chelik, or you'll be punished.' And when a girl leaves the ghotul at marriage, her

FIG. 101. *The Dudh-mogri gota*
Height 4'

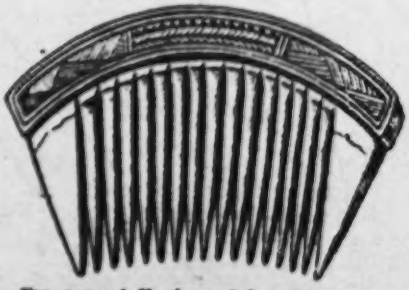

FIG. 102. A Jhoria comb from Markabera
Width 3¾'

most tender memories, as revealed in the farewell songs, seem to be connected with punishments. *'Dudhār gai ke lāl saikai*—The cow that gives milk:

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

this exchange goes so far as to include the sleeping arrangements, but I have no real information about this. Food is provided by the hosts. If the Irpu Pandum, the festival of the eating of the new mahua flowers, has not been celebrated, there is a strict taboo on the drinking of mahua spirit. If this taboo is broken the supply of flowers will fail. In Jungani there was a rule that the dance must not be performed at all until the flowers were gathered in. Here it was supposed that the noise of the stick-dance has a bad effect on the crop.

At the end of the expedition the boys and girls return to their own village and dance before the Gaita's house round and round the semur tree. The Gaita offers liquor to it, then pulls it up and throws it away. The ring is given to the leader of the dance. Finally the boys tie their sticks to a rope across a path near the village boundary in the usual way.

If there is a bazaar in the neighbourhood the boys visit it and dance in its four corners.

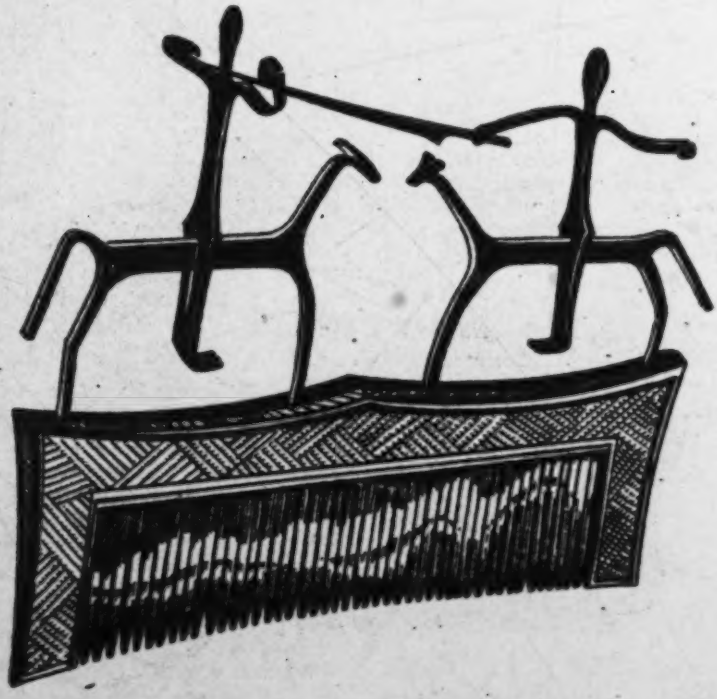

FIG. 121. Comb with chelik and motiari on horseback

The sticks used in this dance are called either *dandár* or *kátí* and are usually made of surteli wood. Before the Gaita pulls up the semur tree the boys hang their sticks upon it.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are
285 allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
614

[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

decided to go to his father's house to get his children by his former wife. The girl insisted on going with him. As they were approaching Telam they had the misfortune to meet Kosa coming along the same path. Apparently some people returning from a bazaar had told him that Boti had returned, and he had set out to seek vengeance armed with a *gagra*. When the boy saw his elder brother, he said, 'My fate is good, for it has sent you to me, since you have run away with my wife'. And so saying he struck Boti across the face. At that Boti seized his brother by his arms, and there was a struggle in the course of which Kosa was killed.

Gagra knife
(*Length* 18")

When Boti returned from jail, he had to make special offerings in addition to undergoing the usual ceremony of purification. Since he had kept his younger brother's wife, he had to sacrifice to the Departed of his house, and to his clan-god. If he had not done this, his body would have swollen and he would have died. As it was, he was impotent for a whole year after he was released from jail.

V

It is perhaps surprising that there are not more murders as a result of the liberties allowed a youth with his elder brother's wife. Boti stood in this pleasant relation to Mase and as a result they poisoned Mase's husband in order that they could be regularly married. The murder of Tati Hirme was due to her rejection of her dead husband's younger brother when he came to claim her.

It is possible that the remarkable forbearance shown by Ujji Poda towards Kopa, his younger cousin-brother, who was in love with his wife, Ragho, was due to his realization that Kopa was not breaking any tribal or social conventions:

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

congress. Hebka Masa killed his wife Pakli in consequence of a long dispute, but immediately before the tragedy she refused to lie with him. Barse Chappe, a polygamous invalid, was first refused by both his wives and later by his senior wife because he desired to perform the act in a semi-public place. Marvi Deva saw his wife with a man and when, probably to test her, he asked her to give herself to him and she refused, he killed his baby daughter and tried to kill her. Kosa, an almost imbecile paralytic, asked his wife to have intercourse with him; she abused him and he stabbed her to death. Doga, rejected sexually by his elder brother's widow, was so affronted that he killed her. Mundra, who so brutally treated his wife Pande, asked her to have sexual congress with him and was refused only an hour before he met his death at her hands.

Decorated banda knife (*Length 3'*)

Such a refusal may also drive a man to suicide. Marvi Joga, the Waddai of Mathadi, was always quarrelling with his wife and threatening to remarry. One day at the funeral ceremony of his brother's son, he drank a lot of surem, and when he came home he tried to have intercourse with his wife. But she refused saying, 'You are always talking about another wife. Why don't you go and get one?' and she went away to sleep in the Room of the Departed. Joga, intoxicated and desperate at his wife's refusal, hanged himself.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

to abuse the old man, calling him *mailotia* and thief. Masa did not mind the reflection on his relations with his mother who had been dead for many years. But he greatly objected to being called a thief, for this came nearer home and he replied hotly that it was Oyami Masa who was the real thief, since he had stolen seven cattle from a village in Sukma Zamindari. The boys were very angry at this—possibly the accusation was true and therefore dangerous—and went off threatening that they would tell Oyami Masa and take their revenge. Already drunk, the boys went to Oyami Masa's house and there the relatives gathered together and plotted to give Masa a good beating; they may even have decided to get rid of him altogether. At about 10 o'clock that night the six men armed with sticks came to Masa's house. Oyami Masa led the way in and began to beat his cousin. The stick he had was a rotten one and broke immediately. But as bad luck would have it, his eye fell on a heavy rice-pestle, and he picked this up and delivered several heavy blows which fractured Masa's skull in two places and would alone have been sufficient to kill him. Masa's son and brother tried to save him. But the other men knocked them down, and then belaboured Masa with their sticks until they were certain he was dead. When examined the body was a mass of injuries—there were nine fractures of the ribs, the left ear was torn and the spleen badly ruptured; there were bruises everywhere. When their work was done, the men departed doing the *sui* whistle which, indeed, one witness declared Oyami Masa whistled as he led the attack on his cousin.

Rice-pestle (Length 4')

Perhaps the most notable thing about this incident was the way Oyami Masa tried to save his fellow-conspirators by taking all the blame upon himself. He said that, as he was going for the night worship in connection with the festival, Masa shouted at him and accused him of instigating some Mahara

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *penda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiwa* and making it useless for any magic.

Hair-dressing

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

515 the streams for the sexes, and they never bathe together. But the Hill Maria does not know the use of soap; occasionally his women follow the practice of the plains women and scour their hair with a plaster of black earth well rinsed out later. His nails are generally long and very dirty. The infant and the toddler are occasionally washed with water from a gourd. Where there is no stream near or water is scarce, the daily ablutions are often performed with water dipped from an earthen water-pot with a [415] gourd ladle, called *paghas* by the Hill Marias and *orha* in the plains, made from a gourd shaped like a large European smoking pipe; the straight stem is hollow and holed at the end; the stem is held near the bowl between the chin and collar-bone or shoulder and water tilted down from the bowl on to the body by dropping the other shoulder, while the hands rub the limb thus wetted. Needless to say, ablutions thus performed are not very effective.

The Bison-horn Maria also on occasion 'washes' with the ladle, but generally is cleaner than the Hill Maria, and is beginning to buy cheap soap in the bazaars. He will wash his hands before a meal, unlike the hill man. He has his daily dip, but generally in the evening only; and the women definitely bathe only in the evening on their way back from the fields. Both bathe naked, but they wash their clothes far more readily than the Hill Maria, living indeed in the 'bazaar' plains with several Mahra weavers in their midst.

514 The Hill Maria, unlike the Hindu, does not wash after defeca-
515 tion, but wipes himself with leaves. The plainsman is learning the Hindu habit. Neither a Hill nor a Bison-horn village is ever as noisome as the average Hindu village of so 'advanced' a tract as the Maratha country of Nagpur or Berar, where at night the village streets are used as a public latrine and it is difficult to pass clean-shod in the morning. The Hill Maria generally retires into the jungle to ease himself, and the Bison-horn either does the same or uses the *bari* or vegetable garden at the back of his house.

356 A Hill Maria's house is really clean only for the first month or
361 two after it is made, and there is no regular re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung and mud. The interior is rapidly grimed with smoke and dust; and if the Maria has any article he wishes to keep clean he stores it up a tree or in his granary. But his house seldom has to last him more than four or five years, after which, his *penda* slope being exhausted, he and the other villagers move their houses to one of the alternative village sites, and his old house is ultimately burnt, either deliberately or as a matter of course in the annual firing of the forest grasses. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is now a dweller in permanent habitations, save for an occasional shift for superstitious reasons. His houses are therefore

[See ch. 11 pp. 418-419. – Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

might be, they could always obtain a small cloth. Of the men, Glasfurd observed only that they were certainly more scantily clad than any he had hitherto seen; of the women, that their clothing, like that of the men, was scantier than that of other Maria women, consisting only 'of a very small cloth wrapped once round the loins', while 'some of the elder women and children wore only a square patch of cloth, suspended on a cord fastened round the waist, upon which bamboo rings were strung'. 291

The Hill Marias are now gradually learning to dress in the same fashion as the Jhorias and Murias of Antagarh or the Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara, and are wearing their loin-cloths, turbans and ornaments. But in the villages of the interior, and everywhere among the older inhabitants, the old fashions still survive. The loin-cloth is little more than a length of cloth a foot or fourteen inches broad, twisted or rolled so that it makes a strip round the waist about five inches wide or sometimes much less, passed between the legs tightly, so that in front it seems like a bag for the private parts and that behind it disappears between the buttocks, brought out and wound again round the waist, the end being passed through the waist fold and allowed to hang down over the right buttock; this end is called *toṛa* (tail), and in the case of small boys reaches nearly to their ankles, getting shorter as the wearer ages. Above this there should be a girdle of cowry shells, worn so close to the loin-cloth as to be partly concealed by it; but cowries have become unobtainable, now that for forty years or more they have ceased to be currency, and the wearing of the cowry girdle is, as they admit, dying out, though old girdles are jealously preserved. Some wear just a cord instead of the girdle. Glasfurd says that in 1862 Marias sometimes wore, instead of the cowry girdle, a girdle of about ten or fifteen cords of the same form but smaller than those worn then by Gadba women, which he described thus:— [301]

'The girdle is somewhat singular; it is composed of forty to fifty separate cords of about eighteen or twenty inches in length, which are lashed at the ends; it is fastened in front. From the number and size of the cords, this girdle gives the wearer a strange appearance.'

I have not seen anything of this kind among the Hill or Bison-horn Marias of to-day. Sometimes cloth is so short that there is only a cord round the waist supporting a strip of cloth passing between the legs with a flap hanging down over the cord in front and behind. But generally now there is a tendency to widen the loin-cloth, and not to wear much of a *toṛa*; it used to fulfil the useful purpose of a bag for receiving grain allotted for food at harvest and feasts, and indeed, the end of the loin-cloth is still so used. The Tokalor clan of Erpanar in Mangnar *pargana* is said to have obtained its [415]

[Secondary p. 48. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

name because its founder and members, whenever grain was being given out, were found always to have extra long tail flaps (here pronounced *toka*) to their loin-cloths. A broader-woven cloth makes it possible for it to be taken once round the waist in its full unfolded width, so as to cover the buttocks and private parts. The *toga* hangs sometimes over the left buttock, and, in the south of the hills, sometimes in front of the body in the Godavari fashion.

Tucked into the girdle or the loin-cloth are knives with or without wooden sheaths, razors (as already seen), hollow bamboo tubes filled with tobacco, or little tobacco boxes of carved wood or tree-seeds, or of basketry (the last kind is sometimes worn on the left shoulder on a cord passing round the neck and under the left arm-pit); a comb may hang over the buttock from a cord; and occasionally on the Dantewara side a larger knife approximating to the *tanda* or dao used by the Bison-horn Marias and Parjas.

The older Marias wear no cloth on their heads, and no ornaments in their hair. But it is general now to wear an apology for a *pagri* or turban consisting of one folded Mahra cloth wound round the forehead and tied at the back of the head. Youths wear between this and the back or side of their heads tail feathers of jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo (which they stick into their crown-tuft knots if they have no *pagri*). This head-cloth is often dirty and worn, and looks suspiciously like all that is left of an old friend of a loin-cloth.

Men and women almost invariably go unshod; but occasionally a pair of very coarse sandals of untanned cowskin with a thong over the big toe and another over the four small toes is worn, generally only when there is a cut or a heel-crack to be protected from the ground.

Short of complete nakedness, man could hardly wear less than the Hill Maria in his most primitive state. His scanty frontal covering often leaves little to the imagination in its utter inadequacy. But it is to the fact that he wears so little that he owes it that he is far freer from scabies, itch and ringworm than the Bison-horn Maria, and the Murias and others of the plains, who more and more are imitating Hindu clothes, but are too poor to afford either much washing or spare suits. At the numerous State dispensaries these are the commonest complaints, and treatment is useless because the patients will not leave off the dirty, infected clothing. Luckily, coat and 'waskat' are still rarities in the hills; Bardal Chamru of Kutul, the headman or *majhi* of Bardal *pargana*, and his brother Bardal Boranga, who used to accompany me when I toured near their villages, always arrived coated and waistcoated above their loin-cloths, but would discard the obnoxious and unnecessary

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 to the marksman's right. He stands obliquely to his target, with feet slightly apart and body bending forward over the left hip. The nock in the arrow shaft is held to the string of the bow, in the Abujhmar hills by the index and middle fingers only of the right hand unless the marksman is not strong enough not to use his third finger also; the Bison-horn Marias always use all three. The left thumb rests perpendicularly along the inner edge of the belly of the stave, the arrow resting, on the left of the stave, in the arch between the left thumb and index finger. The latter is laid lightly along the top of the shaft and pointed as a sight towards the target. The other left fingers are brought round the back of the stave. The string is then drawn to the rear by the right hand and released. No ring or other protector is worn on the thumb, though it is sometimes cut on the inner side a little above the knuckle.

Glasfurd, in para. 87 of his report, thus describes another form of release :—

> 'All the Marias . . . often use the feet in bending the bow, while they pull the string with both hands. An arrow discharged in this manner, it is said, would almost pass through the body of a man or deer: this method is only had recourse to in elevated positions, such as from the tops of rocks, hills, and precipices, upon any object below.'

Despite many enquiries, I never found a modern hill or plain Maria who could use this method. A few old men said it was used by wandering 'Nahal' hunters, now very rarely met in Bastar; none could remember it ever being used by Marias.

● 415 No quivers are used by any Marias. Arrows are carried in the hand, or by fixing the point of a barb in the hair-tuft, or in a cord tied round the head if bald.

534 No Marias appear ever to use a musical bow on a winnowing-fan
171 over a pot of water as is done by low Hindu castes and Murias around Kondagaon for the *Tija* festival in the month of Bhadon.

The Hill Maria slays a very occasional panther or barking-deer
151 with his bow, but is not a good shot. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is often a deadly shot up to forty or fifty yards. A young man in a village just below the Aranpur pass, with a powerful bow of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood at fifty paces range sent an arrow through the bullseye of a target which I set up for him against a *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) tree; it penetrated 4 cm. into the very hard wood of that tree.

411 No other actual weapons are used by Marias, save for an occasional old sword of one of the traditional Indian *talwar* patterns which has survived the general disarming after the 1910 rebellion. But it is as well to describe here the few digging hand-tools used.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XI

482
142
291
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HILL MARIA WOMEN CARRYING GOURDS OF WATER

HILL MARIA WOMAN CARRYING A LEAF-BOX OF GRAIN

(Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt)

361
342

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE STREET, TELAM, NEAR KATAKALIAN

[FACING p. 118]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

342 of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner
251 where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of
[769] the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are
[832] far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

342 The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small
[513] children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *akki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *usipal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc.
[273] If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like
● [415 an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction
326] in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orha*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

343 There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

422 The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

it is not much used among Bison-horn and Hill Marias in comparison to the *salphi* or sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*) which is found wild and is extensively propagated. When the *salphi*, after much cutting of the spadix for the intoxicating sap, ceases to flower, the interior of the stem yields a fibrous pith. This the Hill Maria women (probably the Bison-horn also) pound on a large flat stone with a heavy oval pebble held in their right hand, to separate pith from fibre. The resultant pith 'grain' looks like lime, and is steamed into cakes; an earthenware pot has a little water poured into it, and over the water bamboo sticks are criss-crossed and covered with *siari* leaves as a platform for the pith to be steamed; no salt or sugar is added.

Actually most of the fruit already mentioned is collected by women and children; the men, of course, deal with the toddy and sago palm sap, and their methods will be described in the section on drinking and intoxicants. The men collect those forest products which they need for basketry or rope making, or in finding which there is an element of the chase. They like to roam about with their bows and arrows while their women are busy gathering fruit.

The women gather also various leaves, flowers and seeds as vegetables. They use the young green leaves and the seeds of the sal (*Shorea robusta*); the flowers of the *giril marra* shrub (*Indigofera arborea*); the young curled fronds of bracken in the Abujhmar hills, possibly also on the Bailadila mountains, where, too, it is common (the Hill Marias call it *handa jabba* and the Bison-horn *anda koser*); the seeds of the marking nut tree (*Semecarpus anacardium*; *bhelwa*); the young green shoots, pith and seeds of the bamboo; the fruits of the *ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*). The digging of forest roots and yams in the rains is one of the women's chief occupations; there are many varieties, and some are now cultivated. In the early rains a much sought after foods are the *khudrati* or *bora* fungus, and the mushroom. Various wild plants are gathered as vegetables from marsh and river valley, especially the *chiur*, the long thin leaves of which are like small hyacinth leaves, and are a favourite food of wild buffalo and bison. Women and men collect large supplies of *siari* or elephant creeper leaves for use as plates and drinking vessels. *Aki* is the Gondi word for a leaf, and the assonance *aking-waking* is commonly used as covering all produce which the Maria collects from the forest.

In August and September the Bison-horn Maria women spend hours swishing a basket[1] over the tops of certain wild grasses in the fields to collect the seeds, which are eaten like the small hill grains.

[1] Hill Maria women also do this, using little wicker-work shields fastened to bamboo sticks to beat the grass seeds into a basket.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE XV

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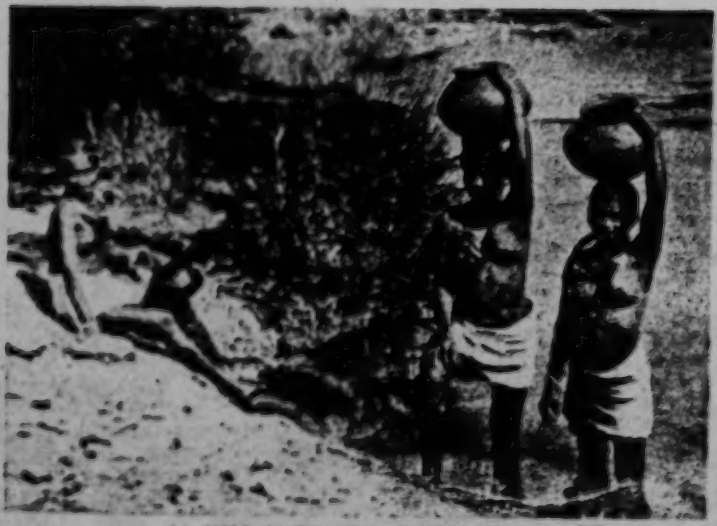
HILL MARIA DANCERS



482
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HILL MARIA DOMESTIC LIFE
Fetching water from river
(*Photographs by Baron E. von Eichstedt*)

[Facing p. 184]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 735 economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again."[2]

177 291 Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

342 The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

273 656 405 On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa.*
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

415
516

[Verrier Elwin

Marvi Bhima and Muchaki Kondi making leaf-cups at Bergum

[End Plate I]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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515

Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria mother with her newly-born child at Maranda. Note the arrow driven into the ground where the placenta is buried, and the stone for bathing

[End Plate P]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Good AW32
Muria

142
291
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415
516

The chiefs are assembled

[Frontispiece]

Plate IV

142
291
516
415

A Muria of Nayanar greets his friends before drinking mahua juice

[p. 12 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do. 252

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing. [464]

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it. [462]

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath. [585]

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground. 251

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'. 415

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bŏri*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals. 796

Irpu Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Kurum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Korta or *Puna Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

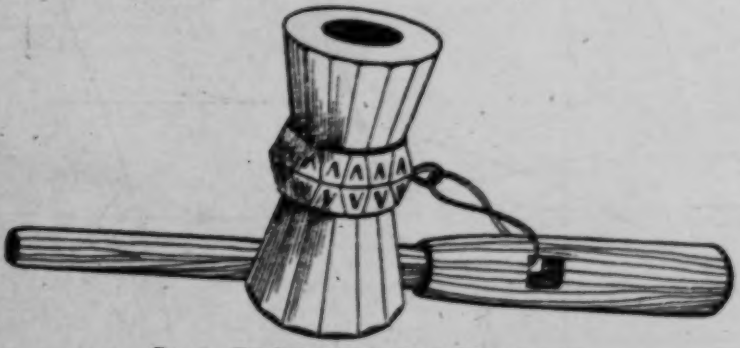


FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chulik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of ghotul leaders; it is distributed when a boy or girl leaves the ghotul after marriage; it is a convenient and compendious means of paying a fine. The chelik offer it to their drums before a wedding, and drink it in honour of Lingo at the end of the Pus Kolang dance.

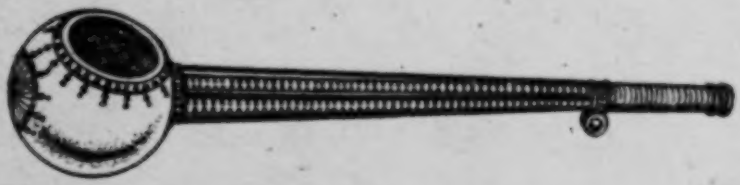


FIG. 13. Brass *orhi* used for ladling liquor
Length 8"-9"

This homely drink, so intimately connected with every aspect of their lives, so accessible to the forest-dwellers, so readily and cheaply prepared, may not be distilled by the Muria in Bastar or by the aboriginals anywhere. Its profits must be divided between the State and the middleman. Home-distillation is everywhere forbidden, and the privilege of the manufacture and sale of the spirit is farmed out to contractors in open auction. The business has thus passed into the hands of the most degenerate type of Hindu and Mussalman adventurer, for few aboriginals have either the means or the enterprise to compete with the sophisticated aggression of the outside world in the open market. These adventurers rob both the aboriginals and the State. They dilute the spirit; they put soda in it to cover the fact of their tampering; they make false returns; they use filthy water in unclean pots;[1] their shops are centres of the most degraded type of alien immigrant into tribal territory.

When the National Congress came into power in 1938, they declared that they would not apply their Prohibition laws to Europeans or aboriginals. It would have been more consistent had they allowed the aboriginal to distil his own liquor and had thus ceased to draw revenue from his drinking habits. The real evil of the present system is not that the aboriginal gets drunk, but that in order to get his liquor he is forced into contact with the worst type of alien and outsider.

In this respect conditions in Bastar are better than in many other parts of India. The Excise Department is efficient and understanding; the State controls the mahua trade, but allows the aboriginal great freedom in the use of toddy and salphi. But nothing can atone for the evil of depriving a primitive people of a natural right.

However, once that has been done, the arrangements in Bastar are as good as can be imagined. The spirit is cheap, only two annas a bottle,[2] and passes are freely granted to the Muria and Maria to purchase whatever is needed for ceremonial and social occasions. As a result there appears to be very little illicit distillation in either Kondagaon or Narayanpur. The figures of prosecutions for the five years, 1937–41, are these:

[1] The riddle 'Man and wife pass in the same lane', to which the answer is 'The two pipes of the still', probably hints at the dirt of the Kalar's out-still.
[2] This was in 1941.

585
●415

The bride's bath

Plate XXIV

Chabk fan the bride dry after her bath

[p. 94 (b)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

each other's arms on the sleeping-mat. They often have to lie very close together; sometimes two boys have one girl between them; many of the couples actually touch each other. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the compound.

In ghotul where the motiari always sleep in the ghotul, bedtime is a simple matter of routine. In places where they only stay on sometimes, they go singing to their own house or verandah. When they are not sure what to do, they stay on till the Sirdar says, 'Well, girls, are you going to sleep here or are you going home?' The Bekoa answers, 'It's very late, I think we'd better stay here' or 'There's a tiger about, it's not safe to go'. The Sirdar says, 'Then go to your mats at once and don't keep us awake any longer'.

FIG. 77. Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel
Width 4½"

In Chandabera, the boys told me that the girls often said, 'Let's go home tonight' and ran away. But if a boy was anxious to sleep with his girl, he would ask the Kotwar to keep them and he always did.

FIG. 78. Comb with carved leopard
Width 5"

FIG. 79. The Ammal-gola or tortoise box
Height 4"

2. Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
264
415
291
381

Plate LXXVIII

A motiari serves the boys

The ghotul Kotwar, son of Nari, serving food at Nayanar

[p. 388 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

291
415

Motiari of Palli with leaf-cup

Plate LXXXVII

532

Pola festival: earthen bells locks put on the roof for luck

[p. 428 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXXVIII

142
291
301
415

The Nero of Tarbalil with bamboo water-contain

[p. 428(2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●445
314

Motiari drying mahua flowers at Temrugaon

Motiari collecting and sifting mahua flowers

Plate XCVI

[p. 492 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CL

X 983
796
415

Ceremonial axe-cultivation, preparing the Gaita's field

Cooking in the Gaita's field

[p. 652 (B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

312
HS
291
142
301
302

Girls fetching water at Battanar

[FACING p. 32]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273
415
417

Apparatus for distilling mahua spirit

221
532
273

Detail of memorial pillar of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar, showing people serving rice-beer

273
285
415
417

Women making rice-beer

[FACING P. 96]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

415
452
301

Married Maria girl. The love of such young wives for the 'mother's house' sometimes leads to disaster

[facing p. 160]

417

417 APPARATUS--supports (e.g., posts, frames, ladders, scaffolds); fences and gates; pens and corrals; birdcages; apparatus not elsewhere described; etc. See also:.

Traps, snares, and fishing gear 20
Aids to locomotion and burden carrying 48
Looms 236
Furniture 348
Plumbing fixtures 414
Riding gear 498
Nautical rigging and gear 801

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

are made either of similar but lighter pole stockading, or of what the Hill Marias call *tum*, that is, fencing of grass fastened in vertical bundles between pairs of horizontal bamboo struts, which themselves are fastened at intervals to poles planted in the ground. The floors, walls and partitions are plastered with mud, the walls on the inside, and the partitions on both sides; the women do the plastering, while their men look on. They often do not plaster the veranda wall at all. They sometimes make the side walls of bamboo wattlework instead of pole stockading. They do not char or otherwise treat the bases of the poles before fixing them in the ground. The first post of the house is almost always of the sacred *saja* tree; I have not seen this adorned with bundles of thatching grass in the manner of other Gonds (cf. Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 122), but I have seen two *saja* trees near a house under construction so adorned. The youths sometimes paint the plastered partitions in white with rows of dots, with swastikas like those tattooed on girls' faces (see p. 74 above), or with crude crocodiles or tigers; I have seen women's breasts represented in relief.

The grass (rarely palm) thatch rests on bamboos tied across the roof beams, and is secured against wind by bamboos criss-crossed outside the thatch. The grass generally used is *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) which appears in the *penda* fields after the first harvest has been reaped, and in the second or third year covers them so thickly that they have to be abandoned. In March, after the harvest has been finished, you will see near all the recently abandoned *penda* clearings extensive *dab* cuttings, the grass being stacked on rough log platforms about a foot and a half above the ground in readiness for re-thatching the houses just before the break of the monsoon. The men re-thatch houses, granaries, pig-sties and temples every year.

The usual form of door is a rectangle of split bamboo wickerwork sliding between two pairs of upright wooden posts. The doorway has often a wicker-work threshold from one to two feet high, over which the sliding door fits. There are always doors in the doorways leading from outside into the veranda, from the veranda to the *angadi*, and at the back of the menstruation room; generally also in the doorways leading into the *lonu*; but I have never seen a door in the front doorway of the menstruation room. Sometimes the whole of this room is not taboo to men, the *binda* or mud threshold that marks the limit of the tabooed ground (see p. 106) being constructed across the floor of the room some two feet beyond the front entrance. Occasionally more elaborate doors will be seen, made of a small hewn wooden plank with tangs of wood left

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to fire all the *penda* plots simultaneously, and the women take no part in this work. There is no public ceremony before the firing; but the *kasyeq-gaita* starts it for the whole village by firing the first bundle of dried brushwood in his own plot with a bundle of dried grass kindled from a glowing ember brought from his own house; he makes fire with a fire-saw only if no ember is available or if it has died on its way to the *penda*. At Handawada in May 1930, heavy rain fell, and so delayed the firing of the *penda* that the *kasyeq-gaita* and village elders went in deputation to the clan-god Verma Pen of the Gume clan at Toinar and promised to sacrifice a cock to him if he would stop the rain; he only received his cock after he had fulfilled the condition and it had been possible to fire the *penda*. The firing takes only three or four days if the wood is really dry.

241 ●417 Between firing and sowing there is only a short interval in which the villagers must work hard to prepare their fences and field houses. There are no fences between individual plots as a rule, these being marked off either by lines of *til* or roselle at sowing, as already explained, or by laying a few poles lengthwise along the edge of the plots; but there is a general fence around each block of plots, except where there is no risk of animals damaging the crops. A type of fencing found only around Orcha and the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*, known as *kokor* (crooked) *garpi*, is a zig-zag stockading of logs laid horizontally on each other, the sides of each projecting angle being fifteen or twenty feet long; it looks like a vast herringbone pattern climbing the hillside. Grass *tum* fences, made in the same way as the *tum* partitions of houses already described, are used where the need for protection from animals is less, and, where bamboo is very plentiful, bamboo wattle-work fences. Another type of substantial timber fence is the *welma* fence consisting of poles laid horizontally one on another, held in position between pairs of bamboo uprights driven into the ground, and tied together at intervals between the horizontal poles; the upright bamboos are generally the two halves of a thick bamboo split lengthwise. I have not noticed in the hill villages the stockades of sal piles driven into the ground which are common among the Murias of the north and are met in Bison-horn Maria villages also.

241 342 513 The chief field-house is really a sleeping platform raised high above the level of the crops on wooden piles, similar to the field watchers' *machan* found throughout Central India, but far more elaborate; the space between the piles below the platform is walled round with bamboo wicker-work or *tum*, and there is a thick thatched roof. As in the dormitories, a fire is kept burning at night below the platform to warm those sleeping on it. Tools and weapons, and cooking pots and food, are kept in the room below the platform,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the midst of the grain crops to support them. The cut crops which are to be threshed are stacked on the wooden platforms prepared before sowing, in beehive shaped stacks, called *paki* by the Hill Marias and *kupa* in Halbi.

The women prepare the threshing-floor (*karanu* in the hill dialect), clearing a piece of ground near the stacks of grain, and plastering it with mud. In the centre of this the men erect a thick bamboo railing on posts. It is *polo* for women to take part in the actual threshing. Oxen are never used. For each cultivator in turn, beginning with the *kasyeq-gaita*, all the men and boys in the village combine to thresh (*wisna*). They range themselves in two rows facing each other, with the bamboo railing between them.[1] Holding this with both their hands and supporting themselves by it, they dance up and down, rubbing the ears of corn between their feet. They thresh in this way only *kodon*, *kutki*, rice, *ghatka*, *chikma* and *kikka*; the women pick the ears of grains like *kang* and *bajra* in baskets, and rub them in their hands to extract the grain. The cultivator whose grain is being threshed is expected to feed all the villagers helping him for that day, and if possible to give them a good drink of *salphi*, the fermented sap of the sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*), which is raised from cuttings in large numbers all over the Hill Maria country. The threshed grain is winnowed by men only, winnowing being as taboo to women as sleeping in the fields or threshing. One man stands on a rough wooden platform and pours the grain from a basket held above his head, while another, if there is not wind enough, winnows the falling grain with a basketry winnowing fan of the usual Indian type (*het* in Maria). All the men and women of the village combine to carry the threshed and winnowed grain of each cultivator to his compartment in the long granary. They never measure their produce, but there is no taboo on this account; it simply is that they grow crops for their own sustenance, and not for sale, and it is easy to see whether the grain garnered is adequate for the coming year or not. They do indeed understand something of bazaar measures, for some of their pulses and oil seeds are sold annually to raise the money needed to pay their poll-tax; they make their own measures of basketry, with different traditional shapes for each kind of produce that they sell; and at the bazaar you may see them measuring out their produce in these in front of the Hindu tradesmen to whom they are selling it. Their measures are very accurate, and need never be challenged. If they make them a little too large, they plaster a little mud over the bottom to reduce the capacity.

[1] I have since seen *kodon* and *kutki* threshed in the same way by Korkus on the Betul border of Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 In his *mudur erka* (big tree *erka*) he raises *chikma* (*Panicum miliare*), *gatka* (*Panicum frumentaceum*) and *sama*, all crops of the first sowing, ripening by early August, and, as main crops, *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) which he calls *gurra*, and *kulthi*, which he, like the Hill Maria, calls *kohala*, both of which ripen with the *penda kulthi* [273] in early December; with him *Eleusine coracana* is an important crop, as he uses it as a principal ingredient in his *landa* intoxicant. In his *marram erka* (brushwood *erka*) he sows only the pulses *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), which he calls *popul*, and *kulthi* (*Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*) which he calls *koreng*. The '*os kosra*' millets which the Hill Maria sows as a second crop after the crops reaped in August he calls '*mach kohala*', and sows not only similarly as a second crop, but also as the main crop in his *erka* land for the third and last year of its cultivation, when it is too exhausted to bear anything else.

241 423 Besides the fact observed on page 128 above that, unlike the Hill Maria, he ploughs the ashes, or digs them with his hoe, into his *erka* and *penda* lands, these lands have, therefore, this further great difference from the Hill Maria *penda* lands, that each crop has its own appropriate type of cultivation, and is therefore sown separately, not jumbled up with every other kind of crop in a hopeless welter. He is, moreover, careful to preserve any mango or other fruit trees on his plot. As he retains permanent rights over his plot, whether it is tilth or forest at the moment, he has to be more careful over its boundaries than the Hill Maria, and cannot be content with the temporary sowing of a line of *til* or roselle. At each burning, therefore, he spares important trees or stumps at boundary junctions, which he calls *sarkari* or 'authority' trees, and sometimes he leaves a thin line of trees standing along his boundary when he fells the forest. He generally grows his beans and gourds on these and other trees, not on poles stuck up in the middle of other crops like the Hill Maria.

241 [417] [231] It has been seen that he has always a *bari* garden enclosure round or near his house in the village, which he calls *lon-welung* or 'house fencing', and generally fences with either bamboo wattlework (*wadur-welung*) or a fence of brushwood tied slantwise between horizontal struts (*jhat-welung*). Here at night he pens his cattle, and the ground is thus richly manured to bear maize (*jonna*), *sarson* or mustard (*tarson*) and tobacco (*pogo*)[1] as essential crops, with in these days frequent patches of chillies, tomatoes and other vegetables. *Sarson* is the most paying crop exported from Bastar.

[1] The Hill Maria grows tobacco and a few poor chillies and tomatoes in little plots left clear of dab grasses when *penda* land is useless for grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

534
417
302

Bison-horn Maria boys repair a drum

[End Plate ZB]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

When this is done and the ground is cooled, the bullocks are brought and chelik and motiari with their ploughs drive the ashes deep into the soil.

The plough is 'the lizard that runs into its hole in the dry tree': it has 'three heads and ten legs': the cowhide reins of the oxen are described as 'the dead bullocks that go before a living man'.

Before the seed can be sown, the Wijja Pandum must be celebrated. This festival, which is preceded by a ceremonial hunt, is held at any time from April to June. Essential to the festival, one version of which I describe in detail in Chapter VII, is the hunt which foretells the success or failure of the crops, the feast on the animals killed, and the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the seed—some of which is taken away by every householder. In some villages, at the end of the ceremonies, the chelik roll the Gaita in mud from an ant-hill.

The night before the actual sowing, which is sometimes fixed when new leaf-shoots appear on the bhoir tree, all the men again sleep in the ghotul and the motiari stay at home to ensure chastity and thus avoid any possible infection of menstrual blood. On their way to the fields in the morning, they put a small heap of seed at any cross-roads they pass. Each householder has a leaf-cup of the seed that was consecrated with blood at the Wijja Pandum, and sows this after the Gaita has sacrificed a chicken in his field.

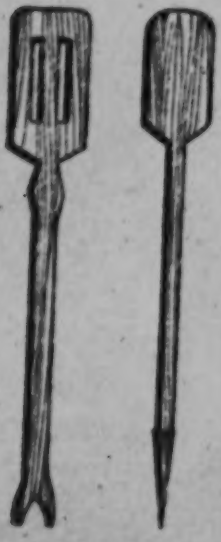


FIG. 2. *Dayi* wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking. Length 2' 9"

The Muria, unlike the Hill Maria, sows different kinds of seed in different places, but like the Hill Maria he sows them at different times. In the west and central areas there are three main sowings.

The first sowing, immediately after the first rains, is of small millets—*turo kohala* or *kosra*, *kikma* and *mandia*. *Rahar dāl* is sown with the *mandia*. Gourds and pumpkins are sown at the same time.

The next sowing is in early July of rice, *kuthi* and *urad dāl* as well as beans.

The last sowing, of what is called *os kosra*, is done in August, though not on ground that has already been used that year. Rice is again sown and *mung* and *kulthi* pulses.

Before the actual sowing of the seed, the Muria prepare their fences, and the field-huts and watching-platforms for the guarding of their crops. The fences are not, of course, as in civilised areas, to keep out their fellow-men but to protect the crops against wild animals: bison and deer are plentiful in north Bastar, especially in the Makri area, and can do much damage to the fields.

There are many kinds of fencing. Sometimes there is none at all; in the jungle clearings a line of poles is enough, in the permanent fields the embankments make a clear division. Sometimes a strong *gawao* stockade is made by placing hundreds of logs upright in the ground. Fences of bamboo wattle are also made.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A N32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*ketul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchelav*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honey-comb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitka ondār* and the *lokti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognise four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mohu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sattapuri mohu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nibiti mohu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 32. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'Is a golden box' bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 450.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585

Ceremonial greeti of the bridegroom his relations

585
417

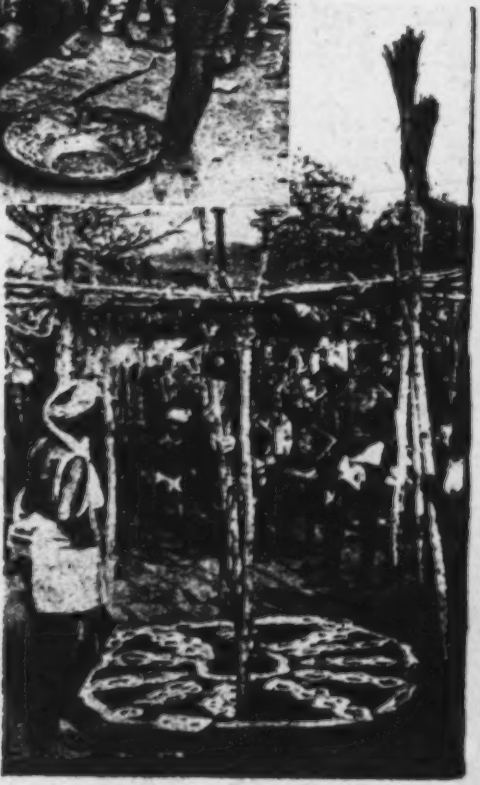


Plate XXII

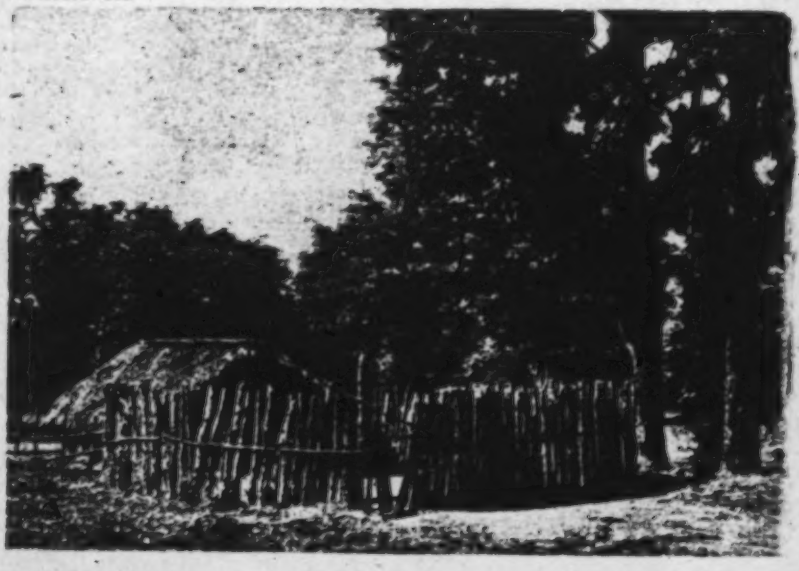
Marriage booth

[P. 82 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
342
417

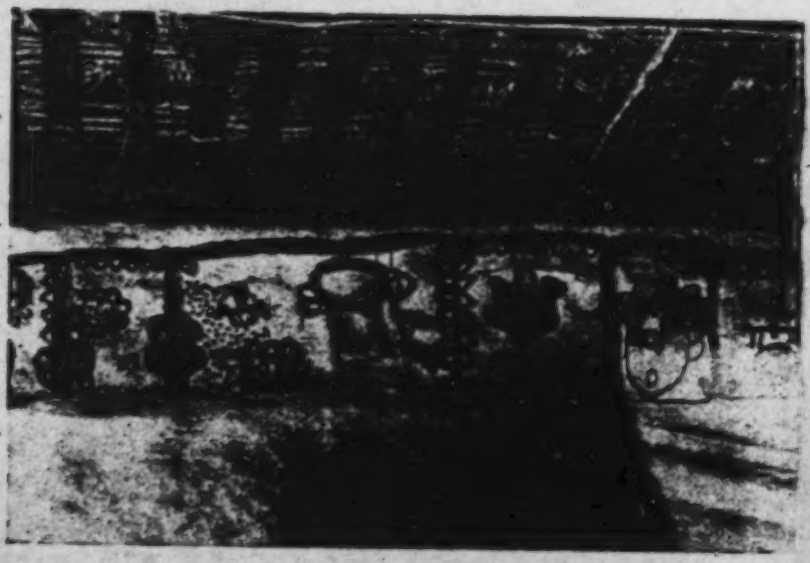
Plate LXVIII



The ghotul at Mason

Black and red wall-paintings in the More Berma ghotul

X 883
353
532



[p. 330 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
342

Plate LXX

The Baghbera

The Bandopal ghotul

[417]

[p. 338 (R)]

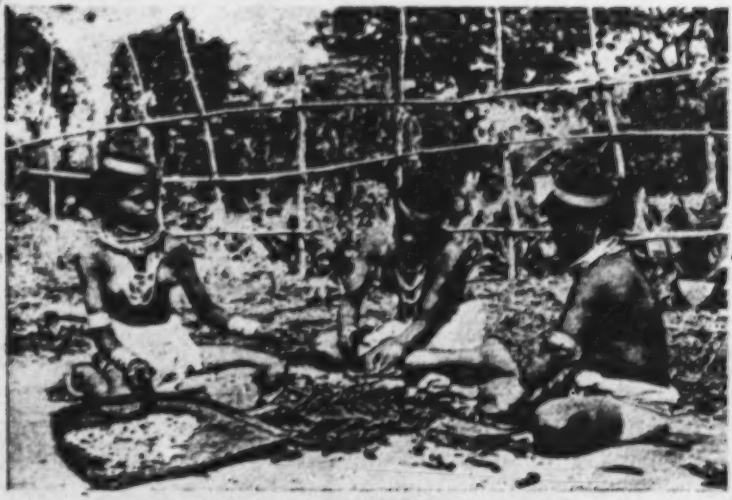
3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

285
301
482

Girl with basket at Marenda

Girls breaking pods at Khutepal

417
252
285
516



[facing p. 29]

3:Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273
415
417

Apparatus for distilling mahua spirit

221
532
273

Detail of memorial pillar of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar, showing people serving rice-beer

273
285
415
417

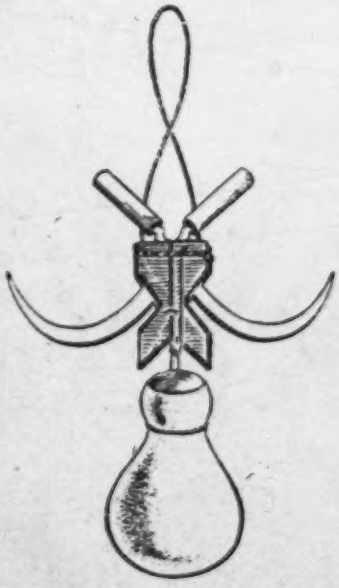
Woman making rice-beer

[FACING P. 96]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed 477 by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the 481 summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree. Once in Gogonda I saw a Maria getting up a very tall sago palm with great ingenuity. At the foot there was a pole eight feet high fixed in the ground. The climber had to get to the top of this and then, supporting himself upon it with his legs, had to catch the hook twenty feet above him with a long double bamboo pole with a loop at its end. This was no mean feat, and when it was done he had to tie the end of the swinging stick to the pole on which he had been standing and climb up to where he was able to hoist himself to the top of the tree by the branches.

In the Konta Tahsil the method of climbing is the same as that recorded for [273] the Kadir, which again compares with that of the Dyak of Borneo. Long lengths of bamboo are tied to the trunk. The climber ties round his waist an ingenious gadget, called *kach pirik*, holding two knives and a gourd, and he then climbs straight up the tree. In other villages the *mohukum* is used. This is a beautifully made arrangement of ropes by which the climber's body is attached to the trunk, and can be



Kach-pirik apparatus for extracting toddy-juice

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

slipped up it. Between his feet is tied another rope which holds them against the tree. He is thus able to get up the tree like a humping caterpillar. A Maria told me that in the evening the people go up the trees 'like a company of monkeys'. When villagers go to drink sago or toddy, they often take with them little leaf-bundles containing dry fish, roasted crabs, red ants or mahua paste.

It is impossible to say how much alcohol is drunk by the Maria. According to the Excise figures in the Dantewara Tahsil and Sukma Zamindari where the population is overwhelmingly Maria, the consumption per 100 in proof gallons is 46.48 and 50.51 respectively. In the Muria Tahsil to the north it is 32.43 in Kondagaon and 58.90 in Narayanpur. Narayanpur, it must be remembered, has a large population of Hill Maria who do not drink rice-beer which may explain why there is a higher consumption of mahua spirit. In the Bison-horn Maria area, there are —according to the Settlement records—about 75,000 toddy trees. The number of sago palms is not known, but is—I believe—considerably smaller.

Mohukum ropes for climbing toddy trees

Illicit distillation was a feature of two at least of the murders. In the last five years 143 cases were detected in the Dantewara Tahsil, 91 in Bijapur, 65 in Jagdalpur as against only 11 in Kondagaon and 18 in Narayanpur. This certainly suggests that the Bison-horn Maria are much more given to illicit distillation than their brethren of the north. But, of course, these figures may only reflect greater energy

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

In the chapter on marriage we saw how the elders had to witness the betrothal ceremonies, and how the *panchayats* deal with cases of divorce and elopement. It may be added that among the Hill Marias the clan-headman, like the *Sendhia* of the Chanda Marias, gets certain traditional fees which the parties have to pay in addition to the compensation which the *panchayat* may award to the injured parents or husband, or to the cost of the tribal feast; at every marriage in Kutru and Bhairamgarh Mar the clan-headman gets a fee of eight annas; when a *panchayat* has settled the compensation to be given to the first husband by the man with whom his wife has eloped, the old and the new husband have each to pay the clan-headman four annas. But the latter is expected not to retain the whole of his fee-income, but to divide it with the headmen of the villages of his clan who have assisted in the ceremony or *panchayat*.

I have already described on page 246 above, the ordeal to which the Gume Hill Maria clan *panchayat* in 1929 subjected a Toinar youth accused of incest with a girl of his clan. How far the ordeal survives in the remotest parts of the State I cannot say; naturally instances of its use very seldom come to light. There is reason to believe that ordeals of this kind were a regular feature of the 'justice' administered by bygone Chiefs and zamindars of Bastar, rather than a product of aboriginal thought; compare the account of the settlement of the Kudmer-Jatalur land dispute at page 96 above. Ordinarily, however, the *panchayats* follow no regular procedure beyond hearing the parties and their friends as informally as possible and deciding the case then and there after free discussion among themselves.

Questions of property seldom arise among the Hill Marias, there being obviously so little scope for dispute when 95 per cent. of the cultivation is shifting cultivation of hillsides regarded as the property of the clan and not of the individual, and when the village site is shifted at least every six years. Sons after marriage live in a separate portion of the long-house of their father or uncle, if there is space for adding a portion for them, or else build a separate house as close as possible; when next the village is shifted there is ample space for all to live in separate houses under one long-house roof. Questions of inheritance of houses therefore arise only when, as among the Bison-horn Marias, villages have become permanent and are not shifted at regular intervals. Even here, however, there are few disputes. The little value set on houses is shown by the fact that it is generally the youngest son who lives on in the father's house after his death, as probably his elder brothers will have married long before him and built separate houses for themselves on marriage. There is among the Bison-horn Marias a vague right to demand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

partition of a father's property when a son sets up house for himself, but although he can press for his share, it is felt by the community to be against tribal spirit, rather than unfilial. When, on the other hand, a father had outraged tribal feelings by seducing his sons' wives and driving his sons from his house, his refusal to let his sons have any share in the family property was considered by the Bison-horn Marias an additional justification for his subsequent murder by his sons.

There is so little domestic property of great value among the Hill Marias, and so many of a man's few tools and possessions, as we have seen, are buried with him, that inheritance disputes about movable property are almost unknown. Though among the Bison-horn Marias less is buried or burned with the dead, the remaining movable property generally passes with the house; if the elder sons have set up separate establishments in their father's lifetime they will have equipped themselves with the few possessions they need, and will not worry about the younger brother appropriating what their father has left. Women's ornaments generally are buried or burned with them.

When the inheritance includes valuable ri. lands, they remain generally the joint property of the sons and brother's sons, and the father's surviving brothers, the eldest son generally nominally being the manager, though he will certainly have to give way to an uncle or younger brother or cousin if he is inefficient, weak-minded or deformed. The produce will be stored in his granary, but shared among the members of the family.

Daughters and sisters have no right of inheritance of their father's or brothers' lands or property. For the land is really the land of the clan, and the daughters and sisters will on marriage have passed to the clans of their husbands. A widow is entitled only to maintenance, and as on her husband's death she very often becomes the wife of his younger brother, she gets her maintenance as a matter of course; if he leaves no younger brother and she does not marry again, she lives on in her late husband's house and works with other women of the family, and is maintained by their husbands. A girl whose parents die before she is married frequently goes to a married sister's house and becomes a co-wife.

For a woman on the whole is a kind of property, or a valuable adjunct to the house and family. For her, the husband's family has had to pay a bride-price that is a severe tax on its resources[1]; or else, where cross-cousin marriage prevails,[2] she represents the repayment of a debt incurred when her father took his bride from

[1] See pp. 248-50 and 252-3 above.
[2] See pp. 234 and 247 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

342 projecting about two inches at the top and bottom of the inner edge, to work in the eyes of staples cut out of wood and fastened into the door-post; the other end has a roughly squared strip of wood six inches long, which rests in a slot in the opposite door-post and is fastened to it by a horizontal peg passing through holes in the door-post and the strip of wood.

●422 The contents of the Kurmer house represented in ground-plan (b) on page 111 were typical of Hill Maria houses; the list that follows enumerates the contents only of the rooms occupied by Dedha Keye himself, his wife and children; his mother had her own property in her own *angadi* and *lonu* :—

VERANDA

1 sambar horn used as a peg.
1 *taghali* bark overcoat.
4 bundles of firewood.
[824] 1 broom of *phulbshari* (*Thysanolaena agrostis*) grass.

ANGADI

2 earthen cooking pots.
10 gourd ladles.
5 gourds for making bottles.
2 earthen pots full of drinking water.
1 bow.
2 arrows.
3 axes.
1 broken axe.
1 bamboo tobacco tube.
1 pair wooden clogs.
3 small wooden sitting stools.
4 coils of dried *siari* bark for twisting into twine.
1 bundle of peacock's feathers, and 2 cock feathers.
4 *reking* bamboo and leaf rain-hats.
1 *dsda'ino* leaf rain-shield for the back.
3 small iron sickles.
2 baskets of leaves for plates, etc.
29 baskets of various types, mostly empty, but some containing meal, grain and forest fruits.

MENSTRUATION ROOM

(a) *Outside the taboo limit*

2 *uspal*, or grain pestles.
2 winnows.
1 shouldered digging iron (*pulu*).
1 *gudari* hoe.
2 arrows.

(b) *Inside the taboo limit*

1 hearth.
1 cooking pot.
1 axe.
1 *uspal*.
2 gourd water-bottles.
1 *phulbshari* broom.
2 bamboo tubes of oil.
8 baskets of different sizes, used for storing food, leaves, etc., when the room is in occupation.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

LONU

1 *alpanji* platform for storing produce.
10 large baskets, containing grain and forest fruits.
1 blue dancing skirt or *hochi*.
5 gourd bottles.
1 axe.
2 sickles.
4 large earthenware pots.
1 ditto, used as *Hanal Kunda*.
1 hearth, used as *Hanal O'idal*.
3 very small earthenware pots of pigs' fat.
6 thick bamboo oil-tubes.

422

Most houses have, besides these, a number of drums, more bows and arrows, fishing-rods, lines and hooks, snares, nets of varying mesh for fish, birds and animals, throwing spears, fibre for making string and rope, hemp or grass for the same purpose, sandals of raw cow-hide, thongs of cow-hide, and *korr-guda*, or funnel-shaped hen's nests on bamboo posts about two feet high. They keep the bulk of their grain and forest fruits in their granaries, and the baskets in the house contain only what has been removed from the granary for current consumption; there are generally to be found quantities of new baskets made for sale at the bazaar. The baskets are of all shapes and sizes, and amongst other items include flat baskets something like winnows for use as platters, which they hold up full of food to their mouths.

[251]

[285]

343

Granaries

The granaries, whether built singly or in a long row, are almost invariably built on piles, the floor being 3 or 3½ feet above the ground. This not only protects the grain and dried fruit stored in the granary from damp and white ants, but, as already remarked, provides an extra sleeping place for the males of the family and any male guests. There are three rows of piles, the two outer ones being tree trunks, seven or eight feet high, cut with a piece of a bough forking off at the floor height and trimmed short as a rest for the horizontal beams which support the flooring; the central piles have similar forks turned inwards at floor-height to support the floor beams, but are two or three feet higher above the floor than the outer piles, as they have to support the roof-tree. The upper ends of these long piles are either naturally forked or else notched to support the horizontal roof beams, which bear a thatched roof constructed in the same way as the roofs of dwelling-houses. Planks are laid across the floor beams at the points where these rest on the lower forks of the piles, and a flooring of bamboo wicker-work is laid on them. The walls are made of bamboo check wicker-work, the wefts being carried on around each corner of the building, where a thin pole resting on a floor plank forms the corner warp; the other warps are unsplit bamboos, but

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

342 of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner
251 where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of
[769] the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are
[432] far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

342 The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small
[513] children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *ahki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc.
[273] If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like
[415 an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction
326] in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orka*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

343 There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

● 422 The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: DISPUTES ABOUT PROPERTY

I

674 In Europe, and indeed wherever modern civilization has made its way, the great majority of murders are murders for gain. Among the Maria also many acts of violence arise in sequel to disputes about property. But there is a great difference between Maria homicide and civilized murder with this motive.

422 428 How few are the possessions of the Maria! There are some little huts of mud and thatch, some weedy cattle, land which is ultimately the property of the State, a few knives and axes, some pots, perhaps a store of grain and a handful of rupees hidden somewhere. When a man dies, questions of inheritance only rarely arise, for after a few valuables have been buried in the grave there is hardly anything left to distribute. Rules of inheritance do, however, exist. After the death of a father his fields are jointly owned by his sons, his brothers and his brothers' sons. Widows and daughters do not usually inherit, though there are a few examples where there is either no obvious rival claimant or the widow is of strong character and has refused to hand over the property of her dead husband to anyone else.

578 428 Quarrels more often arise over the partition of the family goods while the head of the household is alive. The traditional idea was clearly not to partition the family property during the father's lifetime. But nowadays elder sons often desire a share of land or cattle when they set up a separate establishment. Brothers who, after the death of their father, have shared his possessions sometimes quarrel with one another, and desire a formal separation and partition. Where such partition is permitted in the father's lifetime the youngest son, who often remains at home when the older boys go away to live elsewhere, has a special claim over his father's remaining goods.

674 Murders connected with property are not generally

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The population is comparatively small, and the land available for
● [423] the shifting *penda* cultivation is very extensive. There is practically no individual property in *penda* land, and it is recognized only in permanent rice fields.

361 In comparison, the Bison-horn Maria country is thickly
241 populated; there is far more permanent rice cultivation; much
178 old *penda* land has lost its forest growth, or is getting steadily slower in recuperating it after each time when it is felled and burnt
621 for *penda* cultivation; and each villager likes to have a large *bari* or garden enclosure at the back of his house or in the immediate neighbourhood of the village where he can grow tobacco, maize, chillies, tomatoes and sesamum, and can pen his cattle for the sake of their manure. In consequence, economic considerations now operate in favour of the permanency of Bison-horn Maria villages and against their being shifted; as the pressure on the land has become greater the alternative sites (*padar*), to which in past generations a village was from time to time shifted, have been permanently occupied by hamlets (*para*) of that village, and the settlers in the hamlets have permanently occupied the adjacent *penda* sites once cultivated in rotation by the shifting village. Many big Bison-horn villages have six or seven hamlets, some of which are virtually separate villages, and are beginning to assert a separate identity by having their own headmen and sometimes their own village priests, though on formal occasions all will still gather together at the original *padar* of the village and its hamlets, and acknowledge there the authority of the headman and priest of the parent village. In the Abujhmar hills, moreover, each village is still inhabited almost entirely by members of one clan, and all the lands of the villages are regarded as the lands of the clan. But in the Bison-horn country, though each parish is still said to be the *bhum* (earth) of the clan which first settled there, yet there are generally in the village many houses of other clans and wife-clans, from whom the first settlers and their descendants have taken
[423] wives. Though they will still say that a certain village is the *bhum* of the clan that founded it, yet in consequence of the many representatives of other clans settled there now the village and its lands are not looked on as that clan's property in anything like the same degree as among the Hill Marias, nor in actual fact is the original clan so free to shift the village as it was before it allowed its wife-clans to share its village site and cultivable lands. Often, too, the headman is no longer a member of the settler clan. If,
[166] therefore, a Bison-horn village does shift in these days, the move is probably due to superstitious motives, or to epidemic or epizootic disease.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE

THE whole life of the Maria is primarily directed towards the raising of food from the earth, either by cultivation, or by gathering the fruits of the forest, or by fishing, hunting or trapping. His agriculture, as we have seen, determines the sites of his villages, and regulates his relations with his wife. His festivals, it will be seen, are designed either to ensure the benevolence of the earth and the ancestors and the clan-god towards the crops about to be sown, or to celebrate the first eating of each of the main crops, and the final harvest-home, in a spirit of communal thanksgiving. The human population to him is the crop of men that the *Bhum* or Earth raises for the clan, or for the Ruling Chief.

The Hill Maria still regards the crops as the result of the combined labours of the village rather than of the labours of individuals. If one suffers, all suffer, and all combine to support the old and the needy, and to help each fellow villager to get through the heaviest parts of the yearly agricultural round. The young man on marriage, or the fellow clansman settling in the village, must have his share of the village lands for cultivation. In the raising of crops, then, the village and not the individual cultivator is the unit, even now, in the Abujhmar hills. But the Bison-horn Maria is an individualist. He has lived long in contact with semi-Hinduized neighbours, and has long begun to practise the more advanced methods of the settled cultivator. Permanent cultivation fosters individualism. Even in the Abujhmar hills the few permanent rice fields are definitely the private property of individuals; and as the use of the plough spreads and more and more of the wet lands become permanent rice fields, the owners of these fields begin more and more to assert in their shifting cultivation plots the rights of permanent private ownership already admitted in their rice fields. This has already happened among the Bison-horn Marias, aided by the rapid growth of population increasing the pressure on the land and reducing the land available for distribution to newcomers to the villages. The indications are that formerly they shared the communal attitude of the Hill Maria. In describing, therefore, the agricultural life of the community, I shall deal primarily with that of the Hill Marias, indicating where necessary the different developments among the Bison-horn Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 805 cultivation, it will be convenient to start this account from the new moon of Phagur, that is to say, the new moon nearest to the end of February, before which it is not considered right to start cutting forest for *penda*, though the work is started two or three weeks earlier for *dippa* cultivation. The choice of the *kaghai* site (see p. 107 above) for the *penda* will have been made beforehand, either in informal discussion among the village elders or at the ceremony after *Koqsar*, the great concluding harvest festival, at which the *kasyeq-gaita* seated on his *udam-garia* seat of honour with the villagers seated around him, confirms by formal pronouncement the decisions probably already reached in informal discussions with the elders about the village arrangements for the coming year.

241 Before the felling of the forest may begin, a further ceremony takes place. I attended the ceremony at Orcha on March 11th, 1934, when the moon of Phagur was nearly full. At about 1 p.m. the *kasyeq-gaita* with the elders proceeded to the selected *kaghai*, which was covered with a dense growth of sapling sal trees; the oldest villager present, a man of about fifty, said that he was a small child when it had last been cultivated. There Usendi Delu, the *kasyeq-gaita*, cleared a small piece of ground at the foot of a *saja* tree, set up a stone on it against a root of the tree, and placed an egg upright on its pointed end in front of the stone. He then squatted on the ground before the stone to the right of the egg, and Usendi Moda, the *gaita* or secular headman, to the left of the egg. Both put their hands together, palm to palm, touched the ground below the egg with them and raised them to their foreheads, uttering in unison the formula, '*Bhum kenji! Talugh kenji! Jimme jaga kenji! Anam pirka a'i, nehna nehna manna a'i!, Kohla pandi! irka gumur hadi!*' (Earth hearken! Mother hearken! All that is here and around hearken! Let our crops and vegetables grow here, let them grow and yield full increase!' Let our *kutki* ripen! Let our cucumbers and pumpkins mature!) They repeated the formula in unison, again saluted the earth in front of the egg, and then arose. The congregation of elders which had squatted around them and kept silence all through the ceremony also arose, and everyone returned to the village, leaving the egg there unbroken. There was no formal felling of the first tree, and no allotment of the different plots of *penda* land.

241 423 From this ceremony onwards all are free to start felling. There is no formal allotment, but villagers divide up the land by mutual discussion, the size of each plot depending on the number of persons in the household to be fed and capable of doing a full day's work with axe and hoe. It is largely a matter of one man volunteering to clear one plot and another man the next, and so on;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the preparation of the *kaghai* site is a task to be accomplished by the whole village. Disputes are practically unknown, owing to this strong feeling of community of interest. There is, moreover, in the Abujhmar hills ample land for all, and any man is free to work harder than others if he likes to cultivate a larger plot; but he seldom does so unless he either is a newly married newcomer to the village, bent on building up a reserve of grain, or has a large number of dependents. There is no guarantee that a man will have the same plot as that allotted to him when the *kaghai* was last previously cultivated, or even a plot of the same area; but in villages where land is not so ample as in others, and a *kaghai* may be cultivated therefore at shorter intervals, each man as far as possible is allowed the same plot that he occupied at the previous cutting, though he may have to contribute a part of his former land to accommodate newcomers or newly married youths. There are villages where either the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita* is a strong man and has arrogated to himself a right to allot the *penda* plots; but he would get short shrift if he were unfair in his allotting: he is not a chief, but only *primus inter pares* among the village elders.

Plots once allotted and cultivated are for the time the private property of the householder who cultivates them, and he marks the limits of his cultivation either by leaving certain tree stumps to serve as boundary marks (the Bison-horn Marias who retain permanent rights over their *penda* plots are especially careful about this, the boundary trees often being left intact and not even lopped, save in so far as necessary to keep birds off the *penda*), or by planting lines of roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) or of *til* (*Sesamum indicum*) along the edges of his plot; roselle with its crimson seed-vessels and *til* with its deep yellow blossoms make very vivid boundaries.

Each family fells its own *penda* plots, and the villagers do not combine to clear each plot in turn as they combine in threshing. The work takes two or three weeks, and the men do all the heavy work, though women and children assist in cutting small trees and undergrowth and in arranging them for firing. Any fruit trees are carefully spared. If any of the ground is dug up with *gudari* hoes, men do most of the work, though they leave it to women on the flat *dippa* lands or on the gentler *penda* slopes. The iron *pulu* digging stick is used for grubbing up roots large enough to be a serious impediment. Much timber, when the growth is heavy, is reserved for fencing the *penda* against wild animals, where any herds of deer survive. The wood is left to dry through the heat of April and May, which are holiday months.

When the wood is dry, the *kasyeq-gaita* calls a meeting in the village dormitory to fix a day for firing. All the villagers combine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 In his *mudur erka* (big tree *erka*) he raises *chikma* (*Panicum miliare*), *gatha* (*Panicum frumentaceum*) and *sama*, all crops of the first sowing, ripening by early August, and, as main crops, *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) which he calls *gurra*, and *kulthi*, which he, like the Hill Maria, calls *kohala*, both of which ripen with the *penda kulthi* [273] in early December; with him *Eleusine coracana* is an important crop, as he uses it as a principal ingredient in his *landa* intoxicant. In his *marram erka* (brushwood *erka*) he sows only the pulses *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), which he calls *popul*, and *kulthi* (*Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*) which he calls *koreng*. The '*os kosra*' millets which the Hill Maria sows as a second crop after the crops reaped in August he calls '*mach kohala*', and sows not only similarly as a second crop, but also as the main crop in his *erka* land for the third and last year of its cultivation, when it is too exhausted to bear anything else.

241 Besides the fact observed on page 128 above that, unlike the Hill Maria, he ploughs the ashes, or digs them with his hoe, into his ● 423 *erka* and *penda* lands, these lands have, therefore, this further great difference from the Hill Maria *penda* lands, that each crop has its own appropriate type of cultivation, and is therefore sown separately, not jumbled up with every other kind of crop in a hopeless welter. He is, moreover, careful to preserve any mango or other fruit trees on his plot. As he retains permanent rights over his plot, whether it is tilth or forest at the moment, he has to be more careful over its boundaries than the Hill Maria, and cannot be content with the temporary sowing of a line of *til* or roselle. At each burning, therefore, he spares important trees or stumps at boundary junctions, which he calls *sarhari* or 'authority' trees, and sometimes he leaves a thin line of trees standing along his boundary when he fells the forest. He generally grows his beans and gourds on these and other trees, not on poles stuck up in the middle of other crops like the Hill Maria.

241 It has been seen that he has always a *bari* garden enclosure [417] round or near his house in the village, which he calls *lon-welung* or 'house fencing', and generally fences with either bamboo wattle-[231] work (*wedur-welung*) or a fence of brushwood tied slantwise between horizontal struts (*jhat-welung*). Here at night he pens his cattle, and the ground is thus richly manured to bear maize (*jonna*), *sarson* or mustard (*tarson*) and tobacco (*pogo*)[1] as essential crops, with in these days frequent patches of chillies, tomatoes and other vegetables. *Sarson* is the most paying crop exported from Bastar,

[1] The Hill Maria grows tobacco and a few poor chillies and tomatoes in little plots left clear of dab grasses when *penda* land is useless for grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

over from previous days. The female trees bear fruit in May, and the pulp of this is eaten, generally after roasting the fruit on an earthenware crock and breaking off the rind. They also eat the unripe seeds and seedlings, as well as the roots. They collect the seed and leave it to germinate in pits; they propagate the trees also from root cuttings.

Individual ownership in the trees is to some extent recognized, not necessarily, however, in the owner of the land. There is a sort of village arrangement as to the trees to be tapped by each family, permitting a rough rotation where trees are plentiful, so as to give them a much needed rest from tapping. The Koyas and Dorlas sacrifice a fowl or a goat at the foot of the first tree tapped, and the sacrificial victims are then taken to the Village Mother's shrine and eaten there by the men.

Date-palm

The *sindi* (*Phoenix sylvestris*) is occasionally tapped in the Bison-horn country by making an incision in the bark below the crown of the tree.

The *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*) is common everywhere except in the Abujhmar hills, and it is the spirit distilled from it that is sold at the State excise shops, except for a few toddy shops around Konta. There is very little illicit distillation, the State liquor distilled by licensees at outstills being very cheap, and the pass rules enabling Marias fairly easily to get an adequate supply of the spirit for the religious and domestic or social occasions at which its consumption is obligatory. The State does not tax the tapping of the sago-palm and toddy-palm, but merely tries to prohibit the sale and to limit the quantity of the resulting spirit which individuals may possess.

Mahua

The Parjas and Bison-horn Marias sometimes make a wine from *mahua*, said to be red in colour, by several successive boilings and strainings of *mahua* flowers. It is called *surum*; I have never been able to get hold of any.

Landa, a cause of half the homicide committed in Bastar, is the favourite intoxicant of the Bison-horn Marias, but is taboo to the Hill Maria. It is made of equal portions of husked rice or *kuthi* and *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*). The rice or *kuthi* is soaked well in water, strained off and pounded to a paste. The *mandia* grain is first damped and allowed to sprout, then dried in the sun for three or four days, and soaked, strained and pounded like the rice or *kuthi*. Both are then well mixed. They then take an earthenware *handi*, with holes in the bottom, and cover the holes with a lattice of bamboo slices, on which they place *siari* leaves. The mixed rice or *kuthi* and sprouted *mandia* are piled on these leaves. The *handi* is then placed on a *handi* of

Landa

[see cat. 116 | p. 421. – Neal 73]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

326 564 cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

[135] 326 316 423 Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyaq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyaq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

[754]

325 Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bugi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Mother Earth. The Gaita offered eggs and chickens, first making the chickens eat the rice and then killing them. The juice in the leaf-cups was offered to the Earth Mother and the Kanyang and then everyone drank a little. After this the owner was free to tap the tree in the ordinary way.

Failure of the sago-palm may be due either to black magic and witchcraft or to the hostility of one of the Gorga Kanyang. The Kanyang, if she is not happy in a particular village, may twist the branches at the top of the tree and cause them to wither. It is generally believed that the tree gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul. Then she marries and the juice ceases to flow. The motiari of the palm tree is afraid of marrying too soon. If we touch the tree with a cloth yellowed by haldi it will stop giving juice till the new shoots come, for the shadow of haldi (that is, of marriage) is upon it.'

For gonorrhoea, a very rare disaster among these aboriginals, the sufferer stands below holding a leaf-cup into which a friend pours a little of the juice from the top of the tree. The patient offers a few drops to the Gorga Kanyang and then drinks it without allowing it to touch the ground.

The wood of the palm is not usually used for building in Bastar but the Hill Maria make their *turam* drums out of its hollow dried-up trunk. The Muria also make combs and drum-sticks out of the dry wood. Some of the Muria in the Abujhmar foothills make necklaces of the fibre. The leaves are often used as hair-ornaments or to decorate the village dormitories. Sometimes the flowers are pounded into flour, mixed with water and drunk as a sort of gruel. When it is evident that the tree will give no more juice, it is cut down and the pith is removed. This is pounded into a sort of flour and steamed in the usual way into cakes which are popular eaten with honey or sugar. This practice is common across the whole of the sago-palm country. I have found it among Hill Maria, Bondo, Gadaba, and Juang and it has been recorded for the Kadir and Khasi.[1]

The salphi juice is either brought back to the house and stored there until by fermentation it becomes much more intoxicating than in its fresh condition or it is drunk immediately at the foot of the tree. Little groups of people, generally men, go out to the trees, taking with them roasted crabs or frogs, little bits of chicken, various kinds of chutney, carefully wrapped in leaf-cups. The liquor is drunk from leaves, generally simply folded to make a sort of cup, and it is sometimes poured direct into the mouth. Many delightful hours are thus spent by the villagers out among the woods or on the hills.

When a tree is specially planted by seeds or cuttings it is very carefully tended. A fence of wood is built round it and it is watered regularly. Sometimes a tree is associated with the memory of a particular person. In Kanhargaon, a village in the Chota Dongar area, a Muria planted salphi and mango trees fifty years ago and they still preserve his memory. When the people go in the evening to drink the juice, they offer a few drops in the name of Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal to the sago-palm and a few drops in the name of the dead man who planted the trees to the mango, 'so that as we drink you can drink also'.

Generally speaking the tree belongs to the man in whose field or garden it is growing. Where the trees are out in the jungle, or standing in the common land of the village, disputes sometimes arise. The headman or the more influential priests generally claim these trees as their own, but there is also a

[1] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 171.; P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), p. 32. See also Grigson, op. cit., p. 152.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

custom that the man who goes to the trouble of tapping the tree, protecting it with thorns, and making a bamboo ladder, has a right over it, especially when it is growing far away in the forest. The trees are not taxed but the villagers are not allowed to sell the juice. Disputes simply arise over the right to take the liquor for personal use.

The salphi juice, however, is not generally so intoxicating as to cause quarrels in the same degree as landa rice-beer or mahua spirit. Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual* (par. 263) gives some account of the comparative alcoholic strengths of these drinks. 'The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number of tests made with toddy from all parts of the Madras Presidency were:

		Percentage by Volume
Coconut ..	.. 85·7° U.P.	8·1
Palmyra ..	.. 90·8° U.P.	5·2
Date ..	.. 91·4° U.P.	4·9
Sago ..	.. 89·6° U.P.	5·9

Toddy exposed for sale in Bengal in 1909 was found generally to range in alcoholic strength from about 93° to 94° U.P. When reasonably fresh it has a food value somewhat comparable with that of well-made malt beer.' The average strength of landa rice-beer may be taken at about 85° U.P. (8·6% by volume). Mahua spirit is much stronger—*rasi* may be sold at strengths of 50° to 70° U.P. and *phuli* of 5° to 35° U.P. The average for *rasi* is 60° U.P. (22·8% by volume) and for *phuli* 25° U.P. (42·8%).

XIII

With all these varied economic and social activities how far do chelik and motiari meet one another during the day? Does tribal custom allow them to share the same tasks or are the functions of men and women sharply differentiated?

The girls, of course, have the major part of the house-work to see to. They cook, bring water, clean the buildings with cow-dung and whitewash, husk the grain, grind wheat or spices. They generally make the *masni* mats, tie grass into brooms, prepare leaf-plates and cups. In the house a woman must not climb on the roof and she must not take grain out of the dhusir grain-bin, although it may only be removed at her command. A motiari before the menarche may go into the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept, but not afterwards—for she is going to join another clan and has no part with these ancestors; her spirit will mingle with those of her husband's family.

The chelik, on the other hand, have comparatively little to do in the house. They may cook and bring water when the womenfolk are in their periods; they have the business of erecting the framework of the building which the girls will later plaster with mud, and they thatch the roof.

But their main work is outside. In male hands is all the business of the fields and forest. They make and use the ploughs; they cut wood for fuel or cultivation; they embank the fields; they tend the cattle, make and drive their carts; they go to hunt and fish; they watch the crops and thrash and winnow them.

Yet there remain many chances for sharing of labour between chelik and motiari. A boy does not always see his motiari in the dark. Both can repair

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

together in a village in the area of the largest dreg, and abandon claim to the other clan-areas; for example, Aipur in Kutru Mar had in 1931, one Hoyami, one Telam, one Micha and two Bardi clan houses, while Malahanar had four Hoyami, two Pungati and one Diwa. Both were originally Hoyami clan villages; the clan has also still the villages of Komu and Kalhaza in Bhairamgarh Mar, but has since the census deserted Malahanar, as the headman and all but one Hoyami householder died suddenly, and the remaining Hoyami shifted to Kalhaza. In adjacent parts of the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* there are big clans like the Usendi and the Jugho already needing fresh lands, and the obvious fields for expansion are the empty lands of dwindling or extinct clans in Kutru Mar and Bhairamgarh Mar. Often big clans have just thrown off parties of squatters who have founded fresh villages in such places; the large Gume clan of Barsur Mar has, for example, long occupied Dunga, Goti and Kunjewada in Bhairamgarh Mar. Where there is still a remnant of a clan strong enough to raise some opposition to squatters from other clans coming in to their areas, but not to retain effective cultivating occupation, the *kasyeq-gaita* of the chief village (the clan being always too small to have retained an area big enough to become a *pargana*, and seldom having even a clan-god in its days of adversity) has sold some of the clan land for a few rupees to another clan; thus comparatively recently the Ark clan, now of Korowaya village only, sold the lands of their deserted village of Itulnar for Rs. 30 to the overflowing Jugho clan of the adjacent Chhota Dongar Mar village of Adeq and other large villages. When the sale took place, the *kasyeq-gaita* of the Arkalur showed the *kasyeq-gaita* of the Jughalor the traditional village sites, and the cairns marking former shrines of the Village Mother, and extracted a sworn promise of reverence for her. The Arkalur themselves could not have long been in occupation, as they said that the *kotokal* menhirs at Itulnar had not been erected by them but by some other forgotten clan which had died out before their occupation of the village.

Not only have hardly any of these dying clans clan-gods and clan-priests, but also the colonizers, having left their hereditary clan-area, consider themselves outside their clan-god's jurisdiction, and 'under no need' therefore to attend his Koqsar or to get his permission to hold festivals before the Village Mothers of their new villages. So the Gumelor of Dunga, Goti and Kunjewada are seen no more at the Gume Koqsar of Verma Mo'itto Pen at To'inar in Barsur Mar, and the Jughalor settlers of Itulnar do not join their fellow Jughalor of Adeq and other villages of Chhota Dongar Mar at the Koqsar of the Usendi and allied clans' god Wikir Hunga at

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the bed of the stream; these are held in position between upright poles set V-wise in the boulders, to which are fastened horizontal bamboo poles as railings. As they have no saws, the 'plank' is a tree trunk with one side trimmed flat with the axe. Even more elaborate bridges are sometimes made at high levels over streams liable to flood, from tree-fork to tree-fork on opposite banks.

Though, as has been said above, agricultural conditions nowadays determine village sites, hill-tops or rocky slopes remain favourite sites, and become commoner as you penetrate farther into the Abujhmar hills. The traditional arrangement is a street some twenty-five yards wide between parallel lines of long-houses; at one end of the street is the *gotul-lon* or village dormitory, generally within a rounded bamboo fence, and sometimes in front of this dormitory will be seen the *udam-garia* or seat of honour of the *kasyeq-gaita* and possibly also of the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*), as well as the stones on which the other village elders sit around with them in conclave; but the *udam-garia* custom is not found in all parts of the hills. Sometimes the shrine of the *Nar-Talughi* or Village Mother is actually inside the dormitory fencing, and she is often housed there for a while when a village is being shifted. There are, as a rule, no *bari* (vegetable gardens) attached to each house as amongst most Gonds, including the Bison-horn Marias and the Murias of Bastar; but sometimes the *kasyeq-gaita* has a small tobacco *bari* attached to the dormitory in the centre of the main street. The *Gazetteer* (p. 50) speaks of the 'common granary' as standing in the broad street; but with one partial exception, Nugur village in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, I have never seen this. The villagers generally construct a row of granaries (*manda* or *wijja-dodi*) on piles at the side or rear of the main village street, sometimes nearer the *penda* fields than the village; this row can hardly be called a 'common granary', as each villager has his own granary in the row for his own private food and seed store, the granaries being built together only for convenience, as they can then be watched at night by one watchman for the whole village, sleeping in a special hut at the side of the granaries or under a granary. At Nugur there were big matting bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored; but here the village had come under the economic thraldom of some Teli tradesmen, who for years had advanced rice to the cultivators. The bins were left in the collective charge of the headman and elders, and any villager could help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest he would replace it with 50 per cent. interest, the Teli owners being also free to remove the surplus from time to time.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

interior villages send down their young men in relays to work for wages at Allapilli. There they get prompt and regular payment and just and fair treatment. There are resting-sheds where the Marias can sleep, leave their scanty personal possessions and take their meals in clean surroundings, not divorced from their own kind. The Forest Department are arranging ever-improving facilities for them to purchase cloth, grain, salt and ornaments at fair prices. Forest work is in itself a technical training. At one time also the local officials tried to establish at Allapilli a small carpentry and basketry school.[1] Everywhere on this tour I met Marias who were on their way either to or from Allapilli, or had worked there from time to time in the past and looked upon it as a place to which they could always go to earn quickly any cash needed for payments of rent, fines or bride-price. More than one passage in *The Aboriginal Problem*[2] describes the Marias' consciousness of the fact that the Allapilli departmental forest operations have saved them from debt and distress; the establishment throughout the Chanda zamindari forests of similar 'Allapillis' was one of my recommendations. Allapilli has further been the one thing that has saved the Marias from the economic ruin that they feared when the Court of Wards and district authorities by a sudden ukase stopped their *podu* or *dahi* cultivation.

From Allapilli we motored eastwards by forest road and by estate forest tracks, generally motorable after slight repair in the open season, to Bhamragarh, halting a night on the way at Pirmeli; it was some fifteen miles from Allapilli to Pirmeli, and another twenty-three on to Bhamragarh. I had been preceded on this tour by Mr. Kerawala inquiring into debt at each big village, and the neighbouring village *bhumias* and *gaitas* and the *patti Sendhias*[3] from miles around gathered again to repeat to me what they had already told him. The first such gathering was at Mirkal[4] and the next at Pirmeli itself. At both places we heard much about money-lenders and their methods, and I therefore reproduce from *The Aboriginal Problem*[5] the gist of Mr. Kerawala's report on what he was told at Mirkal and Wateli;[6] those whom he saw at Wateli came to my camp at Pirmeli.

At Mirkal he enquired particularly into the economic and social conditions of the Marias of Mirkal, Sagangatta and Kasampalli villages. He found that many were heavily in debt to Hindu

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 283.
[2] Pp. 257, 332 and 366.
[3] See p. 287.
[4] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, *ref.* MV2148.
[5] Pp. 180-2.
[6] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. MV4035.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

426 563 money-lenders of Ahiri and Rajaram.[1] Few loans had been taken in cash, and the borrowers being unable to read or write had to depend entirely on the word of the money-lenders. Mada, son of Bodka Maria, of Sagangatta had borrowed Rs. 20 for wedding expenses ten or eleven years before from a Rajaram money-lender, and since then had been repaying him from time to time, generally in kind; he admitted however that he had also taken occasional loans of seed grain. He had no idea of the rates of interest and no means of checking his account, but had been told by his creditor that he now owed him Rs. 100. Korke, son of Kesu Maria said that his 'kind' *sahukar*, Chinwar Poshatti of Ahiri, was good enough to have gone on accepting for years whatever he had been able to pay towards a debt of the details of which he was completely ignorant. A Sagangatta villager had borrowed Rs. 40 twenty years ago from a Kalar money-lender in Ahiri for a wedding and, though he had since repaid many small sums and had given his creditor a bullock and a cow, had been told that he still owed Rs. 100; he said that the Kalar would never explain how he worked this out, but he thought the heavy rate of interest to be the reason why the debt still grew. Generally the Marias said that if they needed seed, they could only get it from the Ahiri and Rajaram money-lenders, who advanced seed on condition of repayment with 25 per cent. interest at the next harvest or 50 per cent. at the second harvest if they defaulted at the first; no consideration was given to failure of crops, and it was only on the promise of payment of 50 per cent. interest that further time was allowed for repayment of principal.

Similar tales were told at Wateli and at my Pirmeli camp by the very large gatherings of Marias. As at Mirkal, cash loans were few but nearly all had taken seed loans at rates of interest varying, even for punctual repayment, from 25 to 50 per cent., and going even higher than 100 per cent. in the event of default. Even if cash is borrowed, interest is paid annually in grain until the borrower can find cash to repay the principal. In fact the money-lenders seem to reckon on perpetual interest in kind on petty initial loans of five to ten rupees. Thus a Maria from Khandanwadi village had borrowed Rs. 10 from an Ahiri Kalar four years before; in each of the first and second years he had paid grain worth Rs. 10 merely as interest, but in the next two years his crops had failed, and he expected in the fifth year to have to pay either Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 worth of grain. A Maria from Pokht village had borrowed Rs. 5 six years ago, from a Telugu money-lender of Indaram, but as he had repaid nothing the Maria headmen said that he was a ruined man, as the money-lender's claims must have so swollen that the Maria

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. MV1833.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

would never be able to repay during his lifetime, and the debt would devolve on his sons. Another Maria from Irakdumme village had borrowed Rs. 20 bride-price from an Echli money-lender ten years before and had so far paid him paddy worth Rs. 22-8 as interest, but nothing towards principal, and had no idea what the final demand of his creditor would be. Another Maria from Batanfundi village had borrowed Rs. 12 from an Ahiri money-lender six or seven years ago and though he had repaid the principal was still being dunned for Rs. 40 worth of grain as interest, and was afraid that this high rate would now be doubled, as owing to the crop failure of 1939 he had been unable to repay any grain that year.

Throughout this area a crying need is an agency for advancing small seed-loans. The Government have seldom done this, on the theory that the zamindar should meet his tenants' needs; but we could not find one who had ever been given a seed-loan by the estate. The rates of interest extorted by the nests of money-lenders at Ahiri, Rajaram, Allapilli, Indaram, Echli and other centres are preposterous. The need for these seed-loans has been imposed on the Marias largely by the arbitrary stopping of their *podu* (*dahi*) shifting cultivation; *podu* fields always produced seed grain at least. Such is the pathetic honesty of the Marias that when the Debt Conciliation Board was working they readily acceded to the money-lenders' request to place their thumb-marks by the hundred on application after application begging the Board not to interfere between them and their money-lenders: it was only by persistent effort that the Board secured nearly 800 applications. In our camps the Maria elders opposed debt relief measures on the ground that if a man borrowed it was only right that he and his heirs after him should go on repaying. The final report of the Debt Conciliation Board of 1936 mentioned some fantastic cases. In one a Telugu Komti of Indaram had lent a Maria of Koreli a bullock on hire in 1920, at the usual fee of Rs. 4 worth of paddy. For twelve years the Maria went on paying Rs. 5 worth of paddy. In 1932 the Komti made out that the Maria still owed him Rs. 700 worth of paddy, and proceeded to show against him further compound interest of 50 per cent., until, when the Board took up the case, the Komti claimed as much as Rs. 2,320 worth of grain—all this for the hire of a single indifferent bullock. This, however, pales into insignificance against an Echli case of a money-lender lending Rs. 32 to finance a wedding a few years before, and in his accounts showing this debt, despite a repayment of Rs. 20, as having risen to Rs. 17,519!

At every halting place and camp the Marias' chief grievance, however, was not so much the exactions of money-lenders as the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 312 Bahadur D. Lakshmanswamy in his 1922-4 Sironcha and Garchiroli Settlement Report, paragraph 31 :—

'Agriculture in parts of these zamindaris is as thorough as in the most advanced *khalsa* tracts. One has simply to look at the extensive rice fields and *gattas* of the Madias [*sic*] to admire the almost mathematical levelling of their field embankments. The Maria Gond has a genius for rice cultivation. He selects the best *rilas* position area, and with an intuition for irrigation lays out his fields one below the other so as to utilize water from the field above to that lower down. A natural stream or spring of water is generally never allowed to go waste by him. He so embanks and diverts the supply by a system of well arranged water-channels as to utilize the whole supply for his rice area, however distant it may be. Even in the remotest part of the zamindaris agriculture has now developed beyond the domestic stage and assumed the commercial stage. The aboriginals constituting the greater part of the population of these zamindaris mostly live on the early rice, small millets and beans, while the heavy rice grown in the big *gattas* and embanked areas is exported to the markets.'

241 Now it should be noted that this means that for his own subsistence the Maria still relied on the grains and beans dear to his heart, and grown by *dahi* or *jalapod* cultivation, which had not then been stopped except in parts of Ahiri. The growth of heavy rice as a commercial crop is yet another sign of the transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Of this the money-lender takes full advantage.

241 406 563 For in these plains villages around Bhamragarh and Lahiri, besides Marias and Gonds there are nests of Teli exploiters, notably in the six villages of Lahiri, Mallampodur,[1] Kukurmeta,[2] Arawara,[3] Dodrai[4] and Idadapalli.[5] Many of these Teli money-lenders are now wealthy, as a result of small grain loans to the plains Marias and Gonds. The *modus operandi* is repayment indefinitely at rates of interest so high that the principal can never be repaid, while interest takes the form of a steady and heavy share of the debtors' harvest. Some of the Telis resort habitually to molestation of their debtors until the latter satisfy their yearly demand, but though molestation of debtors is now a cognizable offence under the Debtors' Protection Act, the police in their far distant police station at Etapalli never take action against molesting money-lenders. We have seen already on page 102 how these Telis' tentacles had spread to such Bastar villages as Nugor in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, where there were big matting paddy bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored on behalf of the Telis, who were free from time to time to remove all paddy from the bins surplus to the Marias' seed requirements, while each Maria villager was free to help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest

[1] References on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A :
1. MV7951
2. MV7854.
3. MV7955.
4 and 5. Not marked.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

he would repay with 50 per cent. interest.[1] Although it is clear that these Teli, Kalar and Telugu money-lenders do levy an exorbitant toll on the Maria villagers' produce, it is equally clear that they are fulfilling a necessary function, which has become the more necessary since the stopping of *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation below the hills has restricted the Marias in most villages to permanent rice cultivation on small acreages always dependent on seasonal rainfall evenly distributed in time. If such money-lenders are excluded, then they must be replaced by Government grain depots and village grain banks.

Of Maria funeral rites the *Gazetteer* observes that a stone or a carved post about five feet high is usually put up to mark the spot where a man's body has been cremated, and that 'sometimes one comes across a forest glade strewn with these memorials, the only sign of some deserted village, the very name of which has perished'.[2] Many rows of carved wooden posts may be seen between Bhamragarh and Lahiri, while at Lahiri itself I saw scores of such posts and of the small cromlechs (*hanal-garya* or 'thrones of the Departed') described on page 273, and mentioned in the *Gazetteer*[3] as built on the spot where the body was burned. The top of one of these very substantial funerary posts, or *hanal-gutta*, photographed at Lahiri, is reproduced as one of the illustrations in this Supplement. Noticeable are the carved wooden horns, between which is a carved wooden bird, probably a hornbill. The wooden horns are common, and probably are a modern symbol of the cow formerly sacrificed at the erection of a menhir or wooden *hanal-gutta* by Hill Marias[4] and Bison-horn Marias[5] throughout Bastar: the funerary customs of the Chanda Marias seemed, however, to be Hill Maria in type, and this was confirmed by oral enquiries at Lahiri.

The addiction of the Bison-horn Marias and of the Kutru Hill Marias of Bastar to cock-fighting has been described on page 162. I particularly inquired if the weekly cock-fights at Oikal in Ahiri zamindari, there mentioned, and at Lahiri itself still went on. But all cock-fighting among Chanda Marias had for some years been stopped under orders from an inexperienced young European District Superintendent of Police on the theory that it contravened the Gambling Act. But the Marias maintained that, as in Bastar, so here, there had never been cash betting (as, indeed, one might expect in a region where all transactions are still so largely in kind), but the defeated bird had passed to the owner of the winning bird.

[1] For further details, see *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 183-4.
[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 106.
[3] Ibidem, loc. cit.
[4] See pp. 278-9.
[5] See p. 281.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

same ceremonies and festivals are observed in connexion with cutting and firing of the *penda*, sowing, harvesting and first eating of the new crops. Most of the reaping of the ' big *kosra* ' crops had been completed, but that of the ' *os kosra* ' millets and pulses was still in progress. For many of the *penda* plots in the current *kaghai* cultivation clearing (see p. 107) this was the second and last year of cultivation, and the *kutki* crop raised was known as *hiwar*, a term, according to the *Gazetteer*,[1] always technically applied to these second year crops. I sent specimens of both *hiwar* and *kosra* or *kohala* (see p. 134) for identification to the Nagpur Agricultural College: botanically both were identical. These villages have never had the advantage of the special system of poll-tax assessment on every able-bodied axeman in the village which I devised for Bastar (p. 145). The system followed in these hill villages of Ahiri is roughly this. Each *penda* is cut by a number of villagers with the approval of the *gaita*, and the portion cut by each of them is roughly marked by one or other of the methods indicated on page 131. Help is taken from other villagers, who are always ready to give this mutual aid, and at harvest the produce is divided among the different shareholders of the *penda*, with something also for all who helped to clear the *penda*; sometimes a number of plots are specially earmarked for division of the produce by the *gaita* and elders amongst all who joined in clearing the whole *kaghai* and in watching and fencing the crops; a part of the produce is also allocated to villagers too old and feeble to work. The zamindar's *kamdar* or agent is paid rent, usually in kind, by the *gaita* for the whole village, for paying which the *gaita* takes a share of the produce of each *penda* plot. The village cultivation is in fact a truly co-operative enterprise.

I have alluded above to the arbitrary stopping in the plains Maria villages of the Chanda zamindaris of *dahi* cultivation, and the consequent increase of debt among the Marias. This Kuvakodi hill tract is fortunate, however, in having escaped this prohibition; it is the only Ahiri area where *penda* reigns undisturbed. It was therefore no surprise to find not a single case of old debt among the fifty or sixty Hill Maria cultivators who assembled at my camp from Kuvakodi and the other hill villages. Occasionally when crops are poor and the *kamdar* has to be paid rent in cash, the *gaita* goes to a Teli money-lender in the plains to borrow the money. But the villagers look on this as the debt of the whole village, not of the *gaita*, and though the Teli is as unscrupulous here as in any plains village in exacting high interest, yet the combined villagers are usually able to repay in kind in a year or two. Nowadays sometimes not only they, but even their Bastar neighbours, instead of resorting

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 170.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *penda* must not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatikarhana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-bhita* or ' song fellows ' and the dance-steps.[1]

The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence. Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of ' jewellery ' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 75-6 and 183-4

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Key to Figure 6

Kaghai Names (see p. 107).

1. Kawar, 1st half.
2. Do., 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta.
4. Hitanggal.
5. Kurmelnar.
6. Rekarai.
7. Handawada, 1st half.
8. Do., 2nd half.
9. Ahekele, 1st half.
10. Do., 2nd half.

The letters against fields in nos. 2 and 3 and houses and granaries in nos. 1, 3, 9 and 10 refer to the tenants in the list below. Tenants A to N are Gume by clan, O to Q, Tamo.

(*Abbreviations.*—M = mother, W = wife, S = grown-up son, b = boy child, g = girl child, D = marriageable daughter.)

Letter	*Tenant*	*Family*	*Area in acres*	*Rent* Rs. a.
A	Modi s/o Malla	M., cousin's widow	5·00	2 4
B	Lalu s/o Banda, Bhum-gaita	W., 1 b.	4·50	1 12
C	Banda s/o Bursal	W., 2 g.	6·25	3 8
D	Horra s/o Musra	W., 1 g.	3·50	2 4
E	Masa s/o Kule, gaita	W., 1 S., 1 g.	7·50	4 12
F	Pido s/o Doga	W., 1 b.	3·50	2 0
G	Irpa s/o Karanje	W.	1·50	1 8
H	Rama s/o Peda Junga s/o Rama	W., 1 S., 2 g.	4·50	2 4 1 8
I	Kohla s/o Pahandi	W., 1 D., 1 man serving to win daughter's hand	4·00	1 8
J	Doga s/o Wijja	W., 1 b., 1 g.	4·00	1 12
K	Kuma s/o Boda	W., 1 g.	4·50	1 4
L	Juga s/o Wijja	M.	1·50	2 0
M	Malla s/o Gorra, Kasyeq-gaita a	W., 1 S., 1 b., 1 g.	5·50	2 4
N	Pahandi s/o Karanje	W., M.	2·50	2 12
O	Hara s/o Pandu	W.	3·00	2 4
P	Bandi s/o Kuli	W., M., 2 b.	5·00	2 12
Q	Musra s/o Pandu	W.	2·25	2 4
		Total Acres	68·50	Rs. 40 12
	There was also in Ahekele Kaghai no. 9 a house shared by a Rawat and a Telugu with a small tobacco plot paying 4 annas rent			4
				Rs. 41 0

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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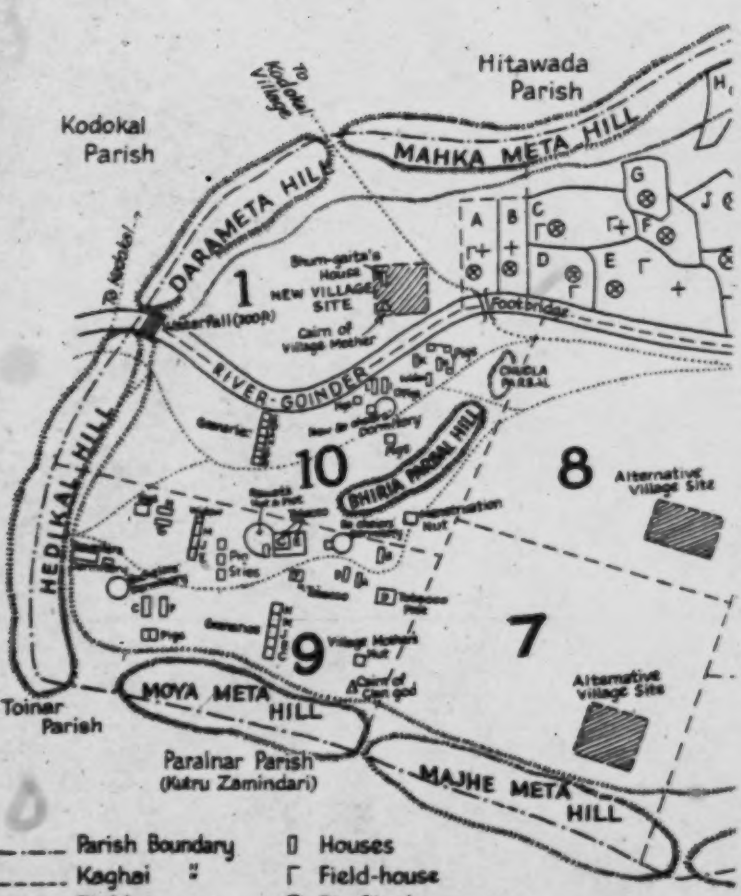

The buildings etc in Kaghai Nos 9 & 10 are of course drawn too large in comparison to the areas of the Fields in Nos 2 & 3; actually they left ample room for fields in Nos 9 & 10, but had become more scattered when those fields became exhausted

FIGURE 6
PARISH MAP OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(A)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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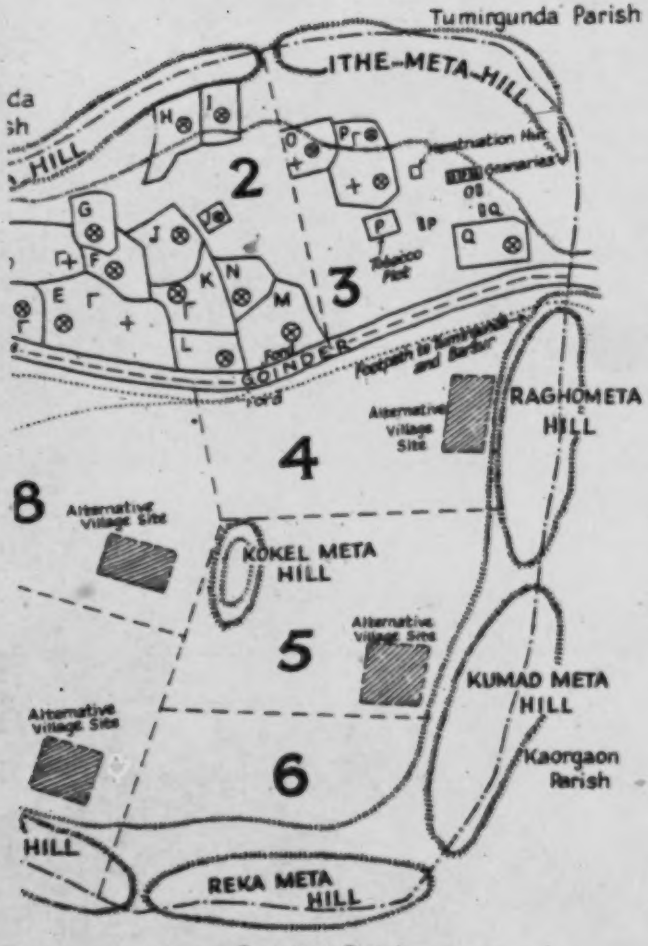

FIGURE 6
OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the few who grew it soon abandoned its cultivation and returned to the hill grains which the police would not eat. The second thing, even more potent than the demand for *bisaha* because of its universality, was the land revenue policy. In the remotest times the hill villages paid what little assessment the Chiefs imposed on them in kind, royal granaries being situated at centres like Barsur, Partabpur and Narainpur. There is no need to believe the picturesque story told first to Elliot in 1853 and since repeated by writers down to Russell and Hiralal, that 'their tribute to the Raja of Bastar, paid in kind, was collected once a year by an officer who beat a tom-tom outside the village and forthwith hid himself, whereupon the inhabitants brought out whatever they had to give and deposited it on an appointed spot'[1]; this is one of the typical tales with which the old State officials used to try to disguise their utter ignorance of every part of their charge except the handful of villages in their immediate vicinity. But in actual fact there was no regular assessment. The secular headman of the village (*gaita* or *peda*) collected as a rough poll-tax from every able-bodied male cultivator whatever he could fairly be called upon to contribute in kind, and delivered the village contribution at the royal granary. Even when the Chief in 1865 and 1872 attempted for the first time to settle villages with outside lessees and to assess the land revenue on the basis of fixed payments partly in cash and partly in kind for every plough, his officers made no effort to interfere with the traditional system in the Abujhmar hills. But after the State came under management in 1891, the authorities aimed at gradually introducing improved settlement methods based on the experience of British districts in the Central Provinces. The general method was to ascertain the rate per plough imposed at the late Raja's last settlement, to decide what enhancement per plough each village could bear, and then to ascertain the number of ploughs in each cultivator's possession and in the whole village. The number of ploughs was estimated from a rough calculation of the seed capacity of each field, and further checked by comparison with the number of cattle, counted when brought home to the village in the evening. In the better cultivated parts of Bastar, seed capacity of 7½ *khandis*[2] was regarded as a plough of land, and in the jungly parts seed capacity of 5½ *khandis*. Simultaneously, every effort was made to extend to all parts of the State the leasing of villages to *thekadars* or lessees, who were available in numbers in the open and settled parts and only too ready to seize the chance of getting the aboriginal

[1] Russell and Hiralal, Vol. III, p. 129.

[2] The Bastar *khandi* is a measure equivalent to 40 *pailis* or 160 *sali*; a *sali* contains 40 *tolas* or approximately 1 lb.'s weight of rice.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

villages there for nothing, with the hope of appropriating the best village lands for themselves and getting them tilled by the forced labour of the villagers. The theory was that good and substantial cultivators from outside the State would bring capital and improved methods into Bastar and play something of the part played by the landlord in the development of English agriculture. In practice the *thekedari* system was the cause of untold harm even in the permanent villages of the State, where the alien *thekedar* destroyed the solidarity of village and tribal life besides mercilessly exploiting the aboriginals, whom indeed he goaded into rebellion in 1910. Luckily, I was able to secure its abolition for the future, and every opportunity has been taken to resume management of the villages through the headmen when a lease has fallen in or in cases of mismanagement.

When the authorities tried to apply the system to wild regions like the Abujhmar hills, fortunately for the Hill Marias their reputation as sorcerers was such, and their cultivation was so primitive, that no foreigners would take leases of their villages. There were hardly any ploughs, and the problem of estimating the seed capacity of *penda* plots on remote and steep hillsides was too much for the wits and energy of badly paid Hindu *patwaris*. A farcical record was, however, prepared of the number of 'hoe-ploughs' of land cultivated by each Hill Maria on the basis of a seed capacity assumed in nine cases out of ten by pure guess-work, the *patwari* and his superior officials never going near the villages. Individual assessments were then made on each man, in spite of the communal feeling in regard to the land. These assessments varied in their incidence without rhyme or reason, except that they had been based on guess-work. Men deserted their villages in large numbers and migrated into the Chanda part of the hills or into the Bastar zamindaris, with which the authorities were not so concerned. As it was felt that every good village should have a lessee, and no outsider would come near, the hapless headman of many a village was made to put his thumb-mark to a lease deed of his village, only to find himself in consequence legally responsible for the whole village assessment, even if his villagers had absconded or were unable to pay. The post of headman became one to be avoided or nominally given to the simpleton of the village, whom the villagers would put forward as a figurehead, while the *kasyap-gaita* retained the religious headmanship and was the real headman so far as the villagers were concerned. No allowance was made for the vagaries of shifting cultivation; though one year a man newly married or with a large growing family to support might be allowed by the village a larger *penda* area than others, and after a year or two

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
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[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 170.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

563 Pendri is now mainly a Marar village, its 451 inhabitants including only some forty Marias and sixty Halbas. They seem able to live in easy symbiosis with all Gonds, to whom they impart much of their agricultural skill. Their intrusion into these tribal areas, provided it is controlled, is therefore not a bad thing.

178 At Jharapapra there was a once familiar sight, the Halba log-god of the zamindari family, in type precisely similar to the clan-gods of the Hill Marias and the Halba log-gods at Chingnur near Bare Dongar and at other Halba centres in Bastar. The *Kutumb-Naik* headman of the Bare Dongar Halbas had told me in 1929 how some years before the then zamindar of Jharapapra had sent a party of Halbas to carry off the Chingnur log-god to Jharapapra, and how the god had resented this and 'flown' back to Chingnur from the first halting place of the god-snatchers.

000 Of the visits to Aundhi[1] and, next day, to Manpur[2] in Koracha zamindari and some way along the Manpur-Panabaras road, there is little to say except that, generally speaking, the Drug Court of Wards regime in Panabaras and Aundhi seemed to be progressive, and the Drug District Council to do more for the Partially Excluded Areas than its Chanda counterpart.

[167] In the four Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug the aboriginals form well over sixty per cent. of the population. The worst feature of these estates is that there is a *thekadari* system, originally akin to that once prevalent in Bastar, and that many of the *thekadars*, especially those on whom the semi-permanent 'protected' status has been conferred, are non-aboriginal oppressors of the local Gonds and Marias, while comparatively few aboriginal headmen, except in Panabaras and Ambagarh-Chauki zamindaris, have been declared protected. The whole original conception was wrong in that it involved conversion of the tribal headman or *gaontia* into a lessee or *thekadar* of his village. Various examples have been given in *The Aboriginal Problem*[3] of the way in which these Maria headmen were thus transformed into *thekadars*, and then lost their villages in the great famines, or for other causes, to non-aboriginal intruders, who now rack-rent and oppress the surviving aboriginal tenants. We may give here one example, that of the village of Dokhla in Panabaras zamindari. This village was settled before 1861 by a Maria headman and ten other Marias. The headman absconded during the great famines at the turn of the century. Another Gond was then given the lease, but ultimately could not pay the lease-money and had to surrender the village.

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. MQ5349.
[2] Ibidem, Sheet 64D, ref. MQ8366.
[3] Pp. 79-81.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The Court of Wards finally gave the lease to a Hindu of the Kurmi caste, on a premium of Rs. 211. The present lessee, his son, was made protected in 1923. Though the aboriginals as a whole have not actually lost land since 1902, the lessee had been very oppressive, forcing the aboriginals who borrowed from him to surrender their fields to him and then selling them to new tenants. 427

In Panabaras the departmental working of the five teak forests, largely built up, as already stated, by the Court of Wards insisting from 1900 onwards on *podu* cultivators sowing teak-seed on their plots in the second year of cultivation, has done something on Allapilli lines to bring economic relief to the local aboriginals. These four estates have been special targets for the agrarian agitation already mentioned, which started from the adjacent non-excluded Dondi-Lohara zamindari and made a special feature of inciting the Gonds and Marias to burn *podu*. 313

In the Garchiroli zamindaris on the whole the Marias and other aboriginals continue to hold their own and to take gradually to permanent cultivation, though far more slowly than outsiders: in the twenty years after the 1922-3 settlement aboriginal cultivation had increased by only 23 per cent., but non-aboriginal by 50 per cent., there being 6,523 aboriginal tenants of 76,113 acres against 4,012 other tenants of 46,863 acres. The aboriginals still have miles and miles of land available for extending their cultivation, but always hanker after their beloved *podu*. 241 311

This *podu* question, as I have already said, was the principal topic at the conference of the Drug and Chanda Partially Excluded Areas zamindars at Murumgaon on New Year's Day, 1940. Other topics were the neglect of the Garchiroli zamindaris by the Chanda District Council, and the future of the zamindars, in view of the political threat to the whole zamindari system. To deal first with the last topic, let me say that while there may be much to be said for 'liquidation' of big landed estates, especially of absentee proprietors, the policy towards aboriginal zamindars should be different. Most of them are descendants of long lines of tribal chieftains holding estates on very ancient tenures dating back to the semi-tribal, semi-feudal systems[1] under which most of middle India was organized centuries ago. Properly speaking these chiefs in relation to their ryots and fellow tribesmen are *primi inter pares*. Some of the wealthier aboriginal proprietors of the huge Chhattisgarh estates may have aped the princeling: but most of the Chanda zamindars are closely akin to their people—the Rangi chief, for example, is frankly a Maria among Marias—and do their utmost to protect their ryots. Legally, so long as the proprietary rights in any 632

[1] See p. 4.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Murders connected with property are not generally committed for gain in the ordinary sense. They rather arise out of disputes about rights and privileges, and the actual murder is the result of anger and resentment rather than a desire for possession. In several cases indeed murder has been a form of self-defence against someone who tries to take away land or other property that the murderer believes to be his by right. Thus Marvi Buti was the elder brother of Marvi Chule, and for some time they lived in separate villages. Two years before the tragedy, Chule came to live next-door to his elder brother at Bara Gudra and got two of his fields and two tanks for irrigation. Chule cultivated them and paid two rupees as rent. Buti spent the money and when the time for the next payment came round, demanded and recovered four rupees from his younger brother. The following year Buti refused to give Chule any land at all. But Chule, claiming that he had already paid in advance for that year since he had actually paid six rupees and had only cultivated for one year, ploughed up the fields in spite of Buti's protests, and sowed grain in one of them. Buti countered this by giving the fields and the tanks to another brother who used the tanks, but was unable to get possession of the land. Then Buti threatened that he would drive the village cattle into the fields where Chule had sown his crop and would thus destroy it. Chule seems to have felt that it was no use carrying on the unequal struggle any longer, and he decided to leave the village and go elsewhere. He actually built a house in another village, and at the beginning of the rains went to move his possessions. When he reached his old house, he found one of his plantain trees cut down; he was told that Buti had been there and had cut the tree saying that he would cut down Chule in the same way. As he was removing his mahua seed from the building, someone came running to say that Buti was approaching with a knife in his hand. Chule got his axe and faced his enemy. Apparently Buti tried to run away, but Chule followed him and killed him.

674X 578

674X 578 427

Now here, although the tragedy arose out of a question about property, it is evident that Chule was not moved by the desire of gain. Indeed he had abandoned his claim to the fields in dispute, for he had already moved to another village where he would get new land. I think it is probable

674X

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

In the chapter on marriage we saw how the elders had to witness the betrothal ceremonies, and how the *panchayats* deal with cases of divorce and elopement. It may be added that among the Hill Marias the clan-headman, like the *Sendhia* of the Chanda Marias, gets certain traditional fees which the parties have to pay in addition to the compensation which the *panchayat* may award to the injured parents or husband, or to the cost of the tribal feast; at every marriage in Kutru and Bhairamgarh Mar the clan-headman gets a fee of eight annas; when a *panchayat* has settled the compensation to be given to the first husband by the man with whom his wife has eloped, the old and the new husband have each to pay the clan-headman four annas. But the latter is expected not to retain the whole of his fee-income, but to divide it with the headmen of the villages of his clan who have assisted in the ceremony or *panchayat*.

I have already described on page 246 above, the ordeal to which the Gume Hill Maria clan *panchayat* in 1929 subjected a Toinar youth accused of incest with a girl of his clan. How far the ordeal survives in the remotest parts of the State I cannot say; naturally instances of its use very seldom come to light. There is reason to believe that ordeals of this kind were a regular feature of the 'justice' administered by bygone Chiefs and zamindars of Bastar, rather than a product of aboriginal thought; compare the account of the settlement of the Kudmer-Jatalur land dispute at page 96 above. Ordinarily, however, the *panchayats* follow no regular procedure beyond hearing the parties and their friends as informally as possible and deciding the case then and there after free discussion among themselves.

Questions of property seldom arise among the Hill Marias, there being obviously so little scope for dispute when 95 per cent. of the cultivation is shifting cultivation of hillsides regarded as the property of the clan and not of the individual, and when the village site is shifted at least every six years. Sons after marriage live in a separate portion of the long-house of their father or uncle, if there is space for adding a portion for them, or else build a separate house as close as possible; when next the village is shifted there is ample space for all to live in separate houses under one long-house roof. Questions of inheritance of houses therefore arise only when, as among the Bison-horn Marias, villages have become permanent and are not shifted at regular intervals. Even here, however, there are few disputes. The little value set on houses is shown by the fact that it is generally the youngest son who lives on in the father's house after his death, as probably his elder brothers will have married long before him and built separate houses for themselves on marriage. There is among the Bison-horn Marias a vague right to demand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

691 421 partition of a father's property when a son sets up house for himself, but although he can press for his share, it is felt by the community to be against tribal spirit, rather than unfilial. When, on the other hand, a father had outraged tribal feelings by seducing his sons' wives and driving his sons from his house, his refusal to let his sons have any share in the family property was considered by the Bison-horn Marias an additional justification for his subsequent murder by his sons.

691 428 768 There is so little domestic property of great value among the Hill Marias, and so many of a man's few tools and possessions, as we have seen, are buried with him, that inheritance disputes about movable property are almost unknown. Though among the Bison-horn Marias less is buried or burned with the dead, the remaining movable property generally passes with the house; if the elder sons have set up separate establishments in their father's lifetime they will have equipped themselves with the few possessions they need, and will not worry about the younger brother appropriating what their father has left. Women's ornaments generally are buried or burned with them.

428 When the inheritance includes valuable rice-lands, they remain generally the joint property of the sons and brother's sons, and the father's surviving brothers, the eldest son generally nominally being the manager, though he will certainly have to give way to an uncle or younger brother or cousin if he is inefficient, weak-minded or deformed. The produce will be stored in his granary, but shared among the members of the family.

428 736 587 Daughters and sisters have no right of inheritance of their father's or brothers' lands or property. For the land is really the land of the clan, and the daughters and sisters will on marriage have passed to the clans of their husbands. A widow is entitled only to maintenance, and as on her husband's death she very often becomes the wife of his younger brother, she gets her maintenance as a matter of course; if he leaves no younger brother and she does not marry again, she lives on in her late husband's house and works with other women of the family, and is maintained by their husbands. A girl whose parents die before she is married frequently goes to a married sister's house and becomes a co-wife.

562 For a woman on the whole is a kind of property, or a valuable adjunct to the house and family. For her, the husband's family has had to pay a bride-price that is a severe tax on its resources[1]; or else, where cross-cousin marriage prevails,[2] she represents the repayment of a debt incurred when her father took his bride from

[1] See pp. 248-50 and 252-3 above.
[2] See pp. 234 and 247 above.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

535 but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison'
585 charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and, indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum.* Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

293 The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic
[237] cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered
[787] unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

428 A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after
682 his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heir-
762 looms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

184 In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison
535 horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

534 The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called *kikir*, a Jews-harp made of iron or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: DISPUTES ABOUT PROPERTY

I

674 In Europe, and indeed wherever modern civilization has made its way, the great majority of murders are murders for gain. Among the Maria also many acts of violence arise in sequel to disputes about property. But there is a great difference between Maria homicide and civilized murder with this motive.

422 How few are the possessions of the Maria! There are 428 some little huts of mud and thatch, some weedy cattle, land which is ultimately the property of the State, a few knives and axes, some pots, perhaps a store of grain and a handful of rupees hidden somewhere. When a man dies, questions of inheritance only rarely arise, for after a few valuables have been buried in the grave there is hardly anything left to distribute. Rules of inheritance do, however, exist. After the death of a father his fields are jointly owned by his sons, his brothers and his brothers' sons. Widows and daughters do not usually inherit, though there are a few examples where there is either no obvious rival claimant or the widow is of strong character and has refused to hand over the property of her dead husband to anyone else.

578 428 Quarrels more often arise over the partition of the family goods while the head of the household is alive. The traditional idea was clearly not to partition the family property during the father's lifetime. But nowadays elder sons often desire a share of land or cattle when they set up a separate establishment. Brothers who, after the death of their father, have shared his possessions sometimes quarrel with one another, and desire a formal separation and partition. Where such partition is permitted in the father's lifetime the youngest son, who often remains at home when the older boys go away to live elsewhere, has a special claim over his father's remaining goods.

674 Murders connected with property are not generally

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

gyrated in all directions, at one moment appearing inextricably mixed together, only to disentangle miraculously at the next and weave themselves into fresh spirals and circles, singing abuse at each other. All the while the group of standing girls went on swaying and singing round the door; the leader caused great laughter by improvising a song warning all girls to be on their guard that night, for the Diwan, the Tahsildar and the Circle Inspector were watching them, and who knew what might happen after dark?

Before we arrived the bridegroom's party had presented the bride-price, which consisted of one slaughtered pig, a live pig, five very large pots of *landa*, five *paili* of husked rice, four yards of Mahra cloth for the bride's mother, and one rupee. While the chains of girls were dancing around the bride and bridegroom, her mother's sister came out and displayed the bride's going-away presents, a *masni* or grass sleeping-mat, a small basket containing about a *paili* of husked rice, a large pot of *landa*, and a young bull calf newly weaned.

Some men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses and beating their long drums now started to dance near the gyrating chains of girls, and there was a further accompaniment to the singing of bamboo flutes. The two chains of girls suddenly opened out, leaving the bridegroom and bride together, and the girl's father and the bridegroom's elder brother were with them, holding their hands. The old father, Kunjami Harma, held up his hand for silence, and started a long speech, asking the bridegroom's elder brother, 'Have you come willingly for this flower? Will you wear it and cherish it? It is fresh and tender, and will not bear rough handling. Know you how witless women are? If she be a poor housekeeper, pardon her. If she cook badly, pardon her. If she speak to other men, do not take it amiss, but pardon her.' There were other similar injunctions, and to all the bridegroom's brother answered yes. Then Kunjami Harma took his daughter, who took the bridegroom's right hand, and placed on his little finger a ring that she had pulled off the little finger of her own right hand; the bridegroom then took a ring off his own left little finger and placed it on hers; cloths were held over their heads while this exchange was in progress. The bridegroom then took off another ring, which the girl's elder sister received in her outstretched cloth, while she said, 'From now onwards you must neither touch me nor utter my name till I am dead. If you do, all will laugh at you, and your brethren will fine you.' I was told that if she dies before him, he will take a ring off her little finger and wear it on the middle finger of his right hand. He also gave a ring to the bride's younger sister, for he is free to touch her and to talk of her by name. Then his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

VII

I found it very difficult—and I suspect that Grigson had the same experience—to see Marias in action. Tribes vary greatly in their willingness to allow a visitor to be present at their ceremonial. The Murias used to invite me to marriages or festivals, sending information about them long beforehand. The Saoras are delighted to have visitors at their celebrations and more than once the ghost of a long dead headman has come upon the priest and admonished the people to treat me right. But the Bondos do their utmost to keep the stranger away; during the great summer festival they pile the paths leading to their villages with thorn bushes and not even a fellow Bondo, if he belongs to another village, is admitted. The Marias do not go so far as that, yet I found them singularly unwilling to let me watch them do anything. When I was camping at Borgum I heard that the Wijja Pandum was to be celebrated in two days' time and rather unwisely announced my intention of being present. On the morning of the festival a delegation arrived in camp to say that the proceedings had had to be postponed because the Perma's wife was in her period—though I darkly suspect that the old lady had in fact passed the climacteric. I had to dodge round the country for weeks before I saw a wedding, and to witness the Ghotpal Marhai I had to come sixty miles on an elephant down from the Abujhmar because the dates were changed at the last moment.

But since a page of personal observation is worth a whole chapter of hearsay I will describe the wedding at which I assisted and the great festival at Ghotpal in 1942.

On March 15th, 1942 I was camping in Gogonda at the edge of the hills overlooking the great southern plain. That evening, I was told, two girls were to be taken to Sirsitti, a village some two thousand feet below, to be married. At about five o'clock therefore married and unmarried women collected and began to dance with one of the brides. She had her head and shoulders completely covered with a shawl and wailed loudly all the time. Three pots of rice-beer were distributed to the dancers and a large number of onlookers, and then the dancers took the bride round the village. This was a very pretty sight. The circle of dancers would suddenly elongate into a line and then curl up again in a ring. As they danced from house to house, men and women would come out and put a ring on the bride's finger or a necklace round her neck and embrace her by raising her hands twice to their foreheads and then clasping her in their arms. As they did so, the dancers sang the names of the people who were giving presents and their exact relationship to the bride. At other times they sang how the girl had hitherto been going to and fro freely in the jungle, getting wood, husking grain,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Such privileges are not universal or uncontrolled. In Junganar only very small Ganda girls may massage the boys or sleep in the ghotul; once they are mature, though they may attend the dances, they may not massage and must say Johar at a distance. This rule seems to have been made by the Ganda elders rather than by the Muria. For the Muria are generally more anxious to control the behaviour of the boys of other castes; girls are allowed to do what they like.

The relations of Muria and Muria-Lohar are discussed in more than one song. Here is a Manda dance song from Tursani village.

Jāging poysi weke dāda roy seng busur bhusbās ?	Where are you going with your bamboo basket, brother?
Nia bāti pāri dāda ?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori hile bai.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wāde lyona bai.	I am a Lohar boy, girl.
Nima weke dān ton dāda ?	Where are you going, brother?
Irum mara koyala bai	To get charcoal of mahua wood, girl.
Koyala pandi dān tona bai	I am going to make charcoal, girl.
Nana gala wāyāka dāda.	I will come with you, brother.
Nima icho wāyama bai.	Don't come with me, girl.
Jāti dube māyār bai.	Your caste will be broken, girl.
Sarus pite jori dāda.	Two cranes make a perfect pair, brother.
Jori ise ayahāt dāda.	We will pair off like them, brother.

A Har Pata, sung when the girls of Kehalakot go to dance in other ghotul at Diwali, is on the same theme.

Pāri porro nititon bai le.	On the bank of the field you were standing, girl.
Niya pāri wāti roy bai le ?	What is your clan?
Pāri ori hile roy dāda le.	I have no clan, brother.
Nāwa pāri ātek roy dāda le.	If I had a clan, it would be yours.
Jāti sori layāna dāda le.	I am a girl of the Sori clan, brother.
Niya pāri wāti roy dāda le ?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori hile roy bai le.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wade layona bai le	I am a blacksmith boy.
Titi dāda uti roy dāda le,	You have eaten and drunk me, brother,
Jāti dube kiti roy dāda le.	And have made my caste sink down.

Naturally such an arrangement sometimes leads to trouble. At Sarandi a Lohar chelik ran off with a Muria motiari, and since then outsiders have not been admitted there. At Gohora, the Saidar—a Rawat boy—eloped with the Piosa who was a Muria girl, and the ghotul was henceforward closed to visitors.

VI. Relations between Different Ghotul

Members of different ghotul meet at dances, marriages and festivals. They visit each other on dancing expeditions throughout the year. Sometimes they have dancing contests. Neighbouring ghotul send gifts to each other, especially at the time of eating parched rice at Diwali. Thus when I was at Siūhawand, the boys put aside a good portion of their parched rice to send to the Kokameta ghotul with which they had relations of special friendship. At Banjora they sent one measure of rice to Bhopna and one measure to Kokori asking the boys and girls of those ghotul to share their feast. Bhopna and Kokori returned the gifts at the Chherta festival.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

302 The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Belle marrāte pungār puy ānia

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

X883 412 301 In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

412 531 171 301 Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

[831]

431 836 For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

[1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The bearers lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'

[2] Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 27f.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAS* (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 396ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poesy* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Muduvar.—Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

[301]

FIG. 87. Head-band of sago palm fibre from Malakot (*see p. 385*)
Length 23"

FIG. 88. Neck-band of date palm fibre from Bayanar (*see p. 385*)
Length 16"

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devoted lover. Every comb, however, is a gift. When a girl wants a new one she brings two annas' worth of silver metal from the bazaar and that

[301]

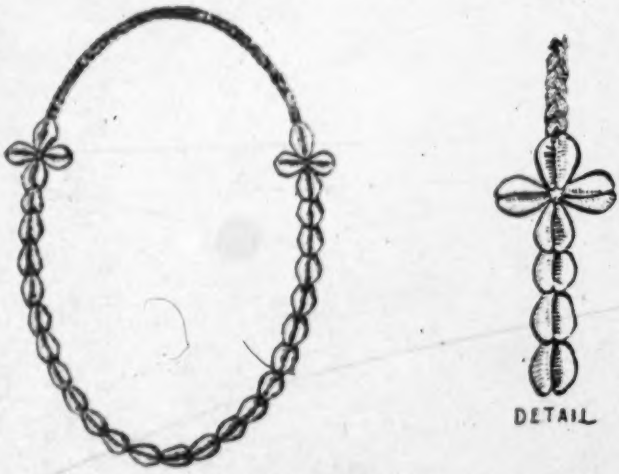

FIG. 89. Cowrie head-band from Ulera. The cowries are attached to a cord made of carefully woven sago palm fibre
(*See p. 386*)

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

night goes to comb the hair of the boy from whom she desires a present. She does his hair with special care and whispers in his ear, 'Look, boy, I have brought some silver, make me a nice comb'. The boy says, 'I don't know how to'. The girl says, 'But of course you know'. Then the boy says, 'Well, what will you give me? Will you....?' The girl says, 'Never', meaning 'Yes', and the boy makes the comb.

In well-disciplined ghotul a boy cannot give a comb to a motiari without the permission of the Kotwar; sometimes it has actually to pass through the Kotwar's hands. For such a gift seems to be regarded as a very definite and important step in the love relations between a boy and girl, and it is considered necessary by the ghotul authorities to keep a check on such intimacies in case there is any scandal or trouble. To this witness some lines in a Paskna Pata from Bandopal:

> Where did you get a comb like that?
> You got it from the embrace of a chelik.
> One comb for once, two combs for twice.

If a comb is lost or broken, the chelik must make a new one. Otherwise his motiari says, 'How can I comb his hair?' If the Kotwar hears about it, he orders the boy to make one, and he does so at once.

Most combs are made of mahua or karraha wood. Implements used in their manufacture are a small saw, ¾" broad and 6" long, rather like a fret-saw; a *kadri* knife; a *hujji* chisel and a *tatti* adze.

The Kotwar of the Phunder ghotul made a comb for me. He took a piece of mahua wood 2' long and 3" broad, supported one end on a bit of wood and gradually planed down one end, first with the adze and then with his knife. He stood it on end and trimmed the top; then with the saw cut a number of slits 1" deep, measuring them with a twig to ensure that they were even He cut them again and again to enlarge the slits, leaving on either side of the wood a space uncut.

Now another boy came and held the wood firmly, and the Kotwar cut off 1¼" from the top with his saw, first cutting half through on one side, then turning the wood over and doing it from the other. Finally he broke the piece off and trimmed it with his knife. So far the process had taken half an hour, but the small piece of wood had taken shape as a comb. The boy now spent fifteen minutes shaping the sides, then with his chisel he enlarged the slits again and carefully cleaned the apertures between the spikes. After this, he held the comb in the hollow of his left hand and grasping the chisel firmly in the right and pressing it down hard began to decorate the comb with various patterns. By the time he had finished, he had spent two-and-a-half hours on the work, the greater part of the time being spent on the decoration.

The next morning the Kotwar went to a wild fig tree to extract its sticky, milky gum. He struck a branch with the blunt end of his axe and caught some drops of gum in a leaf-cup. He brought this back and sat down by a fire. He spread the gum on either side of the comb with a bit of straw, warmed it on the fire, applied more gum, laid the silver paper over it and rubbed it in hard with the handle of his chisel till the pattern showed. He repeated the process on the opposite side toasting the comb before the fire by sticking it on the end of his chisel. Finally he brought out the pattern clearly by pressing in the silver paper with his own finger-nails, and washed it with a straw dipped in water.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *ahki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc. If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orha*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process."

There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 the ordinary axe, and there is little or no 'waist' by the socket. It is, on a smaller scale, like the Cornish biddox.

Though this is used by some Bison-horn Marias in the remoter tracts, its use is now definitely a sign of the Hill Maria. The Bison-horn Maria uses the ordinary *korki* of the plains, which the Hill Maria calls *koq-gudari*; the villages on the edge of the Abujhmar hills are beginning to use it instead of the *gudari*, but it is never seen in the villages in the interior of the hills. This is a shouldered iron hoe, the blade from the shoulders to the digging edge being almost square, the sides being only slightly longer than the edge. It scores over the *gudari* because it can also be used to scoop and shovel earth.

Last must be mentioned the solid iron crowbar or digging-stick, found in all Maria houses, and throughout Bastar. But in the [171] Abujhmar hills it is interesting to find that it is sometimes shouldered and is in form very like the Madras Sawaras' shouldered iron hoe illustrated at p. 361 of Hutton's *India Census Report* (1931). This is known to the Hill Marias as *pulu*. I have seen similar shouldered specimens occasionally among the Bison-horn Marias, and was told that they had been imported from the Malkangiri taluq of the Jeypore Agency; but there is no coming and going between that Agency and the Abujhmar hills. Of all the Marias' iron weapons ●[435] and implements the *pulu* is the dearest, owing to the weight of iron used. The blacksmiths charge a rupee, the price of three *gudari* or two axes. It is generally about a metre long, and the shouldered portion is about a quarter of the total length. Plain unshouldered specimens are more common. Its chief use is for digging up the various yams and jungle roots in the rains that form so important a part of the diet of all Bastar Koitor. Or it is useful for digging holes for the posts of houses, or grubbing up stumps, etc.; it never is used as a hoe.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A little later they collect *kapani*, the wild bearded rice common in all old rice fields and fallows and at the edges of standing water, by holding a winnowing-fan in one hand and beating the grain of the standing ripe plants into it with the other; the bearded ears are sometimes plaited into '*sela*' fringes for ornamenting doors of houses at the new-eating festivals.

The men are adept in collecting the honey of various kinds of bees, though sometimes, despite forest rules, too prone to save trouble by felling rather than climbing a fine tree. For this purpose, and for tapping palm trees, they often fasten to the trunks of trees long thick bamboos, cutting the side shoots down to stumps four or five inches long to serve as ladder rungs. Gums are collected from many species of trees, for use as bird-lime or in securing the *kosa* silk whipping of arrow-heads, etc. In Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils the Forest Department has quantities of *tasar* silk cocoons collected by Bison-horn Maria men when, in the rains in the intervals between sowing and reaping their various crops, they go out to the forests in search of such delicacies as red ants' nests, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs. The cocoons are high on sal or *saja* trees; where the climbers cannot reach them they use long bamboo poles with a piece of bamboo fastened at an acute angle at the end to serve as a hook. They get about Rs. 3 a thousand cocoons from the Koshta weavers who employ them; the Hill Maria, however, generally collects only what cocoons he needs for his own purposes. Red ants' nests are cooked, leaves, ants and all, either with *pej* or *gato*, or by themselves and eaten with pulses as a vegetable. They are also a favourite febrifuge; a rough and ready remedy is to shake out the live red ants on to the patient's skull, when the formic acid of their stings is said to reduce the fever; the more elaborate method is to boil the nest, ants and all, and to strain off and use the juice as a febrifuge in small doses; this juice is said to taste sharper than any lime and believed to be invaluable for a long-standing fever. In collecting the palms of the dwarf palms *chhind* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *P. acaulis*, and *buta chhind* (*P. farinifera*) for use for thatching, basketry or making rough cords for binding fences, the men not only collect the small dates or the flowers (according to season) and the edible pith of the *buta chhind*, but also the fat white grub of a certain beetle, which is also found in the stems of the toddy palm and in fresh green monsoon bamboo shoots. This is eaten fried in ghee or oil with a little spice and chillies, and is regarded as a great delicacy; it is sold in the Jagdalpur market for three or four pice, and even high-caste Hindus buy it. When white ants emerge in flying swarms early in the monsoon they collect them after they have shed their wings, or pull the wings

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

These pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. They are usually made of the wood of *terminalia tomentosa* or *shorea robusta* and are erected with ceremonies similar to those used for a menhir. 764 [824]

As far as I know, the pillars are always made by non-aboriginals, but since the Marias give their instructions to the carpenters about the patterns they want carved, they do thus throw some light on Maria psychology even if they do not illustrate their sense of art. For example, the pillar in memory of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar was made by Bharto, an Oriya carpenter of Jagdalpur. The pillars for Barse Marka at Barrem and for Marvi Masa at Jabeli were both made by Anda Kalar of Potali. For Barse Marka's pillar his sister's son gave a bull calf worth twenty rupees, cloth worth five rupees, two rupees in cash and daily rations for the fifteen days while the carpenter was working. 764 532 [435]

There was a fine pillar to a wealthy Maria named Muchaki Hunga near Dilmilli on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. It is a fat, thick pillar, carefully squared, standing some fifteen feet high with elaborate carvings round the base and a decoration of crocodiles and pigeons at the top. The whole is surmounted by a trident, obviously suggested by the carpenter, and on this again is a small bird. On the west face of the pillar there are carvings of dancers wearing bison horns and six girls who are realistically portrayed with breasts and genitalia. Below them is a tiger, a crane and a peacock. On the south side is a picture of the dead man riding an elephant, an umbrella in his hand and bags of money at the saddle. Five women follow him with pots of rice-beer and spoons. Below them are rats. At the foot are men ploughing, deer and tigers. On the east side is a man riding a horse and fish, horses and a tortoise. To the north is a man and wife with their children, a gourd for taking beer from a pot and representations of snakes and birds. Below this are two pairs of dogs apparently copulating, and at the very bottom some men are carrying a pot of rice-beer.

Near the pillar is a grave built up in the modern Hinduized fashion and protected by a little shed. [177]

Near Massenar, at the end of a long row of *wraskal* menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa. This is much more slender than the one at Dilmilli and is not so well carved. But it has carvings of Kopa himself on his elephant with the inevitable umbrella, a gun and a tobacco pouch. On his chest is a small circle which I was told represented his Jubilee Medal. The pillar is further decorated with carvings of men dancing with the bison-horn head-dress, boys and girls dancing with a pot of rice-beer, a man trying to drag away a girl by the hand, crocodiles,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

continue their old habit (shared by the Baigas and most of the Orissa tribes) of wiping themselves with leaves after defecation. This custom, along with beef-eating and the breeding of domestic pigs, appears to worry that slightly ludicrous figure, the pious social reformer, far more than more obvious social evils. In Orissa, for example, earnest attempts have been made to induce the Bondos, of all people, to use water after defecation. A few have begun to do so, using the village stream (sole source of water-supply) as a latrine: the only result of these rather pathetic endeavours at 'improvement' has been to make the water-supply of a few aboriginal villages as filthy as that of many 'advanced' areas. As a comment on this curious belief that a change in defecatory habits indicates an advance in culture, I note that in a famous Indian Public School, new boys are greeted with the question, 'Do you wash or wipe?' If a boy 'washes' he is regarded as coming from a definitely inferior social stratum.

Page 69, *line* 31. The multiple cord belt is not worn by Gadaba women, as Glasfurd says, nor by the Bondos, as Hutton says at page xiv of his Introduction to this book; it is a certain class of Kond women, notably the Kuttia Konds and the Konds round Nimgiri, who wear it. Gadaba women wear, not a belt, but a bustle made of many separate cords lashed together; this certainly gives them 'a strange appearance'. Juang women formerly wore belts made of a great number of little earthen cubes strung on cords. Cowrie belts are still common among the northern Murias.

Page 80, *line* 35. Cowries seem to have come back on the market again; I have seen them on sale in the bazaars and have noticed many new cowrie belts and fringes for the bison-horn head-dress. For notes on the use of the cowrie, see Grigson's communication to *Man* (Vol. XL, p. 159) on the subject, and my article, 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State' in the same journal (Vol. XLII, pp. 121ff).

Page 81, *line* 11. Marias have told me that they distinguish two kinds of bison horn. Those of inferior quality are all-black in colour. The better type are white from the root to the middle and then dark to the tip; nowadays such horns fetch anything up to twenty rupees—sometimes a bullock is given in exchange for a fine pair. Marias go all the way from Dantewara into the Jeypore zamindari to obtain them.

Before leaving their village for a dance Maria youths often promise a fowl to Mahaprabhu, the Village Mother and the Departed saying 'Save us from hostile magic and the evil eye, and see that no feathers fall from our head-dresses. Let the drums give a good sound; let them not be broken'.

of ghotul leaders; it is distributed when a boy or girl leaves the ghotul after marriage; it is a convenient and compendious means of paying a fine. The chelik offer it to their drums before a wedding, and drink it in honour of Lingo at the end of the Pus Kolang dance.

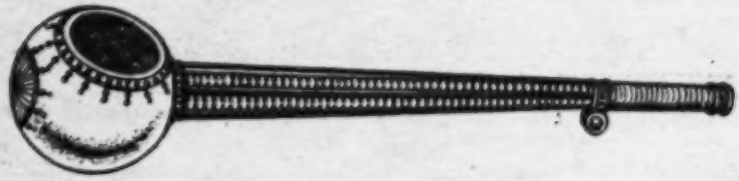

FIG. 13. Brass *orhi* used for ladling liquor
Length 8"-9"

This homely drink, so intimately connected with every aspect of their lives, so accessible to the forest-dwellers, so readily and cheaply prepared, may not be distilled by the Muria in Bastar or by the aboriginals anywhere. Its profits must be divided between the State and the middleman. Home-distillation is everywhere forbidden, and the privilege of the manufacture and sale of the spirit is farmed out to contractors in open auction. The business has thus passed into the hands of the most degenerate type of Hindu and Mussalman adventurer, for few aboriginals have either the means or the enterprise to compete with the sophisticated aggression of the outside world in the open market. These adventurers rob both the aboriginals and the State. They dilute the spirit; they put soda in it to cover the fact of their tampering; they make false returns; they use filthy water in unclean pots;[1] their shops are centres of the most degraded type of alien immigrant into tribal territory.

When the National Congress came into power in 1938, they declared that they would not apply their Prohibition laws to Europeans or aboriginals. It would have been more consistent had they allowed the aboriginal to distil his own liquor and had thus ceased to draw revenue from his drinking habits. The real evil of the present system is not that the aboriginal gets drunk, but that in order to get his liquor he is forced into contact with the worst type of alien and outsider.

In this respect conditions in Bastar are better than in many other parts of India. The Excise Department is efficient and understanding; the State controls the mahua trade, but allows the aboriginal great freedom in the use of toddy and salphi. But nothing can atone for the evil of depriving a primitive people of a natural right.

However, once that has been done, the arrangements in Bastar are as good as can be imagined. The spirit is cheap, only two annas a bottle,[2] and passes are freely granted to the Muria and Maria to purchase whatever is needed for ceremonial and social occasions. As a result there appears to be very little illicit distillation in either Kondagaon or Narayanpur. The figures of prosecutions for the five years, 1937–41, are these:

[1] The riddle 'Man and wife piss in the same lane', to which the answer is 'The two pipes of the still', probably hints at the dirt of the Kalar's out-still.
[2] This was in 1941.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 *Page* 86. Col. E. Clementi Smith, who commanded the detachment of troops which was sent to Bastar at the time of the 1910 rebellion, writes to me that in those days the Marias made arrow-heads of bone and porcupine quills as well as of iron. He adds, 'Another thing I remember was the dislike of a guide, when moving along jungle tracks, if one came to a cock's head stuck on a stick—the guide always said "one couldn't go there". The same objection also arose if one came to thin boughs bent over the track and intertwined. I need hardly say that we couldn't stop for these signs and one used to kick them out of the way—I think the guides expected the heavens to fall on us for such desecration. Another thing I remember was that salt was more acceptable as payment than pice. We had a lot of our "enemy" enrolled as porters at one time. They hardly ever deserted. The sepoys liked them and I am always glad to know that we never caused any casualties among them.' For Col. Clementi Smith's account of the Bastar rebellion, see *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, pp. 240-53.

[436]

Page 113, *line* 35. The real taboo is not so much on intercourse inside a house as on a bed. At Komhu I was told by the Hill Marias that 'no woman may sleep on a cot, for the village Pen is in it'. The Bison-horn Marias and even the Raj Gonds have the same rule. A wealthy Gond Zamindar is said to have made a platform of earth for his wife, as he would not allow her a bed.

[513]

Page 135, *line* 14. The Hill Marias do actually avoid their wives (how astonished the Baigas would be at the idea!) from the time when the *kosra* shoots appear until the threshing is over. They control themselves, they told me at Itulnar, 'by tying their cloth very tight'.

462 *Pages* 135-7. Though there is some division of labour between men and women, Bison-horn Maria women are much freer to share the work of men than are the women of many other tribes. They are allowed, for example, to plough—a thing strictly taboo to the Gonds of the Central Provinces. But they must not carry loads on a *kawar*-pole, for if they do Dongar Pen and the Rau will be offended and bring misfortune on them. They may reap a crop, but they must not tie it in bundles or lift it on to their heads with their own hands; a man must do it for them or there may be a scarcity the following year. Women may climb trees, but not near a house; they may fish, but not hunt. They may not winnow, but they can thresh with their feet (there is an illustration of this in *Maria Murder and Suicide*) and may beat out a *mandia* crop with long poles. Men, on the other hand, may not husk rice or clean it in a fan; they should not grind, nor should they carry pitchers

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Bastar, and learned later from the Maratha *amil* of Deolmari that he had retired only just in time, as word had been passed from zamindar to zamindar in Bastar to combine to plunder his party. Unless there has been since then a wide displacement of population—which is quite possible in view of the chronic mismanagement of the Bhopalpatnam and Kutru zamindaris of Bastar—it is unlikely that his assailants were Abujhmar or Bison-horn Marias or Koyas; they were probably members of the gangs of ruffians at that time maintained by all the petty chieftains of the Godavari valley, or else Gonds of the type known in that part of Bastar to the Telugus as Dorla, probably Bison-horn Marias who, on descending to the Godavari valley, had come into contact with the outside world. This Maratha Amil, in congratulating Blunt on his escape from the mountains and jungles in which several of the Amil's men had been lost, added some remarks about the men of the jungle which rightly gave the wandering Banjara the credit of being the first civilizing influence in Bastar; his remarks, with the necessary modifications, are certainly true of a later period in the Abujhmar hills and the wilder parts of Central Bastar. He represented the Banjaras as having done much to conciliate and partially civilize the 'Gonds', 'for the traffic which they carry on among them, particularly in salt and sugar, had introduced a taste for luxuries, which many of them now could not easily dispense with. This had also induced them to be more industrious in collecting the produce of their jungles, such as lac, iron ore, and other articles for barter, and had necessitated their affording protection to the Brinjaries (*sic*). In the course of this traffic, which had now lasted about twenty-five years, the desire of the Goands (*sic*) for salt and sugar had considerably increased, and tended more to their civilization than any other means: for before they had tasted or acquired a relish for these articles, no man could venture among them; and he assured me that it had a more powerful effect than the whole force of the Mahratta arms in rendering them obedient to their government.'

The first Europeans actually to visit Bastar seem to have been Captain Fenwick in 1850 and Mr. Take in 1855; they made only short trips up a portion of the Kolab-Sabari river that forms for many miles the eastern boundary of Bastar. I have not seen their reports. Captain MacVicar's brief visit early in 1855 and the important visit of Colonel (then Lieut.) C. Elliot, the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur, later that year have been mentioned above in the footnote on human sacrifice. Elliot's report was reprinted in 1861 as 'Selections from the Records of the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. XXX. Report on the Bustar and Kharonde Dependencies of the Raepore District'. He

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 479 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk [462] take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhaurai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills, and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

541 Cock-fighting is the favourite pastime of the Bison-horn Marias, well-known venues being the weekly markets at Kuakonda, Paknar, Kukanar, Bastanar Ghat and near Karli, among several others. They tie iron knives to the cocks' legs. If the cocks break away, their owners pick them up and rub their hackles or spit into their beaks to get their blood up. The defeated cock always becomes the property of the victor's owner. On any market morning you can see scores of Bison-horn Marias walking to market with cocks tucked under their arms. Hill Marias do not themselves go in much for this pastime; only a few of them even stay to watch cock-fighting at Dhaurai market. Some of the Kutru Hill Marias attend cock-fighting every week at Oikal in the Ahiri zamindari of Chanda.

231 614 **Goats** Goats are seldom kept by the Hill Marias, though at Nugur in the Indrawati valley the Parlio clan, despite the fact that its totem is the goat, kept goats for the Teli tradesmen who owned the village rice bins described on page 102; but they could not eat goat flesh or even take goat milk.

Among the Bison-horn Marias, many, including even those who belong to the goat phratry and goat clans, keep goats and use goat milk; but totemistic rules prohibit members of goat clans and phratry from eating goat flesh.

231 **Cattle and buffaloes** As has been seen, the Hill Marias are not rich in cattle, do not milk them or yoke them to carts or ploughs, and generally keep Rawat herdsmen to tend them. Nearly all eat beef whenever they can afford it. Bullock or cow sacrifice is almost an essential part of funeral ceremonies, and all present eat the meat. Dead cattle are divided up and eaten; at Kutru, Hill Marias ate all that remained of a cow killed by a family of man-eating tigers, though the mangled remains had been gnawed by hyaenas and jackals, and exposed to the sun for four or five days till full of flies and maggots. The headmen of the villages of Padalibhum, Tapalibhum, Behramar, Nurbhum and Sonpur Mar *parganas* frankly admitted that they liked eating beef when they could get it; at Handawada, on the other side of the hills, the headmen of the Dantewara Mar and Mangnar *pargana* villages asserted that they never eat dead cattle, and only eat the beef of sacrificed animals. There are practically no buffaloes in the Abujhmar hills.

231 439 231 The Bison-horn Marias are great stock-raisers, both of cattle and buffaloes, and they export many head of cattle to Chanda and Raipur, as well as over the Madras border; in fact the land revenue is often paid out of the price received for cattle, and one of their favourite grievances is the cattle export duty of a rupee or two imposed by the State. They use cattle for ploughing and are

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and removed. This air passage serves for the forge the same purpose as the earthen pipe *tuyère* for the smelting furnace, and the bamboo pipes of the bellows are arranged to converge at its entrance. The hole originally excavated is filled with *mahua* charcoal. 326

The smiths' only tools, which they make themselves, are the pointed and blunt ended hammer or *mutti* already mentioned, and long iron pincers with long noses, which they call *andes*. They generally have large and small hammers. The haft is inserted in a hole right through the maximum thickness of the head, at a point about a third of its length from the broad flat end; the remaining two-thirds tapers to a rough point.

3. Brass-work

The brass workers already frequently mentioned, unlike the blacksmiths, are by now practically a distinct caste. Hindus and Murias call them Ghasias, which is the name applied elsewhere in Central India, Chhota Nagpur and Orissa to one of the lowest and most degraded of the untouchable castes, whose usual occupation is grass-cutting and horse-tending, while some sections make combs for the hair or for weavers' looms. Even in Bastar, where many of them are skilled artisans, the wildest Maria holds them in profound contempt. The Maria calls them Gharwa. In outward appearance there is little difference between them and their Muria or Maria neighbours, and probably in the remote past they may have been recruited from these or other aboriginal stocks. Rohilla traders and oppressive zamindari managers in the past have often employed Ghasia duns to extract money from Marias; such is the Maria's feeling of degradation if a Ghasia comes near his house that the villagers would combine to pay a miserable rupee or two to these extortioners to get rid of their foul presence. 326 564

The Gharwas buy old brass or bronze in the markets or through Hindu middlemen. They make their brass ornaments, spoons, bells and Muria hunting horns by the *cire-perdue* process. The first or inner core of their moulds is made of earth from white-ants' hills, and known as *mati-kutan*; the earth is puddled with water and moulded to the needed shape in the hands. This is dried in the sun, and when hard covered with a coating of beeswax, on which the desired pattern is made in relief with long thin threads or small pellets of beeswax; various patterns can be produced by whipping these threads round the circumference of the *mati-kutan* core, or applying them on the sides of its plain wax covering in coils, spirals, suns, moons, lozenges, twined, or in any other pattern; and the pellets are used to produce bands of dots. The wax is warmed till it is pliant in the hands, and then forced through a tool called a 326 [439]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *penda* must not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatikarhana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-bhita* or 'song fellows' and the dance-steps.[1]

The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence. Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of 'jewellery' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 73-6 and 183-4

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

continue their old habit (shared by the Baigas and most of the Orissa tribes) of wiping themselves with leaves after defecation. This custom, along with beef-eating and the breeding of domestic pigs, appears to worry that slightly ludicrous figure, the pious social reformer, far more than more obvious social evils. In Orissa, for example, earnest attempts have been made to induce the Bondos, of all people, to use water after defecation. A few have begun to do so, using the village stream (sole source of water-supply) as a latrine: the only result of these rather pathetic endeavours at 'improvement' has been to make the water-supply of a few aboriginal villages as filthy as that of many 'advanced' areas. As a comment on this curious belief that a change in defecatory habits indicates an advance in culture, I note that in a famous Indian Public School, new boys are greeted with the question, 'Do you wash or wipe?' If a boy 'washes' he is regarded as coming from a definitely inferior social stratum.

Page 69, *line* 31. The multiple cord belt is not worn by Gadaba women, as Glasfurd says, nor by the Bondos, as Hutton says at page xiv of his Introduction to this book; it is a certain class of Kond women, notably the Kuttia Konds and the Konds round Nimgiri, who wear it. Gadaba women wear, not a belt, but a bustle made of many separate cords lashed together; this certainly gives them 'a strange appearance'. Juang women formerly wore belts made of a great number of little earthen cubes strung on cords. Cowrie belts are still common among the northern Murias.

Page 80, *line* 35. Cowries seem to have come back on the market again; I have seen them on sale in the bazaars and have noticed many new cowrie belts and fringes for the bison-horn head-dress. For notes on the use of the cowrie, see Grigson's communication to *Man* (Vol. XL, p. 159) on the subject, and my article, 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State' in the same journal (Vol. XLII, pp. 121ff).

Page 81, *line* 11. Marias have told me that they distinguish two kinds of bison horn. Those of inferior quality are all-black in colour. The better type are white from the root to the middle and then dark to the tip; nowadays such horns fetch anything up to twenty rupees—sometimes a bullock is given in exchange for a fine pair. Marias go all the way from Dantewara into the Jeypore zamindari to obtain them.

Before leaving their village for a dance Maria youths often promise a fowl to Mahaprabhu, the Village Mother and the Departed saying 'Save us from hostile magic and the evil eye, and see that no feathers fall from our head-dresses. Let the drums give a good sound; let them not be broken'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of ghotul leaders; it is distributed when a boy or girl leaves the ghotul after marriage; it is a convenient and compendious means of paying a fine. The chelik offer it to their drums before a wedding, and drink it in honour of Lingo at the end of the Pus Kolang dance.

FIG. 13. Brass *orhi* used for ladling liquor
Length 8"-9"

This homely drink, so intimately connected with every aspect of their lives, so accessible to the forest-dwellers, so readily and cheaply prepared, may not be distilled by the Muria in Bastar or by the aboriginals anywhere. Its profits must be divided between the State and the middleman. Home-distillation is everywhere forbidden, and the privilege of the manufacture and sale of the spirit is farmed out to contractors in open auction. The business has thus passed into the hands of the most degenerate type of Hindu and Mussalman adventurer, for few aboriginals have either the means or the enterprise to compete with the sophisticated aggression of the outside world in the open market. These adventurers rob both the aboriginals and the State. They dilute the spirit; they put soda in it to cover the fact of their tampering; they make false returns; they use filthy water in unclean pots;[1] their shops are centres of the most degraded type of alien immigrant into tribal territory.

When the National Congress came into power in 1938, they declared that they would not apply their Prohibition laws to Europeans or aboriginals. It would have been more consistent had they allowed the aboriginal to distil his own liquor and had thus ceased to draw revenue from his drinking habits. The real evil of the present system is not that the aboriginal gets drunk, but that in order to get his liquor he is forced into contact with the worst type of alien and outsider.

In this respect conditions in Bastar are better than in many other parts of India. The Excise Department is efficient and understanding; the State controls the mahua trade, but allows the aboriginal great freedom in the use of toddy and salphi. But nothing can atone for the evil of depriving a primitive people of a natural right.

However, once that has been done, the arrangements in Bastar are as good as can be imagined. The spirit is cheap, only two annas a bottle,[2] and passes are freely granted to the Muria and Maria to purchase whatever is needed for ceremonial and social occasions. As a result there appears to be very little illicit distillation in either Kondagaon or Narayanpur. The figures of prosecutions for the five years, 1937-41, are these:

[1] The riddle 'Man and wife piss in the same lane', to which the answer is 'The two pipes of the still', probably hints at the dirt of the Kalar's out-still.
[2] This was in 1941.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria everywhere are at the mercy of the merchants in the bazaar, though these are not entirely indifferent to popular demand. They supply cheap aluminium armlets and anklets, glass and lac bangles, aluminium and silver neck-bands, the *kawel* necklaces of rupees known throughout Central India, and many varieties of beads. Muria chelik and motiari buy these in the bazaars and wear them. They indicate nothing except perhaps the way in which the natural taste and intelligence of the aboriginals is degraded in the interests of big business.

We may now turn to the special ornaments worn by the Muria in the different fashion areas I have named. We will begin with the Jhoria, for these are the most distinctive and interesting of all the Muria.

The Jhoria, as we have seen, are simply Hill Maria who have settled in the foothills. You can distinguish a Maria from a Jhoria girl by her breasts so charmingly displayed and the tattoo marks less charmingly marring the beauty of her face. It is not so easy to distinguish between a Jhoria chelik and a young Hill Maria boy.

Like the Hill Maria, the Jhoria give the impression of being a little over-dressed.[1] They are 'dolled up', smart, tight, fresh, alert, vivacious—altogether charming. Their clothes are worn tightly round their bodies, revealing the grace and energy of the figure. Their ornaments and especially their necklaces do not hang about them, but are drawn tight round their heads and necks. The feathers in their hair give them the perky bright appearance of young birds.

Most striking of all are their gaily coloured bead decorations. They wear head-bands, sometimes three or four of them, round the head, keeping the hair in place. Round the neck are two or more broad bead collars and a profusion of necklaces; their beautiful and elaborate designs are fully illustrated in the colour plates in this book.

Jhoria boys and girls wear ear-pendants of coloured beads (Fig. 64): some girls also wear large circular shields (*dhāi*) without the usual chains, or home-made wooden *kinwa* (Fig. 73) covered with silver paper.

Bangles are not made by the Muria, and those worn by boys or girls are the usual bazaar products.

Rings play an important part in ghotul life. A boy or girl on being appointed to high office is presented with a ring: at a marriage the bride and bridegroom give rings to their old companions: a ring is buried in front of the Gaita's house before a Deo-Dandar or Pen Kolang expedition and is later given to the leader of the dance: rings are collected at a festival and offered to the clan-god.

The rings are of brass or aluminium: some are decorated with little bells (Fig. 17). Girls often wear a great many which the boys beg them to remove before beginning the massage.

Girls often wear rows of combs in their hair, with thick bunches of cowries,[2] and balls of red and green wool. Both chelik and motiari love to put flowers in their hair or over their ears.

The Jhoria chelik wear cowrie belts just above their loin-cloths. There seems no shortage of these; they may be found everywhere. Sometimes the son of well-to-do people wears a broad silver *hardan*, bought in the bazaar, of a kind used by girls.

[1] The word is W. V. Grigson's; it exactly describes my own impression—if such a phrase can be applied to people who hardly wear any clothes at all.

[2] For the use of cowries, almost universal in Bastar, see my article 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII (1942), pp. 121–4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *pedas* (headmen) and *permas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

Shifting villages

The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 439 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets ● [462] made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhaurai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Page 86. Col. E. Clementi Smith, who commanded the detachment of troops which was sent to Bastar at the time of the 1910 rebellion, writes to me that in those days the Marias made arrow-heads of bone and porcupine quills as well as of iron. He adds, 'Another thing I remember was the dislike of a guide, when moving along jungle tracks, if one came to a cock's head stuck on a stick—the guide always said "one couldn't go there". The same objection also arose if one came to thin boughs bent over the track and intertwined. I need hardly say that we couldn't stop for these signs and one used to kick them out of the way—I think the guides expected the heavens to fall on us for such desecration. Another thing I remember was that salt was more acceptable as payment than pice. We had a lot of our "enemy" enrolled as porters at one time. They hardly ever deserted. The sepoys liked them and I am always glad to know that we never caused any casualties among them.' For Col. Clementi Smith's account of the Bastar rebellion, see *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, pp. 240-53.

Page 113, *line* 35. The real taboo is not so much on intercourse inside a house as on a bed. At Komhu I was told by the Hill Marias that 'no woman may sleep on a cot, for the village Pen is in it'. The Bison-horn Marias and even the Raj Gonds have the same rule. A wealthy Gond Zamindar is said to have made a platform of earth for his wife, as he would not allow her a bed.

Page 135, *line* 14. The Hill Marias do actually avoid their wives (how astonished the Baigas would be at the idea!) from the time when the *kosra* shoots appear until the threshing is over. They control themselves, they told me at Itulnar, 'by tying their cloth very tight'.

Pages 135-7. Though there is some division of labour between men and women, Bison-horn Maria women are much freer to share the work of men than are the women of many other tribes. They are allowed, for example, to plough—a thing strictly taboo to the Gonds of the Central Provinces. But they must not carry loads on a *kawar*-pole, for if they do Dongar Pen and the Rau will be offended and bring misfortune on them. They may reap a crop, but they must not tie it in bundles or lift it on to their heads with their own hands; a man must do it for them or there may be a scarcity the following year. Women may climb trees, but not near a house; they may fish, but not hunt. They may not winnow, but they can thresh with their feet (there is an illustration of this in *Maria Murder and Suicide*) and may beat out a *mandia* crop with long poles. Men, on the other hand, may not husk rice or clean it in a fan; they should not grind, nor should they carry pitchers

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

on their heads. They must not remove rice from the Pot of the Departed.

Page 169, *line* 33. Of the 100 cases of homicide examined in *Maria Murder and Suicide* 13 were due to intoxication by rice-beer and 6 to other liquors. In a further 14 cases of which Grigson kept notes, *landa*-intoxication led to 2 murders and other intoxicants to 3.

Page 174, *line* 5. The Murias still remember this camp and recall how Sir Montague Butler gave one of the headmen a ten rupee note as a present. That was seventeen years ago, when ten rupee notes were seldom seen. The Muria showed the note to a Forest Guard and asked him what it was. The Guard offered to buy it for a rupee, saying that was all it was worth. The Muria accepted the bargain and went off full of gratitude to the kindly Guard but doubtful of the Governor's generosity in giving him such a small reward. Quite recently a Mussalman merchant of Narayanpur was prosecuted for cheating a Muria with coloured labels which he declared were hundred rupee notes.

Page 174, *line* 9. At Dugeli I saw in 1942 a small carefully-fenced enclosure round a group of plantain trees, among which was a tall plant not unlike a sugar cane, which I was told was the 'Baiha Danda' and was used as an antidote to the bite of a mad dog. It was grown entirely for this purpose, in case the emergency should arise.

Page 174, *line* 15. The custom of blowing away disease may be illustrated by the experience of Oyami Harma of Bara Harma-munda. 'Once when I was working in my fields with some labourers I had employed, they performed magic against me and a lot of mud went into my mouth and filled my whole body. The Waddai discovered what had happened and cured me by blowing the mud out of my stomach. Another day, some people came to ask for rice. I refused at first, but they persisted and at last I had to let them have some. But they were annoyed with me and with my own rice they made hostile magic and filled my belly with it. The Waddai cured me by blowing it out.' Sucking is also practised. A Siraha places his lips on a patient's stomach and sucks. If he finds only blood in his mouth, it means a Rau has sent the disease; if there is a little earth with the blood, it indicates the Earth Mother.

Page 182, *line* 24. I have seen split-string instruments similar to the *vaddur-dol* among the Bondos and Saoras in Orissa, as well as among the Jhoria-Murias; they have been noticed for the Reddis by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Reddis of the Bison Hills*, p. 348. Meerwarth reports that they are common in Malaya and Indonesia

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do.

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing.

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it.

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath.

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground.

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'.

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bari*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals.

Irpu Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Korum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Korta or *Pona Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

custom that the man who goes to the trouble of tapping the tree, protecting it with thorns, and making a bamboo ladder, has a right over it, especially when it is growing far away in the forest. The trees are not taxed but the villagers are not allowed to sell the juice. Disputes simply arise over the right to take the liquor for personal use.

The salphi juice, however, is not generally so intoxicating as to cause quarrels in the same degree as landa rice-beer or mahua spirit. Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual* (par. 263) gives some account of the comparative alcoholic strengths of these drinks. 'The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number of tests made with toddy from all parts of the Madras Presidency were:

		Percentage by Volume
Coconut ..	.. 85·7° U.P.	8·1
Palmyra ..	.. 90·8° U.P.	5·2
Date ..	.. 91·4° U.P.	4·9
Sago ..	.. 89·6° U.P.	5·9

Toddy exposed for sale in Bengal in 1909 was found generally to range in alcoholic strength from about 93° to 94° U.P. When reasonably fresh it has a food value somewhat comparable with that of well-made malt beer.' The average strength of landa rice-beer may be taken at about 85° U.P. (8·6% by volume). Mahua spirit is much stronger—*rasi* may be sold at strengths of 50° to 70° U.P. and *phuli* of 5° to 35° U.P. The average for *rasi* is 60° U.P. (22·8% by volume) and for *phuli* 25° U.P. (42·8%).

XIII

With all these varied economic and social activities how far do chelik and motiari meet one another during the day? Does tribal custom allow them to share the same tasks or are the functions of men and women sharply differentiated?

The girls, of course, have the major part of the house-work to see to. They cook, bring water, clean the buildings with cow-dung and whitewash, husk the grain, grind wheat or spices. They generally make the *mansi* mats, tie grass into brooms, prepare leaf-plates and cups. In the house a woman must not climb on the roof and she must not take grain out of the dhusir grain-bin, although it may only be removed at her command. A motiari before the menarche may go into the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept, but not afterwards—for she is going to join another clan and has no part with these ancestors; her spirit will mingle with those of her husband's family.

The chelik, on the other hand, have comparatively little to do in the house. They may cook and bring water when the womenfolk are in their periods; they have the business of erecting the framework of the building which the girls will later plaster with mud, and they thatch the roof.

But their main work is outside. In male hands is all the business of the fields and forest. They make and use the ploughs; they cut wood for fuel or cultivation; they embank the fields; they tend the cattle, make and drive their carts; they go to hunt and fish; they watch the crops and thrash and winnow them.

Yet there remain many chances for sharing of labour between chelik and motiari. A boy does not always see his motiari in the dark. Both can repair

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

the embankment of a field, both can join in spreading brushwood over a clearing.

A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. But she must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife, or thrust the plunge-traps into the water.

FIG. 14. *Baras* or *talli* used for cutting up meat and planing wood
Length of upright 9"

A motiari, once she is mature, must not sleep on a machan to watch the fields. She must never go with a boy to sleep there—if she does a tiger will shake it and perhaps kill them both. In some villages, she may cow-dung the thrashing-floor, provided it is of her own clan, but she cannot thrash with her feet, or winnow the grain from a fan though she may do it with her hands. She must not sow seeds of rice or millet, though she does sometimes sow beans and vegetables.

The motiari gather mahua flowers with the boys; they collect myrabolams, and extract oil. Very important, they take food to the boys while they are working in the fields. This is a constant motive of romance in folk-tales.

The motiari may attend a funeral and most of the festivals. At the New Eating ceremonies they prepare the plates and cups for the feast, and are eager spectators of the ceremonies. They dance at most festivals with the boys. But I know of no Muria women Siraha-mediums or Gunia-diviners, though these are not unknown in Chhattisgarh. I am told, however, that there is a female Siraha of Pendrawandin in Gudabera, and there is a tradition that in former times it was the women who sacrificed to the gods. 'In those days, they used to cut the tail instead of the head and the bird or animal instead of dying would escape. Men soon got annoyed at this and said, "You women do not know how to do it; from now we will sacrifice". Men then began to cut off the heads of the birds and animals and the sacrifices were complete. This is why women do not eat the head of any bird or animal offered to the gods. They said to their husbands, "Now the head is yours, ours is the tail".

There are not many absolute taboos. A man must not husk grain or grind it. He must not wash women's clothes or wear them—except at night. Girls must not wear boys' turbans and clothes except on ceremonial occasions.

On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CRIMES OF WOMEN

I

674 171 It is notorious that women are everywhere less criminal than men. 'The proportion varies, however, greatly in different countries. In France it is usually about 4 to 1; in the United States it is about 12 to 1; in Italy and Spain the proportion of women is very small. In Great Britain, on the other hand, the proportion of criminal women is extremely large, especially for the greater crimes'.[1] In Bastar the proportion is 23 men to 1 woman.

674 Havelock Ellis points out that woman is protected from crime by certain physical and psychological characteristics—her physical weakness, sexual selection, domestic seclusion, prostitution and maternity. Among Maria women, however, the only one of these forms of protection to operate is maternity. The women are often of considerable physical strength and are as capable of striking a murderous blow with an axe as are the men. Since every Maria woman is married, sexual selection is of no assistance in removing from the place of danger and temptation the more degenerate and abnormal types.

462 562 As far as the domestic seclusion of women is concerned, the Maria situation resembles that in the Baltic provinces of Russia of former days, where the women shared the occupations of men and the level of feminine criminality was comparatively high. In England also, which has taken the lead in enlarging the sphere of women's work, 'the level of feminine criminality has for half a century been rising'. The Maria woman is not only free to assist her husband in the tasks of daily life, but she also frequently participates in those very occasions which are regarded as most provocative to murder, the drinking parties when large quantities of rice-beer are consumed. [548] There is no prostitution among the Maria. But on the other hand women do not, as in Europe, fall out of the social ranks.

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 261 f.

[p. 161]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do. 252

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing. [464]

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it. [462]

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath. [585]

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground. 251

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'. 415

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bāri*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindaua, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals. 196

Irpu Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Kurum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Korta or *Puna Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupul Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brush-wood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live. There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots, tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

565 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally
177 therefore on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 The Allapalli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills
466 attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen, etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the
166 Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

[1] For example, the suppression of *podu* cultivation, or the deliberate
622 curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the
791 *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

> The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village; sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*. Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> 'This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official, and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

interior villages send down their young men in relays to work for wages at Allapilli. There they get prompt and regular payment and just and fair treatment. There are resting-sheds where the Marias can sleep, leave their scanty personal possessions and take their meals in clean surroundings, not divorced from their own kind. The Forest Department are arranging ever-improving facilities for them to purchase cloth, grain, salt and ornaments at fair prices. Forest work is in itself a technical training. At one time also the local officials tried to establish at Allapilli a small carpentry and basketry school.[1] Everywhere on this tour I met Marias who were on their way either to or from Allapilli, or had worked there from time to time in the past and looked upon it as a place to which they could always go to earn quickly any cash needed for payments of rent, fines or bride-price. More than one passage in *The Aboriginal Problem*[2] describes the Marias' consciousness of the fact that the Allapilli departmental forest operations have saved them from debt and distress; the establishment throughout the Chanda zamindari forests of similar 'Allapillis' was one of my recommendations. Allapilli has further been the one thing that has saved the Marias from the economic ruin that they feared when the Court of Wards and district authorities by a sudden ukase stopped their *podu* or *dahi* cultivation.

From Allapilli we motored eastwards by forest road and by estate forest tracks, generally motorable after slight repair in the open season, to Bhamragarh, halting a night on the way at Pirmeli; it was some fifteen miles from Allapilli to Pirmeli, and another twenty-three on to Bhamragarh. I had been preceded on this tour by Mr. Kerawala inquiring into debt at each big village, and the neighbouring village *bhumias* and *gaitas* and the *patti Sendhias*[3] from miles around gathered again to repeat to me what they had already told him. The first such gathering was at Mirkal[4] and the next at Pirmeli itself. At both places we heard much about money-lenders and their methods, and I therefore reproduce from *The Aboriginal Problem*[5] the gist of Mr. Kerawala's report on what he was told at Mirkal and Wateli;[6] those whom he saw at Wateli came to my camp at Pirmeli.

At Mirkal he enquired particularly into the economic and social conditions of the Marias of Mirkal, Sagangatta and Kasampalli villages. He found that many were heavily in debt to Hindu

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 283.
[2] Pp. 257, 332 and 366.
[3] See p. 287.
[4] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV2148.
[5] Pp. 180-2.
[6] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. MV4035.

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

colour sense in bead-work, it is noticeable that the best carpet weavers in Jagdalpur Jail are almost invariably Bison-horn Marias. They are quick to grasp intricacies of pattern, and there is hardly any pattern that they cannot copy. For years the chief instructor in the jail was the double murderer from Palnar already mentioned in this chapter.

The Marias of both kinds are very hospitable. On entering a Hill Maria village you are met by the elders and offered little gifts, an uncouth yam, or dried tobacco leaves and forest fruits. The whole village co-operates to get your camp ready, and to entertain you at night with song and dance. The occasional stranger from other Koitor villages or minor State official is housed and fed, provided he does not outstay his welcome or attempt to be exacting in his demands. Co-operation, in service to the State, in village festivals, in felling of forest for *penda* cultivation, in allotment of *penda* areas, in sowing, reaping, winnowing and storing of grain, in fishing and hunting, is the key to the social life of the Hill Maria, who is a natural communist; his hospitality is perhaps mainly an expression of his ingrained co-operation, though he is genuinely glad to see you after a long absence, and will greet you with tears of joy. The Bison-horn Maria is more of an individualist, or, rather, less of a communist, than the hill man, but he likes to entertain for a wedding or to celebrate the completion of a new *munda* (small rice irrigation tank) and similar occasions on a lavish scale, keeping open house. All Marias are extremely grateful for any benefit received and for sympathy and interest.

[p. 98 is blank]

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter VII

Agriculture

The whole life of the Maria is primarily directed towards the raising of food from the earth, either by cultivation, or by gathering the fruits of the forest, or by fishing, hunting or trapping. His agriculture, as we have seen, determines the sites of his villages, and regulates his relations with his wife. His festivals, it will be seen, are designed either to ensure the benevolence of the earth and the ancestors and the clan-god towards the crops about to be sown, or to celebrate the first eating of each of the main crops, and the final harvest-home, in a spirit of communal thanksgiving. The human population to him is the crop of men that the *Bhum* or Earth raises for the clan, or for the Ruling Chief.

The Hill Maria still regards the crops as the result of the combined labours of the village rather than of the labours of individuals. If one suffers, all suffer, and all combine to support the old and the needy, and to help each fellow villager to get through the heaviest parts of the yearly agricultural round. The young man on marriage, or the fellow clansman settling in the village, must have his share of the village lands for cultivation. In the raising of crops, then, the village and not the individual cultivator is the unit, even now, in the Abujhmar hills. But the Bison-horn Maria is an individualist. He has lived long in contact with semi-Hinduized neighbours, and has long begun to practise the more advanced methods of the settled cultivator. Permanent cultivation fosters individualism. Even in the Abujhmar hills the few permanent rice fields are definitely the private property of individuals; and as the use of the plough spreads and more and more of the wet lands become permanent rice fields, the owners of these fields begin more and more to assert in their shifting cultivation plots the rights of permanent private ownership already admitted in their rice fields. This has already happened among the Bison-horn Marias, aided by the rapid growth of population increasing the pressure on the land and reducing the land available for distribution to newcomers to the villages. The indications are that formerly they shared the communal attitude of the Hill Maria. In describing, therefore, the agricultural life of the community, I shall deal primarily with that of the Hill Marias, indicating where necessary the different developments among the Bison-horn Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the midst of the grain crops to support them. The cut crops which are to be threshed are stacked on the wooden platforms prepared before sowing, in beehive shaped stacks, called *pakí* by the Hill Marias and *kupa* in Halbi.

The women prepare the threshing-floor (*karanu* in the hill dialect), clearing a piece of ground near the stacks of grain, and plastering it with mud. In the centre of this the men erect a thick bamboo railing on posts. It is *polo* for women to take part in the actual threshing. Oxen are never used. For each cultivator in turn, beginning with the *kasyeq-gaita*, all the men and boys in the village combine to thresh (*wisna*). They range themselves in two rows facing each other, with the bamboo railing between them.[1] Holding this with both their hands and supporting themselves by it, they dance up and down, rubbing the ears of corn between their feet. They thresh in this way only *kodon*, *kutki*, rice, *ghatka*, *chikma* and *hikka*; the women pick the ears of grains like *kang* and *bajra* in baskets, and rub them in their hands to extract the grain. The cultivator whose grain is being threshed is expected to feed all the villagers helping him for that day, and if possible to give them a good drink of *salphi*, the fermented sap of the sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*), which is raised from cuttings in large numbers all over the Hill Maria country. The threshed grain is winnowed by men only, winnowing being as taboo to women as sleeping in the fields or threshing. One man stands on a rough wooden platform and pours the grain from a basket held above his head, while another, if there is not wind enough, winnows the falling grain with a basketry winnowing fan of the usual Indian type (*het* in Maria). All the men and women of the village combine to carry the threshed and winnowed grain of each cultivator to his compartment in the long granary. They never measure their produce, but there is no taboo on this account; it simply is that they grow crops for their own sustenance, and not for sale, and it is easy to see whether the grain garnered is adequate for the coming year or not. They do indeed understand something of bazaar measures, for some of their pulses and oil seeds are sold annually to raise the money needed to pay their poll-tax; they make their own measures of basketry, with different traditional shapes for each kind of produce that they sell; and at the bazaar you may see them measuring out their produce in these in front of the Hindu tradesmen to whom they are selling it. Their measures are very accurate, and need never be challenged. If they make them a little too large, they plaster a little mud over the bottom to reduce the capacity.

[1] I have since seen *kodon* and *kutki* threshed in the same way by Korkus on the Betul border of Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

same ceremonies and festivals are observed in connexion with cutting and firing of the *penda*, sowing, harvesting and first eating of the new crops. Most of the reaping of the 'big *kosra*' crops had been completed, but that of the '*os kosra*' millets and pulses was still in progress. For many of the *penda* plots in the current *kaghai* cultivation clearing (see p. 107) this was the second and last year of cultivation, and the *kuthi* crop raised was known as *hiwar*, a term, according to the *Gazetteer*,[1] always technically applied to these second year crops. I sent specimens of both *hiwar* and *kosra* or *kohala* (see p. 134) for identification to the Nagpur Agricultural College: botanically both were identical. These villages have never had the advantage of the special system of poll-tax assessment on every able-bodied axeman in the village which I devised for Bastar (p. 145). The system followed in these hill villages of Ahiri is roughly this. Each *penda* is cut by a number of villagers with the approval of the *gaita*, and the portion cut by each of them is roughly marked by one or other of the methods indicated on page 131. Help is taken from other villagers, who are always ready to give this mutual aid, and at harvest the produce is divided among the different shareholders of the *penda*, with something also for all who helped to clear the *penda*; sometimes a number of plots are specially earmarked for division of the produce by the *gaita* and elders amongst all who joined in clearing the whole *kaghai* and in watching and fencing the crops; a part of the produce is also allocated to villagers too old and feeble to work. The zamindar's *kamdar* or agent is paid rent, usually in kind, by the *gaita* for the whole village, for paying which the *gaita* takes a share of the produce of each *penda* plot. The village cultivation is in fact a truly co-operative enterprise.

I have alluded above to the arbitrary stopping in the plains Maria villages of the Chanda zamindaris of *dahi* cultivation, and the consequent increase of debt among the Marias. This Kuvakodi hill tract is fortunate, however, in having escaped this prohibition; it is the only Ahiri area where *penda* reigns undisturbed. It was therefore no surprise to find not a single case of old debt among the fifty or sixty Hill Maria cultivators who assembled at my camp from Kuvakodi and the other hill villages. Occasionally when crops are poor and the *kamdar* has to be paid rent in cash, the *gaita* goes to a Teli money-lender in the plains to borrow the money. But the villagers look on this as the debt of the whole village, not of the *gaita*, and though the Teli is as unscrupulous here as in any plains village in exacting high interest, yet the combined villagers are usually able to repay in kind in a year or two. Nowadays sometimes not only they, but even their Bastar neighbours, instead of resorting

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 170.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills, and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

796 one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyeq-gaita* obtains the permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman sweeps out her house, and the *kasyeq-gaita* goes to each house and collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan, or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up [481] on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some [184] reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought from Japgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots kept at his *pen-rawar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The [535 *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that 834] follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual [533] intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana* 796 before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially 622 where the *udam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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The fermented sap of the sago-palm is a favourite drink

[p. 44 (2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate CXLVIII

Stilt-fighting

[P.650 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

III. The Stilt Festival

The use of stilts during the rains is a semi-religious practice common throughout Middle India and no doubt elsewhere.[1] It has been suggested that it has some magical significance aimed at encouraging the crops to grow.

'The Geeree', says Colonel Ward, describing the custom in Mandla, 'can hardly be called a festival: it is remarkable more for its absurdity than anything else, and is left to the children to celebrate. This they do by walking about the place on stilts for some days, praising the institution of the Geeree, or stilts, as placing them above the necessity of walking in the mud; and finally, proceeding in procession to the Nerbudda, they throw the stilts in and return to their homes.'[2]

The chelik have similar, but more fully developed, customs. The stilts are made of two poles of either ghotiya or sarai about 6' high, to which foot-rests are attached 2' from the ground. These are made of hollowed bits of char wood which are filled with pebbles and fixed together round the poles either by nails or small wooden pegs. The stilts are made early in the rains at the Amavas Pandum which corresponds to the Hareli festival of the Hindus. During the rains, the chelik constantly walk about on their stilts making a great deal of noise as the pebbles inside the hollowed foot-rests rattle about. The only game they play on the stilts is stilt-fighting when they attack each other and try to bump each other off.[3] They become expert in lifting one of the stilts off the ground and hitting another boy with it. They are also able to do very clever solo dances, hopping on one leg with the other raised from the ground.

Stilt-walking is permitted for a couple of months during the rains from the time of the Amavas Pandum until after the first New Eating ceremony in the middle of August or a little later. This is called the Korta Tindana in Gondi and on the second day of the festival, which is known as the Hara Tindana or the day on which the people eat the leavings of the food that remained after the big day of the festival, a special ceremony takes place in connexion with the stilts. After this day it is taboo to use stilts at all. Grigson adds that among the Hill Maria there is a rule that stilt-walking is not only taboo during the rest of the year but also every fourth year.[4]

On the second day of the Korta Tindana the chelik assemble and go round the village on their stilts holding bursundi plants in their hands. They dance in front of each house in turn begging for rice, eggs, liquor and money and sing,

Lāya dāya loo loon thi,
Rai hada hada the
Nīna daka dharthe,
Gondri bursundi pāra pāra.

This may be freely translated, 'O stinking mosquitoes, run away to the fields of rai before our feet touch the threshold, for with branches we are hunting

[1] As, for example, by the Angami and Ao Nagas, the Kuki and Kachari, and the Marquesans. See Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 155 and J. G. Frazer, *Belief in Immortality* (London, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 339f. Russell gives photographs of Hindu boys on stilts (*op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 42 and 46) and describes the custom briefly at Vol. IV, p. 111.

[2] H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mandlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 63. Compare E. M. Gordon, 'Notes concerning the People of Mungeli Tahsil, Bilaspore District' in *JAS Beng.*, New Series, Vol. I (1905), p. 193.

[3] The Angami Nagas, like the Marquesan Islanders, play a game on stilts in which the contestants try to balance on one stilt and trip up their opponents with the other. See J. H. Hutton, 'Assam and the Pacific', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 6.

[4] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

you'. As they dance, the boys beat the ground with their bursundi branches, as a result of which it is believed that stinging wasps and flies will not bother the village for the rest of the year.[1]

Then the chelik go on their stilts outside the village to where a stone stands on an ant-hill in honour either of Bhimul Pen, Dito Pen or Gorondi Muttai. They go in procession round the stone seven times and the Sirdar winds a string round and round it. He sends one of the boys some distance away and he himself presses his hand down on the ground to crack his fingers and says, 'Now we will see if you have really been helping us'. He picks up one of the eggs that they have begged from the village and throws it to where the other boy is standing. If the god is favourable, the egg does not break and the other boy picks it up and throws it back. They do this three times.[2] If the egg breaks the leader picks up the mess and rubs a little of it on the penis of every member of the party in turn saying, 'May we be free of itch and ringworm'.

Then they break their stilts and arrange them over the stone. Sometimes the stilts are tied in a sort of square and the foot-rests and pegs hung from it. Four stilts are placed upright at each corner and a cord is tied round them. They offer eggs and chickens at the foot of this shrine and tie the egg-shells in a string to the top of the stilts. They kill the chickens by hitting their heads on the ground, not by cutting their throats as usual. Then they cook the chickens and any other food that they have been given and eat the feast and drink as much liquor as they have been able to collect. There is a rule that on this day they must not cook on a stone hearth out of respect for the stone representing the deity, but should cut green pegs of saja wood, drive them into the ground and put their pots on these.

There are various stories to account for the origin of this ceremony. In the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria say that on the festival of Amavas Lingo's brother, Bhimul, went out of his house to give salt to his cattle. His little son wept, crying, 'I want to go too', and as it was very muddy his mother Gorondi made him a pair of stilts and sent him with his father. When the village boys saw Bhimul's son walking on the stilts, they asked their fathers to make them also, but they said, 'No, we don't know how to do it'. So the boys went to Gorondi and persuaded her to make stilts for them. One day a boy fell down; Gorondi ran to him and rubbed the wound with her hands and it healed at once. The boys used to bring their wounds to be cured and their broken stilts for her to mend. At first she refused but afterwards she said, if they brought her eggs and chickens as payment, she would do anything they wanted. So ever since the boys give her presents once a year and she saves them from falling and the stilts from breaking.

Another version of the story attributes the origin of the practice to the notorious jealousy between Bhimul and his wife. There is always supposed to be bitter rivalry between them. In Bhandarsiuni, the Muria once dedicated a bull to Bhimul promising that they would sacrifice it to him if he gave them good rain. This made Gorondi very angry and her Siraha called the villagers and said to them, 'Why have you been so stupid as to give a bull to my husband? Bhimul has gone below to dig roots and he won't be back for six months, so

[1] Russell records a Teli custom at the Pola festival, when women bring branches of a thorny creeper which they call Marbod and sweep their houses saying, 'O Marbod, sweep away all diseases, pains, coughs, bugs, flies and mosquitoes'.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 550. Cf. Hivale, op. cit., p. 123.

[2] Divination by egg-throwing, though in a different way, is common among the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226f. For an interesting account of the folk-lore of eggs, see L. F. Newman, 'Some Notes on the Folklore of Poultry', *Folk-lore*, Vol. LIII (1940), pp. 104ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Good AW32
Muria

X883
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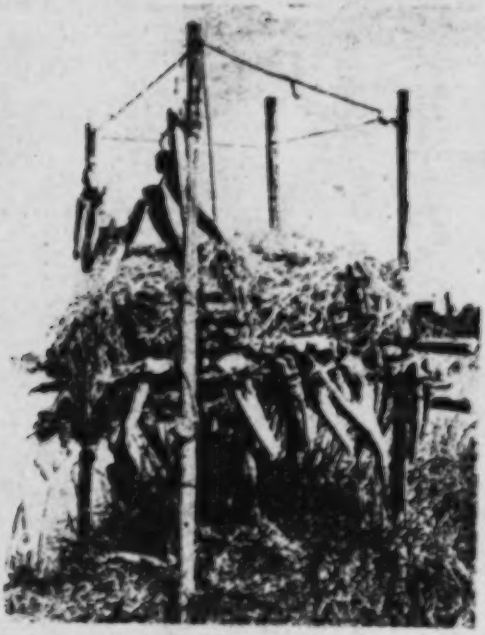
Stilts piled up outside
Phumlei village

Plate CXLIX



Stilts piled up over
Dimo Pen. of Abor

[p. 652 (A)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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●481
824

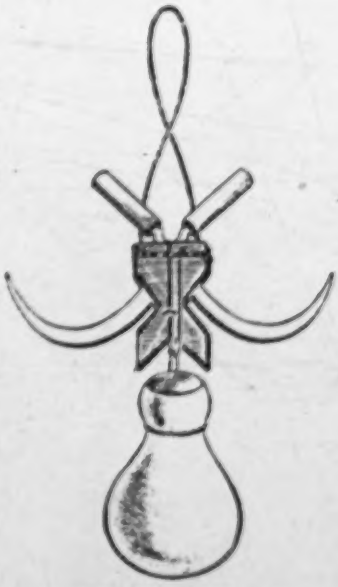
Maria climbing toddy tree to extract the juice

[Facing p. 97]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed 417 by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the 481 summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree. Once in Gogonda I saw a Maria getting up a very tall sago palm with great ingenuity. At the foot there was a pole eight feet high fixed in the ground. The climber had to get to the top of this and then, supporting himself upon it with his legs, had to catch the hook twenty feet above him with a long double bamboo pole with a loop at its end. This was no mean feat, and when it was done he had to tie the end of the swinging stick to the pole on which he had been standing and climb up to where he was able to hoist himself to the top of the tree by the branches.

In the Konta Tahsil the method of climbing is the same as that recorded for [273] the Kadir, which again compares with that of the Dyak of Borneo. Long lengths of bamboo are tied to the trunk. The climber ties round his waist an ingenious gadget, called *kach pirik*, holding two knives and a gourd, and he then climbs straight up the tree. In other villages the *mohukum* is used. This is a beautifully made arrangement of ropes by which the climber's body is attached to the trunk, and can be



Kach-pirik apparatus for extracting toddy-juice

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

slipped up it. Between his feet is tied another rope which holds them against the tree. He is thus able to get up the tree like a humping caterpillar. A Maria told me that in the evening the people go up the trees 'like a company of monkeys'. When villagers go to drink sago or toddy, they often take with them little leaf-bundles containing dry fish, roasted crabs, red ants or mahua paste.

It is impossible to say how much alcohol is drunk by the Maria. According to the Excise figures in the Dantewara Tahsil and Sukma Zamindari where the population is overwhelmingly Maria, the consumption per 100 in proof gallons is 46.48 and 50.51 respectively. In the Muria Tahsil to the north it is 32.43 in Kondagaon and 58.90 in Narayanpur. Narayanpur, it must be remembered, has a large population of Hill Maria who do not drink rice-beer which may explain why there is a higher consumption of mahua spirit. In the Bison-horn Maria area, there are —according to the Settlement records—about 75,000 toddy trees. The number of sago palms is not known, but is—I believe—considerably smaller.

Mohukum ropes for climbing toddy trees

Illicit distillation was a feature of two at least of the murders. In the last five years 143 cases were detected in the Dantewara Tahsil, 91 in Bijapur, 65 in Jagdalpur as against only 11 in Kondagaon and 18 in Narayanpur. This certainly suggests that the Bison-horn Maria are much more given to illicit distillation than their brethren of the north. But, of course, these figures may only reflect greater energy

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

●482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 439 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk [462] take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhaurai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills, and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XI

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HILL MARIA WOMEN CARRYING GOURDS OF WATER

HILL MARIA WOMAN CARRYING A LEAF-BOX OF GRAIN

(Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt)

361
342

BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE STREET, TELAM, NEAR KATAKALIAN

[FACING p. 118]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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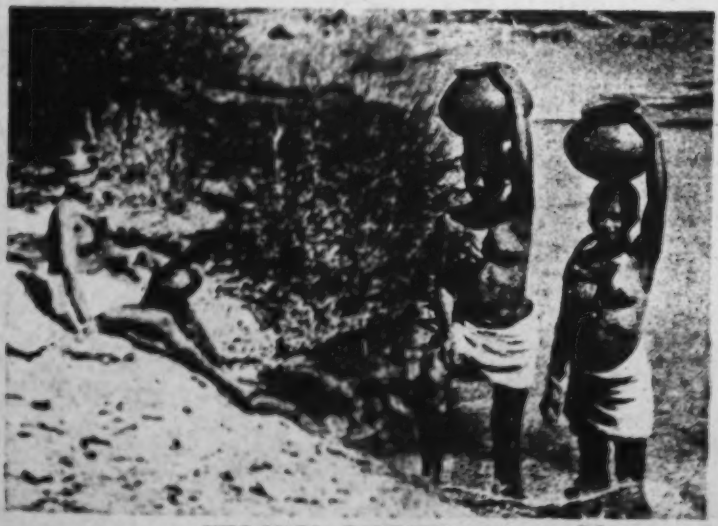
HILL MARIA DANCERS



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HILL MARIA DOMESTIC LIFE
Fetching water from river
(*Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)

[Facing p. 184]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

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[Verrier Elwin

Tati Mundra of Tikanpal, with the 'wooden' horse or 'vehicle' of the Tati clan-god Hunga

[End Plate Z]

Plate VIII

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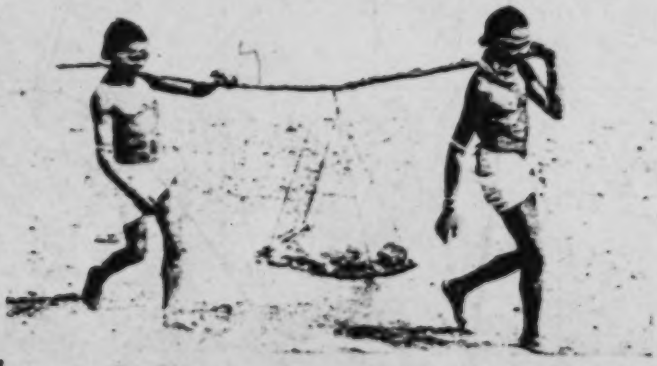

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3

1 Motiari ploughing at Bayanar

2 Carrying earth to embank a field

3 Chelik at Sirpuri in solid-wheeled cart

[p. 30(8)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Chelik bringing wood for dahi cultivation

Plate IX

Verrier firing a marhan clearing near Antagarh

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

285
301
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Girl with basket at Marenda

Girls breaking pods at Khutepal

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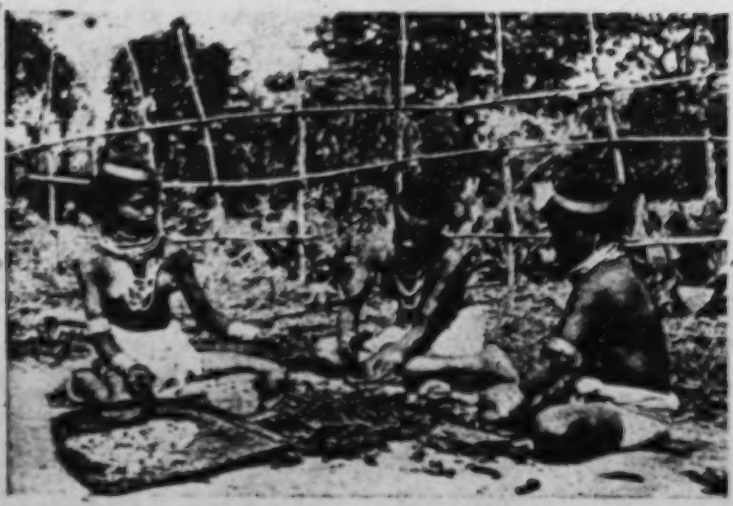

[facing p. 29]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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●482
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Married Maria girl. The love of such young wives for the 'mother's house' sometimes leads to disaster

[FACING p. 160]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

guiding their choice is the adequacy of their resources to provide food and drink for the men required to drag or carry the stone. The menhirs in the Abujhmar country and the adjacent Muria tracts are considerably smaller than the vast menhirs sometimes met in the Bison-horn country; the largest that I have seen, at Lakka in Kutru Mar, were just over 8 feet high, and about 2½ feet wide by 10 inches thick at the base. They drag out the selected stone from its resting-place, and place under it several cross-pieces of wood, and on each side of it a long thick pole, to which the cross-pieces are lashed. The stone is then lashed to the cross-pieces, and the poles are lifted on to the shoulders of the bearers, from twenty to thirty in number, and so the journey to the *kotokal* begins. At intervals they stop, and are given by the heir drinks of *mahua* spirit, which is considered to give them strength to bear the burden; and they are given at least one meal on the way. There will also be reserves of bearers, who carry the food and drink and cooking pots, to be entertained. So they ultimately reach the *kotokal* and deposit the stone on the ground at the appointed spot. If it is too late to erect it that evening, a feast follows at the heir's house, and all night the men and women dance with their wife-clan (*akomama*) relatives. In the following afternoon the stone is erected under the supervision of the *erramtogh* or the senior wife-clan relative present. A hole is dug in the ground at one end of the stone and then the stone, if small, is pulled upright by willing hands and held there while the earth is shovelled in. If it is large and heavy, ropes are lashed round the far end and used to pull it upright, with its base in the hole, and ten men or so hold poles on both sides of its apex to prevent it falling over, while others ram small stones, earth and turves around its base. In Kutru Mar, Chhota Dongar Mar, Behramar, Tapalibhum and Sonpur Mar a *hanal-garya* cromlech is then made at the base of the menhir, and the heir of the dead man comes up to it, and squats on the ground with his back to the menhir and the cromlech. He takes an eight or nine days old chicken, and, holding it behind his back and never looking at the stone, cuts its throat with the nails of his hand, sprinkles its blood on the table-stone of the cromlech, and pushes its body under the table-stone; next he places an offering of rice or *kutki* grain on the table-stone. As he makes the offerings he speaks to the dead man, saying, 'Whether you were killed by magic, or by the wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, or died naturally, I know not. But now I have put up this menhir for you, and you must wander no more. Stay here in peace for ever, and do not worry us your descendants.' In Tapalibhum and Behramar they erect the stone and sacrifice the chicken in silence. Only the heir has to keep his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

316 crack boulders by burning piles of logs on and around them, and use their iron digging-sticks as crowbars to assist the work. The stones are too heavy to be carried merely by the ends of the two long poles to which the Hill Maria lashes the short cross-pieces of wood on which the stone rests; the Bison-horn cross-pieces project beyond the stone, and on the ends they attach long loops of twisted bamboo rind, through the upper ends of which they pass cross-poles over the top of the stone, and the ends of these cross-poles, like those of the two long poles, are borne on the bearers' shoulders. 764 The heir of the dead man has to provide food and drink for the bearers, as in the Abujhmar hills. The stone is taken to the place where it is to be set up, and the heir sacrifices a cock on the other side of the road on the spot where the body was cremated, and buries it in a hole dug under the ashes.

All proceed thence to the dead man's house, and there in the *wijja-lon* by the Pot of the Departed the heir sacrifices another cock to the dead man. The latter's son-in-law, or, if there is none, his *erramlogh* or some other affine, in the name of the dead man kills, with blows from the blunt head of an axe on its head, the cow or cows selected by the dead man during his lifetime; they believe that if these cows are not sacrificed in fulfilment of his wishes they pine away and die, and then the dead man is said to have come and fetched them away. Pigs are sometimes sacrificed as a substitute for or in addition to cows. The sacrificed animals are then skinned and cut up for roasting, the liver being cooked separately for the dead man. They take the liver, the tails tied to loops of cord, and a pot of *landa* to the *wraskal*, and there the affines of the dead man see to the erection of the stone. The heir hangs the tails over the top of the stone, after pouring *landa* over it, and sometimes milk also. He then places the roasted liver on the *kanal-kutul* cromlech, and with his back turned to the menhir sacrifices a chicken and places it under the cromlech, in much the same way as the Hill Maria heir. All present fling rice, *kuthi*, *urad* and *mung* at and around the menhir, and then follow the heir to the nearest pool to bathe, without looking back at the menhir. They eat the roast beef and pork of the sacrificial victims either on the banks of the pool or at the dead man's house, with boiled rice and pulses, and *landa* and *mahua* spirit to drink. The son-in-law or other affine who beat the funeral drum is presented by the heir with a brass dish and a piece of cloth, or, more often, with the cloth only. All then disperse.

At the first Marka Pandum following this, a final offering of mangoes and grain is made to the dead man's *kanal* at his *wraskal*.

In some villages a forked bough is erected instead of an *wraskal* or an *wragatta*. It is always cut from the sacred *saja* tree.

9 [see cat. 116, p. 427. – Ambyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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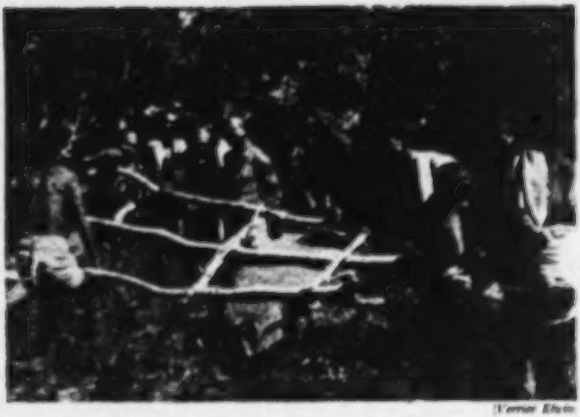
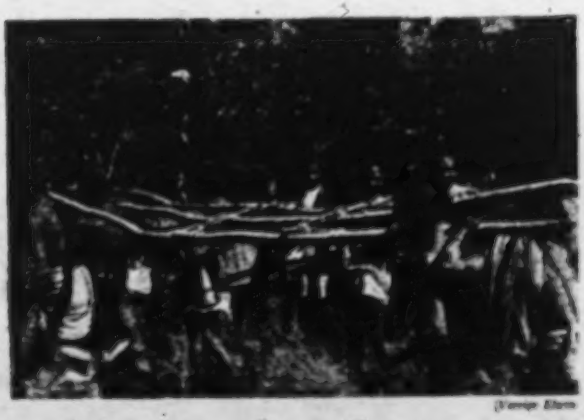


Scenes at the erection of a menhir at Mawsmai



[End Plate V]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 479 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets [462] made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhaural, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills, and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°.

/For travel by ghotul members in the form of ceremonial dancing "expeditions" to neighboring villages, see category 116, pp. 485-520/

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

VII. The Chherta Dance

X 883
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796
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As we have seen, many ghotul do not perform the Pus Kolang dances. Some do not even go to dance the Mahua Dandar. In such places, the chelik concentrate on the Chherta festival. In many other villages, however, the Chherta is danced side by side with the older dances.

The Muria say that at the marriage between Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai the supplies of food and liquor for the visitors ran out, and the chelik assisting at the ceremony were sent to beg for food and liquor from neighbouring villages. They did so, and the marriage was happily completed. The more Hinduized Muria villages and the Hindus of Bastar generally have the same tradition, but they say that the marriage was between Mahadeo and Parvati. I doubt whether the Chherta dance is a genuine Muria dance or very long established in their culture; it is common throughout Chhattisgarh and in the Central Provinces, whence it has probably been imported.

Its attractiveness to the Muria is that it is great fun. It enables them to get a little liquor and have a feast. It is not overshadowed by the catastrophic penalties that come upon those who break the taboos of the serious, dangerous Pus Kolang. For this reason the Chherta has spread widely throughout the centre and east of the Muria territory.

On a Chherta expedition boys and girls go together. They dance in the ghotul of the villages they visit and sleep there. Hosts and visitors entertain one another. The visiting party salutes the elders of the ghotul at night and they then exchange girls for massaging. The visitors, however, take fire from their own village and are supposed to cook for themselves.

During the day the visiting party goes round the village dancing and begging. The leader of the dance is a boy whom they call the Nakta.[1] He is dressed up, sometimes in tattered clothes, sometimes in finery, and wears a grotesque gourd mask. The gourd is generally decorated: two rings are put for eyes, a nose is made of wax, a mouth is cut and a number of grains are stuck in it to look like teeth. A beard of the hair of nilgai or bear is attached below. A bunch of peacock feathers is tied to the top. I saw one mask with a small wax bullock placed above the nose. As the dancers go through the village they stand in a line before each house, and beat the ground with long sticks while the Nakta capers about before them with the most grotesque gestures and antics. Two or more boys carry baskets, and while the others dance these go into the house and beg for liquor, rice, pulse or other food. When they have been round the village the girls who have accompanied them take what has been collected and cook their meal.

On return from the expedition the boys and girls take the Nakta to the nearest stream, roll him in the mud, duck him in the water, and give him *mandia roti*, making him eat it with his head under water.

Besides the Nakta, other diversions enliven the Chherta festival. In Remawand I saw an ingenious toy—a stout bamboo pole was decorated with some excellently carved monkeys climbing up towards a bird perched on the top. An arrangement of strings kept both monkeys and bird in motion (Fig. 123). At Koilibera, there was a similar toy which was taken also on Pus Kolang and other expeditions. At the bottom of the bamboo pole the wood was serrated to make a 'musical rasp', and at the top was a little man.

[1] Nakta is an abusive term meaning 'noseless'. It probably refers to the custom of cutting off an erring wife's nose, for it is usually applied to sexually loose persons. It can also be used in an affectionate playful sense. A Nakti Devi is worshipped in parts of Chhattisgarh.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

But in many villages instead of a communal *pedawo'gha'i* there is a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *pedawo'gha'i* room known generally as *hala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *hala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable attached.

The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *kasyeq-gaita's* house, near the latter's *udam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-ravar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parllo clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street;

[1] Or *ala*; the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

883 quite understood why—but once they realize that the enquirer is not prepared to be deceived they talk fairly freely about them.

883 485 In all these villages there are commodious rest-houses for the use of visitors and officials on tour and when they are unoccupied —and they are but seldom used officially—the boys sleep in them as their dormitories. The boys, however, are not fully organized as among the Murias, but a leader may be appointed—in Mokhpal he was called the Sian, in Chote Timnar the Peda. Sometimes an older man sleeps with them and imposes a rough sort of discipline, fining those who are absent without cause. An old Maria, Sodi Mukha, is said to have been very proud of his management of the dormitory at Mokhpal. 'Originally', I was told in this village, 'the boys used to make their house in the middle of the place and it was theirs. But when Government ordered us to make a rest-house we had to build it not as we wanted it, but as the officers wanted it.'

883 841 The girls sometimes sleep together in the house of a lonely widow, but often have their own building. This is occasionally combined with the corporate menstruation hut. The menstruating women sleep on one side and the unmarried girls on the other. It is more common, however, for such women to sleep at home and to leave the unmarried girls to themselves. They too are not organized as in the Muria ghotul, but they are fined for quarrelling and for non-attendance. Both boys and girls have regular duties. They must all bring wood for the dormitory fire. At marriages and funerals they must collect wood and make leaf-plates. In the evening the boys and girls often meet in some central place or in front of the boys' house and dance and play games.

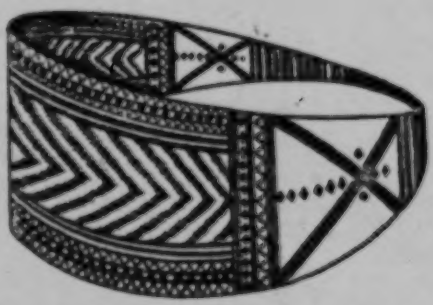
883 836 The relations between the boys and girls are not organized and disciplined as among the Murias. At marriages the members of the two dormitories may slip away together and sleep in some secluded place. At Penta the boys described how a girl would make a hole in the wall near which she slept. 'Then a boy creeps up and pokes a stick through the hole to wake her, and she creeps out to join him.' At Bara Harmamunda, the boys said that they actually went into the girls' house, though I fancy this is exceptional.

883 The Bison-horn Maria dormitory does not seem to play an important part in the social or religious life of the tribe. It is not established in the mythology; it does not serve as a school of dancing or as a place for initiation into sexual experience; there is no need in these pacific hills for village guard-rooms. Whether at any time the institution existed in a more flourishing form it is now impossible to say.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

164 State Medical Department has done much to check the spread of the disease. Malaria, as everywhere in the Indian forests, is endemic, but few suffer from enlarged spleen. Leprosy and the venereal diseases are very rare. Skin diseases are also much less common than among the more elaborately clothed and thus dirtier people of the north.

291 Men wear a small loin-cloth and sometimes a little turban. The women tie a sort of skirt, very short, round their waists: it hangs down to the knees. The breasts are covered only with [532 ornaments; when 301] visiting a bazaar girls may tie a small piece of cloth round their shoulders. They often wear a thin brass fillet round [302] the hair, and the older women use a large snood which is most becoming. Round the neck are masses of bead-necklaces, and iron or brass torcs. The bright colours of the beads and the shining brass fillets against the rich brown skin make a sight of unforgettable beauty.



Brass fillet worn by Maria women

361 The Bison-horn Maria village is laid out on the same lines as the Gond village of the Central Provinces, unlike the communal settlements of the Hill Maria, Baiga or Juang. Each house stands in its own garden which is sometimes a substantial field, and a village may cover a very large area in consequence. Often a village is composed of anything from six to twelve small hamlets, each of which represents the grouping of a family round its patriarchal head. The little huts stand among woods, on rocky hill-sides, in the shade of spreading trees. Sometimes they appear almost submerged [485 by waves of yellow sarson flowers or red jhira vegetable. 873 Each village has a substantial building for the accommodation 361 of travellers and this is used by the unmarried boys as a dormitory. The unmarried girls also sleep together, some-

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter VI

Villages, Houses and their Contents

A. Hill Maria Villages, Houses and their Contents

361 The site of the Hill Maria village is in these days almost entirely determined by its convenience as a centre from which to cultivate the *penda* slopes of the year. Peace has reigned in the Abujhmar hills from time immemorial, and no question of defence arises when a village is built. A possible relic of former unsettled times [349] is the custom of building stone cairns and seats as look-outs at the head of passes or the summits of hills on the paths leading to villages; but these are convenient watching places for herdsmen when their cattle are grazing around the hill-tops, and serve also to mark the line of the paths which, in the rains, are overgrown with rank grass, or fall into disuse when villages or *penda* slopes are abandoned for alternative sites. Certain well-defined tracks 487 through the hills are cleared annually by the villagers; these often avoid the actual village sites, to which side tracks connect them. There are no carts in the hills, and therefore the tracks are only foot-paths, generally wide enough only for a party to walk in single file, though at the periodic clearings the grass is cut down to a width of two or three feet on each side of the path. The village 361 boundary is usually marked by a cairn of stones, in the centre of which may be planted a pole ornamented at the top with bunches of grass or peacock or jungle-cock feathers, the pole being further adorned by peeling off bands of bark at intervals throughout its length. The boundary itself is usually a stream, and the cairns of the two villages are usually twenty or thirty yards apart, so that [783] when the annual *pira-mansha* (called by the Bison-horn Marias *rog-burria* and by Halbi-speakers *boharani*) ceremony of ridding the village of disease takes place, the old winnowing-fans with the sweepings of each house can be hung up beyond the boundary on this no-man's-land without leaving them on the lands of the neighbouring village.

487 These paths cross streams by stepping-stones, by logs felled across the stream, by small raised embankments pierced by hollowed 491 tree trunk pipes for the passage of the water and revetted with horizontally laid logs, or by bridges consisting of a plank supported by bamboo wicker-work cylinders filled with boulders resting on

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the bed of the stream; these are held in position between upright poles set V-wise in the boulders, to which are fastened horizontal bamboo poles as railings. As they have no saws, the 'plank' is a tree trunk with one side trimmed flat with the axe. Even more elaborate bridges are sometimes made at high levels over streams liable to flood, from tree-fork to tree-fork on opposite banks.

Though, as has been said above, agricultural conditions nowadays determine village sites, hill-tops or rocky slopes remain favourite sites, and become commoner as you penetrate farther into the Abujhmar hills. The traditional arrangement is a street some twenty-five yards wide between parallel lines of long-houses; at one end of the street is the *gotul-lon* or village dormitory, generally within a rounded bamboo fence, and sometimes in front of this dormitory will be seen the *udam-garia* or seat of honour of the *kasyeq-gaita* and possibly also of the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*), as well as the stones on which the other village elders sit around with them in conclave; but the *udam-garia* custom is not found in all parts of the hills. Sometimes the shrine of the *Nar-Talughi* or Village Mother is actually inside the dormitory fencing, and she is often housed there for a while when a village is being shifted. There are, as a rule, no *bari* (vegetable gardens) attached to each house as amongst most Gonds, including the Bison-horn Marias and the Murias of Bastar; but sometimes the *kasyeq-gaita* has a small tobacco *bari* attached to the dormitory in the centre of the main street. The *Gazetteer* (p. 50) speaks of the 'common granary' as standing in the broad street; but with one partial exception, Nugur village in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, I have never seen this. The villagers generally construct a row of granaries (*manda* or *wijja-dodi*) on piles at the side or rear of the main village street, sometimes nearer the *penda* fields than the village; this row can hardly be called a 'common granary', as each villager has his own granary in the row for his own private food and seed store, the granaries being built together only for convenience, as they can then be watched at night by one watchman for the whole village, sleeping in a special hut at the side of the granaries or under a granary. At Nugur there were big matting bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored; but here the village had come under the economic thraldom of some Teli tradesmen, who for years had advanced rice to the cultivators. The bins were left in the collective charge of the headman and elders, and any villager could help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest he would replace it with 50 per cent. interest, the Teli owners being also free to remove the surplus from time to time.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *padas* (headmen) and *permas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

Shifting villages

The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

J: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from Adeq and then south-eastwards towards the Maria villages of Mangnar *pargana*, streams flow southwards or south-westwards into the Indrawati. 133

Though this block of hills is a homogeneous tract, peopled entirely by Hill Marias, it unfortunately is split up administratively. The south-western corner above Bhamragarh and Lahir is British territory, part of the Ahiri zamindari of Chanda district. All the *parganas* north of the watershed between the Nei Bherat and Indrawati on the one hand and the Gudra on the other are in Antagarh tahsil. The slopes draining into the Indrawati from the Chanda border eastwards to a line running north from the confluence of the Indrawati and the Dantewara form the Kutru Mar and the Bhairamgarh Mar *parganas* of Kutru zamindari; the Hikul-Toinar-Handawada group of eight hill villages east of this is part of Dantewara tahsil, and the few hill villages at the south-east corner are part of the outlying Mangnar *pargana* of the Bhopalpatnam zamindari.

The peaks of the Abujhmar vary in height from 2,050 feet on the northern fringes to 3,322, the highest point near Tadanar in Mangnar *pargana*. Fourteen peaks exceed 3,000 feet in height. Except the Marias themselves, few persons in Bastar know the tract at all; and before I visited it, all the old tales served up to Glasfurd in the sixties were again cooked up for my benefit; the country was so rugged that I should have to climb on my hands and knees; it was impossible for elephants and quite out of the question for horses; I should be unable to get bearers for my camp kit; fever was rampant; distances were enormous; and so on. Some of the marches are difficult; but then a car can be taken now up to Orcha, the chief village of Chhota Dongar Mar; the people are friendly in the extreme, and if properly treated and reimbursed in salt, beads, mirrors, cloth and pork, and allowed to dance at every camp, they will turn out in numbers to carry all necessary equipment. It is not difficult to arrange camps at distances at once reasonable for the walker and far enough apart to make it unnecessary to detain bearers from the previous camp to carry luggage on to the next camp. There are no cart tracks and no carts; and there are many steep ascents and descents on the hill tracks. Good water is everywhere available from clear perennial springs. The hills are far freer from mosquitoes and fever than the plains below; but the traveller who brings a medical assistant and simple medicines with him will find the Marias in great need of elementary medical relief and very grateful for it. [489]

The scenery varies. On the edges of the hills there are often fine views of the plains below, while on the northern and eastern

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the Marias of the Abujhmar hills abstaining. The tribes converged on Jagdalpur, the Diwan who had been touring in the South fleeing into the Chanda district. A half battalion of regular Panjabi troops and large detachments of armed Central Provinces police soon suppressed and disarmed the rebels. A few ringleaders who had been guilty of cruel murders of isolated State officials were hanged, and several hundred men flogged, a punishment really more humane for such primitive men than imprisonment. Lal Kalendra Singh and a few of his associates were banished. The Raja was deprived of his powers, and an experienced Englishman, Mr. James May, appointed Diwan. The rebellion had been marked by keen hostility towards the immigrant exploiters, and a movement to keep Bastar for Bastaris. *Pari passu* with the punishment of the rebels, full enquiry was made into their undoubted grievances, and stern action taken against their oppressors. From 1910 till the Raja's death in 1921 the State was under virtual Government management; it has since then been under direct management, owing to the minority and the subsequent illness of the late Maharani.[1]

Save, therefore, for the short period 1908-10 the State has virtually been under Government management since 1886. Great progress has been made in developing communications. The Godavari navigation scheme referred to in the quotation above from Glasfurd's report was abandoned in 1871 after the works on the first barrier at Dummagudem in the present East Godavari district of Madras had been completed and much money had been spent on the works at the second barrier, where the river forms the boundary between Bastar and Hyderabad. This must be one of the very few great engineering works abandoned uncompleted by the British in India, defeated by the fever and sweltering heat of the valley, the difficulty of recruiting labour, lack of funds and the improbability of an adequate return for the great cost; and there are few more desolate sights than the vast ruins of the half-finished anicut, lock-gates and guard-walls that still resist the annual floods of this mighty river, and in the dry weather stand gaunt and futile in the baking wilderness of rocks and sands in which the united Godavari and Indrawati there lose themselves. With the transference of the Political Agency for Bastar from Sironcha to Raipur, all idea of the Godavari as the base-line for its communications was abandoned. Emphasis was placed on linking the north of the State with the main Nagpur-Calcutta railway line by roads from Raipur and Rajnandgaon to Jagdalpur, and the Vizagapatam Agency road from Salur

[1] The hereditary title of the Ruling Chief of Bastar was raised from Raja to Maharaja in 1932.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

rail-head below the Eastern Ghat mountains to Jeypore and the Bastar border was continued thence to Jagdalpur; subsequently roads have gradually been driven westward to Dantewara, Bijapur, Kutru and Bhopalpatnam, and southward to Sukma and Konta; the most recent development has been many miles of forest roads, constructed either as feeder roads to the Raipur and Rajnandgaon roads, or to link up the forests of Dantewara and the south with the Godavari at Tarlagudam, Cherla and Dummagudam or the Kolab-Sabari at Mismagudam and Konta. The Raipur road is now motorable throughout the year, and there is a daily mail and passenger service by it to Kanker and Dhamtari. A railway connexion with the new Raipur-Vizianagram line has been surveyed, and would have been under construction but for the world-wide financial depression. The revenue of the State has risen from about Rs. 30,000 in 1855, then received in kind or in cowry shells at a rate of 2,880 to the rupee, to well over a million rupees.

So the old order is doomed; and with the motor-bus abroad in the land and scores of aboriginals every month seeking work on the public works of the State, in the Assam tea gardens or in the towns of the Godavari valley, with the railway administration feeling this last great blank of 300 miles from Raipur to Salur by 250 from Titlagarh in Kalahandi State to Singareni in Hyderabad a slur to be removed as soon as funds permit, change comes ever faster. My successors and I, like our predecessors, are guilty of accelerating change; but we can on the one hand plead that when we came a return to the old isolation was not practical politics, and on the other that we have tried before it was too late to strengthen and revive the old tribal *panchayat* organization and restore its jurisdiction in civil and in all but serious criminal offences, to check the drunkenness made rampant by a bad excise system, to prevent the further bestowal of aboriginal villages on alien *thekadars* (lessees) and to make the post of village headman one of honour and responsibility instead of one to be held reluctantly by some dummy with no influence in the village, to abolish *bisaha*, to deprive village lessees of the right of taking forced labour, to minimize the right of officials to take it and to regulate the still necessary State demands for road and other labour so as to inconvenience the cultivator as little as possible, to see that it is paid for, and to abolish bondservice. Much of great interest could be written on the effects and reactions of the administrative measures of the last fifty years sketched in these last few pages. But the purpose of this book is to place on record while there is yet time an account of the way of life prevalent among the Maria tribes of Bastar, perhaps now the most primitive

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE I

131
133
491

BASTAR STATE—NATURAL DIVISIONS
Scale (approx.): 1 inch = 32 miles

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

plateau from Antagarh tahsil. The northern half of this north-eastern plateau is Kondagaon tahsil, and the southern Jagdalpur. The height of the plateau varies from 2,500 or 2,400 feet at its northern and southern edges to about 1,800 feet near Jagdalpur. It is a region of evergreen forests, with the beautiful sal (*Shorea robusta*) as its characteristic tree. The temperature seldom exceeds 104° in the summer, and at Jagdalpur descends to 40° in the winter, while hoar frosts are not uncommon in the forests. Kondagaon tahsil is under-developed and jungly, much of it and Antagarh having been comparatively recently settled by Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh. Jagdalpur, on the other hand, has miles of excellent rice cultivation in its extensive open plains, and is the only heavily populated part of the State, except adjacent parts of Dantewara. On its south-eastern and southern edges, however, it has hilly country heavily forested or inhabited by primitive Parjas and Bison-horn Marias.

The north-west corner of the State is the Antagarh tahsil. The north of this is a continuation of the Chhattisgarh-Kanker plain 800 or 900 feet above sea-level, bounded on the west and north by the Chanda and Drug districts of the Central Provinces and by Kanker State. This plain, the second main natural division of Bastar, is reached from Keskal and north Kondagaon through the Amabera *pargana*, which, though on the 2,000 feet plateau, is in Antagarh, by a forest road descending the steep Matlaghat by a recently re-aligned and easily-graded descent. The main road from Jagdalpur and Kondagaon through Antagarh to Rajnandgaon rail-head enters the tahsil in the Benur *pargana* on the 2,000 feet plateau and descends 200 or 300 feet to Narainpur which, with the adjacent *parganas* of Kurangal, Dugal, Baragaon, Ghat Jhorian and Bare Jhorian, as well as Benur and the lowland or 'Kalpatti' villages of Chhote Dongar *pargana*, are an intermediate stage between the true 2,000 feet plateau and the plain of north Antagarh. The inhabitants are mostly what were called by Glasfurd and other early writers Jhorias, in appearance scarcely distinguishable from the Marias of the Abujhmar hills, with similar dancing dress, and customs similar, but considerably modified by sojourn in the lowlands and contact with other tribes. From Narainpur a forest road runs westward along the Nei Bherat valley to Sonpur, with an extension thence to Paralkot and Maroda, where it meets another forest road that comes westward from Taroki on the Narainpur-Antagarh road across the north Antagarh plain. The Sonpur, Paralkot and Paralkot-Kalpatti *parganas* are really lowland *parganas* in the middle of highland Maria *parganas*, and the two latter belong properly speaking to the north Antagarh plain. The

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

133 Sonpur *pargana*, however, has many Hill Maria villages, and a sprinkling of Halbas and 'Jhorias'.

[491] The road from Narainpur to Antagarh descends the Raoghat near Aturbera village between a spur of the Abujhmar mass of hills 2,938 feet in height and the Matlaghat hills, down the sal-clad valley of a stream that drains into the Kotri river. The Antagarh plain has the 'Muria' *parganas* of Antagarh, Kolar, Surebahi, Bomra, Kirangal, Kalpatti, and Bandadesh, besides Paralkot and Paralkot-Kalpatti already mentioned.

The third great natural division of the State is the Abujhmar mountain mass. Roughly speaking, this is composed of all the wild hill country bounded on the south by the Indrawati, on the north by the Antagarh plain, on the east by the Jhoria country described above and the Gudra valley from Chhota Dongar to Mangnar near the Indrawati and Barsur, and on the west by the Kotri river from Partabpur to its junction with the Indrawati at Bhamragarh in the Ahiri zamindari of the Chanda district. This tangle of hills is roughly rectangular, but at its north-eastern corner throws two great spurs into the Antagarh plain by Raoghat (already mentioned) and Kolar, and at its north-western corner projects a bastion of hill almost to the Kotri valley between Partabpur and Koilibera. The north-eastern spurs are now in the Matla State Forest, but the north-western bastion has as its northern face the Padalibhum *pargana*, with the Tapalibhum and Nurbhum *parganas* to the side and south of this, all three occupied by Hill Marias. The hill mass is so cracked and seamed with valleys running in all directions, that it is not possible to point out any main hill systems; the only clues that help to a conception of its features are the watersheds. The northern slopes drain into the Bastar branch of the Kotri, and the north-western into the main Kotri after the junction of the Drug-Kanker and Bastar branches. Below this, the great trough of the Nei Bherat valley cleaves the mountains from Narainpur on the north-eastern edge westward for thirty-five miles through Sonpur into the Nurbhum *pargana*, where it turns south-west through the Behramar *pargana* and the Chanda Hill Maria country to Bhamragarh. The watershed dividing this from the streams that flow into the Gudra runs roughly south-west from the north-western corner of the Hukkagotal *pargana* just south of the Nei Bherat valley along a line of crests to Kutul village in Bardal *pargana*, thence south to Dhurbera, the village of the headman of the Farsal *pargana*, and slightly east of south from there to Adeq in Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*. From the hills between Dhurbera and Adeq some smaller streams flow south-west direct into the Indrawati. From the crests running first eastwards

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 slopes and in the Mangnar and Dantewara Mar villages there are often fine patches of sal and other evergreen trees. On the hill-tops and on slopes exhausted by shifting cultivation, high grass and stunted trees make the country monotonous to the eye and tiring through lack of shade. Where the slopes are newly cleared and have once been burnt for shifting *penda* cultivation, often a small grove of trees is left on the summit, like nothing so much as the top-knot of hair on the crown of a Maria's otherwise roughly-shaved head. But the moment you descend off the rocky plateaux you meet green glades and hurrying streams, or may feel the sudden amaze of a prospect such as that of the blue apex of the lofty Bailadila ridge seen beyond the haze of the Indrawati valley down the valley of a stream that far below the ridge between Itulnar and Hikul races due south to the Indrawati.

161 There are only between 150 and 160 villages inhabited in all this area of about 1,500 square miles, and there are only 11,500 361 Hill Marias. This means one village in every ten square miles, and less than eight persons to the square mile. In few places can you lose yourself in such solitudes.

635 North Bastar thus consists administratively of the Antagarh, Kondagaon and Jagdalpur tahsils, half of the Jagdalpur tahsil being south of the Indrawati, and of the portions of the Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris and the Dantewara tahsil north of the Indrawati.

635 In South Bastar there are the Dantewara, Bijapur and Konta tahsils, and the Sukma, Kutru, Bhopalpatnam and Kotapalli-
●491 Pamer zamindaris; these four zamindaris alone survive out of the seventeen or eighteen of old times. A great western road runs 134 miles from Jagdalpur through Gidam, Karli, Matawara, Bijapur and Bhopalpatnam to Timer on the Indrawati, opposite Patagudam in Chanda district, whence there is a forest road to Sironcha; branches south from Gidam and Karli run to Dantewara, with a further extension to Kameli at the foot of the Bailadila hills; north from Gidam to Barsur, and from Matawara to Kutru; and south from Bhopalpatnam to Tarlagudam on the Godavari and thence over the Latpatkandi pass into the Nugur and Albaka taluqs of Madras. A great southern road runs 114 miles from Jagdalpur to Sukma and Konta. A network of forest roads of recent construction links these roads together between Tirathgarh in Jagdalpur tahsil, Katakalian, Kuakonda and Dantewara, or southward from Kuakonda to the Kolab-Sabari at Misma on the Konta road, and to Konta via the Aranpur pass, Jaggergonda and Golapalli; while Bijapur is linked to Cherla and Jaggergonda to Dummagudam, both on the Godavari. With these and other

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

forest roads there are now few places in south Bastar out of reach of a motor-car, in the fair weather.

Dantewara tahsil is a horseshoe plain between the Tangri Dongri ghats at the edge of Jagdalpur tahsil on the east, the Abujhmar mountains on the north, and the great sword-blade north and south ridge of Bailadila on the west. Its general level is about 400 feet below that of the Jagdalpur tahsil, and it is an intermediate step between the north-eastern plateau and the great plains of South Bastar. The main road descends steeply to it from Killepal and Bastanar. This Dantewara valley may almost be regarded as the fourth natural division of Bastar; though small portions of the east of Kutru zamindari and the north of Bijapur tahsil are on the same level, there is between them and Dantewara tahsil the great barrier of the Bailadila ridge, except where the narrow Indrawati valley separates the northern end of the ridge from the Abujhmar mountains.

The rest of Bastar is sometimes described as one great southern plain varying in level from 600 to 300 feet according to the proximity of the Godavari. Actually, however, there is yet another plateau to be crossed on the western road (and on its forest branches that strike off towards the Godavari) before the traveller descends on to the real Godavari plain. Its level varies from 1,100 to 900 feet (leaving out of account, in this as in all the plateaux and plains of Bastar, the frequent spurs and isolated hills). On the southern road to Konta, and on the forest roads descending from Dantewara to Konta tahsil and Sukma zamindari by the Aranpur, Koriras and Mokpal passes, on the other hand, the traveller gets at once off the northern 2,000 feet plateau, in the case of the southern road, and off the Dantewara valley level in those of the forest roads, to the Godavari or southern plain. This intermediate western plateau may be regarded as the fifth natural division, and called the Kutru-Bijapur plateau. On the north and north-west the Indrawati is its boundary, so far as Bastar is concerned, as far as the hills which begin north of Desli in Sironcha tahsil and cross the Indrawati into Bastar to form the boundary of the Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris; the gorge in which the Indrawati boils through these hills, the last barrier to its union with the Godavari, is sinister in its magnificence. The hills run thence south-west along the border of the two zamindaris, cross the western road a little west of Bijapur village and continue south-west to the Isalnar pass on the Nelasnar-Cherla forest road, and thence westward till they merge with the foot-hills at the southern end of the Bailadila ridge, a little north of the Aranpur pass.

This Kutru-Bijapur plateau comprises all Kutru zamindari

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

CHAPTER VI

VILLAGES, HOUSES AND THEIR CONTENTS

A. Hill Maria Villages, Houses and their Contents

361 THE site of the Hill Maria village is in these days almost entirely determined by its convenience as a centre from which to cultivate the *penda* slopes of the year. Peace has reigned in the Abujhmar hills from time immemorial and no question of defence arises when a village is built. A possible relic of former unsettled times [349] is the custom of building stone cairns and seats as look-outs at the head of passes or the summits of hills on the paths leading to villages; but these are convenient watching places for herdsmen when their cattle are grazing around the hill-tops, and serve also to mark the line of the paths which, in the rains, are overgrown with rank grass, or fall into disuse when villages or *penda* slopes 487 are abandoned for alternative sites. Certain well-defined tracks through the hills are cleared annually by the villagers; these often avoid the actual village sites, to which side tracks connect them. There are no carts in the hills, and therefore the tracks are only foot-paths, generally wide enough only for a party to walk in single file, though at the periodic clearings the grass is cut down to a width of two or three feet on each side of the path. The village 361 boundary is usually marked by a cairn of stones, in the centre of which may be planted a pole ornamented at the top with bunches of grass or peacock or jungle-cock feathers, the pole being further adorned by peeling off bands of bark at intervals throughout its length. The boundary itself is usually a stream, and the cairns of the two villages are usually twenty or thirty yards apart, so that [783] when the annual *pira-manska* (called by the Bison-horn Marias *rog-burria* and by Halbi-speakers *boharani*) ceremony of ridding the village of disease takes place, the old winnowing-fans with the sweepings of each house can be hung up beyond the boundary on this no-man's-land without leaving them on the lands of the neighbouring village.

487 These paths cross streams by stepping-stones, by logs felled across the stream, by small raised embankments pierced by hollowed 491 tree trunk pipes for the passage of the water and revetted with horizontally laid logs, or by bridges consisting of a plank supported by bamboo wicker-work cylinders filled with boulders resting on

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the bed of the stream; these are held in position between upright poles set V-wise in the boulders, to which are fastened horizontal bamboo poles as railings. As they have no saws, the 'plank' is a tree trunk with one side trimmed flat with the axe. Even more elaborate bridges are sometimes made at high levels over streams liable to flood, from tree-fork to tree-fork on opposite banks.

Though, as has been said above, agricultural conditions nowadays determine village sites, hill-tops or rocky slopes remain favourite sites, and become commoner as you penetrate farther into the Abujhmar hills. The traditional arrangement is a street some twenty-five yards wide between parallel lines of long-houses; at one end of the street is the *gotul-lon* or village dormitory, generally within a rounded bamboo fence, and sometimes in front of this dormitory will be seen the *udam-garia* or seat of honour of the *kasyeq-gaita* and possibly also of the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*), as well as the stones on which the other village elders sit around with them in conclave; but the *udam-garia* custom is not found in all parts of the hills. Sometimes the shrine of the *Nar-Talughi* or Village Mother is actually inside the dormitory fencing, and she is often housed there for a while when a village is being shifted. There are, as a rule, no *bari* (vegetable gardens) attached to each house as amongst most Gonds, including the Bison-horn Marias and the Murias of Bastar; but sometimes the *kasyeq-gaita* has a small tobacco *bari* attached to the dormitory in the centre of the main street. The *Gazetteer* (p. 50) speaks of the 'common granary' as standing in the broad street; but with one partial exception, Nugur village in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, I have never seen this. The villagers generally construct a row of granaries (*mauda* or *wijja-dodi*) on piles at the side or rear of the main village street, sometimes nearer the *penda* fields than the village; this row can hardly be called a 'common granary', as each villager has his own granary in the row for his own private food and seed store, the granaries being built together only for convenience, as they can then be watched at night by one watchman for the whole village, sleeping in a special hut at the side of the granaries or under a granary. At Nugur there were big matting bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored; but here the village had come under the economic thraldom of some Teli tradesmen, who for years had advanced rice to the cultivators. The bins were left in the collective charge of the headman and elders, and any villager could help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest he would replace it with 50 per cent. interest, the Teli owners being also free to remove the surplus from time to time.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gon 1 AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

343 841 that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut 342 for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-ton* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *padas* (headmen) and *parmas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

361 Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in [487] the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these 443 are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias [492] have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. ● [491] They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

361 The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory 787 of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

Shifting villages 166

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandum* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandum*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Nennor new-eating feast.

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue.

Dogs and cats Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Darra, darra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bamboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *konda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralur are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasnar to Bhamragarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the *Sendhias* and the zamindars also denied it. The allegation possibly arises from the fact that the zamindar appoints or confirms the succession of the *Sendhia*, and may arbitrate in a case involving parties from the *patti* of two or more *Sendhias*. Moreover the zamindars themselves have probably often descended from the tribal headmen of old, and so it is easy for them to perform the function of ultimate arbitration in social matters which is so characteristic of the chiefs of the ancient semi-feudal organization of the province from whom they descend or derive. Obviously it would be easy to apply to all the Chanda Maria country the Bastar *panchayat* system.[1]

From Jarawandi our route took us six miles to Pendri, the largest village and virtual headquarters of Jharapapra zamindari, thence six miles to Jharapapra and back; on fifteen miles to Aundhi in Drug district, and thence seven miles to Murumgaon, the headquarters of the Chanda zamindari of that name; the last mile was at long last on made road, the third-class road running east from Garchiroli through Khutgaon, Dudhmala, Dhanora, Rangi, Murumgaon and Koracha zamindaris to Dondi-Lohara and Drug. We were, however, to have trouble on this road next day, when heavy rain flooded unbridged streams between Murumgaon and the twenty miles distant Manpur, the *de facto* headquarters of the Koracha zamindari of Drug. The very long delay in bridging this road and raising it in class is only too typical of the neglect by Government and District Councils of aboriginal areas.

Similarly the District Council had not opened a single school in Jharapapra zamindari. The late zamindar, a Halba by tribe, and amongst the most intelligent and progressive landholders of the two districts, had opened a private school at Pendri[2] which at the time of my visit was being run by a Gondi-speaking teacher of the Marar agricultural caste, and his pupils were six Marar, six Halba and two Pardhan boys. Marias and Halbas are the chief elements in the small population of the zamindari, dwindling steadily by the drift in recent years of Marias across into Bastar for the sake of *podu*.

All along this route there had been frequent pockets of Marar cultivators, especially near the streams. These industrious, progressive, dark-skinned agricultural pioneers have pushed up the valley of every substantial river in the backward areas of Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Drug, Raipur and doubtless other aboriginal districts of the Central Provinces. They have been the chief factor in such increase as there has been of permanent, especially irrigated, cultivation in these Garchiroli and Drug Partially Excluded Areas.

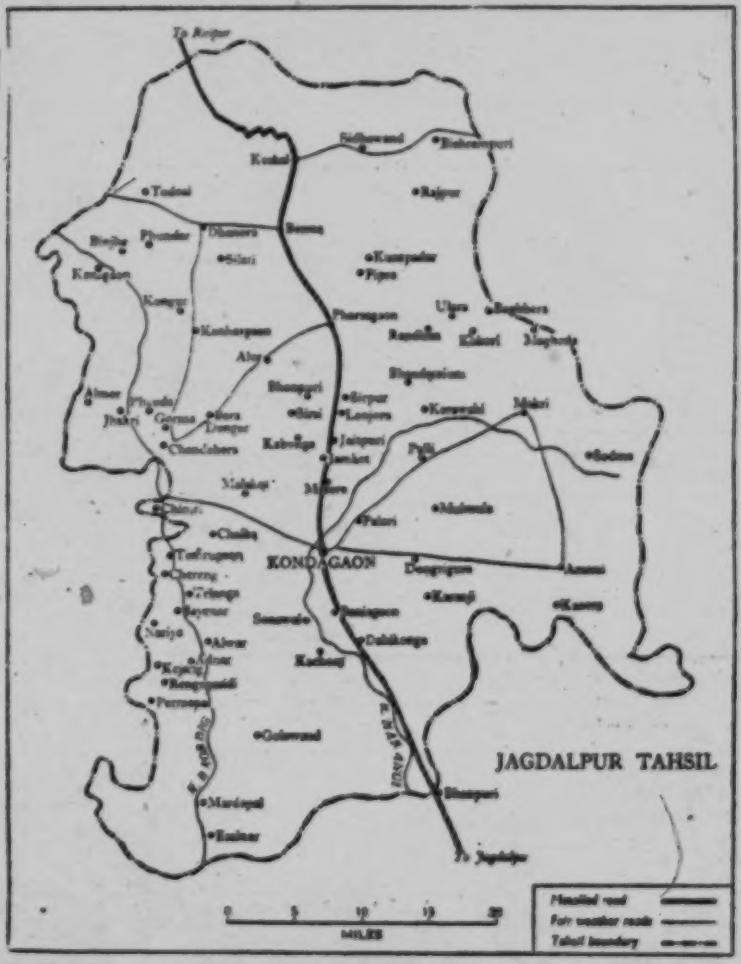
[1] See pp. 295-7.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. M(1922)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

133 These are the main features of the Kondagaon Tahsil: a main road,
● 491 open all the year round and vibrating day and night to the rumble of lorries
connecting the capital with the greater world. A high plateau, broken by
one range of hills running north from Bara Dongar and to the south and east.

[131
491]



KONDAGAON TAHSIL

Two main rivers and many streams. Forest everywhere, mainly sal forest, green all the year. Four fair-weather roads; one east from Keskal along the northern border to Bishrampuri and on into Jeypore and the Likma Forest

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

133
491

Railway; another from Kondagaon itself round the Makri Reserved Forest, a hunter's paradise. A third goes west from Berma to Antagarh, skirting the south of the Telinghat Hills. A fourth and most important connects the two tahsil headquarters of Kondagaon and Narayanpur.

There are no towns and few important villages. Kondagaon itself has a court with a First Class Magistrate, a police-station, dispensary, middle school, forest, excise and revenue offices and a headquarters of a timber company, a few shops, and an important bi-weekly bazaar. Thousands of Muria visit the place for the Marhai festival in March. There is only one other police-station, at Keskal, an important village at the head of the pass leading down to the lowlands. There are schools here and at Baniagaon, Mardapal, Pharasgaon and Bara Dongar. Bara Dongar is a beautiful village with important Hindu temples and a special connexion with the Maharaja, who is ceremonially enthroned here, when a smaller version of the royal Dasaera festival is observed every year.

The population of the Kondagaon Tahsil in 1941 was 111,428. The area is 1880 square miles. It has 521 villages, of which 23 are deserted. In 1942 I counted 278 ghotul in the tahsil, but this figure is probably an underestimate.

The headquarters of the western tahsil have recently been moved from Antagarh to Narayanpur. The Narayanpur Tahsil is much larger than Kondagaon, being 2885 square miles, but its population is only 62,305. It has 831 villages, of which however only 565 are inhabited. In 1942 there were about 244 Muria ghotul. The tahsil has much more character and diversity than Kondagaon and it is not easy to describe. It will be most convenient to follow its roads.

From Berma on the main Keskal-Jagdalpur road, there branches a forest road through heavily-wooded and attractive country to Amabera and thence to Antagarh. In its course the road passes the village of Penjori at the edge of the high plateau: two miles away at the end of a path winding through magnificent trees and wild mountain scenery is the famous shrine of Lingo at Semurgaon. Thence the road begins an abrupt descent down the Matlaghat to the Antagarh plain. Unhappily a fringe of trees and tall bamboos, as nearly everywhere in Bastar, hides the view from the traveller's eyes. At the foot of the mountains the road is only 900 feet above sea-level and has reached the northern plain which is simply a continuation southward of the Chhattisgarh-Kanker lowlands. Here is Antagarh, the old administrative centre of the tahsil, where there is still a large bazaar, a police-station and a school. The population of this area is very mixed, for the Muria are influenced both by the wild Maria of the hills and the sophisticated Gond of the lowlands. There are many immigrants from British India.

From Antagarh runs a beautiful road to Narayanpur. On the right are hills of vitrified sandstone that glow pink like dolomite rocks in the evening sun, and half-way along the road climbs the magnificent Raughat between the Abujhmar and Matlaghat Hills. In the woods on either side are charming Muria villages, Padbera, Aturbera, Phulpar and many others.

Narayanpur itself is a very large village not yet grown into a town. It is fresh and open, surrounded by hills in the near distance. Near by is Binjhli among its great mango groves and palms.

From Narayanpur roads go west, south and east. The western road is one of the loneliest and most exciting in Bastar. After passing the Halba centre of Soupur, it forces its way into the very heart of the Abujhmar through wild and majestic scenery, and on to Paralkot and Partabpur. Here is the

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

133
491

most striking landmark of all Bastar, the great mass of the Abujhmar Mountains, an impregnable fortress, wild, lonely, exalted, exhilarating, home of the Hill Maria. To the west of the mountains, in sharp and striking contrast, is one of the most 'civilized' areas of Bastar, the north-western plain, where the ghotul still flourishes, but a little shyly, and the children have none of the decorations that make their fellows to the south such a delight to see.

NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

The road curves round at Partabpur and runs east back to Antagarh. For a great part of its journey it runs near and parallel to the beautiful Kotri river. The Kotri, which has its source in the Raughat and Matlaghat Hills, flows west through Koilibera to meet another river of the same name that comes down through Kanker from Drug. They meet near Partabpur and travel on together through the Muria tracts of the extreme west into Sironcha, until at last they join the Indrawati at Bhairamgarh. This is the river that makes glad the heart of the Muria of the north-west. It is a lovely river, wide and open, with glorious sands, and every now and then a glimpse of distant mountains. Some of the happiest days of my life have been spent on its banks.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

South and east of Narayanpur is the true Jhoria country, home of the most charming and friendly people in Bastar. Between Narayanpur and Chota Dongar, the villages of the Abujhmar foothills, Kapsi, Markabera, Metawand, Kongera are probably Hill Maria in origin. Beyond Chota Dongar a road goes up into the real Maria country and Orcha village, passing through the wonderful Marian gorge, where the Gudra river emerges through enormous wooded rocks out of the hills.

THE PARGANAS OF THE NARAYANPUR TAHSIL

The area east of the Antagarh-Narayanpur road is equally attractive. Here are the villages of Nayanar, Bandopal, Almer and Jhakri which frequently appear in this book. The country is well-wooded and hilly, more varied and beautiful than the Kondagaon Tahsil into which it leads. The old Hindu centre of Bénur is near the road half-way between the two tahsils.

I have spoken throughout of roads, for they provide a convenient means of finding places on a map, and actually divide up the two northern tahsils very well. But it should not be supposed that these roads are great highways of traffic. Except for the Keskal-Jagdalpur road, not one of them is open during the rains. Several cannot be used by cars before December. The roads are important as agents of culture-change, however, because along them come the slow-moving trains of bullock-wagons, the ever-touring chaprasi and constable, the merchant on his laden horse. These are not, of course, confined to the official roads; the inter-village communications of north Bastar

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

491 are excellent, and there are few places to which a bullock-cart and even a car cannot be taken with a little care.

631 Although the Muria area is divided officially into the two tahsils I have described, the people themselves think much more in terms of the smaller administrative unit, the pargana, the Manjhi or Chief of which is the court of appeal in all tribal disputes. The parganas of Narayanpur are clearly defined blocks of territory with considerable homogeneity of custom and fashion within their borders. But in Kondagaon, the parganas are very broken up. The Keskal, Kongur, Chalka and Mardapal Parganas are well defined, but the Hatiya and Sonawal Parganas, to name no others, are scattered all over the tahsil, and it must be hard for the Pargana Manjhi to exercise any sort of control over the area in his charge.

It has always been a tradition of the State to allow the village panchayats, which we may call judicial committees of village elders, to have jurisdiction over most tribal offences with a final appeal to the Maharaja. Since 1932 the jurisdiction of the village courts has been greatly extended to include cases of simple hurt and assault, minor thefts, mischief, trespass, adultery and enticement. They can also settle civil claims up to a value of twenty-five rupees. The Pargana Manjhi are not personally members of these courts, but to them lies any appeal from their findings. These men, who have the privilege of wearing red turbans, are a useful link between the aboriginals and the Administration. Though some of them abuse their position and tend to divert fines to their own use, they are on the whole a first-rate body of men, and their friendship is invaluable to the investigator.

The tradition of local self-government, so firmly established in the State, is an important factor in the conditions that make the ghotul and its organization and discipline possible.

II. The Tribal Population of Bastar

101 The tribal population of Bastar is varied and interesting. In order to simplify my description I will adopt the names given to the tribes by Grigson, though it must be remembered that, convenient though these often are, they are not always the names used by the people themselves.

The Hill Maria are the least influenced by the outside world and have retained most of their religious and cultural institutions. They live in the [162] Abujhmar Mountains and there were 11,500 of them in 1931, and probably some 13,000 now. They are both shy and friendly, an attractive people, cultivating their desolate and lonely hills with axe and fire; their life and customs have been fully described by Grigson.

The Bison-horn Maria, a great tribe of some 175,000 persons, live south [162] of the Indrawati in the Dantewara, Konta, Jagdalpur and Bijapur Tahsils and in the Sukma Zamindari. Grigson has studied them in less detail than the Hill Maria.[1] They have very little contact with the Muria of the north, except that they meet parties of them coming down from the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas to dance at the great Marhai at Ghotpal. Their characteristic dance is the marriage dance with a splendid bison-horn headdress. A megalithic culture survives among them, and there are traces of a ghotul system long since moribund.

[1] A detailed study of one aspect of their life will be found in my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); some of their folk-tales are given in my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

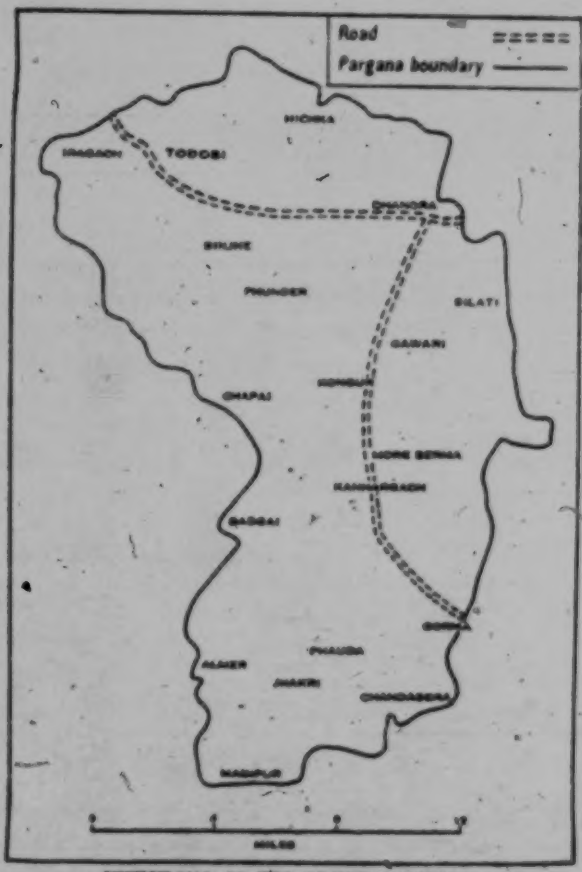
APPENDIX ONE

** Mohpal	..	AB	10	9
* Salebhat	..	AB	12	9
* Sargipal	..	AB	7	8
Umradah	..	..	7	3
Upermurmend		..	11	9

883
361
162

Konqur Pargana

This delightful pargana contains some of the most characteristic ghotul in the State. It lies between Bara Dongar to the east and the Bara Jhorian, Kolur, Baragaon and Bensur Parganas to the west. As you move across it you leave



SKETCH-MAP OF THE KONGUR PARGANA

typical Kondagaon villages where the Chait Dandar is danced and the boys have little decoration, and come to as typical Jhoria villages, where the Lingo legend

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills, and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *pedas* (headmen) and *permas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

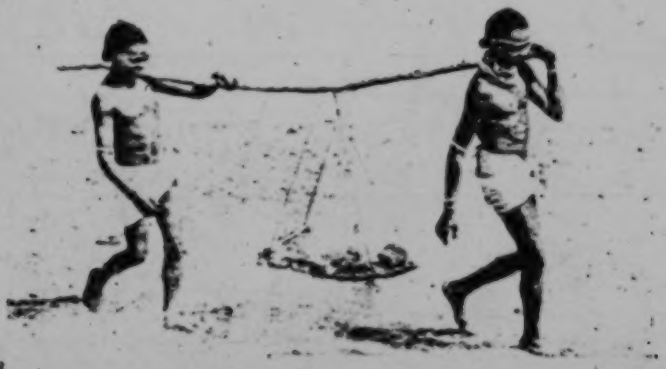
The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

Shifting villages

Plate VIII

241
231

482



492
493

1 Motiari ploughing at Bayanar

2 Carrying earth to embank a field

3 Chelik at Sirpuri in solid-wheeled cart

[p. 30(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate VIII

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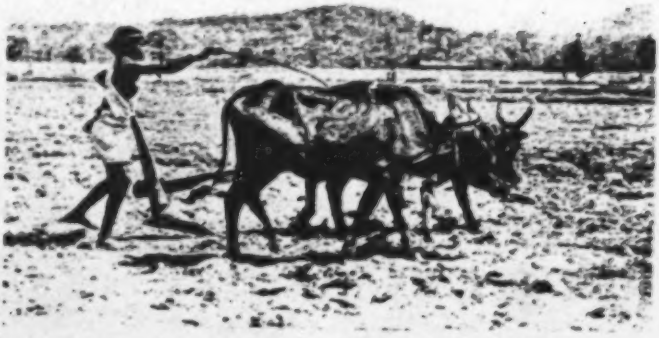

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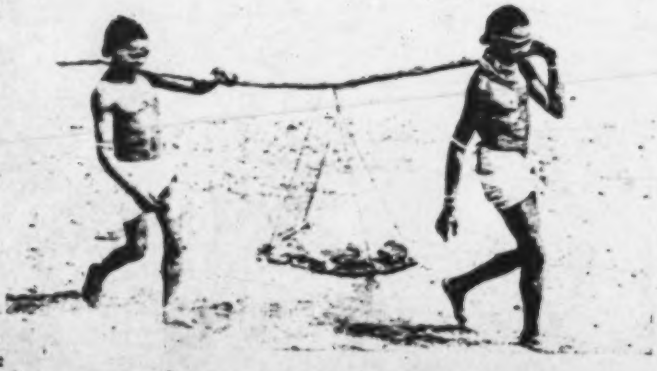

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1 Motiari ploughing at Bayanar

2 Carrying earth to embank a field

3 Chelik at Sirpuri in solid-wheeled cart

[p. 30(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

524

Wori wori singār,
Bāni bāni pungār.
Rows and rows of decorations,
There are many kinds of flowers.
—A honeycomb.
Tutri bukāte bātri perek.
In a small hole is a small seed.
—*Lokti* bees.
Untie the she-buffalo and milk the peg.
—Getting honey from a hive.
A herd of cattle has one leader.
—The swarm and its queen.
Many flowers grow in the tank.
—A honeycomb.
Flower, flower, how it flowers!
What comes out of the flower?
—Bees.

I have recorded one song about bees, but I was unable to discover any games that illustrated the taking of a hive.

539

Song

The bees suck the kosra flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The bees suck the paddy flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The Manjhi says he'll give his daughter
To the boy who kills the bees.
An orphan chelik kills the bees,
He brings the hive and shows the Manjhi.
The Manjhi gives the boy his daughter.
The bees suck the mandia flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.

VII. Oil

Ann kare motai, tel kare chiknai, kapare kare barai. Food fattens, oil adorns, clothes dignify.—Muria saying

252

The Muria make many different kinds of oil; some for use in their carts, some for light, some for medicine, but most, of course, for food. The *gāraneyi* is extracted from mahua seed and is used mainly for cooking. So is the oil gained from the usual oil-seed crops, 'the slender trees that have a hundred babies', which are often raised in the *bāri* gardens. Seeds of the sarai tree are collected and make a useful oil. The fat of lizards and the grubs that live in the date-palm and the fat of cow, buffalo, goat, pig, cock, and several kinds of deer all yield oil which can be used for cooking and to mix with food. For lighting purposes and to oil the wheels of bullock-carts, oil made from the seed of the karanji, bandgul or kosom is used. Oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and

[373
493]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

markets. The Kuruks go up into the hills to collect these dues, and they also dry fish and bring it round from village to village in the hills, bartering it for grain, generally at the rate of five pieces the size of a finger for a *paili*[1] of *kuthi*; the Hill Marias allow them to sleep in the *path-gotul* rest-house. They are expert with net and with rod and line. Frequently they stretch a cord over the head of a pool with several short lengths of line ending in baited hooks depending at intervals in the water, while they go across the tail of the pool in their dug-out canoes spanking the surface of the water with their paddles or with long bamboos to drive the fish up towards the baits. They fish simultaneously several little rods tied to clumps of rushes or reeds. They certainly catch fish at all times except in high floods, and send them alive to your camp in water in little dug out sections of trees. As boatmen they are expert in managing their clumsy and heavy dug-outs, which are generally made of *Bombax malabaricum* wood owing to the heavy duty charged by the Forest Department for the far more durable teak. I spent nearly three weeks in their charge in November 1927 with Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the State Medical Officer, journeying in their dug-outs down the Indrawati from Kutru to the Jitam rapids, whence they returned to their villages. They were expert in shooting rapids even with two dug-outs lashed together, which they sometimes took through the wild tangle of rapids above Bhamragarh with two paddlers standing in the bows and two in the stern. The paddles are rectangles of teak nailed to teak handles. One dug-out would shoot ahead to explore the rapids, and its owner appear suddenly on the top of a rock to shout directions to the rest; old Kuruks and their grey-headed wives would appear out of tributary streams from riparian villages and croak away their greetings in the guttural Hill Maria dialect, and then paddle back upstream in the morning mist with charcoal or wood smoking around them in broken earthen crocks at the bottom of their boats, carried for warmth. At dusk, after escorting us to our camp on the Bastar bank, they invariably would paddle croaking off to rocky islands in midstream, whence at night the eye would be delighted with their numerous fires of driftwood and the ear with the melodious refrains of their songs.

The Hill Marias make various forms of fish cages and traps with reeds and cane. They dam river shallows in the hot weather and poison the pools. In the rains they make *gorla* piers of boulders in cylindrical wicker-work baskets, like the piers of their bridges, between which is laid a platform of wicker-work, the upstream end of which rests on the bed of the stream, and is weighted down with

[1] A measure containing about 4 lb. weight of grain.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWO

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

I. The Muria Village

BEFORE approaching the main subject of this book, it is necessary to see how the chelik and motiari live at home. In a sense, there is no such thing as a typical Muria village any more than there is a typical Muria house. But most of the villages conform to the Gond pattern: they are set among trees—the Muria seem fonder of shade than wind and do not often choose the hill-tops beloved of the Maria and Baiga—and each house is enclosed within a separate fence that also surrounds its garden. There is thus a sharp distinction between a Muria and a Hill Maria village: the latter, like the Baiga village, consists of a row of houses joined together and opening on to a common street. Traces of this survive among the Muria in the enclosures of some of their leading men; at Markabera, for example, the headman's house is like a little village, a long enclosure with a small street on to which face many dwelling-places and granaries. In Palli-Barkot and other western villages also, groups of related families build their houses to open round a square.

But generally the houses are scattered about, sometimes widely scattered, to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens, and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul are ever in a special or recognized position.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small courtyard, are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs. As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the east of Kondagaon the verandah of the main house is often deeper than the room inside. Where houses are built like this, there is no need for special menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar, where there is no room to seclude a woman on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and cleanness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of Mother Earth, and a love of animals. The pigsties are substantial, often with a double roof; the cattle-sheds are sometimes raised on pillars; sitting hens are given comfortable nests raised well above the ground. The houses themselves are cosy and homely, crammed with every sort of basket, leaf-bundle and utensil. Fish-traps, drums, wooden clogs hang from the roof, and flutes and bows and arrows are stuck under the thatch. Inside, in an inner room, is kept the mysterious Pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and placated.

These houses are the work-rooms of the chelik and motiari; they are the homes only of the married. The life and interest of chelik and motiari centre in the ghotul. But life there is definitely regarded as a preparation and training for the home. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

Most of the Muria are undoubtedly very poor. I was one day discussing with W. V. Grigson, who had visited Mandla after several years in Bastar, whether the Bastar villagers were poorer than those in the Central Provinces. I suggested—and he agreed—that probably the Bastar villagers were actually poorer, but that their lives were so much richer that they seemed far more

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

511 prosperous than their fellows in a district like Mandla. In Mandla, for example, or Bilaspur, the worst poverty is the poverty of the spirit, the decay of art and culture, the disappearance of tribal religion, the dying-out of dance and song. Against this background, material want stands out stark and bare. But the Muria of Bastar has a full rich life; every day brings its delightful and absorbing pursuits; at least twice a month there is a sharp break in the monotony, the colour and music of a festival, the excitement of a hunt, the romance of a dancing expedition—and all the time, if you are young, there is the ghotul which you would not exchange for any offer of material wealth.

II. Cultivation

241 'It is as bad for a Muria to fail in his cultivation as for a monkey to slip from a branch,' but it is not necessary to spend very much time on this subject, important as it is. The axe-cultivation of the Maria, which closely resembles that of the Muria, has been fully discussed by Grigson,[1] and for its wider implications my own account of bewar in *The Baiga* may be consulted.[2] The Muria's permanent rice-cultivation hardly differs from that elsewhere in India and need not be described in detail.

For the sake of completeness, however, and because we must never forget that the ghotul exists in a setting of agriculture, food-gathering and hunting, I will give a brief outline of the Muria's methods of cultivation.

There are three kinds of axe-cultivation and the Muria practise them all, for 'the axe is our milk-giving cow':

1. *Penda* is cut on the steep slopes of hills. The Muria fells the trees and undergrowth, fires them when dry, and sows his seed in the ashes after the first rains have fallen. In a *penda* clearing there is no digging or ploughing of the earth. After two or three years a *penda* plot is abandoned and a new clearing made. This is the most common form of axe-cultivation among the Hill Maria: it is the bewar of the Baiga. No plough or hoe is used. For beans and pulses, holes are dibbled with a primitive digging-stick.

2. *Dippa*, also called *marhān* and *erka*, differs from *penda* in three ways—

   (*a*) The clearings are made on fairly level ground, not on the side of hills.

   (*b*) After the fellings have been fired the ashes are evenly distributed over the whole area; in a *penda* clearing no one bothers to do this. The result is a much more even and regular crop.

   (*c*) When the rains fall, the ashes are ploughed into the ground, or dug into it with a hoe, and only then is the seed sown.

3. *Parka* or *dahi* differs again: in *dippa* and *penda* clearings, the trees are felled in the very place where it is desired to sow. They are burnt on the spot. But in *parka*, trees and brushwood are cut elsewhere and are carried on to an already existing field. Here they are spread over the field and fired. After raking the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria plough them into the ground and sow their seed.

[1] Grigson, op. cit., pp. 123–30.
[2] Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), pp. 100–31.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda's* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

805 morning after the murder, ultimately going to the police when there were fifty-four knots on it.

The Maria names for the times of day belong to this sub-chapter, but as they follow so closely the daily routine, I give them in the next sub-chapter.

G. Daily Routine

● 512 805 The following list of times of day was taken from Bison-horn Marias. It is more comprehensive than the Hill Maria nomenclature but the latter understand or have similar expressions in their own dialect for the Gondi expressions used by the Bison-horn Marias, though phrases dealing with ploughing or buffaloes, and Halbi expressions, unless corruptions of Gondi expressions, are not current in the hills. In the list, Ha. stands for Halbi, Hi. for Hindi and G. for Gondi.

Hāchehusānā (G.) ..	2 or 3 a.m., the time when the ***hāch-pitte*** or king-crow calls '***Thākur-jī, thākur-jī!***' in the forest.
Kōrrk-husānā (G.) ***Kukra-bastan*** (Ha.)	Cock-crow.
Pal-tōrr-tintā (G.) ***Hal-jorto-berā*** (Ha.)	5 a.m., time to put the yoke or ***hal*** on the oxen.
Pharphar-berā (Ha.) ..	When the darkness is fleeing; ***pharphar*** is Gondi, the Nagpur Gonds saying ***phalphal-ātū*** for this time.
Narhōm (G.) ..	Just before sunrise.
Tirtir-pōrrd (G.) ***Tirtir-berā*** (Ha.)	The time when the sun is rising 'tir-tir' above the horizon.
Eh-pōrrd (G.) ***Pānhārī-berā*** (Ha.)	7 a.m., when the women go to fetch water (***eh***).
Hāt-pōrrd (G.) ***Hāto-berā*** (Ha.)	9 to 10 a.m., time to go to the market (***hāt***); sometimes they say '***hātō-pej-berā***', the time to have ***pej*** gruel before leaving for the market.
Jāwā-pōrrd (G.) ***Pej-berā*** (Ha.)	About 10.30 a.m., the time for the morning meal of gruel (***jāwā*** or ***pej***).
Tallā-pōrrd (G.) ***Mund-berā*** (Ha.) or ***Ād-pōrrd*** (G.)	12 noon, when the sun is directly over the head (***tallā*** or ***mund***), or when the day is half (***ād***, corruption of the Hindi ***ādhā***) over.
Arhāhū-berā (Ha.) ..	2.30 p.m.; literally '2½-time'; though Halbas do not know the clock, yet they use the expression, and so do nearly all Bison-horn Marias.
Hirrī-pōrrd (G.) ***Kaikī-berā*** (Ha.)	About 4 p.m., when flocks of green parrots (***hirrī***, ***kaikī***) invade the fields, and the women return from the fields.
Rafraf-berā (Ha.) or ***Rātokandiā-berā*** (Ha.)	When the sun is half below the horizon. '***Rafraf***' is probably Gondi. Sunset in Maria is '***pōrrd digmōtā***'.
Kōndāng-ūlhānā (G.) ***Gai-goru-berā*** (Ha.)	Time for tying up cattle.
Mas-mas (G.) ***Masmas-berā*** (Ha.)	When the light is fast going.
Jhul-pul-berā (Ha.) ***Phul-sundrī*** (Hi.)	About 7.30 p.m., when the flowers all shed their greatest fragrance.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Bhainsā-andhyār (Ha.)	..	'Buffalo-darkness', when the evening has become as dark as a buffalo's hide.
Tindī-tindānā (G.) / *Bhāt-kurā* (Ha.)	..	9.30 p.m., the time of eating (*tindānā*) the supper of boiled rice (*bhāt*).
Bhāt-nānā-kurā (Ha.)	..	The time when drowsiness (*nānā*) comes over one after supper.
Narjām (G.)	..	Midnight. The Hill Marias say *narjūm*.

The routine of the Bison-horn family's day is roughly as follows. The woman rises at cock-crow, and arranges her hair, but does not wash. She then pounds grain with the *usṭal* husker. Her husband gets up when it is time to yoke the bullocks, and goes off to plough. She then sweeps out the house and its surroundings, and goes to the river to fetch water, and on her return cooks the *pej* gruel for her husband's meal; any spare time is occupied in basket-making. He generally comes home for this meal, but when the field-work is heavy, she takes it to him there. If they have had their meal in the house (the women always eat after their men have been satisfied), they return together to the field, where the wife works as hard as the husband, often even ploughing. She stays in the field till 'parrot-time' and then goes back to the house to prepare the evening meal, bathing naked on her way in a river pool. Her husband comes back at dusk, and ties up the cattle in the *bari* or in the byre; the children bring them home, calling stray animals with a kind of shrill yodelling. He then bathes naked in the men's pool, and returns for his supper and sleep.

I have not attempted to recapitulate the daily routine of the Hill Maria, most of which, including his four meals, has been detailed in the preceding pages, which have generally dealt primarily with him rather than the Bison-horn Maria.

H. Fire-Making

All Marias and most Murias make fire by means of a fire-saw. A piece of bamboo about 1½ or 1¼ inches in diameter and about 16 inches long is split down the centre for about half its length, and wedged open with a pebble or a bit of stick at the split end. This 'hearth' stick is called by Hill Marias a *nogho*, and is explained by them as the 'mother' of the fire. Another length of bamboo, perhaps a little longer than the 'hearth', is split in half, and one half is trimmed along the top of the split to a clean, sharp edge; this trimmed half they call the *kanda*. A flat boulder is selected and firmly planted on the ground. On top of this are placed dry leaves, or a bit of old rag, if available; and two men hold the 'hearth' down by its ends on the stone and the leaves, so that the leaves are under the V formed by the wedged split. The third man then saws

[see cat. 116, p. 423. – Ed.]

513, 575, 561

Gond AW32

/Information concerning the ghotul or gotul, the bachelors' and adolescents' dormitory, will be found in category 883, Adolescent Activities./

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 513 374 42°. But he feels the cold, and at night, when walking, may be met carrying a glowing ember held close to his navel for warmth, while in camp he sleeps on the ground between two fires, and in house, field-hut or village dormitory sleeps generally on a platform of criss-crossed bamboos or creeper rope with a fire beneath it. He 513 has usually also a sleeping mat or *masni* (Halbi) made of a special grass, which is easily rolled up and carried about when he visits Jagdalpur or a touring officer's camp; or he may use instead of it his *taghali* or bark rain coat. He sleeps generally on his side with his head resting on his arm, the other arm resting on the ground in front with the elbow bent; and he will shift from side to side. It is *polo*, that is taboo, for a woman to sleep on a cot or platform, and she must sleep on the ground in her room in the house.

Bodily attitudes

The Bison-horn Maria has generally a cot to sleep on, and even his wife often has one. In such matters he is getting more and more like the ordinary Hindu villager.

516 For eating or social conversation or resting, the Hill Maria often sits with his buttocks on the ground and his knees drawn up, though he sometimes uses the familiar Indian squatting position, and his women usually squat in this way for mourning at funerals or singing at weddings. The men have also little wooden stools to [352] sit on, or sit on a stone, as at the commensal feasts; while in the villages where there is the custom of the *gaita* or headman and the *kasyeq-gaita* or Village Mother priest sitting on an *uddamgarya* or seat of honour to preside over meetings of the elders, it is often a flat stone resting on stone legs, on which he sits in ordinary sitting posture. In any group of Hill Marias resting after a meal or on a march you will see almost every attitude that might be adopted by English schoolboys except lying prone on back or stomach. If standing, a favourite position of all the tribes in Bastar is to stand on one foot, the other knee being bent so that the sole of the foot may rest against the outer side of the standing leg, the arm on the same side as the bent knee catching hold of a bough or something for steadiness. Another favourite position is to stand with the left leg braced, the right slightly flexed so that the left hip is extended sideways; the left wrist or knuckles rest on this hip, while the right hand rests on the left shoulder, the right arm being bent at the elbow to look like a V over the chest; or else the right arm is hung loosely at the side, or held in that of the next youth. For fire- [372] making, they kneel on their knees. They stand to urinate and squat to defecate.

[514] The Bison-horn Maria uses mostly the same positions, but is more prone to imitate Hindu habits; he squats to urinate.*

* [see cat. 116 p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from the fresh cultivation site, postponed till after the first harvest has been raised on the latter. This is inconvenient only to the women, as from the time when the new *kosra* comes into ear till the harvest is over all the men sleep apart from their wives in their fields, while their womenfolk have to sleep in the village, it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to have sexual intercourse during this period. As it was inconvenient for the bachelors to sleep in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) on the hill-top village in Ahekele *paghai*, a temporary dormitory had been made near the river, actually in Ahekele *kaghai* no. 10, but close to the bridge by which the villagers crossed the river to their *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai*; and there were also four houses there, and a row of granaries, that site having been more convenient for some of the villagers whose fields had been on the lower slopes of *kaghai* no. 10 when that was being cultivated. Handawada is a village of the Gume clan; and all the houses in the village on Ahekele *paghai*, those by the river in *kaghai* no. 10, and the one advance-guard house in Kawar *paghai*, as well as all the *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1, belonged to members of the Gume clan: but in the small Irpmeta *kaghai* no. 3 three families of the Tamo clan, with which the Gume clan may intermarry, had been allowed to have *penda* cultivation and to build houses and granaries; the wives had all been Gume girls. In the new village site, Kawar *paghai*, one villager had already built his house, to which I referred above as the advance-guard house, because he had been sent to make an experimental *penda* field in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1 a year in advance of the rest of the villagers, in accordance with custom; on the success of this experimental cultivation depends the villagers' decision whether to migrate *en masse* in the following year. There was also a newly made cairn close by where a ceremony in honour of the Village Mother had been performed as an essential preliminary to the shifting of the village. When I next camped in the parish in March 1934, the villagers had for three years occupied Kawar *paghai*, and the houses were dirty and smoke-blackened; the villagers had found the site feverish and unhealthy owing to its proximity to the river, there had been several deaths, and Kawar *kaghai* nos. 1 and 2 had each been exhausted in two years. Their Tamo relatives had exhausted Irpmeta *kaghai* and left the parish. The *Bhum-gaita* and another villager had been sent ahead to make experimental *penda* plots in Hitangpal *kaghai* (no. 4), and the villagers proposed to shift the village during 1935 to the village site in that *kaghai* or the adjacent Kurmelnar *kaghai* (no. 5); the experiments in Hitangpal had succeeded, and the villagers were to start their *penda* felling in a few days.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

342 Rough ground-plans of three typical Hill Maria houses are given in the illustration on page 111. The Nugur house was the end house of a long-house, and faced south on to the main village street. It differs from the other two in having no partition wall between the veranda (*algi*) and the *angadi*, or women's kitchen and sleeping room; the *angadi* in this case is in fact almost a continuation of the veranda round the eastern side of the *lonu*. The husband actually slept in the veranda and his wife in the *angadi* in warm weather, but in the *lonu* in winter and rains. This house had no *hala* or menstruation room, because the village had a communal menstruation hut; so also the house had no back door.

Houses

The Kurmer house faced north on to the main street, and was the central house of a long-house of three houses; its western and eastern walls were thus only partitions separating it from the other two houses. It was itself almost two houses, as the widowed mother [592] of Dedha Keye, the occupant, had the eastern *algi*, *angadi* and *lonu* for her exclusive use; but there was no door between her portion of the *algi* and Keye's portion, only a partial continuation across the veranda of the partition wall between her and Keye's rooms. The widow was too old to need a *hala*, and so there was only one for Keye's wife in his part of the house, and this had a back door. Like the Nugur house, this house had no *agha* room.

The Handawada secular headman's (*peda's*) house was at the north end of a long-house containing three houses and facing west on to the village street; the other two houses had their verandas (*algi*) and entrances on the street side, facing west. His *algi* was therefore very small, and only nominally walled off from the open [351] ground to the north of the house by a bamboo wicker-work fence about 3½ feet high, being thus useless for keeping property. Where, as in the other houses illustrated, the veranda is in front of the house and parallel to the roof-tree, it is easy to construct a front wall as high as the roof, which is there barely 3½ feet above the ground.

342 The *agha* is the husband's living and sleeping room, and it is taboo (*polo*) for his wife, a mature daughter or any woman to sleep ● 513 in it; but boys too small to sleep in the bachelors' dormitory and 784 immature daughters may sleep there. In hot weather the males of the family often sleep under the granary, which is built on piles, and when houses have no *agha* this is the usual sleeping place at all times for the men of the family, and for male guests except when the latter can be accommodated in the village dormitory 342 (*gotal-lon*). It is strictly taboo for any female to enter a granary, 513 or to sleep under one. Every *agha* has a large *alpanji* or sleeping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*ahki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies. The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write :—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see cal.116, p.420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 the wefts are of split bamboo. The corners of the walls are further secured by cords stitched through the two wicker walls round the corner warp and the corner pile. Wherever beams cross, they are [283] lashed with *siari* twine or thicker rope. The door of a single granary is usually a sliding piece of bamboo wicker-work; but in the long granaries it is a section of *tum* grass fence or bamboo wicker-work fastened in position by obliquely crossing bamboos.

251 These granaries contain immense quantities of *kosra* and other hill grains, rice, beans, dried forest fruits, etc., in big bins of bamboo basketry, smaller baskets, and large *chiptis* or lidded boxes of leaves on a framework of cane or twigs. The bins are all lidded with stitched-leaf tops, tied round the rim with creeper cord, like the paper top of an English jam-jar. The Marias store here also dried rolls of tobacco leaves, coils of creeper and other ropes, and gourds of all shapes and sizes for making spoons, ladles and water-bottles; and when they used *moghi* dancing shields and peacock plumes attached to them they used to hang them under the eaves except when they wrapped them in leaves and hung them in the tops of trees.

342 The village dormitory, as has been said above, is generally in the centre and at one end of the village street. It is a long-house ● 513 made with no partitions, surrounded generally with a bamboo wattle-work fence; and it is practically a roofed *alpanji* or sleeping platform, the criss-cross bamboo framework of which covers almost the whole floor at a height of about 2½ feet above the floor. Often it is entered from in front by a door under the highest point of the eaves, to which access is gained by a narrow horizontal gangway of logs raised the same height above the ground as the sleeping platform and extending from the outer fence to the door; persons entering the dormitory climb on to the gangway by a rough stile, consisting of a tree stump set in the ground between two vertical posts which serve as railings. [374] The interior is badly grimed with smoke, as log fires are lit at night under the sleeping platform, the only door is fastened, and there is no window or vent for the escape of smoke. I have never found anything inside a dormitory except two or three drums and occasionally the shrine of the Village Mother.

The 'gotul-lon'

B. Bison-horn Maria Villages, Houses, and their Contents

361 Of Hill Maria villages the essential thing to remember is that they shift as the cultivation shifts, and so seldom remain more than four or five years in one place. The few villages that have good permanent rice fields tend now to become more or less permanent.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *ahki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc. If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orka*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to fire all the *penda* plots simultaneously, and the women take no part in this work. There is no public ceremony before the firing; but the *kasyeq-gaita* starts it for the whole village by firing the first bundle of dried brushwood in his own plot with a bundle of dried grass kindled from a glowing ember brought from his own house; he makes fire with a fire-saw only if no ember is available or if it has died on its way to the *penda*. At Handawada in May 1930, heavy rain fell, and so delayed the firing of the *penda* that the *kasyeq-gaita* and village elders went in deputation to the clan-god Verma Pen of the Gume clan at Toinar and promised to sacrifice a cock to him if he would stop the rain; he only received his cock after he had fulfilled the condition and it had been possible to fire the *penda*. The firing takes only three or four days if the wood is really dry.

241 477 Between firing and sowing there is only a short interval in which the villagers must work hard to prepare their fences and field houses. There are no fences between individual plots as a rule, these being marked off either by lines of *til* or roselle at sowing, as already explained, or by laying a few poles lengthwise along the edge of the plots; but there is a general fence around each block of plots, except where there is no risk of animals damaging the crops. A type of fencing found only around Orcha and the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*, known as *kokor* (crooked) *garpi*, is a zig-zag stockading of logs laid horizontally on each other, the sides of each projecting angle being fifteen or twenty feet long; it looks like a vast herringbone pattern climbing the hillside. Grass *tum* fences, made in the same way as the *tum* partitions of houses already described, are used where the need for protection from animals is less, and, where bamboo is very plentiful, bamboo wattle-work fences. Another type of substantial timber fence is the *welma* fence consisting of poles laid horizontally one on another, held in position between pairs of bamboo uprights driven into the ground, and tied together at intervals between the horizontal poles; the upright bamboos are generally the two halves of a thick bamboo split lengthwise. I have not noticed in the hill villages the stockades of sal piles driven into the ground which are common among the Murias of the north and are met in Bison-horn Maria villages also.

241 342 ● 513 The chief field-house is really a sleeping platform raised high above the level of the crops on wooden piles, similar to the field watchers' machan found throughout Central India, but far more elaborate; the space between the piles below the platform is walled round with bamboo wicker-work or *tum*, and there is a thick thatched roof. As in the dormitories, a fire is kept burning at night below the platform to warm those sleeping on it. Tools and weapons, and cooking pots and food, are kept in the room below the platform,

[374]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian wigwams, known as *panambaksha*. They may also erect big and small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

Sowing

From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory. Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-akk*). These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit kenjat! Miku har kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemasi mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyaq-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241

The people of Bastar are apt to use the Halbi word *kosra* as a generic term for all grains raised by *penda* cultivation. Strictly speaking, it applies only to *kutki*, *Panicum miliaceum*, which the Marias and Murias call *kohala*, to which they also give the same wider meaning as *kosra*. The early sown grains are called generically ' small *kosra* ', and those most sown are *Panicum frumentaceum*, known as *sawa* or *ghatka* or, to the Hill Marias, as *amu*, and *Panicum miliare*, known as *sika* or *chikma*, which seems also to be the grain known to the Hill Marias as *turya-kohala* ; others sown are *kodon* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) and *hikka*, a Hill Maria word which I have not been able to identify ; the Bison-horn Marias, and, to a much smaller extent, some Hill Marias, also sow much *haruna* or light mountain rice. All these are sown generally without any pulses, but cucumbers, marrows and gourds are sown early near the field-houses. *Panicum frumentaceum* and *Panicum miliare* ripen generally in time for their New Eating festivals to take place at the end of Hagh (July-August) ; the mountain rice and other early grains are reaped a little later, at the beginning of Eranj (August-September).

Crops

The second main sowing is of the later crops known collectively as ' big *kosra* ', chief of which is the true *kosra* or *kutki* (*Panicum miliaceum*), with which will be met *kodon*, *kang* (*Setaria italica*) and *bajra* (*Penicillaria spicata*). These are sown in Ha'i (June-July), to be harvested in Pa (November-December). No attempt is made to keep the different crops separate, and the confusion is made worse by broadcasting with them seeds of various pulses, especially *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus* ; Maria, *pupal*), *arhar* (*Cajanus indicus*), and *sem* (*Dolichos lablab* ; Maria, *jata*).

The third sowing is the ' *Os kosra* ' sowing of a second crop in August-September on the land from which the ' small *kosra* ' harvest has already been reaped. About a quarter of this is sown with ' *os kosra* ' millets, the remaining three-quarters being devoted to pulses, including not only varieties of the ' big *kosra* ' pulses, but also *mung* (*Phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (both *Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*). This crop is harvested in Pusi (December-January).

241
834
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The rains bring out a plentiful crop of shoots from the stumps of the trees felled for the *penda*, and before these get too big a day is appointed for all the villagers to cut and get rid of them. As soon as the ears form on the growing crops it is taboo for the men to have sexual intercourse or to sleep in the village. This taboo remains in force until the final combined New Urad and Koqsar festival, when it is held at the end of Pusi

After sowing

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949"
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 *Page* 86. Col. E. Clementi Smith, who commanded the detachment of troops which was sent to Bastar at the time of the 1910 rebellion, writes to me that in those days the Marias made arrow-heads of bone and porcupine quills as well as of iron. He adds, 'Another thing I remember was the dislike of a guide, when moving along jungle tracks, if one came to a cock's head stuck on a stick—the guide always said "one couldn't go there". The same objection also arose if one came to thin boughs bent over the track and intertwined. I need hardly say that we couldn't stop for these signs and one used to kick them out of the way—I think the guides expected the heavens to fall on us for such desecration. Another [436] thing I remember was that salt was more acceptable as payment than pice. We had a lot of our "enemy" enrolled as porters at one time. They hardly ever deserted. The sepoys liked them and I am always glad to know that we never caused any casualties among them.' For Col. Clementi Smith's account of the Bastar rebellion, see *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, pp. 240-53.

[513] *Page* 113, *line* 35. The real taboo is not so much on intercourse inside a house as on a bed. At Komhu I was told by the Hill Marias that 'no woman may sleep on a cot, for the village Pen is in it'. The Bison-horn Marias and even the Raj Gonds have the same rule. A wealthy Gond Zamindar is said to have made a platform of earth for his wife, as he would not allow her a bed.

Page 135, *line* 14. The Hill Marias do actually avoid their wives (how astonished the Baigas would be at the idea!) from the time when the *kosra* shoots appear until the threshing is over. They control themselves, they told me at Itulnar, 'by tying their cloth very tight'.

462 *Pages* 135-7. Though there is some division of labour between men and women, Bison-horn Maria women are much freer to share the work of men than are the women of many other tribes. They are allowed, for example, to plough—a thing strictly taboo to the Gonds of the Central Provinces. But they must not carry loads on a *kawar*-pole, for if they do Dongar Pen and the Rau will be offended and bring misfortune on them. They may reap a crop, but they must not tie it in bundles or lift it on to their heads with their own hands; a man must do it for them or there may be a scarcity the following year. Women may climb trees, but not near a house; they may fish, but not hunt. They may not winnow, but they can thresh with their feet (there is an illustration of this in *Maria Murder and Suicide*) and may beat out a *mandia* crop with long poles. Men, on the other hand, may not husk rice or clean it in a fan; they should not grind, nor should they carry pitchers

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*ketul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

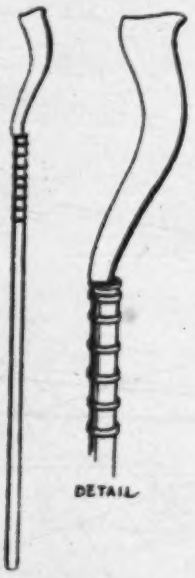

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brush-wood
Length 3' 9"

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchedar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

Round Kondagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

IV. The Clan-God

We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods' *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halba, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

then again at the usual time. At Palari, where the girls take the boys' *mausi*-mats home with them every morning and bring them in the evening, the first salutation is called *Mausi-johar*, for it is then they give the mats to their chelik.

In some ghotul, especially those where they do not massage every night, the two leading girls crack the boys' fingers as they go round.

Immediately after the Joharni, a girl distributes finely-powdered tobacco and sometimes a supply of leaf-pipes to the boys. The tobacco is taken from the ghotul store, to which all must contribute.

The motiari often go outside for a few minutes. The Belosa may now arrange how the massage is to be done and decide whether they will sleep in the ghotul that night and, if so, how they will pair off. When they are ready they come back into the ghotul and each girl goes straight to a boy to comb his hair and massage him. There does not seem to be any rule about this. A girl is not bound to massage her own ghotul partner, nor does the fact of massaging imply that the two will sleep together. In practice, however, the elder girls generally massage the elder boys.

In the Chota Dongar Pargana, the girls go to massage the chelik in the very place where they are going to sleep. Elsewhere they sit in a circle or grouped round the fire, sometimes scattered about the room. If the boy is asleep the motiari rouses him and makes him sit up; she sits or kneels behind him, very close, with her knees round his body. With her comb she begins to shake out and arrange the boy's hair.

The combs are small and it is often difficult to get them through the long unruly locks of the chelik. In Masora the method of combing was to tap the head rather roughly, then to twist the comb round, digging it into the skull; then the hair was pulled out and fretted and at last tied again into a bun. The digging in of the edge of the comb is known as *pitis pitis hiyāna*; it is intended to kill lice and clear away scurf.

In Pupgaon, the combing was much gentler, and was only done every three days. In Bandopal, the girls did not tap the head but twisted the comb through the hair and rubbed the scalp in a very soothing way. When we were at Binjhli they were not combing at all, and in Khutgaon after a dog had relieved itself on the leader's turban, the Siraha forbade the girls to touch the chelik's heads. But generally the combing is done in the way I have described. When a lot of girls are at it together, the clicking of the combs against a score of hard heads makes a remarkable noise, reminding me of a phrase by Roy Campbell:

> While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,
> Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

But this is not the end of the comb's work. The motiari now uses it to titillate the skin of the back and arms. She rubs the points of the comb very gently to and fro, up and down, over the back and then when she has massaged that, takes each arm in turn and runs the comb up and down the skin.

Now the massage begins. In many ghotul (in Binjhli, for example, and in Bandopal and Almer among many others) this is done with the oily waste of the mahua or karanji seed, and cleans as well as refreshes. In Gorma, in May when they burn *dahi*, they massage the whole body with karanji waste. 'For in the old days this is how Tallur Muttai used to massage Kadrengal.' In other ghotul and at other seasons the massage is done with the hands alone.

The motiari begins by passing her open hands gently over the back, rubs a little harder, presses back on the ball of the hand, pushes more and more vigorously and always upward till the chelik nearly falls forward on his face,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883 302

then rubs down more gently, soothes and quietens the whole body. If oil-seed is used, she rubs this off gradually and cleans the back by ever more gentle movements of the hands. Sometimes, as at Chandabera, the girl catches a boy's shoulder with one hand and rubs and pushes his back very vigorously with the other. In eastern Kondagaon the girls often stand beside the boy and rub the back downwards.

Then the girl takes the boy's left arm and places it over her shoulder, squatting back on her heels and pulling him towards her. The comb is again brought into play, and the skin is soothed by gentle stroking with the hand, before she begins a very vigorous massage of the arm, gripping it with both hands and pulling downwards, then moving the hands in opposite directions with a twisting motion. When a girl is wearing a large number of rings this can be painful. It is impossible to say that the movement of the massage is away from the heart or towards it; it moves in both directions. There is obviously no rule.

When the left arm is finished, the girl removes it from her shoulder, lays the hand in her lap and cracks the fingers one by one. Then she repeats the process for the right arm. In Koilibera the girl did not put the boy's arm on her shoulder but on the ground, and rubbed it up and down.

In some ghotul there now follows a very intimate form of massage. In Binjhli the girl kneels upright or stands behind the boy and bends over him putting her arms round his neck and massages the chest with downward thrusts of the hands, while the boy leans back against her body in great enjoyment. This generally excites ribald comment and cries of 'Catch hold of her breasts!' or 'How big are her breasts?' In Almer, the girl puts her hands under the boy's arms and rubs his chest and stomach. In Phulpar and Koilibera I saw a girl crack a boy's fingers by putting her arms round his neck from behind to catch his hands.

A few other variations may be noted. It is not uncommon for two girls to massage a boy together. One does the back while another massages the arms. In Binjhli and a few other ghotul the girls do not put the arms over their shoulders but in their laps; here too they begin with the arms and afterwards do the back and chest.

In many places it is taboo for the motiari to massage the boys' legs, and where Hill Maria influence is strong even after marriage a wife does not massage her husband's legs unless he is ill. But in the central area, in Gorma, Berma, Jogi Alwar, and doubtless elsewhere, and in Chargaon and Korkoti to the north, the girls massage the boys' legs every now and then, at Jogi Alwar every three days, at Berma every fifteen. The girl sits in front of the boy and rubs right up the leg almost to the groin.

When a girl has finished her massage, she often lays her hand on the boy's head or shoulder and says Johar.

In the majority of ghotul this is the daily programme, but sometimes the combing and massage is done less frequently. In Binjhli, it was once a week—on Fridays; in Pupgaon, the girls cracked the boys' fingers every day, combed their hair every three days and massaged once a week.

X883 513

It is now fairly late and boys and girls prepare for bed. In fine weather they may scatter about the compound and in the various huts; when it is cold or wet they seem to prefer crowding into the main ghotul building. The little boys and girls lie down in a long row, two boys, then a girl, a boy, two girls and so on. Boys without partners—and there are often fewer girls than boys—lie down two and two on their little mats. Those who have permanent or temporary partners lie down with them, side by side facing each other in

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

each other's arms on the sleeping-mat. They often have to lie very close together; sometimes two boys have one girl between them; many of the couples actually touch each other. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the compound.

In ghotul where the motiari always sleep in the ghotul, bedtime is a simple matter of routine. In places where they only stay on sometimes, they go singing to their own house or verandah. When they are not sure what to do, they stay on till the Sirdar says, 'Well, girls, are you going to sleep here or are you going home?' The Belosa answers, 'It's very late, I think we'd better stay here' or 'There's a tiger about, it's not safe to go'. The Sirdar says, 'Then go to your mats at once and don't keep us awake any longer'.

FIG. 77. Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel
Width 4½"

In Chandabera, the boys told me that the girls often said, 'Let's go home tonight' and ran away. But if a boy was anxious to sleep with his girl, he would ask the Kotwar to keep them and he always did.

FIG. 78. Comb with carved leopard
Width 5"

FIG. 79. The *Aswal-gota* or tortoise box
Height 4"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
513

When visitors come to the village, the girls usually do not go to the ghotul at all. In Karikhodra the chelik complained bitterly about the disruption of ghotul life that was caused by the continual presence of subordinate officials and merchants. During the busy seasons of the year the ghotul is practically closed, specially at the time when everyone is needed to sleep in the fields to guard the ripening crops. When the boys are in the fields, the girls often camp on the verandah of someone's house where they play, dance and sleep. During a marriage, also, the ghotul is normally closed and in some villages there is a rule that the members must sleep in their camp and not in the dormitory so long as the ceremony continues.

In the very early morning, the Belosa gets up and goes round the ghotul rousing her girls. They ought to be out of the ghotul before dawn. 'They leave early', said a boy in Markabera, 'because they come laughing from the arms of the chelik and feel shy about it.' I am told that in Kondagaon the girls remain later, until it is light, but in Narayanpur they leave at cock-crow. 'A girl should be hard at work husking or grinding grain before her parents are up.' The boys get up later, but it is considered improper for them to be seen sleeping in the ghotul after the village is up and about. Soon after the girls have gone, they too are up and, taking their mats with them, return to their houses and the duties of the day.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

These mats are kept at home and boys or girls bring them rolled up under their arms at night to the ghotul. In some villages this is the special duty of the girls. When they arrive they go round saluting the boys and presenting them with their mats. This is known as *Masni-johar*.

FIG. 96. The wooden ādā used for making a *masni*-mat
Length 2' 10"

The mat is very definitely a sexual symbol and many ribald jokes are connected with it. The new mat given to a bridegroom at his marriage is generally smeared with oil 'to make it slippery'. Once when I was sitting down in the village of Amgaon a chelik brought me a *masni* but an old man said, 'Don't sit on it, it is covered with semen', and everyone thought it very amusing. It is supposed to be a great honour to be given a mat by the chelik, probably just because it is a symbol of so much excitement and romance.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 With these cases we may compare the tragic destiny of
583 Dome, a young unmarried Dhurwa girl aged about seventeen. A youth called Joga had been living as her Lamhada for the past five years, and their marriage had been arranged to take place at the next harvest. Dome did not care for Joga, but like any other Maria girl she was prepared to follow her parents' wishes in regard to her marriage and become his wife.

[513] One night the girl found herself alone in her house. Joga was not supposed to sleep indoors, but outside in the courtyard. The girl went to bed and shut the door of her room. Late that night Joga went to her and asked her to have sexual intercourse with him. She refused, saying that, if she did, the gods would be angry with her and her cattle would die, and Joga went away. Fearing that the boy might ravish her, she got her axe and kept it by her side. Presently she fell sleep and again Joga came into the house and caught hold of her. She started up and struck him a violent blow with her axe, making a deep wound from which he died in a few minutes.

The Court held that Dome had acted according to her right of self-defence when she was unprotected in the house at dead of night. It is not known why Dome rejected her [834] future husband, for it is not really a very common habit among girls for whom Lamhada are serving. It is possible that she was in her menstrual period, a thought that is suggested by her saying that the gods would be angry and the cattle die if she had intercourse. On the other hand, it may merely be that she disliked the boy and did not wish to have anything to do with him until she had to after marriage.

Another Lamhada, who is now serving a sentence of life imprisonment in Jagdalpur, is Khuja, a Muria boy from Esalnar. He is a cheerful and rather stupid youth who, when he described his crime to me, laughed heartily at what he considered the amusing bits. Khuja was living with his father-in-law and though the girl was very young had already been married to her. One day a Ghasia beggar woman came to the house and said to him, 'Come along boy'. He asked her what she wanted him for, and she replied, 'For your wife's head'. A fortnight later she came again and complain-

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

080 42°. But he feels the cold, and at night, when walking, may be met
513 carrying a glowing ember held close to his navel for warmth, while
374 in camp he sleeps on the ground between two fires, and in house, field-hut or village dormitory sleeps generally on a platform of criss-crossed bamboos or creeper rope with a fire beneath it. He
513 has usually also a sleeping mat or *masni* (Halbi) made of a special grass, which is easily rolled up and carried about when he visits Jagdalpur or a touring officer's camp; or he may use instead of it his *taghali* or bark rain coat. He sleeps generally on his side with his head resting on his arm, the other arm resting on the ground in front with the elbow bent; and he will shift from side to side. It is *polo*, that is taboo, for a woman to sleep on a cot or platform, and she must sleep on the ground in her room in the house.

Bodily attitudes

The Bison-horn Maria has generally a cot to sleep on, and even his wife often has one. In such matters he is getting more and more like the ordinary Hindu villager.

516 For eating or social conversation or resting, the Hill Maria often sits with his buttocks on the ground and his knees drawn up, though he sometimes uses the familiar Indian squatting position, and his women usually squat in this way for mourning at funerals or singing at weddings. The men have also little wooden stools to
[352] sit on, or sit on a stone, as at the commensal feasts; while in the villages where there is the custom of the *gaita* or headman and the *kasyeq-gaita* or Village Mother priest sitting on an *uddamgarya* or seat of honour to preside over meetings of the elders, it is often a flat stone resting on stone legs, on which he sits in ordinary sitting posture. In any group of Hill Marias resting after a meal or on a march you will see almost every attitude that might be adopted by English schoolboys except lying prone on back or stomach. If standing, a favourite position of all the tribes in Bastar is to stand on one foot, the other knee being bent so that the sole of the foot may rest against the outer side of the standing leg, the arm on the same side as the bent knee catching hold of a bough or something for steadiness. Another favourite position is to stand with the left leg braced, the right slightly flexed so that the left hip is extended sideways; the left wrist or knuckles rest on this hip, while the right hand rests on the left shoulder, the right arm being bent at the elbow to look like a V over the chest; or else the right arm is hung loosely at the side, or held in that of the next youth. For fire-
[372] making, they kneel on their knees. They stand to urinate and squat to defecate.

● [514] The Bison-horn Maria uses mostly the same positions, but is more prone to imitate Hindu habits; he squats to urinate.*
*[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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514 The Hill Maria, unlike the Hindu, does not wash after defecation, but wipes himself with leaves. The plainsman is learning the 515 Hindu habit. Neither a Hill nor a Bison-horn village is ever as noisome as the average Hindu village of so 'advanced' a tract as the Maratha country of Nagpur or Berar, where at night the village streets are used as a public latrine and it is difficult to pass clean-shod in the morning. The Hill Maria generally retires into the jungle to ease himself, and the Bison-horn either does the same or uses the *bari* or vegetable garden at the back of his house.

356 A Hill Maria's house is really clean only for the first month or 361 two after it is made, and there is no regular re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung and mud. The interior is rapidly grimed with smoke and dust; and if the Maria has any article he wishes to keep clean he stores it up a tree or in his granary. But his house seldom has to last him more than four or five years, after which, his *penda* slope being exhausted, he and the other villagers move their houses to one of the alternative village sites, and his old house is ultimately burnt, either deliberately or as a matter of course in the annual firing of the forest grasses. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is now a dweller in permanent habitations, save for an occasional shift for superstitious reasons. His houses are therefore

^[See CA1.116 pp. 418-419. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

him. He has, however, to cook food for his wife. The latter during ordinary menstrual periods stays, in villages where there are menstrual rooms or private and not communal menstruation huts, on her side of the mud threshold and keeps there special water-pots and cooking pots; her husband brings food and water in the regular pots, and, standing on his non-taboo side of the mud threshold, pours their contents into the menstruation water and cooking pots. But as he may never touch the latter, he cannot use them for preparing food for his wife after child-birth, and so has to buy a special set of pots for cooking her food then, which are destroyed at the end of her period of seclusion. Nor is the husband permitted to enter the ordinary rooms of the house until the child's navel-cord has fallen off; he has to build a temporary room at the back of the house near the menstruation room or hut, and cook there. It is taboo for him to give any other person any fire from the hearth in this temporary kitchen. Breach of the taboos attaching to child-birth by either parent is believed to entail the wrath of the Village Mother. During the period of seclusion the mother is permitted to leave the room only to bury the placenta or to answer the call of nature. As it is taboo for her to pick or break anything growing during the period, she has before her delivery to lay in enough leaves for cleaning herself after defecation to last for the full period. She wears nothing but the *mudang* until the end of the period.

After the navel-cord has fallen off or at the end of the period of seclusion, the mother goes out at night to the river, immerses herself, and cleans her old loin-cloth and the cloth of her *mudang*. In the early morning she emerges wearing her loin-cloth and carrying her baby, which in most villages her husband then sees for the first time; around Handawada, however, he is allowed to see it in the menstruation room on the morning after it is born. The mother has to sprinkle every part of the house with water.

From birth to death there is no age ceremony of any kind, neither at birth, naming, weaning, ear-boring, hair-cutting, puberty, first shaving, nor on any other occasion. Normally the child gets no name until it is two or three years old, when its parents know its physique and something of its character. But there are three exceptions to this. When the child is brought out from the place where it was born at the end of the initial period of seclusion, it is examined for birth-marks; and if these are considered to be the same as those of a dead ancestor it is given that ancestor's name, or, if, for example, the child is a boy and has his father's mother's birth-marks, it gets her husband's name. Thus Usendi Moda, the headman of Orcha, was called after his dead grandfather because he had the same mole on his hip as he;

Naming

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

●514 For defecation, the Muria go into the fields or jungle. Their villages are always clean of human excreta; if a child relieves itself in the house, the mother immediately cleans the place and sprinkles ash over it. One of the instructions given by Lingo in the first ghotul was that the boys and girls should never relieve themselves on the paths. Moreover since they do not wash themselves with water after defecation, the banks of streams or rivers are usually clean—in striking contrast to the horrible condition of streams near many a more 'advanced' village.

[824] After defecation the Muria clean themselves with leaves, but they do not use siari, saja, char, sarai, tendu or karmata leaves for this. The saja is, of course, sacred; the tendu also is connected with Lingo. Sarai, karmata and siari leaves are used as leaf-plates.

A strict rule against urinating in the ghotul greatly helps to preserve its cleanliness and freshness. The rule is not, however, universal. In a few ghotul there are little holes in the wall down near the floor which are used as urinals. In others, though the children are not allowed to urinate inside the building, they may do so against the fence. Generally both boys and girls [524] stand to urinate—a fact which gives point to the riddle: 'Shoot the arrow with all your might, yet it still falls beneath your feet.'[1]

V. Tobacco

276 In many ghotul, the distribution of tobacco is an important part of the evening ritual. As the girls go round for Johar, the Belosa and her assistant ✕883 put a few pinches of finely-powdered tobacco into the chelik's hands. One of the boys has the special duty of seeing that there is a proper supply and that the girls prepare it daily.

The legendary origin of tobacco is described in a story from Kachora.

> Long ago a party of Muria went to visit the Maharaja during Dassera. On their way they came to a spot where a barren woman had been cremated. This woman had been very beautiful, but no one cared for her—for who goes to a withered tree for shelter from the sun? She complained to Nandraj and he said, 'Though they take no notice of you now, once you are dead they won't be able to get on without you.' So after her death, a beautiful plant sprung from her ashes.
>
> One of the party went to relieve himself and saw the plant. He picked a leaf and began to chew it. He found it sweet and distributed it to the others. On his way home, he went to get more leaves, but found the plant had dried. So he took the seeds and planted them in his garden. When the leaves were ready he chewed them and felt a little drunk. The feeling was so pleasant that whenever he had no leaves in his mouth he longed for them. This is why tobacco is called *surti* [after the Chhattisgarhi word *surta*, longing or remembrance].
>
> Every morning tobacco plants give off a sort of smoke because of the dew that settles on the leaves during the night. So the tobacco used in a leaf-pipe is called *dungya*, or smoke.[2]

The chelik, and still more their elders, suffer to the full this *surta*, or longing for tobacco, which they either chew or smoke in small tightly rolled leaf-

[1] The Muria ghotul is generally much less odorous than the Uraon dhumkuria I visited. A writer has described the inner room of the Ao Naga *morung* which is used as a urinal as 'emitting such an obnoxious smell that it makes even the second room unfit for entrance'.—S. N. Majumdar, 'The Ao Nagas', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 53.

[2] Cf. the Kond story on p. 308.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Cleanliness

It is generally asserted that all Marias are dirty, and object to washing. It is true that Maria women dancing late at night after lying on ground covered with the ashes of camp-fires, or men and women in the *penda* fields or after a long march, are dirty; and anyone who has tried to dress a Maria's wounds knows how dirt-encrusted they can be. Sleeping between fires, or over fires in an enclosed and low-roofed hut, does not promote cleanliness. But the real reason for the idea is the fact that the Hill Maria seldom washes his loin-cloth. On this, Russell and Hiralal say (III, p. 124):— 515

> 'In Bastar they seldom wash their clothes, as they think this impious, or else that the cloth would wear out too quickly if it were often washed. Here they set great store by their piece of cloth, and a woman will take it off before she cleans up her house, and do her work naked. It is probable that these wild Gonds, who could not weave, regarded the cloth as something miraculous and sacred, and, as already seen, the god Palo is a piece of cloth.'

This passage is all wrong. Palo is unknown to Maria or Muria Murias and Bison-horn Marias wash their clothes, and there are occasions when even a Hill Maria is bound to do so. He may not weave, himself, but he makes nets and baskets and twine, and always accepts the manufacturing processes of Kumhar potters, Kammar blacksmiths, Gharwa brass founders or Mahra weavers in a commonsense, rational way; he sees the work done quite often, and indeed there are many Marias who, in jail for homicide, have themselves become expert weavers of cloth or carpets. The reasoning processes of the savage are not unlike our own, and it is always safe to reject any such explanation as that he does not wash his cloth because he regards it as impious to wash something so sacred and miraculous, when there is available the commonsense economic explanation that he himself gives, that cloth costs money, of which he has never much, and that the oftener it is washed the sooner it wears out. So ordinarily, when a Hill Maria has his dip in a pool or river he takes off his filthy and inadequate loin-cloth and hangs it on a bush or rock while he washes his limbs, fastening it again all dirty on his clean body when he emerges. The women remove their loin-cloth, but not their *mudang*[1] and the cloth attached to it. Both husband and wife, however, must bathe in the morning after sexual intercourse and wash their loin-cloths; and a woman must invariably bathe and wash her loin-cloth, beating it out well on a stone, on leaving the menstruation hut or room at the end of her courses and of the four weeks following the birth of a child. Generally men and women wash or bathe every morning, and more often than not in the evening also. There are separate pools in [285 286] [833] [841 846]

[1] The *mudang* is explained below, under dress.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

● 515 the streams for the sexes, and they never bathe together. But the Hill Maria does not know the use of soap; occasionally his women follow the practice of the plains women and scour their hair with a plaster of black earth well rinsed out later. His nails are generally long and very dirty. The infant and the toddler are occasionally washed with water from a gourd. Where there is no stream near or water is scarce, the daily ablutions are often performed with water dipped from an earthen water-pot with a [415] gourd ladle, called *paghas* by the Hill Marias and *orka* in the plains, made from a gourd shaped like a large European smoking pipe; the straight stem is hollow and holed at the end; the stem is held near the bowl between the chin and collar-bone or shoulder and water tilted down from the bowl on to the body by dropping the other shoulder, while the hands rub the limb thus wetted. Needless to say, ablutions thus performed are not very effective.

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[see CA 1.116 MP. 418-419. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwaris or Forest-maidens, and on each

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria mother with her newly-born child at Maranda. Note the arrow driven into the ground where the placenta is buried, and the stone for bathing

[End Plate P]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

841 Nahani Deo. In some villages, however, the older women do not allow the girl to go to a stream or tank at all. They bring her water and let her bathe and wash her clothes on a stone in the compound.

We can understand how the rules affecting the menstruating motiari must be particularly strict when we remember that the ghotul is a shrine built by Lingo Pen, still sacred to him, and that the children within its walls are not only specially protected from marauding ghost or evil nightmare, but are also subject to the taboos and disciplines of *le monde sacré*. The girl therefore is forbidden for a period varying from four to seven days to enter the ghotul or even touch its fence. She must never, of course, touch a chelik at this time. If she did, they told us at Kajen, he would go mad. Even if her shadow fell on him while he was drinking, he would fall senseless to the ground. Should a girl go into the ghotul concealing her condition, the ashes of the ghotul fire would scatter in all directions and might continue to do so for two or three days, a sure sign that Lingo Pen is offended. When the culprit is discovered, she must offer a bottle of liquor to the insulted deity.

There is naturally considerable risk that a girl may begin her period during the night or evening while she is in the ghotul. A chelik in Munjmeta described what is done. 'She feels the warm blood, she shows it to her chelik and goes away at once.' 'Once', he said, 'his motiari did not realise what had happened and spent the night in the ghotul. When it was discovered in the morning, he himself was fined three long pieces of wood.'

The motiari is not, of course, allowed to go on the Diwali, Chherta and Mahua Dandar excursions while she is in this condition. If the period only begins after she has started out, she must make an offering to the local god and return home. Should any motiari begin her period at the moment when the chelik are about to start for their Pus Kolang dances, they abandon the trip. If during a boy's absence on this expedition his 'ghotul wife' should menstruate, he is warned of the fact by a dream and must make offerings to Lingo Pen. A chelik may go to the ghotul even while his special partner is in her period, but no one may take tobacco from him. The others tease him, saying, 'Don't worry, she'll be all right in two or three days. Perhaps you dug a little too deeply last night'.

If a girl is to be married, and her period begins on the eve of her marriage, this is postponed for a day; then she takes a bath and declares that officially all is well. Once when I went to Borgaon for a wedding, the bride entered her period on the critical day and the ceremony was postponed. On another occasion, when the omens did not come right, the people made a search through the wedding party to see if any relative was concealing this condition.

841 A girl does not bathe her whole body until the flow of blood ceases, but she does change and wash her pubic cloth, though she has to be very careful where
515 she puts it to dry for fear a witch should steal it. This cloth must never be touched by a man. It is either thrown away after every period or hidden
291 in a safe place outside the house. Along the banks of the Boroda river near Temrugaon I noticed many earthen pots, some floating in a backwater, others hidden in bushes. These were the pots in which the menstrual cloths were boiled to get them clean.

841 At the end of the period the girl goes as secretly as possible to a stream for her bath. She must be careful not to meet any man on this day, for should
515 his shadow fall upon her, her first child will resemble him. In some villages the girl must take two baths, in others she must take three. After the first bath she cleans and cow-dungs the room where she will sleep, washes all her clothes and sprinkles oil and haldi in the house and on her body. She then

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

841 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following
●515 day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria
[842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?' In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their
[833] lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O
841 Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were
522 tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In
841 Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the
787 blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached
841 to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendra-
776 wandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Bison-Horn Maria

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Hirmo, a Bison-horn Maria girl washing her hands

Plate LIV

Bison-horn Maria dancers

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

then again at the usual time. At Palari, where the girls take the boys' *massi*-mats home with them every morning and bring them in the evening, the first salutation is called *Massi-johar*, for it is then they give the mats to their chelik.

In some ghotul, especially those where they do not massage every night, the two leading girls crack the boys' fingers as they go round.

Immediately after the Joharni, a girl distributes finely-powdered tobacco and sometimes a supply of leaf-pipes to the boys. The tobacco is taken from the ghotul store, to which all must contribute.

The motiari often go outside for a few minutes. The Belosa may now arrange how the massage is to be done and decide whether they will sleep in the ghotul that night and, if so, how they will pair off. When they are ready they come back into the ghotul and each girl goes straight to a boy to comb his hair and massage him. There does not seem to be any rule about this. A girl is not bound to massage her own ghotul partner, nor does the fact of massaging imply that the two will sleep together. In practice, however, the elder girls generally massage the elder boys.

In the Chota Dongar Pargana, the girls go to massage the chelik in the very place where they are going to sleep. Elsewhere they sit in a circle or grouped round the fire, sometimes scattered about the room. If the boy is asleep the motiari rouses him and makes him sit up; she sits or kneels behind him, very close, with her knees round his body. With her comb she begins to shake out and arrange the boy's hair.

The combs are small and it is often difficult to get them through the long unruly locks of the chelik. In Masora the method of combing was to tap the head rather roughly, then to twist the comb round, digging it into the skull; then the hair was pulled out and fretted and at last tied again into a bun. The digging in of the edge of the comb is known as *pitis pilis kiyāna*; it is intended to kill lice and clear away scurf.

In Pupgaon, the combing was much gentler, and was only done every three days. In Bandopal, the girls did not tap the head but twisted the comb through the hair and rubbed the scalp in a very soothing way. When we were at Binjhli they were not combing at all, and in Khutgaon after a dog had relieved itself on the leader's turban, the Siraha forbade the girls to touch the chelik's heads. But generally the combing is done in the way I have described. When a lot of girls are at it together, the clicking of the combs against a score of hard heads makes a remarkable noise, reminding me of a phrase by Roy Campbell:

> While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,
> Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

But this is not the end of the comb's work. The motiari now uses it to titillate the skin of the back and arms. She rubs the points of the comb very gently to and fro, up and down, over the back and then when she has massaged that, takes each arm in turn and runs the comb up and down the skin.

Now the massage begins. In many ghotul (in Binjhli, for example, and in Bandopal and Almer among many others) this is done with the oily waste of the mahua or karanji seed, and cleans as well as refreshes. In Gorma, in May when they burn *dahi*, they massage the whole body with karanji waste. 'For in the old days this is how Tallur Muttai used to massage Kadrengal.' In other ghotul and at other seasons the massage is done with the hands alone.

The motiari begins by passing her open hands gently over the back, rubs a little harder, presses back on the ball of the hand, pushes more and more vigorously and always upward till the chelik nearly falls forward on his face,

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

301 The cowrie belt is almost unknown, but the chelik carry strings of cowries, bells, beads and tobacco-pouches at the waist.

In this area, the girls have either floppy brass *pairi* slipping down over the heels, or the thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the ankles.

Finally, in the extreme east of Kondagaon, the chelik recapture something of the aesthetic attractiveness of the Jhoria. Once more elaborate necklaces of small red and blue beads appear; a head-band of cowries and black sago palm fibre is often worn (Fig. 89). The chelik's turban is specially attractive:
291 it is tied straight round into a box with one flap hanging over the top, the other falling behind. The boys themselves attach pretty fringes of pink, mauve and red tassels to these flaps.

For protection against rain, all the Muria make large round hats of leaves placed between a double bamboo framework, and long shields of the same material to hang from their shoulders. In a few villages near the Abujhmar they make the *tarali*-cloak of strips of retted bark characteristic of the Hill Maria.

II. Hair-dressing

302 The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria.
832 You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive.

Care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render
302 to a chelik; it is during the hair-combing in the evening that friendships become
● 515 intimate and proposals are made; wherever she is, in camp for a marriage or festival, resting in the heat of the day while working on the roads, or just
524 sitting in the house, a girl takes any chance she can of cleaning a boy's head, and examining it for lice, 'the thousand babies housed in a dry tree', 'the black cows that live in the thick forest, bothering everyone and drinking red water', 'the tigers that breed so quickly in the jungle'. She catches them with the end of her comb, or with her fingers, and kills them with thumb and forefinger. 'Ten went to hunt', says the riddle, 'but two did the killing.'

302 The chelik keep their hair fairly long. A straight fringe is cut across the forehead, and from the parting above it the hair is brushed back and tied in a bun usually covered by the turban. Some of the Muria living under the shadow of the Abujhmar follow the Hill Maria custom of shaving the whole head except for a patch on the crown which is carefully combed back and tied in a knot.

The chelik cut and trim their hair once every month or so, when the motiari who comb it tell them to. They cut and shave each other's heads with small razors made by the village Lohar. The motiari keep their boys closely shaven as to their chins, but they seem to like a good moustache. There is no other reason for shaving: the Muria, except those who have begun to imitate Hindu customs, do not shave at funerals or other religious occasions.

Girls do not cut their hair. They part it down the centre, and very carefully smooth it down and back. Behind the head they wind it over the small wooden blocks called *hunjar balla* (Fig. 91) which are carved for them by the chelik, and tuck it in underneath, fixing it in place with the *hunjar hoio*, beautifully made wooden pins (Fig. 90)—also the gifts of chelik—to which are often attached bunches of cowries, coloured wool or strings of beads.

Both boys and girls treat their hair with oil, generally oil specially expressed by a motiari, a mother or sister. Many Muria now carry little bazaar mirrors which they constantly use.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

In some villages of the Bomra Pargana, if a comb falls down, it must be left where it is for a whole day. No one else may pick it up, and the owner should say nothing to anybody.

FIG. 90. Wooden hair-pins from the Jhoria area
Longest pin 4¼"
(*See p. 386*)

In most places, there is a rule that when a motiari marries she should remove her combs within a certain time. Naturally if she has a dozen or more in her hair, the presents of a ghotul lover, it is only proper for her to return them to him when she marries someone else. But suppose it was her own husband who gave them to her, or another girl? Then she continues to wear them. It is not safe to say that a girl with combs is a motiari, one without combs a wife. I have seen women with three children wearing them. But usually the smart silvered ones are removed within a year of marriage.[1]

IV. CLEANLINESS

The Muria are, on the whole, a clean and tidy people. The chelik and motiari especially are devoted to their toilet, wash their clothes frequently,

[1] The Lakher and Lushai share the Muria objection to other people using their combs. 'They fear that if a man who is subject to headaches or who has a vampire soul uses another's comb', the owner may suffer in the same way.—Parry, op. cit., p. 34.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

515 bathe daily, and keep their hair in beautiful condition. They have to—they are always on duty.

Both boys and girls bathe naked. A party of motiari goes to a stream, and when they are sure they are alone, they remove their little wraps and plunge into the water. They rub their limbs and bodies with mud, shake out their hair, rub in handfuls of mud, rinse it again and again. They have nothing corresponding to towels, so they sit in the sun to dry.

If, however, they have to bathe in some more public place such as a well or tank, they first wash legs, arms and face. Then the girl removes the upper covering of her body and tucks it between her legs or wraps it round her waist, and washes back and breasts in a way that does not wet her cloth.

Chelik usually bathe naked, even when there are other people about.

For washing at home, there are often hollowed-out trunks set up on a couple of supports with a run-away out through the wall of the house to some favourite tree such as a sago palm. A wife pours water over her husband's hands and feet, and often over his whole body. A common method of washing is to fill a long-handled gourd with water, tuck it under the chin and tip out the water over the hands which are thus free to be rubbed together.

There are gaps in the general tradition of cleanliness. No one seems to think it necessary to bathe after sexual intercourse. For the chelik and motiari this would, of course, compel them to admit that they had had it. The following lines are sarcastic: they are a fragment of a taunt song used during a marriage.

> Your son is bathing in water,
> At the hour of Raja Karan.[1]
> Your daughter is bathing in water,
> When intercourse is over.

The Muria do not usually wash their hands before food, though they do sometimes. They do not wash after defecation. Old women are often very dirty, as well they might be considering the hard toil that is put upon them. It takes time to go down to a stream to bathe; it needs strength and energy to bring water for a bath; an old widow rarely has either. And so we have many sayings from unsympathetic neighbours scorning these poor and simple people. 'A Muria woman never husks more rice than for a single meal and never covers her bottom which is always thick with dirt.' 'A Muria may be rich as a Raja, but he will always be dirty as a pig.'

Such dirt as there is may usually be traced to poverty, a poverty not infrequently due to the exactions and exploitation of the Muria's critics. It is true that both men and women dirty their buttocks by sitting on the ground—they tuck up their scanty clothes to save them from being worn out. So too if the cloth is dirty, it is because frequent washing will shorten its life—and then who will provide another? The well-to-do Indian or European critic, with servants to bring him water for his hands before a meal, does not always remember that when you have to bring water from a distant stream with your own hands, you tend to use it with more economy.

Yet in spite of poverty, in spite of a generally indifferent water-supply, in spite of a complete lack of toilet accessories (how many English women would keep as smart and fresh as a motiari without one of those aids to nature on which they so greatly rely?), the Muria keep themselves and their houses clean and pleasant enough.

[1] Raja Karan is a legendary king who had a passion for cleanliness.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

almost roughly, it grows gentler and gentler until at last the girl's hands are moving caressingly, tenderly over the arms and bodies of their boys, rousing affection and stirring with every gesture new desire.

The use of the comb to titillate the skin has a similar effect: Muria boys and girls are susceptible to tickling, which has been described as 'the most intellectual mode of touch sensation and that with the closest connexion with the sexual sphere'. As the motiari dresses her chelik's hair and with her comb gently tickles and stimulates his back and arms, he responds by fondling her breast, by stroking her legs (which are usually placed round his body; as she massages, the girl often grips the boy's waist between her knees) or by boldly tickling her. Certain types of massage are specially exciting. The girl stands above the boy, bending over him, and rubs downwards, passing her hands over the stomach down to the specifically erogenous region which thus receives a powerful tonic; sometimes she massages the legs, pushing her hands right up to the groin.

It is curious that with all this, the kiss as a means of sensory excitement is but little used.[1] It is not unknown—far from it—but it is something that goes in fashions; a ghotul discovers it, as at More Berma, and then everybody kisses. But even then the kiss does not appear to be on the lips, nor does the tongue play any part; for the Muria the kiss is a highly concentrated form of massage with the lips upon the skin. Boys kiss the face and breasts; I have never heard of *fellatio* being practised, but it may be—the description of it causes no offence.

After touch, smell is a powerful stimulant. Charming is the freshness of the open hill and forest, but more charming still, say the chelik, is the smell of perspiration, oil, wet earth, a suggestion of urine, all tempered by the bitter-sweet wood-smoke, which is regarded as the peculiar aroma of the ghotul.[2] The ghotul smell is unforgettable; it is not unpleasant even to a stranger's nostrils; and boys have told me that they have found it a strong sexual stimulant. 'The smell of the wood-smoke in a girl's hair, how exciting it is!' exclaimed a chelik at Markabera. So is the smell of the cow-shed clinging to boy or girl, a clean healthy smell with good associations. At Temrugaon the boys loved the scent of the marigolds that the motiari put in their hair and declared them to be their favourite flower.

No artificial scents are used, and this means that both boys and girls have to be very careful about bodily cleanliness; an unpleasant vaginal odour is mentioned as specially inhibiting to desire; there is a saying—*muh sundri gänd gandri*—however beautiful the face, if a girl has a dirty body, she will not be admired.

But 'the most usual method of attaining tumescence', says Havelock Ellis, 'a method found among the most various kinds of animals, from insects and birds to man—is some form of the dance'.[3] 'It is everywhere the instinctive object of the male, who is very rarely passive in the process of courtship, to assure by his activity in display, his energy or skill or beauty, both his own

[1] It is a commonplace of anthropology that primitive peoples do not kiss; I have always wondered how investigators can be so sure of this. The ordinary word in Gondi is *buriyäna*, 'to kiss' Trench says that the word as used in Betul—*burrdna*—means 'to kiss, of humans, to nose, of dogs'. Ward gives *nahilia* as a Gondi word for kiss used in the Mandla District (*nähäna* means 'to lick'). I also found the Muria using a word *lovandi*, which was said to mean 'kiss', but I am doubtful about this.

[2] The Uraon *dhumburia* have a quite different smell, in which the odour of urine is much more prominent. The Bison-horn Maria again have a strong, and rather attractive, smell, not unlike the Savara but quite distinct from the Muria.

[3] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 53.

OTHER RECREATIONS

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43. The basket broke and out came the tiger.
A pig excretes.
44. A Lamana woman goes along throwing parched rice on the path
A she-goat excretes.
45. The dish comes from a Raja's house; touch it and you swell.
Fire.
46. On the dry tree blossoms a flower.
Fire.
47. A small boy pulling hard puts on his dhoti.
A man winds rope into a grain-bin.
48. The sacrificed goat drinks water.
Hemp.
49. Lick quickly and fall down.
Broom.
50. Pick up the bundle and it talks.
Broom.
51. Nobody knows the noise of its beating *pat-pat.*
Eyebrow.
52. If anything is thrown in the two tanks, they overflow.
Eyes.
53. Even little fish can't get into this shining tank.
The eye.
54. A new plough, a new yoke, a new field yields a crow.
A new daughter-in-law.
55. It is hard to pick up, but you can throw it away with your left hand.
Ashes from the hearth.
56. A chelik uses up a whole cart-load of toilet-twigs.
The hearth.
57. At the time of yoking—one:
At time of loosing—two.
Toilet-twig used to clean the teeth, which usually splits after use. [575]
58. Five men are ploughing the fields and ten men are collecting the earth with a harrow.
A twig for cleaning the teeth. (Five men means five fingers and ten men means fingers of both the hands.)
59. The hornless bullock grows a horn.
Moon.
60. It always turns up punctually.
Sun.
61. Four are cold, four are hot, four are wet. The deer has twelve toes: each grazes by itself.
The year.
62. The black cock gathers it; the white cock spreads it out to dry.
Night and day.
63. In the stream sits a decorated bird.
Money in a string-bag.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. [551] Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. [164] The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

● [516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 439 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets [462] made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhaurai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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A HILL MARIA, OF THE GOND TYPE
Usendi Muka of Orcha

GROUP OF HILL MARIA GIRLS
(Photograph by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.)

[facing p. 62]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

080 42°. But he feels the cold, and at night, when walking, may be met
513 carrying a glowing ember held close to his navel for warmth, while
374 in camp he sleeps on the ground between two fires, and in house, field-hut or village dormitory sleeps generally on a platform of criss-crossed bamboos or creeper rope with a fire beneath it. He
513 has usually also a sleeping mat or *masni* (Halbi) made of a special grass, which is easily rolled up and carried about when he visits Jagdalpur or a touring officer's camp; or he may use instead of it his *taghali* or bark rain coat. He sleeps generally on his side with his head resting on his arm, the other arm resting on the ground in front with the elbow bent; and he will shift from side to side. It is *polo*, that is taboo, for a woman to sleep on a cot or platform, and she must sleep on the ground in her room in the house.

Bodily attitudes

The Bison-horn Maria has generally a cot to sleep on, and even his wife often has one. In such matters he is getting more and more like the ordinary Hindu villager.

●516 For eating or social conversation or resting, the Hill Maria often sits with his buttocks on the ground and his knees drawn up, though he sometimes uses the familiar Indian squatting position, and his women usually squat in this way for mourning at funerals or singing at weddings. The men have also little wooden stools to
[352] sit on, or sit on a stone, as at the commensal feasts; while in the villages where there is the custom of the *gaita* or headman and the *kasyeq-gaita* or Village Mother priest sitting on an *uddamgarya* or seat of honour to preside over meetings of the elders, it is often a flat stone resting on stone legs, on which he sits in ordinary sitting posture. In any group of Hill Marias resting after a meal or on a march you will see almost every attitude that might be adopted by English schoolboys except lying prone on back or stomach. If standing, a favourite position of all the tribes in Bastar is to stand on one foot, the other knee being bent so that the sole of the foot may rest against the outer side of the standing leg, the arm on the same side as the bent knee catching hold of a bough or something for steadiness. Another favourite position is to stand with the left leg braced, the right slightly flexed so that the left hip is extended sideways; the left wrist or knuckles rest on this hip, while the right hand rests on the left shoulder, the right arm being bent at the elbow to look like a V over the chest; or else the right arm is hung
[372] loosely at the side, or held in that of the next youth. For fire-making, they kneel on their knees. They stand to urinate and squat to defecate.

[514] The Bison-horn Maria uses mostly the same positions, but is more prone to imitate Hindu habits; he squats to urinate.*

*[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

HILL MARIA *PANCHAYAT*, ITULNAR
showing religious and secular headmen seated on stone udam-garya seats

[*face p.* 290]

[facing P. 290]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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Bison-horn Maria girl of Mokhpal

[End Plate 6]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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[Verrier Elwin

Marvi Bhima and Muchaki Kondi making leaf-cups at Borgum

[End Plate I]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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After the Census, the Marias took the house-numbering boards outside their villages and sacrificed pigs to them in order to avert the danger of numbering the people

[End Plate Y]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Hill Maria youth playing a reed-flute

[End Plate ZD]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Good AW32
Muria

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The chiefs are amused

[Frontispiece]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate IV

142
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A Muria of Nayanar greets his friends before drinking mahua juice

Plate XIII

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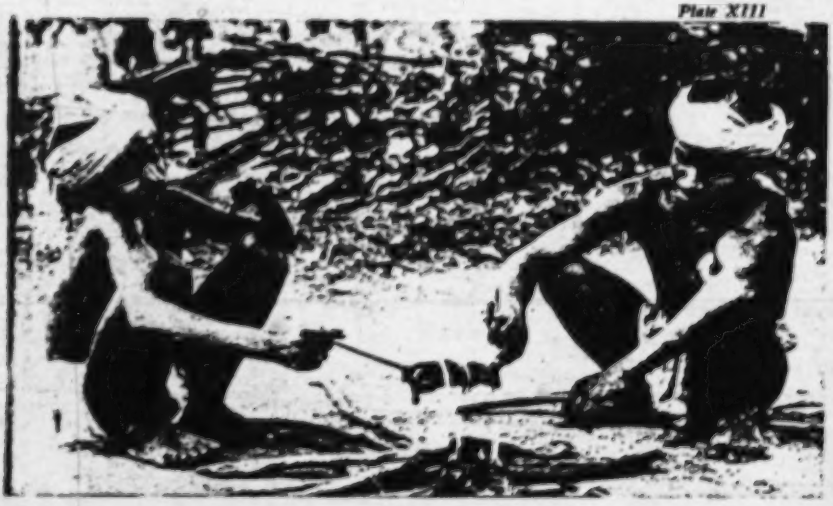

Ghetik of Mandra roasting a rat

A porcupine trap near Lohatar

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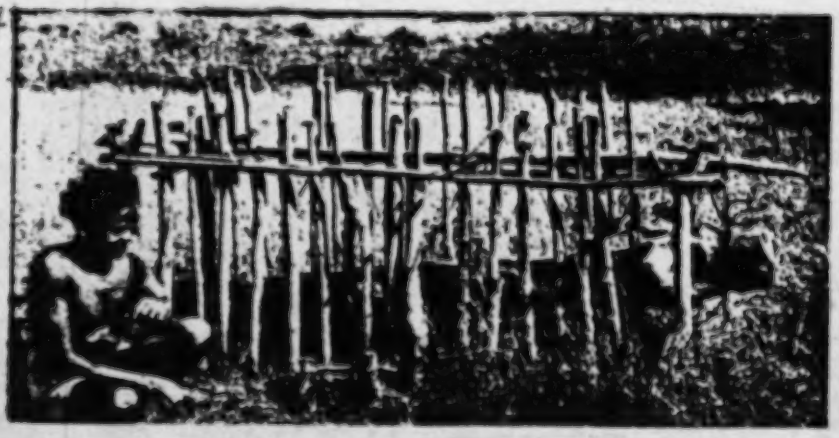

[p. 52(N)]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883 517 They come one by one, carrying their sleeping-mats and perhaps their drums. The little boys bring their daily 'tribute' of wood, 'clock in' by showing it to the official responsible and throw it in a corner. The elder boys gather round the fire; one takes a half-smoked leaf-pipe from his turban and ignites it by placing a bit of glowing wood in the cup, another plays a few notes on his flute, a third spreads his mat and lies down. The Kotwar inspects the buildings to see if the girls have done their work properly. The Sirdar comes in tired and calls a youngster to massage his legs. Gradually all the boys assemble.

At the same time the motiari are collecting near by, in someone's house, or just round the corner; at Binjhli and other villages where there is a special girls' house they gather there laughing and chatting generally, I was told, about the day's encounters with the chelik. If a group of girls have to come some distance, as from another hamlet, they often sing on the way.

Then at last the girls come in, with a rush, all together and gather round their own fire. After a while they scatter, some sitting with the boys, others singing in a corner, some lying down. Nearly always there are boys and girls who are tired after the long day's work at home, and these lie down at once in a corner or in one of the smaller huts—to lie flat on the face with head buried in the arms is a popular ghotul attitude when one is alone. [516]

The others occupy the time in pleasant harmony; sometimes they dance for an hour or two; the smaller children play rampageous games; sometimes they just sit round the fire and talk; in the hot weather on a moonlit night you will see them scattered all about the compound. Often they sing lying down, two by two, chelik with motiari, or in little groups. A boy tells a story; they ask riddles; they report on the affairs of the day; there may be a ghotul trial; they plan a dancing expedition or allot duties at a wedding. I shall never forget the sight in some of the larger ghotul of 60 or 70 youngsters thus engaged.

[533] Among songs, the most popular are the taunt songs which boys and girls sing against each other, especially those with proper names that can be changed to suit the occasion. Everybody in turn is paired off, often with forbidden relatives; one after another they are caught in compromising situations; they are engaged, married and divorced, re-married.

Songs

X883 539

I

Re re la rela re re la rela re re la

Korka ta dōyo oiki helo tiloka.	O my little sister Tiloka, take the cow out of the cow-shed.
Tāna osi bāra kiyākān dāda silledār?	Why should I take the cow from the shed, O brother Silledar?
Mehwāl kopāl lewa bāra kiyākān?	There is no grazier, Kopa, why should I take it?
Bāra na dōye oiki helo tiloka?	O little sister Tiloka, what do you want?
Guda ta gino oiki helo tiloka.	Take the pig from its sty, Tiloka.
Tāna bāra kiyākān dāda silledār?	Why should I take the pig from its sty, O brother Silledar?
Konār ta hor oiki helo tiloka.	O little sister Tiloka, take the hen from inside the house.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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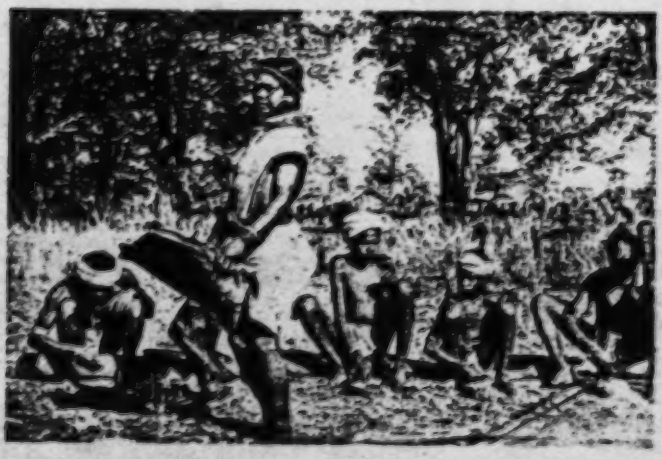
At Kongera a motiari passes on her drink to a chelik

Motiari serving food to the chelik at Nayanar



3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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A Siraha treats his patient at Tikanpal; medical treatment led to several murders.

[facing p. iii]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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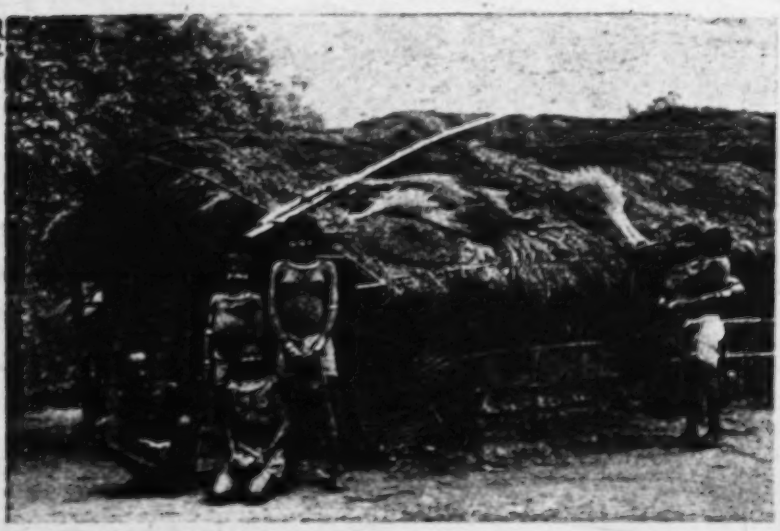

Oyami Masa with family on the scene of the death of the younger wife

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Oyami Masa with his surviving wife

[Facing p. 15]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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A girl cleans grain in a field at Garmiri; failure in preparing food is sometimes a cause of tragedy

[facing p.20]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32 ·
Bison Horn Maria

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Bandi of Mokhpal: the typical Maria wife

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Habka Mara, jealous of his wife

[Facing p. 81]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Girl cleaning grain at Tikanpal before a decorated door

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Hinga, a Maria girl of Rewali

[facing p. 28]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Girl with basket at Marenda

Girls breaking pods at Khutepal

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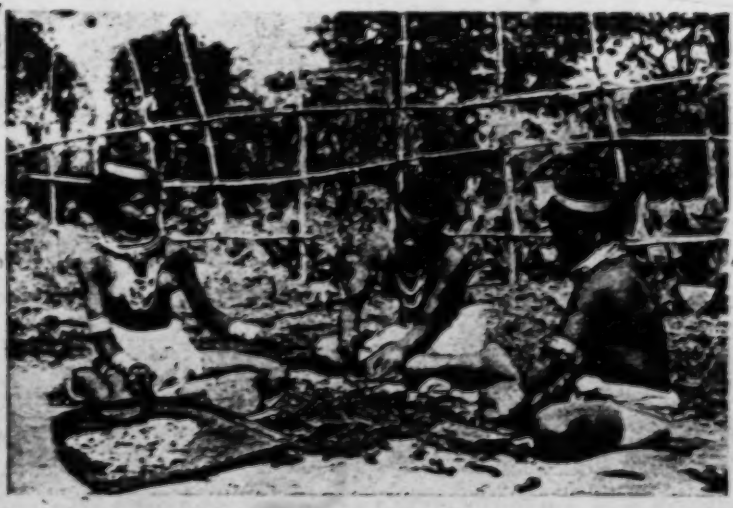

[facing p. 29]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Hill Maria

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Youth with Hill Maria dancing-dress

Markami Marka wearing head-dress

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Boys preparing head-dress

[Facing p. 80]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

695 There was a disputed boundary between the village of Kurmer in the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* and the adjacent Kutru Mar village of Jatalur; the Jata clan asserted possession over a strip of land belonging to the Parllo clan of Kurmer. I suggested, on the strength of a tale I had heard of former Chiefs' methods of justice, that the head of each village should come with a cock to the land, and that the land should go to the clan whose cock crowed first. This was hailed by both sides as a sound solution, and off we went to the land; but just before we reached it the Jata headman began to hang back, and finally backed out of the test; I awarded the land to the Parllo clan to the approval of men present from other clans, and on going over the land found that it contained a *pagh'ai* or alternative village site of the Parllo clan besides the cromlech left to mark the site of the Village Mother's 'temple', the *kasyeq-gaita's udam-garia* or seat of honour, and the *kotokal* or line of menhirs erected in the name of the Parllo dead. Here the Jata clan finally abandoned their claim when challenged by the Parllo *kasyeq-gaita* to eat earth from under the Village Mother's cromlech.

181 To be left to live the free life of the hills, untrammelled by restrictions on his user of forest, earth and water or his right to shift his village and his *penda* cultivation, is the unconscious ideal of the Hill Maria. If he is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls; and few of them or of the wilder Bison-horn Marias survive long imprisonment.

517 [822] The Hill Maria shows great artistry in his bead-work, and is never at fault in his discrimination between colours and shades, though he uses for all shades of green and blue the one word *kaqarondla*. He has general terms also for red, white, black and yellow, but none for intermediate shades. In his houses he draws 532 rude cup-marking patterns, *swastikas* and strange creatures in white earth on his mud plaster, or makes rough clay representations of women's breasts. His songs are low and rather melancholic in 533 sound, the youths' voices verging on contralto; but they are far easier for an English ear to understand than Hindu music, and have often a haunting refrain. Both he and the Bison-horn Maria love to hear European records on a gramophone, especially a good soprano or contralto, sea shanties, and violins or trios and quartets playing light chamber music; but operatic fireworks merely provoke laughter, Chaliapin singing the 'Song of Prince Igor' making them [534] ache with laughter, but being often encored. The Marias as a whole have no musical instruments except drums. Though the 517 Bison-horn Maria does not show the Hill Maria's artistry and 153

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

colour sense in bead-work, it is noticeable that the best carpet weavers in Jagdalpur Jail are almost invariably Bison-horn Marias. They are quick to grasp intricacies of pattern, and there is hardly any pattern that they cannot copy. For years the chief instructor in the jail was the double murderer from Palnar already mentioned in this chapter.

The Marias of both kinds are very hospitable. On entering a Hill Maria village you are met by the elders and offered little gifts, an uncouth yam, or dried tobacco leaves and forest fruits. The whole village co-operates to get your camp ready, and to entertain you at night with song and dance. The occasional stranger from other Koitor villages or minor State official is housed and fed, provided he does not outstay his welcome or attempt to be exacting in his demands. Co-operation, in service to the State, in village festivals, in felling of forest for *penda* cultivation, in allotment of *penda* areas, in sowing, reaping, winnowing and storing of grain, in fishing and hunting, is the key to the social life of the Hill Maria, who is a natural communist; his hospitality is perhaps mainly an expression of his ingrained co-operation, though he is genuinely glad to see you after a long absence, and will greet you with tears of joy. The Bison-horn Maria is more of an individualist, or, rather, less of a communist, than the hill man, but he likes to entertain for a wedding or to celebrate the completion of a new *munda* (small rice irrigation tank) and similar occasions on a lavish scale, keeping open house. All Marias are extremely grateful for any benefit received and for sympathy and interest.

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AN EVENING IN THE GHOTUL

883 X
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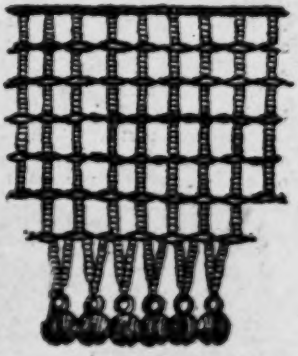
THE ghotul is very literally a night-club; it is only in the evening that there is 'a noise in the belly of the elephant'; during the day, except on festivals, it is deserted. The real life of the ghotul is in the firelight.

The conventions and routine of a ghotul evening are almost everywhere the same. I have spent a hundred evenings in all parts of the Muria area with the chelik and motiari and have found, on the whole, a remarkable similarity of custom. The Muria explain this by saying that all ghotul have developed from the first house at Semurgaon where Lingo himself prescribed the routine that should be followed.

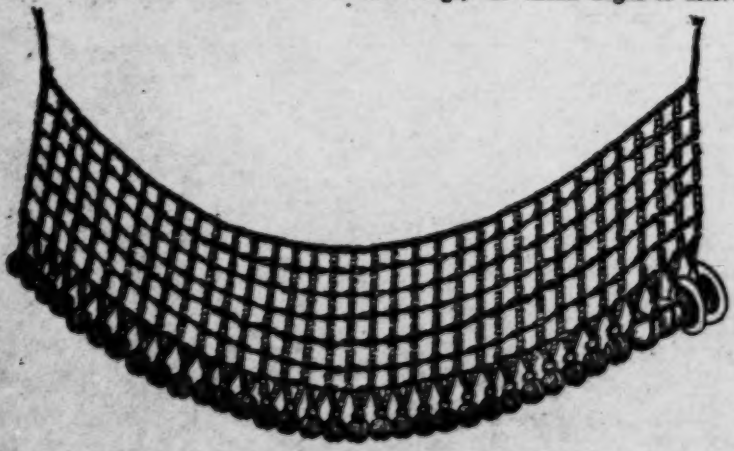


DETAIL

[301]

In the afternoon, motiari come to sweep, clean and cow-dung the buildings and court-yard. Their grass brooms are soon raising clouds of dust; rubbish is collected in basket or winnowing-fan and thrown away; cow-dung mixed with water is spread by hand over the floor. At sunset, someone often comes to arrange and light the fire; where there are no matches to light your pipe or lanterns to show you your way about, a fire serves more purposes than warmth and is needed even in the hot weather.

At any time after supper, it may be from 7.30 up to 9 p.m. according to the season and the circumstances of the village, the chelik begin to arrive.



[301]

FIG. 66. Bead belt with bells and cowries from Remawand. The beads are blue and white

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 S17 They come one by one, carrying their sleeping-mats and perhaps their drums. The little boys bring their daily 'tribute' of wood, 'clock in' by showing it to the official responsible and throw it in a corner. The elder boys gather round the fire; one takes a half-smoked leaf-pipe from his turban and ignites it by placing a bit of glowing wood in the cup, another plays a few notes on his flute, a third spreads his mat and lies down. The Kotwar inspects the buildings to see if the girls have done their work properly. The Sirdar comes in tired and calls a youngster to massage his legs. Gradually all the boys assemble.

At the same time the motiari are collecting near by, in someone's house, or just round the corner; at Binjhli and other villages where there is a special girls' house they gather there laughing and chatting generally, I was told, about the day's encounters with the chelik. If a group of girls have to come some distance, as from another hamlet, they often sing on the way.

Then at last the girls come in, with a rush, all together and gather round their own fire. After a while they scatter, some sitting with the boys, others singing in a corner, some lying down. Nearly always there are boys and girls who are tired after the long day's work at home, and these lie down at once in a corner or in one of the smaller huts—to lie flat on the face with head buried in the arms is a popular ghotul attitude when one is alone. [516]

The others occupy the time in pleasant harmony; sometimes they dance for an hour or two; the smaller children play rampageous games; sometimes they just sit round the fire and talk; in the hot weather on a moonlit night you will see them scattered all about the compound. Often they sing lying down, two by two, chelik with motiari, or in little groups. A boy tells a story; they ask riddles; they report on the affairs of the day; there may be a ghotul trial; they plan a dancing expedition or allot duties at a wedding. I shall never forget the sight in some of the larger ghotul of 60 or 70 youngsters thus engaged.

Among songs, the most popular are the taunt songs which boys and girls sing against each other, especially those with proper names that can be changed to suit the occasion. Everybody in turn is paired off, often with forbidden relatives; one after another they are caught in compromising situations; they are engaged, married and divorced, re-married. [533]

Songs

X 883 539

1

Re re la rela re re la rela re re la

Korka ta doyo oiki helo tiloka.	O my little sister Tiloka, take the cow out of the cow-shed.
Tāna osi bāra kiyākān dāda silledār?	Why should I take the cow from the shed, O brother Silledar?
Mekwāl kopāl lewa bāra kiyākān?	There is no grazier, Kopa, why should I take it?
Bāra na dāya oiki helo tiloka?	O little sister Tiloka, what do you want?
Guda ta gino oiki helo tiloka.	Take the pig from its sty, Tiloka.
Tāna bāra kiyākān dāda silledār?	Why should I take the pig from its sty, O brother Silledar?
Konār ta kor oiki helo tiloka.	O little sister Tiloka, take the hen from inside the house.

AN EVENING IN THE GHOTUL

Tôna bôra hiyûkûn dâda silledâr ?	Why should I take out the hen, O brother Silledar?
Bâra na dâye oiki helo tiloka ?	O little sister Tiloka, what do you want?
Sanduk ta rupiya oiki helo tiloka ?	Will you take the rupee from the box?
Tôna nana bâra hiyûkûn dada silledar ?	Why should I take the rupee from the box, O brother Silledar?
Jhâpi ta chocko oiki helo tiloka ?	O little sister Tiloka, will you take the cloth hidden in the basket?
Tôna nana oikûn dâda silledâr !	Yes, brother Silledar, I will take the cloth hidden in the basket, O brother Silledar!

883X
539

2

This song is from Manegaon and has the refrain *Suy ale helo le.*

Pôt paroda pâlor podela.	On the ant-hill grows a *kurai* tree.
Bag ne pungâr puyta injore.	The flower has blossomed, sister.
Bor dâdûn mihchi oye rôt ?	Who are you going to give the flower to, sister?
Laharu dâdûn mihchi oye rôt.	I will pin the flower on Laharu.
Tirka hâya tâla injore ;	That boy's head is like the *tirka* fruit;
Bese pungâr pâga injore ;	His turban is like the *kusu* flower;
Pâgûl pungâr mihchi hiyûkûl,	I will pin the flower on his turban,
Udimy mut-ka mamût hiyûkûl,	I will give him a blow with my fist,
Durro poy-nai mamût bilkat.	And quickly I will run away.

3

Barpela Post Oyna Pata

This song, with its refrain, *He dâda saidar*, addressed to the head of the ghotul, is called 'The Song of Carrying off by Force'.

Barang sarpâr te sulitou saidar ?	Why are you sitting in the middle of the road, Saidar?
Badenko ine sulitou ?	Whom are you waiting for, Saidar?
Alonâuk ine sulitou.	You are waiting for Alosa, Saidar.
Koido arka poyni katka ite kandu.	She went with her pot for water, Saidar.
Talût kumâr hinkun katka ite kandu.	She had a roll on her head, Saidar.
Sarpâr tâko kandu.	She came along the road, Saidar.
Tôna ine poyandi.	You caught hold of her, Saidar.
Aye aye indu.	She said, 'No, no', Saidar.
Tuta tônu ondi saidar.	You dragged her to the jungle, Saidar.

After an hour or two of dancing, singing, games or story-telling, certainly not much after ten o'clock, the serious business of the evening begins. The younger boys, those who have not yet been given titles or excused their tributes of wood, go round to every senior boy beginning with the leader (but not afterwards following any special order) saluting each with Johar followed by the ghotul title—'Johar Sirdar', 'Johar Kotwar', 'Johar Silledar'. But for greeting relatives, the term of relationship is used—'Johar *dâda*', 'Johar

883X
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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

māma' and so on. As they give the salute they stretch out their hands, sometimes both hands, lower and then raise them in a pretty gesture. Often

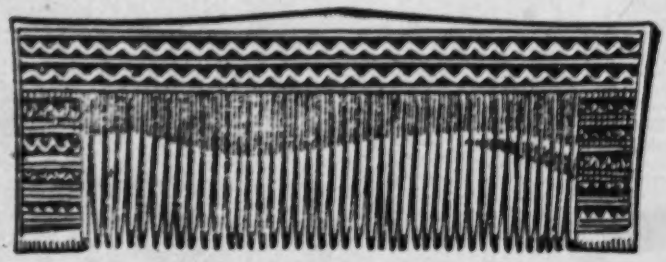

FIG. 67. Carved wooden comb from Toinar
Length 6"

they only use one hand, laying it on head or shoulder; in the east of Kondagaon they put both hands on the head.

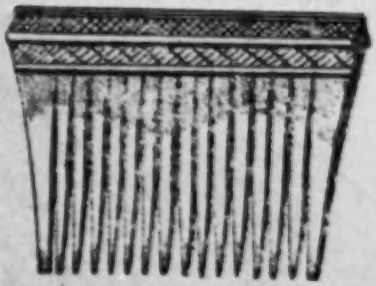

FIG. 68 A comb from the Narayanpur Tahsil
Width 2¼"

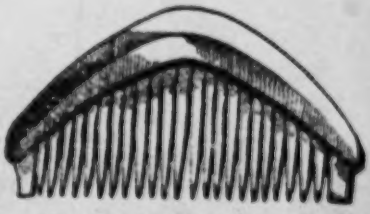

FIG. 69. A comb from Phulpar
Width 3¼"

When the boys have finished, the motiari go round in the same way, with the same gestures and salutes, generally speaking in high, almost artificial voices. In Phulpar the girls did not say Johar, but repeated the ghotul title twice, thus—'Gaita, Gaita' or 'Kotwar, Kotwar'. A girl should not salute a boy to whom she is betrothed or her Lamhada, and she must be very careful about using the proper terms of relationship—for by this means she is reminded of the tribal laws of avoidance. In some ghotul this ceremony is performed twice, once when the company first assembles and

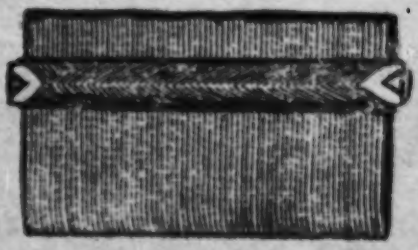

FIG. 70. A bamboo comb, of a type sometimes made by Muria for sale in the bazaars
Width 2¾"

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

then again at the usual time. At Palari, where the girls take the boys' *massi*-mats home with them every morning and bring them in the evening, the first salutation is called *Massi-johar*, for it is then they give the mats to their chelik.

In some ghotul, especially those where they do not massage every night, the two leading girls crack the boys' fingers as they go round.

Immediately after the Joharni, a girl distributes finely-powdered tobacco and sometimes a supply of leaf-pipes to the boys. The tobacco is taken from the ghotul store, to which all must contribute.

The motiari often go outside for a few minutes. The Belosa may now arrange how the massage is to be done and decide whether they will sleep in the ghotul that night and, if so, how they will pair off. When they are ready they come back into the ghotul and each girl goes straight to a boy to comb his hair and massage him. There does not seem to be any rule about this. A girl is not bound to massage her own ghotul partner, nor does the fact of massaging imply that the two will sleep together. In practice, however, the elder girls generally massage the elder boys.

In the Chota Dongar Pargana, the girls go to massage the chelik in the very place where they are going to sleep. Elsewhere they sit in a circle or grouped round the fire, sometimes scattered about the room. If the boy is asleep the motiari rouses him and makes him sit up; she sits or kneels behind him, very close, with her knees round his body. With her comb she begins to shake out and arrange the boy's hair.

The combs are small and it is often difficult to get them through the long unruly locks of the chelik. In Masora the method of combing was to tap the head rather roughly, then to twist the comb round, digging it into the skull; then the hair was pulled out and fretted and at last tied again into a bun. The digging in of the edge of the comb is known as *pitis pitis hiyēna*; it is intended to kill lice and clear away scurf.

In Pupgaon, the combing was much gentler, and was only done every three days. In Bandopal, the girls did not tap the head but twisted the comb through the hair and rubbed the scalp in a very soothing way. When we were at Binjhli they were not combing at all, and in Khutgaon after a dog had relieved itself on the leader's turban, the Siraha forbade the girls to touch the chelik's heads. But generally the combing is done in the way I have described. When a lot of girls are at it together, the clicking of the combs against a score of hard heads makes a remarkable noise, reminding me of a phrase by Roy Campbell:

> While her sharp nails, in slow caresses ruled,
> Prowl through his hair with sharp electric clicks.

But this is not the end of the comb's work. The motiari now uses it to titillate the skin of the back and arms. She rubs the points of the comb very gently to and fro, up and down, over the back and then when she has massaged that, takes each arm in turn and runs the comb up and down the skin.

Now the massage begins. In many ghotul (in Binjhli, for example, and in Bandopal and Almer among many others) this is done with the oily waste of the mahua or karanji seed, and cleans as well as refreshes. In Gorma, in May when they burn *dabi*, they massage the whole body with karanji waste. 'For in the old days this is how Tallur Muttai used to massage Kadrengal.' In other ghotul and at other seasons the massage is done with the hands alone.

The motiari begins by passing her open hands gently over the back, rubs a little harder, presses back on the ball of the hand, pushes more and more vigorously and always upward till the chelik nearly falls forward on his face,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947. AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY

DANCE AND SONG

I

DANCE and song, games, stories and riddles should not be regarded as mere recreation; in the Muria's eyes they are serious and important business. A ghotul's reputation largely depends on the excellence of its dancing; the motiari's ability to sing may make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful wedding. Even the games, many of them, serve an educational purpose. The younger boys and girls are carefully trained in the ghotul, and the others practise night after night, repeating the same steps and rhythms again and again till they get them right, before they set out on a dancing expedition. The complicated stick-dances need special training and practice, for once an expedition has started mistakes are regarded as ill-omened.

The first musician was Lingo himself, and the practice of music is not held, as so often in India, to be discreditable, but is honourably rooted in the history and mythology of the tribe. Many of the songs and dances have a religious purpose, and often begin with an invocation to Lingo and other gods. Before the Mandri dances at a wedding, worship should be performed before a pile of drums.

It is refreshing to go to Bastar from the reform-stricken [1] and barren districts of the Central Provinces. As you climb the Keskal Ghat the whole countryside bursts into song about you. The Muria have a short way with 'reformers', as I was fortunate enough to see at Telenga village on 26 March 1941. There was a marriage that day in the village, and the chelik and motiari from eleven villages came to attend it. But when they arrived they did not begin to dance as usual, but went out into the jungle for a consultation. They had seen among the wedding guests the sinister figure of Chainu, the headman of Maragaon. A month earlier this Chainu had attended a marriage at the house of Guma in his own village. Chelik and motiari had come as usual and danced till noon. Then according to custom they asked for liquor to offer to the drums and food for themselves. Chainu, who had been under a good deal of Hindu influence, refused to let them have either liquor for the drums or food for themselves, and declared that he would 'stop this dancing throughout the pargana'. The chelik and motiari left the marriage in protest and for a month the matter was the subject of heated discussion in their ghotul.

Now in Telenga the boys saw their chance. After a long discussion, they came back, a large and formidable crowd, and told the Pargana Manjhi (of Chalka) that they wanted a panchayat and that Chainu must be there. Near the marriage-booth the boys assembled in a great circle, and almost all the wedding guests joined to see what would happen. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom were left sitting in their places, entirely forgotten.

[1] It is very hard to understand the mentality of the 'reformers' who would deprive the aboriginal of his beautiful and innocent recreations, and would impose on him a 'Shiv-raj' (as it is often called) at which the great dancer Natarajan would have shuddered. It is interesting to compare the attitude of the American Negro towards the 'Spirituals' which have done as much as anything else to establish him throughout the world. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were considered fit only for uneducated 'country niggers'. 'As late as 1909, Negro students at Howard University rebelled and refused to sing them. By the more progressive and aggressive elements in the race the spirituals were frowned upon as a reminder of slavery and ignorance.'—N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 3. Then suddenly, they became the fashion, and the Negroes found that nothing gave them more credit and prestige.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a fearful pride, but soon lose their fear, and try to crowd into the seats; their women, however, are as reluctant to risk entering a car as any old village woman in Cornwall thirty-five years ago. It was a pleasure later in the day to see the bold adventurers of the morning who watched the white man's toilet operations conducting parties of sight-seers into the tent and pantomiming the use of brush, razor and everything there. The Bison-horn Maria is more sophisticated, and will not intrude without being asked, nor is he so curious about small things; but a motor-car is as great a draw to him as to the hill men. Both are very interested in seeing a carburettor stripped and assembled or a tyre changed, or any mechanical repairs; they show quick intelligence, and could soon be taught. In the spate of bridge building on the State roads in recent years they have been quick to grasp methods of sinking piles or getting great beams into position, and have not been slow to offer suggestions that have sometimes been practicable. The newly built road bridge over the Indrawati at Jagdalpur is really built according to the same method as the bridges which even Hill Marias construct across their rivers, with modern and stronger materials and other improvements.

My inquisitiveness about their houses, habits, possessions, agriculture and customs in their eyes must seem much like their curiosity about my ways. Actually their mental processes are not unlike ours, when allowance is made for their centuries of isolation; they are certainly more receptive than the ordinary villager of British India, whose thought has for generations been stunted by the cumbrous wrappings of caste and debased Hinduism. A striking instance of this is the comparative ease with which vaccination was made compulsory years ago throughout the State and is welcomed by the Marias, in strong contrast to the keen opposition to it even in the cities of British India and to the caution venturing on timidity with which provincial Governments make tentative advances in the direction of universal compulsion. Not only is vaccination really universal even in the hill villages, but the Marias are keenly alive to the advantages of inoculation for cholera and yaws, and, in fact, are inclined to demand '*tika*' or inoculation for every ailment, those of them, that is, who have seen for themselves cholera checked or yaws cured by injections; for till recently no medical relief other than vaccination had reached the hills.

In natural cheerfulness few races can surpass the Hill Marias, who, like all Gonds, are quick to see the fun of things, whether it be something that spontaneously appeals to their sense of humour, or a joke put to them by some outsider. Their humour is apt to be broad. Very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

for a tooth; but nowadays this is generally satisfied by invoking the police and the courts. But distances are great in Bastar, and in the rains, when the early hill grains are ripe, communications are bad; often the villagers conspire to hush up a murder or leave it to those affected to take their own direct action, rather than disorganize agricultural work by the troubles of a long police enquiry followed by committal proceedings and a sessions trial. 692

It is a relief to return from this darker side of the Bison-horn Maria's character to the light-heartedness of all Marias, but especially the Hill Maria. An engaging feature of this is his readiness to burlesque himself. A village *gaita* (headman) at Tondawada set the whole camp in fits of laughter by his description of his first vain attempts to use a pair of bullocks in the plough, mimicking himself pulled hither and thither by these wild-cat animals; at Hikul I was treated to a similar comic representation of what would happen if a Maria attempted to milk a cow. They are quick to seize on any foibles or peculiarities of individuals, without respect of persons, and have a happy knack of inventing apposite nicknames; this trait is common throughout the State, where there are nicknames for almost every State official current among all the primitive tribes, while few of the leading Hindu and Mohammedan settlers are referred to by their true names. 157 522 551

Frankness and honesty are still as characteristic as ever of the hill men and the wilder Bison-horn Marias, and many a man arraigned for homicide will state in court perfectly frankly why it was essential to kill his victim and how it was done. I have very seldom found any hesitate to answer any questions, even about the most intimate domestic matters. The Bison-horn Maria, however, being, at least in the open tracts, more sophisticated, is inclined to be suspicious; and he certainly is learning the ways of the courts, and how to defeat a justice administered on the evidence and not according to the facts; many know, for example, that the death penalty may be escaped if you can convince your judge that you murdered your victim because you believed him to be bewitching you. But in general a Maria witness can still be relied upon to speak the truth, although it involve his dearest relatives or himself in trouble; and the occasional pleader from British India is soon hopelessly at sea if he tries his usual methods of cross-examination even on a Bison-horn Maria who knows Halbi. Fortunately, the restoration of the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the village and *pargana* panchayats will considerably reduce Maria experience of the law courts. The Hill Maria never has had much recourse to them, petty theft being almost unknown and murder rare. His attitude may to some extent be gauged by the following example. 157 577 [674] 695

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535
522

(Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria clown, covered with glistening mud, postures during a dance

[End Plate ZA]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

607

Dewar: O Ange, the gruel is made of broken rice.
Ange: O my Dewar, where are you going today?
Dewar: Today I am not going anywhere
For I have to load my bullocks.
Tomorrow I go to another land to trade.
Ange: I too will go with you to drive the laden bullocks.
Dewar: Don't come with me, for all know how we stand to one another.
Those who do not know us will call us brother and sister.
And when they call us that we shall be ashamed.

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[831]

The relations between *samdhi* and *samdhin* are generally of an amiable, coarse and humorous nature. For men this is a drinking rather than a joking relationship, and all their lives whenever they meet they regard it as an excuse for a bottle. The women, specially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breasts, stick feathers into the private parts and exchange the coarsest jokes.

The place where this joking and fun most commonly occurs is at a marriage. 'There is no purdah in a house of marriage.' Everybody feels free to fool about; no one is going to be offended; everyone is slightly drunk.

V. Summary

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The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. Nothing reveals more clearly the extent of this domination than the fact that out of 2000 marriages examined no fewer than 1799 were of the cross-cousin type and, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, 1884 out of 2000 boys married according to their parents' wishes. This could only happen in a society which had a strong regard for its own organization and laws.

The clan system retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. Clan festivals remain great and notable occasions. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. The *samdhi* relationship, as may be seen in every song and story, continues to be of the first importance. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs. Totemism is less important, but is still far from moribund. The whole complex of ideas and customs is greatly confused, but the very confusion is perhaps a sign of its vitality.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

304 There are not generally any taboos on a girl during the day that she is tattooed, but in Kokori I found that a girl was not allowed to go to the
● 322 ghotul the following night. This is probably a practical rule made because the girl is likely to be in some pain on that day. But when a girl does return to the ghotul after her tattooing the boys laugh at her and make the old joke about *godan* and *chodan*. 'If you could bear the pricks of *godan* (tattooing) surely you won't be afraid of the pricks of *chodan* (intercourse).' The girl naturally says that she cannot bear either. Then her boy may say, 'Look, there is pain when one is being tattooed, but in intercourse there is nothing but fun', and the girl replies, 'Well, if a mountain were to fall on me I would die, but if you fall on me I suppose I shall go on living, so you had better do what you want'. This conversation was recorded at Padbera.

314 There are a few songs about tattooing. One is in the nature of a prayer to cool the pain of the marks.

539

Arji binthi mān hamāra.	Listen to our prayer.
Us dinki bachan tumāra.	Yours is the promise we made that day.
Sujiki jhār uthāra.	Let the burning of the needles cease.

Two other songs are sung during the 'tattooing' of the *kalsa*-pot during a wedding. The first has a refrain continually repeated, *Main wāna godenda āya*, 'Mother, I want to be tattooed'.

1

God jāle godenda nuni.	If you wish, you may be, daughter.
Kon rājcho gogin nuni?	What land has the Gogin come from, daughter?
Dongarcho gogin āya.	The Gogin is from Dongar, mother.
Dudr barkjīe rale āya,	I was sweeping the yard,
Jabre wasala āya	She forced me to sit down.
Main nahin bol le āya.	I said I wouldn't, mother.
Kitro kitro mola re nuni?	How much did you pay her, daughter?
Nilo āgar dugāni wo āya.	Double the usual sum, mother.

2

Aga bagkāling dumki dai?	Where do the tattooers come from?
Raigarh da dumking dai.	From Raigarh they come.
Aga baga wāling dai?	Why have they come here?
Singār koti wāling dai.	They have come to tattoo you.
Singār koti punong dai.	They don't know how to tattoo.
Danda mola kintāling dai?	What is their charge for tattooing the arm?
Huj tāsi punong dai.	They don't know how to use the needles.
Māt mola hewom dai.	We won't pay their wages.
Māt koti hewāk dai,	If they would let us do it,
Māt singār koterom dai.	We would tattoo ourselves.[1]

[1] The Bison-horn Maria regard tattooing as a comparatively modern innovation, intended mainly as a means of attraction. The work is still done chiefly by the Maria themselves: they make needles of thorns and the colour is made by mixing the ash of pothar bark, date palm or myrabolams with mahua oil. Lamp-black is also used.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

841 In Chandabera the Muria described how once when a man had touched a menstruating woman the Gaita heated gold and touched his forehead, tongue and shoulders, sprinkled him with rice-water and water in which gold had been [628] dipped, made him drink it in the name of the Earth Mother who had been insulted, and imposed upon him a heavy fine.

This is the same penalty as that extracted from a murderer on return from jail. It does not necessarily mean that the Muria regard the two offences as morally equal, but it does suggest that they regard them as equally dangerous in the supernatural field.

A woman's husband also is subject to the strictest rules. During his wife's period, he must not dig the ground, visit his fields, either to sow or reap, thatch the roof, go to the thrashing floor, touch the grain-bins in the house, or visit the village shrines. If he visits his thrashing floor the quantity of his grain is reduced by half. But he may go to the ghotul and sleep there, though no one will take tobacco from his hands. He is allowed to fetch water and cook; indeed he generally has to do this work when his wife is barred from it, and [572] many are the ribald jests that greet a young husband caught carrying pots from the well.

841 If he is a priest, he cannot conduct any religious ceremony during his wife's period, and festivals often have to be postponed on this account. A curious 539 story from Korenda illustrates the special difficulties that may trouble a polygamous Gaita.

> At the beginning of the world, there was no god of the Wadder clansmen, though they were numerous enough, while on the other hand there was a god of the Partabi though there was only one solitary male member of the clan. He was the Gaita and he had seven wives. Since one or other of his wives was in her period all the month round, he was never able to perform his priestly duties properly. They were due to eat the new rice on Monday: on Sunday night his eldest wife began her period. They postponed the festival till Friday: but no sooner had the eldest wife bathed on Wednesday than the youngest began on Thursday. And so on, he could never keep the festival, till Dokara Deo began to trouble the Gaita and he gave both his gods, Budha Deo and Dokara Deo, to the Wadder clan.

841 How do these taboos affect the ghotul? The great majority of Muria girls experience the crisis of the menarche while they are still motiari. Only in a few villages like Malakot do the people try to get girls married before maturity. Even where they are married, the little wives may sleep in the ghotul till they are mature. At her first period, a girl-wife gives *jori-darango* or a gift of liquor to the boys and girls 'to show her companionship with them is ended'.

841 The ghotul members take a great interest in the menarche. Everybody knows all about it at once and there is a lot of joking and laughter. 'Our 522 new pot is broken, where can we go and clean it?' 'She has trodden on dirty leaves.' 'The embankment of the field is leaking.' When the chelik see the girl sitting plaintive and embarrassed behind her house or in the segregated hut they call to her, 'Have you got a baby, or what is the matter with you? Which is it, a girl or a boy?'

841 I describe elsewhere the special precautions that are taken at the menarche to ensure freedom from conception. A girl must be careful not to throw away her cups and plates for if a witch can get hold of them, she can cause her a great deal of trouble. She should, on this occasion, take these vessels and the ash in which she has cleaned her pots to the river for the Yer Kanyang or

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?' In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendra-wandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 366

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 This is the supreme moment of the marriage, the ceremony that finally asserts the union of bride and bridegroom,[1] the ultimately binding element in the long-protracted ceremonies. Bride and bridegroom were now man and wife.

Song

[539]

To manda batti dai;	There is the cattle's resting-place;
Aga padda manta dai.	There is a calf there, mother.
Padda dohi dāka dai.	I am going to tie that calf.
Sono ta dāmir dai,	There is a golden rope,
Padda poya hewo dai.	But the calf won't let me catch her.

Carrying off the Bride

Immediately the boy seized the bride, rushed her once round the booth, and carried her off to his camp, followed by a row of motiari singing enthusiastically. The bride's elder sister has the right to try to stop them: she stood in the way and was only appeased by the present of a cloth.

Ceremonial Greeting

In a few minutes the motiari came to bring the newly-married pair back to the booth for tika, the ceremonial greeting by relatives and friends. They sat down on a mat to the west of the booth, each supported by motiari, and everyone in turn put a rice-mark on their foreheads and a small present in the dish before them. As people bent down to do this, old women poured haldi over their backs and often tried to undo their clothes and smear their naked buttocks. There was much ribald laughter and a lot of fun.

[522]

The motiari stood round singing as loudly as they could. Each relative was greeted in turn. Here is the song they used when the boy's father came for tika.

[539]

Wilor wāllor-manda buba!	The booth is shaking, father!
Mandāli horku wār-tu buba.	The branches of the booth have withered, father.
Sānde tika tāsa buba.	Do the tika, father.
Wele bara hema buba.	Don't be late, father.
Pile harau harau buba.	The birds grow hungry, father.
Karun manda paron buba.	I can't bear to be hungry, father.
Niya marri lāruna buba.	This is your darling son, father.

[1] The essential and binding part of the marriage ceremony varies in different parts. In the Punjab it consists of the *phere* or circumambulation of the sacrificial fire. In the United Provinces the young couple walk round not a fire but the marriage shed or pole. In the east of these provinces and also in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, the binding part of the ceremony is generally the *sindurdan* or painting of the bride's forehead with vermilion. Amongst certain castes such as the Hari, the bride and bridegroom smear each other with their blood, which they obtain by pricking their fingers with a thorn. In Bombay the higher castes follow the practice of circumambulation. The lower castes sprinkle rice over the bride and bridegroom, while some pour milk or water over the joined hands of the couple. In Orissa their right hands are tied together with *kusa* grass, or their left hands when the bride is a widow. In Madras there are various ceremonies, such as making them eat from the same dish, or knotting their garments together, or pouring water over them so that it runs from the man to the woman. But the most common is for the bridegroom to tie the *tali* or necklace round the bride's neck. The Brahmin bridegroom places the bride's foot seven times on a mill-stone, a symbol of constancy.—*Census of India, 1911, Report for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, p. 322.

585

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

FIG. 22. Iron lampstand placed in the centre of the marriage booth
Height 5'

[354]

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522

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In the evening, after everyone had eaten their supper, the chelik and motiari went singing to escort the bridal pair to their new house, which had been entirely deserted for their benefit. All the other people had gone away. The chelik and motiari danced before the house for some time, the newly-married pair dancing with them. Then the little boys and girls were sent away, and the seniors caught hold of the bride and groom and pushed them into the house. Here the girl stood still while the husband was taken into a small inner room. The Sirdar spread a new mat, placed a cloth on it (they sometimes put oil on it 'to make it slippery') and made him lie down on one side. Then they pulled the girl into the room and made her lie down beside him. The boys patted them farewell, and ran out shutting the door behind them.

Outside they ran to the wall of the house, trying to peep in and hear what was going on, laughing and excited. The boys ought now to have caught a cock and taken it away, plucking its feathers all along the road, to roast it in the ghotul. But the groom's old mother had been too clever for them and had hidden all her poultry.

This cock is known variously as the *lod-kor* or 'sleeping cock', *pussi-kor* or 'semen cock', *honda-kor* or 'pubic-hairs cock', *pude-kor* or 'vagina cock', and *gel-kor* or 'copulation cock'. The usual custom, as we shall see at Nayanar, is to catch this cock, pluck the feathers going along the road, roast it in or near the ghotul or the ghotul camp, and then when everyone is asleep to push burnt feathers, entrails, bits of bone, into the mouths, ears, noses and private parts of the sleeping children—a joke that never fails to cause the greatest mirth and delight.

The theory seems to be that the cock is some sort of compensation. 'He is eating her vagina; we are eating the vagina cock.'

In Aturgaon I was told that the ghotul leaders gave a little sermon to the husband when they shut him up with his bride. 'Take this girl; she is now your property. Give us a sleeping-cock in exchange. Sleep with the girl in happiness and joy; may she bear a child within a year; it is your duty.'

The chelik of Mumjmeta told me that where boy and girl belonged to the same ghotul, and where that ghotul was one in which boys and girls paired off in some kind of permanent relationship, they had a different custom. When the marriage was over, the bride returned to the ghotul and combed the hair and massaged the limbs of her old ghotul-husband for the last time. She slept with him for an hour, and then the chelik took her to her husband and shut them up together. The cock in this

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 The Lagir was a very tame affair compared with what I saw at Sidhawand and Malakot. One of the boy's samdhi led the procession. He was followed by the boy, then by the girl, and then by five motiari singing. After completing the seven circuits, they tied the clothes of bride and groom together, and made them sit down for tika. When this was done a man poured water over them from the roof of the booth.[1] After this they were taken outside the house and the little rites of toilet-twig, undoing the plaits and breaking wood were performed as at Malakot.

The Tour of the Village

Now chelik and motiari escorted the bride and bridegroom round the village on a sort of farewell tour. The party first visited the ghotul, where the boy and girl threw rice and copper coins into the building. Thence they went to the Gaita's house and round the village. As the party entered each compound the house-folk came out to wash their feet, put tika on their foreheads and embraced them. The groom tied bead-necklaces round the necks of the young children of the house. The housewife gave rice and a coin or two, all of which was carefully collected in a basket by the leading motiari.

The Ghotul Camp

During a marriage the cooking has to be done out-of-doors. The ghotul is closed until all is over. At Nayanar a special camp was made in a magnificent grove of mango trees. Here the boys and girls lived and entertained their visitors. On the last night, the bride and bridegroom came at sunset, and the chelik and motiari of Nayanar sat round in a great circle. The bridegroom, who had been the Sirdar, attended by two motiari, gave necklaces and rings to every boy and girl. The rings were strung on two big *sutia*-torcs. The bead necklaces were tied together as they came from the bazaar. These gifts must have cost at least twenty rupees.

The Bedding of the Bridal Pair

Bride and bridegroom went to their house for supper; chelik and motiari had theirs in the camp and fed their many visitors. At about 11 p.m. girls and boys went to fetch the bride and her husband. They 'stole away secretly', as I was told, and stayed a little while in the camp. Then suddenly the chelik seized the girl and her husband and took them to their house. They went willingly enough at first, but when they reached the bridal chamber, though the girl entered without persuasion, the boy made a great deal of fuss. But at last they pushed him in, spread a new mat, and made them lie down together. The chelik ran out and shut the door, shouting with excitement. It was noticeable that no older person came near or showed the slightest interest.

585 This time the chelik were able to catch a cock. They took it down to
●522 the camp and made a fire in a field near by and roasted it. In the meantime the younger children went to sleep. About midnight, the boys who had bedded the married pair, and eaten the cock, came round with handfuls of offal and burnt bones and feathers. They pushed these into the mouths and privates of the sleeping girls and boys, who woke spitting and protesting but

[1] This is possibly the oldest part of the ceremony. Cain, writing in 1876, describes how a Koi woman was made to bend her head while the man leant over her and friends poured water out of a bottle-gourd. 'When the water ran off his head to that of the woman they were regarded as man and wife.'—J. Cain, 'The Bhadrachellam Taluka', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V (1876), p. 357.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
522

with a pleased recognition that the marriage at which they had so earnestly assisted had been consummated.[1]

VI. The Ghotul's Share in the Ceremony

Nāg nāgin he bihav na dondiya he salmal. The little fish are kept busy at the cobras' wedding.—Muria saying

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No wonder that there is no greater threat to a Muria boy or girl than that the ghotul members will not attend their marriage. For from beginning to end the smooth progress of the rite depends on the chelik and motiari. For a week beforehand the motiari instruct the bride in the ghotul. Chelik and motiari accompany the bridegroom when he goes to fetch his bride; they sing and dance at every point of the ceremony; the chelik go to bring in the wood for the booth and the girls direct them to its site by dancing on the spot with a mahua tree. Boys and girls go together to fetch the earth for the manda-platform, and dance round it when it is ready. The motiari attend through all the long-drawn business of anointing, they carry the bridal pair about on their backs; they bathe them, do their hair, feed them and weep with them. At the central moment of the rite, it is the drumming of the chelik and singing of the motiari that provides dignity, colour and excitement. Chelik and motiari again assist at the concluding ceremonies in the bridegroom's house, and it is the chelik who ultimately arrange the consummation of the marriage.

But these ritual duties are only the beginning of their task. They have to see to the entertainment of a large number of guests. The Sirdar arranges for wood and organizes the dances; the Belosa sees to the supply of water and leaves. She and her motiari have to make leaf-cups and plates for the male visitors (they only give leaves to women visitors, considering that they should be able to make their own). This in itself is a very considerable task, but in addition nearly all the cooking is done in the ghotul camp, and chelik and motiari have to serve food at meals. I have never seen girls work so hard as at Nayanar, where there were three weddings one after another: as the chelik were leading one husband and his bride to bed, the motiari were preparing the next bride for her fate. The girls never seemed to stop working; they were engaged day and night; yet though they began to look very tired

[1] Similar customs are observed by other tribes. In Siraiti, I watched Bison-horn Maria girls escort the bride to bed, though here the groom had to drag her into his house. Then a jovial party stole a cock and scattered its feathers along the path. The Juang boys escort the bridegroom from the *dorbar* (dormitory), sometimes tying him hand and foot, to where his bride is waiting. They make him sit with her and say, 'See, here is your house: look to it. Here is a new girl, big-breasted and young. Do not disappoint her.' The boys piss inside the house, throw rubbish over the floor, then tie the door and run away. Bride and groom must clean the house before the marriage is consummated. I have witnessed a similar ceremony in a Bondo village.

For the Kota of the Nilgiri Hills, consummation was in the nature of a test, like the custom of 'bundling' in Wales. In the morning, the girl was questioned whether she liked her husband: if she did, the marriage was confirmed, if not, it was annulled.—E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India* (Madras, 1907), p. 62. Here, as with the Hill Maria and other very primitive tribes, the payment of bride-price and consummation was the marriage: there was little more to it.

By Hindus of Western Bengal, the third night after the wedding is called Phulsajya, or the flower bed. 'Eavesdropping goes on freely.'—S. N. Roy, 'Stree-Achar in West Bengal', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, p. 190. In Mysore, the Brahmins observe the beautiful *garbhādāna* ceremony, when the husband in a room filled with flowers pours fruit into his wife's lap and the priest prays 'May a male embryo enter thy womb as an arrow the quiver'.—M. N. Srinivas, op. cit., pp. 134f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SIX

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

I. Old Age and the Climacteric

888 THE place of the aged in Muria society is not unenviable. The training in the ghotul instils into the minds of boys and girls the idea of respect for older people and, for all its stress on equality, a sense of the dignity of position and achievement. This attitude remains with the children all their lives. An older man, therefore, often enjoys a very favoured position. In time he becomes a member of the village, and even of the pargana, panchayat. The system of cross-cousin marriage, so largely prevalent in the tribe, ensures that he is surrounded by a large number of relatives and dependants. Among these he gradually rises to a position in which flattering attention is paid to his judgement and it is considered essential that he should be consulted in everything to do with the welfare of the tribe, the clan, the family, and the ghotul.

887 Nor is there any loss of the variety and colour of life. He still occasionally visits the scene of his youthful happiness and, if he is wise and tactful, the children will consult him about their affairs. If he has the art of music or story-telling he will command absorbed attention. He still goes to the great tribal festivals and the commercial Marhai in the larger villages. At these, if he is a Siraha he will dance and beat his drum as lustily as any chelik; he will meet scores of old friends and drink with them. At marriages, which he invariably attends, he has a special licence to play practical jokes and to indulge the coarsest behaviour. There are certain to be present many men and women who stand to him in the 'joking relationship', and a marriage is the stage whereon the Table of Relationship comes to dramatic life. Nobody is likely to think less of him for his pranks. Indeed the antics of the old men are an enlivening and picturesque feature of most marriages. [522]

888 But, of course, the varied scenes he has witnessed and the bereavements he has suffered generally tend to make the old Muria at other times somewhat sad and meditative. Disease sometimes hampers his movements, though many old Muria are remarkably hale and hearty. A proverb runs: 'When a child he plays; when a boy he displays his beauty; in age his head shakes and he meditates.' This comparison of youth and age is a favourite one among the Muria. 'The baby has no hair; the youth dresses it; the old man's curls behind.'

887 The old village woman, Muria, Gond, Pardhan or Baiga, deserves the world's most profound respect. Her wrinkled face and bent indomitable form, which is so familiar a sight in every Muria village, is the symbol of the courage, devotion and the will to persevere characteristic of her race. Upon her falls the heavy burden of the work of an ever-growing household. She is expected to be present and to help at the confinements of every one of her descendants. She constantly has to care for her grandchildren and may even be called on to provide milk for them from her withered breasts. Should she be relieved of the burden of a family, her lot is no less arduous, and I have often seen the pitiful little huts in which some lonely, childless widow spends the evening of her days.

But the old woman's lot is not unbroken drudgery. The scheme and pattern of Muria life is well devised to break up the monotony of village existence with bright and vivid colours and gay bursts of song. The old woman too

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

887 goes to the market and attends the festivals, though there is not so much for her in these as for the men. But her real hour of happiness is at a marriage. Here she may lay aside restraint and recapture the abandon of youth. Now she may drink heavily and for a few hours in blissful intoxication free herself of inhibitions and forget all that is tiresome and weary in her life. If the older men enliven the marriage scene with their buffoonery, the older women divert it with their obscenity. There is nothing that they may not say, little they may not do. Their songs and their dance movements are outrageous and never fail to rouse laughter in the crowd.

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888 In a very few cases Muria women grow riggish in old age. They adorn themselves with many ornaments and wear bright-coloured saris. This behaviour is not approved.

You are an old woman,
Forget your dances.
You are an old woman,
Yet on your buttocks is a tiny cloth
And flowers are in your hair.

Although there is a rule that women should never use their ghotul titles after marriage, when a group of old women who have grown up together in the same ghotul meet in later life, they usually use the old names in order to awaken happy memories of the past. I am told that then they exchange reminiscences through half the night and that such times are among the happiest of their lives.

886 As elsewhere in aboriginal India, the climacteric does not appear to be dreaded or even to be specially noticed. In India, women are old at 45 and they greet the cessation of the menstrual period with relief that they are now saved from its embarrassments. I have not been able to find any myth about the climacteric; there does not seem to be any rule about it or any desire to avert it. It is a purely natural phenomenon. 'The stream that flowed so long is dry', 'the old tree has begun to wither'. Some people believe that the tree withers because 'no one goes to an old woman,[1] so her vagina has no grain to eat; no rain falls in her stream, so how can it flow?'

II. Death and the Ghotul

761 883 The ghotul is a place of separations. But when a chelik or motiari dies there is a special feeling of sorrow, a sense of outrage, the conviction that something exceptional and abnormal has occurred. Sometimes the ghotul is closed for three days; where it is not closed the children gather sadly and there is no singing and there should be no intimacies. When older people die the dormitory is not closed. 'The ghotul is the *Dinda-mahāl*, the Palace of the Unmarried. As the Raja's Palace is not shut when people die in the town, neither is ours. But if two or three of the chelik and motiari die, then we shut it.' At Dongrigura, they said that when a chelik died, the motiari wept and next day initiated one of the younger boys and gave him the dead chelik's title, so that there might be no gap in their fellowship. When the Subedar died, they made his little brother Subedar next day and gave him as 'husband' to the Subedarin, his *ange*, or elder brother's 'widow'.

The death of a chelik or motiari is always abnormal. The death of a little child or of a child in the womb is no less unnatural. 'Just as in a field, rice

[1] A rather cynical proverb runs: 'How disgusted is a man who eats stale food in the morning and goes to bed with an old woman at night.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Angār mute rāni ra.	Angar Mute is the Rani.
Yer miyāṛ hilandu ra.	Weeping, she is bathing in the water.
Jhāro jhāro hilandu ra.	As she weeps the tears fall.
Pitāmaro dhoti ra!	O her silken cloth!
Dhoti tune kurandu ra.	She looks at her cloth.
Tāna dudong ātsko ra?	How can we describe her breasts?
Māhka kāyāng dudo ra.	Her breasts are as the bel fruit.
Ghātum tikeda wāndung ra.	From the bathing-place she is coming home.
Lonc tike kandung ra	In the house
Mul gatke māta ra	There are so many relatives
Suju buju hile ra.	That we cannot count them.

The rest of the song describes Angar Mute's court, to which comes the Pargana Manjhi with small legs, his spear over his shoulder, a big-bellied Kotwar and many other officials. The Manjhi delivers judgement, giving a hundred rupees to the Raja and only a pair of bullocks for the Muria. 'One of the bullocks had no tail, the other had no horns.' Then the chelik and motiari who have escorted the corpse to the burial ground are described. There are sixty boys led by Kosi Leyur and sixty girls led by Gara Karre Mode, the Belosa of the ghotul, whose vagina is sixteen cubits long and whose pubic hairs are five cubits long. 'A jungle boar could roll in her vagina.' The boys break her bangles and push the pieces into her navel with a *jharar jharar* noise.

All this, which seems merely coarse to us, is exceedingly amusing to the Muria; the song is really a comic effort intended to relieve the tension of the funeral now that the main rites are done.

VI. Divining the Cause of Death

It is always important at a funeral to discover the cause of so monstrous and unnatural a thing as death. At Binjhli, when magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the Siraha medium recites a string of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty man is mentioned, the bier moves forward violently of its own accord. This method, which resembles the use of an Anga clan-god for divination, is common throughout the State, and Grigson has recorded a similar, though more elaborate, rite in use among the Hill Maria.[1]

At Kehalakot, the Muria remove some locks of the dead man's hair and a little earth from beneath his head. They make a small flag-pole with the hair and the earth and a saja leaf stuck on an ebony stick. They take this to the jungle and a boy holds it while the Siraha recites the names of any suspected causes or people. When the right word is uttered, the flag is said to quiver. At Kokori the villagers go to the boundary and put five heaps of rice in a row, one for Mahapurub, one for witchcraft, one for Mother Earth, one for the ancestors of the house, and one for any local godling who may have been troublesome. The people sit some distance away, and spend the time having their hair done by their relatives-in-law. Presently a crow flies down and pecks at one or other of the piles of rice, thus revealing the cause of death.

The *thembukri* divination is done with chickens on the second or third day after death. One chicken is taken from the house of the dead and one from

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

In many ghotul a sister may comb and massage a brother, but in Kabonga there was a rule that she must not salute him with Johar nor comb his hair.

Many coarse jokes are made about the relation of brothers and sisters when everyone is drunk at a marriage. There are many obscene songs about it, for it is regarded as a licensed subject for humour. As in other societies, however, it is probable that such humour only exists against a background of very strict propriety. The suggestion that a brother is sleeping with his sister is amusing simply because he never does.

Generally it is said that brothers and sisters live together very happily. When they do quarrel a boy may say to his sister: 'You *potsa* (big-bellied one), you *chipri* (you've got dirty eyes), *saladri* (murderess).' It is said that a girl on her marriage remembers these delightful animosities and weeps bitterly saying, 'No one will be able to quarrel with me so sweetly in future'. The brother may threaten to turn his sister out of the house, but she has the ready retort available that 'in any case I am not going to stay in your house, I can easily make a living somewhere else'.

III

How far is the rule of fidelity to a single partner kept? This is a matter on which there can be no possible statistical evidence; one can only give a general impression and quote a few examples. The temptation to break the rules must be very great. Ghotul routine aims at stimulating the sexual passion. The boys and girls live in the closest contact, and enjoy sexual intimacy in one another's presence. Certain relatives, such as the younger brother, have traditional privileges. The chelik are often absent in the fields, and their motiari sleep accessible and alone. In every 'memoir' that I have collected, the narrator has described how he or she evaded the ghotul rules.

From these memoirs I will give a few quotations. My first is from the experiences of Budhu, a Poyami of Kanera in the Sonawal Pargana of Kondagaon, in a *jodidār* ghotul forty years ago.

> In those days there were about twelve boys and ten girls in the ghotul, and a boy used to sleep with his partner until his marriage unless he changed his name. I was married to the Malko and loved her very much. I was then Sepahi. But after two years, I was made Kotwar, and I had to leave Malko and sleep with the Kotwarin, for that was the rule. Yet my thoughts were always for Malko, and at night when everyone was asleep I would leave the mat where I was sleeping with Kotwarin and creep over to Malko to make love to her.
>
> My parents knew nothing of this, yet to my delight they told me one day that they were going to arrange my marriage with Malko, which was just what we wanted.
>
> A few days after this good news, I went to Sonawal for work and stayed there for a week. During this time I slept in the Sonawal ghotul with the Jamadarin. On the last night this girl took the comb from my hair as a keepsake. From Sonawal I went to Kokori and danced in the ghotul there. One of the motiari fell in love with me and constantly offered me tobacco. After a few days I started home, but three of the girls met me in the jungle and begged me to stay with them, but I had to go home.
>
> Soon afterwards I was married to Malko and we were very happy. We have always done everything together and have never quarrelled.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

These mats are kept at home and boys or girls bring them rolled up under their arms at night to the ghotul. In some villages this is the special duty of the girls. When they arrive they go round saluting the boys and presenting them with their mats. This is known as *Masni-johar*.

Fig. 96. The wooden dab used for making a masni-mat
Length 1' 10"

The mat is very definitely a sexual symbol and many ribald jokes are connected with it. The new mat given to a bridegroom at his marriage is generally smeared with oil 'to make it slippery'. Once when I was sitting down in the village of Amgaon a chelik brought me a *masni* but an old man said, 'Don't sit on it, it is covered with semen', and everyone thought it very amusing. It is supposed to be a great honour to be given a mat by the chelik, probably just because it is a symbol of so much excitement and romance.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

OTHER RECREATIONS

I. Muria Humour

522 THE humour of the Muria is probably more fully developed than that of any other tribe in Bastar or the Central Provinces; the ghotul is a natural school of wit; the constant association of young people forces them to devise many forms of entertainment. The first and most elementary expression of Muria humour is plain buffoonery. They love throwing dirty water at each other, sprinkling people with red ants, creeping up behind someone and clasping muddy hands round his face. In Nayanar, the chelik had bamboo squirts (Fig. 21) with which they projected streams of water at the motiari. At a marriage, old men and women get great fun out of pouring haldi-water over the buttocks of their relatives as they bend down to greet the bridal pair. They enjoy poking each other's genitals and catching hold of them, and if anyone dances naked, especially if this is in front of forbidden relatives, they laugh till they can hardly stand. The reader will note that here it is the social rather than the sexual aspect of the ribaldry that appeals; it is the notion of doing something unusual and improper before people in whose presence the strictest decorum is usually practised. Jokes about incest are funny because it is almost unknown in Muria society; it is possible to be humorous about adultery simply because it is so rare. The obscene jokes of a Muria marriage do not by any means imply a general standard of obscenity; indeed they suggest the opposite. It is in the most rigidly correct middle classes of English society that the vulgar postcard has its widest circulation, for it is the sense of contrast and incongruity that is amusing. In this connexion George Orwell has recently drawn attention to the difference between obscenity and immorality. The obscene is based on the implication that 'marriage is something profoundly exciting and important, the biggest event in the average human being's life. So also with jokes about nagging wives and tyrannous mothers-in-law. They do at least imply a stable society in which marriage is indissoluble and family loyalty taken for granted... A dirty joke is not, of course, a serious attack upon morality, but it is a sort of mental rebellion, a momentary wish that things were otherwise.'[1] So, in this sense Muria jokes are obscene, but they are not immoral.

522 292 The Muria get a great deal of fun out of dressing up. At weddings, especially at the critical moment of the Lagir, many people—both young and old—appear in fantastic array. One man performs as a giant; another has an enormous rope penis; a third is covered with ash and goes about imitating the Siraha-mediums. In Malakot the villagers were highly amused at the antics of an old man dressed in a bear-skin who was led about by his keeper, himself swathed from head to foot in paddy-rope. The village headman, ordinarily the soberest of beings, appeared riding a hobby-horse and flourishing an umbrella. At Sidhawand there was a 'sadhu' with a long tail and an ash-covered fisherman who burlesqued Muria fishing methods. Masks are sometimes worn, especially during the Pus Kolang and Chherta expeditions. In Kachora two boys wearing gourd masks played at man and wife, the wife causing great mirth by a pair of artificial breasts. In Phulpar a chelik wore an artificial beard of squirrel's hair which he combed before a mirror. In

[1] G. Orwell, 'The Art of Donald McGill', *Horizon*, Vol. IV (1941), pp. 132ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

522 292 Gorma, the Muria Atpariha dressed up as a straw man, with a whitened face and beard of bear's fur. He carried about an enormous bow and a wooden spade as arrow. Even an old solar topi is thought amusing—when it is on a chelik's head. The desire to create a sharp dramatic contrast prompted a Muria at Masora to dance with a dog in his arms (Plate CXLIII).

522 But beside a delight in sudden contrasts, the Muria have a special attraction to the grotesque. In one story a girl with a huge umbilical stump buries herself in the bed of a river, but the stump sticks up and a bullock cart is caught on it. The first motiari had a vagina so large that a wild boar could roll about in it. She looked like a sack of salt from Nandgaon. In a song, a boy has a penis as long as a cucumber and testicles as fat as pumpkins.

In Gorma I saw an extraordinary dance, when the performer, distorting his face and body, pranced about the ghotul like an obscene bird. With his hand he poked his bottom, privates, chest and head, smelt his supposedly soiled and stinking fingers, then pushed them in the faces of the onlookers. It was done so well that you forgot the indecency in a sort of horror as at some perverted creation of the mind. In the same category are the 'panthers' or 'lizards' that so often appear at a dance or wedding. A boy covers himself with a blanket, and with an ingenious arrangement of twigs makes himself a head and beak which opens and shuts. He then crawls about in what I can only call an abominable manner which never fails to give a thrill of fear.

More purely humorous was a great bird made at Phauda. A chelik lay on the ground with his hands stretched out before him. The others covered his body with a blanket and his hands with cloth. They decorated the cloth-covered hands with ornaments, gave them a beak and ears, and produced a grotesque bird. Then the boy by moving his hands made the bird peck about very divertingly (Plate CXLVII).

If we turn to verbal wit we find a similar tendency. In the songs are references to moustached peacocks[1] and tusked hares.

[539] On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
Its teeth are as long as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustache is like jungle grass, chelik.
Its hairs like bamboo shavings, chelik.

In the Ghotul Pata there are many such diverting descriptions. How excellent, for example, is the account of the Kotwar who is fed on gruel twelve years old and full of frogs and lizards[2]

[539] His moustaches said *suyi suyi* as he drank,
His throat cried *gurgur gurgur*.
As he ate the frogs and lizards, his mouth went *pilos pilos*.

The descriptions of the chelik and motiari at Siri Somni's marriage and of the treatment given to Bai Dursal Rani by the Manjhi[3] are funny even to Western ears.

[1] Compare the Uraon poem:

The cobra comes
With his hood raised
Asking alms.
The heron comes
With his neck straight
Twirling his moustaches. (Archer, *op. cit.*, p. 122.)

[2] The antics of the village Kotwar are a favourite theme of the Gond and Pardhan story-teller in the Central Provinces. See my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 281., 108f., and Elwin and Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 372ff.

[3] See p. 608.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

II. A Test of Wit

The posing of riddles is a fairly popular form of amusement in the ghotul. It sharpens the wits and is often very amusing, the sharp and unexpected contrasts between description and meaning often surprising the listeners into a sudden burst of laughter. Many riddles have both a manifest and latent meaning, the latter usually sexual. Riddles illustrating various sociological points will be found throughout the book, but I will add another 150 here.

In Gondi, the riddles are usually in what may be called prose. Rhyme is very uncommon and even assonance and punning are rare. The following are hardly typical:

Uiu tutu bhui la tutu.
The horn comes out of the ground.
A bamboo shoot.

Uding uding inta, dāy dāy inta.
Say sit sit and say go go.
Sand in which you get stuck.

Porro kīre, adi mond.
Threshing-floor above, its pole below.
An umbrella.

Konda udinta kīsra witinta.
The bullock sits, the tethering cord runs away.
A pumpkin.

The usual Gondi riddle has no special form.

Undi urpādum nur nei kushintāng.
A hundred dogs bite one lizard.
The rafter of a house.

Tāmur iruura lokku jotāy manta, mati warro warrona lote koriyor.
The brothers live together, but never enter each other's house.
A pair of shoes.

It is in the Halbi riddles, which are now almost as common as those in the original Gondi, that we find rhyme and assonance. The Halbi riddle is spoken very fast with an emphasis on a central word.

Sukko rukh thai kare;
Burga bhālu hai kare.
The dry tree says *thai*;
The old bear says *hai*.
A gun.

Kurlu dongri mārlu jhāli;
Ek thanī pachās pāli.
Cut shrubs on the hill of kurlu trees;
There are fifty rafters on one pole.
An umbrella.

Ek garkcho murkiyai,
Bāru garkcho pānikhai.
The cow with the broken horn from one house drinks the water of twelve houses.
A fish-hook.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

522
524

Chiringia bāja;
Natrāl pāga.
It makes a noise like a drum;
It has a red turban.

A sarus crane.

Alliteration is also used.

Phulle phulese,
Jharte jharese.
Flower blossoms
And drops soon.

A bazaar.

Some riddles end with a taunt or challenge, a device which is generally only used when an extra line is needed to complete the rhyme.

Jhil mili tarai
Rai ratan bāri.
Ye dhandha ke nijānbe,
Baile cho nāk ke kāti.

The star sparkles
The fence is beautiful.
If you don't answer this riddle,
Your wife's nose will be cut off.

A mirror.

Karkas pāna rupas dheti
Dhandha ko nahi jānbe ghasnin ke beti.
Rough leaves, silver stem.
If you don't know this riddle,
You're a Ghasnin's daughter.

Sugar-cane.

There's a wall round the lake.
If you can't answer this, you'll be my bond-servant.

A mirror.

The stick is straight,
At the top are bells.
If you don't know what this is,
An ant will bite your bottom.

Male genitalia.

A few rather curious riddles take the form of imaginary conversations. A thorn addresses a man about to step on it. 'I see you, but you don't see me.' A householder speaks to a leaf blown in by the wind. 'Where have you come from, old chap, making your camp on my doorstep?' A flooded river as it rushes on speaks to the reeds growing in its bed, 'You stay where you are; I am going to Ratanpur'.

The riddles posed in the ghotul may not all be of Muria origin, but at least the Muria can enjoy them and see their point. Even if a man cannot make that kind of joke himself, he may claim to have some sense of humour if he enjoys reading Thurber. Many of the descriptions set out in riddle form are really witty and amusing even to the sophisticated Western mind. The riddles too gain their effect from bizarre contrasts. An axe is described as 'a roasted pig jumping from tree to tree'. Anyone who has seen a Muria roasting a pig, holding the headless creature over the fire, will appreciate the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A W32
Muria

522 524 wit of that; it is even better than the Uraon riddle on the same theme—'A parrot playing on the dry stump of a tree'.[1] Another pig riddle is about a needle and thread which is described as 'a little pig with a cord in its bottom' instead of where the pig's cord ought to be, in its nose.

And what an admirable description of palm wine! 'Outside how quiet—but in the belly how it thunders!' The stomach is always amusing; as with us there is the connotation of something gross and amiable, the fat man keen on his food. A drum is 'a fly buzzing in an elephant's belly'—stressing the contrast of the huge belly and the little fly. A winnowing-fan is the 'man with buttocks in front and stomach behind'—the same kind of absurdity as when a man puts on his trousers back to front.

An oil-press is 'the hunchback bear that pisses all round'. A gun is riddled thus: 'Tap the dry tree and the old bear says *Hai*.' This seems to me amusing in a quiet and bucolic way, but—to make one more comparison with the Uraon riddles—their description of a gun as 'a ghost speaking from a dry piece of wood'[2] is uncanny and chills the heart. It probably has more effect on a European reader: he remembers a thousand guns and the ghosts that they have made.

There is an excellent description of a letter:

> A little wood-pigeon has a fat tummy:
> Where are you off to, pigeon?

Some other witty riddles are these:

> The basket broke and out came the tiger.—*A pig excreting.*
> Always turns up punctually to work.—*The sun.*
> A black cow with a thousand feet jumps onto the Raja's food.—*A fly.*

You can almost see those dirty feet landing in the middle of the plate, scattering the royal food across the table, the face of the indignant Raja.

Two riddles expose the limitations of the human frame: 'You can see the distant hill, but not the one on top of you.' That is your own head. And 'your own back' is the answer to 'You can see all the world save one little plot of land'.

Two smutty jokes: 'The creature has a penis above and a vagina below.' *The backside of a cow.* 'He has his penis in his mouth.' *A sahib smoking a cigar.* These with their vague half-remembered associations to Havelock Ellis are probably more amusing to a European than to a Muria.

522 Really witty smut is not very common; I have been through many Paske Pata, the marriage songs which hurl rhythmic abuse at all the relations of the bridal pair, but I have found nothing that seems funny to me. Yet it obviously seems funny to the Muria, for at each new obscenity they shout with triumphant laughter. Why should it be so amusing to say 'I'll bed your sister', 'I'll copulate with your mother', 'I'll carry off my uncle's daughter'? The reason again is not sexual, but social; it is due to the absorbed attention which all Muria give to family relationships. You can always raise a laugh from a Muria audience by a reference to the Table of Affinity.

As we see elsewhere, certain relations stand in a *hassi hi ndi*, a joking relation, to one another. The time-honoured jokes are brought out again and again and always get a good hand. A man says to his *bhaicha*: 'Why not come and live on us? You can't get a living in your own house. Then I'll be able to carry off your daughter, I've always wanted to marry her.' A chelik laughs at his *malma*, mother's brother. 'I'm going to have your daughter', he says.

[1] Archer, op. cit., p. 180. [2] Ibid., p. 180.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

522 'Well', says his uncle. 'She *is* being kept for you.' 'No, I want a larger choice of girls. But I'll just carry her off for a few days.' And two samdhi joke with each other. 'I know you sleep every night with your sister', says one. 'Yes, and we all know whom *you* sleep with.' And so on interminably.

X883 522 In the ghotul, children tease each other but they are not allowed to go too far. A chelik who repeats a joke until it becomes cruel is fined. At a motiari's first menstruation, everybody is pleased and amused. 'Today the embankment of the field is broken.' 'We'd better call a lot of coolies to mend the leaking tank.' When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period of seclusion, the boys say, 'So the coolies have stopped the hole in the field. Don't let anyone make a new hole tonight'.

In the Binjhli ghotul one day the Silo, an older girl, was forcibly 'married' to the smallest boy there—this is a ghotul in which formal 'marriages' are not allowed, so the game had the double value of incongruity both in age and custom. The children performed all the marriage ceremonies, pretended to drink a lot of liquor, imitated the antics of their drunken elders, and finally dragged the pair off to bed together. But the little boy ran away. Then they pretended that a child was born, and a bundle was handed round the ghotul, the boys giving it their 'breasts' to suck. At last the little 'father' had to take it, but he threw it away crying, 'It doesn't look like me; she's been going to other boys'.

When older men come to the ghotul, there is a lot of coarse jesting about their relations with their wives. I remember the headman of Kuntpadar who is almost completely bald had himself massaged by the Belosa and said, 'How is she going to pull her comb through my few hairs' and 'If my old woman were to see me now, I wonder what she'd say. It's a good rule that wives mustn't come to the ghotul'.

X883 522 551 A boy or girl with any deformity is laughed at and is given a nickname which will remind him of it. Some of these names are themselves witty—Dhol, fat as a drum; Banga, who was a stupid baby; Pota with a big stomach; Salaidu who never does what he is told but always something else; Cholu who never stops talking, and Marin—who is like a Maria, 'never takes any notice of anyone and when you want to beat him gets out his bow and arrows'. A boy at Binjhli, of whom it is said that he cannot see a motiari without saying something to make her laugh, is called Jhola. In the same ghotul a big overgrown fellow was ragged mercilessly. He was *dokara* (old man) by day and *bokara* (goat) at night. 'All the land of the ghotul has been broken up by his great ploughshare.'

X883 522 Shamrao Hivale heard a chelik and motiari talking to each other in the ghotul; each sentence sent them into fits of laughter. 'What have you got?' said the boy. 'No, tell me first what you've got.' 'Well, I've one root and two onions.' 'And I', said the girl, 'have two sweet mangoes and a basket for your root.' 'Yes, but what am I to do with the onions?' 'They can stay out in the compound.' 'But at least put the root in your basket.'

Straightforward sexual jokes, with no social reference, about copulation and the private parts are common enough. For the Baihar Karsana (Mad Game), at Kanhargaon, boys dress up as a lunatic with his wife and child. He has a huge penis, 'she' grotesque breasts. Every time he touches them, he gets burnt; he tries to pull out her pubic hairs, and gets burnt again. The wife gives birth to a child, a cloth doll, the husband suckles it—but I need not particularize the endless buffoonery. The copulation of animals may be imitated; this is done even in the public—and very sacred—Pus Kolang dances. Excretory jokes are rare, I think, though boys laugh at girls

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

if they catch them relieving themselves. There is nothing very subtle or witty in any of this. In fact, since there are so few taboos on sex in the ghotul it is rather difficult to be funny about it.

It is worth noting that even the gods are not above a bit of horse-play. In Adnar I watched the young deity Chelik Sai, who was after all a chelik and conveniently represented by a long erect pole, amusing himself with a group of motiari. In the hands of his medium he pranced about, poking himself at the girls, chasing them about, pretending to catch them and ride upon them. Another medium carrying an iron chain amused everybody by his absurd gestures; he would dance round and round a line of girls, bend down and peer up into their faces in the most ridiculous manner. In Metawand, one of the horses of the gods was chased about the field, and roars of laughter greeted the divine sport.

A common type of funny story finds its humour in an absurd and indecorous situation. In Metawand I was told the tale of the woman who is going along the road in the rains. Some of the mud gets into her vagina and when she stops at a stream to wash it, a crab catches hold of her clitoris. She calls a man to help, but hard as he pulls at the crab he cannot make it let go. At last he tries to bite it off, but it gets hold of his nose with its spare claw, and there they all are—on a public highway, the respectable Muria with his nose stuck in the vagina of an unknown woman. After a while along comes a Lohar and gets the crab out with his tongs, but only on condition that the woman will give him 'tobacco' whenever he wants it. Some days later he comes to her house to claim his reward. She is busy cooking and asks him to lie down on a cot until she is ready. He lies on his face, but he is so excited that his erect penis goes through the strings of the cot and protrudes below. A cat thinking it a bit of meat, catches it. The situation is now reversed. The woman comes out and refuses to release the Lohar unless he declares her quit of her debt to him.

Another tale, from Aturgaon, which is known in Bengal and to the Uraon, but is given an entirely fresh and vivid turn by the Muria, again gets its effect from the sticking together, in public and deplorable juxtaposition, of incongruous things: a man and woman cannot get apart, a midwife finds her hands stuck to her head and nothing on below, a magician discovers a bullock's horns sticking to his bottom. Personally I think this tale is really funny, even in its bare and literal form.

There was a Muria Raja with one son. In his village was a barber who also had an only son. The two boys were always playing together, they would never do their work. The Raja used to tell his son to go and plough in the fields, but he always refused. At last the Raja got very angry and turned him out. The boy put on his ornaments and took a bag of money, mounted his horse and rode away. As he went he met the barber's son and told him that he was going to his future father-in-law's house. The barber's son said he would go with him.

Presently, the Raja's son said he wanted to relieve himself. There were no leafy trees at hand so the barber's son said, 'You had better take off your clothes and ornaments and go to the jungle in your loin cloth'. While the Raja's son was away, the barber's son put on his clothes and ornaments and rode off on the horse.

When the boy returned and found his things gone, he wept so loudly that Bara Deo heard his crying and came to him in the shape of an old

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

522
539

man. 'Go to your father-in-law's house', he said, 'as a servant. I will give you this charm, that whatever you say will happen.' So the boy went and took a job as servant. He found the barber's son living there in his stead, wearing his ornaments and dressed in his clothes. That night the barber's son went in to the father-in-law's daughter. The Raja's son outside the door exclaimed, 'As they are, let them be; without my order let them not separate'.

So there they were, stuck together and all night they struggled to get free. In the morning the members of the family sent their servant, the Raja's son, for a midwife to cut the unhappy pair apart.

Now as the Raja's son was bringing the midwife to the house, they had to cross a flooded river and both of them stripped themselves naked. The Raja's son said, 'Put your clothes on your head, hold them there with your two hands and so cross the river'. As the woman approached the opposite bank, the boy said, 'As you are, so remain; without my order you may not change'. So the midwife came naked, holding her hands to her head, and weeping and, of course, she could do nothing.

So then they sent the Raja's son to fetch a magician. As they were coming along together, the magician went to relieve himself but there was no water near at hand. But there was a dead bullock's head with two horns and he wiped himself on it. As he was doing so, the Raja's son exclaimed, 'As you are, so remain; without my order you may not change'. And so the magician came to the house with the bullock's head and its horns sticking to his bottom. When he saw him, the father-in-law was so frightened that he said, 'Whoever can solve this trouble, shall have my daughter and all my money'. Then the Raja's son told him what had happened and his father-in-law said, 'If you can make all well again, I will believe you, and you shall have my daughter'. At this the Raja's son removed his charms and the horns dropped from the magician's bottom, the woman covered her vagina with her hands, and the girl released the barber's son from his captivity.

Then the father-in-law killed that barber's son and married the Raja's son to his daughter.

From that day we never use barbers to cut our hair. We never use water when we relieve ourselves. If the omens are wrong we never go to betroth a girl, and we think it no fault if the unmarried sleep together.[1]

[1] In a Bengali tale, which we probably possess in a somewhat bowdlerised version, the stick of a cowherd gets stuck to his hand, the winnowing-basket of a maid servant gets stuck to her hand, a platter sticks to the hand of a Rani, and a Raja and his courtiers get stuck to their seats and have to be sawn off.—S. C. Mitra, 'A Bengali Cumulative Folk-tale of the Old Dame Lousy Type' in *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Bangalore, July 1922. Other parallels may be found in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 212ff., where the Prince makes the impostor's mouth stick to his hookah and the priest's wife stick to his shoulders as he carries her across a stream, and in A. Grignard, *Haka's Oraon Folk-lore* (Patna, 1931), pp. 46ff., where the Prince declares, 'If this fellow be her god-given bridegroom, you stools stick to the rears of these sorcerers' and of course they do. I recorded yet another version in a Juang village in Pal Lahara State. In this a goatherd who suffers from impotence has the compensatory power of sticking things together. He attaches a girl's buttocks to a rock while she is bathing and a pot to an old man's behind. There is a ribald scene where a bride and bridegroom are fixed together and the whole family tries to pull them apart. An inquisitive Brahmin bends over the place of conjunction and gets his moustache caught there. These stories are of the same order as the Toda-Kota motif of the dog becoming stuck in copulation.—M. B. Emeneau, 'Some Origin Stories', *JAOS*, Vol. LXIII, p. 163.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

he is sometimes known as the Gahania[1]—the boy who is in pawn. Elsewhere in India he is called Ghar-jamai, Ghardi-jawae, Ghar-damānd and Khāna-damānd—these expressions mean 'house-son-in-law'.

The Lamhadz is betrothed to his girl in the ordinary way, and then comes to live in her father's house, where he is treated as one of the family. If he has been living hitherto in a different village, he has to leave the ghotul there and join the ghotul of which his future bride is a motiari. He will get a ghotul-wife or a temporary partner as the case may be and he will live with her at the same time that he serves for his betrothed. We thus have the interesting situation that if a Lamhada boy comes from another village to a place where there is a *jodidār* ghotul, he gets two new girls—one his betrothed with whom he should have nothing to do, and the other his ghotul-wife with whom he will regularly cohabit.

The strongly equalitarian character of the Muria saves the institution of serving-marriage from certain obvious disadvantages. A boy is not looked down upon because he has no money. The capital that he brings to his new home is the strength of his arms, his industry and his enterprise. It is true that the hardest tasks are often given him, but these are to test his capacity and willingness to work rather than any token that he is regarded as inferior. His status in the ghotul is as good as any, and he is just as likely to become Sirdar or Kotwar as the son of the house where he is serving.

[522] But the Lamhada is a licensed subject for jesting. His close proximity to his future wife—in the same house, a definitely more 'risky' connexion than the closely disciplined relationship in the ghotul; his relations with his mother-in-law and other forbidden persons begun even before marriage; the heavy tasks and tests that are laid upon him; these are subjects for endless comment and amusement.

In Dugabangal, the boys and girls sing a *Lām dāyna pāta*, a song about a boy going as a Lamhada.

Say Lamka Lamka, say son-in-law.
Hard is the work of the Lamka boy
What is the plough made of?
The plough is made of the kosom tree.
What is the yoke made of?
The yoke is made of the siuna tree.
What is the pole made of?
The pole is made of the tinsa tree.
The bullocks are uncle and nephew;
The field is the field of the frogs;
The rice is black as the eyes of a queen.

In a Chitkul song of the Amoli ghotul, a girl is represented as chiding her father for not getting her married.

I am growing up like the beans in the garden,
Yet no one comes to marry me.
I am seven years mature, my father,
I am nearly old as you.
Yet if a boy comes to be Lamhada,
You show him the axe that weighs twelve *gana*;
You show him the basket of two hundred bamboos;
And he goes to find another girl.

[1] In Betul Gondi he is called Lamjanal and the girl he is betrothed to is Lamjana-watar.—Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 104.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CXLIV

X 883
522

Chelik of Nayanar squirts water at a motiari

Old people throw mud at each other at a Malakot wedding

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522

[p. 638 (2)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535 dance, which makes everyone laugh, while all the mediums of neighbouring villages attend, and, possessed by their godlings, leap wildly to and fro, carrying bunches of *saja* leaves in their hands or holding them over their matted hair, to the general merriment. The chief wedding dance is the bison dance, every male turning at intervals in his paces to smile and 'glad-eye' the next dancer, and each then pretending to butt the other with his bison-horns; in another figure they similarly mimic two cocks fighting. The greatest sign of skill is to be able to impale on the tip of the horns a piece of grass twisted into a ring and thrown on the ground; the dancer may before this pretend to be a young and frisky bull, butting at wisps of grass or trees, or hurling them into the air to toss them on his horns. I have seen a dancer pick a small finger ring off the ground on the tip of his horns. As among the Hill 535 Marias, and indeed most Central Provinces Gonds, there is always 831 a comic and obscene element; men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear or goat fur, and carrying clubs, nets and dummy guns, rush in and out amongst the dancers, making obscenely suggestive gestures with their clubs at the dancing or onlooking girls, and provoking roars of laughter.

[273] There is generally a pause for *landa* or *mahua* spirit sooner or later, after which the girls sometimes, before resuming the dance, sit in a bunch swaying from their hips and singing short catchy refrains, with either frankly sexual meaning or no meaning at all; and often the lads opposite make the whole company laugh by imitating them in falsetto.

The dancing and singing, it need hardly be said, lead on frequently to love-making, couples retiring into the darkness, or else starting an affair ending in experimental union and perhaps, later, in matrimony.

E. Other Amusements

524 The Bison-horn Marias' favourite pastime of cock-fighting has already been described (see page 162 above). Small wooden toys are made for the children, very crude representations of tigers or [164] other animals; and a pathetic sight at the graves of children are these toys left there for the *hanal*[1] of the children to play with. I have never found any Marias making string figures; and they have 526 shown no interest in attempts to demonstrate them. The Murias and Bhattras have innumerable games in which all the village youth takes part in the cold weather and spring nights, many of which

[1] Literally the 'Gone', used of the spirits of the dead.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*hatul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

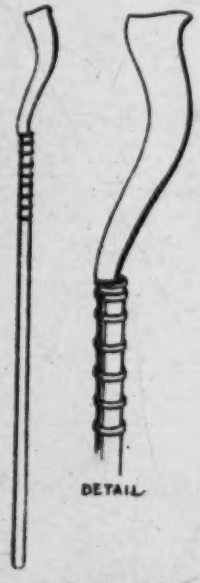

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brush-wood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *bharchakdar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol.

Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

A broom is 'the thing that licks quickly and then falls flat'; a leaf-plate is 'the little tank full of thorns' or 'the boy that morning and evening gives a share to all'; a pot of curds hawked round the village is described as 'the white cock going from house to house'.

But the main interest of chelik and motiari—for after all they are still only boys and girls—*is* in food. '*Bhaio bihân handiya ma dhyân*. As soon as morning comes, his mind is in the cooking-pot.' Of things to eat the Muria have a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the State has not yet interfered with their right to natural roots, fruit and leaves—they may take what they want so long as they do no damage.

As Grigson says of the Maria: 'The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list.'[1] I do not propose to give such a list here; but I will briefly mention the things that chelik and motiari like best. Meat and fish probably stand first in popularity—I will describe them later.

FIG. 5. Unpal rice husker. Length 5'6"

Among fruit trees, the mahua is supreme. When the flowers begin to fall, the cattle are kept tied up until the women and children have gathered them. They spread them in bright yellow patches swiftly turning brown on rocks, before their houses, in specially-made enclosures. When dry enough, the flowers are beaten with heavy sticks, sometimes with the wooden doors of a pigsty. The pulp is made into chutney with dried khamer fruit and tamarind kernels, and eaten with rice or gruel. The oil is used for cooking and lighting. The flowers are stored in baskets, and make one of the most eagerly demanded gifts when the chelik make a dance tour of a village.

Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with chilli and salt to the chelik.

Aonra fruit is liked, and there are many riddles about it. 'A green pigeon came from Porrobhum and laid its eggs on a leaf.' 'The white bird hides its eggs under its wings.' Other popular fruits are those of the thorny bhoir—'Mother bites, but daughter invites'; the kurin—'The little sparrow's liver is sweet'; the aimla, the char, the jamun and the tamarind. Tendu fruit is picked while still unripe and put in kodon chaff to mature. Sometimes it is buried in the ground and a fire is lit above it. When ripe, it is eaten raw. Wild figs are eaten ripe or dried and ground up with flour.

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

262 The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In
922 the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs
252 before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and
stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs,
[278] regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith
262 that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands
276 and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams;
● 524 a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries'
262 when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

262 Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja
843 Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[171] [1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. 'The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Saises in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 76.

[171] [2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 10ff.

[278] [3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

50

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honey-comb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitka ondār* and the *lokti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside.' They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognize four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mohu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sattapuri mohu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *mhiti mohu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'In a golden box bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 450.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

524

Wori wori singār,
Bāni bāni pungār.
Rows and rows of decorations,
There are many kinds of flowers.
—A honeycomb.
Tutri bukāte bātri perek.
In a small hole is a small seed.
—*Lokti* bees.
Untie the she-buffalo and milk the peg.
—Getting honey from a hive.
A herd of cattle has one leader.
—The swarm and its queen.
Many flowers grow in the tank.
—A honeycomb.
Flower, flower, how it flowers!
What comes out of the flower?
—Bees.

I have recorded one song about bees, but I was unable to discover any games that illustrated the taking of a hive.

539

Song

The bees suck the kosra flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The bees suck the paddy flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The Manjhi says he'll give his daughter
To the boy who kills the bees.
An orphan chelik kills the bees,
He brings the hive and shows the Manjhi.
The Manjhi gives the boy his daughter.
The bees suck the mandia flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.

VII. Oil

Ann kare motai, tel kare chiknai, kapare kare barai. Food fattens, oil adorns, clothes dignify.—Muria saying

252

The Muria make many different kinds of oil; some for use in their carts, some for light, some for medicine, but most, of course, for food. The *ghranyi* is extracted from mahua seed and is used mainly for cooking. So is the oil gained from the usual oil-seed crops, 'the slender trees that have a hundred babies', which are often raised in the *bāri* gardens. Seeds of the sarai tree are collected and make a useful oil. The fat of lizards and the grubs that live in the date-palm and the fat of cow, buffalo, goat, pig, cock, and several kinds of deer all yield oil which can be used for cooking and to mix with food. For lighting purposes and to oil the wheels of bullock-carts, oil made from the seed of the karanji, bandgul or kosom is used. Oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and

[313 493]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *sagrâm*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats. 224 [411]

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongara* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hâyna mânjhi*). [324]

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachâr*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught. 223

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

FIG. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

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[411]

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

223 arrangement of strings attached to a wooden rod called the *pawda* which keeps them from tangling. This is illustrated in Fig. 11. When a boy is going to take the hawk to hunt, he wears a goatskin finger-glove to protect his hand from being scratched by the claws. He hangs round his neck a little bamboo fish-basket containing frogs and lizards. This is carefully closed with a cloth tied round the mouth. He goes with the hawk sitting either on his hand or on his head, and with his free hand he holds the bough of a tree to beat the undergrowth for birds. Generally two or three boys go out together and when they have started any game they release the hawk from the slip-knot by which it has been tied and throw it into the air with the right hand from behind the shoulder. The hawk flutters wildly for a moment and then darts for its prey. When it catches anything, it sits down perfectly still on the ground. The boys run after it and recover it without difficulty. On hunting days the hawk is kept hungry and is only rewarded after it has made a kill.

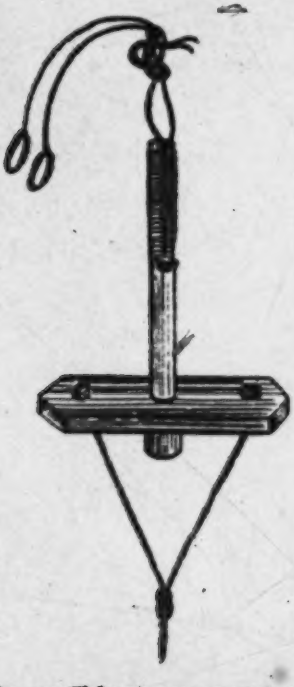

FIG. 11. Elaborate arrangement of strings and a wooden peg attached to the leg of a falcon, intended to prevent the strings from tangling
Length of upright rod 3½"

[524]

A riddle—'He makes a snare for others, but his own feet are caught'—refers to the hovering hawk which appears to have been caught in an invisible snare. There is a saying that an idle man who does no work yet always turns up punctually for food is like 'the vulture who finds it easy enough to eat a dead bullock and the hawk who can always catch a little bird'.

The following Ghotul Pata about Lingo's son, Netturgundi, throws an interesting light on traditional Muria falconry:[1]

539
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The Song of Netturgundi

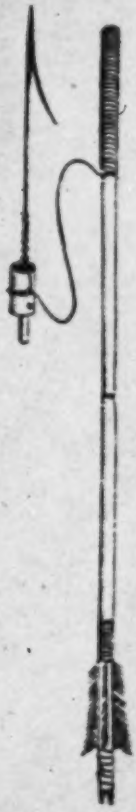
Who was that Raja? He was Netturgundi.
He had a hawk. He was wondering what to do.
He took the hawk to hunt; here and there he went.
The hawk sat on his head. He took his gold and silver stick.
He slung the fish-basket behind his back.
So, with his hawk on his head, the Raja went to hunt.

To the Field of the Frogs the Raja took the hawk.
There he hunted, there he got nothing.
He thought 'Now where shall I go?' and went to the Fallow Field.
'I will hunt there; some animals are grazing there.

[1] A hawk plays an important part in the Pardhan tale of Mara Kshattri. Its body was golden and it was fed on ghee and sweets. *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 70ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

worms and a peacock feather is attached to the line as a float. There are riddles about both hook and float. The hook is 'the bullock with the broken horn that drinks the water of twelve villages'; the float is represented as saying to the fish, 'You are eating secretly, but I'll tell brother what you're up to'.



Nets are also used. The *changori* is a net with a very fine mesh which takes at least a year to make. It is weighted with little balls of baked earth or iron and thrown into the water. Other nets are the *jhorli*, the *tāngra* and the *sarka*. These are pushed or dragged through the water, or stretched across the narrow part of a stream and the fish beaten into them.

The *māndar* is a net of hemp cord attached to a bamboo trap which is set in rapids and narrow streams. The *kurjār* is a rigid net. Ten bamboos joined at one end radiate outwards and a net is spread over their points. The middle of the net is raised by a cord attached to the top of the trap, and it is then thrust down into the water. The *palna* is the net attached to a triangular bamboo frame which is pushed through the water, the fish being caught in the belly of the net simply by the pressure of the stream. The *chargod* (Plate XIX) is attached to bamboos tied together at the end of a long pole and is dipped into the water.

The *dundka* or *sondri* is a bamboo basket with a wide bottom tapering sharply towards the top with holes in the upper side. It is used (Plate XVIII) in conjunction with the *dandar* (also called *talai* and *bissar*), a long bamboo cylinder measuring about five and a half feet, about two feet wide at the large open end and gradually narrowing: inside is a spiral with bamboo points projecting inwards.[1] The small end is placed in the hole at the side of the *dundka*, and the water drives the fish down the trap and thus into the basket.

The *thāpa* (Halbi) or *utād* (Gondi) is a circular plunge-trap, three feet wide at the bottom. A Chherta song refers to it:

Thāpa re thāpa, māchh māriya thāpa,	O trap, trap, fish-killing trap,
Ye gāon cho leha manke, bāte nawun chāpa.	Take the boys of this village and press them down.

FIG. 12. Arrow with detachable head, used for shooting fish
Length of shaft 21'

The *chodiya* is a bamboo scoop two-and-a-half feet long leading into a pocket extending another one-and-a-half feet. It is placed in a field at some point where the water escapes, and catches crabs, frogs and little fish. 'In the middle of the field Gango's son is weeping *chir chir*.' This scoop may some-

[1] This trap resembles the Fenland eel-trap used in the Severn near Worcester. It is known as a grig in Fenland, and is made of split osiers. In Worcester the narrow end is called the starling. It has two cones of pointed sticks called fuckins in Worcester and chairs in Fenland. Chair is an old word for the narrow part of a river.—See *Man*, 1934, p. 178 and 1936, p. 179.

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Muria

times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long.

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Neānek korinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'.

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes.

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden.

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first.

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2]

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Koya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 52.

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Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

XII. The Sago-Palm

273 137 Another very popular drink is the juice of the sago-palm, and since the Muria have developed many legends round it I will give the subject a section of its own.[1]

The sago-palm (*Caryota urens*, Linn.), which is known as *gorga marra* in Gondi and as *salpi rukh* in Halbi, is widely distributed over the greater part of the State. It is an erect monoecious tree, with axiliary spadices, which sometimes grows to the height of sixty or eighty feet. Its long bipinnate leaves with their fish-tail ends are sometimes twenty feet long. The aboriginals, whether Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria or Muria,[2] regard the trees primarily as a source of liquor, though they use the inner tissues of the stem and the wood for other purposes. The popularity of the tree is shown in the riddle, [524] 'Above sits the parrot, below is the thrashing-floor', suggesting that under the beautiful sago-palm a great crowd of people gather, and in such songs as '*Waliya wāto gorga ale māmile*—O uncle, the sago-palms are everywhere you go'. Unlike mahua spirit, however, salpi juice is not usually used in worship or on other ceremonial occasions.[3] It is rather a drink for one's private and friendly hours, though it may often supplement a failing supply of mahua at a marriage or funeral.

824 538 As always, legends and stories gather about anything that is intimately connected with the life of the people. There are several different accounts of the origin of the sago-palm, but all agree in connecting it with youth and gaiety. It came into being when maidens danced together or when boys pursued their loves. In the north of the State the most common legend traces its origin to an expedition of boys and girls from the house of Bhagavan, which came down to earth to dance and bathe.[4] One such party came to Chikhli village on the northernmost plateau of the State and after bathing, the girls left behind the cowrie ornaments of their hair. These ornaments are very popular among the motiari; sometimes a mass of cowries covers the whole of the back of their heads. When the girls found they had lost their ornaments they were angry and cursed the cowries saying, 'Now turn into sago-palms and we will always live with you and will never lose you again.' For this reason it is said that the cowrie is the tuft of feathers that fell from Lingo's turban. Yet again it is said that the tree was a feather stuck in the hair of a motiari which fell off as she was going to Penjori village to dance the Diwali dances, and turned into a tree when she got angry with it. But everywhere it is agreed that the tree springs up in all those places where the girls either from the house of Bhagavan or from some earthly ghotul used to go to dance. In the forests above the Raughat and all along the northern plateau there are a great many of these trees and these were the very parts where the girls went for their dancing in the dawn of the world.

There are, however, some other versions of the origin of the palm. In Mule village the Muria say that when the seven salphi maidens (Gorga Kanyang) were born they only had one placenta between them. This was cut off and

[1] For a fuller account see my article 'The Sago-Palm in Bastar State', *JBAS. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII (N.S. 1942), pp. 69–78.

[2] Grigson is not quite correct in saying that Hill and Bison-horn Maria 'almost alone in Bastar use salpi liquor'.—Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. The Muria of the north are among the most enthusiastic drinkers of salphi juice in the whole State.

[3] According to Thurston, the fermented juice is used ceremonially at marriages and festivals by the Poroja and Savara.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 216, 322.

[4] The seven heavenly damsels who came down to dance and bathe on earth is a common motif in Indian folk-tales. See Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 100.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

buried by their mother. Almost immediately the seven sisters ran away, and when the mother could not find them, she went to the place where the placenta was buried and let the milk from her breasts fall upon it. As the days went by there gradually grew up from the placenta a tree which was full of milk. This was the sago-palm that was born from milk and always gives milk. There is a riddle—'Milk comes from the horns of the buffalo'.

Another story comes from Pharasgaon. Long ago there were eleven brothers and one day as they went hunting in the jungle they grew very thirsty. They came to a group of palm trees and rested in their shade. The youngest brother looked up at the tree and said, 'This is a very fine tree. Surely there is water hidden in its branches! I can see a pot tied there. Who can climb up and get it?' Each of the brothers tried to climb the tree and failed, for when they were nearly at the top they saw that the pot was full of blood. But the youngest boy made a rope of siari fibre and climbed up and when he looked in the pot the juice appeared to him as milk. He brought it down and they all drank of it. The ten elder brothers fell senseless but the youngest boy was intoxicated with pleasure. But he grew afraid thinking that his brothers would die. Then his god said to him, 'Offer a pig to the Gorga Kanyang and they will recover'. He sacrificed a pig and his brothers sat up again.

This is the origin of the sacrifices that are made to the tree before it is tapped. It is believed that if no offerings are made the juice turns into blood and makes the people ill. If offerings are withheld for a long time, the tree dries up.

In the Chota Dongar area, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar and the Muria of their immediate neighbourhood trace the palm to Tallur Muttai or Mother Earth herself. At the beginning of the world, Tallur Muttai came with Kadrengal (whom some call her brother and some her husband) to the forest of Bastar. Kadrengal was innocent of sexual desire, and so Tallur Muttai created sago-palms with the hope that their juice would excite him. When Kadrengal first went to tap the trees, he tied a thread from the cut peduncle down to a hole which he dug below, but the wind blew it to and fro and the juice was scattered. Then Tallur Muttai taught him how to tie a gourd to catch the juice and place a leaf to guide it safely. Kadrengal drank a great quantity; desire came to him; and he went to Tallur Muttai.

But the Hill Maria of Jharsgaon and Nalnar say that the palms originated when the seven Kanyang, daughters of Bhagavan, came down to Singardip (the world) to bathe. They combed their hair, and wherever their hairs fell the trees sprang up. They give the names of three of the Maidens of the sago-palm—Puse Kanyang, Ganganangi Kanyang and Kondakalbuli Kanyang.

The palms are carefully guarded. Sometimes a large bamboo mat is tied round the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree.

This is the method of extracting the juice. The ends of the flowering spadices are cut and hollow bamboos, gourds or earthen pots are fixed where they can catch the flow of sap. Bamboos or gourds are simply tied to the tree, but a pot may be fixed in position with a couple of poles below it tied round the trunk and fixed together supported by a string tied to a bough above. The pot is placed inside a basket and its mouth tied to the spadix, to the end

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Muria

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Budha ta jāwa undāna bedur gatta te mak dāyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

842 Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead. 789 A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform spells to stop her supplanter from realizing the fullest joys of marriage. The Constable of Modenar said that Mayakuka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

842 Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Husband and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of 578 Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel [586] miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

843 A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (intercourse), and *paidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to space confinements properly. After a year, 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months, and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'. But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puerperium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them? But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

843 In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is 844 interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements. The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

844 Until the stump falls the father is in a state of taboo. He must not cook, he must not leave the house to visit his friends, he cannot go to the ghotul. No one will accept his tobacco and he cannot share in a sacrificial feast.

843 Certain attempts are made to influence and to diagnose the sex of unborn children. If a motiari, after fasting for twelve hours at her first menstruation, eats a dish of *khichri*, a mixture of pulse and rice without salt, her children will likewise be a mixture of boys and girls. If she goes to the jungle on this day and brings home a bundle of leaves on her hip, she is likely to bear girls.

Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman.

●[524] *Chipta upre jai phar,* There is fruit inside the basket,
Jāna bābu kai phar? How can you know what fruit it is?

845 Abnormal births are not common but are not unknown. Twins are called *jāmar jiya* and are not regarded as either particularly lucky or unlucky. Twins with a single placenta are born if the mother eats a double fruit such as a double plantain or tendu or uses double leaves as a plate. Sensible women are careful to avoid doing this but sometimes accidents happen. In Rengagondi, there are twins, named Joga and Jogi, who were born because the mother ate off a double leaf at the end of her period. Such twins may also be due to a woman's passing between two men on her way back to the house from her menstrual bath. The shadows of both men fall upon her and the twins resemble them. In some places, it is thought if she passes at this time a man holding a baby she will have twins—if it is a boy, she will have male twins; if a girl, male and female. If the woman lies on her back after intercourse so that the man's seed divides into two streams, twins may result. When there are two placentae it is often supposed that the woman has been to two men and the twins, therefore, have different fathers. The woman may also have had intercourse with a ghost or spirit on the day following intercourse with her husband. Where this is suspected, the twins (if boy and girl) are called Dukhalu and Dukhali and are vaguely regarded as unlucky.

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Pandru of Bermakot twice had twins, from different wives. The first were from the Manjaro whom he made pregnant in the ghotul and were both girls: the second were from the Nirosa, another of his ghotul lovers, and were both boys. Pandru thinks he had twins because he went to each of the girls twice on the night following the post-catamenial bath. If this is done during the rains, girls will be born: if during the hot weather, there will be boys.

A foot-presentation is called in Gondi *tāli-janamta* or 'cow-birth', for the child is born like a calf. This is regarded as very unlucky indeed and the family must immediately protect the child by waving round it a bundle of burning grass. Such births are generally expected to be fatal to the mother. A *kera bānjh* is a woman with only one child; 'she is like a plantain which gives fruit once on a stalk and never again'.

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II. Name-giving

559 After about six weeks the mother stops her ritual bathing and resumes her domestic duties inside the house. It is now time to give the child a name, a name—it must be remembered—which the little chelik or motiari will hardly use during the period of childhood, which will never be taken by husband or wife after marriage, and will be uttered only with reluctance after death. Even then a later nickname may supplant this *mur-podor* or original name.

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Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Life of Young Children

In youth the spider's web is the sky.—Muria proverb

Muria babies, who are suckled for at least two years and then often weaned at the Jata Pandum, seem to be happy and contented. The Muria are good parents, proud of their children, tolerant towards them in many ways, anxious to teach them things, delighted as they see them grow. 'When a young child walks for the first time, the earth trembles for two-and-a-half days.' But directly a child is old enough to play, he is regarded as old enough to work. The early stage of 'eating while playing and playing while eating' is soon over and the little girls and boys have to take their share of the work of the house. Tiny girls may often be seen staggering about with the youngest baby in their arms or helping their mothers to cow-dung the house. Sometimes you may see a line of boys and girls following their elders back from the jungle, each with a tiny basket of fruit or a minute bundle of leaves on their heads. During this period the children are very dependent on their parents and go everywhere with them. A boy takes his little axe and follows his father to the jungle. A girl takes a pot and goes with her mother to the well.

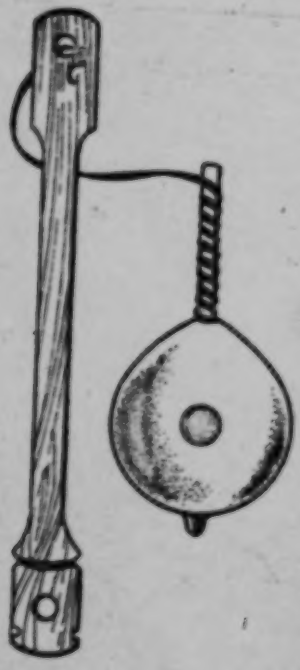

Fig. 16. Spinning-top
Length of upright wooden stick, 8½"

It is now that the parents, and especially the fathers, enjoy the happiest relations with their children. You may often see a father carrying his baby son to the ghotul and sleeping with him there, or taking him to a festival, sometimes even encouraging him to dance as a medium before the clan-god. The father may give a boy a tiny drum or axe, toys that are just like the real thing, or he may make his children little wooden carts or ploughs.

From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. Tattooing

The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable

her catamenial period, and so Pendrawandin is considered by many an untouchable goddess. 776

The famous Kanda Dokara, father of Lingo, came into being in a very simple way. This is the story they tell at Kuatpadar. 773

> There were seven brothers and their wives. One day the women went to the jungle for grass to make brooms. Six of them made big bundles and put them on their heads to carry home, but the youngest wife only made a very small bundle and was unable to lift it. She called the others and they could not lift it either. Then she said, 'Whether you are god or devil, let me lift this bundle and when I get home I'll give you food-sacrifice'.
>
> When she reached home she was afraid that her husband would be angry with her for bringing such a small bundle, so she threw it into the pigsty. When her husband asked her where her grass was, she said, 'Who knows what was the matter; there was some god or ghost in it; I threw it into the pigsty'. The husband went laughing to get it, but when he too could not lift it up, he said, 'If you are really a god, give me a son'. Then he undid the grass and found inside a root, and they all worshipped it. Afterwards the Muria had twelve sons, the eldest of whom was Kanda Dokara and the youngest Lingo. He used to carry the root with him as a weapon. This is why we swear by the grass in a broom and use it to find out why we are ill and where our cattle have strayed.

Such is a typical account of the origin of the gods. There is a difficulty; sometimes it is an epidemic, sometimes it is some lighter matter as in the story I have just recounted. But always the god manifests himself by causing some hitch in the smooth working of human life. In Adner in 1940, there was an outbreak of cattle disease and the Siraha-mediums declared that a new god had been born, and was not receiving his due honour. A great festival, which I will presently describe, was held to appease the affronted deity and stop the disease.

Any strange or inexplicable event may bring a new god into being; the subdivisions of clans, the migration of peoples, the desire to imitate the Hindus are equally potent in the creation of gods. We must now consider the nature of these gods and who they are.

III. The Nature of the Gods

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There is only one true, but it gives many kinds of losses—
A god (dev) that causes many kinds of trouble.—Muria riddle.

The gods of the Muria, as we have seen, are many and varied. The majority of them are, I think, comparatively modern. Some have been imported, some are the result of Hindu influence, some have come into being as a result of dreams, some at a magician's whim. It is only the Earth, the Dead, the clan-god and the Maharaja which are ancient and fundamental to Muria worship and belief. [171]

But many other gods are worshipped, the extent of their cult and the notice they receive depending on the instructions given by the Siraha from time to time. For just as Muria ceremonies are not arranged in a precise formulary but rather make up a repertory from which the priest on the instructions of the Siraha will draw what he requires, so also the vast pantheon of the Muria may be regarded as a sort of repertory of deities out of which, from

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Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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Mahapurub was working in his fields. His wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. There he sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon. The sun, who is a man, drank a lot of the blood and that is why he is always red. The moon, who is a woman, only drank a little and is always pale.

When Mahapurub's wife returned and could not find her son, she ran to tell her husband and they were full of sorrow. But next morning when the sun rose red into the sky, Mahapurub cried to his wife, 'Look, there's your baby in the sky; don't weep, for you will always be able to look at him'.

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In many villages the Muria know the widely-dispersed story of how the moon tricked the sun into swallowing his children.[1] They generally say that the moon is subject to a menstrual period and when her time comes she hides herself, thus accounting for the dark nights of the month. The sun works all day. We cannot see him at night because every evening he goes to his wife, but the Muria are not quite clear or consistent about this because some of them think that on account of the stealing and sacrifice of Mahapurub's child, sun and moon were cursed to remain for ever apart. Some Muria say that the sun's wife is Sukko, who is the daughter of the moon and it is she who keeps him company during the night. In Muria riddle the moon is 'the fat bullock that loses its horn in its old age'.

[524]

The stars are explained in many different ways. In Ulera they said that they were the shavings of the great tree Huppe Piyer. In Aturgaon they said that they were the babies of the moon. In Berma they said they were the moon's servants. The moon brings her children out at night and plays with them. Everyone believes that the stars are alive. 'The stars are looking at us', they sometimes say, and it is almost uncanny to hear them speaking of sun and moon and stars as though they were actual living people. Riddles about the stars are common: '*Mesel hadang pasalk*: the whetstone is covered with *mung*-grains.' 'The dish is so full of areca nuts that you cannot count them.' 'Take a stick in your hand and count the cowries.'

[524]

The eclipse is not explained otherwise than by the usual stories current in central India,[2] but the Muria have their own way of observing the event. It is regarded as a very good time for snaring animals or catching fish. Women dig holes in their yards and pretend to throw out water with a basket crying, 'Now we are clearing the stream for fish'. This little rite will result in good fishing expeditions later on. Boys make their *gulel*-slings, for as the moon catches the sun so will the pellet from the sling hit its mark. They also begin making nets and traps of every kind for the same reason, and put the bamboo baskets and platforms in the fields to catch and dry fish. Nets for birds are set and traps for animals arranged.

Thunder and lightning is explained in several different ways. Some say that lightning is the great *dandai* fish which leaps out of the ocean of universe into the sky, its scales flashing in the sun. In other villages they say that thunder and lightning comes from the smithy of the heavenly Lohar who is working iron in Porrobhum. The thunder is the sound of his heavy hammer;

[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 331f. for references to Uraon, Santal and Turi legends.
[2] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 21; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 530 and 550; *The Baiga*, p. 334; Enthoven, op. cit., pp. 34f.; J. J. Modi, 'A Few Ancient Beliefs about the Eclipse', *J. Anth. Soc. Bom.*, Vol. III (1894), pp. 346ff. Penzer has a useful summary in *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. II, pp. 8ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

I. Dress and Fashions

THE chelik and motiari, as we have seen, pay a lot of attention to their charming persons, so much attention indeed and of such a varied nature that it is not easy to describe their fashions in a single chapter. But the task is made somewhat easier by the tradition of ghotul solidarity. To be in the fashion, according to Muria ideas, it is essential that all the girls of any one village should look exactly alike. They must have the same coloured cloth round their loins, the same ornaments in their ears, the same bangles on their wrists, the same kind of beads about their necks. The Belosa sets the fashion and all her subjects follow it. There is a little more latitude allowed to boys, especially to the leaders. The Malik of Jungani can wear a wonderful comb fashioned with a chelik and motiari on horseback; the Kotwar of Chandabera can have a tobacco-pouch shaped like a fish in his turban; the Manjhi of Kabonga can go about with a beautifully-carved wooden bird perched on the comb in his hair. But girls cannot do that sort of thing; for them originality is bad taste.

There are five main fashion areas—the villages along the northern border, the Jhoria of the south and centre, the Muria of the north-west near the Abujhmar, the villages round Kondagaon and along the main road and the eastern forest approaching the Jeypore boundary. Each of these areas has its own special style.

There are, however, certain general observations that may be made of Muria everywhere. All Muria wear the same kind of cloth. It is taboo for a Muria to weave, and most of their cloth comes from the local Ganda and Mahara weavers. The cloth is good, but unenterprising, generally plain white with a red stripe or band. The chelik rarely wear a dhoti; all they can usually afford is a loin-cloth tied round the waist, passed between the legs and allowed to hang down in front. Well-to-do boys use a broader cloth that covers the buttocks, but most leave them bare and only conceal the private parts with a narrow strip that forms a sort of bag.

Girls wear a small cloth, supported back and front by their waist-string, to cover the private parts. Over it they wind round the loins a small strip of cloth like a very short skirt, carrying the end up and over one shoulder so as somewhat to conceal the breasts, and tucking it in again behind. In the Jhoria and north-western parganas, both breasts are often left exposed when no stranger is near, and nearly always one breast is visible—a fact that gives point to the riddle: 'The cow-shed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get inside.'

Muria boys and men usually wear a turban, and this varies not so much from a desire to be in the fashion but according to what one can afford. The classical Muria turban is tied round and round to form a sort of box on the head; in eastern Kondagaon the overhanging flaps are carefully decorated with coloured fringes. This box is rightly so named, for it not only covers the head, but serves as a receptacle for combs, mirrors, leaf-pipes and anything else that a boy may wish to take about.

Neither motiari nor married women cover their heads in conventional village fashion. It is a mark of a Muria girl that her head should be proudly free.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

301 The cowrie belt is almost unknown, but the chelik carry strings of cowries, bells, beads and tobacco-pouches at the waist.

In this area, the girls have either floppy brass *pairi* slipping down over the heels, or the thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the ankles.

Finally, in the extreme east of Kondagaon, the chelik recapture something of the aesthetic attractiveness of the Jhoria. Once more elaborate necklaces of small red and blue beads appear; a head-band of cowries and black sago palm fibre is often worn (Fig. 89). The chelik's turban is specially attractive: 291 it is tied straight round into a box with one flap hanging over the top, the other falling behind. The boys themselves attach pretty fringes of pink, mauve and red tassels to these flaps.

For protection against rain, all the Muria make large round hats of leaves placed between a double bamboo framework, and long shields of the same material to hang from their shoulders. In a few villages near the Abujhmar they make the *tarali*-cloak of strips of retted bark characteristic of the Hill Maria.

II. Hair-dressing

302 The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria. 832 You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive.

Care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render 302 to a chelik; it is during the hair-combing in the evening that friendships become 515 intimate and proposals are made; wherever she is, in camp for a marriage or festival, resting in the heat of the day while working on the roads, or just ● 524 sitting in the house, a girl takes any chance she can of cleaning a boy's head, and examining it for lice, 'the thousand babies housed in a dry tree', 'the black cows that live in the thick forest, bothering everyone and drinking red water', 'the tigers that breed so quickly in the jungle'. She catches them with the end of her comb, or with her fingers, and kills them with thumb and forefinger. 'Ten went to hunt', says the riddle, 'but two did the killing.'

302 The chelik keep their hair fairly long. A straight fringe is cut across the forehead, and from the parting above it the hair is brushed back and tied in a bun usually covered by the turban. Some of the Muria living under the shadow of the Abujhmar follow the Hill Maria custom of shaving the whole head except for a patch on the crown which is carefully combed back and tied in a knot.

The chelik cut and trim their hair once every month or so, when the motiari who comb it tell them to. They cut and shave each other's heads with small razors made by the village Lohar. The motiari keep their boys closely shaven as to their chins, but they seem to like a good moustache. There is no other reason for shaving: the Muria, except those who have begun to imitate Hindu customs, do not shave at funerals or other religious occasions.

Girls do not cut their hair. They part it down the centre, and very carefully smooth it down and back. Behind the head they wind it over the small wooden blocks called *kunjar balla* (Fig. 91) which are carved for them by the chelik, and tuck it in underneath, fixing it in place with the *kunjar koto*, beautifully made wooden pins (Fig. 90)—also the gifts of chelik—to which are often attached bunches of cowries, coloured wool or strings of beads.

Both boys and girls treat their hair with oil, generally oil specially expressed by a motiari, a mother or sister. Many Muria now carry little bazaar mirrors which they constantly use.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Jhoria have the most elaborate hair-ornaments. Bands of beads (Fig. 85) are made by the motiari with great art and taste, and are worn round

FIG. 86. A cowrie belt from the Jhoria area
(See p. 389)

the head by both boys and girls. Thick bands of blue, white and red beads, or three narrower bands, give the children a distinctive and delightful appearance. Sometimes long strings of beads are also wound over and round the turban. Boys and girls alike delight to stick feathers in their hair—feathers of junglecock, peacock, the racket-tailed drongo. Girls often wear tufts of the sago or date palms and any flowers that may be available; they have a special affection for the marigold, which is 'the most beautiful of flowers', and the crimson velvety *siliyāri*.

The motiari in the Jhoria country tie great masses of cowries over the bun into which their hair is tied, mixing them with balls of red, green and blue wool.

There is a pretty game called Atoi-mal-mal Karsana in which the girls stand in a half-circle singing 'Make my hair soft and *mal-mal*'. Each girl in turn goes round the circle smoothing and parting the hair of her fellows.

In the east of the State, in the villages round Ulera, I found many boys using hair-retainers (Fig. 92) made out of old umbrella ribs by the local Muria Lohar.

But, of course, the chief hair-ornament is the comb, a subject of such importance that I describe it in a separate section.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

514 For defecation, the Muria go into the fields or jungle. Their villages are always clean of human excreta; if a child relieves itself in the house, the mother immediately cleans the place and sprinkles ash over it. One of the instructions given by Lingo in the first ghotul was that the boys and girls should never relieve themselves on the paths. Moreover since they do not wash themselves with water after defecation, the banks of streams or rivers are usually clean—in striking contrast to the horrible condition of streams near many a more 'advanced' village.

[824] After defecation the Muria clean themselves with leaves, but they do not use siari, saja, char, sarai, tendu or karmata leaves for this. The saja is, of course, sacred; the tendu also is connected with Lingo. Sarai, karmata and siari leaves are used as leaf-plates.

A strict rule against urinating in the ghotul greatly helps to preserve its cleanliness and freshness. The rule is not, however, universal. In a few ghotul there are little holes in the wall down near the floor which are used as urinals. In others, though the children are not allowed to urinate inside the building, they may do so against the fence. Generally both boys and girls stand to urinate—a fact which gives point to the riddle: 'Shoot the arrow with all your might, yet it still falls beneath your feet.'[1]

[524]

V. Tobacco

276 In many ghotul, the distribution of tobacco is an important part of the evening ritual. As the girls go round for Johar, the Belosa and her assistant
*883 put a few pinches of finely-powdered tobacco into the chelik's hands. One of the boys has the special duty of seeing that there is a proper supply and that the girls prepare it daily.

The legendary origin of tobacco is described in a story from Kachora.

> Long ago a party of Muria went to visit the Maharaja during Dassera. On their way they came to a spot where a barren woman had been cremated. This woman had been very beautiful, but no one cared for her—for who goes to a withered tree for shelter from the sun? She complained to Nandraj and he said, 'Though they take no notice of you now, once you are dead they won't be able to get on without you.' So after her death, a beautiful plant sprung from her ashes.
>
> One of the party went to relieve himself and saw the plant. He picked a leaf and began to chew it. He found it sweet and distributed it to the others. On his way home, he went to get more leaves, but found the plant had dried. So he took the seeds and planted them in his garden. When the leaves were ready he chewed them and felt a little drunk. The feeling was so pleasant that whenever he had no leaves in his mouth he longed for them. This is why tobacco is called *surti* [after the Chhattisgarhi word *surta*, longing or remembrance].
>
> Every morning tobacco plants give off a sort of smoke because of the dew that settles on the leaves during the night. So the tobacco used in a leaf-pipe is called *dungya*, or smoke.[2]

The chelik, and still more their elders, suffer to the full this *surta*, or longing for tobacco, which they either chew or smoke in small tightly rolled leaf-

[1] The Muria ghotul is generally much less obscene than the Uraon dhumkuria I visited. A writer has described the inner room of the Ao Naga morung which is used as a urinal as 'emitting such an obscurious smell that it makes even the second room unfit for entrance'.—S. N. Majumdar, 'The Ao Nagas', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 53.

[2] Cf. the Kond story on p. 308.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
539

At midnight the umaguji bird cried *Ha huhu*. The girl shrieked with fright and said 'O Lakari, let me sleep near you, for I am afraid'. Then the bird cried again and the girl said, 'What is the bird saying?' Lakari replied, 'It says "Drive on, drive on!"'. So now there was no mother, no father, there was no one in the world, and he went to her. From the bird's talk came the boy's copulation. Every time the bird cried, the girl clung again to Lakari.

In this way Lakari took each of the girls in turn, and at last every one was pregnant and he had seven score sons. When the boys were old enough to earn their living, Lakari got bullocks for them. In this way family life began and villages were formed, because a girl was frightened of a bird.

II. The Anatomy and Mythology of Sex

831
192

The Muria seem to have a rather sketchy knowledge of the sexual organs and their functions. They have no idea of the purpose of the testes or of the existence of the hymen. They do, however, recognize the clitoris and understand its function. Their vocabulary is limited, but sufficient to cover the main points of the external genitalia.[1] They have half-a-dozen words for the penis, three or four for the vagina (the most popular simply means 'the lower part of something'), and words for the labia majora (*pude adawing*, vagina flesh), the urethra (*urhul bukha*, urine hole) and the clitoris (*titiguta*, a word which like its Graeco-English equivalent probably has reference to the organ's power of erection and excitement). The Muria word for orgasm is *pusi* or *wijja pesina*, 'the coming out of the seed'.

There is no word for love in Gondi. The Muria use the Chhattisgarhi word *mâya* and sometimes *pirit* or *prem*, which are simply corruptions of the ordinary Hindi words. But neither do they have any words for lust or desire, and for erotic excitement use expressions that are only descriptive of the physical sensations of sex—*penda kohalta* said of a girl means that her 'vagina is itching'; *boudę dokalta* that the 'penis is quivering'. The expression *girda kiyâna* is sometimes used for 'making love'; *girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'. *Girda ator* can be used in the sense of 'being in love'. But abstract and emotional terms are rare in Gondi, as in most primitive languages.

831
524

Sexual riddles are interesting as showing how direct and forthright are the Muria's references to the genitals and sexual intercourse.

Chapti pakna gobivailaisch.
The flat stone itches.

—The vagina.

Sulung dondi bundle burna.
The pole is long, its bottom is black.

—The penis.

Kondâng lewa botang.
The fish that has no eyes.

—The penis.

[1] I notice that our authorities often confuse the names of the genitalia, perhaps because the tribes themselves, like the British and French, use a bewildering variety of synonyms for them. Ward gives as Gondi words *prem* or *muuchalee* for the 'affections', *mya lalatur* for 'beloved', and *nahilia* for 'to kiss'. There are no such words in Trench's vocabulary.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
S73

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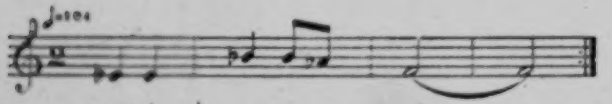


O rere loyo rela rela. Re re loyo re rela. Re re loyo rerela. O rerela rela rela rerela rela rererela rerela rela rerelo oy.

The word Relo, however, has had a disastrous effect upon the Muria: it has served as a hypnotic drug that has destroyed their poetic faculty. Their songs, compared with those current in other parts of aboriginal India, are singularly devoid of inspiration.

II. The Eighteen Instruments

X883
S34

Lingo was the first of musicians; he brought music to the world; he had eighteen instruments and played them all at once. Many Muria cannot say more than that there were eighteen, but some can give their names, though the lists do not always agree.

In a Lingo Pata sung by the Phulpar chelik as they set out on their Pus Kolang expedition, they described:

The eighteen instruments of Lingo Rai,
The Dhol Rai hanging from his shoulder,
The Hakum Rai under his arm,
The Madan Parrai drum hanging from his loins,
The Paijna Rai on his feet,
The Dhusir Rai played across the chest,
The Jhikar Rai played when wind passes through the nose,
The Sulur Rai played with wind passing through the mouth.

The Phulpar boys did not know more than this. But Suku of Bandopal knew the names of all eighteen, as do many of the chelik in the typically 'Jhoria' Parganas. The list is as follows:

1. *The nissan drum.*—A large single-membrane iron drum played with two sticks on the ground at festivals. When a new skin is needed, the Muria offer a bull to Lingo Pen, skin it and begin to prepare the hide that very day. The drum is also sometimes called *māwāloti* or *lohāti*.

2. *The goga dhol drum.*—A single-membrane wooden drum, 14" deep with a diameter of 17", covered with cow-hide.[1] It is slung round the shoulders and beaten with a single stick held in the right hand at festivals and at the funerals of very old and famous people.

3. *The dhol drum.*—This is a large circular double-membrane wooden drum, 15" deep and 17" in diameter, covered with cow-hide, which is fixed in place with a bamboo ring and cords of leather. It is said to be the local habitation of Bara Pen and Lingo, and is beaten with a single stick at festivals. Its loud and solemn note gives point to the riddle—

[524]

Kaide nehtike bila mand dānta, Beat it with your hand and it runs half a cubit,
Bargāte hileke kos mand dānta. Beat it with a stick and it runs two miles.

[1] The measurements in this chapter are of specimens in my possession: there is naturally some degree of variation.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

throw it behind them as they go. They also tie a little to each drum, pushing the ends of the grass under the strings. As they enter the village, they drum what is called the Bhimul Par or the rhythm in honour of Bhimul, and go once round the marriage-booth. Then they go apart and stack the drums in a row or pile and the leading drummer, who is called the Mandri Guru, offers liquor and the usual gifts of rice, haldi and flour to the drums in the name of Bhimul, Lingo or Danteshwari Matal, according to the local custom, and always in the name of the Dead. 'Let the sounds of the drum be good', they say, 'and let the variety of our dance-steps and rhythms be right. O Mandri Guru Bhimul, as your drum used to sound, so may ours.' As they finish the offerings the boys gather round and each stoops down and catches hold of his drum by its cords; then at a given signal they all together lift the drums into the air and, with a loud cry, sling them across their shoulders and begin to beat them vigorously.

When a drum is broken, the owner asks the Siraha why, and only repairs it after making the appropriate offerings to whatever god or ancestor caused the trouble.

Some of the riddles about this drum are picturesque:

'The seed is outside, the bark inside.'
'In the elephant's stomach buzzes a fly.'
'It cries *tihito*, this bird with no teeth.'
'The bullocks come from Porrobhum [the Upper World] crying *burum burum*.'[1]

IV. Dancing Dress

Chelik and motiari wear no special dancing dress for weddings or any ordinary occasion. They simply put on as many ornaments as they can, stick feathers in their hair and occasionally tattoo their faces with white dots and stars.

Even for festivals the Muria of the east have no special dress and they go out on their Hulki and Dandar expeditions in their ordinary clothes. But the Jhoria have a very elaborate and distinctive dress for the festivals of the clan-god; and the Muria of the north and west wear a special uniform (which I describe elsewhere) for the Pus Kolang and Chait Dandar expeditions. Here I shall confine myself to a description of the Jhoria festival attire, which closely resembles the dancing dress of the Hill Maria.

[1] It is interesting to compare these riddles about drums with those current in other tribes. The following are Uraon:

'A brown cow lows in the middle of a field.'
'The boy who only speaks when beaten.'
'Outside pretty
Inside empty.'
'Put down silent—picked up noisy.'
'The fishes gather when the dry tree is beaten.'

These are Kharia:

'The jack-fruit tree is a tree full of mandri drums.'
'The little fishes gather at the sound of the clouds.'

These are Baiga:

'At the least touch, it growls.'
'An orphan boy with a big belly cries all night.'
'He is brought and hung up. When the crowd gathers, they beat him.'

See Archer, op. cit., pp. 181ff.; Roy, *The Kharias*, pp. 430ff.; *The Baiga*, pp. 464ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

GAMES

X883
●524

I

THE number and variety of Muria games is remarkable. The games (*karsana*) are played in the ghotul, some of them indoors, some out in the compound and usually on ordinary occasions. The word '*karsana*' meaning 'a game' is distinguished from *endanna* 'a dance' rather by its occasion than by its form. Many dances are not called *endanna* because they are not performed either at a marriage, a festival or an expedition. They are casual, go-as-you-please affairs for entertainment, and so, though the form is that of a dance, they are called *karsana* or games.

Some of the games are excellent exercise. They have the same kind of importance that drill has for an army; they teach the ghotul members to move together and to move at once. Others should probably be called little dramas rather than games and they too have their value in developing the wit and imagination of the boys and girls as well as being great fun. There are many domestic games which imitate such tiresome household duties as the husking of rice, the drawing of water, cooking, gathering leaves and fruit. I doubt if these are intended to teach the children anything; what Muria girl needs to be taught to draw water or husk rice? Their educational purpose is rather to make these tasks more attractive and to bridge the gulf between the conflicting claims of home and ghotul. When a thing is turned into a game it is less like work. On the other hand, the marriage games seem to be definitely intended to practise the chelik and motiari in the complicated ritual of a wedding, in which they play so conspicuous a part.

But perhaps the majority of the games are meant only as entertainment and to pass the time. Some of them are certainly adapted to serve the same function as the dances in the ghotul routine. They prepare the boys and girls for tumescence. Others are the natural bubbling over of youth and high spirits.

I have roughly classified the games in this chapter, but it must be remembered that the Muria themselves would never think of such a schematic arrangement.

II. Games of Little Children

I begin first with the games played by very little children.

These are generally noisy, riotous and formless, but often show considerable spontaneity of imagination. The children make little propellers with leaves and allow the wind to spin them round. They make all sorts of dolls with mud and clay and decorate them with their ornaments. At the Hindu Nawa festival, which is generally observed throughout Bastar, the potters make toy grindstones, bullocks, horses, earthen wheels to be attached to little carts, cooking-pots and tiny hearths. After the children have played with these for a few days, those that remain unbroken are sometimes put on the roof of the cattle-shed. The children, however, are not dependent on the potters and like making mud-pies and dolls with earth mixed in their own urine. But generally the small children share the games of their elders, nor is there any taboo or bar on their doing so.

Spinning-tops are used, but not widely and only for amusement. The top illustrated in Fig. 16 was made of a small gourd, through which a bamboo

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
524

peg was driven. It was spun with the help of a carefully fashioned wooden handle, perforated at one end, through which the string was threaded. Boys sometimes fight with their tops against each other.[1]

III. Household Games

I will now give some account of those games which imitate the tasks of every day, rice-husking, drawing water from the well, cooking, cleaning and using dishes, gathering fruit, making a cart, sending grain to market. Such games are mostly played by girls, though there is no bar on boys joining in.

Wanjing or Rumela Karsana (*Plate CXXVIII*)

This game, which is called the Wanjing (husking), Rumela (grinding), Pindi Usna (grinding flour) and Chakki (grindstone) Karsana, is very popular. Girls gather in a compact group. One of them sits on the ground in the middle, holding a long stick in her hand. The others grasp the stick and lift it up and down singing various songs, of which I will give three examples.

X983
524
539

1

Bad bai pindi usa rumela rumela ?	Which of the girls is husking grain?
Alosa bai pindi usela rumela rumela.	Alosa Bai is husking grain.
Wirik wārek kema dāda rumela rumela.	She should not pound carelessly, brother.
Basken usmāl paiwāl dāda rumela rumela.	She never did it before, brother.
Sālo bai pindi usela rumela rumela.	Salo Bai is husking grain.

2

Kāy dhān kāy dhān, sulidri joy nārangi ?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Mot dhān mot dhān sulidri joy nārangi.	Coarse rice, coarse rice, Suliari, O the orange!
Kāy dhān kāy dhān sulidri joy nārangi ?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Kalgi dhān kalri dhān sulidri joy nārangi.	Mixed rice, mixed rice, Suliari, O the orange!
Kāy dhān kāy dhān sulidri joy nārangi ?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Kuji dhān kuji dhān sulidri joy nārangi.	Fine rice, fine rice, Suliari, O the orange!

[1] Tops are common among the Naga tribes, less so in other parts of India. I have recorded their use among the Bhuiya and Juang. The Sema Naga use tops only after the sowing is over, and the Chang fine a man who uses one at any time other than during or just after sowing. The Lhota have the same rule, though they inflict no fines. See Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 104; Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 123; Mills, *The Lhota Nagas*, p. 84; Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 281.

GAMES

3

Dhân hutat rahew wo dai. I was husking rice, mother.
Dharis munar mâris wo dai. Holding the rice-husker he beat me.

Lugu dharke parayouw wo dai; I took my cloth and ran away;
Wâki hât ais wo dai. He followed me along the road.
Sind bata men luhouw wo dai. I hid behind a chhind shrub.
Didi ghar gayow wo dai: I went to my elder sister's house:
Bâsi pejla rihais wo dai. She gave me stale gruel to eat.
Dâda ghar gayow wo dai: I went to my elder brother's house:
Kukri sikhr khawais wo dai. He gave me chicken to eat.

The game imitates one of the more tedious duties of the motiari, the husking of grain, sometimes—before a marriage—in large quantities. Sometimes the stick, which represents the rice-husker, is omitted, and the girls make a ring with their hands, and swing it up and down. When they do this it means they are imitating the grinding of wheat.

Another variant, the Dundum or Chuer Karsana,[1] where the girls join their hands in a ring and swing them up and down, represents the drawing of water from a well—another of the commonest of the motiari's tasks. One of the songs used is this:

Where are you going, sister?
I am going to play in the deep water.
Why are you going, sister?
I am going to be mixed with salt and savour.
I am going to get covered with turmeric water.
Where are you going, sister?

[1] Bonda boys play a similar game which to them represents filling a pot.—R. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 251.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●524

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Hoydel (Hearth) Karsana

A girl lies down on the ground. Two other girls each pick up one of her legs and put it between their own. A fourth raises the first girl's body by the shoulders and they swing her round singing '*Hoydel dhara, hoydei dhara,* pick up the hearth!'

Baipar-lad Karsana (*Plate CXXXIX*)

A big boy goes down on all fours. Two little boys lie on their backs on each side, put their legs over his back, and catch hold of each other's feet with their hands. They are thus slung like two sacks on the back of a bullock. The older boy gets up and carries them to market.[1]

Godsi-gara Karsana

This represents the wooden wheels of a cart. Boys tuck their feet well into their thighs, and roll over and over like cart-wheels.

X883
524
533
539

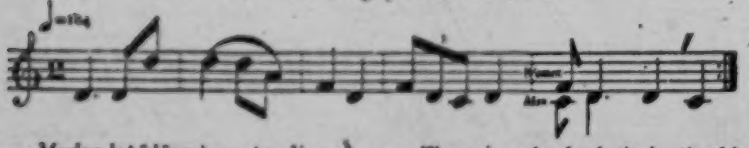
Other Games

The motiari have a fairly large repertory of songs about the kitchen, which they use for almost any dance. The next four songs are sung while they stand in rows facing each other, alternately bending forward and erect, as they clap their hands and cymbals.

This, from Phauda village, is called the Thari Pata, or Dish Song.

Uth uth re thări thări nări!	Pick up, pick up the plate!
Pur gnila unding.	The hill is burning.
Mâta maoli dolinta dolinta.	This is of Mata Maoli the shaking, the shaking.
Uth uth re hasola hassia massia.	Pick up, pick up the pot!
Uth uth re sura mura mura.	Pick up, pick up the bangles!

Kuru Pata, or Song of the Kurlu Fruit



Mudur lopădding kuru panding sângo.	There is a kurlu fruit in the big jungle, Sango.
Sangen hri datu ale sângo.	Let us go together, Sango.
Panding tinda dăkăt ale sângo.	We will go to eat the ripe kurlu fruit.
Rende ălkăng heit ale re sângo ui sângo ri suy.	Let us call twice *Ui*, Sango, *ri suy!*

[1] This is exactly the same as the Sema Naga game 'Hog's-rub', described and illustrated by Hutton.—*The Sema Nagas*, p. 108. But boys in a similar formation among the Ifugao represent a wooden lounging bench.—R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans*, Plate VIII.

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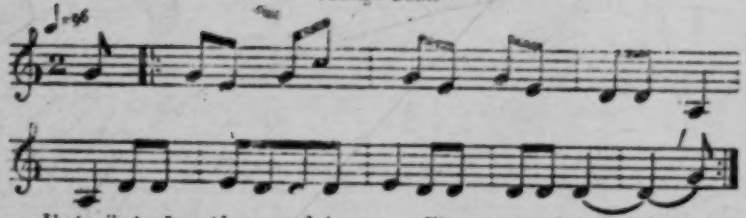
Mango Game



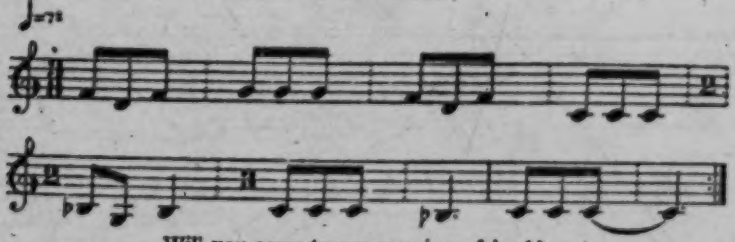
Jhopa jhopa āma phare wo dai. — The mango gives fruit in clusters.
Kon bai tore wo dai dāli dāli? — Which girl has picked a basketful?
Kon bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar? — Which girl is carrying a load?
Julpi bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar. — Julpi is carrying the load.
Kon bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli? — Which girl carries the basketful?
Sālo bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli. — Salo is carrying the basketful.

Chik-dondi Pāta[1]

Press down the *siliyāri* vegetable with a little pot.
Press down the juice with a little pot.
What was in the hand is gone.
What was on the head is gone.
Eat the *singri* fish with salt in a leaf-cup.

IV. Marriage Games

The ghotul children never tire of imitating the marriage dances. Two big girls pick up a boy and girl and prance about with them, while the other motiari stand in a row singing. Another time the girls divide into two rows, clapping their hands, swaying to and fro and singing. Then each row comes forward in turn and touches the feet of the other. This is the Tarweling Karsana, when the girls sing a song with the refrain *Sāngo tarweling murweling*. A *sāngo* is a girl friend who is not a relative.



Will you come to our marriage, friend?
We won't come to your marriage, friend.
We have no cloth to wear.
We will give you cloth.
Your husband will abuse me.
I have no husband, friend.

[1] *Chik-dondi* is actually the stick used for setting bird-lime.

X883
●S44
[539]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The dry river carried him away.
His tomb is by the road.
There is no tomb by the road.
We have not seen a tomb.

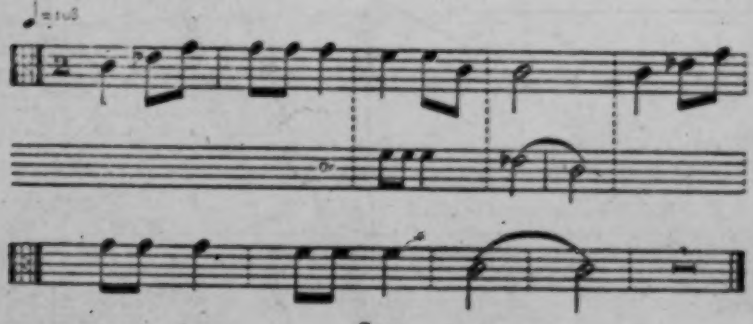
In another game one of the girls is made to take the part of the bride and the motiari sit round her, clutching her hands, weeping and singing mournfully.

The Kalsa Karsana is also popular, very similar to the games that imitate drawing water or rice-husking. The girls gather in a close circle, each grasps another's wrist and thus form a ring held low down. Then they raise and lower their arms singing the usual Kalsa song. This represents the ceremony when bride or bridegroom fill the kalsa-pot with grain.

Sometimes, the children make a little booth, put a boy and girl under it and smear their bodies with white earth (representing haldi) while a group of girls stand behind singing a marriage song.

The betrothal also is frequently imitated. A little girl represents the future bride. She sits in the middle of a close circle of girls who represent her family. Girls dance round and round them asking for her hand in marriage. From time to time they try to break through the circle of relations and carry the girl away.

[533]



Song

[539]

Bad bain mahla hanarāt bahin lok?	For whose betrothal shall we go?
Sālobain mahla hanarāt bahin lok.	We will go for Salobai.
Bor dādan jori oyerāt bahin lok?	Who will be her yoke-fellow?
Silledār dādan jori oyerāt bahin lok.	She will be yoked with the Silledar.
Haring paring darango naderāt bahin lok,	We will give liquor to everyone, one by one,
Haring harri uderāt bahin lok.	And then we will sit in a row.

This can, of course, be done over and over again, pairing off the chelik and motiari with each other, not sparing close and forbidden relations.

V. Dramatic Games

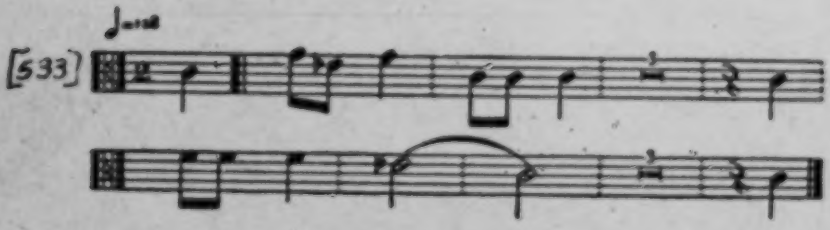
Many games express and illustrate the Muria's sense of drama. The boys and girls act their little plays with vivacity, humour and intelligence. Some of the plays are about thieves, others about cock-fighting, others about livestock and cultivation, one about human sacrifice. As always in a State, the people love pretending to be kings and queens.

GAMES

Thief Games

In the Paralkot area I saw the Hirka Karsana. Boys and girls sit in a line to represent a planting of brinjals. The owner of the garden puts a dumb fellow in charge to watch it. A thief comes by, and greets the dumb watchman, 'There's a fine wedding down in the village; come and see it'. He takes the watchman away with him and sits him down away somewhere, runs back and carries off a child (a brinjal) from the end of the line. Now the owner comes back, and abuses the watchman. He gives him honey, represented by a handful of earth, to persuade him to work properly. The dumb man shows in pantomime that it was a fox that stole the brinjal. Gradually the thief removes the whole garden. The last brinjal stands up as a sign that it has grown well. The thief takes this too and cooks it. The owner comes and asks what it is. 'It's *jôna*-gruel', says the thief. 'Then give me some', says the owner. The thief is frightened and calls his dog, a boy on all fours, which chases the owner away, and the game is done.

In Phulpar I saw a simpler form of the brinjal-stealing game, here called Hapang-kultur. The children make a little pile of stones, each of which represents a brinjal. They divide into two parties. One party sits round the stones to protect it, the other has to break through and carry off as many 'brinjals' as it can.



Song

Lito lito bînga parela ;
Kôwar kôwar kon torela ?
Kôwar kôwar jolma torela.
Chhai chhai bori kon bechela ?
Chhai chhai bori manai bechela.
Nakti paisa kon jhokela ?
Nakti paisa jalîm jhokela.

Bunches of brinjal are ready ;
Who picked them load by load ?
Jolma picked a load of them.
Who sold them six to a *bori* ?
Manai sold them six to a *bori*.
Who took the worthless money ?
Jalam took the worthless money.

Meriah Game

In the north-western area both Maria and Muria play a game which recalls the days of the Meriah sacrifices of the Kond. The very name Meriah Karsana is used. Boys and girls form little groups representing houses in a village. A band of three boys comes round singing, begging, shouting. While the attention of the 'householders' is thus distracted, the Meriah party seize one of them and carry him off. Then they go through the motions of cutting off his head, pretend to offer him in sacrifice and return for the others.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Donga Karsana (*Plate CXXV*)

X983
•574

Another type of thief game resembles 'Oranges and Lemons'. In Kuntpadar and Koilibera, it was played this way. Two girls stood with joined hands facing each other. They lowered their hands and a line of boys and girls stepped over them. They raised their hands and the line went underneath. Suddenly the girls caught a boy. The leader of the line asked, 'Why have you caught our man?' The girls replied, 'He has stolen chillies'. 'How many times?' 'Only once.' 'Then let him go.' 'No more, no more.' He was now in prison. The girls made him husk rice by beating his hands; then they shook and beat him 'as if he were in a winnowing-fan'. They pulled his ears—this was the picking of leaves. At last they both hung round his neck to show that he was loaded with rice chaff, chillies and onions, and let him go.

In Sidhawand it was played a little differently. The two girls represented, for some obscure reason, a 'boat'. When they caught a boy, the leader said, 'Why have you caught our friend?' 'He's been stealing rice.' 'How much?' 'Only a little.' Then the girls punished him, pushing him and pulling him about 'as the police do in jail' until the victim cried, 'Come, my queen, eat milk and rice' and they let him go.[1]

Min Karsana

The Muria, like the Munda,[2] have their own version of Blind Man's Buff. Boys and girls form a big circle round a blindfolded boy who has to squat down and hop about trying to catch them. When he catches someone, he feels the legs and tries to guess who it is, while the following dialogue is repeated:

'Blind man, blind man, what fish is this?'
'It is a bod fish.'
'Blind man, blind man, where are its bones?'
'In the river.'
'Blind man, blind man, how many bones?'
'Three cart-loads.'
'Blind man, blind man, where is its oil?'
'In the pot.'
'Blind man, blind man, how much oil?'
'Three pots of oil.'
'Blind man, blind man, where is the flesh?'
'In the basket.'
'Blind man, blind man, whom are you holding?'

If he guesses correctly—and it is surprising how hard they find it to guess right—the blind man is released and whoever he caught must take his place.

Kor Karsana (*Plate CXXXIII*)

This is the cock-fighting game. The children divide into two parties. The leader of each side secretly chooses one of his girls or boys and covers the

[1] S. C. Roy has given a full account of the Kantara-lau or jack-fruit game played by the Munda and Kharia, which is not unlike the brinjal-stealing and other thief games of the Muria.—S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Ranchi, 1912), pp. 492ff. and S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 463. See also *The Baiga*, p. 463.

The Ba-ila have a game to represent thefts from a melon patch.—Smith and Dale, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 253. The Trobriand Islanders imitate the stealing of bananas.—Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, p. 206.

[2] Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 491.

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Muria

X 883
• 524

'cock' with a blanket. Then they bring the 'cocks' forward and make them squat down, facing each other and bending forward as the fighting cocks do. Each 'owner' goes over to the other's cock, pokes it, tickles it, and says, 'Crow, cock, crow!'—at which the cock whistles—to try to see who it is. They each have to guess, whereon the cocks stand up throwing off their blankets. Whoever guesses right wins the game.

The Hawk Games

These Gidal Karsana[1] or Kor Karsana take different forms on a general pattern. I will first give the Berma version.

The hawk gives its adze and chisel to a farmer, who gives them to his hen. In other words the boy playing the hawk gives a bit of wood to the leader of a line of children. The leader is the farmer, the children behind him his chickens. The hen hands the adze and chisel to the next hen and so all down the line. The last hen is very hungry and gives the tools to a goodwife in the village in exchange for a morsel of gruel. After a time the hawk returns and demands its tools from the farmer. He says, 'Ask my hen for them'. She says, 'I gave them to my neighbour'. And so all down the line. The last hen says, 'I was very hungry and I sold the tools for a morsel of gruel'. Back comes the hawk to the farmer and says that since the tools are not to be found it will have to eat the hens instead.

The farmer shakes his head, and says, 'Well, who is greater, you or me?' The hawk says, 'I am the greater, of course'. 'Let us see', says the man, and they measure themselves with arms outstretched, jumping into the air. Then the farmer says, 'Well, eat if you can. But will you eat sitting or standing?' The hawk promises only to eat the hens when they are standing. At once it pounces on a hen. But she as quickly sits down and is safe. Then the hawk runs round and round trying to carry off the hen at the end of the line, but the leader swings the line round to oppose it, and whenever the hawk approaches, the hens have only to squat down to be safe. You would think the hawk would get little to eat, but it is surprising how stupid poultry are! As they run round, the hens sing,

Tin koliya [illegible] *gugurgum.* Eat, jackal. Don't fall down, *gugurgum.*

Ada kako koliya gugurgum. This is uncle jackal, *gugurgum.*

The song suggests that originally the game was of a jackal, not a hawk, that tried to catch the hens.

I saw the game played slightly differently in Masora. Here a line of children, widely separated, represent pegs in the ground. The chickens run round and round the pegs, chased by the hawk. Once they can catch hold of the pegs they are safe. This is easy for the chickens, and so the hawk generally gets a 'dog' to help him.

In Masora they also play the Hawk Game with mice instead of chickens. There is a long line of mice, first he-mice, then she-mice. Their Raja is Kundal-mussa. Along comes the hawk and gives a comb, in other words a small

[1] The Munda have a similar game of 'Fox and Hen'.—Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 493. The Kharia play the Chil-hor-hor, or 'Vulture and Chickens'.—Roy, *The Kharias*, p. 463. So do the Ho.—D. N. Majumdar, 'Games of the Hos of Kolhan', *Man in India*, Vol. V (1925), p. 199.

2: Elwin E 5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
S 24

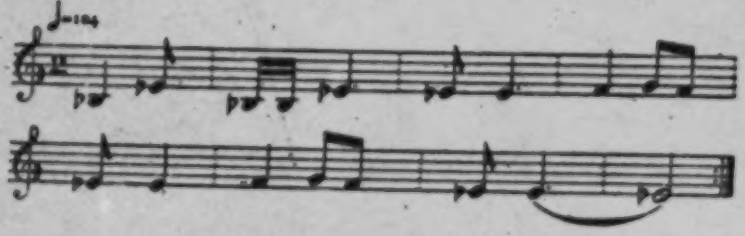
stick, to the Raja of the mice. He gives it to his Diwan, who passes it to the Tahsildar and so to the end of the line. Here a faithless she-mouse gives it away to the first person who offers her a cup of gruel.

Then the game follows the same pattern as at Berma. When the mice sit down, it means they have escaped into their holes, and naturally the hawk cannot get at them.

They played it very well at Masora; boys protected girls in the best tradition; they fell in heaps and tumbled over each other, and they all enjoyed themselves enormously.

Song

[533]



[539]

The hawk will swoop down like a wave,
When the midnight dew comes down.
It will carry off the chicken,
When the cock crows at dawn.
The hawk will eat the chicken,
When the midnight dew comes down.
O set the chicken free,
When the cock crows at dawn.

The Root Game (Plates CXXX and CXXXI)

This game, which imitates the growing of sweet potatoes or other roots in the garden, is played with many small variations all over the Muria area.[1] Boys and girls sit in line holding each other round the waist, the boy or girl at the end gripping a tuft of grass or a tree. These are the roots. A boy and his 'wife' and a 'servant' go up and down the line pushing sticks under the bottoms of the children, knocking them on the head and generally pushing them about. This is the cultivation of the soil. They go round again and now dig up a little dust and rubbish on either side and throw it over the 'roots'. The third time, they put their hands on the heads of the sitting children chanting '*Lud lud hurush*, Are you ready? Are you ripe?' They pinch the 'roots' to see if they are ripe or no. All this time the 'owner of the field' is beating and abusing his 'wife', insulting her relatives, threatening to marry again—the patter is only limited by the inventiveness of the boys.

Then the gardeners go to the head of the line and begin to pull off the boys and girls one by one. They clutch desperately at each other, but in the end they are dragged off and away, hit twice and thrown in a heap. This represents the digging up of the roots. The last boy holds out for a long time and the wife has to tickle him before he lets go.

[1] Compare the similar game described in *The Baiga*, p. 463.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 - A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GAMES

The gardeners now hire two men to carry the roots to the river for washing. There is a lot of discussion about this, but at last two 'coolies' are willing to work for four annas a day. The coolies get a stout pole and put it over their shoulders. Two or three girls and boys catch hold of the pole and are lifted up hanging to it and so carried a little way off, where the coolies bump them on the ground, and then rub them all over with dust and rubbish. This is the washing of the roots. They are bumped to remove any superfluous earth that may be clinging to them. The owners of the field stand by abusing the coolies. 'Why don't you wash that root properly? We'll cut your pay' and so on. When a big girl is carried out they cry, 'There's a fine fat root; we'll eat it tonight for supper'. If a girl is heavily tattooed, they say, 'What are these marks on that root? It's eaten by grubs, it's full of worms. Throw it away'. Of another they say, 'That root's gone rotten, it's stinking, give it to the coolies'. Then the coolies bring the roots back and pile them in a heap, throwing the boy-roots on top of the girl-roots where possible.

Now the roots are to be cooked. The children sit round in a circle, their feet extended to the middle. In the centre the owner and his friend dig with a stick. The wife fans the roots with a leaf. The roots wriggle their feet to represent flames. The grass and earth dug up by the owner is thrown on the heads of the roots. The wife goes round pinching them to see if they are 'done' or not. In some villages half the children lie down with their feet to the centre, and the others catch them under the shoulders and swing them round in a big circle.

At last, some of the roots are sold for chips of wood—the bargaining gives endless opportunities for 'patter'—and the rest are eaten by being hit twice on the back.

Raja Rani Karsana

The motiari sit in two rows facing each other. In front of each row sits a girl representing the Raja and Rani.

The Rani's party sings, 'What will you give her?' The Raja's party replies, 'We will bring pots for her'. But this is not enough. The Rani's party replies, 'But what will you give her?' The Raja's party answers again, 'We will bring ornaments'. And so on interminably, through every present that has ever been given by a Muria to his motiari. But as they are singing, the Raja is shifting nearer and nearer to the Rani, until at last 'he' is near enough and he can jump on her and carry her away.

Another song, in Halbi, sung during this game, was recorded at Gawari. After each line is the refrain *Jay Rāni* (or *Rāja*) *dhiro dhiro rayo rāni dhiro dhiro jāno.*

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
524
533
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song

Rânicho bâla bahania lânten;
For the Rani we are bringing an armlet;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Râjâcho bâla darpanj lânten;
For the Raja we are bringing a mirror;
O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.

Rânicho bâla paijjan lânten;
For the Rani we are bringing anklets;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Râjâcho bâla dhoti lânten;
For the Raja we are bringing a dhoti;
O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.

Rânicho bâla churi lânten;
For the Rani we are bringing bangles;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

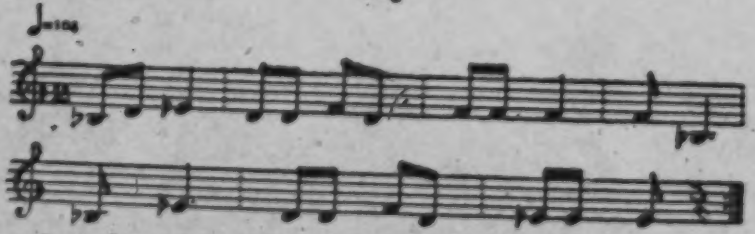
Râjâcho bâla topi lânten;
For the Raja we are bringing a hat;
O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.

Rânicho bâla saudra lânten.
For the Rani we are bringing a sari;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Rajona Belori Karsana

The 'Game of the Raja's Love'. The girls form into two lines facing one another. One line darts forward and touches the other's feet and quickly retires. The others chase them and try to touch their feet before they have got home.

Song



X983
524
539

Tucho kâje tucho kâje Akkiwala andwia mocho belori.
For you, for you, I have brought an ear-ring, my love.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GAMES

Rājācho pāyloṛi !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho khāluṛu ke tucho khāluṛu ke !	Your ear-ring, your ear-ring!
Muṇḍe thechu ra heloṛi.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāyloṛi !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho kāje tucho kāje mālā aṇiule mecho heloṛi.	For you, for you I have brought a necklace, my love.
Rājācho pāyloṛi !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho mālā ke tucho mālā ke !	Your necklace, your necklace!
Muṇḍe thechu ra heloṛi.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāyloṛi !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho kāje tucho kāje muṇḍi aṇiule mecho heloṛi.	For you, for you I have brought a ring, my love.
Rājācho pāyloṛi !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho muṇḍi ke tucho muṇḍi ke !	Your ring, your ring!
Muṇḍe thechu ra heloṛi.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāyloṛi !	O the king's anklet!

They continue the song indefinitely, using the names of every possible ornament.

VI. Games of Animals and the Chase

As we have seen, the Muria are good hunters, and like all aboriginals are greatly interested in the behaviour of animals.[1] They have games to imitate various animals and birds, and some of their most dramatic displays are about the chase. In this they resemble, though they do not emulate, the remarkable bird and animal dances of the Juang and Pauri Bhuiya. One of these imitates the strut of a peacock, another the ambling gait of a bear, yet another the unwieldy movements of an elephant. In one exciting Juang variant, girls play the part of vultures devouring a corpse, and again, lying face downwards on the ground, they wriggle like snakes.

Goihal Karsēna (*Plate CXL*)

This is the Lizard game. A boy gets down on his left leg and right hand and sticks his right leg out behind. Then he moves rapidly forward, first on one hand and then on the other, while he beats his chest with the free hand. The right leg always remains stuck out behind like a tail.

Hupsa-koriha Karsena

In this a boy imitates a mouse scratching itself, though he might equally well be almost any other animal. He lies flat on his face supporting himself on his hands and propels himself along by jerky movements of his bottom in an amusing way.

Tolha or Nival Karsena

A small boy wears a mask of white cloth. Two sticks are placed inside to make a mouth which opens and shuts. The effect is bizarre in the extreme. The boy is covered with a blanket and supported on the shoulders of two friends and his feet are carried by a third. They hop round and round with him while he opens and shuts his mouth and jerks his head. Sometimes

[1] When, some years ago, I went with a party of aboriginals to Calcutta I found them more interested in the Zoo than in anything else.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
● 524

he charges about on all fours. He is supposed to represent a frog but in some places he is called a panther.

Mogral Karsana (*Plate CXXXII*)

This is the Crocodile game. A boy is held between two others by the waist. A third clutches his legs. They walk forward, and the boy in the middle sways his arms and tries to keep his head and shoulders upright.

Yen Karsana

This is the Elephant game and is played by five boys. Two of them go down on their hands and knees, two climb up and lean forward supporting themselves by their hands on each other's shoulders. A fifth climbs right up on top. Then they go round until they fall over.

Koda Karsana (*Plate CXXXV*)

I have recorded two different forms of this Horse game. The first is played by three boys. Two stand holding sticks at either end in their hands. Two other sticks are laid across their shoulders. A third boy climbs up and sits between them on the upper sticks and supports his legs on the sticks held below. He then drives the two boys forward as though they were a horse.

In the second version two boys get down on their hands and knees, a third stands between them bending slightly forward. A fourth stands on the backs of the kneeling boys and places his hands on the shoulders of the third. So placed they go round and round.

Purar-upihana Karsana (*Plate CXXXIV*)

This imitates the wood-pigeon. Two boys sit opposite each other, putting their feet under the other's buttocks. Each in turn half rises and claps his hands in the air. They swing to and fro, and rise up and down in a very attractive movement.

Hunting Games[1]

The Muria hunting games are exciting and realistic. One type represents the chase after a gaur or sambhar; the other shows the defence of the cowherd against the tiger that attacks his cattle.

I saw an excellent hunt in Sidhawand. A gaur was made by throwing a blanket over two boys. The head was a winnowing-fan doubled over and covered with cloth and real horns were attached to it. A tail of grass and peacock feathers was hung behind. The gaur came on the scene, trotted round, grazed, sat down and went to sleep. Presently a party of hunters appeared. They were nearly naked, smeared all over with ashes, their hair

[1] Mills has an excellent description of hunting games played by the Rengma Nagas.—Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 122f. The Lakher have an Elephant Hunting game.—Parry, op. cit., p. 188. The Kond have a dance that represents a bison hunt; 'one man with the horns and skin of the animal takes to his heels followed by the remainder, who capture him after a brief chase, and bear him back as a trophy'.—Dalton, op. cit., p. 300. Compare also the Lion Hunting game of the Ba-ila.—Smith and Dale, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 237ff. Haddon saw boys at Vailaa acting 'very realistically' a pig hunt and a kangaroo drive.—A. C. Haddon, 'Notes on Children's Games in British New Guinea', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 289.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

883X
524

flying in the wind. Two had bows and arrows; two were magicians with winnowing-fan and measuring-sticks to discover by divination where their quarry was; one imitated a dog with a bell on his neck; and there was an old man carrying a pot and a basket to take the meat home.

The party chased the gaur round and round the field. Sometimes they lost it, and then the magicians sat down, fell into trance, measured their sticks, and shook the winnowing-fan. The dog ran round with his nose to the ground; it was a great joke to beat and kick him. After a time they shot the gaur and it rolled over on the ground. The hunters ran to it, patted, stroked, embraced it, congratulated each other; they danced round and round with delight. It was a charming scene and reminded one of the passion for the chase that still dominates the heart of every Muria. The dog fell upon the gaur and began to eat it; it had to be beaten off. Then the magicians ordered the party to pick up the great animal and carry it to a stream where they would cut it up and eat it. But the gaur came to life and chased them away.

In Kuntpadar, the magicians blew into the sambhar's ear to see if it was alive or not. The magicians there were very lively, turning somersaults and shaking their heads in trance. At Palli (Kondagaon) there was an interesting variation. One of the boys—practically naked save for a scrap round his loins—represented the *jiwa* or soul of the gaur. When the animal was injured and lay dying on the ground, its soul came to perform a strange and uncanny dance above and round the body. The boy contorted himself like a wounded worm and twisted and turned in the strangest manner. At last it fell on the body, a sign that the life had after all returned, and the gaur got to its feet and ran away.

[411
284]

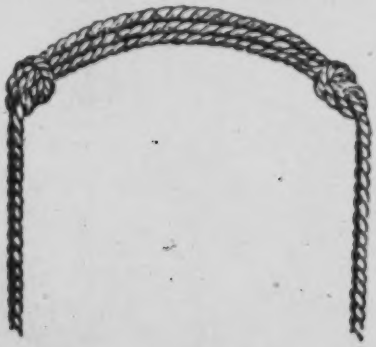


FIG. 145. Sling used in hunting

In other villages I have seen this game take another form. A boy plays the part of cowherd and takes the boys (bulls and bullocks) and girls (cows) out to graze in the jungle. They crawl along pretending to nibble grass and roots. Then the tiger or leopard appears: in Pupgaon he was an almost naked boy whose body was covered with stripes and stars made by applying white earth and charcoal with the splayed end of a castor twig; in Kuntpadar and Markabera I saw a tiger made by tying a boy round and round with strips of bark to represent the stripes, and a large cloth round the head. The tiger

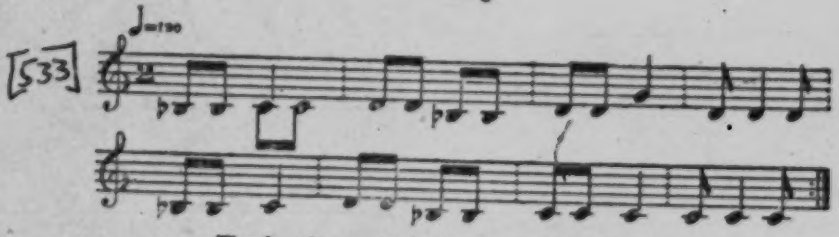
X 883
● 524

creeps through the grass and presently leaps out and seizes one of the bullocks; it drags it away and returns for a cow. The cowherds get their bows and arrows and large balls of cloth to represent bullets from their wooden guns. They ambush behind trees, track the tiger through the grass, play all the tricks of the hunter. At last the tiger is killed and slung on a pole to be taken home and skinned.

Mao Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

This is a variant of the hunting games. A ring of girls represents a forest-covered hill, and a girl representing a sambhar stands inside. Two girls march round and round singing, and every now and then charge the ring, trying to break through and catch the sambhar. This is how I saw it played at Markabera.[1]

Song



[533]

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The deer has come, its tracks are over here.
There are no tracks this side, friend.
There is the mandia crop in the field of the Cat Stone.
It has gone to graze mandia, friend.
The *urad* crop is half ready, friend.
It has gone to graze it, friend.
The fencing is rotten, friend.
The game has come, its tracks are over there.

The hunters push the group of girls crying, 'The fencing will fall down'.

In Remawand, however, the circle that holds hands is a bamboo fence inside which are two chickens. A 'leopard' runs round outside trying to get it. He dashes against the fence, and if he can break through he catches the chickens and rolls them on the ground. This is called Durka or Niral Karsana. In the Paralkot area, the boys said the girl in the middle was a she-goat; otherwise it was played as at Remawand.

In Chimri, Kajen and Nariha, I saw yet another version called Paddi-dagan, or Pigs in the Garden. A ring of children squat down holding hands to represent the garden fence. Inside are four little pigs. These have to jump out without being hit between the legs.

The Parbodela game recorded at Bernia is yet another version. A circle of girls hand in hand runs round and round; there is a boy inside to represent a dog, another—the tiger—chases round outside. The girls sit down for a moment, to give the tiger a chance to jump, then the fence is up again.

[1] With these games, compare the Tuyu-merom of the Kharia, where the circle is a goat-pen and the jackal tries to get in to eat the goat.—Roy, *The Kharias*, Vol. II, p. 463.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 983
574
[539]

GAMES

Song

Udil sângi parbodelâng sângi !	Sit friend, sit friend Parbodela!
Nitil sângi parbodelâng sângi !	Stand friend, stand friend Parbodela!
Ade sângi nirâl sângi parbodelâng sângi !	There is a panther, friend Parbodela!
Witil sângi parbodelâng sângi !	Let us run away, friend Parbodela!

VII. Games as Exercise

People who work as hard as the Muria should not need further exercise, but many of the ghotul games are in fact admirably designed to test the strength, develop the muscles and train the eye and the intelligence. It is curious that competitive jumping and the tug-of-war, so popular among the Naga, are not found in the ghotul.[1]

Tod-de Pehekana Karsana[2]

A boy sits down on the ground and someone puts a ring behind his back. He has to lean backwards with arms outstretched tilting his head over and back until he can pick up the ring with his mouth. This is a very difficult feat, and generally the boy falls over before he can accomplish it.

Kap-munra Tekana (Pulling-up) Karsana

The boy lies flat on his face, raises his legs up into the air and grasps them with his hands behind his back so that he is lying supported on his stomach with legs and feet above him. Another boy puts his hands into the loop thus formed and swings him over his back.

Gudha (Rolling-over) Karsana

A boy bends down with his head to the ground, and another boy lies on him. The first boy catches hold of his loin-cloth from below and he catches hold of the first boy's loin-cloth from above. The first boy then hoists him up and throws him over backwards. A glance at Plate CXXXIX will elucidate this necessarily obscure explanation.

Kal-tekana (Legs-up) Karsana

A big boy clasps his wrist with one hand, a small boy stands on his palm holding the other's head with his hands. Then the first boy lifts him off the ground and walks about with him till he is exhausted and has to let him fall.

Kadna (Wrestling) Karsana (Plate CXXXVIII)

In this game a boy climbs up over one boy and under another. Two boys, A and B, stand facing each other, clasping one another's arms. Boy C leans,

[1] Compare Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 120ff.; *The Lhota Nagas*, pp. 82f.; Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 101f.; *The Sema Nagas*, p. 109. Among the Trobriand Islanders 'the favourite and most important game is the tug-of-war'.—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 207.

[2] The Gondi words mean 'Lifting up with the mouth'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●524

head downwards, against the back of A and gets his legs round A's chest. Then he pulls himself into a sitting posture with his legs now round A's waist, climbs up over A's head, descends through the arms of A and B and dives down between B's legs.

A Pulling-up Game (*Plate CXXXVIII*)

Two boys sit facing each other, placing their feet sole to sole. They hold hands or a stick and try to pull each other off the ground.[1]

Gudina Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

Girls sit on their knees in a long line, bending right over with their heads between their knees, and sing in a rather muffled way. The girl at one end heaves herself up and rolls over and over along the line till she reaches the other end. Each girl does this in turn. They sing the following song:

[539]

Dhondera wāndera dhondera wāndera.	*Dhondera wāndera*, if it is a girl preserve her.
Pehi ātehe tāsna dhondera wāndera,	She will fetch water in an earthen pot,
Tānd to yer tatārde dhondera wāndera,	She will bring roots,
Māting harsi tatārde dhondera wāndera.	She will bring leaves.
Aking'hois tatārde dhondera wāndera.	If it is a boy, throw him away.
Pehil ātehe wātna dhondera wāndera.	*Dhondera wāndera*, if it is a girl preserve her.
Pehi ātehe tāsna dhondera wāndera.	

I would not like to read more into this song than I should. On the face of it, it is very interesting indeed. Many a Muria would rather have a daughter than a son.

Karmata Karsana (*Plate CXXIV*)

Two lines of girls face one another and join hands. The boys pick up a smaller girl and throw her onto the 'bed' thus formed. Sometimes she supports herself by placing her hands on the shoulders of the two leading girls, sometimes she lies prone, sometimes there are two girls, one at either end of the line.[2] When they are ready the girls swing their victim to and fro, singing the while.

X883
524
539

Songs

I

Joyo karmata, joyo roy!	Swing Karmata swing!
Lukur itān mati lukur bāra āyo,	We thought it was a *hansi* fish,
	But it's not a *hansi* fish.

[1] A similar game is known in the Trobriand Islands.—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 206.

[2] A similar game has been recorded in British New Guinea, and is there called Bidabido. 'Two rows of boys and girls face each other and opposite couples lock hands in sedan-chair fashion. A small boy projects himself prone upon the lane of hands at one end of the row and is tossed along it to the other end and as he passes each couple they run to the fore-end of the avenue and take up position as before thus making an endless lane.'—R. F. Barton, 'Children's Games in British New Guinea', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 266.

GAMES

Sipa ittu mati sipa bira ãyo.	We thought it was a *chipa* fish, But it's not a *chipa* fish.
Kotri ittu mati kotri bira ãyo.	We thought it was a *kotri* fish, But it's not a *kotri* fish.
Tengri ittu mati tengri bira ãyo.	We thought it was a *tengri* fish, But it's not a *tengri* fish.
Madum ittu mati mãdum bira ãyo.	We thought it was a *madum* fish, But it's not a *madum* fish.
Joyo karmata joyo roy.	Swing Karmata swing.

2

Kãher mãcha mon jhulna ho dai?	In whose *mãcha* is the swing, mother?
Sãjen hi mãcha mon jhulna ho dai.	The swing is in Sajen's *mãcha*, mother.
Upar le aise nawa jogi ho dai;	A new beggar has come from above;
Sulãyãro la legise nãwa jogi ho dai.	He has taken away the Suliaro.
Sulãyãro hansa se much-much ho dai.	Suliaro is laughing *much-much*.
Sãjen dekha se mit-mit ho dai.	Sajen is peeping *mit-mit*, mother.

3

Bor dãdli uhãr ungiwãl?	Who is swinging in the swing?
Kalamsai dãdli uhãr ungiwãl.	It is Kalamsai swinging in the swing.
Adu hadu hai uhãr uhãna?	Which girl is pushing the swing?
Manjãro hai uhãr uhãna.	Manjaro is pushing the swing.
Uhma rãni uhma nana ariha.	Don't swing too hard, Rani, or I shall fall.
Arwi rãja arwi nana yatha.	You won't fall, Raja, for I am here to catch you.

Mahamandal Karsana (*Plate CXXXIX*)

Boys and girls form themselves into a great *mahamandal* snake. Each grasps with both hands the buttocks of the one in front, and the line moves forward with a peculiar stamping movement. The head does not try to catch the tail; it simply imitates a snake, swinging round and round in a very serpentine manner. At last the line ties itself up by threading through itself again and again till all the children are knotted into a compact and helpless group.[1]

Nun-nurial Karsana

This is a variety of the above game which I saw at Palli-Barkot and danced by the Tarbalil children. They wind and unwind themselves in the same way, but in the middle they squat down and walk over one another. At the beginning too the head of the line does not tie them up, but weaves his line through the main line, in and out under the uplifted arms. Here the name of

[1] This is like a Tudorland game, in which 'the players stand in a long chain holding hands, and then walk round the person who stands at one end. This end remains immovable and the person at the other end leads the chain round in gradually narrowing circles until the whole group is pressed together into a tight knot.... It is then unrolled.'—Malinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
●524

the game is taken from the Nun-nurial bird, which runs hither and thither in search of grasshoppers and grubs.

Chik-dondi Karsana[1]

This is similar to the preceding game. A long line of as many as forty boys and girls stand with arms extended, catching each other by the hand. Sometimes boys and girls are mixed; more properly the girls are at one end of the line and the boys at the other. Girls sing, '*Silori silori tande masak lo*' and the boys answer '*Kinari kinari tande masak lo*'. To which the girls reply, '*Hat ke geli mund ke geli jolinta joil singri masli non purgi kaon ta kaon ta*'. As they sing, the head of the line swings round and, bending down, burrows under the upraised arms of those next to him; he goes round again to those next but one, and so on, until several circles are rotating at once and the great line is gradually wound up. Then very rapidly they unwind themselves and soon are standing in line again. Now the opposite end begins, and they repeat the process until they are tired.

VIII. Round Games

We may now consider those games in which the children chase each other and run in and out of circles. These too are mainly important as exercise, to train the boys and girls in alertness, lightness of foot and the capacity to seize an opportunity.

Watia Karsana (*Plate CXXIX*)

Boys and girls sit in a big circle. A boy takes a roll of cloth or bit of paddy rope (*watia*) in his hand and runs round and round until he drops it behind someone. That boy or girl must jump up and catch the first boy before he can get round the circle into the safety of the place that has just been vacated.

A variety of this under the same name is played in Tarbaili. Two lines of boys and girls are formed facing each other at some distance. They throw a roll of cloth to one another. Anyone who misses the catch becomes the prisoner of the other side. So they continue until all are gathered on one side.

Giri Giri Karsana[2]

A number of girls sit in a circle. One girl bends down in front of them and several hit her on the back. She jumps up and chases them round the circle. Any she can touch must go and sit inside. They continue till she has caught them all.

Ganda Karsana

Boys and girls sit down in a big circle. They have to get up one by one. The first boy or girl whose knees crack while rising is 'out' and is called the Ganda, or untouchable. Sufficient children sit down to make the circle, and the rest run round and round outside; the Ganda goes into the circle and dashes out to catch as many as he can. Anyone he touches must go into the circle, and when all are caught the game is over. As they run round they sing:

Ek cowrie de re Gânde, nâk me orain de.
Give me a cowrie, Ganda, and I'll wear it in my nose.

[1] *Chik-dondi* is the stick for applying bird-lime.
[2] When you waggle your finger in someone's palm, it is *giri giri*.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GAMES

Pot Karsana

983^x
524

The Pot Karsana is very similar to the above. Some of the children make a circle; half the others go inside and the other half run round outside. They pull each other in and out of the circle singing *Pot pot pot.*

Pairi Karsana

A number of children sit down in a circle. The space between each child is regarded as a door. Others go round and round in line and have to cross into the middle of the circle by each door in turn. Once the leader of the line has succeeded in jumping over, the rest may follow him. If the sitting children manage to catch the leader by his ankle, as he jumps over, he is caught. It is a 'foul' if more than one tries to jump over at the same time.

A variety of this is called Usta Gundur Karsana.[1] Boys holding hands squat in a circle on the ground. Others run round clapping their hands and singing *'Usta gundur ta tin pe kor wark wark'.* 'Run round and jump. Get some parched rice and eat it.' The aim is to jump into the circle without being touched by the 'wall'. If one boy manages to get in, it means the gate is open, and they all go in and dance inside. Now they have to try to jump out.

Purar Karsana[2] (*Plate CXXIII*)

Girls stand in a ring holding each other's hands. A similar but smaller ring stands inside. The outer ring jumps over the inner ring and gets inside. Then that ring jumps inside again and so they go on over and over each other.

Song

Tuy chitkul?	Are you a little [pigeon]?
Ki mai mitkul?	Or am I a pretty girl?
Ghāghara ke pāni	The water of a pot
Tabak tor.	Splashes out when it is shaken.

[539]

A *mitkul* girl is a smart pretty child who always keeps herself well dolled-up.

I saw almost the same game under the name of Kinaring Karsana at Kuntpadar. A double ring of girls hold hands. The inner ring bend down and the outer ring walk inwards over them. Then that ring bends down and the original inner ring walks over them. They turn and move outwards in the same way. They sing *Kināri kināri dondi maskelo.*

IX. Miscellaneous Games

There are a number of games which do not fall readily into any classification. I give some of them here.

Nana Darbena Karsana (*Plate CXXII*)

Girls stand in a circle facing inwards. They jump up and down, clapping their hands above their heads. Suddenly they turn outwards and go on jumping up and down and clapping their hands.

[1] *Usta gundur* is a small partridge.

[2] *Purar* is a wood-pigeon.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song

Nana darhena!
What is your clan, girl?
Whose daughter are you?
I want to laugh with you.
You are of the Naitami clan;
You are a Naitami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
You are of the Kuhrami clan;
You are a Kuhrami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
You are of the Poyami clan;
You are a Poyami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
What is your clan, girl?
If I go to a village, I will bring a boy and will laugh with him.
If I go to the field, I will bring a horse and will laugh with it.
If I go to the market, I will bring a girl and laugh with her.
Nana darhena!

Buchi Karsana

This, which means literally 'the game of the girl with a broken ear', is played by girls standing together in a close circle. They begin to sing a little song with no particular meaning and all bend forward touching their ankles. At each line of the song they raise themselves a little touching first the knees, then the waist, the breast, the shoulders until the hands are held high above the head.

Song

Dâda gelose gaon gelose buchi buchi!	Brother has gone to his village, *buchi buchi!*
Dâda cho thaili me arrigunda arrigunda;	In his purse is sweet tobacco;
Tindkiney tinwiney arrigunda arrigunda?	Will he eat the sweet tobacco?

The word *buchi*, which means a broken ear, is sometimes used as a girl's name. To tear the ear-aperture (used for ornaments) is regarded by the Muria, as by people elsewhere, as a social disaster, but here the expression seems to have no connexion either with the song or the game.

Mundi Karsana

A ring of girls stand very close together. Every girl with her left hand catches the thumb of her neighbour's right hand until there is an upper ring formed. Then each with her right hand catches the thumb of her neighbour's left hand until a lower ring is formed. They then raise and lower the two rings, singing with a quick jerky rhythm.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GAMES

883X

Song

524

534

Eh eh mundi !	One one ring!
Duy duy mundi !	Two two rings!
Oher mundi !	His ring!
Mundi lori !	Rings in a circle!
Pasparsla de hodo milli lori de hodo milli lori !	Put the *pasparsla* shrubs in a circle!

Panung-doking (Frog and Lizard) Karsana

This game is also known as Doke and Nagil-mâting (Root-digging). I have also seen it played by Gond and Pardhan in the Central Provinces. Three boys or girls stand back to back on one leg. They link their legs together in order to support themselves and then hop round in a circle clapping their hands and singing various short catches, of which one is *Nagil-mating kutuh kutuh*, or 'We dig for roots and eat them'. And another is

Pâki tâtung pânung doking mâli tâtom lutha.	The girls ate lizards and we ate frogs.
Pâkor tâtung pânung doking mâl tâtom bâli.	The boys ate lizards and we ate sweets.

Jatis (Grindstone) Karsana (Plate CXXVII)

883X

524

Four boys lie down feet to feet like a star. Their feet are tied together with someone's turban. Bigger boys catch them by the arms and raising them up go round and round in a circle.[1]

Tolapotur Karsana

Boys lie down in a long straight line, each extending his right hand above his head to catch hold of his predecessor's loin-cloth. The boy at the end gets up and walks straddled down the line dragging the boys up with him till all are standing now with their arms between their legs clutching their neighbour's loin-cloths. Then the leader reverses the process and walks back till all are lying on the ground again. *Tolapotur* may mean 'stitching a leaf-basket' and the game may be supposed to represent this.

Song

[539]

Mother-in-law 's like a *potor* leaf.
Husband's elder brother 's like the central beam of the house.
Husband's younger brother 's like the verandah pole.
Father-in-law 's like a teak leaf.

In this song the symbols are probably sexual. The mother-in-law is like the leaf of the *vâw-dâtun* (or *potor*) tree whose twigs are usually used for cleaning teeth. The two brothers of the husband have virile organs, the elder's like the thick house-beam, the younger's pleasant and penetrating, as the slender pole that supports the verandah. Father-in-law is useless as the leaf of a teak tree.

[1] Haddon recorded a similar game in British New Guinea. Four boys lie at full length forming a cross: a small boy crouches at their feet. Other boys lift them up and go round so that 'the whole contrivance revolves like a four-spoked wheel'.—Haddon, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Johar Karsana

This game, which is one of the many attractive games played in the big ghotul at Alor, is a saluting game. The motiari form a line, the leader comes forward, bends down with her back to the others and swings to left and right, touching the feet of each in turn. She goes down the line and the next in order follows her.

Song

Didi boli boli kudum keli lo,	Sister, say, we have stamped our feet,
Ulti pão parilo pulti pão parilo.	Saluting the feet this side and that.
Juna garh dekhilo nawâ garh dekhilo.	We saw the old fort, we saw the new fort.
Sakhi chânwur badilo.	We made friendship with rice.
Râja tika tikilo.	We gave greeting to the Raja.
Son kukra basilo!	O the golden cock crowed!
Kumâr kukra basilo	The red cock crowed
Ki hi ri hir.	*Ki hi ri hir.*

Kudum represents the sound of stamping feet. After the song has been sung through to the sister, it is done for the mother-in-law, cousin, sister-in-law, anyone you please.

A Guessing Game

The Muria have a guessing game called Mundi Karsana. In Phulpar the girls stood in a circle holding out their hands. One of the boys put a ring into a girl's hand. Then the other boys had to come one by one to guess where it was.

In Metawand, this was played by boys and girls together sitting down, but the principle was the same. Sometimes the guesser puts his hand on each forehead in turn: it is believed that whoever has the ring will have a hot head.

A Game with Myrabolams

In Nayanar, I watched the chelik playing with *harra*-myrabolams. Two boys sat facing each other, each had a pile of myrabolams. The first boy picked up a handful, threw them into the air, and tried to catch as many as possible on the back of his hand. He failed to catch any, and lost his turn, and the other boy made the attempt. He caught two and put these beside him, the next throw he caught one, then three, but at last, though he had only three stones left, he dropped them all and lost his turn. Then the first boy tried again.[1]

X. COCK-FIGHTING

Cock-fighting is a popular sport among the Muria of the central and northern parganas, but it is little followed in the east where it is said to be a pastime worthy only of Ganda.[2] But in the west and central areas, cocks are specially

[1] A similar game is known as *Dhopa* by the Pauri Bhuiya.—Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 283. I have seen it in Mandla, and it is probably universally distributed.

[2] For an excellent account of cock-fighting among Kol, Bhumij and Uraon, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 95. Thurston considered it a 'disgusting spectacle' and agreed with Colonel Newcome that it should be performed in secret. He describes cock-fighting among the Mohammedans of Mysore who do not use steel spurs but

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Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

11. A Test of Wit

The posing of riddles is a fairly popular form of amusement in the ghotul. It sharpens the wits and is often very amusing, the sharp and unexpected contrasts between description and meaning often surprising the listeners into a sudden burst of laughter. Many riddles have both a manifest and latent meaning, the latter usually sexual. Riddles illustrating various sociological points will be found throughout the book, but I will add another 150 here.

In Gondi, the riddles are usually in what may be called prose. Rhyme is very uncommon and even assonance and punning are rare. The following are hardly typical:

Utu tutu bhui la tutu.
The horn comes out of the ground.
A bamboo shoot.

Uding uding inta, dây dây inta.
Say sit sit and say go go.
Sand in which you get stuck.

Porro hâru, adi mond.
Threshing-floor above, its pole below.
An umbrella.

Konda udinta hâru witinta.
The bullock sits, the tethering cord runs away.
A pumpkin.

The usual Gondi riddle has no special form.

Undi sapâdun sur sai kashinting.
A hundred dogs bite one lizard.
The rafter of a house.

Tâmur iruuru lokku jotây manta, mati warro warrona lota horiyor.
The brothers live together, but never enter each other's house.
A pair of shoes.

It is in the Halbi riddles, which are now almost as common as those in the original Gondi, that we find rhyme and assonance. The Halbi riddle is spoken very fast with an emphasis on a central word.

Sukho rukh thai kare;
Burga bhâlu kai kare.
The dry tree says *thai*;
The old bear says *kai*.
A gun.

Kurlu dongri mâria jhâti;
Eh thuni pachâs pâti.
Cut shrubs on the hill of kurlu trees;
There are fifty rafters on one pole.
An umbrella.

Eh garicho morhigai,
Bâru garicho pânikhai.
The cow with the broken horn from one house drinks the water of twelve houses.
A fish-hook.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

522
524 *Chiringta bāja;*
Natrāl pāga.
It makes a noise like a drum;
It has a red turban.
A sarus crane.

Alliteration is also used.

Phulit phulese,
Jharis jharese.
Flower blossoms
And drops soon.
A bazaar.

Some riddles end with a taunt or challenge, a device which is generally only used when an extra line is needed to complete the rhyme.

Jhil mili tarai
Rai ratan bāri.
Ye dhandha ke nijānbe,
Baile cho nāk ke kāti.

The star sparkles
The fence is beautiful.
If you don't answer this riddle,
Your wife's nose will be cut off.
A mirror.

Karkas pāna rupas dheti
Dhandha ko nahi jānbe ghasnin ke beti.
Rough leaves, silver stem.
If you don't know this riddle,
You're a Ghasnin's daughter.
Sugar-cane.

There's a wall round the lake.
If you can't answer this, you'll be my bond-servant.
A mirror.

The stick is straight,
At the top are bells.
If you don't know what this is,
An ant will bite your bottom.
Male genitalia.

A few rather curious riddles take the form of imaginary conversations. A thorn addresses a man about to step on it. 'I see you, but you don't see me.' A householder speaks to a leaf blown in by the wind. 'Where have you come from, old chap, making your camp on my doorstep?' A flooded river as it rushes on speaks to the reeds growing in its bed, 'You stay where you are; I am going to Ratanpur'.

The riddles posed in the ghotul may not all be of Muria origin, but at least the Muria can enjoy them and see their point. Even if a man cannot make that kind of joke himself, he may claim to have some sense of humour if he enjoys reading Thurber. Many of the descriptions set out in riddle form are really witty and amusing even to the sophisticated Western mind. The riddles too gain their effect from bizarre contrasts. An axe is described as 'a roasted pig jumping from tree to tree'. Anyone who has seen a Muria roasting a pig, holding the headless creature over the fire, will appreciate the

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Muria

X883
S24

Plate CXXIV

Karmata Karmata: Swinging-the-Baby, at Tumrugaon

[p. 536 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond AW32
Muria

522 wit of that; it is even better than the Uraon riddle on the same theme—'A
524 parrot playing on the dry stump of a tree'.[1] Another pig riddle is about a needle and thread which is described as 'a little pig with a cord in its bottom' instead of where the pig's cord ought to be, in its nose.

And what an admirable description of palm wine! 'Outside how quiet—but in the belly how it thunders!' The stomach is always amusing; as with us there is the connotation of something gross and amiable, the fat man keen on his food. A drum is 'a fly buzzing in an elephant's belly'—stressing the contrast of the huge belly and the little fly. A winnowing-fan is the 'man with buttocks in front and stomach behind'—the same kind of absurdity as when a man puts on his trousers back to front.

An oil-press is 'the hunchback bear that pisses all round'. A gun is riddled thus: 'Tap the dry tree and the old bear says *Hai*.' This seems to me amusing in a quiet and bucolic way, but—to make one more comparison with the Uraon riddles—their description of a gun as 'a ghost speaking from a dry piece of wood'[2] is uncanny and chills the heart. It probably has more effect on a European reader: he remembers a thousand guns and the ghosts that they have made.

There is an excellent description of a letter:

A little wood-pigeon has a fat tummy:
Where are you off to, pigeon?

Some other witty riddles are these:

The basket broke and out came the tiger.—*A pig excreting.*
Always turns up punctually to work.—*The sun.*
A black cow with a thousand feet jumps onto the Raja's food.—*A fly.*

You can almost see those dirty feet landing in the middle of the plate, scattering the royal food across the table, the face of the indignant Raja.

Two riddles expose the limitations of the human frame: 'You can see the distant hill, but not the one on top of you.' That is your own head. And 'your own back' is the answer to 'You can see all the world save one little plot of land'.

Two smutty jokes: 'The creature has a penis above and a vagina below.' *The backside of a cow.* 'He has his penis in his mouth.' *A sahib smoking a cigar.* These with their vague half-remembered associations to Havelock Ellis are probably more amusing to a European than to a Muria.

522 Really witty smut is not very common; I have been through many Paske Pata, the marriage songs which hurl rhythmic abuse at all the relations of the bridal pair, but I have found nothing that seems funny to me. Yet it obviously seems funny to the Muria, for at each new obscenity they shout with triumphant laughter. Why should it be so amusing to say 'I'll bed your sister', 'I'll copulate with your mother', 'I'll carry off my uncle's daughter'? The reason again is not sexual, but social; it is due to the absorbed attention which all Muria give to family relationships. You can always raise a laugh from a Muria audience by a reference to the Table of Affinity.

As we see elsewhere, certain relations stand in a *hassi ki nāt*, a joking relation, to one another. The time-honoured jokes are brought out again and again and always get a good hand. A man says to his *bhācha*: 'Why not come and live on us? You can't get a living in your own house. Then I'll be able to carry off your daughter, I've always wanted to marry her.' A chelik laughs at his *māma*, mother's brother. 'I'm going to have your daughter', he says.

[1] Archer, op. cit., p. 180. [2] Ibid., p. 180.

OTHER RECREATIONS

-III. RIDDLES

524

1. In the middle of the field they are measuring salt.
Rats.
2. A small boy brings out the salt to be measured.
Rat digging a hole.
3. You stay where you are, swaying to and fro:
I am going to Ratanpur.
A flooded river speaks to reeds growing in its bed.
4. I will say to my brother, 'Don't eat, don't eat'.
Fishing-hook.
5. The wind shakes it *hurur burur:* why is it not fit for eating? You are looking at the jungle; why don't you eat it?
Sambhar and hambar fruit (which sambhar do not eat).
6. Eight legs, nine knees, it decorates the wall, the old dried-up headman.
Spider.
7. The dock-tailed one has twenty-two cubs.
Spider.
8. In the dry tree the flower blossoms: it is beautiful in the world.
Cloth.
9. The belly behind, the back before.
Calves of the legs.
10. Malan bites the buttocks of Salan.
Marking-nut seed and fruit (which sticks on at the end).
11. The *chirota* fruit is not to be plucked;
The spotted bullock is not to be tethered;
The green stick is not to be lifted.
Sun, tiger, snake.
12. The Jamdar hides in the leaves,
The Kamdar hides in the clods,
There is a *ruchhai* sound in the grain-bin.
Hare, field-rat, mouse.
13. It jumps *che che*; it is naked in spite of its clothes; it is the ants' priest; it is the Gunia of the forest.
Frog, spider, snake, wai bird.
14. Inside flesh, outside bones.
Coconut.
15. There's one pot inside another: the son is whiter than the father.
Coconut.
16. The pig is three years old, but it has only a little bit of flesh.
Gongi and shell.
17. The white cock's organ is bent.
Gongi shell.
18. The small boy jumps along, repairing as he goes, the bank of the field.
Needle.
19. It drinks water on the rock and jumps over the tree.
Axe.

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Muria

● 524

20. You are going taking me with you.
A man and his shadow.

21. Who is the priest of the Bastar soil?
The potter.

22. The piebald horse ate a thousand leaves.
A bamboo umbrella.

23. They built a palace without using water.
White-ants.

24. Four-score buffaloes go along a narrow road.
Ants in a line.

25. There is a black man in your house.
Ant.

26. Big eyes, sharp teeth.
Monkey and white-ants.

27. On the ground big teeth; in the sky big eyes.
White-ants and a vulture.

28. It drinks its gruel from a gourd; it hides among the bamboos.
A baby drinking milk and sleeping in a basket.

29. Chitkunj Mitkunj crosses twelve hills, but hides in a dry leaf.
Siari seed.

30. Sit, Bondki, sit. Why are you standing?
The wall of a house.

31. Many kosum flowers in one bunch.
Market.

32. In the field a snake is wriggling.
Cultivators using a rake.

33. On the bush are many yellow birds.
Chilli.

34. The small boy makes the king weep.
Chilli.

35. The smell of the marriage feast is hot.
Chilli.

36. A chip of a dry tree.
Finger-nail.

37. On the green tree is a dry piece of wood.
Finger-nail.

38. Going, coming, but no footprint.
A boat.

39. You can't throw away the seed, but you can throw away the bark.
Boat (from which bits are chipped off when it is made).

40. The deer goes to and fro without feet.
Boat.

41. The fist is full of seed, the house is full of beans.
Children.

42. An old woman digs up the ground.
Pig.

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Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

43. The basket broke and out came the tiger.
A pig excretes.

44. A Lamana woman goes along throwing parched rice on the path
A she-goat excretes.

45. The dish comes from a Raja's house; touch it and you swell.
Fire.

46. On the dry tree blossoms a flower.
Fire.

47. A small boy pulling hard puts on his dhoti.
A man winds rope into a grain-bin.

48. The sacrificed goat drinks water.
Hemp.

49. Lick quickly and fall down.
Broom.

50. Pick up the bundle and it talks.
Broom.

51. Nobody knows the noise of its beating *pat-pat.*
Eyebrow.

52. If anything is thrown in the two tanks, they overflow.
Eyes.

53. Even little fish can't get into this shining tank.
The eye.

54. A new plough, a new yoke, a new field yields a crow.
A new daughter-in-law.

55. It is hard to pick up, but you can throw it away with your left hand.
Ashes from the hearth.

56. A chelik uses up a whole cart-load of toilet-twigs.
The hearth.

57. At the time of yoking—one:
At time of loosing—two.
Toilet-twig used to clean the teeth, which usually splits after use.

58. Five men are ploughing the fields and ten men are collecting the earth with a harrow.
A twig for cleaning the teeth. (Five men means five fingers and ten men means fingers of both the hands.)

59. The hornless bullock grows a horn.
Moon.

60. It always turns up punctually.
Sun.

61. Four are cold, four are hot, four are wet. The deer has twelve toes: each grazes by itself.
The year.

62. The black cock gathers it; the white cock spreads it out to dry.
Night and day.

63. In the stream sits a decorated bird.
Money in a string-bag.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

524

64. The vulture eats the bullock, but can never finish it.
Sharpening-stone.

65. It is raining dum-dum; the tortoise goes to the bank.
Rain-hat.

66. The spotted monkey eats thirty-two score leaves.
Rain-hat.

67. The thrashing-floor is above, and its peg is below.
An umbrella.

68. This peacock has only one leg.
An umbrella.

69. The baby is born with seven coverings.
A bamboo-shoot.

70. The cowshed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get in.
Breasts that can never be properly covered with cloth.

71. The nose-string is above, the hawk below.
Mango and its stem.

72. Unmarried they beat her:
Married they let her be.
Pot.

73. Inside it goes down deep;
Above it rises high;
It is needed every year.
Thatching grass.

74. The long hen lays its eggs in a circle.
Dāng-kānda, a root.

75. Fruit, fruit, seedless fruit.
Eggs.

76. A cow bears seeds; the seeds bear children.
Hen's eggs.

77. The cow gave birth to a bone, and the bone to a calf.
A hen.

78. Fruit without root.
An egg.

79. The mother gave birth to a seed and the seed gave birth to a child.
An egg.

80. The orange now has flowers.
A chick hatched from an egg.

81. The tree has only two leaves.
Man and his ears.

82. Up stairs, down stairs, a fish in the middle.
The tongue.

83. Dead bullock goes ahead.
Cowhide rope of a plough.

84. A ploughshare falls from the hillside.
A lizard.

85. The white cock goes from house to house.
Curds being hawked from door to door.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
•S24

Donga Karsana:
Oranges and Lemons, at Koilibera

Plate CXXV

[p. 594(A)]

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Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

524

86. There's white water in the black pot. Queen Thamka is dancing there.
The pot in which curd is churned.

87. It comes when you call and goes back when you threaten it.
Gate.

88. Going it goes, coming it comes.
Door.

89. It takes its food without vegetables.
Wooden spade for digging earth.

90. Three brothers stand on one leg.
Leaf of the pharsa tree.

91. The sweetest thing in the world.
Sleep.

92. A bird goes along dragging a cart-load of grass behind.
A peacock.

93. The white bullock has a black halter.
Kosa-cocoon.

94. You fire the arrow with all your might, but it falls below your feet.
Urine.

95. The mother sits still and her child whirls round.
Earthen pot and gourd used to stir the jāwa-gruel.

96. Two are dry and four are slimy.
The horns and udders of a cow.

97. A hundred dogs bite one lizard.
Rafter of a house.

98. The two brothers live together but never enter each other's house.
Shoes.

99. You can hear the noise of the ring and see its mark on the road.
Cart-wheel.

100. This creeper has only one fruit, but inside that fruit there is a flower.
Lamp.

101. A little sparrow scattered its feathers about the whole house.
Lamp.

102. There is a fire in its mouth; its tail drinks water; we all love it, for it's like a queen.
Lamp.

103. It has a head but no heart. It walks but cannot speak.
A copper coin.

104. The flower is in the water but the fruit is in the tree.
Wild fig.

105. The black seed is sown in the white field.
Ink and paper.

106. A little wood-pigeon has a fat tummy. Where are you off to, pigeon? To meet the king.
A letter in the post.

107. The bullock sits down and its tethering cord runs away.
A pumpkin.

108. The tethering cord is long and many calves are tied to it.
Cucumbers on their stalk.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

● 524

109. The ram cries when you touch its horn.
Grindstone.

110. The small drum has holes at either end.
Mahua flower.

111. The two brothers clean their teeth with one twig.
Two wheels and one axle.

112. There's no tree near the seed. If you eat it, it disappears.
Hailstone.

113. It cannot understand, but others understand; it is not a man, but it walks day and night.
A watch.

114. It grows in the sun and dies in the shade.
Sweat.

115. It shoots its arrow, but it has neither bow nor hands.
A porcupine.

116. Licks quickly and looks up.
A hoe.

117. It is life without bone, it is black but it's no young buffalo.
A leech.

118. All is burnt but the king's small piece of cloth.
A path.

119. Everything in the forest is burnt but the yogi's sack.
Date-palm grub.

120. The big creature has small eyes, ears like winnowing-fans and no wings.
Elephant.

121. A black cow has a thousand feet; it jumps on to the king's dinner.
A fly.

122. Daughter-in-law's name is Koelapati; mother-in-law's name is Tarro. It goes round the village making a noise.
Government and Kotwar.

123. A little pig has a cord in its bottom.
Needle and thread.

124. Whistle and the pole waves to and fro.
Tail of a dog.

125. The big forest has a little forest at one end.
A dog and its tail.

126. The vagina is underneath, the penis is above.
Tail of a cow.

127. In front, it cuts with a sickle.
In the middle, it fills a basket.
Behind, it sweeps with a broom.
A cow.

128. A little girl ties a lot of cloth round her waist.
Spinner's bobbin.

129. This house has no doors.
Kosa-cocoon.

130. If you give, I will give.
Johar greeting.

OTHER RECREATIONS

524

131. The plough has ten servants; each bullock has five. They catch the mangoes. They shut the little door; they fill the house with water.
Love-making and intercourse. The ten and five are the fingers.

132. Two sisters live together with one husband.
Tongs.

133. From the tree-top falls a green leaf.
A parrot comes down to feed.

134. The goad with a little mouth. Who knows what it is?
The person who is bitten knows.

135. Catch it firmly, throw it away.
Nasal discharge.

136. The pillar of the Raja's house sounds *has mas*
The Raja shakes it and it trembles *dal dal.*
Plantain.

137. The fruit of the jungle climbs to the sky.
Whirlwind.

138. A crooked footprint on a broad leaf.
The navel.

139. Throw it down, but it won't break.
Kosa-cocoon.

140. On a burnt tree the vultures sit.
People round liquor.

141. The Manjhi who fells you to the ground.
Landa rice-beer.

142. The roasted hen jumps alive out of its own bottom.
Burnt grass springing up again.

143. The fencing is decorated, the water of the tank sparkles. If you don't know the answer, you will be a girl's *kabīri* (bond-servant).
A mirror.

144. The earth is sticky: the lid is the broken half of a pot.
Tortoise.

145. Bastar's Raja and Kanker's Rani have the same face.
Mandia and sarson seed.

146. When he eats, his thighs are swollen.
A man puffs out his cheeks as he plays the mohori-trumpet.

147. The Mohammedan's horse is full of holes; however many mount it, it never wearies.
A country cot.

148. The leather is cut into threads. The thread is tied to seven drums. Some is tied in a knot, some is tied to a cot, the rest is put out to dry, and the kite without claws comes and kicks it down.
A spider's web spoilt by the wind.

149. The pole stands up without support.
Hair.

150. There's a bunch of corn on the withered tree.
A scorpion.

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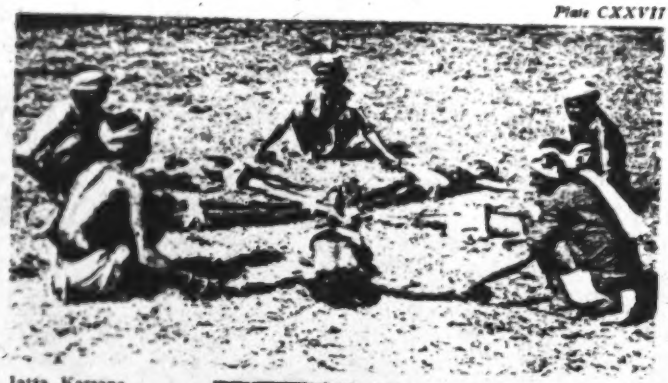
Muria

Y883
●524



Jatta Karsana
at Metawand

Mao Karsana:
Hunt-the-Buffalo,
at Markabera

Gudina Karsana:
Rolling-over game,
at Koilibera

[p. 606(N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CXXVIII

A883
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Wanjing Karsana : Rice-husking game, at Temrugaon

Rice-husking in fact

[2 2]

[p.606 (B)]

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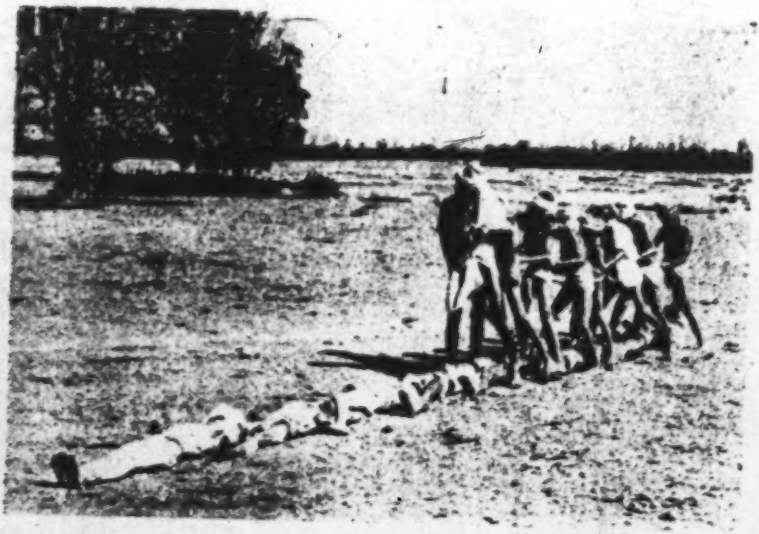

Tedapotur Karsana
at Sidhawand

Plate CXXIX

Munjmeta chelik playing
the Watia Karsana

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534

Plate CXXX The Root Game

Planting the roots

Pulling up a root

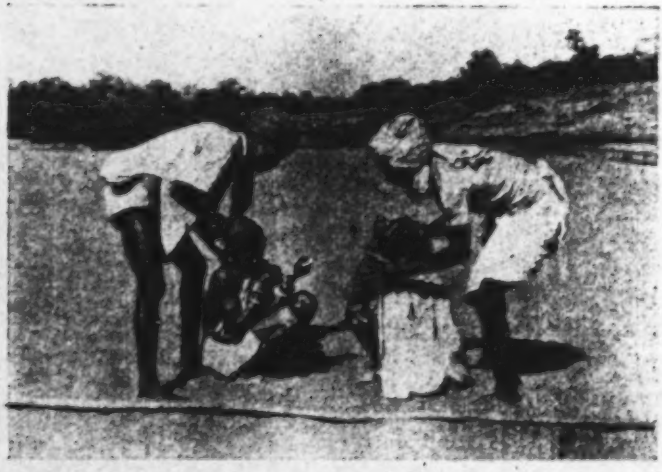
[p. 608(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●524

Carrying the roots to be washed in the river

Washing the roots



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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate CXXXII

The Mogral Karsana, or Crocodile game

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5x6

Wrestling at Kollibera

[p. 608(a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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1

Kor Karsana

1. Revealing a cock
2. Guessing the cock

2

[p. 610 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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883
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Plate CXXXIV

The Purad-upihana Karsana which imitates the movements of the wood-pigeon

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
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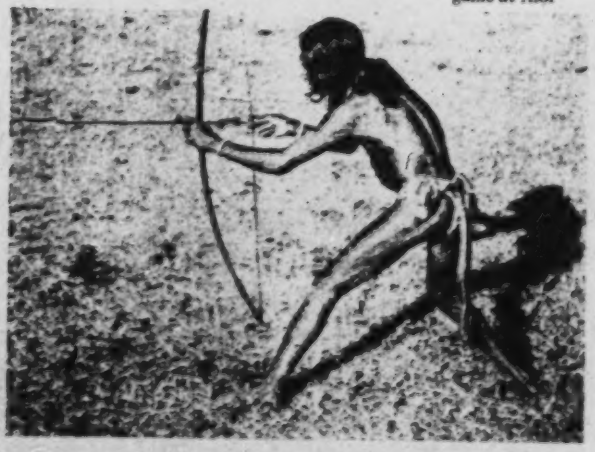
The Koda Karsana, or Horse game



An archer in a hunting game at Alor

[p. 622 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

A983
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Shooting the bison
at Sidhawand

Bison-hunting at Alor

[p. 622 (b)]

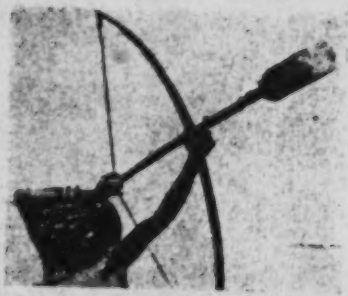
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●524

Hunting games

Plate CXXXVII

Preparing a human tiger at Pupgaon



Village jester shoots with a spade

A hunt at Phauda

[p.624(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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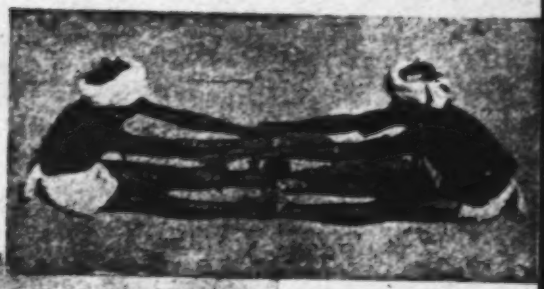
Plate CXXXVIII



Movements in a 'Pulling-up' game

Kadna Kavsana or Wrestling game

[p.624(B)]

883
524

Baiper-lad Karsana: bullock laden with sacks

Plate CXXXIX

Gudha Karsana

Mahasundai Karsana or Snake game

[p. 624 (c)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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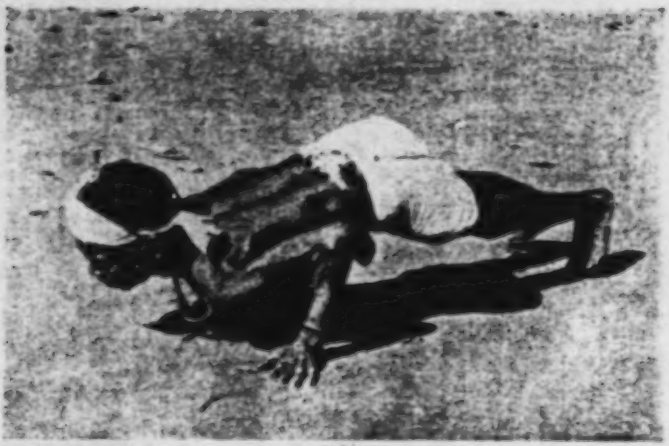
Plate CXL



Goibal Karsana,
or Lizard game

A cock-fighting game

[p. 624 (D)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CXLVI

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The Jhelo of Pupgaon with earthen dolls and cattle

[p. 646 (8)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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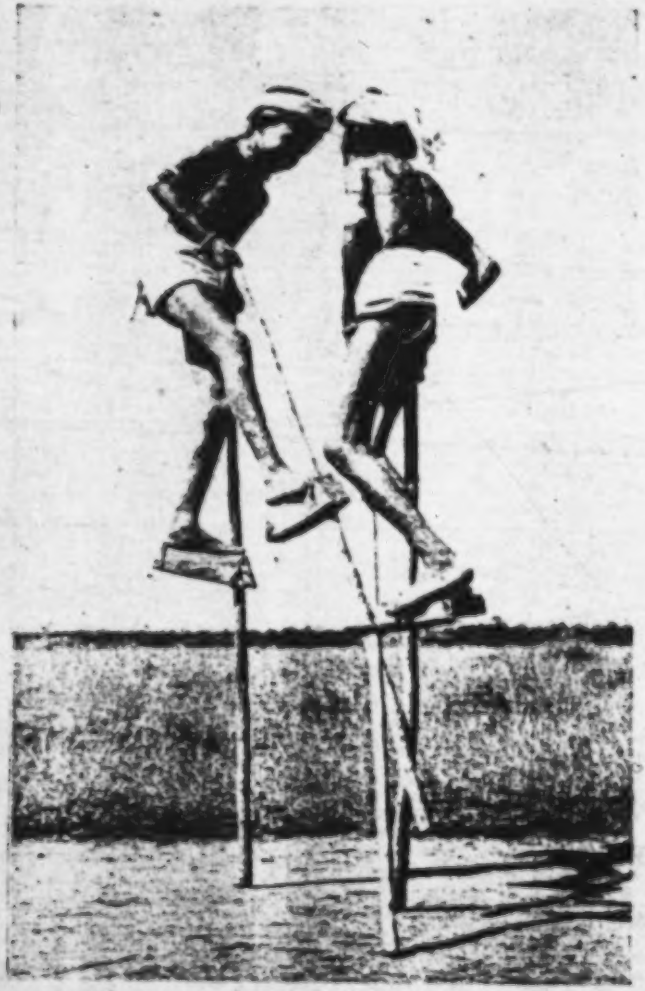
Plate CXLVIII



Stilt-fighting

[p.650 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

III. The Stilt Festival

The use of stilts during the rains is a semi-religious practice common throughout Middle India and no doubt elsewhere.[1] It has been suggested that it has some magical significance aimed at encouraging the crops to grow.

'The Geeree', says Colonel Ward, describing the custom in Mandla, 'can hardly be called a festival: it is remarkable more for its absurdity than anything else, and is left to the children to celebrate. This they do by walking about the place on stilts for some days, praising the institution of the Geeree, or stilts, as placing them above the necessity of walking in the mud; and finally, proceeding in procession to the Nerbudda, they throw the stilts in and return to their homes.'[2]

The chelik have similar, but more fully developed, customs. The stilts are made of two poles of either ghotiya or sarai about 6' high, to which foot-rests are attached 2' from the ground. These are made of hollowed bits of char wood which are filled with pebbles and fixed together round the poles either by nails or small wooden pegs. The stilts are made early in the rains at the Amavas Pandum which corresponds to the Hareli festival of the Hindus. During the rains, the chelik constantly walk about on their stilts making a great deal of noise as the pebbles inside the hollowed foot-rests rattle about. The only game they play on the stilts is stilt-fighting when they attack each other and try to bump each other off.[3] They become expert in lifting one of the stilts off the ground and hitting another boy with it. They are also able to do very clever solo dances, hopping on one leg with the other raised from the ground.

Stilt-walking is permitted for a couple of months during the rains from the time of the Amavas Pandum until after the first New Eating ceremony in the middle of August or a little later. This is called the Korta Tindana in Gondi and on the second day of the festival, which is known as the Hara Tindana or the day on which the people eat the leavings of the food that remained after the big day of the festival, a special ceremony takes place in connexion with the stilts. After this day it is taboo to use stilts at all. Grigson adds that among the Hill Maria there is a rule that stilt-walking is not only taboo during the rest of the year but also every fourth year.[4]

On the second day of the Korta Tindana the chelik assemble and go round the village on their stilts holding bursundi plants in their hands. They dance in front of each house in turn begging for rice, eggs, liquor and money and sing,

Lāya dāya loo loon thi,
Rai hoda hoda the
Nāna daha dharthe,
Gaudri bursundi pāra pāra.

This may be freely translated, 'O stinking mosquitoes, run away to the fields of rai before our feet touch the threshold, for with branches we are hunting [illegible].

[1] As, for example, by the Angami and Ao Naga, the Kuki and Kachari, and the Marquesans. (See Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 155 and J. G. Frazer, *Belief in Immortality* (London, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 339f. Russell gives photographs of Hindu boys on stilts (op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 42 and 46) and describes the custom briefly at Vol. IV, p. 111.

[2] H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mandlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 65. Compare E. M. Gordon, 'Notes concerning the People of Mungeli Tahsil, Bilaspore District' in *JAS Beng.*, New Series, Vol. I (1905), p. 193.

[3] The Angami Naga, like the Marquesan Islanders, play a game on stilts in which the combatants try to balance on one stilt and trip up their opponents with the other. See J. H. Hutton, 'Assam and the Pacific', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 6.

[4] Grigson, op. cit., p. 140.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
524

Johar Karsana

This game, which is one of the many attractive games played in the big ghotul at Alor, is a saluting game. The motiari form a line, the leader comes forward, bends down with her back to the others and swings to left and right, touching the feet of each in turn. She goes down the line and the next in order follows her.

Song

[539]

Didi boli boli kudum keli lo,	Sister, say, we have stamped our feet,
Ulti pão parilo pulti pão parilo.	Saluting the feet this side and that.
Juna garh dekhilo nawã garh dekhilo.	We saw the old fort, we saw the new fort.
Sākhi chānwur badilo.	We made friendship with rice.
Rāja tika tikilo.	We gave greeting to the Raja.
Son kukra basilo !	O the golden cock crowed!
Kumār kukra basilo	The red cock crowed
Ki hi ri kir.	*Ki hi ri kir.*

Kudum represents the sound of stamping feet. After the song has been sung through to the sister, it is done for the mother-in-law, cousin, sister-in-law, anyone you please.

A Guessing Game

The Muria have a guessing game called Mundi Karsana. In Phulpar the girls stood in a circle holding out their hands. One of the boys put a ring into a girl's hand. Then the other boys had to come one by one to guess where it was.

In Metawand, this was played by boys and girls together sitting down, but the principle was the same. Sometimes the guesser puts his hand on each forehead in turn: it is believed that whoever has the ring will have a hot head.

A Game with Myrabolams

In Nayanar, I watched the chelik playing with *harra*-myrabolams. Two boys sat facing each other, each had a pile of myrabolams. The first boy picked up a handful, threw them into the air, and tried to catch as many as possible on the back of his hand. He failed to catch any, and lost his turn, and the other boy made the attempt. He caught two and put these beside him, the next throw he caught one, then three, but at last, though he had only three stones left, he dropped them all and lost his turn. Then the first boy tried again.[1]

X. Cock-fighting

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Cock-fighting is a popular sport among the Muria of the central and northern parganas, but it is little followed in the east where it is said to be a pastime worthy only of Ganda.[2] But in the west and central areas, cocks are specially

[1] A similar game is known as *Dhapa* by the Pauri Bhuiya.—Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 285. I have seen it in Mandla, and it is probably universally distributed.

[2] For an excellent account of cock-fighting among Kol, Bhumij and Uraon, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 95. Thurston considered it a 'disgusting spectacle' and agreed with Colonel Newcome that it should be performed in secret. He describes cock-fighting among the Mohammedans of Mysore who do not use steel spurs but

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

reared and trained to fight. It is said that in the good old days, the fights used to be between two men, and the spectators bet on the result. Cock-fighting came in when this exciting custom was forbidden. Large meetings

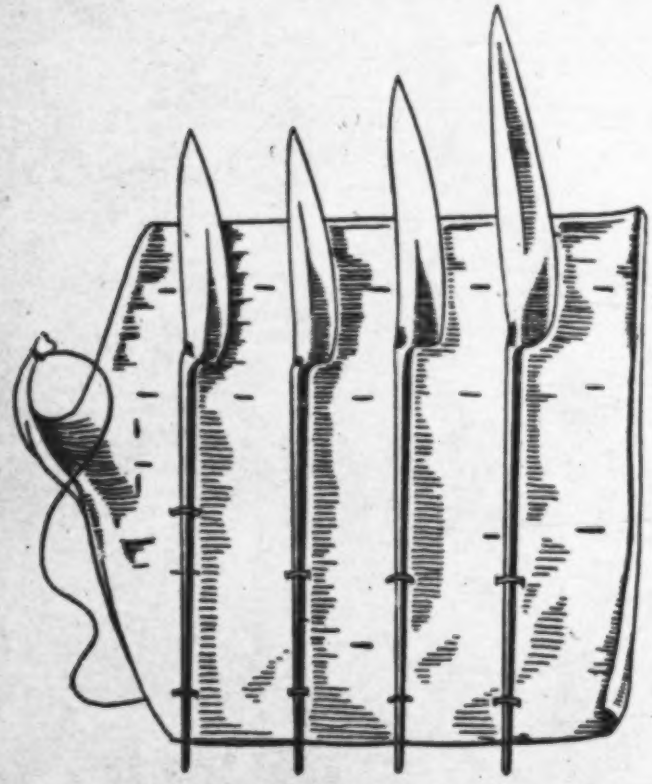


FIG. 146. Set of cock-fighting knives in cloth bag
Length of longest knife 3"

are held at the end of most of the bazaars late in the afternoon. Special meetings are also called in the larger Muria villages, both regularly and on

sharpen the natural spurs with a knife. 'A real good fight' he says 'may last for several hours.' This, and several other details of Thurston's description, seem to me a little doubtful. Thurston adds that the sport was popular in South Canara among the Bant, but since it often led to quarrels was discouraged by the police.—*Ethnographic Notes*, pp. 569ff. I have never seen it in the Central Provinces, though I have watched maina-fighting in Sarangarh State. Other references to cock-fighting will be found in T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, 'Games, Sports and Pastimes in Prehistoric India', *Man in India*, Vol. XXI, p. 144; D. N. Majumdar, 'Games of the Hos of Kolhan', *Man in India*, Vol. V, p. 201; J. Sarkar, 'Assam and the Ahoms in 1660', *JBORS*, Vol. I, p. 186; and in some of the standard monographs on individual tribes.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

541 525 special occasions such as a gathering of the pargana panchayat. In this part the Muria are enthusiastic over the sport and not inconsiderable sums of money pass to and fro in the bets which inevitably accompany a fight. To the gentle Muria the attraction of cock-fighting is not (as it is to the more blood-thirsty Bison-horn Maria) the excitement of blood and battle, but the pleasure of betting. The cock that loses also becomes the property of the winner.

When the company has gathered in the shade of a great grove of trees, the cocks—which have been brought to the place carefully covered—are measured against each other so that in no fight will they be too unfairly matched. The spur-men, who are Muria specially trained in the business, go aside to tie the spurs to the cocks' feet. These spurs are sharp knife-blades about 3" long and slightly curved, made by the Muria Lohar of locally smelted iron, and are kept in little bamboo cases or rolled up in a cloth hold-all.

The spur-man attaches the blades to the cock's feet, spits on the string and binds it round and round until the blades are firmly fixed at exactly the right height and angle. He then removes dirt from his ears, mixes some with the dust from his left foot with a little spittle and rubs the mess on the blades saying, 'O Mahapurub, O the Departed of my house, you know my truth and goodness. It is for you to give this cock victory'. He removes a feather from the cock's tail, cuts it in two with the blade attached to its leg, spits on it and throws it away. If the cock is victorious, the spur-man receives a leg of its defeated adversary.

The owners now pick up their birds and stand facing each other in the middle of a clearing surrounded by an excited crowd of spectators. They hold the cocks out, make them peck at each other and when they are aroused put them on the ground. The birds usually go to the attack at once, and the fight only lasts a short time. The blades are very deadly and I have frequently seen both cocks fall dead after thirty seconds' combat. Once a cock turns away from its adversary, it is considered defeated.

After a victory, the owner of the cock should make an offering of liquor to the Departed. At Binjhli he was expected to give a coconut to the Village Mother. At Ulera, the Muria said that when they put the cocks into battle they remembered the Departed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and uncomplicated view is correct. Social problems are usually very intricate and very simple solutions have so far always been found wanting.

'It cannot be denied, however, that alcoholic liquor is liable to change an individual's mode of reaction, and therefore plays an important part as a crimino-etiological factor. The most prominent psychological effects of alcohol are: emotional changes, usually in the direction of euphoria and increased irritability, but occasionally towards dysphoria (especially in the later stages of intoxication); reduced inhibition of drive impulses, particularly of a sexual nature; more optimistically coloured judgements; a reckless disposition; reduced control of actions; increased physical mobility, with a tendency to impulsive and thoughtless actions; a general lowering of the moral level. These effects indicate that intoxication is conducive to certain kinds of criminality, such as acts of violence—assault, manslaughter, rape and other sexual crimes, defamation and resistance to the police. Alcohol is, as a matter of fact, a more or less important contributory cause in many such crimes'.[1]

674 Typical crimes of drunkenness among the Maria may be briefly illustrated. A man and his wife were illegally distilling mahua liquor in a field. They both got very drunk on the fresh spirit and as they went staggering home, the woman fell and broke the pot, and her husband beat and killed her in a drunken fury.[2] One day a party of men met [575] to gamble. One of them (as is generally the case, since gambling is not an aboriginal vice) was a Mahara. The party drank a lot of salphi juice, and perhaps some mahua spirit as well. There was a quarrel and the Mahara beat [564] one of the Maria, a serious matter involving the latter's excommunication. The Maria in his drunken rage killed the Mahara and then gave himself up to the police.[3]

Twelve out of the thirteen cases where murder was due to drinking landa rice-beer occurred at festivals. For example, at one festival a man abused his elder brother's wife for not tethering the cattle properly or clearing away the cow-dung. She abused him in return, and in his drunken fit he stabbed her with an arrow.[4] At another festival party,

[1] Kinberg, op. cit., p. 211.
[2] Case No 35.
[3] Case No 36.
[4] Case No 43.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

dance, which makes everyone laugh, while all the mediums of neighbouring villages attend, and, possessed by their godlings, leap wildly to and fro, carrying bunches of *saja* leaves in their hands or holding them over their matted hair, to the general merriment. The chief wedding dance is the bison dance, every male turning at intervals in his paces to smile and 'glad-eye' the next dancer, and each then pretending to butt the other with his bison-horns; in another figure they similarly mimic two cocks fighting. The greatest sign of skill is to be able to impale on the tip of the horns a piece of grass twisted into a ring and thrown on the ground; the dancer may before this pretend to be a young and frisky bull, butting at wisps of grass or trees, or hurling them into the air to toss them on his horns. I have seen a dancer pick a small finger ring off the ground on the tip of his horns. As among the Hill Marias, and indeed most Central Provinces Gonds, there is always a comic and obscene element; men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear or goat fur, and carrying clubs, nets and dummy guns, rush in and out amongst the dancers, making obscenely suggestive gestures with their clubs at the dancing or onlooking girls, and provoking roars of laughter.

There is generally a pause for *landa* or *mahua* spirit sooner or later, after which the girls sometimes, before resuming the dance, sit in a bunch swaying from their hips and singing short catchy refrains, with either frankly sexual meaning or no meaning at all; and often the lads opposite make the whole company laugh by imitating them in falsetto.

The dancing and singing, it need hardly be said, lead on frequently to love-making, couples retiring into the darkness, or else starting an affair ending in experimental union and perhaps, later, in matrimony.

E. Other Amusements

The Bison-horn Marias' favourite pastime of cock-fighting has already been described (see page 162 above). Small wooden toys are made for the children, very crude representations of tigers or other animals; and a pathetic sight at the graves of children are these toys left there for the *hanal*[1] of the children to play with. I have never found any Marias making string figures; and they have shown no interest in attempts to demonstrate them. The Murias and Bhattras have innumerable games in which all the village youth takes part in the cold weather and spring nights, many of which

[1] Literally the 'Gone', used of the spirits of the dead.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

involve considerable physical exertion and have proved excellent material for the physical training of the boys in the State schools; at the Muria *gotul* dormitories these games often take the place of dancing and singing. But the only Hill Maria villages which have anything of the kind appear to be those of the Padalibhum and Tapalibhum *parganas* which are gradually adopting the dormitory organization of their Muria neighbours; and some Bison-horn villages on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country are beginning to copy the Murias and Bhattras. Early to bed is the rule for old and young in Maria villages, and the child from the beginning learns to copy his father's activities; his playthings soon become small bows and arrows, fishing-rods and snares, skill in the use of which will make him an asset to the community. Stilt-walking in the early monsoon, occasional use of bull-roarers and bamboo drums, crude ornamentation of the walls of houses or the carving of ornamental combs and beadwork seem to be the only other recreations of Hill Maria youth.

F. Reckoning Time

The Hill Maria names for the months have already been given (page 129), and it has been said that in general the Bison-horn Marias know and use the local Hindu names. They call a month *lenj*, the word used for the moon; but all, even Bison-horn Marias, have to think hard before they can tell you what month it is, and there may be a certain amount of argument on the point. Throughout Bastar there is something of this uncertainty; the local Hindu months are named after festivals such as Goncha, Dasehra and Diwali; and the Bastaria, even if he adopts these, does not like to observe them on the same date in every village, because that would deprive him of the chance of taking part in the celebrations at the surrounding villages.

Though the Bison-horn Maria knows the Hindu names for the days of the week, and uses them in his conversation, the Hill Maria does not. If word comes to a Hill Maria headman that in thirteen days' time he and his villagers have to go to the tahsil court, or to work on the annual road repairs, he will make a tally string with thirteen knots and undo one every day, leaving to keep the appointment on the morning of the last knot. These tally strings are also kept by those who attend markets at fairly regular intervals; and in a murder case, of which the villagers had decided to suppress or postpone informing the police because it was the harvest season, the wife of the murdered man, determined to get justice, had kept a tally string on which she tied a fresh knot every

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

526

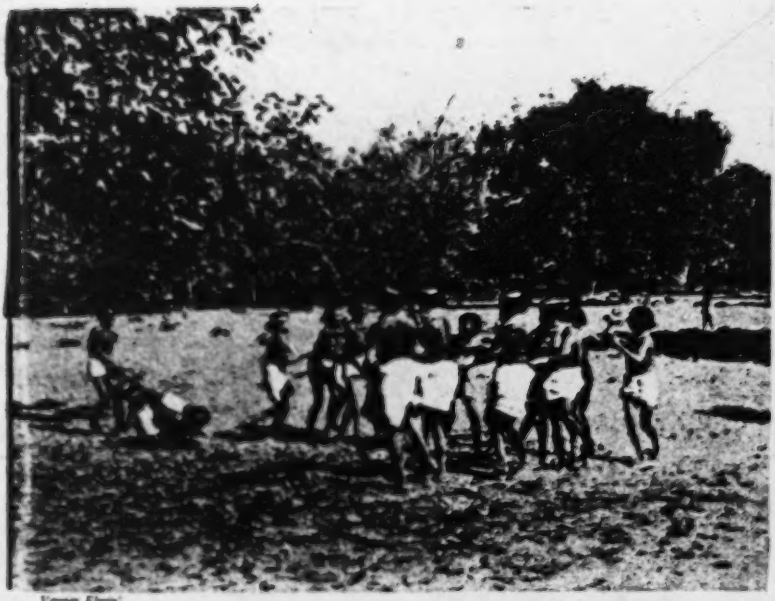
Bison-horn Maria girls playing games at Mokhpal [Verrier Elwin

[End Plate M]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

526



Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria girls playing games at Mokhpal

[End Plate O]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate CXXXII

The Mogral Karsana, or Crocodile game

X883
526

Wrestling at Koilibera

[p. 608(a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

summer or the work of burning *dahi*, saying, 'O the summer has brought this burning for me'. They eat onions as a cure. 757

For pain in the stomach. The root of the arandi shrub, or the small green shoots of the bahera tree. 755

For wounds. The bark of the mendla tree. 278

For rheumatism. There are several different remedies:

(1) Put some leaves of the kumi tree on the affected place and blow the pain away.

(2) Powder the roots of the karanji and sarpho plants. Mix with oil and rub it in.

(3) Touch the painful swelling with a bit of 'seed-iron' (*bij-loha*), or a thunderbolt.

For fever. The classic treatment is with red ants, which are sprinkled over the patient's body—the stings act as a counter-irritant. Sometimes, however, the ants are put in a pot of water, the lid is closed and the water is boiled for an hour. Then it is strained out and salt, chilli and garlic are mixed in it and it is given to the patient to drink. The residue of red ants is cleaned, ground up with salt and chilli and made into a chutney and given to the patient with his first food.

Another common febrifuge is to pound the leaves of the chill tree, and make a drink by mixing them with salt and chilli in water.

Red ants are also given as a cure for biliousness. A chutney of red ants, haldi and chilli is said to act very quickly on the stomach.

For headache.

(1) Pull each of your toes in turn. When you have found the toe that is connected with whatever part of the head is aching, tie it up and the pain will cease.

(2) Grind up the roots of makar and tikur with fresh haldi. Make a hot poultice of this and apply it to the head.

For diarrhoea. Take seven grains of rice and seven grains of urad pulse and the dry leaf of any old bamboo in the house. Grind them up together, boil in water, strain and take on an empty stomach.

For itch. Make an ointment of the white underskin of a snake and karanji oil.

For sores.

(1) Collect some harra fruit (myrabolams), dry and grind them to powder. Make a paste with a little oil, and apply to the sores.

(2) Remove the dirt from the patient's own ears, mix it in a paste of rice-flour and apply to the sores.

For the bite of a mad dog. Get a bit of the flesh of a mad dog which has died, dry it carefully and store it. When needed, it may be given mixed with gur not less than two years old.

Several different kinds of medicinal oil are made by the Muria. For cracked feet, and wounds in the ears of a bullock, they extract oil from the *dhaman* snake or the cobra. The fat is removed and melted in a pot and kept carefully in a small gourd. For rheumatism, oil made from the fatty parts of the tiger, the leopard or the bear is said to be effective.

X. Muria Festivals

Muria festivals are of several different kinds. The great Marhai are commercial festivals; in the larger Hinduized villages the old Pen Karaita or 'Sport of the Gods' has been turned into a large bazaar, at which the religious element 527

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

● 527 is present but not obtruded. The Kondagaon Marhai lasts four or five days, but only on one of these is there any serious spiritual business. Then clan-gods from the surrounding villages attend, scores of Siraha fall into ecstasy, and a great procession goes round the booths of the fair. In the Muria country, similar Marhai are held in Keskal, Narayanpur and Antagarh.

[411]

FIG. 31. Axes of a type used to kill sacrificial animals

Dassera is a national festival. If the Marhai corresponds to St Giles Fair or the Lord Mayor's Procession, Dassera is for the people of Bastar the King's Birthday, the Aldershot Tattoo and Primrose Day combined. Pargana headmen from all over the State assemble at Jagdalpur to pay tribute to the Maharaja and attend the Muria Darbar. The ceremonies last a fortnight and the aboriginals play a major part in them; among other things they kidnap the Maharaja and have the right to pull his ceremonial car. Central in the Dassera ritual is the royal worship of Danteshwari: her priest and litter come all the way from Dantewara; and no Muria who sees the regal attention the goddess receives at Jagdalpur but wants to introduce her to a shrine in his own village.

The great Jatra may be classified as tribal festivals. These are the religious pilgrimages to the shrines of the clan-gods and to notable gods in celebrated temples. They are sometimes celebrated annually and sometimes every three years. They are very great and exciting occasions; gods are brought by their devotees from surrounding villages; hundreds of chelik and motiari come to dance; and scores of Siraha enliven the scene by their antics. In villages where there is no clan-god, there is usually a small Deo-jatra, an assembly of the villagers to do honour to the local gods. These are brought out of their shrines, bathed, exercised and worshipped. Such ceremonies often occur shortly before the Wijja Pandum in April or May.

796 I have already given an outline of the agricultural festivals which, with the festivals of the clan-gods, are the most important events of the year. All these festivals are of the same pattern; at one the first pulses are eaten; at another the freshly reaped millets; at a third mangoes and other fruits. It will be sufficient, therefore, to describe in detail one of these celebrations, and I will now give an account of the Marka Pandum, or the ceremonial eating of the first mangoes of the year, which I saw at Masora on 17 April 1941. This feast is preceded by a ceremonial hunt. I missed this at Masora, arriving only in time to see the chelik return with a fine hare slung over a boy's shoulder.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER NINETEEN

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

I

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X 484
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DELIGHTFUL and enlivening features of ghotul life are the expeditions which are made throughout the year to other villages.[1] I will consider here only those visits which are made by the ghotul officially, under the command of the leaders and with appropriate discipline and rules. Such expeditions are made for marriages, for the festivals of the clan-gods and the Marhai fairs, and—in the cold weather—for ceremonial dancing from village to village. Sometimes the chelik and motiari go together, sometimes separately. Although every trip has a definite and serious purpose it is transformed by the spirit of youth and love into a holiday adventure. Now girls and boys of different villages meet one another and fall in love; now chelik and motiari can go out together on the freest and happiest of picnics far away from the drudgery of everyday life.

Every marriage attracts the neighbouring ghotul; early in the morning of the marriage day the chelik and motiari of a dozen villages are up, decorating themselves, preparing their drums, collecting their few necessities. When they reach their destination, they camp under trees or by a stream. They go to the wedding to help in the making of the booth, to dance before the house and above all to share in the splendid display of the Lagir. They are entertained by the bridegroom's family; they get their food and some liquor. For the rest they roam about together, playing, laughing, flirting or talking and resting in their little outdoor camps. Marriages usually occur in the warm weather and provide a perfect picnic-holiday for everyone.

The great festivals of the clan-gods provide another opportunity for amorous adventure or recreation. The Muria mind does not confuse piety with religion. The gods are to be satisfied and honoured; they must be bathed, fed, humoured, coaxed, caressed; but there is no reason why their worshippers should not enjoy themselves. The Canterbury Pilgrims would have been quite at home at a clan-festival. I have witnessed these at Adnar and Metawand. Hundreds of boys and girls attend them—a magnificent sight with their finery and ornaments. Here again, each ghotul makes a separate camp under trees, but the chelik and motiari dance together and there is more mixing with other villages than in a marriage.

Many a boy arrives with a bottle of mahua liquor half hidden beneath his arm. He has come with a definite purpose of meeting and attracting a girl from another village. At night he may be seen with a torch searching everywhere for his sweetheart. Even married men are allowed licence on these occasions. The gods themselves, carried about by mediumistic Siraha, assault the girls and chase them about. The festal dancing begins about nine o'clock in the evening and goes on till dawn; it is a splendid and moving spectacle. All round are little camp fires, and as the night wears on more and more boys and girls slip away together into the jungle or retire to sit by the fire and drink their liquor.

X 883
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There are finally the ceremonial expeditions, which we will now consider.

[1] Similar expeditions are made by the Orissa tribes, the Bhuiya, Juang, Bondo and Gadaba, though these generally have a serious matrimonial purpose alien to Muria tradition.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 size, from those used in the plains. The plains blacksmith does recognize the Hill Maria's individual taste in such matters, but that 326 taste is always being modified by the sight, occasional use and occasional purchase of plains types, particularly if, when a new weapon is wanted in a hurry, only the latter are immediately available.

411 The blade of the average Maria knife measures 13 to 15 cm. from the point to the beginning of the tang. It is about 2·5 cm. broad where the tang begins, and from there the cutting edge curves inwards for a quarter or a fifth of its length, thence tapering with a slight convex curve to the point, which is 2 or 3 cm. to the side of the axis of the handle. The reverse edge is about 3 mm. thick in the tang, the thickness gradually diminishing towards the point. The tang is a continuation of the thick side of the blade, about 8 mm. wide where it leaves the blade and tapering for about 3·5 or 4 cm. to a pointed end. Except where it is continued in this tang, the blade has a horizontal bottom. The tang is heated and so burned into the wooden handle; the blacksmith, with this as all iron tools and weapons, supplies only the iron, and the buyer makes his own handle. The edge is produced in the first place by hammering on each side, followed by rubbing down a whet-stone. Being made of soft iron smelted from local ore, these knives can be given an extremely sharp point and fine edge. They are not usually [412] taken back to the smith to be sharpened, but are whetted on a stone; there is often a flat, black, polished, communal whet-stone outside the men's dormitory (*gotal*) in a hill village.

411 Besides fitting the tang into a short, cylindrical, wooden handle, about 6·5 to 7·5 cm. long, and in diameter 2 cm. at the base and 322 somewhat thinner where the tang enters it, the Hill Maria makes a wooden sheath of two flat pieces of wood trimmed roughly to the shape of the blade, each of which has on one side a low flange slightly more than half as thick as the thick edge of the blade. The two flat pieces are laid on each other, the flanged edges together, and are joined by whipping of twine, *kosa* silk or millimetre-wide thin thongs of hide at the broad top, over a groove round the centre of the sheath, and near its point. The sheath is often carved, ●[531] favourite designs being rough lozenges in relief on a bar, or a bar indented, or bands of three parallel lines.

411 This knife the Maria uses for slicing bamboo and all ordinary cutting purposes; holding the handle loosely in his hand he uses its full weight for chopping with the concave portion of the blade pieces of wood up to 3 cm. in diameter, getting a surprisingly straight cross-section; he usually chops all round the circumference to a depth of a third of the diameter, then breaks off the portion to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

are made either of similar but lighter pole stockading, or of what the Hill Marias call *tuss*, that is, fencing of grass fastened in vertical bundles between pairs of horizontal bamboo struts, which themselves are fastened at intervals to poles planted in the ground. The floors, walls and partitions are plastered with mud, the walls on the inside, and the partitions on both sides; the women do the plastering, while their men look on. They often do not plaster the veranda wall at all. They sometimes make the side walls of bamboo wattlework instead of pole stockading. They do not char or otherwise treat the bases of the poles before fixing them in the ground. The first post of the house is almost always of the sacred *saja* tree; I have not seen this adorned with bundles of thatching grass in the manner of other Gonds (cf. Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 122), but I have seen two *saja* trees near a house under construction so adorned. The youths sometimes paint the plastered partitions in white with rows of dots, with swastikas like those tattooed on girls' faces (see p. 74 above), or with crude crocodiles or tigers; I have seen women's breasts represented in relief.

The grass (rarely palm) thatch rests on bamboos tied across the roof beams, and is secured against wind by bamboos criss-crossed outside the thatch. The grass generally used is *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) which appears in the *ponda* fields after the first harvest has been reaped, and in the second or third year covers them so thickly that they have to be abandoned. In March, after the harvest has been finished, you will see near all the recently abandoned *ponda* clearings extensive *dab* cuttings, the grass being stacked on rough log platforms about a foot and a half above the ground in readiness for re-thatching the houses just before the break of the monsoon. The men re-thatch houses, granaries, pig-sties and temples every year.

The usual form of door is a rectangle of split bamboo wickerwork sliding between two pairs of upright wooden posts. The doorway has often a wicker-work threshold from one to two feet high, over which the sliding door fits. There are always doors in the doorways leading from outside into the veranda, from the veranda to the *aggadi*, and at the back of the menstruation room; generally also in the doorways leading into the *lowa*; but I have never seen a door in the front doorway of the menstruation room. Sometimes the whole of this room is not taboo to men, the *binda* or mud threshold that marks the limit of the tabooed ground (see p. 106) being constructed across the floor of the room some two feet beyond the front entrance. Occasionally more elaborate doors will be seen, made of a small hewn wooden plank with tangs of wood left

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A little later they collect *kapani*, the wild bearded rice common in all old rice fields and fallows and at the edges of standing water, by holding a winnowing-fan in one hand and beating the grain of the standing ripe plants into it with the other; the bearded ears are sometimes plaited into '*sela*' fringes for ornamenting doors of houses at the new-eating festivals.

The men are adept in collecting the honey of various kinds of bees, though sometimes, despite forest rules, too prone to save trouble by felling rather than climbing a fine tree. For this purpose, and for tapping palm trees, they often fasten to the trunks of trees long thick bamboos, cutting the side shoots down to stumps four or five inches long to serve as ladder rungs. Gums are collected from many species of trees, for use as bird-lime or in securing the *kosa* silk whipping of arrow-heads, etc. In Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils the Forest Department has quantities of *tasar* silk cocoons collected by Bison-horn Maria men when, in the rains in the intervals between sowing and reaping their various crops, they go out to the forests in search of such delicacies as red ants' nests, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs. The cocoons are high on sal or *saja* trees; where the climbers cannot reach them they use long bamboo poles with a piece of bamboo fastened at an acute angle at the end to serve as a hook. They get about Rs. 3 a thousand cocoons from the Koshta weavers who employ them; the Hill Maria, however, generally collects only what cocoons he needs for his own purposes. Red ants' nests are cooked, leaves, ants and all, either with *pej* or *gato*, or by themselves and eaten with pulses as a vegetable. They are also a favourite febrifuge; a rough and ready remedy is to shake out the live red ants on to the patient's skull, when the formic acid of their stings is said to reduce the fever; the more elaborate method is to boil the nest, ants and all, and to strain off and use the juice as a febrifuge in small doses; this juice is said to taste sharper than any lime and believed to be invaluable for a long-standing fever. In collecting the palms of the dwarf palms *chhind* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *P. acaulis*, and *buta chhind* (*P. farinifera*) for use for thatching, basketry or making rough cords for binding fences, the men not only collect the small dates or the flowers (according to season) and the edible pith of the *buta chhind*, but also the fat white grub of a certain beetle, which is also found in the stems of the toddy palm and in fresh green monsoon bamboo shoots. This is eaten fried in ghee or oil with a little spice and chillies, and is regarded as a great delicacy; it is sold in the Jagdalpur market for three or four pice, and even high-caste Hindus buy it. When white ants emerge in flying swarms early in the monsoon they collect them after they have shed their wings, or pull the wings

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

There are other clans which I have not been able to fit into the scheme of phratries—the Hurra clan with its clan-god Lingo Mudial at Semurgaon, the Karati with its *bhum* at Phunder, the Vetti which has the lizard as its totem and the Kodovetti which has the mongoose. These, of course, fit into the scheme of *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relationships of their own neighbourhood.

FIG. 15. Decorated Muria knife
Length 1' 5"

There are not many songs about the clans. I give one Jhoria Pata from Sirpuri.

Those who kindle fire in the field
are boys of the Uika clan.
How strong the Uika boys are!
Those who make a hearth with brinjals from the Panara's house are boys of the Maravi clan.
Those who sit on a gate and call it a horse are boys of the Maravi clan.
How strong the Maravi boys are!
Those who build a hearth of pig's droppings are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who sit to clean their teeth with a twig are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!
Those who blow the buffalo horn are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who throw fine rice on the road are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CLANS

Many of the clans derive their origin from some historic journey in the course of which a river had to be crossed. Others have local and special reasons for their origin.

This legend of crossing a river is known throughout central India. Many Gond, Baiga and Agaria trace their clans and the attachment of those clans to certain totems from this.[1] In Muria mythology we are sometimes told

[1] Compare, for such tales in the Central Provinces alone, Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 61ff.; Grignon, *op. cit.*, p. 241; C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919), Vol. II, pp. 8ff.; Elwin, *The Agaria*, p. 73; M. P. Buradkar, 'Totemism among the Gonds.', *Man in India*, Vol. XX (1940), pp. 120 and 277f.; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 77 (the Gond emigrating from Phuljhar cross the Gondki river in flood).

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539
831

Kai pila koli bhilu pila kole. — Whose was the child? It was a bear's child.

Kāka buba balade dulha ke buba balade. — Whom will he call father? The bridegroom.

Kāke āya balade dulhi ke āya balade. — Whom will he call mother? The bride.

Kai rāg men gāge de hur hur balede. — To what tune will she weep? *Hur hur.*

Ama pān chiro chāro. — The mango leaf sounds *chiro charo.*

Dulha chotli kira paro ach. — There are maggots in the bridegroom's penis

Mande pude kurri. — Loudly cry 'Vagina'.

2

Goti roy dodon banjāra aya! — O the Banjara's bullock, mother!

Noni bona roy sudha dāki noni? — With whom will you go, girl?

Māma na marri mantor go āya. — There is my *māma's* son, mother.

Noni miya jori pobe roy noni. — He's not fit to be your mate, girl.

Ona roy sudha hanma roy noni. — Do not go with him, girl.

Gere mara jori roy ade jori pibo. — He is as bad as a pair of gere trees.

Ona re suda hanon roya āya. — I will not go with him, mother.

Aich mande pude kaudi bandhla. — Under the booth is a vagina tied with a cowrie.

Dulhe kandi bhursa. — And breasts like a brown pot.

Leka cho chotli bhursa! — O the penis of the brown boy!

Ama pān siro sāro. — The mango leaves sound *siro sāro.*

Leki cho pudi kira paro kurri. — The girl's vagina is full of maggots.

585
● [531]

Before the kalsa-pitcher is put in its place by the central pillar of the booth, it is decorated, sometimes beautifully and with great elaboration. Red, yellow and black grain is stuck with cow-dung in varied patterns, or stars and lines of dots are made in white and black. While two of the older women are doing this, the motiari stand by and sing.

Song

585
539

Riri loyo ri ri lo rilo ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri lo ri ri loyo ri ri lo

Ursa wenjing karsa wo dai. — The pot is decorated with rice, mother.

Nena karsa kotikān dai. — I place a mark on the pot, mother.

Bāti wenjing kotikin bābu? — With what kind of rice will you decorate it, boy?

Hinga wenji kotikān dai. — I will use *hinga* rice, mother.

Bona suda kotikin bābu? — With whom will you decorate it, boy?

Atin miyār manta roy dai. — With my *māmi's* daughter, mother.

Tāna suda kotikān dai. — I will decorate the pot for her, mother.

Tāna suda parwin roy bābu. — You won't be able to do it for her, boy.

Tāna jorti āywi roy bābu. — She is no fit mate for you, boy.

Tāral tamor biti roy bābu. — She has brothers, boy.

Halār bhai biti roy bābu. — She has sisters and brothers, boy.

Awa bābo biti roy bābu. — She has a mother and father, boy.

Nālum arik wāla wo dai. — But I am willing, mother.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

796 As they did so they all yelled at the animals, 'Don't trouble us or we'll give you nothing next time'. One pig refused to eat—it had been offered as a fine; the donor's wife was a witch—and this showed the enormity of the offence which it was expected to condone. But the people did not take it back; they cried, 'We offered it willingly, but you refused, yet we give it all the same'. One man asked for a son, but they shouted to the gods, 'No, give him a daughter'.

[411]

[531]

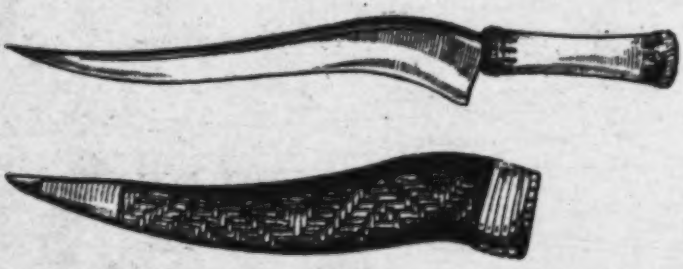

FIG. 32. Muria knife and sheath, of a type often used in sacrifice

796 After the animals had been fed, the priest offered three brass rings for three men who had died during the past year, saying 'Let them now be mingled with
782 the Departed'. Then the animals were killed. The priest put his knife upright between the toes of his right foot, plucked some of the feathers, cut off the head of the chick and sprinkled the blood over the rice and the gods. He killed the pigs by holding them down firmly and sawing off the heads, which he placed facing outwards before the line of rice. As the first pig was killed the worshippers stood with folded hands crying, 'Let the village folk be well; let there be good crops this year; let our animals, cows, pigs, goats and hens be well.' As they killed the second pig, they cried, 'Though it didn't eat, show whether you accept it or no'. They watched eagerly to see how many times the automatic action of the muscles would open the mouth of the decapitated head. Slowly the mouth opened and shut three times and the people were pleased, for this was a sign that the penalty pig had been accepted and all was well.

Similar offerings were made to all the gods, or at least a little blood was sprinkled on them. After a pause, the priest offered the mango, char and karmata fruits, cutting them in half, and removing the stones.

796 Now the women and motiari approached and the Anga went dancing to meet them. He stood before them, and they offered him liquor—'When a Gondi god drinks even one cup of liquor, he talks and dances very well', said one of my guides. Then the chelik picked up their big dhol drums and danced in a long straight line, shuffling to and fro, drumming very vigorously and crying loudly as they changed their direction. The women and girls also danced in a line, and all the Siraha-mediums began to throw themselves about and play and dance, generally carrying one of the gods in their hands. A Naitami boy had come to the wrong place and he picked up the Gutal Lalu and was dancing with it. But the Poyami people resented this, and took it from him with loud abuse.

The dancing, drumming and drinking continued till sundown, when the meat with the fruit and rice was cooked. Then the people—men and women—

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the four corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chelik-bairag* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central parganas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and no one would steal from it.

As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more, and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The chelik desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Kober and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has Siddari birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidhs*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidhs* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.

Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

[1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bhuiya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of breasts right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. Hutton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of sexual excitement' in Naga morung.—Hutton, *Diaries*, op. cit., p. 48.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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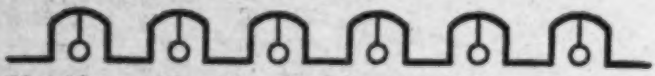
on the central pillar. In the small Kolur ghotul there is one slender pillar covered with carvings of the vagina, as always showing the clitoris, but here there was a double clitoris and a clitoris upside down.

At Markabera there were similar carvings of the vagina with the clitoris.

Often a chelik may be seen with an enormous penis, a motiari in his arms. The boys say that these carvings are very useful as an approach to girls. It may be that the vagina in the central pillar is the relic of a custom now forgotten of initiating smaller boys by pressing them against it.[1]

The walls of the ghotul are often decorated with drawings and paintings. In 1940 there was a fine display in the Remawand ghotul. The following year I saw a frieze of fantastic paintings (illustrated in Plate LXVIII) at More Berma. At Netgaon there were models of motiari, tigers and a monkey. In Urdabera there was a model of a chelik with his motiari, and over the door a mud model of a horse. In Deogaon, there were modellings of a chelik and motiari riding on a horse. At Kuntpadar, one wall was well decorated with drawings of a boy, a vagina, a girl, a bow and arrow and the sun and moon. At Palki there was the representation of a bird trap:



But this might equally well be a sexual symbol, similar to the design of the phallus within the vagina that I noted at Metawand:

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[531]

The day-time visitor to a ghotul will find little enough there by way of furniture. Cots are never used; everyone sleeps on the ground. Seats and stools are rare, but in many ghotul are to be found long narrow pieces of wood raised some two inches from the ground. These are the *kutul* which may be used either as seats or pillows. Some are very long and suggest the custom of several boys and girls sleeping together. They are often carved with geometric designs, figures of boys and girls, crude representations of the vagina. I have one with four breasts carved on its under-side. Occasionally you may see a *kutul* with a little drawer hollowed out below for storing necklaces or other ornaments during the night. As far as I know these head-rests are the corporate property

FIG. 54. *Kutul* from Talabera showing small drawer for keeping ornaments. *Length 1' 7"*

[1] A remarkable parallel from an English Public School (Repton) is provided in Denton Welch's *Maiden Voyage* (London, 1943), p. 48. The author is describing the House dormitory. 'Two lips had been painted on one of the beams and all new boys had to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of the ghotul, though they are usually appropriated by particular boys for the period of their membership.

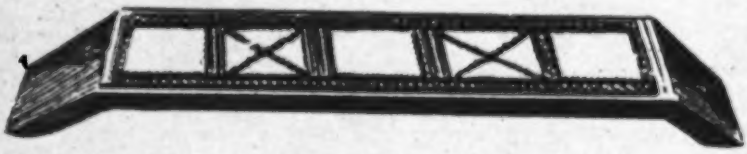

FIG. 55. Carved head-rest from Markabera
Length 3' 6"

In eastern Kondagaon drums are usually kept in the ghotul; at Masora a dhol-drum hangs under the verandah roof—it is the local habitation of Lingo

FIG. 56. Carved underside of wooden head-rest from Kumli
Length 4' 1"

Pen. At Dongrigura and other villages in this area, the whole ceiling is of drums, a fine and impressive sight. Special officers are appointed to provide rope for hanging them up and to see that they are kept in good order.

Flutes are often pushed into the thatch, but dancing-sticks are kept in the shrine of the Village Mother. I have never seen the emblem of a god, a flag or a 'horse' in the ghotul, nor any village symbol, but in Palli Barkot there was a bundle of blessed seed hanging from the roof.

There are often little holes in the wall for keeping tobacco and other small treasures. Sometimes too there are holes in the floor—for husking the rice that is brought home from the Pus Kolang and other expeditions. In one or two ghotul I have seen holes low down in the wall to serve as urinals. Outside in the courtyard there may be a large flat stone for washing clothes, but this is probably an innovation for the benefit of outsiders.

Inside the ghotul compound there is generally a stack of grass for thatching the roofs. Outside are tall piles of firewood, which may be stacked criss-cross about a central pole or piled up in the forked branches of a tree. Sometimes long poles are stood upright against and round a tree. In Jhakri I saw near the ghotul four different ways of storing the chelik's wood—it was stacked horizontally criss-cross round a tree; it was laid in parallel rows between two trees; it was criss-crossed between two upright poles tied together at the top by a rope; and it was stacked upright against a tree.

These stores of wood play an important part in the consciousness of every Muria boy, for his earliest ghotul memories are of his duty to add one or two pieces to them every evening, failure to do so earning dreaded punishments.

pull themselves up by their arms, to kiss them. I remember straining up, and at last reaching the yellow pitch pine and the two crimson lips. They looked indecent, for some reason; as if they were the drawing of another part of the body.' If the boys were not quick or could not reach the lips, they were flicked with wet towels as an encouragement.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

I

BEFORE proceeding further it is essential that we distinguish carefully between two different types of ghotul, for these are so sharply differentiated by rule and custom and the psychological conditions of each are so distinct that until this is done we can get no clear picture of the intimate relations between chelik and motiari.

The fundamental principle of the first type of dormitory, which is sometimes called the *jodidâr*[1] or 'yoking' ghotul, is that of fidelity to a single partner during the whole of the pre-marital period. Each chelik is paired off with a motiari; he is formally 'married' to her; she may even take the feminine form of his title as her own. Divorce is allowed, though infidelity is punished.

In the second type of ghotul, which is probably a later development of the classic model, any kind of lasting attachment between chelik and motiari is forbidden. No one can say that such and such a motiari is *his* girl; if anyone sleeps with a particular girl for more than three days at a time, he is punished.

In all other matters, whether of discipline, routine, social duty or recreation, there is no difference between the two types of ghotul. We must, however, carefully distinguish them for their sexual customs and psychological conditions.

The *jodidâr* ghotul is, I think, the original form of the Muria dormitory. In the first place, it is most widely distributed in the more primitive parganas—the Chota Dongar, Dugal and Karangal—and in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar Mountains. It has retained its place most successfully among the Jhoria, who are undoubtedly the oldest of the Muria groups. Secondly, the Muria themselves describe the other type of ghotul as a modern improvement intended to eliminate scandals and the danger of pregnancy. The change from one type to the other is still going on. At Karangaon, which was formerly

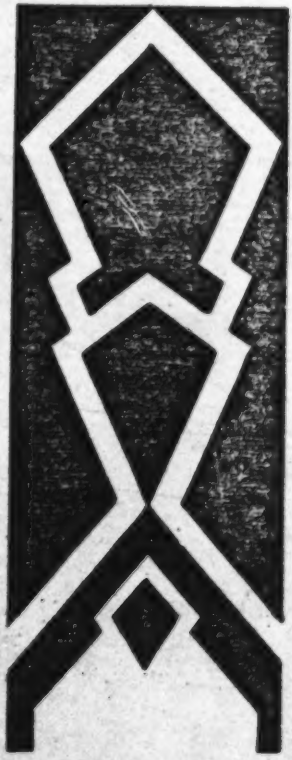

FIG. 57. Carving on the pillars of the ghotul at Almer

[1] A *jodi* or *jori* is the word used for a life-long friend, yoke-fellow or husband and wife. A *jodi* is something definitely more than a temporary lover. It is the person yoked to whom one will pull the heavy plough of life. See V. Elwin and S. Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 240f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

But 'divorce' is allowed. I was given a vivid account by a chelik of the Kapsi ghotul of how this is arranged. If a motiari has intercourse with another boy, her own chelik reports the matter to the Sirdar saying, 'My wife has left her house and made another; for many days she lived and fed with me, but now she has run away and my honour is ruined. How can I live in a broken house, how can my work prosper in a field of weeds?'

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[531]

FIG. 58. Ghotul carvings at Nayanar
Slightly enlarged

Then the Sirdar calls the girl and says, 'Well, girl, why have you left your husband? Do you really want to forsake him and live with this other boy?' If the girl has made up her mind, she may answer, 'Yes, I want to live with this boy. My honour has gone to him'. The Sirdar then says to the second boy, 'How can you live with another chelik's wife? Think well, are you going to keep her, or will you send her away again?' The boy replies, 'I didn't fetch the girl; she came to my mat of her own accord. Now how can I quarrel with her or drive her away? Her husband must have neglected her or beaten her'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

found alone in the ghotul with him. A Muria girl never covers her head,[1] but at least she must not undo her hair in his presence. When the elder brother is away from the ghotul his 'wife' is allowed to sleep with her '*dewar*', the younger brother.

A chelik does not seem to have to avoid entirely his brother's daughters; in the ghotul he may abuse them or flirt with them, but he ought not to sleep with one of them. But they can massage him, as indeed his own sisters can. They call him *sidwa* in the ghotul. This leads us to the interesting provision that close relations should not address each other by their ghotul titles, but by terms of relationship, thus continually reminding themselves and one another how they are related and that they must behave.

What is the reason for these rules of avoidance? The ban on the younger brother's wife is probably to safeguard the position of the younger brother, always in jeopardy as a hundred folk-tales show. In the ghotul certainly it serves as a valuable protection to a younger boy, whose brother might well be the all-powerful Sirdar or Diwan. Similarly, the rule of avoidance between a boy and his motiari's elder sister, who might be the almost equally powerful Belosa or head of the girls, prevents her from taking advantage of her position to seduce a boy away from his 'lawful wife'.

There does not appear to be any taboo on brothers and sisters witnessing each other's erotic adventures in the ghotul, provided they do not discuss them with each other and, of course, strictly avoid any relations between themselves. It is not, however, considered improper for a brother to have full knowledge of and to hear all about his sister's love affairs. Once in Binjhli a boy told me in Gondi how he had dreamt that he was having intercourse with a certain girl. The girl's own brother interpreted for me without embarrassment.

A sister sleeps every night with a boy in the presence of her brother. A brother flirts and makes love and sleeps with girls before his sister. They seem to be quite unembarrassed and both behave naturally.

FIG. 59. Wall-decoration from the Remawand ghotul
Height 6"

[1] What Hoffmann said so charmingly of the Munda is true also of the Muria girl: 'Nothing but a load or a flower is ever seen on the head of a Munda woman.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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762

as due to the separation of a chelik from his motiari. This occurred in 1932 and was, as we should expect, in a *jodidār* ghotul, at Amgaon in the Karangal Pargana. Chaitu and Munga—I do not know their ghotul titles—the boy about twenty years old and the girl about eighteen—were greatly attached to each other and dreaded the thought of separation. They each begged their parents to let them marry, but Munga's father was adamant and married her to Dasru of the Markabera ghotul, a different Dasru, of course, from the one

[31]

FIG. 60. Carving in the ghotul at Nayanar
Height 4½"

I have just mentioned. After the marriage she was taken to Markabera, where the chelik diverted themselves as usual by shutting her up with the new husband whom she did not love. Before she left Amgaon, she was taken round the village to say good-bye and every household made their contributions for the ghotul feast that would be held a week after the marriage.

When the time came, chelik and motiari went singing through the pretty wooded country that separates Amgaon from Markabera and invited Munga to the feast. Her husband could not refuse, though he must have known there was danger in Amgaon, but it was so near—only two miles away—that he let her go. When she reached her old home, she went to meet Chaitu in the lonely corner of a field; he had brought some liquor for her, and they sat down to have a farewell drink together. But a little girl, Chaitu's younger sister, followed them and ran to tell her father. He hurried to the spot, caught the two lovers

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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them both. The Gaita at Kollibera said that a chelik could have congress three times a night and it would do no harm, but if he went to the same girl more than three days running he would fall ill and she might conceive.

The modern type of ghotul breaks up the coital sequence and is thus supposed to lessen the danger of conception. Statistics, however, show that this is not so. Among 2000 men, 80 made motiari pregnant during their ghotul period; of these 25 or 1 in 28·8 belonged to *jodidār* ghotul, and 55 or 1 in 23·2 to the modern type.

• [531]

FIG. 61. Carving on the door of a private house at Bandopal
Slightly enlarged

X 883 836

A more genuine reason for the prevalence of the newer rules is the Muria temperament which is fundamentally hostile to individualism, to exclusiveness, and to any kind of 'possessiveness'. The Muria believe that if everyone belongs to everyone else in the ghotul there will be no room for jealousy. I am not at the moment thinking whether this is true or not, but it is certainly what

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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It is equally offensive to the ghotul spirit for a chelik and motiari to fall openly in love and to insist on sleeping together to the exclusion of the rest. When they do this the others get jealous and irritated. If a girl, who has thus given way to her feelings, then goes to comb the hair of another boy, he says, 'Don't touch my head, go and do your lover's; I am not a boy, you never take any notice of me'. None of the chelik will let her massage them. If this treatment is not successful they catch the offenders by the hand and drag them out of the ghotul saying, 'Come no more to our ghotul, sleep in your own houses, have a lonely marriage without us, for we won't come to it'. In Kabonga, where such an incident occurred in 1941, the Kotwar said that after they had expelled the boy and girl, the boy very quickly repented, paid a fine of liquor and was readmitted. The girl was more obstinate. After a time the Kotwar went to her house and said that if she would sleep with each of the three leading boys on three successive nights, he would let her return. In the end she agreed to this and was accepted back into the ghotul. A similar incident occurred at Sirsi where a girl insisted on trying to sleep always with the same boy. The others said, 'Is there only one chelik? Aren't we chelik too?' and at last turned them both out. They were only readmitted when they gave a rupee's worth of liquor to the company.

• [531]

FIG. 62. Carving on a pillar in the ghotul at Almer

In a number of ghotul this system of complete equality has broken down and the three leading boys, the Sirdar or Diwan and his counsellors, including probably the Kotwar, have the right either to have a permanent partner just as in the older type of ghotul, or to choose their own partner whenever a change is made, without reference to the Kotwar. When this is done, and it happens generally in the bigger ghotul where there may be as many as sixty or seventy members, the leaders still insist on the rule of

●531
342

Carved pillar at
Chandabera

Plate LXXII

Carved pillar at
Remawand

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1 and 3 Carved pillars at Chandabera
2 Carving on the pillar of a shrine at Phauda

Plate LXXIII

[p. 356 (a)]

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Pillar at Binjhe with the chelik who carved it

Drawing old ce... number-...

Plate LXXIV

[534]

Carving ... a pi... drum ... Dunpui

[p. 356(b)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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māma' and so on. As they give the salute they stretch out their hands, sometimes both hands, lower and then raise them in a pretty gesture. Often

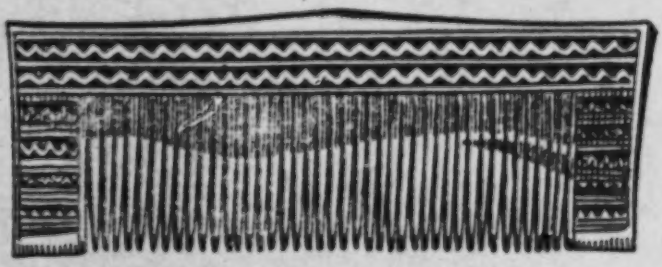

FIG. 67. Carved wooden comb from Toinar
Length 6"

they only use one hand, laying it on head or shoulder; in the east of Kondagaon they put both hands on the head.

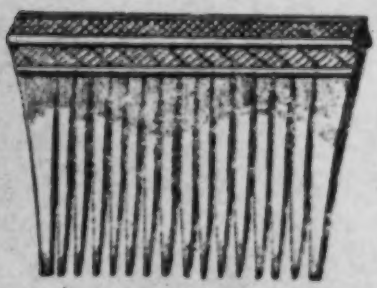

FIG. 68 A comb from the Narayanpur Tahsil
Width 2¾"

FIG. 69. A comb from Phulpar
Width 3¼"

When the boys have finished, the motiari go round in the same way, with the same gestures and salutes, generally speaking in high, almost artificial voices. In Phulpar the girls did not say Johar, but repeated the ghotul title twice, thus—'Gaita, Gaita' or 'Kotwar, Kotwar'. A girl should not salute a boy to whom she is betrothed or her Lamhada, and she must be very careful about using the proper terms of relationship—for by this means she is reminded of the tribal laws of avoidance. In some ghotul this ceremony is performed twice, once when the company first assembles and

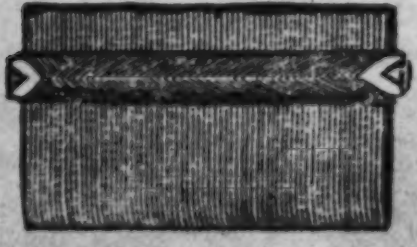

FIG. 70. A bamboo comb, of a type sometimes made by Muria for sale in the bazaars
Width 2¾"

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Muria

412
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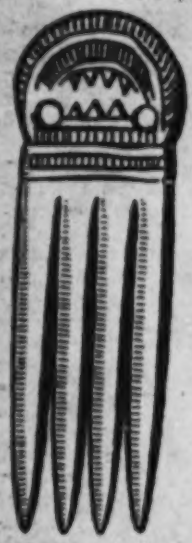


FIG. 74. Comb of a type often used in the Abujhmar foothills
Length 3½"

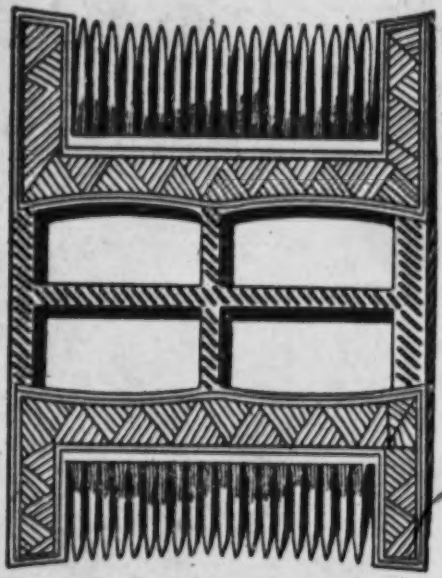
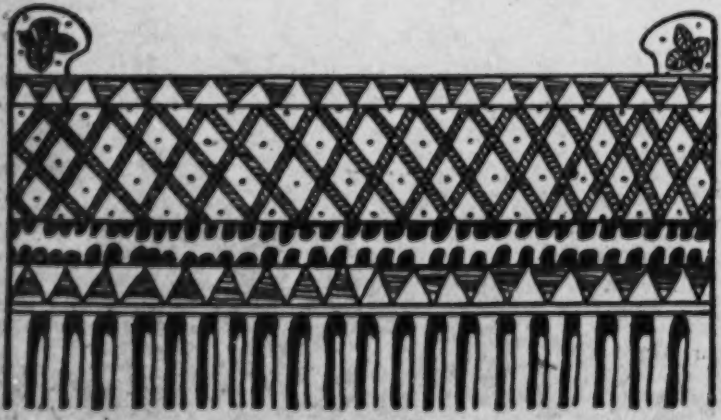


FIG. 73. Double comb from Bhanpuri
Height 4½"



From Paul Schebesta's article 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula' in *JRAS* (1929), p. 738
FIG. 76. Malayan comb
(See p. 380a)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

each other's arms on the sleeping-mat. They often have to lie very close together; sometimes two boys have one girl between them; many of the couples actually touch each other. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the compound.

In ghotul where the motiari always sleep in the ghotul, bedtime is a simple matter of routine. In places where they only stay on sometimes, they go singing to their own house or verandah. When they are not sure what to do, they stay on till the Sirdar says, 'Well, girls, are you going to sleep here or are you going home?' The Bekoa answers, 'It's very late, I think we'd better stay here' or 'There's a tiger about, it's not safe to go'. The Sirdar says, 'Then go to your mats at once and don't keep us awake any longer'.

FIG. 77. Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel
Width 3½"

In Chandabera, the boys told me that the girls often said, 'Let's go home tonight' and ran away. But if a boy was anxious to sleep with his girl, he would ask the Kotwar to keep them and he always did.

FIG. 76. Comb with carved leopard
Width 5"

FIG. 78. The *kasud-gota* or tortoise box
Height 4"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

412
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Fig. 80. Bird-comb from Chandabera
Height 4½"

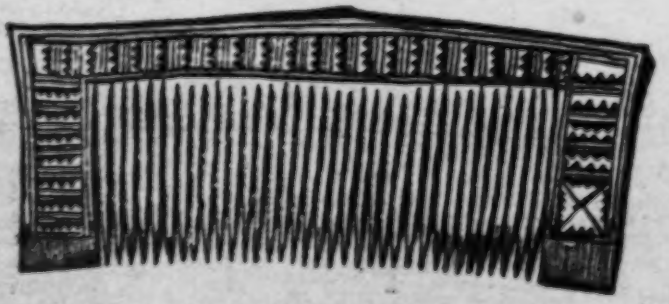

Fig. 81. Comb from Bhurpal
Length 5½"

276
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FIG. 82. Tobacco-box from the Mardapal Pargana
Height 5"

FIG. 83. *Kalavi-gota* from Borpal
Height 7½"

FIG. 84. *Dudawg-gota*. A small tobacco-box 'as round as a girl's breast'
Height 1½"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Betle marrāte pungār puy ānta

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

[1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The eaters lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'

[2] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 27f.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAS* (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 396ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poesy* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, op. cit., p. 180.

[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Muduvar.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—Ibid., Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, op. cit., p. 47.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria wash their houses with a solution of cow-dung and water. When this has dried they apply a whitewash of clean mud from the jungle. A good

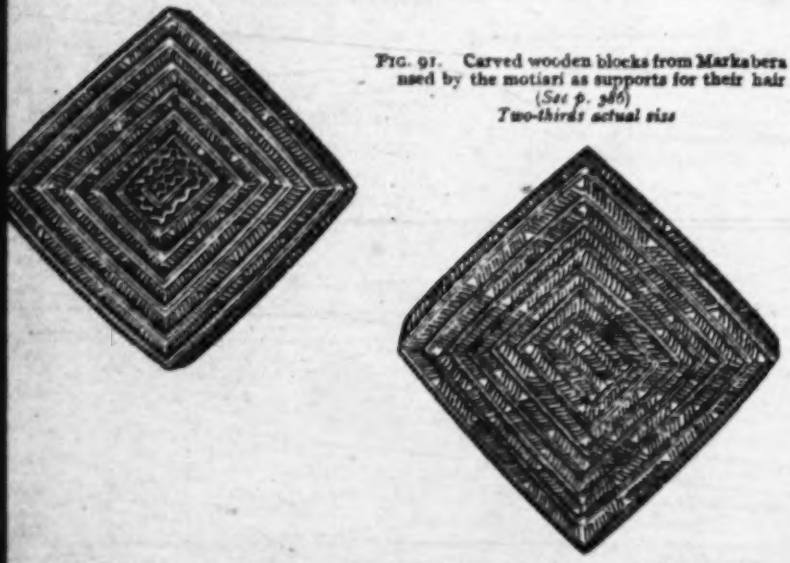

FIG. 91. Carved wooden blocks from Markabera used by the motiari as supports for their hair
(See p. 386)
Two-thirds actual size

housewife should do this every day. The motiari must keep the ghotul spotlessly clean—'This is how she learns to keep her husband's house clean when she leaves us', explained the boys at Berma.

Chelik and motiari wash their clothes frequently, almost as often as they bathe; the older people, naturally less concerned about their personal appearance, more anxious about economy, wash them less. The clothes are put in a pot with the ash of saja, dhaura, sesamum, siari-creeper or rice-chaff, and are boiled. When ready the pot is carried to the river, the clothes removed and washed by being beaten with the hands on a stone and rinsed again and again in the water. The clothes of a woman in her period, and especially her pubic cloth, are boiled on the river bank. At Temrugaon I saw many empty pots lying on the bank and even floating in the pools which were used for this purpose, for they cannot of course be taken back to the house.

FIG. 92. Boys' hair-retainer made by a local blacksmith out of the ribs of an old umbrella
(See p. 387)

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276
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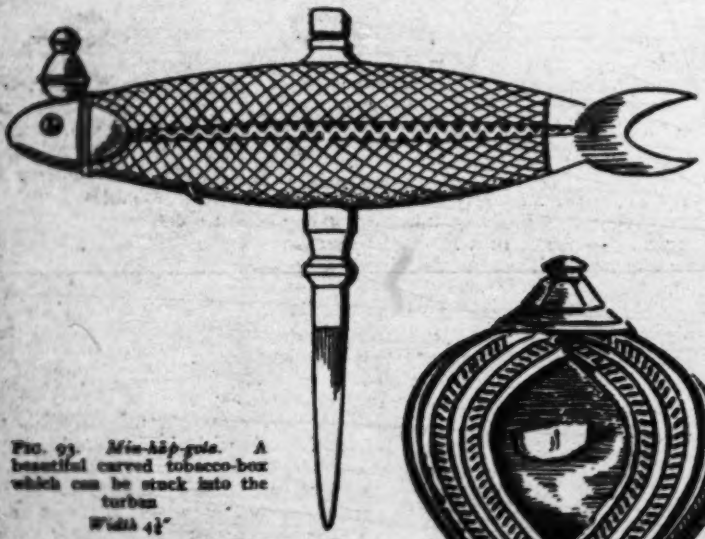

FIG. 93. *Mīn-kāp-gola.* A beautiful carved tobacco-box which can be stuck into the turban
Width 4½"

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FIG. 94. *Pudo-gola*, with an obvious representation of the vagina
Height 3½"

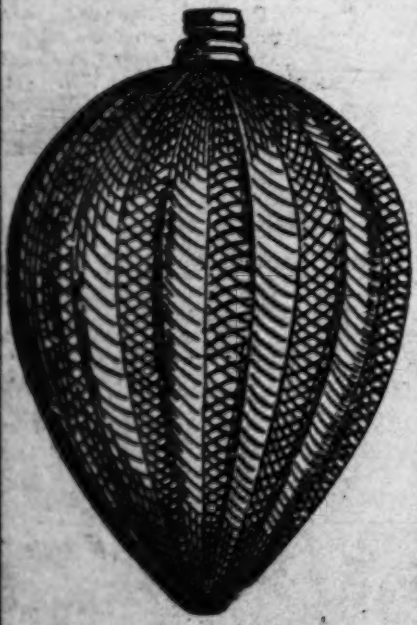

FIG. 95. Tobacco-box from Penjori decorated with carvings supposed to represent the bones of the *mīn* fish
Height 4½"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pipes. These are lit with little bits of glowing coal picked from the fire, and when half-smoked or not in use are generally kept tucked into the turban or hidden in a hole in the ghotul wall.

But the chelik do not rely only on the tobacco supplied them in the ghotul. Any enterprising boy has tucked into his loin-cloth or hanging (sometimes with a bunch of bells or cowries) at his waist a specially-made tobacco-pouch. These *gota* are, as a glance at the illustrations in Figs. 82-4, 93-5, 99, 103-4, and 109-14 will show, elaborate and varied. They are of every size and shape. One is like a fish, another carved like a wheel, a third resembles a mango. Some are of garud, moda or koraya wood, others are cut from the kernel of a fruit, a few are of brass. The stoppers are fitted tightly with a little lac. Some are covered with the testes of a goat or sambhar. Most are elaborately carved.

Many of the *gota*-pouches are named. There is the *dudong-gota*, round as a girl's breast; the *chakka-gota* (Fig. 77), a beautifully carved wheel; the *hemul*, or tortoise pouch (Fig. 79) with its elaborate designs; the charming *marka-batta-gota* (Fig. 112) shaped like a mango; the *halāri-gota* (Fig. 83); the *min-hāp-gota*, with its decoration of fish bones; the *tumur-gota*, whose carving resembles the flowers of the ebony tree; the *girna* or lizard *gota* (Fig. 82); and the *damera-āching-singār gota* (Fig. 110) with its elaborate silver decorations. Some of the *gota* have a deliberately sexual purpose; the *pude-gota* (Figs. 94 and 99) has small representations of the vagina carved on it and the *dudo-muri* (Fig. 101) has marks that are supposed to resemble the pimples round the nipples of a woman's breast. The chelik show these to girls to excite them. But, indeed, as I show in another chapter, to ask for tobacco is itself a polite way of asking a girl for sexual congress.

The Muria grow tobacco in specially fenced gardens near their houses and sometimes in enclosures made on the banks of stream or river. When it is ready, it is cut and allowed to dry in the garden. Then it is placed between layers of kodon straw 'which turns it red in a few days'. After this it is dried again, this time on the roof of the house, and finally tied up in bundles with home-made string.

VI. The Sleeping-mat

The *gih* or *masni*-mat is an important piece of ghotul furniture. When a boy joins the ghotul for the first time he is expected to bring a mat which is usually made for him by his mother or an aunt. Later on, especially in the *jodidār* ghotul, a girl ought always to make a mat for her special chelik, but elsewhere the mats seem to be made by a boy's mother, sister or some other female relative. At a marriage a new mat is usually presented to the bridegroom.

The mat is not difficult to make. A rectangle is marked out and pegs driven into the ground at its four corners. Bits of bamboo are tied between the pegs at opposite ends of the rectangle and a dozen or more strings of hemp or grass are tied from one end to the other so as to form the warp. Before they are attached, they are threaded through the holes of the *āch*, a wooden instrument illustrated in Fig. 96 which is used to beat the grass into place. The woman sits down with the *āch* before her and threads bits of reed or grass over and under the strings. After she has threaded two or three she sprinkles them with water and pulls the *āch* sharply towards her several times, thus pressing the grass into position. This is done over and over again until finally the mat is complete.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

I

"We obey our ghotul laws more faithfully than the laws of Government; for we ourselves made the ghotul laws, and so we love them."

—Common Muria saying

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THE life of the chelik and motiari is strictly regulated, and when a leader is appointed one of the powers with which he is entrusted is that of judging and punishing offenders against the ghotul code. It is surprising how important a place these punishments hold in the minds of the

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FIG. 97. Comb from Palari. The two horns are of bone-wax
Width 2½"

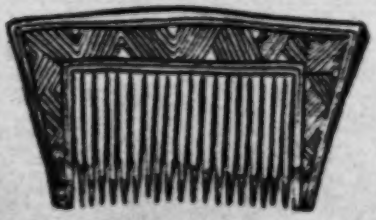

FIG. 98. Comb from Antagarh
Width 5"

FIG. 99. The *Pudo-gota*
Actual size

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

children. When they are initiated, the little boys are told—'You must come every day, or you'll be punished'. The girls are likewise told—'You must

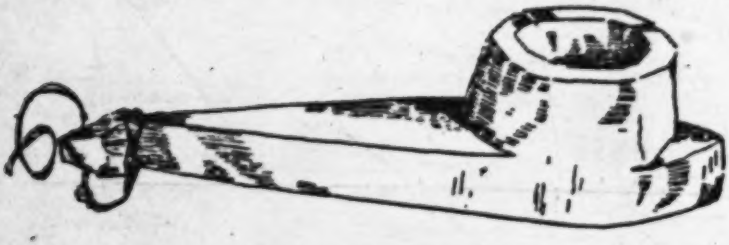

FIG. 100. Tobacco pounder
Length 15"

come every day, or you'll be punished. You must massage the chelik, or you'll be punished.' And when a girl leaves the ghotul at marriage, her

FIG. 101. The *Dudu-mur-gota*
Height 4"

FIG. 102. A Jhoria comb from Markabera
Width 3½"

most tender memories, as revealed in the farewell songs, seem to be connected with punishments. *'Dudhār gai ke lāl saithai*—The cow that gives milk:

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

every boy in turn saying, 'Johar, *mahārāj*, I have farted'. An interesting rule prohibits the other boys and girls from laughing at the offender too much. The name *padva* may be used three times but not more; anyone who carries the joke too far is fined.

FIG. 103. A brass tobacco-box made by the local Ghasia
Actual size

A bed-wetter is punished with the *khotla-pakava* described below; if incurable, he may be expelled.

Most ghotul are actually kept beautifully clean; occasional lapses are severely penalized. It is the special duty of the girls to sweep and cow-dung the building, but often the Kotwar in charge of them is punished instead. At Kabonga, when the Diwan found that the ashes of the previous day's fires had not been cleared away, he reported the matter to the Inspector who called the Kotwar and threw ash all over him. The Kotwar insisted that it was the girls' fault, not his, and so the girls were called and ash was thrown over them and pushed into their private parts. At Kokori also, two girls were tied to the roof by their feet and ashes put into their vaginae. 'As you've let the ghotul be dirty, we are making your privates dirty', said the boys.

It is generally the chalik who have to see to the surroundings of the ghotul. At Palari in 1941, the Munshi, Sipahi and Likasdar were told to clear a space in front of the building for a dance, but they failed to do so. They were hung together from the roof until they begged forgiveness and promised to do the work at once. The younger boys are often punished for failing to bring their daily tribute of wood—a task they all dislike. In the Jamkot

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

was similarly punished for failing in his duty to make the chelik and motiari work at a wedding. As a boy Bindo punished the ghotul Kotwar for disobeying his orders to fetch the motiari in the evening; fifty years afterwards he still remembers the incident with satisfaction.

When the head of the ghotul is penalized, it is a convention in some ghotul that the motiari should beg to be punished in his stead. This happened at Chandabera when I was there, and the Sirdar was fined for not making proper arrangements for his visitors. The girls implored to be allowed to suffer for him.

FIG. 104. A sun and moon tobacco-box
Height 2½"

FIG. 105. Boy's necklace, from Kajen, of cowries strung together with red and 'silver' beads

Should the head of the ghotul turn out a bully or a slacker, the chelik and motiari take the help of the village headman and remove him. This does not happen very often because there is plenty of time to test a boy before he is appointed. But it is not always possible to judge how far power is likely to corrupt character, and scandals do occur. I have recorded a number of cases from the history of the last few years. In Mannegaon, the Leyur-Gaita was removed for bullying and abusing the children. The Malik of Esalnar was once degraded for bullying. The Kotwar of the Berma ghotul a few years ago got very much above himself and used 'to punish for four hours instead of one' until the members rebelled. They fined him a rupee, deprived him of office, made him a 'subject' with the name of Silledar, and appointed the Kandki in his place. Recently in Kehalakot the Kotwar gave so much trouble to the girls that he was fined eight annas and removed.

Laziness also disqualifies a boy from holding high office. In Atargaon the Mazjhi was dismissed 'for not working properly'. The Kokori Chalki was degraded to the rank of Kotwar for laziness and the Kotwar was appointed

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

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861

Kaxing taliyana is the very common Indian punishment of making someone squat down on the ground and get up and down holding his ears with his

[276
531]

FIG. 109. Tobacco pouch with bell and tusk ornaments
Height of pouch 3½"

hands. It is difficult, exhausting and undignified. But it is not very painful and it leaves no trace, which probably accounts for its popularity among subordinate officials. In Lihagaon, pebbles were held to the ears while the culprit was pushed up and down twenty-five to fifty times. This was how the Manjhi punished Dursal Rani in the song recorded at p. 608.

At Nanipodar, the chelik connected this punishment with a story of a Raja and a dancing girl of the Mirdangiya caste—whose girls are famous for their wit and beauty.

> There was a Mirdangiya. She danced before a Raja. He was so pleased that he said, 'Ask what you will and I'll give it to you'. She said, 'Spit on the floor and then lick up the mess'. The Raja said, 'How can a Raja do such a thing?' Then the Mirdangiya said, 'Very well then, give me the turban from your head'. He did so and she wore it herself and went away well pleased.

The movements of a girl jumping up and down holding her ears are supposed to resemble the Mirdangiya dancing before the Raja, and the chelik taunt the girls saying, 'Ho re Mirdangiya! Today you've become Mirdangiya'. To which the girls reply, 'We are Kanchnin [good and beautiful] girls. If we were Mirdangiya we would be dancing and you'd have to give us your turbans.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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clan and relationship rules may lead to this extreme penalty. It is indeed extreme, for it means the death of youth, the loss of company and the shame of a wedding without dancers.

[276
●531]

FIG. 110. Carved tobacco-box from Nayanar
Actual size

That is, in fact, the final sanction of the ghotul rules—the fear that the chelik and motiari will refuse to attend one's wedding. It is no idle threat; it has been done; it has been still more often threatened, and the parents have had to pay a fine. Once at Jhakri the Piosa failed to do her share of bringing leaves at someone's marriage, and the boys said, 'This girl is too great for us. She evidently likes to be alone. Well, she shall marry alone'. When her marriage day arrived there was a great disturbance and the elders of several villages had to pacify the offended boys. But at last, after her parents had given a gift of liquor, they agreed to assist.

No reader of Chapter V can fail to see the importance of this threat. No wedding can proceed without chelik and motiari. Their absence would mean that on the greatest day of one's life there was drabness, mockery and disgrace. So long as this ultimate sanction remains, the youngsters submit cheerfully to all the penalties, harsh as they may sometimes seem, that the leaders of the ghotul may inflict.[1]

[1] Anyone who thinks the ghotul discipline too hard should read a curious paper by Thurston on 'Corporal Punishment in Vernacular Schools' in India, in which forty-two different manifestations of pedagogic sadism are listed.—*Ethnographic Notes*, pp. 433–40.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

organs' into a slit in a sal sapling.[1] In *Oraon Religion*[2] he says that this is to be found 'in most *dhumkuria* houses'. He only mentions the name of one village, however, Borhambey. We saw the slit there, but did not find it in any of the other dormitories we visited, nor has W. G. Archer been able to find any trace of the custom elsewhere.

383 V
761
171

FIG. 111. A tortoise tobacco-box
Height 4½"

FIG. 112. *Marka-batta-gota* or mango tobacco-box
Height 2½"

[276
531]

It is probable that the 'dormitory slit' was chiefly used for punishing refractory boys. According to the *dhangar* who talked to Shamrao Hivale at Mandar, it was used as a punishment for boys who were shy or sulky and refused to join in the communal games and dances. 'A lump of red earth is put on the pillar, and the Mahato stands by with a stick, and hits us on the legs and tells us to push our penis into the earth, and then he pushes us against it again and again till we become red. If a boy is sulky, we bring him at night to the *dubri* (mistress) and we push his penis into the slit until he cries and promises not to offend again. We all hit him and push him to and fro against the pillar till his penis hurts and he cries.'

Discipline in the Naga morung is, as we might expect, more rigorous and the punishments more drastic. 'Among the boys of the village', says Mills,

> there is a certain amount of rough play, and a bumptious or obnoxious youngster is taught his place exactly as he is in an English Public School. He may sit down in the dark and find stinging leaves have been put ready for him. Or a more elaborate punishment may be inflicted which many a mother in England would not approve of for her darling. A plank is laid like a see-saw over a log. One end is weighted down with a wooden pillow. The boy has to jump on the other end and the wooden pillow flies up and hits him on the back of the neck.[3]

There is nothing in Bastar to compare with the Naga bullying, a process by which young boys are hardened to face every kind of danger and difficulty.

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 243.
[2] p. 53.
[3] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 32.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

both were Sori. So were the Beldar and Beldarin, the Sirdar and Sirdarin and the Supedar and Supedarin. If members of the same sept could be 'married' to each other, the feeling against clan-incest *inside the ghotul* cannot be very strong. So long as the relation does not result in pregnancy it does not seem to matter greatly. No one knows except the chelik and motiari—and they never tell.

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531]

FIG. 113. Carved tobacco-box from Markabera
Height 2½"

But if there is a pregnancy it is a serious matter. In such a case, I was told at Kabonga, the members of the ghotul assemble and pass judgement. 'Look, brother, look, sister, you are both of the same clan; you are brother-sister to each other, yet you have done this evil. If the elders hear of it, we can give them no answer. We ourselves do not think it sin; it was the lust of youth, you were mad with love; but the elders will think it sin.' And they insist that the boy should bring an abortifacient. In Munjmeta when a Katlami boy fell in love with a girl of the Wadder clan—these are forbidden to one another—the ghotul members held a meeting and solemnly warned them that they would be fined if they continued to sleep together and that if the girl became pregnant it would be most serious for them both. But I heard that they took no notice.

The offence is usually condoned by a heavy fine, anything from six to twelve rupees to the panchayat and a calf or pig to the clan-god. But so long as the lovers are willing to separate, they are not barred from marrying in the usual

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

For months everyone must have known all about it. Before the girl's marriage Kule's breach of the clan laws was complete and open; it must constantly have been discussed in the ghotul, and the elders must have known of it. Yet until the day of the 'trial' it had never been openly proclaimed in the village that he had offended against the laws of the tribe. That was too much for him, he saw his girl lost to him, a life-long shame, and heavy penalties. So he killed himself.

FIG. 114. Carved tobacco-box from Metawand
Height 2¾"

There was another case in 1936 in Kerawahi when a chelik and motiari [1] who belonged to the same clan fell in love with one another. They often used to slip outside the ghotul at night and sleep together. After a time the girl found herself pregnant. When the matter became known, there was a great scandal and the elders announced that they would hold a panchayat. The boy was so ashamed and so afraid of paying the fine that was certain to be inflicted, that he hanged himself. The girl was afterwards married to another boy, but was punished—the people said—by excessive menorrhagia. She grew thinner and thinner, and after a year her husband left her and married someone else.

IX

I have heard of very few cases of incest between near relatives. In spite of all the joking, in spite also of the close proximity in which near relatives grow up together in the ghotul, I think that the rules are kept. On the rare occasions that they are broken, the act is regarded with severe censure. At Sahimunda a girl was made pregnant by her own *mâmâ*, her mother's brother. She publicly accused him and he was fined. In Adenga, a Muria kept his own father's junior wife. He was excommunicated and banned from all tribal privileges. He and the woman were not even allowed to get water from the usual place. I am told that he is never to be admitted into the tribe. In the same village the Gaita kept his mother's sister, and was excommunicated.

A tale of incest from Kapsi is obviously satirical and hardly suggests approval of what was done.

> Long ago there lived an old man who married his son to a very lovely girl. When she came to his house the father at once fell in love with her. He sent his old wife and son to another village to get rice, and that evening he himself pretended to get high fever and lay groaning on his bed. The poor daughter-in-law came to him and said, 'What can I do for you?' He said, 'Ask the Departed in the granary what they want you to do'. She went to them and asked, 'What can I do for my

[1] According to the police report, the chelik was Lati, son of Dhanaji, and the motiari was Koli, daughter of Bhimram. Lati was Koli's paternal uncle. I do not know their ghotul titles.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and for this reason the dance is sometimes known as Nei Kolang or Kukur Kolang.

At Phulpar the chelik said that they took with them whatever dog wandered round their fire and sat down near its ashes, but in other villages I have been told that they only take a dog which is carefully trained, for it is essential that it should not bark or bite or have anything to do with other dogs. In Udanpur they said that the dog was taught to dance.

The dog serves both as a mascot and to take the omens. The boys remove a bell from the shrine of the Village Mother and tie it round its neck in the name of Lingo. When they dance in a circle the dog must sit in the middle. At meal-times, the Gain gives it three handfuls of rice before anybody else is fed.

When the dancing party enters a village the chelik wait to see what the dog will do. If all is well, it sits down quietly and they stay. If it wanders off into the village and enters someone's house, it means that a pair of boys will die. If it runs out into the fields even late in the evening, it is a sign that they must move on at once. If it fights with another dog, someone will die. Should the dog leave the party and return home, it is taken as a warning of great danger.

FIG. 117. Ornamental stick carried on dancing expeditions
Full length 2' 7½"

When the chelik return to their village they sacrifice two chickens for the dog, though a boy has to be content with one, and they place stones for it on a cairn. They remove the bell from its neck and replace it in the shrine of the Village Mother. From the time the bell is tied round the dog's neck to the time it is removed, no member of the party may have sexual intercourse. But once the bell is removed, it is a sign that they are free.

In most villages the same dog accompanies the party for three years running, but at the end of that period it is expected to go mad or to be carried away by a tiger. The theory is that for three years Lingo 'possesses' the dog for the brief period of the expedition, but at the end of the time he takes the form of a tiger and carries it away.

When all is ready, about a week before Cherta-puni, the chelik put on their full dress and dance all day. They are rather solemn about this; they talk to no one and take a very superior attitude towards their girls and have nothing to do with them. The next morning, the Gaita takes them to the Village Mother's shrine where the spear of Maria Pen is kept. They dance before the shrine in a straight line, not in a circle; this is the 'Lingo Par'. The Gaita brings fire from his house in a length of smouldering rope spun from paddy-stalk fibre. With the aid of this he offers incense saying, 'These youngsters are going out to dance. Let no disease attack them on the way. Bring them home safely. Let the spear be their aid and Maria Pen go with them. If they return in safety I will give food-sacrifice'. He fixes the smouldering rope on the point of the spear and brings it out.

This was the custom in Phulpar and Kollibera; in the latter village the Gaita went on to the shrine of Thakur Deo and worshipped there with the same

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

this exchange goes so far as to include the sleeping arrangements, but I have no real information about this. Food is provided by the hosts. If the Irpu Pandum, the festival of the eating of the new mahua flowers, has not been celebrated, there is a strict taboo on the drinking of mahua spirit. If this taboo is broken the supply of flowers will fail. In Jungani there was a rule that the dance must not be performed at all until the flowers were gathered in. Here it was supposed that the noise of the stick-dance has a bad effect on the crop.

At the end of the expedition the boys and girls return to their own village and dance before the Gaita's house round and round the semur tree. The Gaita offers liquor to it, then pulls it up and throws it away. The ring is given to the leader of the dance. Finally the boys tie their sticks to a rope across a path near the village boundary in the usual way.

If there is a bazaar in the neighbourhood the boys visit it and dance in its four corners.

FIG. 121. Comb with chelik and motiari on horseback

The sticks used in this dance are called either *dandār* or *kāṭi* and are usually made of sartali wood. Before the Gaita pulls up the semur tree the boys hang their sticks upon it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 583
X 484
796
535

You would not see that sort of thing on a Pus Kolang expedition. As a chelik described it at Chandabera, 'We all go together for the Mahua Dandar and have great fun. No one has a right over any girl and all play with each other'. Occasionally boys and girls of different villages fall in love and run away together.

V.. The Diwali Dances

But of all the opportunities for romantic adventure so liberally provided by Muria society, none is more exciting than the girls' Diwali dance. The word 'Diwali' is here simply an indication of date; the dances have nothing to do with the Hindu festival. Even the dates are usually wrong; I saw Diwali dances on 18 November 1940 at Binjhli, on 24 November at Remawand and on 27 November at Bandopal. The actual Diwali that year was on 24 October. I saw it again at Sirpur on 30 October 1941, though the real festival was a fortnight earlier.

[531
293]

Fig. 122. Ornamented wooden axe carried by the leader of the girls on a Diwali expedition

During this season the motiari go from village to village, singing and dancing. But to the east of the main road, the Diwali is only danced in a few villages; to the south of Kondagaon it is almost unknown. Instead boys and girls go together for the Hulki.

Sometimes, the Diwali is abandoned for a time because of a scandal, sometimes on supernatural grounds. In Talabera, the girls cannot dance or sing at all, for if they do a god (*deo*) attacks them. He makes the girls tremble and fall to the ground: the Gaita has to spit and beat them with a stick to get rid of him.

There does not seem to be any special religious or magical purpose in these expeditions; they are simply for enjoyment and amorous adventure. Only girls go, led by their Belosa, and when they visit any village, only the boys of that village may be present to entertain them. The visitors dance first at the Gaita's house, then through the village; they camp in the ghotul; the local boys cook for them and entertain them. In the evening, the visiting girls and the local boys dance and play together and the dancing often lasts all night. During those long hours every one of the visitors is taken away into the jungle; the more attractive ones may be taken several times. The evenings are fruitful of love-affairs and sometimes a chelik now meets his future wife. A boy from Kapsi told me that he met

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

(i) *Manda mandi tendsim dāy pokre mām.*
Throw away the mess in the booth and go away.

5. *Neyi Tarhīna Pār.* The tedious business of anointing bride and bridegroom with oil, which continues intermittently for two days, is enlivened by some excellent dancing.

(a) *Teda mudiya tatti de.*
Stand old man and give the adze.

(b) *Gām chekli bassunda ta.*
We will sit while the sun is shining.

(c) *Barha mānz he chorun neyse lāchhu dy lāchhu mai hi dāda mai to ni chorey.*
It was Lachhu, not I, that stole the pork.

(d) *Dim dim dim kosum dim tumcho bāpcho polka dim.*
Testes! Testes! Kosum testes! The hollow testes of your father!

(e) *Dengur mundi me lamha āse, chu kābri chu.*
In the ant-hill is a hare, *Chu kābri chu.*

(f) *Teda bhuski hātum dāyi.*
Stand up, fat woman, and go to the bazaar.

(g) *Karanji gaon cho kursa, gaon kāje pursa.*
He is impotent in Karanji village; but he is a real man in ours.

FIG. 141. *Pitorha* gong

6. *Maur Tatīna Pār.* The rhythm while the bride and bridegroom are having their crowns tied on their heads.

Tatti de tatti de kamadir bābu kamadir.
Give the adze, give the adze. But the boy won't go.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

252
531
516
301
285
302

Girl cleaning grain at Tikanpal before a decorated door

301
142

Hinga, a Maria girl of Rewali

[facing p. 28]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

refused. She abused him saying, '*Puk nak*, lick my privates', and told him to go home without her. This, he said, was impossible and she again abused him. He got so angry that he hit her on the head with a heavy piece of wood and she died immediately.

More frequently these disputes have ended in suicide. The wife of Markami Pide was in love with another man, and frequently used to leave her husband and go to stay at her mother's house where it was possible for her to meet her lover. Pide as frequently would go and bring her back and beat her. At last she killed herself in despair. Mundri, the wife of the headman of Kaklur, frequently quarrelled with her husband over the question of visiting her parents, and one day when she wished to go and her husband stopped her, she became so miserable that she hanged herself from a mango tree.

Wooden tobacco box (Length 3½")

In two cases it was the husband who committed suicide. Marvi Gutami, a young man of twenty-two years, married a girl to whom he was much attached. Indeed it is said that he loved her so much that he was quite unable to control her, and she got on the nerves of the older women in the house who lost no opportunity of venting their spite upon her. As a result she often used to go away to her mother's house, and Gutami would have to go and bring her back. One day when this happened, the youth found that she had gone into hiding elsewhere. Despairing of happiness, he returned home and hanged himself behind his house. Kawasi Hurra's wife Lakhmi did not care for him and was always slipping away to her parents' house. He brought her back five or six times, but she would run away again after staying with him for a few days. Hurra seems to have been very fond

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

congress. Habka Masa killed his wife Pakli in consequence of a long dispute, but immediately before the tragedy she refused to lie with him. Barse Chappe, a polygamous invalid, was first refused by both his wives and later by his senior wife because he desired to perform the act in a semi-public place. Marvi Deva saw his wife with a man and when, probably to test her, he asked her to give herself to him and she refused, he killed his baby daughter and tried to kill her. Kosa, an almost imbecile paralytic, asked his wife to have intercourse with him; she abused him and he stabbed her to death. Doga, rejected sexually by his elder brother's widow, was so affronted that he killed her. Mundra, who so brutally treated his wife Pande, asked her to have sexual congress with him and was refused only an hour before he met his death at her hands.

Decorated banda knife (*Length* 3')

Such a refusal may also drive a man to suicide. Marvi Joga, the Waddai of Mathadi, was always quarrelling with his wife and threatening to remarry. One day at the funeral ceremony of his brother's son, he drank a lot of surem, and when he came home he tried to have intercourse with his wife. But she refused saying, 'You are always talking about another wife. Why don't you go and get one?' and she went away to sleep in the Room of the Departed. Joga, intoxicated and desperate at his wife's refusal, hanged himself.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

There was a disputed boundary between the village of Kurmer in the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* and the adjacent Kutru Mar village of Jatalur; the Jata clan asserted possession over a strip of land belonging to the Parlio clan of Kurmer. I suggested, on the strength of a tale I had heard of former Chiefs' methods of justice, that the head of each village should come with a cock to the land, and that the land should go to the clan whose cock crowed first. This was hailed by both sides as a sound solution, and off we went to the land; but just before we reached it the Jata headman began to hang back, and finally backed out of the test; I awarded the land to the Parlio clan to the approval of men present from other clans, and on going over the land found that it contained a *pagh'ai* or alternative village site of the Parlio clan besides the cromlech left to mark the site of the Village Mother's 'temple', the *kasyaq-gaita's udam-garia* or seat of honour, and the *kotokal* or line of menhirs erected in the name of the Parlio dead. Here the Jata clan finally abandoned their claim when challenged by the Parlio *kasyaq-gaita* to eat earth from under the Village Mother's cromlech.

To be left to live the free life of the hills, untrammelled by restrictions on his user of forest, earth and water or his right to shift his village and his *penda* cultivation, is the unconscious ideal of the Hill Maria. If he is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls; and few of them or of the wilder Bison-horn Marias survive long imprisonment.

The Hill Maria shows great artistry in his bead-work, and is never at fault in his discrimination between colours and shades, though he uses for all shades of green and blue the one word *kaqarondla*. He has general terms also for red, white, black and yellow, but none for intermediate shades. In his houses he draws rude cup-marking patterns, *swastikas* and strange creatures in white earth on his mud plaster, or makes rough clay representations of women's breasts. His songs are low and rather melancholic in sound, the youths' voices verging on contralto; but they are far easier for an English ear to understand than Hindu music, and have often a haunting refrain. Both he and the Bison-horn Maria love to hear European records on a gramophone, especially a good soprano or contralto, sea shanties, and violins or trios and quartets playing light chamber music; but operatic fireworks merely provoke laughter, Chaliapin singing the 'Song of Prince Igor' making them ache with laughter, but being often encored. The Marias as a whole have no musical instruments except drums. Though the Bison-horn Maria does not show the Hill Maria's artistry and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

764
532

Uraogatta post, near Chitrakot Falls

764

Danyakal and urnakal stones, Aranpur

BISON-HORN MARIA MEMORIALS TO THE DEAD

[facing p. 280]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

themselves socially they not only cease to follow old Maria customs, but begin to resent being called Marias and to claim the designation of Muria. In some places, especially in villages where it is hard to find suitable menhir stones, they erect in their stead posts of *saja* wood, which they call *urasgatta*. The upper illustration on plate XXI shows a very elaborate *urasgatta* from a roadside village near the Chitrakot falls, on the northernmost fringe of the Bison-horn country. It is carved on each of its carefully squared sides with representations of hunting scenes, and the objects of the chase. Originally these were picked out in red and blue paint. Plate XXII shows part of a large row of *uraskal* menhirs by the side of the road from Dantewara to Kameli, at the foot of the bridle-path ascending to the Bailadila guest-house; such enormous menhirs as those shown behind the women in this illustration are seldom set up in these days; the tallest shown was thirteen feet high, and the broadest over six feet wide at the base. The normal size of those nowadays erected is shown in the lower illustration on plate XXI; this portrays part of the *uraskal* of Aranpur village, by the side of the forest road from Kuakonda to Dummagudem, and at the head of the Aranpur pass. In this photograph the interesting thing is the large flat stone resting on four boulders.[A] This is known as a *danya-kal*, and was placed there as the memorial of Birya-Marvi Hurra Wadde, who in his life-time was *perma* and *bhum-gaita* of Aranpur, as well as a *wadde*. The Birya-Marvi and the Kuhrami clans are the only two which always make *danyakal* and never set up *uraskal* stones; all the other clans, even in the Marvi and Kuhrami phratries, and including the small or Chudala Marvi clan, erect *uraskal* stones. This Aranpur *uraskal* was not restricted to the Birya-Marvi clan, although the village was founded by that clan; the *danyakal* stone on the right edge of the photograph was the last stone at the south end of the row; next to it on the north were fifteen *uraskal* stones of the Kunjami clan, and after them three of the Chudala Marvi clan. The small stones at the foot of the menhirs are known as *hanal-kutul* or ghost stools, and serve the same function as the *hanal-garya* cromlechs of the Hill Marias. Any recently erected stone can usually be detected either by the presence of a cow's or pig's tail hung over its apex by a loop of cord, or by the dirty white stains of libations of *landa* poured over the stone when it was set up.

The stone is selected and carried from the quarry to the place where it is to be erected in much the same way as that already described for the Hill Marias. I use the word quarry advisedly, for these great slabs or pillars cannot be found as surface boulders. I have not seen the actual quarrying; but they understand how to

[A] [See col. 116, pp. 426-427. – Awalgsf]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

These pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. They are usually made of the wood of *terminalia tomentosa* or *shorea robusta* and are erected with ceremonies similar to those used for a menhir.

As far as I know, the pillars are always made by non-aboriginals, but since the Marias give their instructions to the carpenters about the patterns they want carved, they do thus throw some light on Maria psychology even if they do not illustrate their sense of art. For example, the pillar in memory of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar was made by Bharto, an Oriya carpenter of Jagdalpur. The pillars for Barse Marka at Barrem and for Marvi Masa at Jabeli were both made by Anda Kalar of Potali. For Barse Marka's pillar his sister's son gave a bull calf worth twenty rupees, cloth worth five rupees, two rupees in cash and daily rations for the fifteen days while the carpenter was working.

There was a fine pillar to a wealthy Maria named Muchaki Hunga near Dilmilli on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. It is a fat, thick pillar, carefully squared, standing some fifteen feet high with elaborate carvings round the base and a decoration of crocodiles and pigeons at the top. The whole is surmounted by a trident, obviously suggested by the carpenter, and on this again is a small bird. On the west face of the pillar there are carvings of dancers wearing bison horns and six girls who are realistically portrayed with breasts and genitalia. Below them is a tiger, a crane and a peacock. On the south side is a picture of the dead man riding an elephant, an umbrella in his hand and bags of money at the saddle. Five women follow him with pots of rice-beer and spoons. Below them are rats. At the foot are men ploughing, deer and tigers. On the east side is a man riding a horse and fish, horses and a tortoise. To the north is a man and wife with their children, a gourd for taking beer from a pot and representations of snakes and birds. Below this are two pairs of dogs apparently copulating, and at the very bottom some men are carrying a pot of rice-beer.

Near the pillar is a grave built up in the modern Hinduized fashion and protected by a little shed.

Near Massenar, at the end of a long row of *wrashal* menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa. This is much more slender than the one at Dilmilli and is not so well carved. But it has carvings of Kopa himself on his elephant with the inevitable umbrella, a gun and a tobacco pouch. On his chest is a small circle which I was told represented his Jubilee Medal. The pillar is further decorated with carvings of men dancing with the bison-horn head-dress, boys and girls dancing with a pot of rice-beer, a man trying to drag away a girl by the hand, crocodiles,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

764 porcupines, peacocks, fish and tigers. The carpenter had put in a representation of Hanuman, but the Marias, knowing little of him, supposed it was a policeman included to emphasize Kopa's dignity.
532

The pillar also has, or had, pigeons on the top and there was a trident, though the Marias were ignorant of its meaning. 'It is the pole's turban,' they said. 'It is made of iron to save us the trouble of renewing it.'

It is obviously impossible to describe all these pillars[1]; in 1942 they were to be found near Chitrakot, near Killepal, at Lalaguda, near Sirisguda, at Taragaon, at Kumalnar and at Garda. I saw a very simple one at Chingner in honour of an important member of the Lekhami clan. It was standing out in the jungle by itself; there were three rows of lozenges cut in the wood near the top and a single carved pigeon above. It was still red with oil mixed with *geru*. At its foot was a flat stone supported on two others, the *hanal-garya*. From the top there hung a strip of cloth, possibly a bit of the dead man's dancing dress.

It is important to note that these pillars are closely associated with the megalithic culture of the Marias. Sometimes both a menhir and pillar are erected for the same man; sometimes the pillar stands at the end of a row of stone monuments. It is not, therefore, in any sense a substitute for the *uraskal* but a supplement to it. I have noticed a similar combination of stone and wooden monuments among the Lanjhia Saoras who have come under Kond influence.
[171]

It is tempting to suppose that the various animals and birds carved on the pillar have some totemic significance, but I doubt if this is so. In the first place, every pillar has a wide variety of animals portrayed upon it; in the second the people themselves say that these animals simply represent the ordinary objects of the chase and are carved to indicate some of the interests of the dead man. Each pillar in fact attempts to be a biography in wood of the deceased.

These notes are desultory enough, but they do at least give me
114 an opportunity of paying some tribute to the man whose endless docility to facts has enabled him to make so striking a contribution to science and whose great-hearted affection for the aboriginals has led him to propose a policy and establish principles which, if adopted by the National Governments of the future, will preserve freedom and happiness in the hills and forests of India. There is much that is tedious in anthropology, much that hardly seems worth while,

[1] The pillar of Marvi Oyami Mase, the homicide, is described in detail in *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 201.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

he would repay with 50 per cent. interest.[1] Although it is clear that these Teli, Kalar and Telugu money-lenders do levy an exorbitant toll on the Maria villagers' produce, it is equally clear that they are fulfilling a necessary function, which has become the more necessary since the stopping of *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation below the hills has restricted the Marias in most villages to permanent rice cultivation on small acreages always dependent on seasonal rainfall evenly distributed in time. If such money-lenders are excluded, then they must be replaced by Government grain depots and village grain banks.

Of Maria funeral rites the *Gazetteer* observes that a stone or a carved post about five feet high is usually put up to mark the spot where a man's body has been cremated, and that 'sometimes one comes across a forest glade strewn with these memorials, the only sign of some deserted village, the very name of which has perished'.[2] Many rows of carved wooden posts may be seen between Bhamragarh and Lahiri, while at Lahiri itself I saw scores of such posts and of the small cromlechs (*kanal-garya* or 'thrones of the Departed') described on page 273, and mentioned in the *Gazetteer*[3] as built on the spot where the body was burned. The top of one of these very substantial funerary posts, or *kanal-gutta*, photographed at Lahiri, is reproduced as one of the illustrations in this Supplement. Noticeable are the carved wooden horns, between which is a carved wooden bird, probably a hornbill. The wooden horns are common, and probably are a modern symbol of the cow formerly sacrificed at the erection of a menhir or wooden *kanal-gutta* by Hill Marias[4] and Bison-horn Marias[5] throughout Bastar: the funerary customs of the Chanda Marias seemed, however, to be Hill Maria in type, and this was confirmed by oral enquiries at Lahiri.

The addiction of the Bison-horn Marias and of the Kutru Hill Marias of Bastar to cock-fighting has been described on page 162. I particularly inquired if the weekly cock-fights at Oikal in Ahiri zamindari, there mentioned, and at Lahiri itself still went on. But all cock-fighting among Chanda Marias had for some years been stopped under orders from an inexperienced young European District Superintendent of Police on the theory that it contravened the Gambling Act. But the Marias maintained that, as in Bastar, so here, there had never been cash betting (as, indeed, one might expect in a region where all transactions are still so largely in kind), but the defeated bird had passed to the owner of the winning bird.

[1] For further details, see *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 183-4.
[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 106.
[3] Ibidem, loc. cit.
[4] See pp. 278-9.
[5] See p. 281.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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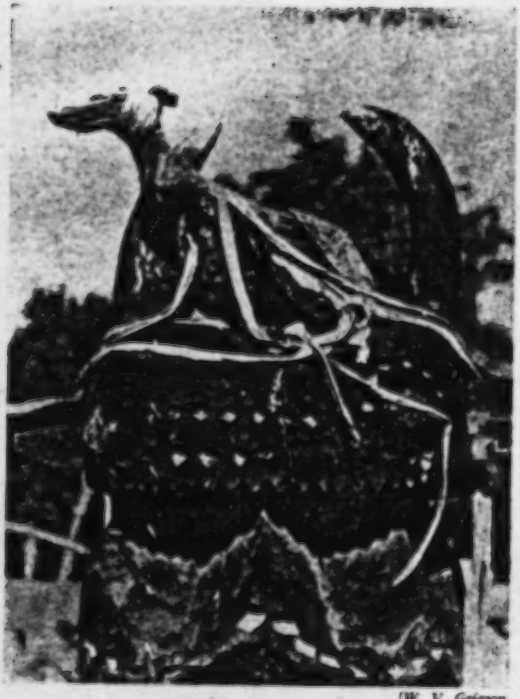

[W. V. Grigson

The top of a Maria funerary post (*hanal-gutta*) at Lahiri Chanda district

[End Plate 4]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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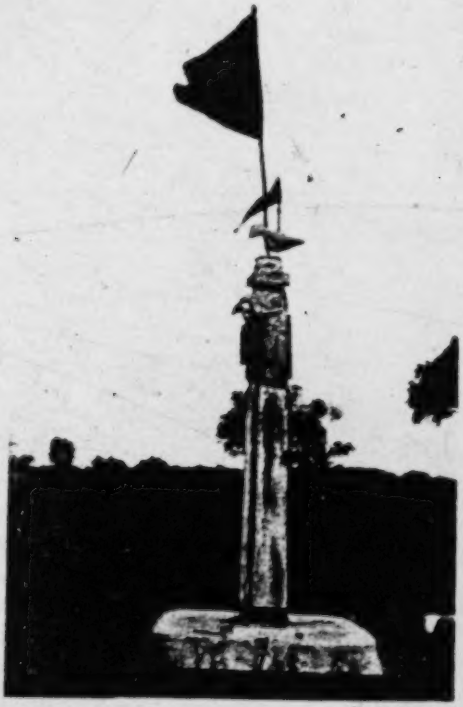
Memorial pillar
at Bare Arapur



Verrier Elwin

Memorial pillar (for members of the Lekhami clan) near Chinger. Note the cromlech at the base

[End Plate W]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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(Verrier Elwin

Memorial pillar for Barse Marka at Barrem

[End Plate X]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

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[Verrier Elwin

Tati Mundra of Tikanpal, with the ' wooden ' horse or ' vehicle ' of the Tati clan-god Hunga

[End Plate Z]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

778 346 The buildings vary greatly. Some are solid mud houses with strong doors, others are open sheds, a few stand in substantial compounds of their own with pillars and swings before the entrance. The furniture and symbols inside vary as greatly. In the solid buildings there is generally something that might be damaged by cattle or blown away in a storm—little brass images of horses, elephants and bulls, elaborate litters for Danteshwari, bunches of peacock feathers. Flags and very small images are wrapped up and put into an earthen pot hung from the roof. The long Gutal poles (with a big bunch of peacock feathers at the top) are slung from the roof, and the Anga Deo are hung on ropes from the roof or placed resting on bamboos. Other symbols of the gods are chains, spears, axes, digging tools, whips of cow-hair, shields.

[532]

FIG. 24. Brass horse, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines *Height* 9¼"

In the more open sheds, the symbols of the gods have to be slung high up very near the roof. At the foot of the central pillar there is generally a flat stone which serves as the seat of the god, and there are several big stones placed together to form a hearth for the cooking of the new grain and pulses or sacrificial animals. The gods are often taken out of their temples to be worshipped, at least on all major festivals, but the sacramental cooking is done inside. So you may often see big wooden spoons stuck in the roof. Outside the temple, there may be a swing with a spiked seat on which the mediums can prophesy; there is often a row of wooden pillars, each with a stone seat before it, to which certain visiting gods can be tied, and there may be a stone for special offerings to the dead.

[831] On the wooden pillars, there are often phallic symbols. At Metawand I saw an elaborately carved vagina showing the clitoris and labia; there are similar carvings at Markabera and Bayánar.

346 I will describe one or two representative shrines, for this will give a better idea of them than any general account. At Markabera is the *pen-ravar* of the Wadder clan, and near the temple is a row of menhirs erected for members of the clan who have died in the neighbourhood. But Markabera is not the original *pen-ravar* of this clan. That is at Kakori, where the clan-god, the Anga Bope Harma, has his residence. Many years ago, Bope Harma had a son at Kakori who was named Bhumiriya; two brothers of the Wadder clan lived there as the Dhurwa Pujari. After a time Bope Harma ordered one of the Wadder brothers to go to Markabera and make a new *pen-ravar* there with a temple to Bhumiriya.

The temple is built with nine wooden pillars, fixed in place by the clan-priest who put iron slag at the bottom of each hole. Bundles of grass called *gubba* were prepared by a Karanga, a clan *ahoudma* to the Wadder clan; mahua flowers and water were offered them and they were tied to the top of the pillars before thatching. The roof was then thatched, but no walls were made. Every ten years, the *pen-ravar* building is renewed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

346 Just inside the gate of the enclosure there is a line of pillars and four stone seats. These poles are for the convenience of such visiting deities as are

[532]

FIG. 23. Brass swing, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines
Breadth 8¼"

represented by poles or flags and can be tied to the pillars; the stones also are seats for those gods who have a traditional or family right to come to the temple. Such are Kustirmago Pen, a cousin of Bhumiriya, an Uika god from Kasabahi; Lath Kuar, Bhumiriya's son, a Wadder god from Tadopal; Inde Muitar, a Karanga god of Suhnar and Son Kuar, son of Kanda Dokara, a Maravi god from Garhbangal. Near the gate of the enclosure is another stone [749] of sacrifice where black hens are offered to the dead. One of the pillars is used to tie the buffaloes and bulls which are to be sacrificed to Bhumiriya.

Entering the temple, we find a clean open shed with broad wooden pillars [831] on which are carved crude representations of the sun and the vagina. Here too are four stone seats. The chief is, of course, for the lord of the temple Bhumiriya himself. The second is for his father Bope Harma who is brought every ten years to sit with his son. The third is for Dhursai Kuar, a son of the Pat Deo in Jagdalpur, who comes at festivals from Timnar, and the fourth is for Lalsai Kuar of Metawand.

From the roof hangs an earthen pot containing little bells and a bundle of peacock feathers. Another pot has in it a piece of cloth used as a flag at festivals. In the roof are ten large wooden spoons, which are used for the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and in front of the shrine a pile of old clay elephants, bulls and horses. And indeed I was told that the Anga used to live up on the hillside but was offended by the rough Muria habits and moved down to the plain where he

FIG. 26. A typical carved wooden pigeon often found in Muria shrines
Length 9½"

would not be offended by the sight of his worshippers eating beef. Here, in vivid symbol, was the god leading the hillmen down into the plains, from the open free hut to the enclosed house, to a reform of diet and a change of religious custom and the use of ephemeral images made by low-caste Hindu artisans.

There are two other small temples, both open sheds, to visit; both are for the Naitami clan. The first is for Paknabundin Matal, who is represented by a big stone, and the other for Tallur Muttai, the Village Mother, also represented by a stone. These four temples of the plain are not without their charm; set among great trees they look towards the grim rocks of the hills above them. But they have not the hard clear light and freedom of the shrines that brave the rocks and mountain.

VI. THE MURIA PRIESTHOOD

Who are the priests that officiate at these temples? In a sense every Muria is a priest; for the head of each family tends the dead of his house and can make offerings to his personal gods, but there are priestly families of greater or less influence which have performed the worship of the gods for generations.

Notable among these is the priest of the clan-god or Anga, often now called the Pen-Pujari or Pen-Gaita. In the Chota Dongar and Partabpur areas, he is called the Pen-Waddai. He is also known as the Dhurwa, which is the name of a tribe in the south of the State and possibly has associations with the Dhur Gond. This use of a tribal name as a priestly title is paralleled by the use of the word Baiga to denote a village-priest. It suggests that the Dhurwa tribe like the Baiga is regarded by the people as of great antiquity.

Then there is the priest of the *bhum* or earth. The Kaser-Gaita (knife-priest), also known as the Bhum-Gaita or Mati-Gaita (earth-priest), has the duty of offering sacrifices to the earth and keeping the village free of disease. It is he who must go to the fields and clearings when they are prepared and must make offerings at sowing time and harvest.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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horseback; so do the Korku on their carved memorial tablets.[1] The Muria often offer horses of clay or brass (Fig. 24) at their shrines. Sir Lewis Fermor

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After a photograph by G. F. Ramsden

FIG. 25. Gond shrine near Naghir, Chanda District

discovered a remarkable iron horse among clay horses offered to a village god on the top of a hill of manganese-ore in the Chhindwara District, which he thought might be compared with the horse offered to the Southern Indian deity Iyenar.[2]

One of the oldest of Indian sacrifices is the *asvamedha*, or horse-sacrifice, which has been traced to Scythia. 'There has always', says Penzer, 'been a close connexion between horses and the sea-god, and also with the sun. The latter connexion is due not merely, I think, to the fact that the horse was the "vehicle"—of the sun-god, but because, through its swiftness, strength and activity, it was itself a symbol of the sun.' Penzer gives an account of the rite, which included the horse's consecration and its release for a year's wandering before the actual sacrifice. After its death, the queen lay with the animal so that its great powers of fertility might be transferred to her.[3] Fraser describes rites for the horse among the Russians and Chinese.[4] The Greeks sacrificed horses to the sea-god.

This association of the horse with magic, worship and sacrifice provides a background to its connexion with divination and ecstatic trance among the

[1] See W. Koppers 'Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils and Other Primitive Tribes in Central India', *Annali Lateranensi*, Vol. VI (1942), *passim*; D. H. Gordon, 'Korku Memorial Tablets', *Man*, 1936, Vol. XIX.

[2] L. Fermor, 'An Iron Horse from the Central Provinces', *JRASB*, Vol. II (1936), pp. 211–14.

[3] *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. IV, pp. 14–16.

[4] *Pausanias*, Vol. IV, pp. 197f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Garowala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite home for spirit-influence.'[3]

IX. The Cure of Disease

Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 122.
[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agapitoff and Khangaloff.
[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 100.

Plate XLV

●532

ABOVE: Uraon village elephant of Saparam

BELOW: Uraon dhumkuria at Borhambey

342

[p. 224 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
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Plate LXVIII

The ghotul at Mas

Black and red wall-paintings in the More Berma ghotul

X 883
353
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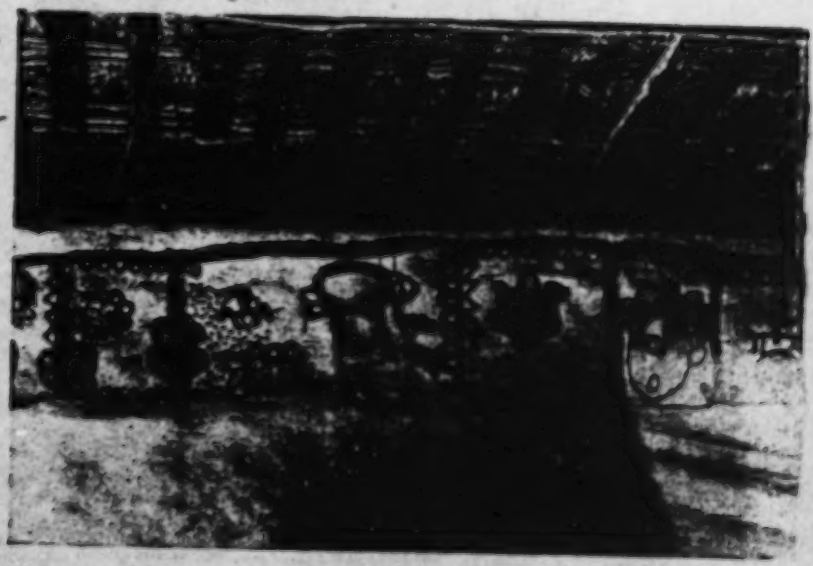

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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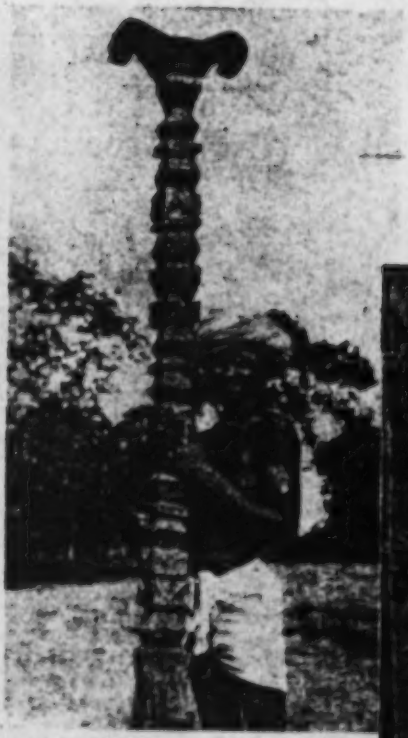

Pillar at Binjhe with the chalik who carved it

Drawing of old census number-board

Plate LXXIV

[534]

Carving on a pillar drum at Dongargaon

[p. 356(N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

291
415

Motiari of Palli with leaf-cup

Plate LXXXVII

●532

Pola festival necklaces bedecks put on the road for luck

[p. 428 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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X484
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Plate XCVIII

Hulki expedition mask
(From Sirpur)

Chait Dasahra masks representing man and wife (From Kachora)

[p. 500(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
796
535
532

Mask used in Chhertu dances (From Berma)

[p. 508 (A)]

Plate C

● 532

Earthen dolls from Phauda

Malko and Dulosa with earthen dolls at Chandabera

[p. 508 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
796
535
●532

Nakta mask used for Chaita dance

Plate C11

Masked chelik representing a frog or leopard, at Phunder

[p. 512 (B)].

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Here the chelik said that the animals represented were lizards and they were climbing the tree to catch a wood-pigeon (Fig. 124). At the top of each toy were cymbals that clanged whenever its strings were pulled.

883 X
484 X
796
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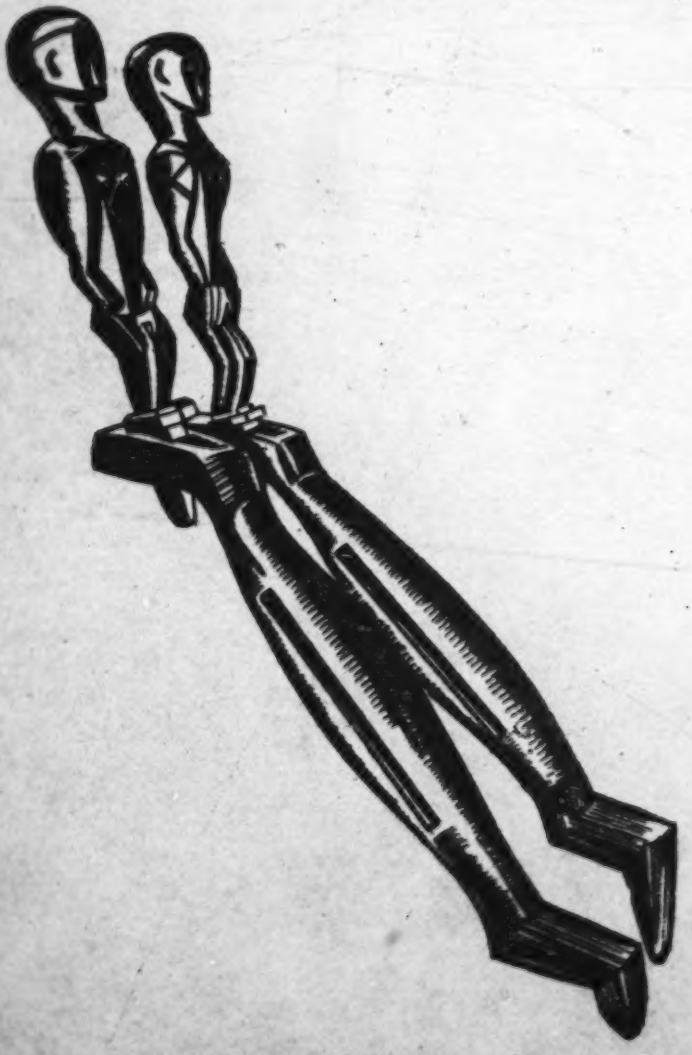

FIG. 125. Gongs from Alor
Cf. Plate CV

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CIII

532
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293

Pus Kolang mask

[P. 528 (W)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Good AW32
Muria

●532

Wooden dolls, representing a chelik and motiari, attached to gongs and carried over the shoulder on any festive occasion

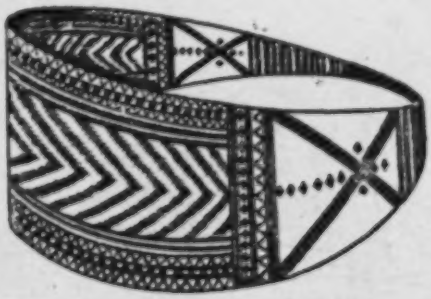
Photograph by Author
Plate CV

[p. 532 (A)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

164 State Medical Department has done much to check the spread of the disease. Malaria, as everywhere in the Indian forests, is endemic, but few suffer from enlarged spleen. Leprosy and the venereal diseases are very rare. Skin diseases are also much less common than among the more elaborately clothed and thus dirtier people of the north.

291 Men wear a small loin-cloth and sometimes a little turban. The women tie a sort of skirt, very short, round their waists: it hangs down to the knees. The breasts are covered only with [632 ornaments; when 301] visiting a bazaar girls may tie a small piece of cloth round their shoulders. They often wear a thin brass fillet round [302] the hair, and the older women use a large snood which is most becoming. Round the neck are masses of bead-necklaces, and iron or brass torcs. The bright colours of the beads and the shining brass fillets against the rich brown skin make a sight of unforgettable beauty.



Brass fillet worn by Maria women

361 The Bison-horn Maria village is laid out on the same lines as the Gond village of the Central Provinces, unlike the communal settlements of the Hill Maria, Baiga or Juang. Each house stands in its own garden which is sometimes a substantial field, and a village may cover a very large area in consequence. Often a village is composed of anything from six to twelve small hamlets, each of which represents the grouping of a family round its patriarchal head. The little huts stand among woods, on rocky hill-sides, in the shade of spreading trees. Sometimes they appear almost submerged [485 by waves of yellow sarson flowers or red jhira vegetable. 983 Each village has a substantial building for the accommodation 361 of travellers and this is used by the unmarried boys as a dormitory. The unmarried girls also sleep together, some-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

322 766 on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. Near Massenar at the end of a long line of menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa, which has a carving of the old man wearing his jubilee medal. There are others at Chinger, on the way to Chitrakot and in a few other places.

322 766 532 Each pillar attempts to be a biography in wood of the deceased. We see him important carrying the symbols of wealth and power and riding on a horse or elephant; we see the dancers that delighted him and the landa pot which never failed to give him pleasure. We are shown the knives and axes that he used; the animals that he saw or hunted in the forest. The pillar for Oyami Masa, the homicide, had several carvings illustrating his work as a Siraha.

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623 632 Every Maria village has a panel of secular and religious officials. There is the headman (often called the Peda), his assistant (the Kandki) and a Kotwar, who has the duty of reporting to the police all births and deaths within his jurisdiction. Each group of villages belongs to what is called a Pargana, a relic of the older administrative system of the State, and at the head of each Pargana there is a Pargana Manjhi. Each village has its panchayat presided over by the village headman, and each Pargana has a Pargana panchayat which is a Court of Appeal. In 1932, the village panchayats among all the aboriginals in Bastar were entrusted with a certain amount of criminal and civil work. The regular Courts were deprived of jurisdiction over the tribesmen for no fewer than seventeen Sections of the Indian Penal Code, including those dealing with simple hurt and assault, thefts of property up to five rupees, mischief, trespass and adultery. The panchayats were permitted to deal with claims for civil damages that might arise out of the criminal offences, and in other civil claims not exceeding twentyfive rupees. They were permitted to impose fines of not more than twentyfive, and in marriage cases to allow expenses up to fifty rupees. The Kotwar had the business of reporting panchayat decisions to the police. An appeal

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Detail of Muchaki Hunga's pillar at Dilmilli

Newly-erected pillar near Chitrakot

[Facing p. 81]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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Apparatus for distilling mahua spirit

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Detail of memorial pillar of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar, showing people serving rice-beer

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Woman making rice-beer

[FACING P. 96]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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A murderer's memorial. Wooden pillar in memory of Oyami Marvi Masa at Jabeli

Detail of Marvi Masa's memorial pillar, showing him as a Siraha sitting on his swing

[Facing p. 116]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 he murdered. The stone next to his is for Marvi Buta who was also sentenced for this murder and also died in jail. But there was nothing at all in honour of the murdered man.

764 532 The erection of a carved memorial pillar is probably the greatest honour that the Maria can pay to the dead. It is the equivalent of being buried in Westminster Abbey. Masa's pillar is a very fine one. It shows him as a Siraha sitting on a swing: a streamer of untidy hair blows out from his head. Another carving shows him mounted on an elephant. Another portrays him riding on a horse attended by his wives. All round him are the symbols of his life; deer and tigers represent his love of the chase; axes, swords and knives symbolize his valour and enterprise; two men carry a pot of rice-beer in memory of his drinking prowess.

775 789 The business of keeping the ghost of the murderer or his victim quiet naturally greatly exercises the minds of the village medicine-men and priests. There is danger either that the ghost will cause trouble among the other ghosts of the family, and thus by annoying the ancestors may bring trouble upon the living: or it may inspire another member of the family also to commit a murder; or it may return and simply make itself troublesome. At Phulpar, after Pandu had been hanged and the usual ceremonies performed, the village priest sacrificed a hen near the pyre saying, 'Now we make your home here: live here with your ancestors peacefully'. If they fail to do this, they said, they think someone else in the house will also commit a murder. Then they erected a saja pole and after sacrificing a cow to appease the ghost of the dead man, each relative in turn picked up the cow's tail, saluted it and hung it on the pole. The Waddai went to a corner of the room where the Pot of the Departed was kept, sprinkled liquor there and addressed the ghost: 'Live now with your sons. Do not go to your daughters. Care for the people of your house. See that your children prosper'.

Often, after the ceremony of burning the clothes and ornaments, a man sits in the house of the deceased and the ghost comes upon him. He is led out to the pyre, and there he buries a bhut kukri, a ghost hen, to ensure that the ghost will not come to the house and trouble its relatives.

The ghost of the murderer or his victim becomes a Mirchuk.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

695 There was a disputed boundary between the village of Kurmer in the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* and the adjacent Kutru Mar village of Jatalur; the Jata clan asserted possession over a strip of land belonging to the Parllo clan of Kurmer. I suggested, on the strength of a tale I had heard of former Chiefs' methods of justice, that the head of each village should come with a cock to the land, and that the land should go to the clan whose cock crowed first. This was hailed by both sides as a sound solution, and off we went to the land; but just before we reached it the Jata headman began to hang back, and finally backed out of the test; I awarded the land to the Parllo clan to the approval of men present from other clans, and on going over the land found that it contained a *pagh'ai* or alternative village site of the Parllo clan besides the cromlech left to mark the site of the Village Mother's 'temple', the *kasyeq-gaita's udam-garia* or seat of honour, and the *kotokal* or line of menhirs erected in the name of the Parllo dead. Here the Jata clan finally abandoned their claim when challenged by the Parllo *kasyeq-gaita* to eat earth from under the Village Mother's cromlech.

181 To be left to live the free life of the hills, untrammelled by restrictions on his user of forest, earth and water or his right to shift his village and his *penda* cultivation, is the unconscious ideal of the Hill Maria. If he is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls; and few of them or of the wilder Bison-horn Marias survive long imprisonment.

517 The Hill Maria shows great artistry in his bead-work, and is never at fault in his discrimination between colours and shades, [802] though he uses for all shades of green and blue the one word *kagarondla*. He has general terms also for red, white, black and yellow, but none for intermediate shades. In his houses he draws 532 rude cup-marking patterns, *swastikas* and strange creatures in white earth on his mud plaster, or makes rough clay representations of women's breasts. His songs are low and rather melancholic in ● 533 sound, the youths' voices verging on contralto; but they are far easier for an English ear to understand than Hindu music, and have often a haunting refrain. Both he and the Bison-horn Maria love to hear European records on a gramophone, especially a good soprano or contralto, sea shanties, and violins or trios and quartets playing light chamber music; but operatic fireworks merely provoke laughter, Chaliapin singing the 'Song of Prince Igor' making them [834] ache with laughter, but being often encored. The Marias as a whole have no musical instruments except drums. Though the 517 Bison-horn Maria does not show the Hill Maria's artistry and 153

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyeq-gaita* obtains the permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman sweeps out her house, and the *kasyeq-gaita* goes to each house and collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan, or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought from Japgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots kept at his *pen-rawar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana* before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially where the *adam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

there is no need to describe their processes in this book. The potter, like the Gharwa, expects immediate payment for his goods and is not a tribal servant remunerated with a retainer of grain at harvest like the blacksmith; but he often takes payment in grain. For a Bison-horn Maria marriage, the potter will make and supply as many pots as are required, but after the marriage is paid a bullock, cow or calf for his work. 326

C. *Musical Instruments*

1. Drums

The Bison-horn Marias use the large double-membrane drums called *birya-dol*, of which typical specimens are shown in the illustrations in Plates VIII and IX. The hollow cylindrical body of these drums is a section of the trunk of a *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) or a *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*) tree up to sixteen or seventeen inches in diameter. The right hand membrane is made of goat-skin, even by those who have the goat as totem, and this is struck by the finger-tips of the open right hand. The other membrane is of cow- or bullock-hide, and this is struck with a bamboo stick carried in the left hand, and sometimes adorned at the end with a bunch of the pea-pod iron pellet-bells that are attached to the *tirdudi* bamboo dancing-sticks of their women. The membranes are stitched to each other by thongs of cow-hide criss-crossed over the outside of the wooden cylinder. That cylinder is sometimes as much as three feet long, and the weight is very considerable. The drum is slung over the right shoulder by a sling of hide or cord, sometimes adorned with cowries, and is carried obliquely across the stomach, the right end being the higher. There is no season among them when drum-beating is taboo or *melo* (their term for the Hill Maria *polo*). They have different drum rhythms for different dances, for weddings, for success in the chase, and a dactylic beat, for the drum beaten from the roof of the house to announce death; for the *pen-harsita* dance at their festival corresponding to the Hill Maria Koqsar they use the drum-stick only, and not their right hands, the rhythm being seven short beats followed by two long beats. 534 [824] [533]

These *dol* drums are occasionally found in Hill Maria villages also, but are a sign of cultural contact with the Bison-horn Marias. The essential Hill Maria drum is the single-membrane *turam* drum. The body is a wooden bowl, generally the rounded base of the hollow trunk of an exhausted *salphi* (*Caryota urens*) tree, trimmed with the waist-knife to bowl-shape; sometimes a section of *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) trunk is similarly whittled into bowl-shape. The membrane is dried untanned cow-hide, hair outwards, and this is [824]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

534 attached by criss-cross thongs of the same material to rings of the same material tied round the outside of the bowl in its centre and just above its base. The thongs are passed through holes pierced in the overlap of the membrane with the point of the knife or of an arrow, and pulled taut without anything being done to guard the edge of the membrane from tearing. Occasionally pottery bowls [177] are used instead of *salphi* or *bija* wood, a practice learnt both from the Teluguized Gonds of the south and the northernmost Murias of Antagarh tahsil.

●533 The *turam* drum is placed on the ground between the outspread legs of the player, who sits on his buttocks with legs bent at the knee. The drum-sticks are held lightly between the index and middle fingers, the right stick being somewhat larger than the left. [184] It is taboo to beat a *turam* except at Koqsar and weddings, though nowadays most of them regard the taboo as lifted for a dance at a high official's camp. The ordinary rhythm at Koqsar and weddings is :—

The rhythm thus begins and ends on a long beat with the right hand, with six short left hand and five short right hand beats alternately in between.

534 I saw once at Nugur a small drum of the *turam* shape made with a hollow gourd bowl.

When it is taboo to use the *turam* drums, boys use what are called by them *pak-dol* or *veddur-dol*, literally 'bamboo-drums', which are really split-stringed instruments. They are made of two-foot lengths of the thick bamboo called *soli-veddur* by the Marias, or *bendri-bans* in Halbi. The outer rind of the bamboo is prised apart from the rest of the bamboo for a length of about eighteen inches, three inches being left joined at each end. The prised rind is about one-eighth of an inch thick and an inch and a half wide. It is raised from the body of the bamboo by two small bridges (*barga*) of bamboo inserted at each end as near its junctions with the body of the bamboo as possible, and is made into three 'strings' by two longitudinal cuts. The drum is laid on the ground and rubbed firmly into position in the dust, and dust is poured along its sides; the 'strings' are then struck with light drum-sticks in the same way as the *turam*. The Bison-horn Marias do not make this.

Brass dish-shaped gongs (*gatia*) struck with sticks used, till a few years ago, to be an indispensable part of the bride-price or

§ [see cat. 116, pp. 421-422, - Analysis]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

535 in the early summer, between the harvest-home and sowing. It is, therefore, not surprising that their dancing is poor and monotonous in comparison to that of the Bison-horn Marias, the Teluguized Koitor of the south, and the Parjas, Gadbas and Murias of the north. There is nothing to prevent married women joining in; they always join the Koqsar dances, and if generally the wedding dances are restricted to unmarried girls, even old women often take part in dances at official camps.

533 535 The essential feature of the Hill style of dancing is that it is *pata-endanna*, dancing to song, and the singing is far more important than the drumming. The theme of the song and the lines with meaning are sung by three youths or two youths with a girl between them, who are known as the *pata-bhita* or 'song-fellows', who walk up and down as they sing in front of the line or ring of dancers; they are shown clearly in the illustration opposite. All the dancers answer each stave sung by the 'song-fellows' in full-throated chorus, usually a meaningless refrain. The opening refrain and the chorus refrain are sometimes soft and melancholic, almost wailing; the refrains are melodious and lingering, far more intelligible to the European than any Hindu music.

535 Normally the dancers form a long line, not a circle, though the line is curved and revolves in a circle, always right-handed. Sometimes the line is of men and boys only, sometimes (as in the illustration opposite) the girls are all together at the far end of the line, but more often, if not invariably after they have warmed to the dance and any initial shyness has worn off, there is a girl between every pair of men or boys. But whether the dancers on his right and left are girls or not, each dancer puts his right hand round the neck of the dancer on his right, and his left hand round the waist of the dancer on his left. The right foot is moved slowly to the right, the body being raised on the toes of both feet; the heels are raised twice and lowered without touching the ground, and then raised a third time and brought to the ground, when the left foot is brought up to the right foot and the raising and lowering of the heels are repeated with both feet together; the right foot is then moved away as at first, and the steps repeated. Each time the body is raised with the heels, the male dancers make their bunches of buttock-bells clash together by a jerk of their posteriors. So the whole line gyrates very slowly, in perfect time; but as this step is never varied, and the only change is in the songs, the dancing is monotonous to a spectator. Actually the jolliest part of the performance at camp dances is the hilarious entrance of the dancers in a rampaging column of fives or sixes, lads and girls mixed, yelling, whistling and laughing, on to the dancing ground, preceded

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 house, and are given *landa* to drink. At the meal in the Place of the Departed the couple are exhorted by the bridegroom's father to live together in unity and concord, and to be faithful. All night the drums roll and guests pour in to dance and drink *landa* or sing around the bride and bridegroom, the men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses. Ultimately next morning the couple are made to stand on a hurdle under the eaves of the hut constructed for them, and a kinsman of the girl's father climbs on the roof and tips a pot of water over them. The boy then drags the girl into the hut, both pushed by willing hands, and the door is fastened on [353] them and a bamboo-matting curtain hung over it. After a while they emerge, and the bride takes a ceremonial farewell of the girls of her village, and the guests disperse. Finally in the evening she is thrust into the bridal hut by her husband's younger brothers and his friends, her husband being already inside awaiting her.

In the account of the Ganjenar-Massenar wedding which follows, naturally no description can be given of the scenes in the *narma-lon* rooms of the bride's and bridegroom's fathers, to which outsiders are not admitted, or of other parts of the wedding ceremonies which I did not actually see. The bridegroom was the son of Atrami Hunga of Massenar, the younger brother of Atrami Kopa Dhurwa, a very influential headman who was decorated by the late Raja of Bastar for keeping that *pargana* quiet during the 1910 rebellion, and the bride was the daughter of Kunjami Harma, the headman of Ganjenar. When I reached the latter's house, which was about two miles from my camp at Massenar, the bridegroom and his party had arrived, and the relatives' dinner was over. The bride had gone to a tank to be bathed by her elder sister and her brother's wife; the bridegroom and his father were walking about talking to the guests and the bride's male relatives. There were not many persons present, perhaps 150 all told; a few men were beating their dancing drums, but none were wearing their bison-horn head-dresses. Around the door of the separate sleeping hut used [533 831 195] by Kunjami Harma's daughters and other womenfolk, some thirty women were standing shoulder to shoulder, swaying to and fro and singing a choral refrain of '*Koholin-waya*' to obscene verses sung by a laughing woman in the centre of the group. Another band of women hurled abuse at them at intervals, when the leader of each band tried to out-Billingsgate the other.

535 585 When the bride had been bathed, she emerged from the sleeping hut with a cloth wrapped over her shoulders, and was dragged into a chain of dancing and singing girls with their arms closely linked, while the bridegroom, also with a cloth over his shoulders, was pulled into another chain. These chains of girls circled and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535 585 gyrated in all directions, at one moment appearing inextricably mixed together, only to disentangle miraculously at the next and weave themselves into fresh spirals and circles, singing abuse at each other. All the while the group of standing girls went on swaying and singing round the door; the leader caused great [533] laughter by improvising a song warning all girls to be on their guard that night, for the Diwan, the Tahsildar and the Circle Inspector were watching them, and who knew what might happen after dark?

583 431 585 Before we arrived the bridegroom's party had presented the bride-price, which consisted of one slaughtered pig, a live pig, five very large pots of *landa*, five *pailí* of husked rice, four yards of Mahra cloth for the bride's mother, and one rupee. While the chains of girls were dancing around the bride and bridegroom, her mother's sister came out and displayed the bride's going-away presents, a *masni* or grass sleeping-mat, a small basket containing about a *pailí* of husked rice, a large pot of *landa*, and a young bull calf newly weaned.

585 Some men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses and beating their long drums now started to dance near the gyrating chains of girls, and there was a further accompaniment to the singing of bamboo flutes. The two chains of girls suddenly opened out, leaving the bridegroom and bride together, and the girl's father and the bridegroom's elder brother were with them, holding their hands. The old father, Kunjami Harma, held up his hand for silence, and started a long speech, asking the bridegroom's elder brother, 'Have you come willingly for this flower? Will you wear it and cherish it? It is fresh and tender, and will not bear rough handling. Know you how witless women are? If she be a poor housekeeper, pardon her. If she cook badly, pardon her. If she speak to other men, do not take it amiss, but pardon her.' There were other similar injunctions, and to all the bridegroom's brother answered yes. Then Kunjami Harma took his daughter, who took the bridegroom's right hand, and placed on his little finger a ring that she had pulled off the little finger of her own right hand; the bridegroom then took a ring off his own left little finger and placed it on hers; cloths were held over their heads while this exchange was in progress. The bridegroom then took off another ring, which the girl's elder sister received in her outstretched cloth, while she said, 'From now onwards you must neither touch me nor utter my name till I am dead. If you do, all will laugh at you, and your brethren will fine you.' I was told that if she dies before him, he will take a ring off her little finger and wear it on the middle finger of his right hand. He also gave a ring to the bride's younger sister, for he is free to touch her and to talk of her by name. Then his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

elder brother touched the old man's feet, and the old man touched his, and then each placed his hands on the other's shoulders, standing face to face, and leaned his head forward first on the other's right, then on his left shoulder; finally each salaamed the other with both hands held in front of his face, palm to palm, and said '*Jukar!*' Each of them then exchanged similar salutations with all their near relatives present and the leading guests, including myself and the other State officials present.

The girls now started singing again, telling the bride that she must leave them and go to her man, that her lot would be hard, and that if she did not like her man she should make up her mind to leave him. Meanwhile the bridegroom slipped off over the fields to his father's house at Massenar to be ready there to receive the party escorting the bride.

The bridal procession then formed up, led by some thirty women, singing and side-stepping along the narrow jungle path in the gathering darkness. After them walked the elders, then a party of drummers, followed by the bride, pretending to struggle against a cluster of laughing girls pushing her to Massenar. All danced as they went, beating their jangling dancing sticks on the ground in time with the drums and the steps of the dance. It took them two and a half hours to cover the two miles to the bridegroom's father's house in Massenar.

There a multitude of other girls and men received them, the men all in the traditional dancing costume, with a thundering roll of drums, while dozens of bombs of gunpowder and rice chaff were exploded. The full moon beat down on a sea of tossing plumes, or shone back from the glistening bison-horns of the head-dresses, till the whole courtyard was full of rampaging and fantastic movement. The bride and bridegroom were seized by fifty girls, and made to sit in their midst in front of the house where they were later to live, all packed as closely as sardines, swaying to and fro on their hips as they sat, and singing obscene marriage songs in full-throated chorus, while all prodded and plucked at every part of the bodies of the bride and bridegroom, whose heads were muffled in cloths.

After watching this for some time I went off to my tent for dinner, but returned towards midnight. The bride and bridegroom were still where I had left them, surrounded by the swaying and singing girls. Some of these had babies sleeping in their laps as they sang, and many, tired out, were sleeping, hemmed in by their companions. The crowds had swollen, and every forest path was thronged with men and women hastening with drums and dancing kit to join the dance. Some came from villages twenty-five or

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *wraskal*.

On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *wraskal* menhir. There are *wraskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs.[1] On the Jagdalpur side, however, and around Paknar, though every village has its *wraskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kulthi*, *urad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 426. — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

'Dōkrī, id mu'ittōr hāttā intōq?' Dōkrī ittā, 'Āyō, idēn
'Old-woman, this old-man what says?' Old-woman said, 'No, him-to

539

sāhrnā ḍand yē'ittā. mur hāyᵃ ātōq.' Dōkrī kētu-nā tāt
severe fever has-come and alarm came.' Old-woman field-house-of mat-door

kēb-sittā. Payā ḍōkrī tēdnā sabē mal-dun hawaq-tōq. Payā mu'ittā
shut. Then old-man arose all peacocks killed. Then old-woman

mu'ittōr mal-dun pa'la lōn wātōq tittōq.
old-man peacocks taking home came ate.

Free Translation

An old couple lived in a certain village. The kutki which the old man had sown in his *penda* plot had ripened, and as he had seen peacocks eating the ripe crop he was living in his field to guard the crop. One day he was attacked by fever and could not go home. His wife, wondering why he had not come, went towards the *penda* plot to look for him. When she reached the field she saw peacocks eating the crop and her husband lying in his field-house, and she wept at the sight. The peacocks came up and asked the old woman why she was weeping. She answered, 'Alas, my old man has fever and cannot walk; just go there and look at him.' So the peacocks went inside the field-house to see. Then the old man cried, 'Shut the mat-door of the field-house!' The peacocks asked the old woman what he had said, and she answered that he was in delirium from his fever. So saying, she shut the door of the field-house, and the old man sprang from his bed and killed all the peacocks. Then the old woman and he carried the peacocks home and ate them.

Three Songs from Orcha

533 ●
539

(These are sung at weddings or at the Koqwar festival.)

I

Refrain: Ālēyᵃ rēlōyᵃ rē rēlōyᵃ rēlō,
Ālēyᵃ rēlōyᵃ rē rēlōyᵃ rēlō!

Chorus: Pīnḍōlā kusēlē, dīdā-lē, pīnḍōlā kusēlē!
(The racquet-tailed drongo is calling, my brothers!)

1. Ēkālyᵃ pālē ḍumarā, layōrē, bālāyᵃ pālē-yē!
(Some-kind-of song sing, lads, some-kind-of song!)
Chorus.

2. Pīnōm, layōr, pīnōm-ē, layōrē, pīnōm, layōrē, pīnōm-ē!
(We-know-not, lads, know not, lads, know not, lads, know not!)
Chorus.

3. Adēm āyō, badrām, layōrē, adēm āyō, badrām?
((If) thus not, how, lads, (if) thus not, how?)
Chorus.

4. Jāwā lāwā āyō-rē, layōr-ē, jāwā lāwā āyō-yō!
(Gruel without not, lads, gruel without not!)
Chorus.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

533
539

5. Bōtēl dāṛ*ngō jakmā-rē, layōr-ē, bōtēl dāṛ*ngō jakmā-yē !
(Bottle (of) wine intoxication, lads, etc.)
Chorus.

6. Māwāṅg huṛa-lē āyō-rē, layōr-ē, māwāṅg huṛa-lē āyō-rē !
(At-us look not, lads, etc.)
Chorus.

7. Ōmṭarē, layōr, ōmaṭē, layōr-ē, ōmṭarē, layōr, ōmaṭē !
(Sing, lads, sing, etc.)
Chorus.

8. Āyār, dādā, āyōrā, layōr-ē, āyār ō-ō-yē !
(Ayar, brothers, ayora, lads, ayaro o ye !)
Chorus.

Free Translation

Aleya, reloya re reloya relo !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling, brothers !
Sing us some kind of song, lads !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
We know no songs, lads, we know no songs !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
If we cannot sing thus, lads, how shall we sing ?
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Without food we cannot, lads, we cannot sing !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
If we drink we'll be merry, lads, merry !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Do not look at us, lads, do not look at us !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Sing, lads, keep singing, keep singing, lads, sing !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Ayār, brothers, āyōrā, oh lads eh ! āyār ō-ō-yē !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !

II

Kokoreng ko-reng !

Refrain : Alēya rē-lō-ya rē-lō !
Chorus : Kōkōrēng kōrēng ! (meaningless).

1. Bāroq banē māyō !
(What for was-not !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
2. Wāṭarē, lāyōr, wāṭā !
(Come, lads, come !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
3. Idrā pāṭā manō !
(This-kind song is-not !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
4. Dūsar pāṭā ōmē !
(Another song sing !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
5. Pāṭār ōmwāl, āṭēkē.
(Song-singer is, then.)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !

APPENDIXES

6. Wô wô weâtâñke âyô !
(Wo, wo we saying are not !)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !
7. Wâyô-rê, layôr, wâyô !
(Not-come, lads, not-come !)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !
8. Omarê, dâdê, ômû.
(Sing, brother, sing.)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !
9. Kañtîñ duralê ôratû
(In-eyes dust has-fallen)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !
10. Ôsâr bhûmite âtêkê.
(Another's land, therefore.)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !
11. Bâroq banê mâyô !
(What-for was-not !)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !

Free Translation

Aleya reloya relo
Kokoreng koreng !
Why are we not singing,-
Kokoreng koreng !
Come, lads, come !
Kokoreng koreng !
This kind of song is no song.
Kokoreng koreng !
Sing a different song !
Kokoreng koreng !
If singers are here !
Kokoreng koreng.
Song out of time is useless,
Kokoreng koreng !
No one hah come, lads,
Kokoreng koreng !
Sing, brothers, keep singing,
Kokoreng koreng !
Dust has fallen in our eyes,
Kokoreng koreng,
From singing in another's land.
Kokoreng koreng !
Why are we not singing ?
Kokoreng koreng !

III

(Sung by dancers at the Koqsar festival only.)

Refrain : Sâlây^{e} rê rê lôy^{e} rê rê lôy^{e}, layôr, rê rê lô rê rê lôy^{e} !

Chorus : Kâkâr, dâdâ-lê, kâpêrâ, layôr, kâpêrâ layôr-â !
(Crow, brethren, night-jar, lads, night-jar, lads !)

1. Têhan pêgh guṛanjôrâ, layôr, gûṛanjôrâ, layôr-â !
(Above (?) rain is-thundering, lads, thundering, lads !)
Kâkâr, etc.
2. Âh^{e}lêhâ âyô âyô-rê, layôr, âyô-rê, layôr-â !
(Thus not not, lads, not, lads !)
Kâkâr, etc.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

533
539

3. **Adrām āyō, badūrā, layōr, badūrā, layōr-ē ?**
((If) thus not, how, lads, how, lads ?)
Kākār, etc.

4. **Wō'ati-tagānē mātālarā, layōr, mātālarā, layōr-ē !**
(Veranda-in Mata-is, lads, Mata-is, lads !)
Kākār, etc.

5. **Rāwaṛ-agānē pēn-ōrā, layōr, pēn-ōrā, layōr-ē !**
(Shrine-in clan-god, lads, clan-god, lads.)
Kākār, etc.

6. **Uṭi-tagānē Tallōgkā, layōr, Tallōgkā, layōr-ē !**
(Carrying-net-in Village-Mother, lads, Village-Mother, lads !)
Kākār, etc.

Free Translation

Solaya re re loya, re re loya, lads O, re re lo, re re loya !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
The rain-clouds are thundering, lads, thundering on high !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
Do not sing thus though, nay, lads, no, nay, no, lads, do not sing thus !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
If thus we must sing not, lads, then how must we sing, lads ?
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
In her veranda is Mātā, lads, the Mātā goddess, lads O !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
In his shrine is the clan-god, lads, the clan-god, O lads !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
In her net the Village Mother, lads, the Village Mother, lads !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !

Four Riddles (*metaw*) from Hirkul Village

Q. **Usṭā-nēdē gumchār bōṛē kōrintā ?**
(Cow-dung) plastered (place)-on dove what crawls ?
What is the dove that struts on fresh cow-dung plaster ?
A. **Ōṛā.** (A boat.)

Q. **Rēkā- ichōr puṅgār, kauṛā- ichōr pēṛēm ?**
(Leaf-hat as-big-as flower, cowry-shell as-small-as seed ?)
What is the seed as small as a cowry shell inside a flower as big as a leaf-hat ?
A. **Bālō ; wad.** (A spider in its web.)

Q. **Hndilā pīlā mētā-tīn tochtōq ?**
(Small child mountain wears-as-hat ?)
What is the child that wears a mountain on its head ?
A. **Yēṭē.** (A crab.)

Q. **Ōnāgā nāṭēnā pōnāgāl mārē-tē mēṇj ?**
(Any village-of green-pigeon feather-on egg ?)
In any village what is like an egg on the feather of a green pigeon ?
A. **Nēl-Marrā.** ((A fruit of) the *aonla* tree.)

SUPPLEMENT

VII

I found it very difficult—and I suspect that Grigson had the same experience—to see Marias in action. Tribes vary greatly in their willingness to allow a visitor to be present at their ceremonial. The Murias used to invite me to marriages or festivals, sending information about them long beforehand. The Saoras are delighted to have visitors at their celebrations and more than once the ghost of a long dead headman has come upon the priest and admonished the people to treat me right. But the Bondos do their utmost to keep the stranger away; during the great summer festival they pile the paths leading to their villages with thorn bushes and not even a fellow Bondo, if he belongs to another village, is admitted. The Marias do not go so far as that, yet I found them singularly unwilling to let me watch them do anything. When I was camping at Borgum I heard that the Wijja Pandum was to be celebrated in two days' time and rather unwisely announced my intention of being present. On the morning of the festival a delegation arrived in camp to say that the proceedings had had to be postponed because the Perma's wife was in her period—though I darkly suspect that the old lady had in fact passed the climacteric. I had to dodge round the country for weeks before I saw a wedding, and to witness the Ghotpal Marhai I had to come sixty miles on an elephant down from the Abujhmar because the dates were changed at the last moment.

But since a page of personal observation is worth a whole chapter of hearsay I will describe the wedding at which I assisted and the great festival at Ghotpal in 19[illegible].

On March 15th, 1942 I was camping in Gogonda at the edge of the hills overlooking the great southern plain. That evening, I was told, two girls were to be taken to Sirsitti, a village some two thousand feet below, to be married. At about five o'clock therefore married and unmarried women collected and began to dance with one of the brides. She had her head and shoulders completely covered with a shawl and wailed loudly all the time. Three pots of rice-beer were distributed to the dancers and a large number of onlookers, and then the dancers took the bride round the village. This was a very pretty sight. The circle of dancers would suddenly elongate into a line and then curl up again in a ring. As they danced from house to house, men and women would come out and put a ring on the bride's finger or a necklace round her neck and embrace her by raising her hands twice to their foreheads and then clasping her in their arms. As they did so, the dancers sang the names of the people who were giving presents and their exact relationship to the bride. At other times they sang how the girl had hitherto been going to and fro freely in the jungle, getting wood, husking grain,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 fetching water, but that now she was to go to a life that was both sweet and bitter. Finally, a group of quite little girls arrived on [533] the scene with bundles of food tied up in cloth on their heads and the bride, still weeping loudly, was carried off by her girl companions across the fields into the sunset. It was a moving sight, this taking away of the bride to her new life, but it was noticeable that no member of the bridegroom's family came to fetch her. She was simply taken away by her own people to his village.

Next morning I started before dawn with my assistant Mr. Sampat Singh on the long descent to Sirsitti. The scenery on the way was magnificent. From the brow of the hill we could see stretching away almost to Orissa the great plain of Konta and Sukma with the peaks of hills rising above the mist just touched by the morning sun. When we reached the village we found the two marriages in progress, though everyone was a little jaded having been up dancing all night. There were little camps outside the village for the two brides and the bridegrooms' families sent food and liquor out to them. During the morning there was some desultory dancing in the middle of the village, and a group of girls sat round each bride who wailed loudly from time to time as the girls sang to her about the sorrows and hardships of the married life to which she was now going. Young men from Gogonda, the brides' village, cooked the food supplied by the bridegrooms and this was ready about three o'clock in the afternoon. The visitors assembled beneath a magnificent mango tree outside the village, and the feast was very carefully served by the young men; an exact number of [264] leaf-cups was prepared and each contained the same number of bits of pork; an equal number contained identical portions of rice. The boys then served the cups, first to the women and then to the men. Others went round pouring gravy on the rice and they all ate together. When the meal was over they went to a stream near [271] by and drank, kneeling down and putting their faces right into the water to suck it up.

Then the girls assembled round the first bride, who was still 585 covered with the shawl which all through that sweltering day she had not once laid aside, and danced with her into the centre of the 535 village. Another party escorted the second bride and soon the scene was very lively with two separate dances whirling round the square. Presently the first party danced up to the future husband's house. They gathered in a very tight block before the door and began to sing loudly and rapidly, jerking their bodies to and fro from the hips, a song which meant, 'Come and get her if you can, brother; come and catch her if you can'. For some 585 time the bridegroom stood in a rather embarrassed fashion in the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Benur, Dansa Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sambhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered.

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

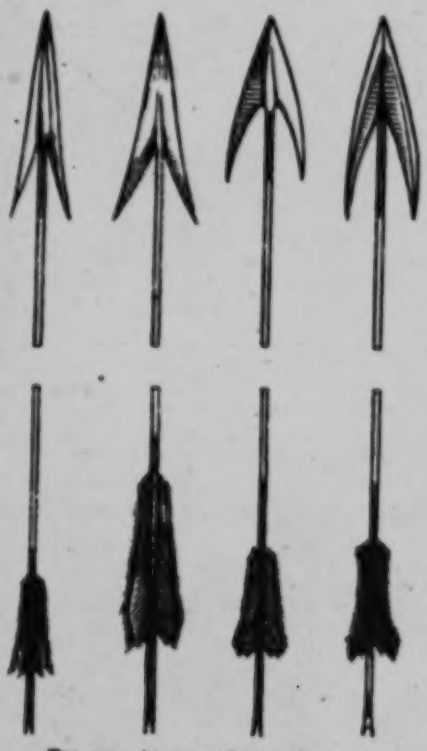


FIG. 10. Arrows and arrow-heads
Length 2' 5"

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chaniyagaon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection.

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul.

I

Chikkal mitti kariya mâma Adrigir kâtigir shikâri shikâri!
Tupak sâja kiwa mâma.
Mâli gondi tupâk mâma.

Gojir kewar sawa mâma.

O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!
Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
The name of the gun is Maligondi, uncle shikari.
Make gunpowder with gum from the mode tree, uncle shikari.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Nilwa lavdi wâtw ummi.	We have come to take you, girl.
Halay dehi jhulay de!	Let us shake her, let us swing her!
Jora jhugh la michat lamay de.	Extend both your legs.
Chhhde re hun he hondra.	The forest monkey bites.
Kohom de re ghar he bilai	The household cat scratches.
Mahâra dhare jora bichchu.	In the Mahara's house, there is a pair of scorpions.
Re re loyo rela re re la!	*Re re loyo re re la!*

II. The Evidence of the Songs

The importance of the betrothal ceremony is shown by the place it holds in the long narrative songs sung in the ghotul or at a funeral. These songs are valuable as revealing in the most authentic manner what the Muria themselves regard as important; they are in fact documentaries in verse.

I quote here two of these songs, both of which give an interesting account of the course of Muria life. The first is a song used when a menhir is erected. It was sung by Dorga Muria of Dugabangal, a village at the foot of the Abujhmar Hills. In the second song, a Ghotul Pata from Nayanar, is another vivid description of the betrothal. Both in these songs and similar narrative poems given elsewhere in this book, the importance of the ceremony is clearly emphasized.

The Fate of Nirabosi Usendi

In this island of the world lived Kamragatti of the Dhurwa clan.
He had a daughter.
There was a boy, too, son of Nirabosi of the Usendi clan.
Nirabosi Usendi went to Kamragatti Dhurwa to betroth his son.
He himself went ahead and the brother-clansmen behind.
The Dhurwa asked them, 'Why have you come?'
'You have a daughter, we have come for her.'
'I have a daughter, I have not given her to anyone.'
Thus spoke Kamragatti to Nirabosi of the Usendi clan.
Seeing the bottle of liquor, Kamragatti desired it.
'You are related to me of old, I will give you my daughter.'

The daughter was inside and heard their talk.
She said, 'Many men came for my betrothal, but he did not give me to them.
Today they came and he has given me.'
Thinking thus she was very pleased.
The men drank the liquor and so made an end.
Old man Kamragatti was thinking; he thought, 'I too will give them liquor'.
Amaetiya Kalar and Hiramoti Kalarin had a still.
He went there to fetch liquor.
His daughter came out of the house.
The Usendi asked her, 'Where are you going?'
'I am not going anywhere, I am only coming out of the house.'
'O daughter-in-law, you are so big—why are you not going to someone?
O daughter-in-law, we have come today for your betrothal and you are going out.'
'Men came before for my betrothal, but my father refused to give me.
That is why I am living here and do not go to anyone.'

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 of his daughter to a Poyami boy from Ritkonar. On 3 March 1941, therefore, I made my camp in the village, and was greeted with great affection.

Preparations for the Marriage

585 533 For a whole week before the marriage, there had been energetic preparations both in the ghotul and the home. In the ghotul the chelik and motiari gathered round the bride and sang songs about her future joys and sorrows. So important is this training of the bride that even where the girls do not normally sleep in the ghotul, the rule is relaxed for these few days.

The songs describe the joys of ghotul life and the girl's stern and sorrowful experiences under a stepmother's rule. Here is a fairly lengthy song on this familiar theme. After each line the refrain *Rerela rerela rela rerela* is repeated several times. Each line ends with the exclamation *Roy halo, O sister!* and is itself repeated twice.

Song

Rerela rerela rela rerela

585 539

Niya ra mandāna loni roy halo,
Loni gājur hindu roy halo,
Loni re hinja podār roy halo.
Niya re nāru gali roy halo,
Koliyāl tokār harri halo,
Bera re arrān gāti roy halo,
Dāwāng haide heti roy halo,
Tināng haide hesur roy halo,
Ghotu de heya hardi roy halo,
Jaliyāl mal lekka roy halo.
Amka na miyār indur roy halo.

This used to be your home,
How clamorous your talk here,
But now the house is silent.
Yours was the village path,
The path was like a fox's tail,
You used to go at sunset,
In your left hand a winnowing-fan,
In your right hand a broom,
You went to clean the ghotul,
Like a peacock strutting.
We said, 'There goes so-and-so's daughter'.

Ghotu de gājur hindu roy halo,
Kile re koru racha roy halo,
Niya ra jor tor layor roy halo,
Jodire ondoy hiti roy halo,
Sangi re jor tor layor roy halo,
Sangi re tasi dāki roy halo,

In the ghotul was a lot of noise,
The court was long and broad,
You had a boy lover,
But you are leaving him lonely,
You had a boy lover,
You are going away leaving him behind,

Dinda re rāj te mandi roy halo,

You were living in the kingdom of the unmarried,

Adere vājo puto roy halo,
Buto re kabār punwin roy halo,

You will never enter it again,
You don't know what toil there is ahead,

Sagāre sidun punwin roy halo,

You don't know what relatives can be like,

Haton ne wālon ne punwin roy halo,

You don't know what visitors will come,

Kosure koytuns punwin roy halo,

You don't know what officials will come,

Ideke sudi wāyar roy halo,
Ideke bara pundahi roy halo.

But soon you will know it all,
Soon you will discover what married life is like.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Rerela rerela rela rerela

585
539

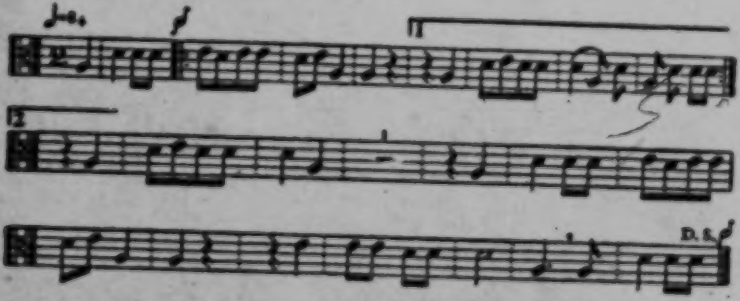
They remind the motiari of her former lovers:

Niya jorta layor halo adere,	He was your yoke-fellow,
Kotel jori layor halo adere,	He was your lover,
Ore layor hunjdi halo adere,	You used to sleep with him,
Narha dhuinga talkindi halo adere,	At night he craved tobacco,[1]
Dhuinga hila indur halo adere.	You said you had none.
Adere dhuinga āyo halo adere.	But that was not his real desire.
Hewon injor witindi halo adere.	You denied him and tried to run away.
Layon tani dāhi halo adere.	But now forever you are leaving him.

They also remind the bridegroom (if he is in the same ghotul) of what he too is going to lose.

How good it would have been had the Raja stayed, O Rani!
He would have been lord of this kingdom;
We would have served him as his servants;
We would have brought our ploughs for his field;
We would have carried his loads without charge.
We would have been given rice as our wages.
We would have carried home his bundles of rice.
We would have brought them from the fields, lifting up our loads.
We would have taken them to the Raja, and he would have paid us our wages, O Rani!

This song is specially appropriate to one of the leaders of the ghotul: other songs have a more general application.



[533]

Dindorājo jorājo nona.	The kingdom of the free, lad.
Ida rājo puto nona.	You'll never see it more, lad.
Niya wāyna ghotul nona.	You came to the ghotul, lad.
Parmākoro ghotul nona.	Fair as bison-horns, lad.
Ida ghotul da wandir nona.	You used to come here always, lad.
Dāna kaida gihi nona.	A sleeping-mat in the left hand, lad.
Tina kaida barga nona.	In the right hand a stick, lad.

[1] To ask for tobacco is the conventional way of inviting a girl to sexual congress. [833]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 539 During the day, material preparations keep the family busy and excited. Rice must be husked and cleaned, pulses prepared; the men must arrange for liquor, the women for oil and haldi. As they grind the haldi the women sing:

Mâyo halum jamudi.	O Jamidarin mother, we call on you.
Kâher ghare niy utra,.	Don't go elsewhere, O mother,
Maniya daniya ghare je.	But come to Maniya Daniya's house.
Tuhe newta pârila,	We invite you here,
Dandik baie yiha se,	Come for a little while,
Haldi pura dihâse.	Let there be full measure of haldi and flour.
Asa mâyo asa je.	Do not betray our faith in you.
Mâyo halum bangdrâm.	O mother Bangaram!
Tuhe newta pârila.	We invite you also.
Kâher ghare newta je?	Whose is this invitation?
Maniya daniya ghare je.	It is to Maniya Daniya's house.
Haldi pura dihâse.	May there be full measure of haldi and flour.

And so on, endlessly, through a score of deities. Maniya Daniya simply means 'so-and-so' and is altered to the actual name of the householder in each case.

The Bridegroom's Farewell Dance

585 Shortly after my arrival, a roll of drums heralded the approach of the bridegroom, attended by a party of chelik and motiari, who made a temporary camp under a mango tree outside the boundary of the village. This night they cooked for themselves, but three of them came on deputation to the headman to ask for assistants to help with water and cooking. Later, the bridegroom's party began to dance, led by the boy himself; it was his farewell and final dance as an unmarried man.

The Preparation of the Bride

At about nine in the evening, the elders of the village assembled outside the headman's house for a preliminary drink, and two hours later the chelik and motiari gathered in the same place. The elders had now gone away, and the boys made a big fire, and brought out the bride. The girl, who had been Belosa, was covered with a cloth and made to sit in the lap of the Tiloka, her own sister, and was supported on either side by the Sirdar and Kandki. She began to weep loudly and mournfully: she was in good voice, for she [152] had been practising in the ghotul every day for the past week. Today she must continue to cry all night. The boys and girls sang to drown the painful noise, to instruct her in her new duties and themselves to mourn the loss of their Belosa. All night they continued weeping, singing, sometimes dancing, though unlike the bridegroom the bride had no heart for this. From time to time they took a little liquor. It was a moving sight, for the girl's sorrow was genuine, as well it might be—she was leaving a world of freedom and romance for the unfamiliarity of a strange house. The ghotul children also felt the departure of one of their number very deeply; they had lived with her for years; as Belosa she had been the lover of the boys and controlled the destiny of the girls.

585 The sequence of the songs was fascinating; with Pilsai's help I was able ● 533 to get a lot of it down. It was sung in a mixture of Gondi, Halbi and Chhattisgarhi.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

The Bride's Song

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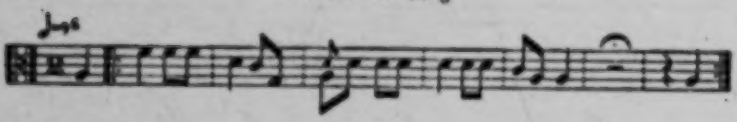

585 The bride wept:
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Father, my own father, come to me,
For I am going away to a stranger's house.
Had I been a boy you would have brought a daughter
To your own house.
But as I am a girl you send me away.
Had I been a boy, my wife and I would have stayed with you and made you happy.
But I must go away, and we both are sad.

Mother, my own mother, come to me.
Yesterday I was husking rice in your house;
I was sweeping the floor, fetching water from the well,
Cooking food for you, plucking leaves for cups and plates.
But now I go away to a stranger's house, and who will care for you?
How lovingly you looked after me!
But in this new house shall I find joy or sorrow?
When you come to see me shall I be able to give you so much as a cup of gruel?
From today my games, my fun, my seeing you will end.

Now the bride addressed the head of the ghotul.

O Sirdar, when you came to the ghotul and found it dirty
With ashes and dust and no one had swept it,
You called for me and asked me whose fault it was.
The Kotwar and Kandki defended me,
But you said, We are not Maria that we should sleep in dirt,
And so you fined us.
Now I am going away and whom will you have to fine?
Daily I cleaned the ghotul,
But now who will clean it?
With you I used to play and dance,
But now my feet are bound, and I shall not meet you even in my dreams.
Who knows whether I shall find joy or sorrow in this stranger's house.
Sometimes I combed your hair and laughing rubbed your arms,
But sometimes I was tired and slept.
Then you all said, Why don't you comb our hair,
And massage our limbs today?
You must have been to someone, why don't you come to us today?
For this you punished us, turning us out, and saying,
Never come more to the ghotul.
But I brought you liquor and with folded hands
Begged you to let us in again.
Now even in my dreams I may not massage you,
And who will there be to comfort you?

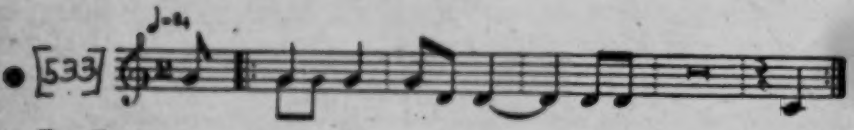
THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Meeting of the Parents

535 Just inside the village the parties met—the girls greeted each other, and the elders sat down on the ground for *pâriu-bhêt* or *samdhi-bhêt*, an important little rite which emphasizes that marriage is more than a union of two individuals; it is an alliance of families. A cloth was spread on the ground, and the father of the bride and the father of the bridegroom—the two samdhi—sat down together to talk for a few minutes. The Gaita drew lines of rice-flour and turmeric on the ground, and exclaimed, 'Let tomorrow's work be rooted deep and the tree grow large!' When they got up someone threw a pot of haldi-water over them and there was a lot of ribald laughter.

In Esalnar, the samdhi sat down with a pot of water and cleaned their teeth, exchanging the twigs and saying, 'Let there be no quarrels, let all be well, let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'.

During this little ceremony the motiari sing various songs, of which the following (in Chhattisgarhi) is an example:



[539]

Milo milo milo samdhi kukur pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a puppy!
Kukur pila la kây karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a puppy? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi hâthi pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a baby elephant!
Hâthi pila la kây karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a baby elephant? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi burhâl pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a tiger cub!
Burhâl pila la kây karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a tiger cub? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi gini pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a sucking pig!
Gini pila la kây karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a sucking pig? Take away your baby.

The bride's motiari went forward; one of them picked up the boy on her back, and they led him in this formation to his camp on one side of the headman's field.

Here was a small leaf-hut under a shady tree. Men and women of both parties greeted the bridegroom. They washed his feet and put a rice-mark on his forehead. Then they led him into the hut and made him sit on a new mat.

The Giving of the Ring

The scene now shifts to the bride's house. Presents of cloth were given to the bride's mother. As it had not been done at the engagement-time, the ring-cowrie, in its modern form of four annas, was given to the bride's father and put in the Pot of the Departed to compensate the ancestors for

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

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Chhind pân ke mauor doi,	Of palm leaves is the crown, mother.
Main mauor bândho doi?	May I wear the crown, mother?
Kây mola deke bâbu?	What will you give me, son?
Gaiberi ke rupiya doi,	I'll give you a bundle of money, mother,
Kotha ke jaila doi,	I'll give you a bullock in the stall, mother,
Wahi baila deke bâbu.	Give me that bullock, son.

Here is a rather charming little song, which was recorded at Palari.

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Bâri hate chhind bata rati rati kande	The palm grows near the fence and cries all night.
Na kând re chhind bata bâbu mauor pinde,	Don't cry, O palm, my son will wear you as a crown,
Bândo le bândo pujâri chatuk mauor bândo.	Tie O tie it, priest, carefully tie the crown.

Bringing in the Mahua Wood

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Now the chelik of Sidhawand, assisted by visiting chelik from other villages, went out with the Gaita to fetch wood for the marriage-booth. The Gaita cut a small mahua tree with a single blow of his axe, and the boys cut the other poles and leafy branches of sarai wood. Presently the party returned, drumming, dancing and singing, with loud shouts of *Pude* (vagina).[1] It was now nearly sunset. The boys piled the wood in the place where they were going to build the booth, and danced round it holding each other's hands. The motiari came and picked up the mahua tree. They stood in a bunch very close together, everyone held the tree and banged it up and down, singing vigorously.

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While the wood was being brought in the girls sang taunt-songs at the boys, most of them obscene. The first, for example, has the refrain *Kawal khyâng burka sulling farbatuk eteto nor layer*, 'The chelik's testicles are like the fruit of a dried-up tree and the root of a gourd; his penis is like a snake'.

[1] Risley describes a festival of Dharti Mai among the Mal Paharia. 'The dancing party shout continually *bar, bar* (*pudendum muliebre*), a mode of invocation believed to be especially acceptable to the goddess. In this somewhat indelicate cry we may perhaps see a barbarous and undraped reference to the *vis genetrix naturae* so prominent in many early forms of belief.'—H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1891). Vol. II, p. 71.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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Awa bābo lewor wo dai.
Wenayise torun wo dai.
Mardi marra manda wo dai;
Layān perla bona wo dai.
Marka ākī torun wo dai.
Bākiya nima behuri wo dai?
Bābuna jiwa werriyta wo dai.

He has no father or mother.
But here is a goat for the *torun*.
The pole is from the saja tree;
Young girls made the platform.
Of mango leaves is the *torun*.
Why do you not answer, Mother?
The boy's soul is frightened,
Mother.

Tying of the Beni-plaits

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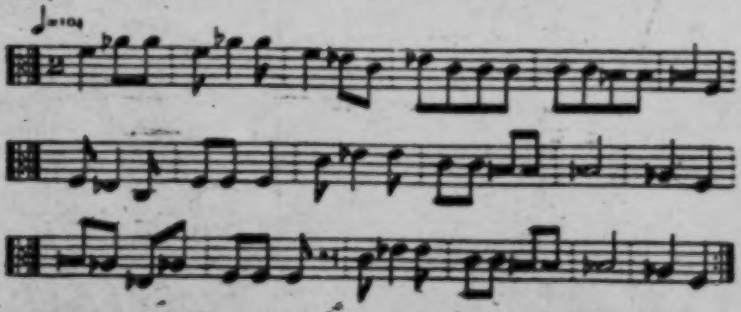
After this, the motiari carried the bride back to her house and her motiari and others anointed her with haldi. Then in both camps motiari busied themselves with tying the hair of their charges into two long and five little plaits. Other motiari stood round singing a song with the refrain,

Riri loyo. Rirīlo vilo riri loyo rirīlo riri loyo rirīlo vilo rilo riri loyo rirīlo.



Sura beri sakāli bābu.
Baden suda pāiki bābu?
Atin miyār manta roy dai.

Tāna suda pāika dai,
Niya jor tā ayo roy bābu,
Halār bhāi biti roy bābu,
Saga saina biti roy bābu,
Awa bābo biti roy bābu.
Awa bābona lewon roy bābu.
Tārāl tamer lewon roy bābu.

The plait is a sevenfold chain, boy.
Whose plait will you tie, boy?
I'll tie the plait of my māma's daughter, mother.
For her I will tie the plait, mother,
She's no fit mate for you, boy,
She has sisters and brothers, boy,
She has relations, boy,
She has father and mother, boy.
You have no father or mother, boy.
You have no brothers, boy.

This is a very common sentiment in the marriage songs. The bridegroom is an orphan, alone in the world, useless, ugly, unfit to mate with a bride so richly dowered with wealth and relatives. I add two other very short songs:

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Sur beni beni roy āya,
Main beni pāronde āya,
Pārois pāro tuy pāro mona.

O the links of the plait, mother,
I want to tie the plait, mother,
If you wish, boy, you may tie it.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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Kope le kope le uduh toriy himu roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, give us a little.
Kope le kope le sŭnde toriy himu roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, give the earth quickly.
Kope le kope le bŭti juru hŭti roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, what are you doing?
Kope le kope le tada kope tada roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, quickly get up.
Kope le kope le kopŭl ondah hŭtor roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, is the cowherd enjoying you?
Kope le kope le girda mata mŭyoy roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, haven't you finished?
Kope le kope le girda tŭyo kaukar roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, are you still sleeping?

585 Presently the woman appeared carrying a digging-stick and was greeted with derisive shouts. She led them to the spot where the cattle rested at midday. There she sprinkled water and cow-dung and prepared a little patch of ground. The Gaita offered rice, egg-shell and haldi, and took the digging-stick in his hand. This was also held by the Kopa's wife and the bridegroom's mother. All three together dug up a little earth, put it into a basket and covered it with cloth. Suddenly one of the motiari picked up the basket and ran as hard as she could towards the *manda*. The chelik chased her; they had to catch her before she reached it. They were just in time; they took one of her rings, and then allowed her to put the earth by the mahua tree under the booth.

Plastering the Manda Platform

585 Then some old women, singing very fast, began to plaster with this special
539 mud a little platform in the middle of the booth. They made patterns of rice-flour, plastered them in, and finally smoothed it all over.

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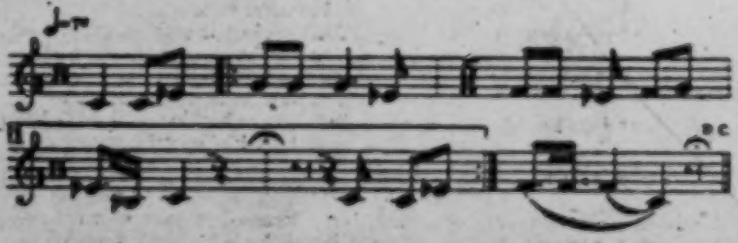


Song

Bowla jurila leyur jaanwira honda buking.	The boys don't know how to make the platform.
Nŭgal chotong tallowjo.	The penis is like a ploughshare.
Mŭku bowla jurri kenen ra.	The boys won't let us make the platform.
Sir kanan leyur jurri ram.	If they did, boy beautifully we'd make it.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Midday Dance

585 539 Then the chelik gathered round the booth and began to dance, holding each other's hands swinging backwards and forwards to a rather dismal tune, so they circled slowly round.

Songs

1

Têra wo âei nâwa sono pungâri.	Give me my golden flower, mother.
Nâwa iga to kils wani niyu bahân wigâdu.	I haven't got it, your father has it, son.
Têra wo baba nâwa sono pungâri.	Give me my golden flower, father.
Nâwa iga to kils wani niyu dâdân igâdu.	I haven't got it, your brother has it, son.
Têra wo dâda nâwa sono pungâri.	Give me my golden flower, brother.

—and so on, taking the names of every relative present.

2

Waldidâti hoiyâl walâlia?	Where are you going, fox, where are you going?
Chithodâl wayâl hilu jo tâna loka tun kepur pandhal.	Make a broom of a squirrel's tail.
Waldidâti wirâl wâlâlia?	Where are you going, leopard, where are you going?
Chithodâl wayâl têna tâlla tun hudwo pandarâr.	Make a measure of the head of a rat.

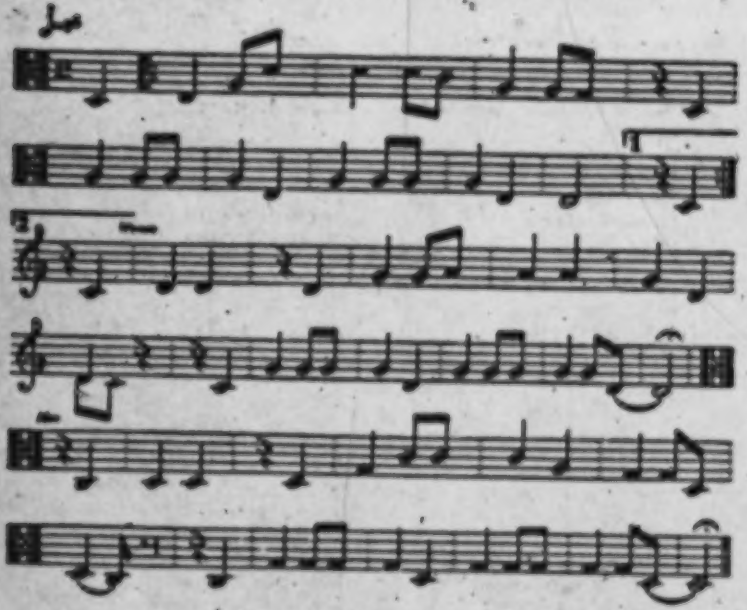
585 It was now midday and the visiting motiari brought food to the booth as reward for the boys who had gone to fetch the wood the previous day. The boys sat down in a wide circle round the booth and the girls served them with rice and vegetables on leaf-plates. When they had finished the chelik got up and down three times shouting 'Penis!', and so dispersed.

When darkness fell everyone went home for the evening meal. The headman provided pork for his visitors: the pig was knocked over the head with a rice-pounder and the Gaita offered the carcass mahua-spirit saying, 'Let there be enough flesh for us all and some left over'.

Throughout the night there was singing and dancing; every now and then the weary bride and groom were brought out to be anointed, from the feet upwards to the head.

[533 831] The company drank, and made merry with feminine songs, for 'there is no purdah in a house of marriage'. Much of the dancing during the night and a large part of the day was done without drums in almost Hill Maria style. Boys, or boys and girls, held hands and moved slowly round the marriage-booth in a wide circle. The singing was monotonous, but the songs themselves are often more interesting than those concerned merely with details of the ritual.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH



Songs

1

Aliyâro maliyâro kanki maka joji !
Aliyâro maliyâro sânde joji hium !

Aliyârsingh maliyârsingh ainde maka dâkit ?
Aliyâro maliyâro pârwâro jôte juri !
Aliyâro maliyâro juri purki dâka !

Aliyârsingh maliyârsingh mâlir khemi dâka ?
Aliyâro maliyâro lânjir khemi dâka !

The gruel is made of bits of rice, Aliyaro Maliyaro! 585
Give us the gruel quickly, Aliyaro Maliyaro! 539
Where are you going, Aliyarsingh Maliyarsingh?
We are like a pair of pigeons, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
We are off to search for wives, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
What country are you going to, Aliyarsingh Maliyarsingh?
We are going to Lanji Land, Aliyaro Maliyaro!

2

Charoto mara buka charoto mara darmi ray !
Whithwa darbâr buka darbâr maki ray ?

O the shade of the charoto tree, father!
What is this durbar, O father?

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rupee to purchase rings in the bazaar. The Hichami Gaita then dug the hole 769
and they put a saja leaf in the bottom and the stone above it. Soon afterwards a second stone was brought for Birju's mother and this was placed separately, for it is the rule that the memorials for men and women should not usually be together, though this rule, like all rules, is often broken. They bathed the stones and put a *gappa* basket with roots and rice in front of the woman's stone and a dish in front of the man's. Everyone present put a mark of oil and haldi on the stones, just as they might have done at a marriage to the bride and bridegroom. They returned home and sacrificed a bullock and tied the tail to the old man's menhir. On this occasion the souls of the deceased were brought back to the Hanalkot, which stands in the village itself.

The cow or bullock is often chosen by old people while they are still alive. Widows, who may reasonably expect to be neglected, are insistent on dedicating such an animal.

XII. General Ideas about the Menhirs

There is a universal belief that the memorial stones grow in size if the soul of the dead is satisfied with the arrangements that are made for him. I have on several occasions spoken to the Muria of the north (who erect very much smaller stones than the Maria of the south) about the great *wrakhal* of the Bison-horn Maria. They invariably reply, 'But, of course, these stones are very old and they have grown; they could never have put up such big ones'. They believe that even the small stones of the north will grow in time. Kodu, the very intelligent Malguzar of Khutgaon in the extreme north of the State, told me that in the past twenty years he has definitely seen the stones grow in size. A very small stone is put for a baby and it is believed that it will grow gradually until it has reached the size it should have been had it been placed for a man of twenty.

When a stone grows it is considered fortunate. There is sure to be happi- [787]
ness and good luck for the family. If a stone falls down or goes crooked, the relatives consult the Siraha and then put it straight and offer whatever sacrifices he has recommended. It is generally supposed that when a stone falls, it is an indication that the ghost of the dead is angry or feels neglected. In some places, the collapse of a menhir is regarded as prophetic of disaster, and generally should white ants make a nest over the stone it is considered a bad omen. But in some places there is a belief that there is no need to worry about this after twenty years have passed. After twenty years the Hanal has become completely mingled with his ancestors and no longer exists as a separate entity. When an old stone falls down, therefore, the Muria perform no ceremonies and leave it where it is.

XIII. The Hanal Pata

It is very difficult to persuade the Muria to repeat the songs connected 533
with death at any but the proper time. This is quite natural, for there is 761
to all simple minds something dark and ominous about talking of the dead. 769
I did not find a Hill or Bison-horn Maria who was willing to repeat a single song. It has only been among the more open-hearted and friendly Muria that I have been able to get a few songs, mostly in Gondi, which are used during a funeral and at the time of erecting a menhir. I have already given the funeral songs; I will now quote a few songs used at the later ceremonies.

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776 to death.[1] Tallur Muttai asks him to marry her, but he refuses and runs away to Semurgaon, where 'being weary' he turns into a stone, and has ever since been worshipped.

[173] This rather tedious account yet gives an exact picture of the working of the Muria's mind when he turns it to theology. The distribution of the gods probably represents very ancient migrations of the tribe. As the different Muria families moved here and there, it was necessary that their gods also should move and, in order to emphasise the unity of the tribe, should be related to one another. A Pus Kolang chant sung by the chelik of Phulpar gives a good picture of the multiplicity, variety and confusion of the Muria pantheon.

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Aho rerelayo rerela rer loyo rer loyo eho rerela!

O the sixteen divisions of the earth,
The nine divisions of the sky!
Who is lord of the earth?
The lord of the earth is Tallur Rai.
Give him a good Johar.

O the hoar-frost and Pati Pen!
Give him a good Johar.

O the tiger and Kadrenga!!
Give him a good Johar.

Oho the red Sun like a blazing log
Oho the haldi-coloured Moon!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in a corner is the bed,
In the midst is the ocean
Nearby is the Kutela.
Oho the many baby stars!
Give them a good Johar.

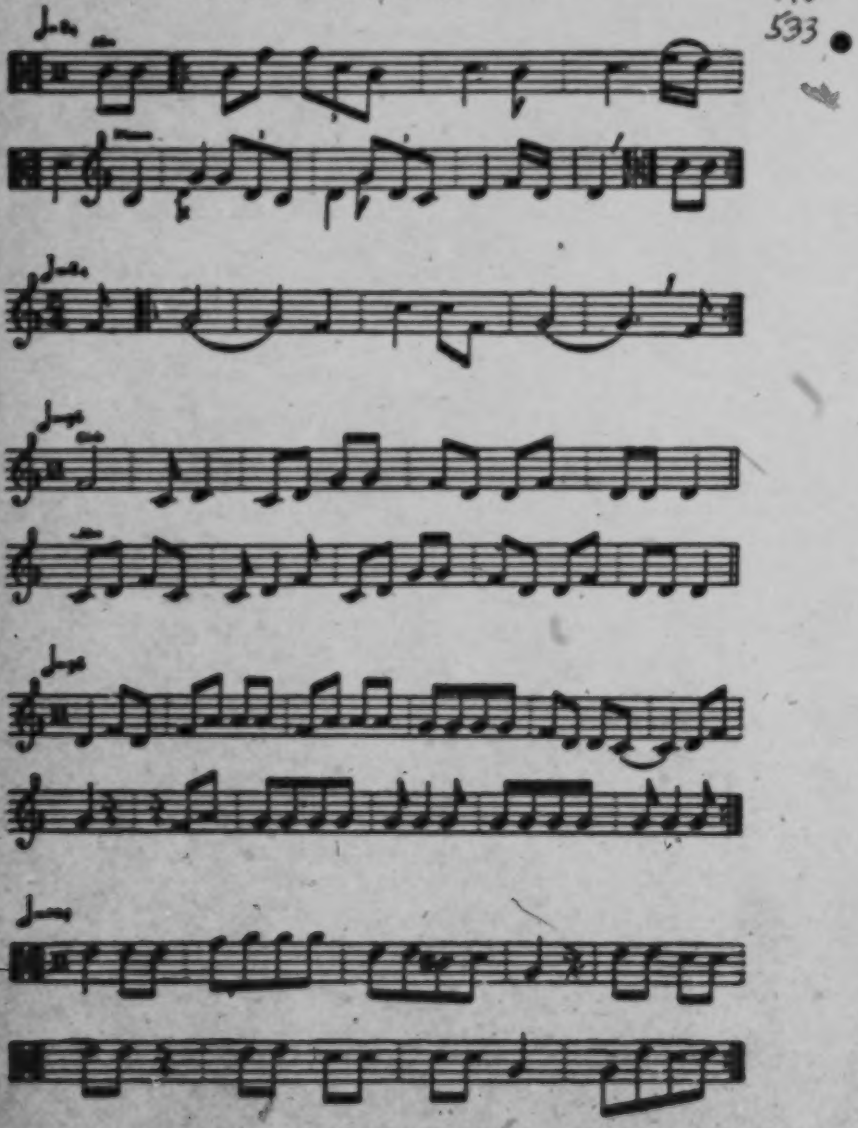
Oho in the ghotul Madan Matal Rai!
In the village Jamederin Mata!
Oho Nelo Maria Rai!
Give him a good Johar.

[1] For a full account of the Lingo legend, see Chapter VIII.

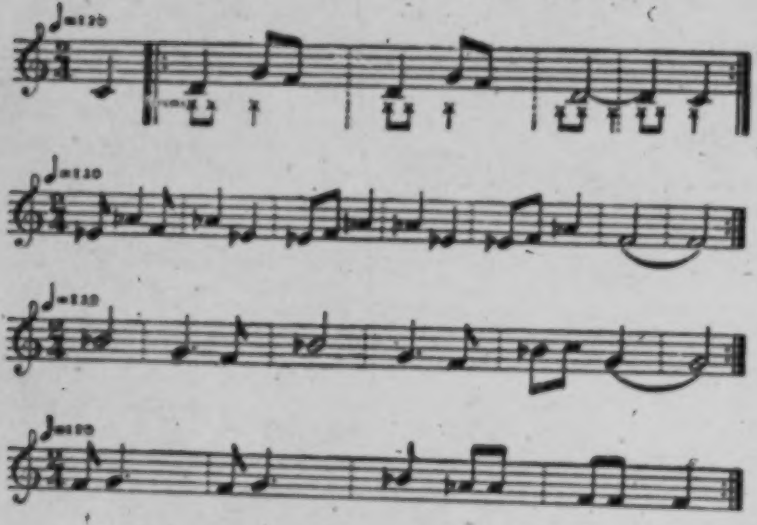
MURIA RELIGION

eat and ate, and returned home for an all-night dance by the cheiik and 796
motiari.

During a festival the Muria sing to a large variety of tunes, of which 796
Walter Kaufmann recorded a number of samples: 533



THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL



XI. Purifying the Village

Throughout the year ceremonies, called in Halbi *bokorani*, are performed to purify the villages of disease and evil. Old brooms and baskets are collected and carried to the village boundary, and a scapegoat may be consecrated and sent away into the jungle.

Such ceremonies are performed before the Wijja Pandum in May, when the nearest stream or river first comes down in flood in July or August, before the Puna Pandum in September and before the Jata or Pupul Pandum in January. If necessary, it may be repeated before the Marka Pandum. All the year round, in fact, these protective ceremonies continue; apparently they cannot confer permanent immunity.

I will give a detailed description of one of these purificatory rites, the Nartate Kiyana for the purification and protection of Bandopal, which I witnessed on 25 April 1942. We were woken at dawn by the blowing of hunting-horns, at the sound of which the village assembled. The people went first to the shrine of the Village Mother and offered incense there; the mediums took Kuari, Marin Dokari and Hoche Muria, each represented by a bundle of date-palm leaves, out of the shrine. Others carried gourds, soura rings, iron slag, parched gram, wheat cakes, eggs, chickens, the root of a date-palm, a pig, rice and liquor.

A long procession went round the village boundaries. At every point where a path went out of the village, the Gaita put three bits of iron slag, hammered them into the ground, and touched the place with the palm root. This, by a pleasant fiction, represented the sacrifice of a pig. At the four points of the compass he offered eggs to the Rau or demon of the forest. As they went round the boundaries, the mediums caught the ghosts and spirits of the surrounding jungle—the Bhut and Mirchuk—on the trees with palm leaves and popped them into a gourd which they then shut with a leaf-cup.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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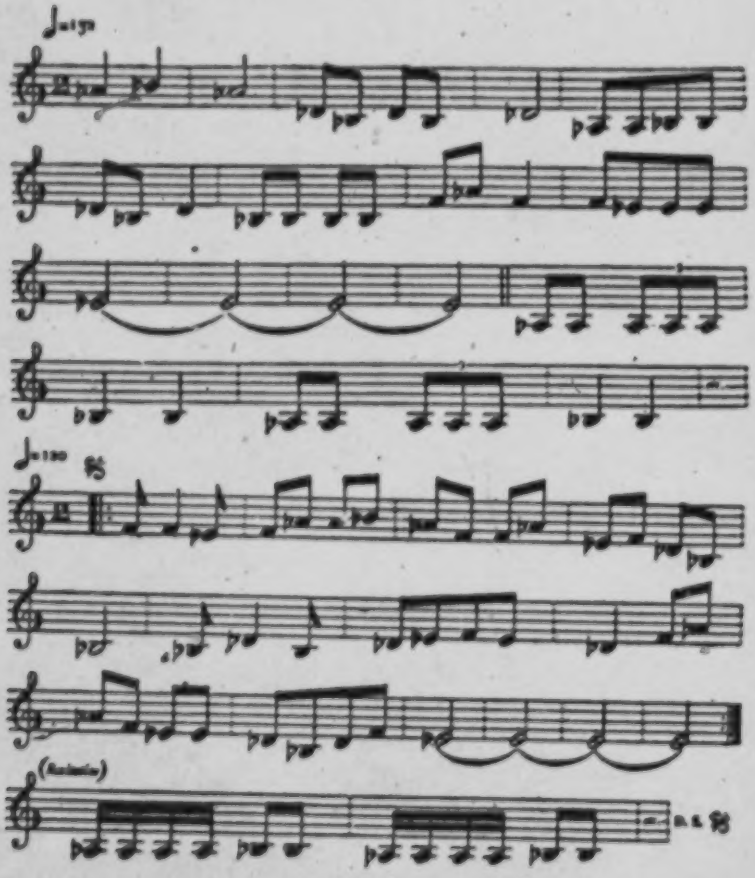
At Mascra, the chelik sing in Halbi to Lingo before a wedding.



Lingo, balun, Lingo!
Kây hêie êy chelikman?
Bila dhare bila ucuta parli bila dhare jao.
Macho buta âss.
Tucho kây buta âss?
Macho korbi dheta bhario âss.
Tucho bigur nâloy gil gobind tucho.
Pahilo tucho nigcho mand.
Aru nigcho kardi.
Tucho êy nibnato gil banu êy.

Lingo, say, Lingo!
Why have you come, chelik?
We've come to invite you to the wedding.
I have work to do.
What work have you to do?
I must make a handle for my hoe.
Without you nothing can be done.

To you liquor must first be given.
The haldi must first be put on you.
Only with you the song goes well.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 517 They come one by one, carrying their sleeping-mats and perhaps their drums. The little boys bring their daily 'tribute' of wood, 'clock in' by showing it to the official responsible and throw it in a corner. The elder boys gather round the fire; one takes a half-smoked leaf-pipe from his turban and ignites it by placing a bit of glowing wood in the cup, another plays a few notes on his flute, a third spreads his mat and lies down. The Kotwar inspects the buildings to see if the girls have done their work properly. The Sirdar comes in tired and calls a youngster to massage his legs. Gradually all the boys assemble.

At the same time the motiari are collecting near by, in someone's house, or just round the corner; at Binjhli and other villages where there is a special girls' house they gather there laughing and chatting generally, I was told, about the day's encounters with the chelik. If a group of girls have to come some distance, as from another hamlet, they often sing on the way.

Then at last the girls come in, with a rush, all together and gather round their own fire. After a while they scatter, some sitting with the boys, others singing in a corner, some lying down. Nearly always there are boys and girls who are tired after the long day's work at home, and these lie down at once in a corner or in one of the smaller huts—to lie flat on the face with head buried in the arms is a popular ghotul attitude when one is alone. [516]

The others occupy the time in pleasant harmony; sometimes they dance for an hour or two; the smaller children play rampageous games; sometimes they just sit round the fire and talk; in the hot weather on a moonlit night you will see them scattered all about the compound. Often they sing lying down, two by two, chelik with motiari, or in little groups. A boy tells a story; they ask riddles; they report on the affairs of the day; there may be a ghotul trial; they plan a dancing expedition or allot duties at a wedding. I shall never forget the sight in some of the larger ghotul of 60 or 70 youngsters thus engaged.

● [533] Among songs, the most popular are the taunt songs which boys and girls sing against each other, especially those with proper names that can be changed to suit the occasion. Everybody in turn is paired off, often with forbidden relatives; one after another they are caught in compromising situations; they are engaged, married and divorced, re-married.

Songs

X 883 539

I

Re re la rela re re la rela re re la

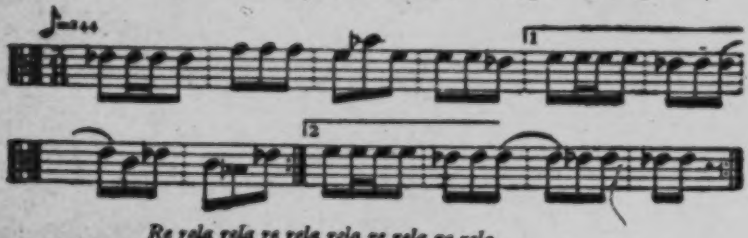
Korka ta doyo oiki helo tiloka.	O my little sister Tiloka, take the cow out of the cow-shed.
Tāna osi bāra kiyākān dāda silledār?	Why should I take the cow from the shed, O brother Silledar?
Mehwāl kopāl lewa bāra kiyākān?	There is no grazier, Kopa, why should I take it?
Bāra na dāye oiki helo tiloka?	O little sister Tiloka, what do you want?
Guda ta gino oiki helo tiloka.	Take the pig from its sty, Tiloka.
Tāna bāra kiyākān dāda silledār?	Why should I take the pig from its sty, O brother Silledar?
Konār ta kor oiki helo tiloka.	O little sister Tiloka, take the hen from inside the house.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

taboo. It is very dangerous to make mistakes in the dancing or stick-beating, and any kind of error is heavily penalized.[1] If one of the boys makes a mistake the Gaita of the village visited removes the turban of the Gain and the boys have to pay a fine of two bottles of liquor before he will return it. Should a boy drop his stick or if his dhoti gets loose, he has to pay a similar fine. Anything dropped must be picked up with the teeth.

Special rules control the conduct of the three leading pairs, the Gain and Jokta or Roche-sela and two other couples. They must talk to no one; they must not dance with the motiari of the villages they visit; they may only sing the special Pus Kolang songs.

The dancing party from Phulpar in 1941 visited Sarandi, Kurse, Kutgaon and Tursani. When they reached Sarandi, they went straight to the Gaita's house and danced before it. As they entered the village they sang,



Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.
Show us the Gaita's house, chelik.
Don't you know the Gaita's house, chelik?
Where have you come from, chelik?
We have come from the land of hills.
If we show you, what will you give us, chelik?
We will give you a cloth for your loins.
It's the house with a cart in the yard, chelik.
There is a pond for the buffaloes in front, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.
On a bamboo pole there's a monkey, chelik.
There's an elephant tied to the pillar, chelik.
There's a horse tied in the shed, chelik.
On the roof there sits a peacock, chelik.
There's a gun against the fence, chelik.
A sword against the wall, chelik.
A parrot on its perch, chelik.
A mains in a cage, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.

The boys sing this song to a circular stick-dance rather slowly and reverently as if their words were charged with deep spiritual meaning. Then while two boys take a basket into the house to beg for rice, pulse and salt, the others begin their programme of dances.

[1] For similar beliefs in the danger of making a mistake during a ceremonial dance, see J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. III, p. 518. Compare also A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1890), p. 95.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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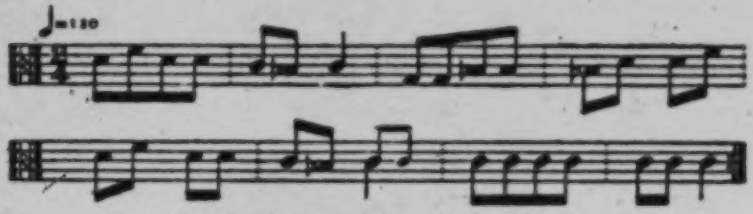
There are four of these, quite distinct from those danced at any other time. Indeed it is often considered dangerous to dance the Pus Kolang dances even for show at a visitor's camp.

The first, which is the Pus Kolang dance proper, is a stick-dance. The sacred spear is stuck in the ground and the boys circulate round it rather solemnly, each boy attached to his neighbour by dancing-sticks which both hold.

[533]

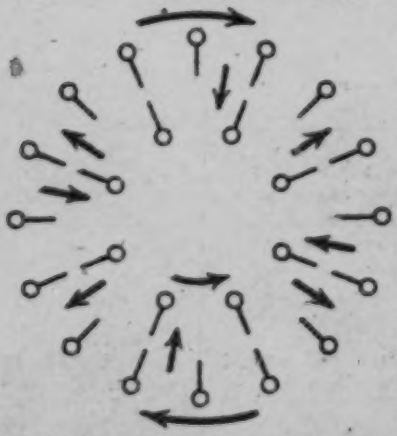


Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.

[539]

Old man Lingo Pen, Johar to thee,
After Lingo what god was there?
After him was Budha Pen.
Johar to him!
After Budha Pen, who was there?
After him was Mudial Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!
After him who comes?
After him comes Mudial Use Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!

And so through a long list of gods, Gundi Pen, Sonkuari Pen, Phulkuari Pen, Kurumtulla Pen, Balkuari Pen, Naturgundi Pen.



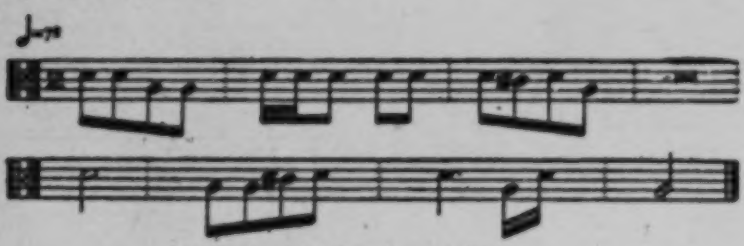
To all these gods we fold our hands,
We beg them not to be angry,
Not to forget us.
We will give incense, cock and pig.
To all we give Johar!

Then the dance changes, and improves. The boys form two circles facing each other. These two rings circulate antagonistically and at the same time the boys of the inner circle change places, with a hop and a jump and three taps of the sticks, with those of the outer circle. This goes on continually, so that the two circles are in constant movement against each other and always alternating. The flourishing and beating of the sticks is very pleasing.

A special variety of the stick-dance is called Kappu Daka. *Kappu* is a bird and *daka* means to lift the feet. So this dance imitates the rapid movement

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

of a bird picking up its feet. The step changes to a much more lively and bouncing movement; the boys swing their buttocks and tinkle their bells with greater vigour; they sing with more zest and clash their sticks merrily. The song is long and tedious.

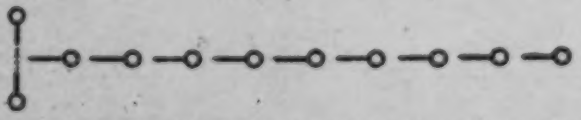


In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Raigarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
A cloth for the loins,
To make the loins beautiful, chelik.
In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Sarangarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
Ornaments for the body,
To make the body beautiful, chelik.
In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Delhigarh we will buy, chelik.

And so on, until head and ear and waist ornaments have been bought for the adornment of the handsome chelik.

A rather serious dance is the Lingo Endanna, which is also called Pen Endanna. For this the boys form up in two long lines facing inwards. At the head of the line, two boys face each other holding their sticks across the gap. The leader stands behind these sticks and beats them. The boys move slowly forward and back, singing. After a time they sit down and do the same thing, but without moving. Then they rise and the line turns in on itself, the leader going down and stepping over the sticks; then the boys return with the sticks held above their heads. This movement is known as Hichelhar Pata. The songs are conventional, referring to Lingo Pen and his relatives.

There is another movement, which I saw at Puppgaon.



The two leaders face each other holding a stick between them; the line of boys forms up headed by the Ghotul Manjhi. They stand quite still singing slowly and sadly; the Manjhi gently taps the cross-stick in front of him.

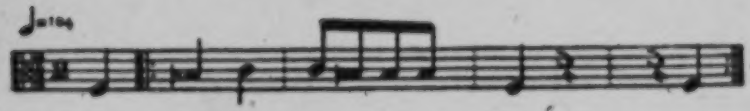
Now the dancing-sticks are carefully piled round the sacred spear. For the Monkey dance, three or four small boys mount on the shoulders of a circle of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

their elders and are raised into the air with a whistle and a shout.[1] This pyramid slowly gyrates, and the other boys form a procession and march round and round singing.

Songs

1



Re veloyo re vela re vela vela re veloyo re vela vela
Sayvela re vela vela.
At the boundary the monkey sits on a pile of stones.
Get up, monkey, get up, monkey.
My horse is speaking to you, monkey.
You are sitting on a long pole, monkey.
You are eating the raw ebony fruit, monkey.

2

Whose is this temple, girl?
It is the shrine of the Kolang boys, girl.
This is their temple, girl.
Come out to see it, girl.
Bring a lamp in the left hand, girl,
Water in the right, girl.
Give them greeting, girl.
Bring rice in the fan, girl,
Rice in the basket, girl,
Rice in the leaf-cup, girl,
Bring salt in the leaf-bundle, girl.
Give us something to drink from your hand, girl.

The last dance is the Kokotar Daka Endanna. The chelik form a line, each boy holding in his right hand the stick of the one in front and in his left the stick of the one behind. They go round in a rambling line, while the boys at the end hop about and waggle like the tail of the *manda-pita* bird. Others say that the head of the line is a dog and the tail a hare; the purpose of the dance then becomes a game in which the head of the line must turn round and catch the tail. In Koilibera, the boys at the tail imitated the copulation of goats.

[1] Thurston describes a similar dance performed by Koyi women. 'The elder ones stood in a circle with their arms intertwined and the younger girls perched aloft, standing astraddle on their shoulders.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 72. I have seen similar dances of this kind performed by the Dhurwa-Parja of southern Bastar, the Kond of Koraput District and the Bhil of the Dangs.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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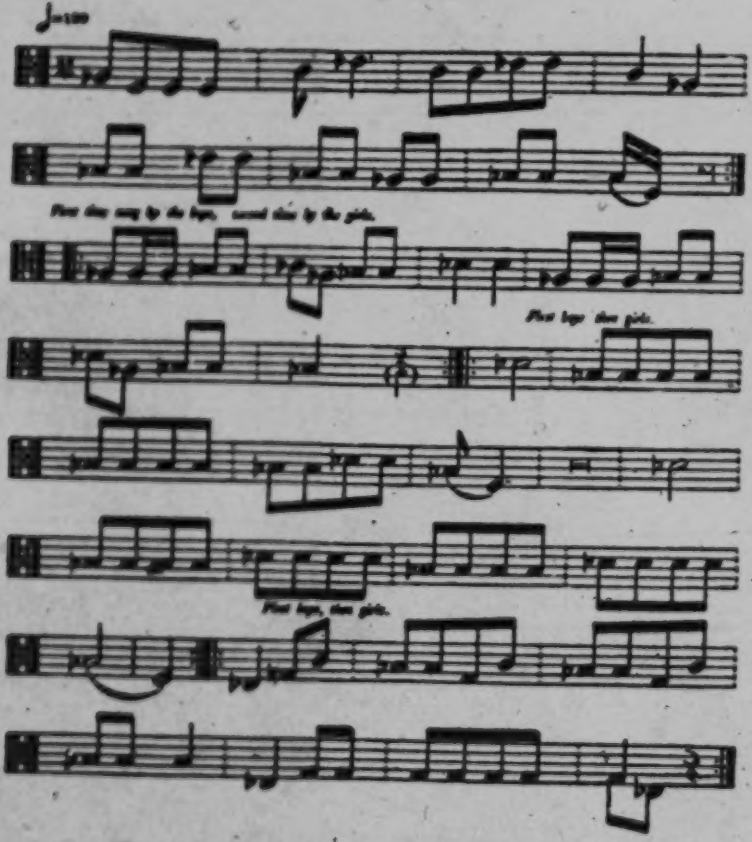
GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Ask the Gaita's wife where the
Gaita has gone;
He has gone to his village holding
an umbrella.
Ask the Manjhi's wife where the
Manjhi has gone.
He has gone to give judgement
holding his stick.



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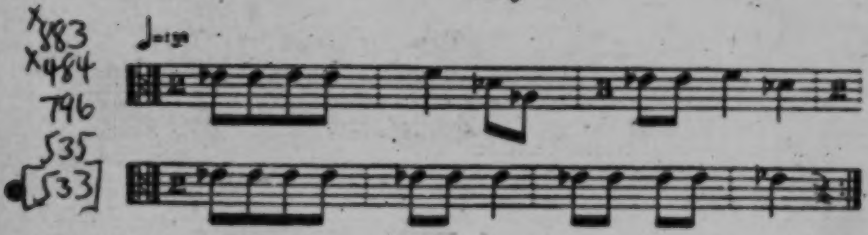
The second dance corresponded to the Lingo dance of the Pus Kolang. Boys and girls made two long lines facing each other; each pair held two sticks between them and beat them in unison. After a time the line turned in on itself, the leaders taking it down under a roof of sticks; then they turned round and the sticks were held low down near the ground and the line this time stepped over them.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song

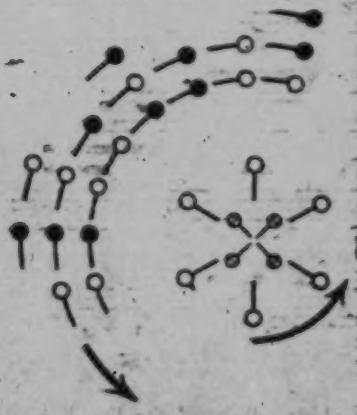


Tari nānā na nāre nāna tari nānāre

[534]

Oho maina ho lālsai baitho danda ho.	O maina bird, O Lalsai! Sit down with a stick.
Oho kāhen he danda ho lālsai maina kāhen he danda ho tari?	What is the stick made of, O Lalsai maina?
Ye bāju paltu ho rāja maina ho lālsai ye bāju paltu ho!	Let us turn this side, O Raja maina, O Lalsai!
O ho chait dandar ho rāja maina ho lālsai ho teri.	This is the Chait Dandar.
Uthun dakhu ho rāja maina lālsai ho tari.	Let us stand and watch it.

Lalsai means a prince. The young Maharaja used to be called Lalpila. The third dance was called the Bendri (or Monkey) Endanna, very like the usual pyramid dance, but with a brighter note in the procession where boys and girls marched round with their arms about each other's necks. Four little boys mounted on the backs of half-a-dozen seniors, who rose up with a loud whistle. The rest of the party formed the procession and went round the pyramid beating their sticks, with quick hopping movements. They advanced three paces, paused, swung back a little and then advanced again. From time to time they made excellent *hoop-hoop* monkey noises. When they descended, the younger boys saluted their elders with Johar, apparently in gratitude for their safe return from so perilous an elevation.



The last dance was performed in a slow and solemn line. Boys and girls, embracing one another about the shoulders, formed a long row, sticks in hand. They advanced two steps, retired two steps and at the same time moved a little to the right. After the line had thus travelled some distance, it moved back to the left. The movement was slow and tedious and the singing rather flat.

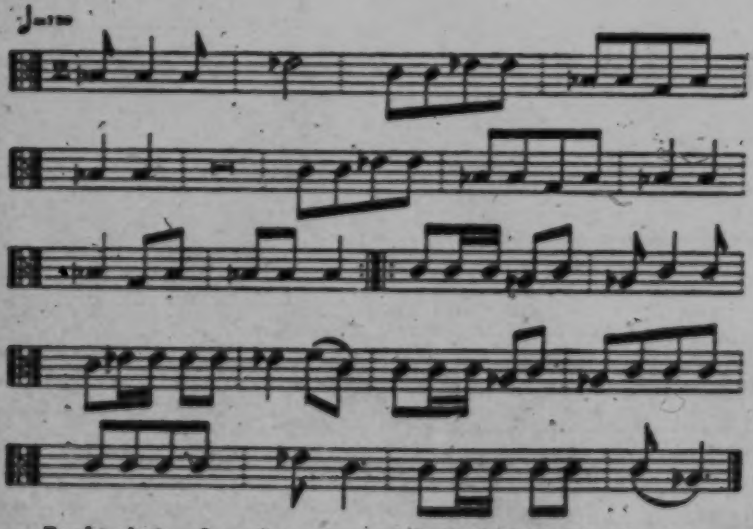
GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

in preparation for an exhausting night. When the food was ready the boys brought it to the ghotul and they all ate from leaf-plates, seated on logs of wood placed in a rough circle. There were about a dozen visiting girls and as many hosts.

After supper a great fire was lit in the ghotul court and some of the girls began to dance in a small circle with the boys in another group, a slow and mournful dance, wholly unsuited to the spirit of the moment. None of the older people came near; it was the hour of youth. Presently they wearied of the dance, and sat down round the fire, the girls in a half-circle on one side, the boys facing them. They began to talk very delightfully to each other. I do not think I have ever heard a group of people talk with such gentle and natural charm. The girls began by asking the clan of every boy; the boys asked the same question of the girls. This was significant—a necessary preparation for later assignations and even marriages. Then the two parties exchanged names, ghotul-names, and this caused a lot of merriment, for of course the girls' lovers in Markabera had often the same names as the boys of Remawand. Then the boys began to call themselves by the girls' titles and the girls took the boys' names, causing roars of laughter and some embarrassment. This was probably a form of proposal and assignation. When the Sirdar called himself Malko and she replied by calling herself Kotwar, he knew that her attentions were engaged elsewhere. But if she said 'I am the Sirdar', he knew that his advances at midnight would not be rejected.

Songs

I



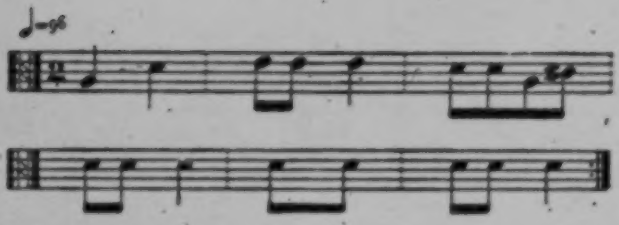
Banda rola pungär wo ôya.
Pungär mikichila dikigo ôya.
Nima icho hanma wo nami.
Bona suda dahi wo nami?

In the lake there is a flower.
I go to put it in my hair.
Don't go, little daughter.
Who will go with you there?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Songs

1



Sora dhāru dharti nawu khandu pirthi ho!
O the sixteenfold earth and the ninefold heaven!

Dharti mālik boru lariyo pirthi mālik boru ho?
Who is the master of earth and who is the master of heaven?

Dharti mālik lingo lariyo pirthi mālik rājāl ho.
Lingo is master of earth and Rajal is master of heaven.

Lingona wehle pāta lariyo lingona wehle dākān ho!
O the songs that Lingo taught us, O the steps that Lingo taught us!

Pahili pāta lingo lariyo pahili dākān lingona ho.
The first song is Lingo's, and the first step is Lingo's.

Maria pāta layora lariyo maria dākān layora ho.
The last song is the boys', and the last step is the boys'.

Nadwin narka diya lariyo nike poroy poytom ho.
At midnight burns a lamp, we have taken your name.

Hongu dāpu ēyma lariyo nike johar lāgi ho.
Don't be angry with us, we salute you with Johar.

2

Aring horing bāder roy.
Clouds are over heaven.

Poron bāder poyndu roy.
The sky is overcast with clouds.

Darka pirru dar dar roy,
The rain comes pouring down,

Jimti piru jim jim roy.
Then drizzles drop by drop.

Dori usa handu roy,
Towards the sunset flows a flood,

Dakha pekchor handu roy.
Forcing its way along.

3

Gugti gugti māri māri kokora.
Let us play *dudu* in the dust.

Kum dudu dudu roy he bai?
Are you coming to play *dudu*?

Dud karsi wayeni he bai,
I would like to come, but I can't,

Wāyon ēyo wāyena he dāda;
Mother is in the house;

Lone dai mania roy he dāda.
She will be angry with me.

Niya dāi mateh roy he bai.
Don't bother about her.

Sura wori jhāpi roy he bai;
The basket has seven chains;

Jhāpile sandra hitona he bai.
I have put cloth into the basket.

Bashe wanz hitoni he dāda?
When did you give it?

Konāu wedur joli roy he bai;
When you were in your cradle;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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In Alor Shamrao Hivale found some very elaborate gongs. They are illustrated in Plate CV and Fig. 125. Each gong is a single piece of wood hollowed out in the middle with a carved beak at one end and at the other a flat strip with a hole in the centre. Into this slot there fits a 4″ peg projecting from a small support on which stands the wooden figure. Through the peg there is a small hole to take a wooden pin which fixes the figure firmly in position. The figures are male and female. The male is slightly taller, standing 15½″ from the base. The female is ½″ shorter. The two figures are differentiated by the shape of the genital organs and by small breasts in the female and a lozenge-shaped pattern on her body, probably intended to represent the womb. The hair is roughly indicated by carved lines and is different in the two images. The man has the five fingers of each hand carved on either side of his thighs where he is supposed to be holding his hands. This feature is absent in the female image. The male rectum is shown but not the female. The entire length of each gong is 2′ 6½″ from end to end. The slot in the middle is 10½″ long, ½″ broad and 2″ deep.

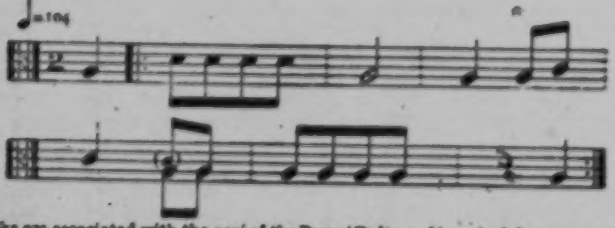
FIG. 126. Dancing-stick from Remawand

Among other things taken out for the Chherta and Pus Kolang expeditions, I have seen masks[1] of various kinds (illustrated in Plates XCIX, CII, CIII) and dancing-sticks. At Gorma I saw a *Chherta-gujir*, very like the dancing-sticks of the Bison-horn Maria, made of an old umbrella rod, with a bunch of iron bells at the top. At Remawand was a stick called *jaray-bargar*; it had an iron crown fitted with rings.[2] Decorated wooden guns are also carried.

The songs used during the Chherta are confused and obscure, a series of disconnected images and symbols, though there is always one song concerned with straightforward begging. I will give examples of both kinds.

Songs

I



[1] Masks are associated with the *ravi* of the Purari Delta and 'masked dances or ceremonial parades are a common institution in New Guinea'. In the *ravi* masks are worn during the initiation of boys, when there is a taboo upon garden produce and in a mortuary ceremony in which a masked figure represents the spirit of the dead revisiting his home.—R. Firth, *Art and Life in New Guinea* (London, 1936), p. 26.

[2] This type of musical stick is similar to that carried by postal runners in the neighbouring Jeypore Zamindari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY

DANCE AND SONG

I

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DANCE and song, games, stories and riddles should not be regarded as mere recreation; in the Muria's eyes they are serious and important business. A ghotul's reputation largely depends on the excellence of its dancing; the motiari's ability to sing may make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful wedding. Even the games, many of them, serve an educational purpose. The younger boys and girls are carefully trained in the ghotul, and the others practise night after night, repeating the same steps and rhythms again and again till they get them right, before they set out on a dancing expedition. The complicated stick-dances need special training and practice, for once an expedition has started mistakes are regarded as ill-omened.

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The first musician was Lingo himself, and the practice of music is not held, as so often in India, to be discreditable, but is honourably rooted in the history and mythology of the tribe. Many of the songs and dances have a religious purpose, and often begin with an invocation to Lingo and other gods. Before the Mandri dances at a wedding, worship should be performed before a pile of drums.

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It is refreshing to go to Bastar from the reform-stricken [1] and barren districts of the Central Provinces. As you climb the Keskal Ghat the whole countryside bursts into song about you. The Muria have a short way with 'reformers', as I was fortunate enough to see at Telenga village on 26 March 1941. There was a marriage that day in the village, and the chelik and motiari from eleven villages came to attend it. But when they arrived they did not begin to dance as usual, but went out into the jungle for a consultation. They had seen among the wedding guests the sinister figure of Chainu, the headman of Maragaon. A month earlier this Chainu had attended a marriage at the house of Guma in his own village. Chelik and motiari had come as usual and danced till noon. Then according to custom they asked for liquor to offer to the drums and food for themselves. Chainu, who had been under a good deal of Hindu influence, refused to let them have either liquor for the drums or food for themselves, and declared that he would 'stop this dancing throughout the pargana'. The chelik and motiari left the marriage in protest and for a month the matter was the subject of heated discussion in their ghotul.

Now in Telenga the boys saw their chance. After a long discussion, they came back, a large and formidable crowd, and told the Pargana Manjhi (of Chalka) that they wanted a panchayat and that Chainu must be there. Near the marriage-booth the boys assembled in a great circle, and almost all the wedding guests joined to see what would happen. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom were left sitting in their places, entirely forgotten.

[1] It is very hard to understand the mentality of the 'reformers' who would deprive the aboriginal of his beautiful and innocent recreations, and would impose on him a 'shiv-raj' (as it is often called) at which the great dancer Natarajan would have shuddered. It is interesting to compare the attitude of the American Negro towards the 'Spirituals' which have done as much as anything else to establish him throughout the world. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were considered fit only for uneducated country niggers'. 'As late as 1909, Negro students at Howard University rebelled and refused to sing them. By the more progressive and aggressive elements in the race the spirituals were frowned upon as a reminder of slavery and ignorance.'—N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 3. Then suddenly, they became the fashion, and the Negroes found that nothing gave them more credit and prestige.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

I have never seen boys more angry than these as they developed their indictment of Chainu and declared their grievance. They sprang to their feet one after another, trembling with rage, hardly able to speak for temper, pointing at the culprit who stood before them, at first haughty and defiant, but gradually weakening to a complete collapse. The boys called witnesses to show that he had insulted the god of the drums, that he was interfering with their old customs and spoiling their pleasure. Chainu tried to deny it, and called his witnesses, but they were not believed. The boys got more and more angry; tough little Panku of Kajen had to be held back by his friends. The boys demanded a fine of three rupees. Chainu apologized and offered one. But they did not accept this and insisted on their three rupees. The Pargana Manjhi was commissioned to see that the money was paid. At this point the bridegroom came rather pathetically into the middle of the crowd and said, 'Why do you want to have this quarrel at *my* wedding: I thought you all came here for me, but it seems that you are only interested in your own affairs'. At this people began to laugh and having won their point the boys went to worship the drums, and to dance.

The Muria are very good dancers: at their best, and taking into account the great variety of their dances, they are not inferior to any in Bastar. They dance both with and without drums, sometimes with flutes, the sexes mixed or separate. Many of the dances are accompanied by songs, and the music of these, as well as many of the drum rhythms, were written down by Walter Kaufmann during a tour with me in February 1941. He recorded songs sung by the boys and girls of Kongera, Toinar, Markabera, Narayanpur and Kondagaon, and though the collection which he has generously allowed me to use here is not complete, it will give a fair idea of the type of music, which is undoubtedly of a very primitive character; it is entirely within the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, the 'Jhoria' songs being sometimes three-tone, sometimes four-tone and sometimes roughly five-tone. Kaufmann spoke of the clean, clear shape of the tunes, their purity and integrity; they were 'straight, delightful, impressive and very old'. He was however disappointed in the singing of the Narayanpur ghotul, which has come under the influence of education and the outside world. The singing there was vague and unbalanced; though still of the primitive pentatonic scale, it had become 'unclean'.

Muria music has decided Mongolian affinities, and the curious yodel of the Relo chorus reminded Kaufmann of Chinese and Tibetan songs and even of those of the Pacific Islands. In the Muria country as in Mongolia all rhythms can be divided by two or four.

The Muria seem to distinguish tunes and songs mainly by the different rhythms of their choruses. When the songs are sung antiphonally, one party keeps the tune going and the other sings the words. 'One ploughs the tune; the other follows sowing the seed.' In Bandopal the Muria called the theme of a song the *lebua* and the chorus, which is generally a variation of the word Relo, is called the *rochā* or *tek*. The Relo chorus, for all its apparent verbal monotony, is capable of much subtle variation in tune and rhythm. Typical choruses are these:

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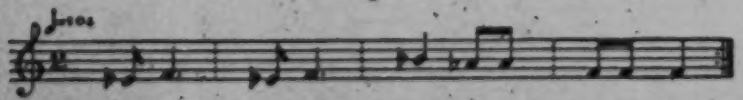
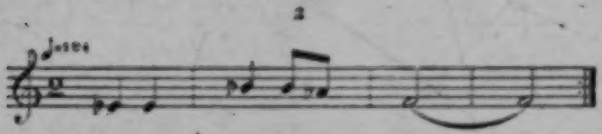


Rure loyo rure la rurula rula. Rure loyo rurula rure rula rula.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
533



O vere loyo vela vela. Re re loyo re vela. Re re loyo revela. O revela vela vela revela vela revevela revela vela revelo oy.

The word Relo, however, has had a disastrous effect upon the Muria: it has served as a hypnotic drug that has destroyed their poetic faculty. Their songs, compared with those current in other parts of aboriginal India, are singularly devoid of inspiration.

II. The Eighteen Instruments

X 883
534

Lingo was the first of musicians; he brought music to the world; he had eighteen instruments and played them all at once. Many Muria cannot say more than that there were eighteen, but some can give their names, though the lists do not always agree.

In a Lingo Pata sung by the Phulpar chelik as they set out on their Pus Kolang expedition, they described:

The eighteen instruments of Lingo-Rai,
The Dhol Rai hanging from his shoulder,
The Hakum Rai under his arm,
The Madan Parrai drum hanging from his loins,
The Paijna Rai on his feet,
The Dhusir Rai played across the chest,
The Jhikar Rai played when wind passes through the nose,
The Sulur Rai played with wind passing through the mouth.

The Phulpar boys did not know more than this. But Suku of Bandopal knew the names of all eighteen, as do many of the chelik in the typically 'Jhoria' Parganas. The list is as follows:

1. *The nissan drum.*—A large single-membrane iron drum played with two sticks on the ground at festivals. When a new skin is needed, the Muria offer a bull to Lingo Pen, skin it and begin to prepare the hide that very day. The drum is also sometimes called *mâwâloti* or *lohâti*.

2. *The goga dhol drum.*—A single-membrane wooden drum, 14" deep with a diameter of 17", covered with cow-hide.[1] It is slung round the shoulders and beaten with a single stick held in the right hand at festivals and at the funerals of very old and famous people.

3. *The dhol drum.*—This is a large circular double-membrane wooden drum, 15" deep and 17" in diameter, covered with cow-hide, which is fixed in place with a bamboo ring and cords of leather. It is said to be the local habitation of Bara Pen and Lingo, and is beaten with a single stick at festivals. Its loud and solemn note gives point to the riddle—

[534]

Kaide nehtihe bita mend dânta,	Beat it with your hand and it runs half a cubit,
Bargâte hitehe hos mend dânta.	Beat it with a stick and it runs two miles.

[1] The measurements in this chapter are of specimens in my possession: there is naturally some degree of variation.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
535

beat them for a few moments, up again and round, leaping, gesticulating, whirling round.

The best Mandri dancing I have seen was at Khutgaon under the inspiration of the remarkable old Muria landlord Kodu. A band of twenty-five black-coated boys headed by Kodu entered the ghotul. Several had silver belts tied across their shoulders from right to left, or chains of little bells hanging down behind; they wore silk turbans, cheap ornaments and used small parrang drums. Here, I thought, were typical decayed Muria of the lowlands. But there was nothing decayed about their dancing. They entered, and stood still without a sound. Kodu raised his hand in a fine gesture and a shout, and they all did the same. They gesticulated with both hands, and away they went in a swiftly moving circle. After a time the boys rushed outwards; they clapped their hands twice, turned, drummed on the turn, stopped, pointed, gesticulated, drummed again, clapped their hands twice, bent down, exclaimed loudly, stamped, went round again, clapped their hands twice, beat the drums twice, went round and round. Then more pointing in the air and shouting, a jump in the air, two claps of the hands, two beats of the drum, then round again, now facing out, now in, clap and drum again.

Now the dance changed. As they went round, the drummers hopped three paces on the left foot, turned inwards, stood still. There was a pause of silence, then all gesticulated and shouted together, faced about, shouted, turned to the right and circulated drumming with very wide movements of the hands, more and more quickly, left foot forward, right up to it with a little kick, right forward, left up to it with a kick. Then they stopped and moved backwards, round and round, drumming incessantly with great vigour. At last they

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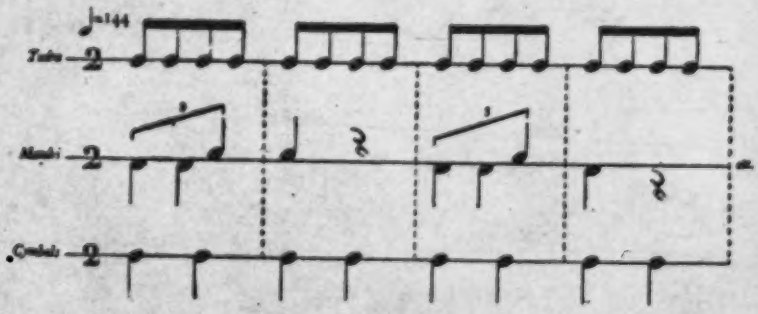


Drum rhythm

stopped, facing out from their circle, pointed to the sky, gave a great shout, and broke their ranks. It was a most invigorating dance to watch.

During this magnificent parade, the motiari too were dancing, but in a corner, shy and subdued, their heads bowed and bodies bent to hide their charms. No one took any notice of them; all eyes were on the boys. Yet the girls' dances are interesting, and can be delightful. The motiari form two lines facing inwards, and generally begin by standing erect and singing antiphonally while they clash their cymbals or clap their hands. They do not hold each other. Presently one line bends forward while the other remains upright, and those bending forward clap their hands or cymbals low down between their legs.

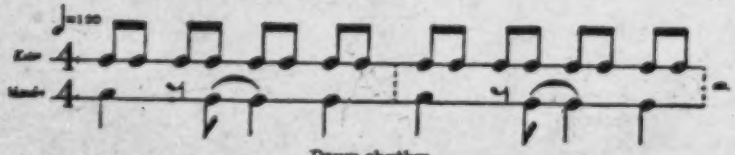
X883 535 cannot move about. They have, however, devised a most effective form of stationary dance which obtains its effect from the movements of the hands and the swaying, bending and jerking of the body. This is probably why the girls' dances are not synchronized to the boys' drumming. The girls have their special duties and must adapt their songs to these, but the boys can move about independently for a large part of the time.

VI. The Drum Rhythms

X883 535 ●533 583 In villages in the central area particularly, the Muria distinguish a great many *pār* or rhythms in their drumming. These rhythms are not connected with the *dāṇa* steps, though they are sometimes associated with special movements of the dance. Thus, there are *pār*-rhythms for the Pargao in a marriage, for the dances round the booth, for the great crisis of the Lagir, and to lead bride and bridegroom to the marriage-bed. Different rhythms accompany the worship of Mother Earth.

The *pār* are known by easily memorized sentences, the words of which have usually no connexion with the dance but describe it by their rhythm. The Jhoria Muria do not seem to know many of these. At Metawand, the chelik only knew of two—'When we beat the drum with both hands', said one of them, 'the drum says *nihun getha nihun getha*, copulate properly, and when it is beaten with one hand, it says *deos deos endāt*, dance jumping'.

It is in villages like Kabonga, Bargaon and Hathipakhna and in most of the ghotul of the east-central area that the practice of the *pār* has been most fully elaborated. At Hathipakhna there was a blind Mandar Guru, an old man who taught the boys their rhythms. He had only to say the words and the chelik immediately followed on their drums.



Drum rhythm

The meaning of many of the rhythms is obscure, and in some cases I can give only an approximate translation.

1. *Pargao Pār*, used when bride or bridegroom (according to local custom, see page 98) arrives at the other's house, and is greeted by a procession of dancers. The drummers first circle round, all facing one direction; they then split up into pairs and each pair faces his partner. A number of different rhythms are used, for this is a memorable moment in the life of every boy and girl.

(a) *Barha mĩṇa ke lukĩwun khĩwuli tuy to ãi tuy to ãi saga ke lakãe le puriwuli?*
You are eating the stolen pork. How will you give it to the saga?

(b) *Jim jim jim nadum narka, jim jim jim nadum narka.*
Rain is falling in the dead of night.

(c) *Hãi jãsis duriya duriya, poj khãwun jãss.*
You are going to a market far far away. Eat your gruel and go.

(d) *Kahãe le yilãsit duriya lãphi duriyalle.*
You have come from far away.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

883 X
533 ●
535
585

(e) *Are buha kazkār be.*
O father, it will bite.

(f) *Dur dur dur dur neyi kazkār be.*
Drive it off; the dog may bite.

2. *Saga Pār*, used when the two fathers-in-law meet officially for the first time. The chelik dance round them in a circle, facing each other in pairs: every now and then they halt and each pair raise their hands off their drums and salute each other, crying on a long steady note *Johār ho saga*.

(a) *Johār ho saga johār.*
Johar, saga, Johar.

(b) *Tuy samdhi mai samdhi surti minjun kānwuta.*
You are samdhi, I am samdhi, let us eat the powdered tobacco.

(c) *Aking koya korka dārango tuska ta.*
Pluck the leaf, O hoe, to serve the liquor.

(d) *Tokīt layor māndi tun.*
Boys, lift up your knees.

(e) *Gatla pāta sahis kim dāy pohre mām.*
Put on your clothes properly before you go away.

(f) *Johār ho saga johār bhet howun duno saga samdhi mand piyun.*
Johar, saga, johar, we've met so let us drink.

(g) *Adi narka bhum narka tara paha kal norka.*
Bring water to wash the feet at midnight and midday, O boy!

3. *Dārango Undāna Pār*, the rhythm for drinking liquor. This also accompanies the ritual drinking of liquor by the two fathers-in-law.

Dumun dumun kāha ta, dumun dumun kāha ta.
Take out liquor from the pot and drink.

4. *Manda Pār.* These are the rhythms used while the boys bring in the wood for the marriage booth—the drummers go to the forest and return dancing and drumming vigorously at the head of the procession; when the platform is plastered inside; and when any of the many minor rites are being performed under its shade.

(a) *Usta gundur gundur ta tin pekor wark wark!*
O the quail! Eat parched rice, O boys!

(b) *Bonyla bandwan jhatke māti ān gaitin.*
Let us make a platform; O Gaitin, quickly bring the earth.

(c) *Harda reha puita pekin penda sita.*
The char flower has blossomed on the way; the girl's vagina has swollen.

(d) *Chich penda kauvela.*
The vagina is a cowrie facing upwards.

(e) *And and and, ēyo ēyo ēyo!*
That's it! That's it! No it isn't! No it isn't!

(f) *Gaon cho manuk siyān.*
All the headmen of the village.

(g) *Nawun nawun chepāwan.*
Take her, press her.

(h) *Ad laya beta kandik surti desta.*
That girl is beautiful, give her some tobacco.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

(i) *Manda mandi tendzim dāy pohre mām.*
Throw away the mess in the booth and go away.

5. *Neyi Tarhīna Pār.* The tedious business of anointing bride and bridegroom with oil, which continues intermittently for two days, is enlivened by some excellent dancing.

(a) *Tela mudiya tatti de.*
Stand old man and give the adze.

(b) *Gām chekli basunde ta.*
We will sit while the sun is shining.

(c) *Barha māns he chorun neyse lāchhu āy lāchhu mai hi dāda mai to ni chorey.*
It was Lachhu, not I, that stole the pork.

(d) *Dim dim dim kosum dim tumcho bāpcho polha dim.*
Testes! Testes! Kosum testes! The hollow testes of your father!

(e) *Dengur mundi me lamha āse, chu kābri chu.*
In the ant-hill is a hare, *Chu kābri chu.*

(f) *Teda bhushi hātum dāyi.*
Stand up, fat woman, and go to the bazaar.

(g) *Karanji gaon cho kursa, gaon kāje pursa.*
He is impotent in Karanji village; but he is a real man in ours.

PIG. 141. *Pitorha* gong

6. *Maur Tatāna Pār.* The rhythm while the bride and bridegroom are having their crowns tied on their heads.

Tatti de tatti de hanwār bābu hanwār.
Give the adze, give the adze. But the boy won't go.

DANCE AND SONG

7. *Lagir Pār.* The climax of the marriage is when the bride and bridegroom are escorted round the booth seven times in a procession of chelik with their drums and by loudly singing motiari.

(a) *Mai samdhi tuy samdhin johār bhet howun leka he pāni rihāwun.*
We samdhi do Johar, pour the water over the boy.

(b) *Baniagāon cho ban bhainsa bāte chāra charese gucha bai kedendata kedendata.*
The wild buffalo of Baniagaon is grazing on the way. Move aside, girl, and I will drive it off.

(c) *Yergunda inta tāne tinta, kamha inta, tāne tinta.*
Say it is a water-snake and eat it. Say it is turmeric and eat it.

(d) *Korwāl kusir korasta agay mute narasta.*
The *korwāl* vegetable has sprouted; the girl went every day to see it.

(e) *Bāte valo durki chu chu chu ta ta ta.*
The panther is on the road. *Chu chu ta ta ta.*

(f) *Johār layor johār kor phat phate manta.*
O boys Johar! It is cock-crow time.

(g) *Teda buda hātum te.*
Stand up, old man, and go to market.

8. *Kor Pude Pār.* Bride and bridegroom are not allowed to slip away quietly to bed; they must be escorted thither with the roar of drums. In these *pār* the boys from time to time raise both hands from their drums and wave their arms in the air like excited cocks—an obvious reference to the cock they are going to steal.

(a) *Adan luta dam-dama tarni bāyle gum guma.*
The charred saja wood is strong, the young girl is hard and firm.

(b) *Dulhi dudh he dulha dhare dulhi thar thare.*
The bridegroom holds the breasts of the bride and the bride trembles.

(c) *Dhirey dhirey dhirey gumcha, chānd chānd chānd gumcha.*
Penetrate slowly! Penetrate quickly!

(d) *Dengur mund cho hewu, bhitre newun gab gab dewu.*
The root in the ant-hill; take it inside and press it hard.[1]

This is the end of the rhythms used in marriages. The following *pār* can also, of course, be used in marriages, but they are not connected with specific moments of the ceremony. They represent the purely recreational side of the dancing.

9. *Gondin Pār.* The drummers circle in a line of couples facing each other.
Gondin gondin bolsat hāy he gondin bolsat? Buchah mand dese tabto gondin balāse.
To whom will you say Gondin, Gondin? If she will give a little liquor then you can call her Gondin.

10. *Māndar Palni Pār.* The drummers first stand still facing each other in pairs. Suddenly they flourish their hands in the air and move quickly round with short steps, knees bent. Then they straighten their knees and dance to left and right on alternate feet.

[1] It is said that the chelik sometimes use these rhythms as a sort of secret language to make proposals to the motiari. Even when no words are spoken they are understood: even the tapping of the rhythm with the fingers is enough.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Karanji gaon cho bhursa aur bodi nāo pārun pārun sāng. Gotok bāhri cho gotok silik.
Speak of Bhusa and Bodi of Karanji. For one broom there's one bamboo pin.

11. *Sailori Pār.* The rhythm is very distinctive. The drumming is punctuated by shrill cries and the boys wave their arms in the air between the beats. Their circle moves constantly backwards and forwards.

(a) *Nāchun nāchun kahān jānwān? Hamke lāgli bhuk donāyek pej kon dewu āy?*
Where should we go dancing dancing? We are hungry, who will give us gruel?

(b) *Kedun kedun bāgdare yekko manuk yend kare chichka chargod ke ār kare.*
The tiger makes the man run away; what can the fellow's testes do? He can only hide in a fish-net.

(c) *Chachān mārun neyse chachān mārun neyse jānw bohāri chandāwān.*
The hawk has carried it away; let us go, *bohāri*, to release it.

(d) *Chāh chāh pār oltom.*
The drum-beating is very careless.

FIG. 142. Bull-roarer from Markabera
Length 1' 9"

12. *Kondagaon Pār.* A rhythm specially associated with the Kondagaon ghotul.
Dum dām Kondāgaon nāogaon Sonābāl.
Beating at Kondagaon and judgement at Sonabal.

13. *Māndri Pār* or *Māndar Kelni Pār.* One of the drummers kneels down and the others go round him in line and then one by one jump over him. The last boy of the line also kneels and they then jump over two drummers, and so on till all save one are kneeling. He jumps over the whole line, kneels at the head of it, and leads them round, still kneeling and drumming in a circle, moving forward first on one knee and then on the other.
Māndar dandik kelun ta.
Play the drum for a little while.
Pāgi hitāwun desta.
Remove the cloth from the vagina.

14. *Uram Pār.* This complicated 'Pleasure Dance' is delightful to watch. The boys first move in a circle, beating their drums with both hands at the same end. Then they put them down on the ground, large end facing outwards, and go round beating each of the drums in turn until they return to their own. They sit down on the drums and beat each end in turn with both hands. Then they beat the outer ends, stand up and clap their hands in the air, swing round, bend down and beat the inner end, then roll the drums round in a circle, lift them two paces, put them down again, beat alternately inner and outer ends, roll them round again, beat outer ends, stand again clapping

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

their hands above the head, stoop down, swing the drums up over the shoulder and continue the dance in the usual way.

Basu nâur gâwun duno bât cho.
Let both parties sit and sing.

15. *Wark Pâr.* When the boys and girls eat parched rice on some ceremonial occasion in the ghotul, they dance to this rhythm.

Udi saga udila porbodela dât sangi dât sangi mamât jâle wâyom.
Sit, saga, to play the Porbodela game.

16. *Mâti Pâr.* The only rhythm for a religious occasion. This is sometimes used when offerings are made to Mother Earth.

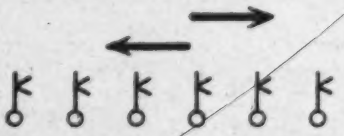
Buta bhitar cho lamka mâns châh châh ne.
They left the hare's flesh carelessly below the shrub.

VII. Religious Dances

Muria chelik and motiari dance at the great clan festivals, at the ordinary village ceremonies, and during the Pus Kolang and other expeditions; they dance, in fact, in honour of the clan-god, the village gods and the ghotul god. I describe the songs and dances of the expeditions in the chapter on that subject; these dances, which were mainly stick-dances, seemed to fall readily into a class of their own and so have been separately described. We must now examine the religious dancing of the ghotul at the ordinary festivals.

Here we find immediately a great difference between the south-west and the north and east of the Muria country. In the Chota Dongar, Karangal, Mardapal and Chalka Parganas mainly, and in villages not far from their borders, the Muria celebrate their greater festivals in typically Abujhmar Maria fashion. Elsewhere they have a distinctive Muria form of dance and drumming. Let us take the latter first.

The festival dancing of the northern and eastern Muria is not elaborate. A line of chelik, each with a large dhol drum slung from his shoulders, stands not far from the place of sacrifice. They drum very vigorously with a single stick held in the right hand and move to and fro in line. As they reach the end of their movement they drum with special vigour and shout at the turn.



Sometimes, however, the line moves forward a certain distance, all turn round and move back, then back again.

At the same time a group of boys with small turburi drums dances in a small circle, beating very fast and twirling round. The motiari form the usual double line and move to and fro (see p. 546).

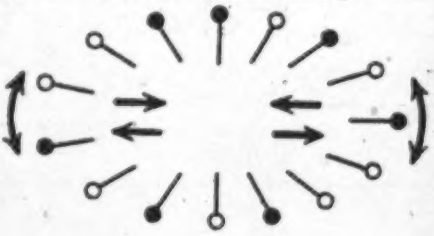
There is nothing spectacular about this dancing, though the dhol drumming is often impressive, and when flutes accompany the drums it is delightful.

It is a very different story, however, when we turn to the great festival dances of the Maria-Muria. When the chelik and motiari of a dozen villages assemble in their full dancing-dress it is a magnificent spectacle. Two conditions are necessary for the proper appreciation of this dance; it must be

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
535

Sometimes the Har is not done hand in hand, but each dancer places his left hand on his left neighbour's shoulder and lets his right hang down.

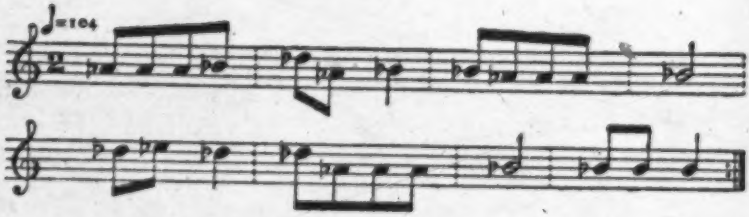


Everybody sings; they generally begin with the Lingo song, continue to describe the exploits of 'the gods, ancestors and the Raja', and use general songs without much meaning.

Songs

I

●[533]



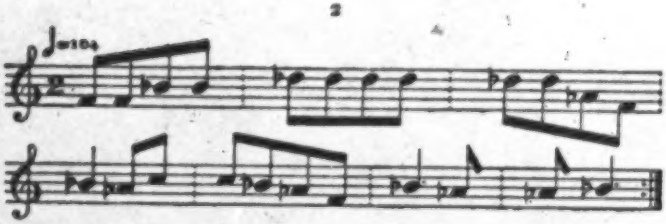
X883
535
539

Māri reka dengāl āto āto dīpāta reha gujal āti le:
Kākar mārile reha āti he.
Konem wedur gapa āti he niya miyār matek āti le.
Reka tinda loha āti he āta.
Hile āyo manta hāre he hāre tāne dārgon utona hāre le,
Tānke isi lohon hāre he.
Reka tinda dahom āti he.
Hipiya pite jori āti he jori dāhom āti le.
Reka lijin wāihom āti he.
Niya hāre āyena ayen āti he he āti nihun āti inena āti le.

On the hill the char is tall;
In the clearing it is small.
O the char on the Hill of Crows!
Were your daughter here, there would be a basket of soft bamboo.
Send her to eat char.
She is in the house, son-in-law,
But we have already drunk liquor for another,
And I cannot send her.
We will go to eat the char.
Like a pair of birds we will go.
We will come when we have eaten.
Send your daughter with me.
I will be your son-in-law,
I will call you mother-in-law.

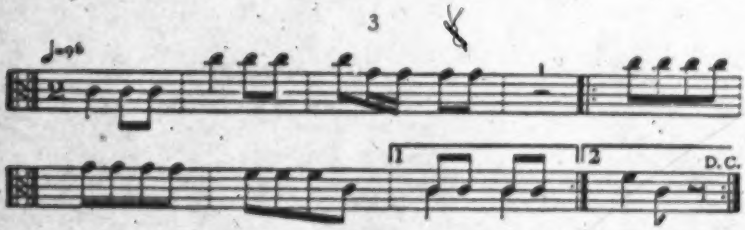
DANCE AND SONG

2



Where should I sell you, O bullock?
Laharsingh, Lahari and Udamsai!
I will sell you to a Teli, O bullock!
Don't sell me to a Teli, brother.
Let me stay in a Muria's house, brother.
The oil-press sounds *kiur kour*.
I can't pull the oil-press, brother.
Laharsingh, Lahari and Udamsai.

3



The cock has crowed, let Sona come.
The cock crows *kukuru kuru*, let Sona come.
Let it crow, Sona.
The dawn has come, Sona.
This is a thing of joy, Sona.
There is nothing here for anger, Sona.
We have come to dance for joy, Sona.
It is still dark, brother.
Don't go away, brother.
Let us dance together, brother, let Sona come.
The cock has crowed, let Sona come.

IX. KARSANA

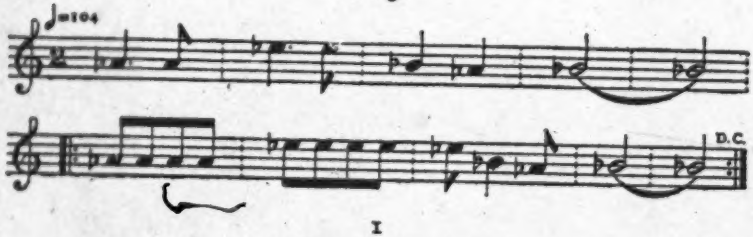
A large number of dances are not called *endanna*, dances, but *karsana*, games. The distinction is not one of form, but of occasion. Endanna, or dance, is performed at special times—at a marriage, a festival, an expedition. Karsana, game, can be performed at any time, and usually is danced informally in the ghotul. Some of the karsana, of course, are real games jolly, boisterous frolics, but others are simply dances which have no deep significance.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kokora Karsana

X883 535 This is called Kokora (Crane) Karsana at Remawand, Mindachna Pata at Markabera, and Tutumri Karsana at Kuntpadar. It may have other names elsewhere. The girls form a circle; each puts her hands on her neighbour's knees, that is, her right hand on her right-hand neighbour's left knee while her right-hand neighbour puts her left hand on her right knee, so that all round the circle arms are crossed and the girls bending forward. They dance very vigorously, standing stationary, but jerking their buttocks inwards. Presently they swing round and face outwards, and now their buttocks knock against each other to the amusement of all. In Sidhawand, when the girls faced outwards they lifted their hands from their knees and clapped them together. But the essence of this dance is its frankly sexual imitations.

Songs

[533] 

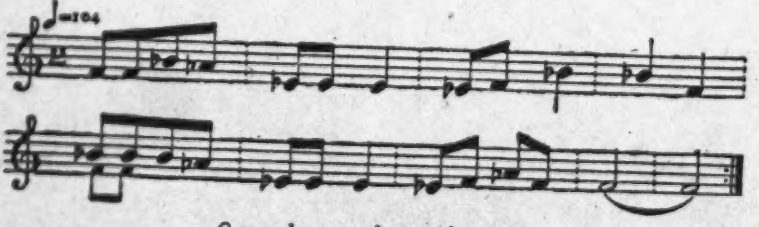
1

[539] *Kon pāra jābe re kokoda, durun ruchu durun ruchu.*
Kalār pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kewta pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Māhara pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.

Where are you going to, O crane? *Durun ruchu durun ruchu.*
Go to the Kalar hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Kewta hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Mahara hamlet, O crane.

[8>5] The names of the hamlets are those of low Hindu castes. The refrain *ruchu ruchu* is reminiscent of the noise *ruchmuch ruchmuch* which a bed is supposed to make when intercourse occurs on it. The crane is everywhere a sexual symbol, the devotion of these birds to one another being proverbial.

2

[533] 

X883 535 539 *O re re loyo re rela re re loyo oy!*

O tu tumri parheli ātin! O toilet-twig from the ebony tree!

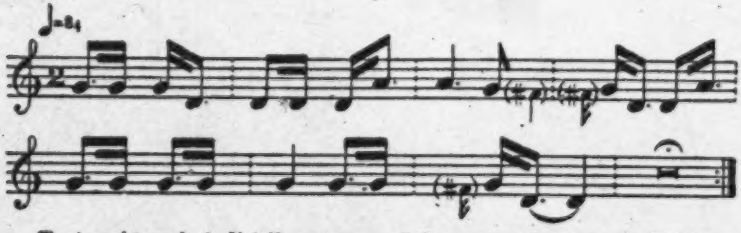
DANCE AND SONG

O niya mari bayāli bayāli ātin. — Your son has gone mad.
Ona nāna wāyon na nāna wāyon rāy. — I will not come for him.

3

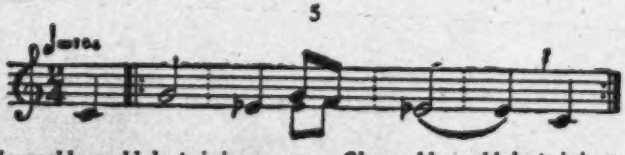
Andeknāta māndeh jela jālum te jālum te! — O wearer of the long-tailed turban from Adangaon!
Kokti masri bhet pāwlu bhetum te bhetum te, — We catch the *kokti* fish,
Rahar pungār bhet pāwlu pudgānte. — We pluck the *rahar* flower.
Andeknāta māndeh jela jālum te jālum te! — O boy with the long-tailed turban from Adangaon!

4



Tu tumri tumri rāndi jalkena! — Spit on the ebony tree, Call it widow, widow!
Neka jalkemaima rāndi jalkena! — Don't show off too much, O widow!
Kasur muta'paima rāndi jalkena! — Don't use a broom, or your body will swing to and fro, O widow!

5



Chu ruchhe ruchhela painjana. — *Chu ruchhe ruchhela painjana.*
Kāherhāje daihi lābe painjana? — For whom will you bring a girl, O anklet?
Beldārhāje daihi lābe painjana. — Bring a girl for the Beldar, O anklet.
Bhuzhi bhuzhi donh lābe painjana. — Bring the fat girl, O anklet.

X883
535
539
533

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

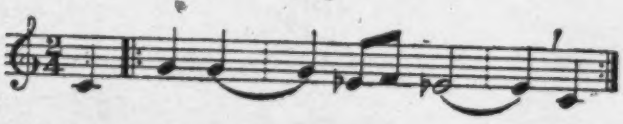
6

We will call Jalarsingh brother, O crane!
Whom will you call *bhauji*, O crane?
We will call Surtao *bhauji*, O crane!
What will she call you, O crane?
She will call you *dewar*, O crane!
You will trick her and eat her, O crane!

Jal-kanni (Shaking) Karsana

Girls and boys form a large circle, each with hands on the neighbour's knees. They circle round kicking out the right leg behind, moving sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, but always with the right leg kicking out and a convulsive pushing movement of the body which is bent forward.

Song



Ut gur gur ut gur gur poya layāna nanāy warre na,
Hātum hanji pātum tawāna nanāy warre na.
Weda hanji koda tawāna nanāy warre na.
Harri hanji mudiyo tawāna nanāy warre na.

When the quail cries *ut gur gur ut gur gur* I am not afraid of the Poyami girl,
When I go to the bazaar to bring cloth, I am not afraid.
When I go to the field to bring the horse, I am not afraid.
When I go above the road to bring a husband, I am not afraid.

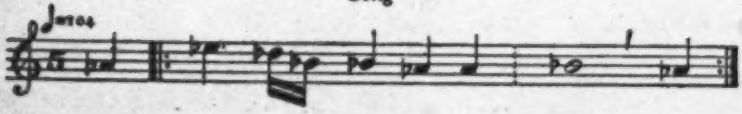
Nak Dondi Karsana

X883
535

A variant on the previous exercises is the Nak Dondi or Bhais-sand Karsana which is supposed to imitate the tethering of buffaloes. A big circle is made of boys and girls. Each puts his hands between the legs of his neighbour's so that everyone is clasping the hand of the next but one. They then circulate with a lively skip and a hop, the right foot forward, the left foot to the left, the right foot to the left and the left foot to the left with a skip. All bend forward and move their arms up and down with the result that they catch each other constantly between the legs. As this is a mixed dance its sexual implications are obvious.

DANCE AND SONG

Song



Re re loya rela rela re re la rela

What were you doing, girl, your anklets sounding *chiding-chadang*, in the cowshed?
I was just clearing up the cow-dung, brother.
There was no cow-dung there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just clearing up the cow-dung.

What were you doing, girl, your anklets sounding *chiding-chadang*, in the garden?
I was combing my hair, brother.
There was no head nor hair there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just combing my hair.

What were you doing on the river bank in the shade of the plum tree?
What were you doing on the leaves, girl?
I was just sitting there in the shade, brother.
There was no shade there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just sitting in the shade.

Re re loyo re re loyo rela rela re re la rela.

This song was not in Gondi but in Chhattisgarhi Hindi, and recorded in Sidhawand village. Its picture of a faithless motiari being interrogated by her true lover is a common motif in ghotul songs.
Another of the songs used was recorded at Dongrigura.

Kariya baila darbār chale;

Kariya cho lāri men dul wo champa
kariya cho lāri men dul.
Dinda layan darbār chale.

Dinda cho pagri men wo champa
dinda cho pagri men phūl.
Munga baila darbār chale.

Munga cho lāri men dul wo champa
munga cho lāri men dul.
Pandra baila darbār chale;

Dul champa dewra pandra cho lāri
men dul.
Dinda layan darbār chale;

The black bullock is going to the darbar;
O Champa, sway to and fro in the black bullock's shed.
The young girl is going to the darbar.
In the turban of the boy is a champa flower.
The red bullock is going to the darbar.
O Champa, sway to and fro in the red bullock's shed.
The white bullock is going to the darbar;
O Champa, sway to and fro in the white bullock's shed.
The maiden is going to the darbar;

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Dinda cho lāri men dul wo champa *dinda layan cho lāri men dul.*	O Champa, sway to and fro in the maiden's shed.

Ujur (White) Karsana

Two lines of girls face one another and dance to and fro singing.

Ujur ujur hanār te dedākor mārte	From the white white corner of thirty hills,
Pais oya hewom,	We will not let her be taken away,
Ujur ujur hanār te dedākor mārte yer miya hewom,	We will not let them bathe,
Ujur ujur hanār te dedākor mārte nei lari woykom,	We will not let them anoint her with oil,
Ujur ujur hanār te dedākor mārte lagir paya hewom.	We will not let them perform the Lagir.

All the references here are to the marriage ceremony.

Durpa Dāndi Karsana (Plate CXXII)

The Durpa Dandi or Game of the Lotus Root is also called Chingri Bunbutti. The leading girl puts her right foot on her left knee. Another girl stands on her right and puts her left leg up over the leading girl's right leg, thus supporting it almost at a right angle to her body. The next girl does the same until there is a complete circle of girls each standing on one leg with the other tucked up in the air. This is supposed to represent a flower supported on its stem. Then the girls begin to sing and each jumps up a little on her one leg and claps her hands.

Song

Durpa dāndi dāndi layor jāmdār jāmdār!	O the lotus plant boy, *jām* leaf, *jām* leaf!
Dāndi tori dāwāt layor jāmdār jāmdār.	Go to pick the plant, boy.
Dinda layor āteke layor jāmdār jāmdār,	If you are unmarried, boy,
Jāti āwār āwār dewsi wāyki jāmdār jāmdār.	You will come pushing through the fence.
Pila hālār āteke layor jāmdār jāmdār,	If you are the father of children,
Pila wonde kis mandaki jāmdār jāmdār.	You will be busy looking after them.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

Guguring Gus Karsana (*Plate CXXIII*)

883
533
535
539

A line of girls, each with her hands on her hips, fingers to the front, runs round and round like a snake. This is a very attractive dance as I saw it in Alor in 1941. The girls ran quickly and gracefully round and round and in and out, bending their bodies slightly.

Hākki mend kohla usta.

Nāwa nāri nolla guguring gus !
Hākki mend wanji usta.
Nāwa nāri nolla guguring gus !
Hākki mend kore usta.

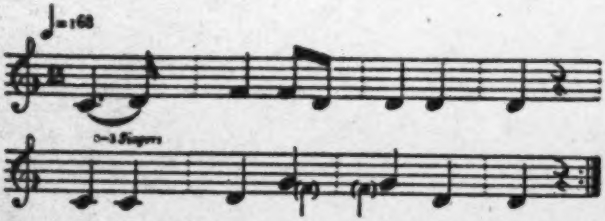
Nāwa nāri nolla guguring gus !

I husk the grain in a wooden mortar.
My back is aching, *guguring gus !*
I husk the rice in a wooden mortar.
My back is aching, *guguring gus !*
I husk the pulse in a wooden mortar.
My back is aching, *guguring gus !*

The word *guguring* is used to describe *khulti* pulse that is boiled whole, without being ground.

GAMES

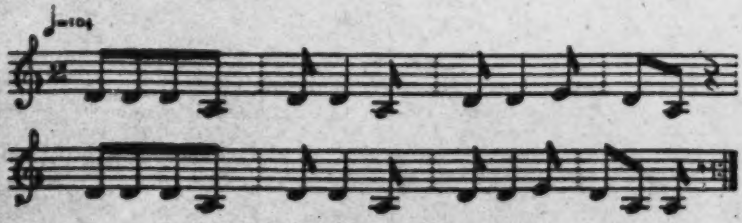
3



Dhān kutat rahew wo dai.	I was husking rice, mother.
Dharis mutar māris wo dai.	Holding the rice-husker he beat me.
Luga dharke parayenw wo dai;	I took my cloth and ran away;
Wahi bāt ais wo dai.	He followed me along the road.
Sind buta men lukenw wo dai.	I hid behind a chhind shrub.
Didi ghar gayew wo dai:	I went to my elder sister's house:
Bāsi pejla rikais wo dai.	She gave me stale gruel to eat.
Dāda ghar gayew wo dai:	I went to my elder brother's house:
Kukri sikār khawais wo dai.	He gave me chicken to eat.

The game imitates one of the more tedious duties of the motiari, the husking of grain, sometimes—before a marriage—in large quantities. Sometimes the stick, which represents the rice-husker, is omitted, and the girls make a ring with their hands, and swing it up and down. When they do this it means they are imitating the grinding of wheat.

Another variant, the Dundum or Chuer Karsana,[1] where the girls join their hands in a ring and swing them up and down, represents the drawing of water from a well—another of the commonest of the motiari's tasks. One of the songs used is this:



Where are you going, sister?
I am going to play in the deep water.
Why are you going, sister?
I am going to be mixed with salt and savour.
I am going to get covered with turmeric water.
Where are you going, sister?

[1] Ba-ila boys play a similar game which to them represents filling a pot.—E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 251.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
524

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Hoydel (Hearth) Karsana

A girl lies down on the ground. Two other girls each pick up one of her legs and put it between their own. A fourth raises the first girl's body by the shoulders and they swing her round singing '*Hoydel dhara, hoydel dhara,* pick up the hearth!'

Baipar-lad Karsana (Plate CXXXIX)

A big boy goes down on all fours. Two little boys lie on their backs on each side, put their legs over his back, and catch hold of each other's feet with their hands. They are thus slung like two sacks on the back of a bullock. The older boy gets up and carries them to market.[1]

Godel-gara Karsana

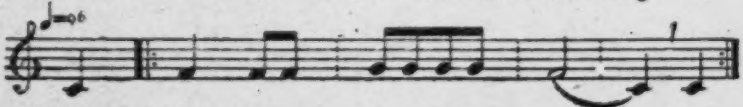
This represents the wooden wheels of a cart. Boys tuck their feet well into their thighs, and roll over and over like cart-wheels.

X883
524
●533
539

Other Games

The motiari have a fairly large repertory of songs about the kitchen, which they use for almost any dance. The next four songs are sung while they stand in rows facing each other, alternately bending forward and erect, as they clap their hands and cymbals.

This, from Phauda village, is called the Thari Pata, or Dish Song.



Uth uth re thāri thāri māri!
Pur genta unding.
Māta maoli dolinta dolinta.

Uth uth re kasela kasela masela.
Uth uth re sura mura mura.

Pick up, pick up the plate!
The hill is burning.
This is of Mata Maoli the shaking, the shaking.
Pick up, pick up the pot!
Pick up, pick up the bangles!

Kuru Pata, or Song of the Kurlu Fruit

Mudur lopādāng kuru panding sāngo.

Sangen kei dātu ale sāngo.
Panding tinda dākāt ale sāngo.

Rende ālkāng keil ale re sāngo ui sāngo ri suy.

There is a kurlu fruit in the big jungle, Sango.
Let us go together, Sango.
We will go to eat the ripe kurlu fruit.
Let us call twice *Ui*, Sango, *ri suy!*

[1] This is exactly the same as the Sema Naga game 'Hog's-rub', described and illustrated by Hutton.—*The Sema Nagas*, p. 108. But boys in a similar formation among the Ifugas represent a wooden lounging bench.—R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans*, Plate VIII.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Murta

GAMES

Mango Game

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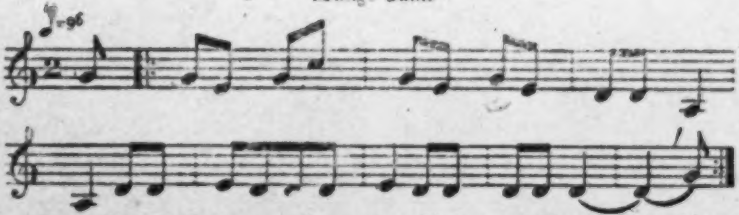


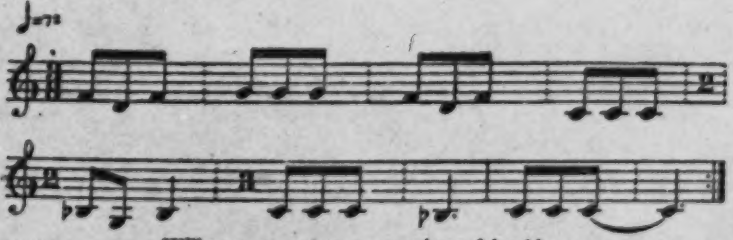
Jhopa jhopa āma phare wo dai. — The mango gives fruit in clusters.
Kon bai tore wo dai dāli dāli? — Which girl has picked a basketful?
Kon bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar? — Which girl is carrying a load?
Julpi bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar. — Julpi is carrying the load.
Kon bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli? — Which girl carries the basketful?
Sālo bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli. — Salo is carrying the basketful.

Chik-dondi Pāta [1]

Press down the *siliyāri* vegetable with a little pot.
Press down the juice with a little pot.
What was in the hand is gone.
What was on the head is gone.
Eat the *singri* fish with salt in a leaf-cup.

IV. Marriage Games

The ghotul children never tire of imitating the marriage dances. Two big girls pick up a boy and girl and prance about with them, while the other motiari stand in a row singing. Another time the girls divide into two rows, clapping their hands, swaying to and fro and singing. Then each row comes forward in turn and touches the feet of the other. This is the Tarweling Karsana, when the girls sing a song with the refrain *Sāngo tarweling murweling*. A *sāngo* is a girl friend who is not a relative.



Will you come to our marriage, friend?
We won't come to your marriage, friend.
We have no cloth to wear.
We will give you cloth.
Your husband will abuse me.
I have no husband, friend.

[1] *Chik-dondi* is actually the stick used for setting bird-lime.

36

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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X883
S54
[539]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The dry river carried him away.
His tomb is by the road.
There is no tomb by the road.
We have not seen a tomb.

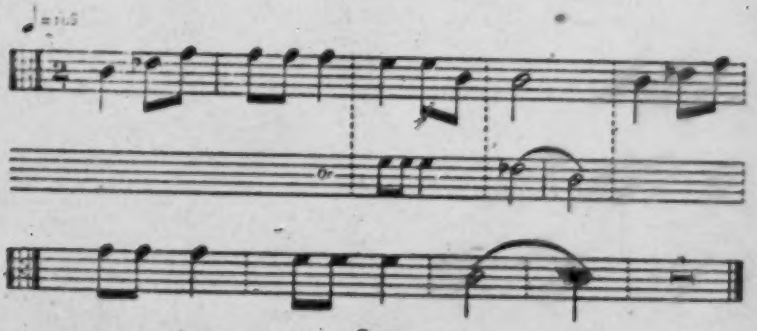
In another game one of the girls is made to take the part of the bride and the motiari sit round her, clutching her hands, weeping and singing mournfully.

The Kalsa Karsana is also popular, very similar to the games that imitate drawing water or rice-husking. The girls gather in a close circle, each grasps another's wrist and thus form a ring held low down. Then they raise and lower their arms singing the usual Kalsa song. This represents the ceremony when bride or bridegroom fill the kalsa-pot with grain.

Sometimes, the children make a little booth, put a boy and girl under it and smear their bodies with white earth (representing haldi) while a group of girls stand behind singing a marriage song.

The betrothal also is frequently imitated. A little girl represents the future bride. She sits in the middle of a close circle of girls who represent her family. Girls dance round and round them asking for her hand in marriage. From time to time they try to break through the circle of relations and carry the girl away.

[533]



Song

[539]

Bad bain mahla hanerāt bahin loh?
Sālobain mahla hanerāt bahin loh.
Bor dādan jori oyerāt bahin loh?
Silledār dādan jori oyerāt bahin loh.
Haring paring darango waderāt bahin loh;
Haring harri uderāt bahin loh.

For whose betrothal shall we go?
We will go for Salobai.
Who will be her yoke-fellow?
She will be yoked with the Silledar.
We will give liquor to everyone, one by one,
And then we will sit in a row.

This can, of course, be done over and over again, pairing off the chelik and motiari with each other, not sparing close and forbidden relations.

V. Dramatic Games

Many games express and illustrate the Muria's sense of drama. The boys and girls act their little plays with vivacity, humour and intelligence. Some of the plays are about thieves, others about cock-fighting, others about livestock and cultivation, one about human sacrifice. As always in a State, the people love pretending to be kings and queens.

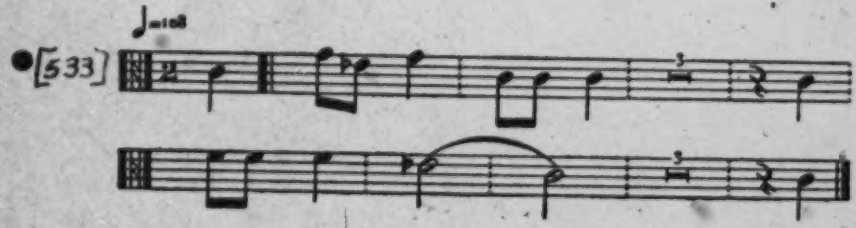
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GAMES

Thief Games

In the Paralkot area I saw the Hirka Karsana. Boys and girls sit in a line to represent a planting of brinjals. The owner of the garden puts a dumb fellow in charge to watch it. A thief comes by, and greets the dumb watchman, 'There's a fine wedding down in the village; come and see it'. He takes the watchman away with him and sits him down away somewhere, runs back and carries off a child (a brinjal) from the end of the line. Now the owner comes back, and abuses the watchman. He gives him honey, represented by a handful of earth, to persuade him to work properly. The dumb man shows in pantomime that it was a fox that stole the brinjal. Gradually the thief removes the whole garden. The last brinjal stands up as a sign that it has grown well. The thief takes this too and cooks it. The owner comes and asks what it is. 'It's *jāwa*-gruel', says the thief. 'Then give me some', says the owner. The thief is frightened and calls his dog, a boy on all fours, which chases the owner away, and the game is done.

In Phulpar I saw a simpler form of the brinjal-stealing game, here called Haṛang-kultur. The children make a little pile of stones, each of which represents a brinjal. They divide into two parties. One party sits round the stones to protect it, the other has to break through and carry off as many 'brinjals' as it can.



Song

Lito lito bīnga parala ;
Kāwar kāwar kon torela ?
Kāwar kāwar jolma torela.
Chhai chhai bori kon bechela ?
Chhai chhai bori manai bechela.
Nakti paisa kon jhokela ?
Nakti paisa jalām jhokela.

Bunches of brinjal are ready ;
Who picked them load by load ?
Jolma picked a load of them.
Who sold them six to a *bori* ?
Manai sold them six to a *bori*.
Who took the worthless money ?
Jalam took the worthless money.

[539]

Meriah Game

In the north-western area both Maria and Muria play a game which recalls the days of the Meriah sacrifices of the Kond. The very name Meriah Karsana is used. Boys and girls form little groups representing houses in a village. A band of three boys comes round singing, begging, shouting. While the attention of the 'householders' is thus distracted, the Meriah party seize one of them and carry him off. Then they go through the motions of cutting off his head, pretend to offer him in sacrifice and return for the others.

X 883 534

stick, to the Raja of the mice. He gives it to his Diwan, who passes it to the Tahsildar and so to the end of the line. Here a faithless she-mouse gives it away to the first person who offers her a cup of gruel.

Then the game follows the same pattern as at Berma. When the mice sit down, it means they have escaped into their holes, and naturally the hawk cannot get at them.

They played it very well at Masora; boys protected girls in the best tradition; they fell in heaps and tumbled over each other, and they all enjoyed themselves enormously.

Song

[533]

[539]

The hawk will swoop down like a wave,
When the midnight dew comes down.
It will carry off the chicken,
When the cock crows at dawn.
The hawk will eat the chicken,
When the midnight dew comes down.
O set the chicken free,
When the cock crows at dawn.

The Root Game (Plates CXXX and CXXXI)

This game, which imitates the growing of sweet potatoes or other roots in the garden, is played with many small variations all over the Muria area.[1] Boys and girls sit in line holding each other round the waist, the boy or girl at the end gripping a tuft of grass or a tree. These are the roots. A boy and his 'wife' and a 'servant' go up and down the line pushing sticks under the bottoms of the children, knocking them on the head and generally pushing them about. This is the cultivation of the soil. They go round again and now dig up a little dust and rubbish on either side and throw it over the 'roots'. The third time, they put their hands on the heads of the sitting children chanting '*Lud lud kuruch*, Are you ready? Are you ripe?' They pinch the 'roots' to see if they are ripe or no. All this time the 'owner of the field' is beating and abusing his 'wife', insulting her relatives, threatening to marry again—the patter is only limited by the inventiveness of the boys.

Then the gardeners go to the head of the line and begin to pull off the boys and girls one by one. They clutch desperately at each other, but in the end they are dragged off and away, hit twice and thrown in a heap. This represents the digging up of the roots. The last boy holds out for a long time and the wife has to tickle him before he lets go.

[1] Compare the similar game described in *The Baiga*, p. 463.

X983
524
533
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song

Rānicho bāta bahanta lānten;	For the Rani we are bringing an armlet;
	O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.
Rājācho bāta darpanj lānten;	For the Raja we are bringing a mirror;
	O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.
Rānicho bāta paijjan lānten;	For the Rani we are bringing anklets;
	O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.
Rājācho bāta dhoti lānten;	For the Raja we are bringing a dhoti;
	O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.
Rānicho bāta churi lānten;	For the Rani we are bringing bangles;
	O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.
Rājācho bāta topi lānten;	For the Raja we are bringing a hat;
	O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.
Rānicho bāta sandra lānten.	For the Rani we are bringing a sari;
	O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Rajana Belori Karsana

The 'Game of the Raja's Love'. The girls form into two lines facing one another. One line darts forward and touches the other's feet and quickly retires. The others chase them and try to touch their feet before they have got home.

Song

X983
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Tucho kāje tucho kāje khilwān anāzla mocho belori.	For you, for you, I have brought an ear-ring, my love.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 S24

creeps through the grass and presently leaps out and seizes one of the bullocks; it drags it away and returns for a cow. The cowherds get their bows and arrows and large balls of cloth to represent bullets from their wooden guns. They ambush behind trees, track the tiger through the grass, play all the tricks of the hunter. At last the tiger is killed and slung on a pole to be taken home and skinned.

Mao Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

This is a variant of the hunting games. A ring of girls represents a forest-covered hill, and a girl representing a sambhar stands inside. Two girls march round and round singing, and every now and then charge the ring, trying to break through and catch the sambhar. This is how I saw it played at Markabera.[1]

Song

[533]

[534]

The deer has come, its tracks are over here.
There are no tracks this side, friend.
There is the mandia crop in the field of the Cat Stone.
It has gone to graze mandia, friend.
The *urad* crop is half ready, friend.
It has gone to graze it, friend.
The fencing is rotten, friend.
The game has come, its tracks are over there.

The hunters push the group of girls crying, 'The fencing will fall down'.

In Remawand, however, the circle that holds hands is a bamboo fence inside which are two chickens. A 'leopard' runs round outside trying to get it. He dashes against the fence, and if he can break through he catches the chickens and rolls them on the ground. This is called Durka or Niral Karsana. In the Paralkot area, the boys said the girl in the middle was a she-goat; otherwise it was played as at Remawand.

In Chimri, Kajen and Nariha, I saw yet another version called Paddi-dagan, or Pigs in the Garden. A ring of children squat down holding hands to represent the garden fence. Inside are four little pigs. These have to jump out without being hit between the legs.

The Parbodela game recorded at Berma is yet another version. A circle of girls hand in hand runs round and round; there is a boy inside to represent a dog, another—the tiger—chases round outside. The girls sit down for a moment, to give the tiger a chance to jump, then the fence is up again.

[1] With these games, compare the *Tuyu-merom* of the Kharia, where the circle is a goat-pen and the jackal tries to get in to eat the goat.—Roy, *The Kharias*, Vol. II, p. 463.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

IV. Folk-tales

X 883 538 Folk-tales and legends are told in the ghotul if there is a boy there who knows any. There does not seem to be a formal 'right' of possession over a particular story, but in practice certain stories are connected with special people. One boy knows a story which was taught him by an elder boy on leaving the ghotul or by his father, and this boy is always called on to recite it.

X 883 538 No one is likely to forget the experience of listening to one of these stories, which are often in a sort of rhythmic prose and chanted to a recognizable tune. The most remarkable that I have heard was a long and rambling Ghotul Pata chanted by Dasru of the Markabera ghotul. Dasru sat in the middle ● 533 of the room, a little group of boys near him, the other chelik and motiari reclining near. He sat very upright and sang with great animation, gesticulating with his hands and the boys near him joined in a chorus and beat the ground with little sticks.

I heard another beautifully sung story in the Masora ghotul. This was the tale of the Ogre and the Little Girl; the boy who 'owned' it was a very small boy, the Anter. He and a friend sang in a curious shrill falsetto and the whole ghotul joined in the chorus:

Rai sarso sarso phul nuniki nāngar gurdum—gurdum gurdum gurdum.
Rākas bukas barma bhat des nuni kuchi kewar—gurdum gurdum gurdum.

The story was chanted in a kind of rhythm, while the beat of the chorus was irresistible, the boys booming grandly on the *gurdum*.

Sometimes the narrative of the tale is in 'prose' and is recited in the ordinary speaking voice, and the dialogue is sung, occasionally in rhymed couplets. The boys and girls sit round listening with great attention, and nod their heads saying '*Hingo*, Yes', at the right moments.

X 883 538 Most of these stories have been published separately for it would have taken too much space to include them here.[1] I am, however, giving two narrative poems which throw some light on conditions of life in the ghotul. The first is the Ghotul Pata mentioned above, which illustrates the custom of a ceremonial beat for fish before a festival, the appointment of the Gaita's children as ghotul leaders, and the relations of brother and sister in the dormitory.

X 883 539

Ghotul Pata of Markabera

The Gaita of the village gathered them all together saying,
'Look brothers, the month of Magh has come again,
And we must decide about the Mango Festival'.
Everyone came and eagerly decided,
For already other villages had kept the Festival.
'Certainly, we also will keep the Festival, but what curry shall we eat?'
'Haven't we many chelik and motiari in our ghotul?
Send the chelik and motiari to catch fish for the Festival.'
So said the leaders, and the chelik and motiari prepared to go.
When they were ready the chelik and motiari went to catch fish.

[1] See my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), which includes many Muria stories; some appear to be original, others turn on such universal motifs as those of the Quest, Grateful Animals, Brother-Sister Incest, the Hero on Pilgrimage.

534

534 MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS--idiophones (e.g., clappers, gongs, rattles); membranophones (e.g., drums); cordophones (e.g., zithers, lutes, harps); aerophones (e.g., flutes, pipes, trumpets); special instruments (e.g., bullroarers), complex mechanical instruments (e.g., piano, organ); care and repair of musical instruments; etc. See also:

Drum signaling 202
Radio 207
Sound recordings 216
Musical supplies industry 649

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

534 ●
535
292

BISON-HORN MARIA DANCERS

PLATE VIII

[Facing p. 78]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE IX

535
534
292
301

BISON-HORN MARIA DANCERS AT BAILADILA

Above Four men. (*Photograph by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.*)

Below Women. Note the clothes, the masses of ornaments, and the *tirãndi* bamboo dancing-staves

[FACING p. 80]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 to the marksman's right. He stands obliquely to his target, with feet slightly apart and body bending forward over the left hip. The nock in the arrow shaft is held to the string of the bow, in the Abujhmar hills by the index and middle fingers only of the right hand unless the marksman is not strong enough not to use his third finger also; the Bison-horn Marias always use all three. The left thumb rests perpendicularly along the inner edge of the belly of the stave, the arrow resting, on the left of the stave, in the arch between the left thumb and index finger. The latter is laid lightly along the top of the shaft and pointed as a sight towards the target. The other left fingers are brought round the back of the stave. The string is then drawn to the rear by the right hand and released. No ring or other protector is worn on the thumb, though it is sometimes cut on the inner side a little above the knuckle.

Glasfurd, in para. 87 of his report, thus describes another form of release :—

> 'All the Marias . . . often use the feet in bending the bow, while they pull the string with both hands. An arrow discharged in this manner, it is said, would almost pass through the body of a man or deer: this method is only had recourse to in elevated positions, such as from the tops of rocks, hills, and precipices, upon any object below.'

Despite many enquiries, I never found a modern hill or plain Maria who could use this method. A few old men said it was used by wandering 'Nahal' hunters, now very rarely met in Bastar; none could remember it ever being used by Marias.

415 No quivers are used by any Marias. Arrows are carried in the hand, or by fixing the point of a barb in the hair-tuft, or in a cord tied round the head if bald.

534 No Marias appear ever to use a musical bow on a winnowing-fan over a pot of water as is done by low Hindu castes and Murias around Kondagaon for the *Tija* festival in the month of Bhadon. 171

151 The Hill Maria slays a very occasional panther or barking-deer with his bow, but is not a good shot. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is often a deadly shot up to forty or fifty yards. A young man in a village just below the Aranpur pass, with a powerful bow of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood at fifty paces range sent an arrow through the bullseye of a target which I set up for him against a *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) tree; it penetrated 4 cm. into the very hard wood of that tree.

411 No other actual weapons are used by Marias, save for an occasional old sword of one of the traditional Indian *talwar* patterns which has survived the general disarming after the 1910 rebellion. But it is as well to describe here the few digging hand-tools used.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

695 There was a disputed boundary between the village of Kurmer in the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* and the adjacent Kutru Mar village of Jatalur; the Jata clan asserted possession over a strip of land belonging to the Parllo clan of Kurmer. I suggested, on the strength of a tale I had heard of former Chiefs' methods of justice, that the head of each village should come with a cock to the land, and that the land should go to the clan whose cock crowed first. This was hailed by both sides as a sound solution, and off we went to the land; but just before we reached it the Jata headman began to hang back, and finally backed out of the test; I awarded the land to the Parllo clan to the approval of men present from other clans, and on going over the land found that it contained a *pagh'ai* or alternative village site, of the Parllo clan besides the cromlech left to mark the site of the Village Mother's 'temple', the *kasyeq-gaita's udam-garia* or seat of honour, and the *kotokal* or line of menhirs erected in the name of the Parllo dead. Here the Jata clan finally abandoned their claim when challenged by the Parllo *kasyeq-gaita* to eat earth from under the Village Mother's cromlech.

181 To be left to live the free life of the hills, untrammelled by restrictions on his user of forest, earth and water or his right to shift his village and his *penda* cultivation, is the unconscious ideal of the Hill Maria. If he is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls; and few of them or of the wilder Bison-horn Marias survive long imprisonment.

517 [823] The Hill Maria shows great artistry in his bead-work, and is never at fault in his discrimination between colours and shades, though he uses for all shades of green and blue the one word *kaqarondla*. He has general terms also for red, white, black and yellow, but none for intermediate shades. In his houses he draws 532 rude cup-marking patterns, *swastikas* and strange creatures in white earth on his mud plaster, or makes rough clay representations of women's breasts. His songs are low and rather melancholic in 533 sound, the youths' voices verging on contralto; but they are far easier for an English ear to understand than Hindu music, and have often a haunting refrain. Both he and the Bison-horn Maria love to hear European records on a gramophone, especially a good soprano or contralto, sea shanties, and violins or trios and quartets playing light chamber music; but operatic fireworks merely provoke laughter, Chaliapin singing the 'Song of Prince Igor' making them ache with laughter, but being often encored. The Marias as a whole have no musical instruments except drums. Though the [534] 517 153 Bison-horn Maria does not show the Hill Maria's artistry and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

226 the water. On each side of each torch-bearer goes a man armed with bow and arrows; for small fish the arrows have heads like the handles of spoons, but for large fish they use arrows with heads with only one wing and barb, like an ordinary arrow-head bisected from point to shank. The torch-bearers and bowmen wade up against the current, and the fish, which at night are feeding in these shallows and not in the deep pools, are attracted or stupefied by the glare and are easily shot with the arrows or caught in the baskets.'

E. Intoxicants and Other Drinks

273 The commonest intoxicant in the Abujhmar hills is the fermented juice of the sago-palm (*Caryota urens*), and the tree is common also in many parts of the Bison-horn Maria country. It is now propagated freely by Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The tree, unlike the toddy-palm, is monoecious. The flowering peduncles, which appear like thin elephant trunks, have their ends cut off before they flower, and act as taps, bamboo tubes being fastened below the cut to catch the sap; the Bison-horn Marias often use earthenware pots. The tubes are emptied in the morning and evening, bamboo poles still retaining the stumps of side-shoots being tied on to the trees as rough ladders. When [272] fresh, the sap is not intoxicating and has a pleasant dry taste, not unlike champagne. After two or three years' tapping the tree dies, when the inner tissue of the stem yields the starchy food substance 754 already mentioned. If the ends of the peduncle get worm- or grub-eaten before they are tapped, it is considered a sure sign of witchcraft, and more than one murder has been recorded on this account. The bottom of the trunk of the dead tree is commonly 534 used as the hollow body of the Hill Maria single-membrane *turam* or kettle-drums.

Sago-palm

273 The toddy-palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is not grown or tapped in the Abujhmar hills, but is common in the south of the Bison-horn country especially among the so-called Koyas and the Dorlas, and in Sukma and Konta. In this telugnized region whole villages camp out in the toddy groves from March till June in a perpetual state of semi-intoxication, taking solid food only in the evening, and sometimes going without that for three or four days or even a week. The sap is tapped by cutting the ends of the flowering spadices, in much the same way as the sago-palm; the spadix appears in the male trees from November to March, while the female tree yields sap from April to June. The vessels used to catch the sap are generally thick bamboo tubes three or four feet long, of about three gallons capacity. Excessive tapping soon shortens the life of the trees. The juice rapidly ferments, though not intoxicating when drawn, and fermentation is expedited by the habit of mixing the fresh juice with that left

Toddy-palm

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

there is no need to describe their processes in this book. The potter, like the Gharwa, expects immediate payment for his goods and is not a tribal servant remunerated with a retainer of grain at harvest like the blacksmith; but he often takes payment in grain. For a Bison-horn Maria marriage, the potter will make and supply as many pots as are required, but after the marriage is paid a bullock, cow or calf for his work.

C. *Musical Instruments*

1. Drums

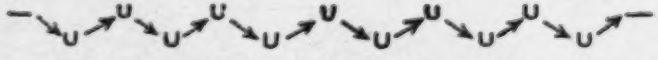
The Bison-horn Marias use the large double-membrane drums called *birya-dol*, of which typical specimens are shown in the illustrations in Plates VIII and IX. The hollow cylindrical body of these drums is a section of the trunk of a *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) or a *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*) tree up to sixteen or seventeen inches in diameter. The right hand membrane is made of goat-skin, even by those who have the goat as totem, and this is struck by the finger-tips of the open right hand. The other membrane is of cow- or bullock-hide, and this is struck with a bamboo stick carried in the left hand, and sometimes adorned at the end with a bunch of the pea-pod iron pellet-bells that are attached to the *tirdudi* bamboo dancing-sticks of their women. The membranes are stitched to each other by thongs of cow-hide criss-crossed over the outside of the wooden cylinder. That cylinder is sometimes as much as three feet long, and the weight is very considerable. The drum is slung over the right shoulder by a sling of hide or cord, sometimes adorned with cowries, and is carried obliquely across the stomach, the right end being the higher. There is no season among them when drum-beating is taboo or *melo* (their term for the Hill Maria *polo*). They have different drum rhythms for different dances, for weddings, for success in the chase, and a dactylic beat, for the drum beaten from the roof of the house to announce death; for the *pen-harsita* dance at their festival corresponding to the Hill Maria Koqsar they use the drum-stick only, and not their right hands, the rhythm being seven short beats followed by two long beats.

These *dol* drums are occasionally found in Hill Maria villages also, but are a sign of cultural contact with the Bison-horn Marias. The essential Hill Maria drum is the single-membrane *turam* drum. The body is a wooden bowl, generally the rounded base of the hollow trunk of an exhausted *salphi* (*Caryota urens*) tree, trimmed with the waist-knife to bowl-shape; sometimes a section of *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) trunk is similarly whittled into bowl-shape. The membrane is dried untanned cow-hide, hair outwards, and this is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

attached by criss-cross thongs of the same material to rings of the same material tied round the outside of the bowl in its centre and just above its base. The thongs are passed through holes pierced in the overlap of the membrane with the point of the knife or of an arrow, and pulled taut without anything being done to guard the edge of the membrane from tearing. Occasionally pottery bowls are used instead of *salphi* or *bija* wood, a practice learnt both from the Teluguized Gonds of the south and the northernmost Murias of Antagarh tahsil.

The *turam* drum is placed on the ground between the outspread legs of the player, who sits on his buttocks with legs bent at the knee. The drum-sticks are held lightly between the index and middle fingers, the right stick being somewhat larger than the left. It is taboo to beat a *turam* except at Koqsar and weddings, though nowadays most of them regard the taboo as lifted for a dance at a high official's camp. The ordinary rhythm at Koqsar and weddings is :—



The rhythm thus begins and ends on a long beat with the right hand, with six short left hand and five short right hand beats alternately in between.

I saw once at Nugur a small drum of the *turam* shape made with a hollow gourd bowl.

When it is taboo to use the *turam* drums, boys use what are called by them *pak-dol* or *veddur-dol*, literally 'bamboo-drums', which are really split-stringed instruments. They are made of two-foot lengths of the thick bamboo called *noli-veddur* by the Marias, or *bendri-bans* in Halbi. The outer rind of the bamboo is prised apart from the rest of the bamboo for a length of about eighteen inches, three inches being left joined at each end. The prised rind is about one-eighth of an inch thick and an inch and a half wide. It is raised from the body of the bamboo by two small bridges (*barga*) of bamboo inserted at each end as near its junctions with the body of the bamboo as possible, and is made into three 'strings' by two longitudinal cuts. The drum is laid on the ground and rubbed firmly into position in the dust, and dust is poured along its sides; the 'strings' are then struck with light drum-sticks in the same way as the *turam*. The Bison-horn Marias do not make this.

Brass dish-shaped gongs (*gatta*) struck with sticks used, till a few years ago, to be an indispensable part of the bride-price or

[see cat. 116, pp. 421-422, - Analysis]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

sponsalia at a Hill Maria wedding. They were brought to the markets by itinerant Telugu dealers, but for some reason or other they have ceased to stock them, and the modern wedding takes place without them. Several remain, and are now highly prized, buf are generally brought out for a camp dance, along with any old brass pot or piece of metal with which a clanging noise can be made.

2. Gongs

A few northern Hill Marias and, occasionally, Bison-horn Marias use the brass *tori* hunting horns of the Murias, and towards the Parja country the Bison-horn Marias sometimes imitate these by a 'horn' of strips of palm-leaf wound like a bandage round and away from the end of a wooden mouth-piece, each fold being gummed on to the edge of the preceding fold to the extent of the overlap.

3. Other instruments

Some Bison-horn Marias use bamboo flutes to accompany the *dol* drums at wedding dances, but I had no chance of examining one closely. They use also little iron jews-harps (*kach-tendor*) made by the blacksmiths, but of the primitive type, with the tongue straight and welded to the bend between the two arms of the frame, and of the same length as the arms, but only a thin narrow strip of iron. They say they have also a small wooden stringed instrument which they call *kikir*, probably a derivative of the Indian *chikara*.

4. Bull-roarers

The only other instruments are the bells and jingling anklets already mentioned in describing the dancing-dress of Hill Maria men and the dancing-sticks of the Bison-horn Maria women, unless mention is made here of the bull-roarers, which Hill Maria boys call *ate* and make of a strip of split bamboo, pointing one end and notching it near the point for a bark string, with which, looped round one finger, they whirl the bull-roarer round counter-clockwise. It seems to be purely a toy, and to have no religious or magical significance. At various camps the lads present made them on request; none were holed at the bottom.

D. Dancing

1. Hill Maria

The description of Maria dancing given by Russell and Hiralal (III, pp. 136-7) is brief and misleading; it possibly relates to Marias of the Chanda plains, though the dancers illustrated are wearing typical Hill Maria dancing-dress. Russell and Hiralal do not mention the remarkable Bison-horn dancing.

It is taboo for Hill Marias to dance except on the night of Koqsar and at weddings, or at the rare visits of State officials. For practical purposes, therefore, it may be said that they dance only

[See cat. 116 ip. 4223 - Analysis]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XVI

Death and Funeral Ceremonies

A. Hill Marias

The ordinary rule throughout the Abujhmar hills is to cremate the bodies of headmen and elders of influence and standing and of their wives, and to bury all others. 764 766

Except on the southern fringes of the hills, where the villages are influenced by contact with their Bison-horn Maria neighbours, the Hill Marias do not follow the Bison-horn custom of beating a drum from the roof of the house, which Russell and Hiralal predicate of all Marias. The custom is creeping into the hills from south of the Indrawati, and has for example already reached the Kutru Hill Maria villages of Lakka (Lanka) and Karangal; but there it is reserved for men of higher status. The drum used is the hill *turam* kettle-drum, and is usually one of those kept in the village dormitory; the village lads beat it continuously day and night from the death till the burial or cremation of the body. [534]

News of the death is sent out to all the brother-clan and wife-clan relatives and friends of the deceased. The funeral is postponed for two or three days, to give them time to assemble. Then all the women gather in and around the house where the body is lying. A man is never left to die on a cot, but is lifted on to the ground as his end draws near; they say that their reason for this custom is simply that they do not want the dying man to fall off the cot in a last convulsion. Women are never allowed to sleep on a cot. They close the eyes of the corpse, and lift it on to a rough wicker-work bier, covering it over with a length of cloth. It is burned or buried with the clothes and jewellery that were on it at death. The women sit around the corpse and outside in the street, and break into loud keening for the dead. 764 763

For the last rites the body is not washed or otherwise prepared, but is left just as it was composed after death. Friends and relatives carry it out on the bier, the only person for whom it is taboo to touch or carry a body being the *waddai* clan-priest medium and his medium assistant (*leshi*). The bier heads the procession to the burial and cremation ground, and is followed by the remaining relatives and friends, the women still keening and beating their breasts. 764

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 Next morning large parties of Marias and Murias came from every direction, some of the Murias from the Mardapal Pargana and the villages round Chhota Dongar. A little rain fell and there was a lot of blowing of horns. At midday the Anga and other symbols of the gods were taken down to a stream for a bathe and during the afternoon many Sirahas fell into trance and postured and danced in ecstasy. A little shrine was set up in the middle of the clearing and as more and more people arrived and other gods came to visit Usendi Pen, the Sirahas danced wildly round and round it. A procession was formed, the Anga leading it, with tall poles decorated with peacocks' feathers following, and a crowd of children carrying [534] gongs and various substitutes for gongs—bits of painted wood, the lids of old kerosene oil tins, anything that could be banged to make a noise.

Gradually the place filled up and by four o'clock there were three or four thousand people present—a small attendance, I was told. The Marias and Murias showed little interest in the shops which were mostly attended by local Hindus and officials, and there was very little drinking, though many a boy brought a gourd or a bottle of rice-beer or palm wine hanging under his arm. Then the dancing began, and hundreds of boys and girls in the full Hill Maria dancing attire (though no Hill Marias were present) and carrying decorated sticks and axes over their shoulders, formed lines and processions and great circles, until the entire ground was alive with slowly circulating movement.

As evening fell little fires sprang up under every tree where groups of people made their camps. The older people drank, cooked and gossiped with their relatives. Like all bazaars the Marhai is a great occasion for repairing friendships. During the night the boys and girls continued dancing, and from time to time the Sirahas brought out the Anga-gods and danced with them.

The moon rose at midnight and turned the scene into one of extraordinary majesty and beauty. The festival was decorous and restrained, but very happy. There was no orgy and practically no drunkenness. At dawn the dancing stopped and in a few minutes the whole great assembly melted away back into the forest.

IX

764 On page 281 Grigson refers briefly to the Bison-horn Maria custom of erecting carved wooden pillars in memory of well-known or wealthy tribal leaders. There are not many of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 426 621 to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *penda* must not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The 661 first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant 439 cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

535 292 Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatikarhana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-bhita* or 'song fellows' and the dance-steps.[1]

535 The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed 534 in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence. 301 Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of 'jewellery' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 75-6 and 183-4

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and see the bulk of the Council's funds, including their own contributions, spent on the open and advanced tracts of the district where the villagers must be placated for political reasons. More will be said on this point later in this Note, in dealing with the Garchiroli zamindaris.

The dancing at Surjagarh stands out in memory as faster and livelier than any other dancing seen on this tour. The drums too were different, great double membrane drums of short sections of *semur* (*bombax malabaricum*) trunks, up to 2 ft. 6 in. or 3 ft. in diameter. The *Gazetteer* well describes the typical Maria dance :—

> 'The favourite dance is a peculiar rippling step forwards, with the foot dragged, not very graceful when done by a single individual, but looking quite different when done in unison by a great circle of dancers singing a *re-la, re-la*, chorus to which the step keeps time. In some villages where the headman is an enthusiast for the pastime a trained band performs weird and wonderful step dances to the sound of the drum. At a big dance the trained band occupies the inner ring round the fire, while the common folk, men and maids, in separate rings move round in great circles in opposite ways. All are dressed for the occasion in their best, bearing in their hands weird ornaments of wicker work, with garlands of flowers on their necks, and, in their hair, feather ornaments humorously or coquettishly placed. Seen in the red glow of a huge log fire, glinting on the shining beads and barbaric ornaments of the dancers, with the throb of the drums, and the beat of many feet moving in unison to the wild music of the voices in chorus, a Maria dance is a spectacle not easily forgotten, but lingers as a characteristic scene when other details have faded from the memory.'[1]

That would well describe that wild night at Surjagarh, when the dancers, their spirits enlivened by several earthen pots of *mahua* liquor, kept up their dancing nearly till dawn. It had been a long and tiring day, and I retired early, the last thing seen from my tent before I closed the flap to shut out the blaze of the many log fires, the dust and the tramp of hundreds of feet, being our now nearly nude Local Board Member, well warmed by liquor and congenial surroundings, leading a ring of dancers and gravely demonstrating the right steps.

Next morning after an early breakfast we climbed with many of the night's dancers up to the keep of the old fort that crowns the Surjagarh hills, 1,273 feet above the forests at their base, the ascent being over what the *Gazetteer*[2] truly calls a noble cliff of black ferruginous mica schist.

> 'The ascent at first is by a narrow rift in the mountain, whose sides rise vertically on either hand 600 feet in height, and then the path winds round the face of the cliff in natural steps formed by the weathering of the schist. The whole ascent has been carefully fortified by a series of stone breastworks, here thrown across the path, there perched on an overhanging ledge of rock; and if properly defended would be impracticable for troops without means of shelling. Within the keep on the summit there used to be a small tank which

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 99-100.
[2] Pp. 428-9.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142
292
301
534

[Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria youth of Kakhur in Hill Maria festival dress

[End Plate D]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
292
534

Bison-horn Maria dancer

[End Plate E]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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534

[End Plate R]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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417
302

Bison-horn Maria boys repair a drum

[End Plate ZB]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

142
291
S34

Hill Maria playing stringed instrument

[End Plate ZC]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

534
516

Hill Maria youth playing a rudder-rod

[End Plate ZD]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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292

Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Marias dancing

Verrier Elwin

[End Plate ZE]

142
301
291
534

Plate V

A study in contrasts. The two boys are brothers, but one goes to school

[p. 18 (a)]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585
534

Setina setina kaida nana getil kuhena;
I will wear cloth from a merchant's shop;
Nani re nani re rumjum rumjum getil kuhena.
When I wear that cloth, my waist goes *rumjum rumjum.*
Sonārān sonārān kaida nana suta karena;
I will wear a goldsmith's neck-band;
Todara re todara re rumjum rumjum suta karena.
The neck-band sounds *rumjum rumjum.*
Sonārān sonārān kaida nana dāru karena,
I will wear a goldsmith's ear-ring,
Kaiwu re kaiwu re rumjum rumjum dāru karena.
The ear-rings sound *rumjum rumjum.*
Kaserān kaserān kaida nana chura karena,
I will wear the Kaser's bangles,
Kālu re kālu re rumjum rumjum chura karena.
The bangles tinkle *rumjum rumjum.*

6

[534]

Nāwa tehendor turil roy ange,
My *tehendor*[1] is lost,
Baga ise turil roy bābu?
Where was it lost?
Jamha jumur manda roy ange,
It was lost among the crowds beneath the booth,
Agōy ise turil roy ange.
It is lost there.
Niya sang nor layor roy bābu,
Your friend the chelik
Niya layor bara oyor roy bābu,
Has taken everything,
Or ise oyor roy ange,
But he did not take that away,
Niya sang nāng layāk roy bābu!
O your friend the motiari
Ore bāra oyong roy bābu.
Must have taken it away.

7

Bera lopa bārang kelo le nuni?
O what is in the field, girl?
Jhumjhum āyana nuni hankī tulana.
The girl is cleaning pieces of rice, *jhumjhum.*
Bera lopa tarāy kelo le?
What is in the field, sister?
Tarai lopa wārang kelo le.
The tank is in the field, sister.
Tarai lopa durpa kelo le?
What is in the tank, sister?
Durpa morada wārang kelo le.
The lotus-root is in the tank, sister.
Durpa morada kanjal kelo le?
What is under the lotus-root, sister?
Kanjal rosela wāyena kelo le.
Under the lotus-root there is a mouse, sister.
Wāyen ayo wāyena dāda le?
Will you come to catch the mouse, sister?
Nāke dai rāngār dāda le.
I would love to come but I cannot, brother:
Niya dai matek kelo le.
Mother would be angry with me, brother.
Jhāpil sandra kitona kelo le.
I have given cloth from the basket, sister.
Hilah icho waiha dāda le.
If you have given it, brother, then I will come.

[1] Iron Jew's-harp.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

776 by the tragic circumstances of his origin. According to universal legend he is the ghost of a young bridegroom who, on the way to his wedding, was killed either by lightning [1] or by a tiger. Frustrated at the moment of achieving happiness, he lives on, soured and bitter, to trouble mankind.

For this reason Dulha Deo is regarded as particularly touchy and there are many stories about his quick temper and his readiness to take an insult and notice a slight. For example, at Silati the Muria described how he interrupted a Kalar marriage at Bara Dongar. A Muria neighbour had dedicated a pig to Dulha Deo. On the morning of the marriage the pig wandered over to the Kalar's house and the Kalar exclaimed, 'Alas! I have seen a pig's face early in the morning'. When Dulha Deo in the form of the pig heard this, he was very angry and stood snorting with rage in front of the house, refusing to allow the marriage to proceed. At last the Kalar had to touch the pig's feet and promise a goat in honour of Dulha Deo.

A practical reason for Dulha Deo's bad reputation may be the fact that at a marriage everybody is very excited, more or less drunk, and hitches in the procedure and quarrels between relations are always likely to occur. Whenever anything goes wrong, the blame is put on the god who must then be properly appeased. Dulha Deo serves a useful purpose as the divine whipping-boy.

Bhimul Pen

[778] In many Muria villages there is a small shrine of four wooden pillars and some cross-poles, but no roof, round one or two stones that may be anything from one to three feet high. These represent the deity who is called variously Bhimul Pen, Bhima or Bhimsen and his wife Bhimsenin or Gorondi Dokari.

I think it probable that there was a very ancient aboriginal deity, a rain-god called Bhimul, whose cult has been assimilated to that of the mightiest of the Pandava brothers, Bhimsen. The Muria expect both Lingo and Bhimul to provide them with rain in due season. If there is a drought, Bhimul's stone is [789] covered with cow-dung with the idea that he will quickly send rain to wash himself clean.[2]

But the Muria Bhimul has many other functions. In eastern Kondagaon, he takes the place of Lingo as the founder of the ghotul and its protector. ●[534] He is regarded as having a special interest in drums and must be worshipped when a mandri drum is made and when it is used at a wedding. He and his wife are associated with stilt-walking. He appears as the cause of thunder and the fertilizer of the crops.

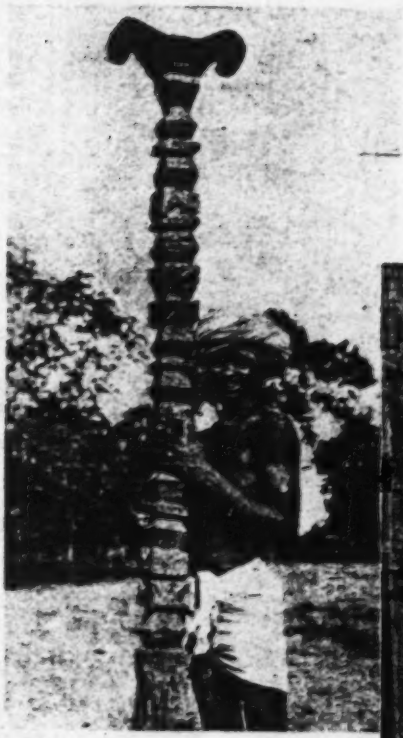
[796] Bhimul has a special festival to himself in order to ensure a good rainfall. The villagers bring in March a little of whatever seed or vegetable is available and throw it over Bhimul's stone. The Gaita makes the usual offerings. Chelik and motiari dance all night.[3]

[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 119; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73.

[2] To get rain, Bombay Hindu villagers 'besmear the phallus of Shiva with cooked rice and curds'.—Enthoven, op. cit., p. 321. The Parja of Bastar are described as fixing a piece of wood into the ground in the name of Bhimsen over which they pour water when they are in need of rain.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 377.

[3] For the widespread cult of this 'heroic godling' both among Hindus and aboriginals, see Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 66, 89, 250 and Vol. II, p. 182; Grigson, op. cit., pp. 206, 215, 219; S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Calcutta, 1912), p. 98; *The Baiga*, p. 59 and *passim*; *The Agaria*, p. 95; *The Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 76 (for the cult among the Nagpur Gond); ibid., p. 236 (for the Urali's idea that thunder is the result of a duel between the two Bhima in heaven); Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. IV, pp. 56 and 71 (for the Koyi tradition that traces the origin of the tribe to Bhimador who while hunting in the jungle met a wild woman of the woods and married

531
532



Pillar at Binjhe with the chelik who carved it

Drawing of old census number-board

Plate LXXIV

[534]

Carving on a pillar drum

[p. 356(b)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

276

Motiari of Palli pounding tobacco in a wooden mortar for the chelik

Plate LXXXIV

534

The Chalan of Jhakri preparing a pitorka drum

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

831
534

Itwa lewa patwa tado.
Touch it and up it goes.

—A mat, or the penis.

Mela aur jela bahir jhule
Mantor kach kutile lopa narey kiyantor.
Mela and Jela swing to and fro outside;
The iron rice-husker is at work within.

—Sexual congress.

Three are dancing in a thick jungle.

—Sexual congress.

There are two witnesses to this thief's escapades.

—The testes and penis.

But if their anatomical knowledge of the genitalia is slight, the Muria compensate for it by an extensive mythology of sex, which is, I think, even more elaborate than that of the Bison-horn Maria and the Orissa tribes. 831

It is remarkable that the Muria seem to regard the sexual organs, whether male or female, as living things with an independent life of their own.[1] For example, one of the reasons given for forbidding urination inside the ghotul is that the girls' urine would smell abominably because her labia majora are always chewing her urine as she walks about—just as a goat chews its food, and therefore a girl's urine smells as strongly as a goat's.

There are several stories about the vagina, though the Vagina Dentata legend, known throughout the Central Provinces and Orissa, is comparatively rare. The following story is from Masora. 831
539

Long ago the vagina had the power of leaving its body at night and going out to feed in the fields. It had teeth with which it could eat; it would stay out all night grazing in the fields and return satisfied in the morning.

By and by the village people began to say, 'What is this thing that comes at night and eats up our crops? Let us set traps and catch it'. So they set traps in their fields, and that night when the vaginae came to feed they were caught and the villagers collected them and took them to the Gaita's house in a big basket. They shut them up in an inner room and went to report the matter to the Raja. The Raja sentenced the vaginae to be hanged.

When they heard this, the villagers were frightened, for they said, 'How are we to live with our wives if their organs are destroyed?' So they went to the Raja asking him to forgive them and promising to repay the owners of the fields for whatever damage had been done.

The Raja said, 'First of all the teeth must be broken and removed from the vaginae. Whoever can do this will be rewarded'. No one knew how to do it until at last a one-eyed policeman, who himself had a knife growing from his penis, declared that he would deal with the matter. With his knife he removed the teeth and then with hammer and nails fixed every vagina back in its place. The nail he used is the clitoris which stands above the vagina to hold it steady. The vaginae then cursed the man who had done them this injury and turned him

[1] A similar idea is found in the Crow Indian tale *Mentsis Lopawa*, where a man's penis refuse to talk and refuses to stop.—R. H. Lowie, 'Myths and Traditions of the Crow Indians', *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. XXV (1922), p. 225.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Here the chelik said that the animals represented were lizards and they were climbing the tree to catch a wood-pigeon (Fig. 124). At the top of each toy were cymbals that clanged whenever its strings were pulled.

883 X
484 X
796
535
[534
532]

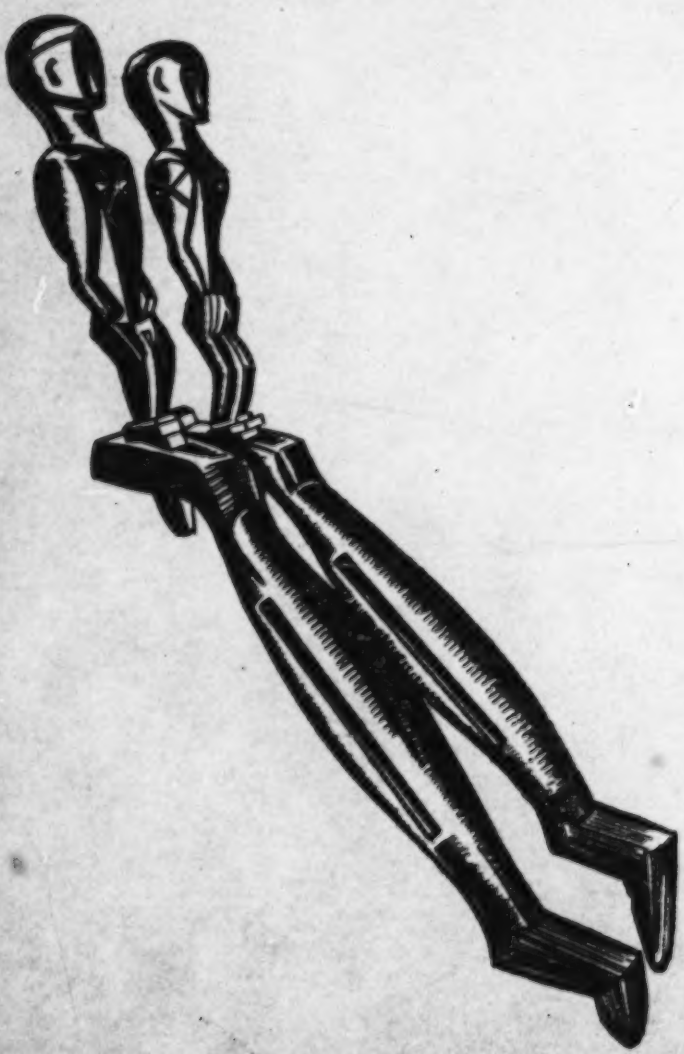


FIG. 123. Gonds from Alee
Cf. Plate CV

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

534

FIG. 127. *Goga dhol* drum
(*See p. 524*)

FIG. 128. *Parrang* drum
(*See p. 525*)

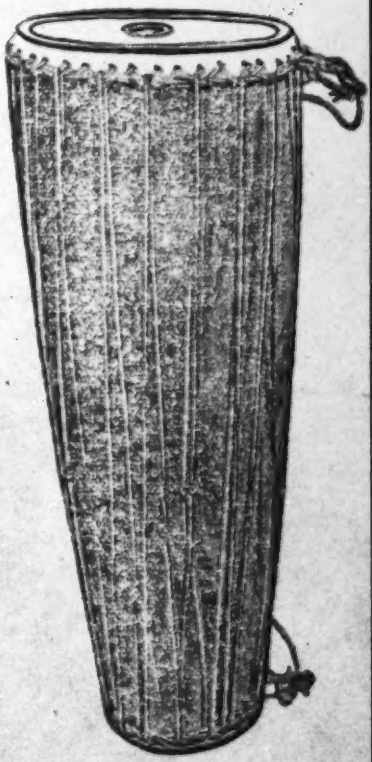


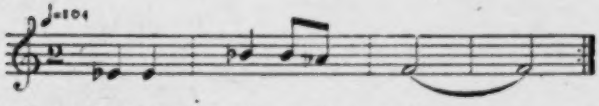
FIG. 129. *Mandri* drum
(*See pp. 530ff.*)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
S33

2



O rere loyo rela rela. Re re loyo re rela. Re re loyo rerela. O rerela rela rela rerela rela rerela rerela rela rerelo oy.

The word Relo, however, has had a disastrous effect upon the Muria: it has served as a hypnotic drug that has destroyed their poetic faculty. Their songs, compared with those current in other parts of aboriginal India, are singularly devoid of inspiration.

II. The Eighteen Instruments

X883
S34

Lingo was the first of musicians; he brought music to the world; he had eighteen instruments and played them all at once. Many Muria cannot say more than that there were eighteen, but some can give their names, though the lists do not always agree.

In a Lingo Pata sung by the Phulpar chelik as they set out on their Pus Kolang expedition, they described:

The eighteen instruments of Lingo Rai,
The Dhol Rai hanging from his shoulder,
The Hakum Rai under his arm,
The Madan Parrai drum hanging from his loins,
The Paijna Rai on his feet,
The Dhusir Rai played across the chest,
The Jhikar Rai played when wind passes through the nose,
The Sulur Rai played with wind passing through the mouth.

The Phulpar boys did not know more than this. But Suku of Bandopal knew the names of all eighteen, as do many of the chelik in the typically 'Jhoria' Parganas. The list is as follows:

1. *The nissan drum.*—A large single-membrane iron drum played with two sticks on the ground at festivals. When a new skin is needed, the Muria offer a bull to Lingo Pen, skin it and begin to prepare the hide that very day. The drum is also sometimes called *māwāloti* or *lohāti*.

2. *The goga dhol drum.*—A single-membrane wooden drum, 14" deep with a diameter of 17", covered with cow-hide.[1] It is slung round the shoulders and beaten with a single stick held in the right hand at festivals and at the funerals of very old and famous people.

3. *The dhol drum.*—This is a large circular double-membrane wooden drum, 15" deep and 17" in diameter, covered with cow-hide, which is fixed in place with a bamboo ring and cords of leather. It is said to be the local habitation of Bara Pen and Lingo, and is beaten with a single stick at festivals. Its loud and solemn note gives point to the riddle—

[524]

Kaide nehtike bita mend dānta,	Beat it with your hand and it runs half a cubit,
Bargāte hiteke kos mend dānta.	Beat it with a stick and it runs two miles.

[1] The measurements in this chapter are of specimens in my possession: there is naturally some degree of variation.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 X
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4. *The mandri drum.*—This is the chelik's favourite drum, the marriage

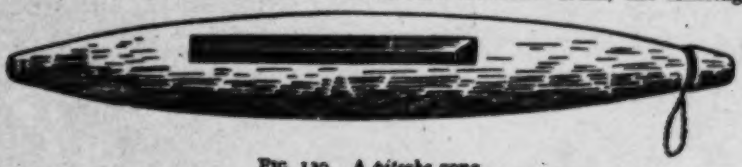


FIG. 130. A *pitorha* gong

drum. In shape it is a long barrel of wood, with two membranes of unequal size. It is so important to the life of the ghotul that I describe its manufacture and use in a separate section.

5. *The parrang drum.*—This is a waisted drum of earthenware, shaped like an hour-glass, 18″ to 2′ long with a cow-hide cover of 9″ at either end. It is used as a substitute for the mandri in some villages. It is also called *tori parra*, *parrai*[1] or *parrayin*.

There is a wooden variety of this drum, smaller but of the same pattern, called *hulki māndri*, *ojha parra* or *damru*. The first name derives from its use in the Hulki dance, the second because it is played by the wandering minstrel Ojha. The drum is a little under a foot long; the ends have a diameter of 6″ and narrow to 3″ at the waist. It is hollowed out of a single piece of wood. Lizard-skin membranes at either end are fixed in place by rings of bamboo and tied by a cord that is crisscrossed round the drum. A leather belt, to which is attached a carved wooden peg, passes round the waist and is held by the left hand.

This is the Muria version of the widely-distributed *dāmaru* used by beggars all over India. In its very small shape it has a stick or stone tied to a string: it is shaken and the stone strikes each head in turn. In Madras it is called *udakkai*.

6. *The turburi drum.*—This small earthenware drum, hemispherical in shape, is also called *kundur*, *kundri*, *kundurka* and *kunderi*. Its Muria form is a sophisticated version of the Hill Maria *turam* drum made by them of sago palm or bija wood. Its single membrane is of cow-hide. It is tied to the waist and beaten with two sticks at festivals. (See Plate CX.)

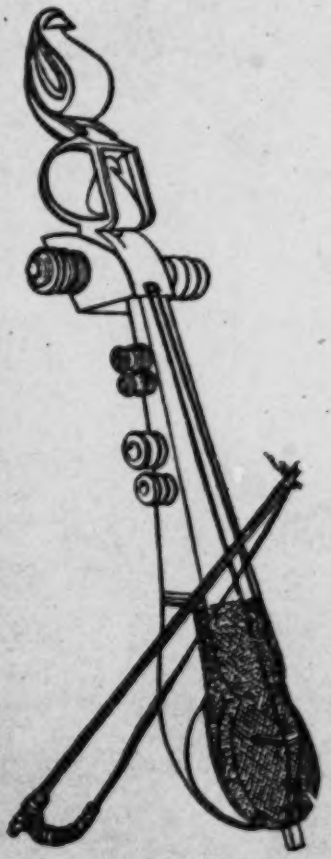


FIG. 131. A *sarangi*
(See p. 526)

[1] *Parai* is a Tamil word for a drum, from which the Paraiyan caste may possibly get its name.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●534

7. *The pitorha gong.*—This is a wooden gong, also called *tudra*, *hutorha* and *thuturha*, which seems to have developed out of the wooden cow-bell. But this hollowed-out, membraneless instrument differs from the cow-bell in having no clapper; it is beaten with two sticks during marriage dances and makes a sharp penetrating noise. The name *pitorha* means a bulbul. Riddles about the gong are:

Hayle hor hara hara inta. The dead cock cries *hara hara*.
The cock's belly is removed, but it goes on crying for food.

It is this class of instrument that gives most scope to the chelik for carving the little decorations and symbols of which they are so fond. The gongs often have small mirrors fitted into the wood, carvings of tigers, birds, chelik and motiari, and crude drawings of the vagina (Fig. 141). The heavy cow-bell type of *pitorha* is often fairly large; one in my possession measures 21″ by 10½″, another 23″ by 14″, a third 27½″ by 14″. Sometimes the *pitorha* takes the shape of a hollowed-out canoe (Fig. 130). I have one that is 26″ long with a slit 10″ long, 3″ deep and 1″ across. A small hole is made in the bottom of the slit to improve the tone.[1]

The wood used is generally semur or siuna. A chelik goes to the tree and throws rice and pulse at it in the name of Lingo. 'To improve the sound', the gong is worshipped with oil and haldi before a marriage.

8. *The sarangi.*—A fiddle of the ordinary Indian pattern, made of a single block of wood, with a hollowed-out belly. The Muria sometimes carve a bird at the top (Fig. 131).

9. *The dhusir.*—This is another type of fiddle with a bamboo neck attached to a resonator made of half a coconut. This is covered with lizard skin. The strings are of horse-hair. The instrument is held to the shoulder and played with a bamboo bow which has horse-hair strings.

10. *The toheli.*—This resembles the Indian *sitar*. A bamboo neck is attached to a gourd resonator. It is played specially in honour of Bara Pen and Bangaram.

11. *The dumri.*—A guitar made of a thick board over which brass strings are tied, with a large gourd resonator. It is held with one hand and the strings are plucked with the other. If any of these stringed instruments are played at a wedding, they are first worshipped with oil and haldi in the name of Lingo.

12. *The hakum hunting-horn.*—Originally this was an ordinary buffalo horn, and still many of them may be seen slung from the roofs of shrines. They are blown at festivals to announce the arrival of a god or to mark any important turn of the ceremonial. The Ghasia make an elaborate brass horn by the *cire-perdue* process, which is eagerly bought by those Muria who can afford it. Such brass horns are common in Madras, where they are called *hombu*, and in Nepal under the name of *sringa*.

13. *The solor flute.*—This is also called *kalur* and *husor* in Gondi and *bansuri* in Halbi. It is a cylindrical bamboo tube with from four to six stops. Among the Muria flutes in my possession, one is 3′ long. It is closed by the

[1] This appears to be a miniature edition of the large wooden xylophone made from a hollow log and sometimes called a canoe-drum which is frequently found in the Naga Hills, among the Wa of Burma, in the Malay Peninsula and in Borneo. Hutton connects it with the Fijian *lali*. 'It may be associated with the use of the war canoe, as its construction appears to be attended in the Naga Hills by taboos identical with those attending the construction of canoes in Melanesia; and canoes have been used, occasionally at any rate, for drumming in Manipur, in Papua and in Oceania.'—J. H. Hutton, 'Races of Further Asia', *Man in India*, Vol. XII (1932), p. 10.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
534●

natural joint at the proximal end near which a circular sound-hole has been burnt. Half-way down the pole is a set of three holes and then after a space

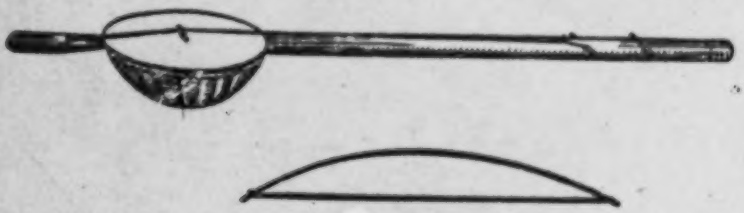


Fig. 132. A *dhuzir*
(See p. 526)

of 4" another set of three holes. A bamboo stick with a bunch of cloth at the end is kept inside the flute to clean it. Another flute, with five stops, has a lozenge-shaped sound-hole which is divided into two by a lump of wax, so that the air can escape from both ends of the flute which has no joints to close it. A small piece of tin, held in place by a roll of salphi fibres, can be slid up and down to close one or both of the sound-holes. This flute is 14" long; a third, of the same size, has four stops and a sound-hole. This, which is only capable of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, is, of course, the most primitive. I have found it distributed in the remoter villages throughout the entire Muria area. It is curious that contact with the bazaars and main roads should even add stops to the flute, but it is so.

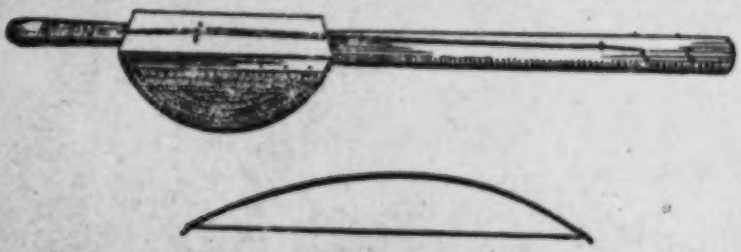


Fig. 133. Another type of *dhuzir*

The chelik sometimes play their flutes very well. They dance with them at festivals, and play them while watching cattle or sitting lonely in a field-hut at night. In Bermakot, the chelik distinguished ten different tunes.—Matapar, Bangarampar, Maolipar, Budha Dokarapar, Khanda Dokarapar, Lingopar, Son Kumarpar, Knari Maolipar, Bhamnipar and Bhagarampatpar.

14. *The kekrong*.—This is the curious musical rasp, a notched stick belonging to the idiophone class, found also in south-east Asia and Africa. The rasps are generally made of bamboo poles about 5' long with a bunch of feathers at the top. At the lower end a slot is made and notches are cut along it on either side for about 8". A bit of wood is rubbed over these notches making a rasping noise which can be adapted to the rhythm of the drums. A similar rasp made of wood, 1' long, 1½" deep and ¾" broad, was attached to the bottom of one of the elaborate toys carried on Chherta and Pus Kolang expeditions.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
883
● 534

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Here the wood was hollowed out like a little canoe and the notches were cut in its sides.

I have also an elaborate iron stridulator; it is a hollow cylindrical tube 18" long notched right down its upper surface, and twisted at the narrower end into a crude representation of a cobra with hood erect. Attached to its lower side by an iron loop is a 4" 'hair-pin' of twisted iron which is used to rub against the indentations of the upper surface.[1]

15. *The kach-tahendor.*—This little iron Jew's harp is said to make music so sweet 'that even a snake would dance to it', but it is not popular because it is supposed to damage the teeth. It is made by Muria-Lohar from locally smelted iron; a prong is enclosed in a small frame which is held by the teeth, the mouth thus acting as resonator, and it is played by jerking the vibrating prong (Fig. 138). There is also a very delicate instrument made of thin bamboo cut so as to leave a vibrating tongue tied by a string at the end. Held between the teeth, the string is jerked and a sweet low humming noise is produced.[2]

16. *The muyang bells.*—Small pellet-bells are tied to the buttocks by the Jhoria Muria for their festival dances. They are jerked up and down or swung to and fro. With them are usually two or three larger clapper-bells called *irma*. They are made of brass by the local Ghasia. Pellet-bells are also tied round the arms, the calves or the ankles, and strings of them are hung from the girdle.

17. *The kalwahing anklets.*—These are hollow, made of iron or brass, and contain small pellets of the same material. When the chelik dance vigorously stamping their feet, the clash of the anklets blends pleasantly with the rhythm of the drums.

18. *The chitkul cymbals.*—Nearly all Lingo's instruments are still used only by boys, but the *chitkul* are more common in the hands of girls. They are made of brass by Ghasia or Bharewa and are often attached to each other by long chains of cowries. Men and boys also use them—there is no taboo

[1] Grigson found the Baiga of Arwar in the Balaghat District using a musical rasp, which they called *kirr-kirki*, made of a 'tapering rod of dhaman-wood carved by a series of bulges into a kind of ratchet. The key-board is a short piece of bamboo one foot long, one inch wide and a quarter of an inch thick, obtained by tangential section so that the outer surface of the bamboo is retained for roughly one-fifth of the periphery of the complete bamboo. This piece of bamboo is then bisected lengthways by a second tangential cut extending for two-thirds of its length. Five cuts in the radial direction are made to produce a double set of five "fingers", which have a common groove about 1½" from the open end. To operate the instrument the tapering "ratchet" stick is stabbed vertically downwards through the groove.'—W. V. Grigson, *The Aboriginal Problem in the Balaghat District* (Nagpur, 1941), p. 14. This is similar to the South Indian *kokkara*, used by Pulayar, Vedar and Kuruvar sorcerers. The *kokkara* is 'formed of a plate of iron turned into a tube, the edges strongly serrated and not closely united. From it hangs a chain and an iron pin which is rubbed along the dentate edges of the iron cylinder, making a horrid grating noise'.—S. Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore* (London, 1883), p. 49. The Savara *daddawrdjan* is a stridulator made of a hollow bamboo with a slit, either side of which is ragged with small grooves, the upper part of the slit being covered with the hand to regulate the volume of resonance.—C. V. Sitapati, 'Sora Musical Instruments', *Bulletin du Musée Ethnographie du Trocadero* (Paris, 1933), No. 3, p. 23. I have also seen Savara use as a rasp the inner ribbed core of a buffalo's horn.

[2] The Jew's harp is common in Assam and Burma, where it has been recorded for the Lakher and Chin, though it is absent among the Lushai. The Naga tribes call it 'mouth music' and use it for serenades. The Mikir and Garo make a double harp and for the Kachin 'all love passages are conducted with this as the chief musical instrument'. Still more elaborate harps are found in the Sadiya District. So seductive is the music that the use of the harp is forbidden by many missionaries.—A. W. Young, 'The Jew's Harp in Assam', *JASB*, Vol. IV (*N.S.*, 1908), pp. 235f. I have found little bamboo harps popular in the Juang and Bondo dormitories (cf. Fig. 136).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

983
534

about it—but generally for fun; an old man dressed as a beggar may do a turn by himself, mournfully clashing a pair of cymbals; a couple of chelik will take them and imitate the jerky dance motions of the motiari.

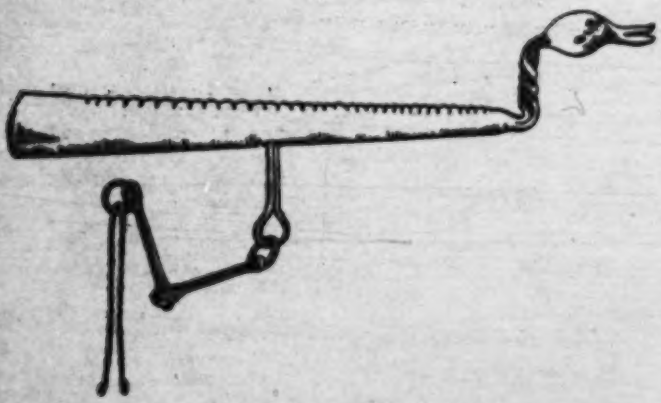


FIG. 134. An iron *bakeng*
(*See p. 527*)

These were the eighteen instruments of Lingo, and even today they are still full of the love-charms that he put into them. Not every chelik can make and use them all. Every chelik, it is safe to say, can deal with the drums; every motiari can handle the cymbals. But the buttocks-bells are not known in eastern Koudagaon, and in any ghotul there are rarely more than two or three boys who can play the stringed instruments.

Most of these instruments are not, of course, peculiar to the Muria, and it is certain that several of them do not go back to the days of Lingo. The dhol and turburi are of the ordinary Indian pattern, so are the stringed instruments. But the hunting horn, the four-holed flute, the musical rasp, the bamboo Jew's harp, the canoe-shaped gong are very primitive.

Beside the eighteen instruments, the Muria have a few others. They sometimes use a tambourine called *dahi*, made of goatskin stretched over a wooden ring, 15" in diameter. This instrument is common throughout Orissa: it is the chang of the Juang. The Jhoria of the western parganas make bull-roarers for amusement. I have not been able to discover any religious or magical significance in them; they are only used as toys. The Muria make their bull-roarers of bamboo slats, 12" to 18" long and ¾" to 1" broad; they are notched round one end and a string is attached; sometimes they are pointed at the other end. The blade is then whirled round in the air and a roaring noise is made, as a result of the edge and flat surface being alternately presented to the air, and thus acting as a closing and opening valve.[1] The *suva*, which is the shenai-clarionet of other parts of India, is sometimes used at marriages.

[1] The bull-roarer is widely distributed throughout the world, but can hardly be called common in India. It is used in the Uraon *dhumkuria*, and Roy discovered it among the Santal, Ho and Munda. Munda and Uraon bull-roarers have been found perforated as well as notched, but elsewhere, as in Bastar, only the notched type has been recorded. See S. C. Roy, 'The Bull-Roarer in India', *Man in India*, Vol. VII (1927), pp. 6ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
●534

A very simple drum is made by Muria living in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar Mountains. Two slats are made on the upper rounded surface of a split bamboo about 3′ long and these are raised by small wooden frets placed at either end. These are beaten with two small wooden sticks, the operator sitting cross-legged on the ground.[1] (See Figs. 53 and 139.)

III. The Mandri Drum

So important is the mandri drum to the chelik and so essential to their chief dances that I devote a special section to its manufacture and use.

The drum exists in two forms, the first akin to the *mridang* pattern universal throughout India, the second of the *damaru* hour-glass type. The *khut mändri* is a double-membrane drum, 30″ long, of wood or earthenware, the two ends being of different sizes, one 10″ in diameter and the other 7″. The membranes are made of cow-hide attached by strips of the same material criss-crossed round the body of the drum. The *hulki mändri*, which is also called *ojha parra* or *damaru*, is a waisted drum, shaped and hollowed out of a single piece of wood. At either end it is covered with lizard-skin which is fixed in place by a ring of bamboo held by cords made of siari bark. A normal size for this drum is 11″ long and 6½″ diameter at either end.

It is said by the Muria that only a great lover, a man who desires to shine before the maidens of the village, will go to the trouble nowadays of making a wooden mandri. Earthen drums or earthen bowls from which drums can be manufactured are easily obtainable in the bazaars and there is a growing

Fig. 135. Hunting-horn of brass
(See p. 528)

tendency to use them. Those who make the mandri of wood do so, therefore, with great care and elaborate ceremonial.

[1] This resembles the *tasang* of the Shan States. But the Shan instrument has a sort of sounding board made by a hole in the bamboo. The Reddis have a similar split stringed instrument—C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Reddis of the Bison Hills*, p. 348—so have the Bondo (Fig. 53), and the Savara.

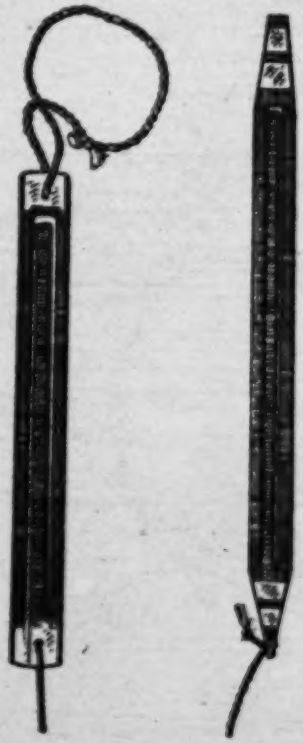
349

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

In the month of June, when the first rain falls and the frogs begin to croak, a boy goes to the jungle to find a suitable tree. The tree may either be bija,

FIG. 136. Bamboo Jew's harp
Length 44"



After a drawing from A. Williter Young's article 'The Jew's Harp in Assam' from *JASB*, Vol. IV, 1908, p. 538

FIG. 137. Chin and Mikir harps

sirsa, mahua, mango or dumar fig. Probably the most commonly used is the bija. Before cutting the tree the chelik must offer it an egg with some sâri gum as incense on a little fire saying, 'Look, we are taking you to make you into a drum; may the sound you give be that of a good drum'. Another prayer is, 'Look Bhimul, let our drum sound well'. In Palari the boys used to offer *mahuri* and coconut in the name of Danteshwari and the Departed saying, 'May our drum give a good sound and may we learn every kind of step (*dâkar*) and rhythm (*thâr*); may the chelik have no kind of sorrow; may the songs of the chelik and motiari be good'. The reference to Bhimul, which is repeated at the worship of the drums before the marriage ceremony, is probably due to his association with rain and thunder. In some legends thunder is caused by the noise made by Bhimul dragging his water-skin across the sky. He who gives thunder in heaven is the best person to promote the thunder of the drum on earth.

Then the boy cuts down the tree and takes it home. He hollows out the wood with his *kurar* (Fig. 14) and axe until it is of perfect shape. He makes

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X983
534

a little hole in one side and closes it with a wooden plug. This is called the drum's umbilical stump. Later when the drum is ready the boy will blow into it, the idea being that when there is more air inside, it will sound better. Then he puts it aside for a year. During this year he should offer Bhimul a pig for the success of his drum. Then in the same month that he originally cut the wood, when the frogs are croaking again, he ties the skin to either end.

The preparation of the skin also has its appropriate ritual. The boy takes the cow-hide to the river and puts it in the water to soak. When he finds after three or four days that the hairs come out easily, he removes it and offers red and black powder, seven rings of aonra leaf, egg-shells, a chicken and liquor to the Yer Kanyang saying, 'O Kanyang, for so many days you have been defiled; to free you of this I make these offerings; let the skin be good and let it not break'. The idea that the water is defiled by contact with cow-hide is, of course, an accretion on older Muria thought. It is quite inconsistent, for the same Muria do not hesitate to eat beef and to offer cows and bulls to their gods. It is said that once a Siraha, when consulted as to why the skins of the drum broke rather quickly, declared that it was because the Water Maiden was angry at her defilement by contact with leather, and the custom arose from this.

The skin is tied to the drum in the months when the frogs begin to croak so that as the frogs croak loudly the drum too will give a loud noise'.

Then the boy with the help of his friends makes a little platform of sticks on the ground, lays the skin upon it, stands on either end to keep it taut, scatters ash over it and with a bit of wood rubs off the hairs. He doubles the skin, lays the drum mouth-downwards on it and cuts round leaving an ample margin. When it has dried he cuts the upper skin to the exact size required, leaving the underskin to project all round. He makes long strips of cord from the hide, cutting it out circlewise. Then he ties the skins to either end, fixing them in place with the cords that he criss-crosses over the body.

It is said that cow-hide is better than bullock's, but that the skin of cow or bullock killed by a tiger gives the best sound of all. This is obviously based on the idea that the drum thunders as the tiger roars.

Now as the chelik is finishing his work he soaks a few mahua flowers in water and offers them to the drum with a little rice, pulse, haldi, an egg, and a chicken saying, 'Look, Bhimul Mandri Guru, O all ye Departed, I am offering you this so that my drum may sound well every day'. In the villages of the north, where the cult of Lingo is prominent, the offerings are made in his name. This is more appropriate, since Lingo was the first musician who taught the Muria the art of drumming.

Then the boy puts some oil and flour mixed together on both ends of the drum; he sometimes attaches a sort of saddle of polished cow-hide to protect his body. I have also seen ordinary blankets, deer-skin or leopard-skin used for this purpose. At last when everything is ready, on that very night the boy summons the chelik and motiari and dances with them the whole night beating the drum all the time. The drum thus introduced to the community of youth may last a lifetime.

The drums are hung in the verandah or sitting-room of a house or suspended from the roof of the ghotul. In some ghotul the entire ceiling is covered with drums, a very impressive sight. The instruments are treated with reverence and are honoured on special occasions. The mandri is used mainly for marriages; for religious festivals a circular dhol drum is employed. When the boys go for a marriage, as they enter the village they exclaim, 'May no hostile god or goddess, witch or warlock trouble us'. They pluck a little dub grass and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●534
291

Chelik of Temrugaon wearing typical Hill Maria cap and playing the hunting-horn

Plate CVI

X883
578

Chelik panchayat denouncing a would-be reformer

[p. 532 (2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

throw it behind them as they go. They also tie a little to each drum, pushing the ends of the grass under the strings. As they enter the village, they drum what is called the Bhimul Par or the rhythm in honour of Bhimul, and go once round the marriage-booth. Then they go apart and stack the drums in a row or pile and the leading drummer, who is called the Mandri Guru, offers liquor and the usual gifts of rice, haldi and flour to the drums in the name of Bhimul, Lingo or Danteshwari Matal, according to the local custom, and always in the name of the Dead. 'Let the sounds of the drum be good', they say, 'and let the variety of our dance-steps and rhythms be right. O Mandri Guru Bhimul, as your drum used to sound, so may ours.' As they finish the offerings the boys gather round and each stoops down and catches hold of his drum by its cords; then at a given signal they all together lift the drums into the air and, with a loud cry, sling them across their shoulders and begin to beat them vigorously.

When a drum is broken, the owner asks the Siraha why, and only repairs it after making the appropriate offerings to whatever god or ancestor caused the trouble.

Some of the riddles about this drum are picturesque:

'The seed is outside, the bark inside.'
'In the elephant's stomach buzzes a fly.'
'It cries *tihito*, this bird with no teeth.'
'The bullocks come from Porrobhum [the Upper World] crying *burum burum*.'[1]

IV. Dancing Dress

Chelik and motiari wear no special dancing dress for weddings or any ordinary occasion. They simply put on as many ornaments as they can, stick feathers in their hair and occasionally tattoo their faces with white dots and stars.

Even for festivals the Muria of the east have no special dress and they go out on their Hulki and Dandar expeditions in their ordinary clothes. But the Jhoria have a very elaborate and distinctive dress for the festivals of the clan-god; and the Muria of the north and west wear a special uniform (which I describe elsewhere) for the Pus Kolang and Chait Dandar expeditions. Here I shall confine myself to a description of the Jhoria festival attire, which closely resembles the dancing dress of the Hill Maria.

[1] It is interesting to compare these riddles about drums with those current in other tribes. The following are Uraon:

'A brown cow lows in the middle of a field.'
'The boy who only speaks when beaten.'
'Outside pretty
Inside empty.'
'Put down silent—picked up noisy.'
'The fishes gather when the dry tree is beaten.'

These are Kharia:

'The jack-fruit tree is a tree full of mandri drums.'
'The little fishes gather at the sound of the clouds.'

These are Baiga:

'At the least touch, it growls.'
'An orphan boy with a big belly cries all night.'
'He is brought and hung up. When the crowd gathers, they beat him.'

See Archer, op. cit., pp. 181ff.; Roy, *The Kharias*, pp. 450ff.; *The Baiga*, pp. 464ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The basis of this dress is a very commonplace shirt and a white skirt with red bands, held in place by a wide sash, all of bazaar cloth. The chelik wear on their heads either turbans tied straight round to make a sort of box or a round cap of bamboo lattice-work covered with red cloth with one end hanging down behind as a streamer. This *topi*, as it is called, is decorated with feathers, cowries, coloured balls borrowed from the motiari and anything else available. When a turban is worn, it is similarly decorated and has one or two long streamers, or strings of cowries hanging down behind.

Round their waists the chelik tie a cord and attach to it bunches of small and big bells which hang above their buttocks.[1] I once saw a boy with a large wooden cow-bell. From the shoulders hangs the very distinctive dancing-shield called *moghi*. This is a circular shield of carved wood or basketwork, with bamboo hoops underneath to support it away from the back and often four smaller hoops of bamboo or brass on the upper side, through which are threaded more streamers of red, white or blue cloth (see Fig. 33).

FIG. 138. Iron Jew's harp
Length 3½"

Sometimes coloured shawls are thrown over the shoulders spoiling the effect, since they conceal the shields. I have only once seen the older type of Hill Maria 'rib-waistcoat', and that was at Bandopal where the boys covered their waistcoats with folded strips of white cloth so arranged as to look like a series of ribs down the body. Round their necks the boys wear masses of ornaments, many of them borrowed for the occasion from their sisters and cousins.

Every dancer must carry something over his shoulder. Nowadays this is often an umbrella, though an umbrella decorated with strings of cowries or even bunches of fruit. Traditionally the Hill Maria carried a large pharsa battle-axe over his shoulder: the Muria still sometimes make exaggeratedly large wooden pharsa, carved wooden godel axes, sticks with bunches of peacock feathers tied to the top; the less enterprising carry ordinary pharsa and godel axes and even wooden sticks.

The most interesting objects carried by the Muria for their festival dances are the 'horses', or *kokti* as they are called (Figs. 27, 29). These are roots of trees chosen because their shape roughly resembles the head of a horse, often a fringe of smaller roots being left on the upper side to indicate the mane. This 'horse' is given horns or ears by fixing pointed bits of wood, barking-deer horns, or the tusks of the wild boar to the front of the 'head'. From its nose hang long streamers of white feathers, and the nose itself is often decorated with crisscross patterns. Into the back of the *kokti* are fixed three or four ornamented sticks each with a tuft of feathers at the end. The general effect, specially when a very large number of these 'horses' appear together, is magnificent.

[1] These buttocks-bells, which are characteristic of the Hill Maria, have also been recorded in the Coorg area of the Western Ghats. See M. B. Emeneau, *JAOS*, Vol. LIX, p. 132.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

V. The Mandri Dance

X 883
535

I include here all those dances which are primarily exhibitions of drumming with the earthen or wooden mandri, the large waisted parrai, and the wooden tudra. These dances are performed at marriages or for amusement in the ghotul; they are the dances normally displayed at the camps of touring officials and visitors.

There is no special uniform; the dancers wear what they can. Boys sometimes carry carved wooden axes over one shoulder: girls and boys may decorate their faces with white spots, lines and stars. There is often a boy in peacock-dress or a cowrie-jacket. All the pomp and excitement of the dance is for the boys; the peahens to these exuberant peacocks are usually pushed into a corner where they sing a subdued little Relo on their own.

There are a great many different movements in the Mandri; I will describe them one by one. The prelude, or grand entrance, is done at the beginning of the dance always, when the boys bring in the wood for the marriage-booth, when they go to welcome the bridegroom on his arrival at their village, and when they escort bride or bridegroom to the Lagir ceremony. The formation is simple—boys form a double file followed by two rows of girls.

The procession advances a few steps, halts, retires a little, advances again. Sometimes it comes forward with a rush, halts, turns round and rushes back not quite so far, comes on again; with each rush the procession makes a slight advance. I saw this done very effectively at Sidhawand, where the boys held antlers in their hands. When they reached the limit of their advance they bowed with them to the ground, then all together raised them into the air with a fine flourish, and retired. At Kokori, boys entered in a long serpentine column. Every four paces, they knelt down, then advanced crab-like sideways, knelt, went back, came on again, knelt, moved to and fro on their knees. Sometimes the line of drummers squats down and hops along, drumming vigorously the while. When the drummers have made their entry, they should perform the drum worship in the name of Bhimul or Lingo.

They then usually form themselves into the first movement, which is quite simple. They go round in a circle, with a straightforward rapid walk, the

[534]

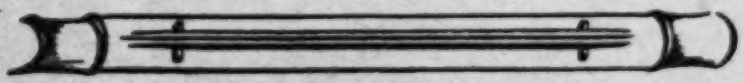


Fig. 130. A bamboo drum (see p. 530)

knees slightly bent. If there are any boys with wooden kutorka or tudra, these gyrate inside the main circle. The girls form two lines some distance

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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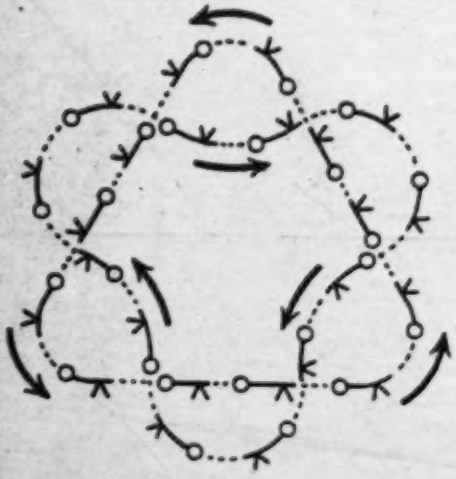
But there is no limit to the variations of the Mandri. At one moment the dancers are going round in a circle, and each boy has one hand on the shoulder



of the drummer in front of him; the next they have closed in and are kneeling down facing inwards clapping their hands; soon they jump up, turn round, open the circle and kneel again facing outwards, clapping their hands. They put their hands on their hips and sway twice on their feet. Sometimes they gyrate with the drums between their legs, beating with the left hand behind the left leg, then they swing the drums up and forward. Between beats, they touch first chest, then buttocks with their hands, then beat the drums.

Sometimes they do a sort of leap-frog: the circle shakes out a little, and they kneel down with the drums on the ground and each in turn jumps over the others. When that is done they begin to gyrate, kneeling down, and hopping forward.

FIG. 140. Flutes
(See p. 526)

[534]

In another movement, the boys kneel in a circle facing one way; they shuffle round on their knees, upright, they lean back on their heels, one foot to one side, then to the other. They go round slowly on their knees, like a fantastic ring of cripples, then lean right back and go backwards supporting their bodies with one hand, drumming with the other. Then they go forward on all fours beating with alternate hands and at last spring up and go round quickly.

When they tire of this, they sit on the drums lengthways as though riding a horse; then they turn inwards and move towards the centre pulling the drums in with graceful movements, and later widen the circle again with the same movements reversed. They abandon their drums and dance round the circle, clapping their hands, sometimes sitting down on each other's drums to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Kachora chelik with tudra drum

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CVIII

X683
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Chelik playing the flute at Nayanar

Ghotul Kotwar of Markabera playing the dhusir

[p. 540 (B)]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

(i) *Manda mandi tendsim dāy pohre mām.*
Throw away the mess in the booth and go away.

5. *Neyi Tarhāna Pār.* The tedious business of anointing bride and bridegroom with oil, which continues intermittently for two days, is enlivened by some excellent dancing.

(a) *Teda mudiya tatti de.*
Stand old man and give the adze.

(b) *Gām chehli basunde ta.*
We will sit while the sun is shining.

(c) *Barha māns ke chorun neyse lāchhu āy lāchhu mai hi dāda mai to ni chorey.*
It was Lachhu, not I, that stole the pork.

(d) *Dim dim dim kosum dim tumcho bāpcho polka dim.*
Testes! Testes! Kosum testes! The hollow testes of your father!

(e) *Dengur mundi me lamha āse, chu kābri chu.*
In the ant-hill is a hare, *Chu kābri chu.*

(f) *Teda bhuski hātum dāyi.*
Stand up, fat woman, and go to the bazaar.

(g) *Karanji gaon cho kursa, gaon kāje pursa.*
He is impotent in Karanji village; but he is a real man in ours.

FIG. 141. *Pitorha* gong

6. *Maur Tatāna Pār.* The rhythm while the bride and bridegroom are having their crowns tied on their heads.

Tatti de tatti de kanwār bābu kanwār.
Give the adze, give the adze. But the boy won't go.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
533
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Karanji gaon cho bhursa aur bodi nāo pārun pārun sāng. Gotok bāhri cho gotok silik.
Speak of Bhusa and Bodi of Karanji. For one broom there's one bamboo pin.

11. *Sailori Pār.* The rhythm is very distinctive. The drumming is punctuated by shrill cries and the boys wave their arms in the air between the beats. Their circle moves constantly backwards and forwards.

(a) *Nāchun nāchun kahān jānwān? Hamke lāgli bhuk donāyek pej kon dewu āy?*
Where should we go dancing dancing? We are hungry, who will give us gruel?

(b) *Kedun kedun bāgdare yeklo manus yend kare chichha chargod ke ār kare.*
The tiger makes the man run away; what can the fellow's testes do? He can only hide in a fish-net.

(c) *Chachān mārun neyse chachān mārun neyse jānw bohāri chandāwān.*
The hawk has carried it away; let us go, *bohāri*, to release it.

(d) *Chāh chāh pār oltom.*
The drum-beating is very careless.

●[534]

FIG. 142. Bull-roarer from Markabera
Length 1' 9"

12. *Kondagaon Pār.* A rhythm specially associated with the Kondagaon ghotul.
Dum dām Kondāgaon nāogaon Sonābāl.
Beating at Kondagaon and judgement at Sonabal.

13. *Māndri Pār* or *Māndar Kelni Pār.* One of the drummers kneels down and the others go round him in line and then one by one jump over him. The last boy of the line also kneels and they then jump over two drummers, and so on till all save one are kneeling. He jumps over the whole line, kneels at the head of it, and leads them round, still kneeling and drumming in a circle, moving forward first on one knee and then on the other.
Māndar dandik helun ta.
Play the drum for a little while.
Pāgi hitāwun desta.
Remove the cloth from the vagina.

14. *Uram Pār.* This complicated 'Pleasure Dance' is delightful to watch. The boys first move in a circle, beating their drums with both hands at the same end. Then they put them down on the ground, large end facing outwards, and go round beating each of the drums in turn until they return to their own. They sit down on the drums and beat each end in turn with both hands. Then they beat the outer ends, stand up and clap their hands in the air, swing round, bend down and beat the inner end, then roll the drums round in a circle, lift them two paces, put them down again, beat alternately inner and outer ends, roll them round again, beat outer ends, stand again clapping

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Plate CIX

Chelik worshipping their drums at a marriage at Nayanar

Motiari carrying drums for their chelik

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate CX

The Sirdar of the Sidhawand ghotul

The Danga of the Bekora ghotul with dakl drum

The Salki of the Kongera ghotul with kundri drum

[p. 550 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Movements in a Maudri dance at Khutgaon

[p.554 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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One method of placing the arms in the Hulki dance.

Plate CXII

Chelik of Atargaon, showing buttock veils and cowrie streamers

[p. 560(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Movements in the Mandri dance, at Kabonga

[p.560(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Movements in the Mandri dance, at Kabonga

[p. 560 (c)]

Plate CXVI

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Maudri and Relo dancing at Kachera

[p. 560 (b)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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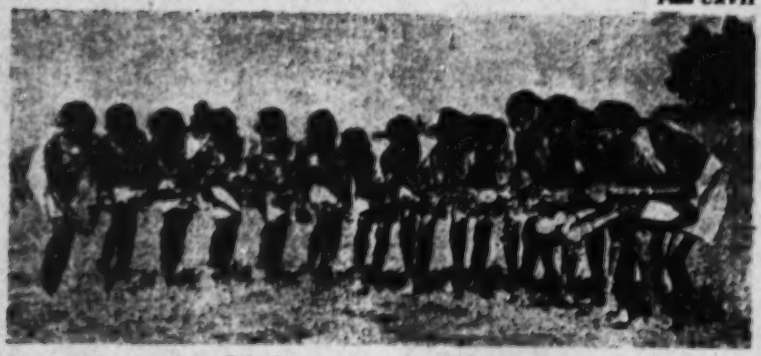

Reio dancers accompanying the boys

Mandri dancers on their knees

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[p. 564 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Murik

Plate CXVIII

XS83
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S34

Marriage dancers at Kachora

Motiari of Kachora practise the marriage-dance

[P.564 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate CXIX

Chelik and motiari of Atargaon and Kongera doing a variation of the Maria dance

Chelik of Toinar doing sandhi-par

[p.572(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Festival dancing, with big dhol drums, at Phunder

Festival dancing, with small drums, at Phunda

[p. 582 (W)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison' charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum*. Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heirlooms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called kikir, a Jews-harp made of iron or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

534 bamboo and the usual flute. They are fond of gongs, but these are not now so common as they were. At the great Pen Karsita at Ghotpal in 1942, the dancers used slabs of

Kikir Fiddle
(*Length 2'*)

coloured wood, bits of old tin and indeed anything that would make a noise instead of the traditional gongs. Like the Muria, at festivals and even for amusement the Maria use a hunting horn, either a real horn or one made of brass.

541 Besides dancing, the chief Maria relaxation is the cock-fight. At the conclusion of all the bigger bazaars, the men retire to a grove of trees and set their cocks against each other. The cocks are armed with sharp and deadly little knives tied to their feet and fights are to the death. The victor has the privilege of taking the defeated bird, but the real excitement comes from the betting.

v

844 [843] The ceremonies attending birth and marriage are very simple. The pregnant mother is not hampered by many restrictions on her movements. After the birth of the child the placenta is buried in a pit behind the house. Logs are placed above it and the arrow with which the cord was cut is driven into the ground near by. A small shed is made and the 846 mother lives here for some weeks with her child, taking a daily bath above the placenta-pit. At the end of this period of segregation, the husband gives a feast to the neighbours, [551] the child is named and the mother is permitted to return to her household duties. It was to such a feast that the unhappy victim of the Mardum sacrifice was enticed.[1]

881 There are no ceremonies of initiation at puberty, though a

[1] Case No 31.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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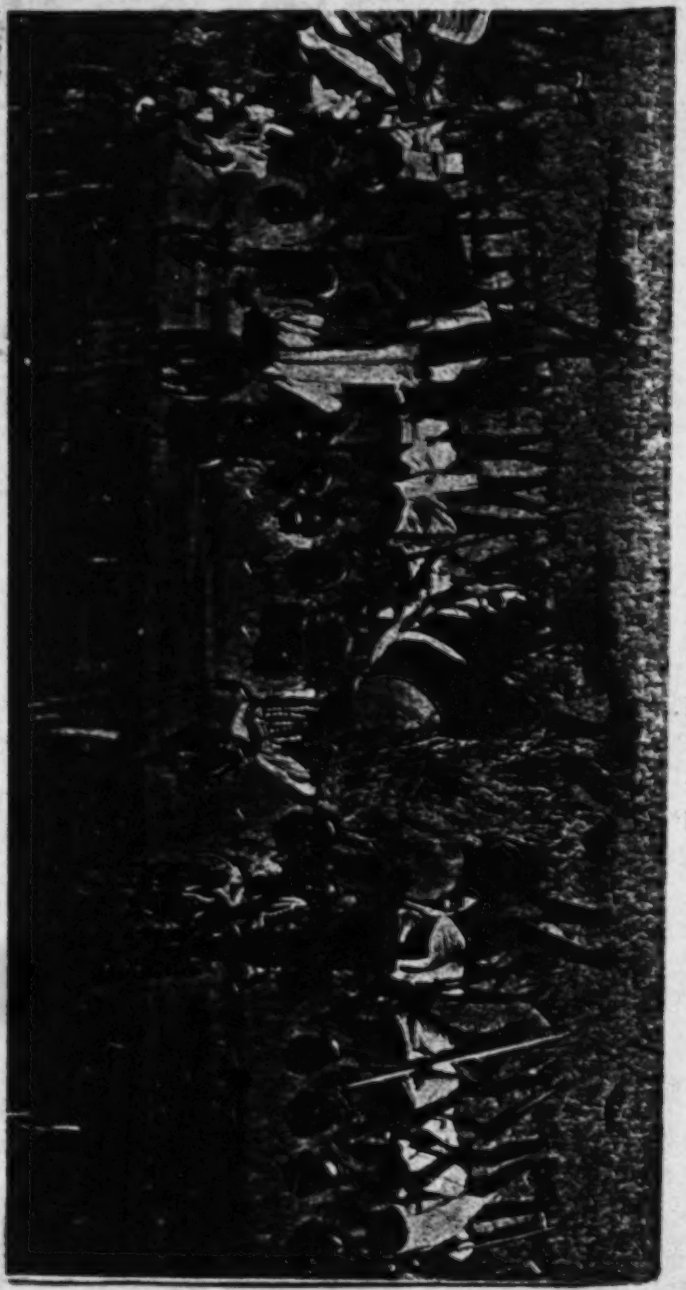

The famous 'bison-horn' marriage dance

[Facing p. 144]

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535 DANCING.--dance styles (e.g., imitative, pantomimic, symbolic, stylized); technique (e.g., movements of the head, trunk, and limbs); gestures, postures, and their symbolism; solo, pair, and group dancing; choreographic patterns; extemporization and formalization; rhythm; musical accompaniment; occasions for dancing and associated dance forms (e.g., war dances, shamanistic dances, ballroom dancing, tap dancing); participants and spectators; dancing places (e.g., dance halls); dance costumes and paraphernalia; emotional expression in dancing; training in dancing; specialized dancers and dance leaders; choreographic arts allied to dancing (e.g., figure skating); etc. See also:

Costume 391
Posture 616
Skating 626
Dance performances on the stage 645
Night clubs 647

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

582 hand some Hill Marias say that there is no theoretic obstacle to intermarriage, but that actually 'it isn't done', though they occasionally take part in each other's festivals. The Bison-horn 177 style of dancing with long *dol* drums is gradually spreading among 535 the lower villages just north of the Indrawati. Hudala Karka, for example, some eight miles from Barsur and on the northern bank of the river, now dances entirely in Bison-horn style, and claims to be a Bison-horn village, the claim being admitted by the Bison-horn Maria *pargana* headman in theory, and in practice by intermarriage with undoubted Bison-horn villages; but in several houses I found old Hill Maria dancing shields (*moghi*) and buttock-bells, and the older men admitted that when they were young they 177 danced in the Hill Maria style. Another sign of this is that Hurra [176] Gunda, the log-god of the Tamo clan at Tumirgunda, near Hudala Karka, is also the log-god of the Atami clan of Hudala Karka and of two other Atami villages south of the Indrawati. The clan-priest of the god is a Tamo, and the Tamo villages of Tumirgunda and Padmeta still dance in Hill Maria style. In a few years, therefore, the Bison-horn Marias will have adopted the valley villages north of the Indrawati; the *pargana* headman already virtually claims them as such, since they are under his direct jurisdiction and not that of the Hill Maria *chalki* or assistant appointed to help him manage the eight Hill Maria villages of his *pargana*. In speech, too, [197] they are approximating more and more to the Bison-horn Marias, as there is a marked absence of the harsh guttural sounds so characteristic of the Hill Maria language, and they use the Bison-horn technical social and religious terms.

101 Westward along the valley, as observed above, Bison-horn Maria influence gets less. For a few miles, roughly from Nelasnar 177 to Jegur on the Matawara-Kutru road, and in the village of Ketulnar beyond Jegur, the people are now known as Murias but are really Hill Maria stock, and still dance in Hill Maria style. Ketulnar still intermarries with the hill villages of the Kutru Mar *pargana*. The villagers of Bheriabhum, on the south bank opposite their former village of Pali, five or six miles north of Bhairamgarh, are of the Hill Earsal clan, and cannot be distinguished from Farsalor of the hills. In the hill villages above the valley I verified occasional marriages with girls from the valley villages and vice versa.

101 The tract west and south-west of Kutru, marked by the letter L on the ethnographic map, contains a very scanty population, which appears to be Hill Maria in origin, much modified by contact with the Telugu-influenced Dorla Koitor from the south, who are shown by the letter K. These mixed elements also were returned

[see cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Dongar, sleeping the first night at Orcha, twenty-five miles from Kurmer, descending in the morning fourteen miles to Dhaurai, doing their selling and buying and eating a noon meal, and then return that afternoon to sleep again at Orcha, reaching Kurmer on the third day by noon. And their route is no easy one, but up hill and down dale along rough mountain paths. The men will carry heavy loads balanced at either end of a carrying stick borne on their shoulder, proceeding at a jog trot, for nine or ten miles over similar paths, but stop to drink and paddle at the streams, and get very exhausted if they have to carry weights much farther; on the other hand, after food and an hour's rest they are ready to walk back at once to their villages. Three Hill Marias on my last visit to the hills came to my camp at Itulnar some seventy miles across country, with letters, and met me on the march at 8 a.m. in the hills on the third morning after they had set out, having done twelve miles that morning along an exceptionally arduous mountain path. When the crops are ripe on the *penda* slopes and the men are sleeping there, the women go twice a day to them with their food, and sometimes have a heavy day's reaping as well; the *penda* may be five or six miles away from the village and high above it.

Like the Nagas of the Assam hills, the Hill Marias prefer walking over hilly country to long treks on the plains, and are excellent hill and tree climbers. All the Koitor of Bastar, in fact, are remarkably agile tree climbers, and seem to walk up trees rather than climb.

The Bison-horn Maria is even better developed physically than the Hill Maria, and has similar powers of endurance, though on the level plateau villages he does not become the adept hill climber that every Hill Maria is. He leaves less, however, to his women. He can be seen at his physical fittest when dancing for hours with tireless verve and agility, wearing on his head a heavy head-dress of bison-horns with plumes of peacock and jungle-cock feathers and strings of cowries, with a heavy cylindrical drum of hollowed tree-trunk three feet or more long slung from his shoulders, and sometimes carrying a small son frogwise on his chest. He will carry stick-loads of grain sixty or seventy miles to market in the Godavari valley, for even he makes as yet only little use of carts or beasts of burden; the Hill Maria makes none at all.

The Hill Maria wears nothing but a loin-cloth of coarse cotton in winter, summer and rains, though an occasional man may have a piece of similar cloth big enough to wrap over his shoulders at night, and a few headmen have blankets. His body, therefore, is inured to heat and to great cold; for frosts are frequent in his hills, and even as late as the end of March the thermometer may fall to 42°.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

301 from behind, it makes her appear very thick-, in fact bull-necked, and creates a false impression of her often slender build.

304 What beauty the girls have they mar to Western eyes by excessive tattooing over all the face and forehead, and often the breasts also. Mothers begin to tattoo their daughters when they are eight or nine years old, using lengths of the brass wire used for the rings in the helix of the ear, sharpened into rough needles, and black charcoal powder. The girl lies on her side with one cheek flat on the ground while the mother operates on the other cheek. Sometimes only one breast is tattooed, often neither. They seem never to tattoo legs or arms, though Glasfurd speaks of their arms and thighs being covered with tattooing. A swastika with the corners slightly rounded and not right-angled, and a pair of very small parallel vertical lines between each arm is a common motive, on face and breast. On the centre of the forehead, vertically one below the other, are usually tattooed a circle with a dot in the centre, for the sun, a circle and a crescent for the full and crescent moon respectively. Thence fairly symmetrically vertical hatching alternates with horizontal round and round the face, becoming oblique at the corners and down the sides of the nose; and over the corners of the cheekbones three dots are made triangle-wise. This is only one common pattern. The only tattooing on men is single, double or treble horizontal rows of dots, varying in number from three to nine, over the glabella. I did not ascertain at what age or by whom these marks are made. There are no special tattoo marks for the different clans. There seems to be no significance behind tattooing; it is considered merely an adornment. The Nagpur Gonds speak of tattooing as marks by which ancestors and clan-gods can identify [775] persons in the next world; but the Marias have no formulated idea of another world.

292 The dancing dress of the Hill Maria men is completely different from that of the Bison-horn Marias and most other tribes. The ●535 women have no special dancing dress. The young men wear on their heads either red and white turbans, or, more often, curious Chinese fig-box head-dresses which they call by the Hindi word *topi*, covered with red or blue cloth, and piped at the edges and centre with peacock feather quills. Often a peacock, jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo's feather is stuck in the *topi*, or spiral coils of feather quill fastened on both sides of a stick; or scarlet 'Scissors' cigarette packets found empty at the bazaars, lead seals from petrol tins, old brass cog-wheels from watches, little tins, cheap mirrors, the round of bright tin-foil cut out when an airtight cigarette tin is opened; dried snipe or woodcock neck and skull; or anything bright-coloured or interesting to the Maria.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE VII

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Hill Maria dancers. Note, in 2, the use of bark rain-coat as dancing skirt
(*Photographs by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.*)

Hill Maria dancers, showing dancing-shields and bunches of pellet-bells worn over the rump

A Hill Maria of Kurmer, using his rain-hat and rain-shield, as he works with his *gudari* digging hoe

[*facing p. 74*]

[FACING p. 74]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 Sometimes the 'fig-box' is made of a lattice of split bamboo strips.
● 535 Generally a streamer or two of red or blue cloth hangs down from the back of the *topi* or turban. Over the chest a sort of sleeveless vest of red cloth is worn, almost neck-high, and over this from breast to waist, strands of white cloth are twisted, back and front, so as to produce a rib-like effect, the ribs radiating from a central double plait of cloth running vertically from navel to breast, then passing on either side of the neck and repeating the pattern in the rear. The 'ribs' vary from five to nine in number, according to the means or taste of the dancer. This cloth arrangement is known as *gatikar-kana*. Below is worn a long skirt of red-edged white or dark blue cotton, called a *kochi*, with a white or coloured sash round the waist over the bottom of the 'ribs' and the top of the skirt; the sash is called *poriya*. Over the sash round the waist runs a cord, from which is suspended over the rump a great bunch of large and small pellet-bells (*muyang*), in the middle of which two or three large clapper-bells often are prominent. From the neck is hung over the back of the shoulders a basketry dancing-shield or *moghi*, made to slant downwards away from the back by two hoops of bamboo protruding underneath. Over the top of the shield either streamers of coloured cloth reaching nearly to the ground, or peacock's tails
292 are looped. The shield is made of two targes of twined basketry
535 joined together so that the rough edges are in the middle; the
285 warps are flat slices of bamboo about 13 mm. wide, radiating from the centre of the targes, and the wefts, the twining of which begins from the centre, are for the most part thin rods of bamboo pared to the thickness of a straw; but at intervals bands of red are made on the targes by using red yarn from the markets as wefts for three or four rounds of twining; flakes of shining mica are worked into this yarn, and over the outermost red band often cowry shells are sewn. The ends of the bamboo hoops are forced through the joined targes and held either by horizontal pieces of bamboo tied across them, or by ornamental studs of *cire-perdue* brass-work. When not
292 in use, the dancing-shield is never kept inside the house, but either
535 sewn up in leaves and hung high in the boughs of a tree, or on the outer wall of the *manda* or granary under the eaves; this is to protect it from smoke, sun and rain. Each dancer makes his own dancing head-dress and shield. Formerly every dancer held in his left hand the handle of an axe, of which the head, decked with coloured cloth streamers, protruded behind his back; and the axe was a *pharsi* with blade shaped like vulture wings. Now even the ordinary Maria workaday axe is ceasing to be used, a twisted tree-root, or plume of peacock feathers with the stalks plaited together in a basketry pattern, or a stick, taking its place.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 This dress was in regular use in every village in Metabhum until a year or two ago. At my last visit in March 1934, I was ● 535 amazed to find that, almost as in obedience to some decree that had 178 gone forth, the youth of the hills had abandoned the rib-dress, the shield and the gaily-coloured head-dress and skirt, sometimes wearing in lieu cheap bazaar singlets and a *dhoti*, retaining, however, the buttock-bells, the songs and the dance-steps. The older men all said that it was a spontaneous decision of the younger generation, decided upon because of the cost of buying the expensive yards of cloth needed for the dress; but this would not account for the abandonment of the shield, which they make themselves, and for which peacock tails are better than cloth streamers. Many have actually thrown away their cloth and shields. But some still think it necessary to hang them up round fresh graves, and I found that all the youths still know how to make them, and were willing to make them in camp. In 1932 a rumour went through all the tribes 203 of Jeypore and spread thence into Bastar that a god had descended 184 on one of the mountains of the Eastern Ghats and commanded all 178 men to give up keeping black poultry and goats, wearing clothes or using umbrellas or blankets with any black in them, and using beads or articles made of aluminium alloy. The message was rapidly bruited abroad, and everywhere villages had '*bohorani*' ceremonies for purifying themselves from disease, and cast out black goats, cocks, hens, umbrellas, blankets, 'waskats', beads, aluminium ornaments and domestic utensils on the village boundary. Mohammedans began to make a good thing out of slaughtering the goats or exporting them. Strenuous propaganda by the State soon stopped this impoverishing rumour, and some of the villagers in the end recovered much of their property from the police, who had been ordered to take charge of it. At the time, the Bison-horn Marias seemed to have been only a little affected and the Hill Marias not at all; possibly this sudden abandonment of the most picturesque features of their dancing costume may be a late repercussion. Such sudden moves amongst Indian primitive tribes are not uncommon; the Gonds of Nagpur and adjacent districts a few years ago suddenly decided to give up keeping poultry and pigs as a measure of social uplift.

292 The *taghali* or bark cloak used by the Hill Maria for warmth or, primarily, protection against heavy dew and rain, has already been mentioned as deputizing occasionally for the sleeping-mat. Hutton speaks of the Angami Nagas making 'a large hat of leaves and basket work . . . as well as a rain-coat of plaited grass, the ends of which hang out loose, to

Rain-clothes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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BISON-HORN MARIA DANCERS

PLATE VIII

[facing p. 78]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

301 favourite beads. They are fond also of necklaces of small, brightly gilded beads, which they call *mirako-mungya*. They may wear one or two armlets (*danda-bhata*) on one arm above the elbow, or a pair of bracelets on one wrist (*ka'i-bara*), of silver, brass, or aluminium, and similar in type to those bought by the Hill Marias. They wear a plain waist-cord (*para-nori*) instead of the cowry-cord of the hills for carrying knives and tobacco boxes. A comb is attached to this, for regular use. They may have hanging from a fastener of aluminium wire, shaped like the eye of the hooks-and-eyes of ladies' dresses, two thin aluminium toothpicks, and an aluminium ear-scoop; the Hill Marias also use these. They hang like a pendant on the chest.

The women's hair ornaments have been described along with their hair-dressing; it need only be added here that occasionally, instead of the polished brass fillet there mentioned, they wear bead fillets like those of the Hill Maria women. Armlets and wristlets are worn on the same arm, and are similar to those of the hill women. Instead of the white-bead ropes and the coloured-bead collars worn by the hill women, they wear long ropes of red, red and green, or gamboge beads; and over these they wear a vast number of the iron and brass rings of the type already described as borrowed by the hill women from them; they here call the iron neck-rings *tiya*, not *suta* as in the hills. Their ear plugs are similar to those 301 used in the hills, but from the lobe plug to a ring worn, as by their 304 men, in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, is often fastened a cord on which is threaded between two blue or green beads a slightly oblong, cube-shaped bead of brass or aluminium. The nose is symmetrically adorned by two gold or gilt rings in the wing of each nostril, and, between them, hanging from a small ring in the septum, a small gold or gilt ornament like a leaf pointing downwards, sometimes with a piece of red glass set in the middle.

297 I have taken the wearing of the Bison-horn dancing head-dress as the most obvious distinction between the two kinds of 'Marias'.

● 535 **Dancing-dress** This is known as a *tallagulla*. I had one made from horns and peacock feathers supplied by me. After my head had been measured round the plane of the temples, a basketry 'cap' was made, fitting loosely round the brows, and sloping backwards and upwards into a low peak. It is made loose, 294 as it has to support the horns and the plume of feathers, as well as strings of cowries and many folds and streamers of cloth of various colours, which subsequently tighten it and make it fit snugly round the head. The basketry is of twilled bamboo strips running diagonally from the edge that fits over the brows. The bison-horns were pared with a sharp knife to remove outer dirt or callosities and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

PLATE IX

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BISON-HORN MARIA DANCERS AT BAILADILA

Above Four men. (*Photograph by Mr. K. L. B. Hamilton, C.I.E., I.C.S.*)

Below Women. Note the clothes, the masses of ornaments, and the *tirdudi* bamboo dancing-staves

[FACING p. 80]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

many of the places where game of all kinds was plentiful in his father's time. Every Maria has his bow and arrow, the population has multiplied, and miles of jungle have been beaten annually for game in the great spring hunts. Wild buffalo and bison had been so reduced in numbers that they were declared protected thirty years ago, and heavy fines have been imposed for shooting them. The supply of bison-horns is thus not equal to the demand, and the head-dress is therefore a highly prized hereditary possession. No one should try to buy them from their owners; if a specimen is needed, the collector should provide the horns and other materials and see it made up for him. Bison-horns being now rare, and obtainable only from a bison found dead or by purchase from the State Forest Department, various substitutes are being used, such as domestic bullocks' or small buffaloes' horns, wild boars' tushes, the long beaks of the hornbill, and, occasionally, the antlers of the spotted deer (*Cervus axis*). The most interesting substitutes are brass patterned horns, of the shape and size of bison-horns, made by the *cire-perdue* process by the local Gharwa (Ghasia) brass workers.

Except occasional dancing anklets of hollow iron with pebbles inside, the Bison-horn Maria wears no special dancing dress; in fact he girds up his loin-cloth higher than usual and generally discards his singlet or '*washat*', so as to leave himself as free as possible for his antics, while the heavy drum that he carries slung from his right shoulder across his abdomen necessitates as much freedom as possible.

The women wear no special dancing dress, but put on every available ornament, and carry in their right hands *tirdudi* or bamboo staves to which are fastened bunches of iron pellet-bells, shaped something like short but plump pea-pods, which they clash in time with the drums as they dance by striking their butts on the ground. Similar bells sometimes adorn the drum-stick with which the left hand of the male dancer beats the cowskin membrane at the left end of his drum.

Weapons and tools

The universal *vade mecum* of the Hill Marias is the knife or *kasyaq* carried tucked into the loin-cloth, with or without a wooden sheath. Of this, as of all weapons and tools used by Hill or Bison-horn Marias, it has to be remembered that they are not always made by blacksmiths working exclusively for Marias, but often by blacksmiths in or near the bazaar villages of the plains who cater for Murias, Halbas and other tribes also. The most distinctive types are possibly, in the case of the Hill Marias, those made by the few blacksmiths living in their hills; but there are only slight differences, often of mere

[see cat. 116 ip. 419]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be severed, trimming the break with the knife held and used in the normal cutting position; he carves patterns in relief with the sharp point, or, holding the knife vertically, rolls the handle between the flat palms of his hand so as to drill holes with the point, trimming the edges of the holes with a burning ember. 411

The Bison-horn Maria uses a similar knife, often much larger, and seldom with a sheath. His *banda* is like a dao, but it is really a glorified and enlarged knife, with a thick end, and sometimes a pronounced bend or angle in the centre of the cutting edge; he uses this for lopping thick saplings or bamboo culms. But the use of the *banda* is not universal, and may be borrowed from Parjas or other tribes to the east. Similar weapons, but socketed on to long shafts of bamboo, and known as *gagra*, are used by the northern Murias and Jhorias, occasionally by Hill Marias, as weapons of offence and defence or billhooks for bamboo and saplings; the ordinary *gagra* has a concavely curved edge and a point, the *chhuri gagra* a convex edge and no point, while the *bhalu gagra* has an edge curving concavely from the top to a bend about half way along its length, and thence concavely to the socket. [177]

The Hill Maria calls his axe *maq'su*, which is the hill gutturalized version of the ordinary Gondi word *maras* used all over the Central Provinces. The Bison-horn Maria uses a totally different word for his axe of this shape, *godel*. The Halbi word is *tangya*. Like the Naga axe, the *maq'su* or *godel*[1] is an iron blade, decidedly suggestive of a long stone celt in form[1]; but unlike that axe, the butt of the blade ends in a socket for the haft, not in a tang inserted in a hole in the haft. The cutting edge of the blade among the Hill Marias seldom exceeds 7 cm. width, and 15 cm. is the maximum length of the blade from the cutting edge to the socket, which encloses a haft 4 or 5 cm. in diameter. It has a pronounced 'waist' just before the socket, but this is far more marked on the longer Muria *maras* than on *maq'su* or *godel*. The *godel* is usually rather more massive than the *maq'su*. The blacksmith, when giving an axe its first edge or a new edge to a blunt axe, heats the axe well in his forge, and thoroughly hammers the actual edge. He then heats it again, and hammers it flat on each side till he forms a new edge. He repeats the heating, and grinds down the edge by rubbing each side down a lump of stone. After a further slight heating he dips it in cold water to temper the edge, which is then ready for use. The haft is set at slightly less than a right-angle to the blade, the thick socket being wedged with a thin slip of wood. 412 412 326

A type of axe found still sometimes in the hill villages, where it is known as *pata ondanna maq'su* (the song-and-dance axe, because 412 535

[1] Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, p. 63.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

412 when the old men of to-day were young it was the decorated axe carried by all Hill Maria men dancers), is similar to the *pharsi* ●535 battle-axe of the plains tribes. The blade is crescent-shaped, the concave being the cutting edge, and the convex outer edge being socketed in the centre to receive the haft, which fits in the same vertical plane as the cutting edge. I have seen one of these axes measuring 41 cm. between the horns of the crescent.

411 The Hill Marias use small throwing spears made in one piece of iron, of the same type as the much larger solid spears used by the Murias of Amabera and north Kondagaon. They have leaf-shaped but very long blades, shafts with a knob counterpoise and, below the knob, spiked butts about a foot long. They are not nowadays very skilled throwers, there being scarcely any game in the hills. The thrower stands at a right incline to his target, and, holding the spear by the point of balance, uses much the same action as the javelin thrower of modern athletics.

411 The Bison-horn Maria uses a long and powerful stabbing spear for killing the big game, including tiger and panther, that his 224 beaters drive into his nets. This is about 8½ to 9 feet (2·6 to 2·8 metres) long, and consists of an iron head socketed on to a long bamboo shaft. The head consists of a blade about 30 cm. long and 7 cm. wide at the greatest width just above the shank, whence the wings taper with a slight convexity to the point; a shank nearly as long, slightly thinner where it leaves the blade than where it ends in the socket; and a socket about 22 cm. long, generally with one or more iron or brass rings which are forced down over the socket from the shank when the shaft has been inserted, to tighten the grip of the socket on the shaft. The socket below these rings often forms a convenient grip for the right hand, when the huntsman leans on his upright spear with his right upper arm extended horizontally from his elbow, and the elbow bent for the hand to grip the spear above the plane of the crown of the head. When the quarry is netted, the spear has its point lowered to the front pointing slightly downwards, the left arm is bent for the hand to grasp the spear well below the socket, while the right hand grasps it about a foot from the butt-end of the shaft, and the spearman sprints forward and stabs the quarry with a smart two-handed downward thrust.

411 The last weapons to be described are bows and arrows. The Hill Marias call the bow *villu*, and the Bison-horn Marias *ville*; the word, strictly speaking, means the stave only, the cord being *ha'undi* in the former and *panti* in the latter language. The stave is nearly always of bamboo, but the Bison-horn Marias, who generally use more powerful weapons than the hill men, sometimes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The Bison-horn Marias (and, I believe, many of the Murias also) have similar ideas of it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to thresh or winnow. They are not so particular about the cessation of conjugal life between the sowing and sprouting of the crops, and between their coming into ear and being garnered. They use bullocks to tread out the grain on a threshing floor. Each cultivator has to take the help of his fellow villagers to carry his corn, but it is a service for which he hires them, and not a routine piece of communal village service in gathering the village crop as in the Abujhmar hills.

It is taboo to eat any of the new crops until the appropriate new-eating festival has been celebrated.[A] These are very similar to the *pandum* festivals of the Bison-horn Marias, which will be described in the chapter on religion; but they are less elaborate and are fewer in number; the Bison-horn Maria seems to have a *pandum* as an essential preliminary to almost every act of gathering the produce of field or forest. The Hill Maria has only three, or, in villages where the last festival is held as late as March or early April, four of these festivals. The first is known either as *Tur Korta Tindana* or *Amus Korta Tindana*, according as the chief of the early ripening rains crops is *Panicum miliare* (*turya-kohala*) or *Panicum frumentaceum* (*amus*), and is held at the end of Hagh, that is about the middle of August. In Eranj (September) comes *Hikka Korta Tindana* in villages, like Handawada, where there is no rice cultivation, and *hikka* (see p. 134 above) is the chief crop ripening next after the August crops; where much rice (*wanj*) is grown, *Wanj Korta Tindana* is celebrated instead at the end of Eram (middle of October). This is followed in Pusi (January) in the villages where the final festival is celebrated after February by *Kohala Korta Tindana*, the first eating of the main *Panicum miliaceum* (*kuthi*) crop. The last and greatest festival, held on dates varying from the end of January till early April in different clan-areas, is *Pupal Korta Tindana*, combined with *Koqsar*, the clan-god's festival; when this takes place early enough in the year to be economically convenient, it is the new-eating festival not only of *urad* (*pupal*; *Phaseolus radiatus*) and other pulses and beans, but also of *kuthi* and the other late ripening hill grains. '*Korta Tindana*' is Hinduised literally as '*nawa khana*', 'new eating'. A main reason for the varying dates of this last festival is that dancing is permissible only at it, at weddings and at the camps of touring officials. The round of festivities after the final harvest-home is prolonged by celebrating the festival clan after clan; all the youths of neighbouring clans go to dance at each other's *Koqsar*,

The new-eating festivals of the Hill Marias

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[A] [see cat. 116, p. 420. -Analyst]

1: Grierson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

796 one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyeq-gaita* obtains the permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman sweeps out her house, and the *kasyeq-gaita* goes to each house and collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan, or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up [481] on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some [484] reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought from Japgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots kept at his *pen-ravar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The [535 *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that 834] follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual [533] intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

796 Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana* 622 before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially where the *adam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

sponsalia at a Hill Maria wedding. They were brought to the markets by itinerant Telugu dealers, but for some reason or other they have ceased to stock them, and the modern wedding takes place without them. Several remain, and are now highly prized, but are generally brought out for a camp dance, along with any old brass pot or piece of metal with which a clanging noise can be made.

2. Gongs

A few northern Hill Marias and, occasionally, Bison-horn Marias use the brass *tori* hunting horns of the Murias, and towards the Parja country the Bison-horn Marias sometimes imitate these by a 'horn' of strips of palm-leaf wound like a bandage round and away from the end of a wooden mouth-piece, each fold being gummed on to the edge of the preceding fold to the extent of the overlap.

3. Other instruments

Some Bison-horn Marias use bamboo flutes to accompany the *dol* drums at wedding dances, but I had no chance of examining one closely. They use also little iron jews-harps (*kach-tendor*) made by the blacksmiths, but of the primitive type, with the tongue straight and welded to the bend between the two arms of the frame, and of the same length as the arms, but only a thin narrow strip of iron. They say they have also a small wooden stringed instrument which they call *kikir*, probably a derivative of the Indian *chikara*.

The only other instruments are the bells and jingling anklets already mentioned in describing the dancing-dress of Hill Maria men and the dancing-sticks of the Bison-horn Maria women, unless mention is made here of the bull-roarers, which Hill Maria boys call *ats* and make of a strip of split bamboo, pointing one end and notching it near the point for a bark string, with which, looped round one finger, they whirl the bull-roarer round counter-clockwise. It seems to be purely a toy, and to have no religious or magical significance. At various camps the lads present made them on request; none were holed at the bottom.

4. Bull-roarers

D. Dancing

The description of Maria dancing given by Russell and Hiralal (III, pp. 136-7) is brief and misleading; it possibly relates to Marias of the Chanda plains, though the dancers illustrated are wearing typical Hill Maria dancing-dress. Russell and Hiralal do not mention the remarkable Bison-horn dancing.

1. Hill Maria

It is taboo for Hill Marias to dance except on the night of Koqsar and at weddings, or at the rare visits of State officials. For practical purposes, therefore, it may be said that they dance only

[See cat. IIb p. 4223 - Analysis]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

535 in the early summer, between the harvest-home and sowing. It is, therefore, not surprising that their dancing is poor and monotonous in comparison to that of the Bison-horn Marias, the Teluguized Koitor of the south, and the Parjas, Gadbas and Murias of the north. There is nothing to prevent married women joining in; they always join the Koqsar dances, and if generally the wedding dances are restricted to unmarried girls, even old women often take part in dances at official camps.

533 The essential feature of the Hill style of dancing is that it is
535 *pata-endanna*, dancing to song, and the singing is far more important than the drumming. The theme of the song and the lines with meaning are sung by three youths or two youths with a girl between them, who are known as the *pata-bhita* or 'song-fellows', who walk up and down as they sing in front of the line or ring of dancers; they are shown clearly in the illustration opposite. All the dancers answer each stave sung by the 'song-fellows' in full-throated chorus, usually a meaningless refrain. The opening refrain and the chorus refrain are sometimes soft and melancholic, almost wailing; the refrains are melodious and lingering, far more intelligible to the European than any Hindu music.

535 Normally the dancers form a long line, not a circle, though the line is curved and revolves in a circle, always right-handed. Sometimes the line is of men and boys only, sometimes (as in the illustration opposite) the girls are all together at the far end of the line, but more often, if not invariably after they have warmed to the dance and any initial shyness has worn off, there is a girl between every pair of men or boys. But whether the dancers on his right and left are girls or not, each dancer puts his right hand round the neck of the dancer on his right, and his left hand round the waist of the dancer on his left. The right foot is moved slowly to the right, the body being raised on the toes of both feet; the heels are raised twice and lowered without touching the ground, and then raised a third time and brought to the ground, when the left foot is brought up to the right foot and the raising and lowering of the heels are repeated with both feet together; the right foot is then moved away as at first, and the steps repeated. Each time the body is raised with the heels, the male dancers make their bunches of buttock-bells clash together by a jerk of their posteriors. So the whole line gyrates very slowly, in perfect time; but as this step is never varied, and the only change is in the songs, the dancing is monotonous to a spectator. Actually the jolliest part of the performance at camp dances is the hilarious entrance of the dancers in a rampaging column of fives or sixes, lads and girls mixed, yelling, whistling and laughing, on to the dancing ground, preceded

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE XV

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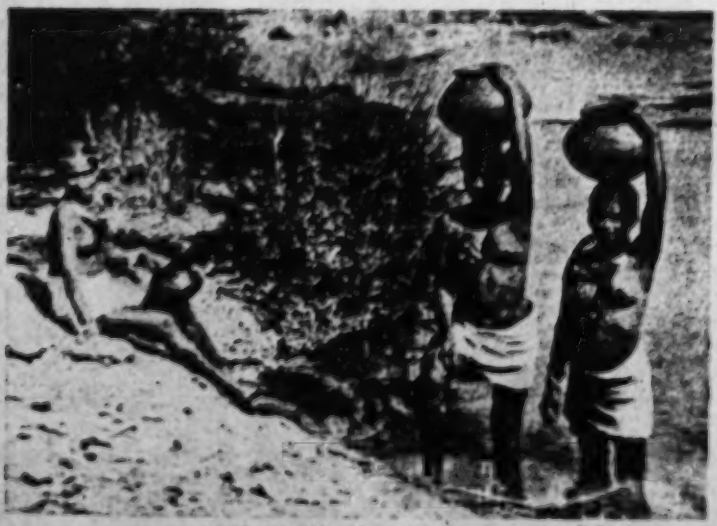
492

HILL MARIA DANCERS



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HILL MARIA DOMESTIC LIFE
Fetching water from river
(*Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)

[Facing p. 184]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

535 by a few men with kettle-drums and more with clanging brass gongs; to this babel of sound must be added the clatter of the innumerable iron neck-rings and the bracelets of the girls, and the clangour of the great bunches of bells on the buttocks of the male dancers. The whole scene is lit up by blazing torches and log fires.

535 831 Often a slight element of obscenity is introduced by one or two men dressed as tiger-men with large imitation *membra virilia* which they brandish at each other and at the women, girls and youths, rushing ludicrously here, there, and everywhere, and provoking such laughter that often the dancers have to break off their singing to join in.

535 868 There is no formal dancing teaching. Boys are allowed to join in the dances when they are about six, and girls when nine or ten. They learn simply by imitating their elders.

535 574 Men of all ages, married and unmarried, youths, boys, young wives and girls join in the Bison-horn Maria dances. There appears to be no time of year at which they are forbidden to dance, though naturally the spring and the summer, when they are freest from field-work, see most of their dancing. If at this time of year you invite villagers to dance at your camp, the throb of the drums attracts more and more men and girls from surrounding villages; for the tradition is that no invitation is needed, and that open house should be kept at a wedding or any other occasion when there will be dancing.

2. Bison-horn Maria

535 292 There is no mixing of men and girls as in the Abujhmar hills. The girls, in their ordinary finery of beads and iron and brass neck-rings, and wearing their head snoods and fillets of polished brass, have no special dancing apparatus except the *tirdudi* dancing-sticks ornamented with iron bells which they hold upright in their right hands, clashing the bells in unison by striking the ground with the butts of the sticks on their left front as they bring their left foot across in front of their right; each girl rests her left arm on the back of the left shoulder of the girl on her left. They gyrate to the right, like the Hill Marias, but the Bison-horn women have a far more rapid step; the right foot is moved to the right and slightly to the rear, and the left foot is then brought across the right leg to the right front, while the ground is struck with the butts of the jingling dancing-sticks. The girls in this way dance fast around the outside of the dancing men, sometimes singing as they go; but the unceasing throb of the men's great drums drowns their song.

535 The women's step never varies, whatever the dance; but the men have many different dances and steps, and can improvise a dance on practically any theme, such as asking for pork or *landa*. Their *pen-karsila* or Koqsar dance is a very fast, side-stepping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535 dance, which makes everyone laugh, while all the mediums of neighbouring villages attend, and, possessed by their godlings, leap wildly to and fro, carrying bunches of *saja* leaves in their hands or holding them over their matted hair, to the general merriment. The chief wedding dance is the bison dance, every male turning at intervals in his paces to smile and 'glad-eye' the next dancer, and each then pretending to butt the other with his bison-horns; in another figure they similarly mimic two cocks fighting. The greatest sign of skill is to be able to impale on the tip of the horns a piece of grass twisted into a ring and thrown on the ground; the dancer may before this pretend to be a young and frisky bull, butting at wisps of grass or trees, or hurling them into the air to toss them on his horns. I have seen a dancer pick a small finger ring off the ground on the tip of his horns. As among the Hill 535 Marias, and indeed most Central Provinces Gonds, there is always 831 a comic and obscene element; men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear or goat fur, and carrying clubs, nets and dummy guns, rush in and out amongst the dancers, making obscenely suggestive gestures with their clubs at the dancing or onlooking girls, and provoking roars of laughter.

[273] There is generally a pause for *landa* or *mahua* spirit sooner or later, after which the girls sometimes, before resuming the dance, sit in a bunch swaying from their hips and singing short catchy refrains, with either frankly sexual meaning or no meaning at all; and often the lads opposite make the whole company laugh by imitating them in falsetto.

The dancing and singing, it need hardly be said, lead on frequently to love-making, couples retiring into the darkness, or else starting an affair ending in experimental union and perhaps, later, in matrimony.

E. Other Amusements

524 The Bison-horn Marias' favourite pastime of cock-fighting has already been described (see page 162 above). Small wooden toys are made for the children, very crude representations of tigers or other animals; and a pathetic sight at the graves of children are [764] these toys left there for the *hanal*[1] of the children to play with. I have never found any Marias making string figures; and they have 526 shown no interest in attempts to demonstrate them. The Murias and Bhattras have innumerable games in which all the village youth takes part in the cold weather and spring nights, many of which

[1] Literally the 'Gone', used of the spirits of the dead.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwarin or Forest-maidens, and on each

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

a table-stone with a white pebble on it may be erected in the name of the clan-god under a *saja* tree. The *pherma* sacrifices cocks and a pig or goat on behalf of the village in the usual way, and washes some new husked rice and *kuthi* and offers it to the god. The men cook and eat the sacrificial meat then and there. The wife-clan relatives may be present, but in most villages are not allowed to participate in the sacrificial rice and meat and are supplied with other rice and meat which they cook separately. The usual remains-eating feast takes place in the houses next day.

The Jata Pandum

At the Jata Pandum, held somewhere near the full moon of Pus (December-January), they celebrate the eating of the first new beans, pulses, and the latest ripening grains. There is the usual public sacrifice for the men before the log-god or the Village Mother. In the south, towards the Doria border, the festival is known as Chikur Pandum, and the sacrifices are always to a table-stone beneath a *saja* tree known as Dhania Deo, which, like the Bhattra Dhani, appears to be only another form of the earth-god. The only special feature of this *pandum* is that the domestic sacrifice and libations to the Departed in the house are often followed by a ceremony for weaning suckling children, the first food given being some of the rice and sacrificial meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed.

The Kare Pandum

This takes place in Magh (January-February), soon after the Jata Pandum, and, as already observed, is preceded by the *Kare Weta* in which fields and open spaces are beaten for small game. I was unable to ascertain what other special features, if any, the festival has, or whether new grass and new bamboo are offered to the gods. Until the festival has been held it is *mulo* or taboo to cut grass or bamboos or to start felling timber for *erka*, *parka* and *penda* cultivation.

The Bhimul Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum comes very soon after the Kare Pandum. I have no detailed information. But it is a ceremony for ensuring a good rainfall in the coming monsoon. It takes place by the Bhimul post in the *kudri-bara*, over which a booth of boughs is erected. Men and women attend. The booth is decorated with strings of mango leaves. The *pherma* sacrifices a white cock and an egg, and pours *landa* over the Bhimul post; and men and women then empty over the post baskets containing a little of every kind of field produce. Men and women then sit in the open, and consume *landa*. All night the village women dance, led by the *pherma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head or in her arms.

The Bhimul Pandum is really the last of the *pandum* held in all villages. It only remains to mention the Mandai or Deoguri

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 house, and are given *landa* to drink. At the meal in the Place of the Departed the couple are exhorted by the bridegroom's father to live together in unity and concord, and to be faithful. All night the drums roll and guests pour in to dance and drink *landa* or sing around the bride and bridegroom, the men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses. Ultimately next morning the couple are made to stand on a hurdle under the eaves of the hut constructed for them, and a kinsman of the girl's father climbs on the roof and tips a pot of water over them. The boy then drags the girl into the hut, both pushed by willing hands, and the door is fastened on [353] them and a bamboo-matting curtain hung over it. After a while they emerge, and the bride takes a ceremonial farewell of the girls of her village, and the guests disperse. Finally in the evening she is thrust into the bridal hut by her husband's younger brothers and his friends, her husband being already inside awaiting her.

In the account of the Ganjenar-Massenar wedding which follows, naturally no description can be given of the scenes in the *narma-lon* rooms of the bride's and bridegroom's fathers, to which outsiders are not admitted, or of other parts of the wedding ceremonies which I did not actually see. The bridegroom was the son of Atrami Hunga of Massenar, the younger brother of Atrami Kopa Dhurwa, a very influential headman who was decorated by the late Raja of Bastar for keeping that *pargana* quiet during the 1910 rebellion, and the bride was the daughter of Kunjami Harma, the headman of Ganjenar. When I reached the latter's house, which was about two miles from my camp at Massenar, the bridegroom and his party had arrived, and the relatives' dinner was over. The bride had gone to a tank to be bathed by her elder sister and her brother's wife; the bridegroom and his father were walking about talking to the guests and the bride's male relatives. There were not many persons present, perhaps 150 all told; a few men were beating their dancing drums, but none were wearing their bison-horn head-dresses. Around the door of the separate sleeping hut used [533 by Kunjami Harma's daughters and other womenfolk, some thirty 831 women were standing shoulder to shoulder, swaying to and fro and 195] singing a choral refrain of '*Koholin-waya*' to obscene verses sung by a laughing woman in the centre of the group. Another band of women hurled abuse at them at intervals, when the leader of each band tried to out-Billingsgate the other.

535 When the bride had been bathed, she emerged from the sleeping 585 hut with a cloth wrapped over her shoulders, and was dragged into a chain of dancing and singing girls with their arms closely linked, while the bridegroom, also with a cloth over his shoulders, was pushed into another chain. These chains of girls circled and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

gyrated in all directions, at one moment appearing inextricably mixed together, only to disentangle miraculously at the next and weave themselves into fresh spirals and circles, singing abuse at each other. All the while the group of standing girls went on swaying and singing round the door; the leader caused great laughter by improvising a song warning all girls to be on their guard that night, for the Diwan, the Tahsildar and the Circle Inspector were watching them, and who knew what might happen after dark?

Before we arrived the bridegroom's party had presented the bride-price, which consisted of one slaughtered pig, a live pig, five very large pots of *landa*, five *paili* of husked rice, four yards of Mahra cloth for the bride's mother, and one rupee. While the chains of girls were dancing around the bride and bridegroom, her mother's sister came out and displayed the bride's going-away presents, a *masni* or grass sleeping-mat, a small basket containing about a *paili* of husked rice, a large pot of *landa*, and a young bull calf newly weaned.

Some men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses and beating their long drums now started to dance near the gyrating chains of girls, and there was a further accompaniment to the singing of bamboo flutes. The two chains of girls suddenly opened out, leaving the bridegroom and bride together, and the girl's father and the bridegroom's elder brother were with them, holding their hands. The old father, Kunjami Harma, held up his hand for silence, and started a long speech, asking the bridegroom's elder brother, 'Have you come willingly for this flower? Will you wear it and cherish it? It is fresh and tender, and will not bear rough handling. Know you how witless women are? If she be a poor housekeeper, pardon her. If she cook badly, pardon her. If she speak to other men, do not take it amiss, but pardon her.' There were other similar injunctions, and to all the bridegroom's brother answered yes. Then Kunjami Harma took his daughter, who took the bridegroom's right hand, and placed on his little finger a ring that she had pulled off the little finger of her own right hand; the bridegroom then took a ring off his own left little finger and placed it on hers; cloths were held over their heads while this exchange was in progress. The bridegroom then took off another ring, which the girl's elder sister received in her outstretched cloth, while she said, 'From now onwards you must neither touch me nor utter my name till I am dead. If you do, all will laugh at you, and your brethren will fine you.' I was told that if she dies before him, he will take a ring off her little finger and wear it on the middle finger of his right hand. He also gave a ring to the bride's younger sister, for he is free to touch her and to talk of her by name. Then his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

elder brother touched the old man's feet, and the old man touched his, and then each placed his hands on the other's shoulders, standing face to face, and leaned his head forward first on the other's right, then on his left shoulder; finally each salaamed the other with both hands held in front of his face, palm to palm, and said '*Juhar!*' Each of them then exchanged similar salutations with all their near relatives present and the leading guests, including myself and the other State officials present.

The girls now started singing again, telling the bride that she must leave them and go to her man, that her lot would be hard, and that if she did not like her man she should make up her mind to leave him. Meanwhile the bridegroom slipped off over the fields to his father's house at Massenar to be ready there to receive the party escorting the bride.

The bridal procession then formed up, led by some thirty women, singing and side-stepping along the narrow jungle path in the gathering darkness. After them walked the elders, then a party of drummers, followed by the bride, pretending to struggle against a cluster of laughing girls pushing her to Massenar. All danced as they went, beating their jangling dancing sticks on the ground in time with the drums and the steps of the dance. It took them two and a half hours to cover the two miles to the bridegroom's father's house in Massenar.

There a multitude of other girls and men received them, the men all in the traditional dancing costume, with a thundering roll of drums, while dozens of bombs of gunpowder and rice chaff were exploded. The full moon beat down on a sea of tossing plumes, or shone back from the glistening bison-horns of the head-dresses, till the whole courtyard was full of rampaging and fantastic movement. The bride and bridegroom were seized by fifty girls, and made to sit in their midst in front of the house where they were later to live, all packed as closely as sardines, swaying to and fro on their hips as they sat, and singing obscene marriage songs in full-throated chorus, while all prodded and plucked at every part of the bodies of the bride and bridegroom, whose heads were muffled in cloths.

After watching this for some time I went off to my tent for dinner, but returned towards midnight. The bride and bridegroom were still where I had left them, surrounded by the swaying and singing girls. Some of these had babies sleeping in their laps as they sang, and many, tired out, were sleeping, hemmed in by their companions. The crowds had swollen, and every forest path was thronged with men and women hastening with drums and dancing kit to join the dance. Some came from villages twenty-five or

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

585 535 thirty miles away, but showed no sign of fatigue. Around the dance many were lying already drunk, for sixty large pots of *landa* had been provided for the guests. Now and again an excited youth and girl would leave the dance and disappear in the trees. But there must always have been over two thousand men dancing; and those who had been overcome by the *landa* would return to the dance as soon as they had slept off their intoxication.

All night the drumming and dancing went on, though when I returned to the scene at 7.30 a.m. many men were lying asleep or drunk or merely resting, with piled drums and head-dresses. Now many men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear's fur and carrying thick bamboo sticks, dummy guns and nets, rushed in and out among the dancers, making obscene [831] gestures with their sticks at the dancing and watching girls, to the general merriment. Looking for the bride and bridegroom, I found them, their heads still covered with the same cloths, riding on the shoulders of their sisters' husbands in the middle of a ring formed by a long chain of girls with arms outstretched and hands clasped, who headed off all the efforts of the 'steeds' to break out of the ring with their riders.

585 The fathers of the couple now decided that the time had come for the final ceremonies; the sun was getting hot, and the *landa* supplies low, for the dancers continued at intervals to leave the dance for a drink and a nap before the maddening beat of the drums called them out once again. A bamboo wickes-work hurdle was placed on the ground in front of the door of the hut where the couple was to spend its married life. To this the bride and bridegroom were led, and when they were standing on it they were at last freed from the cloths in which their heads had been enveloped for the last twelve hours. As they stood there hand in hand, the girl's father's brother climbed on to the eaves of the hut[1] with a large pot of cold and dirty water, and suddenly tipped its contents over the bride and bridegroom, whereupon, amid general laughter, the bridegroom seized the bride, and both rushed into the hut, the door of which was closed and curtained upon them. But they were allowed only ten minutes' privacy 'to discuss what they would do that night', as the bridegroom's old father explained; and even then they cannot have heard each other speak for the din of the drumming and dancing, which had not ceased for a moment even when the water was poured from the roof.

After ten minutes the bride emerged, and was surrounded by the girls of her own village, who in unison sang to her advice on a wife's duties and rights, urging her to return to them if her

[1] This is illustrated in Plate XIX. [See Cat. 116, pp. 124-25, Pl. 34]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

VII

I found it very difficult—and I suspect that Grigson had the same experience—to see Marias in action. Tribes vary greatly in their willingness to allow a visitor to be present at their ceremonial. The Murias used to invite me to marriages or festivals, sending information about them long beforehand. The Saoras are delighted to have visitors at their celebrations and more than once the ghost of a long dead headman has come upon the priest and admonished the people to treat me right. But the Bondos do their utmost to keep the stranger away; during the great summer festival they pile the paths leading to their villages with thorn bushes and not even a fellow Bondo, if he belongs to another village, is admitted. The Marias do not go so far as that, yet I found them singularly unwilling to let me watch them do anything. When I was camping at Borgum I heard that the Wijja Pandum was to be celebrated in two days' time and rather unwisely announced my intention of being present. On the morning of the festival a delegation arrived in camp to say that the proceedings had had to be postponed because the Perma's wife was in her period—though I darkly suspect that the old lady had in fact passed the climacteric. I had to dodge round the country for weeks before I saw a wedding, and to witness the Ghotpal Marhai I had to come sixty miles on an elephant down from the Abujhmar because the dates were changed at the last moment.

But since a page of personal observation is worth a whole chapter of hearsay I will describe the wedding at which I assisted and the great festival at Ghotpal in 1942.

On March 15th, 1942 I was camping in Gogonda at the edge of the hills overlooking the great southern plain. That evening, I was told, two girls were to be taken to Sirsitti, a village some two thousand feet below, to be married. At about five o'clock therefore married and unmarried women collected and began to dance with one of the brides. She had her head and shoulders completely covered with a shawl and wailed loudly all the time. Three pots of rice-beer were distributed to the dancers and a large number of onlookers, and then the dancers took the bride round the village. This was a very pretty sight. The circle of dancers would suddenly elongate into a line and then curl up again in a ring. As they danced from house to house, men and women would come out and put a ring on the bride's finger or a necklace round her neck and embrace her by raising her hands twice to their foreheads and then clasping her in their arms. As they did so, the dancers sang the names of the people who were giving presents and their exact relationship to the bride. At other times they sang how the girl had hitherto been going to and fro freely in the jungle, getting wood, husking grain,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 fetching water, but that now she was to go to a life that was both sweet and bitter. Finally, a group of quite little girls arrived on [533] the scene with bundles of food tied up in cloth on their heads and the bride, still weeping loudly, was carried off by her girl companions across the fields into the sunset. It was a moving sight, this taking away of the bride to her new life, but it was noticeable that no member of the bridegroom's family came to fetch her. She was simply taken away by her own people to his village.

Next morning I started before dawn with my assistant Mr. Sampat Singh on the long descent to Sirsitti. The scenery on the way was magnificent. From the brow of the hill we could see stretching away almost to Orissa the great plain of Konta and Sukma with the peaks of hills rising above the mist just touched by the morning sun. When we reached the village we found the two marriages in progress, though everyone was a little jaded having been up dancing all night. There were little camps outside the village for the two brides and the bridegrooms' families sent food and liquor out to them. During the morning there was some desultory dancing in the middle of the village, and a group of girls sat round each bride who wailed loudly from time to time as the girls sang to her about the sorrows and hardships of the married life to which she was now going. Young men from Gogonda, the brides' village, cooked the food supplied by the bridegrooms and this was ready about three o'clock in the afternoon. The visitors assembled beneath a magnificent mango tree outside the village, and the feast was very carefully served by the young men; an exact number of [264] leaf-cups was prepared and each contained the same number of bits of pork; an equal number contained identical portions of rice. The boys then served the cups, first to the women and then to the men. Others went round pouring gravy on the rice and they all ate together. When the meal was over they went to a stream near [271] by and drank, kneeling down and putting their faces right into the water to suck it up.

Then the girls assembled round the first bride, who was still 585 covered with the shawl which all through that sweltering day she had not once laid aside, and danced with her into the centre of the 535 village. Another party escorted the second bride and soon the scene was very lively with two separate dances whirling round the square. Presently the first party danced up to the future husband's house. They gathered in a very tight block before the door and began to sing loudly and rapidly, jerking their bodies to and fro from the hips, a song which meant, 'Come and get her if you can, brother; come and catch her if you can'. For some 585 time the bridegroom stood in a rather embarrassed fashion in the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

doorway while his parents encouraged him and the old women shouted ribald jokes. At last he plucked up courage and made a dash for the girl. Her companions resisted him but at last, of course, he broke through them, seized the girl and dragged her weeping loudly into the house. The girls rushed after them and pushed and hustled them into an inner room and shut the door on them, the theory being that they would consummate the marriage there and then. The old women stood round the hut trying to look inside and discussing the bridegroom's potency. The cock which is often stolen by the bride's party from the bridegroom's house was here given as a present with a little cloth to the bride's younger sister.

This was the end of one marriage. The other was a surprise. The girls came dancing with the shrouded bride up to the house, the bridegroom put on a new shirt for the occasion, his mother brought water to wash the feet of her new daughter-in-law. Everything was ready, but after the girls had danced round once or twice in front of the house, they made as if to go right round it in honour of the Departed. Everybody waited for them to complete the circuit and return, but their voices grew fainter and fainter, and I went out to see them dancing away into the forest. It was then explained to the unfortunate bridegroom that certain ceremonies had to be performed in Gogonda to protect the bride against magical dangers with which she was threatened and that she would be returned to him in three days' time.

It was then six o'clock and we returned to camp.

VIII

On February 2nd, 1942 there was celebrated at Ghotpal near Barsur the great Marhai and Pen-Karsita of the Lekhami clan. Directly I arrived and made my camp under some trees I was greeted by a little deputation of local priests who told me very politely but quite firmly that though they were delighted to have me there I would not be permitted to take any photographs or write anything down. Later I went with Mr. Sampat Singh to the shrine of the Ghotpal clan-god, the Anga, Usendi Pen, with whom are his sons Hunga and Wella and his daughter Wange. I was at once surrounded by people telling me that I must not go inside. An elderly magician approached me and in a stern voice told me to take my hat off, for I was looking at a god. Such instructions are unusual in aboriginal India.

Nothing happened that day, but people began to assemble and many merchants arrived and set up their booths in a line along the edge of the great open dancing-ground in front of the shrine.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *penda* must not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatikarhana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-bhita* or 'song fellows' and the dance-steps.[1]

The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence. Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of 'jewellery' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 75-6 and 183-4

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and see the bulk of the Council's funds, including their own contributions, spent on the open and advanced tracts of the district where the villagers must be placated for political reasons. More will be said on this point later in this Note, in dealing with the Garchiroli zamindaris. 632

The dancing at Surjagarh stands out in memory as faster and livelier than any other dancing seen on this tour. The drums too were different, great double membrane drums of short sections of *semur* (*bombax malabaricum*) trunks, up to 2 ft. 6 in. or 3 ft. in diameter. The *Gazetteer* well describes the typical Maria dance :— 535 [534]

'The favourite dance is a peculiar rippling step forwards, with the foot dragged, not very graceful when done by a single individual, but looking quite different when done in unison by a great circle of dancers singing a *re-la, re-la*, chorus to which the step keeps time. In some villages where the headman is an enthusiast for the pastime a trained band performs weird and wonderful step dances to the sound of the drum. At a big dance the trained band occupies the inner ring round the fire, while the common folk, men and maids, in separate rings move round in great circles in opposite ways. All are dressed for the occasion in their best, bearing in their hands weird ornaments of wicker work, with garlands of flowers on their necks, and, in their hair, feather ornaments humorously or coquettishly placed. Seen in the red glow of a huge log fire, glinting on the shining beads and barbaric ornaments of the dancers, with the throb of the drums, and the beat of many feet moving in unison to the wild music of the voices in chorus, a Maria dance is a spectacle not easily forgotten, but lingers as a characteristic scene when other details have faded from the memory.'[1]

That would well describe that wild night at Surjagarh, when the dancers, their spirits enlivened by several earthen pots of *mahua* liquor, kept up their dancing nearly till dawn. It had been a long and tiring day, and I retired early, the last thing seen from my tent before I closed the flap to shut out the blaze of the many log fires, the dust and the tramp of hundreds of feet, being our now nearly nude Local Board Member, well warmed by liquor and congenial surroundings, leading a ring of dancers and gravely demonstrating the right steps.

Next morning after an early breakfast we climbed with many of the night's dancers up to the keep of the old fort that crowns the Surjagarh hills, 1,273 feet above the forests at their base, the ascent being over what the *Gazetteer*[2] truly calls a noble cliff of black ferruginous mica schist. 712

'The ascent at first is by a narrow rift in the mountain, whose sides rise vertically on either hand 600 feet in height, and then the path winds round the face of the cliff in natural steps formed by the weathering of the schist. The whole ascent has been carefully fortified by a series of stone breastworks, here thrown across the path, there perched on an overhanging ledge of rock, and if properly defended would be impracticable for troops without means of shelling. Within the keep on the summit there used to be a small tank which

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 99-100.
[2] Pp. 428-9.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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[End Plate R]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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[End Plate 5]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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522

Bison-horn Maria clown, covered with glistening mud, possesses during a dance

[End Plate ZA]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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292

Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Marias dancing

[Verrier Elwin

[End Plate ZE]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535

Bison-horn Maria girls dancing

[Verrier Elwin]

[End Plate ZF]

Plate XXVIII

●535

The Horn Dance at Sidhawand

The Lagir ceremony at Sidhawand

[p. 106 b]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate XXXII

[P. 144 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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292
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Scenes from the Dance of the Ghost

[p. 144 (E)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The near relatives of the deceased then go into the water crying on the dead to come to them and try to catch any kind of living thing. Whoever first catches a fish or prawn or frog, whatever it may be, is regarded as being specially loved by the dead and is rewarded with extra drinks and small presents. They put the fish into one of the pots together with a ring. The pot is covered with a bamboo cover on which is a new sari. The *akondma* relative applies haldi and oil to the pot and as he is doing this someone else catches hold of every member of the party in turn, both men and women, and smears their private parts with haldi-oil. Then a girl (daughter or daughter-in-law to the dead) lifts the pot, puts it on her head, carries it up to the house and puts it down near the Pot of the Departed. A samdhi sacrifices a chicken after testing it in the usual way; when the chicken eats the rice offered it is a sign that the soul of the dead man loves his family as before. Then they pour the water together with the fish and ring on to the ground and tie the ring, which represents the man's soul, from the roof above the Pot of the Departed. Sometimes the ring is tied to a broom. They hang the pot itself up to the roof of the house. They eat the sacrificed chicken and drink and dance and then disperse. A samdhi makes a mixture of the water in which rice has been cleaned, the bark of the mango tree and a little cow's milk and sprinkles the whole house in order to purify it.

Some time afterwards, at one of their clan festivals, the members of the family take either the pot or simply the ring that has been hung in the Room of the Departed to the clan shrine or Hanalkot, which must be located at the clan headquarters or at least in some village within the clan territory. In some villages, as at Gudla, this is only done for men; women stay in the house. But at Sirsi the souls of both men and women were taken to the Hanalkot. In Kerawahi they said that at the special festival for Bara Pen, which occurs every two or three years, the members of the Poyami clan take the pots in which the soul has been brought from the river along with the rings to the shrine of their clan god. They sacrifice fowls saying, 'Here is the god of Lanji-Dhamda, go to him and you will become like him. As he helps us, so you too help us'. They tie the ring to a tree overlooking the shrines and break the pot. Then after the usual feast they go home.

Sometimes, however, the people take the soul direct to the Hanal. This is a small shrine for the dead, generally under a saja tree. They put the pot containing the soul and the ring down near the tree and sacrifice two hens, one for the dead man's family and one for his *akondma* relatives. They feed these saying, 'Have you come happily today? Don't trouble us, you are to become a god. Always help us and don't trouble us'. When the chickens eat, thus showing that the soul is pleased, a member of the family kills one chicken and a samdhi kills the other. On the place where the chickens are sacrificed, they pour out the water and soul from the pot. They tie the ring by a single thread to the tree thus 'mixing him with the dead'. Everyone who came should have brought a chicken; these are now killed with sticks and roasted. The two sacrificed chickens may only be eaten by those who killed them. They drink liquor and dance and sing, and then go dancing home.

In the Bara Dongar Pargana the Muria have a very impressive death-dance for this occasion. A man wearing a beard of bear's hair, four *gutri*[1] horns tied on his forehead, a fishing-net round his loins, a wooden doll in one hand, a bent stick in the other, leads the way from the river up to the house. In

[1] *Cervulus Muntjac*, the barking deer.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769 front of him one samdhi carries water and another a stick. As they go along
535 they beat the path and throw water on it saying, 'We are making a road before you, come slowly leaning on your stick; we are making a road for you, come samdhi to your house, don't stay outside'.

The bearded man, who is supposed to represent the soul of the dead, weary, hungry and exhausted comes walking slowly, bent like an aged man. Soon he falls to the ground exclaiming, 'I can go no further'. Then the samdhi says, 'You must drink this jawa-gruel' and they give him a drink of liquor and pull him up on his feet. He goes on a little more and falls on his feet again. Other people dance round him beating sticks against each other and all the people sing. He falls down again and again exclaiming that he is too weary and hungry to go further.

When they get near the house the bearded man and his two attendants roll on the ground and the family has to come out and beg them to bring the soul in. 'We will pay you your wages' they say, meaning that they will give them plenty of liquor. The daughter or sister of the deceased comes out with haldi, rice and water in a dish and washes the feet of the man who represents the soul.[1]

769 Inside the house they place a small stump, eight inches high, in the ground in the name of Bara Pen. There is a nail in the post and they hang the pot containing the fish on this and all relatives put haldi on it and offer pice to it saying, 'We have brought you here for your last marriage'. They sacrifice a cock to Bara Pen saying, 'Now keep this soul with you'.

They pour the water from the pot over the stump of the dead man, who is thus supposed to bathe in it. There is a curious idea that the fish must disappear as otherwise it will mean that the soul has not 'flown out of the pot to mingle with his ancestors'. Once when Lahari Maravi's father died, a witch kept the fish in the pot and would not let it fall out. They had to make special sacrifices before the soul was able to mingle with the Departed.

During the ceremonies of catching the soul and bringing it back to the house a number of songs are sung, of which the following are given as examples.

Song

769 *Re re nāgo re rela !*

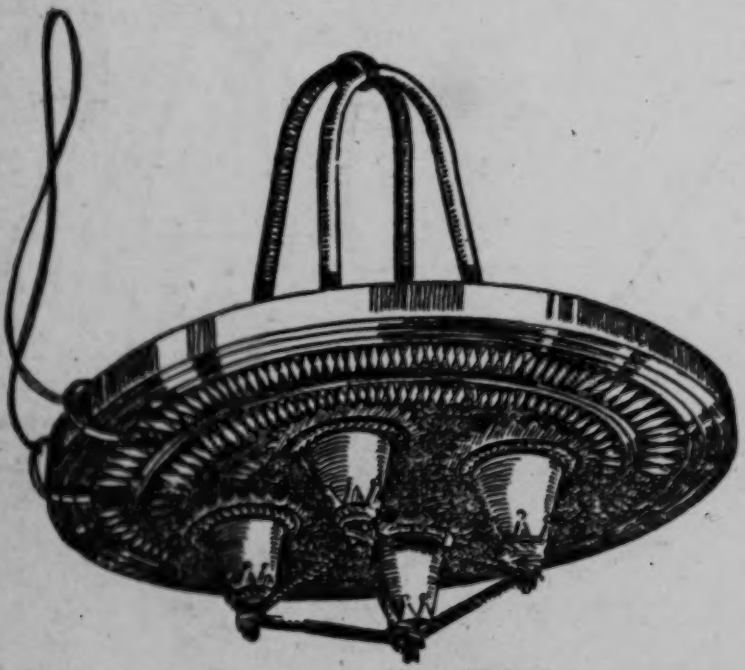
539

Dāt ra dādī dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go.
Aga boga dākāt ra ?	Where are they going?
Sono rupo bandāng ra,	To the gold and silver tank,
Aga yise dātu ra.	Let us go there.
Phauj lamre mānta ra.	The whole company is going.
Agāy yise yewandur ra.	They have arrived there.
Sāt kori layer ra,	Seven score chelik,
Sāt kori layah kare ra,	Seven score motiari,
Agāy yise handur ra,	They are going there,
Bandāng jhalke māndur ra.	Where waves move the water of the tank.
Agāy yise parahandur ra.	They are searching for it.
Jiwa kojī kindur ra,	They are searching for the soul,
Bagāy jiwa puto ra.	But they cannot find it.

[1] Such dramatic rituals give some point to Ridgeway's suggestion that serious drama originated from the worship of the, often deified, dead. See Sir W. Ridgeway, *Drama and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races* (London, 1915).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

clan-priest of the Kuhrami struck the throat of the animal and killed it with a single blow. The Gaita of every god pressed forward with hands outstretched, 796



[535]

FIG. 33. Dancing-shield used by chelik during the festivals of the clan-gods

crying to the bull to have pity on them and not to be angry, then dipped their hands in the blood and carried it to offer to their own deities. The clan-priest of the Kuhrami made an incision in the bull's side and removed part of the liver and offered it to Chelik Sai. After this they carried the carcass away into the jungle and cut it up.

For the evening meal, the meat was boiled in a score of pots, and rice mixed with sesamum oil, urad pulse and some green vegetables was cooked for each clan separately by the clan-priests in their respective temples.

As evening fell, the chelik and motiari, gorgeous in their festival attire, came from Bargaon and Taragaon, Aturgaon and Esalnar, Kajen and Kongera, from Chalka, Temrugaon and Chimri. Each party made a little camp under the trees, lit a fire and cooked some food. About ten o'clock they began to dance, pargana by pargana, in huge circles lit by the light of torches. The gods were brought and placed in the middle of the dancing-field. All night the boys and girls danced and at dawn the gods awoke and danced and gesticulated. About seven o'clock the visitors went away and the gods were taken home. Chelik Sai, who after all is a chelik, danced with the motiari;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Hill Maria chelik in dancing dress

[p. 254 (2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Bison-Horn Maria

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301
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Hirme, a Bison-horn Maria girl washing her hands

Plate LIV

Bison-horn Maria dancers

[p. 278(2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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x47

Jhoria dancers at Kabenga

Jhoria dancers at Amosara

Plate LXXXV

[p.420 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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almost roughly, it grows gentler and gentler until at last the girl's hands are moving caressingly, tenderly over the arms and bodies of their boys, rousing affection and stirring with every gesture new desire.

The use of the comb to titillate the skin has a similar effect: Muria boys and girls are susceptible to tickling, which has been described as 'the most intellectual mode of touch sensation and that with the closest connexion with the sexual sphere'. As the motiari dresses her chelik's hair and with her comb gently tickles and stimulates his back and arms, he responds by fondling her breast, by stroking her legs (which are usually placed round his body; as she massages, the girl often grips the boy's waist between her knees) or by boldly tickling her. Certain types of massage are specially exciting. The girl stands above the boy, bending over him, and rubs downwards, passing her hands over the stomach down to the specifically erogenous region which thus receives a powerful tonic; sometimes she massages the legs, pushing her hands right up to the groin.

It is curious that with all this, the kiss as a means of sensory excitement is but little used.[1] It is not unknown—far from it—but it is something that goes in fashions; a ghotul discovers it, as at More Berma, and then everybody kisses. But even then the kiss does not appear to be on the lips, nor does the tongue play any part; for the Muria the kiss is a highly concentrated form of massage with the lips upon the skin. Boys kiss the face and breasts; I have never heard of *fellatio* being practised, but it may be—the description of it causes no offence.

After touch, smell is a powerful stimulant. Charming is the freshness of the open hill and forest, but more charming still, say the chelik, is the smell of perspiration, oil, wet earth, a suggestion of urine, all tempered by the bitter-sweet wood-smoke, which is regarded as the peculiar aroma of the ghotul.[2] The ghotul smell is unforgettable; it is not unpleasant even to a stranger's nostrils; and boys have told me that they have found it a strong sexual stimulant. 'The smell of the wood-smoke in a girl's hair, how exciting it is!' exclaimed a chelik at Markabera. So is the smell of the cow-shed clinging to boy or girl, a clean healthy smell with good associations. At Temrugaon the boys loved the scent of the marigolds that the motiari put in their hair and declared them to be their favourite flower.

[515]

No artificial scents are used, and this means that both boys and girls have to be very careful about bodily cleanliness; an unpleasant vaginal odour is mentioned as specially inhibiting to desire; there is a saying—*mush sundri gând gandri*—however beautiful the face, if a girl has a dirty body, she will not be admired.

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But 'the most usual method of attaining tumescence', says Havelock Ellis, 'a method found among the most various kinds of animals, from insects and birds to man—is some form of the dance'.[3] 'It is everywhere the instinctive object of the male, who is very rarely passive in the process of courtship, to assure by his activity in display, his energy or skill or beauty, both his own

[1] It is a commonplace of anthropology that primitive peoples do not kiss; *I* have always wondered how investigators can be so sure of this. The ordinary word in Gondi is *barydna*, 'to kiss'. Trench says that the word as used in Betul—*barydna*—means 'to kiss, of humans, to nose, of dogs'. Ward gives *nahilo* as a Gondi word for kiss used in the Mandla District (*nâhâna* means 'to lick'). I also found the Muria using a word *lorandi* which was said to mean 'kiss', but I am doubtful about this.

[2] The Urson *dhumburia* have a quite different smell, in which the odour of urine is much more prominent. The Bison-horn Maria again have a strong, and rather attractive, smell, not unlike the Savara but quite distinct from the Muria.

[3] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 53.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

passion and the passion of the female. Throughout nature sexual conjugation only takes place after much expenditure of energy.'[1] And so the ghotul evening usually begins with vigorous dances and games, many of them frankly provocative of the sexual emotions. The splendid parade of the Mandri dance, the intimacies of the Hulki, the suggestiveness of some of the games are invaluable as a preparation for tumescence. There is a proverb *Rela rela bando pela*—'If you start with singing Rela you end with the satisfaction of desire'. It must be noted that it is not only the chelik who by the energy of their display excite the motiari; the girls' games and dances are equally powerful stimulants. In one of these games, the girls bend forward, each holding a stick in her hand to represent a penis, and dance with jerky movements of the buttocks that closely simulate the sexual process. As they dance they sing,

Nân nân chingvo,	Little little prawn hairs,
Bare lân khuta,	Very long thorn,
Kaha gai ho,	Where has he gone,
Nandpurihâr Râja?	The Nandpurihar Raja?

The 'little prawn hairs' are the pubic hairs and the long thorn is the penis of the chelik. In the Jhoria Endanna, the girls also sing songs about sexual congress.

V

We have already seen, particularly in Chapter XI, something of the scope of sexual opportunity offered by the ghotul as also the limitations it imposes on the normal process of sexual selection. Under these conditions do the chelik and motiari really 'fall in love'? What happens to the tenderness of devotion, the tensions and despairs of passion, the idealizing of the adored object which is still, to the majority of Europeans, essential to any proper relationship between the sexes? Or does life in the ghotul, as Dalton said of the Uraon dormitory, 'sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'?

It is possible that the Muria, in the diffused tenderness of corporate affection, in their simple and natural view of sexual congress, in their rational and realistic attitude to one another, have achieved something better than the sentimental raptures of the lover in the novelette 'sighing like furnace' for an impossible ideal.

Many chelik and motiari seem to pass through their ghotul period without any very passionate love-affairs, content and happy with the ghotul tradition of love. Others, in the course of their seven or eight ghotul years, experience one or two vivid and exciting adventures which may last only a few months and which interrupt but illuminate the general course of their less intense amours. Others again, of a different temperament, are always falling in love and out of it, coveting other cheliks' 'wives', arranging to meet girls outside in the forest or visiting them when the others are asleep. 'Love often makes us break the rules,' said a chelik at Kuntpadar.

For across the calm sea of unstrained, unfrustrated affection, there blow sudden gales and storms. A new girl comes to the village; a boy suddenly awakes to the charm of a motiari he has known for years; a chelik displays himself as a popular hero and draws every heart; little girls and boys grow up

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 52. The sex-dance of the subhuman primates 'consists of an erect swaggering waddle quite different from the usual mode of locomotion. No doubt its function is to intimidate and prepare the female for sexual submission to the dominant male.'—Clifford Allen, *The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities* (Oxford, 1940), p. 97. See also H. Bingham, *The Sex Development in Apes* (Baltimore, 1928).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

838 On the third day of a marriage, the motiari retire to the ghotul or their camp
585 and dress up as chelik. They put on turbans, waistcoats and loin-cloths.
They borrow boys' armlets for their arms, put knives in their waist-bands,
292 and approach the marriage-booth carrying axes, branches of mango leaves
and bunches of *dab* grass. They dance up to the marriage-booth, under which
●535 the bridegroom is seated, and ceremonially sweep it. Among the dancers is
the bride disguised as a boy. All the dancers are in fact disguised, for they
wind their turbans round and round their faces to make it as difficult as
possible to tell them apart. As the girls go round and round the booth, they
challenge the bridegroom to pick out his bride. He is supposed to be
unable to do this, so at last, as the girls draw closer and closer to him, the
bride suddenly darts out from among them and hits him on the back with her
clenched fist. He jumps up and attempts to hit her back but she escapes and
her fellow motiari do their best to protect her. After this the girls continue
dancing for some time, then retire to their homes and remove their male
disguise.[1]

This practice is called the Nenuldwar, the 'army of the bride and bridegroom', and the dance is the Choli Endanna or the Jhoria Endanna. The name Choli Endanna simply means 'the waistcoat dance' and refers to the male disguise. The word Jhoria probably means lowlander[2] and has been fully explained in Chapter I. It is now no longer used as the title of the tribe, which has become merged with the Muria. There is, however, a Jhorian Pargana or sub-division and it is said that the dance is so called because it originated here. Although the word Jhoria means 'lowlander' in comparison with the Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains, to the Muria and Gond of eastern Bastar it is the name of an older and more primitive people. The expression Jhoria Endanna, therefore, suggests a dance of old time and ancient tradition. It is the most primitive of all the marriage dances.

838 As the motiari approach and dance round the marriage-booth, which they
585 do very slowly in a long straight line, each girl clutching her left-hand
neighbour round the neck with one arm, while with the other she waves her
535 bunch of grass and mango leaves to and fro as if she were sweeping a floor,
539 they sing a number of songs. There is a considerable variety of these and I will give a few examples of different kinds. The first song refers to the ceremonial sweeping of the marriage-booth.

Diwān wiyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Wāyu dewa wāyu roy dewo!	Come girl, come Dewo!
Wiyār hayu wāyu roy dewo!	Come to sweep, girl, come Dewo!
Naling cao gorāng roy dewo.	The mandia is like aonra fruit.
Gorāng nori ola roy dewoni.	She went to grind the mandia.

men. The chaunt and dance were as before, except that the pantomime abounded in the most indecent gestures and attitudes, all illustrative of sexual relations. One girl slipped (or pretended to) and fell. Whereupon, one of those playing a man's part fell upon her to ravish her. A rescue ensued amidst roars of merriment, and the would-be ravisher was in process of being stripped when our modesty compelled us to call an interval.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 66ff.

According to Santal tradition, witchcraft began through a transvestite expedition. Marang Buru had decided to teach men witchcraft, but the women made them drunk and then 'put on pagris and dhoties and stuck goats' beards on their faces' and went to learn the magic art instead.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 422.

[1] At Pardhan marriages in Mandla, the bride is sometimes disguised as a boy and her future husband is challenged to find her. I found a similar test among the Binjhwar of Chhattisgarh. The custom is doubtless widely distributed.

[2] See pp. 19–27.

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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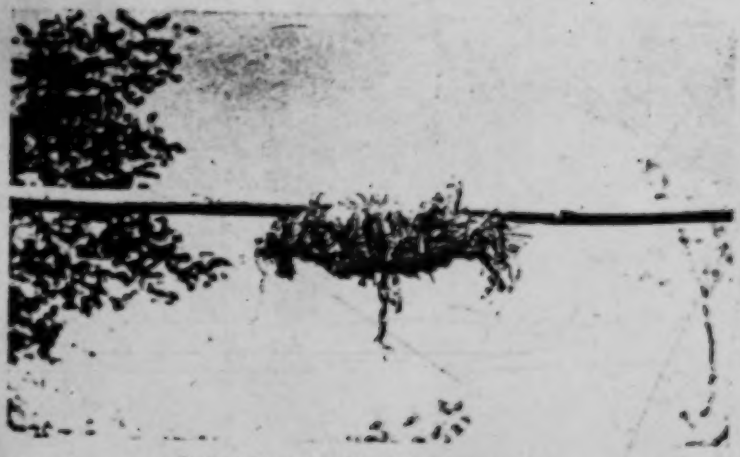

Rubbish hung over the road to purify a village

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Plate LXXXIX

Leader of the Diwali dance

Chelik with sacred ire

[p. 464 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate XC

Pan Koiang dances: two movements in the Lingo Pata at Phulpar

[p. 464 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XCII

535
196

The semur tree at Phulpar, hung with dancing sticks

[p. 480(b)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 -AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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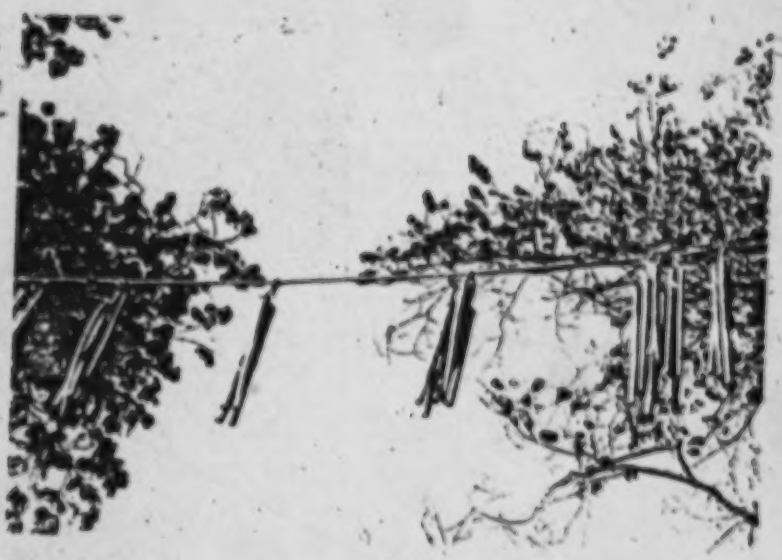

Dancing sticks strung across the road near the village boundary at Kohtera

Chelik preparing to hunt their sticks across the road

[p. 484 (A)]

Plate XCIII

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Plate XCIV

Chait Dandar dances: two movements in the Stick Dance at Mahakot

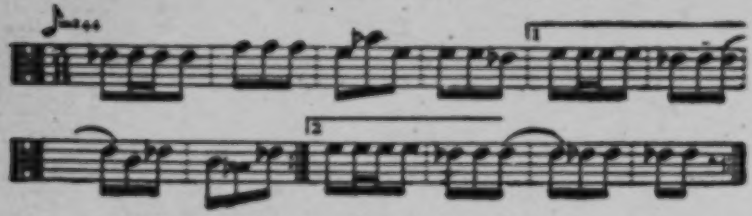
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

taboo. It is very dangerous to make mistakes in the dancing or stick-beating, and any kind of error is heavily penalised.[1] If one of the boys makes a mistake the Gaita of the village visited removes the turban of the Gain and the boys have to pay a fine of two bottles of liquor before he will return it. Should a boy drop his stick or if his dhoti gets loose, he has to pay a similar fine. Anything dropped must be picked up with the teeth.

Special rules control the conduct of the three leading pairs, the Gain and Jokta or Roche-sela and two other couples. They must talk to no one; they must not dance with the motiari of the villages they visit; they may only sing the special Pus Kolang songs.

The dancing party from Phulpar in 1941 visited Sarandi, Kurse, Kutgaon and Tursani. When they reached Sarandi, they went straight to the Gaita's house and danced before it. As they entered the village they sang,



Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.
Show us the Gaita's house, chelik.
Don't you know the Gaita's house, chelik?
Where have you come from, chelik?
We have come from the land of hills.
If we show you, what will you give us, chelik?
We will give you a cloth for your loins.
It's the house with a cart in the yard, chelik.
There is a pond for the buffaloes in front, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.
On a bamboo pole there's a monkey, chelik.
There's an elephant tied to the pillar, chelik.
There's a horse tied in the shed, chelik.
On the roof there sits a peacock, chelik.
There's a gun against the fence, chelik.
A sword against the wall, chelik.
A parrot on its perch, chelik.
A maina in a cage, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.

The boys sing this song to a circular stick-dance rather slowly and reverently as if their words were charged with deep spiritual meaning. Then while two boys take a basket into the house to beg for rice, pulse and salt, the others begin their programme of dances.

[1] For similar beliefs in the danger of making a mistake during a ceremonial dance, see J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. III, p. 518. Compare also A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1890), p. 93.

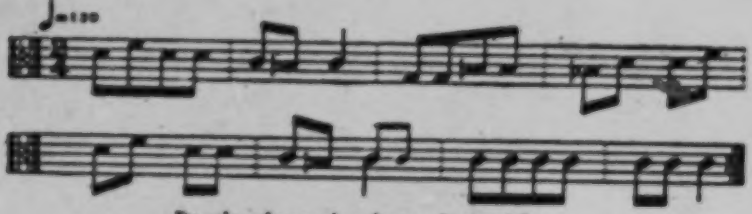
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

There are four of these, quite distinct from those danced at any other time. Indeed it is often considered dangerous to dance the Pus Kolang dances even for show at a visitor's camp.

The first, which is the Pus Kolang dance proper, is a stick-dance. The sacred spear is stuck in the ground and the boys circulate round it rather solemnly, each boy attached to his neighbour by dancing-sticks which both hold.

[533]

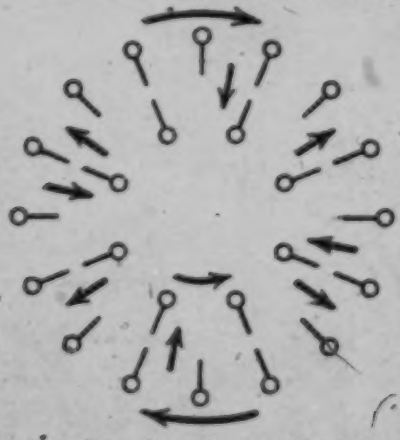


Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.

[539]

Old man Lingo Pen, Johar to thee,
After Lingo what god was there?
After him was Budha Pen.
Johar to him!
After Budha Pen, who was there?
After him was Mudial Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!
After him who comes?
After him comes Mudial Use Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!

And so through a long list of gods, Gundi Pen, Sonkuari Pen, Phulkuari Pen, Kurumtulla Pen, Balkuari Pen, Naturgundi Pen.



To all these gods we fold our hands,
We beg them not to be angry,
Not to forget us.
We will give incense, cock and pig.
To all we give Johar!

Then the dance changes, and improves. The boys form two circles facing each other. These two rings circulate antagonistically and at the same time the boys of the inner circle change places, with a hop and a jump and three taps of the sticks, with those of the outer circle. This goes on continually, so that the two circles are in constant movement against each other and always alternating. The flourishing and beating of the sticks is very pleasing.

A special variety of the stick-dance is called Kappu Daka. *Kappu* is a bird and *daka* means to lift the feet. So this dance imitates the rapid movement

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

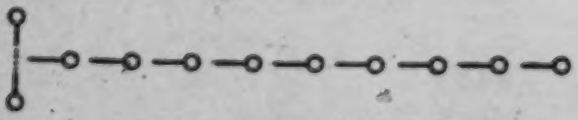
of a bird picking up its feet. The step changes to a much more lively and bouncing movement; the boys swing their buttocks and tinkle their bells with greater vigour; they sing with more zest and clash their sticks merrily. The song is long and tedious.

In what *gaṛā* shall we buy, chelik?
In Raigarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
A cloth for the loins,
To make the loins beautiful, chelik.
In what *gaṛā* shall we buy, chelik?
In Sarangarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
Ornaments for the body,
To make the body beautiful, chelik.
In what *gaṛā* shall we buy, chelik?
In Delhigarh we will buy, chelik.

And so on, until head and ear and waist ornaments have been bought for the adornment of the handsome chelik.

A rather serious dance is the Lingo Endanna, which is also called Pen Badanna. For this the boys form up in two long lines facing inwards. At the head of the line, two boys face each other holding their sticks across the gap. The leader stands behind these sticks and beats them. The boys move slowly forward and back, singing. After a time they sit down and do the same thing, but without moving. Then they rise and the line turns in on itself, the leader going down and stepping over the sticks; then the boys return with the sticks held above their heads. This movement is known as Hichelhar Pata. The songs are conventional, referring to Lingo Pen and his relatives.

There is another movement, which I saw at Pupgaon.



The two leaders face each other holding a stick between them; the line of boys forms up headed by the Ghotul Manjhi. They stand quite still singing slowly and sadly; the Manjhi gently taps the cross-stick in front of him.

Now the dancing-sticks are carefully piled round the sacred spear. For the Monkey dance, three or four small boys mount on the shoulders of a circle of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

their elders and are raised into the air with a whistle and a shout.[1] This pyramid slowly gyrates, and the other boys form a procession and march round and round singing.

Songs

1

[533]

Re reloyo re rela re rela rela re reloyo re rela rela
Sayrela re rela rela.

[539]

At the boundary the monkey sits on a pile of stones.
Get up, monkey, get up, monkey.
My horse is speaking to you, monkey.
You are sitting on a long pole, monkey.
You are eating the raw ebony fruit, monkey.

2

Whose is this temple, girl?
It is the shrine of the Kolang boys, girl.
This is their temple, girl.
Come out to see it, girl.
Bring a lamp in the left hand, girl,
Water in the right, girl.
Give them greeting, girl.
Bring rice in the fan, girl,
Rice in the basket, girl,
Rice in the leaf-cup, girl,
Bring salt in the leaf-bundle, girl.
Give us something to drink from your hand, girl.

The last dance is the Kokotar Daka Endanna. The chelik form a line, each boy holding in his right hand the stick of the one in front and in his left the stick of the one behind. They go round in a rambling line, while the boys at the end hop about and waggle like the tail of the *manda-pilo* bird. Others say that the head of the line is a dog and the tail a hare; the purpose of the dance then becomes a game in which the head of the line must turn round and catch the tail. In Koilibera, the boys at the tail imitated the copulation of goats.

[771]

[1] Thurston describes a similar dance performed by Koyi women. 'The older ones stood in a circle with their arms intertwined and the younger girls perched aloft, standing astraddle on their shoulders.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 72. I have seen similar dances of this kind performed by the Dhurwa-Parja of southern Bastar, the Kond of Koraput District and the Bhil of the Dangs.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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The Watia Karsana

A Chait Dandar
dancer

A straw man

[p. 492 (A)]

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GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Song

Whose sticks are these, mother-in-law?
The sticks of our clan, mother-in-law.
The sticks shine in the sun, mother-in-law.
Come out to see the sticks, mother-in-law.
In your left hand bring a lamp, mother-in-law.
In your right hand bring water, mother-in-law.
Quickly, quickly give us greeting, mother-in-law.

Probably to the Muria mind the constant repetition of 'mother-in-law' is amusing; a second song is also humorous.

On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
The hare has teeth as big as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustaches are like spear grass, chelik.
Its hairs are like a pile of bamboo shavings, chelik.[1]

From the Gaita's house the chelik move round the village, dancing before each house in turn and collecting a little rice. Meanwhile the motiari are busy collecting rice themselves; they cook this in the ghotul, and later serve it to the boys in their camp. At night boys and girls dance together, but without their sticks.

In the morning, the boys give the girls two or four pice and try to hit them when they accept it. When they reach the village boundary on their way to the next village, the little rite of crossing over a sacred line is repeated. Before reaching the new village, they halt somewhere by a stream and cook the food that they have just collected, lighting the fire from the need-fire on their spear. Then they go on and repeat the same programme.

At last the expedition is over; the days of taboo will soon be at an end; the boys approach once more their own village. News of their coming has preceded them and their motiari have not been idle. In Khutgaon I was told that they went out with the rest of the village to catch hares for the boys' feast. But everywhere the girls take the Gaita out into the jungle and make him cut one or two small semur trees. The semur tree is chosen because it was a semur which grew up out of the stump of the gold-covered

[293]

FIG. 118. Dummy guns carried on dancing expeditions

bamboo which Lingo himself cut down at the end of the first Pus Kolang expedition. In some villages the boys say that the semur is chosen because Lingo

[1] For similar humour, see my *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, pp. 150ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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used to shelter beneath it when he was alive. Obviously there is a reference to Semurgaon, the village where Lingo is said to have turned into a stone and now has his shrine. The semur has the added advantage that its spikes frighten off magic and demons. A small semur is chosen because a bigger one might be inhabited by the ghost of some dead chelik. The bare branches of the tree that suddenly blossom with bright red flowers may symbolize the menarche or nuptial fertility.

The semur must be cut very carefully. The motiari offer rice and pulse before it saying, 'As our boys went out well and happy, so well and happy may they return'. As the Gaita cuts it the girls stop it falling to the ground, for should it do so, it is believed that a pair of dancers will die on the way and not return.

[293]

They then tie a saja leaf round the stumps of the trees and carry them back either to the ghotul compound, or to an open space in the middle of the village, wherever the ashes of the fire by which the omens were originally tested are to be found. If the trees, after being planted, do not stand up straight it is believed that disaster is in store for the boys. The motiari make small mud platforms, whiten them with clay and sometimes decorate them with drawings of the chelik.

Fig. 119. Dancing-sticks from Rengawand

These platforms are to be left for three years, though I doubt if this is often done, but it is important that at the end of the proceedings the semur trees should be pulled up. Should they sprout with renewed life it means that the Gain and his mate will die. In Ghotulbera this actually happened and now the trees are always pulled up and thrown away.

After the platforms have been made, the motiari prepare a lot of leaf-pipes, bundles of tobacco and toilet-twigs. Where there are two trees, one is for the leaders of the party, the Gain and Jokta, the other for the rest. This is an anxious and exciting day for the motiari; their chelik have been away amidst unknown dangers to the heart and spirit; they must do all they can to please them. This evening they cook in the ghotul or near the boys' camp in an enclosure of branches.

When the boys reach home, they go first to the Gaita's house and dance there. They then proceed to the ghotul or to their camp, where they put the spear into the ground near the semur trees and dance round them. After a time they gather about the trees and suddenly all cry *Hurr!* and hang their dancing-sticks on the branches. They remove their special clothes and hang these too on the branches. They take the pipes and tobacco from the trees and smoke them. The next morning they clean their teeth with the toilet-twigs which the motiari have provided. They are home again.

In Kollibera in 1941, the boys reached the village in the morning and spent the day dancing and collecting grain. In the evening, after they had danced round the semur trees, the Kaser-Gaita made little squares with coal-dust, rice-flour and haldi at the foot of each tree, and offered incense with the aid of the need-fire that the boys had now brought home. The chelik gathered round him and their leader offered him the sacred bunch of peacock's feathers and after exchanging this three times, the priest hung it on the first tree. Then the boys hung up their dancing-sticks and turbans. The rest of their attire was packed in little baskets and put under a tree.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

The boys then sit down and the motiari feed them. They must not, however, go to the ghotul that night; there are still ceremonies to be performed.

The next morning the motiari husk in the ghotul the grain that the chelik have brought home. On the verandahs of some ghotul there are permanent mortars for this purpose. In the evening boys and girls will cook this together. The boys then begin to dance; they go to the Gaita's house—at Koilibera they came to my camp; but fairly soon they go home to collect chickens and pigs for sacrifice. When they have all re-assembled they set off in a ragged procession, led by the Kaser-Gaita, towards the village boundary. On the way every boy picks up a stone and carries it along with him.

FIG. 130. Anklet of bells worn on dancing expeditions

When they reach the boundary, the Kaser-Gaita goes for water; others clear a space under a tree by the roadside; the boys make a pile of stones in honour of Lingo Pen near by. In some villages, each pair of boys put down two stones and one above them. The Gaita's stones are put first and then all the others in a line with finally three stones for the dog. The chickens are sacrificed before the appropriate stones. The following day the boys go to inspect the stones and if any of them have fallen over it is regarded as a fatal omen and that particular pair of dancers will die. When the Gaita returns he sprinkles a little water on the cleared space, smooths it over, makes seven piles of rice and offers incense.

The chelik stretch a rope of siari creeper across the road and tie their dancing-sticks to it. The sacred bundle of peacock feathers is tied at one end. Two chelik climb trees on opposite sides and haul up the rope until it stretches taut across the road.

Now the Gaita offers chickens, eggs and two small pigs in the usual way. At Koilibera I was interested to see how he taught two of the boys, allowing them to practise with a few of the chickens and a pig. When this was over, the boys went to the road and rather formally stripped themselves of the *Lingo-singār*, the dress worn in honour of Lingo, packing the turbans, skirts and bells into little bamboo baskets.

The Pus Kolang is almost over. The chelik return home to the village and the Gaita goes with a few of the leading boys to the shrine of the Village Mother and replaces the sacred spear of Maria Pen. Everyone has returned safely, so the priest offers a goat. The rest of the day is spent preparing for the evening feast, which is taken at about five o'clock. At Koilibera, on 25 January 1941, I attended this feast; it was a very pleasant affair. A great crowd of people sat round in a half-circle, mothers with their children, old men, little boys. The older boys served the food; the motiari saw to arrangements behind the scenes. There was an excellent meal of rice (of several different kinds collected on the trip), pork, goat and pulses. My wife and I sat with the Chowkidar and Kalingsai. Presents of meat were sent to the whole village, to Kalar, Halba and Mahars without distinction. Last of all the older chelik and the motiari got their food, and that evening they went to sleep in the ghotul.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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III. The Pen Kolang Expeditions

Between the ordinary Pus Kolang expedition and the Chait Dandar, which I will describe immediately, there is a sort of intermediate dance called the Pen or Deo Kolang. This is danced by boys only, but girls accompany them to do the cooking and keep an eye on them. Just as in the Pus Kolang, the chelik practise their dances, light a fire to test the omens and go to the shrine of the Village Mother to get fire and a spear or axe or bell. When this is done the Gaita buries a ring in front of the shrine.

The boys follow very much the same rules as are observed on the Pus Kolang expeditions and have to observe chastity even with the motiari of their own village. When they return they dance before the Gaita's house and he digs up the ring and returns it to their leader. At Esalnar they said that it was essential that the dancing party should make a complete circle of villages right round their own village. Every boy must dance for at least three years or the gods will be angry with him. At Esalnar, as also in villages south of Narayanpur such as Bakulwahi and Markabera, the dancing-sticks are not slung up across the road but are placed in the Deo-gudi.

The distinctive features then of the Pen Kolang are that girls accompany the party, that a ring is buried, and that the dancing-sticks are placed in the Deo-gudi at the end of the performance.

At Bakulwahi there was a rule that on the last day when the last dance was finished every boy had to throw his stick down at the same time, or they would fall ill.

IV. The Chait Dandar Expeditions

Throughout the east-central and south-eastern villages of the Muria territory the Chait Dandar, Kati Dandar or Mahua Dandar dances take the place of the Pus Kolang. I have already pointed out that as we move east and south from the Jhoria area the cult of Lingo grows progressively weaker and there is thus less inducement to perform the Pus Kolang, which is essentially a dance performed in his honour. The Chait Dandar is a much happier and freer dance than the Pus Kolang. It is not hedged about by a score of taboos and the dread sanctions that enforce them. The essential feature, indeed, of this dance is that boys and girls go out together and that there is no rule forbidding sexual intercourse between members of the same or of different ghotul.

Apart from this the general procedure of the Chait Dandar is not unlike that of the Pus Kolang. Before the chelik and motiari start, they practise for many days in the ghotul—for here too mistakes are dangerous and have to be atoned for. When all is ready they first dance in the ghotul; they then go to the shrine of the Village Mother where they offer liquor to Tallur Muttal saying, 'O Mother Earth, we are but children, teach us to dance well, save us from mistakes'. Then in front of the Gaita's house they dance again and the Gaita digs a hole into which he puts a ring, planting a semur tree above it. In some villages he offers liquor here in the name of Bhimni Pen.

When the boys and girls set out, they cross over a line of acura rings as usual and promise to give Mother Earth and the Departed offerings if they protect them from magic and evil spirits. In each village they go first to the Gaita and then collect mahua and food from every house. The visitors are entertained in the ghotul; sometimes they are made to dance at once and the ordinary procedure of the evening is omitted; sometimes, however, hosts and visitors interchange their girls for combing and massaging. I doubt if

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

this exchange goes so far as to include the sleeping arrangements, but I have no real information about this. Food is provided by the hosts. If the Irpu Pandum, the festival of the eating of the new mahua flowers, has not been celebrated, there is a strict taboo on the drinking of mahua spirit. If this taboo is broken the supply of flowers will fail. In Jungani there was a rule that the dance must not be performed at all until the flowers were gathered in. Here it was supposed that the noise of the stick-dance has a bad effect on the crop.

At the end of the expedition the boys and girls return to their own village and dance before the Gaita's house round and round the semur tree. The Gaita offers liquor to it, then pulls it up and throws it away. The ring is given to the leader of the dance. Finally the boys tie their sticks to a rope across a path near the village boundary in the usual way.

If there is a bazaar in the neighbourhood the boys visit it and dance in its four corners.

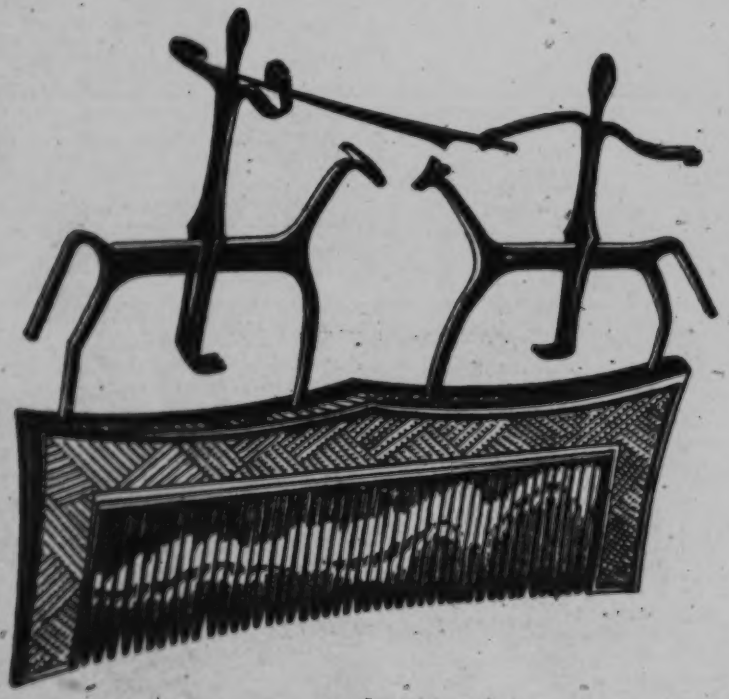

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FIG. 111. Comb with chalik and motiari on horseback

The sticks used in this dance are called either *dandār* or *kāli* and are usually made of sartali wood. Before the Gaita pulls up the semur tree the boys hang their sticks upon it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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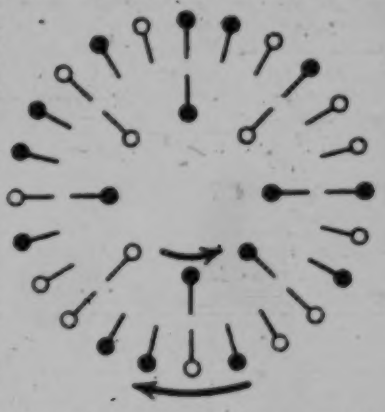
The dances and songs differ slightly from those of the Pus Kolang. In April 1941, I saw the Chait Dandar dancers of Jungani when they visited Malakot. The girls had no special dress, but the boys wore the dancing skirt, turbans and bells loosely hung above the buttocks. The leader of the party, the Gaita, wore the elaborate comb illustrated in Fig. 121 and a gaily coloured bag round his neck.



The dancing resembled the Pus Kolang dancing, but was much enlivened by the presence of the girls. The sticks used were much longer, about three feet with a notch at one end. In the big stick-dance with which they began the boys and girls mixed freely, forming two antagonistic circles. Each boy and girl held a stick in either hand, the right pointing upwards and the left down. As the circles revolved, they struck each other's sticks and passed on. They danced on their toes, with a light and easy step, right foot to right, left foot to left, the left foot up and down, then across to the right. The circles moved in both directions, reversing with a loud cry of *Ow-ha*. As usual among Muria, the boys shook their buttocks horizontally to ring the bells; this gave a very ragged effect in comparison with the strict timing and unison of the vertical jerk of the Hill Maria.

Songs

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1

Hun hun hun hun jām huy

The peacock has a long tail.
Where is the long-tailed peacock?
The peacock's in the Gaita's house.
How much does the peacock drink?
The peacock takes five sips.
Come down, O long-tailed peacock!
Where will it come down?
In the Pujari's house,
In his house come down.
O long-tailed peacock!

2

Roy wāyo jām huy

Don't think about your lover, she won't come now.
You'll miss your step in the dance if you think of her.
You won't sing properly.
Where has the Pujari gone?
He has gone with a knife to sacrifice.

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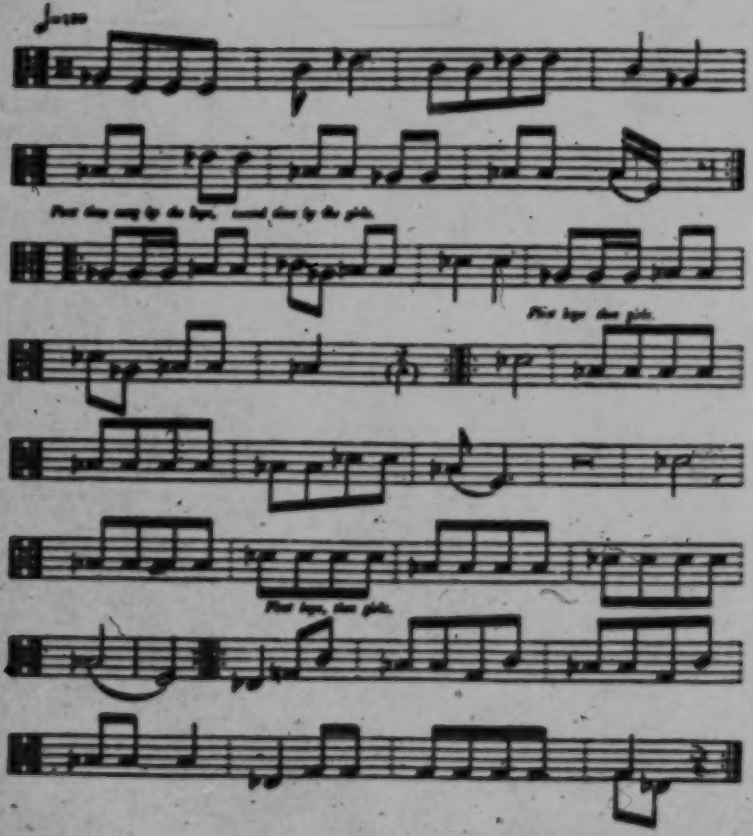
GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Ask the Gaita's wife where the Gaita has gone;
He has gone to his village holding an umbrella.
Ask the Manjhi's wife where the Manjhi has gone.
He has gone to give judgement holding his stick.



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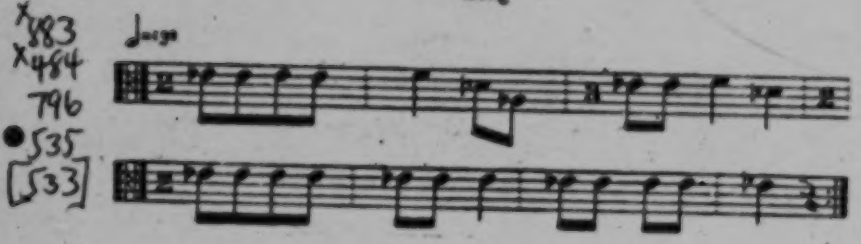
The second dance corresponded to the Lingo dance of the Pus Kolang. Boys and girls made two long lines facing each other; each pair held two sticks between them and beat them in unison. After a time the line turned in on itself, the leaders taking it down under a roof of sticks; then they turned round and the sticks were held low down near the ground and the line this time stepped over them.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song



Tari nāna na nāre nāna tari nānāre

Oho maina ho Lālsai baitho danda ho. — O maina bird, O Lalsai! Sit down with a stick.

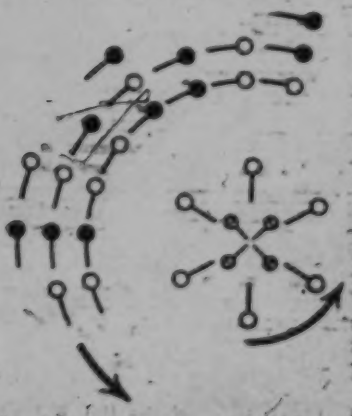
Oho kāhen ke danda ho Lālsai maina kāhen ke danda ho tari? — What is the stick made of, O Lalsai maina?

Ye bāte palțu ho rāja maina ho Lālsai ye bāte palțu ho! — Let us turn this side, O Raja maina, O Lalsai!

O ho chait dandar ho rāja maina ho Lālsai ho teri. — This is the Chait Dandar.

Uthun dakhu ho rāja maina Lālsai ho tari. — Let us stand and watch it.

Lalsai means a prince. The young Maharaja used to be called Lalpila. The third dance was called the Bendri (or Monkey) Kindanna, very like the usual pyramid dance, but with a brighter note in the procession where boys and girls marched round with their arms about each other's necks. Four little boys mounted on the backs of half-a-dozen seniors, who rose up with a loud whistle. The rest of the party formed the procession and went round the pyramid beating their sticks, with quick hopping movements. They advanced three paces, paused, swung back a little and then advanced again. From time to time they made excellent *hoop-hoop* monkey noises. When they descended, the younger boys saluted their elders with Johar, apparently in gratitude for their safe return from so perilous an elevation.



The last dance was performed in a slow and solemn line. Boys and girls, embracing one another about the shoulders, formed a long row, sticks in hand. They advanced two steps, retired two steps and at the same time moved a little to the right. After the line had thus travelled some distance, it moved back to the left. The movement was slow and tedious and the singing rather flat.

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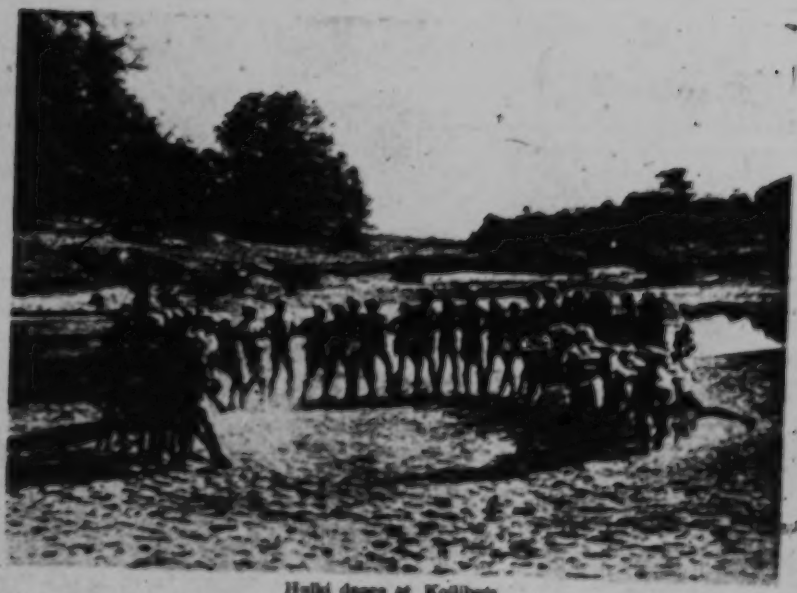
Hulki dance at Aivr



Hulki dance at Kolibeta

[p. 500(A)]

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Plate XCVIII

Hulki expedition mask
(From Sirpur)

Chait Dasdar masks representing man and wife (From Kachora)

[p.500(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Songs

1

Tare nare nare na nare

Porre metta dippa tendera lālsai.	Cut the clearing on the top of the hill, Lalsai.
Dippa tendsi bāra kewerār lālsai?	Why is the clearing to be cut?
Dippa tendsi bāra bitirār lālsai?	What will be sown in that clearing?
Dippa tendsi ganga parbat bitirār lālsai.	In that clearing *ganga parbat* seed will be sown.
Ganga bitsi bāra kewerār lālsai?	What shall we do with that seed?
Ganga pungār jhola jewerār lālsai.	We will put its flower in our turbans, Lalsai.

The *ganga parbat* is a specially profitable seed.

2

Tari na hari na morey, nāna hari nāna ho, ye na hari na morey na, kankaiya morey ye na, hari na morey na

Bhala kaise rowen more pandki parewān ho?	How does my wood-pigeon cry, and my dove?
Kaise rowen manjur?	And how does my peacock cry?
Bhala ghutru ghutru more pandki parewān ho;	O *ghutru ghutru* cries my wood-pigeon and my dove;
Dhoke dhoke manjur.	O *dhoke dhoke* cries my peacock.
Bhala kay chāra charen more pandki parewān ho?	O what food has my wood-pigeon and my dove?
Kāy chāra charen manjur?	What food has my peacock?
Bhala gotin charen more pandki parewān ho;	My wood-pigeon and my dove eat small pieces of stone;
Dhānen charen manjur.	My peacock eats rice.
Bhala 'haisen sowen more pandki parewān ho?	And how sleeps my wood-pigeon and my dove?
Kaise sowen manjur?	How sleeps my peacock?
Bhala gura me sowen more pandki parewān ho;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove sleep in their nests;
Jhāre me sowen manjur.	And my peacock sleeps in the tree.
Bhala kahān pāni piwen more pandki parewān ho?	O where do my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water?
Kahān pāni piwen manjur?	And where does my peacock drink?
Bhala ghare pāni piwen more pandki parewān ho;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water in the house;
Bane pāni piwen manjur.	My peacock drinks water in the forest.

There are evidently no chastity taboos in the Mahua Dandar expeditions. Girls and boys went about with free and natural embraces that were a delight to watch. During the stick-dance, when a boy approached a girl he fancied, he waggled the bells on his buttocks furiously and laughed and flirted with her as she passed. In our camp a party of dancers stood for a long time watching us. Every boy had his arms round a girl, and the Belosa stood with two boys; they were all embracing each other (see Plate XCI). There was no self-consciousness or shyness, no fear either of the stranger or the gods.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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You would not see that sort of thing on a Pus Kolang expedition. As a chelik described it at Chandabera, 'We all go together for the Mahua Dandar and have great fun. No one has a right over any girl and all play with each other'. Occasionally boys and girls of different villages fall in love and run away together.

V. The Diwali Dances

But of all the opportunities for romantic adventure so liberally provided by Muria society, none is more exciting than the girls' Diwali dance. The word 'Diwali' is here simply an indication of date; the dances have nothing to do with the Hindu festival. Even the dates are usually wrong; I saw Diwali dances on 18 November 1940 at Binjhli, on 24 November at Remawand and on 27 November at Bandopal. The actual Diwali that year was on 24 October. I saw it again at Sirpur on 30 October 1941, though the real festival was a fortnight earlier.

[531
293]

Fig. 122. Ornamented wooden axe carried by the leader of the girls on a Diwali expedition

During this season the motiari go from village to village, singing and dancing. But to the east of the main road, the Diwali is only danced in a few villages; to the south of Kondagaon it is almost unknown. Instead boys and girls go together for the Hulki.

Sometimes, the Diwali is abandoned for a time because of a scandal, sometimes on supernatural grounds. In Talabera, the girls cannot dance or sing at all, for if they do a god (*deo*) attacks them. He makes the girls tremble and fall to the ground: the Gaita has to spit and beat them with a stick to get rid of him.

There does not seem to be any special religious or magical purpose in these expeditions; they are simply for enjoyment and amorous adventure. Only girls go, led by their Belosa, and when they visit any village, only the boys of that village may be present to entertain them. The visitors dance first at the Gaita's house, then through the village; they camp in the ghotul; the local boys cook for them and entertain them. In the evening, the visiting girls and the local boys dance and play together and the dancing often lasts all night. During those long hours every one of the visitors is taken away into the jungle; the more attractive ones may be taken several times. The evenings are fruitful of love-affairs and sometimes a chelik now meets his future wife. A boy from Kapsi told me that he met

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

his bride when she came from Markabera to dance. He took her three times to the jungle.

I will now trace the experiences of a party of these dancers as they go out from their village.

For days discussions in the ghotul have centred round the girls' programme. Some of the girls have definite villages in mind; there is a handsome boy glimpsed for a moment at a last year's wedding: here is a famous drummer and singer whom they all admire. The chelik are more concerned that their motiari will be properly fed and cared for. 'Last year such and such a village was very mean; don't go there this time,' they say. 'But that village gave you pork and a little ghee, it is worth a second visit.' The girls too have their memories, different ones. They have to consider too the prevailing clans, and the *bhum* of the places they propose to see. At last the programme is settled. The motiari are to go to seven villages and return home on the eighth day.

On the morning of their departure, the girls go to the shrine of the Village Mother, and the Gaita offers incense and promises food-sacrifice if they return safely. The girl leader, carrying an ornamented axe over her shoulder, takes fire from the shrine in a coil of rice-straw. She must preserve this fire throughout the tour. Other girls must not touch either the axe or fire, for they represent the village god. Then the Gaita takes the party to the boundary of the village and makes a line across the path, on which he puts little piles of rice, and seven rings of aonra leaf with some iron slag. Over this the girls step in single file while the Gaita prays, addressing all the gods of that part and the Departed, 'Our girls go out to dance the Diwali dance. Let them go well, let them come well. Let there be no fever, cough or cold. If they come unharmed, we will give you liquor, incense, eggs, a cock. They are going to a strange country; let them have no trouble. It is your duty to see to this'. And then with a sudden change of tone, 'If they return with fever, cough or cold, I will piss in your face'.

By now the girls have passed and the Gaita says no more to them, for they must go on their way without once looking round.

Presently they reach the first village on their tour programme. They go straight to the Gaita's house, pile their belongings, their extra wraps, their big baskets for collecting food, under a tree, and begin to dance. The Diwali dance takes several forms. One is a slow, monotonous dance, in a circle, clapping the hands and singing, mostly Relo. In another the girls form themselves into two rows and move round quickly with four steps forward and to the right, two back, then four to the right again.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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[539]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

In Sidhawand, the girls danced in two lines following each other. Each girl had her left hand on her neighbour's shoulder and her right hand hung straight down. They took two steps to the right, right, left, right, then slid the left foot along the ground.

When they first arrive, the Diwali dancers sing:

1

Thākur ghar kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's house, brothers?
Jora kukur bhuke re bhai rām,	Where a pair of dogs are barking, brothers,
Tehi thākur gharu re bhai rām.	There is the Thakur's house, brothers.
Thākur beta kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's son, brothers?
Jora kardhan pahire re bhai rām.	He has a double silver belt, brothers.
Tehi thākur beta re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's son, brothers.
Thākur bohāri kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers?
Jora suta pahire re bhai rām.	She has two bands round her neck, brothers.
Tehi thākur bohāri re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers.

2

Mulir mulir intoni kāri gurti!	You are crying army, army, O blackbird!
Aga baga da mulir kāri gurti?	Where has the army come from, blackbird?
Rainigarh da mulir dāda.	The army has come from Rainigarh, brother.
Hurrig lekha mulir dāda.	The army comes like a line of black ants, brother.
Dondera kayang talwār dāda.	The sword is long as the dondera fruit, brother.
Tormend tormend puja roy kāri gurti;	They are killing people *tormend tormend*, blackbird;
Mindāk tora reyandu roy kāri gurti;	The blood is flowing up to the knees, blackbird;
Luwur minu kubnāh roy kāri gurti;	*Luwur* fish are swimming in it, blackbird;
Nāri minu targanāh roy kāri gurti.	*Nāri* fish are swimming against the stream, blackbird.

A crowd soon gathers, attracted not so much by the dance as by the desire to see who has come. The local chelik are very excited and bustle to and fro making arrangements. They send their own girls to clean the ghotul, but once that is done forbid them to come near. Their own girls are planning to go out themselves in two days' time, so they do not really mind.

In Remawand, when the girls from Markabera came, the Remawand boys went round the village collecting rice, pulse and salt, and cooked it under a tree near the Gaita's house. When the girls had finished singing they camped in the ghotul, taking complete possession of it, spreading their things everywhere; some of them lay down and slept at once, tired with the journey and

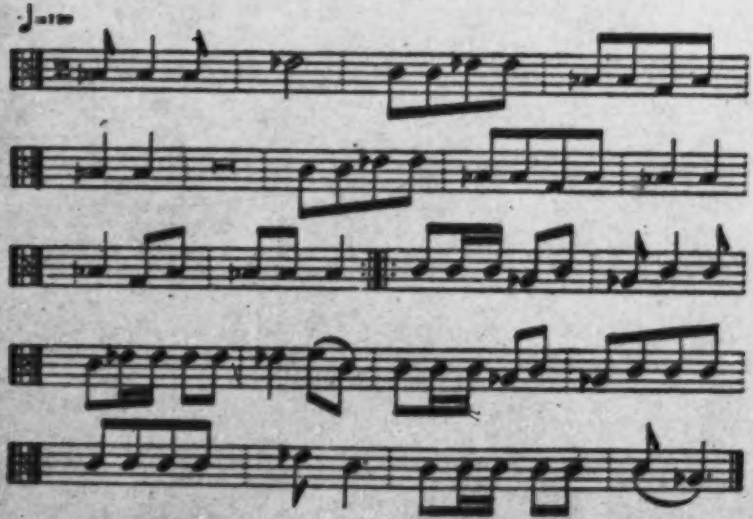
GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

in preparation for an exhausting night. When the food was ready the boys brought it to the ghotul and they all ate from leaf-plates, seated on logs of wood placed in a rough circle. There were about a dozen visiting girls and as many hosts.

After supper a great fire was lit in the ghotul court and some of the girls began to dance in a small circle with the boys in another group, a slow and mournful dance, wholly unsuited to the spirit of the moment. None of the older people came near; it was the hour of youth. Presently they wearied of the dance, and sat down round the fire, the girls in a half-circle on one side, the boys facing them. They began to talk very delightfully to each other. I do not think I have ever heard a group of people talk with such gentle and natural charm. The girls began by asking the clan of every boy; the boys asked the same question of the girls. This was significant—a necessary preparation for later assignations and even marriages. Then the two parties exchanged names, ghotul-names, and this caused a lot of merriment, for of course the girls' lovers in Markabera had often the same names as the boys of Remawand. Then the boys began to call themselves by the girls' titles and the girls took the boys' names, causing roars of laughter and some embarrassment. This was probably a form of proposal and assignation. When the Sirdar called himself Malko and she replied by calling herself Kotwar, he knew that her attentions were engaged elsewhere. But if she said 'I am the Sirdar', he knew that his advances at midnight would not be rejected.

Songs

I



Banda vela ḍyungir wo ḍya.
Pungir nilichila dikigo ḍya.
Nima icho hanma wo nami.
Bona sada dahi wo nami?

In the lake there is a flower.
I go to put it in my hair.
Don't go, little daughter.
Who will go with you there?

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Māmān marri mantor go āya: There is my *māma's* son:
Ona suda dāka wo āya. I will go with him.
Tāra nāwa sandra go āya. Give me my *sandra* cloth.
Sandra nana uhka go āya. I will wear my cloth.
Kosa wāri polka go āya; The *polka* jacket is made of silk;
Tāra nāwa polka go āya. Bring me that jacket.
Wāler igāda tukil wo āya; The basket was made by the Nahar;
Tāra nāwa tukil wo āya. Give me my basket.
Muyāng end-leng kocha go āya; The measure has little bells round it;
Tāra nāwa kocha go āya. Bring me the measure.
Kawdāng end-leng humār go āya; The *gundri* is adorned with cowries;
Tāra nāwa humār go āya. Bring me the *gundri*.
Hupe lolor wati go āya! O the jungle clearing of the rats!
Hupe lehkā dāka go āya. Like a rat I will go.
Nana waronāy atona āya. I will go all alone.
Saboy tāskun dāynur go āya. For everyone has left me.
Kapo kanhār bera go āya, Over the field of the *kapu* bird,
Kapo lehka parriya ka āya. Like a bird I will go.

2

Aga baga pārewāng roy dele? Whence are these pigeons?
Dongur bhum tāng pārewāng roy dele. The pigeons have come from the highlands.
Aga baga raiya nung roy dele? Where have the pigeons settled?
Gāita dāda duār re roy dāda. In the Gaita's court.
Kile re koru rachāte roy dele, In front of his fence,
Agāye ise raiytāng roy dele. There they have settled.

3

Kumda phul sitārām kayde layor. Salute the flower of the pumpkin, boys.
Tuma phul sitārām kayde layor. Salute the flower of the gourd, boys.
Kākri phul sitārām kayde layor. Salute the flower of the cucumber, boys.
Mogra phul sitārām kayde layor. Salute the flower of the *mogra*, boys.
Keonra phul sitārām kayde layor. Salute the flower of the *keonra*, boys.
Chameli phul sitārām kayde layor. Salute the flower of the *chameli*, boys.
Gulāp phul sitārām kayde layor. Salute the flower of the rose, boys.
Āma phul sitārām kayde layor. Salute the flower of the mango, boys.

4

Dāda le waiya munhe re korha kiton; In front you have built a cow-shed, brother;
Perhe ne purha kiton, dāda. Behind you have made a grain-bin, brother.
Murwize pāt jaliyal, dāda. The peacock is on the roof, brother.
Pinjora te maina kiton, dāda. The maina is in its cage, brother.
Rachāte gāda kiton, dāda. The cart is in the courtyard, brother.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Latite howe hiton, dāda.	The monkey is on the pole, brother.
Nawchāre pāt te chidrai, dāda.	The rat is in the rafters, brother.
Kena ye manwān āywin, dāda!	What a rich man you are, brother!
Dalate hesa himun, dāda,	Give us a basketful, brother,
Kāwir te hitāp āyār, dāda.	A full load, brother.
Jiwa tun hami hema, dāda.	Don't give less than that, brother.
Niyare poroy poyhom, dāda.	Then we will throw [praises] on you, brother.

5

Muda muda intoni dāda!	Ring, Ring, say Ring, brother!
Guru pehih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a blacksmith girl,
Kachi muda heweroṁ dāda.	She would have given an iron ring.
Sonār pehih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a goldsmith girl,
Soni muda wāterom dāda.	She would have given a gold ring.
Kauro pehih āyerom dāda,	Had she been of the Kauro clan,
Kawra muda heweroṁ dāda.	She would have given a cowrie ring,
Kudum dāka wāterom dāda.	And she would have walked stamping her feet.
Dinda layor ātekroy dāda,	Had you been an unmarried boy, brother,
Kudum dāka wāta roy dāda,	You too would have walked stamping your feet,
Māte muth ka heweroṁ dāda.	And we would have beaten you with our fists.

From time to time girls would jump up and try to run into the ghotul to sleep, but the boys were generally quick enough to catch them. This went on all night, alternating dance and pleasant talk. Every now and then a boy pulled a girl out of the ghotul and away into the fields. No one took any notice, though there was a little laughter when they returned. The girls took it in turns to get a little sleep; there were generally three or four girls sleeping at any one time.

In the morning, the girls first sang outside the Gaita's house and the boys went round the village collecting a basket of rice for their journey and the midday meal which they would eat beside a stream half-way to their next village. When the boys returned, suddenly the girls ran to the ghotul leaving four of their number standing in line. These put two pice on the ground. Two of the boys ran to pick up the money and as they bent down the girls thumped them on the back. Then the boys took the baskets of rice down to the ghotul, put it on the ground, and the girls had to pull it away without getting hit. They emptied the basket and put it outside the gate; the boys made a dash for it, but were again caught and beaten. Then the girls, accompanied by the Gaita, went again to the boundary; a line was drawn across the path, they stepped over it and went their way.

This programme was repeated every night for a week, and then the girls went home. I witnessed their return at Binjhli and Bandopal. On the 18th of November, 1941, the chelik of Binjhli were very excited and busy. They took a whole cartload of wood into the jungle. They dug a pit in the ground, long and deep but narrow enough to bear a row of pots full of rice and pork. They lit the fire and prepared the feast. About 6 p.m. came the news that the motiari were approaching, and the boys ran through the forest towards a footpath some two hundred yards away.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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Here were sitting the Gaita and a Siraha; across the path was the usual line of ash, a row of tiny green rings of aonra leaf, bits of egg-shell.[1] We sat and waited. Suddenly out of the jungle came the line of motiari, eighteen of them, bearing themselves most proudly, their rows of silvered combs and ornaments shining in the evening light. The chelik smiled in welcome and delight. It was an unforgettable moment.

The first girl reached the line across the path and squatted down before it. The Siraha fell into trance asking the gods if all was well. The leader of the chelik waved two chickens round her head and she was allowed to pass. The other girls stepped directly over the line, one by one in single file. They put their bundles in the ghotul, then went to the Gaita's house and began to dance and sing. They were weary and hoarse after their week's continual singing, but they danced for half an hour, and then made an end.

Now night was falling, and the boys in great excitement went back to the jungle and finished cooking the feast. Two big girls, who had been in their menstrual period—as the boys informed me at the top of their voices—and so could not go on the trip, were making leaf-plates and cups. Soon the motiari came and sat in a long line; boys ran to and fro with torches. The chelik first served palm wine, then bits of highly chillied pork and rice on leaf-plates. My wife sat and ate with the girls; I had a place to myself near the fire, and enjoyed the feast as much as anyone. The flavour of the food was excellent and it was well cooked; at least it did me no harm.

The elders of the village also came and even some of the Ganda and Kalar. When they and the girls had eaten, the chelik were able to sit and take their supper. At last all went to the ghotul. They were too tired and excited to dance; they lay down together and slept.

On the evening of the following day, the girls gave a feast to the boys in the same place, using the rice and pulse that they had collected on their expedition.

At Bandopal, the chelik made a feast for the girls in a shed on the edge of a field near the village. They cooked rice, pulse and fish, crabs and frogs that the boys had caught specially for the feast. When the motiari assembled, they were given liquor. Then, holding the leaf-cups in one hand, they saluted the chelik with the other. After this the Jhoria, head of the chelik, asked the girls where they had been, what food they had been given, what entertainment they had received, and whether there had been any trouble or sickness on the way. The girls gave a lively account of everything that had happened, describing how they had been given here a chicken, there a pig, and here had been meanly received. The Jhoria declared that when girls or boys came from those villages they would be treated as they had treated them.

In Bandopal, the purification ceremony was not held on arrival but the following morning. The girls were taken outside the village by the Gaita and the boys. The Gaita made the usual line of ash, and sacrificed liquor, eggs and chickens. Some branches were placed across the path and the girls told to step over them and go home. As they went the chelik hit them on the back 'to drive away disease'.

[1] When Juang return from similar expeditions, at a cross-roads near the village boundary a line of date palm leaves, bhoir thorns, and an ebony branch is made across the path. The leader says, 'Whatever devils are dancing after us, let them return hence and follow us no more'. Each dancer in turn spits and steps across the line and so goes home without looking round. The Juang do this even on ordinary occasions when they return after a visit to another village. The Savara, and I have no doubt many other tribes also, take similar precautions whenever they visit other villages for a ceremonial purpose.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate XCIX

Mask used in Chherta dances (From Berma)

[p. 508 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

VI. The Hulki Dances

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As we move east, the custom of allowing girls to go to dance by themselves from village to village at Diwali gradually weakens. Indeed the Diwali dance of the girls is almost co-terminal with the Pus Kolang dance, although in isolated villages like Surma in eastern Kondagaon the Diwali is still kept up. Where it has died out, its place is often taken by the Hulki expedition. Just as the Chait Dandar has replaced the Pus Kolang and boys and girls go together instead of boys only, so the Hulki replaces the Diwali dance and boys and girls go together instead of girls only. The Hulki expedition is sometimes made in the ordinary way and boys and girls go out for a week's tour; sometimes they simply go out for the day or for a long evening to neighbouring villages and return to their own ghotul to sleep. There is no special decoration worn, except that boys put on all the clothes they have and the girls adorn themselves with their prettiest ornaments.

When they start, the dancers perform the same sort of ceremonies for their protection and success as is done in the other dances. A line of rings is made and the Gaita promises suitable offerings if the party returns safely. The leader of the party, who is still called the Gain, prays, 'May our song and dance be good, may the rhythm keep time, may the tune not be spoilt, let no witch or magician injure us, let us not be attacked by Arjatta Parjatta, Bhut, Massan, Jurelin, Mirchuk, Matia of other villages. May the gods of the villages we visit not trouble us'.

The visitors dance and collect food and liquor as usual and are generally joined by the boys and girls of the village they are visiting. Hosts dance in one line, visitors in another. At Bhandarsiuni they sang a song in honour of Lingo. When the Bhandarsiuni party, which included many big boys but only very little girls, visited Sirpuri on 28 October, 1941, it was amusing to note how bored the Sirpuri *boys* were with the visit, though the Sirpuri girls bustled about with great excitement to arrange entertainment for their visitors.

When the boys go for Hulki, with perhaps only a few girls, the members of the two ghotul dance against each other till one party becomes exhausted.

Often the members of the two ghotul dance together. It was at such a time that the Jholer of Morenga—and many another—met his bride. 'I went to dance at Mundpal and a girl pushed her way through the crowd and danced beside me. I put my arm round her and rested my hand on her breast. Later I gave her liquor to drink and we slipped away into the jungle. After a few months, we ran away together and were married.'

The actual dance, which is called Hulki or Kokti, is a serpentine promenade in which boys and girls, clasped in each other's arms, combine a rhythmic movement with all sorts of fun. It is a quick and jolly dance, delightful to watch and, I suspect, entrancing (provided the circumstances are right) to dance.

Boys and girls form a long line all facing one way. They hold each other by placing the right arm lightly across the right-hand neighbour's bottom, while the left hand holds the right arm of the left-hand neighbour but one which is, of course, resting across the immediate left-hand neighbour's back. The method is most easily understood by looking at Plate CXIII. The dance often begins with only boys holding each other rather loosely with a wide inviting space between each pair. Girls one by one burrow in, pushing their heads down under the boys' arms. The dance is so intimate that girls have to see who their neighbours are; they ought not to have on either side of them a member of their own clan or a relative of some forbidden degree.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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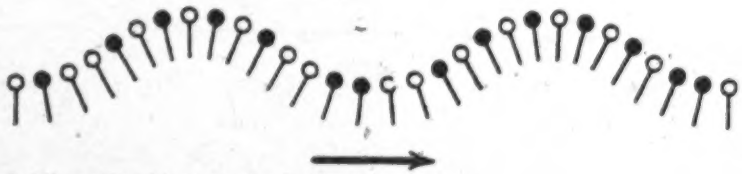
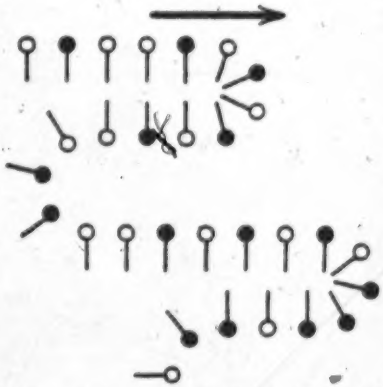
THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The line moves to left or right with a very simple, rapid step sideways. The dancers generally keep perfect step, and all the legs come over together in a delightful way. The line reverses its direction with a loud cry of *Jai koonra jai mongra* (as if we were to cry 'Victory to the lily and the rose!') or *Hurē hurē hurē, Sālē sālē sālē*, or even a sharp barking noise.

Now the line that began like this—

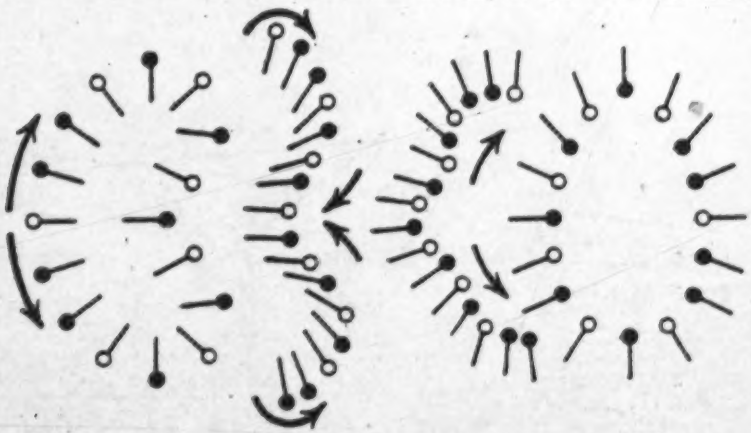


winds round and back on itself, like this—



This, of course, is great fun; when the line winds back the dancers all bump their behinds against each other; the leader suddenly ducks under a gap in the line and makes it thread through itself; he begins to go very fast or tries to pull the line over, and there is a regular tug-of-war; they form into a big circle, head and tail of the line joining hands, first facing inwards, then with a movement like pulling a glove inside out they turn themselves into a circle facing outwards

All the time the quick, fresh, even step never changes—so long as the song remains the same. But at last the dancers change to a *Nāna nāna rē* motif, and then the step gets more of a swing in it, until at the end it



2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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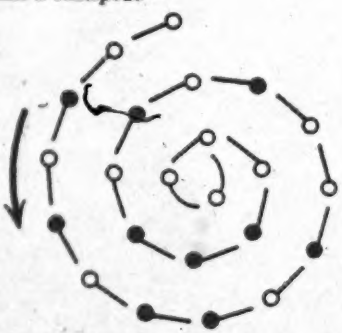
develops into a new movement—three steps to the left with a skip on the third step, then one step back to the right on the right foot with a good swing, half-left with the left foot which then goes back directly to the left. This is a pleasant change. Finally the line spaces itself out; the boys and girls resign their happy intimacy and stretch out hand in hand, whereon they repeat the same steps and movements.

In Pupgaon the head and the tail of the line each held sticks; at one point they met and held each other's sticks; the rest of the line had first to pass over them and then below, after which they worked round again into a complete circle.

Some of the best Hulki dancing I have seen, vigorous, precisely regular, dramatic, exciting, was at Alor. The boys and girls stood in line facing forwards, each with the left hand on the shoulder of the one in front, thus giving a slightly 'half-right' inclination. The steps were five paces forward, right foot up to left and half back; five paces back, left back to right and half forward; five paces forward and so continue; reverse at a shout; five paces back, left foot swung in and out.

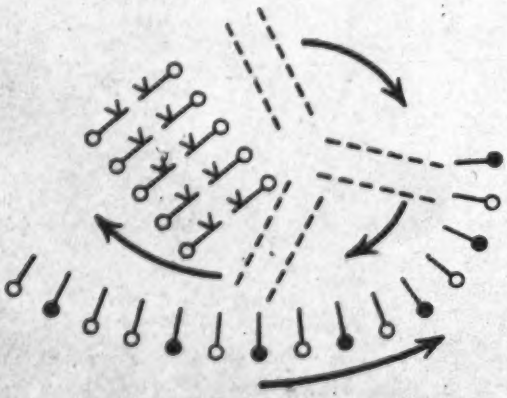
Sometimes the Hulki line rolls itself up like a centipede—



In fact there is no limit to what the Hulki dancers cannot do. It is the liveliest and happiest of all the dances and the boys and girls hate to leave off once they have begun.

In the north of Kondagaon Tahsil (I have seen it at Sidhawand and Amgaon, but only there) the Hulki is danced with drums, small *hulki-māndri* which the boys grasp with the left hand and beat very fast with the right. The drummers form two lines facing each other, while the girls and the rest of the boys form the usual Hulki line (see below).

The Hulki songs bear little relation to the dance. Those sung in the earlier stages have the refrain *Sīliṕ rēle role*

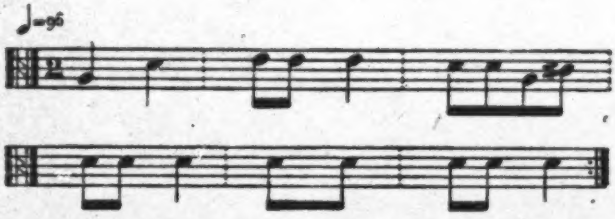


role; those sung later have the refrain *Arā tina nāmur nāna re.*

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Songs

1



Sora dhāru dharti nawu khandu pirthi ho!	O the sixteenfold earth and the ninefold heaven!
Dharti mālik boru lariyo pirthi mālik boru ho?	Who is the master of earth and who is the master of heaven?
Dharti mālik lingo lariyo pirthi mālik rājāl ho.	Lingo is master of earth and Rajal is master of heaven.
Lingona wehle pāta lariyo lingona wehle dākān ho!	O the songs that Lingo taught us, O the steps that Lingo taught us!
Pahili pāta lingo lariyo pahili dākān lingona ho.	The first song is Lingo's, and the first step is Lingo's.
Maria pāta layora lariyo maria dākān layora ho.	The last song is the boys', and the last step is the boys'.
Nadum narka diya lariyo nike poroy poytom ho.	At midnight burns a lamp, we have taken your name.
Hongu dāpu āyma lariyo nike johar lāgi ho.	Don't be angry with us, we salute you with Johar.

2

Aring koring bāder roy.	Clouds are over heaven.
Poron bāder poyndu roy.	The sky is overcast with clouds.
Darka pirru dar dar roy,	The rain comes pouring down,
Jimti piru jim jim roy.	Then drizzles drop by drop.
Dori usa handu roy,	Towards the sunset flows a flood,
Dakka pehchor handu roy.	Forcing its way along.

3

Gugti gugti māri māri kokore.	Let us play *dudu* in the dust.
Kum dudu dudu roy he bai?	Are you coming to play *dudu*?
Dud harsi wayeni he bai,	I would like to come, but I can't,
Wāyon āyo wāyena he dāda;	Mother is in the house;
Lone dai manta roy he dāda.	She will be angry with me.
Niya dai matek roy he bai.	Don't bother about her.
Sura weri jhāpi roy he bai;	The basket has seven chains;
Jhāpite sandra hitona he bai.	I have put cloth into the basket.
Baske wane hitoni he dāda?	When did you give it?
Konem wedur joli roy he bai;	When you were in your cradle;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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Pus Kolang: the Monkey dance

Pus Kolang: the Kokothar dance at Koilibera

[p. 512 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Nakta mask used for Chherta dance

Plate CII

Masked chelik representing a frog or leopard, at Phunder

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Jolit nima mandi roy he bai,
Ashe nana hitona he bai.
Sandra ise hitek roy he dāda,
Nana ise wāyka roy he dāda,
Jori ise āyhāt roy he dāda.

You were swinging in your cradle,
Then I put the cloth for you.
If you have given cloth, brother,
Then I will come, brother,
And we will live as yoke-fellows, brother.

4

Bhālur beti rāni kai men lure jāy ho?
Bhālur beti rāni dongri men lure jāy ho.
Bhālur beti rāni kahān pāni jāy ho?
Bhālur beti rāni tariya men pāni jāy ho.
Bhālur beti rāni kahān sutela jāy ho?
Bhālur beti rāni dorgi men sutela jāy ho.

Where is the bear's queenly daughter?
She is playing on the hill.
Where is she drawing water?
She is drawing it from the tank.
Where does she sleep?
The bear's queenly daughter sleeps in the little stream.

5

Miti bolo mitiyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.
Mai ni jāno dāhar bābu mai ni jāno kor ho;
Pāni ghāt me jābe bābu paniyārin la puchbe re ho.
Ye bai paniyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.
Kor me khele kor larka larka la puch lebe ho.
He bābu leroko thākur ghar kon re ho?
Yewni jewni chor debe jābe manja gali re ho,
Rang pote chuhi pote tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Jawra bawnra kukur bhuke tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Kama me to āti bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Ala me to ghora bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Lewa me to bainsa dube tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Kota me to gaiya bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Dāng me to bandra jule tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Chhāni me to manjur nāche tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Pinjora me to mena bole tehi thākur ghar re ho,

O sweet-spoken coolie girl, show me the way.
I don't know the way, brother;
Go to the water-place and ask the water-girls.
O water-girl, tell me the way.
O boy, ask the boys playing in the road.
Where is the house of the Thakur, O boy?
Turn neither left nor right, and go straight on,
Where the walls have been washed in colour and white,
Where the dogs Jawra Bawra are barking,
Where an elephant is tied to a pole,
Where a horse is tied in the shed,
Where the buffaloes are tethered in the yard,
Where the cows are shut in the shed,
Where a monkey swings on a bamboo pole,
Where a peacock is dancing on the roof,
Where a maina sings in its cage,

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kat me to suwa bole tahi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a parrot talks on a wooden perch, that is the Thakur's house.
He bai thakurain thākur hahān gais re ho?	Where is the Thakur, O Thakurain?
Hāt me tenga daris bhaiya rāja he sewa gais re ho.	With a stick in his hand he has gone to serve the Raja.
Kaiya tere kaiya bhāji nadi tir he kaiya re ho.	The *kaiya* tree is on the river bank.
Amor thākur la to rāja ghar le maya re ho;	Our Thakur has the love of the Raja's house.
Arri thākur parri jo chong bharela dewe re ho.	The Raja gave him tobacco to smoke.
Keni tere keni bhāji bāri tir he keni re ho.	The *keni-bhāji* grows near the fence.
Amar thākur he bālak bati son he beni gāte re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden plait.
Airi tere airi bhai tarai he airi re ho.	The ducks live in the tank.
Amar thākur he bālak bati son he pari pinde re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter wears golden anklets.
Amar thākur he bālak bati son he paniya konche re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden comb in her hair.

6

Meta porro tingi te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the top of the hill?
Meta porro tingi te bodāl gore lāta ho.	The bison is swinging on the top of the hill.
Gora lariyo boda di nikun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O bison!
Bodāl da tohār te bātāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the bison's tail?
Bodāl da tohār te chachi gore lāta ho.	The *chachi* bird is swinging on its tail.
Kene dgr dhamki te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging under the hill?
Kene dor dhamki te yekta gore lāta ho.	Under the hill the pig is swinging.
Gora lariyo yehlā di nihun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O pig!
Turjing arta bharri te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging in the field of thick grass?
Turjing arta bharri te korwal gore lāta ho.	In the grass-field the sambhar is swinging.
Pāwur marra tonda te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the siari tree?
Pāwur marra tonda te munj gore lāta ho.	The monkey is swinging on the siari tree.
Gora lariyo munj di nihun sobhe māta ho.	Your swing looks very fine, O monkey!

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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FIG. 123. Toy used on Chherta expeditions
Length 6' 6"

FIG. 124. Toy used on Pus Kolang and other expeditions
Length 4' 6"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

VII. The Chherta Dance

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As we have seen, many ghotul do not perform the Pus Kolang dances. Some do not even go to dance the Mahua Dandar. In such places, the chelik concentrate on the Chherta festival. In many other villages, however, the Chherta is danced side by side with the older dances.

The Muria say that at the marriage between Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai the supplies of food and liquor for the visitors ran out, and the chelik assisting at the ceremony were sent to beg for food and liquor from neighbouring villages. They did so, and the marriage was happily completed. The more Hinduized Muria villages and the Hindus of Bastar generally have the same tradition, but they say that the marriage was between Mahadeo and Parvati. I doubt whether the Chherta dance is a genuine Muria dance or very long established in their culture; it is common throughout Chhattisgarh and in the Central Provinces, whence it has probably been imported.

Its attractiveness to the Muria is that it is great fun. In enables them to get a little liquor and have a feast. It is not overshadowed by the catastrophic penalties that come upon those who break the taboos of the serious, dangerous Pus Kolang. For this reason the Chherta has spread widely throughout the centre and east of the Muria territory.

On a Chherta expedition boys and girls go together. They dance in the ghotul of the villages they visit and sleep there. Hosts and visitors entertain one another. The visiting party salutes the elders of the ghotul at night and they then exchange girls for massaging. The visitors, however, take fire from their own village and are supposed to cook for themselves.

During the day the visiting party goes round the village dancing and begging. The leader of the dance is a boy whom they call the Nakta.[1] He is dressed up, sometimes in tattered clothes, sometimes in finery, and wears a grotesque gourd mask. The gourd is generally decorated: two rings are put for eyes, a nose is made of wax, a mouth is cut and a number of grains are stuck in it to look like teeth. A beard of the hair of nilgai or bear is attached below. A bunch of peacock feathers is tied to the top. I saw one mask with a small wax bullock placed above the nose. As the dancers go through the village they stand in a line before each house, and beat the ground with long sticks while the Nakta capers about before them with the most grotesque gestures and antics. Two or more boys carry baskets, and while the others dance these go into the house and beg for liquor, rice, pulse or other food. When they have been round the village the girls who have accompanied them take what has been collected and cook their meal.

On return from the expedition the boys and girls take the Nakta to the nearest stream, roll him in the mud, duck him in the water, and give him *mandia roti*, making him eat it with his head under water.

Besides the Nakta, other diversions enliven the Chherta festival. In Remawand I saw an ingenious toy—a stout bamboo pole was decorated with some excellently carved monkeys climbing up towards a bird perched on the top. An arrangement of strings kept both monkeys and bird in motion (Fig. 123). At Kollibera, there was a similar toy which was taken also on Pus Kolang and other expeditions. At the bottom of the bamboo pole the wood was serrated to make a 'musical rasp', and at the top was a little man.

[1] Nakta is an abusive term meaning 'noseless'. It probably refers to the custom of cutting off an erring wife's nose, for it is usually applied to sexually loose persons. It can also be used in an affectionate playful sense. A Nakti Devi is worshipped in parts of Chhattisgarh.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Here the chelik said that the animals represented were lizards and they were climbing the tree to catch a wood-pigeon (Fig. 124). At the top of each toy were cymbals that clanged whenever its strings were pulled.

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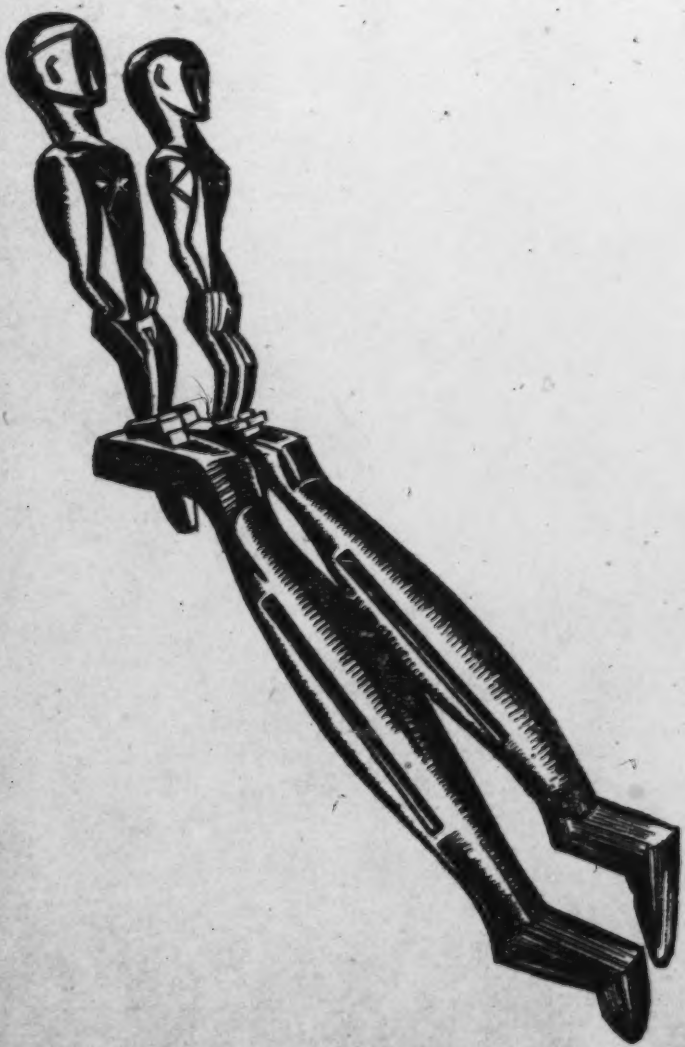

FIG. 125. Gongs from Alor
Cf. Plate CV

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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In Alor Shamrao Hivale found some very elaborate gongs. They are illustrated in Plate CV and Fig. 125. Each gong is a single piece of wood hollowed out in the middle with a carved beak at one end and at the other a flat strip with a hole in the centre. Into this slot there fits a 4″ peg projecting from a small support on which stands the wooden figure. Through the peg there is a small hole to take a wooden pin which fixes the figure firmly in position. The figures are male and female. The male is slightly taller, standing 15½″ from the base. The female is ½″ shorter. The two figures are differentiated by the shape of the genital organs and by small breasts in the female and a lozenge-shaped pattern on her body, probably intended to represent the womb. The hair is roughly indicated by carved lines and is different in the two images. The man has the five fingers of each hand carved on either side of his thighs where he is supposed to be holding his hands. This feature is absent in the female image. The male rectum is shown but not the female. The entire length of each gong is 2′ 6½″ from end to end. The slot in the middle is 10½″ long, ⅝″ broad and 2″ deep.

[243]

FIG. 126. Dancing-stick from Remawand

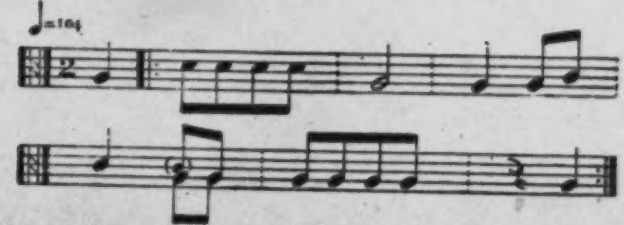
Among other things taken out for the Chherta and Pus Kolang expeditions, I have seen masks[1] of various kinds (illustrated in Plates XCIX, CII, CIII) and dancing-sticks. At Gorma I saw a *Chherta-gujir*, very like the dancing-sticks of the Bison-horn Maria, made of an old umbrella rod, with a bunch of iron bells at the top. At Remawand was a stick called *jarar-bargar*; it had an iron crown fitted with rings.[2] Decorated wooden guns are also carried.

The songs used during the Chherta are confused and obscure, a series of disconnected images and symbols, though there is always one song concerned with straightforward begging. I will give examples of both kinds.

Songs

I

[533]



[1] Masks are associated with the *ravi* of the Purari Delta and 'masked dances or ceremonial parades are a common institution in New Guinea'. In the *ravi* masks are worn during the initiation of boys, when there is a taboo upon garden produce and in a mortuary ceremony in which a masked figure represents the spirit of the dead revisiting his home.—R. Firth, *Art and Life in New Guinea* (London, 1936), p. 26.

[2] This type of musical stick is similar to that carried by postal runners in the neighbouring Jeypore Zamindari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

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Ban bhainsa āna tāna khāye lasun pāna pāna jām kuy.
The jungle buffaloes go here and there eating garlic leaves.

Chari buli āo bhainsa rupa bera thāna thāna jām kuy.
Come buffaloes and graze in the silver field.

Khat kuṛha cho kānia kuda; 'kalār gharo bhātti bhātti;
There are thorns in the pile of rubbish; there is an outstill in the Kalar's house;

Bhātti cho mundi he āg lage; pinda he chābli chāti chāti.
The top of the still caught fire, the ant bit the buttocks.

Bhuhute bhuku hai kuvāri dengur cho bhuku ho ho.
There are maggots in the new ant-hill.

Pila rāja bairamgarh jora chawar duku ho ho.
The baby Raja of Bairamgarh is fanned with a pair of fans.

Kar harāti harāti pipar pān cho dati dati.
The pipal leaf has nipples.

Chirak charak mand beche jāt kalāring beti ho ho;
The Kalarin's daughter is selling liquor drop by drop;

Tan tan rupaiya gine kalāring bai ho ho jām kuy.
She is counting her rupees *tan tan.*

2

Jhirliti jhirliti pandki māra liti.
Jhirliti jhirliti, the pigeon killed the sparrow.

Dokra dokri jhagra hola chāpun dila luthi.
The dotard quarrelled with his dame and burnt her with a fire-brand.

Ao dokri chhandaiyla tola dehun roti.
Come, old woman, and I will give you bread.

Roti pitha hai harkun? Bare bāp he beti.
What am I to do with your bread? I am the daughter of a rich man.

Gāda upar garli chonda upar khila.
On top of a big cart is a little cart, and the poles are joined with a nail.

Gāra chaghi kākdela sidhāwandiya pila.
To ride on this cart a chelik from Sidhawand is invited.

Amli beti tingāli pur duwāre mācha.
The tamarind fruit is very sour; the platform is in the yard.

Mācha chaghi kākdela duyi māma bhācha.
The uncle and his nephew are called to sit on the platform.

Naya nāngār bāri bāri juna nāngār bāri.
On the new plough is tied a strap, on the old plough is a strap.

Ye gaon cho lakimanke kolepa nilo ari,
The children of this village were carried away by a fox,

Kolepa cho bata beti amhe balla dādi.
And its children will call us grandfather.

Chher chherta hi mer mera, bāman dorgoda.
Chher chherta hi mer mera, bāman dorgoda.
A tall man was coming along, and his foot was caught.

Nāni lāwa guri guri bade lāwa guri.
The little quail is sweet, so is the big quail.

Jhatke bida des kāka tucho mai cho pudi.
Quickly give us alms, uncle, or your mother's vagina.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
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Pāni suna pāni suna lendi barli duna.	A water dog with a cup full of excreta.
Ayele pār cho kohoda paile paile jayse.	Cranes from here go to the other side.
Paile pār cho rāut leka mārun mārun khāyse.	The Rawat boy there kills and eats them.
Sipi sipi dongri kosa cho dori.	The hill of shells, the cord of silk cocoons.
Tucho beta he dakhle māma sānjh bere.	I saw your son, at evening time.
Adan lasa dhaura lasa pondkhe dharli kasa.	The gum of saja, gum of dhaura, like holding someone's buttocks.
Aware bai chihan khosa, bhelwān tel ke ghasa.	O come, girl with hair well-done, I'll cover you with *bhelwa* oil.
Kāri āma lure lure, pandri āma lure.	O the black mangoes, O the white mangoes, are hanging down in heavy clusters.
Mahādeo he parsād me pandri baile mile.	By the grace of Mahadeo we will get a light-coloured girl.

3

Come out, girls, to see what boys have come.
They have come from the Upper World.
Give us our present quickly, for it is growing very late.
Tie up a pair of bullocks:
Kill a fat hen: bring rice out of the granary.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY

DANCE AND SONG

I

DANCE and song, games, stories and riddles should not be regarded as mere recreation; in the Muria's eyes they are serious and important business. A ghotul's reputation largely depends on the excellence of its dancing; the motiari's ability to sing may make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful wedding. Even the games, many of them, serve an educational purpose. The younger boys and girls are carefully trained in the ghotul, and the others practise night after night, repeating the same steps and rhythms again and again till they get them right, before they set out on a dancing expedition. The complicated stick-dances need special training and practice, for once an expedition has started mistakes are regarded as ill-omened.

The first musician was Lingo himself, and the practice of music is not held, as so often in India, to be discreditable, but is honourably rooted in the history and mythology of the tribe. Many of the songs and dances have a religious purpose, and often begin with an invocation to Lingo and other gods. Before the Mandri dances at a wedding, worship should be performed before a pile of drums.

It is refreshing to go to Bastar from the reform-stricken [1] and barren districts of the Central Provinces. As you climb the Keskal Ghat the whole countryside bursts into song about you. The Muria have a short way with 'reformers', as I was fortunate enough to see at Telenga village on 26 March 1941. There was a marriage that day in the village, and the chelik and motiari from eleven villages came to attend it. But when they arrived they did not begin to dance as usual, but went out into the jungle for a consultation. They had seen among the wedding guests the sinister figure of Chainu, the headman of Maragaon. A month earlier this Chainu had attended a marriage at the house of Guma in his own village. Chelik and motiari had come as usual and danced till noon. Then according to custom they asked for liquor to offer to the drums and food for themselves. Chainu, who had been under a good deal of Hindu influence, refused to let them have either liquor for the drums or food for themselves, and declared that he would 'stop this dancing throughout the pargana'. The chelik and motiari left the marriage in protest and for a month the matter was the subject of heated discussion in their ghotul.

Now in Telenga the boys saw their chance. After a long discussion, they came back, a large and formidable crowd, and told the Pargana Manjhi (of Chalka) that they wanted a panchayat and that Chainu must be there. Near the marriage-booth the boys assembled in a great circle, and almost all the wedding guests joined to see what would happen. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom were left sitting in their places, entirely forgotten.

[1] It is very hard to understand the mentality of the 'reformers' who would deprive the aboriginal of his beautiful and innocent recreations, and would impose on him a 'Shiv-ra|' (as it is often called) at which the great dancer Natarajan would have shuddered. It is interesting to compare the attitude of the American Negro towards the 'Spirituals' which have done as much as anything else to establish him throughout the world. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were considered fit only for uneducated 'country niggers'. 'As late as 1909, Negro students at Howard University rebelled and refused to sing them. By the more progressive and aggressive elements in the race the Spirituals were frowned upon as a reminder of slavery and ignorance.'—N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 3. Then suddenly, they became the fashion, and the Negroes found that nothing gave them more credit and prestige.

DANCE AND SONG

I have never seen boys more angry than these as they developed their indictment of Chainu and declared their grievance. They sprang to their feet one after another, trembling with rage, hardly able to speak for temper, pointing at the culprit who stood before them, at first haughty and defiant, but gradually weakening to a complete collapse. The boys called witnesses to show that he had insulted the god of the drums, that he was interfering with their old customs and spoiling their pleasure. Chainu tried to deny it, and called his witnesses, but they were not believed. The boys got more and more angry; tough little Panku of Kajen had to be held back by his friends. The boys demanded a fine of three rupees. Chainu apologized and offered one. But they did not accept this and insisted on their three rupees. The Pargana Manjhi was commissioned to see that the money was paid. At this point the bridegroom came rather pathetically into the middle of the crowd and said, 'Why do you want to have this quarrel at *my* wedding: I thought you all came here for me, but it seems that you are only interested in your own affairs'. At this people began to laugh and having won their point the boys went to worship the drums, and to dance.

The Muria are very good dancers: at their best, and taking into account the great variety of their dances, they are not inferior to any in Bastar. They dance both with and without drums, sometimes with flutes, the sexes mixed or separate. Many of the dances are accompanied by songs, and the music of these, as well as many of the drum rhythms, were written down by Walter Kaufmann during a tour with me in February 1941. He recorded songs sung by the boys and girls of Kongera, Toinar, Markabera, Narayanpur and Kondagaon, and though the collection which he has generously allowed me to use here is not complete, it will give a fair idea of the type of music, which is undoubtedly of a very primitive character; it is entirely within the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, the 'Jhoria' songs being sometimes three-tone, sometimes four-tone and sometimes roughly five-tone. Kaufmann spoke of the clean, clear shape of the tunes, their purity and integrity; they were 'straight, delightful, impressive and very old'. He was however disappointed in the singing of the Narayanpur ghotul, which has come under the influence of education and the outside world. The singing there was vague and unbalanced; though still of the primitive pentatonic scale, it had become 'unclean'.

Muria music has decided Mongolian affinities, and the curious yodel of the Relo chorus reminded Kaufmann of Chinese and Tibetan songs and even of those of the Pacific Islands. In the Muria country as in Mongolia all rhythms can be divided by two or four.

The Muria seem to distinguish tunes and songs mainly by the different rhythms of their choruses. When the songs are sung antiphonally, one party keeps the tune going and the other sings the words. 'One ploughs the tune; the other follows sowing the seed.' In Bandopal the Muria called the theme of a song the *laksa* and the chorus, which is generally a variation of the word Relo, is called the *rochē* or *tek*. The Relo chorus, for all its apparent verbal monotony, is capable of much subtle variation in tune and rhythm. Typical choruses are these:

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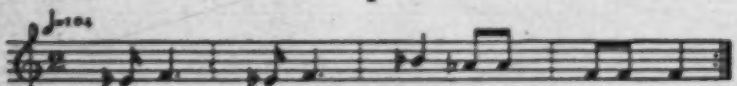


Rere loyo rere la rerela rela. Rere loyo rerela rere rela rela.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CIV

535
V47
793

The Malik of the Kongera ghotul in dancing dress

[p. 528 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

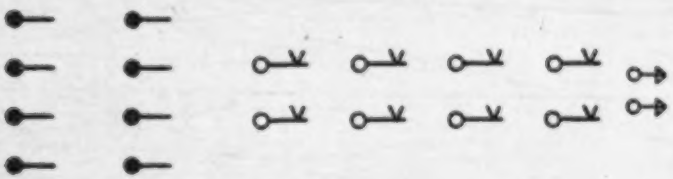
V. The Mandri Dance

X883
535

I include here all those dances which are primarily exhibitions of drumming with the earthen or wooden mandri, the large waisted parrai, and the wooden tudra. These dances are performed at marriages or for amusement in the ghotul; they are the dances normally displayed at the camps of touring officials and visitors.

There is no special uniform; the dancers wear what they can. Boys sometimes carry carved wooden axes over one shoulder: girls and boys may decorate their faces with white spots, lines and stars. There is often a boy in peacock-dress or a cowrie-jacket. All the pomp and excitement of the dance is for the boys; the peahens to these exuberant peacocks are usually pushed into a corner where they sing a subdued little Relo on their own.

There are a great many different movements in the Mandri; I will describe them one by one. The prelude, or grand entrance, is done at the beginning of the dance always, when the boys bring in the wood for the marriage-booth, when they go to welcome the bridegroom on his arrival at their village, and when they escort bride or bridegroom to the Lagir ceremony. The formation is simple—boys form a double file followed by two rows of girls.



The procession advances a few steps, halts, retires a little, advances again. Sometimes it comes forward with a rush, halts, turns round and rushes back not quite so far, comes on again; with each rush the procession makes a slight advance. I saw this done very effectively at Sidhawand, where the boys held antlers in their hands. When they reached the limit of their advance they bowed with them to the ground, then all together raised them into the air with a fine flourish, and retired. At Kokori, boys entered in a long serpentine column. Every four paces, they knelt down, then advanced crab-like sideways, knelt, went back, came on again, knelt, moved to and fro on their knees. Sometimes the line of drummers squats down and hops along, drumming vigorously the while. When the drummers have made their entry, they should perform the drum worship in the name of Bhimul or Lingo.

They then usually form themselves into the first movement, which is quite simple. They go round in a circle, with a straightforward rapid walk, the

[534]

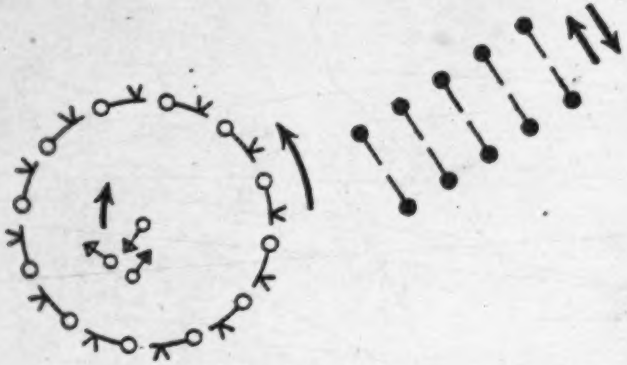
Fig. 139. A bamboo drum (*see p. 530*)

knees slightly bent. If there are any boys with wooden kutorka or tudra, these gyrate inside the main circle. The girls form two lines some distance

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

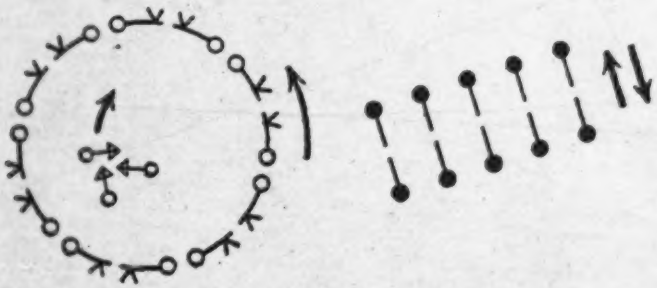
X883
●535

away, and sing a Relo song which has no relation in time or rhythm to the drumming or the movements of the boys. Since the girls' dances are quite independent, I will describe them all together later.



There is no particular order about the subsequent movements and formations of the Mandri dance. After a time the circle of drummers, on an order from the leader, either turns round and goes in the opposite direction, or goes backwards.

At another order from the leader, every other drummer turns round, so that now they rotate in pairs. Sometimes each lays his left hand on his partner's drum: this is the *Samdhi Johar*.



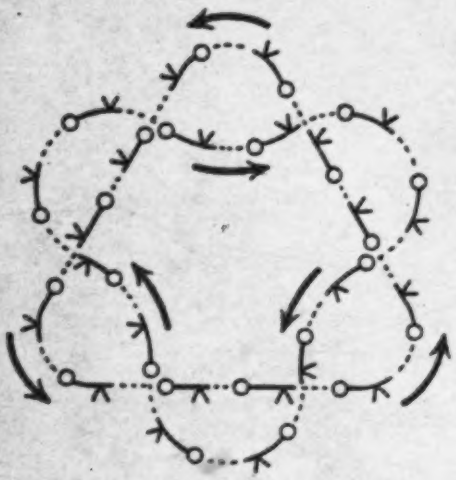
This first turn becomes general. While watching the dance at Bandopal I wrote, 'the basis of this Mandri is a revolving circle, of which each member also gyrates round his neighbour. The circle also contracts and expands rhythmically, for in gyrating each drummer takes a couple of steps in and out'.

Then they change again, and now there are two circles gyrating in opposite directions, threading through each other—this is called the *semilaha* (see p. 537).

The drummers beat with an upward flourish of the hands; each swirls round, bending his knees a little; each member wheels as the whole circle wheels.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

But there is no limit to the variations of the Mandri. At one moment the dancers are going round in a circle, and each boy has one hand on the shoulder



of the drummer in front of him; the next they have closed in and are kneeling down facing inwards clapping their hands; soon they jump up, turn round, open the circle and kneel again facing outwards, clapping their hands. They put their hands on their hips and sway twice on their feet. Sometimes they gyrate with the drums between their legs, beating with the left hand behind the left leg, then they swing the drums up and forward. Between beats, they touch first chest, then buttocks with their hands, then beat the drums.

Sometimes they do a sort of leap-frog: the circle shakes out a little, and they kneel down with the drums on the ground and each in turn jumps over the others. When that is done they begin to gyrate, kneeling down, and hopping forward.

FIG. 140. Flutes
(See p. 526)

In another movement, the boys kneel in a circle facing one way; they shuffle round on their knees, upright, they lean back on their heels, one foot to one side, then to the other. They go round slowly on their knees, like a fantastic ring of cripples, then lean right back and go backwards supporting their bodies with one hand, drumming with the other. Then they go forward on all fours beating with alternate hands and at last spring up and go round quickly.

When they tire of this, they sit on the drums lengthways as though riding a horse; then they turn inwards and move towards the centre pulling the drums in with graceful movements, and later widen the circle again with the same movements reversed. They abandon their drums and dance round the circle, clapping their hands, sometimes sitting down on each other's drums to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

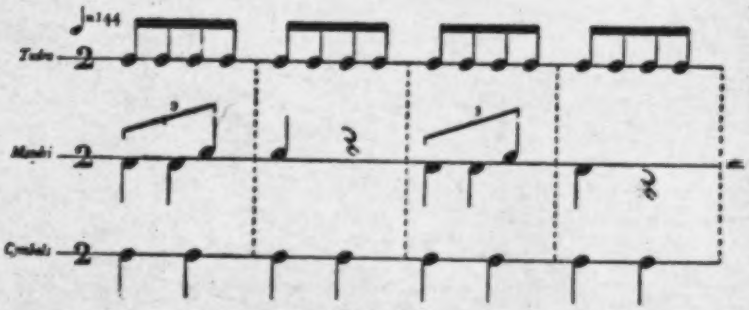
X 883 ● 535

beat them for a few moments, up again and round, leaping, gesticulating, whirling round.

The best Mandri dancing I have seen was at Khutgaon under the inspiration of the remarkable old Muria landlord Kodu. A band of twenty-five black-coated boys headed by Kodu entered the ghotul. Several had silver belts tied across their shoulders from right to left, or chains of little bells hanging down behind; they wore silk turbans, cheap ornaments and used small parrang drums. Here, I thought, were typical decayed Muria of the lowlands. But there was nothing decayed about their dancing. They entered, and stood still without a sound. Kodu raised his hand in a fine gesture and a shout, and they all did the same. They gesticulated with both hands, and away they went in a swiftly moving circle. After a time the boys rushed outwards; they clapped their hands twice, turned, drummed on the turn, stopped, pointed, gesticulated, drummed again, clapped their hands twice, bent down, exclaimed loudly, stamped, went round again, clapped their hands twice, beat the drums twice, went round and round. Then more pointing in the air and shouting, a jump in the air, two claps of the hands, two beats of the drum, then round again, now facing out, now in, clap and drum again.

Now the dance changed. As they went round, the drummers hopped three paces on the left foot, turned inwards, stood still. There was a pause of silence, then all gesticulated and shouted together, faced about, shouted, turned to the right and circulated drumming with very wide movements of the hands, more and more quickly, left foot forward, right up to it with a little kick, right forward, left up to it with a kick. Then they stopped and moved backwards, round and round, drumming incessantly with great vigour. At last they

[533]



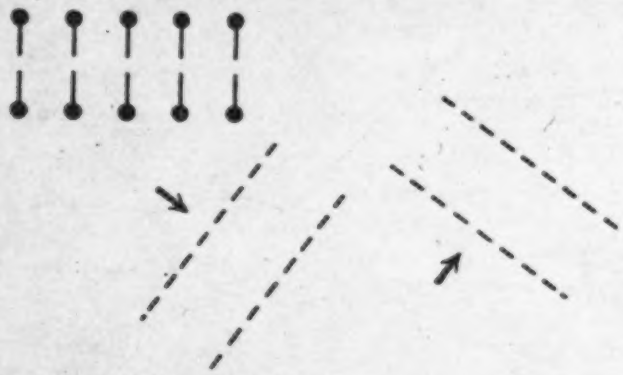
Drum rhythm

stopped, facing out from their circle, pointed to the sky, gave a great shout, and broke their ranks. It was a most invigorating dance to watch.

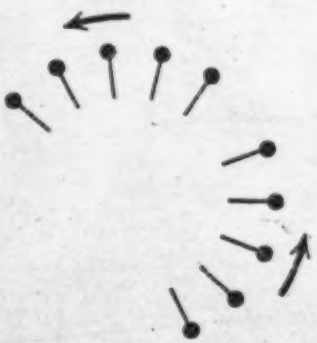
During this magnificent parade, the motiari too were dancing, but in a corner, shy and subdued, their heads bowed and bodies bent to hide their charms. No one took any notice of them; all eyes were on the boys. Yet the girls' dances are interesting, and can be delightful. The motiari form two lines facing inwards, and generally begin by standing erect and singing antiphonally while they clash their cymbals or clap their hands. They do not hold each other. Presently one line bends forward while the other remains upright, and those bending forward clap their hands or cymbals low down between their legs.

DANCE AND SONG

The two lines now gradually work round; ideally they should pivot round on their centre, preserving the double-line formation—



Actually they often form into a half circle in two sections as below.



An alternative movement is this—the girls form two lines, but when it comes to the moment when one of them is to bend forward, the line turns round and then bends down. The Jamkot Para motiari did this very well; every four beats of the cymbals they swing round and change position. Sometimes both lines have their backs to each other. Here they do the swing-dance in line; in Kachora I saw it done excellently in a circle. The motiari there first went round clockwise with their cymbals in a full circle; then every girl began to turn right every three steps and bent down, gave three beats with the cymbals, stood upright, took three steps round, turned left, bent down and so on. In this way, the circle alternately faced inwards and outwards. Done with real vigour this is an exciting dance to watch. At Bhanpuri, each girl put her left leg between the legs of her left-hand neighbour, thus moving slowly round.

In the Kondagaon area, the motiari sometimes accompany the boys' Mandri dance in one long line, each arm in arm with her neighbour, clashing their cymbals and either bending forward or swaying to and fro.

In Chandabera the Karse Pata was a quick round: the girls clasped each other by the waist and went left right, right foot always behind the other, with rapid vigorous and distinctive singing. But in another form of the Karse Pata, two lines face each other and the motiari clasp each other's hands. Each line in turn bends down and the girls swing their clasped hands to and fro while they sing. In this they do not move round but remain stationary.

Most of the marriage songs have to be sung by a line or half-circle of motiari. While they are tying the plaits of bride and bridegroom, or applying haldi, or offering tika, or bathing or decorating the happy pair, the girls obviously

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

cannot move about. They have, however, devised a most effective form of stationary dance which obtains its effect from the movements of the hands and the swaying, bending and jerking of the body. This is probably why the girls' dances are not synchronized to the boys' drumming. The girls have their special duties and must adapt their songs to these, but the boys can move about independently for a large part of the time.

VI. The Drum Rhythms

In villages in the central area particularly, the Muria distinguish a great many *pār* or rhythms in their drumming. These rhythms are not connected with the *dīka* steps, though they are sometimes associated with special movements of the dance. Thus, there are *pār*-rhythms for the Pargao in a marriage, for the dances round the booth, for the great crisis of the Lagir, and to lead bride and bridegroom to the marriage-bed. Different rhythms accompany the worship of Mother Earth.

The *pār* are known by easily memorized sentences, the words of which have usually no connexion with the dance but describe it by their rhythm. The Jhoria Muria do not seem to know many of these. At Metawand, the chelik only knew of two—'When we beat the drum with both hands', said one of them, 'the drum says *nihun getha nihun getha*, copulate properly, and when it is beaten with one hand, it says *deos deos endāt*, dance jumping'.

It is in villages like Kabonga, Bargaon and Hathipakhna and in most of the ghotul of the east-central area that the practice of the *pār* has been most fully elaborated. At Hathipakhna there was a blind Mandar Guru, an old man who taught the boys their rhythms. He had only to say the words and the chelik immediately followed on their drums.

Drum rhythm

The meaning of many of the rhythms is obscure, and in some cases I can give only an approximate translation.

1. *Pargao Pār*, used when bride or bridegroom (according to local custom, see page 98) arrives at the other's house, and is greeted by a procession of dancers. The drummers first circle round, all facing one direction; they then split up into pairs and each pair faces his partner. A number of different rhythms are used, for this is a memorable moment in the life of every boy and girl.

(a) *Barka māne he lukāwun khāwuās tuy to ās tuy to ās saga ke kahān le purāwuās ?*
You are eating the stolen pork. How will you give it to the *saga* ?

(b) *Jim jim jim nadum narka, jim jim jim nadum narka.*
Rain is falling in the dead of night.

(c) *Hāt jāsis duriya duriya, pej khāwun jāse.*
You are going to a market far far away. Eat your gruel and go.

(d) *Kahān le yilāsil duriya lāphi duriyāle.*
You have come from far away.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

883X
533
535
585

(e) *Are buba kaskār be.*
O father, it will bite.

(f) *Dur dur dur dur nevi kaskār be.*
Drive it off; the dog may bite.

2. *Saga Pār*, used when the two fathers-in-law meet officially for the first time. The chelik dance round them in a circle, facing each other in pairs: every now and then they halt and each pair raise their hands off their drums and salute each other, crying on a long steady note *Johār ho saga.*

(a) *Johār ho saga johār.*
Johar, saga, Johar.

(b) *Tuy samdhi mai samdhi surti minjun kānurula.*
You are samdhi, I am samdhi, let us eat the powdered tobacco.

(c) *Aking koya korka dārango tuska ta.*
Pluck the leaf, O hoe, to serve the liquor.

(d) *Tchāt layor māndi tun.*
Boys, lift up your knees.

(e) *Gatla pāta sakle kim dāy pohre mām.*
Put on your clothes properly before you go away.

(f) *Johār ho saga johār bhet howun duno saga samdhi mand piyun.*
Johar, saga, johar, we've met so let us drink.

(g) *Adi narka bhum narka tara peha kal norka.*
Bring water to wash the feet at midnight and midday, O boy!

3. *Dārango Undāna Pār*, the rhythm for drinking liquor. This also accompanies the ritual drinking of liquor by the two fathers-in-law.

Dumun dumun kāha ta, dumun dumun kāha ta.
Take out liquor from the pot and drink.

4. *Manda Pār.* These are the rhythms used while the boys bring in the wood for the marriage booth—the drummers go to the forest and return dancing and drumming vigorously at the head of the procession; when the platform is plastered inside; and when any of the many minor rites are being performed under its shade.

(a) *Usta gundur gundur ta tin pekor wark wark!*
O the quail! Eat parched rice, O boys!

(b) *Bonyla bandwan jhatka māti ān gaitin.*
Let us make a platform; O Gaitin, quickly bring the earth.

(c) *Harde reka punta pakin ponda uita.*
The char flower has blossomed on the way; the girl's vagina has swollen.

(d) *Chich ponda kawrela.*
The vagina is a cowrie facing upwards.

(e) *And and and, āyo āyo āyo!*
That's it! That's it! No it isn't! No it isn't!

(f) *Gaon cho manuh siyān.*
All the headmen of the village.

(g) *Nawun nawun chopāwan.*
Take her, press her.

(h) *Ad laya beuta kandik surti deuta.*
That girl is beautiful, give her some tobacco.

Z: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

(i) *Manda mandi tendsim dāy pohre mām.*
Throw away the mess in the booth and go away.

5. *Neyi Tarhāna Pār.* The tedious business of anointing bride and bridegroom with oil, which continues intermittently for two days, is enlivened by some excellent dancing.

(a) *Teda mudiya tatti de.*
Stand old man and give the adze.

(b) *Gām chekli bazunge ta.*
We will sit while the sun is shining.

(c) *Barha māns he chorun neyse lāchhu āy lāchhu mai hi dāda mai to ni chorey.*
It was Lachhu, not I, that stole the pork.

(d) *Dim dim dim kosum dim tumcho bāpcho polka dim.*
Testes! Testes! Kosum testes! The hollow testes of your father!

(e) *Dengur mundi me lamha āse, chu kābri chu.*
In the ant-hill is a hare, *Chu kābri chu.*

(f) *Teda bhuski hātum dāyi.*
Stand up, fat woman, and go to the bazaar.

(g) *Karanji gaon cho kursa, gaon kāje pursa.*
He is impotent in Karanji village; but he is a real man in ours.

FIG. 141. *Pitorka* gong

6. *Maur Tatāna Pār.* The rhythm while the bride and bridegroom are having their crowns tied on their heads.

Tatti de tatti de hanwār bābu hanwār.
Give the adze, give the adze. But the boy won't go.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

7. *Lagir Pār.* The climax of the marriage is when the bride and bridegroom are escorted round the booth seven times in a procession of chelik with their drums and by loudly singing motiari.

(a) *Mai samdhi tuy samdhin johār bhet howun leka ke pāni rihāwun.*
We samdhi do Johar, pour the water over the boy.

(b) *Baniagāon cho ban bhainsa bāte chāra charese gucha bai hadendata hadendata.*
The wild buffalo of Baniagaon is grazing on the way. Move aside, girl, and I will drive it off.

(c) *Yergunda inta tāne tinta, kamha inta, tāne tinta.*
Say it is a water-snake and eat it. Say it is turmeric and eat it.

(d) *Korwāl husir horasta āgay mute narasta.*
The *korwāl* vegetable has sprouted; the girl went every day to see it.

(e) *Bāte ralo durki chu chu chu ta ta ta.*
The panther is on the road. *Chu chu ta ta ta.*

(f) *Johār leyor johār hor phat phate manta.*
O boys Johar! It is cock-crow time.

(g) *Tada buda hātum te.*
Stand up, old man, and go to market.

8. *Kor Puda Pār.* Bride and bridegroom are not allowed to slip away quietly to bed; they must be escorted thither with the roar of drums. In these *pār* the boys from time to time raise both hands from their drums and wave their arms in the air like excited cocks—an obvious reference to the cock they are going to steal.

(a) *Adan luta dam-dama tarni bāyle gum guma.*
The charred saja wood is strong, the young girl is hard and firm.

(b) *Dulhi dudh ke dulha dhare dulhi thar thare.*
The bridegroom holds the breasts of the bride and the bride trembles.

(c) *Dhirey dhirey dhirey gumcha, chānd chānd chānd gumcha.*
Penetrate slowly! Penetrate quickly!

(d) *Dengur mund cho hewu, bhitre newun gab gab dewu.*
The root in the ant-hill; take it inside and press it hard.[1]

This is the end of the rhythms used in marriages. The following *pār* can also, of course, be used in marriages, but they are not connected with specific moments of the ceremony. They represent the purely recreational side of the dancing.

9. *Gondin Pār.* The drummers circle in a line of couples facing each other.

Gondin gondin bolsat hāy ke gondin bolsat? Buchak mand dese tabto gondin balāte.
To whom will you say Gondin, Gondin? If she will give a little liquor then you can call her Gondin.

10. *Mūndar Palni Pār.* The drummers first stand still facing each other in pairs. Suddenly they flourish their hands in the air and move quickly round with short steps, knees bent. Then they straighten their knees and dance to left and right on alternate feet.

[1] It is said that the chelik sometimes use these rhythms as a sort of secret language to make proposals to the motiari. Even when no words are spoken they are understood: even the tapping of the rhythm with the fingers is enough.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883
533
535

Karanji gaon cho bhursa aur bodi nāo pārun pārun sāng. Gotok bāhri cho gotok silik.
Speak of Bhusa and Bodi of Karanji. For one broom there's one bamboo pin.

11. *Sailori Pār.* The rhythm is very distinctive. The drumming is punctuated by shrill cries and the boys wave their arms in the air between the beats. Their circle moves constantly backwards and forwards.

(a) *Nāchun nāchun kahān jānwān? Hamke lāgli bhuk donāyek pej kon dewu āy?*
Where should we go dancing dancing? We are hungry, who will give us gruel?

(b) *Kedun kedun bāgdare yeklo manuk yend kare chichha chargod ke ār kare.*
The tiger makes the man run away; what can the fellow's testes do? He can only hide in a fish-net.

(c) *Chachāu mārun neyse chachān mārun neyse jānw bohāri chandāwān.*
The hawk has carried it away; let us go, *bohāri*, to release it.

(d) *Chāh chāh pār ollom.*
The drum-beating is very careless.

[534]

FIG. 142. Bull-roarer from Markabera
Length 1' 9"

12. *Kondagaon Pār.* A rhythm specially associated with the Kondagaon ghotul.

Dum dām Kondāgaon nāogaon Sonābāl.
Beating at Kondagaon and judgement at Sonabal.

13. *Māndri Pār* or *Māndar Kelni Pār.* One of the drummers kneels down and the others go round him in line and then one by one jump over him. The last boy of the line also kneels and they then jump over two drummers, and so on till all save one are kneeling. He jumps over the whole line, kneels at the head of it, and leads them round, still kneeling and drumming in a circle, moving forward first on one knee and then on the other.

Māndar dandik helun ta.
Play the drum for a little while.

Pāgi hilāwun desta.
Remove the cloth from the vagina.

14. *Uram Pār.* This complicated 'Pleasure Dance' is delightful to watch. The boys first move in a circle, beating their drums with both hands at the same end. Then they put them down on the ground, large end facing outwards, and go round beating each of the drums in turn until they return to their own. They sit down on the drums and beat each end in turn with both hands. Then they beat the outer ends, stand up and clap their hands in the air, swing round, bend down and beat the inner end, then roll the drums round in a circle, lift them two paces, put them down again, beat alternately inner and outer ends, roll them round again, beat outer ends, stand again clapping

their hands above the head, stoop down, swing the drums up over the shoulder and continue the dance in the usual way.

Bazu nāur gāwun duno bāt cho.
Let both parties sit and sing.

15. *Wark Pār.* When the boys and girls eat parched rice on some ceremonial occasion in the ghotul, they dance to this rhythm.

Udi saga udita porbodela dāt sangi dāt sangi mamāt jāle wāyom.
Sit, saga, to play the Porbodela game.

16. *Māti Pār.* The only rhythm for a religious occasion. This is sometimes used when offerings are made to Mother Earth.

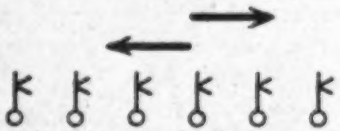
Bula bhitar cho lamha mānz chāh chāh ne.
They left the hare's flesh carelessly below the shrub.

VII. Religious Dances

Muria chelik and motiari dance at the great clan festivals, at the ordinary village ceremonies, and during the Pus Kolang and other expeditions; they dance, in fact, in honour of the clan-god, the village gods and the ghotul god. I describe the songs and dances of the expeditions in the chapter on that subject; these dances, which were mainly stick-dances, seemed to fall readily into a class of their own and so have been separately described. We must now examine the religious dancing of the ghotul at the ordinary festivals.

Here we find immediately a great difference between the south-west and the north and east of the Muria country. In the Chota Dongar, Karangal, Mardapal and Chalka Parganas mainly, and in villages not far from their borders, the Muria celebrate their greater festivals in typically Abujhmar Maria fashion. Elsewhere they have a distinctive Muria form of dance and drumming. Let us take the latter first.

The festival dancing of the northern and eastern Muria is not elaborate. A line of chelik, each with a large dhol drum slung from his shoulders, stands not far from the place of sacrifice. They drum very vigorously with a single stick held in the right hand and move to and fro in line. As they reach the end of their movement they drum with special vigour and shout at the turn.



Sometimes, however, the line moves forward a certain distance, all turn round and move back, then back again.

At the same time a group of boys with small turburi drums dances in a small circle, beating very fast and twirling round. The motiari form the usual double line and move to and fro (see p. 546).

There is nothing spectacular about this dancing, though the dhol drumming is often impressive, and when flutes accompany the drums it is delightful.

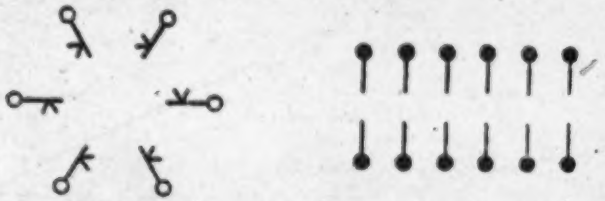
It is a very different story, however, when we turn to the great festival dances of the Maria-Muria. When the chelik and motiari of a dozen villages assemble in their full dancing-dress it is a magnificent spectacle. Two conditions are necessary for the proper appreciation of this dance; it must be

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
●535

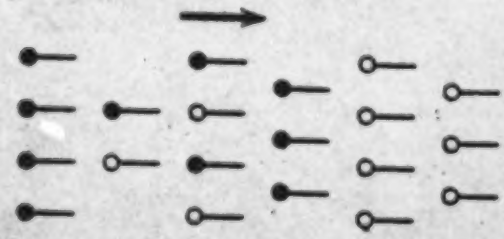
done in mass and it must go on all night. When a small crowd of Maria or Muria dancers assemble at a camp to give an exhibition dance, it soon becomes



monotonous. But when four or five hundred dancers spread themselves over a great field, and move round to the light of torches, the blowing of hunting-horns, the clang of bells, the waving of innumerable plumes, the earth itself seems to come alive. And it goes on and on and on till you are intoxicated by the gentle rhythm, and by dawn even the outsider can appreciate the ecstasy and delight of the boys and girls who can dance untired for hours before their gods.

There are two main dance formations, the second developing out of the first. A line of boys and girls facing inwards, each with the right arm round the shoulder or waist of his neighbour, moves round in a great circle and very slowly. The circle moves in both directions. At the same time two or three boys in a line walk up and down the main dance to lead the singing.

The steps are very simple. In the main line each dancer moves his right foot slowly to the right, rises on his toes three times, brings the left foot up to the right, rises again on his toes, then moves to the right once more. As he does this, he jerks the bells on his buttocks. The singers in the centre simply walk forward, but with a slight pause at the end of every second step.



Now gradually the number of singers in the centre of the circle increases. A second row of boys is formed, then a row of girls. Soon the whole dance has turned into a procession and the gyrating line has disappeared.

350

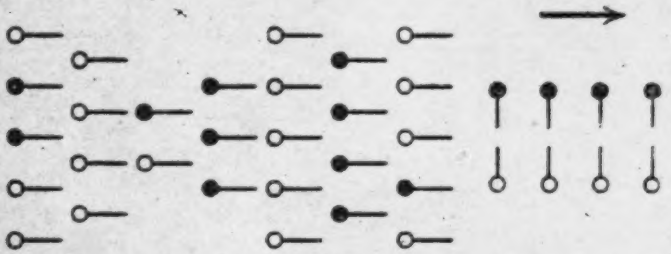
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

883 X
535

The procession walks forward and round in any direction. Or it may choose a 'beat' and walk up and down simply reversing when it reaches its limits.

This procession is, in fact, often performed as a separate dance, in this formation:



I have seen chelik and motiari dancing like this, without their finery, round and round the ghotul compound at night simply for practice and recreation.

A third festival dance is done with the little turburi drums. A line of boys with the drums faces a line of girls and they run with very quick and energetic steps to and fro, the boys drumming furiously and the girls singing.

At most of the big festivals of the Maria-Muria and Jhoria you will also see the line of boys beating the big dhol, holding it low down, half-way to the ground and beating it with a stick in the right hand.

No one should ever miss seeing a big festival in this area; it is a moving and unforgettable sight. For in addition to the formal dances of chelik and motiari, there are the individual dances of gods, mediums, the 'horses' of the gods. These leap in the air, roll on the ground, fight one another; here you may see a medium in spirited combat with a stick-god, defending himself against its blows with a small shield; there is an Anga Pen refreshing itself by disturbing a line of motiari; again two gods who are not on the best of terms chase each other, dodging in and out of the groups of amused spectators.

VIII. The Har Endanna

The Har Endanna vaguely recalls the dance and song of the Maria of the Abujhmar; it is as tedious, but less interesting. The dancers wear no finery; there are no bells on the buttocks to be jingled with rhythmic jerks; but the atmosphere of the dance, in its sad slow singing and its solemn movement, is the same. The Muria call it the oldest of their dances, and it may well have come down from the Abujhmar long ago.

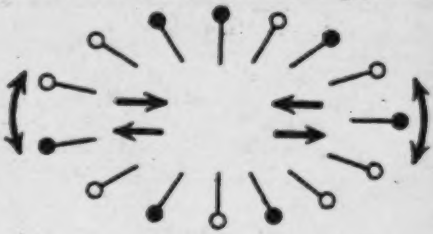
There is a large circle of boys and girls, some hand in hand, some with arms interlaced behind the backs of their companions. The form of the dance is that of an expanding and contracting ring which moves slowly round on its own centre, first one way and then the other. The dancers take two steps forward, then two steps back again, each time moving slightly to the left or right. Their bodies sway slightly and the hands, where these are joined, swing to and fro. There is little attempt at keeping time, none at any kind of rhythm. The singing is equally slow and dreary.

The Har Endanna is danced round the marriage-booth, by girls and boys during the Diwali expeditions, and in the ghotul when there is nothing else to do.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
535

Sometimes the Har is not done hand in hand, but each dancer places his left hand on his left neighbour's shoulder and lets his right hang down.

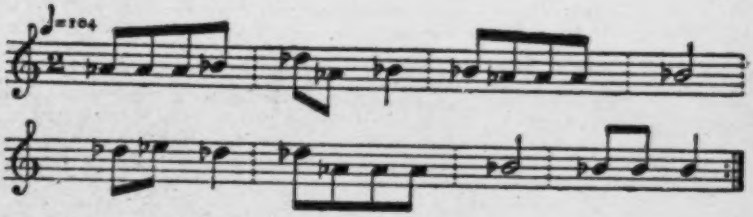


Everybody sings; they generally begin with the Lingo song, continue to describe the exploits of 'the gods, ancestors and the Raja', and use general songs without much meaning.

Songs

I

[533]



X883
535
539

Māri reka dengāl āto āto dīpāta reka gujal āti le:
Kākar mārile reka āti he.
Konem wedur gapa āti he niya miyār matek āti le.
Reka tinda loha āti he āta.
Hile āyo manta hāre he hāre tāne dārgon utona hāre le,
Tānke isi lohon hāre he.
Reka tinda dakom āti he.
Hipiya pite jori āti he jori dākom āti le.
Reka tijin wāikom āti he.
Niya hāre āyena ayen āti he he āti nikun āti inena āti le.

On the hill the char is tall;
In the clearing it is small.
O the char on the Hill of Crows!
Were your daughter here, there would be a basket of soft bamboo.
Send her to eat char.
She is in the house, son-in-law,
But we have already drunk liquor for another,
And I cannot send her.
We will go to eat the char.
Like a pair of birds we will go.
We will come when we have eaten.
Send your daughter with me.
I will be your son-in-law,
I will call you mother-in-law.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

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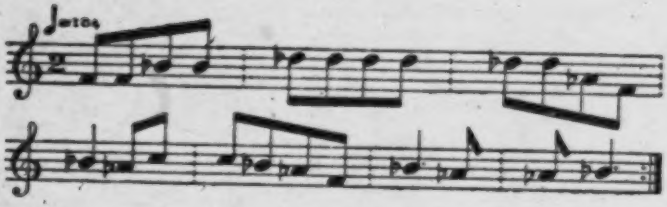


883X
535●
533
539

Where should I sell you, O bullock?
Laharsingh, Lahari and Udamsai!
I will sell you to a Teli, O bullock!
Don't sell me to a Teli, brother.
Let me stay in a Muria's house, brother.
The oil-press sounds *kiur kour*.
I can't pull the oil-press, brother.
Laharsingh, Lahari and Udamsai.

3

The cock has crowed, let Sona come.
The cock crows *kukuru kuru*, let Sona come.
Let it crow, Sona.
The dawn has come, Sona.
This is a thing of joy, Sona.
There is nothing here for anger, Sona.
We have come to dance for joy, Sona.
It is still dark, brother.
Don't go away, brother.
Let us dance together, brother, let Sona come.
The cock has crowed, let Sona come.

IX. KARSANA

883X
535

A large number of dances are not called *endanna*, dances, but *karsana*, games. The distinction is not one of form, but of occasion. Endanna, or dance, is performed at special times—at a marriage, a festival, an expedition. Karsana, game, can be performed at any time, and usually is danced informally in the ghotul. Some of the karsana, of course, are real games, jolly, boisterous frolics, but others are simply dances which have no deep significance.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kokora Karsana

This is called Kokora (Crane) Karsana at Remawand, Mindachna Pata at Markabera, and Tutumri Karsana at Kuntpadar. It may have other names elsewhere. The girls form a circle; each puts her hands on her neighbour's knees, that is, her right hand on her right-hand neighbour's left knee while her right-hand neighbour puts her left hand on her right knee, so that all round the circle arms are crossed and the girls bending forward. They dance very vigorously, standing stationary, but jerking their buttocks inwards. Presently they swing round and face outwards, and now their buttocks knock against each other to the amusement of all. In Sidhawand, when the girls faced outwards they lifted their hands from their knees and clapped them together. But the essence of this dance is its frankly sexual imitations.

Songs

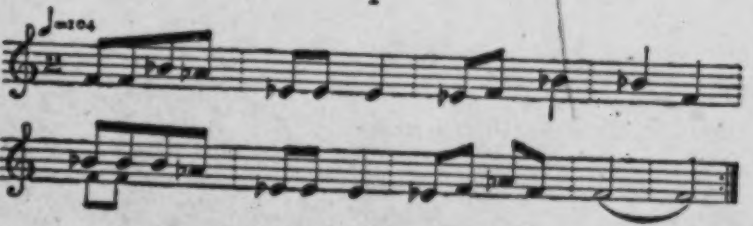
1

Kon pāra jābe re kokoda, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kalār pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kewta pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Māhara pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.

Where are you going to, O crane? *Durun ruchu durun ruchu.*
Go to the Kalar hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Kewta hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Mahara hamlet, O crane.

The names of the hamlets are those of low Hindu castes. The refrain *ruchu ruchu* is reminiscent of the noise *ruchmuch ruchmuch* which a bed is supposed to make when intercourse occurs on it. The crane is everywhere a sexual symbol, the devotion of these birds to one another being proverbial.

2



O re re loyo re rela re re loyo oy!

O tu tumri parkeli ātin! O toilet-twig from the ebony tree!

X883
●535
539

DANCE AND SONG

O miya mari bayāli bayāli dīin.
Ona nāna wēyon na nāna wēyon rāy.

Your son has gone mad.
I will not come for him.

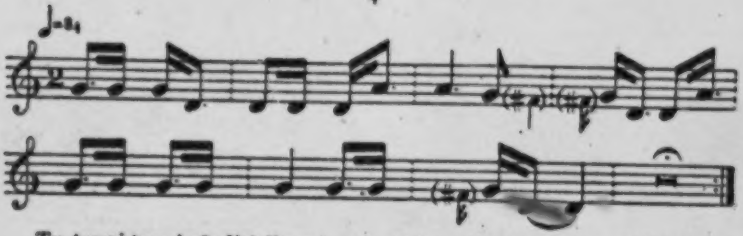
3

X883
535
539
533

Andeknāta māndek jela jālum te jālum te!
Kokti masri bhet pāwlu bhetum te bhetum te,
Rahar pungār bhet pāwlu pudgānte.
Andeknāta māndek jela jālum te jālum te!

O wearer of the long-tailed turban from Adangaon!
We catch the *kokti* fish,
We pluck the *rahar* flower.
O boy with the long-tailed turban from Adangaon!

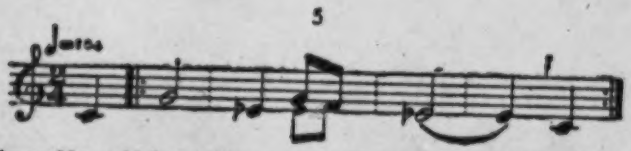
4



Tu tumri tumri rāndi jalkena!
Neha jalhemaima rāndi jalkena!
Kasur muta'paima rāndi jalkena!

Spit on the ebony tree, Call it widow, widow!
Don't show off too much, O widow!
Don't use a broom, or your body will swing to and fro, O widow!

5



Chu ruchhe ruchhela painjana.
Kāherkāje daikī lābe painjana?
Beldārkāje daikī lābe painjana.
Bhuskī bhuskī donk lābe painjana.

Chu ruchhe ruchhela painjana.
For whom will you bring a girl, O anklet?
Bring a girl for the Beldar, O anklet.
Bring the fat girl, O anklet.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

6

We will call Jalarsingh brother, O crane!
Whom will you call *bhauji*, O crane?
We will call Surtao *bhauji*, O crane!
What will she call you, O crane?
She will call you *dewar*, O crane!
You will trick her and eat her, O crane!

Jal-kanni (Shaking) Karsana

Girls and boys form a large circle, each with hands on the neighbour's knees. They circle round kicking out the right leg behind, moving sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, but always with the right leg kicking out and a convulsive pushing movement of the body which is bent forward.

Song

Ut gur gur ut gur gur poya layāna nanāy warre na,
Hātum hanji pātum tawāna nanāy warre na.
Weda hanji koda tawāna nanāy warre na.
Harri hanji mudiyo tawāna nanāy warre na.

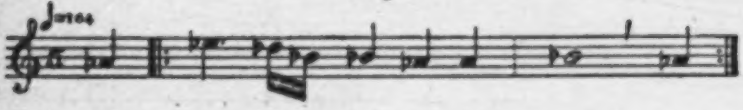
When the quail cries *ut gur gur ut gur gur* I am not afraid of the Poyami girl,
When I go to the bazaar to bring cloth, I am not afraid.
When I go to the field to bring the horse, I am not afraid.
When I go above the road to bring a husband, I am not afraid.

Nak Dondi Karsana

A variant on the previous exercises is the Nak Dondi or Bhais-sand Karsana which is supposed to imitate the tethering of buffaloes. A big circle is made of boys and girls. Each puts his hands between the legs of his neighbour's so that everyone is clasping the hand of the next but one. They then circulate with a lively skip and a hop, the right foot forward, the left foot to the left, the right foot to the left and the left foot to the left with a skip. All bend forward and move their arms up and down with the result that they catch each other constantly between the legs. As this is a mixed dance its sexual implications are obvious.

DANCE AND SONG

Song



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535 ●
533
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Re re loya rela rela re re la rela

What were you doing, girl, your anklets sounding *chiding-chadang*, in the cowshed?
I was just clearing up the cow-d ng, brother.
There was no cow-dung there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just clearing up the cow-dung.
What were you doing, girl, your anklets sounding *chiding-chadang*, in the garden?
I was combing my hair, brother.
There was no head nor hair there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just combing my hair.
What were you doing on the river bank in the shade of the plum tree?
What were you doing on the leaves, girl?
I was just sitting there in the shade, brother.
There was no shade there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just sitting in the shade.

Re re loyo re re loyo rela rela re re la rela.

This song was not in Gondi but in Chhattisgarhi Hindi, and recorded in Sidhawand village. Its picture of a faithless motiari being interrogated by her true lover is a common motif in ghotul songs.
Another of the songs used was recorded at Dongrigura.

Kariya baila darbār chale;	The black bullock is going to the darbar;
Kariya cho lāri men dul wo champa hariya cho lāri men dul.	O Champa, sway to and fro in the black bullock's shed.
Dinda layan darbār chale.	The young girl is going to the darbar.
Dinda cho pagri men wo champa dinda cho pagri men phūl.	In the turban of the boy is a champa flower.
Munga baila darbār chale.	The red bullock is going to the darbar.
Munga cho lāri men dul wo champa munga cho lāri men dul.	O Champa, sway to and fro in the red bullock's shed.
Pandra baila darbār chale;	The white bullock is going to the darbar;
Dul champa dewra pandra cho lāri men dul.	O Champa, sway to and fro in the white bullock's shed.
Dinda layan darbār chale;	The maiden is going to the darbar;

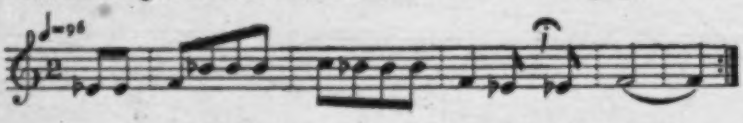
THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Dinda cho lāri men dul wo champa
dinda layan cho lāri men dul.

O Champa, sway to and fro in the maiden's shed.

Ujur (White) Karsana

Two lines of girls face one another and dance to and fro singing.



Ujur ujur kanār te dedākor mārte
Pais oya hewom,
Ujur ujur kanār te dedākor mārte
yer miya hewom,
Ujur ujur kanār te dedākor mārte
nei tari woykom,
Ujur ujur kanār te dedākor mārte
lagir paya hewom.

From the white white corner of thirty hills,
We will not let her be taken away,
We will not let them bathe,
We will not let them anoint her with oil,
We will not let them perform the Lagir.

All the references here are to the marriage ceremony.

Durpa Dāndi Karsana (Plate CXXII)

The Durpa Dandi or Game of the Lotus Root is also called Chingri Bunbutti. The leading girl puts her right foot on her left knee. Another girl stands on her right and puts her left leg up over the leading girl's right leg, thus supporting it almost at a right angle to her body. The next girl does the same until there is a complete circle of girls each standing on one leg with the other tucked up in the air. This is supposed to represent a flower supported on its stem. Then the girls begin to sing and each jumps up a little on her one leg and claps her hands.

Song

Durpa dāndi dāndi layor jāmdār jāmdār!
Dāndi tori dāwāi layor jāmdār jāmdār.
Dinda layor āteke layor jāmdār jāmdār,
Jāti āwār āwār dewsi wāyhi jāmdār jāmdār.
Pila hālār āteke layor jāmdār jāmdār,
Pila wonde his mandshi jāmdār jāmdār.

O the lotus plant boy, *jām* leaf, *jām* leaf!
Go to pick the plant, boy.
If you are unmarried, boy,
You will come pushing through the fence.
If you are the father of children,
You will be busy looking after them.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

X883
●535
534

Movements in a Mandri dance at Khutgaon

[p.554 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

Guguring Gus Karsana (*Plate CXXIII*)

X883
533
535
539

A line of girls, each with her hands on her hips, fingers to the front, runs round and round like a snake. This is a very attractive dance as I saw it in Alor in 1941. The girls ran quickly and gracefully round and round and in and out, bending their bodies slightly.

Hâhki mend kohla usta.

I husk the grain in a wooden mortar.

Nâwa nâri nolla guguring gus !
Hâhki mend wanji usta.
Nâwa nâri nolla guguring gus !
Hâhki mend kore usta.

My back is aching, *guguring gus !*
I husk the rice in a wooden mortar.
My back is aching, *guguring gus !*
I husk the pulse in a wooden mortar.

Nâwa nâri nolla guguring gus !

My back is aching, *guguring gus !*

The word *guguring* is used to describe *khulti* pulse that is boiled whole, without being ground.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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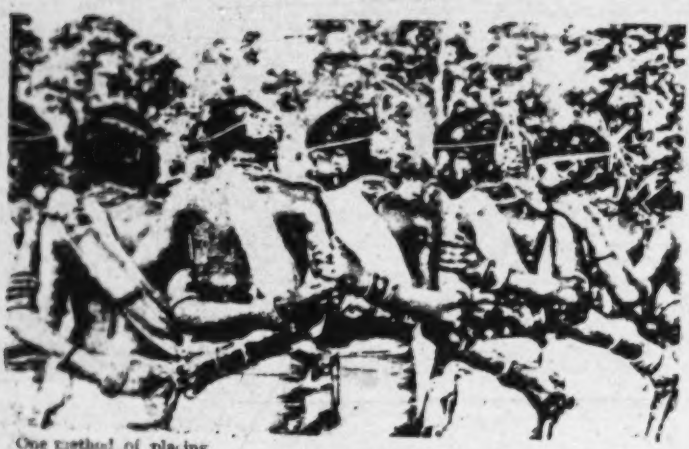

One method of placing the arms in the Hulki dance

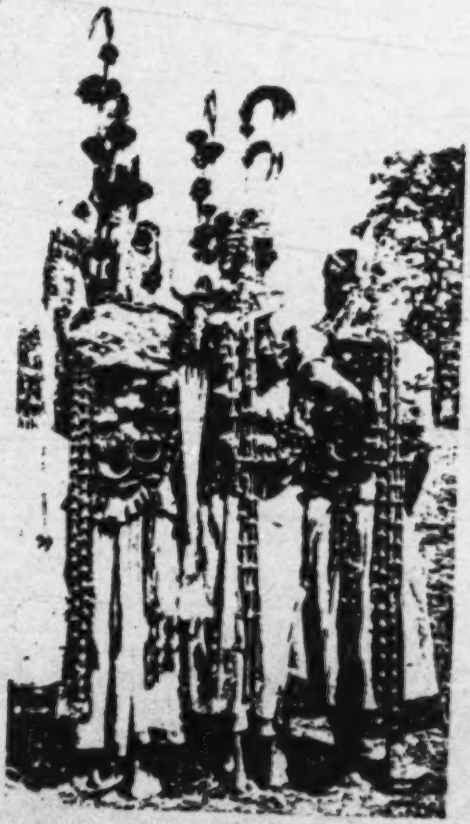

Plate CXIII

Chelik of Marzarm, showing buttock bells and ostrich streamers

[p. 560 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
534
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Plate CXIV

Movements in the Mandri dance, at Kabonga

[p. 560(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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Movements in the Mandri dance, at Kabonga

[p. 560 (c)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CXVI

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Mandri and Relo dancing at Kachora

[p. 560 (b)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●535

Relo dancers accompanying the boys

Mandri dancers on their knees

X883
535
534

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CXVIII

X883
S35
S34

Marriage dancers at Kachora

Motiari of Kachora practise the marriage dance

[p. 564 (R)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
535
534
292

Chelik and motiari of Aturgaon and Kongera doing a variation of the Maria dance

Chelik of Toinar doing samdhi-par

[p.572 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate CXX

Festival dancing at Kongera

Dancers marching in a procession

[p.572 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Festival dancing, with big dhol drums, at Phunder

Festival dancing, with small drums, at Phaula

[p. 582 (A)]

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Plate CXXII

Durpa Dandi

Movements in the Nana Darbena dance at Alor

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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ABOVE: The Guguring Gus dance at Alor

BELOW: Purar Karsana, a ring dance at Phunder

[p. 586 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Chelik dancing at the Kokoko festival

Plate CXLII

Chelik collecting offerings at the Kokoko festival

[p.626 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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A motiari throws water over the Kokoko dancers at Bandopal

Muria of Masora dancing with a dog in his arms

[p. 638 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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Plate CXLV

Dancer dressed in peacock's feathers

A dummy giant at Sidhawand

[p. 646 (A)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

776 in praise of the mahua tree, before which the new mahua flowers must not be eaten or used for liquor. Then comes a similar ceremony in honour of the mango. This generally falls in March. It may be preceded by a ceremonial fishing expedition. In April, preceded by a ritual hunt, comes the great Seed Festival, the Wijja Pandum, at which the seed then to be sown is consecrated.

At the beginning of the rains many of the Maria now observe the Halba festival of Hareli or Amavas. As the crops ripen, there begins a series of Harvest Festivals or (as a literal translation of their Gondi name would have it) 'New Eating' Festivals. The first of these is for the small millets that ripen early. The next is for the new gourds and cucumbers. It is followed, at about the beginning of November, by the Nuka Nordana Pandum, a festival which falls at about the time of Diwali and is concerned with the new rice. Before this ceremony, the rice of the new harvest must not be husked or washed.

Towards the end of the year comes the Jata Pandum for new beans and pulses, and the Kare Pandum before which no one is allowed to cut grass or bamboo, or begin making clearings for cultivation in the forest.

In addition to this round of celebrations there are the festivals of the clan-gods, the Pen Karsita or Divine Games, which may be held at any time, and the commercial Mandai which are often combined with the clan festivals but are mainly great bazaars.

Dassara is the chief official festival of the State. It lasts fifteen days and is attended by elaborate ceremonies in which each of the aboriginal tribes has its special part to play. All the Maria headmen attend the celebrations in their official capacity, and there is a special Darbar at which they have the opportunity to place their grievances before the administration.

IV

585 The great dance that has given the Bison-horn Maria their
535 name is really a marriage dance. At its best it is a superb spectacle. The men, in their splendid head-dresses of bison horns and carrying their long drums, move in a large circle

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

535 but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison' 585 charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum.* Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

293 The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic [237 cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered 737] unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

428 A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after 682 his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heir- 762 looms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

184 In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison 535 horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

534 The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called kikir, a Jews-harp made of iron or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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The famous 'bison-horn' marriage dance

[facing p. 144]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

291 cotton material cut in European style; or instead of these has at least an extra round or two of his loin-cloth which he can throw loosely over his shoulder, or a small cotton sheet to answer the same purpose.

The women's loin-cloth is worn like that of their men, but in front is not knotted in such a way as to make a long flap necessary to cover the front of their thighs; it looks, therefore, like a short skirt from their waists to just above their knees. In the fields and jungles and in their own homes they still go with their breasts uncovered save for their masses of ornaments; but they have become somewhat self-conscious, owing to misguided officials suggesting that it was improper for them to appear like this before their Chief or at high officials' camps; and they frequently, when going to a bazaar or festival, or to dance at a wedding or camp, start off with their breasts loosely covered with a cotton sheet or one or two folds of their loin-cloth wrapped loosely from one hip over the opposite shoulder, their beads and finery resting on top of this cloth. Generally, however, the cloth is too small or too loosely thrown over the body really to conceal the breasts. They have this favourite riddle :— [538]

'Bara palle lote haven honda podo',

meaning, 'What is the pair of bullocks that cannot be confined within the byre of the twelve parts of the body?' to which the answer is '*Dudo*', or 'Woman's breasts'. They explained this as referring to the refusal of the breasts to be concealed by any wrap. Moreover, as soon as women warm to the dance they rapidly divest themselves of the unwonted wrap.

Most men now wear a *pagri* or turban, tied in the usual fashion of the Hindu population of the adjacent Chhattisgarh districts, and far more ample than the rag worn by the Hill Marias. They do not adorn it with feathers; nor do they wear bead chains or fillets on their heads like the Hill Marias. They use far fewer 301 ornaments; they do not wear the brass wire *mappuradang* rings in 304 the helix of the ear, but sometimes a single small ring like the tasselled ring of the Hill Marias, but worn in a hole in the cartilage near the darwinian tubercle, from which a small gilt chain depends. In the lobe a small ear plug of gold or gilded brass, often with a little red or green stone or glass set in it, may anchor two or three gilt chains fastened at the top to a similar plug vertically above it in the helix. Most men content themselves with one or two small 301 bead necklaces (*mungya*) round their necks, the beads being all of one shape, scarlet or royal blue tubular glass, or pale green humming-top-shaped, both kinds considerably larger than the Hill Marias'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

over her from the roof, and she has to catch some and drink it. In some villages, again, if a man marries a widow or another man's wife, the woman must stand below the eaves with a *bassia latifolia* leaf on her head. The Waddai pours water and rice-beer from the roof, all over her, and after this she can enter her new home. When Oyami Anda of Bara Harmamunda married a giri for whom a Lamana'i youth had already been engaged, he had to stand with his rival's brother under the eaves of his house for a ceremony 'to make them forget enmity'. Anda's right hand was placed below the other's right hand, both having the palms upward. In front of them the Waddai made a heap of rice and set an arrow upright in it. He climbed on the roof and poured water over the hands of the two men who allowed it to flow down the arrow and over the rice. Afterwards Anda gave a pig and two fowls to the dispossessed Lamana'i as an offering to the latter's *hanal*. Had this ceremony not been performed, Anda—so he believed—would have suffered from a watery swelling of the body. 823

Page 262. Marias of both kinds are exceptionally virtuous in their sexual lives. Venereal disease is almost unknown, except in the vicinity of the few schools. Several old men have assured me—and I believe them—that since marriage they had had no other woman than their own wives. Love-charms and erotic stimulants are not much in demand and are not approved. At Molasnar there was a Naiko who was said to be making some sort of living by selling love-potions to the Marias; he used to administer them in liquor or tobacco and once a woman took one of them she would follow her lover everywhere 'like a pet dog'. But a Maria said, 'If I bring a girl in this way, my store of rice will grow less for such a union is not a yoking of the house of Mahapurub, and the girl will probably leave me after a time.' Vetti Muda of Dhurli described how when he was a young man (he must have been born about 1870), he used to take a regular diet of monkey's flesh. 'As a result I became very strong and active and could hop from tree to tree like a monkey. Once when I was going through the forest a monkey slipped from the overhanging branch of an ebony tree and was killed by the fall. I cut off its organ and roasted and ate it, with the result that I became so potent that I needed four wives at once.' But it is characteristic of the Maria—as against, for example, the ordinary Gond, Pardhan or Baiga—that he should have used the word 'wives'. 832

Page 269, *line* 27. Grigson has recorded 2 Hill Maria folk-tales. In my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* I give 5 Bison-horn Maria, 37 Muria and 13 Kuruk stories, some of which are probably known also to the Hill Marias, for they were recorded in villages 538

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

538 not far distant from the Abujhmar. The Kuruk stories are almost certainly current also among the Bison-horn Maria. Two of the five specifically Bison-horn Maria tales, like one of the two Maria tales, are about monkeys. The first describes a helpful monkey which is treated with great ingratitude by human beings; in the second—as in Grigson's tale—a monkey marries a human girl and does not make a very great success of the union. In neither case, however, is there any reference to the dispareunia which the Baigas delight to emphasize in stories of the 'Beast Marriage' type. Two of the other tales, 'The Magic Eyes' and 'The Loving Ghost' are exceptionally charming and, while full of conventional folk-lore clichés, strike a note of some originality. In my *Myths of Middle India*, I give Bison-horn Maria legends of the creation of the world, the making of the sun and moon, the origin of fire and several stories of the Vagina Dentata cycle.

178 *Page* 280, *line* 34. In the country round Gidam and Barsur, many clans that follow the megalithic tradition elsewhere have abandoned the practice of erecting menhirs, though the Barse, Kalmu and Kunjami clans continue it and erected twenty-six menhirs within the limits of the Gidam Revenue Circle in the years 1938-42. In the Jagdalpur tahsil, though the custom is less well maintained here than elsewhere, the Poyami, Vetti, Bekor, Kuharami, Marvi Padami and Muchaki at least continue to erect *urashal* stones. Near Jagdalpur, however, and in the neighbourhood of Paknar, there has been some falling off of the practice.

Whatever may be the reason for the abandonment of megalithic customs—and I am rather sceptical about the influence of the Hindu taboo on beef-eating—certain clans have been affected by the warnings of their priests. In Vagriguda, for example, a village in the heart of an area where these customs flourish undisturbed, no menhirs are erected now because once when the village was overwhelmed by an epidemic, the Siraha declared that it was because the Village Mother was annoyed at the practice. The [187] Telami clan have abandoned the practice in the Dhurli area because once when they were quarrying a stone to serve as a menhir, a snake wriggled out of the crack, and this was taken as a sign of the divine displeasure. I believe that many culture changes in India are not due to the spread of civilization but are caused by incidents like these.

000 *Page* 281, *line* 24. The upper stone is called *danya-kal* and its supports *odiyal*. In the Kutru zamindari, the Akri clan calls the upper stone *gariyakal*. The Chudala Marvi clan erects both *urashal* and *danyakal* stones throughout the Konta tahsil and in such villages as Gogonda, Mankapal and Koya Vekur. So do the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

XII. The Sago-Palm

273 137 Another very popular drink is the juice of the sago-palm, and since the Muria have developed many legends round it I will give the subject a section of its own.[1]

The sago-palm (*Caryota urens*, Linn.), which is known as *gorga marra* in Gondi and as *salpi rukh* in Halbi, is widely distributed over the greater part of the State. It is an erect monoecious tree, with axillary spadices, which sometimes grows to the height of sixty or eighty feet. Its long bipinnate leaves with their fish-tail ends are sometimes twenty feet long. The aboriginals, whether Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria or Muria,[2] regard the trees primarily as a source of liquor, though they use the inner tissues of the stem and the wood for other purposes. The popularity of the tree is shown in the riddle, [524 'Above sits the parrot, below is the thrashing-floor', suggesting that under the beautiful sago-palm a great crowd of people gather, and in such songs as '*Waliya wāto gorga ale mīmāle*—O uncle, the sago-palms are everywhere you go'. Unlike mahua spirit, however, salphi juice is not usually used in worship or on other ceremonial occasions.[3] It is rather a drink for one's private and friendly hours, though it may often supplement a failing supply of mahua at a marriage or funeral.

824 As always, legends and stories gather about anything that is intimately connected with the life of the people. There are several different accounts ●538 of the origin of the sago-palm, but all agree in connecting it with youth and gaiety. It came into being when maidens danced together or when boys pursued their loves. In the north of the State the most common legend traces its origin to an expedition of boys and girls from the house of Bhagavan, which came down to earth to dance and bathe.[4] One such party came to Chikhli village on the northernmost plateau of the State and after bathing, the girls left behind the cowrie ornaments of their hair. These ornaments are very popular among the motiari; sometimes a mass of cowries covers the whole of the back of their heads. When the girls found they had lost their ornaments they were angry and cursed the cowries saying, 'Now turn into sago-palms and we will always live with you and will never lose you again.' For this reason it is said that the cowrie is the tuft of feathers that fell from Lingo's turban. Yet again it is said that the tree was a feather stuck in the hair of a motiari which fell off as she was going to Penjori village to dance the Diwali dances, and turned into a tree when she got angry with it. But everywhere it is agreed that the tree springs up in all those places where the girls either from the house of Bhagavan or from some earthly ghotul used to go to dance. In the forests above the Raughat and all along the northern plateau there are a great many of these trees and these were the very parts where the girls went for their dancing in the dawn of the world.

There are, however, some other versions of the origin of the palm. In Mule village the Muria say that when the seven salphi maidens (Gorga Kanyang) were born they only had one placenta between them. This was cut off and

[1] For a fuller account see my article 'The Sago-Palm in Bastar State', *JRAS. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII (N.S. 1942), pp. 69–78.

[2] Grigson is not quite correct in saying that Hill and Bison-horn Maria 'almost alone in Bastar use salphi liquor'.—Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. The Muria of the north are among the most enthusiastic drinkers of salphi juice in the whole State.

[3] According to Thurston, the fermented juice is used ceremonially at marriages and festivals by the Poroja and Savara.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 216, 322.

[4] The seven heavenly damsels who came down to dance and bathe on earth is a common motif in Indian folk-tales. See Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 100.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

buried by their mother. Almost immediately the seven sisters ran away, and when the mother could not find them, she went to the place where the placenta was buried and let the milk from her breasts fall upon it. As the days went by there gradually grew up from the placenta a tree which was full of milk. This was the sago-palm that was born from milk and always gives milk. There is a riddle—'Milk comes from the horns of the buffalo'.

Another story comes from Pharasgaon. Long ago there were eleven brothers and one day as they went hunting in the jungle they grew very thirsty. They came to a group of palm trees and rested in their shade. The youngest brother looked up at the tree and said, 'This is a very fine tree. Surely there is water hidden in its branches! I can see a pot tied there. Who can climb up and get it?' Each of the brothers tried to climb the tree and failed, for when they were nearly at the top they saw that the pot was full of blood. But the youngest boy made a rope of siari fibre and climbed up and when he looked in the pot the juice appeared to him as milk. He brought it down and they all drank of it. The ten elder brothers fell senseless but the youngest boy was intoxicated with pleasure. But he grew afraid thinking that his brothers would die. Then his god said to him, 'Offer a pig to the Gorga Kanyang and they will recover'. He sacrificed a pig and his brothers sat up again.

This is the origin of the sacrifices that are made to the tree before it is tapped. It is believed that if no offerings are made the juice turns into blood and makes the people ill. If offerings are withheld for a long time, the tree dries up.

In the Chota Dongar area, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar and the Muria of their immediate neighbourhood trace the palm to Tallur Muttai or Mother Earth herself. At the beginning of the world, Tallur Muttai came with Kadrengal (whom some call her brother and some her husband) to the forest of Bastar. Kadrengal was innocent of sexual desire, and so Tallur Muttai created sago-palms with the hope that their juice would excite him. When Kadrengal first went to tap the trees, he tied a thread from the cut peduncle down to a hole which he dug below, but the wind blew it to and fro and the juice was scattered. Then Tallur Muttai taught him how to tie a gourd to catch the juice and place a leaf to guide it safely. Kadrengal drank a great quantity; desire came to him; and he went to Tallur Muttai.

But the Hill Maria of Jharagaon and Nalnar say that the palms originated when the seven Kanyang, daughters of Bhagavan, came down to Singardip (the world) to bathe. They combed their hair, and wherever their hairs fell the trees sprang up. They give the names of three of the Maidens of the sago-palm—Fuse Kanyang, Ganganangi Kanyang and Kondakalbuli Kanyang.

The palms are carefully guarded. Sometimes a large bamboo mat is tied round the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree.

This is the method of extracting the juice. The ends of the flowering spadices are cut and hollow bamboos, gourds or earthen pots are fixed where they can catch the flow of sap. Bamboos or gourds are simply tied to the tree, but a pot may be fixed in position with a couple of poles below it tied round the trunk and fixed together supported by a string tied to a bough above. The pot is placed inside a basket and its mouth tied to the spadix, to the end

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When you saw me and knew that your heart was not captured, why did you ruin me? What am I to do now? Tell me. Where am I to go?'

Inside the ghotul sexual anaesthesia is known, but it is uncommon and is regarded as a sort of deviation. I have met a few Muria who have never been to the ghotul or who have never shared its sexual activities. Dhansingh Pandu of Palki is a man of some forty years and still unmarried. He has never been to a ghotul. His father used to say to him, 'These boys talk in front of their sisters as if they were their lovers. You don't know what gods there are in the ghotul; many gods live there; you might unwittingly offend one of them and be destroyed. No one knows what people may have in their hearts when all sleep together.' But it was not only his father's exaggerated fears of the supernatural that stopped Dhansingh from attending the ghotul; he himself had no desire to go. But now he regrets it. 'I am a very lonely man', he told me. 'I might now be happily married. But at that time I was very poor and I had no passion.' The real reason for his abstinence seems to have been a dread that he would be forced into sexual intercourse for which he had neither power nor inclination.

Another Muria who has never been a chelik is Hagru of Masora. In his youth he lived in the Hindu potters' quarter of Kondagaon town where there was, of course, no ghotul. 'I used to feel very lonely when I heard how happy the other boys were, but what could I do?'

Early marriage sometimes brings ghotul life to a premature close. In Malakot, I found the people arranging their children's marriages as early as possible 'to prevent copulation in the ghotul'. Old Sukali of Masora was married so young that 'she never even learnt to sing a Relo'. But child-marriage is not common and young married girls are generally allowed to attend the ghotul till puberty or until they are sent to live with their husbands.

Although the Muria insist on abstinence from sexual congress before the ceremonial hunts and require their priests to remain celibate on various occasions, the rule does not seem to be due to any special regard for celibacy as such or belief in its power; it is rather connected with the dread of the menstruous woman. On the eve of a festival all the males of a village must sleep in the ghotul—which for that night is cleared of motiari—to ensure that none of their wives or other relatives will infect them with the defilement of a catamenial period that might begin during the night. So too the very strict rules governing a young Gaita's relations with women in the Chota Dongar Pargana appear to be based mainly on a desire to isolate him from the dreaded menstrual contact.

Celibacy is not admired, and it is dangerous to be unmarried, for a man or woman who dies in this condition lives for ever restless and frustrated, and a nuisance to the friends he has left behind on earth. It should be noted that it is marriage and not sexual experience that is important. The Hindu sadhu is rarely respected, though he may be feared for his supposed supernatural powers. The state of *sanyds* is everywhere associated in the aboriginals' mind with idleness and beggary rather than with chastity. In Alor the chelik spoke very scornfully of celibacy: 'It is a way of life for loafers.' And of boys and girls who stand aside from the main life of the ghotul, they say 'they will get children directly they begin'. 'There may be one in a thousand girls who tries to keep her water, but she will get a child in her *haldi-dhoti*', while her clothes are still stained with the marriage turmeric. It is dangerous to store up power, for when it is released it may prove too potent.

In order to enforce this attitude, the chelik tell a number of stories illustrating the danger of breaking the ghotul tradition. One such tale, from

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A 32 Gond A 32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

X883 589 538 Atargaon, is about the seven motiari who knew nothing about sex. One day they went to gather leaves with their grandmother. The old lady climbed a tree and the girls looked up and saw her vagina. When she told them what it was for, they were so frightened that they left the ghotul and went to live far away in the jungle. Whenever they saw a man they beat him and drove him away. The story proceeds through various adventures to the inevitable conclusion. Each of the girls is seduced by a sadhu and becomes pregnant.

X883 539 Another story, given me by Sonu, a Muria of Jamkot, is of interest as emphasizing the ghotul doctrine of equality, that everyone in the ghotul fellowship must be loved and happy: if not, disaster may befall.

There were seven score chelik and seven score motiari. All slept together in the ghotul. One of them was the son of a grazier of goats, and none of the girls would sleep with him. When he came to the ghotul, they would abuse him. 'Get out, you grazier's son, you block of wood.' The boy's name was Lakari; that was why they called him a block of wood. But Lakari was a clever boy and he made a love-charm.

One day the boys and girls decided to go to Kodawata to earn their living. When he heard of this, Lakari decided to have all the girls for himself. He put the boys to sleep by his charms. When the girls were ready for their journey, he went ahead beating his drum. They thought that all the boys had started and set out after them.

Now Lakari was very poor; his bed was the earth, his blanket was the air, his pillow was his own elbow. He was so poor that no girl would let him sleep with her. He went along with an axe over his shoulder, his *dâol* drum slung from his arm and a drumstick in one hand. He led the girls away into the jungle, on and on for a whole month. When he beat the drum they ran after him, but he always kept at a distance so that they wouldn't know who it was.

The jungle stretched for twelve *kos* on every side, there was not even the name of a village. The jungle was called Madhuban, the sweet forest; the trees were so tall that it seemed the moon had stuck to them. When Lakari had led the girls into the very heart of this jungle, he took off his clothes and sat shivering with cold. When the girls saw that the chelik were not there and it was only Lakari who had brought them all that way, they were angry and disappointed.

On a hill-top between two rivers Lakari built a ghotul for himself. On the far side of the river he made another house for the girls. They refused to visit him or even look at him, they were so angry. By the time the rains began they found they had eaten all their provisions for the year. Lakari himself had nothing; he lived on honey.

Now at last one of the girls came to him and said, 'How are we to live here without a village or bazaar? Even you can give us nothing to eat'. Lakari replied, 'I will see to everything; come with me to the bazaar and we will get what we want'. The girls went fishing in the river, and this girl brought fish in a basket and he himself took honey and they went together to the bazaar at Ladri. They sold their things and bought what they wanted. On the way back, Lakari went as slowly as he could so that they would have to spend the night in the jungle and the girl would have to sleep with him. When darkness fell he made her a bed in the sand of a river; there was one bed for him and one for her with a fire between. He had brought food and ornaments to please her.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

if they catch them relieving themselves. There is nothing very subtle or witty in any of this. In fact, since there are so few taboos on sex in the ghotul it is rather difficult to be funny about it.

It is worth noting that even the gods are not above a bit of horse-play. In Adnar I watched the young deity Chelik Sai, who was after all a chelik and conveniently represented by a long erect pole, amusing himself with a group of motiari. In the hands of his medium he pranced about, poking himself at the girls, chasing them about, pretending to catch them and ride upon them. Another medium carrying an iron chain amused everybody by his absurd gestures; he would dance round and round a line of girls, bend down and peer up into their faces in the most ridiculous manner. In Metawand, one of the horses of the gods was chased about the field, and roars of laughter greeted the divine sport.

A common type of funny story finds its humour in an absurd and indecorous situation. In Metawand I was told the tale of the woman who is going along the road in the rains. Some of the mud gets into her vagina and when she stops at a stream to wash it, a crab catches hold of her clitoris. She calls a man to help, but hard as he pulls at the crab he cannot make it let go. At last he tries to bite it off, but it gets hold of his nose with its spare claw, and there they all are—on a public highway, the respectable Muria with his nose stuck in the vagina of an unknown woman. After a while along comes a Lohar and gets the crab out with his tongs, but only on condition that the woman will give him 'tobacco' whenever he wants it. Some days later he comes to her house to claim his reward. She is busy cooking and asks him to lie down on a cot until she is ready. He lies on his face, but he is so excited that his erect penis goes through the strings of the cot and protrudes below. A cat thinking it a bit of meat, catches it. The situation is now reversed. The woman comes out and refuses to release the Lohar unless he declares her quit of her debt to him.

Another tale, from Aturgaon, which is known in Bengal and to the Uraon, but is given an entirely fresh and vivid turn by the Muria, again gets its effect from the sticking together, in public and deplorable juxtaposition, of incongruous things: a man and woman cannot get apart, a midwife finds her hands stuck to her head and nothing on below, a magician discovers a bullock's horns sticking to his bottom. Personally I think this tale is really funny, even in its bare and literal form.

> There was a Muria Raja with one son. In his village was a barber who also had an only son. The two boys were always playing together, they would never do their work. The Raja used to tell his son to go and plough in the fields, but he always refused. At last the Raja got very angry and turned him out. The boy put on his ornaments and took a bag of money, mounted his horse and rode away. As he went he met the barber's son and told him that he was going to his future father-in-law's house. The barber's son said he would go with him.
>
> Presently, the Raja's son said he wanted to relieve himself. There were no leafy trees at hand so the barber's son said, 'You had better take off your clothes and ornaments and go to the jungle in your loin cloth'. While the Raja's son was away, the barber's son put on his clothes and ornaments and rode off on the horse.
>
> When the boy returned and found his things gone, he wept so loudly that Bara Deo heard his crying and came to him in the shape of an old

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

IV. FOLK-TALES

883 538 Folk-tales and legends are told in the ghotul if there is a boy there who knows any. There does not seem to be a formal 'right' of possession over a particular story, but in practice certain stories are connected with special people. One boy knows a story which was taught him by an elder boy on leaving the ghotul or by his father, and this boy is always called on to recite it.

883 538 533 No one is likely to forget the experience of listening to one of these stories, which are often in a sort of rhythmic prose and chanted to a recognizable tune. The most remarkable that I have heard was a long and rambling Ghotul Pata chanted by Dasru of the Markabera ghotul. Dasru sat in the middle of the room, a little group of boys near him, the other chelik and motiari reclining near. He sat very upright and sang with great animation, gesticulating with his hands and the boys near him joined in a chorus and beat the ground with little sticks.

I heard another beautifully sung story in the Masora ghotul. This was the tale of the Ogre and the Little Girl; the boy who 'owned' it was a very small boy, the Anter. He and a friend sang in a curious shrill falsetto and the whole ghotul joined in the chorus:

Rai sarso sarso phul nunike nāngar gurdum—gurdum gurdum gurdum.
Rākas bukas barma bhat des nuni kuchi kewar—gurdum gurdum gurdum.

The story was chanted in a kind of rhythm, while the beat of the chorus was irresistible, the boys booming grandly on the *gurdum*.

Sometimes the narrative of the tale is in 'prose' and is recited in the ordinary speaking voice, and the dialogue is sung, occasionally in rhymed couplets. The boys and girls sit round listening with great attention, and nod their heads saying '*Hingo*, Yes', at the right moments.

883 538 Most of these stories have been published separately for it would have taken too much space to include them here.[1] I am, however, giving two narrative poems which throw some light on conditions of life in the ghotul. The first is the Ghotul Pata mentioned above, which illustrates the custom of a ceremonial beat for fish before a festival, the appointment of the Gaita's children as ghotul leaders, and the relations of brother and sister in the dormitory.

883 534

Ghotul Pata of Markabera

The Gaita of the village gathered them all together saying,
'Look brothers, the month of Magh has come again,
And we must decide about the Mango Festival'.
Everyone came and eagerly decided,
For already other villages had kept the Festival.
'Certainly, we also will keep the Festival, but what curry shall we eat?'
'Haven't we many chelik and motiari in our ghotul?
Send the chelik and motiari to catch fish for the Festival.'
So said the leaders, and the chelik and motiari prepared to go.
When they were ready the chelik and motiari went to catch fish.

[1] See my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), which includes many Muria stories; some appear to be original, others turn on such universal motifs as those of the Quest, Grateful Animals, Brother-Sister Incest, the Hero on Pilgrimage.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter VIII

Procuring of Other Food and Drink

539

> 'Whatever came across them they must needs kill and eat it;
> They made no distinction. If they saw a jackal they killed
> And ate it; no distinction was observed; they respected not antelope,
> sambhar and the like.
> They made no distinction in eating a sow, a quail, a pigeon,
> A crow, a kite, an adjutant, a vulture,
> A lizard, a frog, a beetle, a cow, a calf, a he- and a she-buffalo,
> Rats, bandicoots, squirrels—all these they killed and ate.
> So began the Gonds to do. They devoured raw and ripe things.'
> (Hislop's version of the Lingo epic of the Gonds.)

A. Food Gathering

222
262

Famine has never been a problem in Bastar, as the Marias and other tribes have always been able to draw half of their food supplies from the innumerable edible products of the vast forests. The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department, and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list. At page 124 above, many of the more important forest products collected and garnered were enumerated. *Mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*) is not common in the Abujhmar hills, where consequently little *mahua* spirit is distilled or drunk; where it does occur, the Hill Marias collect its flowers and fruit as eagerly as cultivators throughout India. It is common in the Bison-horn country. The women and children gather the fallen flowers in the mornings. It is dried in the sun, and then stored in bamboo wicker baskets; it keeps a long time. It is used to flavour *pej* and *gato*, or roasted. Oil is pressed in the plains from the fruit. Tamarind trees are not really wild, but were originally planted around village sites; the fruit is carefully gathered from all the unoccupied village sites. The fruits of the *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*) and *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) are two of the main sources of food supply. They collect also fruit of the *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *jamun* (*Eugenia jambolana*) and *aonla* (*Phyllanthus emblica*). Wild mangoes are common, and they are learning to cultivate the tree; they store whole fruit, dried pulp, and kernels whole or crushed. In the south of the State the toddy palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is the mainstay of the economic life of the people, but

[273]

[263]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

197 It may be observed that in these specimens and in the *Linguistic Survey* records there is far less borrowing from Aryan languages than in the Gondi folk-tales, stories and songs printed in Volume II 192 of Trench's *Grammar*. In my specimens there are two corruptions of English words which have become current through excise and police practice respectively, ***bōtēl*** (bottle) and ***rapōṭ*** (report). Fairly recent Hindi or Halbi borrowings (as distinct from long acclimatized words of Sanskrit origin like ***mīn*** (fish), ***wijjā*** (seed) or ***bēsh*** (good)) found in my specimens are ***ḍōkrā*** (old man), ***ḍōkrī*** (old woman), ***dinām*** and ***dināl*** (daily), ***kabāṛ*** (work), ***khush*** (pleased), ***tiyār*** (ready), ***bichār*** (thought), ***milē-māsī*** (together), ***sarkār*** (authorities), ***lagē*** (fastened), and ***rāzī*** (contented).

126 I have not collected any specimens of Bison-horn Maria language, nor have I the qualifications to attempt any sketch of the grammars of the two dialects. The Hill Maria specimens that follow were recorded under my supervision by Sampat Singh, my interpreter, in the villages of Orcha and Hikul in the Abujhmar hills in March 1934, the records being corrected with the aid of the Hill Marias in my camp.

Two Stories, from Hikul Village

539

I. The Monkey Son-in-law

Uṇḍ nāgā mattā. Ḍōkrī- mu'ittā mattā, ōrā uṇḍ miyāṛ
One village was. Old-woman-old-woman was, hers a daughter

mattā. Ad pīkī layā mattā. Ḍōkrī- mu'ittā ad pīkī-tun
was. That girl maiden was. Old-woman-old-woman that girl

bōn-kē hēwā mattā. Uṇḍ mēṭṭā-tā uṇḍ kōwē ḍōkrī-mu'ittā-
anyone-to giving-not was. A mountain-from a monkey old-woman-

nagā pīkī-may^dē lām wātā. Ḍōkrī-mu'ittā
old-woman-to girl-for bride-servitor came. Old-woman-old-woman

kētā, 'Nimā bārī-kīyā wātōq, kōwā?' Kōwā ittoq, 'Illē,
said, 'You what-for have-come, monkey?' Monkey said, 'No,

māmō, bēnōrē lām tā^tēq, nannā paṛī tūngānā-may^dē
father's-sister, anyone bride-servitor will-keep. I work doing-for

mandākān.' Ḍōkrī-mu'ittā bichār kitā, 'Māwā-igā paṛī kiyānōr bōgh
will-stay.' Old-woman thought-made, 'Me-with work doer anyone

hillē; pīkīn-may^dē kōwā baranjā-tun tā^kān.' Injōr vēāttā,
not; girl-for monkey son-in-law-for I-will-keep.' Then she said,

'Mīkū paṛī kis, tihtānūr.' Kōwā-ku tāstōq. Kōwā vēāttōq,
'Me-for work do, I-will-feed.' Monkey she-kept. Monkey said,

'Māmā, nī-kē uṇḍ maqsu par-dīm; pēndā naṛkān.'
'Father-in-law, me-to an axe made-give; penda-clearing I-will-cut.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

539

Kŏwā-nā pŏlŏ kĕĕj-sī, mu'ittŏr māṛŏnagā uṇḍ maqsu banā-kīyā
Monkey-of saying having-heard, old-man blacksmith-with an axe making-do

vĕĕātŏq. Ogā māṛŏ tānā kŏlā-bārā maqsu-nā kīsī kŏwāng-kū
said. That smith its handle-with axe having-made monkey-to

hittŏq. Aske kŏwā tānā māmān-tŏnē vĕĕātŏq ki, 'Nākun jāwā
gave. Then monkey his father-in-law-to said that, 'Me-to gruel

aṭsī-sīm; nannā pĕṇḍā naṛkālāy[a] dākān.' Mu'ittā-ḍŏkrī
cooking-give; I penda-clearing to-cut will-go.' Old-woman-old-woman

vĕĕātā ki 'Kŏwā-tun jāwā himatu, aur pĕndā naṛkālāy[a] dāyānur.'
said that 'Monkey-to gruel give, and penda to-cut he-will-go.'

Aske narkŏm pīkī jāwā kīs-hittā. Jāwā pā'īs, kŏwā pĕndā
Then in-the-morning girl gruel made-gave. Gruel having-taken, monkey penda

naṛkālāy[a] hattŏq. Pĕndā naṛkālāy[a] wiṛsī, kŏwā rĕkā tumrī
to-cut went. Penda to-cut having-neglected, monkey achar tendu

tindā-lāy[a] marā mĕṭā huṛtŏq, wa pāyā mulpē maqsu-tun
to-eat trees mountain was-seeing, and afterwards at-evening axe

marā tŏl-ā lagē-kīsī lŏn wātŏq. Pīkī kŏwān man-kīwŏ mattā.
tree bark-to having-fastened home came. Girl monkey liking-not was.

Onā paṛī-tun huṛsī, ḍŏkrī ŏnā miyāṛ-tun kĕtā, 'Huṛā, pīkī, kŏwā
His work seeing, old-woman her daughter-to said, 'See, girl, monkey

baṛānjā nāh[a]nā kām kiyānŏr, nimā ŏn man-kĕwīr.' Pīkī kāmĕk
son-in-law good work will-do, you him liking-make-not.' Girl silent

ātā. Dinām kŏwā jāwā kājsī kām kiyānā may[a]dē hattŏq. Uṇḍ diyā
was. Daily monkey gruel taking work doing for went. One day

māmāī kĕtŏq, 'Nēṇḍ nannā bārā pĕndā huṛ[a]lāsī ākān.' Kŏwā
father-in-law said, 'To-day I also penda to-see will-come.' Monkey

kĕtŏq, 'Nāṛ wā'īkī.' Imā diyā ŏnā māmā-kū kŏwā
said, 'To-morrow come-please.' Next day his father-in-law monkey

nāṭēnā naṛkal pĕṇḍā-tun tŏĕātŏq. Mu'ittŏr kabāṛ-tun huṛsī khush
of-the-village cut penda-to showed. Old-man work seeing pleased

ātŏq. Pīyā ogā lŏn wās, ḍŏkrī-tun kĕtŏq. Mu'ittŏr-nā pŏlŏ
was. Afterwards he home having-come old-woman told. Old-man's word

kĕĕjsī mu'ittā bārī khush ātā. Nāṭēnŏr pĕndā bŏṛsalāy[a]
having-heard old-woman also pleased was. Villagers penda to-burn

kandānā-ashā kŏwā bārā jāwā pa'īs tiyār ātŭr. Nāṭēnŏr pĕṇḍā
going-when monkey also gruel having-taken ready was. Villagers penda

bŏṛsatŏq arū kŏwā tumrī rĕkā tindā ātŭr. Nāṭēnŏr kŏb[a]lā bītānā-ashā,
burnt and monkey tendu achar to-eat began. Villagers kutki sowing-when,

kŏwā vĕĕātŏq, 'Wijjā parkā, māmā, nannā bārā bīt[a]kān.'
monkey said, 'Seed look-for, father-in-law, I too will-sow'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

●539 Mu'ittōr wijjā parhakas hittōq. Kōwā wijjā-tun guppat-tagā
Old-man seed having-looked-for gave. Monkey seeds-to undergrowth-in

missī-hittōq. Missī pāyā lōn wās, 'bītān' injōrē
buried. Having-buried then home having-come, 'I-have sown' saying

ōnā māmā-tun vēḵḵātōq. Mu'ittōr ittōq, 'Pēndā huṛ'lā dākōm,
his father-in-law-to told. Old-man said, 'Penda to-see we-will-go,

baṛānjā.' Indānkē, kōwā vēḵḵātōq, 'Dā'I.' Kōwā
son-in-law.' He-having-spoken, monkey said, 'Please-go.' Monkey

munē munē, tānā māmā pāyā pāyā wītal pēndā huṛ'lāsī
in-front in-front, his father-in-law behind behind sown penda to-see

hattōq. Kōwā askē munē tōḵḵas-mattōq, ad pēndā-tun ōs bēṛ
went. Monkey then before shown-was, that penda second time

tōḵḵātōq. Kōh'lā mōṛas-mattā. Huṛtōq, payā milē-māsī lōn wātōq.
showed. Kutki sprouted-had. They-saw, then together home came.

Imā diyā kōwā ittōq ki, 'Māmā, nannā piṭṭē rākhā-may'dē
Next day monkey said that, 'Father-in-law, I birds watching-for

pēndā-tagā dākān.' Ab'lēkēn dinām jāwā tinjī kōwā pēndā-nagā
penda-to will-go.' Thus daily gruel having-eaten monkey penda-to

rākhā-may'dē handōr. Agā kōwā nāṭēnā gōṛ-ku mēhtānā
watching-for used-to-go. There monkey of-the-village cattle grazing

pēkōr-nā pēndā bīt'lē-tun tindūr. Ab'lēkēn dinām tinjōr-mattōq.
lads-of penda the-sown was-eating. Thus daily he-kept-eating.

Pēkōr huṛtōq ki 'Māwā kōhalā-tun bātā lēkōrā dinām tintā?' Und
The-lads saw that 'Our kutki what animal daily eats?' One

diyā pēkōr jamā wāsī bichār kitōq, 'Ayō, bōgā igkā rākhā
day lads together having-come counsel took, 'No, someone here watching

man'tu, askē huṛ'kiṭ bātā tindāntā.' Imā diyā und pēkā kōh'lā-tagā
stay, then you-will-see what is-eating.' Next day a boy kutki-near

rākhā-mattōq. Askē kōwā garak-manj kōh'lā tindā wātōq, bārā
watching-stayed. Then monkey soon-after kutki to-eat came, and

tindālāsī ātōq. Rākhā pēkā huṛsī ōnā sang'tōr-kun vēḵḵātōq.
eating began. Watching boy having-seen his comrades-to told.

Imā diyā sabē milē-māsī kōwā-tun hawaktōq. Hawaksī-manj hachun
Next day all together monkey killed. Killing-after a-little

kōwā-tā awiṅg ōnā māmā-tun bārā pēkōr hittōq; ōgā tittōq.
monkey-of flesh his father-in-law-to also lads gave; he ate (it).

Mulpē ātā, matī kōwā ōnā māmānā lōn āwō ātōq. Askē ōnā
Evening came, but monkey his father-in-law's house not come. Then his

māmā parktōq. Munḍ nālū diyālī payā ōnā māmā-ku
father-in-law searched. Three four days later his father-in-law-to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

539

yērkā ātā ki pēkōr hawaktōq. Ona māmā rām ātōr
known became that the-lads had-killed. His father-in-law angry became

pēkōr-nū vēāātōq, 'Idēn nannā sarkār-tagā rapōṭ kiyā-kān.' Askē pēkōr
lads-to said, 'This I authorities-to report shall-make.' Then lads

bēṛatōq ittōq, 'Ayō, ilēāā kēmā; māt bōgā ni-agā lām
were-afraid said, 'No, thus do-not; of-us someone you-with bride-servitor

mandākōm. Askē mu'ittōr rāzi ātōq. Ūnd pēkā ōnēgā lām
we-will-stay. Then old-man content became. A lad his bride-servitor

mattōq, askē ōnā pīki-tun ad lām pēkānā-tōgāē marmi kis-hittōq.
became, then his girl-to that bride-servitor boy-with marriage made.

Lōn kis, tittōq.
House having-made, they-ate.

Free Translation

In a certain village an old woman had a maiden daughter, whose hand she would give to no suitor. A monkey came from a mountain to gain the girl's hand by serving for her. The old woman asked the monkey why he had come, and the monkey answered, 'Father's sister, if I could find anyone to give me his daughter as my wife after I have served him for her, I would stay with him and work for him.' The old woman reflected that she had no one to work for her, and determined to keep the monkey as a future husband for the girl. So she told him that if he would work for her, she would keep him. So she kept the monkey. The monkey then asked his future father-in-law to get an axe made for him to enable him to cut the trees for his *penda* cultivation. The old man ordered an axe from the blacksmith, and the smith duly made an axe complete with handle and gave it to the monkey. Then the monkey told his father-in-law that if he were given some cooked gruel to eat, he would go to clear the *penda* plot. The old woman told her daughter to make gruel for the monkey, so that he could go to work. So next morning the girl made gruel and gave it to the monkey, who ate it and went off to cut the forest for *penda* cultivation; but he did no cutting, but searched the mountain-side for achar and tendu fruits to eat, and then in the evening left the axe in the bark of a tree and came home. The girl hated the monkey; but when the old woman saw him return from work, she said to her daughter, 'Look, my girl, what good work this monkey son-in-law will do, and yet you dislike him!' But the girl kept quiet. Every day the monkey when he had had his gruel went off to work. One day his father-in-law said that he would go with him to see the *penda* cultivation, but the monkey suggested that he should wait till the morrow. The next day the monkey showed him the *penda* clearings that had been made by the villagers, and the old man, thinking he was looking at the monkey's work, was delighted, and went home and told his equally delighted wife.

When the villagers were going to burn the felled timber in the *penda* plots, the monkey took his gruel, and said that he was ready to go and burn his *penda* also, but while the villagers were busy burning theirs, the monkey was eating tendu and achar fruit. And when the villagers were sowing their kutki, the monkey said that he, too, was going to sow, and asked his future father-in-law to look out some seed for him. The old man found some seed and gave it to the monkey, but the monkey threw it away in the undergrowth, and came and told the old man that he had sown the seed. Then the old man said that he would go with the monkey to see the *penda* plot, and the monkey agreeing, they went off, the monkey leading, to see the sown field. The monkey again showed the old man the same plot which he had shown him before, on which the kutki had sprouted, and then they went back home.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

539

Next day the monkey told his father-in-law that he would have to go up to the *penda* field to scare away the birds; and thereafter every day after his gruel the monkey used to go off on the pretence of watching the crops; but when he reached the *penda* fields, he used to eat the kutki growing on the fields of the boys who were absent grazing the village cattle. The boys observed that some animal was eating their crops, and one day consulted together, and decided to leave a boy there to see what happened to the crops. Next day, therefore, a boy was left to guard the *penda*, and soon after he had been posted he saw the monkey come and start eating the kutki. The watchman told the other boys, and next day all combined to kill the monkey; they gave a little of its flesh to the old man also, and he ate it.

When evening came but the monkey did not come home, his father-in-law searched for him, and three or four days later learnt how the boys had killed him. In a rage he told the boys that he intended to report their action to the authorities. They were frightened and begged him not to do this, promising that one of them should come and serve him for his daughter's hand. Then the old man was satisfied. One of the boys came to serve him to win his daughter's hand, and ultimately he married the servitor to his daughter, and the boy and girl made a house and lived there together.

II. Catching Peacocks

Uṇḍ nāṭē-nagā mu'ittōr mu'ittā mattōq. Mu'ittōr ōnā pēndā-nagā
One village-in old-man old-woman were. Old-man his penda-field-in

kōh'lā biti-mattōq. Kōh'lā pāṇḍ'tā. Pāṇḍ'tā kōh'lātun mal tinjōr-
kutki sown-had. Kutki ripened. Ripened kutki peacocks eating-

mattā. Tān huṛsī mu'ittōr rākhā may'dē dināl pēndā-tagā
kept. Them seeing old-man watching-for daily penda-field-in

mantoq. Und diya mu'ittor-tun ḍanḍ pōr'tā; ōghu lōn handā parō-
was-staying. One day old-man-to fever arose; he home go could-

wātō. Askē ōnā mutī ittā, 'Nēnḍ mu'ittōr pēndā-tākī bāhu wāyōq?'
not. Then his wife said, 'To-day old-man penda from why not-come?'

Onā huṛ'lāsī mu'ittā pēndā-tākē hattā. Aṭkā hanj huṛtā mal
His seeing-for old-woman penda-towards went. There having-come saw pea-

kōh'lā tinjōr-mandē arā mu'ittōr kētul-nagā huñjas-mattōq. Askē
cocks kutki eating-were and old-man field-house-in sleeping-was. Then

ḍōkrī mu'ittōr-tun huṛsī kiltā. Askē mal mu'itta-ḍōkrī-
old-woman old-man seeing wept. Then peacocks old-woman

nagā wās vāāktōq bārī kētōq, 'Nimā hāāk-kīyā kilintā?' Ḍōkrī
near coming spoke and said, 'You what-for weep?' Old-woman

ittā, 'Ayō, māwā mu'ittōr-tun ḍanḍ paṛtā; handā parōr. Nimā mēnḍ
said, 'No, my old-man-to fever has-come; walk cannot. You also

aṭkā hanj huṛā.' Mal kētu-dē-lōpā huṛ'lāsī hattōq. Askē
there going see.' Peacocks field-house-inside to-see went. Then

ḍōkrā ittōq, 'Kētu-dā tāt kēh-aim.' Mal ittōq,
old-man said, 'Field-house-of mat-door shut.' Peacocks said,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

'Dŏkri, id mu'ittŏr bātā intŏq?' Dŏkri ittā, 'Āyŏ, idēn
'Old-woman, this old-man what says?' Old-woman said, 'No, him-to

nēh°nā ḍanḍ yē'itā, aur bāy° ātŏq.' Dŏkri kētu-pā tāṭ
severe fever has-come and alarm came.' Old-woman field-house-of mat-door

kēh-sitā. Payā ḍŏkrā tēdsā sabē mal-dun hawaq-tŏq. Payā mu'ittā
shut. Then old-man arose all peacocks killed. Then old-woman

mu'ittŏr mal-dun pa'la lōn wātŏq tittŏq.
old-man peacocks taking home came ate.

Free Translation

An old couple lived in a certain village. The kutki which the old man had sown in his *ponda* plot had ripened, and as he had seen peacocks eating the ripe crop he was living in his field to guard the crop. One day he was attacked by fever and could not go home. His wife, wondering why he had not come, went towards the *ponda* plot to look for him. When she reached the field she saw peacocks eating the crop and her husband lying in his field-house, and she wept at the sight. The peacocks came up and asked the old woman why she was weeping. She answered, 'Alas, my old man has fever and cannot walk; just go there and look at him.' So the peacocks went inside the field-house to see. Then the old man cried, 'Shut the mat-door of the field-house!' The peacocks asked the old woman what he had said, and she answered that he was in delirium from his fever. So saying, she shut the door of the field-house, and the old man sprang from his bed and killed all the peacocks. Then the old woman and he carried the peacocks home and ate them.

Three Songs from Orcha

533
539

(These are sung at weddings or at the Koqsar festival.)

I

Refrain: Alēy° rēlōy° rē rēlōy° rēlo,
Ālēy° rēlōy° rē rēlōy° rēlō!

Chorus: Pīnḍōkā kusiñtā, dīdā-lē, pāṇḍōkā kusiñtā!
(The racquet-tailed drongo is calling, my brothers!)

1. Bātāy° pāṭā ōntarā, layōrē, bāṭāy° pāṭā-yē!
(Some-kind-of song sing, lads, some-kind-of song!)
Chorus.

2. Pūnōm, layōr, pūnōm-rā, layōrē, pūnōm, layōrē, pūnōm-ē!
(We-know-not, lads, know not, lads, know not, lads, know not!)
Chorus.

3. Adrām āyŏ, badrām, layōrē, adrām āyŏ, badrām?
((If) thus not, how, lads, (if) thus not, how?)
Chorus.

4. Jāwā lēwā āyŏ-rā, layōr-ē, jāwā lēwā āyŏ-yō!
(Gruel without not, lads, gruel without not!)
Chorus.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

533
539

5. Bōtēl dāṛ°ngō jakmā-rā, layōr-ē, bōtēl dāṛ°ngō jakmā-yē !
(Bottle (of) wine intoxication, lads, etc.)
Chorus.

6. Māwāṅg huṛa-lē āyō-rā, layōr-ē, māwāṅg huṛa-lē āyō-rē !
(At-us look not, lads, etc.)
Chorus.

7. Ōmṭarā, layōr, ōmaṭā, layōr-ē, ōmṭarā, layōr, ōmaṭā !
(Sing, lads, sing, etc.)
Chorus.

8. Āyār, dādā, āyōrā, layōr-ē, āyār ō-ō-yē !
(Ayar, brothers, ayora, lads, ayaro o ye !)
Chorus.

Free Translation

Aleya, reloya re reloya relo !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling, brothers !
Sing us some kind of song, lads !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
We know no songs, lads, we know no songs !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
If we cannot sing thus, lads, how shall we sing ?
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Without food we cannot, lads, we cannot sing !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
If we drink we'll be merry, lads, merry !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Do not look at us, lads, do not look at us !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Sing, lads, keep singing, keep singing, lads, sing !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !
Ayār, brothers, āyōrā, oh lads eh ! āyār ō-ō-yē !
The racquet-tailed drongo is calling !

II

Kokorong ko-rong !

Refrain : Alēya rē-lō-ya rē-lō !
Chorus : Kōkōrēng kōrēng ! (meaningless).

1. Bāroq banē māyō !
(What for was-not !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
2. Wāṭarā, ilyōr, wāṭā !
(Come, lads, come !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
3. Idrā pāṭā manō !
(This-kind song is-not !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
4. Dūsar pāṭā ōmā !
(Another song sing !)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !
5. Pāṭār ōmwāl, ātēkē
(Song-singer is, then.)
Kōkōrēng kōrēng !

APPENDIXES

533
539

6. Wô wô weâtâške âyô !
(Wo, wo we saying are not !)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !
7. Wâyô-eâ, layôr, wâyô !
(Not-come, lads, not-come !)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !
8. Omarê, dâdâ, ômû.
(Sing, brother, sing.)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !
9. Kaštîn duralâ ôratû
(In-eyes dust has-fallen)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !
10. Ôsâr bhûmito âtêkê.
(Another's land, therefore.)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !
11. Bîroq banê mâyô !
(What-for was-not !)
Kôkôrêng kôrêng !

Free Translation

Aleya reloya relo
Kokoreng koreng !
Why are we not singing,
Kokoreng koreng !
Come, lads, come !
Kokoreng koreng !
This kind of song is no song.
Kokoreng koreng !
Sing a different song !
Kokoreng koreng !
If singers are here !
Kokoreng koreng.
Song out of time is useless,
Kokoreng koreng !
No one has come, lads,
Kokoreng koreng !
Sing, brothers, keep singing,
Kokoreng koreng !
Dust has fallen in our eyes,
Kokoreng koreng.
From singing in another's land.
Kokoreng koreng !
Why are we not singing ?
Kokoreng koreng !

III

(Sung by dancers at the Koqsar festival only.)

Refrain : Sôlly^{o} rê rê lôy^{o} rê rê lôyê, layôr, rê rê lô rê rê lôy^{o} !
Chorus : Kâkâr, dâdâ-lê, kâpârâ, layôr, kâpârâ layôr-â !
(Crow, brethren, night-jar, lads, night-jar, lads !)

1. Têkaa pâgâ guranjôrâ, layôr, gûranjôrâ, layôr-â !
(Above (?) rain is-thundering, lads, thundering, lads !)
Kâkâr, etc.
2. Âh^{o}ikâ âyô âyô-eâ, layôr, âyô-eâ, layôr-â !
(Thus not not, lads, not, lads !)
Kâkâr, etc.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

533
539

3. Adrām āyō, badūrā, layōr, badūrā, layōr-ē ?
((If) thus not, how, lads, how, lads ?)
Kākāṛ, etc.

4. Wō'aṭl-tagānē mātālarā, layōr, mātālarā, layōr-ē !
(Veranda-in Mata-is, lads, Mata-is, lads !)
Kākāṛ, etc.

5. Rāwaṛ-agānē pēn-ōrā, layōr, pēn-ōrā, layōr-ē !
(Shrine-in clan-god, lads, clan-god, lads.)
Kākāṛ, etc.

6. Uṭi-tagānē Tallōgāl, layōr, Tallōgāl, layōr-ē !
(Carrying-net-in Village-Mother, lads, Village-Mother, lads !)
Kākāṛ, etc.

Free Translation

Solaya re re loya, re re loya, lads O, re re lo, re re loya !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
The rain-clouds are thundering, lads, thundering on high !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
Do not sing thus though, nay, lads, no, nay, no, lads, do not sing thus !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
If thus we must sing not, lads, then how must we sing, lads ?
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
In her veranda is Mātā, lads, the Mātā goddess, lads O !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
In his shrine is the clan-god, lads, the clan-god, O lads !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !
In her net the Village Mother, lads, the Village Mother, lads !
O the crow, brothers, O the night-jar, lads, O the night-jar !

FOUR RIDDLES (*sesay*) FROM HIKUL VILLAGE

Q. Usṭā-nēdē gumchār bōṛē kōrintā ?
(Cow-dung) plastered (place)-on dove what crawls ?
What is the dove that struts on fresh cow-dung plaster ?
A. Oṛā. (A boat.)

Q. Rēkā- ichōr puṅgār, kauṛā- ichōr pēṛēm ?
(Leaf-hat as-big-as flower, cowry-shell as-small-as seed ?)
What is the seed as small as a cowry shell inside a flower as big as a leaf-hat ?
A. Bālō ; wad. (A spider in its web.)

Q. Hudilā pīlā mēṭā-tēn tochtōq ?
(Small child mountain wears-as-hat ?)
What is the child that wears a mountain on its head ?
A. Yēṛē. (A crab.)

Q. Ōnāgā nāṭēnā pōnāgāl mārē-tē mēṭj ?
(Any village-of green-pigeon feather-on egg ?)
In any village what is like an egg on the feather of a green pigeon ?
A. Nēl-Marrā. ((A fruit of) the *semla* tree.)

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

modern Hindu or missionary accretion is to be found in a study of the myths of origin which in many tribes have all the marks of antiquity. In these a Supreme Being is firmly established. He is not omnipotent, he is not omniscient, his character is ambiguous, his morals are uncertain and his language coarse. But he is exalted far above all others and he is the prime mover in the creative process as well as the goal of the human spirit after death. 776

My collection of Maria myths is incomplete, but the Bison-horn Maria story of Creation leaves no room to doubt the tribe's belief in a Supreme Deity. 776 773

There was a great rain and the world was drowned. But Gajabhimul put a brother and sister—their names were Kawachi and Kuharami—in a gourd. This gourd drifted to and fro until it ran aground on a great rock. Mahapurub sent a crow to search for men. The crow found the gourd, pecked it open and released the boy and girl who began to cry. Mahapurub told the crow to stop the noise, but it wanted the children to die so that it could feed on their bodies and it did nothing. Mahapurub sent an eagle, but it too did nothing. Then he sent a tiger, but it too did nothing. At last he sent a monkey. The monkey sat on a rock and asked the children what was the matter. The rock was so hot that it burnt its buttocks and it jumped on to a tree. 'We have nowhere to go,' said the children, 'and there is no food.' The monkey returned to Mahapurub and told him. 539

Mahapurub now sent a boar. 'Near the rock is a tortoise,' he said. 'It has made itself a home of mud and clay. Take off the mud and spread it on the rock.' 'But how am I to live without food?' asked the boar. 'These children will sow seed,' said Mahapurub. 'There will be a harvest on the rock, and you will be the first to eat it.' That is why the wild boar always ravages the crops before men can reap them.

The boar found the tortoise and rolled itself in the mud. It came to the rock and shook itself violently. The mud flew in all directions and there was the world again.

This story was recorded at Rewali and was repeated with small variants in other villages. But at Killepal, the Marias said that the children were put in the gourd by the gods Andalkosa, Patraj, Pirusi and Tuldokarj. It was Mahapurub who wanted to destroy the children and he himself tried to cut the gourd open and so let them drown. But the gods got hold of the gourd in time and threw it into the water and it drifted away out of Mahapurub's reach. If this is a Supreme Being, it is a singularly imperfect one. And 776 773

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

A Cultivation Song

241
539

A song sung to accompany the Korak Dahiya Karsana illustrates the various processes of cultivation and life in the fields.

Warjandoy pendoy rāmo rāmo!	In the Wendpendoy jungle is the hill Ramo!
Korak pehchi wāykom sāngo.	We will come to cut the tree branches, *sāngo.*
Miya wāy wāy pehchiorom sāngo	Before you came we had cut the branches.
Korak kāh wāykom sāngo	We will come to spread the branches in the field.
Miya wāy wāy kāhiorom sāngo	Before you came we had spread the branches.
Hurri tāsi wāykom sāngo	We will come to set fire to it with straw.
Miya wāy wāy hurri tāsiorom sāngo	Before you came we had set fire to it.
Lāting tata wāykom sāngo	We will come to bring the rake.
Miya wāy wāy lating tatorom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the rake.
Parka puki wāykom sāngo	We will come to plough the *parka* clearing.
Miya wāy wāy pukiorom sāngo	Before you came we had ploughed the clearing.
Goring witi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sow the mandia seed.
Miya wāy wāy witilom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the seed.
Hāmo witi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sow the *Hāmo* seed.
Miya wāy wāy witilom sāngo	Before you came we had brought the seed.
Goring kichi wāykom sāngo	We will come to pick the mandia crop.
Miya wāy wāy kichiorom sāngo	Before you came we had picked the crop.
Goring jāki wāykom sāngo	We will come to thrash the grain with a stick.
Miya wāy wāy jākiorom sāngo	Before you came we had thrashed the grain.
Goring kemi wāykom sāngo	We will come to sift the grain in a basket.
Miya wāy wāy kemiom sāngo	Before you came we had sifted the grain.
Goring taddi wāykom sāngo	We will come to gather the mandia grain.
Miya wāy wāy taddikiom sāngo	Before you came we had gathered the grain.
Goring widing wāykom sāngo	We will come to make a rope-bin for the grain.
Miya wāy wāy widikiom sāngo	Before you came we had stored the grain.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

241 *Dhuṭir jāki wāykom sāngo* We will come to press the grain into the bin.
539 *Miyu wāy uṇy jāhlorom sāngo.* Before you came we had pressed the grain.

III. The Muria's Year

221 It is very difficult to give any sort of general time-table, for events vary
196 in their incidence and in their order from place to place and from year to year. Everything depends on the orders of the Gaita and Siraha, and dreams, economic factors and 'inspirations' combine to disturb the course of events. However, the following table may be taken as giving a rough picture of a normal year:

January .. Bhimul Pandum, the festival of the rain-god. Pupul Korta Tindana and Pen Karsita, the New Eating Festival of pulses, also known as Jata Pandum. Chelik go from village to village dancing the Pus Kolang or Chherta. The people reap the til oil-seed.

February .. Kare Pandum, after which the people may cut grass, bamboos and may begin felling trees for their *dippa* and *parka* clearings. The chelik begin collecting wood and grass for the ghotul. The Marhai festivals, great semi-religious commercial fairs, begin now and continue in various places until April.

March .. Irpu Pandum, the festival of the mahua tree, Marka Pandum, the festival of the new mangoes, and Til Khani, the festival of oil-seed, are held about this time. The marriage season begins and continues until May. Boys and girls go out dancing the Chait and Mahua Dandar. The people are busy collecting mahua flowers, tendu leaves and wood.

April .. Vijja Pandum, the seed festival, preceded by a ceremonial hunt. Ceremonies to purify and protect the villages. People begin breaking myrabolams. Hot weather begins. Many marriages everywhere.

May .. Timber spread over *parka* clearings. Local ceremonies to ensure a good harvest and rainfall.

June .. Timber in clearings fired. Rains begin. Ploughing and sowing. Fencing of gardens and repairs to houses, thatching and protection against rain.

July .. Amawas or Hareli festival. Chelik make stilts.

August .. Heavy rain during the month. Tur Korta Tindana or Kurum Pandum, when the first milleta are eaten.

September Rains are clearing. At the end of the month is the Korta Pandum, the first eating of the new rice, cucumbers and gourds. On the day after this festival, the chelik break their stilts and pile them on the stone of Dito or Bhimul Pen.

October .. Cheru or Nuka Nordana Pandum, before which the new rice must not be washed. The Dassera festival attracts thousands to Jagdalpur and Bara Donger, and is celebrated in a few ghotul. Diwali comes a little later:

252 with wood and fired; pots are placed in rows upon them. The motiari husk and clean the rice, and make the leaf-cups and plates, but the boys do the actual cooking. When the rice is ready it is tipped out in a great pile on bamboo mats. A pig, which is killed by being beaten on the head with a rice husker, is roasted in the fire till its hair is burnt off; it is skinned and cleaned. Flesh, bones and skin are cut up into little squares of equal size—an important matter, for it is essential that everyone should receive exactly the same amount. These pieces are fried in mahua oil, and put into large earthen pots with rice-water, salt, haldi and chilli and boiled till ready. Fish is prepared in much the same way, except that usually something sour is added to flavour it. Fowls are cooked in leaf-cups. The intestines are squeezed out, and the whole chicken with head and feet is roasted with a little salt. Eggs are wrapped in leaves and baked in the fire. Mongoose flesh is roasted and spiced with dried mangoes. Crocodile is boiled.

264 At the ghotul feasts and marriages I have attended everyone sits round in a big circle, and the boys (sometimes assisted by a few motiari) serve the food. The bits of meat are carefully counted out into leaf-cups and distributed. Rice is served from baskets or winnowing-fans direct onto leaf-plates.

At home, the family sits round the pot of jawa, which is taken straight off the fire and placed in the middle of the floor. Each has a little chutney on a leaf in front of him and an empty leaf-cup. The mother dips a gourd into the pot and helps the little children; then each member of the family helps himself. There is no idea that men should eat before women or elders before the children.

262 Doctors say that the Muria's food lacks fat and protein and criticize them
146 for not taking more milk, ghee and vegetable. No doubt the Muria, like other people, would eat more of these things if they could get them. But there is no doubt that they do not like milk, and rarely take it themselves or give it to their children.

731 Famine is not common in Bastar, for the people can fall back on the almost limitless products of the forests. But it has been known, and a sombre song preserves its memory.

● 539

Nimāre wehe dāntona rawnāni	Vulture, whither away, vulture?
Dori bhumi dāntona dāda le	I am going towards the west, brother,
Bhumi dukār dukār roy dāda le	For the day of want has dawned.
Bhumi te dukār arit roy dāda le	The famine is over all the world
Hihāl huro bhaiso roy dāda le	Black, black are the buffaloes,
Sarpane bhaiso arit roy dāda le	And all of them have died, brother.
Podor pungār doyo roy dāda le	White as cotton flowers are the cows,
Sarpane doyo ariu roy dāda le	And all of them have fallen in summer.
Puhle dhelāt rawnāl roy dāda le	On the broken clod the vulture,
Wella marāte hawrāl roy dāda le	On the withered tree the crow,
Kawar woher inta roy dāda le	The crow is cawing, brother.
Raiyaha reyon hawrāl roy dāda le	It is ready to fly down.

VI. Honey

222 Honey was discovered by a Maria named Waddai who also gave his name to
539 the whole succession of Waddai diviners. 'Waddai went one day to a medium, with a gift of char nuts, seeking help for his sick son. On the way he met a monkey which had been outcasted for falling while jumping from a tree and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honey-comb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitka ondār* and the *lokti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognise four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mohu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dursata*); (*b*) *sattapuri mohu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nihiti mohu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1928), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'In a golden box bells are sounding; when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 450.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

524

Wori wori singār,
Bāni bāni pungār.
Rows and rows of decorations,
There are many kinds of flowers.
—A honeycomb.

Tutri bukāte bāri perek.
In a small hole is a small seed.
—*Lokti* bees.

Untie the she-buffalo and milk the peg.
—Getting honey from a hive.

A herd of cattle has one leader.
—The swarm and its queen.

Many flowers grow in the tank.
—A honeycomb.

Flower, flower, how it flowers!
What comes out of the flower?
—Bees.

I have recorded one song about bees, but I was unable to discover any games that illustrated the taking of a hive.

539

Song

The bees suck the kosra flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The bees suck the paddy flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.
The Manjhi says he'll give his daughter
To the boy who kills the bees.
An orphan chelik kills the bees,
He brings the hive and shows the Manjhi.
The Manjhi gives the boy his daughter.
The bees suck the mandia flower,
Search for the bees, Kotwar,
Send out the boys, Kotwar.

VII. Oil

Ann kare motai, tel kare chiknai, kapare kare barai. Food fattens, oil adorns, clothes dignify.—Muria saying

252 The Muria make many different kinds of oil; some for use in their carts, some for light, some for medicine, but most, of course, for food. The *gūrancyi* is extracted from mahua seed and is used mainly for cooking. So is the oil gained from the usual oil-seed crops, 'the slender trees that have a hundred babies', which are often raised in the *bāri* gardens. Seeds of the sarai tree are collected and make a useful oil. The fat of lizards and the grubs that live in the date-palm and the fat of cow, buffalo, goat, pig, cock, and several kinds of deer all yield oil which can be used for cooking and to mix with food. For lighting purposes and to oil the wheels of bullock-carts, oil made from the seed of the karanji, bandgul or kosom is used. Oil for anointing the bride and bridegroom in marriage and

[373 493]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Bennr, Danua Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sambhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered.

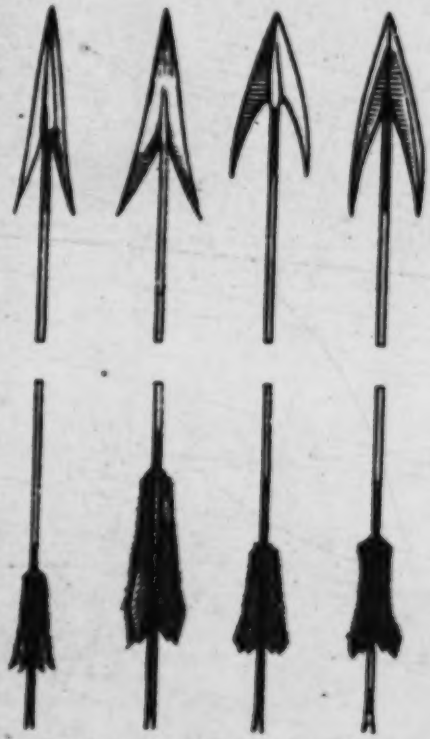


FIG. 10. Arrows and arrow-heads
Length 1' 5"

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chanjyagaon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection.

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul.

I

Chikkal mâlî kariya mâma shivi-
gir kâriyir shikâri shikâri!
Tupak sâja kiwa mâma.
Mâli gondî tupâk mâma.

Gojir kawar sawa mâma.

O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!
Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
The name of the gun is Maligondi, uncle shikari.
Make gunpowder with gum from the mode tree, uncle shikari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

539
224

Tumir mara jhâka mâma.
The machan is on the ebony tree, uncle shikari.

Jhâka sâje hinu mâma.
Make the machan there, uncle shikari.

Ghotiya kâya goli mâma.
Make bullets like ghotiya fruit, uncle shikari.

Jhâka udi dâkat mâma.
We will go and sit on the machan, uncle shikari.

Nâwa suda waihi bâncha.
You must come with me, nephew shikari.

Wâteh icho waihi bâncha.
If you are ready, come with me, nephew shikari.

Mâoku wâteh pahchhât bâncha.
When the sambhar comes we will shoot it, nephew shikari.

Hâlo mara mâri bâncha.
On the hill of sal trees, nephew shikari.

Ahay khojin oyhât bâncha.
We will go to search there, nephew shikari.

2

Kaindhe gulel dai kaindhe dori wo dai sona kaindhe gunel?
What is the *gulel* made of, what is the rope, mother?

Bânz he to gulel bâbu san sutri doriya bâbu.
The *gulel* is made of bamboo, and the rope of hemp, my son.

Kaindhe ghora dai kaindhe phata wo dai?
What is the horse made of, and what is the bridle, mother?

Banz he to ghora bâbu sut he to phata bâbu.
The horse is made of bamboo, the bridle of thread, my son.

Kaindhe dhuti dai kaindhe he gulla?
What is the basket made of, and what are the pellets, mother?

Bânz he to dhuti bâpu mâti he gulla.
The basket is made of bamboo, and the pellets of earth, my son.

Koni hât mem gulel dai koni hât mem gulla?
In which hand is the *gulel*, and in which the pellets, mother?

Deri hât mem gulel bâbu jewni hât mem gulla.
The *gulel* is in the left hand, the pellets in the right, my son.

3

Taina nâmar nâna re nân nâmar nân ho

Mâligondi tupak tun bor sâje hindur ho?
Who made the Maligondi gun?

Mâligondi tupak tun mistri sâje hindur.
The carpenter made the Maligondi gun.

Teka marra hata tun bor sâje hindur ho?
Who made the stock of teak?

Teka marra hata tun bar-hi sâje hindur.
The carpenter made the stock of teak.

Kobre hât bakre tun bor sâje hindur ho?
Who made the trigger of the gun?

Kobre hât bakre tun mistri sâje hindur.
The carpenter made the trigger of the gun.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

224
●539

Māligondi tupak tun ber payal ūndur ho?	Who holds the Maligondi gun?
Māligondi tupak tun singāl payal ūndur.	Singal holds the Maligondi gun.
Adu bādu patār tun singāl weli ūndur ho.	Singal took the gun to the jungle.
Ihla hur dulki patār singāl weli ūndur ho.	Singal went to hunt by a spring.
Ghotiya mara daram te bodāl kunjil mīla ho.	He found a bison asleep by a ghotiya tree.
Barbara kursi manji singāl udil ūndur ho.	Seeing it Singal prepared to fire.
Jirra barga tikri tun singāl mānde kindur ho.	Singal placed the support for his aim.
Saw sawa kursi manjil singāl dābe kindur ho	Singal fired the gun with care.
Ting tohli tohli lariyo bodāl mutil ūnd ho.	By that shot was the bison killed.
Ringri kāpa linga laya gorhā-wātil ānd ho.	Linga boy stood like a small brinjal ready to kill it.

4

Are tina nāmur nāna re nāna nāmur nāna na ho tina nāmur O nāna nāmur nāho, tina nāmur nāndho tina nāmur na. Hurre, hurre, hurre

Ho bhālu kato dera re ho kahān okar dera.	Where is the bear's home, where can it be?
Are bhālu kato dera re ho jhāpi khāle dera.	Under the bushes the bear has its home.
Achchha okar khāna pina, achchha okar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Are kodri kato dera re ho, kahān okar dera.	Where is the deer's home, where can it be?
Kodri ka dera re ho gudri upar dera.	On the low hills the deer has its home.
Achchha okar khāna pina, achchha okar dera.	It has lots to eat and drink, it has a lovely home.
Hurre, hurre, hurre.	

IX. Falconry

223 While cock-fighting is rare in the east and common to the west, hunting with a hawk is known all over eastern Kondagaon, but is rare among the Jhoria Muria and in the west.

Muria boys get the hawks when they are very young and train them carefully. They teach them to catch small chicks, keep mice for them in little bamboo cages and train them by withholding food and then rewarding them with morsels of frog and lizard. They 'hood' them by closing their eyes with feathers thrust through the lids. When mature the birds are able to catch quail, partridge, snipe and sparrows, though it is said that they are not able to kill a wood-pigeon.

A hawk is kept in the verandah of the house perched on a specially made pole round which an old bit of fishing-net is wrapped. It is tied by an ingenious

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

223 arrangement of strings attached to a wooden rod called the *pawda* which keeps them from tangling. This is illustrated in Fig. 11. When a boy is going to take the hawk to hunt, he wears a goatskin finger-glove to protect his hand from being scratched by the claws. He hangs round his neck a little bamboo fish-basket containing frogs and lizards. This is carefully closed with a cloth tied round the mouth. He goes with the hawk sitting either on his hand or on his head, and with his free hand he holds the bough of a tree to beat the undergrowth for birds. Generally two or three boys go out together and when they have started any game they release the hawk from the slip-knot by which it has been tied and throw it into the air with the right hand from behind the shoulder. The hawk flutters wildly for a moment and then darts for its prey. When it catches anything, it sits down perfectly still on the ground. The boys run after it and recover it without difficulty. On hunting days the hawk is kept hungry and is only rewarded after it has made a kill.

FIG. 11. Elaborate arrangement of strings and a wooden peg attached to the leg of a falcon, intended to prevent the strings from tangling
Length of upright rod 3½"

[524]

A riddle—'He makes a snare for others, but his own feet are caught'—refers to the hovering hawk which appears to have been caught in an invisible snare. There is a saying that an idle man who does no work yet always turns up punctually for food is like 'the vulture who finds it easy enough to eat a dead bullock and the hawk who can always catch a little bird'.

The following Ghotul Pata about Lingo's son, Netturgundi, throws an interesting light on traditional Muria falconry:[1]

539
223

The Song of Netturgundi

Who was that Raja? He was Netturgundi.
He had a hawk. He was wondering what to do.
He took the hawk to hunt; here and there he went.
The hawk sat on his head. He took his gold and silver stick.
He slung the fish-basket behind his back.
So, with his hawk on his head, the Raja went to hunt.

To the Field of the Frogs the Raja took the hawk.
There he hunted, there he got nothing.
He thought 'Now where shall I go?' and went to the Fallow Field.
'I will hunt there; some animals are grazing there.

[1] A hawk plays an important part in the Purdhan tale of Mara Kshattri. Its body was golden and it was fed on ghee and sweets. *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 70ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

539
223

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.'
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill.
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish that live in tanks and flooded fields. 226

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *kurangra*, *ndri* (or *bhui*), *bete* (or *khoksa*), *dundum*, *luwe* (or *turu*) and *bigum*. 825 821 614

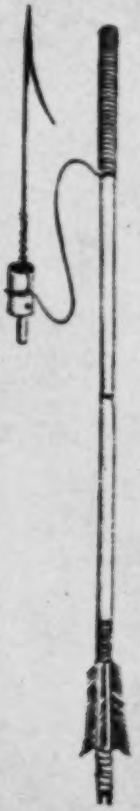
The gall-bladder of the *bigum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake-bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by filling it with the small kosra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient to drink. 278

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 227 226

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

226
227
[524]

worms and a peacock feather is attached to the line as a float. There are riddles about both hook and float. The hook is 'the bullock with the broken horn that drinks the water of twelve villages'; the float is represented as saying to the fish, 'You are eating secretly, but I'll tell brother what you're up to'.



Nets are also used. The *changori* is a net with a very fine mesh which takes at least a year to make. It is weighted with little balls of baked earth or iron and thrown into the water. Other nets are the *jhorli*, the *tāngra* and the *sarka*. These are pushed or dragged through the water, or stretched across the narrow part of a stream and the fish beaten into them.

The *mānder* is a net of hemp cord attached to a bamboo trap which is set in rapids and narrow streams. The *kurjār* is a rigid net. Ten bamboos joined at one end radiate outwards and a net is spread over their points. The middle of the net is raised by a cord attached to the top of the trap, and it is then thrust down into the water. The *pelna* is the net attached to a triangular bamboo frame which is pushed through the water, the fish being caught in the belly of the net simply by the pressure of the stream. The *chargod* (Plate XIX) is attached to bamboos tied together at the end of a long pole and is dipped into the water.

The *dundka* or *sondri* is a bamboo basket with a wide bottom tapering sharply towards the top with holes in the upper side. It is used (Plate XVIII) in conjunction with the *dandar* (also called *telai* and *bissar*), a long bamboo cylinder measuring about five and a half feet, about two feet wide at the large open end and gradually narrowing: inside is a spiral with bamboo points projecting inwards.[1] The small end is placed in the hole at the side of the *dundka*, and the water drives the fish down the trap and thus into the basket.

The *thāpa* (Halbi) or *utād* (Gondi) is a circular plunge-trap, three feet wide at the bottom. A Chherta song refers to it:

[539]

FIG. 12. Arrow with detachable head, used for shooting fish
Length of shaft 2ft

Thāpa re thāpa, māchh māriya thāpa,	O trap, trap, fish-killing trap,
Ye gāon cho leka manhe, bāte nawun chāpa.	Take the boys of this village and press them down.

The *chodiya* is a bamboo scoop two-and-a-half feet long leading into a pocket extending another one-and-a-half feet. It is placed in a field at some point where the water escapes, and catches crabs, frogs and little fish. 'In the middle of the field Gango's son is weeping *chir chir*.' This scoop may some-

[1] This trap resembles the Fenland eel-trap used in the Severn near Worcester. It is known as a grig in Fenland, and is made of split osiers. In Worcester the narrow end is called the starling. It has two cones of pointed sticks called inchins in Worcester and chains in Fenland. Chair is an old word for the narrow part of a river.—See *Man*, 1934, p. 178 and 1936, p. 179.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Tahsil	Population in 1941	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	Total
Kondagaon ..	111,428	3	1	1	..	6	11
Narayanpur ..	62,305	13	..	2	..	3	18
Jagdalpur ..	236,931	16	4	14	5	26	65
Dantewara ..	90,345	58	20	35	10	20	143
Bijapur ..	25,587	4	17	29	18	23	91

Such a table does not, of course, mean quite what it says. An increase in the number of cases detected may imply greater zeal on the part of the Excise and Police staff rather than an outbreak of illicit distillation. Moreover, as the Excise Officer writes to me, 'The number of cases detected represents only a small fraction of those actually occurring, especially in the south of the State'.

Yet even so, the contrast between the Muria of the north and the more civilized Muria of Jagdalpur and the Bison-horn Maria of Dantewara and Bijapur is striking. In the ghotul, the peace-loving Muria are taught to observe the laws.

On the other hand, the incidence of the consumption of mahua spirit in 1942 was greater in the Narayanpur Tahsil than anywhere in Bastar. There is only one way of calculating this, and that is on the basis of the licence fees, which are in turn based on the presumed out-turn of the still; such figures cannot be altogether reliable, but they give at least some indication, as the following table will show:

Tahsil	Population in 1941	Presumed out-turn in gallons	Consumption per 100 of the population in proof gallons
Kondagaon ..	111,428	36,137	32·43
Narayanpur ..	62,305	36,700	58·90
Jagdalpur ..	236,931	63,581	26·84
Dantewara ..	90,345	42,000	46·48
Bijapur ..	25,587	11,275	44·06
Sukma Zamindari	47,914	24,200	50·51

The Muria recognize the danger of drinking to excess, and indeed they have few drunkards. 'Liquor is dangerous, even a wise woman falls through drinking.' 'An out-still in the village—quarrels in the ghotul.' But it is irresistible. 'At first it tastes nasty, but afterwards you know it for the sweetest thing on earth. You would sell everything to get it.' There is a song about drunkenness:

Gond bond bhaisa pond
Lai kadri katin pond,
Kalär kalärin chuniya chor,
Ghar ghar mangai burga jor.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

273 This seems to mean, 'When drunk a Gond is like the hind-quarters of a buffalo, which you can cut with a knife but nothing happens. The Kalar and his
●539 wife are the thieves of the liquor-pots and so they have to beg from door to door for beef-soup.' The song reveals the usual scorn for and unpopularity of the Kalar.

276 The Muria do not approve of drugs. 'We will seduce the Kalar's daughter (mahua spirit), but we won't even look at the Raja's sister (opium).' They do not drink *gānja* or *bhāng*—'those are for the Hindus'—though Lingo is said to have distributed *gānja* to chelik and motiari in the ghotul he founded. Kotla, an old Muria of Kuntpadar, recalled what happened to him when he drank *gānja* as a chelik. 'Once as I was ploughing my field, I took off my cloth and put it under a tree, where a cow found and ate it. In the evening I felt cold and took a lot of *gānja* to warm myself. I got very drunk and shouted in the ghotul that I was going to die. That night I took several motiari and they were all angry with me. Next morning I felt very ashamed and have never taken *gānja* or even tobacco since.'

272 The Muria sometimes make what is called *surem*, a concoction of mahua flowers which have been boiled in water again and again, sometimes with slices of mango added. They occasionally tap the date palm and drink its sweet heavy juice. In the east and south of the ghotul country, they
273 occasionally make the landa rice-beer so beloved of the Bison-horn Maria.

Landa, which tastes like an imaginary mixture of dynamite and Sanatogen, is the most potent intoxicant in Bastar. It is also the most deceptive. It does not produce its effect at once. The thick tasty fluid slips down the throat, and the drinker deceives himself into thinking he is having a good meal; before he knows what has happened he is dangerously drunk, and he remains drunk for a long time. Not a few of the homicidal crimes of the Bison-horn Maria are due to or are at least occasioned by the drinking of landa.[1]

To the Hill Maria, landa is *polo*, or taboo, and the Jhoria and northern Muria under Maria influence do not make it. Its use appears to be confined to the Muria of the centre, east and south. It is made by mixing kosra or rice and mandia. The rice or kosra is first soaked in water, then dried and ground in an ordinary hand-mill. The resulting flour is mixed with hot water into a paste. A woman places a large earthenware pot full of boiling water on the fire and fixes an inverted conical basket (called the *jib*) over its mouth. She fills this with the paste and steams it for about a quarter of an hour and then puts it aside.

Previously the mandia grain has been soaked in water, set aside for two or three days till it has sprouted and then dried and ground. The woman pours some of it into a very large pot, puts the rice paste above it, and adds more mandia flour in the proportion of one part of mandia to two of rice or kosra. She then fills the pot up with cold water and puts it aside in a corner of the room. Here it stands for five or six days; when it is seen to be obviously fermenting and there is a bitter smell, they know it is ready.

The Muria do not use landa for ritual purposes; it is made by just those Muria who do not erect memorial menhirs to their dead—which is the time when the Bison-horn Maria chiefly use it ceremonially. The Muria take it at marriages and funerals; they give it to their labourers at seed-time or harvest; it is generally regarded as a sort of supplementary drink to be used when the supply of mahua spirit or salphi juice is insufficient.

[1] Elwin, *Maria Murder and Suicide*, pp. 135ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

614 There are other clans which I have not been able to fit into the scheme of
615 phratries—the Hurra clan with its clan-god Lingo Mudial at Semurgaon, the Karati with its *bhum* at Phunder, the Vetti which has the lizard as its totem and the Kodovetti which has the mongoose. These, of course, fit into the scheme of *akomāna* and *dādābhai* relationships of their own neighbourhood.

614
539

[411
531]

FIG. 15. Decorated Muria knife
Length 1' 5"

There are not many songs about the clans. I give one Jhoria Pata from Sirpuri.

Those who kindle fire in the field
are boys of the Uika clan.
How strong the Uika boys are!
Those who make a hearth with
brinjals from the Panara's
house are boys of the Maravi
clan.
Those who sit on a gate and call
it a horse are boys of the
Maravi clan.
How strong the Maravi
boys are!
Those who build a hearth of
pig's droppings are boys of the
Halami clan.
Those who sit to clean their
teeth with a twig are boys
of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami
boys are!
Those who blow the buffalo horn
are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who throw fine rice on
the road are boys of the
Halami clan.
How strong the Halami
boys are!

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CLANS

614 Many of the clans derive their origin from some historic journey in the course of which a river had to be crossed. Others have local and special reasons for their origin.

This legend of crossing a river is known throughout central India. Many Gond, Baiga and Agaria trace their clans and the attachment of those clans to certain totems from this.[1] In Muria mythology we are sometimes told

[1] Compare, for such tales in the Central Provinces alone, Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 61ff.; Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 243; C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919), Vol. II, pp. 8ff.; Elwin, *The Agaria*, p. 75; M. P. Buradkar, 'Totemism among the Gonds', *Man in India*, Vol. XX (1940), pp. 120 and 277*f.*; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 77 (the Gond emigrating from Phuljhar cross the Gondki river in flood).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

that this first great journey was the coming of Lingo with his brothers to the earth. This is the Alor version of the tale.

> At the beginning of the world, after Lingo and his brothers had put the earth in order, heaping up a mountain here and hollowing out a river there, the earth began to weep crying, 'There is no one to serve or worship me'. But Lingo and his brothers said, 'Do not distress yourself, we will go to find a priest for you'.
>
> Then Lingo took his brothers to Lanjhi and Dhamda. In Lanjhi Raja Naitam was living. He had seven sons and seven daughters. Lingo came to them and said, 'The earth is ready in the Middle World and we have come to take you there'. When they heard that, Raja Naitam and Raja Markam with their sons and daughters and their subjects, Sori, Kawachi, Poyami, Kuhrami and Kaudo, set out with Lingo and his brothers to the Middle World. Raja Naitam and Raja Markam had many possessions and they travelled more slowly, lagging behind the others.
>
> After a time they came to a great river. Lingo and his brothers said to themselves, 'We are gods and can cross without difficulty, but how are these human beings to get over?' On the bank tall grass was growing and Lingo and his brothers made it into a rope and stretched it across the river. The subjects clung to the rope and got across, but they were jealous of the two Rajas who were coming behind and, once they were safely on the far bank, they cut the rope. Then Raja Markam and Raja Naitam not knowing that the grass was cut began to cross, but under their weight the rope went down and they sank up to their necks in the middle of the river and stood there weeping. The *dandai* fish, who is the king of all the creatures that live in water, heard the sound and sent a tortoise to save them, and since then the Markami and Naitami honour the tortoise as their god.
>
> At last the whole party reached the Middle World. Raja Naitam and Raja Markam had brought their cattle with them, and they offered a black calf to Mother Earth and pleased her greatly. These are the old priests of the Earth. All the gods have come from Lanjhi-Dhamda except Danteshwari and Maoli, who came from Warangal.

There are endless versions of this tale. In Lanjora a member of the Naitami clan said that,

> At the beginning of the world a brother and sister on their way to a certain village came to a great river. The sister went ahead and reached the other side. Then a flood came down and the boy was left behind. Each wept on opposite sides of the stream. Then came a tortoise and asked the boy why he was weeping. When he told his story, it took him on its back and began to swim across. Half way across, the tortoise sank, but as the boy was drowning a dog came from the far bank where the sister was standing and swam out to him. He caught the dog's tail and was dragged to safety.

This story obviously attempts to explain how it is that the Naitami clan, which is named after the dog (*nai* is the Gondi word for dog) yet honours the tortoise as its totem. Many Naitami, however, have a special reverence for the dog as well.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

539
614

Another very common variation of the legend is that told by the Hirko clan:

> When the first twelve brothers came to Bastar from Warangal, they came to a great river and decided to have their midday meal before crossing. Six of the brothers said, 'The river may flood; let us eat our food quickly' and they mixed their rice with water, ate it and went ahead. The other six mixed ghee in the rice instead of water and it took a long time to cook. As they were waiting for it to be ready the river came down in flood and, unable to cross, they sat on the bank and wept. Then came a tortoise and asked them what was the matter. When they told their story, the tortoise said, 'Will you worship me and never eat my people if I take you over?' They swore to do so and the tortoise carried them across on its back, and ever since these six brothers honour it as Bara Pen. In Dongar, Bara Pen used to go from place to place in the form of a tortoise.

Other clans are connected with the bod fish.[1] Members of the Halami clan at Gorma described how,

> There was a great tank in the jungle and below it was a village. The people of that village thought that if the banks were to break they would all be drowned and they decided to make a channel to carry the water away in another direction. Hearing this Kana Pen came to the place and camped below the tank. 'I will break the bank,' he said to himself. By his magic he put all the Muria to sleep and then broke the banks and the water poured out. Kana Pen saved himself by clinging to the root of a tree, but as the water poured over him the bod fish came, angry and saying, 'I will eat one of the eyes of whoever has dried up my tank'. It caught Kana Pen and ate one of his eyes and since then Kana Pen has been one-eyed. Since that day we worship him and with him we worship the bod fish in order to stop it eating his other eye.

Another clan which in certain places honours the bod fish is the Sori. At Masora members of this clan had a slightly different version of the story. Here they regarded Kana Bod as a man.

> The people of the village went to a nearby river to make a bridge. They had iron spades, but Kana made a wooden one. When the others began to dig out the stones, Kana sat idly on the bank. The others got tired, but the bridge was not yet ready and they shouted to Kana, 'Now come and work yourself'. So he took his wooden spade and began to dig. As they watched him the others said to themselves, 'If we kill this man and throw him in the river, then the bridge will soon be ready'. When he heard them Kana jumped into the river and was carried away by the water. A great fish caught him and ate one eye. After that Kana Bod turned into a fish and we have worshipped him as a god.

The Sori clan is actually the tiger clan (*sori* means tiger in Gondi), but it is connected with bees and buffaloes as well as with tigers and bod fish. In

[1] The bod fish is regarded as specially sluggish in Chhattisgarh and is often compared to a drunken Kalar. See R. B. Hiralal, 'Why Kewat Women are Black', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LX (1931), p. 35.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

539 ●
614

Karikhodra, a member of this clan described how his ancestors were born from a tigress:

> Two children were born: one brother was a tiger, one was a human being. When the boy grew up, one day he was going to the fields with eleven other men. A tiger came by and asked each in turn, 'Who are you?' Each of them, knowing that the tiger would not kill its own child, said, 'I am Sori' and it spared them. When it came to the real Sori boy it was angry and said, 'You can't all be Sori' and ate him. Ever since we have been angry with the tiger that betrayed us, and when a tiger is killed we put an egg and a pice in its mouth.

In Sidhawand I recorded yet another story of the origin of the Sori clan.

> The twelve Sori brothers went to get honey in the forest. The tree where bees lived stood beside a stream and the shadow of the hive could be seen in the water. Eleven of the brothers seeing the shadow in the water tried to reach it, but they fell in and were drowned. The twelfth brother looked up and saw the hive; so he climbed the tree and got the honey. In this way the Sori clan came into being.

In Cheribera the Maravi clan trace their origin to an incident in Chingnar.

> In Chingnar a Marar dug a well but could not reach water. Presently a tortoise came out of the well and everyone said, 'It must be a god'. Then the tortoise came to the Marar in a dream saying, 'I am Bara Pen, I will give you water in your well and a son to your wife if you worship me'. The next day the Marar took a goat to offer to the tortoise but it refused the sacrifice saying, 'I must have a cow'. This the Marar refused to give. So the tortoise said, 'I will stay no more with you, I will go to the Muria'. The Muria gave the tortoise a cow and thus became Maravi (for Bara Pen came to them from the house of the Marar), but because the Marar offered a goat, the Maravi do not eat goat.

Other stories throw light on the way in which some clans possibly did originate—through dreams and the divisions of families as well as by migration. In Silati village, the Naitami told us that,

> Long ago an old Muria widow lived with her son. When the boy was old enough he was married, but the next day he died and they broke the girl's bangles. The girl and her mother-in-law were weeping bitterly, but at last the husband came to the girl in a dream saying, 'Worship me as Dulha Deo, and I will go on being your husband'. The next day she made offerings to Dulha Deo and from that time he used to come daily to her by night till a son was conceived and born. The elders of the village came to the girl and asked whose child it was. 'I have been to no one,' said the girl, 'It is the child of Dulha Deo.' They were all laughing at her when the dead boy came out of the house and they realised that it really was Dulha Deo who had given the child. So we Naitami call ourselves *rândlin sens* (born of a widow) and our women do not wear bangles.

From the same place I recorded a story explaining why the Naitami and the Poyami, though both having the tortoise as their totem and both being descended from the same parents, can yet intermarry in some villages:

> During a great famine, a Poyami was dying of hunger and went to a Naitami's house to beg for food. The Naitami said, 'There is no food

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

here, I can give you nothing'. But the Poyami said, 'At least keep my daughter to work in your house and give me a little food'. So the Naitami fed him and kept the daughter in payment. When the time came for redeeming the girl the Poyami had no money, so the Naitami kept the girl and married her. From that girl there was born a daughter who was Naitami and from her brother there was a son who was Poyami. These two married, for the girl was *dudh-bahini* to the boy.

III. Clan Rules

Every clan has its own distinctive regulations based often on some incident in the story of its origin, often, too, on something that has happened, probably really happened, to a member of the clan.

The first rule is, of course, the obvious one; that no one may marry within the clan or a member of a clan that is related as *dādibhai*. Marriages can only take place between clans that stand in the *akomāma* relationship to one another.

The second rule is that members of a clan must avoid injury to the totem animal, tree or plant, must not eat it, and must usually give it some special honour or worship. In many clans, when the totem animal dies, the members observe mourning just as they would if a human being of their own clan had died.

Thirdly, there are a number of special rules such as that forbidding the members of the Naitami clan to wear bangles.

Among the food rules, some are clear enough. None of the members of the Bakravans or Goat phratry may eat goat's meat. We have seen that there is an added reason for this among the Maravi because, in the story of their origin, the Marar from whose house the tortoise emigrated offered it a goat. When a goat dies the Maravi perform funerary rites for it; they will not even touch the water from which a goat has drunk. This rule is taken very seriously. Twenty years ago in Palari one Bhaira Maravi ate goat's flesh by mistake and died of it, his throat swelling and choking him. Raghunath Maravi also ate it by accident, but he sacrificed a pig to Mati Pen and a buffalo to Bara Pen and was saved, though his brother died. In Kondagaon a man of the Partabi sept ate a goat and was very ill. He was excommunicated and only readmitted to the tribe after paying a heavy fine.

The members of the Kachhimvans or Tortoise phratry avoid eating the tortoise and worship it. The Naitami clan in addition to honouring the tortoise revere the dog, which they regard as their elder brother. Members of the Sori or Tiger phratry, however, have a buffalo totem, since members of the clan consider that they were betrayed by the tiger who ate the original member of their clan. But they still refuse to kill a tiger, and when one is killed they perform funerary rites for it.

Members of the Nagvans or Serpent phratry are supposed to be immune to the bite of the cobra, but some of the members of this phratry also honour other animals. For example, the Karanga has the wild buffalo as its totem and the Nei Nuroti has the dog.

Members of the Usendi clan which, being a Hill Maria clan, does not fit easily into any of the Muria phratries, do not eat the *usi* bird. The Kando sept has to avoid the horse: its members may not ride a horse or touch it. If a horse is tied in front of a Kando house, it goes mad or dies. The Komra sept never cut down a kassi tree, nor do they eat its leaves as vegetables. They must not cook roti with oil, and at the New Eating ceremonies they

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

304 There are not generally any taboos on a girl during the day that she is tattooed, but in Kokori I found that a girl was not allowed to go to the
522 ghotul the following night. This is probably a practical rule made because the girl is likely to be in some pain on that day. But when a girl does return to the ghotul after her tattooing the boys laugh at her and make the old joke about *godan* and *chodan*. 'If you could bear the pricks of *godan* (tattooing) surely you won't be afraid of the pricks of *chodan* (intercourse).' The girl naturally says that she cannot bear either. Then her boy may say, 'Look, there is pain when one is being tattooed, but in intercourse there is nothing but fun', and the girl replies, 'Well, if a mountain were to fall on me I would die, but if you fall on me I suppose I shall go on living, so you had better do what you want'. This conversation was recorded at Padbera.

314 There are a few songs about tattooing. One is in the nature of a prayer to cool the pain of the marks.

539 *Arji binthi mān hamāra.* — Listen to our prayer.
Us dinhi bachan tumāra. — Yours is the promise we made that day.
Sujiki jhār uthāra. — Let the burning of the needles cease.

Two other songs are sung during the 'tattooing' of the *kalsa*-pot during a wedding. The first has a refrain continually repeated, *Main wāna godenda āya*, 'Mother, I want to be tattooed'.

1

God jāle godenda muni. — If you wish, you may be, daughter.
Kon rājcho gogin numi? — What land has the Gogin come from, daughter?
Dongarcho gogin āya. — The Gogin is from Dongar, mother.
Duār harhāle rale āya, — I was sweeping the yard,
Jabre wasala āya — She forced me to sit down.
Main nahin bol le āya. — I said I wouldn't, mother.
Kitro kitro mola ve numi? — How much did you pay her, daughter?
Nilo āgar dugūni wo āya. — Double the usual sum, mother.

2

Aga bagādāng dumki dai? — Where do the tattooers come from?
Raigarh da dumking dai. — From Raigarh they come.
Aga baga wātāng dai? — Why have they come here?
Singār hoti wātāng dai. — They have come to tattoo you.
Singār hoti punong dai. — They don't know how to tattoo.
Danda mola kintāng dai? — What is their charge for tattooing the arm?
Huj tāni punong dai. — They don't know how to use the needles.
Mān mola hewom dai. — We won't pay their wages.
Mān hoti hewāk dai, — If they would let us do it,
Mān singār hotorom dai. — We would tattoo ourselves.[1]

[1] The Bison-horn Maria regard tattooing as a comparatively modern innovation, intended mainly as a means of attraction. The work is still done chiefly by the Maria themselves: they make needles of thorns and the colour is made by mixing the ash of pothar bark, date palm or myrabolams with mahua oil. Lamp-black is also used.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

841 In Chandabera the Muria described how once when a man had touched a menstruating woman the Gaita heated gold and touched his forehead, tongue and shoulders, sprinkled him with rice-water and water in which gold had been [628] dipped, made him drink it in the name of the Earth Mother who had been insulted, and imposed upon him a heavy fine.

This is the same penalty as that extracted from a murderer on return from jail. It does not necessarily mean that the Muria regard the two offences as morally equal, but it does suggest that they regard them as equally dangerous in the supernatural field.

A woman's husband also is subject to the strictest rules. During his wife's period, he must not dig the ground, visit his fields, either to sow or reap, thatch the roof, go to the threshing floor, touch the grain-bins in the house, or visit the village shrines. If he visits his threshing floor the quantity of his grain is reduced by half. But he may go to the ghotul and sleep there, though no one will take tobacco from his hands. He is allowed to fetch water and cook; [522] indeed he generally has to do this work when his wife is barred from it, and many are the ribald jests that greet a young husband caught carrying pots from the well.

841 If he is a priest, he cannot conduct any religious ceremony during his wife's period, and festivals often have to be postponed on this account. A curious ●539 story from Korenda illustrates the special difficulties that may trouble a polygamous Gaita.

> At the beginning of the world, there was no god of the Wadder clansmen, though they were numerous enough, while on the other hand there was a god of the Partabi though there was only one solitary male member of the clan. He was the Gaita and he had seven wives. Since one or other of his wives was in her period all the month round, he was never able to perform his priestly duties properly. They were due to eat the new rice on Monday: on Sunday night his eldest wife began her period. They postponed the festival till Friday: but no sooner had the eldest wife bathed on Wednesday than the youngest began on Thursday. And so on, he could never keep the festival, till Dokara Deo began to trouble the Gaita and he gave both his gods, Budha Deo and Dokara Deo, to the Wadder clan.

841 How do these taboos affect the ghotul? The great majority of Muria girls experience the crisis of the menarche while they are still motiari. Only in a few villages like Malakot do the people try to get girls married before maturity. Even where they are married, the little wives may sleep in the ghotul till they are mature. At her first period, a girl-wife gives *jori-darango* or a gift of liquor to the boys and girls 'to show her companionship with them is ended'.

The ghotul members take a great interest in the menarche. Everybody 841 knows all about it at once and there is a lot of joking and laughter. 'Our new pot is broken, where can we go and clean it?' 'She has trodden on dirty 522 leaves.' 'The embankment of the field is leaking.' When the chelik see the girl sitting plaintive and embarrassed behind her house or in the segregated hut they call to her, 'Have you got a baby, or what is the matter with you? Which is it, a girl or a boy?'

841 I describe elsewhere the special precautions that are taken at the menarche to ensure freedom from conception. A girl must be careful not to throw away her cups and plates for if a witch can get hold of them, she can cause her a great deal of trouble. She should, on this occasion, take these vessels and the ash in which she has cleaned her pots to the river for the Yer Kanyang or

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Nilwa lewāl wāter wani.
Halay dahi jhaday da!
Jora jāngh la'nichai lawray da.
Chilhla re ban ke bendra.
Kohom de re ghar ke bilai
Mahāra dhare jora bichchu.

Re re loyo rela re re la!

We have come to take you, girl.
Let us shake her, let us swing her!
Extend both your legs.
The forest monkey bites.
The household cat scratches.
In the Mahara's house, there is a pair of scorpions.
Re re loyo re re la!

584
539

II. The Evidence of the Songs

The importance of the betrothal ceremony is shown by the place it holds in the long narrative songs sung in the ghotul or at a funeral. These songs are valuable as revealing in the most authentic manner what the Muria themselves regard as important; they are in fact documentaries in verse. 584 533

I quote here two of these songs, both of which give an interesting account of the course of Muria life. The first is a song used when a menhir is erected. It was sung by Dorga Muria of Dugabangal, a village at the foot of the Abujhmar Hills. In the second song, a Ghotul Pata from Nayanar, is another vivid description of the betrothal. Both in these songs and similar narrative poems given elsewhere in this book, the importance of the ceremony is clearly emphasized.

The Fate of Nirabosi Usendi

584
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In this island of the world lived Kamragatti of the Dhurwa clan.
He had a daughter.
There was a boy, too, son of Nirabosi of the Usendi clan.
Nirabosi Usendi went to Kamragatti Dhurwa to betroth his son.
He himself went ahead and the brother-clansmen behind.
The Dhurwa asked them, 'Why have you come?'
'You have a daughter, we have come for her.'
'I have a daughter, I have not given her to anyone.'
Thus spoke Kamragatti to Nirabosi of the Usendi clan.
Seeing the bottle of liquor, Kamragatti desired it.
'You are related to me of old, I will give you my daughter.'

The daughter was inside and heard their talk.
She said, 'Many men came for my betrothal, but he did not give me to them.
Today they came and he has given me.'
Thinking thus she was very pleased.
The men drank the liquor and so made an end.
Old man Kamragatti was thinking; he thought, 'I too will give them liquor'.
Amasetiya Kalar and Hiramoti Kalarin had a still.
He went there to fetch liquor.
His daughter came out of the house.
The Usendi asked her, 'Where are you going?'
'I am not going anywhere, I am only coming out of the house.'
'O daughter-in-law, you are so big—why are you not going to someone?
O daughter-in-law, we have come today for your betrothal and you are going out.'
'Men came before for my betrothal, but my father refused to give me.
That is why I am living here and do not go to anyone.'

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

584 'Hear my word, O daughter-in-law, I have a son, come for him.
Come to the Saturday bazaar, I will send my son there.'
539 The Usendi said thus and the daughter-in-law was ready to go to the bazaar.

The old man Kamragatti brought liquor.
'I have already taken your liquor, now take mine',
So saying they sat and drank together.
They finished the liquor and were ready for food.
They made chicken curry and prepared fine rice.
They finished the food and got up to go.
Usendi said, 'O samdhi, now we must go'.
'It is no use coming once, you must come again;
'My daughter is young; we will drink a lot of liquor.'
Doing Johar to his samdhi Usendi said, 'I will come again'.

Usendi went to his house and told his son, the Garhbangal boy,
'We went for your betrothal and everything is well arranged,
O son, go to the Saturday bazaar and there the girl will come to meet you.'
When his father said this, the boy was silent from shyness.
This Garhbangal boy prepared to go to the bazaar.

Kamragatti's daughter was called Nerum Taro.
As she went round the bazaar, she met the boy.
They were of one face, like brother and sister.
She asked him, 'Where are you living?'
And he replied, 'Where are you living?
I am living in such and such a village, and I am a Usendi boy'.
Hearing this, she told him,
'We have already talked with your father and it is of you we talked'.
'Yes, I am that boy; come girl, come home with me.'
When the Garhbangal boy said this, the girl was ready to go.
The boy went ahead and the girl followed him.
As they went they passed a jungle on the way.
They went into the thicket beneath the shade of a mango tree.
As they rested, the boy said, 'Don't go back to your father's house'.
'I won't go, brother, how can I leave you?'
The Garhbangal boy was very pleased.
He held her arm as though it were a sweet root;
Her bosom was a banyan leaf on which lay two fruits;
He held the breasts and she remained quiet.
Her thighs were stalks of a plantain tree.
He spread them out and did as he desired.

They got up from there and went to the house;
The path was a jackal's bush, the road was a rat's tail.
Talking to one another, they reached the house.
As they came along the road, the sun set.
Garhbangal had a separate house to sleep in;
They reached the house in the dark and lit a lamp;
There was a cot there and they sat upon it.
They were young, they slept together.
As they lay and sat, they did as they desired.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

584
539

The mother was looking out to see why her son did not return,
She went to ask the folk in the bazaar;
The bazaar-folk said that he had been talking to a girl.
She came home and told her husband saying, 'He has been talking to a girl'.
'I had already told him, that's why I sent him there.'
The Usendi told his wife and she was content.
There was a separate sleeping-place for the Garhbangal boy;
She went there and saw them talking to one another.
Seeing this, she returned and told her husband.
The wife of Nirabosi Usendi said,
'There are two there and they are talking to each other'.
Then they both went there to look.
As he went, the Usendi called, 'Have you come back, O boy?'
When they knew someone was coming, they sat separately.
'O daughter-in-law, you also have come home.'

They took them both into the house.
The old woman lit a lamp to put the tika;
She put tika on the girl and kissed her.
Nirabosi Usendi, holding his stick, went to call the villagers,
'Come brothers, my son has brought a girl;
Let us discuss her, whether she will remain or no.'
So saying the old man brought them all.
'She has come as a *haiwark* girl;
Let us marry her at once.'
All night the marriage ceremony continued until dawn.
The boys gathered holding their drums,
And the girls with their cymbals in their hands.
At dawn they finished the marriage and performed the Lagir,
And the boys danced the Lagir dance.

The old man Kamragatti heard the noise of the dance.
He said to himself, 'Where is my daughter? I must have a marriage for her like that'.
They finished the marriage and finished the tika also.
All day they ate and drank till evening, and the boys were thinking,
'Let us take the bride and bridegroom and put them in their house'.
They took the bride and bridegroom and shut the door;
They took a bottle of liquor and stole a cock;
Boys and girls ate it together.

Old man Kamragatti said, 'Who has carried off my daughter?'
He was grinding his teeth as though his mouth was full of pulse.
When he learnt that Nirabosi Usendi had taken his daughter,
He sent an arrow saying, 'Let Nirabosi Usendi die'.
He sent an arrow of fire and snapped his fingers.

Nirabosi Usendi and his wife died;
Garhbangal, the boy, was weeping *sirk, sirk*.
The whole village gathered there;
The boy went for the samdhi and they all came;
The brother-clans and samdhi-clans gathered.
The samdhi laughing beat the drum;
They buried them both and made a tomb.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

All the clansmen went away.
The Garhbangal boy told them,
'Come on Wednesday, and on that day we will do the *gatgang* ceremony.
On that day we will put a stone or pole'.
So they did Johar and went away.

The cock-people gave cocks and the goat-people gave goats;
And the clansmen made ready goat and pig.
On that day all the samdhi came.
The dead man's soul was living in a saja leaf,
The samdhi cooked the food to give to the dead man.
After cooking it they carried some of the food to the cross-roads,
They called the soul to eat it;.
They offered the *jāwa* and *gāto* in the name of the dead man;
The boys and girls danced with the dhol drums.
They cut a saja tree as a post and placed it in the ground.
The soul came there and that is the house of the dead.

The samdhi went to bring a stone;
They went to the Hill of Panthers for a stone;
Some took a cot and some took poles to carry it.
The samdhi brought the stone;
They brought it to the place where they had put the pillar.
The samdhi saw the place and said, 'This is a good spot'.
So thinking they dug a hole;
They dug two holes with the digging-stick;
There they put the stone of the dead.
From the saja tree the dead man came to the stone;
They put haldi and oil on the stone; they put tika on it.

Those who had cowries gave cowries; those who had money gave money;
Those who had rupees gave rupees; those who had dishes gave dishes;
Those who had pots gave pots; those who had cloth gave cloth.
All these things the samdhi took away.
There they finished the work of the stone of death.
'Go, samdhi, go, let us eat in the house.'
Then came from the dead man's house
All old men and women and chelik and motiari also,
They gave their wages to the chelik of several villages.
The boys went away and they fed the samdhi with beef and rice.
For putting a stone for a dead man, this much only.
The dead man's bazaar is not a small bazaar;
On a Saturday, on that day was the bazaar.
There was a king of the dead, he was a great man;
That Raja made ready to go to the bazaar;
His Rani also was ready to go to the bazaar.

Ghotul Pata: The Marriage of Phulsundar Raja

There were seven wealthy brothers,
They had aged parents.
Six of the brothers went to plough,
The youngest stayed at home doing nothing.
He said to his brothers, 'Go and find wives'.
How shall we go without knowing where to go?'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

'Take a bottle of liquor and go for the betrothal anywhere.'
They reached a girl's house.
They gave Johar to the father-in-law,
They gave Johar also to the mother-in-law.
Father-in-law asked, 'Why have you come?'
'There is a flower; for that we have brought liquor.'
'We have a flower, but we have already drunk liquor for another.
Take away your liquor, for we will not drink it.'

For their betrothal they had to go elsewhere.
They saw a girl, they gave Johar to her father.
They gave Johar to her mother.
'Where are you going with that bottle of liquor?'
'We have come for the betrothal of your daughter.'
'I have no daughter; take away your liquor.'

As they searched for girls on their way they reached a house.
They came to a widow's house.
There was a girl there.
'Why have you come with a bottle of liquor?'
'You have a daughter; we have come for her.'
'She is my only child; I will not give her to you.
She is to me both daughter and son.'

Leaving that house, the boys went on their way.
They said, 'How are we to find girls for wives?'
There were daughters of Bhagavan;
There were seven sisters and none were betrothed.
The boys went to Bhagavan and gave him Johar.
Bhagavan asked them, 'Why have you come?'
'You have a daughter; we have come for her betrothal.'
'It is true I have a daughter, but we have already drunk liquor for her.'
So said Bhagavan and the boys made ready to depart.

But as they were going, the youngest daughter said,
'O sisters, hear my word.
A year has passed, but my father has not drunk liquor for me.'
The small girl said to her father,
'We are all mature; why don't you accept the liquor?'
Her father said, 'There is no one who has come for your betrothal; how then can I give you?'
The small girl went to the house where the young men were,
And said, 'Come to my house for my betrothal'.

Father-in-law said, 'There is no mate; why have you come?'
Bhagavan said, 'There is no mate, O daughters'.
The small girl told her sisters, 'There is no mate for us.
What shall we do. There is the Baidar.
Let us ask him about our mates.
Birds and ants combine in pairs, and why not we?
Let us go to the Baidar, for he keeps the accounts of all'.

They then asked the Baidar, 'Are there mates for us or no?'
Bringing his books the Baidar came out.
He brought a book large as a village boundary.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

He read his book about birth and mating,
He sat and looked at his books.
Then said he, 'It is written here.
Reading my books I forgot.
Morning and evening I have read my books
For twelve years and thirteen ages,
All read but none can understand.
Sitting, sitting, I have become hunchbacked'.

At that time the small girl saw the book and laughed.
She tied up that book in her waist-cloth,
She told her sisters, 'Let us go.
Let the papers be; but let us go to the house'.
The small girl took Baidar's papers in her cloth.
Her elder sisters asked her, 'What are you taking in your cloth?
O sister, let us know what it is'.

They gathered round and read the paper.
'It is for our mating and says what should be done.
We cannot win mates unless we go to the Middle World.'
Down to the Middle World they climbed by a silken thread and went towards the east.
They came to a village. 'Where are you, brothers? See, we have come.'
'I am the watcher of my house, I always live at home.'
'O brother, hear my word.'
'What is it? Let me know.'
'Keep us with you, so we will remain.'
'I do not know what to answer; my elder brothers know.
Wait a little till they return home.'

Soon the brothers came and the girls said, 'Brothers, brothers!'
'What is the matter? Let us know.'
'No, it is nothing. Only keep us with you, brothers.'
'All of you may live here if you like.'
The small girl said, 'Let us be divided pair by pair.
The eldest sister for the eldest brother,
The middle sisters for the middle brothers.
And I will live with the youngest brother'.

All then were paired with each other.
They gave a granary-full of rice to be husked;
Sonni and Dami husked the rice.
The villagers were called to fetch the liquor.
Twelve outstills of *phuli* and thirteen outstills of *rasi*.
They went to a Chitkul Mitkul Kalarin, beautiful and sweet.
They asked for liquor from that Kalarin,
Twelve outstills of *phuli* and thirteen outstills of *rasi*.
The Chitkul Mitkul Kalarin measured out the liquor.
The liquor was brought and the marriage was performed.
The marriage was finished and they were yoked together.

Living, living, the eldest brother's wife conceived.
Day by day the belly grew; it was made by Bhagavan.
She gave birth to a boy and the Chhati ceremony was performed.
For that ceremony they husked a granary-full of rice.
'Go and bring leaves and fuel for the Chhati ceremony.'

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

587 Five went to the hill for leaves and fuel.
The small girl was lazy, she was sleeping on the road.
539 'O girl, pick the leaves and take them home.'
At that she went away and slept on the rock.
'I am not feeling well, sister, I feel very bad.'
'Why are you feeling ill? What disease have you got?'
'Come here, girl, and lie down and listen:
Whether it be true or false, there is the beating of a drum.'
'No, let us go home, it is for our father's funeral.'
So they went home and told the eldest sister,
'You remain here, we will go for our father's funeral'.

'I too will come with you, O sisters.'
'No, do not come, see how small [1] is your baby.'
'No, I must come, or they'll say, Look the eldest daughter hasn't come.'
She took the baby and went along with them.
'Let us not take the child, let us leave him with the cattle.'
So thinking, they left him with the cattle.

They went on to the funeral.
The baby got up and followed them.
They turned round and said, 'O girl, your baby is coming'.
So they took him with them.
They reached the house and did Johar to everyone.
All wept and they finished the rites of the dead.

The daughter of Gharabundi was Phulsundri Rani.
'O mother, betroth this girl for me.'
'No, son, her betrothal has already been arranged.
They have betrothed her to Oriyal Jhoriyal.'
So he went to his little mother and asked her to arrange his engagement with this girl.
She winked at the boy to come to her.
'Put on some bangles and wear a cloth.'
She has married Raja Phulsundor.
The marriage is done, the liquor is drunk.
They did a Raja-subject marriage [2] hastily.
The Raja caught the Rani's finger and made her sleep inside the house.
He stayed seven days in that village.
The village potter brought his pot to boil the clothes.
In that pot they boiled the clothes and took them to the river.
They threw away the haldi-stained clothes.
But they washed the new clothes and took them out and went.
After bathing they returned to the house.

Both went riding on a horse.
So Phulsundor Raja brought her home.
Reaching home they lived and ate.
Gharabundi went to Oriyal Jhoriyal.
'Phulsundor Raja stole my daughter.'
They searched for them and held a panch.
The panch decided and took the bride-price.

[1] *Yotna*, the word means to hold a little baby with the arm against the breast. The whole line runs in the original—'Niya wāyma kal bāba to yotna āyam gil gīla ātar'.
[2] A Raja-praja marriage is one performed hastily, within the limits of a single night and day.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 of his daughter to a Poyami boy from Ritkonar. On 3 March 1941, therefore, I made my camp in the village, and was greeted with great affection.

Preparations for the Marriage

585 533 For a whole week before the marriage, there had been energetic preparations both in the ghotul and the home. In the ghotul the chelik and motiari gathered round the bride and sang songs about her future joys and sorrows. So important is this training of the bride that even where the girls do not normally sleep in the ghotul, the rule is relaxed for these few days.

The songs describe the joys of ghotul life and the girl's stern and sorrowful experiences under a stepmother's rule. Here is a fairly lengthy song on this familiar theme. After each line the refrain *Rerela rerela rela rerela* is repeated several times. Each line ends with the exclamation *Roy halo, O sister!* and is itself repeated twice.

Song

Rerela rerela rela rerela

585 ● 539

Niya ra mandāna loni roy halo,
Loni gājur hindu roy halo,
Loni re hinja podār roy halo.
Niya re nāru gali roy halo,
Koliyāl tohār harri halo,
Bera re arrān gāti roy halo,
Dāwāng kaide heti roy halo,
Tindng kaide kesur roy halo,
Ghotu de keya kandi roy halo,
Jaliyāl mal lekha roy halo.
Amha na miyār indur roy halo.

This used to be your home,
How clamorous your talk here,
But now the house is silent.
Yours was the village path,
The path was like a fox's tail,
You used to go at sunset,
In your left hand a winnowing-fan,
In your right hand a broom,
You went to clean the ghotul,
Like a peacock strutting,
We said, 'There goes so-and-so's daughter'.

Ghotu de gājur hindu roy halo,
Kile re koru racha roy halo,
Niya ra jor tor layor roy halo,
Jodire ondoy kiti roy halo,
Sangi re jor tor layor roy halo,
Sangi re tasi dāki roy halo,

In the ghotul was a lot of noise,
The court was long and broad,
You had a boy lover,
But you are leaving him lonely,
You had a boy lover,
You are going away leaving him behind,

Dinda re rāj le mandi roy halo,

You were living in the kingdom of the unmarried,

Adere rājo puto roy halo,
Budo re kabār punwin roy halo,

You will never enter it again,
You don't know what toil there is ahead,

Sagāre sidun punwin roy halo,

You don't know what relatives can be like,

Haton ne wilton ne punwin roy halo,

You don't know what visitors will come,

Kosare koytuna punwin roy halo,

You don't know what officials will come,

Idahe tudi wājur roy halo,
Idahe kara pundahi roy halo.

But soon you will know it all,
Soon you will discover what married life is like.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Rerela rerela rela rerela

They remind the motiari of her former lovers:

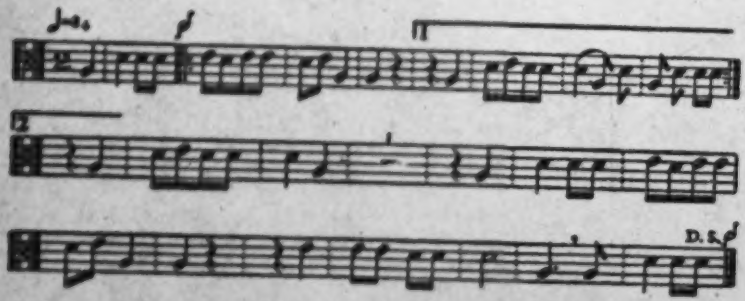
585
539

Niya jorta layor halo adere,	He was your yoke-fellow,
Kotal jori layor halo adere,	He was your lover,
Ore layor hunjdi halo adere,	You used to sleep with him,
Narha dhuinga talkindi halo adere,	At night he craved tobacco,[1]
Dhuinga hile indur halo adere.	You said you had none.
Adere dhuinga ãyo halo adere.	But that was not his real desire.
Hewon injor wilindi halo adere.	You denied him and tried to run away.
Layon tasi dãhi halo adere.	But now forever you are leaving him.

They also remind the bridegroom (if he is in the same ghotul) of what he too is going to lose.

How good it would have been had the Raja stayed, O Rani!
He would have been lord of this kingdom;
We would have served him as his servants;
We would have brought our ploughs for his field;
We would have carried his loads without charge.
We would have been given rice as our wages.
We would have carried home his bundles of rice.
We would have brought them from the fields, lifting up our loads.
We would have taken them to the Raja, and he would have paid us our wages, O Rani!

This song is specially appropriate to one of the leaders of the ghotul: other songs have a more general application.



[533]

Dindorõjo jorõjo nowa.	The kingdom of the free, lad.
Ido rõjo pain nowa.	You'll never see it more, lad.
Niya welywa ghotul nowa.	You came to the ghotul, lad.
Parsadhero ghotul nowa.	Fair as bison-horns, lad.
Ida ghotul do wandir nowa.	You used to come here always, lad.
Dõna haido gihi nowa.	A sleeping-mat in the left hand, lad.
Tina haido barga nowa.	In the right hand a stick, lad.

[1] To ask for tobacco is the conventional way of inviting a girl to sexual congress.

[833]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 During the day, material preparations keep the family busy and excited. Rice must be husked and cleaned, pulses prepared; the men must arrange for liquor, the women for oil and haldi. As they grind the haldi the women sing:

Māyo balum jamudi,	O Jamidarin mother, we call on you.
Kākor ghare niy utra,	Don't go elsewhere, O mother,
Maniya daniya ghare je.	But come to Maniya Daniya's house.
Tuke neuta pārila,	We invite you here,
Dandik bale yiha se,	Come for a little while,
Haldi pura dihāse.	Let there be full measure of haldi and flour.
Asa māyo asa je.	Do not betray our faith in you.
Māyo balum bangārām.	O mother Bangaram!
Tuke neuta pārila.	We invite you also.
Kākor ghare neuta je?	Whose is this invitation?
Maniya daniya ghare je.	It is to Maniya Daniya's house.
Haldi pura dihāse.	May there be full measure of haldi and flour.

And so on, endlessly, through a score of deities. Maniya Daniya simply means 'so-and-so' and is altered to the actual name of the householder in each case.

The Bridegroom's Farewell Dance

585 Shortly after my arrival, a roll of drums heralded the approach of the bridegroom, attended by a party of chelik and motiari, who made a temporary camp under a mango tree outside the boundary of the village. This night they cooked for themselves, but three of them came on deputation to the headman to ask for assistants to help with water and cooking. Later, the bridegroom's party began to dance, led by the boy himself; it was his farewell and final dance as an unmarried man.

The Preparation of the Bride

At about nine in the evening, the elders of the village assembled outside the headman's house for a preliminary drink, and two hours later the chelik and motiari gathered in the same place. The elders had now gone away, and the boys made a big fire, and brought out the bride. The girl, who had been Belosa, was covered with a cloth and made to sit in the lap of the Tiloka, her own sister, and was supported on either side by the Sirdar and Kandki. [152] She began to weep loudly and mournfully: she was in good voice, for she had been practising in the ghotul every day for the past week. Today she must continue to cry all night. The boys and girls sang to drown the painful noise, to instruct her in her new duties and themselves to mourn the loss of their Belosa. All night they continued weeping, singing, sometimes dancing, though unlike the bridegroom the bride had no heart for this. From time to time they took a little liquor. It was a moving sight, for the girl's sorrow was genuine, as well it might be—she was leaving a world of freedom and romance for the unfamiliarity of a strange house. The ghotul children also felt the departure of one of their number very deeply; they had lived with her for years; as Belosa she had been the lover of the boys and controlled the destiny of the girls.

585 533 The sequence of the songs was fascinating; with Pilsai's help I was able to get a lot of it down. It was sung in a mixture of Gondi, Halbi and Chhattisgarhi.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

The Bride's Song

585
533

585 The bride wept:
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Father, my own father, come to me,
For I am going away to a stranger's house.
Had I been a boy you would have brought a daughter
To your own house.
But as I am a girl you send me away.
Had I been a boy, my wife and I would have stayed with you and made you happy.
But I must go away, and we both are sad.

Mother, my own mother, come to me.
Yesterday I was husking rice in your house;
I was sweeping the floor, fetching water from the well,
Cooking food for you, plucking leaves for cups and plates.
But now I go away to a stranger's house, and who will care for you?
How lovingly you looked after me!
But in this new house shall I find joy or sorrow?
When you come to see me shall I be able to give you so much as a cup of gruel?
From today my games, my fun, my seeing you will end.

Now the bride addressed the head of the ghotul.

O Sirdar, when you came to the ghotul and found it dirty
With ashes and dust and no one had swept it,
You called for me and asked me whose fault it was.
The Kotwar and Kandki defended me,
But you said, We are not Maria that we should sleep in dirt,
And so you fined us.
Now I am going away and whom will you have to fine?
Daily I cleaned the ghotul,
But now who will clean it?
With you I used to play and dance,
But now my feet are bound, and I shall not meet you even in my dreams.
Who knows whether I shall find joy or sorrow in this stranger's house.
Sometimes I combed your hair and laughing rubbed your arms,
But sometimes I was tired and slept.
Then you all said, Why don't you comb our hair,
And massage our limbs today?
You must have been to someone, why don't you come to us today?
For this you punished us, turning us out, and saying,
Never come more to the ghotul.
But I brought you liquor and with folded hands
Begged you to let us in again.
Now even in my dreams I may not massage you,
And who will there be to comfort you?

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Then she addressed every girl in turn, repeating the same formula to their different ghotul titles.

O Dulosa, Tiloka, Alosa, Jhankai!
I used to bid you sweep and clean, go here and there,
Comb this boy's hair, rub that boy's limbs.
Sometimes you forgot your duty and I abused you.
I went with you for the Diwali and the Hulki dance.
With you I played all kinds of games.
Now who will go to dance or play with you?
Who will teach you our ghotul ways?
While I was with you I taught you everything.
But now I go to a strange house,
And I cannot teach you even in my dreams.

Then the chelik replied,

Only yesterday you came to our ghotul to press our hands and arms,
But now who will comfort us?
Only yesterday you made us happy with your talk and laughter,
But now who will comfort us?
We used to trouble you in every way,
Yet you always gave us comfort.
If you didn't come to the ghotul for two days, we used to ask in the village where you were.
Sometimes they said you had gone away or had fallen ill.
Then when you came at last and we asked you what you had been doing,
You replied 'I went to such and such a village' or 'I was ill and so I couldn't come'.
But when we knew that you had not gone anywhere,
When we heard that you were not ill, but had been to sleep in some rascal's house,
When we knew that you had deserted us for that worthless fellow,
We had to punish you.
But now you will never be punished again,
For you are going away to a husband's house.
Never in your life will you be punished again like that.

Only yesterday we told you to fill our leaf-pipes, to fetch us leaves, to sweep the ghotul rooms,
But now you will never do that again.
We shall look at you from far away and whisper, There goes Belosabai.
No more can you go with us or sit with us.

But live happily there as you lived with us.
Love your husband and comfort him as you loved and comforted us.
Roll his leaf-pipe for him, fetch him leaves and water,
Clean his house, comb his hair, massage his arms and back.
But leave your games and loves and laughter.
Your games and loves and laughter now are for your husband.

And the motiari sang weeping:

Give food and water to your husband's parents.
Don't quarrel with them, don't annoy them, hark to what they say
So you will be happy; if not, your life is ruined.
Live happily with your husband's younger brothers and sisters.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

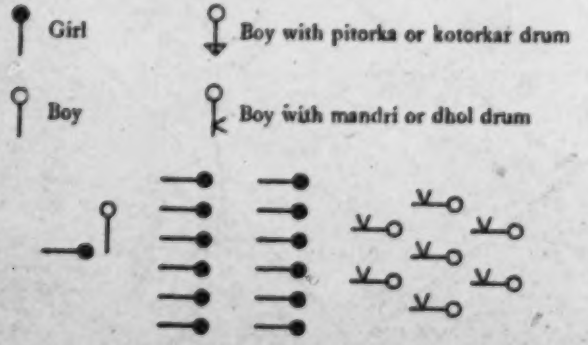
Pick leaves for them, fetch water, bring them wood, and clean their house.
Yesterday you laughed and played with us; tomorrow laugh and play with them.
Yesterday you went with us for water to the well; tomorrow go with them.
If a stranger comes to your new house, content him with water for his feet and a cup of gruel.
When we come, show that you remember us, and give us what we need.
You used to teach us everything, how to make necklaces with beads,
How to massage and how to please the chelik;
But who will teach us now?
When you troubled us, you were our defence;
But who will defend us now?
We will never forget you, without you our ghotul is empty and deserted.

In this wonderful exchange of tenderness and remembrance the whole of ghotul life becomes real and vivid. Almost every line might have a footnote referring to some chapter of this book.

After a long night of this, everyone was a little subdued, and nothing happened next day till about 3 p.m. when the bride's party of chelik and motiari went out with their drums to meet the bridegroom.

The Welcome of the Bridegroom

The boys led the way with their drums, followed by a double line of girls, clashing their cymbals, singing loudly. They advanced three paces, halted,



retired two paces, and then advanced again. At the same time the bridegroom's party advanced from their camp in similar formation, bringing the boy with them. As they went along, the girls sang a Gondi song with the refrain *Riri loyo ririla riri loyo ririla rila.*

Sindi ābi mowuri buba,
Nana mowur kerka buba,
Bubdu lār ne kerka.
Sātu jār dādālur buba,
Dādāu lār ne kerka buba.

There's a crown of palm leaves, father,
I will wear that crown, father,
Wear it to please my father.
I have seven brothers, father,
For love of them I'll wear it, father.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Meeting of the Parents

585 Just inside the village the parties met—the girls greeted each other, and the elders sat down on the ground for *pārin-bhet* or *samdhi-bhet*, an important little rite which emphasizes that marriage is more than a union of two individuals; it is an alliance of families. A cloth was spread on the ground, and the father of the bride and the father of the bridegroom—the two samdhi—sat down together to talk for a few minutes. The Gaita drew lines of rice-flour and turmeric on the ground, and exclaimed, 'Let tomorrow's work be rooted deep and the tree grow large!' When they got up someone threw a pot of haldi-water over them and there was a lot of ribald laughter.

In Esalnar, the samdhi sat down with a pot of water and cleaned their teeth, exchanging the twigs and saying, 'Let there be no quarrels, let all be well, let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'.

During this little ceremony the motiari sing various songs, of which the following (in Chhattisgarhi) is an example:

●[539]

Milo milo milo samdhi kukur pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a puppy!
Kukur pila la hāy harbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a puppy? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi hāthi pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a baby elephant!
Hāthi pila la hāy harbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a baby elephant? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi burkāl pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a tiger cub!
Burkāl pila la hāy harbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a tiger cub? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi gini pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a sucking pig!
Gini pila la hāy harbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a sucking pig? Take away your baby.

The bride's motiari went forward; one of them picked up the boy on her back, and they led him in this formation to his camp on one side of the headman's field.

Here was a small leaf-hut under a shady tree. Men and women of both parties greeted the bridegroom. They washed his feet and put a rice-mark on his forehead. Then they led him into the hut and made him sit on a new mat.

The Giving of the Ring

The scene now shifts to the bride's house. Presents of cloth were given to the bride's mother. As it had not been done at the engagement-time, the ring-cowrie, in its modern form of four annas, was given to the bride's father and put in the Pot of the Departed to compensate the ancestors for

585 the loss of the girl from their clan. This is a very important and significant ceremony. It represents the passage of the girl from her original clan into that of her husband, and indicates that she will henceforth be numbered with his ancestors.

The bridegroom was carried over from his camp. A new mat was spread, and the samdhi sat down. A little rice was put on their knees. The bride sat in the lap of her father-in-law, the bridegroom in the lap of his. Motiari covered the girl's hand with oil. The Gaita put a ring on the boy's little finger. The boy then seized his bride and tried to transfer the ring to her. But her hand was oily and slippery, and there was a long struggle—which caused great amusement—before he was victorious. Then the girl hit him with her clenched fist and jumped up. He tried to hit her back, but a group of her chelik dashed forward and covered her escape.

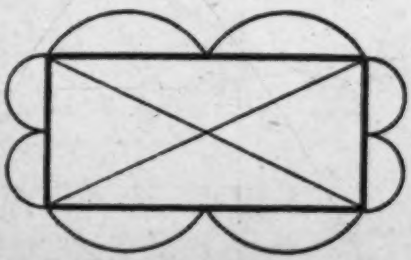
All the time the motiari stood by singing loudly:

539

Muda muda intoni dāda!	He is saying ring, ring, brother!
Sonār pekoh āyirom dāda,	Were I a goldsmith's daughter, brother,
Son muda hewerom dāda,	He would give me a golden ring, brother,
Dinda layorātek roy dāda,	Were he an unmarried boy, brother,
Kuddum dāka wāteni dāda.	He would come running to me, brother.
Kaide muda niya ro dāda.	The ring is in your hand, brother.
Pila hāra āteke roy dāda,	Were he a man with children, brother,
Pila odoh kemu roy dāda.	He would bring them to stay with me, brother.

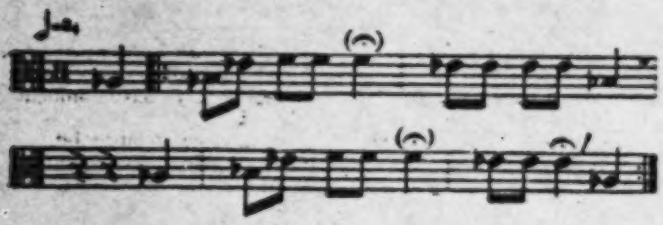
The Crowning of the Bridegroom

The bridegroom was now carried back to his camp, where the Gaita made a *ghari*-pattern[1] on the ground like this. The boy sat in the lap of his elder brother's wife. Old women, mother's and father's sisters, covered his head with the ends of their saris. The Gaita came with an elaborate crown made by Pannara from date-palm leaves. The leaves in the crowns are carefully counted: if the number in each is uneven, all will be well, but if the bride's number is even it means that the marriage will be a failure. This is the Neyi Maur or Oil Crown which will be worn throughout the preliminaries of the marriage, and then exchanged for the Lagir Maur at its crisis. The Gaita and the boy handed it to and fro seven times. The Gaita held it up, exhibited it left and right and with a sudden movement pushed it over the boy's face, while the whole party shouted in



[1] These patterns, which are also made in the marriage booth, are akin to the 'threshold designs' common throughout India. Their purpose is, I think, definitely 'witch-baffling'. Cf. *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 268 and XLIX, p. 181.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH



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Chhind ṭhin ho maur dai,	Of palm leaves is the crown, mother.
Main maur bāndho dai?	May I wear the crown, mother?
Kāy mola dobe bābu?	What will you give me, son?
Gaḍuri ho rupiya dai,	I'll give you a bundle of money, mother,
Kotha ho baila dai,	I'll give you a bullock in the stall, mother,
Wahi baila dobe bābu.	Give me that bullock, son.

Here is a rather charming little song, which was recorded at Palari.

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Bāri kata chhind bata rati rati kande	The palm grows near the fence and cries all night.
Na bānd re chhind bata bābu maur ṭhindo,	Don't cry, O palm, my son will wear you as a crown,
Bāndo le bāndo ṭujāri chatuk maur bāndo.	Tie O tie it, priest, carefully tie the crown.

Bringing in the Mandā Wood

585

Now the chelik of Sidhawand, assisted by visiting chelik from other villages, went out with the Gaita to fetch wood for the marriage-booth. The Gaita cut a small mahua tree with a single blow of his axe, and the boys cut the other poles and leafy branches of sarai wood. Presently the party returned, drumming, dancing and singing, with loud shouts of *Puḍe* (vagina).[1] It was now nearly sunset. The boys piled the wood in the place where they were going to build the booth, and danced round it holding each other's hands. The mottiari came and picked up the mahua tree. They stood in a bunch very close together, everyone held the tree and banged it up and down, singing vigorously.

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While the wood was being brought in the girls sang taunt-songs at the boys, most of them obscene. The first, for example, has the refrain *Kawad hāyāng barka mātiṅg ṭarbatuk chato nor layer*, 'The chelik's testicles are like the fruit of a dried-up tree and the root of a gourd; his penis is like a snake'.

[1] Risley describes a festival of Dharti Mai among the Mal Paharia. 'The dancing party shout continually *hur, hur* (*pudendum muliebre*), a mode of invocation believed to be especially acceptable to the goddess. In this somewhat indelicate cry we may perhaps see a barbarous and undraped reference to the *vis genetrix* theories so prominent in many early forms of belief.'—H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1891), Vol. II, p. 71.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Songs

585
539

Layor talle manda ri sango;	The boys are bringing the bougha on their heads;
Mahri manda tator ri sango.	Secretly they have brought the wood.
Buching poynāh hākior ri sango.	They have cut it bit by bit.
Māke marsi hewer ri sango,	If they would give us axes,
Chhak ne manda haderāt sango.	We'd cut the wood with a single blow,
Mamāt manda tawerāt sango.	And we would bring the wood in.

In the next song, the boys sing the first three lines and the girls answer.

Mando deri kokoti wāhoti soy bai.	The pole of the booth is crooked, girl.
Tumchō rati chepoti roy soy bai.	Your vagina is like a chapati, girl.
Jhelun dānka netu roy soy bai.	We will dance jumping up and down, girl.
Tumcho asan ratu roy soy dāda.	If we were to do it instead of you, brother.
Jhelun dānka netu roy soy dāda.	We would dance jumping up and down, brother.
Gāra phāndun netu roy soy dāda.	We would yoke the cart and take it away, brother,
Kukra bāsti netu roy soy dāda.	At cock-crow we would take it away, brother.
Kānde tangia dhartu roy soy dāda.	We'd put axes on your shoulders, brother.
Bāchun deri mārium roy soy dāda.	We'd bring a straight pole, brother.
Kohta bāhta deri roy soy dāda.	We'd never cut a crooked pole, brother.

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[831]

There are other songs which I need not quote, in which there is much play about crooked wood and the crooked penis, and the penis which can dig well in intercourse but cannot dig a hole for the pillar of the booth.

The boys had hidden a pice somewhere in the wood, and the girls spent a long time looking for it. Finally, about 7-30 p.m., the Gaita put some rice on the spot where the motiari had danced with the mahua tree, and dug a hole with his iron digging-stick. If white-ants or stones are found there, they move to another spot, offering an egg and chicken to whatever god the Siraha decides was responsible for the ill omen. But all was well today. The Gaita broke a coconut on his digging-stick, and the chelik planted the centre-pole of the booth and the mahua tree in the hole that the Gaita had made. After drinking a little liquor, the chelik then proceeded to make the booth (*manda*).

This was a very simple affair. Nine sarai poles were placed in a rough square, in the middle of which was the centre-pole and the mahua tree.[1] On the centre-pole a small representation of the vagina is often carved. A roof

[1] A number of tribes put the mahua in the marriage-booth. The Omanaito do (Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 444), so do the Birjhia (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 332), the Sonkar of Chhattisgarh (Ibid., Vol. III, p. 326), and the Bunjya or Binjya (Dalton, op. cit., p. 148). Mock marriages to the tree are performed by the Bagdi, the Kurmi, the Mahli and no doubt others (*Census of India, 1911. Report for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, pp. 322ff). The Gond of Mandla put a mango tree in the centre of the booth, but elsewhere use a post made of mahua wood (Wood, op. cit., p. 138).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

was made by tying poles round the square and criss-cross over it. This was again covered with leafy branches. Round the poles was tied a haldi coloured string, or sometimes simply a rope of paddy-chaff, and a string of mango leaves. This string is called *torse* (Halbi) and is mentioned in another *manda* song. This has the refrain *Riri loyo ririlo ririlo riri loyo ririlo*, and is addressed apparently to the village mother.

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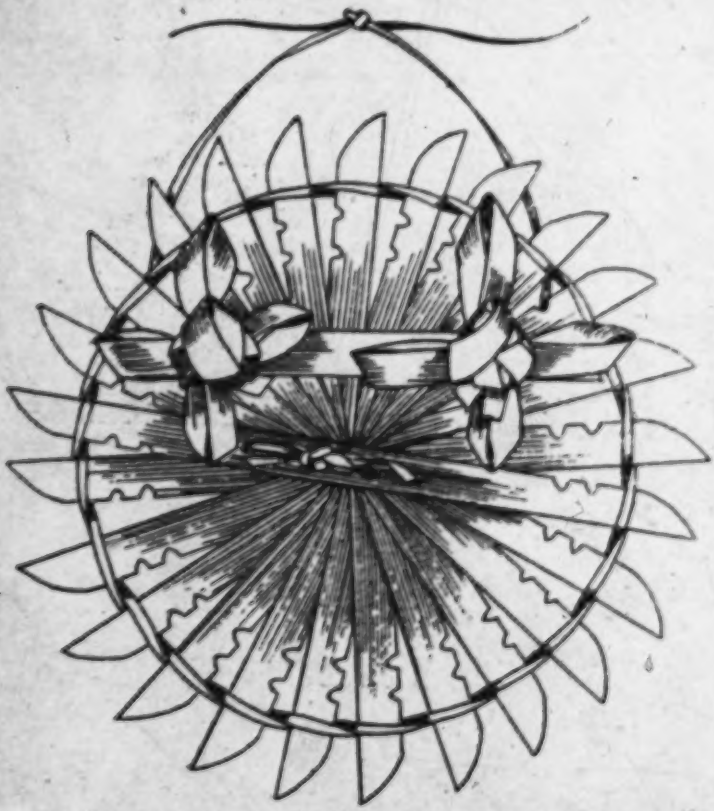

[292]

FIG. 19. Marriage crown for bride
Breadth 6"

Bille lewendr gohlna dai,
Sukhen dukhen kahe wo dai.
Gachur wachur dyma rey dai?
Kāwjla tesle āyo wo dai?

Haryar wawta yatkwo dai.
Tārli tamur lemur wo dai.

O Mother of this young boy,
Reveal his happiness and sorrow.
Why do you stay silent, Mother?
Because nothing has been promised you?
Take our offerings willingly.
He has no brothers, Mother.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
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Awa bābo lewer wo dai.
Wenayise torun wo dai.
Mardi marra manda wo dai;
Leyān parla bona wo dai.
Marha ākī torun wo dai.
Bākiya nima bahri wo dai?
Bābuna jiwa werriyta wo dai.

He has no father or mother.
But here is a goat for the *torun*.
The pole is from the saja tree;
Young girls made the platform.
Of mango leaves is the *torun*.
Why do you not answer, Mother?
The boy's soul is frightened, Mother.

Tying of the Beni-plaits

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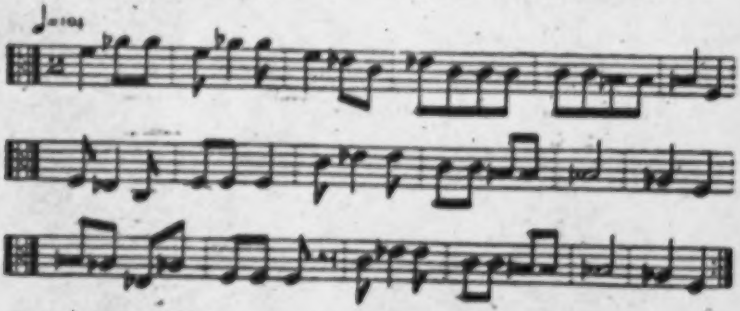
After this, the motiari carried the bride back to her house and her motiari and others anointed her with haldi. Then in both camps motiari busied themselves with tying the hair of their charges into two long and five little plaits. Other motiari stood round singing a song with the refrain,

Riri loyo. Ririlo rilo riri loyo ririlo riri loyo ririlo rilo rilo riri loyo ririlo.



Sura beri sakāli bābu.
Baden suda pāihi bābu?
Atin miyār manta roy dai.

Tāna suda pāiha dai,
Niya jor tā ayo roy bābu,
Halār bhāi bāti roy bābu,
Saga saina bāti roy bābu,
Awa bābo bāti roy bābu.
Awa bābona lewon roy bābu.
Tārā tamer lewon roy bābu.

The plait is a sevenfold chain, boy.
Whose plait will you tie, boy?
I'll tie the plait of my *māma*'s daughter, mother.
For her I will tie the plait, mother,
She's no fit mate for you, boy,
She has sisters and brothers, boy,
She has relations, boy,
She has father and mother, boy.
You have no father or mother, boy.
You have no brothers, boy.

This is a very common sentiment in the marriage songs. The bridegroom is an orphan, alone in the world, useless, ugly, unfit to mate with a bride so richly dowered with wealth and relatives. I add two other very short songs:

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I

Sur beni beni roy āya,
Main beni pāronda āya,
Pārda pāro tay pāro mona

O the links of the plait, mother,
I want to tie the plait, mother,
If you wish, boy, you may tie it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

2

Sāt bahin kanya baba!	O the seven Kanya sisters!
Kanya dhari kanāle baba.	Holding your waist they sit.
Sāt bārī ṭhali nā baba	O the seven-times distilled liquor
Baba indāna baba na	Father, say, father.

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THE THIRD DAY

Bathing Bride and Bridegroom

Shortly after dawn the bride's motiari brought out the bridegroom and danced with him. Then they bathed him in front of his camp, making him sit on a wooden seat, while two chelik fanned him vigorously with large baskets. When this was finished he jumped from his seat into one of these baskets and the bride's motiari picked him up and carried him, swinging him vigorously, back to his camp. They left him with loud cries of *Sods* (penis). Then the bridegroom's motiari bathed the bride.

585

Songs

1

Riri loyo rilo rilo riri loyo ri ri lo rilo ri riloyo ri ri lo

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Mōwa bāhu na yaru ra sangari;	The water's for our boy;
Sono jhar jhar yaru ra.	Like a stream of gold is the water.
Niya munia yaru ra;	The water's for your girl;
Koda urkul yaru ra.	Like horse-stale is the water.
Niya bāhuna yaru ra;	The water's for your boy;
Noyu urkul yaru ra.	Like a dog's urine is the water.
Mōwa munina yaru ra;	The water's for our girl;
Sono jhar jhar yaru ra sangari.	Like a stream of gold is the water.

2

Dulhi na ang dhoila chalik sundar pāni,	Bathing the bride's body with chelik-beautiful water,
Paniya paniya bolis ra nona.	You were begging for a comb, a comb.
Ab paniya pāwalis ra nona.	Now you have got your comb.
Sai shanichir sāntum roy nona.	It's the Saturday bazaar today.
Sāntum daaru hindi roy nona.	You were going to the bazaar.
Dulhi na ang dhoila chalik sundar pāni.	But you are bathing the bride's body with chelik-beautiful water.

Digging the Manda Earth

I missed seeing this at Sidhawand, but witnessed it at Malakot. Some older women, carrying baskets covered with cloth, led a small procession of singing and dancing motiari and drummers to the house of the village cowherd (Kopa or Rawat). They danced for a time before the house, asking the Kopa's wife to come out.

Song

Kopa lo kopa lo pania kopa pania roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, come outside.
Kopa lo kopa lo ānka turiy turiy roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, have you some earth?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
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Kopa le kopa le mdah toriy hinna roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, give us a little.
Kopa le kopa le sbuda toriy hinna roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, give the earth quickly.
Kopa le kopa le bhi jura hili roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, what are you doing?
Kopa le kopa le tada kopa tada roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, quickly get up.
Kopa le kopa le kopli ondah hilor roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, is the cowherd enjoying you?
Kopa le kopa le girda mata mdyoy roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, haven't you finished?
Kopa le kopa le girda thya hunkar roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, are you still sleeping?

585 Presently the woman appeared carrying a digging-stick and was greeted with derisive shouts. She led them to the spot where the cattle rested at midday. There she sprinkled water and cow-dung and prepared a little patch of ground. The Gaita offered rice, egg-shell and haldi, and took the digging-stick in his hand. This was also held by the Kopa's wife and the bridegroom's mother. All three together dug up a little earth, put it into a basket and covered it with cloth. Suddenly one of the motiari picked up the basket and ran as hard as she could towards the *munda*. The chelik chased her; they had to catch her before she reached it. They were just in time; they took one of her rings, and then allowed her to put the earth by the mahua tree under the booth.

Plastering the Munda Platform

585 Then some old women, singing very fast, began to plaster with this special
539 mud a little platform in the middle of the booth. They made patterns of rice-flour, plastered them in, and finally smoothed it all over.

533

Song

Bowla parila leyar punnira hoada baking.	The boys don't know how to make the platform.
Nāgal chotong tallanjo.	The penis is like a ploughshare.
Mika bowla parri hewen re.	The boys won't let us make the platform.
Sir hawas leyar parri vom.	If they did, how beautifully we'd make it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Some of the mud was left and the old women smeared it on any man they could find. I saw one of them creep up behind the Gaita and blindfold him with her muddy hands, shouting *Pude sârango* or Vagina liquor! At that they all sat down and had a drink. Refreshed by this, the Gaita and an assistant drew an elaborate pattern on the freshly-plastered platform, and put earthen lamps at its four corners. The rice-flour and haldi for this was ground by the Gaita with his own hands. 585

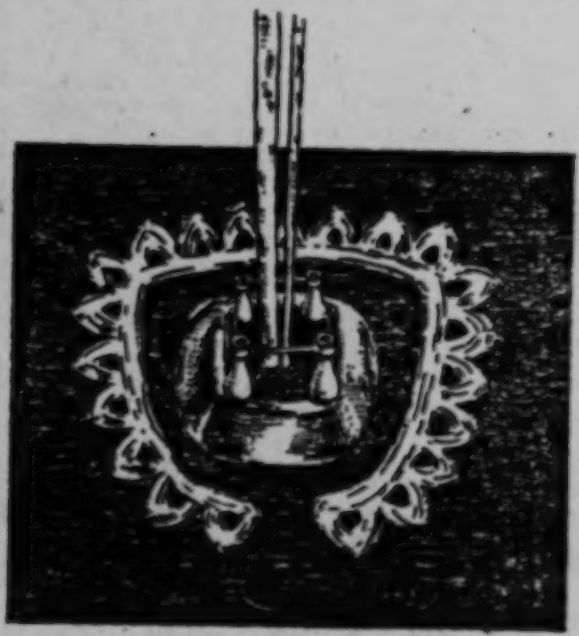

Fig. 10. Mandu platform with typical decoration, from Tylengs

Songs

1

Alav alav singâri doni,
Nahwa singâr karâiyo doni.
Kike saiwa kânkaru doni,
Kânkar tike kâugita doni.
Kotawj sawa kiwa yo doni,
Kavri kaji singâri doni.

Make varied patterns, Doni. 585
The best patterns you know.
The fish has come from Kanker, 539
The pattern faces Kanker.
Make the corners square,
Make a cock's-foot pattern, Doni.

2

Nardi pakkaw kardi pakkaw doni.
Khâlo kaniyo khâlo kaniyâlo doni.
Upar kaniyo upar kaniyâlo doni.
Jan bisarbo jan bisarbo doni.

Apply the haldi, Doni.
Below for the Kanyang, Doni.
Above for the Kanyang, Doni.
Do not forget, Doni.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Hêna dewa la hêna dewa la doni.	Put it for the Departed, Doni.
Mâta mâuli la mâta mâuli la doni.	For Mata Maoli, Doni.
Jan bisarbe jan bisarbe doni.	Do not forget, Doni.
Tuve dharam jo tuve dharam jo doni.	It is your duty, Doni.

Further Anointing of the Bridegroom

585 Now his own motiari carried the bridegroom out again and brought him to the *mandu*. They danced round the booth, one of them carrying him on her back, till they were tired. Then they made him sit on a motiari's lap on a bamboo fan to the west of the booth and outside it, and put a fan between his hands which he held folded before his face. Again they put haldi, making it 'climb' up his body. The bride's brother's wife came and wept loudly, saying, 'Never forget us and the love we've had for you. Come and see us often. Don't trouble our poor girl. She is ignorant and foolish, but you will be able to teach her. Let her come and see us often'.

This tedious and exasperating ritual continues during the whole ceremony. Every relative in turn must perform it over and over again.

Songs

585
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1

Dâda indân he dâda!	Cry brother, brother!
Dharwan tain chaga wo dâda.	Anoint with holy oil, brother.
Tuhe dharam lâge de dâda.	This is your gift, brother.
Bai indân he bai!	Cry sister, sister!
Dharwa tain chaga wo bai.	Anoint with holy oil, sister.
Tuhe dharam lâge de bai.	This is your gift, sister.

And so on, interminably, through the entire table of affinity.

2

Tilohe tain tain wo dai!	O the oil of til, mother!
Mala re tain chada wo dai.	Let me rub the oil, mother.
Tola re tain charâtan wo bata,	I would rub you with oil, son,
More re buta kamey jo bata.	But I have work to do, son.
Sagare din he buta wo dai,	You can work every day, mother,
Yehe re din he tola wo dai.	But this oil is just for today, mother.
Tuve re buta rahe wo dai.	Leave your work, mother.
Mala re tain chada wo dai.	And rub me with oil, mother.

3

[831]

Kit kuve kuve layen eh he.	The chelik is a little monkey.
Kena perro targa kuve eh he!	Climb up, O little monkey!
Gehlic dudo kuve eh he!	Her breasts will fill your fists!
Kena dor vaiya kuve eh he!	Come down again, O little monkey!
Rêpêlic pudo kuve eh he.	Her vagina is big as a spade, O little monkey!

4

This song is from Bayanar village, a Paskana Puta for the anointing. The refrain imitates the noise of a goat in heat.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Sai le le he he he! Sai le le he he he!

585
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O young darling, whence have you come,
Have you come for the play of love,
With an ox-goad under the mango tree?
Why have you come, big-breasted love?
I will catch you and enjoy you.
Saikobai, why have you come?
Your pubic hairs are like a shrub in Amgaon.
We were yoked together in the ghotul.
Now you are going, and I bid you farewell.
Now you are leaving the ever-thrilling ghotul.
I took you under the pipal tree and shook you to and fro.
By the ant-hill I tumbled you.
Your ghotul lover has come for you,
But no longer are you there to welcome him.

Taking the Omens

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Now the final omens must be taken. The Gaita placed an earthen pot full of water on the verandah of the headman's house, and dropped grains of rice two by two into it. For a successful marriage the grains must meet tip to tip. If they meet crosswise, there will be quarrels; if they both sink, the married pair will die together in a year; if they do not meet at all, the girl will elope with someone else. On this occasion, the two grains sank to the bottom, and the headman sent round an inquiry whether any of the near relatives of the bride had just begun to menstruate—a calamity which had previously been known to disturb the omens. At about the same time the bridegroom fell into a trance, twitching, shivering, stretching himself and then falling inert to the ground. Apparently none of the women were in the tabooed condition and the bridegroom's mother—a managing woman with an enormous bun of hair on the top of her head which caused some to regard her as an incarnation of the Hindu god Mahadeo—thought quite obviously that it was I with my camera who was causing all the trouble, but did not like to say so. After a time, however, when the Gaita had made some extravagant promises to the gods, the boy recovered and the rice grains floated round and hit each other meet properly tip to tip.

Filling the Kalas

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The little kalas-pitcher, which is to be placed by the mahua tree in the marriage-booth, must be filled with rice. The motiari put a basket before the bride. They place the pot inside and fill the bride's hands with rice, covering them with a cloth. Several of them catch hold of her hands and move them up and down above the kalas, singing *Rolo*, until all the rice has fallen into the pot. When the pot is full the motiari stand up with a loud cry of *Sais!* (panic).

Songs

1

Nandi hoita dokda hurka khilo lotoka.	The reeds grow by the river, where the old bear lies.
Kikse jilo lotoka dudhi le lotoka.	With whom is he lying? He's lying with the bride.

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539
831

Kai pīla koli bhālu pīla hole.
Whose was the child? It was a bear's child.

Kāke buha balede dulha he buha balede.
Whom will he call father? The bridegroom.

Kāke āya balede dulhi he āya balede.
Whom will he call mother? The bride.

Kai rāg men gāge de hur hur balede.
To what tune will she weep? *Hur hur.*

Ama pān chiro chāro.
The mango leaf sounds *chiro charo.*

Dulha cholli kira paro ach.
There are maggots in the bridegroom's penis

Mande pude kurri.
Loudly cry 'Vagina'.

2

Geti roy dodon banjāra aya!
O the Banjara's bullock, mother!

Noni bona roy sudha dāki noni?
With whom will you go, girl?

Māma na marri mantor go āya.
There is my *māma's* son, mother.

Noni wiya jori jobe roy noni.
He's not fit to be your mate, girl.

Ona roy sudha hanma roy noni.
Do not go with him, girl.

Gere mara jori roy ade jori pibo.
He is as bad as a pair of gere trees.

Ona re suda hanon roya āya.
I will not go with him, mother.

Aich mande pude kaudi bandhla.
Under the booth is a vagina tied with a cowrie.

Dudhe kendi bhursa.
And breasts like a brown pot.

Loha cho cholli bhursa!
O the penis of the brown boy!

Ama pān siro sāro.
The mango leaves sound *siro sāro.*

Laki cho pudi kira paro kurri.
The girl's vagina is full of maggots.

585 [531] Before the kalsa-pitcher is put in its place by the central pillar of the booth, it is decorated, sometimes beautifully and with great elaboration. Red, yellow and black grain is stuck with cow-dung in varied patterns, or stars and lines of dots are made in white and black. While two of the older women are doing this, the motiari stand by and sing.

Song

585 539 *Riri loyo ri ri lo rilo ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri lo ri ri loyo ri ri lo*

Ursa wenjing harsa wo dai.
The pot is decorated with rice, mother.

Nana harsa kotikān dai.
I place a mark on the pot, mother.

Bāti wenjing kotikin bābu?
With what kind of rice will you decorate it, boy?

Hinga wenji kotikān dai.
I will use *hinga* rice, mother.

Bona suda kotikin bābu?
With whom will you decorate it, boy?

Atin miyār manta roy dai.
With my *māmi's* daughter, mother.

Tāna suda kotikān dai.
I will decorate the pot for her, mother.

Tāna suda parwin roy bābu.
You won't be able to do it for her, boy.

Tāna jorti āywi roy bābu.
She is no fit mate for you, boy.

Tāral tamor biti roy bābu.
She has brothers, boy.

Halār bhai biti roy bābu.
She has sisters and brothers, boy.

Awa bābo biti roy bābu.
She has a mother and father, boy.

Nākun arik wāta wo dai.
But I am willing, mother.

2: Elwin E.-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

When the kalsa-pitcher is ready, decorated and filled with grain, it is taken out to the booth and placed by the central pillar.

585
539

Song

Hi demuni ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri lo

Ona ri bona ri kursa dai?	Whose is this pitcher, mother?
Jâti poyanni pohâna jâti nuni.	It's for a Poyami boy, daughter.
Ondiyae kursa nuni.	This pitcher is for him, daughter.
Kursa mulke mîta dai!	How the pitcher glitters, mother!
Kursa kuri dîka dai.	I am going to look at it, mother.
Niya bîrung sâdu nuni?	Why does it please you, daughter?
Yerri mâyla tîndi nuni.	It is a pot for bathing, daughter.
Tîndi gula oruy nuni.	The pot is not broken, daughter.
Modi ashle kâri nuni.	The cord has been cut with this arrow, daughter.
Kâri gula mâyoyo nuni.	The arrow is not lost, daughter.
Loni kâwa manar dai.	The Lambada boy is in the house, mother.
Turru khola kanar dai.	He has gone to hunt wild animals, mother.
Mâlal khola kanar dai.	He has gone to hunt the hare, mother.
Mâo khola kanar dai.	He has gone to hunt the sambhar, mother.
Asko kâri mâyuâr dai.	Then the arrow will be lost, mother.
Barsa pura mâlona dai.	I am grown up now, mother.
Nâkun arik mîta dai.	I am very happy, mother.
Hawwa lowa tikow dai.	I cannot rest till I go away with him, mother.

In this song, mother and daughter look ahead beyond the marriage to the girl's first child. The kalsa-pitcher becomes the pot of warm water heated daily by the husband for the young mother's bath; the arrow down which the anointing oil is poured becomes the arrow by which the child's umbilical cord is cut. The young husband has gone on a ceremonial hunt—and by his success or failure they will know the number of their children.

From time to time a couple of girls came to clean the *mandu*: as they did so, the others stood round singing, *Re re loyo re re la rula rula re re loyo re rula.*

Dulha bahan gelo balosa?	Where has the bridegroom gone, Belosa?
Wahin bahân gelow balosa.	He has carried off his sister.
Kai dâra eanio balosa?	What branches has he spread?
Pharsa dâra eanio balosa.	He has made a bed of pharsa branches.
Kai pila baha re balosa?	What child has she borne?
Bhâlu pila baha re balosa;	It is a bear cub;
Hur hur hara re balosa;	It cries *hur hur*;
Chilluk bale khada as re balosa.	It runs to bite you, Belosa.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Midday Dance

585 Then the chelik gathered round the booth and began to dance, holding
●539 each other's hands swinging backwards and forwards to a rather dismal tune, as they circled slowly round.

Songs

1

Têra wo doi nâwa sowo pungêri.	Give me my golden flower, mother.
Nâwa iga to hile wani niyu bubêu nigâdu.	I haven't got it, your father has it, son.
Têra wo buba nâwa sowo pungêri.	Give me my golden flower, father.
Nâwa iga to hile wani niyu dâdêu igâdu.	I haven't got it, your brother has it, son.
Têra wo dâda nâwa sowo pungêri.	Give me my golden flower, brother.

—and so on, taking the names of every relative present.

2

Walilddîi heliyâl walilla?	Where are you going, fox, where are you going?
Chithoddl wayâl hilu jo tâna tola tun hepur pandhal.	Make a broom of a squirrel's tail.
Walilddîi nirâl wâlilla?	Where are you going, leopard, where are you going?
Chithoddl wayâl tâna tâlla tun kudwo panderâr.	Make a measure of the head of a rat.

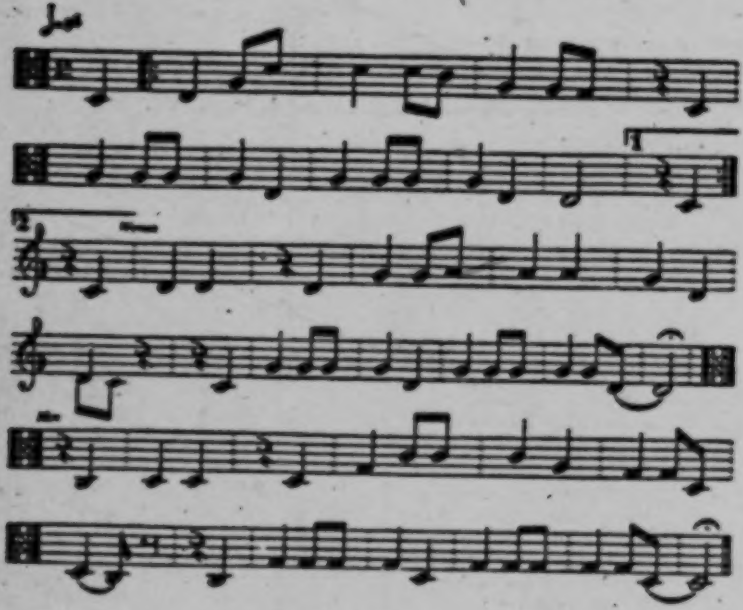
585 It was now midday and the visiting motiari brought food to the booth as reward for the boys who had gone to fetch the wood the previous day. The boys sat down in a wide circle round the booth and the girls served them with rice and vegetables on leaf-plates. When they had finished the chelik got up and down three times shouting 'Penis!', and so dispersed.

When darkness fell everyone went home for the evening meal. The headman provided pork for his visitors: the pig was knocked over the head with a rice-pounder and the Gaita offered the carcass mahua-spirit saying, 'Let there be enough flesh for us all and some left over'.

Throughout the night there was singing and dancing; every now and then the weary bride and groom were brought out to be anointed, from the feet upwards to the head.

[533 831] The company drank, and made merry with feminine songs, for 'there is no purdah in a house of marriage'. Much of the dancing during the night and a large part of the day was done without drums in almost Hill Maria style. Boys, or boys and girls, held hands and moved slowly round the marriage-booth in a wide circle. The singing was monotonous, but the songs themselves are often more interesting than those concerned merely with details of the ritual.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH



58
533

Songs

1

Aliyāro maliyāro kuski suka joji !	The gruel is made of bits of rice, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyāro maliyāro sānda joji kinu !	Give us the gruel quickly, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyāringh maliyāringh nimār suka dāki ?	Where are you going, Aliyaringh Maliyaringh?
Aliyāro maliyāro pārumān pila jori !	We are like a pair of pigeons, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyāro maliyāro jori parki dāka !	We are off to search for wives, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyāringh maliyāringh wātir khumi dāka ?	What country are you going to, Aliyaringh Maliyaringh?
Aliyāro maliyāro lānjir khumi dāka !	We are going to Lanji Land, Aliyaro Maliyaro!

585
539

2

Charota mara buha charota mara darmi roy !	O the shade of the charota tree, father!
Wārāna darbār buha darbār nahi roy ?	What is this darbar, O father?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
●539

Kosa re kokkasa nuhi kosa re kokkasa doyon roy!
O the silken horns of the bullock, daughter!

Tānu re mola nuni tānu re mola kindan roy!
I have named a price for this bullock, daughter!

Nākuna ndrek buba nākuna ndrek kama roy.
Do not deceive me, father.

Nākuna mola buba nākuna mola kindan roy.
You are selling me, father.

Kile re khapra buba kile re khapra rupia roy,
A rupee is worthless as a broken bit of earthenware,

Rupia re jiwa buba rupia re jiwa kiti roy.
Yet you love rupees, father.

Koda re urkul buba koda re urkul dārango roy,
Liquor is worthless as a horse's stale.

Dārango re jiwa buba dārango re jiwa kiti roy,
Yet you love liquor, father,

Miyāne jiwa buba miyāne jiwa kewi roy.
And you do not care for me.

3

Niāwn lewāl nuni wātor roy guguti guguti.
They have come to take you away, my girl.

Wātir bhum tor dai wātor roy?
Where have they come from, mother?

Chhattisgarh tor nuni wātor roy.
They have come from Chhattisgarh, my girl.

Wātir wātir dai kamiāl roy?
What work do they do there, mother?

Jāti kawdo nuni kamiāl roy.
They are of the Kawdo clan, daughter.

One ise dai hemāl roy;
Don't give me to them, mother;

Kodo usi dai paron roy;
I cannot husk the kodon, mother;

Karwul māti dai danda roy;
My arms are like tundri roots, mother;

Danda gala dai nindo roy!
My arms are not yet grown, mother!

One ise dai hemāl roy.
Don't give me to them, mother.

4

Koh bodāl bodāl kopa le;
I have a horned bison, Kopa;

Nāwa bodāl mai: kopa le.
My bison is lost, Kopa.

Hille mārī mārī gaita le,
On the hill of sal trees, Gaita,

Ahey toru osi gaita le.
I had taken it to graze there, Gaita.

Sono tāye guta kopa le.
I had a golden tethering peg, Kopa.

Guta inja poitu kopa le.
Now the peg stands solitary, Kopa.

Hira tāye dāmir kopa le.
The tethering-cord was made of diamonds, Kopa.

Dāmir himu poitu kopa le.
Now the cord is lonely, Kopa.

Dāmir himu poitu kopa le.
Now the cord is lonely, Kopa.

5

Bharewān bharewān kaida nana pairi karena;
I will wear the Bharewa's anklets;

Kālu re kālu re rumjum rumjum pairi karena.
The anklets tinkle *rumjum rumjum*.

Kochiyāna kochiyāna kaida nana churi karena;
I will wear the Kochiya's bangles;

Kaida re kaida re rumjum rumjum churi karena.
The bangles tinkle *rumjum rumjum*.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585
539

Setina setina kaida nawa getil kuhena;	I will wear cloth from a merchant's shop;
Nawi re nawi re rumjum rumjum getil kuhena.	When I wear that cloth, my waist goes *rumjum rumjum.*
Sonārūn sonārūn kaida nawa suta karena;	I will wear a goldsmith's neck-band;
Todara re todara re rumjum rumjum suta karena.	The neck-band sounds *rumjum rumjum.*
Sonārūn sonārūn kaida nawa dāru karena.	I will wear a goldsmith's ear-ring,
Kaiwu re kaiwu re rumjum rumjum dāru karena.	The ear-rings sound *rumjum rumjum.*
Kasarūn kasarūn kaida nawa chura karena,	I will wear the Kaser's bangles,
Kālu re kālu re jumjum rumjum chura karena.	The bangles tinkle *rumjum rumjum.*

6

[534]

Nāwa tehendor turil roy ange,	My *tehendor*[1] is lost,
Baga ise turil roy bālu?	Where was it lost?
Jamka jumur manda roy ange,	It was lost among the crowds beneath the booth,
Agāy ise turil roy ange.	It is lost there.
Niya sang nor layor roy bālu,	Your friend the chelik
Niya layor kara oyor roy bālu,	Has taken everything,
Or ise oyor roy ange,	But he did not take that away,
Niya sang nāng layāk roy bālu!	O your friend the motiari
Ore bāra oyong roy bālu.	Must have taken it away.

7

Bara lopa bārang kalo la nawi?	O what is in the field, girl?
Jhumjhum dyana nawi kanki kalawa.	The girl is cleaning pieces of rice, *jhumjhum.*
Bara lopa tarāy kalo la?	What is in the field, sister?
Tarai lopa wārang kalo la.	The tank is in the field, sister.
Tarai lopa durpa kalo la?	What is in the tank, sister?
Durpa morala wārang kalo la.	The lotus-root is in the tank, sister.
Durpa morala kanjal kalo la?	What is under the lotus-root, sister?
Kanjal roala wāyena kalo la.	Under the lotus-root there is a mouse, sister.
Wāyen ayo wāyena dāda la?	Will you come to catch the mouse, sister?
Nāka dai rāngār dāda la.	I would love to come but I cannot, brother:
Niya dai mateh kalo la.	Mother would be angry with me, brother.
Jhāpit sandra kitona kalo la.	I have given cloth from the basket, sister.
Hiteh icha waiha dāda la.	If you have given it, brother, then I will come.

[1] Iron Jew's-harp.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

8

585
539

Hare nāru uṛsina heṣe maryum parcha bīti nāru heṣo maryum!	Don't build your house near the road, cousin!
Mardumshumāri nāru roy maryum!	There will be nothing but receipt-books and Census forms, cousin!
Kesur koytor wāynur heṣo maryum.	There the peons and their porters will come.
Khatiya lāwo indānur heṣo maryum.	They will say, 'Bring us a bed'.
Khatiya inda punwi heṣo.	We don't know what a bed is.
Katul inda puton heṣo.	All we know is a cot.
Chānwal lāwo indānur heṣo;	They will say, 'Bring us rice':
Chānwal inda punwi heṣo;.	We don't know what rice is;
Nukāng inda puton heṣo.	We only know paddy.
Dāl lāwo indānur heṣo;	They will say, 'Bring us lentils';
Dāl inda punwi heṣo.	We don't know what lentils are.
Dāring inda puton heṣo.	We only know pulse.
Namak lāwo indānur heṣo;	They will say, 'Bring us ground salt';
Namak inda punwi heṣo.	We don't know what ground salt is.
Hawor inda puton heṣo.	We only know rock salt.
Haldi lāwo indānur heṣo;	They will say, 'Bring us turmeric';
Haldi inda punwi heṣo.	We don't know what turmeric is.
Kamha inda puton heṣo.	We only know haldi.
Ghee lāwo indānur heṣo;	They will say, 'Bring us ghee';
Ghee inda punwi heṣo.	We don't know what ghee is.
Neyi inda puton heṣo.	We only know oil.
Pyāj lāwo indānur heṣo;	They will say, 'Bring us onions';
Pyāj inda punwi heṣo.	We don't know what onions are.
Gondri inda puton heṣo.	We only know garlic.

585 In this song, the words for the different things supposed to be demanded by the visiting officials are given both in the village and the more sophisticated dialects. A *khatiya* is demanded: the villagers only know of a *katul*. The visitor asks, in his own language, for *chanwal*, rice: but the villagers use the Gondi word *nukāng*; and so on.

The Arrow Ceremony

Now came the final anointing with haldi, the 'bringing down' of the oil from head to foot in contrast to the previous 'climbing', when it was applied from foot to head. The bridegroom was brought to the west of the booth and sat on the lap of one of his motiari. He held his hands above his head and an arrow was placed in them. The Gaita first, and then all his relatives, poured oil down it and it spread thence over his body. The same ceremony was performed for the girl, but inside the house.

Songs

585
539

1

Kudār koldng dākāng māwor.	Our boy's stride is long as the handle of a hoe.
Neka dākāng udma māwor.	Don't stride along too quickly, boy.
Keri gābo wandul;	Our boy's body is a plantain fruit;
Mendul gala nindoye.	His body is not yet ripe.
Ali ākī moha;	His face is a pipal leaf;
Moha gala nindoye.	His face is not yet ripe.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585 *Berel ākī chhāti;* His chest is a banyan leaf;
Chhāti gala nindoye. His chest too is not yet ripe.
● 539 *Kāreka kāya tala;* His head is a kadam fruit;
Tala gala nindoye. His head is not yet ripe.
Kāruwal māti danda; His hand too is a tundri root;
Danda gala nindoye. His hand is not yet ripe.
Neka jhulak kewa O boy, don't shake your hand too much
Danda dole māyār. Or it will be broken, boy.

2

Huh dusār dusār buba huh dusār roy buba

Neyura dusār reha buba. The haldi oil has been rubbed down, father.
Kānde kāwar bojha buba. A heavy load for a small *kāwar*, father.
Reh teke bojha buba, Its weight is the same though you bring it down,
Teh teke bojha buba. Its weight is the same though you raise it up.
Nāwa bojha reha buba. Bring down the weight, father.

585 Then, while a circle of motiari stood singing, others bathed the boy and re-tied his hair in three or four plaits. They decorated him, painting his eyes with black and white powder, and making stars of yellow haldi on his face with a splayed castor-twig. They put a new crown, the Lagir Maur, over his head and face. So attired he went round greeting everyone. A pot of haldi-water was hung from the roof of the booth.

The Lagir

Now the drums began to sound; the chelik moved out in formation from the bridegroom's camp and began to move round the booth. The whole place began to stir. Soon with grand display the bride's drummers came down the road. They were led by two lines of boys waving antlers in the air; [292] one boy was dressed in peacock's feathers, another had a gay cowrie jacket. They advanced, placed the horns on the ground, raised them with loud cries, retired, then came on again. They reached the booth and danced near by.

The bride's elder sister's husband came out of the house with the bride on his shoulders and a group of men held a canopy over them. A man similarly related brought out the bridegroom from his camp. As the two parties approached the booth, the drumming increased in volume, rows of girls singing and clashing their cymbals followed, a 'bison' appeared pursued by hunters, and a dummy giant whirled into the centre of the scene.

The two parties, the boy's party leading, now went round the booth, outside, seven times anti-clockwise. The drummers went ahead, the girls followed, clouds of dust rose in the air. When this was done, bride and bridegroom were made to stand at the west side of the booth, and their clothes were knotted together. The girl's elder brother and four other men climbed the booth, and poured a little liquor and then a whole potful of haldi-water over the pair. In Malakot, where brooms were tied to the tops of the nine poles, the men threw them down and shook the booth violently.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585

This is the supreme moment of the marriage, the ceremony that finally asserts the union of bride and bridegroom,[1] the ultimately binding element in the long-protracted ceremonies. Bride and bridegroom were now man and wife.

Song

[539]

To manda batti dai;	There is the cattle's resting-place;
Aga padda manta dai.	There is a calf there, mother.
Padda dohi dāka dai.	I am going to tie that calf.
Sono ta dāmir dai,	There is a golden rope,
Padda poya hewo dai.	But the calf won't let me catch her.

Carrying off the Bride

Immediately the boy seized the bride, rushed her once round the booth, and carried her off to his camp, followed by a row of motiari singing enthusiastically. The bride's elder sister has the right to try to stop them: she stood in the way and was only appeased by the present of a cloth.

Ceremonial Greeting

In a few minutes the motiari came to bring the newly-married pair back to the booth for tika, the ceremonial greeting by relatives and friends. They sat down on a mat to the west of the booth, each supported by motiari, and everyone in turn put a rice-mark on their foreheads and a small present in the dish before them. As people bent down to do this, old women poured haldi over their backs and often tried to undo their clothes and smear their naked buttocks. There was much ribald laughter and a lot of fun.

[522]

The motiari stood round singing as loudly as they could. Each relative was greeted in turn. Here is the song they used when the boy's father came for tika.

[539]

Wilor wilor-manda buha!	The booth is shaking, father!
Mandāli korku wār-tu buha.	The branches of the booth have withered, father.
Sānda tika tāsa buha.	Do the tika, father.
Wele bera hema buha.	Don't be late, father.
Pile herau harau buha.	The birds grow hungry, father.
Karun wanda paron buha.	I can't bear to be hungry, father.
Niya marri lāruna buha.	This is your darling son, father.

[1] The essential and binding part of the marriage ceremony varies in different parts. In the Punjab it consists of the *phera* or circumambulation of the sacrificial fire. In the United Provinces the young couple walk round not a fire but the marriage shed or pole. In the east of these provinces and also in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, the binding part of the ceremony is generally the *sindurdan* or painting of the bride's forehead with vermilion. Amongst certain castes such as the Hari, the bride and bridegroom smear each other with their blood, which they obtain by pricking their fingers with a thorn. In Bombay the higher castes follow the practice of circumambulation. The lower castes sprinkle rice over the bride and bridegroom, while some pour milk or water over the joined hands of the couple. In Orissa their right hands are tied together with *kusa* grass, or their left hands when the bride is a widow. In Madras there are various ceremonies, such as making them eat from the same dish, or knotting their garments together, or pouring water over them so that it runs from the man to the woman. But the most common is for the bridegroom to tie the *tali* or necklace round the bride's neck. The Brahmin bridegroom places the bride's foot seven times on a mill-stone, a symbol of constancy.—*Census of India, 1911, Report for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, p. 312.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

The Marriage Sermon

At this point the Gaita and one or two elders sat down and delivered a sort of sermon. One man spoke, then another took up the tale, and a third continued. 'Now we have linked you two together. May you always have enough to eat and drink. May you live together happily. Bear many sons and daughters. Do not forget your parents. Greet the visitor at your house with food and water.' 585

The Farewell

When the tedious business of the tika was over, the bride and groom were taken back to the groom's camp and their crowns were removed. The boy was taken by his party out of the village to the road which ran near by. After a little while the girl, led by her father and escorted by two motiari (her own sisters) and preceded by drummers from her old ghotul, followed. When they came to the road, the girl bade a last farewell to her chelik and motiari. Accompanied by her two sisters, she went to each in turn and wept before them. She gave a pice to each of the chelik and they 'kissed' her farewell.

The two samdhi again sat down, drank a little and threw haldi-water over each other. 'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it!' Then suddenly two chelik picked up the bride and bridegroom and they went off very quickly, a line of motiari walking behind them.

Song

Kāka ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to uncle's house, mother,
Bāṛhga mās khain wo dai.	There they eat beef.
Dāda ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to brother's house, mother,
Bokri mās khain wo dai.	There they eat goat.
Didi ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to sister's house, mother,
Kukri mās khain wo dai.	There they eat chicken.
Hamla bāsi pej dein wo dai.	But we like to eat stale *pej*.

[539]

The New Home

When the party came to the boundary of their own village, the Gaita drew a line of rice-flour across the path and placed seven aonra rings upon it. They stepped across this and went home without looking round. When bride and bridegroom reached their house, the boy's mother came out to greet them. She washed their feet and drank a little of the dirty water. She took her daughter-in-law into the house, and presently brought her out again into the court, where those of the villagers who had not been able to go for the wedding came to do tika and gave their presents. Then bride and groom were taken back into the house; offerings were made to the Departed and the ring-cowrie was put into the Pot of the Departed to symbolise the fact that the bride had now joined her husband's clan and after death would henceforth be numbered with the ancestors of her new home. Other offerings were made to the pots hanging from the roof and the grain-bins. 'These are all yours now', exclaimed the mother. 'Live here happily with us.'

The Wedding Crowns

At the end of a marriage the wedding crowns must be properly disposed of, for it would be highly dangerous to throw them away where a witch could get at them. It will be remembered that there are two crowns, the Neyi

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585 with the water, caught her and spat again in her mouth. Motiari gave him another gourd of water and he passed it on to his bride; she twice filled her mouth and spat all over him.

Now the motiari gathered round and undid the plaits of hair that had been tied during the wedding.

Song

585 ●539

Sura heri sahāli sahāli he buba,	There are seven links in my plait,
Nana sahal lahiha lahiha he buba.	I am going to undo the links.
Bone lārne lahiha lahiha he buba?	For whose love will you undo it?
Sātu jor dāda lor dāda lor he buba;	I have seven brothers;
Dādān lārne lahiha lahiha he buba.	For love of my brothers I will undo it.
Bārāng his lahiha lahiha he buba?	What will you give before you undo it?
Dobir bhainsi hiyāha hiyāha he buba,	I'll give a buffalo from my herd.
Tāna yise hema roy hema roy he buba,	Don't give a buffalo,
Dobir hinja poyor roy poyor roy he buba.	Or the herd will be desolate.

585 When the hair was undone, the motiari combed it, and then bride and groom threw water and rubbish over each other. They needed a bath and the motiari poured water over them.

Then two motiari sat down presenting little laps for ritual occupation. The boy sat down, and the bride came to sit in his lap. She stayed there a moment, then jumped up and hit him on the back. Then she sat down, and he prepared to sit in her lap. But at the right moment she wriggled aside and he tumbled to the ground amid roars of laughter. But he jumped up and hit her two or three times with his clenched fist.

The fun now became general. Chelik filled their mouths with water and blew it over the motiari. The girls filled leaf-cups with cow-dung and spilled it over the chelik. Meanwhile the Gaita's wife collected the haldi-stained clothes of bride and groom; someone brought out a pot and went round begging for fire. He pushed handfuls of rubbish against private parts saying, 'Set them on fire!' At last they put the pot on the fire and boiled the clothes. But they were soon brought out and tied in a bundle. The Gaita poured a little liquor on the four corners and they lifted up the bundle seven times. Bride and groom undid the wet clothes and threw them over each other. [831] Someone pretended to be a Ganda with a large imitation penis and went round trying to sell the clothes.

At last the Gaita caught hold of the married pair and dragged them into the house for a well-earned meal, which they took together in ceremonial state.

The Last Rites

The marriage is over but a curious and interesting rite remains. Bride and bridegroom go for one last visit to the ghotul. The bride first massages her husband and then every boy in turn. The chelik send the husband off to his house, and a little later tell the girl to follow him. When she refuses three or four of them take her by force, push her into the room with her husband and shut them in. I have seen this done at Malakot and Nayanar. I will describe the Malakot incident here.

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Muria

case was not stolen, but was given by the husband in compensation for taking a girl away from the ghotul. 585

As they escort the newly married pair to bed the boys and girls sing a characteristic song.

Dulha cho māndo dulha cho māndo,	In the bridegroom's booth,
Parewān jhulesa.	Swings the pigeon. 585
Dulhi cho māndo dulhi cho māndo,	In the bride's booth, 539
Tendka lotesa lot buba lot.	The lizard copulates and copulates. 831
Pilak bhāji mane re leka bhāji hamlāy joi se leka.	Spinach is drying on a leaf.
Jora jora tenda bane se re leka tenda pāni nāhin tire re leka.	There is a pair of weighted balances (of a well), but he won't use them.
Palāriguan cho jaliya gānja,	The long-tailed cock of Palari,
Dongrigura cho hāri homi,	The black hen of Dongrigura,
Dandik chathi abhich dehi.	Every moment they want to copulate.

When everything was over, at Sidhawand the headman and the village elders purified the village from any possible evil introduced by the many visitors. They sprinkled liquor round the houses and offered a chick to the Village Mother. 585 783

V. The Navanar Marriages: a Different Procedure

Such was the marriage ritual at Sidhawand and Malakot. I believe that a very similar procedure is followed all over eastern Bastar. We must now take a brief glance at the other type of marriage, where the main ceremony takes place at the bridegroom's house and where a number of minor details differ. 585

The marriage I am now to describe was celebrated at Amasara and Nayanar on 15 April 1941 and the following days. On the first evening the bride was prepared as at Sidhawand. Her motiari sat round her all night, weeping and consoling her. The next morning the bridegroom, escorted by his chelik and motiari, came to Amasara to fetch her. On the way, at the village boundary, the Gaita made the usual line of ash and offered liquor in three saja leaves, saying, 'Let there be no trouble and no quarrels. Let us return in safety'. They stepped over the line and went on their way, none looking back.

The Farewell Ceremonies

Both parties cooked separately out-of-doors in the fields. During the day there was the usual application of haldi, weeping, exchange of presents and some heavy drinking. When I reached Amasara on the afternoon of this second day, I found a scene of great animation. Several groups of boys were dancing with mandri drums; in another part of the field rows of girls were dancing and singing Relo. Another group of motiari in boy's clothes, with waistcoats and turbans, were preparing for the Jhoria Endanna when the bridegroom has to recognize his bride amidst a group of dancing motiari disguised as boys, an incident which I study fully in Chapter XVI. In the middle sat a row of old women, samdhi to each other, their bodies covered with haldi-water and singing drunkenly.

It was getting late and presently the bride's parents went to the boy's people and said, 'Now you are our daughter's mother and father; we are giving her

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

In some villages the Gaita takes the marriage pair to the shrine of the Village Mother to offer sacrifice and ask if all will be well. 585

Rites of Anointing

On the Lagir day, the groom was first taken round the pole inside the booth five times; this corresponds to the *khari binwar* of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The girl was taken round later and carried swinging to and fro into the house.

In this type of marriage, bride and groom are again and again carried out of the house by their attendants to be anointed. After fifteen or twenty minutes they are taken back; then after a rest, brought out again. They are made to sit on a wooden *pidha* seat under the booth.

Songs

585
539

The seat is made of sandalwood, O sister.
Come out girl and sit upon the seat.
It is in the raj of your mother and father.
It is in the raj of your brothers and relatives.
There is no kind of trick about it.

From Naria village, I have a few of the songs sung by the bride herself when her different relatives come to anoint her.

When her brother comes, she sings:

Give the oil lovingly;
Give the ghee costly as gold, brother;
Make the good oil climb my body.

When different *akomdma* relatives come, she sings:

Put a mark on my forehead, friends;
Put much haldi on my body.
You are the daughters of a great house,
I am your little sister.
How happy I was in my own home!
Now I go to a stranger's house.
Who can tell if I will live,
Who can tell if I will die there?

When her brother's wife comes, she sings:

I used to be in your house, bhauji,
Now you are giving me to a stranger.
You used to give me good food to eat,
But now you are sending me away.
When you come to visit me
Who knows if they will let me give you food or no?

At the end of the anointing ceremony, girls lifted the bride up and swung her vigorously to and fro as they carried her into the house.

Song

We will hold you fast,
We will not let you fall.
Swing, bride, swing.
We hold you safely in our hands

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

head. Weeping bitterly, she cried, 'All these days you were with me. Now you have left your wife and gone away. So take your bangles, I don't want them any more'. She broke the bangles and threw them on the grave. 764

In Amgaon the rite of the dead fish was omitted, probably because no fish were available. But in Gorma, when oil was given to the guests for their purification, they were also offered a small dead dry fish floating in oil. They had to touch this and make a mark on the Gaita's forehead with a drop of oil; he did the same for each of the guests.

Ceremonies vary considerably according to the age and status of the deceased. Thus when a young bride died at Temrugaon on 22 March 1941, it was the chelik who took a leading part in the ceremonies and some of them made a pathetic reference to her youth of happiness in the ghotul. Here it was three women, the girl's mother and two sisters, who poured liquor, not onto the ground, but into the corpse's mouth. Three chelik broke the bangles: each placed one hand on a stone and their leader smashed the bangles. Most of the other ornaments were removed and distributed as gifts to the motiari. But the wooden square, round which a Muria girl's hair is tied, was placed in the grave above her head along with the broken bangles and one necklace. After the earth had been filled in, the women poured a little oil and some gruel from a gourd onto the head of the grave.

The sense of outrage, the feeling that something has gone wrong, that the magicians have failed and the gods have 'let them down' is almost as marked as the deep and genuine grief of the mourners. We have already noticed how they said at Amgaon, 'God to whom we vowed gifts has failed us'. At Gorma the family had promised a goat to Gondin Pen, a pig to Tallur Muttai, another pig to the Rau and a chicken and coconut to the Departed. At the funeral, just before the grave was filled in, the dead man's son stood by the head of the grave and broke a small stick into five pieces. He threw one piece into the grave and said, 'I promised Gondin Pen a goat if you lived. But you died and this is all she'll get'. He threw the second piece and said, 'I promised Tallur Muttai a pig if you lived. But you died and this is all she'll get'. And so on. At Temrugaon the husband and father of the dead girl stood at the head of the grave holding seven saja twigs. The others present said to the husband, 'If she were alive, what would you give?' He replied, 'A goat, a pig, a hen' and so on, and at each answer threw one of the twigs into the grave.

When an old and distinguished Muria dies the ceremonies are more elaborate. The body is carried out to burial with singing and dancing. An *akomāma* relative beats the *kātur-dhol* (death-drum) to summon the relatives and then goes dancing and beating his drum before the bier, singing, 'O dead man, now you are sleeping with your feet turned up, and your penis is pointing to the sky'. It is one of the social duties of the chelik and motiari to attend such funerals and escort the bier. I have recorded one of the Gondi songs that are sung on such occasions.

Chale dāda ro ro le.	Come, brothers, come.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Oru koru rājāl ra?	Who is this Raja?
Mānu yise rājāl ra.	It is our Raja.
Duri dipta dāntor ra.	The Raja passes through the Under World.
Duri dipta gajur ra.	There is a great noise in the Under World.

764
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

764
●839

Manjhpar te chimu ra. In the Middle World is silence.
Porro dipta chimu ra. In the Upper World is silence.
Rājān vase ev unil ra. Let us take the Raja home.
Bāra dindova arta ra. Twelve times have the folk been called.

Warīt dādi mavīt ra. Come, brothers, come.
Hajār muli gurh to ra. A thousand men have gathered.
Adu bādu hoda ra? What horse is this?
Bagri māro hoda ra. It is the horse Bagri Maro.
Tāmāng bālku ātak ra? What should we say of its legs?
Ai bālku na hoda ra. This horse has eight legs.
Tāmo talla ātak ra? What should we say of its heads?
Nālong talla na hoda ra. This horse has four heads.
Sono tāye khārwa ra. It has golden shoes.
Khanau yisa kartor ra. It has to wear these shoes.
Hīra tāye lagām ra. It has a diamond bridle.
Lagām peyri aditor ra. Catch the bridle and mount the horse.

Perke muney māney ra. There are men before and behind.
Oddng oddng pulus ra. There are police on either side.
Koda chhute valia ra. The horse begins to run.
Adu bādu mālāl ra? What is this palace?
Mālāl porro hairag ra. Above the palace flies a flag.
Chāron kotenj te hairag ra. On its four sides are flags.
Nao bhand ta mālāl ra. There are nine quarters of the palace.

Mālāl lopa jhulna ra; Inside there is a swing;
Sono tāye jhulna ra. The swing is made of gold.
Hīra tāye ghādi ra. The throne is made of diamonds.
Ghādi sopa kewil ra. Give him the throne.
Mālāl sopa kewil ra. Give him the palace.
Johār bhatu kewil ra. Greet him with Johar.
Dāl ra dādi dātu ra. Come away, brothers, come away.
Ai ai ai ai! Ai ai ai ai!

In this very interesting song, the horse Bagri Maro is, of course, the bier and its four bearers. The men and police on every side are the escorting chelik. The palace is the grave and the tomb that is usually built above it for an important man. The flags are the bits of cloth tied to overhanging trees or attached to the tomb itself. The throne is made of sticks and leaves on which the corpse is laid.

I also have a lengthy and very coarse song sung by the mourners as they go down to the stream to bathe after disposing of the corpse. I will give the first fifteen lines.

Chale dāda ro ro la. Come, brothers, come.
Ai ai ai ai! Ai ai ai ai!
Dātu ra dādi dātu ra, Let us now go hence,
Yeru māyāla dātu ra, Let us go to bathe in the stream,
Ghātuwa teke veyil ra, Let us go to the bathing-place,
Samand teke yer māyil ra. Let us bathe in the ocean.
Adu bādu rāni ra? What Rani is this?
Ade rājona rāni were ra. This is the Rani of that Raja.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Angar mute rāni re.	Angar Mute is the Rani.
Yar mujyō kilandu re.	Weeping, she is bathing in the water.
Jhāro jhāro kilandu re.	As she weeps the tears fall.
Pūdmaro dhoti re!	O her silken cloth!
Dhoti tenz kurandu re.	She looks at her cloth.
Tōna dudong ōteke re?	How can we describe her breasts?
Mākhr kōyang dudo re.	Her breasts are as the bel fruit.
Gādhem tikeda wāndung re.	From the bathing-place she is coming home.
Lonz tike kandung re	In the house
Mul gathe mōia re	There are so many relatives
Sojo hojo kilo re.	That we cannot count them.

The rest of the song describes Angar Mute's court, to which comes the Pargana Manjhi with small legs, his spear over his shoulder, a big-bellied Kotwar and many other officials. The Manjhi delivers judgement, giving a hundred rupees to the Raja and only a pair of bullocks for the Muria. 'One of the bullocks had no tail, the other had no horns.' Then the chelik and motiari who have escorted the corpse to the burial ground are described. There are sixty boys led by Kosi Leyur and sixty girls led by Gara Karre Mode, the Belosa of the ghotul, whose vagina is sixteen cubits long and whose pubic hairs are five cubits long. 'A jungle boar could roll in her vagina.' The boys break her bangles and push the pieces into her navel with a *jharay jharay noine*.

All this, which seems merely coarse to us, is exceedingly amusing to the Muria; the song is really a comic effort intended to relieve the tension of the funeral now that the main rites are done.

VI. Divining the Cause of Death

It is always important at a funeral to discover the cause of so monstrous and unnatural a thing as death. At Binjhli, when magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the Siraha medium recites a string of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty man is mentioned, the bier moves forward violently of its own accord. This method, which resembles the use of an Anga clan-god for divination, is common throughout the State, and Grigson has recorded a similar, though more elaborate, rite in use among the Hill Maria.[1]

At Kehalakot, the Muria remove some locks of the dead man's hair and a little earth from beneath his head. They make a small flag-pole with the hair and the earth and a saja leaf stuck on an ebony stick. They take this to the jungle and a boy holds it while the Siraha recites the names of any suspected persons or people. When the right word is uttered, the flag is said to quiver. At Kokori the villagers go to the boundary and put five heaps of rice in a row, one for Mahapurab, one for witchcraft, one for Mother Earth, one for the ancestors of the house, and one for any local godling who may have been troublesome. The people sit some distance away, and spend the time having their hair done by their relatives-in-law. Presently a crow flies down and pecks at one or other of the piles of rice, thus revealing the cause of death.

The *Sheelakni* divination is done with chickens on the second or third day after death. One chicken is taken from the house of the dead and one from

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769 535 front of him one samdhi carries water and another a stick. As they go along they beat the path and throw water on it saying, 'We are making a road before you, come slowly leaning on your stick; we are making a road for you, come samdhi to your house, don't stay outside'.

The bearded man, who is supposed to represent the soul of the dead, weary, hungry and exhausted comes walking slowly, bent like an aged man. Soon he falls to the ground exclaiming, 'I can go no further'. Then the samdhi says, 'You must drink this jawa-gruel' and they give him a drink of liquor and pull him up on his feet. He goes on a little more and falls on his feet again. Other people dance round him beating sticks against each other and all the people sing. He falls down again and again exclaiming that he is too weary and hungry to go further.

When they get near the house the bearded man and his two attendants roll on the ground and the family has to come out and beg them to bring the soul in. 'We will pay you your wages' they say, meaning that they will give them plenty of liquor. The daughter or sister of the deceased comes out with haldi, rice and water in a dish and washes the feet of the man who represents the soul.[1]

769 Inside the house they place a small stump, eight inches high, in the ground in the name of Bara Pen. There is a nail in the post and they hang the pot containing the fish on this and all relatives put haldi on it and offer pice to it saying, 'We have brought you here for your last marriage'. They sacrifice a cock to Bara Pen saying, 'Now keep this soul with you'.

They pour the water from the pot over the stump of the dead man, who is thus supposed to bathe in it. There is a curious idea that the fish must disappear as otherwise it will mean that the soul has not 'flown out of the pot to mingle with his ancestors'. Once when Lahari Maravi's father died, a witch kept the fish in the pot and would not let it fall out. They had to make special sacrifices before the soul was able to mingle with the Departed.

During the ceremonies of catching the soul and bringing it back to the house a number of songs are sung, of which the following are given as examples.

Song

769 539 *Re re nāgo re rela !*

Dāt ra dādi dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go.
Aga baga dākāt ra ?	Where are they going ?
Sono rupo bandīng ra,	To the gold and silver tank,
Aga yise dātu ra.	Let us go there.
Phauj lamre mānta ra.	The whole company is going.
Agāy yise ye wandur ra.	They have arrived there.
Sāi kori layor ra,	Seven score chelik,
Sāi kori layah kare ra,	Seven score motiari,
Agāy yise haydur ra,	They are going there,
Bandīng jhalke māndur ra.	Where waves move the water of the tank.
Agāy yise parahandur ra.	They are searching for it.
Jiwa hoji kindur ra,	They are searching for the soul,
Bagāy jiwa pado ra.	But they cannot find it.

[1] Such dramatic attitude give some point to Ridgeway's suggestion that serious drama originated from the worship of the, often dolled, dead. See Sir W. Ridgeway, *Drama and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races* (London, 1915).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

769
539

Dāda hārāl ītur ra,	His brother says,
Wāy ra bābu wāyu ra.	Come, father, come.
Idām injor ketur ra	When he said this
Jiwa injor wāndu ra.	The soul came.
Dāda hārāl poyindu ra,	His brother caught it.
Dātu dādi dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go.

Re re nāgo re rela!

This song explains itself so clearly that no commentary is needed. It is sung by chelik and motiari while the elder people are groping about in the water trying to catch some kind of living creature. The next song also gives an exact description of the rites that accompany the return of the soul, after it has been caught, to its home.

Songs

Ange hāri nihandu ra	Daughter-in-law puts it (the soul)
Puhna tānd te irandu.	In a new pot and shuts it up.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Ange hāri indu ra,	Daughter-in-law says,
Dāyu bābu dāyu ra!	Come, brother, come!
Sāt kori layor ra,	Seven score boys,
Sāt kori layāhhe ra,	Seven score girls,
Dand lawre māndur ra,	They go along,
Ange hāri poyse māndur ra	Daughter-in-law carries the pot on her head.
Lone yise yeutor ra,	They reach the house,
Ghāt ghadse māndur ra.	They come outside.
Lone yise yewkun ra	When they reach the house
Agāy yise rehandu ra.	She puts down the pot.
Nātenoru saga ra,	Wife-clansmen of the village,
Bāhar tore saga ra.	Wife-clansmen from outside have come.
Samdhi saga wāsmandur ra,	The wife-clansmen have come,
Helār bhai saga wāsmandur ra.	The brother-clansmen have come.
Ore yise talhikindu ra,	They are asking,
Jiwa muda tun talhikindu ra,	They ask for the ring of the soul.
Jiwa muda tun poyendur ra	The relatives
Saga sena poyendu ra.	All touch the ring.
Saga saina jiwa muda tun ra	The relatives tie the ring
Kasur pediya te dohandur ra;	On a broom;
Lopāra murwis pāl te ra,	Then take the broom inside,
Agāy yise dohandur ra.	And tie it to the cross-beam.
Rend rupaiya na dārango ra:	They give two rupees for liquor:
Dārango yise tach mandur ra.	They give liquor to all.
Saga saina tun hindur ra;	They give to the wife-clans:
Bhai bandun tun hitor ra.	They give to the brother-clans.
Lotor yise mānay ra	The people of the house
Johār bhetu hindur ra.	Salute them with Johar.
Johār bhetu kichun ra	After the Johar greeting
Apun āpunlokhe hondur ra.	The visitors go home.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769
539

The next song refers to the erection of the booth in honour of the Water Maiden whence the motiari carry the pot containing the soul up to the house.

Chole dada ro ro le
Gari poto hintor ra
Gailasa marri hintor ra,
Ai ai ai ai!
Rāni haniyātun gari ra
Hintor nima girla āmu ra.
Nima rāni dāyu ra!
Nima penn aloni ra.
Garh haniyār mata ra
Rāni haniyāna āndu ra.
Garh lopa hārēng ra?
Ghar lopa jhulna ra,
Sono tāye jhulna ra,
Chāndi tāye sakri ra,
Hira tāye gādi ra
Gādi porey udila ra.
Tāna porey itehe ra
Jora chawar artu ra.
Dari dipte gajur ata ra;
Niyu sangwar girla ra
Atev nima acho dayu ra.
Manjhpurte chim arta ra
Nima acho dayu ra.
Silāwāri layāk ra
Dātu hai dātu ra,
Mawa jiwa oil ra;
Harik mante dāyu hai
Lone nima mandaki ra.
Samdhi saga watar hai.
Helār hai watang ra,
Dand laware watar ra,
Lone tihe wontar ra.
Ai ai ai ai!

Come, brothers!
The Gaita's son
Makes a seat,
Ai ai ai ai!
In the Rani's name
For you he makes a seat.
Come O Rani!
You have become our god.
The house is ready
Of the Rani Kaniya.
What is there in the house?
There is a swing in the house,
The swing is of gold,
The chains are of silver,
The throne is of diamonds
On which she sits.
Above her
Are a pair of fly-whisks.
In this world there is much noise;
Come, for your friends
Are happy.
In the Middle World is silence;
Therefore come.
Silawari is a maiden,
Come, girl, come,
Bring our *jiwa* home;
Come willingly
And live in our house.
The wife-clan people have come, girl.
The sisters have come,
Come by the path,
Come home with the soul.
Ai ai ai ai!

Another song, recorded at Kokori, refers to the wild and lonely life of the soul in the jungle before it is brought home to live in the granary.

Bābu ēole bābu na!
Tuy hale bābu nunu!
Jau bābu jau na!
Jau bābu jau!
Kaha hale jawa bābu?
Kaha hale jau?
Pāni ghāte jau bābu,
Bāra bali kholi.
Jhar bhitar rahis bābu;
Ban bhitar rahis;
Pāni ghāte jau bābu.
Pāni ghāte jau.
Burjaun rahis bābu.
Pāni nahauk haru.

Brother, O brother!
Listen to us, brother!
Go, brother, go!
Go, brother, go!
Where should I go, brother?
Where should I go?
Go to the place of water, brother,
Where there are twelve rooms.
You were living in a tree;
You were living in the forest;
Go to the water-place, brother.
Go to the water-place.
You were in the dust, brother.
Now go to bathe.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

769
539 ●

Pîni nahank jau bîbu,	When you have bathed, brother,
Gadiya batuk jau.	Go, sit in the granary.
Nâwa luga pôdun bîbu,	Wearing a new cloth, brother,
Gadiya me batuo.	Sit in the granary.
Chîti cho dhar kowun bîbu,	Like a line of ants, brother,
Ghero bale jau.	Let us go home.
Age din cho dâda bîbu,	The elders of former days,
Ulay milak jau.	Go to mix with them.

This song, which is in Halbi, refers to the custom of east Kondagaon (and of other parts) of keeping the soul in the granary. The song ensures that the soul will come happily. It is said that the souls of the dead hear all things on earth the wrong way round. Mourning sounds to them like merry-making, and a song sounds like a wail.

VIII. The Bazaar Ceremony

In some villages in the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria go to the nearest bazaar to buy parched rice, gram and liquor. They walk round the shops scattering the rice and gram and then visit the grave of the dead man. Here they eat and drink a little and then go home saying to the soul of the dead, 'Come home with us'. They go into the Room of the Departed and it is believed that the soul follows them. 769

The mourners go to a bazaar. The women carry rice, bread and sweets in their baskets and sit down near the market-place, but away from it. They pretend to have a bazaar of their own and the men of the party go to them and pretend to buy. The widow or the chief female mourner, if the deceased was a man, comes and sits in the middle of the party; the Gaita offers fire and incense and the rest give her leaves and flowers. In some villages it is supposed that it is at this time that the soul of the dead man mixes with his ancestors. Then the widow leads the party widdershins round the bazaar and comes home. On their arrival at the house the mourners say to her, 'Now let us depart. You have had great sorrow, for your life has left you. You have had great expense, but don't worry. Live happily and eat your fill. God has given you sorrow, but if you brood on this sorrow overmuch who will care for your children?'

In the Mardapal Pargana they performed the same ceremony by walking round the place where the cattle rest at midday. In other villages, specially those at some distance from a bazaar, the people hold a mock bazaar in their own compound putting out for sale old clothes, bits of wood, seeds and beans. Instead of money they use the broken pieces of an earthen pot. This does not seem to take the place of the ordinary ceremony of bringing the soul in a pot from the river but is supplementary to it. If for any reason these ceremonies are not performed, a cock is sacrificed annually at the year's end. A neja 'tooth-twig' is also given so that the dead man can clean his teeth before eating.

The ceremonies are confused and vary from village to village and even from time to time. But the main outlines are clear. The soul of the dead man is supposed to be living outside his home and must be brought back. People go to the nearest stream or tank and catch some living creature which they bring with dance and song, and sometimes with an elaborate ceremonial, to his old home. There they believe the soul will rest for a time. Afterwards they take the ring representing the soul to the central shrine of all the members of the clan. There is thus a double mingling of a man's soul with the Departed,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769
539

From Sonawal village comes a Halbi song used at the time of quarrying the stone.

You were on the ground, O stone!
Come now to our house, and see your children.
Once you were a man,
Now you are a god (*deo*).
You were in the grave, O man!
Today we bring you to your home.
We will all feast and drink
In memory of you.
Ri ri loyo ri ri loyo!

The next step is to bring the stone to the memorial ground. Here is another Halbi song—which can also be used at the time of placing a memorial pillar at the grave.

Hearken, brother, hearken, brother!
You were a tree, brother,
You were a stone, brother,
You were out on the hillside, brother.
Today we remember you.
Come to your house, brother, for you are growing old.
Come to the granary and live with your family.
Limb to limb we will live with you,
We will hold each other's arms.
Come to the house, come to the granary.
We have no knowledge, teach us wisdom.
The clansmen are sitting: go to the house.
The clansmen have come in crowds,
Though the court is small and narrow.
There is not enough rice,
How are we to feed the clansmen?
There is nothing in the house;
Go, brother, and give them something.
There is not enough curry,
Yet thick as sal trees are the clansmen.
There is liquor from twelve stills,
Yet there is not drink for a drink apiece.
There are twelve sacks of rice,
Yet there is not enough to give each visitor a helping.
There are five measures of salt, three measures of chilli,
Two measures of haldi, yet there is not enough.
What can we do? You teach us.
Give us food, brother, and then there'll be enough.

This stress on the practical difficulties of entertainment is typical. As we have seen, many clans have abandoned the practice of erecting menhirs because of the expense. It may be noted that here a situation seems to be visualized in which the *kotokal* stone is erected at the same time that the soul is brought home to the house.

We now come to songs sung at the actual placing of the stone in position. It is probable that many of these songs are interchangeable; we must not think of them as carefully chosen and arranged as in an English hymnal.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Re re loyo re re la! re re loyo re re la!
Re re laita he ayo ra! Ayo bāba re re la!

769
539

Sora bora dhartin ra,	Sixteen-, twelve-storied earth,
Nāwa khandi prithi ra.	Nine-storied world.
Ida dharti te mandahi ra.	Lie down here to rest.
Nike kotum ta otum ra.	We leave you in the forest.
Mamat iga mandakom ra.	We shall not be here.

This song, in sharp distinction from its predecessor, lays all the stress on the fact that the soul is to stay in its stone house in the jungle. I will now give another Gondi song used at the erection of a *kotokal*. At the end of each line there is a refrain almost like a sigh—*Ye budha, O old man!*—addressing the dead.

Yenda budha yenda budha!	Dance, old man, dance!
Nihun kuri wātom ra.	We have come to see you.
Niya kelār miyār vāndom ra,	Your sons and daughters have come,
Niya tamdi saga wātorom.	Your relatives have come.
Udak dārango tatorom,	We've brought some liquor,
Niya bīta tatorom.	We've brought it for you.
Niya harsār kuri wātorom,	We've come for your ceremonies,
Hariyar mante yetā ra.	To make you happy.
Kenja budha kenja ra.	Listen, old man, listen.
Keri gābo mendul ra.	Your body is like the pith of a plantain tree.
Bes mundāng kālku ra.	Your legs are like fine pillars (of a house).
Berel ākī chhāti ra.	Your chest is like a banyan leaf.
Kurawal pite tala ra.	Your head is like an owl's.
Ali ākī moha ra.	Your face is like a pipal leaf.
Usir gatta chundi ra.	Your hair is like the usri grass.
Chundi malkeh komu ra.	Shake your hair.
Tindi kursi wāyom ra.	We haven't come to watch you eat.
Hariyar mante yenda ra,	Dance full of happiness,
Niya Māhāl kiykom ra.	We are making a palace for you.
Aga baga ron penu ra?	Where does your god come from?
Dhamda ton penu ra.	The god is from Dhamda.
Kenja budha kenja ra.	Listen, old man, listen.
Māhāl lopa barang ra?	What is inside the palace?
Sono taya jhulna ra,	If there was a golden swing inside,
Bārāng bāne āywār ra.	How beautiful it would be.
Jhulna jhule mayu ra	Swing to and fro on the swing
Nihun sewa kiykom ra.	And we will serve you.
Nihun puja kiyākom ra,	We will give an offering for you,
Kāla menda kiyākom ra.	We will give a black ram for you.
Tāns bhojān kenon ra,	[*The dead man speaks*]
Pujāri lāmo lengra himu ra.	I won't eat that,
Tāns bhojān kiyaka ra	I must have the long-tailed one.
Pujāri ahar dupu himu ra.	I will eat that
Achha sewa kimu ra	If you give some incense.
Girdā wānāh kimu ra.	Serve me well
	That I may be well pleased.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769
539

'The long-tailed one' mentioned in the song is, of course, a bull. Lanji-Dhamda is the traditional home of many of the northern Muria whence they migrated into Bastar.

I have already given extracts from the lengthy song recorded at Dugabangal,[1] which is sung during the transport and erection of the stone; it is interesting to note how closely life and love and death are allied in Muria thought, which regards them as a single process. The bulk of this Hanal Pata is indeed about life, and only at the tragic end do the singers discourse of death.

The song begins with some sententious lines about the universality of death.

Sora dhāru dharti roye deva,	Sixteen-storied world,
Nau bhanāu pirthi ra ale!	Nine-storied earth!
Singār mālor dīpu roye deva;	Here is the island of mankind;
Igāy hāyvālor ra ale.	Here all die.
Mānc manja igāy roye deva,	Men, ants, worms,
Hurr pate igāy ra ale,	Animals are here,
Bhagavān ise pandtu ra deva,	Bhagavan has made them,
Saboy tune pandtu ra ale.	He has made them all.
Kondāng manās hurāna ra,	See with the eyes,
Kālku manās dīyna ra ale,	Walk with the feet,
Kaiku manās kām kiyāna ra,	Work with the hand,
Tori manās barkāna ra ale.	Talk with the mouth.
Idām bhagavān pandtu ra,	So has Bhagavan ordained,
Singār mālor dwīpute ra ale.	So provided in this world.
Bāhchiteh ise igāy ra,	Here men quarrel,
Koyma kitek igāy ra ale,	Here men laugh,
Dharmu kitek igāy ra,	Here is virtue,
Pāpu kitek igāy ra ale.	Here is sin.
Ide singāl dwīpne ra	In this world
Rājālor ise mantor ra ale.	Live royally.
Samdki saga igāy ra,	Here are the samdhi clans,
Bhaibandi igāy ra ale.	Here too are the brother-clans.

After this the song continues along the lines which I have already given.

XIV. Substitutes for the Menhir

769

The Muria erect memorial poles and pillars as well as stones. At Modenga they described how they made a small bundle of straw with rice inside it called *dhusir* for a man and a small bamboo basket (*gappa*) for a woman. They put marks of haldi and oil as at a marriage on the wooden pillar and some also on both the baskets and give them to the sister or daughter of the dead. The girl has to take these to the house and from that day has to worship Lagar Pen who comes to the house then. Every three years thereafter she must offer a pig to Lagar Pen. If she has given birth to a male child in the interval a male pig will be sacrificed, and if a girl has been born a female pig.

It is generally said that the erection of the wooden pillar and the application of oil and haldi to it represents the second wedding of the dead. Here the pillar is usually made of saja. At Phauda the Muria described how the saja branch must be cut by a member of an *ahomāma* clan after he has offered rice, pulse and liquor to it saying, 'I am going to take you in honour of the

[1] See pp. 89–92.

766 and make customary offerings in the name of the tiger, the dead man and Bagharam Pat to clear themselves of infection. If this is not done, the tiger haunts their dreams.

After an interval, which varies from a week to three years, the people go to bring the soul of the dead man to the proper place, where it will be mingled with his ancestors. The household prepares a feast and invites all relatives. At the east of the village they build an open shed with two poles in the middle and on the floor trace a square with rice-flour. A small pot is filled with flour and put in the middle of the square, and above it another empty pot closed with a lid. A ring, threaded on a fine cord and tied between the two poles above the pot, is swung to and fro. The elders sit round and sing the Burkal Pata, or Tiger Song, which I will quote presently. As they sing this, the dead man's soul comes, the string breaks and the ring falls on to the lid of the pot.

The Gaita at once removes the upper pot and examines the flour in the lower vessel. If there is a 'tiger's mark' on the flour, they believe that a tiger will again devour the man at his next birth—and since the man will be reborn in his own family this means, of course, that the tiger will again visit and harry the same village. If there is a cow's mark, the more Hinduized Muria say that the dead man will be reborn as a cow and then be eaten by a tiger. But if there is a man's footprint, all will be well. They then take the ring, which is known as *Bāgh-kandī mundi*, to a tree (usually a saja tree) nearby, and hang it up there saying, 'Now this is your home; live here and don't trouble us'.

After this the people feast, but not on meat. When all is over they throw the pots, leaves and leaf-cups into the river, bathe and return home.

A cat's footprint on the floor is considered very ominous. 'When a man is eaten by a tiger', I was told at Remawand, 'his soul dwells in the tiger's tail. On the same day of the week on which he was cremated, a small cat forms itself out of the ashes of the pyre and wanders away into the jungle. If a man sees it and recognizes it, calling it by the name of the dead man, it disappears. If not, and if the cat looks at the man, and he says nothing, another tiger will come to trouble the village.'

If a man is killed by a bear, the same ceremonies are observed.

The Burkal Pata, which is sung while the 'ring of the tiger-ghost' swings to and fro above the earthen pots, is often dragged out to an enormous length. It consists of a formula, which can be repeated as often as necessary, accusing one god after another of having sent the tiger which killed the man.

766
539

Porro sātu dīpu ra.	In the Upper World are seven islands.
Ale ale ale ale!	*Ale ale ale ale!*
Ariy sātu dīpu ra.	In the Lower World are seven islands.
Ide dīpu avoy ra.	Bad is this Middle World.
Nīte nāye talur ra:	There is the Village Mother:
Awe sangu manong ra:	She did not help him:
Awe tinda hitung ra.	She gave him up to be devoured.
Tēna kawār badu ra?	Who follows after her?
Use mudiyāl penu ra.	There is Use Mudial Pen.
Nima bāra tinwi ra?	Was it you who ate him?
Nima baliy hati ra;	You were wandering round about;
Nai pairsi hati ra.	You had a dog with you.
Bāru joring nai ra.	There are twelve pairs of dogs.
Nima chuchch hiti ra.	You gave orders to the dog.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Guddūng oda hādu ra,	It came hiding in the grass,
Hupe ichha poyāndu ra.	It caught him like a rat.
Hajār rupiya ta jīwa ra.	The soul is worth a thousand rupees.
Jīwa wakshān kiti ra.	You have destroyed the soul.
Ade jīwa pudlo ra.	The soul cannot return again.
Bada diya ta puja ra?	What offering did he fail to give?
Puja hadu barak matar ra?	Did he fail to give what he had promised?
Adenh ise titi ra?	Was that why you ate him?
Nima gala tinui ra.	But it wasn't you who ate him.
Nikuna ijor ilān ra.	I said it was you (but I was wrong).
Hongu dāpu āyma ra:	Don't be angry:
Sāte barāng johār ra.	I give you a sevenfold greeting.

Use Mudial Pen is acquitted, and now Hirto Mudial Pen is accused in exactly the same words. He too is found innocent and the singers, afraid that they may have angered him, beg him not to be offended and greet him seven times with their Johar. Then in the song as I have it recorded, Muyang Waddai is accused—presumably of black magic—then Lingo Mudial Pen, Kara Harra Pen, the Rau of Tipagarh, the Kandra Kaniya, the Rau of Raughat, the Mata of the man's own home, and finally Ispural. Of Ispural, which is a variant on Mahapurub or Bhagavan, the Supreme Being in whose hands are the issues of life and death, it is said,

Nimāy ise titi ra.	It was you who ate him.
Hāyna hago antu ra;	The time of his death had come;
Adenh ise oti ra.	That was why you took him.

But even Ispural is proved innocent, and at last the singers decide that it was the dead man's own ancestors, the Departed of his own house, who desired his company and sent the tiger to bring him.

Lota ise mudiyālor ra,	The ancient of the house,
Abe ise tilur ra,	It was he who ate him,
Jori pandila otung ra.	To gain a companion for himself.
Mākun jori tilatur ra,	He left our companion behind,
Tanka ise otung ra.	That was why he took him.[1]

XVII. The Danger of the Abnormal: The Ondar Muttai

Throughout India the ghost of a woman who has died in pregnancy, in child-birth or immediately after child-birth is feared and dreaded.[2] The

[1] Russell and Hiralal have many accounts of the precautions taken by various tribes after a man has been killed by a tiger, some of which resemble those of the Muria. They describe the rites of the Baiga (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 84), Bhattra (II, p. 274), Dumal (II, p. 536), Gond (III, p. 81 and III, p. 95), Halba (III, p. 274), Kalanga (III, p. 308), Kawar (III, p. 506), Kurmi (IV, p. 79), Panwar (IV, p. 346), Sanosi (IV, p. 496) and Savara (IV, p. 483). There is no particular reason in most cases why the customs recorded should be peculiar to the various tribes; nor why they should be recorded for some tribes and not for others. Probably very similar rites are common throughout the Central Provinces and indeed most of aboriginal India.

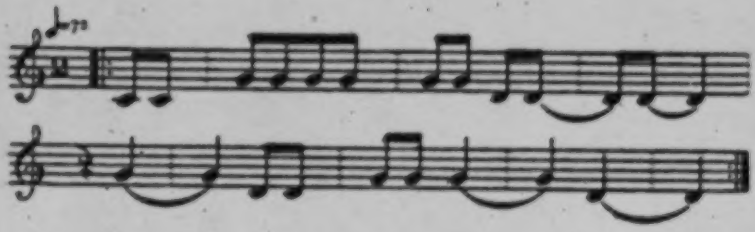
S. C. Roy has described the rites of the Uraon and I have described a Baiga ceremony that I personally witnessed in the Pandaria Zamindari (*The Baiga*, pp. 298ff.). According to Russell and Hiralal, the Gond and Halba resemble the Muria in suspending a ring over a pot of water, which they watch till it falls. The Bhattra, Kawar, Uraon and others dress a man as a tiger and either tie him up, banish him or force him to release his prey, with the idea that what is done in symbol will be achieved in effect.

[2] The Churelin or Chunni, as this ghost is called elsewhere, is a familiar figure in Indian ethnographic literature. One of the earliest accounts is by Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I,

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

to death.[1] Tallur Muttai asks him to marry her, but he refuses and runs away to Semurgaon, where 'being weary' he turns into a stone, and has ever since been worshipped.

This rather tedious account yet gives an exact picture of the working of the Muria's mind when he turns it to theology. The distribution of the gods probably represents very ancient migrations of the tribe. As the different Muria families moved here and there, it was necessary that their gods also should move and, in order to emphasize the unity of the tribe, should be related to one another. A Pus Kolang chant sung by the chelik of Phulpar gives a good picture of the multiplicity, variety and confusion of the Muria pantheon.



Aho revaloyo revala var loyo var loyo aha revala!

O the sixteen divisions of the earth,
The nine divisions of the sky!
Who is lord of the earth?
The lord of the earth is Tallur Rai.
Give him a good Johar.

O the hoar-frost and Pati Pen!
Give him a good Johar.

O the tiger and Kadrengal!
Give him a good Johar.

Oho the red Sun like a blazing log
Oho the haldi-coloured Moon!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in a corner is the bed,
In the midst is the ocean
Nearby is the Kutala.
Oho the many baby stars!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in the ghotul Madan Matal Rai!
In the village Jamedario Mata!
Oho Nelo Maria Rai!
Give him a good Johar.

[1] For a full account of the Lingo legend, see Chapter VIII.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

776
539

In the banyan is the cat,
In the pipal Mirchuk Rai,
In the deep gully Bhutuk Rai,
In the Hutang stream is Kaniyal Rai,
Give them a good Johar.

Near Ranghat is Talachetang Rai,
In Jabkastang stream is Kaniyal Rai,
Give him a good Johar.

To the Rau of the pass, Johar.
To Tipagardha Rau Rai, Johar.
To Hitagardha Rau Rai, Johar.
To Kodagardha Rau Rai, Johar.

Below the pass is Maoli Rai,
Below the hill is Maoli Rai,
In Dantegarh is Maoli Rai,
In Antagarh is Maoli Rai.
Give, give a good Johar.

Salute them all with good Johar—

Kana Mudial Pennur Rai [Lingo's brother Bechor's son]
Bechor Kodor Pennur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Budha Mudial Pennur Rai [*Akomâma* to Lingo]
Guta Mudial Pennur Rai
Dewan Mudial Pennur Rai
Kada Hural Pennur Rai
Kokce Mudial Pennur Rai
Ocke Mudial Pennur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kola Koso Pennur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Halel Dokari Muttai Pennur Rai
Halai Dokari Pennur Rai [Lingo's mother's sister]
Hirgiri Pennur Rai [son of Halai Dokari]
Son Kumar Pennur Rai [son of Kanda Dokara]
Nettungundi Pennur Rai [son of Lingo]
Lingo Mudial Pennur Rai.

Oho the eighteen instruments of Lingo Rai!
The hunting horn hanging from his shoulder,
The Madan Parai drum at his loins,
The Pujna Rai (anklets) on his feet,
The Dhumir Rai (fiddle) across his chest,
The Jhikar Rai (Jew's harp) with the wind passing through his nose,
The Sulur Rai (flute) played with his mouth.
Give him a good Johar.

Salute them all with good Johar—

Dandki Dokari Pennur Rai,
Sunga Deo Pennur Rai [Lingo's brother]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Paik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's father's brother's son]
Aik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Togmjdeo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Perma Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's brother]
Bhumrandari Penur Rai [Lingo's elder brother's wife]
Pordegumal Penur Rai [Lingo's daughter's husband]
Nulemuttai Penur Rai [Lingo's sister]
Poche Dokara Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Maria Moghraj Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kokal Bidral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kurumtala Penur Rai [Lingo's brother [1]]

By this time the reader probably feels that he has had enough. But he need not fear that I propose to take him much further into the intricate and often contradictory relationships of the Muria gods. The subject needs a book to itself and an investigator deeply interested in the theology of primitive peoples. All I wish to do here is to impress on the reader the great complexity of the Muria pantheon, and the intimate human way in which its various members are interrelated.

The gods then come into being by migration from outside and by the division of the tribe into various clans. Many of the gods named in the song are clan-gods, and as the clans split up new gods come into being. But this is not the only way that gods are born. We already have a hint of a fundamental Muria belief in the statement that Tallur Muttai sent her servant to trouble men with disease in order to get food-sacrifice to keep her quiet. The gods are troublesome and expensive, and the more troublesome they are the more they are honoured. This is, of course, the normal Gond method of attracting attention. A Gond wife, who is devoted to her husband, sulks and makes a nuisance of herself, not because she is in a temper, but simply because she judges that to be the best way of getting herself noticed.

Some of the gods, however, have come into being as a result of actual incidents, no doubt greatly magnified by the course of time. I have only room for a few examples of this tendency. In a village near Bishrampuri there is the shrine of Pendrawandin Pen, a goddess about whom there has been much controversy. Long ago, so runs the local legend, a Muria of the Naitami clan had a daughter called Hidde for whose hand a Poyami boy called Kuria was serving as Lamhada. Hidde's father made a dam across a stream, but the water kept breaking through. Then one day a dream came to him, 'Worship me and I will stop the water'. The Muria thought in his heart 'Whom shall I sacrifice?' He decided to offer the Lamhada boy, Kuria. He took him to the stream, pushed him in and piled earth above his body. At once the dam became firm and strong. But now Hidde began to search for her lover, and when she came to the dam she saw one finger sticking out of the earth. When she saw this she jumped into the stream and was drowned also.[2] After a few days, her ghost began to trouble her father, and when he asked who it was, she replied, 'I am Pendrawandin, your daughter; worship me and I will trouble you no more'. Then began the cult of Pendrawandin and her consort Kuria Pen. Unfortunately, at the time of her death Hidde was in

[1] The word 'brother' is used in both its actual and classificatory senses: the Muria are very confused over these relationships.

[2] With this story compare the legend of Ganga and Beni, who are associated with the source of the Wainganga river at Mundara.—R. V. Russell, *Saoni District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 178.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of slag on the ground before them, and prayed to Tallur Muttal, 'Look after these children. Keep them safe from other gods'. Lingo gave fire to Mankor Singa, and bade him tend it so that it did not go out till they returned. Then they went to dance in seven villages.

After seven days Godakare Mode and the three score motiari brought a bamboo and decorated its shoots with gold. 'If they have been faithful to us and if all is going well, it will stand up of its own accord and no one will be able to pull it up.' So thinking they welcomed the boys home. The boys hung their sticks on the tree and sat down to smoke. The bamboo stood of its own accord and none could uproot it.

Then came Lingo and was pleased with the stick. He tried to pull it up, but it would not move. Then he cut it down, at the bottom, near the ground. From the stump grew a semur tree; ever since, the semûr tree has had thorns like the small branches of a bamboo.

Then the motiari said, 'We too must go to dance with you'. So Lingo took them for the Chait Dandar and the Hulki dances. At Diwali, the girls said to the boys, 'You go off by yourselves in Pus; we will go to dance by ourselves at Diwali'.

The tradition of Lingo's association with the ghotul is still very much alive. Every year thousands of boys take great pains to perfect a complicated and rather tedious dance and set out on a pilgrimage in his honour, which must be marked by accurate performance and complete chastity. In some ghotul, as at Masora, a dhol drum hangs near the door in honour of Lingo. Lingo in his turn protects the ghotul which he has founded; no evil dream can approach, no sin can be committed, and no girl will become pregnant for three years after puberty.

The chelik remember Lingo, with their ancestors and the Earth, whenever they drink liquor; they offer him a few drops of mahua spirit whenever they play their drums at a marriage; even in eastern Kondagaon, they invite him to weddings saying, 'This is your marriage, your haldi-oil, not ours but yours'; they still sing many songs in his honour. Most of these are inexpressibly boring, consisting as they do of a long and largely inaccurate recital of Lingo's relations. This poetic and romantic figure has not inspired much poetry in his worshippers. The following song is typical.

Lingo Pata

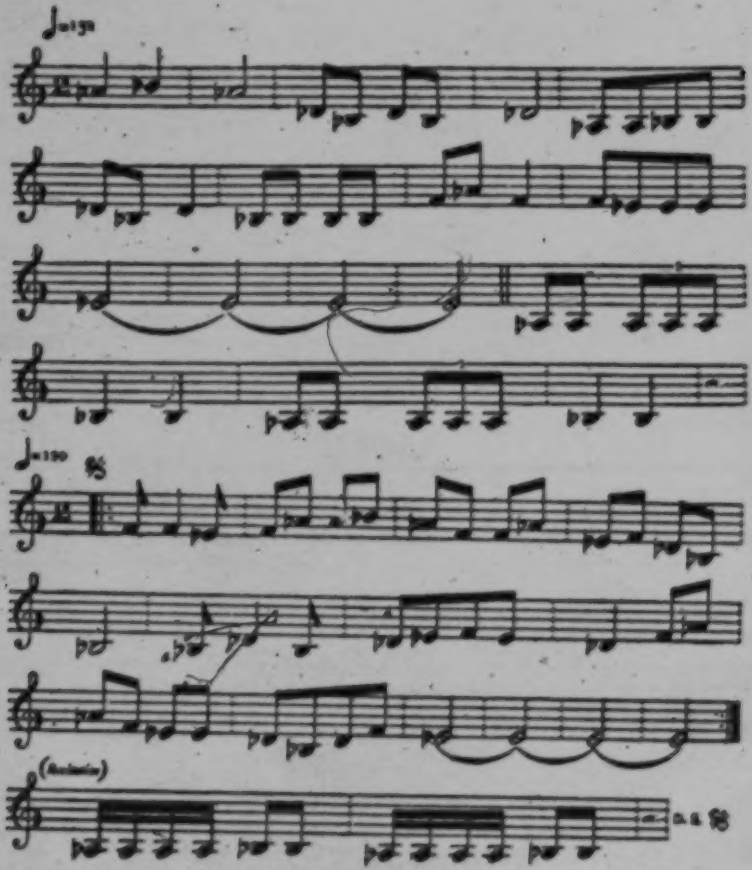
Re re loyo re re la rela
Re re loyo re re la re re la rela

Bâra bhai lingo ra layor,	O twelve Lingo brothers,
Pinding kamking niya ra layor.	There's haldi and flour for you.
Dây ra lingo dêyu ra lingo!	Come, Lingo, come!
Pinding kamking yakti ra lingo.	With haldi and flour we anoint you.
Wâyna pâta mai ra lingo.	May songs unknown come to us.
Wâyna dâka mai ra lingo.	May steps unknown come to us.
Pahili pâta niya ra lingo,	The first song is yours,
Maria pâta maina ra lingo.	The Maria song is ours.
Pahili dâka niya ra lingo.	The first steps are yours,
Maria pâta layor ra lingo.	The Maria song is the chelik's.
Wây ra lingo wâyu ra lingo!	Come, Lingo, come!
Nana wâyla parron ra layor.	I can't come, chelik.
Nêwa bulo manta ra layor.	I've got work to do, chelik.
Kudâr holing butong ra layor.	I've got to fix the handle of my hoe.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883
533
539
973

At Masora, the chelik sing in Halbi to Lingo before a wedding.



Lingo, balun, Lingo!
Kāy kāṛe āy chalikman?
Bila dhare bila ucuṭa parli bila dhare jao.
Macho buta ās.
Tucho kāy buta ās?
Macho korki dheta kharto ās.
Tucho bigur nāoy gīt gobind tucho.
Pahilo tucho nigcho-mand.
Aru nigcho hardi.
Tucho āy nāmato gil hanu āy.

Lingo, say, Lingo!
Why have you come, chelik?
We've come to invite you to the wedding.
I have work to do.
What work have you to do?
I must make a handle for my hoe.
Without you nothing can be done.

To you liquor must first be given.
The haldi must first be put on you.
Only with you the song goes well.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

with flour. At Karanji the Sirdar and Baidar had to escort the motiari when they went to the forest to gather leaves for plates and cups, and the Jamadar had to arrange for small boys and girls to carry the drums when they went to some other village for a dance. At Baniagaon, the Matatgar had to look after the drums; the Baidarin arranged how the motiari were to comb and massage the boys in the evenings; the Kotwar and Chalan were the lawyers who regularly appeared to defend girls accused of some breach of ghotul discipline.

In a song recorded at Gawari, there is a reference to the duty of the Jaramkal and Supedar, who in this ghotul have to escort the girls when they go to fetch leaves. This is the Aking Koyana Karse Pata and, as they sing it, the motiari pretend to be picking leaves.

Sir pula helo dori ned weke dākāt roy sango ned weke dākāt roy?	Where are you going today, friends?
Sir pula helo dori marm āhing dākāt roy sango marm āhing dākāt roy.	We are going to pick leaves for the wedding.
Sir pula helo dori won tori oyhāt roy sango won tori oyhāt roy?	Who are you taking with you, friends?
Sir pula helo dori jaramkal supedār sango jaramkal supedār roy.	We are taking Jaramkal and Supedar.

In some ghotul, boys' titles are given to girls. At Taragaon and Atargaon, the two leading girls are called Malik and Chalan; they are the 'ghotul wives' of boy-leaders bearing the same names. At Rengagondi, the three chief girls are called Malik, Kotwar and Chalan for the same reason. In Nariha, the girls' leader is called Chalan. These villages are in the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas, and the custom seems confined to that area. But in ghotul, especially in the neighbourhood of Kondagaon, where the boys and girls 'pair off', it is not uncommon (as we have already seen at Esalnar) for girls to take names which are really equivalent to the English 'Mrs'. Thus, in Pirapal and Haddigaon, girls are called Kotwarin (or Mrs Kotwar, the ghotul-wife of the Kotwar), Supedarin (or Mrs Supedar) and Mukhwanin.

The ghotul titles are linguistically a very mixed collection. A. N. Mitchell, who has traced the derivation and meanings of a list drawn from over a hundred ghotul in every part of the Muria area, has derived them from Urdu, Hindi, Halbi, Gondi and English. The English titles are generally corruptions of names used by State officials; thus Captan, or Captain, is the name by which the State Superintendent of Police is usually known in the villages; Engineer is the head of the P.W.D.; Dakdar is the local Assistant Surgeon; Orsel is the Overseer of work on the roads. Urdu and Hindi titles for excise, revenue and military officers are common, and so are the Hindi titles for such subordinates as the constable, watchman, headman, or forest-guard. It is curious that the title Kotwar, which in Muria villages is often held by a despised Ganda or Mahara, is in the ghotul usually an indication of importance.

Gondi names are more common among girls than boys. Among boys' titles we may notice Belumdar, owner of a *biri* or garden, Ghotulsai—lord of the ghotul; Neliya—a good fellow, and the very common variants of Laharu which seems to imply in Gondi a 'dandy' or Don Juan, the word being derived from the Hindi *laharīya*, striped cloth, the wearing of which is regarded as very fast and 'advanced'. Some of the Gondi titles seem more like nicknames than anything else—thus Uden or Kude, meaning someone who sits down

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 563

Such privileges are not universal or uncontrolled. In Junganar only very small Ganda girls may massage the boys or sleep in the ghotul; once they are mature, though they may attend the dances, they may not massage and must say Johar at a distance. This rule seems to have been made by the Ganda elders rather than by the Muria. For the Muria are generally more anxious to control the behaviour of the boys of other castes; girls are allowed to do what they like.

X 883 563 539

The relations of Muria and Muria-Lohar are discussed in more than one song. Here is a Manda dance song from Tursani village.

Jāging poysi weke dāda roy seng bussur bhushās?	Where are you going with your bamboo basket, brother?
Nia bāti pāri dāda?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori hile bai.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wāde lyona bai.	I am a Lohar boy, girl.
Nima weke dān ton dāda?	Where are you going, brother?
Irum mara koyala bai	To get charcoal of mahua wood, girl.
Koyala pandi dān tona bai	I am going to make charcoal, girl.
Naua gala wāyāka dāda.	I will come with you, brother.
Nima icho wāyama bai.	Don't come with me, girl.
Jāti dube māyār bai.	Your caste will be broken, girl.
Sarus pite jori dāda.	Two cranes make a perfect pair, brother.
Jori ise ayakāt dāda.	We will pair off like them, brother.

A Har Pata, sung when the girls of Kehalakot go to dance in other ghotul at Diwali, is on the same theme.

Pāri porro nititon bai le.	On the bank of the field you were standing, girl.
Niya pāri wāti roy bai le?	What is your clan?
Pāri ori hile roy dāda le.	I have no clan, brother.
Nāwa pāri ātek roy dāda le.	If I had a clan, it would be yours.
Jāti sori layāna dāda le.	I am a girl of the Sori clan, brother.
Niya pāri wāti roy dāda le?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori hile roy bai le.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wade layona bai le	I am a blacksmith boy.
Titi dāda uiti roy dāda le,	You have eaten and drunk me, brother,
Jāti dube kiti roy dāda le.	And have made my caste sink down.

Naturally such an arrangement sometimes leads to trouble. At Sarandi a Lohar chelik ran off with a Muria motiari, and since then outsiders have not been admitted there. At Gohora, the Saidar—a Rawat boy—eloped with the Piosa who was a Muria girl, and the ghotul was henceforward closed to visitors.

VI. Relations between Different Ghotul

X 883 574 431

Members of different ghotul meet at dances, marriages and festivals. They visit each other on dancing expeditions throughout the year. Sometimes they have dancing contests. Neighbouring ghotul send gifts to each other, especially at the time of eating parched rice at Diwali. Thus when I was at Sidhawand, the boys put aside a good portion of their parched rice to send to the Kokameta ghotul with which they had relations of special friendship. At Banjora they sent one measure of rice to Bhopna and one measure to Kokori asking the boys and girls of those ghotul to share their feast. Bhopna and Kokori returned the gifts at the Chherta festival.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A 32 Gond A 32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

Generally relations between the ghotul are friendly enough, but quarrels do occasionally arise. Once at a dance the boys of Kabonga failed to perform the Johar Par properly and salute the boys of Hatipakna who were dancing with them. The insulted chelik slung their drums over their shoulders and went away, and the Kabonga boys had to give them a rupee's worth of liquor before they would consent to dance with them again.

Formerly the boys and girls of two neighbouring villages, Kanhargaon and More Berma, used to go to the same ghotul which stood on the boundary between them. But the time came when the boys of Kanhargaon complained that they were unfairly treated in the distribution of motiari by the More Berma Kotwar. It was found impossible to adjust the matter and in the end the Kanhargaon boys and girls separated and built another ghotul just within their own village boundary not more than a hundred yards away. The members of the two ghotul meet at marriages and festivals, but they never visit one another nor do the chelik have anything to do with each other's motiari.

Boy or girl visitors from other ghotul are always warmly welcomed. When a boy's parents move from one village to another the boy automatically becomes a member of the ghotul in his new home and either retains his original title or is given a new one. A boy visitor is often put to the test. The girls push little bits of wood under their rings before they massage him 'to see how much he can stand'. By this means they can hurt a boy considerably, for even without rings the girls' massage is vigorous enough to make the skin smart and sting. If a boy passes his test successfully, the Belosa (with the approval of the Kotwar) may invite him to sleep with her. Generally a Muria boy visitor from another ghotul is given a partner for the night.

When a girl goes visiting another village she has to be more careful. She generally stays in her house and does not go to the ghotul. When the chelik hear of it they send two motiari to fetch her. They go to the house and say, 'Sister, come, do come to our ghotul'. She generally replies, 'No, sisters, no, I must not', to which the girls answer, 'O, just come for a little singing and then we will bring you home'. If she still refuses all the boys and girls go to the house and sing taunt-songs outside until she weakens. If she does go, she must return home for the night. She ought not actually to sleep in another ghotul. In some villages there is a special official whose task it is to escort such visitors home. When a motiari returns to her own village the chelik examine her very carefully and if it is proved that she slept in another ghotul, she is severely punished for what is regarded as treachery to her own boys. But this, like all Muria rules, is neither absolute nor universal. The girls who go on the Diwali dancing tours always sleep in the ghotul of the villages they visit and are entertained by the chelik.

Unknown girls are sometimes regarded with suspicion. They may not keep the menstruation rules. They may be witches in disguise. A story from Atargaon points the moral.

> There was a mother and her daughter. The daughter says, 'Marry me to someone'. The mother says, 'I know no one, daughter'. 'I will go and find a husband for myself; give me a basket and I will go today.' The girl leaves her home and starts out to search for a husband. On the way a chelik meets her. He catches her by the shoulder. 'Why have you caught me? Let me alone, brother, let me alone.' 'I won't let you go unless I take you to the jungle, then you may go.' Then says that girl, 'Very well, hold this basket for me while I relieve myself'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 574 539

She goes among the bushes and turns into a tigress. She comes roaring and kills and eats the boy.

Then she becomes a girl again and goes on her journey. She meets a man fetching wood. He speaks to her and she turns into a tigress again and kills him. At last she reaches a Saturday bazaar. The bazaar is finished but she sits down near the carts of the merchants. Four men see her beauty and desire her. She makes them all mad and they run away.

A little boy is going round the bazaar picking up scraps, bits of lac, cigarette ends, grain and other odds and ends. He sees the girl and tells his grandfather about her. That grandfather is a magician. 'Come, daughter, and marry my son.'

That night the chelik hear that a beautiful girl has come to the magician's house. 'Let's bring her to the ghotul.' They go to the house and bring her singing and dancing on the way. They make her sleep with one of the chelik. Presently she says, 'This is too crowded, let's go outside'. They go out and the boy spreads his mat while the girl goes to relieve herself outside the compound. She comes roaring, a tigress, and kills her lover, then returns as a girl to the magician's house. The chelik suspect what has happened and go again and bring her by force to the ghotul. Once again they make her sleep with a boy to discover if it was really she who was the killer. Once again she takes the boy outside and goes to relieve herself, but this time the boys are waiting armed with sticks and when she comes into the compound they fall upon her and kill her.

VII. Leaving the Ghotul

X 883 594

A girl automatically leaves the ghotul when she is married and must never enter it again. In many places she gives a feast to the ghotul members either on the first day of the marriage ceremony or a week or so afterwards. Sometimes it is her duty to massage every chelik for the last time before she finally goes to her husband's house. The bridegroom also may give a present of a basket of mahua oil-seed which is pounded and cleaned, after which the motiari massage the chelik with it, including their legs.

The only exception to the rule that bars a married girl and even a widow from entering the ghotul is when a girl is married very young. She is then permitted to sleep in the dormitory and join in all its activities up to the time of her first menstrual period. In the Jamkot ghotul, for example, Kariya was married to a little girl and she continued to attend. Here they said that so long as the girl had not been sent officially to her husband, whether she had passed the menarche or no, she might continue as a motiari, but I think that this is unusual.

X 883 582

Such child-marriages are comparatively rare. Where children are married, it is generally in villages where there have been scandals in the ghotul and the parents, instead of interfering with the ghotul routine, adopt this means of preventing pre-nuptial pregnancy. At Korenda I was told that 'in the old days, when there were neither roads nor motor-cars, the Muria were honest, truthful and virtuous'. A boy was not considered suitable for marriage 'until he had made two or three long trips with a load', say from Narayanpur to Kondagaon or Kondagaon to Jagdalpur. The girls were not considered ready 'until their breasts were fully grown and eyes beginning to slope downwards'. But now the situation has changed. *Abiha rāj kalau, larka larki malau*—'The kingdom of today is black, the boys and girls are like monkeys'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883 517

They come one by one, carrying their sleeping-mats and perhaps their drums. The little boys bring their daily 'tribute' of wood, 'clock in' by showing it to the official responsible and throw it in a corner. The elder boys gather round the fire; one takes a half-smoked leaf-pipe from his turban and ignites it by placing a bit of glowing wood in the cup, another plays a few notes on his flute, a third spreads his mat and lies down. The Kotwar inspects the buildings to see if the girls have done their work properly. The Sirdar comes in tired and calls a youngster to massage his legs. Gradually all the boys assemble.

At the same time the motiari are collecting near by, in someone's house, or just round the corner; at Binjhli and other villages where there is a special girls' house they gather there laughing and chatting generally, I was told, about the day's encounters with the chelik. If a group of girls have to come some distance, as from another hamlet, they often sing on the way.

Then at last the girls come in, with a rush, all together and gather round their own fire. After a while they scatter, some sitting with the boys, others singing in a corner, some lying down. Nearly always there are boys and girls who are tired after the long day's work at home, and these lie down at once in a corner or in one of the smaller huts—to lie flat on the face with head buried in the arms is a popular ghotul attitude when one is alone.

[516]

The others occupy the time in pleasant harmony; sometimes they dance for an hour or two; the smaller children play rampageous games; sometimes they just sit round the fire and talk; in the hot weather on a moonlit night you will see them scattered all about the compound. Often they sing lying down, two by two, chelik with motiari, or in little groups. A boy tells a story; they ask riddles; they report on the affairs of the day; there may be a ghotul trial; they plan a dancing expedition or allot duties at a wedding. I shall never forget the sight in some of the larger ghotul of 60 or 70 youngsters thus engaged.

[533]

Among songs, the most popular are the taunt songs which boys and girls sing against each other, especially those with proper names that can be changed to suit the occasion. Everybody in turn is paired off, often with forbidden relatives; one after another they are caught in compromising situations; they are engaged, married and divorced, re-married.

Songs

X883 539

1

Re re la rela re re la rela re re la.

Korka ta doyo oiki helo tiloka.	O my little sister Tiloka, take the cow out of the cow-shed.
Tāna osi bāra kiyākān dāda silledār?	Why should I take the cow from the shed, O brother Silledar?
Mehwāl kopāl lewa bāra kiyākān?	There is no grazier, Kopa, why should I take it?
Bāra na dāye oiki helo tiloka?	O little sister Tiloka, what do you want?
Guda ta gino oiki helo tiloka.	Take the pig from its sty, Tiloka.
Tāna bāra kiyākān dāda silledār?	Why should I take the pig from its sty, O brother Silledar?
Konār ta kor oiki helo tiloka.	O little sister Tiloka, take the hen from inside the house.

AN EVENING IN THE GHOTUL

883X
539

Tāna bāru kiyākān dāda silledār ?	Why should I take out the hen, O brother Silledar?
Bāru na dāye oihi helo tiloka ?	O little sister Tiloka, what do you want?
Sanduk ta rupiya oihi helo tiloka ?	Will you take the rupee from the box?
Tāna nana bāru kiyākān dada silledar ?	Why should I take the rupee from the box, O brother Silledar?
Jhāpi ta chocho oihi helo tiloka ?	O little sister Tiloka, will you take the cloth hidden in the basket?
Tāna nana oihān dāda silledār !	Yes, brother Silledar, I will take the cloth hidden in the basket, O brother Silledar!

2

This song is from Manegaon and has the refrain *Suy ale helo le.*

Pāt parada pāloy podela.	On the ant-hill grows a *kurai* tree.
Bag ne pungār payta injore.	The flower has blossomed, sister.
Bor dādān mihchi oye rāi ?	Who are you going to give the flower to, sister?
Laharu dādān mihchi oye rāi.	I will pin the flower on Laharu.
Tirha kāya tāla injore ;	That boy's head is like the *tirha* fruit;
Bosa pungār pāga injore ;	His turban is like the *kewa* flower;
Pāgki pungār mihchi kiyākāi,	I will pin the flower on his turban,
Udimy mut-ka mamāi kiyākāi,	I will give him a blow with my fist,
Durro poy-nai mamāi bihat.	And quickly I will run away.

3

Barpela Post Oyna Pata

This song, with its refrain, *He dāda saidar*, addressed to the head of the ghotul, is called 'The Song of Carrying off by Force'.

Barang sarpār te udilon saidar ?	Why are you sitting in the middle of the road, Saidar?
Badenke ise udilon ?	Whom are you waiting for, Saidar?
Alosānk ise udilon.	You are waiting for Alosa, Saidar.
Kaido arka poyoi katka ise kandu.	She went with her pot for water, Saidar.
Talāi kumār kishun katka ise kandu.	She had a roll on her head, Saidar.
Sarpār tāka kandu.	She came along the road, Saidar.
Tāna ise poyandi.	You caught hold of her, Saidar.
Aye aye indu.	She said, 'No, no', Saidar.
Tata tāna ondi saidar.	You dragged her to the jungle, Saidar.

883X
517

After an hour or two of dancing, singing, games or story-telling, certainly not much after ten o'clock, the serious business of the evening begins. The younger boys, those who have not yet been given titles or excused their tribute of wood, go round to every senior boy beginning with the leader (but not afterwards following any special order) saluting each with Johar followed by the ghotul title—'Johar Sirdar', 'Johar Kotwar', 'Johar Silledar'. But for greeting relatives, the term of relationship is used—'Johar *dāda*', 'Johar

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

For months everyone must have known all about it. Before the girl's marriage Kule's breach of the clan laws was complete and open; it must constantly have been discussed in the ghotul, and the elders must have known of it. Yet until the day of the 'trial' it had never been openly proclaimed in the village that he had offended against the laws of the tribe. That was too much for him, he saw his girl lost to him, a life-long shame, and heavy penalties. So he killed himself.

FIG. 114. Carved tobacco-box from Metawand
Height 2¼"

There was another case in 1936 in Kerawahi when a chelik and motiari[1] who belonged to the same clan fell in love with one another. They often used to slip outside the ghotul at night and sleep together. After a time the girl found herself pregnant. When the matter became known, there was a great scandal and the elders announced that they would hold a panchayat. The boy was so ashamed and so afraid of paying the fine that was certain to be inflicted, that he hanged himself. The girl was afterwards married to another boy, but was punished—the people said—by excessive menorrhagia. She grew thinner and thinner, and after a year her husband left her and married someone else.

IX

I have heard of very few cases of incest between near relatives. In spite of all the joking, in spite also of the close proximity in which near relatives grow up together in the ghotul, I think that the rules are kept. On the rare occasions that they are broken, the act is regarded with severe censure. At Sahimunda a girl was made pregnant by her own *mama*, her mother's brother. She publicly accused him and he was fined. In Adenga, a Muria kept his own father's junior wife. He was excommunicated and banned from all tribal privileges. He and the woman were not even allowed to get water from the usual place. I am told that he is never to be admitted into the tribe. In the same village the Gaita kept his mother's sister, and was excommunicated.

A tale of incest from Kapsi is obviously satirical and hardly suggests approval of what was done.

> Long ago there lived an old man who married his son to a very lovely girl. When she came to his house the father at once fell in love with her. He sent his old wife and son to another village to get rice, and that evening he himself pretended to get high fever and lay groaning on his bed. The poor daughter-in-law came to him and said, 'What can I do for you?' He said, 'Ask the Departed in the granary what they want you to do'. She went to them and asked, 'What can I do for my

[1] According to the police report, the chelik was Lati, son of Dhanaji, and the motiari was Koli, daughter of Bhimram. Lati was Koli's paternal uncle. I do not know their ghotul titles.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
835
●539

father-in-law?' The old man crept out of bed and stood behind the wall. When the girl asked the question, he replied in a loud, strange voice, 'Your father-in-law is going to die; there is only one way to save him; lie with him and his fever will be cured'. At this the girl was frightened and said to the Departed, 'But the marriage haldi is still on my body, how can I do such wickedness? The marriage booth is yet green, how can I betray my husband?' But the old man replied, 'If you want your father-in-law to live, do as we say; the sin will not be yours, but that of the Dead'. Then the poor daughter-in-law went back to the old man and told him what the Departed had said, and he asked her what she thought of it. She said she was willing to do what they ordered and she lay with him. When all was over, she asked whether his fever had left him, and he told her that it had, and praised her devotion to the Departed.

378

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

X883 589 538 Atargaon, is about the seven motiari who knew nothing about sex. One day they went to gather leaves with their grandmother. The old lady climbed a tree and the girls looked up and saw her vagina. When she told them what it was for, they were so frightened that they left the ghotul and went to live far away in the jungle. Whenever they saw a man they beat him and drove him away. The story proceeds through various adventures to the inevitable conclusion. Each of the girls is seduced by a sadhu and becomes pregnant.

X883 539 Another story, given me by Sonu, a Muria of Jamkot, is of interest as emphasizing the ghotul doctrine of equality, that everyone in the ghotul fellowship must be loved and happy: if not, disaster may befall.

There were seven score chelik and seven score motiari. All slept together in the ghotul. One of them was the son of a grazier of goats, and none of the girls would sleep with him. When he came to the ghotul, they would abuse him. 'Get out, you grazier's son, you block of wood.' The boy's name was Lakari; that was why they called him a block of wood. But Lakari was a clever boy and he made a love-charm.

One day the boys and girls decided to go to Kodawata to earn their living. When he heard of this, Lakari decided to have all the girls for himself. He put the boys to sleep by his charms. When the girls were ready for their journey, he went ahead beating his drum. They thought that all the boys had started and set out after them.

Now Lakari was very poor; his bed was the earth, his blanket was the air, his pillow was his own elbow. He was so poor that no girl would let him sleep with her. He went along with an axe over his shoulder, his *dhol* drum slung from his arm and a drumstick in one hand. He led the girls away into the jungle, on and on for a whole month. When he beat the drum they ran after him, but he always kept at a distance so that they wouldn't know who it was.

The jungle stretched for twelve *kos* on every side, there was not even the name of a village. The jungle was called Madhuban, the sweet forest; the trees were so tall that it seemed the moon had stuck to them. When Lakari had led the girls into the very heart of this jungle, he took off his clothes and sat shivering with cold. When the girls saw that the chelik were not there and it was only Lakari who had brought them all that way, they were angry and disappointed.

On a hill-top between two rivers Lakari built a ghotul for himself. On the far side of the river he made another house for the girls. They refused to visit him or even look at him, they were so angry. By the time the rains began they found they had eaten all their provisions for the year. Lakari himself had nothing; he lived on honey.

Now at last one of the girls came to him and said, 'How are we to live here without a village or bazaar? Even you can give us nothing to eat'. Lakari replied, 'I will see to everything; come with me to the bazaar and we will get what we want'. The girls went fishing in the river, and this girl brought fish in a basket and he himself took honey and they went together to the bazaar at Ladri. They sold their things and bought what they wanted. On the way back, Lakari went as slowly as he could so that they would have to spend the night in the jungle and the girl would have to sleep with him. When darkness fell he made her a bed in the sand of a river; there was one bed for him and one for her with a fire between. He had brought food and ornaments to please her.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

At midnight the umagaji bird cried *Ha huhu*. The girl shrieked with fright and said, 'O Lakari, let me sleep near you, for I am afraid'. Then the bird cried again and the girl said, 'What is the bird saying?' Lakari replied, 'It says "Drive on, drive on!"'. So now there was no mother, no father, there was no one in the world, and he went to her. From the bird's talk came the boy's copulation. Every time the bird cried, the girl clung again to Lakari.

In this way Lakari took each of the girls in turn, and at last every one was pregnant and he had seven score sons. When the boys were old enough to earn their living, Lakari got bullocks for them. In this way family life began and villages were formed, because a girl was frightened of a bird.

II. The Anatomy and Mythology of Sex

The Muria seem to have a rather sketchy knowledge of the sexual organs and their functions. They have no idea of the purpose of the testes or of the existence of the hymen. They do, however, recognize the clitoris and understand its function. Their vocabulary is limited, but sufficient to cover the main points of the external genitalia.[1] They have half-a-dozen words for the penis, three or four for the vagina (the most popular simply means 'the lower part of something'), and words for the labia majora (*pude adawing*, vagina flesh), the urethra (*urkul bukha*, urine hole) and the clitoris (*titiguta*, a word which like its Graeco-English equivalent probably has reference to the organ's power of erection and excitement). The Muria word for orgasm is *pusi* or *wijja pesina*, 'the coming out of the seed'.

There is no word for love in Gondi. The Muria use the Chhattisgarhi word *māya* and sometimes *pirit* or *perem*, which are simply corruptions of the ordinary Hindi words. But neither do they have any words for lust or desire, and for erotic excitement use expressions that are only descriptive of the physical sensations of sex—*ponda hohalta* said of a girl means that her 'vagina is itching'; *bondę dokalta* that the 'penis is quivering'. The expression *girda kiyāna* is sometimes used for 'making love'; *girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'. *Girda ator* can be used in the sense of 'being in love'. But abstract and emotional terms are rare in Gondi, as in most primitive languages.

Sexual riddles are interesting as showing how direct and forthright are the Muria's references to the genitals and sexual intercourse.

Chapti pakna gohivailaiseh.
The flat stone itches.

—The vagina.

Sulung dandi bundla bursa.
The pole is long, its bottom is black.

—The penis.

Kondāng lewa boteng.
The fish that has no eyes.

—The penis.

[1] I notice that our authorities often confuse the names of the genitalia, perhaps because the tribes themselves, like the British and French, use a bewildering variety of synonyms for them. Ward gives as Gondi words *prest* or *munchelas* for the 'affections', *saye kalatue* for 'beloved', and *nahilia* for 'to kiss'. There are no such words in Trench's vocabulary.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

831
534

Itwa lewa patwa tolo.
Touch it and up it goes.
—A mat, or the penis.

Mela aur jela bahir jhule
Mantor hach hutile lopa narey kiyantor.
Mela and Jela swing to and fro outside;
The iron rice-husker is at work within.
—Sexual congress.

Three are dancing in a thick jungle.
—Sexual congress.

There are two witnesses to this thief's escapades.
—The testes and penis.

831

But if their anatomical knowledge of the genitalia is slight, the Muria compensate for it by an extensive mythology of sex, which is, I think, even more elaborate than that of the Bison-horn Maria and the Orissa tribes.

It is remarkable that the Muria seem to regard the sexual organs, whether male or female, as living things with an independent life of their own.[1] For example, one of the reasons given for forbidding urination inside the ghotul is that the girls' urine would smell abominably because her labia majora are always chewing her urine as she walks about—just as a goat chews its food, and therefore a girl's urine smells as strongly as a goat's.

831
539

There are several stories about the vagina, though the Vagina Dentata legend, known throughout the Central Provinces and Orissa, is comparatively rare. The following story is from Masora.

Long ago the vagina had the power of leaving its body at night and going out to feed in the fields. It had teeth with which it could eat; it would stay out all night grazing in the fields and return satisfied in the morning.

By and by the village people began to say, 'What is this thing that comes at night and eats up our crops? Let us set traps and catch it'. So they set traps in their fields, and that night when the vaginae came to feed they were caught and the villagers collected them and took them to the Gaita's house in a big basket. They shut them up in an inner room and went to report the matter to the Raja. The Raja sentenced the vaginae to be hanged.

When they heard this, the villagers were frightened, for they said, 'How are we to live with our wives if their organs are destroyed?' So they went to the Raja asking him to forgive them and promising to repay the owners of the fields for whatever damage had been done.

The Raja said, 'First of all the teeth must be broken and removed from the vaginae. Whoever can do this will be rewarded'. No one knew how to do it until at last a one-eyed policeman, who himself had a knife growing from his penis, declared that he would deal with the matter. With his knife he removed the teeth and then with hammer and nails fixed every vagina back in its place. The nail he used is the clitoris which stands above the vagina to hold it steady. The vaginae then cursed the man who had done them this injury and turned him

[1] A similar idea is found in the Crow Indian tale *Mometula Lopuuna*, where a man's penis begins to talk and refuses to stop.—R. H. Lowie, 'Myths and Traditions of the Crow Indians', *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. XXV (1922), p. 225.

2: Elwin. E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

931
539

into a pig. Even today the pig's virile member is shaped like a knife.[1]

A rather similar tale from Palari (Kondagaon Tahsil) connects the incident with Bhimul and his wife.

> The vagina used to creep out of the body where it lived and go in search of maize and cucumbers. It would nibble its way through a fence and steal from the field. The farmers made fences of iron and now when the vagina tried to get through, its teeth were knocked out by the iron. A small bit of iron stuck in the vagina's mouth and became the clitoris. When the teeth came out, blood flowed from the mouth and the vagina went to Bhimul for help.
>
> Now the penis of Bhimul was five hands long and he cut it into several pieces, each four fingers long. He put one piece into the vagina's mouth and said, 'Don't eat cucumbers or maize any more: from today this will be your food'. But the bleeding did not stop, and Bhimul said, 'It will stop soon and then after a month it will bleed again'. Such was the beginning of women's menstruation.
>
> There was blood at the end of Bhimul's penis where he had cut it. It went into the belly of the woman to whom the vagina belonged and she conceived. This is how the birth of children began.
>
> In those days men had no genitals. One day they went to Bhimul to complain about this. He fixed a bit of his own penis with wax between the thighs of a man. Such was the beginning. But the penis fell off as the wax melted. They went to Gorondi Dokari (Bhimul's wife) and she put two small chickens under the penis to support it. Such is the origin of the testes.[2]

Another Vagina Dentata story comes from Koelari.[3]

> There was a Rakshasa's daughter with teeth in her vagina. She used to live mostly as a tigress and kept ten or twelve tigers always with her. When she saw a man, she would turn into a pretty girl, seduce him, cut off his penis, eat it herself and give the rest of his body to her tigers.
>
> One day she met seven brothers in the jungle and married the eldest so that she could sleep with them all. After some time she took the eldest boy to where her tigers lived, made him lie with her, cut off his penis, ate it and gave his body to the tigers. In the same way she killed six of the brothers till only the youngest was left.
>
> When his turn came, the god who helped him appeared in a dream saying, 'If you go with this girl, make an iron tube, put it into her vagina and break her teeth'. The boy acted according to his dream, and when the tigers came for his body, he climbed into a mango tree

[1] Similar stories among the Bison-horn Maria relate how a man once caught a vagina eating his gram and knocked its teeth out with a pestle; in another tale, from Kamell, people used to feed the wandering vagina out of charity. When it was satisfied it would open its mouth and do men no harm. Even now the vagina has not forgotten its old habit of eating *gur* and gram and still tries to 'bite' the male member by its muscular contractions.

[2] Elsewhere the Muria said, 'The testes are the children of the penis and have sapped their father's strength. Only when the children restore the strength can their father work'.

[3] I present a large number of similar legends recorded from the Gond and Pardhan of the Central Provinces, the Bison-horn Maria of Bastar, and the Juang, Gadaba and Savara of Orissa in my forthcoming book *Myths of Middle India*.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and made himself very small. The tigers chased him and the girl too became very angry. He cursed her; 'Let nothing but your face remain'. And so it was; she became a bat which eats, excretes, urinates and copulates through one and the same hole. One of the mangoes opened and the boy crept inside. A parrot carried off the mango to the Raja's palace.

The parrot dropped the fruit, it broke open, out came the boy and after various adventures married the Raja's daughter. The hero of an Agaria story was similarly saved by the use of an iron condom.[1]

Sometimes it is said that originally the vagina was situated below the knee of the left leg. One day a chicken pecked at it, and it jumped up to a place of safety between the thighs where it has remained ever since. But it was wounded and blood still flows from it every month. From Bara Dongar comes the tale of the vagina which died.

One day a vagina died and its companions were wondering what to do with it. 'Shall we cremate it or bury it?' said some, but others said, 'Let us divide it among us'. They cut it up and each stuck a portion on itself. This is the origin of the lips [labia majora]. The woman whose vagina died was the first hermaphrodite.

In the same style is a story from Alor, which has the familiar competition-motif.

The breasts and the vagina had a quarrel. 'I am the greater,' said the vagina. 'It is for my sake that men go mad and die.'

'No,' said the breasts. 'We are greater. It is our beauty that men come to see. If there were no breasts, who would come to you?'

'If there was no vagina, who would bother about you? Do men chase a flower or a lovely stream?'

'Men see us from afar and excited by our beauty draw near. It is only then that they notice you; first they touch us, then you.'

'But no one gets pleasure from touching you.'

'But if they didn't see and touch us, how would they be excited? You would be neglected entirely.'

So quarrelling, the vagina and the breasts parted and went their ways. As they went along, the breasts met a man and he took them aside and began to fondle them. But when he looked down and saw nothing there, he went disappointed away.

Then the breasts went to the vagina and said, 'Come, sister, you have won the battle; you are the greatest of all'.

There are also legends about the penis. Originally it was of gigantic size.

Once the penis was so long that as a man lay in bed it could get out of the house and penetrate a woman a hundred yards away. When he went abroad, a man would wind it round and round his waist and tuck in the end.

One day a penis broke through the wall of the house, entered a woman, came out of her mouth, dipped its head into a cooking-pot and ate all the supper, and in withdrawing killed the woman. Then all the women

[1] For a discussion of this legend, see my article 'The Vagina Dentata Legend', *The British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XIX (1943), pp. 439–53. For accounts of its distribution in North America, see W. Bogoras, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. IV (New Series), p. 667 and R. H. Lowie, 'The Test-Theme in North American Mythology', *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXI (1908), p. 110.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

§31 §39 came to cut it off. The man grasped his penis with his hand, but that was all he could save. The women cut it off and it is now only a hands-breadth long.[1]

Another version of the tale, however, connects the disappearance of the long penis with the Vagina Dentata legend.

> In the old days there were teeth far back in the vagina. One day when the long penis went in, the teeth cut it and all that remained was a stump of its present length. Angry at this, the man brought a rice-husker and broke off the teeth. In those days the penis itself was covered with thorns; it stood up like a semur tree. But there were no thorns at the root. The thorny part was cut off, and the smooth part remains to this day.[2]

In this mythical past it was man, not woman, who was subject to a menstrual period.

> Formerly men had to live outside their houses every month. They used to tie hollow bamboos over the penis to catch the blood. One day a girl saw this and laughed at the man. He pulled the bamboo off and threw it at her.[3] Since then women have suffered this flowing of the blood instead of men.

III. Erotic Attractiveness

§32 I found it very difficult to get the Muria to give any clear account of what they meant by beauty. They are always moved by the loveliness of natural scenery, but they are not very articulate and find it hard to express themselves except when the words of a song or proverb provide them with a ready means of utterance. The following Chitkul Pata from Amakot, for example, reveals not a little aesthetic appreciation.

Jilāng jāpar bandār!	How beautiful the lake!
Bandār soba bārāng?	Why is the lake so beautiful?
Bandār soba pāri,	Lovely are the banks of the lake,
Bandār soba yero.	Lovely the waters of the lake.
Yero soba minur,	Lovely are the fish in the water.
Minur soba bārāng?	To the fish what is lovely?
Minur soba sila.	To the fish the water-reeds are lovely.
Pārar soba bārāng?	On the bank what is lovely?
Pārar soba marka,	On the bank the mango trees,
Kāndi udo marka,	The mango's spreading branches,
Waliya wāto gorga.	And the palm trees everywhere.

In human beings the Muria seem to admire liveliness, animation, vigour more than perfection of colour or feature. They apply their universal test of hard work not only to assess a person's morals, but even his erotic attractiveness. 'However beautiful the face, one's eyes turn aside disgusted from a loafer.'

[1] The Bison-horn Maria attribute this incident to a man named Baikesa and say that he himself cut off his long penis through shame when it touched a woman not his wife by mistake. He bled to death and was buried in a sitting posture. He is still honoured as Baikesa Pen with a pile of stones in many villages.

[2] But the Bison-horn Maria of Dugali said that the penis became short because in olden times the Mahara had none at all and went to Gaja Bhimul to beg for one. He cut off the long part from the Maria, but they held the stems in their fists. This is why the Maria have nothing to do with the Mahara for fear they lose the rest of the organ.

[3] For this reason, it is said, the Bison-horn Maria pelt a girl with mud at her first menstruation.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

883X
833
539

Here's a twig of the ebony tree,
Here's the twig you were telling me of.
No one can use it at either end.
I have offered water in a brass pot,
I have offered gruel in a leaf-cup,
I have served him rice in a dish,
I have given him curry in a leaf-cup,
But he does not speak to me.
He doesn't know what to do.
I cannot live just looking at his house,
I cannot live just to fill my belly.
I can only live if my heart is filled.
I will go away to my father's house.
How can I live so long without my proper work?

The symbols in this song are sexual. The brass pot, the leaf-cup, the dish offered by the girl to her husband, and his useless toilet-twig are recognized symbols of the female and male genitalia. In the concluding lines the girl declares, as she did at Palli, that life is something more than just looking after a house or filling one's stomach with food. The word in the eighth line which I have translated 'He does not speak to me' also means 'He does not have intercourse with me' and thus gives the key to the whole song.

883X
833

An impotent chelik's life in the ghotul is not altogether intolerable, for there are nearly always more boys than girls, and it does not matter very much if one of them has to sleep alone. But once the boy has got married, his position becomes desperate. A former Kotwar of the Kapsi ghotul was impotent. To cover his embarrassment he used to leave his wife at home and go to sleep in the ghotul. Naturally he was not very popular there, and after a time the motiari began to try to turn him out. They escorted him dancing and singing home to his wife, made him take her by the hand and said to her, 'Here's your husband. Sleep with him, beat him, do something with him; we don't want him in our ghotul'. Then they took a chicken from the house and went away, thus suggesting that they had again performed the final marriage rite when bride and bridegroom are put to bed together. After this had happened two or three times, the unfortunate youth gave up going to the ghotul—for he could not afford the continual loss of chickens—and went to sleep in any empty verandah or disused shed.

Boys who are married to older girls are accused by their wives of sexual inadequacy. A boy at Jamkot said, 'My wife was much older; how could my little penis please her? She used to go to her mother's house, and when I went to fetch her back, would say, "Do you think I can be happy sleeping with your pots and dishes? I want a man to live with".' At Karanji, the Mukhwan was also married to an older girl. 'My first wife was always dissatisfied because of my small penis. She used to leave me at home and go to dance the Chait Parab dances, for she came from the lowlands, and loved them. At last she met a man there who could please her, and left me. But my next wife was very happy.'

Such impotence is, of course, merely a symptom of immaturity. So also may be the cases reported of chelik who, though fully potent in the ghotul, find themselves impotent with their wives. This is usually attributed to a jealous motiari who resents her chelik being married to someone else. Ghasia, a very old Muria of Garka, recalls how in his youth the Piosa of the ghotul was in love with him, and when he refused to marry her, made him impotent

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

838 585 292 535 On the third day of a marriage, the motiari retire to the ghotul or their camp and dress up as chelik. They put on turbans, waistcoats and loin-cloths. They borrow boys' armlets for their arms, put knives in their waist-bands, and approach the marriage-booth carrying axes, branches of mango leaves and bunches of *dab* grass. They dance up to the marriage-booth, under which the bridegroom is seated, and ceremonially sweep it. Among the dancers is the bride disguised as a boy. All the dancers are in fact disguised, for they wind their turbans round and round their faces to make it as difficult as possible to tell them apart. As the girls go round and round the booth, they challenge the bridegroom to pick out his bride. He is supposed to be unable to do this, so at last, as the girls draw closer and closer to him, the bride suddenly darts out from among them and hits him on the back with her clenched fist. He jumps up and attempts to hit her back but she escapes and her fellow motiari do their best to protect her. After this the girls continue dancing for some time, then retire to their homes and remove their male disguise.[1]

This practice is called the Nemuldwar, the 'army of the bride and bridegroom', and the dance is the Choli Endanna or the Jhoria Endanna. The name Choli Endanna simply means 'the waistcoat dance' and refers to the male disguise. The word Jhoria probably means lowlander[2] and has been fully explained in Chapter I. It is now no longer used as the title of the tribe, which has become merged with the Muria. There is, however, a Jhorian Pargana or sub-division and it is said that the dance is so called because it originated here. Although the word Jhoria means 'lowlander' in comparison with the Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains, to the Muria and Gond of eastern Bastar it is the name of an older and more primitive people. The expression Jhoria Endanna, therefore, suggests a dance of old time and ancient tradition. It is the most primitive of all the marriage dances.

838 585 535 539 As the motiari approach and dance round the marriage-booth, which they do very slowly in a long straight line, each girl clutching her left-hand neighbour round the neck with one arm, while with the other she waves her bunch of grass and mango leaves to and fro as if she were sweeping a floor, they sing a number of songs. There is a considerable variety of these and I will give a few examples of different kinds. The first song refers to the ceremonial sweeping of the marriage-booth.

Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Wāyu dewa wāyu roy dewo!	Come girl, come Dewo!
Wiyār hayu wāyu roy dewo!	Come to sweep, girl, come Dewo!
Naling cao gorāng roy dewo.	The mandia is like aonra fruit.
Gorāng nori ola roy dewoni.	She went to grind the mandia.

men. The chaunt and dance were as before, except that the pantomime abounded in the most indecent gestures and attitudes, all illustrative of sexual relations. One girl slipped (or pretended to) and fell. Whereupon, one of those playing a man's part fell upon her to ravish her. A rescue ensued amidst roars of merriment, and the would-be ravisher was in process of being stripped when our modesty compelled us to call an interval.'—Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 66ff.

According to Santal tradition, witchcraft began through a transvestite expedition. Marang Buru had decided to teach men witchcraft, but the women made them drunk and then 'put on pagris and dhoties and stuck goats' beards on their faces' and went to learn the magic art instead.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 422.

[1] At Pardhan marriages in Mandla, the bride is sometimes disguised as a boy and her future husband is challenged to find her. I found a similar test among the Binjhwar of Chhattisgarh. The custom is doubtless widely distributed.

[2] See pp. 15–17.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Hirpong ichoh wejing roy dewo.	The rice is like chips of wood.
Wejeng usi ola roy dewo.	She went to husk the rice.
Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Perke pila wātercm dewo,	She went with her baby on her back,
Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!

838
585
539

The next song is about the girls' disguise. The bridegroom cannot recognize the bride now, but he will recognize her all too well when the marriage is consummated.

Burga chodi layor.	The boy is getting old.
Bāba hokore hore!	
Nanāy layor intor.	Yet he calls himself a youth.
Layāh ondeh kitor,	He collects the young girls,
Layah todla hewong.	He won't let them go.
Murha portāna intor.	He calls himself an orphan.
Ona chode māywār	He says he'll see what happens
Māwa here wāyer.	If we come near.
Māhe ise wariyāntor.	He frightens us away.
Dulhin chinhe māyor,	He can't recognize the bride,
Mulnāh chinhe māntor	But he'll know her tonight
Layor ise ātek.	If he really is a youth.
Wāsi muthha hewer.	We are going to hit him.
Nāwāy āri iner.	He says, 'This is my wife'.
Bāba hokore hore!	

The next song explains itself. It must be remembered that each of these songs is being sung by girls led by the bride herself who insists over and over again that she is a boy.

Mutha hilāy wāl iona,	I come to beat him,
Nana jhoriyān layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Nāhe hurse warinlu,	Seeing me he is afraid,
Nana jhoriyān layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Pichāl tangiya kānj tona,	I have a small axe on my shoulder,
Nana jhoriyān layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Kariya koi kartuna,	I am wearing a black coat,
Nana jhoriyān layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Manda hoi wānlona,	I have come to clean the marriage-booth,
Nana jhoriyān layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.

Another song seems simply to describe the various clothes and ornaments that the girls are wearing:

Aga baga dāng parsing saiya sona?	Whence is the drum that sounds so bravely?
Arra nātāng parsing saiya sona.	From Arra comes the drum.
Aga baga dāng hundring saiya sona?	Whence is the *hundring* that sounds so well?
Kohka nātāng hundring saiya sona.	From Kohka comes the *hundring*.
Aga baga dāng chithuring saiya sona?	Whence are the cymbals that clash so loudly?
Guran haiyadāng chithuring saiya sona.	The blacksmith made the cymbals.

2: Elwin . E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

838
585
539

Aga baga da dhoti roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the dhoti that looks so smart?
Gānaon kaiyada dhoti roy saiya sona.	The Ganda made the dhoti.
Aga waga dāng muyāng roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the bells that tinkle so merrily?
Kaser kaiyadāng muyāng roy saiya sona.	The Kāser made the bells.
Aga baga dāng paniya saiya sona ?	Whence came the comb that looks so fine?
Layon kaiyada paniya roy saiya sona.	The chelik made the comb that looks so fine.

Finally, I will give two examples of the many obscene songs that are sung during this dance, for otherwise it is impossible to get a clear picture of the meaning and atmosphere of the rite.

Nana jhoriyāna waiwoy gāto tinwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will not eat half-cooked rice.
Nana jhoriyāna dais dudo poywāna.	I am Jhoria: jumping up and down I hold her breast.
Nana jhoriyāna podoh monde dehwāna.	I am Jhoria: I break the girdle round her waist.
Nana jhoriyāna hārspoche tendwāna.	I am Jhoria: I quickly pull off her cloth.
Nana jhoriyāna pudete bonde nehyāna.	I am Jhoria: into her I press myself.
Nana jhoriyāna teks bura mihachwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will pluck out my pubic hairs and throw them away.

In the same style is a Halbi Jhoria Git.

Go to sweep the booth, Belosa.
Where has the bridegroom gone?
He is nowhere in the house.
What can he be frightened of?
He is dying for his penis.
He is going to have his sister.
Where has he taken her?
He has taken her to the river bank.
What leaves has he spread for her?
He has made a bed of *jam* leaves.
Jham-jham he swings to and fro.
Bathing, bathing, he inserts it.
Get off, get off, brother, she cries.

These songs are sung by the bride herself and by a party of unmarried girls. They have changed their sex for the occasion and imagine themselves performing the sexual act as men. The significance of this will be seen when we discuss the ultimate basis of the rite.

838 171 182 Various reasons have been advanced by scholars to explain this custom in different parts of the world. Frazer has emphasized the difficulty of the problem. 'The religious or superstitious interchange of dress between men and women is an obscure and complex problem, and it is unlikely that any

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond A,W32
Muria

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

DREAMS

OFFICIALLY it is not possible to dream inside the ghotul, for Lingo and the other ghotul gods protect those who sleep there, and indeed I believe that in many places the boys and girls dream very little, enjoying sound and satisfying sleep in the security, warmth and delight of their peculiar realm.

But not all ghotul are equally happy. In Binjhli for example, where there was a strange atmosphere of jealousy and frustration, I heard a great deal about dreams. And in all villages there are official and standardized dreams which are believed to be the normal means of receiving communications from gods or ancestors.

It is not possible, I think, to provide material on this subject which will be of much value to the psycho-analyst. It is very difficult to obtain the Muria's associations to their dreams; their memory is poor and they are so timid that too prolonged an inquiry is likely to make it impossible to obtain any information at all. But it is possible to discover various ideas and attitudes of the Muria through an examination of their dreams, especially since the most important are of the official type.

What is the Muria theory of dreams? Where do they come from and why do we see them? Some say that all sleep is a dream; sleep is the food by which man's life is recreated and 'the dream is the chutney of sleep'. As with other Indian aboriginals the Muria theory of dreams is closely related to the idea of the soul or *jiwa*. The *jiwa* leaves the body in sleep, goes here and there and what it sees during its adventures is the dream.[1] The power of the *jiwa* to leave the body is described in a significant tale from Ulera.

> One day long ago two men went to a blacksmith's shop to rest. One fell asleep, the other sat by his side watching. Presently from the sleeper's mouth there came out his *jiwa* in the form of a lizard and went to feed. A dog saw it and chased it into an ant-hill. There it saw a pot full of rupees.
>
> The other man covered the sleeper's face with coal-dust for a joke. When the *jiwa* returned it did not recognize its body with the blackened face, and went away seeking for it elsewhere. By and by the second man noticed a lizard going to and fro, and soon realized what had happened. He quickly cleaned the sleeper's face, and the lizard, recognizing the body, entered it, and became a *jiwa* again.
>
> When the sleeper awoke he told his friend what he had seen in his dreams, and they went to the ant-hill and found the rupees. This is a true tale of what actually occurred.[2]

[1] Compare *The Baiga*, p. 408.

[2] The literature of the 'separable soul' is considerable. It appears in folk-tales as the useful motif of 'entering another's body' which, as Penzer rightly insists, must not be confused with the quite distinct 'life-index' motif. Crooke observes that 'in Bombay it is considered most reprehensible to play jokes on a sleeping person, such as painting the face in fantastic colours, or giving moustaches to a sleeping woman. The absent soul may not be able to find its own body, the appearance of which has been thus changed, and may depart altogether, leaving the body a corpse'.—*Religion and Folk-Lore*, Vol. I, p. 232. For the subject generally see *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. I, p. 37, n. 2; A. E. Crawley, 'Doubles', Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. IV, pp. 853f.; M. Bloomfield, 'On the Art of Entering Another's Body', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. LVI, pp. 1ff.;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

828
539
774

Another tale, from Atargaon, points the same moral.

> Dream and Wealth were disputing which was the greater. When they could not agree they decided that each should hide in turn and whoever could find the other, yet not be found himself, would win the contest. Wealth hid himself first. He took the shape of a pot of rupees and hid in an ant-hill. Dream went to a very poor boy who was lying asleep and called his soul to come out. When the *jiwa* came Dream sent it to the ant-hill. It returned, and when the boy awoke he went to the ant-hill and dug up Wealth in the shape of the pot. Then Dream hid in the wind, and was blown here and there about the world. Wealth could not find him and when they met again he admitted that Dream was the greater.

In this other world into which the *jiwa* can enter during sleep, the gods and the Departed are familiar figures and the *jiwa* can talk with them and learn their will. Often, however, the Muria speak as though the gods and the dead had come to them in sleep, that the approach was, as it were, from the other side. Obviously the ordinary Muria, any more than the ordinary Englishman, has no consistent theory. One thing which has puzzled him, and which he explains by a fantastic tale, is the 'falsity' or symbolism of dreams. In Berma I was given a story which accounts for this.

> Long ago men could read the future in their dreams. An owl heard of it and said, 'If men can see the future in dreams, they will never die'. The owl waited till the gods were holding a darbar and then fell with a bang into the midst of them. The gods said, 'What is the matter?' The owl replied, 'I have had a dream, and in that dream I was marrying a Raja's daughter. We had done eleven rounds of the Lagir; had it been twelve she had been mine; but I awoke and fell to the ground. Now I must marry this girl. What am I to do?' The gods were concerned and said to one another, 'How can a red-eyed bird marry a Raja's daughter?' The owl replied, 'But all the world gets what it sees in dreams; how can it be that only my dreams are false?' At that the gods cursed men saying, 'From now on, let all dreams be false'.

828
787

Dreams, therefore, are symbolic. They are code messages from the other world and only the wise can decipher them. There is a fairly extensive system of dream-interpretation, on the whole consistently maintained throughout the Muria area, though with a few variations from place to place. I will tabulate these interpretations for the reader's convenience.

787

	Good Dreams
One's dead parents ..	.. Lucky, for it shows they have retained their affection for one.
Drowning in a river ..	.. Very good. The Yer Kanyang so loves the dreamer that she wants to marry him.

Sir J. G. Frazer, *Taboo and Perils of the Soul*, pp. 37 and 49; *Panjab Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 166 (which gives a tale with a similar motif to that in the text); W. A. Clouston, *Popular Tales and Fictions* (Edinburgh, 1887), Vol. I, p. 437.

For a Santal story of a soul which slipped out of a man's sleeping body in the form of a lizard and was prevented from returning, see B. Bonnerjea, 'The Social and Ceremonial Life of the Santals', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LIX (1930), p. 100.

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

taboo. It is very dangerous to make mistakes in the dancing or stick-beating, and any kind of error is heavily penalized.[1] If one of the boys makes a mistake the Gaita of the village visited removes the turban of the Gain and the boys have to pay a fine of two bottles of liquor before he will return it. Should a boy drop his stick or if his dhoti gets loose, he has to pay a similar fine. Anything dropped must be picked up with the teeth.

Special rules control the conduct of the three leading pairs, the Gain and Jokta or Roche-sela and two other couples. They must talk to no one; they must not dance with the motiari of the villages they visit; they may only sing the special Pus Kolang songs.

The dancing party from Phulpar in 1941 visited Sarandi, Kurse, Kutgaon and Tursani. When they reached Sarandi, they went straight to the Gaita's house and danced before it. As they entered the village they sang,

Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.
Show us the Gaita's house, chelik.
Don't you know the Gaita's house, chelik?
Where have you come from, chelik?
We have come from the land of hills.
If we show you, what will you give us, chelik?
We will give you a cloth for your loins.
It's the house with a cart in the yard, chelik.
There is a pond for the buffaloes in front, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.
On a bamboo pole there's a monkey, chelik.
There's an elephant tied to the pillar, chelik.
There's a horse tied in the shed, chelik.
On the roof there sits a peacock, chelik.
There's a gun against the fence, chelik.
A sword against the wall, chelik.
A parrot on its perch, chelik.
A maina in a cage, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.

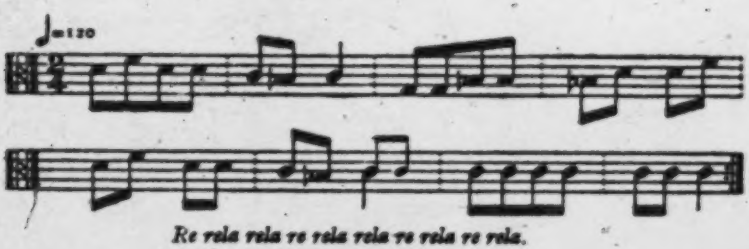
The boys sing this song to a circular stick-dance rather slowly and reverently as if their words were charged with deep spiritual meaning. Then while two boys take a basket into the house to beg for rice, pulse and salt, the others begin their programme of dances.

[1] For similar beliefs in the danger of making a mistake during a ceremonial dance, see J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. III, p. 518. Compare also A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1890), p. 93.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

There are four of these, quite distinct from those danced at any other time. Indeed it is often considered dangerous to dance the Pus Kolang dances even for show at a visitor's camp.

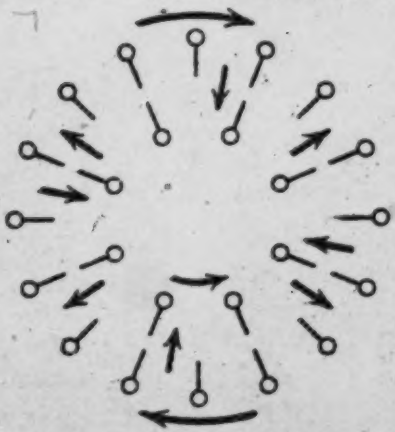
The first, which is the Pus Kolang dance proper, is a stick-dance. The sacred spear is stuck in the ground and the boys circulate round it rather solemnly, each boy attached to his neighbour by dancing-sticks which both hold.



Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.

Old man Lingo Pen, Johar to thee,
After Lingo what god was there?
After him was Budha Pen.
Johar to him!
After Budha Pen, who was there?
After him was Mudial Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!
After him who comes?
After him comes Mudial Use Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!

And so through a long list of gods, Gundi Pen, Sonkuari Pen, Phulkuari Pen, Kurumtulla Pen, Balkuari Pen, Naturgundi Pen.



To all these gods we fold our hands,
We beg them not to be angry,
Not to forget us.
We will give incense, cock and pig.
To all we give Johar!

Then the dance changes, and improves. The boys form two circles facing each other. These two rings circulate antagonistically and at the same time the boys of the inner circle change places, with a hop and a jump and three taps of the sticks, with those of the outer circle. This goes on continually, so that the two circles are in constant movement against each other and always alternating. The flourishing and beating of the sticks is very pleasing.

A special variety of the stick-dance is called Kappu Daka. *Kappu* is a bird and *daka* means to lift the feet. So this dance imitates the rapid movement

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

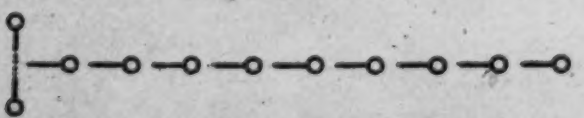
of a bird picking up its feet. The step changes to a much more lively and bouncing movement; the boys swing their buttocks and tinkle their bells with greater vigour; they sing with more zest and clash their sticks merrily. The song is long and tedious.

In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Raigarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
A cloth for the loins,
To make the loins beautiful, chelik.
In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Sarangarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
Ornaments for the body,
To make the body beautiful, chelik.
In what *garh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Delhigarh we will buy, chelik.

And so on, until head and ear and waist ornaments have been bought for the adornment of the handsome chelik.

A rather serious dance is the Lingo Endanna, which is also called Pen Endanna. For this the boys form up in two long lines facing inwards. At the head of the line, two boys face each other holding their sticks across the gap. The leader stands behind these sticks and beats them. The boys move slowly forward and back, singing. After a time they sit down and do the same thing, but without moving. Then they rise and the line turns in on itself, the leader going down and stepping over the sticks; then the boys return with the sticks held above their heads. This movement is known as Hichelhar Pata. The songs are conventional, referring to Lingo Pen and his relatives.

There is another movement, which I saw at Pupgaon.



The two leaders face each other holding a stick between them; the line of boys forms up headed by the Ghotul Manjhi. They stand quite still singing slowly and sadly; the Manjhi gently taps the cross-stick in front of him.

Now the dancing-sticks are carefully piled round the sacred spear. For the Monkey dance, three or four small boys mount on the shoulders of a circle of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

their elders and are raised into the air with a whistle and a shout.[1] This pyramid slowly gyrates, and the other boys form a procession and march round and round singing.

Songs

1

Re reloyo re rela re rela rela re reloyo re rela rela
Sayrela re rela rela.
At the boundary the monkey sits on a pile of stones.
Get up, monkey, get up, monkey.
My horse is speaking to you, monkey.
You are sitting on a long pole, monkey.
You are eating the raw ebony fruit, monkey.

2

Whose is this temple, girl?
It is the shrine of the Kolang boys, girl.
This is their temple, girl.
Come out to see it, girl.
Bring a lamp in the left hand, girl,
Water in the right, girl.
Give them greeting, girl.
Bring rice in the fan, girl,
Rice in the basket, girl,
Rice in the leaf-cup, girl,
Bring salt in the leaf-bundle, girl.
Give us something to drink from your hand, girl.

The last dance is the Kokotar Daka Endanna. The chelik form a line, each boy holding in his right hand the stick of the one in front and in his left the stick of the one behind. They go round in a rambling line, while the boys at the end hop about and waggle like the tail of the *manda-pits* bird. Others say that the head of the line is a dog and the tail a hare; the purpose of the dance then becomes a game in which the head of the line must turn round and catch the tail. In Koilibera, the boys at the tail imitated the copulation of goats.

[1] Thurston describes a similar dance performed by Koyi women. 'The older ones stood in a circle with their arms intertwined and the younger girls perched aloft, standing astraddle on their shoulders.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 72. I have seen similar dances of this kind performed by the Dhurwa-Parja of southern Bastar, the Kond of Koraput District and the Bhil of the Dangs.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Song

Whose sticks are these, mother-in-law?
The sticks of our clan, mother-in-law.
The sticks shine in the sun, mother-in-law.
Come out to see the sticks, mother-in-law.
In your left hand bring a lamp, mother-in-law.
In your right hand bring water, mother-in-law.
Quickly, quickly give us greeting, mother-in-law.

Probably to the Muria mind the constant repetition of 'mother-in-law' is amusing; a second song is also humorous.

On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
The hare has teeth as big as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustaches are like spear grass, chelik.
Its hairs are like a pile of bamboo shavings, chelik.[1]

From the Gaita's house the chelik move round the village, dancing before each house in turn and collecting a little rice. Meanwhile the motiari are busy collecting rice themselves; they cook this in the ghotul, and later serve it to the boys in their camp. At night boys and girls dance together, but without their sticks.

In the morning, the boys give the girls two or four pice and try to hit them when they accept it. When they reach the village boundary on their way to the next village, the little rite of crossing over a sacred line is repeated. Before reaching the new village, they halt somewhere by a stream and cook the food that they have just collected, lighting the fire from the need-fire on their spear. Then they go on and repeat the same programme.

At last the expedition is over; the days of taboo will soon be at an end; the boys approach once more their own village. News of their coming has preceded them and their motiari have not been idle. In Khutgaon I was told that they went out with the rest of the village to catch hares for the boys' feast. But everywhere the girls take the Gaita out into the jungle and make him cut one or two small semur trees. The semur tree is chosen because it was a semur which grew up out of the stump of the gold-covered

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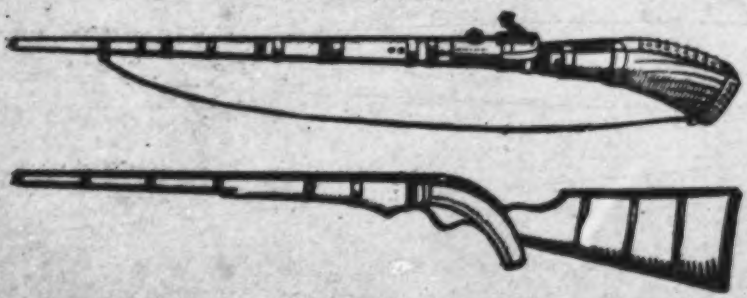

FIG. 118. Dummy guns carried on dancing expeditions

bamboo which Lingo himself cut down at the end of the first Pus Kolang expedition. In some villages the boys say that the semur is chosen because Lingo

[1] For similar humour, see my *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, pp. 150ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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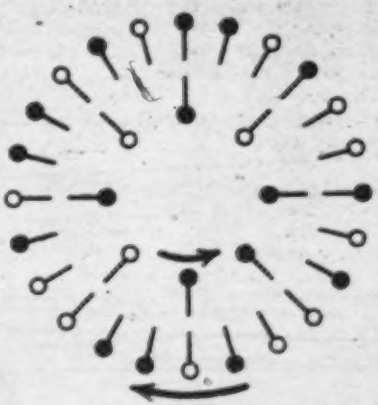
The dances and songs differ slightly from those of the Pus Kolang. In April 1941, I saw the Chait Dandar dancers of Jungani when they visited Malakot. The girls had no special dress, but the boys wore the dancing skirt, turbans and bells loosely hung above the buttocks. The leader of the party, the Gaita, wore the elaborate comb illustrated in Fig. 121 and a gaily coloured bag round his neck.



The dancing resembled the Pus Kolang dancing, but was much enlivened by the presence of the girls. The sticks used were much longer, about three feet with a notch at one end. In the big stick-dance with which they began the boys and girls mixed freely, forming two antagonistic circles. Each boy and girl held a stick in either hand, the right pointing upwards and the left down. As the circles revolved, they struck each other's sticks and passed on. They danced on their toes, with a light and easy step, right foot to right, left foot to left, the left foot up and down, then across to the right. The circles moved in both directions, reversing with a loud cry of *Ow-ha*. As usual among Muria, the boys shook their buttocks horizontally to ring the bells; this gave a very ragged effect in comparison with the strict timing and unison of the vertical jerk of the Hill Maria.

Songs

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1

Hun hun hun hun jām huy

The peacock has a long tail.
Where is the long-tailed peacock?
The peacock's in the Gaita's house.
How much does the peacock drink?
The peacock takes five sips.
Come down, O long-tailed peacock!
Where will it come down?
In the Pujari's house,
In his house come down.
O long-tailed peacock!

2

Roy wāyo jām huy

Don't think about your lover, she won't come now.
You'll miss your step in the dance if you think of her.
You won't sing properly.
Where has the Pujari gone?
He has gone with a knife to sacrifice.

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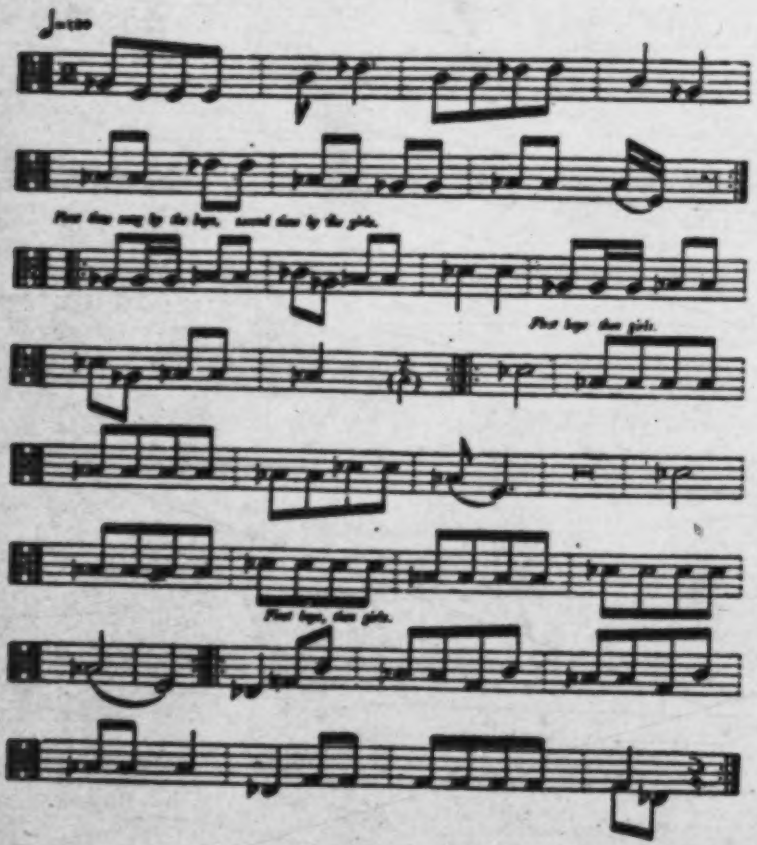
GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Ask the Gaita's wife where the Gaita has gone;
He has gone to his village holding an umbrella.
Ask the Manjhi's wife where the Manjhi has gone.
He has gone to give judgement holding his stick.



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The second dance corresponded to the Lingo dance of the Pus Kolang. Boys and girls made two long lines facing each other; each pair held two sticks between them and beat them in unison. After a time the line turned in on itself, the leaders taking it down under a roof of sticks; then they turned round and the sticks were held low down near the ground and the line this time stepped over them.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

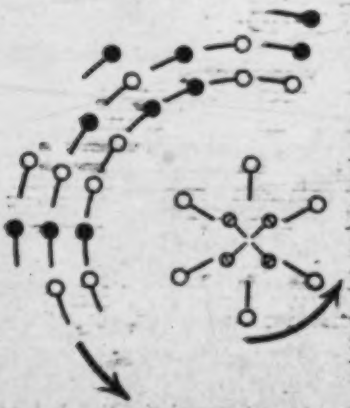
Song

Tari nāna na nāre nāna tari nānāre

Oho maina ho lālsai baitho danda ho.	O maina bird, O Lalsai! Sit down with a stick.
Oho kāhen he danda ho lālsai maina kāhen he danda ho tari?	What is the stick made of, O Lalsai maina?
Ye bāte palţu ho rāja maina ho lālsai ye bāte palţu ho!	Let us turn this side, O Raja maina, O Lalsai!
O ho chait dandar ho rāja maina ho lālsai ho teri.	This is the Chait Dandar.
Uthun dakhu ho rāja maina lālsai ho tari.	Let us stand and watch it.

Lalsai means a prince. The young Maharaja used to be called Lalpila.

The third dance was called the Bendri (or Monkey) Endanna, very like the usual pyramid dance, but with a brighter note in the procession where boys and girls marched round with their arms about each other's necks. Four little boys mounted on the backs of half-a-dozen seniors, who rose up with a loud whistle. The rest of the party formed the procession and went round the pyramid beating their sticks, with quick hopping movements. They advanced three paces, paused, swung back a little and then advanced again. From time to time they made excellent *hoop-hoop* monkey noises. When they descended, the younger boys saluted their elders with Johar, apparently in gratitude for their safe return from so perilous an elevation.



The last dance was performed in a slow and solemn line. Boys and girls, embracing one another about the shoulders, formed a long row, sticks in hand. They advanced two steps, retired two steps and at the same time moved a little to the right. After the line had thus travelled some distance, it moved back to the left. The movement was slow and tedious and the singing rather flat.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Songs

1

Tare nare nare na nare

Porre metta dippa tendera lālsai.	Cut the clearing on the top of the hill, Lalsai.
Dippa tendsi bāra kewerār lālsai?	Why is the clearing to be cut?
Dippa tendsi bāra bitirār lālsai?	What will be sown in that clearing?
Dippa tendsi ganga parbat bitirār lālsai.	In that clearing *ganga parbat* seed will be sown.
Ganga bitsi bāra kewerār lālsai?	What shall we do with that seed?
Ganga pungār jhela jewerār lālsai.	We will put its flower in our turbans, Lalsai.

The *ganga parbat* is a specially profitable seed.

2

Tari na hari na morey, nāna hari nāna ho, ye na hari na morey na, kanhaiya morey ye na, hari na morey na

Bhala kaise rowen more pandki parewān ho?	How does my wood-pigeon cry, and my dove?
Kaise rowen manjur?	And how does my peacock cry?
Bhala ghutru ghutru more pandki parewān ho;	O *ghutru ghutru* cries my wood-pigeon and my dove;
Dhoke dhoke manjur.	O *dhoke dhoke* cries my peacock.
Bhala kay chāra charen more pandki parewān ho?	O what food has my wood-pigeon and my dove?
Kāy chāra charen manjur?	What food has my peacock?
Bhala gotin charen more pandki parewān ho;	My wood-pigeon and my dove eat small pieces of stone;
Dhānen charen manjur.	My peacock eats rice.
Bhala kaisen sowen more pandki parewān ho?	And how sleeps my wood-pigeon and my dove?
Kaise sowen manjur?	How sleeps my peacock?
Bhala gura me sowen more pandki parewān ho;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove sleep in their nests;
Jhāre me sowen manjur.	And my peacock sleeps in the tree.
Bhala kahān pāni piwen more pandki parewān ho?	O where do my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water?
Kahān pāni piwen manjur?	And where does my peacock drink?
Bhala ghare pāni piwen more pandki parewān ho;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water in the house;
Bane pāni piwen manjur.	My peacock drinks water in the forest.

There are evidently no chastity taboos in the Mahua Dandar expeditions. Girls and boys went about with free and natural embraces that were a delight to watch. During the stick-dance, when a boy approached a girl he fancied, he waggled the bells on his buttocks furiously and laughed and flirted with her as she passed. In our camp a party of dancers stood for a long time watching us. Every boy had his arms round a girl, and the Belosa stood with two boys; they were all embracing each other (see Plate XCI). There was no self-consciousness or shyness, no fear either of the stranger or the gods.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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In Sidhawand, the girls danced in two lines following each other. Each girl had her left hand on her neighbour's shoulder and her right hand hung straight down. They took two steps to the right, right, left, right, then slid the left foot along the ground.

When they first arrive, the Diwali dancers sing:

1

Thākur ghar kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's house, brothers?
Jora kukur bhuke re bhai rām,	Where a pair of dogs are barking, brothers,
Tehi thākur gharu re bhai rām.	There is the Thakur's house, brothers.
Thākur beta kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's son, brothers?
Jora kardhan pahire re bhai rām.	He has a double silver belt, brothers.
Tehi thākur beta re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's son, brothers.
Thākur bohāri kon āy re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers?
Jora suta pahire re bhai rām.	She has two bands round her neck, brothers.
Tehi thākur bohāri re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers.

2

Mulir mulir intoni kāri gurti!	You are crying army, army, O blackbird!
Aga baga da mulir kāri gurti?	Where has the army come from, blackbird?
Rainigarh da mulir dāda.	The army has come from Rainigarh, brother.
Hurrig lehka mulir dāda.	The army comes like a line of black ants, brother.
Dondera kayang talwār dāda.	The sword is long as the dondera fruit, brother.
Tormend tormend puja roy kāri gurti;	They are killing people *tormend tormend*, blackbird;
Mindāk tora reyandu roy kāri gurti;	The blood is flowing up to the knees, blackbird;
Luwur minu kubnāh roy kāri gurti;	*Luwur* fish are swimming in it, blackbird;
Nāri minu targanāh roy kāri gurti.	*Nāri* fish are swimming against the stream, blackbird.

A crowd soon gathers, attracted not so much by the dance as by the desire to see who has come. The local chelik are very excited and bustle to and fro making arrangements. They send their own girls to clean the ghotul, but once that is done forbid them to come near. Their own girls are planning to go out themselves in two days' time, so they do not really mind.

In Remawand, when the girls from Markabera came, the Remawand boys went round the village collecting rice, pulse and salt, and cooked it under a tree near the Gaita's house. When the girls had finished singing they camped in the ghotul, taking complete possession of it, spreading their things everywhere; some of them lay down and slept at once, tired with the journey and

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

in preparation for an exhausting night. When the food was ready the boys brought it to the ghotul and they all ate from leaf-plates, seated on logs of wood placed in a rough circle. There were about a dozen visiting girls and as many hosts.

After supper a great fire was lit in the ghotul court and some of the girls began to dance in a small circle with the boys in another group, a slow and mournful dance, wholly unsuited to the spirit of the moment. None of the older people came near; it was the hour of youth. Presently they wearied of the dance, and sat down round the fire, the girls in a half-circle on one side, the boys facing them. They began to talk very delightfully to each other. I do not think I have ever heard a group of people talk with such gentle and natural charm. The girls began by asking the clan of every boy; the boys asked the same question of the girls. This was significant—a necessary preparation for later assignations and even marriages. Then the two parties exchanged names, ghotul-names, and this caused a lot of merriment, for of course the girls' lovers in Markabera had often the same names as the boys of Remawand. Then the boys began to call themselves by the girls' titles and the girls took the boys' names, causing roars of laughter and some embarrassment. This was probably a form of proposal and assignation. When the Sirdar called himself Malko and she replied by calling herself Kotwar, he knew that her attentions were engaged elsewhere. But if she said 'I am the Sirdar', he knew that his advances at midnight would not be rejected.

Songs

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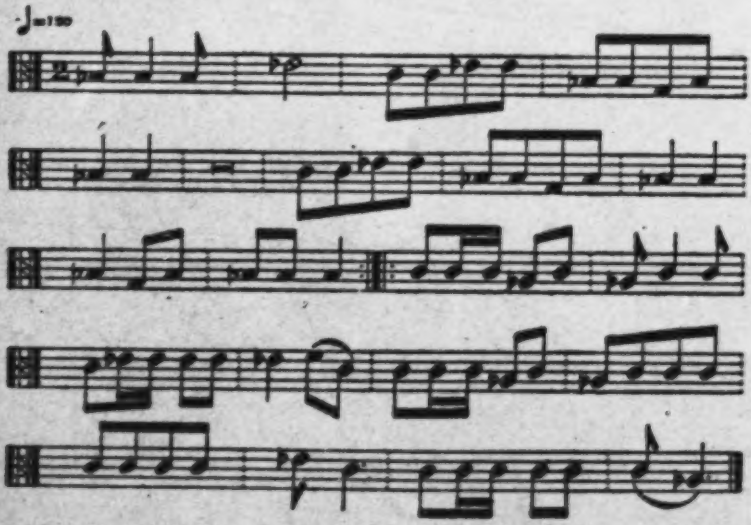


Banda rola pungăr wo ăya.
Pungăr mikichăla dăhigo ăya.
Nima icho hanma wo nuni.
Bona suda dahi wo nuni?

In the lake there is a flower.
I go to put it in my hair.
Don't go, little daughter.
Who will go with you there?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Māmān marri manior go āya:
Ona suda dāka wo āya.
Tāra nāwa sandra go āya.
Sandra nana uhka go āya.
Kosa wāri polka go āya;
Tāra nāwa polka go āya.
Wāler igāda tukil wo āya;
Tāra nāwa tukil wo āya.
Muyāng end-leng kocha go āya;
Tāra nāwa kocha go āya.
Kawdāng end-leng humār go āya;
Tāra nāwa humār go āya.
Hupe lolor wati go āya!
Hupe lehkā dāka go āya.
Nana waronāy atona āya.
Saboy tāskun dāynur go āya.
Kape kanhār bera go āya,
Kape lehka parriya ka āya.

There is my *māma*'s son:
I will go with him.
Give me my *sandra* cloth.
I will wear my cloth.
The *polka* jacket is made of silk;
Bring me that jacket.
The basket was made by the Nahar;
Give me my basket.
The measure has little bells round it;
Bring me the measure.
The *gundri* is adorned with cowries;
Bring me the *gundri*.
O the jungle clearing of the rats!
Like a rat I will go.
I will go all alone.
For everyone has left me.
Over the field of the *kapu* bird,
Like a bird I will go.

2

Aga baga pārewāng roy dele?
Dongur bhum tāng pārewāng roy dele.
Aga baga raiya nung roy dele?
Gāita dāda duār re roy dāda.
Kile re koru rachāte roy dele,
Agāye ise raiytāng roy dele.

Whence are these pigeons?
The pigeons have come from the highlands.
Where have the pigeons settled?
In the Gaita's court.
In front of his fence,
There they have settled.

3

Kumda phul sitārām kayde layor.
Tuma phul sitārām kayde layor.
Kākri phul sitārām kayde layor.
Mogra phul sitārām kayde layor.
Keonra phul sitārām kayde layor.
Chameli phul sitārām kayde layor.
Gulāp phul sitārām kayde layor.
Āma phul sitārām kayde layor.

Salute the flower of the pumpkin, boys.
Salute the flower of the gourd, boys.
Salute the flower of the cucumber, boys.
Salute the flower of the *mogra*, boys.
Salute the flower of the *keonra*, boys.
Salute the flower of the *chameli*, boys.
Salute the flower of the rose, boys.
Salute the flower of the mango, boys.

4

Dāda le waiya munhe re korka kiton;
Perke ne purka kiton, dāda.
Murwise pāi jaliyal dāda.
Pinjora te maina kiton, dāda.
Rachāte gāda kiton, dāda.

In front you have built a cow-shed, brother;
Behind you have made a grain-bin, brother.
The peacock is on the roof, brother.
The maina is in its cage, brother.
The cart is in the courtyard, brother.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Latile howe hiton, dāda.	The monkey is on the pole, brother.
Nawchāre pāt te chidral, dāda.	The rat is in the rafters, brother.
Kena ye manwān āywin, dāda!	What a rich man you are, brother!
Dalate heza himun, dāda,	Give us a basketful, brother,
Kāwir te hilāp āyār, dāda.	A full load, brother.
Jiwa tun kami koma, dāda.	Don't give less than that, brother.
Niyare porov poykom, dāda.	Then we will throw [praises] on you, brother.

5

Muda muda intoni dāda!	Ring, Ring, say Ring, brother!
Guru pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a blacksmith girl,
Kachi muda heweroṁ dāda.	She would have given an iron ring.
Sonār pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a goldsmith girl,
Soni muda wāterom dāda.	She would have given a gold ring.
Kauro pekih āyerom dāda,	Had she been of the Kauro clan,
Kawra muda heweroṁ dāda.	She would have given a cowrie ring,
Kudum dāka wāterom dāda.	And she would have walked stamping her feet.
Dinda layor ātekroy dāda,	Had you been an unmarried boy, brother,
Kudum dāka wāta roy dāda,	You too would have walked stamping your feet,
Māte muth ka heweroṁ dāda.	And we would have beaten you with our fists.

From time to time girls would jump up and try to run into the ghotul to sleep, but the boys were generally quick enough to catch them. This went on all night, alternating dance and pleasant talk. Every now and then a boy pulled a girl out of the ghotul and away into the fields. No one took any notice, though there was a little laughter when they returned. The girls took it in turns to get a little sleep; there were generally three or four girls sleeping at any one time.

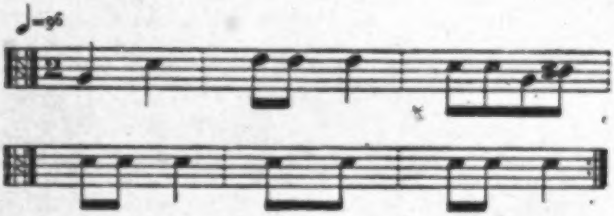
In the morning, the girls first sang outside the Gaita's house and the boys went round the village collecting a basket of rice for their journey and the midday meal which they would eat beside a stream half-way to their next village. When the boys returned, suddenly the girls ran to the ghotul leaving four of their number standing in line. These put two pice on the ground. Two of the boys ran to pick up the money and as they bent down the girls thumped them on the back. Then the boys took the baskets of rice down to the ghotul, put it on the ground, and the girls had to pull it away without getting hit. They emptied the basket and put it outside the gate; the boys made a dash for it, but were again caught and beaten. Then the girls, accompanied by the Gaita, went again to the boundary; a line was drawn across the path, they stepped over it and went their way.

This programme was repeated every night for a week, and then the girls went home. I witnessed their return at Binjhli and Bandopal. On the 18th of November, 1941, the chelik of Binjhli were very excited and busy. They took a whole cartload of wood into the jungle. They dug a pit in the ground, long and deep but narrow enough to bear a row of pots full of rice and pork. They lit the fire and prepared the feast. About 6 p.m. came the news that the motiari were approaching, and the boys ran through the forest towards a footpath some two hundred yards away.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Songs

1



Sora dhāru dharti nawu khandu pirthi ho!
O the sixteenfold earth and the ninefold heaven!

Dharti mālik boru lariyo pirthi mālik boru ho?
Who is the master of earth and who is the master of heaven?

Dharti mālik lingo lariyo pirthi mālik rājāl ho.
Lingo is master of earth and Rajal is master of heaven.

Lingona wehle pāta lariyo lingona wehle dākān ho!
O the songs that Lingo taught us, O the steps that Lingo taught us!

Pahili pāta lingo lariyo pahili dākān lingona ho.
The first song is Lingo's, and the first step is Lingo's.

Maria pāta layora lariyo maria dākān layora ho.
The last song is the boys', and the last step is the boys'.

Nadum narka diya lariyo nike poroy poytom ho.
At midnight burns a lamp, we have taken your name.

Hongu dāpu āyma lariyo nike johar lāgi ho.
Don't be angry with us, we salute you with Johar.

2

Aring koring bāder roy.
Clouds are over heaven.

Poron bāder poyndu roy.
The sky is overcast with clouds.

Darka pirru dar dar roy,
The rain comes pouring down,

Jimti piru jim jim roy.
Then drizzles drop by drop.

Dori usa handu roy,
Towards the sunset flows a flood,

Dakka pehchor handu roy.
Forcing its way along.

3

Gugti gugti māri māri kokore.
Let us play *dudu* in the dust.

Kum dudu dudu roy he bai?
Are you coming to play *dudu*?

Dud harsi wayeni he bai,
I would like to come, but I can't,

Wāyon āyo wāyena he dāda;
Mother is in the house;

Lone dai mania roy he dāda.
She will be angry with me.

Niya dai matek roy he bai.
Don't bother about her.

Sura weri jhāpi roy he bai;
The basket has seven chains;

Jhāpite sandra hitona he bai.
I have put cloth into the basket.

Baska wane hitoni he dāda?
When did you give it?

Konem wedur joli roy he bai;
When you were in your cradle;

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Jolit nima mandi roy he bai,
Ashe nana hitona he bai.
Sandra ise hiteh roy he dāda,
Nana ise wāyha roy he dāda,
Jori ise ãykāt roy he dāda.

You were swinging in your cradle,
Then I put the cloth for you.
If you have given cloth, brother,
Then I will come, brother,
And we will live as yoke-fellows, brother.

4

Bhālur beti rāni hai men lure jāy ho?
Where is the bear's queenly daughter?

Bhālur beti rāni dongri men lure jāy ho.
She is playing on the hill.

Bhālur beti rāni kahān pāni jāy ho?
Where is she drawing water?

Bhālur beti rāni tariya men pāni jāy ho.
She is drawing it from the tank.

Bhālur beti rāni kahān sutela jāy ho?
Where does she sleep?

Bhālur beti rāni dongri men sutela jāy ho.
The bear's queenly daughter sleeps in the little stream.

5

Miti bolo mitiyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.
O sweet-spoken coolie girl, show me the way.

Mai ni jāno dāhar bābu mai ni jāno hor ho;
I don't know the way, brother;

Pāni ghāt me jābe bābu paniyārin la puchbe re ho.
Go to the water-place and ask the water-girls.

Ye bai paniyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.
O water-girl, tell me the way.

Kor me khele kor larka larka la puch lebe ho.
O boy, ask the boys playing in the road.

He bābu leroko thākur ghar kon re ho?
Where is the house of the Thakur, O boy?

Yewni jewni chor debe jābe manja gali re ho,
Turn neither left nor right, and go straight on,

Rang pote chuhi pote tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where the walls have been washed in colour and white,

Jawra bawra kukur bhuke tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where the dogs Jawra Bawra are barking,

Kama me to āti bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where an elephant is tied to a pole,

Ala me to ghora bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where a horse is tied in the shed,

Lewa me to bainsa dube tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where the buffaloes are tethered in the yard,

Kota me to gaiya bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where the cows are shut in the shed,

Dāng me to bandra jule tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where a monkey swings on a bamboo pole,

Chhāni me to manjur nāche tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where a peacock is dancing on the roof,

Pinjora me to mena bole tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Where a maina sings in its cage,

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kat me to suwa bole tohi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a parrot talks on a wooden perch, that is the Thakur's house.
He bai thakurain thākur kahān gais re ho?	Where is the Thakur, O Thakurain?
Hāt me tenga daris bhaiya rāja he suwa gais re ho.	With a stick in his hand he has gone to serve the Raja.
Kaiya tere kaiya bhāji nadi tir he kaiya re ho.	The *kaiwa* tree is on the river bank.
Amor thākur la to rāja ghar le maya re ho;	Our Thakur has the love of the Raja's house.
Arri thākur parri jo chong bharela dewe re ho.	The Raja gave him tobacco to smoke.
Keni tere keni bhāji bāri tir he keni re ho.	The *keni-bhāji* grows near the fence.
Amar thākur he bālak beti son he beni gāte re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden plait.
Airi tere airi bhai tarai he airi re ho.	The ducks live in the tank.
Amar thākur he bālak beti son he peri pinde re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter wears golden anklets.
Amar thākur he bālak beti son he paniya konche re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden comb in her hair.

6

Meta porro tingi te bārēng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the top of the hill?
Meta porro tingi te bodāl gore lāta ho.	The bison is swinging on the top of the hill.
Gora lariyo boda di nikun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O bison!
Bodāl da tohār te bātāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the bison's tail?
Bodāl da tohār te chachi gore lāta ho.	The *chachi* bird is swinging on its tail.
Kene dor dhamki te bārēng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging under the hill?
Kene dor dhamki te yekta gore lāta ho.	Under the hill the pig is swinging.
Gora lariyo yekta di nikun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O pig!
Turjing arta bharri te bārēng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging in the field of thick grass?
Turjing arta bharri te horsal gore lāta ho.	In the grass-field the sambhar is swinging.
Pāwur marra tonda te bārēng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the siari tree?
Pāwur marra tonda te munj gore lāta ho.	The monkey is swinging on the siari tree.
Gora lariyo munj di nikun sobhe māta ho.	Your swing looks very fine, O monkey!

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Ban bhainsa āna tāna khāye lasun pāna pāna jām kuy.
The jungle buffaloes go here and there eating garlic leaves.

Chari buli āo bhainsa rupa bera thāna thāna jām kuy.
Come buffaloes and graze in the silver field.

Khai kurha cho hānla huda; halār gharo bhātti bhātti;
There are thorns in the pile of rubbish; there is an outstill in the Kalar's house;

Bhātti cho mundi ke āg lage; pinda ke chābli chāti chāti.
The top of the still caught fire, the ant bit the buttocks.

Bhukute bhuku kai kuwāri dengur cho bhuku ho ho.
There are maggots in the new ant-hill.

Pila rāja bairamgarh jora chawar duku ho ho.
The baby Raja of Bairamgarh is fanned with a pair of fans.

Kar harāti harāti pipar pān cho deti deti.
The pipal leaf has nipples.

Chirak charah mand bache jāti halāring beti ho ho;
The Kalarin's daughter is selling liquor drop by drop;

Tan tan rupaiya gine halāring bai ho ho jām kuy.
She is counting her rupees *tan tan*.

2

Jhirliti jhirliti pandki māra liti.
Jhirliti jhirliti, the pigeon killed the sparrow.

Dokara dokari jhagra hola chāpun dila luthi.
The dotard quarrelled with his dame and burnt her with a fire-brand.

Ao dokari chhandaiyla tola dehun roti.
Come, old woman, and I will give you bread.

Roti pitha kai karhun? Bare bāp ke beti.
What am I to do with your bread? I am the daughter of a rich man.

Gāda upar garli chonda upar khila.
On top of a big cart is a little cart, and the poles are joined with a nail.

Gāra chaghi kāhdela sidhāwandiya pila.
To ride on this cart a chelik from Sidhawand is invited.

Amli boti tingāli pur duwāre mācha.
The tamarind fruit is very sour; the platform is in the yard.

Mācha chaghi kāhdela dayi māma bhācha.
The uncle and his nephew are called to sit on the platform.

Naya nāngār bāri bāri juna nāngār kāri.
On the new plough is tied a strap, on the old plough is a strap.

Ye gaon cho lekimanhe kolepa nilo ari,
The children of this village were carried away by a fox,

Kolepa cho bata beti amka balla dādi.
And its children will call us grandfather.

Chher chherta hi mar mara, bāman dorgoda.
Chher chherta hi mar mara, bāman dorgoda.

Donga dāda yete rala pawli adgada.
A tall man was coming along, and his foot was caught.

Nāni lāwa guri guri bade lāwa guri.
The little quail is sweet, so is the big quail.

Jhatke bida des kāka tucho mai cho pudi.
Quickly give us alms, uncle, or your mother's vagina.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Pāṇi suna pāni suna lendi barli duna.	A water dog with a cup full of excreta.
Ayele pār cho kohoda paile paile jayse.	Cranes from here go to the other side.
Paile pār cho rāut leka mārun mārun khāyse.	The Rawat boy there kills and eats them.
Sipi sipi dongri kosa cho dori.	The hill of shells, the cord of silk cocoons.
Tucho beta ke dakhle māma sānjh bera.	I saw your son, at evening time.
Adan laza dhaura lasa pondhke dharli kasa.	The gum of saja, gum of dhaura, like holding someone's buttocks.
Aware bai chikan khosa, bhelwān tel he ghasa.	O come, girl with hair well-done, I'll cover you with *bhelwa* oil.
Kāri āma lure lure, pandri āma lure.	O the black mangoes, O the white mangoes, are hanging down in heavy clusters.
Mahādeo he parsād me pandri baile mile.	By the grace of Mahadeo we will get a light-coloured girl.

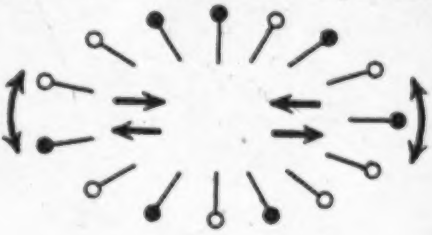
3

Come out, girls, to see what boys have come.
They have come from the Upper World.
Give us our present quickly, for it is growing very late.
Tie up a pair of bullocks:
Kill a fat hen: bring rice out of the granary.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883 535

Sometimes the Har is not done hand in hand, but each dancer places his left hand on his left neighbour's shoulder and lets his right hang down.

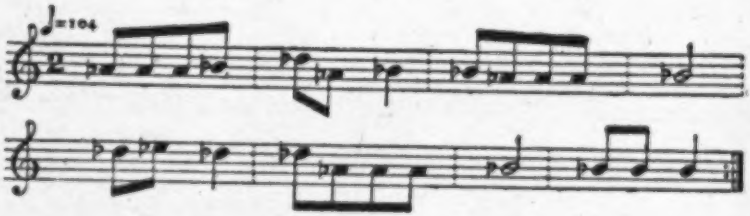


Everybody sings; they generally begin with the Lingo song, continue to describe the exploits of 'the gods, ancestors and the Raja', and use general songs without much meaning.

Songs

I

[533]



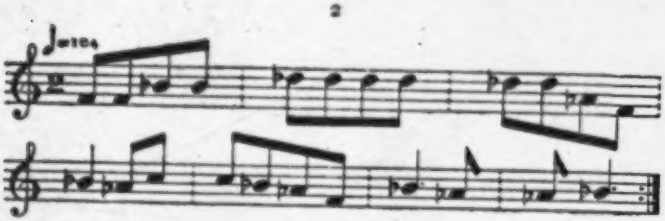
X883 535 ●539

Māri reka dengāl āto āto dīpāta reha gujal āti le:
Kākar mārile reka āti he.
Konem wedur gapa āti he niya miyār matek āti le.
Reka tinda loha āti he āta.
Hile āyo manta hāre he hāre tāne dārgon utona hāre le,
Tānka isi lohon hāre he.
Reka tinda dakom āti he.
Hipiya pite jori āti he jori dākom āti le.
Reka tijin wāikom āti he.
Niya hāre āyena ayen āti he he āti nikun āti inena āti le.

On the hill the char is tall;
In the clearing it is small.
O the char on the Hill of Crows!
Were your daughter here, there would be a basket of soft bamboo.
Send her to eat char.
She is in the house, son-in-law,
But we have already drunk liquor for another,
And I cannot send her.
We will go to eat the char.
Like a pair of birds we will go.
We will come when we have eaten.
Send your daughter with me.
I will be your son-in-law,
I will call you mother-in-law.

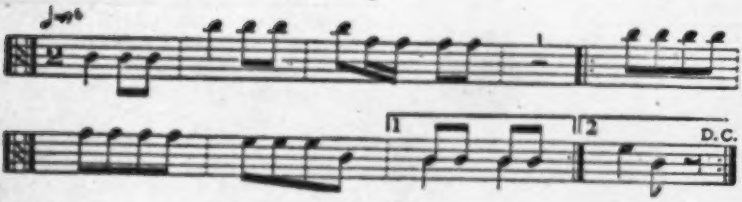
DANCE AND SONG

2



Where should I sell you, O bullock?
Laharsingh, Lahari and Udamsai!
I will sell you to a Teli, O bullock!
Don't sell me to a Teli, brother.
Let me stay in a Muria's house, brother.
The oil-press sounds *kiur kour*.
I can't pull the oil-press, brother.
Laharsingh, Lahari and Udamsai.

3



The cock has crowed, let Sona come.
The cock crows *kukuru kuru*, let Sona come.
Let it crow, Sona.
The dawn has come, Sona.
This is a thing of joy, Sona.
There is nothing here for anger, Sona.
We have come to dance for joy, Sona.
It is still dark, brother.
Don't go away, brother.
Let us dance together, brother, let Sona come.
The cock has crowed, let Sona come.

IX. KARSANA

A large number of dances are not called *endanna*, dances, but *karsana*, games. The distinction is not one of form, but of occasion. Endanna, or dance, is performed at special times—at a marriage, a festival, an expedition. Karsana, game, can be performed at any time, and usually is danced informally in the ghotul. Some of the karsana, of course, are real games, jolly, boisterous frolics, but others are simply dances which have no deep significance.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kokora Karsana

X883 535

This is called Kokora (Crane) Karsana at Remawand, Mindachna Pata at Markabera, and Tutumri Karsana at Kuntpadar. It may have other names elsewhere. The girls form a circle; each puts her hands on her neighbour's knees, that is, her right hand on her right-hand neighbour's left knee while her right-hand neighbour puts her left hand on her right knee, so that all round the circle arms are crossed and the girls bending forward. They dance very vigorously, standing stationary, but jerking their buttocks inwards. Presently they swing round and face outwards, and now their buttocks knock against each other to the amusement of all. In Sidhawand, when the girls faced outwards they lifted their hands from their knees and clapped them together. But the essence of this dance is its frankly sexual imitations.

Songs

[533]

1

●[539] *Kon pāra jābe re kokoda, durun ruchu durun ruchu.*
Kalār pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kewta pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Māhara pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.

Where are you going to, O crane? *Durun ruchu durun ruchu.*
Go to the Kalar hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Kewta hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Mahara hamlet, O crane.

The names of the hamlets are those of low Hindu castes. The refrain *ruchu ruchu* is reminiscent of the noise *ruchmuch ruchmuch* which a bed is [825] supposed to make when intercourse occurs on it. The crane is everywhere a sexual symbol, the devotion of these birds to one another being proverbial.

2

[533]

X883 535 539

O re re loyo re rela re re loyo oy!

O tu tumri parheli ātin! O toilet-twig from the ebony tree!

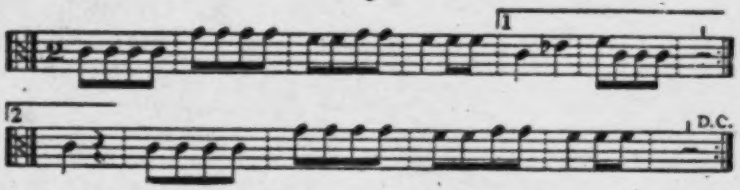
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

X883
535
●539

O niya mari bayāli bayāli ātin. — Your son has gone mad.
Ona nāna wāyon na nāna wāyon rāy. — I will not come for him.

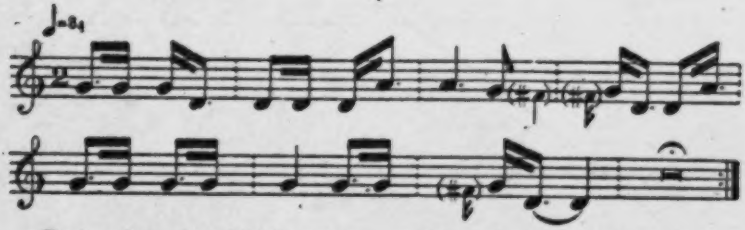
3



X883
535
539
533

Andeknāta māndek jela jālum te jālum te! — O wearer of the long-tailed turban from Adangaon!
Kokti mazri bhet pāvlu bhetum te bhetum te, — We catch the *kokti* fish,
Rahar pungār bhet pāvlu pudgānte. — We pluck the *rahar* flower.
Andeknāta māndek jela jālum te jālum te! — O boy with the long-tailed turban from Adangaon!

4



Tu tumri tumri rāndi jalkena! — Spit on the ebony tree, Call it widow, widow!
Neka jalkemaima rāndi jalkena! — Don't show off too much, O widow!
Kasur muta'paima rāndi jalkena! — Don't use a broom, or your body will swing to and fro, O widow!

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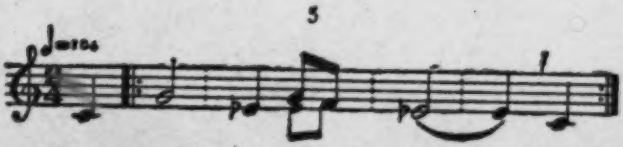


Chu ruchhe ruchhela painjana. — *Chu ruchhe ruchhela painjana.*
Kāherhāje daiki lābe painjana? — For whom will you bring a girl, O anklet?
Beldārhāje daiki lābe painjana. — Bring a girl for the Beldar, O anklet.
Bhuski bhuski denh lābe painjana. — Bring the fat girl, O anklet.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

6

We will call Jalarsingh brother, O crane!
Whom will you call *bhauji*, O crane?
We will call Surtao *bhauji*, O crane!
What will she call you, O crane?
She will call you *dewar*, O crane!
You will trick her and eat her, O crane!

Jal-hanni (Shaking) Karsana

Girls and boys form a large circle, each with hands on the neighbour's knees. They circle round kicking out the right leg behind, moving sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, but always with the right leg kicking out and a convulsive pushing movement of the body which is bent forward.

Song

Ut gur gur ut gur gur poya layāna nanāy warre na,
Hātum hanji pātum tawāna nanāy warre na.
Weda hanji koda tawāna nanāy warre na.
Harri hanji mudiyo tawāna nanāy warre na.

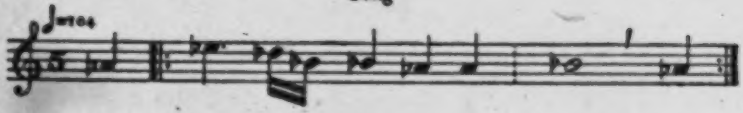
When the quail cries *ut gur gur ut gur gur* I am not afraid of the Poyami girl,
When I go to the bazaar to bring cloth, I am not afraid.
When I go to the field to bring the horse, I am not afraid.
When I go above the road to bring a husband, I am not afraid.

Nak Dondi Karsana

A variant on the previous exercises is the Nak Dondi or Bhais-sand Karsana which is supposed to imitate the tethering of buffaloes. A big circle is made of boys and girls. Each puts his hands between the legs of his neighbour's so that everyone is clasping the hand of the next but one. They then circulate with a lively skip and a hop, the right foot forward, the left foot to the left, the right foot to the left and the left foot to the left with a skip. All bend forward and move their arms up and down with the result that they catch each other constantly between the legs. As this is a mixed dance its sexual implications are obvious.

DANCE AND SONG

Song



883 X
535
533
539

Re re loya rela rela re re la rela

What were you doing, girl, your anklets sounding *chiding-chadang*, in the cowshed?
I was just clearing up the cow-dung, brother.
There was no cow-dung there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just clearing up the cow-dung.
What were you doing, girl, your anklets sounding *chiding-chadang*, in the garden?
I was combing my hair, brother.
There was no head nor hair there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just combing my hair.
What were you doing on the river bank in the shade of the plum tree?
What were you doing on the leaves, girl?
I was just sitting there in the shade, brother.
There was no shade there, girl, I know your heart.
I swear to you, brother, I was just sitting in the shade.

Re re loyo re re loyo rela rela re re la rela.

This song was not in Gondi but in Chhattisgarhi Hindi, and recorded in Sidhawand village. Its picture of a faithless motiari being interrogated by her true lover is a common motif in ghotul songs.
Another of the songs used was recorded at Dongrigura.

Kariya baila darbār chale;
The black bullock is going to the darbar;

Kariya cho lāri men dul wo champe
kariya cho lāri men dul.
Dinda layan darbār chale.
O Champa, sway to and fro in the black bullock's shed.
The young girl is going to the darbar.

Dinda cho pagri men wo champa
dinda cho pagri men phūl.
Munga baila darbār chale.
In the turban of the boy is a champa flower.
The red bullock is going to the darbar.

Munga cho lāri men dul wo champa
munga cho lāri men dul.
Pandra baila darbār chale;
O Champa, sway to and fro in the red bullock's shed.
The white bullock is going to the darbar;

Dul champa dewra pandra cho lāri
men dul.
Dinda layan darbār chale;
O Champa, sway to and fro in the white bullock's shed.
The maiden is going to the darbar;

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
533
535
●539

Dinda cho lāri men dul wo champa dinda layan cho lāri men dul.

O Champa, sway to and fro in the maiden's shed.

Ujur (White) Karsana

Two lines of girls face one another and dance to and fro singing.

Ujur ujur hanār te dedākor mārte
Pais oya hewom,
Ujur ujur hanār te dedākor mārte yer miya hewom,
Ujur ujur hanār te dedākor mārte nei lari woykom,
Ujur ujur hanār te dedākor māfle lagir paya hewom.

From the white white corner of thirty hills,
We will not let her be taken away,
We will not let them bathe,
We will not let them anoint her with oil,
We will not let them perform the Lagir.

All the references here are to the marriage ceremony.

Durpa Dāndi Karsana (Plate CXXII)

The Durpa Dandi or Game of the Lotus Root is also called Chingri Bunbutti. The leading girl puts her right foot on her left knee. Another girl stands on her right and puts her left leg up over the leading girl's right leg, thus supporting it almost at a right angle to her body. The next girl does the same until there is a complete circle of girls each standing on one leg with the other tucked up in the air. This is supposed to represent a flower supported on its stem. Then the girls begin to sing and each jumps up a little on her one leg and claps her hands.

Song

Durpa dāndi dāndi layor jāmdār jāmdār!
Dāndi tori dāwāt layor jāmdār jāmdār.
Dinda layor āteke layor jāmdār jāmdār,
Jāti āwār āwār dewsi wāyki jāmdār jāmdār.
Pila hālār āteke layor jāmdār jāmdār,
Pila wonde hō mandaki jāmdār jāmdār.

O the lotus plant boy, *jām* leaf, *jām* leaf!
Go to pick the plant, boy.
If you are unmarried, boy,
You will come pushing through the fence.
If you are the father of children,
You will be busy looking after them.

DANCE AND SONG

Guguring Gus Karsana (*Plate CXXIII*)

7883
533
535
539

A line of girls, each with her hands on her hips, fingers to the front, runs round and round like a snake. This is a very attractive dance as I saw it in Alor in 1941. The girls ran quickly and gracefully round and round and in and out, bending their bodies slightly.

Hākhi mend kohla usta.	I husk the grain in a wooden mortar.
Nāwa nāri nolta guguring gus !	My back is aching, *guguring gus !*
Hākhi mend wanji usta.	I husk the rice in a wooden mortar.
Nāwa nāri nolta guguring gus !	My back is aching, *guguring gus !*
Hākhi mend kore usta.	I husk the pulse in a wooden mortar.
Nāwa nāri nolta guguring gus !	My back is aching, *guguring gus !*

The word *guguring* is used to describe *khulti* pulse that is boiled whole, without being ground.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
524

peg was driven. It was spun with the help of a carefully fashioned wooden handle, perforated at one end, through which the string was threaded. Boys sometimes fight with their tops against each other.[1]

III. Household Games

I will now give some account of those games which imitate the tasks of every day, rice-husking, drawing water from the well, cooking, cleaning and using dishes, gathering fruit, making a cart, sending grain to market. Such games are mostly played by girls, though there is no bar on boys joining in.

Wanjing or Rumela Karsana (*Plate CXXVIII*)

This game, which is called the Wanjing (husking), Rumela (grinding), Pindi Usna (grinding flour) and Chakki (grindstone) Karsana, is very popular. Girls gather in a compact group. One of them sits on the ground in the middle, holding a long stick in her hand. The others grasp the stick and lift it up and down singing various songs, of which I will give three examples.

X983
524
539

1

Bad bai pindi use rumela rumela?	Which of the girls is husking grain?
Alosa bai pindi usela rumela rumela.	Alosa Bai is husking grain.
Wirik wāreh hema dāda rumela rumela.	She should not pound carelessly, brother.
Basken usmāl paiwāl dāda rumela rumela.	She never did it before, brother.
Sālo bai pindi usela rumela rumela.	Salo Bai is husking grain.

2

Kāy dhān kāy dhān, suliāri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Mot dhān mot dhān suliāri joy nārangi.	Coarse rice, coarse rice, Suliari, O the orange!
Kāy dhān kāy dhān suliāri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Kabri dhān kabri dhān suliāri joy nārangi.	Mixed rice, mixed rice, Suliari, O the orange!
Kāy dhān kāy dhān suliāri joy nārangi?	What kind of rice is that, Suliari, O the orange?
Kuji dhān kuji dhān suliāri joy nārangi.	Fine rice, fine rice, Suliari, O the orange!

[1] Tops are common among the Naga tribes, less so in other parts of India. I have recorded their use among the Bhuiya and Juang. The Sema Naga use tops only after the sowing is over, and the Chang fine a man who uses one at any time other than during or just after sowing. The Lhota have the same rule, though they inflict no fines. See Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 104; Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 123; Mills, *The Lhota Nagas*, p. 84; Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 281.

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Muria

3

Dhān kutat rahew wo dai. I was husking rice, mother.
Dharis musar māris wo dai. Holding the rice-husker he beat me.

Luga dharke parayenw wo dai; I took my cloth and ran away;
Wahi hāt ais wo dai. He followed me along the road.
Sind buta men lukenw wo dai. I hid behind a chhind shrub.
Didi ghar gayew wo dai: I went to my elder sister's house:
Bāsi pejla rikais wo dai. She gave me stale gruel to eat.
Dāda ghar gayew wo dai: I went to my elder brother's house:

Kukri sikār khawais wo dai. He gave me chicken to eat.

The game imitates one of the more tedious duties of the motiari, the husking of grain, sometimes—before a marriage—in large quantities. Sometimes the stick, which represents the rice-husker, is omitted, and the girls make a ring with their hands, and swing it up and down. When they do this it means they are imitating the grinding of wheat.

Another variant, the Dundum or Chuer Karsana,[1] where the girls join their hands in a ring and swing them up and down, represents the drawing of water from a well—another of the commonest of the motiari's tasks. One of the songs used is this:

Where are you going, sister?
I am going to play in the deep water.
Why are you going, sister?
I am going to be mixed with salt and savour.
I am going to get covered with turmeric water.
Where are you going, sister?

[1] Ba-fia boys play a similar game which to them represents filling a pot.—E. W. Smith and A. M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking Peoples of Northern Rhodesia* (London, 1920), Vol. II, p. 251.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
524

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Hoydel (Hearth) Karsana

A girl lies down on the ground. Two other girls each pick up one of her legs and put it between their own. A fourth raises the first girl's body by the shoulders and they swing her round singing '*Hoydel dhara, hoydel dhara*, pick up the hearth!'

Baipar-lad Karsana (*Plate CXXXIX*)

A big boy goes down on all fours. Two little boys lie on their backs on each side, put their legs over his back, and catch hold of each other's feet with their hands. They are thus slung like two sacks on the back of a bullock. The older boy gets up and carries them to market.[1]

Godel-gara Karsana

This represents the wooden wheels of a cart. Boys tuck their feet well into their thighs, and roll over and over like cart-wheels.

X883
524
533
●539

Other Games

The motiari have a fairly large repertory of songs about the kitchen, which they use for almost any dance. The next four songs are sung while they stand in rows facing each other, alternately bending forward and erect, as they clap their hands and cymbals.

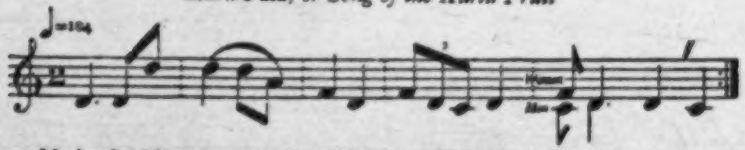
This, from Phauda village, is called the Thari Pata, or Dish Song.

Uth uth re thāri thāri māri!
Pur genta unding.
Māta maoli dolinta dolinta.

Uth uth re kasela kasela masela.
Uth uth re sura mura mura.

Pick up, pick up the plate!
The hill is burning.
This is of Mata Maoli the shaking, the shaking.
Pick up, pick up the pot!
Pick up, pick up the bangles!

Kuru Pata, or Song of the Kurlu Fruit



Mudur lopādāng kuru panding sāngo.

Sangen kei datu ale sārgo.
Panding tinda dāhāt ale sāngo.

Rende ālkāng keit ale re sāngo ui sāngo ri suy.

There is a kurlu fruit in the big jungle, Sango.
Let us go together, Sango.
We will go to eat the ripe kurlu fruit.
Let us call twice *Ui*, Sango, *ri suy!*

[1] This is exactly the same as the Sema Naga game 'Hog's-rub', described and illustrated by Hutton.—*The Sema Nagas*, p. 108. But boys in a similar formation among the Ifugao represent a wooden lounging bench.—R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans*, Plate VIII.

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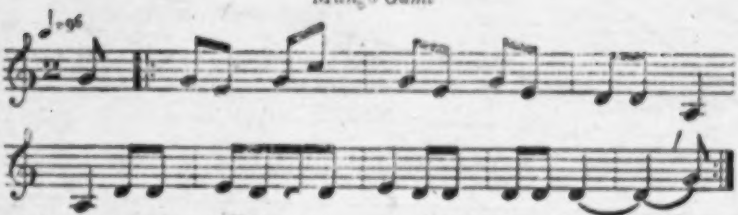
Muria

X883
524
533
●539

GAMES

Mango Game



Jhopa jhopa āma phare wo dai.
Kon bai tore wo dai dāli dāli ?
Kon bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar ?
Julpi bohey wo dai kāwar kāwar.
Kon bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli ?
Sālo bai bohey wo dai dāli dāli.

The mango gives fruit in clusters.
Which girl has picked a basketful?
Which girl is carrying a load?
Julpi is carrying the load.
Which girl carries the basketful?
Salo is carrying the basketful.

Chik-dondi Pāla [1]

Press down the *siliyāri* vegetable with a little pot.
Press down the juice with a little pot.
What was in the hand is gone.
What was on the head is gone.
Eat the *singri* fish with salt in a leaf-cup.

IV. Marriage Games

The ghotul children never tire of imitating the marriage dances. Two big girls pick up a boy and girl and prance about with them, while the other motiari stand in a row singing. Another time the girls divide into two rows, clapping their hands, swaying to and fro and singing. Then each row comes forward in turn and touches the feet of the other. This is the Tarweling Karsana, when the girls sing a song with the refrain *Sāngo tarweling murweling*. A *sāngo* is a girl friend who is not a relative.

Will you come to our marriage, friend?
We won't come to your marriage, friend.
We have no cloth to wear.
We will give you cloth.
Your husband will abuse me.
I have no husband, friend.

[1] *Chik-dondi* is actually the stick used for setting bird-lime.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
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[539]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The dry river carried him away.
His tomb is by the road.
There is no tomb by the road.
We have not seen a tomb.

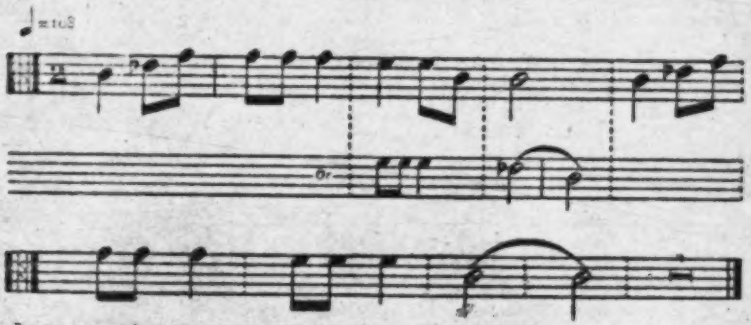
In another game one of the girls is made to take the part of the bride and the motiari sit round her, clutching her hands, weeping and singing mournfully.

The Kalsa Karsana is also popular, very similar to the games that imitate drawing water or rice-husking. The girls gather in a close circle, each grasps another's wrist and thus form a ring held low down. Then they raise and lower their arms singing the usual Kalsa song. This represents the ceremony when bride or bridegroom fill the kalsa-pot with grain.

Sometimes, the children make a little booth, put a boy and girl under it and smear their bodies with white earth (representing haldi) while a group of girls stand behind singing a marriage song.

The betrothal also is frequently imitated. A little girl represents the future bride. She sits in the middle of a close circle of girls who represent her family. Girls dance round and round them asking for her hand in marriage. From time to time they try to break through the circle of relations and carry the girl away.

[533]



Song

[539]

Bad bain mahla hanwāt bahin lok?	For whose betrothal shall we go?
Sālobain mahla hanerāt bahin lok.	We will go for Salobai.
Bor dādan jori oyerāt bahin lok?	Who will be her yoke-fellow?
Silledār dādan jori oyerāt bahin lok.	She will be yoked with the Silledar.
Haring paring darango waderāt bahin lok,	We will give liquor to everyone, one by one,
Haring harri uderāt bahin lok.	And then we will sit in a row.

This can, of course, be done over and over again, pairing off the chelik and motiari with each other, not sparing close and forbidden relations.

V. Dramatic Games

Many games express and illustrate the Muria's sense of drama. The boys and girls act their little plays with vivacity, humour and intelligence. Some of the plays are about thieves, others about cock-fighting, others about livestock and cultivation, one about human sacrifice. As always in a State, the people love pretending to be kings and queens.

GAMES

Thief Games

X 583 524 In the Paralkot area I saw the Hirka Karsana. Boys and girls sit in a line to represent a planting of brinjals. The owner of the garden puts a dumb fellow in charge to watch it. A thief comes by, and greets the dumb watchman, 'There's a fine wedding down in the village; come and see it'. He takes the watchman away with him and sits him down away somewhere, runs back and carries off a child (a brinjal) from the end of the line. Now the owner comes back, and abuses the watchman. He gives him honey, represented by a handful of earth, to persuade him to work properly. The dumb man shows in pantomime that it was a fox that stole the brinjal. Gradually the thief removes the whole garden. The last brinjal stands up as a sign that it has grown well. The thief takes this too and cooks it. The owner comes and asks what it is. 'It's *jāwa*-gruel', says the thief. 'Then give me some', says the owner. The thief is frightened and calls his dog, a boy on all fours, which chases the owner away, and the game is done.

In Phulpar I saw a simpler form of the brinjal-stealing game, here called Hapang-kultur. The children make a little pile of stones, each of which represents a brinjal. They divide into two parties. One party sits round the stones to protect it, the other has to break through and carry off as many 'brinjals' as it can.

Song

● [539]

Lito lito bānga parela ;
Kāwar kāwar kon torela ?
Kāwar kāwar jolma torela.
Chhai chhai bori kon bechela ?
Chhai chhai bori manai bechela.
Nakti paisa kon jhokela ?
Nakti paisa jalām jhokela.

Bunches of brinjal are ready ;
Who picked them load by load ?
Jolma picked a load of them.
Who sold them six to a *bori* ?
Manai sold them six to a *bori*.
Who took the worthless money ?
Jalam took the worthless money.

Meriah Game

In the north-western area both Maria and Muria play a game which recalls the days of the Meriah sacrifices of the Kond. The very name Meriah Karsana is used. Boys and girls form little groups representing houses in a village. A band of three boys comes round singing, begging, shouting. While the attention of the 'householders' is thus distracted, the Meriah party seize one of them and carry him off. Then they go through the motions of cutting off his head, pretend to offer him in sacrifice and return for the others.

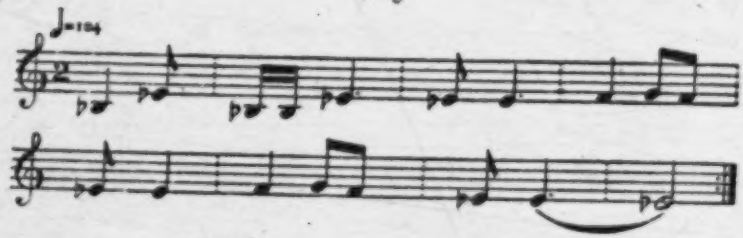
THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

stick, to the Raja of the mice. He gives it to his Diwan, who passes it to the Tahsildar and so to the end of the line. Here a faithless she-mouse gives it away to the first person who offers her a cup of gruel.

Then the game follows the same pattern as at Berma. When the mice sit down, it means they have escaped into their holes, and naturally the hawk cannot get at them.

They played it very well at Masora; boys protected girls in the best tradition; they fell in heaps and tumbled over each other, and they all enjoyed themselves enormously.

Song



The hawk will swoop down like a wave,
When the midnight dew comes down.
It will carry off the chicken,
When the cock crows at dawn.
The hawk will eat the chicken,
When the midnight dew comes down.
O set the chicken free,
When the cock crows at dawn.

The Root Game (Plates CXXX and CXXXI)

This game, which imitates the growing of sweet potatoes or other roots in the garden, is played with many small variations all over the Muria area.[1] Boys and girls sit in line holding each other round the waist, the boy or girl at the end gripping a tuft of grass or a tree. These are the roots. A boy and his 'wife' and a 'servant' go up and down the line pushing sticks under the bottoms of the children, knocking them on the head and generally pushing them about. This is the cultivation of the soil. They go round again and now dig up a little dust and rubbish on either side and throw it over the 'roots'. The third time, they put their hands on the heads of the sitting children chanting '*Lud lud kuruch*, Are you ready? Are you ripe?' They pinch the 'roots' to see if they are ripe or no. All this time the 'owner of the field' is beating and abusing his 'wife', insulting her relatives, threatening to marry again—the patter is only limited by the inventiveness of the boys.

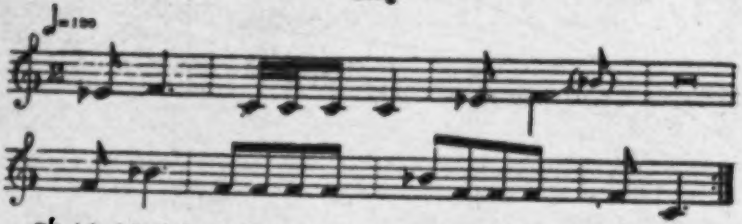
Then the gardeners go to the head of the line and begin to pull off the boys and girls one by one. They clutch desperately at each other, but in the end they are dragged off and away, hit twice and thrown in a heap. This represents the digging up of the roots. The last boy holds out for a long time and the wife has to tickle him before he lets go.

[1] Compare the similar game described in *The Baiga*, p. 463.

X883
524
533
●539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song



Rānicho bāta bahania lānten;
For the Rani we are bringing an armlet;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Rājācho bāta darpanj lānten;
For the Raja we are bringing a mirror;
O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.

Rānicho bāta paijjan lānten;
For the Rani we are bringing anklets;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Rājācho bāta dhoti lānten;
For the Raja we are bringing a dhoti;
O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.

Rānicho bāta churi lānten;
For the Rani we are bringing bangles;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

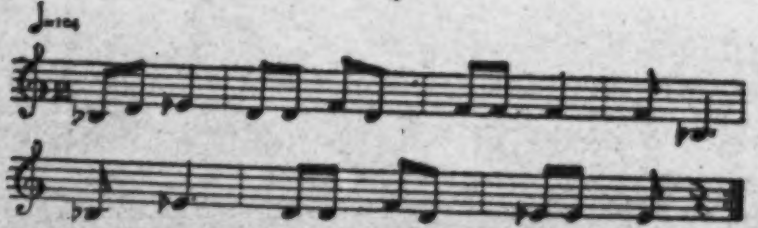
Rājācho bāta topi lānten;
For the Raja we are bringing a hat;
O Raja, come slowly, go slowly.

Rānicho bāta saudra lānten.
For the Rani we are bringing a sari;
O Rani, come slowly, go slowly.

Rajana Belori Karsana

The 'Game of the Raja's Love'. The girls form into two lines facing one another. One line darts forward and touches the other's feet and quickly retires. The others chase them and try to touch their feet before they have got home.

Song



X883
524
539

Tucho kōje tucho kōje khilwān ankuta mocho belori.
For you, for you, I have brought an ear-ring, my love.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GAMES

Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho khilwān he tucho khilwān he !	Your ear-ring, your ear-ring!
Munde thechu ra belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho kāje tucho kāje māla anāwle mocho belori.	For you, for you I have brought a necklace, my love.
Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho māla he tucho māla he !	Your necklace, your necklace!
Munde thechu ra belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho kāje tucho kāje mundi anāwle mocho belori.	For you, for you I have brought a ring, my love.
Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!
Tucho mundi he tucho mundi he !	Your ring, your ring!
Munde thechu ra belori.	Put it on your head, my love.
Rājācho pāylori !	O the king's anklet!

They continue the song indefinitely, using the names of every possible ornament.

VI. Games of Animals and the Chase

As we have seen, the Muria are good hunters, and like all aboriginals are greatly interested in the behaviour of animals.[1] They have games to imitate various animals and birds, and some of their most dramatic displays are about the chase. In this they resemble, though they do not emulate, the remarkable bird and animal dances of the Juang and Pauri Bhuiya. One of these imitates the strut of a peacock, another the ambling gait of a bear, yet another the unwieldy movements of an elephant. In one exciting Juang variant, girls play the part of vultures devouring a corpse, and again, lying face downwards on the ground, they wriggle like snakes.

Goikal Karsāna (*Plate CXL*)

This is the Lizard game. A boy gets down on his left leg and right hand and sticks his right leg out behind. Then he moves rapidly forward, first on one hand and then on the other, while he beats his chest with the free hand. The right leg always remains stuck out behind like a tail.

Hupen-korikna Karsana

In this a boy imitates a mouse scratching itself, though he might equally well be almost any other animal. He lies flat on his face supporting himself on his hands and propels himself along by jerky movements of his bottom in an amusing way.

Tedha or Niral Karsana

A small boy wears a mask of white cloth. Two sticks are placed inside to make a mouth which opens and shuts. The effect is bizarre in the extreme. The boy is covered with a blanket and supported on the shoulders of two friends and his feet are carried by a third. They hop round and round with him while he opens and shuts his mouth and jerks his head. Sometimes

[1] When, some years ago, I went with a party of aboriginals to Calcutta I found them more interested in the Zoo than in anything else.

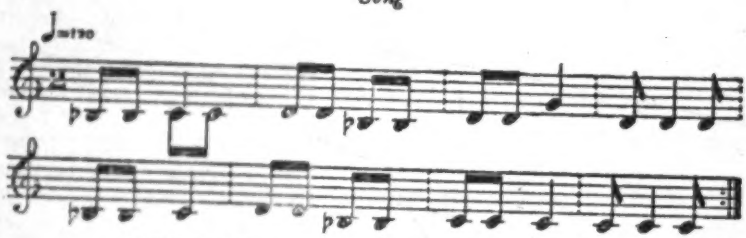
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

creeps through the grass and presently leaps out and seizes one of the bullocks; it drags it away and returns for a cow. The cowherds get their bows and arrows and large balls of cloth to represent bullets from their wooden guns. They ambush behind trees, track the tiger through the grass, play all the tricks of the hunter. At last the tiger is killed and slung on a pole to be taken home and skinned.

Mao Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

This is a variant of the hunting games. A ring of girls represents a forest-covered hill, and a girl representing a sambhar stands inside. Two girls march round and round singing, and every now and then charge the ring, trying to break through and catch the sambhar. This is how I saw it played at Markabera.[1]

Song



The deer has come, its tracks are over here.
There are no tracks this side, friend.
There is the mandia crop in the field of the Cat Stone.
It has gone to graze mandia, friend.
The *urad* crop is half ready, friend.
It has gone to graze it, friend.
The fencing is rotten, friend.
The game has come, its tracks are over there.

The hunters push the group of girls crying, 'The fencing will fall down'.

In Remawand, however, the circle that holds hands is a bamboo fence inside which are two chickens. A 'leopard' runs round outside trying to get it. He dashes against the fence, and if he can break through he catches the chickens and rolls them on the ground. This is called Durka or Niral Karsana. In the Paralkot area, the boys said the girl in the middle was a she-goat; otherwise it was played as at Remawand.

In Chimri, Kajen and Nariha, I saw yet another version called Paddi-dagan, or Pigs in the Garden. A ring of children squat down holding hands to represent the garden fence. Inside are four little pigs. These have to jump out without being hit between the legs.

The Parbodela game recorded at Berma is yet another version. A circle of girls hand in hand runs round and round; there is a boy inside to represent a dog, another—the tiger—chases round outside. The girls sit down for a moment, to give the tiger a chance to jump, then the fence is up again.

[1] With these games, compare the Tuyu-merom of the Kharia, where the circle is a goat-pen and the jackal tries to get in to eat the goat.—Roy, *The Kharias*, Vol. II, p. 463.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 583
574
[539]

GAMES

Song

Udit sāngi parbodelāng sāngi !	Sit friend, sit friend Parbodela!
Nitil sāngi parbodelāng sāngi !	Stand friend, stand friend Parbodela!
Ade sāngi nirāl sāngi parbodelāng sāngi !	There is a panther, friend Parbodela!
Witil sāngi parbodelāng sāngi !	Let us run away, friend Parbodela!

VII. Games as Exercise

People who work as hard as the Muria should not need further exercise, but many of the ghotul games are in fact admirably designed to test the strength, develop the muscles and train the eye and the intelligence. It is curious that competitive jumping and the tug-of-war, so popular among the Naga, are not found in the ghotul.[1]

Tod-de Pehekana Karsana[2]

A boy sits down on the ground and someone puts a ring behind his back. He has to lean backwards with arms outstretched tilting his head over and back until he can pick up the ring with his mouth. This is a very difficult feat, and generally the boy falls over before he can accomplish it.

Kap-munrs Tehana (Pulling-up) Karsana

The boy lies flat on his face, raises his legs up into the air and grasps them with his hands behind his back so that he is lying supported on his stomach with legs and feet above him. Another boy puts his hands into the loop thus formed and swings him over his back.

Gudha (Rolling-over) Karsana

A boy bends down with his head to the ground, and another boy lies on him. The first boy catches hold of his loin-cloth from below and he catches hold of the first boy's loin-cloth from above. The first boy then hoists him up and throws him over backwards. A glance at Plate CXXXIX will elucidate this necessarily obscure explanation.

Kal-tehana (Legs-up) Karsana

A big boy clasps his wrist with one hand, a small boy stands on his palm holding the other's head with his hands. Then the first boy lifts him off the ground and walks about with him till he is exhausted and has to let him fall.

Kadna (Wrestling) Karsana (Plate CXXXVIII)

In this game a boy climbs up over one boy and under another. Two boys, A and B, stand facing each other, clasping one another's arms. Boy C leans,

[1] Compare Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 120ff.; *The Lhota Nagas*, pp. 82f.; Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, pp. 102f.; *The Sema Nagas*, p. 109. Among the Trobriand Islanders 'the favourite and most important game is the tug-of-war'.—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 207.

[2] The Gondi words mean 'Lifting up with the mouth'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
524

head downwards, against the back of A and gets his legs round A's chest. Then he pulls himself into a sitting posture with his legs now round A's waist, climbs up over A's head, descends through the arms of A and B and dives down between B's legs.

A Pulling-up Game (*Plate CXXXVIII*)

Two boys sit facing each other, placing their feet sole to sole. They hold hands or a stick and try to pull each other off the ground.[1]

Gudina Karsana (*Plate CXXVII*)

Girls sit on their knees in a long line, bending right over with their heads between their knees, and sing in a rather muffled way. The girl at one end heaves herself up and rolls over and over along the line till she reaches the other end. Each girl does this in turn. They sing the following song:

[539]

Dhondera wāndera dhondera wāndera.	*Dhondera wāndera*, if it is a girl preserve her.
Pehi āteke tāsna dhondera wāndera,	She will fetch water in an earthen pot,
Tānd te yer tatārde dhondera wāndera,	She will bring roots,
Māting harsi tatārde dhondera wāndera.	She will bring leaves.
Aking koïs tatārde dhondera wāndera.	If it is a boy, throw him away.
Pehāl āteke wātna dhondera wāndera.	*Dhondera wāndera*, if it is a girl preserve her.
Pehi āteke tāsna dhondera wāndera.	

I would not like to read more into this song than I should. On the face of it, it is very interesting indeed. Many a Muria would rather have a daughter than a son.

Karmata Karsana (*Plate CXXIV*)

Two lines of girls face one another and join hands. The boys pick up a smaller girl and throw her onto the 'bed' thus formed. Sometimes she supports herself by placing her hands on the shoulders of the two leading girls, sometimes she lies prone, sometimes there are two girls, one at either end of the line.[2] When they are ready the girls swing their victim to and fro, singing the while.

X883
524
539

Songs

I

Joyo karmata, joyo roy!	Swing Karmata swing!
Luhur itān mati luhur bāra āyo,	We thought it was a *bami* fish, But it's not a *bami* fish.

[1] A similar game is known in the Trobriand Islands.—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 206.

[2] A similar game has been recorded in British New Guinea, and is there called Bidobido. 'Two rows of boys and girls face each other and opposite couples lock hands in sedan-chair fashion. A small boy projects himself prone upon the lane of hands at one end of the row and is tossed along it to the other end and as he passes each couple they run to the fore-end of the avenue and take up position as before thus making an endless lane.'—R. P. Barton, 'Children's Games in British New Guinea', *JRAI*, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 266.

GAMES

Sipa itān mati sipa bāra āyo.	We thought it was a *chipa* fish, But it's not a *chipa* fish.
Kotri itān mati kotri bāra āyo,	We thought it was a *kotri* fish, But it's not a *kotri* fish.
Tengri itān mati tengri bāra āyo.	We thought it was a *tengri* fish, But it's not a *tengri* fish.
Madum itān mati mādum bāra āyo.	We thought it was a *madum* fish, But it's not a *madum* fish.
Joyo karmata joyo roy.	Swing Karmata swing.

2

Kāhor mācha men jhulna ho dai?	In whose *mācha* is the swing, mother?
Sājen hi mācha men jhulna ho dai.	The swing is in Sajen's *mācha*, mother.
Upar le aise nawa jogi ho dai;	A new beggar has come from above;
Suliyāro la legise nāwa jogi ho dai.	He has taken away the Suliaro.
Suliyāro hanse se much-much ho dai.	Suliaro is laughing *much-much*.
Sājen dekhe se mit-mit ho dai.	Sajen is peeping *mit-mit*, mother.

3

Bor dādāl uhār ungivāl?	Who is swinging in the swing?
Kalamsai dādāl uhār ungivāl.	It is Kalamsai swinging in the swing.
Adu badu bai uhār uhāna?	Which girl is pushing the swing?
Manjāro bai uhār uhāna.	Manjaro is pushing the swing.
Uhma rāni uhma nana ariha.	Don't swing too hard, Rani, or I shall fall.
Arwi rāja arwi nana yatka.	You won't fall, Raja, for I am here to catch you.

Mahamandal Karsana (*Plate CXXXIX*)

Boys and girls form themselves into a great *mahamandal* snake. Each grasps with both hands the buttocks of the one in front, and the line moves forward with a peculiar stamping movement. The head does not try to catch the tail; it simply imitates a snake, swinging round and round in a very serpentine manner. At last the line ties itself up by threading through itself again and again till all the children are knotted into a compact and helpless group.[1]

Nun-nurial Karsana

This is a variety of the above game which I saw at Palli-Barkot and danced by the Tarbaili children. They wind and unwind themselves in the same way, but in the middle they squat down and walk over one another. At the beginning too the head of the line does not tie them up, but weaves his line through the main line, in and out under the uplifted arms. Here the name of

[1] This is like a Trobriand game, in which 'the players stand in a long chain holding hands, and then walk round the person who stands at one end. This end remains immovable and the person at the other end leads the chain round in gradually narrowing circles until the whole group is pressed together into a tight knot.... It is then unrolled.'—Malinowski, op. cit., p. 207.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GAMES

Pot Karsana

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524

The Pot Karsana is very similar to the above. Some of the children make a circle; half the others go inside and the other half run round outside. They pull each other in and out of the circle singing *Pot pot pot.*

Pairi Karsana

A number of children sit down in a circle. The space between each child is regarded as a door. Others go round and round in line and have to cross into the middle of the circle by each door in turn. Once the leader of the line has succeeded in jumping over, the rest may follow him. If the sitting children manage to catch the leader by his ankle, as he jumps over, he is caught. It is a 'foul' if more than one tries to jump over at the same time.

A variety of this is called Usta Gundur Karsana.[1] Boys holding hands squat in a circle on the ground. Others run round clapping their hands and singing *'Usta gundur ta tin pe kor wark wark'*. 'Run round and jump. Get some parched rice and eat it.' The aim is to jump into the circle without being touched by the 'wall'. If one boy manages to get in, it means the gate is open, and they all go in and dance inside. Now they have to try to jump out.

Purar Karsana[2] (*Plate CXXIII*)

Girls stand in a ring holding each other's hands. A similar but smaller ring stands inside. The outer ring jumps over the inner ring and gets inside. Then that ring jumps inside again and so they go on over and over each other.

Song

Tuy chitkul ?	Are you a little [pigeon] ?
Kŝ mai mitkul ?	Or am I a pretty girl ?
Ghāghara ke pāni	The water of a pot
Tabak tor.	Splashes out when it is shaken.

[539]

A *mitkul* girl is a smart pretty child who always keeps herself well dolled-up.

I saw almost the same game under the name of Kinaring Karsana at Kuntpadar. A double ring of girls hold hands. The inner ring bend down and the outer ring walk inwards over them. Then that ring bends down and the original inner ring walks over them. They turn and move outwards in the same way. They sing *Kināri kināri dondi maskelo.*

IX. Miscellaneous Games

There are a number of games which do not fall readily into any classification. I give some of them here.

Nana Darbena Karsana (*Plate CXXII*)

Girls stand in a circle facing inwards. They jump up and down, clapping their hands above their heads. Suddenly they turn outwards and go on jumping up and down and clapping their hands.

[1] *Usta gundur* is a small partridge.

[2] *Purar* is a wood-pigeon.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song

Nana darbena!
What is your clan, girl?
Whose daughter are you?
I want to laugh with you.
You are of the Naitami clan;
You are a Naitami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
You are of the Kuhrami clan;
You are a Kuhrami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
You are of the Poyami clan;
You are a Poyami's daughter;
I will laugh with you.
What is your clan, girl?
If I go to a village, I will bring a boy and will laugh with him.
If I go to the field, I will bring a horse and will laugh with it.
If I go to the market, I will bring a girl and laugh with her.
Nana darbena!

Buchi Karsana

This, which means literally 'the game of the girl with a broken ear', is played by girls standing together in a close circle. They begin to sing a little song with no particular meaning and all bend forward touching their ankles. At each line of the song they raise themselves a little touching first the knees, then the waist, the breast, the shoulders until the hands are held high above the head.

Song

Dāda gelose gaon gelose buchi buchi!	Brother has gone to his village, *buchi buchi!*
Dāda cho thaili me arrigunda arrigunda;	In his purse is sweet tobacco;
Tindkiney tinwiney arrigunda arrigunda?	Will he eat the sweet tobacco?

The word *buchi*, which means a broken ear, is sometimes used as a girl's name. To tear the ear-aperture (used for ornaments) is regarded by the Muria, as by people elsewhere, as a social disaster, but here the expression seems to have no connexion either with the song or the game.

Mundi Karsana

A ring of girls stand very close together. Every girl with her left hand catches the thumb of her neighbour's right hand until there is an upper ring formed. Then each with her right hand catches the thumb of her neighbour's left hand until a lower ring is formed. They then raise and lower the two rings, singing with a quick jerky rhythm.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GAMES

883X
524
539

Song

Ek ek mundi !	One one ring!
Duy duy mundi !	Two two rings!
Ohar mundi !	His ring!
Mundi lori !	Rings in a circle!
Pasparela de kodo māli lori de kodo māli lori !	Put the *pasparela* shrubs in a circle!

Paneng-doking (Frog and Lizard) Karsana

This game is also known as Doke and Nagil-māting (Root-digging). I have also seen it played by Gond and Pardhan in the Central Provinces. Three boys or girls stand back to back on one leg. They link their legs together in order to support themselves and then hop round in a circle clapping their hands and singing various short catches, of which one is *Nagil-mating hutuh hutuh*, or 'We dig for roots and eat them'. And another is

Pehi titung pāneng doking māt titom latha.	The girls ate lizards and we ate frogs.
Pahor titung pāneng doking māt titom bali.	The boys ate lizards and we ate sweets.

Jatta (Grindstone) Karsana (Plate CXXVII)

883X
524

Four boys lie down feet to feet like a star. Their feet are tied together with someone's turban. Bigger boys catch them by the arms and raising them up go round and round in a circle.[1]

Tedapotur Karsana

Boys lie down in a long straight line, each extending his right hand above his head to catch hold of his predecessor's loin-cloth. The boy at the end gets up and walks straddled down the line dragging the boys up with him till all are standing now with their arms between their legs clutching their neighbour's loin-cloths. Then the leader reverses the process and walks back till all are lying on the ground again. *Tedapotur* may mean 'stitching a leaf-basket' and the game may be supposed to represent this.

Song

[539]

Mother-in-law 's like a *potor* leaf.
Husband's elder brother 's like the central beam of the house.
Husband's younger brother 's like the verandah pole.
Father-in-law 's like a teak leaf.

In this song the symbols are probably sexual. The mother-in-law is like the leaf of the *rām-dātun* (or *potor*) tree whose twigs are usually used for cleaning teeth. The two brothers of the husband have virile organs, the elder's like the thick house-beam, the younger's pleasant and penetrating, as the slender pole that supports the verandah. Father-in-law is useless as the leaf of a teak tree.

[1] Haddon recorded a similar game in British New Guinea. Four boys lie at full length forming a cross: a small boy crouches at their feet. Other boys lift them up and go round so that 'the whole contrivance revolves like a four-spoked wheel'.—Haddon, op. cit., p. 290.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Johar Karsana

This game, which is one of the many attractive games played in the big ghotul at Alor, is a saluting game. The motiari form a line, the leader comes forward, bends down with her back to the others and swings to left and right, touching the feet of each in turn. She goes down the line and the next in order follows her.

Song

Didi boli boli kudum keli lo,	Sister, say, we have stamped our feet,
Ulti pão parilo pulti pão parilo.	Saluting the feet this side and that.
Juna garh dekhilo nawā garh dekhilo.	We saw the old fort, we saw the new fort.
Sakhi chāmurur badilo.	We made friendship with rice.
Rāja tika tikilo.	We gave greeting to the Raja.
Son kukra basilo!	O the golden cock crowed!
Kumār kukra basilo	The red cock crowed
Ki ki ri kir.	*Ki ki ri kir.*

Kudum represents the sound of stamping feet. After the song has been sung through to the sister, it is done for the mother-in-law, cousin, sister-in-law, anyone you please.

A Guessing Game

The Muria have a guessing game called Mundi Karsana. In Phulpar the girls stood in a circle holding out their hands. One of the boys put a ring into a girl's hand. Then the other boys had to come one by one to guess where it was.

In Metawand, this was played by boys and girls together sitting down, but the principle was the same. Sometimes the guesser puts his hand on each forehead in turn: it is believed that whoever has the ring will have a hot head.

A Game with Myrabolams

In Nayanar, I watched the chelik playing with *harra*-myrabolams. Two boys sat facing each other, each had a pile of myrabolams. The first boy picked up a handful, threw them into the air, and tried to catch as many as possible on the back of his hand. He failed to catch any, and lost his turn, and the other boy made the attempt. He caught two and put these beside him, the next throw he caught one, then three, but at last, though he had only three stones left, he dropped them all and lost his turn. Then the first boy tried again.[1]

X. Cock-fighting

Cock-fighting is a popular sport among the Muria of the central and northern parganas, but it is little followed in the east where it is said to be a pastime worthy only of Ganda.[2] But in the west and central areas, cocks are specially

[1] A similar game is known as *Dhapa* by the Pauri Bhuiya.—Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 285. I have seen it in Mandla, and it is probably universally distributed.

[2] For an excellent account of cock-fighting among Kol, Bhumij and Uraon, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 93. Thurston considered it a 'disgusting spectacle' and agreed with Colonel Newcome that it should be performed in secret. He describes cock-fighting among the Mohammedans of Mysore who do not use steel spurs but

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Gorma, the Muria Atpariha dressed up as a straw man, with a whitened face and beard of bear's fur. He carried about an enormous bow and a wooden spade as arrow. Even an old solar topi is thought amusing—when it is on a chelik's head. The desire to create a sharp dramatic contrast prompted a Muria at Masora to dance with a dog in his arms (Plate CXLIII).

But beside a delight in sudden contrasts, the Muria have a special attraction to the grotesque. In one story a girl with a huge umbilical stump buries herself in the bed of a river, but the stump sticks up and a bullock cart is caught on it. The first motiari had a vagina so large that a wild boar could roll about in it. She looked like a sack of salt from Nandgaon. In a song, a boy has a penis as long as a cucumber and testicles as fat as pumpkins.

In Gorma I saw an extraordinary dance, when the performer, distorting his face and body, pranced about the ghotul like an obscene bird. With his hand he poked his bottom, privates, chest and head, smelt his supposedly soiled and stinking fingers, then pushed them in the faces of the onlookers. It was done so well that you forgot the indecency in a sort of horror as at some perverted creation of the mind. In the same category are the 'panthers' or 'lizards' that so often appear at a dance or wedding. A boy covers himself with a blanket, and with an ingenious arrangement of twigs makes himself a head and beak which opens and shuts. He then crawls about in what I can only call an abominable manner which never fails to give a thrill of fear.

More purely humorous was a great bird made at Phauda. A chelik lay on the ground with his hands stretched out before him. The others covered his body with a blanket and his hands with cloth. They decorated the cloth-covered hands with ornaments, gave them a beak and ears, and produced a grotesque bird. Then the boy by moving his hands made the bird peck about very diverting'ly (Plate CXLVII).

If we turn to verbal wit we find a similar tendency. In the songs are references to moustached peacocks [1] and tusked hares.

[539]
On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
Its teeth are as long as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustache is like jungle grass, chelik.
Its hairs like bamboo shavings, chelik.

In the Ghotul Pata there are many such diverting descriptions. How excellent, for example, is the account of the Kotwar who is fed on gruel twelve years old and full of frogs and lizards [2]

[539]
His moustaches said *suyi suyi* as he drank,
His throat cried *gurgur gurgur*.
As he ate the frogs and lizards, his mouth went *pitos pitos*.

The descriptions of the chelik and motiari at Siri Somni's marriage and of the treatment given to Bai Dursal Rani by the Manjhi [3] are funny even to Western ears.

[1] Compare the Uraon poem:

The cobra comes
With his hood raised
Asking alms.
The heron comes
With his neck straight
Twirling his moustaches. (Archer, op. cit., p. 122.)

[2] The antics of the village Kotwar are a favourite theme of the Gond and Pardhan story-teller in the Central Provinces. See my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal*, pp. 83f., 108f., and Elwin and Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 372ff.

[3] See p. 608.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

if they catch them relieving themselves. There is nothing very subtle or witty in any of this. In fact, since there are so few taboos on sex in the ghotul it is rather difficult to be funny about it.

It is worth noting that even the gods are not above a bit of horse-play. In Adnar I watched the young deity Chelik Sai, who was after all a chelik and conveniently represented by a long erect pole, amusing himself with a group of motiari. In the hands of his medium he pranced about, poking himself at the girls, chasing them about, pretending to catch them and ride upon them. Another medium carrying an iron chain amused everybody by his absurd gestures; he would dance round and round a line of girls, bend down and peer up into their faces in the most ridiculous manner. In Metawand, one of the horses of the gods was chased about the field, and roars of laughter greeted the divine sport.

A common type of funny story finds its humour in an absurd and indecorous situation. In Metawand I was told the tale of the woman who is going along the road in the rains. Some of the mud gets into her vagina and when she stops at a stream to wash it, a crab catches hold of her clitoris. She calls a man to help, but hard as he pulls at the crab he cannot make it let go. At last he tries to bite it off, but it gets hold of his nose with its spare claw, and there they all are—on a public highway, the respectable Muria with his nose stuck in the vagina of an unknown woman. After a while along comes a Lohar and gets the crab out with his tongs, but only on condition that the woman will give him 'tobacco' whenever he wants it. Some days later he comes to her house to claim his reward. She is busy cooking and asks him to lie down on a cot until she is ready. He lies on his face, but he is so excited that his erect penis goes through the strings of the cot and protrudes below. A cat thinking it a bit of meat, catches it. The situation is now reversed. The woman comes out and refuses to release the Lohar unless he declares her quit of her debt to him.

Another tale, from Aturgaon, which is known in Bengal and to the Uraon, but is given an entirely fresh and vivid turn by the Muria, again gets its effect from the sticking together, in public and deplorable juxtaposition, of incongruous things: a man and woman cannot get apart, a midwife finds her hands stuck to her head and nothing on below, a magician discovers a bullock's horns sticking to his bottom. Personally I think this tale is really funny, even in its bare and literal form.

There was a Muria Raja with one son. In his village was a barber who also had an only son. The two boys were always playing together, they would never do their work. The Raja used to tell his son to go and plough in the fields, but he always refused. At last the Raja got very angry and turned him out. The boy put on his ornaments and took a bag of money, mounted his horse and rode away. As he went he met the barber's son and told him that he was going to his future father-in-law's house. The barber's son said he would go with him.

Presently, the Raja's son said he wanted to relieve himself. There were no leafy trees at hand so the barber's son said, 'You had better take off your clothes and ornaments and go to the jungle in your loin cloth'. While the Raja's son was away, the barber's son put on his clothes and ornaments and rode off on the horse.

When the boy returned and found his things gone, he wept so loudly that Bara Deo heard his crying and came to him in the shape of an old

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

522
539

man. 'Go to your father-in-law's house', he said, 'as a servant. I will give you this charm, that whatever you say will happen.' So the boy went and took a job as servant. He found the barber's son living there in his stead, wearing his ornaments and dressed in his clothes. That night the barber's son went in to the father-in-law's daughter. The Raja's son outside the door exclaimed, 'As they are, let them be; without my order let them not separate'.

So there they were, stuck together and all night they struggled to get free. In the morning the members of the family sent their servant, the Raja's son, for a midwife to cut the unhappy pair apart.

Now as the Raja's son was bringing the midwife to the house, they had to cross a flooded river and both of them stripped themselves naked. The Raja's son said, 'Put your clothes on your head, hold them there with your two hands and so cross the river'. As the woman approached the opposite bank, the boy said, 'As you are, so remain; without my order you may not change'. So the midwife came naked, holding her hands to her head, and weeping and, of course, she could do nothing.

So then they sent the Raja's son to fetch a magician. As they were coming along together, the magician went to relieve himself but there was no water near at hand. But there was a dead bullock's head with two horns and he wiped himself on it. As he was doing so, the Raja's son exclaimed, 'As you are, so remain; without my order you may not change'. And so the magician came to the house with the bullock's head and its horns sticking to his bottom. When he saw him, the father-in-law was so frightened that he said, 'Whoever can solve this trouble, shall have my daughter and all my money'. Then the Raja's son told him what had happened and his father-in-law said, 'If you can make all well again, I will believe you, and you shall have my daughter'. At this the Raja's son removed his charms and the horns dropped from the magician's bottom, the woman covered her vagina with her hands, and the girl released the barber's son from his captivity.

Then the father-in-law killed that barber's son and married the Raja's son to his daughter.

From that day we never use barbers to cut our hair. We never use water when we relieve ourselves. If the omens are wrong we never go to betroth a girl, and we think it no fault if the unmarried sleep together.[1]

[1] In a Bengali tale, which we probably possess in a somewhat bowdlerised version, the stick of a cowherd gets stuck to his hand, the winnowing-basket of a maid servant gets stuck to her hand, a platter sticks to the hand of a Rani, and a Raja and his courtiers get stuck to their seats and have to be sawn off.—S. C. Mitra, 'A Bengali Cumulative Folk-tale of the Old Dame Lousy Type' in *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Bangalore, July 1922. Other parallels may be found in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 212ff., where the Prince makes the impostor's mouth stick to his hookah and the priest's wife stick to his shoulders as he carries her across a stream, and in A. Grignard, *Hahn's Oraon Folk-lore* (Patna, 1931), pp. 46ff., where the Prince declares, 'If this fellow be her god-given bridegroom, you stools stick to the seats of these sorcerers' and of course they do. I recorded yet another version in a Juang village in Pal Lahara State. In this a goatherd who suffers from impotence has the compensatory power of sticking things together. He attaches a girl's buttocks to a rock while she is bathing and a pot to an old man's behind. There is a ribald scene where a bride and bridegroom are fixed together and the whole family tries to pull them apart. An inquisitive Brahmin bends over the place of conjunction and gets his moustache caught there. These stories are of the same order as the Toda-Kota motif of the dog becoming stuck in copulation.—M. R. Emeneau, 'Some Origin Stories', *JAOS*, Vol. LXIII, p. 163.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

IV. Folk-tales

X 883 538 Folk-tales and legends are told in the ghotul if there is a boy there who knows any. There does not seem to be a formal 'right' of possession over a particular story, but in practice certain stories are connected with special people. One boy knows a story which was taught him by an elder boy on leaving the ghotul or by his father, and this boy is always called on to recite it.

X 883 538 533 No one is likely to forget the experience of listening to one of these stories, which are often in a sort of rhythmic prose and chanted to a recognizable tune. The most remarkable that I have heard was a long and rambling Ghotul Pata chanted by Dasru of the Markabera ghotul. Dasru sat in the middle of the room, a little group of boys near him, the other chelik and motiari reclining near. He sat very upright and sang with great animation, gesticulating with his hands and the boys near him joined in a chorus and beat the ground with little sticks.

I heard another beautifully sung story in the Masora ghotul. This was the tale of the Ogre and the Little Girl; the boy who 'owned' it was a very small boy, the Anter. He and a friend sang in a curious shrill falsetto and the whole ghotul joined in the chorus:

Raí sarso sarso phul nunike nāngar gurdum—gurdum gurdum gurdum.
Rākas bukas barma bhat des nuni kuchi kewar—gurdum gurdum gurdum.

The story was chanted in a kind of rhythm, while the beat of the chorus was irresistible, the boys booming grandly on the *gurdum*.

Sometimes the narrative of the tale is in 'prose' and is recited in the ordinary speaking voice, and the dialogue is sung, occasionally in rhymed couplets. The boys and girls sit round listening with great attention, and nod their heads saying '*Hingo*, Yes', at the right moments.

X 883 538 Most of these stories have been published separately for it would have taken too much space to include them here.[1] I am, however, giving two narrative poems which throw some light on conditions of life in the ghotul. The first is the Ghotul Pata mentioned above, which illustrates the custom of a ceremonial beat for fish before a festival, the appointment of the Gaita's children as ghotul leaders, and the relations of brother and sister in the dormitory.

X 883 ● 539

Ghotul Pata of Markabera

The Gaita of the village gathered them all together saying,
'Look brothers, the month of Magh has come again,
And we must decide about the Mango Festival'.
Everyone came and eagerly decided,
For already other villages had kept the Festival.
'Certainly, we also will keep the Festival, but what curry shall we eat?'
'Haven't we many chelik and motiari in our ghotul?
Send the chelik and motiari to catch fish for the Festival.'
So said the leaders, and the chelik and motiari prepared to go.
When they were ready the chelik and motiari went to catch fish.

[1] See my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), which includes many Muria stories; some appear to be original, others turn on such universal motifs as those of the Quest, Grateful Animals, Brother-Sister Incest, the Hero on Pilgrimage.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
539

OTHER RECREATIONS

There the Gaita's son Negi was leader of the chelik,
And his daughter too was leader of the girls.
In the midst of the jungle, there was a lake which they emptied.
While the others were emptying it, Negi lay down and slept,
Though Negi was one of a party of chelik and motiari.
Draining, draining this water, at last the tank was emptied and the fish were caught.
They all started home, but no one woke up Negi.
Even his sister had forgotten him, but she remembered on the way.
She said, 'My brother is sleeping, go and wake him up'.
This she said to everyone, but no one listened to her.

So she left them and herself went back to wake him up.
She thought in her mind, 'How am I to wake him?
If I touch him and wake him, they will say I am his wife'.
Thinking thus, she took some clay from a white-ant hill to rouse him.
She threw it at his head, with this she woke him up.
The sister then started to go back home,
And Negi also got up and walked along behind her.
The chelik and motiari on their way thought they would laugh at them.
The chelik and motiari began to say to them,
'You two, sister and brother, must have been to one another,
So from our caste we are going to turn you out'.
Thus talking they reached the house of their parents, and told them this story.
In anger they turned them out of the village.

These two left that country and went to seek another.
Thus walking for days, Negi and his sister left their own country.
They had no rice, and on the way they grew very hungry.
On they went and at last they reached a forest-clearing.
In that clearing there was a creeper of cucumbers.
Of the fruit only two were ripe, all the rest were green.
The owner counted them every day; then the old man went to sleep in his house.
From this same creeper Negi took one cucumber, and the two shared it together.
Next day when the old man came, he found one ripe cucumber was missing.
He returned to his house and told his old woman,
'I don't know who has eaten our cucumber, but be quick and make my food,
I will make a machan there and sleep to watch my creeper'.

The old woman, his wife, cooked his food quickly;
He ate it and went back to his clearing and made a machan.
The old man was sleeping there when Negi came again.
The old man asked him, 'Who are you that steals my cucumber?'

'I am the son of your younger brother.
My sister and I have been turned out from our country.
Old father, we have come to you for shelter, for we have been starving.'

The old man and woman thought to themselves,
'We have no children and if we keep these two,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

They will earn money and look after us'.
Thinking thus, they took them to their home and Negi began to earn.

The old man went out to find a wife for Negi.
Having found the girl, he married him.
Negi's wife stayed for two months, then ran away.
The old man and old woman, they also died soon.
Afterwards, the brother and sister thought thus:
'Those two were protecting us, they were our mother and father,
We will perform funeral rites in their honour.'

Negi chelik now was ready to wander in the jungle.
He had two dogs, whose names were Sauran and Bhauran:
Taking these two dogs with him, he went wandering through the jungle.
His sister in the house thought thus:
'My brother has gone to the jungle, he will come back hungry,
I will cook food quickly.'

So thinking she went to find some fire.
She went round the village searching, she grew tired but could not find it.
She saw smoke somewhere in the jungle:
To that place she went for fire.
That fire was in the abode of a Churelin.
The Churelin was not in the house, but her son was there,
'O brother, give me fire', said the girl.

Seeing the girl, he thought, 'I will keep this girl'.
There was a broken earthen pot,
He made a small hole at the bottom.
Above it he put ash and on the ash he put fire,
And he gave it to her.
He did this so that as she went, the ashes might fall on the way.
The girl went home and kindled fire and prepared rice and curry.
From towards the jungle her brother came back home.
To him she served food and ate herself.

Next day the Churelin's son followed the ash and came to her house.
When he arrived, the girl was pounding rice.
The boy came in and sat in her lap.
The girl said, 'Go away, for if my brother sees you,
He will kill you', thus said the girl.
But when he would not go, she took him in and hid him in an earthen pot.

He said, 'In my mother's house there is a mango tree,
Send your brother there for mangoes and my mother will catch him and devour him'.
Hearing this, the girl decided to do as he told her.
When her brother came home she sent him out for mangoes.
The boy went to pick mangoes with his two dogs.
He climbed the mango tree and began to pick them.
'Why are you plucking my mangoes?' Saying this, the Churelin came out of the house.
Negi seeing this was frightened, but the dogs were underneath the tree.
He signalled to them and they began to chase her.
The dogs bit and killed her and Negi came home with the mangoes.
Negi gave the mangoes to his sister and she ate them.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

OTHER RECREATIONS

883X
539

The girl went in and said to the Churelin's son,
'The Churelin was no match for my brother, for he has killed her'.
The boy said, 'Say to your brother, "I cannot sleep.
O brother, go and bring the flower of sleep, then only can I sleep".
If you say so, he will go to bring the flower.
He will die there as he seeks the flower, and we will live happily.'
Hearing this, she said so to her brother,
'I cannot sleep, brother, go bring the flower of sleep'.

Negi got ready to bring this flower.
The flower of sleep was beyond three seas.
The seas were in the way, he could not reach the flower.
He came to the sea, and there was a frog who asked him:
'Where are you going and what are you going to bring?'
'My sister cannot sleep, so I am going to bring the flower of sleep.'
Negi said to the frog, 'Will you help me cross the sea?'
The frog hearing this helped him cross the sea.
When he had crossed one sea, there was another. There was no way to go.
There too he searched for a way across and could not find it.

There was a crocodile and Negi said to it,
'I am going to find the flower of sleep, will you help me cross the sea?'
And the crocodile helped him to do so.
When he had crossed the sea, on the other side there lived a Raja.
He had a beautiful daughter who slept in a house apart.
Before this house there was a tamarind.
Negi made his camp beneath this tree.
The Raja's daughter saw Negi.
She asked him, 'Why have you come?'
Negi said, 'My sister cannot sleep and I am going to bring the flower of sleep for her'.
She said, 'Don't go yourself, I will send someone to bring it for you'.
Saying this she took Negi to her house and called her mother.
'Mother, I cannot sleep, will you get me the flower of sleep?'
Hearing this the Rani went to bring the flower.
She brought the flower and stuck it over the door.

The whole night Negi slept with the princess.
Then he travelled home and came to his sister.
Negi asked his sister why she had tried to kill him.
She swore she was innocent, and Negi drew his sword.
'If you are truthful your tongue will not be cut even by a sword,
If you are not truthful, your tongue will be cut'.[1]
His sister touched the sword with her tongue, and it was cut immediately,
And so her brother killed her with the sword.
He cut her body into seven pieces.
The Churelin's son was watching all this from the house.
Through fear he ran out of the house.
Negi saw him and ran after him to catch him.
He caught him and killed him.

After this he married the princess and they began to earn their living.
After a few days Negi became rich.

[1] In Bastar, as in other States, the royal swords are regarded as sacred. Many indigenes regard an oath on a sword as specially binding.

P: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Now he thought, 'Let me go and see what my parents are doing'.
Taking with him all his wealth, he went to his parents' country.
There he built a big house and began to live there.
His parents had been rich when he was living with them.
After he was driven out, they became very poor.
They used to beg from house to house,
And even then got scarce enough to fill their stomachs.
They were so poor that even the dogs did not look at them.

The father came to Negi for alms.
'O merchant, give me something, for I am very poor.'
He said thus, and did not recognize Negi.
But his son recognized him and said,
'Where do you come from, and where is your house?
How many children have you got?'
'O merchant, I had one son whom I turned out of my country.
Since then I have become a poor man.'
'Who am I, do you recognize me?'
'O merchant, I cannot recognize you', said the old man.
'I am your son, whom you drove out of your house.'
Hearing this the old man was frightened.
He fell at his son's feet and caught them firmly with his hands.
From that day Negi kept him in his house.
They lived and ate together and ruled their affairs.

The Marriage of Siri Somni Raja

The following song (the original of which is in Gondi) was recorded at Penjori, two miles away from the famous shrine of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon. It gives a vivid picture of a Muria betrothal. In places it almost suggests a world ruled by chelik and motiari. The punishment of the Rani by the Manjhi is entirely in the ghotul tradition. The early list of ghotul titles is interesting.

The earth of villages was born,
Places and lands were born,
Mata Maoli was born,
In the world above were many islands,
In the world below were seven islands,
In the middle was Singaldip.
To the Gaita belonged the villages.
There was a Manjhi.
There was the Raja's land, land of four corners.
There was a Raja Siri Somni,
He was a little boy.
The father of Siri Somni was Kunkal Siri Raja.
Kunkal Siri Raja died.
The mother of Siri Somni Raja was Bai Dursal Rani.
She wept very loudly crying, 'O my Lord has died.
Here is my land of villages, what am I to do?
I am a woman, I have a son,
He knows not how to read a paper,
He knows not how to do justice.
What am I to do?'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 X
539 ●

Siri Somni Raja daily grew older,
He ate milk and ghee and butter,
He slept in gold cotton,
He rubbed red powder on his body,
He grew tall as a shrub,
He grew bigger daily.
He became mature,
Siri Somni Raja.

Then said Bai Dursal Rani,
'I'll arrange the marriage of my son,
I'll perform his marriage'.
'With what city's Rani?'
'There is a girl in Kathingpura city.'
'Whose daughter is she?'
'She is the daughter of Katsunga Rani.'
So she thought in her mind.
The Rani sent to arrange the betrothal.
'I'll marry her in her cradle.
I've many servants,
I've my Negi Jogi,
I've my Pande Pardhan,
Hear my word all of you.'
'What's the matter, Rani?'
'Kathingpura city,
Go there for the betrothal.
I'll marry her in her cradle.'

Negi Jogi got ready,
Pande Pardhan got ready.
'We will go, Maharani.'
Three handfuls of pulse,
He ate it raw,
Diwan Kshattri sat to eat it.
Jaribkhan Musalman,
With a crippled hand ate his food raw.
Bodelal was a chilli-eater.
Many kinds of curry made with ghee,
Eighty kinds of curry made with arsi oil,
Two kinds of curry made with mahua oil,
Curry of bitter *karela*,
They ate the thirty-two different kinds of food,
Those men who were going for the betrothal.
That is how they ate their food.

This is how they dressed.
In dhoti of *pitambar* cloth,
With other cloth like gold,
With shoes on their feet,
Shoes made of sambhar skin,
Shoes covered with the skins of mice,
Their stockings made of lizard skin,
Bikmi and Kamdar prepared to go.
They put on their ornaments,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 993
893
539

They had supari nuts of iron,
Their *pān* was made of pipal leaves,
They were chewing it *muyure, muyure*,
Colouring their teeth.
Holding sticks in their hands,
Their turban's flap like a Banjari bullock's tail.

They went along like old bullocks,
They went three days' journey.
O the spear of the mahua tree!
They went carrying the spear.
Then they approached the city,
They did Johar to their father-in-law.
'Who are you calling father-in-law?'
'We are your sister's sons.'
When they said this, they brought a long and broad cot for them,
Carpet-soft fit for a Raja.
They put the spear down on a stone,
They had their grass bundles with them,
They gave grass to the spear,
And the spear ate the grass.

'Hear, *māma*, hear,
We have come to wear a flower.'
'What flower is this you want to wear?
What flower can you get now?
If you had come at Diwali, you could have worn the pumpkin flower,
You could have worn the flower of the beanstalk,
You could have put them in your ears.'
'We have not come for flowers like those.
You have a daughter, we have come for her.'
'What is this you are saying, my sister's son?
My daughter is a child, what will you do to her?
She is swinging in her cradle.'
'Her I will marry in the cradle.
Hear, *māma*, hear, let us talk of marriage,
I have lack of nothing, I have a twelve-year pig,
I have an eighty-years castrated goat,
I have rice and pulse in plenty.'
Thus they arranged the marriage to take place in two-and-a-half months' time.
'We are going, let the matter thus remain,
We will come in two-and-a-half months.'

Then they did Johar and went back home to Bai Dursal Rani.
Diwan Kshattri asked, 'What did you do with the flower?'
'We did well; the marriage will be in two-and-a-half months' time.'
'There were men of twelve villages, O Rani,
We settled everything with them.'
'Call the men of nine towns for Siri Somni's marriage;
There are many villages all around, like a bunch of bells.'
Such was this country;
The market was as in the days of their fathers;
There were Gaita and cultivators and Manjhi Mukasi,
There were poor men and rich; it was a great country.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 X
539 ●

OTHER RECREATIONS

In this country there were chelik and motiari.
There are seven-score girls and six-score boys,
There are boys in the ghotul lovely as a bison horn.
There is a leader of the seven-score girls,
Her name is Gadakare Mode.
Her navel is one cubit long,
She looks like a sack of salt from Nandgaon.
Bai Durual Rani was thinking in her mind:
'The chelik and motiari of my village will bring leaves and wood.
In the upper village there is Negi Sai Kotwar;
Go and call the Kotwar, bring him quickly here.'
'Come, Kotwar, the Rani is calling you.'
'Why is she calling me? I have stolen nothing.'
His soul trembled *dak dak*,
For fifteen days he could not eat.
He put on a cloth one cubit long.
He went to the Rani and asked her what she wanted.
'I want nothing, but there are nine towns:
There are chelik and motiari there.
Go and fetch them for the marriage of Siri Somni;
Beat your drum and bid them come;
Tell them to bring leaves and wood.'
'I am hungry, Rani, give me gruel to eat.'
'There is no gruel, Kotwar, what can I do?
There is rice-water twelve years old,
Frogs and lizards have fallen in it.'
'I like such gruel; give me some to eat.'
She gave him a measure of salt and a handful of chillies,
His moustaches said *suyi suyi* as he drank,
His throat cried *gurgur gurgur*.
As he ate the frogs and lizards, his mouth went *pilos pilos*.
'There will be coarse rice in the small houses,
There will be fine rice in the big houses,
We will bring it for the marriage.'
So saying the Kotwar drank his gruel.
He so filled up his belly that his loin-cord broke.
The Kotwar was naked, he got up and ran away.
His penis was one-and-a-half handspans long,
His pubic hairs were one cubit long,
With his two hands he hid his penis and so ran away.

There was a grazier woman wearing twelve cubits of cloth.
He went to her and snatched her cloth away,
The Kotwar tied that dhoti down to his knees.
The grazier woman ran away covering her vagina with her hands.
The seven-score chelik were playing marbles in the ghotul.
She ran into the midst of them.
The boys cried, 'She is taking away our marbles'.
So saying, those boys chased her.
They cried, 'Don't take away our marbles, grazier girl'.
The grazier girl was running in front, the boys ran behind.
She went into her house, the boys followed her inside.
Her vagina was one handspan broad,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
● 539

Her clitoris was four fingers long,
Her pubic hairs were long as thatching grass.
The grazier girl removed her hands, the boys saw the sight.

Negi Sai Kotwar was beating his drum,
Proclaiming the marriage of Siri Somni Raja.
There was the chelik Singa, handsome as the *singa* fish;
There was the chelik Pola, like a deer's tail;
The crippled Nawje was carrying an axe;
The long-haired Latiya held a spear;
Welal had a battle-axe;
The stupid staring Bakke was carrying a lizard;
Chital had a rat;
Batal had a hare.
There was Gadakare Mode;
There was Gango like a *gogum* flower;
Big-cheeked Buke distributed rice-husks;
Broken-fingered Thoti gave out curry;
Bhime was stitching leaves;
Mule sat silent;
Gengre called the pigs, snuffling through her nose.
Little Thubri was going to market;
Dogri was picking beans;
Lahari was picking brinjals.
Singal chelik was driving the cart,
Driven by uncle-nephew buffaloes.
The motiari went with Singal,
The chelik told them to go,
They went to pick leaves for the marriage.
They went to the golden hill with the noise of a thousand men,
They gathered wood and came home shouting.

Singal chelik prepared to go with them,
Gadakare Modé also prepared her cart.
Her navel was seven cubits long.
Singal chelik yoked the uncle-nephew buffaloes to his cart.
Singal went ahead with the cart, and the others followed.
They went with the clamour of a thousand men.
As they went to Siri Somni Raja, they passed a river on the way.
The girl Gadakare Mode was thinking in her mind,
'I will block the road[1] and not let them pass'.
She went into the river-bed and dug the sand,
She hid there covering herself with sand;
Everything was covered but her navel stump.
Singal brought the cart by that way and drove it over the navel stump;
The axle stuck against the stump, but Singal tried to urge the cart forward.
He was beating the buffaloes.
They were saying, 'What has the cart stuck on?'
There was a one-eyed boy, he saw what it was.

[1] *Hasr chelna*, to stretch a rope across the way before a marriage party or hunters returning successful from a beat. It is a form of Neng: see my *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, p. 9.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
539

OTHER RECREATIONS

'So many boys and girls were here, but none of them could see it,
But I the one-eyed boy have seen it,
It is the girl Mode who has done this.'
'Listen, O Mode, we know it is you who has blocked the road.'
'Yes, it is, but this is my custom.'
'You have stopped the cart with your navel stump,
Now let it go, we will give you liquor.'
Then Mode let the cart go by.

The boys brought wood and leaves,
They took them to the palace of Bai Dursal Rani.
Rani Dursal sent Negi Jogi and Pande Pardhan to bring the bride.
A thousand men went to bring her, a three days' journey they went,
They went to Kathingpura city.
Jangobai, the daughter of Katsunga Rani was swinging in her cradle.
They had come for her marriage, the Raja and Rani also came there,
She was swinging in her cradle and crying *taring taring*.
They brought her to Siri Somni's house with a great noise of drums.
In that palace of seven rooms there was the marriage.
Inside was Siri Somni and outside Jangobai in her cradle.
So the cradle marriage was performed.
Then the Manjhi asked about *pataunī*.[1]

The Manjhi was a Dhurwa, he had no moustaches; it was he who asked this.
His head was like a booth overgrown with beans,
His eyes were like small earthen pots,
His nose was like a bamboo pole,
His teeth were like choppers,
His chest was as big as a cart-wheel,
His ears were like winnowing-fans,
His legs were like branches of the *piral* tree,
His beard was like a broom,
His moustaches were like thatching grass,
His eyebrows were like ears of *hirwa*-pulse,
His rectum was like a pit in the field.
The Manjhi was like this, he was an important Manjhi.
There was a mongoose whose fur was like thatching grass.
It asked Gadakare Mode for a present.
'What can I give you? I will give you a rupee,
I will give you gold and silver.'
'I don't want these things, what I want is your breasts.'
Then the mongoose jumped over her breasts and cut them off.
This Gadakare Mode went to the chelik;
When the boys saw her they asked her where she had been.
'I have been to relieve myself.'
'Don't deceive us, we know what you have been up to.'

Siri Somni Raja was growing bigger every day,
Jangobai Maharani was also growing up every day.
Siri Somni looked on her as his sister.
Jangobai called him her elder brother.

[1] Chhattisgarhi expression for sending a girl to her husband's house when she has matured.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
539

They used to go together to relieve themselves,
They used to sleep and play together,
They used to eat and drink and sit together.
Then the Raja became mature.
In youth there is strength, in age disease.
So passed seven years of Siri Somni's life.

Then Jangobai Rani also became mature.
Rani Dursal looked on her as her daughter.
The Manjhi thought to himself, 'Why does she call her daughter-in-law daughter?
Let us go and explain things to the Rani'.
So the Manjhi went to her and the Rani came out.
She gave him a cot and the Manjhi sat upon it.
Then he explained to her that Jangobai was her daughter-in-law, not her daughter,
'We have come to tell you this, now we are going away'.
The Manjhi went to Sonorupo Kalarin's house.
'O Kalarinbai, give me as much liquor as can be made by twelve out-stills.'
She gave it to him to drink in a pot;
The Manjhi drank himself drunk from a *parsa* leaf.
'Send some men to bring the Rani here.'
They went to call the Rani,
They went to the Rani and said, 'The Manjhi is calling you'.
The Rani said, 'Why is he calling me, I have not punished anyone,
I have not stolen anything', but she prepared to go,
The Rani went to the Darbar.
She saluted the Muria with Johar and the Hindus with Ram Ram,
And salaamed also Jaribkhan Pathan.

The Manjhi approached her holding in his hand a *chamargota* stone.
He made the Rani hold the stone against her ears and get up and down.
In this way he punished her.
At last the Rani grew tired, and there was pain in her knees;
She begged the Manjhi to let her go.
'Why are you punishing me?'
'Because you were calling your daughter-in-law your daughter.'
'She used to call me mother, what else could I do?'
'Now you must do this, rub wood-ash on your body,
And so rubbing yourself with ashes, go to your daughter-in-law.'
She was inside the house, she was swinging in her swing.
The Rani called, 'Daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law, O Jangobai'.
The girl came out and asked, 'What is that white stuff on your body?
Have you taken opium and liquor, O mother?'
'I have taken no opium or liquor, daughter-in-law.'
'Don't call me daughter-in-law, that is sinful,
For I am not yet betrothed to any man.'
Jangobai got angry and seized Dursalbai by the hair;
She kicked her and hit her with her fists.
'Don't beat me, daughter-in-law, wait a little.'
Jangobai beat her and satisfied her anger.

Holding the water-pot in her hand, she prepared to fetch water,
She went to fetch water at the old tank, to cook thirty-two kinds of food.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X983
539

OTHER RECREATIONS

Jangobai went to fetch water,
She went along the footpath to fetch water.
Seven pairs of girls were on the path.
The Rani was going along the path and the girls asked her,
'Where are you going, Rani, you never go this way?
Where has your husband gone? You should have him with you'.
'I am not married, girls, I have no husband.'
'When you were in the cradle then you were married.'
The Rani said to them, 'Don't talk indecently'.
As she took out the water, she said to them,
'If I have a husband, I will draw clear water,
If I have no husband, the water will be like blood'.
So saying she took out the water,
It was clear water that she drew.
Taking the water in a pot she went home.
She said, 'Where is the rice?'
'Look in the house, there is rice and pulse, O daughter-in-law,
There is every kind of curry made of ghee, and eighty kinds of curry made with arsi oil,
O daughter-in-law, Siri Somni Raja is coming now,
When the Raja comes, give him water in his hand,
Put a tooth-twig in his hand and give him water for his bath.'
When the Raja came his Rani gave him water in his hand.
'O Raja, take this twig and use it.'
'You are my sister, how is it you are giving me water in my hand?'
So saying the Raja ran away for shame.
Daughter-in-law Jango Rani took her food and went to sleep.
After eating, the food that remained was hung from the roof.

At night Jango slept on the threshold on her cot.
The Raja came at night and knocked against the cot.
Siri Somni Raja thought in his mind,
'If I go under the cot, they will say he went under his sister,
If I go above the cot, they will say he went to his sister,
But somehow or other I will go inside the house'.
The Raja went over the cot into the house,
The Raja was hungry, he was searching for food,
He found the food hanging from the roof,
There was a dish which fell down.
Bai Dursal Rani said,
'Get up, daughter-in-law, the cat with half a tail may have come'.
Jangobai got up and shut the door.
She went inside and began to quarrel.
The next day the Raja thought, 'I will demand three-score ploughs in service'.
He said to the mother, 'Bring gruel'.
The plough was of iron, the yoke also was of iron,
In the hen's egg was gruel, in the pea-hen's egg was rice,
In the pigeon's egg was curry.
She took it to the ploughing place.
Siri Somni Raja was ploughing,
Jangobai Rani took the gruel there.
'O Raja, lift down the food, it is a very heavy load.'

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X983
●539

The Raja came and beat Jangobai.
Thence the Raja went to sit in his Darbar.
She gave the gruel to the ploughmen,
She gave them rice and returned home.
She said to her mother-in-law, 'I will not remain here.
Your son did not greet me, how can I remain?'
She took off her ornaments and put them in a basket,
She did Johar to Pande Pardhan,
She fell at the feet of her mother-in-law,
She did Johar to the servants.
Jangobai Rani went away taking her basket with her,
Jangobai was going along the road.
'Look, who is going on the road? Recover the road money.'
Majjar Khan Mussalman went to take the money.
'Where are you going, girl? Pay me the road money.'
'What shall I give? I have nothing, brother.'
She was wearing a ring on her finger, she was ready to give it.
Jangobai Rani gave him the ring.
He tied it to his waist, but it fell down;
He tied it to his cloth, but it fell down;
After that he wore it on his little finger where it stayed.
The lice on his head gathered in one place.

Siri Somni Raja stood up and went home,
He went inside the palace of nine rooms,
He slept on the long broad bed,
He slept on the bed facing upwards.
He saw a comb in the rafters.
The Raja tried to get the comb but it disappeared.
On that comb there was written the story of his marriage,
Of his marriage when he was a child in the cradle.
'Which is that Rani?' 'She is the Rani of Kathingpura.'
Jangobai's marriage was done when she was a child in the cradle.
The Rani's marriage was performed outside the palace in her cradle,
While inside was the Raja.
Thus it was written and the Raja read the story when he found the comb.
The Raja asked his mother Bai Dursal,
'Where has my wife Jangobai gone?'
'She has only gone to the bazaar to buy bangles.'

He went to the bazaar and there the Manjhi's daughter was wearing bangles.
He thought, 'This is my wife', and hit her thrice.
She said, 'Why are you beating me? I will make a report about you'.
'I thought you were my wife, that's why I beat you. It was a mistake,
Don't report the matter, I will give you five rupees.'
He returned to the house and again asked his mother, 'Where's my wife?'
'Your wife has left the house, my son.'
'I will go to look for her, make ready pulse and rice.'
He prepared his horse called Bagri Maro,
He decorated the saddle like a pharsa flower,
Bai Dursal Rani prepared the food.
Siri Somni Raja took it in a bundle.
He took his hostile knife and his sword like a lizard's foot.

398

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

X883
539

Siri Somni Raja tied them to his waist.
He prayed to the Hanal Pen [1] to look after him,
'I am going to search for my wife, you must help me'.
Bai Dursal Rani said, 'Do not go, my son'.

He beat the horse with a cobra snake for whip.
The horse Bagri Maro flew into the air.
Jango Rani was going ahead, the Raja followed her.
He could not catch her, he was a full two miles behind.
He reached the kingdom of Molol Sai.[2]
Molol Sai had seven wives, sitting in a palace of seven rooms.
Siri Somni went by riding on his horse.
The seven Ranis saw Siri Somni Raja.
'Call him, sister, we will give him a pipe to smoke.'
The Rani, seeing him, stood in the way,
She caught the bridle of the horse Bagri Maro.
'Where are you going, brother? Come to my house and smoke a pipe.'
'I do not smoke, nor do I eat tobacco.'
'You are a man, how is it you don't know how to smoke tobacco? You are like a woman.'
Shamed by these words the Raja then went to her house.
Four seers of lime and one seer of tobacco
She powdered and put it in the pipe.
The Raja pulled at the pipe and fire burst out.
With that fire the palace was burnt down.
He mounted his horse and rode away.
Molol Sai Raja had gone to eat grass.

Siri Somni Raja came to the land where everything was gum.
He saw gum on the way and halted by it.
He took fire-sticks from his pocket and burnt the gum.
Now he came to the land covered with traps.
There in a trap a sambhar had been caught.
He made his horse stand and went into the trap.
He went in, and relieved himself, coming out he let the trap-door fall.
He mounted the horse and rode away.
He came to Raimunda Garh where lived Dera Manga Raja,
And there was his Rani.
When he reached there, he found his Rani by his guru-magic.
He caught her and brought her to his kingdom.
On the way was the river Surng.
He reached it and prepared their food for dinner.

Jango Rani went to bathe in that river.
There were sixteen streams of the tank and thirty-two streams of the river.
As she was bathing, a bod-fish ate her.
Siri Somni Raja was cooking their food.
There were Nahar there, and they killed the Raja.
Two mongoose brothers called Jar Khandi came there.
They prepared to restore his life to Siri Somni Raja.
The mongoose gave life to the Raja.

[1] The-Departed, his clan-ancestors.

[2] Lord of the hares.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X983
●539

The Raja came alive and went to find his Rani.
He crossed the sixteen streams of the tank and thirty-two streams of the river,
By his guru-magic he drank up the water of the tank.
In the tank there was no water, only the fish were left.
The Raja looked into the bellies of the fishes.
He found no trace of his Rani and he grew weary.
There was a frog and the Raja prepared to split open its belly.
The frog cried, '*Tarang tarang*, don't do this, O Raja,
I will tell you where your Rani is, but don't cut me open,
The bod-fish has eaten her and it is not here;
That fish has gone to Basum Katri's kingdom'.

There was a Kewat, and he killed the fish;
He caught the fish in his *dandar* trap made with thorns;
He took the fish home, and began to cut it up.
Jangobai was inside that fish's stomach.
She called out from inside, 'Cut carefully, O father'.
Hearing this the old man cut carefully.
Jangobai then came out from the fish's stomach.
When they saw her, the old man and his wife were very pleased;
'We have no son or daughter, we will keep this girl'.
Jangobai Rani looked like a fire.
Basum Katri Raja went to see his city.
He saw Jangobai and thought in his mind that he would marry her;
He said to the old Kewat and his wife,
'Give me your daughter, I will marry her'.
'This is a poor man's daughter, how can you marry her?'
'Somehow or other I will marry her.'
Basum Katri Raja prepared for the marriage.
The marriage was performed, all but the Lagir.
Siri Somni came there searching for his wife;
Siri Somni Raja came as a sadhu,
To the place where Basum Katri's marriage was being celebrated.
He sat there, saying 'Hey Ram, Ram'.
He said to Basum Katri Raja,
'There is some trouble in your house, I will relieve it'.
'Maharaj, save me from this trouble.'
'I will do tika and thus save you from trouble.'
He pretended to put tika, but carried off his Rani.

Basum Katri Raja pursued them.
Siri Somni was ahead, Basum Katri followed.
On the way they met and fought,
The hostile knife and sword like a lizard's tail.
The knife was like a jackal's tongue and the straight sword like a dog's tongue.
They fought with these weapons but did no damage to each other.
They fought and fought, but neither could prevail.
Siri Somni said to Basum Katri Raja,
'I will come as rain, you try to stop the river'.
Basum Katri Raja laid down across the river,
Siri Somni rained for three days.
The river flooded and carried away Basum Katri Raja.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

883 X
539 ●

The next day the Raja went to look for him.
Basum Katri Raja had been caught against a tree.
Siri Somni Raja found him there.
Siri Somni Raja said to Basum Katri Raja,
'Which of our mouths is red? Let's open them to see'.
So Siri Somni Raja deceived him.
Basum Katri Raja opened his mouth.
The hostile knife and sword like a lizard's tail pierced through his mouth.
Then Basum Katri Raja died.
Siri Somni took his wife home.
They reached their village and lived there and ate.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

It is a cart, if you know how to drive, boy.
It is a food, if you know how to eat, boy.
It is a path, if you know how to walk, boy.
It is a horse, if you know how to ride, boy.

—*Marriage song* (*Lagir Pata*) *of Malakot*

I

581

AMONGST ourselves marriage is so closely associated with an initiation into a sexual union and experience that was previously tabooed, that it is not easy at first to adjust ourselves to the outlook of a society that can so clearly distinguish between sexual love without marriage and domestic love within it.

For a Muria the sexual side of marriage is comparatively unimportant; he marries because he wants to have children whom he can call his own, so that he can have a home of his own, and so that he can have a partner whom he can regard as his own, over whom he has authority and a right, with whom relationship will be permanent and recognized.

This is not mere individualism; it is part of the process of growing up. It is the discovery that sexual excitement is not enough; it is often, as we shall see, the still deeper discovery that romantic attachment is not always the best foundation for a lifelong union. There is a beautiful saying in the *Rigveda* (III, 53, 4)—'Wife is the home; she alone is the place of rest'—which is well paralleled by something said by a young Muria wife at Phunder about life with her husband: 'It was like sitting down on a stool after a long and troubled journey.'

The life of pre-nuptial freedom ends in a longing for security and permanence. This desire is naturally more emphatic in the ghotul where partners are often changed. In Kongera a Muria said, 'You only get real pleasure from your own property; in the ghotul it is always someone else's'. And Gando of Jaitpuri said, 'I often remember my life in the ghotul, but you can't get that happiness always. That is only for four days, but life in your very own home lasts'. Man and wife become each other's property; they get a *haq* or 'right' over each other; and because everybody respects this right, regarding adultery as evil and dangerous, Muria marriage is secure and is not marred by fear, the source of jealousy.

Every Muria contrasts the free happy life in the ghotul with the economic drudgery of marriage. 'The ghotul is for happiness,' they said at Nayanar. 'The home is for work.' The Jamadar of Sorma said, 'Don't ask me about my youth, for in those days I never lacked tobacco and lime. But now I have lost my happiness in thinking always of my belly'. Many songs underline the contrast.

581
539

O the kingdom of the unmarried!
You will never see that kingdom more.
Of housework you know nothing.
You went wandering in the fields,
Looking like a sarus crane.
Early morning you would go;
Evening you'd come home again.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

581
539

O that beautiful ghotul!
Every day you went to clean it.
The road was like a jackal's tail.
You used to go along that road.
In your left hand was a winnowing-fan,
In your right hand a broom,
At sunset you would go there.
You will never see that Raj again.
Now you are going to your husband's house.
Now your pleasure will be work in the house.
You have got no sense at all.
Your husband will curse you,
Your mother-in-law will curse you.
Holding your forehead you will weep.
You will remember the days of youth.
Then you will know what hardship is.
You have got no sense at all.

883X
593
[591]

The first days of marriage certainly appear to emphasize this taunt. The new life together is not immediately satisfactory, especially for the girl. She has to stay in a house filled with her husband's relatives, and work for them. She has not yet a house, perhaps not even a room, of her own. It is not easy for her to adjust herself to the complete and drastic change in her life. 'A young wife,' they said at Masora, 'is like a bulbul whose tail goes up and down all the time. So does she shake her buttocks. She cooks if she feels like it, gets water if she feels inclined. It is hard for her to forget she is no more a motiari; her feet itch to dance.' But she must never enter the ghotul again, the ghotul which for the last six or eight years has been the centre of her social and emotional life. She must avoid her old ghotul partners; she must forget her ghotul name; she must give away most of her ornaments; she has lost her freedom. Lingo Pen will no longer protect her from pregnancy, which indeed quickly follows. There are no more rapturous evenings round the ghotul fire, no more expeditions through the green forest to other villages, no more dancing to the light of torches at the great festivals. She is now a wife and must prepare to be a mother.

For the husband the change is less drastic. He may continue to spend his evenings in the ghotul, returning home late at night to sleep. This is perhaps the hardest trial that the young wife has to bear; she must abandon old romance, he may continue it. He even holds his ghotul title for six months or a year longer. He may go on expeditions, organize marriages, dance at festivals. But his sex life is undoubtedly curtailed. 'Now he is responsible,' I was told at Malakot. 'He is a man with wife and home. Fun and teasing is ended, touching others is ended; he has a wife. For his old habits the penalty is swelling and death. He may now only do it at marriages and at the sport of the gods at festivals.' Even his visits to the ghotul must soon end. Sooner or later he must lay down his office; sooner or later comes the day when the boys suggest that his presence is no longer so welcome as it was. He must then stop his visits or he will be fined and his poultry stolen.

But by this time married life has become established and serene. Happiness has begun to illuminate the hard tasks of home and field. That is why the Muria regard marriage of such supreme importance; everyone must pass through its gate to the fulfilment of tribal and social life. The ghotul with its many joys might easily have become an end in itself. But the Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

O mother, the clouds look like smoke,
Each roof seems joined to the one next door.
I must go and see it, mother.
Whom will you go with, daughter?
I will go with my uncle's son, mother.
Don't go with him, daughter;
He will pour haldi over you.
Let him pour haldi if he wills, mother.
I can't rest till I go with him.

In those cases where no *gudamol* union is possible or convenient, the parents consider many things before they go to 'pluck the flower' of a betrothal. It may safely be said that the thought uppermost in their minds is the happiness of their child. A father seeking a daughter-in-law considers whether the women of such and such a family are hard workers, free from the taint of witchcraft, unstained by scandal. He does not seem to worry whether a girl is beautiful or no, though he would naturally prefer her to be 'well made and conformable'. When a betrothal party arrives at a house, a girl's parents discuss much the same things. Will the boy be a good worker? Has there been scandal in the family, signs of indifference to the laws of the clan? Is the boy himself steady, will he go through with the matter? The girl is consulted; if she strongly objects, the father sends the visitors away. Once she has agreed, however, he expects her to abide by her choice. In the song on p. 89 there is a hint that several betrothal parties may visit a house before the parents can make up their minds—a delay not always pleasing to the daughter.

We have, therefore, in Muria society two very different traditions existing side by side. Before marriage, in the ghotul, boys and girls are encouraged to live to the full a life of romantic passion. For marriage, everything must be arranged on the lines of strictest commonsense. A boy can live with the girl he is in love with before marriage, but not in marriage. How does this arrangement work?

I am not here attempting to pass a personal judgement in this matter, I am not considering whether it is a good or a bad arrangement. The interesting thing is what the chelik and motiari think of it.

Generally, the boys and girls believe that what their parents, or rather society and the tribe, arrange makes for ultimate happiness. They may object to a particular choice made by their parents, but they do not object to their making a choice at all. It is easier for them to accept this position because what they think matters about marriage is not so much the partner as the whole condition of life so different from life in the ghotul. 'The ghotul is for happiness', they said at Nayanar. 'Marriage is for work.' They are more concerned about the new home than the new partner. The new way of life is more important than the person who will share it.

It is some such reflection as this that enables boys and girls to bear the very great pain of separation from their lovers at marriage. This is a very real thing, especially in the *jodidār* ghotul. Here a chelik and motiari may have lived six or seven years together, perhaps in great fidelity, and have come to love each other devotedly. Everything in life—except responsibility for children and a home—has been shared. They have gone together to festivals and danced all night in each other's arms. They have been to a score of marriages and shared a world of jokes together. They have slept night after night in the ghotul 'lovely as a bison's horns'. Then suddenly

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 583 he is sometimes known as the Gabania[1]—the boy who is in pawn. Elsewhere in India he is called Ghar-jamai, Ghardi-jawae, Ghar-damānd and Khāna-damānd—these expressions mean 'house-son-in-law'.

The Lamhada is betrothed to his girl in the ordinary way, and then comes to live in her father's house, where he is treated as one of the family. If he has been living hitherto in a different village, he has to leave the ghotul there and join the ghotul of which his future bride is a motiari. He will get a ghotul-wife or a temporary partner as the case may be and he will live with her at the same time that he serves for his betrothed. We thus have the interesting situation that if a Lamhada boy comes from another village to a place where there is a *jodidār* ghotul, he gets two new girls—one his betrothed with whom he should have nothing to do, and the other his ghotul-wife with whom he will regularly cohabit.

The strongly equalitarian character of the Muria saves the institution of serving-marriage from certain obvious disadvantages. A boy is not looked down upon because he has no money. The capital that he brings to his new home is the strength of his arms, his industry and his enterprise. It is true that the hardest tasks are often given him, but these are to test his capacity and willingness to work rather than any token that he is regarded as inferior. His status in the ghotul is as good as any, and he is just as likely to become Sirdar or Kotwar as the son of the house where he is serving.

[522] But the Lamhada is a licensed subject for jesting. His close proximity to his future wife—in the same house, a definitely more 'risky' connexion than the closely disciplined relationship in the ghotul; his relations with his mother-in-law and other forbidden persons begun even before marriage; the heavy tasks and tests that are laid upon him; these are subjects for endless comment and amusement.

X 883 583 ●539 In Dugabangal, the boys and girls sing a *Lām dāyna pāta*, a song about a boy going as a Lamhada.

Say Lamka Lamka, say son-in-law.
Hard is the work of the Lamka boy
What is the plough made of?
The plough is made of the kosom tree.
What is the yoke made of?
The yoke is made of the siuna tree.
What is the pole made of?
The pole is made of the tinsa tree.
The bullocks are uncle and nephew;
The field is the field of the frogs;
The rice is black as the eyes of a queen.

In a Chitkul song of the Amoli ghotul, a girl is represented as chiding her father for not getting her married.

I am growing up like the beans in the garden,
Yet no one comes to marry me.
I am seven years mature, my father,
I am nearly old as you.
Yet if a boy comes to be Lamhada,
You show him the axe that weighs twelve *gana*;
You show him the basket of two hundred bamboos;
And he goes to find another girl.

[1] In Betul Gondi he is called Lamjanal and the girl he is betrothed to is Lamjana-watar.—Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 104.

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THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

An old woman at Masora spoke with great indignation about the way her mother treated the boy who served for her. 'She gave him the heaviest work, and she delayed our marriage as long as she could, for she wanted to get as much work out of him as possible.'

An interesting expression was used at Chandabera. 'A Lamhada is the *koryâri* (daughter-in-law), because he is brought to the house of his wife. Just as the mother-in-law usually abuses her son's wife, so now does the mother-in-law abuse her daughter's husband. He is the daughter-in-law and must do her work.'

An adaptation of a familiar folk-tale motif describes the trials of a Lamhada and his final victory.

> A father-in-law says to the Lamhada boy, 'Boy, go and sow sarson seed'. The boy goes and in the evening, the father says, 'Boy, go and bring it back, seed for seed, in the same measure'. The Lamhada goes weeping, for he loves the girl, and begins to pick up the seeds one by one. A pair of partridges come by and say, 'Boy, don't weep: we will gather it all for you'. By evening every grain is back in the measure.
>
> Then says the father, 'Boy, bring me five measures of ashes from hemp-waste'. The Lamhada collects a pile of waste and burns it, but the ashes go to nothing. At last he goes to his father-in-law and says, 'Without a knotless bamboo, I can do nothing'. The father searches on every hillside and at last returns. 'Boy, I am defeated'. The Lamhada says, 'But if I bring it, will you give me your daughter at once'? The father promises, and the Lamhada brings back a reed. 'Here is bamboo without a knot: give me your daughter.'

What of the relations between the Lambada and the girl with whom he is brought into such intimate contact? In the ghotul the same rules are supposed to apply as govern the conduct of other betrothed couples. The girl must strictly avoid her Lamhada; she must not salute him, nor comb his hair, nor massage him. She must not sleep with him, or sit on his mat. In his presence she will sleep regularly with other boys; he too will have his own partners. Yet neither may reproach the other, though they will be working together all day in the same house.

But although betrothed couples usually seem to observe these rules of avoidance fairly strictly, they are sometimes broken by the Lamhada. Several factors contribute to this. The boy and girl are brought into far more constant and intimate contact in kitchen, field and forest than ordinary engaged couples. A girl cannot help feeling that the Lamhada boy is already more or less married to her when she sees his relations with her parents, watches him already observing the special rules of jesting and avoidance with her other relatives; perhaps not a little sympathy is roused in her heart at the sight of the hard life he leads. Above all, if they do come together, and if she should become pregnant, nothing is easier than to perform their marriage—the boy concluding his term of service afterwards. When the Malik of Lohatur who was a Lamhada made his betrothed pregnant, they were not even fined, for the parents said, 'If it hadn't happened today, it would have happened tomorrow'.

Many cases of such 'irregularities' have been recorded. Dhani, the old Muria woman of Masora, had her affections strongly stirred by her mother's treatment of her Lamhada and she used to sleep with him in the ghotul. At Tarbaili, a girl was passionately devoted to her Lamhada; they used to slip out together at night into the forest—for at least they must preserve the conventions.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

under the thatch by the door of his house. The palm of his right hand was placed below the Lamhada's right hand. On the ground, below their hands, a pile of rice was made, and an arrow placed in it. Then the Waddai climbed on to the roof and poured down water which fell through the thatch on to their hands, and thence to the rice. After this a pig and two chickens were given to the Lamhada to be offered to his ancestors. The Waddai as clan-priest officiated since the Dead of the clan were to be appeased.

A curious story related by Oyami Harma of the same village illustrates the manner in which the Maria expect supernatural punishment to fall upon the criminal. 'Long ago', said Oyami Harma, 'my ancestors, who were a family of seven brothers and one sister, were living beyond Bailadila. A youth of the Uika clan came as Lamhada for the girl, and in due time she was married to him. Twin boys were born, but after a few days one of them died. During Dassara the husband went to Jagdalpur at the invitation of the eldest brother and while he was away his wife together with the wives of the seven brothers went to reap the harvest, taking their two hunting-dogs. The surviving twin was taken with them, and as they were working, he was put to sleep in a swing. While the women were busy in the field, a hare jumped out of a bush and ran towards the baby. The two hunting-dogs chased it, and mistaking the baby for the hare bit him and killed him.

'When the husband returned he asked for his baby, and his wife said, "He has been taken out by our neighbour. First eat your food and then you can play with the child". The husband sat down and ate, and his wife told him what had happened. In the meantime the other brothers told their eldest brother of the child's death, and he was afraid that the bereaved father would revenge himself on him, because it was at his invitation that he had gone to Jagdalpur. So they all decided to run away. The father pursued them saying that it was they who were responsible for the death of his child. They went to Gadapal closely pursued by the angry father. In Gadapal there was a shrine for Kas Pona Pen which was in the form of a bird. This god hid the eldest brother under its wings, and when the father arrived at the shrine, he could find no trace of him. But as he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Biron Horn Maria

539 773 had seen him entering, he knew that he was hiding somewhere and so he set fire to the building and went away. The fire did not harm the man, but some of the bird's feathers were burnt. The soul of the clan-god in Gadapal is in that bird, and to this day the bird can be seen, though now it is made of iron, and on its body the marks made by the burns remain.

'The eldest brother then went to Mailawada and lived there. He consulted the Waddai about the death of his sister's child, and it was revealed to him that the girl had been committing adultery with another man, and that on the very day she had bathed after her menstrual period, she [945] had had intercourse both with her husband and her lover. The result of this was twins. But the Departed were offended at her conduct, and as a result one of the twins died after a few days and the second was killed by the Departed who first took the form of a hare and excited the dogs, and then possessed the dogs and killed the child in the swing'.

Such stories are not mere fairy-tales. They are part of the actual life of the people, vividly believed and actually experienced. To aboriginals who live in such an atmosphere and depend so entirely on the supernatural, the cumbersome and vulgar machinery of human courts of justice seems comparatively unimportant. It is said that many murderers find a sort of relief in going to jail, since they believe that this earthly punishment may save them from the vengeance of the Departed.

782 837 But as often in the aboriginal world there are regular methods of evading these dangers. If a man wishes to commit adultery, he makes offerings to the Departed and prays, 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on the husband of this girl and not on me', and then he addresses his ancestors, 'Away with you. Go to water and to wind. Go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me whatever happens'.

684 There is no doubt, however, that many Maria are not satisfied with such ceremonies, and that they consider themselves entirely justified in killing a wife who is disloyal. In particular, the discovery of a woman actually in the arms of her lover appears to have so overwhelming an emotional effect that the husband is almost bound to strike

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 All round the little pond were sitting rame birds singing,
773 wagging their heads to and fro and flapping their wings in great excitement. The hero tasted the water and soon he too was singing, dancing and flapping his arms in company with the birds.

The recipe for rice-beer was given to the Maria by the Supreme Being for no other purpose apparently but to cheer them up.

273 The origin of sago and toddy juice is more elaborately
773 described.
539 Long ago there was a Maria called Iro Kawachi who had two beautiful daughters, Ilo and Palo. He made a seat of mahua wood and covered it with the skins of lice. He proclaimed that anyone who could first lift it up and put it where he could bathe upon it, and who could say what kind of wood it was made of, and what skin covered it, would get his daughters. All the boys of the neighbourhood came to try but none could tell what the seat was and none could lift it up. At last came a lame boy called Mad Moda from the Irma Raj with an open sore upon his leg. He too was unable to guess what the seat was made of until a fly came and said, 'Let me sit on your sore and eat it and then I will tell you what the wood is'. The boy let the fly settle upon him and after it had taken its fill it told him that the seat was of mahua wood and covered with the skins of lice. Then the boy was able to lift up the seat and put it where Iro Kawachi could bathe.

Now Mad Moda was lame and ugly and covered with hideous sores. When the two girls Ilo and Palo saw him, they ran away in terror but the boy went stumbling along after them and dropped his dancing-stick. He went on and at last caught the girls by the strings with which they tied their hair into a bun. He pulled the cloth off their shoulders and tore out some of their hair. Then he threw them down in the bed of the Indaltom River and enjoyed them. Afterwards the river divided and flowed onwards in two streams.

The boy's bell-stick turned into a toddy tree; the strings from the girls' hair became sago palms; the hair itself grew up as a date palm; the cloth became the broad-leaved plantain tree. Because on that day the girls' cloth fell from their shoulders, they now do not cover their breasts.

This is the story as it was told in Garmiri village. It is known in its main outlines in many other places, though

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

with small variations. In Dualkarka it was Ira Dhurwa who made the seat and its covering was of cloth. In Muskel it was Gaja Bhimul who made it and the end of the story is that Ilo and Palo jumped into the river at Dantewara and were drowned.

A few stories resemble the tales of the northern Muria. The Pen Kaina come down to bathe in the Godaveri river; they come singing to eat jamun fruit; or they simply come to dance. They sing, 'Whoever can tell what our names are, we will go with him'. When the village boys find they cannot tell their names they get angry and try to catch them. As the girls run away their bell-sticks fall and become toddy trees. The boys throw their sticks at them and these become sago palms. As the girls run away the kardan-belts round their waists break and turn into the date palm. The knots on these belts are its fruit. The god cuts off the testicles of the boys and sticks them on to the end of the dancing-sticks and these become toddy fruit. That is why, the Maria say, their women beat the sticks so vigorously as they dance. This version of the story is from Bara Harmamunda. In Palnar the situation is reversed. When the boys begin to flirt with the girls, the girls beat them with their bell-sticks and it is the boys who run away. Here they add that the toddy trees said, 'We won't stay here', and went down below the hills. But the sago palms remained on the Dantewara plateau.

Another completely different type of story is told in the neighbourhood of Bailadila. Long ago a group of Maria were hunting on the Bailadila Hills. They grew very thirsty and went searching for water. A rat had nibbled at the peduncle of a sago palm and a jungle cock had scratched a hole in the ground at its foot. The juice dropped into this hole and filled it. When the hunters came to the place they found a hole full of refreshing juice and drank it and thus learnt to tap the tree.

The comparative strength of these drinks is given in Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual*. The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Death comes into the world by the treachery of the gods. The Baiga describe how Bhagavan grew tired of men, but did not know how to kill them. So he gave Nanga Baiga itch and the old man began to scratch. But he was unable to reach the small of his back, and one day when he picked up a stick to scratch himself there, Bhagavan turned it into a cobra and it bit him and he died.[1] The Juang say that formerly men did not die because they did not sleep, and Bhagavan had to send a woman to sell them curds mixed with sleep-medicine. When they ate the curds, they slept and died. The Bhuiya story describes how so long as Jug Budha and his wife were living, no one died and the world was becoming over-populated. So the Supreme Being sent a centipede to bite them, and thus introduced death into the world.

The Muria too, in the north of Bastar, associate the coming of death with the murder of a son.

> In the Middle World no man died, and Mahapurub wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He had a son. He killed him and prepared to carry him out for burial. But when his wife heard of it, she ran weeping to the place and, taking her son from him, sat with the corpse in her lap. Mahapurub said, 'We must bury the child, don't be foolish'. But she said, 'No, I'll never give him to you'.
>
> Mahapurub then planted a jamun tree behind her. One day some of the berries fell to the ground before her. She picked them up and as she ate her mouth was reddened with the juice. Mahapurub came again and said, 'Give me the boy. You are a witch, you are eating his flesh'. He brought a mirror and when she saw her reddened mouth, she thought she really was eating her son. She wept bitterly, but gave the body to Mahapurub. He buried it and from that day, death has been in the world.

A similar sacrifice accounts for the origin of the sun and moon. The Muria, in a story which is known in a slightly different version to the Bison-horn Maria, describe how after the great wooden circles for the sun and moon were made, there was the problem of how to put life into them. Mahapurub had a son, and Lingo declared that only by killing him and giving his blood to the sun and moon to

[1] Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), p. 329.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

drink, would they become alive and be man and woman. One day while Mahapurub was working in his fields, his wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. He sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon and they became alive.

Both the Baiga and Muria have stories to account for the disappearance of human sacrifice.

> Now Nanga Baiga and Nanga Baigin had nothing to sacrifice for the steadying of the world. So they took their own three sons and daughters, and were carrying them along. Then they met a jungle hen. 'Where are you going?' she asked. And when she heard, 'You musn't kill your own children. Take two pairs of mine. Offer one pair, and keep the other for breeding'. So said the jungle hen. Then Nanga Baiga lifted one son and daughter out of the kawar and left them with the hen, and put the chickens in instead.
>
> A little later they met a sow. She also begged them not to sacrifice their children, and gave two pairs of sucklings in exchange for two more of the children. Then they met a barking deer, and made a similar exchange.[1]

The Muria story runs as follows:—

> The Muria was thinking, 'How am I to worship the earth for I have nothing to give her?'. He had one daughter. He covered her whole body with soot to make her black and forced her to walk on all fours like a black cow.

[1] *The Baiga*, p. 315. 'At Nasik, in the Deccan, when cholera appears, a woman of the Mang (menial tribe) is solemnly led out of the city as a scapegoat. She remains outside the city bounds till the next day, when she bathes and returns. The ceremonial, which closely resembles that of bringing a victim to a shrine, doubtless implies an earlier rite of human sacrifice.

'Another rite resembles that of the self-immolation of pilgrims, who used, in former times, to fling themselves, in the name of Siva, over the cliff known as Bhairava Jhamp, near the famous shrine of Kedar Nath in the lower Himalayas. This rite has now been commuted into the paying for the service of a bedi or rope dancer, who slides on a wooden saddle upon a cable hung over a precipitous cliff as a means of propitiating Siva.

'In the form of the "Bihunda" rite the same custom prevails in the Punjab, on the River Sutlej.

'In Baroda also, at the worship of Vagh Deo, the tiger god, a man is covered with a blanket; he bows to the image and walks round it seven times. During this performance the worshippers slap him on the back. He then tries to escape to the forest, pursued by children, who fling balls of clay at him, and finally bring him back, the rite ending with feasting and drinking. The above are instances of attenuated forms of the custom of human sacrifice and immolation which has become intolerable under the conditions of modern society.' Haikerwal, op. cit., pp. 68 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Then he went to the jungle to worship Mother Earth. On the way he met Lingo driving a cow. Lingo said, 'O man, where are you going?' 'I am going to worship Mother Earth'. 'What are you going to sacrifice?' 'I have nothing to give but my own daughter and I am going to sacrifice her'. Then Lingo said, 'Give me your daughter, and I will give you my cow'. From that day the Muria have not offered human beings to the Earth Mother but, taught by Lingo, have sacrificed their cattle.

A Bison-horn Maria account of creation tells of the great deluge and how the earth came into existence from mud that dropped from the hairs of the great boars that then lived in the world. There were two deities, Irisirma and Markaraja. They had two daughters, Iro and Palo. The girls both wanted to marry Koyabhimul, but the parents were unwilling and tried to kill the boy. They first sent a great snake to bite him as he returned from the jungle. But the girls warned him in time, and told him to invoke the name of their father and the snake would be unable to harm him. The parents then tried to kill him by asking him to sacrifice a chicken, planning to behead him as he bent down to do so. But the girls again warned him, and the boy said to Markaraja that he must first show him how the sacrifice was to be performed. As the older man bent down, the boy picked up a sword and beheaded him. 'In those days there were few gods and so there were few deaths on earth. The mortality on earth has increased because of the great increase in the number of deities.'

We have already seen how the origin of magic among men is connected with a human sacrifice and cannibalism. The Maria are acquainted with similar stories of the origin of the sun and moon through the sacrifice of a living being. Some of the Maria iron-smelters describe how at the beginning they were unable to extract iron from the ore. They killed a Maria and put his body into the furnace, after which their craft prospered.

Maria folk-tales are full of the usual murders, treacheries and deceits. But it is worth noting that generally these are attributed to outsiders and members of other castes. The Maria themselves usually appear virtuous and honourable.

I do not suppose anyone was ever incited to murder by these stories and legends. I doubt if anyone would ever

1: Koppers--220 E-5 (1938-1939) 1948 AW25 Bhil AW25
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Jawārā Song

1. Behind the bar (tree) stands the pipal tree.
   By the door stands the fruit-bearing nim tree.
   Ho Mata, you are good.
2. Under the nim tree hangs a swing.
   Who is to be swung?
   Ho Mata, you are good.
3. The Dewi (mata) sits on the swing,
   And the servant swings.
   Hanuman (the monkey) speaks: Swing to (i.e., he murmurs hm, hm).
   Ho Mata, you are good.
4. Swinging, swinging, she (Dewi) became unconscious,
   And the neckband tore apart.
   Ho Mata, you are good.
5. Who will pick up the beads (which have fallen on the ground)?
   Who will put the string of beads back together?
   Ho Mata, you are good.
6. The goddess has picked them up.
   And the servant helped her.
   The gardener put it (the string of beads) back together.
   Ho Mata, you are good.

/186/ 7. Well, well, Mata, I have sung this song.
O goddess Hinglaj (442), bless (us)!

442. "Hinglaj, said to be derived from Sanskrit hingula, a preparation of mercury with sulphur, vermilion: possibly, on account of the smearing of a sacred stone with red pigment, . . ." W. Crooke, ERE, Vol. VI, p. 715. Under the name Hinglaj the great mother goddess is venerated in Baluchistan, west of the Hingol River, near its mouth. The Hinglaj Mātā is widely known in India.

Ho Mata, you are good.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

541 Cock-fighting is the favourite pastime of the Bison-horn Marias, well-known venues being the weekly markets at Kuakonda, Paknar, Kukanar, Bastanar Ghat and near Karli, among several others. They tie iron knives to the cocks' legs. If the cocks break away, their owners pick them up and rub their hackles or spit into their beaks to get their blood up. The defeated cock always becomes the property of the victor's owner. On any market morning you can see scores of Bison-horn Marias walking to market with cocks tucked under their arms. Hill Marias do not themselves go in much for this pastime; only a few of them even stay to watch cock-fighting at Dhaurai market. Some of the Kutru Hill Marias attend cock-fighting every week at Oikal in the Ahiri zamindari of Chanda.

231 614 **Goats** Goats are seldom kept by the Hill Marias, though at Nugur in the Indrawati valley the Parlio clan, despite the fact that its totem is the goat, kept goats for the Teli tradesmen who owned the village rice bins described on page 102; but they could not eat goat flesh or even take goat milk.

Among the Bison-horn Marias, many, including even those who belong to the goat phratry and goat clans, keep goats and use goat milk; but totemistic rules prohibit members of goat clans and phratry from eating goat flesh.

231 **Cattle and buffaloes** As has been seen, the Hill Marias are not rich in cattle, do not milk them or yoke them to carts or ploughs, and generally keep Rawat herdsmen to tend them. Nearly all eat beef whenever they can afford it. Bullock or cow sacrifice is almost an essential part of funeral ceremonies, and all present eat the meat. Dead cattle are divided up and eaten; at Kutru, Hill Marias ate all that remained of a cow killed by a family of man-eating tigers, though the mangled remains had been gnawed by hyaenas and jackals, and exposed to the sun for four or five days till full of flies and maggots. The headmen of the villages of Padalibhum, Tapalibhum, Behramar, Nurbhum and Sonpur Mar *parganas* frankly admitted that they liked eating beef when they could get it; at Handawada, on the other side of the hills, the headmen of the Dantewara Mar and Mangnar *pargana* villages asserted that they never eat dead cattle, and only eat the beef of sacrificed animals. There are practically no buffaloes in the Abujhmar hills.

231 439 231 The Bison-horn Marias are great stock-raisers, both of cattle and buffaloes, and they export many head of cattle to Chanda and Raipur, as well as over the Madras border; in fact the land revenue is often paid out of the price received for cattle, and one of their favourite grievances is the cattle export duty of a rupee or two imposed by the State. They use cattle for ploughing and are

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

he would repay with 50 per cent. interest.[1] Although it is clear that these Teli, Kalar and Telugu money-lenders do levy an exorbitant toll on the Maria villagers' produce, it is equally clear that they are fulfilling a necessary function, which has become the more necessary since the stopping of *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation below the hills has restricted the Marias in most villages to permanent rice cultivation on small acreages always dependent on seasonal rainfall evenly distributed in time. If such money-lenders are excluded, then they must be replaced by Government grain depots and village grain banks.

Of Maria funeral rites the *Gazetteer* observes that a stone or a carved post about five feet high is usually put up to mark the spot where a man's body has been cremated, and that 'sometimes one comes across a forest glade strewn with these memorials, the only sign of some deserted village, the very name of which has perished'.[2] Many rows of carved wooden posts may be seen between Bhamragarh and Lahiri, while at Lahiri itself I saw scores of such posts and of the small cromlechs (*hanal-garya* or 'thrones of the Departed') described on page 273, and mentioned in the *Gazetteer*[3] as built on the spot where the body was burned. The top of one of these very substantial funerary posts, or *hanal-gutta*, photographed at Lahiri, is reproduced as one of the illustrations in this Supplement. Noticeable are the carved wooden horns, between which is a carved wooden bird, probably a hornbill. The wooden horns are common, and probably are a modern symbol of the cow formerly sacrificed at the erection of a menhir or wooden *hanal-gutta* by Hill Marias[4] and Bison-horn Marias[5] throughout Bastar: the funerary customs of the Chanda Marias seemed, however, to be Hill Maria in type, and this was confirmed by oral enquiries at Lahiri.

The addiction of the Bison-horn Marias and of the Kutru Hill Marias of Bastar to cock-fighting has been described on page 162. I particularly inquired if the weekly cock-fights at Oikal in Ahiri zamindari, there mentioned, and at Lahiri itself still went on. But all cock-fighting among Chanda Marias had for some years been stopped under orders from an inexperienced young European District Superintendent of Police on the theory that it contravened the Gambling Act. But the Marias maintained that, as in Bastar, so here, there had never been cash betting (as, indeed, one might expect in a region where all transactions are still so largely in kind), but the defeated bird had passed to the owner of the winning bird.

[1] For further details, see *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 183-4.
[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 106.
[3] Ibidem, loc. cit.
[4] See pp. 278-9.
[5] See p. 281.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

541 656 Such iron knives or spurs as were tied on to the cock's legs were very small, and a Lahiri Maria criticized the usual theory that this way of increasing a cock's natural armament is cruel on the ground that if it meant a quicker death for the defeated cock it was merciful. All the headmen promised that if the ban on cock-fights were lifted they would frown on cash or grain betting, and, if we so desired, on the use of iron spurs and knives. Thoughtless officiousness such as that which stopped this favourite tribal pastime is only too typical of the lack of imagination with which officials, great and small, are apt to interfere with all that lends colour to aboriginal life.

615 618 114 Lahiri was one of the chief camps where I questioned the local Marias as to their clan organization, particularly the grouping of clans into phratries according to the number of *Chuddur penk* or Little Gods. I mentioned on pages 194-5 my doubts as to the traditional accounts of this god-grouping among the Chanda Marias. But these accounts go back to Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report. A somewhat confusing summary of his account, on page 101 of the *Gazetteer*, seems to imply that there is little difference between the god-grouping of the Raj-Gond, the other Gond tribes of Chanda. Lucie-Smith divided the Raj-Gonds into a four-god group, with the tortoise and crocodile totems, a five-god group with the iguana totem, a six-god group with the tiger totem, and a seven-god group with the porcupine totem: these groups were divided into what the *Gazetteer* calls 'houses or families, distinguished by their family name or *padi*', i.e. into what in this book have been called clans (*pari*), which numbered 28 among the Raj-Gonds, 24 among the Marias and 17 among the Dhurve Gond. Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, p. 66) say that in Chanda :—

> 'There are four main groups worshipping seven, six, five and four gods respectively, and each group contains ten to fifteen septs. A man cannot marry a woman of any sept which worships the same number of gods as himself. Each group has a sacred animal which the members revere, that of the seven-god worshippers being a porcupine, of the six-god worshippers, a tiger, of the five-god worshippers, the *saras* crane, and of the four-god worshippers, a tortoise. As a rule the members of the different groups do not know the names of their gods, and in practice it is doubtful whether they restrict themselves to the proper number of gods of their own group. Formerly there were three-, two-, and one-god worshippers, but in each of these classes it is said that there were only one or two septs, and they found that they were much inconvenienced by the paucity of their numbers, perhaps for the purposes of communal worship and feasting, and hence they got themselves enrolled in the larger groups. In reality it would appear that the classification according to the number of gods worshipped is being forgotten and the three lowest groups have disappeared.'

They suggested that this conjecture was supported by the fact that in Chhindwara and other localities only two large six-god and seven-god groups remained.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Johar Karsana

This game, which is one of the many attractive games played in the big ghotul at Alor, is a saluting game. The motiari form a line, the leader comes forward, bends down with her back to the others and swings to left and right, touching the feet of each in turn. She goes down the line and the next in order follows her.

Song

[539]

Didi boli boli kudum keli lo,	Sister, say, we have stamped our feet,
Ulti pão parilo pulti pão parilo.	Saluting the feet this side and that.
Juna garh dekhilo nawā garh dekhilo.	We saw the old fort, we saw the new fort.
Sakhi chānwur badilo.	We made friendship with rice.
Rāja tika tikilo.	We gave greeting to the Raja.
Son kukra basilo!	O the golden cock crowed!
Kumār kukra basilo	The red cock crowed
Ki hi ri hir.	*Ki hi ri hir.*

Kudum represents the sound of stamping feet. After the song has been sung through to the sister, it is done for the mother-in-law, cousin, sister-in-law, anyone you please.

A Guessing Game

The Muria have a guessing game called Mundi Karsana. In Phulpar the girls stood in a circle holding out their hands. One of the boys put a ring into a girl's hand. Then the other boys had to come one by one to guess where it was.

In Metawand, this was played by boys and girls together sitting down, but the principle was the same. Sometimes the guesser puts his hand on each forehead in turn: it is believed that whoever has the ring will have a hot head.

A Game with Myrabolams

In Nayanar, I watched the chelik playing with *harra*-myrabolams. Two boys sat facing each other, each had a pile of myrabolams. The first boy picked up a handful, threw them into the air, and tried to catch as many as possible on the back of his hand. He failed to catch any, and lost his turn, and the other boy made the attempt. He caught two and put these beside him, the next throw he caught one, then three, but at last, though he had only three stones left, he dropped them all and lost his turn. Then the first boy tried again.[1]

X. Cock-fighting

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Cock-fighting is a popular sport among the Muria of the central and northern parganas, but it is little followed in the east where it is said to be a pastime worthy only of Ganda.[2] But in the west and central areas, cocks are specially

[1] A similar game is known as *Dhapa* by the Pauri Bhuiya.—Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 285. I have seen it in Mandla, and it is probably universally distributed.

[2] For an excellent account of cock-fighting among Kol, Bhumij and Uraon, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 95. Thurston considered it a 'disgusting spectacle' and agreed with Colonel Newcome that it should be performed in secret. He describes cock-fighting among the Mohammedans of Mysore who do not use steel spurs but

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

reared and trained to fight. It is said that in the good old days, the fights used to be between two men, and the spectators bet on the result. Cock-fighting came in when this exciting custom was forbidden. Large meetings

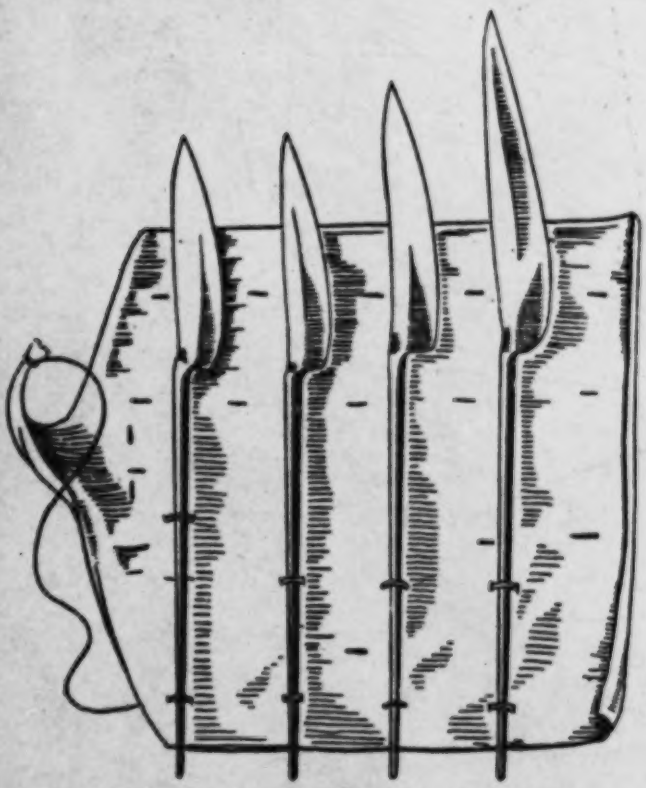

FIG. 146. Set of cock-fighting knives in cloth bag
Length of longest knife 3"

are held at the end of most of the bazaars late in the afternoon. Special meetings are also called in the larger Muria villages, both regularly and on

sharpen the natural spurs with a knife. 'A real good fight' he says 'may last for several hours.' This, and several other details of Thurston's description, seem to me a little doubtful. Thurston adds that the sport was popular in South Canara among the Bant, but since it often led to quarrels was discouraged by the police.—*Ethnographic Notes*, p. 569ff. I have never seen it in the Central Provinces, though I have watched maina-fighting in Sarangarh State. Other references to cock-fighting will be found in T. R. Venkatarama Sharma, 'Games, Sports and Pastimes in Prehistoric India', *Man in India*, Vol. XXI, p. 144; D. N. Majumdar, 'Games of the Hos of Kolhan', *Man in India*, Vol. V, p. 201; J. Barkar, 'Assam and the Ahoms in 1660', *JBORS*, Vol. I, p. 186; and in some of the standard monographs on individual tribes.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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special occasions such as a gathering of the pargana panchayat. In this part the Muria are enthusiastic over the sport and not inconsiderable sums of money pass to and fro in the bets which inevitably accompany a fight. To the gentle Muria the attraction of cock-fighting is not (as it is to the more blood-thirsty Bison-horn Maria) the excitement of blood and battle, but the pleasure of betting. The cock that loses also becomes the property of the winner.

When the company has gathered in the shade of a great grove of trees, the cocks—which have been brought to the place carefully covered—are measured against each other so that in no fight will they be too unfairly matched. The spur-men, who are Muria specially trained in the business, go aside to tie the spurs to the cocks' feet. These spurs are sharp knife-blades about 3" long and slightly curved, made by the Muria Lohar of locally smelted iron, and are kept in little bamboo cases or rolled up in a cloth hold-all.

The spur-man attaches the blades to the cock's feet, spits on the string and binds it round and round until the blades are firmly fixed at exactly the right height and angle. He then removes dirt from his ears, mixes some with the dust from his left foot with a little spittle and rubs the mess on the blades saying, 'O Mahapurub, O the Departed of my house, you know my truth and goodness. It is for you to give this cock victory'. He removes a feather from the cock's tail, cuts it in two with the blade attached to its leg, spits on it and throws it away. If the cock is victorious, the spur-man receives a leg of its defeated adversary.

The owners now pick up their birds and stand facing each other in the middle of a clearing surrounded by an excited crowd of spectators. They hold the cocks out, make them peck at each other and when they are aroused put them on the ground. The birds usually go to the attack at once, and the fight only lasts a short time. The blades are very deadly and I have frequently seen both cocks fall dead after thirty seconds' combat. Once a cock turns away from its adversary, it is considered defeated.

After a victory, the owner of the cock should make an offering of liquor to the Departed. At Binjhli he was expected to give a coconut to the Village Mother. At Ulera, the Muria said that when they put the cocks into battle they remembered the Departed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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●541

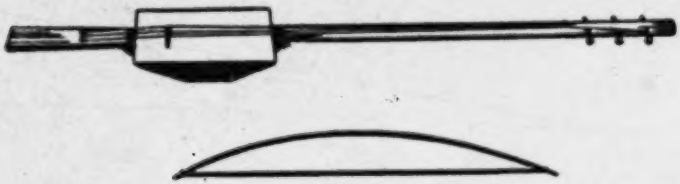
A cock-fight at Bayanar

Plate CXLI

[p.626(A)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

534 bamboo and the usual flute. They are fond of gongs, but these are not now so common as they were. At the great Pen Karsita at Ghotpal in 1942, the dancers used slabs of



Kikir Fiddle
(*Length* 2')

coloured wood, bits of old tin and indeed anything that would make a noise instead of the traditional gongs. Like the Muria, at festivals and even for amusement the Maria use a hunting horn, either a real horn or one made of brass.

541 Besides dancing, the chief Maria relaxation is the cock-fight. At the conclusion of all the bigger bazaars, the men retire to a grove of trees and set their cocks against each other. The cocks are armed with sharp and deadly little knives tied to their feet and fights are to the death. The victor has the privilege of taking the defeated bird, but the real excitement comes from the betting.

V

844 [843] The ceremonies attending birth and marriage are very simple. The pregnant mother is not hampered by many restrictions on her movements. After the birth of the child the placenta is buried in a pit behind the house. Logs are placed above it and the arrow with which the cord was cut is driven into the ground near by. A small shed is made and the 846 mother lives here for some weeks with her child, taking a daily bath above the placenta-pit. At the end of this period of segregation, the husband gives a feast to the neighbours, [551] the child is named and the mother is permitted to return to her household duties. It was to such a feast that the unhappy victim of the Mardum sacrifice was enticed.[1]

881 There are no ceremonies of initiation at puberty, though a

[1] Case No 51.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

114 live side by side with Kolams as well as with non-aboriginal settlers, then climbed to the higher plateau and were fortunate enough to watch a clan-god feast at Pangri. On our way from Pangri to Utnur we passed Marlavai and decided on this village as our future base-camp. Early
●[54] in February we went to the Kcslapur Jatra, a great Gond feast and fair, held annually fifteen miles north-west of Utnur. From there we turned north and then east into Rajura Taluq, where we visited tht famous fort of Manikgarh, now deserted and overgrown by jungle. Camping in
[124] various villages of the higher plateau we gathered piecemeal information from both Gonds and Kolams, and by the end of our tour realized that a study of the aboriginals of Adilabad might lead to the very heart of the Gond problem.

123 A sligltly embarrassing circumstance during our first tour was the rapidly spreading rumour that I was a recruiting officer and had come to take young Gonds to the war. The general excitement following the Japanese invasion of Malaya, had reached even the Gonds and they interpreted my taking of notes and photographs as a preliminary selection of all the fittest men. And when at the same time the Director-General of Revenue visited Adilabad and Utnur, they took our tours for a concerted movement and thought the lorries with his camp-kit were meant to carry off the recruits. Many hid in the forest and the fields when we passed by and in the villages it was difficult to establish confidence.

But once settled in Marlavai in a house built in Gond style just outside the village, we were soon faced by a difficulty of exactly the opposite nature. For now rumour ran that I was a revenue officer, specially sent to the District to investigate the grievances of Gonds, Kolams and Naikpods, and to give land to all those whom the influx of new settlers had rendered landless. All through the hot weather and the greater part of the rains aboriginals from all parts of the district, some in delegations of thirty and forty, flocked to Marlavai, all wanting their difficulties heard and remedied. Unable to give them any concrete assistance, I had at least to listen to their tales of woe, and many a day passed when the only anthropological information swelling my note-books was the distressingly monotonous account of a culture-contact resulting invariably in the expropriation and economic enslavement of the aboriginal.[1]

114 From March to the middle of December Marlavai was our headquarters, but several tours led us to the surrounding villages and ultimately to the Tilani area as far as Rompalli and Mangi. We left the district at Christmas and returned again early in March 1943, when we toured the taluqs of Both, Kinwat and Adilabad, reaching Marlavai in the middle of April. While in Hyderabad I had succeeded in obtaining the sanction of H.E.H. the Nizam's Government for a Gond Education

1. A full account of the conditions then prevailing in the Adilabad District is contained in my reports and diaries published under the title *Tribal Hyderabad* by the Revenue Department, Government of H.E.H. the Nizam, Hyderabad 1945.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CRIMES OF WOMEN

I

674 171 It is notorious that women are everywhere less criminal than men. 'The proportion varies, however, greatly in different countries. In France it is usually about 4 to 1; in the United States it is about 12 to 1; in Italy and Spain the proportion of women is very small. In Great Britain, on the other hand, the proportion of criminal women is extremely large, especially for the greater crimes'.[1] In Bastar the proportion is 23 men to 1 woman.

674 Havelock Ellis points out that woman is protected from crime by certain physical and psychological characteristics—her physical weakness, sexual selection, domestic seclusion, prostitution and maternity. Among Maria women, however, the only one of these forms of protection to operate is maternity. The women are often of considerable physical strength and are as capable of striking a murderous blow with an axe as are the men. Since every Maria woman is married, sexual selection is of no assistance in removing from the place of danger and temptation the more degenerate and abnormal types.

462 562 As far as the domestic seclusion of women is concerned, the Maria situation resembles that in the Baltic provinces of Russia of former days, where the women shared the occupations of men and the level of feminine criminality was comparatively high. In England also, which has taken the lead in enlarging the sphere of women's work, 'the level of feminine criminality has for half a century been rising'. The Maria woman is not only free to assist her husband in the tasks of daily life, but she also frequently participates in those very occasions which are regarded as most provocative to murder, the drinking parties when large quantities of rice-beer are consumed.

[544] There is no prostitution among the Maria. But on the other hand women do not, as in Europe, fall out of the social ranks.

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 261 f.

[p. 161]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

142 individuals. The prognathous jaw is common, but far from universal; and one fairly often meets fair individuals with pointed faces tapering towards the chin. Young girls are frequently [304] graceful, light in colour, and, but for the disfigurements of tattooing, often pretty; but with age and child-bearing, long journeys to the market and heavy field work, they soon coarsen and darken. Colour varies from nearly black to pale copper; but really black [551] skins are uncommon enough to give rise to names or nicknames. The copper complexion is perhaps commoner among the Bison-horn than the Hill Marias, but the really pale copper face is more often met in the hills. Lips are full rather than thick. Eyes are almost invariably brown; I have met occasional individuals with grey or greenish-grey eyes accompanied by hair of a dirty rust colour and light complexions. The hair is black and generally straight, but many have natural waves that would do credit to European coiffeurs, and a few have naturally frizzy hair. Some young 'bloods' [302] among the Bison-horn Marias seem to have artificially curled hair. The teeth are usually worn down, discoloured and neglected, and [164] caries is common. The richer Bison-horn headmen sometimes have [304] small gold plugs, the size of a pin's head, inserted in the front of their upper front teeth.

[516] The bodies are usually well developed, and the easy, upright carriage of the Maria displays to advantage his good chest, buttocks and calves. The Hill Maria seldom if ever carries

482 **Physical powers and endurance** weights on his head, but on his left shoulder, supported by his left arm bent over the top of his burden. Actually he regards the woman as the natural carrier, as may be seen when he goes with her to the market, and almost the only time when he may be seen carrying loads is when he acts as a carrier for a touring official. It is actually recorded that at one time he used to send his women for this work; but he has long given this up, possibly through experience of the less pleasant ways of subordinate State servants. Young hill girls and women carry heavy baskets or leaf-boxes of grain, logs of wood, water-pots or other weights on their heads, generally supporting the burden with their left hands holding its upper edge above their heads. With 439 loads of grain for sale, and perhaps piles of baskets, brooms or mats, 484 the Hill Maria housewife will go once a month to the bazaar, often from thirty-five to forty miles away, in the plains, while her menfolk [462] take nothing but bow and arrow or, very occasionally, big baskets made for storing grain, which only males may make. From Kurmer, for example, on the Kutru-Antagarh border where the hill-streams begin to flow south to the Indrawati, they go thirty-nine miles to the market at Dhanrai, between Narainpur and Chhota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934; 1949

AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

for a tooth; but nowadays this is generally satisfied by invoking the police and the courts. But distances are great in Bastar, and in the rains, when the early hill grains are ripe, communications are bad; often the villagers conspire to hush up a murder or leave it to those affected to take their own direct action, rather than disorganise agricultural work by the troubles of a long police enquiry followed by committal proceedings and a sessions trial. 692

It is a relief to return from this darker side of the Bison-horn Maria's character to the light-heartedness of all Marias, but especially the Hill Maria. An engaging feature of this is his readiness to burlesque himself. A village *gaita* (headman) at Tondawada set the whole camp in fits of laughter by his description of his first vain attempts to use a pair of bullocks in the plough, mimicking himself pulled hither and thither by these wild-cat animals; at Hikul I was treated to a similar comic representation of what would happen if a Maria attempted to milk a cow. They are quick to seize on any foibles or peculiarities of individuals, without respect of persons, and have a happy knack of inventing apposite nicknames; this trait is common throughout the State, where there are nicknames for almost every State official current among all the primitive tribes, while few of the leading Hindu and Mohammedan settlers are referred to by their true names. 157 522 551

Frankness and honesty are still as characteristic as ever of the hill men and the wilder Bison-horn Marias, and many a man arraigned for homicide will state in court perfectly frankly why it was essential to kill his victim and how it was done. I have very seldom found any hesitate to answer any questions, even about the most intimate domestic matters. The Bison-horn Maria, however, being, at least in the open tracts, more sophisticated, is inclined to be suspicious; and he certainly is learning the ways of the courts, and how to defeat a justice administered on the evidence and not according to the facts; many know, for example, that the death penalty may be escaped if you can convince your judge that you murdered your victim because you believed him to be bewitching you. But in general a Maria witness can still be relied upon to speak the truth, although it involve his dearest relatives or himself in trouble; and the occasional pleader from British India is soon hopelessly at sea if he tries his usual methods of cross-examination even on a Bison-horn Maria who knows Halbi. Fortunately, the restoration of the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the village and *pargana* panchayats will considerably reduce Maria experience of the law courts. The Hill Maria never has had much recourse to them, petty theft being almost unknown and murder rare. His attitude may to some extent be gauged by the following example. 157 577 [674] 695

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XIV

Marriage

582 618 Whatever the origin of the clans and phratries, they serve as a means of regulating the marriages of Hill and Bison-horn Marias; in the case of the latter, among whom the clan is no longer a territorial as well as a social unit, one might say that the primary function of the clan and phratry organization is the regulation of marriage. A child is born into the clan of its father, and, if a son, must remain in that clan all its life; but, if a daughter, passes on marriage to the clan of the husband, and on re-marriage from his clan to that of the second husband. A son must not take a wife, or a daughter a husband, from the father's clan or from any clan that is brother-clan or *dadabhai* to it: he must marry a wife from, and she must marry into, some clan that is a wife-clan or *akomama* of their father's clan. It has been seen that the phratry system of the Bison-horn Marias gives them a wider field of selection of wives and husbands than the more inchoate group system of Hill Maria clans. A widow, however, must not marry as second husband a man whose clan is brother to her father's clan, even though through being in a phratry other than that of her first husband's clan the second husband's clan would be wife-clan to the first husband's. In a word, throughout a woman's life all her marriages are regulated by the clan into which she was born.

Exogamy

601 114 Appendix III gives a list of the Hill Maria terms of relationship so far as I could ascertain them; they were collected in Orcha and adjacent villages by the genealogical method, and verified in other parts of the Abujhmar hills. They were collected as terms of reference, though some are used also as terms of address, e.g. *mama*, *dada*, *kaka*. I was unable in the time at my disposal to make a similar collection of the Bison-horn Maria terms; but so far as my observation went their terms are the same but for dialectical differences. This applies also, it may be added, in a considerable degree to the terms used by the Gonds of the Nagpur District, and, to judge from the incomplete list given in Trench's *Grammar*, Volume I, to those of the Betul Gonds. It may be added that when [551] a son has been born to him, a Hill or Bison-horn Maria is often addressed by his family and neighbours as the father of his son, e.g. '*Rajin-tappe*', meaning 'Father of Raje'.

601 *Dadabhai*, the word used to designate kindred or brother-clans, is a combination of *dada*, the Gondi term for an elder brother, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

553 Yete Mura, the headman of Hoinar, was born hare-lipped and was therefore named after his hare-lipped paternal grandfather; and Jugho Dallu, the headman of Hitulnar, recognized on his son the birth-marks of his dead mother Pora'i and therefore gave him the name of her dead husband Dugha. This practice is a sign of some sort of belief in the reincarnation of the Departed. The second exception is the practice of giving a name immediately after birth when birth has coincided with some natural phenomenon or incident. Usendi Ippo of Orcha was called Ippo because born when the *mahua* tree (*ippa marra* in Maria) was in flower; Usendi Irka was born when the cucumbers (*irka*) were ripening in the *penda* fields; Usendi Ghasi was so named because, just before he was born, a *patwari* rode into Orcha and ordered his father Moda to go and cut grass (*ghas* in Halbi) for his pony. Oyami Gursha, headman of Komu, was born when his father and uncles were making a wicker-work bin (*gursha*) for storing grain. Yete Mura named his daughter Reko because she was born when the *reka marra* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) was in fruit. The third exception, which, like the first, indicates some belief, if not in reincarnation, at least in a previous existence, is the practice when a new-born baby cries loudly for three or four days of reciting to it all the names that the parents can remember and giving it the last name uttered before it stops crying, on the theory that it has stopped crying on recognizing its name. Normally, however, the name is not given till the child is two or three, and then depends on such things as whether it is fat or thin, slow or smart, learnt to walk or speak quickly, and so on. Thus a boy was named Morlel or 'hare' because he used to double suddenly like a hare when running about the village; Bunge is a name given to a boy with a huge stomach; Baiyya or 'mad' to a harum-scarum boy; Banga to a shy, untalkative child; and U'ile or 'thin' to a child thin through much illness in his early years.

551 177 Russell and Hiralal state (III, p. 87) of the Gond race as a whole that names derived from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and, on this assumption, actually suggest that perhaps the Gonds had not advanced to the stage of having individual names before they came into contact with the Hindus! This is certainly not true of either Hill or Bison-horn Marias. Of 103 male and 38 female Hill Maria names collected from 215 men and 107 women, and 103 male and 23 female Bison-horn Maria names collected from 236 men and 68 women, very few, not 5 per cent., were Hindu, the proportion of Hindu names being, as might be expected, slightly higher among the Bison-horn Marias. Only about 27 per cent. of the Hill Maria men's names and 8 per cent. of their women's names occur also, in the same or a modified form, in the lists of Bison-horn

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Maria names, though, of course, very few Bison-horn women's names were collected. A noticeable difference is the absence from the Hill Maria of names given according to the day of the week on which the person named was born, such as Budhi (Wednesday), Mangru (Tuesday) and Lakhmu (Thursday); it has already been noted that the Hill Marias have no names for the days of the week.

Weaning

A child is breast-fed until it can both walk and take its own food by hand, sometimes as long as three years. Unlike the Bison-horn Marias, the Hill Marias have no weaning ceremony.

Education

There is no system of training Hill Maria children corresponding to the Gotul or Dormitory system of the Murias, except in the northernmost Hill Maria *parganas* of Padalbhum and Nurbhum. In the greater part of the Maria country, children learn simply by accompanying and imitating their parents and the elder boys of the village. At night the boys who are old enough to leave their mothers sleep in the communal dormitory, and in the evenings they sit outside the dormitory round the fire with the men of the village. When the corn is ripening and the men sleep in the field-houses, in many villages the dormitory is closed, and the boys sleep with their fathers or elder brothers in the fields. Thus from his earliest days the child learns the routine of village and tribal life from constant association with his elders. He is made to do his share of the field work, and taught the use of the bow and arrow and the setting of snares. Children of six and seven of both sexes join in the village and clan dances, very quickly mastering the steps. We have seen how they use bamboo *pak-dol* drums to master the rhythm of drumming. In the ordinary hill village there is nothing corresponding to the Muria custom of the dormitory owning and cultivating a field or fields and applying the proceeds either to dormitory feasts or to the purchase of beads; but in the Barsur Mar villages and, therefore, probably elsewhere in the Abujhmar hills fathers encourage children to keep their own pigs, which they sometimes sell to procure money or grain for buying beads and knives. Girls similarly soon learn domestic routine from their constant association with their mothers. They cannot associate with boys in the manner of the Murias, among whom every girl must attend the boys' dormitory every night and has her own *gotul* 'boy-friend' to serve, since these *gotul* unions must be between couples who could legitimately marry under the rules of exogamy, and in nearly all Hill Maria villages all the boys and girls are of the same clan and therefore kindred. Yet the girls make bead fillets, ear-tassels and necklaces for the boys, and the latter carve wooden combs for the girls.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

861 The complete *gotul* organization is a feature of Muria and not of Hill Maria culture. But as it has extended to Padalibhum and Nurbhum (possibly also to parts of Tapalibhum and Behra Mar) among the Hill Marias, a brief account of its salient features will not be out of place; it may be expected to spread into the hills with the gradual improvement of communications. A fairly full account from my notes on the Murias has been printed in the *Census of India* 1931 *Report*, Vol. I, Part III B., pp. 81-3. It may be added that it is easier for the Marias of Padalbhum to copy their Muria neighbours because Padalibhum not only has two or three villages which are not Padali villages but belong to the Nuroti and Usendi clans, but even in Padali villages has settlers of these two clans, which are *akomama* (wife-clan) to them.

[858] Boys and girls of an age to visit the *gotul* dormitories are known as *leyur* and *leyas* respectively. All the boys assemble at the 857 dormitory in the evening for dancing, games and social and sexual 571 training, sleeping on there after the departure of the girls to their homes late in the night. The girls attend at the dormitory in the 864 evening, each girl being paired off with a boy of an *akomama* clan. The girls have to comb their boys' hair and massage their arms and legs, to dance with them, and to be initiated into the mysteries of sex with them. Marriage frequently follows these dormitory unions, but by no means always does. Children are expected to attend the dormitory from the age of eleven or twelve, and the parents may be fined for not sending them. Every boy and girl has a special dormitory name or rank; the smaller children have designations which are little more than names, but those of the elder boys change as they are promoted, and involve special duties. The Hill Marias seem to have adopted the ranks for the boys only, the girls retaining the name given them on their entry until they leave the dormitory organization on marriage, but taking among their fellows the precedence of their boy-mates in the dormitory. In Padalibhum the head boy of the dormitory is always known as [771] the *leyur-gaita*, and below him the *gotul* officials are the *leyur-majhi*, the *silledar*, the *jaliarsi*, the *laharu*, the *baiddar* and the *kamdar*; of these, *silledar*, *baiddar* and *kamdar* are Hindi terms copied from the titles of State or zamindari servants; in many a Muria dormitory all the office-holders have such designations instead of the old native names. Besides these names or designations to which [557] special duties and privileges are attached, they have for the boys the names Jalka, Jolsai and Joria, and probably others. The girls' dormitory names ascertained were Jaliaru, Lahari, Manjaro, Nircia, Jhelo, Gujaro, Piyosa and Belosa. At a camp at Partabpur attended by Hill Marias from Padalibhum, the *leyur-gaita* of three

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

551

APPENDIX IV

NAMES OF MEN AND WOMEN

(a) Hill Marias

MEN (215)

Aitū (2)
Arjāhā
Bāghū
Baiyyā (2)
Bandē (3)
Bangā (3)
Banjar
Barangā
Bhōsā (5)
Birā
Bital (2)
Borangā (2)
Bōrkā
Buchā
Bungē
Bungrī
Burkā
Bursā
Dabbū (2)
Dallu
Dangī
Dēlū (3)
Dōbā
Dōgā
Dōgū
Dūgā (4)
Erkā (3)
Gabā
Gangā
Ghāsī (2)
Gillē
Gōndā
Gudī (2)
Gudrā (2)
Gurshā (2)
Hāghā
Harmā (5)
Hirā (2)
Hungā (4)
Irkā (2)
Irpā (2)
Jallā
Kāmā (2)
Kandar
Kandī
Kāpā
Karēt
Karpā
Kēsā
Kēyē (4)
Khuria
Kohla (6)
Kōhlāl (3)
Kōlā (2)
Kōpā (2)
Kōplā
Kōriā
Kōrkā
Kōsā
Kūlē (2)
Kūmal (5)
Kundī
Kurwē
Kutkē (2)
Kuttā (2)
Lamrī
Mādī
Mahrū
Mallā (2)
Mārā
Māsā (5)
Mēsā (2)
Mēsō
Mirsō
Mōdī (3)
Mōrlēl
Mukkā (10)
Mullā (2)
Mulli (2)
Mūrā (16)
Murral (3)
Mūsā
Narangō (2)
Nēndā (3)
Ōghā (3)
Pāndrū (3)
Pēdā
Pēndā (4)
Pōlā (4)
Rājū (2)
Rāmā (2)
Rēkā
Sobrai
Sōkhā
Udsā
U'ilē
Ungal
Usō
Ville
Wanjā (3)
Wārangē
Watē
Wijjā (6)

WOMEN (107)

Bandī (4)
Bīrē (4)
Bukē (2)
Bīrgī (2)
Chērō (3)
Dāmē
Dōbē (2)
Dōpī (3)
Dughō (3)
Dūtī (4)
Ewadō (2)
Goghai (4)
Gudī (2)
Hidē
Hirē (6)
Ipē (4)
Kāmpē (2)
Kānē (4)
Kiringo
Kōhlē (4)
Kōwē (2)
Kume (2)
Kundī
Māsē (8)
Mēnē (3)
Mōrī
Mūrī (4)
Mūsrā (2)
Nēndō (4)
Pākū (3)
Panō (2)
Pōrai
Pūsē (3)
Rēkō (3)
Sōtrī (2)
Wanje (3)
Wāghāll
Wijjē (4)

N.B.—The numbers in brackets indicate the number of persons bearing the name indicated in the total 215 men and 107 women taken into account. No number is given when the name occurs only once.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gone AW32

Bison Horn Maria

(b) *Bison-horn Maria:*

551

Men (236)		Women (68)
Aitû	Khôjâ	Aitû
Artî	Khôtîâ	Bandê (2)
Bâghâ	Kôhlâ	Bangê (4)
Baibâ	Kôlâ (5)	Bhairê
Bakkâ	Kôndâ	Bôchê (3)
Bandâ	Kôpâ (3)	Budhnî (2)
Bandî (14)	Kôsâ (11)	Bulîî
Bâtî	Kôyê	Dômê (2)
Bhîmâ (3)	Kummâ	Êrê (4)
Bôdâ (3)	Kuttâ (2)	Galplê
Bôngrî	Lakhmû (2)	Gangî (7)
Bortê	Lakkâ	Hirmê
Budhî	Lingâ	Jimmê (3)
Bugrî	Mallâ (2)	Kâmê (3)
Burrâ	Mangrû	Kôsî (4)
Chalkî	Markâ	Mâsê (12)
Chamrû	Mâsâ (15)	Mukke (2)
Chêwâ (4)	Mâtâ	Mukî (8)
Chêlâ	Mêdhô	Mutî
Dêwâ (9)	Mûkâ (8)	Pîlî (2)
Dhûrwâ (6)	Mundâ	Pirî (2)
Dôgî	Mundrâ (4)	Sukrî
Dôgôrî	Muttâ	Tôrkî
Dôkâ (2)	Nâdî	
Dôlê (2)	Nandâ (4)	
Dômê (2)	Nangâ	
Dôrâ (3)	Pândû (3)	
Duggî	Pandrû	
Dullâ	Pisôrî	
Dûmâ	Pôdiâ (2)	
Edîâ	Pônârî	
Gangâ (6)	Pôtâ (2)	
Ghâsî	Râmâ	
Gôgê (3)	Râmû	
Geddî	Risâmî	
Gundâ	Rôdâ	
Gûrdâm	Saniâsî	
Harmâ (10)	Sikkâ	
Harrâ	Simâ	
Hiriâ (2)	Singâ	
Hirmâ (7)	Sukrâ	
Hungâ (6)	Sûpâ	
Hurrâ (5)	Tângrâ	
Indâmôkâ	Tikrâ	
Indar	Tôkâ	
Jôgâ	U'lkâ	
Jûngâ	Ûsâ (2)	
Kâmâ (3)	Veddî	
Kânâ	Vîlâ (3)	
Kannâ	Vîtklê	
Kôsâ (2)	Wângrê	
	Wôdî	

N.B.—The numbers in brackets indicate the number of persons bearing the name indicated in the total 236 men and 68 women taken into account. No number is given when the name occurs only once.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

But this name is important because of its connexion with the theory of rebirth, and before it is given it is necessary to discover which of the family ancestors has returned in the young child. Many different methods of divination are adopted. At Bandopal they tied up some rice into a little bundle of siari leaves and put it on the child's head. Then the Siraha took the names of all the family ancestors that he could remember one by one: if the child drops the bundle on its shoulder as the medium is repeating a name, they know who it is. In the Sonawal Pargana I found the Muria placing a lighted lamp in a leaf-cup of sarai above the pit where the placenta was buried, while they waved a second lamp round the child reciting names. The child shows its recognition of its name by putting its hands out towards the lamp. In Karikhodra they put a chicken-bone in the child's hand and give the name that is used when the child drops it. At Gorma, they made a ball of siari leaves, put it in front of the child and waited till it touched it. Sometimes, the child refuses to drink its mother's milk. Then the medium is called and he recites names as usual; they give the one that coincides with the child's turning to the breast. In Aturgaon, they wave rice in a leaf-cup round the child, put it down before it, stick a scrap of rice on a siari stalk and place it in the child's hand. When the child throws the rice over its shoulder, they give the name.

The names are, as we might expect, slowly becoming Hindu in character, though this tendency should not be exaggerated. Out of 2000 names, only 85 were specifically Hindu and such names as Ram, Ganesh, Govind, Sita, Indira, were comparatively rare. Girls and boys are sometimes named after the Hindu months in which they were born—Asaru, Baisakhu, Bhadru or Phagu—and after the day of the week—Aitu, Mangal and Sani.[1]

As always, events at the time of birth influence a child's name.

Akalsai or Kangalu	Born in a famine year
Barat or Bartiya	Born during a marriage procession
Dera	Born in a hut
Duwaru	Born in the yard
Irpa	Born at the time of picking mahua flowers
Sataru	A seven-months child

The usual derogatory names are given with the idea of depreciating a child's value in the eyes of hostile spirits.

Amlu	Sour	Burjaha	Dirty
Apoti	Stinking	Chamra	Shoemaker
Banda	Naked, or dock-tailed	Dhondu	Useless
Barko	Thin	Ganda	A despised weaver
Barra	Crack-brained	Gatharu or Gatti	A little bundle, or undersized
Baya or Balhi	Mad	Hoche	Drunkard
Bhondu	Stupid	Jakari	Madman
Bhoska	A dunce	Lardhu	Useless
Bhuka	Hungry	Sukhu	Wizened
Bohbor	Stinking		

A remarkable name in this class is Duma, the Halbi word for the dead.

Yet on the other hand, there are just as many names calculated to flatter the child. The derogatory names are generally only given when calamity

[1] In the text I have mostly given the names of men: in many cases a feminine form of the same word is used for women, thus Bhuki, Sukli, Sugrin.

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Muria

551 and sorrow have visited a family; if two children have died, the parents hope to avert another disaster by calling the next one Hagru (excreter) and so on. Laudatory names are much more common.

Anjori	Splendour	Dularsingh	Lovable
Amoli	Invaluable	Hirasingh	Handsome as a diamond
Amarsingh	Immortal		
Bahadur	Brave	Labarzingh, Laharu, Lahari	Happy
Balsai	Young King		
Bansingh	Lord of the forest	Ruprai, Rupsingh or Rupa	Silver
Birsingh	Brave		
Budha	Wise and learned	Sobi	Beautiful
Dhansingh, Dhanu	Rich	Sugru	Beautiful
		Sunher	Golden

A few Muria are named after trees and vegetables.

Amori	A tree	Jira	A red vegetable
Baranga	A tree	Jhitka or Jhitu	A shrub
Dhodra	A hollow tree	Kanda	A root
Guthlu	Mango seed	Kehala	A tree

Others are named after animals, birds and fish.

Baghrai	Tiger	Maliyarsingh	Peacock
Bhainsa	Buffalo	Malsai	Peacock
Bharanda	The broom-tailed (probably a tiger)	Mendi	She-goat
Domi	A fish	Mugur	Crocodile
Dulu	A fish	Newra	Mongoose
Gundru	A small bird	Paddi	Pig
Kawe	A bird	Pitorka	Bulbul bird
Kidar	A bird	Sukni	Dry fish
Liti	Sparrow	Usir	A bird
Maina	A starling	Yerjaha	Bear

Another class of names is taken from musical instruments and other material objects such as Erra (a sickle), Nagel (a plough), or Gota (tobacco-box).

Bajo	Fiddle	Dhol	A drum
Belo	A sort of violin	Kudurka	Wooden gong

Disease-names are either given when the child is grown and are purely descriptive, or they are prophylactic, given in the hope that the bearer of the name will not be afflicted with the fact.

Dutka	A leg disease	Khoru or Khoriya	Lame
Kodi	Leprous	Konda	Dumb
Thota	Cripple	Gaja	Ringworm

Names deriving from physical characteristics are more in the nature of *pattu podor* or nicknames, though names based on colour are probably given when the child is a baby.

Bhuri	Fair, light brown	Chhendi	Long-haired
Bhuaku	Fat	Chirangu	Curly-haired
Bijju	Impotent	Denga	Tall
Bondka	With a long navel	Derka	Left-handed
Botori	Undersized	Dhonya	Big-bellied
Buke	Fat-faced	Hetka	Stammerer
Chemtu	Dry-faced	Jatiya	Long-haired

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

Julpi	Curly-haired	Meso	Black
Kari or Kariya	Black	Milku	Short-sighted
Koso	Black	Mondi	Crippled
Limtu	Short-sighted	Mundra	Hairless

Other nicknames, of which there are a great variety, may be represented here by—

Bode	With a big shaking stomach	Karbe	Burnt in the fire as a child
Dahko	A fast walker	Pakla	Grey-haired
Dalu or Darsu	A heavy eater of pulses	Pitarri	One who quickly loses his temper and talks very fast
Dorga	Big-bellied		
Garbari	Always bustling about		
Golar	Always wanders like a bull	Potsu	Stout
		Udlin	A girl who eloped from the ghotul.

Of the 2000 names collected, we may make the following classification:

	Number	Percentage
Specifically Hindu names ..	85	4·25
Hindi or Halbi names ..	820	41
Names of probable Gondi origin ..	1095	54·75

These figures are, I suggest, sufficient to reinforce Grigson in his criticism of Russell and Hiralal for their statement[1] that names from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and that it was only after contact with the Hindus that the Gond took to having individual names. Grigson found that out of 267 names collected from the Maria only 5 per cent were Hindu.[2] But he does not give the percentage of names that a Hindu might conceivably use.

The following Muria names[3] may not all be Gondi, but no ordinary Hindu would use them:

Bindo	Gile	Kule	Pitsa
Boga	Gulu	Kundel	Poke
Boko	Gurti	Leake	Pola
Bosa	Hirdu	Malo	Poriya
Bui	Jaggu	Mirdu	Sankoy
Chahra	Jainu	Mitku	Silo
Chepu	Jakkar	Muke	Singa
Chirga	Jako	Nappu	Sudu
Chogu	Jamni	Nargo	Tahtor
Dirka	Jauge	Orcha	Temsu
Dirwi	Jelu	Orsu	Thiblu
Duga	Jepi	Ote	Tuge
Durru	Keso	Pakur	Turku
Gannu	Korge	Picho	Udlu
Gecho	Kosi	Pite	Wandel

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 87. [2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 266.
[3] Bishop gives the following specimens of Muria names, which I reproduce because they are the earliest we have. 'Names of males: Badal, Bukal, Boyal, Dhala, Dhodi, Durga, Gagura, Godi, Higal, Judabal, Kodal, Malal, Mulal, Milol, Musal, Odhi, Pichka, Somoru, Surka, Suval. Females: Gajari, Hinga, Judahi, Kodo, Kasi, Sukali.' Hislop, op. cit., p. 84.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWELVE

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

I

X 883 551

IN the first splendid ghotul, with its peacock roof and door of ogre's bones, Lingo gave the boys and girls names and duties. The oldest stories say that the first chelik were Mankor Singa, Jiha Guta Soma and Karata Guta Soma, and the first motiari Godakare Mode, Belosa and Kurumtuse Buke; the later tales give the girls' names as Belosa, Manjaro, Jalko and Dulosa. Lingo's own ghotul name was Manjhi. Since then every boy and girl, on becoming a full member of the dormitory, has received a title.

These titles are of great significance. Until they receive them, the children have no standing; they cannot get 'ghotul-mates'; they are the servants and drudges of the others. But once they are named they enter into the full equality of the ghotul fellowship. They now almost forget their *mar podor* or home name, which must never be used in the ghotul or by the other children, and is indeed hardly ever used except at home, by parents and close relatives, or for some official purpose.

An ordinary name is often ugly or unkind, but the ghotul title has the tenderest and happiest associations, charged with romantic memories. For this reason it is never used by parents, who must pretend not to know it. A boy may sometimes tell his father his name but the girls never reveal it in the home. After marriage, a boy goes on using his title as indeed he continues for a time to exercise his old office; but a girl must never allow people to address her by a name which has so many memories of the free days of youth (though an old lover may, rarely, use it for that very reason), she should not call her husband by his old title, or refer in any way to hers in his presence. But I am told that when a group of old women who were once members of the same ghotul get together, they call each other by their ghotul names 'to remind themselves of happiness'. Close friends continue to address one another in this way all their lives.

For everybody treasures the memory of his title. When visiting the Jagdalpur jail, I found the sulkiest Muria prisoners expand into beaming smiles when I addressed them by their old ghotul names.

As the children grow older, they are promoted from rank to rank in the ghotul hierarchy, and their titles are often changed. Sometimes, however, they are too attached to their original title to give it up. This may be one reason for the great diversity in the names of the leaders in different places. In different ghotul I have found the leader called variously Sirdar, Kotwar, Malik, Diwan, Jhoria, Malguzar, Silledar, Salya and Gaita, though elsewhere these titles may be given to quite junior boys. On the other hand, the majority of girls call their leader Belosa, though at Markabera she was Malko, in Binjhli Manjaro and in a group of three villages (Udanpur, Kapei and Timnar) she

tiger carried off two boys from the *dhumkuria* house and since then the house has been abandoned and allowed to fall into ruins, under the belief that the tiger indicated the will of the gods that the village should no longer maintain a public *dhumkuria* building'.—Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 213. W. G. Archer has studied the distribution of the Uraon dormitory, and the areas where it has disappeared, on the basis of information collected at the 1941 census.—*Man in India*, Vol. XXV, No. 1.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
551

was Suliyaro. There is no rule about this, and the children change their names as often as they retain them.

There is indeed no fixed list of titles with an order of precedence. In one village the Kotwar may be a subordinate; in the next he may be the leader. The Raja may rank below the Diwan, or the Tahsildar below the Constable. In the same way, though many of the titles carry duties with them, it is impossible to say that these duties will always be associated with the same titles. In Silati village, the Munshi has to see to the supply of wood, but in Taragaon it is the Tekedar who does this, while the Munshi has to 'write' reports about absentees. In Haddigaon, it is the Budkher who collects the children and brings them to the ghotul; in the neighbouring Palli, it is the Sirdar.

Throughout this book, however, in order to avoid endless qualification of every statement, I call the leading chelik the Sirdar, the leading motiari the Belosa, and the chelik in charge of the girls the Kotwar, except—of course—when I am quoting actual incidents that have occurred in a particular ghotul, where different titles may be required.

I will give here a few lists of names and titles as they were in 1941—it must be remembered that they change every year. A list of all titles in alphabetical order will be found in Appendix III. The following were the boys and girls in the Kabonga ghotul with their duties, in order of precedence.

Chelik of Kabonga

Diwan Sirdar Mukhwan	These form the 'supreme council' which controls the affairs of both boys and girls.
Kotwar Chalan	These have the special task of seeing to the attendance and behaviour of the girls.
Munshi	Keeps an account of all that is done.
Jamadar	Sees that the girls have a proper supply of combs.
Kandki	Entertains visitors from other ghotul.
Dafedar Baidar	See to the cleanliness of the ghotul, and keep the roof thatch in order.
Kajanti Chalki	Attend to the tobacco supply. The Kajanti must offer it to visitors.
Bara Pahadar Nani Pahadar	Attend to seating arrangements. They give mats to visitors, and if little boys are sitting on mats they turn them off for the elders.
Kamdar Beldar Chowkidar Likhen	These are 'subjects' whose only function is to do what they are told.

Motiari of Kabonga

Belosa Dulosa	The leaders of all the girls who arrange how everyone is to sleep, and see that their 'subjects' perform their duties properly.

253

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

Tiloka Nirosa Pirosa Janko Malko Jankai Manka Junki Alosa	These all have to clean the ghotul, bring leaves and make them into plates, cups and leaf-pipes, comb and massage the boys, and perform any other task allotted to them by the Belosa, Dulosa or Diwan.

Kabonga is a village in north-central Kondagaon. I will now give a list from Esalnar, a 'Jhoria' village of the Mardapal Pargana, very near the Chota Dongar Hills.

Cholik of Esalnar

Diwan	Head of both boys and girls. The final judge in all disputes.
Manager Tahsildar Sirkil	Assistants to the Diwan.
Mukhwan	Inspector of the boys. Reports absentees to the Diwan.
Kotwar	In charge of the girls. Controls their discipline and work.
Inspector	Looks after visitors, provides them with mats and wooden pillows.
Pahardar	Administers punishments imposed by the Diwan. When there is too much noise keeps the children quiet.
Dafedar	Sees to the supply of wood.
Munshi	Arranges for the cleaning of the ghotul's surroundings and approaches.
Chalki	Looks after the drums, and sees there is string to hang them from the roof.
Gaita	Collects fines and has charge of them.
Havaldar	Must recover anything lost during a dance.
Kajanchi	Looks after the tobacco. Must see that there is enough for elders and visitors.
Ijardar	At any ceremony the liquor is kept in his charge.
Mukkadam Baidar Saidar	'Subjects' who have no special duties.

In this village the girls' names are simply feminine forms of those of their ghotul partners—Diwanin, Managerin, Kotwarin. The order of precedence is the same as for the boys. As in Kabonga, the girls do not have separate

X883
551

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

individual duties, but the two leaders, under the direction of the Kotwar, allot them their tasks as need arises.

I will give one more list, from Karikhodra near Antagarh in the north—the village where Lingo is said to have passed his supreme ordeal of oil and fire. Here the old Gondi titles are more prominent.

Chelik of Karikhodra

Manjhi	The leader. Passes judgements and inflicts fines.
Diwan	He examines the reports of the Singga.
Singga	He is in charge of the girls and reports defaulters.
Beldar Karati Alorsinh Jhaliarsinh Jolsay Daidar Subedar Laharsinh Salikrai Laharu Jhoria Kapatdar Kosa Milledar Kanjus	These are all 'subjects'. Special duties are not allotted. They have simply to obey the orders of the three leaders.

Motiari of Karikhodra

Belosa	The head of the girls, 'the Rani'.
Dulosa	Her assistant, 'the Diwanin'.
Mularo Muliyaro Salho Mulki Tiloka Suliyaro Malko Chaiko Achhoke Jilmili Laharo	These are all 'subjects', who have to perform their ghotul duties irrespective of the titles they hold.

The names in these lists are given in order of precedence, an order that is strictly observed. If the senior boys and girls are away—working in the fields or on the roads, for example—the younger boys and girls occupy their positions with dignity and zeal. In Masora once, all the elder boys were away in the fields watching the crops, with the result that the Jamadar, a charming youth called Dulsai, was in charge. No one could have fulfilled the duties of leader, judge and father with more zest.

X883

Some special duties were recorded at Kokori, where the Chalan had to provide an escort home for visitors and the Likhen had to clean the drums

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

X 883 with flour. At Karanji the Sirdar and Baidar had to escort the motiari when they went to the forest to gather leaves for plates and cups, and the Jamadar had to arrange for small boys and girls to carry the drums when they went to some other village for a dance. At Baniagaon, the Matatgar had to look after the drums; the Baidarin arranged how the motiari were to comb and massage the boys in the evenings; the Kotwar and Chalan were the lawyers who regularly appeared to defend girls accused of some breach of ghotul discipline.

X 883 539 In a song recorded at Gawari, there is a reference to the duty of the Jaramkal and Supedar, who in this ghotul have to escort the girls when they go to fetch leaves. This is the Aking Koyana Karse Pata and, as they sing it, the motiari pretend to be picking leaves.

Sir pula helo dori ned weke dākāt roy sango ned weke dākāt roy?	Where are you going today, friends?
Sir pula helo dori marm āking dākāt roy sango marm āking dākāt roy.	We are going to pick leaves for the wedding.
Sir pula helo dori won tori oykāt roy sango won tori oykāt roy?	Who are you taking with you, friends?
Sir pula helo dori jaramkal supedār sango jaramkal supedār roy.	We are taking Jaramkal and Supedar.

X 883 551 In some ghotul, boys' titles are given to girls. At Taragaon and Atargaon, the two leading girls are called Malik and Chalan; they are the 'ghotul wives' of boy-leaders bearing the same names. At Rengagondi, the three chief girls are called Malik, Kotwar and Chalau for the same reason. In Nariha, the girls' leader is called Chalau. These villages are in the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas, and the custom seems confined to that area. But in ghotul, especially in the neighbourhood of Kondagaon, where the boys and girls 'pair off', it is not uncommon (as we have already seen at Esalnar) for girls to take names which are really equivalent to the English 'Mrs'. Thus, in Pirapal and Haddigaon, girls are called Kotwarin (or Mrs Kotwar, the ghotul-wife of the Kotwar), Supedarin (or Mrs Supedar) and Mukhwanin.

X 883 551 177 The ghotul titles are linguistically a very mixed collection. A. N. Mitchell, who has traced the derivation and meanings of a list drawn from over a hundred ghotul in every part of the Muria area, has derived them from Urdu, Hindi, Halbi, Gondi and English. The English titles are generally corruptions of names used by State officials; thus Captan, or Captain, is the name by which the State Superintendent of Police is usually known in the villages; Engineer is the head of the P.W.D.; Dakdar is the local Assistant Surgeon; Orsel is the Overseer of work on the roads. Urdu and Hindi titles for excise, revenue and military officers are common, and so are the Hindi titles for such subordinates as the constable, watchman, headman, or forest-guard. It is curious that the title Kotwar, which in Muria villages is often held by a despised Ganda or Mahara, is in the ghotul usually an indication of importance.

X 883 551 Gondi names are more common among girls than boys. Among boys' titles we may notice Belumdar, owner of a *bīri* or garden, Ghotulsai—lord of the ghotul, Neliya—a good fellow, and the very common variants of Laharu which seems to imply in Gondi a 'dandy' or Don Juan, the word being derived from the Hindi *lahariya*, striped cloth, the wearing of which is regarded as very fast and 'advanced'. Some of the Gondi titles seem more like nicknames than anything else—thus Uden or Kude, meaning someone who sits down

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and is perhaps given to a lazy boy, Meliya from the Gondi verb 'to wander', or Jelu which means 'an obstructive fellow'.

Some of the girls' names are very pretty; such are the Gondi Alosa, 'pleasant-spoken', Dulosa—a corruption of the Hindi *dulocha*, soft; Malko, a peahen—Plate CXII shows how fitting the title can be; the Hindi Mulari, the 'precious one'; the Gondi Saile, 'friendly'; and Belosa, perhaps derived from the bel tree.

A few titles appear to have been given in derision to boys or girls who have been caught misbehaving in the ghotul. Thus Hagru and Mutra or Mutri have reference to natural functions which may not be performed inside the building; Padru is given to a flatulent boy and Bandri to a smelly little girl.

Some other titles seem to be chosen for their sound rather than their meaning: Jelkar, which comes from a Gondi word meaning a 'ripple on water', is probably chosen for its likeness to Jailer and Budhker; Jalla or Jallam is a Hindi word meaning a 'spider's web'—perhaps Jallam was taken as a pun on Salam, another ghotul title. And I think some of the titles like Tiliyaro (which has a reference to tilli pulse), Siliyaro (the Gondi for a vegetable) and Jaliyaro are primarily chosen just because they sound attractive. So too, among chelik's titles, Paseldar (owner of mung pulse) is nothing more than a parody of Tahsildar or Issaldar.

II

There does not seem to be any fixed age at which children can claim admission to the dormitory; it depends mainly on their relations with their parents. When they reach the stage of going about with other children, forming gangs and playing with them instead of staying at home, there is a natural desire to go to the ghotul. The first entry is very informal, especially for boys, who simply slip in almost unnoticed with the rest. A girl does not go until 'she covers her shoulders'. This does not suggest that she is mature, but there comes a stage when she wants to wear a little more clothing than is usual in infancy, and this marks her entry into her ghotul phase. A girl usually asks her mother first, and often—we were told—the mother herself suggests it when the children are old enough for their presence to be an embarrassment in the home at night. Sometimes a girl is greatly attached to her mother—and the mother too may find her help necessary in looking after still younger children—and her coming to the ghotul is delayed. Then the older girls go and fetch her, saying to the mother, 'Your girl is now grown up; you must let her come, or you will be fined'.

In any case there is no taboo on even the youngest children going to the dormitory; a father may take his two-year-old son to sleep there when the mother is away at a wedding or in her catamenial period; smaller children often go to watch the games and dances. A boy's initiation is not like going to a new school; he knows all about it already.

But very little girls and boys are not allowed to sleep in the ghotul, 'for they sometimes wake up crying, and they wet their beds', so they are taken home after the games and dances are over. Before a child can sleep in the ghotul 'he must be able to look after himself'. At Deogaon, they said, 'We only let big girls sleep in the ghotul; what can the little ones do?' Konda, headman of Kanhargaon, recalled how his elder brother used to chase him out of the ghotul and beat him for coming before he was old enough.

When children first begin to attend the ghotul regularly, they are left alone for a week or so. Then the elder boys ask them if they are going to be regular in their attendance and why they did not come before. The children usually reply that their parents kept them away. Then the Sirdar says to a boy,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

even her kicks are sweet.' A study of ghotul offences and the type of punishment awarded, therefore, may be expected to throw some light on Muria notions of morality and the inner life of chelik and motiari.

Their offences, of course, cannot be understood properly except against the background of the general moral and social life of the tribe. To the Muria, as to most aboriginals, tribal solidarity is the supreme good, and anything that breaks this precious unity and fellowship must be condemned. Individualism is the great sin. For this reason, quarrelling and homicide are rare, theft is almost as uncommon. There are few who refuse to share the common work and interests of the community. Adultery is bad, not only because it infringes the rights of another Muria, but because it breaks up the carefully regulated domestic system of the people, and threatens to disrupt it by jealousy and hatred.

We have already seen the stress laid by the Muria on work. Slackness and laziness are very severely regarded, and are the commonest sources of friction between wife and husband. Cleanliness, decency, decorum and modesty are virtues much prized. A quiet and kindly attitude is expected of the tribal leaders; the bully and the coward are equally disliked.

Against this background, what sort of actions are condemned by ghotul opinion and punishable in ghotul law? Let us first consider those actions that are held to betray the common interest. They are doubly important, for in the highly specialized and concentrated fellowship of the ghotul, the general tribal instinct for unity becomes intensified.

II

Quarrels in the dormitory are strongly condemned. They are disturbing to the peace of ghotul life and specially offensive to so gentle and uncontentious a people. Children are fined for this, and may even be expelled. In Khutgaon there was once a very quarrelsome chelik. After a time, the leaders of the ghotul called him and said, 'Do you want to be in the ghotul or outside it?' The dreaded threat of expulsion brought him to his senses and he gave no more trouble.

The betrayal of the ghotul fellowship by repeating outside anything that happens within its walls, especially any stories of the intimate relations of chelik and motiari or some scandal about a pregnancy, is one of the greatest of ghotul crimes, for 'that which comes from the mouth bears fruit throughout the world'. Once at Gorma, the Kotwar and Belosa revealed to the village that a girl was pregnant; they were expelled and told that they would never be readmitted. Only when they brought a lot of liquor and fell at the feet of each chelik in turn, promising never to offend again, were they allowed to return.

Ghotul solidarity is constantly emphasized by the use of the ghotul title, and proper names may never be used between members. If a young child forgets this and addresses, say, his elder brother by the name that is always used at home, the others explain the custom to him; but if he offends again, he is punished.

The dormitory has to be kept clean. Though spitting is permitted, anyone who urinates inside the building is punished. This prohibition extends, in some places, to the court outside. To break wind is not a very serious offence; the children laugh at the offenders and call them *padva* or *padri*. Only a light punishment is imposed. At Esalnar the culprit had to salute

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

'Well', says his uncle. 'She *is* being kept for you.' 'No, I want a larger choice of girls. But I'll just carry her off for a few days.' And two samdhi joke with each other. 'I know you sleep every night with your sister', says one. 'Yes, and we all know whom *you* sleep with.' And so on interminably.

In the ghotul, children tease each other but they are not allowed to go too far. A chelik who repeats a joke until it becomes cruel is fined. At a motiari's first menstruation, everybody is pleased and amused. 'Today the embankment of the field is broken.' 'We'd better call a lot of coolies to mend the leaking tank.' When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period of seclusion, the boys say, 'So the coolies have stopped the hole in the field. Don't let anyone make a new hole tonight'.

In the Binjhli ghotul one day the Silo, an older girl, was forcibly 'married' to the smallest boy there—this is a ghotul in which formal 'marriages' are not allowed, so the game had the double value of incongruity both in age and custom. The children performed all the marriage ceremonies, pretended to drink a lot of liquor, imitated the antics of their drunken elders, and finally dragged the pair off to bed together. But the little boy ran away. Then they pretended that a child was born, and a bundle was handed round the ghotul, the boys giving it their 'breasts' to suck. At last the little 'father' had to take it, but he threw it away crying, 'It doesn't look like me; she's been going to other boys'.

When older men come to the ghotul, there is a lot of coarse jesting about their relations with their wives. I remember the headman of Kuntpadar who is almost completely bald had himself massaged by the Beloss and said, 'How is she going to pull her comb through my few hairs' and 'If my old woman were to see me now, I wonder what she'd say. It's a good rule that wives mustn't come to the ghotul'.

A boy or girl with any deformity is laughed at and is given a nickname which will remind him of it. Some of these names are themselves witty—Dhol, fat as a drum; Banga, who was a stupid baby; Pota with a big stomach; Salaidu who never does what he is told but always something else; Cholu who never stops talking, and Marin—who is like a Maria, 'never takes any notice of anyone and when you want to beat him gets out his bow and arrows'. A boy at Binjhli, of whom it is said that he cannot see a motiari without saying something to make her laugh, is called Jhola. In the same ghotul a big overgrown fellow was ragged mercilessly. He was *dokara* (old man) by day and *bokara* (goat) at night. 'All the land of the ghotul has been broken up by his great ploughshare.'

Shamrao Hivale heard a chelik and motiari talking to each other in the ghotul; each sentence sent them into fits of laughter. 'What have you got?' said the boy. 'No, tell me first what you've got.' 'Well, I've one root and two onions.' 'And I', said the girl, 'have two sweet mangoes and a basket for your root.' 'Yes, but what am I to do with the onions?' 'They can stay out in the compound.' 'But at least put the root in your basket.'

Straightforward sexual jokes, with no social reference, about copulation and the private parts are common enough. For the Baihar Karsana (Mad Game), at Kanhargaon, boys dress up as a lunatic with his wife and child. He has a huge penis, 'she' grotesque breasts. Every time he touches them, he gets bullt; he tries to pull out her pubic hairs, and gets bunt again. The wife gives birth to a child, a cloth doll, the husband suckles it—but I need not particularize the endless buffoonery. The copulation of animals may be imitated; this is done even in the public—and very sacred—Pus Kolang dances. Excretory jokes are rare, I think, though boys laugh at girls

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

APPENDIX THREE

GHOTUL TITLES

The following is a list of titles collected from over a hundred ghotul in every part of the Muria country. I owe many of the derivations and meanings to Mr A. N. Mitchell.

551
192

TITLES OF CHELIK

Achhoy	Hindi. *Achhā* means 'good'.
Adhikar, or Adhker	Hindi. *Adhikār* means 'authority'.
Akfisai	Probably a Mussalman name, Aqal Shah. The latter word always becomes Sai in Gondi and either in its original or corrupt form is common among the Gond.
Akram	A curiously mixed Hindu and Mussalman name.
Alorsing or Ahursi	Gondi. *Alor* is 'one who makes a disturbance'.
Apkari or Atkari	Urdu. An excise man.
Athpahariya	Hindi. 'One who is on duty for eight watches', day and night. Used in Bastar for the village drudge.
Baidar	Hindi. *Bahiddr*, a money-lender's accountant.
Baksi	Urdu. *Bakshi*. A common title in northern India among Mussalmans and Hindus. Also a Parsi surname, 'treasurer'.
Bandobast Saheb	Urdu. A Settlement Officer. Here probably given after a visit to the village of Mr S. M. Ishaque who is widely known in Bastar under this title.
Bandukdar	Urdu. One who carries a gun.
Barko	
Beldar	Urdu. A digger, one who wields a spade.
Belumdar	Gondi. One who owns a *belum* or garden.
Budhker	Hindi. A clever fellow, one who has *budh*, intelligence, used of village officials.
Captan	English. A title usually used of the State Superintendent of Police.
Chajen	Gondi. One who roams about.
Chalau, Chāluk, or Chalin	Gondi borrowing from Hindi *chalāna*, meaning organizer.
Chalki	Hindi. Assistant to a headman.
Chaprāsi	Hindi. A peon, one who wears a *chaprās* or badge.
Chelik-sai	Lord of the chelik.
Chelik-sunder	*Chelik* is Gondi, meaning a 'good-looking, unmarried youth'. *Sundar* is Hindi *sundar*, beautiful.
Chowkidar	Hindi, watchman.
Chutukdar	
Constiball	English. A constable.
Dafedar	Urdu. One in charge of a section.
Daidar	A corruption, through Halbi, of Hindi *dawan*, oppression. Means a 'bully'.
Dakdar	English. Doctor.
Dandasi	Rare.
Dāroga	Urdu. An inspector.
Dewān	Urdu. A Diwan, or Prime Minister.
Dubey	A Brahmin name, contraction of Dwivedi.
Dubur or Duborsing	Gondi. The word means 'love'.
Engineer	English.
Gaidar	Cowherd(?), from Hindi *gai*.
Gāita	Gondi. A priest.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

551
192

Gangedar	Perhaps from Ganga, the Ganges.
Gâred	English. A Forest Guard.
Garhi	From Hindi, *garh* fort, or headquarters (?). Perhaps *chhâtisgarh*.
Gotul-sai	Gondi and Urdu. 'Lord of the ghotul.'
Gurti	Gondi. Strong.
Hagru	A nickname having reference to defaecation, usually given by parents to deceive hostile demons as to a child's true value. Here it is rather a nickname than a title.
Hardi-garbo	Hindi and Halbi. Refers to turmeric powder.
Havaldar	Urdu. A sergeant.
Hikmi	A Halbi social title.
Ijardar or Ijeldar	Urdu. From *ijara*, a monopoly. Used in Bastar of excise contractors.
Issaldar	Probably from Urdu Risaldar, an officer of cavalry.
Jailer	English.
Jalansai	Gond name, probably corruption of Urdu Jalim Shah.
Jalia or Jallam	Hindi. Means a 'spider's web'.
Jamadar	Urdu. An infantry rank above Havildar.
Jangel Saheb	Forest Officer.
Jelkar	Gondi. A ripple on water.
Jelu or Jelnk	Gondi. An obstructive fellow.
Jhakajhol	
Jhalakwar	Hindi. One who glitters.
Jilen	Perhaps from Hindi, *jila*, thin or fine. Compare English 'skinny'.
Jilmil	Hindi. Mica.
Joler	Hindi. This and the following title suggest a cheat, but Joler is not quite so strong as this. Perhaps 'fibber' would put it better.
Jolma	Probably a variant of the above.
Julpi	Hindi. From *julufh*, a curl of the hair. Hence curly-haired.
Jhalakrai Jhalkrai	Hindi. From *jhalakna*, to glisten. Hence, one who glistens. Like Lingo, founder of the ghotul.
Jumukdar	Hindi. From *jhumka*, little bells on the ear or ankle, and thus one who carries such bells. These are often worn as ornaments, especially by the Jhória Muria.
Kajanti	Corruption of *khajânchi*, a treasurer.
Kalbot	
Kâlikdar	Hindi. From *kâlâ*, black.
Kalingsai	Corruption of Hindi *kalgi*, an aigrette on a turban, and *shah*.
Kamdadar or Kâmdar	Hindi. An agent.
Kandki	Hindi. Village officer in charge of a *khad*, a section.
Kanjus	Hindi. A miser.
Kapatdar	Hindi. From *kapatdâr*, a dressing-boy.
Karu	
Katlami	A Gondi clan-name.
Khuti Manjhi	
Kilârning	From Hindi *kilkâna*, to scream.
Kisimsai	Probably a corruption of the name Kasim Shah.
Kopki	
Kosa	Hindi. A silk cocoon.
Kotiya	Hindi. One in charge of the *kothi* or granary.
Kotwar	Hindi. A village watchman.
Kude	Gondi. From *kuddna*, to sit. Thus, one who is always sitting.

APPENDIX THREE

Kutel	Hindi. From *kushal*, happiness. Thus, the happy boy.
Laburdar, Laburs, Labarchi or Labersing	Used in Gondi to mean a 'dandy', from Hindi *labariya*, striped cloth. The wearing of some unspeakable striped shirt is regarded as very fast and 'advanced' by the Muria.
Likin or Likhan	One who carves hair combs, from Hindi *likhna*, to write.
Mitth	Urdu. A master.
Manikdar	Hindi. One who owns a ruby: precious stones often are girl-symbols.
Mlenger	English.
Manjhi	Hindi. A boatman or skipper. Used in Bastar for the Headman of a Pargana.
Master	English.
Meliyā	From Gondi *melkna*, to wander.
Mitchell Sahib	Scotch.
Mirgar	From Gondi *mirkna*, to run.
Muharrir	Urdu. A clerk.
Mukhwan	From Hindi *mukh*, a face; one who produces people before a panchayat.
Mu'tadam	Urdu. A village headman.
Mollyaling	From Gondi *mal*, a peacock and the name Singh.
Munshi	Urdu. A reader.
Mutra	Hindi. One who urinates. Probably given to a boy who was caught urinating inside the ghotul, or to a bed-wetter.
Nāchan	Hindi. From *nāchna*, to dance. A dancer.
Nāikdar	A subordinate in charge of an outpost, *nāka*.
Narbar	A Hindu name.
Nāzir	Urdu. A tahsil official.
Nelliya	Gondi. *Nela* means good, hence 'a good fellow'.
Nengi	A Halbi social title.
Nispettar	English. Inspector.
Oāsi	English. Overseer.
Oppal	Probably from Hindi, *uppam*, best.
Pādra	From Hindi *pādna*, to pass wind. Probably given to a boy who had the habit of doing this inside the ghotul.
Pahardar	Hindi. From *pahar*, a watch. Hence a watchman.
Pāgan	Hindi. From *pāgā*, a turban. Hence one who has a turban.
Pagan-meliyā	See above. *Meliyā* is a Gondi word meaning a wanderer.
Paik	Hindi. Paik is a foot soldier. The word is used in Bastar of all subordinate officials.
Pando-Pardhan	The Pardhan are the priests and musicians of the Gond. Pando-Pardhan appears as a court official in some of the Ghotul Pata.
Pandāar	Gondi. *Pandi* is the mung pulse. Hence the title means 'one who owns mung'. Probably given because of the assonance with Tahsildar or Jamadar.
Patwāri	Hindi. A village land record official, originally an accountant.
Phaniya	Gondi. The buffalo.
Pohnp Singh	Probably from the Hindi root *phopā*, which in various forms means 'hump', hence anything spongy, hence 'fatty'. The late Willy Forbes, Secretary of the Nagpur Club, was very fat. He was known to the servants as 'Phophas Sahib' (A.N.M.).
Raja Sahab	Hindi. A king.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

551
192

Rânger	Forest official.
Rengo	Hindi. *Rengna* means 'to stroll'.
Rupedar	One who owns rupees or silver.
Saidar	A Hindi social title.
Salâm	An Urdu greeting.
Saledar or Silledar	Urdu *Ziledar*, one in charge of a district. The Silledar was the armour-bearer of the old Maratha chivalry, and the breeder of mares for the army.
Salho	From Hindi *chalna*, to go. One who goes.
Sâligrâm or Sâligrâi	A Hindi name, Shaligram, described as meaning a stone linga of the Hindu god Mahadeo.
Salya or Selya	A local, but not Gondi, word *sal*, meaning (?) pangolin.
Sanker	Eastern Hindi, meaning morning.
Sikandâr	A Mussalman name.
Sileh	Gondi *sile*, clothing (Hindi *sina*, to sew).
Singga	From Hindi *sing*, a horn.
Sipâhi	Urdu, a soldier.
Sirdâr	Urdu, a chief.
Sirajdâr or Sirasdar	Urdu, Sarishtedar, a judicial moharrir.
Sirkil	English, Circle Inspector of Police, probably named after the popular Thakur Manbahal Singh, who for long held this position.
Subedâr	Urdu, a military officer.
Sudher	Halbi, *sudh*, cleverness, hence a clever fellow.
Suen or Suwel	Gondi corruption of Hindi *kuâ*, a well.
Sulhi	Probably corruption of Hindi *chula*, an oven. Hence 'cook'.
Suluksai	A Gondi name. Sai is the same as Shah.
Sunder	Hindi *Sundar*, beautiful.
Surjut	Hindi *suraj ki jyoti*, the brightness of the sky.
Tabu	
Tahsildar	Urdu. Revenue official.
Tekedar	Hindi. A Tekedar is one who farms the revenues of a village on payment of a quit-rent.
Tel-dundi	Hindi. An oil-press.
Tindka	From Gondi *tindâna*, to eat, perhaps 'hungry or greedy one'.
Uden	From Gondi, *udâna*, to sit. Hence one who sits down. Compare Kude.
Ukwar	Gondi. A mattock.
Vakil	Urdu. A pleader.

Titles of Motiaki

Achhoke	Gondi adjective, good.
Aloka	Gondi adjective, pleasant-spoken.
Anbalko	Perhaps from Marathi *ana*, bring, and *ank*, root of Gondi *nekndâd*, to say, and female termination *ko*. Hence 'she who tells one to bring things'.
Beldarin	Feminine of Beldar, q.v.
Beloka	Perhaps derived from the bel tree.
Chalko	Gondi. One who talks nonsense.
Dasoda	Hindi name.
Dulcka	Corruption of Hindi *dulecha*, soft.
Galje	Gondi. The noisy one.
Gandri	Hindi and Halbi. One who smells bad. Probably a derisive nickname rather than a proper title.
Haliyâro	Hindi *haliya*, a herd or flock, hence cowherd or shepherdess.

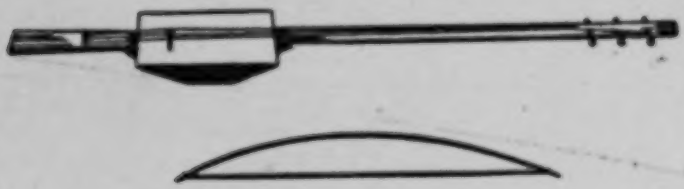
APPENDIX THREE

Jaimo	
Jalaro, Jalâri or Jaliyâro	From Hindi *jalna*, to burn, perhaps 'hot stuff'.
Jalko	Gondi. A ripple. Compare Jelkar.
Jamadarin	Feminine of Jamadar, q.v.
Janakrâi, Janko, Jamko or Jankâi	Hindi names.
Jhelo	Gondi. A splash of water.
Jhilli	Hindi. Mica. Compare Jilmil.
Junki	Gondi. Tinkling.
Kotwarin	Feminine of Kotwar, q.v.
Lahari or Laharo	From Hindi, *lahar*, a wave.
Malko or Malkârose	Gondi. *Mal*, a peacock, a girl like a peahen.
Manjâro	From Hindi root *manj*, middle. Perhaps the second of three sisters, or one who holds a secondary place after the ghotul leaders.
Mankai	Hindi *mânna*, to obey, hence the obedient one.
Metin	English mate in a gang, with a Gondi feminine termination.
Mulâri or Mulâro	Probably from Hindi *mulya*, 'value, hence 'precious'.
Mulki	From Urdu *mulk*, country. Thus 'country lass'.
Mutri	Feminine of Mutra, q.v. But not necessarily, in this case, his ghotul mate.
Nirosa	A Sanskritic word meaning 'clean'. There does not seem to be such a word in Hindi, but the meaning is definite. The word exists in Halbi, and it may be connected with *nirog*.
Pisa	From Hindi *pina*, to drink. Perhaps one who drinks a lot of palm-wine or 'the thirsty one'.
Rani	Hindi. A queen.
Saidarin	Feminine of Saidar, q.v.
Saile	Gondi. Friendly.
Salko	Feminine of Salya, q.v.
Samakro	The patient one. *Samatar* is Halbi for patient.
Sargi	Hindi for the sal tree.
Siliyâro	Gondi *siliya*, a vegetable.
Silo	Hindi cloth or clothing (*sina*).
Singâro	Hindi *shringâr*, adorned.
Sulâko	From Hindi *chula*, an oven. Hence perhaps 'cook'.
Surtin	Hindi *surta*, thought. Hence 'thoughtful'.
Surti, Surto or Surtel	Hindi, tobacco. One who distributes tobacco to the chelik.
Tiliyâro	From a pulse. Probably given for its assonance with Jaliyaro or Siliyaro.
Tilola	From the Hindi name, *tilak*.
Talki	
Tusro or Tusâro	
Ujlaro or Ujlâro	Gondi. White.

551 ●
192

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

534 bamboo and the usual flute. They are fond of gongs, but these are not now so common as they were. At the great Pen Karsita at Ghotpal in 1942, the dancers used slabs of



Kikir Fiddle
(*Length* 2')

coloured wood, bits of old tin and indeed anything that would make a noise instead of the traditional gongs. Like the Muria, at festivals and even for amusement the Maria use a hunting horn, either a real horn or one made of brass.

541 Besides dancing, the chief Maria relaxation is the cock-fight. At the conclusion of all the bigger bazaars, the men retire to a grove of trees and set their cocks against each other. The cocks are armed with sharp and deadly little knives tied to their feet and fights are to the death. The victor has the privilege of taking the defeated bird, but the real excitement comes from the betting.

v

844 [843] The ceremonies attending birth and marriage are very simple. The pregnant mother is not hampered by many restrictions on her movements. After the birth of the child the placenta is buried in a pit behind the house. Logs are placed above it and the arrow with which the cord was cut is driven into the ground near by. A small shed is made and the 846 mother lives here for some weeks with her child, taking a daily bath above the placenta-pit. At the end of this period of segregation, the husband gives a feast to the neighbours, [851] the child is named and the mother is permitted to return to her household duties. It was to such a feast that the unhappy victim of the Mardum sacrifice was enticed.[1]

881 There are no ceremonies of initiation at puberty, though a

[1] Case No 31.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

him. He has, however, to cook food for his wife. The latter during ordinary menstrual periods stays, in villages where there are menstrual rooms or private and not communal menstruation huts, on her side of the mud threshold and keeps there special water-pots and cooking pots; her husband brings food and water in the regular pots, and, standing on his non-taboo side of the mud threshold, pours their contents into the menstruation water and cooking pots. But as he may never touch the latter, he cannot use them for preparing food for his wife after child-birth, and so has to buy a special set of pots for cooking her food then, which are destroyed at the end of her period of seclusion. Nor is the husband permitted to enter the ordinary rooms of the house until the child's navel-cord has fallen off; he has to build a temporary room at the back of the house near the menstruation room or hut, and cook there. It is taboo for him to give any other person any fire from the hearth in this temporary kitchen. Breach of the taboos attaching to child-birth by either parent is believed to entail the wrath of the Village Mother. During the period of seclusion the mother is permitted to leave the room only to bury the placenta or to answer the call of nature. As it is taboo for her to pick or break anything growing during the period, she has before her delivery to lay in enough leaves for cleaning herself after defecation to last for the full period. She wears nothing but the *mudang* until the end of the period.

After the navel-cord has fallen off or at the end of the period of seclusion, the mother goes out at night to the river, immerses herself, and cleans her old loin-cloth and the cloth of her *mudang*. In the early morning she emerges wearing her loin-cloth and carrying her baby, which in most villages her husband then sees for the first time; around Handawada, however, he is allowed to see it in the menstruation room on the morning after it is born. The mother has to sprinkle every part of the house with water.

From birth to death there is no age ceremony of any kind, neither at birth, naming, weaning, ear-boring, hair-cutting, puberty, first shaving, nor on any other occasion. Normally

Naming

the child gets no name until it is two or three years old, when its parents know its physique and something of its character. But there are three exceptions to this. When the child is brought out from the place where it was born at the end of the initial period of seclusion, it is examined for birth-marks; and if these are considered to be the same as those of a dead ancestor it is given that ancestor's name, or, if, for example, the child is a boy and has his father's mother's birth-marks, it gets her husband's name. Thus Usendi Moda, the headman of Orcha, was called after his dead grandfather because he had the same mole on his hip as he;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

553 Yete Mura, the headman of Hoinar, was born hare-lipped and was therefore named after his hare-lipped paternal grandfather; and Jugho Dallu, the headman of Hitulnar, recognized on his son the birth-marks of his dead mother Pora'i and therefore gave him the name of her dead husband Dugha. This practice is a sign of some sort of belief in the reincarnation of the Departed. The second exception is the practice of giving a name immediately after birth when birth has coincided with some natural phenomenon or incident. Usendi Ippo of Orcha was called Ippo because born when the *mahua* tree (*ippa marra* in Maria) was in flower; Usendi Irka was born when the cucumbers (*irka*) were ripening in the *penda* fields; Usendi Ghasi was so named because, just before he was born, a *patwari* rode into Orcha and ordered his father Moda to go and cut grass (*ghas* in Halbi) for his pony. Oyami Gursha, headman of Komu, was born when his father and uncles were making a wicker-work bin (*gursha*) for storing grain. Yete Mura named his daughter Reko because she was born when the *reka marra* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) was in fruit. The third exception, which, like the first, indicates some belief, if not in reincarnation, at least in a previous existence, is the practice when a new-born baby cries loudly for three or four days of reciting to it all the names that the parents can remember and giving it the last name uttered before it stops crying, on the theory that it has stopped crying on recognizing its name. Normally, however, the name is not given till the child is two or three, and then depends on such things as whether it is fat or thin, slow or smart, learnt to walk or speak quickly, and so on. Thus a boy was named Moriel or 'hare' because he used to double suddenly like a hare when running about the village; Bunge is a name given to a boy with a huge stomach; Baiyya or 'mad' to a harum-scarum boy; Banga to a shy, untalkative child; and U'ile or 'thin' to a child thin through much illness in his early years.

551 177 Russell and Hiralal state (III, p. 87) of the Gond race as a whole that names derived from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and, on this assumption, actually suggest that perhaps the Gonds had not advanced to the stage of having individual names before they came into contact with the Hindus! This is certainly not true of either Hill or Bison-horn Marias. Of 103 male and 38 female Hill Maria names collected from 215 men and 107 women, and 103 male and 23 female Bison-horn Maria names collected from 236 men and 68 women, very few, not 5 per cent., were Hindu, the proportion of Hindu names being, as might be expected, slightly higher among the Bison-horn Marias. Only about 27 per cent. of the Hill Maria men's names and 8 per cent. of their women's names occur also, in the same or a modified form, in the lists of Bison-horn

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

843 secluded for their first menstruation, known as the *piki-kurma-lon*; but generally speaking, Bison-horn Marias do not seem to hold in the same strength the Hill Maria fear of a woman in this condition.

844 For the birth of a child a separate hut or booth is erected in the compound, generally at the back of the house, known as the *er-nihitana-lon*, or water-washing hut. This is often little more than the roughest of booths, and considerably inferior to even a Bison-horn Maria pigsty. Here the mother remains for a full month, during which her husband is not allowed to go to his work. The delivery is assisted by an experienced woman relative or fellow-villager, who cuts and binds the navel-cord and washes the child immediately after it is born, and gives it to the mother to suckle. No food is given to the mother that day; on the next morning she is made to drink a decoction of the bark of the *kusum* [824] tree (*Schleichera trijuga*), the root of the dwarf *chhind* palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*), and *kulthi* (*Dolichos biflorus*) pulses, pounded to a powder and boiled together, and an hour or two after this dose she is given a meal of warm boiled rice. She is dosed and fed in this way for six or seven days more, until the navel-cord falls off; and then she washes her whole body and is allowed to eat regular meals. At the 852 end of the month the *lon-wa'ina* or Returning to the House ceremony takes place. The child is named with the aid of a medium, though 533 actually names seem to be given for reasons very similar to those actuating Hill Maria choice of names. A pig, a goat or a number of cocks are killed, and the mother, having washed her clothes and her body, cooks the flesh, all the villagers and relatives being entertained to dinner. Thenceforward the mother is free to resume all her normal household and field work, and the father can resume his work.

553 I once witnessed an unusual naming ceremony. A son had been born after three elder brothers had died. It was considered 789 that their deaths had been due to the hostility of some demon or of the familiar spirit of some magician, and on the medium's advice the baby had been suspended in a rough cradle over the rubbish-heap by the fence of the *bari* garden, and all the men present threw cow-dung and filth all round the cradle, shouting out '*Kacharu*' or 'Filth!', which name was given to the child in the hope that thereby the malignant power would be deceived into thinking that the parents set no value on the child.

862 Children are breast-fed for two years or more, as among the Hill Marias. It has been already recorded (page 219) that there is among the Bison-horn Marias a special weaning ceremony during the Jata Pandum at which the first solid food given to the children is a portion of the rice and meat offered to the Departed.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

844 seat above it. Near by he drives the arrow or knife into the ground. He brings a pot of water and puts it inside the hut ; should the water [787] decrease of its own accord it is regarded as a very bad omen and the child is expected to die. This hut is now used constantly by the mother who comes five or six times a day to bathe herself and the baby. She always takes water from the pot kept inside the enclosure and it is refilled each time with warm water heated elsewhere. The mother regularly pours warm water over the child's umbilical stump, for so long as it does not drop off she is in a state of taboo and can do no work.

In some villages the placenta is buried under a *bassia latifolia* tree and a large stone is placed above, ' for this tree does every kind of work for us '. Very small babies are sometimes buried in the same place so that they can suck the milky sap.

When the stump falls off, it is buried in the placenta-pit ; should it be dug up and eaten, for example, by a dog, the child would cease suckling and die. After a year has passed the Perma comes to offer compensation of a fowl and rice-beer to the Earth Mother because they have offended her by burying the placenta and cord in the ground.

846 Once the stump has dropped the mother is free of the restric-
852 tions on her and when she feels ready—' when her body is dry and clean '—she has a final bath, cowdungs the house and begins to cook and live normally again. The father shaves the child's head. The mother herself destroys the little bathing-hut. The father smears the arrow with oil and puts it in the roof of the house. When a boy grows up it is shown to him and he can use it for hunting, though no special virtue seems to attach to it.

852 On the day of the mother's ceremonial entry into the house,
553 there is a little feast, cooked by the woman herself, on the veranda. The Perma and a few neighbours are invited and they have a pot of rice-beer. Before they drink, each of the visitors dips his finger into it and gives it to the child to suck. The mother presents oil and a ring to each of the women who helped her and to the Waddai and Perma. The child is often, though not always, named on this occasion. A chicken is dedicated by being fed on rice and is set free. A year later it is sacrificed and a bit of the liver is given to the child. If a baby cries continually it is supposed that it has been given the wrong name and the Waddai renames it and dedicates another chicken. In Gadapal I was told that if the gods disapprove a child's name, they send Hidmaraj to make it itch and Markaraj to make it cry.

845 The Marias do not seem to have made up their minds about twins. One village thinks them lucky, another disastrous. There

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

is a vague idea that monozygotic twins are more likely to be fortunate than dizygotic. Thus when Tati Buta's wife gave birth to female twins at Palnar, it was observed that they had but one placenta and the people declared them to be lucky and expected them to survive—which they did. But at Phulpar, where Sodi Mandra's wife gave birth to dizygotic twins, a boy and a girl, both died within a fortnight, and at Bara Harmamunda, where Oyami Kama's wife had male twins of the same order, both parents and the children died soon afterwards. 845

The Marias believe that the cause of such births may be physical, magical or supernatural. When Gangu of Koriras had male twins it was believed to have been due to her eating off a leaf-plate made of double leaves. It was the indiscretion of eating a double cob of maize that gave Oyami Kama's wife her twins. The Marias, therefore, are generally careful not to pick double leaves or fruit—double plantains, ebony fruit, maize and so on. Even a husband should be careful about this. For even though twins are not specially unlucky nobody wants them, and it is hard for the mother to nourish two children properly. If a young girl has twins, it is generally assumed that she has been lying with more than one man. At Gogonda a woman had intercourse both with her husband and a lover on the day of her post-menstrual bath. The result was twins and such grievous offence to the Departed that they killed both children within a few weeks.

The Marias also believe that twins may be the result of intercourse with a supernatural being. At Gudra I was told how Hunga Nupo's wife was visited by a Rau: 'He laughed and went to her. The next day her husband lay with her and in due time she gave birth to twins.' A similar story is told of the wife of Sodi Mandra.

Maria twins, like twins all over India, are named after the inseparable couple Rama and Lakshman. Two boys are Rama and Lakha, two girls Rame and Lakhe. The after-birth, whether double or single, of both children is buried in one pit and only one arrow is put above it. In the same way the twins are supposed to remain very close to each other throughout their lives. 845 553

VI

Grigson was unable to find any trace of the dormitory among the Bison-horn Marias; the people always denied that they existed, and even said that they were a degraded institution. Grigson was rightly suspicious of these denials, for in fact a simple form of dormitory exists in most of the bigger Bison-horn Maria villages. Even to-day the headmen deny their existence—I have never 883

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

844 Until the stump falls the father is in a state of taboo. He must not cook, he must not leave the house to visit his friends, he cannot go to the ghotul. No one will accept his tobacco and he cannot share in a sacrificial feast.

843 Certain attempts are made to influence and to diagnose the sex of unborn children. If a motiari, after fasting for twelve hours at her first menstruation, eats a dish of *khichri*, a mixture of pulse and rice without salt, her children will likewise be a mixture of boys and girls. If she goes to the jungle on this day and brings home a bundle of leaves on her hip, she is likely to bear girls.

Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman.

[524] *Chipta upre jai phar,* There is fruit inside the basket,
Jāna bābu kai phar? How can you know what fruit it is?

845 Abnormal births are not common but are not unknown. Twins are called *jāmar jiya* and are not regarded as either particularly lucky or unlucky. Twins with a single placenta are born if the mother eats a double fruit such as a double plantain or tendu or uses double leaves as a plate. Sensible women are careful to avoid doing this but sometimes accidents happen. In Rengagondi, there are twins, named Joga and Jogi, who were born because the mother ate off a double leaf at the end of her period. Such twins may also be due to a woman's passing between two men on her way back to the house from her menstrual bath. The shadows of both men fall upon her and the twins resemble them. In some places, it is thought if she passes at this time a man holding a baby she will have twins—if it is a boy, she will have male twins; if a girl, male and female. If the woman lies on her back after intercourse so that the man's seed divides into two streams, twins may result. When there are two placentae it is often supposed that the woman has been to two men and the twins, therefore, have different fathers. The woman may also have had intercourse with a ghost or spirit on the day following intercourse with her husband. Where this is suspected, the twins (if boy and girl) are called Dukhalu and Dukhali and are vaguely regarded as unlucky.

[777] Pandru of Bermakot twice had twins, from different wives. The first were from the Manjaro whom he made pregnant in the ghotul and were both girls: the second were from the Nirosa, another of his ghotul lovers, and were both boys. Pandru thinks he had twins because he went to each of the girls twice on the night following the post-catamenial bath. If this is done during the rains, girls will be born: if during the hot weather, there will be boys.

[777] A foot-presentation is called in Gondi *tāli-janamta* or 'cow-birth', for the child is born like a calf. This is regarded as very unlucky indeed and the family must immediately protect the child by waving round it a bundle of burning grass. Such births are generally expected to be fatal to the mother. A *kera bānjh* is a woman with only one child; 'she is like a plantain which gives fruit once on a stalk and never again'.

II. Name-giving

● 553 After about six weeks the mother stops her ritual bathing and resumes her domestic duties inside the house. It is now time to give the child a name, a name—it must be remembered—which the little chelik or motiari will hardly use during the period of childhood, which will never be taken by husband or wife after marriage, and will be uttered only with reluctance after death. Even then a later nickname may supplant this *mur-podor* or original name.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

But this name is important because of its connexion with the theory of rebirth, and before it is given it is necessary to discover which of the family ancestors has returned in the young child. Many different methods of divination are adopted. At Bandopal they tied up some rice into a little bundle of siari leaves and put it on the child's head. Then the Siraha took the names of all the family ancestors that he could remember one by one: if the child drops the bundle on its shoulder as the medium is repeating a name, they know who it is. In the Sonawal Pargana I found the Muria placing a lighted lamp in a leaf-cup of sarai above the pit where the placenta was buried, while they waved a second lamp round the child reciting names. The child shows its recognition of its name by putting its hands out towards the lamp. In Kari-khodra they put a chicken-bone in the child's hand and give the name that is used when the child drops it. At Gorma, they made a ball of siari leaves, put it in front of the child and waited till it touched it. Sometimes, the child refuses to drink its mother's milk. Then the medium is called and he recites names as usual; they give the one that coincides with the child's turning to the breast. In Aturgaon, they wave rice in a leaf-cup round the child, put it down before it, stick a scrap of rice on a siari stalk and place it in the child's hand. When the child throws the rice over its shoulder, they give the name.

The names are, as we might expect, slowly becoming Hindu in character, though this tendency should not be exaggerated. Out of 2000 names, only 85 were specifically Hindu and such names as Ram, Ganesh, Govind, Sita, Indira, were comparatively rare. Girls and boys are sometimes named after the Hindu months in which they were born—Asaru, Baisakhu, Bhadru or Phagu—and after the day of the week—Aitu, Mangal and Sani.[1]

As always, events at the time of birth influence a child's name.

Akalsai or Kangalu	Born in a famine year
Barat or Bartiya	Born during a marriage procession
Dera	Born in a hut
Duwaru	Born in the yard
Irpa	Born at the time of picking mahua flowers
Sataru	A seven-months child

The usual derogatory names are given with the idea of depreciating a child's value in the eyes of hostile spirits.

Amlu	Sour	Burjaha	Dirty
Apoti	Stinking	Chamra	Shoemaker
Banda	Naked, or dock-tailed	Dhondu	Useless
Barko	Thin	Ganda	A despised weaver
Barra	Crack-brained	Gatharu or Gatti	A little bundle, or undersized
Baya or Baihi	Mad	Hoche	Drunkard
Bhondu	Stupid	Jakari	Madman
Bhoska	A dunce	Lardhu	Useless
Bhuka	Hungry	Sukdu	Wizened
Bohber	Stinking		

A remarkable name in this class is Duma, the Halbi word for the dead.

Yet on the other hand, there are just as many names calculated to flatter the child. The derogatory names are generally only given when calamity

[1] In the text I have mostly given the names of men: in many cases a feminine form of the same word is used for women, thus Bhuki, Sukli, Sugria.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

'Now that you have begun to come to the ghotul, you must come every day. You must bring one bit of wood every day. You must first salute me and then all the other chelik and you must do what they tell you to do.' To a girl he says, 'You must obey the Belosa and Dulosa, and clean the ghotul every day'. 883X

A little boy must bring a *gih*-mat with him. This is usually made for him by his mother or an elder sister. But a girl is allowed to beg for a 'camping site' on someone else's mat.

The children are now called *nona* or *noni* till they get proper titles. They do not join the dances, unless they are being specially instructed; they generally play and sleep together. At bedtime they have to salute the full members with Johar. Every evening they must bring a bit of wood for the ghotul store. In some places they have to hand round the tobacco which nowadays takes the place of the ganja which was provided in Lingo's ghotul. When girls are few, the boy probationers massage the elder boys, but not as the girls do it—they massage the legs and thighs. Both boys and girls have to act as ghotul fags and are made to work hard enough. Old Sukali of Masora described how as a little girl, the Pissa of the ghotul, 'I used to carry little bundles for the others at dances and marriages. I was always ordered about by everyone'.

The older boys and girls take a lot of trouble over these children. They teach them manners and to keep their mouths shut. They instruct them in dancing and the ghotul games. They watch them closely and punish any failure or slackness. They specially watch a child's regularity of attendance, and whether a boy brings his wood properly and the girl does her cleaning. Regularity, obedience and habits of work are taught and tested. 883X 867

When a sufficient time has passed, and the leaders see that the children have grasped the ghotul rules and customs, they decide to give them a title at the next Dassera or Diwali. To the Muria these festivals are simply dates; they do not observe them in a religious sense; and the date is nearly always wrong. In some ghotul, children are given names at any time of the year; in others, boys are named at Dassera and girls at Diwali; in others again, boys and girls are named together at Diwali. In some ghotul, in Pandripani, for example, and Bandopal, girls are given their titles at the menarche. 'When a girl first puts water on her head, then we give her a name.' But this cannot be a general rule, for I have seen dozens of little girls with ghotul names. 883X 553

Titles are given at a simple and pleasant ceremony. I was present at Sidhawand on 5 November 1940 at the naming of five children. At the beginning of the evening, the boys and girls assembled, each bringing a seer of parched rice. The Sirdar and Kotwar measured each contribution to see that the quantity was right, and then poured it onto a cloth spread on a mat in the middle of the ghotul compound. Presently the Belosa brought three leaf-cups and the Sirdar filled one for Lingo Pen, one 'for the Diwali' and one for the Village Mother and her consort. The rest of the rice was divided into four parts, for men, for women, for Kokameta (a neighbouring ghotul with which the Sidhawand ghotul was on very friendly terms) and for the boys and girls of Sidhawand. These last, it may be observed, only got a quarter of the feast.

This done, the Belosa and Dulosa held a formal consultation, came forward and called out three diminutive boys, Tuna, Gando and Dorga. They caught hold of each in turn, lifted him up, hit him twice and announced his name. To Tuna they gave the title Tel-dundi, to Gando the name Hardi-garbo and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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to Dorga the attractive title Chelik-sunder. Then the Sirdar called the leading boys aside and they whispered together for a few minutes. The Sirdar went to the group of girls, picked up two of them and brought them into the middle of the company. He lifted each in turn and hit her with his clenched fist. To the first, Sukmi, he gave the name Jankáí and to the second, Pakli, the name Mankai. This was all done, as it should be done, in the presence of the people, in the face of the village elders, who yet by an absurd fiction are not supposed to know that such a thing as a ghotul name exists.

FIG. 63. Ear-ring with pendant of red, blue and white beads
Actual size

The motiari now did Johar, first to the Sirdar, then to all the chelik and elders and visitors, but not to any women. Then the Sirdar, followed by the three boy initiates, did the same. This is the only occasion when the Sirdar salutes his 'subjects'—it is a kind action, to make the little boys feel at home. It is the last time the initiates perform the Johar rite. After the Johar, the Sirdar gave a little sermon to the new boys. He waved a siari stalk round them three times and said, 'Bear this *Adwar* [pole for carrying loads]. Serve the [ghotul] government. Give food to the official and the stranger. Serve and feed your father and mother. Now you have a new name. Grow up quickly and live till you are an old man.' He put rice-marks on their foreheads and gave them a leaf-cup of liquor. In Aturgaon, the leader gives the initiates a ring, but this was not done here.

In many villages, when he gets his name, the initiate gives a bottle of liquor to the ghotul, of which he then becomes a full member. He is then excused the tiresome duties of childhood. He no longer has to bring wood daily: he no longer salutes anyone. But in some places, the little boy has to continue doing this even after he has got his title until he is 'grown up' and makes a formal offering of liquor to the ghotul. For a girl, a title means less change, for she still has to salute the boys every night and perform her obligations in tobacco, leaves and cleaning. But boys and girls alike gain a new dignity,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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and they are soon ordering about those unfortunate children who have not yet received their names.

III

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In time the little boy will grow up and may become Sirdar or Diwan; the little girl may one day be Belosa. How are these appointments made? The choosing of the leaders is a serious matter, for they not only have great power over the happiness of the children, but they are also responsible for the smooth working of village life. The elders of the village, as well as the boys and girls, are anxious that the best appointments should be made.

How is the leader chosen? The Muria have not discovered the principle of voting, which I do not think would appeal to a people so devoid of jealousy and the spirit of rivalry. Generally the new leader is an obvious choice; the boy who has acted as second-in-command has been well trained, and if he is a good boy will naturally step into the old leader's place. If all the leaders are married in the same year, the matter is more difficult; but if he is available, the position usually goes to the boy whose special duty it has been to look after the motiari. If he can fill that, he can fill any office. The choice is made easier by the fact that the old leader does not relinquish his office immediately after marriage; he continues in it for six to twelve months longer. Sometimes he remains permanently; at Masora, the Diwan is Lakmu, a married man with sons in the ghotul. But Lakmu still retains his title and is the final court of appeal in all disputes. Under these circumstances there is plenty of time for the ghotul to make up its mind. In a serious case of dispute, the village headman or the Pargana Manjhi is asked to intervene and decide.

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The leader of the girls is appointed in much the same way, though here the influence of the boys' leader counts for a great deal. Especially in those ghotul where the chelik and motiari pair off, the Sirdar's motiari is often made leader of the girls.

What sort of boy or girl is chosen to be Sirdar or Belosa? Except in the Kalpatti and Bandadesh Pargana of the north-west, where the son or a near relative of the Kaser-Gaita must be appointed, no one has any claim on office by reason of the wealth or position of his parents. To become the head of a ghotul is a simple triumph of character. We may gain some idea of the qualities expected from the following descriptions. The first is from Binjhli. 'A good man is one who helps in difficulty and sympathises in sorrow. Dhansai Muria was like that. He never told a lie. He spoke kindly and gently to everyone. He was never seen angry. Even when he was drunk he never swore at people.' And in Kuntpadar we were told about Nattu Babu, a Mussalman. 'He thinks everyone equal to him. He loves humble people, he loves the ugly, he loves the destitute. You would never think he was a Mussalman.' On the other hand, a bad man, like Mundra Muria, is 'friends with no one. He speaks friendly to your face, then goes away and does you an injury. When there is work he avoids it, he is rough and abusive in speech. When he sees a good harvest in another's field, he burns with jealousy.'

A leader therefore must be gentle, friendly, not quick to anger or abuse, a good worker himself. He must be able to organise the work at a marriage or festival, and arrange for an official's camp. He must be popular with the girls, who naturally have a lot to say in his appointment. And in most ghotul, the leader admirably fulfils these conditions. You could not find anywhere boys more intelligent, gentle and hard-working than the boys who

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32.Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

763 for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

764 When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the [533] mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *uraskal*.

[787 On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion 761] remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *uraskal* menhir. There are *uraskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs. On the Jagdalpur side, however, and [718] around Paknar, though every village has its *uraskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kutki*, *urad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of 764 *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at 177 weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. 554 The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[see cat. 116, p. 426. — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

themselves socially they not only cease to follow old Maria customs, but begin to resent being called Marias and to claim the designation of Muria. In some places, especially in villages where it is hard to find suitable menhir stones, they erect in their stead posts of *saja* wood, which they call *wrasgatta*. The upper illustration on plate XXI shows a very elaborate *wrasgatta* from a roadside village near the Chitrakot falls, on the northernmost fringe of the Bison-horn country. It is carved on each of its carefully squared sides with representations of hunting scenes, and the objects of the chase. Originally these were picked out in red and blue paint. Plate XXII shows part of a large row of *wraskal* menhirs by the side of the road from Dantewara to Kameli, at the foot of the bridle-path ascending to the Bailadila guest-house; such enormous menhirs as those shown behind the women in this illustration are seldom set up in these days; the tallest shown was thirteen feet high, and the broadest over six feet wide at the base. The normal size of those nowadays erected is shown in the lower illustration on plate XXI; this portrays part of the *wraskal* of Aranpur village, by the side of the forest road from Kuakonda to Dummagudem, and at the head of the Aranpur pass. In this photograph the interesting thing is the large flat stone resting on four boulders.[A] This is known as a *danya-kal*, and was placed there as the memorial of Birya-Marvi Hurra Wadde, who in his life-time was *perma* and *bhum-gaita* of Aranpur, as well as a *wadde*. The Birya-Marvi and the Kuhrami clans are the only two which always make *danyakal* and never set up *wraskal* stones; all the other clans, even in the Marvi and Kuhrami phratries, and including the small or Chudala Marvi clan, erect *wraskal* stones. This Aranpur *wraskal* was not restricted to the Birya-Marvi clan, although the village was founded by that clan; the *danyakal* stone on the right edge of the photograph was the last stone at the south end of the row; next to it on the north were fifteen *wraskal* stones of the Kunjami clan, and after them three of the Chudala Marvi clan. The small stones at the foot of the menhirs are known as *kawal-kutul* or ghost stools, and serve the same function as the *kawal-garya* cromlechs of the Hill Marias. Any recently erected stone can usually be detected either by the presence of a cow's or pig's tail hung over its apex by a loop of cord, or by the dirty white stains of libations of *landa* poured over the stone when it was set up.

The stone is selected and carried from the quarry to the place where it is to be erected in much the same way as that already described for the Hill Marias. I use the word quarry advisedly, for these great slabs or pillars cannot be found as surface boulders. I have not seen the actual quarrying; but they understand how to

[A] [See col. 116, pp. 426-427. - Awal/48]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Masa, the children's uncle and sole survivor of the elder branch of the family, was the Waddai of the clan-god of Japgunda. He seems to have resented the way a poor Lamana'i boy like Erka had risen in the world and become owner of both his brothers' property, and there was some tension in the relations between the two houses. For five or six years, Erka had had good crops and Masa bad ones, and Masa decided that his failure must be due to the fact that Erka was practising magic against him. One day he openly accused the younger man of sorcery and challenged him to an ordeal. Erka, who had no desire to quarrel, accepted and a pot of boiling water and cowdung was prepared. Erka dipped his fingers into it and was badly burned.

This incident convinced the villagers that Erka was a sorcerer and had a curious effect on his own character. He found that, far from being a social outcaste, he—the poor Lamana'i boy—was believed to have the ear of the goddess Parkal Muttai and that many people were coming to him for advice and help. He grew proud and arrogant and when he caused the death of a calf, a pig and a fowl belonging to Masa, no one dared to remonstrate with him. Bija's little boys were growing up and Erka built a house of his own near by. Presently Aga was to be married and some time late in August 1943 the wedding was held in Bija's old house. Masa was, of course, invited but on his way to join the festivities—for the essence of a Hill Maria marriage is a dance, a drink and a heavy meal—Erka went out to intercept him. He greeted him pleasantly and showing him a gourd of rice-beer took him aside to drink with him on the bank of the village pond. Some time later boys coming in their finery for the marriage dance saw the two men sitting together by the water under a virgin moon. The next day Masa's mutilated body was found in the pond.

Erka immediately used his reputation as a sorcerer to hush the matter up. He called the elders to his house, bribed the Kotwar whose duty it was to report suspicious deaths to the police, and taking the headman and another person of some influence aside, sat them down and drew on the ground what was described at the trial as a 'magic line'. He put dub grass, a knife and a bit of cowdung on it and two rupees on one side and three rupees on the other. Then he asked the two men to pick up the money, saying that this act bound them to secrecy. Deeply impressed, the headman went out and told the other villagers that they must cremate the body at once and make no report to the authorities. On the way to the pyre the usual divination by *sāja* leaves was performed and indicated that Masa had died by violence. It was five months before rumours of the crime reached the police.

2: Elwin. E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883[x]
553

and they are soon ordering about those unfortunate children who have not yet received their names.

III

883[x]
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In time the little boy will grow up and may become Sirdar or Diwan; the little girl may one day be Belosa. How are these appointments made? The choosing of the leaders is a serious matter, for they not only have great power over the happiness of the children, but they are also responsible for the smooth working of village life. The elders of the village, as well as the boys and girls, are anxious that the best appointments should be made.

How is the leader chosen? The Muria have not discovered the principle of voting, which I do not think would appeal to a people so devoid of jealousy and the spirit of rivalry. Generally the new leader is an obvious choice; the boy who has acted as second-in-command has been well trained, and if he is a good boy will naturally step into the old leader's place. If all the leaders are married in the same year, the matter is more difficult; but if he is available, the position usually goes to the boy whose special duty it has been to look after the motiari. If he can fill that, he can fill any office. The choice is made easier by the fact that the old leader does not relinquish his office immediately after marriage; he continues in it for six to twelve months longer. Sometimes he remains permanently: at Masora, the Diwan is Lakmu, a married man with sons in the ghotul. But Lakmu still retains his title and is the final court of appeal in all disputes. Under these circumstances there is plenty of time for the ghotul to make up its mind. In a serious case of dispute, the village headman or the Pargana Manjhi is asked to intervene and decide.

[152]

The leader of the girls is appointed in much the same way, though here the influence of the boys' leader counts for a great deal. Especially in those ghotul where the chelik and motiari pair off, the Sirdar's motiari is often made leader of the girls.

What sort of boy or girl is chosen to be Sirdar or Belosa? Except in the Kalpatti and Bandadesh Pargana of the north-west, where the son or a near relative of the Kaser-Gaita must be appointed, no one has any claim on office by reason of the wealth or position of his parents. To become the head of a ghotul is a simple triumph of character. We may gain some idea of the qualities expected from the following descriptions. The first is from Binjhli. 'A good man is one who helps in difficulty and sympathizes in sorrow. Dhansai Muria was like that. He never told a lie. He spoke kindly and gently to everyone. He was never seen angry. Even when he was drunk he never swore at people.' And in Kuntpadar we were told about Nattu Babu, a Mussalman. 'He thinks everyone equal to him. He loves humble people, he loves the ugly, he loves the destitute. You would never think he was a Mussalman.' On the other hand, a bad man, like Mundra Muria, is 'friends with no one. He speaks friendly to your face, then goes away and does you an injury. When there is work he avoids it, he is rough and abusive in speech. When he sees a good harvest in another's field, he burns with jealousy.'

A leader therefore must be gentle, friendly, not quick to anger or abuse, a good worker himself. He must be able to organize the work at a marriage or festival, and arrange for an official's camp. He must be popular with the girls, who naturally have a lot to say in his appointment. And in most ghotul, the leader admirably fulfils these conditions. You could not find anywhere boys more intelligent, gentle and hard-working than the boys who

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

in 1940-1 were the Salya of Binjhli, the Sirdar of Sidhawand and Malakot, the Hikmi of Almer, the Likhen of Kanhargaon, the Kotwar of Kabonga.

When the old leader, the Sirdar, decides finally to lay down his office, there is a small ceremony for the appointment of his successor. The following is the custom in villages of the Chalka Pargana. The old Sirdar, after giving due notice to the elders of the village and the ghotul members, comes on an appointed day wearing a new turban which he has bought himself, five to eight hands long. The ghotul members collect money in the village and purchase liquor. When everyone has assembled in the ghotul, the elders ask the members, 'Whom do you want for Sirdar?' They give the name of the boy they want and the elders remove the turban from the old Sirdar and tie it round the head of his successor, saying, 'From today the ghotul is in your hands. Whatever you command must be done'. The members reply, 'We will do whatever he says'. Then the elders say, 'Look, boy, these children are in your care. If you take them to another village, yours is the responsibility. When they are sleeping, look to see that every child is there. You may go hungry, but don't let the children starve. When there is a marriage, you must arrange the work. When anyone dies, you must see to it. When a visitor comes, you must arrange wood and water. See that the ghotul is always clean and the children are also clean. For if they are happy, it is your credit; if they are ruined, it is your fault.' At this point, in some villages, the girls present the new Sirdar with a new sleeping-mat; in Binjhli, they give him three rings, which he wears throughout his time of office and returns when he resigns; in Markabera, they give him a leaf-pipe of honour. Finally the girls formally give him his new name, hitting him on the back with clenched fists, and his 'subjects' salute him with Johar and place tika-marks of rice on his forehead. They give him liquor to drink, and celebrate his appointment with a dance.

[787] In Khutgaon village, I found that the turban ceremony had been abandoned. Some years ago a dog urinated on it. This was regarded as a very bad omen, and when the Siraha was consulted he declared that they must no more tie the turban on the leader's head nor must the motiari any longer touch the heads of the boys with their combs. The disappearance of old customs is not always due to alien influence.

On 1 November 1941 I was present at Bhanpuri when a new Diwan (as the head of the ghotul is called there) was appointed. The girls and boys assembled shortly after nine for what was called the *Diwali mark*, or eating of parched rice in honour of the Diwali festival. Each member had to bring a contribution to the feast: big boys and girls brought one seer each, somewhat younger children brought half a seer and the little probationers a quarter. The rice was collected on mats spread on the ground in the compound and carefully measured. Part was put aside for the villagers—in fact for the children's own parents; part was allocated to a neighbouring village with whom the ghotul was on friendly terms; the rest was for the present company.

Then the elder boys retired inside the ghotul and deliberated about the appointment of their new Diwan. This was only a formality, since the matter had been settled long before. They came out and declared that they had chosen Gando the Sirkil. The Bekna and Dulcna, the two leading girls, then went to Gando, pulled him to his feet and thumped him hard on the back crying 'Diwan, Diwan'. After the Bekna had put a ring on his finger, he went round and saluted everyone with Johar. After a few days he would, he promised, treat them to eight annas' worth of liquor.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

828 In some places there is a boy called Pargana Manjhi who exercises the same functions as that official actually does in the life of the tribe. Normally, however, appeals against the decisions of the ghotul leaders go to some older man who has retained his association with the ghotul for that very purpose.

The girl leader is generally appointed by the older boys in consultation with the Kotwar and the motiari. This is an entirely informal matter, there is no election, there is rarely a dispute. In some places the ghotul 'wife' of the leading boy becomes the head of the girls, especially in those ghotul where the girls' names are the same as those of the boys. Thus, where the Diwan is the head of the boys the Diwanin will lead the girls. In those villages where the Gaita's son has the right to leadership of the boys, the Gaita's daughter has a similar privilege among the girls.

The actual ceremony of appointment of a Belosa is similar to that of a Sirdar or Diwan but omits, of course, the tying of a turban. The elders say to the girl, 'Greet the boys with Johar, give them tobacco, comb their hair, massage their limbs, keep the ghotul clean, look after the younger girls, see there is no scandal; this is your responsibility and charge'.

IV

863 In some villages, specially in those of the north-west (in the Kalpatti-Bandadesh and Paralkot-Kalpatti Parganas) there is a rule that the son of the village 554 Gaita must be the head of the ghotul. Thus in Kollibera and Barkot I found that the Gaita's son ranked, even when he was a little boy, above the son of the Pargana Manjhi and this boy or some other relative of the Gaita was always the head of the ghotul. In Sarandi the son of the Dhurwa and in Padbera the son of the Manjhi were the leaders of their ghotul. The head of the Barkot ghotul was called Gaita and was the Gaita's son. The head of the Mannegaon ghotul was also called Gaita and the post was held by the son of Kandru, the Gaita of that village. In a Ghotul Pata recorded at Markabera, the village Gaita's son is leader of the chelik and the Gaita's daughter leader of the motiari.

883 But in other villages throughout the whole Muria area such an idea is unheard of and, when I have suggested it, has been indignantly rejected. The 183 only leadership is that of character; the whole principle of the ghotul, I have been told again and again, is that everyone is equal, rich or poor, the son of priest, headman or landlord, all are one in this fellowship which knows no wealth-distinction or privilege of inherited rank. And this, I think, is true. The Muria belief in equality is often carried to quite fantastic lengths. If work is demanded from a village by the Government, every family contributes the same amount. If in any ghotul all the boys have titles and there are thus no probationers to bring wood in the evenings, all the boys go together to fetch wood in a cart; each cuts exactly the same quantity and all bring the wood home. If one boy is not able to be present, they postpone the task till another day. If the village gets any present it must be exactly distributed and at feasts exact measurements are made of parched rice, meat or liquor. The Muria of Chandabera said that 'if one of our tribe were to pile up heaps of gold before us, we would still say "O, he is only a relation; our sons can marry his daughters",' and in Phunder the headman said, 'Of all the good things our children learn in the ghotul, one of the best is that everyone is equal'. In Phulpar, the leader was the son of the Atpariha or village drudge. At Chandabera, the Kotwar was deformed; at Bhanpuri, the Daroga was blind. Both had important duties and every privilege.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

X883 829 The Muria belief in equality is illustrated by a characteristic story. 'Raja Dokara ruled in Tulsidongri. It was thick jungle: there was no Brahmin to cook his food. So he went to Bhagavan to ask for one. Bhagavan said, "Certainly take one if you can recognize him. They all look alike to me". Bhagavan told everyone to wear a dhoti, and when they came, Brahmin and Ganda, Muria and Dhakar, Halba and Maria, the Raja found it impossible to tell which was which. So he sent Idur Kola Pen to see what he could do, but he also failed. At last a fly came and said, "Give me something to eat, and I'll get you a Brahmin". Idur Kola Pen offered it gold and silver and many tax-free villages. "No", said the fly, "I don't want these. There's a sore on your leg. Let me sit and feed there." Idur Kola Pen allowed it, and when it had fed, the fly settled on a Brahmin's head. Thus the man was recognized and he became Raja Dokara's cook.'

X883 554 This conception of complete democracy affects the position of the leaders. Their power is not absolute; they can be, and sometimes are, removed from office. They can be punished by a meeting of the other members. At Palari, the three leaders—Diwan, Tahsildar and Jamadar—abused their position, and the boys and girls met and fined them. In any case, the rule of the ghotul is not that of a dictator, but of a council. Associated with the chief boy or girl is a company of two or three who advise them on all important matters.

These leaders do, of course, have their privileges. The little boys fag for them and massage them if the girls are absent. Little girls do the Belosa's hair and run her errands. In ghotul where partners have to be constantly changed, the leaders are sometimes allowed to have girls of their own. In Banjora, for example, the Kotwar, who is there the leader, and the Belosa always sleep together, though the others must change every two or three days.

V

X883 563 Are members of other tribes and the Hindu castes admitted to the ghotul? This is the sort of question that is usually met with an indignant denial from the Muria elders, who explain that they never admit outsiders for fear of possible matrimonial complications, and equally indignant denials from Hindus and others who claim that the ghotul is a degraded institution to which they would never send their children. Neither is true.

Throughout the Muria area may be found examples—not many examples, but some—of Muria-Lohar, Rawat, Nahar and even the despised Ganda and Ghasia being admitted as members of the dormitory. Such children receive titles; they are allotted duties and allowed all ghotul privileges. In Palli Barkot the people said that Muria-Lohar boys and girls were given the fullest privileges but that there was a ban on Mahara, Rawat and Kuruk. The Lohar children could sleep with the Muria children, but must not marry them. In Nayanar I discovered to my astonishment that two of the girls who were taking the leading part at a Muria wedding were Lohar—the Aloea and Duloea of the ghotul. In Markabera, the most popular girl in the entire company, the Saile who had a Muria ghotul-partner, was a Lohar. The Belosa of the Mule ghotul was a Lohar, so was the Salya; in 1941 the Jamadar of Kokoti, the Jamadar of Phunder, the Jalaru (a girl) of Phunder, the Jhoria of Modenga were all Lohar.

The leading drummer of Hatipakna was a Nahar and two of his brothers and a sister were also prominent members of the ghotul. At Junganar a Ganda boy was made the Suel, and a Ghasia was the Kotwar at Modenga. In Phunder there was a Kalar boy. Rawat are commonly admitted.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 has been specially hollowed out for this purpose. Usually
273 there is no stock of rice-beer at hand and it cannot be made so quickly. The Maria then mix a little mandia flour with water and give this instead.

If for any reason in the course of the ceremony some rite or custom is omitted the spirit of the dead man may attack one or other of the mourners in order to show his displeasure. For example, at Gadapal, Burka Peda told me that they once forgot to give landa to the old menhirs and the insulted Dead attacked his father's sister and she fell down in a fit. They quickly gave both landa and mahua liquor to all the menhirs and she recovered. Again in Mahara-Karka one Kuhrami Eriya was hurled into the fire by the angry ghost and his leg was burnt. If this happens it is a good plan for the victim to run and catch
[709] hold of the bamboo poles with which the stone was carried. The Gaita pours water upon him and the angry ghost leaves him alone.

IX

322 When a very well-known or wealthy man dies his family
766 sometimes erects a carved wooden pillar to his memory.
554 There are very few of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

522 These pillars are called by Grigson urasgatta, a word that
766 is obviously formed on the same plan as uraskal, from *urasna* meaning 'to bury' and *gatta*—'a pillar'. I have not myself found any Maria using the word or even recognizing it when it has been put to them. It may be that its use has died out. The Maria to whom I have spoken call these pillars either *munde* (Gondi) or *kambha* (Halbi or Hindi).

The pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. It should simply be near any road or path that is constantly used by the people. The pillars are usually made of saja or sarai wood and are erected with ceremonies very similar to those for a stone.

There are not many of these pillars, but they are worth looking at. There is a very fine one near Dilmilli

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Kuakonda. When Telami Dhurwa returned from jail after killing a man in a drunken quarrel, he offered his clan-god Uru Maru, a pig, a cow and a hen, and had to undergo the usual ceremonies of purification. 783

Apart from these ceremonies, however, the fact that a man has served a sentence for murder has singularly little influence on his social position and domestic happiness. It is true that imprisonment, if it is for a very long term, sometimes acts as an automatic divorce, and women feel that they are at liberty to marry again. But generally wives wait for their husbands to be released, as I found Deve, the wife of Kawasi Borga, waiting for her husband at Doriras. Borga, ten years before, had gone to jail with a life-sentence for killing his uncle. His wife had all the time been well looked after by the villagers, and I found her house substantial and prosperous. Her two sons had been successfully married and were carrying on the business of their home with the help of their wives. 554 558 [586] [593]

People, however, are sometimes afraid to marry a released murderer. Doga of Jabeli must be one of the luckiest young men alive, for after being sentenced to transportation for one murder he was released after three years; whereupon he is said to have killed his wife, was sentenced to death and again got off on appeal. He came to see me armed with a ferocious-looking axe, which had actually been put in evidence at one of his trials as the weapon with which he had committed murder. He was trying to get a new wife, but without success. 'They are all afraid of me', he said, 'for fear I might kill them as well'. But he thought he might possibly get a widow. Another youth who found it very difficult to get a new wife was Hemla Bakka, who killed his wife for committing adultery, and got three years' imprisonment for it. At Aranpur all the girls were frightened of the charming Gutte, who had been in jail for killing a man in a drunken quarrel after a cock-fight. They thought if they displeased him, he might murder them too. 554 582

At Khutepal, Oyami Masa, who was imprisoned for killing his junior wife, seems to have suffered no loss of prestige on account of it. He is a Waddai, and when I was there he 554 558

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

554 558 went over to Tikanpal to offer sacrifice on behalf of that village.

At Muler I visited the widow of Ido Deva, an unpleasant quarrelsome fellow who had recently been hanged for murdering one of the most popular men in the village. In spite of this, his widow was well treated. She was not excommunicated and was allowed to share in the usual feasts. But she always remained inside her house, and generally refused to talk to people; the headman told me that there would probably be some difficulty in getting her two sons married, for people would say, 'After all, their father was a murderer'.

005 The relationship between the families of a murderer and his victim is always a delicate one, and Frazer has collected many examples from all over the world in illustration. The Uraon make sacrifices to the angry ghost of a murdered man, and sometimes even reckon him among the ancestral spirits of his murderer. Roy records that two Uraon, related to each other as cousins, had a quarrel over a piece of land; and one of them, in a sudden fit of anger, thrust his axe into the bowels of his companion. The man, thus struck, at once ran to his assailant's house and, pressing his wounded stomach with his hands, sat down at one corner of the hut and exclaimed, 'Here I establish myself', and then ran out again to the field in dispute and dropped down dead. To this day, the descendants of the murderer propitiate the murdered man's spirit. After the harvest, the first sheaf of paddy from the field where he fell dead is offered to his spirit at the same corner of the house where he sat down before his death. The descendants of the murdered man too are allowed access to the spot in order to make similar offerings.[1]

682 571 I have not found this custom in Bastar, though that does not mean that it does not exist. But I have found everywhere an anxiety that there should not be any enmity between the families. Compensation is often paid to the victim's widow or family, and the murderer's family may contribute to the expenses of the funeral. Both families should always have a feast together. In Gamawada the family of an imprisoned homicide, Barse Mata, gave every kind of help to the relatives of his victim: among other

[1] S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 60 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

went over to Tikanpal to offer sacrifice on behalf of that village.

At Muler I visited the widow of Ido Deva, an unpleasant quarrelsome fellow who had recently been hanged for murdering one of the most popular men in the village. In spite of this, his widow was well treated. She was not excommunicated and was allowed to share in the usual feasts. But she always remained inside her house, and generally refused to talk to people; the headman told me that there would probably be some difficulty in getting her two sons married, for people would say, 'After all, their father was a murderer'.

The relationship between the families of a murderer and his victim is always a delicate one, and Frazer has collected many examples from all over the world in illustration. The Uraon make sacrifices to the angry ghost of a murdered man, and sometimes even reckon him among the ancestral spirits of his murderer. Roy records that two Uraon, related to each other as cousins, had a quarrel over a piece of land; and one of them, in a sudden fit of anger, thrust his axe into the bowels of his companion. The man, thus struck, at once ran to his assailant's house and, pressing his wounded stomach with his hands, sat down at one corner of the hut and exclaimed, 'Here I establish myself', and then ran out again to the field in dispute and dropped down dead. To this day, the descendants of the murderer propitiate the murdered man's spirit. After the harvest, the first sheaf of paddy from the field where he fell dead is offered to his spirit at the same corner of the house where he sat down before his death. The descendants of the murdered man too are allowed access to the spot in order to make similar offerings.[1]

I have not found this custom in Bastar, though that does not mean that it does not exist. But I have found everywhere an anxiety that there should not be any enmity between the families. Compensation is often paid to the victim's widow or family, and the murderer's family may contribute to the expenses of the funeral. Both families should always have a feast together. In Gamawada the family of an imprisoned homicide, Barse Mata, gave every kind of help to the relatives of his victim: among other

[1] S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 69 f.

513, 575, 561

Gond AW32

/Information concerning the ghotul or gotul, the bachelors' and adolescents' dormitory, will be found in category 883, Adolescent Activities./

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

V. MENSTRUATION

561 Neither in the ghotul nor outside are the age-grades of Muria children very strictly defined. There are, for example, no rites of transfer from one age-grade to another, but generally four different stages in a child's growth to maturity are recognized. The first stage for a boy or girl is babyhood; the boy is called *pila*, the girl *pili* or *noni* (daughter). This stage lasts a year. The child then becomes a *tākna peka* or *peda* (feminine *tākna peki* or *pedi*), the word *tākna* meaning 'a toddler'. This stage lasts for two or three years till the child begins to play about the house and perform little tasks, when it is known as a *leka* or *leki*. At the age of seven or eight the boy becomes a *lāyor peka* or *nangriya*, the second word implying that he is now able to go along with his father behind the plough. A girl of the same age is known as *lāya peki*, *norwa lāya* (meaning 'immature', a girl who does not yet have to wash after her menstrual period) or in Halbi *tāndak pāni ānu leki*. Finally a girl on passing her menarche becomes a *lāya*, *torita*, *tarni*, *dhāngri*. She is now *juwān* or *mast juwān*, mature. A boy too is now called *lāyor*, *dhāngra*, *dinda* (meaning unmarried) or *juwān* (meaning mature).

841 The significant moment in these stages of growth is obviously a girl's first menstruation. This is a crisis of enormous importance to her both socially and psychologically. The fact that she is subject to this monthly cycle sets her as woman in an entirely different category to man. Menstrual blood makes her dangerous, infectious while alive; it may turn her into a ghost of dread and horror after death. A dozen names and expressions for this condition testify to the importance it has in the Muria mind. It will be most convenient to give them in tabular form: all, except the last three, are Gondi.

Pendawoghai	'Her private parts are flowing.'
Kata pongta	'The bank of the field is broken.'
Netur danta	'Blood is flowing.'
Tora pongta	'Blood is flowing.'
Arro āta	'She is taboo.'
Aṭāna ǰyo	'She is not cooking.'
Arka chhande kita	'She's in the position of one who may not touch cooking-pots.'
Pirita	'She is wrung out like a dhoti.'
Ghāt utaris	'She can't go to the water-place.'
Bhāta me hona	'To be outside,' i.e. she cannot enter the house.
Dhār bohis	'Blood is flowing.'

The first menstruation is called *yete arta* ('the call to water') in Gondi and *phulsundri* ('the blossoming of the flower') in Halbi.

841 343 In many villages, especially those to the west where the influence of the Abujhmar Maria is strong, the Muria build separate huts where their women can be segregated at this period.[1] Sometimes they make one communal hut for the whole village; sometimes there is one hut for a group of houses; occasionally a big house with a large family has a hut to itself. The Muria do not generally build such huts outside the village, but in some isolated spot within its borders. The huts are usually wretched little buildings with small doors. Inside may be seen a bed, a cooking-hearth, a few pots, some strips of cloth, a little firewood. The hut is built by the chelik—no married man may help—who are paid by the village women with liquor for their services. Every year at

[1] Among many other villages may be mentioned Sarandi, Chingnar, Kaleparas, Hochur, Tulchera and Talabera. The huts are called in Gondi *witār-kurma* (the hut that must not be touched) or *yer nuyāna lon* (the hut for bathing in water).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

691 421 partition of a father's property when a son sets up house for himself, but although he can press for his share, it is felt by the community to be against tribal spirit, rather than unfilial. When, on the other hand, a father had outraged tribal feelings by seducing his sons' wives and driving his sons from his house, his refusal to let his sons have any share in the family property was considered by the Bison-horn Marias an additional justification for his subsequent murder by his sons.

691 428 768 There is so little domestic property of great value among the Hill Marias, and so many of a man's few tools and possessions, as we have seen, are buried with him, that inheritance disputes about movable property are almost unknown. Though among the Bison-horn Marias less is buried or burned with the dead, the remaining movable property generally passes with the house; if the elder sons have set up separate establishments in their father's lifetime they will have equipped themselves with the few possessions they need, and will not worry about the younger brother appropriating what their father has left. Women's ornaments generally are buried or burned with them.

428 When the inheritance includes valuable rice-lands, they remain generally the joint property of the sons and brother's sons, and the father's surviving brothers, the eldest son generally nominally being the manager, though he will certainly have to give way to an uncle or younger brother or cousin if he is inefficient, weak-minded or deformed. The produce will be stored in his granary, but shared among the members of the family.

428 736 587 Daughters and sisters have no right of inheritance of their father's or brothers' lands or property. For the land is really the land of the clan, and the daughters and sisters will on marriage have passed to the clans of their husbands. A widow is entitled only to maintenance, and as on her husband's death she very often becomes the wife of his younger brother, she gets her maintenance as a matter of course; if he leaves no younger brother and she does not marry again, she lives on in her late husband's house and works with other women of the family, and is maintained by their husbands. A girl whose parents die before she is married frequently goes to a married sister's house and becomes a co-wife.

562 For a woman on the whole is a kind of property, or a valuable adjunct to the house and family. For her, the husband's family has had to pay a bride-price that is a severe tax on its resources[1]; or else, where cross-cousin marriage prevails,[2] she represents the repayment of a debt incurred when her father took his bride from

[1] See pp. 248-50 and 252-3 above.
[2] See pp. 234 and 247 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the family and clan to which she goes as a bride. She may elope with another man, but he must compensate the first husband. She must work for her husband, having his meals ready in the home or taking them to him in the field when he wants them, gathering forest fruits and roots, and doing her appointed work in the fields; many a woman has paid with her life by exasperating her tired husband by not having his food ready or by cooking it badly. She is not a full human being like a man. She is taboo when menstruating; she may not sleep in the field when the crops are ripening; she is debarred from attending at the festivals and *pandum*; she has no special dancing dress. Yet with all this she has not too bad a position. As a girl she has considerable freedom both in premarital sexual life and in the choice of a husband, and she is fairly free to leave her husband if he ill-treats her, or if he cannot beget a child. Tribal sentiment strongly condemns wife-beating. Her natural taste for ornament is given full scope, her parents gradually collecting beads and metal neck and arm rings, her boy-companion presenting her with beads and carved hair-combs, and her husband when she is married recognizing her right to spend a few of the scanty pice she earns from the sale of her basketry at the bazaar on simple trinkets. She participates in the tribal dances and songs, though not in the religious ceremonies that accompany them. In fact her position *vis-a-vis* her husband is far freer than that of the ordinary Hindu wife. Above all, she is not exposed to the evil of child marriage and premature motherhood, of which habits of their Hindu neighbours Maria headmen will speak with abhorrence.

Such in brief and imperfect outline are the main principles governing tribal law and custom, and the main features of the old village and tribal headman and *panchayat* organization. No attempt has been made in this chapter to draw any clear-cut distinction between the ways of the Hill and the Bison-horn Marias; in actual practice both treat such matters in much the same way, the main distinctions being (*a*) that the primitive clan organization is stronger and the authority of the headmen more limited by that of elders among the Hill Marias, and (*b*) that the Bison-horn Maria has been more in contact with the outer Hindu world than the Hill Maria.

The recent State Order restoring jurisdiction to Panchayats

Under the State Order framed in 1932 by my successor, the regular criminal courts of the State have been deprived of jurisdiction over the primitive tribes in cases of certain public nuisances, simple hurt and assault, thefts (except of cattle), of property worth Rs. 5 or less, mischief, trespass, house-trespass, bigamy, adultery and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE CRIMES OF WOMEN

I

674 171 It is notorious that women are everywhere less criminal than men. 'The proportion varies, however, greatly in different countries. In France it is usually about 4 to 1; in the United States it is about 12 to 1; in Italy and Spain the proportion of women is very small. In Great Britain, on the other hand, the proportion of criminal women is extremely large, especially for the greater crimes'.[1] In Bastar the proportion is 23 men to 1 woman.

674 Havelock Ellis points out that woman is protected from crime by certain physical and psychological characteristics—her physical weakness, sexual selection, domestic seclusion, prostitution, and maternity. Among Maria women, however, the only one of these forms of protection to operate is maternity. The women are often of considerable physical strength and are as capable of striking a murderous blow with an axe as are the men. Since every Maria woman is married, sexual selection is of no assistance in removing from the place of danger and temptation the more degenerate and abnormal types.

462 562 As far as the domestic seclusion of women is concerned, the Maria situation resembles that in the Baltic provinces of Russia of former days, where the women shared the occupations of men and the level of feminine criminality was comparatively high. In England also, which has taken the lead in enlarging the sphere of women's work, 'the level of feminine criminality has for half a century been rising'. The Maria woman is not only free to assist her husband in the tasks of daily life, but she also frequently participates in those very occasions which are regarded as most provocative to murder, the drinking parties when large quantities of rice-beer are consumed. [598] There is no prostitution among the Maria. But on the other hand women do not, as in Europe, fall out of the social ranks.

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 261 f.

[p. 161]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 For the Maria (as for the European woman) maternity
562 is the great protection. The reason for the low incidence of homicide among Maria women is possibly connected with the strong aboriginal belief that it is supernaturally dangerous for a woman to take life. This is the ultimate reason why there are no women priests, for the priest has to offer sacrifice. Maria women are not supposed to kill goats or even chickens. They are not permitted to join in hunting. The only pursuit of the kind which is not taboo to them is fishing—but fish are cold-blooded creatures.

762 It will be noted, however, that the number of Maria women who commit suicide is almost as high as that of Maria men.

II

674 Five of the 100 homicides were committed by women, and in one of them the woman was helped by a man. Two of these were typical women's crimes arising out of annoyance and exasperation over comparatively small matters. In the first two women, both of whom had been married to the same man and were now widows, were living together. The older widow was so tiresome and so continually nagged the younger that at last the girl could stand it no longer, and gave her three blows with an axe whereon she died. In the second, a man and his wife were collecting red ants for food when they heard the cries of a child in extremity. They went to the place and found a little girl about ten years old lying on the ground with her neck broken. She had been killed by her step-mother for not doing what she was told. The older woman had climbed up a tree and was picking the leaves and throwing them down. She called to the child and asked her to bring her basket closer so that she could drop the leaves directly into it. When the child disobeyed, her step-mother came down from the tree and beat and kicked her, then twisted her neck till she died. Both the older woman and the girl were weak and hungry for want of food. There was no rice in their house and they had been living on mahua for days. Fatigue and hunger played their part in this tragedy, as so often happens.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

interior villages send down their young men in relays to work for wages at Allapilli. There they get prompt and regular payment and just and fair treatment. There are resting-sheds where the Marias can sleep, leave their scanty personal possessions and take their meals in clean surroundings, not divorced from their own kind. The Forest Department are arranging ever-improving facilities for them to purchase cloth, grain, salt and ornaments at fair prices. Forest work is in itself a technical training. At one time also the local officials tried to establish at Allapilli a small carpentry and basketry school.[1] Everywhere on this tour I met Marias who were on their way either to or from Allapilli, or had worked there from time to time in the past and looked upon it as a place to which they could always go to earn quickly any cash needed for payments of rent, fines or bride-price. More than one passage in *The Aboriginal Problem*[2] describes the Marias' consciousness of the fact that the Allapilli departmental forest operations have saved them from debt and distress; the establishment throughout the Chanda zamindari forests of similar 'Allapillis' was one of my recommendations. Allapilli has further been the one thing that has saved the Marias from the economic ruin that they feared when the Court of Wards and district authorities by a sudden ukase stopped their *podu* or *dahi* cultivation.

From Allapilli we motored eastwards by forest road and by estate forest tracks, generally motorable after slight repair in the open season, to Bhamragarh, halting a night on the way at Pirmeli; it was some fifteen miles from Allapilli to Pirmeli, and another twenty-three on to Bhamragarh. I had been preceded on this tour by Mr. Kerawala inquiring into debt at each big village, and the neighbouring village *bhumias* and *gaitas* and the *patti Sendhias*[3] from miles around gathered again to repeat to me what they had already told him. The first such gathering was at Mirkal[4] and the next at Pirmeli itself. At both places we heard much about money-lenders and their methods, and I therefore reproduce from *The Aboriginal Problem*[5] the gist of Mr. Kerawala's report on what he was told at Mirkal and Wateli;[6] those whom he saw at Wateli came to my camp at Pirmeli.

At Mirkal he enquired particularly into the economic and social conditions of the Marias of Mirkal, Sagangatta and Kasampalli villages. He found that many were heavily in debt to Hindu

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 283.
[2] Pp. 257, 332 and 366.
[3] See p. 287.
[4] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV2148.
[5] Pp. 280-2.
[6] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. MV4955.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

426 563 money-lenders of Ahiri and Rajaram.[1] Few loans had been taken in cash, and the borrowers being unable to read or write had to depend entirely on the word of the money-lenders. Mada, son of Bodka Maria, of Sagangatta had borrowed Rs. 20 for wedding expenses ten or eleven years before from a Rajaram money-lender, and since then had been repaying him from time to time, generally in kind; he admitted however that he had also taken occasional loans of seed grain. He had no idea of the rates of interest and no means of checking his account, but had been told by his creditor that he now owed him Rs. 100. Korke, son of Kesu Maria said that his 'kind' *sahukar*, Chinwar Poshatti of Ahiri, was good enough to have gone on accepting for years whatever he had been able to pay towards a debt of the details of which he was completely ignorant. A Sagangatta villager had borrowed Rs. 40 twenty years ago from a Kalar money-lender in Ahiri for a wedding and, though he had since repaid many small sums and had given his creditor a bullock and a cow, had been told that he still owed Rs. 100; he said that the Kalar would never explain how he worked this out, but he thought the heavy rate of interest to be the reason why the debt still grew. Generally the Marias said that if they needed seed, they could only get it from the Ahiri and Rajaram money-lenders, who advanced seed on condition of repayment with 25 per cent. interest at the next harvest or 50 per cent. at the second harvest if they defaulted at the first; no consideration was given to failure of crops, and it was only on the promise of payment of 50 per cent. interest that further time was allowed for repayment of principal.

Similar tales were told at Wateli and at my Pirmeli camp by the very large gatherings of Marias. As at Mirkal, cash loans were few but nearly all had taken seed loans at rates of interest varying, even for punctual repayment, from 25 to 50 per cent., and going even higher than 100 per cent. in the event of default. Even if cash is borrowed, interest is paid annually in grain until the borrower can find cash to repay the principal. In fact the money-lenders seem to reckon on perpetual interest in kind on petty initial loans of five to ten rupees. Thus a Maria from Khandanwadi village had borrowed Rs. 10 from an Ahiri Kalar four years before; in each of the first and second years he had paid grain worth Rs. 10 merely as interest, but in the next two years his crops had failed, and he expected in the fifth year to have to pay either Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 worth of grain. A Maria from Pokht village had borrowed Rs. 5 six years ago, from a Telugu money-lender of Indaram, but as he had repaid nothing the Maria headmen said that he was a ruined man, as the money-lender's claims must have so swollen that the Maria

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. MV1833.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

would never be able to repay during his lifetime, and the debt would devolve on his sons. Another Maria from Irakdumme village had borrowed Rs. 20 bride-price from an Echli money-lender ten years before and had so far paid him paddy worth Rs. 22-8 as interest, but nothing towards principal, and had no idea what the final demand of his creditor would be. Another Maria from Batanfundi village had borrowed Rs. 12 from an Ahiri money-lender six or seven years ago and though he had repaid the principal was still being dunned for Rs. 40 worth of grain as interest, and was afraid that this high rate would now be doubled, as owing to the crop failure of 1939 he had been unable to repay any grain that year.

Throughout this area a crying need is an agency for advancing small seed-loans. The Government have seldom done this, on the theory that the zamindar should meet his tenants' needs; but we could not find one who had ever been given a seed-loan by the estate. The rates of interest extorted by the nests of money-lenders at Ahiri, Rajaram, Allapilli, Indaram, Echli and other centres are preposterous. The need for these seed-loans has been imposed on the Marias largely by the arbitrary stopping of their *podu* (*dahi*) shifting cultivation; *podu* fields always produced seed grain at least. Such is the pathetic honesty of the Marias that when the Debt Conciliation Board was working they readily acceded to the money-lenders' request to place their thumb-marks by the hundred on application after application begging the Board not to interfere between them and their money-lenders: it was only by persistent effort that the Board secured nearly 800 applications. In our camps the Maria elders opposed debt relief measures on the ground that if a man borrowed it was only right that he and his heirs after him should go on repaying. The final report of the Debt Conciliation Board of 1936 mentioned some fantastic cases. In one a Telugu Komti of Indaram had lent a Maria of Koreli a bullock on hire in 1920, at the usual fee of Rs. 4 worth of paddy. For twelve years the Maria went on paying Rs. 5 worth of paddy. In 1932 the Komti made out that the Maria still owed him Rs. 700 worth of paddy, and proceeded to show against him further compound interest of 50 per cent., until, when the Board took up the case, the Komti claimed as much as Rs. 2,320 worth of grain—all this for the hire of a single indifferent bullock. This, however, pales into insignificance against an Echli case of a money-lender lending Rs. 32 to finance a wedding a few years before, and in his accounts showing this debt, despite a repayment of Rs. 20, as having risen to Rs. 17,519!

At every halting place and camp the Marias' chief grievance, however, was not so much the exactions of money-lenders as the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 312 Bahadur D. Lakshmanswamy in his 1922-4 Sironcha and Garchiroli Settlement Report, paragraph 31 :—

'Agriculture in parts of these zamindaris is as thorough as in the most advanced *khalsa* tracts. One has simply to look at the extensive rice fields and *gattas* of the Madias [*sic*] to admire the almost mathematical levelling of their field embankments. The Maria Gond has a genius for rice cultivation. He selects the best *silas* position area, and with an intuition for irrigation lays out his fields one below the other so as to utilise water from the field above to that lower down. A natural stream or spring of water is generally never allowed to go waste by him. He so embanks and diverts the supply by a system of well arranged water-channels as to utilise the whole supply for his rice area, however distant it may be. Even in the remotest part of the zamindaris agriculture has now developed beyond the domestic stage and assumed the commercial stage. The aboriginals constituting the greater part of the population of these zamindaris mostly live on the early rice, small millets and beans, while the heavy rice grown in the big *gattas* and embanked areas is exported to the markets.'

241 Now it should be noted that this means that for his own subsistence the Maria still relied on the grains and beans dear to his heart, and grown by *dahi* or *jalapod* cultivation, which had not then been stopped except in parts of Ahiri. The growth of heavy rice as a commercial crop is yet another sign of the transition from an 241 406 economy in kind to a cash economy. Of this the money-lender takes full advantage.

563 For in these plains villages around Bhamragarh and Lahiri, besides Marias and Gonds there are nests of Teli exploiters, notably in the six villages of Lahiri, Mallampodur,[1] Kukurmeta,[2] Arawara,[3] Dodhai[4] and Idadapalli.[5] Many of these Teli money-lenders are now wealthy, as a result of small grain loans to the plains Marias and Gonds. The *modus operandi* is repayment indefinitely at rates of interest so high that the principal can never be repaid, while interest takes the form of a steady and heavy share of the debtors' harvest. Some of the Telis resort habitually to molestation of their debtors until the latter satisfy their yearly demand, but though molestation of debtors is now a cognizable offence under the Debtors' Protection Act, the police in their far distant police station at Etapalli never take action against molesting money-lenders. We have seen already on page 102 how these Telis' tentacles had spread to such Bastar villages as Nugor in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, where there were big matting paddy bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored on behalf of the Telis, who were free from time to time to remove all paddy from the bins surplus to the Marias' seed requirements, while each Maria villager was free to help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest

[1] References on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A :
1. MV7957
2. MV7654
3. MV7055
4 and 5. Not marked.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

he would repay with 50 per cent. interest.[1] Although it is clear that these Teli, Kalar and Telugu money-lenders do levy an exorbitant toll on the Maria villagers' produce, it is equally clear that they are fulfilling a necessary function, which has become the more necessary since the stopping of *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation below the hills has restricted the Marias in most villages to permanent rice cultivation on small acreages always dependent on seasonal rainfall evenly distributed in time. If such money-lenders are excluded, then they must be replaced by Government grain depots and village grain banks.

Of Maria funeral rites the *Gazetteer* observes that a stone or a carved post about five feet high is usually put up to mark the spot where a man's body has been cremated, and that 'sometimes one comes across a forest glade strewn with these memorials, the only sign of some deserted village, the very name of which has perished'.[2] Many rows of carved wooden posts may be seen between Bhamragarh and Lahiri, while at Lahiri itself I saw scores of such posts and of the small cromlechs (*hanal-garya* or 'thrones of the Departed') described on page 273, and mentioned in the *Gazetteer*[3] as built on the spot where the body was burned. The top of one of these very substantial funerary posts, or *hanal-gutta*, photographed at Lahiri, is reproduced as one of the illustrations in this Supplement. Noticeable are the carved wooden horns, between which is a carved wooden bird, probably a hornbill. The wooden horns are common, and probably are a modern symbol of the cow formerly sacrificed at the erection of a menhir or wooden *hanal-gutta* by Hill Marias[4] and Bison-horn Marias[5] throughout Bastar: the funerary customs of the Chanda Marias seemed, however, to be Hill Maria in type, and this was confirmed by oral enquiries at Lahiri.

The addiction of the Bison-horn Marias and of the Kutru Hill Marias of Bastar to cock-fighting has been described on page 162. I particularly inquired if the weekly cock-fights at Oikal in Ahiri zamindari, there mentioned, and at Lahiri itself still went on. But all cock-fighting among Chanda Marias had for some years been stopped under orders from an inexperienced young European District Superintendent of Police on the theory that it contravened the Gambling Act. But the Marias maintained that, as in Bastar, so here, there had never been cash betting (as, indeed, one might expect in a region where all transactions are still so largely in kind), but the defeated bird had passed to the owner of the winning bird.

[1] For further details, see *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 183-4.
[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 106.
[3] Ibidem, loc. cit.
[4] See pp. 278-9.
[5] See p. 281.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the *Sendhias* and the zamindars also denied it. The allegation possibly arises from the fact that the zamindar appoints or confirms the succession of the *Sendhia*, and may arbitrate in a case involving parties from the *patti* of two or more *Sendhias*. Moreover the zamindars themselves have probably often descended from the tribal headmen of old, and so it is easy for them to perform the function of ultimate arbitration in social matters which is so characteristic of the chiefs of the ancient semi-feudal organization of the province from whom they descend or derive. Obviously it would be easy to apply to all the Chanda Maria country the Bastar *panchayat* system.[1]

From Jarawandi our route took us six miles to Pendri, the largest village and virtual headquarters of Jharapapra zamindari, thence six miles to Jharapapra and back; on fifteen miles to Aundhi in Drug district, and thence seven miles to Murumgaon, the headquarters of the Chanda zamindari of that name; the last mile was at long last on made road, the third-class road running east from Garchiroli through Khutgaon, Dudhmala, Dhanora, Rangi, Murumgaon and Koracha zamindaris to Dondi-Lohara and Drug. We were, however, to have trouble on this road next day, when heavy rain flooded unbridged streams between Murumgaon and the twenty miles distant Manpur, the *de facto* headquarters of the Koracha zamindari of Drug. The very long delay in bridging this road and raising it in class is only too typical of the neglect by Government and District Councils of aboriginal areas.

Similarly the District Council had not opened a single school in Jharapapra zamindari. The late zamindar, a Halba by tribe, and amongst the most intelligent and progressive landholders of the two districts, had opened a private school at Pendri[2] which at the time of my visit was being run by a Gondi-speaking teacher of the Marar agricultural caste, and his pupils were six Marar, six Halba and two Pardhan boys. Marias and Halbas are the chief elements in the small population of the zamindari, dwindling steadily by the drift in recent years of Marias across into Bastar for the sake of *podu*.

All along this route there had been frequent pockets of Marar cultivators, especially near the streams. These industrious, progressive, dark-skinned agricultural pioneers have pushed up the valley of every substantial river in the backward areas of Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Drug, Raipur and doubtless other aboriginal districts of the Central Provinces. They have been the chief factor in such increase as there has been of permanent, especially irrigated, cultivation in these Garchiroli and Drug Partially Excluded Areas.

[1] See pp. 295-7.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. M/5222

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

563 Pendri is now mainly a Marar village, its 451 inhabitants including only some forty Marias and sixty Halbas. They seem able to live in easy symbiosis with all Gonds, to whom they impart much of their agricultural skill. Their intrusion into these tribal areas, provided it is controlled, is therefore not a bad thing.

178 At Jharapapra there was a once familiar sight, the Halba log-god of the zamindari family, in type precisely similar to the clan-gods of the Hill Marias and the Halba log-gods at Chingnur near Bare Dongar and at other Halba centres in Bastar. The *Kutumb-Naik* headman of the Bare Dongar Halbas had told me in 1929 how some years before the then zamindar of Jharapapra had sent a party of Halbas to carry off the Chingnur log-god to Jharapapra, and how the god had resented this and 'flown' back to Chingnur from the first halting place of the god-snatchers.

000 Of the visits to Aundhi[1] and, next day, to Manpur[2] in Koracha zamindari and some way along the Manpur-Panabaras road, there is little to say except that, generally speaking, the Drug Court of Wards regime in Panabaras and Aundhi seemed to be progressive, and the Drug District Council to do more for the Partially Excluded Areas than its Chanda counterpart.

[162] In the four Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug the aboriginals form well over sixty per cent. of the population. The 427 worst feature of these estates is that there is a *thekadari* system, originally akin to that once prevalent in Bastar, and that many of the *thekadars*, especially those on whom the semi-permanent 'protected' status has been conferred, are non-aboriginal oppressors of the local Gonds and Marias, while comparatively few aboriginal headmen, except in Panabaras and Ambagarh-Chauki zamindaris, have been declared protected. The whole original conception was wrong in that it involved conversion of the tribal headman or *gaontia* into a lessee or *thekadar* of his village. Various examples have been given in *The Aboriginal Problem*[3] of the way in which these Maria headmen were thus transformed into *thekadars*, and then lost their villages in the great famines, or for other causes, to non-aboriginal intruders, who now rack-rent and oppress the surviving aboriginal tenants. We may give here one example, that of the village of Dokhla in Panabaras zamindari. This village was settled before 1861 by a Maria headman and ten other Marias. The headman absconded during the great famines at the turn of the century. Another Gond was then given the lease, but ultimately could not pay the lease-money and had to surrender the village.

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. MQ5349.
[2] Ibidem, Sheet 64D, ref. MQ8366.
[3] Pp. 79-81.

1; Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

632 land remain vested in an aboriginal belonging to a tribe notified under the Land Alienation Act of the province, even new tenancies in favour of non-aboriginals require sanction. Often the existence of the aboriginal proprietor is the one thing that saves his fellow tribesmen from being ousted from their lands by Hindu and Muslim incomers. Once he disappears and free alienation of land by aboriginals becomes possible, they will soon sink finally to the level of landless hewers of wood and drawers of water, or at best of factory fodder for Nagpurs and Jamshedpurs. A recent official report on grazing and *nistar*[1] in the zamindaris frankly envisaged the disappearance of the tribal chieftains as probably a good thing; the non-aboriginal who would replace him, it was said, would bring new ideas, new capital, new progress, and therefore it would be better for the villages, which would be well managed by a non-aboriginal instead of being mismanaged or ignored by an aboriginal proprietor. What are the facts? Hardly a single 632 non-aboriginal who in the history of the Central Provinces has 563 elbowed the Gond proprietor out of his estates has done anything for the aboriginal tenantry except to reduce them to debt and helotry. Such new ideas as they have brought into the tribal villages have always tended to destroy or suppress everything good or vital in tribal custom and culture; their 'new progress' has been achieved by getting the aboriginal so heavily into debt that it has been easy to hand over his land to Hindus of castes more acceptable to the new landlord. Nor is it true that there has been no progress under the tribal zamindar: everywhere there has been a steady rise in permanent cultivation, as can clearly be seen from comparing present conditions in such remote estates as these Chanda and Drug zamindaris with the conditions recorded when the Central Provinces were formed in 1861. To the aboriginal also the fact that his *Raja*, as he will always term his zamindar whether or not Government recognize the title, is like him a Korku, a Gond, a Halba or a Maria, has great psychological significance; not all of his tribe are excluded from the seats of the mighty, and a Gond may even rule over a Brahman, and be the final arbiter in the social disputes within his estate not only of his own tribe, but even of Hindu castes. In many zamindaris, notably the Garchiroli estates, Government and District Council alike have neglected communications and nation-building; whatever there is of education and medical relief is even now largely paid for by the zamindar.

[1] *Grazing and Nistar in the Central Provinces Estates, the Report of an Enquiry*, by H. S. Kamath, I.C.S. (Nagpur, Government Printing, 1941); see especially paras. 358-64. *Nistar* means, roughly, tenants' rights of user of forest produce.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

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The Muria belief in equality is illustrated by a characteristic story. 'Raja Dokara ruled in Tulsidongri. It was thick jungle: there was no Brahmin to cook his food. So he went to Bhagavan to ask for one. Bhagavan said, "Certainly take one if you can recognize him. They all look alike to me". Bhagavan told everyone to wear a dhoti, and when they came, Brahmin and Ganda, Muria and Dhakar, Halba and Maria, the Raja found it impossible to tell which was which. So he sent Idur Kola Pen to see what he could do, but he also failed. At last a fly came and said, "Give me something to eat, and I'll get you a Brahmin". Idur Kola Pen offered it gold and silver and many tax-free villages. "No", said the fly, "I don't want these. There's a sore on your leg. Let me sit and feed there." Idur Kola Pen allowed it, and when it had fed, the fly settled on a Brahmin's head. Thus the man was recognized and he became Raja Dokara's cook.'

X883
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This conception of complete democracy affects the position of the leaders. Their power is not absolute; they can be, and sometimes are, removed from office. They can be punished by a meeting of the other members. At Palari, the three leaders—Diwan, Tahsildar and Jamadar—abused their position, and the boys and girls met and fined them. In any case, the rule of the ghotul is not that of a dictator, but of a council. Associated with the chief boy or girl is a company of two or three who advise them on all important matters.

These leaders do, of course, have their privileges. The little boys fag for them and massage them if the girls are absent. Little girls do the Belosa's hair and run her errands. In ghotul where partners have to be constantly changed, the leaders are sometimes allowed to have girls of their own. In Banjora, for example, the Kotwar, who is there the leader, and the Belosa always sleep together, though the others must change every two or three days.

V

X883
563

Are members of other tribes and the Hindu castes admitted to the ghotul? This is the sort of question that is usually met with an indignant denial from the Muria elders, who explain that they never admit outsiders for fear of possible matrimonial complications, and equally indignant denials from Hindus and others who claim that the ghotul is a degraded institution to which they would never send their children. Neither is true.

Throughout the Muria area may be found examples—not many examples, but some—of Muria-Lohar, Rawat, Nahar and even the despised Ganda and Ghasia being admitted as members of the dormitory. Such children receive titles; they are allotted duties and allowed all ghotul privileges. In Palli Barkot the people said that Muria-Lohar boys and girls were given the fullest privileges but that there was a ban on Mahara, Rawat and Kuruk. The Lohar children could sleep with the Muria children, but must not marry them. In Nayanar I discovered to my astonishment that two of the girls who were taking the leading part at a Muria wedding were Lohar—the Alosa and Dulosa of the ghotul. In Markabera, the most popular girl in the entire company, the Saile who had a Muria ghotul-partner, was a Lohar. The Belosa of the Mule ghotul was a Lohar, so was the Salya; in 1941 the Jamadar of Kokori, the Jamadar of Phunder, the Jalaru (a girl) of Phunder, the Jhoria of Modenga were all Lohar.

The leading drummer of Hatipakna was a Nahar and two of his brothers and a sister were also prominent members of the ghotul. At Junganar a Ganda boy was made the Suel, and a Ghasia was the Kotwar at Modenga. In Phunder there was a Kalar boy. Rawat are commonly admitted.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Such privileges are not universal or uncontrolled. In Junganar only very small Ganda girls may massage the boys or sleep in the ghotul; once they are mature, though they may attend the dances, they may not massage and must say Johar at a distance. This rule seems to have been made by the Ganda elders rather than by the Muria. For the Muria are generally more anxious to control the behaviour of the boys of other castes; girls are allowed to do what they like.

The relations of Muria and Muria-Lohar are discussed in more than one song. Here is a Manda dance song from Tursani village.

Jāging poysi weke dāda roy seng busur bhushās?	Where are you going with your bamboo basket, brother?
Nia bāti pāri dāda?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori hile bai.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wāde lyona bai.	I am a Lohar boy, girl.
Nima weke dān ton dāda?	Where are you going, brother?
Irum mara koyala bai	To get charcoal of mahua wood, girl.
Koyala pandi dān tona bai	I am going to make charcoal, girl.
Nana gala wāyāka dāda.	I will come with you, brother.
Nima icho wāyama bai.	Don't come with me, girl.
Jāti dube māyār bai.	Your caste will be broken, girl.
Sarus pite jori dāda.	Two cranes make a perfect pair, brother.
Jori ise ayahāt dāda.	We will pair off like them, brother.

A Har Pata, sung when the girls of Kehalakot go to dance in other ghotul at Diwali, is on the same theme.

Pāri porro nititon bai le.	On the bank of the field you were standing, girl.
Niya pāri wāti roy bai le?	What is your clan?
Pāri ori hile roy dāda le.	I have no clan, brother.
Nāwa pāri ātek roy dāda le.	If I had a clan, it would be yours.
Jāti sori layāna dāda le.	I am a girl of the Sori clan, brother.
Niya pāri wāti roy dāda le?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori hile roy bai le.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wade layona bai le	I am a blacksmith boy.
Titi dāda uti roy dāda le,	You have eaten and drunk me, brother,
Jāti dube kiti roy dāda le.	And have made my caste sink down.

Naturally such an arrangement sometimes leads to trouble. At Sarandi a Lohar chelik ran off with a Muria motiari, and since then outsiders have not been admitted there. At Gohora, the Saidar—a Rawat boy—eloped with the Pissa who was a Muria girl, and the ghotul was henceforward closed to visitors.

VI. Relations between Different Ghotul

Members of different ghotul meet at dances, marriages and festivals. They visit each other on dancing expeditions throughout the year. Sometimes they have dancing contests. Neighbouring ghotul send gifts to each other, especially at the time of eating parched rice at Diwali. Thus when I was at Siūhawand, the boys put aside a good portion of their parched rice to send to the Kokameta ghotul with which they had relations of special friendship. At Banjera they sent one measure of rice to Bhopna and one measure to Kokori asking the boys and girls of those ghotul to share their feast. Bhopna and Kokori returned the gifts at the Chherta festival.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Koitor, all meaning Lowland Koitor, and the plains below are either Dorbhum, Hatiyabhum or Kalpatti; Dor Koitor and Dorbhum, the terms most commonly used, are probably the source of the expression Dhur Koitor said to be used fairly generally in the Central Provinces to designate the ordinary Gond as distinct from the one who gives himself social airs as a Raj-Gond; a Gondi word has been assimilated to the Hindi '*dhur*' or '*dhul*' meaning 'dust', and the Gond commoner referred to as the 'Dust' Gond. Hatiya-bhum is simply the land of the *hat* or bazaar. *Kalpatti* is the ordinary Halbi term for lowlands, which we have already seen applied as the name of two *parganas* in Antagarh. Hatiya is similarly the name of a *pargana* in the north of Kondagaon.

Hill Marias

The Hill Maria tracts are shown by the letter E in the ethnographic map. An account of their country and distribution has been given already in Chapter II, pages 26-8. The estimate of 11,500 population is fairly accurate; I examined the actual census returns of all the Hill Maria villages except the five included in the outlying Mangnar *pargana* of Bhopalpatnam zamindari, and obtained a total of 11,361 (5,702 males and 5,659 females). There can only be 140 or 150 persons at the most in the Mangnar villages. Since the census, many Hill Marias have come back to the Abujhmar, chiefly from the Ahiri zamindari; it was found when the poll-tax settlement was effected in 1932 that 240 able-bodied males had so returned; probably, therefore, the Hill Maria population is now just over 12,000 in Bastar. There had in the past been a considerable exodus of Marias from the old Paralkot zamindari, owing to the zamindar's oppression. As they consider the new conditions in Bastar better than those in Ahiri, more may be expected to drift back into Bastar.

The tract is extremely homogeneous. In 22 Hill Maria villages in Kutru with 1,443 Hill Marias the only non-Marias are 38 Rawats and 1 Halba; in 9 Hill Maria villages in Dantewara there are 879 Marias to 3 Telanga, 98 Rawats and 19 Mahras. The Rawats are only in the villages near the plains where they are employed by Marias to tend cattle and are beginning to teach them the use of the plough and the milking of cattle; they speak Maria as fluently as Halbi, and in outward appearance are scarcely distinguishable from Marias. Most of the Hill Maria villages are in Antagarh, and have hardly any outsiders except occasional Rawats or liquor contractors. The few blacksmiths are really Marias, knowing no other language than Maria, having the same clans as the Marias and still occasionally marrying Maria girls; though, as among other tribes, there is always a tendency to look down on the blacksmith,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and to make him live by himself on the outskirts of the village, so that in the end he becomes almost a separate low caste. This, however, has not gone nearly as far among the Hill Marias as among the Bison-horn.

To the south, along the Indrawati valley, the Hill Marias are influenced strongly by the Bison-horn Marias, and the area concerned is marked on the map by the letter H. The influence of the Bison-horn Marias gets less as you go west down the valley towards Kutru, and beyond Kutru is replaced by that of the Telugu-influenced Koitor of the riverain tract, known generally in those parts as Dorlas. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of most of these villages near the river were once Hill Marias. They seem to have been enumerated as Murias in the 1931 census, and are included in the 15,000 persons whom I have indicated at the end of my account of the Murias as wrongly enumerated at census as Murias. Where the Hill Marias are the immediate neighbours of the Bison-horn Marias, the influence of the latter is strong. In theory, according to local legend the Mander, a tributary running more or less east to west and joining the Indrawati on its *southern* bank near Barsur, is the boundary between the two kinds of Marias, with the Indrawati as the boundary west of the confluence. Here the Hill Marias know the Bison-horn Marias as Dandami Koitor; but the name is not universal in Bastar, and I have therefore preferred to call them Bison-horn because the wearing of bison-horns by their male dancers is so obvious a peculiarity of the tribe. Formerly, the legend says, Fat Raja, the log-god of Mornar in the Mangnar *pargana* who is regarded almost as the overlord of all the log-gods of the Hill Marias, and his wife's brother Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan at Ghotpal, a large Bison-horn village south of the Indrawati, between Barsur and Gidam, divided up the Hill and Bison-horn Marias into *dadabhai* and *ahomama* clans (brother-clans and wife-clans), and in those days the Hill Marias used to intermarry with the Bison-horn, and each used to attend the other's festivals. One day, as the Gumelor clan of Hill Marias, which occupies a group of villages in Bhairamgarh Mar, Dantewara Mar and Mangnar, was trooping to Ghotpal to dance at the Koqsar festival there, carrying their axes on their shoulders, a Gume with his axe accidentally severed the *sem* bean vine of the Old Widow (*Kuram Mutla'i*), who thereupon put a curse on all the Hill Marias and forbade them ever again to come south of the Mander river for social or religious purposes. Since then, according to the Hill Marias, intermarriage and participation in each other's festivals has ceased. On the other

Hill Marias of Indrawati valley, influenced by Bison-horn Marias or Dorla Koitor

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandum* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandum*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Nennor new-eating feast.

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue.

Dogs and cats Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Darra, darra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bamboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *konda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralur are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasnar to Bhamragarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

markets. The Kuruks go up into the hills to collect these dues, and they also dry fish and bring it round from village to village in the hills, bartering it for grain, generally at the rate of five pieces the size of a finger for a *paili*[1] of *kuthi*; the Hill Marias allow them to sleep in the *paik-gotul* rest-house. They are expert with net and with rod and line. Frequently they stretch a cord over the head of a pool with several short lengths of line ending in baited hooks depending at intervals in the water, while they go across the tail of the pool in their dug-out canoes spanking the surface of the water with their paddles or with long bamboos to drive the fish up towards the baits. They fish simultaneously several little rods tied to clumps of rushes of reeds. They certainly catch fish at all times except in high floods, and send them alive to your camp in water in little dug out sections of trees. As boatmen they are expert in managing their clumsy and heavy dug-outs, which are generally made of *Bombax malabaricum* wood owing to the heavy duty charged by the Forest Department for the far more durable teak. I spent nearly three weeks in their charge in November 1927 with Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the State Medical Officer, journeying in their dug-outs down the Indrawati from Kutru to the Jitam rapids, whence they returned to their villages. They were expert in shooting rapids even with two dug-outs lashed together, which they sometimes took through the wild tangle of rapids above Bhamragarh with two paddlers standing in the bows and two in the stern. The paddles are rectangles of teak nailed to teak handles. One dug-out would shoot ahead to explore the rapids, and its owner appear suddenly on the top of a rock to shout directions to the rest; old Kuruks and their grey-headed wives would appear out of tributary streams from riparian villages and croak away their greetings in the guttural Hill Maria dialect, and then paddle back upstream in the morning mist with charcoal or wood smoking around them in broken earthen crocks at the bottom of their boats, carried for warmth. At dusk, after escorting us to our camp on the Bastar bank, they invariably would paddle croaking off to rocky islands in midstream, whence at night the eye would be delighted with their numerous fires of driftwood and the ear with the melodious refrains of their songs.

The Hill Marias make various forms of fish cages and traps with reeds and cane. They dam river shallows in the hot weather and poison the pools. In the rains they make *gorla* piers of boulders in cylindrical wicker-work baskets, like the piers of their bridges, between which is laid a platform of wicker-work, the upstream end of which rests on the bed of the stream, and is weighted down with

[1] A measure containing about 4 lb. weight of grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

285

The favourite basketry material is bamboo, in thin strips varying from half an inch to three-quarters in width. Occasionally the wefts are of reed, coloured twine, or bamboos pared down to the thickness of twigs. Patterns are produced by using warps of dry bamboo strips from the heart-wood, and wefts of green strips from the outer rind. Nearly all the Hill Maria basketry is twilled, with each weft passing over and then under two or three warps, the topmost edge or rim being twilled-twined with a weft of thin bamboo pared to the size of twigs; and sometimes an ornamental plaited ring is worked around the central circumference. The measure baskets made by the Hill Marias and brought by them to the markets for sale or for measuring out the grain which they sell or the salt which they buy are of different shapes and sizes for each commodity. The grain measure is a *bhurki*, eight of which make a *soli*[1] or half a seer, i.e. a measure containing about a pound's weight of rice. There are slightly different sizes for rice, *kutki*, mustard and pulses, according to the size of the different grains; all *bhurki* measures are little round baskets with slightly convex bottoms and uniform in diameter at top and bottom. For salt, a rather similar basket called a *kochli* is made, sufficient to hold one pice worth of salt, of roughly the same capacity as a *bhurki*; they are graduated for smaller quantities by being plastered inside with varying quantities of mud or cow-dung. *Mahua* flowers are measured by being heaped on shallow dishes called *kurli*, shaped like inverted cones or Annamese hats; each should contain 4 *pailis*, or 128 *bhurkis*, and those that I tested were remarkably accurate. The Hill Marias sell also the flat basket dishes already referred to, but rather larger than those they use for their own plates; they are called *bediya*.

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2. Iron-work

Frequent mention has already been made of the Maria blacksmiths, and some of their tempering and manufacturing methods have been described in the section dealing with weapons and tools. These blacksmiths appear to be of Maria stock, speaking the Maria language, indistinguishable physically, having the same phratries and clans, and following the same customs. Enquiry in the big blacksmith settlements at Bagmundi Panera in Jagdalpur tahsil, at Kamargudem below the Arapur ghat in Konta tahsil (both Bison-horn blacksmith villages), and from the Hill Maria blacksmiths at Nugur in Kutru zamindari, showed in every case that some of the blacksmiths either had themselves once been cultivators or had fathers who were originally

[1] 5 *tola* or Government rupees' weight of rice is contained in one *bhurki*: 8 *bhurki* = 1 *soli*, 4 *soli* = 1 *paili*, 2 *paili* = 1 *ori*, 2 *ori* = 1 *kurli*, 20 *ori* = 1 *khandi* = 40 *paili*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyeq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyeq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bugi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and removed. This air passage serves for the forge the same purpose as the earthen pipe *tuyère* for the smelting furnace, and the bamboo pipes of the bellows are arranged to converge at its entrance. The hole originally excavated is filled with *mahua* charcoal.

The smiths' only tools, which they make themselves, are the pointed and blunt ended hammer or *mutti* already mentioned, and long iron pincers with long noses, which they call *andes*. They generally have large and small hammers. The haft is inserted in a hole right through the maximum thickness of the head, at a point about a third of its length from the broad flat end; the remaining two-thirds tapers to a rough point.

3. Brass-work

The brass workers already frequently mentioned, unlike the blacksmiths, are by now practically a distinct caste. Hindus and Murias call them Ghasias, which is the name applied elsewhere in Central India, Chhota Nagpur and Orissa to one of the lowest and most degraded of the untouchable castes, whose usual occupation is grass-cutting and horse-tending, while some sections make combs for the hair or for weavers' looms. Even in Bastar, where many of them are skilled artisans, the wildest Maria holds them in profound contempt. The Maria calls them Gharwa. In outward appearance there is little difference between them and their Muria or Maria neighbours, and probably in the remote past they may have been recruited from these or other aboriginal stocks. Rohilla traders and oppressive zamindari managers in the past have often employed Ghasia duns to extract money from Marias; such is the Maria's feeling of degradation if a Ghasia comes near his house that the villagers would combine to pay a miserable rupee or two to these extortioners to get rid of their foul presence.

The Gharwas buy old brass or bronze in the markets or through Hindu middlemen. They make their brass ornaments, spoons, bells and Muria hunting horns by the *cire-perdue* process. The first or inner core of their moulds is made of earth from white-ants' hills, and known as *mati-kutan*; the earth is puddled with water and moulded to the needed shape in the hands. This is dried in the sun, and when hard covered with a coating of beeswax, on which the desired pattern is made in relief with long thin threads or small pellets of beeswax; various patterns can be produced by whipping these threads round the circumference of the *mati-kutan* core, or applying them on the sides of its plain wax covering in coils, spirals, suns, moons, lozenges, twined, or in any other pattern; and the pellets are used to produce bands of dots. The wax is warmed till it is pliant in the hands, and then forced through a tool called a

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

326 *pichhi* for the making of these thin wax threads. The *pichhi* consists of two parts each shaped like the letter T, but with a short stem and the cross-piece or handle three times as long as the stem. One T-piece is entirely of hard wood, handle and stem being cylindrical and smoothly rounded; but the stem of the second T-piece is hollowed so that the solid stem of the first may fit closely in it, and at its bottom it has a brass cap with holes like the lid of a pepper pot. A lump of soft wax is placed in this hollow stem, and then the solid stem of the other T-piece is fitted into the hollow socket, and the Gharwa presses the two cross-piece handles together in one hand, so as to force wax through the perforations like meat through a mincing machine.

When the core has been covered with wax and the wax pattern, it is known as *main-kutan*, *main* meaning wax. The *main-kutan* is covered over closely with another layer of white-ant clay with a drain-hole left at one end; this clay must be pressed firmly on to the wax pattern, to take the impress of it. It is dried and heated enough to melt the wax, which is run off from the drain-hole. It remains to replace the melted wax with molten metal. The *main-kutan* as it stands is not strong enough, and so it is again covered over with a thick coating of white-ant clay mixed with water in which certain leaves and grasses have been cooked, which gives the clay a greenish colour. At the top, over the drain-hole through which the wax was poured out, a large clay-cup or *khondi* is plastered as part of this new clay covering, and the whole affair is now known as a *kaskut-chancha*. This is hardened in the sun, and then baked in a furnace with the *khondi* uppermost; the metal melts and falls through the drain-hole into the place occupied by the wax, and takes the pattern left by the wax on the clay that was plastered over it.

323 There are no potters in the heart of the Abujhmar hills, partly because in the valleys of the clear rocky mountain streams there is no suitable clay, and partly because the Hill Maria still grows and uses gourds for many purposes, or else uses bamboo tubes. But all now use earthen pots at least for cooking, and for the Pot of the Departed, many also for drawing and storing water. At every market, therefore, in the valleys and plains below there are potters who do a considerable trade with the Hill Marias, and some have settled in their villages like Nugur and Lakka between the Kutru foot of the hills and the Indrawati, while, of course, potters are plentiful in the Bison-horn country. [564] The potters belong to the great Kumhar potter caste, at least in name, though here again many differ little in type from surrounding Marias. They use the common type of Indian potters' wheel, and

4. Pottery

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

623 692 tahsildars, took the law into their own hands and had the thieves killed.

623 622 692 564 Purely social matters, breaches of caste or tribal prejudices, were left by the State to the jurisdiction of caste *panchayats* and of the caste headmen, appointed for nearly all Hindu and semi-Hindu castes in the State by the Ruling Chief in the tahsils and by the zamindars for their own zamindaris; after the first appointment these offices tended to become hereditary in the family of the person appointed, the succession having to be recognized by the Ruling Chief, from whom the headmen of leading castes would receive a turban as insignia of office. A register of these headmen is kept, and appeals from their decisions in caste *panchayat* in social matters lie direct to the Ruling Chief, this power during the long minority of the late Maharani of Bastar having been exercised on her behalf by a relative of hers who manages the State temples at Jagdalpur. But the State never appointed caste headmen for Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who retained their own tribal customs in these matters, and whose *panchayats* did not, like those of Hindu castes, deal only with social matters, but also with petty crime and with the administration and agricultural management of the villages and clans, as well as their relations with the officers of the State. To some extent the Murias were in the same position; but in certain areas caste headmen had been appointed for them, and they had learnt to defer to the Palace as the ultimate arbiter in social matters, while great numbers of their villages had been granted to alien lessees who asserted their own authority and belittled that of the traditional headmen and *panchayats*.

622 623 692 A text for the enquiries which I had made into the *panchayats* of the Marias was the following passage from the appendix to the chapter on caste (Chapter IX, p. 239) in Marten's 1911 *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*:—

> 'The following account of the tribal council of the Maria Gonds of South Chanda has been sent in by the Manager of the Ahiri estate, and is worth quoting almost in full. Every genuine Maria village has a village headman or *patel*, called the *Gaita*. In addition to his office as a *gaita* he generally exercises also the hereditary functions of a *Bhumia* or religious headman of the village. This dual office used formerly to be held as a rule by one and the same man in the village, and, with a few exceptions here and there owing to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia*, it is still so held in the majority of cases. The man enjoying the double office is therefore the patriarch of the whole village community, and his authority in the village (or a group of two or three villages) under him is supreme. This post is hereditary. The caste has not a standing Panchayat or governing body. It is called together when required. But the system prevailing in the caste is far more developed and is in certain respects more far-reaching than the ordinary Panchayat
623 692 system prevailing in other castes. The village *Gaita*, on receiving a report of a misdemeanour or other occurrence in the village, calls two or three elders of the village together—the number is not fixed, nor is it necessary to call the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

622 kingdoms or *garhs* of forgotten chiefs, or divisions of the early
623 medieval Telanga kingdoms of Barsur, Dantewara or Bhairamgarh.
632 The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chudala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

689 Social offences involving exclusion from tribal ceremonies and feasts are very similar in these days to those of neighbouring Hindu
●564 castes. The worst offences are to get maggots in wounds, to take
684 food from or have sexual relations with persons of the despised
688 Ghasia, Mahra or Lohar castes, and to break the rules of exogamy by having sexual relations with a girl of a brother-clan. Another offence, which among the Bison-horn Marias may lead to considerable trouble, is the eating of any new crop or the cutting of grass or bamboo before the appropriate *pandum* has been celebrated; this form of sacrilege is believed to be avenged by the earth or clan-god sending tigers to carry off cattle or men, and in a case which came before me in which such a visitation had followed the cutting of grass by two villagers before the Kare Pandum the *panchayat* had ordered them to compensate the owner of each cow or bullock killed by the avenging tigers. The way in which breaches of the rules of exogamy are dealt with has already been described
689 (pages 245-6 above). Any form of social relations with Ghasia,
564 Mahra or Lohar, however unwitting, entails penalties not only
783 on the actual offender, but also often on his near kinsmen. In the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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783

1913 case (see page 283 above) in which two Hill Marias murdered a Maria Lohar girl with whom they had been cohabiting, their parents and brothers all had to be purified by the *pargana* headman, and the actual murderers were purified by him a year after the murder; one of the main reasons for the villagers hushing up the crime was the belief that greater harm might have resulted to the clan if the Lohar girl had borne a child to the murderers than from them killing her. In 1926, Oyami Masa of Malhanar in the Kutru Mar hill *pargana*, an orphan boy six years old, was outcasted for taking some food from a Ghasia who was spending the night in the village *kos-gotul*[1] (strangers' rest-house) and found the child half-starved. As soon as the villagers heard of this they regarded him as outcasted. They realized, however, that he could not be expected to pay the expenses of the purification ceremony, and as they themselves had had poor harvests and were not in a position to meet the cost just then, they built a hut for the child at some distance from the rest of the village, and there he had to live for two years, till they could pay to purify him; meanwhile they provided food for him, leaving it for him at some distance from his hut. After two years had elapsed they subscribed eight annas cash as remuneration to Arki Burga of Jegur, the *Sendhia*, ten *paili* of rice and a *paili* of pulse, and invited the *Sendhia* to come and purify the boy. The men of the neighbouring villages of the clan were also asked to attend. At the bidding of the *Sendhia* the villagers built seven small huts in a row, and the boy had to pass through each in turn, each being burnt down as soon as he had passed through it. The *Sendhia* himself then shaved the whole of the boy's head, including even his crown-tuft. This done, the boy was taken to the river, made to bathe thrice and brought back to the village, where the *Sendhia* burnt his tongue with a *karra* (*Odsa marra*) twig, made him drink a little from a cup of milk into which he had dipped a piece of gold, and sprinkled the rest of the milk over the boy and the onlookers. The boy then fetched water, and in this the *Sendhia* boiled the rice and pulses, and served the cooked food to the boy and all the clansmen present. This incident typifies the way in which Marias combine to relieve each other's difficulties. The postponement of the caste feast until the offender has had time to collect all that is necessary is almost a rule of tribal life, and one that might with advantage be copied by the pharasaical elders of Hindu castes in British India. The social offence may offend the clan-god, and so its expiation is the concern of the whole clan, which therefore must help the offender gradually to raise the cost of the expiation ceremonies.

[1] See page 100 above.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and uncomplicated view is correct. Social problems are usually very intricate and very simple solutions have so far always been found wanting.

'It cannot be denied, however, that alcoholic liquor is liable to change an individual's mode of reaction, and therefore plays an important part as a crimino-etiological factor. The most prominent psychological effects of alcohol are: emotional changes, usually in the direction of euphoria and increased irritability, but occasionally towards dysphoria (especially in the later stages of intoxication); reduced inhibition of drive impulses, particularly of a sexual nature; more optimistically coloured judgements; a reckless disposition; reduced control of actions; increased physical mobility, with a tendency to impulsive and thoughtless actions; a general lowering of the moral level. These effects indicate that intoxication is conducive to certain kinds of criminality, such as acts of violence—assault, manslaughter, rape and other sexual crimes, defamation and resistance to the police. Alcohol is, as a matter of fact, a more or less important contributory cause in many such crimes'.[1]

Typical crimes of drunkenness among the Maria may be briefly illustrated. A man and his wife were illegally distilling mahua liquor in a field. They both got very drunk on the fresh spirit and as they went staggering home, the woman fell and broke the pot, and her husband beat and killed her in a drunken fury.[2] One day a party of men met to gamble. One of them (as is generally the case, since gambling is not an aboriginal vice) was a Mahara. The party drank a lot of salphi juice, and perhaps some mahua spirit as well. There was a quarrel and the Mahara beat one of the Maria, a serious matter involving the latter's excommunication. The Maria in his drunken rage killed the Mahara and then gave himself up to the police.[3]

Twelve out of the thirteen cases where murder was due to drinking landa rice-beer occurred at festivals. For example, at one festival a man abused his elder brother's wife for not tethering the cattle properly or clearing away the cow-dung. She abused him in return, and in his drunken fit he stabbed her with an arrow.[4] At another festival party,

[1] Kinberg, op. cit., p. 211.
[2] Case No 26.
[3] Case No 35.
[4] Case No 43.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 desire while in jail. Boti of Telam declared that the doctor
831 had made them all impotent by medicine put in the food. On the other hand, Pandru of Chichari said that he frequently suffered from erections in jail and from nocturnal emissions. Naturally, however, the worst thing about jail-life is the deprivation of the company of women, though many Maria would modify this by saying that it is rather the whole family atmosphere, houses, children, cattle as well as the wife, that was missed. When I asked one youth what jail-life was like, he said, 'No wife, no bazaar, no children, no family'. But the thing that most oppressed him in jail was the silence.

697 The food in jail is excellent, far better than the prisoners get in their own homes. Since 1935, a special effort has been made to improve the health of the prisoners among whom at one period there had been a rather heavy mortality. The result has been highly satisfactory. There was only 1 death in 1938, 2 in 1939 and 4 in 1940. Accommodation in the jail is for 308 prisoners and the daily average is between 210 and 230. Special measures are taken against respiratory diseases, notably influenza. Phyrnoderma (toad-skin), which was one of the chief causes of reduced vitality among aboriginal prisoners, has been practically banished by the prophylactic administration of meat and cod liver oil. The ex-convicts generally grumble at the food and declare that they are continually unwell, but all reports agree in saying that they actually eat heartily and keep very fit. I think the real fact is that the food is unfamiliar to them and that many of them suffer from nervousness and a general psychic depression which makes them feel wretched, even though their actual bodily health is excellent. Several prisoners have declared how they long for roots and the gruels prepared in the ordinary way at home.

697 The work given to the prisoners varies. Some of the
564 Maria work in the kitchens, and it is interesting that the Hindu prisoners respect their social status and agree to eat from them. Ghasia and Panka are not admitted into the jail kitchen. Maria and Muria do not do sweepers' work in the jail,[1] though when a man is hanged Maria prisoners deal

[1] But I believe that Gond prisoners in the Central Provinces are made to work as sweepers, a thing that should never be allowed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 564 with the corpse. Short-term prisoners, suitably shackled, are allowed beyond the walls to work in the gardens of the Palace and the higher State officials. Other prisoners learn to make baskets and chiks. But the main prison industry in Jagdalpur, as throughout India, is weaving. Some of the Maria have become experts at this art. I was told that Kunjami Malle and Marvi Tibru were excellent at it, and that Marami Dhurwa of Palnar was so good that he was sent to Raipur for training. In 1940 the receipts from jail industries exceeded Rs 10,000.

697 286 564 Unfortunately no aboriginal prisoner is able to take advantage after his release of the training he receives in jail. For weaving is regarded as the monopoly of the low caste Ganda and Mahara, and no aboriginal will ever degrade himself by practising it. Should he do so, he would be excommunicated, he would be unable to marry his daughters and he would be forbidden access to his clan and village festivals. I have constantly enquired about this and especially as to whether there is any reason behind it. Nobody seems to know the origin of the taboo. It may date from the days when the aboriginals did not use cloth at all, and regarded it as something foreign and alien. It may have simply come into being because of the Maria's dislike and scorn for the particular castes which practise weaving. It is not impossible, of course, that the Mahara and the Ganda themselves have encouraged the idea so as to enjoy the monopoly of trade. If all the Maria ex-convicts were to set up looms and make their own cloth, the existing weavers would be hard hit financially. I met one Maria who had tried to carry on his weaving work after a term in jail. But there had been such a commotion about it that he had to abandon the project.

000 It is a pity, I think, that some art or craft could not be taught to aboriginal prisoners, not only in Bastar but throughout India, which would be of value to them after their release. In five, ten or fifteen years a man could become an expert carpenter or wood-carver, a first-rate cook, an admirable market gardener. The Maria do learn a little gardening but they might do more, and carpentry on a large scale would be invaluable. For the aboriginal blacksmiths, whether they be Maria Lohar in Bastar or Agaria and Asur

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It is remarkable to contrast the effect on the tribal population 565 ●
of Ahiri of two influences, that of the zamindar and his administra- 177
tion at Ahiri and that of the Allapilli forest depot. The zamindar as a practising Raj-Gond, related both to the former royal house of Chanda and to the neighbouring zamindari families of Kutru and Bhopalpatnam in Bastar State, might be expected to be in some sense a focus or rallying point of tribal culture. But he and his relatives and agents (so far as the latter are Gond) are representatives of what Verrier Elwin describes as culturally the fourth class of aboriginals, the old aristocracy of the country who 'retain the old tribal name and their clan and totem rules and observe elements of tribal religion though they generally adopt the full Hindu faith and live in modern and even in European style'. He adds that the members of this fourth class may be said to have won the battle of culture-contact, since 'aristocratic tradition, economic stability or affluence, outside encouragement, a certain arrogance and self-confidence characteristic alike of ancient families and modern enterprise, have enabled them to assimilate the blessings of civilization without injury to themselves'; but he wisely reminds us that 'such educated progressive persons are not necessarily, simply because they are of aboriginal stock, the best qualified to represent their poorer brethren, of whose needs they often have only an elementary knowledge'.[1] The zamindar of Ahiri at least on the economic side has done much to preserve his tribal ryots from the evil effects of such sudden contacts as have reduced to 'despair and degradation' Elwin's third class of aboriginals, 'those who under the influence of external contact have begun to lose their hold on tribal culture, religion and social organization'.[2] He has accordingly himself been active in efforts to save his people from alien money-lenders, and was, for example, an active and valuable member of a voluntary debt conciliation board that worked in Sironcha tahsil in 1935-6.[3] Yet the fact that Ahiri, as the headquarters of the estate administration, especially when the estate has been under the Court of Wards, has become a centre of the modern way of life, has brought to Ahiri and Allapilli and all the adjacent villages a steady influx of outsiders, mostly Hindu, as officials, contractors, cloth and salt dealers, money-lenders and cultivators. The Dasehra festival, attended by ryots from all villagers coming to honour the zamindar as their Raja, has accustomed even remote Maria villagers to certain fundamental Hindu ideas. The Court of Wards administration has proceeded on its ruthless, standardized lines, to impose on the

[1] The quotations are from *The Aboriginals* (Oxford Pamphlet on India Affairs, No. 14, Bombay, 1943), pp. 10-11.
[2] Ibidem, p. 10.
[3] *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 285-6.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

565 177 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally therefore on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 466 166 The Allapilli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen, etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

622 791 [1] For example, the suppression of *podu* cultivation, or the deliberate curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

> The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village, and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village; sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*. Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> 'This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official, and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are
285 allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
614

[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

861 The complete *gotul* organization is a feature of Muria and not of Hill Maria culture. But as it has extended to Padalibhum and Nurbhum (possibly also to parts of Tapalibhum and Behra Mar) among the Hill Marias, a brief account of its salient features will not be out of place; it may be expected to spread into the hills with the gradual improvement of communications. A fairly full account from my notes on the Murias has been printed in the *Census of India* 1931 *Report*, Vol. I, Part III B., pp. 81-3. It may be added that it is easier for the Marias of Padalbhum to copy their Muria neighbours because Padalibhum not only has two or three villages which are not Padali villages but belong to the Nuroti and Usendi clans, but even in Padali villages has settlers of these two clans, which are *akomama* (wife-clan) to them.

[858] Boys and girls of an age to visit the *gotul* dormitories are known as *leyur* and *leyas* respectively. All the boys assemble at the 857 dormitory in the evening for dancing, games and social and sexual 571 training, sleeping on there after the departure of the girls to their homes late in the night. The girls attend at the dormitory in the 864 evening, each girl being paired off with a boy of an *akomama* clan. The girls have to comb their boys' hair and massage their arms and legs, to dance with them, and to be initiated into the mysteries of sex with them. Marriage frequently follows these dormitory unions, but by no means always does. Children are expected to attend the dormitory from the age of eleven or twelve, and the parents may be fined for not sending them. Every boy and girl has a special dormitory name or rank; the smaller children have designations which are little more than names, but those of the elder boys change as they are promoted, and involve special duties. The Hill Marias seem to have adopted the ranks for the boys only, the girls retaining the name given them on their entry until they leave the dormitory organization on marriage, but taking among their fellows the precedence of their boy-mates in the dormitory.

[171] In Padalibhum the head boy of the dormitory is always known as the *leyur-gaita*, and below him the *gotul* officials are the *leyur-majhi*, the *silledar*, the *jaliarsi*, the *laharu*, the *baiddar* and the *kamdar*; of these, *silledar*, *baiddar* and *kamdar* are Hindi terms copied from the titles of State or zamindari servants; in many a Muria dormitory all the office-holders have such designations instead of the old native names. Besides these names or designations to which [557] special duties and privileges are attached, they have for the boys the names Jalka, Jolsai and Joria, and probably others. The girls' dormitory names ascertained were Jaliaru, Lahari, Manjaro, Nirosa, Jhelo, Gujaro, Piyosa and Belosa. At a camp at Partabpur attended by Hill Marias from Padalibhum, the *leyur-gaita* of three

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

village dormitories were present. All were Padali by clan from Padali villages. Their dormitory mates were respectively Lahari, a Nuroti girl, Jaliaru, an Usendi girl, and Nirosa, a Nuroti girl; and despite their different designations, these girls were the head-girls of their villages in virtue of their boys' ranks. Another Usendi village in Padalibhum called its head boy Silledar, and his mate was Jhelo, a Padali girl. All four stated freely that they expected ultimately to marry their mates, and that they and all the other dormitory boys often had sexual intercourse with their girls.

The dormitory in these *parganas*, as among the neighbouring Murias, is really a school for training the youth of both sexes in conjugal and social duties and in the lore of the clan; the dormitory office-bearers are practically prefects and monitors. The headman and other elders of the villages frequently call on the head-boy for the help of his boys and girls in field-work; but here they are not paid wages, as among the Murias, but are only fed by those for whom they are working. They are also asked to help in thatching houses and building granaries. In weddings the girls are expected to sing, and boys to collect fuel and leaves for cups, and both have to dance; they have similar functions at the various new-eating festivals. The head-boy imposes fines for unjustifiable absence from the dormitory, or from weddings and festivals, or general disobedience of his orders or those of other office-bearers, a bottle of *mahua* spirit being the usual penalty, the cost of which falls upon the parents. The head-boy's mate has similar powers of fining other girls. At the nightly meetings of boys and girls at the dormitory there are dancing in season, tale-telling, singing and games, and from an early age boys are given practical lessons in sexual intercourse.

B. Bison-horn Marias

The information which I was able to collect on this subject among the Bison-horn Marias is much less full than that given above for the Hill Marias, and needs further testing and considerable supplementing.

During pregnancy the mother carries on her ordinary work. The only note which I have of any disability attaching to pregnancy is that when the flesh of animals slain in the *veta* ceremonial hunts is divided up and eaten, no share may be given to the husband of a wife who either is pregnant or has her monthly period. In most Bison-horn villages there is no menstruation hut, and in their houses there is no menstruation room. A few villages near the foot of the Abujhmar hills have a hut where young girls are

[see cat. 116, pp. 425-426. - Awl 9/51]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

554 558 went over to Tikanpal to offer sacrifice on behalf of that village.

At Muler I visited the widow of Ido Deva, an unpleasant quarrelsome fellow who had recently been hanged for murdering one of the most popular men in the village. In spite of this, his widow was well treated. She was not excommunicated and was allowed to share in the usual feasts. But she always remained inside her house, and generally refused to talk to people; the headman told me that there would probably be some difficulty in getting her two sons married, for people would say, 'After all, their father was a murderer'.

000 The relationship between the families of a murderer and his victim is always a delicate one, and Frazer has collected many examples from all over the world in illustration. The Uraon make sacrifices to the angry ghost of a murdered man, and sometimes even reckon him among the ancestral spirits of his murderer. Roy records that two Uraon, related to each other as cousins, had a quarrel over a piece of land; and one of them, in a sudden fit of anger, thrust his axe into the bowels of his companion. The man, thus struck, at once ran to his assailant's house and, pressing his wounded stomach with his hands, sat down at one corner of the hut and exclaimed, 'Here I establish myself', and then ran out again to the field in dispute and dropped down dead. To this day, the descendants of the murderer propitiate the murdered man's spirit. After the harvest, the first sheaf of paddy from the field where he fell dead is offered to his spirit at the same corner of the house where he sat down before his death. The descendants of the murdered man too are allowed access to the spot in order to make similar offerings.[1]

682 571 I have not found this custom in Bastar, though that does not mean that it does not exist. But I have found everywhere an anxiety that there should not be any enmity between the families. Compensation is often paid to the victim's widow or family, and the murderer's family may contribute to the expenses of the funeral. Both families should always have a feast together. In Gamawada the family of an imprisoned homicide, Barse Mata, gave every kind of help to the relatives of his victim: among other

[1] S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 69 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

things they provided a pot of rice-beer and a pig for his funeral rites.

V

BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE DEAD

The reaction of society to violent crime may be seen from the funerary arrangements that are made both for the murderer and his victim.[1]

In the great majority of cases these arrangements are complicated by the fact that the corpse of the deceased is not available. It is generally taken to headquarters for post-mortem examination, and when a man is hanged in jail his body is disposed of by the prison authorities. This does not mean, however, that the funeral ceremonies are omitted. Clothes and other property belonging to the dead are brought back from the Magistrate's Court or from the jail, and these are used to represent the corpse. When Markami Deva killed his wife at Darbha the people brought her clothes, necklace and armlets to the village. These relics were not brought into the house, but were put outside in the yard. The usual funeral drum was not beaten, but the relatives gathered and the brother of the husband (the husband himself was in police custody) put haldi and oil on the things, and a relative by marriage carried them in a basket to a pyre which had been prepared outside the village. Men and women walked behind throwing seeds of rice, maize and pulse mixed together in the basket.

The pyre was under a tree over which a great camel's-foot creeper was growing. They carried the basket round it seven times. Relatives put small pieces of cloth upon it in the usual way and removed them. They hung a bit of cloth on the tree. Then they lit the pyre and went away. They did not erect an uraskal, though here they said that they would

[1] Everywhere in India the ghost of a murdered man or a suicide is dangerous. The Lushai think a victim's ghost will haunt the murderer and drive him mad. J. Shakespear, *The Lushai Kuki Clans* (London, 1912), p. 76. Both the Lushai and Lakher perform ceremonies to make the dead man's ghost harmless and to ensure that it becomes the servant of the slayer in the other world. If this is not done, the ghost may blind, lame or paralyse the man who killed him. N. E. Parry, *The Lakhers* (London, 1932), p. 213. Frazer gives many examples from other parts of the world. Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III, pp. 103 ff.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

674 very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a murder is extremely rare and due usually to some suspicion of
572 black magic. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is subject to sudden fits of blind rage, especially after he has been taking large quantities of his intoxicating gruel, *landa*, which is anathema to the Hill Marias. In that state he will seize any weapon that comes to hand, whether it be his wife's heavy rice pestle, a log of wood, an axe or a bow and arrow, and murder for the most trivial of reasons; the State Jail at Jagdalpur has always a high percentage of Bison-horn Marias doing time for homicide. He also is capable of nursing his revenge for a long time; a recent example was given by a strapping Bison-horn Maria from Palnar, who, after serving twelve years of a commuted death sentence, soon after his release took the first chance of picking a quarrel with a man whom he considered deliberately to have let him down by not giving evidence in his defence twelve years before, and battered his head in with a heavy bamboo stick. The Bison-horn Maria will in his fury declare an implacable enmity by stalking round his foe's house three times, either plucking straws from the thatch, or whistling the peculiar *su'i* whistle, or throwing some of his own pubic hairs at the house; and murder is the inevitable result. There were twenty-seven murder trials in Bastar between 1917 and 1923, and in eighteen of them the murderers were Bison-horn Marias, but only two of the murders were committed by Hill Marias. About half the Bison-horn Maria murders are committed in *landa* intoxication, and almost the same proportion in sudden fits of rage about nothing; for example, wives often are killed when the husband dislikes his food or it is not ready for him; one even lost her life for refusing to cook for her husband when he woke up hungry in the middle of the night. But there are on record Bison-horn Maria murders committed for all the ordinary sordid and criminal murder motives; the Bison-horn Maria is a man of far stronger feelings than the Hill Maria. The former actually runs amuck on occasion
[158] like the Malay; in two such cases the offender pleaded that he suffered from fits and ran amuck under the delusion, in the one case, of pursuit and, in the other, of possession by evil spirits and of the
628 imminence of a new rebellion. Cain indeed wrote in 1876 that 'blood revenge' had hardly died out in the Godavari valley, and was said to be 'in full exercise' in Bastar. The only apparent case of a hereditary vendetta of which I am aware occurred in Orcha, a Hill Maria village, where a grandfather and his son were murdered at long intervals for suspected witchcraft, while the grandson conveniently fell off a sago-palm tree as soon as he was old enough to claim the hereditary post of *pargana* headman.
692 There is a strong feeling everywhere of an eye for an eye and a tooth

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

XII. Friendships

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572

The 'official' friendships which are such a common feature of the social life of many castes and tribes in the Central Provinces and Chota Nagpur are not popular among the Muria. This *bode-kiyāna* (friendship-making) is regarded as a Hindu custom and throughout the Jhoria country is practically unknown. In the Kondagaon Tahsil, especially in villages along the main road and in parts of the Bara Dongar Pargana, such friendships are indeed made, but do not play a very important part in the ghotul or in village life.

As in the Central Provinces, when these ceremonial friendships are instituted, the parties to them henceforth stand together and help each other in a very special way.[1]

Dalton says the ties 'are almost as binding as those of marriage'.[2] The parties may not address each other by their ordinary names, though they may continue to use their ghotul titles. Such friendships can only be made between people who are *akonāma* to one another. In certain cases boys and girls can make these friendships with each other, though they are much more common between members of the same sex.

In Bastar the best-known friendships are the *keonra-phul*, the *supāri-phul*, the *sakhi* and the *baru*. I have not found the *jawāra* friendship, though I have occasionally heard of the *gangājal* and *bhajli*. It is said that the *keonra-phul* is made between men and women who stand in a joking relationship to each other as, for example, between a man and his elder brother's wife. A girl often becomes *sakhi* to her father's brother's wife. Boys and girls can be *baru* to each other and there is a line in a song which suggests that they can also become *jai-mongra-phul*:

> He asked me to be his *jai-mongra* flower-friend, mother;
> But I am too shy to be that, mother.

These friendships are initiated by a simple ceremony in the ghotul. Two leaf-cups are made and little lamps are placed in them and lit. The friends wash each other's feet, stand face to face, put flowers behind each other's ears, exchange three times shoots of grain, *supāri*-nut, a little sand or whatever it may be, embrace and greet each other by their new names and salute everyone who is there. They then distribute coconut and liquor.

I have not found many examples of this charming and natural practice. There were such alliances in Binjhli and Alor. At Sidhawand, Pilsai had a *keonra-phul* in the Sirdar and at Masora Phirtu had a friend of the same

[1] This system of friendships in Chota Nagpur and Orissa has been described by Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, pp. 235ff.; *The Kharias*, p. 162; *The Birhors*, pp. 527ff.; *The Oraons*, pp. 396ff. Roy stresses the fact that the aboriginals generally form these alliances with members of other communities, thus indicating that the custom is a borrowed one. Certainly any elaboration seems to indicate external contact: thus the primitive Juang only have the Makro, Sangat and Phulo friendships, and do not take the names of flowers. The Dhurwa-Parja have the custom in a very simplified form. I have not found it at all among the Maria. See also Gordon, op. cit., p. 188, who remarks that after an acquaintance with the people of Bilaspur of fourteen years he 'can recall only one instance in which such a friendship was broken', and adds 'It has been hinted to me that these friendships sometimes result in a community of possessions extending even to a community of wives'. Firth has given an interesting account of such bond-friendships in Tikopia, which he considers 'less striking forms of covenant' than the blood-brotherhood of Africa, but which illustrate 'some aspects of the sociology of co-operation and the very real and immediate advantages of a psychological, economic and social kind which an institutionalized friendship provides, and the moral sanction which attaches to the performance of material, non-ritual services'.—R. Firth, 'Bond-Friendship in Tikopia', *Custom is King* (London, 1936), pp. 259ff.

[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 353.

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Muria

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degree. It is worthy of remark that both these boys had been to school. At Sidhawand my wife and I became the *supāri-phul* and *sakhi* of Rame and Pilsai respectively. My *sakhi* certainly takes this friendship and its obligations very seriously indeed. In Sidhawand the Kotwar entered into the *bhāi* relationship with the Nircsa.

If the two friends are to sleep together in the ghotul—this is a Masora and Jamkot custom—they must place a piece of cloth between them. Otherwise 'to sleep together would be a sin'. I do not think we should read a very deep meaning into this; the rule is not intended to prevent homosexual practices which do not exist; the two friends are simply in a religious or magical state to one another.

But apart from such covenanted alliances, there are deep and lasting friendships between chelik and chelik, motiari and motiari, even though these have no formal name and are not officially recognized. But it seems to me that these tend to express themselves in gangs or groups rather than in pairs. The exclusive, passionate, devotion of two boys or two girls to each other would be contrary to the strongly communal nature of the ghotul and indeed of all Muria society.

So although the Padhar and Tahsildar (Pilsai) of the Sidhawand ghotul are *sāthi* (companions) who 'must always be together, must stand by one another, and feel miserable if they don't see each other', their attachment is not exclusive. The Sirdar is always with them, and the three boys sleep together with their motiari in a corner of the ghotul. Boys and girls group themselves according to age; the bigger motiari, who have to do so many things together, naturally spend most of their time together and become great friends. In Jhakri there were several groups of boys and they told us that they had their own secret language and could talk to each other and make jokes without the others knowing anything about it. 'When you are friends, you can all fart together', as one of them said. They would not even tell their secrets to the girls they loved. Even in the *jodidār* ghotul, such groups of boys are said to share their girls with one another, though not, of course, with anyone outside. But it is said that these friendships weaken after marriage, as the friends begin to 'tread the hill of the elders' and to suffer 'the cares of house and door'.

Two famous friends, who have continued to this day, are the former Atkari and Soha, Nari and Tota, of Nayanar, both men of outstanding character, witty, active, genial, popular. In their youth, both were fined for making their motiari, the Tiloka and the Manjaro, pregnant, and have thus borne ever since the name of *jataka*, a Gondi-Halbi word meaning someone 'who takes a thing by force'. They always slept on the same mat in the ghotul, back to back with their motiari on either side of them on separate mats. People talk also of the friendship between Rama, the Sirdar, and Sukder, the Likhen, of Palli. 'They never go anywhere alone: they are always together.'

But, on the whole, such devoted alliances and partnerships are rare. The reasons for this are many. There is, as I have said, the strongly communal and highly organized character of ghotul society. From childhood the Muria are trained to do things together, to move, work, mourn, rejoice as a group. Then there is the strong feeling against jealousy and anything that would promote jealousy. The habit of mind that forces a boy to sleep every night with a different motiari is not likely to encourage him to form an exclusive attachment to a member of his own sex, which would be likely to excite the jealousy of the others. In Alor, the villagers said of two great friends, older men, that 'those two always cut everything in pieces; they disturb the judgements of the panchayat'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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Any form of partiality is resented by the Muria. We see this in the ghotul which dislikes even a hint of favouritism towards a boy or girl on account of the wealth or rank of the parents. It is the same among the elders. The panchayat, the village mind, must work dispassionately; intensity of personal relationships ruins fair judgement.

When I was discussing this question in Khutgaon, and asked why it was that in that (Kalpatti) pargana there were so few famous friendships, the answer came quite simply: 'Because we are more interested in girls.' Let the European reader of this book pause to reflect how much of his own youth was passed in exclusively male society, what the word 'dormitory' meant to him—as compared to what it means to a Muria!—and he will realize that the kind of friendship that was so important a part of his life at school or the university will obviously have little significance in Bastar.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

colour sense in bead-work, it is noticeable that the best carpet weavers in Jagdalpur Jail are almost invariably Bison-horn Marias. They are quick to grasp intricacies of pattern, and there is hardly any pattern that they cannot copy. For years the chief instructor in the jail was the double murderer from Palnar already mentioned in this chapter.

The Marias of both kinds are very hospitable. On entering a Hill Maria village you are met by the elders and offered little gifts, an uncouth yam, or dried tobacco leaves and forest fruits. The whole village co-operates to get your camp ready, and to entertain you at night with song and dance. The occasional stranger from other Koitor villages or minor State official is housed and fed, provided he does not outstay his welcome or attempt to be exacting in his demands. Co-operation, in service to the State, in village festivals, in felling of forest for *penda* cultivation, in allotment of *penda* areas, in sowing, reaping, winnowing and storing of grain, in fishing and hunting, is the key to the social life of the Hill Maria, who is a natural communist; his hospitality is perhaps mainly an expression of his ingrained co-operation, though he is genuinely glad to see you after a long absence, and will greet you with tears of joy. The Bison-horn Maria is more of an individualist, or, rather, less of a communist, than the hill man, but he likes to entertain for a wedding or to celebrate the completion of a new *munda* (small rice irrigation tank) and similar occasions on a lavish scale, keeping open house. All Marias are extremely grateful for any benefit received and for sympathy and interest.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

535 by a few men with kettle-drums and more with clanging brass gongs; to this babel of sound must be added the clatter of the innumerable iron neck-rings and the bracelets of the girls, and the clangour of the great bunches of bells on the buttocks of the male dancers. The whole scene is lit up by blazing torches and log fires.

535 831 Often a slight element of obscenity is introduced by one or two men dressed as tiger-men with large imitation *membra virilia* which they brandish at each other and at the women, girls and youths, rushing ludicrously here, there, and everywhere, and provoking such laughter that often the dancers have to break off their singing to join in.

535 868 There is no formal dancing teaching. Boys are allowed to join in the dances when they are about six, and girls when nine or ten. They learn simply by imitating their elders.

535 Men of all ages, married and unmarried, youths, boys, young wives and girls join in the Bison-horn Maria dances. There appears

● 574 to be no time of year at which they are forbidden to dance, though naturally the spring and the summer, when they are freest from field-work, see most of their dancing. If at this time of year you invite villagers to dance at your camp, the throb of the drums attracts more and more men and girls from surrounding villages; for the tradition is that no invitation is needed, and that open house should be kept at a wedding or any other occasion when there will be dancing.

2. Bison-horn Maria

535 292 There is no mixing of men and girls as in the Abujhmar hills. The girls, in their ordinary finery of beads and iron and brass neck-rings, and wearing their head snoods and fillets of polished brass, have no special dancing apparatus except the *tirdudi* dancing-sticks ornamented with iron bells which they hold upright in their right hands, clashing the bells in unison by striking the ground with the butts of the sticks on their left front as they bring their left foot across in front of their right; each girl rests her left arm on the back of the left shoulder of the girl on her left. They gyrate to the right, like the Hill Marias, but the Bison-horn women have a far more rapid step; the right foot is moved to the right and slightly to the rear, and the left foot is then brought across the right leg to the right front, while the ground is struck with the butts of the jingling dancing-sticks. The girls in this way dance fast around the outside of the dancing men, sometimes singing as they go; but the unceasing throb of the men's great drums drowns their song.

535 The women's step never varies, whatever the dance; but the men have many different dances and steps, and can improvise a dance on practically any theme, such as asking for pork or *landa*. Their *pen-harsila* or Koqsar dance is a very fast, side-stepping

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to be a definite infiltration of Bison-horn Maria influences from Bastar. The illustration in this Supplement shows some of the Lahiri Maria girls and gives some indication of the quantity and Bison-horn style of the ornaments.

Before climbing to Kuvakodi I had sent some Marias up the valley to Nugur village in Kutru Mar, on the Indrawati banks, to invite to my camp the Kuruk boatmen who had taken Dr. Mitchell and myself in their canoes in November 1927, down the river from Nugur to the Jitam rapids.[1] Tati Ogha and Rajintappa, the leaders of our 1927 'fleet', and several of the boatmen arrived at Lahiri that evening, and recognized me, after thirteen years, with tears of joy. They were received and made at home with the utmost courtesy—that almost stately courtesy so characteristic of the Gond, whether of Marias at a feast or of Betul Gonds receiving the bride's party at the bridegroom's village; although the Bastar Hill Marias look down on Kuruks or 'Jharaman' (netters), the Lahiri headmen could not do enough for these Kuruks, giving them the best of the food, refilling their leaf-cups with *mahua* spirit, and showing a real delight when I tied a *pagri* on each Kuruk's head, and presented them with cloth and beads, while they insisted on the strangers getting the best places from which to watch the dancing.

The motor journey from Lahiri to Surjagarh, about 59 miles in all, involved a return on our outward tracks through Bhamragarh to a point three miles east of Pirmeli, thence roughly north or north-west through Kandar, Burgi and Markel villages to Chukmitapalli, and thence due east through Hitawara to Surjagarh; despite a very early start we reached Surjagarh after dark, thanks to 'receptions' in every intervening village and, above all, to delays for treating yaws patients. All these Maria villages have excellent human material, and some surprises for the visitor. At Burgi, for example, a boy dashed off to his house to emerge as a uniformed boy scout! Some years before an attempt to start a boy scout movement in Ahiri zamindari had met with some initial success, but had apparently died out. Yet this boy had carefully preserved his uniform in a leaf-box, and, more hopeful, he and some other boys had preserved the memory of the lessons they had had on cleanliness and hygiene and in a minor way were still influencing the villages to carry out what they had learnt. It is often assumed that the Marias and similar men of the backwoods have never seen anything of the outer world. Comparable with the visit of a party of Bastar Hill Marias to the Allahabad Exhibition mentioned on page 71, was the fact that this boy and some other Maria youths had been taken two or three years before to a scout jamboree at Delhi. When I asked

[1] See p. 164.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 563 Such privileges are not universal or uncontrolled. In Junganar only very small Ganda girls may massage the boys or sleep in the ghotul; once they are mature, though they may attend the dances, they may not massage and must say Johar at a distance. This rule seems to have been made by the Ganda elders rather than by the Muria. For the Muria are generally more anxious to control the behaviour of the boys of other castes; girls are allowed to do what they like.

X 883 The relations of Muria and Muria-Lohar are discussed in more than one song. Here is a Manda dance song from Tursani village.

563 539

Jāging poyni weke dāda roy seng bussur bhusbās?	Where are you going with your bamboo basket, brother?
Nia bāti pāri dāda?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori kile bai.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wāde lyona bai.	I am a Lohar boy, girl.
Nima weke dān ton dāda?	Where are you going, brother?
Irum mara koyala bai	To get charcoal of mahua wood, girl.
Koyala pandi dān tona bai	I am going to make charcoal, girl.
Nana gala wāyāka dāda.	I will come with you, brother.
Nima icho wāyama bai.	Don't come with me, girl.
Jāti dube māyār bai.	Your caste will be broken, girl.
Sarus pite jori dāda.	Two cranes make a perfect pair, brother.
Jori ise ayahāt dāda.	We will pair off like them, brother.

A Har Pata, sung when the girls of Kehalakot go to dance in other ghotul at Diwali, is on the same theme.

Pāri porro nititon bai le.	On the bank of the field you were standing, girl.
Niya pāri wāti roy bai le?	What is your clan?
Pāri ori kile roy dāda le.	I have no clan, brother.
Nāwa pāri ātek roy dāda le.	If I had a clan, it would be yours.
Jāti sori layāna dāda le.	I am a girl of the Sori clan, brother.
Niya pāri wāti roy dāda le?	What is your clan, brother?
Pāri ori kile roy bai le.	I have no clan, girl.
Jāti wade layona bai le	I am a blacksmith boy.
Titi dāda uti roy dāda le,	You have eaten and drunk me, brother,
Jāti dube kiti roy dāda le.	And have made my caste sink down.

Naturally such an arrangement sometimes leads to trouble. At Sarandi a Lohar chelik ran off with a Muria motiari, and since then outsiders have not been admitted there. At Gohora, the Saidar—a Rawat boy—eloped with the Piosa who was a Muria girl, and the ghotul was henceforward closed to visitors.

VI. Relations between Different Ghotul

X 883 574 431 Members of different ghotul meet at dances, marriages and festivals. They visit each other on dancing expeditions throughout the year. Sometimes they have dancing contests. Neighbouring ghotul send gifts to each other, especially at the time of eating parched rice at Diwali. Thus when I was at Sidhawand, the boys put aside a good portion of their parched rice to send to the Kokameta ghotul with which they had relations of special friendship. At Banjora they sent one measure of rice to Bhopna and one measure to Kokori asking the boys and girls of those ghotul to share their feast. Bhopna and Kokori returned the gifts at the Chherta festival.

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Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

Generally relations between the ghotul are friendly enough, but quarrels do occasionally arise. Once at a dance the boys of Kabonga failed to perform the Johar Par properly and salute the boys of Hatipakna who were dancing with them. The insulted chelik slung their drums over their shoulders and went away, and the Kabonga boys had to give them a rupee's worth of liquor before they would consent to dance with them again.

Formerly the boys and girls of two neighbouring villages, Kanhargaon and More Berma, used to go to the same ghotul which stood on the boundary between them. But the time came when the boys of Kanhargaon complained that they were unfairly treated in the distribution of motiari by the More Berma Kotwar. It was found impossible to adjust the matter and in the end the Kanhargaon boys and girls separated and built another ghotul just within their own village boundary not more than a hundred yards away. The members of the two ghotul meet at marriages and festivals, but they never visit one another nor do the chelik have anything to do with each other's motiari.

Boy or girl visitors from other ghotul are always warmly welcomed. When a boy's parents move from one village to another the boy automatically becomes a member of the ghotul in his new home and either retains his original title or is given a new one. A boy visitor is often put to the test. The girls push little bits of wood under their rings before they massage him 'to see how much he can stand'. By this means they can hurt a boy considerably, for even without rings the girls' massage is vigorous enough to make the skin smart and sting. If a boy passes his test successfully, the Belosa (with the approval of the Kotwar) may invite him to sleep with her. Generally a Muria boy visitor from another ghotul is given a partner for the night.

When a girl goes visiting another village she has to be more careful. She generally stays in her house and does not go to the ghotul. When the chelik hear of it they send two motiari to fetch her. They go to the house and say, 'Sister, come, do come to our ghotul'. She generally replies, 'No, sisters, no, I must not', to which the girls answer, 'O, just come for a little singing and then we will bring you home'. If she still refuses all the boys and girls go to the house and sing taunt-songs outside until she weakens. If she does go, she must return home for the night. She ought not actually to sleep in another ghotul. In some villages there is a special official whose task it is to escort such visitors home. When a motiari returns to her own village the chelik examine her very carefully and if it is proved that she slept in another ghotul, she is severely punished for what is regarded as treachery to her own boys. But this, like all Muria rules, is neither absolute nor universal. The girls who go on the Diwali dancing tours always sleep in the ghotul of the villages they visit and are entertained by the chelik.

Unknown girls are sometimes regarded with suspicion. They may not keep the menstruation rules. They may be witches in disguise. A story from Atargaon points the moral.

> There was a mother and her daughter. The daughter says, 'Marry me to someone'. The mother says, 'I know no one, daughter'. 'I will go and find a husband for myself; give me a basket and I will go today.' The girl leaves her home and starts out to search for a husband. On the way a chelik meets her. He catches her by the shoulder. 'Why have you caught me? Let me alone, brother, let me alone.' 'I won't let you go unless I take you to the jungle, then you may go.' Then says that girl, 'Very well, hold this basket for me while I relieve myself'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
● 574
539

She goes among the bushes and turns into a tigress. She comes roaring and kills and eats the boy.

Then she becomes a girl again and goes on her journey. She meets a man fetching wood. He speaks to her and she turns into a tigress again and kills him. At last she reaches a Saturday bazaar. The bazaar is finished but she sits down near the carts of the merchants. Four men see her beauty and desire her. She makes them all mad and they run away.

A little boy is going round the bazaar picking up scraps, bits of lac, cigarette ends, grain and other odds and ends. He sees the girl and tells his grandfather about her. That grandfather is a magician. 'Come, daughter, and marry my son.'

That night the chelik hear that a beautiful girl has come to the magician's house. 'Let's bring her to the ghotul.' They go to the house and bring her singing and dancing on the way. They make her sleep with one of the chelik. Presently she says, 'This is too crowded, let's go outside'. They go out and the boy spreads his mat while the girl goes to relieve herself outside the compound. She comes roaring, a tigress, and kills her lover, then returns as a girl to the magician's house. The chelik suspect what has happened and go again and bring her by force to the ghotul. Once again they make her sleep with a boy to discover if it was really she who was the killer. Once again she takes the boy outside and goes to relieve herself, but this time the boys are waiting armed with sticks and when she comes into the compound they fall upon her and kill her.

VII. Leaving the Ghotul

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A girl automatically leaves the ghotul when she is married and must never enter it again. In many places she gives a feast to the ghotul members either on the first day of the marriage ceremony or a week or so afterwards. Sometimes it is her duty to massage every chelik for the last time before she finally goes to her husband's house. The bridegroom also may give a present of a basket of mahua oil-seed which is pounded and cleaned, after which the motiari massage the chelik with it, including their legs.

The only exception to the rule that bars a married girl and even a widow from entering the ghotul is when a girl is married very young. She is then permitted to sleep in the dormitory and join in all its activities up to the time of her first menstrual period. In the Jamkot ghotul, for example, Kariya was married to a little girl and she continued to attend. Here they said that so long as the girl had not been sent officially to her husband, whether she had passed the menarche or no, she might continue as a motiari, but I think that this is unusual.

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Such child-marriages are comparatively rare. Where children are married, it is generally in villages where there have been scandals in the ghotul and the parents, instead of interfering with the ghotul routine, adopt this means of preventing pre-nuptial pregnancy. At Korenda I was told that 'in the old days, when there were neither roads nor motor-cars, the Muria were honest, truthful and virtuous'. A boy was not considered suitable for marriage 'until he had made two or three long trips with a load', say from Narayanpur to Kondagaon or Kondagaon to Jagdalpur. The girls were not considered ready 'until their breasts were fully grown and even beginning to slope downwards'. But now the situation has changed. *Abiha rāj halau, larka larki malau*—'The kingdom of today is black, the boys and girls are like monkeys'.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

told everyone who knew anything about the matter to make a report of suicide, and since he was a man of great influence this was done.

The remarkable thing about this case is not the violence with which the murder was committed, but the very great forbearance shown by Poda. After forgiving Kopa the first time, he himself went to the expense of marrying him to a young girl, perhaps with the idea that this would divert his attention. Even on the second occasion he refrained from physical violence, and contented himself with turning the boy out of his house. Few Maria would have failed to kill Kopa immediately after discovering him in the house at night. But all Poda did was to put the matter before the village elders. It seems to have been Kopa's impertinence in going to the hut and sitting there as if nothing had happened that suddenly deprived Poda of his self-control. The Court, taking these matters into consideration, sentenced him to only five years' imprisonment.

VI

THE MOTHER'S HOUSE

Another very common source of domestic friction is the custom that allows a girl to visit her mother's house. These visits are an exciting and important part in the life of every aboriginal girl. During her marriage ceremony many of the songs deal with the happiness of her childhood home, and the misery of a life with a husband under the domination of her parents-in-law. After marriage the mother's house acquires a sweet and romantic memory. Its hardships and quarrels are easily forgotten, and the love of one's own parents appears tender and kind compared to the constant friction of the new home. It is generally considered correct for girls to go to their parents' house for important domestic events such as the ceremonies for the birth of children, marriages and funerals, for some of the chief festivals and to help in the more urgent work of the fields. Husbands, especially young husbands, resent this, for it means one pair of hands the less to work in their own house. Girls are not always very tactful in the enthusiasm they show at returning

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

574 593 to their old homes, and some girls make a regular habit of going there, far too often for the comfort of their husbands.

574 578 There have been several suicides arising out of this situation, but only one of our hundred murders. This was the tragedy of Habka Masa who, when I saw him in jail, was a sad gaunt man utterly crushed by the tragedy that had befallen him. He had been married to his wife Pakli for some three years, and was living with his old blind parents at Hallur in the Kutru Zamindari. In June his wife went home to Gangalur for the Pen Karsita festival. Masa insisted on going with her. Two days after the festival, Masa told his father-in-law that he wanted to go back to his house, for it was the beginning of the rains and there was a lot to do. The older man was agreeable, and gave him the customary clothes and a basket of oil-seed, which is the usual present to a son-in-law when he leaves the house. But Pakli refused to go. Her parents were on the point of going to work as coolies, and she wanted to go with them. Masa, fearing that he might lose his wife altogether, decided to accompany her. The party set out and went to Gidam, a prosperous little country town on the main road, and again Masa tried to get his wife to go home. From Gidam they went to Tirthum and worked at the construction of a bridge for the P.W.D. When the bridge was ready, they all went on to Silakjhori where they got work as farm-servants. The parents-in-law built a little hut for themselves, and Masa and Pakli occupied a deserted hut belonging to sawyers. From the day of their arrival there were constant quarrels between Masa and his wife, for Masa was anxious about his cultivation—he was the only able-bodied man in the family. Pakli used to put forward every possible excuse for not going back. One day it was raining heavily. The next the rivers were flooded and she was afraid to cross them. A third day she promised to go when the rains were over.

On the night of 10 July 1939, there was heavy rain and a strong wind. After supper with the family Masa and Pakli struggled through the wind to their little hut. According to Masa's own account they then began to quarrel violently. He again asked Pakli to go home and she refused. Then he asked her to give him some tobacco, or, in other words, to have intercourse with him, and this also she

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

refused. She abused him saying, '*Puk nak*, lick my privates', and told him to go home without her. This, he said, was impossible and she again abused him. He got so angry that he hit her on the head with a heavy piece of wood and she died immediately.

More frequently these disputes have ended in suicide. The wife of Markami Pide was in love with another man, and frequently used to leave her husband and go to stay at her mother's house where it was possible for her to meet her lover. Pide as frequently would go and bring her back and beat her. At last she killed herself in despair. Mundri, the wife of the headman of Kaklur, frequently quarrelled with her husband over the question of visiting her parents, and one day when she wished to go and her husband stopped her, she became so miserable that she hanged herself from a mango tree.

Wooden tobacco box (*Length* 3[")

In two cases it was the husband who committed suicide. Marvi Gutami, a young man of twenty-two years, married a girl to whom he was much attached. Indeed it is said that he loved her so much that he was quite unable to control her, and she got on the nerves of the older women in the house who lost no opportunity of venting their spite upon her. As a result she often used to go away to her mother's house, and Gutami would have to go and bring her back. One day when this happened, the youth found that she had gone into hiding elsewhere. Despairing of happiness, he returned home and hanged himself behind his house. Kawasi Hurra's wife Lakhmi did not care for him and was always slipping away to her parents' house. He brought her back five or six times, but she would run away again after staying with him for a few days. Hurra seems to have been very fond

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 of the girl, and her constant absence made him so miserable
574 that he ended his life.
578

A situation where the roles of the characters were reversed, and it was the mother who wished to visit the daughter's house, led to an even more pathetic tragedy.

In November 1939, a mother at Killepal was rebuked by her son and daughter-in-law for not helping them with the reaping of the kosra crop. She had been a widow for ten years and seems to have got a certain amount of pleasure and relaxation from paying visits to her married daughter at Dilmilli. This was resented by the son and brother with whom she lived. When she found that she was to be robbed even of this happiness, she killed herself.

VII

PARENTS-IN-LAW

X 674 The relationship between a man and his parents-in-law is
606 always difficult. But the general tradition in Maria, as in Hindu society, is that the older people should treat a son-in-law with respect and consideration. Neglect of this rule is apt to arouse very strong feelings in a man's mind. Marvi Kesa had three wives, the youngest of whom ran away to her parents' house after a beating. This is a common practice of aboriginal wives, and causes great annoyance to their husbands especially if the parents take their daughters' side. On this occasion Kesa followed his wife to the house and found her enjoying a drink of rice-beer with the neighbours. He went to his father-in-law and asked him why he had not sent his wife back. The older man replied casually that she had only arrived that morning, and this answer so annoyed Kesa that he struck him on the head with his axe and killed him.

In another case it was the mother-in-law who was the victim. Marvi Hinga took his wife Hirme, who was suffering from fever, to a neighbouring village to a Siraha for treatment. He stayed with her during the night and the next morning returned to his house, where he was seen by his mother-in-law. She, thinking that he had left her daughter uncared for and was now wandering about the village seeking enjoyment, abused the youth saying that he

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/Information concerning the ghotul or gotul, the bachelors' and adolescents' dormitory, will be found in category 883, Adolescent Activities./

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

for a tooth; but nowadays this is generally satisfied by invoking the police and the courts. But distances are great in Bastar, and in the rains, when the early hill grains are ripe, communications are bad; often the villagers conspire to hush up a murder or leave it to those affected to take their own direct action, rather than disorganize agricultural work by the troubles of a long police enquiry followed by committal proceedings and a sessions trial.

It is a relief to return from this darker side of the Bison-horn Maria's character to the light-heartedness of all Marias, but especially the Hill Maria. An engaging feature of this is his readiness to burlesque himself. A village *gaita* (headman) at Tondawada set the whole camp in fits of laughter by his description of his first vain attempts to use a pair of bullocks in the plough, mimicking himself pulled hither and thither by these wild-cat animals; at Hikul I was treated to a similar comic representation of what would happen if a Maria attempted to milk a cow. They are quick to seize on any foibles or peculiarities of individuals, without respect of persons, and have a happy knack of inventing apposite nicknames; this trait is common throughout the State, where there are nicknames for almost every State official current among all the primitive tribes, while few of the leading Hindu and Mohammedan settlers are referred to by their true names.

Frankness and honesty are still as characteristic as ever of the hill men and the wilder Bison-horn Marias, and many a man arraigned for homicide will state in court perfectly frankly why it was essential to kill his victim and how it was done. I have very seldom found any hesitate to answer any questions, even about the most intimate domestic matters. The Bison-horn Maria, however, being, at least in the open tracts, more sophisticated, is inclined to be suspicious; and he certainly is learning the ways of the courts, and how to defeat a justice administered on the evidence and not according to the facts; many know, for example, that the death penalty may be escaped if you can convince your judge that you murdered your victim because you believed him to be bewitching you. But in general a Maria witness can still be relied upon to speak the truth, although it involve his dearest relatives or himself in trouble; and the occasional pleader from British India is soon hopelessly at sea if he tries his usual methods of cross-examination even on a Bison-horn Maria who knows Halbi. Fortunately, the restoration of the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the village and *pargana* panchayats will considerably reduce Maria experience of the law courts. The Hill Maria never has had much recourse to them, petty theft being almost unknown and murder rare. His attitude may to some extent be gauged by the following example.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

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THERE is little immorality in the ghotul. The outsider who looks on it as a place of unbridled licence and youthful corruption commits two errors, one of method and one of fact. His method of approach is wrong, for we cannot import our own ideas and standards into another culture and judge that culture by ours. But he is even wrong in point of fact. The ghotul is regulated by exact and far-reaching laws which are very generally obeyed. Its life, compared with the life of young people in other aboriginal villages, is marked by restraint rather than by excess.

Let us first consider the general standards of good and evil among the Muria. I have often discussed this question in the ghotul. 'The greatest sin', said a Muria in Markabera, 'is to injure someone by magic. It is very bad to hurt a man, specially an old man, with an axe. To kill cattle without cause is bad, but there is nothing wrong in sacrificing a bull or cow for a funeral or at a festival.' On the other hand, 'to give food to the hungry is a great virtue. If a man can't pay his rent, and there is a warrant for him, to save him is a great virtue. If a stranger comes from far away, and I entertain him in my house, that is a great virtue. If a man loses his way, to put him on the road again is a great virtue. If a man is rich and when we ask a loan he gives more than we ask and takes little interest, he is a good man. If a man is a Siraha and we ask his help, if he comes at once to help the sick, he is a good man. If a man is old and wise, and when we are in trouble he does not talk foolishly or reproach us, but gives sound advice, he is a good man.'

A quarrelsome and angry man is regarded as very bad. A gentle and kindly manner, freedom from bitterness and jealousy, generosity and open-handedness are qualities that are much admired. The late headman of Masora was regarded by many of his people as a sort of saint. 'He speaks kindly whether he is hot (drunk) or cold (sober). He speaks slowly to everyone. He has no enemies among his own folk, though he has many enemies among the *paik* (subordinate officials), for he always protects the poor from *begar* (forced labour). His greatest enemy is the Kotwar who would take work even from a corpse. But the headman never gets angry, never orders you about; when he wants you to do something, he talks as if he were requesting you to do it. He has often paid rent and fines for the poorest villagers from his own money. All the children run after him. He laughs and jokes with everyone and is nice even to the Ganda.' Anyone who has listened to an outsider, whether chaprasi or landlord or contractor, talking to Muria will appreciate the virtue of the saying, 'He speaks slowly to everyone'.

Another good man in Masora was Lakadu, a young man, very lovable. 'He never quarrels, but earns his living and remains quietly at home. We have never heard of a quarrel in his house. He is cool.' In Binjhli I was told that the most respected man in those parts was Dibdu of Karlakha. He is admired for his wisdom. 'He knows all languages, all knowledge, all wisdom and how to share it. He understands what to do at a marriage, at a funeral, at a festival for the gods. He cannot quarrel. If he gets drunk he goes and lies down somewhere by himself, for fear he may speak roughly to someone. He has never stolen anything, or beaten anyone. He lives happily with his family.' Another man of the same type is Dandi Muria of Palki.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

In Kuntpadar, the people stressed the virtue of a democratic outlook, the estimating of everyone as equal to yourself. In Metawand, they thought more of generosity. To help a man in need and be kind to those who come to you in trouble is the sign of a good man. Courage is also admired, but not specially so. Yet it is said of Kurwal Kumoti of Palki that 'where the English only venture into the jungle armed with guns and protected by many people, he goes anywhere without a weapon and has no fear of bears or tigers'.

Is sexual morality in our Western sense an ingredient of the good man's character? When I have raised this point in conversation, the reply has always referred to forbidden relations. 'The greatest sin'—this is the view of Lakmu of Masora—'is to have something to do with your younger brother's wife. Or for a girl to have intercourse with a Ganda.' Elsewhere, in several villages, I was told how serious it was to break the laws of exogamy, to have intercourse with a forbidden relation and to commit adultery. In Masora, when I asked if they thought it wrong for the unmarried to have intercourse with each other, for a long time they could not understand the question. When they did, they answered, 'Only if he sleeps with the same girl too often: he must change'.

Here then we have a general picture of the moral qualities that are considered desirable and the vices that are deplored. Let us now come nearer to the ghotul. 'In the ghotul no sin can be committed.' This is not strictly true, but it is sufficiently true to explain the wonderful innocence and simplicity of the chelik and motiari. There is no sin in sex, provided—as I have said before—sexual relations are enjoyed with the right people, at the right time, in the right place and in the right way.

Chelik and motiari must choose the right partner. They must strictly avoid the inner circle of forbidden relatives. Intercourse within the clan is forbidden, but is not regarded as very serious so long as no one knows about it and it does not result in pregnancy. In the *jodidār* ghotul, chelik and motiari must be faithful to one another; in the other, they must avoid too great attachments to special individuals. It is practically unknown for a motiari to have an affair with someone outside the tribe. One of the first lessons taught to a young girl in the ghotul is that she must avoid Chasia, Ganda, Mahara and Lohar. It is probably safe to say that no European has ever had anything to do with a Muria girl, and I am told by State officials that in the old days when, in the more 'advanced' areas round Jagdalpur, it was the custom for the village headman to bring women for touring subordinates, this was never done in the ghotul villages of the north. I am told that chaprasis, forest guards and constables, who are sometimes such a menace to rural virtue, are never able to seduce the motiari of the ghotul, where the village dormitory remains to protect tribal honour. This opinion is confirmed by the fact that venereal disease is almost unknown among the Muria. In fact, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, has told me that in thirty years' service he had never seen a straight case of venereal disease among the Bastar aboriginals.

The rules governing the sexual life of the ghotul are strict and appear to be generally observed. Breaches of the rules are sufficiently rare to be talked of for many years and to be severely punished.

But sexual intercourse must not only be with the right people: it must be at the right time. It is tabooed before the greater festivals, before a hunting expedition, during the Pus Kolang dance and, most important of all, during a girl's menstrual period.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

boys and girls. They dance clasped in each other's arms; they go about together, chelik with his arm round the neck of motiari. How revealing are Plates LXXV and XCI. In one a chelik lies on a cot with his arm on his motiari's shoulder, while she sits almost on top of him making leaves. They were not posed for the photo, and they showed no embarrassment at my approach with the mysterious camera, even though they were from a village I did not know well. In the other Plate two chelik and a motiari are listening to the gramophone outside my tent. They are completely absorbed in it and in each other. One of the boys embraces the girl with both his arms. You would not see this natural innocence in the more 'advanced' parts of aboriginal India.

But this refreshing freedom never degenerates into immodesty in public. It would be unthinkable for a chelik to dance naked—as I have seen older men do—in the presence of women or of his elders. The motiari never indulge in the cheerful vulgarity of the old women at a wedding. A chelik never catches hold of a girl immodestly in general company, though he will embrace her and walk with his arms about her. The great festival dances, though the air is full of romantic suggestion and the older men dance with the greatest licence, are conducted by chelik and motiari with complete decorum.

The sympathetic reader will realize how hopeless it is to bring our cut-and-dried judgements of sexual morality to bear upon a situation such as this. But he will also realize that even on his own standards the ghotul cannot be called immoral in the sense that it has no rules or laws or that it ignores those it has. Its regulations are as far-reaching and as strict as our own, and they are often better kept. For the rules are not imposed from without, but have been made by the ghotul-members themselves. Thus they are reasonable, adapted to the actual situation, and so easy to obey.

It is curious that while a Western visitor to a Muria village, if he is of a Puritan turn, will probably be chiefly concerned about the pre-nuptial relations of the children, the Hindu visitor—who is, of course, by far the more frequent—will be scandalized by the casual attitude of the Muria towards cows. Many years ago earnest efforts were made by Hindu reformers in the State to stop cow-sacrifice, and still today—though the majority of State officials preserve an admirable restraint in interfering with tribal customs—landlords, merchants, schoolmasters and travellers do what they can to put an end to the practice. But, except for a few centres where Hindu influence is strong, bulls and cows continue to be sacrificed and eaten all over the northern part of the State. The Muria cannot believe that this is wrong, for the gods demand it. There is nothing in their culture or mythology to forbid it—and indeed we here have a good example of the difficulty of importing a new idea into a system that has no provision for it. Yet if the Muria ever does ponder about 'moral' problems it is this that perplexes him and not any question about pre-nuptial chastity.

Stealing is generally condemned, but it is licensed on some special occasions. The chelik are expected to steal a cock when they take the newly-wedded bride and bridegroom to bed; they appear to have similar licence when they perform ceremonial dances round the village.

The incidence of crime is very low. An experienced police officer, who had served in the ghotul area for twelve years, told me that in all this time there had been no case of murder, riot, assault, hurt, or rape in connexion with the ghotul. There has not been a single case of rape against a Muria, though non-aboriginals have been arrested for raping Muria women. It is a remarkable thing that most of the crime in the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils occurs

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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in the Mardapal Pargana and along the north-eastern border in just those areas where the dormitory system is moribund. The ghotul has almost disappeared from the Mardapal Pargana, and the system is rapidly decaying along the border. A policeman told me that in his opinion ghotul-education was a most valuable preventative of crime, for boys and girls learnt to share everything and to scorn acquisitiveness and the lust of possession.

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To lie and cheat is reprehensible, but does not seem to be taken very seriously. It all depends on whom you are deceiving. It may well be a positive virtue to give an inquisitive ethnographer a false date for a ceremony or direct him to the wrong village when he wants to see a funeral. To break an oath or take a false oath is not so much an offence against morality as to do something very dangerous. In Binjhli I was told of a former Pargana Manjhi who stole a lot of rice during a famine. He was put on his trial, but took a powerful oath that he was innocent. As he walked out of the court, 'his eyes broke' and he became blind.

Muria ethics, therefore, combine a firm belief in taboos and the danger of breaking them, with a faith in the value of certain amiable and social virtues. The Muria are a closely knit tribe; as their culture is still living they are bound together by many ties. They therefore regard as most reprehensible those faults and crimes that would break the solidarity of the tribe—anger, jealousy, assault, adultery that leads to these things, the practice of magic that divides a community with hatred and suspicion, the breach of tribal laws of relationship which destroy its unity, and the breach of the laws of endogamy which destroy its integrity. Those virtues are most admired which bring men together in peace and happiness—a gentle tongue, an open hand and house, the love of wife and children, loyalty to tribal law.

In conclusion, let us for a moment look at the ghotul from our own Western standpoint, and try to assess the value of the Muria attitude to life and especially to sex not by their standards but by ours. It is not the business of the ethnographer to pass moral judgements, but he may perhaps imagine himself talking to a Christian missionary or a devout Hindu reformer, both of whom take so different a view to the Muria's, regarding sex as bad and dangerous in itself and any form of 'unchastity' as the worst of sins. Is there anything to be said for the Muria way of life?

X883 861

In the first place it must be said that the chelik and motiari are wonderfully happy. Their life is full, interesting, exciting, useful. The ghotul is, as they often say, 'a little school'. The chelik are 'like Boy Scouts', as I was told in a village which had a troop in the local school. There is no comparison between these children and the sad-eyed, dirty ragamuffins of villages at a similar cultural level elsewhere. In the ghotul the children are taught lessons of cleanliness, discipline and hard work that remain with them throughout their lives. They are taught to take a pride in their appearance, to respect themselves and their elders; above all, they are taught the spirit of service. These boys and girls work very hard indeed for the public good. They are immediately available for the service of State officials or for work on the roads. They must be ready to work at a wedding or a funeral. They must attend to the drudgery of festivals. In most aboriginal villages of the Central Provinces the children are slack, dirty, undisciplined, and with no sense of public spirit. Even those who attend school generally only develop a strong desire to advance their own interests at the expense of their fellows.

With all this our missionary and Hindu friends will be in agreement. 'But', they will say, 'that is not the point. Our complaint is that these youngsters

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

revenge she ' destroyed his seed '. For several years he was unable to get a child, though in the end the Perma diagnosed the trouble and after the proper sacrifices his wife conceived. 754

A number of recent murders were due either to the desire of a victim to be revenged on a witch or wizard or to a man's resentment at being accused of sorcery. The Orcha murder of 1941 was due to a Hill Maria called Mukka suspecting that the Gaita, Pidche, was practising sorcery against him. After killing him he put the corpse in a stream, but next day recovered and buried it, the whole village agreeing to hush the matter up. The following year Podiyami Doma of Michnar killed Kuharami Konda during a New Eating Festival because the latter accused him of being a thief and a sorcerer. On November 26th, 1941 Gumma Karwe, a young Bison-horn Maria, killed his uncle Gumma Galla at Toinar. Only three months previously Karwe had been married. One day his young wife went with his father and step-mother to visit relations at Gummalnar, a journey that took them over the Indrawati. It was October and I well remember the heavy floods that year. The water swept away the canoe in which they were crossing the river and the bodies were never recovered. A month later, while uncle and nephew were drinking palm wine together they began to quarrel. The younger man accused his uncle of causing the death of his wife, on whom he had spent twenty rupees in cash and three measures of paddy, by magic. Galla admitted it, even boasted of it, and threatened to kill him in the same way. The boy, wild with rage and fear, killed Galla forthwith by a heavy blow from his axe. 674 754 578

At the beginning of March 1944, one evening as the crescent moon was rising above the eastern horizon, there was a violent quarrel in Barse Bendo's house at Kadampal, and a few hours later one of the disputants crept out of his house and stabbed his enemy to death with an arrow as he lay asleep. Barse Bendo was a well-known and successful magician with a large practice. In the same village a youngish man called Kunjami Gota set up as a Siraha and seems to have succeeded in drawing away some of Bendo's patients and creating a sense of rivalry and opposition. Gota's own uncle, Kunjami Tonda, however, preferred the treatment of the older and more experienced man, and when his wife Mate fell ill at the beginning of 1944 he took her to Bendo, and not to his nephew, for consultation. She soon recovered, but shortly afterwards Tonda's two little sons, Lakhma and Bala, fell ill and he came with his whole family to stay in a leaf-hut built for patients in Bendo's compound. Bala was cured in a day or two, but Lakhma, who had a swollen face, did not improve. Here was Bendo's chance. At the time of divination he skilfully introduced the name of Gota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

into his ravings and afterwards declared that it had been revealed to him that the child's illness had been caused by the evil influence of his rival whom he now denounced as a Pangnaha or sorcerer. Gota was summoned to the house and when he came Tonda—prompted by Bendo—asked him to perform antidotal magic to undo the harm he had done and so cure the little boy. This was a clever move. If Gota agreed he became a self-confessed Pangnaha; if he refused to treat a patient, Bendo would see to it that his reputation as a Siraha was destroyed. Gota chose the safer course, and declared that he knew nothing about the treatment of the sick. They all protested at this, reminding him how they had seen him curing disease by *mana-bujha* and sprinkling rice on the heads of ailing children. Tonda said, 'Bendo has cured Bala, but he can't do anything for Lakhma. You are a new man and have cured other people's children. Now cure your own cousin.' But Gota still refused. This made Tonda furious, for the refusal confirmed his suspicion, so carefully fostered by the jealous and wily Bendo, that Gota himself was responsible for the trouble, and that in fact he was an impostor, not a Siraha at all, but a mere Pangnaha. He lost control of himself and began to shout insults and accusations at his nephew, saying that he was trying to kill his own cousins and was of such unbearable wickedness that even when he was found out he would do nothing to remedy matters. In the quarrel the two men came to blows, but they were separated and Gota was taken back to his house. The others went to sleep and Tonda lay down outside the little hut where his wife watched by the sick child. But Gota, angry and brooding over the accusation which he knew well would spoil his practice as a Siraha and thus ruin him economically as well as socially, waited for some hours and then crept into Bendo's compound and stabbed Tonda to death with an arrow. Gota was brought to trial and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, escaping the gallows partly in consequence of a passage (on p. xxvi) in *Maria Murder and Suicide* which was quoted in the judgement.

To understand the Japgunda murder of 1943 a certain amount of family history must be related. Masa, a Hill Maria of Japgunda, had two brothers Gai and Bija. When Gai died, leaving a widow and a daughter Muri, his younger brother inherited the widow along with the property and adopted a boy named Erka as a Lamana'i to work for his step-daughter. When the period of service was complete, Erka and Muri were married and both continued to live in Bija's house until in due time Erka succeeded, on Bija's death, to control of the household and became guardian of Bija's three little sons, Suku, Gilu and Aga.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Masa, the children's uncle and sole survivor of the elder branch of the family, was the Waddai of the clan-god of Japgunda. He seems to have resented the way a poor Lamana'i boy like Erka had risen in the world and become owner of both his brothers' property, and there was some tension in the relations between the two houses. For five or six years, Erka had had good crops and Masa bad ones, and Masa decided that his failure must be due to the fact that Erka was practising magic against him. One day he openly accused the younger man of sorcery and challenged him to an ordeal. Erka, who had no desire to quarrel, accepted and a pot of boiling water and cowdung was prepared. Erka dipped his fingers into it and was badly burned.

This incident convinced the villagers that Erka was a sorcerer and had a curious effect on his own character. He found that, far from being a social outcaste, he—the poor Lamana'i boy—was believed to have the ear of the goddess Parkal Muttai and that many people were coming to him for advice and help. He grew proud and arrogant and when he caused the death of a calf, a pig and a fowl belonging to Masa, no one dared to remonstrate with him. Bija's little boys were growing up and Erka built a house of his own near by. Presently Aga was to be married and some time late in August 1943 the wedding was held in Bija's old house. Masa was, of course, invited but on his way to join the festivities—for the essence of a Hill Maria marriage is a dance, a drink and a heavy meal—Erka went out to intercept him. He greeted him pleasantly and showing him a gourd of rice-beer took him aside to drink with him on the bank of the village pond. Some time later boys coming in their finery for the marriage dance saw the two men sitting together by the water under a virgin moon. The next day Masa's mutilated body was found in the pond.

Erka immediately used his reputation as a sorcerer to hush the matter up. He called the elders to his house, bribed the Kotwar whose duty it was to report suspicious deaths to the police, and taking the headman and another person of some influence aside, sat them down and drew on the ground what was described at the trial as a 'magic line'. He put dub grass, a knife and a bit of cowdung on it and two rupees on one side and three rupees on the other. Then he asked the two men to pick up the money, saying that this act bound them to secrecy. Deeply impressed, the headman went out and told the other villagers that they must cremate the body at once and make no report to the authorities. On the way to the pyre the usual divination by *sāja* leaves was performed and indicated that Masa had died by violence. It was five months before rumours of the crime reached the police.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Burka te jikwa unddna bedur gatta te mak dāyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

842 789 Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead. A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform spells to stop her supplanter from realizing the fullest joys of marriage. The Constable of Modenar said that Mayakaka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

842 578 [586] Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Husband and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

843 A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (intercourse), and *poidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to space confinements properly. After a year, 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months, and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'. But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puerperium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them? But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

843 844 In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements. The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A 32 Gon A 32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

Generally relations between the ghotul are friendly enough, but quarrels do occasionally arise. Once at a dance the boys of Kabonga failed to perform the Johar Par properly and salute the boys of Hatipakna who were dancing with them. The insulted chelik slung their drums over their shoulders and went away, and the Kabonga boys had to give them a rupee's worth of liquor before they would consent to dance with them again.

Formerly the boys and girls of two neighbouring villages, Kanhargaon and More Berma, used to go to the same ghotul which stood on the boundary between them. But the time came when the boys of Kanhargaon complained that they were unfairly treated in the distribution of motiari by the More Berma Kotwar. It was found impossible to adjust the matter and in the end the Kanhargaon boys and girls separated and built another ghotul just within their own village boundary not more than a hundred yards away. The members of the two ghotul meet at marriages and festivals, but they never visit one another nor do the chelik have anything to do with each other's motiari.

Boy or girl visitors from other ghotul are always warmly welcomed. When a boy's parents move from one village to another the boy automatically becomes a member of the ghotul in his new home and either retains his original title or is given a new one. A boy visitor is often put to the test. The girls push little bits of wood under their rings before they massage him 'to see how much he can stand'. By this means they can hurt a boy considerably, for even without rings the girls' massage is vigorous enough to make the skin smart and sting. If a boy passes his test successfully, the Belosa (with the approval of the Kotwar) may invite him to sleep with her. Generally a Muria boy visitor from another ghotul is given a partner for the night.

When a girl goes visiting another village she has to be more careful. She generally stays in her house and does not go to the ghotul. When the chelik hear of it they send two motiari to fetch her. They go to the house and say, 'Sister, come, do come to our ghotul'. She generally replies, 'No, sisters, no, I must not', to which the girls answer, 'O, just come for a little singing and then we will bring you home'. If she still refuses all the boys and girls go to the house and sing taunt-songs outside until she weakens. If she does go, she must return home for the night. She ought not actually to sleep in another ghotul. In some villages there is a special official whose task it is to escort such visitors home. When a motiari returns to her own village the chelik examine her very carefully and if it is proved that she slept in another ghotul, she is severely punished for what is regarded as treachery to her own boys. But this, like all Muria rules, is neither absolute nor universal. The girls who go on the Diwali dancing tours always sleep in the ghotul of the villages they visit and are entertained by the chelik.

Unknown girls are sometimes regarded with suspicion. They may not keep the menstruation rules. They may be witches in disguise. A story from Atarpaon points the moral.

> There was a mother and her daughter. The daughter says, 'Marry me to someone'. The mother says, 'I know no one, daughter'. 'I will go and find a husband for myself; give me a basket and I will go today.' The girl leaves her home and starts out to search for a husband. On the way a chelik meets her. He catches her by the shoulder. 'Why have you caught me? Let me alone, brother, let me alone.' 'I won't let you go unless I take you to the jungle, then you may go.' Then says that girl, 'Very well, hold this basket for me while I relieve myself'.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic, they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently hardened to persist in their visits after this.

But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Maru, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margaon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1941 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahua Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul, Dasru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she said, 'well why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY

DANCE AND SONG

I

DANCE and song, games, stories and riddles should not be regarded as mere recreation; in the Muria's eyes they are serious and important business. A ghotul's reputation largely depends on the excellence of its dancing; the motiari's ability to sing may make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful wedding. Even the games, many of them, serve an educational purpose. The younger boys and girls are carefully trained in the ghotul, and the others practise night after night, repeating the same steps and rhythms again and again till they get them right, before they set out on a dancing expedition. The complicated stick-dances need special training and practice, for once an expedition has started mistakes are regarded as ill-omened.

The first musician was Lingo himself, and the practice of music is not held, as so often in India, to be discreditable, but is honourably rooted in the history and mythology of the tribe. Many of the songs and dances have a religious purpose, and often begin with an invocation to Lingo and other gods. Before the Mandri dances at a wedding, worship should be performed before a pile of drums.

It is refreshing to go to Bastar from the reform-stricken [1] and barren districts of the Central Provinces. As you climb the Keskal Ghat the whole countryside bursts into song about you. The Muria have a short way with 'reformers', as I was fortunate enough to see at Telenga village on 26 March 1941. There was a marriage that day in the village, and the chelik and motiari from eleven villages came to attend it. But when they arrived they did not begin to dance as usual, but went out into the jungle for a consultation. They had seen among the wedding guests the sinister figure of Chainu, the headman of Maragaon. A month earlier this Chainu had attended a marriage at the house of Guma in his own village. Chelik and motiari had come as usual and danced till noon. Then according to custom they asked for liquor to offer to the drums and food for themselves. Chainu, who had been under a good deal of Hindu influence, refused to let them have either liquor for the drums or food for themselves, and declared that he would 'stop this dancing throughout the pargana'. The chelik and motiari left the marriage in protest and for a month the matter was the subject of heated discussion in their ghotul.

Now in Telenga the boys saw their chance. After a long discussion, they came back, a large and formidable crowd, and told the Pargana Manjhi (of Chalka) that they wanted a panchayat and that Chainu must be there. Near the marriage-booth the boys assembled in a great circle, and almost all the wedding guests joined to see what would happen. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom were left sitting in their places, entirely forgotten.

[1] It is very hard to understand the mentality of the 'reformers' who would deprive the aboriginal of his beautiful and innocent recreations, and would impose on him a 'Shiv-raj' (as it is often-called) at which the great dancer Natarajan would have shuddered. It is interesting to compare the attitude of the American Negro towards the 'Spirituals' which have done as much as anything else to establish him throughout the world. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were considered fit only for uneducated country niggers'. 'As late as 1909, Negro students at Howard University rebelled and refused to sing them. By the more progressive and aggressive elements in the race the Spirituals were frowned upon as a reminder of slavery and ignorance.'—N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 3. Then suddenly, they became the fashion, and the Negroes found that nothing gave them more credit and prestige.

DANCE AND SONG

I have never seen boys more angry than these as they developed their indictment of Chainu and declared their grievance. They sprang to their feet one after another, trembling with rage, hardly able to speak for temper, pointing at the culprit who stood before them, at first haughty and defiant, but gradually weakening to a complete collapse. The boys called witnesses to show that he had insulted the god of the drums, that he was interfering with their old customs and spoiling their pleasure. Chainu tried to deny it, and called his witnesses, but they were not believed. The boys got more and more angry; tough little Panku of Kajen had to be held back by his friends. The boys demanded a fine of three rupees. Chainu apologized and offered one. But they did not accept this and insisted on their three rupees. The Pargana Manjhi was commissioned to see that the money was paid. At this point the bridegroom came rather pathetically into the middle of the crowd and said, 'Why do you want to have this quarrel at *my* wedding: I thought you all came here for me, but it seems that you are only interested in your own affairs'. At this people began to laugh and having won their point the boys went to worship the drums, and to dance.

The Muria are very good dancers: at their best, and taking into account the great variety of their dances, they are not inferior to any in Bastar. They dance both with and without drums, sometimes with flutes, the sexes mixed or separate. Many of the dances are accompanied by songs, and the music of these, as well as many of the drum rhythms, were written down by Walter Kaufmann during a tour with me in February 1941. He recorded songs sung by the boys and girls of Kongera, Toinar, Markabera, Narayanpur and Kondagaon, and though the collection which he has generously allowed me to use here is not complete, it will give a fair idea of the type of music, which is undoubtedly of a very primitive character; it is entirely within the anhemitonic pentatonic scale, the 'Jhoria' songs being sometimes three-tone, sometimes four-tone and sometimes roughly five-tone. Kaufmann spoke of the clean, clear shape of the tunes, their purity and integrity; they were 'straight, delightful, impressive and very old'. He was however disappointed in the singing of the Narayanpur ghotul, which has come under the influence of education and the outside world. The singing there was vague and unbalanced; though still of the primitive pentatonic scale, it had become 'unclean'.

Muria music has decided Mongolian affinities, and the curious yodel of the Relo chorus reminded Kaufmann of Chinese and Tibetan songs and even of those of the Pacific Islands. In the Muria country as in Mongolia all rhythms can be divided by two or four.

The Muria seem to distinguish tunes and songs mainly by the different rhythms of their choruses. When the songs are sung antiphonally, one party keeps the tune going and the other sings the words. 'One ploughs the tune; the other follows sowing the seed.' In Bandopal the Muria called the theme of a song the *lekna* and the chorus, which is generally a variation of the word Relo, is called the *rochē* or *tek*. The Relo chorus, for all its apparent verbal monotony, is capable of much subtle variation in tune and rhythm. Typical choruses are these:

1

Rere loyo rere le rerela rela. Rere loyo rerela rere rela rela.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
534
291

Chelik of Temrugaon wearing typical Hill Maria cap and playing the hunting-horn

Plate CVI

X883
578

Chelik panchayat denouncing a would-be reformer

[p. 532(b)]

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

second after a time. In 6 other cases a plural marriage was in progress, but was unhappy and disturbed by constant quarrels. 595

Polygyny is not socially disapproved—though an incidence of only 2 per cent might suggest it was. The Muria's attitude is rather that a man has undertaken more than he is likely to be able to manage, and is more to be pitied for his difficulties than to be condemned for impropriety.

For example, at Berma, a Muria said, 'Two wives are like two drums with the player in between; he beats one or he beats both according to the rhythm required. But a good drummer does his best with a single drum'. Or again at Kanhargaon they said, 'You will always hear the noise of pots clashing and breaking in a house with two wives; nothing is done properly, not even rice is cooked in time'. And the Kandki of Bunagaon said, 'I am dried up even by one wife. How could I manage another?' But elsewhere I have heard it said that a clever man can keep two wives happy 'just as two hands beat the two ends of a drum in rhythm'.

It is everywhere said that the wives quarrel, not through sexual jealousy or about prestige, but because each thinks the other shirks her due share of work. As I show later in the chapter this question of the distribution of work is very important to the Muria mind and is indeed the cause of most of the quarrels and a high percentage of the suicides in Muria society. [578 ● 762]

For example, in the following record of a quarrel it is the dispute about work that is really important. A husband has been neglecting his senior wife. 'Is my vagina bitter and hers so sweet?' she says and then turns on the junior. 'You *kāloti*, it is I who made this man what he is today: everything in the house is mine; all you should eat is my leavings.' The younger girl replies, 'I didn't come here of my own accord: he is as much my husband as yours, for it is he who brought us both here'. Then the husband says to the elder, 'Don't be angry. I have brought this girl, not because I love her more than you, but so that she can help you in your work'. 'But that is what she never does. When I am cooking, she should fetch wood, when I am defiled, she should cook. But she refuses.' The younger wife, in some villages, has to observe various vital taboos. She cannot approach the Pot of the Departed at will. She can only go at the New Eating Festivals after an offering has been made and a feast enjoyed. Before this she should not take any grain to the place where the Pot is kept. [784]

In the sexual sphere it is supposed to be comparatively easy to manage two or even three wives.[1] The headman of Chandabera, a charming man with the body of an athlete, told me how he arranged that he himself and each of his two wives slept in three different places. Then he made love to one or the other according to his desire, not much caring whether the other was awake and watching or no. On this point, he said, he never had trouble. In Badgaon, a Muria said that he had to have his senior wife three times a day and the junior twice in order to stop them fighting over his body—but this was doubtless an exaggeration.

I will quote some of the remarks made by these sexual athletes during the statistical inquiry.

A Sirdar of Kejang: 'I did not care for my first wife: I married her at my parents' wish, and they were more interested in marrying a rich man's daughter

[1] In many tribes, leading 'characters' take pride in keeping a number of wives. A Maria of the Oyami clan in Kanapur had six wives; in Korlapal another Maria had seven. I found a Juang in Keonjhar State with seven. The famous Yogi Baiga of Mandla had six, with twenty-six children. A Pardhan of Balaghat had a similar number and used to take them all, walking behind him in a file, when he went to a bazaar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

593 A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar
152 was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at
837 Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby? Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilizing him to some extent.

587 We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining
152 faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. Quarrels and their Causes

152 For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria
578 families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiari during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude: every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

be distributed equally; no one boy must do more than another; no one may shirk, but no one may be unduly burdened.[1]

In the home, after marriage, quarrels usually arise about the distribution of work. This, rather than sexual jealousy, is the real cause of dispute in polygamous households. Where brothers live together, their wives quarrel about the serving of the food. To say *tokirsa* of a girl implies that 'she stares at other people eating' in a suggestive way; 'she peeps in from the door when other folk sit down for a meal, hoping to get some' but she will do no work herself. The real sting of the expression *jutaha*, 'eater of another's leavings', is that it suggests that the *jutaha* never works for himself, but goes cadging round ready to eat anything, even the scraps off dirty plates.

Men beat their wives for not cooking properly, but rarely for any other cause. Here again, the reason for a man's anger is not that he feels he has missed a good meal, but that he thinks his wife is not doing her fair share of work of the home. He himself has been out all day working in the fields; his wife has been enjoying herself at home, chatting with her gossips, wasting her time; otherwise she would certainly have cooked properly.

The actual records of these quarrels are instructive. At Jhakri I overheard a man quarrelling with his wife. 'Why didn't you make the rice soft, you *jutaha*?' he shouted. 'You haven't even yet learnt to cook. When you were a girl did you do nothing but dance at marriages?' To which his wife replied, 'Of course, all through my youth I sat still in the house, and my food was brought to me in bed. Ever since I married you, you have done all the work and I have just sat filling my belly. Come along, *mailotia*, turn me out of your house, you can get another cook, and I'll live somewhere else.'

At Palli, Shamrao Hivale was privileged to listen to a wife abusing her drunken husband for chronic idleness. It was an epic row, which went on and on, and of which every detail was so often repeated that it was easy to record.

> You can only live, screamed the woman, where there is a smell of liquor. That is your real home—the out-still—there is your bed and hearth; you have no home here. What will you do if I die? Who will feed you, who will look after the children? If you won't work, I will leave you and I will take away my children. You wander all day like a goat and all night like a thief. There is no salt in the house, there are no chillies; suppose the landlord comes and asks for some, or suppose a constable comes and wants food, what shall we do? If visitors come, what food can we give them? How are you going to pay the taxes? You shameless creature, a woman has sense but you have none. When there is work to be done, there is no life in you, but when you see liquor you are full of vigour. Then you are like a pig when it catches sight of excrement.
>
> You child of a Ghasnin's vagina, go and wash your dirty face and eyes; go and see how other people work. If I had known what you were like, I would never have come to your house, you corpse. When there is work to be done in the house, then your back begins to ache, your penis is sore. Look, your son is ill, but you won't go to the Siraha—

[1] The Santal also insist on the exact division of food at festivals—P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 78—and I have noticed it also among the Orissa tribes. So keen are the Savara on the precise allocation of labour that when I have required porters to shift camp, every man in the village has turned up—many more than necessary—to ensure that no one does more, or less, work than anyone else.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

593
518
152

for you would have to give him liquor. The children are old enough for marriage but you can't spare the liquor to betroth them. Yet there's always plenty of liquor for your own genitals. If you at least had a sister, I would go to her house and forcibly bring her daughter for our boy—but what other family would give a girl to marry a son of yours unless they had the proper gifts of liquor? You eater of excrement, eater of dog's-flesh, I have spent my life telling you how to live, and now in a year or two you will go to your grave, yet you have never taken note of what I say. We have no place in the house to dry tendu or mahua; we have no garden and the manure is lying useless in the house. Everyone else has beans and vegetable and even sago palms, but we never have anything. You come quarrelling for better food, the children cry for cucumbers, there is no maize, and the children have to go and watch other people eating—while your hands and feet are being eaten by white ants. May a tiger eat you, then I can marry another man. If you die there will be less evil in the world.

Yet, as a boy at Phauda said, 'We may quarrel for *pej* and *pāni* in the day, but we become one at night', and at Kehalakot the Chalan said, 'Our life is never full unless we quarrel'.

This enjoyment of a quarrel, at least between lovers, is shown in a proverbial rhyme.

Tor gāri to mor kān ke bāri,
Tor mutka to mor chutka,
Mārbe lāt to mor dār bhāt,
Jitna mārbe panihi tatnāhi banihi.

Your abuse is the ring in my ear,
Your blows are my toe-rings,
If you kick me, it is my pulse and rice,
The more you beat me with your shoes, the more we are united.

Just as between husband and wife, so between parents and children quarrels arise about the distribution of work. On the whole relations in the home are friendly and happy; it is notable too that any attempt of parents to punish their children is spoken of as a 'quarrel'—something that arises between equals.

Parents indeed rarely complain about their children's sexual activities; the thing that worries them is that the ghotul interferes with the work of the house. The average Muria parent, it seems to me, does make real sacrifices for his children. He must experience considerable financial loss as a result of letting them go on so many expeditions, attend so many marriages and festivals and divert so many of their deeper interests from their home. But no one can say that he likes it. He usually complains that the boys and girls are guilty of four main faults—they don't obey their parents, for they have more consideration for the ghotul leaders than for them; they steal family property, little bits of wood and tobacco, and take it to the ghotul; they get uppish, answer their parents back and are afraid of no one; they don't get up early enough in the morning and they don't do enough work. Among the forms of abuse and examples of domestic quarrels that I have been able to collect, nearly all are concerned with this one point of not doing enough work. A mother says to her daughter, 'You *nakti mailotia*, all day long you are laughing with your boy friends; so and so's mother was telling me that you were ruining him; he never does any work now. If you don't work properly at home, how will you work in your husband's house? He will turn you out and our honour

418

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

will be ruined'. Or a father says to his son, 'I spit on your ghotul friends; all you can do is to dance and sing; you have no idea of how to work; when I tell you to do some work you always have a pain in the stomach. When you see a plough you at once get fever, but when you hear a drum your pains and fever disappear at once'.

At Jhakri Raunu gave us some examples of how angry parents talk to their children. Here is a mother telling her daughter what she thinks of her: 'You *jatâhi*, why can't you work? If you don't begin to use your limbs now, what will you do later?' And the girl replies, 'Why are you always bothering me? If you don't want to give me food, don't; if I have got to starve, I will starve, or I will go away and beg'. Then the father joins in: 'After you are married you are going to ruin our name; you will go changing from husband to husband, for not one will put up with your idleness; and everywhere you go people will laugh at us. Has not your mother taught you to do anything but to dance in the ghotul? Must you spend all your life in the ghotul? You cannot even cook the rice properly.'

In the same way the mother says to the son, 'Why can't you go to the fields? Why can't you look after the bullocks? Your one desire is to eat without moving your limbs; your hands and feet are broken. Yet this is your own house; this is your own property; how are you going to look after it when we are dead? How are you going to bury us properly if you never do any work?'

But the Muria believe that the mother is generally very kind and loving to her son. As Nari said at Nayanar, 'The father is always saying to himself that the girl is going to leave him and go to her husband's house and therefore he is tender to her, but the mother does not seem to mind her going away. She thinks of her own reputation. Unless she is nasty to the girl, she cannot teach her anything and so she has to nag her continually'.

These quarrels about work lead, in a few rare cases, to the serious consequence of suicide. During the past ten years there have been 20 suicides among the Muria of the ghotul area, and a study of the causes leading to them confirms what I have written in this chapter. The suicides have been due to the following causes.

Cause of Suicide	Number	Percentage
Insanity	2	10
Sickness	3	15
Fear due to breach of tribal rules ..	1	5
Fear of prosecution	1	5
Conflict with parents over marriage ..	2	10
Sorrow for the death of a son	1	5
Quarrel over childlessness	1	5
Quarrels about work	9	45

This is a very small number of suicides, only 2 a year, for so large a population, working out at about 20 to the million annually. The method of suicide, in every case but one, was hanging; the single exception was the young wife who drowned herself at Korhabera.

The suicides due to quarrels and disputes number 12, or 60 per cent. This, which would be surprising in other communities, is less so here in view of what we have seen of the sense of outrage that a quarrel gives to a Muria.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

762 578 152

I will give a few case-histories to illustrate this. Ghasia was a Lamhada boy. He went to dance at a tribal festival and on his return was violently abused by his 'father-in-law' for neglecting his work. He went out and hanged himself.

Karu of Todopal was a lazy, ill-tempered youth. One day his father abused him. 'You *mailotia*, I have fed you all your life; when will you start feeding me? All you can do is to sit about and eat' and doubtless a lot more. The boy lost his temper; there was a violent quarrel; he rushed out of the house and hanged himself on a mango tree.

Sukta was a fifteen-year-old chelik of Baghbera. In October 1931 he was beaten by his father for allowing the cattle to get into the *bāri*-enclosure and spoil the green chillies growing there. The boy ran away and hanged himself on a tamarind tree just outside the village.

Bhadu, a Muria of about 30 years, was the youngest of four brothers living together at Burbal. The eldest, Rupji, had to take his wife to a Siraha for treatment. This usually takes time; it is expensive, and involves a lot of drinking. After a few days Rupji came home in a rage and found his brothers had been neglecting the field-work in his absence. He quarrelled violently with them and was so upset that that night he hanged himself with his own turban from a mahua tree near the house.

Kaharu, a man of about 35, was a habitual drunkard. He worked for a Musalman settled in the village, Dhoundai. One evening in July 1940 he got his wages and went to the liquor shop. When he returned home drunk, his wife scolded him for spending all their money on liquor and for doing no work. He got angry, beat her, and went back to drink again. His wife followed him quarrelling violently. Kaharu took her home and hit her with his axe. She managed to escape, but Kaharu being very drunk thought he had killed her and hanged himself with one of her cloths in front of the house.

Sukaro, a middle-aged Muria woman of Killam, is described in the police reports as thin-skinned and hot-tempered, suffering from an ulcer on the left knee that did not make her any more amiable. One day when she was supposed to be watching the standing crops she went to another village. Her husband made a great to-do about her neglect of her work, and she got so angry that she hanged herself.

Dhonya was a young chelik of about 15 belonging to the Kurasnar ghotul, who did not get on well with his father. So constantly did they quarrel that at last the boy went to Jodenga to live with his uncle. A month later the father followed him and abused him publicly, saying that he had become a vagabond and would do anything but work. The boy got very angry, refused to eat and went out with his bow and arrows. But he only went as far as the Thanagudi. A few minutes later the father followed and found him hanging from a beam inside the building. He cut him down at once, but the boy was dead.

The apparent cause of suicide in these cases seems trivial enough at first sight. I have little doubt, however, that deeper reasons were usually present. The triviality of motive so often advanced by the villagers who report these tragedies is really a screen to protect the real significance of the deed from official or merely inquisitive eyes. In the majority of cases, also, psycho-neurotic or psychotic symptoms have been recognised by the people themselves. So deeply rooted is the faith in work and its equal distribution that a public rebuke on such a subject is an insult not to be borne and suicide is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

less the expression of outraged temper than a final and complete protest against a loss of dignity.[1]

It must not be supposed that because quarrels arise over work, chelik and motiari are slack or lazy. They are in fact singularly laborious and the disputes about work stand out because they occur against a background of a very high tradition of industry.

It is very rare that these quarrels end in murder. One day at the end of the rains in 1932, Kodu came home tired and hungry from the fields. His elder brother's wife, Bahe, had only got *jāwa* ready for him: he demanded rice, and she retorted that 'since his arms and legs were not broken, he might cook his food himself'. He replied that as long as there was a woman in the house he was not going to do woman's work and he gave her such a severe beating that she died after a few days.

Balsai, a former Chalki of the Umargaon ghotul, lost his temper with his wife Rupoti because though he had a bad throat and cough, she cooked the irritating *dhoba* vegetable for him. He was drunk at the time and gave her a heavy blow with a wooden stool. When I saw him in jail he said that he loved his wife—'it was a mistake, not from my heart'—and that she often visited him in dreams.

Bandi (a thin big-eyed youth, formerly the Kajanchi of Kanera) had two wives. He too quarrelled with them over food. He came hungry and there was nothing ready. He got out his razor and said he was going to kill them. The elder wife ran away, but he gave two deep cuts on the arm and belly of his younger wife. She survived, but was in hospital for months.[2]

I have seen only one record of murder on account of a wife's infidelity. Manglu was the former Kandki of the Amgaon ghotul and his wife had been the Manjaro of the same ghotul. But the girl did not like him and, it is said, would never give herself to him. She ran away twice to the house of a lover at Bamkot. The second time a group of people went to fetch her back. As they were returning at night they met Manglu and handed the girl over to him. He gave her a very severe beating then and there in the forest, and a week later she died. Manglu was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

X. The Vocabulary of Abuse

The Muria's vocabulary of abuse is meagre and unenterprising compared to that of other aboriginal tribes. Perhaps we ought not to regret this; it may be a sign of the genial and pacific temper of the people that they put so little of their imagination and colour into their swearing. But I sometimes think that their continual use of one standard and now almost meaningless expression has dulled their inventive powers.

This expression, as common as the English 'bloody' and as meaningless, is the universal *mailotia*. This is a Halbi word meaning 'to lie with your mother', but very few of those who use it so freely intend seriously to suggest that an act of incest has occurred or could occur. Indeed, the way all meaning has been drained from the expression is clearly seen in the fact that a mother can apply it to her own daughter. Girls shout it at other girls, aunts at their nieces, grandmothers at their granddaughters. There is certainly no Lesbian suggestion here; it probably simply implies 'you are capable of anything'.

[1] For a full discussion of this subject, see my book *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943).

[2] The elder wife had been the Salan of Sabapal, the younger Belosa of Metawand. Both marriages were regular, the first arranged by the parents, the second a love-match. Bandi said the two girls got on very well together.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

578
192

The expression can be varied into *bāplotia* when it is applied to a girl, but this is less common.

Halbi terms of abuse, used by the Muria but not confined to them, are the usual *nakta* or *nakti*—'noseless', a reference to the habit of removing someone's nose as a penalty for adultery; *pachmār*, a girl who goes to five men; *jutaha*, eater of the leavings of others, a thing forbidden by tribal law; and such words as *tolhi*, slacker, and *gadhi*, donkey. As in Chhattisgarh, references to the pubic hairs are common. 'You can't shave my pubic hairs', 'Can you pull out five of my pubic hairs?', 'Do you want to copulate with my hairs?' are expressions sufficiently insulting, but actually to pull out one or two of these hairs and throw them at an adversary is unforgivable.

The Muria can be very rude if he feels inclined—'Come and eat my penis'; 'Eat your mother's excreta'; 'Come and lick my plate'. *Gukhai* means 'eater of human excrement', *masaha* means 'a gluttonous eater of meat'. 'You have nothing in your own house, but run about licking others' plates.' The Muria are perhaps better at taunts than at abuse, a fact which explains the large number of taunt-songs which, sung amicably enough in the ghotul, equip the singers with weapons suitable for sterner business later on.

In Gondi almost the only abusive expressions have an incestuous reference. There are a few others, but I doubt if they are taken very seriously. I once heard a chelik say quite amiably to a motiari who had failed to clean the ghotul, '*Korka men ormi kattake galla ni pendāna jāhano*, A shed-full of buffaloes are scratching your privates'. And in the songs a not uncommon taunt is 'A jungle boar is rolling in your vagina'. I am told that a word *laria* is used with the same intention as the Chhattisgarhi *bhosri*, and means the penis. But more common is the simple *makka*—a hillman may call the people of the foothills *Jhoria-makka* or 'offspring of a lowlander's penis'; a conceited Raj Gond may be told that he is *Ganda-makka* or 'born of a Ganda', one of the despised weaving castes.

But these are rather unusual. When the Muria gets annoyed, he calls to mind the Table of Affinity and works through it, with special reference to forbidden relatives. Thus we get *niya āwān gatha*, 'I will copulate with your mother', which is usually said by a man to his own son, or classificatory son, to his daughter or younger brother's daughter: and *niya didi na gatha*, 'I will copulate with your elder sister', said by a man to his wife (the elder sister is, of course, in an 'avoidance' relationship).

To a sister's husband, a man may say *Niya ajin penda gatha*, or 'I will copulate with your father's mother' and *Niya kalena gatha*, 'I will copulate with your sister'.

These expressions, it will be noted, do not suggest that the person abused has committed incest or any tribal offence. The speaker proclaims his own intention of doing so—suggesting, I suppose, that his enemy is too weak or too acquiescent to interfere.

Another formula, which can be used in a great many different ways, is a reference to the private parts of various relatives. The Muria go into this with some anatomical detail. They say, for example, *Niya miyar na penda* or 'Your daughter's vagina' but they can also refer to her clitoris—*Niya miyar na titi gutta*—or her *labia majora*, her urethra and her breasts. I am told that a man abuses his sister's son or daughter by reference to their daughter (who is in a forbidden relation to him), and his wife's brother's son by reference to his father's sister who is, of course, his own wife.

These references to one's own wife are the strangest feature of primitive abuse. Nothing rouses stronger passions; nothing—on the face of it—is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

more absurd. A father tells his son or daughter that he will copulate with their mother, an uncle tells his nephew that he will sleep with his aunt. And so he may. But he ought not to talk about it. 578 192

Such a vocabulary of abuse could only effect its object in a society where great stress was laid on family relationships and where the rules of those relationships are strictly observed. It is just because a man never does intrigue with a forbidden relation that the accusation becomes effective and even amusing. If a Muria thought it was really true, he would not say so; for he is a decent fellow, and even in his hottest moments does not want to cause trouble.

The most significant thing about this vocabulary is in its omissions. There are no religious oaths—for they would be too dangerous. There is no suggestion of unnatural offences—for they are practically unknown. There are no references to prostitution—for there are no Muria whores.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 of fear. Sori Bhima killed a neighbour Kosa, who suffered
683 from yaws, believing him to be a wizard and responsible for the death of his children.

Vedta Sukra murdered his uncle Kola, the headman of Surguda, for being a wizard. Three years before, Sukra's three-year old daughter had died, and the cause had been diagnosed as Kola's magic. Immediately before the tragedy, Sukra's little son died after a month's illness, and members of the family went to a Siraha at Sarjiguda to find out why. The Siraha invoked the deity Madin Deo onto his person, and the deity declared through him that the death was the result of Kola's magic. The next day Sukra went with a number of villagers to the place where his child had been cremated. Heaps of rice were placed in front of the ashes, in the names of Mirchuk (which kills children), the Village Mother, the Departed, Bhagavan and the suspect Kola. A chicken was allowed to make its choice among the heaps, and it pecked up rice from those of Mirchuk and Kola. From this the people deduced that Kola had killed the child with the help of Mirchuk Deo.

The following day Kola was found lying dead in a pool of blood on his own thrashing-floor. Sukra admitted his crime and no doubt considered that his action was justified and indeed laudable.

754 One day the sago palm belonging to Hunga of Gudse village
578 ceased to give the usual juice. Hunga went to the village Siraha, a young man called Kosa, to find out what was the matter, and received the reply that it was due to the magic of Pandru, one of the neighbours. Sometime later, Pandru and Kosa met in the local liquor shop and had a drink together, and presently Kosa accused Pandru to his face of doing magic against Hunga's tree. Pandru became very angry at this, and abused Kosa and his gods. Expressing himself in typical Maria fashion, he pulled out a few of his pubic hairs and threw them on Kosa's head. Kosa slapped Pandru's face twice and went away.

Nothing happened for five months. But then on the evening of 14 April 1922, Kosa went out to look for a straying cow. His way took him near Pandru's house who, when he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754
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saw his enemy, got out his bow and arrow and shot him in the stomach.[1]

III

THE POWER OF BLOOD

The belief in the magical power of blood is world-wide, and has been so fully studied that I need only briefly refer to it here. Its virtues are imparted by the blood-covenant, by drinking, by bathing in it and by being baptized in it. Charms against sickness are sometimes written in blood in China. The blood bath was believed to be a cure for leprosy down to the Middle Ages; the idea even occurs in Grimm's fairy-tales where leprosy is treated by a bath of the blood of innocent maidens. Constantine the Great was advised to bathe in the blood of virgin children to cure an illness, but the parents' cries dissuaded him and he was miraculously healed instead.

'In the past', says Haikerwal, 'the custom of human sacrifice was common in India chiefly amongst the Dravidians. One of its forms was Purusamedha, which was celebrated for the attainment of supremacy over all created beings and at which eleven human beings and eleven barren cows were offered up. The Puranas and Tantras also contain frequent references to Narabali or human sacrifice to the goddess Chandika. These Tantrik sacrifices to Kali or Chandika were formerly common. People were freely offered in the days of Maharatta rule, and in Western India there are many temples existing even today at which such sacrifices were common only a century ago. In the North-East of India also human sacrifice to Kali was very common'.[2]

Crooke gives a number of modern examples. 'In 1870, a Mohammedan butcher losing his child was told by a Hindu

[1] This fear of witchcraft is by no means confined to the aboriginals. In 1931, a Gwara schoolmaster in the Central Provinces lost several of his cattle and his children fell ill. He traced the cause to a Powar sorcerer. He dressed up in a green skirt, green shirt, green cap, and put bells on his feet to make himself appear like his goddess and killed the sorcerer with a trident from the village temple. In 1935, some Hindus killed a Gond medicine-man in the Amraoti District because he threw a charmed lemon (believed to be infected with disease) into their compound. In Mandla District in 1935, a Mohammedan Sub-Inspector of Police, believing a Panka woman had "overlooked" his child, sent his constables to force her to remove the charm. She was beaten with castor plants, made to drink water from a Chamar's shoe and subjected to other indignities.

[2] Haikerwal, op. cit., p. 66.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

837 get offended, and in their anger kill the cattle and other livestock. When an animal dies for this cause, its tongue protrudes and a watery discharge issues from its mouth. In Dhurli the Maria said that the guilty person might go blind, and in Mathadi we were told how an old woman did actually become blind as a result of betraying her husband. If a wife commits adultery when her husband is absent on a hunting expedition, her act will 'defile the earth' and the hunt will be ruined. The arrows will fly crookedly, and the husband himself may trip over a stump. He may be bitten by a snake or hit with an arrow. If the deceived husband is a magician, his vision will be clouded. If the proper ceremonies are not performed, he may be afflicted with a watery swelling that may cause death.

674 783 If a murder is committed on account of adultery, the families both of the murderer and his victim may suffer from this swelling. To prevent the danger, the elders of each house gather together; they mix milk and water in a leaf-cup of mahua leaves and say, 'These sinned; but let not their sin be on us'. Then a representative of each house drinks a little. The family of the murdered man gives a present (which is called in Halbi *bhul-karcha*) to the family of the murderer. A measure of rice is put under the eaves of the victim's house. In the rice there is placed some thread, a ring and an arrow. The two families feast together on pork and rice, and swear friendship with each other. The arrow remains as witness to their oath. Then the murderer's family [769] take the *bhul-karcha* home, and offer it to the Departed in their own house.

578 787 Quarrels are always dangerous, for they disturb tribal solidarity and may earn the vengeance of the Departed. Indeed it is dangerous even to dream of a quarrel; if you do, you should sacrifice to the Earth the next morning. If husband and wife are known to be constantly at odds with one another, a panchayat is held and one or both may be fined.

783 When Oyami Anda of Harmamunda carried off and married a girl for whom another youth was serving as Lamhada, he not only had to pay compensation for the work done by the other boy, but a ceremony was performed to purify both parties of enmity. Anda stood with the Lamhada

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: DISPUTES ABOUT PROPERTY

I

674 In Europe, and indeed wherever modern civilization has made its way, the great majority of murders are murders for gain. Among the Maria also many acts of violence arise in sequel to disputes about property. But there is a great difference between Maria homicide and civilized murder with this motive.

422 428 How few are the possessions of the Maria! There are some little huts of mud and thatch, some weedy cattle, land which is ultimately the property of the State, a few knives and axes, some pots, perhaps a store of grain and a handful of rupees hidden somewhere. When a man dies, questions of inheritance only rarely arise, for after a few valuables have been buried in the grave there is hardly anything left to distribute. Rules of inheritance do, however, exist. After the death of a father his fields are jointly owned by his sons, his brothers and his brothers' sons. Widows and daughters do not usually inherit, though there are a few examples where there is either no obvious rival claimant or the widow is of strong character and has refused to hand over the property of her dead husband to anyone else.

576 428 Quarrels more often arise over the partition of the family goods while the head of the household is alive. The traditional idea was clearly not to partition the family property during the father's lifetime. But nowadays elder sons often desire a share of land or cattle when they set up a separate establishment. Brothers who, after the death of their father, have shared his possessions sometimes quarrel with one another, and desire a formal separation and partition. Where such partition is permitted in the father's lifetime the youngest son, who often remains at home when the older boys go away to live elsewhere, has a special claim over his father's remaining goods.

674 Murders connected with property are not generally

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Murders connected with property are not generally committed for gain in the ordinary sense. They rather arise out of disputes about rights and privileges, and the actual murder is the result of anger and resentment rather than a desire for possession. In several cases indeed murder has been a form of self-defence against someone who tries to take away land or other property that the murderer believes to be his by right. Thus Marvi Buti was the elder brother of Marvi Chule, and for some time they lived in separate villages. Two years before the tragedy, Chule came to live next-door to his elder brother at Bara Gudra and got two of his fields and two tanks for irrigation. Chule cultivated them and paid two rupees as rent. Buti spent the money and when the time for the next payment came round, demanded and recovered four rupees from his younger brother. The following year Buti refused to give Chule any land at all. But Chule, claiming that he had already paid in advance for that year since he had actually paid six rupees and had only cultivated for one year, ploughed up the fields in spite of Buti's protests, and sowed grain in one of them. Buti countered this by giving the fields and the tanks to another brother who used the tanks, but was unable to get possession of the land. Then Buti threatened that he would drive the village cattle into the fields where Chule had sown his crop and would thus destroy it. Chule seems to have felt that it was no use carrying on the unequal struggle any longer, and he decided to leave the village and go elsewhere. He actually built a house in another village, and at the beginning of the rains went to move his possessions. When he reached his old house, he found one of his plantain trees cut down; he was told that Buti had been there and had cut the tree saying that he would cut down Chule in the same way. As he was removing his mahua seed from the building, someone came running to say that Buti was approaching with a knife in his hand. Chule got his axe and faced his enemy. Apparently Buti tried to run away, but Chule followed him and killed him.

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Now here, although the tragedy arose out of a question about property, it is evident that Chule was not moved by the desire of gain. Indeed he had abandoned his claim to the fields in dispute, for he had already moved to another village where he would get new land. I think it is probable

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 that he never intended to kill Buti. But when he reached his old house and found his tree cut down, and when on top of this he saw his enemy approaching with a knife in his hand, the double passions of revenge and fear so moved him that he lost all control and went out to kill his adversary. It is said indeed that, as he pursued him, he shouted that they would both die together.

674 578 Another incident developed on similar lines. Dudhi Bhima and his uncle Marvi Deva lived on opposite sides of a field at Pordem, and cultivated it jointly. The real owner of the land had abandoned the field on the death of his father some eight years previously. Four years later Deva's father also died, and when Deva himself fell ill, he decided that whatever good or evil spirit was in occupation there was dangerous and he too abandoned the land and moved to another village. For four years Bhima cultivated the land as a sub-tenant of the original owner, Sori Masa. According to the State Law Masa forfeited his right to his land by sub-letting it for a period longer than three years, and Bhima actually had, by virtue of long residence, become the real owner, though in typical aboriginal fashion he never thought of getting this officially recorded. All went well, however, until in the middle of 1929 Marvi Deva, apparently persuaded that the supernatural danger from the field was not as great as he had feared, or perhaps as a result of performing the necessary prophylactic sacrifices, returned to the village and claimed the land. Bhima refused to surrender it, and in the summer and rains of 1930 he ploughed it and sowed and reaped his crop. After the field was cleared Marvi Deva decided on forcible measures, and one morning he started ploughing the field with the idea of sowing rape seed on it. His nephew did nothing at the moment, but that evening he went to his uncle's house and killed him while he was sitting by the fire after supper.

674 In this case it might conceivably be said that Bhima's crime was a crime for gain, because once the uncle was out of the way, he would be left in undisturbed possession of the field. But it is much more likely that the crime was one of sheer anger and revenge. In the first place, as we have seen, the land belonged legally to Bhima and he could easily have asserted his right to it by preferring a claim to any

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

State official. Secondly he must have known that after killing his uncle so openly—he made confession immediately to the Zamindar of Sukma—he would not be able to enjoy the fruit of his crime. Bhima's action was indeed judicial and an expression of his indignation against the anti-social conduct of his uncle. Unhappily he chose far too drastic a means of indicating his displeasure.

The case of Marvi Khotla arose out of a dispute about the partition of property. After the death of Manjhi Wijja, his sons Bande and Khotla inherited his property and continued to share the land and cattle. At the time of the murder Bande was about sixty years old and had succeeded his father as headman or Peda of the village. All the family cattle, though actually the joint property of the two brothers, were in his hands. The younger brother was anxious to have his own share separate. But since he and Bande were married to two sisters and were practically one family of which Bande regarded himself as the patriarchal head, the villagers and Bande himself did not consider that there was a sufficient case for partition. Khotla, however, was continually badgering his elder brother, and one day at the beginning of the monsoon he went at sunset to Bande's house and standing before it demanded his share. Bande as usual put him off on some pretext, and there was the usual quarrel. Khotla went home and had his supper. During supper his wife, who was, it will be remembered, the sister of Bande's wife, urged him not to quarrel about the cattle. But directly after supper Khotla again went back to Bande's house and abused him violently. He sat down by the fire, and continued for some time shouting at him. Bande was gradually getting more and more annoyed, and it is said that he exclaimed that he would kill Khotla if he did not keep quiet. A little later he declared, 'I am the Peda of this village, and I will have to beat you if you abuse me like this'. Presently Khotla's own wife came and begged her husband to stop quarrelling and come home to bed. But the man took no notice, and continued shouting every sort of foul abuse until at last Bande came quietly out of his house and knocked him senseless to the ground. The next day shortly after noon he died, and his wife beat a drum in order to give the alarm.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 678 It is not easy to say whether Bande's motive here was primarily to keep control of the family property or not. His feelings were probably very mixed. He was an elderly man and the Peda of the village. Division of his herd of cattle might do something to lower his prestige. As Peda he was accustomed to give abuse, not to receive it. He believed, and in this he had the support of the villagers, that his brother's claim was unreasonable. Outraged dignity, wounded pride and sheer exasperation probably played as strong a part in his catastrophic revenge as any other motives.

Sometimes the quarrels arise about what may seem to the outsider quite trivial matters, though we should never fall into the error of judging the value of things to an aboriginal by our own standards. For example, two murders were committed on account of cocks, one a cock that was needed at a feast in honour of a brother-in-law and the other a fighting-cock.[1] In another case the quarrel arose between two brothers about the possession of a drum which was sold for two rupees ten annas, out of which the real owner only got a rupee.[2] In yet another case a youth murdered his own father as a result of a dispute over a tobacco crop. The son had a debt of four rupees to pay, and he asked his father to give him the tobacco so that he could sell it and pay off his debt. The father wanted the proceeds to buy clothes for himself. Tempers rose quickly and soon the father was saying that his son could sell the children to pay off his debt, but he would never part with his tobacco, a remark that cost him his life.[3]

II

762 Suicides from economic causes are extremely rare. This remarkable fact has been noticed also for the Bantu in South Africa. 'Conditions of starvation, prolonged droughts and disease among live-stock', says Laubscher, 'are common, and still no cases of suicides are known to magistrates of as much as thirty years' experience which can be considered as the result of despair in the face of economic difficulties'.[4] Only one Bison-horn Maria, Veko Lakhma, killed himself as the

[1] See Case Nos 52 and 18.
[2] Case No 86.
[3] Case No 40.
[4] Laubscher, op. cit., p. 290.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Man and wife generally settle down at first in a small hut of their own. But there is a sort of joint family system with the father or elder brother as the patriarchal head, and sometimes a large family occupies an entire hamlet of its own in one part of the village territory. The institution of the cross-cousin marriage tends to unite families very closely.

This happy and united family life is disturbed by several causes. One, as we have seen, is the commonplace invasion of the happiness of two people by a third. Another is the presence of the husband's younger brother in the house, and the privileged relationship which he has with the elder brother's wife. Another is the custom that allows a married girl to visit her mother's house. Yet another is man's insatiable passion for domestic experiment which leads to the complicated and dubious joys of plural marriage.

It will be of interest to compare with this the situation in ordinary Hindu families, where the common disparity of age between husband and wife creates stresses from which the Maria are free. 'There are tendencies at work within the family institution itself which sometimes lead to criminal action. The joint family rests upon the mutual toleration and sacrifice of the different members of the household. While forbearance is the outcome of long discipline in joint family life, it is put to a severe test as a result of the growth of individualism. Again, the disparity between the ages of husband and wife, of parents-in-law and girl-wife, offers opportunities of exploitation and even cruelty. The custom of infant marriage is apt to promote oppression, especially where there is a striking difference in age between the husband and the wife. Cases of cruelty to young wives are often brought to the courts in India.

'In 1929 a Hindu weaver in Hyderabad, who had married a young girl, chained her like an animal to a big mill-stone to prevent her making frequent attempts to run away. She subsequently died.

'In another case in the same year a young girl-wife who was being forcibly taken to her husband's house managed to free herself, jumped into a wayside well, and was drowned'.[1]

[1] Halkarwal, op. cit., p. 25.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

II

HUSBAND AND WIFE

674 578 The murder by Veko Chamru of his wife and two children and his subsequent execution which thus removed a whole family from the world, makes a strange and sombre tale. Chamru and his wife Hirme had two young children, a daughter of ten called Lakhmi and a son of six named Hando. Apparently for some time they had not been getting on very well. One day Chamru asked his wife to husk rice, as he had to give his share of the Maharaja's tribute at Dassara, but she refused to do it. He brought some sweets for his children and dried fish from the Alnar bazaar. But when he gave them to his daughter, Hirme snatched them out of her hand and threw them away. The woman was evidently suffering from an extreme form of sulks. She refused to husk rice for supper and she did not cook food that evening or the next morning. The husband went to bathe in the river taking his little daughter with him, but she fetched the child back, and when he returned to the house he found that Hirme had gone away with the two children. She went to a friend's house and told her that she was frightened of her husband, and stayed there two days. She then went to another friend and again stayed two days and went away in the night. At last she went to the house of Chamru's uncle, and he advised her not to quarrel with her husband and told her to go home. The woman came back, but sat at a distance of about a hundred yards from the house and shouted to Chamru that she was going to leave him. He had to go out to get his cattle, and on his return found that his wife had disappeared. After a few days he left his house in charge of a boy, and went to the Alnar bazaar. He met a friend, drank some liquor with him and the two men did not start home till evening. On the way they met Hirme with the two children. Chamru scolded her asking her where she had been and saying he would kill her. When they came to the cross-roads near their village, Chamru went home with his wife and children and his friend turned off by another path. When they got home the boy, who had been left in charge of the house, was there and in his

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

presence Chamru twice struck his wife on the back with the handle of his axe.

That night one of the neighbours was watching his crops as usual and as he was going home after making a round of the fields, he heard a noise in Chamru's house. He went there and found the man sitting near the door supporting his dead wife in his arms and weeping loudly. Chamru declared that he had killed her. The neighbour went away and brought his friends, and before them Chamru declared that he had hanged his wife and children because they had run away. He said that he would get another wife the next morning, and tried to borrow rice and bullocks for her bride-price.

The people then went to the house, and found the dead body of Hirme lying near the door and the little boy and girl hanging from a rafter. The next day they went to the police station and reported that Hirme had hanged herself, and the two children had followed her example, during Chamru's absence at the Alnar bazaar.

It is evident that Chamru intended to make a deal with the villagers. He supposed that, if he frankly admitted what he had done and paid suitable compensation, they would agree to hush the matter up, and indeed it is obvious that they did agree to do so. What they did not realize was that a police investigation was bound to discover the weak points in their story. Directly the police came to investigate the alleged suicides, they found suspicious inconsistencies. For example, the knot by which the rope round the boy's neck was tied was not a slip-knot, and it would have been difficult for him to have died by strangulation under the circumstances. The girl's neck was tied with a cloth which was hardly adapted to kill her, and her feet were hanging close to a heap of rice on which she could easily have supported herself. The medical evidence immediately disposed of any idea that the three victims had met their deaths by hanging. The usual marks of such a death—constriction of the neck, ligature mark in the neck interrupted at one side, open eyes, protruding tongue, clenched hands, dislocation of the second vertebra from the first—were absent. Medical opinion was that the cause of death in all three cases was congestion of

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 the chest due to shock, but it was certainly not due to hanging.

626 When these facts were put to the villagers they, seeing that the matter was known, changed their attitude; and three different lots of people, none of whom apparently had any kind of enmity towards Chamru in spite of his allegations to that effect, described how on the night of the murder he had admitted killing his wife and children. Chamru, however, insisted that he had not met his wife and children on the way back from the bazaar as the witnesses described, but that on reaching home late at night he had, as he entered, collided against the naked corpse of his wife hanging from the roof. He had taken a blazing piece of wood and had discovered his son and daughter in a similar plight. He had cut down his wife's naked body and wrapped it in the cloth with which she had hanged herself, and had sat there weeping and wondering whether he himself should not commit suicide.

There was abundant evidence, however, that Chamru had met his wife and children on the way home from the Alnar bazaar and had gone with them to the house. He was seen in their company by the boy who had been left to guard the building. Nobody saw what happened from sunset until late at night when his perhaps not wholly hypocritical cries of distress attracted the attention of a neighbour. But it is obvious that he was present in the house, and that no other person could have come in and killed his wife and children. Frustrated sexual desire, injured pride, jealousy at the children's affection for their mother, hunger and fatigue (for Hirme's absence meant there was no one to cook or do the house-work) drove the distracted man to a shocking vengeance and his own death on the scaffold in the end.

674 578 Marvi Paklu and his wife Dallo had been married for about three years, and had two children who died. They got on fairly well together for some time. But particularly after the death of the children disagreements arose; Dallo appears to have been that rather unusual type among aboriginals, a frigid woman who refused full sexual privileges to her husband and yet at the same time was jealous of him and possessive. Two years after their marriage she went to an uncle at Dilmilli without any proper clothes and only

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

wearing a small bit of cloth for decency. She declared that she had been beaten by her husband and turned out of the house. According to one version of what happened, she stayed at Dilmilli for a whole year. According to Paklu's own story, he went for her after a week and brought her home. This is, I think, more likely. But it is quite possible that Dallo then for a whole year refused to live with him as his wife.

Paklu's home was at Muskonta, a little hamlet of only three houses, among rocks and woods near Mutanpal. One of the houses belonged to an old widow called Wage, whose widowed daughter Jimme had come to live with her. Jimme was an attractive girl, and she and Dallo became great friends; they used to go out together to get leaves, fruit and mushrooms. As Dallo got more and more frigid towards her husband, she used to go every night to sleep in Jimme's house. The result was what perhaps might be expected. Paklu, rejected by his wife, fell in love with his wife's friend. One afternoon in July 1939 Paklu and Jimme arranged to meet in a cave among the rocks of a hill about half a mile from the hamlet. That afternoon as one of the neighbours was sitting on his verandah, he saw Paklu going to the place and a little afterwards Jimme following him. But then to his dismay he observed Dallo going in the same direction with a basket in her hand.

The prosecution story was that Paklu and Jimme were together in the cave and were in the act of intercourse when Dallo discovered them. She asked her husband what he was doing there and struck Jimme with a thin bamboo stick. Paklu, naturally enraged at the interruption, got up and pulled off his wife's cloth, trying to shame her by making her naked. He struck her on the head twice with the blunt side of his axe. She fell down, and then Paklu knelt on her chest and twisted her neck till she died. He dragged her out into the forest and left her body there. Her combs and ornaments and the basket were hidden by Jimme. Paklu went to get some bamboos and returned home. When the body was found, he declared that his wife had been killed by a tiger.

But later Paklu first declared that he had caught his wife having intercourse with another man, who ran away as he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 approached, and that in a fit of rage at his wife's infidelity he had killed her; and then later admitted that he had gone to the cave, but denied that he ever approached Jimme sexually. He said that he had been sitting on the rocks above when his wife threw a stone at him. He slapped her, and she fell accidentally from the rocks and was killed.

There can be little doubt, however, that the prosecution story was true. When the police searched the cave, they found on the dust of the floor the clear signs of a woman lying on her back and a pair of footprints on either side [833] of the marks made by the woman's buttocks. This clearly shows that intercourse practised according to the normal aboriginal technique had been in progress, and Jimme confirmed the fact.

Paklu, when I saw him in jail, was still young, a man of [697] fine physique and good-looking. He has behaved well in jail, for he has been made a Lambardar and wears the tall yellow cap which indicates his office.

762 Nine cases of suicide were due to disputes between wife ● 578 and husband. Thus Kome is said to have been quick-tempered, a person who always exaggerated things. She was a young wife, only twenty years old, and when her husband came in one day tired and wet from the fields, and found no food ready, and abused her, she took a rope and slipped out of the house. Her husband, also young, found some stale food and took it back to the field. When he came home in the evening his wife was dead.

Mate had a row with her husband over lighting the fire. He was drunk and beat her, and she attacked him. But her [607] husband's elder brother, to whom she was strictly taboo and who had no business to touch her, intervened and beat her also. During the night, she left the house and tried to get across the Indrawati River in order to reach her mother's house. But there was no ferry and she hanged herself with her clothes. It is worthy of note that although there was a deep river at hand, the girl preferred to end her life by hanging.

An unusually tragic incident occurred at Metapal in February 1937. Kuhrami Hurra returned one day from the bazaar and found that one of his calves had been killed by a panther. Rightly or wrongly he considered that this was

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

the fault of his wife and daughter, who had not tied the calf up properly in the evening. Hurra's wife was well known for her quick temper; she was continually quarrelling, especially if her husband ventured to interfere with household matters, and it is said that the daughter had learnt to take her mother's side. After the quarrel about the calf, the older woman set fire to their house and took her daughter away to the field-house out in their clearing. Here she first hanged her daughter and then herself.

Yet another wife from the same area, Galle, was obviously a bad housewife; she used to tell her husband that she would throw their child on the ground if he ordered her to do any work. On the day of her death she had been asked to prepare leaf-cups and food for the whole family—a large one. This seems to have been the immediate cause of disturbance, and she hanged herself. But there was undoubtedly a long and miserable tale of domestic unhappiness behind it.

In three remarkable cases it was the husband who committed suicide from remorse and sorrow. Barse Chewa asked his wife, a sick and miserable woman, to light the fire early in the morning. She was rather slow about it and Chewa beat and kicked her, knocking her unconscious. He was so ashamed and frightened that he killed himself. Sori Deva, angry at the loss of two of his cows, miserable because he had beaten his wife, did the same. So did Marvi Dhodsa who beat his wife, who was suffering from sore eyes, for not keeping the baby quiet. That night Dhodsa felt very miserable; he realized that his wife was ill, that he had no right to beat her, and that the child too had sore eyes and was bound to cry. He crept out of the house and hanged himself on a mahua tree with his own cloth.

III

THE POLYGAMOUS HOME

The strains and stresses of a polygamous household do not appear to result in tragedy so often as we might expect. Polygamy is not perhaps very common among the Maria, for the simple reason that there are not enough women to make it often possible. Those men who do keep more than one

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

595 wife at a time are generally the sort of people who would make a success of anything, even of so complicated a matrimonial adventure as this. The rough, dominating Goge, for example, was exactly the sort of person who would have had three wives.[1] Oyami Masa, who killed his younger wife at Khutepal, was again a strong, powerful, interesting character, a typical polygamist. And indeed provided the husband treats his wives with more or less equal consideration, and provided he is sufficiently potent to satisfy them all, there is a chance that such a domestic arrangement may succeed. But woe betide the 'good' husband, whose virtues are those that civilization may applaud, who enters on this experiment.

674 595 578 The failures that come to light are not many, but they are interesting. Sometimes the jealousies and quarrels lead to murder, sometimes to suicide. At Khutepal I visited the family of Oyami Masa, and met the charming old lady who was his senior wife. He was just out of jail after a year's imprisonment for killing his younger wife, Tokki. Tokki was a widow and by no means young, for her son by her previous husband had been old enough to go to the Tea Gardens of Assam. At the beginning of 1940, when Tokki had been living with Masa for about six months, the son returned from the Tea Gardens bringing three bits of cloth with him as a present for his mother. Masa, as one would expect, took possession of the cloth and this naturally upset Tokki very much. She declared that the older wife had persuaded him to keep the cloth simply in order to be vexatious. Masa replied that, since he was the head of the house and was feeding her and her son and everyone else, it did not matter whether he kept the cloth or she did. The quarrel—as such quarrels do—went on and on and at last during supper one evening Masa got so angry at the woman's nagging on the subject that he picked up a stick and beat her. It is not known how hard he beat her or whether he intended to kill her or not, since he had the body cremated immediately. For the woman died. No report was made to the police for three weeks by which time all the evidence had disappeared, and it was impossible for the court to do more than to sentence Masa to a year's imprisonment under

[1] See Case No 71.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 578 595 Section 323, I.P.C. for what he admitted, voluntarily causing hurt to his wife.

At Dugeli I met Bugori and his senior wife Jimme. Bugori, a most attractive young man, had been able to win the affection of two women both of whom appear to have loved him devotedly. Unfortunately Jimme's jealousy knew no bounds, and one day, when the two women were out together working in the jungle, Jimme, who was robust and powerful, tried to kill the younger girl with her axe. But she survived, and Jimme went to jail for three years. During [626] her absence the younger wife remained with Bugori. But when Jimme was due for release, the village held a panchayat and decided that the younger wife must go to live at her mother's house for fear that Jimme might try to kill her again. When Jimme came home, therefore, after Bugori had [783] given the usual feast to the villagers and had purified her of jail defilement, he took her to his house where she has lived very happily and borne him children. He visits his younger wife in her mother's village from time to time, but does not allow her to come to his house for fear of another tragedy.

Markami Handa had two wives, but does not seem to have been able to keep the affection of the younger, an attractive girl about twenty-four years old. She fell in love with another man and he killed the husband to prevent him taking revenge. Marvi Kesa had three wives, and ill-treated the youngest. One day, after he had beaten her, she ran away to her father's house. There was a quarrel there, and Kesa killed his father-in-law. Poyami Masa had two wives, and a Dhobi tried to seduce the elder. The younger discovered the intrigue, and probably thought it was an excellent opportunity to get rid of her rival. She told her husband, and he was so angry that he stabbed the older woman with an arrow and was himself sentenced to life imprisonment.

Tati Harma had three wives. At the time of the tragedy which brings his name into this record, only two were living. The younger wife had borne him four children, but Harma used to beat her constantly saying that she did not work properly and ate too much. So serious were the disputes in the home that a panchayat fined husband and wife four

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

annas each for not living happily together. One morning the elder wife went to fetch Harma from the field-hut where he had been sleeping, and found him dead, killed by the younger woman who could not endure his ill-treatment longer.

The complications and petty miseries of a polygamous home are illustrated in the story of how Sori Dome murdered her elder co-wife, Chule. Even while their husband was alive, the two women were always quarrelling. Three years before his death Dome beat Chule over the head with a bit of a broken plough, and Chule took a whole month to recover from the blow. Dome used continually to threaten the older woman that one day she would kill her. After the husband's death, matters got even worse. Chule was old and feeble and suffered from yaws, which made her irritable and exacting. But the two women continued to live together, along with their husband's elder brother, in their husband's house. Just before the tragedy, Chule made peevish complaints that Dome had been extravagant in using up the rice, to which the other replied that, since she had eaten it, it was not wasted. One evening, after they had been working in the fields and quarrelling all the time, they set out to go home. Dome had an axe in her hand and her two children were with her. Chule was carrying a bamboo basket. Dome urged the old woman to hurry up, but she replied that her feet were hurting her and she would follow later. Exasperated, Dome pushed Chule by the back of her neck and then struck her a blow with the axe. The old woman fell down, and Dome hit her again and she seems to have died on the spot. Medical examination, however, showed that there was no fracture and no dislocation either in the head or ribs where the blows had fallen. Dome did not use the sharp edge of the axe, and it is possible that she did not intend to kill the woman, but only wanted to teach her a lesson. On the other hand, of course, it was greatly to her advantage that Chule should be eliminated.

It is perhaps rather surprising that there is not more suicide in polygamous households. But it does, of course, occur. Bandi, headman of Khutepal, had two wives. They quarrelled and the elder woman hanged herself. Masa of Samgiri also had two wives, and the younger girl quarrelled

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

with him saying that he did not give her proper clothing or ornaments and that he did not sleep with her often enough. Jealous and frustrated, she hanged herself in a fit of despair. Poyami Gupe of Bastanar, a girl of about eighteen years, was widowed at sixteen and remarried two years later as the junior wife of Guddi. One day, about seven months after the new marriage, Gupe went to collect young bamboo shoots—a great delicacy to the aboriginal—and came home rather late in the evening. For this she was scolded by her co-wife and no doubt accused of every crime that jealousy could suggest. She left the house and went to stay with her maternal uncle. Guddi went to bring her back, but rather than go with him she hanged herself.

Kawasi Dulga's reaction was unusual. He appears to have been one of those husbands who should never have tried such an experiment; a man of weak character who could not keep his two wives in order. The women were always quarrelling and made his home and life a misery. One day he went with the younger to the bazaar and, as they were coming home, they quarrelled and Dulga slapped her. Presently he told her to go ahead as he wanted to relieve himself. She walked on a little way, but he did not appear and when she went back to look for him she found him hanging from a tree.

IV

The relationship between the wives of brothers is carefully regulated. Between an elder brother and his younger brother's wife there is an absolute taboo: there is no stronger rule of avoidance in all primitive society. But the younger brother stands in a special and privileged relationship to his elder brother's wife: he can flirt with her; he can make indecent jokes; he can become her lover; after her husband's death he has the first claim on her person and if she marries anyone else he has a right to compensation.[1]

It is obvious that among a people where brothers often live together, sharing house and lands, where jealousy is strong and sexual desire passionate and keen, such a tradition may

[1] For a detailed study, see Shamrao Hivale, 'The Dewar-Bhauji Relationship', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 157-67.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

607 sometimes lead to trouble. To the younger man, his elder brother's wife is delightful because she is accessible and does not burden his conscience. To the elder man, the younger girl is doubly attractive because she is forbidden. The word [601] 'brother', of course, under the classificatory system of relationship, includes also male relations who are more usually called cousins.

674 A youth Hemla Bakka killed his wife Jimme for having 578 betrayed him with his elder cousin Hemla Dhurwa. During 607 the season when the mangoes ripen, Jimme had gone with Dhurwa to collect and eat the fruit, and the husband suspecting them followed and watched them secretly. Dhurwa climbed the tree and shook it; the woman collected the fallen mangoes, and they ate them together. Then Dhurwa took her behind some bushes and was about to have intercourse with her, when Bakka appeared and separated them. Some time later Bakka returned suddenly from his field to drink water and discovered Dhurwa coming out of his house. He said that he would report the matter to the village elders. When he scolded his wife for her behaviour, she retorted that she would live with the man she loved and that nothing could prevent her. There was then a regular family quarrel, in which Bakka's father was beaten, and this so enraged the boy that he struck his wife a heavy blow on the head and killed her. There can be no doubt that in this case Bakka's feelings were outraged not only because his wife was unfaithful, but because she was unfaithful with a forbidden person, an act which might bring all manner of supernatural vengeance upon him—cattle might die and he himself might be afflicted with a psycho-dropsical swelling.

Another case of the same kind is that of Marvi Boti of Telam. Boti and his younger brother Kosa were living with their father, and were both married. Boti's wife died and he fell in love with his younger brother's wife, though the villagers said that it was really the girl who made overtures to Boti and threatened to commit suicide if he did not marry her. Kosa suspected his wife and beat her, and this seems to have decided Boti, for a week later he ran away with the girl to the Jeypore Zamindari. After about three weeks Boti

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

decided to go to his father's house to get his children by his former wife. The girl insisted on going with him. As they were approaching Telam they had the misfortune to meet Kosa coming along the same path. Apparently some people returning from a bazaar had told him that Boti had returned, and he had set out to seek vengeance armed with a *gagra*. When the boy saw his elder brother, he said, 'My fate is good, for it has sent you to me, since you have run away with my wife'. And so saying he struck Boti across the face. At that Boti seized his brother by his arms, and there was a struggle in the course of which Kosa was killed.

Gagra knife
(*Length* 18")

When Boti returned from jail, he had to make special offerings in addition to undergoing the usual ceremony of purification. Since he had kept his younger brother's wife, he had to sacrifice to the Departed of his house, and to his clan-god. If he had not done this, his body would have swollen and he would have died. As it was, he was impotent for a whole year after he was released from jail.

V

It is perhaps surprising that there are not more murders as a result of the liberties allowed a youth with his elder brother's wife. Boti stood in this pleasant relation to Mase and as a result they poisoned Mase's husband in order that they could be regularly married. The murder of Tati Hirme was due to her rejection of her dead husband's younger brother when he came to claim her.

It is possible that the remarkable forbearance shown by Ujji Poda towards Kopa, his younger cousin-brother, who was in love with his wife, Ragho, was due to his realization that Kopa was not breaking any tribal or social conventions:

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

574 593 to their old homes, and some girls make a regular habit of going there, far too often for the comfort of their husbands.

574 578 There have been several suicides arising out of this situation, but only one of our hundred murders. This was the tragedy of Habka Masa who, when I saw him in jail, was a sad gaunt man utterly crushed by the tragedy that had befallen him. He had been married to his wife Pakli for some three years, and was living with his old blind parents at Hallur in the Kutru Zamindari. In June his wife went home to Gangalur for the Pen Karsita festival. Masa insisted on going with her. Two days after the festival, Masa told his father-in-law that he wanted to go back to his house, for it was the beginning of the rains and there was a lot to do. The older man was agreeable, and gave him the customary clothes and a basket of oil-seed, which is the usual present to a son-in-law when he leaves the house. But Pakli refused to go. Her parents were on the point of going to work as coolies, and she wanted to go with them. Masa, fearing that he might lose his wife altogether, decided to accompany her. The party set out and went to Gidam, a prosperous little country town on the main road, and again Masa tried to get his wife to go home. From Gidam they went to Tirthum and worked at the construction of a bridge for the P.W.D. When the bridge was ready, they all went on to Silakjhori where they got work as farm-servants. The parents-in-law built a little hut for themselves, and Masa and Pakli occupied a deserted hut belonging to sawyers. From the day of their arrival there were constant quarrels between Masa and his wife, for Masa was anxious about his cultivation—he was the only able-bodied man in the family. Pakli used to put forward every possible excuse for not going back. One day it was raining heavily. The next the rivers were flooded and she was afraid to cross them. A third day she promised to go when the rains were over.

On the night of 10 July 1939, there was heavy rain and a strong wind. After supper with the family Masa and Pakli struggled through the wind to their little hut. According to Masa's own account they then began to quarrel violently. He again asked Pakli to go home and she refused. Then he asked her to give him some tobacco, or, in other words, to have intercourse with him, and this also she

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

refused. She abused him saying, '*Puk nak*, lick my privates', and told him to go home without her. This, he said, was impossible and she again abused him. He got so angry that he hit her on the head with a heavy piece of wood and she died immediately.

More frequently these disputes have ended in suicide. The wife of Markami Pide was in love with another man, and frequently used to leave her husband and go to stay at her mother's house where it was possible for her to meet her lover. Pide as frequently would go and bring her back and beat her. At last she killed herself in despair. Mundri, the wife of the headman of Kaklur, frequently quarrelled with her husband over the question of visiting her parents, and one day when she wished to go and her husband stopped her, she became so miserable that she hanged herself from a mango tree.

Wooden tobacco box (*Length* 3½")

In two cases it was the husband who committed suicide. Marvi Gutami, a young man of twenty-two years, married a girl to whom he was much attached. Indeed it is said that he loved her so much that he was quite unable to control her, and she got on the nerves of the older women in the house who lost no opportunity of venting their spite upon her. As a result she often used to go away to her mother's house, and Gutami would have to go and bring her back. One day when this happened, the youth found that she had gone into hiding elsewhere. Despairing of happiness, he returned home and hanged himself behind his house. Kawasi Hurra's wife Lakhmi did not care for him and was always slipping away to her parents' house. He brought her back five or six times, but she would run away again after staying with him for a few days. Hurra seems to have been very fond

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 of the girl, and her constant absence made him so miserable
574 that he ended his life.
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A situation where the roles of the characters were reversed, and it was the mother who wished to visit the daughter's house, led to an even more pathetic tragedy.

In November 1939, a mother at Killepal was rebuked by her son and daughter-in-law for not helping them with the reaping of the kosra crop. She had been a widow for ten years and seems to have got a certain amount of pleasure and relaxation from paying visits to her married daughter at Dilmilli. This was resented by the son and brother with whom she lived. When she found that she was to be robbed even of this happiness, she killed herself.

VII

PARENTS-IN-LAW

674 The relationship between a man and his parents-in-law is
606 always difficult. But the general tradition in Maria, as in Hindu society, is that the older people should treat a son-in-law with respect and consideration. Neglect of this rule is apt to arouse very strong feelings in a man's mind. Marvi Kesa had three wives, the youngest of whom ran away to her parents' house after a beating. This is a common practice of aboriginal wives, and causes great annoyance to their husbands especially if the parents take their daughters' side. On this occasion Kesa followed his wife to the house and found her enjoying a drink of rice-beer with the neighbours. He went to his father-in-law and asked him why he had not sent his wife back. The older man replied casually that she had only arrived that morning, and this answer so annoyed Kesa that he struck him on the head with his axe and killed him.

In another case it was the mother-in-law who was the victim. Marvi Hinga took his wife Hirme, who was suffering from fever, to a neighbouring village to a Siraha for treatment. He stayed with her during the night and the next morning returned to his house, where he was seen by his mother-in-law. She, thinking that he had left her daughter uncared for and was now wandering about the village seeking enjoyment, abused the youth saying that he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

586 by the fact that Chewa had himself turned the girl out and that between her first and second marriages she had spent two years in her father's house. The matter was thus a difficult one, and was still further complicated by Pandu being a blacksmith who probably did not anticipate fair treatment from the tribal panchayat.

X 674 604 There was a very curious and tragic murder when young sixteen-year old Marvi Hunga killed Hirma, a boy three years younger than himself. These two boys were related as uncle and nephew; Hunga's mother was married to the uncle of Hirma's father. This relationship is a privileged one. Just as a grandson may joke with his grandmother, so an uncle may abuse his nephew and even threaten to sleep with his mother, and neither uncle nor nephew is supposed to take any notice of it.

But on this occasion when Hunga met his young nephew Hirma in a field and asked him where he was going, the younger boy abused his uncle's mother and wife saying that he would keep them both as his wives; this annoyed Hunga and he drew his bow and shot the boy with an arrow. The incident apparently had nothing whatever behind it. The boys were not drunk and were on good terms. Hunga seems to have been suddenly, but quite improperly, excited by the abuse given by his nephew, and in a few moments two lives were ruined.

VIII

THE LAMHADA

583 Among the Maria, as in many other parts of tribal India, there is an arrangement whereby youths from poor families who cannot afford the price of a bride can serve for her for three, five or seven years. In Bastar such a youth is known as Lamhada, Lamanai, Lamsena or Gharjamai. The relations between the Lamhada and his future parents-in-law is not always a happy one, and it is complicated by the intimate proximity in which he has to live with the girl to whom he is not yet married. Sometimes, however, especially if the Lamhada happens to make the girl pregnant, the marriage is celebrated before the end of his term of service.

X 674 ● 578 583 Only two cases of murder have arisen out of a Lamhada

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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situation. The first reproduced incidents that are constantly happening all over India. Kalmumi Masa was living as a Lamhada in the house of his mother-in-law, a widow named Hungi. He was already married to the girl, Kohale, though he was still fulfilling his contract of service. The two women, as often happens when they deal with a youth of this kind (for the Lamhada as a poor boy and often without relatives is generally despised), were careless in their treatment of him, and did not bother to cook his meals properly. A few days before the tragedy they went out for a funeral ceremony, and Hungi only sent Kohale home very late in the evening to see to her husband's food. When he found that nothing had been prepared, he was very angry and for fear of being beaten the girl ran away and spent the night in a fig tree.

The next day a panchayat was called to consider the relations of Masa and his wife. Masa objected to his affairs being discussed in public, and probably suspected that his mother-in-law had too much influence with the panchayat. He had to be forcibly brought to the meeting which decided that the women were not cooking properly for the boy, and ordered them to behave better in future. But Masa was also reproved. He was slapped by the Gaita (priest) and ordered not to beat his wife who was six months with child. Masa was very angry at this, and removed his things from Hungi's house. He no longer took his meals there, but only went there to sleep. He did not go away immediately to another village, because he wanted to take his wife with him, get his share of the rice crop and make arrangements for removing his cattle.

Hungi, of course, did not want to lose Masa's services. As a widow she was entirely dependent on him for the cultivation of her land. She persuaded her daughter to refuse to go away with him, and did everything she could to stop him removing his rice. On the eve of the tragedy the boy filled three baskets with the grain, and put them ready for removal the following morning. Hungi said that she would on no account let him take the rice, and spent the night sleeping in front of it, on guard with her two children. Early in the morning Masa went to get his property. The old woman tried to prevent him; Masa flew

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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into a rage, struck her heavily and killed her. Kohale tried to intervene, and he so injured her also that she died a fortnight later.

Marvi Risami was the Maria blacksmith of Bastanar. Towards the end of 1934 he brought a youth, Markami Wango, to serve as a Lamhada for his young daughter Paike. The boy worked in the house for about a year and a half, and Risami intended to celebrate the marriage in 1936.

All went well at first. But there was living in the house a youth of about Wango's age, Marvi Kuma, a son of Risami's elder brother, whose parents had died when he was a child and who had been, for all practical purposes, adopted by the Bastanar household. This boy was thus, according to the classificatory system of relationship, Paike's brother and, of course, belonged to the same clan. Any relationship between the two would be regarded by tribal custom as extremely serious, as a form of incest. In spite of this, however, Kuma and Paike were greatly attracted by each other and Paike soon found that she had little time to give to her betrothed Wango. One day at the end of the hot weather, Wango and Paike went with Kuma and another youth, Kosa, to the hill near Lakhapal to get ore for smelting in the smithy. When they arrived there, Kosa went to the village on some business of his own and Wango accompanied him to get a drink of water. It is possible that he deliberately left Kuma and Paike together with the idea of spying on them and catching them *in flagranti*. He returned quietly and claims that he caught them actually in the act of intercourse. He threw a stone at his rival but missed him, and then chased him with a knife. Kuma ran away, and when Kosa rejoined the party, he found Wango quarrelling with Paike and throwing stones at her. Wango declared that he would kill all the people of the Marvi clan, and would either be hanged or run away to the Tea Gardens.

About a month later, the whole family with a number of other relatives and neighbours went to Handa Khodra to fetch grass for the thatching of their houses at the beginning of the rains (it was 2 June 1936), and when they got home late in the afternoon they found Risami with a pot of rice-beer and everyone had a little. Apparently no one was actually intoxicated, but they were at least revived after

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

their long day's work. That night at supper Wango accused Kuma of allowing Paike to flirt with him and of distracting her affections from himself. The boy seems to have been

[301]

Necklace in Muria style, part of a dancing outfit

genuinely upset at his betrothed's lack of interest in him and her frigid attitude. He threatened to shoot her with an arrow. Kuma told his uncle Risami about this, and the old man got angry and declared that it was disgraceful of Wango to accuse a girl betrothed to him of so serious a crime as incest, and hit the boy twice. Wango caught hold of his future father-in-law, but the others separated them. So Wango walked out of the house. Risami followed to bring him back, for he had no desire to lose such a useful person

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

as a Lamhada. But Wango threw a stone at him, hitting him on the back of the head and making it bleed. Risami then went to the village headman and reported the matter, and they arranged with the Kotwar to hold an enquiry the next morning.

While Risami and the others were at the headman's house, Wango returned home to fetch his dancing kit. This was not the usual bison-horn outfit, but a collection of small and big bells, waist-band and necklaces. It looks as though he had decided to leave the house and abandon his duties as Lamhada out of disgust with the family that seemed allied against him. While he was removing the dancing things, Paike came out of the house and stopped him, saying that they belonged to her and had been given her by her parents. Paike's mother, who was eight months pregnant and was lying in the house, also seems to have shouted to the boy abusively to return the things. Wango, already in a towering rage, drew his bow and shot the girl just below the left breast. She lived till the following morning but then died of an acute generalized peritonitis.

In Court Wango declared that on the night of the quarrel he had again caught Kuma having intercourse with Paike, and that this had so enraged him that he had gone to remove his possessions from the house. But when Paike and her mother tried to stop him he shot the girl. This part of the story was doubted, since the other members of the party declared that Kuma had gone with Risami to make a report to the headman. But obviously everybody was concerned to hush up the matter of Paike's intimacy with her cousin-brother, and it is possible that Wango, who appears to have had something of the voyeur's temperament, may have again been hanging about to catch them together and may have again succeeded.

It is interesting that the immediate cause of this murder, like the last, was the attempt by the women of the house to prevent a Lamhada from going away and removing his property. It is not easy to say whether Wango found the loss of his property, or the sight of his betrothed in the arms of another man the more provocative. I think probably it was the struggle over the dancing outfit that really provoked the murder.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE CRIME OF REVENGE

1

MOTIVES of revenge and implacable enmity operate in many 201
cases. The Maria have various symbolic methods of expressing their hatred. One of these is to remove three handfuls of straw from an enemy's roof. This was done in a case where the murderer had a long-standing enmity with his victim, which came to a head over a quarrel about the cutting of an embankment. Another symbol is to pull out a few of the pubic hairs and to whistle loudly with one finger in the mouth. This was done by Muchaki Dasru shortly before he killed a man for not giving him the tribute that was due to him as Siraha of the village, and by Marvi Oyami Masa as he led his party to murder his cousin. Kartami Aitu dipped his hand in his victim's blood and made a mark on his own head. He cut the ground of the threshold with his axe in dramatic symbol of his triumph over the dead man's family.[1]

In some cases hostility between two Maria may continue 578
for years before it breaks out into open conflict. Thus Vetti Hirma had been on bad terms for several years with Rawa Hirma, who was ultimately to be his victim. It began by a quarrel over land. Then when both were probably a little drunk at a Chikma New Eating festival, they tried to shoot each other with arrows, but missed their aim. It was only [674]x after three years that at last the theft of a pumpkin aroused Vetti Hirma to such a state of revengeful anger that he beat his enemy to death.

Outraged family pride that craved revenge, desire to 674x
eliminate a tiresome suitor, and a chivalrous sense of protectiveness towards a girl were combined in the murder of Muka, the young Siraha of Surnar. He was in love with Kume, the daughter of Poyami Irma and one day in March 1935 he went to Ghatom with a pot of sago palm juice to ask

[1] In 1939, in a Telanga case, the murderer stabbed his victim with an arrow, disembowelled him with a knife, extracted the liver, and bit off a portion of it. But was this for revenge or magic?

[p. 147]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

the time for trembling'. He took the axe out of Bhima's hand and struck the landlord two more blows with the sharp edge. Just then they caught sight of two men coming by. They hurriedly dropped their weapons and stood upright with their hands straight down round the landlord's body so that the passers-by could not see what was happening. These men were going to get some meat from a dead cow which was lying near a tank in the next village. They do not seem to have seen anything, and went on their way. Another witness came by and he saw Pandu look cautiously round and then rub the blade of his axe in the earth and throw it down beside the landlord's body. This witness was so frightened that he did not go to get meat from the dead cow as he originally intended, but went home and lay down.

This story shows on the one hand an unusual degree of premeditation and a careful adherence to plan, and on the other a rather unusual susceptibility on the part of some of those concerned in the affair. The youth Bhima, who was Pandu's bond-servant, evidently had no heart in the business and trembled so much after striking one blow that he could do no more. One witness was so frightened that he could hardly walk and had to go home and lie down. Without the urging of Pandu, who seems to have been an unusual type of criminal, the other men would certainly have never carried out the plan. For this reason Pandu was sentenced to death and was executed, and the other murderers went for life-imprisonment.

III

The subject of aboriginal abuse or gali is obscure, and outsiders often find it hard to understand why expressions that are continually used in ordinary conversation should sometimes arouse the most passionate feelings of indignation. The most abusive terms are sometimes actually used in love-making, and a Maria employs the word *mailotia*, for example, which means 'cohabit with your mother' as freely as a British soldier uses the word 'bloody' and generally with as little meaning.

For gali to be offensive everything depends on the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 occasion, the tone of voice and the relationship of the people 578 concerned. Word-magic is an important and dangerous 195 element in Maria life. A witch can make a man impotent by giving him 'corpse-abuse'. It is possible for a man to use a normally inoffensive expression in a certain tone of voice, which under the circumstances is so dangerous and insulting as to lead to murder. A mother-in-law, for example, may abuse her son-in-law privately as much as she wishes. But if she shouts an insulting epithet at him in the presence of half the village, she has committed an unbearable insult.

674 Two types of abuse are not used in ordinary conversation. You do not call somebody a thief, unless you want trouble. You certainly do not call anyone a witch or a wizard. In a number of our cases the allegation that someone was a thief or a wizard led to murder.

Excreta-abuse is also not very common in daily life. In several cases it has led to murder. Thus the elder of two brothers told the younger that he was eating excreta. A son-in-law killed his father-in-law when he told him that he ate the excreta and drank the urine of his wife. A nephew killed his aunt for accusing him of eating excreta.

On two occasions fathers were killed by sons for insulting them. One father told his son to 'get out of the house' and was killed for it. Another father, who was asked by his son for a loan of money, replied that the boy might sell his own children for the money, but he would not get it from him. Such remarks were not to be endured.

Markami Turka killed his elder brother's wife Kosi for abusing him. He told her that if she did not do her work properly he would not give her cattle for cultivation, and she replied that 'her pubic hairs would not be pulled up' if she did not get them. This ought not to have greatly offended someone in that relationship, but it did: probably it was the way she said it.

Yet another case (not in our list) in which a father was murdered by his son was when a youth about nineteen years old, Poyami Lakhma, killed his father Linga in 1940. The two men had a drunken quarrel, and the father abused his son and told him to get out of his house. As before, this seems to have been regarded by the boy as an almost

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

unbearable insult. He replied, 'Why did you not kill me and throw me away while I was a child, if you want to turn me out of your house now?' The father replied, 'I will kill you even now and throw you away'. He also called the boy *chor* (thief), *mailotia* (one who cohabits with his mother) and Dher (a member of the despised Mahara caste). Finally he said, 'You are not my son, and whose son you are I cannot say'. At last the boy, driven to madness by these insults, struck his father with an axe and killed him.

The most common abuse in everyday life is based on straightforward natural sex—there are no words, as in Europe, associated with perversion—the words *mailotia* and *baplotia*, suggestions that somebody should lick the private parts or eat the pubic hairs, insinuations about the chastity of wife or sisters. Such abuses are so common that they should not normally rouse anyone to the pitch of intense excitement necessary for committing homicide. But in several of our cases, though it was these expressions that were reported in Court as the cause of provocation, I think probably many other unpleasant expressions were actually employed. Some Maria are sufficiently intelligent, when they are pleading provocation, to mention the things which they think would provoke the Court rather than the things that really provoked them.

Educated people are sometimes puzzled why the rude, coarse aboriginal should be so offended at a little bad language. But the truth is that there is a strict etiquette in these matters, and while a lot of filthy talk is tolerated provided the conditions are right, any breach of the rules will cause an explosion of temper that may end in tragedy. It is probable too that the abuse releases an instinct for revenge that is unconscious. Stanley Hall says,

> The instinct of revenge is very deep-seated, and not entirely eradicable. In abnormal cases it is instantaneous and perhaps unconscious. I have myself talked with perhaps a score of youthful murderers under sentence of death, who, I believe, were in every way as good by nature as I am, but who in an instant of fulminating anger struck the fatal blow, possibly harder than they knew or because a weapon was at hand, and killed, it may be, their best friend with a regret no less than

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

It is a cart, if you know how to drive, boy.
It is a food, if you know how to eat, boy.
It is a path, if you know how to walk, boy.
It is a horse, if you know how to ride, boy.

—*Marriage song (Lagir Pata) of Malakot*

I

581

AMONGST ourselves marriage is so closely associated with an initiation into a sexual union and experience that was previously tabooed, that it is not easy at first to adjust ourselves to the outlook of a society that can so clearly distinguish between sexual love without marriage and domestic love within it.

For a Muria the sexual side of marriage is comparatively unimportant; he marries because he wants to have children whom he can call his own, so that he can have a home of his own, and so that he can have a partner whom he can regard as his own, over whom he has authority and a right, with whom relationship will be permanent and recognized.

This is not mere individualism; it is part of the process of growing up. It is the discovery that sexual excitement is not enough; it is often, as we shall see, the still deeper discovery that romantic attachment is not always the best foundation for a lifelong union. There is a beautiful saying in the *Rigveda* (III, 53, 4)—'Wife is the home; she alone is the place of rest'—which is well paralleled by something said by a young Muria wife at Phunder about life with her husband: 'It was like sitting down on a stool after a long and troubled journey.'

The life of pre-nuptial freedom ends in a longing for security and permanence. This desire is naturally more emphatic in the ghotul where partners are often changed. In Kongera a Muria said, 'You only get real pleasure from your own property; in the ghotul it is always someone else's'. And Gando of Jaitpuri said, 'I often remember my life in the ghotul, but you can't get that happiness always. That is only for four days, but life in your very own home lasts'. Man and wife become each other's property; they get a *haq* or 'right' over each other; and because everybody respects this right, regarding adultery as evil and dangerous, Muria marriage is secure and is not marred by fear, the source of jealousy.

Every Muria contrasts the free happy life in the ghotul with the economic drudgery of marriage. 'The ghotul is for happiness,' they said at Nayanar. 'The home is for work.' The Jamadar of Sorma said, 'Don't ask me about my youth, for in those days I never lacked tobacco and lime. But now I have lost my happiness in thinking always of my belly'. Many songs underline the contrast.

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O the kingdom of the unmarried!
You will never see that kingdom more.
Of housework you know nothing.
You went wandering in the fields,
Looking like a sarus crane.
Early morning you would go;
Evening you'd come home again.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

581
539

O that beautiful ghotul!
Every day you went to clean it.
The road was like a jackal's tail.
You used to go along that road.
In your left hand was a winnowing-fan,
In your right hand a broom,
At sunset you would go there.
You will never see that Raj again.
Now you are going to your husband's house.
Now your pleasure will be work in the house.
You have got no sense at all.
Your husband will curse you,
Your mother-in-law will curse you.
Holding your forehead you will weep.
You will remember the days of youth.
Then you will know what hardship is.
You have got no sense at all.

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The first days of marriage certainly appear to emphasize this taunt. The new life together is not immediately satisfactory, especially for the girl. She has to stay in a house filled with her husband's relatives, and work for them. She has not yet a home, perhaps not even a room, of her own. It is not easy for her to adjust herself to the complete and drastic change in her life. 'A young wife,' they said at Masora, 'is like a bulbul whose tail goes up and down all the time. So does she shake her buttocks. She cooks if she feels like it, gets water if she feels inclined. It is hard for her to forget she is no more a motiari; her feet itch to dance.' But she must never enter the ghotul again, the ghotul which for the last six or eight years has been the centre of her social and emotional life. She must avoid her old ghotul partners; she must forget her ghotul name; she must give away most of her ornaments; she has lost her freedom. Lingo Pen will no longer protect her from pregnancy, which indeed quickly follows. There are no more rapturous evenings round the ghotul fire, no more expeditions through the green forest to other villages, no more dancing to the light of torches at the great festivals. She is now a wife and must prepare to be a mother.

For the husband the change is less drastic. He may continue to spend his evenings in the ghotul, returning home late at night to sleep. This is perhaps the hardest trial that the young wife has to bear; she must abandon old romance, he may continue it. He even holds his ghotul title for six months or a year longer. He may go on expeditions, organise marriages, dance at festivals. But his sex life is undoubtedly curtailed. 'Now he is responsible,' I was told at Malakot. 'He is a man with wife and home. Fun and teasing is ended, touching others is ended; he has a wife. For his old habits the penalty is swelling and death. He may now only do it at marriages and at the sport of the gods at festivals.' Even his visits to the ghotul must soon end. Sooner or later he must lay down his office; sooner or later comes the day when the boys suggest that his presence is no longer so welcome as it was. He must then stop his visits or he will be fined and his poultry stolen.

But by this time married life has become established and serene. Happiness has begun to illuminate the hard tasks of home and field. That is why the Muria regard marriage of such supreme importance; everyone must pass through its gate to the fulfilment of tribal and social life. The ghotul with its many joys might easily have become an end in itself. But the Muria

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

O mother, the clouds look like smoke,
Each roof seems joined to the one next door.
I must go and see it, mother.
Whom will you go with, daughter?
I will go with my uncle's son, mother.
Don't go with him, daughter;
He will pour haldi over you.
Let him pour haldi if he wills, mother.
I can't rest till I go with him.

In those cases where no *gudamol* union is possible or convenient, the parents consider many things before they go to 'pluck the flower' of a betrothal. It may safely be said that the thought uppermost in their minds is the happiness of their child. A father seeking a daughter-in-law considers whether the women of such and such a family are hard workers, free from the taint of witchcraft, unstained by scandal. He does not seem to worry whether a girl is beautiful or no, though he would naturally prefer her to be 'well made and conformable'. When a betrothal party arrives at a house, a girl's parents discuss much the same things. Will the boy be a good worker? Has there been scandal in the family, signs of indifference to the laws of the clan? Is the boy himself steady, will he go through with the matter? The girl is consulted; if she strongly objects, the father sends the visitors away. Once she has agreed, however, he expects her to abide by her choice. In the song on p. 89 there is a hint that several betrothal parties may visit a house before the parents can make up their minds—a delay not always pleasing to the daughter.

We have, therefore, in Muria society two very different traditions existing side by side. Before marriage, in the ghotul, boys and girls are encouraged to live to the full a life of romantic passion. For marriage, everything must be arranged on the lines of strictest commonsense. A boy can live with the girl he is in love with before marriage, but not in marriage. How does this arrangement work?

I am not here attempting to pass a personal judgement in this matter, I am not considering whether it is a good or a bad arrangement. The interesting thing is what the chelik and motiari think of it.

Generally, the boys and girls believe that what their parents, or rather society and the tribe, arrange makes for ultimate happiness. They may object to a particular choice made by their parents, but they do not object to their making a choice at all. It is easier for them to accept this position because what they think matters about marriage is not so much the partner as the whole condition of life so different from life in the ghotul. 'The ghotul is for happiness', they said at Nayanar. 'Marriage is for work.' They are more concerned about the new home than the new partner. The new way of life is more important than the person who will share it.

It is some such reflection as this that enables boys and girls to bear the very great pain of separation from their lovers at marriage. This is a very real thing, especially in the *jodidār* ghotul. Here a chelik and motiari may have lived six or seven years together, perhaps in great fidelity, and have come to love each other devotedly. Everything in life—except responsibility for children and a home—has been shared. They have gone together to festivals and danced all night in each other's arms. They have been to a score of marriages and shared a world of jokes together. They have slept night after night in the ghotul 'lovely as a bison's horns'. Then suddenly

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

they are torn apart; they must never talk to each other again; each must change over to live, under conditions infinitely less romantic, with someone of whom they may know nothing.

Yet in the great majority of cases they do it, and believe it to be for the best. And statistics support them. A percentage of only 2·6 of marital failures among arranged marriages is very low.

But naturally there are disorders of this neat and tidy arrangement. Sooner than be married to another girl, some boys—from both types of ghotul—elope with their motiari. In Kabonga, the chelik said, 'If a boy does not run away with his motiari, he doesn't really love her'. A girl may slip away to the house of her lover and establish herself there for a *paisa mundi* wedding. 'A girl in love for the first time will walk even on a monkey's path', narrow, slippery and steep. She cares little for the opinion of her fellows. Such incidents are not very common—there were 116 irregular marriages among our 2000, of which 90 were elopements—but they occur. When the parents' hands are forced in this manner, they generally accept the situation. Compensation has to be paid to the girl's betrothed or, if she was not engaged, to her parents, and all is well.

In a case of pregnancy, if the girl does not run away, she is married to her betrothed—if he will have her, or to the boy responsible—whether he wants her or not, and a fine must be paid. Sometimes the pregnant girl runs away with her chelik and they get married in another village. There is always, however, an attempt to bring the lovers back. If there is no pregnancy and they are caught in time, they are fined and nothing more is said. If the girl is pregnant, and she is brought back, she must be offered to her betrothed, and it is a remarkable result of ghotul solidarity how often the boy accepts her and the responsibility for another's child.

The following incident is instructive:

> There were three brothers in the Garhbangal ghotul. The eldest made a girl pregnant; he was fined five rupees and she was married to her betrothed. Then the same boy made the same girl's younger sister pregnant. He consulted with his second brother and they persuaded their youngest brother to carry off the girl to another village and thus accept the responsibility for the pregnancy. The eldest brother did not want to be held capable of 'ruining' two girls, and he was moreover engaged to marry the landlord's daughter, whom he did not want to lose. But the youngest boy and the motiari were caught and brought back. The boy confessed the truth, and the eldest brother was fined seven rupees and the two others five rupees each. The girl was married to her betrothed. All three brothers are now happily married.

Sometimes parents who are very sympathetic decide that they will bear the fine and the bother, and allow a son to marry a girl he has made pregnant, if they are sure he really loves her, and there are no serious difficulties in the way. But generally, parents do not like to do this. At Binjhli, a girl was pregnant by a chelik to whom she was greatly devoted, but her father said, 'Why did you not tell me about this when I drank liquor for you on the betrothal day? I took gifts for you publicly, and now you would make me look down on the ground in shame'. At Nayanar too a father spoke in much the same way to a boy from Kulanar who made his daughter pregnant. 'How can I give her to you? You are a thief, though I know you love her and she loves you. But I have taken gifts and I have drunk liquor for another clan, and how can I change now?'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
581

This may sound hard, but unless parents insisted I doubt if the ghotul could continue. The orderly life of the tribe would be destroyed. After a betrothal a girl belongs already to her future husband's clan; she may attend his clan festivals and should avoid his, and not her own, totem. An engagement is not a mere contract between individuals; it is an alliance of families and clans, affecting even the Departed.

Serious difficulties are not common. Occasionally a man may have an experience like that of Kunjami Gudra of Chaniyagaon.

> While I was a little boy I was betrothed to a girl in Korpar village. Two years afterwards I went with the other chelik of Chaniyagaon to Jungani for the Pus Kolang dance. There I met the Nirosa of that ghotul, and fell in love with her. When she came with the other girls to dance the Diwali dances in our village, I was able to make love to her.
>
> Then I was married, but I did not care for my wife. Soon after the marriage I went to work at Jungani and stayed in the ghotul for some days. Now my love for the Nirosa grew much stronger. She told me she was betrothed to a boy in Gorma, but I persuaded her, and shortly after I returned home, she came to my house. I said, 'Why have you come?' She replied, 'For *paisa-mundi*, for money and a ring'.
>
> My first wife left me, but did her best to plague me with magic. One day she sent a black cobra to attack me. Another day as I was returning from the Dhanora bazaar—where my first wife lived—a tiger (sent by her) chased me up a tree. But with my second wife, I am living very happily.

X883
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762

Out of the 20 suicides committed by Muria of the north during the past ten years only two were the result of parental interference in their children's love affairs. I have described one of these cases on page 416 and I will give the other here, for it is relevant to our discussion.

In 1933 Budha of Bayalpur arranged a marriage between his son Malsai and Ghasnin, the daughter of Liti of Korhabera. They were both then young children. Each grew up in their separate ghotul, and Ghasnin began to accompany the older girls on the Diwali dances. The motiari of Korhabera go to Honawandi and the chelik of Honawandi go for the Dandar dances to Korhabera. Gradually Ghasnin herself became a leader of the motiari. In 1940 she became very friendly with Dawari of Honawandi, and they decided to marry. One evening Ghasnin begged her mother to allow this, but she refused. The next day, Ghasnin ran away to Honawandi and was married to Dawari that very night, the chelik and motiari of the ghotul there assisting at the wedding. Next morning, her elder brother arrived and angrily forced her to come home. On the way she escaped and ran through the jungle back to her husband. But her brother came again and forcibly took her home. Her parents decided to hand her over to the parents of Malsai, her betrothed. But because she was married and in love, and because Malsai was an undersized diseased boy, she was in despair. On the morning of 18 January 1941 she escaped from the house and drowned herself in the village tank.

In both these incidents, the sense of obligation to the official 'legal' partner is worthy of remark. Gudra had to quiet his conscience by persuading himself that his first wife was a witch; Ghasnin allowed herself to be taken from her husband's house, and seems to have accepted as inevitable her re-marriage to Malsai.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER NINE

CRIME IN THE RELATIONSHIPS OF FAMILY LIFE

I

Not only to the aboriginals, but to all the inhabitants of India family relationships mean far more than to the dispersed and individualistic peoples of the West. People live together and share things; they control one another and interfere with each other; they are connected by rules of jest or taboo; proximity sometimes leads on to disaster. The following Table illustrates the number of murders resulting from such relationships.

674

TABLE SEVENTEEN

Illustrating the relationships of 107 victims in 100 cases

Wives killed by husbands	18
Husbands killed by wives	3
Fathers-in-law killed by sons-in-law	5
Mothers-in-law killed by sons-in-law	3
Young children killed by parents	6
Brothers killed by brothers	9
Fathers killed by sons	3
Mother killed by son	1
Sisters-in-law killed by brothers-in-law	3
Son killed by father	1
Other murders where the parties were related ...	10

581 To a Maria youth and his wife marriage is a real partnership in living and not merely an association for the production of children. Husband and wife share far more of life together than is common in the ordinary Indian village. They work together in the fields. They go to the jungle for wood. They eat in company. They sit together to drink rice-beer. Women even attend funerals with the men and help them to erect memorial pillars. Their life together is happy and united, and woe to the man who disturbs it.

[p. 104]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and to make him live by himself on the outskirts of the village, so that in the end he becomes almost a separate low caste. This, however, has not gone nearly as far among the Hill Marias as among the Bison-horn.

Hill Marias of Indrawati valley, influenced by Bison-horn Marias or Doria Koitor

To the south, along the Indrawati valley, the Hill Marias are influenced strongly by the Bison-horn Marias, and the area concerned is marked on the map by the letter *H*. The influence of the Bison-horn Marias gets less as you go west down the valley towards Kutru, and beyond Kutru is replaced by that of the Telugu-influenced Koitor of the riverain tract, known generally in those parts as Dorias. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of most of these villages near the river were once Hill Marias. They seem to have been enumerated as Murias in the 1931 census, and are included in the 15,000 persons whom I have indicated at the end of my account of the Murias as wrongly enumerated at census as Murias. Where the Hill Marias are the immediate neighbours of the Bison-horn Marias, the influence of the latter is strong. In theory, according to local legend the Mander, a tributary running more or less east to west and joining the Indrawati on its *southern* bank near Barsur, is the boundary between the two kinds of Marias, with the Indrawati as the boundary west of the confluence. Here the Hill Marias know the Bison-horn Marias as Dandami Koitor; but the name is not universal in Bastar, and I have therefore preferred to call them Bison-horn because the wearing of bison-horns by their male dancers is so obvious a peculiarity of the tribe. Formerly, the legend says, Pat Raja, the log-god of Mornar in the Mangnar *pargana* who is regarded almost as the overlord of all the log-gods of the Hill Marias, and his wife's brother Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan at Ghotpal, a large Bison-horn village south of the Indrawati, between Barsur and Gidam, divided up the Hill and Bison-horn Marias into *dadabhai* and *ahomama* clans (brother-clans and wife-clans), and in those days the Hill Marias used to intermarry with the Bison-horn, and each used to attend the other's festivals. One day, as the Gumelor clan of Hill Marias, which occupies a group of villages in Bhairamgarh Mar, Dantewara Mar and Mangnar, was trooping to Ghotpal to dance at the Koqsar festival there, carrying their axes on their shoulders, a Gume with his axe accidentally severed the *sem* bean vine of the Old Widow (*Kuvam Mutia'i*), who thereupon put a curse on all the Hill Marias and forbade them ever again to come south of the Mander river for social or religious purposes. Since then, according to the Hill Marias, intermarriage and participation in each other's festivals has ceased. On the other

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

582 hand some Hill Marias say that there is no theoretic obstacle to intermarriage, but that actually 'it isn't done', though they occasionally take part in each other's festivals. The Bison-horn 177 style of dancing with long *dol* drums is gradually spreading among 535 the lower villages just north of the Indrawati. Hudala Karka, for example, some eight miles from Barsur and on the northern bank of the river, now dances entirely in Bison-horn style, and claims to be a Bison-horn village, the claim being admitted by the Bison-horn Maria *pargana* headman in theory, and in practice by intermarriage with undoubted Bison-horn villages; but in several houses I found old Hill Maria dancing shields (*moghi*) and buttock-bells, and the older men admitted that when they were young they 177 danced in the Hill Maria style. Another sign of this is that Hurra [176] Gunda, the log-god of the Tamo clan at Tumirgunda, near Hudala Karka, is also the log-god of the Atami clan of Hudala Karka and of two other Atami villages south of the Indrawati. The clan-priest of the god is a Tamo, and the Tamo villages of Tumirgunda and Padmeta still dance in Hill Maria style. In a few years, therefore, the Bison-horn Marias will have adopted the valley villages north of the Indrawati; the *pargana* headman already virtually claims them as such, since they are under his direct jurisdiction and not that of the Hill Maria *chalki* or assistant appointed to help him [197] manage the eight Hill Maria villages of his *pargana*. In speech, too, they are approximating more and more to the Bison-horn Marias, as there is a marked absence of the harsh guttural sounds so characteristic of the Hill Maria language, and they use the Bison-horn technical social and religious terms.

101 Westward along the valley, as observed above, Bison-horn 177 Maria influence gets less. For a few miles, roughly from Nelasnar to Jegur on the Matawara-Kutru road, and in the village of Ketulnar beyond Jegur, the people are now known as Murias but are really Hill Maria stock, and still dance in Hill Maria style. Ketulnar still intermarries with the hill villages of the Kutru Mar *pargana*. The villagers of Bheriabhum, on the south bank opposite their former village of Pali, five or six miles north of Bhairamgarh, are of the Hill Farsal clan, and cannot be distinguished from Farsalor of the hills. In the hill villages above the valley I verified occasional marriages with girls from the valley villages and vice versa.

101 The tract west and south-west of Kutru, marked by the letter L on the ethnographic map, contains a very scanty population, which appears to be Hill Maria in origin, much modified by contact with the Telugu-influenced Dorla Koitor from the south, who are shown by the letter K. These mixed elements also were returned

[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison horn Maria

Koyas, since it alone, being greatly corrupted by Telugu, presents any marked difference from the Maria and Muria dialects.

Intermarriage is frequent between the Bison-horn Marias of the plateaux and those at the foot of the passes, but now never occurs between them and the Dorla, the latter having become a true endogamous group.[1]

The Koyas of the Malkangiri taluq of Jeypore, across the Bastar border from the Sukma zamindari and north-east Konta, seem on the contrary to be Bison-horn Marias.[2] Intermarriage still takes place between the Marias of Sukma and the 'Koyas' of Malkangiri; and these same Sukma clans intermarry with the clans on the Dantewara and Jagdalpur plateaux. In fact, intermarriage is not unknown between Dantewara and Malkangiri clans, and it is not unusual for a man wanted by the police in Dantewara to abscond to his fellow-tribesmen, possibly relatives, in Malkangiri. The headmen of Edpal and Dodpal on the Dantewara-Sukma border stated that the Koitor of Malkangiri had migrated there some generations back from the Bailadila mountains, and named relatives among them belonging to the Sodi clan. Bailadila had in fact been practically deserted long before its inclusion in the Bailadila Forest Reserve; and some superstition attaches to it which prevents surrounding Maria clans from settling there, though more than one attempt has been made to found permanent forest villages so as to obviate the labour now entailed on the villages below when the Maharaja and his officials go there for the hot weather. The most tempting offers fail to attract settlers; even as labourers the Marias profess fear of staying on the hills unless accompanied by a European, over whom Elma Pen, the god of the mountain, has no power. The only chance, they say, of re-settling the place is to get hold of a descendant of the original inhabitant, preferably of the clan-priest (*modul-waddai*), who knows the godlings and demons of the hills.

[p.58 is blank]

[1] Glasfurd in the ethnological papers already quoted commented thus on physical differences between the lowlanders and highlanders of South Bastar. 'The Koya are very dark, quite as much so as the Telingas; while the Gottawars and Marias are generally copper-coloured, some being quite fair. Their faces are rather broad than long, and they have small eyes, which, with the almost entire absence of hair on the face, gives these altogether a strongly marked Tartar-like physiognomy.'

[2] It is important to remember that the Dorla also use bison-horn or buffalo-horn dancing head-dresses, and in other ways also show that they were once the same people as those whom I term Bison-horn Marias, as indeed the traditions of both peoples have been seen to assert.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

she came. The second circumstance was the fact that, to some extent, I could spur their memories from the record of a 1916 Sessions case in which Moda and two other members of the family had been sentenced to imprisonment for life for the murder of a fourth member, Usendi Bhosa. The family was, moreover, one of considerable social importance. It has the hereditary right of providing the secular headman of both the village of Orcha and the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, while the Usendi clan is one of the strongest in the Abujhmar hills, and the Koqsar festivals of its god Wikir Hunga attract people from far and wide. In most families it is impossible to get beyond the paternal grandfather, if indeed beyond the father and mother; but though the names are forgotten, obligations are not; and many, if not all, Marias remember the clans and families with which they have cross-cousin marriage alliances. Of 105 Hill Maria marriages investigated, fifty-seven were marriages between cross-cousins; it is not so easy to check the remaining 46 per cent. in which the marriage marked the start of new affinities, at least as between the two contracting families, if not as between the clans.

On the other hand, a man touring as the administrative head of the State has the advantage of always having many Marias from different clans and villages assembling at his camps, and so of ascertaining their matrimonial alliances and testing practically any clan lists which he may have made or obtained elsewhere. But here a further difficulty crops up. Communications among the Hill Marias are very bad, and it by no means follows that an Usendi living, let us say, on the southern edge of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* has the same views on the clans from which it is permissible to seek a bride as an Usendi in the Chanda part of the Abujhmar hills or in the northernmost Maria *pargana* of the Antagarh tahsil. There is always a tendency to limit clan jurisdiction to the administrative division; though investigation will reveal much intermarriage between one *pargana* and the next, even though one should be in one tahsil and the other in another, in a zamindari or even in British territory, yet the investigator will be assured that 'we do not take wives from that clan or village because it is not in our *pargana*' or 'our raj'; and it has already been seen that when members of a clan migrate from their clan-area to colonize lands deserted by other clans outside the *pargana* they no longer consider themselves under any obligation to attend their original clan-god's festivals.

This much has been said by way of introduction, and of apology if, as I fear, this chapter is the least satisfactory and the least final in its conclusions.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER XIV

MARRIAGE

WHATEVER the origin of the clans and phratries, they serve as a means of regulating the marriages of Hill and Bison-horn Marias; in the case of the latter, among whom the clan is no longer a territorial as well as a social unit, one might say that the primary function of the clan and phratry organization is the regulation of marriage. A child is born into the clan of its father, and, if a son, must remain in that clan all its life; but, if a daughter, passes on marriage to the clan of the husband, and on re-marriage from his clan to that of the second husband. A son must not take a wife, or a daughter a husband, from the father's clan or from any clan that is brother-clan or *dadabhai* to it: he must marry a wife from, and she must marry into, some clan that is a wife-clan or *akomama* of their father's clan. It has been seen that the phratry system of the Bison-horn Marias gives them a wider field of selection of wives and husbands than the more inchoate group system of Hill Maria clans. A widow, however, must not marry as second husband a man whose clan is brother to her father's clan, even though through being in a phratry other than that of her first husband's clan the second husband's clan would be wife-clan to the first husband's.

Exogamy

In a word, throughout a woman's life all her marriages are regulated by the clan into which she was born.

Appendix III gives a list of the Hill Maria terms of relationship so far as I could ascertain them; they were collected in Orcha and adjacent villages by the genealogical method, and verified in other parts of the Abujhmar hills. They were collected as terms of reference, though some are used also as terms of address, e.g. *mama*, *dada*, *kaka*. I was unable in the time at my disposal to make a similar collection of the Bison-horn Maria terms; but so far as my observation went their terms are the same but for dialectical differences. This applies also, it may be added, in a considerable degree to the terms used by the Gonds of the Nagpur District, and, to judge from the incomplete list given in Trench's *Grammar*, Volume I, to those of the Betul Gonds. It may be added that when a son has been born to him, a Hill or Bison-horn Maria is often addressed by his family and neighbours as the father of his son, e.g. '*Rajin-tappa*', meaning 'Father of Raje'.

Dadabhai, the word used to designate kindred or brother-clans, is a combination of *dada*, the Gondi term for an elder brother, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 601
'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *pepi* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man 582 ●
and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite 607
exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his [587]
wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother.

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely 684
among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison- 835
horn. A youth of the Gumu hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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Cross-cousin marriage

It has already been said (page 234) that a very high proportion of marriages are cross-cousin marriages, and that such unions formed 54 per cent. of the Hill Maria marriages into which I enquired. The proportion is not much less among the Bison-horn Marias. Such marriages are considered the most seemly, both because the family which has given a daughter to another family in marriage in one generation should have this obligation repaid by getting her daughter back as a wife for a son of the next generation, and because such family arrangements obviate the necessity of paying the much heavier bride-price required for getting a bride from a new and unrelated family. Such marriages are known as *gudapal* or 'tribe-milk' marriages. The commonest form is marriage between a daughter and her mother's brother's son (brother being again used in the extended sense). But it has also been extended to cover marriages between a girl and her father's sister's son and a son and his mother's brother's daughter, which merely mean the borrowing of a wife from the same family for two successive generations; in such cases the predominant consideration, apart from the wishes of the bridegroom and bride, is the smaller bride-price which will be demanded by relations so close in affinity. Moreover, it is a reflection on parents if, when a girl is mature, no marriage is arranged for her and no one asks for her; in such cases it is a recognised right of the parents to ask either the mother's brother's son or the father's sister's son to carry her off and make her his wife, even though he be already married to some other woman. Similarly a man, especially among the Bison-horn Marias, often acquires as second and third co-wives the younger sisters of his first wife. When a Bison-horn Maria girl marries a man other than her mother's brother's son, the latter, unless he has forfeited his prescriptive right to her by previously marrying another girl, is entitled to compensation from her husband, usually Rs. 5. But the Hill Marias do not observe this. For to them the free choice of the youth and girl is far more important, and when a girl is never compelled to marry against her will, it obviously is unnecessary to compensate anyone if she refuses to marry him. In a similar way Bison-horn Marias consider that a younger brother has a prescriptive right to an elder brother's widow, and he therefore gets Rs. 5 compensation if any other man marries her.

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No value is set on pre-marital chastity, and it is doubtful whether any girl preserves her virginity until her marriage. The typical attitude was thus expressed by Usendi Moda, the headman of Orcha, already mentioned as one of the men sentenced for the 1926 Orcha murder, and whose family pedigree is given in Appendix

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 this supper both parties assemble in front of the bride's house, the men and youths in dancing-dress, and there is dancing and singing till dawn, all men, women, youths and girls present being free to take part, whether married or single, old or young. Soon after dawn the pig, grain and liquor brought by the bridegroom's parents as part of the bride-price are divided into a portion for the bride's village and a portion for the visiting village, cooked and partaken of by all present; any deficiency is made up by the girl's parents, this being their only expense; they do not even decorate their house or put up booths for the guests.

This wedding breakfast over, the bride is brought out by her parents and made over to the bridegroom's parents. She is not washed or given special clothes, though if funds permit she sometimes gets a new loin-cloth. She is expected to weep profusely in token of reluctance to leave her father's home. The bridegroom's parents take her on foot through the forest to their village, arriving always in the evening. The bridegroom stays in his house; to go out to meet the bride would be immodest. She is escorted to his house, thrust inside, and the marriage is thus completed without further ceremony. There is no present from the bridegroom to the bride, not even a ring as among the Bison-horn Marias. Supper that night is cooked for the couple by the bridegroom's mother.

582 177 Pre-puberty marriage never occurs among the Hill Marias, who look upon it as an utterly abhorrent custom of the Kosor or Hindus. Unfortunately a few Bison-horn Marias are beginning to ape their Hindu neighbours in this as in other matters; but even now probably only three in a hundred Bison-horn marriages are child marriages.

Child marriage

583 It is very common for the bridegroom to serve his future father-in-law for his bride instead of paying the bride-price. If at the second *talq-da'ina* his parents have to admit to the girl's parents that they cannot afford the bride-price, it is arranged for the bridegroom to go as *lamana'i* or suitor-servant to the girl's parents for a term of years that varies from three years to seven or eight, though when the term exceeds three years the girl usually becomes the *lamana'i*'s wife for the last two years. For the first part of his service the *lamana'i* is not supposed to have intercourse with the girl, but, provided that the girl agrees (and she is seldom reluctant), he generally does so after a time. It is, however, considered a disgrace to her parents if in consequence she becomes pregnant, and they are fined a pig, which is eaten by all their and the *lamana'i*'s clansmen, after which the girl is regarded as the *lamana'i*'s wife. Often at the end of the agreed period of service the father-in-law is unwilling

Serving for a wife

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Dhurwa, or Parja, live in the south-east of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and in the Sukma Zamindari. In Bastar there are about 20,000 of them, but there are many more of the allied Poroja across the border in Orissa. Their dancing is distinctive, but many of its elements can be paralleled among the Muria.

The Gadaba. There are very few of these left in Bastar. In 1931 only 398 were returned. The Bastar Gadaba have retained little that is characteristic of their tribe. They have no connexion with the Muria of the north.

The Halba. This is a powerful and important near-Hindu caste, probably descended from the old military garrisons stationed in the larger villages. There were 18,427 of them in 1941, of whom 4599 were in the Narayanpur and 3149 in the Kondagaon Tahsil. Their language, Halbi, is used throughout the State; many of the Gondi-speaking Muria use it as a second language, though Chhattisgarhi is now competing with it. The best folk-poetry there is in Bastar is composed in Halbi. The Halba sometimes serve as priests of the Anga clan-gods in the Muria country and the caste has its own Anga similar to those of the Muria.

The Dhakar is a new caste—9596 strong—recruited from the offspring of mixed Halba and Kshattri unions. Many of its members, by their intelligence and ability, have won good positions in the State.

The Jagdalpur Muria, or Raja Muria, are in my opinion the least attractive people in Bastar. Like the Raj Gond, they consider themselves superior to the Maria or Muria of the north; like the Raj Gond they have lost most of their own culture without assimilating that of the Hindus. It is possible that the Raja Muria are civilized Bison-horn Maria rather than civilized Muria, but it is impossible to be sure. They have been greatly exposed to external influence, from the Palace, from Orissa, from the cult of Danteshwari; many of their villages are leased to outsiders. Grigson estimated that there were about 32,000 Raja Muria in 1931; there may be some 40,000 now.

Of these tribes the most important in their influence on the Muria are the Hill Maria. The Bhattra and Raja Muria exercise a disintegrating effect upon them in the south. The Halba live in scattered little communities throughout the Muria area and influence those who live in their immediate neighbourhood.

Other castes living among the Muria are the Rawat, the Mahara, the Kalar, the Lohar, the Ghasia, the Ganda, the Nahar and the Pardhan.

The Rawat are the cowherds living in almost every village. They are also known as Ahir or Kopa. Their children are usually admitted to membership of the ghotul. The Rawat's association with the cow ensures him a good social position. As Elsa says, 'His family having been connected for many generations with the sacred animal, the cow, he enjoys a certain consciousness of moral respectability, like a man whose uncles are deans or canons'.

The Mahara, who numbered 32,787 in 1941, the *Ganda* (7130) and the *Panka* (4178), on the other hand, have officially a very low status. No one is 'untouchable' in a Muria village, but children of these castes are not usually welcomed in the ghotul and a liaison or marriage with a Mahara or Ganda is regarded as unforgivable. Once at Lamkhanar I met a Muria, Duaru, who went out of his mind because his wife eloped with a Ganda. On the other hand, these people have an important place in tribal life. They are the spinners and weavers of the countryside and supply the Muria with much of their cloth. They generally provide the village watchman or Kotwar and they thus have the duty of reporting Muria births and deaths. Mahara musicians attend the more sophisticated Muria weddings. More important still, they are famous for their powers of divination as Siraha. Scores of Mahara mediums appear at the greater Muria festivals and at the Dassera

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

184 and Drug Districts. How far the institution was distributed in former times must remain a mystery. Hislop describes the Gaiti Gond as 'calling themselves Koitars . . . Their chief peculiarity, which I have not found among common Gonds, though it may exist even among them, is to have in each village a separate tenement set apart for the occupancy of unmarried men during the night. This they call a *gotalghar* (empty bed house). In some villages there is a like provision made for the unmarried Gaiti women . . . When the Gaitis have returned in the evening from their work in the jungle, where they are very industrious in cultivation and cutting timber, all the families go to their respective houses for their supper, after which the young men retire to their common dwelling, where around a blazing fire, they dance for an hour or two, each having a small drum suspended in front from his waist, which he beats as he moves about while the young women sit at no great distance accompanying the performance with a song.'[1]

[162] The Census of 1891 returned 5521 of these Gaiti who were then distributed in the Sakoli Tahsil of Bhandara (where they numbered 665), the Brahmapuri Tahsil of Chanda (215) and the north of Bastar (4535).[2] About this W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'The reference to Brahmapuri Tahsil dates back to the time before the separate Garhchiroli Tahsil was created. The reference therefore is probably to the people of the Carhchiroli Zamindaris such as Jharapara and Murramgaon, and possibly to the zamindaris of Karache, Aundhi and Pannabaras now in Drug District which were in Chanda before the foundation of Drug. Some of these zamindaris border on Antagarh Tahsil and the local Gond is sometimes referred to as Maria and sometimes as Gaita, just as in Sironcha Tahsil the Hill Maria is sometimes called Gaita because his headman is known as the Gaita of the village.'

619 With all these differences do the Muria regard themselves as a single
●582 tribe? Can any Muria intermarry with any other Muria family? Do they eat together? Have they any connexion with the outside world?

Such problems as these are not easy to solve, for they do not often arise in practice and there are few precedents. Geographical factors tend to split the Muria up into roughly endogamous groups, but there is no rule about this. A Muria boy from the extreme west can go to a ghotul in the east of Kondagaon and find himself at home and perhaps find himself a wife. The ghotul is a fundamental bond, and in theory at least all Muria who have it as part of their culture can marry each other. In practice, the Jhoria Muria of the south-west do not often come into touch with the Gond Muria of the north and east, and marriages between them are rare.

As for different tribes and tribes outside Bastar—the Muria of the northern parganas often intermarry with the Kanker Gond (who also have the ghotul system and are really Muria). The Jhoria Muria marry Hill Maria of the appropriate clans whenever geographical conditions allow them to do so. The same is sometimes true of the Muria of the Paralkot area. Those Muria who have migrated from Jeypore naturally marry their relations who have remained in the Orissa territory. Bindo, the old Muria leader of Benur, told me that 'we marry Kanker Gond and the Bhattra Muria of Jagdalpur (but not the Raja Muria) for we are of the same family; but now we live in the hills and they on the plains. Those who live near the Raja are the true Raja Muria, and they look down on us.' Bindo is here referring to the thirty or forty thousand Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil to the south of Kondagaon. These Muria have

[1] Hislop, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 22.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 183.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

619 given up eating beef, and either never had or have abandoned the ghotul system. Their influence is gradually making itself felt in the south of Kondagaon to the east of the road, where the Ghotul Muria call those who have separated themselves from them 'Bhattra'. This is probably the best name for the Raja Muria of Jagdalpur. Indeed it would be a great convenience if we could call the western Muria 'Jhoria', the Muria of Kondagaon 'Muria' and the Muria of Jagdalpur 'Bhattra'. It may be that one day they will call themselves by these titles, and then we can follow suit.

582

However, there is no intermarriage between the Raja Muria or Bara Bhattra of Jagdalpur, but it continues naturally enough with the Bhattra Muria or ordinary Muria just across the border of the tahsil. It is evident, however, that the Muria think of themselves as a single people, related (it is true) to several others, but having one common rallying point in the ghotul founded by Lingo Pen, the father of the tribe.

IV. Physical Characters of the Muria

142 At the end of February 1942, Dr B. S. Guha, of the Zoological Survey of India, accepted my invitation to visit Bastar in order to examine the physical characters of the Muria. He joined me at Dongrigura in the Kondagaon Tahsil, where he measured 52 adult male Muria, and we then went on to Markabera in the Abujhmar foothills. Here he measured 51 adult male Muria of this and surrounding villages. He has written a detailed account which is printed elsewhere, but the following brief description may be inserted here.

'The difference', he writes, 'between the plains Muria of Kondagaon and the Abujhmar foothills Muria, in all essential physical characters, is hardly significant except to a small extent in the shape of the nose. The latter have a slightly longer, narrower and more prominent nose as compared to the former. This difference may be fortuitous and may disappear if larger samples are taken, a view to which I am provisionally inclined, though the possibility of some genuine difference in this respect between the two cannot be altogether ruled out.

'Taking the two groups together the Muria are a short-statured long-headed race with broad cheek bones and rather short pearish type of face. Alike in the absolute measurements (mean H.L. 185·56±0·35; H.B. 138·56 [141] ±0·29 and mean C.I. 74·72±0·18) and the bulging of the occiput, the head is essentially dolichocephalic; there is hardly any true brachycephaly noticeable. The forehead is on the average well-arched but in an appreciable number it tends to be vertical. The supraorbital ridges vary from moderate to well-marked—in a few they are very prominent. On the whole the face tends to project forwards—approximately one-half of the people being prognathic. The nose is usually flat and broad and the nasal root depressed, the lips thick and the chin retreating. In a small number, however, the face is longish, the lips thin, and the chin well developed and some even show a prominent nose with a tendency to aquilinity.

'The skin colour is on the average dark chocolate brown, though individuals with brown and even yellowish brown skin colour are not wanting. The hair is black and varies between straight and wavy with a few persons showing curly hair. It is usually very rich on the head but only moderate on the lips and face. The body hair is rather slight.

'The eye colour is generally black and the eye is horizontal but in seven men examined it was undoubtedly oblique and in a few cases traces of the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

614 menhirs erected. This belief in the clan-*bhum*, whether original or adopted as a result of immigration and settlement, is still sufficiently alive to excite serious quarrels. It was a dispute over the rights to a clan-*bhum* that began the deadly feud between the sorcerer Singlu and the people of Almer.[1] Most of the inhabitants of Almer belong to the Kaudo clan (which has its *pen-ravar* at Kharkagaon) and they consider that the place is Kaudo-*bhum* since they first settled there. But Singlu is a Karanga. One day he said to the Kaudo priest, 'Let me erect memorial stones in your village; then my ancestors will live here and will help me and my family'. But the priest pointed out that the headquarters of the Karanga clan was at Kokori. 'If you bring your ancestors to this village, our gods will be neglected,' he said and refused to give him any *bhum*.

There was a similar conflict at Bandopal. The *bhum* here also belongs to the Kaudo clan which has erected a number of menhirs. Members of the Gaude clan, which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kaudo, demanded a share of the *bhum*, probably because it was more convenient for them than to go to Kharkagaon. After many quarrels and a long dispute, the Kaudo people agreed to let the Gaude clan erect its menhirs within their *bhum* territory, and they even made a Gaude Gaita assistant to the chief Kaudo Bhum-Gaita (priest of the soil). But many of the Kaudo clansmen objected to this and stopped erecting menhirs at Bandopal, going instead to Kharkagaon (where indeed they ought always to have gone). In the end the Gaude people decided to give up erecting menhirs at all because of the expense, and gave back the land to the Kaudo clan.

615 The clans fall roughly into five phratries, which are generally called by the Hindi word for 'race', *vans*. There is the Nagvans or Serpent Race, which includes a number of brother-clans, most of which have the cobra as their totem and cannot marry among themselves; the Kachhimvans or the Tortoise Race, the Bakravans or the Goat Race, the Baghvans or the Tiger Race and the Bodminkvans or the Fish Race.

All the clans within one phratry are *dādābhai*, or brothers, to one another, and all the members of each clan are *dādābhai* to each other. The word used to describe the relation of a clan into which you can marry your daughter is *akomāma*, a combination of the words *ako*, which means a man's mother's father, daughter's son and daughter's daughter (all of whom will belong to a different clan in a different phratry) and *māma*, which means a man's mother's brother, his father-in-law and his wife's brother's son (who will again, of course, be members of different clans).

[582 835] A chelik or motiari, therefore, who is seeking either amorous adventure or permanent domestic relationship, has to turn to members of the *akomāma* clans. Fortunately, owing to the wide distribution of the population, there are nearly always members of such clans in one's own ghotul or near at hand.

614 Before going on to describe the origin of the clans and the special rules that govern them, I will give in tabulated form a list of clans with their totems. It is not worth while adding to this an account of the *bhum* territory as this is too scattered and disorganized; the same is true of the clan-gods and *pen-ravar*.

[615] It will be noticed that in addition to the phratry totem each clan has its own totem which is sometimes different. The Sori clan has three different totems.

[1] See p. 204.

614 must not themselves cook at all but must get their food from others. If they do cook in their houses a tiger will kill their cattle.

A similar rule applies to members of the Poyami clan, who have been forbidden by their clan-god to cook in their own houses at Diwali. Once an old man broke the rule and his cattle died. The Poyami sept also must not eat carrion, though a cadet branch, the Busar Poyami, may. Long ago a Poyami ate a dead cock and died of it. Randa Pen, who is the same as Dulha Deo, has forbidden it. The Poyami are so particular about this avoidance of carrion that they must not use even grain or fruit that has fallen of its own accord to the ground or they will lose their eyesight; if a gourd falls down or if rice falls from a basket or bin, they must not use it but must give it away to someone else. The grandfather of the Pujari of Karanji broke this rule and was supernaturally blinded as a punishment.

The Kuhrami clan must not eat cocks and they are said to place a small image of a cock on the forehead of a bridegroom at a marriage.

I have already noted the fact that Naitami women cannot wear bangles. If they do, it is believed that a snake will wind round the wrist or that the arm will swell until the bangle is broken, and both husband and wife will die. So when members of this sept go to perform the betrothal ceremony they do not give bangles, as is usual, to the future bride. The Naitami frequently marry the Poyami, and after a Poyami girl is engaged to a Naitami boy she also gives up wearing bangles even before she is married.

This custom derives from the story that has already been given. It was said in Silati that many years ago when a boy and girl were shut up together in the house on the last night of their wedding and the boy took his wife to bed for the first time, a snake coiled itself round her wrist. The boy hastily promised to break the bangles in its honour and the snake went away.

A wife, of course, changes her clan to that of her husband after marriage and even, in many cases, after betrothal. Once the ring-cowrie has been placed in the Pot of the Departed of her father's house,[1] a girl is regarded as having made compensation to her own ancestors for her desertion of their clan, and is now a member of her husband's clan. Sometimes she even goes for festivals, especially those of the clan-god, to her future husband's house instead of remaining with her own family. She is now free to eat her old totem animal and generally some opportunity is taken after the marriage to enable her to do this. Before she does so a few drops of liquor or a coconut are offered to her own ancestors to ensure that they will not be offended.

Adoption is uncommon among the Muria, but it exists. Where a baby is adopted from a family belonging to another clan, the child's clan and totem is changed—unless it is a sister's son. There is a small ceremony for the changing of the clan: offerings are made to the clan-god and the Departed and a feast of pork and liquor is given to the village. After this the child takes his new father's clan and ancestors as his own.

IV. The Family

● 582 Such, very briefly, is the system into which the chelik and motiari must adjust their lives. But can a chelik marry any girl of the tribe provided she belongs to an *akomima* clan? As in the rest of India, the Muria regard certain relations as standing in a forbidden relationship; with others there is the

[1] See p. 127.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

582 fullest freedom to joke and even to intrigue: with yet others marriage is almost obligatory.

A boy obviously cannot marry relatives of the inner circle or any of his classificatory 'aunts' or 'nieces'. He is strictly forbidden to marry his wife's elder sister, his mother-in-law, his younger brother's wife or widow and any other woman in a parallel relation to them. There is no objection to his marrying his grandmother or granddaughter even when they are in the direct line of relationship. A few cases are known of men marrying their great-aunts or grand-nieces.

As we shall see presently, the great majority of Muria marriages are of the cross-cousin type and are celebrated between a boy and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or with girls in the same classificatory relationship to him as these.

Throughout India certain relations are regarded as standing in a privileged position to each other. They have licence to laugh and joke with each other, generally in a rather vulgar manner, and in some cases sexual relations between them are not very severely condemned.

605 The Muria have their own system of joking relationships. As a result of the common cross-cousin marriages, a chelik has special licence to joke and flirt with his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter (both *manāri* in Gondi). A motiari can be equally free with her father's sister's son or her mother's brother's son (both *manriyo* in Gondi). This freedom, however, only lasts so long as they are not engaged to be married. Should such an arrangement be made the joking relationship changes into one of avoidance, for a girl must never have anything to do with her betrothed.

So long as these cousins are not engaged, however, they have many jokes [835] together. A boy is at liberty to catch hold of the girl's breasts and he may have intercourse with her. If he sees her going to the river to wash her clothes at the end of her catamenial period, he is free to shout to her, 'Are you off to polish it and take off the rust? What are your plans for tonight?' Or again 'How long was the bank of the lake broken?' The girl in turn often teases her boy-cousin by accusing him of having relations with his own sister: 'I saw you with her; you'll have to pay a fine, or if you don't you'll have to marry her'.

604 An uncle stands in a joking relationship to all his nieces except the daughters of his own sister. For example, a man and his uncle's daughter's daughter are in this relationship.

607 As elsewhere in India, a woman and her husband's younger brothers or a man and his wife's younger sisters are specially privileged. So are grand-
603 mother and grandson or grandfather and granddaughter. A boy may say to his grandmother, 'Once you are dead I will eat beef in your honour; I will go dancing in front of you with a drum; why don't you die quickly so that I can get a good feast?' And she replies, 'If I die you will have to spend a lot of money, you will have to get rice, you will have to bring several tins of liquor, so what good will it be?' A grandfather always flirts and jokes with his granddaughter. Sometimes he says to her husband, 'How dare you sleep with my wife? You will have to give me the bride-price for her', and so on.

607 The connexion between a man (*dewar*) and his elder brother's wife (*sage*) is the central theme of the Lingo legend. This kinship is more than a mere joking relation; it is often one of deep romance. A Ghotul Pata illustrates the kind of humour that passes between them.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

607

Dewar: O Ange, the gruel is made of broken rice.
Ange: O my Dewar, where are you going today?
Dewar: Today I am not going anywhere
For I have to load my bullocks.
Tomorrow I go to another land to trade.
Ange: I too will go with you to drive the laden bullocks.
Dewar: Don't come with me, for all know how we stand to one another.
Those who do not know us will call us brother and sister.
And when they call us that we shall be ashamed.

The relations between *samdhi* and *samdhin* are generally of an amiable, coarse and humorous nature. For men this is a drinking rather than a joking relationship, and all their lives whenever they meet they regard it as an excuse for a bottle. The women, specially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breasts, stick feathers into the private parts and exchange the coarsest jokes. 602 522 [831]

The place where this joking and fun most commonly occurs is at a marriage. 'There is no purdah in a house of marriage.' Everybody feels free to fool about; no one is going to be offended; everyone is slightly drunk.

V. Summary

The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. Nothing reveals more clearly the extent of this domination than the fact that out of 2000 marriages examined no fewer than 1799 were of the cross-cousin type and, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, 1884 out of 2000 boys married according to their parents' wishes. This could only happen in a society which had a strong regard for its own organization and laws. 614 582

The clan system retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. Clan festivals remain great and notable occasions. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. The *samdhi* relationship, as may be seen in every song and story, continues to be of the first importance. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs. Totemism is less important, but is still far from moribund. The whole complex of ideas and customs is greatly confused, but the very confusion is perhaps a sign of its vitality.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 182

importance of the Muria bath is emphasised by the use of the winnowing-fan (universally important in magic) to fan and drive away all risk of evil.

The red ants scattered over the marriage party are perhaps intended merely as a joke; they may, however, represent a survival of some former custom of ordeal. In British Guiana a man before marriage had to show his fitness for it by allowing himself to be sewn into a hammock full of fire ants.[1]

Yet to the participants in the marriage it is probable that its financial and social aspect is of even greater importance than the supernatural atmosphere into which they have projected themselves. The alliance of the two families is emphasized by the little rite of *samdhi-bhet* at the very beginning and by the farewell of the new relations-in-law at the end. Their prayer—'Let there be no quarrels. Let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'—and again—'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it'—indicates the importance of the ceremony for the family, the clan and the ancestors. This is still further shown by the presents made to various relatives and, above all, by the gifts offered to the Departed—to the Pot in the old home to compensate the ancestors for the loss of a girl, to the Pot in the new family to indicate that the bride has left her old clan and joined that of her husband.

But it is not only family and village that the motiari must now desert; she has to leave her ghotul. So gifts and compensations are given: there is a feast, a farewell massage, and marriage-crowns are often put up on the ghotul pillar. Bride and groom bid ceremonial farewell to their old companions as they set out for their new home.

So far we have dealt mainly with rites of parting and separation: other ceremonies stress the social and sexual union of bride and groom and attempt to ensure its natural fertility. The giving of the bridal ring is a world-wide symbol of union, so is the ceremony of eating together. At the end of the Lagir circumambulation (itself a rite of aggregation with a subsidiary cathartic or prophylactic purpose [2]), bride and groom are tied together and water is poured over them. On two occasions, the bridegroom or his friends carry off the bride; this may be a survival of an older tradition of marriage by capture or may merely be intended to stress the emphatic break with the old life and entry into the new.

582 182 831

The sexual interest is both manifest and latent. There is little concealment or symbolism about the ceremonial bedding of the married pair, the vagina carved on the main pillar of the booth, the obscene horseplay between relatives, the constant cries of 'Penis' and 'Vagina', the songs, the jokes, the abuse. In such sexual jokes, says W. G. Archer, 'is a release of repressed energy which when applied to the marriage must necessarily make it fertile'.[3]

Other of the incidents and objects in the ritual are of a symbolic character. Some are directly sexual: thus the motiari bang the mahua branch up and down on the pile of the booth just as Bison-horn Maria girls use their dancing-sticks, professedly in imitation of sexual intercourse. The pouring of water over bride and groom is a symbol of world-wide distribution, and the breaking of wooden poles links up with many examples given by Westermarck,[4] where

[1] Sir E. F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), p. 221.
[2] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 511ff.
[3] *The Wedding of the Writers*. And Westermarck says, 'The sexual indulgence of the wedding guests may, on the principle of homœopathic magic, be a means of assisting bride and bridegroom in achieving the reproductive aims of their union'.—Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 592.
[4] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 457.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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She goes among the bushes and turns into a tigress. She comes roaring and kills and eats the boy.

Then she becomes a girl again and goes on her journey. She meets a man fetching wood. He speaks to her and she turns into a tigress again and kills him. At last she reaches a Saturday bazaar. The bazaar is finished but she sits down near the carts of the merchants. Four men see her beauty and desire her. She makes them all mad and they run away.

A little boy is going round the bazaar picking up scraps, bits of lac, cigarette ends, grain and other odds and ends. He sees the girl and tells his grandfather about her. That grandfather is a magician. 'Come, daughter, and marry my son.'

That night the chelik hear that a beautiful girl has come to the magician's house. 'Let's bring her to the ghotul.' They go to the house and bring her singing and dancing on the way. They make her sleep with one of the chelik. Presently she says, 'This is too crowded, let's go outside'. They go out and the boy spreads his mat while the girl goes to relieve herself outside the compound. She comes roaring, a tigress, and kills her lover, then returns as a girl to the magician's house. The chelik suspect what has happened and go again and bring her by force to the ghotul. Once again they make her sleep with a boy to discover if it was really she who was the killer. Once again she takes the boy outside and goes to relieve herself, but this time the boys are waiting armed with sticks and when she comes into the compound they fall upon her and kill her.

VII. Leaving the Ghotul

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A girl automatically leaves the ghotul when she is married and must never enter it again. In many places she gives a feast to the ghotul members either on the first day of the marriage ceremony or a week or so afterwards. Sometimes it is her duty to massage every chelik for the last time before she finally goes to her husband's house. The bridegroom also may give a present of a basket of mahua oil-seed which is pounded and cleaned, after which the motiari massage the chelik with it, including their legs.

The only exception to the rule that bars a married girl and even a widow from entering the ghotul is when a girl is married very young. She is then permitted to sleep in the dormitory and join in all its activities up to the time of her first menstrual period. In the Jamkot ghotul, for example, Kariya was married to a little girl and she continued to attend. Here they said that so long as the girl had not been sent officially to her husband, whether she had passed the menarche or no, she might continue as a motiari, but I think that this is unusual.

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Such child-marriages are comparatively rare. Where children are married, it is generally in villages where there have been scandals in the ghotul and the parents, instead of interfering with the ghotul routine, adopt this means of preventing pre-nuptial pregnancy. At Korenda I was told that 'in the old days, when there were neither roads nor motor-cars, the Muria were honest, truthful and virtuous'. A boy was not considered suitable for marriage 'until he had made two or three long trips with a load', say from Narayanpur to Kondagaon or Kondagaon to Jagdalpur. The girls were not considered ready 'until their breasts were fully grown and even beginning to slope downwards'. But now the situation has changed. *Abiha rāj kalau, larka larki malau*—'The kingdom of today is black, the boys and girls are like monkeys'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942, 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

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It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young.

Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'.

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591

A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palari, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. Married Men in the Ghotul

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Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two chelik and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval.

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In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted.

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But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When you saw me and knew that your heart was not captured, why did you ruin me? What am I to do now? Tell me. Where am I to go?'

Inside the ghotul sexual anaesthesia is known, but it is uncommon and is regarded as a sort of deviation. I have met a few Muria who have never been to the ghotul or who have never shared its sexual activities. Dhansingh Pandu of Palki is a man of some forty years and still unmarried. He has never been to a ghotul. His father used to say to him, 'These boys talk in front of their sisters as if they were their lovers. You don't know what gods there are in the ghotul; many gods live there; you might unwittingly offend one of them and be destroyed. No one knows what people may have in their hearts when all sleep together.' But it was not only his father's exaggerated fears of the supernatural that stopped Dhansingh from attending the ghotul; he himself had no desire to go. But now he regrets it. 'I am a very lonely man', he told me. 'I might now be happily married. But at that time I was very poor and I had no passion.' The real reason for his abstinence seems to have been a dread that he would be forced into sexual intercourse for which he had neither power nor inclination.

Another Muria who has never been a chelik is Hagru of Masora. In his youth he lived in the Hindu potters' quarter of Kondagaon town where there was, of course, no ghotul. 'I used to feel very lonely when I heard how happy the other boys were, but what could I do?'

Early marriage sometimes brings ghotul life to a premature close. In Malakot, I found the people arranging their children's marriages as early as possible 'to prevent copulation in the ghotul'. Old Sukali of Masora was married so young that 'she never even learnt to sing a Relo'. But child-marriage is not common and young married girls are generally allowed to attend the ghotul till puberty or until they are sent to live with their husbands.

Although the Muria insist on abstinence from sexual congress before the ceremonial hunts and require their priests to remain celibate on various occasions, the rule does not seem to be due to any special regard for celibacy as such or belief in its power; it is rather connected with the dread of the menstruous woman. On the eve of a festival all the males of a village must sleep in the ghotul—which for that night is cleared of motiari—to ensure that none of their wives or other relatives will infect them with the defilement of a catamenial period that might begin during the night. So too the very strict rules governing a young Gaita's relations with women in the Chota Dongar Pargana appear to be based mainly on a desire to isolate him from the dreaded menstrual contact.

Celibacy is not admired, and it is dangerous to be unmarried, for a man or woman who dies in this condition lives for ever restless and frustrated, and a nuisance to the friends he has left behind on earth. It should be noted that it is marriage and not sexual experience that is important. The Hindu sadhu is rarely respected, though he may be feared for his supposed supernatural powers. The state of *sanyás* is everywhere associated in the aboriginals' mind with idleness and beggary rather than with chastity. In Alor the chelik spoke very scornfully of celibacy: 'It is a way of life for loafers.' And of boys and girls who stand aside from the main life of the ghotul, they say 'they will get children directly they begin'. 'There may be one in a thousand girls who tries to keep her water, but she will get a child in her *haldi-dhoti*', while her clothes are still stained with the marriage turmeric. It is dangerous to store up power, for when it is released it may prove too potent.

In order to enforce this attitude, the chelik tell a number of stories illustrating the danger of breaking the ghotul tradition. One such tale, from

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

regard it as a mere preparation; the ghotul is the school of marriage, a training-ground of the domestic virtues. 'When a girl learns to keep the ghotul clean, she will keep her husband's house clean; the boy who is taught to bring wood and work hard will do the same in his own house.'

Still more important, the ghotul exercises its members in the sexual arts and virtues. In other 'higher' societies, how many lives have been ruined on the marriage night![1] But when a newly-married Muria husband and wife approach each other, they are already sexually educated, graduates in the technique of love, instinctively able to avoid the dangers into which untried partners so easily fall. The agony of defloration is divorced from marriage; the hymen casts no shadow across its consummation. The husband is not likely to be repelled by frigidity or shocked by dispareunia—an experience which might later make him impotent. Not a little of the serenity and stability of Muria marriage is due to the fact that when husband and wife cross its threshold they are both prepared.

II. The Appeal of the Childhood Friend

But though the ghotul is a school of marriage, it is not a place for experimental marriages. According to Muria tradition a chelik should never marry his ghotul partner, and once a boy and girl are betrothed they are separated in the ghotul by the strictest of taboos.

For a long time I was under the impression that marriages had to be arranged between families living in different villages. But when I examined the matter statistically I was surprised to find that out of the 2000 marriages scrutinized, there were

Marriages between members of the same ghotul	765
Marriages between members of different ghotul	1235

Of the 765, between members of the same ghotul, there were

Lambada (marriage by service)[2]	113
Irregular marriages (chelik marrying their ghotul-wives) ..	77
Betrothed in the ordinary way	575

These figures are sufficient to show that there is no official objection to boys and girls who are to marry each other later growing up in the same ghotul. This is significant when we remember that both boy and girl will be regularly cohabiting with others during the betrothal period. But that this does not interfere with their ultimate happiness is shown by the figures for divorce. These are very low, only 59, or under 3 per cent, for the whole tribe, but they rise startlingly in two special cases.

[1] 'The course of a marriage is determined by the wedding night.' With these words Dr F. S. Chesser opens her discussion of the Honeymoon in A. Forbath, *Love, Marriage, Jealousy* (London, 1938), p. 169. The Muria would think that very odd.

[2] Many of the Lambada boys probably came from different villages, but after beginning their period of service would have had to join the same ghotul as their future wives.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

Type of Marriage	Number of Marriages	Number of Divorces	Percentage of Divorces
Marriage by service ..	113	13	11·50
Marriage with ghotul-wife ..	77	9	11·68
Others marrying in the same ghotul	575	2	0·34
Marriages between members of different ghotul ..	1235	35	2·83

One other figure may be given. Out of the 2000 men questioned 316 admitted that they had had some connexion with their wives before marriage, either at a festival or marriage, during a dancing expedition or at a bazaar. Of these 14 or 4·4 per cent were divorced later. This figure, of course, includes the 77 who married their ghotul-wives.

These statistics seem to me important. They suggest in the first place that where the rules of avoidance are properly observed, there is no danger to future happiness in betrothed couples growing up together. That 573 out of 575 of such couples should have made a success of their marriages is very striking. It is equally striking to discover that it is among those very persons who had opportunity for some sort of experimental marriage that the divorce rate is highest. The Lambada boy, as we see later in this chapter, spends his whole time with his future wife, working with her in the fields and in the house; ghotul mates in the *jokidir* dormitories do not usually share the same home, but they too spend a great deal of time together during the day and sleep together every night—often for five, six or seven years.

These figures throw some light on a problem which has been debated by Havelock Ellis, Westermarck and Briffault among others—whether the happiest marriages are between those who have grown up together or who have met later in life as strangers; a question which, if it could be settled, might throw some light on the origins of exogamy and the reason for the hostility to incest.

'Generally speaking,' says Westermarck, 'there is a remarkable absence of erotic feelings between persons living very closely together from childhood. Nay more, in this, as in many other cases, sexual indifference is combined with the positive feeling of aversion when the act is thought of. This I take to be the fundamental cause of the exogamous prohibitions.' This 'sexual indifference to housemates' he illustrates by an interesting communication from the headmistress of a co-educational school in Finland. 'One youth assured her that neither he nor any of his friends would ever think of marrying a girl who had been their schoolfellow; and I heard of a lad who made a great distinction between girls of his own school and other, "real", girls, as he called them.'[1]

Westermarck quotes the important passage from Havelock Ellis,[2] which I have already used in another connexion, to the effect that 'the normal failure of the pairing instinct to manifest itself in the case of brothers and sisters, or of boys and girls brought up together from infancy, is a merely negative phenomenon due to the inevitable absence under those circumstances of the conditions which evoke the pairing impulse.... Between those who have

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 190ff.
[2] Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection in Man*, p. 205.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

given by Westermarck and Havelock Ellis and our own statistics. It simply does not work.

Another curious problem is this—why should engaged couples elope together? It is not uncommon—again I have no statistics, but I know of a dozen cases—where chelik and motiari, who were in any case going to be married, have gone to all the trouble and danger of an elopement. Why is this? It is generally due to economic causes. When the parents keep on postponing a marriage on financial grounds, sometimes the boy and girl get tired of waiting and force their parents' hands. This may be done either by the boy making his future wife pregnant, or by simply eloping to some friendly ghotul and persuading the members there to celebrate the marriage. When this is done, nobody really minds very much; for a lot of money is saved, and the married pair are received, when they return, with the usual honours. Such adventures do not seem to ruin the later happiness of the home.

Crawley has explained a similar policy of segregation during the period from engagement to marriage among other peoples as a magical taboo.[1] 'The principle is to prevent all intercourse until the particular ceremonies which obviate the danger of the new relation, mutual contagion between two particular persons, have been performed, and to prepare them for these and for the new state of life—the taboo of avoidance being thought to be in itself some guarantee of future safety.... The young people are about to enter upon a critical state, that of living in more or less close contact with each other, and as that state derives its dangers from their reciprocal influence, a taboo is set between them until it is removed by the ceremony which united them while rendering them mutually innocuous.'

It may be so. But I have a growing conviction that many of our conclusions about the sex life of primitive peoples have been vitiated by the earlier investigators' assumption that aboriginals knew nothing of sexual technique, had no idea of romantic love, and based their actions, even the most intimate, on magical principles and fears. Modern research is rapidly destroying these premises and, certainly for the Muria, I believe that much which convention would ascribe to magic and religion should really be attributed to the tribe's remarkable knowledge of the psychology of sex.

The taboo between betrothed couples is thus seen to be entirely practical. It aims at preserving the mutual stimuli of vision and touch.[2] It is connected with the universal admiration for modesty, the general appeal of reticence. Even if a chelik's wife is not a virgin absolutely, she should at least be a virgin for him. Where this condition is fulfilled marriages are most happy, and the divorce rate is at its lowest.

III. 'A Marriage has been Arranged'

It is only by a breach of all rule and tradition that a chelik's motiari can be his wife. We have seen this happen in 77 cases out of 2000 with a comparatively high percentage of marital failures. In some other cases a chelik is forced by an unlucky pregnancy into a marriage with a girl to whom he was not officially betrothed; in a few other cases romantic passion leads to an elopement. But the great majority of marriages are arranged by the parents, or

[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 25.

[2] Two proverbial sayings illustrate this. '*Durihe he bāja nāh lāgu*, the distant drum is sweet' and '*Durhe mdya rudi-dpen, najdik mdya gindpen*, the distant love is charming, the love at hand detestable.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rather—since so many alliances are formed according to the relationship laws —by the voice of society and tradition. The figures are as follows—

Number of—	Number	Percentage
Chelik marrying according to parents' wishes	1884	94·20
Cross-cousin marriages	1799	89·95
Divorces among arranged marriages ..	49	2·60
Irregular marriages	116	5·80
Marriages with ghotul partners ..	77	3·85
Marriages forced by pregnancy ..	26	1·30
Marriages by elopement on romantic grounds	13	0·65
Divorces among irregular marriages ..	10	8·62

The cross-cousin marriage is known as the *gudamol* or *gudapal*, the 'tribe-nest' or 'tribe-milk' marriage, and may be compared with the *dudh-lautāna* or 'bringing back the milk' of the Gond of the Central Provinces. Its popularity, to which the above figures abundantly testify, is not the least of the factors that bind the Muria as a tribe so close together. The *gudamol* is, of course, a marriage between a chelik and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or a motiari and her mother's brother's son or father's sister's son. In its *kutiyāri* form, the cross-cousin marriage is extended to cover persons in the same general classificatory relationship as these but less closely related. What this means in practice is that when a family gives a girl to another family in one generation, it gets a girl back in return in the next generation.

The advantage of this is manifest. The bride-price can be much lower. The clan-ancestors are satisfied—it will be remembered that when a girl leaves a clan at her marriage compensation must be put into the Pot of the Departed. Everything remains homely and familiar—there is the same set of *saga-samdhi*, there are no new relationships to be explored. Old-standing alliances are strengthened. Just as after death, steps are taken to ensure the return of the dead to his own family circle, so at marriage there is satisfaction at keeping the children within a certain range of families.

To the chelik and motiari subjected to this arrangement it appears less that their parents have settled their fate than that society itself has done so. The parents themselves must bow to tribal custom. This is, I think, important in view of the very strong hold of tribal custom and social solidarity upon the Muria, even upon the young Muria. Boys or girls may easily rebel against their parents; obscure complexes may well arouse in them dissatisfaction with anything their parents do; but they have a passionate devotion to the tribe. 'We love our laws', they say, 'and obey them far more readily than we obey the Government—for we made them ourselves.'

We should not therefore think of chelik and motiari as forced by some external influence into unions for which they have no desire; rather we may say that as part of society they follow society's laws.

The mother's brother's son, though he must be avoided, becomes a figure of romance, stronger than the most handsome chelik to whom there is ready access. He is often mentioned in the ghotul songs.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

O mother, the clouds look like smoke,
Each roof seems joined to the one next door.
I must go and see it, mother.
Whom will you go with, daughter?
I will go with my uncle's son, mother.
Don't go with him, daughter;
He will pour haldi over you.
Let him pour haldi if he wills, mother.
I can't rest till I go with him.

In those cases where no *gudamoi* union is possible or convenient, the parents consider many things before they go to 'pluck the flower' of a betrothal. It may safely be said that the thought uppermost in their minds is the happiness of their child. A father seeking a daughter-in-law considers whether the women of such and such a family are hard workers, free from the taint of witchcraft, unstained by scandal. He does not seem to worry whether a girl is beautiful or no, though he would naturally prefer her to be 'well made and conformable'. When a betrothal party arrives at a house, a girl's parents discuss much the same things. Will the boy be a good worker? Has there been scandal in the family, signs of indifference to the laws of the clan? Is the boy himself steady, will he go through with the matter? The girl is consulted; if she strongly objects, the father sends the visitors away. Once she has agreed, however, he expects her to abide by her choice. In the song on p. 89 there is a hint that several betrothal parties may visit a house before the parents can make up their minds—a delay not always pleasing to the daughter.

We have, therefore, in Muria society two very different traditions existing side by side. Before marriage, in the ghotul, boys and girls are encouraged to live to the full a life of romantic passion. For marriage, everything must be arranged on the lines of strictest commonsense. A boy can live with the girl he is in love with before marriage, but not in marriage. How does this arrangement work?

I am not here attempting to pass a personal judgement in this matter, I am not considering whether it is a good or a bad arrangement. The interesting thing is what the chelik and motiari think of it.

Generally, the boys and girls believe that what their parents, or rather society and the tribe, arrange makes for ultimate happiness. They may object to a particular choice made by their parents, but they do not object to their making a choice at all. It is easier for them to accept this position because what they think matters about marriage is not so much the partner as the whole condition of life so different from life in the ghotul. 'The ghotul is for happiness', they said at Nayanar. 'Marriage is for work.' They are more concerned about the new home than the new partner. The new way of life is more important than the person who will share it.

It is some such reflection as this that enables boys and girls to bear the very great pain of separation from their lovers at marriage. This is a very real thing, especially in the *jokidir* ghotul. Here a chelik and motiari may have lived six or seven years together, perhaps in great fidelity, and have come to love each other devotedly. Everything in life—except responsibility for children and a home—has been shared. They have gone together to festivals and danced all night in each other's arms. They have been to a score of marriages and shared a world of jokes together. They have slept night after night in the ghotul 'lovely as a bison's horns'. Then suddenly

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Kuakonda. When Telami Dhurwa returned from jail after killing a man in a drunken quarrel, he offered his clan-god Uru Maru, a pig, a cow and a hen, and had to undergo the usual ceremonies of purification. 783

Apart from these ceremonies, however, the fact that a man has served a sentence for murder has singularly little influence on his social position and domestic happiness. It is true that imprisonment, if it is for a very long term, sometimes acts as an automatic divorce, and women feel that they are at liberty to marry again. But generally wives wait for their husbands to be released, as I found Deve, the wife of Kawasi Borga, waiting for her husband at Doriras. Borga, ten years before, had gone to jail with a life-sentence for killing his uncle. His wife had all the time been well looked after by the villagers, and I found her house substantial and prosperous. Her two sons had been successfully married and were carrying on the business of their home with the help of their wives. 554 559 [584] [593]

People, however, are sometimes afraid to marry a released murderer. Doga of Jabeli must be one of the luckiest young men alive, for after being sentenced to transportation for one murder he was released after three years; whereupon he is said to have killed his wife, was sentenced to death and again got off on appeal. He came to see me armed with a ferocious-looking axe, which had actually been put in evidence at one of his trials as the weapon with which he had committed murder. He was trying to get a new wife, but without success. 'They are all afraid of me', he said, 'for fear I might kill them as well'. But he thought he might possibly get a widow. Another youth who found it very difficult to get a new wife was Hemla Bakka, who killed his wife for committing adultery, and got three years' imprisonment for it. At Aranpur all the girls were frightened of the charming Gutte, who had been in jail for killing a man in a drunken quarrel after a cock-fight. They thought if they displeased him, he might murder them too. 554 582

At Khutepal, Oyami Masa, who was imprisoned for killing his junior wife, seems to have suffered no loss of prestige on account of it. He is a Waddai, and when I was there he 554 558

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia scrifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Pigs

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*morrkeng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *hadiali padi* or *huna padi*, and Bison-horn *hadiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charkal padi* and *hural padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Korr-guda*, tunnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

Poultry

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar
[2] See pp. 103 and 120.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

has been formally demanded, shame prevents her looking at her betrothed. The parents this time do not take the village elders with them, but bring a rupee's worth of *mahua*, as before. The purpose of the visit is to ask the girl's parents if they are now ready to give the girl in marriage, or want to wait another six months or year; if they are poor, they may not have had time to collect enough to meet their share of the cost of the wedding, and this is the only possible justification for further postponement of the wedding. Normally the girl's parents say they are ready, and ask the youth's parents to come for the girl in ten days' time. This visit occurs generally at the end of Phagur or early in Chaita month, because, although marriages may take place at any time of year, they almost always take place in Chaita, when there is no field work and there is plenty of grain in hand from the freshly garnered harvest. Before this visit the amount of the bride-price or *paring*, settled at the previous *talq-da'ina*, should be ready, and the girl's parents signify their readiness to give the girl by asking the youth's parents to bring the bride-price in ten days' time. The amount of the bride-price varies with the means of the youth's family. It consists of a rupee's worth of new cloth for the bride's mother, a gelded pig, one *pailî* (four pounds) of salt, one *pailî* of ground *ambari* (roselle) flowers, one or two pounds of red chillies, two or three pieces of turmeric, and, according to the means of the bridegroom's family, from one to four *duti* baskets each containing ten *pailî* (forty pounds) of husked *kutki*, from eight annas' to three rupees' worth of *mahua* spirit, and from Rs. 5 to Rs. 40 in cash. It is the cash portion of the bride-price that is avoided or reduced by cross-cousin marriage or such arrangements as the marriage of a brother and sister of one family to the sister and brother of another; other items are unaffected; the bride's mother must always get her cloth, and the pig and grain are eaten at the wedding.

On the day appointed for bringing the bride-price the bridegroom stays at home, but his father and mother, taking the bride-price, proceed to the bride's village, accompanied by all their fellow-villagers, and preceded by three or four drummers. The villagers who go with them, men, women, boys and girls, do not expect to be fed entirely at the expense of the bridegroom's parents, and therefore take their own food and drink for the first meal on arrival; it is felt that, to be entertained at the expense of the parents would not be helping them, but adding to the financial burden of the wedding.

On arrival, the bridegroom's parents make the bride-price over to the bride's parents, and all the visiting party then cook their food and eat it apart from the bride's parents and co-villagers. After

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 this supper both parties assemble in front of the bride's house, the men and youths in dancing-dress, and there is dancing and singing till dawn, all men, women, youths and girls present being free to take part, whether married or single, old or young. Soon after dawn the pig, grain and liquor brought by the bridegroom's parents as part of the bride-price are divided into a portion for the bride's village and a portion for the visiting village, cooked and partaken of by all present; any deficiency is made up by the girl's parents, this being their only expense; they do not even decorate their house or put up booths for the guests.

This wedding breakfast over, the bride is brought out by her parents and made over to the bridegroom's parents. She is not washed or given special clothes, though if funds permit she sometimes gets a new loin-cloth. She is expected to weep profusely in token of reluctance to leave her father's home. The bridegroom's parents take her on foot through the forest to their village, arriving always in the evening. The bridegroom stays in his house; to go out to meet the bride would be immodest. She is escorted to his house, thrust inside, and the marriage is thus completed without further ceremony. There is no present from the bridegroom to the bride, not even a ring as among the Bison-horn Marias. Supper that night is cooked for the couple by the bridegroom's mother.

582 177 Pre-puberty marriage never occurs among the Hill Marias, who look upon it as an utterly abhorrent custom of the Kosor or Hindus. Unfortunately a few Bison-horn Marias are beginning to ape their Hindu neighbours in this as in other matters; but even now probably only three in a hundred Bison-horn marriages are child marriages.

Child marriage

583 It is very common for the bridegroom to serve his future father-in-law for his bride instead of paying the bride-price. If at the second *talq-da'ina* his parents have to admit to the girl's parents that they cannot afford the bride-price, it is arranged for the bridegroom to go as *lamana'i* or suitor-servant to the girl's parents for a term of years that varies from three years to seven or eight, though when the term exceeds three years the girl usually becomes the *lamana'i's* wife for the last two years. For the first part of his service the *lamana'i* is not supposed to have intercourse with the girl, but, provided that the girl agrees (and she is seldom reluctant), he generally does so after a time. It is, however, considered a disgrace to her parents if in consequence she becomes pregnant, and they are fined a pig, which is eaten by all their and the *lamana'i's* clansmen, after which the girl is regarded as the *lamana'i's* wife. Often at the end of the agreed period of service the father-in-law is unwilling

Serving for a wife

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to let his daughter go, or to lose the assistance of his future son-in-law; but in that case the marriage is at once celebrated, the *lamana'i* leaving his father-in-law's house where he has stayed for the period of his service for a house built for him in the father-in-law's village, and his parents and their party, after the wedding dance and breakfast, take the girl and leave her there with him instead of in their own village; but thereafter no *lamana'i* ever stays more than two years in his father-in-law's village. Provided that the girl has not become pregnant, there is always a regular *marmi* wedding at the end of the agreed term, the bride's parents meeting the expenses; if she has become pregnant, after the penal feast of pork already mentioned she becomes the *lamana'i's* wife merely by passing into his keeping by *ottur*.

This account of marriage by service is based entirely on investigations among the Hill Marias; but it is equally common among the Bison-horn Marias, and their practice is much the same except that, of course, the regular marriage at the end of the term of service is the ordinary Bison-horn *pendul* wedding, while, owing to the fact that in all villages there are many houses and fields belonging to clans other than the original clan that founded the village, the *lamana'i* often settles permanently in his father-in-law's village, and breaks up new land for himself with the consent of the *pala* or headman.

Bison-horn Maria betrothal ('tulpana') and marriage ('pendul')

Among Bison-horn Marias a father wishing to ask another man for his daughter's hand for his son goes to him with a few relatives and takes a *paili* of rice, and a large earthen pot (*handi*) and a small earthen pot (*dudi*) of *mahua* spirit. As already stated in the section on omens, the party will turn back if it meets a bad omen on the way, and postpone the journey for a fortnight. On their arrival at the girl's house her father calls his relatives and the village elders; when all have assembled, the father of the prospective bridegroom formally asks the girl's father for the girl as his son's wife. Sometimes the visiting father comes rather to assert his right to the girl in *gudapal* marriage, and before either his son or the girl has attained puberty, than in the expectation of arranging the wedding in the near future, especially if he has heard rumours of the girl being given to someone else; in such cases the girl's father almost always refuses to give his girl at least till both the boy and the girl are mature, and the boy's father formally declares that he will never renounce his *gudapal* rights. It has already been said that the Bison-horn Marias assert these rights more strongly than the Hill Marias, among whom the *gudapal* tie is rather a convenient and economical arrangement than a binding

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

celebrate his son's marriage on a certain date, and asks him to deliver the girl to him on the appointed day; in reply he agrees to do so, but calls on the youth's father to settle the bride-price then and there, and to deliver it to him when he comes for the girl. Bison-horn Marias do not use the word *paring* for the bride-price, but either the Chhattisgarhi Hindi word *barna*, the Halbi word *jora*, or, more commonly, the ordinary Hindi term for expenses, *kharcha*. They then discuss terms. If it is a *gudapal* union, the girl's father expects only to get as much *landa*, *mahua* spirit, grain and cloth as his family had to pay in the previous generation when he married her mother. A Bison-horn marriage is extremely expensive to the bridegroom's parents because they are expected to keep open house, and guests pour in uninvited from all villages to which the throb of the marriage drums reverberates; and therefore the actual bride-price is kept as low as possible. In fact, in many *parganas* they assert that no cash passes from the bridegroom's parents to the bride's. The practice varies; a single rupee passed in the weddings that I saw, though in certain disputes that came to my notice after a wife had eloped with another man the first husband claimed from the new husband the refund of cash alleged to have formed part of the bride-price. In general, however, cash is not the important element in the Bison-horn that it is in the Hill Maria bride-price. Usually the bride-price consists of from five to ten very large pots of *landa*, one *pali* of husked rice or *kuthi* for every pot of *landa*, two large and one small pots of *mahua* spirit, a large gelded pig ready slaughtered, a cock, and about four yards of Mahra cloth for the bride's mother, the cloth being sometimes called in Hindi *ma'i-lugra*. Another consideration is the cost of the dinner that the girl's father has to give to his relatives before the girl is taken away, known as *suttam-jawa*, and of her going-away presents; in the discussion about the bringing of the bride-price on the wedding-day suggested by the bridegroom's father, the girl's father sometimes alleges that he is too poor to collect the necessary food and presents by the suggested date and that he must therefore have another year before handing over his daughter, unless the bridegroom's father will help him with a loan in cash or in kind. The loan is readily made if the latter is well-to-do. These matters being settled, the bride's father formally promises to hand the girl over on the appointed day, and the promise is ratified by the usual libation from the small pot of *mahua* to the Departed of the girl's family, and the consumption of the *landa* and the *mahua* spirit by all present, the bridegroom's father and his party returning to their village after having been entertained to dinner by the bride's father.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

gyrated in all directions, at one moment appearing inextricably mixed together, only to disentangle miraculously at the next and weave themselves into fresh spirals and circles, singing abuse at each other. All the while the group of standing girls went on swaying and singing round the door; the leader caused great laughter by improvising a song warning all girls to be on their guard that night, for the Diwan, the Tahsildar and the Circle Inspector were watching them, and who knew what might happen after dark?

Before we arrived the bridegroom's party had presented the bride-price, which consisted of one slaughtered pig, a live pig, five very large pots of *landa*, five *pailí* of husked rice, four yards of Mahra cloth for the bride's mother, and one rupee. While the chains of girls were dancing around the bride and bridegroom, her mother's sister came out and displayed the bride's going-away presents, a *masni* or grass sleeping-mat, a small basket containing about a *pailí* of husked rice, a large pot of *landa*, and a young bull calf newly weaned.

Some men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses and beating their long drums now started to dance near the gyrating chains of girls, and there was a further accompaniment to the singing of bamboo flutes. The two chains of girls suddenly opened out, leaving the bridegroom and bride together, and the girl's father and the bridegroom's elder brother were with them, holding their hands. The old father, Kunjami Harma, held up his hand for silence, and started a long speech, asking the bridegroom's elder brother, 'Have you come willingly for this flower? Will you wear it and cherish it? It is fresh and tender, and will not bear rough handling. Know you how witless women are? If she be a poor housekeeper, pardon her. If she cook badly, pardon her. If she speak to other men, do not take it amiss, but pardon her.' There were other similar injunctions, and to all the bridegroom's brother answered yes. Then Kunjami Harma took his daughter, who took the bridegroom's right hand, and placed on his little finger a ring that she had pulled off the little finger of her own right hand; the bridegroom then took a ring off his own left little finger and placed it on hers; cloths were held over their heads while this exchange was in progress. The bridegroom then took off another ring, which the girl's elder sister received in her outstretched cloth, while she said, 'From now onwards you must neither touch me nor utter my name till I am dead. If you do, all will laugh at you, and your brethren will fine you.' I was told that if she dies before him, he will take a ring off her little finger and wear it on the middle finger of his right hand. He also gave a ring to the bride's younger sister, for he is free to touch her and to talk of her by name. Then his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

588 cases there is no bride-price, though the deserted husband can claim from the new husband the bride-price which he paid when he married the woman, a *gudapal* cousin can claim Rs. 5 compensation if an unmarried girl goes to some other man, and a younger brother of the dead husband can claim Rs. 5 compensation if a widow goes to a new husband. Sometimes when parents or parties to a marriage are very poor and cannot afford the expense of a regular wedding they merely start to live together in this way, either performing the marriage ceremony later when they have had time to collect the means required, or else distributing tiny cakes to their clan-fellows instead. The term *aghmirtur* or *armirtur* is sometimes applied to the elopement of an unmarried girl or a wife with another man.

583 *Poyse'ottur* or marriage by capture still occurs, though getting rarer every year. We have seen how, when a girl remains unmarried her parents will arrange for her cross-cousin to carry her off; and in the Bison-horn *pendul* regular marriage described above there is an element of marriage by capture in the way in which the bride feigns resistance when the bridegroom's party begins to escort her to his village and when she is finally parted from the girls of her own village with a show of force by the bridegroom's younger brother and his friends. In fact, the Hill and Bison-horn Maria custom of the bride being taken off from her native village to the bridegroom's village and of the wedding taking place there may be a survival of a former general custom of marriage by capture. When the girl is unmarried and is carried off by her cross-cousin at her parents' request, they usually explain matters to her as she is being carried off and advise her to make the best of it. I found only one Bison-horn Maria who admitted having really captured his wife in the good old way once so prevalent in the Killepal, Dantewara, Pharaspal, Kuakonda and Aranpur *parganas*, probably in the whole of the Bison-horn country. He was reticent about the whole affair, though apparently the girl had been willing to marry him, but her parents had objected. According to old records the practice was for the villagers of the girl's village to beat the invading party of youths until it had crossed the village boundary with the girl; Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 79) state that the women only used to beat the invaders in this way, the invaders making no effort to retaliate, and the marriage being completed by the gift of a cloth to the girl on arrival in the captor's village and a *landa* carousal by the invading party.

587 Widow marriage is common among all Marias. In the hills, widows usually go to their husband's younger brothers without any

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. Six Kinds of Marriage

583 As in other parts of aboriginal India, the Muria recognize several different types of marriage, which for convenience I will give in tabular form.

585 (i) *Ostasāna marmi* (Halbi, *sopni bihao*). This is the traditional Gond marriage; the parents, after anointing the girl with haldi, send her to the bridegroom's house where the Lagir is performed.

(ii) *Talk dayna* (Halbi, *chal bihao*). This is the Hinduized modification of the Gond marriage and is performed partly in the bride's and partly in the bridegroom's house. The Lagir is held outside the bride's house. It is known as Chat-marmi in Betul and is only performed when the contracting parties have quarrelled.[1]

(iii) *Arwitāna* (Halbi, *udaliya*[2]). This is the marriage of a chelik and motiari who elope to a friend's house and have the rites there without the approval of their parents. The full ceremonies may be performed, but the bridegroom has to pay for them himself.

(iv) *Haiwark wāt* (Halbi, *paisa mundi* or *paitu*). Here a girl runs away from her parents' house and forces marriage on a boy of her choice. She arrives, sits down and refuses to go away.

[587] (v) *Tika tasāna* (Halbi, *haldi-pāni bihao*). This is the simple and inexpensive ritual performed either for a widow or widower who remarries, for the marriage of divorced persons or for an adulterous marriage.

(vi) *Yer dosāna marmi* (Halbi, *bhul bihao*). This is the hurried marriage when a motiari is found to be pregnant. If the boy to whom she is engaged is willing to marry her in spite of this and is willing to accept the child as his own, it is called a *bhul bihao*. If the marriage is with the boy who caused the pregnancy it is simply a *yer dosāna* or 'pouring-water marriage'.[3]

585 I will describe in very considerable detail the first two types of marriage. The others may be disposed of more expeditiously.

The *Arwitāna* marriage is often performed with the full rites, though naturally somewhat modified by the absence of the parents, and the fact that the bride and bridegroom are attended by chelik and motiari of another ghotul.

The *Haiwark wāt* marriage is celebrated when a girl leaves her home and forces herself upon her lover. When the boy asks her what she wants, she says she has come for *paisa mundi*. If the boy is willing, and sometimes even if he is not very enthusiastic about it, the marriage is performed as soon as possible. That very evening the chelik and motiari assemble and build a simple booth with only five pillars. Bride and bridegroom sit in this and the Gaita places rapidly-made crowns on their heads, and puts haldi and oil on their bodies. The village people do tika and the chelik and motiari take bride and bridegroom seven times round the booth and someone pours water and haldi over them.

587 The *Tika tasāna* marriage is simple and inexpensive. It often has to be, for in the case of adultery, elopement or a marriage after divorce, the new

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 80.
[2] Russell says this means 'Love in the fields'—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 466.
[3] To these forms of marriage many parallels may be found in other Indian tribes as well as in traditional Hinduism.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

of a chelik's absence from the ghotul to seduce his motiari. These things happen, but they are condemned.

The chelik themselves consider that this type of ghotul has several great advantages. The first, characteristically, is the very practical one that if a girl becomes pregnant 'they know the thief'. Elsewhere it is naturally often difficult to fix the responsibility of fatherhood. Again, the chelik say that a great deal of trouble is saved. 'We know what to do; there is no jealousy or dispute; everything is settled, and there is no more to be said.' I think it is true that there is less strain and anxiety in these ghotul; and there is room for the development of deep intimacy and romantic attachment. In the pre-nuptial period, however, it may be argued that these things are not altogether desirable.

They certainly lead to greater conflict with the parents over marriage. Many chelik and motiari look forward with misery to separation from the partner who has shared with them the happy days of youth, and occasionally—but only occasionally—ghotul partners elope together rather than face a separation. Statistics here are striking. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 1884 were celebrated according to the wishes of the parents and the great majority of cases were of the cross-cousin type. Of the 116 irregular marriages, 77 were those of chelik who married their 'ghotul-wives'. Only 39 irregular marriages were reported from the other type of ghotul. In view of the smaller number of men from the *jodidār* ghotul, these figures indicate a proportion of about 1 in every 9 of chelik in this type of ghotul who had conflict with their parents, and only 1 in about 32 from the other type of ghotul.

Of those who married their 'ghotul-wives', 9 out of 77 divorced them later, giving a proportion of 11·6 per cent against a proportion of 2·9 per cent of divorces for the whole 2000 marriages. It is interesting that the proportion of divorces among Lamhada—the other type of chelik who live in close contact with their future wives before marriage—is almost exactly the same, 11·5 per cent. And although 77 and 113 cases respectively are not sufficient for us to draw far-reaching conclusions, it is undoubtedly striking that there should be so high an incidence of divorce among these and only among these two classes of people.

Yet even though a passionate ghotul attachment is not the best preparation for a life-long union, at the time separation seems tragic indeed. A girl especially, whose chelik marries someone else, is a pathetic figure. 'Her life has left her'—so they put it in Munjmeta—'she lies alone on her mat and pines for him; she has no heart to take another lover.' Often she sleeps with a girl friend who is herself in the arms of a boy, but she lies with her back to them, turning away from all that happiness. In Ulera they said that when a girl's lover leaves her, she cannot sing for many days. When the Mukhwan of Banjora died, the Mukhwanin's face was 'destroyed by sorrow'.

Boys are often, but not always, more philosophical. 'Yes, for a month you feel wretched', said a chelik in Markabera. 'Then you forget all about it. One may be able to meet her again, but that is difficult and dangerous. But at least you can always get another girl in the ghotul.' Yet at Bopna the Silledar was called a 'widower', so miserable was he after his 'wife's' marriage last year. At Markabera, Dasru took to drink after his ghotul wife was married and Gurti, who was deeply attached to the beautiful and vivacious Malko, looked very lonely and miserable when I saw him nearly a year after her marriage to a boy in another village.

It is remarkable, however, how few actual tragedies there have been from this cause. In the last ten years, only one case of suicide has been registered

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

Sometimes, indeed, the chelik actually try to make a girl pregnant. In Kanhargaon, two very popular motiari were betrothed to boys at Nayanar. The Kanhargaon chelik did all they could to make them pregnant so that they could force them into marriage and keep them in their own village. But they were unsuccessful, and in the end one of the girls was seduced by her own betrothed at a marriage, became pregnant and was hastily married to him. It is not uncommon, though I have no statistics on the point, for engaged couples whose parents unduly delay their marriage to force the issue either by eloping together or by trying to achieve a pregnancy.

But on the whole, the admirable ghotul rule that engaged couples should have nothing to do with one another before marriage is carefully observed. Out of 113 Lamhada boys serving for their wives and in close proximity for several years to the girls they were going to marry, only 5 made them pregnant.

Pre-nuptial pregnancy does not seem to injure the couple's relationships in marriage, provided a youth marries the girl himself. Of the 26 chelik who married the motiari they made pregnant, not one made a failure of his domestic life. At the time of my inquiries every one of them was living with his original partner and very happy with her. But those who had infertile sexual connexion with their wives before marriage showed a comparatively high divorce rate. Of the 316 who admitted to this, 14 had unsuccessful marriages. Of these 77 were the regular ghotul-wives of my informants and 68 of them were still living together when I inquired.

In only three cases during the last twenty years has a pregnancy been taken so seriously as to lead to tragedy. Two of these were the suicides which I have already described in Chapter XV. But here it was not so much the pregnancy itself as the fact that the pregnancy was the result of a connexion between chelik and motiari of the same clan that mattered. The third tragedy appears to have been due largely to a chelik's fear of the disgrace and expense, especially as it was his second experience of the kind.

At the beginning of April 1942, Birjhu, a chelik of the Aturbera ghotul, discovered with dismay that his motiari, Mori, was pregnant. Only a year before he had made another girl pregnant in the ghotul, had refused to marry her and had forced his parents to pay compensation. They did so, but they made many threats as to what they would do if it occurred again. Mori, who seems to have been in love with the boy, said that he must marry her, but Birjhu refused and said that if she told anybody that it was through him that she had conceived, he would kill her. After a little while, however, the poor girl told her brother's wife about it. When Birjhu heard she had done so, he planned to carry out his threat. On the night of the 14th of April, he told Mori he would do what she wanted and they had better elope together and get married in another village. Late at night they crept stealthily out of the ghotul and made their way through the forest. But suddenly, before they had gone very far, Birjhu caught hold of the girl and strangled her. Then he dragged her body below a tree and tied a rope round the neck to make it look as though the girl had committed suicide.

The following day a report was made at the Narayanpur police station that Mori had committed suicide. When Birjhu heard that the matter had gone to the police, he was frightened but possibly even more he was overwhelmed with sorrow and misery at what he had done. He disappeared, and two days later hanged himself from a tree in the jungle.

But this is the only incident of the kind that has yet been recorded.

Such is the general picture, familiar to students of pre-marital freedom everywhere. How are we to explain the fact that through all the years of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

regard it as a mere preparation; the ghotul is the school of marriage, a training-ground of the domestic virtues. 'When a girl learns to keep the ghotul clean, she will keep her husband's house clean; the boy who is taught to bring wood and work hard will do the same in his own house.'

Still more important, the ghotul exercises its members in the sexual arts and virtues. In other 'higher' societies, how many lives have been ruined on the marriage night![1] But when a newly-married Muria husband and wife approach each other, they are already sexually educated, graduates in the technique of love, instinctively able to avoid the dangers into which untried partners so easily fall. The agony of defloration is divorced from marriage; the hymen casts no shadow across its consummation. The husband is not likely to be repelled by frigidity or shocked by dispareunia—an experience which might later make him impotent. Not a little of the serenity and stability of Muria marriage is due to the fact that when husband and wife cross its threshold they are both prepared.

II. The Appeal of the Childhood Friend

But though the ghotul is a school of marriage, it is not a place for experimental marriages. According to Muria tradition a chelik should never marry his ghotul partner, and once a boy and girl are betrothed they are separated in the ghotul by the strictest of taboos.

For a long time I was under the impression that marriages had to be arranged between families living in different villages. But when I examined the matter statistically I was surprised to find that out of the 2000 marriages scrutinized, there were

Marriages between members of the same ghotul	.. ..	765
Marriages between members of different ghotul	.. ..	1235

Of the 765, between members of the same ghotul, there were

Lamhada (marriage by service)[2]	.. ..	113
Irregular marriages (chelik marrying their ghotul-wives)	..	77
Betrothed in the ordinary way	.. ..	575

These figures are sufficient to show that there is no official objection to boys and girls who are to marry each other later growing up in the same ghotul. This is significant when we remember that both boy and girl will be regularly cohabiting with others during the betrothal period. But that this does not interfere with their ultimate happiness is shown by the figures for divorce. These are very low, only 59, or under 3 per cent, for the whole tribe, but they rise startlingly in two special cases.

[1] 'The course of a marriage is determined by the wedding night.' With these words Dr E. S. Chesser opens her discussion of the Honeymoon in A. Forbath, *Love, Marriage, Jealousy* (London, 1938), p. 169. The Muria would think that very odd.

[2] Many of the Lamhada boys probably came from different villages, but after beginning their period of service would have had to join the same ghotul as their future wives.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

IV. MARRIAGE BY SERVICE

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One of the first to describe the custom of marriage by service in India was the Abbé Dubois who wrote that 'the expenses of a wedding are so considerable that in all castes one often sees young men, who are without the necessary means, using the same expedient to procure a wife that Jacob employed with Laban'.[1] 'Marriage by service must be distinguished from other customs which take a son-in-law to live in his wife's house. In all parts of India a youth may go to live with his parents-in-law either because the girl's family is well-to-do but without sons, or because it is poor and needs an extra man in the house, or because the son-in-law is poor and cannot pay the bride-price. The Coorgis allow a man who has no sons to give his daughter in marriage on the understanding that his son-in-law will remain with her in the house, and that any issue will belong to his family. Similar customs are reported from the Holeya of Bombay and the Kunnavan and Madiga of Madras, as well as from Assam, Kashmir and the Punjab. It is said that if a Santal or Uraon boy marries a girl without brothers and stays in his father-in-law's house and works for him till he dies, he will inherit the property.'[2]

Westermarck has distinguished between marriage by service as a regular form of marriage, which is preferred by the people because it gives an opportunity to test a youth's fitness, and marriage by service as a substitute for marriage by purchase.[3] Schmidt and Koppers have shown that the institution, 'functionally and culture-historically belonging to a matriarchal culture, has been transformed under patriarchal influence into the institution of paying the bride-price'.[4]

Marriage by service in Bastar means that a youth whose family cannot afford the bride-price comes to live in his father-in-law's house and works for him until he has earned his wife. He then marries her and either takes her to a house of his own or stays on with the parents-in-law. In the Madras Presidency the number of years' service required was seven; in the central India of today, it is generally not more than five and often only three. In the Punjab and the United Provinces it is normally three years. Here the practice is found among most Hindu castes, even Brahmins and Rajputs, and sometimes among Mussalmans. Youths who serve in this way are often despised, and a proverb is quoted from the United Provinces: *Kuta pāle, so kuta; sās ghar jamai aur bahin ghar bhai*—He who tames a dog is a dog; other dogs are those who live in a mother-in-law's house or where a sister is married.[5]

The chelik who goes to serve for his bride is called Lam or Lamhada in Gondi, Gharjiya in Halbi and Lamsena in Hindi.[6] In the Central Provinces

[1] J. A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 1928), p. 213. Nowadays many youths go instead to the tea gardens of Assam in order to earn sufficient to pay a bride-price; it would be an interesting subject for inquiry, to examine how far the Tea Districts Labour Association's recruitment has modified the institution of the 'serving marriage'.

[2] *See Census of India, 1931*, United Provinces Report, p. 311.

[3] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 366ff.

[4] O. R. Ehrenfels, *Mother-right in India*, p. 147, quoting Schmidt and Koppers, *Volker und Kulturen* (Regensburg, 1924), pp. 270ff.

[5] *Census of India, 1931*, United Provinces Report, p. 311.

[6] For the institution in India generally see Ward, op. cit., p. 138 (for the Mandla District); *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part IIIB, p. 53 (for the Bhil); Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 210 (Basor), Vol. III, p. 394 (Kawar), Vol. III, p. 550 (Korku), Vol. IV, p. 133 (Mahar), Vol. IV, p. 152 (Majhwar), Vol. IV, p. 166 (Mali). See also Ehrenfels, op. cit., p. 197; S. Hivale, *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley*, pp. 205ff.; *The Baiga*, pp. 287f.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 583 he is sometimes known as the Gahania[1]—the boy who is in pawn. Elsewhere in India he is called Ghar-jamai, Ghardi-jawae, Ghar-damand and Khana-damand—these expressions mean 'house-son-in-law'.

The Lamhada is betrothed to his girl in the ordinary way, and then comes to live in her father's house, where he is treated as one of the family. If he has been living hitherto in a different village, he has to leave the ghotul there and join the ghotul of which his future bride is a motiari. He will get a ghotul-wife or a temporary partner as the case may be and he will live with her at the same time that he serves for his betrothed. We thus have the interesting situation that if a Lamhada boy comes from another village to a place where there is a *joddidr* ghotul, he gets two new girls—one his betrothed with whom he should have nothing to do, and the other his ghotul-wife with whom he will regularly cohabit.

The strongly equalitarian character of the Muria saves the institution of serving-marriage from certain obvious disadvantages. A boy is not looked down upon because he has no money. The capital that he brings to his new home is the strength of his arms, his industry and his enterprise. It is true that the hardest tasks are often given him, but these are to test his capacity and willingness to work rather than any token that he is regarded as inferior. His status in the ghotul is as good as any, and he is just as likely to become Sirdar or Kotwar as the son of the house where he is serving.

[522] But the Lamhada is a licensed subject for jesting. His close proximity to his future wife—in the same house, a definitely more 'risky' connexion than the closely disciplined relationship in the ghotul; his relations with his mother-in-law and other forbidden persons begun even before marriage; the heavy tasks and tests that are laid upon him; these are subjects for endless comment and amusement.

X 883 583 539 In Dugabangal, the boys and girls sing a *Lâw dâyna pâta*, a song about a boy going as a Lamhada.

Say Lamka Lamka, say son-in-law.
Hard is the work of the Lamka boy.
What is the plough made of?
The plough is made of the kosom tree.
What is the yoke made of?
The yoke is made of the siuna tree.
What is the pole made of?
The pole is made of the tinsa tree.
The bullocks are uncle and nephew;
The field is the field of the frogs;
The rice is black as the eyes of a queen.

In a Chitkul song of the Amoli ghotul, a girl is represented as chiding her father for not getting her married.

I am growing up like the beans in the garden,
Yet no one comes to marry me.
I am seven years mature, my father,
I am nearly old as you.
Yet if a boy comes to be Lamhada,
You show him the axe that weighs twelve *gasa*;
You show him the basket of two hundred bamboos;
And he goes to find another girl.

[1] In Betul Gondi he is called Lamjanal and the girl he is betrothed to is Lamjana-watar.—Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 104.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

X983 An old woman at Masora spoke with great indignation about the way her
583 mother treated the boy who served for her. 'She gave him the heaviest work, and she delayed our marriage as long as she could, for she wanted to get as much work out of him as possible.'

An interesting expression was used at Chandabera. 'A Lamhada is the *koryāri* (daughter-in-law), because he is brought to the house of his wife. Just as the mother-in-law usually abuses her son's wife, so now does the mother-in-law abuse her daughter's husband. He is the daughter-in-law and must do her work.'

X983 An adaptation of a familiar folk-tale motif describes the trials of a Lamhada
583 and his final victory.

539 A father-in-law says to the Lamhada boy, 'Boy, go and sow sarson seed'. The boy goes and in the evening, the father says, 'Boy, go and bring it back, seed for seed, in the same measure'. The Lamhada goes weeping, for he loves the girl, and begins to pick up the seeds one by one. A pair of partridges come by and say, 'Boy, don't weep: we will gather it all for you'. By evening every grain is back in the measure.

Then says the father, 'Boy, bring me five measures of ashes from hemp-waste'. The Lamhada collects a pile of waste and burns it, but the ashes go to nothing. At last he goes to his father-in-law and says, 'Without a knotless bamboo, I can do nothing'. The father searches on every hillside and at last returns. 'Boy, I am defeated'. The Lamhada says, 'But if I bring it, will you give me your daughter at once'? The father promises, and the Lamhada brings back a reed. 'Here is bamboo without a knot: give me your daughter.'

X983 What of the relations between the Lamhada and the girl with whom he is
584 brought into such intimate contact? In the ghotul the same rules are supposed to apply as govern the conduct of other betrothed couples. The girl must strictly avoid her Lamhada; she must not salute him, nor comb his hair, nor massage him. She must not sleep with him, or sit on his mat. In his presence she will sleep regularly with other boys; he too will have his own partners. Yet neither may reproach the other, though they will be working together all day in the same house.

But although betrothed couples usually seem to observe these rules of avoidance fairly strictly, they are sometimes broken by the Lamhada. Several factors contribute to this. The boy and girl are brought into far more constant and intimate contact in kitchen, field and forest than ordinary engaged couples. A girl cannot help feeling that the Lamhada boy is already more or less married to her when she sees his relations with her parents, watches him already observing the special rules of jesting and avoidance with her other relatives; perhaps not a little sympathy is roused in her heart at the sight of the hard life he leads. Above all, if they do come together, and if she should become pregnant, nothing is easier than to perform their marriage—the boy concluding his term of service afterwards. When the Malik of Lohatur who was a Lamhada made his betrothed pregnant, they were not even fined, for the parents said, 'If it hadn't happened today, it would have happened tomorrow'.

Many cases of such 'irregularities' have been recorded. Dhani, the old Muria woman of Masora, had her affections strongly stirred by her mother's treatment of her Lamhada and she used to sleep with him in the ghotul. At Tarbaili, a girl was passionately devoted to her Lamhada; they used to slip out together at night into the forest—for at least they must preserve the conventions.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

343 substantial and carefully tended buildings. Fowls, set in
[23] funnel-shaped bamboo stands, share the house with the human beings.

II

241 The Maria's main source of livelihood is agriculture. The ancient and traditional method is axe-cultivation, whereby the people make clearings in the forest with their axes, allow the felled wood to dry, fire it shortly before the rains and then sow the seed in the ashes. Sometimes this is done in the very place where the trees are cut. Sometimes brush-wood is carried to a regular field and spread upon its surface. The Maria, living as they do in settled and often level country, have also many permanent fields which are embanked and
[312] irrigated by artificial tanks. The Maria are very proud of these tanks, and they are a frequent cause of dispute which sometimes leads to murder. A great part of the Maria's life is necessarily spent in these fields and clearings, and little field-huts and platforms are erected in which whole families camp for weeks at a time watching the crops at night and cooking and doing their work by day. Everybody helps in the work. Beside the family there may be farm-hands, some
[464 of a special kind such as the Lamhada, who serves for his
582] wife instead of paying the bride-price, and the Kabari who is a bond-servant working to repay a loan.[1]

Besides agriculture, the Maria eagerly and successfully exploit the produce of the great forests in which they live.
[222] There is nothing edible that they will not eat, fruits, roots,
262 tubers, leaves—they have a profound knowledge of the possibilities of natural produce. They are equally omnivorous in their attitude to meat. In the villages they keep pigs, goats and fowls, and they are fond of pigeons. They still (though they often deny it to outsiders) eat beef on all important and
224 ceremonial occasions. Rats, squirrels and small birds are caught by the children and roasted and eaten with delight.

[1] The Kabari system, which is similar to what is called Bhagela in Hyderabad, Kamiauti in Bihar, and Gothi in Orissa and Madras, is open to grave abuses—men working a whole life-time to settle a debt which is not settled even by death, but descends to the sons—and is now controlled by the State.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

586 by the fact that Chewa had himself turned the girl out and that between her first and second marriages she had spent two years in her father's house. The matter was thus a difficult one, and was still further complicated by Pandu being a blacksmith who probably did not anticipate fair treatment from the tribal panchayat.

X 674 604 There was a very curious and tragic murder when young sixteen-year old Marvi Hunga killed Hirma, a boy three years younger than himself. These two boys were related as uncle and nephew; Hunga's mother was married to the uncle of Hirma's father. This relationship is a privileged one. Just as a grandson may joke with his grandmother, so an uncle may abuse his nephew and even threaten to sleep with his mother, and neither uncle nor nephew is supposed to take any notice of it.

But on this occasion when Hunga met his young nephew Hirma in a field and asked him where he was going, the younger boy abused his uncle's mother and wife saying that he would keep them both as his wives; this annoyed Hunga and he drew his bow and shot the boy with an arrow. The incident apparently had nothing whatever behind it. The boys were not drunk and were on good terms. Hunga seems to have been suddenly, but quite improperly, excited by the abuse given by his nephew, and in a few moments two lives were ruined.

VIII

LAMHADA

583 Among the Maria, as in many other parts of tribal India, there is an arrangement whereby youths from poor families who cannot afford the price of a bride can serve for her for three, five or seven years. In Bastar such a youth is known as Lamhada, Lamanai, Lamsena or Gharjamai. The relations between the Lamhada and his future parents-in-law is not always a happy one, and it is complicated by the intimate proximity in which he has to live with the girl to whom he is not yet married. Sometimes, however, especially if the Lamhada happens to make the girl pregnant, the marriage is celebrated before the end of his term of service.

X 674 578 583 Only two cases of murder have arisen out of a Lamhada

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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situation. The first reproduced incidents that are constantly happening all over India. Kalmumi Masa was living as a Lamhada in the house of his mother-in-law, a widow named Hungi. He was already married to the girl, Kohale, though he was still fulfilling his contract of service. The two women, as often happens when they deal with a youth of this kind (for the Lamhada as a poor boy and often without relatives is generally despised), were careless in their treatment of him, and did not bother to cook his meals properly. A few days before the tragedy they went out for a funeral ceremony, and Hungi only sent Kohale home very late in the evening to see to her husband's food. When he found that nothing had been prepared, he was very angry and for fear of being beaten the girl ran away and spent the night in a fig tree.

The next day a panchayat was called to consider the relations of Masa and his wife. Masa objected to his affairs being discussed in public, and probably suspected that his mother-in-law had too much influence with the panchayat. He had to be forcibly brought to the meeting which decided that the women were not cooking properly for the boy, and ordered them to behave better in future. But Masa was also reproved. He was slapped by the Gaita (priest) and ordered not to beat his wife who was six months with child. Masa was very angry at this, and removed his things from Hungi's house. He no longer took his meals there, but only went there to sleep. He did not go away immediately to another village, because he wanted to take his wife with him, get his share of the rice crop and make arrangements for removing his cattle.

Hungi, of course, did not want to lose Masa's services. As a widow she was entirely dependent on him for the cultivation of her land. She persuaded her daughter to refuse to go away with him, and did everything she could to stop him removing his rice. On the eve of the tragedy the boy filled three baskets with the grain, and put them ready for removal the following morning. Hungi said that she would on no account let him take the rice, and spent the night sleeping in front of it, on guard with her two children. Early in the morning Masa went to get his property. The old woman tried to prevent him; Masa flew

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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into a rage, struck her heavily and killed her. Kohale tried to intervene, and he so injured her also that she died a fortnight later.

Marvi Risami was the Maria blacksmith of Bastanar. Towards the end of 1934 he brought a youth, Markami Wango, to serve as a Lamhada for his young daughter Paike. The boy worked in the house for about a year and a half, and Risami intended to celebrate the marriage in 1936.

All went well at first. But there was living in the house a youth of about Wango's age, Marvi Kuma, a son of Risami's elder brother, whose parents had died when he was a child and who had been, for all practical purposes, adopted by the Bastanar household. This boy was thus, according to the classificatory system of relationship, Paike's brother and, of course, belonged to the same clan. Any relationship between the two would be regarded by tribal custom as extremely serious, as a form of incest. In spite of this, however, Kuma and Paike were greatly attracted by each other and Paike soon found that she had little time to give to her betrothed Wango. One day at the end of the hot weather, Wango and Paike went with Kuma and another youth, Kosa, to the hill near Lakhapal to get ore for smelting in the smithy. When they arrived there, Kosa went to the village on some business of his own and Wango accompanied him to get a drink of water. It is possible that he deliberately left Kuma and Paike together with the idea of spying on them and catching them *in flagranti*. He returned quietly and claims that he caught them actually in the act of intercourse. He threw a stone at his rival but missed him, and then chased him with a knife. Kuma ran away, and when Kosa rejoined the party, he found Wango quarrelling with Paike and throwing stones at her. Wango declared that he would kill all the people of the Marvi clan, and would either be hanged or run away to the Tea Gardens.

About a month later, the whole family with a number of other relatives and neighbours went to Handa Khodra to fetch grass for the thatching of their houses at the beginning of the rains (it was 2 June 1936), and when they got home late in the afternoon they found Risami with a pot of rice-beer and everyone had a little. Apparently no one was actually intoxicated, but they were at least revived after

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

their long day's work. That night at supper Wango accused Kuma of allowing Paike to flirt with him and of distracting her affections from himself. The boy seems to have been

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Necklace in Muria style, part of a dancing outfit

genuinely upset at his betrothed's lack of interest in him and her frigid attitude. He threatened to shoot her with an arrow. Kuma told his uncle Risami about this, and the old man got angry and declared that it was disgraceful of Wango to accuse a girl betrothed to him of so serious a crime as incest, and hit the boy twice. Wango caught hold of his future father-in-law, but the others separated them. So Wango walked out of the house. Risami followed to bring him back, for he had no desire to lose such a useful person

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

as a Lamhada. But Wango threw a stone at him, hitting him on the back of the head and making it bleed. Risami then went to the village headman and reported the matter, and they arranged with the Kotwar to hold an enquiry the next morning.

While Risami and the others were at the headman's house, Wango returned home to fetch his dancing kit. This was not the usual bison-horn outfit, but a collection of small and big bells, waist-band and necklaces. It looks as though he had decided to leave the house and abandon his duties as Lamhada out of disgust with the family that seemed allied against him. While he was removing the dancing things, Paike came out of the house and stopped him, saying that they belonged to her and had been given her by her parents. Paike's mother, who was eight months pregnant and was lying in the house, also seems to have shouted to the boy abusively to return the things. Wango, already in a towering rage, drew his bow and shot the girl just below the left breast. She lived till the following morning but then died of an acute generalized peritonitis.

In Court Wango declared that on the night of the quarrel he had again caught Kuma having intercourse with Paike, and that this had so enraged him that he had gone to remove his possessions from the house. But when Paike and her mother tried to stop him he shot the girl. This part of the story was doubted, since the other members of the party declared that Kuma had gone with Risami to make a report to the headman. But obviously everybody was concerned to hush up the matter of Paike's intimacy with her cousin-brother, and it is possible that Wango, who appears to have had something of the voyeur's temperament, may have again been hanging about to catch them together and may have again succeeded.

It is interesting that the immediate cause of this murder, like the last, was the attempt by the women of the house to prevent a Lamhada from going away and removing his property. It is not easy to say whether Wango found the loss of his property, or the sight of his betrothed in the arms of another man the more provocative. I think probably it was the struggle over the dancing outfit that really provoked the murder.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 With these cases we may compare the tragic destiny of
583 Dome, a young unmarried Dhurwa girl aged about seventeen. A youth called Joga had been living as her Lamhada for the past five years, and their marriage had been arranged to take place at the next harvest. Dome did not care for Joga, but like any other Maria girl she was prepared to follow her parents' wishes in regard to her marriage and become his wife.

[513] One night the girl found herself alone in her house. Joga was not supposed to sleep indoors, but outside in the courtyard. The girl went to bed and shut the door of her room. Late that night Joga went to her and asked her to have sexual intercourse with him. She refused, saying that, if she did, the gods would be angry with her and her cattle would die, and Joga went away. Fearing that the boy might ravish her, she got her axe and kept it by her side. Presently she fell sleep and again Joga came into the house and caught hold of her. She started up and struck him a violent blow with her axe, making a deep wound from which he died in a few minutes.

The Court held that Dome had acted according to her right of self-defence when she was unprotected in the house at dead of night. It is not known why Dome rejected her [836] future husband, for it is not really a very common habit among girls for whom Lamhada are serving. It is possible that she was in her menstrual period, a thought that is suggested by her saying that the gods would be angry and the cattle die if she had intercourse. On the other hand, it may merely be that she disliked the boy and did not wish to have anything to do with him until she had to after marriage.

Another Lamhada, who is now serving a sentence of life imprisonment in Jagdalpur, is Khuja, a Muria boy from Esalnar. He is a cheerful and rather stupid youth who, when he described his crime to me, laughed heartily at what he considered the amusing bits. Khuja was living with his father-in-law and though the girl was very young had already been married to her. One day a Ghasia beggar woman came to the house and said to him, 'Come along boy'. He asked her what she wanted him for, and she replied, 'For your wife's head'. A fortnight later she came again and complain-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

ed to the father-in-law that Khuja had abused her, repeating the words that he had used. This annoyed Khuja so much that he followed her home, and when they came to the boundary of the village, threw her down and beat her to death. Khuja's anger may have been due to the fact that he was sensitive about being a Lamhada, particularly as he had married a very young wife.

In two cases conflict between a Lamhada and his father-in-law led to suicide. Ghasia went to dance with the other boys and girls of the village when he should have been working at home. Akali Modi had served three years for his wife, to whom he was married four months before his death. As is often the case he was continuing to serve his father-in-law until the payment of the bride-price was completed. On the night before his suicide, two cows broke their tethering cords and damaged the crops. On such occasions it is almost routine to blame the Lamhada, and the father-in-law doubtless bewailed his mistake in giving his daughter to such a fool and made offensive remarks about the boy's mother. Modi, who is said to have been a sensitive, quick-tempered youth waited till the rest of the family went into the fields and then hanged himself from a tree outside the village.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

C. *Omens*

We have seen how the addling of the eggs of the *kasyeq-gaita's* hens may lead to the abandonment of a village site[1]; how the siting of a new Bison-horn village is affected by the finding of roots or stones when the *perma* digs a hole for the first *saja* post, and how even when these omens have allowed the hole to be dug, they have further to be confirmed by the villagers waiting till the next day to see whether two heaps of rice have been disturbed[2]; and how before the ceremonial *weta* hunts of the Bison-horn Marias begin, the *perma* consults the omens with two split pieces of a tooth-stick.[3] The Bison-horn Maria often calls in the *waddai* to examine the omens and fix auspicious days for sowing or other occasions. Omens are particularly important in connexion with betrothals and weddings, but among Bison-horn Marias only; the Hill Marias, except those living in contact with the Bison-horn Marias, seem not to worry over them, and in fact to be ignorant of the whole practice. But the Bison-horn Maria likes everything done on an auspicious day, and then only if no adverse omen is met. Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 78) write:—

> 'In Bastar an omen is taken before the wedding. The village elders meet on an auspicious day as Monday, Thursday or Friday, and after midnight they cook and eat food, and go out into the forest. They look for a small black bird called Usi, from which omens are commonly taken. When anybody sees this bird, if it cries "*Sus, Sus*" on the right hand, it is thought that the marriage will be lucky. If, however, it cries "*Chi, Chi*", or "*Fis, Fis*", the proposed match is held to be of evil omen, and is cancelled. The Koya Gonds of Bastar distil mahua liquor before arranging for a match. If the liquor is good, they think the marriage will be lucky, and take the liquor with them to cement the betrothal; but if it is bad they think the marriage will be unlucky, and the proposal is dropped.'

The *usi* bird is a common source of omens; the Marias of the Kutru zamindari below the Abujhmar hills, who are really Hill Marias influenced greatly by contact with Bison-horn Marias and Teluguized Dorlas, when they select a new *modul wadde* as clan-priest and social arbiter, consult the omens before confirming their selection; they go to the forest, and if they hear an *usi* twittering on their left as they go and on their right as they return, consider that the omens favour their selection, but make a fresh selection if the bird twitters on the other sides. Among Bison-horn Marias the *usi* is not the usual source of marriage omens; if the party on its way to ask for a girl's hand in marriage meets a tiger, panther, sambhur, chital, jackal or snake crossing their path from left to right, it is a good omen; if it crosses the path from right to left, the omen is bad, but merely shows that the expedition has started on a bad day and must

[1] See p. 103. [2] See pp. 122-3. [3] See p. 211.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. Beliefs about Natural Phenomena

To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-wil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garhar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

836 II. His sister married Gecha Harma of Udala Tondawada, and at the wedding he met Harma's sister Gecha Kowe, and danced with her. They liked each other, and met at other weddings and at koqsar dances, and had sexual intercourse two or three times, which Moda said was necessary in order to ascertain that they were both physically capable. Everyone saw that they were in love, and their wedding followed as soon as the necessary betrothal ceremonies could be completed. But if pre-marital intercourse results in pregnancy, there can be no formal marriage, which the Hill Marias call *marmi* and the Bison-horn *pendul*; the girl states the name of the man responsible, and goes to live in his house without any ceremony, the union being described as *ottur* ('taken away'). A child born to a girl without even *ottur* would be considered as belonging to the clan of the man whom the mother names as the father; and this putative father would be expected to take the mother and child to his house, the union being known to the Hill Marias as *ahene-hattu* ('thus-went'). No stigma attaches to such unions, and the children have exactly the same position and rights as the children of a formal marriage.

588 848

●584 Hill Maria parents do not try to interfere in their children's choice of wives and husbands. When a youth and his girl know their minds, each tells his or her parents. Then the youth's parents, with the elders of the village, go, without the youth, with about a rupee's worth of *mahua* spirit (or five bottles) to the girl's parents, taking care to arrive at their house at about four or five o'clock in the afternoon. The father of the youth opens the door of the girl's house, places the liquor bottles inside the threshold and rejoins his party, all of whom sit silent outside the door. The girl's parents then call in some of the elders of their village, and in their presence tell the girl that this liquor has been brought on her account, and ask her if she is willing to go and live with the youth in the village from which the liquor has come. If the girl agrees, the liquor is at once drunk by the parties from the two villages, and the girl's parents entertain the visiting party to supper; if she refuses, the youth's parents take the liquor back to their village. This ceremony is called *talq-da'ina* ('going to ask'). It may take place on any day of the year, Hill Marias recking nothing of auspicious days or omens.

Hill Maria regular betrothal and marriage

[787]

There is a second *talq-da'ina*, generally after an interval of about a year; it sometimes takes place sooner, but it is considered bad form to be too importunate. The youth does not go with his parents even this time; he does not, indeed, meet his betrothed between the first *talq-da'ina* and marriage, as, once a girl's hand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

has been formally demanded, shame prevents her looking at her betrothed. The parents this time do not take the village elders with them, but bring a rupee's worth of *mahua*, as before. The purpose of the visit is to ask the girl's parents if they are now ready to give the girl in marriage, or want to wait another six months or year; if they are poor, they may not have had time to collect enough to meet their share of the cost of the wedding, and this is the only possible justification for further postponement of the wedding. Normally the girl's parents say they are ready, and ask the youth's parents to come for the girl in ten days' time. This visit occurs generally at the end of Phagur or early in Chaita month, because, although marriages may take place at any time of year, they almost always take place in Chaita, when there is no field work and there is plenty of grain in hand from the freshly garnered harvest. Before this visit the amount of the bride-price or *paring*, settled at the previous *talq-da'ina*, should be ready, and the girl's parents signify their readiness to give the girl by asking the youth's parents to bring the bride-price in ten days' time. The amount of the bride-price varies with the means of the youth's family. It consists of a rupee's worth of new cloth for the bride's mother, a gelded pig, one *paili* (four pounds) of salt, one *paili* of ground *ambari* (roselle) flowers, one or two pounds of red chillies, two or three pieces of turmeric, and, according to the means of the bridegroom's family, from one to four *duti* baskets each containing ten *paili* (forty pounds) of husked *kutki*, from eight annas' to three rupees' worth of *mahua* spirit, and from Rs. 5 to Rs. 40 in cash. It is the cash portion of the bride-price that is avoided or reduced by cross-cousin marriage or such arrangements as the marriage of a brother and sister of one family to the sister and brother of another; other items are unaffected; the bride's mother must always get her cloth, and the pig and grain are eaten at the wedding.

On the day appointed for bringing the bride-price the bridegroom stays at home, but his father and mother, taking the bride-price, proceed to the bride's village, accompanied by all their fellow-villagers, and preceded by three or four drummers. The villagers who go with them, men, women, boys and girls, do not expect to be fed entirely at the expense of the bridegroom's parents, and therefore take their own food and drink for the first meal on arrival; it is felt that to be entertained at the expense of the parents would not be helping them, but adding to the financial burden of the wedding.

On arrival, the bridegroom's parents make the bride-price over to the bride's parents, and all the visiting party then cook their food and eat it apart from the bride's parents and co-villagers. After

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to let his daughter go, or to lose the assistance of his future son-in-law; but in that case the marriage is at once celebrated, the *lamana'i* leaving his father-in-law's house where he has stayed for the period of his service for a house built for him in the father-in-law's village, and his parents and their party, after the wedding dance and breakfast, take the girl and leave her there with him instead of in their own village; but thereafter no *lamana'i* ever stays more than two years in his father-in-law's village. Provided that the girl has not become pregnant, there is always a regular *marmi* wedding at the end of the agreed term, the bride's parents meeting the expenses; if she has become pregnant, after the penal feast of pork already mentioned she becomes the *lamana'i's* wife merely by passing into his keeping by *ottur*.

This account of marriage by service is based entirely on investigations among the Hill Marias; but it is equally common among the Bison-horn Marias, and their practice is much the same except that, of course, the regular marriage at the end of the term of service is the ordinary Bison-horn *pendul* wedding, while, owing to the fact that in all villages there are many houses and fields belonging to clans other than the original clan that founded the village, the *lamana'i* often settles permanently in his father-in-law's village, and breaks up new land for himself with the consent of the *peda* or headman.

Bison-horn Maria betrothal ('talpana') and marriage ('pendul')

Among Bison-horn Marias a father wishing to ask another man for his daughter's hand for his son goes to him with a few relatives and takes a *paili* of rice, and a large earthen pot (*handi*) and a small earthen pot (*dudi*) of *mahua* spirit. As already stated in the section on omens, the party will turn back if it meets a bad omen on the way, and postpone the journey for a fortnight. On their arrival at the girl's house her father calls his relatives and the village elders; when all have assembled, the father of the prospective bridegroom formally asks the girl's father for the girl as his son's wife. Sometimes the visiting father comes rather to assert his right to the girl in *gudapal* marriage, and before either his son or the girl has attained puberty, than in the expectation of arranging the wedding in the near future, especially if he has heard rumours of the girl being given to someone else; in such cases the girl's father almost always refuses to give his girl at least till both the boy and the girl are mature, and the boy's father formally declares that he will never renounce his *gudapal* rights. It has already been said that the Bison-horn Marias assert these rights more strongly than the Hill Marias, among whom the *gudapal* tie is rather a convenient and economical arrangement than a binding

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

584 contract; they therefore attach less importance to the consent of the girl, and even if a father or his son agree to the *gudapal* girl marrying some other husband, the latter has to compensate the *gudapal* cousin. If a girl's father raises objections to the proposed match, whether a *gudapal* match or not, bitter quarrels often follow; but generally the boy and girl have learnt their own minds before this first formal demand for the girl (*talpana* in the Bison-horn dialect), or there has been previous informal discussion between the two families. Normally, therefore, the youth and girl both being mature, the girl's father gladly agrees to give his girl, and then the youth's father gives him the *paili* of rice and the large and the small pots of *mahua* liquor. The girl's father takes the small pot into the *narma-lon* room of his house, and pours a small quantity on the ground in front of the Pot of the Departed as a libation, the rest being drunk by him and the members of his family. The liquor in the large pot is divided among the relatives and friends of both families who have come to witness the *talpana*, and all disperse except the youth's father and his companions; the rice which he has brought is cooked and served to them and the girl's family. Her father then invites the youth's father to come again for the formal declaration of the betrothal to all his relatives and friends from near and far. The visitors then return to their village.

Some time later the father of the youth in consultation with his friends, and often with the aid of a medium, fixes a day for this second visit, and sends word to the girl's father in good time for him to invite all his relatives and friends. This time he and his party take with them a small pig, two *paili* of rice, a very large pot of *landa* and a large and a small pot of *mahua* spirit. On arrival at the girl's house they are greeted by her father and the assembled guests, and the former announces the betrothal to the company and asks for their formal approval. This given, the girl's father as before pours a libation to the Departed from the small pot of *mahua*, and he and his household drink the rest of its contents. The large pots of *landa* and *mahua* spirit are consumed by all the assembled guests, *barbatti* beans being fried by the girl's mother and served along with the *landa*; and the rice and pork are cooked and served to all present. All then go.

Yet a third preliminary visit to the girl's father follows, the date being arranged as before by the youth's father, and word being sent to the girl's father. This time the former and his party take and deliver to the latter two large pots of *landa*, two large and one small pots of *mahua* spirit, five *paili* of rice or *kutki*, and a large pig. The youth's father tells the girl's father that he intends to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

celebrate his son's marriage on a certain date, and asks him to deliver the girl to him on the appointed day; in reply he agrees to do so, but calls on the youth's father to settle the bride-price then and there, and to deliver it to him when he comes for the girl. Bison-horn Marias do not use the word *paring* for the bride-price, but either the Chhattisgarhi Hindi word *barna*, the Halbi word *jora*, or, more commonly, the ordinary Hindi term for expenses, *karcha*. They then discuss terms. If it is a *gudapal* union, the girl's father expects only to get as much *landa*, *mahua* spirit, grain and cloth as his family had to pay in the previous generation when he married her mother. A Bison-horn marriage is extremely expensive to the bridegroom's parents because they are expected to keep open house, and guests pour in uninvited from all villages to which the throb of the marriage drums reverberates; and therefore the actual bride-price is kept as low as possible. In fact, in many *parganas* they assert that no cash passes from the bridegroom's parents to the bride's. The practice varies; a single rupee passed in the weddings that I saw, though in certain disputes that came to my notice after a wife had eloped with another man the first husband claimed from the new husband the refund of cash alleged to have formed part of the bride-price. In general, however, cash is not the important element in the Bison-horn that it is in the Hill Maria bride-price. Usually the bride-price consists of from five to ten very large pots of *landa*, one *paili* of husked rice or *kutki* for every pot of *landa*, two large and one small pots of *mahua* spirit, a large gelded pig ready slaughtered, a cock, and about four yards of Mahra cloth for the bride's mother, the cloth being sometimes called in Hindi *ma'i-lugra*. Another consideration is the cost of the dinner that the girl's father has to give to his relatives before the girl is taken away, known as *sutlam-jawa*, and of her going-away presents; in the discussion about the bringing of the bride-price on the wedding-day suggested by the bridegroom's father, the girl's father sometimes alleges that he is too poor to collect the necessary food and presents by the suggested date and that he must therefore have another year before handing over his daughter, unless the bridegroom's father will help him with a loan in cash or in kind. The loan is readily made if the latter is well-to-do. These matters being settled, the bride's father formally promises to hand the girl over on the appointed day, and the promise is ratified by the usual libation from the small pot of *mahua* to the Departed of the girl's family, and the consumption of the *landa* and the *mahua* spirit by all present, the bridegroom's father and his party returning to their village after having been entertained to dinner by the bride's father.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FIVE

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

I. BETROTHAL

584 THE next critical moment in the life of a Muria is the betrothal. This may be done at any age, before puberty or after it, but it is generally arranged later rather than sooner. It is followed, after a number of years, by the marriage, which is still nearly everywhere adult.

I propose to give in this chapter an account of the ceremonies of betrothal and marriage so that our picture of the course of Muria life may be complete, but I will reserve a discussion of the broader aspects of marriage to PART TWO of the book so that they can be considered, where they ought to be considered, in relation to the ghotul.

The betrothal ceremony is called in Gondi *pungār mihchna*, the 'plucking of the flower', *pungār kurhi*, 'looking at the flower' and *talk dāyna*, 'going to beg'. These expressions indicate the chief features of the ceremony: the boy's parents make two or even three visits to the house of the future bride, the 'flower' whom the boy will pick and put in his turban.

On the first occasion, before setting out, the boy's father offers liquor in siari leaf-cups to the Departed, one for the boy, one for the girl and one for the Departed themselves. They wait for a time, and if they find one of the leaves has fallen or curled up, they take it that the omens are unfavourable, and either abandon the project or postpone it. In fact, this is the time when the greatest attention is paid to omens.

584 Muria omens are specially important before an engagement, on the way to the forest for a hunt and before setting out on a journey. These 781 'symbols of the future seen in the present'[1] do not influence events, but declare what is about to happen. If the members of a betrothal party see a bad omen on the way they return home because they know it will be a sheer waste of time to proceed; their visit simply cannot be successful.

781 It is through animals especially that the Departed and clan-ancestors warn or encourage the living about the future. 'The Departed', they said at Palli, 'speak through animals telling us to go or not to go.' On a ceremonial hunt, if one of the party fails in some ritual duty to the dead, an offended ancestor may take the form of an animal and attack him as a warning.

Muria omens can be divided quite simply into good and bad.

GOOD OMENS

An usir bird cries *uing-uing* on the left.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the left, saying 'Go, go, your business will succeed'.

A jackal going from left to right. 'The left side is regarded as a centre of greater vitality than the right. Hence the jackal going from left to right means that the animal is going away from the life centre, and thus that a death symbol is being removed.'[2]

A monkey cries *hoop-hoop*. It might be supposed that it was the reference to Hanuman and the sacred monkeys that made this lucky

[1] W. G. Archer, *The Blue Grove* (London, 1940), p. 159. [2] ibid., p. 161.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

but for the fact that the omen can also be bad. If the members of a betrothal party hear a monkey cough, they return home. 787

A tiger or leopard. A symbol of power.

A mango tree. This is lucky because mango leaves are used to decorate the marriage-booth.

A bear. Another symbol of power. The bear is generally looked on as very potent, and its male member is used as an aphrodisiac. [832]

A blue sambhar.

A woman carrying a full pot—though in some villages it is thought unlucky to see any kind of pot.

When a sparrow says *pitih pitih* it means the carriers of officials on tour are coming; if it says *pichu pichu*, it means they are going somewhere else and all is well.

BAD OMENS

An usir bird crying *kichir-kichir* on the right.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the right, saying '*Kiddarr*, don't go, don't go'.

A crow crying *kaw kaw*, eat, eat! Its tail points towards something dead for the vultures to eat.

A snake across the path. A very natural warning of danger.

A woman carrying an empty pot or going to the river with a bundle of dirty clothes.

Anyone throwing away ashes or rubbish.

A plantain tree, for its leaves are placed on a bier and in a grave.

A peacock.

A mongoose.

A rat.

A lizard. If one crosses your path, you should catch it and burn it to ashes.

In some villages, a cat.

A hare.

Thursday and Saturday are unlucky days, on which important work should not be started.

If the omens are favourable, the father of the bridegroom, with two or three relatives carrying several bottles of the best liquor, set out for the bride's house. When they reach their destination they sit down in the court, and presently the girl's father says, 'Have you come on any business?' They answer, 'We hear that a flower has blossomed in your house; we have come to pluck it'. 'Why do you want to pluck it?' asks the girl's father. 'So that we may stick it in our hair.' 'Have you seen the omens on the way?' asks the girl's father. 'Yes, and they were good to us.'[1] 584

If the parents are willing they now usually ask the girl her opinion. If she refuses, they tell the visitors that the flower is not for plucking, but if she

[1] W. G. Archer has made a careful study of these symbolic dialogues during marriage negotiations (op. cit., pp. 147ff. and *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 147ff.). The flower symbolism does not seem to be used by the Uraon, but Russell and Hiralal notice it for the Kond (op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 467f) and give some charming sentences used by the Turi. 'I hear that a sweet-scented flower has blossomed in your house and I have come to gather it.' To which the bride's father may reply, 'You may take my flower, if you will not throw it away when its sweet scent is gone'. (ibid., Vol. IV, p. 590.) The same symbolism is known to the Kharia and I have recorded its use among the Bison-horn Maria, the Kurak and the Dhurwa in Bastar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

584 agrees, they accept the liquor brought and drink it together. If the parents are unwilling, but the girl desires the match, it is said that they usually have to give in to her.

Here too they offer liquor on leaves to the Departed inside the house and watch the leaves to see whether the omens are favourable or not.

At the next visit, the boy's parents bring four baskets of rice and more liquor. The boy's mother washes the girl's feet with liquor and offers a ring. In some villages they drop liquor in the rice-husking cavity; in others they make an offering of cowries or their equivalent to the Pot of the Departed. As they do so, the boy's father says, 'O Departed, accept this offering. We take this girl into our clan and give you cowries in her stead'. At Esalnar the people said that in the old days the Duga sept used to give five cowries, and now give fifteen pice, and the Sori sept used to give three cowries and now nine pice.[1] These are put into the Pot of the Departed. From this day the girl is regarded as belonging to the clan of her betrothed, and must obey its rules and taboos. In some places it is considered proper that a girl should go, even before marriage, for New Eating ceremonies to her future husband's house.

At Chimri I was told that as the boy's parents go home, the motiari stop them and demand 'ring-cowrie', a small present of rings or cowries to compensate the ghotul for the loss that it will suffer when the girl is married. In other places, this is done during the marriage ceremony.

[301]

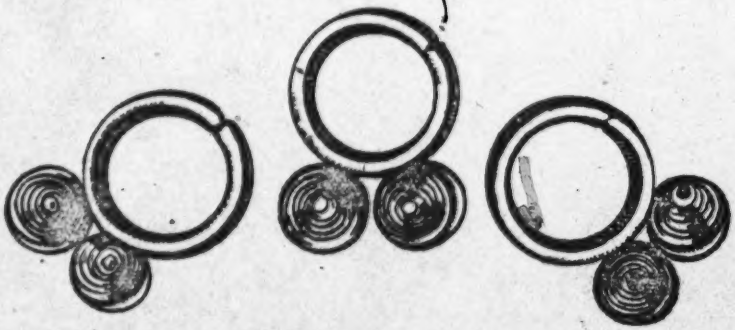

FIG. 17. Brass rings with small bells attached
Actual size

At this second visit, the bride-price is fixed. If the engagement is made many years before marriage the boy's parents generally pay an annual visit to the girl's house, taking her presents of liquor and ornaments.

[801] The bride-price should be in terms of odd numbers, three, five, seven or eleven. Even numbers are *jori ki jori* and so unlucky: you must have something over a pair. The number nine is also unlucky: a man may die of it.

There are many games about this betrothal ceremony and it is often mentioned in the songs; during their slow tedious dance round the marriage-booth the chelik sing a mixed Gondi and Halbi song about it.

[1] The Muria clans do not now appear to worship different numbers of gods, but the above practice suggests that perhaps they once did. Ward says that the Gond marriage contract was generally to the effect 'that the father of the bridegroom elect should give the father of the bride as many rupees as he worships Deos (the latter never exceed nine in number, but vary from that number to five)'.—H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mundlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 136.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Nihun lewāl wātor nuni.	We have come to take you, girl.
Halay dehi jhulay de!	Let us shake her, let us swing her!
Jora jāngh la nichat lamay de.	Extend both your legs.
Chābde re ban ke bendra.	The forest monkey bites.
Kokom de re ghar ke bilai	The household cat scratches.
Mahāra dhare jora bichchu.	In the Mahara's house, there is a pair of scorpions.
Re re loyo rela re re la!	*Re re loyo re re la!*

II. The Evidence of the Songs

The importance of the betrothal ceremony is shown by the place it holds in the long narrative songs sung in the ghotul or at a funeral. These songs are valuable as revealing in the most authentic manner what the Muria themselves regard as important; they are in fact documentaries in verse.

I quote here two of these songs, both of which give an interesting account of the course of Muria life. The first is a song used when a menhir is erected. It was sung by Dorga Muria of Dugabangal, a village at the foot of the Abujhmar Hills. In the second song, a Ghotul Pata from Nayanar, is another vivid description of the betrothal. Both in these songs and similar narrative poems given elsewhere in this book, the importance of the ceremony is clearly emphasized.

The Fate of Nirabosi Usendi

In this island of the world lived Kamragatti of the Dhurwa clan.
He had a daughter.
There was a boy, too, son of Nirabosi of the Usendi clan.
Nirabosi Usendi went to Kamragatti Dhurwa to betroth his son.
He himself went ahead and the brother-clansmen behind.
The Dhurwa asked them, 'Why have you come?'
'You have a daughter, we have come for her.'
'I have a daughter, I have not given her to anyone.'
Thus spoke Kamragatti to Nirabosi of the Usendi clan.
Seeing the bottle of liquor, Kamragatti desired it.
'You are related to me of old, I will give you my daughter.'

The daughter was inside and heard their talk.
She said, 'Many men came for my betrothal, but he did not give me to them.
Today they came and he has given me.'
Thinking thus she was very pleased.
The men drank the liquor and so made an end.
Old man Kamragatti was thinking; he thought, 'I too will give them liquor'.
Amasetiya Kalar and Hiramoti Kalarin had a still.
He went there to fetch liquor.
His daughter came out of the house.
The Usendi asked her, 'Where are you going?'
'I am not going anywhere, I am only coming out of the house.'
'O daughter-in-law, you are so big—why are you not going to someone?
O daughter-in-law, we have come today for your betrothal and you are going out.'
'Men came before for my betrothal, but my father refused to give me.
That is why I am living here and do not go to anyone.'

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

584 'Hear my word, O daughter-in-law, I have a son, come for him.
Come to the Saturday bazaar, I will send my son there.'
539 The Usendi said thus and the daughter-in-law was ready to go to the bazaar.

The old man Kamragatti brought liquor.
'I have already taken your liquor, now take mine',
So saying they sat and drank together.
They finished the liquor and were ready for food.
They made chicken curry and prepared fine rice.
They finished the food and got up to go.
Usendi said, 'O samdhi, now we must go'.
'It is no use coming once, you must come again;
'My daughter is young; we will drink a lot of liquor.'
Doing Johar to his samdhi Usendi said, 'I will come again'.

Usendi went to his house and told his son, the Garhbangal boy,
'We went for your betrothal and everything is well arranged,
O son, go to the Saturday bazaar and there the girl will come to meet you.'
When his father said this, the boy was silent from shyness.
This Garhbangal boy prepared to go to the bazaar.

Kamragatti's daughter was called Nerum Taro.
As she went round the bazaar, she met the boy.
They were of one face, like brother and sister.
She asked him, 'Where are you living?'
And he replied, 'Where are you living?
I am living in such and such a village, and I am a Usendi boy'.
Hearing this, she told him,
'We have already talked with your father and it is of you we talked'.
'Yes, I am that boy; come girl, come home with me.'
When the Garhbangal boy said this, the girl was ready to go.
The boy went ahead and the girl followed him.
As they went they passed a jungle on the way.
They went into the thicket beneath the shade of a mango tree.
As they rested, the boy said, 'Don't go back to your father's house'.
'I won't go, brother, how can I leave you?'
The Garhbangal boy was very pleased.
He held her arm as though it were a sweet root;
Her bosom was a banyan leaf on which lay two fruits;
He held the breasts and she remained quiet.
Her thighs were stalks of a plantain tree.
He spread them out and did as he desired.

They got up from there and went to the house;
The path was a jackal's bush, the road was a rat's tail.
Talking to one another, they reached the house.
As they came along the road, the sun set.
Garhbangal had a separate house to sleep in;
They reached the house in the dark and lit a lamp;
There was a cot there and they sat upon it.
They were young, they slept together.
As they lay and sat, they did as they desired.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

584 ●
539

The mother was looking out to see why her son did not return,
She went to ask the folk in the bazaar;
The bazaar-folk said that he had been talking to a girl.
She came home and told her husband saying, 'He has been talking to a girl'.
'I had already told him, that's why I sent him there,'
The Usendi told his wife and she was content.
There was a separate sleeping-place for the Garhbangal boy;
She went there and saw them talking to one another.
Seeing this, she returned and told her husband.
The wife of Nirabosi Usendi said,
'There are two there and they are talking to each other'.
Then they both went there to look.
As he went, the Usendi called, 'Have you come back, O boy?'
When they knew someone was coming, they sat separately.
'O daughter-in-law, you also have come home.'

They took them both into the house.
The old woman lit a lamp to put the tika;
She put tika on the girl and kissed her.
Nirabosi Usendi, holding his stick, went to call the villagers,
'Come brothers, my son has brought a girl;
Let us discuss her, whether she will remain or no.'
So saying the old man brought them all.
'She has come as a *haiwark* girl;
Let us marry her at once.'
All night the marriage ceremony continued until dawn.
The boys gathered holding their drums,
And the girls with their cymbals in their hands.
At dawn they finished the marriage and performed the Lagir,
And the boys danced the Lagir dance.

The old man Kamragatti heard the noise of the dance.
He said to himself, 'Where is my daughter? I must have a marriage for her like that'.
They finished the marriage and finished the tika also.
All day they ate and drank till evening, and the boys were thinking,
'Let us take the bride and bridegroom and put them in their house',
They took the bride and bridegroom and shut the door;
They took a bottle of liquor and stole a cock;
Boys and girls ate it together.

Old man Kamragatti said, 'Who has carried off my daughter?'
He was grinding his teeth as though his mouth was full of pulse.
When he learnt that Nirabosi Usendi had taken his daughter,
He sent an arrow saying, 'Let Nirabosi Usendi die'.
He sent an arrow of fire and snapped his fingers.

Nirabosi Usendi and his wife died;
Garhbangal, the boy, was weeping *sirk, sirk*.
The whole village gathered there;
The boy went for the samdhi and they all came;
The brother-clans and samdhi-clans gathered.
The samdhi laughing beat the drum;
They buried them both and made a tomb.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

584 All the clansmen went away.
539 The Garhbangal boy told them,
'Come on Wednesday, and on that day we will do the *gatgang* ceremony.
On that day we will put a stone or pole'.
So they did Johar and went away.

The cock-people gave cocks and the goat-people gave goats;
And the clansmen made ready goat and pig.
On that day all the samdhi came.
The dead man's soul was living in a saja leaf,
The samdhi cooked the food to give to the dead man.
After cooking it they carried some of the food to the cross-roads,
They called the soul to eat it;
They offered the *jāwa* and *gāto* in the name of the dead man;
The boys and girls danced with the dhol drums.
They cut a saja tree as a post and placed it in the ground.
The soul came there and that is the house of the dead.

The samdhi went to bring a stone;
They went to the Hill of Panthers for a stone;
Some took a cot and some took poles to carry it.
The samdhi brought the stone;
They brought it to the place where they had put the pillar,
The samdhi saw the place and said, 'This is a good spot'.
So thinking they dug a hole;
They dug two holes with the digging-stick;
There they put the stone of the dead.
From the saja tree the dead man came to the stone;
They put haldi and oil on the stone; they put tika on it.

Those who had cowries gave cowries; those who had money gave money;
Those who had rupees gave rupees; those who had dishes gave dishes;
Those who had pots gave pots; those who had cloth gave cloth.
All these things the samdhi took away.
There they finished the work of the stone of death.
'Go, samdhi, go, let us eat in the house.'
Then came from the dead man's house
All old men and women and chelik and motiari also,
They gave their wages to the chelik of several villages.
The boys went away and they fed the samdhi with beef and rice.
For putting a stone for a dead man, this much only.
The dead man's bazaar is not a small bazaar;
On a Saturday, on that day was the bazaar.
There was a king of the dead, he was a great man;
That Raja made ready to go to the bazaar;
His Rani also was ready to go to the bazaar.

Ghotul Pata: The Marriage of Phulsundar Raja

There were seven wealthy brothers,
They had aged parents.
Six of the brothers went to plough,
The youngest stayed at home doing nothing.
He said to his brothers, 'Go and find wives'.
How shall we go without knowing where to go?'

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

'Take a bottle of liquor and go for the betrothal anywhere.' 584
They reached a girl's house. 539
They gave Johar to the father-in-law,
They gave Johar also to the mother-in-law.
Father-in-law asked, 'Why have you come?'
'There is a flower; for that we have brought liquor.'
'We have a flower, but we have already drunk liquor for another.
Take away your liquor, for we will not drink it.'

For their betrothal they had to go elsewhere.
They saw a girl, they gave Johar to her father.
They gave Johar to her mother.
'Where are you going with that bottle of liquor?'
'We have come for the betrothal of your daughter.'
'I have no daughter; take away your liquor.'

As they searched for girls on their way they reached a house.
They came to a widow's house.
There was a girl there.
'Why have you come with a bottle of liquor?'
'You have a daughter; we have come for her.'
'She is my only child; I will not give her to you.
She is to me both daughter and son.'

Leaving that house, the boys went on their way.
They said, 'How are we to find girls for wives?'
There were daughters of Bhagavan;
There were seven sisters and none were betrothed.
The boys went to Bhagavan and gave him Johar.
Bhagavan asked them, 'Why have you come?'
'You have a daughter; we have come for her betrothal.'
'It is true I have a daughter, but we have already drunk liquor for her.'
So said Bhagavan and the boys made ready to depart.

But as they were going, the youngest daughter said,
'O sisters, hear my word.
A year has passed, but my father has not drunk liquor for me.'
The small girl said to her father,
'We are all mature; why don't you accept the liquor?'
Her father said, 'There is no one who has come for your betrothal; how then can I give you?'
The small girl went to the house where the young men were,
And said, 'Come to my house for my betrothal'.

Father-in-law said, 'There is no mate; why have you come?'
Bhagavan said, 'There is no mate, O daughters'.
The small girl told her sisters, 'There is no mate for us.
What shall we do. There is the Baidar.
Let us ask him about our mates.
Birds and ants combine in pairs, and why not we?
Let us go to the Baidar, for he keeps the accounts of all'.

They then asked the Baidar, 'Are there mates for us or no?'
Bringing his books the Baidar came out.
He brought a book large as a village boundary.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

He read his book about birth and mating,
He sat and looked at his books.
Then said he, 'It is written here.
Reading my books I forgot.
Morning and evening I have read my books
For twelve years and thirteen ages,
All read but none can understand.
Sitting, sitting, I have become hunchbacked'.

At that time the small girl saw the book and laughed.
She tied up that book in her waist-cloth,
She told her sisters, 'Let us go.
Let the papers be; but let us go to the house'.
The small girl took Baidar's papers in her cloth.
Her elder sisters asked her, 'What are you taking in your cloth?
O sister, let us know what it is'.

They gathered round and read the paper.
'It is for our mating and says what should be done.
We cannot win mates unless we go to the Middle World.'
Down to the Middle World they climbed by a silken thread and went towards the east.
They came to a village. 'Where are you, brothers? See, we have come.'
'I am the watcher of my house, I always live at home.'
'O brother, hear my word.'
'What is it? Let me know.'
'Keep us with you, so we will remain.'
'I do not know what to answer; my elder brothers know.
Wait a little till they return home.'

Soon the brothers came and the girls said, 'Brothers, brothers!'
'What is the matter? Let us know.'
'No, it is nothing. Only keep us with you, brothers.'
'All of you may live here if you like.'
The small girl said, 'Let us be divided pair by pair.
The eldest sister for the eldest brother,
The middle sisters for the middle brothers.
And I will live with the youngest brother'.

All then were paired with each other.
They gave a granary-full of rice to be husked;
Soni and Dami husked the rice.
The villagers were called to fetch the liquor.
Twelve outstills of *phuli* and thirteen outstills of *rasi*.
They went to a Chitkul Mitkul Kalarin, beautiful and sweet.
They asked for liquor from that Kalarin,
Twelve outstills of *phuli* and thirteen outstills of *rasi*.
The Chitkul Mitkul Kalarin measured out the liquor.
The liquor was brought and the marriage was performed.
The marriage was finished and they were yoked together.

Living, living, the eldest brother's wife conceived.
Day by day the belly grew; it was made by Bhagavan.
She gave birth to a boy and the Chhati ceremony was performed.
For that ceremony they husked a granary-full of rice.
'Go and bring leaves and fuel for the Chhati ceremony.'

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

587 539

Five went to the hill for leaves and fuel.
The small girl was lazy, she was sleeping on the road.
'O girl, pick the leaves and take them home.'
At that she went away and slept on the rock.
'I am not feeling well, sister, I feel very bad.'
'Why are you feeling ill? What disease have you got?'
'Come here, girl, and lie down and listen:
Whether it be true or false, there is the beating of a drum.'
'No, let us go home, it is for our father's funeral.'
So they went home and told the eldest sister,
'You remain here, we will go for our father's funeral'.
'I too will come with you, O sisters.'
'No, do not come, see how small [1] is your baby.'
'No, I must come, or they'll say, Look the eldest daughter hasn't come.'
She took the baby and went along with them.
'Let us not take the child, let us leave him with the cattle.'
So thinking, they left him with the cattle.

They went on to the funeral.
The baby got up and followed them.
They turned round and said, 'O girl, your baby is coming'.
So they took him with them.
They reached the house and did Johar to everyone.
All wept and they finished the rites of the dead.

The daughter of Gharabundi was Phulsundri Rani.
'O mother, betroth this girl for me.'
'No, son, her betrothal has already been arranged.
They have betrothed her to Oriyal Jhoriyal.'
So he went to his little mother and asked her to arrange his engagement with this girl.
She winked at the boy to come to her.
'Put on some bangles and wear a cloth.'
She has married Raja Phulsundor.
The marriage is done, the liquor is drunk.
They did a Raja-subject marriage [2] hastily.
The Raja caught the Rani's finger and made her sleep inside the house.
He stayed seven days in that village.
The village potter brought his pot to boil the clothes.
In that pot they boiled the clothes and took them to the river.
They threw away the haldi-stained clothes.
But they washed the new clothes and took them out and went.
After bathing they returned to the house.

Both went riding on a horse.
So Phulsundor Raja brought her home.
Reaching home they lived and ate.
Gharabundi went to Oriyal Jhoriyal.
'Phulsundor Raja stole my daughter.'
They searched for them and held a panch.
The panch decided and took the bride-price.

[1] *Yetna*, the word means to hold a little baby with the arm against the breast. The whole line runs in the original—'Mīya wāyma bal bābu to yetna āyore gil gila ātor'.
[2] A Raja-praja marriage is one performed hurriedly, within the limits of a single night and day.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

given by Westermarck and Havelock Ellis and our own statistics. It simply does not work.

Another curious problem is this—why should engaged couples elope together? It is not uncommon—again I have no statistics, but I know of a dozen cases—where chelik and motiari, who were in any case going to be married, have gone to all the trouble and danger of an elopement. Why is this? It is generally due to economic causes. When the parents keep on postponing a marriage on financial grounds, sometimes the boy and girl get tired of waiting and force their parents' hands. This may be done either by the boy making his future wife pregnant, or by simply eloping to some friendly ghotul and persuading the members there to celebrate the marriage. When this is done, nobody really minds very much; for a lot of money is saved, and the married pair are received, when they return, with the usual honours. Such adventures do not seem to ruin the later happiness of the home.

Crawley has explained a similar policy of segregation during the period from engagement to marriage among other peoples as a magical taboo.[1] 'The principle is to prevent all intercourse until the particular ceremonies which obviate the danger of the new relation, mutual contagion between two particular persons, have been performed, and to prepare them for these and for the new state of life—the taboo of avoidance being thought to be in itself some guarantee of future safety.... The young people are about to enter upon a critical state, that of living in more or less close contact with each other, and as that state derives its dangers from their reciprocal influence, a taboo is set between them until it is removed by the ceremony which united them while rendering them mutually innocuous.'

It may be so. But I have a growing conviction that many of our conclusions about the sex life of primitive peoples have been vitiated by the earlier investigators' assumption that aboriginals knew nothing of sexual technique, had no idea of romantic love, and based their actions, even the most intimate, on magical principles and fears. Modern research is rapidly destroying these premises and, certainly for the Muria, I believe that much which convention would ascribe to magic and religion should really be attributed to the tribe's remarkable knowledge of the psychology of sex.

The taboo between betrothed couples is thus seen to be entirely practical. It aims at preserving the mutual stimuli of vision and touch.[2] It is connected with the universal admiration for modesty, the general appeal of reticence. Even if a chelik's wife is not a virgin absolutely, she should at least be a virgin for him. Where this condition is fulfilled marriages are most happy, and the divorce rate is at its lowest.

III. 'A Marriage has been Arranged'

It is only by a breach of all rule and tradition that a chelik's motiari can be his wife. We have seen this happen in 77 cases out of 2000 with a comparatively high percentage of marital failures. In some other cases a chelik is forced by an unlucky pregnancy into a marriage with a girl to whom he was not officially betrothed; in a few other cases romantic passion leads to an elopement. But the great majority of marriages are arranged by the parents, or

[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 25.

[2] Two proverbial sayings illustrate this. '*Durike ke bāja nāi lāgy*, the distant drum is sweet' and '*Durke māya rudkāpan, najdik māya gindpan*, the distant love is charming, the love at hand detestable.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rather—since so many alliances are formed according to the relationship laws —by the voice of society and tradition. The figures are as follows—

Number of—	Number	Percentage
Chelik marrying according to parents' wishes	1884	94·20
Cross-cousin marriages	1799	89·95
Divorces among arranged marriages ..	49	2·60
Irregular marriages	116	5·80
Marriages with ghotul partners ..	77	3·85
Marriages forced by pregnancy ..	26	1·30
Marriages by elopement on romantic grounds	13	0·65
Divorces among irregular marriages ..	10	8·62

The cross-cousin marriage is known as the *gudamol* or *gudapal*, the 'tribe-nest' or 'tribe-milk' marriage, and may be compared with the *dudh-lautâna* or 'bringing back the milk' of the Gond of the Central Provinces. Its popularity, to which the above figures abundantly testify, is not the least of the factors that bind the Muria as a tribe so close together. The *gudamol* is, of course, a marriage between a chelik and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or a motiari and her mother's brother's son or father's sister's son. In its *kutiyâri* form, the cross-cousin marriage is extended to cover persons in the same general classificatory relationship as these but less closely related. What this means in practice is that when a family gives a girl to another family in one generation, it gets a girl back in return in the next generation.

The advantage of this is manifest. The bride-price can be much lower. The clan-ancestors are satisfied—it will be remembered that when a girl leaves a clan at her marriage compensation must be put into the Pot of the Departed. Everything remains homely and familiar—there is the same set of *saga-samdhi*, there are no new relationships to be explored. Old-standing alliances are strengthened. Just as after death, steps are taken to ensure the return of the dead to his own family circle, so at marriage there is satisfaction at keeping the children within a certain range of families.

To the chelik and motiari subjected to this arrangement it appears less that their parents have settled their fate than that society itself has done so. The parents themselves must bow to tribal custom. This is, I think, important in view of the very strong hold of tribal custom and social solidarity upon the Muria, even upon the young Muria. Boys or girls may easily rebel against their parents; obscure complexes may well arouse in them dissatisfaction with anything their parents do; but they have a passionate devotion to the tribe. 'We love our laws', they say, 'and obey them far more readily than we obey the Government—for we made them ourselves.'

We should not therefore think of chelik and motiari as forced by some external influence into unions for which they have no desire; rather we may say that as part of society they follow society's laws.

The mother's brother's son, though he must be avoided, becomes a figure of romance, stronger than the most handsome chelik to whom there is ready access. He is often mentioned in the ghotul songs.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

O mother, the clouds look like smoke,
Each roof seems joined to the one next door.
I must go and see it, mother.
Whom will you go with, daughter?
I will go with my uncle's son, mother.
Don't go with him, daughter;
He will pour haldi over you.
Let him pour haldi if he wills, mother.
I can't rest till I go with him.

In those cases where no *gudamol* union is possible or convenient, the parents consider many things before they go to 'pluck the flower' of a betrothal. It may safely be said that the thought uppermost in their minds is the happiness of their child. A father seeking a daughter-in-law considers whether the women of such and such a family are hard workers, free from the taint of witchcraft, unstained by scandal. He does not seem to worry whether a girl is beautiful or no, though he would naturally prefer her to be 'well made and conformable'. When a betrothal party arrives at a house, a girl's parents discuss much the same things. Will the boy be a good worker? Has there been scandal in the family, signs of indifference to the laws of the clan? Is the boy himself steady, will he go through with the matter? The girl is consulted; if she strongly objects, the father sends the visitors away. Once she has agreed, however, he expects her to abide by her choice. In the song on p. 89 there is a hint that several betrothal parties may visit a house before the parents can make up their minds—a delay not always pleasing to the daughter.

We have, therefore, in Muria society two very different traditions existing side by side. Before marriage, in the ghotul, boys and girls are encouraged to live to the full a life of romantic passion. For marriage, everything must be arranged on the lines of strictest commonsense. A boy can live with the girl he is in love with before marriage, but not in marriage. How does this arrangement work?

I am not here attempting to pass a personal judgement in this matter, I am not considering whether it is a good or a bad arrangement. The interesting thing is what the chelik and motiari think of it.

Generally, the boys and girls believe that what their parents, or rather society and the tribe, arrange makes for ultimate happiness. They may object to a particular choice made by their parents, but they do not object to their making a choice at all. It is easier for them to accept this position because what they think matters about marriage is not so much the partner as the whole condition of life so different from life in the ghotul. 'The ghotul is for happiness', they said at Nayanar. 'Marriage is for work.' They are more concerned about the new home than the new partner. The new way of life is more important than the person who will share it.

It is some such reflection as this that enables boys and girls to bear the very great pain of separation from their lovers at marriage. This is a very real thing, especially in the *jodidār* ghotul. Here a chelik and motiari may have lived six or seven years together, perhaps in great fidelity, and have come to love each other devotedly. Everything in life—except responsibility for children and a home—has been shared. They have gone together to festivals and danced all night in each other's arms. They have been to a score of marriages and shared a world of jokes together. They have slept night after night in the ghotul 'lovely as a bison's horns'. Then suddenly

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

An old woman at Masora spoke with great indignation about the way her mother treated the boy who served for her. 'She gave him the heaviest work, and she delayed our marriage as long as she could, for she wanted to get as much work out of him as possible.'

An interesting expression was used at Chandabera. 'A Lamhada is the *koryōri* (daughter-in-law), because he is brought to the house of his wife. Just as the mother-in-law usually abuses her son's wife, so now does the mother-in-law abuse her daughter's husband. He is the daughter-in-law and must do her work.'

An adaptation of a familiar folk-tale motif describes the trials of a Lamhada and his final victory.

> A father-in-law says to the Lamhada boy, 'Boy, go and sow sarson seed'. The boy goes and in the evening, the father says, 'Boy, go and bring it back, seed for seed, in the same measure'. The Lamhada goes weeping, for he loves the girl, and begins to pick up the seeds one by one. A pair of partridges come by and say, 'Boy, don't weep: we will gather it all for you'. By evening every grain is back in the measure.
>
> Then says the father, 'Boy, bring me five measures of ashes from hemp-waste'. The Lamhada collects a pile of waste and burns it, but the ashes go to nothing. At last he goes to his father-in-law and says, 'Without a knotless bamboo, I can do nothing'. The father searches on every hillside and at last returns. 'Boy, I am defeated'. The Lamhada says, 'But if I bring it, will you give me your daughter at once'? The father promises, and the Lamhada brings back a reed. 'Here is bamboo without a knot: give me your daughter.'

What of the relations between the Lamhada and the girl with whom he is brought into such intimate contact? In the ghotul the same rules are supposed to apply as govern the conduct of other betrothed couples. The girl must strictly avoid her Lamhada; she must not salute him, nor comb his hair, nor massage him. She must not sleep with him, or sit on his mat. In his presence she will sleep regularly with other boys; he too will have his own partners. Yet neither may reproach the other, though they will be working together all day in the same house.

But although betrothed couples usually seem to observe these rules of avoidance fairly strictly, they are sometimes broken by the Lamhada. Several factors contribute to this. The boy and girl are brought into far more constant and intimate contact in kitchen, field and forest than ordinary engaged couples. A girl cannot help feeling that the Lamhada boy is already more or less married to her when she sees his relations with her parents, watches him already observing the special rules of jesting and avoidance with her other relatives; perhaps not a little sympathy is roused in her heart at the sight of the hard life he leads. Above all, if they do come together, and if she should become pregnant, nothing is easier than to perform their marriage—the boy concluding his term of service afterwards. When the Malik of Lohatur who was a Lamhada made his betrothed pregnant, they were not even fined, for the parents said, 'If it hadn't happened today, it would have happened tomorrow'.

Many cases of such 'irregularities' have been recorded. Dhani, the old Muria woman of Masora, had her affections strongly stirred by her mother's treatment of her Lamhada and she used to sleep with him in the ghotul. At Tarbaili, a girl was passionately devoted to her Lamhada; they used to slip out together at night into the forest—for at least they must preserve the conventions.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883
584

A former Kotwar of the Berma ghotul was Lamhada to the Dulosa; he made her pregnant, but as they were engaged, they were quickly married, though not without a fine of one rupee to the ghotul and three to the village. I also heard at Chargaon of a Lamhada who slept in the ghotul with his bride-to-be. In Lihagaon, a motiari went from the girls' ghotul to the boys' ghotul (for here they have separate establishments) and slept with her Lamhada; she was caught and they were punished.

In Palli (Kondagaon), I was told of two Lamhada; one was the Pahardar who was serving for the Dulosa, the other was the Chajen who was serving for the Tiloka. One day, they said with a good deal of amusement, the Tiloka said 'Johar' by mistake to her own Lamhada. Sometimes too she slept with him, but usually these two pairs divided—Pahardar and Tiloka and Chajen and Dulosa—and slept together in one corner. 'There could be no quarrel or jealousy; they are motiari, no one has a *haq* over them.'

A Kinnaring Pata glances at such relations.

> How old is the Kinnaring girl?
> She goes to bed in our house,
> But she gets up with her Lamhada.
> She eats and drinks in our house,
> But she sleeps and rises with her Lamhada.

An interesting comment on these irregularities, and one which suggests that the rules governing the conduct of engaged couples were not made without reason, comes from Rengagondi. A former Munshi of the ghotul served as Lamhada for a girl, and often had intimate relations with her. She too petted him in the house and saw that he got good food and not too much work. But once they were married and went away to live together, she began to repulse him; she generally refused intercourse, and when he forced her, ran home to her parents.

To the Muria mind, however, the most important disorders of this arrangement are financial. Suppose the Lamhada turns out unsuitable: he does not work, he is a fool, he becomes diseased. He will have to be compensated for his wasted years. Suppose the girl elopes with someone else; the Lamhada has his just claims.

As far as I can tell, the Muria—in distinction to the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces—deal very fairly with these boys. If a man's daughter elopes before marriage, they see that her husband pays full compensation, anything up to fifty rupees, to the Lamhada. If the boy has to be turned out he is paid something, not perhaps very much, for such services as he has rendered. There was a significant incident at Pharasgaon.

> 'I served as a Lamhada for seven years', said Baiti, a Muria of about forty. 'Just as we were going to be married, my girl ran away with a chelik she had met during the Diwali dances. My father-in-law was a very good man, and he gave me his youngest daughter instead. She was much younger than I was, but I took her to my own home and we both went to live in the ghotul. Although we were to be married, she used to sleep with other boys and I with other girls. We never quarrelled about it. Now we have been married for years and always have been happy. I never went to her before marriage. Now she looks older than I do, but when we were married people laughed at me for taking such a young girl.'

This incident, which is the converse to what happened at Rengagondi, certainly suggests that it is best to keep the betrothal rules.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

Another form of compensation was recorded at Modenar. Here there were two Lamhada in the ghotul serving for two sisters; the Diwan was betrothed to the Dulosa, the Likhen to the Jaimo. One day the Jaimo was found to be pregnant by the Diwan; they went off together and were married, and the Dulosa was given to the Likhen in compensation.

The institution is not very common; it would be wrong, however, to call it unpopular. Out of our 2,000 cases, 113 were serving-marriages. Of these 93 were cross-cousin marriages, 40 *gudamol* and 53 *kutiyāri*. 13 had divorced their wives or been deserted by them, a rather high proportion of 11·5 per cent as compared with the divorce-rate of the whole tribe which is under 3 per cent. But the other 100 marriages were stated to have been happy enough. The majority of Muria, however, can generally find sufficient money to pay the small bride-price required—and after all, a son in your house is worth something—and the Muria love their children. Hence only 5·5 per cent of marriages are of this type.

V. POLYGYNY

A gentleman, talking to Samuel Johnson about France, told him that in that country as soon as a man of fashion married, he took an opera girl as his mistress, declaring this to be the general custom. 'Pray sir,' said Johnson, 'How many opera girls may there be?' The gentleman answered, 'About four score'. 'Well then, sir,' replied Johnson, 'you see there can be no more than four score men of fashion who can do this.' Even if apocryphal, this rejoinder is relevant to any discussion of the prevalence of polygyny among primitive peoples. For this type of marriage is a simple matter of statistics.

Westermarck laboriously considers the geographical distribution of polygyny and then turns his attention to its prevalence in different grades of economic culture. Quite apart from the astonishing character of some of the witnesses whom he admits to his scientific court—for the aboriginals of central India he depends on Forsyth and Hislop (admirable in many respects, but how could they possibly have known the facts about Gond polygyny?), an article in the *Calcutta Review*, and the childish *Wild Tribes of India* by Rowney[1]—his entire argument is vitiated by one simple fact. In every primitive society, every woman must be married. There are no aboriginal spinsters. Widows may, and generally must, remarry. Widowers may remarry and usually do. There are no aboriginal concubines or prostitutes (outside certain professional tribes). Therefore the prevalence or otherwise of polygyny is conditioned largely by this one fact, the excess of the number of females over males. Thus Westermarck's statement that 'among pastoral peoples I have found none which can be regarded as strictly monogamous, and both among them and the higher agriculturalists polygyny is undoubtedly more frequent than among the hunters and incipient agriculturalists',[2] means nothing more, if it means anything at all, than that among hunters and incipient agriculturalists, there is a higher female mortality and no surplus women—which is what we would expect in view of the hard life lived at this stage of economic development.

In any society where there are more women than men, and where there are neither spinsters nor prostitutes, there must be some form of polygyny. This is so in Europe and in so-called 'higher' society everywhere, only there the plural wives are called mistresses and have no legal or other rights. The Muria is more honest and more just; he turns his mistress into a wife and accepts her children as his own.

[1] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 8.

[2] Ibid, p. 26.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummmation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

I was told by a Kawasi

615 618 informant that a bride coming from a clan with a different totem to a Kawasi household was made to eat her father's totem as a sign of abandoning that totem's race or clan; but I could never verify this. There is a definite ceremony for transferring a re-marrying widow from her first to her second husband's clan; but this has nothing to do with the totem.

There is nothing to prevent a man in the Markami Tortoise phratry taking a wife from the Kawasi Tortoise phratry. In fact, if totems were of real significance, it is hard to see why there should be these two mutually exogamous Tortoise phratries. Nor is there anything to bar them intermarrying with the Hemla Tortoise clan in the Goat phratry; the same applies to the Goat and Buffalo phratries and the Goat and Buffalo clans in other phratries.

Another point that suggests that the phratry has arisen as a convenience for enlarging the matrimonial field is that each village is regarded as the *bhum* (earth or soil) of the individual Bison-horn clan that first settled it, not of the phratry. To give a few examples, Massenar is the *bhum* of the Atrami clan, Lendra and Singwaram of the Barse clan, Mandimarka of the Dodi clan, Durandarbha and Gumadasaka of the Hemla clan, Dugheli and Pharaspal of the Kalmu clan, Birya Gudra, Etipal and Bhusaras of the Kartami clan, Berma and Karrigudem of the Kunjami clan, Kondasaqli, Komarguda, Kodmair, Ursangal, Tetam and Koriras of the Birya Marvi, Chudala Gudra, Tarlaguda and Banjepalli of the Chudala Marvi, Palnar, Phulpan and Singaram of the Vetti. Each clan thus has villages that are far apart; there is no contiguity of all the villages that are the *bhum* of one clan, and therefore no compact clan-area as in the Abujhmar hills. Nor is there any phratry area; five contiguous villages may easily be the *bhum* of five clans each belonging to a different phratry. Even in the villages that are the *bhum* of one clan it is quite possible that the *perma* may be the only member of the clan in the village, and in every village there are settlements of all the clans with which the founder clan has intermarried, each clan that is big enough being allotted a separate quarter in the village for its houses, and clans of which there are only one or two representatives perhaps sharing a quarter with other clans of their phratry. Only a *perma* of the founder clan can mediate between the villagers and the Earth and Village Mother; and if that clan has retained its own clan-god, little heed is paid to the clan-god of the phratry or the parent-clan of the phratry. At the sacrifices to the Departed and the subsequent sacrificial meal at first-fruits ceremonies only the householder's *bhumkal* or fellow-clansmen may be present, not members of other clans in his phratry even. The division of the large Marvi, Markami and Sodi clans into

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

has been formally demanded, shame prevents her looking at her betrothed. The parents this time do not take the village elders with them, but bring a rupee's worth of *mahua*, as before. The purpose of the visit is to ask the girl's parents if they are now ready to give the girl in marriage, or want to wait another six months or year; if they are poor, they may not have had time to collect enough to meet their share of the cost of the wedding, and this is the only possible justification for further postponement of the wedding. Normally the girl's parents say they are ready, and ask the youth's parents to come for the girl in ten days' time. This visit occurs generally at the end of Phagur or early in Chaita month, because, although marriages may take place at any time of year, they almost always take place in Chaita, when there is no field work and there is plenty of grain in hand from the freshly garnered harvest. Before this visit the amount of the bride-price or *paring*, settled at the previous *talq-da'ina*, should be ready, and the girl's parents signify their readiness to give the girl by asking the youth's parents to bring the bride-price in ten days' time. The amount of the bride-price varies with the means of the youth's family. It consists of a rupee's worth of new cloth for the bride's mother, a gelded pig, one *paili* (four pounds) of salt, one *paili* of ground *ambari* (roselle) flowers, one or two pounds of red chillies, two or three pieces of turmeric, and, according to the means of the bridegroom's family, from one to four *duti* baskets each containing ten *paili* (forty pounds) of husked *kutki*, from eight annas' to three rupees' worth of *mahua* spirit, and from Rs. 5 to Rs. 40 in cash. It is the cash portion of the bride-price that is avoided or reduced by cross-cousin marriage or such arrangements as the marriage of a brother and sister of one family to the sister and brother of another; other items are unaffected; the bride's mother must always get her cloth, and the pig and grain are eaten at the wedding.

On the day appointed for bringing the bride-price the bridegroom stays at home, but his father and mother, taking the bride-price, proceed to the bride's village, accompanied by all their fellow-villagers, and preceded by three or four drummers. The villagers who go with them, men, women, boys and girls, do not expect to be fed entirely at the expense of the bridegroom's parents, and therefore take their own food and drink for the first meal on arrival; it is felt that to be entertained at the expense of the parents would not be helping them, but adding to the financial burden of the wedding.

On arrival, the bridegroom's parents make the bride-price over to the bride's parents, and all the visiting party then cook their food and eat it apart from the bride's parents and co-villagers. After

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 this supper both parties assemble in front of the bride's house, the men and youths in dancing-dress, and there is dancing and singing till dawn, all men, women, youths and girls present being free to take part, whether married or single, old or young. Soon after dawn the pig, grain and liquor brought by the bridegroom's parents as part of the bride-price are divided into a portion for the bride's village and a portion for the visiting village, cooked and partaken of by all present; any deficiency is made up by the girl's parents, this being their only expense; they do not even decorate their house or put up booths for the guests.

This wedding breakfast over, the bride is brought out by her parents and made over to the bridegroom's parents. She is not washed or given special clothes, though if funds permit she sometimes gets a new loin-cloth. She is expected to weep profusely in token of reluctance to leave her father's home. The bridegroom's parents take her on foot through the forest to their village, arriving always in the evening. The bridegroom stays in his house; to go out to meet the bride would be immodest. She is escorted to his house, thrust inside, and the marriage is thus completed without further ceremony. There is no present from the bridegroom to the bride, not even a ring as among the Bison-horn Marias. Supper that night is cooked for the couple by the bridegroom's mother.

582 177 Pre-puberty marriage never occurs among the Hill Marias, who look upon it as an utterly abhorrent custom of the Kosor or Hindus. Unfortunately a few Bison-horn Marias are beginning to ape their Hindu neighbours in this as in other matters; but even now probably only three in a hundred Bison-horn marriages are child marriages.

Child marriage

583 It is very common for the bridegroom to serve his future father-in-law for his bride instead of paying the bride-price. If at the second *talq-da'ina* his parents have to admit to the girl's parents that they cannot afford the bride-price, it is arranged for the bridegroom to go as *lamana'i* or suitor-servant to the girl's parents for a term of years that varies from three years to seven or eight, though when the term exceeds three years the girl usually becomes the *lamana'i's* wife for the last two years. For the first part of his service the *lamana'i* is not supposed to have intercourse with the girl, but, provided that the girl agrees (and she is seldom reluctant), he generally does so after a time. It is, however, considered a disgrace to her parents if in consequence she becomes pregnant, and they are fined a pig, which is eaten by all their and the *lamana'i's* clansmen, after which the girl is regarded as the *lamana'i's* wife. Often at the end of the agreed period of service the father-in-law is unwilling

Serving for a wife

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 There is now no obstacle to the wedding. The appointed day may be any auspicious day in the year, chosen in the manner explained in the section on omens; but in practice almost all weddings take place in the early hot weather, as among the Hill Marias. I will first give a general outline of the wedding procedure, and then reproduce, with some revisions, an account of an actual wedding which I saw at Ganjenar and Massenar between Dantewara and Kuakonda in May 1930; the account has already been published in the *Central Provinces Census Report*, 1931.

On the afternoon of the wedding day the bridegroom, his parents and many relatives of both sexes proceed to the girl's father's house with the agreed bride-price. On arrival the bridegroom's father delivers the bride-price to the bride's father, the cloth for her mother being placed on top of one of the large pots of *landa*, and asks him to hand the bride over. In response the [769] bride's father takes up the small pot of *mahua* spirit, and after the usual libation to his Departed in his *narma-lon* room drinks a little spirit and gives the rest to the members of the household. *Landa* is then taken from one of the pots brought as bride-price and from one of those provided by the bride's father, and distributed to all the guests present, both from the bridegroom's and the bride's villages and clans. Meanwhile the bride is bathed at the nearest pool by women relatives, and a bevy of the women of her village and clan keep up a constant chorus of song, to the occasional beating of drums. After the bride's father has entertained all present of both parties to the *suttam-jawa* or relatives' dinner, consisting of grain and the flesh of the pig brought as part of the bride-price, the girl is brought out by her father or brother towards dusk, and handed over to the bridegroom, their hands being joined and rings exchanged. The senior woman relative of the family takes up the cloth brought for the bride's mother, and wraps it round her, while a male member of the family hands the bridegroom's father a hind-leg of the bride-price pig, to be taken to his village to feed the bridegroom and bride and the bridegroom's family. The bridegroom's party then escort the bridegroom and bride with the bride's going-away presents to the bridegroom's village, accompanied by the girl's relatives and fellow-villagers. Special booths are prepared at this village for the bride's relatives. On arrival, the bride and bridegroom are taken into his father's house to the Place of the Departed in his *narma-lon* room and seated there with the father, brothers and mother of the bridegroom; they eat the hind-leg of pork brought from the bride's house after it has been cooked on the Hearth of the Departed. Meanwhile the other guests sit down to pork and rice cooked separately outside the

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

142
391
304

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An old Bison-horn Maria from Gudra, between Katakalian and Kuakonda

[face p. 234

The pouring of water over the bridegroom and bride at the Bison-horn Maria wedding described at p. 238

[facing p.234]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 house, and are given *landa* to drink. At the meal in the Place of the Departed the couple are exhorted by the bridegroom's father to live together in unity and concord, and to be faithful. All night the drums roll and guests pour in to dance and drink *landa* or sing around the bride and bridegroom, the men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses. Ultimately next morning the couple are made to stand on a hurdle under the eaves of the hut constructed for them, and a kinsman of the girl's father climbs on the roof and tips a pot of water over them. The boy then drags the girl into the hut, both pushed by willing hands, and the door is fastened on [353] them and a bamboo-matting curtain hung over it. After a while they emerge, and the bride takes a ceremonial farewell of the girls of her village, and the guests disperse. Finally in the evening she is thrust into the bridal hut by her husband's younger brothers and his friends, her husband being already inside awaiting her.

In the account of the Ganjenar-Massenar wedding which follows, naturally no description can be given of the scenes in the *narma-lon* rooms of the bride's and bridegroom's fathers, to which outsiders are not admitted, or of other parts of the wedding ceremonies which I did not actually see. The bridegroom was the son of Atrami Hunga of Massenar, the younger brother of Atrami Kopa Dhurwa, a very influential headman who was decorated by the late Raja of Bastar for keeping that *pargana* quiet during the 1910 rebellion, and the bride was the daughter of Kunjami Harma, the headman of Ganjenar. When I reached the latter's house, which was about two miles from my camp at Massenar, the bridegroom and his party had arrived, and the relatives' dinner was over. The bride had gone to a tank to be bathed by her elder sister and her brother's wife; the bridegroom and his father were walking about talking to the guests and the bride's male relatives. There were not many persons present, perhaps 150 all told; a few men were beating their dancing drums, but none were wearing their bison-horn head-dresses. Around the door of the separate sleeping hut used [533 by Kunjami Harma's daughters and other womenfolk, some thirty 831 women were standing shoulder to shoulder, swaying to and fro and 195] singing a choral refrain of '*Kokolin-waya*' to obscene verses sung by a laughing woman in the centre of the group. Another band of women hurled abuse at them at intervals, when the leader of each band tried to out-Billingsgate the other.

535 When the bride had been bathed, she emerged from the sleeping 585 hut with a cloth wrapped over her shoulders, and was dragged into a chain of dancing and singing girls with their arms closely linked, while the bridegroom, also with a cloth over his shoulders, was pushed into another chain. These chains of girls circled and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535 585 gyrated in all directions, at one moment appearing inextricably mixed together, only to disentangle miraculously at the next and weave themselves into fresh spirals and circles, singing abuse at each other. All the while the group of standing girls went on [533] swaying and singing round the door; the leader caused great laughter by improvising a song warning all girls to be on their guard that night, for the Diwan, the Tahsildar and the Circle Inspector were watching them, and who knew what might happen after dark?

583 431 585 Before we arrived the bridegroom's party had presented the bride-price, which consisted of one slaughtered pig, a live pig, five very large pots of *landa*, five *paili* of husked rice, four yards of Mahra cloth for the bride's mother, and one rupee. While the chains of girls were dancing around the bride and bridegroom, her mother's sister came out and displayed the bride's going-away presents, a *masni* or grass sleeping-mat, a small basket containing about a *paili* of husked rice, a large pot of *landa*, and a young bull calf newly weaned.

585 Some men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses and beating their long drums now started to dance near the gyrating chains of girls, and there was a further accompaniment to the singing of bamboo flutes. The two chains of girls suddenly opened out, leaving the bridegroom and bride together, and the girl's father and the bridegroom's elder brother were with them, holding their hands. The old father, Kunjami Harma, held up his hand for silence, and started a long speech, asking the bridegroom's elder brother, 'Have you come willingly for this flower? Will you wear it and cherish it? It is fresh and tender, and will not bear rough handling. Know you how witless women are? If she be a poor housekeeper, pardon her. If she cook badly, pardon her. If she speak to other men, do not take it amiss, but pardon her.' There were other similar injunctions, and to all the bridegroom's brother answered yes. Then Kunjami Harma took his daughter, who took the bridegroom's right hand, and placed on his little finger a ring that she had pulled off the little finger of her own right hand; the bridegroom then took a ring off his own left little finger and placed it on hers; cloths were held over their heads while this exchange was in progress. The bridegroom then took off another ring, which the girl's elder sister received in her outstretched cloth, while she said, 'From now onwards you must neither touch me nor utter my name till I am dead. If you do, all will laugh at you, and your brethren will fine you.' I was told that if she dies before him, he will take a ring off her little finger and wear it on the middle finger of his right hand. He also gave a ring to the bride's younger sister, for he is free to touch her and to talk of her by name. Then his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

elder brother touched the old man's feet, and the old man touched his, and then each placed his hands on the other's shoulders, standing face to face, and leaned his head forward first on the other's right, then on his left shoulder; finally each salaamed the other with both hands held in front of his face, palm to palm, and said '*Juhar!*' Each of them then exchanged similar salutations with all their near relatives present and the leading guests, including myself and the other State officials present.

The girls now started singing again, telling the bride that she must leave them and go to her man, that her lot would be hard, and that if she did not like her man she should make up her mind to leave him. Meanwhile the bridegroom slipped off over the fields to his father's house at Massenar to be ready there to receive the party escorting the bride.

The bridal procession then formed up, led by some thirty women, singing and side-stepping along the narrow jungle path in the gathering darkness. After them walked the elders, then a party of drummers, followed by the bride, pretending to struggle against a cluster of laughing girls pushing her to Massenar. All danced as they went, beating their jangling dancing sticks on the ground in time with the drums and the steps of the dance. It took them two and a half hours to cover the two miles to the bridegroom's father's house in Massenar.

There a multitude of other girls and men received them, the men all in the traditional dancing costume, with a thundering roll of drums, while dozens of bombs of gunpowder and rice chaff were exploded. The full moon beat down on a sea of tossing plumes, or shone back from the glistening bison-horns of the head-dresses, till the whole courtyard was full of rampaging and fantastic movement. The bride and bridegroom were seized by fifty girls, and made to sit in their midst in front of the house where they were later to live, all packed as closely as sardines, swaying to and fro on their hips as they sat, and singing obscene marriage songs in full-throated chorus, while all prodded and plucked at every part of the bodies of the bride and bridegroom, whose heads were muffled in cloths.

After watching this for some time I went off to my tent for dinner, but returned towards midnight. The bride and bridegroom were still where I had left them, surrounded by the swaying and singing girls. Some of these had babies sleeping in their laps as they sang, and many, tired out, were sleeping, hemmed in by their companions. The crowds had swollen, and every forest path was thronged with men and women hastening with drums and dancing kit to join the dance. Some came from villages twenty-five or

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

thirty miles away, but showed no sign of fatigue. Around the dance many were lying already drunk, for sixty large pots of *landa* had been provided for the guests. Now and again an excited youth and girl would leave the dance and disappear in the trees. But there must always have been over two thousand men dancing; and those who had been overcome by the *landa* would return to the dance as soon as they had slept off their intoxication.

All night the drumming and dancing went on, though when I returned to the scene at 7.30 a.m. many men were lying asleep or drunk or merely resting, with piled drums and head-dresses. Now many men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear's fur and carrying thick bamboo sticks, dummy guns and nets, rushed in and out among the dancers, making obscene gestures with their sticks at the dancing and watching girls, to the general merriment. Looking for the bride and bridegroom, I found them, their heads still covered with the same cloths, riding on the shoulders of their sisters' husbands in the middle of a ring formed by a long chain of girls with arms outstretched and hands clasped, who headed off all the efforts of the 'steeds' to break out of the ring with their riders.

The fathers of the couple now decided that the time had come for the final ceremonies; the sun was getting hot, and the *landa* supplies low, for the dancers continued at intervals to leave the dance for a drink and a nap before the maddening beat of the drums called them out once again. A bamboo wicker-work hurdle was placed on the ground in front of the door of the hut where the couple was to spend its married life. To this the bride and bridegroom were led, and when they were standing on it they were at last freed from the cloths in which their heads had been enveloped for the last twelve hours. As they stood there hand in hand, the girl's father's brother climbed on to the eaves of the hut[1] with a large pot of cold and dirty water, and suddenly tipped its contents over the bride and bridegroom, whereupon, amid general laughter, the bridegroom seized the bride, and both rushed into the hut, the door of which was closed and curtained upon them. But they were allowed only ten minutes' privacy 'to discuss what they would do that night', as the bridegroom's old father explained; and even then they cannot have heard each other speak for the din of the drumming and dancing, which had not ceased for a moment even when the water was poured from the roof.

After ten minutes the bride emerged, and was surrounded by the girls of her own village, who in unison sang to her advice on a wife's duties and rights, urging her to return to them if her

[1] This is illustrated in Plate XIX. [See ca1.116, pp. 124-25, -Au]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

husband ill-treated her, while she provided a chorus of simulated wailing. They took her off to the booths prepared for her parents and the guests from her village, and sat there with her for the rest of the morning and all the afternoon, taking their food there, while the rest of the guests finished the *landa* and slowly dispersed, beating their drums, along the forest paths. At about 5.30 p.m. the bridegroom entered the bridal hut alone, while his younger brother went to the booth where the bride had spent the afternoon, cried 'Come, sister-in-law, it is time that you were bedded,' caught her by the hand and tried to drag her off. She screamed and feigned resistance, but he called four or five other laughing youths to help him, and between them they pulled the girl to the door of the bridal hut, opened it and pushed her in, barring the door on the outside. Then they stole a cock from the bridegroom's coop, and, accompanied by the girls who had come with the bride from her village, plucked the cock and scattered its feathers along a path leading to a forest glade, where they cooked and ate it, and all dispersed.

The *ottur* and *ahenchattu* forms of marriage among the Hill Marias have already been mentioned; the same forms exist among the Bison-horn Marias. Actually women are very free to change their attachments or, if unattached, to go to the house of the man of their choice and live with him as his wife even if he is already married. It is convenient for the man to have the services of an extra woman in a society in which so much work is done by women; and it is not considered right for a nubile woman to be unattached. Particularly among the Bison-horn Marias, men with two or three wives are common; only one of these will be a regularly married wife, and the others will be either her younger sisters or parallel-cousins or other women who have come into the husband's keeping of their own choice, or after becoming pregnant as a result of a liaison with him. The expression commonly used by the Bison-horn Marias for a woman going in this way to live with a man is the local and Chhattisgarhi Hindi term *paisa-mundi*, and the unions are known as *paithu* or *odiyattur*; there seems to be no difference between these, just as for practical purposes there is little between the *ottur* and *ahenchattu* forms of the Hill Marias. Where an unmarried woman is made pregnant, and becomes the man's wife by living at his house, the man has to give his fellow-clansmen an entertainment (*paithu*) or dinner, and pay the usual bride-price. Husbands have similarly to give a dinner when unmarried girls, wives or widows, of their own choice and without their guardians' consent, go to live with him; but in such

Irregular marriages, widow marriages and divorce; attitude to abnormalities

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

VII

I found it very difficult—and I suspect that Grigson had the same experience—to see Marias in action. Tribes vary greatly in their willingness to allow a visitor to be present at their ceremonial. The Murias used to invite me to marriages or festivals, sending information about them long beforehand. The Saoras are delighted to have visitors at their celebrations and more than once the ghost of a long dead headman has come upon the priest and admonished the people to treat me right. But the Bondos do their utmost to keep the stranger away; during the great summer festival they pile the paths leading to their villages with thorn bushes and not even a fellow Bondo, if he belongs to another village, is admitted. The Marias do not go so far as that, yet I found them singularly unwilling to let me watch them do anything. When I was camping at Borgum I heard that the Wijja Pandum was to be celebrated in two days' time and rather unwisely announced my intention of being present. On the morning of the festival a delegation arrived in camp to say that the proceedings had had to be postponed because the Perma's wife was in her period—though I darkly suspect that the old lady had in fact passed the climacteric. I had to dodge round the country for weeks before I saw a wedding, and to witness the Ghotpal Marhai I had to come sixty miles on an elephant down from the Abujhmar because the dates were changed at the last moment.

But since a page of personal observation is worth a whole chapter of hearsay I will describe the wedding at which I assisted and the great festival at Ghotpal in 1942.

On March 15th, 1942 I was camping in Gogonda at the edge of the hills overlooking the great southern plain. That evening, I was told, two girls were to be taken to Sirsitti, a village some two thousand feet below, to be married. At about five o'clock therefore married and unmarried women collected and began to dance with one of the brides. She had her head and shoulders completely covered with a shawl and wailed loudly all the time. Three pots of rice-beer were distributed to the dancers and a large number of onlookers, and then the dancers took the bride round the village. This was a very pretty sight. The circle of dancers would suddenly elongate into a line and then curl up again in a ring. As they danced from house to house, men and women would come out and put a ring on the bride's finger or a necklace round her neck and embrace her by raising her hands twice to their foreheads and then clasping her in their arms. As they did so, the dancers sang the names of the people who were giving presents and their exact relationship to the bride. At other times they sang how the girl had hitherto been going to and fro freely in the jungle, getting wood, husking grain,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 [533] fetching water, but that now she was to go to a life that was both sweet and bitter. Finally, a group of quite little girls arrived on the scene with bundles of food tied up in cloth on their heads and the bride, still weeping loudly, was carried off by her girl companions across the fields into the sunset. It was a moving sight, this taking away of the bride to her new life, but it was noticeable that no member of the bridegroom's family came to fetch her. She was simply taken away by her own people to his village.

Next morning I started before dawn with my assistant Mr. Sampat Singh on the long descent to Sirsitti. The scenery on the way was magnificent. From the brow of the hill we could see stretching away almost to Orissa the great plain of Konta and Sukma with the peaks of hills rising above the mist just touched by the morning sun. When we reached the village we found the two marriages in progress, though everyone was a little jaded having been up dancing all night. There were little camps outside the village for the two brides and the bridegrooms' families sent food and liquor out to them. During the morning there was some desultory dancing in the middle of the village, and a group of girls sat round each bride who wailed loudly from time to time as the girls sang to her about the sorrows and hardships of the married life to which she was now going. Young men from Gogonda, the brides' village, cooked the food supplied by the bridegrooms and this was ready about three o'clock in the afternoon. The visitors assembled beneath a magnificent mango tree outside the village, and the feast was very carefully served by the young men; an exact number of [264] leaf-cups was prepared and each contained the same number of bits of pork; an equal number contained identical portions of rice. The boys then served the cups, first to the women and then to the men. Others went round pouring gravy on the rice and they all ate together. When the meal was over they went to a stream near by and drank, kneeling down and putting their faces right into [271] the water to suck it up.

Then the girls assembled round the first bride, who was still 585 covered with the shawl which all through that sweltering day she had not once laid aside, and danced with her into the centre of the 535 village. Another party escorted the second bride and soon the scene was very lively with two separate dances whirling round the square. Presently the first party danced up to the future husband's house. They gathered in a very tight block before the door and began to sing loudly and rapidly, jerking their bodies to and fro from the hips, a song which meant, 'Come and get her if you can, brother; come and catch her if you can'. For some 585 time the bridegroom stood in a rather embarrassed fashion in the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

doorway while his parents encouraged him and the old women shouted ribald jokes. At last he plucked up courage and made a dash for the girl. Her companions resisted him but at last, of course, he broke through them, seized the girl and dragged her weeping loudly into the house. The girls rushed after them and pushed and hustled them into an inner room and shut the door on them, the theory being that they would consummate the marriage there and then. The old women stood round the hut trying to look inside and discussing the bridegroom's potency. The cock which is often stolen by the bride's party from the bridegroom's house was here given as a present with a little cloth to the bride's younger sister.

This was the end of one marriage. The other was a surprise. The girls came dancing with the shrouded bride up to the house, the bridegroom put on a new shirt for the occasion, his mother brought water to wash the feet of her new daughter-in-law. Everything was ready, but after the girls had danced round once or twice in front of the house, they made as if to go right round it in honour of the Departed. Everybody waited for them to complete the circuit and return, but their voices grew fainter and fainter, and I went out to see them dancing away into the forest. It was then explained to the unfortunate bridegroom that certain ceremonies had to be performed in Gogonda to protect the bride against magical dangers with which she was threatened and that she would be returned to him in three days' time.

It was then six o'clock and we returned to camp.

VIII

On February 2nd, 1942 there was celebrated at Ghotpal near Barsur the great Marhai and Pen-Karsita of the Lekhami clan. Directly I arrived and made my camp under some trees I was greeted by a little deputation of local priests who told me very politely but quite firmly that though they were delighted to have me there I would not be permitted to take any photographs or write anything down. Later I went with Mr. Sampat Singh to the shrine of the Ghotpal clan-god, the Anga, Usendi Pen, with whom are his sons Hunga and Wella and his daughter Wange. I was at once surrounded by people telling me that I must not go inside. An elderly magician approached me and in a stern voice told me to take my hat off, for I was looking at a god. Such instructions are unusual in aboriginal India.

Nothing happened that day, but people began to assemble and many merchants arrived and set up their booths in a line along the edge of the great open dancing-ground in front of the shrine.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do. 252

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing. [464]

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it. [463]

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath. [585]

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground. 251

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'. 415

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bīri*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Maoora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals. 796

Irpu Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Kurum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Korta or *Puna Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Ceremonial greeti of the bridegroom his relations

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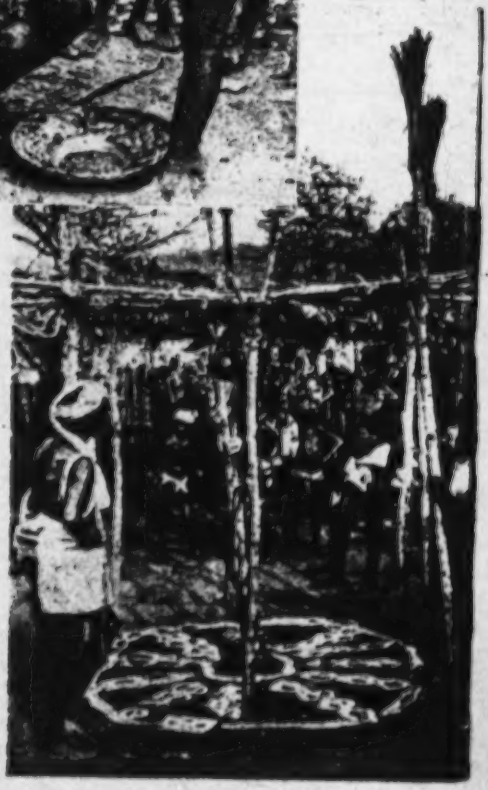

Plate XXII

Marriage booth

[P. 82 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Bride at Amasara with braided hair

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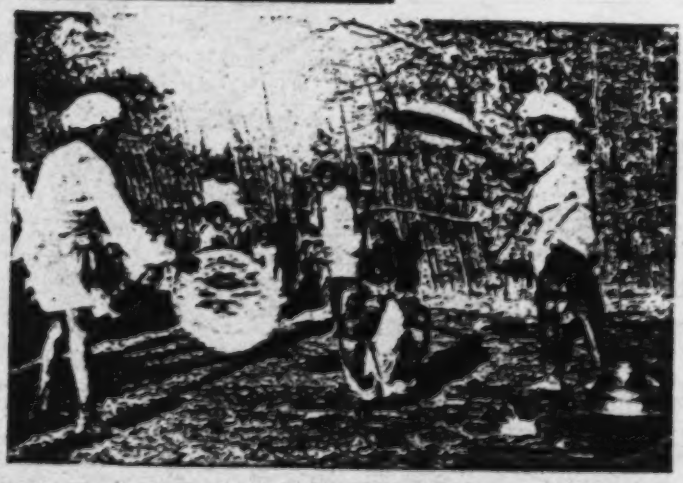
The bride's bath

Plate XXIV

Chelik fan the bride dry after her bath



[p. 94 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. Six Kinds of Marriage

583 As in other parts of aboriginal India, the Muria recognize several different types of marriage, which for convenience I will give in tabular form.

●585 (i) *Ostasāna marmi* (Halbi, *sopni bihao*). This is the traditional Gond marriage; the parents, after anointing the girl with haldi, send her to the bridegroom's house where the Lagir is performed.

(ii) *Talh dayna* (Halbi, *chal bihao*). This is the Hinduized modification of the Gond marriage and is performed partly in the bride's and partly in the bridegroom's house. The Lagir is held outside the bride's house. It is known as Chat-marmi in Betul and is only performed when the contracting parties have quarrelled.[1]

(iii) *Arwitāna* (Halbi, *udaliya*[2]). This is the marriage of a chelik and motiari who elope to a friend's house and have the rites there without the approval of their parents. The full ceremonies may be performed, but the bridegroom has to pay for them himself.

(iv) *Haiwark wāt* (Halbi, *paisa mundi* or *paitu*). Here a girl runs away from her parents' house and forces marriage on a boy of her choice. She arrives, sits down and refuses to go away.

[587] (v) *Tika tasāna* (Halbi, *haldi-pāni bihao*). This is the simple and inexpensive ritual performed either for a widow or widower who remarries, for the marriage of divorced persons or for an adulterous marriage.

(vi) *Yer dosāna marmi* (Halbi, *bhul bihao*). This is the hurried marriage when a motiari is found to be pregnant. If the boy to whom she is engaged is willing to marry her in spite of this and is willing to accept the child as his own, it is called a *bhul bihao*. If the marriage is with the boy who caused the pregnancy it is simply a *yer dosāna* or 'pouring-water marriage'.[3]

585 I will describe in very considerable detail the first two types of marriage. The others may be disposed of more expeditiously.

The *Arwitāna* marriage is often performed with the full rites, though naturally somewhat modified by the absence of the parents, and the fact that the bride and bridegroom are attended by chelik and motiari of another ghotul.

The *Haiwark wāt* marriage is celebrated when a girl leaves her home and forces herself upon her lover. When the boy asks her what she wants, she says she has come for *paisa mundi*. If the boy is willing, and sometimes even if he is not very enthusiastic about it, the marriage is performed as soon as possible. That very evening the chelik and motiari assemble and build a simple booth with only five pillars. Bride and bridegroom sit in this and the Gaita places rapidly-made crowns on their heads, and puts haldi and oil on their bodies. The village people do tika and the chelik and motiari take bride and bridegroom seven times round the booth and someone pours water and haldi over them.

587 The *Tika tasāna* marriage is simple and inexpensive. It often has to be, for in the case of adultery, elopement or a marriage after divorce, the new

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 80.
[2] Russell says this means 'Love in the fields'—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 468.
[3] To these forms of marriage many parallels may be found in other Indian tribes as well as in traditional Hinduism.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

bridegroom has to pay up the expenses of the original marriage and sometimes compensation to the original husband as well as a fine to the panchayat. 587
The ceremony is performed inside the house, bride and bridegroom sitting together. The bridegroom puts a cloth on a wooden seat, pours liquor on it and hands it to his bride. She rolls up mango leaves into little *kinwa* and puts them in her ears. There is no dancing, no anointing with haldi, no going round the booth. Visitors place a tika mark of dry rice without the usual oil or haldi.

The Gaita sprinkles the new cloth of the bride with liquor and gives a little sermon: 'O Mahapurub, this man's house has been broken; this woman's house is broken. These two have we elders yoked. O Mahapurub, give them all they need to eat and drink. Let them have sons and daughters. For all their visitors let there be enough.'

Then the newly married pair touch the feet of the village elders who bless them saying, 'Go brother and sister, live well and eat well; may you have children; when we come to visit you, give us a little water. May Mahapurub care for you.'

When a widow is remarried there is the same ceremony, and almost the same words are used except that instead of the reference to the broken houses, the elders speak of the loss of the husband. Should a widow be marrying an unmarried boy—as might easily happen if the girl had been married young—the boy is anointed with haldi and oil, but she is not.

The *dewar* or husband's younger brother has first claim upon a widow and if she marries anybody else, her husband has to compensate him. In some places, there is a formality by which a woman can avoid the reproach of widowhood without actually getting married. In Banjora, for example, she need not put on bangles; if she puts *kinwa* of mango leaves in her ears in the name of her *dewar* or her grandson, she is no longer a widow'. At Bopna, when Gagra's father died, his widow put what are called *hât kinwa* in her ears. As they described the incident to us, 'she said to herself, "Since there is an Anga in our house no one will eat from my hands now I am a widow. I will put *kinwa* in my ears and bangles on my wrists in the name of my *dewar*; if I don't, my relations will fine me and even men of my own house won't eat with me." So thinking, she went to a bazaar, and on her way home she picked a couple of mango leaves, rolled them up and put them in her ears in the name of the bazaar. After that she was no longer regarded as a widow.'

Sometimes old women put these *kinwa* in their ears in the name of their grandsons. 'If there is no husband for you, marry your grandson.' In Gudla, Lakmu's father's brother's mother put *kinwa* for Lakmu. It is generally said that a grandmother can put these ornaments in the name of her own son's own son, that is, her real, and not merely her classificatory, grandson.

Finally, we have the sad and furtive ceremony that is performed when a notiari has the misfortune to conceive. A booth with only five pillars is 585
erected, relations apply haldi to both bride and bridegroom, but the leaf-crown is put only on the bridegroom's head. He has to go alone round the booth for the Lagir ceremony accompanied by a man carrying the marriage palsa-pot, which represents his wife. They then sit together and tika is made with rice mixed with haldi and oil. A pregnant girl may never go round the booth for the Lagir ceremony.

Irregular marriages, obviously, can be celebrated at any time of the year; but regular marriages are performed only in the hot weather (March to May).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

IV. The Marriage Ceremonies

585 I will now describe in detail the actual procedure of a Muria marriage. This rather tedious task is, I fear, inevitable, for during a wedding the chelik and motiari are on the stage nearly all the time and are rarely seen to better advantage. But to give a coherent account of these marriages is not easy, for—as among the Gond of the Central Provinces—customs vary from village to village and from year to year. Aboriginal marriage procedure seems specially sensitive to outside influence. As we have seen, in northern Bastar the Muria are subject to the influence first of the Abujhmar Maria, then of the Gond of Chanda, Chhattisgarh and Orissa and finally of Hindu traders and officials. In the Chota Dongar, Mardapal and Chalka Pargana I found marriage customs vague and uncertain; I got the impression of people playing a part that was new to them, performing ceremonies that were not theirs by long tradition. This is probably because these people are really Maria who have come to settle in the plains—and the Maria have practically no marriage ceremonial at all. The payment of a bride-price, feasting and dancing in the bride's house, the taking home of the bride and closeting her with her husband: such is the simple formula of a marriage in the Abujhmar Hills.

As we move north and east, however, we find more and more complexity and precision in the marriage ceremony. In the Jhorian, Amabera and other northern parganas of Narayanpur, the influence of the Chhattisgarh Gond is clearly seen; marriages are usually held in the house of the bridegroom, the marriage-booth is built inside the compound, and many of the customs remind me of what I have seen in Mandla and elsewhere.

In the north and east of the Kondagaon Tahsil, Hindu elements are prominent—the use of haldi, the marriage-booth, the sevenfold circumambulation, and many minor details. The most notable difference in custom is that the main ceremony is held in the bride's house. This is the Hindu custom, but it is also that of many Uraon, the Baiga and (most significantly) the Hill Maria. There is some reason to suppose that the Gond practice is not really primitive but, like so many other customs, grew out of some actual incident that was interpreted as revealing the will of the gods.[1]

But even where the ceremony is modified, there is an attempt at a compromise with normal Gond custom. The groom's booth is made *outside* the bride's house, and he has a separate camp. Bride and groom are anointed with haldi in their own separate houses. The climax of the ceremony is at the groom's booth, and the concluding rites in his house.

But where the marriage is held in the groom's house, the booth is made *inside*, and both bride and groom are anointed together.

I must therefore inflict on the reader two accounts: the first is of the marriage of Dhuti and Nohori which I attended at Sidhawand in the north-east of the State from 3 March 1941, where the ceremony was held at the bride's house, supplementing it with observations of two marriages which I saw at Malakot in April of the same year. The latter was a double cross-cousin

[1] Russell and Hiralal suggest that 'the custom of holding the wedding in the bridegroom's house is a survival of the custom of marriage by capture, when the bride was carried off from her own house to the bridegroom's, and any ceremony which was requisite was necessarily held at the house of the latter. But the Gonds say that since Dulha Deo, the bridegroom god and one of the commonest village deities, was carried off by a tiger on his way to his wedding, it was decided that in future the bride must go to the bridegroom to be married in order to obviate the recurrence of such a calamity'.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73. Crooke refers to a version of the legend wherein the bridegroom was killed by lightning.—W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (Westminster, 1896), Vol. I, p. 119.

7B

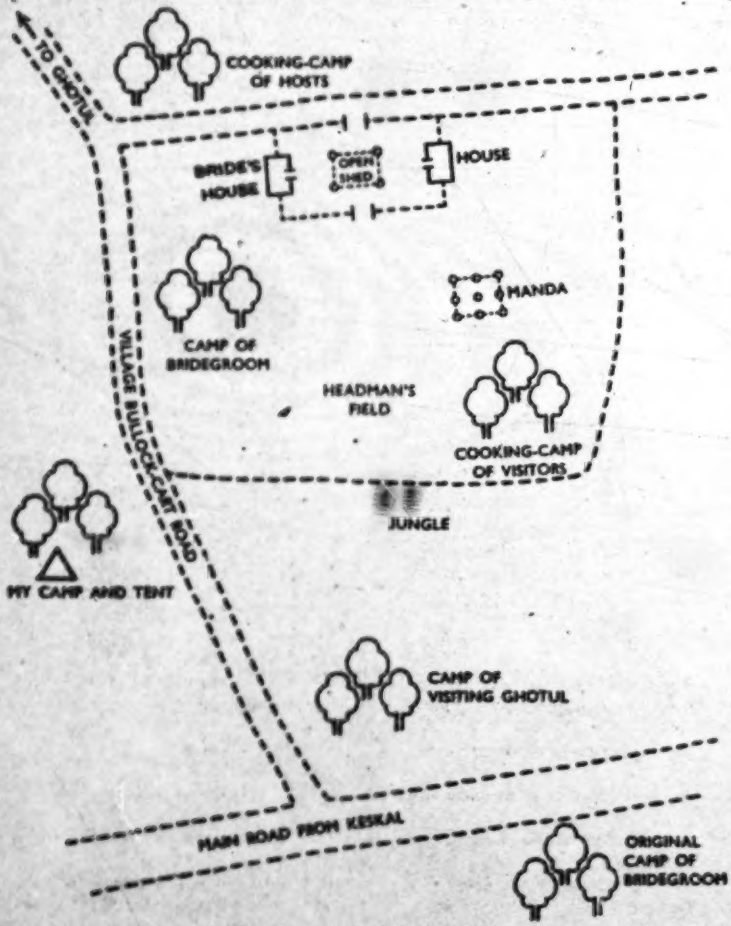
THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585

marriage; a Naitami girl and boy of Malakot married a Poyami boy and girl of Parsipadar by exchange. The second account describes the marriage of Karanga of Nayanar and Waddai of Amasara which began on 15 April 1941, and was held in the bridegroom's house. There were three marriages in succession at this time, and I also have notes of similar ceremonies in Telenga, Atargaon, Naria and Esalnar. In both accounts I emphasize, though I do not exaggerate, the part played by the chelik and motiari.

THE SIDHAWAND MARRIAGE

In Sidhawand lives my *sakhi*, Pilsai; and his uncle the headman of the village (a Maravi) sent me a very warm invitation to be present at the marriage



Plan of the Sidhawand Marriage

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 of his daughter to a Poyami boy from Eitkonar. On 3 March 1941, therefore, I made my camp in the village, and was greeted with great affection.

Preparations for the Marriage

585 533 For a whole week before the marriage, there had been energetic preparations both in the ghotul and the home. In the ghotul the chelik and motiari gathered round the bride and sang songs about her future joys and sorrows. So important is this training of the bride that even where the girls do not normally sleep in the ghotul, the rule is relaxed for these few days.

The songs describe the joys of ghotul life and the girl's stern and sorrowful experiences under a stepmother's rule. Here is a fairly lengthy song on this familiar theme. After each line the refrain *Rerela rerela rela rerela* is repeated several times. Each line ends with the exclamation *Roy helo, O sister!* and is itself repeated twice.

Song

Rerela rerela rela rerela

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Niya ra mandāna loni roy helo,	This used to be your home,
Loni gājur hindu roy helo,	How clamorous your talk here,
Loni re hinja podār roy helo.	But now the house is silent.
Niya re nāru gali roy helo,	Yours was the village path,
Koliyāl tokār harri helo,	The path was like a fox's tail,
Bera re arrān gāti roy helo,	You used to go at sunset,
Dāwāng kaide heti roy helo,	In your left hand a winnowing-fan,
Tināng kaide kesur roy helo,	In your right hand a broom,
Ghotu de heya hardi roy helo,	You went to clean the ghotul,
Jaliyāl mal lekka roy helo.	Like a peacock strutting.
Amka na miyār indur roy helo.	We said, 'There goes so-and-so's daughter'.
Ghotu de gājur hindu roy helo,	In the ghotul was a lot of noise,
Kīle re koru racha roy helo,	The court was long and broad,
Niya ra jor tor layor roy helo,	You had a boy lover,
Jodire ondoy kīti roy helo,	But you are leaving him lonely,
Sangi re jor tor layor roy helo,	You had a boy lover,
Sangi re tasi dāki roy helo,	You are going away leaving him behind,
Dinda re rāj le mandi roy helo,	You were living in the kingdom of the unmarried,
Adere rājo puto roy helo,	You will never enter it again,
Buto re kabār punwin roy helo,	You don't know what toil there is ahead,
Sagāre sidun punwin roy helo,	You don't know what relatives can be like,
Halon ne wāton ne punwin roy helo,	You don't know what visitors will come,
Kosure koytune punwin roy helo,	You don't know what officials will come,
Ideke sudi wāyar roy helo,	But soon you will know it all,
Ideke bara pundaki roy helo.	Soon you will discover what married life is like.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Rerela rerela rela rerela

They remind the motiari of her former lovers:

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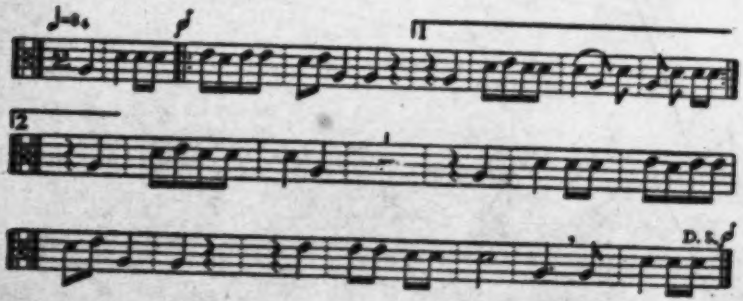
Niya jorta layor helo adere,	He was your yoke-fellow,
Kotal jori layor helo adere,	He was your lover,
Ore layor hunjdi helo adere,	You used to sleep with him,
Narka dhuinga talkindi helo adere,	At night he craved tobacco,[1]
Dhuinga hila indur helo adere.	You said you had none.
Adere dhuinga ãyo helo adere.	But that was not his real desire.
Hewon injor witindi helo adere.	You denied him and tried to run away.
Layon tasi dãki helo adere.	But now forever you are leaving him.

They also remind the bridegroom (if he is in the same ghotul) of what he too is going to lose.

How good it would have been had the Raja stayed, O Rani!
He would have been lord of this kingdom;
We would have served him as his servants;
We would have brought our ploughs for his field;
We would have carried his loads without charge.
We would have been given rice as our wages.
We would have carried home his bundles of rice.
We would have brought them from the fields, lifting up our loads.
We would have taken them to the Raja, and he would have paid us our wages, O Rani!

This song is specially appropriate to one of the leaders of the ghotul: other songs have a more general application.



[533]

Dindorãjo jorãjo nona.	The kingdom of the free, lad.
Ida rãjo puto nona.	You'll never see it more, lad.
Niya wãyna ghotul nona.	You came to the ghotul, lad.
Parmãkoro ghotul nona.	Fair as bison-horns, lad.
Ida ghotul de wandir nona.	You used to come here always, lad.
Dãwa haide gibi nona.	A sleeping-mat in the left hand, lad.
Tina haide burga nona.	In the right hand a stick, lad.

[1] To ask for tobacco is the conventional way of inviting a girl to sexual congress.

[833]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 539 During the day, material preparations keep the family busy and excited. Rice must be husked and cleaned, pulses prepared; the men must arrange for liquor, the women for oil and haldi. As they grind the haldi the women sing:

Māyo balum jamudi.	O Jamidarin mother, we call on you.
Kākor ghare niy utra,.	Don't go elsewhere, O mother,
Maniya daniya ghare je.	But come to Maniya Daniya's house.
Tuke newta pārila,	We invite you here,
Dandik bale yiha se,	Come for a little while,
Haldi pura dihāse.	Let there be full measure of haldi and flour.
Asa māyo asa je.	Do not betray our faith in you.
Māyo balum bangāvām.	O mother Bangaram!
Tuke newta pārila.	We invite you also.
Kākor ghare newta je?	Whose is this invitation?
Maniya daniya ghare je.	It is to Maniya Daniya's house.
Haldi pura dihāse.	May there be full measure of haldi and flour.

And so on, endlessly, through a score of deities. Maniya Daniya simply means 'so-and-so' and is altered to the actual name of the householder in each case.

The Bridegroom's Farewell Dance

585 Shortly after my arrival, a roll of drums heralded the approach of the bridegroom, attended by a party of chelik and motiari, who made a temporary camp under a mango tree outside the boundary of the village. This night they cooked for themselves, but three of them came on deputation to the headman to ask for assistants to help with water and cooking. Later, the bridegroom's party began to dance, led by the boy himself; it was his farewell and final dance as an unmarried man.

The Preparation of the Bride

At about nine in the evening, the elders of the village assembled outside the headman's house for a preliminary drink, and two hours later the chelik and motiari gathered in the same place. The elders had now gone away, and the boys made a big fire, and brought out the bride. The girl, who had been Belosa, was covered with a cloth and made to sit in the lap of the Tiloka, her own sister, and was supported on either side by the Sirdar and Kandki. [152] She began to weep loudly and mournfully: she was in good voice, for she had been practising in the ghotul every day for the past week. Today she must continue to cry all night. The boys and girls sang to drown the painful noise, to instruct her in her new duties and themselves to mourn the loss of their Belosa. All night they continued weeping, singing, sometimes dancing, though unlike the bridegroom the bride had no heart for this. From time to time they took a little liquor. It was a moving sight, for the girl's sorrow was genuine, as well it might be—she was leaving a world of freedom and romance for the unfamiliarity of a strange house. The ghotul children also felt the departure of one of their number very deeply; they had lived with her for years; as Belosa she had been the lover of the boys and controlled the destiny of the girls.

585 533 The sequence of the songs was fascinating; with Pilsai's help I was able to get a lot of it down. It was sung in a mixture of Gondi, Halbi and Chhattisgarhi.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
301
291

Motiari attending the bridegroom at Nayanar

[p.102 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXVI

585
242

Motiari carrying the crowned bride groom at Sidhawand

585

Bridegroom sitting in the lap of an attendant

[p. 102 (B)]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

The Bride's Song

585
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539 The bride wept:

Father, my own father, come to me,
For I am going away to a stranger's house.
Had I been a boy you would have brought a daughter
To your own house.
But as I am a girl you send me away.
Had I been a boy, my wife and I would have stayed with you and made you happy.
But I must go away, and we both are sad.

Mother, my own mother, come to me.
Yesterday I was husking rice in your house;
I was sweeping the floor, fetching water from the well,
Cooking food for you, plucking leaves for cups and plates.
But now I go away to a stranger's house, and who will care for you?
How lovingly you looked after me!
But in this new house shall I find joy or sorrow?
When you come to see me shall I be able to give you so much as a cup of gruel?
From today my games, my fun, my seeing you will end.

Now the bride addressed the head of the ghotul.

O Sirdar, when you came to the ghotul and found it dirty
With ashes and dust and no one had swept it,
You called for me and asked me whose fault it was.
The Kotwar and Kandki defended me,
But you said, We are not Maria that we should sleep in dirt,
And so you fined us.
Now I am going away and whom will you have to fine?
Daily I cleaned the ghotul,
But now who will clean it?
With you I used to play and dance,
But now my feet are bound, and I shall not meet you even in my dreams.
Who knows whether I shall find joy or sorrow in this stranger's house.
Sometimes I combed your hair and laughing rubbed your arms,
But sometimes I was tired and slept.
Then you all said, Why don't you comb our hair,
And massage our limbs today?
You must have been to someone, why don't you come to us today?
For this you punished us, turning us out, and saying,
Never come more to the ghotul.
But I brought you liquor and with folded hands
Begged you to let us in again.
Now even in my dreams I may not massage you,
And who will there be to comfort you?

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Then she addressed every girl in turn, repeating the same formula to their different ghotul titles.

O Dulosa, Tiloka, Alosa, Jhankai!
I used to bid you sweep and clean, go here and there,
Comb this boy's hair, rub that boy's limbs.
Sometimes you forgot your duty and I abused you.
I went with you for the Diwali and the Hulki dance.
With you I played all kinds of games.
Now who will go to dance or play with you?
Who will teach you our ghotul ways?
While I was with you I taught you everything,
But now I go to a strange house,
And I cannot teach you even in my dreams.

Then the chelik replied,

Only yesterday you came to our ghotul to press our hands and arms,
But now who will comfort us?
Only yesterday you made us happy with your talk and laughter,
But now who will comfort us?
We used to trouble you in every way,
Yet you always gave us comfort.
If you didn't come to the ghotul for two days, we used to ask in the village where you were.
Sometimes they said you had gone away or had fallen ill.
Then when you came at last and we asked you what you had been doing,
You replied 'I went to such and such a village' or 'I was ill and so I couldn't come'.
But when we knew that you had not gone anywhere,
When we heard that you were not ill, but had been to sleep in some rascal's house,
When we knew that you had deserted us for that worthless fellow,
We had to punish you.
But now you will never be punished again,
For you are going away to a husband's house.
Never in your life will you be punished again like that.

Only yesterday we told you to fill our leaf-pipes, to fetch us leaves, to sweep the ghotul rooms,
But now you will never do that again.
We shall look at you from far away and whisper, There goes Belosabai.
No more can you go with us or sit with us.

But live happily there as you lived with us.
Love your husband and comfort him as you loved and comforted us.
Roll his leaf-pipe for him, fetch him leaves and water,
Clean his house, comb his hair, massage his arms and back.
But leave your games and loves and laughter.
Your games and loves and laughter now are for your husband.

And the motiari sang weeping:

Give food and water to your husband's parents.
Don't quarrel with them, don't annoy them, hark to what they say
So you will be happy; if not, your life is ruined.
Live happily with your husband's younger brothers and sisters.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585 ●
539

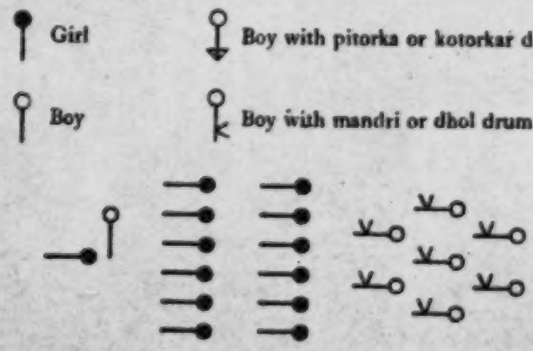
Pick leaves for them, fetch water, bring them wood, and clean their house.
Yesterday you laughed and played with us; tomorrow laugh and play with them.
Yesterday you went with us for water to the well; tomorrow go with them.
If a stranger comes to your new house, content him with water for his feet and a cup of gruel.
When we come, show that you remember us, and give us what we need.
You used to teach us everything, how to make necklaces with beads,
How to massage and how to please the chelik;
But who will teach us now?
When you troubled us, you were our defence;
But who will defend us now?
We will never forget you, without you our ghotul is empty and deserted.

585 In this wonderful exchange of tenderness and remembrance the whole of ghotul life becomes real and vivid. Almost every line might have a footnote referring to some chapter of this book.

After a long night of this, everyone was a little subdued, and nothing happened next day till about 3 p.m. when the bride's party of chelik and motiari went out with their drums to meet the bridegroom.

The Welcome of the Bridegroom

The boys led the way with their drums, followed by a double line of girls, clashing their cymbals, singing loudly. They advanced three paces, halted,



retired two paces, and then advanced again. At the same time the bridegroom's party advanced from their camp in similar formation, bringing the boy with them. As they went along, the girls sang a Gondi song with the refrain *Riri loyo ririla riri loyo virila rila.*

Sindi ãhi mowuri buba,	There's a crown of palm leaves, father, 585
Nana mowur herka buba,	I will wear that crown, father, 539
Bubãu lãr ne herka,	Wear it to please my father.
Sãtu jãr dãdãlor buba,	I have seven brothers, father,
Dãdãu lãr ne herka buba.	For love of them I'll wear it, father.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

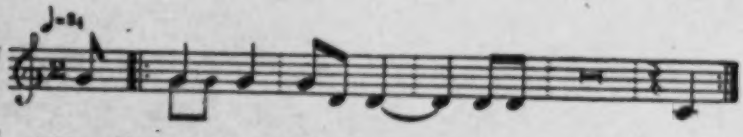
The Meeting of the Parents

585 Just inside the village the parties met—the girls greeted each other, and the elders sat down on the ground for *pārin-bhet* or *samdhi-bhet*, an important little rite which emphasizes that marriage is more than a union of two individuals; it is an alliance of families. A cloth was spread on the ground, and the father of the bride and the father of the bridegroom—the two samdhi—sat down together to talk for a few minutes. The Gaita drew lines of rice-flour and turmeric on the ground, and exclaimed, 'Let tomorrow's work be rooted deep and the tree grow large!' When they got up someone threw a pot of haldi-water over them and there was a lot of ribald laughter.

In Esalnar, the samdhi sat down with a pot of water and cleaned their teeth, exchanging the twigs and saying, 'Let there be no quarrels, let all be well, let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'.

During this little ceremony the motiari sing various songs, of which the following (in Chhattisgarhi) is an example:

[533]



[539]

Milo milo milo samdhi kukur pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a puppy!
Kukur pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a puppy? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi hāthi pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a baby elephant!
Hāthi pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a baby elephant? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi burkāl pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a tiger cub!
Burkāl pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a tiger cub? Take away your baby.
Milo milo milo samdhi gini pila sang milo!	Meet, meet, meet, samdhi, meet with a sucking pig!
Gini pila la kāy karbo? Lejo tumor pila.	What should I do with a sucking pig? Take away your baby.

The bride's motiari went forward; one of them picked up the boy on her back, and they led him in this formation to his camp on one side of the headman's field.

Here was a small leaf-hut under a shady tree. Men and women of both parties greeted the bridegroom. They washed his feet and put a rice-mark on his forehead. Then they led him into the hut and made him sit on a new mat.

The Giving of the Ring

The scene now shifts to the bride's house. Presents of cloth were given to the bride's mother. As it had not been done at the engagement-time, the ring-cowrie, in its modern form of four annas, was given to the bride's father and put in the Pot of the Departed to compensate the ancestors for

Plate XXVII

585 Pouring oil down an arrow on to the head of the bride

Preparing the bride's seat underneath a curtain

[p 106 a]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

●585 the loss of the girl from their clan. This is a very important and significant ceremony. It represents the passage of the girl from her original clan into that of her husband, and indicates that she will henceforth be numbered with his ancestors.

The bridegroom was carried over from his camp. A new mat was spread, and the samdhi sat down. A little rice was put on their knees. The bride sat in the lap of her father-in-law, the bridegroom in the lap of his. Motiari covered the girl's hand with oil. The Gaita put a ring on the boy's little finger. The boy then seized his bride and tried to transfer the ring to her. But her hand was oily and slippery, and there was a long struggle—which caused great amusement—before he was victorious. Then the girl hit him with her clenched fist and jumped up. He tried to hit her back, but a group of her chelik dashed forward and covered her escape.

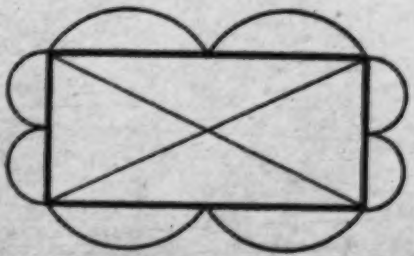
All the time the motiari stood by singing loudly:

[539]

Muda muda intoni dāda!	He is saying ring, ring, brother!
Sondr pekoh āyerom dāda,	Were I a goldsmith's daughter, brother,
Son muda hewerom dāda,	He would give me a golden ring, brother,
Dinda layorātek roy dāda,	Were he an unmarried boy, brother,
Kuddum dāka wāteni dāda.	He would come running to me, brother.
Kaide muda niya ro dāda.	The ring is in your hand, brother.
Pila hāra āteke roy dāda,	Were he a man with children, brother,
Pila odoh hemu roy dāda.	He would bring them to stay with me, brother.

The Crowning of the Bridegroom

The bridegroom was now carried back to his camp, where the Gaita made a *ghari*-pattern[1] on the ground like this. The boy sat in the lap of his elder brother's wife. Old women, mother's and father's sisters, covered his head with the ends of their saris. The Gaita came with an elaborate crown made by Pannara from date-palm leaves. The leaves in the crowns are carefully counted: if the number in each is uneven, all will be well, but if the bride's number is even it means that the marriage will be a failure. This is the Neyi Maur or Oil Crown which will be worn throughout the preliminaries of the marriage, and then exchanged for the Lagir Maur at its crisis. The Gaita and the boy handed it to and fro seven times. The Gaita held it up, exhibited it left and right and with a sudden movement pushed it over the boy's face, while the whole party shouted in



[1] These patterns, which are also made in the marriage booth, are akin to the 'threshold designs' common throughout India. Their purpose is, I think, definitely 'witch-baffling'. Cf. *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 268 and XLIX, p. 181.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 triumph. He dropped a little oil over the boy's head and shoulders, and applied haldi to his body with mango leaves. He was followed by everyone present.

[292]

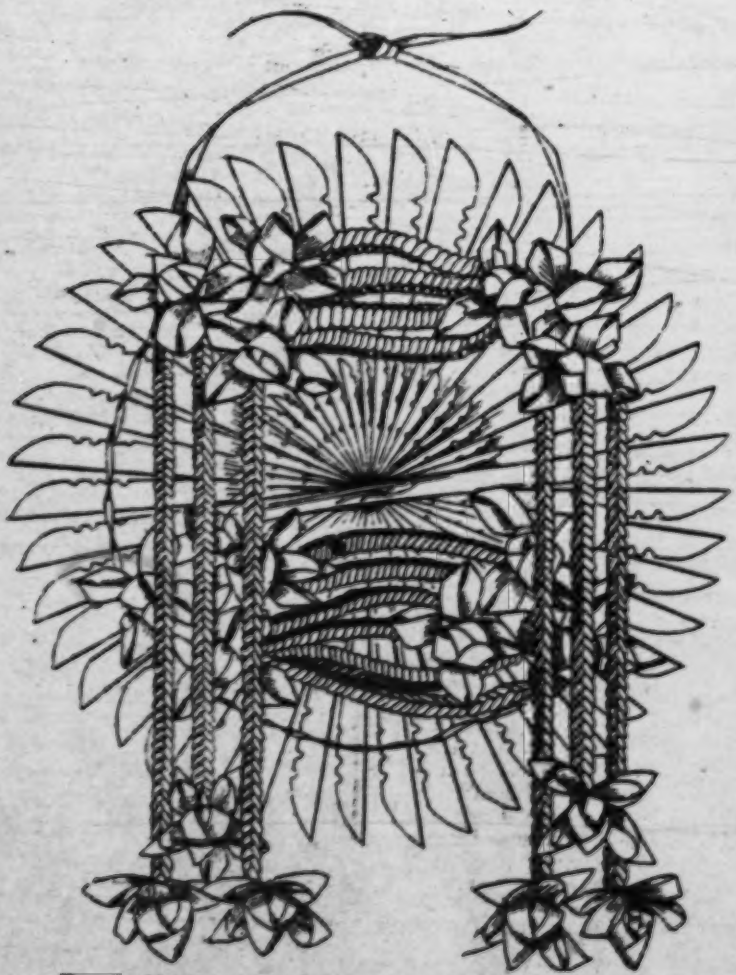
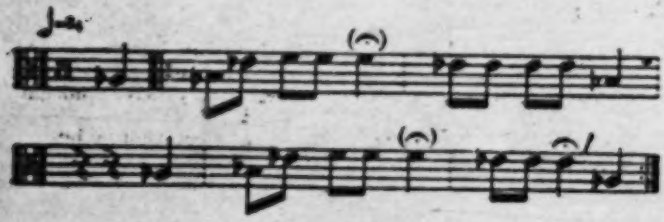


Fig. 18. Marriage crown for the bridegroom made of date-palm leaves
Breadth 1'

Meanwhile, the motiari sang songs about the date-palm, from whose leaves the crowns are made.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH



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Chhind pān ke mauṛ dai,	Of palm leaves is the crown, mother.
Main mauṛ bāndhe dai?	May I wear the crown, mother?
Kāy mola debe bābu?	What will you give me, son?
Gaibri ke rupiya dai,	I'll give you a bundle of money, mother,
Kotha ke baila dai,	I'll give you a bullock in the stall, mother,
Wahi baila debe bābu.	Give me that bullock, son.

Here is a rather charming little song, which was recorded at Palari.

585
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Bāri hate chhind hate ruti ruti kande	The palm grows near the fence and cries all night.
Na kānd re chhind hate bābu mauṛ pinde,	Don't cry, O palm, my son will wear you as a crown,
Bāndo le bāndo pujāri chatuk mauṛ bāndo.	Tie O tie it, priest, carefully tie the crown.

Bringing in the Mandā Wood

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Now the chelik of Sidhawand, assisted by visiting chelik from other villages, went out with the Gaita to fetch wood for the marriage-booth. The Gaita cut a small mahua tree with a single blow of his axe, and the boys cut the other poles and leafy branches of serai wood. Presently the party returned, drumming, dancing and singing, with loud shouts of *Puda* (vagina).[1] It was now nearly sunset. The boys piled the wood in the place where they were going to build the booth, and danced round it holding each other's hands. The nāṭiāri came and picked up the mahua tree. They stood in a bunch very close together, everyone held the tree and banged it up and down, singing vigorously.

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While the wood was being brought in the girls sang taunt-songs at the boys, most of them obscene. The first, for example, has the refrain *Kavad hāyding barha sulling farbatuk chete nor layer*, 'The chelik's testicles are like the fruit of a dried-up tree and the root of a gourd; his penis is like a snake'.

[1] Risley describes a festival of Dharti Mai among the Mal Paharia. 'The dancing party shout continually *bar, bar* (*pudendum muliebre*), a mode of invocation believed to be especially acceptable to the goddess. In this somewhat indelicate cry we may perhaps see a barbarous and undisguised reference to the *vis genetrix naturae* so prominent in many early forms of belief.'—H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1891). Vol. II, p. 71.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Songs

585
539

Layor taile mānda ri sango;	The boys are bringing the boughs on their heads;
Maksi manda tator ri sango.	Secretly they have brought the wood.
Buching poyndh kāhtor ri sango.	They have cut it bit by bit.
Māke marsi hewer ri sango,	If they would give us axes,
Chhak ne manda kaderāt sango.	We'd cut the wood with a single blow,
Mamāt manda tawerāt sango.	And we would bring the wood in.

In the next song, the boys sing the first three lines and the girls answer.

Mando deri kokoti wāhoti soy bai.	The pole of the booth is crooked, girl.
Tumcho rati chepoti roy soy bai.	Your vagina is like a chapati, girl.
Jhelun dānka netu roy soy bai.	We will dance jumping up and down, girl.
Tumcho asan ra'u roy soy dāda.	If we were to do it instead of you, brother.
Jhelun dānka netu roy soy dāda.	We would dance jumping up and down, brother.
Gāra phāndun netu roy soy dāda.	We would yoke the cart and take it away, brother,
Kukra bāsti netu roy soy dāda.	At cock-crow we would take it away, brother.
Kānde tangia dhartu roy soy dāda.	We'd put axes on your shoulders, brother.
Bāchun deri mārtun roy soy dāda.	We'd bring a straight pole, brother.
Kokta bākta deri roy soy dāda.	We'd never cut a crooked pole, brother.

585
[831]

There are other songs which I need not quote, in which there is much play about crooked wood and the crooked penis, and the penis which can dig well in intercourse but cannot dig a hole for the pillar of the booth.

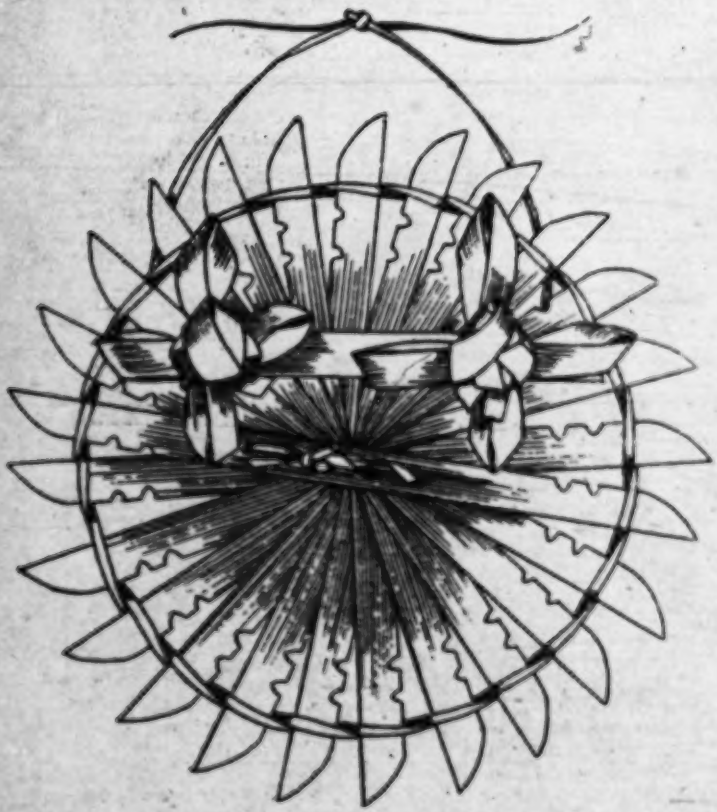
The boys had hidden a pice somewhere in the wood, and the girls spent a long time looking for it. Finally, about 7-30 p.m., the Gaita put some rice on the spot where the motiari had danced with the mahua tree, and dug a hole with his iron digging-stick. If white-ants or stones are found there, they move to another spot, offering an egg and chicken to whatever god the Siraha decides was responsible for the ill omen. But all was well today. The Gaita broke a coconut on his digging-stick, and the chelik planted the centre-pole of the booth and the mahua tree in the hole that the Gaita had made. After drinking a little liquor, the chelik then proceeded to make the booth (*manda*).

This was a very simple affair. Nine sarai poles were placed in a rough square, in the middle of which was the centre-pole and the mahua tree.[1] On the centre-pole a small representation of the vagina is often carved. A roof

[1] A number of tribes put the mahua in the marriage-booth. The Omanaito do (Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 444), so do the Birjhia (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 339), the Sonkar of Chhattisgarh (*ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 316), and the Bunjva or Bhinya (Dalton, op. cit., p. 148). Mock marriages to the tree are performed by the Bagdi, the Kurmi, the Mahili and no doubt others (*Census of India, 1911. Report for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, pp. 322ff). The Gond of Mandla put a mango tree in the centre of the booth, but elsewhere use a post made of mahua wood (Ward, op. cit., p. 138).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

was made by tying poles round the square and criss-cross over it. This was again covered with leafy branches. Round the poles was tied a haldi-coloured string, or sometimes simply a rope of paddy-chaff, and a string of mango leaves. This string is called *torun* (Halbi) and is mentioned in another *manda* song. This has the refrain *Riri loyo ririlo ririlo riri loyo ririlo*, and is addressed apparently to the village mother. 585



[292]

FIG. 19. Marriage crown for bride
Bronzed 6"

Rilo hunnilr gehina dai,
Sukhun dukhun baha wo dai.
Gachar machar dyma rey dai?
Kinjla tosle dyo wo dai?

Haryar mawta yatiwo dai.
Tdrill tawar lawar wo dai.

O Mother of this young boy,
Reveal his happiness and sorrow.
Why do you stay silent, Mother?
Because nothing has been promised you?
Take our offerings willingly.
He has no brothers, Mother.

585
539

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Awa bābo lewor wo dai.
Wenayise torun wo dai.
Mardi marra manda wo dai;
Layān parle bona wo dai.
Marka āki torun wo dai.
Bākiya nima bāwi wo dai?
Bābuna jiwa werriyta wo dai.

He has no father or mother.
But here is a goat for the *torun*.
The pole is from the saja tree;
Young girls made the platform.
Of mango leaves is the *torun*.
Why do you not answer, Mother?
The boy's soul is frightened, Mother.

Tying of the Beni-plaits

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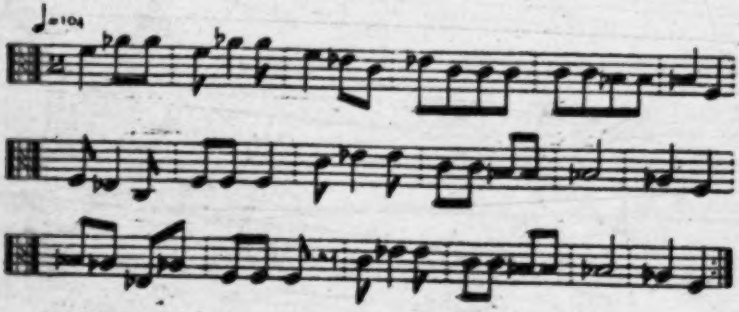
After this, the motiari carried the bride back to her house and her motiari and others anointed her with haldi. Then in both camps motiari busied themselves with tying the hair of their charges into two long and five little plaits. Other motiari stood round singing a song with the refrain,

Riri loyo. Ririlo rilo riri loyo ririlo riri loyo ririlo rilo rilo riri loyo ririlo.



Sura beri sakāli bābu.
Baden suda pāiki bābu?
Atin miyār manta roy dai.

Tāna suda pāiha dai,
Niya jor tā ayo roy bābu,
Helār bhāi bīti roy bābu,
Saga saina biti roy bābu,
Awa bābo biti roy bābu.
Awa bābona lewon roy bābu.
Tārāl tamor lewon roy bābu.

The plait is a sevenfold chain, boy.
Whose plait will you tie, boy?
I'll tie the plait of my *māma*'s daughter, mother.
For her I will tie the plait, mother,
She's no fit mate for you, boy,
She has sisters and brothers, boy,
She has relations, boy,
She has father and mother, boy.
You have no father or mother, boy.
You have no brothers, boy.

This is a very common sentiment in the marriage songs. The bridegroom is an orphan, alone in the world, useless, ugly, unfit to mate with a bride so richly dowered with wealth and relatives. I add two other very short songs:

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I

Sur beni beni roy āya,
Main beni pārenda āya,
Pārole pāro tuy pāro nona

O the links of the plait, mother,
I want to tie the plait, mother,
If you wish, boy, you may tie it.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

2

Sāt bahin kanya buba!	O the seven Kanya sisters!
Kanya dhari bazāla buba.	Holding your waist they sit.
Sāt bhātti phuli nā buba	O the seven-times distilled liquor
Buba indāna buba na	Father, say, father.

585 ●
539

THE THIRD DAY

Bathing Bride and Bridegroom

Shortly after dawn the bride's motiari brought out the bridegroom and danced with him. Then they bathed him in front of his camp, making him sit on a wooden seat, while two chelik fanned him vigorously with large baskets. When this was finished he jumped from his seat into one of these baskets and the bride's motiari picked him up and carried him, swinging him vigorously, back to his camp. They left him with loud cries of *Sota* (penis). Then the bridegroom's motiari bathed the bride.

585

Songs

1

Riri loyo rilo rilo riri loyo ri ri lo rilo ri riloyo ri ri lo

585
539

Māwa bābu na yeru ra sangori;	The water's for our boy;
Sono jhar jhar yeru ra.	Like a stream of gold is the water.
Niya nunin yeru ra;	The water's for your girl;
Koda urkul yeru ra.	Like horse-stale is the water.
Niya bābuna yeru ra;	The water's for your boy;
Neyu urkul yeru ra.	Like a dog's urine is the water.
Māwa nunina yeru ra;	The water's for our girl;
Sono jhar jhar yeru ra sangori.	Like a stream of gold is the water.

2

Dulhi na āng dhoila chelik sundar pāni,	Bathing the bride's body with chelik-beautiful water,
Paniya paniya bolis re nona.	You were begging for a comb, a comb.
Abe paniya pāwaliz re nona.	Now you have got your comb.
Sai shanwār sātum roy nona.	It's the Saturday bazaar today.
Sātum dauru kindi roy nona.	You were going to the bazaar.
Dulhi na āng dhoila chelik sundar pāni.	But you are bathing the bride's body with chelik-beautiful water.

Digging the Manda Earth

I missed seeing this at Sidhawand, but witnessed it at Malakot. Some older women, carrying baskets covered with cloth, led a small procession of singing and dancing motiari and drummers to the house of the village cowherd (Kopa or Rawat). They danced for a time before the house, asking the Kopa's wife to come out.

Song

Kope le kope le pasia kope pasia roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, come outside.
Kope le kope le tuka toriy toriy roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, have you some earth?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Kope le kope le uduh toriy himu roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, give us a little.
Kope le kope le sānde toriy himu roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, give the earth quickly.
Kope le kope le bāti jora hiti roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, what are you doing?
Kope le kope le tada kope tada roy.	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, quickly get up.
Kope le kope le kopāl ondah hitor roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, is the cowherd enjoying you?
Kope le kope l. girda mate mādyoy roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, haven't you finished?
Kope le kope le girda tāye husker roy?	Kopa girl, Kopa girl, are you still sleeping?

585 Presently the woman appeared carrying a digging-stick and was greeted with derisive shouts. She led them to the spot where the cattle rested at midday. There she sprinkled water and cow-dung and prepared a little patch of ground. The Gaita offered rice, egg-shell and haldi, and took the digging-stick in his hand. This was also held by the Kopa's wife and the bridegroom's mother. All three together dug up a little earth, put it into a basket and covered it with cloth. Suddenly one of the motiari picked up the basket and ran as hard as she could towards the *manda*. The chelik chased her; they had to catch her before she reached it. They were just in time; they took one of her rings, and then allowed her to put the earth by the mahua tree under the booth.

Plastering the Manda Platform

585
539
533

Then some old women, singing very fast, began to plaster with this special mud a little platform in the middle of the booth. They made patterns of rice-flour, plastered them in, and finally smoothed it all over.

Song

Boula parila layer panwira honda buking.	The boys don't know how to make the platform.
Nāgal chotong tallenjo.	The penis is like a ploughshare.
Māha boula parri hanen re.	The boys won't let us make the platform.
Sir hanna layer parri ron.	If they did, how beautifully we'd make it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Some of the mud was left and the old women smeared it on any man they could find. I saw one of them creep up behind the Gaita and blindfold him with her muddy hands, shouting *Pude dārango* or Vagina liquor! At that they all sat down and had a drink. Refreshed by this, the Gaita and an assistant drew an elaborate pattern on the freshly-plastered platform, and put earthen lamps at its four corners. The rice-flour and haldi for this was ground by the Gaita with his own hands.

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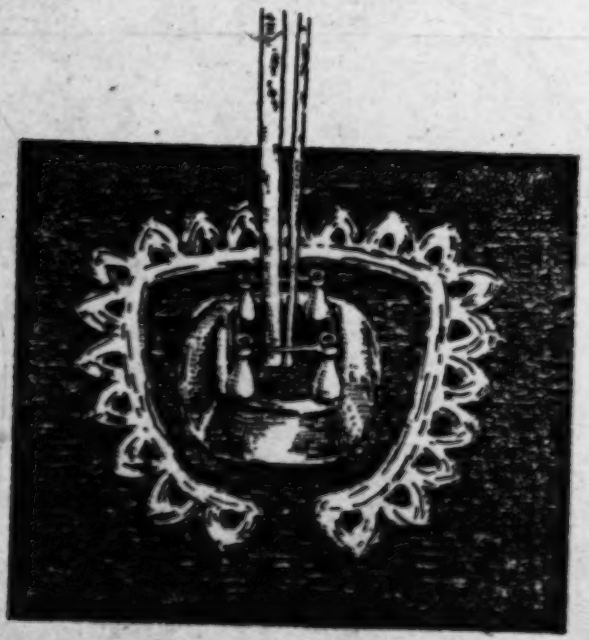


FIG. 20. Mandap platform with typical decoration, from Tylenga

Songs

1

Alar alar singāri dosi,
Nahna singār hersīye dosi.
Kike mimi khuheru dosi,
Kānher tike khingīla dosi.
Kotanj aman kimu yo dosi,
Korri kufi singāri dosi.

Make varied patterns, Dosi,
The best patterns you know.
The fish has come from Kanker,
The pattern faces Kanker,
Make the corners square,
Make a cock's-foot pattern, Dosi.

585
539

2

Hardi pakhua hardi pakhua dosi.
Khālo kaniyu khālo kaniyāla dosi.
Upar kaniyu upar kaniyāla dosi.
Jan bisarbe jan bisarbe dosi.

Apply the haldi, Dosi.
Below for the Kanyang, Dosi.
Above for the Kanyang, Dosi.
Do not forget, Dosi.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Hāna duma la hāna duma la dosi.	Put it for the Departed, Dosi.
Māta māuli la māta māuli la dosi.	For Mata Maoli, Dosi.
Jan bisarbe jan bisarbe dosi.	Do not forget, Dosi.
Tore dharam jo tore dharam jo dosi.	It is your duty, Dosi.

Further Anointing of the Bridegroom

585 Now his own motiari carried the bridegroom out again and brought him to the *manda*. They danced round the booth, one of them carrying him on her back, till they were tired. Then they made him sit on a motiari's lap on a bamboo fan to the west of the booth and outside it, and put a fan between his hands which he held folded before his face. Again they put haldi, making it 'climb' up his body. The bride's brother's wife came and wept loudly, saying, 'Never forget us and the love we've had for you. Come and see us often. Don't trouble our poor girl. She is ignorant and foolish, but you will be able to teach her. Let her come and see us often'.

This tedious and exasperating ritual continues during the whole ceremony. Every relative in turn must perform it over and over again.

Songs

585
539

1

Dāda indān he dāda!	Cry brother, brother!
Dharmu telu chaga wo dāda.	Anoint with holy oil, brother.
Tuke dharam lāge de dāda.	This is your gift, brother.
Bai indān he bai!	Cry sister, sister!
Dharam telu chaga wo bai.	Anoint with holy oil, sister.
Tuke dharam lāge de bai.	This is your gift, sister.

And so on, interminably, through the entire table of affinity.

2

Tiloke telo telo wo dai!	O the oil of til, mother!
Mola re telu chada wo dai.	Let me rub the oil, mother.
Tola re telu charāten wo beta,	I would rub you with oil, son,
Mora re buta kamey jo beta.	But I have work to do, son.
Sagore din ke buta wo dai,	You can work every day, mother,
Yeke re din ke tele wo dai.	But this oil is just for today, mother.
Tore re buta rahe wo dai.	Leave your work, mother.
Mola re telu chada wo dai.	And rub me with oil, mother.

3

[831]

Kis howe howe layon eh he.	The chelik is a little monkey.
Kene porro targa howe eh he!	Climb up, O little monkey!
Gokāle dudo howe eh he!	Her breasts will fill your fists!
Kene dor raiya howe eh he!	Come down again, O little monkey!
Rāpāle pudo howe eh he.	Her vagina is big as a spade, O little monkey!

4

This song is from Bayanar village, a Paskana Pata for the anointing. The refrain imitates the noise of a goat in heat.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Sai le le bo bo bo! Sai le le bo bo bo!

585 ●
539

O young darling, whence have you come,
Have you come for the play of love,
With an ox-goad under the mango tree?
Why have you come, big-breasted love?
I will catch you and enjoy you.
Saikobai, why have you come?
Your pubic hairs are like a shrub in Amgaon.
We were yoked together in the ghotul.
Now you are going, and I bid you farewell.
Now you are leaving the ever-thrilling ghotul.
I took you under the pipal tree and shook you to and fro.
By the ant-hill I tumbled you.
Your ghotul lover has come for you,
But no longer are you there to welcome him.

Taking the Omens

585
787

Now the final omens must be taken. The Gaita placed an earthen pot full of water on the verandah of the headman's house, and dropped grains of rice two by two into it. For a successful marriage the grains must meet tip to tip. If they meet crosswise, there will be quarrels; if they both sink, the married pair will die together in a year; if they do not meet at all, the girl will elope with someone else. On this occasion, the two grains sank to the bottom, and the headman sent round an inquiry whether any of the near relatives of the bride had just begun to menstruate—a calamity which had previously been known to disturb the omens. At about the same time the bridegroom fell into a trance, twitching, shivering, stretching himself and then falling inert to the ground. Apparently none of the women were in the tabooed condition and the bridegroom's mother—a managing woman with an enormous bun of hair on the top of her head which caused some to regard her as an incarnation of the Hindu god Mahadeo—thought quite obviously that it was I with my camera who was causing all the trouble, but did not like to say so. After a time, however, when the Gaita had made some extravagant promises to the gods, the boy recovered and the rice grains floated round and hit each other most properly tip to tip.

Filling the Kalsa

585
831

The little kalsa-pitcher, which is to be placed by the mahua tree in the marriage-booth, must be filled with rice. The motiari put a basket before the bride. They place the pot inside and fill the bride's hands with rice, covering them with a cloth. Several of them catch hold of her hands and move them up and down above the kalsa, singing *Rolo*, until all the rice has fallen into the pot. When the pot is full the motiari stand up with a loud cry of *Sata!* (penis).

Songs

I

Nendi hata dotola burka bhillo lotola.
Kâko jillo lotako dulhi lo lotola.

The reeds grow by the river, where the old bear lies.
With whom is he lying? He's lying with the bride.

585
539
831

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539
831

Kai pila holi bhālu pila hole.
Whose was the child? It was a bear's child.

Kāke buba balede dulha ke buba balede.
Whom will he call father? The bridegroom.

Kāke āya balede dulhi ke āya balede.
Whom will he call mother? The bride.

Kai rāg men gāge de hur hur balede.
To what tune will she weep? *Hur hur.*

Ama pān chiro chāro.
The mango leaf sounds *chiro charo.*

Dulha cholli kira paro ach.
There are maggots in the bridegroom's penis

Mande pude kurri.
Loudly cry 'Vagina'.

2

Goti roy dodon banjāra aya!
O the Banjara's bullock, mother!

Noni bona roy sudha dāki noni?
With whom will you go, girl?

Māma na marri mantor go āya.
There is my *māma's* son, mother.

Noni miya jori pobe roy noni.
He's not fit to be your mate, girl.

Ona roy sudha hanma roy noni.
Do not go with him, girl.

Gere mara jori roy ade jori pibo.
He is as bad as a pair of gere trees.

Ona re suda hanon roya āya.
I will not go with him, mother.

Aich mande pude kaudi bandhla.
Under the booth is a vagina tied with a cowrie.

Dudhe handi bhursa.
And breasts like a brown pot.

Leka cho cholli bhursa!
O the penis of the brown boy!

Ama pān siro sāro.
The mango leaves sound *siro sāro.*

Leki cho pudi kira paro kurri.
The girl's vagina is full of maggots.

585
[531]
Before the kalsa-pitcher is put in its place by the central pillar of the booth, it is decorated, sometimes beautifully and with great elaboration. Red, yellow and black grain is stuck with cow-dung in varied patterns, or stars and lines of dots are made in white and black. While two of the older women are doing this, the motiari stand by and sing.

Song

585
539
Riri loyo ri ri lo rilo ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri lo ri ri loyo ri ri lo

Ursa wenjing harza wo dai.
The pot is decorated with rice, mother.

Nana harza kotikān dai.
I place a mark on the pot, mother.

Bāti wenjing kotikin bābu?
With what kind of rice will you decorate it, boy?

Hinga wenji kotikān dai.
I will use *hinga* rice, mother.

Bona suda kotikin bābu?
With whom will you decorate it, boy?

Atin miyār manta roy dai.
With my *māmi's* daughter, mother.

Tāna suda kotikān dai.
I will decorate the pot for her, mother.

Tāna suda parwin roy bābu.
You won't be able to do it for her, boy.

Tāna jorti āywi roy bābu.
She is no fit mate for you, boy.

Tāral tamor biti roy bābu.
She has brothers, boy.

Halār bhai biti roy bābu.
She has sisters and brothers, boy.

Awa bābo biti roy bābu.
She has a mother and father, boy.

Nāhun arik wāla wo dai.
But I am willing, mother.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

When the kalsa-pitcher is ready, decorated and filled with grain, it is taken out to the booth and placed by the central pillar. 585 539

Song

Hi dewani ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri lo

Ona ri bona ri harsa dai?	Whose is this pitcher, mother?
Jāti poyami pohāna jāti nuni.	It's for a Poyami boy, daughter.
Onāyisa harsa nuni.	This pitcher is for him, daughter.
Karsa malka māta dai!	How the pitcher glitters, mother!
Karsa kuri dāha dai.	I am going to look at it, mother.
Niya bārang sādu nuni?	Why does it please you, daughter?
Yarri miyā tāndi nuni.	It is a pot for bathing, daughter.
Tāndi gala orvy nuni.	The pot is not broken, daughter.
Modi asko kāri nuni.	The cord has been cut with this arrow, daughter.
Kāri gala māyoya nuni.	The arrow is not lost, daughter.
Loni kāra manar dai.	The Lamhada boy is in the house, mother.
Turra khoda kanar dai.	He has gone to hunt wild animals, mother.
Molol khoda kanar dai.	He has gone to hunt the hare, mother.
Māo khoda kanar dai.	He has gone to hunt the sambhar, mother.
Asko kāri māyuār dai.	Then the arrow will be lost, mother.
Barsa pure mālona dai.	I am grown up now, mother.
Nākan arik māta dai.	I am very happy, mother.
Hawwa lona tāoon dai.	I cannot rest till I go away with him, mother.

In this song, mother and daughter look ahead beyond the marriage to the girl's first child. The kalsa-pitcher becomes the pot of warm water heated daily by the husband for the young mother's bath; the arrow down which the anointing oil is poured becomes the arrow by which the child's umbilical cord is cut. The young husband has gone on a ceremonial hunt—and by his success or failure they will know the number of their children.

From time to time a couple of girls came to clean the *manda*: as they did so, the others stood round singing. *Re re loyo re re la rala rala re re loyo re rala.*

Dulha kahan gaio beloss?	Where has the bridegroom gone, Beloss?
Wahin kuhār galoss beloss.	He has carried off his sister.
Kai dāra asaisa beloss?	What branches has he spread?
Pharsa dāra asaisa beloss.	He has made a bed of pharsa branches.
Kai pila kaka re beloss?	What child has she borne?
Bhallu pila kaka re beloss;	It is a bear cub;
Hur hur hare re beloss;	It cries *hur hur*;
Chilluk kalo khade se re beloss.	It runs to bite you, Beloss.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Midday Dance

585 539 Then the chelik gathered round the booth and began to dance, holding each other's hands swinging backwards and forwards to a rather dismal tune, as they circled slowly round.

Songs

1

Tāra wo dai nāwa sono pungāri.	Give me my golden flower, mother.
Nāwa iga to hile nuni niya bubān nigādu.	I haven't got it, your father has it, son.
Tāra wo buba nāwa sono pungāri.	Give me my golden flower, father.
Nāwa iga to hile nuni niya dādān igādu.	I haven't got it, your brother has it, son.
Tāra wo dāda nāwa sono pungāri.	Give me my golden flower, brother.

—and so on, taking the names of every relative present.

2

Walāldāti koliyāl walālta?	Where are you going, fox, where are you going?
Chilhodāl wayāl hilu jo tāna toka tun hepur pandhal.	Make a broom of a squirrel's tail.
Walāldāti nirāl wālālta?	Where are you going, leopard, where are you going?
Chilhodāl wayāl tāna tālla tun kudwo pandardr.	Make a measure of the head of a rat.

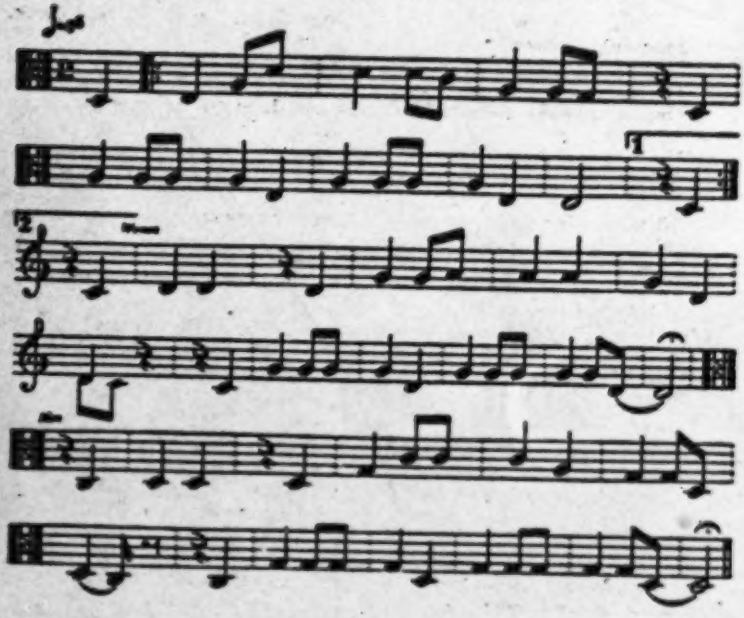
585 It was now midday and the visiting motiari brought food to the booth as reward for the boys who had gone to fetch the wood the previous day. The boys sat down in a wide circle round the booth and the girls served them with rice and vegetables on leaf-plates. When they had finished the chelik got up and down three times shouting 'Penis!', and so dispersed.

When darkness fell everyone went home for the evening meal. The headman provided pork for his visitors: the pig was knocked over the head with a rice-pounder and the Gaita offered the carcass mahua-spirit saying, 'Let there be enough flesh for us all and some left over'.

Throughout the night there was singing and dancing; every now and then the weary bride and groom were brought out to be anointed, from the feet upwards to the head.

[533 831] The company drank, and made merry with feecennine songs, for 'there is no purdah in a house of marriage'. Much of the dancing during the night and a large part of the day was done without drums in almost Hill Maria style. Boys, or boys and girls, held hands and moved slowly round the marriage-booth in a wide circle. The singing was monotonous, but the songs themselves are often more interesting than those concerned merely with details of the ritual.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH



585
533

Songs

1

Aliyāro maliyāro kanhi ruha joji !	The gruel is made of bits of rice, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyāro maliyāro sānda joji kisnu !	Give us the gruel quickly, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyārsingh maliyārsingh nimār mahe dāhit ?	Where are you going, Aliyarsingh Maliyarsingh?
Aliyāro maliyāro pārewāu pila jori !	We are like a pair of pigeons, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyāro maliyāro jori parhi dāha !	We are off to search for wives, Aliyaro Maliyaro!
Aliyārsingh maliyārsingh mātir bhumi dāha ?	What country are you going to, Aliyarsingh Maliyarsingh?
Aliyāro maliyāro lānjir bhumi dāha !	We are going to Lanji Land, Aliyaro Maliyaro!

2

Charota mara buha charota mara darwai rey !	O the shade of the charota tree, father!
Wārāna darbār buha darbār naki rey ?	What is this durbar, O father?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Kosa re kohkana nuni kosa re kohkana doyon roy!
O the silken horns of the bullock, daughter!

Tāne re mola nuni tāne re mola kindan roy!
I have named a price for this bullock, daughter!

Nākune nāreh buba nākune nāreh hema roy.
Do not deceive me, father.

Nākune mola buba nākune mola kindan roy.
You are selling me, father.

Kile re khapra buba kile re khapra rupia roy,
A rupee is worthless as a broken bit of earthenware,

Rupia re jiwa buba rupia re jiwa kiti roy.
Yet you love rupees, father.

Koda re urkul buba koda re urkul dārango roy,
Liquor is worthless as a horse's stale,

Dārango re jiwa buba dārango re jiwa kiti roy,
Yet you love liquor, father,

Miyāne jiwa buba miyāne jiwa kewi roy.
And you do not care for me.

3

Nikān lewāl nuni wātor roy guguti guguti.
They have come to take you away, my girl.

Wātir bhum tor dai wātor roy?
Where have they come from, mother?

Chhattisgarh tor nuni wātor roy.
They have come from Chhattisgarh, my girl.

Wātir wātir dai kamiāl roy?
What work do they do there, mother?

Jāti kawdo nuni kamiāl roy.
They are of the Kawdo clan, daughter.

One ise dai hemāt roy;
Don't give me to them, mother;

Kodo usi dai paron roy;
I cannot husk the kodon, mother;

Karwul māti dai danda roy;
My arms are like tundri roots, mother;

Danda gala dai nindo roy!
My arms are not yet grown, mother!

One ise dai hemāt roy.
Don't give me to them, mother.

4

Koh bodāl bodāl kopa le;
I have a horned bison, Kopa;

Nāwa bodāl mai: kopa le.
My bison is lost, Kopa.

Hāle māri māri gaita le,
On the hill of sal trees, Gaita,

Akey toru osi gaita le.
I had taken it to graze there, Gaita.

Sono tāye guta kopa le.
I had a golden tethering peg, Kopa.

Guta inja poitu kopa le.
Now the peg stands solitary, Kopa.

Hira tāye dāmir kopa le.
The tethering-cord was made of diamonds, Kopa.

Dāmir himu poitu kopa le.
Now the cord is lonely, Kopa.

Dāmir himu poitu kopa le.
Now the cord is lonely, Kopa.

5

Bharewān bharewān kaida nana pairi karena;
I will wear the Bharewa's anklets;

Kālu re kālu re rumjum rumjum pairi karena.
The anklets tinkle *rumjum rumjum*.

Kochiyāna kochiyāna kaida nana churi karena!
I will wear the Kochiya's bangles;

Kaida re kaida re rumjum rumjum churi karena.
The bangles tinkle *rumjum rumjum*.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585●
539

Setina setina kaida nana getil kuhena;
I will wear cloth from a merchant's shop;
Nani re nani re rumjum rumjum getil kuhena.
When I wear that cloth, my waist goes *rumjum rumjum.*
Sonārān sonārān kaida nana suta karena;
I will wear a goldsmith's neck-band;
Todara re todara re rumjum rumjum suta karena.
The neck-band sounds *rumjum rumjum.*
Sonārān sonārān kaida nana dāru karena,
I will wear a goldsmith's ear-ring,
Kaiwu re kaiwu re rumjum rumjum dāru karena.
The ear-rings sound *rumjum rumjum.*
Kaserān kaserān kaida nana chura karena,
I will wear the Kaser's bangles,
Kālu re kālu re rumjum rumjum chura karena.
The bangles tinkle *rumjum rumjum.*

6

[534]

Nāwa tehendor turil roy ange,
My *tehendor*[1] is lost,
Baga ise turil roy bābu?
Where was it lost?
Jamka jumur manda roy ange,
It was lost among the crowds beneath the booth,
Agāy ise turil roy ange.
It is lost there.
Niya sang nor layor roy bābu,
Your friend the chelik
Niya layor bara oyor roy bābu,
Has taken everything,
Or ise oyor roy ange,
But he did not take that away,
Niya sang nāng layāh roy bābu!
O your friend the motiari
Ore bāra oyong roy bābu.
Must have taken it away.

7

Bera lopa bārang kelo le nuni?
O what is in the field, girl?
Jhumjhum āyana nuni kanki tulawa.
The girl is cleaning pieces of rice, *jhumjhum.*
Bera lopa tarāy kelo le?
What is in the field, sister?
Tarai lopa wārang kelo le.
The tank is in the field, sister.
Tarai lopa durpa kelo le?
What is in the tank, sister?
Durpa morede wārang kelo le.
The lotus-root is in the tank, sister.
Durpa morede kanjal kelo le?
What is under the lotus-root, sister?
Kanjal rosela wāyena kelo le.
Under the lotus-root there is a mouse, sister.
Wāyen ayo wāyena dāda le?
Will you come to catch the mouse, sister?
Nāhe dai rāngār dāda le.
I would love to come but I cannot, brother:
Niya dai matek kelo le.
Mother would be angry with me, brother.
Jhāpit sandra hitona kelo le.
I have given cloth from the basket, sister.
Hilek icho waiha dāda le.
If you have given it, brother, then I will come.

[1] Iron Jew's-harp.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

8

585 539

Hare nāru ursima hese maryum
parcha bīti nāru heso maryum!
Mardumshumāri nāru roy maryum!

Kosur koytor wāynur heso maryum.

Khatiya lāwo indānur heso maryum.
Khatiya inda punwi heso.
Katul inda puton heso.
Chānwal lāwo indānur heso;
Chānwal inda punwi heso;
Nukāng inda puton heso.
Dāl lāwo indānur heso;
Dāl inda punwi heso,
Dāring inda puton heso.
Namak lāwo indānur heso;
Namak inda punwi heso,
Hawor inda puton heso.
Haldi lāwo indānur heso;
Haldi inda punwi heso,
Kamka inda puton heso.
Ghee lāwo indānur heso;
Ghee inda punwi heso,
Neyi inda puton heso.
Pyāj lāwo indānur heso;
Pyāj inda punwi heso,
Gondri inda puton heso.

Don't build your house near the road, cousin!
There will be nothing but receipt-books and Census forms, cousin!
There the peons and their porters will come.
They will say, 'Bring us a bed'.
We don't know what a bed is.
All we know is a cot.
They will say, 'Bring us rice';
We don't know what rice is;
We only know paddy.
They will say, 'Bring us lentils';
We don't know what lentils are,
We only know pulse.
They will say, 'Bring us ground salt';
We don't know what ground salt is,
We only know rock salt.
They will say, 'Bring us turmeric';
We don't know what turmeric is,
We only know haldi.
They will say, 'Bring us ghee';
We don't know what ghee is,
We only know oil.
They will say, 'Bring us onions';
We don't know what onions are,
We only know garlic.

585 In this song, the words for the different things supposed to be demanded by the visiting officials are given both in the village and the more sophisticated dialects. A *khatiya* is demanded: the villagers only know of a *katul*. The visitor asks, in his own language, for *chanwal*, rice: but the villagers use the Gondi word *nukāng*; and so on.

The Arrow Ceremony

Now came the final anointing with haldi, the 'bringing down' of the oil from head to foot in contrast to the previous 'climbing', when it was applied from foot to head. The bridegroom was brought to the west of the booth and sat on the lap of one of his motiari. He held his hands above his head and an arrow was placed in them. The Gaita first, and then all his relatives, poured oil down it and it spread thence over his body. The same ceremony was performed for the girl, but inside the house.

Songs

585 539

1

Kudār kolāng dākāng māwor.

Neha dākāng wātma māwor.
Keri gābo mundul;
Mendul gala nindoye.
Ali āki mcha;
Moha gala nindoye.

Our boy's stride is long as the handle of a hoe.
Don't stride along too quickly, boy.
Our boy's body is a plantain fruit;
His body is not yet ripe.
His face is a pipal leaf;
His face is not yet ripe.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585 539

Berel āki chhāti;	His chest is a banyan leaf;
Chhāti gala nindoye.	His chest too is not yet ripe.
Kāreka hāya tala;	His head is a kadam fruit;
Tala gala nindoye.	His head is not yet ripe.
Kārwul māti danda;	His hand too is a tundri root;
Danda gala nindoye.	His hand is not yet ripe.
Neka jhuleh kema	O boy, don't shake your hand too much
Danda dole māyār.	Or it will be broken, boy.

2

Huh dusār dusār buba huh dusār roy buba

Neyura dusār reha buba.	The haldi oil has been rubbed down, father.
Kānde hāwar bojha buba.	A heavy load for a small *hāwar*, father.
Reh teke bojha buba,	Its weight is the same though you bring it down,
Teh teke bojha buba.	Its weight is the same though you raise it up.
Nāwa bojha reha buba.	Bring down the weight, father.

585 Then while a circle of motiari stood singing, others bathed the boy and re-tied his hair in three or four plaits. They decorated him, painting his eyes with black and white powder, and making stars of yellow haldi on his face with a splayed castor-twig. They put a new crown, the Lagir Maur, over his head and face. So attired he went round greeting everyone. A pot of haldi-water was hung from the roof of the booth.

The Lagir

Now the drums began to sound; the chelik moved out in formation from the bridegroom's camp and began to move round the booth. The whole place began to stir. Soon with grand display the bride's drummers came down the road. They were led by two lines of boys waving antlers in the air; [292] one boy was dressed in peacock's feathers, another had a gay cowrie jacket. They advanced, placed the horns on the ground, raised them with loud cries, retired, then came on again. They reached the booth and danced near by.

The bride's elder sister's husband came out of the house with the bride on his shoulders and a group of men held a canopy over them. A man similarly related brought out the bridegroom from his camp. As the two parties approached the booth, the drumming increased in volume, rows of girls singing and clashing their cymbals followed, a 'bison' appeared pursued by hunters, and a dummy giant whirled into the centre of the scene.

The two parties, the boy's party leading, now went round the booth, outside, seven times anti-clockwise. The drummers went ahead, the girls followed, clouds of dust rose in the air. When this was done, bride and bridegroom were made to stand at the west side of the booth, and their clothes were knotted together. The girl's elder brother and four other men climbed the booth, and poured a little liquor and then a whole potful of haldi-water over the pair. In Malakot, where brooms were tied to the tops of the nine poles, the men threw them down and shook the booth violently.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 This is the supreme moment of the marriage, the ceremony that finally asserts the union of bride and bridegroom,[1] the ultimately binding element in the long-protracted ceremonies. Bride and bridegroom were now man and wife.

Song

[539]

To manda batti dai ;	There is the cattle's resting-place ;
Aga padda manta dai.	There is a calf there, mother.
Padda dohi dâka dai.	I am going to tie that calf.
Sono ta dâmir dai,	There is a golden rope,
Padda poya hewo dai.	But the calf won't let me catch her.

Carrying off the Bride

Immediately the boy seized the bride, rushed her once round the booth, and carried her off to his camp, followed by a row of motiari singing enthusiastically. The bride's elder sister has the right to try to stop them: she stood in the way and was only appeased by the present of a cloth.

Ceremonial Greeting

In a few minutes the motiari came to bring the newly-married pair back to the booth for tika, the ceremonial greeting by relatives and friends. They sat down on a mat to the west of the booth, each supported by motiari, and everyone in turn put a rice-mark on their foreheads and a small present in the dish before them. As people bent down to do this, old women poured haldi over their backs and often tried to undo their clothes and smear their naked buttocks. There was much ribald laughter and a lot of fun.

[527]

The motiari stood round singing as loudly as they could. Each relative was greeted in turn. Here is the song they used when the boy's father came for tika.

[539]

Wilor willor-manda buba !	The booth is shaking, father!
Mandât korku wâr-tu buba.	The branches of the booth have withered, father.
Sônde tika tika buba.	Do the tika, father.
Wale bera kema buba.	Don't be late, father.
Pile karau karau buba.	The birds grow hungry, father.
Karun manda paron buba.	I can't bear to be hungry, father.
Niya marri lâruna buba.	This is your darling son, father.

[1] The essential and binding part of the marriage ceremony varies in different parts. In the Punjab it consists of the *phera* or circumambulation of the sacrificial fire. In the United Provinces the young couple walk round not a fire but the marriage shed or pole. In the east of these provinces and also in Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, the binding part of the ceremony is generally the *sindurdan* or painting of the bride's forehead with vermilion. Amongst certain castes such as the Hari, the bride and bridegroom smear each other with their blood, which they obtain by pricking their fingers with a thorn. In Bombay the higher castes follow the practice of circumambulation. The lower castes sprinkle rice over the bride and bridegroom, while some pour milk or water over the joined hands of the couple. In Orissa their right hands are tied together with *kusa* grass, or their left hands when the bride is a widow. In Madras there are various ceremonies, such as making them eat from the same dish, or knotting their garments together, or pouring water over them so that it runs from the man to the woman. But the most common is for the bridegroom to tie the *tali* or necklace round the bride's neck. The Brahmin bridegroom places the bride's foot seven times on a mill-stone, a symbol of constancy.—*Census of India, 1911, Report for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, p. 322.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

The Marriage Sermon

At this point the Gaita and one or two elders sat down and delivered a sort of sermon. One man spoke, then another took up the tale, and a third continued. 'Now we have linked you two together. May you always have enough to eat and drink. May you live together happily. Bear many sons and daughters. Do not forget your parents. Greet the visitor at your house with food and water.' 585

The Farewell

When the tedious business of the tika was over, the bride and groom were taken back to the groom's camp and their crowns were removed. The boy was taken by his party out of the village to the road which ran near by. After a little while the girl, led by her father and escorted by two motiari (her own sisters) and preceded by drummers from her old ghotul, followed. When they came to the road, the girl bade a last farewell to her chelik and motiari. Accompanied by her two sisters, she went to each in turn and wept before them. She gave a pice to each of the chelik and they 'kissed' her farewell.

The two samdhi again sat down, drank a little and threw haldi-water over each other. 'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it!' Then suddenly two chelik picked up the bride and bridegroom and they went off very quickly, a line of motiari walking behind them.

Song

[539]

Kāka ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to uncle's house, mother,
Burkya mās khain wo dai.	There they eat beef.
Dāda ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to brother's house, mother,
Bokri mās khain wo dai.	There they eat goat.
Didi ghar gayen wo dai,	We went to sister's house, mother,
Kukri mās khain wo dai.	There they eat chicken.
Hamla bāsi paj dein wo dai.	But we like to eat stale *paj*.

The New Home

When the party came to the boundary of their own village, the Gaita drew a line of rice-flour across the path and placed seven aonra rings upon it. They stepped across this and went home without looking round. When bride and bridegroom reached their house, the boy's mother came out to greet them. She washed their feet and drank a little of the dirty water. She took her daughter-in-law into the house, and presently brought her out again into the court, where those of the villagers who had not been able to go for the wedding came to do tika and gave their presents. Then bride and groom were taken back into the house; offerings were made to the Departed and the ring-cowrie was put into the Pot of the Departed to symbolise the fact that the bride had now joined her husband's clan and after death would henceforth be numbered with the ancestors of her new home. Other offerings were made to the pots hanging from the roof and the grain-bins. 'These are all yours now', exclaimed the mother. 'Live here happily with us.'

The Wedding Crowns

At the end of a marriage the wedding crowns must be properly disposed of, for it would be highly dangerous to throw them away where a witch could get at them. It will be remembered that there are two crowns, the Neyi

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

385 Maur or Oil Crown, which is worn during the period when the bride and bridegroom are anointed with oil and haldi, and the Lagir Maur, which is put on immediately before the critical moment of the marriage.

The customs vary from place to place. After the marriage the Oil Crown is generally thrown into a stream with some small offerings to the Yer Kanyang. The other crown is sometimes tied to the central pillar of the bridegroom's house. In Palari members of the Marrai clan bury the crown by this pillar and make offerings of liquor to the Departed above it, in order that the wife will always be faithful to her husband. In Kokori the Naitami and Marrai clans put the crowns in a hollow tamarind tree standing in the village. Other clans tie them to the pillars of their houses. Here they throw pulse and rice on the crowns in the name of the Departed. In the north of the State, at Penjori for example, when they are grinding haldi, preparing oil and husking rice in preparation for the marriage, the chelik and motiari go in procession to the ghotul and tie a little crown to the pillar in the name of Lingo. They then go to the Hanalkot and tie another crown there in the name of the Departed. In the Bara Dongar Pargana they sometimes tie the crown after the marriage in the shrine of the clan-god.

Even when a chelik or motiari has left one ghotul and joined another, his old ghotul may remember him at the time of his marriage by tying a crown to their pillar. This was done in 1940 at Penjori when the chelik put up a crown for a boy who had left them a year before to work as Lamhada for a girl in Kanker.

THE FOURTH DAY

I was not able to see the ceremonies of the fourth day at Sidhawand, but at Malakot I saw them twice; the procedure was, I believe, the same at Sidhawand.

393

FIG. 21. Squirt, used in fun for spraying people with water at a marriage
Length 2' 7"

After the ceremonies of welcome to the new daughter-in-law were concluded, or on the following morning, bride and bridegroom were brought out of the house and made to stand together on an old mat.

Wherever I have seen this done, the couple affected the greatest distaste and stood averted from each other's presence. The attendant motiari first handed the boy a toilet-twig; he gave it to the girl and she threw it away. He gave her another one, and she threw that away also. Then she gave him one and he threw it away. He took a fourth and cleaned his teeth with it, and gave it to her. She cleaned her teeth and threw it down.

This rite may symbolize the intimacy of married life—I am not sure. The next appears to be a test of potency. The chelik gave the bridegroom a number of stout poles about six feet long. He handed them to his wife; she threw some away and returned others to him and he had to break them. The boys had already notched them half way down so this was not very difficult.

Suddenly without warning the boy seised his bride and spat in her mouth. When she had recovered, she handed him a gourd of water; he filled his mouth

Plate XXIX

585

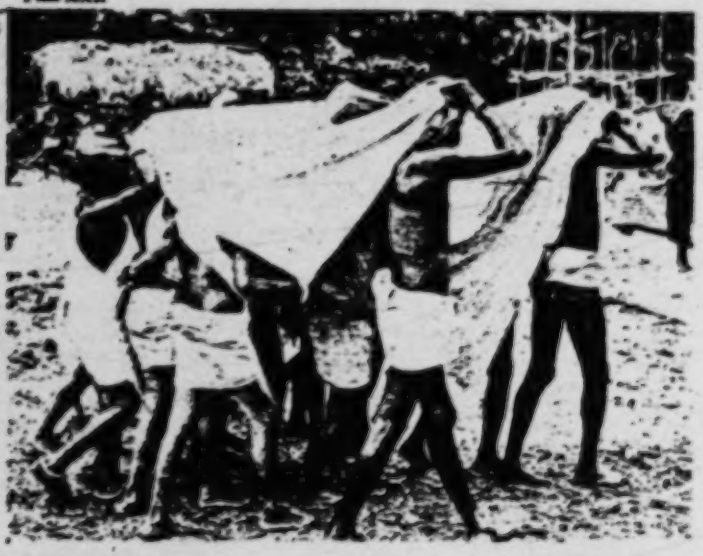
ABOVE: The bride spits at her husband

BELOW: The husband proves his virility by breaking legs

[p. 128a]

Plate XXI

585



ABOVE: Bride being taken out for the Lagir procession

BELOW: The bride bids farewell to her old companions

[p. 128 L]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585 with the water, caught her and spat again in her mouth. Motiari gave him another gourd of water and he passed it on to his bride; she twice filled her mouth and spat all over him.

Now the motiari gathered round and undid the plaits of hair that had been tied during the wedding.

Song

585 539

Sura heri sahāli sahāli he buba,	There are seven links in my plait,
Nawa sahal lehika lehika he buba.	I am going to undo the links.
Bona lārne lehika lehika he buba?	For whose love will you undo it?
Sātu jor dāda lor dāda lor he buba;	I have seven brothers;
Dādān lārne lehika lehika he buba.	For love of my brothers I will undo it.
Bārāng his lehika lehika he buba?	What will you give before you undo it?
Dobir bhainsi hiydka hiydka he buba,	I'll give a buffalo from my herd.
Tāne yise hema roy hema roy he buba,	Don't give a buffalo,
Dobir hinja poyor roy poyor roy he buba.	Or the herd will be desolate.

585 When the hair was undone, the motiari combed it, and then bride and groom threw water and rubbish over each other. They needed a bath and the motiari poured water over them.

Then two motiari sat down presenting little laps for ritual occupation. The boy sat down, and the bride came to sit in his lap. She stayed there a moment, then jumped up and hit him on the back. Then she sat down, and he prepared to sit in her lap. But at the right moment she wriggled aside and he tumbled to the ground amid roars of laughter. But he jumped up and hit her two or three times with his clenched fist.

The fun now became general. Chelik filled their mouths with water and blew it over the motiari. The girls filled leaf-cups with cow-dung and spilled it over the chelik. Meanwhile the Gaita's wife collected the haldi-stained clothes of bride and groom; someone brought out a pot and went round begging for fire. He pushed handfuls of rubbish against private parts saying, 'Set them on fire!' At last they put the pot on the fire and boiled the clothes. But they were soon brought out and tied in a bundle. The Gaita poured a little liquor on the four corners and they lifted up the bundle seven times. Bride and groom undid the wet clothes and threw them over each other. 831] Someone pretended to be a Ganda with a large imitation penis and went round trying to sell the clothes.

At last the Gaita caught hold of the married pair and dragged them into the house for a well-earned meal, which they took together in ceremonial state.

The Last Rites

The marriage is over but a curious and interesting rite remains. Bride and bridegroom go for one last visit to the ghotul. The bride first massages her husband and then every boy in turn. The chelik send the husband off to his house, and a little later tell the girl to follow him. When she refuses three or four of them take her by force, push her into the room with her husband and shut them in. I have seen this done at Malakot and Nayanar. I will describe the Malakot incident here.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
[354]
585
522
585

FIG. 22. Iron lamp-stand placed in the centre of the marriage booth
Height 5'

In the evening, after everyone had eaten their supper, the chelik and motiari went singing to escort the bridal pair to their new house, which had been entirely deserted for their benefit. All the other people had gone away. The chelik and motiari danced before the house for some time, the newly-married pair dancing with them. Then the little boys and girls were sent away, and the seniors caught hold of the bride and groom and pushed them into the house. Here the girl stood still while the husband was taken into a small inner room. The Sirdar spread a new mat, placed a cloth on it (they sometimes put oil on it 'to make it slippery') and made him lie down on one side. Then they pulled the girl into the room and made her lie down beside him. The boys patted them farewell, and ran out shutting the door behind them.

Outside they ran to the wall of the house, trying to peep in and hear what was going on, laughing and excited. The boys ought now to have caught a cock and taken it away, plucking its feathers all along the road, to roast it in the ghotul. But the groom's old mother had been too clever for them and had hidden all her poultry.

This cock is known variously as the *lod-kor* or 'sleeping cock', *pussi-kor* or 'semen cock', *konda-kor* or 'pubic-hairs cock', *pude-kor* or 'vagina cock', and *gri-kor* or 'copulation cock'. The usual custom, as we shall see at Nayanar, is to catch this cock, pluck the feathers going along the road, roast it in or near the ghotul or the ghotul camp, and then when everyone is asleep to push burnt feathers, entrails, bits of bone, into the mouths, ears, noses and private parts of the sleeping children—a joke that never fails to cause the greatest mirth and delight.

The theory seems to be that the cock is some sort of compensation. 'He is eating her vagina; we are eating the vagina cock.'

In Aturgaon I was told that the ghotul leaders gave a little sermon to the husband when they shut him up with his bride. 'Take this girl; she is now your property. Give us a sleeping-cock in exchange. Sleep with the girl in happiness and joy; may she bear a child within a year; it is your duty.'

The chelik of Munjmeta told me that where boy and girl belonged to the same ghotul, and where that ghotul was one in which boys and girls paired off in some kind of permanent relationship, they had a different custom. When the marriage was over, the bride returned to the ghotul and combed the hair and massaged the limbs of her old ghotul-husband for the last time. She slept with him for an hour, and then the chelik took her to her husband and shut them up together. The cock in this

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

case was not stolen, but was given by the husband in compensation for taking a girl away from the ghotul. 585

As they escort the newly married pair to bed the boys and girls sing a characteristic song.

Dulha cho māndo dulha cho māndo,	In the bridegroom's booth,
Parwāda jhulaya.	Swings the pigeon. 585
Dulhi cho māndo dulhi cho māndo,	In the bride's booth, 539
Tendha latwa loi baba lot.	The lizard copulates and copulates. 831
Pālak bhāji waare re leha bhāji hundiy jai re leha.	Spinach is drying on a leaf.
Jara jara tenda bane se re leha tenda pāni nākin tire re leha.	There is a pair of weighted balances (of a well), but he won't use them.
Palārigaon cho jaliya gānja,	The long-tailed cock of Palari,
Dongrigura cho kāri kom,	The black hen of Dongrigura,
Dandāh chathi abbich dehi.	Every moment they want to copulate.

When everything was over, at Sidhawand the headman and the village elders purified the village from any possible evil introduced by the many visitors. They sprinkled liquor round the houses and offered a chick to the Village Mother. 585 783

V. The Navanar Marriages: A Different Procedure

Such was the marriage ritual at Sidhawand and Malakot. I believe that a very similar procedure is followed all over eastern Bastar. We must now take a brief glance at the other type of marriage, where the main ceremony takes place at the bridegroom's house and where a number of minor details differ. 585

The marriage I am now to describe was celebrated at Amasara and Nayanar on 15 April 1941 and the following days. On the first evening the bride was prepared as at Sidhawand. Her motiari sat round her all night, weeping and consoling her. The next morning the bridegroom, escorted by his chelik and motiari, came to Amasara to fetch her. On the way, at the village boundary, the Gaita made the usual line of ash and offered liquor in three saja leaves, saying, 'Let there be no trouble and no quarrels. Let us return in safety'. They stepped over the line and went on their way, none looking back.

The Farewell Ceremonies

Both parties cooked separately out-of-doors in the fields. During the day there was the usual application of haldi, weeping, exchange of presents and some heavy drinking. When I reached Amasara on the afternoon of this second day, I found a scene of great animation. Several groups of boys were dancing with mandri drums; in another part of the field rows of girls were dancing and singing Reio. Another group of motiari in boy's clothes, with waistcoats and turbans, were preparing for the Jhoria Endanna when the bridegroom has to recognise his bride amidst a group of dancing motiari disguised as boys, an incident which I study fully in Chapter XVI. In the middle sat a row of old women, swaddhi to each other, their bodies covered with haldi-water and singing drunkenly.

It was getting late and presently the bride's parents went to the boy's people and said, 'Now you are our daughter's mother and father; we are giving her

•585 to you'. At this the girl went weeping to her friends and gave them little keepsakes. As evening fell, the party left the village. Bride and bridegroom walked most of the way, but whenever they came to a field the chelik carried them across, and they threw pulse and rice onto the ground in honour of the Earth Mother. In Telanga, the bride had to cross a stream. She brought two aonra rings and threw them left and right as she went over in honour of the Water Maiden (Yer Kanyang) for she too was still a maiden.

The bride was brought to her new house rather late at night, but her mother-in-law received her, washing her feet and giving her a kindly welcome. In Telanga, the boy's motiari made the girl stand on a new mat covered with peacock's feathers for this greeting.

Bringing in the Manda Wood

At about 10 p.m. the chelik of Nayanar and visiting villages went to bring the boughs for the marriage-booth. After the Gaita had cut the mahua tree, food was given to the boys and they had supper there in the jungle. They returned to the village, dancing and drumming, shouting *Kiddar-pude* continually. A number of women waiting in the court of the house tried to stop them entering, but the manda branches were full of red ants, and the boys scattered these over the women and dispersed them. Then they danced banging the branches on the ground till the courtyard and road was alive with the ants; they chased any girl they saw, and rained a stinging shower over her.

The booth was hastily erected; there were only four poles and no brooms tied at the top. A rope of paddy straw was tied round and a string of mango leaves. The important thing to notice is that this booth was put up inside the courtyard of the house—I saw the same thing at Telanga—and this completely altered the whole ceremony: the grand procession of the Lagir became obviously impossible.

Now weary and bitten all over with red ants I went to bed. I am told that the party danced and drank all night; I can well believe it, they looked jaded enough next day.

Early the following morning, the Rawat's wife as usual dug up a little earth, [731] but here there was no chasing of a motiari. An old woman put the earth in her sari and tied it over her buttocks, afterwards letting it fall in a very vulgar manner. As they returned the girls took grass from the thatch of a house and put it in their hair; later they stuck it in the centre pole of the booth.

The Worship of the Drums

This rite, which does not seem to be known in eastern Bastar, is very important in the central parganas. Before beginning to dance, the chelik put three mandri and a wooden gong together on the ground. The two leaders of the ghotul removed their turbans, made a small pattern of rice-flour and offered liquor to Tallur Muttai, Lingo and the Departed. Then four other boys caught hold of the drums and at a given signal picked them up all together with a loud cry, while other boys pulled the 'priests' over backwards. Only after this could the chelik dance. As visiting villages arrived the chelik marched up the road, with grand and triumphant drumming, and worshipped their drums in the same place.

The usual rites are now performed; the interminable application of haldi, the taking of omens, the tying of the plaits, the bathing of bride and groom.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

In some villages the Gaita takes the marriage pair to the shrine of the Village Mother to offer sacrifice and ask if all will be well. 585

Rites of Anointing

On the Lagir day, the groom was first taken round the pole inside the booth five times; this corresponds to the *khûri bînwar* of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The girl was taken round later and carried swinging to and fro into the house.

In this type of marriage, bride and groom are again and again carried out of the house by their attendants to be anointed. After fifteen or twenty minutes they are taken back; then after a rest, brought out again. They are made to sit on a wooden *pîdha* seat under the booth.

Songs

585
539

The seat is made of sandalwood, O sister.
Come out girl and sit upon the seat.
It is in the raj of your mother and father.
It is in the raj of your brothers and relatives.
There is no kind of trick about it.

From Naria village, I have a few of the songs sung by the bride herself when her different relatives come to anoint her.

When her brother comes, she sings:

Give the oil lovingly;
Give the ghee costly as gold, brother;
Make the good oil climb my body.

When different *akomdms* relatives come, she sings:

Put a mark on my forehead, friends;
Put much haldi on my body.
You are the daughters of a great house,
I am your little sister.
How happy I was in my own home!
Now I go to a stranger's house.
Who can tell if I will live,
Who can tell if I will die there?

When her brother's wife comes, she sings:

I used to be in your house, bhauji,
Now you are giving me to a stranger.
You used to give me good food to eat,
But now you are sending me away.
When you come to visit me
Who knows if they will let me give you food or no?

At the end of the anointing ceremony, girls lifted the bride up and swung her vigorously to and fro as they carried her into the house.

Song

We will hold you fast,
We will not let you fall.
Swing, bride, swing.
We hold you safely in our hands

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585 The Lagir was a very tame affair compared with what I saw at Sidhawand and Malakot. One of the boy's samdhi led the procession. He was followed by the boy, then by the girl, and then by five motiari singing. After completing the seven circuits, they tied the clothes of bride and groom together, and made them sit down for tika. When this was done a man poured water over them from the roof of the booth.[1] After this they were taken outside the house and the little rites of toilet-twig, undoing the plaits and breaking wood were performed as at Malakot.

The Tour of the Village

Now chelik and motiari escorted the bride and bridegroom round the village on a sort of farewell tour. The party first visited the ghotul, where the boy and girl threw rice and copper coins into the building. Thence they went to the Gaita's house and round the village. As the party entered each compound the house-folk came out to wash their feet, put tika on their foreheads and embraced them. The groom tied bead-necklaces round the necks of the young children of the house. The housewife gave rice and a coin or two, all of which was carefully collected in a basket by the leading motiari.

The Ghotul Camp

During a marriage the cooking has to be done out-of-doors. The ghotul is closed until all is over. At Nayanar a special camp was made in a magnificent grove of mango trees. Here the boys and girls lived and entertained their visitors. On the last night, the bride and bridegroom came at sunset, and the chelik and motiari of Nayanar sat round in a great circle. The bridegroom, who had been the Sirdar, attended by two motiari, gave necklaces and rings to every boy and girl. The rings were strung on two big *sutia*-torcs. The bead necklaces were tied together as they came from the bazaar. These gifts must have cost at least twenty rupees.

The Bedding of the Bridal Pair

Bride and bridegroom went to their house for supper; chelik and motiari had theirs in the camp and fed their many visitors. At about 11 p.m. girls and boys went to fetch the bride and her husband. They 'stole away secretly', as I was told, and stayed a little while in the camp. Then suddenly the chelik seized the girl and her husband and took them to their house. They went willingly enough at first, but when they reached the bridal chamber, though the girl entered without persuasion, the boy made a great deal of fuss. But at last they pushed him in, spread a new mat, and made them lie down together. The chelik ran out and shut the door, shouting with excitement. It was noticeable that no older person came near or showed the slightest interest.

585 522 This time the chelik were able to catch a cock. They took it down to the camp and made a fire in a field near by and roasted it. In the meantime the younger children went to sleep. About midnight, the boys who had bedded the married pair, and eaten the cock, came round with handfuls of offal and burnt bones and feathers. They pushed these into the mouths and privates of the sleeping girls and boys, who woke spitting and protesting but

[1] This is possibly the oldest part of the ceremony. Cain, writing in 1876, describes how a Koi woman was made to bend her head while the man leant over her and friends poured water out of a bottle-gourd. 'When the water ran off his head to that of the woman they were regarded as man and wife.'—J. Cain, 'The Bhadrachallam Taluka', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. V (1876), p. 337.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585●
522

with a pleased recognition that the marriage at which they had so earnestly assisted had been consummated.[1]

VI. The Ghotul's Share in the Ceremony

Nāg nāgin he bihao ma dondiya he salmal. The little fish are kept busy at the cobras' wedding.—Muria saying

585
883

No wonder that there is no greater threat to a Muria boy or girl than that the ghotul members will not attend their marriage. For from beginning to end the smooth progress of the rite depends on the chelik and motiari. For a week beforehand the motiari instruct the bride in the ghotul. Chelik and motiari accompany the bridegroom when he goes to fetch his bride; they sing and dance at every point of the ceremony; the chelik go to bring in the wood for the booth and the girls direct them to its site by dancing on the spot with a mahua tree. Boys and girls go together to fetch the earth for the manda-platform, and dance round it when it is ready. The motiari attend through all the long-drawn business of anointing, they carry the bridal pair about on their backs; they bathe them, do their hair, feed them and weep with them. At the central moment of the rite, it is the drumming of the chelik and singing of the motiari that provides dignity, colour and excitement. Chelik and motiari again assist at the concluding ceremonies in the bridegroom's house, and it is the chelik who ultimately arrange the consummation of the marriage.

But these ritual duties are only the beginning of their task. They have to see to the entertainment of a large number of guests. The Sirdar arranges for wood and organizes the dances; the Belosa sees to the supply of water and leaves. She and her motiari have to make leaf-cups and plates for the male visitors (they only give leaves to women visitors, considering that they should be able to make their own). This in itself is a very considerable task, but in addition nearly all the cooking is done in the ghotul camp, and chelik and motiari have to serve food at meals. I have never seen girls work so hard as at Nayanar, where there were three weddings one after another: as the chelik were leading one husband and his bride to bed, the motiari were preparing the next bride for her fate. The girls never seemed to stop working; they were engaged day and night; yet though they began to look very tired

[1] Similar customs are observed by other tribes. In Siraiti, I watched Bison-horn Maria girls escort the bride to bed, though here the groom had to drag her into his house. Then a jovial party stole a cock and scattered its feathers along the path. The Juang boys escort the bridegroom from the *darbar* (dormitory), sometimes tying him hand and foot, to where his bride is waiting. They make him sit with her and say, 'See, here is your house: look to it. Here is a new girl, big-breasted and young. Do not disappoint her.' The boys piss inside the house, throw rubbish over the floor, then tie the door and run away. Bride and groom must clean the house before the marriage is consummated. I have witnessed a similar ceremony in a Bondo village.

For the Kota of the Nilgiri Hills, consummation was in the nature of a test, like the custom of 'bundling' in Wales. In the morning, the girl was questioned whether she liked her husband: if she did, the marriage was confirmed, if not, it was annulled.—E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India* (Madras, 1907), p. 62. Here, as with the Hill Maria and other very primitive tribes, the payment of bride-price and consummation was the marriage: there was little more to it.

By Hindus of Western Bengal, the third night after the wedding is called Phulsejya, or the flower bed. 'Eavesdropping goes on freely.'—S. N. Roy, 'Bivre-Achar in West Bengal', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, p. 190. In Mysore, the Brahmins observe the beautiful garbhadana ceremony, when the husband in a room filled with flowers pours fruit into his wife's lap and the priest prays 'May a male embryo enter thy womb as an arrow the quiver'.—M. N. Srinivas, op. cit., pp. 134f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

towards the end, I did not once see them strained or quarrelsome. Their tremendous vitality kept the thing on the move and made everyone cheerful and happy.

In return for all this work, the chelik and motiari seem to get very little, one meal a day and a little liquor. The bride and bridegroom distribute small keepsakes, rings and beads. The motiari of the bride's ghotul demand and receive four annas as *mundi*-cowrie. The chelik also demand a new mandri drum from the bridegroom in compensation for the loss of one of their girls. They are generally given eight annas instead. This present is called *sakta*. The boy also has to give *chitkul*-cymbals, or four annas, to his own chelik.

People treat the chelik and motiari with great respect, for there is great fear of offending them—a strike, which is not unknown, can upset the entire proceedings. It is

DETAIL

FIG. 23. *Chapali-mundi* necklace, from Kuntpadar, of red, white and blue beads
Length 3' 8"

noteworthy also that there is no exchange of obscenities between the older people and the ghotul members. When the old women smear their dirty hands on all available male faces, catching hold of their private parts or pouring haldi over their buttocks, they never do it to the chelik. It would be considered equally shocking for a married man to poke his stick at a motiari

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 883

or to abuse her as he may do freely to the married women. There is no doubt about it: these girls and boys are set apart. They must not be touched by sophisticated adult hands.

VII. The Significance of the Marriage Ceremony

585 182

Where both boy and girl belong to the same village and come from the same ghotul, the procedure is simplified and shortened, but otherwise follows the same lines as in the foregoing accounts. It will be seen that, in spite of various differences, the essentials of the rite are everywhere the same. The fundamental things seem to me to be these—the preparation and instruction of the bride in the ghotul, the ceremonial fetching of the bride by the bridegroom and his party, the building of a marriage-booth with its associated magical materials and patterns, the exchange of gifts and payment of a bride-price, the liberal use of oil and haldi to consecrate the bride and bridegroom, the procession round a marriage pole or booth seven times (the last two items are obvious borrowings from Hinduism), the tying together of the bridal pair, the pouring water over them (probably a development of a Maria custom), minor rituals designed to emphasize the unity of the couple and to ensure the potency of the bridegroom, the last visit to the ghotul and the official bedding of the couple by the chelik.

Let us consider the meaning of these essentials in more detail. In a brilliant analysis of the marriage ritual of the Bihari Kayasth, W. G. Archer takes a comparison from modern art. 'If we are to find an analogy for this wedding ritual, the nearest would be a surrealist poem, ballet or novel. In a surrealist work the action has a strange power and a mysterious charm. Strange persons develop their intriguing contacts and the action has an air of irrational urgency. On analysis it is seen that many of the actions are symbolic and the poem, novel or the ballet generates its power from the semi-conscious associations which its dialogue, gestures, scenery and action evoke. In the ritual of a Kayasth wedding, there is a similar use of irrational action, a similar use of persons with a strangely inflated power, and a similar use of semi-conscious symbols. The meaning of the ritual may be submerged and, for many, may be scarcely comprehended but its basis is in a symbolic system and its total effect is overpowering.'[1]

This will apply also to a Muria wedding, though the meaning here is sometimes more obvious; the Kayasth is a highly developed community and naturally resorts more to symbolic concealment of its real interests and desires. The different elements in a Muria marriage can be easily distinguished. There are first the many rites that emphasize the break with the old life and the entry to the new. There are the symbolic actions and materials to express the sexual aspect of the marriage and to ensure its fertility. There are the symbolic or overt arrangements to protect bride and bridegroom at this critical moment of their fortunes. The social and business aspect of the union of the two families is always prominent.

The length, complexity and extravagance of the marriage ritual is necessary to impress on boys and girls who are so used to love and sex the importance of the step they are now taking. Marriage here does not, as in so many other cultures, mark an initiation into the mysteries of sex. It is not, usually, the binding together of two people who have fallen in love with each

[1] From *The Wedding of the Writers*, the manuscript of which I have been privileged to see before publication.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
182

other. It represents instead the end of a life of sexual and domestic freedom and the companionship of young people. It marks the beginning of economic responsibility, a change of residence, a transformation of the whole way of life. The ritual is adapted to emphasize this. There is the long week of preparation in the ghotul and the vigil of song and weeping that ends it; there is the parental fuss; the obvious trouble and expense for everyone; the solemn regard for omens; the new clothes and ornaments. I have often been reminded of the preliminaries to an operation—the bathing and shaving of the body, the tests and examinations, the rendering of the person aseptic, the creation of a sense that the patient is a being already separate and apart who will never be quite the same again. So now chelik and motiari are prepared for an operation that will sever them for ever from the carefree joys of youth.

The importance of this operation is further emphasized by the treatment of bridegroom and bride as the Raja and Rani of their brief matrimonial court. They are crowned; the leaders of their community defer to them and treat them with respect; their 'army' and 'police' accompany them everywhere, even when they go to perform their natural functions; they must never walk but always be carried about; at the time of tika everyone salutes them; they are 'Raja and Rani for two days and a half'.

This is a time of peculiar supernatural danger and the measures taken to avoid it find their parallels in many parts of the world. The crowns are not only symbols of royalty but correspond to the wedding-veil. Bride and bridegroom are also covered with a cloth both at the crisis of the Lagir and other important moments of the ceremony. This, and the refusal of bride and groom to look at each other, is connected partly with sexual modesty, partly with the belief that it is dangerous even to see dangerous persons.[1] Bride and bridegroom remain silent for most of the ceremony; certainly they never speak to one another. 'This is a common taboo upon persons passing through a critical period, and the principle behind it is a natural impulse of egoistic sensibility, a sort of recognition of the importance of the occasion, combined with more or less of spiritual fear, either of general danger, or in this case, of danger from each other.'[2]

The ceremonial beating of the bride by the bridegroom and of the bridegroom by the bride, which occurs several times during the ceremony, is regarded by Westermarck as intended to drive away evil influences and may also be connected 'with the idea of gaining power'.[3] Protection from evil spirits is probably also the aim, or one of the aims, of the Jhoria Endanna when a group of motiari including the bride dress up as boys and the bridegroom has to try to recognize his future wife.

Among the demon-scarers employed during the ceremony may be mentioned the brooms tied to the booth, the oil so freely used, the tying of the hair in plaits, the carrying of bride and groom over the threshold and the ceremonial bath. Brooms are important as sweeping away ghosts and spirits; sticks or grass from a broom are often used in magic or divination. All over the world bride and bridegroom are carried during their wedding[4] and in particular are never allowed to touch with their feet the threshold which is generally haunted by spirits. The ceremonial bath is regarded by Crawley as intended 'to neutralize the mutual dangers of contact'.[5] The magical

[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 44.
[2] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage* (London, 1925), Vol. II, p. 518.
[3] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 58.
[4] Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 332ff.
[5] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 39.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 182

importance of the Muria bath is emphasized by the use of the winnowing-fan (universally important in magic) to fan and drive away all risk of evil.

The red ants scattered over the marriage party are perhaps intended merely as a joke; they may, however, represent a survival of some former custom of ordeal. In British Guiana a man before marriage had to show his fitness for it by allowing himself to be sewn into a hammock full of fire ants.[1]

Yet to the participants in the marriage it is probable that its financial and social aspect is of even greater importance than the supernatural atmosphere into which they have projected themselves. The alliance of the two families is emphasized by the little rite of *samdhi-bhet* at the very beginning and by the farewell of the new relations-in-law at the end. Their prayer—'Let there be no quarrels. Let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'—and again—'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it'—indicates the importance of the ceremony for the family, the clan and the ancestors. This is still further shown by the presents made to various relatives and, above all, by the gifts offered to the Departed—to the Pot in the old home to compensate the ancestors for the loss of a girl, to the Pot in the new family to indicate that the bride has left her old clan and joined that of her husband.

But it is not only family and village that the motiari must now desert; she has to leave her ghotul. So gifts and compensations are given: there is a feast, a farewell massage, and marriage-crowns are often put up on the ghotul pillar. Bride and groom bid ceremonial farewell to their old companions as they set out for their new home.

So far we have dealt mainly with rites of parting and separation: other ceremonies stress the social and sexual union of bride and groom and attempt to ensure its natural fertility. The giving of the bridal ring is a world-wide symbol of union, so is the ceremony of eating together. At the end of the Lagir circumambulation (itself a rite of aggregation with a subsidiary cathartic or prophylactic purpose [2]), bride and groom are tied together and water is poured over them. On two occasions, the bridegroom or his friends carry off the bride; this may be a survival of an older tradition of marriage by capture or may merely be intended to stress the emphatic break with the old life and entry into the new.

582 182 831

The sexual interest is both manifest and latent. There is little concealment or symbolism about the ceremonial bedding of the married pair, the vagina carved on the main pillar of the booth, the obscene horseplay between relatives, the constant cries of 'Penis' and 'Vagina', the songs, the jokes, the abuse. In such sexual jokes, says W. G. Archer, 'is a release of repressed energy which when applied to the marriage must necessarily make it fertile'.[3]

Other of the incidents and objects in the ritual are of a symbolic character. Some are directly sexual: thus the motiari bang the mahua branch up and down on the site of the booth just as Bison-horn Maria girls use their dancing-sticks, professedly in imitation of sexual intercourse. The pouring of water over bride and groom is a symbol of world-wide distribution, and the breaking of wooden poles links up with many examples given by Westermarck,[4] where

[1] Sir E. F. Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), p. 221.
[2] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 513ff.
[3] *The Wedding of the Writers.* And Westermarck says, 'The sexual indulgence of the wedding guests may, on the principle of homoeopathic magic, be a means of assisting bride and bridegroom in achieving the reproductive aims of their union'.—Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 592.
[4] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 437.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

things are broken to ensure or facilitate the consummation of the marriage. The Berber blow a cane to pieces. The Zulu bride breaks a spear. Among the Yakut dry rods are broken and burnt.

Haldi, with its yellow colour, is both a ghost scarer and a sex-symbol. It is significant that one of its forty-six ancient synonyms is *kamala*, 'lustful' and others refer to it as 'night'.[1] The oil with which it is mixed is, to the Muria mind at least, another sex-symbol, recalling the oil used in massage and that traditionally put on a lover's mat 'to make it slippery'.

Other objects are concerned more with the fruit of intercourse, for the fertility so carefully avoided in the ghotul is now passionately desired. The kalsa-pitcher is an obvious symbol of the womb: it is filled with fertile grain and a lamp (which stands for the act of love in folk-poetry as in Pahari paintings) covers its mouth. The arrow is another obvious sex-symbol[2]; the very interesting song on p. 119 connects the marriage arrow with the arrow used to cut the umbilical cord of the first child: here too the kalsa-pitcher becomes the pot from which the mother is bathed during the ceremonial uncleanness of the puerperium. The decorations of the booth, the strings of mango leaves so green and fertile, the coconut, the grain, the burning lamps, all hint at love and love's fruit. Even the curious rite where the bride and groom throw away their toilet-twigs and spit at each other may aim at ensuring union and productiveness. Most obvious of all the symbols are those connected with earth, for woman is everywhere the earth whom man must plough and sow.

The incidents and furniture of a Muria marriage, therefore, have not come together by chance. They are purposeful and charged with meaning. They express in vivid and dramatic form the working of the Muria mind. There could hardly be a more emphatic means of bringing home to a young couple their social, sexual and domestic union.

[1] See *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 39.

[2] Westermarck gives many examples, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 490; so does Archer, *The Blue Grove*, pp. 172ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

761
883

sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

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The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal; the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose of it.

761
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All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatisfied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the loveliest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away. They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Kuara-bhut, revealing his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain. In Palnar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy. When the Siraha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

765
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755

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In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria everywhere are at the mercy of the merchants in the bazaar, though these are not entirely indifferent to popular demand. They supply cheap aluminium armlets and anklets, glass and lac bangles, aluminium and silver neck-bands, the *kawel* necklaces of rupees known throughout Central India, and many varieties of beads. Muria chelik and motiari buy these in the bazaars and wear them. They indicate nothing except perhaps the way in which the natural taste and intelligence of the aboriginals is degraded in the interests of big business.

We may now turn to the special ornaments worn by the Muria in the different fashion areas I have named. We will begin with the Jhoria, for these are the most distinctive and interesting of all the Muria.

The Jhoria, as we have seen, are simply Hill Maria who have settled in the foothills. You can distinguish a Maria from a Jhoria girl by her breasts so charmingly displayed and the tattoo marks less charmingly marring the beauty of her face. It is not so easy to distinguish between a Jhoria chelik and a young Hill Maria boy.

Like the Hill Maria, the Jhoria give the impression of being a little over-dressed.[1] They are 'dolled up', smart, tight, fresh, alert, vivacious—altogether charming. Their clothes are worn tightly round their bodies, revealing the grace and energy of the figure. Their ornaments and especially their necklaces do not hang about them, but are drawn tight round their heads and necks. The feathers in their hair give them the perky bright appearance of young birds.

Most striking of all are their gaily coloured bead decorations. They wear head-bands, sometimes three or four of them, round the head, keeping the hair in place. Round the neck are two or more broad bead collars and a profusion of necklaces; their beautiful and elaborate designs are fully illustrated in the colour plates in this book.

Jhoria boys and girls wear ear-pendants of coloured beads (Fig. 64): some girls also wear large circular shields (*dhār*) without the usual chains, or home-made wooden *hirwa* (Fig. 73) covered with silver paper.

Bangles are not made by the Muria, and those worn by boys or girls are the usual bazaar products.

Rings play an important part in ghotul life. A boy or girl on being appointed to high office is presented with a ring: at a marriage the bride and bridegroom give rings to their old companions: a ring is buried in front of the Gaita's house before a Deo-Dandar or Pen Kolang expedition and is later given to the leader of the dance: rings are collected at a festival and offered to the clan-god.

The rings are of brass or aluminium: some are decorated with little bells (Fig. 17). Girls often wear a great many which the boys beg them to remove before beginning the massage.

Girls often wear rows of combs in their hair, with thick bunches of cowries,[2] and balls of red and green wool. Both chelik and motiari love to put flowers in their hair or over their ears.

The Jhoria chelik wear cowrie belts just above their loin-cloths. There seems no shortage of these; they may be found everywhere. Sometimes the son of well-to-do people wears a broad silver *hardan*, bought in the bazaar, of a kind used by girls.

[1] The word is W. V. Grigson's; it exactly describes my own impression—if such a phrase can be applied to people who hardly wear any clothes at all.

[2] For the use of cowries, almost universal in Bastar, see my article 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII (1942), pp. 121–4.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

On the third day of a marriage, the motiari retire to the ghotul or their camp and dress up as chelik. They put on turbans, waistcoats and loin-cloths. They borrow boys' armlets for their arms, put knives in their waist-bands, and approach the marriage-booth carrying axes, branches of mango leaves and bunches of *dab* grass. They dance up to the marriage-booth, under which the bridegroom is seated, and ceremonially sweep it. Among the dancers is the bride disguised as a boy. All the dancers are in fact disguised, for they wind their turbans round and round their faces to make it as difficult as possible to tell them apart. As the girls go round and round the booth, they challenge the bridegroom to pick out his bride. He is supposed to be unable to do this, so at last, as the girls draw closer and closer to him, the bride suddenly darts out from among them and hits him on the back with her clenched fist. He jumps up and attempts to hit her back but she escapes and her fellow motiari do their best to protect her. After this the girls continue dancing for some time, then retire to their homes and remove their male disguise.[1]

This practice is called the Nenuldwar, the 'army of the bride and bridegroom', and the dance is the Choli Endanna or the Jhoria Endanna. The name Choli Endanna simply means 'the waistcoat dance' and refers to the male disguise. The word Jhoria probably means lowlander[2] and has been fully explained in Chapter I. It is now no longer used as the title of the tribe, which has become merged with the Muria. There is, however, a Jhorian Pargana or sub-division and it is said that the dance is so called because it originated here. Although the word Jhoria means 'lowlander' in comparison with the Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains, to the Muria and Gond of eastern Bastar it is the name of an older and more primitive people. The expression Jhoria Endanna, therefore, suggests a dance of old time and ancient tradition. It is the most primitive of all the marriage dances.

As the motiari approach and dance round the marriage-booth, which they do very slowly in a long straight line, each girl clutching her left-hand neighbour round the neck with one arm, while with the other she waves her bunch of grass and mango leaves to and fro as if she were sweeping a floor, they sing a number of songs. There is a considerable variety of these and I will give a few examples of different kinds. The first song refers to the ceremonial sweeping of the marriage-booth.

Diwān miyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Wāyu dewa wāyu roy dewo!	Come girl, come Dewo!
Wiyār hayu wāyu roy dewo!	Come to sweep, girl, come Dewo!
Naling ceo goräng roy dewo.	The mandia is like aonra fruit.
Goräng nori ola roy dewoni.	She went to grind the mandia.

men. The chaunt and dance were as before, except that the pantomime abounded in the most indecent gestures and attitudes, all illustrative of sexual relations. One girl slipped (or pretended to) and fell. Whereupon, one of those playing a man's part fell upon her to ravish her. A rescue ensued amidst roars of merriment, and the would-be ravisher was in process of being stripped when our modesty compelled us to call an interval.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 66ff.

According to Santal tradition, witchcraft began through a transvestite expedition. Marang Buru had decided to teach men witchcraft, but the women made them drunk and then 'put on pagris and dhoties and stuck goats' beards on their faces' and went to learn the magic art instead—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 422.

[1] At Pardhan marriages in Mandla, the bride is sometimes disguised as a boy and her future husband is challenged to find her. I found a similar test among the Binjhwar of Chhattisgarh. The custom is doubtless widely distributed.

[2] See pp. 15–17.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

Diwān miyār hilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Hirpong ichoh wejing roy dewo.	The rice is like chips of wood.
Wejeng usi ala roy dewo.	She went to husk the rice.
Diwān miyār hilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Purka pila wāterom dewo,	She went with her baby on her back,
Diwān miyār hilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!

838
585
539

The next song is about the girls' disguise. The bridegroom cannot recognize the bride now, but he will recognize her all too well when the marriage is consummated.

Burga chodi layor.	The boy is getting old.
Bāba kohore kore!	
Nanāy layor intor.	Yet he calls himself a youth.
Layāh ondah hitor,	He collects the young girls,
Layah tadla kewong.	He won't let them go.
Murka portāna intor.	He calls himself an orphan.
Ona chods māyudr	He says he'll see what happens
Mēwa kere wāyer.	If we come near.
Mākē ise wariyāntor.	He frightens us away.
Dulhin chinke māyer,	He can't recognize the bride,
Mulnāh chinke māntor	But he'll know her tonight
Layor ise ātak.	If he really is a youth.
Wēsi muthka kewer.	We are going to hit him.
Nāndy āri iner.	He says, 'This is my wife'.
Bāba kohore kore!	

The next song explains itself. It must be remembered that each of these songs is being sung by girls led by the bride herself who insists over and over again that she is a boy.

Mutka hilāy wāl tona,	I come to beat him,
Nana jhoriyān layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Nākē kurza wariatu,	Seeing me he is afraid,
Nana jhoriyān layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Pichil tangiya kānj tona,	I have a small axe on my shoulder,
Nana jhoriyān layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Kariya kot kurtana,	I am wearing a black coat,
Nana jhoriyān layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Manda kot wānana,	I have come to clean the marriage-booth,
Nana jhoriyān layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.

Another song seems simply to describe the various clothes and ornaments that the girls are wearing:

Aga baga dāng parsing saiya sona?	Whence is the drum that sounds so bravely?
Arra nāding parsing saiya sona.	From Arra comes the drum.
Aga baga dāng kundring saiya sona?	Whence is the *kundring* that sounds so well?
Kohka nāding kundring saiya sona.	From Kohka comes the *kundring*.
Aga baga dāng chithuring saiya sona?	Whence are the cymbals that clash so loudly?
Garun kaiyading chithuring saiya sona.	The blacksmith made the cymbals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

838
585
539

Aga baga da dhoti roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the dhoti that looks so smart?
Gāndou kaiyada dhoti roy saiya sona.	The Ganda made the dhoti.
Aga waga dīng muyāng roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the bells that tinkle so merrily?
Kaser kaiyadīng muyāng roy saiya sona.	The Kaser made the bells.
Aga baga dīng paniya saiya sona ?	Whence came the comb that looks so fine?
Layon kaiyada paniya roy saiya sona.	The chelik made the comb that looks so fine.

Finally, I will give two examples of the many obscene songs that are sung during this dance, for otherwise it is impossible to get a clear picture of the meaning and atmosphere of the rite.

Nana jhoriyāna waiwoy gāto tiwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will not eat half-cooked rice.
Nana jhoriyāna dais dudo poyrāna.	I am Jhoria: jumping up and down I hold her breast.
Nana jhoriyāna podoh monde dehrāna.	I am Jhoria: I break the girdle round her waist.
Nana jhoriyāna hārspoche tendwāna.	I am Jhoria: I quickly pull off her cloth.
Nana jhoriyāna pudete bonde nekyāna.	I am Jhoria: into her I press myself.
Nana jhoriyāna teks bura mi-kachwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will pluck out my pubic hairs and throw them away.

In the same style is a Halbi Jhoria Git.

Go to sweep the booth, Belosa.
Where has the bridegroom gone?
He is nowhere in the house.
What can he be frightened of?
He is dying for his penis.
He is going to have his sister.
Where has he taken her?
He has taken her to the river bank.
What leaves has he spread for her?
He has made a bed of *jam* leaves.
Jham-jham he swings to and fro.
Bathing, bathing, he inserts it.
Get off, get off, brother, she cries.

These songs are sung by the bride herself and by a party of unmarried girls. They have changed their sex for the occasion and imagine themselves performing the sexual act as men. The significance of this will be seen when we discuss the ultimate basis of the rite.

838 171 182 Various reasons have been advanced by scholars to explain this custom in different parts of the world. Frazer has emphasized the difficulty of the problem. 'The religious or superstitious interchange of dress between men and women is an obscure and complex problem, and it is unlikely that any

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

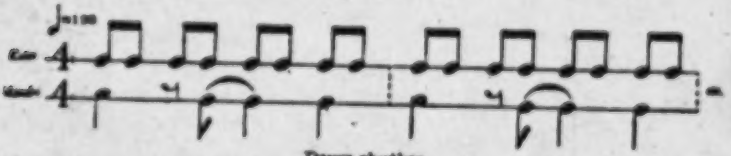
cannot move about. They have, however, devised a most effective form of stationary dance which obtains its effect from the movements of the hands and the swaying, bending and jerking of the body. This is probably why the girls' dances are not synchronized to the boys' drumming. The girls have their special duties and must adapt their songs to these, but the boys can move about independently for a large part of the time.

VI. The Drum Rhythms

In villages in the central area particularly, the Muria distinguish a great many *pâr* or rhythms in their drumming. These rhythms are not connected with the *dîka* steps, though they are sometimes associated with special movements of the dance. Thus, there are *pâr*-rhythms for the Pargao in a marriage, for the dances round the booth, for the great crisis of the Lagir, and to lead bride and bridegroom to the marriage-bed. Different rhythms accompany the worship of Mother Earth.

The *pâr* are known by easily memorized sentences, the words of which have usually no connexion with the dance but describe it by their rhythm. The Jhoria Muria do not seem to know many of these. At Metawand, the chelik only knew of two—'When we beat the drum with both hands', said one of them, 'the drum says *nikun gatha nikun gatha*, copulate properly, and when it is beaten with one hand, it says *deos deos endâl*, dance jumping'.

It is in villages like Kabonga, Bargaon and Hathipakhna and in most of the ghotul of the east-central area that the practice of the *pâr* has been most fully elaborated. At Hathipakhna there was a blind Mandar Guru, an old man who taught the boys their rhythms. He had only to say the words and the chelik immediately followed on their drums.



Drum rhythm

The meaning of many of the rhythms is obscure, and in some cases I can give only an approximate translation.

1. *Pargao Pâr*, used when bride or bridegroom (according to local custom, see page 98) arrives at the other's house, and is greeted by a procession of dancers. The drummers first circle round, all facing one direction; they then split up into pairs and each pair faces his partner. A number of different rhythms are used, for this is a memorable moment in the life of every boy and girl.

(a) *Barka mâne le lukhwun khâwuls tay to ât tay to ât saga le kakâo le parâwuls ?*
You are eating the stolen pork. How will you give it to the saga ?

(b) *Jim jim jim nadum narka, jim jim jim nadum narka.*
Rain is falling in the dead of night.

(c) *Hât jâsis duriya duriya, poj khâwun jâse.*
You are going to a market far far away. Eat your gruel and go.

(d) *Kakâo le yillâsit duriya lâphi duriyâle.*
You have come from far away.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

DANCE AND SONG

883X
533
535
585

(e) *Are [illegible] kashār be.*
O father, it will bite.

(f) *Dur dur dur dur neyi kashār be.*
Drive it off; the dog may bite.

2. *Saga Pār*, used when the two fathers-in-law meet officially for the first time. The chelik dance round them in a circle, facing each other in pairs: every now and then they halt and each pair raise their hands off their drums and salute each other, crying on a long steady note *Johār ho saga*.

(a) *Johār ho saga johār.*
Johar, saga, Johar.

(b) *Tay samdhi mai samdhi surti minjun kānwula.*
You are samdhi, I am samdhi, let us eat the powdered tobacco.

(c) *Aking koya korka dārango tuska ta.*
Pluck the leaf, O hoe, to serve the liquor.

(d) *Tahīt layor māndi tuh.*
Boys, lift up your knees.

(e) *Gatla pāta sahle kim dāy pohrs mām.*
Put on your clothes properly before you go away.

(f) *Johār ho saga johār bhat howun duno saga samdhi mand piyun.*
Johar, saga, johar, we've met so let us drink.

(g) *Adi narka bhum narka tara paka kal norka.*
Bring water to wash the feet at midnight and midday, O boy!

3. *Dārango Undāna Pār*, the rhythm for drinking liquor. This also accompanies the ritual drinking of liquor by the two fathers-in-law.

Dumun dumun kāka ta, dumun dumun kāka ta.
Take out liquor from the pot and drink.

4. *Manda Pār.* These are the rhythms used while the boys bring in the wood for the marriage booth—the drummers go to the forest and return dancing and drumming vigorously at the head of the procession; when the platform is plastered inside; and when any of the many minor rites are being performed under its shade.

(a) *Uita gundur gundur ta tin pakor wark wark!*
O the quail! Eat parched rice, O boys!

(b) *Bonyla bandawan jhatke māti da gaitin.*
Let us make a platform; O Gaitin, quickly bring the earth.

(c) *Harde roka paila pakin ponda uita.*
The char flower has blossomed on the way; the girl's vagina has swollen.

(d) *Chich ponda kawrela.*
The vagina is a cowrie facing upwards.

(e) *And and and, ayo ayo ayo!*
That's it! That's it! No it isn't! No it isn't!

(f) *Gaon cho manuk aiyin.*
All the headmen of the village.

(g) *Nawun nawun chepdawa.*
Take her, press her.

(h) *Ad laya kotla kandih surti detta.*
That girl is beautiful, give her some tobacco.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

(i) *Manda mandi tendsim dāy pohre mām.*
Throw away the mess in the booth and go away.

5. *Nayi Tarhina Pār.* The tedious business of anointing bride and bridegroom with oil, which continues intermittently for two days, is enlivened by some excellent dancing.

(a) *Tada mudiya tatti de.*
Stand old man and give the adze.

(b) *Gām chchli basunde ta.*
We will sit while the sun is shining.

(c) *Bavha mānz he chorun neyse lāchhu dy lāchhu mai hi dāda mai to ni chorey.*
It was Lachhu, not I, that stole the pork.

(d) *Dim dim dim kosum dim tumcho bāpcho polha dim.*
Testes! Testes! Kosum testes! The hollow testes of your father!

(e) *Dengur mundi me lamha āss, chu hābri chu.*
In the ant-hill is a hare, *Chu hābri chu.*

(f) *Tada bhuski hātum dāyi.*
Stand up, fat woman, and go to the bazaar.

(g) *Karanji gaon cho kursa, gaon kāje purza.*
He is impotent in Karanji village; but he is a real man in ours.

FIG. 141. *Pitorha* gong

6. *Mauv Tatkna Pār.* The rhythm while the bride and bridegroom are having their crowns tied on their heads.

Tatti de tatti de kawnār bilhu kawnār.
Give the adze, give the adze. But the boy won't go.

DANCE AND SONG

7. *Lagir Pār.* The climax of the marriage is when the bride and bridegroom are escorted round the booth seven times in a procession of chelik with their drums and by loudly singing motiari.

(a) *Mai samdhi tuy samdhin johār bhet howun leha he pāni rihāwun.*
We samdhi do Johar, pour the water over the boy.

(b) *Baniagāon cho ban bhainsa bāte chāra charate gucha bai hadendata hadendata.*
The wild buffalo of Baniagaon is grazing on the way. Move aside, girl, and I will drive it off.

(c) *Yergonda inta tīne tinta, hamba inta, tīne tinta.*
Say it is a water-snake and eat it. Say it is turmeric and eat it.

(d) *Korwāl kusir korasta agay mute narasta.*
The *korwāl* vegetable has sprouted; the girl went every day to see it.

(e) *Bāte valo durhi chu chu chu ta ta ta.*
The panther is on the road. *Chu chu ta ta ta.*

(f) *Johār leyor johār hor phat phate manta.*
O boys Johar! It is cock-crow time.

(g) *Tala buda hātwa te.*
Stand up, old man, and go to market.

8. *Kor Puda Pār.* Bride and bridegroom are not allowed to slip away quietly to bed; they must be escorted thither with the roar of drums. In these *pār* the boys from time to time raise both hands from their drums and wave their arms in the air like excited cocks—an obvious reference to the cock they are going to steal.

(a) *Adan lata dam-dama tarni bāyla gum guma.*
The charred saja wood is strong, the young girl is hard and firm.

(b) *Dulhi dudh he dulha dhare dulhi thar thare.*
The bridegroom holds the breasts of the bride and the bride trembles.

(c) *Dhirey dhirey dhirey guncha, chānd chānd chānd guncha.*
Penetrate slowly! Penetrate quickly!

(d) *Dengur mund cho howu, bhitre nowun gab gab dewu.*
The root in the ant-hill; take it inside and press it hard.[1]

This is the end of the rhythms used in marriages. The following *pār* can also, of course, be used in marriages, but they are not connected with specific moments of the ceremony. They represent the purely recreational side of the dancing.

9. *Gondin Pār.* The drummers circle in a line of couples facing each other.

Gondin gondin bolaut bāy he gondin bolaut? Buchak mand daas tahto gondin halāte.
To whom will you say Gondin, Gondin? If she will give a little liquor then you can call her Gondin.

10. *Mānder Palni Pār.* The drummers first stand still facing each other in pairs. Suddenly they flourish their hands in the air and move quickly round with short steps, knees bent. Then they straighten their knees and dance to left and right on alternate feet.

[1] It is said that the chelik sometimes use these rhythms as a sort of secret language to make proposals to the maiden. Even when no words are spoken they are understood: even the tapping of the rhythm with the fingers is enough.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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883
522

Plate CXLIV

Chelik of Nayanar squirts water at a motiari

585
522

Old people throw mud at each other at a Malakot wedding

[p. 638 (N)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

776 in praise of the mahua tree, before which the new mahua flowers must not be eaten or used for liquor. Then comes a similar ceremony in honour of the mango. This generally falls in March. It may be preceded by a ceremonial fishing expedition. In April, preceded by a ritual hunt, comes the great Seed Festival, the Wijja Pandum, at which the seed then to be sown is consecrated.

At the beginning of the rains many of the Maria now observe the Halba festival of Hareli or Amavas. As the crops ripen, there begins a series of Harvest Festivals or (as a literal translation of their Gondi name would have it) 'New Eating' Festivals. The first of these is for the small millets that ripen early. The next is for the new gourds and cucumbers. It is followed, at about the beginning of November, by the Nuka Nordana Pandum, a festival which falls at about the time of Diwali and is concerned with the new rice. Before this ceremony, the rice of the new harvest must not be husked or washed.

Towards the end of the year comes the Jata Pandum for new beans and pulses, and the Kare Pandum before which no one is allowed to cut grass or bamboo, or begin making clearings for cultivation in the forest.

In addition to this round of celebrations there are the festivals of the clan-gods, the Pen Karsita or Divine Games, which may be held at any time, and the commercial Mandai which are often combined with the clan festivals but are mainly great bazaars.

Dassara is the chief official festival of the State. It lasts fifteen days and is attended by elaborate ceremonies in which each of the aboriginal tribes has its special part to play. All the Maria headmen attend the celebrations in their official capacity, and there is a special Darbar at which they have the opportunity to place their grievances before the administration.

IV

585 The great dance that has given the Bison-horn Maria their
535 name is really a marriage dance. At its best it is a superb spectacle. The men, in their splendid head-dresses of bison horns and carrying their long drums, move in a large circle

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

535 but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison'
585 charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum*. Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

293 The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic
[237] cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered
[787] unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

428 A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after
682 his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heir-
762 looms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

184 In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison
535 horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

534 The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called *kikir*, a Jews-harp made of iron or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummmation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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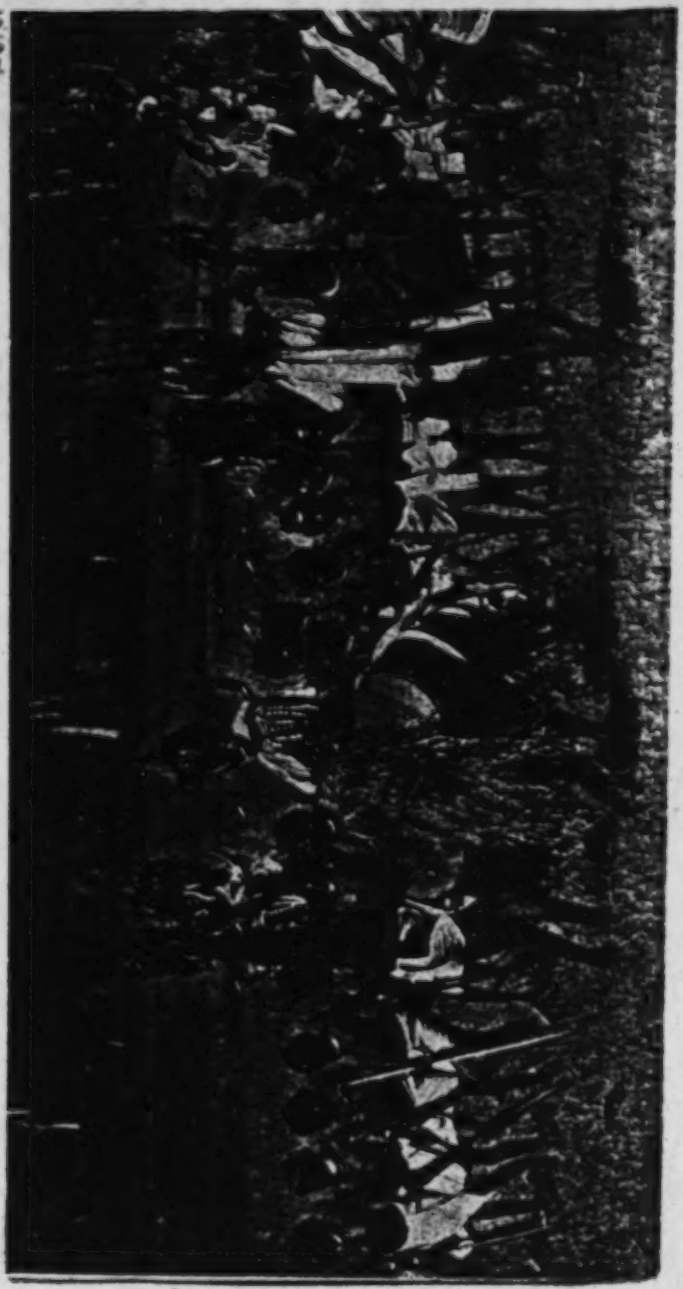

The famous 'bison-horn' marriage dance

[facing p. 144]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

ceremony; I found no case in which any widow had married a man who was not her dead husband's brother (or parallel-cousin). Indeed, owing to the distances between Hill Maria villages and the fact that in nearly all of them the men are all of one clan, irregular marriages are far less common there than in the mixed-clan villages of the Bison-horn Marias. Among the latter the second husband has sometimes to compensate the dead husband's parents in part for the bride-price paid by them when their son married the widow, as well as compensating their younger son, if any. Sometimes the widow and second husband sit side by side on stools, the widow wearing a new cloth and new ornaments, and near relatives put marks on their foreheads with oil and turmeric. There is also sometimes a ceremony to transfer the widow from the clan of her former to that of her new husband; two pieces of grass are placed together in the form of a cross to represent a man, and this cross is separated from another by a knife. Two leaf-cups are filled with water, and three times water is poured from one into the other. The two grass crosses representing the two husbands are sprinkled thrice with the water, and then the heads of the crosses are plunged together first into one cup and then into the other. The knife is regarded as the witness of this transfer of the woman from one clan to the other. When a woman elopes from one husband to another, there is sometimes a similar reconciliation ceremony between the two men after the new husband has obeyed the *panchayat's* decision as to the compensation to be paid to the first husband; their four hands are placed together, and water is poured thrice over them.

It has been seen that women not only have practically free choice among the Hill Marias and considerable choice among the Bison-horn Marias as to their husbands, and that among the latter a woman frequently goes off to a new husband if she wants to. This is practically all that there is in the way of divorce, the position being regularized by the *panchayat* insisting on the new husband paying the appropriate compensation, which is generally only the bride-price paid for the woman at her original marriage. The children, if any, remain in the father's custody, since they belong to his clan. Women often desert their first husband if they have no children and consider his sterility the cause. Physical revulsion from an abnormality is another known cause; a Kuruk Maria fishing girl in the Behra Mar hill *pargana* ran away from a husband with a withered leg, which she said had been wasted away by an angry demon (*ras*), and despite her father's and brother's entreaties to her not to put them to the expense of having to refund to her husband the heavy bride-price of Rs. 70 that he had paid them for her, absolutely refused to return. Hare-lipped men seem to have

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

586 732 no difficulty in getting wives to stay with them. Dwarfs, on the other hand, not only find it hard to get wives except their elder brothers' widows, but are passed over in the succession to a post of responsibility or the management of a family. Madness is particularly dreaded, and would certainly involve the elopement of a wife. But husbands, though they would divorce a mad [833] woman *a thoro*, would still maintain them; sexual intercourse with a mad woman is believed to result in complete loss of virility. 586 I have heard of no case in which a husband has divorced his wife; she may be frigid or barren or in other ways unsatisfactory, but so long as she is not unfaithful her husband is expected to maintain her, and his remedy is to seek another co-wife, often getting her younger sister or parallel-cousin as compensation for her falling [674] short of expectations. The murder of wives in sudden fits of temper for petty shortcomings is unfortunately common among the Bison-horn Marias, though almost unknown in the hills. Nor must it [837] be assumed that because Bison-horn wives often elope, their husbands tamely submit to infidelity; the detection of an intrigue often results in the husband killing the wife or her paramour, though once a wife has made good her escape to another man's house the [593] husband usually accepts the *fait accompli*. The beating or ill-treatment of wives is strongly condemned by all Marias.[a]

[a] [See cat. 116, p. 425, – Analyst]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Burka ta jāwa undāna bedur gatta te mak dāyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

842 789 Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead. A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform spells to stop her supplanter from realizing the fullest joys of marriage. The Constable of Modenar said that Mayakaka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

842 578 [586] Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Husband and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

843 A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (intercourse), and *paidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to space confinements properly. After a year, 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months, and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'. But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puerperium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them? But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

843 844 In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements. The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of a chelik's absence from the ghotul to seduce his motiari. These things happen, but they are condemned. 883X

The chelik themselves consider that this type of ghotul has several great advantages. The first, characteristically, is the very practical one that if a girl becomes pregnant 'they know the thief'. Elsewhere it is naturally often difficult to fix the responsibility of fatherhood. Again, the chelik say that a great deal of trouble is saved. 'We know what to do; there is no jealousy or dispute; everything is settled, and there is no more to be said.' I think it is true that there is less strain and anxiety in these ghotul; and there is room for the development of deep intimacy and romantic attachment. In the pre-nuptial period, however, it may be argued that these things are not altogether desirable. 836

They certainly lead to greater conflict with the parents over marriage. Many chelik and motiari look forward with misery to separation from the partner who has shared with them the happy days of youth, and occasionally—but only occasionally—ghotul partners elope together rather than face a separation. Statistics here are striking. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 1684 were celebrated according to the wishes of the parents and the great majority of cases were of the cross-cousin type. Of the 116 irregular marriages, 77 were those of chelik who married their 'ghotul-wives'. Only 39 irregular marriages were reported from the other type of ghotul. In view of the smaller number of men from the *jodidār* ghotul, these figures indicate a proportion of about 1 in every 9 of chelik in this type of ghotul who had conflict with their parents, and only 1 in about 32 from the other type of ghotul. 883X 836 583

Of those who married their 'ghotul-wives', 9 out of 77 divorced them later, giving a proportion of 11·6 per cent against a proportion of 2·9 per cent of divorces for the whole 2000 marriages. It is interesting that the proportion of divorces among Lamhada—the other type of chelik who live in close contact with their future wives before marriage—is almost exactly the same, 11·5 per cent. And although 77 and 113 cases respectively are not sufficient for us to draw far-reaching conclusions, it is undoubtedly striking that there should be so high an incidence of divorce among these and only among these two classes of people. 883X 836 586

Yet even though a passionate ghotul attachment is not the best preparation for a life-long union, at the time separation seems tragic indeed. A girl especially, whose chelik marries someone else, is a pathetic figure. 'Her life has left her'—so they put it in Munjmeta—'she lies alone on her mat and pines for him; she has no heart to take another lover.' Often she sleeps with a girl-friend who is herself in the arms of a boy, but she lies with her back to them, turning away from all that happiness. In Ulera they said that when a girl's lover leaves her, she cannot sing for many days. When the Mukhwan of Banjora died, the Mukhwanin's face was 'destroyed by sorrow'. 883X 836 152

Boys are often, but not always, more philosophical. 'Yes, for a month you feel wretched', said a chelik in Markabera. 'Then you forget all about it. One may be able to meet her again, but that is difficult and dangerous. But at least you can always get another girl in the ghotul.' Yet at Bopna the Silledar was called a 'widower', so miserable was he after his 'wife's' marriage last year. At Markabera, Dasru took to drink after his ghotul wife was married and Gurti, who was deeply attached to the beautiful and vivacious Malko, looked very lonely and miserable when I saw him nearly a year after her marriage to a boy in another village.

It is remarkable, however, how few actual tragedies there have been from this cause. In the last ten years, only one case of suicide has been registered 883X 836 762

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

regard it as a mere preparation; the ghotul is the school of marriage, a training-ground of the domestic virtues. 'When a girl learns to keep the ghotul clean, she will keep her husband's house clean; the boy who is taught to bring wood and work hard will do the same in his own house.'

Still more important, the ghotul exercises its members in the sexual arts and virtues. In other 'higher' societies, how many lives have been ruined on the marriage night![1] But when a newly-married Muria husband and wife approach each other, they are already sexually educated, graduates in the technique of love, instinctively able to avoid the dangers into which untried partners so easily fall. The agony of defloration is divorced from marriage; the hymen casts no shadow across its consummation. The husband is not likely to be repelled by frigidity or shocked by dispareunia—an experience which might later make him impotent. Not a little of the serenity and stability of Muria marriage is due to the fact that when husband and wife cross its threshold they are both prepared.

II. The Appeal of the Childhood Friend

But though the ghotul is a school of marriage, it is not a place for experimental marriages. According to Muria tradition a chelik should never marry his ghotul partner, and once a boy and girl are betrothed they are separated in the ghotul by the strictest of taboos.

For a long time I was under the impression that marriages had to be arranged between families living in different villages. But when I examined the matter statistically I was surprised to find that out of the 2000 marriages scrutinized, there were

Marriages between members of the same ghotul	.. ..	765
Marriages between members of different ghotul	.. ..	1235

Of the 765, between members of the same ghotul, there were

Lamhada (marriage by service)[2]	.. ..	113
Irregular marriages (chêlik marrying their ghotul-wives)	..	77
Betrothed in the ordinary way	.. ..	575

These figures are sufficient to show that there is no official objection to boys and girls who are to marry each other later growing up in the same ghotul. This is significant when we remember that both boy and girl will be regularly cohabiting with others during the betrothal period. But that this does not interfere with their ultimate happiness is shown by the figures for divorce. These are very low, only 59, or under 3 per cent, for the whole tribe, but they rise startlingly in two special cases.

[1] 'The course of a marriage is determined by the wedding night.' With these words Dr R. S. Chesser opens her discussion of the Honeymoon in A. Forbath, *Love, Marriage, Jealousy* (London, 1938), p. 169. The Muria would think that very odd.

[2] Many of the Lamhada boys probably came from different villages, but after beginning their period of service would have had to join the same ghotul as their future wives.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

Type of Marriage	Number of Marriages	Number of Divorces	Percentage of Divorces
Marriage by service ..	113	13	11·50
Marriage with ghotul-wife ..	77	9	11·68
Others marrying in the same ghotul	575	2	0·34
Marriages between members of different ghotul ..	1235	35	2·83

One other figure may be given. Out of the 2000 men questioned 316 admitted that they had had some connexion with their wives *before* marriage, either at a festival or marriage, during a dancing expedition or at a bazaar. Of these 14 or 4·4 per cent were divorced later. This figure, of course, includes the 77 who married their ghotul-wives.

These statistics seem to me important. They suggest in the first place that where the rules of avoidance are properly observed, there is no danger to future happiness in betrothed couples growing up together. That 573 out of 575 of such couples should have made a success of their marriages is very striking. It is equally striking to discover that it is among those very persons who had opportunity for some sort of experimental marriage that the divorce rate is highest. The Lamhada boy, as we see later in this chapter, spends his whole time with his future wife, working with her in the fields and in the house; ghotul mates in the *jodidār* dormitories do not usually share the same home, but they too spend a great deal of time together during the day and sleep together every night—often for five, six or seven years.

These figures throw some light on a problem which has been debated by Havelock Ellis, Westermarck and Briffault among others—whether the happiest marriages are between those who have grown up together or who have met later in life as strangers; a question which, if it could be settled, might throw some light on the origins of exogamy and the reason for the hostility to incest.

'Generally speaking,' says Westermarck, 'there is a remarkable absence of erotic feelings between persons living very closely together from childhood. Nay more, in this, as in many other cases, sexual indifference is combined with the positive feeling of aversion when the act is thought of. This I take to be the fundamental cause of the exogamous prohibitions.' This 'sexual indifference to housemates' he illustrates by an interesting communication from the headmistress of a co-educational school in Finland. 'One youth assured her that neither he nor any of his friends would ever think of marrying a girl who had been their schoolfellow; and I heard of a lad who made a great distinction between girls of his own school and other, "real", girls, as he called them.'[1]

Westermarck quotes the important passage from Havelock Ellis,[2] which I have already used in another connexion, to the effect that 'the normal failure of the pairing instinct to manifest itself in the case of brothers and sisters, or of boys and girls brought up together from infancy, is a merely negative phenomenon due to the inevitable absence under those circumstances of the conditions which evoke the pairing impulse.... Between those who have

[1] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 19ff.
[2] Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection in Man*, p. 205.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

837 has to divine who is the guilty party in order that peace may be made and danger averted.

783 Adultery therefore is not only the betrayal of tribal fellowship, the infringement of another's right to property, a breach of sexual tradition, but it is highly dangerous. A sort of public apology has to be made to the betrayed husband and a ceremony of purification performed.

In order to avert their fate, once the matter has become public, the guilty pair go to the Gaita with a pig or goat which he offers to the local deities and the Departed. Then he goes with witnesses to the nearest tank. On a stone he puts two bits of broken earthenware and some dub grass. Everyone present puts one foot on the stone; the Gaita throws water and liquor over the guilty pair who cry, 'Let us not now swell with water. May the Yer Kanyang living in the midst of this water make an end of our sin (*pāp*)'. The seducer then greets the woman's husband and all is forgiven.[1]

X883 A similar ceremony is performed in the *jodidār* ghotul if a chelik goes off with another boy's motiari, or if he sleeps with her in his absence. At Atargaon, 836 where a chelik eloped with another's ghotul-wife, but was brought back after a few days, the ghotul Manjhi took the two 'husbands' out of the village to 783 a place where two paths crossed. He made them stand on either side of the path and put a knife on the ground and above the knife a stone. He made the boys put their right feet on the stone and gave them each seven leaf-cups of water. Seven times they exchanged the cups of water and seven times cups of liquor, and swore to preserve friendship with one another. The seducer promised to pay a heavy fine if it happened again.

X883 There is one type of adultery, however, which does not seem to be taken too seriously. 'Suppose a girl has a ghotul lover.' So they put it at Markabera. 836 'She elopes with him. They are brought back and she is quickly married to her betrothed. After a few weeks she runs away again to her lover. She is again brought back, again accepted by her husband, though he knows she 837 has slept with her old lover. And then she is happy at last and settles down.' 'It is like getting a new cow,' said the chelik at Nayanar. 'She does not at first like her new home. She runs back to the herd and her former pastures. But we don't beat her for that; we are rather doubly kind.'

In dealing with a motiari-wife, that is not only kind; it is intelligent.

VII. Divorce

● 586 Throughout tribal India divorce is easy and generally the wife has the same rights as her husband. Among the Muria divorce on either side is possible, but the stability of their marriage tradition makes it a comparatively rare event. I have already described how divorce can be effected in a *jodidār* ghotul. Similar ceremonies can release a woman from her partner in adult life. These ceremonies, it must be observed, are essentially rites of purification; they are retrospective, having reference to an already existing state of affairs. The actual union with a new partner and the paying of compensation effects the divorce; now husband and wife have to be free, not of each other—for they are that already—but of the dangers that cling to the conduct of one or both.

The ceremonies are the same as those by which a couple taken in adultery are cleared of their fault. Whether the woman returns to her own husband

[1] A similar ceremony is performed to purify a boy who sleeps with a near relative in the ghotul, but in this case a root or cucumber is used instead of a goat for sacrifice.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

or goes to a new one is not the point. What matters is that there should be no supernatural interference in the even course of the life of the tribe, and no hatred or division between its members. 586

The critical point of a divorce is the repayment of the bride-price. However firmly the old and new husbands may have been bound together by the ceremonies of purification and reconciliation, the old husband will not eat with the new till he gets his money. When he does, they all sit down and feast together at a meal which is also shared by the woman in dispute.

Divorce, however, is rare. The pattern of Muria life, the Muria's attitude to sex, the training of the young in the ghotul, leads generally to happy marriages. I have already given the figures for divorce, but I will tabulate them here.

Number of divorces among people who had	Number	Percentage to total number of relevant cases
Married girl in same ghotul	24	3·13
Married girl in different ghotul ..	35	2·83
Lived in a *jodidār* ghotul	27	3·75
Lived in a 'modern' ghotul	32	2·50
Married their betrothed	49	2·60
Married their ghotul-wives	9	11·68
Lived as Lamhada	13	11·50
Been forced into marriage by a pregnancy	..	..
Total number of divorces in irregular marriages	10	8·62

The reasons for divorce must also be tabulated, though a disappointingly large number of informants failed to give details.

Reasons for divorce	Number
'She ran away' (No reason given)	25
'We quarrelled over work'	3
'She did not like me'	1
'She eloped from her parents' house before coming to me' ..	2
'She was a bitch'	2
'I was ill and she didn't like to stay with me'	1
'We did not like each other'	2
Impotence	2
'I could not satisfy her'—probably *ejaculatio praecox* ..	9
'My elder wife could not stand it when I married a second ..	5
'My elder wife drove out the second'	4
'She was always going off to her parents' house'	1
'She was a thief'	1
'She was of bad character'	1

This table makes it clear that far from divorce depending on the whim of the husband, in the majority of cases it is the wife who takes action; at least

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

586 40 of the divorces were due to the women. To these we might perhaps add another 9 cases where divorce followed a polygynous marriage.

It is noticeable that in no case has childlessness been put forward as a reason for divorce, though I have found this outside the circle of informants examined for statistical purposes. It is also notable that out of 2,000 men only 11 were suffering from some kind of impotence. It is possible to assert this since it is almost axiomatic that divorce should follow impotence. 'As soon as the penis weakens, the vagina runs to the jungle.'

In this particular set of divorces no case of witchcraft is mentioned. But this too I have found elsewhere, and the legends tell how Lingo himself had to drive away five of his seven wives because they were suspected of being witches.

The 25 cases of wives who 'ran away' are probably to be classed as love-affairs. There is no case of a man driving out his wife for adultery. 'A Muria never gets angry with his wife unless with his own eyes he sees her in the arms of another man.' Nor does the Muria husband listen to scandal. 'All the village knows where the cow is at pasture—except the cowherd.'

593 The paucity of material makes a study of divorce difficult. Generally the Muria husband and wife remain together through all vicissitudes. I heard of a beautiful example of fidelity at Bargaon. A former Chalki described how after he had been married a year, his wife's 'privates came out' and he was unable to have intercourse with her. His friends advised him to marry someone else. 'But I considered how she had given me great happiness for that year. How could I leave her then? What would she have done? Who would give her happiness? So I stayed with her, and married no one else, but sometimes visited the ghotul.'

If there is any possible excuse for forgiveness, the Muria forgive a sexual lapse—not because they are complacent but because their philosophy forces them to tolerance. If there is any kind of doubt in an accusation, they give their partner the benefit of it. Through poverty and sorrow, despite the malice of witch and warlock or the mysterious hostility of the unseen gods, through doubt and temptation, heedless of the swift death of beauty and the passing of desire, they stand by one another and in their old age are not without reward. Muria domestic life might well be a model and example to the whole world.

VIII. Jealousy

152 Jealousy, which was defined by Descartes as 'a kind of fear related to a desire to preserve a possession', is generally used in a much wider sense and covers, as Westermarck says, such different emotions as rage at a rival, revenge for stolen property and anguish at the knowledge or suspicion of violated chastity and outraged conjugal affection.[1] Hartland in his study of jealousy among 'savages' considered that the sense of ownership was the seed-plot of jealousy,[2] but Westermarck rightly points out that this is not enough: 'If jealousy has anything to do with the sense of ownership the reason is that it is primarily connected with the desire of possession, which is something different. Moreover sexual jealousy springs from sexual love.' One of the best recent descriptions is by Stekel. Jealousy, he says, is 'the expression of the desire to possess an object wholly. It is primordial, is born with man and dies with him. It is still a tragic characteristic of all people, to be unable

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 300.
[2] E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (London, 1910), Vol. II, p. 102.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummmation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

was an eater of excreta and urine, and that though he had married her daughter he did not take the least care of her. Hinga, who was apparently a very good husband, was so annoyed at receiving this insult from a woman who should have treated him with respect, especially as the words were shouted at him in the hearing of the village from a distance of about twentyfive paces, that he rushed at her and battered her to death with his axe.

The relationship between a son-in-law and the father of a wife who had betrayed him, was at the bottom of the Aranpur murder of 1941. In 1937 Barse Chewa kept Bandi, daughter of Tati Pandu, a Maria blacksmith, as his wife. For the bride-price he paid a cow with a calf and a basketful of rice. About a year later Chewa's house caught fire, and his elder brother who was then living with them lodged a complaint with the police that Bandi herself had set fire to the building. She was prosecuted, but acquitted. After the disposal of the case against her, Chewa sent the girl back to her parents, and some time afterwards she married a man at Kondasauli. Chewa now went to his original father-in-law Pandu, and demanded a refund of the expense he had incurred in marrying his daughter. Pandu refused to pay anything on the ground that Chewa had turned her out of his house, and that he himself had had to maintain her for two years. He further claimed that any money that could be extracted from the new husband must come to him and not to Chewa. The quarrel went on for some time until at last Chewa grew so exasperated that he went at night to Pandu's house and shot him in the stomach. All Chewa's attempts to exonerate himself and implicate other people were frustrated by the fact that when the blacksmith removed the arrow from his stomach, he was able to recognize it as one which he himself had made for Chewa in his own smithy.

In this case tribal opinion was divided about the question in dispute. The normal rule is that if a woman leaves a husband for another man, he must repay the bride-price (possibly with certain reductions) to the original husband, and that the father of the girl is only entitled to receive money or goods from the first husband and not from his successors. But in this case the question was complicated

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

586 by the fact that Chewa had himself turned the girl out and that between her first and second marriages she had spent two years in her father's house. The matter was thus a difficult one, and was still further complicated by Pandu being a blacksmith who probably did not anticipate fair treatment from the tribal panchayat.

604 There was a very curious and tragic murder when young sixteen-year old Marvi Hunga killed Hirma, a boy three years younger than himself. These two boys were related as uncle and nephew; Hunga's mother was married to the uncle of Hirma's father. This relationship is a privileged one. Just as a grandson may joke with his grandmother, so an uncle may abuse his nephew and even threaten to sleep with his mother, and neither uncle nor nephew is supposed to take any notice of it.

But on this occasion when Hunga met his young nephew Hirma in a field and asked him where he was going, the younger boy abused his uncle's mother and wife saying that he would keep them both as his wives; this annoyed Hunga and he drew his bow and shot the boy with an arrow. The incident apparently had nothing whatever behind it. The boys were not drunk and were on good terms. Hunga seems to have been suddenly, but quite improperly, excited by the abuse given by his nephew, and in a few moments two lives were ruined.

VIII

THE LAMHADA

583 Among the Maria, as in many other parts of tribal India, there is an arrangement whereby youths from poor families who cannot afford the price of a bride can serve for her for three, five or seven years. In Bastar such a youth is known as Lamhada, Lamanai, Lamsena or Gharjamai. The relations between the Lamhada and his future parents-in-law is not always a happy one, and it is complicated by the intimate proximity in which he has to live with the girl to whom he is not yet married. Sometimes, however, especially if the Lamhada happens to make the girl pregnant, the marriage is celebrated before the end of his term of service.

578 583 Only two cases of murder have arisen out of a Lamhada

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Kuakonda. When Telami Dhurwa returned from jail after killing a man in a drunken quarrel, he offered his clan-god Uru Maru, a pig, a cow and a hen, and had to undergo the usual ceremonies of purification. 783

Apart from these ceremonies, however, the fact that a man has served a sentence for murder has singularly little influence on his social position and domestic happiness. It is true that imprisonment, if it is for a very long term, sometimes acts as an automatic divorce, and women feel that they are at liberty to marry again. But generally wives wait for their husbands to be released, as I found Deve, the wife of Kawasi Borga, waiting for her husband at Doriras. Borga, ten years before, had gone to jail with a life-sentence for killing his uncle. His wife had all the time been well looked after by the villagers, and I found her house substantial and prosperous. Her two sons had been successfully married and were carrying on the business of their home with the help of their wives. 554 558 [584] [593]

People, however, are sometimes afraid to marry a released murderer. Doga of Jabeli must be one of the luckiest young men alive, for after being sentenced to transportation for one murder he was released after three years; whereupon he is said to have killed his wife, was sentenced to death and again got off on appeal. He came to see me armed with a ferocious-looking axe, which had actually been put in evidence at one of his trials as the weapon with which he had committed murder. He was trying to get a new wife, but without success. 'They are all afraid of me', he said, 'for fear I might kill them as well'. But he thought he might possibly get a widow. Another youth who found it very difficult to get a new wife was Hemla Bakka, who killed his wife for committing adultery, and got three years' imprisonment for it. At Aranpur all the girls were frightened of the charming Gutte, who had been in jail for killing a man in a drunken quarrel after a cock-fight. They thought if they displeased him, he might murder them too. 554 582

At Khutepal, Oyami Masa, who was imprisoned for killing his junior wife, seems to have suffered no loss of prestige on account of it. He is a Waddai, and when I was there he 554 558

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 601
'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *pepi* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man 582
and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite 607
exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother. [587]

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely 684
among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison-horn. A youth of the Gume hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of 935

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

588 cases there is no bride-price, though the deserted husband can claim from the new husband the bride-price which he paid when he married the woman, a *gudapal* cousin can claim Rs. 5 compensation if an unmarried girl goes to some other man, and a younger brother of the dead husband can claim Rs. 5 compensation if a widow goes to a new husband. Sometimes when parents or parties to a marriage are very poor and cannot afford the expense of a regular wedding they merely start to live together in this way, either performing the marriage ceremony later when they have had time to collect the means required, or else distributing tiny cakes to their clan-fellows instead. The term *aghmirtur* or *armirtur* is sometimes applied to the elopement of an unmarried girl or a wife with another man.

583 *Peyse'ottur* or marriage by capture still occurs, though getting rarer every year. We have seen how, when a girl remains unmarried her parents will arrange for her cross-cousin to carry her off; and in the Bison-horn *pendul* regular marriage described above there is an element of marriage by capture in the way in which the bride feigns resistance when the bridegroom's party begins to escort her to his village and when she is finally parted from the girls of her own village with a show of force by the bridegroom's younger brother and his friends. In fact, the Hill and Bison-horn Maria custom of the bride being taken off from her native village to the bridegroom's village and of the wedding taking place there may be a survival of a former general custom of marriage by capture. When the girl is unmarried and is carried off by her cross-cousin at her parents' request, they usually explain matters to her as she is being carried off and advise her to make the best of it. I found only one Bison-horn Maria who admitted having really captured his wife in 'the good old way once so prevalent in the Killepal, Dantewara, Pharaspal, Kuakonda and Aranpur *parganas*, probably in the whole of the Bison-horn country. He was reticent about the whole affair, though apparently the girl had been willing to marry him, but her parents had objected. According to old records the practice was for the villagers of the girl's village to beat the invading party of youths until it had crossed the village boundary with the girl; Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 79) state that the women only used to beat the invaders in this way, the invaders making no effort to retaliate, and the marriage being completed by the gift of a cloth to the girl on arrival in the captor's village and a *landa* carousal by the invading party.

587 Widow marriage is common among all Marias. In the hills, widows usually go to their husband's younger brothers without any

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

ceremony; I found no case in which any widow had married a man who was not her dead husband's brother (or parallel-cousin). Indeed, owing to the distances between Hill Maria villages and the fact that in nearly all of them the men are all of one clan, irregular marriages are far less common there than in the mixed-clan villages of the Bison-horn Marias. Among the latter the second husband has sometimes to compensate the dead husband's parents in part for the bride-price paid by them when their son married the widow, as well as compensating their younger son, if any. Sometimes the widow and second husband sit side by side on stools, the widow wearing a new cloth and new ornaments, and near relatives put marks on their foreheads with oil and turmeric. There is also sometimes a ceremony to transfer the widow from the clan of her former to that of her new husband; two pieces of grass are placed together in the form of a cross to represent a man, and this cross is separated from another by a knife. Two leaf-cups are filled with water, and three times water is poured from one into the other. The two grass crosses representing the two husbands are sprinkled thrice with the water, and then the heads of the crosses are plunged together first into one cup and then into the other. The knife is regarded as the witness of this transfer of the woman from one clan to the other. When a woman elopes from one husband to another, there is sometimes a similar reconciliation ceremony between the two men after the new husband has obeyed the *panchayat's* decision as to the compensation to be paid to the first husband; their four hands are placed together, and water is poured thrice over them.

It has been seen that women not only have practically free choice among the Hill Marias and considerable choice among the Bison-horn Marias as to their husbands, and that among the latter a woman frequently goes off to a new husband if she wants to. This is practically all that there is in the way of divorce, the position being regularized by the *panchayat* insisting on the new husband paying the appropriate compensation, which is generally only the bride-price paid for the woman at her original marriage. The children, if any, remain in the father's custody, since they belong to his clan. Women often desert their first husband if they have no children and consider his sterility the cause. Physical revulsion from an abnormality is another known cause; a Kuruk Maria fishing girl in the Behra Mar hill *pargana* ran away from a husband with a withered leg, which she said had been wasted away by an angry demon (*rau*), and despite her father's and brother's entreaties to her not to put them to the expense of having to refund to her husband the heavy bride-price of Rs. 70 that he had paid them for her, absolutely refused to return. Hare-lipped men seem to have

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

691 partition of a father's property when a son sets up house for himself,
421 but although he can press for his share, it is felt by the community to be against tribal spirit, rather than unfilial. When, on the other hand, a father had outraged tribal feelings by seducing his sons' wives and driving his sons from his house, his refusal to let his sons have any share in the family property was considered by the Bison-horn Marias an additional justification for his subsequent murder by his sons.

691 There is so little domestic property of great value among the
428 Hill Marias, and so many of a man's few tools and possessions, as we have seen, are buried with him, that inheritance disputes about
768 movable property are almost unknown. Though among the Bison-horn Marias less is buried or burned with the dead, the remaining movable property generally passes with the house; if the elder sons have set up separate establishments in their father's lifetime they will have equipped themselves with the few possessions they need, and will not worry about the younger brother appropriating what their father has left. Women's ornaments generally are buried or burned with them.

428 When the inheritance includes valuable rice-lands, they remain generally the joint property of the sons and brother's sons, and the father's surviving brothers, the eldest son generally nominally being the manager, though he will certainly have to give way to an uncle or younger brother or cousin if he is inefficient, weak-minded or deformed. The produce will be stored in his granary, but shared among the members of the family.

428 Daughters and sisters have no right of inheritance of their
736 father's or brothers' lands or property. For the land is really the land of the clan, and the daughters and sisters will on marriage
587 have passed to the clans of their husbands. A widow is entitled only to maintenance, and as on her husband's death she very often becomes the wife of his younger brother, she gets her maintenance as a matter of course; if he leaves no younger brother and she does not marry again, she lives on in her late husband's house and works with other women of the family, and is maintained by their husbands. A girl whose parents die before she is married frequently goes to a married sister's house and becomes a co-wife.

562 For a woman on the whole is a kind of property, or a valuable adjunct to the house and family. For her, the husband's family has had to pay a bride-price that is a severe tax on its resources[1]; or else, where cross-cousin marriage prevails,[2] she represents the repayment of a debt incurred when her father took his bride from

[1] See pp. 248-50 and 252-3 above.
[2] See pp. 234 and 247 above.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. Six Kinds of Marriage

583 As in other parts of aboriginal India, the Muria recognize several different types of marriage, which for convenience I will give in tabular form.

585 (i) *Ostasāna marmi* (Halbi, *sopni bihao*). This is the traditional Gond marriage; the parents, after anointing the girl with haldi, send her to the bridegroom's house where the Lagir is performed.

(ii) *Talk dayna* (Halbi, *chal bihao*). This is the Hinduised modification of the Gond marriage and is performed partly in the bride's and partly in the bridegroom's house. The Lagir is held outside the bride's house. It is known as Chat-marmi in Betul and is only performed when the contracting parties have quarrelled.[1]

(iii) *Arwitāna* (Halbi, *udaliya*[2]). This is the marriage of a chelik and motiari who elope to a friend's house and have the rites there without the approval of their parents. The full ceremonies may be performed, but the bridegroom has to pay for them himself.

(iv) *Haiwark wāt* (Halbi, *paisa mundi* or *paitu*). Here a girl runs away from her parents' house and forces marriage on a boy of her choice. She arrives, sits down and refuses to go away.

●[587] (v) *Tika tasāna* (Halbi, *haldi-pāni bihao*). This is the simple and inexpensive ritual performed either for a widow or widower who remarries, for the marriage of divorced persons or for an adulterous marriage.

(vi) *Yer dosāna marmi* (Halbi, *bhul bihao*). This is the hurried marriage when a motiari is found to be pregnant. If the boy to whom she is engaged is willing to marry her in spite of this and is willing to accept the child as his own, it is called a *bhul bihao*. If the marriage is with the boy who caused the pregnancy it is simply a *yer dosāna* or 'pouring-water marriage'.[3]

585 I will describe in very considerable detail the first two types of marriage. The others may be disposed of more expeditiously.

The *Arwitāna* marriage is often performed with the full rites, though naturally somewhat modified by the absence of the parents, and the fact that the bride and bridegroom are attended by chelik and motiari of another ghotul.

The *Haiwark wāt* marriage is celebrated when a girl leaves her home and forces herself upon her lover. When the boy asks her what she wants, she says she has come for *paisa mundi*. If the boy is willing, and sometimes even if he is not very enthusiastic about it, the marriage is performed as soon as possible. That very evening the chelik and motiari assemble and build a simple booth with only five pillars. Bride and bridegroom sit in this and the Gaita places rapidly-made crowns on their heads, and puts haldi and oil on their bodies. The village people do tika and the chelik and motiari take bride and bridegroom seven times round the booth and someone pours water and haldi over them.

587 The *Tika tasāna* marriage is simple and inexpensive. It often has to be, for in the case of adultery, elopement or a marriage after divorce, the new

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 80.

[2] Russell says this means 'Love in the fields'—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 466.

[3] To these forms of marriage many parallels may be found in other Indian tribes as well as in traditional Hinduism.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

bridegroom has to pay up the expenses of the original marriage and sometimes compensation to the original husband as well as a fine to the panchayat. The ceremony is performed inside the house, bride and bridegroom sitting together. The bridegroom puts a cloth on a wooden seat, pours liquor on it and hands it to his bride. She rolls up mango leaves into little *kiswa* and puts them in her ears. There is no dancing, no anointing with haldi, no going round the booth. Visitors place a tika mark of dry rice without the usual oil or haldi. 587

The Gaita sprinkles the new cloth of the bride with liquor and gives a little sermon: 'O Mahapurub, this man's house has been broken; this woman's house is broken. These two have we elders yoked. O Mahapurub, give them all they need to eat and drink. Let them have sons and daughters. For all their visitors let there be enough.'

Then the newly married pair touch the feet of the village elders who bless them saying, 'Go brother and sister, live well and eat well; may you have children; when we come to visit you, give us a little water. May Mahapurub care for you.'

When a widow is remarried there is the same ceremony, and almost the same words are used except that instead of the reference to the broken houses, the elders speak of the loss of the husband. Should a widow be marrying an unmarried boy—as might easily happen if the girl had been married young—the boy is anointed with haldi and oil, but she is not.

The *dewar* or husband's younger brother has first claim upon a widow and if she marries anybody else, her husband has to compensate him. In some places, there is a formality by which a woman can avoid the reproach of widowhood without actually getting married. In Banjora, for example, she need not put on bangles; if she puts *kiswa* of mango leaves in her ears in the name of her *dewar* or her grandson, she is no longer a widow'. At Bopna, when Gagra's father died, his widow put what are called *kâli kiswa* in her ears. As they described the incident to us, 'she said to herself, "Since there is an Anga in our house no one will eat from my hands now I am a widow. I will put *kiswa* in my ears and bangles on my wrists in the name of my *dewar*; if I don't, my relations will fine me and even men of my own house won't eat with me." So thinking, she went to a bazaar, and on her way home she picked a couple of mango leaves, rolled them up and put them in her ears in the name of the bazaar. After that she was no longer regarded as a widow.'

Sometimes old women put these *kiswa* in their ears in the name of their grandsons. 'If there is no husband for you, marry your grandson.' In Gudia, Lakmu's father's brother's mother put *kiswa* for Lakmu. It is generally said that a grandmother can put these ornaments in the name of her own son's own son, that is, her real, and not merely her classificatory, grandson.

Finally, we have the sad and furtive ceremony that is performed when a motiari has the misfortune to conceive. A booth with only five pillars is erected, relations apply haldi to both bride and bridegroom, but the leaf-crown is put only on the bridegroom's head. He has to go alone round the booth for the Lagir ceremony accompanied by a man carrying the marriage kalsa-pot, which represents his wife. They then sit together and tika is made with rice mixed with haldi and oil. A pregnant girl may never go round the booth for the Lagir ceremony. 585

Irregular marriages, obviously, can be celebrated at any time of the year; but regular marriages are performed only in the hot weather (March to May).

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

593 A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar
152 was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at
837 Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby? Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilising him to some extent.

587 We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining
152 faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. Quarrels and their Causes

152 For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria
578 life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiari during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude: every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummmation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

to go to the police. There was then the murder of Markami Handa by a young Maria Lohar in 1923. Handa had two wives and the younger, Bandi, fell in love with the young and attractive Masa who was employed as a farm labourer in a neighbour's house, and one day they eloped together. Some time previously Handa had warned the girl that, if she continued her friendship with the boy, he would kill them both. Indeed he took the intrigue so seriously that he moved his entire household to another village, but to no avail. Bandi seems to have been terrified for her lover's safety and when she heard how Handa was searching everywhere for her, she told Masa of the danger they were in, and Masa made up his mind to remove the dangerous husband so that he would be able to live freely with his girl. For four days and nights they enjoyed a sort of happiness in the jungle, then they went together under cover of darkness to Handa's house and climbed a tree outside the compound. Here they sat for a long time until they were sure that everyone was asleep. About midnight Masa went to the house, opened the bamboo door and shot Handa who was lying asleep on the ground near the entrance. Masa probably hoped to get away without being noticed, but unfortunately for him Handa's elder wife woke up and saw him clearly in the moonlight. He was arrested by the villagers the following day, and in due course was hanged. But Bandi, who was a young girl only eighteen years old, was acquitted.

This is, as far as I can see, a pure example of the murder for elimination. The only motive was fear of Bandi's husband. The difference between this and many European crimes is simply that it is more usual for civilized people to eliminate the inconvenient husband or wife first. Masa in true Maria fashion first got the girl, and then set to work to deal with the husband.

II

THE SIRISGUDA POISONING

Marvi Boti and his lover Mase, his elder 'brother's' wife, set about eliminating her inconvenient and rather useless husband, Marvi Bododi, in a more civilized fashion. Mase

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 and Bododi married each other rather late in life, and both
587 had been married before. Mase's first husband died leaving her with five children, and one of her daughters Dallo had been married three years at the time of the tragedy. Bododi also was a widower and had five children by his former wife, the youngest of whom, a boy named Hunga, was about twelve years old and lived with his father. The two lonely people met and married. They lived for some months in Mase's house at Maolibata, and then moved to Sirisguda in April 1940, where they were entertained by Bododi's younger 'brother' Boti. After a time they built a hut of their own close to Boti's house and went to live there.

674 Bododi's profession was that of a Siraha, but he seems to have been as poor a magician as he was a husband. Mase was a large vigorous woman, who expected much of life, and already by this time was getting tired of her elderly husband who produced so little money to run the household. Boti, as Bododi's younger 'brother', stood in a privileged relationship to Mase. Tribal custom regards an intrigue between those who stand to each other in this relationship very lightly and readily forgives it. Mase soon found herself fascinated by the young Boti, though when I saw him he was unattractive enough, with a broad stupid face and a very large flat nose.

Bododi's duties as Siraha always kept him on the move, and he was continually going from place to place treating his patients. In his absence Mase and Boti were naturally free to develop their friendship to the full. One night Bododi came home unexpectedly and found his wife absent. Mase's son-in-law Gagru, the husband of Dallo, had come there for a New Eating festival, and Bododi asked him where Mase was. He said she had gone to drink rice-beer somewhere. Bododi went to look for her, but failing to find her came back and sent Gagru in search instead. Gagru found Mase and Boti coming together out of a field of maize. Mase begged Gagru not to say anything about it, and went straight to Boti's house. Gagru went and told Bododi where his wife was hiding, and there was a violent quarrel.

Patients who came to Bododi's house for treatment reported other quarrels between Bododi and his wife. One

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

836 II. His sister married Gecha Harma of Udala Tondawada, and at the wedding he met Harma's sister Gecha Kowe, and danced with her. They liked each other, and met at other weddings and at koqsar dances, and had sexual intercourse two or three times, which Moda said was necessary in order to ascertain that they were both physically capable. Everyone saw that they were in love, and their wedding followed as soon as the necessary betrothal ceremonies could be completed. But if pre-marital intercourse results in pregnancy, there can be no formal marriage, which the Hill Marias call *marmi* and the Bison-horn *pendul*; the girl states the name of the man responsible, and goes to live in his house without any ceremony, the union being described as *ottur* ('taken away'). A child born to a girl without even *ottur* would be considered as belonging to the clan of the man whom the mother names as the father; and this putative father would be expected to take the mother and child to his house, the union being known to the Hill Marias as *ahene-hatta* ('thus-went'). No stigma attaches to such unions, and the children have exactly the same position and rights as the children of a formal marriage.

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584 Hill Maria parents do not try to interfere in their children's choice of wives and husbands. When a youth and his girl know their minds, each tells his or her parents. Then the youth's parents, with the elders of the village, go, without the youth, with about a rupee's worth of *mahua* spirit (or five bottles) to the girl's parents, taking care to arrive at their house at about four or five o'clock in the afternoon. The father of the youth opens the door of the girl's house, places the liquor bottles inside the threshold and rejoins his party, all of whom sit silent outside the door. The girl's parents then call in some of the elders of their village, and in their presence tell the girl that this liquor has been brought on her account, and ask her if she is willing to go and live with the youth in the village from which the liquor has come. If the girl agrees, the liquor is at once drunk by the parties from the two villages, and the girl's parents entertain the visiting party to supper; if she refuses, the youth's parents take the liquor back to their village. This ceremony is called *talq-da'ina* ('going to ask'). It may take place on any day of the year, Hill Marias recking nothing of auspicious days or omens.

Hill Maria regular betrothal and marriage

[787]

There is a second *talq-da'ina*, generally after an interval of about a year; it sometimes takes place sooner, but it is considered bad form to be too importunate. The youth does not go with his parents even this time; he does not, indeed, meet his betrothed between the first *talq-da'ina* and marriage, as, once a girl's hand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

husband ill-treated her, while she provided a chorus of simulated wailing. They took her off to the booths prepared for her parents and the guests from her village, and sat there with her for the rest of the morning and all the afternoon, taking their food there, while the rest of the guests finished the *landa* and slowly dispersed, beating their drums, along the forest paths. At about 5.30 p.m. the bridegroom entered the bridal hut alone, while his younger brother went to the booth where the bride had spent the afternoon, cried 'Come, sister-in-law, it is time that you were bedded,' caught her by the hand and tried to drag her off. She screamed and feigned resistance, but he called four or five other laughing youths to help him, and between them they pulled the girl to the door of the bridal hut, opened it and pushed her in, barring the door on the outside. Then they stole a cock from the bridegroom's coop, and, accompanied by the girls who had come with the bride from her village, plucked the cock and scattered its feathers along a path leading to a forest glade, where they cooked and ate it, and all dispersed. 585

The *ottur* and *akeushattu* forms of marriage among the Hill Marias have already been mentioned; the same forms exist among the Bison-horn Marias. Actually women are very free to change their attachments or, if unattached, to go to the house of the man of their choice and live with him as his wife even if he is already married. It is convenient for the man to have the services of an extra woman in a society in which so much work is done by women; and it is not considered right for a nubile woman to be unattached. Particularly among the Bison-horn Marias, men with two or three wives are common; only one of these will be a regularly married wife, and the others will be either her younger sisters or parallel-cousins or other women who have come into the husband's keeping of their own choice, or after becoming pregnant as a result of a liaison with him. The expression commonly used by the Bison-horn Marias for a woman going in this way to live with a man is the local and Chhattisgarhi Hindi term *paisa-mundi*, and the unions are known as *paithu* or *odiyattur*; there seems to be no difference between these, just as for practical purposes there is little between the *ottur* and *akeushattu* forms of the Hill Marias. Where an unmarried woman is made pregnant, and becomes the man's wife by living at his house, the man has to give his fellow-clansmen an entertainment (*paithu*) or dinner, and pay the usual bride-price. Husbands have similarly to give a dinner when unmarried girls, wives or widows, of their own choice and without their guardians' consent, go to live with him; but in such 589 [589] 588 595 588

Irregular marriages, widow marriages and divorce; attitude to abnormalities

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

588 cases there is no bride-price, though the deserted husband can claim from the new husband the bride-price which he paid when he married the woman, a *gudapal* cousin can claim Rs. 5 compensation if an unmarried girl goes to some other man, and a younger brother of the dead husband can claim Rs. 5 compensation if a widow goes to a new husband. Sometimes when parents or parties to a marriage are very poor and cannot afford the expense of a regular wedding they merely start to live together in this way, either performing the marriage ceremony later when they have had time to collect the means required, or else distributing tiny cakes to their clan-fellows instead. The term *aghmirtur* or *armirtur* is sometimes applied to the elopement of an unmarried girl or a wife with another man.

583 *Poyse'othur* or marriage by capture still occurs, though getting rarer every year. We have seen how, when a girl remains unmarried her parents will arrange for her cross-cousin to carry her off; and in the Bison-horn *pendul* regular marriage described above there is an element of marriage by capture in the way in which the bride feigns resistance when the bridegroom's party begins to escort her to his village and when she is finally parted from the girls of her own village with a show of force by the bridegroom's younger brother and his friends. In fact, the Hill and Bison-horn Maria custom of the bride being taken off from her native village to the bridegroom's village and of the wedding taking place there may be a survival of a former general custom of marriage by capture. When the girl is unmarried and is carried off by her cross-cousin at her parents' request, they usually explain matters to her as she is being carried off and advise her to make the best of it. I found only one Bison-horn Maria who admitted having really captured his wife in the good old way once so prevalent in the Killepal, Dantewara, Pharaspal, Kuakonda and Aranpur *parganas*, probably in the whole of the Bison-horn country. He was reticent about the whole affair, though apparently the girl had been willing to marry him, but her parents had objected. According to old records the practice was for the villagers of the girl's village to beat the invading party of youths until it had crossed the village boundary with the girl; Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 79) state that the women only used to beat the invaders in this way, the invaders making no effort to retaliate, and the marriage being completed by the gift of a cloth to the girl on arrival in the captor's village and a *landa* carousal by the invading party.

587 Widow marriage is common among all Marias. In the hills, widows usually go to their husband's younger brothers without any

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

husband ill-treated her, while she provided a chorus of simulated wailing. They took her off to the booths prepared for her parents and the guests from her village, and sat there with her for the rest of the morning and all the afternoon, taking their food there, while the rest of the guests finished the *lauda* and slowly dispersed, beating their drums, along the forest paths. At about 5.30 p.m. the bridegroom entered the bridal hut alone, while his younger brother went to the booth where the bride had spent the afternoon, cried 'Come, sister-in-law, it is time that you were bedded,' caught her by the hand and tried to drag her off. She screamed and feigned resistance, but he called four or five other laughing youths to help him, and between them they pulled the girl to the door of the bridal hut, opened it and pushed her in, barring the door on the outside. Then they stole a cock from the bridegroom's coop, and, accompanied by the girls who had come with the bride from her village, plucked the cock and scattered its feathers along a path leading to a forest glade, where they cooked and ate it, and all dispersed.

The *otor* and *ahesahattu* forms of marriage among the Hill Marias have already been mentioned; the same forms exist among the Bison-horn Marias. Actually women are very free to change their attachments or, if unattached, to go to the house of the man of their choice and live with him as his wife even if he is already married. It is convenient for the man to have the services of an extra woman in a society in which so much work is done by women; and it is not considered right for a nubile woman to be unattached. Particularly among the Bison-horn Marias, men with two or three wives are common; only one of these will be a regularly married wife, and the others will be either her younger sisters or parallel-cousins or other women who have come into the husband's keeping of their own choice, or after becoming pregnant as a result of a liaison with him. The expression commonly used by the Bison-horn Marias for a woman going in this way to live with a man is the local and Chhattisgarhi Hindi term *paise-mundi*, and the unions are known as *paithu* or *odiyattur*; there seems to be no difference between these, just as for practical purposes there is little between the *otor* and *ahesahattu* forms of the Hill Marias. Where an unmarried woman is made pregnant, and becomes the man's wife by living at his house, the man has to give his fellow-clansmen an entertainment (*paithu*) or dinner, and pay the usual bride-price. Husbands have similarly to give a dinner when unmarried girls, wives or widows, of their own choice and without their guardians' consent, go to live with him; but in such

Irregular marriages, widow marriages and divorce; attitude to abnormalities

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond AW32
Muria

But I doubt if the necessity of ancestral worship devolving on the youngest son accounts for the Lingo legend. In Bastar, it is a sister's son or a son-in-law who generally performs the funerary rites. Lingo was—in most versions of the tale—miraculously born and the parents play no part in the sequence of events. The Lingo legends fit into the common folk-tale formula: probably all the elements suggested by Macculloch had their part in its construction; but I believe it is the custom of the Levirate (to which Macculloch does not refer) that gives it its real point.

The legend, especially in its Bastar form, cannot be understood apart from the foundation of the ghotul and the horror of adultery so characteristic of Muria society. Here is a very practical reason for the village dormitory—it insulates the elder brothers' wives from the dangerous, legitimate, seductive younger brothers. The youth of the tribe, so distracting to business with its fun and music, is concentrated away from home. The figure of Lingo stands out as the ideal younger brother, who denies himself even his legitimate claims and is absorbed in the ghotul and the motiari. It is not impossible that the legend was composed by a jealous elder brother, once cuckolded and turned reformer, who desired to abolish the disruptive influence of the *sage-devar* relationship.

There remains the character of Lingo which reminds Bishop Eyre Chatterton 'so strangely' of Jesus Christ. The impropriety of comparing the two figures becomes evident when we remember that Sir Richard Temple had to omit nearly half the poem describing Lingo because it was 'frivolous, improper and objectionable'. I greatly doubt whether either Hislop's or Trench's version represents the original legend as it was told normally to village people. The Pardhan priest in Nagpur was obviously a Hindu convert and would not be likely to repeat passages that would too greatly offend a missionary. I suspect too the hand of the Reverend Baba Pandurang. I doubt also whether Mr Trench's petition-writer would have been likely to have risked any improper elements in the story of Rai Linga. This may sound rather hypercritical, but I have never been able to understand how it was that a cult-hero with a phallic name—Lingo means the phallus—should have become the embodiment of purity. Nor could I understand why the supposed embodiment of the Gond virtues should have been a celibate. The Gond despise celibacy; they believe that a man who dies unmarried turns into an especially unpleasant ghost after his death; the sadhus and other celibates in their folk-tales are without exception presented as the greatest rascals.

The Bastar version of the legend suggests a solution of this problem. Lingo is a phallic deity, as the origin of his name given in the legend on page 241 clearly shows. He does not ascend into heaven, but marries seven wives and has children who people the Bastar shrines with gods. He is the founder of the ghotul, where he has his motiari. This is the true Gond picture of the character of Lingo. Hislop's and Trench's versions are undoubtedly nobler to Western and Brahmin eyes, but they are unreal in a Gond setting.

VI. The Lingo Legend in Bastar

Not all the Muria know the legend of Lingo, though all worship him and regard him as the founder of the ghotul. His cult is more or less coterminous with the Pus Kolang, which is danced in his honour. Different versions of the legend have, however, been recorded in the Antagarh, Benur, Amabera and Chat Jhorian Parganas of the Narayanpur Tahsil, and at Alor and Kanhargaon in the Kondagaon Tahsil. In north and east Kondagaon, though

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 626 When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic, they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently hardened to persist in their visits after this.

X 883 837 But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Maru, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margaon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1941 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahua Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

X 883 591 768 589 There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul, Daru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

X 883 The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

X 883 578 But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she said. 'well, why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When you saw me and knew that your heart was not captured, why did you ruin me? What am I to do now? Tell me. Where am I to go?'

Inside the ghotul sexual anaesthesia is known, but it is uncommon and is regarded as a sort of deviation. I have met a few Muria who have never been to the ghotul or who have never shared its sexual activities. Dhansingh Pandu of Palki is a man of some forty years and still unmarried. He has never been to a ghotul. His father used to say to him, 'These boys talk in front of their sisters as if they were their lovers. You don't know what gods there are in the ghotul; many gods live there; you might unwittingly offend one of them and be destroyed. No one knows what people may have in their hearts when all sleep together.' But it was not only his father's exaggerated fears of the supernatural that stopped Dhansingh from attending the ghotul; he himself had no desire to go. But now he regrets it. 'I am a very lonely man', he told me. 'I might now be happily married. But at that time I was very poor and I had no passion.' The real reason for his abstinence seems to have been a dread that he would be forced into sexual intercourse for which he had neither power nor inclination.

Another Muria who has never been a chelik is Hagru of Masora. In his youth he lived in the Hindu potters' quarter of Kondagaon town where there was, of course, no ghotul. 'I used to feel very lonely when I heard how happy the other boys were, but what could I do?'

Early marriage sometimes brings ghotul life to a premature close. In Malakot, I found the people arranging their children's marriages as early as possible 'to prevent copulation in the ghotul'. Old Sukali of Masora was married so young that 'she never even learnt to sing a Relo'. But child-marriage is not common and young married girls are generally allowed to attend the ghotul till puberty or until they are sent to live with their husbands.

Although the Muria insist on abstinence from sexual congress before the ceremonial hunts and require their priests to remain celibate on various occasions, the rule does not seem to be due to any special regard for celibacy as such or belief in its power; it is rather connected with the dread of the menstruous woman. On the eve of a festival all the males of a village must sleep in the ghotul—which for that night is cleared of motiari—to ensure that none of their wives or other relatives will infect them with the defilement of a catamenial period that might begin during the night. So too the very strict rules governing a young Gaita's relations with women in the Chota Dongar Pargana appear to be based mainly on a desire to isolate him from the dreaded menstrual contact.

Celibacy is not admired, and it is dangerous to be unmarried, for a man or woman who dies in this condition lives for ever restless and frustrated, and a nuisance to the friends he has left behind on earth. It should be noted that it is marriage and not sexual experience that is important. The Hindu sadhu is rarely respected, though he may be feared for his supposed supernatural powers. The state of *sanyās* is everywhere associated in the aboriginals' mind with idleness and beggary rather than with chastity. In Alor the chelik spoke very scornfully of celibacy: 'It is a way of life for loafers.' And of boys and girls who stand aside from the main life of the ghotul, they say 'they will get children directly they begin'. 'There may be one in a thousand girls who tries to keep her water, but she will get a child in her *haldi-dhoti*', while her clothes are still stained with the marriage turmeric. It is dangerous to store up power, for when it is released it may prove too potent.

In order to enforce this attitude, the chelik tell a number of stories illustrating the danger of breaking the ghotul tradition. One such tale, from

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A 732 Gond A 732
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

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Atargaon, is about the seven motiari who knew nothing about sex. One day they went to gather leaves with their grandmother. The old lady climbed a tree and the girls looked up and saw her vagina. When she told them what it was for, they were so frightened that they left the ghotul and went to live far away in the jungle. Whenever they saw a man they beat him and drove him away. The story proceeds through various adventures to the inevitable conclusion. Each of the girls is seduced by a sadhu and becomes pregnant.

X 983
539

Another story, given me by Sonu, a Muria of Jamkot, is of interest as emphasizing the ghotul doctrine of equality, that everyone in the ghotul fellowship must be loved and happy: if not, disaster may befall.

There were seven score chelik and seven score motiari. All slept together in the ghotul. One of them was the son of a grazier of goats, and none of the girls would sleep with him. When he came to the ghotul, they would abuse him. 'Get out, you grazier's son, you block of wood.' The boy's name was Lakari; that was why they called him a block of wood. But Lakari was a clever boy and he made a love-charm.

One day the boys and girls decided to go to Kodawata to earn their living. When he heard of this, Lakari decided to have all the girls for himself. He put the boys to sleep by his charms. When the girls were ready for their journey, he went ahead beating his drum. They thought that all the boys had started and set out after them.

Now Lakari was very poor; his bed was the earth, his blanket was the air, his pillow was his own elbow. He was so poor that no girl would let him sleep with her. He went along with an axe over his shoulder, his *dhol* drum slung from his arm and a drumstick in one hand. He led the girls away into the jungle, on and on for a whole month. When he beat the drum they ran after him, but he always kept at a distance so that they wouldn't know who it was.

The jungle stretched for twelve *kos* on every side, there was not even the name of a village. The jungle was called Madhuban, the sweet forest; the trees were so tall that it seemed the moon had stuck to them. When Lakari had led the girls into the very heart of this jungle, he took off his clothes and sat shivering with cold. When the girls saw that the chelik were not there and it was only Lakari who had brought them all that way, they were angry and disappointed.

On a hill-top between two rivers Lakari built a ghotul for himself. On the far side of the river he made another house for the girls. They refused to visit him or even look at him, they were so angry. By the time the rains began they found they had eaten all their provisions for the year. Lakari himself had nothing; he lived on honey.

Now at last one of the girls came to him and said, 'How are we to live here without a village or bazaar? Even you can give us nothing to eat'. Lakari replied, 'I will see to everything; come with me to the bazaar and we will get what we want'. The girls went fishing in the river, and this girl brought fish in a basket and he himself took honey and they went together to the bazaar at Ladri. They sold their things and bought what they wanted. On the way back, Lakari went as slowly as he could so that they would have to spend the night in the jungle and the girl would have to sleep with him. When darkness fell he made her a bed in the sand of a river; there was one bed for him and one for her with a fire between. He had brought food and ornaments to please her.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

In the chapter on marriage we saw how the elders had to witness the betrothal ceremonies, and how the *panchayats* deal with cases of divorce and elopement. It may be added that among the Hill Marias the clan-headman, like the *Sendhia* of the Chanda Marias, gets certain traditional fees which the parties have to pay in addition to the compensation which the *panchayat* may award to the injured parents or husband, or to the cost of the tribal feast; at every marriage in Kutru and Bhairamgarh Mar the clan-headman gets a fee of eight annas; when a *panchayat* has settled the compensation to be given to the first husband by the man with whom his wife has eloped, the old and the new husband have each to pay the clan-headman four annas. But the latter is expected not to retain the whole of his fee-income, but to divide it with the headmen of the villages of his clan who have assisted in the ceremony or *panchayat*.

I have already described on page 246 above, the ordeal to which the Gume Hill Maria clan *panchayat* in 1929 subjected a Toinar youth accused of incest with a girl of his clan. How far the ordeal survives in the remotest parts of the State I cannot say; naturally instances of its use very seldom come to light. There is reason to believe that ordeals of this kind were a regular feature of the 'justice' administered by bygone Chiefs and zamindars of Bastar, rather than a product of aboriginal thought; compare the account of the settlement of the Kudmer-Jatalur land dispute at page 96 above. Ordinarily, however, the *panchayats* follow no regular procedure beyond hearing the parties and their friends as informally as possible and deciding the case then and there after free discussion among themselves.

Questions of property seldom arise among the Hill Marias, there being obviously so little scope for dispute when 95 per cent. of the cultivation is shifting cultivation of hillsides regarded as the property of the clan and not of the individual, and when the village site is shifted at least every six years. Sons after marriage live in a separate portion of the long-house of their father or uncle, if there is space for adding a portion for them, or else build a separate house as close as possible; when next the village is shifted there is ample space for all to live in separate houses under one long-house roof. Questions of inheritance of houses therefore arise only when, as among the Bison-horn Marias, villages have become permanent and are not shifted at regular intervals. Even here, however, there are few disputes. The little value set on houses is shown by the fact that it is generally the youngest son who lives on in the father's house after his death, as probably his elder brothers will have married long before him and built separate houses for themselves on marriage. There is among the Bison-horn Marias a vague right to demand

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWO

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

I. The Muria Village

BEFORE approaching the main subject of this book, it is necessary to see how the chelik and motiari live at home. In a sense, there is no such thing as a typical Muria village any more than there is a typical Muria house. But most of the villages conform to the Gond pattern: they are set among trees—the Muria seem fonder of shade than wind and do not often choose the hill-tops beloved of the Maria and Baiga—and each house is enclosed within a separate fence that also surrounds its garden. There is thus a sharp distinction between a Muria and a Hill Maria village: the latter, like the Baiga village, consists of a row of houses joined together and opening on to a common street. Traces of this survive among the Muria in the enclosures of some of their leading men; at Markabera, for example, the headman's house is like a little village, a long enclosure with a small street on to which face many dwelling-places and granaries. In Palli-Barkot, and other western villages also, groups of related families build their houses to open round a square.

But generally the houses are scattered about, sometimes widely scattered, to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens, and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul are ever in a special or recognized position.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small courtyard, are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs. As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the east of Kondagaon the verandah of the main house is often deeper than the room inside. Where houses are built like this, there is no need for special menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar, where there is no room to seclude a woman on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and cleanness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of Mother Earth, and a love of animals. The pigsties are substantial, often with a double roof; the cattle-sheds are sometimes raised on pillars; sitting hens are given comfortable nests raised well above the ground. The houses themselves are cosy and homely, crammed with every sort of basket, leaf-bundle and utensil. Fish-traps, drums, wooden clogs hang from the roof, and flutes and bows and arrows are stuck under the thatch. Inside, in an inner room, is kept the mysterious Pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and placated.

These houses are the work-rooms of the chelik and motiari; they are the homes only of the married. The life and interest of chelik and motiari centre in the ghotul. But life there is definitely regarded as a preparation and training for the home. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

Most of the Muria are undoubtedly very poor. I was one day discussing with W. V. Grigson, who had visited Mandla after several years in Bastar, whether the Bastar villagers were poorer than those in the Central Provinces. I suggested—and he agreed—that probably the Bastar villagers were actually poorer, but that their lives were so much richer that they seemed far more

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

She goes among the bushes and turns into a tigress. She comes roaring and kills and eats the boy.

Then she becomes a girl again and goes on her journey. She meets a man fetching wood. He speaks to her and she turns into a tigress again and kills him. At last she reaches a Saturday bazaar. The bazaar is finished but she sits down near the carts of the merchants. Four men see her beauty and desire her. She makes them all mad and they run away.

A little boy is going round the bazaar picking up scraps, bits of lac, cigarette ends, grain and other odds and ends. He sees the girl and tells his grandfather about her. That grandfather is a magician. 'Come, daughter, and marry my son.'

That night the chelik hear that a beautiful girl has come to the magician's house. 'Let's bring her to the ghotul.' They go to the house and bring her singing and dancing on the way. They make her sleep with one of the chelik. Presently she says, 'This is too crowded, let's go outside'. They go out and the boy spreads his mat while the girl goes to relieve herself outside the compound. She comes roaring, a tigress, and kills her lover, then returns as a girl to the magician's house. The chelik suspect what has happened and go again and bring her by force to the ghotul. Once again they make her sleep with a boy to discover if it was really she who was the killer. Once again she takes the boy outside and goes to relieve herself, but this time the boys are waiting armed with sticks and when she comes into the compound they fall upon her and kill her.

VII. Leaving the Ghotul

A girl automatically leaves the ghotul when she is married and must never enter it again. In many places she gives a feast to the ghotul members either on the first day of the marriage ceremony or a week or so afterwards. Sometimes it is her duty to massage every chelik for the last time before she finally goes to her husband's house. The bridegroom also may give a present of a basket of mahua oil-seed which is pounded and cleaned, after which the motiari massage the chelik with it, including their legs.

The only exception to the rule that bars a married girl and even a widow from entering the ghotul is when a girl is married very young. She is then permitted to sleep in the dormitory and join in all its activities up to the time of her first menstrual period. In the Jamkot ghotul, for example, Kariya was married to a little girl and she continued to attend. Here they said that so long as the girl had not been sent officially to her husband, whether she had passed the menarche or no, she might continue as a motiari, but I think that this is unusual.

Such child-marriages are comparatively rare. Where children are married, it is generally in villages where there have been scandals in the ghotul and the parents, instead of interfering with the ghotul routine, adopt this means of preventing pre-nuptial pregnancy. At Korenda I was told that 'in the old days, when there were neither roads nor motor-cars, the Muria were honest, truthful and virtuous'. A boy was not considered suitable for marriage 'until he had made two or three long trips with a load', say from Narayanpur to Kondagaon or Kondagaon to Jagdalpur. The girls were not considered ready 'until their breasts were fully grown and even beginning to slope downwards'. But now the situation has changed. *Abiha rāj kalau, larka larki malau*—'The kingdom of today is black, the boys and girls are like monkeys'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942, 1947 A 432 Gond A 432
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

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It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young.

Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'.

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A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palari, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. Married Men in the Ghotul

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Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two chelik and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval.

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In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted.

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But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883 626 When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic, they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently hardened to persist in their visits after this.

X 883 837 But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Maru, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margaon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1947 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahua Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

X 883 ● 591 768 589 There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul, Dasru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

X 883 The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

X 883 578 But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she said. 'well why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

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O that beautiful ghotul!
Every day you went to clean it.
The road was like a jackal's tail.
You used to go along that road.
In your left hand was a winnowing-fan,
In your right hand a broom,
At sunset you would go there.
You will never see that Raj again.
Now you are going to your husband's house.
Now your pleasure will be work in the house.
You have got no sense at all.
Your husband will curse you,
Your mother-in-law will curse you.
Holding your forehead you will weep.
You will remember the days of youth.
Then you will know what hardship is.
You have got no sense at all.

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The first days of marriage certainly appear to emphasize this taunt. The new life together is not immediately satisfactory, especially for the girl. She has to stay in a house filled with her husband's relatives, and work for them. She has not yet a house, perhaps not even a room, of her own. It is not easy for her to adjust herself to the complete and drastic change in her life. 'A young wife,' they said at Masora, 'is like a bulbul whose tail goes up and down all the time. So does she shake her buttocks. She cooks if she feels like it, gets water if she feels inclined. It is hard for her to forget she is no more a motiari; her feet itch to dance.' But she must never enter the ghotul again, the ghotul which for the last six or eight years has been the centre of her social and emotional life. She must avoid her old ghotul partners; she must forget her ghotul name; she must give away most of her ornaments; she has lost her freedom. Lingo Pen will no longer protect her from pregnancy, which indeed quickly follows. There are no more rapturous evenings round the ghotul fire, no more expeditions through the green forest to other villages, no more dancing to the light of torches at the great festivals. She is now a wife and must prepare to be a mother.

For the husband the change is less drastic. He may continue to spend his evenings in the ghotul, returning home late at night to sleep. This is perhaps the hardest trial that the young wife has to bear; she must abandon old romance, he may continue it. He even holds his ghotul title for six months or a year longer. He may go on expeditions, organise marriages, dance at festivals. But his sex life is undoubtedly curtailed. 'Now he is responsible,' I was told at Malakot. 'He is a man with wife and home. Fun and teasing is ended, touching others is ended; he has a wife. For his old habits the penalty is swelling and death. He may now only do it at marriages and at the sport of the gods at festivals.' Even his visits to the ghotul must soon end. Sooner or later he must lay down his office; sooner or later comes the day when the boys suggest that his presence is no longer so welcome as it was. He must then stop his visits or he will be fined and his poultry stolen.

But by this time married life has become established and serene. Happiness has begun to illuminate the hard tasks of home and field. That is why the Muria regard marriage of such supreme importance; everyone must pass through its gate to the fulfilment of tribal and social life. The ghotul with its many joys might easily have become an end in itself. But the Muria

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Man and wife generally settle down at first in a small hut of their own. But there is a sort of joint family system with the father or elder brother as the patriarchal head, and sometimes a large family occupies an entire hamlet of its own in one part of the village territory. The institution of the cross-cousin marriage tends to unite families very closely. 591 621

This happy and united family life is disturbed by several causes. One, as we have seen, is the commonplace invasion of the happiness of two people by a third. Another is the presence of the husband's younger brother in the house, and the privileged relationship which he has with the elder brother's wife. Another is the custom that allows a married girl to visit her mother's house. Yet another is man's insatiable passion for domestic experiment which leads to the complicated and dubious joys of plural marriage. 578 593

It will be of interest to compare with this the situation in ordinary Hindu families, where the common disparity of age between husband and wife creates stresses from which the Maria are free. 'There are tendencies at work within the family institution itself which sometimes lead to criminal action. The joint family rests upon the mutual toleration and sacrifice of the different members of the household. While forbearance is the outcome of long discipline in joint family life, it is put to a severe test as a result of the growth of individualism. Again, the disparity between the ages of husband and wife, of parents-in-law and girl-wife, offers opportunities of exploitation and even cruelty. The custom of infant marriage is apt to promote oppression, especially where there is a striking difference in age between the husband and the wife. Cases of cruelty to young wives are often brought to the courts in India. 171

'In 1929 a Hindu weaver in Hyderabad, who had married a young girl, chained her like an animal to a big mill-stone to prevent her making frequent attempts to run away. She subsequently died.

'In another case in the same year a young girl-wife who was being forcibly taken to her husband's house managed to free herself, jumped into a wayside well, and was drowned'.[1]

[1] Haikerwal, op. cit., p. 35.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

342 Rough ground-plans of three typical Hill Maria houses are given in the illustration on page 111. The Nugur house was the end house of a long-house, and faced south on to the main village street. It differs from the other two in having no partition wall between the veranda (*algi*) and the *angadi*, or women's kitchen and sleeping room; the *angadi* in this case is in fact almost a continuation of the veranda round the eastern side of the *lonu*. The husband actually slept in the veranda and his wife in the *angadi* in warm weather, but in the *lonu* in winter and rains. This house had no *kala* or menstruation room, because the village had a communal menstruation hut; so also the house had no back door.

Houses

The Kurmer house faced north on to the main street, and was the central house of a long-house of three houses; its western and eastern walls were thus only partitions separating it from the other two houses. It was itself almost two houses, as the widowed mother [592] of Dedha Keye, the occupant, had the eastern *algi*, *angadi* and *lonu* for her exclusive use; but there was no door between her portion of the *algi* and Keye's portion, only a partial continuation across the veranda of the partition wall between her and Keye's rooms. The widow was too old to need a *kala*, and so there was only one for Keye's wife in his part of the house, and this had a back door. Like the Nugur house, this house had no *agha* room.

The Handawada secular headman's (*peda's*) house was at the north end of a long-house containing three houses and facing west on to the village street; the other two houses had their verandas (*algi*) and entrances on the street side, facing west. His *algi* was therefore very small, and only nominally walled off from the open [351] ground to the north of the house by a bamboo wicker-work fence about 3½ feet high, being thus useless for keeping property. Where, as in the other houses illustrated, the veranda is in front of the house and parallel to the roof-tree, it is easy to construct a front wall as high as the roof, which is there barely 3½ feet above the ground.

342 513 784 The *agha* is the husband's living and sleeping room, and it is taboo (*polo*) for his wife, a mature daughter or any woman to sleep in it; but boys too small to sleep in the bachelors' dormitory and immature daughters may sleep there. In hot weather the males of the family often sleep under the granary, which is built on piles, and when houses have no *agha* this is the usual sleeping place at all times for the men of the family, and for male guests except when the latter can be accommodated in the village dormitory (*gotal-lon*). It is strictly taboo for any female to enter a granary, 342 513 or to sleep under one. Every *agha* has a large *alpanji* or sleeping

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

be distributed equally; no one boy must do more than another; no one may shirk, but no one may be unduly burdened.[1]

In the home, after marriage, quarrels usually arise about the distribution of work. This, rather than sexual jealousy, is the real cause of dispute in polygamous households. Where brothers live together, their wives quarrel about the serving of the food. To say *tokirsa* of a girl implies that 'she stares at other people eating' in a suggestive way; 'she peeps in from the door when other folk sit down for a meal, hoping to get some' but she will do no work herself. The real sting of the expression *jutaka*, 'eater of another's leavings', is that it suggests that the *jutaka* never works for himself, but goes cadging round ready to eat anything, even the scraps off dirty plates.

Men beat their wives for not cooking properly, but rarely for any other cause. Here again, the reason for a man's anger is not that he feels he has missed a good meal, but that he thinks his wife is not doing her fair share of work of the home. He himself has been out all day working in the fields; his wife has been enjoying herself at home, chatting with her gossips, wasting her time; otherwise she would certainly have cooked properly.

The actual records of these quarrels are instructive. At Jhakri I overheard a man quarrelling with his wife. 'Why didn't you make the rice soft, you *jutaka*?' he shouted. 'You haven't even yet learnt to cook. When you were a girl did you do nothing but dance at marriages?' To which his wife replied, 'Of course, all through my youth I sat still in the house, and my food was brought to me in bed. Ever since I married you, you have done all the work and I have just sat filling my belly. Come along, *mailotia*, turn me out of your house, you can get another cook, and I'll live somewhere else.'

At Palli, Shamrao Hivale was privileged to listen to a wife abusing her drunken husband for chronic idleness. It was an epic row, which went on and on, and of which every detail was so often repeated that it was easy to record.

> You can only live, screamed the woman, where there is a smell of liquor. That is your real home—the out-still—there is your bed and hearth; you have no home here. What will you do if I die? Who will feed you, who will look after the children? If you won't work, I will leave you and I will take away my children. You wander all day like a goat and all night like a thief. There is no salt in the house, there are no chillies; suppose the landlord comes and asks for some, or suppose a constable comes and wants food, what shall we do? If visitors come, what food can we give them? How are you going to pay the taxes? You shameless creature, a woman has sense but you have none. When there is work to be done, there is no life in you, but when you see liquor you are full of vigour. Then you are like a pig when it catches sight of excrement.
>
> You child of a Ghasnin's vagina, go and wash your dirty face and eyes; go and see how other people work. If I had known what you were like, I would never have come to your house, you corpse. When there is work to be done in the house, then your back begins to ache, your penis is sore. Look, your son is ill, but you won't go to the Siraha—

[1] The Santal also insist on the exact division of food at festivals—P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 78—and I have noticed it also among the Orissa tribes. So keen are the Savara on the precise allocation of labour that when I have required porters to shift camp, every man in the village has turned up—many more than necessary—to ensure that no one does more, or less, work than anyone else.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

586 732 no difficulty in getting wives to stay with them. Dwarfs, on the other hand, not only find it hard to get wives except their elder brothers' widows, but are passed over in the succession to a post of responsibility or the management of a family. Madness is particularly dreaded, and would certainly involve the elopement of a wife. But husbands, though they would divorce a mad [833] woman *a thoro*, would still maintain them; sexual intercourse with a mad woman is believed to result in complete loss of virility. 586 I have heard of no case in which a husband has divorced his wife; she may be frigid or barren or in other ways unsatisfactory, but so long as she is not unfaithful her husband is expected to maintain her, and his remedy is to seek another co-wife, often getting her younger sister or parallel-cousin as compensation for her falling [674] short of expectations. The murder of wives in sudden fits of temper for petty shortcomings is unfortunately common among the Bison-horn Marias, though almost unknown in the hills. Nor must it [837] be assumed that because Bison-horn wives often elope, their husbands tamely submit to infidelity; the detection of an intrigue often results in the husband killing the wife or her paramour, though once a wife has made good her escape to another man's house the [593] husband usually accepts the *fait accompli*. The beating or ill-treatment of wives is strongly condemned by all Marias.

[See cat. 116, p. 425. – Analyst]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

776
539

Paik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's father's brother's son]
Aik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Tograjdeo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Perma Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's brother]
Bhumrandari Penur Rai [Lingo's elder brother's wife]
Pordegumal Penur Rai [Lingo's daughter's husband]
Nulemuttai Penur Rai [Lingo's sister]
Poche Dokara Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Maria Moghraj Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kokal Bidral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kurumtala Penur Rai [Lingo's brother [1]]

776

By this time the reader probably feels that he has had enough. But he need not fear that I propose to take him much further into the intricate and often contradictory relationships of the Muria gods. The subject needs a book to itself and an investigator deeply interested in the theology of primitive peoples. All I wish to do here is to impress on the reader the great complexity of the Muria pantheon, and the intimate human way in which its various members are interrelated.

The gods then come into being by migration from outside and by the division of the tribe into various clans. Many of the gods named in the song are clan-gods, and as the clans split up new gods come into being. But this is not the only way that gods are born. We already have a hint of a fundamental Muria belief in the statement that Tallur Muttai sent her servant to trouble men with disease in order to get food-sacrifice to keep her quiet. The gods are troublesome and expensive, and the more troublesome they are the more they are honoured. This is, of course, the normal Gond method of attracting attention. A Gond wife, who is devoted to her husband, sulks and makes a nuisance of herself, not because she is in a temper, but simply because she judges that to be the best way of getting herself noticed.

[152
593]

776
773

Some of the gods, however, have come into being as a result of actual incidents, no doubt greatly magnified by the course of time. I have only room for a few examples of this tendency. In a village near Bishrampuri there is the shrine of Pendrawandin Pen, a goddess about whom there has been much controversy. Long ago, so runs the local legend, a Muria of the Naitami clan had a daughter called Hidde for whose hand a Poyami boy called Kuria was serving as Lamhada. Hidde's father made a dam across a stream, but the water kept breaking through. Then one day a dream came to him, 'Worship me and I will stop the water'. The Muria thought in his heart 'Whom shall I sacrifice?' He decided to offer the Lamhada boy, Kuria. He took him to the stream, pushed him in and piled earth above his body. At once the dam became firm and strong. But now Hidde began to search for her lover, and when she came to the dam she saw one finger sticking out of the earth. When she saw this she jumped into the stream and was drowned also.[2] After a few days, her ghost began to trouble her father, and when he asked who it was, she replied, 'I am Pendrawandin, your daughter; worship me and I will trouble you no more'. Then began the cult of Pendrawandin and her consort Kuria Pen. Unfortunately, at the time of her death Hidde was in

[1] The word 'brother' is used in both its actual and classificatory senses: the Muria are very confused over these relationships.

[2] With this story compare the legend of Ganga and Beni, who are associated with the source of the Waingunga river at Mundara.—R. V. Russell, *Seoni District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 178.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
182

To understand this, we must consider in some detail the relation of Muria parents to their children.

IV. Avoiding the Primal Scene

X883
182
593

At about the time when children become capable of something more than games and food, they also become something of an embarrassment about the house. There is nowhere for them to sleep at night. They are always clamouring to go and play with the other children. They are apt to surprise the intimacies of marital life. The parents decide that it is time they went to the ghotul. At the age of six or seven, then, a child begins its dormitory life. In most ghotul there is a group of very small children, sent by their parents 'to get them out of the way'. They are not given ghotul names or any ghotul privileges, but the house serves as a sort of crèche, and after all most of the little children have older brothers or sisters there who can look after them.

One of the reasons often given by Muria to explain the existence of the ghotul is that 'it is sinful for parents to sleep in the presence of their children'. 'As soon as a child understands what it [that is, sexual intercourse] is, we send it to the ghotul.' Apparently the Muria parent does not consider the child capable of understanding the meaning of the 'primal scene' till it is about six or seven. But it is interesting and significant that the Muria should consider the point at all. It is indeed of such importance that I will quote all the statements that have been made to me about it. 'The very reason for the ghotul', said the headman of Jhakri, 'is that it is sinful to sleep before a daughter or a son. They must never see the parents sleeping on one mat, either by day or night. Suppose a little girl comes home late at night for some reason and finds her parents holding each other on the mat, they are very angry and abuse her saying, "Haven't you your ghotul to live in? Why do you want to come here?"'

In Malakot, the village Gaita told me that 'young children are only kept at home while they are too young to understand pleasure and pain. Very little children may sleep with their mothers, but then they must go somewhere else. They are always getting frightened, so we send them as soon as we can to the ghotul.'

Here is another opinion from one of the elders of Kongera. 'Suppose the child is two or three years old and suddenly wakes up to find its father copulating with the mother. The father goes on, he takes no notice, but the mother pats the child's chest saying, "I'll give you something to eat in a moment, but keep quiet now, my darling". The father also speaks sweet words to the child in order to deceive it about what is happening. But suppose it is a big child, of five or six years, then it is difficult. The father ceases his work and goes away. Next day they send it to the ghotul.'

And this from Binjhli: 'The ghotul was made simply to stop children watching their parents copulating. As soon as boys or girls understand what that is, we send them to the ghotul. It is a great shame to watch one's own parents at it. "What are they doing?" the little children say, wondering. "Why is my father throwing my mother about like that?" So we take them to the ghotul, and they ask no more questions. But what do the Hindu children do and the sahibs, where all live in one house and they have no ghotul?'

And finally from Alor: 'How difficult it is for parents to tell their bigger children, whom they have not yet sent to the ghotul, to go and sleep in another room. Some children are very good and understand, but others are stupid and insist on crowding into the parents' room. We daren't, even while

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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192
593

they are asleep, pick them up and put them on the verandah. We feel very pleased when they begin to say, "This or that little girl has gone to the ghotul. I used to play with her, and now I feel lonely. Do let me go too". We send them to the ghotul very willingly.'

This desire to prevent the child from witnessing the 'primal scene' is interesting and important, though modern psycho-analysts are inclined to believe that Freud over-emphasized its dangers, and certainly any harm likely to be done to the child would have been done long before it reached the ghotul age. But it is at least significant that the parents are aware of the danger, that they think it not only embarrassing for themselves but harmful to the children, and that so many should trace the foundation of the ghotul to a cause which Freud would surely have applauded.[1]

But not only does the ghotul save the child from the psychological dangers of witnessing the 'primal scene'; it alters the entire parent-child complex by putting in the place of the father a new disciplinarian and in the place of the mother a new object of sensual attraction. 'When a boy or girl enters the ghotul', said a leading chelik at Masora, 'he usually forgets his relations altogether. They say they have no relations. The head of the ghotul is the father, and the Belosa is the mother.' However strict the father may be at home, however insistent on the fulfilment of domestic and economic duties, his authority is nothing before that of the dreaded Sirdar, who can fine you, truss your legs up to the roof, make you a mockery to your fellows. The father fades into the background if he comes home drunk and beats up the family, the children will not be there, his orders and curses are feeble before those of the Sirdar. The father may still control a boy's work and duty, but his emotional life is dominated by the Sirdar. The result of this has been well put by J. P. Mills. Speaking of the policy of the American Baptist Mission in Assam which has, of course, been to discourage the dormitories which formerly flourished there as in Bastar, he writes,

> In forbidding their converts to use the *morung* and in undermining it as an institution the Mission are taking a very dangerous step, from which they would surely have shrunk if they had considered the psychological aspect of the matter. A boy goes to the *morung* when he is very small—as soon, that is to say, as he 'feels shame' at sleeping in the same room as his parents. It is in the *morung* that he fags for other boys and is taught his duties in life and generally hammered into shape. This means that the *morung* tends to take the place of his father as a disciplinarian. This is most important, for it is from a son's feeling towards his father as disciplinarian that one of the great stresses of the family complex arises. Looking back over the thousands of Naga disputes that have been brought before me in the course of my service, it certainly seems to me that violent quarrels between fathers and sons are more frequent in tribes which have no *morungs*.[2]

Mills illustrates this by showing that in the Sema tribe where, as we have seen, there are no *morung*, such quarrels are disastrously common; Angami boys, who also do not grow up in dormitories, resent any form of discipline,

[1] The same desire is said to be at the bottom of the custom recorded of the Savara of Orissa who, it is claimed, never have sexual congress after nightfall, but go out together during the day to special places in the jungle. The tribe has no dormitory, and the whole family has to sleep together in a single hut. See S. N. Roy, 'The Savaras of Orissa', *Man in India*, Vol. VII, p. 331. But I believe the taboo on intercourse at night to be an invention. I discuss it in my *Myths of Middle India*.

[2] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, pp. 42f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

yet among the Ao, where the *morung* plays an important part, quarrels between father and son are rare.

Muria parents are tolerant and understanding. 'Whenever we hear the music of a drum', said a boy at Kabonga, 'we feel restless; we leave everything we are doing and go at once to dance and sing.' Here I was told a story, that is often repeated, of a boy who was sowing seed in his father's field. He had a whole measure of rice to sow, but when he heard drums beating in a neighbouring village he forgot all about it and went off to join the dance, leaving the pile of rice on the ground. Three days later he returned expecting to be beaten, but his father had understood the boy's feelings and had himself gone to the field and sown the rice instead. I have been told in various villages that for recognized festivals and marriages, parents are very sympathetic to their children.

[689] And indeed if the parents interfere with the life and discipline of the ghotul, if they stop their children going to it without sufficient excuse, they are fined—and so firmly established is the institution that they pay up.

There is very generally a convention that the parents know nothing of what happens in the ghotul. They are not even supposed to know their children's titles though, of course, they actually know everything that goes on. But the conventions must be observed. The children do not sing ghotul songs at home. A girl should not let her parents see her as she goes out to the ghotul or when she comes back. That is one reason why she returns home very early in the morning. She ought to be at work husking rice or cleaning the house when her parents get up. Should a girl meet her father as she is going to the ghotul, she should turn her head aside and walk away as quickly as possible. They should not greet or say anything to each other. But in some villages, in Kabonga for example, and at Jhakri, the older people have told me that when a girl gets engaged, her mother advises her to be very careful about allowing boys to take liberties with her. It is said, however, that the parents never warn a girl or boy against any particular person. At Jhakri, Raunu said that the mother says to the daughter at this time, 'Don't play and laugh too much with the boys; be happy, but don't let your hands and feet get into trouble. I never got into trouble nor did your grandmother; we were always known to be good girls for we never became pregnant. Never run away with a boy but marry the one we choose for you and don't quarrel with your girl friends.' So also a father advises his son to be very careful in his relations with girls who are already engaged to other boys. The reasons for this attitude are purely financial: 'Don't make a girl pregnant. We are poor people; I shall not be able to pay the fine; if you get into mischief you will have to go and work as someone's servant and pay the fine that way. Be happy but don't always run after the same girl.'

It will be seen that this kind of advice is very practical, and for that reason the boys and girls do not resent it. The parents are not concerned with the 'morals' of their children and, indeed, even when a boy makes a girl pregnant the parents generally stand by him and help him. When I asked a chelik at Markabera whether his parents ever got angry with him for sexual indulgence in the ghotul, he replied, 'Why should they, didn't they do the same when they were young?'

It is not easy to obtain information about the mother-son relationship. I have not heard of any 'possessive' mothers and the general circumstances of Muria life are such as to eliminate the dangers of the mother-fixation. Naturally, mothers tend to spoil their sons and fathers their daughters. 'A boy may be frightened of his father but he is never afraid of his mother. If

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

983 X
182
593

he does not work properly his father chases him with a stick and he hides until he knows the danger is past and then his mother receives him lovingly and gives him special food.'

It is said that a mother often accuses the father of jealousy, saying, 'You cannot bear seeing that boy's happiness when he goes to the ghotul dance; can't you remember that you were a young boy yourself once and you too went to the ghotul?'

Widows' sons and only sons are often spoilt and indulged—'*Rānd he beta sānd*, a widow's son is a bull': he does what he likes and no one can control him. So too it is said of an only son that 'he brings home all the quarrels of the world: if he is given a pot to urinate in, he does it on the floor'.

On the whole the relation of children and parents is a happy one. This may be at least one reason why there is so little conflict and jealousy, so little strain, among the Muria.

In many respects, Muria practice corresponds to what Seligman once described as the psycho-analytic ideal of education. Melanie Klein, speaking of children rather younger than many of those in the ghotul, describes the upbringing of the future generation. 'We shall be more sparing of compulsory ethical requirements in regard to the tiny developing creature than people were with us. We shall allow him to remain for a longer period uninhibited and natural, less interfered with than has hitherto been the case, to become conscious of his different instinctive impulses and of his pleasure therein, without immediately whipping up his cultural tendencies against this ingenuousness. We shall aim at a slower development that allows room for his instincts to become partially conscious, and together with this for their possible sublimation. At the same time, we shall not refuse expression to his awakening sexual curiosity and shall satisfy it step by step, even—in my opinion—withholding nothing. We shall know how to give him sufficient affection, and yet avoid a harmful superfluity: above all, we shall reject physical punishment and threats, and secure obedience necessary for upbringing by means of withdrawing affection.'[1]

Of this passage Seligman says that 'my experience suggests that further investigation will show a very small number of psychotics among the less advanced of the primitive races, and here it is interesting to note that in the upbringing of their children these races do, to a considerable extent, conform to the psycho-analytic ideal' set out above. He adds that 'there is, however, one desideratum laid down by the author, which I believe is only occasionally fulfilled, "that the child from birth shall not share the parental bedroom"'.[2]

[1] Melanie Klein, 'The Development of a Child', *The International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, Vol. IV (1923), p. 445.

[2] C. G. Seligman, 'Anthropological Perspective and Psychological Theory', *JRAI*, Vol. LXII, p. 221. A terrible picture of the effect on a boy's mind and character caused by witnessing scenes in his parents' bedroom is given by Graham Greene in his novel *Brighton Rock*.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

found alone in the ghotul with him. A Muria girl never covers her head,[1] but at least she must not undo her hair in his presence. When the elder brother is away from the ghotul his 'wife' is allowed to sleep with her '*dewar*', the younger brother.

A chelik does not seem to have to avoid entirely his brother's daughters; in the ghotul he may abuse them or flirt with them, but he ought not to sleep with one of them. But they can massage him, as indeed his own sisters can. They call him *mâma* in the ghotul. This leads us to the interesting provision that close relations should not address each other by their ghotul titles, but by terms of relationship, thus continually reminding themselves and one another how they are related and that they must behave.

What is the reason for these rules of avoidance? The ban on the younger brother's wife is probably to safeguard the position of the younger brother, always in jeopardy as a hundred folk-tales show. In the ghotul certainly it serves as a valuable protection to a younger boy, whose brother might well be the all-powerful Sirdar or Diwan. Similarly, the rule of avoidance between a boy and his motiari's elder sister, who might be the almost equally powerful Belosa or head of the girls, prevents her from taking advantage of her position to seduce a boy away from his 'lawful wife'.

There does not appear to be any taboo on brothers and sisters witnessing each other's erotic adventures in the ghotul, provided they do not discuss them with each other and, of course, strictly avoid any relations between themselves. It is not, however, considered improper for a brother to have full knowledge of and to hear all about his sister's love affairs. Once in Binjhli a boy told me in Gondi how he had dreamt that he was having intercourse with a certain girl. The girl's own brother interpreted for me without embarrassment.

A sister sleeps every night with a boy in the presence of her brother. A brother flirts and makes love and sleeps with girls before his sister. They seem to be quite unembarrassed and both behave naturally.

FIG. 59. Wall-decoration from the Remawand ghotul
Height 6'

[1] What Hoffmann said so charmingly of the Munda is true also of the Muria girl: 'Nothing but a load or a flower is ever seen on the head of a Munda woman.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

In many ghotul a sister may comb and massage a brother, but in Kabonga there was a rule that she must not salute him with Johar nor comb his hair.

Many coarse jokes are made about the relation of brothers and sisters when everyone is drunk at a marriage. There are many obscene songs about it, for it is regarded as a licensed subject for humour. As in other societies, however, it is probable that such humour only exists against a background of very strict propriety. The suggestion that a brother is sleeping with his sister is amusing simply because he never does.

Generally it is said that brothers and sisters live together very happily. When they do quarrel a boy may say to his sister: 'You *potsa* (big-bellied one), you *chipri* (you've got dirty eyes), *saladri* (murderess).' It is said that a girl on her marriage remembers these delightful animosities and weeps bitterly saying, 'No one will be able to quarrel with me so sweetly in future'. The brother may threaten to turn his sister out of the house, but she has the ready retort available that 'in any case I am not going to stay in your house, I can easily make a living somewhere else'.

III

How far is the rule of fidelity to a single partner kept? This is a matter on which there can be no possible statistical evidence; one can only give a general impression and quote a few examples. The temptation to break the rules must be very great. Ghotul routine aims at stimulating the sexual passion. The boys and girls live in the closest contact, and enjoy sexual intimacy in one another's presence. Certain relatives, such as the younger brother, have traditional privileges. The chelik are often absent in the fields, and their motiari sleep accessible and alone. In every 'memoir' that I have collected, the narrator has described how he or she evaded the ghotul rules.

From these memoirs I will give a few quotations. My first is from the experiences of Budhu, a Poyami of Kanera in the Sonawal Pargana of Kondagaon, in a *jodidār* ghotul forty years ago.

> In those days there were about twelve boys and ten girls in the ghotul, and a boy used to sleep with his partner until his marriage unless he changed his name. I was married to the Malko and loved her very much. I was then Sepahi. But after two years, I was made Kotwar, and I had to leave Malko and sleep with the Kotwarin, for that was the rule. Yet my thoughts were always for Malko, and at night when everyone was asleep I would leave the mat where I was sleeping with Kotwarin and creep over to Malko to make love to her.
>
> My parents knew nothing of this, yet to my delight they told me one day that they were going to arrange my marriage with Malko, which was just what we wanted.
>
> A few days after this good news, I went to Sonawal for work and stayed there for a week. During this time I slept in the Sonawal ghotul with the Jamadarin. On the last night this girl took the comb from my hair as a keepsake. From Sonawal I went to Kokori and danced in the ghotul there. One of the motiari fell in love with me and constantly offered me tobacco. After a few days I started home, but three of the girls met me in the jungle and begged me to stay with them, but I had to go home.
>
> Soon afterwards I was married to Malko and we were very happy. We have always done everything together and have never quarrelled.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

Sometimes, indeed, the chelik actually try to make a girl pregnant. In Kanhargaon, two very popular motiari were betrothed to boys at Nayanar. The Kanhargaon chelik did all they could to make them pregnant so that they could force them into marriage and keep them in their own village. But they were unsuccessful, and in the end one of the girls was seduced by her own betrothed at a marriage, became pregnant and was hastily married to him. It is not uncommon, though I have no statistics on the point, for engaged couples whose parents unduly delay their marriage to force the issue either by eloping together or by trying to achieve a pregnancy.

But on the whole, the admirable ghotul rule that engaged couples should have nothing to do with one another before marriage is carefully observed. Out of 113 Lamhada boys serving for their wives and in close proximity for several years to the girls they were going to marry, only 5 made them pregnant.

Pre-nuptial pregnancy does not seem to injure the couple's relationships in marriage, provided a youth marries the girl himself. Of the 26 chelik who married the motiari they made pregnant, not one made a failure of his domestic life. At the time of my inquiries every one of them was living with his original partner and very happy with her. But those who had infertile sexual connexion with their wives before marriage showed a comparatively high divorce rate. Of the 316 who admitted to this, 14 had unsuccessful marriages. Of these 77 were the regular ghotul-wives of my informants and 68 of them were still living together when I inquired.

In only three cases during the last twenty years has a pregnancy been taken so seriously as to lead to tragedy. Two of these were the suicides which I have already described in Chapter XV. But here it was not so much the pregnancy itself as the fact that the pregnancy was the result of a connexion between chelik and motiari of the same clan that mattered. The third tragedy appears to have been due largely to a chelik's fear of the disgrace and expense, especially as it was his second experience of the kind.

At the beginning of April 1942, Birjhu, a chelik of the Aturbera ghotul, discovered with dismay that his motiari, Mori, was pregnant. Only a year before he had made another girl pregnant in the ghotul, had refused to marry her and had forced his parents to pay compensation. They did so, but they made many threats as to what they would do if it occurred again. Mori, who seems to have been in love with the boy, said that he must marry her, but Birjhu refused and said that if she told anybody that it was through him that she had conceived, he would kill her. After a little while, however, the poor girl told her brother's wife about it. When Birjhu heard she had done so, he planned to carry out his threat. On the night of the 14th of April, he told Mori he would do what she wanted and they had better elope together and get married in another village. Late at night they crept stealthily out of the ghotul and made their way through the forest. But suddenly, before they had gone very far, Birjhu caught hold of the girl and strangled her. Then he dragged her body below a tree and tied a rope round the neck to make it look as though the girl had committed suicide.

The following day a report was made at the Narayanpur police station that Mori had committed suicide. When Birjhu heard that the matter had gone to the police, he was frightened but possibly even more he was overwhelmed with sorrow and misery at what he had done. He disappeared, and two days later hanged himself from a tree in the jungle.

But this is the only incident of the kind that has yet been recorded.

Such is the general picture, familiar to students of pre-marital freedom everywhere. How are we to explain the fact that through all the years of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

O that beautiful ghotul!
Every day you went to clean it.
The road was like a jackal's tail.
You used to go along that road.
In your left hand was a winnowing-fan,
In your right hand a broom,
At sunset you would go there.
You will never see that Raj again.
Now you are going to your husband's house.
Now your pleasure will be work in the house.
You have got no sense at all.
Your husband will curse you,
Your mother-in-law will curse you.
Holding your forehead you will weep.
You will remember the days of youth.
Then you will know what hardship is.
You have got no sense at all.

The first days of marriage certainly appear to emphasize this taunt. The new life together is not immediately satisfactory, especially for the girl. She has to stay in a house filled with her husband's relatives, and work for them. She has not yet a house, perhaps not even a room, of her own. It is not easy for her to adjust herself to the complete and drastic change in her life. 'A young wife,' they said at Masora, 'is like a bulbul whose tail goes up and down all the time. So does she shake her buttocks. She cooks if she feels like it, gets water if she feels inclined. It is hard for her to forget she is no more a motiari; her feet itch to dance.' But she must never enter the ghotul again, the ghotul which for the last six or eight years has been the centre of her social and emotional life. She must avoid her old ghotul partners; she must forget her ghotul name; she must give away most of her ornaments; she has lost her freedom. Lingo Pen will no longer protect her from pregnancy, which indeed quickly follows. There are no more rapturous evenings round the ghotul fire, no more expeditions through the green forest to other villages, no more dancing to the light of torches at the great festivals. She is now a wife and must prepare to be a mother.

For the husband the change is less drastic. He may continue to spend his evenings in the ghotul, returning home late at night to sleep. This is perhaps the hardest trial that the young wife has to bear; she must abandon old romance, he may continue it. He even holds his ghotul title for six months or a year longer. He may go on expeditions, organize marriages, dance at festivals. But his sex life is undoubtedly curtailed. 'Now he is responsible,' I was told at Malakot. 'He is a man with wife and home. Fun and teasing is ended, touching others is ended; he has a wife. For his old habits the penalty is swelling and death. He may now only do it at marriages and at the sport of the gods at festivals.' Even his visits to the ghotul must soon end. Sooner or later he must lay down his office; sooner or later comes the day when the boys suggest that his presence is no longer so welcome as it was. He must then stop his visits or he will be fined and his poultry stolen.

But by this time married life has become established and serene. Happiness has begun to illuminate the hard tasks of home and field. That is why the Muria regard marriage of such supreme importance; everyone must pass through its gate to the fulfilment of tribal and social life. The ghotul with its many joys might easily have become an end in itself. But the Muria

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

regard it as a mere preparation; the ghotul is the school of marriage, a training-ground of the domestic virtues. 'When a girl learns to keep the ghotul clean, she will keep her husband's house clean; the boy who is taught to bring wood and work hard will do the same in his own house.'

Still more important, the ghotul exercises its members in the sexual arts and virtues. In other 'higher' societies, how many lives have been ruined on the marriage night![1] But when a newly-married Muria husband and wife approach each other, they are already sexually educated, graduates in the technique of love, instinctively able to avoid the dangers into which untried partners so easily fall. The agony of defloration is divorced from marriage; the hymen casts no shadow across its consummation. The husband is not likely to be repelled by frigidity or shocked by dispareunia—an experience which might later make him impotent. Not a little of the serenity and stability of Muria marriage is due to the fact that when husband and wife cross its threshold they are both prepared.

II. The Appeal of the Childhood Friend

But though the ghotul is a school of marriage, it is not a place for experimental marriages. According to Muria tradition a chelik should never marry his ghotul partner, and once a boy and girl are betrothed they are separated in the ghotul by the strictest of taboos.

For a long time I was under the impression that marriages had to be arranged between families living in different villages. But when I examined the matter statistically I was surprised to find that out of the 2000 marriages scrutinized, there were

Marriages between members of the same ghotul	765
Marriages between members of different ghotul	1235

Of the 765, between members of the same ghotul, there were

Lamhada (marriage by service)[2]	113
Irregular marriages (chelik marrying their ghotul-wives) ..	77
Betrothed in the ordinary way	575

These figures are sufficient to show that there is no official objection to boys and girls who are to marry each other later growing up in the same ghotul. This is significant when we remember that both boy and girl will be regularly cohabiting with others during the betrothal period. But that this does not interfere with their ultimate happiness is shown by the figures for divorce. These are very low, only 59, or under 3 per cent, for the whole tribe, but they rise startlingly in two special cases.

[1] 'The course of a marriage is determined by the wedding night.' With these words Dr R. S. Chesser opens her discussion of the Honeymoon in A. Forbath, *Love, Marriage, Jealousy* (London, 1938), p. 169. The Muria would think that very odd.

[2] Many of the Lamhada boys probably came from different villages, but after beginning their period of service would have had to join the same ghotul as their future wives.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

40 of the divorces were due to the women. To these we might perhaps add another 9 cases where divorce followed a polygynous marriage.

It is noticeable that in no case has childlessness been put forward as a reason for divorce, though I have found this outside the circle of informants examined for statistical purposes. It is also notable that out of 2,000 men only 11 were suffering from some kind of impotence. It is possible to assert this since it is almost axiomatic that divorce should follow impotence. 'As soon as the penis weakens, the vagina runs to the jungle.'

In this particular set of divorces no case of witchcraft is mentioned. But this too I have found elsewhere, and the legends tell how Lingo himself had to drive away five of his seven wives because they were suspected of being witches.

The 25 cases of wives who 'ran away' are probably to be classed as love-affairs. There is no case of a man driving out his wife for adultery. 'A Muria never gets angry with his wife unless with his own eyes he sees her in the arms of another man.' Nor does the Muria husband listen to scandal. 'All the village knows where the cow is at pasture—except the cowherd.'

The paucity of material makes a study of divorce difficult. Generally the Muria husband and wife remain together through all vicissitudes. I heard of a beautiful example of fidelity at Bargaon. A former Chalki described how after he had been married a year, his wife's 'privates came out' and he was unable to have intercourse with her. His friends advised him to marry someone else. 'But I considered how she had given me great happiness for that year.' How could I leave her then? What would she have done? Who would give her happiness? So I stayed with her, and married no one else, but sometimes visited the ghotul.'

If there is any possible excuse for forgiveness, the Muria forgive a sexual lapse—not because they are complacent but because their philosophy forces them to tolerance. If there is any kind of doubt in an accusation, they give their partner the benefit of it. Through poverty and sorrow, despite the malice of witch and warlock or the mysterious hostility of the unseen gods, through doubt and temptation, heedless of the swift death of beauty and the passing of desire, they stand by one another and in their old age are not without reward. Muria domestic life might well be a model and example to the whole world.

VIII. JEALOUSY

Jealousy, which was defined by Descartes as 'a kind of fear related to a desire to preserve a possession', is generally used in a much wider sense and covers, as Westermarck says, such different emotions as rage at a rival, revenge for stolen property and anguish at the knowledge or suspicion of violated chastity and outraged conjugal affection.[1] Hartland in his study of jealousy among 'savages' considered that the sense of ownership was the seed-plot of jealousy,[2] but Westermarck rightly points out that this is not enough: 'If jealousy has anything to do with the sense of ownership the reason is that it is primarily connected with the desire of possession, which is something different. Moreover sexual jealousy springs from sexual love.' One of the best recent descriptions is by Stekel. Jealousy, he says, is 'the expression of the desire to possess an object wholly. It is primordial, is born with man and dies with him. It is still a tragic characteristic of all people, to be unable

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 302.
[2] E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (London, 1910), Vol. II, p. 102.

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

626 Quarrels are equally dangerous. They not only destroy one of the chief of the Muria's treasures—his sense of tribal solidarity—but like adultery they bring the vengeance of heaven upon the village that indulges in them. They must, therefore, be avoided and if they do occur peace must be made at once. In Binjhli Tetku and his brother Maria had a row over a field and beat each other. Their *saga*-relatives hurried to the village, they got salphi and mahua liquor, and held a panch. The Gaita dipped a gold ear-ring in water and sprinkled it over the two offenders; he dipped the ear-ring also in the liquor. Each brother gave the other a drink and peace was established. When Dandu and Aitu quarrelled in Masora, everyone was afraid that some epidemic would attack the village. They both did indeed fall ill, their bodies swelling mysteriously. They called the Gaita and gave him a pig, five measures of rice and a rupee's worth of liquor to sacrifice. He did so, praying, 'O Mahapurub, you are the earth, you are our mother. We have made a mistake. Even an elephant with four feet sometimes slips; what can we men with only two feet do? We give you this offering, let there be no more trouble.' And he warned the quarrellers that next time it would cost them ten rupees to make peace.

152 Everything in Muria society is thus calculated to render jealousy unnecessary, dangerous and undignified. Its absence is further proved, not only by a mass of statements and absence of the criminal cases that would certainly arise from it, but by concrete instances of social practice. For example, the Muria does not insist on his wife coming to him as a virgin, nor does she expect that her husband should find in her the first girl he has ever loved. When we consider the vast number of peoples who have required an exactly opposite state of things, we see how free the Muria must be from jealousy affecting the period before marriage.

593 After marriage, says the best Muria opinion, husband and wife should never
152 refer to their lives in the ghotul, still less should they rebuke each other with their old love-affairs. The very fact that exceptions to this are so carefully noted shows how rare they are. A Saidar of Botha is said to have forced his wife to swear that she never slept with any boy in her ghotul. The Diwan of Nayanar is said to have constantly nagged his young wife about a former lover till she stopped him by saying, 'Very well, if it is true—as you say—that I love him so much, I will go and live with him'. At Alor the Gaita said, 'A boy may try to get his wife to confess what she did in her ghotul, but he has no right to, and she can always say "Whatever I did, you did the same or more" '. It was considered a very severe rebuke indeed when the Kotwar of Almer shouted at his lazy wife, 'Why don't you get up earlier to work? Didn't your parents teach you how to work, or did they only train you to sleep with the chelik night and day?'

593 A husband is generally very good to a wife who as a motiari got a child by
152 another man. He takes the child as his own and the convention is that no reference should ever be made to the matter. This would not be so astonishing
837 if it only happened when a girl conceived in the ghotul, for any sensible man would regard it as the logical conclusion of what he had already accepted, that his wife was sleeping with other youths throughout the period of their engagement. But it is remarkable, I think, when a boy accepts a girl who has run away with another man whom she obviously loves and is going to have a child who will constantly remind her of this former lover. An incident at Samalpur is typical of scores of others which I have recorded. In this village the Sirdar of the ghotul made a girl pregnant and ran away with her. They were brought back and he was fined five rupees and the girl was married to her betrothed.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

593 A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby?' Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilizing him to some extent.

587 We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it is as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. Quarrels and their Causes

152 For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiari during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude: every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

be distributed equally; no one boy must do more than another; no one may shirk, but no one may be unduly burdened.[1]

In the home, after marriage, quarrels usually arise about the distribution of work. This, rather than sexual jealousy, is the real cause of dispute in polygamous households. Where brothers live together, their wives quarrel about the serving of the food. To say *tokirsa* of a girl implies that 'she stares at other people eating' in a suggestive way; 'she peeps in from the door when other folk sit down for a meal, hoping to get some' but she will do no work herself. The real sting of the expression *jutaha*, 'eater of another's leavings', is that it suggests that the *jutaha* never works for himself, but goes cadging round ready to eat anything, even the scraps off dirty plates.

Men beat their wives for not cooking properly, but rarely for any other cause. Here again, the reason for a man's anger is not that he feels he has missed a good meal, but that he thinks his wife is not doing her fair share of work of the home. He himself has been out all day working in the fields; his wife has been enjoying herself at home, chatting with her gossips, wasting her time; otherwise she would certainly have cooked properly.

The actual records of these quarrels are instructive. At Jhakri I overheard a man quarrelling with his wife. 'Why didn't you make the rice soft, you *jutaha*?' he shouted. 'You haven't even yet learnt to cook. When you were a girl did you do nothing but dance at marriages?' To which his wife replied, 'Of course, all through my youth I sat still in the house, and my food was brought to me in bed. Ever since I married you, you have done all the work and I have just sat filling my belly. Come along, *mailotia*, turn me out of your house, you can get another cook, and I'll live somewhere else.'

At Palli, Shamrao Hivale was privileged to listen to a wife abusing her drunken husband for chronic idleness. It was an epic row, which went on and on, and of which every detail was so often repeated that it was easy to record.

> You can only live, screamed the woman, where there is a smell of liquor. That is your real home—the out-still—there is your bed and hearth; you have no home here. What will you do if I die? Who will feed you, who will look after the children? If you won't work, I will leave you and I will take away my children. You wander all day like a goat and all night like a thief. There is no salt in the house, there are no chillies; suppose the landlord comes and asks for some, or suppose a constable comes and wants food, what shall we do? If visitors come, what food can we give them? How are you going to pay the taxes? You shameless creature, a woman has sense but you have none. When there is work to be done, there is no life in you, but when you see liquor you are full of vigour. Then you are like a pig when it catches sight of excrement.
>
> You child of a Ghasnin's vagina, go and wash your dirty face and eyes; go and see how other people work. If I had known what you were like, I would never have come to your house, you corpse. When there is work to be done in the house, then your back begins to ache, your penis is sore. Look, your son is ill, but you won't go to the Siraha—

[1] The Santal also insist on the exact division of food at festivals—P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 78—and I have noticed it also among the Orissa tribes. So keen are the Savara on the precise allocation of labour that when I have required porters to shift camp, every man in the village has turned up—many more than necessary—to ensure that no one does more, or less, work than anyone else.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

593
578
152

for you would have to give him liquor. The children are old enough for marriage but you can't spare the liquor to betroth them. Yet there's always plenty of liquor for your own genitals. If you at least had a sister, I would go to her house and forcibly bring her daughter for our boy—but what other family would give a girl to marry a son of yours unless they had the proper gifts of liquor? You eater of excrement, eater of dog's-flesh, I have spent my life telling you how to live, and now in a year or two you will go to your grave, yet you have never taken note of what I say. We have no place in the house to dry tendu or mahua; we have no garden and the manure is lying useless in the house. Everyone else has beans and vegetable and even sago palms, but we never have anything. You come quarrelling for better food, the children cry for cucumbers; there is no maize, and the children have to go and watch other people eating—while your hands and feet are being eaten by white ants. May a tiger eat you, then I can marry another man. If you die there will be less evil in the world.

Yet, as a boy at Phauda said, 'We may quarrel for *pej* and *pāni* in the day, but we become one at night', and at Kehalakot the Chalan said, 'Our life is never full unless we quarrel'.

This enjoyment of a quarrel, at least between lovers, is shown in a proverbial rhyme.

Tor gāri to mor kān he bāri,
Tor mutha to mor chutka,
Mārbe lāt to mor dār bhāt,
Jitna mārbe panihi tatnāhi banihi.

Your abuse is the ring in my ear,
Your blows are my toe-rings,
If you kick me, it is my pulse and rice,
The more you beat me with your shoes, the more we are united.

Just as between husband and wife, so between parents and children quarrels arise about the distribution of work. On the whole relations in the home are friendly and happy; it is notable too that any attempt of parents to punish their children is spoken of as a 'quarrel'—something that arises between equals.

Parents indeed rarely complain about their children's sexual activities; the thing that worries them is that the ghotul interferes with the work of the house. The average Muria parent, it seems to me, does make real sacrifices for his children. He must experience considerable financial loss as a result of letting them go on so many expeditions, attend so many marriages and festivals and divert so many of their deeper interests from their home. But no one can say that he likes it. He usually complains that the boys and girls are guilty of four main faults—they don't obey their parents, for they have more consideration for the ghotul leaders than for them; they steal family property, little bits of wood and tobacco, and take it to the ghotul; they get uppish, answer their parents back and are afraid of no one; they don't get up early enough in the morning and they don't do enough work. Among the forms of abuse and examples of domestic quarrels that I have been able to collect, nearly all are concerned with this one point of not doing enough work. A mother says to her daughter, 'You *nakti mailotia*, all day long you are laughing with your boy friends; so and so's mother was telling me that you were ruining him; he never does any work now. If you don't work properly at home, how will you work in your husband's house? He will turn you out and our honour

412

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

will be ruined'. Or a father says to his son, 'I spit on your ghotul friends; all you can do is to dance and sing; you have no idea of how to work; when I tell you to do some work you always have a pain in the stomach. When you see a plough you at once get fever, but when you hear a drum your pains and fever disappear at once'.

At Jhakri Raunu gave us some examples of how angry parents talk to their children. Here is a mother telling her daughter what she thinks of her: 'You *jutâki*, why can't you work? If you don't begin to use your limbs now, what will you do later?' And the girl replies, 'Why are you always bothering me? If you don't want to give me food, don't; if I have got to starve, I will starve, or I will go away and beg'. Then the father joins in: 'After you are married you are going to ruin our name; you will go changing from husband to husband, for not one will put up with your idleness; and everywhere you go people will laugh at us. Has not your mother taught you to do anything but to dance in the ghotul? Must you spend all your life in the ghotul? You cannot even cook the rice properly.'

In the same way the mother says to the son, 'Why can't you go to the fields? Why can't you look after the bullocks? Your one desire is to eat without moving your limbs; your hands and feet are broken. Yet this is your own house; this is your own property; how are you going to look after it when we are dead? How are you going to bury us properly if you never do any work?'

But the Muria believe that the mother is generally very kind and loving to her son. As Nari said at Nayanar, 'The father is always saying to himself that the girl is going to leave him and go to her husband's house and therefore he is tender to her, but the mother does not seem to mind her going away. She thinks of her own reputation. Unless she is nasty to the girl, she cannot teach her anything and so she has to nag her continually'.

These quarrels about work lead, in a few rare cases, to the serious consequence of suicide. During the past ten years there have been 20 suicides among the Muria of the ghotul area, and a study of the causes leading to them confirms what I have written in this chapter. The suicides have been due to the following causes.

Cause of Suicide	Number	Percentage
Insanity	2	10
Sickness	3	15
Fear due to breach of tribal rules ..	1	5
Fear of prosecution	1	5
Conflict with parents over marriage ..	2	10
Sorrow for the death of a son	1	5
Quarrel over childlessness	1	5
Quarrels about work	9	45

This is a very small number of suicides, only 2 a year, for so large a population, working out at about 20 to the million annually. The method of suicide, in every case but one, was hanging; the single exception was the young wife who drowned herself at Korhabera.

The suicides due to quarrels and disputes number 12, or 60 per cent. This, which would be surprising in other communities, is less so here in view of what we have seen of the sense of outrage that a quarrel gives to a Muria.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

III. The Stilt Festival

The use of stilts during the rains is a semi-religious practice common throughout Middle India and no doubt elsewhere.[1] It has been suggested that it has some magical significance aimed at encouraging the crops to grow.

'The Geeree', says Colonel Ward, describing the custom in Mandla, 'can hardly be called a festival: it is remarkable more for its absurdity than anything else, and is left to the children to celebrate. This they do by walking about the place on stilts for some days, praising the institution of the Geeree, or stilts, as placing them above the necessity of walking in the mud; and finally, proceeding in procession to the Nerbudda, they throw the stilts in and return to their homes.'[2]

The chelik have similar, but more fully developed, customs. The stilts are made of two poles of either ghotiya or sarai about 6' high, to which foot-rests are attached 2' from the ground. These are made of hollowed bits of char wood which are filled with pebbles and fixed together round the poles either by nails or small wooden pegs. The stilts are made early in the rains at the Amavas Pandum which corresponds to the Hareli festival of the Hindus. During the rains, the chelik constantly walk about on their stilts making a great deal of noise as the pebbles inside the hollowed foot-rests rattle about. The only game they play on the stilts is stilt-fighting when they attack each other and try to bump each other off.[3] They become expert in lifting one of the stilts off the ground and hitting another boy with it. They are also able to do very clever solo dances, hopping on one leg with the other raised from the ground.

Stilt-walking is permitted for a couple of months during the rains from the time of the Amavas Pandum until after the first New Eating ceremony in the middle of August or a little later. This is called the Korta Tindana in Gondi and on the second day of the festival, which is known as the Hara Tindana or the day on which the people eat the leavings of the food that remained after the big day of the festival, a special ceremony takes place in connexion with the stilts. After this day it is taboo to use stilts at all. Grigson adds that among the Hill Maria there is a rule that stilt-walking is not only taboo during the rest of the year but also every fourth year.[4]

On the second day of the Korta Tindana the chelik assemble and go round the village on their stilts holding bursundi plants in their hands. They dance in front of each house in turn begging for rice, eggs, liquor and money and sing,

Lāya dāya loo loon thi,
Rai hoda beda the
Nēna daha dharthe,
Gandri bursundi pāra pāra.

This may be freely translated, 'O stinking mosquitoes, run away to the fields of rai before our feet touch the threshold, for with branches we are hunting

[1] As, for example, by the Angami and Ao Naga, the Kuki and Kachari, and the Marquesans. (See Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 155 and J. G. Frazer, *Belief in Immortality* (London, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 339f. Russell gives photographs of Hindu boys on stilts (op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 42 and 46) and describes the custom briefly at Vol. IV, p. 111.

[2] H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mundlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 64. Compare E. M. Gordon, 'Notes concerning the People of Mungeli Tahsil, Bilaspore District' in *JASBeng.*, *New Series*, Vol. I (1905), p. 195.

[3] The Angami Naga, like the Marquesan Islanders, play a game on stilts in which the combatants try to balance on one stilt and trip up their opponents with the other. See J. H. Hutton, 'Assam and the Pacific', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 6.

[4] Grigson, op. cit., p. 140.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Man and wife generally settle down at first in a small hut of their own. But there is a sort of joint family system with the father or elder brother as the patriarchal head, and sometimes a large family occupies an entire hamlet of its own in one part of the village territory. The institution of the cross-cousin marriage tends to unite families very closely.

This happy and united family life is disturbed by several causes. One, as we have seen, is the commonplace invasion of the happiness of two people by a third. Another is the presence of the husband's younger brother in the house, and the privileged relationship which he has with the elder brother's wife. Another is the custom that allows a married girl to visit her mother's house. Yet another is man's insatiable passion for domestic experiment which leads to the complicated and dubious joys of plural marriage.

It will be of interest to compare with this the situation in ordinary Hindu families, where the common disparity of age between husband and wife creates stresses from which the Maria are free. 'There are tendencies at work within the family institution itself which sometimes lead to criminal action. The joint family rests upon the mutual toleration and sacrifice of the different members of the household. While forbearance is the outcome of long discipline in joint family life, it is put to a severe test as a result of the growth of individualism. Again, the disparity between the ages of husband and wife, of parents-in-law and girl-wife, offers opportunities of exploitation and even cruelty. The custom of infant marriage is apt to promote oppression, especially where there is a striking difference in age between the husband and the wife. Cases of cruelty to young wives are often brought to the courts in India.

'In 1929 a Hindu weaver in Hyderabad, who had married a young girl, chained her like an animal to a big mill-stone to prevent her making frequent attempts to run away. She subsequently died.

'In another case in the same year a young girl-wife who was being forcibly taken to her husband's house managed to free herself, jumped into a wayside well, and was drowned'.[1]

[1] Haikerwal, op. cit., p. 35.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

told everyone who knew anything about the matter to make a report of suicide, and since he was a man of great influence this was done.

The remarkable thing about this case is not the violence with which the murder was committed, but the very great forbearance shown by Poda. After forgiving Kopa the first time, he himself went to the expense of marrying him to a young girl, perhaps with the idea that this would divert his attention. Even on the second occasion he refrained from physical violence, and contented himself with turning the boy out of his house. Few Maria would have failed to kill Kopa immediately after discovering him in the house at night. But all Poda did was to put the matter before the village elders. It seems to have been Kopa's impertinence in going to the hut and sitting there as if nothing had happened that suddenly deprived Poda of his self-control. The Court, taking these matters into consideration, sentenced him to only five years' imprisonment.

VI

THE MOTHER'S HOUSE

Another very common source of domestic friction is the custom that allows a girl to visit her mother's house. These visits are an exciting and important part in the life of every aboriginal girl. During her marriage ceremony many of the songs deal with the happiness of her childhood home, and the misery of a life with a husband under the domination of her parents-in-law. After marriage the mother's house acquires a sweet and romantic memory. Its hardships and quarrels are easily forgotten, and the love of one's own parents appears tender and kind compared to the constant friction of the new home. It is generally considered correct for girls to go to their parents' house for important domestic events such as the ceremonies for the birth of children, marriages and funerals, for some of the chief festivals and to help in the more urgent work of the fields. Husbands, especially young husbands, resent this, for it means one pair of hands the less to work in their own house. Girls are not always very tactful in the enthusiasm they show at returning

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

574 593 to their old homes, and some girls make a regular habit of going there, far too often for the comfort of their husbands.

574 578 There have been several suicides arising out of this situation, but only one of our hundred murders. This was the tragedy of Habka Masa who, when I saw him in jail, was a sad gaunt man utterly crushed by the tragedy that had befallen him. He had been married to his wife Pakli for some three years, and was living with his old blind parents at Hallur in the Kutru Zamindari. In June his wife went home to Gangalur for the Pen Karsita festival. Masa insisted on going with her. Two days after the festival, Masa told his father-in-law that he wanted to go back to his house, for it was the beginning of the rains and there was a lot to do. The older man was agreeable, and gave him the customary clothes and a basket of oil-seed, which is the usual present to a son-in-law when he leaves the house. But Pakli refused to go. Her parents were on the point of going to work as coolies, and she wanted to go with them. Masa, fearing that he might lose his wife altogether, decided to accompany her. The party set out and went to Gidam, a prosperous little country town on the main road, and again Masa tried to get his wife to go home. From Gidam they went to Tirthum and worked at the construction of a bridge for the P.W.D. When the bridge was ready, they all went on to Silakjhori where they got work as farm-servants. The parents-in-law built a little hut for themselves, and Masa and Pakli occupied a deserted hut belonging to sawyers. From the day of their arrival there were constant quarrels between Masa and his wife, for Masa was anxious about his cultivation—he was the only able-bodied man in the family. Pakli used to put forward every possible excuse for not going back. One day it was raining heavily. The next the rivers were flooded and she was afraid to cross them. A third day she promised to go when the rains were over.

On the night of 10 July 1939, there was heavy rain and a strong wind. After supper with the family Masa and Pakli struggled through the wind to their little hut. According to Masa's own account they then began to quarrel violently. He again asked Pakli to go home and she refused. Then he asked her to give him some tobacco, or, in other words, to have intercourse with him, and this also she

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Kuakonda. When Telami Dhurwa returned from jail after 763
killing a man in a drunken quarrel, he offered his clan-god Uru Maru, a pig, a cow and a hen, and had to undergo the usual ceremonies of purification.

Apart from these ceremonies, however, the fact that a man 554 558
has served a sentence for murder has singularly little influence on his social position and domestic happiness. It is true that imprisonment, if it is for a very long term, sometimes acts as an automatic divorce, and women feel that they are at liberty to marry again. But generally wives wait for their husbands to be released, as I found Deve, the wife of Kawasi Borga, waiting for her husband at Doriras. Borga, ten years before, had gone to jail with a life-sentence for killing his uncle. His wife had all the time been well looked after by the villagers, and I found her house substantial and prosperous. Her two sons had been successfully married and were carrying on the business of their home with the help of their wives.

People, however, are sometimes afraid to marry a released 554
murderer. Doga of Jabeli must be one of the luckiest young 582
men alive, for after being sentenced to transportation for one murder he was released after three years; whereupon he is said to have killed his wife, was sentenced to death and again got off on appeal. He came to see me armed with a ferocious-looking axe, which had actually been put in evidence at one of his trials as the weapon with which he had committed murder. He was trying to get a new wife, but without success. 'They are all afraid of me', he said, 'for fear I might kill them as well'. But he thought he might possibly get a widow. Another youth who found it very difficult to get a new wife was Hemla Bakka, who killed his wife for committing adultery, and got three years' imprisonment for it. At Aranpur all the girls were frightened of the charming Gutte, who had been in jail for killing a man in a drunken quarrel after a cock-fight. They thought if they displeased him, he might murder them too.

At Khutepal, Oyami Masa, who was imprisoned for killing 554
his junior wife, seems to have suffered no loss of prestige on 558
account of it. He is a Waddai, and when I was there he

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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It has already been said (page 234) that a very high proportion of marriages are cross-cousin marriages, and that such unions formed 54 per cent. of the Hill Maria marriages into which I enquired. The proportion is not much less among the Bison-horn Marias. Such marriages are considered the most seemly, both because the family which has given a daughter to another family in marriage in one generation should have this obligation repaid by getting her daughter back as a wife for a son of the next generation, and because such family arrangements obviate the necessity of paying the much heavier bride-price required for getting a bride from a new and unrelated family. Such marriages are known as *gudapal* or 'tribe-milk' marriages. The commonest form is marriage between a daughter and her mother's brother's son (brother being again used in the extended sense). But it has also been extended to cover marriages between a girl and her father's sister's son and a son and his mother's brother's daughter, which merely mean the borrowing of a wife from the same family for two successive generations; in such cases the predominant consideration, apart from the wishes of the bridegroom and bride, is the smaller bride-price which will be demanded by relations so close in affinity. Moreover, it is a reflection on parents if, when a girl is mature, no marriage is arranged for her and no one asks for her; in such cases it is a recognized right of the parents to ask either the mother's brother's son or the father's sister's son to carry her off and make her his wife, even though he be already married to some other woman. Similarly a man, especially among the Bison-horn Marias, often acquires as second and third co-wives the younger sisters of his first wife. When a Bison-horn Maria girl marries a man other than her mother's brother's son, the latter, unless he has forfeited his prescriptive right to her by previously marrying another girl, is entitled to compensation from her husband, usually Rs. 5. But the Hill Marias do not observe this. For to them the free choice of the youth and girl is far more important, and when a girl is never compelled to marry against her will, it obviously is unnecessary to compensate anyone if she refuses to marry him. In a similar way Bison-horn Marias consider that a younger brother has a prescriptive right to an elder brother's widow, and he therefore gets Rs. 5 compensation if any other man marries her.

Cross-cousin marriage

595

No value is set on pre-marital chastity, and it is doubtful whether any girl preserves her virginity until her marriage. The typical attitude was thus expressed by Usendi Moda, the headman of Orcha, already mentioned as one of the men sentenced for the 1916 Orcha murder, and whose family pedigree is given in Appendix

836

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

husband ill-treated her, while she provided a chorus of simulated wailing. They took her off to the booths prepared for her parents and the guests from her village, and sat there with her for the rest of the morning and all the afternoon, taking their food there, while the rest of the guests finished the *lauda* and slowly dispersed, beating their drums, along the forest paths. At about 5.30 p.m. the bridegroom entered the bridal hut alone, while his younger brother went to the booth where the bride had spent the afternoon, cried 'Come, sister-in-law, it is time that you were bedded,' caught her by the hand and tried to drag her off. She screamed and feigned resistance, but he called four or five other laughing youths to help him, and between them they pulled the girl to the door of the bridal hut, opened it and pushed her in, barring the door on the outside. Then they stole a cock from the bridegroom's coop, and, accompanied by the girls who had come with the bride from her village, plucked the cock and scattered its feathers along a path leading to a forest glade, where they cooked and ate it, and all dispersed.

The *otter* and *akemakatta* forms of marriage among the Hill Marias have already been mentioned; the same forms exist among the Bison-horn Marias. Actually women are very free to change their attachments or, if unattached, to go to the house of the man of their choice and live with him as his wife even if he is already married. It is convenient for the man to have the services of an extra woman in a society in which so much work is done by women; and it is not considered right for a nubile woman to be unattached. Particularly among the Bison-horn Marias, men with two or three wives are common; only one of these will be a regularly married wife, and the others will be either her younger sisters or parallel-cousins or other women who have come into the husband's keeping of their own choice, or after becoming pregnant as a result of a liaison with him. The expression commonly used by the Bison-horn Marias for a woman going in this way to live with a man is the local and Chhattisgarhi Hindi term *paisa-mundi*, and the unions are known as *paithu* or *odiyattur*; there seems to be no difference between these, just as for practical purposes there is little between the *otter* and *akemakatta* forms of the Hill Marias. Where an unmarried woman is made pregnant, and becomes the man's wife by living at his house, the man has to give his fellow-clansmen an entertainment (*paithu*) or dinner, and pay the usual bride-price. Husbands have similarly to give a dinner when unmarried girls, wives or widows, of their own choice and without their guardians' consent, go to live with him; but in such

Irregular marriages, widow marriages and divorce; attitude to abnormalities

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

833 partner; but here, so far from being thought improper, it is not unknown for a girl to attract a chicken-hearted chelik in this way.

Woman is indeed regarded as insatiable. 'Woman is earth; man cannot plough her.' The proverb means that as a single plough cannot break up the universal earth, so no man can really satisfy a woman. Here we have the opposite view to that commonly held in Europe, that sex is the man's privilege and the woman's duty; in aboriginal India, sex is the man's duty and the woman's right. It is her compensation for the embarrassments of menstruation and the pains of child-bearing. She has no more powerful means of dominating and subjugating the male.

It is difficult to say what a Muria regards as the normal frequency of intercourse. Among adults it is often said that a Muria woman insists on a daily connexion until the first child is born; after that twice a week is enough.' A wife is very passionate until she gets a child, but then the child takes her passion and her strength away.' Yet when a husband is more ardent it gives great satisfaction to his partner. 'If he goes to her three times during the night she beams with happiness and tells her friends, "I saw no sleep tonight. He gave it all to me. His life was in me all night".'

[595] This tradition imposes a great strain on the polygamous husband and may explain why multiple marriage is so rare. A former Chalki of Bayanar had two wives. 'We never quarrelled so long as I went daily to both. I didn't mind for I was strong enough. After all, it is only your land, and every man tills as much as he can. All you need is a pair of strong bullocks and a plough.'

833 A childless couple are often driven to excess in a vain attempt to stir the mysterious forces that cause conception. A Daroga of More Berma told me, 842 'My penis has been worn out by seven years' hard work, just as a bit of cloth is torn to bits after months of heavy wear, but still I cannot get a child'. And a man at Alor said, 'You may work night and day, but unless God fills the womb with hair, it is all of no avail'.

X 883 In the ghotul sexual practice varies. In places where there has recently been a pregnancy, the leaders insist on restraint as a contraceptive measure, 833 and sometimes demand that their permission be taken before indulgence. But this is emergency legislation, and the ghotul soon slips back into freer ways. In the stricter ghotul, the chelik and motiari do not have congress more than two or three times a week. At Esalnar, they claimed that they did not exceed once a week—for here they were much concerned to prevent conception.

But elsewhere I have heard the chelik laugh at such moderation. 'The penis is the *datun* (toilet-twig) of the vagina and should clean it every day.' In Binjhli, where chelik and motiari only sleep together once a week, on Fridays, they said that they had intercourse outside the ghotul every day, and at least three times on Fridays.

In most ghotul, the motiari expects her chelik to approach her sexually every day. 'If the boy does nothing, then the following evening when she is combing his hair she says, "Was it a day or a night yesterday? You forgot it was night. Why were you lying beside me like a corpse?" The boy feels very ashamed and says that he had a bad head or was very tired after working in the fields. "But I'll tire you out tonight", he says.'

'A night without intercourse', said a motiari at Chandabera, 'seems twelve years long.'

834 The Muria tradition, which is always wise and sane in sexual matters, interrupts the routine with many holidays. The regular monthly rest during the catamenial period of wife or motiari is a boon alike to husband and chelik. During pregnancy and after it there is a fairly long period of abstinence. During

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

Another form of compensation was recorded at Modenar. Here there were two Lamhada in the ghotul serving for two sisters; the Diwan was betrothed to the Dulosa, the Likhen to the Jaimo. One day the Jaimo was found to be pregnant by the Diwan; they went off together and were married, and the Dulosa was given to the Likhen in compensation. 883X 584

The institution is not very common; it would be wrong, however, to call it unpopular. Out of our 2,000 cases, 113 were serving-marriages. Of these 93 were cross-cousin marriages, 40 *gudawol* and 53 *kudiyāri*. 13 had divorced their wives or been deserted by them, a rather high proportion of 11·5 per cent as compared with the divorce-rate of the whole tribe which is under 3 per cent. But the other 100 marriages were stated to have been happy enough. The majority of Muria, however, can generally find sufficient money to pay the small bride-price required—and after all, a son in your house is worth something—and the Muria love their children. Hence only 5·5 per cent of marriages are of this type.

V. POLYGYNY

A gentleman, talking to Samuel Johnson about France, told him that in that country as soon as a man of fashion married, he took an opera girl as his mistress, declaring this to be the general custom. 'Pray sir,' said Johnson, 'How many opera girls may there be?' The gentleman answered, 'About four score'. 'Well then, sir,' replied Johnson, 'you see there can be no more than four score men of fashion who can do this.' Even if apocryphal, this rejoinder is relevant to any discussion of the prevalence of polygyny among primitive peoples. For this type of marriage is a simple matter of statistics. 585

Westermarck laboriously considers the geographical distribution of polygyny and then turns his attention to its prevalence in different grades of economic culture. Quite apart from the astonishing character of some of the witnesses whom he admits to his scientific court—for the aboriginals of central India he depends on Forsyth and Hislop (admirable in many respects, but how could they possibly have known the facts about Gond polygyny?), an article in the *Calcutta Review*, and the childish *Wild Tribes of India* by Rowney[1]—his entire argument is vitiated by one simple fact. In every primitive society, every woman must be married. There are no aboriginal spinsters. Widows may, and generally must, remarry. Widowers may remarry and usually do. There are no aboriginal concubines or prostitutes (outside certain professional tribes). Therefore the prevalence or otherwise of polygyny is conditioned largely by this one fact, the excess of the number of females over males. Thus Westermarck's statement that 'among pastoral peoples I have found none which can be regarded as strictly monogamous, and both among them and the higher agriculturalists polygyny is undoubtedly more frequent than among the hunters and incipient agriculturalists',[2] means nothing more, if it means anything at all, than that among hunters and incipient agriculturalists, there is a higher female mortality and no surplus women—which is what we would expect in view of the hard life lived at this stage of economic development.

In any society where there are more women than men, and where there are neither spinsters nor prostitutes, there must be some form of polygyny. This is so in Europe and in so-called 'higher' society everywhere, only there the plural wives are called mistresses and have no legal or other rights. The Muria is more honest and more just; he turns his mistress into a wife and accepts her children as his own.

[1] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 8. [2] Ibid, p. 20.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

595 161 The Census of 1931 showed that 'women generally preponderate in the more primitive tracts and men in the more advanced areas'. The aboriginal tribes have 'a high proportion of women'.[1] This was certainly true among Gond, Bharia, Binjhwar and Kawar in the Central Provinces, but the returns for the Maria and the Uraon show a lower figure for women. Here I suspect the accuracy of the returns, for there has often been a tendency among aboriginals to return lower figures of women on account of the curious suspicion that the Census inquiries are leading to a wholesale deportation of girls to England for the pleasure of the sahibs or, as I was once told, 'for the honour of Queen Victoria'.

In 1941, the figures for the chief aboriginal communities in Bastar were as follows.

	Males	Females	Total
Maria	60,015	60,095	120,110
Muria	109,512	110,142	219,654
Bhattra	5,471	5,398	10,869
Dorla	7,097	7,508	14,605
Dhurwa (incl. Parja) ..	13,208	12,611	25,819
Gond	8,344	8,276	16,620

My suspicion about the accuracy of the low returns for Maria women in 1931 is confirmed by the fact that 10 years later women outnumbered the men. Women also outnumber men among the Muria, but it must be remembered that at least 50,000 of those returning themselves as Muria were in reality Bison-horn Maria. When we turn to the Ghotul and Jhoria Muria we find another picture.

		Muria males	Muria females
Narayanpur Tahsil—	North	8,390	7,975
	West	691	631
	South	8,647	7,833
Kondagaon Tahsil—	North	16,596	16,550
	South	17,049	16,506
	Total ..	51,373	49,495

There is thus a deficit among the Ghotul Muria of 1,878 women, out of a rough total of 100,000, or 18 per 1,000. There is little scope, therefore, for polygynous enterprise, even though I again suspect that there are actually more women in the tribe than the Census returns admit. Wherever, as Census Officer, I was able to check returns, I found a tendency to conceal the real number of motiari.

595 In the 2,000 marriages examined, only 44 were or had been polygamous. Of these 29 men claimed that they had lived happily with two wives at a time, but 9 admitted that their experiment had not lasted very long. In 5 cases the first wife left the husband, in 4 the first wife succeeded in driving out the

[1] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XII, Part I, p. 152.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

second after a time. In 6 other cases a plural marriage was in progress, but was unhappy and disturbed by constant quarrels. 595

Polygyny is not socially disapproved—though an incidence of only 2 per cent might suggest it was. The Muria's attitude is rather that a man has undertaken more than he is likely to be able to manage, and is more to be pitied for his difficulties than to be condemned for impropriety.

For example, at Berma, a Muria said, 'Two wives are like two drums with the player in between; he beats one or he beats both according to the rhythm required. But a good drummer does his best with a single drum'. Or again at Kanhargaon they said, 'You will always hear the noise of pots clashing and breaking in a house with two wives; nothing is done properly, not even rice is cooked in time'. And the Kandki of Bunagaon said, 'I am dried up even by one wife. How could I manage another?' But elsewhere I have heard it said that a clever man can keep two wives happy 'just as two hands beat the two ends of a drum in rhythm'.

It is everywhere said that the wives quarrel, not through sexual jealousy or about prestige, but because each thinks the other shirks her due share of work. As I show later in the chapter this question of the distribution of work is very important to the Muria mind and is indeed the cause of most of the quarrels and a high percentage of the suicides in Muria society. [578 762]

For example, in the following record of a quarrel it is the dispute about work that is really important. A husband has been neglecting his senior wife. 'Is my vagina bitter and hers so sweet?' she says and then turns on the junior. 'You *bīploti*, it is I who made this man what he is today: everything in the house is mine; all you should eat is my leavings.' The younger girl replies, 'I didn't come here of my own accord: he is as much my husband as yours, for it is he who brought us both here'. Then the husband says to the elder, 'Don't be angry. I have brought this girl, not because I love her more than you, but so that she can help you in your work'. 'But that is what she never does. When I am cooking, she should fetch wood, when I am defiled, she should cook. But she refuses.' The younger wife, in some villages, has to observe various vital taboos. She cannot approach the Pot of the Departed at will. She can only go at the New Eating Festivals after an offering has been made and a feast enjoyed. Before this she should not take any grain to the place where the Pot is kept. [784]

In the sexual sphere it is supposed to be comparatively easy to manage two or even three wives.[1] The headman of Chandabera, a charming man with the body of an athlete, told me how he arranged that he himself and each of his two wives slept in three different places. Then he made love to one or the other according to his desire, not much caring whether the other was awake and watching or no. On this point, he said, he never had trouble. In Badgaon, a Muria said that he had to have his senior wife three times a day and the junior twice in order to stop them fighting over his body—but this was doubtless an exaggeration.

I will quote some of the remarks made by these sexual athletes during the statistical inquiry.

A Sirdar of Kejang: 'I did not care for my first wife: I married her at my parents' wish, and they were more interested in marrying a rich man's daughter

[1] In many tribes, leading 'characters' take pride in keeping a number of wives. A Muria of the Oyami clan in Kanapur had six wives; in Kerlapal another Muria had seven. I found a Juang in Keonjhar State with seven. The famous Yogi Baiga of Mandla had six, with twenty-six children. A Pardhan of Balaghat had a similar number and used to take them all, walking behind him in a file, when he went to a bazaar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

595 than in my happiness. Soon I found I could not bear to sleep with her and I went back to the ghotul. There I fell in love with Buski and eloped with her and married her. Afterwards I felt sorry for my first wife, and simply out of kindness tried to sleep with her. In this way I lost all happiness, for they began to quarrel with each other, and with me.'

A Saidar of Pharasgaon: 'I lent a man twenty rupees. When the time came for repayment he had nothing to give. So he told me to take his daughter instead. We all three live together very happily. I once beat my second wife for not working properly, but that was the only time we quarrelled.'

A Chalan of Kehalakot: 'I feel ready for a second wife now, but I don't want to be a dog.'

A Kamdar of Chandabera: 'We hear that two wives won't sleep together. But we Muria have always been together in the ghotul, and if a man has two wives, they are both content to sleep with him.'

A Pujari of Kachora: 'I was married to a much older girl and she was always abusing me for having such a small penis. I used to say, "Give it time to grow and all will be well". But she would take no notice and was always wandering about in search of something bigger. Later on I married three wives'—probably to restore the self-respect so deeply injured by his first wife.

A Saidar of Bargaon: 'I had no children from my first wife and she begged me to marry another girl. So I married a widow. We lived together very happily. I always slept with my first wife, and the second lay near by. I used to have intercourse with each of them on alternate days'.[1]

A Jolia of Malmeta: 'I have no children, and I want to marry a second wife. But I have no money to pay for one. I think about it day and night and feel very wretched.'

A Baidar of Bunagaon: 'I am a Siraha. One day some people brought me a girl for treatment. I could do nothing. So they said, "Take her as your second wife, and you will cure her". So I married her, and put on her finger a leaf-ring of aonra, and we have fought the gods together. By becoming my wife she has been cured.'

Surju of Kuntpadar: 'My first wife was barren, and she herself suggested that I should marry another. I did and slept with each alternately. Sometimes they quarrelled, but once the younger girl had a baby, they became great friends, and my elder wife is very fond of the child.'

Here we have many different reasons for polygyny—the desire for offspring, the repayment of a debt, the need to restore injured dignity, a love-affair. In one case the first wife urged her husband to take a second, but more often she employs all the resources of magic or intrigue to prevent her husband installing a junior partner. Chaitu of Chandabera described his experiences in this matter.

> A girl came one day to my village and I fell in love with her. I asked her to come to my house and she agreed. I immediately sent for liquor and invited the village elders to drink. At about midnight, while everyone was drinking outside, I suddenly felt that I must see

[1] The tradition that both wives are to be treated as sexual equals is rooted in Hindu antiquity, as is shown by the admonition of Daksha to Soma for loving Rohini to the exclusion of the other twenty-six constellations. 'Behave in the same way towards all thy wives that a great guilt may not come on thee.' But Soma took no heed and was cursed to wax and wane continually. The *Kamasutra* also says, 'If a man has gathered many wives, let him be the same to all.'—J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 471.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

what she was really like, so I went to the house and asked her to lie with me. She asked me what I was doing outside and I said I was drinking in honour of her marriage to me. Although she had been very sweet to me up to that moment, she suddenly cried, 'No, you are simply drinking my urine'. I was drunk and got very angry, and though she tried to prevent me I forced her. But it gave me no pleasure. 595

Next morning I found the girl was ill. There was no fever or anything we could see, but she lay sick on the ground. I took her to a Siraha and we had to stay with him for a fortnight. I used to give her food and do everything for her, but she got no better. One day I tried to have her again, but she said, 'Wait a moment while I go outside' and she slipped out of the house and ran for her life to her own village. I am sure that my elder wife did some magic to turn this girl's heart away from me. Later I tried to marry another girl, my elder brother's widow, and my wife drove her away also.[1]

VI. Adultery

The Muria have the reputation of observing a very high standard of marital fidelity, and all my observations go to confirm popular report. The incidence of divorce, less than 3 per cent, suggests that they regard marriage as something to persevere in, and while obviously no statistics can be supplied for individual infidelities, social tradition and religious belief are directed towards making adultery both difficult and dangerous. 837

The Muria, usually so tolerant and gentle, are here exceptionally rigorist. Adultery brings the swift vengeance of heaven not only on the guilty individuals, but on the tribe. A woman's sin can ruin the ritual hunt and in consequence endanger the year's harvest. The vision of priest or medium can be dimmed by the infidelity of a wife, children may suffer and die, tigers may assail the village herds. The guilty pair themselves are visited with a shocking punishment; their bodies become covered with sores and swellings, and a watery dropsy brings a wretched death. 837 753

This is no empty danger, as is proved by actual examples. The Solia of Munjmeta told me how his grandfather died of this cause; in Sidhawand, when a man eloped with a married woman, his father died of dropsy and he himself became a permanent invalid. In Lihagaon, one Badru died after an act of adultery. This vengeance comes from the Departed who are the guardians of the purity of family and clan. In Kongera an outraged husband 'set the Departed on the guilty' and wife and lover fell very ill. At Netanar a Muria said that he was only able to preserve his wife's virtue by the help of the Departed whom he constantly invoked for this purpose.

Adultery is suspected when cattle die suddenly, especially if the tongue protrudes and there is a certain kind of watery discharge. The Siraha then 837 783

[1] In Indian tradition and folk-lore, the majority of heroes are successfully polygamous—Ramachandra being a notable exception. In the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, the first wife is represented as welcoming her new companions. Suryaprabha married seven wives on seven consecutive days: by his magic powers he was able to divide his body and live with them all at once.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924-5), Vol. I, p. 429. Naravahanadatta had a similar power of self-multiplication (ibid., Vol. II, p. 477. See also Vol. I, p. 451). Folk-lore wives usually agree—unless they all combine against a youngest favourite. Among Gulsla Shah's happy co-wives, Panj Phul helps her husband to obtain his fourth.—J. H. Knowles, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir* (London, 1888), pp. 466 and 483 and compare M. Frere, *Old Deccan Days* (London, 1909), p. 324. There is an amusing note on the subject in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 318f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

be distributed equally; no one boy must do more than another; no one may shirk, but no one may be unduly burdened.[1]

In the home, after marriage, quarrels usually arise about the distribution of work. This, rather than sexual jealousy, is the real cause of dispute in polygamous households. Where brothers live together, their wives quarrel about the serving of the food. To say *tokirsa* of a girl implies that 'she stares at other people eating' in a suggestive way; 'she peeps in from the door when other folk sit down for a meal, hoping to get some' but she will do no work herself. The real sting of the expression *jutaha*, 'eater of another's leavings', is that it suggests that the *jutaha* never works for himself, but goes cadging round ready to eat anything, even the scraps off dirty plates.

Men beat their wives for not cooking properly, but rarely for any other cause. Here again, the reason for a man's anger is not that he feels he has missed a good meal, but that he thinks his wife is not doing her fair share of work of the home. He himself has been out all day working in the fields; his wife has been enjoying herself at home, chatting with her gossips, wasting her time; otherwise she would certainly have cooked properly.

The actual records of these quarrels are instructive. At Jhakri I overheard a man quarrelling with his wife. 'Why didn't you make the rice soft, you *jutaha*?' he shouted. 'You haven't even yet learnt to cook. When you were a girl did you do nothing but dance at marriages?' To which his wife replied, 'Of course, all through my youth I sat still in the house, and my food was brought to me in bed. Ever since I married you, you have done all the work and I have just sat filling my belly. Come along, *mailotia*, turn me out of your house, you can get another cook, and I'll live somewhere else.'

At Palli, Shamrao Hivale was privileged to listen to a wife abusing her drunken husband for chronic idleness. It was an epic row, which went on and on, and of which every detail was so often repeated that it was easy to record.

> You can only live, screamed the woman, where there is a smell of liquor. That is your real home—the out-still—there is your bed and hearth; you have no home here. What will you do if I die? Who will feed you, who will look after the children? If you won't work, I will leave you and I will take away my children. You wander all day like a goat and all night like a thief. There is no salt in the house, there are no chillies; suppose the landlord comes and asks for some, or suppose a constable comes and wants food, what shall we do? If visitors come, what food can we give them? How are you going to pay the taxes? You shameless creature, a woman has sense but you have none. When there is work to be done, there is no life in you, but when you see liquor you are full of vigour. Then you are like a pig when it catches sight of excrement.
>
> You child of a Ghasnin's vagina, go and wash your dirty face and eyes; go and see how other people work. If I had known what you were like, I would never have come to your house, you corpse. When there is work to be done in the house, then your back begins to ache, your penis is sore. Look, your son is ill, but you won't go to the Siraha—

[1] The Santal also insist on the exact division of food at festivals—P. O. Bodding, *Studies in Santal Medicine* (Calcutta, 1925), p. 78—and I have noticed it also among the Orissa tribes. So keen are the Savara on the precise allocation of labour that when I have required porters to shift camp, every man in the village has turned up—many more than necessary—to ensure that no one does more, or less, work than anyone else.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

the fault of his wife and daughter, who had not tied the calf up properly in the evening. Hurra's wife was well known for her quick temper; she was continually quarrelling, especially if her husband ventured to interfere with household matters, and it is said that the daughter had learnt to take her mother's side. After the quarrel about the calf, the older woman set fire to their house and took her daughter away to the field-house out in their clearing. Here she first hanged her daughter and then herself.

Yet another wife from the same area, Galle, was obviously a bad housewife; she used to tell her husband that she would throw their child on the ground if he ordered her to do any work. On the day of her death she had been asked to prepare leaf-cups and food for the whole family—a large one. This seems to have been the immediate cause of disturbance, and she hanged herself. But there was undoubtedly a long and miserable tale of domestic unhappiness behind it.

In three remarkable cases it was the husband who committed suicide from remorse and sorrow. Barse Chewa asked his wife, a sick and miserable woman, to light the fire early in the morning. She was rather slow about it and Chewa beat and kicked her, knocking her unconscious. He was so ashamed and frightened that he killed himself. Sori Deva, angry at the loss of two of his cows, miserable because he had beaten his wife, did the same. So did Marvi Dhodsa who beat his wife, who was suffering from sore eyes, for not keeping the baby quiet. That night Dhodsa felt very miserable; he realized that his wife was ill, that he had no right to beat her, and that the child too had sore eyes and was bound to cry. He crept out of the house and hanged himself on a mahua tree with his own cloth.

III

THE POLYGAMOUS HOME

The strains and stresses of a polygamous household do not appear to result in tragedy so often as we might expect. Polygamy is not perhaps very common among the Maria, for the simple reason that there are not enough women to make it often possible. Those men who do keep more than one

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

595 wife at a time are generally the sort of people who would make a success of anything, even of so complicated a matrimonial adventure as this. The rough, dominating Goge, for example, was exactly the sort of person who would have had three wives.[1] Oyami Masa, who killed his younger wife at Khutepal, was again a strong, powerful, interesting character, a typical polygamist. And indeed provided the husband treats his wives with more or less equal consideration, and provided he is sufficiently potent to satisfy them all, there is a chance that such a domestic arrangement may succeed. But woe betide the 'good' husband, whose virtues are those that civilization may applaud, who enters on this experiment.

674 595 578 The failures that come to light are not many, but they are interesting. Sometimes the jealousies and quarrels lead to murder, sometimes to suicide. At Khutepal I visited the family of Oyami Masa, and met the charming old lady who was his senior wife. He was just out of jail after a year's imprisonment for killing his younger wife, Tokki. Tokki was a widow and by no means young, for her son by her previous husband had been old enough to go to the Tea Gardens of Assam. At the beginning of 1940, when Tokki had been living with Masa for about six months, the son returned from the Tea Gardens bringing three bits of cloth with him as a present for his mother. Masa, as one would expect, took possession of the cloth and this naturally upset Tokki very much. She declared that the older wife had persuaded him to keep the cloth simply in order to be vexatious. Masa replied that, since he was the head of the house and was feeding her and her son and everyone else, it did not matter whether he kept the cloth or she did. The quarrel—as such quarrels do—went on and on and at last during supper one evening Masa got so angry at the woman's nagging on the subject that he picked up a stick and beat her. It is not known how hard he beat her or whether he intended to kill her or not, since he had the body cremated immediately. For the woman died. No report was made to the police for three weeks by which time all the evidence had disappeared, and it was impossible for the court to do more than to sentence Masa to a year's imprisonment under

[1] See Case No 71.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 578 595 Section 323, I.P.C. for what he admitted, voluntarily causing hurt to his wife.

At Dugeli I met Bugori and his senior wife Jimme. Bugori, a most attractive young man, had been able to win the affection of two women both of whom appear to have loved him devotedly. Unfortunately Jimme's jealousy knew no bounds, and one day, when the two women were out together working in the jungle, Jimme, who was robust and powerful, tried to kill the younger girl with her axe. But she survived, and Jimme went to jail for three years. During [626] her absence the younger wife remained with Bugori. But when Jimme was due for release, the village held a panchayat and decided that the younger wife must go to live at her mother's house for fear that Jimme might try to kill her again. When Jimme came home, therefore, after Bugori had [783] given the usual feast to the villagers and had purified her of jail defilement, he took her to his house where she has lived very happily and borne him children. He visits his younger wife in her mother's village from time to time, but does not allow her to come to his house for fear of another tragedy.

Markami Handa had two wives, but does not seem to have been able to keep the affection of the younger, an attractive girl about twenty-four years old. She fell in love with another man and he killed the husband to prevent him taking revenge. Marvi Kesa had three wives, and ill-treated the youngest. One day, after he had beaten her, she ran away to her father's house. There was a quarrel there, and Kesa killed his father-in-law. Poyami Masa had two wives, and a Dhobi tried to seduce the elder. The younger discovered the intrigue, and probably thought it was an excellent opportunity to get rid of her rival. She told her husband, and he was so angry that he stabbed the older woman with an arrow and was himself sentenced to life imprisonment.

Tati Harma had three wives. At the time of the tragedy which brings his name into this record, only two were living. The younger wife had borne him four children, but Harma used to beat her constantly saying that she did not work properly and ate too much. So serious were the disputes in the home that a panchayat fined husband and wife four

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 annas each for not living happily together. One morning
578 the elder wife went to fetch Harma from the field-hut where
595 he had been sleeping, and found him dead, killed by the younger woman who could not endure his ill-treatment longer.

The complications and petty miseries of a polygamous home are illustrated in the story of how Sori Dome murdered her elder co-wife, Chule. Even while their husband was alive, the two women were always quarrelling. Three years before his death Dome beat Chule over the head with a bit of a broken plough, and Chule took a whole month to recover from the blow. Dome used continually to threaten the older woman that one day she would kill her. After the husband's death, matters got even worse. Chule was old and feeble and suffered from yaws, which made her irritable and exacting. But the two women continued to live together, along with their husband's elder brother, in their husband's house. Just before the tragedy, Chule made peevish complaints that Dome had been extravagant in using up the rice, to which the other replied that, since she had eaten it, it was not wasted. One evening, after they had been working in the fields and quarrelling all the time, they set out to go home. Dome had an axe in her hand and her two children were with her. Chule was carrying a bamboo basket. Dome urged the old woman to hurry up, but she replied that her feet were hurting her and she would follow later. Exasperated, Dome pushed Chule by the back of her neck and then struck her a blow with the axe. The old woman fell down, and Dome hit her again and she seems to have died on the spot. Medical examination, however, showed that there was no fracture and no dislocation either in the head or ribs where the blows had fallen. Dome did not use the sharp edge of the axe, and it is possible that she did not intend to kill the woman, but only wanted to teach her a lesson. On the other hand, of course, it was greatly to her advantage that Chule should be eliminated.

578 It is perhaps rather surprising that there is not more
595 suicide in polygamous households. But it does, of course,
762 occur. Bandi, headman of Khutepal, had two wives. They quarrelled and the elder woman hanged herself. Masa of Samgiri also had two wives, and the younger girl quarrelled

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

with him saying that he did not give her proper clothing or ornaments and that he did not sleep with her often enough. Jealous and frustrated, she hanged herself in a fit of despair. Poyami Gupe of Bastanar, a girl of about eighteen years, was widowed at sixteen and remarried two years later as the junior wife of Guddi. One day, about seven months after the new marriage, Gupe went to collect young bamboo shoots—a great delicacy to the aboriginal—and came home rather late in the evening. For this she was scolded by her co-wife and no doubt accused of every crime that jealousy could suggest. She left the house and went to stay with her maternal uncle. Guddi went to bring her back, but rather than go with him she hanged herself.

Kawasi Dulga's reaction was unusual. He appears to have been one of those husbands who should never have tried such an experiment; a man of weak character who could not keep his two wives in order. The women were always quarrelling and made his home and life a misery. One day he went with the younger to the bazaar and, as they were coming home, they quarrelled and Dulga slapped her. Presently he told her to go ahead as he wanted to relieve himself. She walked on a little way, but he did not appear and when she went back to look for him she found him hanging from a tree.

IV

The relationship between the wives of brothers is carefully regulated. Between an elder brother and his younger brother's wife there is an absolute taboo: there is no stronger rule of avoidance in all primitive society. But the younger brother stands in a special and privileged relationship to his elder brother's wife: he can flirt with her; he can make indecent jokes; he can become her lover; after her husband's death he has the first claim on her person and if she marries anyone else he has a right to compensation.[1]

It is obvious that among a people where brothers often live together, sharing house and lands, where jealousy is strong and sexual desire passionate and keen, such a tradition may

[1] For a detailed study, see Shamrao Hivale, 'The Dewar-Bhauji Relationship', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 157-87.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER XIV

MARRIAGE

582 618 WHATEVER the origin of the clans and phratries, they serve as a means of regulating the marriages of Hill and Bison-horn Marias; in the case of the latter, among whom the clan is no longer a territorial as well as a social unit, one might say that the primary function of the clan and phratry organization is the regulation of marriage. A child is born into the clan of its father, and, if a son, must remain in that clan all its life; but, if a daughter, passes on marriage to the clan of the husband, and on re-marriage from his clan to that of the second husband. A son must not take a wife, or a daughter a husband, from the father's clan or from any clan that is brother-clan or *dadabhai* to it: he must marry a wife from, and she must marry into, some clan that is a wife-clan or *akomama* of their father's clan. It has been seen that the phratry system of the Bison-horn Marias gives them a wider field of selection of wives and husbands than the more inchoate group system of Hill Maria clans. A widow, however, must not marry as second husband a man whose clan is brother to her father's clan, even though through being in a phratry other than that of her first husband's clan the second husband's clan would be wife-clan to the first husband's. In a word, throughout a woman's life all her marriages are regulated by the clan into which she was born.

Exogamy

● 601 114 Appendix III gives a list of the Hill Maria terms of relationship so far as I could ascertain them; they were collected in Orcha and adjacent villages by the genealogical method, and verified in other parts of the Abujhmar hills. They were collected as terms of reference, though some are used also as terms of address, e.g. *mama*, *dada*, *kaka*. I was unable in the time at my disposal to make a similar collection of the Bison-horn Maria terms; but so far as my observation went their terms are the same but for dialectical differences. This applies also, it may be added, in a considerable degree to the terms used by the Gonds of the Nagpur District, and, to judge from the incomplete list given in Trench's *Grammar*, Volume I, to those of the Betul Gonds. It may be added that when [551] a son has been born to him, a Hill or Bison-horn Maria is often addressed by his family and neighbours as the father of his son, e.g. '*Rajin-tappe*', meaning 'Father of Raje'.

601 *Dadabhai*, the word used to designate kindred or brother-clans, is a combination of *dada*, the Gondi term for an elder brother, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 601
'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *pepi* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man 582
and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite 607
exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his [587]
wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother.

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely 684
among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison-horn. A youth of the Gume hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of 835

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PEDIGREE OF THE

•601
632

Usendi WANJA, *gaita* = ♀

U. MODA = Gume PANO, own sister of Gume GUDI of Hikul

U. BAIYYA, *gaita* after U. RAMA; resigned 1926; died 1934 = Dhurwa ♀, died long ago
S.P.

U. BANGA, died abou 1922 in jail, under lif sentence for murderin U. BHOSA

Guma OGHAL of Hikul, son of his wife's mother's brother. Died before 1930 = U. Dopi, living 1934
S.P.

U. Wanje, d. unmarried

Gecha HARMA of Udala Tondawada, son of G. MALLA. Died in 1929 = U. Hire, li

Gecha Pakli, living 1934, aged 8

[p. 306(A)]

U. B. killed accide *salphi*

GREE OF THE ORCHA FAMILY IN WHICH SUCCESSION TO *PARGANA* AN

601
632

J. BANGA, died about 922 in jail, under life entence for murdering J. BHOSA = Gume Ippo, d. of his mother's brother, G. GUDI of Hikul. Living 1934, nearly 80

of Udala = U. Hire, living n of G. in 1929

cha Pakli, living 1934. d 8

U. MODA, about 55 in 1934. released in 1926 after 10 years of life sentence for U. BHOSA's murder. *Gaita* since 1928 = ♀ = (2) Gecha Kowe, own sister of his brother-in-law Gecha HARMA, married year after him and Hire. Living 1934, about 34

U. IRKA, 8 years old in 1934 — U.

♀

(U. BHOSA's magic was said to have killed this wife and daughter)

U. BHOSA, became *gaita* when in about 1910 U. BAIYYA, his first cousin, resigned, and was appointed *pargania* (*pargana* head man). Murdered in 1916 for magic and 'trying to set up a *raj* over Metabhum'; was then 60 = Potawi Kane, d. of P. MURRA of Tulur hamlet of Orcha. Living in 1934 in part of U. POLA's house and cooking for him, but not as his wife

U. BARANGA, said to have killed himself in 1927 by accidentally falling from a *salphi* tree

U. IRKA, about 18 in 193 brought up by U. POLA, uncle

[p. 306(B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

●601
632 RGANA AND FAMILY HEADSHIP IS HEREDITARY

U. RANA, succ. his father as *gaita*; murdered for magic by U. BANGA in 1906 =

U. DANGI, died very old in 1933 = Ahkal Nendo, d. of Ahkal MULLA of Godari; still living 1934

Kowa, own brother-in-ARMA, marer him and g 1934.

U. HARMA, d. 1926, just after release from jail for U. BHOSA's murder = Dol Bire, d. of Dol Murral of Kokapar

Son killed by BHOSA's magic

U. KOHLA, d. 1928 became *pargania* and *gaita* in 1916 on BHOSA's murder

s old in U. Dötl, born in 1932

U. KOSA, 26 in 1934, = Jugho K *pargania* since U. KOHLA's death in 1928. Married in 1929 GUDI of

U. WAghäll, born 1932

URRA rcha. t of iking wife

U. POLA = Dhurwa Burgi, d. of Dhurwa MULLA, kinsman of POLA's mother's father, died in 1919

S.P.

about 18 in 1934; p by U. POLA, his

[p. 306(C)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

601
632

HEREDITARY

U. RĀMA, succ. his father as *gaita*; murdered for magic by U. BANGA in 1906 = Dhurwa Kāhpe, d. of Dhurwa MODA of Gomagal

Ahkal Nendo, d. of Ahkal DULLA of Godari; still living 934

re, d. of Dol Murrai kapar

SA's

U. KOHLA, d. 1928; became *pargania* and *gaita* in 1916 on BHOSA's murder = Guma Mene of Hikul, sister of Guma Oghal, his brother-in-law

♀ 'killed by BHOSA's magic'

U. KOSA, 26 in 1934, *pargania* since U. KOHLA's death in 1928. Married in 1929 = Jugho Kohle, d. of Jugho GUDI of Adeq

U. WĀGHĀR, born 1932

LA = Dhurwa Burgi, d. of Dhurwa MULLA, kinsman of POLA's mother's father, died in 1919

S.P.

[p. 306(D)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

APPENDIX III

HILL MARIA TERMS OF RELATIONSHIP

●601

(These are terms of reference; but see p. 244)

Father	*tāppa*
Mother	*talugh, amā*
Stepfather	*kākā*
Stepmother	*kuchī*
Elder brother (m.s.)	*dādā*
Elder brother (w.s.)	*dādā*
Elder sister (m.s.)	*akkā (akkāī)*
Elder sister (w.s.)	*akkā*
Father's elder brother	*pepī*
Father's elder brother's wife	*pevī*
Father's younger brother	*kākā*
Father's younger brother's wife	*kuchī*
Father's elder brother's son	*dādā*
Father's elder brother's daughter	*ānjī*
Father's sister (elder or younger)	*āī*
Father's sister's husband	*bachā*
Father's sister's child	*marriyō* (m) *mandārī* (f)
Mother's brother	*māmā*
Mother's brother's wife	*āī*
Mother's brother's child	*marriyō* (m) *mandārī* (f)
Mother's elder sister	*pevī*
Mother's younger sister	*kuchī*
Mother's sister's husband	*kākā*
Father's father	*ākō*
Father's mother	*bāpī*

Son	*māghī*
Daughter	*miārī*
Son	*māghī*
Daughter	*miārī*
Stepson	*māghī*
Stepdaughter	*miārī*
Younger brother (m.s.)	*tamō*
Younger sister (m.s.)	*kallār*
Younger brother (w.s.)	*tamō*
Younger sister (w.s.)	
Younger brother's child (m.s.)	*māghī* (m)
Elder brother's child (m.s.)	*miārī* (f)
Husband's brother's child	
Father's younger brother's son	*tamō*
Father's younger brother's daughter	*kallār*
Brother's son (w.s.)	*podā*
Wife's brother's son	*māmā*
Mother's brother's child	*marriyō* (m) *mandārī* (f)
Sister's child (m.s.)	*bachā* (m) *bachī* (f)
Husband's sister's child	*hanomāghī* (m) *hanomiārī* (f)
Father's sister's child	*marriyō* (m) *mandārī* (f)
Younger or elder sister's child (w.s.)	*māghi* (m) *miārī* (f)
Son's son (m.s.)	*tamō*
Son's daughter (m.s.)	*kallār*
Son's son (w.s.)	*unndō*
Son's daughter (w.s.)	

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Mother's father	*dāō*
Mother's mother	*hāāō*
Husband	*hoitor*, or *mudyal* (old man)
Wife's father	*māmā*
Wife's mother	*dīō*
Husband's father	*māmā*
Husband's mother	*dīō*
Wife's elder brother	*errumīgh*
Wife's younger brother	*errundi*
Wife's elder sister	*aho'in*
Wife's younger sister	*hōhhōrī*
Husband's brother	*dādā*
Husband's elder sister	*dhhā*
Husband's younger sister	*hōhhōrī*
Wife's elder sister's husband	*eglā*
Wife's younger sister's husband	*hāīō*
Husband's elder brother's wife	*dhhā*
Husband's younger brother's wife	*hāllār*
Son's wife's father	*p'arī*
Son's wife's mother	*dhhā*

Daughter's son (m.s.) / Daughter's daughter (m.s.)	*dhō*
Daughter's son (w.s.) / Daughter's daughter (w.s.)	*mundō*
Wife	*ār*
Daughter's husband (m.s.) / Daughter's husband (w.s.)	*undo*
Son's wife (m.s.)	*koryārī*
Son's wife (w.s.)	*koryārī*
Younger sister's husband (m.s.)	*errumīgh*
Elder sister's husband (m.s.)	*dādā* or *bāīō*
Younger sister's husband (w.s.)	*pehā*
Elder sister's husband (w.s.)	*dādā*
Brother's wife (m.s.)	*koryārī*
Elder brother's wife (w.s.)	*ange*
Younger brother's wife (w.s.)	*koryārī*

621

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

607 sometimes lead to trouble. To the younger man, his elder brother's wife is delightful because she is accessible and does not burden his conscience. To the elder man, the younger girl is doubly attractive because she is forbidden. The word [60] 'brother', of course, under the classificatory system of relationship, includes also male relations who are more usually called cousins.

674 578 607 A youth Hemla Bakka killed his wife Jimme for having betrayed him with his elder cousin Hemla Dhurwa. During the season when the mangoes ripen, Jimme had gone with Dhurwa to collect and eat the fruit, and the husband suspecting them followed and watched them secretly. Dhurwa climbed the tree and shook it; the woman collected the fallen mangoes, and they ate them together. Then Dhurwa took her behind some bushes and was about to have intercourse with her, when Bakka appeared and separated them. Some time later Bakka returned suddenly from his field to drink water and discovered Dhurwa coming out of his house. He said that he would report the matter to the village elders. When he scolded his wife for her behaviour, she retorted that she would live with the man she loved and that nothing could prevent her. There was then a regular family quarrel, in which Bakka's father was beaten, and this so enraged the boy that he struck his wife a heavy blow on the head and killed her. There can be no doubt that in this case Bakka's feelings were outraged not only because his wife was unfaithful, but because she was unfaithful with a forbidden person, an act which might bring all manner of supernatural vengeance upon him—cattle might die and he himself might be afflicted with a psycho-dropsical swelling.

Another case of the same kind is that of Marvi Boti of Telam. Boti and his younger brother Kosa were living with their father, and were both married. Boti's wife died and he fell in love with his younger brother's wife, though the villagers said that it was really the girl who made overtures to Boti and threatened to commit suicide if he did not marry her. Kosa suspected his wife and beat her, and this seems to have decided Boti, for a week later he ran away with the girl to the Jeypore Zamindari. After about three weeks Boti

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

607

Dewar: O Ange, the gruel is made of broken rice.
Ange: O my Dewar, where are you going today?
Dewar: Today I am not going anywhere
For I have to load my bullocks.
Tomorrow I go to another land to trade.
Ange: I too will go with you to drive the laden bullocks.
Dewar: Don't come with me, for all know how we stand to one another.
Those who do not know us will call us brother and sister.
And when they call us that we shall be ashamed.

602
522
[831]

The relations between *samdhi* and *samdhin* are generally of an amiable, coarse and humorous nature. For men this is a drinking rather than a joking relationship, and all their lives whenever they meet they regard it as an excuse for a bottle. The women, specially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breasts, stick feathers into the private parts and exchange the coarsest jokes.

The place where this joking and fun most commonly occurs is at a marriage. 'There is no purdah in a house of marriage.' Everybody feels free to fool about; no one is going to be offended; everyone is slightly drunk.

V. Summary

614
582

The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. Nothing reveals more clearly the extent of this domination than the fact that out of 2000 marriages examined no fewer than 1799 were of the cross-cousin type and, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, 1884 out of 2000 boys married according to their parents' wishes. This could only happen in a society which had a strong regard for its own organization and laws.

The clan system retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. Clan festivals remain great and notable occasions. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. The *samdhi* relationship, as may be seen in every song and story, continues to be of the first importance. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs. Totemism is less important, but is still far from moribund. The whole complex of ideas and customs is greatly confused, but the very confusion is perhaps a sign of its vitality.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

582 fullest freedom to joke and even to intrigue; with yet others marriage is almost obligatory.

A boy obviously cannot marry relatives of the inner circle or any of his classificatory 'aunts' or 'nieces'. He is strictly forbidden to marry his wife's elder sister, his mother-in-law, his younger brother's wife or widow and any other woman in a parallel relation to them. There is no objection to his marrying his grandmother or granddaughter even when they are in the direct line of relationship. A few cases are known of men marrying their great-aunts or grand-nieces.

As we shall see presently, the great majority of Muria marriages are of the cross-cousin type and are celebrated between a boy and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or with girls in the same classificatory relationship to him as these.

Throughout India certain relations are regarded as standing in a privileged position to each other. They have licence to laugh and joke with each other, generally in a rather vulgar manner, and in some cases sexual relations between them are not very severely condemned.

605 The Muria have their own system of joking relationships. As a result of the common cross-cousin marriages, a chelik has special licence to joke and flirt with his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter (both *mandāri* in Gondi). A motiari can be equally free with her father's sister's son or her mother's brother's son (both *manriyo* in Gondi). This freedom, however, only lasts so long as they are not engaged to be married. Should such an arrangement be made the joking relationship changes into one of avoidance, for a girl must never have anything to do with her betrothed.

[835] So long as these cousins are not engaged, however, they have many jokes together. A boy is at liberty to catch hold of the girl's breasts and he may have intercourse with her. If he sees her going to the river to wash her clothes at the end of her catamenial period, he is free to shout to her, 'Are you off to polish it and take off the rust? What are your plans for tonight?' Or again 'How long was the bank of the lake broken?' The girl in turn often teases her boy-cousin by accusing him of having relations with his own sister: 'I saw you with her; you'll have to pay a fine, or if you don't you'll have to marry her'.

604 An uncle stands in a joking relationship to all his nieces except the daughters of his own sister. For example, a man and his uncle's daughter's daughter are in this relationship.

607 As elsewhere in India, a woman and her husband's younger brothers or a man and his wife's younger sisters are specially privileged. So are grandmother and grandson or grandfather and granddaughter. A boy may say to
● 603 his grandmother, 'Once you are dead I will eat beef in your honour; I will go dancing in front of you with a drum; why don't you die quickly so that I can get a good feast?' And she replies, 'If I die you will have to spend a lot of money, you will have to get rice, you will have to bring several tins of liquor, so what good will it be?' A grandfather always flirts and jokes with his granddaughter. Sometimes he says to her husband, 'How dare you sleep with my wife? You will have to give me the bride-price for her', and so on.

607 The connexion between a man (*dewar*) and his elder brother's wife (*ange*) is the central theme of the Lingo legend. This kinship is more than a mere joking relation; it is often one of deep romance. A Ghotul Pata illustrates the kind of humour that passes between them.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

586 by the fact that Chewa had himself turned the girl out and that between her first and second marriages she had spent two years in her father's house. The matter was thus a difficult one, and was still further complicated by Pandu being a blacksmith who probably did not anticipate fair treatment from the tribal panchayat.

X 674 604 There was a very curious and tragic murder when young sixteen-year old Marvi Hunga killed Hirma, a boy three years younger than himself. These two boys were related as uncle and nephew; Hunga's mother was married to the uncle of Hirma's father. This relationship is a privileged one. Just as a grandson may joke with his grandmother, so an uncle may abuse his nephew and even threaten to sleep with his mother, and neither uncle nor nephew is supposed to take any notice of it.

But on this occasion when Hunga met his young nephew Hirma in a field and asked him where he was going, the younger boy abused his uncle's mother and wife saying that he would keep them both as his wives; this annoyed Hunga and he drew his bow and shot the boy with an arrow. The incident apparently had nothing whatever behind it. The boys were not drunk and were on good terms. Hunga seems to have been suddenly, but quite improperly, excited by the abuse given by his nephew, and in a few moments two lives were ruined.

VIII

THE LAMHADA

583 Among the Maria, as in many other parts of tribal India, there is an arrangement whereby youths from poor families who cannot afford the price of a bride can serve for her for three, five or seven years. In Bastar such a youth is known as Lamhada, Lamanai, Lamsena or Gharjamai. The relations between the Lamhada and his future parents-in-law is not always a happy one, and it is complicated by the intimate proximity in which he has to live with the girl to whom he is not yet married. Sometimes, however, especially if the Lamhada happens to make the girl pregnant, the marriage

X 674 578 583 is celebrated before the end of his term of service. Only two cases of murder have arisen out of a Lamhada

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As we shall see presently, the great majority of Muria marriages are of the cross-cousin type and are celebrated between a boy and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or with girls in the same classificatory relationship to him as these.

Throughout India certain relations are regarded as standing in a privileged position to each other. They have licence to laugh and joke with each other, generally in a rather vulgar manner, and in some cases sexual relations between them are not very severely condemned.

●605 The Muria have their own system of joking relationships. As a result of the common cross-cousin marriages, a chelik has special licence to joke and flirt with his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter (both *mandāri* in Gondi). A motiari can be equally free with her father's sister's son or her mother's brother's son (both *manriyo* in Gondi). This freedom, however, only lasts so long as they are not engaged to be married. Should such an arrangement be made the joking relationship changes into one of avoidance, for a girl must never have anything to do with her betrothed.

[835] So long as these cousins are not engaged, however, they have many jokes together. A boy is at liberty to catch hold of the girl's breasts and he may have intercourse with her. If he sees her going to the river to wash her clothes at the end of her catamenial period, he is free to shout to her, 'Are you off to polish it and take off the rust? What are your plans for tonight?' Or again 'How long was the bank of the lake broken?' The girl in turn often teases her boy-cousin by accusing him of having relations with his own sister: 'I saw you with her; you'll have to pay a fine, or if you don't you'll have to marry her'.

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603 mother and grandson or grandfather and granddaughter. A boy may say to his grandmother, 'Once you are dead I will eat beef in your honour; I will go dancing in front of you with a drum; why don't you die quickly so that I can get a good feast?' And she replies, 'If I die you will have to spend a lot of money, you will have to get rice, you will have to bring several tins of liquor, so what good will it be?' A grandfather always flirts and jokes with his granddaughter. Sometimes he says to her husband, 'How dare you sleep with my wife? You will have to give me the bride-price for her', and so on.

607 The connexion between a man (*dewar*) and his elder brother's wife (*ange*) is the central theme of the Lingo legend. This kinship is more than a mere joking relation; it is often one of deep romance. A Ghotul Pata illustrates the kind of humour that passes between them.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 of the girl, and her constant absence made him so miserable
577 that he ended his life.
578

A situation where the roles of the characters were reversed, and it was the mother who wished to visit the daughter's house, led to an even more pathetic tragedy.

In November 1939, a mother at Killepal was rebuked by her son and daughter-in-law for not helping them with the reaping of the kosra crop. She had been a widow for ten years and seems to have got a certain amount of pleasure and relaxation from paying visits to her married daughter at Dilmilli. This was resented by the son and brother with whom she lived. When she found that she was to be robbed even of this happiness, she killed herself.

VII

PARENTS-IN-LAW

674 The relationship between a man and his parents-in-law is
606 always difficult. But the general tradition in Maria, as in Hindu society, is that the older people should treat a son-in-law with respect and consideration. Neglect of this rule is apt to arouse very strong feelings in a man's mind. Marvi Kesa had three wives, the youngest of whom ran away to her parents' house after a beating. This is a common practice of aboriginal wives, and causes great annoyance to their husbands especially if the parents take their daughters' side. On this occasion Kesa followed his wife to the house and found her enjoying a drink of rice-beer with the neighbours. He went to his father-in-law and asked him why he had not sent his wife back. The older man replied casually that she had only arrived that morning, and this answer so annoyed Kesa that he struck him on the head with his axe and killed him.

In another case it was the mother-in-law who was the victim. Marvi Hinga took his wife Hirme, who was suffering from fever, to a neighbouring village to a Siraha for treatment. He stayed with her during the night and the next morning returned to his house, where he was seen by his mother-in-law. She, thinking that he had left her daughter uncared for and was now wandering about the village seeking enjoyment, abused the youth saying that he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

was an eater of excreta and urine, and that though he had married her daughter he did not take the least care of her. Hinga, who was apparently a very good husband, was so annoyed at receiving this insult from a woman who should have treated him with respect, especially as the words were shouted at him in the hearing of the village from a distance of about twentyfive paces, that he rushed at her and battered her to death with his axe.

The relationship between a son-in-law and the father of a wife who had betrayed him, was at the bottom of the Aranpur murder of 1941. In 1937 Barse Chewa kept Bandi, daughter of Tati Pandu, a Maria blacksmith, as his wife. For the bride-price he paid a cow with a calf and a basketful of rice. About a year later Chewa's house caught fire, and his elder brother who was then living with them lodged a complaint with the police that Bandi herself had set fire to the building. She was prosecuted, but acquitted. After the disposal of the case against her, Chewa sent the girl back to her parents, and some time afterwards she married a man at Kondasauli. Chewa now went to his original father-in-law Pandu, and demanded a refund of the expense he had incurred in marrying his daughter. Pandu refused to pay anything on the ground that Chewa had turned her out of his house, and that he himself had had to maintain her for two years. He further claimed that any money that could be extracted from the new husband must come to him and not to Chewa. The quarrel went on for some time until at last Chewa grew so exasperated that he went at night to Pandu's house and shot him in the stomach. All Chewa's attempts to exonerate himself and implicate other people were frustrated by the fact that when the blacksmith removed the arrow from his stomach, he was able to recognize it as one which he himself had made for Chewa in his own smithy.

In this case tribal opinion was divided about the question in dispute. The normal rule is that if a woman leaves a husband for another man, he must repay the bride-price (possibly with certain reductions) to the original husband, and that the father of the girl is only entitled to receive money or goods from the first husband and not from his successors. But in this case the question was complicated

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 601
'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *pepi* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man 582
and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite 607
exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his [587]
wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother.

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely 684
among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison-horn. A youth of the Gume hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of 835

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
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a woman at this time. At the menarche (for which the word used is *kumor utta*, 'the blossoming of the flower'), however, a special hut is built for the girl by women outside the village. A woman of the household brings her food and sleeps with her at night; she must bathe whenever she returns to the house. In some villages, the Marias still make a platform up a tree for the girl, who during the day must hide herself in the forest.

It is very dangerous for anyone to see, let alone to touch, a girl at her menarche. At Tikanpal I was told that if a man saw such a girl as he went through the jungle he should slap her and then go to her parents and after rebuking them, demand a fowl which he should sacrifice; then he should bathe and anoint himself with oil. At Gadapal they said that a man should throw a lump of earth between his legs at the girl, or a stick over his shoulder, and then go home and bathe. Neglect of these precautions might lead to blindness.

At the end of the period—all this refers only to the first period—the girl destroys her hut or platform during the night, throws away her cloth,[1] bathes and returns home before cockcrow. In some villages she is expected to remain for a day or two longer on the veranda of her house: if she has a married elder brother, it is the special duty of his wife to attend to her. Then she puts oil and turmeric on her body—an act which is said to symbolize her formal re-admission into caste, for during the previous days she has been regarded as excommunicated. In many Maria villages, however, the ceremonial use of turmeric is still unknown, and the elder brother's wife carries a pot of water round the house and sprinkles everyone saying, 'Now you are back again in caste'. After this the girl fetches water in an earthen pot and cowdungs the floor. In the evening her father invites some of the elders to a bottle of liquor and says, 'My daughter who was unclean all these days is now clean again'. He sacrifices a fowl to the Departed and they feast on its flesh.

There is not nearly so much fuss about the later periods. The woman has to keep out of the way, but there is no danger in looking at her, and when it is over she just has a bath and resumes her ordinary duties. But even so her daily programme is considerably disturbed. She must not sleep inside the house and, of course, sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden. She must not cook or fetch water or go to work in the fields. She must not touch cattle, pigs

[1] There do not seem to be any special taboos associated with this cloth. But the leaf-cups from which the girl eats at this time are charged with magical potency and if a witch can get hold of them she can afflict the girl with palsy.

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

607

Dewar: O Ange, the gruel is made of broken rice.
Ange: O my Dewar, where are you going today?
Dewar: Today I am not going anywhere
For I have to load my bullocks.
Tomorrow I go to another land to trade.
Ange: I too will go with you to drive the laden bullocks.
Dewar: Don't come with me, for all know how we stand to one another.
Those who do not know us will call us brother and sister.
And when they call us that we shall be ashamed.

602 522 [831]

The relations between *samdhi* and *samdhin* are generally of an amiable, coarse and humorous nature. For men this is a drinking rather than a joking relationship, and all their lives whenever they meet they regard it as an excuse for a bottle. The women, specially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breasts, stick feathers into the private parts and exchange the coarsest jokes.

The place where this joking and fun most commonly occurs is at a marriage. 'There is no purdah in a house of marriage.' Everybody feels free to fool about; no one is going to be offended; everyone is slightly drunk.

V. Summary

614 582

The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. Nothing reveals more clearly the extent of this domination than the fact that out of 2000 marriages examined no fewer than 1799 were of the cross-cousin type and, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, 1884 out of 2000 boys married according to their parents' wishes. This could only happen in a society which had a strong regard for its own organization and laws.

The clan system retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. Clan festivals remain great and notable occasions. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. The *samdhi* relationship, as may be seen in every song and story, continues to be of the first importance. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs. Totemism is less important, but is still far from moribund. The whole complex of ideas and customs is greatly confused, but the very confusion is perhaps a sign of its vitality.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

approached, and that in a fit of rage at his wife's infidelity he had killed her; and then later admitted that he had gone to the cave, but denied that he ever approached Jimme sexually. He said that he had been sitting on the rocks above when his wife threw a stone at him. He slapped her, and she fell accidentally from the rocks and was killed.

There can be little doubt, however, that the prosecution story was true. When the police searched the cave, they found on the dust of the floor the clear signs of a woman lying on her back and a pair of footprints on either side of the marks made by the woman's buttocks. This clearly shows that intercourse practised according to the normal aboriginal technique had been in progress, and Jimme confirmed the fact.

Paklu, when I saw him in jail, was still young, a man of fine physique and good-looking. He has behaved well in jail, for he has been made a Lambardar and wears the tall yellow cap which indicates his office.

Nine cases of suicide were due to disputes between wife and husband. Thus Kome is said to have been quick-tempered, a person who always exaggerated things. She was a young wife, only twenty years old, and when her husband came in one day tired and wet from the fields, and found no food ready, and abused her, she took a rope and slipped out of the house. Her husband, also young, found some stale food and took it back to the field. When he came home in the evening his wife was dead.

Mate had a row with her husband over lighting the fire. He was drunk and beat her, and she attacked him. But her husband's elder brother, to whom she was strictly taboo and who had no business to touch her, intervened and beat her also. During the night, she left the house and tried to get across the Indrawati River in order to reach her mother's house. But there was no ferry and she hanged herself with her clothes. It is worthy of note that although there was a deep river at hand, the girl preferred to end her life by hanging.

An unusually tragic incident occurred at Metapal in February 1937. Kuhrami Hurra returned one day from the bazaar and found that one of his calves had been killed by a panther. Rightly or wrongly he considered that this was

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

with him saying that he did not give her proper clothing or ornaments and that he did not sleep with her often enough. Jealous and frustrated, she hanged herself in a fit of despair. Poyami Gupe of Bastanar, a girl of about eighteen years, was widowed at sixteen and remarried two years later as the junior wife of Guddi. One day, about seven months after the new marriage, Gupe went to collect young bamboo shoots—a great delicacy to the aboriginal—and came home rather late in the evening. For this she was scolded by her co-wife and no doubt accused of every crime that jealousy could suggest. She left the house and went to stay with her maternal uncle. Guddi went to bring her back, but rather than go with him she hanged herself.

Kawasi Dulga's reaction was unusual. He appears to have been one of those husbands who should never have tried such an experiment; a man of weak character who could not keep his two wives in order. The women were always quarrelling and made his home and life a misery. One day he went with the younger to the bazaar and, as they were coming home, they quarrelled and Dulga slapped her. Presently he told her to go ahead as he wanted to relieve himself. She walked on a little way, but he did not appear and when she went back to look for him she found him hanging from a tree.

IV

The relationship between the wives of brothers is carefully regulated. Between an elder brother and his younger brother's wife there is an absolute taboo: there is no stronger rule of avoidance in all primitive society. But the younger brother stands in a special and privileged relationship to his elder brother's wife: he can flirt with her; he can make indecent jokes; he can become her lover; after her husband's death he has the first claim on her person and if she marries anyone else he has a right to compensation.[1]

It is obvious that among a people where brothers often live together, sharing house and lands, where jealousy is strong and sexual desire passionate and keen, such a tradition may

[1] For a detailed study, see Shamrao Hivale, 'The Dewar-Bhauji Relationship', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 157-67.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

607 sometimes lead to trouble. To the younger man, his elder brother's wife is delightful because she is accessible and does not burden his conscience. To the elder man, the younger girl is doubly attractive because she is forbidden. The word [601] 'brother', of course, under the classificatory system of relationship, includes also male relations who are more usually called cousins.

674 578 607 A youth Hemla Bakka killed his wife Jimme for having betrayed him with his elder cousin Hemla Dhurwa. During the season when the mangoes ripen, Jimme had gone with Dhurwa to collect and eat the fruit, and the husband suspecting them followed and watched them secretly. Dhurwa climbed the tree and shook it; the woman collected the fallen mangoes, and they ate them together. Then Dhurwa took her behind some bushes and was about to have intercourse with her, when Bakka appeared and separated them. Some time later Bakka returned suddenly from his field to drink water and discovered Dhurwa coming out of his house. He said that he would report the matter to the village elders. When he scolded his wife for her behaviour, she retorted that she would live with the man she loved and that nothing could prevent her. There was then a regular family quarrel, in which Bakka's father was beaten, and this so enraged the boy that he struck his wife a heavy blow on the head and killed her. There can be no doubt that in this case Bakka's feelings were outraged not only because his wife was unfaithful, but because she was unfaithful with a forbidden person, an act which might bring all manner of supernatural vengeance upon him—cattle might die and he himself might be afflicted with a psycho-dropsical swelling.

Another case of the same kind is that of Marvi Boti of Telam. Boti and his younger brother Kosa were living with their father, and were both married. Boti's wife died and he fell in love with his younger brother's wife, though the villagers said that it was really the girl who made overtures to Boti and threatened to commit suicide if he did not marry her. Kosa suspected his wife and beat her, and this seems to have decided Boti, for a week later he ran away with the girl to the Jeypore Zamindari. After about three weeks Boti

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria.

decided to go to his father's house to get his children by his former wife. The girl insisted on going with him. As they were approaching Telam they had the misfortune to meet Kosa coming along the same path. Apparently some people returning from a bazaar had told him that Boti had returned, and he had set out to seek vengeance armed with a *gagra*. When the boy saw his elder brother, he said, 'My fate is good, for it has sent you to me, since you have run away with my wife'. And so saying he struck Boti across the face. At that Boti seized his brother by his arms, and there was a struggle in the course of which Kosa was killed.

Gagra knife
(*Length* 18")

When Boti returned from jail, he had to make special offerings in addition to undergoing the usual ceremony of purification. Since he had kept his younger brother's wife, he had to sacrifice to the Departed of his house, and to his clan-god. If he had not done this, his body would have swollen and he would have died. As it was, he was impotent for a whole year after he was released from jail.

V

It is perhaps surprising that there are not more murders as a result of the liberties allowed a youth with his elder brother's wife. Boti stood in this pleasant relation to Mase and as a result they poisoned Mase's husband in order that they could be regularly married. The murder of Tati Hirme was due to her rejection of her dead husband's younger brother when he came to claim her.

It is possible that the remarkable forbearance shown by Ujji Poda towards Kopa, his younger cousin-brother, who was in love with his wife, Ragho, was due to his realization that Kopa was not breaking any tribal or social conventions:

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 607 he was only outraging his personal marital feelings. Kopa was working as Poda's Kabari or farm-servant at Kaurgaon on the banks of the Indrawati River. Five years before the murder Poda discovered that the boy was enjoying a love affair with his wife, taking advantage of the privileged relationship in which he stood to her. A ceremony of purification and appeasement was performed and Kopa left Ragho alone for a time. But they were evidently really in love with one another, and soon their intimacy began again. In July 1933, Poda discovered this and turned Kopa out of his house and service. Kopa went to live with another cousin in the same village.

On the night of Sunday 30 July, Kopa crept into Poda's house in the middle of the night in order to lie with Ragho. But while they were together, her hand accidentally knocked against her husband who was sleeping by her side and woke him. Kopa ran for his life, but not before he had been recognized.

The following day news came that a member of the family in another village, Chota Karka, had died, and Poda with Ragho, Kopa and other relatives went to the place for the funeral ceremonies. On the Wednesday there was an open quarrel there between the two men, and Poda told the elders of the village of Kopa's behaviour and beat him publicly. Kopa ran away and hid in the forest. Then on the Thursday everyone went home.

That afternoon three of Poda's servants were working in his field, weeding the kosra crop. In the field there was [343] the usual field-hut in which the cultivators rest and guard the crops. It was raining that day, and at about 4-30 in [293] the afternoon Kopa arrived there carrying a bamboo umbrella and sat down by the fire in the field-hut to dry himself. A little later Poda came and when he saw who was sitting there he fell into a great rage. He beat Kopa several times with his bare fists, knocked him on his back, sat on his chest and throttled him with both hands. The three servants did not dare to interfere, but stood watching.

Then Poda had the body taken to another hut in someone else's field, tied a rope round the neck of the corpse, and strung it up to the roof to give the impression that the dead man had committed suicide. He bribed the witnesses and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

told everyone who knew anything about the matter to make a report of suicide, and since he was a man of great influence this was done.

The remarkable thing about this case is not the violence with which the murder was committed, but the very great forbearance shown by Poda. After forgiving Kopa the first time, he himself went to the expense of marrying him to a young girl, perhaps with the idea that this would divert his attention. Even on the second occasion he refrained from physical violence, and contented himself with turning the boy out of his house. Few Maria would have failed to kill Kopa immediately after discovering him in the house at night. But all Poda did was to put the matter before the village elders. It seems to have been Kopa's impertinence in going to the hut and sitting there as if nothing had happened that suddenly deprived Poda of his self-control. The Court, taking these matters into consideration, sentenced him to only five years' imprisonment.

VI

THE MOTHER'S HOUSE

Another very common source of domestic friction is the custom that allows a girl to visit her mother's house. These visits are an exciting and important part in the life of every aboriginal girl. During her marriage ceremony many of the songs deal with the happiness of her childhood home, and the misery of a life with a husband under the domination of her parents-in-law. After marriage the mother's house acquires a sweet and romantic memory. Its hardships and quarrels are easily forgotten, and the love of one's own parents appears tender and kind compared to the constant friction of the new home. It is generally considered correct for girls to go to their parents' house for important domestic events such as the ceremonies for the birth of children, marriages and funerals, for some of the chief festivals and to help in the more urgent work of the fields. Husbands, especially young husbands, resent this, for it means one pair of hands the less to work in their own house. Girls are not always very tactful in the enthusiasm they show at returning

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER V

CHARACTER

'Without exception they are the most cheerful, light-hearted people I have met with, always laughing and joking among themselves. Seldom does a Maria village resound with quarrels or wrangling among either sex: and in this respect they present a marked contrast to those in more civilized tracts. They, in common with many other wild races, bear a singular character for truthfulness and honesty, and when once they get over the feeling of shyness, which is natural to them, they are exceedingly frank and communicative. Curious as all savages, the commonest article of domestic use is to them an object of interest; they are quick to observe and to learn.'—Glasfurd's 1862 Report, para. 89.

'In their own hills they are a bold and hardy race, industrious as cultivators, and truthful to a proverb; and, though shy and timid with those they do not know, are quickly won over by kindness. They form, indeed, not only one of the most interesting, but one of the most improvable of the aboriginal tribes of India.'—Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report, para. 111.

MERCIFULLY the Hill Marias and, to a less extent, the Bison-horn Marias have been spared the attention of the improver, and hitherto have been left fairly free to develop on their own lines and to adjust themselves to the increasing impact of modern India on the surrounding lowlands. The shyness already mentioned is still very marked in the hills, and also among the remoter villages not only of Bison-horn Marias and Koyas, but also of Parjas and Murias. But the ordinary Bison-horn Maria of the open tracts, with the steady expansion of communications and frequent visits by the Chief and the Diwan to the Bailadila hills, has come more and more into contact with the outer world; he often comes into Jagdalpur for Dasehra or market or to work on the public works, or even to show his children the sights of the '*sahar*' or 'city', especially the power-house and the pumps of the new waterworks.

In the Abujhmar hills all is well if visitors are expected. Otherwise, as in Glasfurd's day, all the inhabitants are liable to rush off into the jungle on the sudden appearance of an unusual number of persons or a white man. When marching from Orcha to Adeq (Ader) in Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* in February 1930, I left the main path to see the village of Tondawada. I was not expected in the village, and though I had with me a number of Maria youths from Orcha well known to several women of Tondawada, yet my approach was the signal for a general *sauve-qui-peut*; the dogs barked, the few cattle were hastily driven off into the hills, and women and boys fled helter-skelter to the hills, even including

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

609 157 a large party of women who had assembled to keen over an old woman who had just died. Pigs also were driven off, and a youth, who was caught lurking near us to 'rescue' three stray cows and brought to me, advanced to me as delicately as Agag, with his knife unsheathed and held in readiness to defend his life. This lad was quickly reassured and shouted out, whereupon to our surprise four or five other lads came down from trees around us, where they had taken shelter, their curiosity being on the whole stronger than their fear. Ultimately the women felt that the corpse could not be left unmourned any longer, and came back in twos and threes to be reassured by the boys. They were then in two minds whether to resume keening or to see as much as possible of the queer ways of so unheard-of an apparition as a white man. When I came to see the keening it was altogether too much, and they at once left the body and crowded round me; when I had it explained that I wanted to see how funerals were conducted and to photograph them, they very obligingly squatted down in their original places, and began even more doleful keenings than before. It seemed only proper to remove my distracting presence as soon as I could, but the keeners were with difficulty dissuaded from seeing me on my way to Adeq.

Timidity of this kind is unusual among the Bison-horn Marias; but there are many villages among them where few women can have seen a white man. To appear on foot or on a car along a forest road where groups of women are gathering forest fruits is usually the signal for them to rush off into the thickets, leaving their baskets and gear: but if you return that way later after having spent an hour or two in neighbouring villages, they will come timidly out to you on the road, and gradually lose their earlier fears.

152 The highlanders and lowlanders alike are extremely curious. In the Abujhmar hills I have frequently had parties of men, youths and girls coming into my tent or hut to see my strange ways of getting up, shaving and dressing, and their curiosity has been embarrassing when they have tried to watch even the performance of natural functions. I have had to brush my hair a dozen times over to satisfy those who had not seen me do it the first time, and to demonstrate the use of every article on my dressing or office tables. They will sit for hours watching a typewriter, and speculating on how it works. A motor-car is a source of endless delight, whether it be the distorted reflections seen in the polished radiator, or the noises of the bulb and electric horns. They thump it to test its materials, or crawl underneath to be fascinated by the strange sights that reward their trouble. But it takes time to get them to agree to try a ride inside, and when they do, they start off with

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

VII

I found it very difficult—and I suspect that Grigson had the same experience—to see Marias in action. Tribes vary greatly in their willingness to allow a visitor to be present at their ceremonial. The Murias used to invite me to marriages or festivals, sending information about them long beforehand. The Saoras are delighted to have visitors at their celebrations and more than once the ghost of a long dead headman has come upon the priest and admonished the people to treat me right. But the Bondos do their utmost to keep the stranger away; during the great summer festival they pile the paths leading to their villages with thorn bushes and not even a fellow Bondo, if he belongs to another village, is admitted. The Marias do not go so far as that, yet I found them singularly unwilling to let me watch them do anything. When I was camping at Borgum I heard that the Wijja Pandum was to be celebrated in two days' time and rather unwisely announced my intention of being present. On the morning of the festival a delegation arrived in camp to say that the proceedings had had to be postponed because the Perma's wife was in her period—though I darkly suspect that the old lady had in fact passed the climacteric. I had to dodge round the country for weeks before I saw a wedding, and to witness the Ghotpal Marhai I had to come sixty miles on an elephant down from the Abujhmar because the dates were changed at the last moment.

But since a page of personal observation is worth a whole chapter of hearsay I will describe the wedding at which I assisted and the great festival at Ghotpal in 1942.

On March 15th, 1942 I was camping in Gogonda at the edge of the hills overlooking the great southern plain. That evening, I was told, two girls were to be taken to Sirsitti, a village some two thousand feet below, to be married. At about five o'clock therefore married and unmarried women collected and began to dance with one of the brides. She had her head and shoulders completely covered with a shawl and wailed loudly all the time. Three pots of rice-beer were distributed to the dancers and a large number of onlookers, and then the dancers took the bride round the village. This was a very pretty sight. The circle of dancers would suddenly elongate into a line and then curl up again in a ring. As they danced from house to house, men and women would come out and put a ring on the bride's finger or a necklace round her neck and embrace her by raising her hands twice to their foreheads and then clasping her in their arms. As they did so, the dancers sang the names of the people who were giving presents and their exact relationship to the bride. At other times they sang how the girl had hitherto been going to and fro freely in the jungle, getting wood, husking grain,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

doorway while his parents encouraged him and the old women shouted ribald jokes. At last he plucked up courage and made a dash for the girl. Her companions resisted him but at last, of course, he broke through them, seized the girl and dragged her weeping loudly into the house. The girls rushed after them and pushed and hustled them into an inner room and shut the door on them, the theory being that they would consummate the marriage there and then. The old women stood round the hut trying to look inside and discussing the bridegroom's potency. The cock which is often stolen by the bride's party from the bridegroom's house was here given as a present with a little cloth to the bride's younger sister.

This was the end of one marriage. The other was a surprise. The girls came dancing with the shrouded bride up to the house, the bridegroom put on a new shirt for the occasion, his mother brought water to wash the feet of her new daughter-in-law. Everything was ready, but after the girls had danced round once or twice in front of the house, they made as if to go right round it in honour of the Departed. Everybody waited for them to complete the circuit and return, but their voices grew fainter and fainter, and I went out to see them dancing away into the forest. It was then explained to the unfortunate bridegroom that certain ceremonies had to be performed in Gogonda to protect the bride against magical dangers with which she was threatened and that she would be returned to him in three days' time.

It was then six o'clock and we returned to camp.

VIII

On February 2nd, 1942 there was celebrated at Ghotpal near Barsur the great Marhai and Pen-Karsita of the Lekhami clan. Directly I arrived and made my camp under some trees I was greeted by a little deputation of local priests who told me very politely but quite firmly that though they were delighted to have me there I would not be permitted to take any photographs or write anything down. Later I went with Mr. Sampat Singh to the shrine of the Ghotpal clan-god, the Anga, Usendi Pen, with whom are his sons Hunga and Wella and his daughter Wange. I was at once surrounded by people telling me that I must not go inside. An elderly magician approached me and in a stern voice told me to take my hat off, for I was looking at a god. Such instructions are unusual in aboriginal India.

Nothing happened that day, but people began to assemble and many merchants arrived and set up their booths in a line along the edge of the great open dancing-ground in front of the shrine.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

prisoners clearly suspected some trick and told me very little. On the whole I was impressed by the great sadness of their life, even though in the jail they are well and kindly treated. Most of them, I think, felt that an inexplicable tragedy had befallen them. They did not feel like criminals. Their lives had been destroyed by a capricious destiny.

It was naturally more difficult to get information about the suicides, for, in the nature of the case, the person of most interest could not be present to tell his story. Relatives also and the villagers were more reticent, I thought, in discussing this subject, possibly because they feared that any revelations might lead to further police investigation. But even so I was able to get a certain amount of information about the Maria's attitude to self-murder.

But enquiries among the Maria are never easy. The people say that, as a result of Mr Grigson's investigations when he was writing his book on the tribe, their villages have suffered an invasion of man-eating tigers. In one village where I myself took photographs it was declared afterwards that I had made all the women barren. The Maria are friendly people, and I was able to make many friends among them. But particularly on matters which have a police reference they are naturally inclined to be secretive and prefer to claim ignorance rather than by confiding in the investigator perhaps expose themselves to later difficulties. Moreover, there is undoubtedly throughout aboriginal India a belief that talking about tribal affairs may anger the ancestors of the clan or disturb some godling's peace of mind. It is said of Korava children, members of a criminal tribe in Mysore, that they are taught from infancy to say 'I do not know' in reply to questions put to them.[1] Many Maria adopt the same attitude.

The presence of my wife, whom everyone (incorrectly) regarded as a Maria but who has a Maria name, was of great assistance in removing suspicion, as was the fortunate chance that I always go barefoot in the villages. I learnt later that the Maria believe that one reason why the crops are so poor nowadays is that officials defile Mother Earth by trampling on her with their shoes. 'At first,' they said, 'when anyone

[1] L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer, *The Mysore Tribes and Castes* (Mysore, 1930), Vol. III, p. 612.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

634 of the size of the divisions and the formal linking of them together in subordination to the head of the State and of the heads of the intermediate divisions, and its authority being held in constant check by the democratic tendencies of the tribe. The word *pargana* is familiar in the west of the Central Provinces and in Berar as a unit of the Mussalman organization of the Deccan, and as more and more Indian officials were lent to Bastar from the Central Provinces it probably displaced gradually the less familiar terms *garh* and taluq. I deal below with the tribal organization of the [614] Hill Marias. Their clan-units were and are smaller than the conventional *garh* and often than the *barhon* or taluq; yet in the Abujhmar hills tract of the Antagarh tahsil these clan-units of land are now designated *parganas*. The modern list of *parganas* is considerably larger than those of Elliot and Glasfurd, who described all the Abujhmar country as one taluq or *pargana* named Marian; there are now nine Abujhmar *parganas* in Antagarh tahsil alone, besides others of obvious tribal origin below the hills, and there are twenty-nine *parganas* in all in Antagarh tahsil. These are shown in the map on page 33. It was pointed out in the 1911 Central Provinces Census Report, Part I, p. 239, that the Hill Marias of the Ahiri zamindari are similarly divided into (probably clan) units called *pattis*. The *parganas* of modern Bastar include some obvious former *garhs*, some obvious *barhons* (e.g. Baragaon *pargana* in Antagarh), and some obvious old tribal clan-units, while some have been created in my time; and the word *pargana* is now used of any sub-division of a tahsil or zamindari in which villages are grouped under a group headman or '*pargana majhi*'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

and many a marriage arises from the first meeting of lad and girl in these dances.

The land, as has been seen, is the land of the clan-god (if not even, in some sense, the clan-god himself). It is natural, therefore, that before any of these festivals are held in the individual villages of the clan the main ceremony for the whole clan should take place before the clan-god, either in or near the parish where his permanent hut-temple is situated. When the new grain of the crop concerned has been garnered, the *kasyeq-gaita* of each village sends word to the *pen-waddai* or clan-priest. The clan-priest consults the clan-god personally if himself a medium, or else through a medium, and announces a date for the celebration before the clan-god. On the night before leaving their village to attend the celebration, the *kasyeq-gaita* and all the men who are to go with him next day observe sexual continence, and sleep in the dormitory. The *kasyeq-gaita* is fed that night on fish, at the expense of the village, in some clan-areas. In a few villages a separate *bhum-gaita* exists, whose sole function seems to be to lead the villagers in visits of this kind to the clan-god. Before dawn, each wife grinds about 4 lb. of the new grain for her husband to take to the clan-festival. No women may attend the new-eating ceremonies. Besides supplies of new grain, the *kasyeq-gaita* and men take on behalf of the whole village a cock or two (there is no rule as to the colour of the victim), and perhaps, when the village is large or prosperous, a young boar (*not* a gelded pig) or a barren sow.

The deputations from the various villages assemble at the *pen-rawar* or shrine of the clan-god. The god, which in form is always a framework of logs criss-crossed with bamboos and bedecked with peacock feathers, spirals of quills, brass bells and other simple finery, is then taken out of his hut by four men of the clan-priest's family or village, and borne to the traditional place of sacrifice, which may be near the shrine or even outside the main village of the clan, three or four miles from the shrine. There they set the god down on stones under a *saja* tree, and the four bearers have a ceremonial wash. Sometimes the clan-priest again, either himself if a medium, or through mediums, consults the wishes of the god, who always permits the festival to continue, but generally suggests that they should first offer worship to the Village Mother of the village where the assembly has gathered. All adjourn to her shrine, and there the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village places a grain or two of the new crop on the table-stone or cleft stick representing the Mother, cuts the throat of a small chicken, sprinkles its blood on the Mother, and throws it down, still alive, on the ground. All watch the chicken eagerly; if after a convulsive leap or two it falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

541 Cock-fighting is the favourite pastime of the Bison-horn Marias, well-known venues being the weekly markets at Kuakonda, Paknar, Kukanar, Bastanar Ghat and near Karli, among several others. They tie iron knives to the cocks' legs. If the cocks break away, their owners pick them up and rub their hackles or spit into their beaks to get their blood up. The defeated cock always becomes the property of the victor's owner. On any market morning you can see scores of Bison-horn Marias walking to market with cocks tucked under their arms. Hill Marias do not themselves go in much for this pastime; only a few of them even stay to watch cock-fighting at Dhaurai market. Some of the Kutru Hill Marias attend cock-fighting every week at Oikal in the Ahiri zamindari of Chanda.

231 Goats are seldom kept by the Hill Marias, though at Nugur in the Indrawati valley the Parlio clan, despite the fact that its totem
● 614 **Goats** is the goat, kept goats for the Teli tradesmen who owned the village rice bins described on page 102; but they could not eat goat flesh or even take goat milk.

Among the Bison-horn Marias, many, including even those who belong to the goat phratry and goat clans, keep goats and use goat milk; but totemistic rules prohibit members of goat clans and phratry from eating goat flesh.

231 As has been seen, the Hill Marias are not rich in cattle, do not milk them or yoke them to carts or ploughs, and generally keep Rawat herdsmen to tend them. Nearly all eat beef whenever they can afford it. Bullock or cow sacrifice is almost an essential part of funeral ceremonies, and all present eat the meat. Dead cattle are divided up and eaten; at Kutru, Hill Marias ate all that remained of a cow killed by a family of man-eating tigers, though the mangled remains had been gnawed by hyaenas and jackals, and exposed to the sun for four or five days till full of flies and maggots. The headmen of the villages of Padalibhum, Tapalibhum, Behramar, Nurbhum and Sonpur Mar *parganas* frankly admitted that they liked eating beef when they could get it; at Handawada, on the other side of the hills, the headmen of the Dantewara Mar and Mangnar *pargana* villages asserted that they never eat dead cattle, and only eat the beef of sacrificed animals. There are practically no buffaloes in the Abujhmar hills.

Cattle and buffaloes

231 The Bison-horn Marias are great stock-raisers, both of cattle and buffaloes, and they export many head of cattle to Chanda and
439 Raipur, as well as over the Madras border; in fact the land revenue is often paid out of the price received for cattle, and one of their favourite grievances is the cattle export duty of a rupee or two
231 imposed by the State. They use cattle for ploughing and are

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

or with Dorla neighbours. The clearest sign these retain of their Hill Maria origin is the retention of separate clan-areas, clan-gods and *modul-maddai* clan-priests for each large clan (*pari* or *hatta*) or pair or trio of closely related clans, as distinct from the Bison-horn Maria institution of one *pen* or clan-god for each of the five groups of clans or phratries (*tarr* or *kutmam*) and every clan (*hatta*) included in it, without any fixed phratry-area. On the other hand, each village in the true Bison-horn tracts is said to be the *bhum* of the clan (*hatta*) of the *perma* who originally founded it, and, as it is the *bhum* of his clan, he alone can officiate for the village at the ceremonies and sacrifices before the Village Mother, the Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo, Bhu-deo and Bhu-Devi, and the other forms under which the Earth is worshipped at the different agricultural ceremonies.

The Bison-horn country is extensive and, compared to the Hill Maria country, well populated. The villages forming the *bhum* of even individual *hatta* clans may be miles apart, while a village that is the *bhum* of a clan in phratry A may be surrounded by villages that are the *bhum* of clans in phratries B, C, D and E for miles before there is another village of a clan of phratry A. Further, though a village may be the *bhum* of the *perma's* clan, he may easily have only a few other householders of his clan in the village, but several of other kindred and affine clans. At Aranpur, most members of the big and small Marvi, the Hemla and the Oyami clans, all of which are included in the Marvi phratry, did not know the name of the clan-god of their phratry, but suggested vaguely that his *pen-rawar* might be in the Abujhmar hills or in Padar-raj, their name for the plateau around Jagdalpur. Some knew that the god's name was Handa Kosa Pen, and a few said that his *pen-rawar* was at Killepal, nearly sixty miles away, where the great western road from Jagdalpur to Bhopalpatnam approaches the passes descending to the Dantewara valley. At Killepal, however, I had not been shown Handa Kosa Pen; the village is the *bhum* of the Kuhrami clan, which gives its name to the Kuhrami phratry, and the clan members stated that they had no *pen-rawar* of their clan at Killepal, but that Hermraj Pen, their god, was, they had heard, in some village near Orcha in the Abujhmar hills. It was often agreed that a Maria should visit his Pen or clan-god every year in Aghan or Pand month (November-December) and offer a pig or a cock to the god at this annual *pen-jatra* or festival of the *pen*. At Aranpur a few of the older men said that they had long ago visited the Marvi clan-god Handa Kosa Pen at Killepal in their youth, but in recent years no one seemed to have been near. It was agreed that certain social offences could only be expiated by a visit and penal offering to the clan-god.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 The elders of the villages can actually often give the names of each of the gods whom they say that each of the five Bison-horn 614 phratries worships: the Markami phratry worships Harma Pen; 615 the Kuhrami phratry give varying names for their god, Hermraj Pen, Perambhoi (the name applied by the Dorlas to their corresponding Perambhoi phratry) or Banian Muttai; the Kawasi phratry worships Babo Herma Pen; the Marvi phratry Handa Kosa Pen; and the Sodi phratry Tul-Muttai Pen, whose *pen-rawar* is at Kamkanar in the Gangalur *pargana* in Bijapur tahsil, where Sodi Harma the *modul-waddai*, was regarded as the headman of all the surrounding Bison-horn villages. But other names are also given, such as Hirangraj, Hingaraj and Belraj for the Kartami clan, Hirmaraj for the Kawasi, Sodi, Markami and Marvi clans, and Hing-hunga and Mundaraj for the Beko and Kalmu clans. I have used the word 'clan' advisedly, because in this list some gods are shared by clans belonging to different phratries; thus Hirmaraj is shared by the Markami and Kartami clans of the Markami phratry and by the Sodi and Marvi clans of the Sodi and Marvi phratries, while of the worshippers of Hing-hunga and Mundaraj the Beko clan belongs to the Kuhrami phratry and the Kalmu clan to the Markami. Use Modia Pen of Ghotpal is restricted to the Lekami clan of that and surrounding villages, which is now considered part of the Kuhrami phratry. Other local log-gods will be found in the heart of the Bison-horn country at such places as Dugeli; some may be the true *pen-rawars* of the phratries, but I have been unable to verify this.

614 The whole position is, it must be admitted, somewhat confused, but it would be wrong to expect to systematize it. The same 615 confusion will be found again over the totems of the phratries and 173 clans; there are two phratries with the tortoise as totem, and inside the same phratry will be found clans with totems of their own or the totem of other phratries, or no totem at all. The traditions of the Bison-horn Marias all point to their having descended southwards from the Abujhmar hills to colonize their present country, and the presence in their midst of ruined Hindu cities at Dantewara, Barsur, and Bhairamgarh, of traces of forgotten kingdoms at Tirathgarh and Kuakonda, and of isolated villages of Jhari Telangas descended from the subjects of early medieval Telugu kings, point to the truth of the traditions. We have seen how new clans are forming to-day on the southern fringes of the Abujhmar hills, and how the Bison-horn culture is gradually absorbing the southernmost Hill Maria clans, which have, however, not fitted themselves fully as yet into the five-phratry organization, but retain their own clan-gods. The five phratries are named after five principal clans,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the names of which recur not only among Murias in north Bastar, but also among all the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Possibly strong bodies of these clans were the original colonizers, and with the growth of population in their new surroundings have either thrown off sub-clans or absorbed clans newly descending from the hills or acquiring their culture. It is not surprising that settlers in the tracts farthest from their first settlement should find it difficult to worship at the original shrines of their *pen*, and should either forget them, or here and there make fresh log-gods for themselves, perhaps sharing them with other adjacent clans not necessarily of their own phratries, just as they have learnt, unlike the Hill Marias, to share with other brother-clans and wife-clans village lands which are the *bhum* of their own clan.

The cult of the *pen* log-god of the clan is thus, as may be expected, considerably weaker among the Bison-horn than among the Hill Marias. Often he is neglected almost entirely in the annual feasts, or vaguely associated with the Departed in the expressions *pen-hanal* or *dhuma-deo* used of the ancestors. Where there is a log-god, he tends to be regarded merely as one of the local godlings that are becoming as numerous among the Bison-horn Marias as among the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Where there is none, occasionally at festivals before the Village Mother or other manifestations of the Earth a stone or two may be set up in his name under a *saja* tree and receive its share of the sacrificial blood and libations. It is not surprising that, therefore, the *waddai* of the clan-god is more purely a medium among the Bison-horn Marias, and less of a clan-priest than he is among the Hill Marias, and that most Bison-horn villages have at least one *waddai* who may be possessed not only by the clan-god but by other godlings also; even when he is attached definitely to a log-god at a festival, he may be possessed by him and give oracle on his behalf, but the *perma* of the village is the principal celebrant, and the *waddai*, when not possessed, degenerates into a mere *mantram*-reciting assistant of the *perma*.

The Village Mother and other gods among the Bison-horn Marias

Often there is no hut-temple for any deity among the Bison-horn Marias except one for Danteshwari Mai or Maoli or Mata, whose cults have spread from the Hindu temple of Dantewara, and in time will reach every village of Bastar. The Earth cult, however, remains, as among the Hill Marias, the essential cult. Its chief form is thus the cult of the Village Mother, called Tallin Ochur in the Bison-horn dialect. For all the village ceremonies there is a fixed plot of land in a field belonging to the *perma* and known as the *bhum-jaga*, *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu*; *bhum-jaga*

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [834] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *hanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *hanal*. The *hanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *hanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common 776 use of the expression *pen-hanal* has already been mentioned. As the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this 614 association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *uraskal* be the last thing that an individual *hanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms. 775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only 775 around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

The future life

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The only writers who seem to have touched on the social organization of the Bastar Marias before are Russell and Hiralal, who said (III, pp. 64-6) :— 114 614

Russell and Hiralal, on the social organization of the Bastar Marias

'The Gond rules of exogamy appear to preserve traces of the system found in Australia, by which the whole tribe is split into two or four main divisions, and every man in one or two of them must marry a woman in the other one or two. . . .

'Among the Gonds, however, the subdivision into small exogamous sects has been also carried out, and the class system, if the surmise that it once existed be correct, remains only in the form of a survival, prohibiting marriage between agnates, like an ordinary sept. In one part of Bastar all the septs of the Maria Gonds are divided into two great classes. There are ninety septs in A Class and sixty-nine in B Class, though the list may be incomplete. All the septs in A Class say that they are Bhaiband or Dadabhai to each other, that is in the relation of brothers, or cousins being the sons of brothers. No man of Class A can marry a woman of any sept in Class A. The septs of Class A stand in the relation of Mamabhai or Akomama to those of Class B. Mamabhai means a maternal uncle's son, and Akomama apparently signifies having the same maternal grandfather. Any man of a sept in Class A can marry any woman of a sept in Class B. It will thus be seen that the smaller septs seem to serve no purpose for regulating marriage, and are no more than family names. The tribe might just as well be divided into two great exogamous clans only. Marriage is prohibited between persons related only through males; but according to the exogamous arrangement there is no other prohibition, and a man could marry any maternal relative. Separate rules, however, prohibit his marriage with certain female relatives, and these will be given subsequently (ibid., p. 72). It is possible that the small septs may serve some purpose which has not been elicited, though the inquiry made by Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath[1] was most careful and painstaking.

'In another part of Bastar there were found to be five classes, and each class had a small number of septs in it. The people who supplied this information could not give the names of many septs. Thus Class A had six septs,[2] Class B five, Classes C and D one each, Class E four, and Class F two. A man could not marry a woman of any sept belonging to his own class. 114 615

'The Muria Gonds of Bastar have a few large exogamous septs or clans named in Hindi after animals, and each of these clans contains several subsepts with Gondi names. Thus the *Bakarawans* or Goat race contains the Garde, Kunjami, Karrami and Vadde septs. The *Kachhimwans* or Tortoise race has the Netami, Kawachi, Usendi and Tekami septs. The *Nagwans* or Cobra race includes the Maravi, Potari, Karanga, Nurethi, Dhurwa and others. Other exogamous races are the Sodi (or tiger), Behainsa (buffalo), Netam (dog in Gondi), Chamchidai (bat) and one or two more. In this case the exogamous clans with Hindi names would appear to be a late division, and have perhaps been adopted because the meaning of the old Gondi names had been forgotten, or the septs were too numerous to be remembered.'

As will be seen in this chapter, the part of Bastar where five 'classes' were found was presumably the Bison-horn country and its cultural extension, the Dorla country, where there are definitely five phratries each containing varying numbers of clans. The tract in which, according to Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath's enquiry, the 114 618

[1] Diwan of Bastar for many years.

[2] Six classes, A to F, are given, though the text speaks of five, the actual number among both Bison-horn Marias and Dorlas. But so few 'septs' are mentioned, nineteen as compared to the fifty in my list of phratries, that the enquiry must have been incomplete.

[See cat. 116, p. 424. — Analyst]

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.' 539
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill. 223
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon 226
the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make
every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish
that live in tanks and flooded fields.

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally 825
that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps 821
into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem 614●
of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a
dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *kurangra*, *nâri*
(or *bâm*), *bota* (or *khoksi*), *dundum*, *luwo* (or *turu*) and *bâgum*.

The gall-bladder of the *bâgum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake- 278
bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the
State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by
filling it with the small kosra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is
needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions,
is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient
to drink.

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a 227
hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 226

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER THREE

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

I. The Clan System

AN elaborate discussion of the clan system of the Muria would be out of place and not very profitable, for it is impossible to bring any kind of order out of the confusion into which that system has fallen in modern times. But some account of the clans and their rules must be given, for they are of real importance to the children in the ghotul and a breach of the clan-rules may merit not only the vengeance of the Departed but severe punishment from the leaders of the ghotul and of the tribe. The clans regulate the absorbing question of marriage and the still more absorbing relationships of chelik and motiari. Their distribution directs to some extent the annual dancing expeditions. The clan festivals are among the most exciting and colourful incidents in the ghotul's life.

I will therefore briefly outline the clan system—though it must be remembered that it is not really a system—and I will then give a few stories about the origin of these clans and finally an account of the rules and customs that are observed.

The clan system of the Muria is now greatly confused. In the old days it seems probable that the inhabited territory of north Bastar was divided up among the different clans of Maria and Muria, and each had its own particular *bhum* or clan area. In each *bhum* there was a spiritual capital called the *pen-ravar* or *pen-kara*. Here lived the clan-god or Anga with the clan-priest to tend him and mediate between him and his kinsmen. Here they came for the chief festivals of the Anga; here they brought their dead and erected their menhirs; here they gathered for the special panchayat that discussed offences against the clan laws.

Traces of this organization exist, but the increase of population, the occupation of vast new tracts of land, the scattering of the clansmen in all directions has destroyed the clear pattern of former days. Many Muria have never visited their *pen-ravar*, many are living in *bhum* that really belong to other clans, most clans have *bhum* rights in villages that are widely apart. There are no longer compact clan areas, and in every village—though each is regarded as the *bhum* of some special clan—there live members of several other clans.

It was this fact, of course, that made the ghotul, in its Muria form, possible. Among the Hill Maria, where the old one-clan-to-one-village system still survives,[1] girls are not allowed to share the dormitory with the boys because of the obvious danger of clan incest.

The Muria, then, preserve the old traditions but in a confused and disorderly way. Many clans have more than one *pen-ravar* and several gods. The Naitami clan, for example, has spiritual headquarters at Kharkagaon, Kabonga, Chingnar and Sirpur; the Poyami clan worships Samrath Dokara—an Anga—at Sirsi, as well as Budha Pen at Lanjora and Chingnar. The Dhurwa clan has a clan-god, Son Kuar, at Metawand and another, Budha Dokara—an Anga—at Kharkagaon. The Sori clan worships Budha Pen at Chingnar, Kara Hurra at Garanji and Lalit Kuar at Gorma.

In each case, however, there is one ancient *pen-ravar*, to which the more orthodox elders of the tribe go when they can and where they will have their

[1] See Grigson, *op. cit.*, pp. 236ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

614 menhirs erected. This belief in the clan-*bhum*, whether original or adopted as a result of immigration and settlement, is still sufficiently alive to excite serious quarrels. It was a dispute over the rights to a clan-*bhum* that began the deadly feud between the sorcerer Singlu and the people of Almer.[1] Most of the inhabitants of Almer belong to the Kando clan (which has its *pen-rawar* at Kharkagaon) and they consider that the place is Kando-*bhum* since they first settled there. But Singlu is a Karanga. One day he said to the Kando priest, 'Let me erect memorial stones in your village; then my ancestors will live here and will help me and my family'. But the priest pointed out that the headquarters of the Karanga clan was at Kokori. 'If you bring your ancestors to this village, our gods will be neglected,' he said and refused to give him any *bhum*.

There was a similar conflict at Bandopal. The *bhum* here also belongs to the Kando clan which has erected a number of menhirs. Members of the Gaude clan, which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kando, demanded a share of the *bhum*, probably because it was more convenient for them than to go to Kharkagaon. After many quarrels and a long dispute, the Kando people agreed to let the Gaude clan erect its menhirs within their *bhum* territory, and they even made a Gaude Gaita assistant to the chief Kando Bhum-Gaita (priest of the soil). But many of the Kando clansmen objected to this and stopped erecting menhirs at Bandopal, going instead to Kharkagaon (where indeed they ought always to have gone). In the end the Gaude people decided to give up erecting menhirs at all because of the expense, and gave back the land to the Kando clan.

615 The clans fall roughly into five phratries, which are generally called by the Hindi word for 'race', *vans*. There is the Nagvans or Serpent Race, which includes a number of brother-clans, most of which have the cobra as their totem and cannot marry among themselves; the Kachhimvans or the Tortoise Race, the Bakravans or the Goat Race, the Baghvans or the Tiger Race and the Bodminkvans or the Fish Race.

All the clans within one phratry are *dādābhai*, or brothers, to one another, and all the members of each clan are *dādābhai* to each other. The word used to describe the relation of a clan into which you can marry your daughter is *akomāma*, a combination of the words *ako*, which means a man's mother's father, daughter's son and daughter's daughter (all of whom will belong to a different clan in a different phratry) and *māma*, which means a man's mother's brother, his father-in-law and his wife's brother's son (who will again, of course, be members of different clans).

[582 835] A chelik or motiari, therefore, who is seeking either amorous adventure or permanent domestic relationship, has to turn to members of the *akomāma* clans. Fortunately, owing to the wide distribution of the population, there are nearly always members of such clans in one's own ghotul or near at hand.

614 Before going on to describe the origin of the clans and the special rules that govern them, I will give in tabulated form a list of clans with their totems. It is not worth while adding to this an account of the *bhum* territory as this is too scattered and disorganized; the same is true of the clan-gods and *pen-rawar*.

[615] It will be noticed that in addition to the phratry totem each clan has its own totem which is sometimes different. The Sori clan has three different totems.

[1] See p. 204.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

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CLAN	TOTEM	CLAN	TOTEM
	The Nag (Cobra) Phratry		
Buyi	Bullock	Maravi	Goat
Dhurwa	Goat	Kassi Maravi	Kassi tree
Duga	Cobra	Etikal Maravi	She-goat
Kalo	Cobra	Nei Nuroti	Dog
Karanga	Wild buffalo	Nuroti	Cobra
Kaudo	Goat and horse	Partabi	Goat
	The Kachhim (Tortoise) Phratry		
Kawachi	Tortoise	Parchapi	Tortoise
Komra	Tortoise	Poyami	Tortoise
Markami	Tortoise	Tekami	Tortoise
Naitami	Tortoise and dog		
	The Bakra (Goat) Phratry		
Gaude	Goat	Ori	Goat
Karhami	Goat	Uika	Kassi tree
Komra	Goat	Wadde	Goat and kassi tree
Kunjami	Goat		
	The Bagh (Tiger) Phratry		
Sori	Tiger, buffalo and bod fish		
Wadder	Buffalo		
	The Bodmink (Fish) Phratry		
Halami	Bod fish	Kuhrami	Kassi tree
Hurpundi	Bod fish	Kumoti	Kumot bird
Kachlami	Kassi tree	Usendi [1]	Usi bird

I have somewhat arbitrarily divided the clans into these five phratries, though we must not suppose that this is how the Muria usually thinks of them. In each area he is only concerned with the relatively small number of clans in his own neighbourhood. When Dhanuram, my Usendi assistant from north-west Narayanpur, went to Kondagaon Tahsil, the Kuhrami and other related clans did not recognize him as one of themselves, for they had never heard of the Usendi—which is a great clan of the Abujhmar and north-west Bastar.

[1] Russell and Hiralal put the Usendi clan in the Kachhimvans. Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 65.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

614 615 There are other clans which I have not been able to fit into the scheme of phratries—the Hurra clan with its clan-god Lingo Mudial at Semurgaon, the Karati with its *bhum* at Phunder, the Vetti which has the lizard as its totem and the Kodovetti which has the mongoose. These, of course, fit into the scheme of *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relationships of their own neighbourhood.

There are not many songs about the clans. I give one Jhoria Pata from Sirpuri.

Those who kindle fire in the field
are boys of the Uika clan.
How strong the Uika boys are!
Those who make a hearth with brinjals from the Panara's house are boys of the Maravi clan.
Those who sit on a gate and call it a horse are boys of the Maravi clan.
How strong the Maravi boys are!
Those who build a hearth of pig's droppings are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who sit to clean their teeth with a twig are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!
Those who blow the buffalo horn are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who throw fine rice on the road are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!

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FIG. 15 Decorated Muria knife
Length 1' 5"

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CLANS

614 Many of the clans derive their origin from some historic journey in the course of which a river had to be crossed. Others have local and special reasons for their origin.

This legend of crossing a river is known throughout central India. Many Gond, Baiga and Agaria trace their clans and the attachment of those clans to certain totems from this.[1] In Muriā mythology we are sometimes told

[1] Compare, for such tales in the Central Provinces alone, Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. III pp. 61ff.; Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 241; C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919), Vol. II: pp. 8ff.; Elwin, *The Agaria*, p. 75; M. P. Buradkar, 'Totemism among the Gonds', *Man in India*, Vol. XX (1940), pp. 120 and 277ff.; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 77 (the Gond emigrating from Phuljhar cross the Gondki river in flood).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

that this first great journey was the coming of Lingo with his brothers to the earth. This is the Alor version of the tale. 614

At the beginning of the world, after Lingo and his brothers had put the earth in order, heaping up a mountain here and hollowing out a river there, the earth began to weep crying, 'There is no one to serve or worship me'. But Lingo and his brothers said, 'Do not distress yourself, we will go to find a priest for you'. 614 539

Then Lingo took his brothers to Lanjhi and Dhamda. In Lanjhi Raja Naitam was living. He had seven sons and seven daughters. Lingo came to them and said, 'The earth is ready in the Middle World and we have come to take you there'. When they heard that, Raja Naitam and Raja Markam with their sons and daughters and their subjects, Sori, Kawachi, Poyami, Kuhrami and Kaudo, set out with Lingo and his brothers to the Middle World. Raja Naitam and Raja Markam had many possessions and they travelled more slowly, lagging behind the others.

After a time they came to a great river. Lingo and his brothers said to themselves, 'We are gods and can cross without difficulty, but how are these human beings to get over?' On the bank tall grass was growing and Lingo and his brothers made it into a rope and stretched it across the river. The subjects clung to the rope and got across, but they were jealous of the two Rajas who were coming behind and, once they were safely on the far bank, they cut the rope. Then Raja Markam and Raja Naitam not knowing that the grass was cut began to cross, but under their weight the rope went down and they sank up to their necks in the middle of the river and stood there weeping. The *daudai* fish, who is the king of all the creatures that live in water, heard the sound and sent a tortoise to save them, and since then the Markami and Naitami honour the tortoise as their god.

At last the whole party reached the Middle World. Raja Naitam and Raja Markam had brought their cattle with them, and they offered a black calf to Mother Earth and pleased her greatly. These are the old priests of the Earth. All the gods have come from Lanjhi-Dhamda except Danteshwari and Maoli, who came from Warangal.

There are endless versions of this tale. In Lanjora a member of the Naitami clan said that,

At the beginning of the world a brother and sister on their way to a certain village came to a great river. The sister went ahead and reached the other side. Then a flood came down and the boy was left behind. Each wept on opposite sides of the stream. Then came a tortoise and asked the boy why he was weeping. When he told his story, it took him on its back and began to swim across. Half way across, the tortoise sank, but as the boy was drowning a dog came from the far bank where the sister was standing and swam out to him. He caught the dog's tail and was dragged to safety.

This story obviously attempts to explain how it is that the Naitami clan, which is named after the dog (*nai* is the Gondi word for dog) yet honours the tortoise as its totem. Many Naitami, however, have a special reverence for the dog as well.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

539
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Another very common variation of the legend is that told by the Hirko clan:

> When the first twelve brothers came to Bastar from Warangal, they came to a great river and decided to have their midday meal before crossing. Six of the brothers said, 'The river may flood; let us eat our food quickly' and they mixed their rice with water, ate it and went ahead. The other six mixed ghee in the rice instead of water and it took a long time to cook. As they were waiting for it to be ready the river came down in flood and, unable to cross, they sat on the bank and wept. Then came a tortoise and asked them what was the matter. When they told their story, the tortoise said, 'Will you worship me and never eat my people if I take you over?' They swore to do so and the tortoise carried them across on its back, and ever since these six brothers honour it as Bara Pen. In Dongar, Bara Pen used to go from place to place in the form of a tortoise.

Other clans are connected with the bod fish.[1] Members of the Halami clan at Gorma described how,

> There was a great tank in the jungle and below it was a village. The people of that village thought that if the banks were to break they would all be drowned and they decided to make a channel to carry the water away in another direction. Hearing this Kana Pen came to the place and camped below the tank. 'I will break the bank,' he said to himself. By his magic he put all the Muria to sleep and then broke the banks and the water poured out. Kana Pen saved himself by clinging to the root of a tree, but as the water ponred over him the bod fish came, angry and saying, 'I will eat one of the eyes of whoever has dried up my tank'. It caught Kana Pen and ate one of his eyes and since then Kana Pen has been one-eyed. Since that day we worship him and with him we worship the bod fish in order to stop it eating his other eye.

Another clan which in certain places honours the bod fish is the Sori. At Masora members of this clan had a slightly different version of the story. Here they regarded Kana Bod as a man.

> The people of the village went to a nearby river to make a bridge. They had iron spades, but Kana made a wooden one. When the others began to dig out the stones, Kana sat idly on the bank. The others got tired, but the bridge was not yet ready and they shouted to Kana, 'Now come and work yourself'. So he took his wooden spade and began to dig. As they watched him the others said to themselves, 'If we kill this man and throw him in the river, then the bridge will soon be ready'. When he heard them Kana jumped into the river and was carried away by the water. A great fish caught him and ate one eye. After that Kana Bod turned into a fish and we have worshipped him as a god.

The Sori clan is actually the tiger clan (*sori* means tiger in Gondi), but it is connected with bees and buffaloes as well as with tigers and bod fish. In

[1] The bod fish is regarded as specially sluggish in Chhattisgarh and is often compared to a drunken Kalar. See R. B. Hiralal, 'Why Kawat Women are Black', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LX (1931), p. 35.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

Karkhedra, a member of this clan described how his ancestors were born from a tigress: 539 614

> Two children were born: one brother was a tiger, one was a human being. When the boy grew up, one day he was going to the fields with eleven other men. A tiger came by and asked each in turn, 'Who are you?' Each of them, knowing that the tiger would not kill its own child, said, 'I am Sori' and it spared them. When it came to the real Sori boy it was angry and said, 'You can't all be Sori' and ate him. Ever since we have been angry with the tiger that betrayed us, and when a tiger is killed we put an egg and a pice in its mouth.

In Sidhawand I recorded yet another story of the origin of the Sori clan.

> The twelve Sori brothers went to get honey in the forest. The tree where bees lived stood beside a stream and the shadow of the hive could be seen in the water. Eleven of the brothers seeing the shadow in the water tried to reach it, but they fell in and were drowned. The twelfth brother looked up and saw the hive; so he climbed the tree and got the honey. In this way the Sori clan came into being.

In Cherfbera the Maravi clan trace their origin to an incident in Chingnar.

> In Chingnar a Marar dug a well but could not reach water. Presently a tortoise came out of the well and everyone said, 'It must be a god'. Then the tortoise came to the Marar in a dream saying, 'I am Bara Pen, I will give you water in your well and a son to your wife if you worship me'. The next day the Marar took a goat to offer to the tortoise but it refused the sacrifice saying, 'I must have a cow'. This the Marar refused to give. So the tortoise said, 'I will stay no more with you, I will go to the Muria'. The Muria gave the tortoise a cow and thus became Maravi (for Bara Pen came to them from the house of the Marar), but because the Marar offered a goat, the Maravi do not eat goat.

Other stories throw light on the way in which some clans possibly did originate—through dreams and the divisions of families as well as by migration. In Sisti village, the Naitami told us that,

> Long ago an old Muria widow lived with her son. When the boy was old enough he was married, but the next day he died and they broke the girl's bangles. The girl and her mother-in-law were weeping bitterly, but at last the husband came to the girl in a dream saying, 'Worship me as Dulha Deo, and I will go on being your husband'. The next day she made offerings to Dulha Deo and from that time he used to come daily to her by night till a son was conceived and born. The elders of the village came to the girl and asked whose child it was. 'I have been to no one,' said the girl, 'It is the child of Dulha Deo.' They were all laughing at her when the dead boy came out of the house and they realized that it really was Dulha Deo who had given the child. So we Naitami call ourselves *rândihe nene* (born of a widow) and our women do not wear bangles.

From the same place I recorded a story explaining why the Naitami and the Poyami, though both having the tortoise as their totem and both being descended from the same parents, can yet intermarry in some villages:

> During a great famine, a Poyami was dying of hunger and went to a Naitami's house to beg for food. The Naitami said, 'There is no food

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

here, I can give you nothing'. But the Poyami said, 'At least keep my daughter to work in your house and give me a little food'. So the Naitami fed him and kept the daughter in payment. When the time came for redeeming the girl the Poyami had no money, so the Naitami kept the girl and married her. From that girl there was born a daughter who was Naitami and from her brother there was a son who was Poyami. These two married, for the girl was *dudh-bahini* to the boy.

III. Clan Rules

Every clan has its own distinctive regulations based often on some incident in the story of its origin, often, too, on something that has happened, probably really happened, to a member of the clan.

The first rule is, of course, the obvious one; that no one may marry within the clan or a member of a clan that is related as *dādābhai*. Marriages can only take place between clans that stand in the *akomāma* relationship to one another.

The second rule is that members of a clan must avoid injury to the totem animal, tree or plant, must not eat it, and must usually give it some special honour or worship. In many clans, when the totem animal dies, the members observe mourning just as they would if a human being of their own clan had died.

Thirdly, there are a number of special rules such as that forbidding the members of the Naitami clan to wear bangles.

Among the food rules, some are clear enough. None of the members of the Bakravans or Goat phratry may eat goat's meat. We have seen that there is an added reason for this among the Maravi because, in the story of their origin, the Marar from whose house the tortoise emigrated offered it a goat. When a goat dies the Maravi perform funerary rites for it; they will not even touch the water from which a goat has drunk. This rule is taken very seriously. Twenty years ago in Palari one Bhaira Maravi ate goat's flesh by mistake and died of it, his throat swelling and choking him. Raghunath Maravi also ate it by accident, but he sacrificed a pig to Mati Pen and a buffalo to Bara Pen and was saved, though his brother died. In Kondagaon a man of the Partabi sept ate a goat and was very ill. He was excommunicated and only readmitted to the tribe after paying a heavy fine.

The members of the Kachhimvans or Tortoise phratry avoid eating the tortoise and worship it. The Naitami clan in addition to honouring the tortoise revere the dog, which they regard as their elder brother. Members of the Sori or Tiger phratry, however, have a buffalo totem, since members of the clan consider that they were betrayed by the tiger who ate the original member of their clan. But they still refuse to kill a tiger, and when one is killed they perform funerary rites for it.

Members of the Nagvans or Serpent phratry are supposed to be immune to the bite of the cobra, but some of the members of this phratry also honour other animals. For example, the Karanga has the wild buffalo as its totem and the Nei Nuroti has the dog.

Members of the Usendi clan which, being a Hill Maria clan, does not fit easily into any of the Muria phratries, do not eat the *usi* bird. The Kaudo sept has to avoid the horse: its members may not ride a horse or touch it. If a horse is tied in front of a Kaudo house, it goes mad or dies. The Komra sept never cut down a kassi tree, nor do they eat its leaves as vegetables. They must not cook roti with oil, and at the New Eating ceremonies they

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

614 must not themselves cook at all but must get their food from others. If they do cook in their houses a tiger will kill their cattle.

A similar rule applies to members of the Poyami clan, who have been forbidden by their clan-god to cook in their own houses at Diwali. Once an old man broke the rule and his cattle died. The Poyami sept also must not eat carrion, though a cadet branch, the Busar Poyami, may. Long ago a Poyami ate a dead cock and died of it. Randa Pen, who is the same as Dulha Deo, has forbidden it. The Poyami are so particular about this avoidance of carrion that they must not use even grain or fruit that has fallen of its own accord to the ground or they will lose their eyesight; if a gourd falls down or if rice falls from a basket or bin, they must not use it but must give it away to someone else. The grandfather of the Pujari of Karanji broke this rule and was supernaturally blinded as a punishment.

The Kuhrami clan must not eat cocks and they are said to place a small image of a cock on the forehead of a bridegroom at a marriage.

I have already noted the fact that Naitami women cannot wear bangles. If they do, it is believed that a snake will wind round the wrist or that the arm will swell until the bangle is broken, and both husband and wife will die. So when members of this sept go to perform the betrothal ceremony they do not give bangles, as is usual, to the future bride. The Naitami frequently marry the Poyami, and after a Poyami girl is engaged to a Naitami boy she also gives up wearing bangles even before she is married.

This custom derives from the story that has already been given. It was said in Silati that many years ago when a boy and girl were shut up together in the house on the last night of their wedding and the boy took his wife to bed for the first time, a snake coiled itself round her wrist. The boy hastily promised to break the bangles in its honour and the snake went away.

A wife, of course, changes her clan to that of her husband after marriage and even, in many cases, after betrothal. Once the ring-cowrie has been placed in the Pot of the Departed of her father's house,[1] a girl is regarded as having made compensation to her own ancestors for her desertion of their clan, and is now a member of her husband's clan. Sometimes she even goes for festivals, especially those of the clan-god, to her future husband's house instead of remaining with her own family. She is now free to eat her old totem animal and generally some opportunity is taken after the marriage to enable her to do this. Before she does so a few drops of liquor or a coconut are offered to her own ancestors to ensure that they will not be offended.

Adoption is uncommon among the Muria, but it exists. Where a baby is adopted from a family belonging to another clan, the child's clan and totem is changed—unless it is a sister's son. There is a small ceremony for the changing of the clan: offerings are made to the clan-god and the Departed and a feast of pork and liquor is given to the village. After this the child takes his new father's clan and ancestors as his own.

IV. The Family

582 Such, very briefly, is the system into which the chelik and motiari must adjust their lives. But can a chelik marry any girl of the tribe provided she belongs to an *akomāma* clan? As in the rest of India, the Muria regard certain relations as standing in a forbidden relationship; with others there is the

[1] See p. 127.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

607

Dewar: O Ange, the gruel is made of broken rice.
Ange: O my Dewar, where are you going today?
Dewar: Today I am not going anywhere
For I have to load my bullocks.
Tomorrow I go to another land to trade.
Ange: I too will go with you to drive the laden bullocks.
Dewar: Don't come with me, for all know how we stand to one another.
Those who do not know us will call us brother and sister.
And when they call us that we shall be ashamed.

The relations between *samdhi* and *samdhin* are generally of an amiable, coarse and humorous nature. For men this is a drinking rather than a joking relationship, and all their lives whenever they meet they regard it as an excuse for a bottle. The women, specially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breasts, stick feathers into the private parts and exchange the coarsest jokes. 602 522 [831]

The place where this joking and fun most commonly occurs is at a marriage. 'There is no purdah in a house of marriage.' Everybody feels free to fool about; no one is going to be offended; everyone is slightly drunk.

V. Summary

The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. Nothing reveals more clearly the extent of this domination than the fact that out of 2000 marriages examined no fewer than 1799 were of the cross-cousin type and, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, 1884 out of 2000 boys married according to their parents' wishes. This could only happen in a society which had a strong regard for its own organization and laws. 614 582

The clan system retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. Clan festivals remain great and notable occasions. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. The *samdhi* relationship, as may be seen in every song and story, continues to be of the first importance. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs. Totemism is less important, but is still far from moribund. The whole complex of ideas and customs is greatly confused, but the very confusion is perhaps a sign of its vitality.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

Round Kondagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

IV. The Clan-God

We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halba, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

617 776 Today when the process of god-making in Bastar has burst all bounds, when the clans have been scattered, when new clans have come into existence and old clans divided, there is no longer the neat and tidy arrangement of former days. But there is still a deep attachment to the idea of the clan-territory and the clan-god. Every clan still has its spiritual headquarters, still has the clan-god who is regularly worshipped at the great festivals, still maintains a clan-priest (Pen-Dhurwa or Pen-Waddai) to perform that worship, and still in many cases takes its dead to mingle with the clan-ancestors. What has happened in modern times is that each clan may have several places whither it will go for worship or for the disposal of its dead, and this has confused the picture. But the clan-gods are still of great authority.

778 776 614 The Anga is in form and character unique among the aboriginal gods of India. In form it is an arrangement of three parallel poles of saja,[1] bel or ira wood, over which are tied by siari rope cross-pieces of bamboo or saja. The central pole is the actual god, the two side-poles being simply intended to enable his two or four bearers to raise him and carry him about. This central pole has a curious head called *koko* which resembles that of a snake or bird. At the junctions of the logs and cross-bars there are tufts of peacock feathers. Silver ornaments, symbols of the sun and moon and sometimes plain rupees, are nailed to the ends of the poles. Bands of silver may be hammered round them. Bells are hung round the 'neck'. Sometimes the Anga is two-headed: husband and wife live together. The clan-god of the Maravi at Phunder, who is called Karati Dokara, has two heads each with a hooded cobra nailed to it. So too the Anga at Bhanpuri, Son Kuar, is two-headed. Sometimes the Anga's wife is made in the form of a pole and placed upon him.

The Anga is kept in a special shrine apart from the other gods and is either suspended by ropes from the roof or placed on a bamboo support a couple of feet above the ground. When it is taken abroad or goes to live for a time in someone's house, a special stand must be made for it. The Anga usually has a *jiwa* or soul. At Phunder it is a piece of iron carefully preserved under the sacrificial stone in front of the shrine. In Semurgaon the soul of Lingo is a bit of iron wrapped in a grass bundle and hung above its body. Sometimes the soul goes abroad of its own accord and has to be replaced with appropriate offerings. At Chingnar, the soul of Son Kuar goes to hunt at night and in the morning feathers are found scattered about his shrine.

When in use, the Anga is kept sometimes very casually. In Dongrigura, I saw one hanging from the roof in a corner of the granary belonging to the Gaita. At Magbeda, it was lying crookedly in a broken-down hut in the Gaita's garden. The two-headed Anga, Son Kuar-Maoli, at Bhanpuri, is kept in the Gaita's *bari*-enclosure in a little shed. At Karanji the Naitami Anga, Pila Kuar, is kept in the Gaita's house.

The Anga often has one or more attendants in the form of wooden horses slung from the roof beside it. These horses are taken out at the clan festivals and the mediums dance wildly with them. There are two horses attending the Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon. The shrines may be adorned with the skulls of animals killed in the latest ceremonial hunt, with decorated poles or sticks used by the god at festivals, and with symbols of the god's children.

For the Anga is very like a human being. It marries and has children. It has relations both inside and outside the clan. Some of the older gods have very large families. Lingo Pen's brothers, nephews and other relatives are enshrined and worshipped all over the north of the State. The process of

[1] The famous Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon is made of saja, for it was this tree he kicked as he escaped unhurt from his great ordeal.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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776
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multiplication is accelerated by the Anga's polygamous habits. The son of an Anga may itself be an Anga, or it may take the form of a Gutal—a long pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the top, or a Lath—a decorated flag attached to a bamboo staff.

The manufacture of an Anga is an elaborate and dangerous business. It is a necessary one because new gods are born from time to time, and the old gods wear out. There is a general idea that an Anga 'dies' every three or four generations. When this happens it leaves its mortal frame and troubles its clansmen until they make it a new one. Sometimes it expresses its will by burning down its shrine—when this happens everything is consumed, but the god itself is unharmed. Sometimes it attacks the village cattle in the form of a tiger. Sometimes it plagues the Gaita with appalling dreams.

The actual making of the god is unusual and interesting; it reveals the logical and straightforward working of the Muria mind. Once it is admitted that the Anga is a sort of person with like passions to ourselves, the rest follows. I will give some typical accounts from villages in the north of the State.

In Kokori the clan-priest told me that when an Anga gets very old and tired, it is taken to a river and 'cooled' by being thrown into the water. The clan-priest prays to the Yer Kanyang, 'Now it is in your charge, you must care for it'. After a time the old Anga sends a dream to the priest and the villagers decide to make a new one. They have to go to another priest of a clan which stands in a marriageable relationship to the Anga's clan and he takes them to a suitable tree. He embraces it, and if his hands meet round the trunk it is a good omen, and an engagement is celebrated.

The following year in the month of Magh they again go to the same priest who offers rice to the tree and says, 'Now we are going to take you away'. He goes round it with a thread, winding it seven times, and then cuts it down. As he is cutting it, he gives the tree liquor from time to time 'in case it should get tired'. They take the wood home, and induce some old man to make the Anga. When it is ready they take it to the river and make offerings to the Yer Kanyang. Every Anga has an umbilical stump with a cord attached and the father's sister of the clan-priest must cut this cord and throw it into the water. Then they bathe the god to purify it after the cutting of the cord. At last it is taken to its temple and a young bull is sacrificed.

Another interesting account comes from Korenda, where the Anga of Budha Dokara and Dokari Deo, the clan-gods of the Partabi and Wadde clans in that area, are made every few generations. The preliminary rites are performed as elsewhere, but later, just before the visiting clan come to fetch the wood for their Anga, the Gaita of the Bhatgaon *bhum* (whence the wood must be taken) goes to the path by which they will come and buries seven eggs at intervals along it.

After the visitors have cut and dressed the wood, and are preparing to go home, they whistle loudly. The Gaita and villagers of Bhatgaon are waiting for the signal, and at once come out to catch them in a sort of game of hide-and-seek. The visitors dash for home, but if one of them is unlucky enough to break one of the buried eggs, it turns into a tiger which destroys their cattle.

When the Korenda people get home, they cut the tree into two, the upper half to be used for Budha Dokara and the lower for Dokari Deo. A special enclosure is made near the shrine of the now exhausted clan-god, and the wood is left there until someone comes forward who is willing to make the Anga. There is no limit to the interval; it may last any time from a few weeks to several years. When one or two very old men, who are not likely

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in any case to live much longer, come forward for the work, they set them to make the frames. When they are ready they put an egg on each Anga and make the old men sit 'to hatch them'. They have to sit there until their *jiwa* (souls) pass from their bodies into the gods. They know when this happens because the Anga begin to shake and tremble of their own accord. Directly this happens, the members of both clans bring a cow or bull and sacrifice it. The old men climb down from their perches and the Gaita breaks the eggs before the gods.

Both Anga now start swinging and are carried on the shoulders of four Siraha-mediums. After the usual dance they are placed in their shrines.

But the two old men who made them, and whose souls have passed into their frames, die within a few days.

It is obvious, therefore, that it is highly dangerous to make an Anga. In Korenda at the present time the process of god-making has been delayed, although long overdue; for there is no old Partabi or Wadde willing to take the risk. It is generally said that such men will die within a year; if they do not they are regarded as exceptionally lucky. But their life thereafter is blind and shrunken, miserable to themselves and a heavy charge on their relations. Thus in Kabonga, Malsai made a new Anga and lived for four years before he died. But it is said that for the last three years of his life, he was a senile and helpless figure, longing for the death that was denied him.[1]

Repairs to the Anga, which are made every twelve or fifteen years, are less dangerous, but they too should only be undertaken by old men.

The Anga has various functions. Its primary function, of course, is that of god of the clan, keeping its scattered members together and attracting them to its worship. It is honoured at the great clan festivals held once a year in the *pen-rawar* and it may also be taken out to visit the shrines of related clan-gods. At a big clan-festival and at the great Mandai commercial festivals at Jagdalpur, Dantewara, Kondagaon and elsewhere sometimes a dozen or more of these Anga may be present. The procedure is generally the same. The Anga is worshipped with various offerings; it is taken down to the river and immersed in water, it is then anointed with oil and carried on the shoulders of its bearers; it is 'exercised' by dancing and playing with the other gods. At these festivals I have often watched the Anga attended by a dozen lesser gods, a crowd of drummers and gong-beaters and a vast company of boys and girls, men and women, going round and round the sacred clearing in procession. This is the Pen Karsita or Sport of the Gods.

Incest within the clan is regarded as specially insulting to the Anga and before the guilty can be forgiven offerings must be made to it. If they do not do this the offenders' bodies will swell and their eyes burst. They will be buried apart from the other members of the family or clan, and their children will be given to the despised Lohar in marriage.

As god of the clan the Anga is specially interested in marriages, and in many villages the Muria place one of the marriage crowns upon it or in its shrine. Often too it is concerned in death ceremonies. The memorial menhirs of

[1] An old report, by Captain MacPherson, on the Kond refers to one of their destructive deities. 'It is firmly believed that the tree under which the deity is placed must die; that the water in which he is laid must be dried up; that the priest in his service cannot expect to survive four years.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 20. When the Kiwai Papuans erect a man's house (*darima*), an old couple perform the proper ceremonies and die soon after. 'There seems to be an understanding that the endowment of the house with its various magical properties has consumed their vitality.' —G. Landtmann, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 22.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

members of the clan should be erected, if possible, in its neighbourhood. At Phunder there is a bamboo bundle containing a small earthen pot hanging above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any Maravi dies his relatives carry his *jiwa* there, open the bamboo bundle and sacrifice a chicken above it, allowing the blood to fall into the pot. This means that the soul of the dead man will henceforth live in the pot hanging above his clan-god.

Another important function of the Anga is to serve as a means of detecting witches, breach of tribal taboo, theft or even to discover loss of property. At the end of 1940 I witnessed an interesting witch-hunt at Palki in the Narayanpur Tahsil.

On 16 November 1940, Aitu, the Muria headman of Palki, bought eight annas worth of Court Fee stamps and affixed them to an application to the Tahsildar of Kondagaon, complaining that in his village the animals were dying, people were falling sick and crops were failing, and asking for the services of the Anga Deo at Bara Dongar to discover what witch, magician or malignant ghost or deity was responsible. On his paying five rupees into the Treasury the Tahsildar issued *parwāna* instructing the priest in charge of the god to take it to Palki (but to no other village) in order to discover and thus cure the trouble.

On the 18th, Aitu reached the shrine at Bara Dongar, and almost immediately the party set out. There was Deo Singh, the hereditary Halba priest of the god, four Muria bearers to carry it and a 'Dhurwa' priest, a Muria specially attached to the god's service. In two days they reached Palki and camped in a little shed of branches outside the village, placing the god on a rough bed of logs and branches in a separate hut.

There Deo Singh told me about this famous Anga. His name was Narsingnath Deo and he was born at Amgaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana. His father was Mong Raj, who now lives at Paralkot, his mother Devni Dokari of Antagarh. His younger brother is the Pat Deo who now lives at Jagdalpur and was taken there in the time of Raja Bhairon Deo to hunt witches. Here, of course, Deo Singh was talking in theological language: actually the Raja, hearing of the fame of the Anga in the wilds, had a copy made and installed in the palace at Jagdalpur. For some time the custom was to bring the original god from Jagdalpur and send the copy to take its place; but in time this custom was dropped and today the Anga in the palace acts independently of its prototype.

Raja Bhairon Deo, continued my informant, at one time had both Anga at Jagdalpur. There was a great epidemic, and none of the gods was able to help, so the Raja ordered them all to be thrown into the Indrawati river. But only Anga Deo and his young brother Pat Deo floated on the surface and drifted to the shore. This made them very famous, but the Raja felt that it was wrong to keep two such gods in Jagdalpur and he sent the Anga Narsingnath to Bara Dongar, where he has since resided.[1]

This Anga is made of bel wood. Every three generations it is remade. It is decorated with a silver snake and a sun and moon in silver. The old worn-out images are thrown into a deep pond at Amgaon.

On the 20th of November the witch hunt at Palki began. It was only with great difficulty that I was able to be present, for the villagers concealed both the time and place of the ceremony, and in fact were sending me off in the

[1] For another account see W. V. Grigson's Introduction to my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), pp. x f. According to Grigson's information the Jagdalpur god was copied from the Narayanpur god.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and in front of the shrine a pile of old clay elephants, bulls and horses. And indeed I was told that the Anga used to live up on the hillside but was offended by the rough Muria habits and moved down to the plain where he

FIG. 26. A typical carved wooden pigeon often found in Muria shrines
Length 9½"

would not be offended by the sight of his worshippers eating beef. Here, in vivid symbol, was the god leading the hillmen down into the plains, from the open free hut to the enclosed house, to a reform of diet and a change of religious custom and the use of ephemeral images made by low-caste Hindu artisans.

There are two other small temples, both open sheds, to visit; both are for the Naitami clan. The first is for Paknabundin Matal, who is represented by a big stone, and the other for Tallur Muttai, the Village Mother, also represented by a stone. These four temples of the plain are not without their charm; set among great trees they look towards the grim rocks of the hills above them. But they have not the hard clear light and freedom of the shrines that brave the rocks and mountain.

VI. THE MURIA PRIESTHOOD

Who are the priests that officiate at these temples? In a sense every Muria is a priest; for the head of each family tends the dead of his house and can make offerings to his personal gods, but there are priestly families of greater or less influence which have performed the worship of the gods for generations.

Notable among these is the priest of the clan-god or Anga, often now called the Pen-Pujari or Pen-Gaita. In the Chota Dongar and Partabpur areas, he is called the Pen-Waddai. He is also known as the Dhurwa, which is the name of a tribe in the south of the State and possibly has associations with the Dhur Gond. This use of a tribal name as a priestly title is paralleled by the use of the word Baiga to denote a village-priest. It suggests that the Dhurwa tribe like the Baiga is regarded by the people as of great antiquity.

Then there is the priest of the *bhum* or earth. The Kaser-Gaita (knife-priest), also known as the Bhum-Gaita or Mati-Gaita (earth-priest), has the duty of offering sacrifices to the earth and keeping the village free of disease. It is he who must go to the fields and clearings when they are prepared and must make offerings at sowing time and harvest.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are
285 allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
614

[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. 771
Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should 776
be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan- 614
priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of 615
phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other 614
tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken [177] down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series 796
of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

618 Orcha. Ultimately the new colonies may spread, and they may
776 feel the need of clan-gods and petition the clan-priests of the areas from which they migrated to give them a son of the old clan-god; but meanwhile the majority of them get on quite well without him and his clan-gatherings, and find the Village Mother and village ceremonies quite enough for their needs. If in time they ask for a clan-god of their own, they are likely to get some additional name to distinguish them from the main section of their clan, and ultimately all mention of the original clan name will be omitted.

Special features of the Clan-god among the Bison-horn Marias

It was remarked on page 194 that for each clan of the Gonds of the British India districts bordering on Nagpur there is or was a *Pen-kara* or Holy Circle under a *saja* tree somewhere in the province. If he has not become detribalized, every Gond should visit this once a year with offerings, or at least should pay sacrificial fines there on the birth of a child, on being released from handcuffs, on readmission to the community after some social lapse, and so on; and there ultimately his soul should be brought after death, to be united to the clan Departed. The villages are there no longer the *bhum* of particular clans, and many clans and god-groups may be represented in one village. Members of the clans are scattered far and wide over the province, and in one Nagpur Gond village you may find representatives of clans with the *Pen-kara* of their gods at places so far apart as Berar, Chhindwara, Lanji or Chanda. Many have settled far from their *Pen-kara* for so many generations that the fatigue of the long journey has been avoided more and more by each new generation till in the end it has been given up, and many of the present time cannot even say where it is.

776 To this kind of attitude some of the Bison-horn Marias are
618 beginning to come. There are many clan-areas[1] in Bijapur and
615 Dantewara tahsils and in Kutru zamindari on both sides of the river Indrawati which, as indicated in the ethnic map on page 40, are peopled by clans once purely Hill Maria in language and culture, but now modified in both by contact either with Bison-horn Maria

[1] Examples are Chikatraj Pen of Kutru, the god of the Gota clan of Kutru, Borje, Bhirabhatti, Pillur, Sappimarka, Kakler, Gattapalli, Mendri, Udru villages; Kuwo-Gundo Pen, god of the Majje and Wadde clans of Bodametta, Kodepalli, Majje-Mendri, Kungler, Madhepar, Dudepalli, and Rengawaya in Kutru zamindari and of Kounde (where the god is kept and the clan-priest lives) and other villages in Chanda District; Wachami Mo'itto Pen, of Markanar in Kutru zamindari, god of the Wachami clan of Markanar, Irkapal, Karkelli, Kumharmeta and Bodeli in Kutru Zamindari and some adjacent Wachami clan villages in Ahiri zamindari; Wange Muri Pen, of Dhanora in Bijapur tahsil, god of the Kuriyami clan of several villages around Dhanora and Thoinar and Pharsegarh sub-zamindaris of Kutru.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

or with Doria neighbours. The clearest sign these retain of their Hill Maria origin is the retention of separate clan-areas, clan-gods and *modul-maddai* clan-priests for each large clan (*pari* or *katta*) or pair or trio of closely related clans, as distinct from the Bison-horn Maria institution of one *pen* or clan-god for each of the five groups of clans or phratries (*tarr* or *kutmam*) and every clan (*katta*) included in it, without any fixed phratry-area. On the other hand, each village in the true Bison-horn tracts is said to be the *bhum* of the clan (*katta*) of the *perma* who originally founded it, and, as it is the *bhum* of his clan, he alone can officiate for the village at the ceremonies and sacrifices before the Village Mother, the Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo, Bhu-deo and Bhu-Devi, and the other forms under which the Earth is worshipped at the different agricultural ceremonies.

The Bison-horn country is extensive and, compared to the Hill Maria country, well populated. The villages forming the *bhum* of even individual *katta* clans may be miles apart, while a village that is the *bhum* of a clan in phratry A may be surrounded by villages that are the *bhum* of clans in phratries B, C, D and E for miles before there is another village of a clan of phratry A. Further, though a village may be the *bhum* of the *perma's* clan, he may easily have only a few other householders of his clan in the village, but several of other kindred and affine clans. At Aranpur, most members of the big and small Marvi, the Hemla and the Oyami clans, all of which are included in the Marvi phratry, did not know the name of the clan-god of their phratry, but suggested vaguely that his *pen-rawar* might be in the Abujhmar hills or in Padar-raj, their name for the plateau around Jagdalpur. Some knew that the god's name was Handa Kosa Pen, and a few said that his *pen-rawar* was at Killepal, nearly sixty miles away, where the great western road from Jagdalpur to Bhopalpatnam approaches the passes descending to the Dantewara valley. At Killepal, however, I had not been shown Handa Kosa Pen; the village is the *bhum* of the Kuhrami clan, which gives its name to the Kuhrami phratry, and the clan members stated that they had no *pen-rawar* of their clan at Killepal, but that Hermraj Pen, their god, was, they had heard, in some village near Orcha in the Abujhmar hills. It was often agreed that a Maria should visit his Pen or clan-god every year in Aghan or Pand month (November-December) and offer a pig or a cock to the god at this annual *pen-jatra* or festival of the *pen*. At Aranpur a few of the older men said that they had long ago visited the Marvi clan-god Handa Kosa Pen at Killepal in their youth, but in recent years no one seemed to have been near. It was agreed that certain social offences could only be expiated by a visit and penal offering to the clan-god.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 614 615 The elders of the villages can actually often give the names of each of the gods whom they say that each of the five Bison-horn phratries worships: the Markami phratry worships Harma Pen; the Kuhrami phratry give varying names for their god, Hemraj Pen, Perambhoi (the name applied by the Dorlas to their corresponding Perambhoi phratry) or Banian Muttai; the Kawasi phratry worships Babo Herma Pen; the Marvi phratry Handa Kosa Pen; and the Sodi phratry Tul-Muttai Pen, whose *pen-rawar* is at Kamkanar in the Gangalur *pargana* in Bijapur tahsil, where Sodi Harma the *modul-waddai*, was regarded as the headman of all the surrounding Bison-horn villages. But other names are also given, such as Hirangraj, Hingaraj and Belraj for the Kartami clan, Hirmaraj for the Kawasi, Sodi, Markami and Marvi clans, and Hing-hunga and Mundaraj for the Beko and Kalmu clans. I have used the word 'clan' advisedly, because in this list some gods are shared by clans belonging to different phratries; thus Hirmaraj is shared by the Markami and Kartami clans of the Markami phratry and by the Sodi and Marvi clans of the Sodi and Marvi phratries, while of the worshippers of Hing-hunga and Mundaraj the Beko clan belongs to the Kuhrami phratry and the Kalmu clan to the Markami. Use Modia Pen of Ghotpal is restricted to the Lekami clan of that and surrounding villages, which is now considered part of the Kuhrami phratry. Other local log-gods will be found in the heart of the Bison-horn country at such places as Dugeli; some may be the true *pen-rawars* of the phratries, but I have been unable to verify this.

614 615 173 The whole position is, it must be admitted, somewhat confused, but it would be wrong to expect to systematize it. The same confusion will be found again over the totems of the phratries and clans; there are two phratries with the tortoise as totem, and inside the same phratry will be found clans with totems of their own or the totem of other phratries, or no totem at all. The traditions of the Bison-horn Marias all point to their having descended southwards from the Abujhmar hills to colonize their present country, and the presence in their midst of ruined Hindu cities at Dantewara, Barsur, and Bhairamgarh, of traces of forgotten kingdoms at Tirathgarh and Kakonda, and of isolated villages of Jhari Telangas descended from the subjects of early medieval Telugu kings, point to the truth of the traditions. We have seen how new clans are forming to-day on the southern fringes of the Abujhmar hills, and how the Bison-horn culture is gradually absorbing the southernmost Hill Maria clans, which have, however, not fitted themselves fully as yet into the five-phratry organization, but retain their own clan-gods. The five phratries are named after five principal clans,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the names of which recur not only among Murias in north Bastar, but also among all the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Possibly strong bodies of these clans were the original colonizers, and with the growth of population in their new surroundings have either thrown off sub-clans or absorbed clans newly descending from the hills or acquiring their culture. It is not surprising that settlers in the tracts farthest from their first settlement should find it difficult to worship at the original shrines of their *pen*, and should either forget them, or here and there make fresh log-gods for themselves, perhaps sharing them with other adjacent clans not necessarily of their own phratries, just as they have learnt, unlike the Hill Marias, to share with other brother-clans and wife-clans village lands which are the *bhum* of their own clan.

The cult of the *pen* log-god of the clan is thus, as may be expected, considerably weaker among the Bison-horn than among the Hill Marias. Often he is neglected almost entirely in the annual feasts, or vaguely associated with the Departed in the expressions *pen-hanal* or *dhumo-deo* used of the ancestors. Where there is a log-god, he tends to be regarded merely as one of the local godlings that are becoming as numerous among the Bison-horn Marias as among the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Where there is none, occasionally at festivals before the Village Mother or other manifestations of the Earth a stone or two may be set up in his name under a *saja* tree and receive its share of the sacrificial blood and libations. It is not surprising that, therefore, the *waddai* of the clan-god is more purely a medium among the Bison-horn Marias, and less of a clan-priest than he is among the Hill Marias, and that most Bison-horn villages have at least one *waddai* who may be possessed not only by the clan-god but by other godlings also; even when he is attached definitely to a log-god at a festival, he may be possessed by him and give oracle on his behalf, but the *perma* of the village is the principal celebrant, and the *waddai*, when not possessed, degenerates into a mere *mantram*-reciting assistant of the *perma*.

Often there is no hut-temple for any deity among the Bison-horn Marias except one for Danteshwari Mai or Maoli or Mata, whose cults have spread from the Hindu temple of Dantewara, and in time will reach every village of Bastar. The Earth cult, however, remains, as among the Hill Marias, the essential cult. Its chief form is thus the cult of the Village Mother, called Tallin Ochur in the Bison-horn dialect. For all the village ceremonies there is a fixed plot of land in a field belonging to the *perma* and known as the *bhum-jaga*, *hadri-bera* or *wijj-erku*: *bhum-jaga*

The Village Mother and other gods among the Bison-horn Murias

1: Grigson G-5 (192?-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The only writers who seem to have touched on the social organization of the Bastar Marias before are Russell and Hiralal, who said (III, pp. 64-6) :— 114 614

Russell and Hiralal, on the social organization of the Bastar Marias

'The Gond rules of exogamy appear to preserve traces of the system found in Australia, by which the whole tribe is split into two or four main divisions, and every man in one or two of them must marry a woman in the other one or two. . . .

'Among the Gonds, however, the subdivision into small exogamous sects has been also carried out, and the class system, if the surmise that it once existed be correct, remains only in the form of a survival, prohibiting marriage between agnates, like an ordinary sept. In one part of Bastar all the septs of the Maria Gonds are divided into two great classes. There are ninety septs in A Class and sixty-nine in B Class, though the list may be incomplete. All the septs in A Class say that they are Bhaiband or Dadabhai to each other, that is in the relation of brothers, or cousins being the sons of brothers. No man of Class A can marry a woman of any sept in Class A. The septs of Class A stand in the relation of Mamabhai or Akomama to those of Class B. Mamabhai means a maternal uncle's son, and Akomama apparently signifies having the same maternal grandfather. Any man of a sept in Class A can marry any woman of a sept in Class B. It will thus be seen that the smaller septs seem to serve no purpose for regulating marriage, and are no more than family names. The tribe might just as well be divided into two great exogamous clans only. Marriage is prohibited between persons related only through males; but according to the exogamous arrangement there is no other prohibition, and a man could marry any maternal relative. Separate rules, however, prohibit his marriage with certain female relatives, and these will be given subsequently (ibid., p. 72). It is possible that the small septs may serve some purpose which has not been elicited, though the inquiry made by Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath[1] was most careful and painstaking.

'In another part of Bastar there were found to be five classes, and each class had a small number of septs in it. The people who supplied this information could not give the names of many septs. Thus Class A had six septs,[2] Class B five, Classes C and D one each, Class E four, and Class F two. A man could not marry a woman of any sept belonging to his own class. 114 615

'The Muria Gonds of Bastar have a few large exogamous septs or clans named in Hindi after animals, and each of these clans contains several subsepts with Gondi names. Thus the *Bakaravans* or Goat race contains the Garde, Kunjami, Karrami and Vadde septs. The *Kachhimvans* or Tortoise race has the Netami, Kawachi, Usendi and Tekami septs. The *Nagvans* or Cobra race includes the Maravi, Potari, Karanga, Nurethi, Dhurwa and others. Other exogamous races are the Sodi (or tiger), Behainsa (buffalo), Netam (dog in Gondi), Chamchidai (bat) and one or two more. In this case the exogamous clans with Hindi names would appear to be a late division, and have perhaps been adopted because the meaning of the old Gondi names had been forgotten, or the septs were too numerous to be remembered.'

As will be seen in this chapter, the part of Bastar where five 'classes' were found was presumably the Bison-horn country and its cultural extension, the Dorla country, where there are definitely five phratries each containing varying numbers of clans. The tract in which, according to Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath's enquiry, the 114 618

[1] Diwan of Bastar for many years.

[2] Six classes, A to F, are given, though the text speaks of five, the actual number among both Bison-horn Marias and Dorlas. But so few 'septs' are mentioned, nineteen as compared to the fifty in my list of phratries, that the enquiry must have been incomplete.

[See cat. 116, p. 824. — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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The theory of two moieties therefore completely breaks down, and it is obvious that we are confronted by something approaching phratries. The Bison-horn Marias call their groups *kutmam* or *tarr* and their clans *katta*; but the Hill Marias know neither of the two former words, and, though some towards the south of the hills understand *katta*, they use the word *pari* that is in vogue for this purpose among all the Central Provinces Gonds. It is possible that they have some word for groups of clans, but I was unsuccessful in trying to get at it. They have some conception, however, of groups. The Usendi, Wadder, Katlami and Jaterom consider themselves brothers; Wikir Hunga, the god of the Usendis and Wadder, is a younger brother of Pat Raja, god of the Jaterom, and Pandu Hunga, god of the Katlamis, is the next brother after Wikir Hunga and has a Jate *waddai*; the Deda clan of Kurmer may also belong to the group, as its god Nule Harma is the youngest brother of Pat Raja. To the group would also belong the smaller clans of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* that are *dadabhai* to the Usendi, the Korami, Dodi, Deda and Parsal. Similarly the Jugho (*alias* Karme) clan says that the Dhurwa clan is its elder and the Dolwar clan its younger brother; their marriages are all consistent with membership of the same group, which possibly also includes the other Chhota Dongar clans of the list not mentioned above as *dadabhai* to the Usendi group, and the Yete clan of Kutru; all these are definitely *dadabhai* to the Jughalor. The Bardal, Farsal, Gotal, Nughoti, Tapa and Hichami clans of the north appear to be a group, to which would be added the Dughalor and Karangalor had they not become Murias and decided to discontinue the give and take of daughters in marriage with the Hill Marias. Of the grouping of the Kutru clans it is difficult to speak; but judging from marriages the Parllo, Jata, Kohka and Ark clans are a group of *dadabhai*, and *akomama* to another group consisting of the Boter, Wachami, Mohanda, Oyami, Mohke, and Pungati. The former group appears to be *dadabhai* to the Usendi group, and to be differentiated from it only by the fact that its members live in the Kutru zamindari, while the Usendi group is practically confined to the Antagarh tahsil. In Mangnar there is definitely a Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group, while the Marvi may belong to the same group as the Marvi phratry of the Bison-horn Marias and may include the small Alami and Nonde clans of Mangnar. The Gumelor of Barsur Mar seem to be in a group of their own so far as most of the Hill clans are concerned. The chief clans ungrouped in this tentative grouping are the Padal of Padalibhum and the Jati of Jatwara; both possibly come into the great Jughalor group.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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It should be clear from what has been said that these groups or phratries are not proved, but are a hypothesis that does explain observed facts, which cannot possibly be squared with the theory of two moieties. That theory is the less likely when it is remembered that amongst all the Gonds of the Central Provinces it is usual to find phratries, whether the simple totem-phratries of the Bison-horn Marias of Bastar or the three-god, four-god, five-god, six-god and seven-god phratries of the Chanda, Nagpur and Chhindwara districts. Russell and Hiralal have already been quoted as saying that there are similar totem phratries among the Murias. But one must not necessarily expect to find the same number (five) of phratries among the Hill Marias; they perhaps are not conscious of having any phratries at all, and the groups are only the result of proximity and convenience, tempered by the accidents of the political geography of the hill country. There are no signs at all of totems for these suppositious groups, like those shown in the list of Bison-horn clans, and existing among the Murias; the Usendi will not eat or keep goats, and the Parllo, though they tend goats for Telis, will not eat them or drink their milk. The Kohkalor will not touch or fell the marking-nut tree (*kohka-marra*; *Semecarpus anacardium*) or its fruits. The Yete are called after the crab (*yete*), but they eat crabs. The Neghal are called after the panther (*neghal*), but the reason seems to be that when they founded their village a panther was killed at the entrance to it, the panther now commemorated by three stones (see page 154). The Alami have the *alam* or chameleon as totem, and salaam gravely any chameleon they may meet. But the reverence paid by the Jaterom to the brooms of *jate* grass used to sweep their god's shrine and by the Hukur to the ladle that they use to dole out the sacrificial rice cooked at the same shrine are acts akin to the annual worship paid by all Hindu artisans to the tools of their craft. The other things mentioned in the totem column in the list of hill clans in the appendix are not totems, but explanations of the origins of the names of the clans concerned. It is thus clear that traces of totemism among the Hill Marias are very slight, and affect individual clans, not groups. There is no connexion at all between totemism and the taboos, nor does it figure in the cult of the clan-god.

It was suggested on page 205 that the five major clans from which the five Bison-horn phratries take their names might have originated from the migration of strong bodies of each of those clans from the Abujhmar hills, in the same way that even now bodies of clans like the Jughalor and the Gumelor are beginning to occupy deserted lands of forgotten or dwindling clans in Bhairamgarh Mar, and that each of these five major clans split up into smaller clans,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

each new clan, however, retaining to some extent its membership of the original clan, the name of which became the generic name for it and its daughter-clans. The process can be seen at work in the hills; the Tokalor and Hukur have clearly split off from the Jaterom, while the Usendi group must at some time have split away from the Jaterom, as their clan-gods are the younger brothers of the Jaterom god Pat Raja, and the Katlami god Pandu Hunga, the eldest of these younger brothers, is served by a Jate *waddai* (clan-priest). It does look as though there may have been an original two-moiety system, which has expanded into a group system merely because as colonization proceeded strict adherence to the rule of taking a wife from the other moiety proved impossible owing to distances and bad communications. For the emigrant clans who colonized the Bison-horn country, which could support a far larger population than the hills, it would be particularly necessary to allow a wider range of choice than possible under two-moiety exogamy. This is secured if a man in phratry A can take a wife from phratry B, C, D or E.

Bison-horn phratries and clans

So we have the phatry and clan organization of the Bison-horn Marias. The list in Appendix II shows nine clans in the Marvi phratry, ten in the Kuhrami, three in the Sodi, twenty-one in the Markami and eight in the Kawasi, fifty-one altogether, as compared with the nineteen of Russell and Hiralal. The list mentions six other clans whose phratry I did not ascertain. Like the Muria phratries mentioned by Russell and Hiralal, these phratries are often described as the *bans*, a Hindi word for race, of their totems; the Marvi phratry in most of the Bison-horn country is the *Bakrabans* or Goat race, and in Sukma and the south the *Naguans* or Cobra race; the Kuhrami phratry is the *Kadiaribans* or Cuckoo race; the Sodi phratry is the *Baghbans* or Tiger race; and both the Markami and the Kawasi phratries are *Kachhimans* or Tortoise races. Almost exactly the same phratries with the same subordinate clans are found among the Dorla Koitor of the south; but they have other names for the phratries, called after the *yelopi* or *valpu* god of the phratry, only one of whom, Perambhoi, after whom the phratry corresponding to the Bison-horn Kuhrami or Cuckoo race is called, is even known to the Bison-horn Marias.

There are certain peculiarities. Although clans belong to a phratry with a certain totem, they sometimes have either no totem or a totem of their own, which may be the same as the totem of one of the other phratries, or one peculiar to itself. The Hemla clan of the Marvi or Goat phratry has the tortoise as totem; the Kalmu clan of the Markami Tortoise race has the goat as totem; and the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615 618 Poriami clan of the Kuhrami or Cuckoo phratry has the buffalo, which has supplanted the tiger as the totem of the Sodi or Tiger phratry, since tigers so far forgot themselves as to kill and eat some men of the phratry. In the Cuckoo phratry two clans, the Kartami and the Kuhrami (which gives its name to the phratry), have the *karot* or hornbill as totem, while the Kunjami clan has the *kunje* or screech-owl. In all these cases it is the clan totem that matters, not the phratry totem; the Hemla clan will kill goat or cobra, the Kartami and Kuhrami the cuckoo, and the Kalmu the goat. Some clans have no totem of their own, but have no scruples about touching, killing or eating the totem of their phratry; examples are the Tamo clan in the Goat phratry, the Oika clan in the Tiger or Buffalo phratry, and the Birya or Big Markami, the Gonche, the Miriyami, the Nupo and the Tati clans in the Markami Tortoise race. Two conclusions follow. The first is that certain clans in the phratry, those with different totems, probably did not split off from the parent clan of the phratry, but were independent clans grouped into the phratry at a later stage, probably owing to contiguity. The second thing is that the association of the totemic animal or plant with phratries and clans is so far from universal and plays so small a part in the life of the whole tribe that it is either something new, borrowed from another culture, but not really assimilated, or else a relic of something that has decayed with antiquity. It is remarkable that the Birya or Big Markami clan should not have any scruples about the tortoise, the totem of the Markami or Tortoise phratry, while the Chudala or Small Markami clan is very particular about it. Yet it is only of the tortoise totem that there is any [773] legend; there is said long ago to have been a great flood, which the brothers Markam and Kawasi were unable to cross until a tortoise came and took them on its back.[1] Some, however, do go [784] out of their way to avoid touching or harming their totem, particularly the Kawasi Tortoise phratry; blindness is the punishment which eating the totem is said to involve. I was told by a Kawasi

[1] This legend of the origin of the tortoise totem is one of the very few traces (the only trace that I have met) among Bastar Marias of the Ramcharsa legend of the origin of the Gonds. In the version of this given in Trench's *Gondi Grammar*, Vol. II, all the ancestors of the Gonds were stopped on their way to worship the Great God by a great flood, 'whereupon in haste they plunged into the river, and one caught hold of a Tendu log, another a Sirras, another a palm tree, another a teak tree, another an iguana, another a tiger, thus each seizing something or other, they forded the river. Having crossed the river, they assembled near a Saj tree, and ate the new rice that ripens in hollows, and drank, and asked each other, "What did you catch hold of when you crossed?" They said, "I for my part seized a palm tree and forded on it, I a teak tree, and I a tiger." Addi-rawan-pariol says, "Then your *pari* will be the Palm tree, yours the Teak, and yours the Tiger." Thus *paris* were found for all of them

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

I was told by a Kawasi
informant that a bride coming from a clan with a different totem to a Kawasi household was made to eat her father's totem as a sign of abandoning that totem's race or clan; but I could never verify this. There is a definite ceremony for transferring a re-marrying widow from her first to her second husband's clan; but this has nothing to do with the totem.

There is nothing to prevent a man in the Markami Tortoise phratry taking a wife from the Kawasi Tortoise phratry. In fact, if totems were of real significance, it is hard to see why there should be these two mutually exogamous Tortoise phratries. Nor is there anything to bar them intermarrying with the Hemla Tortoise clan in the Goat phratry; the same applies to the Goat and Buffalo phratries and the Goat and Buffalo clans in other phratries.

Another point that suggests that the phratry has arisen as a convenience for enlarging the matrimonial field is that each village is regarded as the *bhum* (earth or soil) of the individual Bison-horn clan that first settled it, not of the phratry. To give a few examples, Massenar is the *bhum* of the Atrami clan, Lendra and Singwaram of the Barse clan, Mandimarka of the Dodi clan, Durandarbha and Gumadasaka of the Hemla clan, Dugheli and Pharaspal of the Kalmu clan, Birya Gudra, Etipal and Bhusaras of the Kartami clan, Berma and Karrigudem of the Kunjami clan, Kondasaoli, Komarguda, Kodmair, Ursangal, Tetam and Koriras of the Birya Marvi, Chudala Gudra, Tarlaguda and Banjepalli of the Chudala Marvi, Palnar, Phulpan and Singaram of the Vetti. Each clan thus has villages that are far apart; there is no contiguity of all the villages that are the *bhum* of one clan, and therefore no compact clan-area as in the Abujhmar hills. Nor is there any phratry area; five contiguous villages may easily be the *bhum* of five clans each belonging to a different phratry. Even in the villages that are the *bhum* of one clan it is quite possible that the *perma* may be the only member of the clan in the village, and in every village there are settlements of all the clans with which the founder clan has intermarried, each clan that is big enough being allotted a separate quarter in the village for its houses, and clans of which there are only one or two representatives perhaps sharing a quarter with other clans of their phratry. Only a *perma* of the founder clan can mediate between the villagers and the Earth and Village Mother; and if that clan has retained its own clan-god, little heed is paid to the clan-god of the phratry or the parent-clan of the phratry. At the sacrifices to the Departed and the subsequent sacrificial meal at first-fruits ceremonies only the householder's *bhumkal* or fellow-clansmen may be present, not members of other clans in his phratry even. The division of the large Marvi, Markami and Sodi clans into

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

big and small clans of the same name is an old one, and, as the examples above show, the big and small clans have different villages as their *bhum*; the reality of their separation is further shown by such differences of custom as the Big Marvi clan making flat table-stones or *danya-kal* for their dead instead of the usual menhirs or *urashal* which the Small Marvi and all other clans except the Kuhrami erect for their dead, and as the different outlook of the Big and Small Markami to the tortoise totem of the Markami phratry.

Traditional origins of clan names

The chapter may be closed with examples of the traditional origins of certain Hill and Bison-horn Maria clan names, into which nothing totemic appears to intrude.

Gumalov	When their first village was founded the sky had become *gume* or overcast with clouds.
Gecha	The founder of the clan was a laggard or stay-behind (*gecha*).
Dolwar	Though Hill Marias, they make *dol* drums like the Bison-horn Marias.
Dhurwa	They walked in front of the clan-god like *dhurwas* preceding the Raja of Bastar in a procession.
Akkal	'Leafy': the founder was a great tree-climber.
Kallami	The 'borrow-pit' clan, diggers of borrow-pits for tank embankments.
Karma	The 'sunset' clan, because the founder was born at sunset (an alternative name for the Jughalor).
Kuhrami	The 'people of the mist' (*kuhra*), because on cold weather mornings they walk ahead of others to disperse the mist and heavy dew.

The examples are similar to those given by Russell and Hiralal (III, pp. 68-70) for the Gond clans of Betul District.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615
618

BISON-HORN MARIA PHRATRIES AND CLANS

Phratry	Totem	Clans	Totem
1. Mārvi	Goat (Dantewara Jagdalpur) Cobra (Sukma and Konta)	Bārse	
		Biryā Mārvi	
		Chudalā Mārvi	
		Dōdi	
		Hēmlā	Tortoise
		Kuppē	
		Oyāmi	
		Pēdāmi	
		Tamo	
2. Kuhrāmi or Kadiāri	Cuckoo (*kadiāri*)	Budādi	
		Gaddi	
		Kartāmi	Hornbill (*karoi*)
		Kuhrāmi (or Karāmi)	Do.
		Kunjāmi	Screech-owl (*kunje-pille*)
		Lēkāmi	
		Poriāmi	Buffalo
		Rawa	
		Veko	
		Wetti	
[1]3. Sōdi or Ōdi	Tiger	Biryā Sōdi	Buffalo
		Chudalā Sōdi	Do.
		Oikā	
4. Markāmi	Tortoise	Atāmi (or Atrāmi)	*Aira*, the flower of the *phul-bahari* grass
		Bālē	
		Bōtē	
		Bhōyāmi	
		Biryā Markāmi	
		Chudalā Markāmi	
		Dudhi	
		Dumo	
		Durro	
		Gomche	
		Kalmu	Goat
		Karte (or Kandte)	
		Kikder	
		Miriyāmi	
		Nendi	
		Nupo	
		Poyāmi	Buffalo
		Tātī (or Tāmti)	
		Tēlāmi	
		Tikder	
		Undāmi	

[1] The tiger was the original totem, and the clan is still spoken of as the tiger-race; but the tigers have broken the legendary rule that no tiger will attack a Sōdi, and the Sōdis retaliate by joining in tiger-beats and adopting the buffalo as their totem instead of the tiger.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615
618

Phratry	Totem	Clans	Totem
5. Kawāsi or Wanjāmi	Tortoise	Berṭā Dirdōd Kawāsi Muchāki Murāmi Padāmi Urve Wanjāmi	

The following six clan names have not been attributed to their phratries: Gonde, Kinke, Korsa, Punem, Rega, Savalam.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

541 656 Such iron knives or spurs as were tied on to the cock's legs were very small, and a Lahiri Maria criticized the usual theory that this way of increasing a cock's natural armament is cruel on the ground that if it meant a quicker death for the defeated cock it was merciful. All the headmen promised that if the ban on cock-fights were lifted they would frown on cash or grain betting, and, if we so desired, on the use of iron spurs and knives. Thoughtless officiousness such as that which stopped this favourite tribal pastime is only too typical of the lack of imagination with which officials, great and small, are apt to interfere with all that lends colour to aboriginal life.

615 618 114 Lahiri was one of the chief camps where I questioned the local Marias as to their clan organization, particularly the grouping of clans into phratries according to the number of *Chuddur penk* or Little Gods. I mentioned on pages 194-5 my doubts as to the traditional accounts of this god-grouping among the Chanda Marias. But these accounts go back to Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report. A somewhat confusing summary of his account, on page 101 of the *Gazetteer*, seems to imply that there is little difference between the god-grouping of the Raj-Gond, the other Gond tribes of Chanda. Lucie-Smith divided the Raj-Gonds into a four-god group, with the tortoise and crocodile totems, a five-god group with the iguana totem, a six-god group with the tiger totem, and a seven-god group with the porcupine totem: these groups were divided into what the *Gazetteer* calls 'houses or families, distinguished by their family name or *padi*', i.e. into what in this book have been called clans (*pari*), which numbered 28 among the Raj-Gonds, 24 among the Marias and 17 among the Dhurve Gond. Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, p. 66) say that in Chanda :—

> 'There are four main groups worshipping seven, six, five and four gods respectively, and each group contains ten to fifteen septs. A man cannot marry a woman of any sept which worships the same number of gods as himself. Each group has a sacred animal which the members revere, that of the seven-god worshippers being a porcupine, of the six-god worshippers, a tiger, of the five-god worshippers, the *saras* crane, and of the four-god worshippers, a tortoise. As a rule the members of the different groups do not know the names of their gods, and in practice it is doubtful whether they restrict themselves to the proper number of gods of their own group. Formerly there were three-, two-, and one-god worshippers, but in each of these classes it is said that there were only one or two septs, and they found that they were much inconvenienced by the paucity of their numbers, perhaps for the purposes of communal worship and feasting, and hence they got themselves enrolled in the larger groups. In reality it would appear that the classification according to the number of gods worshipped is being forgotten and the three lowest groups have disappeared.'

They suggested that this conjecture was supported by the fact that in Chhindwara and other localities only two large six-god and seven-god groups remained.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615 ●
618
114

The accounts over-simplify scattered data collected without concentrated field-enquiry. Even the *Gazetteer*, in a footnote to the passage quoted above from page 101, speaks of a group of three-god Marias having lately been verified in Lahiri. Shoobert[1] quotes the late Bishop Wood as having verified the existence of a group of three-god Marias in the Chanda villages of Lahiri and Beni-Gunda near the Bastar border of Chanda district, and enquiries which the Bishop had made for me in 1929 by the Rev. S. G. Patwardhan, the well-known Indian missionary priest of the Scottish Episcopal Church Mission at Ahiri, went further, as indicated on page 195, and established definitely that the Chanda Marias of Bidri, Yemla, Burgi,[2] Uddera and Kandodi had one three-god clan, six four-god, eight five-god, eight six-god and eight seven-god clans (31 clans against Lucie-Smith's 24). Russell and Hiralal are wrong even of Chhindwara district, where I verified some three-god clans (as in Nagpur district) and even a one-god and a no-god clan. Baron C. von Fürer-Haimendorf's forthcoming book on the Raj-Gonds of the Adilabad plateaux of Hyderabad will deal exhaustively with the god-grouping[3] of the Adilabad Gonds, whose social system is based on a system of four phratries (*saga*), the seven-god, six-god, five-god and four-god phratries. His conclusions there have been to some extent foreshadowed in his interesting article 'The Cult of the Clan Gods among the Raj-Gonds of Hyderabad', published in *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, 1945, pages 149-86. His field-work has been far more detailed and closer than any previous work among Raj-Gonds, and the whole body of myths which he has recorded as to these phratries or god-groups throws altogether new light on the origins and facts of Gond social organization. It badly needs to be supplemented rapidly by similar enquiries among all the sections of the Gonds not only in Chanda district, but also in all the Central Provinces and Berar districts and States where this god-grouping still persists. One is apt to assume that it is dying out or deteriorating rapidly in areas formerly known as British India, in contrast to areas such as Adilabad, which has never been under British rule, and has been till recently free from the detribalizing, hinduizing work of the schoolmaster, or as most of the Chanda Maria country. But the difference may be rather that the Gond of the more

[1] *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*, 1931, p. 334.

[2] I checked this at Burgi (*Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV3842) and discussed the whole question with Rev. Patwardhan at Ahiri: the 31 clans may be far from exhaustive.

[3] Haimendorf prefers to speak of 'seven-brother', 'six-brother' phratries, holding that his Raj-Gonds speak of a classification by the number not so much of *penk* (gods) as of *Wenk*, an almost untranslatable term meaning 'heroes', or 'divine ancestors'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615 618 114 174 60 618

advanced' areas further north, faced by Brahman ridicule of his culture, has more and more withdrawn into his shell and learnt to conceal the more intimate features of his tribal religion and culture.

Until we have before us the records of such systematized and widespread field-work it is impossible to form any reliable general theory of the origin of this god-grouping. My tentative view, so far as the Chanda Marias are concerned, for what it is worth, is that the god-grouping is a comparatively recent importation from their northern and western Gond (especially Raj-Gond) neighbours. As I have pointed out on pages 194-5, the Bastar Marias and Murias have neither god-grouping nor *chuddur penk*. I added that none of the Chanda Marias who had come to my camps in Bastar had these institutions. This may appear inconsistent with the definite proof of the existence at least of god-grouping among the Chanda Marias, as recorded from Lucie-Smith's time onwards, and verified by Bishop Wood and Rev. Patwardhan and in this tour of mine. But here again one must distinguish between the Chanda Marias of the hills above Lahiri and those of the plains and foothills. Those who came to my Bastar camps were all Chanda Hill Marias: those among whom god-grouping was verified were plains Marias. I camped for four days at Kuvakodi, a hill village high above Lahiri, and visited other hill villages close by both in Chanda and in Bastar. The Chanda Hill Marias are identical in culture with the Bastar Hill Marias, and like them had, at least at Christmas 1940, no god-grouping and no *chuddur penk*. The Hill Marias of Chanda in fact appear to be what the *Gazetteer*[1] describes as the Gaita sub-tribe of Gonds, and the speakers of the dialect referred to by it[2] and in the *Linguistic Survey* as Gattu, the language of the 'Kois or Gonds of the hills, especially in Sironcha', who 'are known as Gattu or Gotte Kois'; for it speaks of the Gaita Gonds as being 'almost alone in retaining the old Gondi custom, once universal, of building their village in two long barracks lying east and west facing each other about eighty feet apart' in which the married people dwell, while the bachelors, and in some villages unmarried girls also, have separate barracks. This description clearly fits the Hill Marias of Kuvakodi and adjacent hill villages, as it would do the villages of the neighbouring Hill Maria *parganas* of Bastar.

So we start with these, the most primitive of the Marias of Chanda, and find among them no trace of god-grouping or *chuddur penk*. Down the hill we come to Lahiri, and we find god-grouping (which, however, includes a three-god group absent among the Chanda and Adilabad Raj-Gonds), but, so far as I could ascertain, no *chuddur*

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 97, 98.
[2] Ibidem, p. 73.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

penk corresponding in number to the number of gods of the god-group, and apparently no domestic cult except of the Departed. As you go northwards beyond Surjagarh or north-westwards towards Chand the Marias begin to understand the meaning of god-grouping and of *chuddur penk*, but even there seemed to me—admittedly my enquiries were superficial—to have no such vital interest in these things as a typical Raj-Gond or Dhurve Gond. This would be explicable on a theory that this god-grouping was something gradually imposed, not necessarily deliberately, but by infiltration and imitation, by the Gonds of the ruling house of Chanda and the aristocratic Gond zamindars, under the feudal system grouped about the Chanda Maharaja, upon the whole 'Maria' substratum of the Gonds of Chanda. The Marias probably represent one or two early waves of Gond migration southwards or, at least the Hill Marias, an earlier pre-Gond race with Veddid, Malid or Munda affinities.[1] There are differences between Chanda Hill Maria and plains Maria speech, the former being as guttural as Bastar Hill Maria; but all Chand Marias speak a form of Gondi very different from the Gondi of the Raj and Dhruve Gonds of Chanda, which would support the view that the latter represent different waves of migration, later moreover in view of their very advanced social and political organization and their aristocratic elements: compare also the position of the Pardhan bards and musicians in Raj-Gond life with their rarity in Maria villages. It is probable also that the ancestors of many who now are called Raj-Gonds a few generations back were Maria. The *Gazetteer*[2] mentions that though Marias do not now (1909) intermarry with Raj-Gonds, the records of the Ahiri family show that they once did so. The very term Raj-Gond in my view, as expressed on page 36, arose from the process still common whereby as sections of aboriginal tribes became Hinduized or acquired political power they distinguish themselves from the main body of their original tribe, so as to fit into the caste system. There can be little doubt that as the Raj-Gond kingdom of Chanda grew in power leading local Gond or Maria headmen or elders who fitted into the social organization of the kingdom came to be regarded as Raj-Gond: compare also the discussion earlier in this Note[3] of the meaning of the term 'Maria' and its disappearance in Drug district terminology in very recent times.[4] What, therefore, could be more

[1] Comparable with, for example, the Kolams of Hyderabad and Berar, or the Hill Reddis of Hyderabad, Madras and Orissa. The late Bishop Wood on hearing Bastar Marias talk said that to him it sounded like Gondi spoken with Mandari accent and intonation. See also R. C. Roy on pp. 317-18.
[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909) p. 101
[3] P. 377.
[4] P. 378.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

natural than for the backward Marias aspiring to raise themselves to Raj-Gond status to copy gradually the Raj-Gond social organization? It is equally possible that *pari passu* the Raj-Gond ruler and nobles encouraged this: in all these semi-feudal, semi-tribal states and sub-states, as to this day in the States and zamindaris of Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the Maharajah of the State or the Rajah of the zamindari remains the final arbiter in caste matters, even often conferring the right to wear the sacred thread on communities actively hinduizing themselves. At Surjagarh and Jarawandi camps, various *Sendhias* and headmen practically admitted to me that god-grouping was not originally a Maria institution.[1]

From Lahiri there was a long climb of thirteen miles to the Hill Maria village of Kuvakodi, when we halted for four days, including Christmas Day. The trace led at first up the valley of the Lahiri river, then up the side valley of a small tributary, and so by an exceptionally steep ascent on to an undulating plateau, across which we reached Kuvakodi at dusk, our camp equipment all being carried on poles by Marias, whom on arrival we rewarded not only in cash but, in Bastar fashion, with salt and beads, and a feast of pork: the Marias sat ranged by clan and village, and those who killed and cooked the pork distributed to every man and child, and to the women of Kuvakodi, a portion of the meat off each joint of the pig. On the way up a slight detour took us through the small village of Gudumundi, and from Kuvakodi we visited Podewara and the Bastar village of Nelangari, some five miles from our camp.

Each day started with a parade of yaws patients for inoculation, all from Chanda villages: the Bastar Marias, who came in to see me and to join in the dancing each evening, looked tolerantly on, having themselves long before had the benefit of the Bastar anti-yaws parties.

The whole cultivation system of the Chanda Hill Marias is identical with the Bastar system described in Chapter VII of this book: it is, that is to say, *penda* cultivation and not what is generally known in the Central Provinces as *dahi*, or its Chanda plains variations of *khamori*, *jalapod*, *podu* or *sampod* (these terms will be explained later in this Note). There is the same broadcast sowing on the same kind of clearings of seed of all the minor millets and beans. The

[1] Hasmendorf in reviewing Shamrao Hivale's *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley* has pointed out that the fact that the Pardhans' clan organization is everywhere based on that of the local Gond, does not disprove the different origin of the two peoples, for there are many examples of other tribes adopting their Gond neighbours' system of phratries and clans. He instances from Chanda district and Hyderabad State not only the aboriginal castes as certain Maratha blacksmiths and brass-workers who have the same clan names as the Gonds, *Man in India*, Vol. XXVI, 1946, p. 231. Compare also the Kurak fishing tribe in Bastar, pp. 163-4.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

614 menhirs erected. This belief in the clan-*bhum*, whether original or adopted as a result of immigration and settlement, is still sufficiently alive to excite serious quarrels. It was a dispute over the rights to a clan-*bhum* that began the deadly feud between the sorcerer Singlu and the people of Almer.[1] Most of the inhabitants of Almer belong to the Kaudo clan (which has its *pen-rawar* at Kharkagaon) and they consider that the place is Kaudo-*bhum* since they first settled there. But Singlu is a Karanga: One day he said to the Kaudo priest, 'Let me erect memorial stones in your village; then my ancestors will live here and will help me and my family'. But the priest pointed out that the headquarters of the Karanga clan was at Kokori. 'If you bring your ancestors to this village, our gods will be neglected,' he said and refused to give him any *bhum*.

There was a similar conflict at Bandopal. The *bhum* here also belongs to the Kaudo clan which has erected a number of menhirs. Members of the Gaude clan, which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kaudo, demanded a share of the *bhum*, probably because it was more convenient for them than to go to Kharkagaon. After many quarrels and a long dispute, the Kaudo people agreed to let the Gaude clan erect its menhirs within their *bhum* territory, and they even made a Gaude Gaita assistant to the chief Kaudo Bhum-Gaita (priest of the soil). But many of the Kaudo clansmen objected to this and stopped erecting menhirs at Bandopal, going instead to Kharkagaon (where indeed they ought always to have gone). In the end the Gaude people decided to give up erecting menhirs at all because of the expense, and gave back the land to the Kaudo clan.

● 615 The clans fall roughly into five phratries, which are generally called by the Hindi word for 'race', *vans*. There is the Nagvans or Serpent Race, which includes a number of brother-clans, most of which have the cobra as their totem and cannot marry among themselves; the Kachhimvans or the Tortoise Race, the Bakravans or the Goat Race, the Baghvans or the Tiger Race and the Bodminkvans or the Fish Race.

All the clans within one phratry are *dādābhai*, or brothers, to one another, and all the members of each clan are *dādābhai* to each other. The word used to describe the relation of a clan into which you can marry your daughter is *akomāma*, a combination of the words *ako*, which means a man's mother's father, daughter's son and daughter's daughter (all of whom will belong to a different clan in a different phratry) and *māma*, which means a man's mother's brother, his father-in-law and his wife's brother's son (who will again, of course, be members of different clans).

[582 835] A chelik or motiari, therefore, who is seeking either amorous adventure or permanent domestic relationship, has to turn to members of the *akomāma* clans. Fortunately, owing to the wide distribution of the population, there are nearly always members of such clans in one's own ghotul or near at hand.

614 Before going on to describe the origin of the clans and the special rules that govern them, I will give in tabulated form a list of clans with their totems. It is not worth while adding to this an account of the *bhum* territory as this is too scattered and disorganized; the same is true of the clan-gods and *pen-rawar*.

[615] It will be noticed that in addition to the phratry totem each clan has its own totem which is sometimes different. The Sori clan has three different totems.

[1] See p. 204.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

CLAN	TOTEM	CLAN	TOTEM
	The Nag (Cobra) Phratry		
Buyi	Bullock	Maravi	Goat
Dhurwa	Goat	Kassi Maravi	Kassi tree
Duga	Cobra	Etikal Maravi	She-goat
Kalo	Cobra	Nei Nuroti	Dog
Karanga	Wild buffalo	Nuroti	Cobra
Kaudo	Goat and horse	Partabi	Goat
	The Kachhim (Tortoise) Phratry		
Kawachi	Tortoise	Parchapi	Tortoise
Komra	Tortoise	Poyami	Tortoise
Markami	Tortoise	Tekami	Tortoise
Naitami	Tortoise and dog		
	The Bakra (Goat) Phratry		
Gaude	Goat	Ori	Goat
Karhami	Goat	Uika	Kassi tree
Komra	Goat	Wadde	Goat and kassi tree
Kunjami	Goat		
	The Bagh (Tiger) Phratry		
Sori	Tiger, buffalo and bod fish		
Wadder	Buffalo		
	The Bodmink (Fish) Phratry		
Halami	Bod fish	Kuhrami	Kassi tree
Hurpundi	Bod fish	Kumoti	Kumot bird
Kachlami	Kassi tree	Usendi [1]	Usi bird

I have somewhat arbitrarily divided the clans into these five phratries, though we must not suppose that this is how the Muria usually thinks of them. In each area he is only concerned with the relatively small number of clans in his own neighbourhood. When Dhanuram, my Usendi assistant from north-west Narayanpur, went to Kondagaon Tahsil, the Kuhrami and other related clans did not recognize him as one of themselves, for they had never heard of the Usendi—which is a great clan of the Abujhmar and north-west Bastar.

[1] Russell and Hiralal put the Usendi clan in the Kachhimvans. Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 65.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

There are other clans which I have not been able to fit into the scheme of phratries—the Hurra clan with its clan-god Lingo Mudial at Semurgaon, the Karati with its *bhum* at Phunder, the Vetti which has the lizard as its totem and the Kodovetti which has the mongoose. These, of course, fit into the scheme of *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relationships of their own neighbourhood.

FIG. 15. Decorated Muria knife
Length 1' 5"

There are not many songs about the clans. I give one Jhoria Pata from Sirpuri.

Those who kindle fire in the field
are boys of the Uika clan.
How strong the Uika boys are!
Those who make a hearth with brinjals from the Panara's house are boys of the Maravi clan.
Those who sit on a gate and call it a horse are boys of the Maravi clan.
How strong the Maravi boys are!
Those who build a hearth of pig's droppings are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who sit to clean their teeth with a twig are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!
Those who blow the buffalo horn are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who throw fine rice on the road are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CLANS

Many of the clans derive their origin from some historic journey in the course of which a river had to be crossed. Others have local and special reasons for their origin.

This legend of crossing a river is known throughout central India. Many Gond, Baiga and Agaria trace their clans and the attachment of those clans to certain totems from this.[1] In Muria mythology we are sometimes told

[1] Compare, for such tales in the Central Provinces alone, Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 61ff.; Grigson, op. cit., p. 241; C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919), Vol. II, pp. 8ff.; Elwin, *The Agaria*, p. 75; M. P. Buradkar, 'Totemism among the Gonds', *Man in India*, Vol. XX (1940), pp. 120 and 277ff.; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 77 (the Gond emigrating from Phuljhar cross the Gondki river in flood).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan-priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Marias were divided into two moieties containing ninety and sixty-nine 'septs' (for which this book uses the term 'clans') can only have been the country of the Hill Marias.

Unfortunately the records of the Rai Bahadur's enquiry are not forthcoming. But he appears never to have entered the Abujhmar hills, and his enquiries were probably based on questions put to Hill Marias at camps to which they came to see him in the plains. The list of hill clans in the appendix shows only fifty clans. My enquiries so far as possible covered even those Hill Maria *parganas* which I did not visit, and though my list is, no doubt, incomplete, the great difference between his 159 and my 50 clans must mean that he included many areas which are not Hill Maria areas, probably all Kutru zamindari, and all Antagarh tahsil.

The clan organisation of the Hill Marias

As we have seen, the clans are not merely little more than surnames; quite apart from questions of exogamy, they are, in the Abujhmar hills, practically political units, each, at least of the flourishing clans, with its own clan-area; and each clan had a *panchayat* system for dealing with everyday offences. Clans may feel themselves closer to some clans in kindred or affinity, as the case may be, than to others; but on the whole it is the social solidarity of the clan and its members, its '*bhumkal*' as the Marias say, that keeps the Hill Marias together. Had it not been for the strong feeling of the clan for its own *bhum* (earth) the mistaken and oppressive land revenue system in vogue till recently and the gross mismanagement of at least the Bastar zamindaris would have resulted in wholesale migration to Chanda District. As it was, many went, but generally a nucleus of the clans remained, and now that things are better in Bastar many of the emigrants are returning.

I started my enquiries strongly influenced by the passage quoted from Russell and Hiralal, and expecting that the hill clans would fall naturally into two moieties. So for long they did. I began with the great Usendi clan of Orcha and the Chhota Dongar hill *pargana*. So far as that *pargana* is concerned, the clans in it do fall into two moieties, the Usendi clan having six clans related to it as *dadabhai* (brother-clan) and fourteen as *akomama* (wife-clan); not only did each of the clans concerned agree that it stood in the relation shown to the Usendi clan, but their statements were confirmed by the actual marriages examined. But the first major difficulty arose in the adjacent Barsur Mar and Mangnar *parganas*. There is no doubt about the Usendi freely intermarrying with the important Gume clan which practically monopolizes Barsur Mar; the pedigree in the appendix, for example, shows four such marriages

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

in cross-cousin relation. It is equally certain that the great Jugho clan of Adeq and other Chhota Dongar villages as well as of Itulnar in Bhairamgarh Mar regularly intermarries with and is *khomama* to the Usendi clan. If there were two moieties, all clans from which an Usendi could take a wife would have to be in the moiety other than that containing the Usendi clan; that is to say the Gumelor and the Jughalor would have to be in the same moiety and so would be *dadabhai* to each other and unable to intermarry. But actually they are *khomama* to each other and do intermarry quite often. Take again the important Jate clan of Mornar in Mangnar *pargana*, and its closely connected *dadabhai* clans the Tokalor and Hukur of Erpanar. They are *dadabhai* to the Usendi. On the two-moiety theory, therefore, they would be in the same moiety as the Usendi clan, and so would be any clan from which the Gumelor, with whom the Usendi, Jaterom, Tokalor and Hukur intermarry, might take a wife. The Gumelor often take wives from the Marvi clan of Tokhtoli and three other villages in Mangnar *pargana*. The Jaterom, Tokalor and Hukur should, therefore, be in the same moiety as that clan and debarred from taking wives from it; actually they consider themselves 'close *khomama*' relatives of the Marvi clan, and intermarriage is frequent. As, therefore, on the two-moiety theory Marvis must be in the opposite moiety to the Gumelor, they ought to be in the same moiety as the Usendi clan with whom the Gumelor intermarry; but, e.g., Marvi Bital, the headman of Tokhtoli, married his cross-cousin Usendi Puse of Juwara, continuing a chain of such marriages between the two families. The Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group of clans takes wives from Marvis and Gumelor, the Marvis from the Gumelor and the Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group, and the Gumelor from the Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group and the Marvis. Again, the Dhurwa clan is a close *dadabhai* of the Jughalor, and in practice (vide the pedigree) intermarries with the Usendi. It also intermarries with the Gumelor, who, as we have seen, themselves intermarry with the Usendi. This is another triangular example that cannot be fitted into the two-sided moiety theory. Examples can be found also in the north of the hills. The Farsal, Bardal and Gotal clans are very definitely *dadabhai* both to themselves and to the neighbouring Muria clans the Karangalor and Dughalor; the three of them marry mostly Jughalor girls, but also Usendi and Wadder girls, and the Usendi of the Kiringal and Dugal *pargana* are *khomama* to the Karangalor and Dughalor. On the two-moiety theory, therefore, the Usendi and Jughalor ought to be in the same moiety and, therefore, would not be allowed to intermarry. But actually they do, very frequently.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

[616] 615 618

The theory of two moieties therefore completely breaks down, and it is obvious that we are confronted by something approaching phratries. The Bison-horn Marias call their groups *kutmam* or *tarr* and their clans *katta*; but the Hill Marias know neither of the two former words, and, though some towards the south of the hills understand *katta*, they use the word *pari* that is in vogue for this purpose among all the Central Provinces Gonds. It is possible that they have some word for groups of clans, but I was unsuccessful in trying to get at it. They have some conception, however, of groups. The Usendi, Wadder, Katlami and Jaterom consider themselves brothers; Wikir Hunga, the god of the Usendis and Wadder, is a younger brother of Pat Raja, god of the Jaterom, and Pandu Hunga, god of the Katlamis, is the next brother after Wikir Hunga and has a Jate *waddai*; the Deda clan of Kurmer may also belong to the group, as its god Nule Harma is the youngest brother of Pat Raja. To the group would also belong the smaller clans of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* that are *dadabhai* to the Usendi, the Korami, Dodi, Deda and Parsal. Similarly the Jugho (*alias* Karme) clan says that the Dhurwa clan is its elder and the Dolwar clan its younger brother; their marriages are all consistent with membership of the same group, which possibly also includes the other Chhota Dongar clans of the list not mentioned above as *dadabhai* to the Usendi group, and the Yete clan of Kutru; all these are definitely *dadabhai* to the Jughalor. The Bardal, Farsal, Gotal, Nughoti, Tapa and Hichami clans of the north appear to be a group, to which would be added the Dughalor and Karangalor had they not become Murias and decided to discontinue the give and take of daughters in marriage with the Hill Marias. Of the grouping of the Kutru clans it is difficult to speak; but judging from marriages the Parllo, Jata, Kohka and Ark clans are a group of *dadabhai*, and *akomama* to another group consisting of the Boter, Wachami, Mohanda, Oyami, Mohke, and Pungati. The former group appears to be *dadabhai* to the Usendi group, and to be differentiated from it only by the fact that its members live in the Kutru zamindari, while the Usendi group is practically confined to the Antagarh tahsil. In Mangnar there is definitely a Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group, while the Marvi may belong to the same group as the Marvi phratry of the Bison-horn Marias and may include the small Alami and Nonde clans of Mangnar. The Gumelor of Barsur Mar seem to be in a group of their own so far as most of the Hill clans are concerned. The chief clans ungrouped in this tentative grouping are the Padal of Padalibhum and the Jati of Jarwara; both possibly come into the great Jughalor group.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter X

The Earth, the Clan-God and the Village Mother

771 In the scanty literature dealing with Bastar, few things have received briefer attention than the religion of the Marias. Russell and Hiralal try in twenty-one pages (III, 97-118) to summarize the religion, magico-religious ideas and festivals of all the Gonds of the Central Provinces; their account, therefore, necessarily must be vague about the Marias, and on Bastar generally is in many respects misinformed; there is a tendency to prefer the picturesque to the unvarnished facts, as in the accounts of the alleged human sacrifices at Dantewara and of *Doctor Deo*. I have already stated that there has never been the slightest proof that the former ever took place, and pointed out that, if they did, they were semi-State Hindu ceremonies under the aegis of the Raja and the hereditary Rajput high-priest of his tutelary goddess Danteshwari. *Doctor Deo* is represented as a principal god of 'north Bastar'; actually the Mohammedan sub-assistant surgeon 'deified' as *Doctor Deo* died of cholera on the Keskal pass as he was returning to Raipur from Bastar, and his spirit has been attached by the surrounding Murias as a peon or servant to the shrine of Bhangaram at the head of the pass, where from generations past the final scene of disease-riddance or *bokovasi* ceremonies among the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur and Kondagaon tahsils and the adjacent Bastar Irredenta tracts of Jeypore had taken place; here the scapegoat from Jagdalpur is at last driven forth into the wilderness, and hundreds of litters or model *rath* chariots have been deposited in front of Bhangaram with scape-doves and the sweepings of houses visited by epidemics. *Doctor Deo's* cult is a later and very minor accretion of this ancient cult.

General: previous writers

776 618 Glasfurd in his Report correctly noted that, like the Jhoria and other surrounding Murias, the Marias of the Abujhmar hills had in several villages Log-gods which they called *pen* (plural, *penk*); but he did not realize that there was one of these *penk* for each clan. This was pointed out on page 42 of the *Gazetteer*, though the clans are spoken of there as 'tribes' or by the Hindu term *gotra*; the suggestion there made that the system of each clan in its own area worshipping its own *pen* was even then breaking down, was at least premature, considering that it is still in full force in the Antagarh

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

TL 618

parts of the Abujhmar hills, if, as will be seen, it is weaker on the Kutru side and has been modified among the Bison-horn Marias.

Gond religion outside Bastar : the Chuddur Penk

Even among the Gonds of the British districts of the Central Provinces bordering on the Nagpur District, the special godlings such as Pharsi Pen, Matiya, Ghangra, Chawar and Palo (see Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 99) seem to be only incidental and later additions to their religion. There the clans are divided into groups or phratries according to the number of Little Gods or Chuddur Penk kept as domestic godlings in a pot inside the house of the head of the family; and for each clan there is, or was, somewhere in the Province, a Holy Circle or *Pen-kâra* beneath a sacred *saja* tree, in the fork of which would be tied a grass bundle containing for the whole clan a set of godlings of the same number as the Chuddur Penk in the houses of members of the clan; this set is in reality the Big-God or Bhera Pen (a name commonly Hinduized as Bura Deo or even Mahadeo) of the clan. Just as the Chuddur Penk pot in the house not infrequently contains, besides the actual Chuddur Penk, a vermillioned shell or pebble or knot of wood representing the 'Chuddur (small) Mahadeo' or Narayan Deo or some other godling from whom the family may believe itself to have received some past help, so too the grass bundle at the Holy Circle may contain representations of Bara (big) Mahadeo, Narayan Deo, Pharsi Pen, Matiya, Ghangra, Palo, etc. But it is hopeless to expect the householder or the *Pen-gadwa* custodian of the Holy Circle to name each of the Chuddur Penk or their Bhera Pen counterparts; they have no individual names, but collectively are the clan-god. Apart from these Chuddur Penk *penates*, many houses in British districts have, in a recess in the wall or in the corner of the room, corresponding to the corner of the *lonu* where the Maria keeps the Pot of the Departed, a row of little plaster mounds representing the souls of the Departed, unless these have been taken to the *Pen-gadwa* priest at the Holy Circle and there re-united by him in the *gadwa* marriage ceremony to the clan.

The Chuddur Penk not known in Bastar

Lucie-Smith and others record of the Marias of the Chanda District that they also have these Chuddur Penk, with phratries or groups of clans differentiated according to the number of the Penk. When, finding definitely no trace of them among the Hill or Bison-horn Marias of Bastar, I suggested to Dr. Wood, the present Bishop of Nagpur, who worked as a missionary for years in Chanda, that the information about the Chanda Marias was wrong, he very kindly had further enquiries made by the Rev. S. G. Patwardhan, an Indian Christian missionary with an intimate knowledge of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chanda Gonds, who reported definitely that in the Chanda Maria villages of Bidri, Yemla, Burgi, Uddera and Kandodi the Marias had one three-god, six four-god, eight five-god, eight six-god and eight seven-god clans. The difficulty is, of course, that the word 'Maria', as we have seen, is not a Gondi word and may cover more than one ethnic group, as in Bastar; there certainly are differences between the plains and Hill Marias of Chanda, and the point needs to be cleared by verification in definite hill villages in the Chanda portion of the Abujhmar hills. My enquiries from some of these villagers who visited my camps in Bastar along with Bastar relatives never produced any Chanda Maria who admitted belonging to a god-group or having Chuddur Penk in his house. Admittedly even in Nagpur District, Gonds are reluctant to show their Chuddur Penk, and Koitor everywhere have to be handled delicately before they will talk of the other domestic cult, that of the Departed. Nevertheless, I have known many Marias intimately, and have had them talking freely on these questions; and I have seen the contents of every pot, gourd, packet or other receptacle in many a Hill and Bison-horn Maria house: but I never found any domestic godling, and they have always denied having them, or god-groups founded on them. So likewise did adjacent Jhoria and Gotal Murias, though some of them knew of Gonds who had immigrated into Bastar from the Central Provinces with domestic godlings and god-groups. The only Bastar Gonds of whom it has ever been reported that they have domestic gods in addition to the clan-god are the 'Telugu Gonds' towards Konta (by which is probably meant the Dorla), stated on page 42 of the *Gazetteer* to have for each family a separate god represented by a few pieces of *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) wood; but the Dorla villages that I visited near Jaggergonda had no such family gods.

It may, therefore, be taken as certain that neither Hill nor Bison-horn Marias of Bastar have the cult of the Chuddur Penk, and that their clan-groups are not founded on them. If they are to be fitted into the traditional scheme of god-groups by persons who dislike exceptions to a rule apparently so universal among other Gonds, they must come in as the missing one-god group!

General nature of Bastar Maria cult of Earth, Clan-god and Village Mother

Much has been said in the preceding chapters, particularly the chapter on agriculture, on the cults of Bhum (the earth), the Clan-god and the Village Mother. In some sense, all three are the same, all Marias, Hill and Bison-horn, being the children of Bhum. They will tell you sometimes that the Pen clan-god and the Village Mother are also Bhum; and in some places the cairn or table-stone below the sacred *saja* tree does duty

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the clan; often the same man is both religious headman and secular headman (*gaita*, *peda*), and these functions were probably always combined before the growing interference of the State with village life and the excessive demands for forced labour and supplies began to make the secular headmanship a burden to be avoided by the true leader of the village and put on to the village simpleton.

The Village Mother is always dealt with in Hill and Bison-horn villages through the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* respectively; but she neither enters into the body of a medium nor can be consulted through one like the clan-god. Though it be through her that the *kasyeq-gaita's* eggs are addled or other omens of ill or indications that the village should shift are sent, yet to make plain her will the medium of the clan-god, that is the clan-priest (the *waddai* or *modul-waddai*), is sent for, and through his mouth the clan-god expounds the will of the Unseen Powers. It is tempting to regard her as the personification of the female and the clan-god as that of the male element in the reproductive powers of the Earth or Bhum; needless to say, there are no Maria theologians to worry themselves over such distinctions, and it is not a clear-cut one, since some clans have a clan-goddess, not a god; e.g. Oghal Muttai, goddess of the Dhurwa clan, and Gumtuli, goddess of the Padali clan of Padalibhum at Adnar. This conception, nevertheless, does to a considerable extent clarify the fundamental relation between the Earth, the clan-god and the Village Mother. The other point to be remembered is that the clan-god is the Earth in its dealings with the clan, and the Mother the Earth in its dealings with the village. No woman or girl may take part in the festivals, public sacrificial meals, worship and intercession of either clan-god or Village Mother.

The Earth, then, as clan-god, is the god of nourishment and reproduction, and of life itself; the Marias are his children, fed by him. For them to raise their sustenance he divided up the land among the clans, and the clan-area among the villages, and in each clan and village he appointed priests or headmen who alone might communicate with him, and to whose first ancestor he revealed the clan and village boundaries, which knowledge has been handed down from father to son. The Maria leaves his *penda* slope for another after two or three years because the god is suffering from having too much nourishment extracted from that slope, but he will return to it when the god has recovered from his exhaustion. Children are but one of the god's crops.

The Clan-god

In form, we have seen, the clan-god of Marias of both kinds and of Murias, is a framework of three parallel *saja* logs held together by cross-pieces of bamboo or *saja*, to which they are lashed by cords of *siari* creeper or twisted

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

thongs of the outer rind of bamboos. Where *saja* trees are scarce, he may be made entirely of bamboos, but will be lodged in a hut under a *saja* tree. The junctions of the logs and the cross-pieces are adorned with bunches of peacock and jungle-cock feathers, and the ends of the logs with rupees or spirals of peacock quill or bands of brass and silver. At the first-fruits ceremonies his shed is adorned with plaited fringes of the stalks and ears of the new grains, or bunches of bean and pulse pods; and he is brought forth to have the blood of the sacrificed victims sprinkled upon him.

Halbas, Telangas and Murias have precisely similar gods, if the logs composing them are more elaborately adorned and sometimes carved. Their generic name in Bastar is Anga Deo or Pat Deo, 'Log-God'. The central log is the essential part, for the other two logs are added primarily to enable the god to be borne on the shoulders of four men when he goes forth to a festival or a witch hunt. The Jhoria log-god at Narainpur had a special nose for witches, and the late Raja Bhairam Deo, great-grandfather of the present Maharaja, installed a copy of it in the palace at Jagdalpur; for witch hunts the god used to be brought in from Narainpur while the palace copy was sent to Narainpur during his absence. I found that the palace copy was in 1927 being used generally without reference to the Narainpur prototype for detecting witchcraft around Jagdalpur, a fee of Rs. 5 being paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the Temple Court of Wards whenever surrounding Murias requisitioned its services.

As has been observed on page 51, there is a tradition among the Hill Marias (of Chhota Dongar, Mangnar and Barsur Mar *parganas*) that the great log-god Pat Raja of the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana* with the help of his wife's brother, Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan of the Bison-horn village of Ghotpal, near Barsur, divided up both Hill and Bison-horn Marias into clans, in the old days when there was regular intermarriage between the Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The legend does not appear to be known to the latter, who have only vague traditions of having at some remote date descended to their present lands from the Abujhmar hills, where occasionally they say that their clan-god still resides.

It is certain that most of the Hill Maria clan-gods have relationship claimed for them with Pat Raja of Mohnar. The Usendi clan of Orcha has his younger brother Wikir Hunga at Japgunda, the Deda clan of Kurmer have another younger brother, Nule Harma, the Dhurwa clan of Gomagal have his sister Oghal Mutta'i, the Hill Maria Marvi clan of Toqtoli in Mangnar *pargana* have his sister's son Mara-Magh, while the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

pargana not only acquired a yet younger brother of Pat Raja, Verma Mo'itto Pen, as their clan-god, but also a family of Pat Raja's clan, the Jaterom,[1] as hereditary clan-priests because, the Jaterom being *akomama*[2] (wife-clan) to the Gumelor, the new god was related to them as *mama* or maternal uncle and had to have a priest or *waddai* of his own clan or one *dadabhai*[2] (brother-clan) to it. They say in fact that all clan-gods are mutually related, if they are sometimes very hazy as to the actual relationship; and they add that the gods, being Koitor, must have a full set of brother-clans and wife-clans like any other Koitor. Memories are, however, so poor that it is often difficult to ascertain the name of a man's dead father and quite impossible to ascertain the name of his grandfather and the clan and village of his grandmother, if, indeed, even of his mother; and it would be altogether out of the question to disentangle the descents and relationships of the clans by deduction from the traditional kinship of the clan-gods to Pat Raja and each other.

That old clans split up into new clans is clear, especially among the Hill Marias, from the fact that several of the larger clans have attached to them smaller clans which have no separate clan-god of their own, but attend the celebrations of the god of the large and presumably parent clan; certain other clans, though they have new clan-gods of their own, acknowledge their origin from another clan by taking the permission of the god of that clan before holding their own clan festivals. The way in which these clans split up is a matter belonging rather to the chapter in Part V, where the clan and phratry organization is dealt with as a matter of social organization, than to this chapter on religion. Here the point is that new clans are breaking off, and that their separation from the parent clan is signalized by the birth of a son or daughter (a son in the cases that I have seen) to the god of the parent clan. Thus Tumirgunda, in the plains between Handawada, still a true Hill Maria village, and the river Indrawati, near Barsur, belongs to the Tamo clan, and is the seat of their god Hurra Gunda Mo'itto[3] Pen. The *modul-waddai* of this clan-god was in 1930 still the *modul-waddai* of neighbouring villages of the Atami clan; and of the Tamo and Atami villages in his 'see' some were, like Tumirgunda itself, still mainly Hill Maria in culture, dancing in Hill Maria style, and some had changed to Bison-horn culture and dancing, and were recognized as Bison-horn

[1] Jāterom is the plural of Jāte; the clan is distinct from the Jātā, plural Jātālūr, and the Jāti clan of Jātwara *pargana*.

[2] Clans are *akomama* to clans with which they may intermarry, but *dadabhai* to all others.

[3] '*Mo'itto*' ('old man') or '*watta'i*' ('old woman') is always added to the clan-god's name.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 618 villages by the headman of the Bison-horn Pharaspal *pargana*. The god had long ago produced a son worshipped as clan-god in the Atami village of Chudala Karka, now a Bison-horn village. But the son's dependence on the parent was shown by the practice of the Tumirgunda clan-priest every third year making a new network of peacock's quills for encasing the front cross-piece of the Chudala Karka son. The *modul-waddai* shaves his beard only when he has to start to make a new quill network, and lets it grow after that till it has again to be replaced three years later. Chudala Karka pays Tumirgunda for this network a pig, a *khandi* of 164 lb. of husked rice and a pot of *mahua* spirit. In the *pen-rawar* hut of the god at Tumirgunda was yet another son, already named Hunga Gunda Mo'itto Pen, who was being made for another Atami village in the 'see', and was to be taken to it as soon as he was a year old; he then consisted only of one bamboo pole tipped with a silver cone and adorned with bunches of peacock feathers. Here perhaps the need for separation was arising because the Atami villages were adopting or had adopted Bison-horn ways, while the village for which the new god was being 'born' was some way from Chudala Karka, and effectively separated from it by the Indrawati river. So at Kurmer at the end of 1929 Nule Harma, god of the Deda clan, was producing a 'son' for some distant villages of the clan; and we have already seen how the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar *pargana* acquired from the Jaterom of Mohnar not only a younger brother of their god, but a Jate family to be his clan-priest.

The *Gazetteer* has been quoted as suggesting that the system of separate areas and separate gods for each clan was breaking down. Among the Hill Marias the remark is justified to the following extent only. Many of the old villages of the Bhairamgarh Mar and Kutru Mar *parganas* of the Kutru zamindari have disappeared, including indeed the two which Glasfurd gave as the seats of the chief Hill Maria clan-gods of his time. Many clans have disappeared or are reduced to one or two households. There are various causes; maladministration leading to exodus to the tahsils of the plains or the Chanda district, the great 1918 influenza epidemic, and the ravages of yaws. The total disappearance of clans is evidenced by [764] the presence in villages now settled by other clans of *kotokal* rows of menhirs erected for the Departed of forgotten clans, quite distinct from those erected by the present clan, which can give no information at all about its predecessors. Clans greatly diminished in numbers soon find that they cannot economically manage to keep even one village going on their traditional clan-area, much less keep effective control and user of all the alternative *penda* slopes of the area. The dregs, therefore, of three or four clans may settle

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

together in a village in the area of the largest dreg, and abandon claim to the other clan-areas; for example, Aipur in Kutru Mar had in 1931, one Hoyami, one Telam, one Micha and two Bardi clan houses, while Malahanar had four Hoyami, two Pungati and one Diwa. Both were originally Hoyami clan villages; the clan has also still the villages of Komu and Kalhaza in Bhairamgarh Mar, but has since the census deserted Malahanar, as the headman and all but one Hoyami householder died suddenly, and the remaining Hoyami shifted to Kalhaza. In adjacent parts of the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* there are big clans like the Usendi and the Jugho already needing fresh lands, and the obvious fields for expansion are the empty lands of dwindling or extinct clans in Kutru Mar and Bhairamgarh Mar. Often big clans have just thrown off parties of squatters who have founded fresh villages in such places; the large Gume clan of Barsur Mar has, for example, long occupied Dunga, Goti and Kunjewada in Bhairamgarh Mar. Where there is still a remnant of a clan strong enough to raise some opposition to squatters from other clans coming in to their areas, but not to retain effective cultivating occupation, the *kasyeq-gaita* of the chief village (the clan being always too small to have retained an area big enough to become a *pargana*, and seldom having even a clan-god in its days of adversity) has sold some of the clan land for a few rupees to another clan; thus comparatively recently the Ark clan, now of Korowaya village only, sold the lands of their deserted village of Itulnar for Rs. 30 to the overflowing Jugho clan of the adjacent Chhota Dongar Mar village of Adeq and other large villages. When the sale took place, the *kasyeq-gaita* of the Arkalur showed the *kasyeq-gaita* of the Jughalor the traditional village sites, and the cairns marking former shrines of the Village Mother, and extracted a sworn promise of reverence for her. The Arkalur themselves could not have long been in occupation, as they said that the *kotokal* menhirs at Itulnar had not been erected by them but by some other forgotten clan which had died out before their occupation of the village.

Not only have hardly any of these dying clans clan-gods and clan-priests, but also the colonizers, having left their hereditary clan-area, consider themselves outside their clan-god's jurisdiction, and 'under no need' therefore to attend his Koqsar or to get his permission to hold festivals before the Village Mothers of their new villages. So the Gumelor of Dunga, Goti and Kunjewada are seen no more at the Gume Koqsar of Verma Mo'itto Pen at To'inar in Barsur Mar, and the Jughalor settlers of Itulnar do not join their fellow Jughalor of Adeq and other villages of Chhota Dongar Mar at the Koqsar of the Usendi and allied clans' god Wikir Hunga at

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

618 Orcha. Ultimately the new colonies may spread, and they may feel the need of clan-gods and petition the clan-priests of the areas 776 from which they migrated to give them a son of the old clan-god; but meanwhile the majority of them get on quite well without him and his clan-gatherings, and find the Village Mother and village ceremonies quite enough for their needs. If in time they ask for a clan-god of their own, they are likely to get some additional name to distinguish them from the main section of their clan, and ultimately all mention of the original clan name will be omitted.

Special features of the Clan-god among the Bison-horn Marias

It was remarked on page 194 that for each clan of the Gonds of the British India districts bordering on Nagpur there is or was a *Pen-kara* or Holy Circle under a *saja* tree somewhere in the province. If he has not become detribalized, every Gond should visit this once a year with offerings, or at least should pay sacrificial fines there on the birth of a child, on being released from handcuffs, on readmission to the community after some social lapse, and so on; and there ultimately his soul should be brought after death, to be united to the clan Departed. The villages are there no longer the *bhum* of particular clans, and many clans and god-groups may be represented in one village. Members of the clans are scattered far and wide over the province, and in one Nagpur Gond village you may find representatives of clans with the *Pen-kara* of their gods at places so far apart as Berar, Chhindwara, Lanji or Chanda. Many have settled far from their *Pen-kara* for so many generations that the fatigue of the long journey has been avoided more and more by each new generation till in the end it has been given up, and many of the preseht time cannot even say where it is.

776 To this kind of attitude some of the Bison-horn Marias are 618 beginning to come. There are many clan-areas[1] in Bijapur and Dantewara tahsils and in Kutru zamindari on both sides of the 615 river Indrawati which, as indicated in the ethnic map on page 40, are peopled by clans once purely Hill Maria in language and culture, but now modified in both by contact either with Bison-horn Maria

[1] Examples are Chikatraj Pen of Kutru, the god of the Gota clan of Kutru, Borje, Bhirabhatti, Pillur, Sappimarka, Kakler, Gattapalli, Mendri, Udru villages; Kuwo-Gundo Pen, god of the Majje and Wadde clans of Bodametta, Kodepalli, Majje-Mendri, Kungler, Madhepar, Dudepalli, and Rengawaya in Kutru zamindari and of Kounde (where the god is kept and the clan-priest lives) and other villages in Chanda District; Wachami Mo'itto Pen, of Markanar in Kutru zamindari, god of the Wachami clan of Markanar, Irkapal, Karkelli, Kumharmeta and Bodeli in Kutru Zamindari and some adjacent Wachami clan villages in Ahiri zamindari; Wange Muri Pen, of Dhanora in Bijapur tahsil, god of the Kuriyami clan of several villages around Dhanora and Thoinar and Pharsegarh sub-zamindaris of Kutru.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

or with Dorla neighbours. The clearest sign these retain of their Hill Maria origin is the retention of separate clan-areas, clan-gods and *modul-waddai* clan-priests for each large clan (*pari* or *katta*) or pair or trio of closely related clans, as distinct from the Bison-horn Maria institution of one *pen* or clan-god for each of the five groups of clans or phratries (*barr* or *kutmam*) and every clan (*katta*) included in it, without any fixed phratry-area. On the other hand, each village in the true Bison-horn tracts is said to be the *bhum* of the clan (*katta*) of the *pennia* who originally founded it, and, as it is the *bhum* of his clan, he alone can officiate for the village at the ceremonies and sacrifices before the Village Mother, the Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo, Bhu-deo and Bhu-Devi, and the other forms under which the Earth is worshipped at the different agricultural ceremonies.

The Bison-horn country is extensive and, compared to the Hill Maria country, well populated. The villages forming the *bhum* of even individual *katta* clans may be miles apart, while a village that is the *bhum* of a clan in phratry A may be surrounded by villages that are the *bhum* of clans in phratries B, C, D and E for miles before there is another village of a clan of phratry A. Further, though a village may be the *bhum* of the *pennia's* clan, he may easily have only a few other householders of his clan in the village, but several of other kindred and affine clans. At Aranpur, most members of the big and small Marvi, the Hemla and the Oyami clans, all of which are included in the Marvi phratry, did not know the name of the clan-god of their phratry, but suggested vaguely that his *pen-rawar* might be in the Abujhmar hills or in Padar-raj, their name for the plateau around Jagdalpur. Some knew that the god's name was Handa Kosa Pen, and a few said that his *pen-rawar* was at Killepal, nearly sixty miles away, where the great western road from Jagdalpur to Bhopalpatnam approaches the passes descending to the Dantewara valley. At Killepal, however, I had not been shown Handa Kosa Pen; the village is the *bhum* of the Kuhrami clan, which gives its name to the Kuhrami phratry, and the clan members stated that they had no *pen-rawar* of their clan at Killepal, but that Hemraj Pen, their god, was, they had heard, in some village near Orcha in the Abujhmar hills. It was often agreed that a Maria should visit his Pen or clan-god every year in Aghan or Pand month (November-December) and offer a pig or a cock to the god at this annual *pen-jatra* or festival of the *pen*. At Aranpur a few of the older men said that they had long ago visited the Marvi clan-god Handa Kosa Pen at Killepal in their youth, but in recent years no one seemed to have been near. It was agreed that certain social offences could only be expiated by a visit and penal offering to the clan-god.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

she came. The second circumstance was the fact that, to some extent, I could spur their memories from the record of a 1916 Sessions case in which Moda and two other members of the family had been sentenced to imprisonment for life for the murder of a fourth member, Usendi Bhosa. The family was, moreover, one of considerable social importance. It has the hereditary right of providing the secular headman of both the village of Orcha and the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, while the Usendi clan is one of the strongest in the Abujhmar hills, and the Koqsar festivals of its god Wikir Hunga attract people from far and wide. In most families it is impossible to get beyond the paternal grandfather, if indeed beyond the father and mother; but though the names are forgotten, obligations are not; and many, if not all, Marias remember the clans and families with which they have cross-cousin marriage alliances. Of 105 Hill Maria marriages investigated, fifty-seven were marriages between cross-cousins; it is not so easy to check the remaining 46 per cent. in which the marriage marked the start of new affinities, at least as between the two contracting families, if not as between the clans.

On the other hand, a man touring as the administrative head of the State has the advantage of always having many Marias from different clans and villages assembling at his camps, and so of ascertaining their matrimonial alliances and testing practically any clan lists which he may have made or obtained elsewhere. But here a further difficulty crops up. Communications among the Hill Marias are very bad, and it by no means follows that an Usendi living, let us say, on the southern edge of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* has the same views on the clans from which it is permissible to seek a bride as an Usendi in the Chanda part of the Abujhmar hills or in the northernmost Maria *pargana* of the Antagarh tahsil. There is always a tendency to limit clan jurisdiction to the administrative division; though investigation will reveal much intermarriage between one *pargana* and the next, even though one should be in one tahsil and the other in another, in a zamindari or even in British territory, yet the investigator will be assured that 'we do not take wives from that clan or village because it is not in our *pargana*' or 'our raj'; and it has already been seen that when members of a clan migrate from their clan-area to colonize lands deserted by other clans outside the *pargana* they no longer consider themselves under any obligation to attend their original clan-god's festivals.

This much has been said by way of introduction, and of apology if, as I fear, this chapter is the least satisfactory and the least final in its conclusions.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The only writers who seem to have touched on the social organization of the Bastar Marias before are Russell and Hiralal, who said (III, pp. 64-6) :—

Russell and Hiralal, on the social organization of the Bastar Marias

'The Gond rules of exogamy appear to preserve traces of the system found in Australia, by which the whole tribe is split into two or four main divisions, and every man in one or two of them must marry a woman in the other one or two. . . .

'Among the Gonds, however, the subdivision into small exogamous sects has been also carried out, and the class system, if the surmise that it once existed be correct, remains only in the form of a survival, prohibiting marriage between agnates, like an ordinary sept. In one part of Bastar all the septs of the Maria Gonds are divided into two great classes. There are ninety septs in A Class and sixty-nine in B Class, though the list may be incomplete. All the septs in A Class say that they are Bhaiband or Dadabhai to each other, that is in the relation of brothers, or cousins being the sons of brothers. No man of Class A can marry a woman of any sept in Class A. The septs of Class A stand in the relation of Mamabhai or Akomama to those of Class B. Mamabhai means a maternal uncle's son, and Akomama apparently signifies having the same maternal grandfather. Any man of a sept in Class A can marry any woman of a sept in Class B. It will thus be seen that the smaller septs seem to serve no purpose for regulating marriage, and are no more than family names. The tribe might just as well be divided into two great exogamous clans only. Marriage is prohibited between persons related only through males; but according to the exogamous arrangement there is no other prohibition, and a man could marry any maternal relative. Separate rules, however, prohibit his marriage with certain female relatives, and these will be given subsequently (ibid., p. 72). It is possible that the small septs may serve some purpose which has not been elicited, though the inquiry made by Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath[1] was most careful and painstaking.

'In another part of Bastar there were found to be five classes, and each class had a small number of septs in it. The people who supplied this information could not give the names of many septs. Thus Class A had six septs,[2] Class B five, Classes C and D one each, Class E four, and Class F two. A man could not marry a woman of any sept belonging to his own class.

'The Maria Gonds of Bastar have a few large exogamous septs or clans named in Hindi after animals, and each of these clans contains several subsepts with Gondi names. Thus the *Bakaravans* or Goat race contains the Garde, Kunjami, Karrami and Vadde septs. The *Kachhimvans* or Tortoise race has the Netami, Kawachi, Usendi and Tekami septs. The *Nagvans* or Cobra race includes the Maravi, Potari, Karanga, Nurethi, Dhurwa and others. Other exogamous races are the Sodi (or tiger), Behaimsa (buffalo), Netam (dog in Gondi), Chamchidai (bat) and one or two more. In this case the exogamous clans with Hindi names would appear to be a late division, and have perhaps been adopted because the meaning of the old Gondi names had been forgotten, or the septs were too numerous to be remembered.'

As will be seen in this chapter, the part of Bastar where five 'classes' were found was presumably the Bison-horn country and its cultural extension, the Dorla country, where there are definitely five phratries each containing varying numbers of clans. The tract in which, according to Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath's enquiry, the

[1] Diwan of Bastar for many years.

[2] Six classes, A to F, are given, though the text speaks of five, the actual number among both Bison-horn Marias and Dorlas. But so few 'septs' are mentioned, nineteen as compared to the fifty in my list of phratries, that the enquiry must have been incomplete.

[See cat. 116, p. 424. — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Marias were divided into two moieties containing ninety and sixty-nine 'septs' (for which this book uses the term 'clans') can only have been the country of the Hill Marias.

Unfortunately the records of the Rai Bahadur's enquiry are not forthcoming. But he appears never to have entered the Abujhmar hills, and his enquiries were probably based on questions put to Hill Marias at camps to which they came to see him in the plains. The list of hill clans in the appendix shows only fifty clans. My enquiries so far as possible covered even those Hill Maria *parganas* which I did not visit, and though my list is, no doubt, incomplete, the great difference between his 159 and my 50 clans must mean that he included many areas which are not Hill Maria areas, probably all Kutru zamindari, and all Antagarh tahsil.

The clan organisation of the Hill Marias

As we have seen, the clans are not merely little more than surnames; quite apart from questions of exogamy, they are, in the Abujhmar hills, practically political units, each, at least of the flourishing clans, with its own clan-area; and each clan had a *panchayat* system for dealing with everyday offences. Clans may feel themselves closer to some clans in kindred or affinity, as the case may be, than to others; but on the whole it is the social solidarity of the clan and its members, its '*bhumkal*' as the Marias say, that keeps the Hill Marias together. Had it not been for the strong feeling of the clan for its own *bhum* (earth) the mistaken and oppressive land revenue system in vogue till recently and the gross mismanagement of at least the Bastar zamindaris would have resulted in wholesale migration to Chanda District. As it was, many went, but generally a nucleus of the clans remained, and now that things are better in Bastar many of the emigrants are returning.

I started my enquiries strongly influenced by the passage quoted from Russell and Hiralal, and expecting that the hill clans would fall naturally into two moieties. So for long they did. I began with the great Usendi clan of Orchha and the Chhota Dongar hill *pargana*. So far as that *pargana* is concerned, the clans in it do fall into two moieties, the Usendi clan having six clans related to it as *dadabhai* (brother-clan) and fourteen as *akomama* (wife-clan); not only did each of the clans concerned agree that it stood in the relation shown to the Usendi clan, but their statements were confirmed by the actual marriages examined. But the first major difficulty arose in the adjacent Barsur Mar and Mangnar *pargana*. There is no doubt about the Usendi freely intermarrying with the important Gume clan which practically monopolizes Barsur Mar; the pedigree in the appendix, for example, shows four such marriages

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

in cross-cousin relation. It is equally certain that the great Jugho clan of Adeq and other Chhota Dongar villages as well as of Itulnar in Bhairamgarh Mar regularly intermarries with and is *akomama* to the Usendi clan. If there were two moieties, all clans from which an Usendi could take a wife would have to be in the moiety other than that containing the Usendi clan; that is to say the Gumelor and the Jughalor would have to be in the same moiety and so would be *dadabhai* to each other and unable to intermarry. But actually they are *akomama* to each other and do intermarry quite often. Take again the important Jate clan of Mornar in Mangnar *pargana*, and its closely connected *dadabhai* clans the Tokalor and Hukur of Erpanar. They are *dadabhai* to the Usendi. On the two-moiety theory, therefore, they would be in the same moiety as the Usendi clan, and so would be any clan from which the Gumelor, with whom the Usendi, Jaterom, Tokalor and Hukur intermarry, might take a wife. The Gumelor often take wives from the Marvi clan of Tokhtoli and three other villages in Mangnar *pargana*. The Jaterom, Tokalor and Hukur should, therefore, be in the same moiety as that clan and debarred from taking wives from it; actually they consider themselves 'close *akomama*' relatives of the Marvi clan, and intermarriage is frequent. As, therefore, on the two-moiety theory Marvis must be in the opposite moiety to the Gumelor, they ought to be in the same moiety as the Usendi clan with whom the Gumelor intermarry; but, e.g., Marvi Bital, the headman of Tokhtoli, married his cross-cousin Usendi Puse of Juwara, continuing a chain of such marriages between the two families. The Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group of clans takes wives from Marvis and Gumelor, the Marvis from the Gumelor and the Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group, and the Gumelor from the Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group and the Marvis. Again, the Dhurwa clan is a close *dadabhai* of the Jughalor, and in practice (vide the pedigree) intermarries with the Usendi. It also intermarries with the Gumelor, who, as we have seen, themselves intermarry with the Usendi. This is another triangular example that cannot be fitted into the two-sided moiety theory. Examples can be found also in the north of the hills. The Farsal, Bardal and Gotal clans are very definitely *dadabhai* both to themselves and to the neighbouring Muria clans the Karangalor and Dughalor; the three of them marry mostly Jughalor girls, but also Usendi and Wadder girls, and the Usendi of the Kiringal and Dugal *pargana* are *akomama* to the Karangalor and Dughalor. On the two-moiety theory, therefore, the Usendi and Jughalor ought to be in the same moiety and, therefore, would not be allowed to intermarry. But actually they do, very frequently.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

[616] 615 618

The theory of two moieties therefore completely breaks down, and it is obvious that we are confronted by something approaching phratries. The Bison-horn Marias call their groups *kutmam* or *tarr* and their clans *katta*; but the Hill Marias know neither of the two former words, and, though some towards the south of the hills understand *katta*, they use the word *pari* that is in vogue for this purpose among all the Central Provinces Gonds. It is possible that they have some word for groups of clans, but I was unsuccessful in trying to get at it. They have some conception, however, of groups. The Usendi, Wadder, Katlami and Jaterom consider themselves brothers; Wikir Hunga, the god of the Usendis and Wadder, is a younger brother of Pat Raja, god of the Jaterom, and Pandu Hunga, god of the Katlamis, is the next brother after Wikir Hunga and has a Jate *waddai*; the Deda clan of Kurmer may also belong to the group, as its god Nule Harma is the youngest brother of Pat Raja. To the group would also belong the smaller clans of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* that are *dadabhai* to the Usendi, the Korami Dodi, Deda and Parsal. Similarly the Jugho (*alias* Karme) clan says that the Dhurwa clan is its elder and the Dolwar clan its younger brother; their marriages are all consistent with membership of the same group, which possibly also includes the other Chhota Dongar clans of the list not mentioned above as *dadabhai* to the Usendi group, and the Yete clan of Kutru; all these are definitely *dadabhai* to the Jughalor. The Bardal, Farsal, Gotal, Nughoti, Tapa and Hichami clans of the north appear to be a group, to which would be added the Dughalor and Karangalor had they not become Murias and decided to discontinue the give and take of daughters in marriage with the Hill Marias. Of the grouping of the Kutru clans it is difficult to speak; but judging from marriages the Parllo, Jata, Kohka and Ark clans are a group of *dadabhai*, and *ahomama* to another group consisting of the Boter, Wachami, Mohanda, Oyami, Mohke, and Pungati. The former group appears to be *dadabhai* to the Usendi group, and to be differentiated from it only by the fact that its members live in the Kutru zamindari, while the Usendi group is practically confined to the Antagarh tahsil. In Mangnar there is definitely a Jaterom-Tokalor-Hukur group, while the Marvi may belong to the same group as the Marvi phratry of the Bison-horn Marias and may include the small Alami and Nonde clans of Mangnar. The Gumelor of Barsur Mar seem to be in a group of their own so far as most of the Hill clans are concerned. The chief clans ungrouped in this tentative grouping are the Padal of Padalibhum and the Jati of Jatwara; both possibly come into the great Jughalor group.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615
618

It should be clear from what has been said that these groups or phratries are not proved, but are a hypothesis that does explain observed facts, which cannot possibly be squared with the theory of two moieties. That theory is the less likely when it is remembered that amongst all the Gonds of the Central Provinces it is usual to find phratries, whether the simple totem-phratries of the Bison-horn Marias of Bastar or the three-god, four-god, five-god, six-god and seven-god phratries of the Chanda, Nagpur and Chhindwara districts. Russell and Hiralal have already been quoted as saying that there are similar totem phratries among the Murias. But one must not necessarily expect to find the same number (five) of phratries among the Hill Marias; they perhaps are not conscious of having any phratries at all, and the groups are only the result of proximity and convenience, tempered by the accidents of the political geography of the hill country. There are no signs at all of totems for these supposititous groups, like those shown in the list of Bison-horn clans, and existing among the Murias; the Usendi will not eat or keep goats, and the Parllo, though they tend goats for Telis, will not eat them or drink their milk. The Kohkalor will not touch or fell the marking-nut tree (*kohka-marra*; *Semecarpus anacardium*) or its fruits. The Yete are called after the crab (*yete*), but they eat crabs. The Neghal are called after the panther (*neghal*), but the reason seems to be that when they founded their village a panther was killed at the entrance to it, the panther now commemorated by three stones (see page 154). The Alami have the *alam* or chameleon as totem, and salaam gravely any chameleon they may meet. But the reverence paid by the Jaterom to the brooms of *jate* grass used to sweep their god's shrine and by the Hukur to the ladle that they use to dole out the sacrificial rice cooked at the same shrine are acts akin to the annual worship paid by all Hindu artisans to the tools of their craft. The other things mentioned in the totem column in the list of hill clans in the appendix are not totems, but explanations of the origins of the names of the clans concerned. It is thus clear that traces of totemism among the Hill Marias are very slight, and affect individual clans, not groups. There is no connexion at all between totemism and the taboos, nor does it figure in the cult of the clan-god.

It was suggested on page 205 that the five major clans from which the five Bison-horn phratries take their names might have originated from the migration of strong bodies of each of those clans from the Abujhmar hills, in the same way that even now bodies of clans like the Jughalor and the Gumelor are beginning to occupy deserted lands of forgotten or dwindling clans in Bhairamgarh Mar, and that each of these five major clans split up into smaller clans,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

each new clan, however, retaining to some extent its membership of the original clan, the name of which became the generic name for it and its daughter-clans. The process can be seen at work in the hills; the Tokalor and Hukur have clearly split off from the Jaterom, while the Usendi group must at some time have split away from the Jaterom, as their clan-gods are the younger brothers of the Jaterom god Pat Raja, and the Katlami god Pandu Hunga, the eldest of these younger brothers, is served by a Jate *shaddai* (clan-priest). It does look as though there may have been an original two-moiety system, which has expanded into a group system merely because as colonization proceeded strict adherence to the rule of taking a wife from the other moiety proved impossible owing to distances and bad communications. For the emigrant clans who colonized the Bison-horn country, which could support a far larger population than the hills, it would be particularly necessary to allow a wider range of choice than possible under two-moiety exogamy. This is secured if a man in phratry A can take a wife from phratry B, C, D or E.

Bison-horn phratries and clans

So we have the phatry and clan organization of the Bison-horn Marias. The list in Appendix II shows nine clans in the Marvi phratry, ten in the Kuhrami, three in the Sodi, twenty-one in the Markami and eight in the Kawasi, fifty-one altogether, as compared with the nineteen of Russell and Hiralal. The list mentions six other clans whose phratry I did not ascertain. Like the Muria phratries mentioned by Russell and Hiralal, these phratries are often described as the *bans*, a Hindi word for race, of their totems; the Marvi phratry in most of the Bison-horn country is the *Bakrabans* or Goat race, and in Sukma and the south the *Nagwasi* or Cobra race; the Kuhrami phratry is the *Kadiarikans* or Cuckoo race; the Sodi phratry is the *Bagbans* or Tiger race; and both the Markami and the Kawasi phratries are *Kachhimuras* or Tortoise races. Almost exactly the same phratries with the same subordinate clans are found among the Dorla Koitor of the south; but they have other names for the phratries, called after the *yalopi* or *valpu* god of the phratry, only one of whom, Perambhoi, after whom the phratry corresponding to the Bison-horn Kuhrami or Cuckoo race is called, is even known to the Bison-horn Marias.

There are certain peculiarities. Although clans belong to a phratry with a certain totem, they sometimes have either no totem or a totem of their own, which may be the same as the totem of one of the other phratries, or one peculiar to itself. The Hemla clan of the Marvi or Goat phratry has the tortoise as totem; the Kalmu clan of the Markami Tortoise race has the goat as totem; and the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615 618 Poriami clan of the Kuhrami or Cuckoo phratry has the buffalo, which has supplanted the tiger as the totem of the Sodi or Tiger phratry, since tigers so far forgot themselves as to kill and eat some men of the phratry. In the Cuckoo phratry two clans, the Kartami and the Kuhrami (which gives its name to the phratry), have the *Aavat* or hornbill as totem, while the Kunjami clan has the *kunje* or screech-owl. In all these cases it is the clan totem that matters, not the phratry totem; the Hemla clan will kill goat or cobra, the Kartami and Kuhrami the cuckoo, and the Kalmu the goat. Some clans have no totem of their own, but have no scruples about touching, killing or eating the totem of their phratry; examples are the Tamo clan in the Goat phratry, the Oika clan in the Tiger or Buffalo phratry, and the Birya or Big Markami, the Gonche, the Miriyami, the Nupo and the Tati clans in the Markami Tortoise race. Two conclusions follow. The first is that certain clans in the phratry, those with different totems, probably did not split off from the parent clan of the phratry, but were independent clans grouped into the phratry at a later stage, probably owing to contiguity. The second thing is that the association of the totemic animal or plant with phratries and clans is so far from universal and plays so small a part in the life of the whole tribe that it is either something new, borrowed from another culture, but not really assimilated, or else a relic of something that has decayed with antiquity. It is remarkable that the Birya or Big Markami clan should not have any scruples about the tortoise, the totem of the Markami or Tortoise phratry, while the Chudala or Small Markami clan is very particular about it. Yet it is only of the tortoise totem that there is any [773] legend; there is said long ago to have been a great flood, which the brothers Markam and Kawasi were unable to cross until a tortoise came and took them on its back.[1] Some, however, do go [784] out of their way to avoid touching or harming their totem, particularly the Kawasi Tortoise phratry; blindness is the punishment which eating the totem is said to involve. I was told by a Kawasi

[1] This legend of the origin of the tortoise totem is one of the very few traces (the only trace that I have met) among Bastar Marias of the Ramcharan legend of the origin of the Gonds. In the version of this given in Trench's *Gondi Grammar*, Vol. II, all the ancestors of the Gonds were stopped on their way to worship the Great God by a great flood, 'whereupon in haste they plunged into the river, and one caught hold of a Teridu log, another a Sirras, another a palm tree, another a teak tree, another an iguana, another a tiger, thus each seizing something or other, they forded the river. Having crossed the river, they assembled near a Saj tree, and ate the new rice that ripens in hollows, and drank, and asked each other, "What did you catch hold of when you crossed?" They said, "I for my part seized a palm tree and forded on it, I a teak tree, and I a tiger." Addi-rawan-pariol says, "Then your *pari* will be the Palm tree, yours the Teak, and yours the Tiger." Thus *paris* were found for all of them

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934)-1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

I was told by a Kawasi
615 informant that a bride coming from a clan with a different totem
618 to a Kawasi household was made to eat her father's totem as a sign
[GG] of abandoning that totem's race or clan; but I could never verify this. There is a definite ceremony for transferring a re-marrying widow from her first to her second husband's clan; but this has nothing to do with the totem.

There is nothing to prevent a man in the Markami Tortoise phratry taking a wife from the Kawasi Tortoise phratry. In fact, if totems were of real significance, it is hard to see why there should be these two mutually exogamous Tortoise phratries. Nor is there anything to bar them intermarrying with the Hemla Tortoise clan in the Goat phratry; the same applies to the Goat and Buffalo phratries and the Goat and Buffalo clans in other phratries.

Another point that suggests that the phratry has arisen as a convenience for enlarging the matrimonial field is that each village is regarded as the *bhum* (earth or soil) of the individual Bison-horn clan that first settled it, not of the phratry. To give a few examples, Massenar is the *bhum* of the Atrami clan, Lendra and Singwaram of the Barse clan, Mandimarka of the Dodi clan, Durandarbha and Gumadasaka of the Hemla clan, Dugheli and Pharaspal of the Kalmu clan, Birya Gudra, Etipal and Bhusaras of the Kartami clan, Berma and Karrigudem of the Kunjami clan, Kondasaoli, Komarguda, Kodmair, Ursangal, Tetam and Koriras of the Birya Marvi, Chudala Gudra, Tarlaguda and Banjepalli of the Chudala Marvi, Palnar, Phulpan and Singaram of the Vetti. Each clan thus has villages that are far apart; there is no contiguity of all the villages that are the *bhum* of one clan, and therefore no compact clan-area as in the Abujhmar hills. Nor is there any phratry area; five contiguous villages may easily be the *bhum* of five clans each belonging to a different phratry. Even in the villages that are the *bhum* of one clan it is quite possible that the *parma* may be the only member of the clan in the village, and in every village there are settlements of all the clans with which the founder clan has intermarried, each clan that is big enough being allotted a separate quarter in the village for its houses, and clans of which there are only one or two representatives perhaps sharing a quarter with other clans of their phratry. Only a *parma* of the founder clan can mediate between the villagers and the Earth and Village Mother; and if that clan has retained its own clan-god, little heed is paid to the clan-god of the phratry or the parent-clan of the phratry. At the sacrifices to the Departed and the subsequent sacrificial meal at first-fruits ceremonies only the householder's *bhumkal* or fellow-clansmen may be present, not members of other clans in his phratry even. The division of the large Marvi, Markami and Sodi clans into

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

big and small clans of the same name is an old one, and, as the examples above show, the big and small clans have different villages as their *bhum*; the reality of their separation is further shown by such differences of custom as the Big Marvi clan making flat table-stones or *dawya-kal* for their dead instead of the usual menhirs or *wrakal* which the Small Marvi and all other clans except the Kuhrami erect for their dead, and as the different outlook of the Big and Small Markami to the tortoise totem of the Markami phratry.

Traditional origins of clan names

The chapter may be closed with examples of the traditional origins of certain Hill and Bison-horn Maria clan names, into which nothing totemic appears to intrude.

Gumadur	When their first village was founded the sky had become *gume* or overcast with clouds.
Gecha	The founder of the clan was a laggard or stay-behind (*gecha*).
Dohour	Though Hill Marias, they make *dol* drums like the Bison-horn Marias.
Dhurwa	They walked in front of the clan-god like *dhurwas* preceding the Raja of Bastar in a procession.
Akkal	'Leafy': the founder was a great tree-climber.
Kutlami	The 'borrow-pit' clan, diggers of borrow-pits for tank embankments.
Kurma	The 'sunset' clan, because the founder was born at sunset (an alternative name for the Jughakur).
Kuhrami	The 'people of the mist' (*kuhra*), because on cold weather mornings they walk ahead of others to disperse the mist and heavy dew.

The examples are similar to those given by Russell and Hiralal (III, pp. 68-70) for the Gond clans of Betul District.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER XIV

MARRIAGE

582 618 WHATEVER the origin of the clans and phratries, they serve as a means of regulating the marriages of Hill and Bison-horn Marias; in the case of the latter, among whom the clan is no longer a territorial as well as a social unit, one might say that the primary function of the clan and phratry organization is the regulation of marriage. A child is born into the clan of its father, and, if a son, must remain in that clan all its life; but, if a daughter, passes on marriage to the clan of the husband, and on re-marriage from his clan to that of the second husband. A son must not take a wife, or a daughter a husband, from the father's clan or from any clan that is brother-clan or *dadabhai* to it: he must marry a wife from, and she must marry into, some clan that is a wife-clan or *ahomama* of their father's clan. It has been seen that the phratry system of the Bison-horn Marias gives them a wider field of selection of wives and husbands than the more inchoate group system of Hill Maria clans. A widow, however, must not marry as second husband a man whose clan is brother to her father's clan, even though through being in a phratry other than that of her first husband's clan the second husband's clan would be wife-clan to the first husband's. In a word, throughout a woman's life all her marriages are regulated by the clan into which she was born.

Exogamy

601 114 Appendix III gives a list of the Hill Maria terms of relationship so far as I could ascertain them; they were collected in Orcha and adjacent villages by the genealogical method, and verified in other parts of the Abujhmar hills. They were collected as terms of reference, though some are used also as terms of address, e.g. *mama*, *dada*, *kaka*. I was unable in the time at my disposal to make a similar collection of the Bison-horn Maria terms; but so far as my observation went their terms are the same but for dialectical differences. This applies also, it may be added, in a considerable degree to the terms used by the Gonds of the Nagpur District, and, to judge from the incomplete list given in Trench's *Grammar*, Volume I, to those of the Betul Gonds. It may be added that when [551] a son has been born to him, a Hill or Bison-horn Maria is often addressed by his family and neighbours as the father of his son, e.g. '*Rajin-tappo*', meaning 'Father of Raje'.

601 *Dadabhai*, the word used to designate kindred or brother-clans, is a combination of *dada*, the Gondi term for an elder brother, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

ceremony; I found no case in which any widow had married a man who was not her dead husband's brother (or parallel-cousin). Indeed, owing to the distances between Hill Maria villages and the fact that in nearly all of them the men are all of one clan, irregular marriages are far less common there than in the mixed-clan villages of the Bison-horn Marias. Among the latter the second husband has sometimes to compensate the dead husband's parents in part for the bride-price paid by them when their son married the widow, as well as compensating their younger son, if any. Sometimes the widow and second husband sit side by side on stools, the widow wearing a new cloth and new ornaments, and near relatives put marks on their foreheads with oil and turmeric. There is also sometimes a ceremony to transfer the widow from the clan of her former to that of her new husband; two pieces of grass are placed together in the form of a cross to represent a man, and this cross is separated from another by a knife. Two leaf-cups are filled with water, and three times water is poured from one into the other. The two grass crosses representing the two husbands are sprinkled thrice with the water, and then the heads of the crosses are plunged together first into one cup and then into the other. The knife is regarded as the witness of this transfer of the woman from one clan to the other. When a woman elopes from one husband to another, there is sometimes a similar reconciliation ceremony between the two men after the new husband has obeyed the *panchayat's* decision as to the compensation to be paid to the first husband; their four hands are placed together, and water is poured thrice over them.

It has been seen that women not only have practically free choice among the Hill Marias and considerable choice among the Bison-horn Marias as to their husbands, and that among the latter a woman frequently goes off to a new husband if she wants to. This is practically all that there is in the way of divorce, the position being regularised by the *panchayat* insisting on the new husband paying the appropriate compensation, which is generally only the bride-price paid for the woman at her original marriage. The children, if any, remain in the father's custody, since they belong to his clan. Women often desert their first husband if they have no children and consider his sterility the cause. Physical revulsion from an abnormality is another known cause; a Kuruk Maria fishing girl in the Behra Mar hill *pargana* ran away from a husband with a withered leg, which she said had been wasted away by an angry demon (*rau*), and despite her father's entreaties to her not to put them to the expense of having to refund to her husband the heavy bride-price of Rs. 70 that he had paid them for her, absolutely refused to return. Hare-lipped men seem to have

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Appendix II

618
632
621
776

Lists of Hill Maria Clans and Bison-horn Maria Clans and Phratries, and Pedigree of the Hill Maria Family holding the Hereditary Headmanship of Chhota Dongar Pargana and Orcha Village

[(d) Signifies that the village was deserted in 1934]

Hill Maria Clans

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Usendi	Chhota Dongar	Orcha Japgunda Honar (d) Juwada Dugarli Bagom Thadur Machan Duseli Kejang (d) Uragonda (d)	Wikir Hunga (kept at Japgunda, but brought to Orcha for festivals)	Goat
	Kutru Mar	Michwada	None	
	Kirangal (*not Hill Maria but Gond Muria*)	One or two villages	?	
	Chanda District	?	?	
Wadder	Chhota Dongar	Dhanora Jori Hikpulla Kodeli Perilmeta Rengabera (d)	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda	None
	Bhomra (Muria)	Kurselhur	Use Dokra of Kurselhur	
	Chanda District, and Kutru S. of Indrawati	Kaunde and others, and Madhopar and a few more in Kutru	Kuwo-Gundo of Kaunde	
Kerami	Chhota Dongar	Hirangal Verma	Worship the Usendi god of Japgunda	None

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dodi	Do.	Jhara Rajpur Idnar	Do.	None
Dodu	Chhota Dongar	Kurmer Dedalur.	Nule Harma or Eram Mo'itto of Kurmer	None
Parsal	Do.	Chalcheghi	Do.	None
Katlami	Do.	Jhori Hikpulla (shared with Wadder)	Pandu Hunga of Jhori, elder brother of Wikir Hunga, the Usendi god	None
Jughlo, *alias* Karmo (pisral, Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar Bhairamgarh Mar	Adeq Karanmeta (d) Akmeta (d) Maspur (d) Nelanar Makawada Gomagal Hasnar Rainar Gapa (d) Itulnar	Worships the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda Say would worship Wikir Hunga if still in Chhota Dongar *pargana*, but no need as now in Kutru zamindari	None; the name Karme said to mean 'sunset', the ancestor of clan having been born then
Dharwa (almost a branch of Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar	Share Gomagal and Hasnar with Jughalor	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda but have also his sister Oghal Muttai as their own god	None; clan says it is elder brother of Jughalor

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dol ('younger brothers' of Jughakor)	Do.	Kohkapaghai	Worship Usendi god Wikir Hunga	Called Dol because members started making *dol* drums
Matami	Do.	Teknar	Do.	None
Dugher	Do.	Maramnar	Do.	None
Potawi	Do.	Almost extinct; one house in Orcha	Do.	None
Poyami	Do.	Kundali (one house)	Do.	None
Gecha	Do. Mangnar	Udala Tondawada Wetekal (d)	Do.	None. Name means 'a'uggard' clan
Neghal	Chhota Dongar	Bhera Tondawada	Do.	Panther
Ahkal	Do.	Gudadi	Do.	None
Ete[1]	Do.	Kondakoti	Nule Harma of Kurmer	? Crab
Boka	Do.	Dondrewada Bokalur		None
Kohla	Chhota Dongar	Mandali Kushnar Batwada Kostari Gumter Hoinger Devanar Kerinar Irpenar	Mu'ima Kohla Pen of Batwada	?
Padāl	Padalibhum	All the *pargana*	Gumtuli Muttai, of Adnar	None
Kumoti	Chhota Dongar	Almost extinct; 2 houses in Hasnar, 1 in Kainar	None	None
Jāti	Jātwara	Most of the *pargana*	?	?

[1] Ete is probably the same as Yete, a Kutru Mar clan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618 ●
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Boter	Kutru Mar	Boter	None	None
Wachami	Kutru Mar and Ahiri (mostly Indrawati valley)	Kumharmeta Markanar Irkapal Karkalli Bodeli and some Ahiri villages	Wachami Moitto Pen of Kumharmeta	?
Mohanda	Kutru Mar	Lakka Hingmeta Bhuri Puslakka	A god at Lakka	?
Oyami	Bhairamgarh Mar	Komu Kalhasa Malabanar (d)	None	None
Mohke	Do. Chhota Dongar	2 houses in Kalhasa Albera (d)	None	None
Yete	Bhairamgarh Mar	Hoinar	None	Crab
Pungati	Do.	2 houses in Ader (Kutru)	None	?
Bardal	Bardal Tapalibhum	Whole pargana Ranimarka	Hurra Mu'iya of Kornar	None
Farsal	Farsal	Whole pargana (13 inhabited villages)	Kodo Mo'itto of Dhurwada	None
	Bhairamgarh	Bheriabhum	None	
Gotul	Hukkagotal	Whole pargana (9 inhabited villages)	Pihanleya Muttari of Toinar in Tulagotal	None
	Tulagotal	Whole pargana (9 inhabited villages)	Do.	None
	Farsigotal	Whole pargana (5 inhabited villages)	Top Madya of Mohandi said to be younger brother of Pahanley's husband	None

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
621
632
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Tapa	Tapalibhûm (Chhota Mar)	Nearly all the villages of the *pargana*	Rikas Pen of Dodrimarka in Tapalibhum	None
Nughoti, *alias* Nuroti	Nurbhum Jâtwara Tapalibhum	All *pargana* but Turko Kohkameta Markawada Hachekote	?	None
Hichami	Nurbhum	Turko	The Nughoti god	?
Parlio	Kutru Mar	Dodmarka Karangul Nugur Ader (Kutru) Padmeta	Kornk Pen of Karangal and Nugur	Goat
Jâti	Kutru Mar Chhota Dongar	Jâtalur Akdum (J)	None	?
Kohka	Bhairamgarh Mar	Kakowada, or Kakawoki	None	Kohka-marra the marking-nut tree
Ark	Do.	Korowaya; sold Itulnar to Jughalor	None	None
Jâte (plural, Jâterom)	Mangnar	Mornar	Pat Raja	The Jâte grass used for making brooms to sweep the god's shrine
Tokalor	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The toka or flap of loin-cloth left to hang behind like a tail
Hukur	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The huk or basketry ladle used to stir rice cooked at the god's shrine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618 ●
621
632
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Marvi	Mangnar	Tökhtöll Kuwer Modangwada Moghori	Mirtî-mâgh, Pat Raja's sister's son or *bâvaejal*. They get leave from Pat Raja to hold his nephew's festivals	?
Tamo	Dantewara Mar	Tumirgunda Padmeta	Hurra Gunda Moitto of Tumirgunda	None
Atami[1]	Barsur	Chhota Karka Palawaya	Do.	?
Lekami[1]	Barsur	Batawada Ghotpal	Use Modia of Ghotpal	?

There were one or two Lekami houses in the Hill Maria villages of Handawada and Dunga.

Gume	Dantewara or Barsur Mar	Toinar Handawada Hikul Thakawada Paralnar Prinkapal Kodokal	Verma Mo'itto Pen of Toinar. The *waddai* is Jâtê by clan	None
	Bhairamgarh	Jîtawada Kunjewada Goti Dunga Pariakot	None	
Alami	Mangnar	Nendur Gatla	Attend festivals of Pat Raja, god of Jâtsrom at Mormar	Chameleon (alâm)
Nonde	Mangnar	Rotad	Do.	Rope

[1] Now, in culture, Bison-horn clans; but the Lekami intermarries with the Gume clan, and the Atami still worships the Hill Maria *pen* of the Tamo clan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615
618

BISON-HORN MARIA PHRATRIES AND CLANS

Phratry	Totem	Clans	Totem
1. Mārvi	Goat (Dantewara Jagdalpur) Cobra (Sukma and Konta)	Bārse	
		Biryā Mārvi	
		Chudalā Mārvi	
		Dōdi	
		Hēmlā	Tortoise
		Kuppē	
		Oyāmi	
		Pēdāmi	
		Tamo	
2. Kuhrāmi or Kadāri	Cuckoo (*kadiḍri*)	Budādi	
		Gāddi	
		Kartāmi	Hornbill (*karoi*)
		Kuhrāmi (or Karāmi)	Do.
		Kunjāmi	Screech-owl (*kunjā-pitte*)
		Lēkāmi	
		Poriāmi	Buffalo
		Rawa	
		Veko	
		Wetti	
[1]3. Sōdi or Ōdi	Tiger	Biryā Sōdi	Buffalo
		Chudalā Sōdi	Do.
		Oikā	
4. Markāmi	Tortoise	Atāmi (or Atrāmi)	*Atra*, the flower of the *phul-beharī* grass
		Bālē	
		Bōtē	
		Bhōyāmi	
		Biryā Markāmi	
		Chudalā Markāmi	
		Dudhi	
		Dumo	
		Durro	
		Gonche	
		Kaimu	Goat
		Karte (or Kandte)	
		Kikder	
		Miriyāmi	
		Neṅdi	
		Nupo	
		Poyāmi	Buffalo
		Tāti (or Tāmti)	
		Tēlāmi	
		Tikder	
		Undāmi	

[1] The tiger was the original totem, and the clan is still spoken of as the tiger-race; but the tigers have broken the legendary rule that no tiger will attack a Sōdi, and the Sōdis retaliate by joining the tiger-beats and adopting the buffalo as their totem instead of the tiger.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615
618

Phratry	Totem	Clans	Totem
5. Kawāsi or Wanjāmi	Tortoise	Berṭā Dirdōd Kawāsi Muchāki Murāmi Padāmi Urve Wanjāmi	

The following six clan names have not been attributed to their phratries: Gonde, Kiake, Korsa, Punem, Rega, Savalam.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Such iron knives or spurs as were tied on to the cock's legs were very small, and a Lahiri Maria criticized the usual theory that this way of increasing a cock's natural armament is cruel on the ground that if it meant a quicker death for the defeated cock it was merciful. All the headmen promised that if the ban on cock-fights were lifted they would frown on cash or grain betting, and, if we so desired, on the use of iron spurs and knives. Thoughtless officiousness such as that which stopped this favourite tribal pastime is only too typical of the lack of imagination with which officials, great and small, are apt to interfere with all that lends colour to aboriginal life.

Lahiri was one of the chief camps where I questioned the local Marias as to their clan organization, particularly the grouping of clans into phratries according to the number of *Chuddur penk* or Little Gods. I mentioned on pages 194-5 my doubts as to the traditional accounts of this god-grouping among the Chanda Marias. But these accounts go back to Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report. A somewhat confusing summary of his account, on page 101 of the *Gazetteer*, seems to imply that there is little difference between the god-grouping of the Raj-Gond, the other Gond tribes of Chanda. Lucie-Smith divided the Raj-Gonds into a four-god group, with the tortoise and crocodile totems, a five-god group with the iguana totem, a six-god group with the tiger totem, and a seven-god group with the porcupine totem: these groups were divided into what the *Gazetteer* calls 'houses or families, distinguished by their family name or *padi*', i.e. into what in this book have been called clans (*pari*), which numbered 28 among the Raj-Gonds, 24 among the Marias and 17 among the Dhurve Gond. Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, p. 66) say that in Chanda :—

> 'There are four main groups worshipping seven, six, five and four gods respectively, and each group contains ten to fifteen septs. A man cannot marry a woman of any sept which worships the same number of gods as himself. Each group has a sacred animal which the members revere, that of the seven-god worshippers being a porcupine, of the six-god worshippers, a tiger, of the five-god worshippers, the *saras* crane, and of the four-god worshippers, a tortoise. As a rule the members of the different groups do not know the names of their gods, and in practice it is doubtful whether they restrict themselves to the proper number of gods of their own group. Formerly there were three-, two-, and one-god worshippers, but in each of these classes it is said that there were only one or two septs, and they found that they were much inconvenienced by the paucity of their numbers, perhaps for the purposes of communal worship and feasting, and hence they got themselves enrolled in the larger groups. In reality it would appear that the classification according to the number of gods worshipped is being forgotten and the three lowest groups have disappeared.'

They suggested that this conjecture was supported by the fact that in Chhindwara and other localities only two large six-god and seven-god groups remained.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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114

The accounts over-simplify scattered data collected without concentrated field-enquiry. Even the *Gazetteer*, in a footnote to the passage quoted above from page 101, speaks of a group of three-god Marias having lately been verified in Lahiri. Shoobert[1] quotes the late Bishop Wood as having verified the existence of a group of three-god Marias in the Chanda villages of Lahiri and Beni-Gunda near the Bastar border of Chanda district, and enquiries which the Bishop had made for me in 1929 by the Rev. S. G. Patwardhan, the well-known Indian missionary priest of the Scottish Episcopal Church Mission at Ahiri, went further, as indicated on page 195, and established definitely that the Chanda Marias of Bidri, Yemla, Burgi,[2] Uddera and Kandodi had one three-god clan, six four-god, eight five-god, eight six-god and eight seven-god clans (31 clans against Lucie-Smith's 24). Russell and Hiralal are wrong even of Chhindwara district, where I verified some three-god clans (as in Nagpur district) and even a one-god and a no-god clan. Baron C. von Fürer-Haimendorf's forthcoming book on the Raj-Gonds of the Adilabad plateaux of Hyderabad will deal exhaustively with the god-grouping[3] of the Adilabad Gonds, whose social system is based on a system of four phratries (*saga*), the seven-god, six-god, five-god and four-god phratries. His conclusions there have been to some extent foreshadowed in his interesting article 'The Cult of the Clan Gods among the Raj-Gonds of Hyderabad', published in *Man in India*, Vol. XXV, 1945, pages 149-86. His field-work has been far more detailed and closer than any previous work among Raj-Gonds, and the whole body of myths which he has recorded as to these phratries or god-groups throws altogether new light on the origins and facts of Gond social organization. It badly needs to be supplemented rapidly by similar enquiries among all the sections of the Gonds not only in Chanda district, but also in all the Central Provinces and Berar districts and States where this god-grouping still persists. One is apt to assume that it is dying out or deteriorating rapidly in areas formerly known as British India, in contrast to areas such as Adilabad, which has never been under British rule, and has been till recently free from the detribalizing, hinduizing work of the schoolmaster, or as most of the Chanda Maria country. But the difference may be rather that the Gond of the more

[1] *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*, 1931, p. 334.

[2] I checked this at Burgi (*Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV3842) and discussed the whole question with Rev. Patwardhan at Ahiri: the 31 clans may be far from exhaustive.

[3] Haimendorf prefers to speak of 'seven-brother', 'six-brother' phratries, holding that his Raj-Gonds speak of a classification by the number not so much of *penk* (gods) as of *Wenk*, an almost untranslatable term meaning 'heroes', or 'divine ancestors'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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advanced ' areas further north, faced by Brahman ridicule of his culture, has more and more withdrawn into his shell and learnt to conceal the more intimate features of his tribal religion and culture.

Until we have before us the records of such systematized and widespread field-work it is impossible to form any reliable general theory of the origin of this god-grouping. My tentative view, so far as the Chanda Marias are concerned, for what it is worth, is that the god-grouping is a comparatively recent importation from their northern and western Gond (especially Raj-Gond) neighbours. As I have pointed out on pages 194-5, the Bastar Marias and Murias have neither god-grouping nor *chuddur penk*. I added that none of the Chanda Marias who had come to my camps in Bastar had these institutions. This may appear inconsistent with the definite proof of the existence at least of god-grouping among the Chanda Marias, as recorded from Lucie-Smith's time onwards, and verified by Bishop Wood and Rev. Patwardhan and in this tour of mine. But here again one must distinguish between the Chanda Marias of the hills above Lahiri and those of the plains and foothills. Those who came to my Bastar camps were all Chanda Hill Marias: those among whom god-grouping was verified were plains Marias. I camped for four days at Kuvakodi, a hill village high above Lahiri, and visited other hill villages close by both in Chanda and in Bastar. The Chanda Hill Marias are identical in culture with the Bastar Hill Marias, and like them had, at least at Christmas 1940, no god-grouping and no *chuddur penk*. The Hill Marias of Chanda in fact appear to be what the *Gazetteer*[1] describes as the Gaita sub-tribe of Gonds, and the speakers of the dialect referred to by it[2] and in the *Linguistic Survey* as Gattu, the language of the 'Kois or Gonds of the hills, especially in Sironcha', who 'are known as Gattu or Gotte Kois'; for it speaks of the Gaita Gonds as being 'almost alone in retaining the old Gondi custom, once universal, of building their village in two long barracks lying east and west facing each other about eighty feet apart' in which the married people dwell, while the bachelors, and in some villages unmarried girls also, have separate barracks. This description clearly fits the Hill Marias of Kuvakodi and adjacent hill villages, as it would do the villages of the neighbouring Hill Maria *pargenas* of Bastar.

So we start with these, the most primitive of the Marias of Chanda, and find among them no trace of god-grouping or *chuddur penk*. Down the hill we come to Lahiri, and we find god-grouping (which, however, includes a three-god group absent among the Chanda and Adilabad Raj-Gonds), but, so far as I could ascertain, no *chuddur*

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 97, 98.
[2] Ibidem, p. 73.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

penk corresponding in number to the number of gods of the god-group, and apparently no domestic cult except of the Departed. As you go northwards beyond Surjagarh or north-westwards towards Chand the Marias begin to understand the meaning of god-grouping and of *chuddur penk*, but even there seemed to me—admittedly my enquiries were superficial—to have no such vital interest in these things as a typical Raj-Gond or Dhurve Gond. This would be explicable on a theory that this god-grouping was something gradually imposed, not necessarily deliberately, but by infiltration and imitation, by the Gonds of the ruling house of Chanda and the aristocratic Gond zamindars, under the feudal system grouped about the Chanda Maharaja, upon the whole 'Maria' substratum of the Gonds of Chanda. The Marias probably represent one or two early waves of Gond migration southwards or, at least the Hill Marias, an earlier pre-Gond race with Veddid, Malid or Munda affinities.[1] There are differences between Chanda Hill Maria and plains Maria speech, the former being as guttural as Bastar Hill Maria; but all Chand Marias speak a form of Gondi very different from the Gondi of the Raj and Dhruve Gonds of Chanda, which would support the view that the latter represent different waves of migration, later moreover in view of their very advanced social and political organization and their aristocratic elements: compare also the position of the Pardhan bards and musicians in Raj-Gond life with their rarity in Maria villages. It is probable also that the ancestors of many who now are called Raj-Gonds a few generations back were Maria. The *Gazetteer*[2] mentions that though Marias do not now (1909) intermarry with Raj-Gonds, the records of the Ahiri family show that they once did so. The very term Raj-Gond in my view, as expressed on page 36, arose from the process still common whereby as sections of aboriginal tribes became Hinduised or acquired political power they distinguish themselves from the main body of their original tribe, so as to fit into the caste system. There can be little doubt that as the Raj-Gond kingdom of Chanda grew in power leading local Gond or Maria headmen or elders who fitted into the social organization of the kingdom came to be regarded as Raj-Gond: compare also the discussion earlier in this Note[3] of the meaning of the term 'Maria' and its disappearance in Drug district terminology in very recent times.[4] What, therefore, could be more

[1] Comparable with, for example, the Kolams of Hyderabad and Berar, or the Hill Reddis of Hyderabad, Madras and Orissa. The late Bishop Wood on hearing Bastar Marias talk said that to him it sounded like Gonds spoken with Mandari accent and intonation. See also R. C. Roy on pp. 317-18.

[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909) p. 101.

[3] P. 377.

[4] P. 378.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

natural than for the backward Marias aspiring to raise themselves to Raj-Gond status to copy gradually the Raj-Gond social organization? It is equally possible that *pari passu* the Raj-Gond ruler and nobles encouraged this: in all these semi-feudal, semi-tribal states and sub-states, as to this day in the States and zamindaris of Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the Maharajah of the State or the Rajah of the zamindari remains the final arbiter in caste matters, even often conferring the right to wear the sacred thread on communities actively hinduizing themselves. At Surjagarh and Jarawandi camps, various *Sendhias* and headmen practically admitted to me that god-grouping was not originally a Maria institution.[1]

From Lahiri there was a long climb of thirteen miles to the Hill Maria village of Kuvakodi, when we halted for four days, including Christmas Day. The track led at first up the valley of the Lahiri river, then up the side valley of a small tributary, and so by an exceptionally steep ascent on to an undulating plateau, across which we reached Kuvakodi at dusk, our camp equipment all being carried on poles by Marias, whom on arrival we rewarded not only in cash but, in Bastar fashion, with salt and beads, and a feast of pork: the Marias sat ranged by clan and village, and those who killed and cooked the pork distributed to every man and child, and to the women of Kuvakodi, a portion of the meat off each joint of the pig. On the way up a slight detour took us through the small village of Gudumundi, and from Kuvakodi we visited Podewara and the Bastar village of Nelangari, some five miles from our camp.

Each day started with a parade of yaws patients for inoculation, all from Chanda villages: the Bastar Marias, who came in to see me and to join in the dancing each evening, looked tolerantly on, having themselves long before had the benefit of the Bastar anti-yaws parties.

The whole cultivation system of the Chanda Hill Marias is identical with the Bastar system described in Chapter VII of this book: it is, that is to say, *penda* cultivation and not what is generally known in the Central Provinces as *dahi*, or its Chanda plains variations of *khamari*, *jalapod*, *podu* or *sampod* (these terms will be explained later in this Note). There is the same broadcast sowing on the same kind of clearings of seed of all the minor millets and beans. The

[1] Haimendorf in reviewing Shamrao Hivale's *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley* has pointed out that the fact that the Pardhans' clan organization is everywhere based on that of the local Gond, does not disprove the different origin of the two peoples, for there are many examples of other tribes adopting their Gond neighbours' system of phratries and clans. He instances from Chanda district and Hyderabad State not only the aboriginal castes as certain Maratha blacksmiths and brass-workers who have the same clan names as the Gonds, *Man in India*, Vol. XXVI, 1946, p. 231. Compare also the Kuruk fishing tribe in Bastar, pp. 163-4.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and Drug Districts. How far the institution was distributed in former times must remain a mystery. Hislop describes the Gaiti Gond as 'calling themselves Koitars . . . Their chief peculiarity, which I have not found among common Gonds, though it may exist even among them, is to have in each village a separate tenement set apart for the occupancy of unmarried men during the night. This they call a *gotalghar* (empty bed house). In some villages there is a like provision made for the unmarried Gaiti women . . . When the Gaitis have returned in the evening from their work in the jungle, where they are very industrious in cultivation and cutting timber, all the families go to their respective houses for their supper, after which the young men retire to their common dwelling, where around a blazing fire, they dance for an hour or two, each having a small drum suspended in front from his waist, which he beats as he moves about while the young women sit at no great distance accompanying the performance with a song.'[1]

The Census of 1891 returned 5521 of these Gaiti who were then distributed in the Sakoli Tahsil of Bhandara (where they numbered 665), the Brahmapuri Tahsil of Chanda (215) and the north of Bastar (4535).[2] About this W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'The reference to Brahmapuri Tahsil dates back to the time before the separate Garhchiroli Tahsil was created. The reference therefore is probably to the people of the Garhchiroli Zamindaris such as Jharapara and Murramgaon, and possibly to the zamindaris of Karacha, Aundhi and Pannabaras now in Drug District which were in Chanda before the foundation of Drug. Some of these zamindaris border on Antagarh Tahsil and the local Gond is sometimes referred to as Maria and sometimes as Gaita, just as in Sironcha Tahsil the Hill Maria is sometimes called Gaita because his headman is known as the Gaita of the village.'

With all these differences do the Muria regard themselves as a single tribe? Can any Muria intermarry with any other Muria family? Do they eat together? Have they any connexion with the outside world?

Such problems as these are not easy to solve, for they do not often arise in practice and there are few precedents. Geographical factors tend to split the Muria up into roughly endogamous groups, but there is no rule about this. A Muria boy from the extreme west can go to a ghotul in the east of Kondagaon and find himself at home and perhaps find himself a wife. The ghotul is a fundamental bond, and in theory at least all Muria who have it as part of their culture can marry each other. In practice, the Jhoria Muria of the south-west do not often come into touch with the Gond Muria of the north and east, and marriages between them are rare.

As for different tribes and tribes outside Bastar—the Muria of the northern parganas often intermarry with the Kanker Gond (who also have the ghotul system and are really Muria). The Jhoria Muria marry Hill Maria of the appropriate clans whenever geographical conditions allow them to do so. The same is sometimes true of the Muria of the Paralkot area. Those Muria who have migrated from Jeypore naturally marry their relations who have remained in the Orissa territory. Bindo, the old Muria leader of Benur, told me that 'we marry Kanker Gond and the Bhattra Muria of Jagdalpur (but not the Raja Muria) for we are of the same family; but now we live in the hills and they on the plains. Those who live near the Raja are the true Raja Muria, and they look down on us.' Bindo is here referring to the thirty or forty thousand Muria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil to the south of Kondagaon. These Muria have

[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part I, p. 22.
[2] *Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XI, Part I, p. 183.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

619 given up eating beef, and either never had or have abandoned the ghotul system. Their influence is gradually making itself felt in the south of Kondagaon to the east of the road, where the Ghotul Muria call those who have separated themselves from them 'Bhattra'. This is probably the best name for the Raja Muria of Jagdalpur. Indeed it would be a great convenience if we could call the western Muria 'Jhoria', the Muria of Kondagaon 'Muria' and the Muria of Jagdalpur 'Bhattra'. It may be that one day they will call themselves by these titles, and then we can follow suit.

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However, there is no intermarriage between the Raja Muria or Bara Bhattra of Jagdalpur, but it continues naturally enough with the Bhattra Muria or ordinary Muria just across the border of the tahsil. It is evident, however, that the Muria think of themselves as a single people, related (it is true) to several others, but having one common rallying point in the ghotul founded by Lingo Pen, the father of the tribe.

IV. Physical Characters of the Muria

142 At the end of February 1942, Dr B. S. Guha, of the Zoological Survey of India, accepted my invitation to visit Bastar in order to examine the physical characters of the Muria. He joined me at Dongrigura in the Kondagaon Tahsil, where he measured 52 adult male Muria, and we then went on to Markabera in the Abujhmar foothills. Here he measured 51 adult male Muria of this and surrounding villages. He has written a detailed account which is printed elsewhere, but the following brief description may be inserted here.

'The difference', he writes, 'between the plains Muria of Kondagaon and the Abujhmar foothills Muria, in all essential physical characters, is hardly significant except to a small extent in the shape of the nose. The latter have a slightly longer, narrower and more prominent nose as compared to the former. This difference may be fortuitous and may disappear if larger samples are taken, a view to which I am provisionally inclined, though the possibility of some genuine difference in this respect between the two cannot be altogether ruled out.

'Taking the two groups together the Muria are a short-statured long-headed race with broad cheek bones and rather short pearish type of face. Alike in the absolute measurements (mean H.L. 185·56±0·35; H.B. 138·56 [141] ±0·29 and mean C.I. 74·72±0·18) and the bulging of the occiput, the head is essentially dolichocephalic; there is hardly any true brachycephaly noticeable. The forehead is on the average well-arched but in an appreciable number it tends to be vertical. The supraorbital ridges vary from moderate to well-marked—in a few they are very prominent. On the whole the face tends to project forwards—approximately one-half of the people being prognathic. The nose is usually flat and broad and the nasal root depressed, the lips thick and the chin retreating. In a small number, however, the face is longish, the lips thin, and the chin well developed and some even show a prominent nose with a tendency to aquilinity.

'The skin colour is on the average dark chocolate brown, though individuals with brown and even yellowish brown skin colour are not wanting. The hair is black and varies between straight and wavy with a few persons showing curly hair. It is usually very rich on the head but only moderate on the lips and face. The body hair is rather slight.

'The eye colour is generally black and the eye is horizontal but in seven men examined it was undoubtedly oblique and in a few cases traces of the

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

101 without a considerable Gond population, but the main strongholds of
162 the Gonds are to-day the Satpura plateau including the districts of Betul,
197 Chhindwara and Seoni, where the western type of Gondi is spoken, Mandla and Chhattisgarh in the east, where the Gonds have adopted the local dialect of eastern Hindi but retained their tribal identity, and in the south Chanda and the neighbouring Yeotmal, where the language is Gondi, but of a dialect somewhat different from the Gondi of Betul.

101 To the north-west the Gonds extend across the Narbada River into
691 Central India, and are particularly numerous in Indore State; to the
197 east of the Central Provinces lie the states of Gond princes, such as
[619] Kawardha, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, to-day known as the Chhattisgarh States. Although neither these Gond rajas, nor indeed the Gonds among their subjects speak Gondi, they are fully conscious of their tribal associations and the high status of the ruling princes adds no doubt to tribal prestige in the whole of Chhattisgarh.

Further south, bordering on Chanda, Drug and Raipur, extend the two States of Kanker and Bastar, where Gonds constitute the majority of the population. Bastar in particular is the home of three important groups of Gonds: the Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias, all of which differ in language and custom very considerably from the Gonds of the Central Provinces.[1] Their colourful and complex cul-
[174] tures are representative of ancient aboriginal India and show obvious affinities with the Austroasiatic cultures of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Bastar has also part in the Koyas or Dorlas of the Godavari area, the most southern branch of the Gond family occurring in considerable strength in Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State and stretching across the barrier of the Eastern Ghats into the vicinity of Rajahmundry. Most Koyas still speak a dialect of Gondi, but those surrounded by Telugu populations, have changed over to Telugu.

Another substantial group of Gonds, closely akin to the Gonds of Yeotmal and Chanda, is found in the hilly country between the Godavari and the Penganga Rivers constituting the Adilabad District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, and it is these Gonds who form the subject of the present work.

101 All the Gonds of Adilabad, except for an insignificant overflow of
186 Dhurwe Gonds from Chanda, consider themselves Raj Gonds, and this brings us to the still somewhat problematic division between Raj Gonds and Dhur or Dhurwe Gonds, which runs through the greater part of the Gond population within the Central Provinces. There seems to be no uniformity in the principles ruling this division; in Chhattisgarh only the members of ruling or formerly ruling families are described as Raj Gond, while in other parts most of the land-holding Gonds aspire to this denomination. In recent times the name Raj Gond has also been
[66] claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status by

1. The Hill Marias extend into the hills of the neighbouring Chanda District.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 But in many villages instead of a communal *pedawo'gha'i* there is a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the 841 residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *pedawo'gha'i* room known generally as *hala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely [784] *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *hala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

485 There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable attached.

361 The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria [35] village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The [778] Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *kasyeq-gaita's* house, near the latter's *udam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-rawar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parllo clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal 361 the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who ● 621 was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street; [194]

[1] Or *ala*; the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

and every Maria house was occupied by members of the Parllo clan, the only partial exception being the empty house (no. 1-a) which had till recently been occupied by a youth of the Deda clan, which may intermarry with the Parllo clan, serving as *lamana'i* to win the niece of Parllo Murra, occupant of house no. 1-d. It will be observed that some long-houses have a joint menstruation hut at the rear of the house, while in some there is a separate *kala* for each house in the long-house. The *kasyeq-gaita's* house is at the dormitory end of the street, a very usual position.

The shifting of villages

It has already been implied that though a village site may be abandoned for superstitious reasons, the predominant reason is economic, the exhaustion of the *penda* slopes that can be conveniently cultivated from the existing village. If three or more *kaghai* (*penda* sites) can be dealt with from one *paghai* or village site, then the village may remain on that site for seven or eight years, even though there are other *paghai* in the other *penda* sites cultivated from it; or if any portion of the last *penda* site to be cultivated is very remote from it, then a few houses may be shifted there. What makes the old topographical survey maps so useless for finding a modern village is that they mark only the village site occupied in the sixties, generally, too, by the particular name of that site, not by the general name of the village. The big village of Orcha, for example, is not marked as such, but by the name of its *paghai* Hoinar. A reference to the sketch map of the parish (to use a term more suitable than 'village') of Handawada in Dantewara Mar (opposite p. 108) will make the position clear. The parish has ten alternative *kaghai* cultivation sites, viz.:—

1. Kawar *kaghai*, 1st half.
2. Ditto, 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta *kaghai*.
4. Hitangpal *kaghai*.
5. Kurmelnar *kaghai*.
6. Rekarai *kaghai*.
7. Handawada *kaghai*, 1st half.
8. Ditto, 2nd half.
9. Ahekele *kaghai*, 1st half.
10. Ditto, 2nd half.

Of these, nos. 1, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 only contained *paghai* village sites. In February 1930 the main village was still settled in no. 9, but the *penda* slopes in nos. 9 and 10 had been exhausted, and those in no. 1 had been partly cultivated for the first year and were being reaped. Nos. 9 and 10 had lasted for six years and, though the villagers had started to cultivate no. 1 a long way below the village site in no. 9 and on the other side of the Goinder river, they were only then at harvest time starting to shift the village to the *paghai* in no. 2; in fact, the labour of the first year's work of clearing and cultivating a fresh *penda* slope is so heavy that the shifting of the village itself is, when necessitated by the distance of the existing site

[text continues on p. 109]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

361
241
621
427

Key to Figure 6

Kaghai Names (see p. 107).

1. Kawar, 1st half.
2. Do., 2nd half.
3. Irapmeta.
4. Hitanggal.
5. Kurmelnar.
6. Rekarai.
7. Handawada, 1st half.
8. Do., 2nd half.
9. Abekele, 1st half.
10. Do., 2nd half.

The letters against fields in nos. 2 and 3 and houses and granaries in nos. 1, 3, 9 and 10 refer to the tenants in the list below. Tenants A to N are Gume by clan, O to Q, Tamo.

(*Abbreviations.*—M = mother, W = wife, S = grown-up son, b = boy child, g = girl child, D = marriageable daughter.)

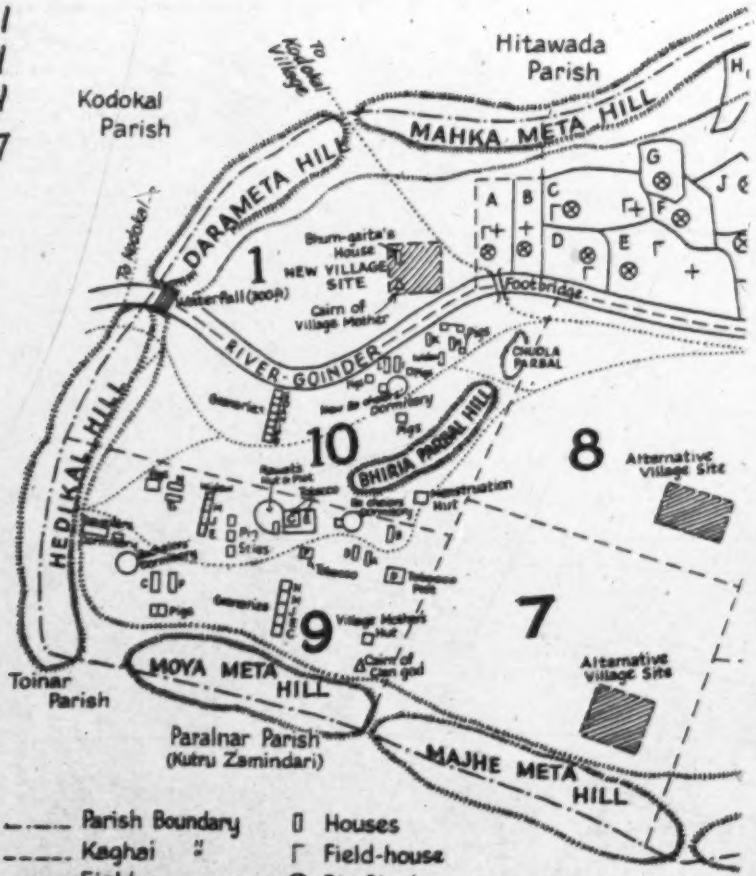
Letter	*Tenant*	*Family*	*Area in acres*	*Rent* Rs. a.
A	Modi s/o Malla	M., cousin's widow	5·00	2 4
B	Lalu s/o Banda, Bhum-gaita	W., 1 b.	4·50	1 12
C	Banda s/o Bursai	W., 2 g.	6·25	3 8
D	Horra s/o Musra	W., 1 g.	3·50	2 4
E	Masa s/o Kule, gaita	W., 1 S., 1 g.	7·50	4 12
F	Pido s/o Doga	W., 1 b.	3·50	2 0
G	Irpa s/o Karanje	W.	1·50	1 8
H	Rama s/o Peda Junga s/o Rama	W., 1 S., 2 g.	4·50	2 4 1 8
I	Kohla s/o Pahandi	W., 1 D., 1 man serving to win daughter's hand	4·00	1 8
J	Doga s/o Wijja	W., 1 b., 1 g.	4·00	1 12
K	Kuma s/o Boda	W., 1 g.	4·50	1 4
L	Juga s/o Wijja	M.	1·50	2 0
M	Malla s/o Gorra, Kasyeq-gaita	W., 1 S., 1 b., 1 g.	5·50	2 4
N	Pahandi s/o Karanje	W., M.	2·50	2 12
O	Hara s/o Pandu	W.	3·00	2 4
P	Bandi s/o Kuli	W., M., 2 b.	5·00	2 12
Q	Musra s/o Pandu	W.	2·25	2 4
		Total Acres	68·50	Rs. 40 12

There was also in Abekele Kaghai no. 9 a house shared by a Rawat and a Telugu with a small tobacco plot paying 4 annas rent 4

Rs. 41 0

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

361
241
● 624
427



The buildings etc. in Kaghai Nos 9 & 10 are of course drawn too large in comparison to the areas of the fields in Nos 2 & 3; actually they left ample room for fields in Nos 9 & 10, but had become more scattered when those fields became exhausted

FIGURE 6
PARISH MAP OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(A)]

I:Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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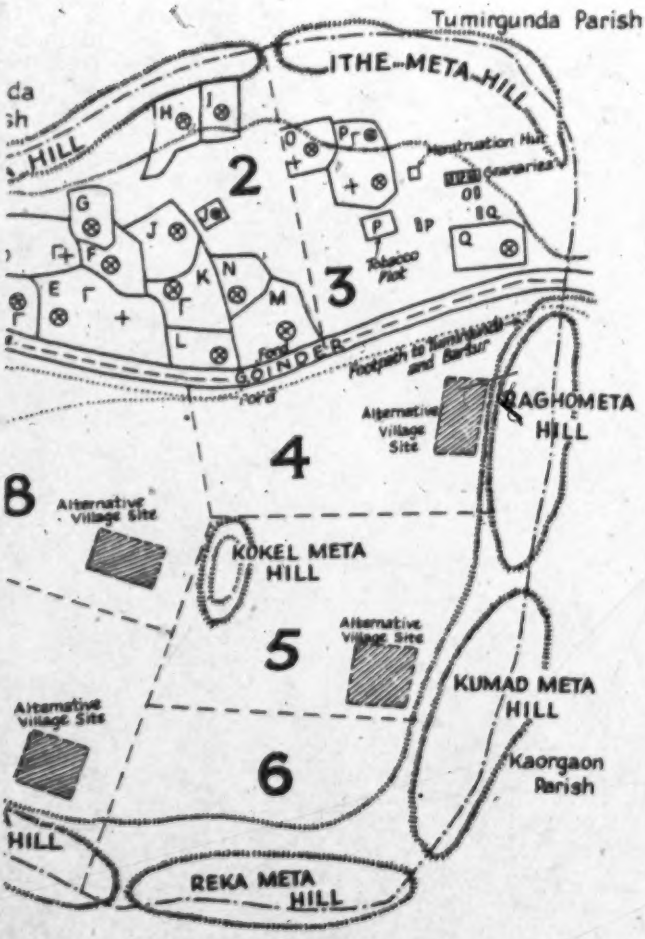
241
●621
427



IGURE 6
OF HANDAWADA

[p. 108(B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from the fresh cultivation site, postponed till after the first harvest has been raised on the latter. This is inconvenient only to the women, as from the time when the new *kosra* comes into ear till the harvest is over all the men sleep apart from their wives in their fields, while their womenfolk have to sleep in the village, it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to have sexual intercourse during this period. As it was inconvenient for the bachelors to sleep in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) on the hill-top village in Ahekele *paghai*, a temporary dormitory had been made near the river, actually in Ahekele *kaghai* no. 10, but close to the bridge by which the villagers crossed the river to their *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai*; and there were also four houses there, and a row of granaries, that site having been more convenient for some of the villagers whose fields had been on the lower slopes of *kaghai* no. 10 when that was being cultivated. Handawada is a village of the Gume clan; and all the houses in the village on Ahekele *paghai*, those by the river in *kaghai* no. 10, and the one advance-guard house in Kawar *paghai*, as well as all the *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1, belonged to members of the Gume clan: but in the small Irpmeta *kaghai* no. 3 three families of the Tamo clan, with which the Gume clan may intermarry, had been allowed to have *penda* cultivation and to build houses and granaries; the wives had all been Gume girls. In the new village site, Kawar *paghai*, one villager had already built his house, to which I referred above as the advance-guard house, because he had been sent to make an experimental *penda* field in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1 a year in advance of the rest of the villagers, in accordance with custom; on the success of this experimental cultivation depends the villagers' decision whether to migrate *en masse* in the following year. There was also a newly made cairn close by where a ceremony in honour of the Village Mother had been performed as an essential preliminary to the shifting of the village. When I next camped in the parish in March 1934, the villagers had for three years occupied Kawar *paghai*, and the houses were dirty and smoke-blackened; the villagers had found the site feverish and unhealthy owing to its proximity to the river, there had been several deaths, and Kawar *kaghai* nos. 1 and 2 had each been exhausted in two years. Their Tamo relatives had exhausted Irpmeta *kaghai* and left the parish. The *Bhum-gaita* and another villager had been sent ahead to make experimental *penda* plots in Hitangpal *kaghai* (no. 4), and the villagers proposed to shift the village during 1935 to the village site in that *kaghai* or the adjacent Kurmelnar *kaghai* (no. 5); the experiments in Hitangpal had succeeded, and the villagers were to start their *penda* felling in a few days.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The population is comparatively small, and the land available for
[423] the shifting *penda* cultivation is very extensive. There is practically no individual property in *penda* land, and it is recognized only in permanent rice fields.

361 In comparison, the Bison-horn Maria country is thickly
244 populated; there is far more permanent rice cultivation; much
178 old *penda* land has lost its forest growth, or is getting steadily slower in recuperating it after each time when it is felled and burnt for *penda* cultivation; and each villager likes to have a large *bari*
● 62 or garden enclosure at the back of his house or in the immediate neighbourhood of the village where he can grow tobacco, maize, chillies, tomatoes and sesamum, and can pen his cattle for the sake of their manure. In consequence, economic considerations now operate in favour of the permanency of Bison-horn Maria villages and against their being shifted; as the pressure on the land has become greater the alternative sites (*padar*), to which in past generations a village was from time to time shifted, have been permanently occupied by hamlets (*para*) of that village, and the settlers in the hamlets have permanently occupied the adjacent *penda* sites once cultivated in rotation by the shifting village. Many big Bison-horn villages have six or seven hamlets, some of which are virtually separate villages, and are beginning to assert a separate identity by having their own headmen and sometimes their own village priests, though on formal occasions all will still gather together at the original *padar* of the village and its hamlets, and acknowledge there the authority of the headman and priest of the parent village. In the Abujhmar hills, moreover, each village is still inhabited almost entirely by members of one clan, and all the lands of the villages are regarded as the lands of the clan. But in the Bison-horn country, though each parish is still said to be the *bhum* (earth) of the clan which first settled there, yet there are generally in the village many houses of other clans and wife-clans, from whom the first settlers and their descendants have taken wives. Though they will still say that a certain village is the *bhum*
[423] of the clan that founded it, yet in consequence of the many representatives of other clans settled there now the village and its lands are not looked on as that clan's property in anything like the same degree as among the Hill Marias, nor in actual fact is the original clan so free to shift the village as it was before it allowed its wife-clans to share its village site and cultivable lands. Often, too, the headman is no longer a member of the settler clan. If,
[166] therefore, a Bison-horn village does shift in these days, the move is probably due to superstitious motives, or to epidemic or epizootic disease.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the family and clan to which she goes as a bride. She may elope with another man, but he must compensate the first husband. She must work for her husband, having his meals ready in the home or taking them to him in the field when he wants them, gathering forest fruits and roots, and doing her appointed work in the fields; many a woman has paid with her life by exasperating her tired husband by not having his food ready or by cooking it badly. She is not a full human being like a man. She is taboo when menstruating; she may not sleep in the field when the crops are ripening; she is debarred from attending at the festivals and *pandum*; she has no special dancing dress. Yet with all this she has not too bad a position. As a girl she has considerable freedom both in pre-marital sexual life and in the choice of a husband, and she is fairly free to leave her husband if he ill-treats her, or if he cannot beget a child. Tribal sentiment strongly condemns wife-beating. Her natural taste for ornament is given full scope, her parents gradually collecting beads and metal neck and arm rings, her boy-companion presenting her with beads and carved hair-combs, and her husband when she is married recognizing her right to spend a few of the scanty pice she earns from the sale of her basketry at the bazaar on simple trinkets. She participates in the tribal dances and songs, though not in the religious ceremonies that accompany them. In fact her position *vis-a-vis* her husband is far freer than that of the ordinary Hindu wife. Above all, she is not exposed to the evil of child marriage and premature motherhood, of which habits of their Hindu neighbours Maria headmen will speak with abhorrence.

Such in brief and imperfect outline are the main principles governing tribal law and custom, and the main features of the old village and tribal headman and *panchayat* organization. No attempt has been made in this chapter to draw any clear-cut distinction between the ways of the Hill and the Bison-horn Marias; in actual practice both treat such matters in much the same way, the main distinctions being (*a*) that the primitive clan organization is stronger and the authority of the headmen more limited by that of elders among the Hill Marias, and (*b*) that the Bison-horn Maria has been more in contact with the outer Hindu world than the Hill Maria.

The recent State Order restoring jurisdiction to Panchayats

Under the State Order framed in 1932 by my successor, the regular criminal courts of the State have been deprived of jurisdiction over the primitive tribes in cases of certain public nuisances, simple hurt and assault, thefts (except of cattle), of property worth Rs. 5 or less, mischief, trespass, house-trespass, bigamy, adultery and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Appendix II

618
632
621
776

Lists of Hill Maria Clans and Bison-horn Maria Clans and Phratries, and Pedigree of the Hill Maria Family holding the Hereditary Headmanship of Chhota Dongar Pargana and Orcha Village

[(d) Signifies that the village was deserted in 1934]

Hill Maria Clans

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Usendi	Chhota Dongar	Orcha Japgunda Hoinar (d) Juwada Dugarli Bagom Thadur Machan Duseli Kejang (d) Uragonda (d)	Wikir Hunga (kept at Japgunda, but brought to Orcha for festivals)	Goat
	Kutru Mar	Michwada	None	
	Kirangal (*not Hill Maria but Gotul Muria*)	One or two villages	?	
	Chanda District	?	?	
Wadder	Chhota Dongar	Dhanora Jori Hikpulla Kodeli Perilmeta Rengabera (d)	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda	None
	Bhomra (Muria)	Kurselhur	Use Dokra of Kurselhur	
	Chanda District, and Kutru S. of Indrawati	Kaunde and others, and Madhepar and a few more in Kutru	Kuwo-Gundo of Kaunde	
Korami	Chhota Dongar	Hirangal Verma	Worship the Usendi god of Japgunda	None

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dodi	Do.	Jhara Rajpur Idnar	Do.	None
Deda	Chhota Dongar	Kurmer Dedalur	Nule Harma or Eram Mo'itto of Kurmer	None
Parsal	Do.	Chalcheghi	Do.	None
Katlami	Do.	Jhori Hilkpulla (shared with Wadder)	Pandu Hunga of Jhori, elder brother of Wikir Hunga, the Usendi god	None
Jughо, *alias* Karme (plural, Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar	Adeq Karanmeta (d) Akmeta (d) Maspur (d) Nelanar Makawada Gomagal Hasnar Rainar	Worships the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda	None; the name Karme said to mean 'sunset', the ancestor of clan having been born then
	Bhairamgarh Mar	Gapa (d) Itulnar	Say would worship Wikir Hunga if still in Chhota Dongar *pargana*, but no need as now in Kutru zamindari	
Dhurwa (almost a branch of Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar	Share Gomagal and Hasnar with Jughalor	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda but have also his sister Oghal Muttai as their own god	None; clan says it is elder brother of Jughalor

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dol ('younger brothers' of Jughalor)	Do.	Kohkapaghai	Worship Usendi god Wikir Hunga	Called Dol because members started making *dol* drums
Matami	Do.	Teknar	Do.	None
Dugher	Do.	Maramnar	Do.	None
Potawi	Do.	Almost extinct; one house in Orcha	Do.	None
Poyami	Do.	Kundali (one house)	Do.	None
Gecha	Do. Mangnar	Udala Tondawada Wetekal (d)	Do.	None. Name means 'sluggard' clan
Neghal	Chhota Dongar	Bhera Tondawada	Do.	Panther
Ahkal	Do.	Gudadi	Do.	None
Ete[1]	Do.	Kondakoti	Nule Harma of Kurmer	? Crab
Boka	Do.	Dondrewada Bokalur		None
Kohla	Chhota Dongar	Mandali Kushnar Batwada Kostari Gumter Hoinger Devanar Kerinar Irpenar	Mu'ima Kohla Pen of Batwada	?
Padal	Padalibhum	All the *pargana*	Gumtuli Muttai, of Adnar	None
Kumoti	Chhota Dongar	Almost extinct; 2 houses in Hasnar, 1 in Rainar	None	None
Jiti	Jatwara	Most of the *pargana*	?	?

[1] Ete is probably the same as Yete, a Kutru Mar clan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Boter	Kutru Mar	Boter	None	None
Wachami	Kutru Mar and Ahiri (mostly Indrawati valley)	Kumharmeta Markanar Irkapal Karkelli Bodeli and some Ahiri villages	Wachami Moitto Pen of Kumharmeta	?
Mohanda	Kutru Mar	Lakka Hingmeta Bhuri Puslakka	A god at Lakka	?
Oyāmi	Bhairamgarh Mar	Komu Kalhaza Malahanar (d)	None	None
Mohke	Do. Chhota Dongar	2 houses in Kalhaza Albera (d)	None	None
Yete	Bhairamgarh Mar	Hoinar	None	Crab
Pungati	Do.	2 houses in Ader (Kutru)	None	?
Bardāl	Bardal Tapalibhum	Whole *pargana* Ranimarka	Hurra Mu'iya of Kornār	None
Farsāl	Farsāl	Whole *pargana* (13 inhabited villages)	Kodo Mo'itto of Dhurwada	None
	Bhairamgarh	Bheriabhum	None	
Gōtāl	Hukkagotal	Whole *pargana* (9 inhabited villages)	Pāhanleya Muttari of Toinar in Tulsagotal	None
	Tulsagotal	Whole *pargana* (9 inhabited villages)	Do.	None
	Farsigotal	Whole *pargana* (5 inhabited villages)	Top Mudya of Mohandi, said to be younger brother of Pahanley's husband	None

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill. Maria

618
621
632
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Tapa	Tapâlibhûm (Chhote Mar)	Nearly all the villages of the *pargana*	Riksa Pen of Dodrimarka in Tapalibhûm	None
Nughoti, *alias* Nuroti	Nurbhum jâtwara Tapalibhum	All *pargana* but Turko Kohkameta Markawada Hachekote	?	None
Hichami	Nurbhum	Turko	The Nughoti god	?
Parlio	Kutru Mar	Dodmarka Karangul Nugur Ader (Kutru) Padmeta	Koruk Pen of Karangal and Nugur	Goat
Jâtâ	Kutru Mar Chhote Dongar	Jâtalur Akdum (d)	None	?
Kohka	Bhairamgarh Mar	Kakowada, or Kakawoki	None	Kohka-marra the marking-nut tree
Ark	Do.	Korowaya; sold Itulnar to Jughalor	None	None
Jâte (plural, Jâterom)	Mangnar	Mornar	Pat Raja	The Jâte grass used for making brooms to sweep the god's shrine
Tokalor	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The *toka* or flap of loincloth left to hang behind like a tail
Hukur	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The *huk* or basketry ladle used to stir rice cooked at the god's shrine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
621
632
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Marvi	Mangnar	Tōkhtōll Kuwer Modangwada Moghori	Mārā-māgh, Pat Raja's sister's son or *bārawjal*. They get leave from Pat Raja to hold his nephew's festivals	?
Tamo	Dantewara Mar	Tumirgunda Padmeta	Hurra Gunda Moitto of Tumir-gunda	None
Atami[1]	Barsur	Chhota Karka Palawaya	Do.	?
Leka.mi[1]	Barsur	Batawada Ghotpal	Use Modia of Ghotpal	?

There were one or two Lekami houses in the Hill Maria villages of Handawada and Dunga.

Gume	Dantewara or Barsur Mar	Toinar Handawada Hikul Thakawada Paralnar Prinkapal Kodokal Hitawada	Verma Mo'itto Pen of Toinar. The *waddai* is Jātē by clan	None
	Bhairamgarh	Kunjewada Goti Dunga Pariakot	None	
Alami	Mangnar	Nendur Gatia	Attend festivals of Pat Raja, god of Jāt-erom at Mornar	Chameleon (alām)
Nonde	Mangnar	Rotad	Do.	Rope

[1] Now, in culture, Bison-horn clans; but the Lekami intermarries with the Gume clan, and the Atami still worships the Hill Maria *pen* of the Tamo clan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

same ceremonies and festivals are observed in connexion with cutting and firing of the *penda*, sowing, harvesting and first eating of the new crops. Most of the reaping of the 'big *kosra*' crops had been completed, but that of the '*os kosra*' millets and pulses was still in progress. For many of the *penda* plots in the current *kaghai* cultivation clearing (see p. 107) this was the second and last year of cultivation, and the *kuthi* crop raised was known as *hiwar*, a term, according to the *Gazetteer*,[1] always technically applied to these second year crops. I sent specimens of both *hiwar* and *kosra* of *kohala* (see p. 134) for identification to the Nagpur Agricultural College: botanically both were identical. These villages have never had the advantage of the special system of poll-tax assessment on every able-bodied axeman in the village which I devised for Bastar (p. 145). The system followed in these hill villages of Ahiri is roughly this. Each *penda* is cut by a number of villagers with the approval of the *gaita*, and the portion cut by each of them is roughly marked by one or other of the methods indicated on page 131. Help is taken from other villagers, who are always ready to give this mutual aid, and at harvest the produce is divided among the different share-holders of the *penda*, with something also for all who helped to clear the *penda*; sometimes a number of plots are specially earmarked for division of the produce by the *gaita* and elders amongst all who joined in clearing the whole *kaghai* and in watching and fencing the crops; a part of the produce is also allocated to villagers too old and feeble to work. The zamindar's *kamdar* or agent is paid rent, usually in kind, by the *gaita* for the whole village, for paying which the *gaita* takes a share of the produce of each *penda* plot. The village cultivation is in fact a truly co-operative enterprise.

I have alluded above to the arbitrary stopping in the plains Maria villages of the Chanda zamindaris of *dahi* cultivation, and the consequent increase of debt among the Marias. This Kuvakodi hill tract is fortunate, however, in having escaped this prohibition; it is the only Ahiri area where *penda* reigns undisturbed. It was therefore no surprise to find not a single case of old debt among the fifty or sixty Hill Maria cultivators who assembled at my camp from Kuvakodi and the other hill villages. Occasionally when crops are poor and the *kamdar* has to be paid rent in cash, the *gaita* goes to a Teli money-lender in the plains to borrow the money. But the villagers look on this as the debt of the whole village, not of the *gaita*, and though the Teli is as unscrupulous here as in any plains village in exacting high interest, yet the combined villagers are usually able to repay in kind in a year or two. Nowadays sometimes not only they, but even their Bastar neighbours, instead of resorting

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 170.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *ponda* must not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatiharhana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-bhita* or 'song fellows' and the dance-steps.[1]

The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence. Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of 'jewellery' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 75-6 and 183-4.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Man and wife generally settle down at first in a small hut of their own. But there is a sort of joint family system with the father or elder brother as the patriarchal head, and sometimes a large family occupies an entire hamlet of its own in one part of the village territory. The institution of the cross-cousin marriage tends to unite families very closely.

This happy and united family life is disturbed by several causes. One, as we have seen, is the commonplace invasion of the happiness of two people by a third. Another is the presence of the husband's younger brother in the house, and the privileged relationship which he has with the elder brother's wife. Another is the custom that allows a married girl to visit her mother's house. Yet another is man's insatiable passion for domestic experiment which leads to the complicated and dubious joys of plural marriage.

It will be of interest to compare with this the situation in ordinary Hindu families, where the common disparity of age between husband and wife creates stresses from which the Maria are free. 'There are tendencies at work within the family institution itself which sometimes lead to criminal action. The joint family rests upon the mutual toleration and sacrifice of the different members of the household. While forbearance is the outcome of long discipline in joint family life, it is put to a severe test as a result of the growth of individualism. Again, the disparity between the ages of husband and wife, of parents-in-law and girl-wife, offers opportunities of exploitation and even cruelty. The custom of infant marriage is apt to promote oppression, especially where there is a striking difference in age between the husband and the wife. Cases of cruelty to young wives are often brought to the courts in India.

'In 1929 a Hindu weaver in Hyderabad, who had married a young girl, chained her like an animal to a big mill-stone to prevent her making frequent attempts to run away. She subsequently died.

'In another case in the same year a young girl-wife who was being forcibly taken to her husband's house managed to free herself, jumped into a wayside well, and was drowned'.[1]

[1] Kalkarwal, op. cit., p. 35.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

INTRODUCTION

101 NO aboriginal people of India has attained greater prominence on the political scene of past centuries than the large group of tribes commonly known by the generic term Gond. When the mist that still veils long periods in the history of the Deccan finally lifts, Gonds appear not only as the main population of wide areas in the very heart of India, described after them as Gondwana, but also as a ruling race equal in power and material status to many contemporary Hindu princes. Lacking unity and leadership the Gond states collapsed before the successive onslaughts of Moghul and Maratha armies, but the Gond populations remained, the old feudal system continued to function in [21] many remote tracts and several Gond rajas enjoy up to this day the status of ruling chiefs. But besides the advanced sections of the Gonds who vied with Hindus in the fields of war and statesmanship, there were and still are the great masses of primitive peasants and forest dwellers on a cultural level no higher than that of other aboriginal populations in the Central Indian zone. Of their economics, social organization and religion, historical sources tell us next to nothing, and the study of Gond culture, as a distinct element in the culture pattern of India, falls to the anthropologist, who finds an almost overwhelming wealth of material among the many vigorous branches of the Gond family.

184 101 [199] Spread over an area considerably larger than the British Isles and extending from the Godavari gorges in the south to the Vindhya Mountains in the north, the Gonds are neither racially, nor culturally, nor linguistically a homogeneous population. So great are the differences in custom and material circumstances between many of the widely scattered tribal groups that one may well wonder what causes them to be considered, and indeed to consider themselves, as members of the same race. Wherever we find Gonds, unless they are totally detribalized and merged with Hindu populations, they describe themselves as Gond or, if speaking Gondi, as Koitur, the universal equivalent of that name in all Gondi dialects. Were it not for those large groups of eastern Gonds, who speak Chhattisgarhi Hindi, the Gonds in the north-west of the Central Provinces, who speak western Hindi and the far smaller groups of Telugu speaking Gonds, better known as Koyas, in Hyderabad and Madras Presidency, it would probably be most satisfactory to replace, at least in ethnological usage, the general name "Gond" by the term "Gondi speaking populations," thus leaving it open whether there exists such an entity as a Gond people or only a group of peoples who to-day speak related languages. Indeed, I believe that we shall fall in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the preparation of the *kaghai* site is a task to be accomplished by the whole village. Disputes are practically unknown, owing to this strong feeling of community of interest. There is, moreover, in the Abujhmar hills ample land for all, and any man is free to work harder than others if he likes to cultivate a larger plot; but he seldom does so unless he either is a newly married newcomer to the village, bent on building up a reserve of grain, or has a large number of dependents. There is no guarantee that a man will have the same plot as that allotted to him when the *kaghai* was last previously cultivated, or even a plot of the same area; but in villages where land is not so ample as in others, and a *kaghai* may be cultivated therefore at shorter intervals, each man as far as possible is allowed the same plot that he occupied at the previous cutting, though he may have to contribute a part of his former land to accommodate newcomers or newly married youths. There are villages where either the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita* is a strong man and has arrogated to himself a right to allot the *penda* plots; but he would get short shrift if he were unfair in his allotting: he is not a chief, but only *primus inter pares* among the village elders.

Plots once allotted and cultivated are for the time the private property of the householder who cultivates them, and he marks the limits of his cultivation either by leaving certain tree stumps to serve as boundary marks (the Bison-horn Marias who retain permanent rights over their *penda* plots are especially careful about this, the boundary trees often being left intact and not even lopped, save in so far as necessary to keep birds off the *penda*), or by planting lines of roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) or of *til* (*Sesamum indicum*) along the edges of his plot; roselle with its crimson seed-vessels and *til* with its deep yellow blossoms make very vivid boundaries.

Each family fells its own *penda* plots, and the villagers do not combine to clear each plot in turn as they combine in threshing. The work takes two or three weeks, and the men do all the heavy work, though women and children assist in cutting small trees and undergrowth and in arranging them for firing. Any fruit trees are carefully spared. If any of the ground is dug up with *gudari* hoes, men do most of the work, though they leave it to women on the flat *dippa* lands or on the gentler *penda* slopes. The iron *pulu* digging stick is used for grubbing up roots large enough to be a serious impediment. Much timber, when the growth is heavy, is reserved for fencing the *penda* against wild animals, where any herds of deer survive. The wood is left to dry through the heat of April and May, which are holiday months.

When the wood is dry, the *kasyeq-gaita* calls a meeting in the village dormitory to fix a day for firing. All the villagers combine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyaq-gaita* obtains the permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman sweeps out her house, and the *kasyaq-gaita* goes to each house and collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan, or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought from Japgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots kept at his *pen-ravar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana* before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially where the *udam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

important, for then the *kasyeq-gaita* and, in a minor degree, the secular headman have their hour of glory, and something of the honour that might be paid to real chieftains. The *kasyeq-gaita* as intermediary between the Village Mother and her children sacrifices to her a pig and a cock, and sets before her a basket of new *kuthi*, pulses and beans. A feast similar to that before the clan-god follows. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* proceeds to his *udam-garia* or seat-of-honour, next to which may be a smaller seat for the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*); it is either a long, flat boulder, or a flat stone supported on stone legs, as in Plate XXIII. He wears no insignia, and is to all appearance as naked and poor a Maria as all his villagers. The men seat themselves around in a circle on little stone cromlechs. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* formally announces the programme for the next year, what *penda* slope is to be cultivated, what arrangements are to be made to meet State or zamindari demands for land revenue or labour, and so on; the announcements, it is true, are the results of previous informal village discussions, and not the *kasyeq-gaita's* orders independently conceived by him, but his formal promulgation is needed before they can be brought into effect.

After *Koqsar* they are free to cut grass and bamboos, and to collect forest produce, or to hunt; it is true that in most villages there is little game but hares and field-mice, but a Maria thinks a field-mouse the rarest of delicacies, and will stop any occupation to chase a mouse or dig them out.[1] But the long year is over at last, and till the next sowing, though there is ahead the labour of felling, spreading and firing the wood for the *penda*, taboos are lifted, and there is no fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex. So now is the season of new marriages and of conjugal life in the home, and the seed is sown for the raising of the human crop.

Assessment and payment of land revenue among the Hill Marias

It has been indicated that there are the beginnings of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias. As a matter of fact, several villages have traces of old rice embanked fields. Two things long effectively checked the spread of permanent cultivation. One, before the 1910 rebellion, was the presence of a police station at Kutul, the headquarter village of the Bardal clan and *pargana* in the very heart of the Abujhmar hills. This meant a constant demand from the Kutul police for rice as *bisaha*,[2] and

[1] I had a carefully arranged beat for a family of man-eating tigers at Kutru ruined because the Hill Maria beaters rushed in wild enthusiasm to catch two or three mice disturbed by the beat.

[2] See p. 14 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

on one occasion for the Pen and on another for the Village Mother; even at the annual village festival of the Mother following the clan harvest-home and Koqsar of the Hill Marias the Pen, if honoured, is sometimes honoured on the same stones as the Mother, and not at a separate cairn. It is useless to expect to get any clear-cut distinction between the three conceptions out of a Maria, whose religious ideas are vague and inchoate. He knows only that there are factors which may bring trouble or which may benefit, and that the wise clan and village duly propitiate them, though, if in their turn these unknown factors fail to reciprocate, they will get no further meed of sacrifice for the same immediate object unless the desired benefit is at once granted. An example of this attitude has already been given in the mention in Chapter VII of the deputation that went to see the Gume clan's god to protest against rain preventing the firing of the *penda*, and to promise him a cock if and when he stopped the rain. In the actual formulae pronounced by the village *kasyeq-gaita* in the hills and the *perma* in the Bison-horn country at the sowing and other ceremonies, however, I have never heard the clan-god's name mentioned; they start almost invariably with '*Bhum kenji, Talugh kenji!*' 'Earth hearken, Mother hearken!', sometimes addressing similarly '*Nel*' or fields and '*Jimme Jaga*', all that is around. Here *Bhum* and the clan-god appear to be identical; in the villages where there are both a *kasyeq-gaita* and a *bhum-gaita* in the Abujhmar country, it is the latter who has to preside over the village deputations to the clan-god. The distinction, however, is not clear-cut. In most hill villages there is no separate *bhum-gaita*, and the *kasyeq-gaita* not only performs his work, but is sometimes called *bhum-gaita* or *bhumia*, while in Bison-horn villages the *perma* is *bhum-gaita* and addresses himself in some tracts to the Earth both as Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi, earth-god and earth-goddess, besides being the priest of the Village Mother and the other forms which the earth takes in Bison-horn cults, such as Dongar Deo or Kodo Deo. The *waddai* or *modul-waddai* I have referred to as the clan-priest, and it has been seen how in the Hill Maria clan-areas each village goes to him for the celebration of the clan festival and for obtaining the clan-god's permission to hold the village festival. But the clan-priest is generally not the clan headman even in the Abujhmar hills tracts where the clan-area has become the modern *pargana*. He may or may not be a person of ability and influence. He should be the medium, into whose body the clan-god enters and through whose mouth the god makes his will known to his clan. The secular *pargana* headman is a man of far more influence; and in the villages the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* are religious headmen in a way that the clan-priest seldom is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the clan; often the same man is both religious headman and secular headman (*gaita*, *peda*), and these functions were probably always combined before the growing interference of the State with village life and the excessive demands for forced labour and supplies began to make the secular headmanship a burden to be avoided by the true leader of the village and put on to the village simpleton.

The Village Mother is always dealt with in Hill and Bison-horn villages through the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* respectively; but she neither enters into the body of a medium nor can be consulted through one like the clan-god. Though it be through her that the *kasyeq-gaita's* eggs are addled or other omens of ill or indications that the village should shift are sent, yet to make plain her will the medium of the clan-god, that is the clan-priest (the *waddai* or *modul-waddai*), is sent for, and through his mouth the clan-god expounds the will of the Unseen Powers. It is tempting to regard her as the personification of the female and the clan-god as that of the male element in the reproductive powers of the Earth or Bhum; needless to say, there are no Maria theologians to worry themselves over such distinctions, and it is not a clear-cut one, since some clans have a clan-goddess, not a god; e.g. Oghal Muttai, goddess of the Dhurwa clan, and Gumtuli, goddess of the Padali clan of Padalibhum at Adnar. This conception, nevertheless, does to a considerable extent clarify the fundamental relation between the Earth, the clan-god and the Village Mother. The other point to be remembered is that the clan-god is the Earth in its dealings with the clan, and the Mother the Earth in its dealings with the village. No woman or girl may take part in the festivals, public sacrificial meals, worship and intercession of either clan-god or Village Mother.

The Earth, then, as clan-god, is the god of nourishment and reproduction, and of life itself; the Marias are his children, fed by him. For them to raise their sustenance he divided up the land among the clans, and the clan-area among the villages, and in each clan and village he appointed priests or headmen who alone might communicate with him, and to whose first ancestor he revealed the clan and village boundaries, which knowledge has been handed down from father to son. The Maria leaves his *penda* slope for another after two or three years because the god is suffering from having too much nourishment extracted from that slope, but he will return to it when the god has recovered from his exhaustion. Children are but one of the god's crops.

The Clan-god

In form, we have seen, the clan-god of Marias of both kinds and of Murias, is a framework of three parallel *saja* logs held together by cross-pieces of bamboo or *saja*, to which they are lashed by cords of *siari* creeper or twisted

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

she came. The second circumstance was the fact that, to some extent, I could spur their memories from the record of a 1916 Sessions case in which Moda and two other members of the family had been sentenced to imprisonment for life for the murder of a fourth member, Usendi Bhosa. The family was, moreover, one of considerable social importance. It has the hereditary right of providing the secular headman of both the village of Orcha and the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, while the Usendi clan is one of the strongest in the Abujhmar hills, and the Koqsar festivals of its god Wikir Hunga attract people from far and wide. In most families it is impossible to get beyond the paternal grandfather, if indeed beyond the father and mother; but though the names are forgotten, obligations are not; and many, if not all, Marias remember the clans and families with which they have cross-cousin marriage alliances. Of 105 Hill Maria marriages investigated, fifty-seven were marriages between cross-cousins; it is not so easy to check the remaining 46 per cent. in which the marriage marked the start of new affinities, at least as between the two contracting families, if not as between the clans.

On the other hand, a man touring as the administrative head of the State has the advantage of always having many Marias from different clans and villages assembling at his camps, and so of ascertaining their matrimonial alliances and testing practically any clan lists which he may have made or obtained elsewhere. But here a further difficulty crops up. Communications among the Hill Marias are very bad, and it by no means follows that an Usendi living, let us say, on the southern edge of the Chhota Dongar *pargana* has the same views on the clans from which it is permissible to seek a bride as an Usendi in the Chanda part of the Abujhmar hills or in the northernmost Maria *pargana* of the Antagarh tahsil. There is always a tendency to limit clan jurisdiction to the administrative division; though investigation will reveal much intermarriage between one *pargana* and the next, even though one should be in one tahsil and the other in another, in a zamindari or even in British territory, yet the investigator will be assured that 'we do not take wives from that clan or village because it is not in our *pargana*' or 'our raj'; and it has already been seen that when members of a clan migrate from their clan-area to colonize lands deserted by other clans outside the *pargana* they no longer consider themselves under any obligation to attend their original clan-god's festivals.

This much has been said by way of introduction, and of apology if, as I fear, this chapter is the least satisfactory and the least final in its conclusions.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The civil matters ordinarily decided by the *panchayats* would be marriage cases, such as settling the compensation to be awarded to a husband when his wife had eloped with another man. But tahsildars would entertain complaints under the sections of the Indian Penal Code punishing adultery from a husband dissatisfied with the *panchayat's* decision, and thereby undermine yet further the authority of the *panchayat*. I have in an earlier chapter referred to the effect of the unconscionable demands for forced labour and supplies on the position of the village headmen, and shown how in consequence the tendency was to put forward a dummy as the headman for secular matters, the real leadership of the village remaining with the religious headman, that is to say, the *kasyeq-gaita* in the case of the Hill Marias, and the *perma* in that of the Bison-horn Marias, but the dummy being available to bear the brunt of official wrath, though powerless to effect anything without the consent of the village elders. Formerly, there seems little doubt, the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* also discharged the functions of the secular headman; the differentiation of the two functions was the result of the State officials' treatment of the aboriginal. In many Abujhmar villages the functions are still combined, or are held by members of the same family, because State officials were always loath to penetrate into the interior of the Hill Maria country. With the revival of the authority of the headmen and *panchayats* that is now the policy of the State, it may be expected that gradually the religious headmen will resume the secular headmanship also.

It is not surprising that, as the result of these methods of dealing with the aboriginals, their *panchayats* tended to co-operate as little as possible with the State; their object became to conceal crime from the police and in general to comply with State requirements only so far as was necessary in order to avoid trouble, and, above all, visits of subordinate State officials to their villages. The records of murder and other trials show many cases of the village elders meeting and deciding to hush up a crime, especially if it had occurred at harvest or any other busy agricultural season, rather than have the whole life of the village community disorganized by police investigation, committal proceedings and Sessions trial. Such crimes may have come to light later through the *panchayat* reporting them at their own convenience, or through the widow or other relative of a murdered man being dissatisfied with the compensation which the murderer had been ordered to give, while in some *parganas* informers arose who subsequently used their supposed prestige with the police to become petty local tyrants. Conversely on occasions *panchayats*, disgusted with the failure of the police to investigate thefts or with the acquittal of guilty persons by the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

623 692 tahsildars, took the law into their own hands and had the thieves killed.

623 692 564 Purely social matters, breaches of caste or tribal prejudices, were left by the State to the jurisdiction of caste *panchayats* and of the caste headmen, appointed for nearly all Hindu and semi-Hindu castes in the State by the Ruling Chief in the tahsils and by the zamindars for their own zamindaris; after the first appointment these offices tended to become hereditary in the family of the person appointed, the succession having to be recognized by the Ruling Chief, from whom the headmen of leading castes would receive a turban as insignia of office. A register of these headmen is kept, and appeals from their decisions in caste *panchayat* in social matters lie direct to the Ruling Chief, this power during the long minority of the late Maharani of Bastar having been exercised on her behalf by a relative of hers who manages the State temples at Jagdalpur. But the State never appointed caste headmen for Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who retained their own tribal customs in these matters, and whose *panchayats* did not, like those of Hindu castes, deal only with social matters, but also with petty crime and with the administration and agricultural management of the villages and clans, as well as their relations with the officers of the State. To some extent the Murias were in the same position; but in certain areas caste headmen had been appointed for them, and they had learnt to defer to the Palace as the ultimate arbiter in social matters, while great numbers of their villages had been granted to alien lessees who asserted their own authority and belittled that of the traditional headmen and *panchayats*.

622 623 692 A text for the enquiries which I had made into the *panchayats* of the Marias was the following passage from the appendix to the chapter on caste (Chapter IX, p. 239) in Marten's 1911 *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*:—

'The following account of the tribal council of the Maria Gonds of South Chanda has been sent in by the Manager of the Ahiri estate, and is worth quoting almost in full. Every genuine Maria village has a village headman or *patel*, called the *Gaita*. In addition to his office as a *gaita* he generally exercises also the hereditary functions of a *Bhumia* or religious headman of the village. This dual office used formerly to be held as a rule by one and the same man in the village, and, with a few exceptions here and there owing to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia*, it is still so held in the majority of cases. The man enjoying the double office is therefore the patriarch of the whole village community, and his authority in the village (or a group of two or three villages) under him is supreme. This post is hereditary. The caste has not a standing Panchayat or governing body. It is called together when required. But the system prevailing in the caste is far more developed and is in certain respects more far-reaching than the ordinary Panchayat system prevailing in other castes. The village *Gaita*, on receiving a report of a misdemeanour or other occurrence in the village, calls two or three elders of the village together—the number is not fixed, nor is it necessary to call the

623 692

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

632 692 morning the *Sendhia* repeated the necessary spells, and, collecting together all the *Gaitas* of the *patti* with the Kotmi fellows, sprinkled fresh well water over their heads and declared Kotmi as re-affiliated to his *patti*.

'This specific instance illustrates not only the great power exercised by the *Sendhia* in his *patti* but also the fact that it is impossible for a village to alienate itself from a *patti* or to disregard the authority of a *Sendhia*.'

632 The South Chanda *patti* thus described seems to be very like the clan-*pargana* of the neighbouring Bastar Hill Marias, though much larger, if the figure of from 50 to 100 villages in each *patti* is correct. Actually, however, the *patti* probably includes several clan-areas or, at all events, villages of several clans, though I have not been able to make any enquiries in Chanda. The designation *Sendhia* is used in the Bhopalpatnam zamindari of Bastar for the headmen appointed by past zamindars over the local Naikpod, Kapewar, Barod and Dolod (Pardhan) castes; among Bastar Marias, however, the term appears to be used only in the Kutru Mar *pargana*, of which Arki Burga of Jegur, a village south of the Indrawati, was in 1930 the hereditary *sendhia*. But his sole function was the reclamation of any Maria guilty of a breach of social rules, and he had no other rights or authority, nor was his presence essential in any *panchayat* except one convened to deal with cases of outcasting. He was in no sense a headman of the *pargana*, and had none of the authority of the *sendhia* of Chanda or the *pargania majhi* or headman of the Maria and Muria *parganas* of Antagarh, Kondagaon, Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils in Bastar. In fact, there were no *pargana* headmen for the Kutru Mar and Bhairamgarh Mar *parganas* of Kutru zamindari, the *gaita* of the parent or principal village of a clan being the nearest approach to a *pargana* headman; when Arki Burga was asked to become *pargana* headman he refused; the little actual influence he possessed over the Kutru Mar *pargana* was shown by the fact that he had left the *pargana* to live at Jegur. The headmen of the Hill Maria *parganas* of Antagarh tahsil are sometimes called *sethia*.

632 622 In the two Hill Maria *parganas* of Kutru the village *gaita* is often still both religious and secular headman. The clans are small, and their villages not always contiguous. The *gaita* of the parent village may not actually decide all cases from each of the other villages, but he can interfere with the decisions of the *gaita* and elders of the other villages, and the latter often refer cases to him; for the decision of such cases he sits in *panchayat* with the *gaitas* of all the other villages of his clan. Examples of these small clan groups are the Gumelor villages of Dunga, Pariakot and Goti in Bhairamgarh Mar and the Mohanda villages of Lakka, Puslakka and Bhuri in Kutru Mar; of the former group the headman of Pariakot is the head *gaita*, though Dunga is the parent village, for the ancestor of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the headman of Pariakot was headman of Dunga when he founded Pariakot from Dunga; of the latter group the headman of Lakka, the parent village, is the head *gaita*, and has since been appointed *pargana* headman of the Kutru Mar *pargana* as the most influential headman in the *pargana*. In these cases, as generally among Hill Marias, the *waddai* or clan-priest is not the headman of the clan. But the Marias of Kutru south of the Indrawati and of the adjacent parts of Bijapur who are of Hill Maria origin modified in culture by contact with Bison-horn Maria and other neighbours, have usually their *waddai*, by them designated *modul wadde*, as the secular head of the clan as well as clan-priest. The names and villages of most of these clans have been given in the footnote to page 202. The post is hereditary, but the holder is sometimes deposed if he does not duly propitiate the clan-god or is oppressive. In matters affecting the State and in ordinary village routine he has no authority (unless he has been recognized as *pargana* headman), the village *peda* and *perma* being supreme; and in ordinary village *panchayats* he probably takes no part, except in his own village, and even there probably only as a member, the *peda* being the president. As social arbiter he decides tribal cases, such as breaches of social rules and marriage disputes, at the annual harvest festival, there known as the *Pindi Pandum*, with the aid of a clan *panchayat* of the leading *pedas* and *permas* of the clan villages.

Among the Hill Marias of Antagarh tahsil, that is to say of the greater part of the Abujhmar hills, we have seen that the *parganas* are clan-areas, the exception being the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, where, however, the Usendi clan predominates and is recognized by the other clans as the chief clan of the *pargana*. The man now recognized by the State as the *pargania majhi* or headman of each of these *parganas* is the hereditary clan headman or *pargania gaita*. He is the chief headman of the village headmen of his clan rather than clan headman, for, though orders issue as his orders, they are issued always after consultation with a *panchayat* of the leading headmen, religious and secular, and elders of the villages in the clan-area. Any attempt on the part of a *pargania gaita* to presume on his position to make himself a little chief or tyrant is fiercely resisted by the clan; one of the reasons for the 1916 murder at Orcha of Usendi Bhosa, the headman of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, was the belief that he was trying to 'set up a *raj* over Metabhum'. Similarly in villages the headman's authority is rather that of the spokesman of the village elders than his own individual authority. If the tahsildar sends word to the *pargania gaita* that, for example, a camp or camps have to be prepared in his *pargana* for the Diwan, or that on a certain date each village in the *pargana* has to supply

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

men for road repairs, the *pargania gaita* cannot merely send out orders to the headman of each village in his *pargana* assigning his village a share of the *pargana* task. But he has to send out his *garhai* or messenger, a clan servant remunerated in grain at two or three *paili* per cultivator, to call in the *gaita*, *kasyeq-gaita* and leading elders of each of the clan villages to a meeting at his village or some central spot, at which he arranges the distribution of the work in consultation with them. Similar meetings are called for arranging collections of money or grain for any clan festival, such as Koqsar, or any special disease-averting or tiger-averting ceremony. In a dispute between some of his villagers as to the distribution of the work he naturally would give the final word; and similarly when he calls in selected village *gaitas* to sit with him to decide inter-village disputes or to interfere with what he considers a wrong decision of a village *panchayat* he may have the final word. Strictly speaking, he is at liberty to dissent from the members of his meetings and *panchayats* and to insist on his own view being the final view in the matter; but in practice he would get short shrift if he made a habit of going against the majority. In actual fact, therefore, we have here a tribal organization very similar to that postulated by Mr. C. U. Wills, I.C.S., in his monograph on 'The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chhattisgarh' (see pages 4 and 33 above) as the foundation on which the Chhattisgarh Maharajas superimposed their roughly feudal system. In the village the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita* is merely *primus inter pares* in regard to the village elders and in the clan or *pargana* the *pargania gaita* in regard to the *gaitas* and *kasyeq-gaitas* of the other villages of the clan or *pargana*. The natural democratic tendencies of the tribe not only are a bulwark against mismanagement by State officials, but also block any attempt on the part of a village or *pargana* headman to become a local despot. We have seen already[1] how even when the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village enthroned on his *udam-garia* stone seat of honour at the Koqsar festival announces the agricultural programme of the coming year he is issuing no independent orders, but merely confirming *ex cathedra* the decisions already reached in *panchayat* between him and the elders. These stone seats for the *kasyeq-gaita* and *gaita* are almost the only outward sign of their primacy in their villages; and in some villages they sit on them also to preside over meetings of the elders for administrative or judicial work. The photograph on plate XXIII opposite this page shows the *kasyeq-gaita* and *gaita* of Itulnar thus seated in *panchayat*.

In the Bison-horn Maria country there are no contiguous clan or phratry areas, and the *parganas* often represent former petty

[1] See page 141.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

622 623 632 kingdoms or *garhs* of forgotten chiefs, or divisions of the early medieval Telanga kingdoms of Barsur, Dantewara or Bhairamgarh. The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chudala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

689 564 684 688 Social offences involving exclusion from tribal ceremonies and feasts are very similar in these days to those of neighbouring Hindu castes. The worst offences are to get maggots in wounds, to take food from or have sexual relations with persons of the despised Ghasia, Mahra or Lohar castes, and to break the rules of exogamy by having sexual relations with a girl of a brother-clan. Another offence, which among the Bison-horn Marias may lead to considerable trouble, is the eating of any new crop or the cutting of grass or bamboo before the appropriate *pandum* has been celebrated; this form of sacrilege is believed to be avenged by the earth or clan-god sending tigers to carry off cattle or men, and in a case which came before me in which such a visitation had followed the cutting of grass by two villagers before the Kare Pandum the *panchayat* had ordered them to compensate the owner of each cow or bullock killed by the avenging tigers. The way in which breaches of the rules of exogamy are dealt with has already been described (pages 245-6 above). Any form of social relations with Ghasia, Mahra or Lohar, however unwitting, entails penalties not only on the actual offender, but also often on his near kinsmen. In the

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

In the chapter on marriage we saw how the elders had to witness the betrothal ceremonies, and how the *panchayats* deal with cases of divorce and elopement. It may be added that among the Hill Marias the clan-headman, like the *Sendhia* of the Chanda Marias, gets certain traditional fees which the parties have to pay in addition to the compensation which the *panchayat* may award to the injured parents or husband, or to the cost of the tribal feast; at every marriage in Kutru and Bhairamgarh Mar the clan-headman gets a fee of eight annas; when a *panchayat* has settled the compensation to be given to the first husband by the man with whom his wife has eloped, the old and the new husband have each to pay the clan-headman four annas. But the latter is expected not to retain the whole of his fee-income, but to divide it with the headmen of the villages of his clan who have assisted in the ceremony or *panchayat*.

I have already described on page 246 above, the ordeal to which the Gume Hill Maria clan *panchayat* in 1929 subjected a Toinar youth accused of incest with a girl of his clan. How far the ordeal survives in the remotest parts of the State I cannot say; naturally instances of its use very seldom come to light. There is reason to believe that ordeals of this kind were a regular feature of the 'justice' administered by bygone Chiefs and zamindars of Bastar, rather than a product of aboriginal thought; compare the account of the settlement of the Kudmer-Jatalur land dispute at page 96 above. Ordinarily, however, the *panchayats* follow no regular procedure beyond hearing the parties and their friends as informally as possible and deciding the case then and there after free discussion among themselves.

Questions of property seldom arise among the Hill Marias, there being obviously so little scope for dispute when 95 per cent. of the cultivation is shifting cultivation of hillsides regarded as the property of the clan and not of the individual, and when the village site is shifted at least every six years. Sons after marriage live in a separate portion of the long-house of their father or uncle, if there is space for adding a portion for them, or else build a separate house as close as possible; when next the village is shifted there is ample space for all to live in separate houses under one long-house roof. Questions of inheritance of houses therefore arise only when, as among the Bison-horn Marias, villages have become permanent and are not shifted at regular intervals. Even here, however, there are few disputes. The little value set on houses is shown by the fact that it is generally the youngest son who lives on in the father's house after his death, as probably his elder brothers will have married long before him and built separate houses for themselves on marriage. There is among the Bison-horn Marias a vague right to demand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

565 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally
177 therefore on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 The Allapilli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills
466 attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen,
166 etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

●622 [1] For example, the suppression of *podu* cultivation, or the deliberate
791 curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

> The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village; sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*. Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> 'This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official, and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

142
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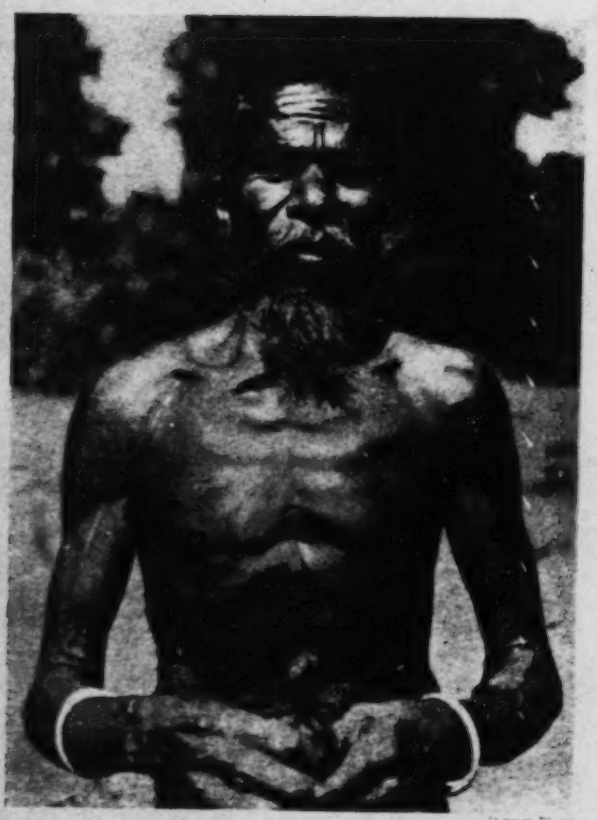

Markami Hunga, Bison-horn Maria headman of Marandia

[End Plate C]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

623 [631] lay to the Pargana Manjhi and his panchayat which consisted of four headmen chosen from his group of villages.

In the ten years since these panchayats were established, they have done a great deal of work, and on the whole may be said to have functioned very well. A few headmen have abused their positions; there has been a certain amount of diversion of fines to uses for which they were not intended; probably a number of less influential people have not always had the justice that they might have expected. But this might have happened even in the ordinary Courts, and there is no doubt whatever that the establishment of these panchayats has done a great deal to build up the self-respect of Maria and Muria, and has developed leadership among them.

622 623 The importance of the panchayat for our subject is obvious. In the first place, it provides a body of semi-official elders in every village whose duty it is to assist the police, and indeed whenever a suspicious death occurs in a village, the investigating officer calls the panchayat for a sort of inquest to which he acts as coroner and they as jury. On the other hand, the establishment of the village elders in a position of considerable authority makes it easy for them, when they wish to do so, to conceal a crime or deal with it themselves. Where a headman is himself the culprit, he may force the people to hush up his guilt; and the solidarity that is created by allowing the village under its own elders to settle many of its own affairs helps the headman to attain this end. This is no argument against the establishment of the panchayat. But it does mean that it is important for the authorities to hold the confidence of the headmen, and to inspire them constantly with a sense of their civic duties.

793 Side by side with the secular leaders are the religious elders of the village, though there is no reason why spiritual and secular functions should not be, as they often are, combined in the same persons. The priests and medicine-men naturally have more influence than the official headmen, the most powerful combination being when the headman himself is a Waddai or Siraha.

Chief among the religious elders is the Bhum-Gaita or Perma, the priest of the soil whose duty it is to see to all the sacrifices concerned with the village and its festivals, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XVII

Village, Clan and Pargana Authorities and Panchayats; their Executive Authority; their Judicial Authority and Methods; Property and Inheritance; Position of Women; the Recent State Orders Restoring Judicial Authority to Panchayats

623 625 692

One of the most remarkable features of the Bastar of 1927 was the extent to which tribal, village and caste *panchayats* still regulated the religious and social life of the people, acted as intermediaries between them and the State and its zamindaris in meeting State demands for taxes, labour and supplies and in protecting the ryots from undue exactions, and exercised much *de facto* criminal and civil jurisdiction. Here ready to hand was the nucleus of an organization which, if properly handled and fostered, could in time save the State much money spent on law and justice, police and general administration. But the opposite policy had consciously or unconsciously been followed. Any exercise of criminal jurisdiction, even in petty crop theft cases, had been regarded as usurpation of the authority of the police and courts, and persons who had already made ample amends under tribal custom were arrested and sentenced all over again by the tahsildars, while headmen and elders not infrequently were punished for not reporting the offences. A badly trained police, often singularly lacking in common sense, would descend on a village and waste days in pointless investigation of petty cases, expecting not only to be fed on rice, mutton and poultry by the villagers during their stay, but also to be provided with stores of grain under the old *bisaha* system to take away with them at the end of the investigation. Villagers would be compelled to carry the supplies thus forcibly taken from them to the police station, perhaps two or three days' march distant, and would rarely be given even the nominal payment prescribed under the old *bisaha* rules. Then would follow a protracted trial at the still more distant tahsil headquarters, ten witnesses being summoned where three or four would have been ample; and probably all these witnesses at the end of the trial would have to accompany the police party back to the police station to carry their impedimenta, and might be kept even longer as '*athpaharia begar*' labourers to clean the police office and lines and do domestic work for the constables.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The civil matters ordinarily decided by the *panchayats* would be marriage cases, such as settling the compensation to be awarded to a husband when his wife had eloped with another man. But tahsildars would entertain complaints under the sections of the Indian Penal Code punishing adultery from a husband dissatisfied with the *panchayat's* decision, and thereby undermine yet further the authority of the *panchayat*. I have in an earlier chapter referred to the effect of the unconscionable demands for forced labour and supplies on the position of the village headmen, and shown how in consequence the tendency was to put forward a dummy as the headman for secular matters, the real leadership of the village remaining with the religious headman, that is to say, the *hasyaq-gaita* in the case of the Hill Marias, and the *perma* in that of the Bison-horn Marias, but the dummy being available to bear the brunt of official wrath, though powerless to effect anything without the consent of the village elders. Formerly, there seems little doubt, the *hasyaq-gaita* and the *perma* also discharged the functions of the secular headman; the differentiation of the two functions was the result of the State officials' treatment of the aboriginal. In many Abujhmar villages the functions are still combined, or are held by members of the same family, because State officials were always loath to penetrate into the interior of the Hill Maria country. With the revival of the authority of the headmen and *panchayats* that is now the policy of the State, it may be expected that gradually the religious headmen will resume the secular headmanship also.

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It is not surprising that, as the result of these methods of dealing with the aboriginals, their *panchayats* tended to co-operate as little as possible with the State; their object became to conceal crime from the police and in general to comply with State requirements only so far as was necessary in order to avoid trouble, and, above all, visits of subordinate State officials to their villages. The records of murder and other trials show many cases of the village elders meeting and deciding to hush up a crime, especially if it had occurred at harvest or any other busy agricultural season, rather than have the whole life of the village community disorganized by police investigation, committal proceedings and Sessions trial. Such crimes may have come to light later through the *panchayat* reporting them at their own convenience, or through the widow or other relative of a murdered man being dissatisfied with the compensation which the murderer had been ordered to give, while in some *parganas* informers arose who subsequently used their supposed prestige with the police to become petty local tyrants. Conversely on occasions *panchayats*, disgusted with the failure of the police to investigate thefts or with the acquittal of guilty persons by the

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

623 692 tahsildars, took the law into their own hands and had the thieves killed.

Purely social matters, breaches of caste or tribal prejudices, were left by the State to the jurisdiction of caste *panchayats* and of the caste headmen, appointed for nearly all Hindu and semi-Hindu castes in the State by the Ruling Chief in the tahsils and by the zamindars for their own zamindaris; after the first appointment these offices tended to become hereditary in the family of the person appointed, the succession having to be recognized by the Ruling Chief, from whom the headmen of leading castes would receive a turban as insignia of office. A register of these headmen is kept, and appeals from their decisions in caste *panchayat* in social matters lie direct to the Ruling Chief, this power during the long minority of the late Maharani of Bastar having been exercised on her behalf by a relative of hers who manages the State temples at Jagdalpur. But the State never appointed caste headmen for Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who retained their own tribal customs in these matters, and whose *panchayats* did not, like those of Hindu castes, deal only with social matters, but also with petty crime and with the administration and agricultural management of the villages and clans, as well as their relations with the officers of the State. To some extent the Murias were in the same position; but in certain areas caste headmen had been appointed for them, and they had learnt to defer to the Palace as the ultimate arbiter in social matters, while great numbers of their villages had been granted to alien lessees who asserted their own authority and belittled that of the traditional headmen and *panchayats*.

622 623 692 A text for the enquiries which I had made into the *panchayats* of the Marias was the following passage from the appendix to the chapter on caste (Chapter IX, p. 239) in Marten's 1911 *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*:—

'The following account of the tribal council of the Maria Gonds of South Chanda has been sent in by the Manager of the Ahiri estate, and is worth quoting almost in full. Every genuine Maria village has a village headman or *patel*, called the *Gaita*. In addition to his office as a *gaita* he generally exercises also the hereditary functions of a *Bhumia* or religious headman of the village. This dual office used formerly to be held as a rule by one and the same man in the village, and, with a few exceptions here and there owing to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia*, it is still so held in the majority of cases. The man enjoying the double office is therefore the patriarch of the whole village community, and his authority in the village (or a group of two or three villages) under him is supreme. This post is hereditary. The caste has not a standing Panchayat or governing body. It is called together when required. But the system prevailing in the caste is far more developed and is in certain respects more far-reaching than the ordinary Panchayat system prevailing in other castes. The village *Gaita*, on receiving a report of a misdemeanour or other occurrence in the village, calls two or three elders of the village together—the number is not fixed, nor is it necessary to call the

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

692
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same man every time—sends for the complainant and the accused, and after hearing the parties decides the case with the help of the village elders, who as a rule agree with his decision.

The jurisdiction of the village panchayat is confined to the village itself, and a local village panchayat is never referred to for the decision of a case by persons at a distance. A group of about 50 to 100 villages is constituted into what is locally called a *patti*, and this *patti* acknowledges the authority of the chief religious and social headman of the group, who is called the *Sendhia*. The *Sendhia* is the chief priest and judge of the *patti*. Every marriage contracted, every case of social misdemeanour involving the penalty of a fine, and every other social and religious function performed in any village of the *patti* yields the *Sendhia* a fixed fee in cash, ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 10, and in some exceptional cases up to Rs. 50. The office of the *Sendhia* is also hereditary, and the *Sendhia* is the dominant authority in the *patti*. The authority of the *Sendhia* (for purposes of a Panchayat) is invoked only in exceptional cases involving the interests of a number of villages, and in such cases the decision of the *Sendhia* on an appeal being made to him by or against a village panchayat (or a number of village panchayats) is final. For purposes of a panchayat therefore each *patti* forms a distinct unit, the internal composition of which is as follows :—

(*a*) Each village holds its own panchayat composed of a few village elders and presided over by the village headman (*gaita*).

(*b*) Each group of villages acknowledges the authority of the *Sendhia*, who is the court of appeal for difficult or intricate intra-communal disputes.

(*c*) Each *Sendhia's patti* is, as a rule, a compact block of country, sharply defined by prominent natural geographical boundaries (a range of hills, a large river or a nullah), and the *Sendhia's* authority is confined to his own *patti*.

The affairs of one *Sendhia's patti* are never referred to a *Sendhia* of another *patti*. Each *patti* is known by its local geographical name (such as the Lahiri *patti*, the Vennasugar *patti*, the Jarawandi *patti*, the Ghat *patti*, and so forth), and each *patti* is the sole undisputed domain of the local *Sendhia*. The only remarkable case of an exception to this general rule that occurred within the memory of living man was during the cold weather of 1909 at the village of Kotmi, which belongs to the Vennasugar *patti*. A Maria's daughter of the village eloped with a Musalman. The local village panchayat took a feast from the father of the girl, and fined him an amount adequate enough for the dues of the *Sendhia*. The *Sendhia* demanded more and censured the village panchayat for having let the man off with a light amount. The village panchayat considered the *Sendhia's* demands to be exorbitant, and threatened to alienate themselves from him and to invoke the aid of a foreign *Sendhia*. This was too much for the *Sendhia*, who directly excommunicated the whole village panchayat. The panchayat therefore sent for the *Sendhia* of Judt, who naturally refused to affiliate the village to his *patti*, but, seeing the difficulties of the case, agreed to purify the culprit for a small fee, which was paid to him. He performed the necessary ceremonies and reclaimed the unfortunate father of the girl. Thereupon the whole *patti* of Vennasugar rose against the village of Kotmi, and threatened to use violence. This caused some uneasiness to the police, who began sending in reports. The Manager of the Ahiri estate went to the spot, and his camp was immediately besieged by about a hundred *Gaitas* of the *patti*, headed by the *Sendhia*, who clamoured for justice. Their complaint was that the village people of Kotmi had set a bad example, and that the people of the *patti* would know no rest till they (the Kotmi people) got themselves purified by the *Sendhia*. The Marias of Kotmi were, on their part, too obstinate to yield, and with great difficulty the Manager succeeded in effecting a compromise by prevailing upon the *Sendhia* to reduce his demands. He agreed ultimately to give absolution for a nominal amount, which was paid by the girl's father, and thus ended in a merry drinking bout what threatened to be a small civil war. The next

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the headman of Pariakot was headman of Dunga when he founded Pariakot from Dunga; of the latter group the headman of Lakka, the parent village, is the head *gaita*, and has since been appointed *pargana* headman of the Kutru Mar *pargana* as the most influential headman in the *pargana*. In these cases, as generally among Hill Marias, the *waddai* or clan-priest is not the headman of the clan. But the Marias of Kutru south of the Indrawati and of the adjacent parts of Bijapur who are of Hill Maria origin modified in culture by contact with Bison-horn Maria and other neighbours, have usually their *waddai*, by them designated *modul wadde*, as the secular head of the clan as well as clan-priest. The names and villages of most of these clans have been given in the footnote to page 202. The post is hereditary, but the holder is sometimes deposed if he does not duly propitiate the clan-god or is oppressive. In matters affecting the State and in ordinary village routine he has no authority (unless he has been recognized as *pargana* headman), the village *peda* and *perma* being supreme; and in ordinary village *panchayats* he probably takes no part, except in his own village, and even there probably only as a member, the *peda* being the president. As social arbiter he decides tribal cases, such as breaches of social rules and marriage disputes, at the annual harvest festival, there known as the *Pindi Pandum*, with the aid of a clan *panchayat* of the leading *pedas* and *permas* of the clan villages.

Among the Hill Marias of Antagarh tahsil, that is to say of the greater part of the Abujhmar hills, we have seen that the *parganas* are clan-areas, the exception being the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, where, however, the Usendi clan predominates and is recognized by the other clans as the chief clan of the *pargana*. The man now recognized by the State as the *pargania majhi* or headman of each of these *parganas* is the hereditary clan headman or *pargania gaita*. He is the chief headman of the village headmen of his clan rather than clan headman, for, though orders issue as his orders, they are issued always after consultation with a *panchayat* of the leading headmen, religious and secular, and elders of the villages in the clan-area. Any attempt on the part of a *pargania gaita* to presume on his position to make himself a little chief or tyrant is fiercely resisted by the clan; one of the reasons for the 1916 murder at Orcha of Usendi Bhosa, the headman of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, was the belief that he was trying to 'set up a *raj* over Metabhum'. Similarly in villages the headman's authority is rather that of the spokesman of the village elders than his own individual authority. If the tahsildar sends word to the *pargania gaita* that, for example, a camp or camps have to be prepared in his *pargana* for the Diwan, or that on a certain date each village in the *pargana* has to supply

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

men for road repairs, the *pargania gaita* cannot merely send out orders to the headman of each village in his *pargana* assigning his village a share of the *pargana* task. But he has to send out his *garhai* or messenger, a clan servant remunerated in grain at two or three *pailī* per cultivator, to call in the *gaita*, *kasyeq-gaita* and leading elders of each of the clan villages to a meeting at his village or some central spot, at which he arranges the distribution of the work in consultation with them. Similar meetings are called for arranging collections of money or grain for any clan festival, such as Koqsar, or any special disease-averting or tiger-averting ceremony. In a dispute between some of his villagers as to the distribution of the work he naturally would give the final word; and similarly when he calls in selected village *gaitas* to sit with him to decide inter-village disputes or to interfere with what he considers a wrong decision of a village *panchayat* he may have the final word. Strictly speaking, he is at liberty to dissent from the members of his meetings and *panchayats* and to insist on his own view being the final view in the matter; but in practice he would get short shrift if he made a habit of going against the majority. In actual fact, therefore, we have here a tribal organization very similar to that postulated by Mr. C. U. Wills, I.C.S., in his monograph on 'The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chhattisgarh' (see pages 4 and 33 above) as the foundation on which the Chhattisgarh Maharajas superimposed their roughly feudal system. In the village the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita* is merely *primus inter pares* in regard to the village elders and in the clan or *pargana* the *pargania gaita* in regard to the *gaitas* and *kasyeq-gaitas* of the other villages of the clan or *pargana*. The natural democratic tendencies of the tribe not only are a bulwark against mismanagement by State officials, but also block any attempt on the part of a village or *pargana* headman to become a local despot. We have seen already[1] how even when the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village enthroned on his *udam-gāṛa* stone seat of honour at the Koqsar festival announces the agricultural programme of the coming year he is issuing no independent orders, but merely confirming *ex cathedra* the decisions already reached in *panchayat* between him and the elders. These stone seats for the *kasyeq-gaita* and *gaita* are almost the only outward sign of their primacy in their villages; and in some villages they sit on them also to preside over meetings of the elders for administrative or judicial work. The photograph on plate XXIII opposite this page shows the *kasyeq-gaita* and *gaita* of Itulnar thus seated in *panchayat*.

In the Bison-horn Maria country there are no contiguous clan or phratry areas, and the *parganas* often represent former petty

[1] See page 141.

HILL MARIA *PANCHAYAT*, ITULNAR
showing religious and secular headmen seated on stone udam-garya seats

[face p. 290

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

[facing p. 290]

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352

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

622 kingdoms or *garhs* of forgotten chiefs, or divisions of the early
623 medieval Telanga kingdoms of Barsur, Dantewara or Bhairamgarh.
632 The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chidala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

689 Social offences involving exclusion from tribal ceremonies and
564 feasts are very similar in these days to those of neighbouring Hindu
684 castes. The worst offences are to get maggots in wounds, to take
688 food from or have sexual relations with persons of the despised Ghasia, Mahra or Lohar castes, and to break the rules of exogamy by having sexual relations with a girl of a brother-clan. Another offence, which among the Bison-horn Marias may lead to considerable trouble, is the eating of any new crop or the cutting of grass or bamboo before the appropriate *pandum* has been celebrated; this form of sacrilege is believed to be avenged by the earth or clan-god sending tigers to carry off cattle or men, and in a case which came before me in which such a visitation had followed the cutting of grass by two villagers before the Kare Pandum the *panchayat* had ordered them to compensate the owner of each cow or bullock killed by the avenging tigers. The way in which breaches of the rules of exogamy are dealt with has already been described
689 (pages 245-6 above). Any form of social relations with Ghasia,
564 Mahra or Lohar, however unwitting, entails penalties not only
783 on the actual offender, but also often on his near kinsmen. In the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

In the chapter on marriage we saw how the elders had to witness the betrothal ceremonies, and how the *panchayats* deal with cases of divorce and elopement. It may be added that among the Hill Marias the clan-headman, like the *Sendhia* of the Chanda Marias, gets certain traditional fees which the parties have to pay in addition to the compensation which the *panchayat* may award to the injured parents or husband, or to the cost of the tribal feast; at every marriage in Kutru and Bhairamgarh Mar the clan-headman gets a fee of eight annas; when a *panchayat* has settled the compensation to be given to the first husband by the man with whom his wife has eloped, the old and the new husband have each to pay the clan-headman four annas. But the latter is expected not to retain the whole of his fee-income, but to divide it with the headmen of the villages of his clan who have assisted in the ceremony or *panchayat*.

I have already described on page 246 above, the ordeal to which the Gume Hill Maria clan *panchayat* in 1929 subjected a Toinar youth accused of incest with a girl of his clan. How far the ordeal survives in the remotest parts of the State I cannot say; naturally instances of its use very seldom come to light. There is reason to believe that ordeals of this kind were a regular feature of the 'justice' administered by bygone Chiefs and zamindars of Bastar, rather than a product of aboriginal thought; compare the account of the settlement of the Kudmer-Jatalur land dispute at page 96 above. Ordinarily, however, the *panchayats* follow no regular procedure beyond hearing the parties and their friends as informally as possible and deciding the case then and there after free discussion among themselves.

Questions of property seldom arise among the Hill Marias, there being obviously so little scope for dispute when 95 per cent. of the cultivation is shifting cultivation of hillsides regarded as the property of the clan and not of the individual, and when the village site is shifted at least every six years. Sons after marriage live in a separate portion of the long-house of their father or uncle, if there is space for adding a portion for them, or else build a separate house as close as possible; when next the village is shifted there is ample space for all to live in separate houses under one long-house roof. Questions of inheritance of houses therefore arise only when, as among the Bison-horn Marias, villages have become permanent and are not shifted at regular intervals. Even here, however, there are few disputes. The little value set on houses is shown by the fact that it is generally the youngest son who lives on in the father's house after his death, as probably his elder brothers will have married long before him and built separate houses for themselves on marriage. There is among the Bison-horn Marias a vague right to demand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the family and clan to which she goes as a bride. She may elope with another man, but he must compensate the first husband. She must work for her husband, having his meals ready in the home or taking them to him in the field when he wants them, gathering forest fruits and roots, and doing her appointed work in the fields; many a woman has paid with her life by exasperating her tired husband by not having his food ready or by cooking it badly. She is not a full human being like a man. She is taboo when menstruating; she may not sleep in the field when the crops are ripening; she is debarred from attending at the festivals and *pandum*; she has no special dancing dress. Yet with all this she has not too bad a position. As a girl she has considerable freedom both in pre-marital sexual life and in the choice of a husband, and she is fairly free to leave her husband if he ill-treats her, or if he cannot beget a child. Tribal sentiment strongly condemns wife-beating. Her natural taste for ornament is given full scope, her parents gradually collecting beads and metal neck and arm rings, her boy-companion presenting her with beads and carved hair-combs, and her husband when she is married recognizing her right to spend a few of the scanty pice she earns from the sale of her basketry at the bazaar on simple trinkets. She participates in the tribal dances and songs, though not in the religious ceremonies that accompany them. In fact her position *vis-a-vis* her husband is far freer than that of the ordinary Hindu wife. Above all, she is not exposed to the evil of child marriage and premature motherhood, of which habits of their Hindu neighbours Maria headmen will speak with abhorrence.

Such in brief and imperfect outline are the main principles governing tribal law and custom, and the main features of the old village and tribal headman and *panchayat* organization. No attempt has been made in this chapter to draw any clear-cut distinction between the ways of the Hill and the Bison-horn Marias; in actual practice both treat such matters in much the same way, the main distinctions being (*a*) that the primitive clan organization is stronger and the authority of the headmen more limited by that of elders among the Hill Marias, and (*b*) that the Bison-horn Maria has been more in contact with the outer Hindu world than the Hill Maria.

The recent State Order restoring jurisdiction to Panchayats

Under the State Order framed in 1932 by my successor, the regular criminal courts of the State have been deprived of jurisdiction over the primitive tribes in cases of certain public nuisances, simple hurt and assault, thefts (except of cattle), of property worth Rs. 5 or less, mischief, trespass, house-trespass, bigamy, adultery and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

692 623 enticing a married woman from her husband.[1] The civil courts have been deprived of jurisdiction in claims for civil damages arising out of these criminal offences, and in simple money, grain and cattle claims up to Rs. 25 in value. All such cases are to be dealt with by the village *panchayat*, the convening of which and the selection of the elders of which are left to the village headman. No particular lines have been laid down to regulate procedure; the *panchayats* are not allowed to impose more than Rs. 25 as a fine, though in marriage cases they may allow marriage expenses up to Rs. 50, while corporal, barbarous or degrading punishments are prohibited; and the village *kotwar* or watchman at his periodic visits to the police station has to report the results of cases decided by the *panchayats* of his villages since his last visit. Any person dissatisfied with a decision of the village headman and elders can appeal within a month to the *pargana* headman, who is assisted by a *panchayat* of four headmen chosen every year by the assembled headmen of the villages of the *pargana* before the tahsildar. Though no orders were issued to regulate the disposal of fines, the headmen are encouraged to spend them on village improvements, save where tribal custom prescribes a tribal feast as part of the penalty.

623 There has not as yet been time enough to judge the success of this attempt to restore authority to the headmen and elders. In some parts the *panchayats* appear to be working surprisingly well on the whole; in some they either have little work to do or else have not won the confidence of the tribes through not having the right men as members, or perhaps through a weak man having been made headman in the old days and not yet having been ousted by the religious headman or the natural leader of the village; a few have had to be superseded, and the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts restored, because they were tampered with by Hindu and Mohammedan traders in adjacent market villages; here foreign influence had perhaps already gone too far towards detribalizing the village life. Obviously a good deal depends on the personality of the *pargana* and village headmen, and on the unobtrusive sympathy and watchfulness of the State officials; regular inspection and interference would, of course, be fatal to the success of what is largely an attempt to defend the tribes from the visits of the petty official. In the Abujhmar hills and the parts of Dantewara and Jagdalpur tahsils which I visited in 1934, the headmen and elders greatly appreciated the relief which the orders had given from the burdens of police and court investigations, and the *pargana* headmen were taking their appellate duties seriously and fairly soundly. It

[1] The actual Penal Code sections are 277, 290, 323, 334, 341, 352, 354, 353, 379, 380, 426, 447, 448, 494, 497, 498 and 504.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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is no use expecting formalism from such unlettered tribal tribunals; the rules as issued perhaps err a little on the side of formalism, and the *panchayats* must not be expected to follow them too strictly or blamed if at times they exceed their nominal powers, so long as rough, ready and cheap justice, within the comprehension of the villagers, results. Once the real leaders of the clans and villages learn that the State is trusting them and that they can trust the State also, the headmen and *panchayats* will be an admirable focus for the introduction and spread of measures of enlightenment.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

unchallenged. I emphasize the word sympathy: the method of threatening and punishing the headmen must be given up, and every effort made to win their understanding support for the new measures and even to entrust them with their execution.

The walks and talks at Surjagarh delayed the start on the 32 miles journey to Jawarwandi, and the car and lorry were more than once bogged on the way, so that once again we arrived in camp long after dark. It was on this journey that we crossed the tongues of Bastar territory mentioned on page 378 of this Note: in the southern tongue, in fact, we were bogged for an hour or more, but, as in Bastar, were readily helped to extricate ourselves. I noticed and stopped in *gotul* or bachelors' dormitories in several villages before and after Surjagarh. Many of these are treated by touring officers as though they were rest-huts built for their special convenience, like the *chauri* of Hyderabad or Berar villages. They use them also for posting up legal notices, and in two I found nailed to the wooden posts copies of the *Yudda Samachar* or War News in the Marathi edition published by the provincial War Purposes Fund for dissemination of accurate war information in all villages; this showed singular lack of intelligence on the part of those who controlled such propaganda in Chanda district, for in these Maria villages not a person was literate and very few could speak Marathi. The *gotul* culture here must be similar to that among the Murias just across the Bastar border in North Antagarh, but in the short time available I did not overcome the Marias' natural reluctance to discuss this intimate social organization, a reluctance heightened, I suspect, by the fact that here on the fringes of the *gotul* country the institution is the butt of Hindu ridicule or prurient curiosity. But there certainly are *gotul* in these villages, at least for the youths, and I found one, with some difficulty owing to the reticence of the local Marias in these mixed villages, at Erka in Rangi zamindari. So far as I could make out, they are still to be found in the Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug.

Jarawandi is the headquarters of a sub-zamindar holding under Ahiri a taluq of twenty-three villages: the rival claims of Ahiri and Jarawandi to the seignorial dues have been a nuisance to the local Marias. Here there was a large gathering of headmen and *Sendhias* of *patti* groups of villages. Enquiries from them and later at Murumgaon showed that the *panchayat* system described in the extract on pages 286-8 of this book is not only as vigorous as ever, but is more widespread than previously recorded, there being *Sendhias* in almost every Chanda zamindari. It had been stated to me that the zamindars outside Ahiri had usurped the authority of the *Sendhia* and his *patti panchayat*, but I doubt the truth of this, and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

322 on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. Near
766 Massenar at the end of a long line of menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa, which has a carving of the old man wearing his jubilee medal. There are others at Chinger, on the way to Chitrakot and in a few other places.

322 Each pillar attempts to be a biography in wood of the
766 deceased. We see him important carrying the symbols of
532 wealth and power and riding on a horse or elephant; we see the dancers that delighted him and the landa pot which never failed to give him pleasure. We are shown the knives and axes that he used; the animals that he saw or hunted in the forest. The pillar for Oyami Masa, the homicide, had several carvings illustrating his work as a Siraha.

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● 623 Every Maria village has a panel of secular and religious
632 officials. There is the headman (often called the Peda), his assistant (the Kanoki) and a Kotwar, who has the duty of reporting to the police all births and deaths within his jurisdiction. Each group of villages belongs to what is called a Pargana, a relic of the older administrative system of the State, and at the head of each Pargana there is a Pargana Manjhi. Each village has its panchayat presided over by the village headman, and each Pargana has a Pargana panchayat which is a Court of Appeal. In 1932, the village panchayats among all the aboriginals in Bastar were entrusted with a certain amount of criminal and civil work. The regular Courts were deprived of jurisdiction over the tribesmen for no fewer than seventeen Sections of the Indian Penal Code, including those dealing with simple hurt and assault, thefts of property up to five rupees, mischief, trespass and adultery. The panchayats were permitted to deal with claims for civil damages that might arise out of the criminal offences, and in other civil claims not exceeding twentyfive rupees. They were permitted to impose fines of not more than twentyfive, and in marriage cases to allow expenses up to fifty rupees. The Kotwar had the business of reporting panchayat decisions to the police. An appeal

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

623 [630] lay to the Pargana Manjhi and his panchayat which consisted of four headmen chosen from his group of villages.

In the ten years since these panchayats were established, they have done a great deal of work, and on the whole may be said to have functioned very well. A few headmen have abused their positions; there has been a certain amount of diversion of fines to uses for which they were not intended; probably a number of less influential people have not always had the justice that they might have expected. But this might have happened even in the ordinary Courts, and there is no doubt whatever that the establishment of these panchayats has done a great deal to build up the self-respect of Maria and Muria, and has developed leadership among them.

622 623 The importance of the panchayat for our subject is obvious. In the first place, it provides a body of semi-official elders in every village whose duty it is to assist the police, and indeed whenever a suspicious death occurs in a village, the investigating officer calls the panchayat for a sort of inquest to which he acts as coroner and they as jury. On the other hand, the establishment of the village elders in a position of considerable authority makes it easy for them, when they wish to do so, to conceal a crime or deal with it themselves. Where a headman is himself the culprit, he may force the people to hush up his guilt; and the solidarity that is created by allowing the village under its own elders to settle many of its own affairs helps the headman to attain this end. This is no argument against the establishment of the panchayat. But it does mean that it is important for the authorities to hold the confidence of the headmen, and to inspire them constantly with a sense of their civic duties.

793 Side by side with the secular leaders are the religious elders of the village, though there is no reason why spiritual and secular functions should not be, as they often are, combined in the same persons. The priests and medicine-men naturally have more influence than the official headmen, the most powerful combination being when the headman himself is a Waddai or Siraha.

Chief among the religious elders is the Bhum-Gaita or Perma, the priest of the soil whose duty it is to see to all the sacrifices concerned with the village and its festivals, and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

to perform the worship of the Village Mother. The Pen-Waddai or Waddai is the priest of the clan who fulfils spiritual duties for its members. There may be more than one Waddai in a village or, on the other hand, one Waddai may have jurisdiction over several villages. Everything depends on the distribution of the clan members in the locality. The Waddai is of great importance because of his association with the Ancestors and the Dead. He has to purify offenders against the clan rules, and those who have done anything which might conceivably offend the Dead. The Hanagunda may be the Waddai or some lesser personage. His duty is to act as master of ceremonies at a funeral and to perform the special rites of appeasement for the ghost. He becomes of great importance when anyone has met an unnatural death such as being killed by a tiger or has been executed.

In addition to these regular priests, there are a large number of men who are regarded as being in a special way the servants and interpreters of the gods. These men have the power of falling into ecstacy and in this condition divine the will and proclaim the wishes of unseen beings. They are called Siraha or Gunia. They are chiefly in demand for the cure of disease. Since disease is believed to be the result of supernatural activity on the part of some ghost or demon, it is by supernatural means that it must be diagnosed and cured. The Siraha often has houses round his compound for in-patients, and a celebrated medicine-man may attract sick and anxious people from a wide area.

These men, civil or religious, are the real rulers of the Bastar village. Their influence is more far-reaching, their word is of greater effect than that of the most popular officials. Only the Maharaja, from whom they derive their power, is greater. Today their power is greatly circumscribed, but, as we will see, it has not altogether disappeared. They can still make unbearable the life of witch or sorcerer; they can still ostracize the social rebel; they can still fine the domestic tyrant and subdue the village bully. The ordeal by fire or burning oil still remains a weapon in their hands, and the threat of excommunication is a greater deterrent than many of the provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

The religious leaders insist on the supernatural dangers of crime, the defilement of jail or handcuffs, the painful death

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

623 674 that may follow an unatoned adultery, the offence to the Ancestors of division within the clan. The secular leaders are more concerned with the fatiguing inconvenience of a police enquiry, and the embarrassment and waste of time of going as witnesses to a distant court. Village officialdom, it may be safely said, is anxious to prevent crime. It is equally anxious, when a crime has been committed, to hush it up. But hushing up does not mean that crimes will go unpunished. This might well bring on a village the vengeance of the Dead.

657 Behind this intense belief and organized activity native to the soil rises the massive and alien structure of the Indian Penal Code. This majestic formulary was first drafted in 1837 by a Law Commission under the presidentship of Lord Macaulay. Its provisions extend throughout British India, and it has been applied with certain modifications to Bastar State. The Civil Code of British India is also largely operative in the State. We thus have the remarkable, but not unusual, picture of tribesmen still deeply attached to their own ethical and penal system, still regulating their lives by their own laws of ownership, partition and inheritance, but unable to invoke any sanctions to enforce them and compelled in time of need to turn to a foreign Code that was made without any reference to their traditions and the conditions under which they live. J. H. Hutton has called attention to the result:

> Tribal customs which regulate the ownership, usufruct or transfer of land are normally superseded by a code in the application of which the tribe is deprived of its property, [illegible]erally in the name of law, either by alienation to foreigners or by transferring the trusteeship of a tribal chief into absolute ownership of a kind quite foreign to the customs of a tribe. This has befallen both the Munda and the hill tribes of Chittagong, while even in Rajputana a somewhat similar process has been at work. A similar application of alien law also usually disturbs the tribal customs of debt. The criminal law of a civilized community is often at variance with what is felt to be just and proper by tribal custom. The complicated system of administration of justice has tended to impair the natural truthfulness and honesty of the people and social solidarity of the tribes and has weakened the authority of the social heads and the respect they formerly commanded.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XVII

Village, Clan and Pargana Authorities and Panchayats; their Executive Authority; their Judicial Authority and Methods; Property and Inheritance; Position of Women; the Recent State Orders Restoring Judicial Authority to Panchayats

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One of the most remarkable features of the Bastar of 1927 was the extent to which tribal, village and caste *panchayats* still regulated the religious and social life of the people, acted as intermediaries between them and the State and its zamindaris in meeting State demands for taxes, labour and supplies and in protecting the ryots from undue exactions, and exercised much *de facto* criminal and civil jurisdiction. Here ready to hand was the nucleus of an organization which, if properly handled and fostered, could in time save the State much money spent on law and justice, police and general administration. But the opposite policy had consciously or unconsciously been followed. Any exercise of criminal jurisdiction, even in petty crop theft cases, had been regarded as usurpation of the authority of the police and courts, and persons who had already made ample amends under tribal custom were arrested and sentenced all over again by the tahsildars, while headmen and elders not infrequently were punished for not reporting the offences. A badly trained police, often singularly lacking in common sense, would descend on a village and waste days in pointless investigation of petty cases, expecting not only to be fed on rice, mutton and poultry by the villagers during their stay, but also to be provided with stores of grain under the old *bisaha* system to take away with them at the end of the investigation. Villagers would be compelled to carry the supplies thus forcibly taken from them to the police station, perhaps two or three days' march distant, and would rarely be given even the nominal payment prescribed under the old *bisaha* rules. Then would follow a protracted trial at the still more distant tahsil headquarters, ten witnesses being summoned where three or four would have been ample; and probably all these witnesses at the end of the trial would have to accompany the police party back to the police station to carry their impedimenta, and might be kept even longer as '*athpaharia begar*' labourers to clean the police office and lines and do domestic work for the constables.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The civil matters ordinarily decided by the *panchayats* would be marriage cases, such as settling the compensation to be awarded to a husband when his wife had eloped with another man. But tahsildars would entertain complaints under the sections of the Indian Penal Code punishing adultery from a husband dissatisfied with the *panchayat's* decision, and thereby undermine yet further the authority of the *panchayat*. I have in an earlier chapter referred to the effect of the unconscionable demands for forced labour and supplies on the position of the village headmen, and shown how in consequence the tendency was to put forward a dummy as the headman for secular matters, the real leadership of the village remaining with the religious headman, that is to say, the *kasyeq-gaita* in the case of the Hill Marias, and the *perma* in that of the Bison-horn Marias, but the dummy being available to bear the brunt of official wrath, though powerless to effect anything without the consent of the village elders. Formerly, there seems little doubt, the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* also discharged the functions of the secular headman; the differentiation of the two functions was the result of the State officials' treatment of the aboriginal. In many Abujhmar villages the functions are still combined, or are held by members of the same family, because State officials were always loath to penetrate into the interior of the Hill Maria country. With the revival of the authority of the headmen and *panchayats* that is now the policy of the State, it may be expected that gradually the religious headmen will resume the secular headmanship also.

It is not surprising that, as the result of these methods of dealing with the aboriginals, their *panchayats* tended to co-operate as little as possible with the State; their object became to conceal crime from the police and in general to comply with State requirements only so far as was necessary in order to avoid trouble, and, above all, visits of subordinate State officials to their villages. The records of murder and other trials show many cases of the village elders meeting and deciding to hush up a crime, especially if it had occurred at harvest or any other busy agricultural season, rather than have the whole life of the village community disorganized by police investigation, committal proceedings and Sessions trial. Such crimes may have come to light later through the *panchayat* reporting them at their own convenience, or through the widow or other relative of a murdered man being dissatisfied with the compensation which the murderer had been ordered to give, while in some *parganas* informers arose who subsequently used their supposed prestige with the police to become petty local tyrants. Conversely on occasions *panchayats*, disgusted with the failure of the police to investigate thefts or with the acquittal of guilty persons by the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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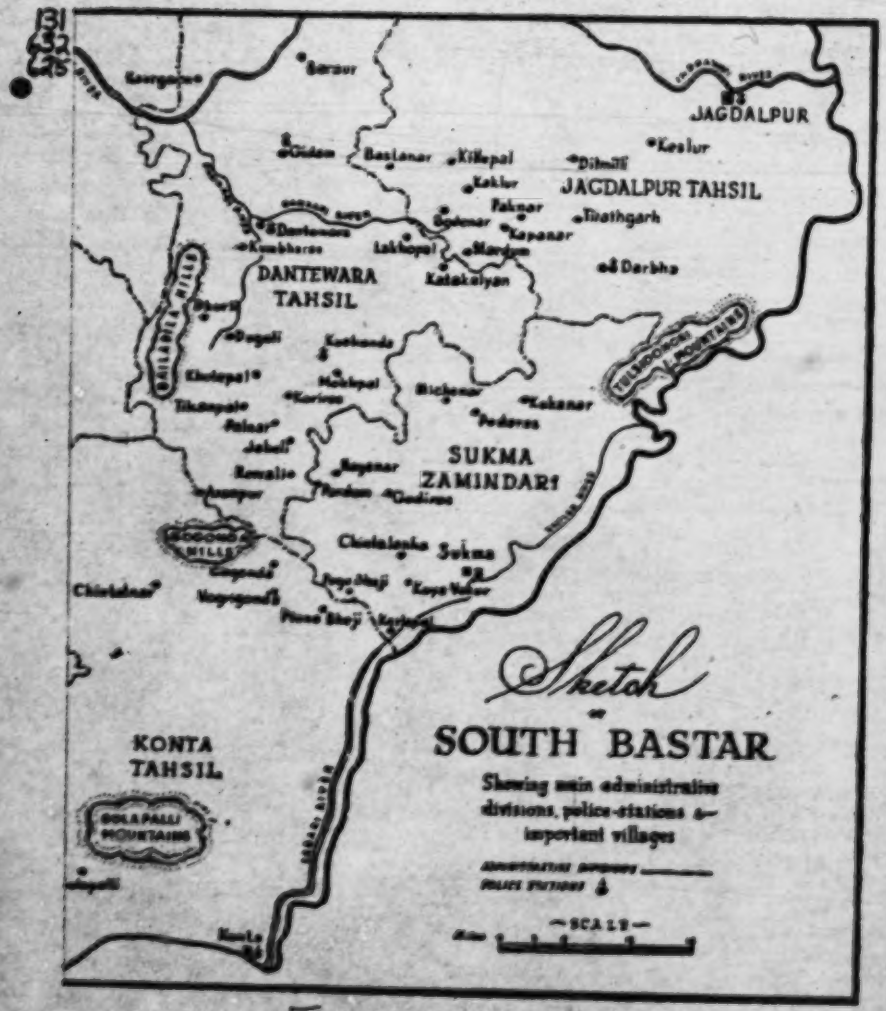

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GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

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It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young.

Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'.

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A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palari, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. Married Men in the Ghotul

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Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two cheliks and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval.

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In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted.

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But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic, they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently hardened to persist in their visits after this.

But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Marn, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margaon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1941 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahna Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul, Dasru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she said, 'well, why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

624 Quarrels are equally dangerous. They not only destroy one of the chief of the Muria's treasures—his sense of tribal solidarity—but like adultery they bring the vengeance of heaven upon the village that indulges in them. They must, therefore, be avoided and if they do occur peace must be made at once. In Binjhli Tetku and his brother Maria had a row over a field and beat each other. Their *saga*-relatives hurried to the village, they got salphi and mahua liquor, and held a panch. The Gaita dipped a gold ear-ring in water and sprinkled it over the two offenders; he dipped the ear-ring also in the liquor. Each brother gave the other a drink and peace was established. When Dandu and Aitu quarrelled in Masora, everyone was afraid that some epidemic would attack the village. They both did indeed fall ill, their bodies swelling mysteriously. They called the Gaita and gave him a pig, five measures of rice and a rupee's worth of liquor to sacrifice. He did so, praying, 'O Mahapurub, you are the earth, you are our mother. We have made a mistake. Even an elephant with four feet sometimes slips; what can we men with only two feet do? We give you this offering, let there be no more trouble.' And he warned the quarrellers that next time it would cost them ten rupees to make peace.

152 Everything in Muria society is thus calculated to render jealousy unnecessary, dangerous and undignified. Its absence is further proved, not only by a mass of statements and absence of the criminal cases that would certainly arise from it, but by concrete instances of social practice. For example, the Muria does not insist on his wife coming to him as a virgin, nor does she expect that her husband should find in her the first girl he has ever loved. When we consider the vast number of peoples who have required an exactly opposite state of things, we see how free the Muria must be from jealousy affecting the period before marriage.

593 After marriage, says the best Muria opinion, husband and wife should never
152 refer to their lives in the ghotul, still less should they rebuke each other with their old love-affairs. The very fact that exceptions to this are so carefully noted shows how rare they are. A Saidar of Botha is said to have forced his wife to swear that she never slept with any boy in her ghotul. The Diwan of Nayanar is said to have constantly nagged his young wife about a former lover till she stopped him by saying, 'Very well, if it is true—as you say—that I love him so much, I will go and live with him'. At Alor the Gaita said, 'A boy may try to get his wife to confess what she did in her ghotul, but he has no right to, and she can always say "Whatever I did, you did the same or more" '. It was considered a very severe rebuke indeed when the Kotwar of Almar shouted at his lazy wife, 'Why don't you get up earlier to work? Didn't your parents teach you how to work, or did they only train you to sleep with the chelik night and day?'

593 A husband is generally very good to a wife who as a motiari got a child by
152 another man. He takes the child as his own and the convention is that no reference should ever be made to the matter. This would not be so astonishing
837 if it only happened when a girl conceived in the ghotul, for any sensible man would regard it as the logical conclusion of what he had already accepted, that his wife was sleeping with other youths throughout the period of their engagement. But it is remarkable, I think, when a boy accepts a girl who has run away with another man whom she obviously loves and is going to have a child who will constantly remind her of this former lover. An incident at Samalpur is typical of scores of others which I have recorded. In this village the Sirdar of the ghotul made a girl pregnant and ran away with her. They were brought back and he was fined five rupees and the girl was married to her betrothed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

presence Chamru twice struck his wife on the back with the handle of his axe. 674x 578

That night one of the neighbours was watching his crops as usual and as he was going home after making a round of the fields, he heard a noise in Chamru's house. He went there and found the man sitting near the door supporting his dead wife in his arms and weeping loudly. Chamru declared that he had killed her. The neighbour went away and brought his friends, and before them Chamru declared that he had hanged his wife and children because they had run away. He said that he would get another wife the next morning, and tried to borrow rice and bullocks for her bride-price.

The people then went to the house, and found the dead body of Hirme lying near the door and the little boy and girl hanging from a rafter. The next day they went to the police station and reported that Hirme had hanged herself, and the two children had followed her example, during Chamru's absence at the Alnar bazaar.

It is evident that Chamru intended to make a deal with the villagers. He supposed that, if he frankly admitted what he had done and paid suitable compensation, they would agree to hush the matter up, and indeed it is obvious that they did agree to do so. What they did not realize was that a police investigation was bound to discover the weak points in their story. Directly the police came to investigate the alleged suicides, they found suspicious inconsistencies. For example, the knot by which the rope round the boy's neck was tied was not a slip-knot, and it would have been difficult for him to have died by strangulation under the circumstances. The girl's neck was tied with a cloth which was hardly adapted to kill her, and her feet were hanging close to a heap of rice on which she could easily have supported herself. The medical evidence immediately disposed of any idea that the three victims had met their deaths by hanging. The usual marks of such a death—constriction of the neck, ligature mark in the neck interrupted at one side, open eyes, protruding tongue, clenched hands, dislocation of the second vertebra from the first—were absent. Medical opinion was that the cause of death in all three cases was congestion of

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 the chest due to shock, but it was certainly not due to hanging.

626 When these facts were put to the villagers they, seeing that the matter was known, changed their attitude; and three different lots of people, none of whom apparently had any kind of enmity towards Chamru in spite of his allegations to that effect, described how on the night of the murder he had admitted killing his wife and children. Chamru, however, insisted that he had not met his wife and children on the way back from the bazaar as the witnesses described, but that on reaching home late at night he had, as he entered, collided against the naked corpse of his wife hanging from the roof. He had taken a blazing piece of wood and had discovered his son and daughter in a similar plight. He had cut down his wife's naked body and wrapped it in the cloth with which she had hanged herself, and had sat there weeping and wondering whether he himself should not commit suicide.

There was abundant evidence, however, that Chamru had met his wife and children on the way home from the Alnar bazaar and had gone with them to the house. He was seen in their company by the boy who had been left to guard the building. Nobody saw what happened from sunset until late at night when his perhaps not wholly hypocritical cries of distress attracted the attention of a neighbour. But it is obvious that he was present in the house, and that no other person could have come in and killed his wife and children. Frustrated sexual desire, injured pride, jealousy at the children's affection for their mother, hunger and fatigue (for Hirme's absence meant there was no one to cook or do the house-work) drove the distracted man to a shocking vengeance and his own death on the scaffold in the end.

674 678 Marvi Paklu and his wife Dallo had been married for about three years, and had two children who died. They got on fairly well together for some time. But particularly after the death of the children disagreements arose; Dallo appears to have been that rather unusual type among aboriginals, a frigid woman who refused full sexual privileges to her husband and yet at the same time was jealous of him and possessive. Two years after their marriage she went to an uncle at Dilmilli without any proper clothes and only

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 Section 323, I.P.C. for what he admitted, voluntarily causing
578 hurt to his wife.
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At Dugeli I met Bugori and his senior wife Jimme. Bugori, a most attractive young man, had been able to win the affection of two women both of whom appear to have loved him devotedly. Unfortunately Jimme's jealousy knew no bounds, and one day, when the two women were out together working in the jungle, Jimme, who was robust and powerful, tried to kill the younger girl with her axe. But she survived, and Jimme went to jail for three years. During
[626] her absence the younger wife remained with Bugori. But when Jimme was due for release, the village held a panchayat and decided that the younger wife must go to live at her mother's house for fear that Jimme might try to kill her again. When Jimme came home, therefore, after Bugori had
[783] given the usual feast to the villagers and had purified her of jail defilement, he took her to his house where she has lived very happily and borne him children. He visits his younger wife in her mother's village from time to time, but does not allow her to come to his house for fear of another tragedy.

Markami Handa had two wives, but does not seem to have been able to keep the affection of the younger, an attractive girl about twenty-four years old. She fell in love with another man and he killed the husband to prevent him taking revenge. Marvi Kesa had three wives, and ill-treated the youngest. One day, after he had beaten her, she ran away to her father's house. There was a quarrel there, and Kesa killed his father-in-law. Poyami Masa had two wives, and a Dhobi tried to seduce the elder. The younger discovered the intrigue, and probably thought it was an excellent opportunity to get rid of her rival. She told her husband, and he was so angry that he stabbed the older woman with an arrow and was himself sentenced to life imprisonment.

Tati Harma had three wives. At the time of the tragedy which brings his name into this record, only two were living. The younger wife had borne him four children, but Harma used to beat her constantly saying that she did not work properly and ate too much. So serious were the disputes in the home that a panchayat fined husband and wife four

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 round his neck, and strung him to a tree. In the next, where according to the medical evidence the murderer strangled a girl with a thin rope, he tied the body to the branch of a tamarind tree, but so carelessly that she was not found hanging but sitting on the ground. In the third, Ujji Poda tied a rope round his victim's neck and broke it. He then tied the broken end to the roof of a field-shed and left it dangling, the idea being to suggest that the man had hanged himself, but that the rope had snapped and allowed the body to fall on the ground. Poda then bribed everybody to make a report of suicide to the police.

Again, when Poyami Masa stabbed his wife with an arrow, his idea seems to have been to suggest suicide; but unfortunately for him he did not do his work properly and the poor woman lived long enough to tell the villagers the truth.

In two other cases the murderers arranged the bodies of their victims to look as though they had been attacked by tigers.

In three cases the murderers attempted to hide the body. In one, the concealment was done so clumsily that marks of blood and every trace of a violent crime was left on the scene of the crime. In another case an attempt was made to suggest that the deceased had met a natural death by drowning, and in another a report was made that the dead man was an epileptic and had killed himself by falling in a fit onto a stump of wood.

674 626 The Maria's attempts to put their crimes on to innocent people are less discreditable than they appear. The idea seems to be that, if an obviously innocent person is accused, he will be able to clear himself in Court, and the police may then drop their investigation and both the innocent and guilty will escape. In 1940, in a village near Aranpur a man was arrested for shooting someone with an arrow, and the prosecution witnesses actually testified that they saw him do so. He denied the crime, and presently another man went to the police and confessed that he was the real culprit. But there was no evidence against the second man and both persons were acquitted. The following year at Aranpur when Barse Chewa was arrested for the murder of his father-in-law, his relatives tried to involve Chewa's brother

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

in the case. They declared that the brother had gone to a Siraha, and had asked him to perform sacrifices which would protect him from the consequences of the crime of which he was the real culprit. It was easily proved, however, that he could have had nothing to do with the matter, and it is probable that the Aranpur people were hoping by this trick to secure the release of both the brothers. This will explain other attempts to involve young men in crimes of which they were obviously innocent. In one case the accused, a youth of only eighteen, tried to involve his brother, though in the end he confessed his crime before the Court. In another, the villagers tried to force a young man to admit the crime and the youth's own father actually took him to the police station for this purpose. The Sub-Inspector refused to accept his confession.

In the Gumiapal murder, however, where the real murderer was the Gaita of the village, the people combined to protect their priest and put the blame on an innocent man. They forced the Kotwar to implicate him and make a false report. When I met the murderer fourteen years afterwards in jail, he was still insisting on his innocence and that the real murderer was the man whom he had tried to implicate so many years before.

But these attempts to shift responsibility are uncommon. It is remarkable how quickly, once the police have arrived on the scene, a Maria admits his guilt, and in 81 of our 100 cases such confession was made.

We should not perhaps assume that these confessions are necessarily evidence of the truthfulness and simplicity of the aboriginals. They may be, but we would do well to take into account the judgment of Sir Cecil Walsh.

> The Indian police are past masters in detective work amongst their own kith and kin, and are endowed with exceptional gifts of insight into the mentality of the average uneducated villager. They are without scruple, and extraordinarily clever in their methods of extracting information. To take what is probably a fairly frequent example, they will tell the man as soon as he is arrested that his only chance of escape is to make a full and candid statement. The majority of men, in such circumstances, are cowardly, and only too ready to sell their associates, if they think by doing so they can purchase immunity. When the statement has been made, the next step is

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

killed Bondki, the wife of Dasru, a panchayat was held by the Pargana Manjhi, and the husband of the murdered woman was given five rupees, a bullock, a pig and some rice. The panchayat received twenty rupees, of which the Pargana Manjhi and the village Peda took five each, the Kandki (headman's assistant) four and the Kotwar one. The villagers then decided to hush up the incident, and it only came to the ears of the police through an informer. When Kartami Hirma killed his baby daughter while he was beating his wife, the panchayat demanded a fine of twentyfive rupees in consideration of which they agreed to hush the matter up. The accused paid five rupees on account and promised the rest within a month. The panchayat even seized the stick with which the beating had been done. Then the Kotwar reported that the child had been still-born. 627 682

When Poriami Handa was killed, the villagers forced his widow to accept compensation from the murderer and to keep the matter a secret. But she told what had happened to her brother-in-law, and he reported the matter to the police. In another case a group of men who had been involved in a robbery killed two of their number to prevent them giving them away. The headman was the cousin of one of the murderers. He called the people of the village together and persuaded them to agree to say nothing about the incident, and it was only through the efforts of the father of one of the victims that the matter came to light. Even then the headman attempted to bribe the police. In this case the only reason for concealment seems to have been the friendship of the headman for one of the people involved. A similar reason seems to have influenced the villagers in another murder. When Miriami Harma fell into a rage at being accused of theft at a panchayat, he snatched his baby daughter out of the arms of his wife, and holding her by the legs dashed her on the ground, killing her immediately. Possibly the members of the panchayat feared that they would be involved, and the next day the murderer and the Kotwar went to the police station and reported that the child had been bitten by a cobra.

Where the murderer is a man of influence in the village, such as one of the civil or religious headmen, he may attempt to force the people to conceal his crime. Manjhi Banda was 626

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

626 the Peda of Turri village, and he said that it was his own brother he had killed and it was nobody else's affair. He even forbade the ferrymen to take the body across the Indrawati, and had it buried himself. It is probable that the villagers were influenced by the circumstances of the case. The murder occurred as a result of a quarrel about the partition of the family property which the dead man demanded. But local opinion seems to have been that, since the two brothers were married to two sisters and were thus practically one family of which the elder brother was the patriarchal head, the dead man was wrong in demanding a separate share. Ujji Poda was a well-to-do man and persuaded the villagers to make a false report to the police. Here too there was probably a general belief that Poda had acted rightly in killing the man who had interfered with his wife's chastity. When Gunda was killed by his son, the villagers hushed up the matter partly because the murdered man was the clan-priest of the Hemla Clan, and his son automatically succeeded him, and partly because of the justifiable nature of the crime. Even the Court considered the murder so excusable that it awarded a sentence of only one month's imprisonment.

In another case the murderer so terrorized the village that nobody dared to go to report the crime. At first the villagers refused to cremate the corpse. But the murderer threatened to kill the headman and burn him with the corpse, and insisted upon it being cremated. It was only after a week that the Peda was able to slip out of the village and make a report. When Oyami Masa of Khutepal killed his junior wife by beating her, he first of all told the villagers that the woman had died of fever. But when they examined the body and found marks of beating, Masa, who was the Waddai of the village and a very domineering and influential man, prevented them from making a report and insisted that the body should be cremated immediately. It was not till three weeks later that any report was made at the police station, and by this time, of course, it had become impossible to prove that Masa had intended to murder his wife or had used sufficient force to kill her. He was, therefore, sentenced to only one year's imprisonment: his presence of mind probably saved him from the gallows.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

An ingenious attempt to hoodwink the police occurred at Jhoriabadhan in 1923. After the mysterious disappearance of a little boy aged two-and-a-half years the police came to investigate, and the villagers took the constable to the thrashing-floor whence the child had disappeared, and there showed him a boy about six years old. They told him that this was the missing boy and that he had been found wandering in the fields. Even the child's own mother declared that this was the lost boy, and since all the members of the family as well as the villagers supported her, the police went away. There is no doubt, however, that a child did disappear and it is probable that he was offered as a human sacrifice.

In one case, but only one, a prosecution witness was so troubled by his family that he committed suicide. On the whole, however, the Maria appear to co-operate with the police very well. In 88 cases out of 100, they assisted in some way or other. Sometimes they reported the matter at the police station. Sometimes they themselves arrested the murderer and kept him in custody until the police arrived. They co-operated by assisting at the inquest which is held in a village when the police arrive to investigate a suspicious death. In one case the villagers took an active and dangerous part in pursuing a convict who had escaped from jail with the result that one of their number was killed.

TABLE TWENTY-ONE

Illustrating the kind of assistance given to police in 100 cases

Information withheld from police	12
Homicide reported by villagers	79
Accused arrested by villagers	25
Accused gives himself up to police	9

This was the exciting pursuit of Markami Mundra in 1934. Mundra was convicted in 1933 and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for an act of violence. On 3 May 1934, he escaped from jail with another convict and a proclamation was issued for their arrest. A Sub-Inspector of Police went at once to Gudra, Mundra's own village, and told the people that a reward of fifty rupees had been offered for his

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

626 capture, and some constables went from village to village
648 looking for him. Very daringly Mundra in his prisoner's clothes went to his house in Gudra, and stayed there till his mother came home from a bazaar. Thence he went to a Kalar's house near Nayanar. The police heard that he was somewhere about, and without knowing that Mundra was hiding there, went to the house to get fire to light their cigarettes. Mundra seeing them and supposing that he was discovered rushed out with a knife in his hand, and tried to stab one of the constables. But they caught him and tied him up with the help of the villagers. They took him to the Kuakonda police station, which they reached at dawn. Thence they went on to Dantewara, which they reached late at night and put up in the Kotwar's house. They tied Mundra's feet to the leg of the cot on which one of the constables was sleeping, and his handcuffed hand to a pillar. But while they were all asleep, Mundra managed to escape again. This time he went to his maternal uncle and got his handcuffs broken. Then dressed in a small loin-cloth and carrying a bow and arrow, he went to his house and took away his wife Kase.

Meanwhile the police went back to Gudra and with the help of the villagers searched the surrounding forest. For eight days the search went on, the Maria taking a leading part in it. At last they got information that Mundra had been seen in someone's field. They again beat the forest and at last found Mundra and his wife. Mundra threatened them with his arrows and managed to escape. But the villagers caught his wife and brought her home. Another week passed with Mundra lurking in the jungle, and one day when Kase went to work in the fields, he took her away again. The Maria, led by Markami Bhima, their headman, again searched for him, but without success, until at last they found him and his wife on the Kopli Hill. Mundra turned upon his pursuers and shot at one of them, his arrow hitting the ground a little in front of him. Once again the search-party succeeded in capturing the unfortunate Kase, and she was beaten and tied up inside her house with a large party of Maria guarding her.

During the night the woman wept loudly, and attracted by her cries Mundra came and stood before the house and said

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

that he would kill the men who were pursuing him and troubling her. He accused his fellow-Maria of doing more than the police for his arrest. Then he struck a beam of the house with his axe in token of revenge and went away. After some days—it was now over two months since he escaped from Dantewara—Mundra again went to look for his wife, but was unable to find her. Markami Bhima the headman, who had been threatened with death by Mundra, had been taking many precautions. But Mundra somehow managed to get into his house at night and killed him by shooting him at close range with an arrow. A week later Mundra went into the Madras Presidency. His hiding-place was betrayed by a woman who met some Maria from the original village who were still searching for him, and the police managed to arrest him on 2 February 1935.

The most remarkable thing about this case was the very large part taken by the Maria in assisting the police. They were no doubt influenced by the reward of fifty rupees that was offered, but even so their help was remarkable and Mundra greatly resented it.

III

Why do the villagers conceal murders from the police? We should not too hastily attribute this to a merely savage absence of the civic instinct. There are many other reasons. First and foremost they still consider that they should settle everything themselves. They believe that it is only in a tribal Court that the real facts can be known. We have seen that they are generally unwilling to testify against a powerful priest or magician who might revenge himself on them. They are equally unwilling to assist the police where they believe a murder has been justified.

Then they fear the annoyance and expense of having police subordinates quartered on them and the expense and waste of time of having to go to a distant Court, especially at the more busy periods of the agricultural year. Again the real reason for a crime is often something which the Maria dislike revealing in Court and which they despair of making outsiders understand. Another powerful factor is the supernatural danger—and the expense of avoiding it—of a post-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

things they provided a pot of rice-beer and a pig for his funeral rites.

V

BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE DEAD

The reaction of society to violent crime may be seen from the funerary arrangements that are made both for the murderer and his victim.[1]

In the great majority of cases these arrangements are complicated by the fact that the corpse of the deceased is not available. It is generally taken to headquarters for post-mortem examination, and when a man is hanged in jail his body is disposed of by the prison authorities. This does not mean, however, that the funeral ceremonies are omitted. Clothes and other property belonging to the dead are brought back from the Magistrate's Court or from the jail, and these are used to represent the corpse. When Markami Deva killed his wife at Darbha the people brought her clothes, necklace and armlets to the village. These relics were not brought into the house, but were put outside in the yard. The usual funeral drum was not beaten, but the relatives gathered and the brother of the husband (the husband himself was in police custody) put haldi and oil on the things, and a relative by marriage carried them in a basket to a pyre which had been prepared outside the village. Men and women walked behind throwing seeds of rice, maize and pulse mixed together in the basket.

The pyre was under a tree over which a great camel's-foot creeper was growing. They carried the basket round it seven times. Relatives put small pieces of cloth upon it in the usual way and removed them. They hung a bit of cloth on the tree. Then they lit the pyre and went away. They did not erect an uraskal, though here they said that they would

[1] Everywhere in India the ghost of a murdered man or a suicide is dangerous. The Lushai think a victim's ghost will haunt the murderer and drive him mad. J. Shakespear, *The Lushai Kuki Clans* (London, 1912), p. 76. Both the Lushai and Lakher perform ceremonies to make the dead man's ghost harmless and to ensure that it becomes the servant of the slayer in the other world. If this is not done, the ghost may blind, lame or paralyse the man who killed him. N. E. Parry, *The Lakhers* (London, 1932), p. 213. Fraser gives many examples from other parts of the world. Sir J. G. Fraser, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III. pp. 103 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

the Tangkhul by fine, amounting to six cows. At Jessami in the Mao group the offender has to make a short sojourn away from his house, but not necessarily outside the village; while at Liyai he is banished from the village. At Mao his punishment is seven years' banishment from the village and a fine of five cows. At Maikel banishment for one year and a fine of five cows, while murder ensuing in the heat of passion in a quarrel is punished with seven years' banishment and a fine of ten cows. The Mayang Khong people exact only a fine of one cow in cases of accidental homicide. Both the Chiru and the Marring impose a heavy fine in such cases, part of the fine being compensation to the relatives of the dead man and the rest being consumed by the village in the course of the settlement of the matter.

In some cases the weapon or other lethal instrument is forfeited to the relatives—a proceeding reminiscent of the law of Deodand.[1]

In former years adultery was commonly punished, so far as the male offender was concerned, with death and this proceeding gave no occasion for a feud. Among the Tangkhul theft was at one time punished with death, if the offender was caught in the act. Nowadays a fine is held sufficient. Arson is penalized and is considered so serious that even when it is accidental, a heavy fine is demanded.

In Bastar also it was formerly the custom for the people to take the law into their own hands and where necessary to pay compensation for doing so to the local authorities. In fact, the older Maria still remember how in the days of their grandparents compensation for murder was paid to the Jia (the high priest) of Dantewara or to the Nengi and Hikmi (State representatives) at Mailawada. A very old man at Harmamunda described how, 'In the old days when a witch was caught, her hands were cut off; and she was taken to the Nengi and Hikmi who were paid eight female calves. If a man was found practising black magic, his teeth were first knocked out with a large bone, and then the bone itself was pushed into his mouth until he died'. The idea was that he had done his evil with the purpose of 'eating' or gain and so he was given a bone to eat. When this happened, the

[1] T. C. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), pp. 106 f. For an account of the attitude of society and 'judicial murder' in Papua, see F. E. Williams, 'Group Sentiment and Primitive Justice', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII (New Series), pp. 523 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

627 683 Nengi and Hikmi received eight male calves. 'Sometimes the witch or sorcerer had all their teeth knocked out, their mouths were burnt with hot oil, and they were banished from their village. With this mark upon them no one would shelter them. Yet another method of dealing with a witch was to tie her up in a sack and throw her into the river'. In another village I was told how a witch was wrapped up in straw and burnt alive.

An old man at Dhurli described how his brother had been killed by a witch's magic. When the Waddai confirmed this, his father killed the witch and paid compensation of four female calves to the Jia.

At Phulpar the headman said that in the old days they used to break the teeth of a witch, shave her head, cut her forehead with a broken bangle and so drive her from the village. Similarly I was told in several places in Konta Tahsil that the people used to cut a witch's nails, shave her head and drive her away. They would confiscate her property and often kill her. There has never been any doubt whatever in the minds of Maria with whom I have discussed this matter that a witch or a sorcerer ought to be punished with death, and that the public were perfectly justified in taking the law into their own hands in a proved case of witchcraft.[1]

627 682 There are probably many cases never discovered by the police that are settled by the Maria panchayat. In others, after everything has been settled by the panchayat, the police have discovered that a crime has been committed. There were as many as 12 such cases out of our 100. And they are instructive. For example, when Mundra killed his wife the villagers fined him a feast of rice and a calf, and then assisted him in cremating the corpse. When Koliha

[1] An interesting parallel is furnished in a note by the late Rai Bahadur Hira Lal on a Report by a certain Captain Sinnock about conditions in the Surguja State in 1818, of which he was then in charge. A landholder named Parbal Sahy had ordered a witch to be put to death. During his trial the Court asked him, 'Do you know that he who is the author of murder commits a great crime?', to which he replied, 'I know that it is a very great crime to commit a murder, but in my country, Surguja, it is no crime to kill a witch'. Sinnock reported the most drastic witch-tests, including the ordeal by water and a test wherein the suspect had to spout milk from the mouth onto a pipal leaf. Hira Lal 'Witches and their Ordeals', *Man in India*, Vol. VI (1926), pp. 295 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

killed Bondki, the wife of Dasru, a panchayat was held by the Pargana Manjhi, and the husband of the murdered woman was given five rupees, a bullock, a pig and some rice. The panchayat received twenty rupees, of which the Pargana Manjhi and the village Peda took five each, the Kandki (headman's assistant) four and the Kotwar one. The villagers then decided to hush up the incident, and it only came to the ears of the police through an informer. When Kartami Hirma killed his baby daughter while he was beating his wife, the panchayat demanded a fine of twentyfive rupees in consideration of which they agreed to hush the matter up. The accused paid five rupees on account and promised the rest within a month. The panchayat even seized the stick with which the beating had been done. Then the Kotwar reported that the child had been still-born.

When Poriami Handa was killed, the villagers forced his widow to accept compensation from the murderer and to keep the matter a secret. But she told what had happened to her brother-in-law, and he reported the matter to the police. In another case a group of men who had been involved in a robbery killed two of their number to prevent them giving them away. The headman was the cousin of one of the murderers. He called the people of the village together and persuaded them to agree to say nothing about the incident, and it was only through the efforts of the father of one of the victims that the matter came to light. Even then the headman attempted to bribe the police. In this case the only reason for concealment seems to have been the friendship of the headman for one of the people involved. A similar reason seems to have influenced the villagers in another murder. When Miriami Harma fell into a rage at being accused of theft at a panchayat, he snatched his baby daughter out of the arms of his wife, and holding her by the legs dashed her on the ground, killing her immediately. Possibly the members of the panchayat feared that they would be involved, and the next day the murderer and the Kotwar went to the police station and reported that the child had been bitten by a cobra.

Where the murderer is a man of influence in the village, such as one of the civil or religious headmen, he may attempt to force the people to conceal his crime. Manjhi Banda was

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a
674 murder is extremely rare and due usually to some suspicion of
572 black magic. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is subject to sudden fits of blind rage, especially after he has been taking large quantities of his intoxicating gruel, *landa*, which is anathema to the Hill Marias. In that state he will seize any weapon that comes to hand, whether it be his wife's heavy rice pestle, a log of wood, an axe or a bow and arrow, and murder for the most trivial of reasons; the State Jail at Jagdalpur has always a high percentage of Bison-horn Marias doing time for homicide. He also is capable of nursing his revenge for a long time; a recent example was given by a strapping Bison-horn Maria from Palnar, who, after serving twelve years of a commuted death sentence, soon after his release took the first chance of picking a quarrel with a man whom he considered deliberately to have let him down by not giving evidence in his defence twelve years before, and battered his head in with a heavy bamboo stick. The Bison-horn Maria will in his fury declare an implacable enmity by stalking round his foe's house three times, either plucking straws from the thatch, or whistling the peculiar *su'i* whistle, or throwing some of his own pubic hairs at the house; and murder is the inevitable result. There were twenty-seven murder trials in Bastar between 1917 and 1923, and in eighteen of them the murderers were Bison-horn Marias, but only two of the murders were committed by Hill Marias. About half the Bison-horn Maria murders are committed in *landa* intoxication, and almost the same proportion in sudden fits of rage about nothing; for example, wives often are killed when the husband dislikes his food or it is not ready for him; one even lost her life for refusing to cook for her husband when he woke up hungry in the middle of the night. But there are on record Bison-horn Maria murders committed for all the ordinary sordid and criminal murder motives; the Bison-horn Maria is a man of far stronger feelings than the Hill Maria. The former actually runs amuck on occasion
[158] like the Malay; in two such cases the offender pleaded that he suffered from fits and ran amuck under the delusion, in the one case, of pursuit and, in the other, of possession by evil spirits and of the
• 628 imminence of a new rebellion. Cain indeed wrote in 1876 that 'blood revenge' had hardly died out in the Godavari valley, and was said to be 'in full exercise' in Bastar. The only apparent case of a hereditary vendetta of which I am aware occurred in Orcha, a Hill Maria village, where a grandfather and his son were murdered at long intervals for suspected witchcraft, while the grandson conveniently fell off a sago-palm tree as soon as he was old enough to claim the hereditary post of *pargana* headman.
692 There is a strong feeling everywhere of an eye for an eye and a tooth

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Appendix I

Administrative Divisions of Bastar State

631
161

	Area[1] *(sq. miles)*	*Population (1931 Census)*
Tahsils:		
Jagdalpur	1,996	198,640
Kondagaon	1,880	83,992
Antagarh	2,885	51,703
Dantewara	1,016	75,872
Konta	1,336	14,206
Bijapur	989	24,135
Zamindaris:		
Kutru	1,360	14,836
Bhopalpatnam	720	17,596
Sukma	650	40,171
Kotapalli-Pamer	230	1,132
Total	13,062[1]	522,283[2]

[1] The areas are given according to the figures current before recent surveys. These surveys have only covered portions of the State, and will not be completed till 1944. In May 1934 the Survey of India, computing from the old maps of the Trigonometrical Survey (which I have often found surprisingly inaccurate for the wilder parts of the State) and from the revised figures of recent surveys, calculated the true area to be 13,725 square miles for the whole State. Revised calculations for each tahsil and zamindari are not available.

[2] The populations of each tahsil and zamindari given above were calculated in the State from preliminary census returns; but separate figures were not isolated by the Central Provinces Census Office. The true population of the State was finally returned as 514,721.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

are excellent, and there are few places to which a bullock-cart and even a car cannot be taken with a little care.

Although the Muria area is divided officially into the two tahsils I have described, the people themselves think much more in terms of the smaller administrative unit, the pargana, the Manjhi or Chief of which is the court of appeal in all tribal disputes. The parganas of Narayanpur are clearly defined blocks of territory with considerable homogeneity of custom and fashion within their borders. But in Kondagaon, the parganas are very broken up. The Keskal, Kongur, Chalka and Mardapal Parganas are well defined, but the Hatiya and Sonawal Parganas, to name no others, are scattered all over the tahsil, and it must be hard for the Pargana Manjhi to exercise any sort of control over the area in his charge.

It has always been a tradition of the State to allow the village panchayats, which we may call judicial committees of village elders, to have jurisdiction over most tribal offences with a final appeal to the Maharaja. Since 1932 the jurisdiction of the village courts has been greatly extended to include cases of simple hurt and assault, minor thefts, mischief, trespass, adultery and enticement. They can also settle civil claims up to a value of twenty-five rupees. The Pargana Manjhi are not personally members of these courts, but to them lies any appeal from their findings. These men, who have the privilege of wearing red turbans, are a useful link between the aboriginals and the Administration. Though some of them abuse their position and tend to divert fines to their own use, they are on the whole a first-rate body of men, and their friendship is invaluable to the investigator.

The tradition of local self-government, so firmly established in the State, is an important factor in the conditions that make the ghotul and its organization and discipline possible.

II. The Tribal Population of Bastar

The tribal population of Bastar is varied and interesting. In order to simplify my description I will adopt the names given to the tribes by Grigson, though it must be remembered that, convenient though these often are, they are not always the names used by the people themselves.

The Hill Maria are the least influenced by the outside world and have retained most of their religious and cultural institutions. They live in the Abujhmar Mountains and there were 11,500 of them in 1931, and probably some 13,000 now. They are both shy and friendly, an attractive people, cultivating their desolate and lonely hills with axe and fire; their life and customs have been fully described by Grigson.

The Bison-horn Maria, a great tribe of some 175,000 persons, live south of the Indrawati in the Dantewara, Konta, Jagdalpur and Bijapur Tahsils and in the Sukma Zamindari. Grigson has studied them in less detail than the Hill Maria.[1] They have very little contact with the Muria of the north, except that they meet parties of them coming down from the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas to dance at the great Marhai at Ghotpal. Their characteristic dance is the marriage dance with a splendid bison-horn headdress. A megalithic culture survives among them, and there are traces of a ghotul system long since moribund.

[1] A detailed study of one aspect of their life will be found in my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); some of their folk-tales are given in my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

692
623
632
692

same man every time—sends for the complainant and the accused, and after hearing the parties decides the case with the help of the village elders, who as a rule agree with his decision.

The jurisdiction of the village panchayat is confined to the village itself, and a local village panchayat is never referred to for the decision of a case by persons at a distance. A group of about 50 to 100 villages is constituted into what is locally called a *patti*, and this *patti* acknowledges the authority of the chief religious and social headman of the group, who is called the *Sendhia*. The *Sendhia* is the chief priest and judge of the *patti*. Every marriage contracted, every case of social misdemeanour involving the penalty of a fine, and every other social and religious function performed in any village of the *patti* yields the *Sendhia* a fixed fee in cash, ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 10, and in some exceptional cases up to Rs. 50. The office of the *Sendhia* is also hereditary, and the *Sendhia* is the dominant authority in the *patti*. The authority of the *Sendhia* (for purposes of a Panchayat) is invoked only in exceptional cases involving the interests of a number of villages, and in such cases the decision of the *Sendhia* on an appeal being made to him by or against a village panchayat (or a number of village panchayats) is final. For purposes of a panchayat therefore each *patti* forms a distinct unit, the internal composition of which is as follows :—

(a) Each village holds its own panchayat composed of a few village elders and presided over by the village headman (*gaita*).

(b) Each group of villages acknowledges the authority of the *Sendhia*, who is the court of appeal for difficult or intricate intra-communal disputes.

(c) Each *Sendhia's patti* is, as a rule, a compact block of country, sharply defined by prominent natural geographical boundaries (a range of hills, a large river or a nullah), and the *Sendhia's* authority is confined to his own *patti*.

The affairs of one *Sendhia's patti* are never referred to a *Sendhia* of another *patti*. Each *patti* is known by its local geographical name (such as the Lahiri *patti*, the Vennasugar *patti*, the Jarawandi *patti*, the Ghat *patti*, and so forth), and each *patti* is the sole undisputed domain of the local *Sendhia*. The only remarkable case of an exception to this general rule that occurred within the memory of living man was during the cold weather of 1909 at the village of Kotmi, which belongs to the Vennasugar *patti*. A Maria's daughter of the village eloped with a Mussalman. The local village panchayat took a feast from the father of the girl, and fined him an amount adequate enough for the dues of the *Sendhia*. The *Sendhia* demanded more and censured the village panchayat for having let the man off with a light amount. The village panchayat considered the *Sendhia's* demands to be exorbitant, and threatened to alienate themselves from him and to invoke the aid of a foreign *Sendhia*. This was too much for the *Sendhia*, who directly excommunicated the whole village panchayat. The panchayat therefore sent for the *Sendhia* of Judt, who naturally refused to affiliate the village to his *patti*, but, seeing the difficulties of the case, agreed to purify the culprit for a small fee, which was paid to him. He performed the necessary ceremonies and reclaimed the unfortunate father of the girl. Thereupon the whole *patti* of Vennasugar rose against the village of Kotmi, and threatened to use violence. This caused some uneasiness to the police, who began sending in reports. The Manager of the Ahiri estate went to the spot, and his camp was immediately besieged by about a hundred *Gaitas* of the *patti*, headed by the *Sendhia*, who clamoured for justice. Their complaint was that the village people of Kotmi had set a bad example, and that the people of the *patti* would know no rest till they (the Kotmi people) got themselves purified by the *Sendhia*. The Marias of Kotmi were, on their part, too obstinate to yield, and with great difficulty the Manager succeeded in effecting a compromise by prevailing upon the *Sendhia* to reduce his demands. He agreed ultimately to give absolution for a nominal amount, which was paid by the girl's father, and thus ended in a merry drinking bout what threatened to be a small civil war. The next

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

morning the *Sendhia* repeated the necessary spells, and, collecting together all the *Gaitas* of the *patti* with the Kotmi fellows, sprinkled fresh well water over their heads and declared Kotmi as re-affiliated to his *patti*.

'This specific instance illustrates not only the great power exercised by the *Sendhia* in his *patti* but also the fact that it is impossible for a village to alienate itself from a *patti* or to disregard the authority of a *Sendhia*.'

The South Chanda *patti* thus described seems to be very like the clan-*pargana* of the neighbouring Bastar Hill Marias, though much larger, if the figure of from 50 to 100 villages in each *patti* is correct. Actually, however, the *patti* probably includes several clan-areas or, at all events, villages of several clans, though I have not been able to make any enquiries in Chanda. The designation *Sendhia* is used in the Bhopalpatnam zamindari of Bastar for the headmen appointed by past zamindars over the local Naikpod, Kapewar, Barod and Dolod (Pardhan) castes; among Bastar Marias, however, the term appears to be used only in the Kutru Mar *pargana*, of which Arki Burga of Jegur, a village south of the Indrawati, was in 1930 the hereditary *sendhia*. But his sole function was the reclamation of any Maria guilty of a breach of social rules, and he had no other rights or authority, nor was his presence essential in any *panchayat* except one convened to deal with cases of outcasting. He was in no sense a headman of the *pargana*, and had none of the authority of the *sendhia* of Chanda or the *pargania majhi* or headman of the Maria and Muria *parganas* of Antagarh, Kondagaon, Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils in Bastar. In fact, there were no *pargana* headmen for the Kutru Mar and Bhairamgarh Mar *parganas* of Kutru zamindari, the *gaita* of the parent or principal village of a clan being the nearest approach to a *pargana* headman; when Arki Burga was asked to become *pargana* headman he refused; the little actual influence he possessed over the Kutru Mar *pargana* was shown by the fact that he had left the *pargana* to live at Jegur. The headmen of the Hill Maria *parganas* of Antagarh tahsil are sometimes called *sethia*.

In the two Hill Maria *parganas* of Kutru the village *gaita* is often still both religious and secular headman. The clans are small, and their villages not always contiguous. The *gaita* of the parent village may not actually decide all cases from each of the other villages, but he can interfere with the decisions of the *gaita* and elders of the other villages, and the latter often refer cases to him; for the decision of such cases he sits in *panchayat* with the *gaitas* of all the other villages of his clan. Examples of these small clan groups are the Gumelor villages of Dunga, Pariakot and Goti in Bhairamgarh Mar and the Mohanda villages of Lakka, Puslakka and Bhuri in Kutru Mar; of the former group the headman of Pariakot is the head *gaita*, though Dunga is the parent village, for the ancestor of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the headman of Pariakot was headman of Dunga when he founded Pariakot from Dunga; of the latter group the headman of Lakka, the parent village, is the head *gaita*, and has since been appointed *pargana* headman of the Kutru Mar *pargana* as the most influential headman in the *pargana*. In these cases, as generally among Hill Marias, the *waddai* or clan-priest is not the headman of the clan. But the Marias of Kutru south of the Indrawati and of the adjacent parts of Bijapur who are of Hill Maria origin modified in culture by contact with Bison-horn Maria and other neighbours, have usually their *waddai*, by them designated *modul wadde*, as the secular head of the clan as well as clan-priest. The names and villages of most of these clans have been given in the footnote to page 202. The post is hereditary, but the holder is sometimes deposed if he does not duly propitiate the clan-god or is oppressive. In matters affecting the State and in ordinary village routine he has no authority (unless he has been recognized as *pargana* headman), the village *pedа* and *perma* being supreme; and in ordinary village *panchayats* he probably takes no part, except in his own village, and even there probably only as a member, the *pedа* being the president. As social arbiter he decides tribal cases, such as breaches of social rules and marriage disputes, at the annual harvest festival, there known as the *Pindi Pandum*, with the aid of a clan *panchayat* of the leading *pedas* and *permas* of the clan villages.

Among the Hill Marias of Antagarh tahsil, that is to say of the greater part of the Abujhmar hills, we have seen that the *parganas* are clan-areas, the exception being the large Chhota Dongar *pargana*, where, however, the Usendi clan predominates and is recognized by the other clans as the chief clan of the *pargana*. The man now recognized by the State as the *parganis majhi* or headman of each of these *parganas* is the hereditary clan headman or *parganis gaita*. He is the chief headman of the village headmen of his clan rather than clan headman, for, though orders issue as his orders, they are issued always after consultation with a *panchayat* of the leading headmen, religious and secular, and elders of the villages in the clan-area. Any attempt on the part of a *parganis gaita* to presume on his position to make himself a little chief or tyrant is fiercely resisted by the clan; one of the reasons for the 1916 murder at Orcha of Usendi Bhosa, the headman of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, was the belief that he was trying to 'set up a *raj* over Metabhum'. Similarly in villages the headman's authority is rather that of the spokesman of the village elders than his own individual authority. If the tahsildar sends word to the *parganis gaita* that, for example, a camp or camps have to be prepared in his *pargana* for the Diwan, or that on a certain date each village in the *pargana* has to supply

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

men for road repairs, the *pargania gaita* cannot merely send out orders to the headman of each village in his *pargana* assigning his village a share of the *pargana* task. But he has to send out his *garkai* or messenger, a clan servant remunerated in grain at two or three *pailî* per cultivator, to call in the *gaita*, *kasyeq-gaita* and leading elders of each of the clan villages to a meeting at his village or some central spot, at which he arranges the distribution of the work in consultation with them. Similar meetings are called for arranging collections of money or grain for any clan festival, such as Koqsar, or any special disease-averting or tiger-averting ceremony. In a dispute between some of his villagers as to the distribution of the work he naturally would give the final word; and similarly when he calls in selected village *gaitas* to sit with him to decide inter-village disputes or to interfere with what he considers a wrong decision of a village *panchayat* he may have the final word. Strictly speaking, he is at liberty to dissent from the members of his meetings and *panchayats* and to insist on his own view being the final view in the matter; but in practice he would get short shrift if he made a habit of going against the majority. In actual fact, therefore, we have here a tribal organization very similar to that postulated by Mr. C. U. Wills, I.C.S., in his monograph on 'The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chhattisgarh' (see pages 4 and 33 above) as the foundation on which the Chhattisgarh Maharajas superimposed their roughly feudal system. In the village the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita* is merely *primus inter pares* in regard to the village elders and in the clan or *pargana* the *pargania gaita* in regard to the *gaitas* and *kasyeq-gaitas* of the other villages of the clan or *pargana*. The natural democratic tendencies of the tribe not only are a bulwark against mismanagement by State officials, but also block any attempt on the part of a village or *pargana* headman to become a local despot. We have seen already[1] how even when the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village enthroned on his *udam-garia* stone seat of honour at the Koqsar festival announces the agricultural programme of the coming year he is issuing no independent orders, but merely confirming *ex cathedra* the decisions already reached in *panchayat* between him and the elders. These stone seats for the *kasyeq-gaita* and *gaita* are almost the only outward sign of their primacy in their villages; and in some villages they sit on them also to preside over meetings of the elders for administrative or judicial work. The photograph on plate XXIII opposite this page shows the *kasyeq-gaita* and *gaita* of Itulnar thus seated in *panchayat*.

In the Bison-horn Maria country there are no contiguous clan or phratry areas, and the *parganas* often represent former petty

[1] See page 141.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

622 kingdoms or *garhs* of forgotten chiefs, or divisions of the early
623 medieval Telanga kingdoms of Barsur, Dantewara or Bhairamgarh.
632 The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chudala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

689 Social offences involving exclusion from tribal ceremonies and
564 feasts are very similar in these days to those of neighbouring Hindu
684 castes. The worst offences are to get maggots in wounds, to take
688 food from or have sexual relations with persons of the despised Ghasia, Mahra or Lohar castes, and to break the rules of exogamy by having sexual relations with a girl of a brother-clan. Another offence, which among the Bison-horn Marias may lead to considerable trouble, is the eating of any new crop or the cutting of grass or bamboo before the appropriate *pandum* has been celebrated; this form of sacrilege is believed to be avenged by the earth or clan-god sending tigers to carry off cattle or men, and in a case which came before me in which such a visitation had followed the cutting of grass by two villagers before the Kare Pandum the *panchayat* had ordered them to compensate the owner of each cow or bullock killed by the avenging tigers. The way in which breaches of the rules of exogamy are dealt with has already been described
689 (pages 245-6 above). Any form of social relations with Ghasia,
564 Mahra or Lohar, however unwitting, entails penalties not only
783 on the actual offender, but also often on his near kinsmen. In the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Appendix II

618
632
621
776

Lists of Hill Maria Clans and Bison-horn Maria Clans and Phratries, and Pedigree of the Hill Maria Family holding the Hereditary Headmanship of Chhota Dongar Pargana and Orcha Village

[(d) Signifies that the village was deserted in 1934]

Hill Maria Clans

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Usendi	Chhota Dongar	Orcha Japgunda Hoinar (d) Juwada Dugarli Bagom Thadur Machan Duseli Kejang (d) Uragonda (d)	Wikir Hunga (kept at Japgunda, but brought to Orcha for festivals)	Goat
	Kutru Mar	Michwada	None	
	Kirangal (not *Hill Maria but Gotul Muria*)	One or two villages	?	
	Chanda District	?	?	
Wadder	Chhota Dongar	Dhanora Jori Hikpalla Kodeli Perilmeta Rengabera (d)	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda	None
	Bhomra (Muria)	Kurselhur	Use Dokra of Kurselhur	
	Chanda District, and Kutru S. of Indrawati	Kaunde and others, and Madhepar and a few more in Kutru	Kuwo-Gundo of Kaunde	
Korami	Chhota Dongar	Hirangal Verma	Worship the Usendi god of Japgunda	None

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dodi	Do.	Jhara Rajpur Idnar	Do.	None
Doda	Chhota Dongar	Kurmer Dedalur	Nule Harma or Eram Mo'itto of Kurmer	None
Parsai	Do.	Chalcheghi	Do.	None
Katlami	Do.	Jhori Hikpulla (shared with Wadder)	Pandu Hunga of Jhori, elder brother of Wikir Hunga, the Usendi god	None
Jugho, *alias* Karme (plural, Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar Bhairamgarh Mar	Adeq Karanmeta (d) Akmeta (d) Maspur (d) Nelanar Makawada Gomagal Hasnar Rainar Gapa (d) Itulnar	Worships the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda Say would worship Wikir Hunga if still in Chhota Dongar *pargana*, but no need as now in Kutru zamindari	None; the name Karme said to mean 'sunset', the ancestor of clan having been born then
Dhurwa (almost a branch of Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar	Share Gomagal and Hasnar with Jughalor	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda but have also his sister Oghal Mutta as their own god	None; clan says it is elder brother of Jughalor

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dol ('younger brothers' of Jughalor)	Do.	Kohkapaghai	Worship Usendi god Wikir Hunga	Called Dol because members started making *dol* drums
Matami	Do.	Teknar	Do.	None
Dugher	Do.	Maramnar	Do.	None
Potawi	Do.	Almost extinct; one house in Orcha	Do.	None
Poyami	Do.	Kundali (one house)	Do.	None
Gecha	Do. Mangnar	Udala Tondawada Wetekal (d)	Do.	None. Name means 'sluggard' clan
Neghal	Chhota Dongar	Bhera Tondawada	Do.	Panther
Ahkal	Do.	Gudadi	Do.	None
Ete[1]	Do.	Kondakoti	Nule Harma of Kurmer	? Crab
Boka	Do.	Dondrewada Bokalur		None
Kohla	Chhota Dongar	Mandali Kushnar Batwada Kostari Gumter Hoinger Devanar Kerimar Irpenar	Mu'ima Kohla Pen of Batwada	?
Padál	Padalibhum	All the *pargana*	Gumtuli Muttai, of Adnar	None
Kumoti	Chhota Dongar	Almost extinct; 2 houses in Hannar, 1 in Rainar	None	None
Játi	Játwara	Most of the *pargana*	?	?

[1] Ete is probably the same as Yete, a Kutru Mar clan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Boter	Kutru Mar	Boter	None	None
Wachami	Kutru Mar and Ahiri (mostly Indrawati valley)	Kumharmeta Markanar Irkapal Karkelli Bodeli and some Ahiri villages	Wachami Moitto Pen of Kumharmeta	?
Mohanda	Kutru Mar	Lakka Hingmeta Bhuri Puslakka	A god at Lakka	?
Oyami	Bhairamgarh Mar	Komu Kalhasa Malahanar (d)	None	None
Mohke	Do. Chhota Dongar	2 houses in Kalhasa Albera (d)	None	None
Yete	Bhairamgarh Mar	Hoinar	None	Crab
Pungati	Do.	2 houses in Ader (Kutru)	None	?
Bardal	Bardal Tapalibhum	Whole pargana Ranimarka	Hurra Mu'iya of Kornar	None
Farsal	Farsal Bhairamgarh	Whole pargana (13 inhabited villages) Bheriabhum	Kodo Mo'itto of Dhurwada None	None
Gotal	Hukkagotal Tulsgotal Parsigotal	Whole pargana (9 inhabited villages) Whole pargana (9 inhabited villages) Whole pargana (5 inhabited villages)	Pahanleya Muttari of Toinar in Tulsgotal Do. Top Mudya of Mohandi, said to be younger brother of Pahanley's husband	None None None

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
621
632
776

Clan	Parganа	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Tapa	Tapalibhūm (Chhote Mar)	Nearly all the villages of the *pargana*	Rikaa Pen of Dodrimarka in Tapalibhum	None
Nughoti, *alias* Nuroti	Nurbhum jātwara Tapalibhum	All *pargana* but Turko Kohkameta Markawada Hachekote	?	None
Hichami	Nurbhum	Turko	The Nughoti god	?
Parlio	Kutru Mar	Dodmarka Karangul Nugur Ader (Kutru) Padmeta	Koruk Pen of Karangal and Nugur	Goat
Jātā	Kutru Mar Chhote Dongar	Jātalur Akdum (d)	None	?
Kohka	Bhairamgarh Mar	Kakowada, or Kakawoki	None	Kohka-marra the marking-nut tree
Ark	Do.	Korowaya; sold Itulnar to Jughalor	None	None
Jāte (plural, Jāterom)	Mangnar	Mornar	Pat Raja	The Jāte grass used for making brooms to sweep the god's shrine
Tokalor	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The *toka* or flap of loin-cloth left to hang behind like a tail
Hukur	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The *huk* or basketry ladle used to stir rice cooked at the god's shrine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
621
632
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Marvi	Mangnar	Tökhtöll Kuwer Modangwada Moghuri	Mārī-māgh, Pat Raja's sister's son or *bārsajal*. They get leave from Pat Raja to hold his nephew's festivals	?
Tamo	Dantewara Mar	Tumirgunda Padmeta	Hurra Gunda Moitto of Tumirgunda	None
Atami[1]	Barsur	Chhota Karka Palawaya	Do.	?
Lekami[1]	Barsur	Batawada Ghotpal	Use Modia of Ghotpal	?

There were one or two Lekami houses in the Hill Maria villages of Handawada and Dunga.

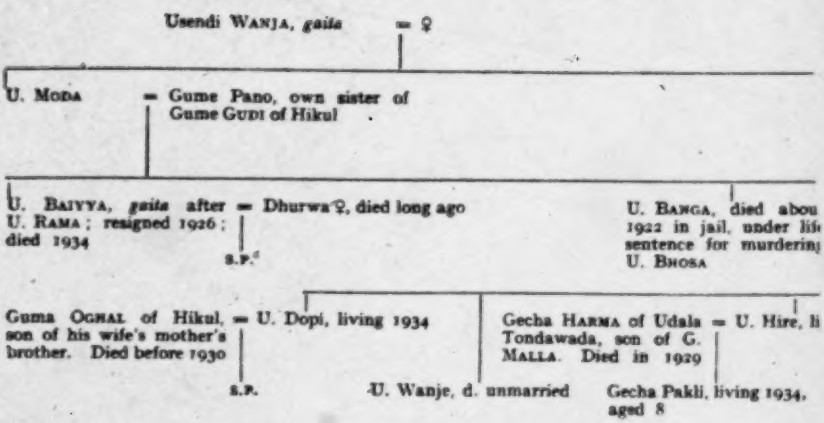
Ganse	Dantewara or Barsur Mar	Toinar Handawada Hikul Thakawada Paralnar Prinkapal Kodokal Hitawada	Verma Mo'itto Pen of Toinar. The *maddai* is jātā by clan	None
	Bhairamgarh	Kunjewada Goti Dunga Pariakot	None	
Alami	Mangnar	Nendur Gatla	Attend festivals of Pat Raja, god of jāt-erom at Mornar	Chameleon (ālām)
Nonde	Mangnar	Rotad	Do.	Rope

[1] Now, in culture, Bison-horn clans; but the Lekami intermarries with the Ganse clan, and the Atami still worships the Hill Maria *pen* of the Tamo clan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PEDIGREE OF THE

601
632



[p. 306(A)]

U. B
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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

GREE OF THE ORCHA FAMILY IN WHICH SUCCESSION TO *PARGANA* AN

601
632

J. BANGA, died about 922 in jail, under life entence for murdering J. BHOSA = Gume Ippo, d. of his mother's brother, G. GUDI of Hikul. Living 1934, nearly 80

of Udala = U. Hire, living n of G. in 1929

cha Pakli, living 1934. d 8

U. MODA, about 55 in 1934, released in 1926 after 10 years of life entence for U. BHOSA's murder. *Gaita* since 1928 = ♀ = (2) Gecha Kowe, own sister of his brother-in-law Gecha HARMA, married year after him and Hire. Living 1934, about 34

U. IRKA, 8 years old in 1934 — U.

♀

(U. BHOSA's magic was said to have killed this wife and daughter)

U. BHOSA, became *gaita* when in about 1910 U. BAIYYA, his first cousin, resigned, and was appointed *parganis* (*pargana* headman). Murdered in 1916 for magic and 'trying to set up a *raj* over Metabhum'; was then 60 = Potawi Kane, d. of P. MURRA of Tulur hamlet of Orcha. Living in 1934 in part of U. POLA's house and cooking for him, but not as his wife

U. BARANGA, said to have killed himself in 1927 by accidentally falling from a *salpā* tree

U. IRKA, about 18 in 193 brought up by U. POLA, uncle

[p. 306(B)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

601
632

RGANA AND FAMILY HEADSHIP IS HEREDITARY

U. RAMA, succ. his father as *gaita*; murdered for magic by U. BANGA in 1926

U. DANGI, died very old in 1933 = Ahkal Nendo, d. of Ahkal MULLA of Godari; still living 1934

Kowe, own brother-in-ARMA, marer him and g 1934.

U. HARMA, d. 1926, just after release from jail for U. BHOSA's murder = Doi Bire, d. of Doi Murral of Kokapar

Son killed by BHOSA's magic

U. KOHLA, d. 1928 became *pargania* and *gaita* in 1916 on BHOSA's murder

s old in U. DÖTI, born in 1932

U. KOSA, 26 in 1934, *pargania* since U. KOHLA's death in 1928. Married in 1929 = Jugho K GUDI of

U. WÄGHÄLL, born 1932

URRA rcha. t of king wife

U. POLA = Dhurwa Burgi, d. of Dhurwa MULLA, kinsman of POLA's mother's father, died in 1919

S.P.

about 18 in 1934; p by U. POLA, his

[p. 306(C)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

601
●632

HEREDITARY

U. RAHA, succ. his father as *gaita*; murdered for magic by U. BANGA in 1906 = Dhurwa Kâhpe, d. of Dhurwa MODA of Gomagal

Ahkal Nendo, d. of Ahkal DULLA of Godasi; still living 1934

re, d. of Dol Murrai kapar

U. KOHLA, d. 1928; became *pargania* and *gaita* in 1916 on BHOSA's murder = Guma Mene of Hikal, sister of Guma Oghal, his brother-in-law

SA's

? 'killed by BHOSA's magic'

U. KOSA, 26 in 1934, *pargania* since U. KOHLA's death in 1928. Married in 1929 = Jugho Kohle, d. of Jugho GUDI of Adeq

U. Wâghâll, born 1932

SA = Dhurwa Burgi, d. of Dhurwa MULLA, kinsman of POLA's mother's father, died in 1919

S.P.

[p. 306(D)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

[883] 117 him his chief impression of Delhi, he spoke of the Kutb Minar, which he told me was almost as fine and tall as the factory chimney of the Allapilli saw-mills! Either at Burgi or the next village another phenomenon was a Maria in a good tweed coat above khaki shorts and stockings with flashes, wearing over all an excellent fawn Curzon topi with a dark brown pugaree, far smarter than I have ever owned. I discovered that his clothes had all been given him by the zamindari of Ahiri, when he had become a member of the Sironcha Independent Local Board. That night, still in his fine feathers, he came to see the dancing in my camp at Surjagarh: but as the drumming swelled and the dances warmed up he found himself unable to keep up the detachment appropriate to his pseudo-*sahib* status, and gradually divested himself of topi, coat, shirt and shoes, finally peeling off his shorts to reveal beneath them the usual abbreviated loin-cloth of the Maria, seizing a drum, and joining in the dance: he was then indistinguishable from any other Maria but for his air of authority as a headman, and his 'undress' was typically Maria, as described in the *Gazetteer*[1]:—

291 304 'Their dress is scanty, consisting of a compromise between a *langoti* and a *dhoti*, a strip of cloth wound tightly round the waist in rope-like folds and passed between the legs with the spare end hanging down in front below the knees. Often this garment diminishes to the scantiest rag. They adorn their necks with handsome strings of beads and their arms occasionally with metal and glass bangles. Their ears are pulled out of shape by the weight of numerous brass rings with which they are usually garnished, and occasionally they wear *pagris*.'

● 632 This Independent Local Board for the Sironcha taluq consisted then of eighteen members, of whom only six were aboriginals, although there were 3,354 aboriginal to 2,850 non-aboriginal voters. The aboriginal members were almost all returned unopposed, and were *de facto* the nominees of the zamindar, who had had to use his full influence to persuade them to join this peculiar body! It was in the circumstances no surprise discovery that the open, mainly non-aboriginal, country around Sironcha and Ahiri got far more benefit from the Board's expenditure and services than the wild interior of Ahiri zamindari. But the Maria members were utterly illiterate and at sea in the Board meetings. It was the zamindar's influence alone that secured for the Maria areas such services as the Board gave them. Nevertheless, the mere fact that there is an independent local authority for Sironcha tahsil secures that at least this tahsil does get spent on it all that it pays in cesses and other local taxes, and a fair share of Government grants to local bodies, in marked contrast to the fate of the zamindaris of Garchiroli tahsil, who come under the tender mercies of the Chanda District Council

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and see the bulk of the Council's funds, including their own contributions, spent on the open and advanced tracts of the district where the villagers must be placated for political reasons. More will be said on this point later in this Note, in dealing with the Garchiroli zamindaris.

The dancing at Surjagarh stands out in memory as faster and livelier than any other dancing seen on this tour. The drums too were different, great double membrane drums of short sections of *semur* (*bombax malabaricum*) trunks, up to 2 ft. 6 in. or 3 ft. in diameter. The *Gazetteer* well describes the typical Maria dance :—

'The favourite dance is a peculiar rippling step forwards, with the foot dragged, not very graceful when done by a single individual, but looking quite different when done in unison by a great circle of dancers singing a *re-lo, re-lo*, chorus to which the step keeps time. In some villages where the headman is an enthusiast for the pastime a trained band performs weird and wonderful step dances to the sound of the drum. At a big dance the trained band occupies the inner ring round the fire, while the common folk, men and maids, in separate rings move round in great circles in opposite ways. All are dressed for the occasion in their best, bearing in their hands weird ornaments of wicker work, with garlands of flowers on their necks, and, in their hair, feather ornaments humorously or coquettishly placed. Seen in the red glow of a huge log fire, glinting on the shining beads and barbaric ornaments of the dancers, with the throb of the drums, and the beat of many feet moving in unison to the wild music of the voices in chorus, a Maria dance is a spectacle not easily forgotten, but lingers as a characteristic scene when other details have faded from the memory.'[1]

That would well describe that wild night at Surjagarh, when the dancers, their spirits enlivened by several earthen pots of *mahua* liquor, kept up their dancing nearly till dawn. It had been a long and tiring day, and I retired early, the last thing seen from my tent before I closed the flap to shut out the blaze of the many log fires, the dust and the tramp of hundreds of feet, being our now nearly nude Local Board Member, well warmed by liquor and congenial surroundings, leading a ring of dancers and gravely demonstrating the right steps.

Next morning after an early breakfast we climbed with many of the night's dancers up to the keep of the old fort that crowns the Surjagarh hills, 1,273 feet above the forests at their base, the ascent being over what the *Gazetteer*[2] truly calls a noble cliff of black ferruginous mica schist.

'The ascent at first is by a narrow rift in the mountain, whose sides rise vertically on either hand 600 feet in height, and then the path winds round the face of the cliff in natural steps formed by the weathering of the schist. The whole ascent has been carefully fortified by a series of stone breastworks, here thrown across the path, there perched on an overhanging ledge of rock, and if properly defended would be impracticable for troops without means of shelling. Within the keep on the summit there used to be a small tank which

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 99-100.
[2] Pp. 418-9.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 313 unchallenged. I emphasize the word sympathy: the method of threatening and punishing the headmen must be given up, and every effort made to win their understanding support for the new measures and even to entrust them with their execution.

883 The walks and talks at Surjagarh delayed the start on the 32 miles journey to Jawarwandi, and the car and lorry were more than once bogged on the way, so that once again we arrived in camp long after dark. It was on this journey that we crossed the tongues of Bastar territory mentioned on page 378 of this Note: in the southern tongue, in fact, we were bogged for an hour or more, but, as in Bastar, were readily helped to extricate ourselves. I noticed and stopped in *gotul* or bachelors' dormitories in several villages before and after Surjagarh. Many of these are treated by touring officers as though they were rest-huts built for their special convenience, like the *chauri* of Hyderabad or Berar villages. They use them also for posting up legal notices, and in two I found nailed to the wooden posts copies of the *Yudda Samachar* or War News in the Marathi edition published by the provincial War Purposes Fund for dissemination of accurate war information in all villages; this showed singular lack of intelligence on the part of those who controlled such propaganda in Chanda district, for in these Maria villages not a person was literate and very few could speak Marathi. The *gotul* culture here must be similar to that among the Murias just across the Bastar border in North Antagarh, but in the short time available I did not overcome the Marias' natural reluctance to discuss this intimate social organization, a reluctance heightened, I suspect, by the fact that here on the fringes of the *gotul* country the institution is the butt of Hindu ridicule or prurient curiosity. But there certainly are *gotul* in these villages, at least for the youths, and I found one, with some difficulty owing to the reticence of the local Marias in these mixed villages, at Erka in Rangi zamindari. So far as I could make out, they are still to be found in the Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug.

● 632 Jarawandi is the headquarters of a sub-zamindar holding under Ahiri a taluq of twenty-three villages: the rival claims of Ahiri and Jarawandi to the seignorial dues have been a nuisance to the local Marias. Here there was a large gathering of headmen and *Sendhias* of *patti* groups of villages. Enquiries from them and later at [623] Murumgaon showed that the *panchayat* system described in the extract on pages 286-8 of this book is not only as vigorous as ever, but is more widespread than previously recorded, there being *Sendhias* in almost every Chanda zamindari. It had been stated to me that the zamindars outside Ahiri had usurped the authority of the *Sendhia* and his *patti panchayat*, but I doubt the truth of this, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the *Sendhias* and the zamindars also denied it. The allegation possibly arises from the fact that the zamindar appoints or confirms the succession of the *Sendhia*, and may arbitrate in a case involving parties from the *patti* of two or more *Sendhias*. Moreover the zamindars themselves have probably often descended from the tribal headmen of old, and so it is easy for them to perform the function of ultimate arbitration in social matters which is so characteristic of the chiefs of the ancient semi-feudal organization of the province from whom they descend or derive. Obviously it would be easy to apply to all the Chanda Maria country the Bastar *panchayat* system.[1]

From Jarawandi our route took us six miles to Pendri, the largest village and virtual headquarters of Jharapapra zamindari, thence six miles to Jharapapra and back; on fifteen miles to Aundhi in Drug district, and thence seven miles to Murumgaon, the headquarters of the Chanda zamindari of that name; the last mile was at long last on made road, the third-class road running east from Garchiroli through Khutgaon, Dudhmala, Dhanora, Rangi, Murumgaon and Koracha zamindaris to Dondi-Lohara and Drug. We were, however, to have trouble on this road next day, when heavy rain flooded unbridged streams between Murumgaon and the twenty miles distant Manpur, the *de facto* headquarters of the Koracha zamindari of Drug. The very long delay in bridging this road and raising it in class is only too typical of the neglect by Government and District Councils of aboriginal areas.

Similarly the District Council had not opened a single school in Jharapapra zamindari. The late zamindar, a Halba by tribe, and amongst the most intelligent and progressive landholders of the two districts, had opened a private school at Pendri[2] which at the time of my visit was being run by a Gondi-speaking teacher of the Marar agricultural caste, and his pupils were six Marar, six Halba and two Pardhan boys. Marias and Halbas are the chief elements in the small population of the zamindari, dwindling steadily by the drift in recent years of Marias across into Bastar for the sake of *podu*.

All along this route there had been frequent pockets of Marar cultivators, especially near the streams. These industrious, progressive, dark-skinned agricultural pioneers have pushed up the valley of every substantial river in the backward areas of Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Drug, Raipur and doubtless other aboriginal districts of the Central Provinces. They have been the chief factor in such increase as there has been of permanent, especially irrigated, cultivation in these Garchiroli and Drug Partially Excluded Areas.

[1] See pp. 295-7.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. M(5228

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The Court of Wards finally gave the lease to a Hindu of the Kurmi caste, on a premium of Rs. 211. The present lessee, his son, was made protected in 1923. Though the aboriginals as a whole have not actually lost land since 1902, the lessee had been very oppressive, forcing the aboriginals who borrowed from him to surrender their fields to him and then selling them to new tenants. 427

In Panabaras the departmental working of the five teak forests, largely built up, as already stated, by the Court of Wards insisting from 1900 onwards on *podu* cultivators sowing teak-seed on their plots in the second year of cultivation, has done something on Allapilli lines to bring economic relief to the local aboriginals. These four estates have been special targets for the agrarian agitation already mentioned, which started from the adjacent non-excluded Dondi-Lohara zamindari and made a special feature of inciting the Gonds and Marias to burn *podu*. 313

In the Garchiroli zamindaris on the whole the Marias and other aboriginals continue to hold their own and to take gradually to permanent cultivation, though far more slowly than outsiders: in the twenty years after the 1922-3 settlement aboriginal cultivation had increased by only 23 per cent., but non-aboriginal by 50 per cent., there being 6,523 aboriginal tenants of 76,113 acres against 4,012 other tenants of 46,863 acres. The aboriginals still have miles and miles of land available for extending their cultivation, but always hanker after their beloved *podu*. 241 311

This *podu* question, as I have already said, was the principal topic at the conference of the Drug and Chanda Partially Excluded Areas zamindars at Murumgaon on New Year's Day, 1940. Other topics were the neglect of the Garchiroli zamindaris by the Chanda District Council, and the future of the zamindars, in view of the political threat to the whole zamindari system. To deal first with the last topic, let me say that while there may be much to be said for 'liquidation' of big landed estates, especially of absentee proprietors, the policy towards aboriginal zamindars should be different. Most of them are descendants of long lines of tribal chieftains holding estates on very ancient tenures dating back to the semi-tribal, semi-feudal systems[1] under which most of middle India was organised centuries ago. Properly speaking these chiefs in relation to their ryots and fellow tribesmen are *primi inter pares*. Some of the wealthier aboriginal proprietors of the huge Chhattisgarh estates may have aped the princeling: but most of the Chanda zamindars are closely akin to their people—the Rangi chief, for example, is frankly a Maria among Marias—and do their utmost to protect their ryots. Legally, so long as the proprietary rights in any 632

[1] See p. 4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

632 land remain vested in an aboriginal belonging to a tribe notified under the Land Alienation Act of the province, even new tenancies in favour of non-aboriginals require sanction. Often the existence of the aboriginal proprietor is the one thing that saves his fellow tribesmen from being ousted from their lands by Hindu and Muslim incomers. Once he disappears and free alienation of land by aboriginals becomes possible, they will soon sink finally to the level of landless hewers of wood and drawers of water, or at best of factory fodder for Nagpurs and Jamshedpurs. A recent official report on grazing and *nistar*[1] in the zamindaris frankly envisaged the disappearance of the tribal chieftains as probably a good thing; the non-aboriginal who would replace him, it was said, would bring new ideas, new capital, new progress, and therefore it would be better for the villages, which would be well managed by a non-aboriginal instead of being mismanaged or ignored by an aboriginal proprietor. What are the facts? Hardly a single 632 non-aboriginal who in the history of the Central Provinces has 563 elbowed the Gond proprietor out of his estates has done anything for the aboriginal tenantry except to reduce them to debt and helotry. Such new ideas as they have brought into the tribal villages have always tended to destroy or suppress everything good or vital in tribal custom and culture; their 'new progress' has been achieved by getting the aboriginal so heavily into debt that it has been easy to hand over his land to Hindus of castes more acceptable to the new landlord. Nor is it true that there has been no progress under the tribal zamindar: everywhere there has been a steady rise in permanent cultivation, as can clearly be seen from comparing present conditions in such remote estates as these Chanda and Drug zamindaris with the conditions recorded when the Central Provinces were formed in 1861. To the aboriginal also the fact that his *Raja*, as he will always term his zamindar whether or not Government recognize the title, is like him a Korku, a Gond, a Halba or a Maria, has great psychological significance; not all of his tribe are excluded from the seats of the mighty, and a Gond may even rule over a Brahman, and be the final arbiter in the social disputes within his estate not only of his own tribe, but even of Hindu castes. In many zamindaris, notably the Garchiroli estates, Government and District Council alike have neglected communications and nation-building; whatever there is of education and medical relief is even now largely paid for by the zamindar.

[1] *Grazing and Nistar in the Central Provinces Estates, the Report of an Enquiry*, by H. S. Kamath, I.C.S. (Nagpur, Government Printing, 1941); see especially paras. 358-64. *Nistar* means, roughly, tenants' rights of user of forest produce.

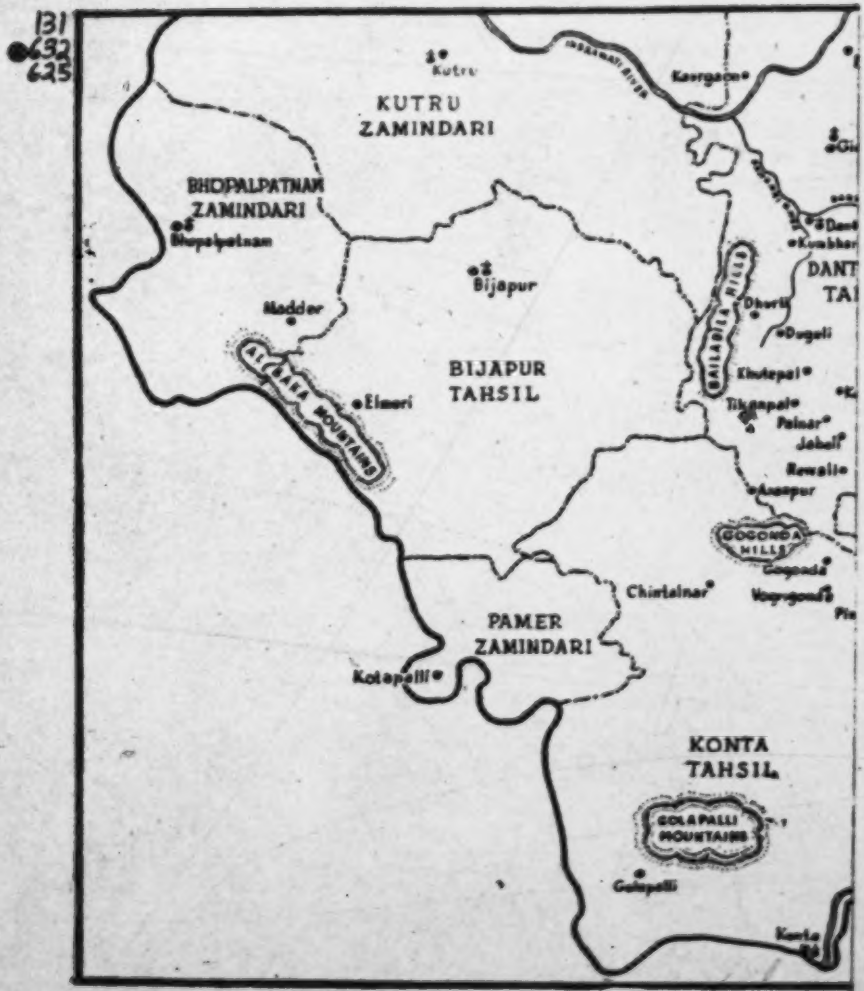
1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

I have written elsewhere[1] that the Garchiroli zamindaris afford a typical example of the neglect of aboriginal interests by the District Council; I might truthfully add by the Government also. So far my tour had taken me into Jharapapra and Murumgaon only of these estates; my departure from Murumgaon to Garchiroli was to take me in 37 miles through parts of Rangi, Dhanora, Dudhmala, and Khutgaon zamindaris: I visited Erka in Rangi, Dhanora, Dudhmala and Chatgaon in Khutgaon.[2] At Murumgaon I met almost all the zamindars. Over most of their estates there was no school, hospital or veterinary dispensary, practically no wells had been sunk, and visits of touring public health and veterinary assistants had been rare. The zamindars told me that a number of former schools had been closed on the plea of low attendance, the reason for which was that the children, who knew no language but Maria Gondi, were bored by lessons in the alien Marathi, while the teachers, knowing no Gondi and hating exile in these forest tracts, frequently went sick, generally in name, but often in fact. At Dhanora I found a small school that had just been re-started by the District Council after being closed for six months because no teacher could be found; at last a local untrained Depressed Classes youth had been appointed and had seventeen pupils, of whom five were Marias: it was a dull, ineffective institution. The zamindar of Potegaon said that though two or three years before Government had made a grant for starting an aboriginal school at Potegaon the District Council had provided no teacher; he was paying for one from his own pocket. I have mentioned the private school at Jharapapra which the zamindar himself finances.

High hopes were placed by the first Congress Ministry of the province in the *Vidya Mandir* Act, which provided for a new type of school in villages, intended to pay its way from the produce of lands attached to the school as endowments, and from the yarn to be spun by the pupils whose basic crafts were to be spinning and perhaps agriculture. I saw two of these, for which the zamindars had provided land, at Erka and Chatgaon. The attendance at both was very small, and they were in all ways utterly alien to the Maria way of life. Erka was typical. The *Vidya Mandir* fields were over a mile from the *Mandir*, which in outward appearance was indistinguishable from any ordinary plains village school, even down to the faded Congress flag on the roof. The masters of these institutions bear the time-honoured designation of *guru*. Here,

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 377-8.
[2] The map references on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Qr. Inch Sheet 64D, are Murumgaon MQ5461, Erka MQ4262, Dhanora MQ3652, Dudhmala MQ2849 and Chatgaon MQ2046.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria



[Facing p. 18(A)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

[Facing p. 18(B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

322 on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. Near
766 Massenar at the end of a long line of menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa, which has a carving of the old man wearing his jubilee medal. There are others at Chinger, on the way to Chitrakot and in a few other places.

322 Each pillar attempts to be a biography in wood of the
766 deceased. We see him important carrying the symbols of
532 wealth and power and riding on a horse or elephant; we see the dancers that delighted him and the landa pot which never failed to give him pleasure. We are shown the knives and axes that he used; the animals that he saw or hunted in the forest. The pillar for Oyami Masa, the homicide, had several carvings illustrating his work as a Siraha.

X

623 Every Maria village has a panel of secular and religious
632 officials. There is the headman (often called the Peda), his assistant (the Kanaki) and a Kotwar, who has the duty of reporting to the police all births and deaths within his jurisdiction. Each group of villages belongs to what is called a Pargana, a relic of the older administrative system of the State, and at the head of each Pargana there is a Pargana Manjhi. Each village has its panchayat presided over by the village headman, and each Pargana has a Pargana panchayat which is a Court of Appeal. In 1932, the village panchayats among all the aboriginals in Bastar were entrusted with a certain amount of criminal and civil work. The regular Courts were deprived of jurisdiction over the tribesmen for no fewer than seventeen Sections of the Indian Penal Code, including those dealing with simple hurt and assault, thefts of property up to five rupees, mischief, trespass and adultery. The panchayats were permitted to deal with claims for civil damages that might arise out of the criminal offences, and in other civil claims not exceeding twentyfive rupees. They were permitted to impose fines of not more than twentyfive, and in marriage cases to allow expenses up to fifty rupees. The Kotwar had the business of reporting panchayat decisions to the police. An appeal

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

623 lay to the Pargana Manjhi and his panchayat which consisted [623] of four headmen chosen from his group of villages.

In the ten years since these panchayats were established, they have done a great deal of work, and on the whole may be said to have functioned very well. A few headmen have abused their positions; there has been a certain amount of diversion of fines to uses for which they were not intended; probably a number of less influential people have not always had the justice that they might have expected. But this might have happened even in the ordinary Courts, and there is no doubt whatever that the establishment of these panchayats has done a great deal to build up the self-respect of Maria and Muria, and has developed leadership among them.

622 The importance of the panchayat for our subject is 623 obvious. In the first place, it provides a body of semi-official elders in every village whose duty it is to assist the police, and indeed whenever a suspicious death occurs in a village, the investigating officer calls the panchayat for a sort of inquest to which he acts as coroner and they as jury. On the other hand, the establishment of the village elders in a position of considerable authority makes it easy for them, when they wish to do so, to conceal a crime or deal with it themselves. Where a headman is himself the culprit, he may force the people to hush up his guilt; and the solidarity that is created by allowing the village under its own elders to settle many of its own affairs helps the headman to attain this end. This is no argument against the establishment of the panchayat. But it does mean that it is important for the authorities to hold the confidence of the headmen, and to inspire them constantly with a sense of their civic duties.

793 Side by side with the secular leaders are the religious elders of the village, though there is no reason why spiritual and secular functions should not be, as they often are, combined in the same persons. The priests and medicine-men naturally have more influence than the official headmen, the most powerful combination being when the headman himself is a Waddai or Siraha.

Chief among the religious elders is the Bhum-Gaita or Perma, the priest of the soil whose duty it is to see to all the sacrifices concerned with the village and its festivals, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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133 Madras if it had been reasonably managed. The few 'Dorla' villages are the most miserable in Bastar.

The third sub-division is the Kolab-Sabari valley from the southern slopes of the hills at the edge of the 2,000 feet plateau and the Dantewara valley plateau to the border of the Bhadrachalam taluq of Madras on the south. The northern portion of this, the Sukma zamindari, is a punchbowl ringed by the high edges of the Jagdalpur and Dantewara plateaux from Tulsidongri in the north-east counter-clockwise to a point in the south-west of the zamindari where the foot-hills of the Gogonda-Tikanpalli hills approach the Kolab-Sabari near Chikpalli; the hills are continued across the river and the Bastar border still counter-clockwise towards Malkangiri, and thence back to Tulsidongri. There are two small detached portions of Jagdalpur tahsil in the north of the zamindari, around Kukanar and the lower waters of the Thakawara and Kumakoleng rivers respectively. South of Sukma zamindari the valley opens out again to form the main block of Konta tahsil, including the former Bhiji zamindari, the level of which falls nearly to 250 feet above the sea by Konta at its south-east corner; here the Bastar portion of the valley is very narrow, as nearly all the south of Konta tahsil is occupied by the ranges of the Golapalli mountains which at one point reach a height of more than 2,800 feet.

132 In contrast with north Bastar, with its evergreen moist forests, cool climate, abundant water-supply and often thick population,
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137 and much of south Bijapur are hot dry regions of deciduous forests, deficient water and sparse population. The rivers are short stony torrents rushing down in the monsoon to the adjacent Godavari, Talper or Kolab-Sabari, and drying up often before January. Teak is the characteristic timber tree.

635 There will be found in Appendix I a statement of the areas and populations of the six tahsils and four zamindaris into which modern
162 Bastar is divided. Each of these administrative units is called after the name of its headquarters; except Jagdalpur with a (1931) population of 10,128, the other headquarters are only villages, and not always large villages; in 1931, of the 2,442 villages in Bastar only five had populations between 2,000 and 2,500, and forty-two populations between 1,000 and 2,000.

634 Frequent mention was made in this chapter of the smaller '*pargana*' unit. The first use that I can find of this word is in Appendix IX of Glasfurd's 1862 report, in which, of the forty-three non-zamindari sub-divisions of Bastar, seventeen are called *parganas* and twenty-six *garhs*. In Elliot's 1855 report the names are given of forty-eight *garhs* and nine taluqs into which the non-zamindari

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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part of the State was said once to have been sub-divided, and of the twenty-seven *garhs* and nine taluqs remaining after some had passed by conquest or other arrangement to Jeypore, Kanker, Bindra-Nawagarh and Nagpur or as *mokasa* grants to Bastar zamindars. The two lists do not correspond, though it seems that what Elliot called taluqs and independent village groups, Glasfurd called *parganas*. There is nothing to show what distinguished a *pargana* or taluq from a *garh*. Reference may again be made to Wills's

FIGURE 1

ANTAGARH TAHSIL, DIVIDED INTO *PARGANAS*

Scale roughly 17 miles = 1 inch. The small patch marked C.D is a detached portion of CHHOTA DONGAR *pargana*. The boundary crossing the *pargana* divides the Hill Maria and Jhoria villages of the *pargana*.

monograph on *The Territorial System of the Rajput Kingdoms of Medieval Chhattisgarh*, in which he summarizes the system of the division of kingdoms into conventional numbers of *garhs* or *chaurasis*, themselves sub-divided into taluqs or *barhons* each containing twelve villages, with the heads of the *garhs* and taluqs working with the advice of *panchayats* or committees of village headmen, as 'a system of feudalism superimposed on an earlier tribal organization', the 'feudal element' being largely the conventionalization

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria

●634 of the size of the divisions and the formal linking of them together in subordination to the head of the State and of the heads of the intermediate divisions, and its authority being held in constant check by the democratic tendencies of the tribe. The word *pargana* is familiar in the west of the Central Provinces and in Berar as a unit of the Mussalman organization of the Deccan, and as more and more Indian officials were lent to Bastar from the Central Provinces it probably displaced gradually the less familiar terms *garh* and taluq. I deal below with the tribal organization of the [614] Hill Marias. Their clan-units were and are smaller than the conventional *garh* and often than the *barhon* or taluq; yet in the Abujhmar hills tract of the Antagarh tahsil these clan-units of land are now designated *parganas*. The modern list of *parganas* is considerably larger than those of Elliot and Glasfurd, who described all the Abujhmar country as one taluq or *pargana* named Màrian; there are now nine Abujhmar *parganas* in Antagarh tahsil alone, besides others of obvious tribal origin below the hills, and there are twenty-nine *parganas* in all in Antagarh tahsil. These are shown in the map on page 33. It was pointed out in the 1911 Central Provinces Census Report, Part I, p. 239, that the Hill Marias of the Ahiri zamindari are similarly divided into (probably clan) units called *pattis*. The *parganas* of modern Bastar include some obvious former *garhs*, some obvious *barhons* (e.g. Baragaon *pargana* in Antagarh), and some obvious old tribal clan-units, while some have been created in my time; and the word *pargana* is now used of any sub-division of a tahsil or zamindari in which villages are grouped under a group headman or '*pargana majhi*'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

133 slopes and in the Mangnar and Dantewara Mar villages there are often fine patches of sal and other evergreen trees. On the hill-tops and on slopes exhausted by shifting cultivation, high grass and stunted trees make the country monotonous to the eye and tiring through lack of shade. Where the slopes are newly cleared and have once been burnt for shifting *penda* cultivation, often a small grove of trees is left on the summit, like nothing so much as the top-knot of hair on the crown of a Maria's otherwise roughly-shaved head. But the moment you descend off the rocky plateaux you meet green glades and hurrying streams, or may feel the sudden amaze of a prospect such as that of the blue apex of the lofty Bailadila ridge seen beyond the haze of the Indrawati valley down the valley of a stream that far below the ridge between Itulnar and Hikul races due south to the Indrawati.

161 There are only between 150 and 160 villages inhabited in all this area of about 1,500 square miles, and there are only 11,500 361 Hill Marias. This means one village in every ten square miles, and less than eight persons to the square mile. In few places can you lose yourself in such solitudes.

● 635 North Bastar thus consists administratively of the Antagarh, Kondagaon and Jagdalpur tahsils, half of the Jagdalpur tahsil being south of the Indrawati, and of the portions of the Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris and the Dantewara tahsil north of the Indrawati.

635 In South Bastar there are the Dantewara, Bijapur and Konta tahsils, and the Sukma, Kutru, Bhopalpatnam and Kotapalli-491 Pamer zamindaris; these four zamindaris alone survive out of the seventeen or eighteen of old times. A great western road runs 134 miles from Jagdalpur through Gidam, Karli, Matawara, Bijapur and Bhopalpatnam to Timer on the Indrawati, opposite Patagudam in Chanda district, whence there is a forest road to Sironcha; branches south from Gidam and Karli run to Dantewara, with a further extension to Kameli at the foot of the Bailadila hills; north from Gidam to Barsur, and from Matawara to Kutru; and south from Bhopalpatnam to Tarlagudam on the Godavari and thence over the Latpatkandi pass into the Nugur and Albaka talugs of Madras. A great southern road runs 114 miles from Jagdalpur to Sukma and Konta. A network of forest roads of recent construction links these roads together between Tirathgarh in Jagdalpur tahsil, Katakalian, Kuakonda and Dantewara, or southward from Kuakonda to the Kolab-Sabari at Misma on the Konta road, and to Konta via the Aranpur pass, Jaggergonda and Golapalli; while Bijapur is linked to Cherla and Jaggergonda to Dummagudam, both on the Godavari. With these and other

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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PLATE III

635

BASTAR STATE—POLITICAL DIVISIONS
Scale (approx.) : 1 inch = 32 miles

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

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forest roads there are now few places in south Bastar out of reach of a motor-car, in the fair weather.

133

Dantewara tahsil is a horseshoe plain between the Tangri Dongri ghats at the edge of Jagdalpur tahsil on the east, the Abujhmar mountains on the north, and the great sword-blade north and south ridge of Bailadila on the west. Its general level is about 400 feet below that of the Jagdalpur tahsil, and it is an intermediate step between the north-eastern plateau and the great plains of South Bastar. The main road descends steeply to it from Killepal and Bastanar. This Dantewara valley may almost be regarded as the fourth natural division of Bastar; though small portions of the east of Kutru zamindari and the north of Bijapur tahsil are on the same level, there is between them and Dantewara tahsil the great barrier of the Bailadila ridge, except where the narrow Indrawati valley separates the northern end of the ridge from the Abujhmar mountains.

The rest of Bastar is sometimes described as one great southern plain varying in level from 600 to 300 feet according to the proximity of the Godavari. Actually, however, there is yet another plateau to be crossed on the western road (and on its forest branches that strike off towards the Godavari) before the traveller descends on to the real Godavari plain. Its level varies from 1,100 to 900 feet (leaving out of account, in this as in all the plateaux and plains of Bastar, the frequent spurs and isolated hills). On the southern road to Konta, and on the forest roads descending from Dantewara to Konta tahsil and Sukma zamindari by the Aranpur, Koriras and Mokpal passes, on the other hand, the traveller gets at once off the northern 2,000 feet plateau, in the case of the southern road, and off the Dantewara valley level in those of the forest roads, to the Godavari or southern plain. This intermediate western plateau may be regarded as the fifth natural division, and called the Kutru-Bijapur plateau. On the north and north-west the Indrawati is its boundary, so far as Bastar is concerned, as far as the hills which begin north of Desli in Sironcha tahsil and cross the Indrawati into Bastar to form the boundary of the Kutru and Bhopalpatnam zamindaris; the gorge in which the Indrawati boils through these hills, the last barrier to its union with the Godavari, is sinister in its magnificence. The hills run thence south-west along the border of the two zamindaris, cross the western road a little west of Bijapur village and continue south-west to the Isalnar pass on the Nelasnar-Cherla forest road, and thence westward till they merge with the foot-hills at the southern end of the Bailadila ridge, a little north of the Aranpur pass.

This Kutru-Bijapur plateau comprises all Kutru zamindari

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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that characterized the Victorian rulers of India and still marks the framers of constitutions for the India of to-day. It could not be seen that there must have been some institutions or system in this apparently unordered Bastar to have kept her together and free from Mohammedan or Maratha interference for all those centuries. So from Glasfurd onwards Political Agents, Commissioners and Chief Commissioners sought to modernize the economics and the administration of this lovely and still lonely land. An alien police from 'civilized' India was soon followed along the gradually expanding lines of communication by Bania and Rohilla tradesmen, and by low-paid esurient subordinate officials 'lent' to the State, who regarded service in a native state only as a means to the rapid acquisition of wealth. Cultivation was to be expanded by the formation of new villages by alien immigrants; instead, the aliens were given long established Bhattra, Muria, Parja or Maria villages, nominally as lessees, over the heads of the traditional village headmen; and the lessees at once proceeded as fast as possible to get the best land into their own hands, to make the headmen's lives a burden by their repeated demands for forced labour and supplies, to ignore the use and wont of village life, especially the *sari-bori* or co-operation in supplies and labour for village bread-winning and village festivals, to introduce Hindu and Mussalman settlers, and to turn the natives of Bastar into bondservants little better than slaves by advancing them money, on terms which made repayment practically impossible, in return for their labour or that of their sons. Every immigrant trader even considered it his right to demand the labour of half a dozen 'Murias' to carry his wares for him. Consequent risings in 1876 and trouble in succeeding years led to the virtual supersession of the old Raja Bhairam Deo in 1886, and the State passed under full management on his death in 1891. From 1886 to 1891 and for the first few years of the long (1891-1908) minority of Raja Rudra Pratap Deo, a series of subordinate officials was lent as Diwans to the State, and a further evil arose in the growing array of minor State officials, few of whom were natives and none aboriginals of Bastar, abusing the ancient custom of *bisaha*, or the payment by villagers of a twentieth of their crops for the feeding of the Raja's servants, by interpreting it as a right to commandeer any aboriginal's produce at an arbitrarily fixed and often nominal price, and generally forgetting to pay even that. The newly-cleared roads soon seemed to run through wildernesses, for on villagers of roadside villages the burden of *begar*, or forced labour, and *bisaha* fell with especial severity. Being 184 miles from Raipur, the headquarters of the Commissioner and the Political Agent, Bastar was seldom visited, and the people were far too much

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

at the mercy of the incompetency or knavery of the local officials. The latter meanwhile were carrying on the prescribed policy of opening communications, introducing the criminal police and judicial system of British India, and exploiting the forests (again by forced labour). Though with the growth of trade there was much to be said for applying the Penal, Criminal Procedure and Civil Procedure Codes and the Evidence Act of British India to the open parts of the Jagdalpur tahsil and northern Bastar, they were far too advanced for most of the tribes, and remain so to this day. No notice was taken of the old system of caste or tribal or *pargana* panchayats presided over by the caste or *pargana* headman appointed by the Chief or the zamindar, which had for centuries administered rough and ready justice far more to the liking of the people than the troubles of a long investigation by a corrupt police, followed by a cumbersome magisterial enquiry and perhaps then the protracted agony of a sessions trial, to their minds unnecessary and unintelligible, with the farcical addition of assessors, chosen, so as to fulfil the requirements of a procedure code designed for a British India at least 1,000 years further advanced in civilization, from a few obsequious immigrants with no knowledge of aboriginal life or psychology. A similar attempt was made to improve on the old excise arrangements by which the local Kalar or Sundi was a village or *pargana* servant kept to distil liquor when needed for social or religious festivities, and remunerated in grain by the villagers every harvest; a system of auctioning outstills was introduced, the letter but not the spirit of arrangements in British India being copied, and the result was a number of contractors and sub-contractors all distilling and hawking liquor, and drunkenness on a scale previously unknown in Bastar and with few parallels in India. Of course trade was increasing, and more land was being cleared, *pari passu* with these growing abuses; but the moral effect of the changes was not good, and there can be few more striking examples of policy sound in motives but utterly wrong because of the divorce of administration from anthropology.

Sir Andrew Fraser, then Commissioner, in an able inspection note written after a long tour of the State in 1892, spotted much of the evil, particularly the State officials' utter ignorance of all but the villages adjacent to Jagdalpur and their headquarters, and their complete lack of touch with the people. He of course strongly advocated the policy of opening up the State, but saw that a just and active administration was necessary if the policy was to succeed. This was ultimately secured by the appointment in 1896 of Colonel (later Major-General) Fagan as Administrator. During his three years of rough and ready justice he toured the length and breadth

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175
648

of the State, and he and his wife are still remembered with affection. The aboriginal, if he had to work on the new roads, yet saw that everyone else had to; but he no longer had to work for the alien trader and village-lessee, and he could get redress for oppression. Under Colonel Fagan and his successor, Mr. G. W. Gayer of the Indian Police, though roads were built and regular land revenue settlements effected on simplified Central Provinces lines, efficient administration kept the tribes satisfied; and for the first time medical relief and vaccination were organized in the State by Surgeon-Major Mitchell. But Mr. Gayer was succeeded by an Indian Superintendent, who held charge for the last few years of the minority and then continued till 1910 as Raja Rudra Pratap Deo's Diwan. He had served successfully as Diwan of Kalahandi State, and his intentions were admirable. Unfortunately he was unable to control his subordinates or to see that his excellent orders were enforced. The old abuses crept back into the swept and garnished State. He was responsible also for two unpopular innovations. The first was a policy of planting new primary schools all over the State, the masters being assisted by attendance peons who bullied the ryots into sending their children to school, while masters and peons levied forced labour and supplies freely. The second was the reservation of large areas as State forests, a measure very necessary as a check to the wholesale destruction of valuable timber by the aboriginals practising shifting cultivation, but bound by its very nature and its interference with long-cherished rights to arouse suspicion. It called, therefore, for great tact, and the people should have been carefully prepared for the measure, and protected from any avoidable hardship in its execution. Instead, it was carried out abruptly. Every village in the reserved areas was destroyed, though provision ought to have been made for forest villages as a source of forest labour, and if this had been done few of the villages need have been disturbed; the old village lands still often remain treeless in the forests, and in recent years it has been necessary to try and tempt settlers back to found much-needed forest villages. Oppression by State officials and by immigrant settlers, excessive levy of forced labour and supplies, unpopular new measures, and the apparent blindness of the Raja and his Diwan to popular grievances produced keen discontent, which was worked up by Lal Kalendra Singh, the first cousin and former Diwan of Raja Bhairam Deo, in the hope of securing the succession for himself. The Murias, Bhattras, and Parjas of Jagdalpur tahsil and some of the Bison-horn Marias and others in Dantewara tahsil and farther south broke into rebellion, in which the Murias of Antagarh and Kondagaon tahsils joined, only the zamindaris and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the Marias of the Abujhmar hills abstaining. The tribes converged on Jagdalpur, the Diwan who had been touring in the South fleeing into the Chanda district. A half battalion of regular Panjabi troops and large detachments of armed Central Provinces police soon suppressed and disarmed the rebels. A few ringleaders who had been guilty of cruel murders of isolated State officials were hanged, and several hundred men flogged, a punishment really more humane for such primitive men than imprisonment. Lal Kalendra Singh and a few of his associates were banished. The Raja was deprived of his powers, and an experienced Englishman, Mr. James May, appointed Diwan. The rebellion had been marked by keen hostility towards the immigrant exploiters, and a movement to keep Bastar for Bastaris. *Pari passu* with the punishment of the rebels, full enquiry was made into their undoubted grievances, and stern action taken against their oppressors. From 1910 till the Raja's death in 1921 the State was under virtual Government management; it has since then been under direct management, owing to the minority and the subsequent illness of the late Maharani.[1]

Save, therefore, for the short period 1908-10 the State has virtually been under Government management since 1886. Great progress has been made in developing communications. The Godavari navigation scheme referred to in the quotation above from Glasfurd's report was abandoned in 1871 after the works on the first barrier at Dummagudem in the present East Godavari district of Madras had been completed and much money had been spent on the works at the second barrier, where the river forms the boundary between Bastar and Hyderabad. This must be one of the very few great engineering works abandoned uncompleted by the British in India, defeated by the fever and sweltering heat of the valley, the difficulty of recruiting labour, lack of funds and the improbability of an adequate return for the great cost; and there are few more desolate sights than the vast ruins of the half-finished anicut, lock-gates and guard-walls that still resist the annual floods of this mighty river, and in the dry weather stand gaunt and futile in the baking wilderness of rocks and sands in which the united Godavari and Indrawati there lose themselves. With the transference of the Political Agency for Bastar from Sironcha to Raipur, all idea of the Godavari as the base-line for its communications was abandoned. Emphasis was placed on linking the north of the State with the main Nagpur-Calcutta railway line by roads from Raipur and Rajnandgaon to Jagdalpur, and the Vizagapatam Agency road from Salur

[1] The hereditary title of the Ruling Chief of Bastar was raised from Raja to Maharaja in 1932.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

lower castes and that of buffaloes only by Shudras. This flesh is of special sanctity as through it men who worship her get power. She is the special Goddess of the warring class—the Kshatriyas. Being the family goddess of the Ruler, she is recognized as the ruling goddess by all classes of Hindus and aboriginals of the State.

The Divine Right of Kings

The Maharaja is regarded as divine by all the Muria and Maria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and by some of the northern Muria. Each ruler appends the word Deo to the end of his name, the other male members of his house calling themselves Singh, though to distinguish them from other Kshatriya the prefix Lal is added, as in Lal Kalindar Singh.

The *gadi* or throne is held sacred and no one but the actual ruler may sit upon it. Should anyone break the rule, he would die.

The ruler has special powers of intercession. 'His sacrifices, fasts, and oblations during the Dassera and Chaitrai festivals benefit not only himself but the members of the royal family and the people of the State. All the important deities of the State are brought to Jagdalpur during Dassera and worshipped on behalf of the ruler, his own worship being confined to the family goddess Danteshwari, Maoli and a few other gods. This worship keeps away disease from the people and cattle and results in good crops and universal happiness, as the deities remain pleased.'[1]

So strongly do the aboriginals believe this, that they greatly resent the Maharaja leaving the State even for a short time. His absence means a withdrawal of divine protection from cattle, crops and people.

Kadrengal

Kadrengal is the consort of Tallur Muttai, as Bangaram is the consort of Danteshwari. A story which I quote elsewhere[2] links him with the forest and the chase, and he is generally worshipped by the Muria before they set out on a ceremonial hunt. In some villages, however, Pati Deo takes his place.

His name occurs from time to time, generally in association with Tallur Muttai, in the songs and legends. In the oldest mythology he plays the part which more modern people ascribe to Mahadeo.

With Tallur Muttai and Lingo, he lives in the ghotul and protects the boys and girls. Along with other deities he is worshipped and remembered at festivals and on most of the major occasions of Muria life.

Dulha Deo

Jahe chulha taha Dulha.—Where there is a hearth, there is Dulha Deo.

Dulha Deo is the marriage god and is supposed to preside not only over the wedding bet over the marriage bed, its happiness and its fertility.

Dulha Deo is not an original Muria god. He is an immigrant from the Central Provinces, where he receives very much more attention than in Bastar. In Bastar he has a certain nuisance value as causing trouble during marriages, a rather expensive addition to the pantheon who must be placated for fear that he will make himself objectionable. His ill temper can easily be explained

[1] Private communication from Rai Sahib Hiranjan Singh.
[2] See page 41.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TABLE FOUR

Sex-ratio in 100 cases, involving 117 convictions

Male	112
Female	5

The Bison-horn Maria do not live in complete isolation. They are in contact with other people, what are often called civilized people. But this contact is mainly a business and commercial contact; it is not an emotional one. Normally there are few chances in any relationship between a Maria and a Hindu or Mussalman for the development of those intense and passionate feelings that may lead to murder. This will probably account for the very small number of people murdered who belonged to other communities.

TABLE FIVE

Illustrating caste of victims in 107 cases

Fellow-Maria	99
Other castes	8

Two of these were killed for their possessions in straightforward robbery—very unusual incidents. One of the victims was a Kalar who was going to report a cattle-theft. One was a boy caught in a madman's fury. But it might have been anyone. Another was a Rawat. But the Rawat, who are the herdsmen of the Maria, live so closely with them as to count almost as members of the tribe. Once during a gambling quarrel a Mahara beat a Maria, a serious matter involving the Maria's excommunication. In one case a Mahara woman was chosen as a human sacrifice. In only one case was a member of another caste involved with a Maria woman. A Dhobi tried to seduce a Maria girl, but it was the girl who was murdered.

I have heard, however, of another case (not among the 100) where the wife of a Maria, one Poyami Masa, at Kodenar had an intrigue with a Kalar liquor-vendor. One night very late the woman—according to previous arrangement—got up and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

An ingenious attempt to hoodwink the police occurred at Jhoriabadhan in 1923. After the mysterious disappearance of a little boy aged two-and-a-half years the police came to investigate, and the villagers took the constable to the threshing-floor whence the child had disappeared, and there showed him a boy about six years old. They told him that this was the missing boy and that he had been found wandering in the fields. Even the child's own mother declared that this was the lost boy, and since all the members of the family as well as the villagers supported her, the police went away. There is no doubt, however, that a child did disappear and it is probable that he was offered as a human sacrifice.

In one case, but only one, a prosecution witness was so troubled by his family that he committed suicide. On the whole, however, the Maria appear to co-operate with the police very well. In 88 cases out of 100, they assisted in some way or other. Sometimes they reported the matter at the police station. Sometimes they themselves arrested the murderer and kept him in custody until the police arrived. They co-operated by assisting at the inquest which is held in a village when the police arrive to investigate a suspicious death. In one case the villagers took an active and dangerous part in pursuing a convict who had escaped from jail with the result that one of their number was killed.

TABLE TWENTY-ONE

Illustrating the kind of assistance given to police in 100 cases

Information withheld from police	...	...	12
Homicide reported by villagers	...	...	79
Accused arrested by villagers	...	...	25
Accused gives himself up to police	...	...	9

This was the exciting pursuit of Markami Mundra in 1934. Mundra was convicted in 1933 and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for an act of violence. On 3 May 1934, he escaped from jail with another convict and a proclamation was issued for their arrest. A Sub-Inspector of Police went at once to Gudra, Mundra's own village, and told the people that a reward of fifty rupees had been offered for his

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

626 capture, and some constables went from village to village
648 looking for him. Very daringly Mundra in his prisoner's clothes went to his house in Gudra, and stayed there till his mother came home from a bazaar. Thence he went to a Kalar's house near Nayanar. The police heard that he was somewhere about, and without knowing that Mundra was hiding there, went to the house to get fire to light their cigarettes. Mundra seeing them and supposing that he was discovered rushed out with a knife in his hand, and tried to stab one of the constables. But they caught him and tied him up with the help of the villagers. They took him to the Kuakonda police station, which they reached at dawn. Thence they went on to Dantewara, which they reached late at night and put up in the Kotwar's house. They tied Mundra's feet to the leg of the cot on which one of the constables was sleeping, and his handcuffed hand to a pillar. But while they were all asleep, Mundra managed to escape again. This time he went to his maternal uncle and got his handcuffs broken. Then dressed in a small loin-cloth and carrying a bow and arrow, he went to his house and took away his wife Kase.

Meanwhile the police went back to Gudra and with the help of the villagers searched the surrounding forest. For eight days the search went on, the Maria taking a leading part in it. At last they got information that Mundra had been seen in someone's field. They again beat the forest and at last found Mundra and his wife. Mundra threatened them with his arrows and managed to escape. But the villagers caught his wife and brought her home. Another week passed with Mundra lurking in the jungle, and one day when Kase went to work in the fields, he took her away again. The Maria, led by Markami Bhima, their headman, again searched for him, but without success, until at last they found him and his wife on the Kopli Hill. Mundra turned upon his pursuers and shot at one of them, his arrow hitting the ground a little in front of him. Once again the search-party succeeded in capturing the unfortunate Kase, and she was beaten and tied up inside her house with a large party of Maria guarding her.

During the night the woman wept loudly, and attracted by her cries Mundra came and stood before the house and said

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

that he would kill the men who were pursuing him and troubling her. He accused his fellow-Maria of doing more than the police for his arrest. Then he struck a beam of the house with his axe in token of revenge and went away. After some days—it was now over two months since he escaped from Dantewara—Mundra again went to look for his wife, but was unable to find her. Markami Bhima the headman, who had been threatened with death by Mundra, had been taking many precautions. But Mundra somehow managed to get into his house at night and killed him by shooting him at close range with an arrow. A week later Mundra went into the Madras Presidency. His hiding-place was betrayed by a woman who met some Maria from the original village who were still searching for him, and the police managed to arrest him on 2 February 1935.

The most remarkable thing about this case was the very large part taken by the Maria in assisting the police. They were no doubt influenced by the reward of fifty rupees that was offered, but even so their help was remarkable and Mundra greatly resented it.

III

Why do the villagers conceal murders from the police? We should not too hastily attribute this to a merely savage absence of the civic instinct. There are many other reasons. First and foremost they still consider that they should settle everything themselves. They believe that it is only in a tribal Court that the real facts can be known. We have seen that they are generally unwilling to testify against a powerful priest or magician who might revenge himself on them. They are equally unwilling to assist the police where they believe a murder has been justified.

Then they fear the annoyance and expense of having police subordinates quartered on them and the expense and waste of time of having to go to a distant Court, especially at the more busy periods of the agricultural year. Again the real reason for a crime is often something which the Maria dislike revealing in Court and which they despair of making outsiders understand. Another powerful factor is the supernatural danger—and the expense of avoiding it—of a post-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

mortem examination, and of allowing the corpse to be buried outside the proper territory of its clan.

Memories of past oppression die slowly and Grigson has a remarkable passage on the conflict between State and people in former times. He points out how in the old days in Bastar (as in many parts of India at the present time) everything conspired to limit the authority and lower the prestige of the tribal elders. He describes the extreme inconvenience to the villagers of a police investigation.

> A badly trained police, often singularly lacking in common sense, would descend on a village and waste days in pointless investigation of petty cases, expecting not only to be fed on rice, mutton and poultry by the villagers during their stay, but also to be provided with stores of grain under the old bisaha system to take away with them at the end of the investigation. Villagers would be compelled to carry the supplies thus forcibly taken from them to the police station, perhaps two or three days' march distant, and would rarely be given even the nominal payment prescribed under the old bisaha rules. Then would follow a protracted trial at the still more distant tahsil headquarters, ten witnesses being summoned where three or four would have been ample; and probably all these witnesses at the end of the trial would have to accompany the police party back to the police station to carry their impediments, and might be kept even longer as 'athpaharia begar' labourers to clean the police office and lines and do domestic work for the constables.

Even today when the Bastar police force has been trained in traditions that are in many respects admirable, it is impossible to keep a check on the conduct of all subordinates, and their very presence in a village is disturbing to the aboriginals. Grigson continues,

> It is not surprising that, as the result of these methods of dealing with the aboriginals, their panchayats tended to co-operate as little as possible with the State; their object became to conceal crime from the police and in general to comply with State requirements only so far as was necessary in order to avoid trouble, and, above all, visits of subordinate State officials to their villages. The records of murder and other trials show many cases of the village elders meeting and deciding to hush up a crime, especially if it had occurred at harvest or any other busy agricultural season, rather than have the whole life of the village community disorganized by police

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

investigation, committal proceedings and Sessions trial. Such crimes may have come to light later through the panchayat reporting them at their own convenience, or through the widow or other relative of a murdered man being dissatisfied with the compensation which the murderer had been ordered to give, while in some Parganas informers arose who subsequently used their supposed prestige with the police to become petty local tyrants. Conversely on occasions panchayats, disgusted with the failure of the police to investigate thefts or with the acquittal of guilty persons by the Tahsildars, took the law into their own hands and had the thieves killed.[1]

I make no apology for quoting Grigson at length on this subject, for it was largely due to his efforts that a new tradition was established in Bastar, and that the Maria began, however slowly and imperfectly, to co-operate with the administration. The new attitude is indeed a remarkable tribute to the sympathy and intelligence of the Bastar police and the understanding and courtesy of the committing Magistrates and Sessions Judges. Even so I doubt whether the Maria will ever be able to overcome the tribal and religious objections to revealing their inmost thoughts in the public Court.

762 This fear of the outside world is revealed in a number of examples where Maria have committed suicide rather than be involved in police enquiries and legal proceedings.

The aboriginal is not alone in finding litigation and contact with officialdom trying to the nerves. Hunga of Kothiagura was involved in a cattle-theft case and believed himself badly treated by the constable investigating it. He prepared a petition to the Superintendent of Police and wrapping it carefully in a parsa leaf set out to Jagdalpur to present it. But on the way, his fears, his grievance, his sense of lost prestige overwhelmed him, and he hanged himself from a parsa tree by the roadside.[2]

Marvi Mundra of Cholnar had some of his cattle stolen and

[1] Grigson, op. cit., pp. 284 ff.

[2] The case of Saradu, a young Maria landlord of Bermaket, in 1933, belongs to the bad old days before the taking of free supplies and labour had been prohibited. An Excise Sub-Inspector came to the village to enquire into a case of illicit distillation. He does not seem to have received all the supplies he wanted, and so he threatened the landlord, who came of a leading Muria family, with prosecution on some false charge. Saradu hanged himself rather than face the indignity and disgrace.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

175 rail-head below the Eastern Ghat mountains to Jeypore and the Bastar border was continued thence to Jagdalpur; subsequently 491 roads have gradually been driven westward to Dantewara, Bijapur, Kutru and Bhopalpatnam, and southward to Sukma and Konta; the most recent development has been many miles of forest roads, constructed either as feeder roads to the Raipur and Rajnandgaon roads, or to link up the forests of Dantewara and the south with the Godavari at Tarlagudam, Cherla and Dummagudam or the Kolab-Sabari at Mismagudam and Konta. The Raipur road is now motorable throughout the year, and there is a daily mail and passenger service by it to Kanker and Dhamtari. A railway connexion with the new Raipur-Vizianagram line has been surveyed, and would have been under construction but for the world-wide financial depression. The revenue of the State [65] has risen from about Rs. 30,000 in 1855, then received in kind or in cowry shells at a rate of 2,880 to the rupee, to well over a million rupees.

177 So the old order is doomed; and with the motor-bus abroad in the land and scores of aboriginals every month seeking work on the public works of the State, in the Assam tea gardens or in the towns of the Godavari valley, with the railway administration feeling this last great blank of 300 miles from Raipur to Salur by 250 from Titlagarh in Kalahandi State to Singareni in Hyderabad a slur to be removed as soon as funds permit, change comes ever faster. My successors and I, like our predecessors, are guilty of accelerating change; but we can on the one hand plead that when we came a return to the old isolation was not practical politics, and on the other that we have tried before it was too late to strengthen and revive the old tribal *panchayat* organization and restore its jurisdiction in civil and in all but serious criminal offences, to check the drunkenness made rampant by a bad excise system, to prevent the further bestowal of aboriginal villages on alien *thekadars* (lessees) and to make the post of village headman one of honour and responsibility instead of one to be held reluctantly by some dummy with no influence in the village, to abolish *bisaha*, to deprive village lessees of the right of taking forced labour, to minimize the right of officials to take it and to regulate the still necessary State demands for road and other labour so as to inconvenience the cultivator as little as possible, to see that it is paid for, and to abolish bondservice. Much of great interest could be written on the effects and reactions of the administrative measures of the last fifty years sketched in these last few pages. But the purpose of this book is to place on 121 record while there is yet time an account of the way of life prevalent among the Maria tribes of Bastar, perhaps now the most primitive

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

important, for then the *kasyeq-gaita* and, in a minor degree, the secular headman have their hour of glory, and something of the honour that might be paid to real chieftains. The *kasyeq-gaita* as intermediary between the Village Mother and her children sacrifices to her a pig and a cock, and sets before her a basket of new *kuthi*, pulses and beans. A feast similar to that before the clan-god follows. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* proceeds to his *udam-garia* or seat-of-honour, next to which may be a smaller seat for the secular headman (*gaita* or *pada*); it is either a long, flat boulder, or a flat stone supported on stone legs, as in Plate XXIII. He wears no insignia, and is to all appearance as naked and poor a Maria as all his villagers. The men seat themselves around in a circle on little stone cromlechs. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* formally announces the programme for the next year, what *penda* slope is to be cultivated, what arrangements are to be made to meet State or zamindari demands for land revenue or labour, and so on; the announcements, it is true, are the results of previous informal village discussions, and not the *kasyeq-gaita's* orders independently conceived by him, but his formal promulgation is needed before they can be brought into effect.

After *Koqsar* they are free to cut grass and bamboos, and to collect forest produce, or to hunt; it is true that in most villages there is little game but hares and field-mice, but a Maria thinks a field-mouse the rarest of delicacies, and will stop any occupation to chase a mouse or dig them out.[1] But the long year is over at last, and till the next sowing, though there is ahead the labour of felling, spreading and firing the wood for the *penda*, taboos are lifted, and there is no fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex. So now is the season of new marriages and of conjugal life in the home, and the seed is sown for the raising of the human crop.

It has been indicated that there are the beginnings of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias. As a matter of fact, several villages have traces of old rice embanked fields. Two things long effectively checked the spread of permanent cultivation. One, before the 1910 rebellion, was the presence of a police station at Kutul, the headquarter village of the Bardal clan and *pargana* in the very heart of the Abujhmar hills. This meant a constant demand from the Kutul police for rice as *bisaha*,[2] and

Assessment and payment of land revenue among the Hill Marias

[1] I had a carefully arranged beat for a family of man-eating tigers at Kutru ruined because the Hill Maria beaters rushed in wild enthusiasm to catch two or three mice disturbed by the beat.

[2] See p. 14 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 651 the few who grew it soon abandoned its cultivation and returned to the hill grains which the police would not eat. The second thing, even more potent than the demand for *bisaha* because of its universality, was the land revenue policy. In the remotest times the hill villages paid what little assessment the Chiefs imposed on them in kind, royal granaries being situated at centres like Barsur, Partabpur and Narainpur. There is no need to believe the picturesque story told first to Elliot in 1853 and since repeated by writers down to Russell and Hiralal, that 'their tribute to the Raja of Bastar, paid in kind, was collected once a year by an officer who beat a tom-tom outside the village and forthwith hid himself, whereupon the inhabitants brought out whatever they had to give and deposited it on an appointed spot'[1]; this is one of the typical tales with which the old State officials used to try to disguise their utter ignorance of every part of their charge except the handful of villages in their immediate vicinity. But in actual fact there was no regular assessment. The secular headman of the village (*gaita* or *peda*) collected as a rough poll-tax from every able-bodied male cultivator whatever he could fairly be called upon to contribute in kind, and delivered the village contribution at the royal granary. Even when the Chief in 1865 and 1872 attempted for the first time to settle villages with outside lessees and to assess the land revenue on the basis of fixed payments partly in cash and partly in kind for every plough, his officers made no effort to interfere with the traditional system in the Abujhmar hills. But after the State came under management in 1891, the authorities aimed at gradually introducing improved settlement methods based on the experience of British districts in the Central Provinces. The general method was to ascertain the rate per plough imposed at the late Raja's last settlement, to decide what enhancement per plough each village could bear, and then to ascertain the number of ploughs in each cultivator's possession and in the whole village. The number of ploughs was estimated from a rough calculation of the seed capacity of each field, and further checked by comparison with the number of cattle, counted when brought home to the village in the evening. In the better cultivated parts of Bastar, seed capacity of 7½ *khandis*[2] was regarded as a plough of land, and in the jungly parts seed capacity of 5½ *khandis*. Simultaneously, every effort was made to extend to all parts of the State the leasing of villages to *thekadars* or lessees, who were available in numbers in the open and settled parts and only too ready to seize the chance of getting the aboriginal

241 651 427

[1] Russell and Hiralal, Vol. III, p. 120.

[2] The Bastar *khandi* is a measure equivalent to 40 *paili* or 160 *soli*; a *soli* contains 40 *tolas*, or approximately 1 lb.'s weight of rice.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

241
651
427

villages there for nothing, with the hope of appropriating the best village lands for themselves and getting them tilled by the forced labour of the villagers. The theory was that good and substantial cultivators from outside the State would bring capital and improved methods into Bastar and play something of the part played by the landlord in the development of English agriculture. In practice the *thekedari* system was the cause of untold harm even in the permanent villages of the State, where the alien *thekedar* destroyed the solidarity of village and tribal life besides mercilessly exploiting the aboriginals, whom indeed he goaded into rebellion in 1910. Luckily, I was able to secure its abolition for the future, and every opportunity has been taken to resume management of the villages through the headmen when a lease has fallen in or in cases of mismanagement.

When the authorities tried to apply the system to wild regions like the Abujhmar hills, fortunately for the Hill Marias their reputation as sorcerers was such, and their cultivation was so primitive, that no foreigners would take leases of their villages. There were hardly any ploughs, and the problem of estimating the seed capacity of *penda* plots on remote and steep hillsides was too much for the wits and energy of badly paid Hindu *patwaris*. A farcical record was, however, prepared of the number of 'hoe-ploughs' of land cultivated by each Hill Maria on the basis of a seed capacity assumed in nine cases out of ten by pure guess-work, the *patwari* and his superior officials never going near the villages. Individual assessments were then made on each man, in spite of the communal feeling in regard to the land. These assessments varied in their incidence without rhyme or reason, except that they had been based on guess-work. Men deserted their villages in large numbers and migrated into the Chanda part of the hills or into the Bastar zamindaris, with which the authorities were not so concerned. As it was felt that every good village should have a lessee, and no outsider would come near, the hapless headman of many a village was made to put his thumb-mark to a lease deed of his village, only to find himself in consequence legally responsible for the whole village assessment, even if his villagers had absconded or were unable to pay. The post of headman became one to be avoided or nominally given to the simpleton of the village, whom the villagers would put forward as a figurehead, while the *kotyeg-gaita* retained the religious headmanship and was the real headman so far as the villagers were concerned. No allowance was made for the vagaries of shifting cultivation; though one year a man newly married or with a large growing family to support might be allowed by the village a larger *penda* area than others, and after a year or two

241
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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

241
65 would get only the normal share, yet, if the settlement took place in the first year, he might find himself saddled for all the period of settlement with a rent estimated on the seed capacity of that year. If a man dies, his widow is maintained by the village community and does not have her own cultivation; the taboo customs make any other arrangement impossible: but the State authorities would expect her, till the end of the settlement, to pay the rent assessed on her husband in his lifetime, and in practice this became a charge on the village. Villages themselves shift, as we have seen; and sometimes some villagers settle in one *paghai* and some in another. The *patwaris* would report these as two villages, and the settlement arrangements would be made accordingly. When *patwaris* came to prepare the annual rent papers, they might find that the villagers were cultivating a new *baghai* and say that they had not only to pay the rent assessed on the *baghai* that they were cultivating at settlement, but also an additional rent because they had also taken up 'new' land.

These are examples of the absurdities of the blind application to this most primitive race of assessment ideas evolved from those built up on long experience of other parts of India where there is little trace left of the old feelings of village solidarity. Fortunately, *patwaris* were too few, too tired and too afraid of 'Maria magic' to spend a moment longer in the Abujhmar hills than they could help; and those who should have checked their work shared their fears and found that there was more need of their presence in the tracts where assessments were considerable. A high and remote *pando* slope would never be visited at settlement, and even if the *patwari* made enquiries in his camp from assembled villagers they soon began to learn the virtues of concealment; the system, in fact, dealt a severe blow to the natural frankness of the people. The only kind of land that could not be concealed from the *patwari*, because always on the lower levels and close to the approach paths of the village, was the occasional patch of two or three permanent rice fields, on which promptly a very high rate of rent was assessed, little less than that applied in the rice lands of the good villages of the plains. The breaking of land into permanent cultivation should be regarded as an improvement in such tracts and exempted from enhancement of assessment. Cultivators with little use or understanding of money were scared at once by the prospect of more market bickering than ever to raise the cash to pay the enhanced rent, and before the 1927 Antagarh tahsil re-settlement practically all permanent rice cultivation had disappeared from the Abujhmar hills.

That 1927 settlement was, I hope, the last that will ever be attempted on such lines. The Settlement Officer did not personally

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

visit any Maria village or check the work of his subordinates on the ground. He called in the headmen to camps in the plains below, and announced the new rents. All had been enhanced on the basis of these seed capacity statements. These were of the usual guess-work type. The *patwaris* did not even visit each village, but called all the villagers from three or four villages to one camp and asked them how much land they cultivated. If a man said that he was cultivating a large area, his word was accepted, and he was assessed accordingly. If he equally truly said that he was cultivating four or five acres, the *patwari* refused to believe it and wrote him down as holding a 'hoe-plough' of thirteen or fourteen acres. Naturally, many villagers deserted to other lands of their clans in the zamindaris. In the years following the settlement, *patwaris* went to each village to prepare the annual papers, and a *patwari* who wanted to make a show of zeal generally reported that more land was being cultivated than at settlement, and had the alleged new areas assessed. In 1930 I found many examples of this; at Handawada the villagers had been assessed at settlement to Rs. 33 for 124 acres, and, as in the next two years the *patwari* had reported new cultivation, the assessment had been raised to Rs. 41. On measuring the cultivation on the spot, I found that seventeen able-bodied cultivators in all had 68½ acres. Four or five acres is, in fact, enough *penda* land to provide sustenance for the ordinary Hill Maria family.

Government accepted my recommendation to cancel this settlement in the Hill Maria country, and in its place to impose a poll-tax on every able-bodied male over sixteen years of age. The number of assessees is to be checked every fifth year, and every other check will thus coincide with the decennial census, and save duplication of work. The headman and elders are made responsible for collection and payment, and arrears are leviable from the village as a whole, not from individuals; it is left to the village community to decide what to do to any individual slacker. A commission of 1½ annas in the rupee is paid to the headman for prompt full payment. Rice or other permanent cultivation is not specially assessed. No annual papers are prepared. *Pari passu* with the quinquennial count of able-bodied men, cattle are to be counted for assessing grazing rates, the annual enumeration of cattle being abolished; the rates will not be varied during the five years, whatever the increase in the number of cattle. The changes apply to the whole of the Hill Maria country in Bastar, in whatever administrative division it is situated.

The re-settlement of the whole area on this basis was carried out after I had left Bastar, in 1932, and was everywhere welcomed

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 by the Marias. It deals with the village community through its mouthpieces, the headmen and the elders. Many have returned to 651 Bastar from the Chanda Maria country. The best sign which I observed when I spent the first month of my 1934 furlough in the Abujhmar hills was that the long abandoned rice fields are all being restored to cultivation. It is interesting to note that the headman has never ventured to keep the commission for himself, but always either divides it among the villagers, or by common consent spends it on pork or liquor for a village feast.

241 In the Bison-horn country as a whole there is now as much permanent and semi-permanent cultivation as *penda*, and the *patwaris* have always been more accurate in their records. The people are more sophisticated and ready to safeguard their interests. The *penda* lands are fairly accessible, except in the hilliest parts. It has been pointed out already that each piece of each *penda* site, whether at the moment under bush or under crop, is now regarded as the individual holding of some cultivator. The people have many markets in their midst, and understand measures and seed capacities. It has not, therefore, been necessary to apply the poll-tax system there. A great deal could be done even there to turn the people from shifting to permanent cultivation by recognizing new permanent cultivation as an improvement.

Methods of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias

Where the Hill Marias have started permanent cultivation they have in general adopted the methods of surrounding Murias or Bison-horn Marias, save that very few of them have mastered or attempted to master ploughing, but prepare the land with their *gudari* digging hoes. A few now keep hired Rawat herdsmen, but do not themselves tend, milk or work their cattle. If the recognition of permanent cultivation as an improvement could be combined with a determined attempt by the State to teach carting, ploughing and milking, even among the Bison-horn Marias, shifting cultivation would be greatly diminished.

243 When he does grow rice, the Hill Maria generally does not 312 irrigate it with water led from a storage reservoir or tank; his method is rather to build his dam across a stream or waterway and to cultivate the land above it. The illustration opposite shows both sides of the dam made in 1930 for cultivation of this kind at Tondawada; the deep hole below the dam was made when its predecessor was washed away by an abnormal flood. No water flows here in the cold weather. First a wall of grass *tuns*[1] was erected along the length of the dam, and behind this a wall of *walwa*[1] horizontal pole fencing, supported behind with thicker pole piles

[1] See p. 152 for definition of *tuns* and *walwa*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

226 564 markets. The Kuruks go up into the hills to collect these dues, and they also dry fish and bring it round from village to village in the hills, bartering it for grain, generally at the rate of five pieces the size of a finger for a *paili*[1] of *kuthi*; the Hill Marias allow them to sleep in the *pail-gotul* rest-house. They are expert with net and with rod and line. Frequently they stretch a cord over the head of a pool with several short lengths of line ending in baited hooks depending at intervals in the water, while they go across the tail of the pool in their dug-out canoes spanking the surface of the water with their paddles or with long bamboos to drive the fish up towards the baits. They fish simultaneously several little rods tied to clumps of rushes or reeds. They certainly catch fish at all times except in high floods, and send them alive to your camp in water in little dug out sections of trees. As boatmen they are expert in [501] managing their clumsy and heavy dug-outs, which are generally made of *Bombax malabaricum* wood owing to the heavy duty ● [651] charged by the Forest Department for the far more durable teak. I spent nearly three weeks in their charge in November 1927 with Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the State Medical Officer, journeying in their dug-outs down the Indrawati from Kutru to the Jitam rapids, whence they returned to their villages. They were expert in [501] shooting rapids even with two dug-outs lashed together, which they sometimes took through the wild tangle of rapids above Bhamragarh with two paddlers standing in the bows and two in the stern. The paddles are rectangles of teak nailed to teak handles. One dug-out would shoot ahead to explore the rapids, and its owner appear suddenly on the top of a rock to shout directions to the rest; old Kuruks and their grey-headed wives would appear out of tributary streams from riparian villages and croak away their greetings in the guttural Hill Maria dialect, and then paddle back upstream in the morning mist with charcoal or wood smoking around them in [374] broken earthen crocks at the bottom of their boats, carried for warmth. At dusk, after escorting us to our camp on the Bastar bank, they invariably would paddle croaking off to rocky islands in midstream, whence at night the eye would be delighted with their numerous fires of driftwood and the ear with the melodious refrains of their songs.

226 The Hill Marias make various forms of fish cages and traps with reeds and cane. They dam river shallows in the hot weather and poison the pools. In the rains they make *gorla* piers of boulders in cylindrical wicker-work baskets, like the piers of their bridges, between which is laid a platform of wicker-work, the upstream end of which rests on the bed of the stream, and is weighted down with

[1] A measure containing about 4 lb. weight of grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

over from previous days. The female trees bear fruit in May, and the pulp of this is eaten, generally after roasting the fruit on an earthenware crock and breaking off the rind. They also eat the unripe seeds and seedlings, as well as the roots. They collect the seed and leave it to germinate in pits; they propagate the trees also from root cuttings. 273

Individual ownership in the trees is to some extent recognized, not necessarily, however, in the owner of the land. There is a sort of village arrangement as to the trees to be tapped by each family, permitting a rough rotation where trees are plentiful, so as to give them a much needed rest from tapping. The Koyas and Dorlas sacrifice a fowl or a goat at the foot of the first tree tapped, and the sacrificial victims are then taken to the Village Mother's shrine and eaten there by the men. 273 423

Date-palm The *sindi* (*Phoenix sylvestris*) is occasionally tapped in the Bison-horn country by making an incision in the bark below the crown of the tree. 273

Mahua The *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*) is common everywhere except in the Abujhmar hills, and it is the spirit distilled from it that is sold at the State excise shops, except for a few toddy shops around Konta. There is very little illicit distillation, the State liquor distilled by licensees at outstills being very cheap, and the pass rules enabling Marias fairly easily to get an adequate supply of the spirit for the religious and domestic or social occasions at which its consumption is obligatory. The State does not tax the tapping of the sago-palm and toddy-palm, but merely tries to prohibit the sale and to limit the quantity of the resulting spirit which individuals may possess. [656] [651]

The Parjas and Bison-horn Marias sometimes make a wine from *mahua*, said to be red in colour, by several successive boilings and strainings of *mahua* flowers. It is called *suram*; I have never been able to get hold of any.

Landa *Landa*, a cause of half the homicide committed in Bastar, is the favourite intoxicant of the Bison-horn Marias, but is taboo to the Hill Maria. It is made of equal portions of husked rice or *kuthi* and *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*). The rice or *kuthi* is soaked well in water, strained off and pounded to a paste. The *mandia* grain is first damped and allowed to sprout, then dried in the sun for three or four days, and soaked, strained and pounded like the rice or *kuthi*. Both are then well mixed. They then take an earthenware *handi*, with holes in the bottom, and cover the holes with a lattice of bamboo slices, on which they place *siari* leaves. The mixed rice or *kuthi* and sprouted *mandia* are piled on these leaves. The *handi* is then placed on a *handi* of

[see cat. 116 p. 421. - Agal 79]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

565 177 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally therefore on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 466 166 The Allapilli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen, etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

622 791 [1] For example, the suppression of *poda* cultivation, or the deliberate curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

> 'The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village: sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*.' Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> 'This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

interior villages send down their young men in relays to work for wages at Allapilli. There they get prompt and regular payment and just and fair treatment. There are resting-sheds where the Marias can sleep, leave their scanty personal possessions and take their meals in clean surroundings, not divorced from their own kind. The Forest Department are arranging ever-improving facilities for them to purchase cloth, grain, salt and ornaments at fair prices. Forest work is in itself a technical training. At one time also the local officials tried to establish at Allapilli a small carpentry and basketry school.[1] Everywhere on this tour I met Marias who were on their way either to or from Allapilli, or had worked there from time to time in the past and looked upon it as a place to which they could always go to earn quickly any cash needed for payments of rent, fines or bride-price. More than one passage in *The Aboriginal Problem*[2] describes the Marias' consciousness of the fact that the Allapilli departmental forest operations have saved them from debt and distress; the establishment throughout the Chanda zamindari forests of similar 'Allapillis' was one of my recommendations. Allapilli has further been the one thing that has saved the Marias from the economic ruin that they feared when the Court of Wards and district authorities by a sudden ukase stopped their *podu* or *dahi* cultivation.

From Allapilli we motored eastwards by forest road and by estate forest tracks, generally motorable after slight repair in the open season, to Bhamragarh, halting a night on the way at Pirmeli; it was some fifteen miles from Allapilli to Pirmeli, and another twenty-three on to Bhamragarh. I had been preceded on this tour by Mr. Kerawala inquiring into debt at each big village, and the neighbouring village *bhumias* and *gaitas* and the *patti Sendhias*[3] from miles around gathered again to repeat to me what they had already told him. The first such gathering was at Mirkal[4] and the next at Pirmeli itself. At both places we heard much about money-lenders and their methods, and I therefore reproduce from *The Aboriginal Problem*[5] the gist of Mr. Kerawala's report on what he was told at Mirkal and Wateli,[6] those whom he saw at Wateli came to my camp at Pirmeli.

At Mirkal he enquired particularly into the economic and social conditions of the Marias of Mirkal, Sagangatta and Kasampalli villages. He found that many were heavily in debt to Hindu

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 283.
[2] Pp. 237, 332 and 366.
[3] See p. 287.
[4] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 63A, ref. MV2148.
[5] Pp. 280-2.
[6] *Ordnance Survey of India*, ref. MV4935.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again.'[2]

Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa.*
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 102.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Gond element had been scheduled, and many others omitted. It was unsound also to confine the privilege to Marias and Gonds, for there are many other aboriginal or semi-aboriginal tribes, such as Pardhan, Halba, Nagarchi, Thoti and Ojha, and artisan, grazier and untouchable castes living in close symbiosis with the Marias, who should get this concession; such an extension would reduce cases of illegal tapping, possession, sale and transfer, and minimize excise subordinate officials' opportunities for harassment and extortion. One of the worst agents of exploitation in aboriginal areas has been the Kalar excise contractor. The Maria here, thanks to this toddy and sago-palm concession, and the availability therefore in his village of this free source of mild intoxicant and the yeast vitamin, has long been far freer of economic thraldom to the Kalar than the other aboriginals in the province who have not had this concession. Moreover the Maria does not seriously abuse this privilege, except perhaps by occasionally selling or giving toddy to non-Marias. I strongly opposed a Nagpur proposal that 'a beginning should be made in the direction of regulating the drinking of toddy by the Marias of Sironcha' who, it was said, 'literally subsist on toddy for some months of the year and are drunk most of the time'. There may be some truth in this theory of drunkenness in regard to the teluguized plains villages of Sironcha outside the zamindari, as noted of similar South Bastar villages on page 168. But of the Ahiri Marias it is quite false. For one thing the morning and evening climb of the palm-trees by rough bamboo ladders calls for nerve, and would be impossible for a drunkard. All through this tour I never saw a Maria drunk on toddy. Nor in the average Maria village are there enough tappable trees available to cause a tenth of this alleged general intoxication.

Just near Bhamragarh in one village bitter weeping came from a woman whose husband had been hauled off that morning for illicit tapping of toddy in an excise raid. As usual the main lament was not so much against this being treated—to my mind needlessly—as an offence, as against the social consequences of being handcuffed and imprisoned. Here we were close to the Kasansogh Togh or Kasansur Turri and other islands of the Indrawati formerly the subject of a boundary dispute between Chanda and Bastar, which I had settled in my voyage down the Indrawati from Kutru in 1927; across the river lay Pharasnar, headquarters of a sub-zamindari of Kutru zamindari, where I had then camped. The ethnographic map on page 40 marks the population of the Bastar bank here as mixed Dorla and Hill Maria, or Hill Maria who have almost become Dorla; and on page 52 I have noted that though on both sides of the river the villagers seem to be of Hill Maria origin and still exchange

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

he would repay with 50 per cent. interest.[1] Although it is clear that these Teli, Kalar and Telugu money-lenders do levy an exorbitant toll on the Maria villagers' produce, it is equally clear that they are fulfilling a necessary function, which has become the more necessary since the stopping of *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation below the hills has restricted the Marias in most villages to permanent rice cultivation on small acreages always dependent on seasonal rainfall evenly distributed in time. If such money-lenders are excluded, then they must be replaced by Government grain depots and village grain banks.

Of Maria funeral rites the *Gazetteer* observes that a stone or a carved post about five feet high is usually put up to mark the spot where a man's body has been cremated, and that 'sometimes one comes across a forest glade strewn with these memorials, the only sign of some deserted village, the very name of which has perished'.[2] Many rows of carved wooden posts may be seen between Bhamragarh and Lahiri, while at Lahiri itself I saw scores of such posts and of the small cromlechs (*kanal-garya* or 'thrones of the Departed') described on page 273, and mentioned in the *Gazetteer*[3] as built on the spot where the body was burned. The top of one of these very substantial funerary posts, or *kanal-gutta*, photographed at Lahiri, is reproduced as one of the illustrations in this Supplement. Noticeable are the carved wooden horns, between which is a carved wooden bird, probably a hornbill. The wooden horns are common, and probably are a modern symbol of the cow formerly sacrificed at the erection of a menhir or wooden *kanal-gutta* by Hill Marias[4] and Bison-horn Marias[5] throughout Bastar: the funerary customs of the Chanda Marias seemed, however, to be Hill Maria in type, and this was confirmed by oral enquiries at Lahiri.

The addiction of the Bison-horn Marias and of the Kutru Hill Marias of Bastar to cock-fighting has been described on page 162. I particularly inquired if the weekly cock-fights at Oikal in Ahiri zamindari, there mentioned, and at Lahiri itself still went on. But all cock-fighting among Chanda Marias had for some years been stopped under orders from an inexperienced young European District Superintendent of Police on the theory that it contravened the Gambling Act. But the Marias maintained that, as in Bastar, so here, there had never been cash betting (as, indeed, one might expect in a region where all transactions are still so largely in kind), but the defeated bird had passed to the owner of the winning bird.

[1] For further details, see *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 183-4.
[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 100.
[3] Ibidem, loc. cit.
[4] See pp. 278-9.
[5] See p. 281.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Such iron knives or spurs as were tied on to the cock's legs were very small, and a Lahiri Maria criticized the usual theory that this way of increasing a cock's natural armament is cruel on the ground that if it meant a quicker death for the defeated cock it was merciful. All the headmen promised that if the ban on cock-fights were lifted they would frown on cash or grain betting, and, if we so desired, on the use of iron spurs and knives. Thoughtless officiousness such as that which stopped this favourite tribal pastime is only too typical of the lack of imagination with which officials, great and small, are apt to interfere with all that lends colour to aboriginal life.

Lahiri was one of the chief camps where I questioned the local Marias as to their clan organization, particularly the grouping of clans into phratries according to the number of *Chuddur penk* or Little Gods. I mentioned on pages 194-5 my doubts as to the traditional accounts of this god-grouping among the Chanda Marias. But these accounts go back to Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report. A somewhat confusing summary of his account, on page 101 of the *Gazetteer*, seems to imply that there is little difference between the god-grouping of the Raj-Gond, the other Gond tribes of Chanda. Lucie-Smith divided the Raj-Gonds into a four-god group, with the tortoise and crocodile totems, a five-god group with the iguana totem, a six-god group with the tiger totem, and a seven-god group with the porcupine totem: these groups were divided into what the *Gazetteer* calls 'houses or families, distinguished by their family name or *padi*', i.e. into what in this book have been called clans (*pari*), which numbered 28 among the Raj-Gonds, 24 among the Marias and 17 among the Dhurve Gond. Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, p. 66) say that in Chanda :—

> 'There are four main groups worshipping seven, six, five and four gods respectively, and each group contains ten to fifteen septs. A man cannot marry a woman of any sept which worships the same number of gods as himself. Each group has a sacred animal which the members revere, that of the seven-god worshippers being a porcupine, of the six-god worshippers, a tiger, of the five-god worshippers, the *saras* crane, and of the four-god worshippers, a tortoise. As a rule the members of the different groups do not know the names of their gods, and in practice it is doubtful whether they restrict themselves to the proper number of gods of their own group. Formerly there were three-, two-, and one-god worshippers, but in each of these classes it is said that there were only one or two septs, and they found that they were much inconvenienced by the paucity of their numbers, perhaps for the purposes of communal worship and feasting, and hence they got themselves enrolled in the larger groups. In reality it would appear that the classification according to the number of gods worshipped is being forgotten and the three lowest groups have disappeared.'

They suggested that this conjecture was supported by the fact that in Chhindwara and other localities only two large six-god and seven-god groups remained.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Railways have still, eighty years later, not penetrated the wilderness: the river navigation schemes proved a failure: the coal mines are well to the west. The prophecy has thus been fulfilled, but with a difference: the clearings are fewer and farther between than in Lucie-Smith's day owing to the virtual cessation in Chanda, except around Kuvakodi, of *podu* or *dahi*.[1]

His wise and discriminating approval of *podu* was overlooked soon after the 1922-4 land revenue settlement of the zamindaris in Ahiri and the Garchiroli zamindaris, when, without apparently any order from Government, the local authorities stopped *podu*. The *Settlement Report* had only said that the miscellaneous income received by the zamindars from *jalapod* had under standing orders been omitted from the assets on which land revenue was to be assessed, so that in case it damaged the forests, Government interference might be justified. In every Garchiroli zamindari except Gewardha *jalapod* had gone on until the 1922-4 settlement, but the total area had been found to be only 993 acres. Rao Bahadur Lakshmanswamy, the Settlement Officer, reported that it was never allowed in good quality timber forests, but only where there was a sparse unmarketable forest growth; even then there was a ten years rest between successive fellings and burnings. The rent on each clearing was recovered in grain and not in cash, the quantity per axe varying from 60 lb. in Kotgal zamindari to 200 lb. in Rangi zamindari: the rent was always substantially less for the second than for the first year of a clearing. The Settlement Officer considered that the privilege of carrying on this shifting cultivation contributed indirectly to the expansion of settled cultivation, and believed that the withdrawal of the privilege would probably unsettle the present occupants: he urged therefore no interference; the area was small, the forest valueless, the privilege kept the Marias happy, and the zamindars, alive to the increasing value of their forests since the advent of the railway and road communications, were sufficiently alive to the need of restricting *podu* and charged higher rates for it in the areas nearer the open parts of the district and the railway than in the remote zamindaris.

[1] This has been mentioned already in this Note on pp. 390-1 and 397. *Podu* strictly speaking is the *dippa* or *markon* of the Hill Marias (p. 126), while *jala* or *khamori*, which is really the *dahi* of most of the province and the *penka* of the Bastar Marias, consists in the sowing of rice on low-lying plots where water naturally collects in the rains, after these plots, which generally have no forest growth, have been fertilised in May with the ashes of grass and wood cut beforehand from the adjacent forests and spread over them. On the *podu* plots, light rice, all the minor millets and beans and pulses are sown. When *mandia* (*eleusine coracana*) is sown, the cultivation is known as *sempod*. As general terms in Chanda either *podu* or *jalapod* are used. *Podu* is also the common term in Hyderabad State.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241
656

In Ahiri zamindari *podu* had been stopped even earlier. In 1917 the then Deputy Commissioner inaugurated an active policy of discouraging it in favour of plough cultivation. He decided to allow no *podu* outside village areas, to make each village *gaita* responsible for reporting the name of each *podu* cultivator and the area, as measured by bamboos, cut and sown by him, and to charge rent at the same rate for *podu* as for plough land. Failure to report any cultivation contravening the orders was to be punished in the first instance by a heavy penal rent, and, if repeated, by total prohibition of all *podu* in the village at fault. This drastic restriction was introduced in all the zamindari except the Kuvakodi Hill Maria tract. The proposals were expounded by the Deputy Commissioner at the end of his tour to several hundred *gaitas* assembled for the purpose at Ahiri. This thoughtlessly wide-sweeping measure soon led to the universal cessation of *podu*: the orders gave great scope to minor zamindari officials for harassing the Marias by alleging that their *podu* contravened the restrictions, and in the end it seemed safer to have no *podu* at all. It seems also that ultimately some Deputy Commissioner finally prohibited *podu*, though the order had disappeared when his successor looked for it in 1930.

In all my camps, especially near the Bastar border, across which *podu* is permissible in every village, the bitter complaints of every Maria showed how harshly this had operated: we have already seen how it has delivered them to the tender mercies of the money-lenders. That, moreover, Rao Bahadur Lakshmanswamy's warning that such interference would unsettle the present occupants had been justified, was proved by the widespread migration of Marias to their kinsmen's villages over the Bastar border, with their greater freedom; of this several *gaitas* and zamindars complained, notably in Jharapapra zamindari. I had a conference with the Garchiroli and Drug zamindars at Murumgaon later in the tour, on New Year's Day, 1941. Several of them complained that in the past the district officers had fined them for allowing *jalapod*, and, yet worse, that they were still often being fined for alleged felling, without the Deputy Commissioner's permission, of high tree forest whenever their ryots broke up new lands even for plough cultivation; the ryots then always burn the felled forest growth and raise the first crops on the new land by the traditional method, but officials stigmatize this as *podu*. The zamindars considered that the stopping of *jalapod* had been quite unjustified, and that if it were again allowed, but confined to commercially worthless miscellaneous forest from which at present they derived no income, it would at least bring in something to them, and above all would save the Marias from the effects

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of rice failures such as those of 1939 and 1940. In the former year the Marias, dismayed by the failure of rice on their plough-lands, took the law into their own hands and started cutting *podu* in the east of Garchiroli tahsil and the adjacent Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district, being to some extent incited by emissaries of the leader of an agrarian agitation in the Dondi-Lohara zamindari. It seemed to me that in their present mood they would before long again defy the restrictions and cut *podu* on a wide scale.

I recommended accordingly that their wishes should be met, as it should not be difficult to regulate *podu* by fixing a regular series of sites to be felled in two-yearly rotations. Silviculturally too there was much to be gained by this. When *podu* was first restricted and then prohibited, the miscellaneous forests were allowed to grow up just as they had been left after the last *podu* fellings, with all the old high stumps and crooked or double or treble stems. Even the patches of teak were often useless because the trees had been left to shoot from old undressed stumps. Most of this vast forest around Bhamragarh, Surjagarh and Jarawandi has no commercial value at all, and never will have unless good teak can be grown. In the neighbouring Panabaras zamindari of Drug I found that some forty years before the Court of Wards had initiated a practice of requiring *podu* cultivators to sow teak seed in the *podu* clearings before abandoning them. This did much to produce the fine forest that is now so valuable an asset of that estate. The Marias whom I met in Ahiri, Jharapapra, Aundi, Koracha, Murumgaon, Rangi and Dhanora zamindaris were most appreciative of the idea of *podu* being allowed with this condition of the sowing of teak seed in the second and last year of cultivation. All knew how the Allapilli departmental forest operation had saved the local Marias from economic ruin, and they were quick to realize that conservation of the surviving teak and the growth of teak in areas now to be selected for that purpose and sown with teak at the end of *podu* cultivation would bring teak forests, and therefore ultimately operations such as those at Allapilli, far nearer to their villages in the days of their grandchildren. Besides areas thus earmarked for teak regeneration after *podu*, there should also be fixed areas around each village where *podu* should be allowed indefinitely. The Marias also would welcome the extension to other parts of Ahiri and the other zamindaris of the precedent of the leasing by Government from the Ahiri zamindar of the forests around Allapilli: the surviving teak areas around Surajgarh would for example be suitable leased areas. In all these measures the fullest co-operation of the Marias could without much difficulty be obtained by enlisting the sympathy and support of the *bhumias*, *gaitas*, and *Sendhias*, whose authority remains real and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of ghotul leaders; it is distributed when a boy or girl leaves the ghotul after marriage; it is a convenient and compendious means of paying a fine. The chelik offer it to their drums before a wedding, and drink it in honour of Lingo at the end of the Pus Kolang dance.

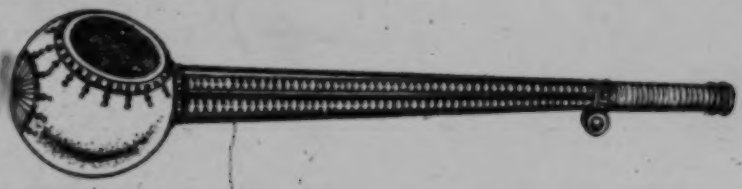

FIG. 13. Brass *arki* used for ladling liquor
Length 8"-9"

This homely drink, so intimately connected with every aspect of their lives, so accessible to the forest-dwellers, so readily and cheaply prepared, may not be distilled by the Muria in Bastar or by the aboriginals anywhere. Its profits must be divided between the State and the middleman. Home-distillation is everywhere forbidden, and the privilege of the manufacture and sale of the spirit is farmed out to contractors in open auction. The business has thus passed into the hands of the most degenerate type of Hindu and Mussalman adventurer, for few aboriginals have either the means or the enterprise to compete with the sophisticated aggression of the outside world in the open market. These adventurers rob both the aboriginals and the State. They dilute the spirit; they put soda in it to cover the fact of their tampering; they make false returns; they use filthy water in unclean pots;[1] their shops are centres of the most degraded type of alien immigrant into tribal territory.

When the National Congress came into power in 1938, they declared that they would not apply their Prohibition laws to Europeans or aboriginals. It would have been more consistent had they allowed the aboriginal to distil his own liquor and had thus ceased to draw revenue from his drinking habits. The real evil of the present system is not that the aboriginal gets drunk, but that in order to get his liquor he is forced into contact with the worst type of alien and outsider.

In this respect conditions in Bastar are better than in many other parts of India. The Excise Department is efficient and understanding; the State controls the mahua trade, but allows the aboriginal great freedom in the use of toddy and salphi. But nothing can atone for the evil of depriving a primitive people of a natural right.

However, once that has been done, the arrangements in Bastar are as good as can be imagined. The spirit is cheap, only two annas a bottle,[2] and passes are freely granted to the Muria and Maria to purchase whatever is needed for ceremonial and social occasions. As a result there appears to be very little illicit distillation in either Kondagaon or Narayanpur. The figures of prosecutions for the five years, 1937–41, are these:

[1] The riddle 'Man and wife piss in the same lane', to which the answer is 'The two pipes of the still', probably hints at the dirt of the Kalar's out-still.
[2] This was in 1941.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

invasion by land-hungry Hindus of the highlands and backwoods, with its accompaniment of money-lenders, cloth pedlars, lawyers' touts, landlords and forest contractors.

The terms of reference for my aboriginal enquiry directed my special attention to the conditions in the tribal tracts which had been declared Partially Excluded Areas under the Government of India Act of 1935. Those are the tracts, speaking generally, where the tribes still constitute a majority of the population and by thus being able to preserve much of their own traditional way of life can still present something of a united front to the invasion of new settlers and new ideas.[1] The Partially Excluded Areas of Chanda district include the huge Ahiri zamindari of Sironcha tahsil and the Garchiroli tahsil zamindaris of Dhanora, Dudhmala, Jharapapara, Khutgaon, Kotgal, Muramgaon, Palasgarh, Rangi, Sirsundi, Sonsari, Chandala, Gilgaon, Pai-Muranda, Potegaon and Gewardha. My enquiries therefore gave me a long desired chance of seeing the Marias of Chanda. These zamindaris have a total area of 4,013 square miles, mostly of hill and forest, and had in 1941 a population of 115,031; this figure included 70,821 'aboriginals', so that out of every 1,000 persons, 607 were tribal. In the 1931 census 34,776 of the Gonds of these zamindaris were returned as Marias, against a total of 34,986[2] Marias for all the British districts of the Central Provinces, leaving only some 210 Marias for the *khalsa* areas of Chanda district and the zamindaris of the Partially Excluded Areas of Drug district. The total strength of the Maria tribe in the British districts of the province is given in the 1941 census summary as 39,553,[3] district figures not being shown. Almost all of these will have been returned from the Chanda Partially Excluded Areas.

It has been indicated in this book how vague are the terms 'Maria' and 'Muria',[4] and how all the tribes thus vaguely designated speak of themselves as Koitor or Koi, distinguishing between one group and another by such terms as Highland Koitor, or Lowland or Plains Koitor. Let it be remembered that the word Maria is not a Gondi word and that *all* Gondi-speaking Gonds throughout the Central Provinces and Berar and Hyderabad State speak of themselves as Koitor; then it will be realized how unprecise, unscientific a term 'Maria' really is. Here in these Chanda zamindaris it is

[1] Any investigator of tribal conditions soon realizes that the tribesmen inside the Partially Excluded Areas are not yet in as bad a plight as their kinsmen outside those areas, in the more 'advanced' districts, where they are steadily losing such land as is left to them and sinking to the status of landless labourers in the service of those who have expropriated them.

[2] and [3] *Census of India*, 1941, Vol. I, Part I, Table XIV, p. 118.

[4] See pp. 35-6, 42, 44, 48-50.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

623 that may follow an unatoned adultery, the offence to the
674 Ancestors of division within the clan. The secular leaders are more concerned with the fatiguing inconvenience of a police enquiry, and the embarrassment and waste of time of going as witnesses to a distant court. Village officialdom, it may be safely said, is anxious to prevent crime. It is equally anxious, when a crime has been committed, to hush it up. But hushing up does not mean that crimes will go unpunished. This might well bring on a village the vengeance of the Dead.

657 Behind this intense belief and organized activity native to the soil rises the massive and alien structure of the Indian Penal Code. This majestic formulary was first drafted in 1837 by a Law Commission under the presidentship of Lord Macaulay. Its provisions extend throughout British India, and it has been applied with certain modifications to Bastar State. The Civil Code of British India is also largely operative in the State. We thus have the remarkable, but not unusual, picture of tribesmen still deeply attached to their own ethical and penal system, still regulating their lives by their own laws of ownership, partition and inheritance, but unable to invoke any sanctions to enforce them and compelled in time of need to turn to a foreign Code that was made without any reference to their traditions and the conditions under which they live. J. H. Hutton has called attention to the result:

> Tribal customs which regulate the ownership, usufruct or transfer of land are normally superseded by a code in the application of which the tribe is deprived of its property, generally in the name of law, either by alienation to foreigners or by transferring the trusteeship of a tribal chief into absolute ownership of a kind quite foreign to the customs of a tribe. This has befallen both the Munda and the hill tribes of Chittagong, while even in Rajputana a somewhat similar process has been at work. A similar application of alien law also usually disturbs the tribal customs of debt. The criminal law of a civilized community is often at variance with what is felt to be just and proper by tribal custom. The complicated system of administration of justice has tended to impair the natural truthfulness and honesty of the people and social solidarity of the tribes and has weakened the authority of the social heads and the respect they formerly commanded.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

114 official in India has tried gradually to call all the Koitor race Gonds,
101 whatever the name by which they call themselves or the local vernacular name for them, and even to include under the generic term Gond other races or tribes who are not Koitor but only resemble them more or less in their customs. All the Koitor of Bastar have thus been officially classed as Gonds, though the name Gond is still hardly known in Bastar and is regarded by most Koitor of every local variety as an insult, except by Hinduized Gond immigrants from Chhattisgarh. If official and ethnographer would always use the names by which tribesmen call themselves when speaking their own language, we should possibly find many of the so-called branches of the primitive races not branches at all, but merely classified as such in the past owing to unintelligent failure to realize that in different tracts different Hindus have used different names for the same race or tribe.

The difficulty is accentuated by the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names. So arise such names as Raj-Gond, Raj-Korku, Raja-Muria, Naik Gond, Pit-Bhattra; and it will be seen below how this process has worked in Bastar.

Almost a reverse process is also at work, by which the remnants of forgotten tribes or old confederations of tribes not necessarily akin or speaking the same language have long been known under the common name applied to the whole confederation. The links that used to hold them together disappear, and those sections of the confederation that are socially or culturally more advanced object to being dragged down to the same level in popular esteem as the backward sections, and so prefer to abandon the name given to the confederation in favour of the original or some new name of their own section. The Parjas are a clear example of this, as beyond the Jeypore border they include at least seven different tribes, some speaking Munda, some Dravidian and some Aryan dialects, which differ widely in customs and degree of advancement: the Bastar Parjas except, it is said, the few wilder ones beyond the Kolab-Sabari in Sukma zamindari and around Mount Tulsidongri in Sukma and Jagdalpur tahsil, now invariably call themselves Dhurwa and resent being called Parja. The name Parja appears to be only a corruption of the Aryan term '*praja*' applied to subjects as distinct from the '*raja*' or ruler.

114 It is difficult to give figures for the growth or decline of the
●659 tribes of Bastar, as the 1931 census was the first since 1891 in which almost all the primitive races of Bastar were not lumped together

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

under the generic name Gond. In 1931 the tribes enumerated as Gonds in the previous three censuses were separately enumerated under the names Bhattra, Gond, Maria, Muria, Koya and Parja. The totals for these must be added both for 1931 and 1891 in order to see how far the primitive races of Bastar have been increasing. The 1921 figure for Gonds was only 107,503 persons, compared with 285,519 in 1911, and was obviously wrong; the 113,100 persons enumerated in 1921 under Minor Castes should be added to the 107,503 Gonds, though even then the total of 220,603 is below the correct figure. Excluding the Halbas and certain minor aboriginal tribes, the comparative figures are then :—

Year	Gonds
1891	128,442
1901	204,641
1911	285,519
1921	220,603
1931	359,637

The increase in forty years has been 181 per cent. In the same period the total population rose by 69 per cent. from 310,884 to 524,721. The primitive population is more than holding its own.

Halbas were also classified at the census, not altogether rightly, as primitive, and with them and certain other minor primitive tribes added, the primitive population rises to 379,082. Even this does not tell the full tale. Large numbers of the persons returned as members of the Hindu functional castes, the graziers, potters, fishermen, weavers (Mahras), blacksmiths and others, are in reality members of primitive tribes speaking their languages and only differentiated from them by their occupation. There is nothing in outward appearance to distinguish these persons from other aboriginals; they follow their tribal religions whether enumerated as such or as Hindus. I consider that on this account the 1931 primitive total can safely be regarded as 400,000, or 76 per cent.; the census report puts the percentage at 73·6.

The totals given for the tribes formerly treated as Gonds but separately enumerated in 1931 are :—

Bhattra	36,611
Gond	24,497
Maria	146,070
Muria	124,993
Koya	9,988
Parja	17,568

Unfortunately even now, as will be shown later, the classification has been over-simplified, and is of little use for scientific purposes. The only categories about which no doubt can arise are Bhattra

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to the Telis, send relays of young men to earn the needed cash by
426 working at Allapilli, and it is noteworthy that these workers do not
621 regard the wages thus earned as their individual property, but as the earnings of the village which sent them there and provided them with food for the journey. Let us hope that the economic self-sufficiency which has hitherto kept these hillmen out of the clutches of the money-lender will be preserved (which means that their *penda* must not be stopped). They are subject, however, to three pests. The
661 first is the frequently corrupt *kamdar* of the zamindar. The second are the village watchmen or *kotwar*, generally of Mahra or kindred untouchable castes, to whose circles these hill villages are attached. These Mahras have their headquarters in plain villages, whence they make periodic tours of the hill villages to levy various illegal dues from the Hill Marias. The third pest is the itinerant
439 cloth pedlar, usually a Mahra, who supplies cloth on credit and then tries to levy a perpetual tribute in kind. I met one of these men in this tour during my visit to the adjacent Bastar village of Nelanguri. Bazaars are so remote that these pedlars, if they could be prevented from selling on credit, and be made to charge reasonable prices, would fulfil a useful function. All these abuses could be checked by effective official touring: Mr. Kerawala's and my visits were unfortunately red-letter events in the Marias' lives.

535 Dancing at Kuvakodi was all in the traditional Hill Maria
292 style, but sadly inferior to dances at such Bastar centres as Orcha or Handawada, although at least half the dancers were Bastar Marias. But even in physical type these Marias from the western fringes of the Abujhmar Mountains are inferior. Here, as I noted of Bastar during my March 1934 visit, the Maria dancer has given up the rib-dress or *gatikarhana*, the dancing-shield and the gay head-dress and skirt, though he still retains the traditional buttock-bells, the songs, the *pata-bhita* or 'song fellows' and the dance-steps.[1]

535 The descent back to the Lahiri camp was almost more tiring than the climb had been. Lahiri that evening was full of an eager crowd, to watch the dancing and partake of the liquor that was ready for the dancers. Here the dancing was lively and vital, but differed
534 in various ways from Hill Maria dancing, if of Hill Maria type. The *dol* drumming was marked, even though the single-membrane *turam* drum more typical of the Hill Maria was much in evidence.
301 Perhaps, however, the strongest impression was the astonishing wealth of 'jewellery' worn by the girls: enquiry showed that apart from strings of beads, almost all the silver and brass and aluminium necklets, armlets and other trinkets worn by the women had been purchased from metal-workers in Bastar State. There seemed here

[1] See pp. 75-6 and 183-4.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

101 without a considerable Gond population, but the main strongholds of
162 the Gonds are to-day the Satpura plateau including the districts of Betul,
197 Chhindwara and Seoni, where the western type of Gondi is spoken, Mandla and Chhattisgarh in the east, where the Gonds have adopted the local dialect of eastern Hindi but retained their tribal identity, and in the south Chanda and the neighbouring Yeotmal, where the language is Gondi, but of a dialect somewhat different from the Gondi of Betul.

101 To the north-west the Gonds extend across the Narbada River into
691 Central India, and are particularly numerous in Indore State; to the
197 east of the Central Provinces lie the states of Gond princes, such as
[619] Kawardha, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, to-day known as the Chhattisgarh States. Although neither these Gond rajas, nor indeed the Gonds among their subjects speak Gondi, they are fully conscious of their tribal associations and the high status of the ruling princes adds no doubt to tribal prestige in the whole of Chhattisgarh.

Further south, bordering on Chanda, Drug and Raipur, extend the two States of Kanker and Bastar, where Gonds constitute the majority of the population. Bastar in particular is the home of three important groups of Gonds: the Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias, all of which differ in language and custom very considerably from the Gonds of the Central Provinces.[1] Their colourful and complex cul-
[174] tures are representative of ancient aboriginal India and show obvious affinities with the Austroasiatic cultures of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Bastar has also part in the Koyas or Dorlas of the Godavari area, the most southern branch of the Gond family occurring in considerable strength in Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State and stretching across the barrier of the Eastern Ghats into the vicinity of Rajahmundry. Most Koyas still speak a dialect of Gondi, but those surrounded by Telugu populations, have changed over to Telugu.

Another substantial group of Gonds, closely akin to the Gonds of Yeotmal and Chanda, is found in the hilly country between the Godavari and the Penganga Rivers constituting the Adilabad District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, and it is these Gonds who form the subject of the present work.

101 All the Gonds of Adilabad, except for an insignificant overflow of
186 Dhurwe Gonds from Chanda, consider themselves Raj Gonds, and this brings us to the still somewhat problematic division between Raj Gonds and Dhur or Dhurwe Gonds, which runs through the greater part of the Gond population within the Central Provinces. There seems to be no uniformity in the principles ruling this division; in Chhattisgarh only the members of ruling or formerly ruling families are described as Raj Gond, while in other parts most of the land-holding Gonds aspire to this denomination. In recent times the name Raj Gond has also been
[668] claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status by

1. The Hill Marias extend into the hills of the neighbouring Chanda District.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

compliance with Hindu customs, and "Raj-Gond" reform movements have made their appearance in the Central Provinces.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the distinction between Raj Gonds and the other sections of the Gond peoples. C. B. Lucie-Smith writing of the Raj Gonds of Chanda suggested that either "the epithet Raj was originally applied to royal and noble Gond families, from which the distinction spread to their followers and the governing class generally; or it may describe the leading Gond tribe which in ancient days conquered the land from other aboriginal clans."[1] But Captain Forsyth believed that Raj Gonds are in many cases the descendants of alliances between Rajput adventurers and Gonds, and R. V. Russell quotes this view with qualified approval.[2]

W. V. Grigson on the other hand lays emphasis rather on the social than the historical causes for the distinction and suggests that such names as Raj Gond arose from "the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names."[3] The situation in Adilabad seems rather to accord with the second suggestion advanced by Lucie-Smith; for here the Raj Gonds do not form a ruling class or even a class of privileged economic status, but an entire tribal group comprising all strata of society from the feudal chiefs down to the poorest labourer. We will see in a later chapter that the once powerful Gond Kings of Chanda belonged to this group, and their kinsmen in the Adilabad hills were as early as the 17th century referred to as Raj Gonds in patents of the Emperor Aurangzeb.

Here the Raj Gonds, far from aspiring to inclusion in the Hindu fold, consider themselves the true exponents of Gond culture and Gond language, and above all of the traditional Gond religion which involves the sacrifice of cows at the rites for the clan-gods. Many of them have never met a Dhurwe Gond, but those who have come in contact with the few groups of Dhurwe Gonds who have recently drifted across the Chanda border, look down upon them as speaking a corrupt form of Gondi intermixed with much Marathi, and as following different customs; somewhat sweepingly and apparently unjustly they assert that the Dhurwe Gonds have no cult of clan deities "only worshipping Bhimana like Kolams."

It seems indeed that the Raj Gonds of Adilabad, who have lived for almost a century and a half under Muslim rule, and have in consequence been less exposed to the influence of the more intolerant exponents of Hinduism, have retained more of their old culture than

1. *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Chanda District. Central Provinces.* 1869. Nagpur 1870, p. 46.
2. *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India.* London 1916. Vol. III. p. 63.
3. W. V. Grigson. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar.* London. 1938 p. 36.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

III

NOTE ON THE INDIAN PENAL CODE

177
671

The law dealing with offences affecting human life is fully set out in Sections 299 to 311 of the Indian Penal Code, and I will quote a part of this for the convenience of Western readers.

299. Whoever causes death by doing an act with the intention of causing death, or with the intention of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, or with the knowledge that he is likely by such act to cause death, commits the offence of culpable homicide.

300. Except in the cases hereinafter excepted, culpable homicide is murder, if the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or—

Secondly—If it is done with the intention of causing such bodily injury as the offender knows to be likely to cause the death of the person to whom the harm is caused, or—

Thirdly—If it is done with the intention of causing bodily injury to any person and the bodily injury intended to be inflicted is sufficient in the ordinary course of nature to cause death, or—

Fourthly—If the person committing the act knows that it is so imminently dangerous that it must in all probability cause death, or such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, and commits such act without any excuse for incurring the risk of causing death or such injury aforesaid.

Exception 1.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, whilst deprived of the power of self-control by grave and sudden provocation, causes the death of the person who gave the provocation, or causes the death of any other person by mistake or accident.

The above exception is subject to the following provisos:—

First—That the provocation is not sought or voluntarily provoked by the offender as an excuse for killing or doing harm to any person.

Secondly—That the provocation is not given by anything done in obedience to the law, or by a public servant in the lawful exercise of the powers of such public servant.

Thirdly—That the provocation is not given by anything done in the lawful exercise of the right of private defence.

Exception 2.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, in the exercise in good faith of the right of private defence of person or property, exceeds the power given to him by law and causes the death of the person against whom he is exercising such right of defence without premeditation, and without any intention of doing more harm than is necessary for the purpose of such defence.

Exception 3.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, being a public servant or aiding a public servant acting for the advancement of public justice, exceeds the powers given to him by law, and causes death by doing an act which he, in good faith, believes to be lawful and necessary for the due discharge of his duty as such public servant and without ill-will towards the person whose death is caused.

Exception 4.—Culpable homicide is not murder if it is committed without premeditation in a sudden fight in the heat of passion upon

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

a sudden quarrel and without the offender's having taken undue advantage or acted in a cruel or unusual manner. 177 671

Exception 5.—Culpable homicide is not murder when the person whose death is caused, being above the age of eighteen years, suffers death or takes the risk of death with his own consent.

302. Whoever commits murder shall be punished with death, or transportation for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

304. Whoever commits culpable homicide not amounting to murder, shall be punished with transportation for life, or imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine, if the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death;

or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine, or with both, if the act is done with the knowledge that it is likely to cause death, but without any intention to cause death or to cause such bodily injury as is likely to cause death.

Sir Cecil Walsh considered that these definitions were too complicated for the situations to which they were normally applied. 'The Indian Penal Code has always been considered a masterpiece of codification, and is the admiration of experts in jurisprudence. The beautifully moulded definitions of murder, and of culpable homicide not amounting to murder, set out every phase of thought through which a man's mind may pass when he is engaged in a fight and burning to defeat and injure his enemy. But men do not think aloud in a confused fight when they are "seeing red" and expecting every minute to be knocked out themselves. How are you to apply almost metaphysical processes of reasoning to the mental processes of half-mad savages, when you are not quite sure what the real facts are? In practice, these works of art in draftsmanship break down, and the simple English dichotomy of "murder" or "manslaughter" is to be preferred'.[1]

[1] Walsh, *Crime in India*, pp. 29 f.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

674 very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a
murder is extremely rare and due usually to some suspicion of
572 black magic. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is subject to sudden fits of blind rage, especially after he has been taking large quantities of his intoxicating gruel, *landa*, which is anathema to the Hill Marias. In that state he will seize any weapon that comes to hand, whether it be his wife's heavy rice pestle, a log of wood, an axe or a bow and arrow, and murder for the most trivial of reasons; the State Jail at Jagdalpur has always a high percentage of Bison-horn Marias doing time for homicide. He also is capable of nursing his revenge for a long time; a recent example was given by a strapping Bison-horn Maria from Palnar, who, after serving twelve years of a commuted death sentence, soon after his release took the first chance of picking a quarrel with a man whom he considered deliberately to have let him down by not giving evidence in his defence twelve years before, and battered his head in with a heavy bamboo stick. The Bison-horn Maria will in his fury declare an implacable enmity by stalking round his foe's house three times, either plucking straws from the thatch, or whistling the peculiar *su'i* whistle, or throwing some of his own pubic hairs at the house; and murder is the inevitable result. There were twenty-seven murder trials in Bastar between 1917 and 1923, and in eighteen of them the murderers were Bison-horn Marias, but only two of the murders were committed by Hill Marias. About half the Bison-horn Maria murders are committed in *landa* intoxication, and almost the same proportion in sudden fits of rage about nothing; for example, wives often are killed when the husband dislikes his food or it is not ready for him; one even lost her life for refusing to cook for her husband when he woke up hungry in the middle of the night. But there are on record Bison-horn Maria murders committed for all the ordinary sordid and criminal murder motives; the Bison-horn Maria is a man of far stronger feelings
[158] than the Hill Maria. The former actually runs amuck on occasion like the Malay; in two such cases the offender pleaded that he suffered from fits and ran amuck under the delusion, in the one case, of pursuit and, in the other, of possession by evil spirits and of the
628 imminence of a new rebellion. Cain indeed wrote in 1876 that 'blood revenge' had hardly died out in the Godavari valley, and was said to be 'in full exercise' in Bastar. The only apparent case of a hereditary vendetta of which I am aware occurred in Orcha, a Hill Maria village, where a grandfather and his son were murdered at long intervals for suspected witchcraft, while the grandson conveniently fell off a sago-palm tree as soon as he was old enough to claim the hereditary post of *pargana* headman.
692 There is a strong feeling everywhere of an eye for an eye and a tooth

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

for a tooth; but nowadays this is generally satisfied by invoking the police and the courts. But distances are great in Bastar, and in the rains, when the early hill grains are ripe, communications are bad; often the villagers conspire to hush up a murder or leave it to those affected to take their own direct action, rather than disorganize agricultural work by the troubles of a long police enquiry followed by committal proceedings and a sessions trial.

It is a relief to return from this darker side of the Bison-horn Maria's character to the light-heartedness of all Marias, but especially the Hill Maria. An engaging feature of this is his readiness to burlesque himself. A village *gaita* (headman) at Tondawada set the whole camp in fits of laughter by his description of his first vain attempts to use a pair of bullocks in the plough, mimicking himself pulled hither and thither by these wild-cat animals; at Hikul I was treated to a similar comic representation of what would happen if a Maria attempted to milk a cow. They are quick to seize on any foibles or peculiarities of individuals, without respect of persons, and have a happy knack of inventing apposite nicknames; this trait is common throughout the State, where there are nicknames for almost every State official current among all the primitive tribes, while few of the leading Hindu and Mohammedan settlers are referred to by their true names.

Frankness and honesty are still as characteristic as ever of the hill men and the wilder Bison-horn Marias, and many a man arraigned for homicide will state in court perfectly frankly why it was essential to kill his victim and how it was done. I have very seldom found any hesitate to answer any questions, even about the most intimate domestic matters. The Bison-horn Maria, however, being, at least in the open tracts, more sophisticated, is inclined to be suspicious; and he certainly is learning the ways of the courts, and how to defeat a justice administered on the evidence and not according to the facts; many know, for example, that the death penalty may be escaped if you can convince your judge that you murdered your victim because you believed him to be bewitching you. But in general a Maria witness can still be relied upon to speak the truth, although it involve his dearest relatives or himself in trouble; and the occasional pleader from British India is soon hopelessly at sea if he tries his usual methods of cross-examination even on a Bison-horn Maria who knows Halbi. Fortunately, the restoration of the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the village and *pargana* panchayats will considerably reduce Maria experience of the law courts. The Hill Maria never has had much recourse to them, petty theft being almost unknown and murder rare. His attitude may to some extent be gauged by the following example.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

beginning to use carts, but many villages still keep Rawats to tend and milk their cattle and manufacture ghee. They are inveterate eaters of beef, not only at funeral ceremonies or when raising a stone for the dead, but at *pandum* ceremonies, family or clan gatherings, the completion of a new tank and similar occasions. Most villages have a rocky place set apart for skinning and eating cattle. They are reluctant to kill and eat only their own cattle; on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country, especially at the time of the *pandum*, they often attempt to steal young heifers or calves from the nearest Muria or non-Muria village: I had once to impose a collective fine on the villagers of Nennor for hiring two men who had been convicted for two or three former thefts to go to the Muria village of Erokot and steal a bullock, which was the mainstay of the Nennor new-eating feast.

Hill and Bison-horn Marias keep tame dogs and cats, and the dogs of the latter are often well-trained hunting dogs who will go with their masters in a beat without giving tongue.

Dogs and cats

Bison-horn Marias coax a dog to them by calling '*Durro*,[1] *durro!*' and a cat (*pusali*) by '*Mini*,[1] *mini!*' while '*Darra, darra!*' is used for driving a dog off.

Other pets

Bison-horn Marias occasionally keep parrots and bulbuls, and some of them use hawks for catching quail and other small birds.

D. Fishing

All Marias make their own rods of bamboo and lines of *kosa* silk; the hooks are generally in these days bought in the markets, but occasionally thorns are said to be used. They use rods only in the rains, and bait their hooks with worms or with *konda*, a paste of rice chaff.

The Kuruk or Jaralur are the Maria fishing caste of the big river valleys, speaking the Gondi dialect of the neighbouring villages. The Kuruks of the Indrawati valley from Nelasnar to Bhamragarh are scarcely distinguishable from the Hill Marias in appearance and customs, but the Hill Marias look down on them and do not allow inter-marriage; like those of potters and blacksmiths, their houses are carefully segregated from Maria houses. They maintain ferry services in their dug-out canoes on the Indrawati, and are paid an annual retainer in grain by the Hill Maria villages which frequent Gidam, Nelasnar, Bhairamgarh and Kutru

[1] I have since heard *Durro* and *Mini* used in the same way not only by Gonds but by Korkus also in the Hoshangabad district of the Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

753 is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

761 Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return 754 next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest [187] or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *wedde* or *wadde*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[1] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[2] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[3]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

674 Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias 754 and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn 683 Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[3] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 168. [3] Report, pp. 52-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to molest suspects. There were cases from Muria and Bhattra villages where the community inflicted degrading punishments only somewhat less cruel than those of Glasfurd's day; but in all but one of the Maria cases the man who believed himself wronged acted entirely on his own, often after consulting the god through a *waddai* medium, and killed or tried to kill the suspect with any weapon that came handy. The exception was the 1916 Hill Maria murder at Orcha, in which many villagers combined against the *pargana* headman, who, like his father before him, was said to have been expert in the black art, and to have used it and his position as headman to set up a '*raj*' over the *pargana*. They combined to seize him at night, crushed his testicles and hanged him from a creeper. Nor were women ever suspected in Maria cases, although in three cases among Jagdalpur Murias and Bhattras women suspects were very roughly handled. In two Bison-horn murders it was clear that the murdered man had threatened his murderer to bewitch him, and one of these blackmailers was himself a *waddai*. In fact, the *waddai* is generally believed by the Bison-horn Marias to know black magic as well as white magic and divination, and is apt to be feared accordingly.

It is naturally difficult to ascertain the methods believed to be used by the black magician; those who imagined they had suffered judged the fact solely from the nature of their sufferings, the word of the *waddai* consulted as to their source, and, perhaps, the known enmity of the suspect towards them, while naturally no practitioner of black magic cared to admit it or to describe his methods. Black magic is commonly referred to as *pangan*; and popular talk confirms the methods described at page 43 of the *Gazetteer*:—

> 'Whenever an enemy's life is to be taken, a bit of his cloth or hair is offered to a god with some incantations consisting of a string of names of godlings, and the victim should then pine away, unless he in turn calls in a magician. This practice is locally called *kuda marna*. Another plan is for the magician to put up two bits of grass tied in the form of a cross to represent his client's enemy, and, after going through incantations, shoot at the little figure with a miniature bow and arrow made of grass. If the arrow hits the mark it is believed that the enemy will surely die, unless he has recourse to magic to avert the spell.'

The information on which this was based came from the mixed Hill and Bison-horn Maria country around Barsur, and the word 'magician' is a translation of '*waddai*'.

White Magic

The white magic in vogue is merely the counter-magic used by a friendly *waddai* to avert or cure illness and disease. Of actual Hill Maria methods I obtained no notes; but certain *waddais* or *leskis* have a much greater reputation than others. I gather that Hill Maria methods do not differ from those in vogue among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, in which

[See cat. 116, pp. 423-424.—Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

586 732 no difficulty in getting wives to stay with them. Dwarfs, on the other hand, not only find it hard to get wives except their elder brothers' widows, but are passed over in the succession to a post of responsibility or the management of a family. Madness is particularly dreaded, and would certainly involve the elopement of a wife. But husbands, though they would divorce a mad [833] woman *a thoro*, would still maintain them; sexual intercourse with a mad woman is believed to result in complete loss of virility. 586 I have heard of no case in which a husband has divorced his wife; she may be frigid or barren or in other ways unsatisfactory, but so long as she is not unfaithful her husband is expected to maintain her, and his remedy is to seek another co-wife, often getting her younger sister or parallel-cousin as compensation for her falling ● [674] short of expectations. The murder of wives in sudden fits of temper for petty shortcomings is unfortunately common among the Bison-horn Marias, though almost unknown in the hills. Nor must it [837] be assumed that because Bison-horn wives often elope, their husbands tamely submit to infidelity; the detection of an intrigue often results in the husband killing the wife or her paramour, though once a wife has made good her escape to another man's house the [593] husband usually accepts the *fait accompli*. The beating or ill-treatment of wives is strongly condemned by all Marias.[a]

[a] [See cat. 116, p. 425. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

766 At Paknar in May 1930 I tried the murderer of a man whose body had been taken to Jagdalpur by the police for *post mortem* examination and had been buried there. In the course of the trial I visited the spot where the accused had shot him dead with a bow and arrow as he and the villagers helping him were carrying his *kutki* harvest from his *penda* field to his granary. His kinsmen had performed funeral rites for him there, sacrificing, roasting and eating two cocks and a pig, hanging up the loin-cloth which he was wearing when killed, and which they had brought back from Jagdalpur, and throwing rice and other grains at the trunk of the tree. They had also thrown away there all the earthen pots in his house except the Pot of the Departed, and his wife had burnt her bangles there. They had poured a libation of *mahua* spirit on the ground at the foot of the tree, which had been stained by his blood, and had adjured his *hanal* to be contented with this, stay with the *hanal* of the other Departed and bring no trouble upon them. A little *mahua* seed oil had then been added in his name to the Pot of the Departed in the *wijja-lon* of his house.

Abnormal deaths

Often when a person is murdered or drowned or dies in any unnatural way, a great cairn of stones is erected over his remains at the spot where he died, known as a *punji-paknar* in Halbi, and any passer-by is supposed to pick up a stone and fling it on the top of the cairn. The custom is common to all the peoples of Bastar, including the Hill Marias; in 1913 two Hill Marias murdered a Maria Lohar girl, with whom both had often cohabited, through fear of the disgrace one of them would incur if the child which she had conceived were born and she named him as the father. The village elders hushed up the murder, and removed the body to the head of a pass crossing the Tiralgarh hills, and there a huge *punji-paknar* was piled over the remains.

[674]

Victims of small-pox and women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried by Bison-horn Marias, but not in the regular cremation ground. Before these women can be buried, a *wadde* or *gunia* has to shut up her malignant spirit by driving iron nails into her knees and elbows. But *uraskal* menhirs are erected for them and for victims of small-pox. Persons killed by lightning are cremated at some distance from the ordinary cremation ground, and no menhir may be erected for them. Menhirs are also forbidden for persons killed by tigers, whose remains are burned in the forest where they are found, with whatever possessions were with them when attacked or killed. A dummy tiger is made of bamboo sticks, taken to the boundary of the village, and there burnt.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

revenge she ' destroyed his seed '. For several years he was unable to get a child, though in the end the Perma diagnosed the trouble and after the proper sacrifices his wife conceived.

A number of recent murders were due either to the desire of a victim to be revenged on a witch or wizard or to a man's resentment at being accused of sorcery. The Orcha murder of 1941 was due to a Hill Maria called Mukka suspecting that the Gaita, Pidche, was practising sorcery against him. After killing him he put the corpse in a stream, but next day recovered and buried it, the whole village agreeing to hush the matter up. The following year Podiyami Doma of Michnar killed Kuharami Konda during a New Eating Festival because the latter accused him of being a thief and a sorcerer. On November 26th, 1941 Gumma Karwe, a young Bison-horn Maria, killed his uncle Gumma Galla at Toinar. Only three months previously Karwe had been married. One day his young wife went with his father and step-mother to visit relations at Gummalnar, a journey that took them over the Indrawati. It was October and I well remember the heavy floods that year. The water swept away the canoe in which they were crossing the river and the bodies were never recovered. A month later, while uncle and nephew were drinking palm wine together they began to quarrel. The younger man accused his uncle of causing the death of his wife, on whom he had spent twenty rupees in cash and three measures of paddy, by magic. Galla admitted it, even boasted of it, and threatened to kill him in the same way. The boy, wild with rage and fear, killed Galla forthwith by a heavy blow from his axe.

At the beginning of March 1944, one evening as the crescent moon was rising above the eastern horizon, there was a violent quarrel in Barse Bendo's house at Kadampal, and a few hours later one of the disputants crept out of his house and stabbed his enemy to death with an arrow as he lay asleep. Barse Bendo was a well-known and successful magician with a large practice. In the same village a youngish man called Kunjami Gota set up as a Siraha and seems to have succeeded in drawing away some of Bendo's patients and creating a sense of rivalry and opposition. Gota's own uncle, Kunjami Tonda, however, preferred the treatment of the older and more experienced man, and when his wife Mate fell ill at the beginning of 1944 he took her to Bendo, and not to his nephew, for consultation. She soon recovered, but shortly afterwards Tonda's two little sons, Lakhma and Bala, fell ill and he came with his whole family to stay in a leaf-hut built for patients in Bendo's compound. Bala was cured in a day or two, but Lakhma, who had a swollen face, did not improve. Here was Bendo's chance. At the time of divination he skilfully introduced the name of Gota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

754 578 674 into his ravings and afterwards declared that it had been revealed to him that the child's illness had been caused by the evil influence of his rival whom he now denounced as a Pangnaha or sorcerer. Gota was summoned to the house and when he came Tonda—prompted by Bendo—asked him to perform antidotal magic to undo the harm he had done and so cure the little boy. This was a clever move. If Gota agreed he became a self-confessed Pangnaha; if he refused to treat a patient, Bendo would see to it that his reputation as a Siraha was destroyed. Gota chose the safer course, and declared that he knew nothing about the treatment of the sick. They all protested at this, reminding him how they had seen him curing disease by *mana-bujha* and sprinkling rice on the heads of ailing children. Tonda said, 'Bendo has cured Bala, but he can't do anything for Lakhma. You are a new man and have cured other people's children. Now cure your own cousin.' But Gota still refused. This made Tonda furious, for the refusal confirmed his suspicion, so carefully fostered by the jealous and wily Bendo, that Gota himself was responsible for the trouble, and that in fact he was an impostor, not a Siraha at all, but a mere Pangnaha. He lost control of himself and began to shout insults and accusations at his nephew, saying that he was trying to kill his own cousins and was of such unbearable wickedness that even when he was found out he would do nothing to remedy matters. In the quarrel the two men came to blows, but they were separated and Gota was taken back to his house. The others went to sleep and Tonda lay down outside the little hut where his wife watched by the sick child. But Gota, angry and brooding over the accusation which he knew well would spoil his practice as a Siraha and thus ruin him economically as well as socially, waited for some hours and then crept into Bendo's compound and stabbed Tonda to death with an arrow. Gota was brought to trial and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, escaping the gallows partly in consequence of a passage (on p. xxvi) in *Maria Murder and Suicide* which was quoted in the judgement.

To understand the Japgunda murder of 1943 a certain amount of family history must be related. Masa, a Hill Maria of Japgunda, had two brothers Gai and Bija. When Gai died, leaving a widow and a daughter Muri, his younger brother inherited the widow along with the property and adopted a boy named Erka as a Lamana'i to work for his step-daughter. When the period of service was complete, Erka and Muri were married and both continued to live in Bija's house until in due time Erka succeeded, on Bija's death, to control of the household and became guardian of Bija's three little sons, Suku, Gilu and Aga.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Masa, the children's uncle and sole survivor of the elder branch of the family, was the Waddai of the clan-god of Japgunda. He seems to have resented the way a poor Lamana'i boy like Erka had risen in the world and become owner of both his brothers' property, and there was some tension in the relations between the two houses. For five or six years, Erka had had good crops and Masa bad ones, and Masa decided that his failure must be due to the fact that Erka was practising magic against him. One day he openly accused the younger man of sorcery and challenged him to an ordeal. Erka, who had no desire to quarrel, accepted and a pot of boiling water and cowdung was prepared. Erka dipped his fingers into it and was badly burned.

This incident convinced the villagers that Erka was a sorcerer and had a curious effect on his own character. He found that, far from being a social outcaste, he—the poor Lamana'i boy—was believed to have the ear of the goddess Parkal Muttai and that many people were coming to him for advice and help. He grew proud and arrogant and when he caused the death of a calf, a pig and a fowl belonging to Masa, no one dared to remonstrate with him. Bija's little boys were growing up and Erka built a house of his own near by. Presently Aga was to be married and some time late in August 1943 the wedding was held in Bija's old house. Masa was, of course, invited but on his way to join the festivities—for the essence of a Hill Maria marriage is a dance, a drink and a heavy meal—Erka went out to intercept him. He greeted him pleasantly and showing him a gourd of rice-beer took him aside to drink with him on the bank of the village pond. Some time later boys coming in their finery for the marriage dance saw the two men sitting together by the water under a virgin moon. The next day Masa's mutilated body was found in the pond.

Erka immediately used his reputation as a sorcerer to hush the matter up. He called the elders to his house, bribed the Kotwar whose duty it was to report suspicious deaths to the police, and taking the headman and another person of some influence aside, sat them down and drew on the ground what was described at the trial as a 'magic line'. He put dub grass, a knife and a bit of cowdung on it and two rupees on one side and three rupees on the other. Then he asked the two men to pick up the money, saying that this act bound them to secrecy. Deeply impressed, the headman went out and told the other villagers that they must cremate the body at once and make no report to the authorities. On the way to the pyre the usual divination by *sāja* leaves was performed and indicated that Masa had died by violence. It was five months before rumours of the crime reached the police.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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I do not in any way emphasize it, but it seems to me curious that many crimes connected with sorcery are associated with water; they are performed on the banks of ponds or rivers and in several instances the body has been thrown into the water afterwards. Does a murderer who has killed a sorcerer believe that there is some spiritual antiseptic for him in throwing his victim's body into water?

IV

841

Grigson has studied in detail the custom of the Hill Marias in regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, but his notes on the Bison-horn Marias need, as he says, 'considerable supplementing'. The Bison-horn Marias have the curious belief that men, not women, were originally subject to a menstrual period. They used to tie hollow bamboos to their organs to catch the discharge. Once—according to one legend—a girl was laughing at a man in this distressing and inconvenient condition, and he lost his temper and threw the bamboo at her; in another story a sister wanted to help her brother, who could not cut his clearing properly on account of the bamboo tagged on in front of him, and offered to take it instead.

841 826

Yet other legends ascribe the origin of menstruation to a wound. There were formerly teeth in the vagina and when these were removed, the wound was not wholly healed. Once the vagina was in the crick of the leg behind the knee—you can still see its shape—but a hen pecked at it and the frightened organ jumped for safety to its hiding-place between the thighs. But it was hurt and it still bleeds every month at the recollection.

841

All the Gond tribes are very strict about the menstrual taboos, in this contrasting sharply with the Orissa Bondos, Gadabas, and Saoras, who are at a similar stage of culture and live not very far away. Grigson has described the extreme rigorism of the Hill Marias and has rightly suggested that the Bison-horn Marias are somewhat less apprehensive of the dangers of menstruation. But they too, like the Murias and the Gonds generally, are strict enough in their application of the taboo and breach of it may be punished by the Departed through the bite of a snake or the destruction of the harvest. They do not usually build special menstruation huts, but sometimes where there is a girls' dormitory, menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and unmarried girls on the other. In such villages, no married woman may go near the dormitory nor should youths enter it. Not all dormitories however are used in this way.

841 881

Elsewhere part of the veranda of the ordinary living-house is screened off or a little hut is built in the compound for the use of

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

of ghotul leaders; it is distributed when a boy or girl leaves the ghotul after marriage; it is a convenient and compendious means of paying a fine. The chelik offer it to their drums before a wedding, and drink it in honour of Lingo at the end of the Pus Kolang dance.

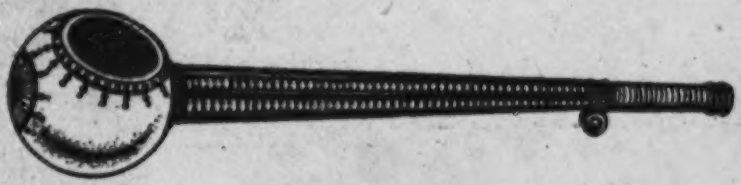

FIG. 13. Brass *arki* used for ladling liquor
Length 8"-9"

This homely drink, so intimately connected with every aspect of their lives, so accessible to the forest-dwellers, so readily and cheaply prepared, may not be distilled by the Muria in Bastar or by the aboriginals anywhere. Its profits must be divided between the State and the middleman. Home-distillation is everywhere forbidden, and the privilege of the manufacture and sale of the spirit is farmed out to contractors in open auction. The business has thus passed into the hands of the most degenerate type of Hindu and Mussalman adventurer, for few aboriginals have either the means or the enterprise to compete with the sophisticated aggression of the outside world in the open market. These adventurers rob both the aboriginals and the State. They dilute the spirit; they put soda in it to cover the fact of their tampering; they make false returns; they use filthy water in unclean pots;[1] their shops are centres of the most degraded type of alien immigrant into tribal territory.

When the National Congress came into power in 1938, they declared that they would not apply their Prohibition laws to Europeans or aboriginals. It would have been more consistent had they allowed the aboriginal to distil his own liquor and had thus ceased to draw revenue from his drinking habits. The real evil of the present system is not that the aboriginal gets drunk, but that in order to get his liquor he is forced into contact with the worst type of alien and outsider.

In this respect conditions in Bastar are better than in many other parts of India. The Excise Department is efficient and understanding; the State controls the mahua trade, but allows the aboriginal great freedom in the use of toddy and salphi. But nothing can atone for the evil of depriving a primitive people of a natural right.

However, once that has been done, the arrangements in Bastar are as good as can be imagined. The spirit is cheap, only two annas a bottle,[2] and passes are freely granted to the Muria and Maria to purchase whatever is needed for ceremonial and social occasions. As a result there appears to be very little illicit distillation in either Kondagaon or Narayanpur. The figures of prosecutions for the five years, 1937-41, are these:

[1] The riddle 'Man and wife piss in the same hole', to which the answer is 'The two pipes of the still', probably hints at the *filth* of the Koiar's pot-still.
[2] This was in 1941.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

674

Tahsil	Population in 1941	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	Total
Kondagaon ..	111,428	3	1	1	..	6	11
Narayanpur ..	62,305	13	..	2	..	3	18
Jagdalpur ..	236,931	16	4	14	5	26	65
Dantewara ..	90,345	58	20	35	10	20	143
Bijapur ..	25,587	4	17	29	18	23	91

Such a table does not, of course, mean quite what it says. An increase in the number of cases detected may imply greater zeal on the part of the Excise and Police staff rather than an outbreak of illicit distillation. Moreover, as the Excise Officer writes to me, 'The number of cases detected represents only a small fraction of those actually occurring, especially in the south of the State'.

Yet even so, the contrast between the Muria of the north and the more civilised Muria of Jagdalpur and the Bison-horn Maria of Dantewara and Bijapur is striking. In the ghotul, the peace-loving Muria are taught to observe the laws.

On the other hand, the incidence of the consumption of mahua spirit in 1942 was greater in the Narayanpur Tahsil than anywhere in Bastar. There is only one way of calculating this, and that is on the basis of the licence fees, which are in turn based on the presumed out-turn of the still; such figures cannot be altogether reliable, but they give at least some indication, as the following table will show: 273

Tahsil	Population in 1941	Presumed out-turn in gallons	Consumption per 100 of the population in proof gallons
Kondagaon ..	111,428	36,137	32·43
Narayanpur ..	62,305	36,700	58·90
Jagdalpur ..	236,931	63,581	26·84
Dantewara ..	90,345	42,000	46·48
Bijapur ..	25,587	11,275	44·06
Sukma Zamindari	47,914	24,200	50·51

The Muria recognize the danger of drinking to excess, and indeed they have few drunkards. 'Liquor is dangerous, even a wise woman falls through drinking.' 'An out-still in the village—quarrels in the ghotul.' But it is irresistible. 'At first it tastes nasty, but afterwards you know it for the sweetest thing on earth. You would sell everything to get it.' There is a song about drunkenness; 273 539

Gond bend khaias pond
Loi kudri katin pond,
Kalär kalärin chaniya cher,
Ghar ghar mangui burga jor.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

154 The fear of magic is a prominent cause of the few murders committed by Muria in the last ten years. Manga of Kodoli believed that his uncle had 614 caused the death of two of his sons by magic as a sacrifice to the Yer Kanyang of his tank. One day the supposed sorcerer said to him, 'I ate up your sons and now I will devour you', whereon Manga killed him. At the Diwali festival in 1938, Boga killed the Pujari of Katagaon because he was a sorcerer and did not do his worship properly with the result that the crops failed.

In Padnar (Mardapal Pargana)—a village where there is no regular ghotul—a man called Kana suspected a whole family of practising black magic. His accusations were so serious that several of them went to live elsewhere. But one by one they returned, and by Dassera of 1939 they were all back in Padnar. One day during the festival Kana, thoroughly drunk on rice-beer, took the opportunity of telling them they were wizards, accused them of relieving themselves on the village gods, and threatened to turn them out of the village. This drove four men of the suspect family to desperation and they assaulted and killed their enemy.

154 The methods of black magic and the attempts to counter it may be studied in the interesting case of the long struggle for magic supremacy between Gurgu, the Gaita of Almer, and his enemy Sir Ju. The quarrel started when Singlu, who belonged to the Karanga clan, said to Gurgu, who is a Kaudo, 'I have lived many years in this village. Let me erect *kutukul* here and then my ancestors will live here and help me'. But the Gaita pointed out that the clan-territory (*bhum*) of the Karanga was at Kokori and Singlu should have his menhirs erected there. 'If you bring your gods and ancestors here, our gods will be neglected.' And he refused to give him land.

Singlu began his campaign by making a *kapād*, a magic door, which was represented by cutting wood into three pieces and burying them. The intention of this was that Gurgu's door (symbolizing his house) would be broken and his family ruined. But Gurgu did counter-magic and survived.

Then Singlu cast a spell over Gurgu's speech. Previously Gurgu had prided himself on being able to talk fluently in Halbi with visiting officials, but now he found that he could only talk in Gondi, and there was a general belief that as a result he would be deprived of his position as village headman. But Gurgu 'cured' this also and when I saw him was speaking excellent Halbi-Chattisgarhi.

[187] Singlu's next move was to send a white owl every night to the village. This bird, which is a sort of Ondar Muttai,[1] is very ill-omened. When it cries someone is sure to die. The villagers began to fall ill, but Gurgu managed to 'cure' this also. I was not able to get many details about these 'cures'; I gathered that Gurgu did not perform any symbolic acts of sympathetic magic, but rather by making generous sacrifices obtained the assistance of the local gods. The sacrifices, however, included a doll of dub grass which may have been a means of devoting Singlu to the deity. Gurgu also put nails of iron slag round the village boundary to 'close' it against magic, but as Singlu was already inside this precaution was not of much value.

When I visited Almer, Singlu had recently caused great consternation by taking a hare to the village boundary and sacrificing it to some unknown deity. Now only the Kaser-Gaita may offer such sacrifices and this breach of religious etiquette was believed to have offended the gods greatly, for they drove away all wild animals from before the village hunters. This was the time of the Marka Wijja Pandum, before which the chelik go out on a ceremonial hunt, on the result of which depends the success or failure of the crops. But

[1] See pp. 169f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

839 An unusual case of cruelty, with a possibly sadistic basis, occurred in 1934. Chaitu was then a young Muria of Khuregaon, and had been the Silledar of
●674 the ghotul there. He lived with his wife, a son and a small sister called Sukti who was an idiot child, aged about seven, deaf and dumb from birth and physically incapable. Chaitu was apparently always very cruel to this child and used to beat her for not helping in the house or playing with his baby. On 3 March 1934 he moved all his household goods from his village in order to take them to Pahurbel, where he wanted to live. The goods went in a cart and the family followed on foot. Poor little Sukti was unable to keep up with the rest and several times fell down crying. Chaitu was angry at this and beat the child with an axe, striking her on the right hand, thigh and foot. He dragged her along the ground some yards, struck her on the top of the head and on the left forearm with the axe and twisted her neck till she died. They left the body there and went on their way.

Chaitu was a young man when he did this cruel deed and did not seem to think he had done anything wrong, for the dead girl—he said—was an idiot and he killed her in a fit of temper. He was sentenced to transportation for life.

839 Exhibitionism and scoptophilia are unknown as *substitutes* for normal sexuality. Chelik and motiari are continually enjoying sexual congress in company; every night a boy can watch his neighbours if he wants to, he can show off his sexual prowess if he feels so inclined. Actually there is a strong tradition against 'peeping', except on the night when the chelik shut up in a room the newly-married pair. Then they may listen and try to peep through cracks in the wall.

Older men and women often indulge in 'indecent exposure' at weddings. I once saw a leading—and normally most respectable—Muria at Nayanar strip off his loin-cloth and dance naked at a wedding in front of a large company of women, including his own daughters. Shamrao Hivale witnessed a similar incident during a festival at Masora. Old women imitate the sexual act and fondle each other's wrinkled breasts.

None of these exhibitions can be classed as psychopathic or abnormal; it is worthy of note that I have never heard of chelik and motiari exposing themselves; in the senile it is probably a simple method of attaining tumescence.

XI. Ceremonial Cross-Dressing

838 Ceremonial cross-dressing has been recorded of a number of primitive peoples and many different explanations of the custom have been advanced. 'Among the lower races', says Havelock Ellis, 'the manifestations of Eonism may occur not only, as in civilization, in a sporadic and isolated way, but also sometimes endemically in groups' and he suggests that possibly this tendency may represent not, 'as we might have been tempted to suppose, a corrupt or over-refined manifestation of late cultures, but the survival of an ancient and natural tendency of more primitive man'.[1]

Seligman used the expression 'ceremonial cross-dressing' to describe what he observed in dances of the Marshall Bennet Islanders in Melanesia and among the Lotuko in Africa.[2] Similar customs have been reported of the Sea-Dyaks of Borneo and the Omaha; and from other parts of the world a long list of examples has been given by Crawley.[3] Sometimes the change of dress is inspired by a dream and occurs occasionally and in emergency: sometimes it

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Eonism*, p. 33. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[2] E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. I, pp. 312ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

Sometimes, indeed, the chelik actually try to make a girl pregnant. In Kanhargaon, two very popular motiari were betrothed to boys at Nayanar. The Kanhargaon chelik did all they could to make them pregnant so that they could force them into marriage and keep them in their own village. But they were unsuccessful, and in the end one of the girls was seduced by her own betrothed at a marriage, became pregnant and was hastily married to him. It is not uncommon, though I have no statistics on the point, for engaged couples whose parents unduly delay their marriage to force the issue either by eloping together or by trying to achieve a pregnancy.

But on the whole, the admirable ghotul rule that engaged couples should have nothing to do with one another before marriage is carefully observed. Out of 113 Lamhada boys serving for their wives and in close proximity for several years to the girls they were going to marry, only 5 made them pregnant.

Pre-nuptial pregnancy does not seem to injure the couple's relationships in marriage, provided a youth marries the girl himself. Of the 26 chelik who married the motiari they made pregnant, not one made a failure of his domestic life. At the time of my inquiries every one of them was living with his original partner and very happy with her. But those who had infertile sexual connexion with their wives before marriage showed a comparatively high divorce rate. Of the 316 who admitted to this, 14 had unsuccessful marriages. Of these 77 were the regular ghotul-wives of my informants and 68 of them were still living together when I inquired.

In only three cases during the last twenty years has a pregnancy been taken so seriously as to lead to tragedy. Two of these were the suicides which I have already described in Chapter XV. But here it was not so much the pregnancy itself as the fact that the pregnancy was the result of a connexion between chelik and motiari of the same clan that mattered. The third tragedy appears to have been due largely to a chelik's fear of the disgrace and expense, especially as it was his second experience of the kind.

At the beginning of April 1942, Birjhu, a chelik of the Aturbera ghotul, discovered with dismay that his motiari, Mori, was pregnant. Only a year before he had made another girl pregnant in the ghotul, had refused to marry her and had forced his parents to pay compensation. They did so, but they made many threats as to what they would do if it occurred again. Mori, who seems to have been in love with the boy, said that he must marry her, but Birjhu refused and said that if she told anybody that it was through him that she had conceived, he would kill her. After a little while, however, the poor girl told her brother's wife about it. When Birjhu heard she had done so, he planned to carry out his threat. On the night of the 14th of April, he told Mori he would do what she wanted and they had better elope together and get married in another village. Late at night they crept stealthily out of the ghotul and made their way through the forest. But suddenly, before they had gone very far, Birjhu caught hold of the girl and strangled her. Then he dragged her body below a tree and tied a rope round the neck to make it look as though the girl had committed suicide.

The following day a report was made at the Narayanpur police station that Mori had committed suicide. When Birjhu heard that the matter had gone to the police, he was frightened but possibly even more he was overwhelmed with sorrow and misery at what he had done. He disappeared, and two days later hanged himself from a tree in the jungle.

But this is the only incident of the kind that has yet been recorded.

Such is the general picture, familiar to students of pre-marital freedom everywhere. How are we to explain the fact that through all the years of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

less the expression of outraged temper than a final and complete protest against a loss of dignity.[1]

It must not be supposed that because quarrels arise over work, chelik and motiari are slack or lazy. They are in fact singularly laborious and the disputes about work stand out because they occur against a background of a very high tradition of industry.

It is very rare that these quarrels end in murder. One day at the end of the rains in 1932, Kodu came home tired and hungry from the fields. His elder brother's wife, Bahe, had only got *jhau* ready for him: he demanded rice, and she retorted that 'since his arms and legs were not broken, he might cook his food himself'. He replied that as long as there was a woman in the house he was not going to do woman's work and he gave her such a severe beating that she died after a few days.

Balsai, a former Chalki of the Umargaon ghotul, lost his temper with his wife Rupoti because though he had a bad throat and cough, she cooked the irritating *dhoka* vegetable for him. He was drunk at the time and gave her a heavy blow with a wooden stool. When I saw him in jail he said that he loved his wife—'it was a mistake, not from my heart'—and that she often visited him in dreams.

Bandi (a thin big-eyed youth, formerly the Kajanchi of Kanera) had two wives. He too quarrelled with them over food. He came hungry and there was nothing ready. He got out his razor and said he was going to kill them. The elder wife ran away, but he gave two deep cuts on the arm and belly of his younger wife. She survived, but was in hospital for months.[2]

I have seen only one record of murder on account of a wife's infidelity. Mangu was the former Kandki of the Amgaon ghotul and his wife had been the Manjaro of the same ghotul. But the girl did not like him and, it is said, would never give herself to him. She ran away twice to the house of a lover at Bamhot. The second time a group of people went to fetch her back. As they were returning at night they met Mangu and handed the girl over to him. He gave her a very severe beating then and there in the forest, and a week later she died. Mangu was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

X. The Vocabulary of Abuse

The Muria's vocabulary of abuse is meagre and unenterprising compared to that of other aboriginal tribes. Perhaps we ought not to regret this; it may be a sign of the genial and pacific temper of the people that they put so little of their imagination and colour into their swearing. But I sometimes think that their continual use of one standard and now almost meaningless expression has dulled their inventive powers.

This expression, as common as the English 'bloody' and as meaningless, is the universal *mailotia*. This is a Halbi word meaning 'to lie with your mother', but very few of those who use it so freely intend seriously to suggest that an act of incest has occurred or could occur. Indeed, the way all meaning has been drained from the expression is clearly seen in the fact that a mother can apply it to her own daughter. Girls shout it at other girls, aunts at their nieces, grandmothers at their granddaughters. There is certainly no Lesbian suggestion here; it probably simply implies 'you are capable of anything'.

[1] For a full discussion of this subject, see my book *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943).

[2] The elder wife had been the Salan of Sahapal, the younger Belosa of Metawand. Both marriages were regular, the first arranged by the parents, the second a love-match. Bandi told me the two girls got on very well together.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

boys and girls. They dance clasped in each other's arms; they go about together, chelik with his arm round the neck of motiari. How revealing are Plates LXXV and XCI. In one a chelik lies on a cot with his arm on his motiari's shoulder, while she sits almost on top of him making leaves. They were not posed for the photo, and they showed no embarrassment at my approach with the mysterious camera, even though they were from a village I did not know well. In the other Plate two chelik and a motiari are listening to the gramophone outside my tent. They are completely absorbed in it and in each other. One of the boys embraces the girl with both his arms. You would not see this natural innocence in the more 'advanced' parts of aboriginal India.

But this refreshing freedom never degenerates into immodesty in public. It would be unthinkable for a chelik to dance naked—as I have seen older men do—in the presence of women or of his elders. The motiari never indulge in the cheerful vulgarity of the old women at a wedding. A chelik never catches hold of a girl immodestly in general company, though he will embrace her and walk with his arms about her. The great festival dances, though the air is full of romantic suggestion and the older men dance with the greatest licence, are conducted by chelik and motiari with complete decorum.

The sympathetic reader will realize how hopeless it is to bring our cut-and-dried judgements of sexual morality to bear upon a situation such as this. But he will also realize that even on his own standards the ghotul cannot be called immoral in the sense that it has no rules or laws or that it ignores those it has. Its regulations are as far-reaching and as strict as our own, and they are often better kept. For the rules are not imposed from without, but have been made by the ghotul-members themselves. Thus they are reasonable, adapted to the actual situation, and so easy to obey.

It is curious that while a Western visitor to a Muria village, if he is of a Puritan turn, will probably be chiefly concerned about the pre-nuptial relations of the children, the Hindu visitor—who is, of course, by far the more frequent—will be scandalized by the casual attitude of the Muria towards cows. Many years ago earnest efforts were made by Hindu reformers in the State to stop cow-sacrifice, and still today—though the majority of State officials preserve an admirable restraint in interfering with tribal customs—landlords, merchants, schoolmasters and travellers do what they can to put an end to the practice. But, except for a few centres where Hindu influence is strong, bulls and cows continue to be sacrificed and eaten all over the northern part of the State. The Muria cannot believe that this is wrong, for the gods demand it. There is nothing in their culture or mythology to forbid it—and indeed we here have a good example of the difficulty of importing a new idea into a system that has no provision for it. Yet if the Muria ever does ponder about 'moral' problems it is this that perplexes him and not any question about pre-nuptial chastity.

Stealing is generally condemned, but it is licensed on some special occasions. The chelik are expected to steal a cock when they take the newly-wedded bride and bridegroom to bed; they appear to have similar licence when they perform ceremonial dances round the village.

The incidence of crime is very low. An experienced police officer, who had served in the ghotul area for twelve years, told me that in all this time there had been no case of murder, riot, assault, hurt, or rape in connexion with the ghotul. There has not been a single case of rape against a Muria, though non-aboriginals have been arrested for raping Muria women. It is a remarkable thing that most of the crime in the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils occurs

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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in the Mardapal Pargana and along the north-eastern border in just those areas where the dormitory system is moribund. The ghotul has almost disappeared from the Mardapal Pargana, and the system is rapidly decaying along the border. A policeman told me that in his opinion ghotul-education was a most valuable preventative of crime, for boys and girls learnt to share everything and to scorn acquisitiveness and the lust of possession.

To lie and cheat is reprehensible, but does not seem to be taken very seriously. It all depends on whom you are deceiving. It may well be a positive virtue to give an inquisitive ethnographer a false date for a ceremony or direct him to the wrong village when he wants to see a funeral. To break an oath or take a false oath is not so much an offence against morality as to do something very dangerous. In Binjhli I was told of a former Pargana Manjhi who stole a lot of rice during a famine. He was put on his trial, but took a powerful oath that he was innocent. As he walked out of the court, 'his eyes broke' and he became blind.

Muria ethics, therefore, combine a firm belief in taboos and the danger of breaking them, with a faith in the value of certain amiable and social virtues. The Muria are a closely knit tribe; as their culture is still living they are bound together by many ties. They therefore regard as most reprehensible those faults and crimes that would break the solidarity of the tribe—anger, jealousy, assault, adultery that leads to these things, the practice of magic that divides a community with hatred and suspicion, the breach of tribal laws of relationship which destroy its unity, and the breach of the laws of endogamy which destroy its integrity. Those virtues are most admired which bring men together in peace and happiness—a gentle tongue, an open hand and house, the love of wife and children, loyalty to tribal law.

In conclusion, let us for a moment look at the ghotul from our own Western standpoint, and try to assess the value of the Muria attitude to life and especially to sex not by their standards but by ours. It is not the business of the ethnographer to pass moral judgements, but he may perhaps imagine himself talking to a Christian missionary or a devout Hindu reformer, both of whom take so different a view to the Muria's, regarding sex as bad and dangerous in itself and any form of 'unchastity' as the worst of sins. Is there anything to be said for the Muria way of life?

In the first place it must be said that the chelik and motiari are wonderfully happy. Their life is full, interesting, exciting, useful. The ghotul is, as they often say, 'a little school'. The chelik are 'like Boy Scouts', as I was told in a village which had a troop in the local school. There is no comparison between these children and the sad-eyed, dirty ragamuffins of villages at a similar cultural level elsewhere. In the ghotul the children are taught lessons of cleanliness, discipline and hard work that remain with them throughout their lives. They are taught to take a pride in their appearance, to respect themselves and their elders; above all, they are taught the spirit of service. These boys and girls work very hard indeed for the public good. They are immediately available for the service of State officials or for work on the roads. They must be ready to work at a wedding or a funeral. They must attend to the drudgery of festivals. In most aboriginal villages of the Central Provinces the children are slack, dirty, undisciplined, and with no sense of public spirit. Even those who attend school generally only develop a strong desire to advance their own interests at the expense of their fellows.

With all this our missionary and Hindu friends will be in agreement. 'But', they will say, 'that is not the point. Our complaint is that these youngsters

421

AW32 Gond AW32

/Materials referring to crime and crime statistics will be found in Category 116, pp. ix-x, xxv-xxvi, 35-45, 50-51, 53-54, 62, 68-78, 82, 85-102, 104, 106-110, 112-114, 116-119, 121-130, 135, 137-165, 167-171, 173-179, 184, 191-193, 217, and 222-245.--Analyst/

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

according to Mr Elwin's categories. Apart from the five intoxication murders, two were prompted by belief that crops had been bewitched, one was a fatigue crime and one was caused by a dispute as to property, one by resentment over being dunned for a debt of one anna and one by a quarrel over failure to repair the skins of a drum broken by a friend who had borrowed it, while three were the result of conjugal infidelity. There were three cases in which the villagers agreed to conceal the crime to avoid the trouble of police and court investigation. The means employed included assault with an axe, a sword, a fencing pole, a stick, a wooden stool and fists, kicking, throttling, shooting with bow and arrow, twisting of neck and stabbing with a knife. In one case the accused committed suicide to avoid the disgrace attendant on the revival of an old scandal caused by his son's association with a blacksmith girl whose murder he and the villagers had hushed up for three years.

Of witchcraft and magic as factors in crime Mr Elwin has written fully in Chapter V, and has illustrated at page 61 a typical clan-god, Anga Pen or Pat Deo (log-god), sometimes used to detect witches in the manner described at page 17, while at pages 185-6 he deals with the Maria view that a witch or a sorcerer should be killed. That view is undoubtedly widely held outside tribal circles, and the power of tribal log-gods to detect black magic is equally strongly believed in by Hindu and Muslim subjects of the State. The reaction of tribal beliefs and practices on the local Hindu rites and ceremonies is very marked, and an example of this is the way in which Raja Bhairon Deo, the great-grandfather of the present Maharaja of Bastar, installed in Jagdalpur a log-god which was either a copy of a famous log-god from Narayanpur in the north-west of the State, or, according to its present Halba Pujari, was brought by a former ruler from Dongar, the old capital, to Narayanpur, and shifted thence by Raja Bhairon Deo. This god is now the Pat Deo of Bastar *par excellence*, and four ceremonies are held in his honour during the Maharaja's Dassara celebrations. His witch-finding function strongly survives, and I well remember my amused astonishment when in 1927 during an inspection of the accounts of the Jagdalpur Temples managed by the State Court of Wards I found

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

for tobacco is a symbolic way of inviting her to sexual intercourse, and when the boy asked his elder brother's widow to have congress with him, he was only demanding his right and when she refused it, he found the provocation, both to his pride and his desire, so great that he killed her.

Research, both by medical science and by anthropology, may in time reveal how far the apparently motiveless homicides of aboriginals can be explained as crimes of exhaustion and fatigue. Again and again a man kills his loved wife in a sudden explosion of temper and for no apparent cause. It is probable that in many cases the real reason is not alcoholic intoxication, but extreme fatigue.

A point that often troubles the Courts is the time-element in cases where provocation is pleaded as an excuse. It is often found that there is a lapse of some hours between the actual incident that gave provocation and the subsequent act of violence. It has too often been held that this lapse of time should deprive the accused of gaining the benefit from Exception 1 of Section 300 of the Indian Penal Code. But there can be little doubt that an aboriginal's intelligence does not work so quickly as that of a more sophisticated person, and even in matters of everyday life it often takes an appreciable time for an idea to take root and effect a result in his mind. Laubscher's analysis of the psychology of the Tembu Negroes of South Africa is of some importance here. The Tembu, he says,

> Is not by nature blood-thirsty, but his aggressive instinctive or pugnacious propensities are excitable, easily roused and explosive. His aggressive libido flows outwards, becomes readily externalized, and sudden impulsive assaults, often fatal, are not uncommon. Careful study of the emotional reactions of the participants in stick fights, of course initially playfully performed for my benefit, has shown me how quickly and explosively the native loses his temper and retaliates with death-dealing blows at his opponent. Fatal blows are only avoided by the defensive skill of the opponent. Aggressive impulses are quickly evoked, although there is no apparent bad feeling after such a stick fight. I came to the conclusion that once an emotional impulse is aroused and the stimulus continues to be present, the native just drifts along with the impulse and exercises little or any inhibitory power, unless this inhibition is brought about by the evocation of another

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

535 but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison'
585 charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum.* Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

293 The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic
237 cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered
197 unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

428 A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after
● 682 his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heir-
762 looms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

184 In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison
535 horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

534 The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called kikir, a Jew's-harp made of iron or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 A third line is put for making women barren, a fourth line for destroying crops and cattle, and so on.

Then the Guru begins to teach the young men in the name of Nandraj, Bodhraj, Kirkod, Markod, Indor and Bandor. He holds a bamboo stick in his hand and as he recites his mantra he beats the stones in turn, beginning with the uraskal and striking each stone from left to right. He must not, however, touch the danyakal with his stick. The disciples chant the mantra after him, and then one by one they stand up and strike the stones with the stick. By December the whole art of black magic is acquired.

At the beginning of the course of study, the disciples subscribe to buy a pig and chicken for their Guru. At the end they also bring offerings and a pot of rice-beer. On the last day a little rice is placed on the danyakal stone and the chicken brought by the disciples is made to eat it. Then it is killed and the boys feast with their Guru.

X 674 754 One homicide not in our list, which occurred at Dhurli, was connected with such a school of magic. A youth named Telami Dhurwa used to go daily to Dogi Para to learn magic from an older man of the same name. The rule here was that from time to time the students should subscribe for a pig and that each should take their instructor a pot of rice-beer. One day Dhurwa and his fellow-students took the required pig and rice-beer, and after their class was finished they feasted with their Guru. On their way home the boys began to quarrel, and Dhurwa and another boy killed a third boy named Hunga. The people at Dhurli said that Hunga's soul [775] was not mingled with the dead because he was learning black magic, and a memorial stone was not erected for the same reason. Hunga in fact became a very dangerous ghost, a Rau [782] Bhut. The two boys were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment as no intention to murder was proved. When [783] Dhurwa was released he had to offer, in addition to the usual ceremonies, a special and expensive sacrifice to his clan-god.

II

THE SORCERER'S METHODS

754 The Maria sorcerer goes about his business in much the same way as elsewhere in India or the world. He may attack

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and kill.[1] A few young husbands keep careful guard over 684
their wives and when they see them going to an assignation, do not stop them then, but follow, watch and at the critical moment intervene.

Poyami Masa had two wives, Gadme and Dome. One day 674X
Dome found her elder co-wife in conversation with a Dhobi 684
who was trying to seduce her. In order to get him to go away Gadme told him to come at night to the house and promised to meet him. When Masa came home from his work, the younger wife told him everything, probably only too glad to make trouble. He became very angry and beat Gadme and took her immediately to confront the Dhobi, but was unable to find him. Then he went to the headman to ask him to take action against the Dhobi. All day long he was in a passion of rage, clenching his teeth and continually talking about his wife's scandalous behaviour. When she tried to give him food, he refused to take it. After supper Gadme and her three children went to bed, but Masa lay awake in the dark brooding until he could contain himself no longer. Just before dawn he got up and stabbed Gadme with an arrow. He was probably intending by this to make it look as though Gadme had committed suicide out of remorse for her behaviour. But he did not do his work properly, and the woman lived long enough to say what had happened to her. In this case the Court took into consideration the fact not only that Masa had been wronged, but that he believed himself to have been wronged by a member of a caste which the Maria despise.

In Chhindgaon a man of about thirty-five years, Burka 674X
by name, began to suspect his wife of deceiving him with 684
Hirma, a neighbour who lived opposite his house. One afternoon—it was Tuesday, 16 December 1924—the woman told her husband that she was going to catch fish in a tank. Burka was suspicious and secretly watched her.

[1] By the Kanikar of Travancore, 'adultery is viewed with great abhorrence, and punishment for this offence varies in different localities. At Kulathupula the punishment inflicted on the adulterer is this. His legs are tied to the branch of a tree with the head hanging down. Straw strewn with chillies is spread on the ground and burned. The body of the culprit is swung to and fro and he is in the meanwhile given twenty-five lashes with a cane on the buttocks. The guilty woman is given fifteen lashes by a man who marries her, even though he may have already been married'. L. A. Krishna Iyer and N. Kunjan Pillai in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III-B, p. 224.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

627 Nengi and Hikmi received eight male calves. 'Sometimes
683 the witch or sorcerer had all their teeth knocked out, their mouths were burnt with hot oil, and they were banished from their village. With this mark upon them no one would shelter them. Yet another method of dealing with a witch was to tie her up in a sack and throw her into the river'. In another village I was told how a witch was wrapped up in straw and burnt alive.

An old man at Dhurli described how his brother had been killed by a witch's magic. When the Waddai confirmed this, his father killed the witch and paid compensation of four female calves to the Jia.

At Phulpar the headman said that in the old days they used to break the teeth of a witch, shave her head, cut her forehead with a broken bangle and so drive her from the village. Similarly I was told in several places in Konta Tahsil that the people used to cut a witch's nails, shave her head and drive her away. They would confiscate her property and often kill her. There has never been any doubt whatever in the minds of Maria with whom I have discussed this matter that a witch or a sorcerer ought to be punished with death, and that the public were perfectly justified in taking the law into their own hands in a proved case of witchcraft.[1]

627 There are probably many cases never discovered by the
682 police that are settled by the Maria panchayat. In others, after everything has been settled by the panchayat, the police have discovered that a crime has been committed. There were as many as 12 such cases out of our 100. And they are instructive. For example, when Mundra killed his wife the villagers fined him a feast of rice and a calf, and then assisted him in cremating the corpse. When Koliha

[1] An interesting parallel is furnished in a note by the late Rai Bahadur Hira Lal on a Report by a certain Captain Sinnock about conditions in the Surguja State in 1818, of which he was then in charge. A landholder named Parbal Sahy had ordered a witch to be put to death. During his trial the Court asked him, 'Do you know that he who is the author of murder commits a great crime?', to which he replied, 'I know that it is a very great crime to commit a murder, but in my country, Surguja, it is no crime to kill a witch'. Sinnock reported the most drastic witch-tests, including the ordeal by water and a test wherein the suspect had to spout milk from the mouth onto a pipal leaf. Hira Lal 'Witches and their Ordeals', *Man in India*, Vol. VI (1926), pp. 286 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

killed Bondki, the wife of Dasru, a panchayat was held by the Pargana Manjhi, and the husband of the murdered woman was given five rupees, a bullock, a pig and some rice. The panchayat received twenty rupees, of which the Pargana Manjhi and the village Peda took five each, the Kandki (headman's assistant) four and the Kotwar one. The villagers then decided to hush up the incident, and it only came to the ears of the police through an informer. When Kartami Hirma killed his baby daughter while he was beating his wife, the panchayat demanded a fine of twentyfive rupees in consideration of which they agreed to hush the matter up. The accused paid five rupees on account and promised the rest within a month. The panchayat even seized the stick with which the beating had been done. Then the Kotwar reported that the child had been still-born.

When Poriami Handa was killed, the villagers forced his widow to accept compensation from the murderer and to keep the matter a secret. But she told what had happened to her brother-in-law, and he reported the matter to the police. In another case a group of men who had been involved in a robbery killed two of their number to prevent them giving them away. The headman was the cousin of one of the murderers. He called the people of the village together and persuaded them to agree to say nothing about the incident, and it was only through the efforts of the father of one of the victims that the matter came to light. Even then the headman attempted to bribe the police. In this case the only reason for concealment seems to have been the friendship of the headman for one of the people involved. A similar reason seems to have influenced the villagers in another murder. When Miriami Harma fell into a rage at being accused of theft at a panchayat, he snatched his baby daughter out of the arms of his wife, and holding her by the legs dashed her on the ground, killing her immediately. Possibly the members of the panchayat feared that they would be involved, and the next day the murderer and the Kotwar went to the police station and reported that the child had been bitten by a cobra.

Where the murderer is a man of influence in the village, such as one of the civil or religious headmen, he may attempt to force the people to conceal his crime. Manjhi Banda was

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

554 558 went over to Tikanpal to offer sacrifice on behalf of that village.

At Muler I visited the widow of Ido Deva, an unpleasant quarrelsome fellow who had recently been hanged for murdering one of the most popular men in the village. In spite of this, his widow was well treated. She was not excommunicated and was allowed to share in the usual feasts. But she always remained inside her house, and generally refused to talk to people; the headman told me that there would probably be some difficulty in getting her two sons married, for people would say, 'After all, their father was a murderer'.

000 The relationship between the families of a murderer and his victim is always a delicate one, and Frazer has collected many examples from all over the world in illustration. The Uraon make sacrifices to the angry ghost of a murdered man, and sometimes even reckon him among the ancestral spirits of his murderer. Roy records that two Uraon, related to each other as cousins, had a quarrel over a piece of land; and one of them, in a sudden fit of anger, thrust his axe into the bowels of his companion. The man, thus struck, at once ran to his assailant's house and, pressing his wounded stomach with his hands, sat down at one corner of the hut and exclaimed, 'Here I establish myself', and then ran out again to the field in dispute and dropped down dead. To this day, the descendants of the murderer propitiate the murdered man's spirit. After the harvest, the first sheaf of paddy from the field where he fell dead is offered to his spirit at the same corner of the house where he sat down before his death. The descendants of the murdered man too are allowed access to the spot in order to make similar offerings.[1]

682 571 I have not found this custom in Bastar, though that does not mean that it does not exist. But I have found everywhere an anxiety that there should not be any enmity between the families. Compensation is often paid to the victim's widow or family, and the murderer's family may contribute to the expenses of the funeral. Both families should always have a feast together. In Gamawada the family of an imprisoned homicide, Barse Mata, gave every kind of help to the relatives of his victim: among other

[1] S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 69 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

things they provided a pot of rice-beer and a pig for his funeral rites.

V

BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE DEAD

The reaction of society to violent crime may be seen from the funerary arrangements that are made both for the murderer and his victim.[1]

In the great majority of cases these arrangements are complicated by the fact that the corpse of the deceased is not available. It is generally taken to headquarters for post-mortem examination, and when a man is hanged in jail his body is disposed of by the prison authorities. This does not mean, however, that the funeral ceremonies are omitted. Clothes and other property belonging to the dead are brought back from the Magistrate's Court or from the jail, and these are used to represent the corpse. When Markami Deva killed his wife at Darbha the people brought her clothes, necklace and armlets to the village. These relics were not brought into the house, but were put outside in the yard. The usual funeral drum was not beaten, but the relatives gathered and the brother of the husband (the husband himself was in police custody) put haldi and oil on the things, and a relative by marriage carried them in a basket to a pyre which had been prepared outside the village. Men and women walked behind throwing seeds of rice, maize and pulse mixed together in the basket.

The pyre was under a tree over which a great camel's-foot creeper was growing. They carried the basket round it seven times. Relatives put small pieces of cloth upon it in the usual way and removed them. They hung a bit of cloth on the tree. Then they lit the pyre and went away. They did not erect an uraskal, though here they said that they would

[1] Everywhere in India the ghost of a murdered man or a suicide is dangerous. The Lushai think a victim's ghost will haunt the murderer and drive him mad. J. Shakespear, *The Lushai Kuki Clans* (London, 1912), p. 76. Both the Lushai and Lakher perform ceremonies to make the dead man's ghost harmless and to ensure that it becomes the servant of the slayer in the other world. If this is not done, the ghost may blind, lame or paralyse the man who killed him. N. E. Parry, *The Lakhers* (London, 1932), p. 213. Frazer gives many examples from other parts of the world. Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III, pp. 103 ff.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

753 is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

761 Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all
754 Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest
[187] or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *wadde* or *wadde*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[2] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[3] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[3]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

674 Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen
754 murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the
683 alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[3] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 168. [3] Report, pp. 52-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to molest suspects. There were cases from Muria and Bhattra villages where the community inflicted degrading punishments only somewhat less cruel than those of Glasfurd's day; but in all but one of the Maria cases the man who believed himself wronged acted entirely on his own, often after consulting the god through a *waddai* medium, and killed or tried to kill the suspect with any weapon that came handy. The exception was the 1916 Hill Maria murder at Orcha, in which many villagers combined against the *pargana* headman, who, like his father before him, was said to have been expert in the black art, and to have used it and his position as headman to set up a '*raj*' over the *pargana*. They combined to seize him at night, crushed his testicles and hanged him from a creeper. Nor were women ever suspected in Maria cases, although in three cases among Jagdalpur Murias and Bhattras women suspects were very roughly handled. In two Bison-horn murders it was clear that the murdered man had threatened his murderer to bewitch him, and one of these blackmailers was himself a *waddai*. In fact, the *waddai* is generally believed by the Bison-horn Marias to know black magic as well as white magic and divination, and is apt to be feared accordingly.

It is naturally difficult to ascertain the methods believed to be used by the black magician; those who imagined they had suffered judged the fact solely from the nature of their sufferings, the word of the *waddai* consulted as to their source, and, perhaps, the known enmity of the suspect towards them, while naturally no practitioner of black magic cared to admit it or to describe his methods. Black magic is commonly referred to as *pangan*; and popular talk confirms the methods described at page 43 of the *Gazetteer*:—

> 'Whenever an enemy's life is to be taken, a bit of his cloth or hair is offered to a god with some incantations consisting of a string of names of godlings, and the victim should then pine away, unless he in turn calls in a magician. This practice is locally called *kuda marna*. Another plan is for the magician to put up two bits of grass tied in the form of a cross to represent his client's enemy, and, after going through incantations, shoot at the little figure with a miniature bow and arrow made of grass. If the arrow hits the mark it is believed that the enemy will surely die, unless he has recourse to magic to avert the spell.'

The information on which this was based came from the mixed Hill and Bison-horn Maria country around Barsur, and the word '*magician*' is a translation of '*waddai*'.

White Magic

The white magic in vogue is merely the counter-magic used by a friendly *waddai* to avert or cure illness and disease. Of actual Hill Maria methods I obtained no notes; but certain *waddais* or *leshis* have a much greater reputation than others. I gather that Hill Maria methods do not differ from those in vogue among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, in which

Q A See ch. 116, pp. 423-424. — Author

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TABLE FOUR

674

Sex-ratio in 100 cases, involving 117 convictions	
Male	112
Female	5

674 648 The Bison-horn Maria do not live in complete isolation. They are in contact with other people, what are often called civilized people. But this contact is mainly a business and commercial contact; it is not an emotional one. Normally there are few chances in any relationship between a Maria and a Hindu or Mussalman for the development of those intense and passionate feelings that may lead to murder. This will probably account for the very small number of people murdered who belonged to other communities.

674 TABLE FIVE

Illustrating caste of victims in 107 cases	
Fellow-Maria	99
Other castes	8

Two of these were killed for their possessions in straightforward robbery—very unusual incidents. One of the victims was a Kalar who was going to report a cattle-theft. One was a boy caught in a madman's fury. But it might have been anyone. [683] Another was a Rawat. But the Rawat, who are the herdsmen of the Maria, live so closely with them as to count almost as members of the tribe. Once during a gambling quarrel a Mahara beat a Maria, a serious matter involving the Maria's excommunication. In one case a Mahara woman was chosen as a human sacrifice. In only one case was a member of another caste involved with a Maria woman. A Dhobi tried to seduce a Maria girl, but it was the girl who was murdered.

674 684

I have heard, however, of another case (not among the 100) where the wife of a Maria, one Poyami Masa, at Kodenar had an intrigue with a Kalar liquor-vendor. One night very late the woman—according to previous arrangement—got up and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I. Murder for gain. 677[x]
II. Murder from revenge.
III. Murder for elimination.
IV. Murder from jealousy.
V. Murder from lust of killing.
VI. Murder from conviction.

Among the Maria there are very few murders for gain, 674[x] for where is the property to be acquired? It would be 152 laughable to imagine in a Maria village the situation so dear to the writer of detective stories, the murder of an elderly person by his heirs for the sake of his money. Murder from revenge occurs, but in not more than half a dozen cases. I describe later a remarkable case of murder for elimination. Murder from jealousy covers a number of the tragedies which involve relations between husband and wife. I am doubtful whether any of the Maria murders could be included under the heading 'Murder from lust of killing'.

Tennyson Jesse's sixth class 'Murder from conviction' is, I believe, much more common among the aboriginals and leads us to the vexed and difficult problem of how to deal with persons whose ideas of right and wrong vary in certain remarkable respects from those of the modern world. Without exception, every Maria believes that it is the right and [683] proper thing to kill a witch or sorcerer. In this the Maria is not criminal; he is merely out-of-date. Two hundred years ago the best brains in Europe believed the same. Almost all Maria consider that a wife caught in the act of adultery with [684] her lover deserves immediate execution, and here again the Maria are simply out-of-date, though in this case they are rather more behind the times than they are about witchcraft. Kinberg has an interesting passage on this subject. 690

> A comparison between the judgements passed on one type of action by different peoples, or by one people at different periods of its history, brings out how purely relative moral evaluations are. If a man catches his wife *in flagranti* with her lover and kills them both, he will in Sweden be condemned to a long term of penal servitude for manslaughter and his action will be strongly disapproved. In Latin countries, on the other hand, the same action would in the majority of cases be declared by the jury not to be culpable, and would cause no general moral indignation. Such is the difference in the moral evalua-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 that his wife did not bear him a child, he went to the Waddai who discovered the real reason, performed the proper rites and soon a large family came into being.

754 Witches can injure women by prolonging their menstrual 755 periods. The Siraha can counter this by offering sacrifices 841 to the Dead and to the Mirchuk. In Kameli a woman who was suffering from menorrhagia was cured by this means. [762] But sometimes the Siraha can do nothing, and in despair the unhappy woman may hang herself.

754 At Borgum I was told that only widows can perform black magic and that they usually call on the ghosts of the dead to help them in their wicked deeds. Here they gave me an interesting account of how a witch can take precautions against discovery. She takes her familiar, say the ghost of a murderer or suicide, with her to an ant-hill and there she 'binds its mouth' by removing some of the earth from the hill and uttering charms. She says to the ghost, 'When the Siraha questions you, do not disclose my name'. Then she replaces the earth. It is believed that, just as any earth that is removed from an ant-hill is automatically filled up the next day, so misfortune will enter the house of the ghost she has bound if it betrays her.

[751]

754
683

Charm against disease, made of small bits of chicken-bone.

Dread of this witchcraft or enchantment is a very powerful factor driving men to violence, for the fear is still a live one and the dangers are supposed to be great. Guma Hunga left his home and village because he believed that his family was being bewitched by a man called Burgi. A year afterwards he saw his enemy in the new village to which he had moved, and murdered him in a sudden access

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 183 of fear. Sori Bhima killed a neighbour Kosa, who suffered from yaws, believing him to be a wizard and responsible for the death of his children.

Vedta Sukra murdered his uncle Kola, the headman of Surguda, for being a wizard. Three years before, Sukra's three-year old daughter had died, and the cause had been diagnosed as Kola's magic. Immediately before the tragedy, Sukra's little son died after a month's illness, and members of the family went to a Siraha at Sarjiguda to find out why. The Siraha invoked the deity Madin Deo onto his person, and the deity declared through him that the death was the result of Kola's magic. The next day Sukra went with a number of villagers to the place where his child had been cremated. Heaps of rice were placed in front of the ashes, in the names of Mirchuk (which kills children), the Village Mother, the Departed, Bhagavan and the suspect Kola. A chicken was allowed to make its choice among the heaps, and it pecked up rice from those of Mirchuk and Kola. From this the people deduced that Kola had killed the child with the help of Mirchuk Deo.

The following day Kola was found lying dead in a pool of blood on his own thrashing-floor. Sukra admitted his crime and no doubt considered that his action was justified and indeed laudable.

754 578 One day the sago palm belonging to Hunga of Gudse village ceased to give the usual juice. Hunga went to the village Siraha, a young man called Kosa, to find out what was the matter, and received the reply that it was due to the magic of Pandru, one of the neighbours. Sometime later, Pandru and Kosa met in the local liquor shop and had a drink together, and presently Kosa accused Pandru to his face of doing magic against Hunga's tree. Pandru became very angry at this, and abused Kosa and his gods. Expressing himself in typical Maria fashion, he pulled out a few of his pubic hairs and threw them on Kosa's head. Kosa slapped Pandru's face twice and went away.

Nothing happened for five months. But then on the evening of 14 April 1922, Kosa went out to look for a straying cow. His way took him near Pandru's house who, when he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

the Tangkhul by fine, amounting to six cows. At Jessami in the Mao group the offender has to make a short sojourn away from his house, but not necessarily outside the village; while at Liyai he is banished from the village. At Mao his punishment is seven years' banishment from the village and a fine of five cows. At Maikel banishment for one year and a fine of five cows, while murder ensuing in the heat of passion in a quarrel is punished with seven years' banishment and a fine of ten cows. The Mayang Khong people exact only a fine of one cow in cases of accidental homicide. Both the Chiru and the Marring impose a heavy fine in such cases, part of the fine being compensation to the relatives of the dead man and the rest being consumed by the village in the course of the settlement of the matter.

In some cases the weapon or other lethal instrument is forfeited to the relatives—a proceeding reminiscent of the law of Deodand.[1]

In former years adultery was commonly punished, so far as the male offender was concerned, with death and this proceeding gave no occasion for a feud. Among the Tangkhul theft was at one time punished with death, if the offender was caught in the act. Nowadays a fine is held sufficient. Arson is penalized and is considered so serious that even when it is accidental, a heavy fine is demanded.

In Bastar also it was formerly the custom for the people to take the law into their own hands and where necessary to pay compensation for doing so to the local authorities. In fact, the older Maria still remember how in the days of their grandparents compensation for murder was paid to the Jia (the high priest) of Dantewara or to the Nengi and Hikmi (State representatives) at Mailawada. A very old man at Harmamunda described how, 'In the old days when a witch was caught, her hands were cut off; and she was taken to the Nengi and Hikmi who were paid eight female calves. If a man was found practising black magic, his teeth were first knocked out with a large bone, and then the bone itself was pushed into his mouth until he died'. The idea was that he had done his evil with the purpose of 'eating' or gain and so he was given a bone to eat. When this happened, the

[1] T. C. Hodson, *The Naga Tribes of Manipur* (London, 1911), pp. 106 f. For an account of the attitude of society and 'judicial murder' in Papua, see F. E. Williams, 'Group Sentiment and Primitive Justice', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XLIII (New Series), pp. 523 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

627 683 Nengi and Hikmi received eight male calves. 'Sometimes the witch or sorcerer had all their teeth knocked out, their mouths were burnt with hot oil, and they were banished from their village. With this mark upon them no one would shelter them. Yet another method of dealing with a witch was to tie her up in a sack and throw her into the river'. In another village I was told how a witch was wrapped up in straw and burnt alive.

An old man at Dhurli described how his brother had been killed by a witch's magic. When the Waddai confirmed this, his father killed the witch and paid compensation of four female calves to the Jia.

At Phulpar the headman said that in the old days they used to break the teeth of a witch, shave her head, cut her forehead with a broken bangle and so drive her from the village. Similarly I was told in several places in Konta Tahsil that the people used to cut a witch's nails, shave her head and drive her away. They would confiscate her property and often kill her. There has never been any doubt whatever in the minds of Maria with whom I have discussed this matter that a witch or a sorcerer ought to be punished with death, and that the public were perfectly justified in taking the law into their own hands in a proved case of witchcraft.[1]

627 682 There are probably many cases never discovered by the police that are settled by the Maria panchayat. In others, after everything has been settled by the panchayat, the police have discovered that a crime has been committed. There were as many as 12 such cases out of our 100. And they are instructive. For example, when Mundra killed his wife the villagers fined him a feast of rice and a calf, and then assisted him in cremating the corpse. When Koliha

[1] An interesting parallel is furnished in a note by the late Rai Bahadur Hira Lal on a Report by a certain Captain Sinnock about conditions in the Surguja State in 1818, of which he was then in charge. A landholder named Parbal Sahy had ordered a witch to be put to death. During his trial the Court asked him, 'Do you know that he who is the author of murder commits a great crime?', to which he replied, 'I know that it is a very great crime to commit a murder, but in my country, Surguja, it is no crime to kill a witch'. Sinnock reported the most drastic witch-tests, including the ordeal by water and a test wherein the suspect had to spout milk from the mouth onto a pipal leaf. Hira Lal 'Witches and their Ordeals', *Man in India*, Vol. VI (1926), pp. 295 ff.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 601
'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *pepi* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man 582
and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite 607
exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his [587] wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother.

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely 684 ●
among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison- 835
horn. A youth of the Gume hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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835

illicit intercourse with a young widow who had been born a Gume, and had a child by her dead husband. This was regarded as incest. The youth was put to the ordeal of plunging his hand into boiling cow-dung and water, and as he was very severely scalded the couple were adjudged guilty. The youth was ultimately received back into the community after a penal feast to the clan, and has since married legitimately; but the widow and her child were driven out of the *pargana*, and in 1934 were said to be living in a village some forty miles away near the Chanda border of Kutru. This was the only definite example of a breach of the rules of exogamy among Hill Marias that came to my notice. In Padalbhum and Tapalibhum *parganas*, however, there were said to have been one or two cases within memory in which both the man and the woman had been received back into the clan after recovery of heavy penalties from them and their parents and after they had sworn to separate and never repeat the offence. It was stated that a child born of such an incestuous union would never be admitted to social or religious ceremonies, or given a wife. Among the Bison-horn Marias connexions between men and women of the same clan appear never to occur, but cases are by no means unknown of affairs between men and women of the same phratry, and it was stated that these are regularized by a visit to the clan-god of the man, with the child, if any, of the union, and by the payment of a heavy fine. I had to try the son of a *waddai* clan-priest who had killed his father because the latter, after first seducing the wife of the accused's younger brother, had raped the accused's wife and driven both his sons out of the house. In this case the two women were not of the same phratry as their father-in-law, and he could have married them had they not been married to his sons. Tribal feeling against the dead man was extremely bitter, and, though it was recognized that the son was justified in slaying his father, this alone was not sufficient to purify the two sons from the guilt of their father's incest; a heavy fine was imposed on them, to collect which took them three years, though in the meantime the elder son was allowed to succeed his father as clan-priest and to officiate as such, and both were admitted to the *pandum* and other feasts. In two other murder cases there was a remarkable hostility displayed by witnesses towards husbands, in one case the accused and in the other the brother of the murdered man, whose wives were suspected of incestuous love affairs; but it was not possible to ascertain exactly what had happened. The general idea seems to be that such incest will bring upon the community the special wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, in the form of visitations of man-eating or cattle-lifting tigers, or famine or pestilence.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

622 kingdoms or *garhs* of forgotten chiefs, or divisions of the early
623 medieval Telanga kingdoms of Barsur, Dantewara or Bhairamgarh.
632 The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chudala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

689 Social offences involving exclusion from tribal ceremonies and
564 feasts are very similar in these days to those of neighbouring Hindu
684 castes. The worst offences are to get maggots in wounds, to take food from or have sexual relations with persons of the despised Ghasia, Mahra or Lohar castes, and to break the rules of exogamy by
688 having sexual relations with a girl of a brother-clan. Another offence, which among the Bison-horn Marias may lead to considerable trouble, is the eating of any new crop or the cutting of grass or bamboo before the appropriate *pandum* has been celebrated; this form of sacrilege is believed to be avenged by the earth or clan-god sending tigers to carry off cattle or men, and in a case which came before me in which such a visitation had followed the cutting of grass by two villagers before the Kare Pandum the *panchayat* had ordered them to compensate the owner of each cow or bullock killed by the avenging tigers. The way in which breaches of the rules of exogamy are dealt with has already been described
689 (pages 245-6 above). Any form of social relations with Ghasia,
564 Mahra or Lohar, however unwitting, entails penalties not only
783 on the actual offender, but also often on his near kinsmen. In the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942, 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Mur.a

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young.

Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'.

A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palari, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. Married Men in the Ghotul

Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two chelik and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval.

In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted.

But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I.P.C. Was the crime premeditated? Was it provoked by a serious and unbearable insult? The difficulty here, which every Sessions Judge admits, is that what seems an extreme provocation to him or the Assessors may hardly be noticed by the aboriginal, and incidents that seem quite trifling to the 'civilized' mind may rouse the Maria or Naga to a fit of homicidal rage. The matter is complicated by the fact that the tribes vary greatly from one to another. The Bison-horn Maria, for example, are passionately concerned about female chastity, and a wife's infidelity is constantly a cause of murder. But in this their Gond and Baiga neighbours to the north have a much lower standard. Love is comparatively free. Divorce is easy and a wife's betrayal is readily compensated by the payment of a small fine. It is obvious, therefore, that a Gond or Baiga who suspects his wife of infidelity is not put to anything like the same degree of provocation as that suffered by a Bison-horn Maria under similar circumstances.

Premeditation may be indicated by tribal customs. The Bison-horn Maria express the spirit of implacable revenge by certain dramatic symbols. They pull out their pubic hairs; they remove a few handfuls of grass from an enemy's roof; they whistle loudly the dreaded *sui* whistle. In any case where an accused is proved to have indulged in one or other of these acts, it may be assumed that his crime was premeditated.

A Bastar tragedy, the murder of Tati Hirme by her deceased husband's younger brother Doga, provides an interesting example of how a knowledge of local custom can explain an otherwise meaningless crime. According to tribal practice a younger brother has a right over his elder brother's widow, a right which extends not only to her person, but to her property. This right Tati Hirme refused to Doga, and there is evidence that for a long time the youth bitterly resented her behaviour. On the day of the tragedy he went to her house and asked her for some tobacco. She refused, and he murdered her.

At first sight here is precisely one of those motiveless crimes which have so often puzzled outside observers. It is true that there was hostility between the parties, but the refusal of a small gift of tobacco was hardly sufficient for so disastrous a result. But in Maria practice to ask a woman

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TABLE FOUR

Sex-ratio in 100 cases, involving 117 convictions

Male	112
Female	5

The Bison-horn Maria do not live in complete isolation. They are in contact with other people, what are often called civilized people. But this contact is mainly a business and commercial contact; it is not an emotional one. Normally there are few chances in any relationship between a Maria and a Hindu or Mussalman for the development of those intense and passionate feelings that may lead to murder. This will probably account for the very small number of people murdered who belonged to other communities.

TABLE FIVE

Illustrating caste of victims in 107 cases

Fellow-Maria	99
Other castes	8

Two of these were killed for their possessions in straightforward robbery—very unusual incidents. One of the victims was a Kalar who was going to report a cattle-theft. One was a boy caught in a madman's fury. But it might have been anyone. Another was a Rawat. But the Rawat, who are the herdsmen of the Maria, live so closely with them as to count almost as members of the tribe. Once during a gambling quarrel a Mahara beat a Maria, a serious matter involving the Maria's excommunication. In one case a Mahara woman was chosen as a human sacrifice. In only one case was a member of another caste involved with a Maria woman. A Dhobi tried to seduce a Maria girl, but it was the girl who was murdered.

I have heard, however, of another case (not among the 100) where the wife of a Maria, one Poyami Masa, at Kodenar had an intrigue with a Kalar liquor-vendor. One night very late the woman—according to previous arrangement—got up and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

went behind the house, ostensibly to relieve herself, thinking her husband asleep. But he was really watching and when she did not return, he went in search for her and found her in sexual congress with the Kalar. He returned to the house, got his bow and double-pointed *engram* arrow and killed her. The Kalar made his escape.

SEASONAL VARIATIONS

The relative predominance of constitutional factors in crimes of violence and lust are believed by European criminologists to explain the very striking differences in the seasonal frequency of these crimes. Sullivan gives a Table based on the police reports of indictable offences for 1909 in England which shows that, while there is comparatively little variation in the frequency of crimes of acquisitiveness from month to month, there is a marked degree of seasonal frequency in crimes of violence and lust, giving a curve of incidence which rises to a maximum in the hot months. This may be explained by the fact that in these forms of delinquency biological factors play an important part.[1] Among the Bison-horn Maria seasonal variations, though less striking, do exist, as the following Table shows.

TABLE SIX

Showing the incidence of 100 homicides by the time of year

January	9
February	9
March	5
April	10
May	10
June	3
July	9
August	8
September	10
October	12
November	9
December	6

[1] W. C. Sullivan, *Crime and Insanity* (London, 1924), pp. 21 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674X

I. Murder for gain.
II. Murder from revenge.
III. Murder for elimination.
IV. Murder from jealousy.
V. Murder from lust of killing.
VI. Murder from conviction.

Among the Maria there are very few murders for gain, 674X for where is the property to be acquired? It would be 152 laughable to imagine in a Maria village the situation so dear to the writer of detective stories, the murder of an elderly person by his heirs for the sake of his money. Murder from revenge occurs, but in not more than half a dozen cases. I describe later a remarkable case of murder for elimination. Murder from jealousy covers a number of the tragedies which involve relations between husband and wife. I am doubtful whether any of the Maria murders could be included under the heading 'Murder from lust of killing'.

Tennyson Jesse's sixth class 'Murder from conviction' is, I believe, much more common among the aboriginals and leads us to the vexed and difficult problem of how to deal with persons whose ideas of right and wrong vary in certain remarkable respects from those of the modern world. Without exception, every Maria believes that it is the right and [683] proper thing to kill a witch or sorcerer. In this the Maria is not criminal; he is merely out-of-date. Two hundred years ago the best brains in Europe believed the same. Almost all Maria consider that a wife caught in the act of adultery with [684] her lover deserves immediate execution, and here again the Maria are simply out-of-date, though in this case they are rather more behind the times than they are about witchcraft. Kinberg has an interesting passage on this subject. 688

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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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Bison Horn Maria

539 had seen him entering, he knew that he was hiding some-
773 where and so he set fire to the building and went away. The fire did not harm the man, but some of the bird's feathers were burnt. The soul of the clan-god in Gadapal is in that bird, and to this day the bird can be seen, though now it is made of iron, and on its body the marks made by the burns remain.

'The eldest brother then went to Mailawada and lived there. He consulted the Waddai about the death of his sister's child, and it was revealed to him that the girl had been committing adultery with another man, and that on the very day she had bathed after her menstrual period, she
[845] had had intercourse both with her husband and her lover. The result of this was twins. But the Departed were offended at her conduct, and as a result one of the twins died after a few days and the second was killed by the Departed who first took the form of a hare and excited the dogs, and then possessed the dogs and killed the child in the swing'.

Such stories are not mere fairy-tales. They are part of the actual life of the people, vividly believed and actually experienced. To aboriginals who live in such an atmosphere and depend so entirely on the supernatural, the cumbersome and vulgar machinery of human courts of justice seems comparatively unimportant. It is said that many murderers find a sort of relief in going to jail, since they believe that this earthly punishment may save them from the vengeance of the Departed.

782 But as often in the aboriginal world there are regular
937 methods of evading these dangers. If a man wishes to commit adultery, he makes offerings to the Departed and prays, 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on the husband of this girl and not on me', and then he addresses his ancestors, 'Away with you. Go to water and to wind. Go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me whatever happens'.

684 There is no doubt, however, that many Maria are not satisfied with such ceremonies, and that they consider themselves entirely justified in killing a wife who is disloyal. In particular, the discovery of a woman actually in the arms of her lover appears to have so overwhelming an emotional effect that the husband is almost bound to strike

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and kill.[1] A few young husbands keep careful guard over their wives and when they see them going to an assignation, do not stop them then, but follow, watch and at the critical moment intervene.

Poyami Masa had two wives, Gadme and Dome. One day Dome found her elder co-wife in conversation with a Dhobi who was trying to seduce her. In order to get him to go away Gadme told him to come at night to the house and promised to meet him. When Masa came home from his work, the younger wife told him everything, probably only too glad to make trouble. He became very angry and beat Gadme and took her immediately to confront the Dhobi, but was unable to find him. Then he went to the headman to ask him to take action against the Dhobi. All day long he was in a passion of rage, clenching his teeth and continually talking about his wife's scandalous behaviour. When she tried to give him food, he refused to take it. After supper Gadme and her three children went to bed, but Masa lay awake in the dark brooding until he could contain himself no longer. Just before dawn he got up and stabbed Gadme with an arrow. He was probably intending by this to make it look as though Gadme had committed suicide out of remorse for her behaviour. But he did not do his work properly, and the woman lived long enough to say what had happened to her. In this case the Court took into consideration the fact not only that Masa had been wronged, but that he believed himself to have been wronged by a member of a caste which the Maria despise.

In Chhindgaon a man of about thirty-five years, Burka by name, began to suspect his wife of deceiving him with Hirma, a neighbour who lived opposite his house. One afternoon—it was Tuesday, 16 December 1924—the woman told her husband that she was going to catch fish in a tank. Burka was suspicious and secretly watched her.

[1] By the Kanikar of Travancore, 'adultery is viewed with great abhorrence, and punishment for this offence varies in different localities. At Kulathupula the punishment inflicted on the adulterer is this. His legs are tied to the branch of a tree with the head hanging down. Straw strewn with chillies is spread on the ground and burned. The body of the culprit is swung to and fro and he is in the meanwhile given twenty-five lashes with a cane on the buttocks. The guilty woman is given fifteen lashes by a man who marries her, even though he may have already been married'. L. A. Krishna Iyer and N. Kunjan Pillai in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III-B, p. 224.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674-684 He saw her go across the road to where Hirma was winnowing grain, and after a word with him proceed towards the tank. After a little while, Burka went over to Hirma's house to see if he was there, but did not find him. So he got his axe and went off in pursuit. Below the tank he saw Hirma and his wife going into the jungle together. He crept quietly to the place, and there discovered the two lovers in the act of sexual congress. He struck Hirma on the back with his axe and rolled him over, and then gave him four blows on the head and left him for dead. His wife sprang up, but he gave her a heavy blow with the back of his axe behind the left ear. She fell to the ground and he gave her a second blow just above the first, and she died.

Burka then went and told the Kotwar of the village what he had done, and with the Kotwar went to the Manjhi. When they went to see the bodies, they found Hirma still alive and Burka tried to get his axe in order to finish him off. But he was prevented.

Poriami Podiya was a young man of about twenty years who had been married only for a year. He either suspected or (as he himself claimed) actually discovered his wife having intercourse with another man. He beat her with his fists and dragged her to the jungle in spite of several remonstrances from the neighbours, and went on beating her there till she fell to the ground. Even then, as he himself admitted, when he found she still had some life in her, he determined to make an end of her and her intrigues with her lover. He twisted a creeper-thong round her neck, but finding it was not long enough for the purpose, tied a cloth round her neck and to a tree. Probably he first strangled her, and then tied her up to give the impression of suicide. During his trial Podiya showed no sign of appreciating the enormity of his crime, which he seems to have regarded as a just retribution for his wife's unchastity.

Marvi Deva killed his little daughter about four years old and tried to kill his wife, because he suspected her of betraying him. He declared that he had twice caught her in the arms of men whom he was unable to identify, and that on the night of the murder he had seen her talking to a man in a neighbour's compound. The man had run away

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

before he could catch him. He took his wife home and tried to force her to give him the name of her lover. When she refused, he took his axe and struck his little daughter who was standing by and crying with fright, and killed her instantly. He then tried to kill his wife who was carrying her baby in a cloth passed round her shoulder, but she managed to escape. Deva picked up the body of his dead child and carried it into the jungle where he left it under a tree covered with a cloth. The Court was sceptical about Deva's accusations of his wife's unchastity, particularly because he could not give the names of her lovers. But this seems to me entirely in keeping with a Maria's pride, particularly if Deva knew that the seducer was someone in a forbidden relationship or someone whom he disliked. Although some aborigirals have no shame in these matters, others are very reluctant to admit the actual names of men who have seduced their wives.

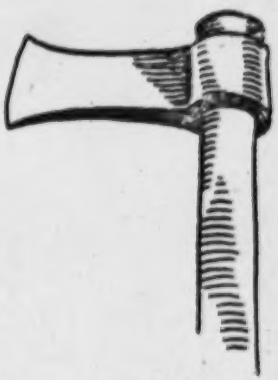
There is the curious point that, according to one version of the incident, Deva asked his wife to give him tobacco or, in other words, to have sexual intercourse with him, and her refusal to do so was the final spark that caused the explosion. This again is, I think, in line with primitive psychology. The husband would have been powerfully excited sexually by the thought of his wife being possessed by another man; he would desire to reassert his rights over her and perhaps to test her. Her refusal to do what he wanted proved to him that his suspicions were well founded.

A very influential man named Nanda, who was the Siraha of Killepal, met his death on the night of the festival of the Village Mother in April 1932. Nanda and Poyami Panda had married two sisters and both families lived in one compound with the old father-in-law. For some time past Panda had suspected Nanda of an intrigue with his wife Hirme. He had been foolish enough to go to the Tea Gardens leaving her behind in too close an association with the exciting and important personality of the Siraha. When he returned he displayed many of the symptoms of pathological jealousy. He was continually asking his wife whether she had had intercourse with Nanda, and he tried hard to get her to leave the village, where she lived in such

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

an undesirable proximity to her lover, and go to live elsewhere. This, however, she refused to do.

It is very difficult to discover what really happened on the night of the festival, for everybody was drunk on rice-beer. Several different versions of the incident were given. It seems probable that early in the evening Panda found his wife standing in the courtyard and slapped her; perhaps he suspected that she was looking for her lover. Nanda saw what happened and told Panda not to hit his wife, for the child she was holding in her arms might fall down and be injured. A little later, Panda wanted to get a bamboo tube to keep his tobacco in. He started to cut a bit from a pole on which bunches of maize were hanging. Nanda again interfered and told him not to cut it, for the maize would fall down. Panda took no notice and went on cutting the bamboo. Nanda then lost his temper, and told him that he was a very quarrelsome person and no one could live with him. He suggested that he should go away to another village and live with his brother. At this Panda retorted that the real reason why Nanda wanted him to go away was because he was in love with Hirme.



Godel axe

There was no violence in the quarrel at this point, and Nanda went away to his own house in the same compound. Hirme was making leaf-cups in her father's house, and later—it was dark and everyone was drunk—Nanda seems to have taken the opportunity of slipping into the room and embracing her. Suddenly Panda entered, and finding his wife and her lover together—he claims that they were actually enjoying sexual intercourse—he lost all control of himself, picked up an axe and killed his rival.

Hemla Gunda was the Dhurwa or clan-priest of the Hemla clan-god. He was also a well-known medicine-man and, although he was excommunicated for reasons that will

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Muria

appear immediately, was a person of great influence among the Maria of Bijapur Tahsil. 674x 684

He was, however, a cruel and unnatural man. About a year before his murder, he seduced the wives of each of his two sons, and not content merely to seduce them drove out of his house his own wife and his two sons, and lived there openly with the two young girls. He refused to do anything to maintain his wife and would not give his sons any share in the family property, although by tribal custom he should have allowed its partition, since he was doing nothing to support his family.

When the sons applied to the panchayat for justice, that body met, but so great was Gunda's influence that they were afraid to take any strong line against him. But they did excommunicate him for his relations with the wives of his own sons and for the even more serious offence of keeping a Ghasia woman. [688]

In May 1928, one of the sons, Hemla Mundra, went to his father's house and attempted to get some share of the property. He failed then, but on the afternoon before the murder, returned and tried to take away two cows from the family herd. His father caught him and abused him, and the boy was so annoyed that he struck the older man on the face with a lathi, a blow that probably fractured the jaw. Gunda prepared to go to the police station to make a report against his son. Mundra, reflecting that his father had not only robbed him of his wife and property, but was now going to deprive him of his liberty as well, decided to kill him and prevent him from going to the police. He managed to get ahead of Gunda on the path, and the moment he appeared broke his skull with several blows of a heavy stick.

The murder was regarded by the other Maria as justified, and they hushed up the whole affair, reporting to the police that Gunda had died of smallpox. Indeed the case would never have come to light, had it not been that a prisoner in jail in the vain hope of getting his own sentence mitigated reported the matter. Mr Grigson, who tried the case, sentenced the accused to one month's imprisonment.[1]

[1] A similar case was reported from the north of the State in 1940. Kanda, a Muria boy, killed his father near Pupgaon. The father had

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943

AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

Muria

[674 836 849] Murders committed on account of an unwelcome and unexpected pregnancy are not common, because of the high standard of domestic morals among the Maria and because if an unmarried girl is found pregnant, she is immediately married and the child is thus legitimized. But there is one authentic case in which a man was driven to kill his lover, though it may be said that it was her stupidity rather than her pregnancy that caused the tragedy. Mase was the wife of a man who deserted her for the Tea Gardens, leaving her alone and unsupported with three little children. She used to make some sort of living as a coolie. But presently Poriami Hirma fell in love with her and used constantly to visit her in her house, although he never officially kept her as his wife. In time she became pregnant and a panchayat was called to consider the matter. The elders decided to send information to Mase's husband's elder brother, an ex-convict and a harsh violent man, of whom the girl was greatly afraid.

Early in the morning of Tuesday, 21 February 1933, Mase left her three children in the house and went to tell Hirma what had happened. She expected that her husband's elder brother would come that day and beat her and she suggested that Hirma should run away with her and hide. Hirma agreed and they went some way into the jungle and sat down under a tamarind tree. The weather was cold and they lit a fire, beside which they sat and talked. Mase was very frightened and depressed. She wept and threatened to kill herself. Hirma very properly asked her to come and live with him as his wife, and promised to look after her and the children. But the girl, who was obviously in

[674 684] seduced Kande's first wife, and the proper ceremonies of purification had been conducted. But when Kande took another wife, the father again attempted or, as some say, succeeded in seducing her, and this time there was a violent quarrel between father and son while they were catching birds in the jungle. The father actually complained to his son that the girl did not respond properly to his advances. Kande was assaulted by his father and killed him in return. When I saw this boy in jail a year later, the extraordinary sadness of his face contrasted strikingly with the expression of many of the more regular criminals. The villagers concealed the crime and when it was by chance discovered five months later, were very backward in co-operating with the police. Obviously as in the Mundra case, they considered it a very proper murder. But Kande was not so fortunate as Mundra and was sentenced not to a month, but to five years' imprisonment. This was later reduced to three years, and he was released in 1943.

3; Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

a hysterical condition, rebuked him and said that she would not go to his house or to any other, accusing him of having brought the trouble on her. Hirma got annoyed and kicked her violently in the stomach and the vagina. Mase was three months pregnant, and it is probable that the kick which was simply intended to bring her to her senses was the real cause of her death.

II

Only rarely do the complications of infidelity lead to suicide. A girl called Kare of Kosalnar came one day to Kadti Pandu as a Paitu wife. This means that she forcibly entered his house of her own accord, and he had to agree to accept her as his wife. They lived together for five months. Then there was a quarrel, and Kare went off to another village, Pharaspal, where she repeated the same trick with another man. Pandu ordered her to come home and she refused. So he beat her and brought her back by force. The following day the girl disappeared, and a search discovered her hanging from a mahua tree.

The reaction of Barse Konda to unchastity in his family circle was remarkable. He had one daughter named Jabbo. This girl was that very rare thing, a Maria girl of promiscuous habits. She was first married to a man of Samgiri. Then she went to a man at Gongral. From him she went to a man at Molasnar. From him she went to a man at Palnar. Some time in 1937 she left her Palnar husband and went to live with Kawasi Kosa of Rewali. For the Korta Pandum, the harvest festival of the new cucumbers and gourds, Jabbo went to her home at Nakulnar, and after three days her father Konda took her back to Rewali. Rewali is a notoriously ill-tempered village, and when Konda arrived he was badly received and abused by several of the people for his daughter's behaviour. He went home, angry and depressed, told his wife what had happened, and got very drunk. At supper he caught his wife by the hair and beat her. She ran away to a neighbour's house. Then Konda got out his drum and danced with it all night long. As the first cocks crew, he went into his house and hanged himself from the central beam of the roof.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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632 The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chudala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

841 In Chandabera the Muria described how once when a man had touched a menstruating woman the Gaita heated gold and touched his forehead, tongue and shoulders, sprinkled him with rice-water and water in which gold had been [628] dipped, made him drink it in the name of the Earth Mother who had been insulted, and imposed upon him a heavy fine.

This is the same penalty as that extracted from a murderer on return from jail. It does not necessarily mean that the Muria regard the two offences as morally equal, but it does suggest that they regard them as equally dangerous in the supernatural field.

A woman's husband also is subject to the strictest rules. During his wife's period, he must not dig the ground, visit his fields, either to sow or reap, thatch the roof, go to the thrashing floor, touch the grain-bins in the house, or visit the village shrines. If he visits his thrashing floor the quantity of his grain is reduced by half. But he may go to the ghotul and sleep there, though no one will take tobacco from his hands. He is allowed to fetch water and cook; [522] indeed he generally has to do this work when his wife is barred from it, and many are the ribald jests that greet a young husband caught carrying pots from the well.

841 If he is a priest, he cannot conduct any religious ceremony during his wife's period, and festivals often have to be postponed on this account. A curious 539 story from Korenda illustrates the special difficulties that may trouble a polygamous Gaita.

> At the beginning of the world, there was no god of the Wadder clansmen, though they were numerous enough, while on the other hand there was a god of the Partabi though there was only one solitary male member of the clan. He was the Gaita and he had seven wives. Since one or other of his wives was in her period all the month round, he was never able to perform his priestly duties properly. They were due to eat the new rice on Monday: on Sunday night his eldest wife began her period. They postponed the festival till Friday: but no sooner had the eldest wife bathed on Wednesday than the youngest began on Thursday. And so on, he could never keep the festival, till Dokara Deo began to trouble the Gaita and he gave both his gods, Budha Deo and Dokara Deo, to the Wadder clan.

841 How do these taboos affect the ghotul? The great majority of Muria girls experience the crisis of the menarche while they are still motiari. Only in a few villages like Malakot do the people try to get girls married before maturity. Even where they are married, the little wives may sleep in the ghotul till they are mature. At her first period, a girl-wife gives *jori-darango* or a gift of liquor to the boys and girls 'to show her companionship with them is ended'.

The ghotul members take a great interest in the menarche. Everybody 841 knows all about it at once and there is a lot of joking and laughter. 'Our 522 new pot is broken, where can we go and clean it?' 'She has trodden on dirty leaves.' 'The embankment of the field is leaking.' When the chelik see the girl sitting plaintive and embarrassed behind her house or in the segregated hut they call to her, 'Have you got a baby, or what is the matter with you? Which is it, a girl or a boy?'

841 I describe elsewhere the special precautions that are taken at the menarche to ensure freedom from conception. A girl must be careful not to throw away her cups and plates for if a witch can get hold of them, she can cause her a great deal of trouble. She should, on this occasion, take these vessels and the ash in which she has cleaned her pots to the river for the Yer Kanyang or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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1913 case (see page 283 above) in which two Hill Marias murdered a Maria Lohar girl with whom they had been cohabiting, their parents and brothers all had to be purified by the *pargana* headman, and the actual murderers were purified by him a year after the murder; one of the main reasons for the villagers hushing up the crime was the belief that greater harm might have resulted to the clan if the Lohar girl had borne a child to the murderers than from them killing her. In 1926, Oyami Masa of Malhanar in the Kutru Mar hill *pargana*, an orphan boy six years old, was outcasted for taking some food from a Ghasia who was spending the night in the village *hos-gotul*[1] (strangers' rest-house) and found the child half-starved. As soon as the villagers heard of this they regarded him as outcasted. They realized, however, that he could not be expected to pay the expenses of the purification ceremony, and as they themselves had had poor harvests and were not in a position to meet the cost just then, they built a hut for the child at some distance from the rest of the village, and there he had to live for two years, till they could pay to purify him; meanwhile they provided food for him, leaving it for him at some distance from his hut. After two years had elapsed they subscribed eight annas cash as remuneration to Arki Burga of Jegur, the *Sendhia*, ten *pali* of rice and a *pali* of pulse, and invited the *Sendhia* to come and purify the boy. The men of the neighbouring villages of the clan were also asked to attend. At the bidding of the *Sendhia* the villagers built seven small huts in a row, and the boy had to pass through each in turn, each being burnt down as soon as he had passed through it. The *Sendhia* himself then shaved the whole of the boy's head, including even his crown-tuft. This done, the boy was taken to the river, made to bathe thrice and brought back to the village, where the *Sendhia* burnt his tongue with a *karra* (*Odsa marra*) twig, made him drink a little from a cup of milk into which he had dipped a piece of gold, and sprinkled the rest of the milk over the boy and the onlookers. The boy then fetched water, and in this the *Sendhia* boiled the rice and pulses, and served the cooked food to the boy and all the clansmen present. This incident typifies the way in which Marias combine to relieve each other's difficulties. The postponement of the caste feast until the offender has had time to collect all that is necessary is almost a rule of tribal life, and one that might with advantage be copied by the pharasaical elders of Hindu castes in British India. The social offence may offend the clan-god, and so its expiation is the concern of the whole clan, which therefore must help the offender gradually to raise the cost of the expiation ceremonies.

[1] See page 196 above.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

yet among the Ao, where the *morung* plays an important part, quarrels between father and son are rare.

Muria parents are tolerant and understanding. 'Whenever we hear the music of a drum', said a boy at Kabonga, 'we feel restless; we leave everything we are doing and go at once to dance and sing.' Here I was told a story, that is often repeated, of a boy who was sowing seed in his father's field. He had a whole measure of rice to sow, but when he heard drums beating in a neighbouring village he forgot all about it and went off to join the dance, leaving the pile of rice on the ground. Three days later he returned expecting to be beaten, but his father had understood the boy's feelings and had himself gone to the field and sown the rice instead. I have been told in various villages that for recognized festivals and marriages, parents are very sympathetic to their children.

[689] And indeed if the parents interfere with the life and discipline of the ghotul, if they stop their children going to it without sufficient excuse, they are fined—and so firmly established is the institution that they pay up.

There is very generally a convention that the parents know nothing of what happens in the ghotul. They are not even supposed to know their children's titles though, of course, they actually know everything that goes on. But the conventions must be observed. The children do not sing ghotul songs at home. A girl should not let her parents see her as she goes out to the ghotul or when she comes back. That is one reason why she returns home very early in the morning. She ought to be at work husking rice or cleaning the house when her parents get up. Should a girl meet her father as she is going to the ghotul, she should turn her head aside and walk away as quickly as possible. They should not greet or say anything to each other. But in some villages, in Kabonga for example, and at Jhakri, the older people have told me that when a girl gets engaged, her mother advises her to be very careful about allowing boys to take liberties with her. It is said, however, that the parents never warn a girl or boy against any particular person. At Jhakri, Raunu said that the mother says to the daughter at this time, 'Don't play and laugh too much with the boys; be happy, but don't let your hands and feet get into trouble. I never got into trouble nor did your grandmother; we were always known to be good girls for we never became pregnant. Never run away with a boy but marry the one we choose for you and don't quarrel with your girl friends.' So also a father advises his son to be very careful in his relations with girls who are already engaged to other boys. The reasons for this attitude are purely financial: 'Don't make a girl pregnant. We are poor people; I shall not be able to pay the fine; if you get into mischief you will have to go and work as someone's servant and pay the fine that way. Be happy but don't always run after the same girl.'

It will be seen that this kind of advice is very practical, and for that reason the boys and girls do not resent it. The parents are not concerned with the 'morals' of their children and, indeed, even when a boy makes a girl pregnant the parents generally stand by him and help him. When I asked a chelik at Markabera whether his parents ever got angry with him for sexual indulgence in the ghotul, he replied, 'Why should they, didn't they do the same when they were young?'

It is not easy to obtain information about the mother-son relationship. I have not heard of any 'possessive' mothers and the general circumstances of Muria life are such as to eliminate the dangers of the mother-fixation. Naturally, mothers tend to spoil their sons and fathers their daughters. 'A boy may be frightened of his father but he is never afraid of his mother. If

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

In the chapter on marriage we saw how the elders had to witness the betrothal ceremonies, and how the *panchayats* deal with cases of divorce and elopement. It may be added that among the Hill Marias the clan-headman, like the *Sendhia* of the Chanda Marias, gets certain traditional fees which the parties have to pay in addition to the compensation which the *panchayat* may award to the injured parents or husband, or to the cost of the tribal feast; at every marriage in Kutru and Bhairamgarh Maria the clan-headman gets a fee of eight annas; when a *panchayat* has settled the compensation to be given to the first husband by the man with whom his wife has eloped, the old and the new husband have each to pay the clan-headman four annas. But the latter is expected not to retain the whole of his fee-income, but to divide it with the headmen of the villages of his clan who have assisted in the ceremony or *panchayat*.

I have already described on page 246 above, the ordeal to which the Gume Hill Maria clan *panchayat* in 1929 subjected a Toinar youth accused of incest with a girl of his clan. How far the ordeal survives in the remotest parts of the State I cannot say; naturally instances of its use very seldom come to light. There is reason to believe that ordeals of this kind were a regular feature of the 'justice' administered by bygone Chiefs and zamindars of Bastar, rather than a product of aboriginal thought; compare the account of the settlement of the Kudmer-Jatalur land dispute at page 96 above. Ordinarily, however, the *panchayats* follow no regular procedure beyond hearing the parties and their friends as informally as possible and deciding the case then and there after free discussion among themselves.

Questions of property seldom arise among the Hill Marias, there being obviously so little scope for dispute when 95 per cent. of the cultivation is shifting cultivation of hillsides regarded as the property of the clan and not of the individual, and when the village site is shifted at least every six years. Sons after marriage live in a separate portion of the long-house of their father or uncle, if there is space for adding a portion for them, or else build a separate house as close as possible; when next the village is shifted there is ample space for all to live in separate houses under one long-house roof. Questions of inheritance of houses therefore arise only when, as among the Bison-horn Marias, villages have become permanent and are not shifted at regular intervals. Even here, however, there are few disputes. The little value set on houses is shown by the fact that it is generally the youngest son who lives on in the father's house after his death, as probably his elder brothers will have married long before him and built separate houses for themselves on marriage. There is among the Bison-horn Marias a vague right to demand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

691 421 partition of a father's property when a son sets up house for himself, but although he can press for his share, it is felt by the community to be against tribal spirit, rather than unfilial. When, on the other hand, a father had outraged tribal feelings by seducing his sons' wives and driving his sons from his house, his refusal to let his sons have any share in the family property was considered by the Bison-horn Marias an additional justification for his subsequent murder by his sons.

691 428 768 There is so little domestic property of great value among the Hill Marias, and so many of a man's few tools and possessions, as we have seen, are buried with him, that inheritance disputes about movable property are almost unknown. Though among the Bison-horn Marias less is buried or burned with the dead, the remaining movable property generally passes with the house; if the elder sons have set up separate establishments in their father's lifetime they will have equipped themselves with the few possessions they need, and will not worry about the younger brother appropriating what their father has left. Women's ornaments generally are buried or burned with them.

428 When the inheritance includes valuable rice-lands, they remain generally the joint property of the sons and brother's sons, and the father's surviving brothers, the eldest son generally nominally being the manager, though he will certainly have to give way to an uncle or younger brother or cousin if he is inefficient, weak-minded or deformed. The produce will be stored in his granary, but shared among the members of the family.

428 736 587 Daughters and sisters have no right of inheritance of their father's or brothers' lands or property. For the land is really the land of the clan, and the daughters and sisters will on marriage have passed to the clans of their husbands. A widow is entitled only to maintenance, and as on her husband's death she very often becomes the wife of his younger brother, she gets her maintenance as a matter of course; if he leaves no younger brother and she does not marry again, she lives on in her late husband's house and works with other women of the family, and is maintained by their husbands. A girl whose parents die before she is married frequently goes to a married sister's house and becomes a co-wife.

562 For a woman on the whole is a kind of property, or a valuable adjunct to the house and family. For her, the husband's family has had to pay a bride-price that is a severe tax on its resources[1]; or else, where cross-cousin marriage prevails,[2] she represents the repayment of a debt incurred when her father took his bride from

[1] See pp. 248-50 and 252-3 above.
[2] See pp. 234 and 247 above.

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

101 without a considerable Gond population, but the main strongholds of
162 the Gonds are to-day the Satpura plateau including the districts of Betul,
197 Chhindwara and Seoni, where the western type of Gondi is spoken, Mandla and Chhattisgarh in the east, where the Gonds have adopted the local dialect of eastern Hindi but retained their tribal identity, and in the south Chanda and the neighbouring Yeotmal, where the language is Gondi, but of a dialect somewhat different from the Gondi of Betul.

101 To the north-west the Gonds extend across the Narbada River into
● 691 Central India, and are particularly numerous in Indore State; to the
197 east of the Central Provinces lie the states of Gond princes, such as
[619] Kawardha, Sakti, Raigarh and Sarangarh, to-day known as the Chhattisgarh States. Although neither these Gond rajas, nor indeed the Gonds among their subjects speak Gondi, they are fully conscious of their tribal associations and the high status of the ruling princes adds no doubt to tribal prestige in the whole of Chhattisgarh.

Further south, bordering on Chanda, Drug and Raipur, extend the two States of Kanker and Bastar, where Gonds constitute the majority of the population. Bastar in particular is the home of three important groups of Gonds: the Murias, the Hill Marias and the Bisonhorn Marias, all of which differ in language and custom very considerably from the Gonds of the Central Provinces.[1] Their colourful and complex cul-
[174] tures are representative of ancient aboriginal India and show obvious affinities with the Austroasiatic cultures of Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Bastar has also part in the Koyas or Dorlas of the Godavari area, the most southern branch of the Gond family occurring in considerable strength in Madras Presidency and Hyderabad State and stretching across the barrier of the Eastern Ghats into the vicinity of Rajahmundry. Most Koyas still speak a dialect of Gondi, but those surrounded by Telugu populations, have changed over to Telugu.

Another substantial group of Gonds, closely akin to the Gonds of Yeotmal and Chanda, is found in the hilly country between the Godavari and the Penganga Rivers constituting the Adilabad District of H.E.H. the Nizam's Dominions, and it is these Gonds who form the subject of the present work.

101 All the Gonds of Adilabad, except for an insignificant overflow of
186 Dhurwe Gonds from Chanda, consider themselves Raj Gonds, and this brings us to the still somewhat problematic division between Raj Gonds and Dhur or Dhurwe Gonds, which runs through the greater part of the Gond population within the Central Provinces. There seems to be no uniformity in the principles ruling this division; in Chhattisgarh only the members of ruling, or formerly ruling families are described as Raj Gond, while in other parts most of the land-holding Gonds aspire to this denomination. In recent times the name Raj Gond has also been
[68] claimed by certain Gonds who have tried to raise their social status by

1. The Hill Marias extend into the hills of the neighbouring Chanda District.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

674 very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a
murder is extremely rare and due usually to some suspicion of
572 black magic. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is subject to sudden fits of blind rage, especially after he has been taking large quantities of his intoxicating gruel, *landa*, which is anathema to the Hill Marias. In that state he will seize any weapon that comes to hand, whether it be his wife's heavy rice pestle, a log of wood, an axe or a bow and arrow, and murder for the most trivial of reasons; the State Jail at Jagdalpur has always a high percentage of Bison-horn Marias doing time for homicide. He also is capable of nursing his revenge for a long time; a recent example was given by a strapping Bison-horn Maria from Palnar, who, after serving twelve years of a commuted death sentence, soon after his release took the first chance of picking a quarrel with a man whom he considered deliberately to have let him down by not giving evidence in his defence twelve years before, and battered his head in with a heavy bamboo stick. The Bison-horn Maria will in his fury declare an implacable enmity by stalking round his foe's house three times, either plucking straws from the thatch, or whistling the peculiar *su'i* whistle, or throwing some of his own pubic hairs at the house; and murder is the inevitable result. There were twenty-seven murder trials in Bastar between 1917 and 1923, and in eighteen of them the murderers were Bison-horn Marias, but only two of the murders were committed by Hill Marias. About half the Bison-horn Maria murders are committed in *landa* intoxication, and almost the same proportion in sudden fits of rage about nothing; for example, wives often are killed when the husband dislikes his food or it is not ready for him; one even lost her life for refusing to cook for her husband when he woke up hungry in the middle of the night. But there are on record Bison-horn Maria murders committed for all the ordinary sordid and criminal murder motives; the Bison-horn Maria is a man of far stronger feelings
[158] than the Hill Maria. The former actually runs amuck on occasion like the Malay; in two such cases the offender pleaded that he suffered from fits and ran amuck under the delusion, in the one case, of pursuit and, in the other, of possession by evil spirits and of the
628 imminence of a new rebellion. Cain indeed wrote in 1876 that 'blood revenge' had hardly died out in the Godavari valley, and was said to be 'in full exercise' in Bastar. The only apparent case of a hereditary vendetta of which I am aware occurred in Orcha, a Hill Maria village, where a grandfather and his son were murdered at long intervals for suspected witchcraft, while the grandson conveniently fell off a sago-palm tree as soon as he was old enough to claim the hereditary post of *pargana* headman.
692 There is a strong feeling everywhere of an eye for an eye and a tooth

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

for a tooth; but nowadays this is generally satisfied by invoking the police and the courts. But distances are great in Bastar, and in the rains, when the early hill grains are ripe, communications are bad; often the villagers conspire to hush up a murder or leave it to those affected to take their own direct action, rather than disorganize agricultural work by the troubles of a long police enquiry followed by committal proceedings and a sessions trial.

It is a relief to return from this darker side of the Bison-horn Maria's character to the light-heartedness of all Marias, but especially the Hill Maria. An engaging feature of this is his readiness to burlesque himself. A village *gaita* (headman) at Tondawada set the whole camp in fits of laughter by his description of his first vain attempts to use a pair of bullocks in the plough, mimicking himself pulled hither and thither by these wild-cat animals; at Hikul I was treated to a similar comic representation of what would happen if a Maria attempted to milk a cow. They are quick to seize on any foibles or peculiarities of individuals, without respect of persons, and have a happy knack of inventing apposite nicknames; this trait is common throughout the State, where there are nicknames for almost every State official current among all the primitive tribes, while few of the leading Hindu and Mohammedan settlers are referred to by their true names.

Frankness and honesty are still as characteristic as ever of the hill men and the wilder Bison-horn Marias, and many a man arraigned for homicide will state in court perfectly frankly why it was essential to kill his victim and how it was done. I have very seldom found any hesitate to answer any questions, even about the most intimate domestic matters. The Bison-horn Maria, however, being, at least in the open tracts, more sophisticated, is inclined to be suspicious; and he certainly is learning the ways of the courts, and how to defeat a justice administered on the evidence and not according to the facts; many know, for example, that the death penalty may be escaped if you can convince your judge that you murdered your victim because you believed him to be bewitching you. But in general a Maria witness can still be relied upon to speak the truth, although it involve his dearest relatives or himself in trouble; and the occasional pleader from British India is soon hopelessly at sea if he tries his usual methods of cross-examination even on a Bison-horn Maria who knows Halbi. Fortunately, the restoration of the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the village and *pargana* panchayats will considerably reduce Maria experience of the law courts. The Hill Maria never has had much recourse to them, petty theft being almost unknown and murder rare. His attitude may to some extent be gauged by the following example.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XVII

Village, Clan and Pargana Authorities and Panchayats; their Executive Authority; their Judicial Authority and Methods; Property and Inheritance; Position of Women; the Recent State Orders Restoring Judicial Authority to Panchayats

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One of the most remarkable features of the Bastar of 1927 was the extent to which tribal, village and caste *panchayats* still regulated the religious and social life of the people, acted as intermediaries between them and the State and its zamindaris in meeting State demands for taxes, labour and supplies and in protecting the ryots from undue exactions, and exercised much *de facto* criminal and civil jurisdiction. Here ready to hand was the nucleus of an organization which, if properly handled and fostered, could in time save the State much money spent on law and justice, police and general administration. But the opposite policy had consciously or unconsciously been followed. Any exercise of criminal jurisdiction, even in petty crop theft cases, had been regarded as usurpation of the authority of the police and courts, and persons who had already made ample amends under tribal custom were arrested and sentenced all over again by the tahsildars, while headmen and elders not infrequently were punished for not reporting the offences. A badly trained police, often singularly lacking in common sense, would descend on a village and waste days in pointless investigation of petty cases, expecting not only to be fed on rice, mutton and poultry by the villagers during their stay, but also to be provided with stores of grain under the old *bisaha* system to take away with them at the end of the investigation. Villagers would be compelled to carry the supplies thus forcibly taken from them to the police station, perhaps two or three days' march distant, and would rarely be given even the nominal payment prescribed under the old *bisaha* rules. Then would follow a protracted trial at the still more distant tahsil headquarters, ten witnesses being summoned where three or four would have been ample; and probably all these witnesses at the end of the trial would have to accompany the police party back to the police station to carry their impedimenta, and might be kept even longer as '*athpaharia begar*' labourers to clean the police office and lines and do domestic work for the constables.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The civil matters ordinarily decided by the *panchayats* would be marriage cases, such as settling the compensation to be awarded to a husband when his wife had eloped with another man. But tahsildars would entertain complaints under the sections of the Indian Penal Code punishing adultery from a husband dissatisfied with the *panchayat's* decision, and thereby undermine yet further the authority of the *panchayat*. I have in an earlier chapter referred to the effect of the unconscionable demands for forced labour and supplies on the position of the village headmen, and shown how in consequence the tendency was to put forward a dummy as the headman for secular matters, the real leadership of the village remaining with the religious headman, that is to say, the *kasyeq-gaita* in the case of the Hill Marias, and the *perma* in that of the Bison-horn Marias, but the dummy being available to bear the brunt of official wrath, though powerless to effect anything without the consent of the village elders. Formerly, there seems little doubt, the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* also discharged the functions of the secular headman; the differentiation of the two functions was the result of the State officials' treatment of the aboriginal. In many Abujhmar villages the functions are still combined, or are held by members of the same family, because State officials were always loath to penetrate into the interior of the Hill Maria country. With the revival of the authority of the headmen and *panchayats* that is now the policy of the State, it may be expected that gradually the religious headmen will resume the secular headmanship also.

It is not surprising that, as the result of these methods of dealing with the aboriginals, their *panchayats* tended to co-operate as little as possible with the State; their object became to conceal crime from the police and in general to comply with State requirements only so far as was necessary in order to avoid trouble, and, above all, visits of subordinate State officials to their villages. The records of murder and other trials show many cases of the village elders meeting and deciding to hush up a crime, especially if it had occurred at harvest or any other busy agricultural season, rather than have the whole life of the village community disorganized by police investigation, committal proceedings and Sessions trial. Such crimes may have come to light later through the *panchayat* reporting them at their own convenience, or through the widow or other relative of a murdered man being dissatisfied with the compensation which the murderer had been ordered to give, while in some *parganas* informers arose who subsequently used their supposed prestige with the police to become petty local tyrants. Conversely on occasions *panchayats*, disgusted with the failure of the police to investigate thefts or with the acquittal of guilty persons by the

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

623 692 tahsildars, took the law into their own hands and had the thieves killed.

Purely social matters, breaches of caste or tribal prejudices, were left by the State to the jurisdiction of caste *panchayats* and of the caste headmen, appointed for nearly all Hindu and semi-Hindu castes in the State by the Ruling Chief in the tahsils and by the zamindars for their own zamindaris; after the first appointment these offices tended to become hereditary in the family of the person appointed, the succession having to be recognized by the Ruling Chief, from whom the headmen of leading castes would receive a turban as insignia of office. A register of these headmen is kept, and appeals from their decisions in caste *panchayat* in social matters lie direct to the Ruling Chief, this power during the long minority of the late Maharani of Bastar having been exercised on her behalf by a relative of hers who manages the State temples at Jagdalpur. But the State never appointed caste headmen for Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who retained their own tribal customs in these matters, and whose *panchayats* did not, like those of Hindu castes, deal only with social matters, but also with petty crime and with the administration and agricultural management of the villages and clans, as well as their relations with the officers of the State. To some extent the Murias were in the same position; but in certain areas caste headmen had been appointed for them, and they had learnt to defer to the Palace as the ultimate arbiter in social matters, while great numbers of their villages had been granted to alien lessees who asserted their own authority and belittled that of the traditional headmen and *panchayats*.

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622 623 692 A text for the enquiries which I had made into the *panchayats* of the Marias was the following passage from the appendix to the chapter on caste (Chapter IX, p. 239) in Marten's 1911 *Central Provinces and Berar Census Report*:—

'The following account of the tribal council of the Maria Gonds of South Chanda has been sent in by the Manager of the Ahiri estate, and is worth quoting almost in full. Every genuine Maria village has a village headman or *patel*, called the *Gaita*. In addition to his office as a *gaita* he generally exercises also the hereditary functions of a *Bhumia* or religious headman of the village. This dual office used formerly to be held as a rule by one and the same man in the village, and, with a few exceptions here and there owing to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia*, it is still so held in the majority of cases. The man enjoying the double office is therefore the patriarch of the whole village community, and his authority in the village (or a group of two or three villages) under him is supreme. This post is hereditary. The caste has not a standing Panchayat or governing body. It is called together when required. But the system prevailing in the caste is far more developed and is in certain respects more far-reaching than the ordinary Panchayat system prevailing in other castes. The village *Gaita*, on receiving a report of a misdemeanour or other occurrence in the village, calls two or three elders of the village together—the number is not fixed, nor is it necessary to call the

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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same man every time—sends for the complainant and the accused, and after hearing the parties decides the case with the help of the village elders, who as a rule agree with his decision.

The jurisdiction of the village panchayat is confined to the village itself, and a local village panchayat is never referred to for the decision of a case by persons at a distance. A group of about 50 to 100 villages is constituted into what is locally called a *patti*, and this *patti* acknowledges the authority of the chief religious and social headman of the group, who is called the *Sendhia*. The *Sendhia* is the chief priest and judge of the *patti*. Every marriage contracted, every case of social misdemeanour involving the penalty of a fine, and every other social and religious function performed in any village of the *patti* yields the *Sendhia* a fixed fee in cash, ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 10, and in some exceptional cases up to Rs. 50. The office of the *Sendhia* is also hereditary, and the *Sendhia* is the dominant authority in the *patti*. The authority of the *Sendhia* (for purposes of a Panchayat) is invoked only in exceptional cases involving the interests of a number of villages, and in such cases the decision of the *Sendhia* on an appeal being made to him by or against a village panchayat (or a number of village panchayats) is final. For purposes of a panchayat therefore each *patti* forms a distinct unit, the internal composition of which is as follows :—

(a) Each village holds its own panchayat composed of a few village elders and presided over by the village headman (*gaita*).

(b) Each group of villages acknowledges the authority of the *Sendhia*, who is the court of appeal for difficult or intricate intra-communal disputes.

(c) Each *Sendhia's patti* is, as a rule, a compact block of country, sharply defined by prominent natural geographical boundaries (a range of hills, a large river or a nullah), and the *Sendhia's* authority is confined to his own *patti*.

The affairs of one *Sendhia's patti* are never referred to a *Sendhia* of another *patti*. Each *patti* is known by its local geographical name (such as the Lahiri *patti*, the Vennasagar *patti*, the Jarawandi *patti*, the Ghat *patti*, and so forth), and each *patti* is the sole undisputed domain of the local *Sendhia*. The only remarkable case of an exception to this general rule that occurred within the memory of living man was during the cold weather of 1909 at the village of Kotmi, which belongs to the Vennasagar *patti*. A Maria's daughter of the village eloped with a Mussalman. The local village panchayat took a feast from the father of the girl, and fined him an amount adequate enough for the dues of the *Sendhia*. The *Sendhia* demanded more and censured the village panchayat for having let the man off with a light amount. The village panchayat considered the *Sendhia's* demands to be exorbitant, and threatened to alienate themselves from him and to invoke the aid of a foreign *Sendhia*. This was too much for the *Sendhia*, who directly excommunicated the whole village panchayat. The panchayat therefore sent for the *Sendhia* of Judt, who naturally refused to affiliate the village to his *patti*, but, seeing the difficulties of the case, agreed to purify the culprit for a small fee, which was paid to him. He performed the necessary ceremonies and reclaimed the unfortunate father of the girl. Thereupon the whole *patti* of Vennasagar rose against the village of Kotmi, and threatened to use violence. This caused some uneasiness to the police, who began sending in reports. The Manager of the Ahiri estate went to the spot, and his camp was immediately besieged by about a hundred *Gaitas* of the *patti*, headed by the *Sendhia*, who clamoured for justice. Their complaint was that the village people of Kotmi had set a bad example, and that the people of the *patti* would know no rest till they (the Kotmi people) got themselves purified by the *Sendhia*. The Marias of Kotmi were, on their part, too obstinate to yield, and with great difficulty the Manager succeeded in effecting a compromise by prevailing upon the *Sendhia* to reduce his demands. He agreed ultimately to give absolution for a nominal amount, which was paid by the girl's father, and thus ended in a merry drinking bout what threatened to be a small civil war. The next

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

632 692 morning the *Sendhia* repeated the necessary spells, and, collecting together all the *Gaitas* of the *patti* with the Kotmi fellows, sprinkled fresh well water over their heads and declared Kotmi as re-affiliated to his *patti*.

'This specific instance illustrates not only the great power exercised by the *Sendhia* in his *patti* but also the fact that it is impossible for a village to alienate itself from a *patti* or to disregard the authority of a *Sendhia*.'

632 The South Chanda *patti* thus described seems to be very like the clan-*pargana* of the neighbouring Bastar Hill Marias, though much larger, if the figure of from 50 to 100 villages in each *patti* is correct. Actually, however, the *patti* probably includes several clan-areas or, at all events, villages of several clans, though I have not been able to make any enquiries in Chanda. The designation *Sendhia* is used in the Bhopalpatnam zamindari of Bastar for the headmen appointed by past zamindars over the local Naikpod, Kapewar, Barod and Dolod (Pardhan) castes; among Bastar Marias, however, the term appears to be used only in the Kutru Mar *pargana*, of which Arki Burga of Jegur, a village south of the Indrawati, was in 1930 the hereditary *sendhia*. But his sole function was the reclamation of any Maria guilty of a breach of social rules, and he had no other rights or authority, nor was his presence essential in any *panchayat* except one convened to deal with cases of outcasting. He was in no sense a headman of the *pargana*, and had none of the authority of the *sendhia* of Chanda or the *parganis majhi* or headman of the Maria and Muria *parganas* of Antagarh, Kondagaon, Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils in Bastar. In fact, there were no *pargana* headmen for the Kutru Mar and Bhairamgarh Mar *parganas* of Kutru zamindari, the *gaita* of the parent or principal village of a clan being the nearest approach to a *pargana* headman; when Arki Burga was asked to become *pargana* headman he refused; the little actual influence he possessed over the Kutru Mar *pargana* was shown by the fact that he had left the *pargana* to live at Jegur. The headmen of the Hill Maria *parganas* of Antagarh tahsil are sometimes called *sethia*.

632 622 In the two Hill Maria *parganas* of Kutru the village *gaita* is often still both religious and secular headman. The clans are small, and their villages not always contiguous. The *gaita* of the parent village may not actually decide all cases from each of the other villages, but he can interfere with the decisions of the *gaita* and elders of the other villages, and the latter often refer cases to him; for the decision of such cases he sits in *panchayat* with the *gaitas* of all the other villages of his clan. Examples of these small clan groups are the Gumelor villages of Dunga, Pariakot and Goti in Bhairamgarh Mar and the Mohanda villages of Lakka, Puslakka and Bhuri in Kutru Mar; of the former group the headman of Pariakot is the head *gaita*, though Dunga is the parent village, for the ancestor of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the family and clan to which she goes as a bride. She may elope with another man, but he must compensate the first husband. She must work for her husband, having his meals ready in the home or taking them to him in the field when he wants them, gathering forest fruits and roots, and doing her appointed work in the fields; many a woman has paid with her life by exasperating her tired husband by not having his food ready or by cooking it badly. She is not a full human being like a man. She is taboo when menstruating; she may not sleep in the field when the crops are ripening; she is debarred from attending at the festivals and *pandum*; she has no special dancing dress. Yet with all this she has not too bad a position. As a girl she has considerable freedom both in pre-marital sexual life and in the choice of a husband, and she is fairly free to leave her husband if he ill-treats her, or if he cannot beget a child. Tribal sentiment strongly condemns wife-beating. Her natural taste for ornament is given full scope, her parents gradually collecting beads and metal neck and arm rings, her boy-companion presenting her with beads and carved hair-combs, and her husband when she is married recognizing her right to spend a few of the scanty pice she earns from the sale of her basketry at the bazaar on simple trinkets. She participates in the tribal dances and songs, though not in the religious ceremonies that accompany them. In fact her position *vis-a-vis* her husband is far freer than that of the ordinary Hindu wife. Above all, she is not exposed to the evil of child marriage and premature motherhood, of which habits of their Hindu neighbours Maria headmen will speak with abhorrence.

Such in brief and imperfect outline are the main principles governing tribal law and custom, and the main features of the old village and tribal headman and *panchayat* organization. No attempt has been made in this chapter to draw any clear-cut distinction between the ways of the Hill and the Bison-horn Marias; in actual practice both treat such matters in much the same way, the main distinctions being (*a*) that the primitive clan organization is stronger and the authority of the headmen more limited by that of elders among the Hill Marias, and (*b*) that the Bison-horn Maria has been more in contact with the outer Hindu world than the Hill Maria.

The recent State Order restoring jurisdiction to Panchayats

Under the State Order framed in 1932 by my successor, the regular criminal courts of the State have been deprived of jurisdiction over the primitive tribes in cases of certain public nuisances, simple hurt and assault, thefts (except of cattle), of property worth Rs. 5 or less, mischief, trespass, house-trespass, bigamy, adultery and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bisor Horn Maria

692 623 enticing a married woman from her husband.[1] The civil courts have been deprived of jurisdiction in claims for civil damages arising out of these criminal offences, and in simple money, grain and cattle claims up to Rs. 25 in value. All such cases are to be dealt with by the village *panchayat*, the convening of which and the selection of the elders of which are left to the village headman. No particular lines have been laid down to regulate procedure; the *panchayats* are not allowed to impose more than Rs. 25 as a fine, though in marriage cases they may allow marriage expenses up to Rs. 50, while corporal, barbarous or degrading punishments are prohibited; and the village *kotwar* or watchman at his periodic visits to the police station has to report the results of cases decided by the *panchayats* of his villages since his last visit. Any person dissatisfied with a decision of the village headman and elders can appeal within a month to the *pargana* headman, who is assisted by a *panchayat* of four headmen chosen every year by the assembled headmen of the villages of the *pargana* before the tahsildar. Though no orders were issued to regulate the disposal of fines, the headmen are encouraged to spend them on village improvements, save where tribal custom prescribes a tribal feast as part of the penalty.

623 There has not as yet been time enough to judge the success of this attempt to restore authority to the headmen and elders. In some parts the *panchayats* appear to be working surprisingly well on the whole; in some they either have little work to do or else have not won the confidence of the tribes through not having the right men as members, or perhaps through a weak man having been made headman in the old days and not yet having been ousted by the religious headman or the natural leader of the village; a few have had to be superseded, and the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts restored, because they were tampered with by Hindu and Mohammedan traders in adjacent market villages; here foreign influence had perhaps already gone too far towards detribalizing the village life. Obviously a good deal depends on the personality of the *pargana* and village headmen, and on the unobtrusive sympathy and watchfulness of the State officials; regular inspection and interference would, of course, be fatal to the success of what is largely an attempt to defend the tribes from the visits of the petty official. In the Abujhmar hills and the parts of Dantewara and Jagdalpur tahsils which I visited in 1934, the headmen and elders greatly appreciated the relief which the orders had given from the burdens of police and court investigations, and the *pargana* headmen were taking their appellate duties seriously and fairly soundly. It

[1] The actual Penal Code sections are 277, 290, 323, 334, 341, 352, 354, 355, 379, 380, 426, 447, 448, 494, 497, 498 and 504.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

In the chapter on marriage we saw how the elders had to witness the betrothal ceremonies, and how the *panchayats* deal with cases of divorce and elopement. It may be added that among the Hill Marias the clan-headman, like the *Sendhia* of the Chanda Marias, gets certain traditional fees which the parties have to pay in addition to the compensation which the *panchayat* may award to the injured parents or husband, or to the cost of the tribal feast; at every marriage in Kutru and Bhairamgarh Mar the clan-headman gets a fee of eight annas; when a *panchayat* has settled the compensation to be given to the first husband by the man with whom his wife has eloped, the old and the new husband have each to pay the clan-headman four annas. But the latter is expected not to retain the whole of his fee-income, but to divide it with the headmen of the villages of his clan who have assisted in the ceremony or *panchayat*.

I have already described on page 246 above, the ordeal to which the Gume Hill Maria clan *panchayat* in 1929 subjected a Toinar youth accused of incest with a girl of his clan. How far the ordeal survives in the remotest parts of the State I cannot say; naturally instances of its use very seldom come to light. There is reason to believe that ordeals of this kind were a regular feature of the 'justice' administered by bygone Chiefs and zamindars of Bastar, rather than a product of aboriginal thought; compare the account of the settlement of the Kudmer-Jatalur land dispute at page 96 above. Ordinarily, however, the *panchayats* follow no regular procedure beyond hearing the parties and their friends as informally as possible and deciding the case then and there after free discussion among themselves.

Questions of property seldom arise among the Hill Marias, there being obviously so little scope for dispute when 95 per cent. of the cultivation is shifting cultivation of hillsides regarded as the property of the clan and not of the individual, and when the village site is shifted at least every six years. Sons after marriage live in a separate portion of the long-house of their father or uncle, if there is space for adding a portion for them, or else build a separate house as close as possible; when next the village is shifted there is ample space for all to live in separate houses under one long-house roof. Questions of inheritance of houses therefore arise only when, as among the Bison-horn Marias, villages have become permanent and are not shifted at regular intervals. Even here, however, there are few disputes. The little value set on houses is shown by the fact that it is generally the youngest son who lives on in the father's house after his death, as probably his elder brothers will have married long before him and built separate houses for themselves on marriage. There is among the Bison-horn Marias a vague right to demand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

for a tooth; but nowadays this is generally satisfied by invoking the police and the courts. But distances are great in Bastar, and in the rains, when the early hill grains are ripe, communications are bad; often the villagers conspire to hush up a murder or leave it to those affected to take their own direct action, rather than disorganise agricultural work by the troubles of a long police enquiry followed by committal proceedings and a sessions trial.

It is a relief to return from this darker side of the Bison-horn Maria's character to the light-heartedness of all Marias, but especially the Hill Maria. An engaging feature of this is his readiness to burlesque himself. A village *gaita* (headman) at Tondawada set the whole camp in fits of laughter by his description of his first vain attempts to use a pair of bullocks in the plough, mimicking himself pulled hither and thither by these wild-cat animals; at Hikul I was treated to a similar comic representation of what would happen if a Maria attempted to milk a cow. They are quick to seize on any foibles or peculiarities of individuals, without respect of persons, and have a happy knack of inventing apposite nicknames; this trait is common throughout the State, where there are nicknames for almost every State official current among all the primitive tribes, while few of the leading Hindu and Mohammedan settlers are referred to by their true names.

Frankness and honesty are still as characteristic as ever of the hill men and the wilder Bison-horn Marias, and many a man arraigned for homicide will state in court perfectly frankly why it was essential to kill his victim and how it was done. I have very seldom found any hesitate to answer any questions, even about the most intimate domestic matters. The Bison-horn Maria, however, being, at least in the open tracts, more sophisticated, is inclined to be suspicious; and he certainly is learning the ways of the courts, and how to defeat a justice administered on the evidence and not according to the facts; many know, for example, that the death penalty may be escaped if you can convince your judge that you murdered your victim because you believed him to be bewitching you. But in general a Maria witness can still be relied upon to speak the truth, although it involve his dearest relatives or himself in trouble; and the occasional pleader from British India is soon hopelessly at sea if he tries his usual methods of cross-examination even on a Bison-horn Maria who knows Halbi. Fortunately, the restoration of the criminal and civil jurisdiction of the village and *pargana* panchayats will considerably reduce Maria experience of the law courts. The Hill Maria never has had much recourse to them, petty theft being almost unknown and murder rare. His attitude may to some extent be gauged by the following example.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

695 There was a disputed boundary between the village of Kurmer in the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* and the adjacent Kutru Mar village of Jatalur; the Jata clan asserted possession over a strip of land belonging to the Parllo clan of Kurmer. I suggested, on the strength of a tale I had heard of former Chiefs' methods of justice, that the head of each village should come with a cock to the land, and that the land should go to the clan whose cock crowed first. This was hailed by both sides as a sound solution, and off we went to the land; but just before we reached it the Jata headman began to hang back, and finally backed out of the test; I awarded the land to the Parllo clan to the approval of men present from other clans, and on going over the land found that it contained a *pagh'ai* or alternative village site of the Parllo clan besides the cromlech left to mark the site of the Village Mother's 'temple', the *kasyaq-gaita's udam-garia* or seat of honour, and the *kotokal* or line of menhirs erected in the name of the Parllo dead. Here the Jata clan finally abandoned their claim when challenged by the Parllo *kasyaq-gaita* to eat earth from under the Village Mother's cromlech.

181 To be left to live the free life of the hills, untrammelled by restrictions on his user of forest, earth and water or his right to shift his village and his *penda* cultivation, is the unconscious ideal of the Hill Maria. If he is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls; and few of them or of the wilder Bison-horn Marias survive long imprisonment.

517 The Hill Maria shows great artistry in his bead-work, and is never at fault in his discrimination between colours and shades, [832] though he uses for all shades of green and blue the one word *kaqarondla*. He has general terms also for red, white, black and yellow, but none for intermediate shades. In his houses he draws 532 rude cup-marking patterns, *swastikas* and strange creatures in white earth on his mud plaster, or makes rough clay representations of women's breasts. His songs are low and rather melancholic in 533 sound, the youths' voices verging on contralto; but they are far easier for an English ear to understand than Hindu music, and have often a haunting refrain. Both he and the Bison-horn Maria love to hear European records on a gramophone, especially a good soprano or contralto, sea shanties, and violins or trios and quartets playing light chamber music; but operatic fireworks merely provoke laughter, Chaliapin singing the 'Song of Prince Igor' making them [534] ache with laughter, but being often encored. The Marias as a whole have no musical instruments except drums. Though the 517 Bison-horn Maria does not show the Hill Maria's artistry and 153

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

horticulture would be the ideal occupations in such a jail village, for the average aboriginal remains an agricultural novice.

As to the death sentence there is little to add to Mr Elwin's remarks in Chapter XVIII. Murder and violence were far more frequent in Bastar in the past than they have been since 1910, the Rebellion year, and at one time executions were carried out publicly in Pargana headquarters for deterrent reasons. This possibly had some effect on the vendetta and the bully. My own practice was to impose the death sentence only in cases of premeditated murder or murder with robbery. The very formidable and steady increase of murders and attempted murders in Hyderabad State ever since the virtual suspension of capital punishment is a warning against removal of the fear of death. And though death may be asked for by an occasional Maria in preference to long years of prison, its finality and grimness are realized even by them, and recognized at times as the only appropriate penalty. This happened when I sentenced Marvi Aita of Paknar (H. Case No 45) to death. The whole trial was impressive. I held it at Paknar, travelling there in the first motor car to use a newly made forest road and followed by a bus bringing assessors, counsel, accused and police escort; we were held up in the few villages through which we passed so that the *perma* and elders might sacrifice cocks and sprinkle blood on the car and bus wheels. The accused had been the village bully, and after the trial, which had added drama from taking place on the actual spot where Aita had deliberately shot Kamlu Masa dead with an arrow as he and his helper neighbours were bringing home his kodon harvest, when I had pronounced sentence, the entire village filed before me to touch my feet in gratitude for freeing them from the perpetual menace of Aita's bullying, and it was then only that I learnt that he had been wrongly acquitted by a former Diwan on a previous murder charge and had been guilty also of yet another killing which the village had been afraid to report.

Let me conclude this Foreword by warmly recommending the book to all whose duties bring them into contact with the aboriginal, though it is so to speak only a study

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 approached, and that in a fit of rage at his wife's infidelity he had killed her; and then later admitted that he had gone to the cave, but denied that he ever approached Jimme sexually. He said that he had been sitting on the rocks above when his wife threw a stone at him. He slapped her, and she fell accidentally from the rocks and was killed.

There can be little doubt, however, that the prosecution story was true. When the police searched the cave, they found on the dust of the floor the clear signs of a woman lying on her back and a pair of footprints on either side [833] of the marks made by the woman's buttocks. This clearly shows that intercourse practised according to the normal aboriginal technique had been in progress, and Jimme confirmed the fact.

Paklu, when I saw him in jail, was still young, a man of [697] fine physique and good-looking. He has behaved well in jail, for he has been made a Lambardar and wears the tall yellow cap which indicates his office.

762 578 Nine cases of suicide were due to disputes between wife and husband. Thus Kome is said to have been quick-tempered, a person who always exaggerated things. She was a young wife, only twenty years old, and when her husband came in one day tired and wet from the fields, and found no food ready, and abused her, she took a rope and slipped out of the house. Her husband, also young, found some stale food and took it back to the field. When he came home in the evening his wife was dead.

Mate had a row with her husband over lighting the fire. He was drunk and beat her, and she attacked him. But her [607] husband's elder brother, to whom she was strictly taboo and who had no business to touch her, intervened and beat her also. During the night, she left the house and tried to get across the Indrawati River in order to reach her mother's house. But there was no ferry and she hanged herself with her clothes. It is worthy of note that although there was a deep river at hand, the girl preferred to end her life by hanging.

An unusually tragic incident occurred at Metapal in February 1937. Kuhrami Hurra returned one day from the bazaar and found that one of his calves had been killed by a panther. Rightly or wrongly he considered that this was

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE ABORIGINAL PRISONER

I

How do the Maria get on in jail? This is a question that only a Jailor can answer, but I have been told by those responsible for aboriginal prisoners what an appalling ordeal prison life is for people accustomed to the great freedoms of the hills and forests. 'If a Maria is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment', says Grigson, 'he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls: and few of the wilder Bison-horn Maria survive long imprisonment'.[1] The grim forbidding walls, the stone beds, the rule of silence, the attitude of suppliant and obsequious deference before officials, the absence of any kind of recreation, the lack of all religious comfort, the denial of human companionship, the appalling monotony oppress and crush them. The Maria is perhaps insensitive to mental suffering, but on the other hand he has no reserve of philosophical or intellectual fortitude to draw on in a crisis. To him life with a woman and daily intercourse with her, a good supply of tobacco, the rough simple food of his village and the not infrequent stimulus of alcohol are perhaps the only necessities of existence. But they are necessary, and many prisoners have told me that they missed these things far more than the restraint upon their liberty.

How do the prisoners themselves look back on their experience? I will attempt to discover this by quoting their own sayings. Markami Doga said, 'I felt very sad in jail, and my thoughts were always in my house'. Another man said that he was continually worrying about his children and who would look after them. Another was distracted lest in his absence his cattle would be distributed like fowls among the neighbours. Many of the prisoners with whom I talked in jail had an extremely sad and pitiable look. I particularly remember the suffering on the face of Habka Masa who had

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 96. Since this was written, improved conditions in the Jagdalpur jail have increased the life-expectation of all the prisoners.

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[p. 207]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 killed his wife, and of Marvi Kuma who described how much he missed his wife and children and was always wondering whether they got enough food to eat. Vetti Rupe told me that he was continually thinking of his family. Dasru, himself a magician, was worried because in prison there was no Siraha to consult about the various untoward things that happened. The three men who had been sentenced from Pinna Bheji and whom I met after their release said, 'The worst thing was we always were thinking of our cattle and our homes, and to feel that we had got into prison by accident. We could hardly eat for the memory of our children'.

697 838 839 These aboriginal prisoners are remarkable in not finding sex a problem while they are in jail. This statement will probably be received with incredulity by many of my readers. I can only say that I have gone into the matter as fully as anyone could who was not himself a jail official or a prisoner setting out to investigate this particular point. The jail officials, who know their people at least as well as officials elsewhere, some of whom have had very long experience, have told me that cases of homosexuality are unknown and that even masturbation is not practised by the aboriginal prisoners. When I have discussed the same matter with released convicts they have all said the same thing, and I am inclined to believe them, because they have shown no reticence in speaking freely and even coarsely about other sexual matters. I think it is possible that the Maria who in his natural state is, as far as I can discover, completely innocent of any kind of sexual deviation simply would not think it possible that any substitute could give him satisfaction or indeed could be practised. The thing just would not occur to him.[1]

697 831 What is generally believed is that medicine is put in the food. I do not suggest this is so, but it is what is supposed. One after another has described how he never got any erection at all while in jail, and several people have found themselves impotent for a time after their release. Barse Mata of Gamawada declared that he had never even felt

[1] It would be hard to imagine a greater contrast to this than, for example, the conditions described by J. F. Fishman in his *Sex in Prison* (London, 1935).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 desire while in jail. Boti of Telam declared that the doctor
831 had made them all impotent by medicine put in the food. On the other hand, Pandru of Chichari said that he frequently suffered from erections in jail and from nocturnal emissions. Naturally, however, the worst thing about jail-life is the deprivation of the company of women, though many Maria would modify this by saying that it is rather the whole family atmosphere, houses, children, cattle as well as the wife, that was missed. When I asked one youth what jail-life was like, he said, 'No wife, no bazaar, no children, no family'. But the thing that most oppressed him in jail was the silence.

697 The food in jail is excellent, far better than the prisoners get in their own homes. Since 1935, a special effort has been made to improve the health of the prisoners among whom at one period there had been a rather heavy mortality. The result has been highly satisfactory. There was only 1 death in 1938, 2 in 1939 and 4 in 1940. Accommodation in the jail is for 308 prisoners and the daily average is between 210 and 230. Special measures are taken against respiratory diseases, notably influenza. Phyrnoderma (toad-skin), which was one of the chief causes of reduced vitality among aboriginal prisoners, has been practically banished by the prophylactic administration of meat and cod liver oil. The ex-convicts generally grumble at the food and declare that they are continually unwell, but all reports agree in saying that they actually eat heartily and keep very fit. I think the real fact is that the food is unfamiliar to them and that many of them suffer from nervousness and a general psychic depression which makes them feel wretched, even though their actual bodily health is excellent. Several prisoners have declared how they long for roots and the gruels prepared in the ordinary way at home.

697 The work given to the prisoners varies. Some of the
564 Maria work in the kitchens, and it is interesting that the Hindu prisoners respect their social status and agree to eat from them. Ghasia and Panka are not admitted into the jail kitchen. Maria and Muria do not do sweepers' work in the jail,[1] though when a man is hanged Maria prisoners deal

[1] But I believe that Gond prisoners in the Central Provinces are made to work as sweepers, a thing that should never be allowed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

with the corpse. Short-term prisoners, suitably shackled, are allowed beyond the walls to work in the gardens of the Palace and the higher State officials. Other prisoners learn to make baskets and chiks. But the main prison industry in Jagdalpur, as throughout India, is weaving. Some of the Maria have become experts at this art. I was told that Kunjami Malle and Marvi Tibru were excellent at it, and that Marami Dhurwa of Palnar was so good that he was sent to Raipur for training. In 1940 the receipts from jail industries exceeded Rs 10,000.

Unfortunately no aboriginal prisoner is able to take advantage after his release of the training he receives in jail. For weaving is regarded as the monopoly of the low caste Ganda and Mahara, and no aboriginal will ever degrade himself by practising it. Should he do so, he would be excommunicated, he would be unable to marry his daughters and he would be forbidden access to his clan and village festivals. I have constantly enquired about this and especially as to whether there is any reason behind it. Nobody seems to know the origin of the taboo. It may date from the days when the aboriginals did not use cloth at all, and regarded it as something foreign and alien. It may have simply come into being because of the Maria's dislike and scorn for the particular castes which practise weaving. It is not impossible, of course, that the Mahara and the Ganda themselves have encouraged the idea so as to enjoy the monopoly of trade. If all the Maria ex-convicts were to set up looms and make their own cloth, the existing weavers would be hard hit financially. I met one Maria who had tried to carry on his weaving work after a term in jail. But there had been such a commotion about it that he had to abandon the project.

It is a pity, I think, that some art or craft could not be taught to aboriginal prisoners, not only in Bastar but throughout India, which would be of value to them after their release. In five, ten or fifteen years a man could become an expert carpenter or wood-carver, a first-rate cook, an admirable market gardener. The Maria do learn a little gardening but they might do more, and carpentry on a large scale would be invaluable. For the aboriginal blacksmiths, whether they be Maria Lohar in Bastar or Agaria and Asur

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and see the bulk of the Council's funds, including their own contributions, spent on the open and advanced tracts of the district where the villagers must be placated for political reasons. More will be said on this point later in this Note, in dealing with the Garchiroli zamindaris.

The dancing at Surjagarh stands out in memory as faster and livelier than any other dancing seen on this tour. The drums too were different, great double membrane drums of short sections of *semur* (*bombax malabaricum*) trunks, up to 2 ft. 6 in. or 3 ft. in diameter. The *Gazetteer* well describes the typical Maria dance :—

'The favourite dance is a peculiar rippling step forwards, with the foot dragged, not very graceful when done by a single individual, but looking quite different when done in unison by a great circle of dancers singing a *re-la, re-la*, chorus to which the step keeps time. In some villages where the headman is an enthusiast for the pastime a trained band performs weird and wonderful step dances to the sound of the drum. At a big dance the trained band occupies the inner ring round the fire, while the common folk, men and maids, in separate rings move round in great circles in opposite ways. All are dressed for the occasion in their best, bearing in their hands weird ornaments of wicker work, with garlands of flowers on their necks, and, in their hair, feather ornaments humorously or coquettishly placed. Seen in the red glow of a huge log fire, glinting on the shining beads and barbaric ornaments of the dancers, with the throb of the drums, and the beat of many feet moving in unison to the wild music of the voices in chorus, a Maria dance is a spectacle not easily forgotten, but lingers as a characteristic scene when other details have faded from the memory.'[1]

That would well describe that wild night at Surjagarh, when the dancers, their spirits enlivened by several earthen pots of *mahua* liquor, kept up their dancing nearly till dawn. It had been a long and tiring day, and I retired early, the last thing seen from my tent before I closed the flap to shut out the blaze of the many log fires, the dust and the tramp of hundreds of feet, being our now nearly nude Local Board Member, well warmed by liquor and congenial surroundings, leading a ring of dancers and gravely demonstrating the right steps.

Next morning after an early breakfast we climbed with many of the night's dancers up to the keep of the old fort that crowns the Surjagarh hills, 1,273 feet above the forests at their base, the ascent being over what the *Gazetteer*[2] truly calls a noble cliff of black ferruginous mica schist.

'The ascent at first is by a narrow rift in the mountain, whose sides rise vertically on either hand 600 feet in height, and then the path winds round the face of the cliff in natural steps formed by the weathering of the schist. The whole ascent has been carefully fortified by a series of stone breastworks, here thrown across the path, there perched on an overhanging ledge of rock, and if properly defended would be impracticable for troops without means of shelling. Within the keep on the summit there used to be a small tank which

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), pp. 99-100.
[2] I'p. 428-9.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

712 has now disappeared. The gates of the fort are lying on the top, and there is a stone platform, on which are images of horses and elephants sacred to the presiding deity, Thakur Deo. Previous to the Gond conquest Surjagarh was a noted Mana fortress, and about the end of the 17th century was occupied by two famous chieftains, Sādho Vuria and Mula Vuria, who rebelled against the Chanda king, Ram Shah, and, secure in their strong fortresses, harried the low lands with impunity. At length Ram Shah granted the tract to a relative named Kokshah, who after some years of desultory warfare stormed the hill and put the insurgent leaders to the sword. Kokshah then made Surjagarh his citadel, and under its shadow his descendants, the present Ahiri family, have extended their possession, east and west, and south and north, until nearly 3,000 miles of country own them masters. The scenery of these hills is very wild, and the black glittering mass of Surjagarh, streaked here and there with patches of bright green and red, stands out grandly against the sky. The upper cliffs have a beautiful shrub, with dark green leaves and clusters of lovely blue flowers.'

There were still 38,650 Manas in Chanda district in 1931, and Thakur Deo on the summit of Surjagarh remains their tutelary deity. Also named after them is the fortress of Manikgarh in the Rajura taluq of Adilabad district. Russell and Hiralal[1] speak of them as a Dravidian caste of cultivators and labourers, possibly an offshoot of the Gonds, and associated in the popular mind with Gonds and Gowaris. They are now completely Hinduized, and have generally adopted Maratha customs. The Thakur Deo platform on the Surjagarh summit had a wealth of clay images, mostly horses, in type precisely similar to the horse images associated with Aiyyenar in South India.

137 If you stand on the summit, in whatever direction you look, north, south, east or west, all the Sironcha and Garchiroli tahsils and the Abujhmar Mountains of Bastar still seem to be one vast forest, with only occasional small yellow patches indicating village sites and cultivation. Speaking of the Chanda Marias' shifting cultivation 241 (*podu*) Lucie-Smith wrote in 1869[2]:—

'For the vast wilderness east of the Wyngunga it is the very best that could be devised. By it, year by year, more and more land is cleared of forest and made ready for the plough, and thus every Maria village has around it a very much larger area of open ground than would be the case if the plough only were used. No one who has passed through these great wastes, shut in by lofty trees and dense masses of bamboo, and seeing, sometimes for days, not a trace of human habitation, can fail to rejoice at the work fire and axe are doing. It is of course important to prevent the destruction of forest containing valuable timber, and to arrange for reserves of jungle wood, grass and bamboos near the cultivated tracts, but, this done, *dahi* cultivation should be encouraged. It would be idle to speculate upon the changes in temperature and in rainfall the clearance of the forests would entail, for even if the population increase to the full, and coal mines, railways and river navigation bring all the prosperity we hope they will, yet in all human probability the youngest teak seedling now springing into life will have grown old and withered to dust before the eastern wilderness shall have sensibly decreased.'

[1] Vol IV, p. 178, *et seq.*
[2] Loc. cit. para. 232.

252 with wood and fired; pots are placed in rows upon them. The motiari husk and clean the rice, and make the leaf-cups and plates, but the boys do the actual cooking. When the rice is ready it is tipped out in a great pile on bamboo mats. A pig, which is killed by being beaten on the head with a rice husker, is roasted in the fire till its hair is burnt off; it is skinned and cleaned. Flesh, bones and skin are cut up into little squares of equal size—an important matter, for it is essential that everyone should receive exactly the same amount. These pieces are fried in mahua oil, and put into large earthen pots with rice-water, salt, haldi and chilli and boiled till ready. Fish is prepared in much the same way, except that usually something sour is added to flavour it. Fowls are cooked in leaf-cups. The intestines are squeezed out, and the whole chicken with head and feet is roasted with a little salt. Eggs are wrapped in leaves and baked in the fire. Mongoose flesh is roasted and spiced with dried mangoes. Crocodile is boiled.

264 At the ghotul feasts and marriages I have attended everyone sits round in a big circle, and the boys (sometimes assisted by a few motiari) serve the food. The bits of meat are carefully counted out into leaf-cups and distributed. Rice is served from baskets or winnowing-fans direct onto leaf-plates.

At home, the family sits round the pot of jawa, which is taken straight off the fire and placed in the middle of the floor. Each has a little chutney on a leaf in front of him and an empty leaf-cup. The mother dips a gourd into the pot and helps the little children; then each member of the family helps himself. There is no idea that men should eat before women or elders before the children.

262 Doctors say that the Muria's food lacks fat and protein and criticise them
146 for not taking more milk, ghee and vegetable. No doubt the Muria, like other people, would eat more of these things if they could get them. But there is no doubt that they do not like milk, and rarely take it themselves or give it to their children.

● 731 Famine is not common in Bastar, for the people can fall back on the almost limitless products of the forests. But it has been known, and a sombre song preserves its memory.

539

Nimdre weke dāniona rawalni	Vulture, whither away, vulture?
Dori bhumi dāutona dāda le	I am going towards the west, brother,
Bhumi dukhr dukhr roy dāda le	For the day of want has dawned.
Bhumi te dukhr arit roy dāda le	The famine is over all the world
Hihli haro bhaiso roy dāda le	Black, black are the buffaloes,
Sarpane bhaiso arit roy dāda le	And all of them have died, brother.
Podar pungār doyo roy dāda le	White as cotton flowers are the cows,
Sarpane doyo arāu roy dāda le	And all of them have fallen in summer.
Pukla dhelāk rawali roy dāda le	On the broken clod the vulture,
Walo marāk kawali roy dāda le	On the withered tree the crow,
Kawar wohar inia roy dāda le	The crow is cawing, brother.
Raiyaka rayon kawali roy dāda le	It is ready to fly down.

VI. Honey

222 Honey was discovered by a Muria named Waddai who also gave his name to
539 the whole succession of Waddai diviners. Waddai went one day to a medium, with a gift of char nuts, seeking help for his sick son. On the way he met a monkey which had been entranced for falling while jumping from a tree and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

ceremony; I found no case in which any widow had married a man who was not her dead husband's brother (or parallel-cousin). Indeed, owing to the distances between Hill Maria villages and the fact that in nearly all of them the men are all of one clan, irregular marriages are far less common there than in the mixed-clan villages of the Bison-horn Marias. Among the latter the second husband has sometimes to compensate the dead husband's parents in part for the bride-price paid by them when their son married the widow, as well as compensating their younger son, if any. Sometimes the widow and second husband sit side by side on stools, the widow wearing a new cloth and new ornaments, and near relatives put marks on their foreheads with oil and turmeric. There is also sometimes a ceremony to transfer the widow from the clan of her former to that of her new husband; two pieces of grass are placed together in the form of a cross to represent a man, and this cross is separated from another by a knife. Two leaf-cups are filled with water, and three times water is poured from one into the other. The two grass crosses representing the two husbands are sprinkled thrice with the water, and then the heads of the crosses are plunged together first into one cup and then into the other. The knife is regarded as the witness of this transfer of the woman from one clan to the other. When a woman elopes from one husband to another, there is sometimes a similar reconciliation ceremony between the two men after the new husband has obeyed the *panchayat's* decision as to the compensation to be paid to the first husband; their four hands are placed together, and water is poured thrice over them.

It has been seen that women not only have practically free choice among the Hill Marias and considerable choice among the Bison-horn Marias as to their husbands, and that among the latter a woman frequently goes off to a new husband if she wants to. This is practically all that there is in the way of divorce, the position being regularized by the *panchayat* insisting on the new husband paying the appropriate compensation, which is generally only the bride-price paid for the woman at her original marriage. The children, if any, remain in the father's custody, since they belong to his clan. Women often desert their first husband if they have no children and consider his sterility the cause. Physical revulsion from an abnormality is another known cause; a Kuruk Maria fishing girl in the Behra Mar hill *parpana* ran away from a husband with a withered leg, which she said had been wasted away by an angry demon (*rau*), and despite her father's and brother's entreaties to her not to put them to the expense of having to refund to her husband the heavy bride-price of Rs. 70 that he had paid them for her, absolutely refused to return. Hare-lipped men seem to have

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

586 732 no difficulty in getting wives to stay with them. Dwarfs, on the other hand, not only find it hard to get wives except their elder brothers' widows, but are passed over in the succession to a post of responsibility or the management of a family. Madness is particularly dreaded, and would certainly involve the elopement of a wife. But husbands, though they would divorce a mad [833] woman *a thoro*, would still maintain them; sexual intercourse with a mad woman is believed to result in complete loss of virility. 586 I have heard of no case in which a husband has divorced his wife; she may be frigid or barren or in other ways unsatisfactory, but so long as she is not unfaithful her husband is expected to maintain her, and his remedy is to seek another co-wife, often getting her younger sister or parallel-cousin as compensation for her falling [674] short of expectations. The murder of wives in sudden fits of temper for petty shortcomings is unfortunately common among the Bison-horn Marias, though almost unknown in the hills. Nor must it [837] be assumed that because Bison-horn wives often elope, their husbands tamely submit to infidelity; the detection of an intrigue often results in the husband killing the wife or her paramour, though once a wife has made good her escape to another man's house the [593] husband usually accepts the *fait accompli*. The beating or ill-treatment of wives is strongly condemned by all Marias. ^a

^a [see cat. 116, p. 425, – Analyst]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

X 674 273 on the part of the Excise staff in certain areas, or greater willingness of informers to come forward with their tale of what is going on.

733 Although drunkenness usually is a marked feature of festivals, marriages and funerals, habitual drunkenness is never common among the aboriginals. For one thing they are too poor for it; for another it is too much trouble. A certain proportion of the people are teetotal, and others never touch mahua spirit and do not drink at any times except on privileged and ceremonial occasions.

II

X 674 273 How far does this drinking of alcohol explain the heavy incidence of homicide among the Bison-horn Maria? It is commonly said that drinking, and especially the drinking of landa rice-beer, is the main cause. It is true that a plea of drunkenness is frequently put forward by accused persons in the Court. But there is reason to suppose that frequently this is suggested to them by their counsel. In many cases the excuse of intoxication was not made by the accused in his confession to the police, or before the lower Court. It was introduced as an afterthought before the Sessions Judge. In the 100 cases the Court only accepted as true a plea of drunkenness in 19 instances. Of these 19, 13 cases of intoxication were due to landa beer, 4 to mahua spirit and 2 to palm juice. Landa intoxication usually occurred during festivals, but there is no record of any murder at a marriage or funeral, the other occasions when this drink is consumed in large quantities.

TABLE EIGHTEEN

Showing the occasions of homicide committed through intoxication

At festivals	12
At marriages	None
At funerals	None
After visiting a liquor shop	4

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

would never be able to repay during his lifetime, and the debt would devolve on his sons. Another Maria from Irakdumme village had borrowed Rs. 20 bride-price from an Echli money-lender ten years before and had so far paid him paddy worth Rs. 22-8 as interest, but nothing towards principal, and had no idea what the final demand of his creditor would be. Another Maria from Batanfundi village had borrowed Rs. 12 from an Ahiri money-lender six or seven years ago and though he had repaid the principal was still being dunned for Rs. 40 worth of grain as interest, and was afraid that this high rate would now be doubled, as owing to the crop failure of 1939 he had been unable to repay any grain that year.

Throughout this area a crying need is an agency for advancing small seed-loans. The Government have seldom done this, on the theory that the zamindar should meet his tenants' needs; but we could not find one who had ever been given a seed-loan by the estate. The rates of interest extorted by the nests of money-lenders at Ahiri, Rajaram, Allapilli, Indaram, Echli and other centres are preposterous. The need for these seed-loans has been imposed on the Marias largely by the arbitrary stopping of their *podu* (*dahi*) shifting cultivation; *podu* fields always produced seed grain at least. Such is the pathetic honesty of the Marias that when the Debt Conciliation Board was working they readily acceded to the money-lenders' request to place their thumb-marks by the hundred on application after application begging the Board not to interfere between them and their money-lenders: it was only by persistent effort that the Board secured nearly 800 applications. In our camps the Maria elders opposed debt relief measures on the ground that if a man borrowed it was only right that he and his heirs after him should go on repaying. The final report of the Debt Conciliation Board of 1936 mentioned some fantastic cases. In one a Telugu Komti of Indaram had lent a Maria of Koreli a bullock on hire in 1920, at the usual fee of Rs. 4 worth of paddy. For twelve years the Maria went on paying Rs. 5 worth of paddy. In 1932 the Komti made out that the Maria still owed him Rs. 700 worth of paddy, and proceeded to show against him further compound interest of 50 per cent., until, when the Board took up the case, the Komti claimed as much as Rs. 2,320 worth of grain—all this for the hire of a single indifferent bullock. This, however, pales into insignificance against an Echli case of a money-lender lending Rs. 32 to finance a wedding a few years before, and in his accounts showing this debt, despite a repayment of Rs. 20, as having risen to Rs. 17,519!

At every halting place and camp the Marias' chief grievance, however, was not so much the exactions of money-lenders as the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this
735 for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again."[2]

Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of
177 Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to
291 Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the
342 remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh
273 we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias
656 climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their
[415] waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa*.
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 100.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

partition of a father's property when a son sets up house for himself, but although he can press for his share, it is felt by the community to be against tribal spirit, rather than unfilial. When, on the other hand, a father had outraged tribal feelings by seducing his sons' wives and driving his sons from his house, his refusal to let his sons have any share in the family property was considered by the Bison-horn Marias an additional justification for his subsequent murder by his sons.

There is so little domestic property of great value among the Hill Marias, and so many of a man's few tools and possessions, as we have seen, are buried with him, that inheritance disputes about movable property are almost unknown. Though among the Bison-horn Marias less is buried or burned with the dead, the remaining movable property generally passes with the house; if the elder sons have set up separate establishments in their father's lifetime they will have equipped themselves with the few possessions they need, and will not worry about the younger brother appropriating what their father has left. Women's ornaments generally are buried or burned with them.

When the inheritance includes valuable rice-lands, they remain generally the joint property of the sons and brother's sons, and the father's surviving brothers, the eldest son generally nominally being the manager, though he will certainly have to give way to an uncle or younger brother or cousin if he is inefficient, weak-minded or deformed. The produce will be stored in his granary, but shared among the members of the family.

Daughters and sisters have no right of inheritance of their father's or brothers' lands or property. For the land is really the land of the clan, and the daughters and sisters will on marriage have passed to the clans of their husbands. A widow is entitled only to maintenance, and as on her husband's death she very often becomes the wife of his younger brother, she gets her maintenance as a matter of course; if he leaves no younger brother and she does not marry again, she lives on in her late husband's house and works with other women of the family, and is maintained by their husbands. A girl whose parents die before she is married frequently goes to a married sister's house and becomes a co-wife.

For a woman on the whole is a kind of property, or a valuable adjunct to the house and family. For her, the husband's family has had to pay a bride-price that is a severe tax on its resources[1]; or else, where cross-cousin marriage prevails,[2] she represents the repayment of a debt incurred when her father took his bride from

[1] See pp. 248–50 and 251–3 above.
[2] See pp. 234 and 247 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

same ceremonies and festivals are observed in connexion with cutting and firing of the *penda*, sowing, harvesting and first eating of the new crops. Most of the reaping of the '*big kosra*' crops had been completed, but that of the '*os kosra*' millets and pulses was still in progress. For many of the *penda* plots in the current *kaghai* cultivation clearing (see p. 107) this was the second and last year of cultivation, and the *kutki* crop raised was known as *hiwar*, a term, according to the *Gazetteer*,[1] always technically applied to these second year crops. I sent specimens of both *hiwar* and *kosra* or *kohala* (see p. 134) for identification to the Nagpur Agricultural College: botanically both were identical. These villages have never had the advantage of the special system of poll-tax assessment on every able-bodied axeman in the village which I devised for Bastar (p. 145). The system followed in these hill villages of Ahiri is roughly this. Each *penda* is cut by a number of villagers with the approval of the *gaita*, and the portion cut by each of them is roughly marked by one or other of the methods indicated on page 131. Help is taken from other villagers, who are always ready to give this mutual aid, and at harvest the produce is divided among the different shareholders of the *penda*, with something also for all who helped to clear the *penda*; sometimes a number of plots are specially earmarked for division of the produce by the *gaita* and elders amongst all who joined in clearing the whole *kaghai* and in watching and fencing the crops; a part of the produce is also allocated to villagers too old and feeble to work. The zamindar's *kamdar* or agent is paid rent, usually in kind, by the *gaita* for the whole village, for paying which the *gaita* takes a share of the produce of each *penda* plot. The village cultivation is in fact a truly co-operative enterprise.

I have alluded above to the arbitrary stopping in the plains Maria villages of the Chanda zamindaris of *dahi* cultivation, and the consequent increase of debt among the Marias. This Kuvakodi hill tract is fortunate, however, in having escaped this prohibition; it is the only Ahiri area where *penda* reigns undisturbed. It was therefore no surprise to find not a single case of old debt among the fifty or sixty Hill Maria cultivators who assembled at my camp from Kuvakodi and the other hill villages. Occasionally when crops are poor and the *kamdar* has to be paid rent in cash, the *gaita* goes to a Teli money-lender in the plains to borrow the money. But the villagers look on this as the debt of the whole village, not of the *gaita*, and though the Teli is as unscrupulous here as in any plains village in exacting high interest, yet the combined villagers are usually able to repay in kind in a year or two. Nowadays sometimes not only they, but even their Bastar neighbours, instead of resorting

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 170.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

101 brides, yet in the census of Bastar they were recorded as Murias.

000 Bhamragarh village itself had few Maria residents. Celebrated though it is as a beauty spot, to my mind the junction of the three rivers there can only be appreciated in its full beauty from the Bastar shore or, better still, from midstream, as I saw it first in 1927. This time we stayed in a forest rest-house on the Indrawati bank, and the Zamindar who had motored out to join me talked under the moon till late at night on tribal problems.

164 Yaws has long been a scourge of the Marias, in Chanda as in Bastar, but whereas the campaigns against yaws, begun when I was
● 744 in Bastar and carried on with unremitting energy ever since by Dr. W. P. S. Mitchell, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, have now almost eradicated the disease in Bastar save for fresh infection from contacts with Chanda Marias or Hyderabad Gonds and Koyas, in Chanda it is still very rife. Bhamragarh gave us an example typical of the difficulties which may beset schemes for helping the aboriginal in the absence of constant supervision of local minor officials. In 1936 the Government had opened a dispensary at Bhamragarh, primarily with the idea that it would become a centre for yaws treatment. Mr. Kerawala visiting Bhamragarh just before my tour, finding that hardly any yaws or other patients attended the dispensary, inquired why, and was told that the Assistant Medical Officer posted there was demanding a fowl and eggs from every Maria as a fee for each injection. His plea was that he had extreme difficulty in getting supplies, so that unless he could 'live on' the Marias he often had to go back by cart the 38 miles of forest track to Allapilli to get supplies, which meant closing the dispensary for nearly a week at a time. One of many things into which I was looking during this tour was the progress in Chanda of the first year of an anti-yaws campaign financed from a Government of India grant. Before that campaign began such anti-yaws work as had been attempted had been haphazard and unplanned, and nothing had been done to ensure that each patient took the full number of injections needed for a permanent cure. At all my camps in the Marias country patients streamed in for treatment, and as the Sub-assistant Health Officer deputed to accompany me for yaws work travelled in my lorry and had to stop in every village on our way to treat yaws patients, our arrival in camp was generally long after dark. The incidence of yaws seemed far greater than the Public Health Department had imagined. We had cases, as I have said, at every camp, perhaps especially among the Hill Marias at Kuvakodi, in Lahiri, and in all the villages between Pirmeli and Surjagarh, and thence on into Aundhi zamindari in Drug district;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias, Gonds, Marars, Mahras, Halbas, almost all communities were infected. At Jarawandi and in the villages of the Jharapapra and Aundhi zamindaris along the Bastar border many Maria and Halba villagers contrasted the Central Provinces Government's lack of care for them in Chanda and Drug districts with the anti-yaws and other public health work over the border in Bastar. It is of course only comparatively recently that doctors have recognized the existence of yaws as a distinct (and easily curable) disease which responds to treatment similar to the usual syphilis treatment; the *District Gazetteer*, for example, refers to the disease as 'a mild form of leprosy named "Gondi rog"'.[1]

Another thirteen miles of forest track, fairly easily negotiated by cars, brought us from Bhamragarh to the large village of Lahiri,[2] the headquarters of a *Sendhia's patti*, as mentioned at page 287. Lahiri lies at the foot of the Abujhmar Mountains, and beyond it no wheeled vehicles could proceed. Between Bhamragarh and Lahiri we saw several examples of the skilful *gatta* cultivation of the Marias, thus described in Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report:—

'In *gattas* the land above the dam is cultivated. To construct a *gatta*, a miniature valley with gently sloping sides, through which a stream flows, is chosen. The space between the banks of the stream is built up in the hot weather with trunks of trees, having their thinner end towards the point from which the current flows, and across these are fixed smaller logs and brushwood. The upstream face has thus a gentle slope to the front, while the rear face is almost perpendicular, and is sometimes strengthened by vertical stakes. The barricade is carried from four to eight feet above the level of the banks, and is then heaped with earth. As soon as the first rains have softened the ground, sods, about fifteen inches long by twelve broad and five thick, are dug with a heavy teak implement called a *katwa*, and with the sods wing embankments are built. These are run out in continuation of, and level with the log barricade, until the rise of the valley reduces their height to about a foot, when they are sloped off to the front and flanks; and pipes of *mohwa*, *sa* or *gougool* are put through. Similar *gattas* are constructed at convenient distances at other points of the stream, and if the situation be favourable, twenty of these *gattas* may be seen spanning the valley in regular series. Surplus water passes round the flanks of the *gatta*, and sometimes in floods, the stream tops the dams and cascades over. Rice is planted in the wet ground above the dam, and, where there is a succession of *gattas*, water, if required, is passed from a higher to a lower level through the wooden pipes in the embankment. Some of the *gattas* rise to twenty feet above the stream bed, and are very substantial structures, flooding large areas.'

This skill is slowly making its way among the Hill Marias, and the illustrations facing page 146 of this book of a Hill Maria dam at Tondawada in Bastar are really of a typical *gatta*, including the hollow tree-trunk pipe. That this traditional skill persists and has developed into a real irrigation technique has been shown by Rao

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.
[2] Spelt Lahir on *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 65A, ref. MV8455.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a fearful pride, but soon lose their fear, and try to crowd into the seats; their women, however, are as reluctant to risk entering a car as any old village woman in Cornwall thirty-five years ago. It was a pleasure later in the day to see the bold adventurers of the morning who watched the white man's toilet operations conducting parties of sight-seers into the tent and pantomiming the use of brush, razor and everything there. The Bison-horn Maria is more sophisticated, and will not intrude without being asked, nor is he so curious about small things; but a motor-car is as great a draw to him as to the hill men. Both are very interested in seeing a carburettor stripped and assembled or a tyre changed, or any mechanical repairs; they show quick intelligence, and could soon be taught. In the spate of bridge building on the State roads in recent years they have been quick to grasp methods of sinking piles or getting great beams into position, and have not been slow to offer suggestions that have sometimes been practicable. The newly built road bridge over the Indrawati at Jagdalpur is really built according to the same method as the bridges which even Hill Marias construct across their rivers, with modern and stronger materials and other improvements.

My inquisitiveness about their houses, habits, possessions, agriculture and customs in their eyes must seem much like their curiosity about my ways. Actually their mental processes are not unlike ours, when allowance is made for their centuries of isolation; they are certainly more receptive than the ordinary villager of British India, whose thought has for generations been stunted by the cumbrous wrappings of caste and debased Hinduism. A striking instance of this is the comparative ease with which vaccination was made compulsory years ago throughout the State and is welcomed by the Marias, in strong contrast to the keen opposition to it even in the cities of British India and to the caution venturing on timidity with which provincial Governments make tentative advances in the direction of universal compulsion. Not only is vaccination really universal even in the hill villages, but the Marias are keenly alive to the advantages of inoculation for cholera and yaws, and, in fact, are inclined to demand '*tika*' or inoculation for every ailment, those of them, that is, who have seen for themselves cholera checked or yaws cured by injections; for till recently no medical relief other than vaccination had reached the hills.

In natural cheerfulness few races can surpass the Hill Marias, who, like all Gonds, are quick to see the fun of things, whether it be something that spontaneously appeals to their sense of humour, or a joke put to them by some outsider. Their humour is apt to be broad. Very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

natural than for the backward Marias aspiring to raise themselves to Raj-Gond status to copy gradually the Raj-Gond social organization? It is equally possible that *pari passu* the Raj-Gond ruler and nobles encouraged this: in all these semi-feudal, semi-tribal states and sub-states, as to this day in the States and zamindaris of Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the Maharajah of the State or the Rajah of the zamindari remains the final arbiter in caste matters, even often conferring the right to wear the sacred thread on communities actively hinduizing themselves. At Surjagarh and Jarawandi camps, various *Sendhias* and headmen practically admitted to me that god-grouping was not originally a Maria institution.[1]

From Lahiri there was a long climb of thirteen miles to the Hill Maria village of Kuvakodi, where we halted for four days, including Christmas Day. The track led at first up the valley of the Lahiri river, then up the side valley of a small tributary, and so by an exceptionally steep ascent on to an undulating plateau, across which we reached Kuvakodi at dusk, our camp equipment all being carried on poles by Marias, whom on arrival we rewarded not only in cash but, in Bastar fashion, with salt and beads, and a feast of pork: the Marias sat ranged by clan and village, and those who killed and cooked the pork distributed to every man and child, and to the women of Kuvakodi, a portion of the meat off each joint of the pig. On the way up a slight detour took us through the small village of Gudumundi, and from Kuvakodi we visited Podewara and the Bastar village of Nelangari, some five miles from our camp.

Each day started with a parade of yaws patients for inoculation, all from Chanda villages: the Bastar Marias, who came in to see me and to join in the dancing each evening, looked tolerantly on, having themselves long before had the benefit of the Bastar anti-yaws parties.

The whole cultivation system of the Chanda Hill Marias is identical with the Bastar system described in Chapter VII of this book: it is, that is to say, *penda* cultivation and not what is generally known in the Central Provinces as *dahi*, or its Chanda plains variations of *khamori*, *jalapod*, *podu* or *sampod* (these terms will be explained later in this Note). There is the same broadcast sowing on the same kind of clearings of seed of all the minor millets and beans. The

[1] Hämmendorf in reviewing Shamrao Hivale's *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley* has pointed out that the fact that the Pardhans' clan organization is everywhere based on that of the local Gond, does not disprove the different origin of the two peoples, for there are many examples of other tribes adopting their Gond neighbours' system of phratries and clans. He instances from Chanda district and Hyderabad State not only the aboriginal castes as certain Maratha blacksmiths and brass-workers who have the same clan names as the Gonds, *Man in India*, Vol. XXVI, 1946, p. 231. Compare also the Kurak fishing tribe in Bastar, pp. 163-4.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

the eggs go bad, the priest plucks the feathers of the hen and puts them with the eggs. Broken egg-shells (which are usually preserved on bits of stick and kept under the roof) are added and all are taken to a cross-road. The priest cries, '*Thu thu*, you wanted to injure my hen. Take this and go away'. After this, the hen grows new feathers and the next lot of eggs will be good.

In the north-west of the State, the son of the village Gaita has a position of privilege in the ghotul and is often appointed its leader, but in the rest of the State the boys of the priestly families have no special privileges and can claim no special office; they are treated exactly the same as any other boys. But the Gaita's and Siraha's sons begin their training as priests or mediums while they are still boys, and many chelik have the power of falling into trance and prophesying. In Masora I saw chelik being taught how to bathe the gods and carry them about. In Koilibera I watched the Gaita teaching two of the chelik how to sacrifice chickens and offer egg-shells to the gods at the end of the Pus Kolang expedition. Parents often take their sons to special festivals so that they can learn what to do by imitation. The chelik usually attend ceremonies as acolytes and prepare the sacrificial food, wash the vessels, and make ready the sacrificial hearth. In this way the future Gaita or Pujari learns his business. The function of Siraha or Gunia is not always hereditary, but boys are chosen and trained when it is found that they are of an unusually sensitive temperament.

VII. White and Black Magic

Hitherto we have been dealing with Muria religion mainly in its relation to the gods; we must now take a brief glance at its prophylactic and protective measures on behalf of man against his natural and ghostly enemies. Chelik and motiari are protected against black magic by the divine power of the ghotul fence, but they are only safe while they are inside the ghotul. Evil powers cannot enter the building, but they camp all round, and the Muria boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of battle in the unseen world.

Black magic entered the world through an insufficiency. Bhagavan had seven daughters. He had prepared flour with which to create man, but his daughters stole and ate a little from some of the heaps of flour. In these there was thus not enough material for them to become real human beings and they became magicians and witches. Because of their lack of flesh and blood, they try to steal flesh and drink the blood of men. The warlock and witch are thus sub-human, not fully created. In the untouched Muria tradition, the enemy of mankind is usually a man; belief in female witches and the evil eye of woman is generally a later and Hindu accretion to the old beliefs.

The story comes from Karikhodra. In it we see that the warlock and witch are sub-human, not fully created. In other stories witchcraft originates in disobedience and cannibalism. In Matawal in the Mardapal Pargana we were told the following tale:

> A Muria and his sister left their parents' house and went out to seek for work. After a time they returned home and wished to make an offering to Mother Earth. They went to the shrine of the goddess and the boy said to his sister, 'Whatever you do, do not eat any of the flesh sacrificed here'. They found that the Gaita had put some flesh on a saja leaf in the name of the goddess before her shrine. As they approached a crow flew down, ate some of the flesh and scattered the rest. The boy picked it up and put it back again on the leaf. Behind the shrine a lot of blood from the animals offered and sacrificed had

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 that his wife did not bear him a child, he went to the Waddai who discovered the real reason, performed the proper rites and soon a large family came into being.

754 Witches can injure women by prolonging their menstrual
755 periods. The Siraha can counter this by offering sacrifices
841 to the Dead and to the Mirchuk. In Kameli a woman who was suffering from mennhorragia was cured by this means.
[762] But sometimes the Siraha can do nothing, and in despair the unhappy woman may hang herself.

754 At Borgum I was told that only widows can perform black magic and that they usually call on the ghosts of the dead to help them in their wicked deeds. Here they gave me an interesting account of how a witch can take precautions against discovery. She takes her familiar, say the ghost of a murderer or suicide, with her to an ant-hill and there she 'binds its mouth' by removing some of the earth from the hill and uttering charms. She says to the ghost, 'When the Siraha questions you, do not disclose my name'. Then she replaces the earth. It is believed that, just as any earth that is removed from an ant-hill is automatically filled up the next day, so misfortune will enter the house of the ghost she has bound if it betrays her.

●[751]
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Charm against disease, made of small bits of chicken-bone.

Dread of this witchcraft or enchantment is a very powerful factor driving men to violence, for the fear is still a live one and the dangers are supposed to be great. Guma Hunga left his home and village because he believed that his family was being bewitched by a man called Burgi. A year afterwards he saw his enemy in the new village to which he had moved, and murdered him in a sudden access

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

servants. Though the Bison-horn Marias are not free from either venereal disease or the visits of these gentry, yet they have been fairly successful in keeping their women to themselves, and have suffered little except in the south, where many of them go at times to Dummagudem and other Madras towns for work. If, however, the Telugus have given them venereal disease, they have more than repaid them with yaws. 164

Skin diseases, such as scabies, ringworm and eczema, are common, especially among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, who under Hindu influence are taking to the use of clothes. They cannot afford a change of clothing, and dispensary treatment is defeated at once if the old infected clothing cannot be discarded. Hill Marias wearing only scanty loin-cloths are far less affected; but even among them the 280 cases treated included 10 of scabies, 9 of ringworm and 7 of eczema. [177]

Eye complaints are frequent, owing largely, no doubt, to the habit of living and sleeping in dark unventilated huts and dormitories thick with smoke. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 16 of conjunctivitis, 5 of cataract, and 5 of other eye complaints.

Malaria is very common among the Bison-horn Marias, and in the Bijapur tahsil blackwater fever occurs. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 26 of malaria, only 4 of which were of children with badly enlarged spleens.

Old men and women are frequently seen crippled with rheumatism, and 17 of the 280 cases were of young men suffering from rheumatic complaints. Of the rest of the 280 cases, 24 were badly neglected ulcers, 6 bad foot-cracks, 25 simple stomach complaints, and 9 (including 3 of pyorrhoea) neuralgia from badly decayed teeth. No figures were kept of what is now the most obviously prevalent complaint, hydrocele, because it was impossible to treat this in camp. Glassford noted the prevalence of this in the sixties, and wrote in paragraph 66 of his Report that :—

'Hydrocele . . . is exceedingly common in the Chintalnar and Sonabore (i.e. Sukma) Talooks, and also around Dantewara and in all parts, indeed, lying adjacent to the Balia Deola range of hills. I should say that from 10 to 20 per cent. of the population in these parts are afflicted in this manner. Their own account of it is that it is caused by drinking the water of nullahs during the freshes.'

To me it now seems commoner in the Hill Maria country than elsewhere. The victims know no cure, and are only beginning to realize that something can be done for it in the dispensaries.

The idea that Marias are expert physicians is an amusing example of the general Hindu ignorance and superstitious dread of the aboriginal. In actual fact the Maria has only a few queer 757 752

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

nostrums like the use of red-ants for fever or python-flesh for pot-belly already mentioned, and cauterization is the only treatment he knows for simple injuries or foot-crack (just as he brands the flanks of ailing cattle). A Maria bitten by a rabid dog at His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler's Christmas camp at Kondagaon in 1927 refused point blank to be sent out of Bastar to Raipur for Pasteur treatment, but ultimately as a concession to the general anxiety asked to be given the body of the dog, and ate its liver.[1] To Marias illness is generally a manifestation of something malignant, either the magic of a human enemy or the ill-will of a god or spirit. At funerals, steps are taken to ascertain whether magic was the cause of death; in illness a medium is called in, or a *wade* or *gunia* with knowledge either of spells to defeat the spirits of evil or of the white magic means of blowing away illness, *jhara phukna*, epidemic or epizootic disease may be defeated either by palisading the village after sweeping it clean, and posting guards with bows and arrows to shoot the demons of illness, as was done by Hill Marias in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, or by special disease-riddance ceremonies like the annual ceremony described on page 140. Yet such is the Hindu's faith in their 'medicine' that in 1930 the late zamindar of Sukma hastened his death when in the last stages of diabetes by taking the advice of Bison-horn Maria 'doctors' or *gunia* to the effect that he had two intestines, one of which had withered like a dead plant, while the other, though withering, was still partly green and could be revived if the patient fed it with lumps of black earth.

Maria treatment of disease

B. Manufactures

In the preceding chapters frequent mention has been made of basketry, for Maria measures, grain bins, walls of houses and fences, dancing shields and so on. The Hill Marias are great basket workers, men and women. The men make all the big basketry bins for storing grain and the large baskets sold at the markets, as well as dancing shields and fencing and matting; the women make the basketry measures, basketry plates and the smaller domestic baskets, as well as brooms of various grasses, which are generally plaited together at the top by basketry methods. In camps, Hill Maria youths almost invariably employ any spare time in basket-making. Bison-horn Marias on the contrary leave it almost entirely to their women, except that the men make the basketry caps that are the basis of the *tallagulis* bison-horn dancing headdress, and fencing.

1 [See cat. 116, p. 421. - Awalysf]

1. Basketry

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip. All Marias agree that the dead are somewhere underground; men, animals, trees, and perhaps rivers and streams have in them *jiwa*, a principal of life, and some say that when a man dies his *jiwa* goes to Pogho Bhum, the sky, while that part which is cremated or buried goes below the earth and is his *kanal*. There is a belief that the menhirs erected at the *kotokal* or *wraskal* increase in size if the *kanal* commemorated by it is happy. There are traces of an embryo belief in reincarnation in the practice among Hill Marias of examining a new-born baby to see if it has the same birth-marks as a dead ancestor and, if so, of naming it after the ancestor if of the same sex, or his spouse if of the other sex. Hindu ideas are beginning to influence Bison-horn Marias; tombs are erected sometimes by the side of the menhir in the *wraskal*, thatched over to protect the dead from the heat of the sun, and with a pot of cold water, replenished from time to time, hung over the memorial to drip through a small hole in the pot to cool him further. But, like their ideas about the earth and the gods, the Marias' ideas about the Departed and the after-life are very indefinite and vary from place to place; it is safe only to go on their actual practice, and not on what some of them will say by way of generalization or theory; the latter are certain to be those who have had most contact with the outer world and persons of other faiths. There is one practical way in which old Bison-horn men show their belief in some future existence. They often choose before death the cow or bullock to be sacrificed when their menhir is erected in the *wraskal*; and it is alleged that if the heir thinks it better to slay some other animal, the animal chosen by the dead man always pines to death. The graves of Hill and Bison-horn Marias are adorned with strips of cloth, spears, fishing-rods and other things they may need hereafter, and their ornaments are buried often with them.

B. Magic and Witchcraft

We have seen before that such is the ignorance of the local Hindus about the Marias that, in the words used by Glasfurd in 1862,[1] 'the simple and unsophisticated Gond tribes are believed to be expert necromancers, and on the most intimate footing with evil spirits'; and that the Marias have a totally undeserved reputation as physicians, although their general idea of sickness

[1] Report, p. 52.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *waddis* or *waddi*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[2] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[3] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[1]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[1] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 168. [3] Report, pp. 32-4.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

eyes; it throws down grass from the roof. But no one need ever be afraid of the ghost of a chelik or motiari.'

During the bazaar ceremonies in the east of the State (when these are performed for a dead chelik or motiari) the villagers say, 'Mahapurub sent you into this world only for a little while; he did not intend you to live with us for long; so don't be angry and don't trouble us'. The parents are led round the shops and then go home leaving the Uriya-bhut in the bazaar. The dead boy or girl is not mingled with the Departed as are the married, and no menhir is erected for them.

Sometimes the ghost of a chelik may be dangerous. In the compound of the Khutgaon ghotul there was formerly a great stone. One of the boys died and the ghost came to sit on it bringing an epidemic with him. Many boys and girls died and the ghotul had to be destroyed and rebuilt in another place. But the stone remained where it was and when the villagers tried to move it sickness broke out again and so they left it alone.

Many Muria say that when an unmarried girl dies her ghost is dangerous because if a witch can get hold of it, she gives it the form of a pretty girl and sends her to rob men of their seed. Such a girl may appear as a man's mother or sister and torment him.

A dead motiari may also continue to visit her old friends of the ghotul. This only happens, however, when the boys sleep outside, for it is believed that Lingo protects the actual building from the invasion of any witch or spirit. The Sirdarsingh of the Chargaon ghotul told me how he once had an encounter with such a ghost. 'She visited me and I went to her; for many days she was with me; I could not get rid of her. I often went to her and my clothes were spoilt with my discharges. At last I gave her a comb and necklace and she went away, but for fear she may return I sacrifice a pig every year.' So too motiari complain of visits from some old lover's ghost: 'he comes to us, pressing us'.

III. The Soul and its Fate

The belief in immortality, or at least in some kind of survival after death, is bound up with the idea of the soul. The Muria theologians say explicitly that a man has two or even three souls (*jiwa*). In Bakulwahi the villagers said that after death one of these souls[1] went to Mahapurub, one became a Hanal and lived in the Pot of the Departed, and the third became a Chhaiya or Shade, a ghost that visited his relatives in dreams and often made himself a nuisance. The word Hanal, as Grigson has pointed out, is literally translated 'The Departed', for it is a past participial form of the Gondi verb *handāna*, to go.[2] Whenever I speak of the Departed, therefore, it may be taken as translating Hanal in original. In Randhna the people said that,

> Every man has two souls: one lives in his mouth and one in his body—you can feel it going *duk-duk* in the chest. The first soul goes from the mouth direct to Mahapurub; the other remains in the corpse and goes with the mourners to the grave. It watches the body being burnt or buried from a tree nearby, then goes to the nearest stream and lives there until the people come and catch it in the form of a fish and take it home. Then it lives in the house as a god (*deo*).

So also in Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria of the Abujhmar foothills said that,

> A man has two souls: one always remains with him; the other, a smaller one, leaves him in sleep and its adventures are what we call

[1] Throughout, when I use the word 'soul' it represents *jiwa* in the original.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 223.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

772 means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose 775 brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.[1] I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.[2] The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. The Intervention of the Departed in Human Affairs

775 But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally
769 interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are particularly interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any
[837 breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery
●753] is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or grievous hurt peace can only be made between the two families if peace is made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery with another man.

769 The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead. Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall, to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing, to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 96.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubstantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, op. cit., p. 141.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

755 To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and
781 tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Anga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

755 When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thaa* is performed.

A *thaa* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahápurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

759 Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means.
755 Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescrip-
278 tion of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833] *For impotence.* The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *tej-rál* and *bhoj-rál* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753] *For dropsy.* This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

your mat to sleep on'. So I had to get up and give him the mat on which we were sleeping together. I was very sorry, but when I came back, she took off her sari and spread it for me to lie on, and I covered her with my blanket. 154

In Markabera the head of the chelik said, 'If my ghotul-wife is away, I dream of sleeping with her. I chase her and often have her'. He sometimes experienced orgasm during such dreams. 'I once dreamt that I was going to dance in another village. I walked along the road with a girl I had always wanted. That night I was able to sleep with her in the other village.'

A chelik at Chandabera said, 'We generally dream of our earliest loves in the ghotul, for these are girls whom we never forget. We dream that they are sleeping by our side or running away from us. Sometimes we dream that we have gone out fishing with them or that we are on our way to a marriage dance'.

The seriousness with which the Muria treat their dreams and the reality they ascribe to them is clearly shown in the precautions taken the following day. I have already referred to various cures for nightmare. I will add a few more. At Bhopna a Muria said, 'If I dream that I have gone down under the water, I consult the Siraha and he says that it means that an evil ghost is coming. This once happened to me, so I got seven different kinds of wood and made a bonfire of them by the bank of a stream. I put some gur and ghee on the fire. Then I and my wife went round it three times, entered the water and ducked below it. We took off our old clothes and left them there on the bank, dressed in new clothes and went home without looking round.' This was rather a drastic and expensive cure. An easier means of averting the possible danger of a dream is this from Chingnar: 787 782

> A dream of a fight between two people suggests danger from black magic. To avert this the figure of a man with a bow and arrow should be made with grass and a bad egg, a pig or a chicken should be offered to it. The little image should be thrown away outside the village and the danger will disappear. [754]

Gatru of Chaniyagaon once dreamt,

> A beautiful woman came to my children and said to them, 'I am going to devour you, because your parents give me nothing to eat'. The next day my children fell ill, and the Siraha declared that their sickness was due to Lagar Deo, who was angry because the customary offering to him three years after the first child had not been made, and he therefore wanted to kill all my children. So I dedicated two pigs to Lagar Deo to be allowed to wander freely and killed three years later. Once I had done this my children recovered. 787 753 782

At Palnar, the Susl once dreamt that he was climbing up a huge stone. Suddenly he saw a chaprasi, he was frightened and tried to run away. He fell down and broke his teeth. When he awoke he found he had fever and only recovered after he had sacrificed a pig and made other offerings.

In Chandabera, a Muria jealous of the happiness of the chelik performed hostile magic against the ghotul. The Sirdar dreamt that one of the boys had died and his corpse was being carried away for burial. Soon afterwards he himself got an attack of fever. He was sleeping at home and dreamt that a chelik came to him saying, 'Come, let us go to dance at a wedding'. The Sirdar replied, 'I am suffering from fever and cannot go'. The chelik said, 'The fever has been sent you by such and such a person, you must drive it

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

back again'. Then the boy awoke and the following day sent for the Siraha, who agreed that his illness was due to magic. They then took a pig and chicken outside the village and sacrificed them saying, 'Are you going away or not?' Both pig and chicken ate the rice offered them, and this was taken to mean that the danger from the magic was averted. The boys feasted on the pig and chicken and the Sirdar recovered from his fever. It was generally believed that the chelik who visited him in his dream was Lingo Pen himself.

Naitami Dole, a Muria of Kokori, described an experience when he was the Sirdar of his ghotul.

> One night I dreamt that I was having intercourse with a motiari. The next morning I found myself suffering from fever, so I called the Siraha to ask what was the matter. He told me that an enemy had sent the motiari to me by his magic. So I went down to the bank of the river and made seven circles on the bank putting rice, powdered egg-shells and ashes in them with an egg in the middle circle for the Yer Kanyang. Then I recovered.

To see one's house burning in a dream means that black magic, particularly in its very dangerous form of the *agindan*, or arrow of fire, is going to be sent against one. To avert it a chicken should be sacrificed and a small image made of *dab* grass carried out across the village boundary and thrown away.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

what she was really like, so I went to the house and asked her to lie with me. She asked me what I was doing outside and I said I was drinking in honour of her marriage to me. Although she had been very sweet to me up to that moment, she suddenly cried, 'No, you are simply drinking my urine'. I was drunk and got very angry, and though she tried to prevent me I forced her. But it gave me no pleasure.

Next morning I found the girl was ill. There was no fever or anything we could see, but she lay sick on the ground. I took her to a Siraha and we had to stay with him for a fortnight. I used to give her food and do everything for her, but she got no better. One day I tried to have her again, but she said, 'Wait a moment while I go outside' and she slipped out of the house and ran for her life to her own village. I am sure that my elder wife did some magic to turn this girl's heart away from me. Later I tried to marry another girl, my elder brother's widow, and my wife drove her away also.[1]

VI. Adultery

The Muria have the reputation of observing a very high standard of marital fidelity, and all my observations go to confirm popular report. The incidence of divorce, less than 3 per cent, suggests that they regard marriage as something to persevere in, and while obviously no statistics can be supplied for individual infidelities, social tradition and religious belief are directed towards making adultery both difficult and dangerous.

The Muria, usually so tolerant and gentle, are here exceptionally rigorist. Adultery brings the swift vengeance of heaven not only on the guilty individuals, but on the tribe. A woman's sin can ruin the ritual hunt and in consequence endanger the year's harvest. The vision of priest or medium can be dimmed by the infidelity of a wife, children may suffer and die, tigers may assail the village herds. The guilty pair themselves are visited with a shocking punishment; their bodies become covered with sores and swellings, and a watery dropsy brings a wretched death.

This is no empty danger, as is proved by actual examples. The Solia of Munjmeta told me how his grandfather died of this cause; in Sidhawand, when a man eloped with a married woman, his father died of dropsy and he himself became a permanent invalid. In Lihagaon, one Badru died after an act of adultery. This vengeance comes from the Departed who are the guardians of the purity of family and clan. In Kongera an outraged husband 'set the Departed on the guilty' and wife and lover fell very ill. At Netanar a Muria said that he was only able to preserve his wife's virtue by the help of the Departed whom he constantly invoked for this purpose.

Adultery is suspected when cattle die suddenly, especially if the tongue protrudes and there is a certain kind of watery discharge. The Siraha then

[1] In Indian tradition and folk-lore, the majority of heroes are successfully polygamous—Ramachandra being a notable exception. In the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, the first wife is represented as welcoming her new companions. Suryaprabha married seven wives on seven consecutive days: by his magic powers he was able to divide his body and live with them all at once.—H. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924-5), Vol. I, p. 429. Naravahanadatta had a similar power of self-multiplication (Ibid., Vol. II, p. 477: see also Vol. I, p. 451). Folk-lore wives usually agree—unless they all combine against a youngest favourite. Among Cullala Shah's happy co-wives, Panj Phul helps her husband to obtain his fourth.—J. H. Knowles, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir* (London, 1888), pp. 466 and 483 and compare M. Frere, *Old Deccan Days* (London, 1929), p. 324. There is an amusing note on the subject in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 318f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Sometimes it is supposed that this Mirchuk possesses a man and makes him commit a murder. At Gudra, when Kawachi Linga returned from jail after serving a homicide sentence, a black chicken was sacrificed to the Mirchuk of his victim. But the chicken refused to eat the rice that is always offered to test it before it is killed, and the people thought that this meant that Linga would be possessed by the spirit of his first victim and thus be driven to commit another murder. To avert this danger they sacrificed a pig and a cow, and only then readmitted him to their society.

The Mirchuk, whatever its origin may be, may be employed by a witch as her familiar and servant. She gets control over it and uses it to assist her in her wicked designs.

The Mirchuk is very quarrelsome, and the spirit of a man who has been hanged must not be mingled with the other ancestors in the Room of the Departed, for it is sure to cause trouble. So the Mirchuk is generally located outside the village under a large stone, in an ant-hill or in a mahua tree. At Dhurli we were told that, when Telami Hunga was murdered, his ghost was kept apart, for he was a student of magic and such persons turn into Rao Bhut. For such no uraskal should be erected, nor should the ghost be mingled with the other Departed.

Indeed it is often held that the ghosts of the slain and of executed criminals should not be 'mingled with the Departed' and nothing should be put for them in the sacred Pot in the ordinary way.[1] When the boy Ando was murdered by his uncle Irma, this precaution was taken. Ando's ghost still roams the village, an axe in its hands, seeking vengeance. Irma's ghost is said to have possessed itself of the rope with which he was hanged and people were afraid it might use it to hang the other Departed of his clan or to steal their cows.

It is very dangerous for a murderer to see the ghost of his victim while he is in jail, perhaps because it is impossible there to perform the proper ceremonies of protection. Pandu

[1] Mateer reported that in Travancore the ghosts of executed murderers were regarded as specially dangerous and were believed to haunt the place of execution. To prevent this the executioner used to cut off the criminal's heels with a sword or hamstring him as he was thrown off. S. Mateer *The Land of Charity* (London, 1871), pp. 203 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 of Chichari described how this happened to three of his
753 fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

768 In several places I found that a house or a village had been
14 moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

764 The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the
762 same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death,
[787] and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

762 In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pida committed
766 suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the water. On each side of each torch-bearer goes a man armed with bow and arrows; for small fish the arrows have heads like the handles of spoons, but for large fish they use arrows with heads with only one wing and barb, like an ordinary arrow-head bisected from point to shank. The torch-bearers and bowmen wade up against the current, and the fish, which at night are feeding in these shallows and not in the deep pools, are attracted or stupefied by the glare and are easily shot with the arrows or caught in the basket.'

E. Intoxicants and Other Drinks

The commonest intoxicant in the Abujhmar hills is the fermented juice of the sago-palm (*Caryota urens*), and the tree is common also in many parts of the Bison-horn Maria country. It is now propagated freely by Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The tree, unlike the toddy-palm, is monoecious. The flowering peduncles, which appear like thin elephant trunks, have their ends cut off before they flower, and act as taps, bamboo tubes being fastened below the cut to catch the sap; the Bison-horn Marias often use earthenware pots. The tubes are emptied in the morning and evening, bamboo poles still retaining the stumps of side-shoots being tied on to the trees as rough ladders. When fresh, the sap is not intoxicating and has a pleasant dry taste, not unlike champagne. After two or three years' tapping the tree dies, when the inner tissue of the stem yields the starchy food substance already mentioned. If the ends of the peduncle get worm- or grub-eaten before they are tapped, it is considered a sure sign of witchcraft, and more than one murder has been recorded on this account. The bottom of the trunk of the dead tree is commonly used as the hollow body of the Hill Maria single-membrane *turam* or kettle-drums.

Sago-palm

The toddy-palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) is not grown or tapped in the Abujhmar hills, but is common in the south of the Bison-horn country especially among the so-called Koyas and the Dorlas, and in Sukma and Konta. In this teluguized region whole villages camp out in the toddy groves from March till June in a perpetual state of semi-intoxication, taking solid food only in the evening, and sometimes going without that for three or four days or even a week. The sap is tapped by cutting the ends of the flowering spadices, in much the same way as the sago-palm; the spadix appears in the male trees from November to March, while the female tree yields sap from April to June. The vessels used to catch the sap are generally thick bamboo tubes three or four feet long, of about three gallons capacity. Excessive tapping soon shortens the life of the trees. The juice rapidly ferments, though not intoxicating when drawn, and fermentation is expedited by the habit of mixing the fresh juice with that left

Toddy-palm

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

nostrums like the use of red-ants for fever or python-flesh for pot-belly already mentioned, and cauterization is the only treatment he knows for simple injuries or foot-crack (just as he brands the flanks of ailing cattle). A Maria bitten by a rabid dog at His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler's Christmas camp at Kondagaon in 1927 refused point blank to be sent out of Bastar to Raipur for Pasteur treatment, but ultimately as a concession to the general anxiety asked to be given the body of the dog, and ate its liver.[1] To Marias illness is generally a manifestation of something malignant, either the magic of a human enemy or the ill-will of a god or spirit. At funerals, steps are taken to ascertain whether magic was the cause of death; in illness a medium is called in, or a *wede* or *gunia* with knowledge either of spells to defeat the spirits of evil or of the white magic means of blowing away illness, *jhara phukna*; epidemic or epizootic disease may be defeated either by palisading the village after sweeping it clean, and posting guards with bows and arrows to shoot the demons of illness, as was done by Hill Marias in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, or by special disease-riddance ceremonies like the annual ceremony described on page 140. Yet such is the Hindu's faith in their 'medicine' that in 1930 the late zamindar of Sukma hastened his death when in the last stages of diabetes by taking the advice of Bison-horn Maria 'doctors' or *gunia* to the effect that he had two intestines, one of which had withered like a dead plant, while the other, though withering, was still partly green and could be revived if the patient fed it with lumps of black earth.

Maria treatment of disease

B. Manufactures

In the preceding chapters frequent mention has been made of basketry, for Maria measures, grain bins, walls of houses and fences, dancing shields and so on. The Hill Marias are great basket workers, men and women. The men make all the big basketry bins for storing grain and the large baskets sold at the markets, as well as dancing shields and fencing and matting; the women make the basketry measures, basketry plates and the smaller domestic baskets, as well as brooms of various grasses, which are generally plaited together at the top by basketry methods. In camps, Hill Maria youths almost invariably employ any spare time in basket-making. Bison-horn Marias on the contrary leave it almost entirely to their women, except that the men make the basketry caps that are the basis of the *tallagulla* bison-horn dancing headdress, and fencing.

1. Basketry

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 421. - AWA 45F]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

cultivators. In some cases they had obtained cultivators' daughters as wives; but these appeared all to be run-away matches without the consent of the girls' parents; in other cases cultivators had become blacksmiths in order to marry blacksmiths' daughters. Halba and Telanga neighbours refer to them often as Kammar by caste; but so far as the word can be used of them, it is clearly rather an occupational term. Yet for some reason the aboriginal everywhere looks down on the smith, and as soon as a Maria takes to this occupation he must live with his fellow-smiths either in a separate village or hamlet, or segregated in a separate part of the village.

Almost all parts of Bastar are full of iron ore, some of it among the finest and purest in the world. But the Maria smiths cannot deal in their rough smelting furnaces with anything but the friable haematite ores, yellow ochre in colour, which they either collect where it lies in exposed lumps or dig from shallow hillside pits. As the ore is a part of the soil, and the soil is the property of the clan-priest vested in the *kasyeq-gaita* of a Hill Maria or the *perma* of a Bison-horn village, the chief of the smiths has to ask the permission of the *kasyeq-gaita* or *perma* to dig ore just as the relatives of a man of another clan dying in the village have to ask his permission to bury the man in the clan-earth. The smiths have generally to pay for this permission by contributing a sacrificial pig at the annual harvest-home festival of the clan-god; and at this festival the smiths pray to the clan-god to give them good iron in the coming year. If smelting produces bad iron, witchcraft is at once suspected, and a medium consulted. Men, women and children mine or collect the ore, which is soft enough to be dug easily with the ordinary hoe, and broken up with the blunt end of the pointed hammer (*mutti*) used by all Maria smiths. It may be added here that they get an annual fee in grain at harvest from all Maria villagers, in return for which they are expected to sharpen, re-temper or repair tools and weapons, and a fee, generally in grain, for all new tools and weapons. They also manufacture for direct sale in the markets.

Having collected the ore, the smith collects a supply of bark for roasting the ore before smelting, and makes a supply of charcoal (*bugi*). For the former purpose he prefers the bark of the sacred *saja* tree, and the roasting changes the colour of the ore from yellow ochre to deep burnt sienna. For smelting he makes charcoal from *karra* wood, unless he can get tamarind, and for refining from *mahua* wood. It takes two or three men a day to cut the wood; they use green *karra* logs eighteen inches or two feet in girth, and dead *mahua* wood. They cut up the *karra* into billets about eighteen inches long,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

753 is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

761 Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return
154 next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest
[197] or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *wadde* or *wadde*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[1] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[2] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[3]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

674 Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen
154 murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias
683 and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[3] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 168. [3] Report, pp. 32-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to molest suspects. There were cases from Muria and Bhattra villages where the community inflicted degrading punishments only somewhat less cruel than those of Glasfurd's day; but in all but one of the Maria cases the man who believed himself wronged acted entirely on his own, often after consulting the god through a *waddai* medium, and killed or tried to kill the suspect with any weapon that came handy. The exception was the 1916 Hill Maria murder at Orcha, in which many villagers combined against the *pargana* headman, who, like his father before him, was said to have been expert in the black art, and to have used it and his position as headman to set up a '*raj*' over the *pargana*. They combined to seize him at night, crushed his testicles and hanged him from a creeper. [A] Nor were women ever suspected in Maria cases, although in three cases among Jagdalpur Murias and Bhattras women suspects were very roughly handled. In two Bison-horn murders it was clear that the murdered man had threatened his murderer to bewitch him, and one of these blackmailers was himself a *waddai*. In fact, the *waddai* is generally believed by the Bison-horn Marias to know black magic as well as white magic and divination, and is apt to be feared accordingly.

It is naturally difficult to ascertain the methods believed to be used by the black magician; those who imagined they had suffered judged the fact solely from the nature of their sufferings, the word of the *waddai* consulted as to their source, and, perhaps, the known enmity of the suspect towards them, while naturally no practitioner of black magic cared to admit it or to describe his methods. Black magic is commonly referred to as *pangan*; and popular talk confirms the methods described at page 43 of the *Gazetteer*:—

> 'Whenever an enemy's life is to be taken, a bit of his cloth or hair is offered to a god with some incantations consisting of a string of names of godlings, and the victim should then pine away, unless he in turn calls in a magician. This practice is locally called *kuda marna*. Another plan is for the magician to put up two bits of grass tied in the form of a cross to represent his client's enemy, and, after going through incantations, shoot at the little figure with a miniature bow and arrow made of grass. If the arrow hits the mark it is believed that the enemy will surely die, unless he has recourse to magic to avert the spell.'

The information on which this was based came from the mixed Hill and Bison-horn Maria country around Barsur, and the word 'magician' is a translation of '*waddai*'.

White Magic

The white magic in vogue is merely the counter-magic used by a friendly *waddai* to avert or cure illness and disease. Of actual Hill Maria methods I obtained no notes; but certain *waddais* or *leshis* have a much greater reputation than others. I gather that Hill Maria methods do not differ from those in vogue among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, in which

[A] [See ch. 11, pp. 423-424. — Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

indeed it must be confessed that the Maria belief in Mahapurub is weaker than in other tribes. The Sun and Moon were created, not by him, but by human beings. Fire was not given—as in so many legends—to the world by God, but was discovered by man in a more or less natural way in a broken stone or a split bamboo. In only one of the folk-tales does Mahapurub play a part. In this he teaches the hero how to make a hearth and gives him a magic bel stick. He refuses to answer the prayer of a bird which begs him to restore its mate to life.

On the whole, we may conclude that while the Marias undoubtedly believe in some kind of Supreme Deity, he is not vividly imagined by them, and his cult is overlaid by the interest and excitement aroused by the earth-bound deities like Danteshwari and the clan-gods and by the attention that must be given to the Departed.

III

The general pattern of Maria magical beliefs has been traced by Grigson and his picture may be supplemented by my chapter on 'Witchcraft and Magic' in *Maria Murder and Suicide*. A few additional notes may be of interest.

The dread of witchcraft and black magic seems to me to be stronger among the Marias than in the other primitive populations of Middle India. Among the neighbouring Bondos, for example, it is comparatively weak and hardly troubles the deeply religious Saoras whose attention is concentrated on pacifying the Dead.

In Maria opinion, the practitioner of black magic is frequently a widow, often a rigrish widow. Her chief delight is to interfere with other people's pleasures; she sends grubs into the spathe of the sago palm and thus checks the supply of the refreshing juice; she loves to rob a fresh young girl of her rightful joys by prolonging her menstrual periods; she frustrates men's happiness by making them impotent; she blights the marriage-bed with barrenness. These wanton and jealous widows are a great nuisance in Maria society. Oyami Anda of Bara Harmamunda told me how he was pestered by one of them but, since he had two wives already, did not want to be involved in a scandal, and in any case was not attracted, he rejected her advances. In revenge she nearly killed him with black magic. Another old Oyami Maria insisted that it was only a widow who could perform this magic; as a young man such a woman had begged him to lie with her and when he refused had made him impotent. At Kuchepal I met a man who had once engaged himself in that most dangerous of erotic adventures, a love-affair with a widow. After a time he wearied of her and in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

revenge she 'destroyed his seed'. For several years he was unable to get a child, though in the end the Perma diagnosed the trouble and after the proper sacrifices his wife conceived. 754

A number of recent murders were due either to the desire of a victim to be revenged on a witch or wizard or to a man's resentment at being accused of sorcery. The Orcha murder of 1941 was due to a Hill Maria called Mukka suspecting that the Gaita, Pidche, was practising sorcery against him. After killing him he put the corpse in a stream, but next day recovered and buried it, the whole village agreeing to hush the matter up. The following year Podiyami Doma of Michnar killed Kuharami Konda during a New Eating Festival because the latter accused him of being a thief and a sorcerer. On November 26th, 1941 Gumma Karwe, a young Bison-horn Maria, killed his uncle Gumma Galla at Toinar. Only three months previously Karwe had been married. One day his young wife went with his father and step-mother to visit relations at Gummalnar, a journey that took them over the Indrawati. It was October and I well remember the heavy floods that year. The water swept away the canoe in which they were crossing the river and the bodies were never recovered. A month later, while uncle and nephew were drinking palm wine together they began to quarrel. The younger man accused his uncle of causing the death of his wife, on whom he had spent twenty rupees in cash and three measures of paddy, by magic. Galla admitted it, even boasted of it, and threatened to kill him in the same way. The boy, wild with rage and fear, killed Galla forthwith by a heavy blow from his axe. 674 754 578

At the beginning of March 1944, one evening as the crescent moon was rising above the eastern horizon, there was a violent quarrel in Barse Bendo's house at Kadampal, and a few hours later one of the disputants crept out of his house and stabbed his enemy to death with an arrow as he lay asleep. Barse Bendo was a well-known and successful magician with a large practice. In the same village a youngish man called Kunjami Gota set up as a Siraha and seems to have succeeded in drawing away some of Bendo's patients and creating a sense of rivalry and opposition. Gota's own uncle, Kunjami Tonda, however, preferred the treatment of the older and more experienced man, and when his wife Mate fell ill at the beginning of 1944 he took her to Bendo, and not to his nephew, for consultation. She soon recovered, but shortly afterwards Tonda's two little sons, Lakhma and Bala, fell ill and he came with his whole family to stay in a leaf-hut built for patients in Bendo's compound. Bala was cured in a day or two, but Lakhma, who had a swollen face, did not improve. Here was Bendo's chance. At the time of divination he skilfully introduced the name of Gota

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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into his ravings and afterwards declared that it had been revealed to him that the child's illness had been caused by the evil influence of his rival whom he now denounced as a Pangnaha or sorcerer. Gota was summoned to the house and when he came Tonda—prompted by Bendo—asked him to perform antidotal magic to undo the harm he had done and so cure the little boy. This was a clever move. If Gota agreed he became a self-confessed Pangnaha; if he refused to treat a patient, Bendo would see to it that his reputation as a Siraha was destroyed. Gota chose the safer course, and declared that he knew nothing about the treatment of the sick. They all protested at this, reminding him how they had seen him curing disease by *mana-bujha* and sprinkling rice on the heads of ailing children. Tonda said, 'Bendo has cured Bala, but he can't do anything for Lakhma. You are a new man and have cured other people's children. Now cure your own cousin.' But Gota still refused. This made Tonda furious, for the refusal confirmed his suspicion, so carefully fostered by the jealous and wily Bendo, that Gota himself was responsible for the trouble, and that in fact he was an impostor, not a Siraha at all, but a mere Pangnaha. He lost control of himself and began to shout insults and accusations at his nephew, saying that he was trying to kill his own cousins and was of such unbearable wickedness that even when he was found out he would do nothing to remedy matters. In the quarrel the two men came to blows, but they were separated and Gota was taken back to his house. The others went to sleep and Tonda lay down outside the little hut where his wife watched by the sick child. But Gota, angry and brooding over the accusation which he knew well would spoil his practice as a Siraha and thus ruin him economically as well as socially, waited for some hours and then crept into Bendo's compound and stabbed Tonda to death with an arrow. Gota was brought to trial and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, escaping the gallows partly in consequence of a passage (on p. xxvi) in *Maria Murder and Suicide* which was quoted in the judgement.

To understand the Japgunda murder of 1943 a certain amount of family history must be related. Masa, a Hill Maria of Japgunda, had two brothers Gai and Bija. When Gai died, leaving a widow and a daughter Muri, his younger brother inherited the widow along with the property and adopted a boy named Erka as a Lamana'i to work for his step-daughter. When the period of service was complete, Erka and Muri were married and both continued to live in Bija's house until in due time Erka succeeded, on Bija's death, to control of the household and became guardian of Bija's three little sons, Suku, Gilu and Aga.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Masa, the children's uncle and sole survivor of the elder branch of the family, was the Waddai of the clan-god of Japgunda. He seems to have resented the way a poor Lamana'i boy like Erka had risen in the world and become owner of both his brothers' property, and there was some tension in the relations between the two houses. For five or six years, Erka had had good crops and Masa bad ones, and Masa decided that his failure must be due to the fact that Erka was practising magic against him. One day he openly accused the younger man of sorcery and challenged him to an ordeal. Erka, who had no desire to quarrel, accepted and a pot of boiling water and cowdung was prepared. Erka dipped his fingers into it and was badly burned.

This incident convinced the villagers that Erka was a sorcerer and had a curious effect on his own character. He found that, far from being a social outcaste, he—the poor Lamana'i boy—was believed to have the ear of the goddess Parkal Muttai and that many people were coming to him for advice and help. He grew proud and arrogant and when he caused the death of a calf, a pig and a fowl belonging to Masa, no one dared to remonstrate with him. Bija's little boys were growing up and Erka built a house of his own near by. Presently Aga was to be married and some time late in August 1943 the wedding was held in Bija's old house. Masa was, of course, invited but on his way to join the festivities—for the essence of a Hill Maria marriage is a dance, a drink and a heavy meal—Erka went out to intercept him. He greeted him pleasantly and showing him a gourd of rice-beer took him aside to drink with him on the bank of the village pond. Some time later boys coming in their finery for the marriage dance saw the two men sitting together by the water under a virgin moon. The next day Masa's mutilated body was found in the pond.

Erka immediately used his reputation as a sorcerer to hush the matter up. He called the elders to his house, bribed the Kotwar whose duty it was to report suspicious deaths to the police, and taking the headman and another person of some influence aside, sat them down and drew on the ground what was described at the trial as a 'magic line'. He put dub grass, a knife and a bit of cowdung on it and two rupees on one side and three rupees on the other. Then he asked the two men to pick up the money, saying that this act bound them to secrecy. Deeply impressed, the headman went out and told the other villagers that they must cremate the body at once and make no report to the authorities. On the way to the pyre the usual divination by *sāja* leaves was performed and indicated that Masa had died by violence. It was five months before rumours of the crime reached the police.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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I do not in any way emphasize it, but it seems to me curious that many crimes connected with sorcery are associated with water; they are performed on the banks of ponds or rivers and in several instances the body has been thrown into the water afterwards. Does a murderer who has killed a sorcerer believe that there is some spiritual antiseptic for him in throwing his victim's body into water?

IV

841

Grigson has studied in detail the custom of the Hill Marias in regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, but his notes on the Bison-horn Marias need, as he says, 'considerable supplementing'. The Bison-horn Marias have the curious belief that men, not women, were originally subject to a menstrual period. They used to tie hollow bamboos to their organs to catch the discharge. Once—according to one legend—a girl was laughing at a man in this distressing and inconvenient condition, and he lost his temper and threw the bamboo at her; in another story a sister wanted to help her brother, who could not cut his clearing properly on account of the bamboo tagged on in front of him, and offered to take it instead.

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Yet other legends ascribe the origin of menstruation to a wound. There were formerly teeth in the vagina and when these were removed, the wound was not wholly healed. Once the vagina was in the crick of the leg behind the knee—you can still see its shape—but a hen pecked at it and the frightened organ jumped for safety to its hiding-place between the thighs. But it was hurt and it still bleeds every month at the recollection.

841

All the Gond tribes are very strict about the menstrual taboos, in this contrasting sharply with the Orissa Bondos, Gadabas, and Saoras, who are at a similar stage of culture and live not very far away. Grigson has described the extreme rigorism of the Hill Marias and has rightly suggested that the Bison-horn Marias are somewhat less apprehensive of the dangers of menstruation. But they too, like the Murias and the Gonds generally, are strict enough in their application of the taboo and breach of it may be punished by the Departed through the bite of a snake or the destruction of the harvest. They do not usually build special menstruation huts, but sometimes where there is a girls' dormitory, menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and unmarried girls on the other. In such villages, no married woman may go near the dormitory nor should youths enter it. Not all dormitories however are used in this way.

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Elsewhere part of the veranda of the ordinary living-house is screened off or a little hut is built in the compound for the use of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a woman at this time. At the menarche (for which the word used is *kumar sāta*, 'the blossoming of the flower'), however, a special hut is built for the girl by women outside the village. A woman of the household brings her food and sleeps with her at night; she must bathe whenever she returns to the house. In some villages, the Marias still make a platform up a tree for the girl, who during the day must hide herself in the forest. 841 881

It is very dangerous for anyone to see, let alone to touch, a girl at her menarche. At Tikanpal I was told that if a man saw such a girl as he went through the jungle he should slap her and then go to her parents and after rebuking them, demand a fowl which he should sacrifice; then he should bathe and anoint himself with oil. At Gadapal they said that a man should throw a lump of earth between his legs at the girl, or a stick over his shoulder, and then go home and bathe. Neglect of these precautions might lead to blindness. 881 783 841

At the end of the period—all this refers only to the first period—the girl destroys her hut or platform during the night, throws away her cloth,[1] bathes and returns home before cockcrow. In some villages she is expected to remain for a day or two longer on the veranda of her house: if she has a married elder brother, it is the special duty of his wife to attend to her. Then she puts oil and turmeric on her body—an act which is said to symbolize her formal re-admission into caste, for during the previous days she has been regarded as excommunicated. In many Maria villages, however, the ceremonial use of turmeric is still unknown, and the elder brother's wife carries a pot of water round the house and sprinkles everyone saying, 'Now you are back again in caste'. After this the girl fetches water in an earthen pot and cowdungs the floor. In the evening her father invites some of the elders to a bottle of liquor and says, 'My daughter who was unclean all these days is now clean again'. He sacrifices a fowl to the Departed and they feast on its flesh. 881 841 783 [607] [769]

There is not nearly so much fuss about the later periods. The woman has to keep out of the way, but there is no danger in looking at her, and when it is over she just has a bath and resumes her ordinary duties. But even so her daily programme is considerably disturbed. She must not sleep inside the house and, of course, sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden. She must not cook or fetch water or go to work in the fields. She must not touch cattle, pigs 841

[1] There do not seem to be any special taboos associated with this cloth. But the leaf-cups from which the girl eats at this time are charged with magical potency and if a witch can get hold of these she can afflict the girl with palsy. [754] 789

eyes; it throws down grass from the roof. But no one need ever be afraid of the ghost of a chelik or motiari.'

During the bazaar ceremonies in the east of the State (when these are performed for a dead chelik or motiari) the villagers say, 'Mahapurub sent you into this world only for a little while; he did not intend you to live with us for long; so don't be angry and don't trouble us'. The parents are led round the shops and then go home leaving the Uriya-bhut in the bazaar. The dead boy or girl is not mingled with the Departed as are the married, and no menhir is erected for them.

Sometimes the ghost of a chelik may be dangerous. In the compound of the Khutgaon ghotul there was formerly a great stone. One of the boys died and the ghost came to sit on it bringing an epidemic with him. Many boys and girls died and the ghotul had to be destroyed and rebuilt in another place. But the stone remained where it was and when the villagers tried to move it sickness broke out again and so they left it alone.

Many Muria say that when an unmarried girl dies her ghost is dangerous because if a witch can get hold of it, she gives it the form of a pretty girl and sends her to rob men of their seed. Such a girl may appear as a man's mother or sister and torment him.

A dead motiari may also continue to visit her old friends of the ghotul. This only happens, however, when the boys sleep outside, for it is believed that Lingo protects the actual building from the invasion of any witch or spirit. The Sirdarsingh of the Chargaon ghotul told me how he once had an encounter with such a ghost. 'She visited me and I went to her; for many days she was with me; I could not get rid of her. I often went to her and my clothes were spoilt with my discharges. At last I gave her a comb and necklace and she went away, but for fear she may return I sacrifice a pig every year.' So too motiari complain of visits from some old lover's ghost: 'he comes to us, pressing us'.

III. The Soul and its Fate

The belief in immortality, or at least in some kind of survival after death, is bound up with the idea of the soul. The Muria theologians say explicitly that a man has two or even three souls (*jiwa*). In Bakulwahi the villagers said that after death one of these souls[1] went to Mahapurub, one became a Hanal and lived in the Pot of the Departed, and the third became a Chhaiya or Shade, a ghost that visited his relatives in dreams and often made himself a nuisance. The word Hanal, as Grigson has pointed out, is literally translated 'The Departed', for it is a past participial form of the Gondi verb *handdna*, to go.[2] Whenever I speak of the Departed, therefore, it may be taken as translating Hanal in original. In Randhna the people said that,

> Every man has two souls: one lives in his mouth and one in his body—you can feel it going *duk-duk* in the chest. The first soul goes from the mouth direct to Mahapurub; the other remains in the corpse and goes with the mourners to the grave. It watches the body being burnt or buried from a tree nearby, then goes to the nearest stream and lives there until the people come and catch it in the form of a fish and take it home. Then it lives in the house as a god (*deo*).

So also in Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria of the Abujhmar foothills said that,

> A man has two souls: one always remains with him; the other, a smaller one, leaves him in sleep and its adventures are what we call

[1] Throughout, when I use the word 'soul' it represents *jiwa* in the original.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 223.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

members of the clan should be erected, if possible, in its neighbourhood. At Phunder there is a bamboo bundle containing a small earthen pot hanging above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any Maravi dies his relatives carry his *jiwa* there, open the bamboo bundle and sacrifice a chicken above it, allowing the blood to fall into the pot. This means that the soul of the dead man will henceforth live in the pot hanging above his clan-god.

Another important function of the Anga is to serve as a means of detecting witches, breach of tribal taboo, theft or even to discover loss of property. At the end of 1940 I witnessed an interesting witch-hunt at Palki in the Narayanpur Tahsil.

On 16 November 1940, Aitu, the Muria headman of Palki, bought eight annas worth of Court Fee stamps and affixed them to an application to the Tahsildar of Kondagaon, complaining that in his village the animals were dying, people were falling sick and crops were failing, and asking for the services of the Anga Deo at Bara Dongar to discover what witch, magician or malignant ghost or deity was responsible. On his paying five rupees into the Treasury the Tahsildar issued *parwāna* instructing the priest in charge of the god to take it to Palki (but to no other village) in order to discover and thus cure the trouble.

On the 18th, Aitu reached the shrine at Bara Dongar, and almost immediately the party set out. There was Deo Singh, the hereditary Halba priest of the god, four Muria bearers to carry it and a 'Dhurwa' priest, a Muria specially attached to the god's service. In two days they reached Palki and camped in a little shed of branches outside the village, placing the god on a rough bed of logs and branches in a separate hut.

There Deo Singh told me about this famous Anga. His name was Narsingnath Deo and he was born at Amgaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana. His father was Morg Raj, who now lives at Paralkot, his mother Devni Dokari of Antagarh. His younger brother is the Pat Deo who now lives at Jagdalpur and was taken there in the time of Raja Bhairon Deo to hunt witches. Here, of course, Deo Singh was talking in theological language: actually the Raja, hearing of the fame of the Anga in the wilds, had a copy made and installed in the palace at Jagdalpur. For some time the custom was to bring the original god from Jagdalpur and send the copy to take its place; but in time this custom was dropped and today the Anga in the palace acts independently of its prototype.

Raja Bhairon Deo, continued my informant, at one time had both Anga at Jagdalpur. There was a great epidemic, and none of the gods was able to help, so the Raja ordered them all to be thrown into the Indrawati river. But only Anga Deo and his young brother Pat Deo floated on the surface and drifted to the shore. This made them very famous, but the Raja felt that it was wrong to keep two such gods in Jagdalpur and he sent the Anga Narsingnath to Bara Dongar, where he has since resided.[1]

This Anga is made of bel wood. Every three generations it is remade. It is decorated with a silver snake and a sun and moon in silver. The old worn-out images are thrown into a deep pond at Amgaon.

On the 20th of November the witch hunt at Palki began. It was only with great difficulty that I was able to be present, for the villagers concealed both the time and place of the ceremony, and in fact were sending me off in the

[1] For another account see W. V. Grigson's Introduction to my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), pp. x f. According to Grigson's information the Jagdalpur god was copied from the Narayanpur god.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

opposite direction. Once I had made an offering of silver to the god, however, they became very friendly and I was able to witness all that happened

Carried by four men, and accompanied by the village elders, the Anga Deo was carried from house to house round the village. The god stopped before each house, and the women had to come out with an offering of a leaf-cup of rice and a copper coin, and walk under the god and away the other side. If all was well the Dhurwa placed a ring of aonra leaf on the threshold and a bit of iron slag and hammered it with an axe.

But in two houses the Anga scented trouble; he refused to accept the offerings of the householders, swinging round indignantly, then rushing to and fro, whirling and turning in an alarming manner. He pointed out an old man and woman in one house, and the householder in another as specially affected by the evil. The priests hastily poured liquor in front of the god 'for he becomes thirsty when there is some mischief in his presence'.

At last they took the Anga back to his hut outside the village and everybody sat round to discuss what had happened and to consider what was to be done. On this occasion the mediums proclaimed that it was not a magician or witch, but a number of deities affronted at not receiving sufficient honour—Pendrawandin, Pardeshin, Koriya Pat, Garba Rau and the local ancestors—who were causing the trouble. That day and the next day were spent in sacrifice to the Anga and divinations by the local mediums. On the morning of the third day diagnosis having been fully established, they went to effect a cure.

The bearers carried the Anga to the first house which had been shown as 'infected'. They stood before the door and a Siraha-medium sat down before it. The god 'climbed' on him and he revealed what things were needed to appease the angry gods. He made two little images of black wax to represent the *kus* digging-bar of Koriya Pat and the axe of Pendrawandin. The owner of the house brought out a basket of rice and many little leaf-packets of parched gram, rice, lamp-black, rice-flour, haldi. The medium danced and postured before the god, and the Dhurwa took two chickens for the Rau, a pig for Pendrawandin, and a goat for Koriya Pat and made them eat a little rice. Each householder present put a rice-mark on the goat saying, 'Whatever evil disease, ghost or god is troubling us, take to yourself and carry away'.

After this the bearers were suddenly impelled to take the Anga out into the jungle and we all followed. The Anga wandered about erratically, but at last came to a halt at a point where two paths crossed, before an ant-hill. The medium fell into a trance again and called out instructions in a high clear voice. The Dhurwa cleared the ground and made a criss-cross pattern of black and white. He placed seven little piles of rice in a row. He made the sacrificial animals eat, and then killed them, dropping the blood on every pile of rice. With his knife he made a circle to enclose the god, and nailed a piece of slag into the ground.

Then the old man and woman who had been proclaimed as 'infected' came to the front and, holding bunches of *chir* grass (the grass from which brooms are made) behind them, broke them in their hands, threw them away with a gesture of finality, spat and walked hurriedly home without looking round, and by another way. The Anga also was taken home by another route back to its camp.

I was not able to see the ceremonies for the purification of the other house. The Anga demanded an offering of the fur of a wild squirrel, and this took some time to find. Two days later, however, the rites were performed and the village was cleared of its supernatural dangers.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice, returned home the next day.

Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2] At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Land of Anga and the body. Yasahketu 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shameless pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga) ", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'. —Nundolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 327.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.

138

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The similarity between this description and the account which I have just given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mân ta pen nahi ta pâthar.—If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under saja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

1 See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
2 Dey, op. cit., p. 318. 3 Ibid., p. 344.
4 J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

the eggs go bad, the priest plucks the feathers of the hen and puts them with the eggs. Broken egg-shells (which are usually preserved on bits of stick and kept under the roof) are added and all are taken to a cross-road. The priest cries, '*Tha tha*, you wanted to injure my hen. Take this and go away'. After this, the hen grows new feathers and the next lot of eggs will be good.

In the north-west of the State, the son of the village Gaita has a position of privilege in the ghotul and is often appointed its leader, but in the rest of the State the boys of the priestly families have no special privileges and can claim no special office; they are treated exactly the same as any other boys. But the Gaita's and Siraha's sons begin their training as priests or mediums while they are still boys, and many chelik have the power of falling into trance and prophesying. In Masora I saw chelik being taught how to bathe the gods and carry them about. In Koilibera I watched the Gaita teaching two of the chelik how to sacrifice chickens and offer egg-shells to the gods at the end of the Pus Kolang expedition. Parents often take their sons to special festivals so that they can learn what to do by imitation. The chelik usually attend ceremonies as acolytes and prepare the sacrificial food, wash the vessels, and make ready the sacrificial hearth. In this way the future Gaita or Pujari learns his business. The function of Siraha or Gunia is not always hereditary, but boys are chosen and trained when it is found that they are of an unusually sensitive temperament.

VII. White and Black Magic

Hitherto we have been dealing with Muria religion mainly in its relation to the gods; we must now take a brief glance at its prophylactic and protective measures on behalf of man against his natural and ghostly enemies. Chelik and motiari are protected against black magic by the divine power of the ghotul fence, but they are only safe while they are inside the ghotul. Evil powers cannot enter the building, but they camp all round, and the Muria boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of battle in the unseen world.

Black magic entered the world through an insufficiency. Bhagavan had seven daughters. He had prepared flour with which to create man, but his daughters stole and ate a little from some of the heaps of flour. In these there was thus not enough material for them to become real human beings and they became magicians and witches. Because of their lack of flesh and blood, they try to steal flesh and drink the blood of men. The warlock and witch are thus sub-human, not fully created. In the untouched Muria tradition, the enemy of mankind is usually a man; belief in female witches and the evil eye of woman is generally a later and Hindu accretion to the old beliefs.

The story comes from Karikhodra. In it we see that the warlock and witch are sub-human, not fully created. In other stories witchcraft originates in disobedience and cannibalism. In Matawal in the Mardapal Pargana we were told the following tale:

> A Muria and his sister left their parents' house and went out to seek for work. After a time they returned home and wished to make an offering to Mother Earth. They went to the shrine of the goddess and the boy said to his sister, 'Whatever you do, do not eat any of the flesh sacrificed here'. They found that the Gaita had put some flesh on a saja leaf in the name of the goddess before her shrine. As they approached a crow flew down, ate some of the flesh and scattered the rest. The boy picked it up and put it back again on the leaf. Behind the shrine a lot of blood from the animals offered and sacrificed had

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

collected in a pool. The girl was afraid to eat the flesh in the presence of her brother but went there secretly and drank the blood.

When Mother Earth saw all the offerings that had been made, she was very pleased with that Muria boy and said, 'O boy, whatever you want ask it of me and I will give it to you'. The boy replied, 'I want nothing'. Then the goddess said, 'From today I make you the priest of my shrine. But your sister will be a witch; look at her mouth'. The boy looked and it was red with the blood that she had drunk. From that day, owing to the disobedience of women, there have been witches in the world.

Another story comes from Kanhargaon:

Lingo married Kodurjunge and lived with her happily, working in his fields. But Tallur Muttai was jealous, for she desired to marry Lingo herself and thought how she could accomplish her desire. One day she took Kodurjunge into the jungle and made her eat a basketful of jamun berries. Then she left her there and went to Lingo saying, 'Your wife is a witch, come and look at her mouth, she is coming home with her mouth reddened with the blood of men. When I saw her I ran away terrified to tell you'. Presently Kodurjunge came home and when Lingo saw her mouth reddened with the jamun juice, he thought, 'Yes, indeed, she must be a witch', and killed her.

Then Tallur Muttai said, 'You cannot live without a wife, marry me'. But Lingo sat with hanging head and would not look at her face. So Tallur Muttai filled with anger went out and cut up Kodurjunge's body. She took it round the village saying that it was pig's flesh. All the pregnant women there at once roasted a little of the flesh and ate it. The others put it in their houses for the morrow's meal. When Lingo discovered what had happened, he went round the village and told them to throw the flesh away. Those who threw it away suffered no harm, but all who had eaten became witches.

The methods of the Muria warlock are not unlike those practised elsewhere in India and indeed throughout the world. The warlock makes a grass doll to represent his enemy and buries it with the head of a chick.[1] This will soon cause his enemy's burial. To injure cattle, he gets the bone of a cow and buries it with a consecrated egg on the threshold of a cow-shed. A more elaborate method is to put the bone, with a hair from the tail, and a little cow's blood, into a small earthen pot and bury it in the path by which the cattle will go to their grazing-ground. The magician ruins a crop in the same way, burying a little rice with appropriate charms in the threshing-floor. The rice in a pot can be diminished by placing an ear of rice beneath it.

To burn with fire, a warlock picks up a hot coal and a pebble and blows them with a charm towards his enemy, or he burns a grass doll. The antidote to this is to wave hot cow-dung ash three times in the air and hide it under a tree; as the ash cools, so will the victim.

To stop a girl having a child, an enemy—it is usually a woman in this case—steals a little of the haldi from her body as she kisses her on her wedding day. She scratches up some of the mud which the bridegroom throws on the girl at the end of a marriage ceremony and somehow obtains a scrap of her menstrual cloth. She buries these by a river and her victim will be sterile.

[1] This is the *desultoria* of the ancient world, the image-magic common in all ages and all places.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

154 The fear of magic is a prominent cause of the few murders committed by Muria in the last ten years. Manga of Kodoli believed that his uncle had 674 caused the death of two of his sons by magic as a sacrifice to the Yer Kanyang of his tank. One day the supposed sorcerer said to him, 'I ate up your sons and now I will devour you', whereon Manga killed him. At the Diwali festival in 1938, Boga killed the Pujari of Katagaon because he was a sorcerer and did not do his worship properly with the result that the crops failed.

In Padnar (Mardapal Pargana)—a village where there is no regular ghotul—a man called Kana suspected a whole family of practising black magic. His accusations were so serious that several of them went to live elsewhere. But one by one they returned, and by Dassera of 1939 they were all back in Padnar. One day during the festival Kana, thoroughly drunk on rice-beer, took the opportunity of telling them they were wizards, accused them of relieving themselves on the village gods, and threatened to turn them out of the village. This drove four men of the suspect family to desperation and they assaulted and killed their enemy.

154 The methods of black magic and the attempts to counter it may be studied in the interesting case of the long struggle for magic supremacy between Gurgu, the Gaita of Almer, and his enemy Singlu. The quarrel started when Singlu, who belonged to the Karanga clan, said to Gurgu, who is a Kaudo, 'I have lived many years in this village. Let me erect *kutukul* here and then my ancestors will live here and help me'. But the Gaita pointed out that the clan-territory (*bhum*) of the Karanga was at Kokori and Singlu should have his menhirs erected there. 'If you bring your gods and ancestors here, our gods will be neglected.' And he refused to give him land.

Singlu began his campaign by making a *kapāṭ*, a magic door, which was represented by cutting wood into three pieces and burying them. The intention of this was that Gurgu's door (symbolizing his house) would be broken and his family ruined. But Gurgu did counter-magic and survived.

Then Singlu cast a spell over Gurgu's speech. Previously Gurgu had prided himself on being able to talk fluently in Halbi with visiting officials, but now he found that he could only talk in Gondi, and there was a general belief that as a result he would be deprived of his position as village headman. But Gurgu 'cured' this also and when I saw him was speaking excellent Halbi-Chattisgarhi.

[187] Singlu's next move was to send a white owl every night to the village. This bird, which is a sort of Ondar Muttai,[1] is very ill-omened. When it cries someone is sure to die. The villagers began to fall ill, but Gurgu managed to 'cure' this also. I was not able to get many details about these 'cures'; I gathered that Gurgu did not perform any symbolic acts of sympathetic magic, but rather by making generous sacrifices obtained the assistance of the local gods. The sacrifices, however, included a doll of dub grass which may have been a means of devoting Singlu to the deity. Gurgu also put nails of iron slag round the village boundary to 'close' it against magic, but as Singlu was already inside this precaution was not of much value.

When I visited Almer, Singlu had recently caused great consternation by taking a hare to the village boundary and sacrificing it to some unknown deity. Now only the Kaser-Gaita may offer such sacrifices and this breach of religious etiquette was believed to have offended the gods greatly, for they drove away all wild animals from before the village hunters. This was the time of the Marka Wijja Pandum, before which the chelik go out on a ceremonial hunt, on the result of which depends the success or failure of the crops. But

[1] See pp. 169f.

MURIA RELIGION

754 Singlu brought disaster this year on the hunt. For a whole month the chelik were taken by Gurgu to the forest, but they got nothing. One day they did shoot a young sambhar but it ran away to another village with their arrows sticking into it, and another village got the meat and the omen. All round other villages were returning triumphant from their hunts, but on 22 April 1941 when I was there the Almer boys returned yet once again empty-handed and Gurgu exclaimed with tears in his eyes, 'I am defeated'.[1]

Here the magician was acting, as it were, at a distance. There is also among the Muria a tradition of the Parat Bagh or were-tiger where a man is metamorphosed into a tiger and attacks his enemy directly. He kills but does not eat him. To become a tiger, a man must go to an ant-hill and circle round it seven times clockwise repeating the necessary charm. It is the charm that matters, and somewhat naturally I have been unable to get hold of it. The man then becomes a tiger, and goes to kill his enemy. When he returns he goes round the ant-hill again, this time anti-clockwise, and is restored to his own shape.

While magicians are very dangerous, but seem to live quite respectably at home, the witch is surrounded in the popular mind with every circumstance of horror and disgust. She goes out naked as a cow; before her go the *mohini*—soothing charms of love—to lull her victims asleep; her spittle is like fire falling to the ground; she drinks the blood of her victims, vomits it and cooks and eats her vomit; she feeds on excrement.

VIII. The Ecstatic Trance

754 How are these evils countered? We have to remember that not all human
791 ills are regarded as of supernatural origin; there are many which are 'natural' and are met by natural remedies. But many other types of disaster are not explicable on natural grounds, and to deal with these the Siraha-medium or
787 the Gunia-diviner is consulted for a proper diagnosis. This diagnosis is generally obtained in trance. The Siraha sits by his patient, some burning coals before him, coughs and belches, and shakes his head till his whole body is in motion with rapid rhythmic movements. These gradually increase in violence, the hair streams out and is thrown to and fro, saliva trickles from the mouth and the tongue protrudes. After a time, the medium gives a loud cry and falls forward, placing the palms of his hands on the burning coals. The smoke curls up between his fingers. He then sits back on his heels, and his companion asks him questions; it is believed that now the god speaks through his lips and the questioner will hear the truth of his perplexities.

791 These mediums also prophesy in a general way at festivals, when they play and posture with a complete forgetfulness of the outside world. Some of them
781 scourge themselves violently with iron chains, others catch hold of the symbol of a god and rush violently about with it, others roll in the dust, hurl themselves on the ground, sit on the spiked seat of a swing, turn somersaults, or simply jog up and down on their toes for lengthy periods.

[1] There was a similar war between a sorcerer and a whole village which he reduced to terror at Sulanga in 1938. Sonu Muria, an ex-convict and a quarrelsome, angry man, was the Pujari of Bhatti Pen. To quarrel with Sonu meant, almost as a matter of routine, that someone would die in your house. From this cause Jagru, a Halba, lost two of his sons on one day and left the village. Another Halba, Jubi, lost three members of his family in a year. Sonu had a row with a settlement of Gonds: several died: and they all migrated. The Muria and Halba of Sulanga took the matter to the police and urged that the Agent should be sent from Jagdalpur for their protection.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 . AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

your mat to sleep on'. So I had to get up and give him the mat on which we were sleeping together. I was very sorry, but when I came back, she took off her sari and spread it for me to lie on, and I covered her with my blanket.

In Markabera the head of the chelik said, 'If my ghotul-wife is away, I dream of sleeping with her. I chase her and often have her'. He sometimes experienced orgasm during such dreams. 'I once dreamt that I was going to dance in another village. I walked along the road with a girl I had always wanted. That night I was able to sleep with her in the other village.'

A chelik at Chandabera said, 'We generally dream of our earliest loves in the ghotul, for these are girls whom we never forget. We dream that they are sleeping by our side or running away from us. Sometimes we dream that we have gone out fishing with them or that we are on our way to a marriage dance'.

The seriousness with which the Muria treat their dreams and the reality they ascribe to them is clearly shown in the precautions taken the following day. I have already referred to various cures for nightmare. I will add a few more. At Bhopna a Muria said, 'If I dream that I have gone down under the water, I consult the Siraha and he says that it means that an evil ghost is coming. This once happened to me, so I got seven different kinds of wood and made a bonfire of them by the bank of a stream. I put some gur and ghee on the fire. Then I and my wife went round it three times, entered the water and ducked below it. We took off our old clothes and left them there on the bank, dressed in new clothes and went home without looking round.' This was rather a drastic and expensive cure. An easier means of averting the possible danger of a dream is this from Chingnar:

> A dream of a fight between two people suggests danger from black magic. To avert this the figure of a man with a bow and arrow should be made with gruel and a bad egg, a pig or a chicken should be offered to it. The little image should be thrown away outside the village and the danger will disappear.

Gadru of Chaniyagaon once dreamt,

> A beautiful woman came to my children and said to them, 'I am going to devour you, because your parents give me nothing to eat'. The next day my children fell ill, and the Siraha declared that their sickness was due to Lagar Deo, who was angry because the customary offering to him three years after the first child had not been made, and he therefore wanted to kill all my children. So I dedicated two pigs to Lagar Deo to be allowed to wander freely and killed three years later. Once I had done this my children recovered.

At Palnar, the Suel once dreamt that he was climbing up a huge stone. Suddenly he saw a chaprasi, he was frightened and tried to run away. He fell down and broke his teeth. When he awoke he found he had fever and only recovered after he had sacrificed a pig and made other offerings.

In Chandabera, a Muria jealous of the happiness of the chelik performed hostile magic against the ghotul. The Sirdar dreamt that one of the boys had died and his corpse was being carried away for burial. Soon afterwards he himself got an attack of fever. He was sleeping at home and dreamt that a chelik came to him saying, 'Come, let us go to dance at a wedding'. The Sirdar replied, 'I am suffering from fever and cannot go'. The chelik said, 'The fever has been sent you by such and such a person, you must drive it

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32.
Muria

back again'. Then the boy awoke and the following day sent for the Siraha, who agreed that his illness was due to magic. They then took a pig and chicken outside the village and sacrificed them saying, 'Are you going away or not?' Both pig and chicken ate the rice offered them, and this was taken to mean that the danger from the magic was averted. The boys feasted on the pig and chicken and the Sirdar recovered from his fever. It was generally believed that the chelik who visited him in his dream was Lingo Pen himself.

Naitami Dole, a Muria of Kokori, described an experience when he was the Sirdar of his ghotul.

> One night I dreamt that I was having intercourse with a motiari. The next morning I found myself suffering from fever, so I called the Siraha to ask what was the matter. He told me that an enemy had sent the motiari to me by his magic. So I went down to the bank of the river and made seven circles on the bank putting rice, powdered egg-shells and ashes in them with an egg in the middle circle for the Yer Kanyang. Then I recovered.

To see one's house burning in a dream means that black magic, particularly in its very dangerous form of the *agindan*, or arrow of fire, is going to be sent against one. To avert it a chicken should be sacrificed and a small image made of *dab* grass carried out across the village boundary and thrown away.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

114 674 according to Mr Elwin's categories. Apart from the five intoxication murders, two were prompted by belief that crops had been bewitched, one was a fatigue crime and one was caused by a dispute as to property, one by resentment over being dunned for a debt of one anna and one by a quarrel over failure to repair the skins of a drum broken by a friend who had borrowed it, while three were the result of conjugal infidelity. There were three cases in which the villagers agreed to conceal the crime to avoid the trouble of police and court investigation. The means employed included assault with an axe, a sword, a fencing pole, a stick, a wooden stool and fists, kicking, throttling, shooting with bow and arrow, twisting of neck and stabbing with a knife. In one case the accused committed suicide to avoid the disgrace attendant on the revival of an old scandal caused by his son's association with a blacksmith girl whose murder he and the villagers had hushed up for three years.

114 776 754 Of witchcraft and magic as factors in crime Mr Elwin has written fully in Chapter V, and has illustrated at page 61 a typical clan-god, Anga Pen or Pat Deo (log-god), sometimes used to detect witches in the manner described at page 17, while at pages 185-6 he deals with the Maria view that a witch or a sorcerer should be killed. That view is undoubtedly widely held outside tribal circles, and the power of tribal log-gods to detect black magic is equally strongly believed in by Hindu and Muslim subjects of the State. The reaction of tribal beliefs and practices on the local Hindu rites and ceremonies is very marked, and an example of this is the way in which Raja Bhairon Deo, the great-grandfather of the present Maharaja of Bastar, installed in Jagdalpur a log-god which was either a copy of a famous log-god from Narayanpur in the north-west of the State, or, according to its present Halba Pujari, was brought by a former ruler from Dongar, the old capital, to Narayanpur, and shifted thence by Raja Bhairon Deo. This god is now the Pat Deo of Bastar *par excellence*, and four ceremonies are held in his honour during the Maharaja's Dassara celebrations. His witch-finding function strongly survives, and I well remember my amused astonishment when in 1927 during an inspection of the accounts of the Jagdalpur Temples managed by the State Court of Wards I found

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

that the villagers around Jagdalpur frequently requisitioned his services for this purpose, paying for them a fee of Rs 5 into the State Treasury. When I wondered whether by lending the log-god the Court of Wards had not been accessory to the killing or beating of witches, the Pujari thus explained the god's conformity to modern law: 'Pat Deo is worshipped to save men from *bhut* and *pret*, and detects *bhut*, *churel* and witches. If a village needs his detective services, the villagers pay into the Treasury a fee of Rs 5, and then the Manager lets me take the god out. I walk behind Pat Deo, who is carried on the shoulders of four men, none of whom must come from the village which needs his help. Starting from the east side, we take him round the village widdershins, and then enter the village, Pat Deo himself impelling the bearers and then knocking against the house where the evil is hidden or against the actual magician. He will not leave the house till the guilty one comes out. Then in these days the offender kneels before Pat Deo and cries for forgiveness, which is given before Pat Deo goes home; he is not even outcasted now. In my grandfather's time he would have been set on an ass with his face towards the tail and taken in procession round the village; his head would then have been shaved, his front teeth pulled out by a Ghasia, and his hair and teeth buried in an ant-hill, while he would have been excommunicated and driven out of his village. They pulled out his teeth to stop him using them to suck blood and because without them he could not pronounce his spells.' One may be pardoned for scepticism as to the affair even in modern days being closed with Pat Deo kindly forgiving the magician!

This fear of magic as the source of illness and all troubles is strong in many parts of India. Here in Hyderabad belief in the power of *bhanamatti* or black magic is widespread, even among some persons of the highest education and social standing. A detailed investigation was made in 1916 by Mr L. B. Goad, an experienced officer of the Indian Police, then in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department. His conclusion was that *bhanamatti* was so absolute a scourge in parts of Hyderabad and so utilized as a form of blackmail by its practitioners that special measures were

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

needed to root them out. The evils which he found to have been inflicted on the victims in a series of cases investigated included loss of consciousness, barking and howling like jackals, appearance of black marks on various parts of the body, giddiness with great abdominal pain, setting of the jaws whilst the victim beat the air and ground with hands and feet, immodest and uncontrollable dancing like a prostitute, ape-like antics, violent laughing and hysteria, clothes dropping off the body, vomiting and spitting out of stones, gravel, marking-nuts, needles, thorns and lemons, food turning into excreta, loss of speech, cessation of menstrual periods or their continuance for weeks and months on end, and many others. His report concluded: 'I trust that this report of mine may have the desired effect of proving that the existing state of affairs in those tracts in which *bhanamatti* is prevalent requires special measures to deal with the present evil. If this is not done the populace will take the law into their own hands, as they have done in more than one instance in the recent past, and as they threatened to do when the District Magistrate of Bidar took action in Bidar City with a commendably strong and firm hand last autumn. Having personally witnessed the dreadful trials which women and girls have to suffer under the scourge of *bhanamatti*, I should not hesitate, did the power lie in my hands, to extend the operations of the Criminal Tribes Act to every cowardly blackguard who was known to practise the vile cult of *bhanamatti*.' Even now the Hyderabad District Police retain the services of an official versed in the art of treating the victims of *bhanamatti*. Most of its practitioners are persons of the untouchable castes, but the victims in the 1916 Bidar 'epidemic' of *bhanamatti* included persons of all ranks and professions, even lawyers. Murders of suspected practitioners[1] continue in Hyderabad. Is it to be wondered at that this fear of magic is so common a cause of murder amongst the Maria? It is after all not so long since in Great Britain an Act of Parliament passed in 1736 finally stopped prosecutions for alleged witchcraft.[2] Mr Elwin has pointed out on page 80

[1] Two were reported in the *Times of India* of 5 May 1933.

[2] A useful brief summary of British witchcraft history and folklore is given in Chapter X of *English Folklore* by Christina Hole (London, 1949).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and measures straight upwards from the corpse's chest to the roof, poking the stick through the thatch. Then he climbs up to the roof and makes a hole which is intended symbolically to allow the message of death to spread out through the world. He puts his dhol drum above the hole, waves a stick thrice round his head and then beats his drum with the rhythm *dung dung-dung*. He beats with one hand, though the normal method is to beat with two. After the drumming has continued for a while, he comes down from the roof and continues it on the ground.

The Hanagunda's wife now husks some rice, makes it into four packets with leaves and ties two of these under the arms of the corpse and two at its waist. She applies to the chest black dust from the bottom of one of the cooking utensils so that they may be able to recognize him when he is reborn. The grand-daughter of the dead man, if available, or some girl in the same relationship, passes a string seven times round his three middle fingers and middle toes, again with the intention of ensuring his return.

It will be most convenient if I describe the actual course of a ceremony which occurred at Penta on 10 February 1942. This funeral is of special interest as the mourners had reason to believe that the dead man was the victim of black magic.

Sori Kosa of Penta had a love affair with the daughter-in-law of Markami Bando which resulted in a serious quarrel between the two families. Kosa's father paid the necessary fine and a special ceremony of peace and friendship was performed. But Bando was not really reconciled—and soon trouble began for Kosa's family. His son by his first wife died; shortly afterwards another of his sons died. One day Bando spat on Kosa's father in the bazaar. A week later the old man fell ill and died. Kosa's wife and daughter were also taken ill but recovered. The villagers whispered that this was due to Bando's magic, and described how he had made a small doll of earth, wrapped it up in a leaf-cup and carried it away into the jungle. But there was no case for police interference, and the villagers proceeded with the funeral for Kosa's father.

After the preliminary rites that I have already described, all Kosa's father's relatives assembled. The women brought

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 then thrown aside. It is very important that this grass should not be burnt. The aim of the rite was to ensure that the [184] man would be able to breathe on his journey to the next world, though other informants said that it was to allow the soul to escape. The brother-in-law of the dead man then lit a bundle of grass with fire brought from the house and after taking a turn round the pyre set fire to the pile of wood by the head. Another man went round in the opposite direction and fired the wood by the legs.

After the pyre was well alight, the whole company went to a stream and washed themselves. The grand-daughter soaked part of her sari in water and holding the wet portion in her hand came home and rinsed it out on the very place where the coffin had lain inside the house so that the dead man could drink it.

Early next morning, the dead man's son-in-law went to the cremation-ground to examine the ashes and there found an [754] earthen doll tied in a leaf-cup. This led the Waddai to declare that the death was due to black magic done by Bando and concealed by him in the jungle.

Later in the morning a cow was brought and its legs washed by the deceased's daughter-in-law. After touching its forehead with a little rice she said to it, 'We have given you your share, now don't make us suffer any longer'. One of the drum-beaters touched the cow with his stick and a marriage-relative killed it by a heavy blow with the blunt end of his axe. He then cut the tail, removed the liver and made it into twenty-four pieces in equal shares of six pieces each. Each share was wrapped up in a leaf and roasted. The party took these to the cremation-ground. On reaching the place some of the women picked out the bones from the pyre and kissed them. The dead man's son collected any half-burnt pieces of wood and kicked them towards the centre of the pyre. Then they cleared the ash where the corpse's head had been, cow-dunged the place and put the leaf-cups there.

The packets containing the liver were now opened and three pieces from each packet were placed on the ground and three in each of the leaf-cups. The twelve pieces on the ground were for the Earth and the twelve pieces in the leaf-cups for the Dead. The Waddai made seven piles of rice. He held a

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC

I

THE ORIGIN OF MAGIC

754 773 The origin of black magic has been described by the Maria in a number of villages and the reports generally agree. 'The first man in the world to practise magic was Nandraj Guru. All the gods[1] and the Dead went to him to learn the art. At one time seven gods were being taught by him daily. One day a Maria of the Maja clan was digging roots in the jungle when he heard voices and went stealthily to see what was happening. From behind a tree he saw Nandraj Guru teaching the seven gods. Every day the Maria went to the place and overheard everything that was said. On the last day the pupils brought offerings of pigs and chickens for their Guru. He sacrificed them and divided the meat into seven equal shares. But to his surprise after a few moments he noticed that the number of shares had grown to eight. He called his disciples and said, "Search the jungle around, for there must surely be a ghost or an animal hiding near". The search revealed the presence of the Maria on the branch of a tree and he was brought before the Guru.

'Nandraj said, "Listen, everyone here is a god and you are the only human being who has learned our magic. Unless you give an offering as the gods have done, your son will die". "What offering should I give?" asked the Maria. "In your house" said the Guru, "there is a pigeon. Offer that to me". Now by the word "pigeon" the Guru meant the Maria's only son and the reason why he demanded him was that his knowledge could only be imparted to immortal beings who would use it in the proper way. But the Guru feared that now that a human being had discovered the secret, he would make use of the magic at all times. There would be no deaths. Pain would be banished, and the gods would have

[1] God, spelt without a capital, represents the Hindi *deo*. The Gondi *pen* is translated 'clan-god'. A *deo* is little more than what the Middle Ages called a 'demon'.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

no Dead to people their kingdom. But if this human being were to eat a bit of the liver of his own son, then there would be deaths in the world and the Maria himself would have learned the knowledge of evil and death and would become a magician. 754 779

'The Maria, little knowing that when Nandraj Guru said "pigeon", he meant his son, asked one of the gods to go to his

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A typical Anga Pen, a clan-god. Carried by four men, it is sometimes used to detect witches.

house and fetch the bird. The god killed the boy, removed the liver, and the Maria and the seven gods ate it together. As the Maria unwittingly ate the liver of his own son, he was filled with the knowledge of death and evil, and became the first sorcerer. Before he died, he taught his own disciples the art and today many men know how to harm and kill their enemies. But in every case the liver must be obtained, for [826] the liver is the jiuo (soul) of all beings.'

In Khutepal the Maria said that they began learning magic in the month of June. The young disciples must go to the jungle and set up a small stone which represents an uraskal menhir. To the left of the pillar they place another stone flat on the ground to represent a danyakal. Then between the uraskal and the danyakal a number of small stones are placed in line from right to left. This line of stones represents one kind of magic, say the magic for curing the sick. Parallel to this they place a second line of small stones. This represents another kind of magic, say doing injury to an enemy. 754

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754A third line is put for making women barren, a fourth line for destroying crops and cattle, and so on.

Then the Guru begins to teach the young men in the name of Nandraj, Bodhraj, Kirkod, Markod, Indor and Bandor. He holds a bamboo stick in his hand and as he recites his mantra he beats the stones in turn, beginning with the uraskal and striking each stone from left to right. He must not, however, touch the danyakal with his stick. The disciples chant the mantra after him, and then one by one they stand up and strike the stones with the stick. By December the whole art of black magic is acquired.

At the beginning of the course of study, the disciples subscribe to buy a pig and chicken for their Guru. At the end they also bring offerings and a pot of rice-beer. On the last day a little rice is placed on the danyakal stone and the chicken brought by the disciples is made to eat it. Then it is killed and the boys feast with their Guru.

674 754 One homicide not in our list, which occurred at Dhurli, was connected with such a school of magic. A youth named Telami Dhurwa used to go daily to Dogi Para to learn magic from an older man of the same name. The rule here was that from time to time the students should subscribe for a pig and that each should take their instructor a pot of rice-beer. One day Dhurwa and his fellow-students took the required pig and rice-beer, and after their class was finished they feasted with their Guru. On their way home the boys began to quarrel, and Dhurwa and another boy killed a third boy named Hunga. The people at Dhurli said that Hunga's soul [775] was not mingled with the dead because he was learning black magic, and a memorial stone was not erected for the same reason. Hunga in fact became a very dangerous ghost, a Rau [682] Bhut. The two boys were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment as no intention to murder was proved. When [783] Dhurwa was released he had to offer, in addition to the usual ceremonies, a special and expensive sacrifice to his clan-god.

II

THE SORCERER'S METHODS

754 The Maria sorcerer goes about his business in much the same way as elsewhere in India or the world. He may attack

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

his enemy directly by blowing something at him, by putting a charm into his food, by performing certain rites or by the evil eye. He may turn into an animal and attack his foe in wild and bestial guise. He may obtain the services of a ghost or a godling to do his work for him.

Stories illustrating all these different methods are common in the Maria villages. At Khutepal I was told 'how a man there could transform himself into a tiger. He would then lie hid in the jungle and when any human being or cow came by, he used to kill and devour him. He then took his human form again and came home and lay with his wife'. After he had killed five or six people in this way, the villagers finally summoned up courage to track down the 'tiger' and kill it. A watch was kept and one day to their surprise and horror they saw the man actually changing into a tiger and then back to human form. They rushed at him and killed him instantly. Similar stories were told me in Dhurli, but here they said that it was most common for such things to happen in the great Zamindari of Jeypore. It is generally believed that if a were-tiger is injured, similar marks will appear on the human body of the man who has possessed it.

Sometimes instead of turning into an animal the sorcerer sends an animal to do his business for him. There are many stories of how people have been attacked by bears and tigers on this account. Indeed many Maria believe that no animal or snake will ever attack a human being unless it is incited to do so by magic. Once on the way from Pordem to Rewali I saw the funeral pyre of a snake. A little while previously a very long snake marked with alternate black and yellow bands had been sent to Rewali by a magician to kill one of his enemies, Nupo Bira. Bira, however, was able to kill the snake in time, and its body was then carried out of the village and cremated beyond the boundary-line. Four pegs of tendu wood were driven into the ground at the four corners of the pyre, and the people claimed that the ritual cremation together with the pegs would effectively protect Bira from any further attack.[1]

[1] An extraordinary case occurred at Bhandara in 1929. A Kunbin (Hindu) woman was bitten by a snake and to avoid further trouble installed the image of Nagoba (the cobra god) in her house. This deity used to possess her and she gained a wide reputation as a healer. One day a fisherwoman, haunted by evil spirits, came for treatment.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 Witches seem to prefer the direct attack. At Mokhpal I was given a vivid description of how a witch performed her hideous rites. 'She goes out of her house at night and finds an ant-hill. She takes off all her clothes and removes even the waist-band. Seven times she goes round the hill. She appears more like a ghost than a human being. Anyone who looks at her goes blind at the sight. She goes to her victim's house, places a bit of grass on his breast and sucks his blood through it. She takes it back to the ant-hill and mixes the blood with milk. Then she can tell by looking at it whether that man will be lucky or unlucky. If the milk is red, he will die, but if it is white wealth will come to his house. If a man dies the witch goes to the grave, revives him and cuts off his head'.

At Tikanpal I was given another account. 'A witch sees a youth and desires him, but she is not content to lie with him as a lover. She must devour his whole body. She goes to him at night and turns his liver over inside his body. After he has been buried, she takes the body out of the grave. She eats the flesh and drinks the blood and puts the bones back into the grave. Sometimes when she robs a man of his blood, she puts it in a bit of broken pot and cooks it on a fire which must be made of a single piece of wood'.

Thirdly, and most sinister, a sorcerer is able to employ the services of a ghost or an evil spirit. Here the danger to the intended victim is, of course, twofold, for there is not only the malice of the magician but also the power of a supernatural [775] being who has become his ally. It is notable that the ghosts of executed murderers are specially liable to be so used by the magicians.

Witches also have the power of affecting the domestic life of their victims. At Samgiri the Maria described how the witch could destroy a man's seed and, even though he were not impotent, he would never be able to have a child. This happened at Kuchepal where a man was in love with a widow who was a witch. After a time he left her, and in revenge she destroyed his seed. When after a long time he found

The Kunbin stripped herself and her patient and then overwhelmed with frenzy thrust a burning log into her unfortunate victim's belly and killed her. She removed all the internal organs of the thorax and abdomen and offered them to Nagoba, claiming that in this way the hostile spirits had been destroyed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 that his wife did not bear him a child, he went to the Waddai who discovered the real reason, performed the proper rites and soon a large family came into being.

754 Witches can injure women by prolonging their menstrual 755 periods. The Siraha can counter this by offering sacrifices 841 to the Dead and to the Mirchuk. In Kameli a woman who was suffering from mennhorragia was cured by this means. [762] But sometimes the Siraha can do nothing, and in despair the unhappy woman may hang herself.

754 At Borgum I was told that only widows can perform black magic and that they usually call on the ghosts of the dead to help them in their wicked deeds. Here they gave me an interesting account of how a witch can take precautions against discovery. She takes her familiar, say the ghost of a murderer or suicide, with her to an ant-hill and there she 'binds its mouth' by removing some of the earth from the hill and uttering charms. She says to the ghost, 'When the Siraha questions you, do not disclose my name'. Then she replaces the earth. It is believed that, just as any earth that is removed from an ant-hill is automatically filled up the next day, so misfortune will enter the house of the ghost she has bound if it betrays her.

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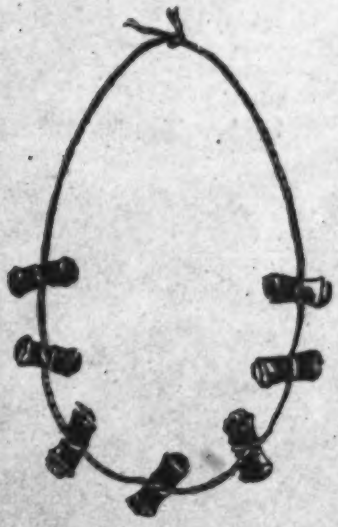

Charm against disease, made of small bits of chicken-bone.

Dread of this witchcraft or enchantment is a very powerful factor driving men to violence, for the fear is still a live one and the dangers are supposed to be great. Guma Hunga left his home and village because he believed that his family was being bewitched by a man called Burgi. A year afterwards he saw his enemy in the new village to which he had moved, and murdered him in a sudden access

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 683 of fear. Sori Bhima killed a neighbour Kosa, who suffered from yaws, believing him to be a wizard and responsible for the death of his children.

Vedta Sukra murdered his uncle Kola, the headman of Surguda, for being a wizard. Three years before, Sukra's three-year old daughter had died, and the cause had been diagnosed as Kola's magic. Immediately before the tragedy, Sukra's little son died after a month's illness, and members of the family went to a Siraha at Sarjiguda to find out why. The Siraha invoked the deity Madin Deo onto his person, and the deity declared through him that the death was the result of Kola's magic. The next day Sukra went with a number of villagers to the place where his child had been cremated. Heaps of rice were placed in front of the ashes, in the names of Mirchuk (which kills children), the Village Mother, the Departed, Bhagavan and the suspect Kola. A chicken was allowed to make its choice among the heaps, and it pecked up rice from those of Mirchuk and Kola. From this the people deduced that Kola had killed the child with the help of Mirchuk Deo.

The following day Kola was found lying dead in a pool of blood on his own thrashing-floor. Sukra admitted his crime and no doubt considered that his action was justified and indeed laudable.

754 578 One day the sago palm belonging to Hunga of Gudse village ceased to give the usual juice. Hunga went to the village Siraha, a young man called Kosa, to find out what was the matter, and received the reply that it was due to the magic of Pandru, one of the neighbours. Sometime later, Pandru and Kosa met in the local liquor shop and had a drink together, and presently Kosa accused Pandru to his face of doing magic against Hunga's tree. Pandru became very angry at this, and abused Kosa and his gods. Expressing himself in typical Maria fashion, he pulled out a few of his pubic hairs and threw them on Kosa's head. Kosa slapped Pandru's face twice and went away.

Nothing happened for five months. But then on the evening of 14 April 1922, Kosa went out to look for a straying cow. His way took him near Pandru's house who, when he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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saw his enemy, got out his bow and arrow and shot him in the stomach.[1]

III

THE POWER OF BLOOD

The belief in the magical power of blood is world-wide, and has been so fully studied that I need only briefly refer to it here. Its virtues are imparted by the blood-covenant, by drinking, by bathing in it and by being baptized in it. Charms against sickness are sometimes written in blood in China. The blood bath was believed to be a cure for leprosy down to the Middle Ages; the idea even occurs in Grimm's fairy-tales where leprosy is treated by a bath of the blood of innocent maidens. Constantine the Great was advised to bathe in the blood of virgin children to cure an illness, but the parents' cries dissuaded him and he was miraculously healed instead.

'In the past', says Halkerwal, 'the custom of human sacrifice was common in India chiefly amongst the Dravidians. One of its forms was Purusamedha, which was celebrated for the attainment of supremacy over all created beings and at which eleven human beings and eleven barren cows were offered up. The Puranas and Tantras also contain frequent references to Narabali or human sacrifice to the goddess Chandika. These Tantrik sacrifices to Kali or Chandika were formerly common. People were freely offered in the days of Maharatta rule, and in Western India there are many temples existing even today at which such sacrifices were common only a century ago. In the North-East of India also human sacrifice to Kali was very common'.[2]

Crooke gives a number of modern examples. 'In 1870, a Mohammedan butcher losing his child was told by a Hindu

[1] This fear of witchcraft is by no means confined to the aboriginals. In 1931, a Gwara schoolmaster in the Central Provinces lost several of his cattle and his children fell ill. He traced the cause to a Powar sorcerer. He dressed up in a green skirt, green shirt, green cap, and put bells on his feet to make himself appear like his goddess and killed the sorcerer with a trident from the village temple. In 1935, some Hindus killed a Gond medicine-man in the Amraoti District because he threw a charmed lemon (believed to be infected with disease) into their compound. In Mandla District in 1935, a Mohammedan Sub-Inspector of Police, believing a Panka woman had "overlooked" his child, sent his constables to force her to remove the charm. She was beaten with castor plants, made to drink water from a Chamar's shoe and subjected to other indignities.

[2] Halkerwal, op. cit., p. 66.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

nostrums like the use of red-ants for fever or python-flesh for pot-belly already mentioned, and cauterization is the only treatment he knows for simple injuries or foot-crack (just as he brands the flanks of ailing cattle). A Maria bitten by a rabid dog at His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler's Christmas camp at Kondagaon in 1927 refused point blank to be sent out of Bastar to Raipur for Pasteur treatment, but ultimately as a concession to the general anxiety asked to be given the body of the dog, and ate its liver.[1] To Marias illness is generally a manifestation of something malignant, either the magic of a human enemy or the ill-will of a god or spirit. At funerals, steps are taken to ascertain whether magic was the cause of death; in illness a medium is called in, or a *vede* or *gunia* with knowledge either of spells to defeat the spirits of evil or of the white magic means of blowing away illness, *jhara phukna*, epidemic or epizootic disease may be defeated either by palisading the village after sweeping it clean, and posting guards with bows and arrows to shoot the demons of illness, as was done by Hill Marias in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, or by special disease-riddance ceremonies like the annual ceremony described on page 140. Yet such is the Hindu's faith in their 'medicine' that in 1930 the late zamindar of Sukma hastened his death when in the last stages of diabetes by taking the advice of Bison-horn Maria 'doctors' or *gunia* to the effect that he had two intestines, one of which had withered like a dead plant, while the other, though withering, was still partly green and could be revived if the patient fed it with lumps of black earth.

Maria treatment of disease

B. Manufactures

In the preceding chapters frequent mention has been made of basketry, for Maria measures, grain bins, walls of houses and fences, dancing shields and so on. The Hill Marias are great basket-workers, men and women. The men make all the big basketry bins for storing grain and the large baskets sold at the markets, as well as dancing shields and fencing and matting; the women make the basketry measures, basketry plates and the smaller domestic baskets, as well as brooms of various grasses, which are generally plaited together at the top by basketry methods. In camps, Hill Maria youths almost invariably employ any spare time in basket-making. Bison-horn Marias on the contrary leave it almost entirely to their women, except that the men make the basketry caps that are the basis of the *tallagulla* bison-horn dancing headdress, and fencing.

1. Basketry

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 421. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

674 to molest suspects. There were cases from Muria and Bhattra
754 villages where the community inflicted degrading punishments only
683 somewhat less cruel than those of Glasfurd's day; but in all but one of the Maria cases the man who believed himself wronged acted entirely on his own, often after consulting the god through a *waddai* medium, and killed or tried to kill the suspect with any weapon that came handy. The exception was the 1916 Hill Maria murder at Orcha, in which many villagers combined against the *pargana* headman, who, like his father before him, was said to have been expert in the black art, and to have used it and his position as headman to set up a '*raj*' over the *pargana*. They combined to seize him at night, crushed his testicles and hanged him from a creeper. Nor were women ever suspected in Maria cases, although in three cases among Jagdalpur Murias and Bhattras women suspects were very roughly handled. In two Bison-horn murders it was clear that the murdered man had threatened his murderer to bewitch him, and one of these blackmailers was himself a *waddai*.
[791] In fact, the *waddai* is generally believed by the Bison-horn Marias to know black magic as well as white magic and divination, and is apt to be feared accordingly.

754 It is naturally difficult to ascertain the methods believed to be used by the black magician; those who imagined they had suffered judged the fact solely from the nature of their sufferings, the word of the *waddai* consulted as to their source, and, perhaps, the known enmity of the suspect towards them, while naturally no practitioner of black magic cared to admit it or to describe his methods. Black magic is commonly referred to as *pangan*; and popular talk confirms the methods described at page 43 of the *Gazetteer*:—

> 'Whenever an enemy's life is to be taken, a bit of his cloth or hair is offered to a god with some incantations consisting of a string of names of godlings, and the victim should then pine away, unless he in turn calls in a magician. This practice is locally called *kuda marna*. Another plan is for the magician to put up two bits of grass tied in the form of a cross to represent his client's enemy, and, after going through incantations, shoot at the little figure with a miniature bow and arrow made of grass. If the arrow hits the mark it is believed that the enemy will surely die, unless he has recourse to magic to avert the spell.'

The information on which this was based came from the mixed Hill and Bison-horn Maria country around Barsur, and the word 'magician' is a translation of '*waddai*'.

● 755 The white magic in vogue is merely the counter-magic used by a friendly *waddai* to avert or cure illness and disease. Of actual Hill Maria methods I obtained no notes; but certain *waddais* or *leṣkis* have a much greater reputation than others. I gather that Hill Maria methods do not differ from those in vogue among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, in which

White Magic

See cat. 116, pp. 423-424. — Anglist

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

755 [187] even Hindu officials educated at colleges outside the State place great trust. The cause of the illness or affliction is discovered by some form of divination (*hal hudatore*), generally by means of rice-grains, unless the case is serious enough to necessitate the actual presence of the log-god. The *waddai* always waits till he is possessed by his god (' the god comes upon him ' or ' sits on him ') to give his decision and advice. He gets rid of illness by ' *jhara phukna* ', blowing it away; as the sun is setting and again as it is rising he, to the accompaniment of long spells (*guni*), pretends to [824] charm a patient's illness by brushing it with a spray of leaves of *amaltas* (*Cassia fistula*), a tree with various magic uses, down from the head or the affected part to the toes, where he blows it away. The spells consist mainly of long lists of godlings; here are three specimens acquired from Telami Dhurwa, a *waddai* of Dhurli in Dantewara tahsil :—

(a) ' *Haranjuro, Jurjapo, Panduro-Parokhanda, Kosarabir, Bhumandra, Modarabir, Kosrapitho, Lenkjugo, Pa'inpaye, Hurremara, Ligoni, Munoputati, Munj-huro, Wireputati, Bhimaraj, Karanja-putati, Karuwaraj, Rupkhanda, Jangabela, Mudara, Yerkama, Ahalharo, Mandkola, Wermar, Yekanath, Nai-tarai, Mor-khanda, Natur-khanda, Gurrahom, Gôpanath, Gurja ! Widse him.*'

This is just a catalogue of names said to be of godlings, but almost all of them unknown even to Telami Dhurwa, and ending with the adjuration ' *Widse him* ' or ' Let it go ! ', after saying which the *waddai* lets out a puff of breath from his mouth.

(b) ' *Dhanbase, Arra-barra, Thakur Deo, Unatha'i, Chhewatin, Dhobin, Chandarin, Bhandarin ! Hat ke bandh* (close the hands), *tônd ke bandh* (close the mouth), *kan ke bandh* (close the ears) ! *Guru, bandh !* (Close, oh Guru) *Guria, Talisar ! Rukh-cho rukh-jat, ban-cho ban-jat, dengur-cho dengur jat !* (literally, " Of trees, tree-kind, of forest forest-kind, of ant-hill ant-hill-kind ! ") *Kud-men bhed-men ilis* (You came by enmity) *Pangon men ilis* (You came by witchcraft), *par bahari udun-ja* (but get out !).'

This is a Halbi formula, starting with names of godlings, telling them to close the hands, mouth and ears of the illness, and then ordering the illnesses of tree, forests and ant-hill to get out, whether they came through enmity or witchcraft.

(c) ' *Chinani, Bisrama, Boyani, Polopo, Nangapo, Idwalo, Tulimla, Kowaimapo, Irpadmo, Wano-Pariya, Koyonda-Hunga, Ar-Iriya, Podemala, Ar-hunga, Dao-manda, Hurkura, Nur-Guru, Path-guru, Path-chola, Gurujan !*'

This is a meaningless jingle of words, mostly names of godlings or demons (*rau*).

000 I have not attempted here to speak of the various magico-religious ceremonies, for their magical aspect is commented on when the ceremonies themselves are described under agriculture, religion or other subjects.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Mother Earth. The Gaita offered eggs and chickens, first making the chickens eat the rice and then killing them. The juice in the leaf-cups was offered to the Earth Mother and the Kanyang and then everyone drank a little. After this the owner was free to tap the tree in the ordinary way.

Failure of the sago-palm may be due either to black magic and witchcraft or to the hostility of one of the Gorga Kanyang. The Kanyang, if she is not happy in a particular village, may twist the branches at the top of the tree and cause them to wither. It is generally believed that the tree gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul. Then she marries and the juice ceases to flow. The motiari of the palm tree is afraid of marrying too soon. If we touch the tree with a cloth yellowed by haldi it will stop giving juice till the new shoots come, for the shadow of haldi (that is, of marriage) is upon it.'

For gonorrhoea, a very rare disaster among these aboriginals, the sufferer stands below holding a leaf-cup into which a friend pours a little of the juice from the top of the tree. The patient offers a few drops to the Gorga Kanyang and then drinks it without allowing it to touch the ground.

The wood of the palm is not usually used for building in Bastar but the Hill Maria make their *turam* drums out of its hollow dried-up trunk. The Muria also make combs and drum-sticks out of the dry wood. Some of the Muria in the Abujhmar foothills make necklaces of the fibre. The leaves are often used as hair-ornaments or to decorate the village dormitories. Sometimes the flowers are pounded into flour, mixed with water and drunk as a sort of gruel. When it is evident that the tree will give no more juice, it is cut down and the pith is removed. This is pounded into a sort of flour and steamed in the usual way into cakes which are popular eaten with honey or sugar. This practice is common across the whole of the sago-palm country. I have found it among Hill Maria, Bondo, Gadaba, and Juang and it has been recorded for the Kadir and Khasi.[1]

The salphi juice is either brought back to the house and stored there until by fermentation it becomes much more intoxicating than in its fresh condition or it is drunk immediately at the foot of the tree. Little groups of people, generally men, go out to the trees, taking with them roasted crabs or frogs, little bits of chicken, various kinds of chutney, carefully wrapped in leaf-cups. The liquor is drunk from leaves, generally simply folded to make a sort of cup, and it is sometimes poured direct into the mouth. Many delightful hours are thus spent by the villagers out among the woods or on the hills.

When a tree is specially planted by seeds or cuttings it is very carefully tended. A fence of wood is built round it and it is watered regularly. Sometimes a tree is associated with the memory of a particular person. In Kanhargaon, a village in the Chota Dongar area, a Muria planted salphi and mango trees fifty years ago and they still preserve his memory. When the people go in the evening to drink the juice, they offer a few drops in the name of Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal to the sago-palm and a few drops in the name of the dead man who planted the trees to the mango, 'so that as we drink you can drink also'.

Generally speaking the tree belongs to the man in whose field or garden it is growing. Where the trees are out in the jungle, or standing in the common land of the village, disputes sometimes arise. The headman or the more influential priests generally claim these trees as their own, but there is also a

[1] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 171.; P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), p. 32. See also Grigson, op. cit., p. 152.

Z: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

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The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal; the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose of it.

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All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatisfied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the loveliest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away. They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Kuara-bhut, revealing his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain. In Palmar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy. When the Siraha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

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In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLIII

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Siraha medium at Adner, scourging himself

Siraha treating the author for fever, at Metawand

[p. 208 (N)]

MURIA RELIGION

825 Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Gurewala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the
171 Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

825 I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two
532 horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of
781 trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's
791 head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite home for spirit-influence.'[3]

IX. The Cure of Disease

755 Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 122.
[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agapitoff and Khangaloff.
[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 100.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

● 755 Manjhi told me that he knew of an expert Siraha in the neighbourhood, and I determined to try his treatment. I must say that I found it very

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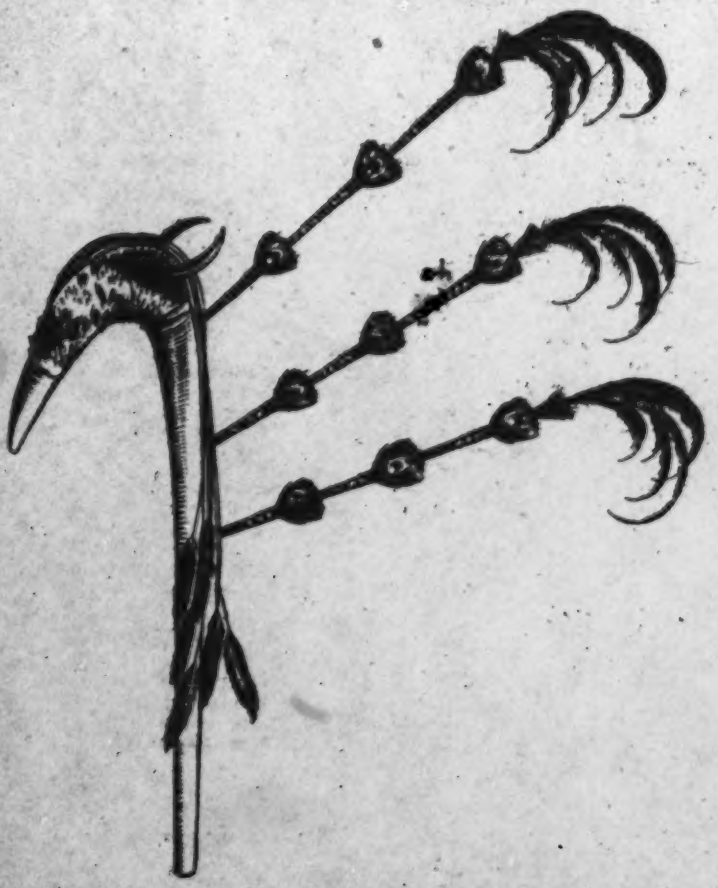

Fig. 99. A wooden "horse", with horns made of the tusks of the wild boar and decorated with feathers of the peacock and the crested tailed drongo
Length of wooden section 3' 3"

soothing and comforting. The Siraha paid three visits to my tent. He began with diagnosis, by inducing a state of trance while his assistant, the Manjhi

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

755 himself, offered incense on a dish of red-hot coals. When the god came on him, the Siraha fell forward with his hands on the fire, then stood up and came directly to my bed and laid his hands on my head. He bent over me

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FIG. 30. Wooden horse, attendant on Hunga and Hirme, gods of the Tati clan, at the Bison-horn Maria village of Tikanpal
Length 3'

and blew rice—with which he had filled his mouth—all over my face three times and made passes over my body from head to feet. He clapped his hands and standing upright poured rice on my head.

At the second visit he repeated the process, except that this time he blew twice in my ears. The third time, he again went through the same routine, but brought a garland of flowers which he placed round his neck in the name of the Village Mother. He had previously discovered that the cause of my illness was the Rau of Markabera, where I had just been in camp, so he now brought an egg, a small grass image of myself, and a grass bow-and-arrow on a saja leaf. He waved these over me, and outside the tent offered them to the Rau, picked them up and carried them hastily away into the jungle. As he went he picked a bit of chir grass, broke it and threw it away behind him.

When I recovered, as I did after a few days, I was told that I had been treated in the strictly conventional manner and that no variations had been made for me because I was a stranger. The main points of the treatment are obvious enough—the blowing away of the evil spirit, the lucky rice on the head, the passes down the body to take the illness out into the toes and beyond, the offering of symbols of the patient and carrying them away. Everything was aimed at taking something away from the sick man. At the same time the cause of the disease, in this case a Hill Spirit, had to be amused with the toys and placated by a ceremonial egg.

755 Other methods of diagnosing disease are those common among the aboriginals and even the village Hindus of the Central Provinces—and no doubt elsewhere.
787 I have fully described methods of divination by the measuring-stick and the winnowing-fan in *The Baiga*; the Muria have the same technique.

Divination by rice, by water, and by chickens is, in essence, similar to European table-turning. The Gunia makes a pile of rice in the name of a god. He asks a question and removes a few grains. These he counts—an odd number means yes, an even number no. For each question he has to repeat the process seven times. Another method of augury is to place a small pot of water by the sick man's side. The Gunia makes several piles of rice, one for the sick man, one for witchcraft, one for the gods and so on. He drops a grain from the patient's pile into the water, and then one from the witch's pile. If the witch's grain 'catches' the man's, he declares his disease due to witchcraft. If not, he removes it and tries with a grain from the god's pile. And so on.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

755 To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and
781 tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Anga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

755 When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thua* is performed.

A *thua* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahapurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

757 Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means.
755 Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescription of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have
278 recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833] *For impotence.* The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *toj-vāl* and *bioj-vāl* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753] *For dropsy.* This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

summer or the work of burning *dahi*, saying, 'O the summer has brought this burning for me'. They eat onions as a cure.

For pain in the stomach. The root of the arandi shrub, or the small green shoots of the bahera tree.

For wounds. The bark of the mendla tree.

For rheumatism. There are several different remedies:

(1) Put some leaves of the kumi tree on the affected place and blow the pain away.

(2) Powder the roots of the karanji and sarpho plants. Mix with oil and rub it in.

(3) Touch the painful swelling with a bit of 'seed-iron' (*bij-loha*), or a thunderbolt.

For fever. The classic treatment is with red ants, which are sprinkled over the patient's body—the stings act as a counter-irritant. Sometimes, however, the ants are put in a pot of water, the lid is closed and the water is boiled for an hour. Then it is strained out and salt, chilli and garlic are mixed in it and it is given to the patient to drink. The residue of red ants is cleaned, ground up with salt and chilli and made into a chutney and given to the patient with his first food.

Another common febrifuge is to pound the leaves of the chill tree, and make a drink by mixing them with salt and chilli in water.

Red ants are also given as a cure for biliousness. A chutney of red ants, haldi and chilli is said to act very quickly on the stomach.

For headache.

(1) Pull each of your toes in turn. When you have found the toe that is connected with whatever part of the head is aching, tie it up and the pain will cease.

(2) Grind up the roots of makar and tikur with fresh haldi. Make a hot poultice of this and apply it to the head.

For diarrhoea. Take seven grains of rice and seven grains of urad pulse and the dry leaf of any old bamboo in the house. Grind them up together, boil in water, strain and take on an empty stomach.

For itch. Make an ointment of the white underskin of a snake and karanji oil.

For sores.

(1) Collect some harra fruit (myrabolams), dry and grind them to powder. Make a paste with a little oil, and apply to the sores.

(2) Remove the dirt from the patient's own ears, mix it in a paste of rice-flour and apply to the sores.

For the bite of a mad dog. Get a bit of the flesh of a mad dog which has died, dry it carefully and store it. When needed, it may be given mixed with gur not less than two years old.

Several different kinds of medicinal oil are made by the Muria. For cracked feet, and wounds in the ears of a bullock, they extract oil from the *dhaman* snake or the cobra. The fat is removed and melted in a pot and kept carefully in a small gourd. For rheumatism, oil made from the fatty parts of the tiger, the leopard or the bear is said to be effective.

X. Muria Festivals

Muria festivals are of several different kinds. The great Marhai are commercial festivals; in the larger Hinduised villages the old Pen Karsita or 'Sport of the Gods' has been turned into a large bazaar, at which the religious element

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 that his wife did not bear him a child, he went to the Waddai who discovered the real reason, performed the proper rites and soon a large family came into being.

754 Witches can injure women by prolonging their menstrual 755 841 periods. The Siraha can counter this by offering sacrifices to the Dead and to the Mirchuk. In Kameli a woman who was suffering from mennhorragia was cured by this means. [762] But sometimes the Siraha can do nothing, and in despair the unhappy woman may hang herself.

754 At Borgum I was told that only widows can perform black magic and that they usually call on the ghosts of the dead to help them in their wicked deeds. Here they gave me an interesting account of how a witch can take precautions against discovery. She takes her familiar, say the ghost of a murderer or suicide, with her to an ant-hill and there she 'binds its mouth' by removing some of the earth from the hill and uttering charms. She says to the ghost, 'When the Siraha questions you, do not disclose my name'. Then she replaces the earth. It is believed that, just as any earth that is removed from an ant-hill is automatically filled up the next day, so misfortune will enter the house of the ghost she has bound if it betrays her.

[751] 754 683

Charm against disease, made of small bits of chicken-bone.

Dread of this witchcraft or enchantment is a very powerful factor driving men to violence, for the fear is still a live one and the dangers are supposed to be great. Guma Hunga left his home and village because he believed that his family was being bewitched by a man called Burgi. A year afterwards he saw his enemy in the new village to which he had moved, and murdered him in a sudden access

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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A Siraha treats his patient at Tikanpal; medical treatment led to several murders

[facing p. iii]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

A little later they collect *kapani*, the wild bearded rice common in all old rice fields and fallows and at the edges of standing water, by holding a winnowing-fan in one hand and beating the grain of the standing ripe plants into it with the other; the bearded ears are sometimes plaited into '*sela*' fringes for ornamenting doors of houses at the new-eating festivals.

The men are adept in collecting the honey of various kinds of bees, though sometimes, despite forest rules, too prone to save trouble by felling rather than climbing a fine tree. For this purpose, and for tapping palm trees, they often fasten to the trunks of trees long thick bamboos, cutting the side shoots down to stumps four or five inches long to serve as ladder rungs. Gums are collected from many species of trees, for use as bird-lime or in securing the *kosa* silk whipping of arrow-heads, etc. In Dantewara and Bijapur tahsils the Forest Department has quantities of *tasar* silk cocoons collected by Bison-horn Maria men when, in the rains in the intervals between sowing and reaping their various crops, they go out to the forests in search of such delicacies as red ants' nests, ant-eaters, rats, squirrels and grubs. The cocoons are high on sal or *saja* trees; where the climbers cannot reach them they use long bamboo poles with a piece of bamboo fastened at an acute angle at the end to serve as a hook. They get about Rs. 3 a thousand cocoons from the Koshta weavers who employ them; the Hill Maria, however, generally collects only what cocoons he needs for his own purposes. Red ants' nests are cooked, leaves, ants and all, either with *pej* or *gato*, or by themselves and eaten with pulses as a vegetable. They are also a favourite febrifuge; a rough and ready remedy is to shake out the live red ants on to the patient's skull, when the formic acid of their stings is said to reduce the fever; the more elaborate method is to boil the nest, ants and all, and to strain off and use the juice as a febrifuge in small doses; this juice is said to taste sharper than any lime and believed to be invaluable for a long-standing fever. In collecting the palms of the dwarf palms *chhind* (*Phoenix sylvestris*), *P. acaulis*, and *buta chhind* (*P. farinifera*) for use for thatching, basketry or making rough cords for binding fences, the men not only collect the small dates or the flowers (according to season) and the edible pith of the *buta chhind*, but also the fat white grub of a certain beetle, which is also found in the stems of the toddy palm and in fresh green monsoon bamboo shoots. This is eaten fried in ghee or oil with a little spice and chillies, and is regarded as a great delicacy; it is sold in the Jagdalpur market for three or four pice, and even high-caste Hindus buy it. When white ants emerge in flying swarms early in the monsoon they collect them after they have shed their wings, or pull the wings

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the seeds are small, shiny and scarlet, with black eyes, and are used as beads in Bastar and many parts of the Central Provinces. For poisoning tiger they 'salt' the flesh of a kill with the poisonous leaves, bark and roots of the shrub *dual bito* (Halbi *bag mohra*; *Alstonia neriifolia*) mixed with quicklime.

C. *Domestication of Animals*

Pigs

Pork is a major item in the dietary of Hill and Bison-horn Marias. At the end of marches in the Abujhmar hills I always paid for a pig for the carriers from the preceding camp to roast and eat before dispersing to their villages; and it is sound to provide the Marias or Murias called out for any State work with pork at the beginning and end of the work. The best fattened hog[1] is very cheap and goes a long way. The housing and feeding of pigs have already been described[2]; cared for in this way, even the domestic India pig is not necessarily the foul worm-ridden pest that he becomes in the low caste quarters of the towns and villages of British India, and in fact in Abujhmar villages his quarters are often cleaner than the houses.

Nearly all young boars are gelded, but a few are left entire for sacrifices in honour of the clan-god and the Village Mother to whom neither Hill nor Bison-horn Maria would offer a hog. The Hill Maria lays the boar on its back, ties its front legs to a post, and stretches out its back legs, while another draws out its penis (*dim*) and crushes its testicles (*merrsheng*) with stones. They say that gelding improves the flavour of pork, and the only boars ever eaten are those sacrificed. A hog is always part of the Hill Maria bride-price. Hill Marias call a hog *badiali padi* or *kuna padi*, and Bison-horn *badiali padi*; boars they respectively call *charkal padi* and *kural padi*.

Cooked pig's lard is kept in many Hill Maria houses as a salve for sore eyes and cuts.

Poultry

They keep numbers of poultry similar in breed and appearance to the red jungle fowl. The Hill Maria's hen-coops have been described on page 104. Cocks and hens are taken to the field houses, and roost there below the sleeping platforms. *Kovr-guda*, funnel-shaped nests on bamboo posts about two feet high, are kept in every Hill Maria house, and by many Bison-horn Marias. Jungle cock visit the *penda* plots and fight the domestic cocks in the early morning; the Hill Marias say that if a jungle cock crosses a domestic hen the eggs are not fertile.

[1] 'Hog' is used in its technical sense, of a gelded boar.
[2] See pp. 103 and 120.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

servants. Though the Bison-horn Marias are not free from either venereal disease or the visits of these gentry, yet they have been fairly successful in keeping their women to themselves, and have suffered little except in the south, where many of them go at times to Dummagudem and other Madras towns for work. If, however, the Telugus have given them venereal disease, they have more than repaid them with yaws. 164

Skin diseases, such as scabies, ringworm and eczema, are common, especially among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, who under Hindu influence are taking to the use of clothes. They cannot afford a change of clothing, and dispensary treatment is defeated at once if the old infected clothing cannot be discarded. Hill Marias wearing only scanty loin-cloths are far less affected; but even among them the 280 cases treated included 10 of scabies, 9 of ringworm and 7 of eczema. [177]

Eye complaints are frequent, owing largely, no doubt, to the habit of living and sleeping in dark unventilated huts and dormitories thick with smoke. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 16 of conjunctivitis, 5 of cataract, and 5 of other eye complaints.

Malaria is very common among the Bison-horn Marias, and in the Bijapur tahsil blackwater fever occurs. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 26 of malaria, only 4 of which were of children with badly enlarged spleens.

Old men and women are frequently seen crippled with rheumatism, and 17 of the 280 cases were of young men suffering from rheumatic complaints. Of the rest of the 280 cases, 24 were badly neglected ulcers, 6 bad foot-cracks, 25 simple stomach complaints, and 9 (including 3 of pyorrhoea) neuralgia from badly decayed teeth. No figures were kept of what is now the most obviously prevalent complaint, hydrocele, because it was impossible to treat this in camp. Glasfurd noted the prevalence of this in the sixties, and wrote in paragraph 66 of his Report that :—

> 'Hydrocele . . . is exceedingly common in the Chintulnar and Sonnkum (i.e. Sukma) Talooks, and also around Dantewara and in all parts, indeed, lying adjacent to the Bailla Deela range of hills. I should say that from 10 to 20 per cent. of the population in these parts are afflicted in this manner. Their own account of it is that it is caused by drinking the water of nullahs during the freshes.'

To me it now seems commoner in the Hill Maria country than elsewhere. The victims know no cure, and are only beginning to realise that something can be done for it in the dispensaries.

The idea that Marias are expert physicians is an amazing example of the general Hindu ignorance and superstitious dread of the aboriginal. In actual fact the Maria has only a few queer 757 752

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

nostrums like the use of red-ants for fever or python-flesh for pot-belly already mentioned, and cauterization is the only treatment he knows for simple injuries or foot-crack (just as he brands the flanks of ailing cattle). A Maria bitten by a rabid dog at His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler's Christmas camp at Kondagaon in 1927 refused point blank to be sent out of Bastar to Raipur for Pasteur treatment, but ultimately as a concession to the general anxiety asked to be given the body of the dog, and ate its liver.[1] To Marias illness is generally a manifestation of something malignant, either the magic of a human enemy or the ill-will of a god or spirit. At funerals, steps are taken to ascertain whether magic was the cause of death; in illness a medium is called in, or a *wede* or *gunia* with knowledge either of spells to defeat the spirits of evil or of the white magic means of blowing away illness, *jhara phukna*; epidemic or epizootic disease may be defeated either by palisading the village after sweeping it clean, and posting guards with bows and arrows to shoot the demons of illness, as was done by Hill Marias in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, or by special disease-riddance ceremonies like the annual ceremony described on page 140. Yet such is the Hindu's faith in their 'medicine' that in 1930 the late zamindar of Sukma hastened his death when in the last stages of diabetes by taking the advice of Bison-horn Maria 'doctors' or *gunia* to the effect that he had two intestines, one of which had withered like a dead plant, while the other, though withering, was still partly green and could be revived if the patient fed it with lumps of black earth.

Maria treatment of disease

B. Manufactures

In the preceding chapters frequent mention has been made of basketry, for Maria measures, grain bins, walls of houses and fences, dancing shields and so on. The Hill Marias are great basket-workers, men and women. The men make all the big basketry bins for storing grain and the large baskets sold at the markets, as well as dancing shields and fencing and matting; the women make the basketry measures, basketry plates and the smaller domestic baskets, as well as brooms of various grasses, which are generally plaited together at the top by basketry methods. In camps, Hill Maria youths almost invariably employ any spare time in basket-making. Bison-horn Marias on the contrary leave it almost entirely to their women, except that the men make the basketry caps that are the basis of the *tallagulla* bison-horn dancing headdress, and fencing.

1. Basketry

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 421. - Analyst]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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781 tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

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755 When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thua* is performed.

A *thua* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahapurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

● 751 Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means.
755 Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power
278 from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescription of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833] *For impotence.* The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *tej-rāl* and *bhoj-rāl* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753] *For dropsy.* This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

summer or the work of burning *dahi*, saying, 'O the summer has brought this burning for me'. They eat onions as a cure.

For pain in the stomach. The root of the arandi shrub, or the small green shoots of the babera tree.

For wounds. The bark of the mendla tree.

For rheumatism. There are several different remedies:

(1) Put some leaves of the kumi tree on the affected place and blow the pain away.

(2) Powder the roots of the karanji and sarpho plants. Mix with oil and rub it in.

(3) Touch the painful swelling with a bit of 'seed-iron' (*bij-loha*), or a thunderbolt.

For fever. The classic treatment is with red ants, which are sprinkled over the patient's body—the stings act as a counter-irritant. Sometimes, however, the ants are put in a pot of water, the lid is closed and the water is boiled for an hour. Then it is strained out and salt, chilli and garlic are mixed in it and it is given to the patient to drink. The residue of red ants is cleaned, ground up with salt and chilli and made into a chutney and given to the patient with his first food.

Another common febrifuge is to pound the leaves of the chill tree, and make a drink by mixing them with salt and chilli in water.

Red ants are also given as a cure for biliousness. A chutney of red ants, haldi and chilli is said to act very quickly on the stomach.

For headache.

(1) Pull each of your toes in turn. When you have found the toe that is connected with whatever part of the head is aching, tie it up and the pain will cease.

(2) Grind up the roots of makar and tikur with fresh haldi. Make a hot poultice of this and apply it to the head.

For diarrhoea. Take seven grains of rice and seven grains of urad pulse and the dry leaf of any old bamboo in the house. Grind them up together, boil in water, strain and take on an empty stomach.

For itch. Make an ointment of the white underskin of a snake and karanji oil.

For sores.

(1) Collect some harra fruit (myrabolams), dry and grind them to powder. Make a paste with a little oil, and apply to the sores.

(2) Remove the dirt from the patient's own ears, mix it in a paste of rice-flour and apply to the sores.

For the bite of a mad dog. Get a bit of the flesh of a mad dog which has died, dry it carefully and store it. When needed, it may be given mixed with gur not less than two years old.

Several different kinds of medicinal oil are made by the Muria. For cracked feet, and wounds in the ears of a bullock, they extract oil from the *dhaman* snake or the cobra. The fat is removed and melted in a pot and kept carefully in a small gourd. For rheumatism, oil made from the fatty parts of the tiger, the leopard or the bear is said to be effective.

X. Muria Festivals

Muria festivals are of several different kinds. The great Marhai are commercial festivals; in the larger Hinduized villages the old Pen Karsita or 'Sport of the Gods' has been turned into a large bazaar, at which the religious element

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter IX

Domestic Life; Miscellaneous

A. Treatment of Sickness

164
758 Amongst the Hindus of the plains the Hill Maria has a great but totally undeserved reputation for his skilful use of herbs and roots to treat the sick. A few chronic sufferers may be met who have migrated to the Abujhmar hills in the fond hope of getting their sufferings mitigated by Maria medicine; they will readily tell you that the Marias were more ignorant than they themselves, though some have stayed on, finding the simple life and the climate of the hills tonic in themselves. Actually, the helplessness of the Hill Maria in the face of the simplest injury or ailment is pathetic. A simple sore beginning from a thorn in the buttock is neglected, till the whole buttock becomes one vast sore. The commonest and worst disease among them is, or was, yaws; whole households suffered, and many for the moment apparently free bore on their persons obvious indications that it was only a matter of time before the disease would reappear in the secondary or tertiary state. Innumerable cases came to my camp doctor for treatment in my 1930 tours. I sent him again in the summer of 1930 to tour in the area, and of 280 cases treated by him in 26 villages, 79 were yaws cases; in his next tour in the same villages, 69 new yaws cases were brought to him. Later tours were undertaken by him and other doctors for injecting yaws patients with salvarsan preparations, with great success; in my March 1934 return visit to this area I did not see one case, and everywhere the villagers were profuse in their thanks for deliverance from the scourge, for which they had known no antidote or alleviative. It is common also in the hilly parts of the Bison-horn country, and in the lower Indrawati and Godavari valleys, where the Bastar dispensaries get many a yaws patient from the Chanda and East Godavari districts of British India.

164 Syphilis is extremely rare among the Hill Marias; the 280 cases already mentioned as treated in summer 1930 did not include one case of venereal disease. Where it is common in Bastar the carriers have invariably been either police constables and forest guards or Rohilla and Telugu traders. Hill Marias have luckily been comparatively immune from the attentions of minor State

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

753 is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

761 Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return 754 next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest [787] or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *wadde* or *wadde*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[1] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[2] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[3]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

674 Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen 754 murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias 683 and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[3] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 188. [3] Report, pp. 32-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

787 825 584

be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. Beliefs about Natural Phenomena

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To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-vil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garhar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

561

826 177

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 Both for burial and for cremation most Hill Marias place the body in the grave or on the pyre with the head, face upwards, towards the sunrise and the feet towards the sunset; the Usendi clan, however, reverses this.

761 When the death is obviously a natural death after a long life, and there can be no suspicion of magic, nothing is done at the funeral to ascertain the cause of death. But if, for example, a 764 man or woman dies suddenly in the prime of life for no apparent reason, the bearers halt on the path just by the funeral ground, and stand with the bier resting on their shoulders. The *waddai* takes seven *saja* leaves, and places them in a row on the ground a few paces away from the bier. One leaf represents the Earth or Bhum, and stands for death through the displeasure of the Village Mother; the second stands for death through sickness; the third for death through the displeasure of the clan-god and the Departed (*pen-hanal*); the fourth for death through the magic of a fellow-villager; the fifth for death from the magic of a man whose enmity has been aroused against the deceased by a quarrel or exchange of abuses; the sixth for death from the magic of a *waddai* or magician; and the seventh for death from natural causes. The *waddai* or, if he is not present, the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita*, strikes the earth three times with an axe, and calls on the corpse to disclose the cause of its death. The corpse is then believed to impel the bearers to carry it to one of the leaves and stand on it; or else the *waddai* first excites the corpse by scattering husked grain over it till it moves the bearers to one of the leaves. The bearers then leap eight or nine paces away from the leaf, and stand with their backs to the row of leaves. They must not look behind them while the *waddai* changes the order of the leaves, after which the corpse has again to impel its bearers to stand on one of the leaves. Three or four times in all the process is repeated, the leaves being rearranged each time behind the backs of the bearers; and if each time the corpse indicates the same leaf, despite its changes of position, the company is satisfied that it has truly revealed the cause of its death. If in successive tests it indicates different leaves, they assume that there was nothing wrong with the death. In old days the elders stated that if the corpse indicated magic as the cause, the *waddai* at once called on it to point out the magician among those present at the funeral, or in the dead man's village or an adjacent village; but nowadays they do not proceed to an immediate witch-hunt; a seed of suspicion has, however, been sown which will sooner or later grow into assault or murder.

764 Then, if the body is to be buried, the bearers bring it to the grave, which is dug only waist-deep, lift it off the bier and place it in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

763 for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

764 When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the [533] mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *uraskal*.

[787 On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion 761] remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *uraskal* menhir. There are *uraskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs. On the Jagdalpur side, however, and [718] around Paknar, though every village has its *uraskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kuthi*, *urad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at 764 weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. 177 The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact 554 with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[see cat. 116, p. 426, — Analyst]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

887 goes to the market and attends the festivals, though there is not so much for her in these as for the men. But her real hour of happiness is at a marriage. Here she may lay aside restraint and recapture the abandon of youth. Now she may drink heavily and for a few hours in blissful intoxication free herself of inhibitions and forget all that is tiresome and weary in her life. If the older men enliven the marriage scene with their buffoonery, the older women divert it with their obscenity. There is nothing that they may not say, little they may not do. Their songs and their dance movements are outrageous and never fail to rouse laughter in the crowd.

888 In a very few cases Muria women grow riggish in old age. They adorn themselves with many ornaments and wear bright-coloured saris. This behaviour is not approved.

You are an old woman,
Forget your dances.
You are an old woman,
Yet on your buttocks is a tiny cloth
And flowers are in your hair.

Although there is a rule that women should never use their ghotul titles after marriage, when a group of old women who have grown up together in the same ghotul meet in later life, they usually use the old names in order to awaken happy memories of the past. I am told that then they exchange reminiscences through half the night and that such times are among the happiest of their lives.

886 As elsewhere in aboriginal India, the climacteric does not appear to be dreaded or even to be specially noticed. In India, women are old at 45 and they greet the cessation of the menstrual period with relief that they are now saved from its embarrassments. I have not been able to find any myth about the climacteric; there does not seem to be any rule about it or any desire to avert it. It is a purely natural phenomenon. 'The stream that flowed so long is dry', 'the old tree has begun to wither'. Some people believe that the tree withers because 'no one goes to an old woman,[1] so her vagina has no grain to eat; no rain falls in her stream, so how can it flow?'

II. Death and the Ghotul

761 883 The ghotul is a place of separations. But when a chelik or motiari dies there is a special feeling of sorrow, a sense of outrage, the conviction that something exceptional and abnormal has occurred. Sometimes the ghotul is closed for three days; where it is not closed the children gather sadly and there is no singing and there should be no intimacies. When older people die the dormitory is not closed. 'The ghotul is the *Dinda-mahli*, the Palace of the Unmarried. As the Raja's Palace is not shut when people die in the town, neither is ours. But if two or three of the chelik and motiari die, then we shut it.' At Dongrigura, they said that when a chelik died, the motiari wept and next day initiated one of the younger boys and gave him the dead chelik's title, so that there might be no gap in their fellowship. When the Subedar died, they made his little brother Subedar next day and gave him as 'husband' to the Subedarin, his *anga*, or elder brother's 'widow'.

The death of a chelik or motiari is always abnormal. The death of a little child or of a child in the womb is no less unnatural. 'Just as in a field, rice

[1] A rather cynical proverb runs: 'How disgusted is a man who eats stale food in the morning and goes to bed with an old woman at night.'

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

761 ●

sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or 883
wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain 764
them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. 883
Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a
funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal;
the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups
for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young
baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose
of it.

All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatis- 761
fied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the love- 775
liest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is
not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed
through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not
consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property
to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women
or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or 765
motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and 776
the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to
trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives
under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done
in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she
becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia
and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari
is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young
children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years
ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul
building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it
against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay
here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual
offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away.
They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus
freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the
Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-
bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Kuara-bhut, revealing
his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an
Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain.
In Palnar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the [755]
ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy.
When the Siraha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices
and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and
possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the
village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village
during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small [585]
date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from
here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone
on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he
removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became 775
what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very
dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and
motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Angār mute rāni re.	Angar Mute is the Rani.
Yar muyelē kilandu re.	Weeping, she is bathing in the water.
Jhāro jhāro kilandu re.	As she weeps the tears fall.
Pāthnaro dhoti re!	O her silken cloth!
Dhoti tene kurundu re.	She looks at her cloth.
Tēna dudeng dāsle re?	How can we describe her breasts?
Mākha kāying dudo re.	Her breasts are as the bel fruit.
Ghātum tikalo wāndung re.	From the bathing-place she is coming home.
Lone tike kandung re	In the house
Mul gathe mānā re	There are so many relatives
Sanju lanju kile re.	That we cannot count them.

The rest of the song describes Angar Mute's court, to which comes the Pargana Manjhi with small legs, his spear over his shoulder, a big-bellied Kotwar and many other officials. The Manjhi delivers judgement, giving a hundred rupees to the Raja and only a pair of bullocks for the Muria. 'One of the bullocks had no tail, the other had no horns.' Then the chelik and motiari who have escorted the corpse to the burial ground are described. There are sixty boys led by Kosi Layur and sixty girls led by Gara Karre Mode, the Belosa of the ghotul, whose vagina is sixteen cubits long and whose pubic hairs are five cubits long. 'A jungle boar could roll in her vagina.' The boys break her bangles and push the pieces into her navel with a *jharar jharar* noise.

All this, which seems merely coarse to us, is exceedingly amusing to the Muria; the song is really a comic effort intended to relieve the tension of the funeral now that the main rites are done.

VI. Divining the Cause of Death

It is always important at a funeral to discover the cause of so monstrous and unnatural a thing as death. At Binjhli, when magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the Siraha medium recites a string of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty man is mentioned, the bier moves forward violently of its own accord. This method, which resembles the use of an Anga clan-god for divination, is common throughout the State, and Grigson has recorded a similar, though more elaborate, rite in use among the Hill Maria.[1]

At Kehalakot, the Muria remove some locks of the dead man's hair and a little earth from beneath his head. They make a small flag-pole with the hair and the earth and a saja leaf stuck on an ebony stick. They take this to the jungle and a boy holds it while the Siraha recites the names of any suspected causes or people. When the right word is uttered, the flag is said to quiver. At Kokori the villagers go to the boundary and put five heaps of rice in a row, one for Maharpurab, one for witchcraft, one for Mother Earth, one for the ancestors of the house, and one for any local godling who may have been troublesome. The people sit some distance away, and spend the time having their hair done by their relatives-in-law. Presently a crow flies down and pecks up one or other of the piles of rice, thus revealing the cause of death.

The *thumbdari* divination is done with chickens on the second or third day after death. One chicken is taken from the house of the dead and one from

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

761 the house of a samdhi. The chickens are exchanged so that a representative of the dead person's house holds the samdhi's chicken and vice versa. The 781 usual piles of rice are made and the chickens held before them while a string of names is recited. When the chickens peck at the rice, it is believed that they have revealed the cause of death. The chickens are then sacrificed and cooked with the rice on the spot.

It is commonly believed all over India, as by the Muria, that the way the smoke rises from the funeral pyre indicates the sort of death the deceased has suffered. If the smoke goes straight up, it indicates a natural death; if it goes crooked, it proclaims the hand of witchcraft.

VII. 'Bringing Back the Soul'

769 The curious rite of 'bringing back the soul' is known to the Hill Maria and the Bison-horn Maria, but is most common among the Muria who practise it in many different forms. Since this rite is performed throughout the Central Provinces, and since some of these Muria probably represent an ancient migration from the north into Bastar, it is not surprising that we should find this cultural link between them.[1]

It is rather difficult to describe the rites because of the bewildering variety of detail to be discovered from village to village, but it is possible to get a fairly clear picture of the main outlines.

After death, on the following day or at any time up to three years, when there is sufficient provision in the house, the relations of the dead man are summoned for a feast. Sometimes the relations are warned by a dream that the spirit of the dead is dissatisfied and that they must do something to comfort and honour him.

The people assemble, both *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relatives, and enjoy a feast in the dead man's house. The next morning they go singing, both men and women, attended by chelik and motiari with their drums and cymbals to the nearest tank or river. In some villages a samdhi makes a small booth on the bank; nine reeds are planted in the ground, mango leaves tied to them and a string run round them seven times. On the top he puts a small mat and on the ground he makes a circle with red and black powder and places an egg in the middle in the name of the Yer Kanyang (the Water Maiden). The Gaita then puts three rings of sonra fibre in the circle and an earthen pot filled with water.

[1] Accounts of bringing back the soul have been given for several tribes by Russell and Hiralal, for the Gond (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 94), Ahir (III, p. 28), Halba (III, p. 195), Kharia (III, p. 436), Kond (III, p. 469), Lohar (IV, p. 124), and Taoula (IV, 541). The practice is probably common to all the tribes in the Central Provinces. It is said that the Gond once buried their dead inside the house in order to ensure re-birth within the family; possibly 'bringing back the soul' has a similar purpose. The Gond customs recorded by Russell and Hiralal resemble those of the Muria. Others, however, differ. For example, the Kharia bring back the soul of the dead by attracting it at night to a lamp placed at a cross-roads. They sit near the lamp calling on the dead man and when the flame wavers in the wind, they break the lamp saying that the soul has returned to them. The Kond are said to have brought home the soul riding on a bow-stick covered with cloth. The Lohar have a custom, which I have myself noted for the Pando of east Bilaspur. Rice-flour is spread on the floor of the kitchen and covered with a brass plate. The mourners go to the village boundary, again spread flour on the ground, call on the dead to come and wait till some worm or insect crawls on to the flour. They catch the creature with a pinch of dough and carry it home and let it loose in the house. The flour under the brass plate is scrutinized and it is said that usually the foot-prints of a man or animal are found; this indicates the body of the man or beast to which the soul has passed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rupee to purchase rings in the bazaar. The Hichami Gaita then dug the hole and they put a saja leaf in the bottom and the stone above it. Soon afterwards a second stone was brought for Birju's mother and this was placed separately, for it is the rule that the memorials for men and women should not usually be together, though this rule, like all rules, is often broken. They bathed the stones and put a *gappa* basket with roots and rice in front of the woman's stone and a dish in front of the man's. Everyone present put a mark of oil and haldi on the stones, just as they might have done at a marriage to the bride and bridegroom. They returned home and sacrificed a bullock and tied the tail to the old man's menhir. On this occasion the souls of the deceased were brought back to the Hanalkot, which stands in the village itself.

The cow or bullock is often chosen by old people while they are still alive. Widows, who may reasonably expect to be neglected, are insistent on dedicating such an animal.

XII. General Ideas about the Menhirs

There is a universal belief that the memorial stones grow in size if the soul of the dead is satisfied with the arrangements that are made for him. I have on several occasions spoken to the Muria of the north (who erect very much smaller stones than the Maria of the south) about the great *wrakkal* of the Bison-horn Maria. They invariably reply, 'But, of course, these stones are very old and they have grown; they could never have put up such big ones'. They believe that even the small stones of the north will grow in time. Kodu, the very intelligent Malguzar of Khutgaon in the extreme north of the State, told me that in the past twenty years he has definitely seen the stones grow in size. A very small stone is put for a baby and it is believed that it will grow gradually until it has reached the size it should have been had it been placed for a man of twenty.

When a stone grows it is considered fortunate. There is sure to be happiness and good luck for the family. If a stone falls down or goes crooked, the relatives consult the Siraha and then put it straight and offer whatever sacrifices he has recommended. It is generally supposed that when a stone falls, it is an indication that the ghost of the dead is angry or feels neglected. In some places, the collapse of a menhir is regarded as prophetic of disaster, and generally should white ants make a nest over the stone it is considered a bad omen. But in some places there is a belief that there is no need to worry about this after twenty years have passed. After twenty years the Hanal has become completely mingled with his ancestors and no longer exists as a separate entity. When an old stone falls down, therefore, the Muria perform no ceremonies and leave it where it is.

XIII. The Hanal Pata

It is very difficult to persuade the Muria to repeat the songs connected with death at any but the proper time. This is quite natural, for there is to all simple minds something dark and ominous about talking of the dead. I did not find a Hill or Bison-horn Maria who was willing to repeat a single song. It has only been among the more open-hearted and friendly Muria that I have been able to get a few songs, mostly in Gondi, which are used during a funeral and at the time of erecting a menhir. I have already given the funeral songs; I will now quote a few songs used at the later ceremonies.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

115 with a particular knack of achieving connexion and intercourse with supernatural beings and, at the great festivals of the State, scores of Ganda and Halba mediums fall into a trance and dance ecstatically before the gods. It will be noticed also that in every case the Churlin dances, that she is 'bound' by charms, cohabits with her captor for many years, bears him seven children and finally disappears on recovering her original garments. It is impossible to say what is at the bottom of this widely distributed tradition.

115 166 In order to avoid the danger of the Ondar Muttai special precautions are taken at the time of her disposal. The Muria, in common with everyone in Bastar, believe that she cannot cross water, so they cremate her body between two streams. The priest makes four iron nails and drives these into each corner of the pyre. Sometimes nails of kassi wood are used. Thorn-bushes are placed above the body. It is considered very important to bury the body immediately. Even if the woman dies at midnight, she must be taken out. They bury the corpse, and only unmarried boys are allowed to handle it. They carry it quickly to the grave, throw the earth upon it and run away. On the day the body is buried, the earth round the grave trembles.

In many villages the Gaita or Waddai goes round the grave throwing mandia grain upon it with the idea that the ghost will be so busy picking up and counting the small grains that she will not have time to do anything else.

The Dorla of Dubatota tie bundles of thorns round the wrists and ankles of the corpse. The Dhurwa of Netanar said that the Gaita drives iron nails through the hands and feet. The Muria of Phunder described how once when a pregnant woman died, the chelik tied her body to the bier with a very strong rope and after lowering it into the grave the Gaita drove four nails into the ground at its four corners. This protection, however, was not successful and so a herd of she-buffaloes was taken to the grave and made to trample upon it. This is another example of the belief that there is some special protection against the Ondar Muttai in the buffalo. The Hill Maria round Chota Dongar said that when a pregnant woman died only women could dispose of the corpse. Women dig the grave on the far side of the village boundary and on the four corners put bits of iron slag and young shoots of the cotton tree. If they put a memorial stone for her, which, in any case, will be a small one, they put a cotton tree pole there also. The Muria sometimes lay an ebony bough over the grave.

115 The Ondar Muttai or Churlin, however, returns to her own country after a certain time. For example, the Muria say that in Jeth (July) at the time of violent wind and rain, the Ondar Muttai goes to her own land, the Rakasgarh, and mingles with her own people. The Hill Maria said the same thing, that after three years she goes to her own country, and I have found a similar tradition among the Bison-horn Maria. What happens to her there is not revealed.

XVIII. Summary

[161] Perhaps the most striking thing in the Muria attitude to death is their emphasis on the continuity of all existence, their belief that death is but an incident in a vital process which continues after the soul has shed its temporary physical integument. But the Muria have not been able to take the further step forward from this into a serene faith and hope in the happiness of the dead, and their desire to help and serve the living. The dead appear rather as dissatisfied, mischievous and wayward, deeply interested in human life but anxious to interfere, to display their power, almost to show off, rather than to assist mankind.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

It is possible that in this case some important evidence was suppressed by the witnesses, for there was a suggestion that the murdered woman had committed incest with her brother. The fear of excommunication and fines would be sufficiently strong to induce everyone to keep quiet about this. On the other hand, it is equally possible that the suspicion of his wife's infidelity was a delusion of Chamru's disordered mind.

Other Maria have been content to take their own way out of the world, when the psychotic disturbance became too strong for them. Many different symptoms are recorded as preceding such suicides. Baiha Ganga, for some days before his death, refused to eat and when people approached him attacked them with his stick. Bongi Maria was subject to periodic attacks of insanity; he tried to kill himself three times before he finally succeeded. Others displayed a marked narcissistic attitude, wandering aimlessly in the jungle, refusing to talk or work; such were Saradu, a northern Muria, who used to wander naked, Nari Maria, Pakli, a little girl about ten years old, and Marvi Mundi, a woman who had suffered since childhood from attacks during which she refused to eat and wandered about aimlessly, neglecting the dozen children she had borne.

There is finally the strange and sombre case of Markami Hirme, mother of four children and about to bear a fifth. In her pre-pubertal period she had been subject to epileptic fits, but was treated by the local Siraha, and was believed cured. On 22 October 1935, at her home at Gonderas, the epilepsy recurred, and she became 'strange in her behaviour'. She was in the eighth month of pregnancy. Two days later, when her husband was out watching the crops, and her eldest daughter had gone for water, she hanged herself from a rafter of the house in the presence of her three little children.

Now such a death is the most dangerous in the world. The woman who dies in pregnancy or childbirth is known throughout India as the Churelin or Churin; in Bastar she is often called the Ondar Muttai, the Old Bee Woman, who attacks men with the fury of a swarm of bees. Hirme's husband and the village elders seem to have been unable to decide what to do. Not one of them dared to touch the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Death comes into the world by the treachery of the gods. 000
The Baiga describe how Bhagavan grew tired of men, but did not know how to kill them. So he gave Nanga Baiga itch and the old man began to scratch. But he was unable to reach the small of his back, and one day when he picked up a stick to scratch himself there, Bhagavan turned it into a cobra and it bit him and he died.[1] The Juang say that formerly men did not die because they did not sleep, and Bhagavan had to send a woman to sell them curds mixed with sleep-medicine. When they ate the curds, they slept and died. The Bhuiya story describes how so long as Jug Budha and his wife were living, no one died and the world was becoming over-populated. So the Supreme Being sent a centipede to bite them, and thus introduced death into the world.

The Muria too, in the north of Bastar, associate the coming 761
of death with the murder of a son. 773

> In the Middle World no man died, and Mahapurub 539
> wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He had a son. He killed him and prepared to carry him out for burial. But when his wife heard of it, she ran weeping to the place and, taking her son from him, sat with the corpse in her lap. Mahapurub said, 'We must bury the child, don't be foolish'. But she said, 'No, I'll never give him to you'.
> Mahapurub then planted a jamun tree behind her. One day some of the berries fell to the ground before her. She picked them up and as she ate her mouth was reddened with the juice. Mahapurub came again and said, 'Give me the boy. You are a witch, you are eating his flesh'. He brought a mirror and when she saw her reddened mouth, she thought she really was eating her son. She wept bitterly, but gave the body to Mahapurub. He buried it and from that day, death has been in the world.

A similar sacrifice accounts for the origin of the sun and 821
moon. The Muria, in a story which is known in a slightly 773
different version to the Bison-horn Maria, describe how after the great wooden circles for the sun and moon were made, there was the problem of how to put life into them. Mahapurub had a son, and Lingo declared that only by killing him and giving his blood to the sun and moon to

[1] Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1939), p. 329.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of a chelik's absence from the ghotul to seduce his motiari. These things happen, but they are condemned. 883X

The chelik themselves consider that this type of ghotul has several great advantages. The first, characteristically, is the very practical one that if a girl becomes pregnant 'they know the thief'. Elsewhere it is naturally often difficult to fix the responsibility of fatherhood. Again, the chelik say that a great deal of trouble is saved. 'We know what to do; there is no jealousy or dispute; everything is settled, and there is no more to be said.' I think it is true that there is less strain and anxiety in these ghotul; and there is room for the development of deep intimacy and romantic attachment. In the pre-nuptial period, however, it may be argued that these things are not altogether desirable. 836

They certainly lead to greater conflict with the parents over marriage. Many chelik and motiari look forward with misery to separation from the partner who has shared with them the happy days of youth, and occasionally—but only occasionally—ghotul partners elope together rather than face a separation. Statistics here are striking. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 1884 were celebrated according to the wishes of the parents and the great majority of cases were of the cross-cousin type. Of the 116 irregular marriages, 77 were those of chelik who married their 'ghotul-wives'. Only 39 irregular marriages were reported from the other type of ghotul. In view of the smaller number of men from the *jodidār* ghotul, these figures indicate a proportion of about 1 in every 9 of chelik in this type of ghotul who had conflict with their parents, and only 1 in about 32 from the other type of ghotul. 883X 836 583

Of those who married their 'ghotul-wives', 9 out of 77 divorced them later, giving a proportion of 11·6 per cent against a proportion of 2·9 per cent of divorces for the whole 2000 marriages. It is interesting that the proportion of divorces among Lamhada—the other type of chelik who live in close contact with their future wives before marriage—is almost exactly the same, 11·5 per cent. And although 77 and 113 cases respectively are not sufficient for us to draw far-reaching conclusions, it is undoubtedly striking that there should be so high an incidence of divorce among these and only among these two classes of people. 883X 836 586

Yet even though a passionate ghotul attachment is not the best preparation for a life-long union, at the time separation seems tragic indeed. A girl especially, whose chelik marries someone else, is a pathetic figure. 'Her life has left her'—so they put it in Munjmeta—'she lies alone on her mat and pines for him; she has no heart to take another lover.' Often she sleeps with a girl-friend who is herself in the arms of a boy, but she lies with her back to them, turning away from all that happiness. In Ulera they said that when a girl's lover leaves her, she cannot sing for many days. When the Mukhwan of Banjora died, the Mukhwanin's face was 'destroyed by sorrow'. 883X 836 152

Boys are often, but not always, more philosophical. 'Yes, for a month you feel wretched', said a chelik in Markabera. 'Then you forget all about it. One may be able to meet her again, but that is difficult and dangerous. But at least you can always get another girl in the ghotul.' Yet at Bopna the Silledar was called a 'widower', so miserable was he after his 'wife's' marriage last year. At Markabera, Dasru took to drink after his ghotul wife was married and Gurti, who was deeply attached to the beautiful and vivacious Mallo, looked very lonely and miserable when I saw him nearly a year after her marriage to a boy in another village.

It is remarkable, however, how few actual tragedies there have been from this cause. In the last ten years, only one case of suicide has been registered 883X 836 762

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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as due to the separation of a chelik from his motiari. This occurred in 1932 and was, as we should expect, in a *jodidār* ghotul, at Amgaon in the Karangal Pargana. Chaitu and Munga—I do not know their ghotul titles—the boy about twenty years old and the girl about eighteen—were greatly attached to each other and dreaded the thought of separation. They each begged their parents to let them marry, but Munga's father was adamant and married her to Dasru of the Markabera ghotul, a different Dasru, of course, from the one

[31]

FIG. 60. Carving in the ghotul at Nayanar
Height 4½"

I have just mentioned. After the marriage she was taken to Markabera, where the chelik diverted themselves as usual by shutting her up with the new husband whom she did not love. Before she left Amgaon, she was taken round the village to say good-bye and every household made their contributions for the ghotul feast that would be held a week after the marriage.

When the time came, chelik and motiari went singing through the pretty wooded country that separates Amgaon from Markabera and invited Munga to the feast. Her husband could not refuse, though he must have known there was danger in Amgaon, but it was so near—only two miles away—that he let her go. When she reached her old home, she went to meet Chaitu in the lonely corner of a field; he had brought some liquor for her, and they sat down to have a farewell drink together. But a little girl, Chaitu's younger sister, followed them and ran to tell her father. He hurried to the spot, caught the two lovers

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942).1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

together, and beat the boy, telling him that the girl was no longer his, and that such meetings would bring scandal upon them all. Behind those slaps how much one can see of parental exasperation over a long and troublesome intrigue, almost certainly parental envy of a son entranced by love, and the usual Muria dread of adultery—a very genuine sentiment.

Boy and girl ran away—I can see their quick Muria nature dissolved in tears and anger—and returned to the ghotul for the feast that sealed their separation. Munga had to massage every chelik after supper as a farewell rite, but then, when all was quiet, they crept together out of the ghotul to the woods. That night—it was 20 May 1932—they climbed onto the great branch of a mango tree, tied and adjusted ropes, and facing one another fell to death. When they were found, Chaitu had his hand upon his motiari's shoulder.

V

Although outwardly both types of ghotul are the same and often only the most careful investigation can distinguish them, the customs and atmosphere of the modern type are entirely distinct. Here everything is arranged to prevent long-drawn intense attachments, to eliminate jealousy and possessiveness, to deepen the sense of communal property and action. No chelik may regard a motiari as 'his'. There is no ghotul marriage, there are no ghotul partners. 'Everyone belongs to everyone else' in the very spirit of *Brave New World*. A chelik and motiari may sleep together for three nights; after that they are warned; if they persist they are punished. If a boy shows any signs of possessiveness for a particular girl, if his face falls when he sees her making love to someone else, if he gets annoyed at her sleeping with another chelik, should he be offended if she refuses to massage him and goes to someone else, he is forcibly reminded by his fellows that she is not his wife, he has no *haq* or right over her, she is the *māl* or property of the whole ghotul, and if he looks like that he will be punished.

This type of ghotul is sometimes called the *mundi-badaina* because in it you change from girl to girl just as you change your rings from finger to finger.

How is it that this type of ghotul has so widely displaced the classical *jodidār* dormitory? Why is the process of change from one type to the other continuing today? There are many reasons.

In the Bennr Pargana and at Koilibera I heard the phrase 'so that they will not be ruined by love'. This is certainly a genuine consideration. Too much love before marriage will mean too little after it. Sexual romance is not the best preparation for a life-long union. A strong and lasting attachment to a girl in the pre-nuptial period may lead to an elopement and an irregular marriage. Such a marriage disturbs the serenity of the home—which ultimately depends on the parents; it destroys the old alliances of families and prevents the repayment of ancient debts; it often turns out unsuccessful. In villages where several such elopements have occurred within a short time, the rules of the ghotul have been changed.

The modern rules are also intended as a contraceptive measure. The Muria believe that conception only occurs when the male and female remain together for a long period and enjoy an uninterrupted series of acts of coition with no divergence of interest. Both psychological and physical concentration in fidelity to a single partner is required for pregnancy.

A former Chalan of Golawand, for example, described how he consistently changed his ghotul partners and never made anyone pregnant; but two friends of his in the same ghotul slept every day with the same girls and impregnated

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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way, though not always with the full ceremonial. Indeed a girl should be married to the boy she is engaged to—if he will have her—as soon as possible. At Kibi Belanga, for example, a Maravi boy, the Panda of the ghotul, used to have intercourse with a Maravi girl, and she became pregnant. The matter became known to the elders of the village who fined him and married the girl quickly to a Naitami boy of Kidir village to whom she was engaged. The child was born three months after marriage and was accepted by the husband. A few years ago in Hathipakna there was a scandal when the Malko, 'a daughter of Naitami', was made pregnant by the Jamadar, also a Naitami. They attempted an abortion, without success, but after the boy's father had paid twelve rupees, the Malko was married, by the reduced ceremonies, to a boy at Sodma.

The kindly, gentle Muria makes things as easy as possible for the young. 'Even an elephant with four legs sometimes stumbles.' 'What can you do to one who has missed the road?' But if the girl refuses to leave her lover, the matter becomes very serious, and both are outcasted. In Metawand, I was told that such people were never re-admitted into the tribe, and after death only the chelik would touch their bodies and take them to the pyre. If a *kutukal* was erected it would have to be apart from the others.

A few years ago, at Alor, a member of the Kuhrami clan eloped with a Kuhrami girl. They were condemned by the panchayat, but took no notice. For 'the mouth that desires its fill and the genitalia that are excited never listen to advice'. They are now living together at Hirri. No Muria will eat with them, and at festivals of the clan-god they get no share of the consecrated meat. If a son is born, he will be called Bhula Huwa, but he will not be regarded as outcaste. He will have all the tribal privileges denied his parents. 'For he was tied up in the bundle; he knew nothing of what was done.'

This rigorist attitude is not so much one of moral condemnation as due to a fear of the supernatural vengeance that may descend upon the whole clan. In some cases, the guilty pair are forgiven if they perform an elaborate ceremony and pay sufficient fines. For two years they have to wait. Then if the Gaita approves he takes them to a tank or stream. Near the bank they make a ring of stakes and build a little bamboo wall, covering it with grass and thatch, inside which the boy and girl are made to stand together. The grass is set on fire and as it blazes up they jump through the flames into the water. After bathing, they put on new clothes and throw the old ones into the water. They make suitable offerings to the gods and are henceforth free of their guilt.

X 883 835 762

The general atmosphere of kindly tolerance probably accounts for the fact that so few tragedies have occurred. In the police records of the last ten years there are only two cases of suicide which arose out of clan-incest. The first was in January 1932. Chime and Kule of the Timri ghotul were of the same clan and in love with one another. The girl's parents married her to a boy called Jhola, from Supbeda, who had a wife already. She left him and it is said that she returned to the Timri ghotul and began to sleep there again. If this is true, it is remarkable in view of the normally strict taboo on married girls entering the ghotul. But all such rules are broken sometimes. After a time she was found to be pregnant but only after several months did the matter come to the ears of the village elders. When they questioned Chime about it, she took the hand of Kule and named him as the father of the unborn child. This was too much for him and on the night of 18 January, though he went to the ghotul as usual, when all were asleep he went quietly out and hanged himself.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

For months everyone must have known all about it. Before the girl's marriage Kule's breach of the clan laws was complete and open; it must constantly have been discussed in the ghotul, and the elders must have known of it. Yet until the day of the 'trial' it had never been openly proclaimed in the village that he had offended against the laws of the tribe. That was too much for him, he saw his girl lost to him, a life-long shame, and heavy penalties. So he killed himself.

FIG. 114. Carved tobacco-box from Metawand
Height 2¾″

There was another case in 1936 in Kerawahi when a chelik and motiari[1] who belonged to the same clan fell in love with one another. They often used to slip outside the ghotul at night and sleep together. After a time the girl found herself pregnant. When the matter became known, there was a great scandal and the elders announced that they would hold a panchayat. The boy was so ashamed and so afraid of paying the fine that was certain to be inflicted, that he hanged himself. The girl was afterwards married to another boy, but was punished—the people said—by excessive menorrhagia. She grew thinner and thinner, and after a year her husband left her and married someone else.

IX

I have heard of very few cases of incest between near relatives. In spite of all the joking, in spite also of the close proximity in which near relatives grow up together in the ghotul, I think that the rules are kept. On the rare occasions that they are broken, the act is regarded with severe censure. At Sahimunda a girl was made pregnant by her own *māma*, her mother's brother. She publicly accused him and he was fined. In Adenga, a Muria kept his own father's junior wife. He was excommunicated and banned from all tribal privileges. He and the woman were not even allowed to get water from the usual place. I am told that he is never to be admitted into the tribe. In the same village the Gaita kept his mother's sister, and was excommunicated.

A tale of incest from Kapsi is obviously satirical and hardly suggests approval of what was done.

> Long ago there lived an old man who married his son to a very lovely girl. When she came to his house the father at once fell in love with her. He sent his old wife and son to another village to get rice, and that evening he himself pretended to get high fever and lay groaning on his bed. The poor daughter-in-law came to him and said, 'What can I do for you?' He said, 'Ask the Departed in the granary what they want you to do'. She went to them and asked, 'What can I do for my

[1] According to the police report, the chelik was Loti, son of Dhanaji, and the motiari was Koli, daughter of Bhimanna. Loti was Koli's paternal uncle. I do not know their ghotul titles.

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

Sometimes, indeed, the chelik actually try to make a girl pregnant. In Kanhargaon, two very popular motiari were betrothed to boys at Nayanar. The Kanhargaon chelik did all they could to make them pregnant so that they could force them into marriage and keep them in their own village. But they were unsuccessful, and in the end one of the girls was seduced by her own betrothed at a marriage, became pregnant and was hastily married to him. It is not uncommon, though I have no statistics on the point, for engaged couples whose parents unduly delay their marriage to force the issue either by eloping together or by trying to achieve a pregnancy.

But on the whole, the admirable ghotul rule that engaged couples should have nothing to do with one another before marriage is carefully observed. Out of 113 Lamhada boys serving for their wives and in close proximity for several years to the girls they were going to marry, only 5 made them pregnant.

Pre-nuptial pregnancy does not seem to injure the couple's relationships in marriage, provided a youth marries the girl himself. Of the 26 chelik who married the motiari they made pregnant, not one made a failure of his domestic life. At the time of my inquiries every one of them was living with his original partner and very happy with her. But those who had infertile sexual connexion with their wives before marriage showed a comparatively high divorce rate. Of the 316 who admitted to this, 14 had unsuccessful marriages. Of these 77 were the regular ghotul-wives of my informants and 68 of them were still living together when I inquired.

In only three cases during the last twenty years has a pregnancy been taken so seriously as to lead to tragedy. Two of these were the suicides which I have already described in Chapter XV. But here it was not so much the pregnancy itself as the fact that the pregnancy was the result of a connexion between chelik and motiari of the same clan that mattered. The third tragedy appears to have been due largely to a chelik's fear of the disgrace and expense, especially as it was his second experience of the kind.

At the beginning of April 1942, Birjhu, a chelik of the Aturbera ghotul, discovered with dismay that his motiari, Mori, was pregnant. Only a year before he had made another girl pregnant in the ghotul, had refused to marry her and had forced his parents to pay compensation. They did so, but they made many threats as to what they would do if it occurred again. Mori, who seems to have been in love with the boy, said that he must marry her, but Birjhu refused and said that if she told anybody that it was through him that she had conceived, he would kill her. After a little while, however, the poor girl told her brother's wife about it. When Birjhu heard she had done so, he planned to carry out his threat. On the night of the 14th of April, he told Mori he would do what she wanted and they had better elope together and get married in another village. Late at night they crept stealthily out of the ghotul and made their way through the forest. But suddenly, before they had gone very far, Birjhu caught hold of the girl and strangled her. Then he dragged her body below a tree and tied a rope round the neck to make it look as though the girl had committed suicide.

The following day a report was made at the Narayanpur police station that Mori had committed suicide. When Birjhu heard that the matter had gone to the police, he was frightened but possibly even more he was overwhelmed with sorrow and misery at what he had done. He disappeared, and two days later hanged himself from a tree in the jungle.

But this is the only incident of the kind that has yet been recorded.

Such is the general picture, familiar to students of pre-marital freedom everywhere. How are we to explain the fact that through all the years of

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883
581

This may sound hard, but unless parents insisted I doubt if the ghotul could continue. The orderly life of the tribe would be destroyed. After a betrothal a girl belongs already to her future husband's clan; she may attend his clan festivals and should avoid his, and not her own, totem. An engagement is not a mere contract between individuals; it is an alliance of families and clans, affecting even the Departed.

Serious difficulties are not common. Occasionally a man may have an experience like that of Kunjami Gudra of Chaniyagaon.

> While I was a little boy I was betrothed to a girl in Korpar village. Two years afterwards I went with the other chelik of Chaniyagaon to Jungani for the Pus Kolang dance. There I met the Nirosa of that ghotul, and fell in love with her. When she came with the other girls to dance the Diwali dances in our village, I was able to make love to her.
>
> Then I was married, but I did not care for my wife. Soon after the marriage I went to work at Jungani and stayed in the ghotul for some days. Now my love for the Nirosa grew much stronger. She told me she was betrothed to a boy in Gorma, but I persuaded her, and shortly after I returned home, she came to my house. I said, 'Why have you come?' She replied, 'For *paisa-mundi*, for money and a ring'.
>
> My first wife left me, but did her best to plague me with magic. One day she sent a black cobra to attack me. Another day as I was returning from the Dhanora bazaar—where my first wife lived—a tiger (sent by her) chased me up a tree. But with my second wife, I am living very happily.

X883
581

Out of the 20 suicides committed by Muria of the north during the past ten years only two were the result of parental interference in their children's love affairs. I have described one of these cases on page 416 and I will give the other here, for it is relevant to our discussion.

●762

In 1933 Budha of Bayalpur arranged a marriage between his son Malsai and Ghasnin, the daughter of Liti of Korhabera. They were both then young children. Each grew up in their separate ghotul, and Ghasnin began to accompany the older girls on the Diwali dances. The motiari of Korhabera go to Honawandi and the chelik of Honawandi go for the Dandar dances to Korhabera. Gradually Ghasnin herself became a leader of the motiari. In 1940 she became very friendly with Dawari of Honawandi, and they decided to marry. One evening Ghasnin begged her mother to allow this, but she refused. The next day, Ghasnin ran away to Honawandi and was married to Dawari that very night, the chelik and motiari of the ghotul there assisting at the wedding. Next morning, her elder brother arrived and angrily forced her to come home. On the way she escaped and ran through the jungle back to her husband. But her brother came again and forcibly took her home. Her parents decided to hand her over to the parents of Malsai, her betrothed. But because she was married and in love, and because Malsai was an undersized diseased boy, she was in despair. On the morning of 18 January 1941 she escaped from the house and drowned herself in the village tank.

In both these incidents, the sense of obligation to the official 'legal' partner is worthy of remark. Gudra had to quiet his conscience by persuading himself that his first wife was a witch; Ghasnin allowed herself to be taken from her husband's house, and seems to have accepted as inevitable her re-marriage to Malsai.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

second after a time. In 6 other cases a plural marriage was in progress, but was unhappy and disturbed by constant quarrels. 595

Polygyny is not socially disapproved—though an incidence of only 2 per cent might suggest it was. The Muria's attitude is rather that a man has undertaken more than he is likely to be able to manage, and is more to be pitied for his difficulties than to be condemned for impropriety.

For example, at Berma, a Muria said, 'Two wives are like two drums with the player in between; he beats one or he beats both according to the rhythm required. But a good drummer does his best with a single drum'. Or again at Kanhargaon they said, 'You will always hear the noise of pots clashing and breaking in a house with two wives; nothing is done properly, not even rice is cooked in time'. And the Kandki of Bunagaon said, 'I am dried up even by one wife. How could I manage another?' But elsewhere I have heard it said that a clever man can keep two wives happy 'just as two hands beat the two ends of a drum in rhythm'.

It is everywhere said that the wives quarrel, not through sexual jealousy or about prestige, but because each thinks the other shirks her due share of work. As I show later in the chapter this question of the distribution of work is very important to the Muria mind and is indeed the cause of most of the quarrels and a high percentage of the suicides in Muria society. [578 762]

For example, in the following record of a quarrel it is the dispute about work that is really important. A husband has been neglecting his senior wife. 'Is my vagina bitter and hers so sweet?' she says and then turns on the junior. 'You *bitloti*, it is I who made this man what he is today: everything in the house is mine; all you should eat is my leavings.' The younger girl replies, 'I didn't come here of my own accord: he is as much my husband as yours, for it is he who brought us both here'. Then the husband says to the elder, 'Don't be angry. I have brought this girl, not because I love her more than you, but so that she can help you in your work'. 'But that is what she never does. When I am cooking, she should fetch wood, when I am defiled, she should cook. But she refuses.' The younger wife, in some villages, has to observe various vital taboos. She cannot approach the Pot of the Departed at will. She can only go at the New Eating Festivals after an offering has been made and a feast enjoyed. Before this she should not take any grain to the place where the Pot is kept. [784]

In the sexual sphere it is supposed to be comparatively easy to manage two or even three wives.[1] The headman of Chandabera, a charming man with the body of an athlete, told me how he arranged that he himself and each of his two wives slept in three different places. Then he made love to one or the other according to his desire, not much caring whether the other was awake and watching or no. On this point, he said, he never had trouble. In Badgaon, a Muria said that he had to have his senior wife three times a day and the junior twice in order to stop them fighting over his body—but this was doubtless an exaggeration.

I will quote some of the remarks made by these sexual athletes during the statistical inquiry.

A Sirdar of Kejang: 'I did not care for my first wife: I married her at my parents' wish, and they were more interested in marrying a rich man's daughter

[1] In many tribes, leading 'characters' take pride in keeping a number of wives. A Maria of the Oyami clan in Kanapur had six wives; in Kerlapal another Maria had seven. I found a Juang in Keonjhar State with seven. The famous Yogi Baiga of Mandla had six, with twenty-six children. A Pardhan of Balaghat had a similar number and used to take them all, walking behind him in a file, when he went to a bazaar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

will be ruined'. Or a father says to his son, 'I spit on your ghotul friends; all you can do is to dance and sing; you have no idea of how to work; when I tell you to do some work you always have a pain in the stomach. When you see a plough you at once get fever, but when you hear a drum your pains and fever disappear at once'.

At Jhakri Raunu gave us some examples of how angry parents talk to their children. Here is a mother telling her daughter what she thinks of her: 'You *futkhi*, why can't you work? If you don't begin to use your limbs now, what will you do later?' And the girl replies, 'Why are you always bothering me? If you don't want to give me food, don't; if I have got to starve, I will starve, or I will go away and beg'. Then the father joins in: 'After you are married you are going to ruin our name; you will go changing from husband to husband, for not one will put up with your idleness; and everywhere you go people will laugh at us. Has not your mother taught you to do anything but to dance in the ghotul? Must you spend all your life in the ghotul? You cannot even cook the rice properly.'

In the same way the mother says to the son, 'Why can't you go to the fields? Why can't you look after the bullocks? Your one desire is to eat without moving your limbs; your hands and feet are broken. Yet this is your own house; this is your own property; how are you going to look after it when we are dead? How are you going to bury us properly if you never do any work?'

But the Muria believe that the mother is generally very kind and loving to her son. As Nari said at Nayanar, 'The father is always saying to himself that the girl is going to leave him and go to her husband's house and therefore he is tender to her, but the mother does not seem to mind her going away. She thinks of her own reputation. Unless she is nasty to the girl, she cannot teach her anything and so she has to nag her continually'.

These quarrels about work lead, in a few rare cases, to the serious consequence of suicide. During the past ten years there have been 20 suicides among the Muria of the ghotul area, and a study of the causes leading to them confirms what I have written in this chapter. The suicides have been due to the following causes.

Cause of Suicide	Number	Percentage
Insanity	2	10
Sickness	3	15
Fear due to breach of tribal rules ..	1	5
Fear of prosecution	1	5
Conflict with parents over marriage ..	2	10
Sorrow for the death of a son	1	5
Quarrel over childlessness	1	5
Quarrels about work	9	45

This is a very small number of suicides, only 2 a year, for so large a population, working out at about 20 to the million annually. The method of suicide, in every case but one, was hanging; the single exception was the young wife who drowned herself at Korhabera.

The suicides due to quarrels and disputes number 12, or 60 per cent. This, which would be surprising in other communities, is less so here in view of what we have seen of the sense of outrage that a quarrel gives to a Muria.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

I will give a few case-histories to illustrate this. Ghasia was a Lamhada boy. He went to dance at a tribal festival and on his return was violently abused by his 'father-in-law' for neglecting his work. He went out and hanged himself.

Karu of Todopal was a lazy, ill-tempered youth. One day his father abused him. 'You *mailotia*, I have fed you all your life; when will you start feeding me? All you can do is to sit about and eat' and doubtless a lot more. The boy lost his temper; there was a violent quarrel; he rushed out of the house and hanged himself on a mango tree.

Sukta was a fifteen-year-old chelik of Baghbera. In October 1931 he was beaten by his father for allowing the cattle to get into the *bāri*-enclosure and spoil the green chillies growing there. The boy ran away and hanged himself on a tamarind tree just outside the village.

Bbadu, a Muria of about 30 years, was the youngest of four brothers living together at Burbal. The eldest, Rupji, had to take his wife to a Siraha for treatment. This usually takes time; it is expensive, and involves a lot of drinking. After a few days Rupji came home in a rage and found his brothers had been neglecting the field-work in his absence. He quarrelled violently with them and was so upset that that night he hanged himself with his own turban from a mahua tree near the house.

Kaharu, a man of about 35, was a habitual drunkard. He worked for a Mussalman settled in the village, Dhoundai. One evening in July 1940 he got his wages and went to the liquor shop. When he returned home drunk, his wife scolded him for spending all their money on liquor and for doing no work. He got angry, beat her, and went back to drink again. His wife followed him quarrelling violently. Kaharu took her home and hit her with his axe. She managed to escape, but Kaharu being very drunk thought he had killed her and hanged himself with one of her cloths in front of the house.

Sukaro, a middle-aged Muria woman of Killam, is described in the police reports as thin-skinned and hot-tempered, suffering from an ulcer on the left knee that did not make her any more amiable. One day when she was supposed to be watching the standing crops she went to another village. Her husband made a great to-do about her neglect of her work, and she got so angry that she hanged herself.

Dhonya was a young chelik of about 15 belonging to the Kurasnar ghotul, who did not get on well with his father. So constantly did they quarrel that at last the boy went to Jodenga to live with his uncle. A month later the father followed him and abused him publicly, saying that he had become a vagabond and would do anything but work. The boy got very angry, refused to eat and went out with his bow and arrows. But he only went as far as the Thanagudi. A few minutes later the father followed and found him hanging from a beam inside the building. He cut him down at once, but the boy was dead.

The apparent cause of suicide in these cases seems trivial enough at first sight. I have little doubt, however, that deeper reasons were usually present. The triviality of motive so often advanced by the villagers who report these tragedies is really a screen to protect the real significance of the deed from official or merely inquisitive eyes. In the majority of cases, also, psycho-neurotic or psychotic symptoms have been recognised by the people themselves. So deeply rooted is the faith in work and its equal distribution that a public rebuke on such a subject is an insult not to be borne and suicide is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

less the expression of outraged temper than a final and complete protest against a loss of dignity.[1]

It must not be supposed that because quarrels arise over work, chelik and motiari are slack or lazy. They are in fact singularly laborious and the disputes about work stand out because they occur against a background of a very high tradition of industry.

It is very rare that these quarrels end in murder. One day at the end of the rains in 1932, Kodu came home tired and hungry from the fields. His elder brother's wife, Babe, had only got *jāwa* ready for him: he demanded rice, and she retorted that 'since his arms and legs were not broken, he might cook his food himself'. He replied that as long as there was a woman in the house he was not going to do woman's work and he gave her such a severe beating that she died after a few days.

Balsai, a former Chalki of the Umargaon ghotul, lost his temper with his wife Rupoti because though he had a bad throat and cough, she cooked the irritating *dhoba* vegetable for him. He was drunk at the time and gave her a heavy blow with a wooden stool. When I saw him in jail he said that he loved his wife—'it was a mistake, not from my heart'—and that she often visited him in dreams.

Bandi (a thin big-eyed youth, formerly the Kajanchi of Kanera) had two wives. He too quarrelled with them over food. He came hungry and there was nothing ready. He got out his razor and said he was going to kill them. The elder wife ran away, but he gave two deep cuts on the arm and belly of his younger wife. She survived, but was in hospital for months.[2]

I have seen only one record of murder on account of a wife's infidelity. Manglu was the former Kandki of the Amgaon ghotul and his wife had been the Manjaro of the same ghotul. But the girl did not like him and, it is said, would never give herself to him. She ran away twice to the house of a lover at Bamhot. The second time a group of people went to fetch her back. As they were returning at night they met Manglu and handed the girl over to him. He gave her a very severe beating then and there in the forest, and a week later she died. Manglu was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

X. The Vocabulary of Abuse

The Muria's vocabulary of abuse is meagre and unenterprising compared to that of other aboriginal tribes. Perhaps we ought not to regret this; it may be a sign of the genial and pacific temper of the people that they put so little of their imagination and colour into their swearing. But I sometimes think that their continual use of one standard and now almost meaningless expression has dulled their inventive powers.

This expression, as common as the English 'bloody' and as meaningless, is the universal *sisilotia*. This is a Halbi word meaning 'to lie with your mother', but very few of those who use it so freely intend seriously to suggest that an act of incest has occurred or could occur. Indeed, the way all meaning has been drained from the expression is clearly seen in the fact that a mother can apply it to her own daughter. Girls shout it at other girls, aunts at their nieces, grandmothers at their granddaughters. There is certainly no Lesbian suggestion here; it probably simply implies 'you are capable of anything'.

[1] For a full discussion of this subject, see my book *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943).

[2] The elder wife had been the Salan of Sabapal, the younger Belosa of Metawand. Both marriages were regular, the first arranged by the parents, the second a love-match. Bandi said the two girls got on very well together.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison' charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum.* Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heirlooms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called kikir, a Jews-harp made of iron or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 of his god, took up the trident and chain and stabbed his brother twice in the chest, and so killed him.

There are only 4 cases of murder by throttling in the 100 under review, and it is remarkable that 3 of these occurred within 9 months of one another during the year 1933. The first was on 6 January near Nakulnar, the second on 21 February at Garmiri and the third on 3 August at Kaurgaon. Moreover, in each case the homicide tried to disguise his murder as a suicide by stringing the corpse of his victim to a tree. The first two villages in which these events occurred are close together and the third within gossip distance, and it is obvious that a sort of epidemic of murder by throttling spread among the people and then disappeared.[1]

V

THE STATISTICS OF SUICIDE

762 In any discussion of violent crime among aboriginals the light thrown by a consideration of suicide must not be ignored. Murder is to the Maria almost a kind of suicide, for discovery is generally inevitable but a man may willingly ruin his life provided at the same time he destroys his enemy. The Maria, as Table Nine shows, are more prone to suicide just as they are more prone to murder than the other tribesmen, and obviously the light hold that life has upon them and their impetuous and passionate temperament is the cause in either 674 762 case. The reasons for murder or suicide sometimes coincide, and it is interesting to see how one type of personality reacts to a given situation by killing someone else and another type by killing himself. For example, it was a dispute about

[1] Adam gives an account of unusual methods of murder in the hill areas of Europe. 'In mountainous and other districts where the inhabitants are often endowed with exceptional strength and exceptional brutality, strange things sometimes happen. One day a woodcutter in the midst of a quarrel seized a large piece of wood over nine feet long, part of a tree which he had just cut down, and holding it in front of him like a ram rushed on his assailants, inflicting no fewer than five serious wounds (fracture of ribs, fracture of collar bone, dislocation of hip joint). In a quarrel in a tavern a young man of gigantic height seized the heavy top of the inn table and brandishing it in the air brought it down on the heads of the young men who were fighting with him, inflicting a dozen grave wounds on the skull'. —J. C. Adam, *Criminal Investigation* (London, 1934), p. 420.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

possession of a dancing outfit that led Wango to murder his betrothed Paike. But when Alami Mata had his splendid bison-horn head-dress, which he loved and cared for with devotion, stolen he did not seek out and kill the thief but was so miserable that he hanged himself. In several cases disputes about the right of a girl to visit her mother's house led to murder. In as many others it led to suicide. Sometimes a girl hangs herself because she is not allowed to go home. Sometimes the husband hangs himself out of loneliness and misery when his wife deserts him for her parents. A public insult caused Marvi Hinga to murder his mother-in-law. Had he been of a different temperament like Markami Pandu, who was abused and insulted by his wife for not working properly, he would have hanged himself. Fatigue drives some Maria to murder in a fit of exhausted rage, but others hang themselves instead.

Some sick people murder the magician who they believe has sent affliction upon them. Others commit suicide in order to escape from him. The Maria themselves identify homicide and suicide in so far that both lead to a violent disturbance of village life. Both involve them in various supernatural dangers, and the ghosts of both can be dealt with in much the same way.

R. S. Cavan discusses the relations of widow suicide and human sacrifice. The voluntary sacrifice of widows at the funerals of their husbands has been recorded in India and China, throughout the central portion of Negro Africa and among certain aristocratic American Indian tribes. These areas are also the areas of human sacrifice.

> In the Orient the sacrifices are a matter of history and are often recorded as accompanying the widow suicide. Among the preliterates, the sacrifices were noted in conjunction with the suicides by early white observers. Moreover, in few parts of the world was human sacrifice found except in the groups which also had Sati. Human sacrifice and Sati went hand in hand.[1]

The Maria do not have the custom of widow suicide, and human sacrifice is equally rare among them.

I will begin, as in the case of the homicides, with general statistics about suicide in Bastar during the last 10 years.

[1] R. S. Cavan, *Suicide* (Chicago, 1928), p. 72

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762

TABLE NINE

Number of suicides in Bastar in 10 years, 1931-40

Tribe or Caste	Number of Cases	Annual average of suicides to the million[1]
Bison-horn Maria ...	93	53·14
Ghotul Muria ...	22	22·00
Others (whole State) ...	130	36·11
Total ...	245	38·58

It is notable again that the highest figure is for the Bison-horn Maria and the lowest for the Ghotul Muria. The Muria, however, are more prone to suicide than murder, which is perhaps what we might expect from a tribe so singularly free of jealousy and passion.

TABLE TEN

Methods of suicides used by all tribes and castes (245 cases)

By cutting the throat	1
By hanging	214
By drowning	15
By poisoning	9
By means not fully reported	6

Every case, except one of drowning, of aboriginal suicide in Bastar has been by hanging. This may be due to the fact that the people are not adept at poisons—murder by poison is very rare among them—and because there are few wells in aboriginal villages, and the tanks and streams where they get their water are fairly shallow.

762
171

It is said that in India generally, drowning is the most common method of achieving suicide, and then hanging. In England, hanging comes first, then poisoning, then cutting the throat, and lastly drowning. In India men resort to hanging and drowning in about equal numbers but six out of seven

[1] Based on the population estimates of 1941.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

female suicides prefer drowning.[1] But this is not so among the Maria. One woman preferred to hang herself even on the very banks of the Indrawati, though the deep waters of the river were at hand.

In the 50 cases of which I have detailed information, 19 suicides were committed inside a building, 16 of them inside the dwelling-place of the family. In 7 other cases death occurred near the house. In the other 24 cases the suicide took place in the jungle, a rope or cloth being attached to the branch of a tree. Among trees the mahua (*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.) was the most popular with 6 cases, and after it the mango with 3. Otherwise there is a very great variety in the trees selected for this gloomy purpose; there do not seem to be any taboos observed, though I notice the sacred saja (*Terminalia tomentosa*, W. & A.) is not used—but this may be for the entirely practical reason that it does not have suitable overhanging branches.

The method of self-execution seems to be to climb up the tree, to attach and arrange the cord and then jump down. When the suicide occurs inside a house, the person stands on a fish-trap or basket and kicks it away. In many cases, the rope consists of the victim's own loin-cloth, turban or sari, but several different kinds of rope are also used. Rope made of the twisted siari (*Baukinia vahlii*, W. & A.) creeper is perhaps the most common. Jute cords for tethering cattle, and ropes made of various kinds of bark are also used.

TABLE ELEVEN

Analysis of 50 Maria suicides by sex

Men	26
Women	24

The contrast between homicide and suicide in respect of the sex-ratio is very striking; 5 per cent stands against 48 per cent. There may be many reasons for this, chiefly that

[1] R. Ramkhodas and D. K. Thakore, *The Law of Crimes* (Bombay, 1911), p. 601, in the author's comment on Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code. But in the U.S.A., the order is said to be—for men—firearms, hanging, poisonous gas, corrosives, and—for women—gas, corrosives, firearms, drowning. In Japan, hanging first and then drowning are the favourite methods for both sexes.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 a woman ought not to kill and often lacks the means of killing —she does not usually learn to be expert with the bow and arrow or with the axe. It is possible that some of the suicides would have been murder, had there been the means and opportunity.

The suicide sex-ratio is remarkable when compared to the situation elsewhere. In Europe and America, there has been over a long period of years a far less equal ratio, varying from one woman to every three or five men. That these figures do vary suggests, however, that 'the propensity of men to commit suicide is probably not inherent in their sex, a conclusion further supported by figures for the Orient. For instance, [171] in Japan the proportion of women who commit suicide is much higher than for Europe or America. The situation in India is yet more at variance with the relations noted for the Occident'.[1]

TABLE TWELVE

Analysis of 50 Maria suicides by age

Under 15	1
Between 15 and 20	12
Between 20 and 25	9
Between 25 and 30	1
30 and over	5
40 and over	8
50 and over	8
Age not specified	6

There is not anything significant in the above Table except that we should notice that nearly half the suicides were of young people. The older men and women, by the time they have reached some position of dignity in the tribe, have consolations that help them to cling to life. Many of the suicides of the older people are due to insanity and intolerable disease believed to be the result of witchcraft.

[1] Cavan, op. cit., p. 308.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

TABLE THIRTEEN

762

Analysis of 50 Maria suicides by the time of year

January	3
February	5
March	3
April	2
May	3
June	4
July	6
August	7
September	2
October	3
November	7
December	5

Here again there is nothing very significant, probably because there are not sufficient figures to indicate large variations. But we may note that July and August, which are the most gloomy months of the rains, months also that are filled with heavy and exacting work, show the largest number of suicides. If we take the figures for homicide and suicide together the highest figures are shown by July and August, and then again by October and November.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

000 precautions he takes against the ghost, while the very fact—which Briffault mentions—that suicide can be made a deadly weapon against an enemy indicates what a serious business it is.

762 For the Maria of Bastar, suicide is a wretched deed; it certainly has no higher, hallowing significance; but it is no light or trivial matter due to lack of foresight. Rather it is caused by an all too clear vision of the future: the leper looks across a wilderness of ever-deepening misery; the widow sees her whole life shadowed by irreparable loss; wife or husband see their home's happiness wrecked about them; a man sees his future darkened by the memory of an unforgiveable insult. The people themselves have no desire to glorify the deed, neither do they condemn it. In perhaps the majority of cases psychoneurotic or psychotic symptoms have been recognized by the people themselves, and they regard the unhappy victims as driven to death by their own disordered minds.

The following Table gives the reasons for suicide among all tribes and castes for the 245 incidents in the last 10 years. The classification is one made by the police.

TABLE FIFTEEN

Reasons for suicide in 245 cases in Bastar State

Insanity	20
Disease	52
Leprosy	6
Grief on account of bereavement	17
Love-affairs	11
Quarrels over property	3
Quarrels between wife and husband	55
Other domestic quarrels	43
Fear of scandal	11
Intoxication	1
Economic: starvation and financial ruin	3
Fear of courts and officials	3
Bad treatment by employers	2
Failing in a school examination	1
Not properly reported	17

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

When we turn to the 50 sample cases (details of which are given in an Appendix) we find the following. 762

TABLE SIXTEEN

Reasons for suicide in 50 Maria cases

Insanity	7
Disease and fear of magic	9
Grief and loneliness	4
Fear of officials	2
Regret for harsh behaviour to someone loved ...	3
Resentment at a rebuke	7
An intolerable home	4
Antagonism between wife and husband	9
Intoxication	1
Economic causes	1
Special cases	3

There is no evidence for supposing any of the suicides were due to a desire for 'identification with the dead', although in one case a youth slept all night before his death in the granary where the sacred Pot of the Dead was kept. Nor is the desire for revenge specially evident, though it may, of course, have been concealed from the authorities. No doubt the feeling that one's death will cause trouble to one's relatives and so pay them out is often present in suicides that are due to temper. Not one case appears to have been due to sexual jealousy, though several were due to sexual disappointment. The majority seem to have been caused by a desire to escape from a physical or domestic situation that had become intolerable. The insult, as in other primitive cultures, is a very potent stimulus to suicide. This too creates an intolerable situation from which escape is necessary, but I do not notice any stress on the protest which a death makes against those who have done harm.

Suicide has been studied with some care among the Indian tribes of North America. The older view was that it was exceptional among primitive people. Thus Hrdlicka says that it was rare on the San Carlos reservation, "infrequent" among the Jicarillas: 'among the Navaho rare instances occur from destitution, despondency or drink'. Among the Papago, Pima, Zuni and other tribes suicide 171

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and men sought to avoid physical suffering, either martyrdom or blood revenge; some cases involve loss of status . . . Avoidance remains the dominating motive of Iroquois suicide."[1]

Suicide among the Trobriand Islanders, says Malinowski, 'is certainly not a means of administering justice, but it affords the accused and oppressed one—whether he be guilty or innocent—a means of escape and rehabilitation. It looms large in the psychology of the natives, is a permanent damper on any violence of language or behaviour, on any deviation from custom or tradition, which might hurt or offend another. Thus suicide, like sorcery, is a means of keeping the native to the strict observance of the law, a means of preventing people from extreme and unusual types of behaviour. Both are pronounced conservative influences and as such are strong supports of law and order'.[2]

This is a little too emphatic for the situation in Bastar, but duly modified might apply there also. But whatever primitive suicide may be, it is not trivial. Nor is it altogether dishonourable. The man insulted escapes, it is true, but he restores his honour. The girl forced into an unwelcome marriage runs away from it, but she preserves her dignity and prestige.

[1] W. N. Fenton, *Iroquois Suicide*, Bureau of American Ethnology: Anthropological Papers, Washington, 1941, p. 134.
[2] B. Malinowski, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (London, 1932), p. 98.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 that his wife did not bear him a child, he went to the Waddai who discovered the real reason, performed the proper rites and soon a large family came into being.

754 Witches can injure women by prolonging their menstrual
755 periods. The Siraha can counter this by offering sacrifices
841 to the Dead and to the Mirchuk. In Kameli a woman who was suffering from mennhorragia was cured by this means.

[762] But sometimes the Siraha can do nothing, and in despair the unhappy woman may hang herself.

754 At Bergum I was told that only widows can perform black magic and that they usually call on the ghosts of the dead to help them in their wicked deeds. Here they gave me an interesting account of how a witch can take precautions against discovery. She takes her familiar, say the ghost of a murderer or suicide, with her to an ant-hill and there she 'binds its mouth' by removing some of the earth from the hill and uttering charms. She says to the ghost, 'When the Siraha questions you, do not disclose my name'. Then she replaces the earth. It is believed that, just as any earth that is removed from an ant-hill is automatically filled up the next day, so misfortune will enter the house of the ghost she has bound if it betrays her.

[75]
754
683

Charm against disease, made of small bits of chicken-bone.

Dread of this witchcraft or enchantment is a very powerful factor driving men to violence, for the fear is still a live one and the dangers are supposed to be great. Guma Hunga left his home and village because he believed that his family was being bewitched by a man called Burgi. A year afterwards he saw his enemy in the new village to which he had moved, and murdered him in a sudden access

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

infect the food magically, but in a special place where only she herself would have access to it. This she refused to do.[1] She was also trying, he said, to have him out-casted for some moral offence. But the nature of this was not made clear in evidence.

The Court decided that Chappe was undoubtedly at the time of the murder a sick and unbalanced person. Although on that very day every able-bodied man in the village had gone out on a ceremonial hunt, Chappe did not feel well enough to do so, a clear sign that he considered himself in a serious condition. It is probable that a number of factors combined to bring about the tragedy. The very fact of being unable to attend the great occasion of the hunt must have been depressing. His wife had refused him access to her for several days. It is more than likely that he attributed his illness to someone's tampering with his food. At last the accumulated frustration and anxiety exploded within him, and murder was the result.

VI

MAGIC AND SUICIDE

762 In some cases, the torment of disease, the fear of the sinister and hostile magic causing it, and the failure of the magicians to effect a cure, led—not to the murder of the sorcerer or of the doctor—but to the suicide of the patient. The reason why all this misery resulted in suicide rather than murder is generally evident: the suicides were so wretched and so weak that it was impossible for them either to protect themselves against their supernormal enemies or to revenge themselves upon the human representatives of an unhappy fate.

For example, Markami Hunga suffered from yaws. She was old and covered with ulcers, unable to eat for pain and misery. One night, when all were asleep, she hanged herself from a rafter of her house.

Atami Kosa, a Maria of Poyali, had a septic ulcer on his left calf. Sori Hirma of Korra got very drunk at a harvest festival and dislocated his hip. For eighteen months he lay

[1] A similar delusion drove a Dhurwa of Darbha to commit suicide in 1939. He believed that his wife was poisoning his food, and he used to wait till she went to work in the fields when he would stealthily go into the house and get what food he could.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

in his house, pulling himself up by a rope tied to the roof. 762
But at last he could bear it no longer and managed to hang himself with the very rope that had been so long his friend.

Menstrual troubles are always due to the magic of a jealous 762
woman, usually a frustrated and malicious widow. The 841
catamenial period in any case is regarded as a time of contagious danger and taboo, and any irregularity is sufficient to cause a strong psychotic disturbance.[1] Karti Sukri, a young girl of only fifteen years, apparently suffered from menorrhagia; she bore it for six months and then hanged herself with her own cloth from a mahua tree near her home. Markami Kosi had been married for twenty years, but she suffered acutely during menstruation—'the pain was so great she behaved as if she were mad'—and she too committed suicide. As is often the case when a woman suffers from menstrual troubles, the husband had married a second wife and I have little doubt that the jealousy and annoyance inevitable in a polygynous household played its part in hastening Markami Kosi's death. The younger wife, however, did her best to save the other woman; she cut her down while still breathing and tried to revive her.

In all these cases, matters were made worse by the failure 762
of the magicians to effect a cure. This naturally added fear and depression to the physical suffering of the patient. Whenever the Siraha is found helpless, an atmosphere of deep gloom and apprehension is created: the supernatural powers arrayed against the sufferer take on a new majesty and horror.

VII

CRIME AND SUPERSTITION

I have not found many superstitions about crime, probably 777
because there are so few professional criminals among the Maria. We have already seen how valuable blood is as a fertiliser. In one case I heard of women throwing their rings on a murdered man's memorial stone as it was being carried to the grave. Afterwards they picked up these rings and wore them believing them to be extremely lucky. But

[1] Havelock Ellis goes so far as to say that 'whenever a woman commits a deed of criminal violence it is extremely probable that she is at her monthly periods', but Stanley Hall assembles evidence to show that this view is over-stated. Hall, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 500.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

a hysterical condition, rebuked him and said that she would not go to his house or to any other, accusing him of having brought the trouble on her. Hirma got annoyed and kicked her violently in the stomach and the vagina. Mase was three months pregnant, and it is probable that the kick which was simply intended to bring her to her senses was the real cause of her death.

II

Only rarely do the complications of infidelity lead to suicide. A girl called Kare of Kosalnar came one day to Kadti Pandu as a Paitu wife. This means that she forcibly entered his house of her own accord, and he had to agree to accept her as his wife. They lived together for five months. Then there was a quarrel, and Kare went off to another village, Pharaspal, where she repeated the same trick with another man. Pandu ordered her to come home and she refused. So he beat her and brought her back by force. The following day the girl disappeared, and a search discovered her hanging from a mahua tree.

The reaction of Barse Konda to unchastity in his family circle was remarkable. He had one daughter named Jabbo. This girl was that very rare thing, a Maria girl of promiscuous habits. She was first married to a man of Samgiri. Then she went to a man at Gongpal. From him she went to a man at Molasnar. From him she went to a man at Palnar. Some time in 1937 she left her Palnar husband and went to live with Kawasi Kosa of Rewali. For the Korta Pandum, the harvest festival of the new cucumbers and gourds, Jabbo went to her home at Nakulnar, and after three days her father Konda took her back to Rewali. Rewali is a notoriously ill-tempered village, and when Konda arrived he was badly received and abused by several of the people for his daughter's behaviour. He went home, angry and depressed, told his wife what had happened, and got very drunk. At supper he caught his wife by the hair and beat her. She ran away to a neighbour's house. Then Konda got out his drum and danced with it all night long. As the first cocks crew, he went into his house and hanged himself from the central beam of the roof.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 578 It is not easy to say whether Bande's motive here was primarily to keep control of the family property or not. His feelings were probably very mixed. He was an elderly man and the Peda of the village. Division of his herd of cattle might do something to lower his prestige. As Peda he was accustomed to give abuse, not to receive it. He believed, and in this he had the support of the villagers, that his brother's claim was unreasonable. Outraged dignity, wounded pride and sheer exasperation probably played as strong a part in his catastrophic revenge as any other motives.

Sometimes the quarrels arise about what may seem to the outsider quite trivial matters, though we should never fall into the error of judging the value of things to an aboriginal by our own standards. For example, two murders were committed on account of cocks, one a cock that was needed at a feast in honour of a brother-in-law and the other a fighting-cock.[1] In another case the quarrel arose between two brothers about the possession of a drum which was sold for two rupees ten annas, out of which the real owner only got a rupee.[2] In yet another case a youth murdered his own father as a result of a dispute over a tobacco crop. The son had a debt of four rupees to pay, and he asked his father to give him the tobacco so that he could sell it and pay off his debt. The father wanted the proceeds to buy clothes for himself. Tempers rose quickly and soon the father was saying that his son could sell the children to pay off his debt, but he would never part with his tobacco, a remark that cost him his life.[3]

II

762 Suicides from economic causes are extremely rare. This remarkable fact has been noticed also for the Bantu in South Africa. 'Conditions of starvation, prolonged droughts and disease among live-stock', says Laubscher, 'are common, and still no cases of suicides are known to magistrates of as much as thirty years' experience which can be considered as the result of despair in the face of economic difficulties'.[4] Only one Bison-horn Maria, Veko Lakhma, killed himself as the

[1] See Case Nos 52 and 16.
[2] Case No 40.
[3] Case No 86.
[4] Laubscher, op. cit., p. 290.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

result of the burden of a debt. Yet his debt was not especially heavy. He had engaged himself to work for a Thakur as a Kabari against a loan of seventeen khandi-measures of paddy. He worked for a year, and then wearied of it. The Thakur beat him for his slackness, and Lakhma hanged himself in his employer's field—probably as much from a desire for revenge as from despair.

The story of Alami Mata throws some light on the attachment of the Bison-horn Maria to their cherished institutions. This youth, about twenty years of age, was devoted to dancing and used to preserve his magnificent hereditary bison-horn head-dress with the greatest care. In a neighbouring village lived a beautiful girl, unmarried and in love with him, whom he used to meet during the dances. One day he found his splendid horns and feathers stolen. He would not go to dance without his finery; he could not meet his girl; on top of it all his father abused him for not working hard enough. Life without music, rhythm and love was not worth living, and he ended it.

Another young Maria boy, Poyami Kosa, hanged himself after a dispute about clothes. He went with a group of others to cut grass; they all put their clothes together, but when the time came for recovering them, Kosa's cloth was claimed by another boy. In spite of everything Kosa could say the other boy went off with it. This may seem a trivial enough matter, but to people as poor as the Maria the loss of a cloth is serious and during the dispute Kosa was greatly insulted. The combination of loss and insult was too much for him, and he hanged himself.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

approached, and that in a fit of rage at his wife's infidelity he had killed her; and then later admitted that he had gone to the cave, but denied that he ever approached Jimme sexually. He said that he had been sitting on the rocks above when his wife threw a stone at him. He slapped her, and she fell accidentally from the rocks and was killed.

There can be little doubt, however, that the prosecution story was true. When the police searched the cave, they found on the dust of the floor the clear signs of a woman lying on her back and a pair of footprints on either side of the marks made by the woman's buttocks. This clearly shows that intercourse practised according to the normal aboriginal technique had been in progress, and Jimme confirmed the fact.

Paklu, when I saw him in jail, was still young, a man of fine physique and good-looking. He has behaved well in jail, for he has been made a Lambardar and wears the tall yellow cap which indicates his office.

Nine cases of suicide were due to disputes between wife and husband. Thus Kome is said to have been quick-tempered, a person who always exaggerated things. She was a young wife, only twenty years old, and when her husband came in one day tired and wet from the fields, and found no food ready, and abused her, she took a rope and slipped out of the house. Her husband, also young, found some stale food and took it back to the field. When he came home in the evening his wife was dead.

Mate had a row with her husband over lighting the fire. He was drunk and beat her, and she attacked him. But her husband's elder brother, to whom she was strictly taboo and who had no business to touch her, intervened and beat her also. During the night, she left the house and tried to get across the Indrawati River in order to reach her mother's house. But there was no ferry and she hanged herself with her clothes. It is worthy of note that although there was a deep river at hand, the girl preferred to end her life by hanging.

An unusually tragic incident occurred at Metapal in February 1937. Kuhrami Hurra returned one day from the bazaar and found that one of his calves had been killed by a panther. Rightly or wrongly he considered that this was

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

the fault of his wife and daughter, who had not tied the calf up properly in the evening. Hurra's wife was well known for her quick temper; she was continually quarrelling, especially if her husband ventured to interfere with household matters, and it is said that the daughter had learnt to take her mother's side. After the quarrel about the calf, the older woman set fire to their house and took her daughter away to the field-house out in their clearing. Here she first hanged her daughter and then herself.

Yet another wife from the same area, Galle, was obviously a bad housewife; she used to tell her husband that she would throw their child on the ground if he ordered her to do any work. On the day of her death she had been asked to prepare leaf-cups and food for the whole family—a large one. This seems to have been the immediate cause of disturbance, and she hanged herself. But there was undoubtedly a long and miserable tale of domestic unhappiness behind it.

In three remarkable cases it was the husband who committed suicide from remorse and sorrow. Barse Chewa asked his wife, a sick and miserable woman, to light the fire early in the morning. She was rather slow about it and Chewa beat and kicked her, knocking her unconscious. He was so ashamed and frightened that he killed himself. Sori Deva, angry at the loss of two of his cows, miserable because he had beaten his wife, did the same. So did Marvi Dhodsa who beat his wife, who was suffering from sore eyes, for not keeping the baby quiet. That night Dhodsa felt very miserable; he realized that his wife was ill, that he had no right to beat her, and that the child too had sore eyes and was bound to cry. He crept out of the house and hanged himself on a mahua tree with his own cloth.

III

THE POLYGAMOUS HOME

The strains and stresses of a polygamous household do not appear to result in tragedy so often as we might expect. Polygamy is not perhaps very common among the Maria, for the simple reason that there are not enough women to make it often possible. Those men who do keep more than one

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 annas each for not living happily together. One morning
578 the elder wife went to fetch Harma from the field-hut where
595 he had been sleeping, and found him dead, killed by the younger woman who could not endure his ill-treatment longer.

The complications and petty miseries of a polygamous home are illustrated in the story of how Sori Dome murdered her elder co-wife, Chule. Even while their husband was alive, the two women were always quarrelling. Three years before his death Dome beat Chule over the head with a bit of a broken plough, and Chule took a whole month to recover from the blow. Dome used continually to threaten the older woman that one day she would kill her. After the husband's death, matters got even worse. Chule was old and feeble and suffered from yaws, which made her irritable and exacting. But the two women continued to live together, along with their husband's elder brother, in their husband's house. Just before the tragedy, Chule made peevish complaints that Dome had been extravagant in using up the rice, to which the other replied that, since she had eaten it, it was not wasted. One evening, after they had been working in the fields and quarrelling all the time, they set out to go home. Dome had an axe in her hand and her two children were with her. Chule was carrying a bamboo basket. Dome urged the old woman to hurry up, but she replied that her feet were hurting her and she would follow later. Exasperated, Dome pushed Chule by the back of her neck and then struck her a blow with the axe. The old woman fell down, and Dome hit her again and she seems to have died on the spot. Medical examination, however, showed that there was no fracture and no dislocation either in the head or ribs where the blows had fallen. Dome did not use the sharp edge of the axe, and it is possible that she did not intend to kill the woman, but only wanted to teach her a lesson. On the other hand, of course, it was greatly to her advantage that Chule should be eliminated.

578 It is perhaps rather surprising that there is not more
595 suicide in polygamous households. But it does, of course,
762 occur. Bandi, headman of Khutepal, had two wives. They quarrelled and the elder woman hanged herself. Masa of Samgiri also had two wives, and the younger girl quarrelled

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

with him saying that he did not give her proper clothing or ornaments and that he did not sleep with her often enough. Jealous and frustrated, she hanged herself in a fit of despair. Poyami Gupe of Bastanar, a girl of about eighteen years, was widowed at sixteen and remarried two years later as the junior wife of Guddi. One day, about seven months after the new marriage, Gupe went to collect young bamboo shoots—a great delicacy to the aboriginal—and came home rather late in the evening. For this she was scolded by her co-wife and no doubt accused of every crime that jealousy could suggest. She left the house and went to stay with her maternal uncle. Guddi went to bring her back, but rather than go with him she hanged herself.

Kawasi Dulga's reaction was unusual. He appears to have been one of those husbands who should never have tried such an experiment; a man of weak character who could not keep his two wives in order. The women were always quarrelling and made his home and life a misery. One day he went with the younger to the bazaar and, as they were coming home, they quarrelled and Dulga slapped her. Presently he told her to go ahead as he wanted to relieve himself. She walked on a little way, but he did not appear and when she went back to look for him she found him hanging from a tree.

IV

The relationship between the wives of brothers is carefully regulated. Between an elder brother and his younger brother's wife there is an absolute taboo: there is no stronger rule of avoidance in all primitive society. But the younger brother stands in a special and privileged relationship to his elder brother's wife: he can flirt with her; he can make indecent jokes; he can become her lover; after her husband's death he has the first claim on her person and if she marries anyone else he has a right to compensation.[1]

It is obvious that among a people where brothers often live together, sharing house and lands, where jealousy is strong and sexual desire passionate and keen, such a tradition may

[1] For a detailed study, see Shamrao Hivale, 'The Dewar-Bhauji Relationship', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 157–67.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

refused. She abused him saying, 'Puk *nak*, lick my privates', and told him to go home without her. This, he said, was impossible and she again abused him. He got so angry that he hit her on the head with a heavy piece of wood and she died immediately.

More frequently these disputes have ended in suicide. The wife of Markami Pide was in love with another man, and frequently used to leave her husband and go to stay at her mother's house where it was possible for her to meet her lover. Pide as frequently would go and bring her back and beat her. At last she killed herself in despair. Mundri, the wife of the headman of Kaklur, frequently quarrelled with her husband over the question of visiting her parents, and one day when she wished to go and her husband stopped her, she became so miserable that she hanged herself from a mango tree.

Wooden tobacco box
(*Length* 3½")

In two cases it was the husband who committed suicide. Marvi Gutami, a young man of twenty-two years, married a girl to whom he was much attached. Indeed it is said that he loved her so much that he was quite unable to control her, and she got on the nerves of the older women in the house who lost no opportunity of venting their spite upon her. As a result she often used to go away to her mother's house, and Gutami would have to go and bring her back. One day when this happened, the youth found that she had gone into hiding elsewhere. Despairing of happiness, he returned home and hanged himself behind his house. Kawasi Hurra's wife Lakhmi did not care for him and was always slipping away to her parents' house. He brought her back five or six times, but she would run away again after staying with him for a few days. Hurra seems to have been very fond

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 574 573 of the girl, and her constant absence made him so miserable that he ended his life.

A situation where the roles of the characters were reversed, and it was the mother who wished to visit the daughter's house, led to an even more pathetic tragedy.

In November 1939, a mother at Killepal was rebuked by her son and daughter-in-law for not helping them with the reaping of the kosra crop. She had been a widow for ten years and seems to have got a certain amount of pleasure and relaxation from paying visits to her married daughter at Dilmilli. This was resented by the son and brother with whom she lived. When she found that she was to be robbed even of this happiness, she killed herself.

VII

PARENTS-IN-LAW

X 674 606 The relationship between a man and his parents-in-law is always difficult. But the general tradition in Maria, as in Hindu society, is that the older people should treat a son-in-law with respect and consideration. Neglect of this rule is apt to arouse very strong feelings in a man's mind. Marvi Kesa had three wives, the youngest of whom ran away to her parents' house after a beating. This is a common practice of aboriginal wives, and causes great annoyance to their husbands especially if the parents take their daughters' side. On this occasion Kesa followed his wife to the house and found her enjoying a drink of rice-beer with the neighbours. He went to his father-in-law and asked him why he had not sent his wife back. The older man replied casually that she had only arrived that morning, and this answer so annoyed Kesa that he struck him on the head with his axe and killed him.

In another case it was the mother-in-law who was the victim. Marvi Hinga took his wife Hirme, who was suffering from fever, to a neighbouring village to a Siraha for treatment. He stayed with her during the night and the next morning returned to his house, where he was seen by his mother-in-law. She, thinking that he had left her daughter uncared for and was now wandering about the village seeking enjoyment, abused the youth saying that he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

ed to the father-in-law that Khuja had abused her, repeating the words that he had used. This annoyed Khuja so much that he followed her home, and when they came to the boundary of the village, threw her down and beat her to death. Khuja's anger may have been due to the fact that he was sensitive about being a Lamhada, particularly as he had married a very young wife.

In two cases conflict between a Lamhada and his father-in-law led to suicide. Ghasia went to dance with the other boys and girls of the village when he should have been working at home. Akali Modi had served three years for his wife, to whom he was married four months before his death. As is often the case he was continuing to serve his father-in-law until the payment of the bride-price was completed. On the night before his suicide, two cows broke their tethering cords and damaged the crops. On such occasions it is almost routine to blame the Lamhada, and the father-in-law doubtless bewailed his mistake in giving his daughter to such a fool and made offensive remarks about the boy's mother. Modi, who is said to have been a sensitive, quick-tempered youth waited till the rest of the family went into the fields and then hanged himself from a tree outside the village.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

671 rage and killed his father while he was still eating.

762 Remorse for drunkenness was the rather unusual cause of a suicide at Dualkarka. Sori Hura was a heavy and reckless drinker. One day as he was indulging himself as usual, a friend, the Kandki of Kuakonda, a rather influential man, happened to visit him and gave him a little lecture on the evils of alcoholism. Hura expressed himself as greatly moved by his advice, and arranged for him to be rewarded with a feast. But directly the Kandki went away, Hura set to work to drink again. By midnight he was in a sorry condition of intoxication and remorse, and went into an inner room and hanged himself. It was about midnight, and his wife was husking grain in the next room for a festival on the morrow. Hearing a suspicious sound, she went to see what had happened and found her husband dead.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

congress. Hebka Masa killed his wife Pakli in consequence of a long dispute, but immediately before the tragedy she refused to lie with him. Barse Chappe, a polygamous invalid, was first refused by both his wives and later by his senior wife because he desired to perform the act in a semi-public place. Marvi Deva saw his wife with a man and when, probably to test her, he asked her to give herself to him and she refused, he killed his baby daughter and tried to kill her. Kosa, an almost imbecile paralytic, asked his wife to have intercourse with him; she abused him and he stabbed her to death. Doga, rejected sexually by his elder brother's widow, was so affronted that he killed her. Mundra, who so brutally treated his wife Pande, asked her to have sexual congress with him and was refused only an hour before he met his death at her hands.

Decorated bauda knife (Length 3')

Such a refusal may also drive a man to suicide. Marvi Joga, the Waddai of Mathadi, was always quarrelling with his wife and threatening to remarry. One day at the funeral ceremony of his brother's son, he drank a lot of surem, and when he came home he tried to have intercourse with his wife. But she refused saying, 'You are always talking about another wife. Why don't you go and get one?' and she went away to sleep in the Room of the Departed. Joga, intoxicated and desperate at his wife's refusal, hanged himself.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and there was only one building belonging to his brother nearby. At this time of the year everyone was busy in the fields. Hunga therefore caught hold of his wife by the hair, threw her down and prepared to cut her throat. She tried her best to snatch the knife from his hand, but was unable to. The two little girls, Malla and Kosi, who had been sitting in the kitchen, came screaming and tried to save their mother. They cried for help, but there was no one to hear. As they tried to pull their father's hands away from their mother, they themselves got slightly injured. Then Hunga put his knee on Gangi's waist and sat above her holding her hair by one hand, while he sawed through her throat with the knife in exactly the same manner as the priest, at a Maria festival, slowly cuts through the neck of a dedicated pig. When he had cut almost right through the throat and was sure that Gangi was dead, he picked up a rope and went behind the house.

A little while later Hunga's mother, who had been to fetch water, returned to the house. She saw Gangi lying dead and Kosi beside her weeping. The child said that her father had gone behind the house with a rope, and the old woman hurried round and found her son hanging from a rafter of the house, his feet about a cubit and a half above the ground. The knife covered with his wife's blood was lying below. She picked it up and cut through the cord, and Hunga fell to the ground unconscious but still breathing. He recovered, but only to be sentenced to death and hanged. The clothes of Hunga and Gangi, partners in this unnatural tragedy, were buried together and an earthen tomb was raised above them.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

For the Maria (as for the European woman) maternity is the great protection. The reason for the low incidence of homicide among Maria women is possibly connected with the strong aboriginal belief that it is supernaturally dangerous for a woman to take life. This is the ultimate reason why there are no women priests, for the priest has to offer sacrifice. Maria women are not supposed to kill goats or even chickens. They are not permitted to join in hunting. The only pursuit of the kind which is not taboo to them is fishing—but fish are cold-blooded creatures.

It will be noted, however, that the number of Maria women who commit suicide is almost as high as that of Maria men.

II

Five of the 100 homicides were committed by women, and in one of them the woman was helped by a man. Two of these were typical women's crimes arising out of annoyance and exasperation over comparatively small matters. In the first two women, both of whom had been married to the same man and were now widows, were living together. The older widow was so tiresome and so continually nagged the younger that at last the girl could stand it no longer, and gave her three blows with an axe whereon she died. In the second, a man and his wife were collecting red ants for food when they heard the cries of a child in extremity. They went to the place and found a little girl about ten years old lying on the ground with her neck broken. She had been killed by her step-mother for not doing what she was told. The older woman had climbed up a tree and was picking the leaves and throwing them down. She called to the child and asked her to bring her basket closer so that she could drop the leaves directly into it. When the child disobeyed, her step-mother came down from the tree and beat and kicked her, then twisted her neck till she died. Both the older woman and the girl were weak and hungry for want of food. There was no rice in their house and they had been living on mahua for days. Fatigue and hunger played their part in this tragedy, as so often happens.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and Bodenar. The man was carrying an axe and told him he was travelling from Tikanpal to Killepal, and he asked for and obtained a cucumber to eat for supper. The witness noticed that the woman looked angry and sat at some distance, refusing to speak to her companion. Later that same evening the villagers of Bodenar saw a man carrying an axe and cucumber and followed by a woman enter the village, and they allowed them to sleep in the village Rest-house. The following morning they discovered the man lying dead with a deep wound going right into the brain. The woman had disappeared.

Later Pande described the continual torture and mutilation to which she was subjected by Mundra. She said that on the night of the tragedy, in the Rest-house Mundra had forcibly attempted to have intercourse with her and she had prevented him. He had declared that if she did not consent, he would cut her to pieces with an axe. They then lay down separately and both tried to keep awake, she in order to prevent him from approaching her in her sleep and he to ensure that she did not run away. But at cock-crow, exhausted by his long journey, he fell asleep and Pande killed him with the axe and made her escape. She was sentenced to transportation for life but the Sessions Judge made a strong recommendation for mercy, and in appeal her punishment was reduced to one year's imprisonment.

In this murder several factors operated simultaneously. There was the desire for revenge for years of cruelty. There was the imperative necessity for Pande to eliminate a man who would not leave her alone, and who would neither allow her to live happily with him or to go anywhere else. There was the fear of treatment by the Siraha. There was the extreme fatigue and exhaustion of her attempted flight, the misery of her capture, the further long journey with little food, and finally a long night's vigil.

IV

Dislike of the husband may equally result in suicide when the woman is weaker or the social odds against her are too heavy. Budri did not love her husband and whenever she was taken to his house ran away from it. After this had

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 happened several times, she hanged herself. Kunjami Burji, a widow, was desired by Konda who sent seven men, according to custom, to bring her to his house. In spite of her remonstrances, she was taken forcibly, but managed to escape with her three little children and hanged herself in the house while they were asleep. A young girl, Poyami Pande, was given to her mother's brother's son in marriage. After the feast, the couple were shut up together in a room as usual for the consummation of the marriage. But Pande objected, fought her way out of the room, and ran home where she was thoroughly scolded for such improper conduct. That night she hanged herself.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

It is possible that in this case some important evidence was suppressed by the witnesses, for there was a suggestion that the murdered woman had committed incest with her brother. The fear of excommunication and fines would be sufficiently strong to induce everyone to keep quiet about this. On the other hand, it is equally possible that the suspicion of his wife's infidelity was a delusion of Chamru's disordered mind.

Other Maria have been content to take their own way out of the world, when the psychotic disturbance became too strong for them. Many different symptoms are recorded as preceding such suicides. Baiha Ganga, for some days before his death, refused to eat and when people approached him attacked them with his stick. Bongi Maria was subject to periodic attacks of insanity; he tried to kill himself three times before he finally succeeded. Others displayed a marked narcissistic attitude, wandering aimlessly in the jungle, refusing to talk or work; such were Saradu, a northern Muria, who used to wander naked, Nari Maria, Pakli, a little girl about ten years old, and Marvi Mundi, a woman who had suffered since childhood from attacks during which she refused to eat and wandered about aimlessly, neglecting the dozen children she had borne.

There is finally the strange and sombre case of Markami Hirme, mother of four children and about to bear a fifth. In her pre-pubertal period she had been subject to epileptic fits, but was treated by the local Siraha, and was believed cured. On 22 October 1935, at her home at Gonderas, the epilepsy recurred, and she became 'strange in her behaviour'. She was in the eighth month of pregnancy. Two days later, when her husband was out watching the crops, and her eldest daughter had gone for water, she hanged herself from a rafter of the house in the presence of her three little children.

Now such a death is the most dangerous in the world. The woman who dies in pregnancy or childbirth is known throughout India as the Churelin or Churin; in Bastar she is often called the Ondar Muttai, the Old Bee Woman, who attacks men with the fury of a swarm of bees. Hirme's husband and the village elders seem to have been unable to decide what to do. Not one of them dared to touch the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

158 762 corpse, and it remained hanging for two days in the house. Then, so the villagers declare, the foetus of the unborn child automatically discharged itself from the womb. By this time the necessary ceremonies of protection had been performed, and the body was cut down.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

An ingenious attempt to hoodwink the police occurred at Jhoriabadhan in 1923. After the mysterious disappearance of a little boy aged two-and-a-half years the police came to investigate, and the villagers took the constable to the threshing-floor whence the child had disappeared, and there showed him a boy about six years old. They told him that this was the missing boy and that he had been found wandering in the fields. Even the child's own mother declared that this was the lost boy, and since all the members of the family as well as the villagers supported her, the police went away. There is no doubt, however, that a child did disappear and it is probable that he was offered as a human sacrifice.

In one case, but only one, a prosecution witness was so troubled by his family that he committed suicide. On the whole, however, the Maria appear to co-operate with the police very well. In 88 cases out of 100, they assisted in some way or other. Sometimes they reported the matter at the police station. Sometimes they themselves arrested the murderer and kept him in custody until the police arrived. They co-operated by assisting at the inquest which is held in a village when the police arrive to investigate a suspicious death. In one case the villagers took an active and dangerous part in pursuing a convict who had escaped from jail with the result that one of their number was killed.

TABLE TWENTY-ONE

Illustrating the kind of assistance given to police in 100 cases

Information withheld from police	12
Homicide reported by villagers	79
Accused arrested by villagers	25
Accused gives himself up to police	9

This was the exciting pursuit of Markami Mundra in 1934. Mundra was convicted in 1933 and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for an act of violence. On 3 May 1934, he escaped from jail with another convict and a proclamation was issued for their arrest. A Sub-Inspector of Police went at once to Gudra, Mundra's own village, and told the people that a reward of fifty rupees had been offered for his

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW?
Bison Horn Maria

investigation, committal proceedings and Sessions trial. Such crimes may have come to light later through the panchayat reporting them at their own convenience, or through the widow or other relative of a murdered man being dissatisfied with the compensation which the murderer had been ordered to give, while in some Parganas informers arose who subsequently used their supposed prestige with the police to become petty local tyrants. Conversely on occasions panchayats, disgusted with the failure of the police to investigate thefts or with the acquittal of guilty persons by the Tahsildars, took the law into their own hands and had the thieves killed.[1]

I make no apology for quoting Grigson at length on this subject, for it was largely due to his efforts that a new tradition was established in Bastar, and that the Maria began, however slowly and imperfectly, to co-operate with the administration. The new attitude is indeed a remarkable tribute to the sympathy and intelligence of the Bastar police and the understanding and courtesy of the committing Magistrates and Sessions Judges. Even so I doubt whether the Maria will ever be able to overcome the tribal and religious objections to revealing their inmost thoughts in the public Court.

This fear of the outside world is revealed in a number of examples where Maria have committed suicide rather than be involved in police enquiries and legal proceedings.

The aboriginal is not alone in finding litigation and contact with officialdom trying to the nerves. Hunga of Kothiagura was involved in a cattle-theft case and believed himself badly treated by the constable investigating it. He prepared a petition to the Superintendent of Police and wrapping it carefully in a parsa leaf set out to Jagdalpur to present it. But on the way, his fears, his grievance, his sense of lost prestige overwhelmed him, and he hanged himself from a parsa tree by the roadside.[2]

Marvi Mundra of Cholnar had some of his cattle stolen and

[1] Grigson, op. cit., pp. 284 ff.

[2] The case of Saradu, a young Maria landlord of Bermakot, in 1933, belongs to the bad old days before the taking of free supplies and labour had been prohibited. An Excise Sub-Inspector came to the village to enquire into a case of illicit distillation. He does not seem to have received all the supplies he wanted, and so he threatened the landlord, who came of a leading Muria family, with prosecution on some false charge. Saradu hanged himself rather than face the indignity and disgrace.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762 reported the matter to the police. The case proceeded normally, and Mundra was summoned as complainant to the court. The accused called two defence witnesses, a matter which seems to have shocked Mundra profoundly, who being simple and honest himself and knowing his case to be true, seems to have expected it to be settled in his favour immediately. In the evening, under the great trees of the travellers' camp at Dantewara, he expressed his concern to his companions and while all were asleep went away and committed suicide.

In case No 1, Lakhmu of Erpund, an old timid Maria who may have himself been involved in the crime, was called by the police as a prosecution witness against his step-son. The boy's mother was so angry at his being willing to give evidence against her son, and she and the family abused the old man so much that before the matter came to trial he hanged himself.

Another case, this time of attempted suicide, occurred in connection with a police investigation as recently as 1941. An elderly Maria, Poyami Masa by name, who lived in the beautiful village of Kaklur among the mountains, had a quarrel with his nephew Kosa. Kosa struck the old man with his axe, and was sentenced to imprisonment. While in jail, in order to revenge himself, he made a report to the Administrator that his uncle had murdered a Banjara gypsy some years before, had placed his dead body in the village temple, and had given a feast to the villagers who had hushed up the whole affair. The police investigated the matter and found that actually seven years previously an unknown Banjara had died in the village, and his body had been quietly disposed of by the people in order to avoid the bother of a police enquiry. No one ever knew who the man was, nor was his body ever found. But Poyami Masa was so alarmed at the arrival of the police that he hanged himself on a branch of a tree behind his house, but was cut down by his son before he died. At his trial he was acquitted, the Sessions Judge finding that there was no real evidence against him.

000 The extreme care that is needed in dealing with primitive people, who may easily misinterpret official action, is seen in a deplorable incident that occurred among the Chenchu

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 of Chichari described how this happened to three of his
758 fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

768 In several places I found that a house or a village had been
14 moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

764 The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the
762 same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death,
[787] and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

762 In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pide committed
766 suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

for this is your home'. When the chicken had pecked at the rice, he twisted its neck and threw it on the still-burning pyre. A pig and a cow were then sacrificed and an uraskal erected the same day. After returning to the house they made a rough drawing with flour of the garden and of the house with its various rooms on the floor. On this pattern they again offered rice to a hen saying, 'We have now made a house for you; don't stay outside any longer, but remain here'.

The ghost of the suicide, like that of a murderer, becomes a Mirchuk and lives in an ant-hill. If the Mirchuk gets angry, it may possess a member of the family, and he too may commit suicide unless the proper offerings are not made at once. The suicide's ghost may also come to the village and cause trouble in a variety of ways. As we have seen elsewhere, the Mirchuk is often used as a familiar by witches. It is most important that the soul of a suicide should not be 'mingled with the Dead'. In some villages they say that this prohibition is absolute. In Dugeli, they said that they should wait a year. A menhir should not be erected. A remarkable double suicide at Khutepal illustrates the danger of ignoring these rules. Bandi, the headman of this village, had two wives. One day they quarrelled, and the elder wife hanged herself in a rage. Her funeral ceremony was performed as though the death had been a natural one. Her soul was mingled with the Dead, and an uraskal memorial pillar was erected for her in the place used by other members of the clan. It is believed that, when this is done, the suicide's ghost quarrels with the other ghosts of the clan and annoys them. In this case the angry Dead so troubled the wife of Bandi's younger son, who was living in the same house, that she too committed suicide after a quarrel with her mother-in-law. This second suicide was regarded by the villagers as the immediate result of having erected a memorial pillar and mingled the soul of the older woman with the ancestral Dead. When the girl's ceremonies were performed, therefore, they carefully burnt her clothes in a place away from the usual crematorium and, although they gave her an uraskal, they did not sacrifice a cow or hang its tail in the usual manner round the stone.

At Dualkarka, however, they said that an uraskal should

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762
764 never be made *for* anyone who commits suicide or is killed by violence. Here they described how, when the members of the household in which a suicide has occurred are feasting at the close of the funeral ceremonies, they suddenly feel as though somebody is strangling them, and to get rid of this unpleasant feeling they have to go to the village boundary and make the usual offerings. If the dead man has been killed by a tiger or has been murdered, the relatives feel that they are being mauled by some great animal or that an unseen hand is belabouring them with a heavy stick.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

II

TABLE OF 50 MARIA SUICIDES

762

No	Name, sex, age and place	Date	Brief history
1	Akali Modi, 18, of Kosalnar	14.8.38	He was a Lamhada and badly treated. Just before the tragedy his father-in-law scolded him for not tethering the cattle properly.
2	Alami Mata, 25, of Pahurnar	16.11.31	His dancing outfit was stolen. He was scolded by his father. He was unable to meet his girl.
3	Atami Kosa, 50, of Potali	31.1.35	He suffered from a painful ulcer and stomach trouble.
4	Baiha Ganga, 50, of Kukanar	22.6.32	He was regarded as mad and taken by his family for treatment to the Siraha.
5	Barse Chewa, 40, of Gamawada	23.7.34	He beat his wife and thought he had killed her.
6	Barse Konda, 35, of Hitawar	8.10.38	His daughter misconducted herself and he was defamed for it. He danced all night and hanged himself at dawn.
7	Bodri (f.), 24, of Bodenar	8.1.33	She could not bear living with her husband.
8	Galle (f.), 9, of Goriapal	18.3.32	She was very independent of her husband, and when he tried to force her to cook against her will, she hanged herself.
9	Hunga, of Kothagada	17.8.37	He was accused of receiving stolen property, had lost his cattle and was troubled by the police.
10	Karti Kare (f.), 18, of Kosalnar	8.8.39	She was newly married, but after a quarrel ran away to another man. Her husband forced her to come home.
11	Karti Sukri (f.), 15, of Pondum	19.10.36	She was suffering from severe pains and undue prolongation of her menstrual period.
12	Kalesami Boti, 40, of Pondum	22.5.33	His son had died.
13	Kawasi Deve (f.), 45, of Killepal	4.11.39	She was a widow living with her son and brother. They abused her for not working hard enough.

[p. 246]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762

14	Kawasi Dulga, 30, of Dilmili	22.1.37	He had two wives who were always quarrelling.
15	Kawasi Hurra, 21, of Siringuda	4.6.40	His wife, whom he loved, did not care for him and was always running away and did not even cook properly.
16	Kawasi Marka, 50, of Maolibhata	29.7.38	He had been blind for seven years, and had long been gloomy and depressed.
17	Kome (f.), 20, of Kodber	12.8.32	She was a sensitive, quick-tempered girl. Her husband scolded her for not cooking in time.
18	Kunjami Baidi (f.), of Gadiras	3.3.39	She suffered from severe pains in chest and stomach.
19	Kunjami Burji (f.), 28, of Perpa	21.3.34	On her husband's death, a man who was her younger cousin claimed her. She was taken to his house, but escaped and hanged herself.
20	Kuhrami Pide (f.), 40, of Metapal	6.2.37	Mother and daughter (No 21) were very quick-tempered and specially resented any interference in household matters from Hurra, Pide's husband.
21	Kuhrami Pande (f.), 16, of Metapal	6.2.37	One day Hurra found a calf had been killed by a panther. He scolded the women and they hanged themselves.
22	Lakhmi (f.), 15, of Badrenga	9.11.40	She disliked her husband, tried to escape, but was always brought back.
23	Markami Hirme (f.), 35, of Gonderas	24.10.35	She was an epileptic. She hanged herself when eight months pregnant.
24	Markami Hunga (f.), 55, of Gongpal	1.5.37	She suffered from yaws and was very miserable.
25	Markami Kosi (f.), 35, of Rasawahi	11.7.37	The pain at menstruation drove her mad.
26	Markami Pandu, 50, of Parcheli	16.2.38	His wife scolded him for not thrashing the crop and for drinking too much. He may have been intoxicated at the time.
27	Marvi Dhodea, 24, of Goriapal	17.5.39	He beat his sick wife for not caring for their child and felt very sorry for it.
28	Marvi Gutami, 22, of Katakanda	24.8.38	He loved his wife very much, but she was careless and used to leave him for her parents' house.
29	Marvi Mundi (f.), 45, of Oriyapal	9.11.32	She had fits of insanity from childhood.
30	Marvi Mundra, of Cholnar	29.12.35	He went to Dantewara as a prosecution witness in a cattle-lifting case, and got frightened.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762

31	Matu (f.), 20, of Kosalnar	17.8.35	She was beaten by her husband and his elder brother, and ran away, hanging herself on the banks of the Indrawati River.
32	Mundri (f.), 30, of Kukur	26.11.32	She was a quarrelsome woman and used to run off to her parents' house. Her husband stopped her and she hanged herself.
33	Muke (f.), 40, of Bhejripadar	1.8.35	She had suffered acutely from pains in head and stomach. Her husband took her to a Siraha, but it did no good.
34	Nadi, 20, of Mandar	12.12.35	He had been insane since childhood.
35	Padami Dhudi, 42, of Naktoka	2.12.33	His old mother used to scold him for not working properly; he had severe headaches.
36	Pakli, (f.), 10, of Takhapal	19.7.32	She was probably an imbecile. The Siraha had tried to treat her, but to no avail.
37	Poriami Bire (f.), of Kondre	21.9.36	Her husband was sick and she did not look after him properly. For this her son rebuked her severely.
38	Poyami Gupe (f.), 18, of Bastanar	29.7.39	She had been widowed and then became the second wife of a man. Her co-wife quarrelled and she ran away.
39	Poyami Hirma, 22, of Kokalpal	21.9.40	He was probably insane. He could not work properly.
40	Poyami Kosa, 15, of Sargipal	16.12.39	Someone took his clothes and he was greatly upset by the loss.
41	Poyami Lakhma, 45, of Gumiapal	24.12.24	He was ill. His two wives and a daughter died. He was sad and lonely.
42	Poyami Mangru, 50, of Dilmilli	20.7.33	He had leprosy and very painful ulcers; he could neither eat nor drink.
43	Poyami Pande (f.), 18, of Kawargaon	17.6.36	She hanged herself rather than sleep with her 'cousin-brother'.
44	Sori Deva, 25, of Kokalwada	9.6.39	His two cows died; he quarrelled with his wife and beat her. She ran away. He felt repentant and miserable.
45	Sori Hirma, 60, of Korra	26.2.32	He injured himself at a festival and was a confirmed invalid.
46	Thadgu, 50, of Gadhia	30.4.40	He loved his son who was ill and took him to a Siraha, with no result.
47	Tiro (f.), 22, of Karka	6.4.39	Her first two babies died. Then the third got burnt and her husband beat her.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762

48	Veko Lakhma, of Haram	24.11.31	He was a Kabari bond-servant. He did not know how to pay his debt.
49	Veko Mukka, of Adhkariras	5.11.34	He was probably insane.
50	Wanjami Mase, (f.), 22, of Pujari Palli	5.2.34	She was weak and lazy. She could not feed her baby properly. Her mother-in-law used to scold her constantly.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XVI

Death and Funeral Ceremonies

A. Hill Marias

The ordinary rule throughout the Abujhmar hills is to cremate the bodies of headmen and elders of influence and standing and of their wives, and to bury all others.

Except on the southern fringes of the hills, where the villages are influenced by contact with their Bison-horn Maria neighbours, the Hill Marias do not follow the Bison-horn custom of beating a drum from the roof of the house, which Russell and Hiralal predicate of all Marias. The custom is creeping into the hills from south of the Indrawati, and has for example already reached the Kutru Hill Maria villages of Lakka (Lanka) and Karangal; but there it is reserved for men of higher status. The drum used is the hill *turam* kettle-drum, and is usually one of those kept in the village dormitory; the village lads beat it continuously day and night from the death till the burial or cremation of the body.

News of the death is sent out to all the brother-clan and wife-clan relatives and friends of the deceased. The funeral is postponed for two or three days, to give them time to assemble. Then all the women gather in and around the house where the body is lying. A man is never left to die on a cot, but is lifted on to the ground as his end draws near; they say that their reason for this custom is simply that they do not want the dying man to fall off the cot in a last convulsion. Women are never allowed to sleep on a cot. They close the eyes of the corpse, and lift it on to a rough wicker-work bier, covering it over with a length of cloth. It is burned or buried with the clothes and jewellery that were on it at death. The women sit around the corpse and outside in the street, and break into loud keening for the dead.

For the last rites the body is not washed or otherwise prepared, but is left just as it was composed after death. Friends and relatives carry it out on the bier, the only person for whom it is taboo to touch or carry a body being the *waddai* clan-priest medium and his medium assistant (*leshi*). The bier heads the procession to the burial and cremation ground, and is followed by the remaining relatives and friends, the women still keening and beating their breasts.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Where, as in Orcha and most of the surrounding villages of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, *hetokal* menhirs are no longer erected, a cow or pig is nevertheless sacrificed in this way in the village on the night after the funeral at the heir's house, and portions of the flesh or the liver when cooked are placed under the cromlech at the base of the *hanal-gutta* post, or, if there is no cromlech, on the grave, while the tail, and sometimes also a lower leg, from hock to hoof, are fastened by a cord from an overhanging *saja* bough. The usual feast and dance then follow.

One reason for the abandonment of the custom of erecting menhirs may be that the clans which have abandoned it have in fairly recent times abandoned their traditional for their present clan-areas; for it was the rule that the menhir should always be erected in the village from which the dead man or his ancestors had originally come, not in the village at which he was living at the time of his death.

Treatment of abnormal deaths

A person who has killed himself, or who dies from cholera or small-pox, is not buried or cremated at the regular funeral ground, but in the forest at some distance from it. There had been no recent case in any village which I visited of a woman dying when pregnant or in child-birth, and no one could say what would be done in such a case. Persons killed by tigers or other wild animals must be burned, not buried, at the place where their remains are found, or to which they are brought for the inquest. They must never be brought into a village, for otherwise the dead man's *hanal* may bring the tiger there. The remains, if scattered, are collected and placed in a cloth brought from the dead man's house; but such bodies should be touched as little as possible. Logs are piled under the body where it lies and kindled, and anything found with the body or at the place where the tiger attacked the dead man is burnt with it; but no dancing dresses or other property are brought from his house to be burned with him, and no offerings of grain or *mahua* spirit are made at the grave. No *marma-kal* cairn and no *hetokal* menhir are set up for him; but there is nothing to prevent this being done for the victims of cholera or smallpox.

B. Bison-horn Marias

The true Bison-horn Marias, as distinguished from members of clans once Hill Maria in culture but now adopting Bison-horn customs, cremate all their dead except those who die from abnormal causes. When a man dies, his son-in-law is sent for, and on arrival climbs on to the roof of the house with a *dol* drum, which he beats

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *wraskal*.

On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *wraskal* menhir. There are *wraskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs.[1] On the Jagdalpur side, however, and around Pakhar, though every village has its *wraskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kuthi*, *urad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 426. — Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

dance, which makes everyone laugh, while all the mediums of neighbouring villages attend, and, possessed by their godlings, leap wildly to and fro, carrying bunches of *saja* leaves in their hands or holding them over their matted hair, to the general merriment. The chief wedding dance is the bison dance, every male turning at intervals in his paces to smile and 'glad-eye' the next dancer, and each then pretending to butt the other with his bison-horns; in another figure they similarly mimic two cocks fighting. The greatest sign of skill is to be able to impale on the tip of the horns a piece of grass twisted into a ring and thrown on the ground; the dancer may before this pretend to be a young and frisky bull, butting at wisps of grass or trees, or hurling them into the air to toss them on his horns. I have seen a dancer pick a small finger ring off the ground on the tip of his horns. As among the Hill Marias, and indeed most Central Provinces Gonds, there is always a comic and obscene element; men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear or goat fur, and carrying clubs, nets and dummy guns, rush in and out amongst the dancers, making obscenely suggestive gestures with their clubs at the dancing or onlooking girls, and provoking roars of laughter.

There is generally a pause for *landa* or *mahua* spirit sooner or later, after which the girls sometimes, before resuming the dance, sit in a bunch swaying from their hips and singing short catchy refrains, with either frankly sexual meaning or no meaning at all; and often the lads opposite make the whole company laugh by imitating them in falsetto.

The dancing and singing, it need hardly be said, lead on frequently to love-making, couples retiring into the darkness, or else starting an affair ending in experimental union and perhaps, later, in matrimony.

E. Other Amusements

The Bison-horn Marias' favourite pastime of cock-fighting has already been described (see page 162 above). Small wooden toys are made for the children, very crude representations of tigers or other animals; and a pathetic sight at the graves of children are these toys left there for the *hawal*[1] of the children to play with. I have never found any Marias making string figures; and they have shown no interest in attempts to demonstrate them. The Murias and Bhattras have innumerable games in which all the village youth takes part in the cold weather and spring nights, many of which

[1] Literally the 'Game' used of the spirits of the dead.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 618 villages by the headman of the Bison-horn Pharaspal *pargana*. The god had long ago produced a son worshipped as clan-god in the Atami village of Chudala Karka, now a Bison-horn village. But the son's dependence on the parent was shown by the practice of the Tumirgunda clan-priest every third year making a new network of peacock's quills for encasing the front cross-piece of the Chudala Karka son. The *modul-waddai* shaves his beard only when he has to start to make a new quill network, and lets it grow after that till it has again to be replaced three years later. Chudala Karka pays Tumirgunda for this network a pig, a *khandi* of 164 lb. of husked rice and a pot of *mahua* spirit. In the *pen-rawar* hut of the god at Tumirgunda was yet another son, already named Hunga Gunda Mo'itto Pen, who was being made for another Atami village in the 'see', and was to be taken to it as soon as he was a year old; he then consisted only of one bamboo pole tipped with a silver cone and adorned with bunches of peacock feathers. Here perhaps the need for separation was arising because the Atami villages were adopting or had adopted Bison-horn ways, while the village for which the new god was being 'born' was some way from Chudala Karka, and effectively separated from it by the Indrawati river. So at Kurmer at the end of 1929 Nule Harma, god of the Deda clan, was producing a 'son' for some distant villages of the clan; and we have already seen how the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar *pargana* acquired from the Jaterom of Mohnar not only a younger brother of their god, but a Jate family to be his clan-priest.

The *Gazetteer* has been quoted as suggesting that the system of separate areas and separate gods for each clan was breaking down. Among the Hill Marias the remark is justified to the following extent only. Many of the old villages of the Bhairamgarh Mar and Kutru Mar *parganas* of the Kutru zamindari have disappeared, including indeed the two which Glasfurd gave as the seats of the chief Hill Maria clan-gods of his time. Many clans have disappeared or are reduced to one or two households. There are various causes; maladministration leading to exodus to the tahsils of the plains or the Chanda district, the great 1918 influenza epidemic, and the ravages of yaws. The total disappearance of clans is evidenced by [764] the presence in villages now settled by other clans of *kotokal* rows of menhirs erected for the Departed of forgotten clans, quite distinct from those erected by the present clan, which can give no information at all about its predecessors. Clans greatly diminished in numbers soon find that they cannot economically manage to keep even one village going on their traditional clan-area, much less keep effective control and user of all the alternative *penda* slopes of the area. The dregs, therefore, of three or four clans may settle

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

first solid food the new grain and meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed. 769

It will be seen in the sections of the next part of this book that deal with birth, marriage and funeral customs that there are further rites, either indicating the power of the Departed to influence the fortunes of their posterity, or designed to propitiate them. Such are the searching of the body of a new-born baby for the birth-marks of some ancestor; the libations to the Departed in the betrothal and marriage ceremonies of all Marias and the sacrificial meal given to Bison-horn bride and bridegroom before the Pot of the Departed in the bridegroom's father's house; the ascertaining at Hill Maria funerals whether the death was due to the wrath of the Departed; the special precautions taken in the obsequies of persons killed by tigers or lightning, victims of small-pox and pregnant women; and in Hill and Bison-horn obsequies the attempt finally to lay or placate the Departed by the erection of a menhir in the *kotokal* or *wrakal*.

The word *kanal* is simply a past participial form of the verb *kandana*, 'to go'; 'Departed' is thus a literal translation. It has a sound of finality about it, as though the dead, once departed, were finished with; and indeed men of the hill clans that do not erect menhirs for the dead are apt to assert that this is the case, and that they never worry further about their dead after they have been cremated or buried. Yet there are many signs that even they do not really think so. All Marias, it has already been observed,[1] are shy of talking about the Departed, though it takes little to get them to discuss other religious beliefs and ceremonies. I have had Hill Marias denying that they do anything for the Departed or offer them anything at death or the new-eating festivals, and then either found at their new graves a wooden *kanal-gutta* post and a stone *kanal-garya* seat for the Departed, with a sacrificed cow's tail and foot hanging from a tree close by, or discovered a Pot and Hearth of the Departed in their *kous*. There is almost certainly not a Maria who does not believe that for some time, at least, after their death the Departed are to be feared and appeased by the necessary offerings and memorials. [764]

This fear of the *kanal* as likely to cause illness, death, the attacks of tigers or famine (for it is these apprehensions that lie behind most of the observances catalogued in the first two paragraphs of this chapter) may operate also not to the alarm of the righteous only, but as a protection to him because of its efficacy in deterring others from offences against the house. Goods stored in the *kous* of the Hill Marias and the *wijja-kos* of the Bison-horn

[1] See p. 193.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip. All Marias agree that the dead are somewhere underground; men, animals, trees, and perhaps rivers and streams have in them *jiwa*, a principal of life, and some say that when a man dies his *jiwa* goes to Pogho Bhum, the sky, while that part which is cremated or buried goes below the earth and is his *hanal*. There is a belief that the menhirs erected at the *kotokal* or *wadkal* increase in size if the *hanal* commemorated by it is happy.[1] There are traces of an embryo belief in reincarnation in the practice among Hill Marias of examining a new-born baby to see if it has the same birth-marks as a dead ancestor and, if so, of naming it after the ancestor if of the same sex, or his spouse if of the other sex.[2] Hindu ideas are beginning to influence Bison-horn Marias; tombs are erected sometimes by the side of the menhir in the *wadkal*, thatched over to protect the dead from the heat of the sun, and with a pot of cold water, replenished from time to time, hung over the memorial to drip through a small hole in the pot to cool him further. But, like their ideas about the earth and the gods, the Marias' ideas about the Departed and the after-life are very indefinite and vary from place to place; it is safe only to go on their actual practice, and not on what some of them will say by way of generalization or theory; the latter are certain to be those who have had most contact with the outer world and persons of other faiths. There is one practical way in which old Bison-horn men show their belief in some future existence. They often choose before death the cow or bullock to be sacrificed when their menhir is erected in the *wadkal*; and it is alleged that if the heir thinks it better to slay some other animal, the animal chosen by the dead man always pines to death. The graves of Hill and Bison-horn Marias are adorned with strips of cloth, spears, fishing-rods and other things they may need hereafter, and their ornaments are buried often with them.

B. Magic and Witchcraft

We have seen before that such is the ignorance of the local Hindus about the Marias that, in the words used by Glasfurd in 1868,[3] 'the simple and unsophisticated Gond tribes are believed to be expert necromancers, and on the most intimate footing with evil spirits'; and that the Marias have a totally undeserved reputation as physicians, although their general idea of sickness

[1] Report, p. 52.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XVI

Death and Funeral Ceremonies

A. Hill Marias

The ordinary rule throughout the Abujhmar hills is to cremate the bodies of headmen and elders of influence and standing and of their wives, and to bury all others.

Except on the southern fringes of the hills, where the villages are influenced by contact with their Bison-horn Maria neighbours, the Hill Marias do not follow the Bison-horn custom of beating a drum from the roof of the house, which Russell and Hiralal predicate of all Marias. The custom is creeping into the hills from south of the Indrawati, and has for example already reached the Kutru Hill Maria villages of Lakka (Lanka) and Karangal; but there it is reserved for men of higher status. The drum used is the hill *turam* kettle-drum, and is usually one of those kept in the village dormitory; the village lads beat it continuously day and night from the death till the burial or cremation of the body.

News of the death is sent out to all the brother-clan and wife-clan relatives and friends of the deceased. The funeral is postponed for two or three days, to give them time to assemble. Then all the women gather in and around the house where the body is lying. A man is never left to die on a cot, but is lifted on to the ground as his end draws near; they say that their reason for this custom is simply that they do not want the dying man to fall off the cot in a last convulsion. Women are never allowed to sleep on a cot. They close the eyes of the corpse, and lift it on to a rough wicker-work bier, covering it over with a length of cloth. It is burned or buried with the clothes and jewellery that were on it at death. The women sit around the corpse and outside in the street, and break into loud keening for the dead.

For the last rites the body is not washed or otherwise prepared, but is left just as it was composed after death. Friends and relatives carry it out on the bier, the only person for whom it is taboo to touch or carry a body being the *waddai* clan-priest medium and his medium assistant (*lashi*). The bier heads the procession to the burial and cremation ground, and is followed by the remaining relatives and friends, the women still keening and beating their breasts.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 Both for burial and for cremation most Hill Marias place the body in the grave or on the pyre with the head, face upwards, towards the sunrise and the feet towards the sunset; the Usendi clan, however, reverses this.

761 When the death is obviously a natural death after a long life, and there can be no suspicion of magic, nothing is done at the funeral to ascertain the cause of death. But if, for example, a 764 man or woman dies suddenly in the prime of life for no apparent reason, the bearers halt on the path just by the funeral ground, and stand with the bier resting on their shoulders. The *waddai* takes seven *saja* leaves, and places them in a row on the ground a few paces away from the bier. One leaf represents the Earth or Bhum, and stands for death through the displeasure of the Village Mother; the second stands for death through sickness; the third for death through the displeasure of the clan-god and the Departed (*pen-hanal*); the fourth for death through the magic of a fellow-villager; the fifth for death from the magic of a man whose enmity has been aroused against the deceased by a quarrel or exchange of abuses; the sixth for death from the magic of a *waddai* or magician; and the seventh for death from natural causes. The *waddai* or, if he is not present, the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita*, strikes the earth three times with an axe, and calls on the corpse to disclose the cause of its death. The corpse is then believed to impel the bearers to carry it to one of the leaves and stand on it; or else the *waddai* first excites the corpse by scattering husked grain over it till it moves the bearers to one of the leaves. The bearers then leap eight or nine paces away from the leaf, and stand with their backs to the row of leaves. They must not look behind them while the *waddai* changes the order of the leaves, after which the corpse has again to impel its bearers to stand on one of the leaves. Three or four times in all the process is repeated, the leaves being rearranged each time behind the backs of the bearers; and if each time the corpse indicates the same leaf, despite its changes of position, the company is satisfied that it has truly revealed the cause of its death. If in successive tests it indicates different leaves, they assume that there was nothing wrong with the death. In old days the elders stated that if the corpse indicated magic as the cause, the *waddai* at once called on it to point out the magician among those present at the funeral, or in the dead man's village or an adjacent village; but nowadays they do not proceed to an immediate witch-hunt; a seed of suspicion has, however, been sown which will sooner or later grow into assault or murder.

764 Then, if the body is to be buried, the bearers bring it to the grave, which is dug only waist-deep, lift it off the bier and place it in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the grave, with its face upwards, and, normally, its feet towards the sunset. The senior near kinsman present then throws a clod of earth on the head of the corpse, and says, 'This is all I can now do for you, and I give you my portion.' Then each near kinsman present flings a clod into the grave, uttering the same formula, followed by five elders of the village, who therefore are distant kinsmen, and after them by any affines who may be present. If there are no near kinsmen present, the five village elders take the lead in the ceremony. The women take no part in this. The dead man's *erramtogh* (that is, his wife's elder brother or his own younger sister's husband) will have brought to the grave the dead man's spare clothes, if any, his ornaments, his axe (but not his bow and arrows), his hoe (*gudari*), his cot and his dancing clothes and ornaments; generally all or some of his cooking pots are also taken to the grave. It may be added that the *erramtogh* has the duty, when he arrives, of uncovering the body and inspecting it for any signs of foul play. When a woman dies, it is still her husband's *erramtogh*, generally her elder brother, who performs these offices. The property thus brought to the grave is either buried with the body or hung up on *saja* trees over or near the grave, or on the fence or *kanal-gutta* posts erected around or in front of the grave. When the men present have dropped their clods on the body, the earth is shovelled into the grave from all sides, and heaped well over it. Over the mound thus made, leaves are spread, and over them logs are piled. Burial or cremation always takes place in the evening, it being the rule not to bring the body out of the house till about 4 p.m. The grave is dug, or the pyre made ready, as the case may be, about four or five hours beforehand, and the keening of the women begins in the early morning and lasts till the body reaches the funeral ground.

While some men are digging the grave, others cut posts of *saja* wood in the forest hard by, clear them of bark, and roughly carve them with their axes and knives in the manner shown in the bottom illustration of Plate XX, often carving at the top of the posts rude representations of peacocks. On the Kutru side of the hills the rule is to set up two large posts of this kind in front of the grave, and a smaller and much plainer post at the four corners of the grave. The posts are called *kanal-gutta*. As soon as the grave has been completed, these posts are set up, and the *erramtogh* of a dead man or the brother of a dead woman, makes at the foot of one of the two large front posts a small stone cromlech, known as *kanal-garya* (throne of the departed), pours a little *mahua* spirit on the ground by the foot of each post and on the table-stone of the cromlech, on the latter of which he also strews a little husked grain. He takes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 then a small chick, twists its neck, breaking the skin of its throat with his nails, sprinkles its blood on the rice, and leaves it there. He then ties a piece of cloth brought from his own house to the boughs of a *saja* tree overhanging the grave, and other pieces handed to him by relatives and friends who wish to honour the dead man, as well as strips of the dead man's clothes brought from his house. Next he, and after him the other affines of the dead man in turn, or, if a married woman has been buried, her father's kindred, take a leaf-cupful of *mahua* spirit, pouring a drop on the grave as an offering to the dead person, and after them the kinsmen of the dead do likewise. The *erramtogh* also offers the *kanal* little *bediya*[1] baskets of rice and *kuthi*, and an empty miniature *handi* (pot). The kinsmen of the dead man have to provide the *mahua* spirit and the grain, baskets and pot. Finally the grave, except the two front *kanal-gutta* posts, is generally surrounded with a fence of criss-crossed strips of bamboo.

766 For a cremation the procedure is much the same. The pyre is made ready beforehand, like the grave, and the body is laid on it. The *erramtogh* brings a burning log from the hearth of the dead man's house, and with it kindles the pyre; and then the kinsmen, the five village elders, and the affines each place a small piece of wood on the head of the corpse, uttering the same formula as when they throw clods of earth on a body in a grave. The pyre is almost always made at the foot of a *mahua* tree. They pile no leaves or logs over the ashes, but leave them there to the mercy of the elements, after fencing them, setting up *kanal-gutta* posts and a *kanal-garya* cromlech, and tying strips of cloth to overhanging *saja* boughs.

767 The ritual varies in different parts of the hills. In some tracts, particularly near Orcha and on the Narainpur side of the hills, they set up only one *kanal-gutta* post, in front of the grave, or none at all. The *mahua* spirit ritual also varies. After earth leaves and logs have been piled over the grave, and the *kanal-gutta* post and the cromlech, if any, have been set up, the *erramtogh* takes a leaf-cupful of liquor, pours a drop or two from it on the earth and logs piled above the head of the corpse, and drinks what remains; this is done after him in turn by the male affines, the kinsmen, and the women present.

The dead man's cot or sleeping-mat and the bier on which his body was carried to the funeral are always left by the grave; and often his dancing head-dress is deposited on the top of one of the *kanal-gutta* posts, while the grave is further adorned with his old fishing-rods and wooden representations of spears and axes. The bottom illustration on Plate XX shows a typical burial grave in

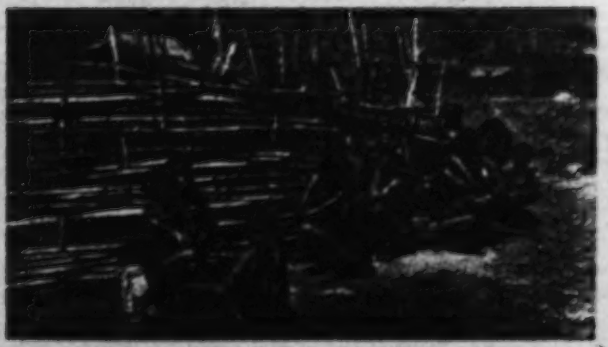
[1] See page 173 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE XX

764

Mourning over a corpse, Handawada
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)



Keening for a dead woman, Bhera Tondawada

Burial grave at Nagur, Kutru Mar
HILL MARIA DEATH CEREMONIES

(See p. 670)

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 the village of Nugur, with the cromlech in front of the two large *hanal-gutta* posts and behind them two of the small corner *hanal-gutta* posts and the log- and leaf-piled grave. At a cremation grave seen at Handawada, where the ashes of the pyre were still fresh, there was no *hanal-gutta* or cromlech, and the only offering to the dead visible was a small basket that contained the funerary grain, fixed at the top of the fence erected round the grave. The usual strips of cloth were hung from the boughs of trees overhead. The wicker-work frames of dancing shields were also suspended from the fence, although, as related on page 76 above, the use of these dancing shields has for the time been abandoned. The Nugur photograph on Plate XX shows dancing head-dresses on top of the two large *hanal-gutta* posts, a large imitation spear of bamboo between them, and strips of cloth hanging from long bamboo saplings planted in the ground, as there were no reasonably low overhanging boughs. The two upper photographs on the plate show women mourners around a sheeted body in a house at Handawada, and keeners outside a house at Bhera Tondawada at noon before a funeral.

Immediately after the actual funeral in many parts of the hills all the mourners proceed from the funeral ground to a spot by the side of one of the paths entering the village. There the *erramtogh* or the next nearest affine relative present builds a small cairn from 1½ to 2½ feet high, surmounted by a flat cap-stone; the cairn is known as a *marma-kal* or *marman-gal*. On the cap-stone he and each of the householders present places a pinch of rice or *kutki* grain, addresses the dead man by name, and tells him that he gives him this food to eat. All then go home. In the Tapalibhum, Behramar and Sonpur Mar *parganas* the dead man's heir or *jiyo-bital* sets up this cairn on the path a little way from the burial or cremation ground. At the selected spot he clears the ground, places a little grain on it, and makes a small chicken peck at the grain; he then cuts its throat behind his back with a knife, the *erramtogh* or some other near affine places a large flat stone at the side of the dead chicken, and the heir piles stones over it. No words are uttered while this is done. Here they call the cairn *korq-kotihtana-kal*, or 'chicken-feeding stone', and do not know the term *marma-kal*. In the Farsal, Bardal, Tulagotal, Hukkagotal and Farsigotal *parganas* they apply the term *marma-kal* to a small stone set up by the side of the path leading from the village to the *kotokal* row of menhirs for the dead as a temporary consolation for the departed when the heir has not sufficient grain or money to erect a menhir immediately after the funeral.

765 Mourning is observed for four days after the funeral, and it is taboo for the heir and the men of the deceased's family to go to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

work in this period. Often a house or a portion of a house in which a death has occurred is shut up and not re-occupied. It is, however, not repaired. So long as it stands, it is regarded as a memorial of the dead. On the day after the funeral, if the house is still to be occupied, the rooms and the surroundings are cleaned out, and the floors are re-plastered. On the first three mornings after the funeral they place a little meal from the Pot of the Departed on the grave as an offering. At the end of the period of mourning the heir, if rich enough, should proceed at once to set up a menhir to the dead in the *kotokal*, in the *parganas* and villages where these menhirs are still erected. If, however, he cannot yet afford to do so, he goes to the graveside, bows before the *hanal-garya* cromlech, tells the dead man's *hanal* that he is sorry that he cannot yet afford to erect his stone, and begs him to be patient, to forgive him for the delay and not to harass him. It may take him two or three years to collect the necessary grain and money for feeding those who are to help him to find and erect a suitable menhir. In many parts of the hills the custom has fallen into disuse, because of its cost. But it is still common on the Kutru side of the hills, in Tulagotal, Hukkagotal, Farsigotal, Farsal, Bardal, Tapalibhum, Padalibhum, Nurbhum, Behramar and Sonpur *parganas*, and also prevails in Dugal and other neighbouring Jhoria Muria *parganas*. In Chhota Dongar *pargana* few clans now erect either *marma-kal* or *kotokal* stones, though in many villages old rows of *kotokal* menhirs attest the former prevalence of the practice; the Bokalur are almost the only clan there who still erect them. From Adeq in that *pargana* rows of menhirs will be met by the traveller at Itulnar in Bhairamgarh Mar, between Itulnar and Hikul in Barsur Mar, and at Toinar and other villages in the latter *pargana*; but the clans now occupying these areas do not erect menhirs, and say that the rows still standing were erected ages ago by clans no longer known, though the Gumelor attribute the menhirs in their village of Toinar to the long extinct Timor clan. The Tamor of Tumirgunda between Handawada and the Indrawati have a *kotokal* on the hill path to Hirameta, but have erected no new menhir there for years, and say that nowadays no stone is set up till three generations have elapsed after death; they admit that this is practically a confession that the practice has been abandoned, and say that it was found to be too expensive.

When, however, the heir has enough grain and money to pay for the food and drink needed for the erection of a menhir, whether on the fourth day after death, or after the lapse of some months or years, he calls together his relatives and friends, and all go off into the forest to look for a suitable stone. The only consideration

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

guiding their choice is the adequacy of their resources to provide food and drink for the men required to drag or carry the stone. The menhirs in the Abujhmar country and the adjacent Muria tracts are considerably smaller than the vast menhirs sometimes met in the Bison-horn country; the largest that I have seen, at Lakka in Kutru Mar, were just over 8 feet high, and about 2½ feet wide by 10 inches thick at the base. They drag out the selected stone from its resting-place, and place under it several cross-pieces of wood, and on each side of it a long thick pole, to which the cross-pieces are lashed. The stone is then lashed to the cross-pieces, and the poles are lifted on to the shoulders of the bearers, from twenty to thirty in number, and so the journey to the *kotokal* begins. At intervals they stop, and are given by the heir drinks of *mahua* spirit, which is considered to give them strength to bear the burden; and they are given at least one meal on the way. There will also be reserves of bearers, who carry the food and drink and cooking pots, to be entertained. So they ultimately reach the *kotokal* and deposit the stone on the ground at the appointed spot. If it is too late to erect it that evening, a feast follows at the heir's house, and all night the men and women dance with their wife-clan (*akomama*) relatives. In the following afternoon the stone is erected under the supervision of the *arramtogh* or the senior wife-clan relative present. A hole is dug in the ground at one end of the stone and then the stone, if small, is pulled upright by willing hands and held there while the earth is shovelled in. If it is large and heavy, ropes are lashed round the far end and used to pull it upright, with its base in the hole, and ten men or so hold poles on both sides of its apex to prevent it falling over, while others ram small stones, earth and turves around its base. In Kutru Mar, Chhota Dongar Mar, Behramar, Tapalibhum and Sonpur Mar a *kanal-garya* cromlech is then made at the base of the menhir, and the heir of the dead man comes up to it, and squats on the ground with his back to the menhir and the cromlech. He takes an eight or nine days old chicken, and, holding it behind his back and never looking at the stone, cuts its throat with the nails of his hand, sprinkles its blood on the table-stone of the cromlech, and pushes its body under the table-stone; next he places an offering of rice or *kutki* grain on the table-stone. As he makes the offerings he speaks to the dead man, saying, 'Whether you were killed by magic, or by the wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, or died naturally, I know not. But now I have put up this menhir for you, and you must wander no more. Stay here in peace for ever, and do not worry us your descendants.' In Tapalibhum and Behramar they erect the stone and sacrifice the chicken in silence. Only the heir has to keep his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 back to the menhir; all others present may watch the whole proceedings. In Padalibhum and parts of Nurbhum they do not sacrifice a chicken, but only place an offering of grain on the cromlech. In Farsal, Bardal and the three Gotal *parganas* they then usually kill a boar a few yards away from the menhir, stretching it out on its stomach, two men holding it down with a pole across its neck, while a third man kills it with blows from the blunt side of the axe-head. They boil and eat the pork there, men, women and children, but give no part of it to the *hanal* and do not even hang its tail over the top of the menhir. In these *parganas* they assert that they have given up sacrificing a cow after the erection of the menhir; but I should be surprised if this assertion were strictly true. A similar claim was made by the Padali headmen of Padalibhum; but Bardal Gille, the headman of Rawan in that *pargana*, stated that some clans still offered a cow and hung its tail from the menhir. There is still a fear of offending Hindu State officials by frankly admitting the slaughter of cows. Cow sacrifice is further limited by the comparative scarcity of cattle in many parts of the Abujhmar hills, whereas pigs are plentiful. Even where they assert that they no longer sacrifice cows they do not scruple to eat the flesh of a cow that has died a natural death or been killed by a tiger.

In Kutru Mar they do not erect stones brought to the *kotokal* for women and children, but leave them flat on the ground. The stones for women and children, whether erected or prone, are always smaller than those erected for men. There is a general belief that menhirs increase or decrease in size according as the *hanal* is satisfied or not.

769 After the chicken and grain have been offered on the cromlech at the foot of the menhir, the heir, still turning his back on the menhir, goes off at once to the nearest pool of water, followed by the others present, and all wash their arms and legs and return to the village. Where cow sacrifice is still in vogue, as in Tapalibhum, Behramar and Sonpur Mar *parganas*, the *arramlogh* then sacrifices a cow or a pig or both, generally in the *lonu* room of the heir's house before the Pot of the Departed, using the blunt side of the axe-head, saying to the dead man, '*Niwa naode mai haukin torum. Idak mak suk-duk kemek manu*', or, 'I sacrifice this in your name; hereafter keep still and do not make trouble for us!' The tuft at the end of the cow's tail is fastened to a loop of cord, and hung over the apex of the menhir just erected. The heir then entertains all who have assembled to a second dinner, off the sacrificed beef and pork, and the night ends in dancing and liquor. Needless to say, this procedure is costly, and many a *hanal* has to rest content with a *marma-kal* cairn.

[See cat. 116, p. 423. - Awa (74)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Where, as in Orcha and most of the surrounding villages of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, *kotokal* menhirs are no longer erected, a cow or pig is nevertheless sacrificed in this way in the village on the night after the funeral at the heir's house, and portions of the flesh or the liver when cooked are placed under the cromlech at the base of the *kanal-gutta* post, or, if there is no cromlech, on the grave, while the tail, and sometimes also a lower leg, from hock to hoof, are fastened by a cord from an overhanging *saja* bough. The usual feast and dance then follow.

One reason for the abandonment of the custom of erecting menhirs may be that the clans which have abandoned it have in fairly recent times abandoned their traditional for their present clan-areas; for it was the rule that the menhir should always be erected in the village from which the dead man or his ancestors had originally come, not in the village at which he was living at the time of his death.

Treatment of abnormal deaths

A person who has killed himself, or who dies from cholera or small-pox, is not buried or cremated at the regular funeral ground, but in the forest at some distance from it. There had been no recent case in any village which I visited of a woman dying when pregnant or in child-birth, and no one could say what would be done in such a case. Persons killed by tigers or other wild animals must be burned, not buried, at the place where their remains are found, or to which they are brought for the inquest. They must never be brought into a village, for otherwise the dead man's *kanal* may bring the tiger there. The remains, if scattered, are collected and placed in a cloth brought from the dead man's house; but such bodies should be touched as little as possible. Logs are piled under the body where it lies and kindled, and anything found with the body or at the place where the tiger attacked the dead man is burnt with it; but no dancing dresses or other property are brought from his house to be burned with him, and no offerings of grain or *mahua* spirit are made at the grave. No *marma-kal* cairn and no *kotokal* menhir are set up for him;—but there is nothing to prevent this being done for the victims of cholera or smallpox.

B. Bison-horn Marias

The true Bison-horn Marias, as distinguished from members of clans once Hill Maria in culture but now adopting Bison-horn customs, cremate all their dead except those who die from abnormal causes. When a man dies, his son-in-law is sent for, and on arrival climbs on to the roof of the house with a *dol* drum, which he beats

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *waskal*.

On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *waskal* menhir. There are *waskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs.[A] On the Jagdalpur side, however, and around Paknar, though every village has its *waskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kutki*, *urad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[A] [see cat. 116, p. 426. — Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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532

Urasgatta post, near Chitrakot Falls

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Danyakal and uraskal stones, Aranpur

BISON-HORN MARIA MEMORIALS TO THE DEAD

[facing p. 280]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

themselves socially they not only cease to follow old Maria customs, but begin to resent being called Marias and to claim the designation of Muria. In some places, especially in villages where it is hard to find suitable menhir stones, they erect in their stead posts of *saja* wood, which they call *wrasgatta*. The upper illustration on plate XXI shows a very elaborate *wrasgatta* from a roadside village near the Chitrakot falls, on the northernmost fringe of the Bison-horn country. It is carved on each of its carefully squared sides with representations of hunting scenes, and the objects of the chase. Originally these were picked out in red and blue paint. Plate XXII shows part of a large row of *wraskal* menhirs by the side of the road from Dantewara to Kameli, at the foot of the bridle-path ascending to the Bailadila guest-house; such enormous menhirs as those shown behind the women in this illustration are seldom set up in these days; the tallest shown was thirteen feet high, and the broadest over six feet wide at the base. The normal size of those nowadays erected is shown in the lower illustration on plate XXI; this portrays part of the *wraskal* of Aranpur village, by the side of the forest road from Kuakonda to Dummagudem, and at the head of the Aranpur pass. In this photograph the interesting thing is the large flat stone resting on four boulders. This is known as a *danya-kal*, and was placed there as the memorial of Birya-Marvi Hurra Wadde, who in his life-time was *perma* and *bhum-gaita* of Aranpur, as well as a *wadde*. The Birya-Marvi and the Kuhrami clans are the only two which always make *danyakal* and never set up *wraskal* stones; all the other clans, even in the Marvi and Kuhrami phratries, and including the small or Chudala Marvi clan, erect *wraskal* stones. This Aranpur *wraskal* was not restricted to the Birya-Marvi clan, although the village was founded by that clan; the *danyakal* stone on the right edge of the photograph was the last stone at the south end of the row; next to it on the north were fifteen *wraskal* stones of the Kunjami clan, and after them three of the Chudala Marvi clan. The small stones at the foot of the menhirs are known as *kawal-kutul* or ghost stools, and serve the same function as the *kawal-garya* cromlechs of the Hill Marias. Any recently erected stone can usually be detected either by the presence of a cow's or pig's tail hung over its apex by a loop of cord, or by the dirty white stains of libations of *londa* poured over the stone when it was set up.

The stone is selected and carried from the quarry to the place where it is to be erected in much the same way as that already described for the Hill Marias. I use the word quarry advisedly, for these great slabs or pillars cannot be found as surface boulders. I have not seen the actual quarrying; but they understand how to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

316 crack boulders by burning piles of logs on and around them, and use their iron digging-sticks as crowbars to assist the work. The [883] stones are too heavy to be carried merely by the ends of the two long poles to which the Hill Maria lashes the short cross-pieces of wood on which the stone rests; the Bison-horn cross-pieces project beyond the stone, and on the ends they attach long loops of twisted bamboo rind, through the upper ends of which they pass cross-poles over the top of the stone, and the ends of these cross-poles, like those of the two long poles, are borne on the bearers' shoulders. 764 The heir of the dead man has to provide food and drink for the bearers, as in the Abujhmar hills. The stone is taken to the place where it is to be set up, and the heir sacrifices a cock on the other side of the road on the spot where the body was cremated, and buries it in a hole dug under the ashes.

All proceed thence to the dead man's house, and there in the *wijja-lon* by the Pot of the Departed the heir sacrifices another cock to the dead man. The latter's son-in-law, or, if there is none, his *errantogh* or some other affine, in the name of the dead man kills, with blows from the blunt head of an axe on its head, the cow or cows selected by the dead man during his lifetime; they believe that if these cows are not sacrificed in fulfilment of his wishes they pine away and die, and then the dead man is said to have come and fetched them away. Pigs are sometimes sacrificed as a substitute for or in addition to cows. The sacrificed animals are then skinned and cut up for roasting, the liver being cooked separately for the dead man. They take the liver, the tails tied to loops of cord, and a pot of *landa* to the *wraskal*, and there the affines of the dead man see to the erection of the stone. The heir hangs the tails over the top of the stone, after pouring *landa* over it, and sometimes milk also. He then places the roasted liver on the *kanal-kutal* cromlech, and with his back turned to the menhir sacrifices a chicken and places it under the cromlech, in much the same way as the Hill Maria heir. All present fling rice, *kutki*, *urad* and *mung* at and around the menhir, and then follow the heir to the nearest pool to bathe, without looking back at the menhir. They eat the roast beef and pork of the sacrificial victims either on the banks of the pool or at the dead man's house, with boiled rice and pulses, and *landa* and *mahua* spirit to drink. The son-in-law or other affine who beat the funeral drum is presented by the heir with a brass dish and a piece of cloth, or, more often, with the cloth only. All then disperse.

At the first Marka Pandum following this, a final offering of mangoes and grain is made to the dead man's *kanal* at his *wraskal*.

In some villages a forked bough is erected instead of an *wraskal* or an *waugatia*. It is always cut from the sacred *saja* tree.

2 [see cat. 116, p. 427. – Archivist]

PLATE XXII

Uraskal stones on Dantewara-Bailadila road
(*Photograph by Baron E. von Eickstedt*)

(*face p. 180*)

1:Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

74

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 Next morning large parties of Marias and Murias came from every direction, some of the Murias from the Mardapal Pargana and the villages round Chhota Dongar. A little rain fell and there was a lot of blowing of horns. At midday the Anga and other symbols of the gods were taken down to a stream for a bathe and during the afternoon many Sirahas fell into trance and postured and danced in ecstasy. A little shrine was set up in the middle of the clearing and as more and more people arrived and other gods came to visit Usendi Pen, the Sirahas danced wildly round and round it. A procession was formed, the Anga leading it, with tall poles decorated with peacocks' feathers following, and a crowd of children carrying [534] gongs and various substitutes for gongs—bits of painted wood, the lids of old kerosene oil tins, anything that could be banged to make a noise.

Gradually the place filled up and by four o'clock there were three or four thousand people present—a small attendance, I was told. The Marias and Murias showed little interest in the shops which were mostly attended by local Hindus and officials, and there was very little drinking, though many a boy brought a gourd or a bottle of rice-beer or palm wine hanging under his arm. Then the dancing began, and hundreds of boys and girls in the full Hill Maria dancing attire (though no Hill Marias were present) and carrying decorated sticks and axes over their shoulders, formed lines and processions and great circles, until the entire ground was alive with slowly circulating movement.

As evening fell little fires sprang up under every tree where groups of people made their camps. The older people drank, cooked and gossiped with their relatives. Like all bazaars the Marhai is a great occasion for repairing friendships. During the night the boys and girls continued dancing, and from time to time the Sirahas brought out the Anga-gods and danced with them.

The moon rose at midnight and turned the scene into one of extraordinary majesty and beauty. The festival was decorous and restrained, but very happy. There was no orgy and practically no drunkenness. At dawn the dancing stopped and in a few minutes the whole great assembly melted away back into the forest.

IX

764 On page 281 Grigson refers briefly to the Bison-horn Maria custom of erecting carved wooden pillars in memory of well-known or wealthy tribal leaders. There are not many of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

These pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. They are usually made of the wood of *terminalia tomentosa* or *shorea robusta* and are erected with ceremonies similar to those used for a menhir.

As far as I know, the pillars are always made by non-aboriginals, but since the Marias give their instructions to the carpenters about the patterns they want carved, they do thus throw some light on Maria psychology even if they do not illustrate their sense of art. For example, the pillar in memory of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar was made by Bharto, an Oriya carpenter of Jagdalpur. The pillars for Barse Marka at Barrem and for Marvi Hasa at Jabeli were both made by Anda Kalar of Potali. For Barse Marka's pillar his sister's son gave a bull calf worth twenty rupees, cloth worth five rupees, two rupees in cash and daily rations for the fifteen days while the carpenter was working.

There was a fine pillar to a wealthy Maria named Muchaki Hunga near Dilmilli on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. It is a fat, thick pillar, carefully squared, standing some fifteen feet high with elaborate carvings round the base and a decoration of crocodiles and pigeons at the top. The whole is surmounted by a trident, obviously suggested by the carpenter, and on this again is a small bird. On the west face of the pillar there are carvings of dancers wearing bison horns and six girls who are realistically portrayed with breasts and genitalia. Below them is a tiger, a crane and a peacock. On the south side is a picture of the dead man riding an elephant, an umbrella in his hand and bags of money at the saddle. Five women follow him with pots of rice-beer and spoons. Below them are rats. At the foot are men ploughing, deer and tigers. On the east side is a man riding a horse and fish, horses and a tortoise. To the north is a man and wife with their children, a gourd for taking beer from a pot and representations of snakes and birds. Below this are two pairs of dogs apparently copulating, and at the very bottom some men are carrying a pot of rice-beer.

Near the pillar is a grave built up in the modern Hinduized fashion and protected by a little shed.

Near Massenar, at the end of a long row of *swaikal* menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa. This is much more slender than the one at Dilmilli and is not so well carved. But it has carvings of Kopa himself on his elephant with the inevitable umbrella, a gun and a tobacco pouch. On his chest is a small circle which I was told represented his Jubilee Medal. The pillar is further decorated with carvings of men dancing with the bison-horn head-dress, boys and girls dancing with a pot of rice-beer, a man trying to drag away a girl by the hand, crocodiles,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

porcupines, peacocks, fish and tigers. The carpenter had put in a representation of Hanuman, but the Marias, knowing little of him, supposed it was a policeman included to emphasize Kopa's dignity.

The pillar also has, or had, pigeons on the top and there was a trident, though the Marias were ignorant of its meaning. 'It is the pole's turban,' they said. 'It is made of iron to save us the trouble of renewing it.'

It is obviously impossible to describe all these pillars[1]; in 1942 they were to be found near Chitrakot, near Killepal, at Lalaguda, near Sirisguda, at Taragaon, at Kumalnar and at Garda. I saw a very simple one at Chingner in honour of an important member of the Lekhami clan. It was standing out in the jungle by itself; there were three rows of lozenges cut in the wood near the top and a single carved pigeon above. It was still red with oil mixed with *gew*. At its foot was a flat stone supported on two others, the *kawal-garya*. From the top there hung a strip of cloth, possibly a bit of the dead man's dancing dress.

It is important to note that these pillars are closely associated with the megalithic culture of the Marias. Sometimes both a menhir and pillar are erected for the same man; sometimes the pillar stands at the end of a row of stone monuments. It is not, therefore, in any sense a substitute for the *wrakhal* but a supplement to it. I have noticed a similar combination of stone and wooden monuments among the Lanjhia Saoras who have come under Kond influence.

It is tempting to suppose that the various animals and birds carved on the pillar have some totemic significance, but I doubt if this is so. In the first place, every pillar has a wide variety of animals portrayed upon it; in the second the people themselves say that these animals simply represent the ordinary objects of the chase and are carved to indicate some of the interests of the dead man. Each pillar in fact attempts to be a biography in wood of the deceased.

These notes are desultory enough, but they do at least give me an opportunity of paying some tribute to the man whose endless docility to facts has enabled him to make so striking a contribution to science and whose great-hearted affection for the aboriginals has led him to propose a policy and establish principles which, if adopted by the National Governments of the future, will preserve freedom and happiness in the hills and forests of India. There is much that is tedious in anthropology, much that hardly seems worth while,

[1] The pillar of Marvi Oyami Mosa, the homicide, is described in detail in *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 201.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

he would repay with 50 per cent. interest.[1] Although it is clear that these Telis, Kalar and Telugu money-lenders do levy an exorbitant toll on the Maria villagers' produce, it is equally clear that they are fulfilling a necessary function, which has become the more necessary since the stopping of *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation below the hills has restricted the Marias in most villages to permanent rice cultivation on small acreages always dependent on seasonal rainfall evenly distributed in time. If such money-lenders are excluded, then they must be replaced by Government grain depots and village grain banks.

Of Maria funeral rites the *Gazetteer* observes that a stone or a carved post about five feet high is usually put up to mark the spot where a man's body has been cremated, and that 'sometimes one comes across a forest glade strewn with these memorials, the only sign of some deserted village, the very name of which has perished'.[2] Many rows of carved wooden posts may be seen between Bhamragarh and Lahiri, while at Lahiri itself I saw scores of such posts and of the small cromlechs (*kanal-gaiya* or 'thrones of the Departed') described on page 273, and mentioned in the *Gazetteer*[3] as built on the spot where the body was burned. The top of one of these very substantial funerary posts, or *kanal-gutta*, photographed at Lahiri, is reproduced as one of the illustrations in this Supplement. Noticeable are the carved wooden horns, between which is a carved wooden bird, probably a hornbill. The wooden horns are common, and probably are a modern symbol of the cow formerly sacrificed at the erection of a menhir or wooden *kanal-gutta* by Hill Marias[4] and Bison-horn Marias[5] throughout Bastar: the funerary customs of the Chanda Marias seemed, however, to be Hill Maria in type, and this was confirmed by oral enquiries at Lahiri.

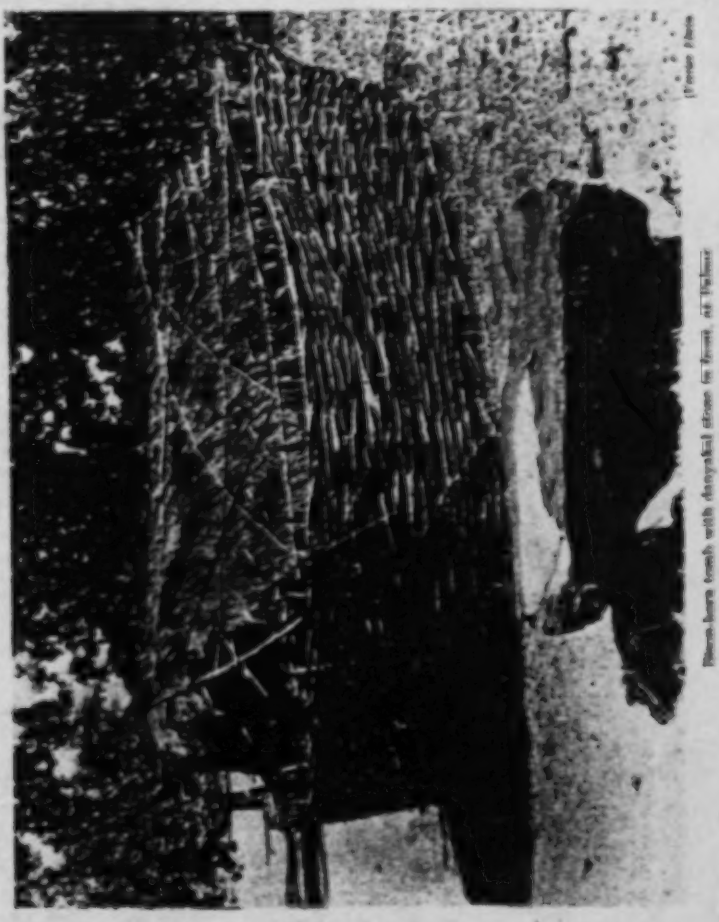
The addiction of the Bison-horn Marias and of the Kutru Hill Marias of Bastar to cock-fighting has been described on page 162. I particularly inquired if the weekly cock-fights at Oikal in Ahiri zamindari, there mentioned, and at Lahiri itself still went on. But all cock-fighting among Chanda Marias had for some years been stopped under orders from an inexperienced young European District Superintendent of Police on the theory that it contravened the Gambling Act. But the Marias maintained that, as in Bastar, so here, there had never been cash betting (as, indeed, one might expect in a region where all transactions are still so largely in kind), but the defeated bird had passed to the owner of the winning bird.

[1] For further details, see *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 183-4.
[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 106.
[3] Ibidem, loc. cit.
[4] See pp. 278-9.
[5] See p. 281.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

764



[Fwd Plate T]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

●764
532

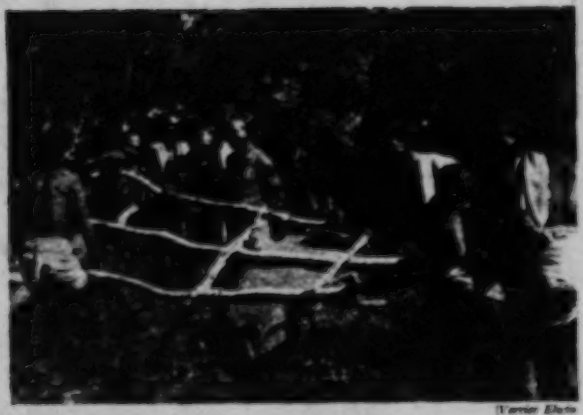
[W. V. Grigson

The top of a Maria funerary post (*hanal-gitta*) at Lahiri, Chanda district

[End Plate 4]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

764
483



Verrier Elwin

Scenes at the erection of a menhir at Mawonar

[Verrier Elwin]

[End plate V]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

764
532

Memorial pillar at Bare Amper

Verrier Elwin

Verrier Elwin

Memorial pillar (for members of the Lekhami clan) near Chinger. Note the crumlech at the base

[End Plate W]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

• 764
532

[illegible]

Memorial pillar for Verrier Elwin at Patrem

[End Plate X]

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

761
883

sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

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883

The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal; the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose of it.

761
775

All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatisfied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the loveliest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away. They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Kuara-bhut, revealing his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain. In Palnar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy. When the Sirsha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

765
775

[755]

[585]

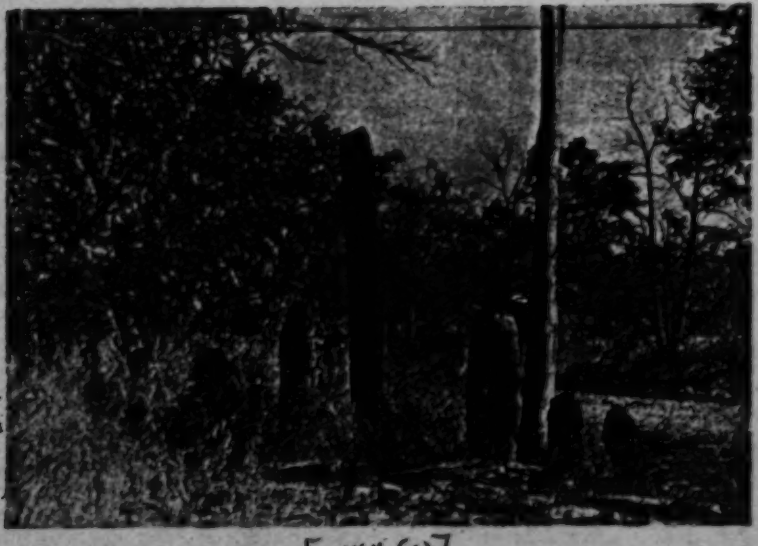
In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

764
769

The dead man's daughter-in-law throws rice over the bier

Memorial menhirs near Khutgaon



[p. 144 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXXIV

●764
769

Tomb at Gadripara

Small menhir in front of the Gadripara tomb

Son and grandson offer liquor at a father's tomb at Phunder

[p. 144 (D)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria -

to its prey, to protect the boys and girls going out on dancing expeditions, to ensure that the drum gives its accustomed thunder. Life and death are thus united by these beliefs and rites, and the whole of existence is seen as a single sequence where physical death is but an incident which in no way disturbs the continuity of interest or relationship.

V. Funerary Rites

In the west, Muria death customs are dominated by Hill Maria influence. In Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria said that their funerary rites were 'things of the Maria Raj'. As we move east, where the Muria population probably represents an earlier Gond immigration from the north, customs are not unlike those typical of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The north-east of Bastar, however, has been more open to Hindu influence and it is not always easy to tell what the original traditions were.

The Muria bury important people, little children, chelik and motiari, and the victims of small-pox. They cremate all others. They lay the corpse, whether of man or woman, on its back with the head to the east. At Padbera, the Gaita said, 'It is because we came from the east. East is "up" and west is "down"'.

Members of each clan and either sex are disposed in separate places. Those who die from unusual causes are taken far away into the jungle. In Palari I was told that the remains of a tiger's victim should be burnt on the actual scene of death. Usually the corpse is placed under a mahua tree.

I will first describe one of the several funerals that I have witnessed, and then give any variations that I have recorded elsewhere.

On the night of 8 December 1940, in Bauri, a village of the Abujhmar foothills, a woman of about forty years named Dhako, the wife of Genjru of the Wadder clan, died and was carried home on a rough litter to her husband's house at Amgaon. She had died of 'a watery swelling of the body', perhaps dropsy, which is generally regarded as a punishment for adultery. The people were very reticent about speaking of the cause of her death and I never was able to hear the real story.

Since it is taboo for a woman to sleep on a cot, Dhako died on the ground and was again laid on the floor of her own house covered with a sheet. Many women, assembled in the house and outside in the street, wailed loudly from time to time. Gradually the relatives gathered and, when all were there, the corpse was carried out on a bamboo mat into the courtyard. Six women sat round weeping. An old woman of the Wadder clan (which can marry with the Partabi clan to which the dead woman originally belonged), but not a member of the family, now tied a little rice and a cowrie in knots on either side of the cloth. There were three knots on each side joined by a thread which ran criss-cross over the body. They did not bathe the corpse nor close the eyes, but the woman's little daughter, a child about five years old, put haldi on her mother's face, and the other female relatives present did the same.

Meanwhile a group of chelik, most of whom were related to Genjru, were busy making a sort of ladder to serve as bier. This they covered with dry grass. The corpse was lifted out and placed upon it. The chelik took it on their shoulders and went into the jungle followed by both men and women. Genjru's younger sister followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice over it. Another woman carried a basket containing three different roots and bits of haldi.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

764 The Muria cremate the bodies of those who die of yaws, leprosy and dropsy, so a party of chelik went ahead to prepare the pyre. When the bearers reached the place, which was in thick jungle, on the far side of a stream, away from the usual crematorium, they carried the corpse round the pyre, which was below a great mahua tree, three times anti-clockwise, and then laid it on the ground to the south-west of the pyre with the feet to the west.

Each of the relatives present came forward and laid a small piece of cloth on the body. Dhako's father-in-law (a father-in-law or an elder brother is often the chief actor at a funeral) poured out some mahua spirit by the head of the corpse saying, 'Today accept this from our hands; after today how will you get it again?' They then removed most of the clothes, but tied one piece to a branch of the mahua tree. The rest they took home to distribute among the children.

The chelik lifted the corpse on to the pyre and the old Wadder woman placed a little earth on saja leaves at either side of the head. She took a stone and broke Dhako's bangles 'for now she is separated from her husband, she is a widow'. They put a little jawa-gruel and water by the head, leaving the pot there. The chelik piled wood and dry grass round the pyre, but none was actually laid on the body. They rested the bier against the pile of wood and one of the boys broke it with his axe, then struck the ground all round—to represent the driving of nails 'to close the house' and prevent the ghost walking, and then two of them threw the axe to and fro over the pyre three times.

Now the same chelik who had carried the bier lit bundles of grass from a coil of paddy-straw rope which had been brought slowly smouldering from the hearth of Genjru's house, and ran quickly two by two round the pyre in opposite directions kindling the dry grass. The flames shot up and the women broke into a loud and moving lamentation. The men threw twigs (of any tree) onto the burning corpse, muttering, 'God to whom we vowed gifts has failed us. Let him take these twigs instead, for it's all he'll get'.

The people stayed for a while, some of them looking up fearfully at the smoke to see if it would go straight into the air or no, then returned slowly and sorrowfully to Genjru's house. The father-in-law met us and distributed oil which was rubbed on face, hands and legs instead of a bath. He gave tobacco and liquor to those who had brought pieces of cloth to cover the corpse, but not to others. The people then slowly and quietly dispersed.

When the corpse is buried, similar customs are observed. On 12 November 1941 I attended the funeral of Bhaira, a middle-aged man of the Halami clan, at Gorma. Here the bier was covered with plantain leaves[1] and the corpse bound firmly to it with cord. Here it was the dead man's daughter-in-law who, with hair untied, followed the bier. When they reached the grave, which was about five feet deep, the village Siraha put a little cow-dung at the bottom, placed plantain leaves above and on the leaves some sticks. After the corpse had been lowered into the cavity, it was covered with plantain leaves, and the Gaita let a few drops of liquor fall by its head saying, 'When you were alive, I could give you nothing, but at least take this now'. After the grave had been filled in, large stones were placed upon the mound. The men went to bathe, but the women remained. The widow brought a pot containing all that was left of the food that had been cooked for the dead man on the day of his death, and emptied it near the grave. She was persuaded by the other women to sit down above her husband's

[1] Plantain leaves, which are sacred to the Hindus, are regarded as unlucky by the Muria because of their use in funerals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

head. Weeping bitterly, she cried, 'All these days you were with me. Now you have left your wife and gone away. So take your bangles, I don't want them any more'. She broke the bangles and threw them on the grave. 764●

In Amgaon the rite of the dead fish was omitted, probably because no fish were available. But in Gorma, when oil was given to the guests for their purification, they were also offered a small dead dry fish floating in oil. They had to touch this and make a mark on the Gaita's forehead with a drop of oil; he did the same for each of the guests.

Ceremonies vary considerably according to the age and status of the deceased. Thus when a young bride died at Temrugaon on 22 March 1941, it was the chelik who took a leading part in the ceremonies and some of them made a pathetic reference to her youth of happiness in the ghotul. Here it was three women, the girl's mother and two sisters, who poured liquor, not onto the ground, but into the corpse's mouth. Three chelik broke the bangles: each placed one hand on a stone and their lesuer smashed the bangles. Most of the other ornaments were removed and distributed as gifts to the motiari. But the wooden square, round which a Muria girl's hair is tied, was placed in the grave above her head along with the broken bangles and one necklace. After the earth had been filled in, the women poured a little oil and some gruel from a gourd onto the head of the grave.

The sense of outrage, the feeling that something has gone wrong, that the magicians have failed and the gods have 'let them down' is almost as marked as the deep and genuine grief of the mourners. We have already noticed how they said at Amgaon, 'God to whom we vowed gifts has failed us'. At Gorma the family had promised a goat to Gondin Pen, a pig to Tallur Muttai, another pig to the Rau and a chicken and coconut to the Departed. At the funeral, just before the grave was filled in, the dead man's son stood by the head of the grave and broke a small stick into five pieces. He threw one piece into the grave and said, 'I promised Gondin Pen a goat if you lived. But you died and this is all she'll get'. He threw the second piece and said, 'I promised Tallur Muttai a pig if you lived. But you died and this is all she'll get'. And so on. At Temrugaon the husband and father of the dead girl stood at the head of the grave holding seven saja twigs. The others present said to the husband, 'If she were alive, what would you give?' He replied, 'A goat, a pig, a hen' and so on, and at each answer threw one of the twigs into the grave.

When an old and distinguished Muria dies the ceremonies are more elaborate. The body is carried out to burial with singing and dancing. An *akomāma* relative beats the *kātur-dhol* (death-drum) to summon the relatives and then goes dancing and beating his drum before the bier, singing, 'O dead man, now you are sleeping with your feet turned up, and your penis is pointing to the sky'. It is one of the social duties of the chelik and motiari to attend such funerals and escort the bier. I have recorded one of the Gondi songs that are sung on such occasions.

Chalo dādā vo vo lo.	Come, brothers, come.	764
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!	
Oru baru rājā va?	Who is this Raja?	539
Māwa yiso rājā va.	It is our Raja.	
Duri dipta dūntor va.	The Raja passes through the Under World.	
Duri dipta gajur va.	There is a great noise in the Under World.	

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

764
539

Manjhpar te chimu ra.	In the Middle World is silence.
Porro dipte chimu ra.	In the Upper World is silence.
Rājān yise os mail ra.	Let us take the Raja home.
Bāra dindwa ezta ra.	Twelve times have the folk been called.
Warāt dādi marāt ra.	Come, brothers, come.
Hajār muli gurh lo ra.	A thousand men have gathered.
Adu bādu koda ra?	What horse is this?
Bagri māro koda ra.	It is the horse Bagri Maro.
Tānāng hālku itek ra?	What should we say of its legs?
Ai hālku na koda ra.	This horse has eight legs.
Tāna talla itek ra?	What should we say of its heads?
Nālung talla na koda ra.	This horse has four heads.
Sono tāye kharau ra.	It has golden shoes.
Kharau yise hertor ra.	It has to wear these shoes.
Hira tāye lagām ra.	It has a diamond bridle.
Lagām poyri uditor ra.	Catch the bridle and mount the horse.
Perke muney māney ra.	There are men before and behind.
Odāng odāng pulus ra.	There are police on either side.
Koda chhute māta ra.	The horse begins to run.
Adu bādu māhāl ra?	What is this palace?
Māhāl porro bairag ra.	Above the palace flies a flag.
Chāron kotunj te bairag ra.	On its four sides are flags.
Nao khand ta māhāl ra.	There are nine quarters of the palace.
Māhāl lopa jhulna ra;	Inside there is a swing;
Sono tāye jhulna ra.	The swing is made of gold.
Hira tāye gādi ra.	The throne is made of diamonds.
Gāddi sope kewit ra.	Give him the throne.
Māhāl sope kewit ra.	Give him the palace.
Johār bhatu kewit ra.	Greet him with Johar.
Dāt ra dādi dētu ra.	Come away, brothers, come away.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

In this very interesting song, the horse Bagri Maro is, of course, the bier and its four bearers. The men and police on every side are the escorting chelik. The palace is the grave and the tomb that is usually built above it for an important man. The flags are the bits of cloth tied to overhanging trees or attached to the tomb itself. The throne is made of sticks and leaves on which the corpse is laid.

I also have a lengthy and very coarse song sung by the mourners as they go down to the stream to bathe after disposing of the corpse. I will give the first fifteen lines.

Chole dāda ro ro le.	Come, brothers, come.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Dātu ra dādi dātu ra,	Let us now go hence,
Yeru miyāla dātu ra,	Let us go to bathe in the stream,
Ghātum tekē yeyit ra,	Let us go to the bathing-place,
Samund teke yer miyit ra.	Let us bathe in the ocean.
Adu bādu rāni ra?	What Rani is this?
Ade rājona rāni were ra.	This is the Rani of that Raja.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Angār mute rūni ra.	Angar Mute is the Rani.
Yer muyetē hilandu ra.	Weeping, she is bathing in the water.
Jhāro jhāro kilandu ra.	As she weeps the tears fall.
Pilāmaro dhoti ra!	O her silken cloth!
Dhoti tune kawandu ra.	She looks at her cloth.
Tōna dudong ātehe ra?	How can we describe her breasts?
Mākha bāyāng dudo ra.	Her breasts are as the bel fruit.
Ghāttom tikeda wāndung ra.	From the bathing-place she is coming home.
Lone tike kandung ra	In the house
Mul gathe māta ra	There are so many relatives
Suju luju kile ra.	That we cannot count them.

The rest of the song describes Angar Mute's court, to which comes the Pargana Manjhi with small legs, his spear over his shoulder, a big-bellied Kotwar and many other officials. The Manjhi delivers judgement, giving a hundred rupees to the Raja and only a pair of bullocks for the Muria. 'One of the bullocks had no tail, the other had no horns.' Then the chelik and motiari who have escorted the corpse to the burial ground are described. There are sixty boys led by Kosi Leyur and sixty girls led by Gara Karre Mode, the Bekoa of the ghotul, whose vagina is sixteen cubits long and whose pubic hairs are five cubits long. 'A jungle boar could roll in her vagina.' The boys break her bangles and push the pieces into her navel with a *jharar jharar* noise.

All this, which seems merely coarse to us, is exceedingly amusing to the Muria; the song is really a comic effort intended to relieve the tension of the funeral now that the main rites are done.

VI. Divining the Cause of Death

It is always important at a funeral to discover the cause of so monstrous and unnatural a thing as death. At Binjhli, when magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the Siraha medium recites a string of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty man is mentioned, the bier moves forward violently of its own accord. This method, which resembles the use of an Anga clan-god for divination, is common throughout the State, and Grigson has recorded a similar, though more elaborate, rite in use among the Hill Maria.[1]

At Kehalakot, the Muria remove some locks of the dead man's hair and a little earth from beneath his head. They make a small flag-pole with the hair and the earth and a saja leaf stuck on an ebony stick. They take this to the jungle and a boy holds it while the Siraha recites the names of any suspected causes or people. When the right word is uttered, the flag is said to quiver. At Kekori the villagers go to the boundary and put five heaps of rice in a row, one for Mahapurub, one for witchcraft, one for Mother Earth, one for the ancestors of the house, and one for any local godling who may have been troublesome. The people sit some distance away, and spend the time having their hair done by their relatives-in-law. Presently a crow flies down and pecks at one or other of the piles of rice, thus revealing the cause of death.

The *thumbuiri* divination is done with chickens on the second or third day after death. One chicken is taken from the house of the dead and one from

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

members of the clan should be erected, if possible, in its neighbourhood. At Phunder there is a bamboo bundle containing a small earthen pot hanging above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any Maravi dies his relatives carry his *jiwa* there, open the bamboo bundle and sacrifice a chicken above it, allowing the blood to fall into the pot. This means that the soul of the dead man will henceforth live in the pot hanging above his clan-god.

Another important function of the Anga is to serve as a means of detecting witches, breach of tribal taboo, theft or even to discover loss of property. At the end of 1940 I witnessed an interesting witch-hunt at Palki in the Narayanpur Tahsil.

On 16 November 1940, Aitu, the Muria headman of Palki, bought eight annas worth of Court Fee stamps and affixed them to an application to the Tahsildar of Kondagaon, complaining that in his village the animals were dying, people were falling sick and crops were failing, and asking for the services of the Anga Deo at Bara Dongar to discover what witch, magician or malignant ghost or deity was responsible. On his paying five rupees into the Treasury the Tahsildar issued *parwâna* instructing the priest in charge of the god to take it to Palki (but to no other village) in order to discover and thus cure the trouble.

On the 18th, Aitu reached the shrine at Bara Dongar, and almost immediately the party set out. There was Deo Singh, the hereditary Halba priest of the god, four Muria bearers to carry it and a 'Dhurwa' priest, a Muria specially attached to the god's service. In two days they reached Palki and camped in a little shed of branches outside the village, placing the god on a rough bed of logs and branches in a separate hut.

There Deo Singh told me about this famous Anga. His name was Narsingnath Deo and he was born at Amgaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana. His father was Mong Raj, who now lives at Parakot, his mother Devni Dokari of Antagarh. His younger brother is the Pat Deo who now lives at Jagdalpur and was taken there in the time of Raja Bhairon Deo to hunt witches. Here, of course, Deo Singh was talking in theological language: actually the Raja, hearing of the fame of the Anga in the wilds, had a copy made and installed in the palace at Jagdalpur. For some time the custom was to bring the original god from Jagdalpur and send the copy to take its place; but in time this custom was dropped and today the Anga in the palace acts independently of its prototype.

Raja Bhairon Deo, continued my informant, at one time had both Angas at Jagdalpur. There was a great epidemic, and none of the gods was able to help, so the Raja ordered them all to be thrown into the Indrawati river. But only Anga Deo and his young brother Pat Deo floated on the surface and drifted to the shore. This made them very famous, but the Raja felt that it was wrong to keep two such gods in Jagdalpur and he sent the Anga Narsingnath to Bara Dongar, where he has since resided.[1]

This Anga is made of bel wood. Every three generations it is remade. It is decorated with a silver snake and a sun and moon in silver. The old worn-out images are thrown into a deep pond at Amgaon.

On the 20th of November the witch hunt at Palki began. It was only with great difficulty that I was able to be present, for the villagers concealed both the time and place of the ceremony, and in fact were sending me off in the

[1] For another account see W. V. Grigson's Introduction to my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), pp. x f. According to Grigson's information the Jagdalpur god was copied from the Narayanpur god.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32 -
Bison Horn Maria

127 these were not kept at the headquarters of the State, but
121 distributed in the police stations and many of them had been eliminated. But the State Superintendent of Police called in as many aboriginal files as could be found, and again after much sifting I found myself with exactly 50 unselected Bison-horn Maria suicide records. These extended over a period of 10 years.

114 Between 1935 and 1942 I made many tours in this enchanting land among these enchanting people. On the earlier tours I was accompanied by my friend Mr Shamrao Hivale whose amazing sympathy and insight helped me to catch my first vision of Maria culture. Later I had the support of my wife who, being herself a Gond, was able to get quickly in touch with the people and immediately established a friendly atmosphere. Particularly in the later tours I tried to see as many scenes of violence as possible, to talk to released convicts and to discover the general attitude of a village towards any crime that had been committed within its boundaries. In Aranpur I stood beside the still warm ashes of the ritually-cremated clothes of Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged in jail. At Khutepal, I watched Oyami Masa's children playing on the very floor once stained by the blood of his murdered wife. In the forest near Jabeli
[211] I had a clearing made so that I could photograph the carved pillar erected in memory of a famous murderer. In Rewali I was visited by a ferocious-looking youth who had twice stood on trial for his life and had twice preserved it. Here too I talked with Hemla Bakka who killed his wife for infidelity and was now unable to get another. In Doriras I saw the
● [764] grave of the murdered Boti which had been desecrated by Ghasia for the sake of the purse of money which had been buried to help the dead man on his journey to the other world. In the same village I visited the home of Kawasi Berga then serving a life sentence, and talked to his fine sons and his sad pathetic wife.

124 Later I spent many hours in the Jagdalpur Jail talking to Maria who were serving terms of life-imprisonment for homicide. Some of them were as informative as the limits of their psychology allowed, for it must always be remembered that aboriginals are not accustomed to discussing those matters which are of special interest to anthropologists. Other

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.

Maria women's dancing-stick (3½' long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

indicate their will to the living through the Siraha or Waddai and by appearing to them in dreams, and it is considered highly dangerous to ignore their behests. 769 775

The necessity for their propitiation has affected every aspect of Maria life. Offerings are made to them at every festival and at every domestic or village ceremony. They are remembered as a matter of routine in every magic formula along with the Earth Mother, Danteshwari and other deities. A few drops of liquor are offered to them every time a Maria drinks. Fire from the hearth of the Pot of the Departed in the Gaita's house is used to light the first fire in the forest clearings and the sacred fires at festivals. The importance of the Ancestors, who remain as a sort of conservative society to safeguard the traditions of the tribe, will appear throughout this book and need not be elaborated now. 769

VII

Women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried, so are the victims of small-pox and of such other diseases as the Siraha may from time to time direct. All others are cremated, a fact which often makes police investigation difficult and even impossible. 764 766

At one time (I am not sure how far the custom survives) the Waddai was buried naked and in an upright posture. The first child of a house, if it dies under five years old, is buried in the same erect posture, with face to the east—as there is light there, and beneath a mahua tree—for it is fertile of flowers and fruit, a good omen for the family. 766 [787]

In a funeral the chief actors are the Hanagunda or Hanal-gaita, who is the master of ceremonies, and the sister's son or son-in-law of the deceased. The Hanagunda has to tie a thread round the corpse and hang the cow's-tail on the menhir. It is his wife's duty to wash the body, and to take cooked rice and haldi to the pyre. The sister's son has to climb on the roof to beat a drum to summon the relatives: he sits on the urnakal while it is being carried to its place; he makes the appointed offerings before the stone: he kills the sacrificial and fatal cow. 764

After death the dead man is laid with his head to the east in the living room of his house. His sister's son takes a stick

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

and measures straight upwards from the corpse's chest to the roof, poking the stick through the thatch. Then he climbs up to the roof and makes a hole which is intended symbolically to allow the message of death to spread out through the world. He puts his dhol drum above the hole, waves a stick thrice round his head and then beats his drum with the rhythm *dung dung-dung*. He beats with one hand, though the normal method is to beat with two. After the drumming has continued for a while, he comes down from the roof and continues it on the ground.

The Hanagunda's wife now husks some rice, makes it into four packets with leaves and ties two of these under the arms of the corpse and two at its waist. She applies to the chest black dust from the bottom of one of the cooking utensils so that they may be able to recognize him when he is reborn. The grand-daughter of the dead man, if available, or some girl in the same relationship, passes a string seven times round his three middle fingers and middle toes, again with the intention of ensuring his return.

It will be most convenient if I describe the actual course of a ceremony which occurred at Penta on 10 February 1942. This funeral is of special interest as the mourners had reason to believe that the dead man was the victim of black magic.

Sori Kosa of Penta had a love affair with the daughter-in-law of Markami Bando which resulted in a serious quarrel between the two families. Kosa's father paid the necessary fine and a special ceremony of peace and friendship was performed. But Bando was not really reconciled—and soon trouble began for Kosa's family. His son by his first wife died; shortly afterwards another of his sons died. One day Bando spat on Kosa's father in the bazaar. A week later the old man fell ill and died. Kosa's wife and daughter were also taken ill but recovered. The villagers whispered that this was due to Bando's magic, and described how he had made a small doll of earth, wrapped it up in a leaf-cup and carried it away into the jungle. But there was no case for police interference, and the villagers proceeded with the funeral for Kosa's father.

After the preliminary rites that I have already described, all Kosa's father's relatives assembled. The women brought

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

brass rings and beads and placed them on the corpse; the men brought bits of cloth. The members of the household fasted from the time of the old man's death until he was cremated. The ceremonies were marked by violent manifestations of grief. When the bamboo bier was brought to the house, the wives of the Waddai, Gaita and Hanagunda fell upon it and lay there. They said that this meant that they too wanted to be taken out and burnt, a curious echo of the Sati tradition. Straw was spread on the bier and when the corpse had been placed there, bits of cloth were laid on it by the male relatives present. The women gathered round the corpse again, kissing it and weeping bitterly. It had been lying with its legs towards the door of the house, but now it was lifted up by the bearers and its position changed so that the head was pointing to the door. They touched the door thrice with it saying, 'You made this house, come here again in your next birth'.

Then, led by the drummers, the corpse was carried out to the cremation-ground. The grand-daughter with her hair undone followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice upon it as she went along. As they passed a path that crossed theirs, they dropped a little rice so that if any other ghost came he would eat it and go away. Everyone went to the funeral. Menstruating women are not normally allowed to attend, though sometimes they may come if they stand at a little distance.

When the party reached the pyre, they went round it anticlockwise once and placed the bier on the ground. Once again the women fell upon the corpse weeping and kissing it. They lay down beside the pyre and had to be pushed away before the business of the funeral could proceed.

Then one of the women put a little tobacco in the mouth of the corpse. The body was placed upon the pyre. Some of the bits of cloth with which it was covered were left there; the rest was distributed between the drummers and the relatives by marriage. The Hanagunda removed the packets of rice which had been tied to the waist of the corpse and threw them to left and right. The body was entirely covered with a cloth and the Hanagunda ripped this open just over the mouth. A piece of grass which had been brought from the roof of the house was put into the mouth of the corpse and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 then thrown aside. It is very important that this grass should not be burnt. The aim of the rite was to ensure that the [194] man would be able to breathe on his journey to the next world, though other informants said that it was to allow the soul to escape. The brother-in-law of the dead man then lit a bundle of grass with fire brought from the house and after taking a turn round the pyre set fire to the pile of wood by the head. Another man went round in the opposite direction and fired the wood by the legs.

After the pyre was well alight, the whole company went to a stream and washed themselves. The grand-daughter soaked part of her sari in water and holding the wet portion in her hand came home and rinsed it out on the very place where the coffin had lain inside the house so that the dead man could drink it.

Early next morning, the dead man's son-in-law went to the cremation-ground to examine the ashes and there found an [754] earthen doll tied in a leaf-cup. This led the Waddai to declare that the death was due to black magic done by Bando and concealed by him in the jungle.

Later in the morning a cow was brought and its legs washed by the deceased's daughter-in-law. After touching its forehead with a little rice she said to it, 'We have given you your share, now don't make us suffer any longer'. One of the drum-beaters touched the cow with his stick and a marriage-relative killed it by a heavy blow with the blunt end of his axe. He then cut the tail, removed the liver and made it into twenty-four pieces in equal shares of six pieces each. Each share was wrapped up in a leaf and roasted. The party took these to the cremation-ground. On reaching the place some of the women picked out the bones from the pyre and kissed them. The dead man's son collected any half-burnt pieces of wood and kicked them towards the centre of the pyre. Then they cleared the ash where the corpse's head had been, cow-dunged the place and put the leaf-cups there.

The packets containing the liver were now opened and three pieces from each packet were placed on the ground and three in each of the leaf-cups. The twelve pieces on the ground were for the Earth and the twelve pieces in the leaf-cups for the Dead. The Waddai made seven piles of rice. He held a

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

piece of wood in his hand and lifting it over each pile several times from right to left uttered charms calling on the soul of the deceased to be content. The dead man's son brought a chicken and made it eat the rice, going from right to left three times. The Waddai passed his stick quickly over the chicken each time. However, when the fowl was eating the rice, it did not follow the proper order, but started to eat the sixth pile after the fourth. The Waddai declared that this was because two persons were involved in the fatal magic. After this had been done three times, the dead man's son passed the chicken between his legs backwards and twisted its neck till it was severed from the trunk. This he threw behind him, holding the head in his hands. He ripped open the head by cutting it through the beak and threw it into the fire. If this was not done, the head might turn into what is called in Gondi *vispitte* (a kind of bird which is known as *jiv chirai* in Hindi) and if this came to the village and called 'jiv, jiv' the people would die.

They then dug a hole in the earth close to the leaf-cups with a knife and placed a forked saja stick there. The dead man's son stood in front of the stick with his back to it, holding the cow's tail in his hand. He pointed it first at the sun, then to the four corners of the world and lastly to the place where the dead body had been cremated. He did this thrice and then tied the tail to the stick and poured a little landa on it. The dead man's wife offered some mahua liquor in a leaf-cup, because when her husband was alive one day when they were drinking they had agreed to die together. The Waddai, therefore, said as she was giving the liquor, 'Do not also take her away with you; release her from her promise; let her live for a while and look after the other members of the family'. Then the deceased's son and brother-in-law, who had carried the rice and pulse, threw it down near the stick. The dead man's son who had also taken with him a little thatch from the roof of his house now threw this at the stick saying, 'You built the house, now accept this'. Similarly, all the other things of which the old man had been fond when he was alive were thrown there. His son-in-law, however, picked up his bow and arrow and his knife was taken by one of the drummers. The drummers then threw away their drum-sticks into the ashes of the pyre.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 Once again the party went to the stream, but the Gaita and the Waddai stayed behind and addressed the saja stick: 'For one month more you will get nothing, don't go to your house, but stay here'. After a bath they all (with the exception of the drummers) went to the deceased's house. The drummers, who are regarded as unclean for the duration of the ceremony, bathed and washed their drums. They applied and placed some rice on the drums. To them they also sacrificed a chicken and offered the blood and some liquor. The drummers were then given rice, which they cooked separately, and a shoulder of the cow. After eating their food they went to their own houses.

769 The conclusion of the story is worth recording. A month later, the Waddai went with the villagers to the boundary of the village carrying a chicken, a pig, an egg, egg-shells, a bamboo bow and arrow, burnt earth from below the hearth, charcoal powder, rice, pulse and haldi. All these things were taken in separate leaf-cups. The Waddai arranged them in seven rows and made a chicken eat the rice, calling on Markami Bando's magic to go away. The chicken ate the rice quickly. But this was not sufficient proof that the black magic had really been driven away, 'because every hungry creature will naturally feed upon what it can get'. The Waddai, therefore, tortured the chicken, first by breaking one leg, and still it ate; he broke another leg, and again it ate; then he broke the wings and the fowl though in pain and agony went on eating. It was now beyond doubt that Bando's magic had been dealt with successfully and the chicken was thrown away, still alive, and not sacrificed. The pig was then sacrificed and the Waddai drew a line on the boundary of the village where the seven rows were arranged, spat there and said, 'Away from this line' and they all departed without looking back. In this ceremony the household members did not take part.

The next day the Waddai sacrificed under a mahua tree near the house a white chicken and broke an egg in honour of the ancestral ghost of Kosa's father. After this he entered the house and sprinkled it with a mixture of milk, saja bark,
769 and dab grass to purify it and sacrificed a black chicken for the Ancestors of the family.

775 Special precautions must, of course, be taken when anyone

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 dies a violent death. The ghost of a man killed by a tiger may possess the animal and drive it to take vengeance on other members of the community: the victim of snake-bite dwells in the snake's tail and drives it to homicidal fury.[1]

775 789 Women dying in pregnancy and childbirth become very dangerous after death and their ghosts must be laid by special ceremonies which include the driving of nails into the knees and elbows of the corpse and at the four corners of the grave, over which a herd of buffaloes may sometimes be driven.

VIII

764 In the neighbourhood of almost every Maria village will be found a row of menhirs erected in memory and for the appeasement of the Dead. Sometimes these stones are very large; sometimes they are quite small and are expected to grow bigger in course of time. The majority of clans erect an upright pillar which is called uraskal. But a number of them place instead a danyakal, a large flat stone supported on four smaller ones.

In the ceremonies attending the bringing of a menhir, the sister's son again plays a leading part. Led by him a party of three drummers and a man beating a gong and twenty or thirty men go out to the quarry where the stone has already been cut out or to some hill where a suitable rock has been observed. The sister's son touches the stone and addresses the dead man. 'In your name', he says, 'we are bringing this stone; let it be light, let not the burden be too heavy'. They place poles below and above the stone, lashing them together with rope. Then the sister's son with a drum in his hand climbs on to the stone and begins to drum with a new rhythm which goes *gul-gucha, gul-gucha, gul-gucha*. Some twenty men lift up the stone whistling loudly, *soor, soor, whee, whee*, and swing it to and fro. Then they move towards the place where the menhir is to be erected, the drummers dancing and drumming in

[1] Such accidental deaths are far from uncommon. In 1938, in the whole State 55 persons were killed by tigers, 10 by panthers, 4 by bears, 53 by drowning, 102 by snake-bite, 53 by falling from trees (chiefly the tall toddy and sago palms). The great majority of these accidents were to aboriginals and every one involved the relatives in complex and hazardous ceremonies for their protection.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

front, the sister's son beating his drum above. From time to time they put their burden on the ground to rest, and are refreshed with rice-beer. 764

When the party reaches the pit that has been prepared, the drummers throw the castor-sticks which they have been using hitherto on to the pyre, and take new sticks, which may be made of any kind of wood. Before the stone is erected the Gaita addresses the dead, 'You are dead and you must forget your father, your mother, your brother and your family. This is your house. Live here and do not trouble us or our pigs and cattle. We are giving you rice and pulse and everything that you had at home, so that you may be satisfied'.

In the hole which has been dug by the sister's son, the relatives put something or other, rice, small coins, rings or ornaments, whatever they can afford. The bearers untie the stone from its poles and all push and lift it into position. Earth and stones are rammed round the bottom and a small cromlech is placed in front. On this stone offerings are made by the sister's son with his back to the menhir. The women of the household come and put cooked rice and haldi in leaf-cups on the cromlech, and pour upon it grain, roots, or anything that the dead man used to like when he was alive.

Then the whole party returns to the house and one or more cows are sacrificed. These were probably selected by the dead man during his life-time. They remove the liver and cut it in pieces. Rice is prepared in the house of the dead and divided into four portions and put in leaf-cups. These cups, with the tail of the sacrificed cow and a pot of rice-beer, are carried out in a specially-made basket to the menhir. One portion is put on the ground for Mother Earth and the rest for the dead man on the cromlech. The tail is hung over the menhir and rice-beer poured upon it. At the same time a little rice-beer must be offered to the old menhirs. If this is omitted the ancient dead will be angry and will quarrel with the new spirit that has gone to join them. 769

Rice-beer must be given both to the menhir and to the mourners. It must be made fresh in the room where death occurred and served with a gourd with a long handle that 764-273

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 has been specially hollowed out for this purpose. Usually
273 there is no stock of rice-beer at hand and it cannot be made so quickly. The Maria then mix a little mandia flour with water and give this instead.

If for any reason in the course of the ceremony some rite or custom is omitted the spirit of the dead man may attack one or other of the mourners in order to show his displeasure. For example, at Gadapal, Burka Peda told me that they once forgot to give landa to the old menhirs and the insulted Dead attacked his father's sister and she fell down in a fit. They quickly gave both landa and mahua liquor to all the menhirs and she recovered. Again in Mahara-Karka one Kuhrami Eriya was hurled into the fire by the angry ghost and his leg was burnt. If this happens it is a good plan for the victim to run and catch
[189] hold of the bamboo poles with which the stone was carried. The Gaita pours water upon him and the angry ghost leaves him alone.

IX

322 When a very well-known or wealthy man dies his family
766 sometimes erects a carved wooden pillar to his memory.
554 There are very few of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

322 These pillars are called by Grigson uragatta, a word that
766 is obviously formed on the same plan as uraskal, from *urasna* meaning 'to bury' and *gatta*—'a pillar'. I have not myself found any Maria using the word or even recognizing it when it has been put to them. It may be that its use has died out. The Maria to whom I have spoken call these pillars either *munde* (Gondi) or *kambha* (Halbi or Hindi).

The pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. It should simply be near any road or path that is constantly used by the people. The pillars are usually made of saja or sarai wood and are erected with ceremonies very similar to those for a stone.

There are not many of these pillars, but they are worth looking at. There is a very fine one near Dilmilli

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

316

Quarrying memorial stones at Dugoli

764

Row of muskal stones

[Facing p. 192]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

things they provided a pot of rice-beer and a pig for his funeral rites.

V

BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE DEAD

The reaction of society to violent crime may be seen from the funerary arrangements that are made both for the murderer and his victim.[1]

In the great majority of cases these arrangements are complicated by the fact that the corpse of the deceased is not available. It is generally taken to headquarters for post-mortem examination, and when a man is hanged in jail his body is disposed of by the prison authorities. This does not mean, however, that the funeral ceremonies are omitted. Clothes and other property belonging to the dead are brought back from the Magistrate's Court or from the jail, and these are used to represent the corpse. When Markami Deva killed his wife at Darbha the people brought her clothes, necklace and armlets to the village. These relics were not brought into the house, but were put outside in the yard. The usual funeral drum was not beaten, but the relatives gathered and the brother of the husband (the husband himself was in police custody) put haldi and oil on the things, and a relative by marriage carried them in a basket to a pyre which had been prepared outside the village. Men and women walked behind throwing seeds of rice, maize and pulse mixed together in the basket.

The pyre was under a tree over which a great camel's-foot creeper was growing. They carried the basket round it seven times. Relatives put small pieces of cloth upon it in the usual way and removed them. They hung a bit of cloth on the tree. Then they lit the pyre and went away. They did not erect an uraskal, though here they said that they would

[1] Everywhere in India the ghost of a murdered man or a suicide is dangerous. The Lushai think a victim's ghost will haunt the murderer and drive him mad. J. Shakespear, *The Lushai Kuki Clans* (London, 1912), p. 78. Both the Lushai and Lakher perform ceremonies to make the dead man's ghost harmless and to ensure that it becomes the servant of the slayer in the other world. If this is not done, the ghost may blind, lame or paralyse the man who killed him. N. E. Parry, *The Lakhers* (London, 1932), p. 213. Frazer gives many examples from other parts of the world. Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III, pp. 103 ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 have done so if they had been able to afford it. When Doga of Jabeli killed his wife, but was acquitted on appeal, no ceremony was performed for the dead woman at the time. But when Doga returned home, he himself made a small pyre and carried his wife's clothes and ornaments in his own hands, and thus performed the usual ceremonies.

The day after the burning of the pyre two men go to inspect the ashes. When Oyami Anda was hanged they found 'signs of hanging'—the marks of a rope—among the ashes.

[764] The funeral drum is not beaten for the ceremonies of a man who is hanged or of his victim or when somebody commits suicide. Otherwise the ceremonies are largely the same as usual.

After Kadti Hunga was hanged for murdering his wife Gangi, the clothes of both murderer and victim were put together and covered with earth, and a small pillar of cotton wood was erected nearby.

Sometimes the dead man's clothes are not brought to the house, but are kept outside the village for fear that they may bring the angry ghost along with them. At Killepal and other villages it was the custom to burn the clothes at a cross-roads outside the village.

In the Konta Tahsil, the Maria have a custom of making a small doll or image to serve as a corpse. An unpleasant, quarrelsome fellow called Ido Deva committed a murder at Muler and was hanged. After his death the villagers did not fetch his clothes from the jail but when the fact of his hanging was confirmed, they cut a bit of the gongum tree 'about the length of your forearm', dressed it up in some of Deva's old cloth, put a pair of his ear-rings where the ears might be, and one of his necklaces round the 'neck'. Then just as if it was a real corpse they put it on a bier, covered it with a cloth and carried it out to the pyre (which was in the ordinary cremation-ground) and burnt it. At the head of the pyre they placed a forked saja branch and hung a cow's tail upon it. When I went to the cremation-ground I saw Deva's ashes still fresh and only a few yards away an older pile of ashes for the man he had murdered. Nearby still lay the pots and a specially-made basket for offering rice to the offended ghost.

Sometimes the corpse is cremated near the menhirs. At

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Aranpur I saw a large pile of ashes and half-burnt logs of 764
wood in front of the uraskal stones erected in memory of members of the Barse clan. These were the remains of the pyre for Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged. In this case it was considered of ill omen that, although two attempts were made to burn the pyre, a lot of the wood remained unburnt. In other villages, however, we were told that such ceremonies must not be performed in the neighbourhood of the menhirs.

There seems to be no objection to erecting an uraskal or danyakal stone either for murderers or for their victims. At Palnar an uraskal was mounted for Mulami Bella. At Dugeli an uraskal was erected for a murdered man. In other villages such as Metapal (where there is no uraskal for Banjami Irma who was murdered by his own son) or at Gandarguda (where there is no danyakal for Rawa Hirma) the absence of these memorials is said to be due to the fact that the deceased were poor men and their relatives could not afford them. But at Dugeli, Kunjami Pandu told us that an uraskal for a murdered man can only be erected after the case against the murderer is settled. When his own brother was murdered, he did not at first erect a stone for [767]
him, and he was continually troubled by the restless ghost who came in dreams to reproach him for not 'mingling his soul with the dead, and for his failure to give him a stone'. Once Pandu did this, he had no more bad dreams.

The ceremonies of erecting a menhir for a murderer are exactly the same as for anyone else. When the villagers were carrying the stone for Mulami Bella at Palnar, they halted and put it on the ground, and the women of the house threw rings on to it. Afterwards the women eagerly collected these [771]
rings, for it is considered very lucky to wear them.

On the forest road between Palnar and Jabeli there is a row of the flat memorial stones called danyakal, and at one end a tall carved wooden pillar and a large earthen tomb. The tomb, the pillar and one of the stones are in honour of Marvi Oyami Masa who died in jail while serving a sentence for the murder of his uncle. Masa was a very important man in Jabeli. He was rich, he was the Waddai of the village and he was a Siraha medicine-man. His death seemed to be far more important to the villagers than that of the man

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 he murdered. The stone next to his is for Marvi Buta who was also sentenced for this murder and also died in jail. But there was nothing at all in honour of the murdered man.

764 532 The erection of a carved memorial pillar is probably the greatest honour that the Maria can pay to the dead. It is the equivalent of being buried in Westminster Abbey. Masa's pillar is a very fine one. It shows him as a Siraha sitting on a swing: a streamer of untidy hair blows out from his head. Another carving shows him mounted on an elephant. Another portrays him riding on a horse attended by his wives. All round him are the symbols of his life; deer and tigers represent his love of the chase; axes, swords and knives symbolize his valour and enterprise; two men carry a pot of rice-beer in memory of his drinking prowess.

775 789 The business of keeping the ghost of the murderer or his victim quiet naturally greatly exercises the minds of the village medicine-men and priests. There is danger either that the ghost will cause trouble among the other ghosts of the family, and thus by annoying the ancestors may bring trouble upon the living: or it may inspire another member of the family also to commit a murder; or it may return and simply make itself troublesome. At Phulpar, after Pandu had been hanged and the usual ceremonies performed, the village priest sacrificed a hen near the pyre saying, 'Now we make your home here: live here with your ancestors peacefully'. If they fail to do this, they said, they think someone else in the house will also commit a murder. Then they erected a saja pole and after sacrificing a cow to appease the ghost of the dead man, each relative in turn picked up the cow's tail, saluted it and hung it on the pole. The Waddai went to a corner of the room where the Pot of the Departed was kept, sprinkled liquor there and addressed the ghost: 'Live now with your sons. Do not go to your daughters. Care for the people of your house. See that your children prosper'.

Often, after the ceremony of burning the clothes and ornaments, a man sits in the house of the deceased and the ghost comes upon him. He is led out to the pyre, and there he buries a bhut *kukri*, a ghost hen, to ensure that the ghost will not come to the house and trouble its relatives.

The ghost of the murderer or his victim becomes a Mirchuk.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 of Chichari described how this happened to three of his
758 fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

768 In several places I found that a house or a village had been
14 moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

764 The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the
762 same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death,
[787] and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

762 In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pide committed
766 suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

for this is your home'. When the chicken had pecked at the rice, he twisted its neck and threw it on the still-burning pyre. A pig and a cow were then sacrificed and an uraskal erected the same day. After returning to the house they made a rough drawing with flour of the garden and of the house with its various rooms on the floor. On this pattern they again offered rice to a hen saying, 'We have now made a house for you; don't stay outside any longer, but remain here'.

The ghost of the suicide, like that of a murderer, becomes a Mirchuk and lives in an ant-hill. If the Mirchuk gets angry, it may possess a member of the family, and he too may commit suicide unless the proper offerings are not made at once. The suicide's ghost may also come to the village and cause trouble in a variety of ways. As we have seen elsewhere, the Mirchuk is often used as a familiar by witches. It is most important that the soul of a suicide should not be 'mingled with the Dead'. In some villages they say that this prohibition is absolute. In Dugeli, they said that they should wait a year. A menhir should not be erected. A remarkable double suicide at Khutepal illustrates the danger of ignoring these rules. Bandi, the headmen of this village, had two wives. One day they quarrelled, and the elder wife hanged herself in a rage. Her funeral ceremony was performed as though the death had been a natural one. Her soul was mingled with the Dead, and an uraskal memorial pillar was erected for her in the place used by other members of the clan. It is believed that, when this is done, the suicide's ghost quarrels with the other ghosts of the clan and annoys them. In this case the angry Dead so troubled the wife of Bandi's younger son, who was living in the same house, that she too committed suicide after a quarrel with her mother-in-law. This second suicide was regarded by the villagers as the immediate result of having erected a memorial pillar and mingled the soul of the older woman with the ancestral Dead. When the girl's ceremonies were performed, therefore, they carefully burnt her clothes in a place away from the usual crematorium and, although they gave her an uraskal, they did not sacrifice a cow or hang its tail in the usual manner round the stone.

At Dualkarka, however, they said that an uraskal should

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 the village of Nugur, with the cromlech in front of the two large *kanal-gutta* posts and behind them two of the small corner *kanal-gutta* posts and the log- and leaf-piled grave. At a cremation-grave seen at Handawada, where the ashes of the pyre were still fresh, there was no *kanal-gutta* or cromlech, and the only offering to the dead visible was a small basket that contained the funerary grain, fixed at the top of the fence erected round the grave. The usual strips of cloth were hung from the boughs of trees overhead. The wicker-work frames of dancing shields were also suspended from the fence, although, as related on page 76 above, the use of these dancing shields has for the time been abandoned. The Nugur photograph on Plate XX shows dancing head-dresses on top of the two large *kanal-gutta* posts, a large imitation spear of bamboo between them, and strips of cloth hanging from long bamboo saplings planted in the ground, as there were no reasonably low overhanging boughs. The two upper photographs on the plate show women mourners around a sheeted body in a house at Handawada, and keeners outside a house at Bhera Tondawada at noon before a funeral.

Immediately after the actual funeral in many parts of the hills all the mourners proceed from the funeral ground to a spot by the side of one of the paths entering the village. There the *erramtogh* or the next nearest affine relative present builds a small cairn from 1½ to 2½ feet high, surmounted by a flat cap-stone; the cairn is known as a *marma-kal* or *marman-gal*. On the cap-stone he and each of the householders present places a pinch of rice or *kuthi* grain, addresses the dead man by name, and tells him that he gives him this food to eat. All then go home. In the Tapalibhum, Behramar and Sonpur Mar *parganas* the dead man's heir or *jiya-bital* sets up this cairn on the path a little way from the burial or cremation ground. At the selected spot he clears the ground, places a little grain on it, and makes a small chicken peck at the grain; he then cuts its throat behind his back with a knife, the *erramtogh* or some other near affine places a large flat stone at the side of the dead chicken, and the heir piles stones over it. No words are uttered while this is done. Here they call the cairn *korq-kotikana-kal*, or 'chicken-feeding stone', and do not know the term *marma-kal*. In the Farsal, Bardal, Tulagotal, Hukkagotal and Farsigotal *parganas* they apply the term *marma-kal* to a small stone set up by the side of the path leading from the village to the *kotokal* row of menhirs for the dead as a temporary consolation for the departed when the heir has not sufficient grain or money to erect a menhir immediately after the funeral.

765 Mourning is observed for four days after the funeral, and it is taboo for the heir and the men of the deceased's family to go to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

765 work in this period. Often a house or a portion of a house in which a death has occurred is shut up and not re-occupied. It is, however, not repaired. So long as it stands, it is regarded as a memorial of the dead. On the day after the funeral, if the house is still to be occupied, the rooms and the surroundings are cleaned out, and the floors are re-plastered. On the first three mornings after the [769] funeral they place a little meal from the Pot of the Departed on the grave as an offering. At the end of the period of mourning 764 the heir, if rich enough, should proceed at once to set up a menhir to the dead in the *kotokal*, in the *parganas* and villages where these menhirs are still erected. If, however, he cannot yet afford to do so, he goes to the graveside, bows before the *hanal-garya* cromlech, tells the dead man's *hanal* that he is sorry that he cannot yet afford to erect his stone, and begs him to be patient, to forgive him for the delay and not to harass him. It may take him two or three years to collect the necessary grain and money for feeding those who are to help him to find and erect a suitable menhir. In many parts of the hills the custom has fallen into disuse, because of its cost. But it is still common on the Kutru side of the hills, in Tulagotal, Hukkagotal, Farsigotal, Farsal, Bardal, Tapalibhum, Padalibhum, Nurbhum, Behramar and Sonpur *parganas*, and also prevails in Dugal and other neighbouring Jhoria Muria *parganas*. In Chhota Dongar *pargana* few clans now erect either *marma-kal* or *kotokal* stones, though in many villages old rows of *kotokal* menhirs attest the former prevalence of the practice; the Bokalur are almost the only clan there who still erect them. From Adeq in that *pargana* rows of menhirs will be met by the traveller at Itulnar in Bhairamgarh Mar, between Itulnar and Hikul in Barsur Mar, and at Toinar and other villages in the latter *pargana*; but the clans now occupying these areas do not erect menhirs, and say that the rows still standing were erected ages ago by clans no longer known, though the Gumelor attribute the menhirs in their village of Toinar to the long extinct Timor clan. The Tamor of Tumirgunda between Handawada and the Indrawati have a *kotokal* on the hill path to Hirameta, but have erected no new menhir there for years, and say that nowadays no stone is set up till three generations have elapsed after death; they admit that this is practically a confession that the practice has been abandoned, and say that it was found to be too expensive.

When, however, the heir has enough grain and money to pay for the food and drink needed for the erection of a menhir, whether on the fourth day after death, or after the lapse of some months or years, he calls together his relatives and friends, and all go off into the forest to look for a suitable stone. The only consideration

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal; the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose of it.

All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatisfied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the loveliest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away. They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Kuara-bhut, revealing his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain. In Palnar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy. When the Siraha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

eyes; it throws down grass from the roof. But no one need ever be afraid of the ghost of a chelik or motiari.'

During the bazaar ceremonies in the east of the State (when these are performed for a dead chelik or motiari) the villagers say, 'Mahapurub sent you into this world only for a little while; he did not intend you to live with us for long; so don't be angry and don't trouble us'. The parents are led round the shops and then go home leaving the Uriya-bhut in the bazaar. The dead boy or girl is not mingled with the Departed as are the married, and no menhir is erected for them.

Sometimes the ghost of a chelik may be dangerous. In the compound of the Khutgaon ghotul there was formerly a great stone. One of the boys died and the ghost came to sit on it bringing an epidemic with him. Many boys and girls died and the ghotul had to be destroyed and rebuilt in another place. But the stone remained where it was and when the villagers tried to move it sickness broke out again and so they left it alone.

Many Muria say that when an unmarried girl dies her ghost is dangerous because if a witch can get hold of it, she gives it the form of a pretty girl and sends her to rob men of their seed. Such a girl may appear as a man's mother or sister and torment him.

A dead motiari may also continue to visit her old friends of the ghotul. This only happens, however, when the boys sleep outside, for it is believed that Lingo protects the actual building from the invasion of any witch or spirit. The Sirdarsingh of the Chargaon ghotul told me how he once had an encounter with such a ghost. 'She visited me and I went to her; for many days she was with me; I could not get rid of her. I often went to her and my clothes were spoilt with my discharges. At last I gave her a comb and necklace and she went away, but for fear she may return I sacrifice a pig every year.' So too motiari complain of visits from some old lover's ghost: 'he comes to us, pressing us'.

III. The Soul and its Fate

The belief in immortality, or at least in some kind of survival after death, is bound up with the idea of the soul. The Muria theologians say explicitly that a man has two or even three souls (*jiwa*). In Bakulwahi the villagers said that after death one of these souls[1] went to Mahapurub, one became a Hanal and lived in the Pot of the Departed, and the third became a Chhaiya or Shade, a ghost that visited his relatives in dreams and often made himself a nuisance. The word Hanal, as Grigson has pointed out, is literally translated 'The Departed', for it is a past participial form of the Gondi verb *handâna*, to go.[2] Whenever I speak of the Departed, therefore, it may be taken as translating Hanal in original. In Randhna the people said that,

> Every man has two souls: one lives in his mouth and one in his body—you can feel it going *duk-duk* in the chest. The first soul goes from the mouth direct to Mahapurub; the other remains in the corpse and goes with the mourners to the grave. It watches the body being burnt or buried from a tree nearby, then goes to the nearest stream and lives there until the people come and catch it in the form of a fish and take it home. Then it lives in the house as a god (*deo*).

So also in Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria of the Abujhmar foothills said that,

> A man has two souls: one always remains with him; the other, a smaller one, leaves him in sleep and its adventures are what we call

[1] Throughout, when I use the word 'soul' it represents *jiwa* in the original.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 223.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

843 such as, in other parts of India, of the use of a knife or the cutting of anything; but ordinary enquiry elicited no clue to them.

844 It was said on page 106 that children are born in the menstruation hut or room. This is certainly the case so far as the private huts and rooms are concerned; but in my notes it is not clear whether births ever take place in the communal menstruation hut. They probably do not, because obviously it may be needed at any time for other women of the village, and I have notes of children in Hikpulla and Nugur, where there are communal menstruation huts, being born in a corner of the veranda of the house specially walled off for the purpose.

[777] Cases are known of a mother being delivered of a child in the fields or the forest, but this is considered very unlucky, and as soon as the mother knows that her hour is upon her, she must make every effort to get in time to the menstruation hut or room. During delivery she may have the comfort of the presence of her mother-in-law or some woman from the village; but there are no midwives, and the woman with her must not touch her or assist the delivery; the mother is expected to do everything for herself, and it is regarded as very wrong if she is unable to do so. They pray to the clan-god during a difficult delivery, but appear to do nothing else to assist the mother by either medicine or ceremony. The mother herself has to cut the navel-cord of her baby either with her husband's ordinary knife or with an arrow-head. She cuts it about three or four inches from its junction with the stomach, and binds it close to the junction with a ligature of cord, the portion between the cut and the ligature being left to dry and fall off; and she is expected to bury the placenta (*modi*) immediately after this under the house rubbish-heap outside the back of the house. If the child is born [845 dead, the mother has to bury it somewhere in the forest, going there 766] alone and digging the grave without assistance; it may not be buried in the regular village graveyard. Around Handawada a mother is expected to stay in the menstruation room for a full month after delivery; but the general rule in the interior of the Abujhmar hills is for her to remain there for eight days or until the navel-cord dries and falls off.

846 Everywhere it is taboo for the father to do any field or other work during this period of eight days before the navel-cord falls. No medicine is given to him. He must not sleep in the house during the period in most parts of the hills, but in the dormitory; around Handawada he sleeps in the portion of the *hala* room separated from the woman's portion by the *binda* mud threshold. He must not cook his own food during this period, and has to get a man friend to cook food for him in another house and bring it to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XVI

Death and Funeral Ceremonies

A. Hill Marias

The ordinary rule throughout the Abujhmar hills is to cremate the bodies of headmen and elders of influence and standing and of their wives, and to bury all others.

Except on the southern fringes of the hills, where the villages are influenced by contact with their Bison-horn Maria neighbours, the Hill Marias do not follow the Bison-horn custom of beating a drum from the roof of the house, which Russell and Hiralal predicate of all Marias. The custom is creeping into the hills from south of the Indrawati, and has for example already reached the Kutru Hill Maria villages of Lakka (Lanka) and Karangal; but there it is reserved for men of higher status. The drum used is the hill *turam* kettle-drum, and is usually one of those kept in the village dormitory; the village lads beat it continuously day and night from the death till the burial or cremation of the body.

News of the death is sent out to all the brother-clan and wife-clan relatives and friends of the deceased. The funeral is postponed for two or three days, to give them time to assemble. Then all the women gather in and around the house where the body is lying. A man is never left to die on a cot, but is lifted on to the ground as his end draws near; they say that their reason for this custom is simply that they do not want the dying man to fall off the cot in a last convulsion. Women are never allowed to sleep on a cot. They close the eyes of the corpse, and lift it on to a rough wicker-work bier, covering it over with a length of cloth. It is burned or buried with the clothes and jewellery that were on it at death. The women sit around the corpse and outside in the street, and break into loud keening for the dead.

For the last rites the body is not washed or otherwise prepared, but is left just as it was composed after death. Friends and relatives carry it out on the bier, the only person for whom it is taboo to touch or carry a body being the *waddai* clan-priest medium and his medium assistant (*leshi*). The bier heads the procession to the burial and cremation ground, and is followed by the remaining relatives and friends, the women still keening and beating their breasts.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 then a small chick, twists its neck, breaking the skin of its throat with his nails, sprinkles its blood on the rice, and leaves it there. He then ties a piece of cloth brought from his own house to the boughs of a *saja* tree overhanging the grave, and other pieces handed to him by relatives and friends who wish to honour the dead man, as well as strips of the dead man's clothes brought from his house. Next he, and after him the other affines of the dead man in turn, or, if a married woman has been buried, her father's kindred, take a leaf-cupful of *mahua* spirit, pouring a drop on the grave as an offering to the dead person, and after them the kinsmen of the dead do likewise. The *erramtogh* also offers the *hanal* little *bediya*[1] baskets of rice and *kuthi*, and an empty miniature *handi* (pot). The kinsmen of the dead man have to provide the *mahua* spirit and the grain, baskets and pot. Finally the grave, except the two front *hanal-gutta* posts, is generally surrounded with a fence of criss-crossed strips of bamboo.

766 For a cremation the procedure is much the same. The pyre is made ready beforehand, like the grave, and the body is laid on it. The *erramtogh* brings a burning log from the hearth of the dead man's house, and with it kindles the pyre; and then the kinsmen, the five village elders, and the affines each place a small piece of wood on the head of the corpse, uttering the same formula as when they throw clods of earth on a body in a grave. The pyre is almost always made at the foot of a *mahua* tree. They pile no leaves or logs over the ashes, but leave them there to the mercy of the elements, after fencing them, setting up *hanal-gutta* posts and a *hanal-garya* cromlech, and tying strips of cloth to overhanging *saja* boughs.

764 The ritual varies in different parts of the hills. In some tracts, particularly near Orcha and on the Narainpur side of the hills, they set up only one *hanal-gutta* post, in front of the grave, or none at all. The *mahua* spirit ritual also varies. After earth leaves and logs have been piled over the grave, and the *hanal-gutta* post and the cromlech, if any, have been set up, the *erramtogh* takes a leaf-cupful of liquor, pours a drop or two from it on the earth and logs piled above the head of the corpse, and drinks what remains; this is done after him in turn by the male affines, the kinsmen, and the women present.

The dead man's cot or sleeping-mat and the bier on which his body was carried to the funeral are always left by the grave; and often his dancing head-dress is deposited on the top of one of the *hanal-gutta* posts, while the grave is further adorned with his old fishing-rods and wooden representations of spears and axes. The bottom illustration on Plate XX shows a typical burial grave in

[1] See page 175 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Where, as in Orcha and most of the surrounding villages of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, *kotokal* menhirs are no longer erected, a cow or pig is nevertheless sacrificed in this way in the village on the night after the funeral at the heir's house, and portions of the flesh or the liver when cooked are placed under the cromlech at the base of the *kanal-gutta* post, or, if there is no cromlech, on the grave, while the tail, and sometimes also a lower leg, from hock to hoof, are fastened by a cord from an overhanging *saja* bough. The usual feast and dance then follow. 769

One reason for the abandonment of the custom of erecting menhirs may be that the clans which have abandoned it have in fairly recent times abandoned their traditional for their present clan-areas; for it was the rule that the menhir should always be erected in the village from which the dead man or his ancestors had originally come, not in the village at which he was living at the time of his death. 178 764

A person who has killed himself, or who dies from cholera or small-pox, is not buried or cremated at the regular funeral ground, but in the forest at some distance from it. There had been no recent case in any village which I visited of a woman dying when pregnant or in child-birth, and no one could say what would be done in such a case. Persons killed by tigers or other wild animals must be burned, not buried, at the place where their remains are found, or to which they are brought for the inquest. They must never be brought into a village, for otherwise the dead man's *kanal* may bring the tiger there. The remains, if scattered, are collected and placed in a cloth brought from the dead man's house; but such bodies should be touched as little as possible. Logs are piled under the body where it lies and kindled, and anything found with the body or at the place where the tiger attacked the dead man is burnt with it; but no dancing dresses or other property are brought from his house to be burned with him, and no offerings of grain or *mahua* spirit are made at the grave. No *marma-kal* cairn and no *kotokal* menhir are set up for him; but there is nothing to prevent this being done for the victims of cholera or smallpox. 766

Treatment of abnormal deaths

B. Bison-horn Marias

The true Bison-horn Marias, as distinguished from members of clans once Hill Maria in culture but now adopting Bison-horn customs, cremate all their dead except those who die from abnormal causes. When a man dies, his son-in-law is sent for, and on arrival climbs on to the roof of the house with a *dol* drum, which he beats 764 763

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

766 At Paknar in May 1930 I tried the murderer of a man whose body had been taken to Jagdalpur by the police for *post mortem* examination and had been buried there. In the course of the trial I visited the spot where the accused had shot him dead with a bow and arrow as he and the villagers helping him were carrying his *kutki* harvest from his *penda* field to his granary. His kinsmen had performed funeral rites for him there, sacrificing, roasting and eating two cocks and a pig, hanging up the loin-cloth which he was wearing when killed, and which they had brought back from Jagdalpur, and throwing rice and other grains at the trunk of the tree. They had also thrown away there all the earthen pots in his house except the Pot of the Departed, and his wife had burnt her bangles there. They had poured a libation of *mahua* spirit on the ground at the foot of the tree, which had been stained by his blood, and had adjured his *hanal* to be contented with this, stay with the *hanal* of the other Departed and bring no trouble upon them. A little *mahua* seed oil had then been added in his name to the Pot of the Departed in the *wijja-lon* of his house.

Abnormal deaths

Often when a person is murdered or drowned or dies in any unnatural way, a great cairn of stones is erected over his remains at the spot where he died, known as a *punji-paknar* in Halbi, and any passer-by is supposed to pick up a stone and fling it on the top of the cairn. The custom is common to all the peoples of Bastar, [674] including the Hill Marias; in 1913 two Hill Marias murdered a Maria Lohar girl, with whom both had often cohabited, through fear of the disgrace one of them would incur if the child which she had conceived were born and she named him as the father. The village elders hushed up the murder, and removed the body to the head of a pass crossing the Tiralgarh hills, and there a huge *punji-paknar* was piled over the remains.

Victims of small-pox and women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried by Bison-horn Marias, but not in the regular cremation ground. Before these women can be buried, a *wadde* or *gunia* has to shut up her malignant spirit by driving iron nails into her knees and elbows. But *uraskal* menhirs are erected for them and for victims of small-pox. Persons killed by lightning are cremated at some distance from the ordinary cremation ground, and no menhir may be erected for them. Menhirs are also forbidden for persons killed by tigers, whose remains are burned in the forest where they are found, with whatever possessions were with them when attacked or killed. A dummy tiger is made of bamboo sticks, taken to the boundary of the village, and there burnt.

2: Elwin · E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria ·

to its prey, to protect the boys and girls going out on dancing expeditions, to ensure that the drum gives its accustomed thunder. Life and death are thus united by these beliefs and rites, and the whole of existence is seen as a single sequence where physical death is but an incident which in no way disturbs the continuity of interest or relationship.

V. Funerary Rites

In the west, Muria death customs are dominated by Hill Maria influence. In Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria said that their funerary rites were 'things of the Maria Raj'. As we move east, where the Muria population probably represents an earlier Gond immigration from the north, customs are not unlike those typical of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The north-east of Bastar, however, has been more open to Hindu influence and it is not always easy to tell what the original traditions were.

The Muria bury important people, little children, chelik and motiari, and the victims of small-pox. They cremate all others. They lay the corpse, whether of man or woman, on its back with the head to the east. At Padbera, the Gaita said, 'It is because we came from the east. East is "up" and west is "down" '.

Members of each clan and either sex are disposed in separate places. Those who die from unusual causes are taken far away into the jungle. In Palari I was told that the remains of a tiger's victim should be burnt on the actual scene of death. Usually the corpse is placed under a mahua tree.

I will first describe one of the several funerals that I have witnessed, and then give any variations that I have recorded elsewhere.

On the night of 8 December 1940, in Bauri, a village of the Abujhmar foothills, a woman of about forty years named Dhako, the wife of Genjru of the Wadder clan, died and was carried home on a rough litter to her husband's house at Amgaon. She had died of 'a watery swelling of the body', perhaps dropsy, which is generally regarded as a punishment for adultery. The people were very reticent about speaking of the cause of her death and I never was able to hear the real story.

Since it is taboo for a woman to sleep on a cot, Dhako died on the ground and was again laid on the floor of her own house covered with a sheet. Many women, assembled in the house and outside in the street, wailed loudly from time to time. Gradually the relatives gathered and, when all were there, the corpse was carried out on a bamboo mat into the courtyard. Six women sat round weeping. An old woman of the Wadder clan (which can marry with the Partabi clan to which the dead woman originally belonged), but not a member of the family, now tied a little rice and a cowrie in knots on either side of the cloth. There were three knots on each side joined by a thread which ran criss-cross over the body. They did not bathe the corpse nor close the eyes, but the woman's little daughter, a child about five years old, put haldi on her mother's face, and the other female relatives present did the same.

Meanwhile a group of chelik, most of whom were related to Genjru, were busy making a sort of ladder to serve as bier. This they covered with dry grass. The corpse was lifted out and placed upon it. The chelik took it on their shoulders and went into the jungle followed by both men and women. Genjru's younger sister followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice over it. Another woman carried a basket containing three different roots and bits of haldi.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

bullock and enjoy a great feast. In Randhna I saw several such pillars and near them a few memorial stones. In Kopra there were three pillars and in Charkai one. 769

In Baghbera, not far from the Orissa border, there is a magnificent mango grove with shrines for Bara Pen and the Village Mother. Not far from these shrines, under a sarai tree, there is a stone about two feet high which is used as a memorial menhir for all members of the Poyami clan in that area. When any member of the clan dies the people come to the stone and make the usual offerings. When I saw it, there were two bundles of straw in the tree above, symbolizing the roof of the stone's temple, and a tethering rope which had been used for cow-sacrifice. Tied round it was a rope made of bark with its end splayed out to look like a flower. The Muria said that the origin of this was that a very old man of the Poyami clan died long ago and came to his descendants in a dream saying, 'In such and such forest there is a stone; bring it for me'. They did as he commanded and later when other members of the same clan died they too came in dreams and said, 'Take us to where our grandfather is'.

Finally there is the custom that we have already noticed, of placing a stone in front of a modern tomb. Here we can see clearly how ancient tradition survives alongside modern innovations.

XVI. The Danger of the Abnormal: Death from Wild Animals

The Muria have the most elaborate ceremonies to meet the dangers of abnormal death, for it is in their country that tigers are most common and tragedies most frequent. When such an incident occurs, the chelik collect the remains of the deceased and his possessions at the very place of death and burn them. They blow a hunting-horn over the pyre and run away. 766●

A day or two later the male members of the house go to the spot with other villagers. They dig up some of the blood-stained earth and make an image of the dead man; with rice-flour they make an image of the tiger. They place these together inside two circles made of flour and haldi, and draw a line of flour representing a rope to join the two together. The Gaita sacrifices chickens and eggs, saying, 'Go and take your dog to some other land. Tie it up properly there and keep it safe. Don't bring it here, we don't want any dogs here'. Then he hits and breaks the model tiger with a sickle crying, 'Tiger! Tiger!'

The chickens are now cut up into a great many little bits, and some of these are given to members of the party and roasted and eaten on the spot. Bones and leaves used for this little feast must be buried carefully, for if a witch got hold of them she could use them to bring the tiger back. The party now breaks up and each member takes a solitary and zigzag route home, throwing away the little bits of chicken as he goes. The idea of this is that if the ghost of the deceased tries to return to his village, he will be puzzled by the roundabout route and will be so busy eating the bits of chicken that he will never get there.

Women do not attend this ceremony, for if a woman's shadow were to fall on the materials of the feast, the tiger would come again. But if a woman is killed by a tiger, a digging-stick is thrown into the ashes of the pyre with the idea that her ghost will take it to dig roots in the jungle and not trouble the people in the village.

After a few days all those who took any active part in the cremation ceremony—such as carrying the remains or preparing the pyre—go to the place

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

766 and make customary offerings in the name of the tiger, the dead man and Bagharam Pat to clear themselves of infection. If this is not done, the tiger haunts their dreams.

After an interval, which varies from a week to three years, the people go to bring the soul of the dead man to the proper place, where it will be mingled with his ancestors. The household prepares a feast and invites all relatives. At the east of the village they build an open shed with two poles in the middle and on the floor trace a square with rice-flour. A small pot is filled with flour and put in the middle of the square, and above it another empty pot closed with a lid. A ring, threaded on a fine cord and tied between the two poles above the pot, is swung to and fro. The elders sit round and sing the Burkal Pata, or Tiger Song, which I will quote presently. As they sing this, the dead man's soul comes, the string breaks and the ring falls on to the lid of the pot.

The Gaita at once removes the upper pot and examines the flour in the lower vessel. If there is a 'tiger's mark' on the flour, they believe that a tiger will again devour the man at his next birth—and since the man will be reborn in his own family this means, of course, that the tiger will again visit and harry the same village. If there is a cow's mark, the more Hinduized Muria say that the dead man will be reborn as a cow and then be eaten by a tiger. But if there is a man's footprint, all will be well. They then take the ring, which is known as *Bāgh-hanāl mundi*, to a tree (usually a saja tree) nearby, and hang it up there saying, 'Now this is your home; live here and don't trouble us'.

After this the people feast, but not on meat. When all is over they throw the pots, leaves and leaf-cups into the river, bathe and return home.

A cat's footprint on the floor is considered very ominous. 'When a man is eaten by a tiger', I was told at Remawand, 'his soul dwells in the tiger's tail. On the same day of the week on which he was cremated, a small cat forms itself out of the ashes of the pyre and wanders away into the jungle. If a man sees it and recognizes it, calling it by the name of the dead man, it disappears. If not, and if the cat looks at the man, and he says nothing, another tiger will come to trouble the village.'

If a man is killed by a bear, the same ceremonies are observed.

The Burkal Pata, which is sung while the 'ring of the tiger-ghost' swings to and fro above the earthen pots, is often dragged out to an enormous length. It consists of a formula, which can be repeated as often as necessary, accusing one god after another of having sent the tiger which killed the man.

766
539

Porro sātu dipu ra.	In the Upper World are seven islands.
Ale ale ale ale!	*Ale ale ale ale!*
Ariy sātu dipu ra.	In the Lower World are seven islands.
Ide dipu aroy ra.	Bad is this Middle World.
Nāte nāye talur ra:	There is the Village Mother:
Awe sangu manong ra:	She did not help him:
Awe tinda hitung ra.	She gave him up to be devoured.
Tāna hawār badu ra?	Who follows after her?
Use mudiyāl penu ra.	There is Use Mudial Pen.
Nima bāra tinwi ra?	Was it you who ate him?
Nima baliy hati ra;	You were wandering round about;
Nai pairvi hati ra.	You had a dog with you.
Bāra joring nai ra.	There are twelve pairs of dogs.
Nima chucheh hiti ra.	You gave orders to the dog.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Guddūng oda bādu ra,	It came hiding in the grass,
Hupe lekha poyūndu ra.	It caught him like a rat.
Hajār rupiya ta jīwa ra.	The soul is worth a thousand rupees.
Jīwa mukaīn kili ra.	You have destroyed the soul.
Ade jīwa putto ra.	The soul cannot return again.
Bada diya ta puja ra?	What offering did he fail to give?
Puja badu barah matar ra?	Did he fail to give what he had promised?
Adenk ise titi ra?	Was that why you ate him?
Nima gala tinavi ra.	But it wasn't you who ate him.
Nikuna ijor ilan ra.	I said it was you (but I was wrong).
Hongu dāpu ayma ra:	Don't be angry:
Sāto berāng johār ra.	I give you a sevenfold greeting.

Use Mudial Pen is acquitted, and now Hirto Mudial Pen is accused in exactly the same words. He too is found innocent and the singers, afraid that they may have angered him, beg him not to be offended and greet him seven times with their Johar. Then in the song as I have it recorded, Muyang Waddai is accused—presumably of black magic—then Lingo Mudial Pen, Kara Harra Pen, the Rau of Tipagarh, the Kandra Kaniya, the Rau of Raughat, the Mata of the man's own home, and finally Ispural. Of Ispural, which is a variant on Mahapurub or Bhagavan, the Supreme Being in whose hands are the issues of life and death, it is said,

Nimāy ise titi ra.	It was you who ate him.
Hāyna hago asdu ra;	The time of his death had come;
Adenk ise oti ra.	That was why you took him.

But even Ispural is proved innocent, and at last the singers decide that it was the dead man's own ancestors, the Departed of his own house, who desired his company and sent the tiger to bring him.

Lela ise mudiyālor ra,	The ancient of the house,
Abe ise titur ra,	It was he who ate him,
Jori pandila otung ra.	To gain a companion for himself.
Mākun jori tāstur ra,	He left our companion behind,
Tenke ise otung ra.	That was why he took him.[1]

XVII. The Danger of the Abnormal: The Ondar Muttai

Throughout India the ghost of a woman who has died in pregnancy, in child-birth or immediately after child-birth is feared and dreaded.[2] The

[1] Russell and Hiralal have many accounts of the precautions taken by various tribes after a man has been killed by a tiger, some of which resemble those of the Muria. They describe the rites of the Baiga (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 84), Bhattra (II, p. 274), Dumal (II, p. 536), Gond (III, p. 81 and III, p. 93), Halba (III, p. 274), Kalanga (III, p. 328), Kawar (III, p. 393), Kurmi (IV, p. 79), Panwar (IV, p. 346), Sansia (IV, p. 498) and Savara (IV, p. 483). There is no particular reason in most cases why the customs recorded should be peculiar to the various tribes; nor why they should be recorded for some tribes and not for others. Probably very similar rites are common throughout the Central Provinces and indeed most of aboriginal India.

S. C. Roy has described the rites of the Uraon and I have described a Baiga ceremony that I personally witnessed in the Pandaria Zamindari (*The Baiga*, pp. 298ff.). According to Russell and Hiralal, the Gond and Halba resemble the Muria in suspending a ring over a pot of water, which they watch till it falls. The Bhattra, Kawar, Uraon and others deem a man as a tiger and either tie him up, banish him or force him to release his prey, with the idea that what is done in symbol will be achieved in effect.

[2] The Churelin or Chundi, as this ghost is called elsewhere, is a familiar figure in Indian ethnographic literature. One of the earliest accounts is by Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I,

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

115 with a particular knack of achieving connexion and intercourse with supernatural beings and, at the great festivals of the State, scores of Ganda and Halba mediums fall into a trance and dance ecstatically before the gods. It will be noticed also that in every case the Churlin dances, that she is 'bound' by charms, cohabits with her captor for many years, bears him seven children and finally disappears on recovering her original garments. It is impossible to say what is at the bottom of this widely distributed tradition.

115 In order to avoid the danger of the Ondar Muttai special precautions are
766 taken at the time of her disposal. The Muria, in common with everyone in Bastar, believe that she cannot cross water, so they cremate her body between two streams. The priest makes four iron nails and drives these into each corner of the pyre. Sometimes nails of kassi wood are used. Thorn-bushes are placed above the body. It is considered very important to bury the body immediately. Even if the woman dies at midnight, she must be taken out. They bury the corpse, and only unmarried boys are allowed to handle it. They carry it quickly to the grave, throw the earth upon it and run away. On the day the body is buried, the earth round the grave trembles.

In many villages the Gaita or Waddai goes round the grave throwing mandia grain upon it with the idea that the ghost will be so busy picking up and counting the small grains that she will not have time to do anything else.

The Dorla of Dubatota tie bundles of thorns round the wrists and ankles of the corpse. The Dhurwa of Netanar said that the Gaita drives iron nails through the hands and feet. The Muria of Phunder described how once when a pregnant woman died, the chelik tied her body to the bier with a very strong rope and after lowering it into the grave the Gaita drove four nails into the ground at its four corners. This protection, however, was not successful and so a herd of she-buffaloes was taken to the grave and made to trample upon it. This is another example of the belief that there is some special protection against the Ondar Muttai in the buffalo. The Hill Maria round Chota Dongar said that when a pregnant woman died only women could dispose of the corpse. Women dig the grave on the far side of the village boundary and on the four corners put bits of iron slag and young shoots of the cotton tree. If they put a memorial stone for her, which, in any case, will be a small one, they put a cotton tree pole there also. The Muria sometimes lay an ebony bough over the grave.

115 The Ondar Muttai or Churlin, however, returns to her own country after a certain time. For example, the Muria say that in Jeth (July) at the time of violent wind and rain, the Ondar Muttai goes to her own land, the Rakasgarh, and mingles with her own people. The Hill Maria said the same thing, that after three years she goes to her own country, and I have found a similar tradition among the Bison-horn Maria. What happens to her there is not revealed.

XVIII. Summary

[761] Perhaps the most striking thing in the Muria attitude to death is their emphasis on the continuity of all existence, their belief that death is but an incident in a vital process which continues after the soul has shed its temporary physical integument. But the Muria have not been able to take the further step forward from this into a serene faith and hope in the happiness of the dead, and their desire to help and serve the living. The dead appear rather as dissatisfied, mischievous and wayward, deeply interested in human life but anxious to interfere, to display their power, almost to show off, rather than to assist mankind.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

indicate their will to the living through the Siraha or Waddai 769
and by appearing to them in dreams, and it is considered 775
highly dangerous to ignore their behests.

The necessity for their propitiation has affected every aspect 769
of Maria life. Offerings are made to them at every festival and at every domestic or village ceremony. They are remembered as a matter of routine in every magic formula along with the Earth Mother, Danteshwari and other deities. A few drops of liquor are offered to them every time a Maria drinks. Fire from the hearth of the Pot of the Departed in the Gaita's house is used to light the first fire in the forest clearings and the sacred fires at festivals. The importance of the Ancestors, who remain as a sort of conservative society to safeguard the traditions of the tribe, will appear throughout this book and need not be elaborated now.

VII

Women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried, so are 764
the victims of small-pox and of such other diseases as the 766
Siraha may from time to time direct. All others are cremated, a fact which often makes police investigation difficult and even impossible.

At one time (I am not sure how far the custom survives) 766
the Waddai was buried naked and in an upright posture. The first child of a house, if it dies under five years old, is buried in the same erect posture, with face to the east—as [787]
there is light there, and beneath a mahua tree—for it is fertile of flowers and fruit, a good omen for the family.

In a funeral the chief actors are the Hanagunda or Hanal- 764
gaita, who is the master of ceremonies, and the sister's son or son-in-law of the deceased. The Hanagunda has to tie a thread round the corpse and hang the cow's-tail on the menhir. It is his wife's duty to wash the body, and to take cooked rice and haldi to the pyre. The sister's son has to climb on the roof to beat a drum to summon the relatives: he sits on the uraskal while it is being carried to its place; he makes the appointed offerings before the stone: he kills the sacrificial and festal cow.

After death the dead man is laid with his head to the east in the living room of his house. His sister's son takes a stick

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 has been specially hollowed out for this purpose. Usually
273 there is no stock of rice-beer at hand and it cannot be made so quickly. The Maria then mix a little mandia flour with water and give this instead.

If for any reason in the course of the ceremony some rite or custom is omitted the spirit of the dead man may attack one or other of the mourners in order to show his displeasure. For example, at Gadapal, Burka Peda told me that they once forgot to give landa to the old menhirs and the insulted Dead attacked his father's sister and she fell down in a fit. They quickly gave both landa and mahua liquor to all the menhirs and she recovered. Again in Mahara-Karka one Kuhrami Eriya was hurled into the fire by the angry ghost and his leg was burnt. If this happens it is a good plan for the victim to run and catch
[789] hold of the bamboo poles with which the stone was carried. The Gaita pours water upon him and the angry ghost leaves him alone.

IX

322 When a very well-known or wealthy man dies his family
●766 sometimes erects a carved wooden pillar to his memory.
554 There are very few of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

322 These pillars are called by Grigson urasgatta, a word that
766 is obviously formed on the same plan as uraskal, from *urasna* meaning 'to bury' and *gatta*—'a pillar'. I have not myself found any Maria using the word or even recognizing it when it has been put to them. It may be that its use has died out. The Maria to whom I have spoken call these pillars either *munde* (Gondi) or *kambha* (Halbi or Hindi).

The pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. It should simply be near any road or path that is constantly used by the people. The pillars are usually made of saja or sarai wood and are erected with ceremonies very similar to those for a stone.

There are not many of these pillars, but they are worth looking at. There is a very fine one near Dilmilli

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

322 766 on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. Near Massenar at the end of a long line of menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa, which has a carving of the old man wearing his jubilee medal. There are others at Chinger, on the way to Chitrakot and in a few other places.

322 766 532 Each pillar attempts to be a biography in wood of the deceased. We see him important carrying the symbols of wealth and power and riding on a horse or elephant; we see the dancers that delighted him and the landa pot which never failed to give him pleasure. We are shown the knives and axes that he used; the animals that he saw or hunted in the forest. The pillar for Oyami Masa, the homicide, had several carvings illustrating his work as a Siraha.

X

623 632 Every Maria village has a panel of secular and religious officials. There is the headman (often called the Peda), his assistant (the Kandki) and a Kotwar, who has the duty of reporting to the police all births and deaths within his jurisdiction. Each group of villages belongs to what is called a Pargana, a relic of the older administrative system of the State, and at the head of each Pargana there is a Pargana Manjhi. Each village has its panchayat presided over by the village headman, and each Pargana has a Pargana panchayat which is a Court of Appeal. In 1932, the village panchayats among all the aboriginals in Bastar were entrusted with a certain amount of criminal and civil work. The regular Courts were deprived of jurisdiction over the tribesmen for no fewer than seventeen Sections of the Indian Penal Code, including those dealing with simple hurt and assault, thefts of property up to five rupees, mischief, trespass and adultery. The panchayats were permitted to deal with claims for civil damages that might arise out of the criminal offences, and in other civil claims not exceeding twentyfive rupees. They were permitted to impose fines of not more than twentyfive, and in marriage cases to allow expenses up to fifty rupees. The Kotwar had the business of reporting panchayat decisions to the police. An appeal

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 have done so if they had been able to afford it. When Doga of Jabeli killed his wife, but was acquitted on appeal, no ceremony was performed for the dead woman at the time. But when Doga returned home, he himself made a small pyre and carried his wife's clothes and ornaments in his own hands, and thus performed the usual ceremonies.

The day after the burning of the pyre two men go to inspect the ashes. When Oyami Anda was hanged they found 'signs of hanging'—the marks of a rope—among the ashes.

765 The funeral drum is not beaten for the ceremonies of a man who is hanged or of his victim or when somebody commits suicide. Otherwise the ceremonies are largely the same as usual.

After Kadti Hunga was hanged for murdering his wife Gangi, the clothes of both murderer and victim were put together and covered with earth, and a small pillar of cotton wood was erected nearby.

Sometimes the dead man's clothes are not brought to the house, but are kept outside the village for fear that they may bring the angry ghost along with them. At Killepal and other villages it was the custom to burn the clothes at a cross-roads outside the village.

In the Konta Tahsil, the Maria have a custom of making a small doll or image to serve as a corpse. An unpleasant, quarrelsome fellow called Ido Deva committed a murder at Muler and was hanged. After his death the villagers did not fetch his clothes from the jail but when the fact of his hanging was confirmed, they cut a bit of the gongum tree 'about the length of your forearm', dressed it up in some of Deva's old cloth, put a pair of his ear-rings where the ears might be, and one of his necklaces round the 'neck'. Then just as if it was a real corpse they put it on a bier, covered it with a cloth and carried it out to the pyre (which was in the ordinary cremation-ground) and burnt it. At the head of the pyre they placed a forked saja branch and hung a cow's tail upon it. When I went to the cremation-ground I saw Deva's ashes still fresh and only a few yards away an older pile of ashes for the man he had murdered. Nearby still lay the pots and a specially-made basket for offering rice to the offended ghost.

Sometimes the corpse is cremated near the menhirs. At

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 of Chichari described how this happened to three of his
753 fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

768 In several places I found that a house or a village had been
14 moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Mulsi village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

764 The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the
762 same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death,
[787] and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

762 In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pide committed
766 suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

for this is your home'. When the chicken had pecked at the rice, he twisted its neck and threw it on the still-burning pyre. A pig and a cow were then sacrificed and an uraskal erected the same day. After returning to the house they made a rough drawing with flour of the garden and of the house with its various rooms on the floor. On this pattern they again offered rice to a hen saying, 'We have now made a house for you; don't stay outside any longer, but remain here'.

The ghost of the suicide, like that of a murderer, becomes a Mirchuk and lives in an ant-hill. If the Mirchuk gets angry, it may possess a member of the family, and he too may commit suicide unless the proper offerings are not made at once. The suicide's ghost may also come to the village and cause trouble in a variety of ways. As we have seen elsewhere, the Mirchuk is often used as a familiar by witches. It is most important that the soul of a suicide should not be 'mingled with the Dead'. In some villages they say that this prohibition is absolute. In Dugeli, they said that they should wait a year. A menhir should not be erected. A remarkable double suicide at Khutepal illustrates the danger of ignoring these rules. Bandi, the headman of this village, had two wives. One day they quarrelled, and the elder wife hanged herself in a rage. Her funeral ceremony was performed as though the death had been a natural one. Her soul was mingled with the Dead, and an uraskal memorial pillar was erected for her in the place used by other members of the clan. It is believed that, when this is done, the suicide's ghost quarrels with the other ghosts of the clan and annoys them. In this case the angry Dead so troubled the wife of Bandi's younger son, who was living in the same house, that she too committed suicide after a quarrel with her mother-in-law. This second suicide was regarded by the villagers as the immediate result of having erected a memorial pillar and mingled the soul of the older woman with the ancestral Dead. When the girl's ceremonies were performed, therefore, they carefully burnt her clothes in a place away from the usual crematorium and, although they gave her an uraskal, they did not sacrifice a cow or hang its tail in the usual manner round the stone.

At Dualkarka, however, they said that an uraskal should

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

762
764 never be made for anyone who commits suicide or is killed by violence. Here they described how, when the members of the household in which a suicide has occurred are feasting at the close of the funeral ceremonies, they suddenly feel as though somebody is strangling them, and to get rid of this unpleasant feeling they have to go to the village boundary and make the usual offerings. If the dead man has been killed by a tiger or has been murdered, the relatives feel that they are being mauled by some great animal or that an unseen hand is belabouring them with a heavy stick.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

691 421 partition of a father's property when a son sets up house for himself, but although he can press for his share, it is felt by the community to be against tribal spirit, rather than unfilial. When, on the other hand, a father had outraged tribal feelings by seducing his sons' wives and driving his sons from his house, his refusal to let his sons have any share in the family property was considered by the Bison-horn Marias an additional justification for his subsequent murder by his sons.

691 428 768 There is so little domestic property of great value among the Hill Marias, and so many of a man's few tools and possessions, as we have seen, are buried with him, that inheritance disputes about movable property are almost unknown. Though among the Bison-horn Marias less is buried or burned with the dead, the remaining movable property generally passes with the house; if the elder sons have set up separate establishments in their father's lifetime they will have equipped themselves with the few possessions they need, and will not worry about the younger brother appropriating what their father has left. Women's ornaments generally are buried or burned with them.

428 When the inheritance includes valuable rice-lands, they remain generally the joint property of the sons and brother's sons, and the father's surviving brothers, the eldest son generally nominally being the manager, though he will certainly have to give way to an uncle or younger brother or cousin if he is inefficient, weak-minded or deformed. The produce will be stored in his granary, but shared among the members of the family.

428 736 587 Daughters and sisters have no right of inheritance of their father's or brothers' lands or property. For the land is really the land of the clan, and the daughters and sisters will on marriage have passed to the clans of their husbands. A widow is entitled only to maintenance, and as on her husband's death she very often becomes the wife of his younger brother, she gets her maintenance as a matter of course; if he leaves no younger brother and she does not marry again, she lives on in her late husband's house and works with other women of the family, and is maintained by their husbands. A girl whose parents die before she is married frequently goes to a married sister's house and becomes a co-wife.

562 For a woman on the whole is a kind of property, or a valuable adjunct to the house and family. For her, the husband's family has had to pay a bride-price that is a severe tax on its resources[1]; or else, where cross-cousin marriage prevails,[2] she represents the repayment of a debt incurred when her father took his bride from

[1] See pp. 248-50 and 252-3 above.
[2] See pp. 234 and 247 above.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic, they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently hardened to persist in their visits after this.

But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Maru, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margaon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1941 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahua Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul, Dasru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she said, 'well, why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

of Chichari described how this happened to three of his fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

In several places I found that a house or a village had been moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death, and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pide committed suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

Houses

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Teiam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *ahki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc. If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orha*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate
342 cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in
513 various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian
241 wigwams, known as *panambaksha*. They may also erect big and
343 small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

241 Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

[834] **Sowing** From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory.

241 Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-ahk*).
●769 These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit kenjat! Miku har kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemasi mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

241 On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyeq-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen. When making his offerings, the *kasyeq-gaita* adjures the Mother to remain favourable to the village.

All return then to the clan-god, and here the clan-priest offers for each village some of the new grain and cuts the throat of the cocks and pigs brought by each *kasyeq-gaita*, sprinkling blood from each victim on the clan-god, on whom he calls to be ever present to help them, in weal or woe, in field or forest, at home or abroad. In the less important new-eatings, if the practice among the Bārdal clan observed in August 1930 at Kutul is universal, the flesh of the sacrificed animals is not then eaten in a communal feast, but divided among the men present, each of whom takes it to his home, where the male members of the family alone eat it with new grain. Some liquor is drunk in the houses by the men and the unmarried girls, but this is not an essential part of the proceedings. The fermented rice gruel, *landa*, which is always freely consumed at Bison-horn Maria *pandums*, is never even manufactured by Hill Marias, who say that it is taboo to them. After the return of each village delegation to its village, the local *kasyeq-gaita* (whether there is a *bhum-gaita* or not) performs a similar ceremony on a smaller scale before his Village Mother; this in some clan-areas is attended by the clan-priest also, as a guest, but not as a celebrant except in a few large villages to which the clan-god is brought for the occasion; in some other villages a cairn or table-stone is set up near the Village Mother's shrine, and, like her shrine, sprinkled with blood. Nor are the Departed forgotten, for they, too, can harm the garnered crops or the next harvest. The housewife pounds the new grain before the festival in a specially made mortar hole with a pestle (*uspal*) washed in water newly drawn from a running stream. She cooks it in the *lonu* room on the Hearth of the Departed (see p. 114 above), and the ashes of this fire are never swept away. In the evening, before the new food is eaten, she places a little as an offering on the floor just in front of the Pot of the Departed, with some appropriate djuration; and some she places in three *siari* leaves, which in the early morning her husband deposits outside the village by the side of some path (never, apparently, at the cemetery or the Stones of the Dead (*kotokal*)), saying, '*Kopa-kopi munata tado-pepi hisor mator, ade hintoram*,' meaning, 'We give what our grandfathers and great-grandfathers used to give to their ancestors of old.'

The association of the clan-god with the three first new-eatings is not so marked as at the last, which is the harvest-home celebration. The tendency is to regard them more as domestic than even village ceremonies. No dancing or drumming is allowed at them, and no

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

stones; the platform is thus sloped against the stream, and small fish coming down are unable to get through the meshes of the wicker-work, and are thrown by the water high and dry on to the downstream end of the platform; this is merely an elaboration of the *dandar* trap regularly made in the plains by other Koitor at corners of rice-fields where there is any considerable fall in the level of a main irrigation current. 226

The Bison-horn Marias have four or five different kinds of nets, and field fish traps of three or four kinds varying in size from the big field *dandar* above to the *bisar*, a small cylindrical trap of reeds or canes fastened together with wefts of cord, with inverted cones of similar construction inside; the narrow mouth at one end of the trap is fixed close to a small hole made through the embankment of a flooded rice field, and the small fry washed through the hole into the trap cannot escape through the cones. Women make a series of small mud dams across the swampy ends of tanks or pools, and dry out the space enclosed by each dam in turn by throwing the water out with winnows or baskets; they then collect what fish are left in the mud.

In the north of the State the Bhattras, Parjas, Murias and low-caste Hindus always precede the ceremonial eating of new mangoes at Aktai, the local name for the Hindu festival of Akshya Trittya, which falls usually in the second fortnight of April, by a ceremonial *parad* for fish; their general method is for all the men to go into the forest to gather the leaves, roots and fruits used for poisoning fish, then to poison the selected and previously dammed rivulet or small tank; after the stupefied fish have been collected and divided, each family cooks and eats the fish with the new mangoes, and the head of the family goes to the source of their usual water-supply and offers water in a new *handi* with a little grain in the name of the ancestors. In Gondi this is called the ceremony of '*Yer upihana pen hanal*' (offering water to the clan-god and the Departed). Some Bison-horn Marias observe this practice also before their own Marka Pandum, or New Mango Festival, but they prefer having a real beat for fish to poisoning pools, though both they and the Hill Marias frequently poison pools. But most Bison-horn Marias beat for fish at all times of the year, except the rains, when there is too much water, just for sport, and join for this with villagers of other castes, such as Jhari Telanga, Halba or Parja. As many as fifty or sixty square-meshed nets are collected, about four feet deep, and the bottoms of the nets are weighted with stones, while pieces of wood are fastened on the top edge to act as floats. Before the nets are arranged in the water, the *perma* (village priest or spiritual headman, corresponding in Bison-horn villages to the 226 769 226

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

273 water, and the latter on the fire, so that the contents of the upper *handi* may be well steamed. When they have been steamed long enough, they are mixed in another *handi* with water to the consistency of *pej* gruel, and left in a cool place to ferment for five or six days, with the top lidded with leaves; when there is a smell like a fowl-house that badly needs cleaning they know that it is ready. *Landa* has to be provided in large quantities for all the guests at a wedding, when open house is kept; all present at funeral ceremonies need it, and some is poured over the menhir erected in the name of the dead man at the *Urashal*; it is given to all who have worked on a new tank at the completion ceremony; a *handi* full is carried by a lad's father and party when going to ask a man for his daughter as wife for the lad; on the sixth day after a child is born *landa* is given to the man and woman called from each house for the naming; at sowing, reaping, threshing and ploughing a little is given to every helper; and at each *pandum* each household makes and consumes some. At the Kuram Pandum, when the new *kutki* is eaten, the *landa* should be made from new *kutki*.

273 There is said to be some creeper from the flowers or sap of which an intoxicating liquor is made by the Bison-horn Marias in the Sukma zamindari, below the Tulsidongri mountains; of this no proof was forthcoming. Possibly the rumour referred to the known habit of the Marias drinking the sap of the wild vine *Vitis repanda* as a substitute for water. Otherwise water is their sole other drink, always from clear running streams, save in the dry southern fringes of the Bison-horn country in Konta tahsil.

271 **Other drinks**

271 The Hill Maria and the Bison-horn drink after meals. The latter drinks in the normal Indian way, and often from a brass *lota*, or at least a leaf-cup. The former, however, in the remoter villages still almost steals to the edge of the stream like a shy animal, kneels down, and puts his mouth to the water. Otherwise he stands in the water and scoops up water into his mouth with rapid moves of alternate hands.

Drinking

273 When Bison-horn Marias drink *mahua* spirit, either the head of the family, in case of domestic ceremonies, or every drinker in general drinking bouts, before drinking pours a drop or two on the ground in the name of the Departed. Hill Marias follow the same practice in general drinking bouts, but the libation may be made before or after drinking. The liquor is brought in large earthen pots or in gourd bottles from the nearest liquor-shop. Hill Marias fill large leaf-cups from it, which they take round to all present and from them fill the small leaf-cups which each person has ready for himself; the Bison-horn Maria doles out his liquor either with the

[169]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

372 his *kanda* by the sharp edge between their hands across the split in the ' hearth ' and at right angles to the ' hearth ', rapidly increasing the speed of his sawing; this friction soon engenders smoke and a spark, which falls through the ' hearth ' on to the little heap of inflammable bamboo sawdust that has fallen with the sawing on to the dead leaves or rag. Sawing is at once stopped, and the ' hearth ' lifted off the sawdust with great care by the kneeling men, who gently blow on the spark till it spreads and kindles the sawdust, when they fold the leaves carefully over sawdust and sparks and take the packet off to the place where a fire is to be lit, kindling first heaps of dry grass, and with this small sticks and finally logs. They are very quick in the process. I introduced a race in the tribal sports at the Maharani Sahiba's Dasehra celebrations, in which teams of three had to run fifty yards, make fire, and run with it another fifty yards to kindle a bonfire; and Hill Maria teams invariably won; the timing of the whole process, from the start till the bonfire was well alight, was eighty-seven seconds. In the [177] Muria and some Bison-horn Maria tracts the use of matches is coming in.

There appears to be no ritual occasion on which fire has to be kindled in this way. The first pile of dry wood at the firing of the *penda* fields, and the fires for cooking sacrificial meals, are kindled [179] from a burning log brought from the Hearth of the Departed in the *kasyep-gaita's* or *penna's* house.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

field, the *perma* bringing a cock and a little milk and husked rice. The *perma* cleans a small rectangle at the foot of the tree, sets the egg upright on it, and strews the rice in front of the egg. The cock is set down on its feet, and as soon as it pecks up a grain or two of the rice, the *perma* cuts its throat in the name of the Village Mother, whom he prays to accept the egg and the cock offered by the village, and to bless them with a bumper crop of *mahua* flowers and fruit. He then pours milk over the trunk of the tree and some of the clusters of *mahua* flowers, and prays to the milk-spirits Pal-mu'ito and Pal-mutta'i (Milk-old-man and Milk-old-woman) to shower upon them *mahua* flowers fat with milk. Next he throws the egg over the tree, calling on Nus-mu'ito and Nus-muttai (Insect-old-man and Insect-old-woman; *nus* is a grub or insect that attacks the ends of the twigs from which burst the *mahua* flowers) not to damage the flowers. Then all the men present quickly gather up dead *mahua* leaves lying around beneath the tree and put them into the baskets that they use for collecting *mahua* flowers, pretending that they are flowers; the idea, of course, is to act the gathering of a crop of flowers as thick as the carpet of dead leaves, and to persuade the trees in sympathy with this magic to yield a generous crop. The *perma* then takes the sacrificed cock as his portion, and all disperse to their homes. Before this ceremony has been held it is taboo to collect *mahua* flowers.

The Marka Pandum

The mango first-fruits ceremony is held generally a little later, in March, the *perma* convening a similar meeting of the elders to fix the day as soon as he sees that the young fruit has formed on the trees, and to arrange either for a *sari-bori* village subscription for buying the sacrificial victims or for getting the victims from those whose turn it is to give them at this *pandum*. We have seen already (pp. 165-6) that this is sometimes preceded by a ceremonial fishing beat or *weta*, and by pouring of water in the name of the Departed. All the males of the village assemble on the morning of the *pandum* by the *perma's kadri-bera* field, the head of each family bringing a pig or a cock, a pot of *landa* or *mahua* spirit, cooking pots, and a pound of husked rice or *kulthi* for each member of his family present. For this festival sometimes instead of using the *kadri-bera* field they resort to a mango grove, a grove of trees by a stream, or a clump of forest trees thickly covered with creepers, often on a hill-top, and known as a *deo-kot*; the site is always reserved for such ceremonies, and it is taboo to pluck even a leaf in them. There should be a sacred *saja* tree there. At the foot of this tree a space is cleaned and smeared with cow-dung and water, over which a table-stone is set up on three or four small stones, to serve as the *gadi* or throne

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

pig, sprinkles their blood over the goddess and over each of the *saja* leaves, and breaks the top of each of the eggs with his knife. Then he offers the goddess ears of *chikma*, other early millets, and mountain rice; if the latter is not yet in ear, he offers a flowering rice stalk. He then prostrates himself with the palms of his hands flat on the ground, belches, and prays the goddess as their mother to accept these first-fruits, to grant them grace to have their new-eating feast, and to save her witless children from all troubles and adversity. He then hands each man one of the bloodstained *saja* leaves, and, leaving someone to watch over the slain victims, all go and bury the leaves in their fields. Each man then brings a handful of old rice from his house to the *kadri-bera* field, and hands it over to the *perma*, who cooks the bodies of the victims and the rice separately, and distributes them to the men, who eat their share there.

Meanwhile the women, for whom it has been taboo to attend the ceremony in the *kadri-bera* field and the burial of the leaves, will have prepared meal from the new millets and mountain rice; the grains are still rather green, and are roughly threshed, parched in a broken earthen crock held over the fire, pounded with the *uspal* husker, winnowed free of husks, and ground between two hand mill-stones with a quantity of salt; some mix in a little *gur* sugar. The wife of each head of a family cooks the new flour in a Hanal Kunda or Pot of the Departed (not, of course, that in which oil, etc., is placed in the name of the newly dead), along with new vegetables from the *bari*, other than gourds, beans and cucumbers. When the head of the family returns from the sacrificial meal already described, he brings with him the junior members of his family, but *not* his wife-clan relatives, and some of them bring small chickens. He sacrifices these to the Departed, offers them some of the new flour and vegetables, and pours a libation of *mahua* spirit and *landa* on the floor of the corner of the *wijja-lon* room that is dedicated to the cult of the Departed. The new flour and vegetables are then eaten in his house by them, their wives and their unmarried children; but no one of any other clan may participate, and on that day no one must give anything out of his house, not even fire from his hearth, to anyone of another clan.

On the next day, however, there is the usual remains-eating feast (*Hara Tindana*) in their houses, to which they are free to invite friends, brother-clan and wife-clan relatives, whom they regale on *mahua* spirit and on *landa*. In the evening they dance the *kortam* dance without their bison-horn head-dresses, but with men and women dancing separately in their usual way.

In villages where there is a log-god and a *Mataguri* or hut-shrine of Mata, the sacrifices on the first day are made before each, the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

perma with three or four mediums officiating at the former, and the priest of Mata (*Mata-pujari*) at the latter. In some villages there is a separate hut close to the shrine (*pen-rawar*) of the log-god or clan-god and to the *Mataguri*, and a separate priest of the Departed called generally *Pitar-gaita*, but sometimes *Dhuma-gaita* or *Hanal-gaita*, the use of the Hindu term *pitar* for the local terms *dhuma* and *hanal* being significant of the way in which Hinduism is gradually modifying tribal religion. At the Ghotpal Kurum Pandum, for example, on the 9th September 1930, the men assembled with the *perma* outside the *pen-rawar* of Use Modia Pen along with the men of two adjacent Lekami villages. The *pen* log-god was brought out and set down on four stone slabs set up as posts. The proceedings started with the *Pitar-gaita* bringing two new earthen pots and about half a pound each of new *chikma* and new mountain rice to a separate shed at the side of the *pen-rawar*. He kindled a fire, and in one pot cooked small quantities of the new *chikma*, set this out on three *mahua* leaves as an offering to the Departed, and attached a fringe of rice plants in ear to the roof of the shed. He then started to cook the rest of the new *chikma* and new rice in the other pot, sitting in the shed, while the others present went to attend the sacrifices in front of the log-god. These were conducted in much the same way as those already described as made usually before the Village Mother; but there was no sprinkling of blood on *saja* leaves or burial of the leaves in the fields, the *perma*, who acted as clan-priest, washed the mouths and feet of the pigs and cocks before applying the *tokana* test, and a *wadde* medium sat by the side of the log-god reciting '*mantram*' as the *perma* sacrificed each cock and pig. The *perma* then poured three libations each of *mahua* spirit and *landa* in front of the log-god. All the men then returned to the *Pitar-gaita's* shed, and sat in a circle round it, while the *Pitar-gaita* stuck a pinch of the cooked *chikma* and rice on the centre of each man's forehead, just as Hindus apply the *tika*. Thereafter all went back to the *pen-rawar*, and first the *perma*, then the *Pitar-gaita*, then the *peda* headmen of the three villages taking part in the ceremony, and last eleven or twelve village elders saluted everyone present and drank a leaf-cupful first of *mahua* spirit and then of *landa*. Then the sacrificed cocks and pigs were cooked, and all the men sat in a circle and were given each two leaf-cupfuls of *landa* to drink and two pieces of the cooked meat. All ended by drinking some *mahua* spirit and the whole feast was over by 9 p.m., when they dispersed to their houses without dancing. No females had been present. They had the usual family new-eating next day, with offerings to the Departed inside the house. Ghotpal and some other villages have no dancing at this *pandum*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 Nowhere, so far as can be ascertained, are any offerings made at the *uraskal* menhir stones for the Departed.

After this *pandum* everyone is free to eat the new early millets and garden vegetables other than gourds, cucumbers, beans and pulses. The practice as to mountain rice varies, for there is still the Korta Pandum or rice first-fruits ceremony to follow. In some places people are free to use and cook the new mountain rice in any way they like after the Kurum Pandum. In others it must be cooked or roasted without being first washed in water until the Nuka Nordana Pandum has been held, which coincides roughly with Diwali.

The Korta Pandum

The Korta Pandum comes about a month after the Kurum Pandum, and celebrates the first eating of the new rice of the main crop, and of new cucumbers, pumpkins and gourds. Unlike the Kurum Pandum, it is a purely domestic ceremony with no public offerings, though the date for it is fixed for the whole village by the usual elders' meeting. It takes place in the first or second week of Kuar, i.e. in early October. Before dawn of the day before the festival the head of each family tries to get to his fields without being seen and reaps enough of the new rice for the morrow's ceremony, for which it is threshed, parched, husked and winnowed in readiness. *Landa* is prepared, and *mahua* spirit bought. On the appointed morning the new [769] rice is cooked in the Pot of the Departed by the housewife, along with the flesh of the goat, cock or pig sacrificed to the Departed by the head of each family, and eaten by the men and women of the family (affines being excluded) in the way already described for the domestic ceremony of the Kurum Pandum. All take *landa* and liquor, and then in most villages the men don their dancing head-dresses, and sing and dance from house to house, exchanging visits and drinking *landa* with all their neighbours. There are the usual remains-eating feasts given next day for brother-clan and wife-clan relatives from other villages, with more singing and dancing.

The Nuka Nordana Pandum

The literal meaning of '*nuka nordana*' is 'husked-grain (*indica, chanwal*) grinding'. The festival is not universal among the Bison-horn Marias, and is held at about the beginning of the third week of Kartik month (November). It is sometimes spoken of as Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights; but no Maria houses are illuminated for it. Other local names are Pit Phorni (Halbi) and Deuthni. The ceremony should be held before the clan-god or log-god, but in villages where there is none it takes place in the *kadri-bera* by the usual Bhimul post, and, as for the Marka Pandum,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

a table-stone with a white pebble on it may be erected in the name of the clan-god under a *saja* tree. The *perma* sacrifices cocks and a pig or goat on behalf of the village in the usual way, and washes some new husked rice and *kulthi* and offers it to the god. The men cook and eat the sacrificial meat then and there. The wife-clan relatives may be present, but in most villages are not allowed to participate in the sacrificial rice and meat and are supplied with other rice and meat which they cook separately. The usual remains-eating feast takes place in the houses next day.

The Jata Pandum

At the Jata Pandum, held somewhere near the full moon of Pus (December-January), they celebrate the eating of the first new beans, pulses, and the latest ripening grains. There is the usual public sacrifice for the men before the log-god or the Village Mother. In the south, towards the Dorla border, the festival is known as Chikur Pandum, and the sacrifices are always to a table-stone beneath a *saja* tree known as Dhania Deo, which, like the Bhattra Dhani, appears to be only another form of the earth-god. The only special feature of this *pandum* is that the domestic sacrifice and libations to the Departed in the house are often followed by a ceremony for weaning suckling children, the first food given being some of the rice and sacrificial meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed.

The Kare Pandum

This takes place in Magh (January-February), soon after the Jata Pandum, and, as already observed, is preceded by the *Kare Wata* in which fields and open spaces are beaten for small game. I was unable to ascertain what other special features, if any, the festival has, or whether new grass and new bamboo are offered to the gods. Until the festival has been held it is *melo* or taboo to cut grass or bamboos or to start felling timber for *erka*, *parka* and *penda* cultivation.

The Bhimul Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum comes very soon after the Kare Pandum. I have no detailed information. But it is a ceremony for ensuring a good rainfall in the coming monsoon. It takes place by the Bhimul post in the *kadri-bera*, over which a booth of boughs is erected. Men and women attend. The booth is decorated with strings of mango leaves. The *perma* sacrifices a white cock and an egg, and pours *landa* over the Bhimul post; and men and women then empty over the post baskets containing a little of every kind of field produce. Men and women then sit in the open, and consume *landa*. All night the village women dance, led by the *perma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head or in her arms.

The Bhimul Pandum is really the last of the *pandum* held in all villages. It only remains to mention the Mandai or Deoguri

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XII

The Cult of the Departed; Magic and Witchcraft; Omens; Beliefs about the Phenomena of Nature

A. The Cult of the Departed

169

In the preceding chapters there have been many references to the *Hanal* or Departed. In Chapter VI were described the *lonu*[1] or Room of the Departed in the Hill Maria house, with the Pot of the Departed and the Hearth of the Departed, and the corresponding *wijjalon*[2] room in the Bison-horn Maria house; in Chapter VII the reader will have seen how the Departed are regarded by the Hill Maria as having the power to influence sowing and harvesting, and are therefore propitiated at seed-time by the *wijj-akk*[3] or 'seed-leaves' ceremony and at the new-eating festivals[4] by the wives offering the new grains before the Pot of the Departed after cooking them on the Hearth of the Departed, and by the husband in the morning depositing three leaves with the new food by the roadside as offerings to them. Of all Marias Chapter VIII[5] has told of the universal practice of pouring a drop or two of intoxicating drink as a libation to the Departed before drinking, and Chapter IX[6] of a burning log from the Hearth of the Departed in the *kasyeq-gaita's* or *perma's* house being used to fire the first pile of dry wood for *penda* cultivation and to light the fires for cooking sacrificial meals. We have seen also in the last chapter how the Bison-horn Maria (*a*) offers water to the Departed at the time of the Marka Pandum[7]; (*b*) has the new grain and vegetables cooked in the Pot of the Departed by his wife and sacrifices cocks or other victims to them in the domestic ceremonies in connexion with the Kurum Pandum,[8] (*c*) the Korta Pandum[9] and (*d*) the Jata Pandum[10]; (*e*) has in some villages a separate priest of the Departed known as the Pitar-Gaita[11] or Hanal-Gaita who has special duties to perform at the public ceremonies of the Kurum Pandum (possibly at other *pandum* also, but no enquiry was made on this point); and (*f*) at the weaning ceremony at the Jata Pandum[12] makes his children eat as their

[1] See p. 114.
[2] See p. 123.
[3] See p. 133.
[4] See p. 139.
[5] See p. 170.
[6] See p. 190.
[7] See p. 209; cf. also pp. 165-6.
[8] See p. 216.
[9] See p. 218.
[10] See p. 219.
[11] See p. 217.
[12] See p. 219.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

first solid food the new grain and meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed. 769 ●

It will be seen in the sections of the next part of this book that deal with birth, marriage and funeral customs that there are further rites, either indicating the power of the Departed to influence the fortunes of their posterity, or designed to propitiate them. Such are the searching of the body of a new-born baby for the birth-marks of some ancestor; the libations to the Departed in the betrothal and marriage ceremonies of all Marias and the sacrificial meal given to Bison-horn bride and bridegroom before the Pot of the Departed in the bridegroom's father's house; the ascertaining at Hill Maria funerals whether the death was due to the wrath of the Departed; the special precautions taken in the obsequies of persons killed by tigers or lightning, victims of small-pox and pregnant women; and in Hill and Bison-horn obsequies the attempt finally to lay or placate the Departed by the erection of a menhir in the *kotokal* or *uraskal*.

The word *kanal* is simply a past participial form of the verb *kandana*, 'to go'; 'Departed' is thus a literal translation. It has a sound of finality about it, as though the dead, once departed, were finished with; and indeed men of the hill clans that do not erect menhirs for the dead are apt to assert that this is the case, and that they never worry further about their dead after they have been cremated or buried. Yet there are many signs that even they do not really think so. All Marias, it has already been observed,[1] are shy of talking about the Departed, though it takes little to get them to discuss other religious beliefs and ceremonies. I have had Hill Marias denying that they do anything for the Departed or offer them anything at death or the new-eating festivals, and then either found at their new graves a wooden *kanal-gutta* post and a stone *kanal-garya* seat for the Departed, with a sacrificed cow's tail and foot hanging from a tree close by, or discovered a Pot and Hearth of the Departed in their *lonu*. There is almost certainly not a Maria who does not believe that for some time, at least, after their death the Departed are to be feared and appeased by the necessary offerings and memorials. [764]

This fear of the *kanal* as likely to cause illness, death, the attacks of tigers or famine (for it is these apprehensions that lie behind most of the observances catalogued in the first two paragraphs of this chapter) may operate also not to the alarm of the righteous only, but as a protection to him because of its efficacy in deterring others from offences against the house. Goods stored in the *lonu* of the Hill Marias and the *wijja-lon* of the Bison-horn

[1] See p. 195.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *hanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *hanal*. The *hanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *hanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common use of the expression *pen-hanal* has already been mentioned. As the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotohal* or *uraskal* be the last thing that an individual *hanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

584 contract; they therefore attach less importance to the consent of the girl, and even if a father or his son agree to the *gudapal* girl marrying some other husband, the latter has to compensate the *gudapal* cousin. If a girl's father raises objections to the proposed match, whether a *gudapal* match or not, bitter quarrels often follow; but generally the boy and girl have learnt their own minds before this first formal demand for the girl (*talpana* in the Bison-horn dialect), or there has been previous informal discussion between the two families. Normally, therefore, the youth and girl both being mature, the girl's father gladly agrees to give his girl, and then the youth's father gives him the *paili* of rice and the large and the small pots of *mahua* liquor. The girl's father takes the small pot into the *narma-lon* room of his house, and pours a small quantity on the [769] ground in front of the Pot of the Departed as a libation, the rest being drunk by him and the members of his family. The liquor in the large pot is divided among the relatives and friends of both families who have come to witness the *talpana*, and all disperse except the youth's father and his companions; the rice which he has brought is cooked and served to them and the girl's family. Her father then invites the youth's father to come again for the formal declaration of the betrothal to all his relatives and friends from near and far. The visitors then return to their village.

Some time later the father of the youth in consultation with [787] his friends, and often with the aid of a medium, fixes a day for this second visit, and sends word to the girl's father in good time for him to invite all his relatives and friends. This time he and his party take with them a small pig, two *paili* of rice, a very large pot of *landa* and a large and a small pot of *mahua* spirit. On arrival at the girl's house they are greeted by her father and the assembled guests, and the former announces the betrothal to the company and asks for their formal approval. This given, the girl's father as [769] before pours a libation to the Departed from the small pot of *mahua*, and he and his household drink the rest of its contents. The large pots of *landa* and *mahua* spirit are consumed by all the assembled guests, *barbatti* beans being fried by the girl's mother and served along with the *landa*; and the rice and pork are cooked and served to all present. All then go.

Yet a third preliminary visit to the girl's father follows, the date being arranged as before by the youth's father, and word being sent to the girl's father. This time the former and his party take and deliver to the latter two large pots of *landa*, two large and one small pots of *mahua* spirit, five *paili* of rice or *kuthi*, and a large pig. The youth's father tells the girl's father that he intends to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 There is now no obstacle to the wedding. The appointed day may be any auspicious day in the year, chosen in the manner explained in the section on omens; but in practice almost all weddings take place in the early hot weather, as among the Hill Marias. I will first give a general outline of the wedding procedure, and then reproduce, with some revisions, an account of an actual wedding which I saw at Ganjenar and Massenar between Dantewara and Kuakonda in May 1930; the account has already been published in the *Central Provinces Census Report*, 1931.

On the afternoon of the wedding day the bridegroom, his parents and many relatives of both sexes proceed to the girl's father's house with the agreed bride-price. On arrival the bridegroom's father delivers the bride-price to the bride's father, the cloth for her mother being placed on top of one of the large pots of *landa*, and asks him to hand the bride over. In response the [769] bride's father takes up the small pot of *mahua* spirit, and after the usual libation to his Departed in his *narma-lon* room drinks a little spirit and gives the rest to the members of the household. *Landa* is then taken from one of the pots brought as bride-price and from one of those provided by the bride's father, and distributed to all the guests present, both from the bridegroom's and the bride's villages and clans. Meanwhile the bride is bathed at the nearest pool by women relatives, and a bevy of the women of her village and clan keep up a constant chorus of song, to the occasional beating of drums. After the bride's father has entertained all present of both parties to the *suttam-jawa* or relatives' dinner, consisting of grain and the flesh of the pig brought as part of the bride-price, the girl is brought out by her father or brother towards dusk, and handed over to the bridegroom, their hands being joined and rings exchanged. The senior woman relative of the family takes up the cloth brought for the bride's mother, and wraps it round her, while a male member of the family hands the bridegroom's father a hind-leg of the bride-price pig, to be taken to his village to feed the bridegroom and bride and the bridegroom's family. The bridegroom's party then escort the bridegroom and bride with the bride's going-away presents to the bridegroom's village, accompanied by the girl's relatives and fellow-villagers. Special booths are prepared at this village for the bride's relatives. On arrival, the bride and bridegroom are taken into his father's house to the Place of the Departed in his *narma-lon* room and seated there with the father, brothers and mother of the bridegroom; they eat the hind-leg of pork brought from the bride's house after it has been cooked on the Hearth of the Departed. Meanwhile the other guests sit down to pork and rice cooked separately outside the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

165 work in this period. Often a house or a portion of a house in which a death has occurred is shut up and not re-occupied. It is, however, not repaired. So long as it stands, it is regarded as a memorial of the dead. On the day after the funeral, if the house is still to be occupied, the rooms and the surroundings are cleaned out, and the floors are re-plastered. On the first three mornings after the [769] funeral they place a little meal from the Pot of the Departed on the grave as an offering. At the end of the period of mourning 764 the heir, if rich enough, should proceed at once to set up a menhir to the dead in the *kotokal*, in the *parganas* and villages where these menhirs are still erected. If, however, he cannot yet afford to do so, he goes to the graveside, bows before the *kanal-garya* cromlech, tells the dead man's *kanal* that he is sorry that he cannot yet afford to erect his stone, and begs him to be patient, to forgive him for the delay and not to harass him. It may take him two or three years to collect the necessary grain and money for feeding those who are to help him to find and erect a suitable menhir. In many parts of the hills the custom has fallen into disuse, because of its cost. But it is still common on the Kutru side of the hills, in Tulagotal, Hukkagotal, Farsigotal, Farsal, Bardal, Tapalibhum, Padalibhum, Nurbhum, Behramar and Sonpur *parganas*, and also prevails in Dugal and other neighbouring Jhoria Muria *parganas*. In Chhota Dongar *pargana* few clans now erect either *marma-kal* or *kotokal* stones, though in many villages old rows of *kotokal* menhirs attest the former prevalence of the practice; the Bokalur are almost the only clan there who still erect them. From Adeq in that *pargana* rows of menhirs will be met by the traveller at Itulnar in Bhairamgarh Mar, between Itulnar and Hikul in Barsur Mar, and at Toinar and other villages in the latter *pargana*; but the clans now occupying these areas do not erect menhirs, and say that the rows still standing were erected ages ago by clans no longer known, though the Gumelor attribute the menhirs in their village of Toinar to the long extinct Timor clan. The Tamor of Tumirgunda between Handawada and the Indrawati have a *kotokal* on the hill path to Hirameta, but have erected no new menhir there for years, and say that nowadays no stone is set up till three generations have elapsed after death; they admit that this is practically a confession that the practice has been abandoned, and say that it was found to be too expensive.

When, however, the heir has enough grain and money to pay for the food and drink needed for the erection of a menhir, whether on the fourth day after death, or after the lapse of some months or years, he calls together his relatives and friends, and all go off into the forest to look for a suitable stone. The only consideration

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

guiding their choice is the adequacy of their resources to provide food and drink for the men required to drag or carry the stone. The menhirs in the Abujhmar country and the adjacent Muria tracts are considerably smaller than the vast menhirs sometimes met in the Bison-horn country; the largest that I have seen, at Lakka in Kutru Mar, were just over 8 feet high, and about 2½ feet wide by 10 inches thick at the base. They drag out the selected stone from its resting-place, and place under it several cross-pieces of wood, and on each side of it a long thick pole, to which the cross-pieces are lashed. The stone is then lashed to the cross-pieces, and the poles are lifted on to the shoulders of the bearers, from twenty to thirty in number, and so the journey to the *kotokal* begins. At intervals they stop, and are given by the heir drinks of *mahua* spirit, which is considered to give them strength to bear the burden; and they are given at least one meal on the way. There will also be reserves of bearers, who carry the food and drink and cooking pots, to be entertained. So they ultimately reach the *kotokal* and deposit the stone on the ground at the appointed spot. If it is too late to erect it that evening, a feast follows at the heir's house, and all night the men and women dance with their wife-clan (*akomama*) relatives. In the following afternoon the stone is erected under the supervision of the *erramlogh* or the senior wife-clan relative present. A hole is dug in the ground at one end of the stone and then the stone, if small, is pulled upright by willing hands and held there while the earth is shovelled in. If it is large and heavy, ropes are lashed round the far end and used to pull it upright, with its base in the hole, and ten men or so hold poles on both sides of its apex to prevent it falling over, while others ram small stones, earth and turves around its base. In Kutru Mar, Chhota Dongar Mar, Behramar, Tapalibhum and Sonpur Mar a *kanal-garya* cromlech is then made at the base of the menhir, and the heir of the dead man comes up to it, and squats on the ground with his back to the menhir and the cromlech. He takes an eight or nine days old chicken, and, holding it behind his back and never looking at the stone, cuts its throat with the nails of his hand, sprinkles its blood on the table-stone of the cromlech, and pushes its body under the table-stone; next he places an offering of rice or *kuthi* grain on the table-stone. As he makes the offerings he speaks to the dead man, saying, 'Whether you were killed by magic, or by the wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, or died naturally, I know not. But now I have put up this menhir for you, and you must wander no more. Stay here in peace for ever, and do not worry us your descendants.' In Tapalibhum and Behramar they erect the stone and sacrifice the chicken in silence. Only the heir has to keep his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 back to the menhir; all others present may watch the whole proceedings. In Padalibhum and parts of Nurbhum they do not sacrifice a chicken, but only place an offering of grain on the cromlech. In Farsal, Bardal and the three Gotal *parganas* they then usually kill a boar a few yards away from the menhir, stretching it out on its stomach, two men holding it down with a pole across its neck, while a third man kills it with blows from the blunt side of the axe-head. They boil and eat the pork there, men, women and children, but give no part of it to the *hanal* and do not even hang its tail over the top of the menhir. In these *parganas* they assert that they have given up sacrificing a cow after the erection of the menhir; but I should be surprised if this assertion were strictly true. A similar claim was made by the Padali headmen of Padalibhum, but Bardal Gille, the headman of Rawan in that *pargana*, stated that some clans still offered a cow and hung its tail from the menhir. There is still a fear of offending Hindu State officials by frankly admitting the slaughter of cows. Cow sacrifice is further limited by the comparative scarcity of cattle in many parts of the Abujhmar hills, whereas pigs are plentiful. Even where they assert that they no longer sacrifice cows they do not scruple to eat the flesh of a cow that has died a natural death or been killed by a tiger.

In Kutru Mar they do not erect stones brought to the *kotokal* for women and children, but leave them flat on the ground. The stones for women and children, whether erected or prone, are always smaller than those erected for men. There is a general belief that menhirs increase or decrease in size according to the *hanal* is satisfied or not.[1]

769 After the chicken and grain have been offered on the cromlech at the foot of the menhir, the heir, still turning his back on the menhir, goes off at once to the nearest pool of water, followed by the others present, and all wash their arms and legs and return to the village. Where cow sacrifice is still in vogue, as in Tapalibhum, Behramar and Sonpur Mar *parganas*, the *erramtogh* then sacrifices a cow or a pig or both, generally in the *lonu* room of the heir's house before the Pot of the Departed, using the blunt side of the axe-head, saying to the dead man, '*Niwa naode mat haukin torun. Idek mak suk-duk kemek manu*', or, 'I sacrifice this in your name; hereafter keep still and do not make trouble for us!' The tuft at the end of the cow's tail is fastened to a loop of cord, and hung over the apex of the menhir just erected. The heir then entertains all who have assembled to a second dinner, off the sacrificed beef and pork, and the night ends in dancing and liquor. Needless to say, this procedure is costly, and many a *hanal* has to rest content with a *marma-kal* cairn.

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 423. – Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Where, as in Orcha and most of the surrounding villages of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, *kotokal* menhirs are no longer erected, a cow or pig is nevertheless sacrificed in this way in the village on the night after the funeral at the heir's house, and portions of the flesh or the liver when cooked are placed under the cromlech at the base of the *hanal-gutta* post, or, if there is no cromlech, on the grave, while the tail, and sometimes also a lower leg, from hock to hoof, are fastened by a cord from an overhanging *saja* bough. The usual feast and dance then follow.

One reason for the abandonment of the custom of erecting menhirs may be that the clans which have abandoned it have in fairly recent times abandoned their traditional for their present clan-areas; for it was the rule that the menhir should always be erected in the village from which the dead man or his ancestors had originally come, not in the village at which he was living at the time of his death.

A person who has killed himself, or who dies from cholera or small-pox, is not buried or cremated at the regular funeral ground, but in the forest at some distance from it. There had been no recent case in any village which I visited of a woman dying when pregnant or in child-birth, and no one could say what would be done in such a case. Persons killed by tigers or other wild animals must be burned, not buried, at the place where their remains are found, or to which they are brought for the inquest. They must never be brought into a village, for otherwise the dead man's *hanal* may bring the tiger there. The remains, if scattered, are collected and placed in a cloth brought from the dead man's house; but such bodies should be touched as little as possible. Logs are piled under the body where it lies and kindled, and anything found with the body or at the place where the tiger attacked the dead man is burnt with it; but no dancing dresses or other property are brought from his house to be burned with him, and no offerings of grain or *mahua* spirit are made at the grave. No *marma-kal* cairn and no *kotokal* menhir are set up for him; but there is nothing to prevent this being done for the victims of cholera or smallpox.

Treatment of abnormal deaths

B. Bison-horn Marias

The true Bison-horn Marias, as distinguished from members of clans once Hill Maria in culture but now adopting Bison-horn customs, cremate all their dead except those who die from abnormal causes. When a man dies, his son-in-law is sent for, and on arrival climbs on to the roof of the house with a *dol* drum, which he beats

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a woman at this time. At the menarche (for which the word used is *kumer utta*, 'the blossoming of the flower'), however, a special hut is built for the girl by women outside the village. A woman of the household brings her food and sleeps with her at night; she must bathe whenever she returns to the house. In some villages, the Marias still make a platform up a tree for the girl, who during the day must hide herself in the forest.

It is very dangerous for anyone to see, let alone to touch, a girl at her menarche. At Tikanpal I was told that if a man saw such a girl as he went through the jungle he should slap her and then go to her parents and after rebuking them, demand a fowl which he should sacrifice; then he should bathe and anoint himself with oil. At Gadapal they said that a man should throw a lump of earth between his legs at the girl, or a stick over his shoulder, and then go home and bathe. Neglect of these precautions might lead to blindness.

At the end of the period—all this refers only to the first period—the girl destroys her hut or platform during the night, throws away her cloth,[1] bathes and returns home before cockcrow. In some villages she is expected to remain for a day or two longer on the veranda of her house: if she has a married elder brother, it is the special duty of his wife to attend to her. Then she puts oil and turmeric on her body—an act which is said to symbolize her formal re-admission into caste, for during the previous days she has been regarded as excommunicated. In many Maria villages, however, the ceremonial use of turmeric is still unknown, and the elder brother's wife carries a pot of water round the house and sprinkles everyone saying, 'Now you are back again in caste'. After this the girl fetches water in an earthen pot and cowdungs the floor. In the evening her father invites some of the elders to a bottle of liquor and says, 'My daughter who was unclean all these days is now clean again'. He sacrifices a fowl to the Departed and they feast on its flesh.

There is not nearly so much fuss about the later periods. The woman has to keep out of the way, but there is no danger in looking at her, and when it is over she just has a bath and resumes her ordinary duties. But even so her daily programme is considerably disturbed. She must not sleep inside the house and, of course, sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden. She must not cook or fetch water or go to work in the fields. She must not touch cattle, pigs

[1] There do not seem to be any special taboos associated with this cloth. But the leaf-cups from which the girl eats at this time are charged with magical potency and if a witch can get hold of them she can afflict the girl with palsy.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWO

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

I. The Muria Village

BEFORE approaching the main subject of this book, it is necessary to see how the chelik and motiari live at home. In a sense, there is no such thing as a typical Muria village any more than there is a typical Muria house. But most of the villages conform to the Gond pattern: they are set among trees—the Muria seem fonder of shade than wind and do not often choose the hill-tops beloved of the Maria and Baiga—and each house is enclosed within a separate fence that also surrounds its garden. There is thus a sharp distinction between a Muria and a Hill Maria village: the latter, like the Baiga village, consists of a row of houses joined together and opening on to a common street. Traces of this survive among the Muria in the enclosures of some of their leading men; at Markabera, for example, the headman's house is like a little village, a long enclosure with a small street on to which face many dwelling-places and granaries. In Palli-Barkot, and other western villages also, groups of related families build their houses to open round a square.

But generally the houses are scattered about, sometimes widely scattered, to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens, and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul are ever in a special or recognized position.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small courtyard, are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs. As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the east of Kondagaon the verandah of the main house is often deeper than the room inside. Where houses are built like this, there is no need for special menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar, where there is no room to seclude a woman on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and cleanness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of Mother Earth, and a love of animals. The pigsties are substantial, often with a double roof; the cattle-sheds are sometimes raised on pillars; sitting hens are given comfortable nests raised well above the ground. The houses themselves are cosy and homely, crammed with every sort of basket, leaf-bundle and utensil. Fish-traps, drums, wooden clogs hang from the roof, and flutes and bows and arrows are stuck under the thatch. Inside, in an inner room, is kept the mysterious Pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and placated.

These houses are the work-rooms of the chelik and motiari; they are the homes only of the married. The life and interest of chelik and motiari centre in the ghotul. But life there is definitely regarded as a preparation and training for the home. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

Most of the Muria are undoubtedly very poor. I was one day discussing with W. V. Grigson, who had visited Mandla after several years in Bastar, whether the Bastar villagers were poorer than those in the Central Provinces. I suggested—and he agreed—that probably the Bastar villagers were actually poorer, but that their lives were so much richer that they seemed far more

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXXI

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The dead man's daughter-in-law throws rice over the bier

Memorial menhirs near Khutgaon

[p. 144 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769
292
535

Plate XXXII

[p. 144 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXXIII

769
292
535

Scenes from the Dance of the Ghost

[p. 144 (E)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXXIV

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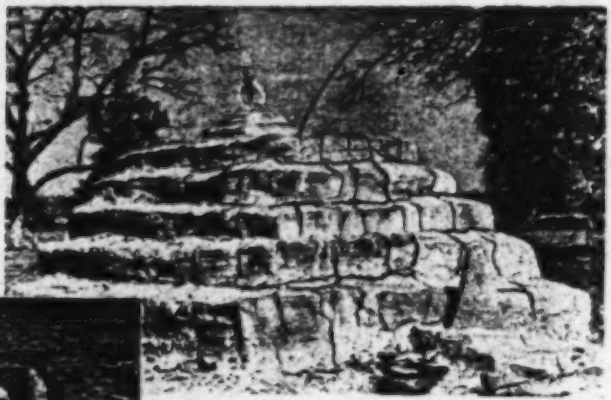
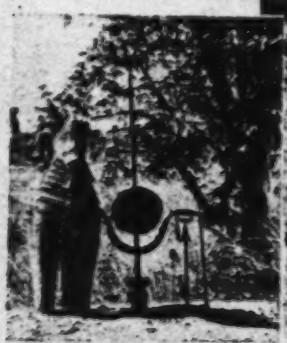


Tomb at Gudripara

Small menhir in front of the Gudripara tomb

Son and grandson offer liquor at a father's tomb at Phunder



[p. 144 (D)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.[1] I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.[2] The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. The Intervention of the Departed in Human Affairs

But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are particularly interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or grievous hurt peace can only be made between the two families if peace is made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery with another man.

The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead. Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall, to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing, to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 96.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubstantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, op. cit., p. 141.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

to its prey, to protect the boys and girls going out on dancing expeditions, to ensure that the drum gives its accustomed thunder. Life and death are thus united by these beliefs and rites, and the whole of existence is seen as a single sequence where physical death is but an incident which in no way disturbs the continuity of interest or relationship.

V. Funerary Rites

In the west, Muria death customs are dominated by Hill Maria influence. In Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria said that their funerary rites were 'things of the Maria Raj'. As we move east, where the Muria population probably represents an earlier Gond immigration from the north, customs are not unlike those typical of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The north-east of Bastar, however, has been more open to Hindu influence and it is not always easy to tell what the original traditions were.

The Muria bury important people, little children, chelik and motiari, and the victims of small-pox. They cremate all others. They lay the corpse, whether of man or woman, on its back with the head to the east. At Padbera, the Gaita said, 'It is because we came from the east. East is "up" and west is "down" '.

Members of each clan and either sex are disposed in separate places. Those who die from unusual causes are taken far away into the jungle. In Palari I was told that the remains of a tiger's victim should be burnt on the actual scene of death. Usually the corpse is placed under a mahua tree.

I will first describe one of the several funerals that I have witnessed, and then give any variations that I have recorded elsewhere.

On the night of 8 December 1940, in Bauri, a village of the Abujhmar foothills, a woman of about forty years named Dhako, the wife of Genjru of the Wadder clan, died and was carried home on a rough litter to her husband's house at Amgaon. She had died of 'a watery swelling of the body', perhaps dropsy, which is generally regarded as a punishment for adultery. The people were very reticent about speaking of the cause of her death and I never was able to hear the real story.

Since it is taboo for a woman to sleep on a cot, Dhako died on the ground and was again laid on the floor of her own house covered with a sheet. Many women, assembled in the house and outside in the street, wailed loudly from time to time. Gradually the relatives gathered and, when all were there, the corpse was carried out on a bamboo mat into the courtyard. Six women sat round weeping. An old woman of the Wadder clan (which can marry with the Partabi clan to which the dead woman originally belonged), but not a member of the family, now tied a little rice and a cowrie in knots on either side of the cloth. There were three knots on each side joined by a thread which ran criss-cross over the body. They did not bathe the corpse nor close the eyes, but the woman's little daughter, a child about five years old, put haldi on her mother's face, and the other female relatives present did the same.

Meanwhile a group of chelik, most of whom were related to Genjru, were busy making a sort of ladder to serve as bier. This they covered with dry grass. The corpse was lifted out and placed upon it. The chelik took it on their shoulders and went into the jungle followed by both men and women. Genjru's younger sister followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice over it. Another woman carried a basket containing three different roots and bits of haldi.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

761 787 the house of a samdhi. The chickens are exchanged so that a representative of the dead person's house holds the samdhi's chicken and vice versa. The usual piles of rice are made and the chickens held before them while a string of names is recited. When the chickens peck at the rice, it is believed that they have revealed the cause of death. The chickens are then sacrificed and cooked with the rice on the spot.

It is commonly believed all over India, as by the Muria, that the way the smoke rises from the funeral pyre indicates the sort of death the deceased has suffered. If the smoke goes straight up, it indicates a natural death; if it goes crooked, it proclaims the hand of witchcraft.

VII. 'Bringing Back the Soul'

769 The curious rite of 'bringing back the soul' is known to the Hill Maria and the Bison-horn Maria, but is most common among the Muria who practise it in many different forms. Since this rite is performed throughout the Central Provinces, and since some of these Muria probably represent an ancient migration from the north into Bastar, it is not surprising that we should find this cultural link between them.[1]

It is rather difficult to describe the rites because of the bewildering variety of detail to be discovered from village to village, but it is possible to get a fairly clear picture of the main outlines.

After death, on the following day or at any time up to three years, when there is sufficient provision in the house, the relations of the dead man are summoned for a feast. Sometimes the relations are warned by a dream that the spirit of the dead is dissatisfied and that they must do something to comfort and honour him.

The people assemble, both *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relatives, and enjoy a feast in the dead man's house. The next morning they go singing, both men and women, attended by chelik and motiari with their drums and cymbals to the nearest tank or river. In some villages a samdhi makes a small booth on the bank; nine reeds are planted in the ground, mango leaves tied to them and a string run round them seven times. On the top he puts a small mat and on the ground he makes a circle with red and black powder and places an egg in the middle in the name of the Yer K[illegible]ang (the Water Maiden). The Gaita then puts three rings of aonra fibre in the circle and an earthen pot filled with water.

[1] Accounts of bringing back the soul have been given for several tribes by Russell and Hiralal, for the Gond (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 94), Ahir (III, p. 28), Halba (III, p. 195), Kharia (III, p. 430), Kond (III, p. 469), Lohar (IV, p. 124), and Taonia (IV, 541). The practice is probably common to all the tribes in the Central Provinces. It is said that the Gond once buried their dead inside the house in order to ensure re-birth within the family; possibly 'bringing back the soul' has a similar purpose. The Gond customs recorded by Russell and Hiralal resemble those of the Muria. Others, however, differ. For example, the Kharia bring back the soul of the dead by attracting it at night to a lamp placed at a cross-roads. They sit near the lamp calling on the dead man and when the flame wavers in the wind, they break the lamp saying that the soul has returned to them. The Kond are said to have brought home the soul riding on a bow-stick covered with cloth. The Lohar have a custom, which I have myself noted for the Pando of east Bilaspur. Rice-flour is spread on the floor of the kitchen and covered with a brass plate. The mourners go to the village boundary, again spread flour on the ground, call on the dead to come and wait till some worm or insect crawls on to the flour. They catch the creature with a pinch of dough and carry it home and let it loose in the house. The flour under the brass plate is scrutinised and it is said that usually the foot-prints of a man or animal are found; this indicates the body of the man or beast to which the soul has passed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The near relatives of the deceased then go into the water crying on the dead to come to them and try to catch any kind of living thing. Whoever first catches a fish or prawn or frog, whatever it may be, is regarded as being specially loved by the dead and is rewarded with extra drinks and small presents. They put the fish into one of the pots together with a ring. The pot is covered with a bamboo cover on which is a new sari. The *akomāma* relative applies haldi and oil to the pot and as he is doing this someone else catches hold of every member of the party in turn, both men and women, and smears their private parts with haldi-oil. Then a girl (daughter or daughter-in-law to the dead) lifts the pot, puts it on her head, carries it up to the house and puts it down near the Pot of the Departed. A samdhi sacrifices a chicken after testing it in the usual way; when the chicken eats the rice offered it is a sign that the soul of the dead man loves his family as before. Then they pour the water together with the fish and ring on to the ground and tie the ring, which represents the man's soul, from the roof above the Pot of the Departed. Sometimes the ring is tied to a broom. They hang the pot itself up to the roof of the house. They eat the sacrificed chicken and drink and dance and then disperse. A samdhi makes a mixture of the water in which rice has been cleaned, the bark of the mango tree and a little cow's milk and sprinkles the whole house in order to purify it.

Some time afterwards, at one of their clan festivals, the members of the family take either the pot or simply the ring that has been hung in the Room of the Departed to the clan shrine or Hanalkot, which must be located at the clan headquarters or at least in some village within the clan territory. In some villages, as at Gudla, this is only done for men; women stay in the house. But at Sirsi the souls of both men and women were taken to the Hanalkot. In Kerawahi they said that at the special festival for Bara Pen, which occurs every two or three years, the members of the Poyami clan take the pots in which the soul has been brought from the river along with the rings to the shrine of their clan god. They sacrifice fowls saying, 'Here is the god of Lanji-Dhamda, go to him and you will become like him. As he helps us, so you too help us'. They tie the ring to a tree overlooking the shrines and break the pot. Then after the usual feast they go home.

Sometimes, however, the people take the soul direct to the Hanal. This is a small shrine for the dead, generally under a saja tree. They put the pot containing the soul and the ring down near the tree and sacrifice two hens, one for the dead man's family and one for his *akomāma* relatives. They feed these saying, 'Have you come happily today? Don't trouble us, you are to become a god. Always help us and don't trouble us'. When the chickens eat, thus showing that the soul is pleased, a member of the family kills one chicken and a samdhi kills the other. On the place where the chickens are sacrificed, they pour out the water and soul from the pot. They tie the ring by a single thread to the tree thus 'mixing him with the dead'. Everyone who came should have brought a chicken; these are now killed with sticks and roasted. The two sacrificed chickens may only be eaten by those who killed them. They drink liquor and dance and sing, and then go dancing home.

In the Bara Dongar Pargana the Muria have a very impressive death-dance for this occasion. A man wearing a beard of bear's hair, four *gutri*[1] horns tied on his forehead, a fishing-net round his loins, a wooden doll in one hand, a bent stick in the other, leads the way from the river up to the house. In

[1] *Cervulus Muntjac*, the barking deer.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769 535 front of him one samdhi carries water and another a stick. As they go along they beat the path and throw water on it saying, 'We are making a road before you, come slowly leaning on your stick; we are making a road for you, come samdhi to your house, don't stay outside'.

The bearded man, who is supposed to represent the soul of the dead, weary, hungry and exhausted comes walking slowly, bent like an aged man. Soon he falls to the ground exclaiming, 'I can go no further'. Then the samdhi says, 'You must drink this jawa-gruel' and they give him a drink of liquor and pull him up on his feet. He goes on a little more and falls on his feet again. Other people dance round him beating sticks against each other and all the people sing. He falls down again and again exclaiming that he is too weary and hungry to go further.

When they get near the house the bearded man and his two attendants roll on the ground and the family has to come out and beg them to bring the soul in. 'We will pay you your wages' they say, meaning that they will give them plenty of liquor. The daughter or sister of the deceased comes out with haldi, rice and water in a dish and washes the feet of the man who represents the soul.[1]

769 Inside the house they place a small stump, eight inches high, in the ground in the name of Bara Pen. There is a nail in the post and they hang the pot containing the fish on this and all relatives put haldi on it and offer pice to it saying, 'We have brought you here for your last marriage'. They sacrifice a cock to Bara Pen saying, 'Now keep this soul with you'.

They pour the water from the pot over the stump of the dead man, who is thus supposed to bathe in it. There is a curious idea that the fish must disappear as otherwise it will mean that the soul has not 'flown out of the pot to mingle with his ancestors'. Once when Lahari Maravi's father died, a witch kept the fish in the pot and would not let it fall out. They had to make special sacrifices before the soul was able to mingle with the Departed.

During the ceremonies of catching the soul and bringing it back to the house a number of songs are sung, of which the following are given as examples.

Song

769 539

Re re nāgo re rela !

Dāt ra dādi dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go.
Aga baga dākāt ra ?	Where are they going?
Sono rupo bandāng ra,	To the gold and silver tank,
Aga yise dātu ra.	Let us go there.
Phauj lamre mānta ra.	The whole company is going.
Agāy yise yewandur ra.	They have arrived there.
Sāt kori layor ra,	Seven score chelik,
Sāt kori layah kere ra,	Seven score motiari,
Agāy yise handur ra,	They are going there,
Bandāng jhalke māndur ra.	Where waves move the water of the tank.
Agāy yise parakandur ra.	They are searching for it.
Jiwa koji kindur ra,	They are searching for the soul,
Bagāy jiwa pudo ra.	But they cannot find it.

[1] Such dramatic rituals give some point to Ridgeway's suggestion that serious drama originated from the worship of the, often deified, dead. See Sir W. Ridgeway, *Drama and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races* (London, 1915).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

769 ●
539

Dīda hārāl itur ra,	His brother says,
Wāy ra bābu wāyu ra.	Come, father, come.
Idām injor hatur ra	When he said this
Jiwa injor wāndu ra.	The soul came.
Dīda hārāl poyondu ra.	His brother caught it.
Dātu dādi dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go.

Re re nāgo re rela!

This song explains itself so clearly that no commentary is needed. It is sung by chelik and motiari while the elder people are groping about in the water trying to catch some kind of living creature. The next song also gives an exact description of the rites that accompany the return of the soul, after it has been caught, to its home.

Songs

Ange hāri nihandu ra	Daughter-in-law puts it (the soul)
Puhua tānd te irandu.	In a new pot and shuts it up.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Ange hāri indu ra,	Daughter-in-law says,
Dāyu bābu dāyu ra!	Come, brother, come!
Sāt kori layor ra,	Seven score boys,
Sāt kori layākhs ra,	Seven score girls,
Dand laure māndur ra,	They go along,
Ange hāri poyse māndur ra	Daughter-in-law carries the pot on her head.
Lone yise yewtor ra,	They reach the house,
Ghāt ghadse māndur ra.	They come outside.
Lone yise yeakun ra	When they reach the house
Agāy yise rohandu ra.	She puts down the pot.
Nātenoru saga ra,	Wife-clansmen of the village,
Bāhar tore saga ra.	Wife-clansmen from outside have come.
Samdhi saga wāsmandur ra,	The wife-clansmen have come,
Helār bhai saga wāsmandur ra.	The brother-clansmen have come.
Ore yise talkhikindu ra,	They are asking,
Jiwa muda tun talkhikindu ra.	They ask for the ring of the soul.
Jiwa muda tun poyendur ra	The relatives
Saga sana poyendu ra.	All touch the ring.
Saga sana jiwa muda tun ra	The relatives tie the ring
Kasur padiya te dohandur ra;	On a broom;
Lopāra murwis pāt te ra,	Then take the broom inside,
Agāy yise dohandur ra.	And tie it to the cross-beam.
Rend rupaiya na dārango ra:	They give two rupees for liquor:
Dārango yise tach mandur ra.	They give liquor to all.
Saga sana tun kindur ra:	They give to the wife-clans:
Bhai bandun tun kitor ra.	They give to the brother-clans.
Lotor yise māney ra	The people of the house
Johār bhatu kindur ra.	Salute them with Johar.
Johār bhatu kishun ra	After the Johar greeting
Apun āpunlokhe kandur ra.	The visitors go home.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769
539

The next song refers to the erection of the booth in honour of the Water Maiden whence the motiari carry the pot containing the soul up to the house.

Chole dada re re le	Come, brothers!
Gari poto hintor ra	The Gaita's son
Gaitana marri hintor ra,	Makes a seat,
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Rāni haniyātun gari ra	In the Rani's name
Hintor nima girta āmu ra.	For you he makes a seat.
Nima rāni dāyu ra!	Come O Rani!
Nima penu atoni ra.	You have become our god.
Garh hutiyār mata ra	The house is ready
Rāni haniyāna āndu ra.	Of the Rani Kaniya.
Garh lopa bārāng ra?	What is there in the house?
Ghar lopa jhulna ra,	There is a swing in the house,
Sono tāye jhulna ra,	The swing is of gold,
Chāndi tāye sakri ra,	The chains are of silver,
Hira tāye gādi ra	The throne is of diamonds
Gādi poroy udila ra.	On which she sits.
Tāna poroy iteke ra	Above her
Jora chawar ārtu ra.	Are a pair of fly-whisks.
Dari dipte gajur ata ra;	In this world there is much noise;
Niya sangnor girta ra	Come, for your friends
Alor nima acho dayu ra.	Are happy.
Manjhpurte chim arta ra	In the Middle World is silence;
Nima echo dayu ra.	Therefore come.
Silāwāri layāk ra	Silawari is a maiden,
Dātu bai dātu ra,	Come, girl, come,
Mawa jiwa oit ra;	Bring our *jiwa* home;
Harik maute dāyu bai	Come willingly
Lone nima mandahi ra.	And live in our house.
Samdhi saga wator bai.	The wife-clan people have come, girl.
Helār bai walang ra,	The sisters have come,
Dand lanre matar ra,	Come by the path,
Lone tike wontor ra.	Come home with the soul.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

Another song, recorded at Kokori, refers to the wild and lonely life of the soul in the jungle before it is brought home to live in the granary.

Bābu oole bābu na!	Brother, O brother!
Tuy bale bābu sunu!	Listen to us, brother!
Jau bābu jau na!	Go, brother, go!
Jau bābu jau!	Go, brother, go!
Kaha bale jawa bābu?	Where should I go, brother?
Kaha bale jau?	Where should I go?
Pāni ghāte jau bābu,	Go to the place of water, brother,
Bāra bali kholi.	Where there are twelve rooms.
Jhar bhitar rahis bābu;	You were living in a tree;
Ban bhitar rahis;	You were living in the forest;
Pāni ghāte jau bābu.	Go to the water-place, brother.
Pāni ghāte jau.	Go to the water-place.
Burjaun rahis bābu,	You were in the dust, brother.
Pāni nahank karu.	Now go to bathe.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

769●
539

Pāni nahauk jau bābu,	When you have bathed, brother,
Gadiya baiuk jau.	Go, sit in the granary.
Nāwa luga pidun bābu,	Wearing a new cloth, brother,
Gadiya ne baiwa.	Sit in the granary.
Chāti cho dhar howun bābu,	Like a line of ants, brother,
Ghare bale jau.	Let us go home.
Age din cho dāda bābu,	The elders of former days,
Utay miluk jau.	Go to mix with them.

This song, which is in Halbi, refers to the custom of east Kondagaon (and of other parts) of keeping the soul in the granary. The song ensures that the soul will come happily. It is said that the souls of the dead hear all things on earth the wrong way round. Mourning sounds to them like merry-making, and a song sounds like a wail.

VIII. The Bazaar Ceremony

769

In some villages in the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria go to the nearest bazaar to buy parched rice, gram and liquor. They walk round the shops scattering the rice and gram and then visit the grave of the dead man. Here they eat and drink a little and then go home saying to the soul of the dead, 'Come home with us'. They go into the Room of the Departed and it is believed that the soul follows them.

The mourners go to a bazaar. The women carry rice, bread and sweets in their baskets and sit down near the market-place, but away from it. They pretend to have a bazaar of their own and the men of the party go to them and pretend to buy. The widow or the chief female mourner, if the deceased was a man, comes and sits in the middle of the party; the Gaita offers fire and incense and the rest give her leaves and flowers. In some villages it is supposed that it is at this time that the soul of the dead man mixes with his ancestors. Then the widow leads the party widdershins round the bazaar and comes home. On their arrival at the house the mourners say to her, 'Now let us depart. You have had great sorrow, for your life has left you. You have had great expense, but don't worry. Live happily and eat your fill. God has given you sorrow, but if you brood on this sorrow overmuch who will care for your children?'

In the Mardapal Pargana they performed the same ceremony by walking round the place where the cattle rest at midday. In other villages, specially those at some distance from a bazaar, the people hold a mock bazaar in their own compound putting out for sale old clothes, bits of wood, seeds and beans. Instead of money they use the broken pieces of an earthen pot. This does not seem to take the place of the ordinary ceremony of bringing the soul in a pot from the river but is supplementary to it. If for any reason these ceremonies are not performed, a cock is sacrificed annually at the year's end. A *saja* 'tooth-twig' is also given so that the dead man can clean his teeth before eating.

The ceremonies are confused and vary from village to village and even from time to time. But the main outlines are clear. The soul of the dead man is supposed to be living outside his home and must be brought back. People go to the nearest stream or tank and catch some living creature which they bring with dance and song, and sometimes with an elaborate ceremonial, to his old home. There they believe the soul will rest for a time. Afterwards they take the ring representing the soul to the central shrine of all the members of the clan. There is thus a double mingling of a man's soul with the Departed,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

●769 first with the immediate members of his own family in his own house, and then with all the members of his clan.

IX. The Pot of the Departed

Funeral rites and memorial pillars or stones emphasize the importance of the dead to the outside world and to the neighbours, but for the family, attention centres round the Hanal Kunda or the Pot of the Departed, a large earthen pot which is kept in a dark corner of the inner room of a Hill Maria house and in the store-room by the Bison-horn Maria. Among the Hill Maria this room is often called the Hanal Kholi or Room of the Departed. In addition to the Pot there is also a Hearth of the Departed on which the housewife must cook new grain at each of the First Eating festivals. In the same room various stores are kept. Among the Bison-horn Maria the room dedicated to the dead is the Wijja-lon, the third of the three buildings of which their homes are normally composed. This room is generally used as the seed-room or granary and is almost entirely filled with a large platform on which pots, baskets and sacks are placed. In one corner, however, there is the Pot of the Departed and near it the sacred hearth. The Jhoria Muria and other Muria also keep the pot inside their houses, sometimes in the ordinary store-room, sometimes in the granary. As we move east across the Kondagaon Tahsil, however, the custom shows signs of weakening and there are villages where a special permanent pot is not preserved in private houses, though there is usually one in the Hanalkot, or corporate house of the dead.

This Pot of the Departed is quite distinct from the little pots in which the soul of a dead man is brought back to the house and taken to the Hanalkot in order to be mingled with his house and clan ancestors. It is a permanent pot to which special offerings are made on all important occasions of Muria life.

New grain and vegetables are cooked in it at the appropriate festivals. From time to time women put a little rice and flour into it. In the north of the State, as at Khutgaon, two pots were kept for the dead in the kitchen, one full of rice and the other empty. At every meal the housewife transferred a pinch of rice from the full into the empty pot in honour of the Departed. When the empty pot was filled members of the household, but no others, cooked and ate it. At an engagement ceremony, a cowrie is put in the pot to compensate the family ancestors for the loss of a girl from their clan.

There are various rules about this pot. No man may remove anything from it. No unmarried girl above the age of puberty may approach it. The reason for this is that the unmarried girls of the family will shortly be leaving the house and will be transferred to another clan and their connexion will be with a different pot in someone else's house. At a Muria marriage also, when the bride comes to her new home, her mother-in-law shows her the Pot of the Departed and a rice-husker saying, 'These things now are yours, care for us, honour the dead, give food to all, entertain strangers'.

X. Memorials to the Dead

Throughout Bastar menhirs are erected in memory and in placation of the dead. The Hill Maria, the majority of the Bison-horn Maria, some of the Dorla, and the Muria of the north and west still maintain their megalithic culture. Even the eastern Muria continue it in a special form that we shall presently consider. The custom has, however, been abandoned in certain areas and by certain clans.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The stone erected by the Muria is an upright menhir called *uraskal* (from Gondi *uraana*—to bury, and *kal*—a stone) or *kotokal*. At Surewahi, near Antagarh, the villagers called the 240 menhirs of their memorial field *khamakal*. They stand from 2 to 8 feet high, and may be 1 foot to 4 feet broad and 6 to 10 inches thick. The Muria of eastern Kondagaon sometimes set up little menhirs not more than a foot tall. 769●

The menhirs are erected for men, women and children, and usually stand in long rows by the roadside, near the village boundary, in the neighbourhood of the cemetery, or even in the village itself. Nearly always a small flat stone supported on two other stones is placed at the foot. This little cromlech is called the *kandi-garya*, or 'ghost-throne', and is used as an altar of sacrifice. Stones for men and women are usually put separately, and anyone who has died a suspicious death has his menhir apart from the others.

Hutton has referred to the megalithic culture of Bastar as 'now apparently rapidly decaying',[1] but the Jhoria Muria continue to erect menhirs everywhere and so do the other Muria of Narayanpur Tahsil and western Kondagaon. As we move east, however, and come more and more into the midst of Muria whose ancestors migrated south from the Central Provinces, the megalithic tradition tends to disappear, though it survives here and there, as we shall see, in curious and interesting forms. 769 178

Why should a practice so widespread, so reasonable and so harmless to mankind have disappeared in the areas I have mentioned? The answer is not an easy one. Sometimes there is an actual difficulty in getting stones, and the Muria naturally do not care to transport great slabs of rock across great distances. The reason most commonly given is expense. This is probably the true reason, for the cost of erecting a menhir is considerable. A great feast has to be given; one or more cows must be sacrificed, and perhaps pigs and chickens as well; large quantities of liquor must be provided; and the carriers of the stone must be properly rewarded. Grigson, however, discussing this problem among the Maria, thinks that the question of expense is not the real reason, pointing out that many aboriginals spend a great deal of money on their marriages; he suggests that the true reason is contact with Hinduism 'with its veneration of the cow'.[2] This may be true of a few villages near Jagdalpur or Dantewara or of those Maria and Muria who have come under the strong influence of the Palace or the cult of Danteshwari. But I believe that in spite of ardent denials to officials and visitors, beef is still eaten from one end of Bastar to the other. In fact, there is evidence that the last few years have seen a revival of beef-eating. In any case, where a forked stick takes the place of a menhir, the fork is intended as a holder over which the tail of the cow should be hung.

It is more likely, certainly along the main roads and in the east, that there is a desire to imitate the Hindu custom of erecting elaborate tombs for the dead. Many of these may now be seen, with a small shelter over them, and a pot hanging above.

The break-up of the clan system, according to which in the old days the country was divided into definite clan areas, each with a central shrine for the clan god and one central place for the erection of all the menhirs of the clan, has been an important factor. The clans now are so scattered and their *khuts* or territory is so divided up that many Muria have never been to their original *pen-rewar* or clan headquarters. The menhirs are no longer erected

[1] J. H. Hutton, Introduction to Grigson, op. cit., p. xv.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 280.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769 at the spiritual capital of the clan-*bhum*, but are often placed in the village where the dead man used to live. I will return to this point immediately; it will 178 be sufficient to say now that the break-up of any form of organization is likely to cause a parallel decline in custom.

The association of the dead with the clan god is seen not only in the custom of erecting menhirs in the clan-*bhum*, and the use of an expression like Penhanal, but also in the Muria practice of taking the soul from the house to the Hanalkot which is always connected with one special clan. This was clearly illustrated at Phunder, where an earthen pot, full of rice, hangs above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any member of the clan dies, the mourners take his soul here, sprinkle the blood of a sacrificed chicken above the clan-pot, and thus leave the soul of the dead with his clan ancestors. Once a year, at the first New Eating ceremony, the Gaita removes the pot and changes the rice in the name of the Departed.

XI. The Erection of a Menhir

769 The Muria regard it as necessary to bring the stone for their menhirs and the wood for the manufacture of the clan gods from special forests and hills. At Kokori the Naitami clan bring their stones from Chapadongri, the Maravi from Mahadeodongri. The Kalo clan of Mahurpat used to fetch their *kotokal* stones from Boga in Kanker State. One of their ancestors, they say, turned into stone (*kal*) on a hill near this place: they stole the stone and since then have been known as Kalo.

Since the Muria generally use small stones they seldom have to quarry them, but pick them off the ground. When people go to the forest for wood or to hunt they keep a look out for suitable surface stones.

The actual erection of the stone is done by the Jhoria Muria in largely Hill Maria fashion,[1] but here it is the chelik and motiari who escort the menhir to its place with their drums and dances. In the Paralkot area, when an old man dies, an *akomāma* relative dances with an axe over his shoulder in front of the stone and the boys and girls follow drumming and singing. In Phulpar they said that on this occasion, which here they called Kal Ursana or stone-burying, an *akomāma* relative beats the *hātur-dhol* or death-drum in front of the house of the deceased and chants a refrain: 'You are dead now; today we will devour your wealth with pleasure.'

I will give an example of the procedure followed at Kehalakot village. Birju Kando decided, as a result of dreams which troubled him, to erect a stone in memory of his parents. Stones for this clan have to be brought from a hill called Deodongri. He took with him the Gaita of the Hichami clan which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kando clan, for it is the rule that the removal of the stone must be performed by a member of such a clan. The Gaita made a *chok* in front of the stone and offered liquor, pulse and rice, then dug it up. At first they could not get it out of the ground and the Gaita declared that the dead man was annoyed about something and they offered a black chicken to appease him. Once they had got the stone out of the ground they placed it on a specially prepared litter, covered it with fresh cloth and brought it to the *bhum* of the Kando clan, being careful not to take it through any village on the way.

As they brought it near, the dead man's sister and daughters stopped them, standing in a line across the path, and demanded rings. Birju gave them a

[1] See Grigson's description, op. cit., pp. 276ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rupee to purchase rings in the bazaar. The Hichami Gaita then dug the hole and they put a saja leaf in the bottom and the stone above it. Soon afterwards a second stone was brought for Birju's mother and this was placed separately, for it is the rule that the memorials for men and women should not usually be together, though this rule, like all rules, is often broken. They bathed the stones and put a *gappa* basket with roots and rice in front of the woman's stone and a dish in front of the man's. Everyone present put a mark of oil and haldi on the stones, just as they might have done at a marriage to the bride and bridegroom. They returned home and sacrificed a bullock and tied the tail to the old man's menhir. On this occasion the souls of the deceased were brought back to the Hanalkot, which stands in the village itself. 769

The cow or bullock is often chosen by old people while they are still alive. Widows, who may reasonably expect to be neglected, are insistent on dedicating such an animal.

XII. General Ideas about the Menhirs

There is a universal belief that the memorial stones grow in size if the soul of the dead is satisfied with the arrangements that are made for him. I have on several occasions spoken to the Muria of the north (who erect very much smaller stones than the Maria of the south) about the great *urashal* of the Bison-horn Maria. They invariably reply, 'But, of course, these stones are very old and they have grown; they could never have put up such big ones'. They believe that even the small stones of the north will grow in time. Kodu, the very intelligent Malguzar of Khutgaon in the extreme north of the State, told me that in the past twenty years he has definitely seen the stones grow in size. A very small stone is put for a baby and it is believed that it will grow gradually until it has reached the size it should have been had it been placed for a man of twenty.

When a stone grows it is considered fortunate. There is sure to be happiness and good luck for the family. If a stone falls down or goes crooked, the relatives consult the Siraha and then put it straight and offer whatever sacrifices he has recommended. It is generally supposed that when a stone falls, it is an indication that the ghost of the dead is angry or feels neglected. In some places, the collapse of a menhir is regarded as prophetic of disaster, and generally should white ants make a nest over the stone it is considered a bad omen. But in some places there is a belief that there is no need to worry about this after twenty years have passed. After twenty years the Hanal has become completely mingled with his ancestors and no longer exists as a separate entity. When an old stone falls down, therefore, the Muria performs no ceremonies and leave it where it is. [781]

XIII. The Hanal Pata

It is very difficult to persuade the Muria to repeat the songs connected with death at any but the proper time. This is quite natural, for there is to all simple minds something dark and ominous about talking of the dead. I did not find a Hill or Bison-horn Maria who was willing to repeat a single song. It has only been among the more open-hearted and friendly Muria that I have been able to get a few songs, mostly in Gondi, which are used during a funeral and at the time of erecting a menhir. I have already given the funeral songs; I will now quote a few songs used at the later ceremonies. 533 761 769

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769
539

From Sonawal village comes a Halbi song used at the time of quarrying the stone.

You were on the ground, O stone!
Come now to our house, and see your children.
Once you were a man,
Now you are a god (*deo*).
You were in the grave, O man!
Today we bring you to your home.
We will all feast and drink
In memory of you.
Ri ri loyo ri ri loyo!

The next step is to bring the stone to the memorial ground. Here is another Halbi song—which can also be used at the time of placing a memorial pillar at the grave.

Hearken, brother, hearken, brother!
You were a tree, brother,
You were a stone, brother,
You were out on the hillside, brother.
Today we remember you.
Come to your house, brother, for you are growing old.
Come to the granary and live with your family.
Limb to limb we will live with you,
We will hold each other's arms.
Come to the house, come to the granary.
We have no knowledge, teach us wisdom.
The clansmen are sitting: go to the house.
The clansmen have come in crowds,
Though the court is small and narrow.
There is not enough rice,
How are we to feed the clansmen?
There is nothing in the house;
Go, brother, and give them something.
There is not enough curry,
Yet thick as sal trees are the clansmen.
There is liquor from twelve stills,
Yet there is not drink for a drink apiece.
There are twelve sacks of rice,
Yet there is not enough to give each visitor a helping.
There are five measures of salt, three measures of chilli,
Two measures of haldi, yet there is not enough.
What can we do? You teach us.
Give us food, brother, and then there'll be enough.

This stress on the practical difficulties of entertainment is typical. As we have seen, many clans have abandoned the practice of erecting menhirs because of the expense. It may be noted that here a situation seems to be visualized in which the *kolohal* stone is erected at the same time that the soul is brought home to the house.

We now come to songs sung at the actual placing of the stone in position. It is probable that many of these songs are interchangeable; we must not think of them as carefully chosen and arranged as in an English hymnal.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Re re loyo re re la! re re loyo re re la!
Re re laita he ayo re! Ayo bāba re re la!

Sora bora dhartin ra,	Sixteen-, twelve-storied earth,
Nāwa khandi prithi ra.	Nine-storied world.
Ide dharti te mandaki ra.	Lie down here to rest.
Nike kotum ta otum ra.	We leave you in the forest.
Mamat iga mandakom ra.	We shall not be here.

This song, in sharp distinction from its predecessor, lays all the stress on the fact that the soul is to stay in its stone house in the jungle. I will now give another Gondi song used at the erection of a *kotokal*. At the end of each line there is a refrain almost like a sigh—*Ye budha, O old man!*—addressing the dead.

Yenda budha yenda budha!	Dance, old man, dance!
Nikun huri wātom ra.	We have come to see you.
Niya helār miyār rāndom ra,	Your sons and daughters have come,
Niya samdi saga wātorom.	Your relatives have come.
Udak dārango tatorom,	We've brought some liquor,
Niya bāta tatorom.	We've brought it for you.
Niya karsār huri wātorom,	We've come for your ceremonies,
Hariyer mante yetā ra.	To make you happy.
Kenja budha kenja ra.	Listen, old man, listen.
Keri gābo mendul ra.	Your body is like the pith of a plantain tree.
Bes mundāng kālku ra.	Your legs are like fine pillars (of a house).
Berel āki chhāti ra.	Your chest is like a banyan leaf.
Kurawal pite tala ra.	Your head is like an owl's.
Ali āki moha ra.	Your face is like a pipal leaf.
Usir gatta chundi ra.	Your hair is like the usri grass.
Chundi malkeh komu ra.	Shake your hair.
Tindi hursi wāyom ra.	We haven't come to watch you eat.
Hariyer mante yenda ra,	Dance full of happiness,
Niya Māhāl kiyhom ra.	We are making a palace for you.
Aga baga ron penu ra?	Where does your god come from?
Dhamda ton penu ra.	The god is from Dhamda.
Kenja budha kenja ra.	Listen, old man, listen.
Māhāl lopa barang ra?	What is inside the palace?
Sono taya jhulna ra,	If there was a golden swing inside,
Bārāng bāne āyuār ra.	How beautiful it would be.
Jhulna jhule mayu ra	Swing to and fro on the swing
Nikun sewa kiyhom ra.	And we will serve you.
Nikun puja kiyākom ra,	We will give an offering for you,
Kāla menda kiyākom ra.	We will give a black ram for you.
	[*The dead man speaks*]
Tāne bhojān hewon ra,	I won't eat that,
Pujāri lāme lengra kimu ra.	I must have the long-tailed one.
Tāne bhojān kiyaka ra	I will eat that
Pujāri ahar dupu kimu ra.	If you give some incense.
Achha sewa kimu ra	Serve me well
Girdā wānāh kimu ra.	That I may be well pleased.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769 539 'The long-tailed one' mentioned in the song is, of course, a bull. Lanji-Dhamda is the traditional home of many of the northern Muria whence they migrated into Bastar.

I have already given extracts from the lengthy song recorded at Dugabangal,[1] which is sung during the transport and erection of the stone; it is interesting to note how closely life and love and death are allied in Muria thought, which regards them as a single process. The bulk of this Hanal Pata is indeed about life, and only at the tragic end do the singers discourse of death.

The song begins with some sententious lines about the universality of death.

Sora dhāru dharti roye deva,	Sixteen-storied world,
Nau khandu pirthi ra ale!	Nine-storied earth!
Singār mālor dīpu roye deva;	Here is the island of mankind;
Igāy hāywālor ra ale.	Here all die.
Māne manja igāy roye deva,	Men, ants, worms,
Hurr pate igāy ra ale,	Animals are here,
Bhagavān ise pandtu ra deva,	Bhagavan has made them,
Saboy tune pandtu ra ale.	He has made them all.
Kondāng manās hurāna ra,	See with the eyes,
Kālku manās dāyna ra ale,	Walk with the feet,
Kaiku manās hām kiyāna ra,	Work with the hand,
Tori manās barkāna ra ale.	Talk with the mouth.
Idām bhagavān pandtu ra,	So has Bhagavan ordained,
Singār mālor dwīpute ra ale.	So provided in this world.
Bāhchitek ise igāy ra,	Here men quarrel,
Koyma kitek igāy ra ale,	Here men laugh,
Dharmu kitek igāy ra,	Here is virtue,
Pāpu kitek igāy ra ale.	Here is sin.
Ide singāl dwipone'ra	In this world
Rājālor ise mantor ra ale.	Live royally.
Samdhi saga igāy ra,	Here are the samdhi clans,
Bhaibānd igāy ra ale.	Here too are the brother-clans.

After this the song continues along the lines which I have already given.

XIV. Substitutes for the Menhir

769 The Muria erect memorial poles and pillars as well as stones. At Modenga they described how they made a small bundle of straw with rice inside it called *dhusir* for a man and a small bamboo basket (*gappa*) for a woman. They put marks of haldi and oil as at a marriage on the wooden pillar and some also on both the baskets and give them to the sister or daughter of the dead. The girl has to take these to the house and from that day has to worship Lagar Pen who comes to the house then. Every three years thereafter she must offer a pig to Lagar Pen. If she has given birth to a male child in the interval a male pig will be sacrificed, and if a girl has been born a female pig.

It is generally said that the erection of the wooden pillar and the application of oil and haldi to it represents the second wedding of the dead. Here the pillar is usually made of saja. At Phauda the Muria described how the saja branch must be cut by a member of an *akomāma* clan after he has offered rice, pulse and liquor to it saying, 'I am going to take you in honour of the

[1] See pp. 89–92.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

dead'. He covers it with a new cloth and ties it round with a string seven times, turning the pillar round and round. After it has been put in position, the ground in front is cow-dunged and three circles of flour are made. A pot of water is placed in the central circle and the Gaita says to the pillar, 'Now I will take you home'. A representative of the dead man's family makes a mark on it with haldi and oil and offers a little rice and a pice. Only the one representative of the bereaved family does this, though all the members of the wife-clans do so. They sacrifice two chickens and offer liquor to the pillar and go home. They kill a bullock and come back with the tail and tie this to the pillar saying, 'We have now given you everything, don't bother us or put us to any loss'. The *akomāma* relative carries the pot of water back to the house of the dead man and places it near the Pot of the Departed. They offer it liquor there and ask the dead man always to remain there and live together happily with the other ancestors. 769

The Muria sometimes make fairly elaborate graves. I saw one very interesting tomb at Gudripara. An old man named Maria Muria of the Poyami sept died in February 1940. He had cleared the jungle with his own hands, established the village, planted mango trees, founded the ghotul, ruled the community as its mukaddam for many years. So although his *bhumiyār* would normally be at Kokameta, the villagers made a tomb for him in his own village. It was built exactly a year after his death, in February 1941. Since Bhagavan had taken his spirit, a 'Bhagavan-diya' or lamp was placed on the top. All round were relics of the dead man—cloth tied to sticks, traps, baskets, pots, spoons, a spindle for preparing hemp-cord. Most interesting of all was a small menhir placed in front of the tomb. Here met in one place Muria, Gond and Hindu customs.

In Phunder I saw an elaborate tomb for a very old man, Rai Singh Thakur, who died in 1937. On the top of the tomb was an earthenware horse with an image of the dead man riding upon it and an elaborate trident. Rai Singh's son, Nergu Maravi, gave a small bullock to the Kumhar for making the horse and another bull to a Lohar for making the trident. As the dead man was a great drinker, his son and grandsons regularly offer liquor at his grave.

But the most common substitute for the memorial pillar is simply nothing at all. The graveyards and cremation grounds of the Muria dead are sad and pathetic witnesses to the vanity of human hopes and ambitions. There may be a ring attached to a tree; you may see a few stones and logs upon the grave; sometimes there are pots or poles at the four corners; there may be a decorated spire (as at Binjhli), or an iron lampstand (as at Phunder) in the centre. Nearby are a few bits of grave-furniture, a baby's cradle, some simple toys, cooking-pots for women, traps or baskets for men. But by none of these can a man's name be preserved. A few seasons wash them with their rains, a bear or hyena digs up the ground. Only the memorial stone can survive even for a while the chances of mortal life.

XV. Remnants of Megalithic Culture in Eastern Kondagaon

Throughout their entire territory the Muria preserve some form of megalithic culture, but this grows less and less prominent as we move towards the east. When we cross the road and move east towards the Orissa border, the custom of placing large menhirs almost disappears, though some tradition of using stones in memory of the dead survives.

This survival takes several different forms. Sometimes a very small stone is brought and placed on the ground near the Hanalkot or elsewhere;

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

●769 sometimes a single stone is erected for a whole clan; sometimes a stone is combined with a modern tomb.

At Kanhera, when the time comes for performing some ceremony to content the dead, the relatives are summoned and they go to the nearest stream. A representative of the family and an *akomāma* relative go together into the water while the people on the bank call upon the dead. The two men duck under the water and one or other brings up a stone or a fish. If it is a fish they put it into the pot and take it home in the ordinary way; if it is a stone they dress it in a new cloth and carry it along till it falls down of its own accord. They bury it there, wherever it may be, put a small marriage crown upon it and anoint it with haldi, then go dancing home.

In Bopna village there is a deep pool in a neighbouring stream. When, after some years, there have died three or four people whose spirits must be mingled with their ancestors, the mourners go to this pool and make the usual offerings on the bank. Presently Bara Pen comes on one of the *akomāma* relatives and he goes down into the water calling on the spirits of the dead to draw near. As he takes one name his foot strikes against a stone and he picks it up; he takes another name and again picks up the stone below his feet. He then takes these stones to the Hanalkot (which is underneath a saja tree) and puts them on the ground saying, 'They will go down into the ground of their own accord'. The mourners anoint them with haldi and sacrifice a pig, killing it with a rice-husker. It is generally believed, wherever this custom exists, that the stones will bury themselves. Should they remain above the ground it is considered a bad omen.

In other villages the people do not go to the river but a samdhi goes to any part of the jungle where there are a lot of stones and throws rice at them saying, 'Throwing rice upon you I invite you to come'. The next morning he goes again and searches for any stone that may have fallen over during the night. This stone is supposed to contain the soul of the deceased and is taken as a memorial to the Hanalkot. In Kokori they said that when the stone fell over of its own accord, the Siraha offered it liquor and then an *akomāma* relative picked it up and carried it 'as if it were a baby' to the Hanalkot. There they covered it with cloth, tied a marriage crown and made the marriage marks of haldi, while the chelik and motiari danced before it.

In Banjora I found a different tradition. A few days after death the Muria in this village dedicate a pig, washing its feet and offering it rice. They then let it wander where it will. If after five years no wild animal has killed it they go into the forest for a memorial stone. When they have found a suitable stone, they sacrifice the pig before it. They anoint the stone with haldi and bring it to the Hanalkot, where it plants itself in the ground of its own accord.

At Randhna village, the Muria put either a wooden pillar or a stone, according to the revelation made to the Siraha in each case. An *akomāma* relative goes into the jungle to find one or the other. If a stone is indicated he sits down beside it; if a pillar, he cuts the tree, usually a saja, carves it roughly with a large ball on the head, and sits there. Then, led by the motiari and chelik with their drums, the relatives come singing and dancing and say to him, 'We have come to fetch a memorial for our dead; will you give it or no?' He says, 'Yes, I will give it'. They offer haldi and liquor to the pillar or the stone and then the *akomāma* picks it up and comes towards the village, the chelik and motiari dancing round him. Now the dead man's soul comes into the stone and guides the man here and there until it is satisfied. At last, of its own accord it falls from his arms on to the ground. As elsewhere the *akomāma* relatives cover it with cloth and put on the marriage crown. They offer a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

bullock and enjoy a great feast. In Randhna I saw several such pillars and near them a few memorial stones. In Kopra there were three pillars and in Charkai one. 769

In Baghbera, not far from the Orissa border, there is a magnificent mango grove with shrines for Bara Pen and the Village Mother. Not far from these shrines, under a sarai tree, there is a stone about two feet high which is used as a memorial menhir for all members of the Poyami clan in that area. When any member of the clan dies the people come to the stone and make the usual offerings. When I saw it, there were two bundles of straw in the tree above, symbolizing the roof of the stone's temple, and a tethering rope which had been used for cow-sacrifice. Tied round it was a rope made of bark with its end splayed out to look like a flower. The Muria said that the origin of this was that a very old man of the Poyami clan died long ago and came to his descendants in a dream saying, 'In such and such forest there is a stone; bring it for me'. They did as he commanded and later when other members of the same clan died they too came in dreams and said, 'Take us to where our grandfather is'.

Finally there is the custom that we have already noticed, of placing a stone in front of a modern tomb. Here we can see clearly how ancient tradition survives alongside modern innovations.

XVI. The Danger of the Abnormal: Death from Wild Animals

The Muria have the most elaborate ceremonies to meet the dangers of abnormal death, for it is in their country that tigers are most common and tragedies most frequent. When such an incident occurs, the chelik collect the remains of the deceased and his possessions at the very place of death and burn them. They blow a hunting-horn over the pyre and run away. 766

A day or two later the male members of the house go to the spot with other villagers. They dig up some of the blood-stained earth and make an image of the dead man; with rice-flour they make an image of the tiger. They place these together inside two circles made of flour and haldi, and draw a line of flour representing a rope to join the two together. The Gaita sacrifices chickens and eggs, saying, 'Go and take your dog to some other land. Tie it up properly there and keep it safe. Don't bring it here, we don't want any dogs here'. Then he hits and breaks the model tiger with a sickle crying, 'Tiger! Tiger!'

The chickens are now cut up into a great many little bits, and some of these are given to members of the party and roasted and eaten on the spot. Bones and leaves used for this little feast must be buried carefully, for if a witch got hold of them she could use them to bring the tiger back. The party now breaks up and each member takes a solitary and zigzag route home, throwing away the little bits of chicken as he goes. The idea of this is that if the ghost of the deceased tries to return to his village, he will be puzzled by the roundabout route and will be so busy eating the bits of chicken that he will never get there.

Women do not attend this ceremony, for if a woman's shadow were to fall on the materials of the feast, the tiger would come again. But if a woman is killed by a tiger, a digging-stick is thrown into the ashes of the pyre with the idea that her ghost will take it to dig roots in the jungle and not trouble the people in the village.

After a few days all those who took any active part in the cremation ceremony—such as carrying the remains or preparing the pyre—go to the place

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The Departed and the ancestors are a sort of perpetual old guard keeping a sharp watch upon their descendants. They are a strictly orthodox and conservative body ever ready to take offence, always on their dignity, suspicious, revengeful, unsympathetic. The honour of the tribe is very dear to them and they are determined to see that it is not betrayed by their unworthy heirs. Any breach of tribal law, any change, any heterodoxy in thought or worship is immediately and drastically punished. 775 769

The Departed are, to some extent, associated with the fertility[1] of the land, but I have not anywhere found the belief that the menhirs can improve the crops and the soil. The Departed are remembered at sowing and harvest, at winnowing time and when the crops are brought to the granary. The Pot of the Departed is indeed often kept among the grain, and the soul brought home to live in the granary. But such remembrance is no more than is paid to the Departed at every chance and turn of mortal life. They are equally remembered when a man drinks liquor or marries his daughter or goes to a dance and, as I say, they are remembered not so much to ensure their blessing as to prevent their interference. 769 ●

The aim, therefore, of the Muria cult of the dead is above all things to put the Departed in their place, to keep them in order and to keep them quiet. Menhirs are set up, sacrifices are offered, endless pains are taken to ensure that the dead are not offended and in their spleen bring disaster upon the world. For the dead suffer an unfortunate change of character after they have left the earth. The kindest, friendliest, gentlest nature becomes warped through death, and in a sense it may be true to say that human beings who are still alive should feel a deep pity for their unfortunate companions who have gone before them into what is very truly a land of shadows. Perhaps this is why the Muria are so anxious to bring their dead back into their own families 'where they will find warmth and love' and where they will receive the comfort that they need.

[1] I have frequently noticed that traps are set in the graveyards and near the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap within a few yards of the graves. At Baghbera there was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs. At Markabera there was a tiger-trap similarly placed. It would be tempting to suggest that there is some deep connexion here but I think it is more likely that the traps are set in the graveyards because animals are attracted by the offerings of grain and roots that are made both to the menhirs and on the graves.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice, returned home the next day.

Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2] At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Land of Anga and the body. Yasaskrta 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shameless pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga) ", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'. —Nundolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 317.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

The similarity between this description and the account which I have just gives of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mān to pen nahi to pāthar.—*If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.*—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under saja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

[1] See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
[2] Day, op. cit., p. 318. [3] Ibid., p. 344.
[4] J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

346 Just inside the gate of the enclosure there is a line of pillars and four stone seats. These poles are for the convenience of such visiting deities as are

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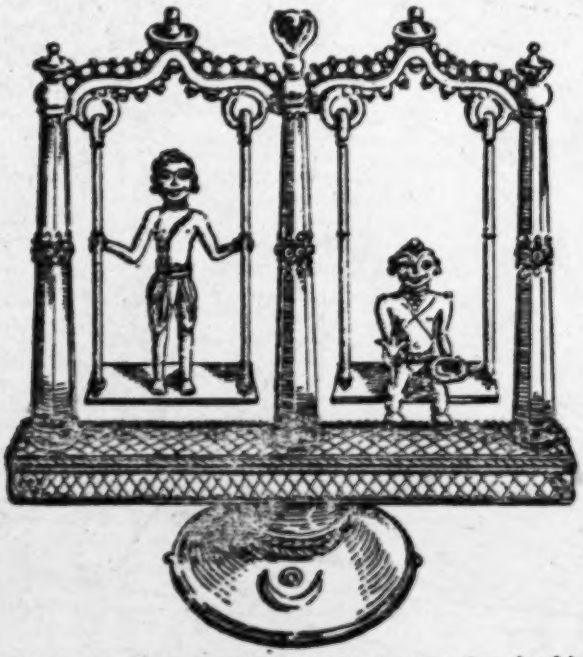

Pic. 23. Brass swing, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines
Breadth 8½"

represented by poles or flags and can be tied to the pillars; the stones also are seats for those gods who have a traditional or family right to come to the temple. Such are Kustirmago Pen, a cousin of Bhumiriya, an Uika god from Kasabahi; Lath Kuar, Bhumiriya's son, a Wadder god from Tadopal; Inde Muitar, a Karanga god of Suhnar and Son Kuar, son of Kanda Dokara, a Maravi god from Garhbangal. Near the gate of the enclosure is another stone of sacrifice where black hens are offered to the dead. One of the pillars is used to tie the buffaloes and bulls which are to be sacrificed to Bhumiriya.

[769]

Entering the temple, we find a clean open shed with broad wooden pillars on which are carved crude representations of the sun and the vagina. Here too are four stone seats. The chief is, of course, for the lord of the temple Bhumiriya himself. The second is for his father Bope Haruna who is brought every ten years to sit with his son. The third is for Dhursai Kuar, a son of the Pat Deo in Jagdalpur, who comes at festivals from Timnar, and the fourth is for Lalsai Kuar of Metawand.

[831]

From the roof hangs an earthen pot containing little bells and a bundle of peacock feathers. Another pot has in it a piece of cloth used as a flag at festivals. In the roof are ten large wooden spoons, which are used for the

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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.

Maria women's dancing-stick (3½' long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 primitive opinion is that the soul goes to dwell with the ancestral Dead with whom it is mingled by appropriate ceremonies. These Dead are imagined as being in close touch with their kinsfolk living still on earth and are able to influence their affairs.

But side by side with this belief is a rudimentary theory of transmigration and rebirth, and at every funeral there are special rites to ensure that the soul will be reborn in the same family and will not go elsewhere. This theory is not necessarily inconsistent with the first, though it is not easy to see how once a soul is reborn again on earth it can continue to hold the office and perform the functions of an Ancestor. But the third theory is contradictory of the others. It is borrowed from the graveyard traditions of popular Hinduism. After death the soul is pictured as turning into a dangerous malignant ghost who has to be kept away from the house at all costs and be appeased from time to time with small offerings. We thus have the ridiculous situation that at a funeral some of the rites are directed to bringing the dead man's soul back to the house and settling him there in the Pot of the Departed while others are directed at keeping him at a distance, if possible beyond the village boundary. After death, in fact, the dead man becomes both soul and ghost, and suitable but different arrangements have to be made for each of these aspects of his personality.

● 769 We have seen that in the inner room of every Maria house 775 there is kept an earthen pot specially dedicated to the Dead; in the same room is the Hearth of the Departed. It is round this little shrine that there centres an extensive cult of the ancestral Dead. At the end of the funeral ceremonies the soul of the deceased is mingled with the other Dead through ceremonies connected with this Pot. Into it the woman of the house puts a little flour in honour of the Dead when she grinds, and here she cooks new grain at the harvest festivals. The Dead are very touchy and excitable. If the soul of a murdered man or a suicide or anyone who has died by tiger, snake, cholera, small-pox, drowning or a fall from a tree is sent to keep them company, there will be quarrels and in their annoyance they may cause great trouble to the living. They are specially sensitive to any infidelity on the part of the wife whose special duty it is to tend their shrine. They

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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

indicate their will to the living through the Siraha or Waddai and by appearing to them in dreams, and it is considered highly dangerous to ignore their behests. 769 775

The necessity for their propitiation has affected every aspect of Maria life. Offerings are made to them at every festival and at every domestic or village ceremony. They are remembered as a matter of routine in every magic formula along with the Earth Mother, Danteshwari and other deities. A few drops of liquor are offered to them every time a Maria drinks. Fire from the hearth of the Pot of the Departed in the Gaita's house is used to light the first fire in the forest clearings and the sacred fires at festivals. The importance of the Ancestors, who remain as a sort of conservative society to safeguard the traditions of the tribe, will appear throughout this book and need not be elaborated now. 769

VII

Women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried, so are the victims of small-pox and of such other diseases as the Siraha may from time to time direct. All others are cremated, a fact which often makes police investigation difficult and even impossible. 764 766

At one time (I am not sure how far the custom survives) the Waddai was buried naked and in an upright posture. The first child of a house, if it dies under five years old, is buried in the same erect posture, with face to the east—as there is light there, and beneath a mahua tree—for it is fertile of flowers and fruit, a good omen for the family. 766 [787]

In a funeral the chief actors are the Hanagunda or Hanal-gaita, who is the master of ceremonies, and the sister's son or son-in-law of the deceased. The Hanagunda has to tie a thread round the corpse and hang the cow's-tail on the menhir. It is his wife's duty to wash the body, and to take cooked rice and haldi to the pyre. The sister's son has to climb on the roof to beat a drum to summon the relatives: he sits on the urasakal while it is being carried to its place; he makes the appointed offerings before the stone: he kills the sacrificial and festal cow. 764

After death the dead man is laid with his head to the east in the living room of his house. His sister's son takes a stick

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 Once again the party went to the stream, but the Gaita and the Waddai stayed behind and addressed the saja stick: 'For one month more you will get nothing, don't go to your house, but stay here'. After a bath they all (with the exception of the drummers) went to the deceased's house. The drummers, who are regarded as unclean for the duration of the ceremony, bathed and washed their drums. They applied and placed some rice on the drums. To them they also sacrificed a chicken and offered the blood and some liquor. The drummers were then given rice, which they cooked separately, and a shoulder of the cow. After eating their food they went to their own houses.

789 The conclusion of the story is worth recording. A month later, the Waddai went with the villagers to the boundary of the village carrying a chicken, a pig, an egg, egg-shells, a bamboo bow and arrow, burnt earth from below the hearth, charcoal powder, rice, pulse and haldi. All these things were taken in separate leaf-cups. The Waddai arranged them in seven rows and made a chicken eat the rice, calling on Markami Bando's magic to go away. The chicken ate the rice quickly. But this was not sufficient proof that the black magic had really been driven away, 'because every hungry creature will naturally feed upon what it can get'. The Waddai, therefore, tortured the chicken, first by breaking one leg, and still it ate; he broke another leg, and again it ate; then he broke the wings and the fowl though in pain and agony went on eating. It was now beyond doubt that Bando's magic had been dealt with successfully and the chicken was thrown away, still alive, and not sacrificed. The pig was then sacrificed and the Waddai drew a line on the boundary of the village where the seven rows were arranged, spat there and said, 'Away from this line' and they all departed without looking back. In this ceremony the household members did not take part.

The next day the Waddai sacrificed under a mahua tree near the house a white chicken and broke an egg in honour of the ancestral ghost of Kosa's father. After this he entered the house and sprinkled it with a mixture of milk, saja bark, 769 and dab grass to purify it and sacrificed a black chicken for the Ancestors of the family.

775 Special precautions must, of course, be taken when anyone

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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

front, the sister's son beating his drum above. From time to time they put their burden on the ground to rest, and are refreshed with rice-beer. 764

When the party reaches the pit that has been prepared, the drummers throw the castor-sticks which they have been using hitherto on to the pyre, and take new sticks, which may be made of any kind of wood. Before the stone is erected the Gaita addresses the dead, 'You are dead and you must forget your father, your mother, your brother and your family. This is your house. Live here and do not trouble us or our pigs and cattle. We are giving you rice and pulse and everything that you had at home, so that you may be satisfied'.

In the hole which has been dug by the sister's son, the relatives put something or other, rice, small coins, rings or ornaments, whatever they can afford. The bearers untie the stone from its poles and all push and lift it into position. Earth and stones are rammed round the bottom and a small cromlech is placed in front. On this stone offerings are made by the sister's son with his back to the menhir. The women of the household come and put cooked rice and haldi in leaf-cups on the cromlech, and pour upon it grain, roots, or anything that the dead man used to like when he was alive.

Then the whole party returns to the house and one or more cows are sacrificed. These were probably selected by the dead man during his life-time. They remove the liver and cut it in pieces. Rice is prepared in the house of the dead and divided into four portions and put in leaf-cups. These cups, with the tail of the sacrificed cow and a pot of rice-beer, are carried out in a specially-made basket to the menhir. One portion is put on the ground for Mother Earth and the rest for the dead man on the cromlech. The tail is hung over the menhir and rice-beer poured upon it. At the same time a little rice-beer must be offered to the old menhirs. If this is omitted the ancient dead will be angry and will quarrel with the new spirit that has gone to join them. [769]

Rice-beer must be given both to the menhir and to the mourners. It must be made fresh in the room where death occurred and served with a gourd with a long handle that 764 273

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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

837 get offended, and in their anger kill the cattle and other livestock. When an animal dies for this cause, its tongue protrudes and a watery discharge issues from its mouth. In Dhurli the Maria said that the guilty person might go blind, and in Mathadi we were told how an old woman did actually become blind as a result of betraying her husband. If a wife commits adultery when her husband is absent on a hunting expedition, her act will 'defile the earth' and the hunt will be ruined. The arrows will fly crookedly, and the husband himself may trip over a stump. He may be bitten by a snake or hit with an arrow. If the deceived husband is a magician, his vision will be clouded. If the proper ceremonies are not performed, he may be afflicted with a watery swelling that may cause death.

674 783 *If a murder is committed on account of adultery, the* families both of the murderer and his victim may suffer from this swelling. To prevent the danger, the elders of each house gather together; they mix milk and water in a leaf-cup of mahua leaves and say, 'These sinned; but let not their sin be on us'. Then a representative of each house drinks a little. The family of the murdered man gives a present (which is called in Halbi *bhul-karcha*) to the family of the murderer. A measure of rice is put under the eaves of the victim's house. In the rice there is placed some thread, a ring and an arrow. The two families feast together on pork and rice, and swear friendship with each other. The arrow remains as witness to their oath. Then the murderer's family [769] take the *bhul-karcha* home, and offer it to the Departed in their own house.

578 787 Quarrels are always dangerous, for they disturb tribal solidarity and may earn the vengeance of the Departed. Indeed it is dangerous even to dream of a quarrel; if you do, you should sacrifice to the Earth the next morning. If husband and wife are known to be constantly at odds with one another, a panchayat is held and one or both may be fined.

783 When Oyami Anda of Harmamunda carried off and married a girl for whom another youth was serving as Lamhada, he not only had to pay compensation for the work done by the other boy, but a ceremony was performed to purify both parties of enmity. Anda stood with the Lamhada

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AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

under the thatch by the door of his house. The palm of 783
his right hand was placed below the Lamhada's right hand. On the ground, below their hands, a pile of rice was made, and an arrow placed in it. Then the Waddai climbed on to the roof and poured down water which fell through the thatch on to their hands, and thence to the rice. After this a pig and two chickens were given to the Lamhada to be offered to his ancestors. The Waddai as clan-priest officiated [769] since the Dead of the clan were to be appeased.

A curious story related by Oyami Harma of the same 539
village illustrates the manner in which the Maria expect 773
supernatural punishment to fall upon the criminal. 'Long ago', said Oyami Harma, 'my ancestors, who were a family of seven brothers and one sister, were living beyond Bailadila. A youth of the Uika clan came as Lamhada for the girl, and in due time she was married to him. Twin boys were born, but after a few days one of them died. During Dassara the husband went to Jagdalpur at the invitation of the eldest brother and while he was away his wife together with the wives of the seven brothers went to reap the harvest, taking their two hunting-dogs. The surviving twin was taken with them, and as they were working, he was put to sleep in a swing. While the women were busy in the field, a hare jumped out of a bush and ran towards the baby. The two hunting-dogs chased it, and mistaking the baby for the hare bit him and killed him.

'When the husband returned he asked for his baby, and his wife said, "He has been taken out by our neighbour. First eat your food and then you can play with the child". The husband sat down and ate, and his wife told him what had happened. In the meantime the other brothers told their eldest brother of the child's death, and he was afraid that the bereaved father would revenge himself on him, because it was at his invitation that he had gone to Jagdalpur. So they all decided to run away. The father pursued them saying that it was they who were responsible for the death of his child. They went to Gadapal closely pursued by the angry father. In Gadapal there was a shrine for Kas Pona Pen which was in the form of a bird. This god hid the eldest brother under its wings, and when the father arrived at the shrine, he could find no trace of him. But as he

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter X

The Earth, the Clan-God and the Village Mother

● 771 In the scanty literature dealing with Bastar, few things have received briefer attention than the religion of the Marias. Russell and Hiralal try in twenty-one pages (III, 97-118) to summarize the religion, magico-religious ideas and festivals of all the Gonds of the Central Provinces; their account, therefore, necessarily must be vague about the Marias, and on Bastar generally is in many respects misinformed; there is a tendency to prefer the picturesque to the unvarnished facts, as in the accounts of the alleged human sacrifices at Dantewara and of *Doctor Deo*. I have already stated that there has never been the slightest proof that the former ever took place, and pointed out that, if they did, they were semi-State Hindu ceremonies under the aegis of the Raja and the hereditary Rajput high-priest of his tutelary goddess Danteshwari. *Doctor Deo* is represented as a principal god of 'north Bastar'; actually the Mohammedan sub-assistant surgeon 'deified' as *Doctor Deo* died of cholera on the Keskal pass as he was returning to Raipur from Bastar, and his spirit has been attached by the surrounding Murias as a peon or servant to the shrine of Bhangaram at the head of the pass, where from generations past the final scene of disease-riddance or *bohorani* ceremonies among the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur and Kondagaon tahsils and the adjacent Bastar Irredenta tracts of Jeypore had taken place; here the scapegoat from Jagdalpur is at last driven forth into the wilderness, and hundreds of litters or model *rath* chariots have been deposited in front of Bhangaram with scape-doves and the sweepings of houses visited by epidemics. *Doctor Deo's* cult is a later and very minor accretion of this ancient cult.

General: previous writers

776 618 Glasfurd in his Report correctly noted that, like the Jhoria and other surrounding Murias, the Marias of the Abujhmar hills had in several villages Log-gods which they called *pen* (plural, *penk*); but he did not realize that there was one of these *penk* for each clan. This was pointed out on page 42 of the *Gazetteer*, though the clans are spoken of there as 'tribes' or by the Hindu term *gotra*; the suggestion there made that the system of each clan in its own area worshipping its own *pen* was even then breaking down, was at least premature, considering that it is still in full force in the Antagarh

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chanda Gonds, who reported definitely that in the Chanda Maria villages of Bidri, Yemla, Burgi, Uddera and Kandodi the Marias had one three-god, six four-god, eight five-god, eight six-god and eight seven-god clans. The difficulty is, of course, that the word 'Maria', as we have seen, is not a Gondi word and may cover more than one ethnic group, as in Bastar; there certainly are differences between the plains and Hill Marias of Chanda, and the point needs to be cleared by verification in definite hill villages in the Chanda portion of the Abujhmar hills. My enquiries from some of these villagers who visited my camps in Bastar along with Bastar relatives never produced any Chanda Maria who admitted belonging to a god-group or having Chuddur Penk in his house. Admittedly even in Nagpur District, Gonds are reluctant to show their Chuddur Penk, and Koitor everywhere have to be handled delicately before they will talk of the other domestic cult, that of the Departed. Nevertheless, I have known many Marias intimately, and have had them talking freely on these questions; and I have seen the contents of every pot, gourd, packet or other receptacle in many a Hill and Bison-horn Maria house: but I never found any domestic godling, and they have always denied having them, or god-groups founded on them. So likewise did adjacent Jhoria and Gotal Murias, though some of them knew of Gonds who had immigrated into Bastar from the Central Provinces with domestic godlings and god-groups. The only Bastar Gonds of whom it has ever been reported that they have domestic gods in addition to the clan-god are the 'Telugu Gonds' towards Konta (by which is probably meant the Dorla), stated on page 42 of the *Gazetteer* to have for each family a separate god represented by a few pieces of *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) wood; but the Dorla villages that I visited near Jaggergonda had no such family gods.

It may, therefore, be taken as certain that neither Hill nor Bison-horn Marias of Bastar have the cult of the Chuddur Penk, and that their clan-groups are not founded on them. If they are to be fitted into the traditional scheme of god-groups by persons who dislike exceptions to a rule apparently so universal among other Gonds, they must come in as the missing one-god group!

Much has been said in the preceding chapters, particularly the chapter on agriculture, on the cults of Bhum (the earth), the Clan-god and the Village Mother. In some sense, all three are the same, all Marias, Hill and Bison-horn, being the children of Bhum. They will tell you sometimes that the Pen clan-god and the Village Mother are also Bhum; and in some places the cairn or table-stone below the sacred *saja* tree does duty

General nature of Bastar Maria cult of Earth, Clan-god and Village Mother

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

on one occasion for the Pen and on another for the Village Mother; even at the annual village festival of the Mother following the clan harvest-home and Koqsar of the Hill Marias the Pen, if honoured, is sometimes honoured on the same stones as the Mother, and not at a separate cairn. It is useless to expect to get any clear-cut distinction between the three conceptions out of a Maria, whose religious ideas are vague and inchoate. He knows only that there are factors which may bring trouble or which may benefit, and that the wise clan and village duly propitiate them, though, if in their turn these unknown factors fail to reciprocate, they will get no further meed of sacrifice for the same immediate object unless the desired benefit is at once granted. An example of this attitude has already been given in the mention in Chapter VII of the deputation that went to see the Gume clan's god to protest against rain preventing the firing of the *penda*, and to promise him a cock if and when he stopped the rain. In the actual formulae pronounced by the village *kasyeq-gaita* in the hills and the *perma* in the Bison-horn country at the sowing and other ceremonies, however, I have never heard the clan-god's name mentioned; they start almost invariably with '*Bhum kenji, Talugh kenji!*' 'Earth hearken, Mother hearken!', sometimes addressing similarly '*Nel*' or fields and '*Jimme Jaga*', all that is around. Here *Bhum* and the clan-god appear to be identical; in the villages where there are both a *kasyeq-gaita* and a *bhum-gaita* in the Abujhmar country, it is the latter who has to preside over the village deputations to the clan-god. The distinction, however, is not clear-cut. In most hill villages there is no separate *bhum-gaita*, and the *kasyeq-gaita* not only performs his work, but is sometimes called *bhum-gaita* or *bhumia*, while in Bison-horn villages the *perma* is *bhum-gaita* and addresses himself in some tracts to the Earth both as Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi, earth-god and earth-goddess, besides being the priest of the Village Mother and the other forms which the earth takes in Bison-horn cults, such as Dongar Deo or Kodo Deo. The *waddai* or *modul-waddai* I have referred to as the clan-priest, and it has been seen how in the Hill Maria clan-areas each village goes to him for the celebration of the clan festival and for obtaining the clan-god's permission to hold the village festival. But the clan-priest is generally not the clan headman even in the Abujhmar hills tracts where the clan-area has become the modern *pargana*. He may or may not be a person of ability and influence. He should be the medium, into whose body the clan-god enters and through whose mouth the god makes his will known to his clan. The secular *pargana* headman is a man of far more influence; and in the villages the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* are religious headmen in a way that the clan-priest seldom is

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the clan; often the same man is both religious headman and secular headman (*gaita*, *pedā*), and these functions were probably always combined before the growing interference of the State with village life and the excessive demands for forced labour and supplies began to make the secular headmanship a burden to be avoided by the true leader of the village and put on to the village simpleton.

The Village Mother is always dealt with in Hill and Bison-horn villages through the *kasyeṣ-gaita* and the *perma* respectively; but she neither enters into the body of a medium nor can be consulted through one like the clan-god. Though it be through her that the *kasyeṣ-gaita's* eggs are addled or other omens of ill or indications that the village should shift are sent, yet to make plain her will the medium of the clan-god, that is the clan-priest (the *waddai* or *modul-waddai*), is sent for, and through his mouth the clan-god expounds the will of the Unseen Powers. It is tempting to regard her as the personification of the female and the clan-god as that of the male element in the reproductive powers of the Earth or Bhum; needless to say, there are no Maria theologians to worry themselves over such distinctions, and it is not a clear-cut one, since some clans have a clan-goddess, not a god; e.g. Oghal Muttai, goddess of the Dhurwa clan, and Gumtuli, goddess of the Padali clan of Padalibhum at Adnar. This conception, nevertheless, does to a considerable extent clarify the fundamental relation between the Earth, the clan-god and the Village Mother. The other point to be remembered is that the clan-god is the Earth in its dealings with the clan, and the Mother the Earth in its dealings with the village. No woman or girl may take part in the festivals, public sacrificial meals, worship and intercession of either clan-god or Village Mother.

The Earth, then, as clan-god, is the god of nourishment and reproduction, and of life itself; the Marias are his children, fed by him. For them to raise their sustenance he divided up the land among the clans, and the clan-area among the villages, and in each clan and village he appointed priests or headmen who alone might communicate with him, and to whose first ancestor he revealed the clan and village boundaries, which knowledge has been handed down from father to son. The Maria leaves his *penda* slope for another after two or three years because the god is suffering from having too much nourishment extracted from that slope, but he will return to it when the god has recovered from his exhaustion. Children are but one of the god's crops.

The Clan-god

In form, we have seen, the clan-god of Marias of both kinds and of Murias, is a framework of three parallel *saja* logs held together by cross-pieces of bamboo or *saja*, to which they are lashed by cords of *siari* creeper or twisted

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SEVEN

MURIA RELIGION

I. Introductory

ALTHOUGH this book does not profess to be a study of Muria culture as a whole, it is necessary to give an outline of the religion of the tribe because the ghotul is itself a religious institution and has its share in the worship of the gods, while many of the chelik are already being trained as mediums and priests.

The ghotul is a *thirtha-sthān*, a holy place, as a Hinduized Muria explained to me; you cannot commit sin within its walls. It was founded by Lingo Pen, noblest of Gond cult-heroes, and no evil dream or power of witch or warlock can invade its sanctuary. Chelik and motiari undertake dancing expeditions in honour of the gods; they visit the great clan festivals and dance at them; at the New Eating ceremonies chelik are employed as cooks and motiari gather leaves for plates and cups. In the ceremonial hunts before certain festivals, the chelik play a major part, and they have special duties in connexion with the first ritual cutting of forest clearings. In some villages it is the chelik who roll the Gaita in mud at the Wijja Pandum and carry him home on their shoulders.

The ghotul also is itself the scene of occasional religious activities. In Palli-Barkot and neighbouring villages the blessed seed collected at harvest-time is hung up in the ghotul until it is needed for the first sowing. On the eve of many festivals the Kaser-Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure chastity for himself and the chelik. Dassera and Diwali are observed by the ghotul members in their own way, and they keep other special festivals which I will describe in detail later when I return to a fuller discussion of the ghotul's part in the religious life of the tribe.

Muria religion is undoubtedly a religion of the Hindu family with special affinities to its Shaivite interpretation, yet at the same time it is but little 'Hinduized'. It remains a special and characteristic faith, a logical entity which can be described and recognized. It acknowledges a large number of deities whom it pictures in a simple and homely manner. It has a definite priesthood and a body of mediums who communicate with the gods while in a state of trance. It erects shrines and temples to the gods and builds small huts for the tendance and placation of the dead. It consecrates every rural activity by sacrifice and a sacramental meal. It purifies and protects the village by a series of ceremonies, and it directs its beneficial power against the energies of witch and warlock.

The subject is a large one, and I cannot hope to treat it fully here. But I will give a brief account of the Muria gods, the Muria priesthood and the shrines in which worship is performed. I will describe the customary methods of worship and sacrifice and consider the trance in which the gods make their wishes known. Certain phallic elements in the worship must also be described. I will then give a brief outline of the festivals and ceremonies by which the whole of Muria life is brought under the sway of religion, and conclude by giving detailed descriptions of festivals I have myself observed. We shall then be in a position to see more fully how the ghotul fits in to this great complex of belief and practice.

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Muria

time to time, the Siraha selects one or two for special worship and attention. The cult of the gods, therefore, moves to and fro, now illuminating a forgotten deity, now strengthening the influence of the more powerful. There is nothing fixed, definite, logical or formulated about Muria religion, for here the power of the prophet and magician is greater than that of the priest. Muria religion is thus dynamic and essentially modernist. It can always adapt itself to new conditions. There is nothing traditional or orthodox in its temper.

The Supreme Being

The Muria have a belief, which is probably very old, in a Supreme Being, whom they call variously Mahapurub, Ispural and Bhagavan. Mahapurub, which may be literally translated the 'Great East', perhaps has reference to the Sun. Bhagavan is, of course, the common Hindu name for the adorable god of Bhakti worship. Mahapurub and Bhagavan are not distinguished in Muria thought: the difference between them is linguistic, Mahapurub being used in the exclusively Halbi-speaking areas. Ispural presents more of a problem. Grigson found the word in use in a few Hill Maria villages bordering the Muria country. 'Ispural would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was. . . It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip.'[1] But to Koppers 'this effort at explanation is not satisfactory'. The word Ispural, he thinks, is 'genuinely Dravidian' and suggests a very old belief in a Supreme Being.[2] Like Grigson, I was unable to discover anything about Ispural, though he appears in the song given on p. 169 as one of the deities accused of having caused a man to be killed by a tiger. He is, however, acquitted of the charge and the death is ascribed to the jealousy of the Departed. But the word is known right across northern Bastar and I agree with Koppers that it probably represents an ancient element in Muria theology.

Mahapurub, to call him by what is his common name, is the creator of Nadumbhum or the Middle World. He lives in Porrobhum, or Upper World, attended by his seven daughters, the divine motiari, and from this post of vantage exercises a rather sketchy control over human affairs. He created the world, but only with the help of Lingo and Bhimul. He made mankind, but so carelessly that many people turned into witches and warlocks. It took him a long while to discover how to ensure that men and women would die and thus provide him with a sufficient supply of *jiva* or living souls. He appears to exercise no control at all on the daily life of mortals; he does men no good, but neither does he do them any harm. As a result there is not a single shrine for him throughout the Muria country. He receives no sacrifices and in ordinary thought is largely ignored. As the originator of death, however, it is supposed that when a man dies it may be at his command.

Both Bhagavan and Mahapurub appear in Muria folk-tales though I am not sure how far the picture given there is to be taken in a theological sense. Each deity has seven daughters, though we hear nothing of wives.[3] Every evening the seven daughters go in their flying chariot to visit Mahapurub and to dance before him.[4] In one tale the seven daughters get annoyed with the hero and build a dam to stop the rain falling on his fields. He climbs up a

[1] Grigson, op. cit., pp. 244*f*.
[2] W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV/XXXVI (1940-1), p. 307.
[3] The Bhil, however, 'are all of one opinion that Bhagwan has no wife and no children'. Koppers, op. cit., p. 292.
[4] Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), p. 8.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

796 he could not keep away from motiari; he chased them round and round the field. A Siraha-medium collected a brass ring from every woman present to offer to the gods; this may have been a token of compensation for the presence of women at the festival, for in strict Muria tradition no woman should have been there.

XIII. Conclusion

771 182 This chapter has dealt with the theological and ceremonial aspects of Muria religion. This is far from being the whole story, for religion is for the Muria a very wide thing, consecrating every aspect of life, inspiring a comprehensive ethical system and linking gods and men, living and dead into a single family that even the intrusion of death cannot destroy.

Muria religion is not unlike that of other tribes—Bison-horn Maria, Raja Muria, Halba, Bhattra—in Bastar (though it has an advantage of the others in possessing a noble hero-god whose example is an inspiration), but it is very different from that of its neighbours. Its elaborate, rich and picturesque character is in striking contrast to the drab and languid faith of the Central Provinces Gond. The tribes of western Orissa near the Bastar border—Kond, Bondo, Gadaba—fully endowed as to personal culture, have a less developed and satisfying religion. The rites of the Maria of the Abujhmar and Chanda are stark and austere beside those of the Muria.

Muria religion, like Muria institutions, has probably reached the peak of its development. In its action on the Muria mind, Hinduism has had a fertilizing and energizing effect, far different from the Puritan destructiveness of its influence to the north. So long as the tribe and its institutions hold together, so long as they remain free from external interference, there is hope that this religion may continue to satisfy Muria needs and interpret Muria aspirations. Otherwise, I fear, now that the peak is reached, change will only bring decline.

Muria religion today is not without dignity and power. It has its distortions and abuses—many have been noted in the present chapter—but we must not confound the corruptions of a religion with religion itself. Even its superstitions may have their value. George Tyrrell once suggested that the superstitions of Catholicism provided 'harmless and healthy outlets for humours otherwise dangerous and morbid'.

Religion must fulfil and answer human needs. There is hardly a greater need among aboriginals than freedom from fear, and Muria ceremonial by aiming at the placation of god and ghost (the ultimate source of all fears) brings the great gift of solace. The desire for continuity is met by the elaborate funerary rites which bring the Departed home. The marriage ceremonial consecrates the Muria's passionate interest in the family. The fundamental longing for tribal unity and solidarity is expressed and strengthened by the great festivals when many villages dance together, share a common meal and unite in the worship of the gods. The gods intermarry and are related just as men are.

To the Muria, is God the rewarder of them that seek him? There is little that can be called love in the Muria's attitude to any of his gods. But there is gratitude often and sometimes a belief that a god takes a special interest in a man, furthers his cause and goes about with him. There is pride too; a powerful and important clan-god is a source of credit to a village, a fine litter of Danteshwari awakes feelings of patriotic delight. But generally the gods are feared; like the Departed they are dangerous and must be kept in their place. There is many a god who is never noticed except when he makes a nuisance of himself.

2:Elwin Es (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32 Muria

MURIA RELIGION

Morals are not usually closely linked with aboriginal theology and ritual. Muria ethics, as we see elsewhere, are fully developed and reach a lofty standard. Part of the system undoubtedly derives from Lingo who during his earthly sojourn is believed to have taught many lessons of domestic fidelity and daily conduct, and whose own life and character is not ignoble. The other gods are less highly moralized, yet their worship probably has a moral influence. For example, when they return home after dancing all night at a festival, are the chelik and motiari better boys and girls? Probably. Their social instincts have been strengthened. Their whole life—gay, colourful, united, peaceful—has appeared more than ever attractive and desirable, and they know that it can only be enjoyed by the practice of certain virtues. They have learnt, in the common dance and common meal, the futility of jealousy, greed and pride.

This fulfilment of the need for moral growth is not, of course, a conscious one; nor is the satisfaction of the sense of beauty in the dancing, music and drum rhythm at festival, marriage and funeral. But it is there and it is most important. The phallic element is not obtruded, but that too is there and its presence reassures the people that this necessary and beautiful aspect of human life is not alien to the divine interest.

A few other points may be noted. I have already stressed the absence of fixed forms and even of a defined pantheon. There is no sacred book, no canon, no deposit of faith committed to a central authorized guardian, no regular liturgy. Religion is always on the move. Even the legends change from village to village. The living voice of the prophet is more important than the convention of the priest. The dream of today is more urgent than the tradition of yesterday. The position and reputation of the gods is constantly changing. As the Muria become more State-conscious, more patriotic and nationalist, as the opening of communications brings them more in touch with the Palace and the Dassera traditions, the worship of Danteshwari is likely to grow ever stronger. By contrast I think the cult of Bara Deo will wane more and more as it has done already in the Central Provinces. Indeed in the neighbouring Bindra Nawagarh Zamindari I have recorded a legend that the decline of Bara Deo was directly due to the British occupation; the old god was captured by the British who still hold him and derive their power from him. As more and more forests are reserved the ancient jungle gods tend to disappear; Kadrengal, lord of the hunt, is already a mere shadow of his former self. There is no need for missionary effort; the advance of civilization will automatically change the character of the gods. I anticipate a considerable increase in the cult of Mahapurub and Bhagavan who are above earthly changes. Modern civilization tends to push men's aspirations and their divinities up into the sky.

The Muria attitude to the gods is a curiously ambivalent blend of familiarity and terror, of humour, affection and abuse. Often they do not so much pray to the gods as talk things over with them, usually at the top of their voices. If they are not satisfied they abuse their gods with point and wit, or treat them very casually in an attempt to bring them to their senses. I was unable to obtain many *mantra*; I believe few exist; the expressions used for the harvest on page 25 and at the time of the hunt on page 42 are definitely intercessory rather than mandatory. The idea that the priest, by virtue of his position or his abstinence, can force the gods to his will, is alien to Muria thought. Yet along with the familiarity and homeliness, there is sometimes a very real sense of awe. In some of the hill temples, when a famous medium is possessed, when the Anga moves so mysteriously to show

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

its will, at the crises of the bull-sacrifice, at the dance of the dead, the urgent and catastrophic nature of the unseen is emphasized and the worshippers are hushed into dread and reverence.

Muria religion, then, which anticipates the vast developments of Hinduism, is not unworthy of the great religious system which has grown up on the same soil and out of the same traditions. Of that system it is of course a simple and childlike version, yet it does not lack dignity, power and beauty, and the modern Hindu—if he is wise—will treat it with the reverence that is always due to children's things.

2: Elwin F-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

their elders and are raised into the air with a whistle and a shout.[1] This pyramid slowly gyrates, and the other boys form a procession and march round and round singing.

Songs

1

[533]

Re reloyo re rela re rela rela re reloyo re rela rela
Sayrela re rela rela.

[539]

At the boundary the monkey sits on a pile of stones.
Get up, monkey, get up, monkey.
My horse is speaking to you, monkey.
You are sitting on a long pole, monkey.
You are eating the raw ebony fruit, monkey.

2

Whose is this temple, girl?
It is the shrine of the Kolang boys, girl.
This is their temple, girl.
Come out to see it, girl.
Bring a lamp in the left hand, girl,
Water in the right, girl.
Give them greeting, girl.
Bring rice in the fan, girl,
Rice in the basket, girl,
Rice in the leaf-cup, girl,
Bring salt in the leaf-bundle, girl.
Give us something to drink from your hand, girl.

The last dance is the Kokotar Daka Endanna. The chelik form a line, each boy holding in his right hand the stick of the one in front and in his left the stick of the one behind. They go round in a rambling line, while the boys at the end hop about and waggle like the tail of the *manda-pite* bird. Others say that the head of the line is a dog and the tail a hare; the purpose of the dance then becomes a game in which the head of the line must turn round and catch the tail. In Koilibera, the boys at the tail imitated the copulation of goats.

[771]

[1] Thurston describes a similar dance performed by Koyi women. 'The older ones stood in a circle with their arms intertwined and the younger girls perched aloft, standing astraddle on their shoulders.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 72. I have seen similar dances of this kind performed by the Dhurwa-Parja of southern Bastar, the Kond of Koraput District and the Bhil of the Dangs.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make
285 baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

● 771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
614

[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. 771
Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should 776
be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan- 614
priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of 615
phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other 614
tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken [177] down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series 796
of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

of a timid and resigned outlook in place of the manly spirit of old. Finally I propose to discuss the results of the more liberal policy towards the aboriginals which H.E.H. the Nizam's Government has pursued since 1944, and to outline the principles and the first stages of the Gond Education Scheme, which is designed to help the Gonds in the struggle for existence and to restore to them self-respect and pride in their own ancient culture.

In an account of a culture as rich and complex as that of the Raj Gonds the anthropologist must needs concentrate on certain aspects, and in this book I have given first place to the Gonds' mythology and their complex ritual, sanctioned and sustained in almost every phase by mythical precedents. This part of Gond culture is rapidly disintegrating and its study, still possible in the hills of Utnur and Asifabad Taluqs, would come too late in the more open parts of the District. Problems of psychology and the more intimate matters of the individual's life, on the other hand, are only fleetingly touched upon, but I believe that changes in this sphere are not as rapid and the time left for their study is consequently far less limited.

Although this book is not a treatise on linguistics, Gondi texts of some length have found a place in many chapters. I noted them when collecting my material and as they are the first recorded specimens of the pecular Gondi spoken in Adilabad, I do not feel justified in withholding them from the student of Indian languages. All have been checked and rechecked with several informants, but this is no guarantee of absolute accuracy, for Gonds, like the speakers of most unwritten languages, are often careless about rules of grammar and not very sensitive to slight slips in a text read out to them. The recording, moreover, is not in accordance with the exigent demands of modern phonetics, which only the trained linguist can fulfil. Consonants are used with their values in English, and vowels with their values in Italian, long and short signs being added only where confusion might otherwise arise between two words of similar sound. Diacritical signs have been used only in the consonants ṭ, ṛ and ḥ. While the dental t, rendered by the Nagri character त , is transcribed by simple t, the cerebral t rendered in Nagri by ट, is transcribed by ṭ. Similarly the soft r, र in Nagri, is transcribed r, and the hard r, ड़ in Nagri, as ṛ. The letter ḥ stands for a sound closely resembling the German ch in Bach (pronounced like the composer). This sound occurs mainly in words of Marathi origin, and in such words most Gonds not familiar with Marathi pronounce it not as sh, but h; examples are *goḥti* (word, speech) and *paḥti* (favour) pronounced in pure Marathi as *goshti* and *pashti*; but I have transcribed these and similar words as pronounced by the Gonds in the hills.

Following the spelling of the Linguistic Survey and Trench's Grammar, I have used *w* for all *v*-sounds, except in proper names occurring in the English text, and in words borrowed from Hindi in which *v* is

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

774 [775] dreams. When a man dies the soul remains near the house and when a child is born we say 'A visitor has come' meaning that the soul has returned to its own place.

The ability of the soul to leave the body and its power of independent movement is illustrated by a significant story, told by a middle-aged Muria, Dalsai of Kerawahi.

> When I was about fourteen years old I died of small-pox and my soul was taken to Mahapurub. I watched my parents sitting round my body weeping in their grief. Mahapurub was sitting on a cot: my soul said to him, 'I'm hungry, give me something to eat'. Mahapurub replied, 'What do you want to eat?' My soul said, 'Ripe mangoes, ripe figs and plenty of salphi juice to drink'. Mahapurub said, 'There's nothing to eat here: go back to Manjhpur [the Middle World or earth] and have it there'. So my soul returned to its body and the corpse sat up. I said to my family, 'What are you weeping for?'
>
> I then asked for ripe mangoes, ripe figs and salphi juice, and my parents gave me everything I wanted. But the Mata [goddess of small-pox feared by Hindus and aboriginals alike] said, 'You have escaped from Mahapurub, but you can't escape from me. Give me one of your eyes'. Since then I have been blind in one eye.

Kotla Muria of Kuntpadar describes how in his youth he 'died' during a cholera epidemic.

> Everyone fled from the village leaving me senseless in the house. I died and my soul went to Adibhum, the Lower World. There I saw a world just like ours, but the men were of small stature, and the cows and bullocks were the size of pigs. When I went among them, the inhabitants said, 'Who is this man? Why has he come here? We have no room for him'. They gave me some food and asked me to leave immediately. My soul returned to earth and entered my body. The food I had taken in Adibhum was enough for me to move my legs a little, and presently I recovered.

The effect of such stories on the simple aboriginal mind is to impress upon it the belief that the soul can exist apart from its bodily integument. Even when that has been shed for ever, dreams prove that the soul continues to exist, though it is only possible to see the Dead for a few years, up to the time when they are finally mingled with the Hanal. It is generally supposed that there is no need to tend or placate a man's soul more than twenty years after his death.

775 After death, the soul goes to Mahapurub and, when a sufficient time has passed, returns to the 'warmth and comfort' of its own family. Though the Muria believe in rebirth, they have no idea of Karma and their picture of life after death is quite unmoralized. There are no words in Gondi for sin or virtue: a man may be ruined, here and hereafter, for breach of a taboo, but the notion of retribution for sinners is an alien importation.

● 772 775 Have the Muria any idea of Hell or Heaven? Their myths and folk-tales are full of references to the three worlds—Porrobhum or Uparpur, the abode of Mahapurub or Ispural; Nadumbhum or Manjhpur, the Middle World, the earth on which we live; and Adibhum or Tarpur, the Under World. This typically Hindu conception has the advantage of giving the story-teller three stages or levels to work on and greatly extends the possible range of a hero's adventures. There is frequent communication between these worlds by

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.[1] I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.[2] The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. The Intervention of the Departed in Human Affairs

But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are particularly interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or grievous hurt peace can only be made between the two families if peace is made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery with another man.

The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead. Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall, to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing, to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 96.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubstantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, op. cit., p. 141.

108

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

and to make him live by himself on the outskirts of the village, so that in the end he becomes almost a separate low caste. This, however, has not gone nearly as far among the Hill Marias as among the Bison-horn.

To the south, along the Indrawati valley, the Hill Marias are influenced strongly by the Bison-horn Marias, and the area concerned is marked on the map by the letter H. The influence of the Bison-horn Marias gets less as you go west down the valley towards Kutru, and beyond Kutru is replaced by that of the Telugu-influenced Koitor of the riverain tract, known generally in those parts as Dorlas. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of most of these villages near the river were once Hill Marias. They seem to have been enumerated as Murias in the 1931 census, and are included in the 15,000 persons whom I have indicated at the end of my account of the Murias as wrongly enumerated at census as Murias. Where the Hill Marias are the immediate neighbours of the Bison-horn Marias, the influence of the latter is strong. In theory, according to local legend the Mander, a tributary running more or less east to west and joining the Indrawati on its *southern* bank near Barsur, is the boundary between the two kinds of Marias, with the Indrawati as the boundary west of the confluence. Here the Hill Marias know the Bison-horn Marias as Dandami Koitor; but the name is not universal in Bastar, and I have therefore preferred to call them Bison-horn because the wearing of bison-horns by their male dancers is so obvious a peculiarity of the tribe. Formerly, the legend says, Pat Raja, the log-god of Mornar in the Mangnar *pargana* who is regarded almost as the overlord of all the log-gods of the Hill Marias, and his wife's brother Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan at Ghotpal, a large Bison-horn village south of the Indrawati, between Barsur and Gidam, divided up the Hill and Bison-horn Marias into *dadabhai* and *ahomama* clans (brother-clans and wife-clans), and in those days the Hill Marias used to intermarry with the Bison-horn, and each used to attend the other's festivals. One day, as the Gumelor clan of Hill Marias, which occupies a group of villages in Bhairamgarh Mar, Dantewara Mar and Mangnar, was trooping to Ghotpal to dance at the Koqsar festival there, carrying their axes on their shoulders, a Gume with his axe accidentally severed the *sem* bean vine of the Old Widow (*Kuram Mutta'i*), who thereupon put a curse on all the Hill Marias and forbade them ever again to come south of the Mander river for social or religious purposes. Since then, according to the Hill Marias, intermarriage and participation in each other's festivals has ceased. On the other

Hill Marias of Indrawati valley, influenced by Bison-horn Marias or Dorla Koitor

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

778 thongs of the outer rind of bamboos. Where *saja* trees are scarce, he may be made entirely of bamboos, but will be lodged in a hut under a *saja* tree. The junctions of the logs and the cross-pieces are adorned with bunches of peacock and jungle-cock feathers, and the ends of the logs with rupees or spirals of peacock quill or bands of brass and silver. At the first-fruits ceremonies his shed [782] is adorned with plaited fringes of the stalks and ears of the new grains, or bunches of bean and pulse pods; and he is brought forth to have the blood of the sacrificed victims sprinkled upon him.

Halbas, Telangas and Murias have precisely similar gods, if the logs composing them are more elaborately adorned and sometimes carved. Their generic name in Bastar is Anga Deo or Pat Deo, 'Log-God'. The central log is the essential part, for the other two logs are added primarily to enable the god to be borne on the shoulders of four men when he goes forth to a festival or a witch hunt. The Jhoria log-god at Narainpur had a special nose for witches, and the late Raja Bhairam Deo, great-grandfather of the present Maharaja, installed a copy of it in the palace at Jagdalpur; for witch hunts the god used to be brought in from Narainpur while the palace copy was sent to Narainpur during his absence. I found that the palace copy was in 1927 being used generally without reference to the Narainpur prototype for detecting witchcraft around Jagdalpur, a fee of Rs. 5 being paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the Temple Court of Wards whenever surrounding Murias requisitioned its services.

● 773 As has been observed on page 51, there is a tradition among
618 the Hill Marias (of Chhota Dongar, Mangnar and Barsur Mar *parganas*) that the great log-god Pat Raja of the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana* with the help of his wife's brother, Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan of the Bison-horn village of Ghotpal, near Barsur, divided up both Hill and Bison-horn Marias into clans, in the old days when there was regular intermarriage between the Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The legend does not appear to be known to the latter, who have only vague traditions of having at some remote date descended to their present lands from the Abujhmar hills, where occasionally they say that their clan-god still resides.

776 It is certain that most of the Hill Maria clan-gods have relation-
618 ship claimed for them with Pat Raja of Mohnar. The Usendi clan of Orcha has his younger brother Wikir Hunga at Japgunda, the Deda clan of Kurmer have another younger brother, Nule Harma, the Dhurwa clan of Gomagal have his sister Oghal Mutta'i, the Hill Maria Marvi clan of Toqtoli in Mangnar *pargana* have his sister's son Mara-Magh, while the Gunne clan of the Barsur Mar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615 618 Poriami clan of the Kuhrami or Cuckoo phratry has the buffalo, which has supplanted the tiger as the totem of the Sodi or Tiger phratry, since tigers so far forgot themselves as to kill and eat some men of the phratry. In the Cuckoo phratry two clans, the Kartami and the Kuhrami (which gives its name to the phratry), have the *karot* or hornbill as totem, while the Kunjami clan has the *kunje* or screech-owl. In all these cases it is the clan totem that matters, not the phratry totem; the Hemla clan will kill goat or cobra, the Kartami and Kuhrami the cuckoo, and the Kalmu the goat. Some clans have no totem of their own, but have no scruples about touching, killing or eating the totem of their phratry; examples are the Tamo clan in the Goat phratry, the Oïkà clan in the Tiger or Buffalo phratry, and the Birya or Big Markami, the Gonche, the Miriyami, the Nupo and the Tati clans in the Markami Tortoise race. Two conclusions follow. The first is that certain clans in the phratry, those with different totems, probably did not split off from the parent clan of the phratry, but were independent clans grouped into the phratry at a later stage, probably owing to contiguity. The second thing is that the association of the totemic animal or plant with phratries and clans is so far from universal and plays so small a part in the life of the whole tribe that it is either something new, borrowed from another culture, but not really assimilated, or else a relic of something that has decayed with antiquity. It is remarkable that the Birya or Big Markami clan should not have any scruples about the tortoise, the totem of the Markami or Tortoise phratry, while the Chudala or Small Markami clan is very particular about it. Yet it is only of the tortoise totem that there is any [773] legend; there is said long ago to have been a great flood, which the brothers Markam and Kawasi were unable to cross until a tortoise came and took them on its back.[1] Some, however, do go [784] out of their way to avoid touching or harming their totem, particularly the Kawasi Tortoise phratry; blindness is the punishment which eating the totem is said to involve. I was told by a Kawasi

[1] This legend of the origin of the tortoise totem is one of the very few traces (the only trace that I have met) among Bastar Marias of the Ramcharra legend of the origin of the Gonds. In the version of this given in Trench's *Gondi Grammar*, Vol. II, all the ancestors of the Gonds were stopped on their way to worship the Great God by a great flood, 'whereupon in haste they plunged into the river, and one caught hold of a Tendu log, another a Sirras, another a palm tree, another a teak tree, another an iguana, another a tiger, thus each seizing something or other, they forded the river. Having crossed the river, they assembled near a Saj tree, and ate the new rice that ripens in hollows, and drank, and asked each other, "What did you catch hold of when you crossed?" They said, "I for my part seized a palm tree and forded on it, I a teak tree, and I a tiger." Addi-rawan-pariol says, "Then your *pari* will be the Palm tree, yours the Teak, and yours the Tiger." Thus *paris* were found for all of them

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

modern Hindu or missionary accretion is to be found in a study of the myths of origin which in many tribes have all the marks of antiquity. In these a Supreme Being is firmly established. He is not omnipotent, he is not omniscient, his character is ambiguous, his morals are uncertain and his language coarse. But he is exalted far above all others and he is the prime mover in the creative process as well as the goal of the human spirit after death. 776

My collection of Maria myths is incomplete, but the Bison-horn Maria story of Creation leaves no room to doubt the tribe's belief in a Supreme Deity. 776 773

There was a great rain and the world was drowned. But Gajabhimul put a brother and sister—their names were Kawachi and Kuharami—in a gourd. This gourd drifted to and fro until it ran aground on a great rock. Mahapurub sent a crow to search for men. The crow found the gourd, pecked it open and released the boy and girl who began to cry. Mahapurub told the crow to stop the noise, but it wanted the children to die so that it could feed on their bodies and it did nothing. Mahapurub sent an eagle, but it too did nothing. Then he sent a tiger, but it too did nothing. At last he sent a monkey. The monkey sat on a rock and asked the children what was the matter. The rock was so hot that it burnt its buttocks and it jumped on to a tree. 'We have nowhere to go,' said the children, 'and there is no food.' The monkey returned to Mahapurub and told him. 539

Mahapurub now sent a boar. 'Near the rock is a tortoise,' he said. 'It has made itself a home of mud and clay. Take off the mud and spread it on the rock.' 'But how am I to live without food?' asked the boar. 'These children will sow seed,' said Mahapurub. 'There will be a harvest on the rock, and you will be the first to eat it.' That is why the wild boar always ravages the crops before men can reap them.

The boar found the tortoise and rolled itself in the mud. It came to the rock and shook itself violently. The mud flew in all directions and there was the world again.

This story was recorded at Rewali and was repeated with small variants in other villages. But at Killepal, the Marias said that the children were put in the gourd by the gods Andalkosa, Patraj, Pirumi and Tuldokarj. It was Mahapurub who wanted to destroy the children and he himself tried to cut the gourd open and so let them drown. But the gods got hold of the gourd in time and threw it into the water and it drifted away out of Mahapurub's reach. If this is a Supreme Being, it is a singularly imperfect one. And 776 773

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

indeed it must be confessed that the Maria belief in Mahapurub is weaker than in other tribes. The Sun and Moon were created, not by him, but by human beings. Fire was not given—as in so many legends—to the world by God, but was discovered by man in a more or less natural way in a broken stone or a split bamboo. In only one of the folk-tales does Mahapurub play a part. In this he teaches the hero how to make a hearth and gives him a magic bel stick. He refuses to answer the prayer of a bird which begs him to restore its mate to life.

On the whole, we may conclude that while the Marias undoubtedly believe in some kind of Supreme Deity, he is not vividly imagined by them, and his cult is overlaid by the interest and excitement aroused by the earth-bound deities like Danteshwari and the clan-gods and by the attention that must be given to the Departed.

III

The general pattern of Maria magical beliefs has been traced by Grigson and his picture may be supplemented by my chapter on 'Witchcraft and Magic' in *Maria Murder and Suicide*. A few additional notes may be of interest.

The dread of witchcraft and black magic seems to me to be stronger among the Marias than in the other primitive populations of Middle India. Among the neighbouring Bondos, for example, it is comparatively weak and hardly troubles the deeply religious Saoras whose attention is concentrated on pacifying the Dead.

In Maria opinion, the practitioner of black magic is frequently a widow, often a riggish widow. Her chief delight is to interfere with other people's pleasures; she sends grubs into the spathe of the sago palm and thus checks the supply of the refreshing juice; she loves to rob a fresh young girl of her rightful joys by prolonging her menstrual periods; she frustrates men's happiness by making them impotent; she blights the marriage-bed with barrenness. These wanton and jealous widows are a great nuisance in Maria society. Oyami Anda of Bara Harmamunda told me how he was pestered by one of them but, since he had two wives already, did not want to be involved in a scandal and in any case was not attracted, he rejected her advances. In revenge she nearly killed him with black magic. Another old Oyami Maria insisted that it was only a widow who could perform this magic; as a young man such a woman had begged him to lie with her and when he refused had made him impotent. At Kuchepal I met a man who had once engaged himself in that most dangerous of erotic adventures, a love-affair with a widow. After a time he wearied of her and in

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

that girls should be tattooed before marriage and if possible before they are betrothed. If a girl is not done till after marriage, her parents-in-law can demand the cost from her own parents. There is some idea that the marks are a sort of passport to heaven. 'If she dies without being tattooed, Mahapurub will punish her. But if she brings him beautiful drawings from the Middle World, he will keep her with him and look after her.'

In the western parganas the tattooing is often done by a girl's own mother or by some elderly woman of the tribe. A crude needle is made out of the brass wire used for an ear-ornament and charcoal dust is mixed with til or mahua oil. In the central and eastern areas, however, most of the tattooing is done by wandering Ojha women.[1] These are the wives of semi-aboriginal professional musicians. They have various stories to account for the origin of tattooing which, as we should expect, are generally Hindu in tone. In Narayanpur the Ojha described how

> At the beginning of the world there was no caste distinction among mankind. Mahapurub decided to divide men up into castes by giving them appropriate presents. A man who was given a net became a fisherman; a man who was given a plough became a Gond; a man who was given a pen became a Brahmin. At last Mahapurub found that he had given away everything except a drum, and he looked round to see who would take it. A number of men were passing along the road and one of them was lagging behind the others. Mahapurub gave him the drum telling him that his name was henceforth to be Ojha, and thus the caste began.
>
> The Ojha now began to earn his living by wandering from village to village beating his drum, telling stories and begging. One day when he went home in the evening his food was not ready and he beat his wife saying, 'All day I go from place to place earning our living; you stay at home doing nothing and yet you cannot even cook my food'. The woman replied, 'I go to the tank for water, I fetch wood from the forest, I clean the house, I cook the food. What other work am I supposed to do?' In the manner of women she began to sulk, saying to herself that she would only eat what she earned. After she had fasted for eight days Budi Matal's carpet began to shake and she sent her messenger to find out what was the matter. The messenger took the Ojha woman to the goddess. 'I have no work to do and so my husband beats me', said the Ojha woman. Budi Matal replied, 'Very well, I will give you special work to do, provided you always worship me'. She took the Ojha woman to the forest and found a sarai tree; she removed some of the gum and put it on a bit of earthenware, covering it with another bit. Then she smeared both pieces with cow-dung and put them on a fire. After a little while she removed the lid and found a black deposit there. She scraped this off with a bit of wood and put it in the broken half of a coconut shell. Into this she put some water and stirred it well. She fixed three needles in the knot of a bamboo and made the Ojha woman lie down with one cheek to the ground. So she tattooed her. Afterwards she washed the place with cow-dung and rubbed in oil and haldi.

[1] In their article 'Ojha' Russell and Hiralal do not mention tattooing as one of the Ojha's activities.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 296ff. The name is applied to the soothsayers and minstrels of several tribes, but the Ojha of Bastar are probably of Gond origin. There were 137 Ojha in Bastar in 1941.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

773
304

Then said the Matal, 'I have done this for you but you yourself must do more than this. First of all tattoo, then wash the place with cow-dung, then sprinkle haldi oil and offer rice in my name. Then holding the needles and some haldi and pulse in your right hand, catch hold of the first fingers of the woman you have tattooed in your left hand and with your right make three passes round her body. Put the haldi and pulse in her sari and let her go. By this means the burning of the marks will be cooled.'

At Palari in the Kondagaon Tahsil the Ojha gave a different version of their origin. Here they described how

Bara Deo was the son of Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai. He had six brothers and seven sisters. One day the seven sisters went to Tallur Muttai and asked her for ornaments such as would last even after death. Kadrengal gave Bara Deo a dhol and a dhamru drum. Then two sons were born to Bara Deo. One was called Murha and the other Ojha. Bara Deo taught Murha to beat the dhol with wooden sticks on the ground. Because he beat with wood on the ground Murha became a ploughman but Ojha played his dhamru slung from his shoulder, and spent his life hunting and drawing patterns on the walls of houses.

In this way the Ojha's wife learnt how to tattoo and once a year the Ojha gives a goat to Bara Deo saying, 'Behold, we go all over the world tattooing. From the marks we make let there be no wound, no pus, no swelling. Let no evil magic attack us as we work.' Because of this, Bara Deo lives with the Ojha and no witch can injure them at the time of tattooing.

304
386

The method of tattooing is still today very much what is supposed to have been taught the first Ojha woman by Budi Matal. Lamp-black, charcoal, pounded incense is mixed with either castor, til or mahua oil. This is put in the broken half of an earthen pot, covered, and burnt over a lamp or a small fire. The black deposit is removed with a shell and kept in a small pot or bit of coconut.

304

The Ojha woman makes a pen of bamboo and draws the desired pattern on the skin. Then with three or four needles she pricks in the black colour. Before beginning she takes the names of the Seven Sisters of Bara Deo. At the end she receives from her victim's relatives rice, haldi, oil, chillies and salt. This she waves round the girl and sometimes performs the little rite with the needles that I have already described. She offers part of what she has received to the Seven Sisters. This helps the pricks to cool quickly and not hurt too much.

Muria girls are tattooed on the forehead, chin, arms and the calves of the legs. Most of the patterns are conventional—squares, triangles, and lozenges. Sometimes you may see two little figures representing a chelik and a motiari. There is no magical significance or even special meaning in the marks. 'It is for pleasure', say some Muria; others declare that it is simply a decoration, but a permanent one. 'Your words', a girl may whisper to her chelik, 'will remain like the tattoo marks on my breast.'[1]

[1] It is curious to find Crawley saying that it is 'erroneous' to attribute the painful processes of tattooing, boring and scarification to the desire for ornament. 'There is ample evidence that "savage mutilation" is never due to this desire; the savage does not hold with the maxim—*il faut souffrir pour être belle.*' This evidence is not given, but Crawley insists that tattooing and other mutilations are for the protection of the parts affected from supernatural dangers. I doubt if this is so in India.—R. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. II, pp. 248ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

II. The Origin of the Gods

A Hindu lives by ceremonies; a Muria lives by his gods.—Muria proverb

Muria religion is a blend of the tremendous and the homely; at one moment the peasant trembles before a display of overwhelming dynamic energy, at the next he is abusing his god for flirting with a goddess of his own clan. The Muria take a great interest in the domestic affairs of their gods; they are much better acquainted with divine than human genealogies; they are proud of the vast confusion and multiplicity of the Bastar deities.

For there are, they say, 'more gods in Bastar than anywhere in India'. Many legends describe their immigration, their birth, their movements from place to place. 'Long ago'—the story comes from Benur—

before the Bastar Raj had come into being, Raja Dokára lived in Warangal.[1] His younger brother was Gotal Dokara. When Danteshwari Mai came to Bastar, Raja Dokara followed her as the Lamhada of Budha Dokara's sister, Pat Rani. Gotal Dokara accompanied them, but he went to live in the Marian Raj in order to avoid his brother. Raja Dokara settled in Bara Dongar and was married to Pat Rani. From them were born Hunga Dokara, Pahedunga, Waikirunge, Guttehunge and Lingo Dokara.

In Bara Dongar, Budha Deo and Samrat Dokara his brother had many daughters. Four of these were carried off by the four elder sons of Raja Dokara. Budha Dokara and Samrat Dokara had seven score sons and seven score daughters. They said to Lingo Dokara, 'These are for you'. But Lingo was very pure. He said, 'No, I do not desire to marry'. So the four brothers said, 'Well, you stay at home and we'll give these girls villages instead'. So the four brothers put the rest of the girls into a fish-basket and sat on the back of a tortoise. By their magic the tortoise turned into an elephant. Seated on the elephant the brothers rode slowly round the Bastar Raj. As they went they gave one girl to four villages, another to seven, and each girl became the Mata Devi of her village.

The tortoise moved very slowly and the brothers put *bhilwa* oil under its tail. So passed many days. The four brothers' wives took red cucumbers and put them in swings and rocked them to and fro, saying 'These are our children'. Now their servant was Kadrengal. They sent him to find their husbands. There was only one girl left in the fish-basket. Her name was Tallur Muttai. The brothers threw her with the basket into Paramwar village and went home, for they could hear from afar the singing of their wives. But Kadrengal met Tallur Muttai and said to her, 'Let us live here together'. They were not married, but lived there as mistress and servant. She used to send him to make people ill, and thus they got food-sacrifice and made a scanty living.

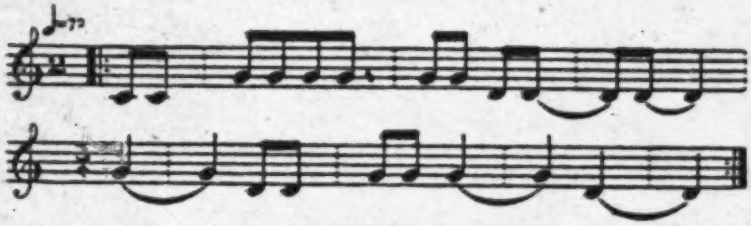
There follows an account of the brothers' return home, their suspicion of their wives—'Who is the father of these children?'—the testing of Lingo and his vindication. In this version of the tale it is Tallur Muttai who goes with Kadrengal to bring Lingo out of the iron bin in which he is being roasted

[1] In Motewand, the villagers told us that 'the gods used to live in Warangal. Thence they climbed by a red thread into the Upper World. Looking down they saw Bastar and descended with the eight descended by the silkworm's thread into the Bastar hills and lived there'.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

to death.[1] Tallur Muttai asks him to marry her, but he refuses and runs away to Semurgaon, where 'being weary' he turns into a stone, and has ever since been worshipped.

This rather tedious account yet gives an exact picture of the working of the Muria's mind when he turns it to theology The distribution of the gods probably represents very ancient migrations of the tribe. As the different Muria families moved here and there, it was necessary that their gods also should move and, in order to emphasize the unity of the tribe, should be related to one another. A Pus Kolang chant sung by the chelik of Phulpar gives a good picture of the multiplicity, variety and confusion of the Muria pantheon.



Aho reveloyo revela ver loyo ver loyo eke revela!

O the sixteen divisions of the earth,
The nine divisions of the sky!
Who is lord of the earth?
The lord of the earth is Tallur Rai.
Give him a good Johar.

O the hoar-frost and Pati Pen!
Give him a good Johar.

O the tiger and Kadrengal!
Give him a good Johar.

Oho the red Sun like a blazing log
Oho the haldi-coloured Moon!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in a corner is the bed,
In the midst is the ocean
Nearby is the Kutela.
Oho the many baby stars!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in the ghotul Madan Matal Rai!
In the village Jamedarin Mata!
Oho Nelo Maria Rai!
Give him a good Johar.

[1] For a full account of the Lingo legend, see Chapter VIII.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

776
539

Paik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's father's brother's son]
Aik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Tograjdeo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Perma Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's brother]
Bhumrandari Penur Rai [Lingo's elder brother's wife]
Pordegumal Penur Rai [Lingo's daughter's husband]
Nulemuttai Penur Rai [Lingo's sister]
Poche Dokara Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Maria Moghraj Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kokal Bidral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kurumtala Penur Rai [Lingo's brother [1]]

776

By this time the reader probably feels that he has had enough. But he need not fear that I propose to take him much further into the intricate and often contradictory relationships of the Muria gods. The subject needs a book to itself and an investigator deeply interested in the theology of primitive peoples. All I wish to do here is to impress on the reader the great complexity of the Muria pantheon, and the intimate human way in which its various members are interrelated.

The gods then come into being by migration from outside and by the division of the tribe into various clans. Many of the gods named in the song are clan-gods, and as the clans split up new gods come into being. But this is not the only way that gods are born. We already have a hint of a fundamental Muria belief in the statement that Tallur Muttai sent her servant to trouble men with disease in order to get food-sacrifice to keep her quiet. The gods are troublesome and expensive, and the more troublesome they are the more they are honoured. This is, of course, the normal Gond method of attracting attention. A Gond wife, who is devoted to her husband, sulks and makes a nuisance of herself, not because she is in a temper, but simply because she judges that to be the best way of getting herself noticed.

[152
593]

776
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Some of the gods, however, have come into being as a result of actual incidents, no doubt greatly magnified by the course of time. I have only room for a few examples of this tendency. In a village near Bishrampuri there is the shrine of Pendrawandin Pen, a goddess about whom there has been much controversy. Long ago, so runs the local legend, a Muria of the Naitami clan had a daughter called Hidde for whose hand a Poyami boy called Kuria was serving as Lamhada. Hidde's father made a dam across a stream, but the water kept breaking through. Then one day a dream came to him, 'Worship me and I will stop the water'. The Muria thought in his heart 'Whom shall I sacrifice?' He decided to offer the Lamhada boy, Kuria. He took him to the stream, pushed him in and piled earth above his body. At once the dam became firm and strong. But now Hidde began to search for her lover, and when she came to the dam she saw one finger sticking out of the earth. When she saw this she jumped into the stream and was drowned also.[2] After a few days, her ghost began to trouble her father, and when he asked who it was, she replied, 'I am Pendrawandin, your daughter; worship me and I will trouble you no more'. Then began the cult of Pendrawandin and her consort Kuria Pen. Unfortunately, at the time of her death Hidde was in

[1] The word 'brother' is used in both its actual and classificatory senses: the Muria are very confused over these relationships.

[2] With this story compare the legend of Ganga and Beni, who are associated with the source of the Wainganga river at Mundara.—R. V. Russell, *Saoni District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 178.

222

her catamenial period, and so Pendrawandin is considered by many as untouchable goddess. 776

The famous Kanda Dokara, father of Lingo, came into being in a very simple way. This is the story they tell at Kuntpadar. 773 ●

> There were seven brothers and their wives. One day the women went to the jungle for grass to make brooms. Six of them made big bundles and put them on their heads to carry home, but the youngest wife only made a very small bundle and was unable to lift it. She called the others and they could not lift it either. Then she said, 'Whether you are god or devil, let me lift this bundle and when I get home I'll give you food-sacrifice'.
>
> When she reached home she was afraid that her husband would be angry with her for bringing such a small bundle, so she threw it into the pigsty. When her husband asked her where her grass was, she said, 'Who knows what was the matter; there was some god or ghost in it: I threw it into the pigsty'. The husband went laughing to get it, but when he too could not lift it up, he said, 'If you are really a god, give me a son'. Then he undid the grass and found inside a root, and they all worshipped it. Afterwards the Muria had twelve sons, the eldest of whom was Kanda Dokara and the youngest Lingo. He used to carry the root with him as a weapon. This is why we swear by the grass in a broom and use it to find out why we are ill and where our cattle have strayed.

Such is a typical account of the origin of the gods. There is a difficulty; sometimes it is an epidemic, sometimes it is some lighter matter as in the story I have just recounted. But always the god manifests himself by causing some hitch in the smooth working of human life. In Adner in 1940, there was an outbreak of cattle disease and the Siraha-mediums declared that a new god had been born, and was not receiving his due honour. A great festival, which I will presently describe, was held to appease the affronted deity and stop the disease.

Any strange or inexplicable event may bring a new god into being; the subdivisions of clans, the migration of peoples, the desire to imitate the Hindus are equally potent in the creation of gods. We must now consider the nature of these gods and who they are.

III. The Nature of the Gods

776
[524]

There is only one tree, but it gives many kinds of leaves—
A god (deo) that causes many kinds of trouble.—Muria riddle.

The gods of the Muria, as we have seen, are many and varied. The majority of them are, I think, comparatively modern. Some have been imported, some are the result of Hindu influence, some have come into being as a result of dreams, some at a magician's whim. It is only the Earth, the Dead, the clan-god and the Maharaja which are ancient and fundamental to Muria worship and belief. [171]

But many other gods are worshipped, the extent of their cult and the notice they receive depending on the instructions given by the Siraha from time to time. For just as Muria ceremonies are not arranged in a precise formulary but rather make up a repertory from which the priest on the instructions of the Siraha will draw what he requires, so also the vast pantheon of the Muria may be regarded as a sort of repertory of deities out of which, from

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

789 the eggs go bad, the priest plucks the feathers of the hen and puts them with the eggs. Broken egg-shells (which are usually preserved on bits of stick and kept under the roof) are added and all are taken to a cross-road. The priest cries, *'Tâu tâu*, you wanted to injure my hen. Take this and go away'. After this, the hen grows new feathers and the next lot of eggs will be good.

791 In the north-west of the State, the son of the village Gaita has a position of privilege in the ghotul and is often appointed its leader, but in the rest of the State the boys of the priestly families have no special privileges and can claim no special office; they are treated exactly the same as any other boys. But the Gaita's and Siraha's sons begin their training as priests or mediums while they are still boys, and many chelik have the power of falling into trance and prophesying. In Masora I saw chelik being taught how to bathe the gods and carry them about. In Koilibera I watched the Gaita teaching two of the chelik how to sacrifice chickens and offer egg-shells to the gods at the end of the Pus Kolang expedition. Parents often take their sons to special festivals so that they can learn what to do by imitation. The chelik usually attend ceremonies as acolytes and prepare the sacrificial food, wash the vessels, and make ready the sacrificial hearth. In this way the future Gaita or Pujari learns his business. The function of Siraha or Gunia is not always hereditary, but boys are chosen and trained when it is found that they are of an unusually sensitive temperament.

VII. White and Black Magic

751 Hitherto we have been dealing with Muria religion mainly in its relation to the gods; we must now take a brief glance at its prophylactic and protective 754 measures on behalf of man against his natural and ghostly enemies. Chelik and motiari are protected against black magic by the divine power of the ghotul fence, but they are only safe while they are inside the ghotul. Evil powers cannot enter the building, but they camp all round, and the Muria boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of battle in the unseen world.

754 Black magic entered the world through an insufficiency. Bhagavan had seven daughters. He had prepared flour with which to create man, but his daughters stole and ate a little from some of the heaps of flour. In these ●773 there was thus not enough material for them to become real human beings and they became magicians and witches. Because of their lack of flesh and blood, they try to steal flesh and drink the blood of men. The warlock and witch are thus sub-human, not fully created. In the untouched Muria tradition, the enemy of mankind is usually a man; belief in female witches and the evil eye of woman is generally a later and Hindu accretion to the old beliefs.

The story comes from Karikhodra. In it we see that the warlock and witch are sub-human, not fully created. In other stories witchcraft originates in disobedience and cannibalism. In Matawal in the Mardapal Pargana we were told the following tale:

> A Muria and his sister left their parents' house and went out to seek for work. After a time they returned home and wished to make an offering to Mother Earth. They went to the shrine of the goddess and the boy said to his sister, 'Whatever you do, do not eat any of the flesh sacrificed here'. They found that the Gaita had put some flesh on a saja leaf in the name of the goddess before her shrine. As they approached a crow flew down, ate some of the flesh and scattered the rest. The boy picked it up and put it back again on the leaf. Behind the shrine a lot of blood from the animals offered and sacrificed had

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

collected in a pool. The girl was afraid to eat the flesh in the presence of her brother but went there secretly and drank the blood. 754

When Mother Earth saw all the offerings that had been made, she was very pleased with that Muria boy and said, 'O boy, whatever you want ask it of me and I will give it to you'. The boy replied, 'I want nothing'. Then the goddess said, 'From today I make you the priest of my shrine. But your sister will be a witch; look at her mouth'. The boy looked and it was red with the blood that she had drunk. From that day, owing to the disobedience of women, there have been witches in the world. 713

Another story comes from Kanhargaon:

Lingo married Kodurjunge and lived with her happily, working in his fields. But Tallur Muttai was jealous, for she desired to marry Lingo herself and thought how she could accomplish her desire. One day she took Kodurjunge into the jungle and made her eat a basketful of jamun berries. Then she left her there and went to Lingo saying, 'Your wife is a witch, come and look at her mouth, she is coming home with her mouth reddened with the blood of men. When I saw her I ran away terrified to tell you'. Presently Kodurjunge came home and when Lingo saw her mouth reddened with the jamun juice, he thought, 'Yes, indeed, she must be a witch', and killed her.

Then Tallur Muttai said, 'You cannot live without a wife, marry me'. But Lingo sat with hanging head and would not look at her face. So Tallur Muttai filled with anger went out and cut up Kodurjunge's body. She took it round the village saying that it was pig's flesh. All the pregnant women there at once roasted a little of the flesh and ate it. The others put it in their houses for the morrow's meal. When Lingo discovered what had happened, he went round the village and told them to throw the flesh away. Those who threw it away suffered no harm, but all who had eaten became witches.

The methods of the Muria warlock are not unlike those practised elsewhere in India and indeed throughout the world. The warlock makes a grass doll to represent his enemy and buries it with the head of a chick.[1] This will soon cause his enemy's burial. To injure cattle, he gets the bone of a cow and buries it with a consecrated egg on the threshold of a cow-shed. A more elaborate method is to put the bone, with a hair from the tail, and a little cow's blood, into a small earthen pot and bury it in the path by which the cattle will go to their grazing-ground. The magician ruins a crop in the same way, burying a little rice with appropriate charms in the threshing-floor. The rice in a pot can be diminished by placing an ear of rice beneath it. 754

To burn with fire, a warlock picks up a hot coal and a pebble and blows them with a charm towards his enemy, or he burns a grass doll. The antidote to this is to wave hot cow-dung ash three times in the air and hide it under a tree; as the ash cools, so will the victim.

To stop a girl having a child, an enemy—it is usually a woman in this case—steals a little of the haldi from her body as she kisses her on her wedding day. She scratches up some of the mud which the bridegroom throws on the girl at the end of a marriage ceremony and somehow obtains a scrap of her menstrual cloth. She buries these by a river and her victim will be sterile.

[1] This is the forerunner of the modern world, the image-magic common in all ages and all places.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

I. The Shrine of Lingo Pen

IN the wild wooded country at the top of the hills, as you go up from Antagarh towards Amabera, is the little village of Semurgaon, and in the forest that surrounds the village, on a cliff overlooking a tiny stream, is the shrine of Lingo Pen who was once honoured by the Gond and Pardhan all over the Central Provinces. Today, as a living force, his cult is probably confined to the north of Bastar, and to the Muria, to whom he has given many deities and the most cherished of their institutions.

In Semurgaon, Lingo's shrine, a substantial thatched hut, is maintained by the Muria, but his priest is a Pardhan—Deo Singh of the Koreti Nang sept—who sings and plays before him on the dhusir-fiddle which is also Lingo's dwelling-place. The shrine is not unworthy of this venerable deity, the lord of all the aboriginal gods of Bastar. Under a spacious roof lies the Anga of Lingo suspended on a swing and sheltered by a great screen of peacock's feathers. At the four corners of the swing are bunches of the same feathers, and at the Anga's side is Lingo's *jiwa* or soul, a piece of iron like a ploughshare wrapped in grass. Round Lingo's neck is a bell, his son Netturgundi. To the right is his throne, a large cup-shaped stone. Above hangs an iron drum and a hunting-horn. From the roof are suspended pots containing Palo, the sacred cloth, and Lingo's two horses, crooked sticks adorned with feathers on which the mediums ride in ecstasy before him.

Every three years there is a great festival at Semurgaon, when Lingo is brought out of his shrine and is worshipped with pigs, goats and bulls. From all over the Jhorian, Amabera and Antagarh Parganas and from Kanker State come the pilgrims bringing their gods with them, 'for Lingo is Raja and Bastar is his kingdom'. At Alor also, in a clearing in the heart of the jungle, is a four-foot pillar of mahua wood in honour of Lingo, and every three years there is a festival. Indeed throughout northern Bastar you may find Lingo's relatives and hear his legend, a token of the strength and distribution of his cult.[1]

II. The Lingo Legend in the Central Provinces

Later in this chapter I present several versions of the Lingo legend as it is current among the Muria of Bastar, where its outstanding feature is its account of the founding of the ghotul. But first let us consider some other versions of the story which have been recorded in the Central Provinces.

The first of these versions was taken down by the Rev Stephen Hislop from a 'Pardhan priest of the Gond at Nagpur' in the Gondi tongue, and was later edited, translated and published by Sir Richard Temple, in 1866.[2] Unfortunately we have no indication of the distribution of the legend, nor indeed whether—in the form recorded by Hislop—it was known to any other

[1] There is a shrine to Lingal Pen at Cherpal in the Dantewara Tahsil, but I do not know whether the Maria here identify him with the Lingo of the north.

[2] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*. Edited by R. Temple, 1866. Large extracts from Temple's translation were reproduced by Bishop Ryve Chatterton in his *The Story of Gondwana* (London, 1916) and many of Temple's notes used without acknowledgement. A brief summary is given by Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 47ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

• 113 than the narrator himself. Temple says that the poem was 'for many generations sung by the Pardhan priests to circles of listening Gond'; Russell, more cautiously, simply says that 'Mr Hislop took down from a Pardhan priest a Gond myth'. In some form or other, however, the Lingo story seems to have been widely distributed, for we meet it in Betul, Nagpur and in the south, though probably not in the Eastern States and districts.

There is little literary evidence of the distribution of the legend. P. N. Bose, in an article on 'Chhattisgar: notes on its tribes, sects and castes', says that 'Lingo is held in great veneration in some parts; but elsewhere the very name is unknown'.[1] Dalton says that of the personages mentioned in the Hislop legend 'the Gonds whom I have met with know nothing. I have frequently questioned them on the subject, but they never apparently had heard of Lingo and his feats. Some Murpachi, or four-God Gonds, in Bamra told me they had heard of Lingo, but he belonged to the Western Gonds'.[2] Crooke records that the Patari of Mirzapur who attended the Manjhi and Kharwa as priests and bards, worshipped a god Ningo—who is, of course, the same as Lingo.[3]

From the Dondi-Lohara Zamindari of the Drug District I have recorded a legend that gives to Lingo the same sort of position enjoyed by many other Gond deities. The substitution of crab for human sacrifice is interesting.

> In Dwarka village a Gond prepared a tank. In this tank there grew many lotus flowers. From one of the lotus stalks was born Lingo Pen. He came in a dream to the Gond and said, 'Sacrifice to me your son and I will double the wealth you have'. The Gond agreed and his wealth increased greatly. But when the time came for the sacrifice the Gond broke his promise, and Lingo Pen was so angry that all that Gond's wealth and cattle and his wife and children were destroyed. He himself died and his clan came to an end.
>
> After a time the villagers also left using the tank and gradually it levelled out and appeared as a field. Many people wanted to use the field, but always Lingo Pen would appear before them and drive them away. 'If you will give me a man in sacrifice', he said, 'you may plough my field. Otherwise you must go away.'
>
> Then one day a Gond named Rahpal came from another village and took his plough to the field and began to plough it. As he was doing so, Lingo Pen appeared and said, 'Who are you? Why are you driving a plough into my head?' The Gond fell at his feet and said, 'I am a poor man; spare me'. Lingo Pen said, 'You must give me two-feet worship'. The Gond said, 'You have asked for two feet in worship; I will worship you with ten feet. I will offer it to you on the day the bullocks finish thrashing the grain that grows in this field'. Then said Lingo Pen, 'Very well, when you reap the rice, make twenty small piles of the sheaves and as many piles of sheaves there are so many will be the cartloads of grain that you will get'.
>
> So when the Gond reaped his crop he made twenty piles of sheaves and prepared a thrashing-floor. He invited his caste-fellows and made ready the sacrifice to Lingo Pen. He caught a crab in the stream and brought it to the thrashing-floor and called on Lingo Pen with fire and incense. The god came and said, 'What is this?' 'You asked for two feet in sacrifice and I promised you ten. Here is the ten-feet

[1] *JASB*, Vol. LIX (1890), Pt. 1 (No. 3), p. 281.
[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 282. [3] *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1891), p. 66

130

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

creature.' When Lingo Pen saw the crab he was pleased and no longer asked for men. Now we always give Lingo Pen a crab whatever else we may also be offering him. 113

In the Oundhi tract of the same district, so Miss D. Bhagwat informs me, Hulki songs are addressed to Lingo and he is described as the patron of dance and music, as in Bastar.

Johar johar O Lingo!
The *mindo*-lyre gives out its tune;
Kadur kum it says.
On his waist Lingo wears brass bells;
There are anklets on his feet;
At his lips there is a flute;
From his ears too there burst
Notes of music:
They come from every side.[1]

In the Bindra-Nawagarh Zamindari, however, the Gond seem to identify Lingo with Bhimsen or Bhimul. Here he is a Rain God. The Gond make a shrine of four pillars round a stone, and when the rain fails they take it as a sign that Lingo is displeased and go to the place dancing and singing.

I am informed by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf that among the Gond of Adilabad District (Hyderabad) the hero Pahindi Kupar Lingal[2] figures mainly as the liberator of the Gond gods. He divides the Gond into clans and establishes their great god, the Persa Pen. But the tale of his 'temptation' does not seem to be known. He is, however, a patron of music as elsewhere. He used to play eighteen tunes on his guitar: it is the beauty of his playing that awakes the imprisoned Gond gods and revives them with new life and hope. Later he saves his own life by his art, and introduces music and dancing to the world.[3]

In Rewa State, about twelve miles from Amarkantak, on the banks of the Narbada, is a beautiful mountain named Lingo, from whose forest-covered slopes comes at times the sound of ghostly music. The story current among the Pardhan and Gond of this region is that the mountain is named after Rai Linga, son of the Raja of Deogarh, founder of the Dhurwa clan.

Once Bhimsen went to Amarkantak, carrying a load of roots, which hung from his pole in two fish-baskets. One was a *mohra* and the other a *dhuti*-basket. On the way, the pole broke and the two baskets of roots fell down and turned into hills, which were then called Mohra Dongar and Dhuti Dongar.

About this time, Rai Linga, who had quarrelled with his brothers in Deogarh, camped at Mohra Dongar with his soldiers. He liked the place so much that he decided to build his palace there, and from that time the hill was known as Rai Linga Dongar. A short while afterwards Bara Deo also came to live with Rai Linga.

One day the Pujari of the Khajarwariha Dhurwa clan set out with the other villagers to Rai Linga Dongar to mingle their dead with Bara Deo. They made offerings of rice, chickens and goats, and danced to

[1] Private communication from Miss D. Bhagwat.
[2] *Pahindi* is the name of a shrub with a red flower: *kupar* is 'the hair-knot worn on one side of the head': the name may mean 'the flower-born Lingal with his hair-knot to the side'.
[3] Private communication from C. von Fürer-Haimendorf.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

113

the beating of the drums. As they were returning home, the Pujari suddenly remembered that he had left behind his sacrificial knife. He turned back and as he entered the shrine saw all the gods partaking of the offerings they had made. The gods were angry that a human being had seen them feasting and decided that the Pujari should not return to his village lest he should tell others what he had seen. Hardly had the Pujari gone inside the shrine than the door shut behind him and he was unable to get out. At the same moment, the villagers who were still on their way home turned into stone with their horses and possessions and these can be seen to this day. The shrine in which the Pujari was shut also turned into stone with the passing of years. After this disaster, the villagers no longer made sacrifices on the top of the hill.

Half-way up the hill can be seen two spears and a few cow-bells. These belong to Rai Linga and the villagers make offerings to them in time of sickness. To this day, the approach of disease or danger is heralded by gunfire from the top of the hill, which can be distinctly heard.

In Huddatola there is a sacred bathing-place known as Deodhar. In former days the Pujari bathed here and dived underground to find a siari plant growing there. He used to pluck some leaves and offer them to Bara Deo. The Pujari was able to do this then because the god possessed him, but today although people bathe on the very spot, they cannot reach the siari plant, for they are not helped by the god.

Once a man was relieving himself close to the Deodhar. Annoyed at this, Rai Linga threw a spear at him but it missed and struck a flat stone. Some people from Ramnagar took this spear to their village, but on the way they died. The mark on the rock made by Rai Linga's spear can be seen to this day.

Another Mandla story connects Lingo with Lanjhi, a traditional home of the Muria.

Lingo Deo was born in Lanjhi Garh. There was a Dhurwa Raja. He was very poor. One day Lingo Deo gave him a dream, 'I am going to take birth in a bamboo clump. You worship me and I will make you wealthy'. The Raja woke up and went to find the bamboo clump. There he found Lingo with his head protruding out of the bamboo and he offered him food-sacrifice. The Raja took Lingo Deo home with him and the god stayed with him. After this the Raja grew wealthier every day.

Then one day said Lingo Deo, 'Come with me and I will take you on tour and then bring you home again'. As they went they came to Lingo Hill in Rewa State and there they made a palace for the god. Lingo had a son who had married someone in Surguja. Lingo had invited all the gods except Kukra Pat. The marriage party went on its way. Lingo Deo made ten days and nights as if they were a single night. 'In one night it must all be done and no one should know of it.'

As the marriage party was returning home, Kukra Pat heard of it and felt annoyed that all the gods had been invited and only he had been left out. When the marriage party reached Lingo Hill, Kukra Pat called 'Kukra-koo, kukra-koo'. When they heard that noise, some of the gods turned into stone, some into wood, some into earth; their drums and horses also turned into stone and wood and earth. Some

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

of the gods had gone into the palace, and had taken the Raja's battle-axe with them. Dhurwa Raja went in to get his axe and the doors shut upon him, and he never got out again. 773

The Khuttia Kond (I am henceforth going to spell Kond instead of Khond, Khand, Kandh or Kondh) of Orissa, who are not after all very distant geographically from the Muria, have a deity Linga Pinnu, who founded their tribe and gave them their chief institutions including the village dormitory. At Sunabata, I recorded a song, much of which might have been chanted in Bastar.

We will sing a song of Linga Pinnu.
Linga Pinnu made the world,
Linga Pinnu made the people,
Linga Pinnu made the Kui,
Linga Pinnu made the Pano,
Linga Pinnu made the sahibs,
Linga Pinnu made the sambhar,
Linga Pinnu made the barking-deer,
Linga Pinnu made the cows,
Linga Pinnu made the roots,
Linga Pinnu taught us how to sing.
Linga Pinnu showed us how to beat the *tapka* [small drum],
Linga Pinnu showed us how to beat the *lissa* [big drum],
Linga Pinnu showed us how to blow the *mohori*,
Linga Pinnu taught us to cut *guriya* on the hillside,
Linga Pinnu taught us how to plant roots and pulses.
Linga Pinnu taught the unmarried boys to sleep in the *dhangra-ilu*,
Linga Pinnu taught them how to dance and sing.
Linga Pinnu showed us how to do the Meriah sacrifice.
Linga Pinnu was born from the ground
From the ground between Gumma and Karanja;
He lived till he was old.
He taught us everything and died.
When he married he had children:
We are all his offspring.
Linga Pinnu divided us by castes and clans.
Then we Kui said to one another,
'How shall we eat? How shall we live?'
Linga Pinnu took us to the jungle:
He taught us how to cut and burn.
For our crops he gave us seed.

We must not, of course, be taken in by names. Since Lingo or Linga simply means the phallus and might thus be given as a name to any deity of the Shaivite type, its use does not necessarily imply a connexion with the Muria Lingo. But legends to the north, in the Central Provinces, are probably of the same family.

III. Hislop's Version of the Legend

Unfortunately Hislop's version was considerably bowdlerised by Sir Richard Temple, assisted by the Reverend Baba Pandurang of the Free Church of Scotland Mission, who was Mr Hislop's native assistant, and his companion in several tours, and who frequently was employed by Mr Hislop in obtaining

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

113 information'.[1] All such passages as were 'redundant, frivolous, improper or objectionable' were cut out and 'the original whole thus pared down to about one half'.[2] But Temple's translation is delightful and to read it is to obtain a fairly good picture of the Gond as seen through the superior eyes of a Hinduized Pardhan who was well acquainted with the advanced culture of the capital of the province. It would be truer to say that it was a Hindu myth about the Gond, or perhaps even a Hindu missionary tract aiming at spreading the Shaivite faith, rather than a genuine element of Gond mythology.

The Lingo of the legend, as Temple admits, is not a Gond, but 'appears throughout in the character of a devout Hindu'.[3] He wears a dhoti round the loins down to the heels (but the Gond has it tied above the knees), he keeps a knot of hair on his head, a diamond on the navel, and on his forehead a sacred mark. Although in front 'he looks foppish like a young man, from behind he looks like a devout Brahmin'.[4] He conquers the gods by fasting and penance. His practice of celibacy is typically Brahmin.

Hislop's legend contains many other Hindu features. Russell points out that the 'Hindu who clearly composed Mr Hislop's version wished to introduce the god Siva as a principal actor' and he therefore removed the site of the cave in which the Gond were imprisoned to the Himalayas. The scornful references to the bad smell and omnivorous habits of the Gond are typical of the Hindu attitude to the aboriginals even today. Many small points—the preference of sons to daughters (not characteristic of the Gond), the introduction of Hindu demons like Basmasur and a version of the bird Garuda, the worship of Hanuman at the end of a wedding—indicate the Hindu standpoint of the author.

At the same time, even Hislop's story contains many very primitive elements, and the main outline of the life of Lingo appears to be of genuinely Gond origin. Dalton goes too far in saying that the legend 'cannot be regarded as embodying any true Gondi traditional lore'.[5] After an account of the creation, the epic describes how from the womb of Parvati eighteen thrashing-floors of Brahmin gods and twelve thrashing-floors of Gond gods were born. The Gond were 'disorderly behaved' and a 'smell was spread over the jungle'. Mahadeo, in order to get rid of them, called them to a meeting. He made a squirrel and let it loose in their midst. They chased it, and the squirrel led them on into a large cave in which Mahadeo shut them up. Only four escaped; they fled to Kachikopa Lohogarh, or the Iron Cave in the Red Hill, and lived there. But Parvati desired the restoration of her Gond, and fasted for six months until Bhagavan promised that they should be given back, and caused Lingo to be born for that purpose.[6]

[1] Hislop, op. cit., Part III, p. 1. [2] Ibid., p. 8. [3] Ibid., p. 22.
[4] Ibid., p. 23. [5] Dalton, op. cit., p. 282.
[6] On the liberation of the Gond from the cave wherein they were imprisoned, there is a curious note in *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 106: 'According to the Gond legend, Lingo was the leader who liberated the first men of the nation from a cave in Kachi Kopa Lohagad or "The Iron Valley in the Red Hill". The exact position of the valley is not stated, but it would seem to have been somewhere in the Himalaya Mountains as Mount Devalagiri is mentioned. Mahadeva is said to have closed the mouth of the cave with a large stone 16 cubits high. Lingo removed the stone and "sixteen crores of Gonds" came out of the cave. No meaning seems to be attached to the name Lingo, but in Gondi *langve* means "a wolf" and in Mahratti *langa* (in which case the story may be totemistic). This is a similar legend to that of the Mughals whose ancestors were confined in the iron-bound valley of Irgana Kon, from whence they were delivered by Burtechino or the "Dun wolf". According to Abulghazi Khan, the ancestors of the Turks were liberated from the iron-bound valley of Irgana Kon by Bertezena. Every year the Khan of the Turks went to sacrifice in the cave of his ancestors at Mount Ektenech Kun. Speaking of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

113

There was a tree.
It was blossoming. Then said Bhagavan, One of its flowers shall conceive.
By God's doing, clouds and winds were loosed. A cloud like a fan arose: thunder roared and lightning flashed;
The flower burst, clouds opened and darkness fell; the day was hid...
In the morning, when clouds resounded with thunder, the flower opened
And burst, and Lingo was born, and he sprang and fell into a heap of turmeric.
Then the clouds cleared, and at the dawn Lingo began to cry...,
It was noon, and wind blew, when Lingo began to grow.

He quickly grew up; 'he was a perfect man: water may be stained, but he had no stain whatever'. But he was lonely. He climbed a needle-like hill and from afar he saw the four Gond on the Red Hill. He met them and became their little brother. He asked them to get him an animal without a liver. They went for a long hunt, but could not find what they wanted. Lingo then taught his brothers to cut down trees and make a field. Their hands quickly blistered and they threw down their hatchets. But in an hour Lingo made a large clearing. The black soil appeared and he sowed rice and fenced it.

There follows a beautiful account of the rains, the growing of the rice and the coming of a herd of nilgai deer to eat it. Lingo and his brothers hunt the deer and kill all save one old bull and a little doe. When they want to cook the meat, the brothers try to make fire with their flints, but fail; Lingo then has an encounter with the giant named Rikad Gawadi, in whose field fire is found. Lingo makes a guitar to charm the giant:

He saw in front three gourds.
Then he saw a bamboo stick, which he took up.
When the river was flooded,
It washed away a gourd tree, and its seed fell, and each stem produced bottle gourds.
He inserted a bamboo stick in the hollow of the gourd and made a guitar.
He plucked two hairs from his head, and strung it.
He held a bow, and fixed eleven keys to that one stick and played on it.

It is interesting to find that in Nagpur, as in Bastar today, Lingo was regarded as a great musician. He played so beautifully that the giant and his wife began to dance.

Lingo took the guitar in his hand,
And held it; he gave a stroke, and it sounded well; from it he drew one hundred tunes.
It sounded well, as if he was singing with his voice.
Trees and hills were silent at its sound.

The old giant hears the music and says, 'Whence has a creature come here today to sing like the maina bird?' And he begins to dance.

the ancient Getae, Strabo remarks that Zamolxis whom they revered as a god, "retired into a district of caverns". The mountain is held sacred and is thus distinguished, being named Kogaionon.—*Archaeological Reports*, Vol. IX, p. 158, quoting De Herbiot: *Bibliotheque Orientale*, Vol. VI, p. 152; Gibbon, chapter 42; Prichard, *Physical History of Mankind*, Vol. IV, p. 337.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

113 Sometimes sitting and sometimes standing, jumping and rolling he began to dance.
The music sounded as the day dawned. His old woman came out in the morning, and began to look out.
The old woman called her husband to her.
With stretched hands and lifted feet, and with his neck bent down, he danced.
Thus he danced. The old woman looked towards her husband, and said, My old man, my husband,
Surely that music is very melodious. I will dance, said the old woman.
Having made the fold of her dress loose, she quickly began to dance near the hedge.
Lingo said in his mind, I am a devout Lingo; God's servant am I...
Water may possess a stain, but I have none. I am Lingo. I will make the old man and woman
To dance the Gond dance.

He calls on a number of Gond gods, and makes friends with the giant. He invites him to a great feast of venison. The giant offers his seven daughters to Lingo in marriage. Lingo declares that he himself will not marry, and gives the girls to his brothers, two apiece to the three elder and one to the fourth. At first they are suspicious, knowing that Lingo, as the youngest brother, will have access to all the girls. But Lingo says—in a passage which, as I will show later, is of the greatest importance to an understanding of the poem—

If you marry them they will serve me.
They will be my sisters-in-law. You are older, and I am younger.
They can give me water and bread, and spread a bed for me;
I will sleep on it. They can give me a bath; my clothes they will wash.
They will be my sisters-in-law, and like my mothers they shall be.
So said Lingo. When Lingo said they will be my mothers, the suspicion of the four vanished.

The marriage is celebrated in the house of the bridegrooms—a characteristic Gond touch. After the marriage, the elder brothers go out to get meat and fruit, saying that Lingo should sit in a swing and be entertained by the seven wives. 'He thought of our good, not of his own, so we will reckon him as our father.' But after the brothers have gone to the forest,

The seven sisters said within themselves, Hear O sisters. This Lingo
Is our husband's younger brother, and we are his sisters-in-law; we are at liberty to laugh with him;
We can pull him by the hand, and we can make him to speak with us.
Lingo does not laugh with us; he neither speaks nor looks towards us; he has closed his eyes;
But he shall laugh, and we will play with him. So saying,
Some held his hand, and some his feet and pulled him, but Lingo moved not his eyes;
He did not speak or laugh with them.
Then Lingo said to them, Hear, O sisters. You have held my hands
And feet, and pulled them; but remember you are my sisters.
You are my mothers; why do you deal so with me? I am God's servant.
I don't care though my life be sacrificed, but I will not speak with you, nor look at you, nor laugh with you. So said Lingo.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

In spite of these protests, however, the sisters persist in their attempts at seduction, until Lingo beats them soundly with a rice-pestle. They flee before him, 'like bellowing cows'. Lingo goes back to sleep. The women lie down in their houses. When the brothers return, the women accuse Lingo of having shamed them. The brothers are very angry and say,

> We told Lingo at the first
> That there were seven sisters, and that he might choose one from amongst them,
> And that we would marry the rest. But he said,
> They are my sisters, they are my mothers.
> Thus said that sinner, wicked and ill-conducted, that Lingo.

The brothers then decide to kill Lingo. They entice him into the forest with the story of a great animal which had put them to flight and which only he could slay, and there they kill him. They pluck out his eyes.

> One said, Let us play at marbles.
> They took out both the eyes, and said, O seven sisters! You also join in play.
> They brought the eyes, and placed one on the east side, and the other on the west;
> And the brethren, sitting close, held the marbles between the joints of their fingers.
> They began to play at marbles with the two eyes; and their game lasted an hour.

But this is not the end. Bhagavan sends the bird Kageswr to find Lingo's body and Kurtao Sabal sprinkles nectar upon it and restores him to life. Lingo then sets out to find the imprisoned Gond; he endures penance for twelve months till the golden seat of Mahadeo begins to shake. Mahadeo agrees to release the Gond, but Narayan interposes with a typical folk-tale test: Lingo must bring him the young of the black Bindo bird. Lingo performs this task successfully and on his return releases the Gond, divides them into clans and teaches them the ritual of marriage.

Such is, in brief outline, the earliest recorded version of this great legend. A little after the publication of the Hislop papers, the otherwise entirely admirable Captain Forsyth was mistaken enough to turn it into the metre of *Hiawatha*.[1] From this version we must be content to glean a few rich ears of poetry:

> And our Lingo relivivus
> Wandered on until the night fell.
> Screamed the panther in the forest,
> Growled the bear upon the mountain,
> And our Lingo then bethought him
> Of their cannibal propensities. . . .
>
> His bulldog fierce Bassawur. . . .

[1] J. Forsyth. *The Highlands of Central India* (London, 1871), pp. 181ff. Forsyth finds that 'the programme' of the 'Hindu saint Lingo' bears a 'singular resemblance in many respects to the legend of Hiawatha, the prophet of the Red Indians'. But, he adds, 'the noble savage of North America is a very different character from the poor squalid Gond of Central India; and not even the genius of a Longfellow or a Fenimore Cooper could throw a halo of sentiment over the latter and his surroundings'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Mahadeo
Came and saw that bed of prickles
Where our Lingo lay unmoving,
Asked him what the little game was.

Russell, who quotes from both Hislop and Forsyth, says that 'certain variations from another form of the legend obtained in Bastar are included'[1] in his pages. But there is no indication of this, and indeed the only part of Russell's account which is not obviously derived from Hislop or Forsyth is a short passage on page 61 of his third volume 'taken from a slightly different local version'[2] which describes the universally-known story of the crossing of a river, whereby tortoise and crocodile totems are derived, and a brief reference to Lingo dividing the Gond into clans and teaching them about marriage.

IV. The Betul Version

We must now turn to a comparatively modern version of the Lingo story, recorded by C. G. C. Trench in Betul.[3] There is, again, no indication where the story was recorded or from whom, though special reference is made to Tahaldas, petition-writer of Betul, and Parsial Kotwar of Lapajhiri, the writer's two munshis. Petition-writers are, of course, famous throughout India as authors of fiction. Trench's version is undoubtedly a more authentic Gond product than Hislop's and is nearer to the Bastar legend, though it too has many Hindu elements. The picture of Rai Linga in heaven and his incarnation is typically Hindu. A Raja goes to the Ganges to bathe. Rai Linga's brothers go to hunt in the forest of Bindraban, and catch fish in the Ganges and Jamna. The death ceremony is Hindu, so is the custom of building an elaborate tomb. At the end of the story Rai Linga ascends to heaven like Tukaram or any other Hindu saint. Moreover, as I shall show later, the character of Rai Linga is as typically Brahmanical as Hislop's Lingo.

Trench's story opens in heaven. Rai Linga descends and enters into Talko the queen. In due time he bursts out from the crown of her head. Unfortunately, the king who had gone to the Ganges 'with his pots and pans to bale out pools of fish' is drowned that very day and the queen, regarding Rai Linga as a curse, sends two maidens to bury him in the forest. But they take pity on him, and leave him under a banyan tree. Thence he is carried off by Rani Gidal, queen of the vultures, who drops him into the lap of Queen Barren, consort of King Sterile. The boy soon grows up and, like the hero of many other Gond folk-tales, takes a bow and arrow and wanders away to the palace of his real mother. Queen Talko accepts the boy as her own and makes him her 'throne-seated king' above the heads of her six elder sons.

The elder brothers are naturally annoyed at this and they take the young king out to catch fish in the Ganges and Jamna, where they try to kill him. But Rai Linga escapes and follows his brothers home. Then the brothers go out on a six months' trading venture taking five or fifty bullocks loaded with pearls and jewels. They say to the boy, 'You look after your six sisters-in-law well. Let them not joke or talk with anyone. We are going to trade'. Rai Linga was a lad of twelve years. 'He spoke not a word to his sisters-in-law, nor did he joke with them. He would play and talk with the village

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 49.
[2] Ibid., p. 61.
[3] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 108ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

113

maidens.' The six wives used to look out from their fort and say, 'See, girls, how he jests and talks with the village maidens, but not a word to us!' When the boy came home, they used to feed him and spread his bed. But he took no notice of them and at dawn he would return to play with the village maidens. At last the six sisters decided that each of them should spend one night with the boy. 'The first night, the eldest forced him to lie down with her, but Rai Linga went to sleep and slept all night through. He never moved, or touched, or laid a finger on her. . . . He never spoke a single wicked word with the village maidens also.' Each sister tried in turn to seduce the boy, but to no avail; then they took him to kill green parrots in the forest, and there stripped him naked, but he did nothing. 'Rai Linga put on his dhoti and went to the village and began to play with the village maidens.'

At last, in despair, the six sisters shut themselves up with a tame cat and the cat in a rage scratched and bit them. When the brothers returned home they found their wives down with fever and accusing Rai Linga of having dishonoured them. 'Rai Linga was playing with the village girls, but they seized him and brought him from there, and put him into an iron grain-bin, and outside the village prepared a great furnace of wood, and brought the iron grain-bin to the furnace, and put it inside it, and set fire to the furnace. Rai Linga was burnt to death.'

Three days later, the elder brothers decide to take 'this stud-bull' from the fire and perform his funeral rites. But when they go to remove him, Rai Linga is alive. He says, 'If I had committed a sin, I should have been burnt. I committed no sin'. Hearing this, the brothers repent and say, 'Rai Linga is innocent. The guilty ones are the women'. They bring Rai Linga with great honour, but they tie bars to the women's legs, yoke bullocks to them, and drive them round the village till they die. For this Rai Linga reproves them, and for a time they all live without wives.

We then get an echo of Hislop's story: Rai Linga goes to the forest and kills many stags, but there is no fire to cook the feast. He sets out to find fire, and obtains it from an old woman who has seven daughters. The girls go with him to the place where the stags had fallen, and they cook and eat their fill. Rai Linga tells the girls to take away the meat that is left, but they protest that they are unable to carry it. So he sends a brother with each girl to help her. By a trick he brings the girls to his own house and there he marries them to his brothers. One girl is left and the brothers say, 'Won't you marry her?' But Rai Linga says, 'Let her go where her vocation calls her (*bega tana sewaa*[1] *lagai agge dai*). I am a holy saint. I may not stay'. So he embraced them all, and vanished, and departed to his own Agnadip, and his six brothers reigned as kings in Singardip.

In both the Nagpur and Betul versions there are many parallels to the Bastar story which also has various (but fewer) Hindu elements. Everywhere the climax of the story is the conflict between the elder brothers and the younger. *Everywhere Lingo is represented as the founder of the Gond* tribe and giving it characteristic institutions. The other legends make no mention of the ghotul which is so prominent in the Bastar version, but it is noticeable that in the Nagpur story Lingo is a great musician, and in the Betul story Rai Linga is always playing with the village maidens; since he is only a lad of twelve years he sounds very like a chelik playing with the motiari. They are not, however, described as motiari, but as *matewa raiyang*.

[1] Sewaa, a Hindu expression.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

V. Interpretations

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Unfortunately both versions of the legend have been romanticized in a manner hardly true to the facts. Bishop Eyre Chatterton says that 'there is a deeper side to the story of *Lingo*, which no one interested in "things of the soul" can fail to appreciate. The story invites the Gonds to think that they owed their simple civilisation to a being of a higher order than themselves. . . The story, too, claims for the "emancipator" a wonderfully noble character. "Lingo was a perfect man, water may be stained, but no stain had Lingo."[1] His rejection of temptation, his freedom from malice and guile, his readiness to forgive his murderers, to forget their ingratitude and injuries, and to complete his mission of the rescue of the Gond race, remind one strangely of Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.'[2] Forsyth, more properly, compares Lingo to Hiawatha, though he too suggests that 'to some an even more startling parallelism may suggest itself'.[3] Trench claims that 'the Rai Linga legend presents astonishing parallels to the Gospel narrative. Rai Linga may not inappropriately be styled the Gond Redeemer. The legend records his incarnation, his purity of heart, his temptation, his death at the hand of unjust accusers, his resurrection after three days, his discovery of fire, and his final ascension into heaven. In Dr Hislop's version there is also a close parallel to the descent into Hades, for Rai Linga is represented as releasing the Gonds from an underground cavern, where they had been confined by Mahadeo for their misdeeds on earth'.[4]

This is sheer nonsense. It is false, not only in sentiment but in fact. It is a vivid example of the danger of relying on apparent parallels between wholly different cultures, without reference to their social background. The incarnation of *Lingo* is a Hindu conception as is the manner of his miraculous birth in Hislop's story. Far nearer to Gond ideas is the Bastar story of the birth of the honest peasant *Lingo* in a poor cottage, or even that other version which says that he was born from a stone.

The death of *Lingo* presents no parallel to the Crucifixion. His incarceration in the iron grain-bin was, as the Bastar story clearly shows, an ordeal of the type familiar to all students of folk-tales, in which the hero must pass a chastity test by holding red-hot metal or plunging himself into boiling oil.[5]

[1] The expression 'Lingo was a perfect man' with its Docetistical reference is not in the original. The Gondi is *Her Lingal yahan dag mailu hingandag hallu*, 'Lingo (was such) that to water there might be a stain, but to *Lingo* there was no stain'. He is, however, called *satadikar* (saint), *pempariyar* (god's servant), *bhiku* (devotee).

[2] Eyre Chatterton, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

[3] Forsyth, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

[4] Trench, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 111.

[5] The practice of ordeal in the classical Hindu law-books has been summarized by A. B. Keith in his article 'Ordeal (Hindu)' in Hastings' *Ency. Rel. Eth.*, Vol. IX, p. 324. The *Yajnavalkya-smriti* gives five ordeals: (1) sacred libation; (2) the balance where the defendant is weighed twice, and must be of lighter weight the second time; (3) fire, where he must walk across seven circles carrying a piece of red-hot iron in his hand; (4) water, in which he must keep immersed while a runner fetches an arrow shot from a bow, and returns; (5) poison, usually made from aconite, which is drunk, and must show no ill effects during the day. Brihaspati and Pitamaha add other ordeals which include that of removing a hot piece of gold or a stag from a pot of boiling ghee, and holding a red-hot ploughshare. The subject had been fully treated long before in *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. I (1790), and later by G. Buhler, 'A translation of the Chapter on Ordeals from the Vyavahara Mayukha', *JASB*, Vol. XXXV (1866), pp. 14–49.

The literature of the ordeal in modern times is extensive. Thurston gives a dramatic account of tests by snake-bite, crocodiles and other means.—*Ethnographic Notes in Southern India*, pp. 422ff. Crooke has given a number of witch-ordeals and points out that the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

Lingo's resurrection after three days might be a striking fact did we not remember that it is the general Gond, and even Hindu, custom to perform funerary rites for the dead on the third day. I do not know where the discovery of fire occurs in the Gospel narrative, unless Mr Trench was thinking of the Day of Pentecost. Lingo's final ascension into heaven may be paralleled again and again in classical Hindu mythology and even in the lives of modern Hindu saints. But it is unknown in Gond or Muria thought. 113

Lingo's 'temptation' raises problems of the greatest interest. Bishop Eyre Chatterton, more cautious than the civilian, does not venture to compare Lingo's experience with that of Christ. He says that it reminds him of 'the same temptation which befell the patriarch Joseph in the house of Potiphar'. But there is no resemblance whatever between the relation of Lingo and the wives of his elder brothers and that of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. The latter was a temptation to the socially and religiously condemned crime of adultery; the former was not a temptation nor, if Lingo had yielded to the solicitations of the six wives, would it have been a sin. For the climax of the Lingo legend turns on the Indian form of the *Levirate*.[1] The wife of an elder brother is in 'a joking relation' to the younger brother. He will have the right to marry her when she is a widow, and he may have the tenderest—and even intimate—relations with her while she is a wife. This is true, not only of Gond and Muria, but even—to some degree—of Hindu society.

But although there is little social condemnation of a younger brother who enjoys the society and the bed of his elder brother's wife, there is no doubt that younger brothers who refrain from exercising their privileges are greatly admired. Lingo did not so much avoid a sin as attain a positive virtue by his conduct. But what is at the bottom of the story? Why, if Lingo was to be presented as pure at heart, was he not shown as resisting some temptation that would have involved a really shameful fall, an act of clan-incest, for example, or even ordinary adultery?

To answer this, we must remember that this incident in the Lingo story closely resembles a motif that is very common in Gond—and indeed in nearly all—folk-tales, the conflict between a youngest boy and the jealous elder brothers. This motif was studied by Macculloch in his *Childhood of*

practice of making a witch walk over burning coals or a heated ploughshare was once common to both India and Europe.—Crooke, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 271. See also Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. I, p. 260 (boiling cow-dung water used by the Bonthuk); Vol. IV, p. 67 (the Kuyi); Vol. IV, p. 185 (the Kuruvikkarans); Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 464 (the female who placed a hot iron plate on the suspect's head); S. C. Roy, *The Mundas*, p. 425 (for ordeals by white ants and boiling water); *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, pp. 23 and 113, and Vol. V, p. 115 (the Sikh Jat and the Khatis); K. J. Saunt, 'Cobrawa' in *Journal of the University of Bombay*, Vol. IX, Pt. IV (1941), p. 190; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Pt. IIB, p. 55 (the Bhil); *The Aborigines*, p. 267. There is no space to give parallels from other countries.

Two tales resemble the story in the text. Temple, in his *Legends of the Punjab*, gives an account of a heroine who has to prove her chastity by bathing in boiling oil, an incident which affords an exact parallel to the Lingo legend.—R. C. Temple, *The Legends of the Punjab* (Bombay, 1884-1901), Vol. I, and *Wide-Awake Stories*, p. 429. Another story is of Prince Sarab who, accused of immorality by his father's Minister, submitted to the ordeal of burning oil in order to prove his innocence. When the Prince entered the cauldron he was unhurt, whereupon the Minister protested that the oil was not hot enough. A hot fruit was thrown into it and burst with great violence, one of the pieces killing the wicked Minister on the spot, and vindicating the Prince.—A. Cunningham, *Archæological Survey of India*, Vol. XVII, p. 90.

[1] The difference between the modern Indian and Jewish version of the Levirate is that in the former there is no idea of providing a son for the dead man. Though this is provided by Manu and the Hindu law-books, it is a notion foreign both to the Indian aboriginals and to the Hindus.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

773 *Fiction*, where he collected tales with this formula from every part of the world and divided them into eleven distinct cycles. 'Certain of these cycles show only the superiority of the young hero or heroine; others appeal more directly to our sympathy by showing him as the victim of adverse circumstances; others do so still more by setting forth the callous wickedness of the elder sisters or brothers."[1]

The reasons for the popularity of this motif are many. There is the sentimental appeal of the young and weak. In polygamous society the child of the youngest wife is often the most cherished. There is the fact that according to the old custom of Borough-English or *Jungstenrecht*, the youngest son was once the most important member of the family and inherited the bulk of the property. Macculloch gives no Indian examples of this practice but, referring to Mongol, Tartar and Singhpo custom says,

> These survivals over definite European areas, as well as the existence of the custom elsewhere, prove that we are face to face with no mere eccentricity of inheritance; they suggest that this may once have been a universal law. Various reasons have been assigned for the existence of this law. Blackstone and Robertson cite several, and incline to the opinion that the elder sons, having become *pars reipublicae* and ceased to be *pars domus*, had received an allotment of public land, while the youngest remained with his father to carry on the household. Littleton explains it by saying that after the death of his parents the youngest son would be least likely to take care of himself, and hence his maintenance was made sure by casting the inheritance upon him. Gomme and others think it due to the fact that the elders (as in the case of the nomadic Tartars) had gone out to found new homesteads, the father's homestead being then reserved for the youngest son. Perhaps the story of Jacob and Esau—Esau the elder going off to found a new family and home, Jacob the younger staying at home and becoming heir—is a reminiscence of this, but coloured to suit a later age, in which primogeniture was the rule, and some explanation of Esau's disinheritance was needed. Elton derives the practice from the domestic religion centring in ancestral worship and consequent reverence for the hearth, with people who saw no natural pre-eminence in the eldest.
>
> This view is probably the best explanation. It suggests that on the youngest son devolved the rites of the worship of the departed father, and as such rites were invariably connected with the hearth as the rallying-place of the home, the hearth and homestead naturally became his by right. We have seen how the homestead is given to the youngest son, while in certain cases explicit reference is made to the hearth. Folk-tales show that the connexion of the youngest child with the hearth had by no means been forgotten; Cinderella, Cinder-jack, the Norse Boots, all have their natural place at the fireside. It has become a position of degradation; but once it was the place of honour. Nor is this quite forgotten, for from it the despised hero or heroine is taken directly to place and power. As for the funeral rights and the ritual of ancestral worship devolving on the youngest-born, the Cinderella tales, in which the gifts are directly supplied to the despised child from the parent's grave, may be a survival.[2]

[1] J. A. Macculloch, *The Childhood of Fiction* (London, 1905), pp. 330–80
[2] Ibid., pp. 374f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

But I doubt if the necessity of ancestral worship devolving on the youngest son accounts for the Lingo legend. In Bastar, it is a sister's son or a son-in-law who generally performs the funerary rites. Lingo was—in most versions of the tale—miraculously born and the parents play no part in the sequence of events. The Lingo legends fit into the common folk-tale formula: probably all the elements suggested by Macculloch had their part in its construction: but I believe it is the custom of the Levirate (to which Macculloch does not refer) that gives it its real point. 113

The legend, especially in its Bastar form, cannot be understood apart from the foundation of the ghotul and the horror of adultery so characteristic of Muria society. Here is a very practical reason for the village dormitory—it insulates the elder brothers' wives from the dangerous, legitimate, seductive younger brothers. The youth of the tribe, so distracting to business with its fun and music, is concentrated away from home. The figure of Lingo stands out as the ideal younger brother, who denies himself even his legitimate claims and is absorbed in the ghotul and the motiari. It is not impossible that the legend was composed by a jealous elder brother, once cuckolded and turned reformer, who desired to abolish the disruptive influence of the *anga-dewar* relationship.

There remains the character of Lingo which reminds Bishop Eyre Chatterton 'so strangely' of Jesus Christ. The impropriety of comparing the two figures becomes evident when we remember that Sir Richard Temple had to omit nearly half the poem describing Lingo because it was 'frivolous, improper and objectionable'. I greatly doubt whether either Hislop's or Trench's version represents the original legend as it was told normally to village people. The Pardhan priest in Nagpur was obviously a Hindu convert and would not be likely to repeat passages that would too greatly offend a missionary. I suspect too the hand of the Reverend Baba Pandurang. I doubt also whether Mr Trench's petition-writer would have been likely to have risked any improper elements in the story of Rai Linga. This may sound rather hypercritical, but I have never been able to understand how it was that a cult-hero with a phallic name—Lingo means the phallus—should have become the embodiment of purity. Nor could I understand why the supposed embodiment of the Gond virtues should have been a celibate. The Gond despise celibacy; they believe that a man who dies unmarried turns into an especially unpleasant ghost after his death; the sadhus and other celibates in their folk-tales are without exception presented as the greatest rascals. [589]

The Bastar version of the legend suggests a solution of this problem. Lingo is a phallic deity, as the origin of his name given in the legend on page 241 clearly shows. He does not ascend into heaven, but marries seven wives and has children who people the Bastar shrines with gods. He is the founder of the ghotul, where he has his motiari. This is the true Gond picture of the character of Lingo. Hislop's and Trench's versions are undoubtedly nobler to Western and Brahmin eyes, but they are unreal in a Gond setting.

VI. The Lingo Legend in Bastar

Not all the Muria know the legend of Lingo, though all worship him and regard him as the founder of the ghotul. His cult is more or less coterminous with the Pus Kolang, which is danced in his honour. Different versions of the legend have, however, been recorded in the Antagarh, Benur, Amabera, and Ghat Jhorian Parganas of the Narayanpur Tahsil, and at Alor and Kanhargaon in the Kondagaon Tahsil. In north and east Kondagaon, though 113 [883]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

713 the Lingo cult is strong, there is some confusion about the legends. In Masora he was given the notable privilege of discovering mahua-liquor in a tale almost identical to that in which the Baiga attribute the same achievement to Nanga Baiga. In other parts of Kondagaon, I have heard him confused with the Gond Bara Pen and he is sometimes supplanted by Bhimul.

Let us now examine these stories, which are of great interest as revealing what is probably an earlier version of the legend than that current in Betul and Nagpur, and are of the utmost importance to our understanding of the Muria's attachment to the ghotul. We will begin with a typical example of what we may call the general version of the legend; it was recorded in the important village of Alor.

> An old man and woman[1] had seven sons. Of these they loved the youngest with special love. The six elder brothers were married, but the youngest remained without a wife. He used to go hunting every day and in the evening he came home and played; soon the six wives of his elder brothers fell in love with him, and used to swing him in a swing outside the house.
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> One day the six elder brothers said, 'Here we are every day working hard in the fields, and this fellow does nothing'. Hearing this, the youngest boy got up early and took the oxen to the fields before his brothers were awake. When they got up and saw the oxen were gone they hurried to the field and found two furrows were completed. They took their bullocks and each went to his own field.
>
> Presently the six wives came to the field with the midday meal and they first fed the youngest boy. When he finished his meal it was his custom to play a little on his instruments. The six women sat listening to the music and only then took what remained to their own husbands. When they saw this, the elder brothers stopped the boy going to plough and told him to remain in the house. But in the house also the boy used to play his music, and the women sat listening to him, and thus delayed taking food to their husbands.
>
> At last the eldest brother said, 'This is a rascal, let's drive him away'. They said to him, 'Be off with you, go away'. The boy went out into the jungle; there he saw a bird sitting in a banyan tree. He shot at the bird and drove a leaf into its body so that the bird and the leaf fell to the ground together. On that leaf was written, 'When a leaf and bird fall together, the hunter will become a Raja'. When he had read this, the boy took the leaf and bird home and showed them to his brothers. They said, 'You may be a Raja, but we don't want you in our house. Be off with you'.
>
> The boy went again into the jungle. He went on and on and on, until at last on a hill he met a tiger which was ploughing with two elephants yoked to its plough. The boy said, 'You must be a very great person to have elephants in your plough'. The tiger said, 'No, there is one much greater than I; that is Lingo'. Then the boy said, 'But I am Lingo'. The tiger said, 'How can I know that? If Lingo beats me in a wrestling-match, then I shall know him to be Lingo'. So the two wrestled together, and the tiger was thrown, and became the boy's servant.

[1] In Bandopal, however, I was told that Lingo was born from the stone Tipagarh Meta. Thence he came to Kobchor and thence to Semurgaon.

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

Again they went on and on and on through the jungle till they found in the middle of the road a great Rakshasa lying with its mouth wide open; its chin rested on the ground, its head was in the sky. The tiger said to the boy, 'If you can pass this Rakshasa then you will truly be a Raja'. But Lingo said, 'How can I pass? I am only a boy'. The tiger said, 'Shoot an arrow into the air, and while it is in the sky transfix it with another, shoot another at that, and then shoot again and again till there is a ladder of arrows which you can climb and so pass by'. The boy took his bow and shot arrow after arrow as the tiger said. He tied a rope round his waist and the tiger clung to this. Then they both climbed up the ladder of arrows to Mahapurub.

The tiger said to Lingo, 'There is Mahapurub sitting there; go and see him'. So Lingo went and did Johar before Mahapurub, saying, 'It was written on the banyan leaf that I should be a Raja; but how is this to be?' Mahapurub said, 'First go and spend twelve years in penance. Live alone on a lonely hill and play your music in my honour. Then you will be a Raja and I will give you my daughter as wife. But first you must kill the Rakshasa'.

Lingo came down from the sky and shot a thousand arrows at the Rakshasa and it fell down. Then he went away and on a lonely hill built a house, where he played on eighteen instruments together. Hearing the sound, the boys and girls of the neighbouring villages were filled with desire and ran to him, and every night they came to sleep and play in their ghotul which Lingo had built.

Every day Lingo went to his parents' house for food. The parents told their daughters-in-law to provide him with the best food, and they gave him everything with great love. The brothers again grew jealous and told him to go and plough in their fields. So Lingo took two buffaloes and tied them to the harrow with his own loin-cloth. Then naked he climbed on the harrow and drove the buffaloes across the field to break the clods of earth.

As he was driving the buffaloes back he came face to face with his sisters-in-law who were bringing him his food. His *linga* stood up stout and strong before him, and when the girls saw it they said, 'Look how stout and strong is his *linga*; from today his name must be Lingo'. He got down from the harrow, and dressed himself, then sat and played for an hour, and the women were late again.

The six brothers said to one another, 'Surely this fellow is up to some mischief with our wives, or why should they be so late?' They said, 'Let us beat these women for being late again'. Now the women were afraid and they took thorns to scratch their bodies and tear their breasts and they threw dust on their heads, and lay down to sleep. When their husbands returned they found their house empty and no food ready, but only their wives lying on the ground. When they roused them and asked what was the matter, those women replied, 'Look how that scoundrel has treated us', for they were angry that Lingo had not made love to them.

When the brothers heard this, they were very angry and decided to kill Lingo. So the next day they said to him, 'Let us go hunting'. Lingo got ready and they went with their bows and arrows to the forest. Soon they saw a squirrel on a bija tree. The brothers said to Lingo, 'Climb up the tree and catch it'. As Lingo was climbing the tree, the six brothers took their bows and arrows; but Lingo saw them and hid

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

173 behind a branch. Then the six brothers shot together, but the arrows stuck in the tree and did him no harm. From that bija tree came out the sap red like blood and the brothers thought, 'Lingo is dead'. They returned home and performed the funeral rites and prepared a great feast in his honour on the third day. Two of the brothers went out for wood and leaves; as they were getting them they saw Lingo coming from the jungle, a dead squirrel in his hand. They said, 'Brother, we thought you were dead'. Lingo said, 'My brothers know nothing'. So Lingo and the boys came home. When they saw Lingo the brothers said to one another, 'How did he escape?' and 'Tomorrow we will certainly kill him'.

Next day, the brothers again said, 'Let us go hunting'. Lingo got ready and they went with their bows and arrows to the forest. Soon they saw a porcupine; it ran away into a hollow saja tree. The brothers said to Lingo, 'Go in and bring it out'. Once Lingo was inside, the brothers stopped up the hole and piled wood round the tree, poured oil upon it and set it on fire. After the tree had blazed for a long time, the brothers supposed Lingo must be dead, but then they heard the sound of the eighteen instruments, all together, within the burning tree. They stood up to see what it was, and the music ceased. They sat down, and it began again. So it was all night. But at dawn the music stopped and the brothers thought, 'Now surely Lingo is dead'.

They returned home and performed the funeral rites again, and again prepared a great feast in Lingo's honour on the third day. Two of the brothers went for wood and leaves; as they were getting them they saw Lingo coming from the jungle, a dead porcupine in each hand. For there was a squirrel's hole under the tree and Lingo had hidden there and so escaped.

This time the six brothers said to one another, 'Let us ask Lingo to swear whether he has lived pure from our wives or no. If he says he has, let us put him to the ordeal. We will put oil in an iron pan, light a fire below it, and when the oil is boiling we will throw him in and close the pan. "If you are really pure", we will tell him, "the fire will have no power over you".'

The following day the six brothers called blacksmiths from twelve villages and got them to make a great iron pan and its lid. They lit a fire below it, and poured in oil. When the oil was hot Lingo sat in it, and they closed the pan. Soon it was so hot that none could approach, but inside it was cool and from the fire the brothers heard the music of the eighteen instruments.

There is some disagreement as to how Lingo got out of the iron pan. According to the Alor story, the wicked sisters-in-law themselves came weeping and crying 'Come out, little brother, come out', whereupon the iron cover broke and Lingo leapt from the fire. In Karikhodra, the chelik said it was Lingo's mother's brother's daughter, called Bhamain, who came from Kanker and said, 'If you are impotent you will sit there, but if you are a man you will come out'. Lingo at once stood up and knocked off the lid of his iron prison. In the Bennr version, the incident occurred in the Karikhodra jungle where Lingo had a motiari. When she heard of it, she came running to save him. She pushed open the lid of the pan and allowed him to come out. This is what we should expect of a motiari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

713 At all events, Lingo escapes. Then, according to the Alor story, 'As Lingo sprang from the fire, his foot struck the tinsa tree—and the bark has ever since looked dry and dead on one side. The white ash from his body flew over the saja tree—and it became white and holy. He rubbed his body, black with oil and smoke, against the ebony tree, and ever since its bark has been black. He cursed his sisters-in law saying, "Whenever you have babies, there will be the marks of scratches on your bodies" and so it is with all women to this day.

'But the six brothers were very frightened. They said, "Three times we have tried to kill him, now surely he will kill us. Let us see his face no more". And Lingo said to them, "From today I will not see your faces again". So even today Lingo Pen faces the opposite direction to his brothers.'[1]

There is no fixed ending to the legend. One version makes Lingo ascend into the sky and marry the daughter of Bhagavan. Another marries him to the Brahmin girl from Kanker, who was his mother's brother's daughter. 'But when Lingo went to plough, Aure-tunda made a love-charm for her and carried her away. She had a child and the girl had put the baby in a swing. When the child began to cry Lingo came to see what was the matter. He found his wife gone and followed her footprints into the jungle and killed her in a pit. So Lingo's wife became a goddess and went to live in Tewda. After that Lingo married seven wives.' A third version, from Benur, sends Lingo back to live again in the ghotul. In Chargaon, the story is that the brothers, despairing of killing him, drove him out, and Lingo went alone to the forest near Semra: he built a hut at the foot of a kurlu tree and lived there playing his instruments.

VII. A Metrical Version of the Legend

Metrical versions of the Lingo legend are common in the north central parganas. I have recorded several versions, in Pharasgaon (Kongur Pargana), at Chingnar, at Hurra Penjori, at Jhakri, at Kanhargaon, at Chikhli, at Karikhodra and at Tumasnar. I will give the version recorded at Tumasnar, which shows many interesting variants from the Alor story.

In Upardip there ruled a king.
He had no one; he was sterile.
He was a rich man, he was a cow-shed [for wealth],
His city was as broad and long
As in a day nine ploughs could go.
His house was twelve bamboos high.
There were hunting platforms,
There was much cattle,
The cattle-sheds were paved with sleepers.
That Raja's name was Duruk Sai, his Rani was Kanak Dai.

Under the sleepers of the cattle-shed lived a cobra.
She gave birth to seven babies,[2]
Those babies had but one cord between them.

[1] This is maintained in current practice. The Anga of Lingo's brothers all face the opposite direction to that of Lingo himself at Semargaon.

[2] This is one of the clichés of the Indian folk-tale. The hero born of a cobra or protected by it is so common that it is hardly worth giving examples, but reference may be made, among many others, to Dalton, op. cit., p. 231; A. K. Iyer, *The Cochin Tribes and Castes* (Madras, 1909–12), Vol. II, p. 89; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 451; O. R. Rhemtulla, *Mother-right in India* (Hyderabad, 1941), p. 97.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

113 They were weeping *taring taring*, the Rani heard them in the night.
Then said Kanak Dai Rani, 'O Raja, in the middle of the night whose child is weeping here?'
She rose and lit a lamp, she went outside to see.
She found the children and told the Raja, 'There are babies here'.
When she told the Raja this, he too went out to see them.

He approached the babies, and there was the cobra.
She tried to bite him, but the Rani begged her,
'I have no children; give me these'.
The snake was pleased, and gave them to the Rani.
There was one cord for seven babies, how were they to cut it?
They cut it with a curved sword, they cut it with a knife,
They cut it with a straight knife, they cut it with a straight sword.
But they could not cut the cord; both Raja and Rani were exhausted.
There was a small piece of bamboo there, with this they cut the cord,
They cut it with a single blow and separated the babies.
They took them to the house and cared for them.

Slowly the children grew, the Raja gave them names.
They were Use Mudial, Raja Mudial, Budha Mudial,
Soma Mudial, Kana Hurra Mudial, Kana Mudial,
The youngest was Lingo Mudial.

Slowly the children grew, they played in the village.
They went out to hunt with little bows and arrows.
They gained knowledge and desired to bring wives.
But they knew there were no wives for them.
'Let us leave this place and go to Nadumbhum',
Thinking thus, they came down by the silken rope.

The seven brothers made their camp in Nadumbhum.
Six brothers were married, their wives are still named,
Bhumanthar, Dhakardeoni, Mardeoni, Theorajunghe,
Mahipurjunghe, Halayindokari, these were their wives.
Only Lingo remained unmarried.
His hair reached up to Porrobhum above,
His tail hung down to Tarbhum below.

At one time he played eighteen instruments of music.
There was a *pitorha* gong at his knee, a *gulguda* drum at his waist,
From one shoulder hung the *mandri* drum, from the other hung the *dhol*.
There were bells tied at his back, there were *paijus* on his feet.
In his hands were *sarangi, dusir, dhamir*,
In his hands were *tehondor, mohir, jihir, chikhal, kilkum*,
In his hands were *parrai, kundir, charahowa, dandkar*,
On all these instruments he played at once,
There were love-charms in them, all who heard them were entranced.

The six brothers were busy ploughing their land,
They were working in the Field of Frogs.
Their wives carried their food to them in the field.
But when Lingo played his music,
Those who were fetching water stood still to hear,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

Those who were carrying food to their husbands stood still to hear,
The six wives forgot their work and stood as in a trance.

The husbands were angry, their food was always late.
The eldest brother sent one of them to see what was the matter.
He came to the house and hid behind a grain-bin,
But when he heard the music he too was entranced and lay down asleep behind the grain-bin.
At last the food was cooked, and as the women were going his wife saw him,
And left his share beside him in his hiding-place.

The wives were late again, and next day the eldest brother came himself,
He saw all that happened, and was very angry.
'How can we destroy this useless fellow?'
So thinking he went to his field at Huppelolod.

As Lingo played, the village girls gathered round him and danced,
The chelik came too with their drums,
They made a ghotul and lived near him, for there were love-charms in his instruments.
But none loved him as did those six wives,
His elder brothers' wives, his *aige*.
But he cared nothing for them, he loved the motiari,
All his desire was to dance and play with the motiari.

Then those wives were very angry.
'How can we destroy this useless fellow?'
So thinking they went inside their house.
'We will not take food to the field today, let us go to fetch thorns from the jungle,
We will scratch our bodies with the thorns till the blood flows.'
So thinking they went to bring thorns from the jungle.
They brought the thorns and scratched their bodies,
They tore their clothes, the blood came from their bodies.
Each lay down in a separate corner of the house.

At sun-standing time the brothers were looking for their meal,
They were hungry, they grew very angry.
'Let us leave our ploughing and go to drink our gruel at home.'
So thinking they went to the house, and found their wives lying here and there in corners.
They said, 'Why are you each sleeping in a corner?
What is the matter that you should be so sleeping?'
'Nothing is the matter, but your brother—
He raised our honour, beat us and tied us up.
He tore our clothes and blood came from our bodies,
If you beat him to death, then only can we go on living here.'

The brothers believed the story true,
They too wished to destroy Lingo.
'Let us take him out to hunt, and kill him in the jungle.'
So thinking they took him with them,
To hunt for barking-deer and hares. Thus they deceived their brother.
They went to the great forest, they found nothing but a jungle rat.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

113 The rat ran up a bija tree and nobody could climb it.
They told Lingo to climb the tree.
Lingo got ready and he climbed the tree.
'Now he is climbing, let us shoot him with our arrows.'
Each arrow weighed twelve maunds, but not one struck him.
They hit the bija tree and its sap came out like blood.
When they saw the blood of that tree, they thought they had pierced the body.
Thinking Lingo dead, they returned to their house,
They told their wives, 'We have killed Lingo'.
Hearing this the women were pleased.
The brothers went to call the *akomāma* for the funeral.
The *akomāma* came and they performed the rites.
Lingo climbed the tree and killed the rat,
He took it to his ghotul and roasted it.
After three days he went home playing on his instruments.
When the women heard the music they cried, 'Lingo is coming, you told us he was dead'.
Seeing Lingo the brothers were ashamed.
All the *akomāma* returned to their homes.

Again the brothers plotted how to kill Lingo.
'Let us take him to the jungle, this time we will certainly kill him.'
So thinking they went to the great jungle, they found nothing but a porcupine.
The porcupine ran into a hole in the ground.
They told Lingo to follow it.
Lingo got ready and went into the hole.
The brothers brought great logs of wood and blocked the hole.
They set fire to the wood. 'Lingo is burnt to death.'
So thinking they went home and told their wives.
Hearing this the women were pleased.
The brothers went to call the *akomāma*.
All the *akomāma* came and performed the funeral rites for Lingo.

There was a Rau, the master of that jungle.
The porcupine was his servant and led Lingo to his house.
The Rau was away taking roots to the bazaar, but his wife was there.
When Lingo played his eighteen instruments, she was enchanted.
She gave him four porcupines, and showed him another way by which he could escape.
Lingo went to his ghotul, and cooked one porcupine for the boys and girls;
He sent three porcupines to his brothers, and began to play his music.
The wives heard the music and all abused their husbands.
'Look, Lingo is coming; you told us he was dead.'
The brothers were ashamed; the *akomāma* went away angry.

Once again the brothers plotted how they might destroy their brother.
'We will put him to the test; we will try him by oil and fire.'
They went to Karikhodra, where still stands the Pillar of Oaths.
They made an iron vessel of twelvefold smelted iron.
Twelve pots of oil they poured into it,
They put Lingo into it and covered it,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

773

They fixed the lid in place with strong nails.
They made a hearth and put the vessel on it.
They brought twelve cartloads of wood and lit the fire.
'Now Lingo will surely die.' So thinking they went home.

As the oil boiled, Lingo began to play his music.
When they heard the sound the brothers and their wives despaired.
From inside the vessel, Lingo kicked the lid away.
The lid he kicked fell on the Tata Hill,
The vessel turned to stone and is still seen at Karikhodra.
Lingo came out, he leaned against the ebony tree and burnt it black,
He kicked the tinsa tree and all one side was burnt.
He kicked the saja and it turned white; today we call it impotent—
It is impotent as Lingo was with his brothers' wives.

'He will surely kill us now.'
So thinking the six brothers ran away.
Lingo called to Use Mudial and told him not to be afraid.
Use Mudial asked him, 'How will the world continue?
When they hear your music no one will work, all must stand still and listen.'
Lingo said, 'I will give my instruments to the chelik and motiari.
They will live in the ghotul and no one will hear their music.
So will the world continue so long as there are ghotul'.

The other brothers ran away and scattered through the jungle.
Use Mudial stayed with Lingo and worked with him in the fields.
When Lingo died Use Mudial went to the Maria mountains;
Raja Mudial went at once to the Maria Kingdom;
Budha Mudial ran away to Rai Kursai;
Soma Mudial went to the Maria mountains;
Kana Hurra Mudial fled to Garanja, Kana Mudial to Dhanora;
Lingo went to Semurgaon. 'They are not my brothers,
They are my enemies, I will not see their faces.'
So saying he took an oath,
The oath taken that day remains till now.

Lingo went to Kesurboda, there he was married.
Lingo had seven wives, all of them were Brahmins.
One lived in Kongur, her name was Mudri Muttai.
Each day she husked twelve measures of rice and ate it.
She was a witch and Lingo turned her out.
The second wife lived in Changori with her son Bal Kuar.
She was a witch and Lingo turned her out.
Now Bal Kuar lives at Kotori.
The third wife was Hirgomiro, she lived in Baneri.
She was a witch and Lingo turned her out.
The fourth wife quarrelled with him and he sent her to Bhaisgaon in the Kanker Raj.
He sent the fifth away to Dhaneli in the Kanker Raj, for she too was a witch.
The sixth we have forgotten, but the last was Netturgundi's mother.
Lingo was working with his hoe in the Cat-stone Field,
As he was working there his wife brought him gruel to drink.
She put the gruel beneath a tree and tied a swing.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

773 There his son slept, his name was Netturgundi.
The mother went into the field to weed the grass.

Heweh Tunda Kshattriya [1] carried away Lingo's wife.
Netturgundi was weeping *teveng teveng*,
Hearing the noise, Lingo came to see where his wife had gone.
He searched but could not find her.
He went carrying an ox-goad.
He saw on the way the footprint of Heweh Tunda Kshattriya.
Seeing the footprint he thrust the goad into the ground.
It turned into a bamboo that can be seen today.
His bullocks ran away dragging the plough to the Budhwari Mari Meta.
There they turned to stone and still are seen.
Lingo tied Netturgundi round his neck and went to find his wife.
He met Heweh Tunda Kshattriya half way.
When Heweh Tunda Kshattriya saw Lingo he left the girl and ran away.
Lingo caught his wife and pushed a peg into her vagina.
He beat her and cut her into seven pieces; these pieces became stones.

He followed Heweh Tunda Kshattriya to the hill by Chichgaon.
There was a cave and Heweh Tunda hid there.
Lingo put twelve cartloads of wood outside to make smoke.
Heweh Tunda ran out and fled away leaving no trace behind.
Lingo gave up the search and wondered what to do.
He went to Bagjar, from there he went to Penjori.
Thence he went to Baskur, thence to Dudhpar, and at last came to Semurgaon.

There was at Chikhli a family of the Partabi clan.
Lingo began to think of them. 'They should do some service for me.'
Sona and Rupa Partabi had seven daughters-in-law,
They went to get grass for brooms.
They cut the grass and made it into bundles.
They pulled up a siari creeper, root and all, to tie them.
They stripped the creeper with their teeth and tied the bundles.
The smallest girl had only seven handfuls in her bundle.
Lingo Pen liked this girl and his desire was for her.
The six elder sisters lifted up their bundles,
But the seventh could not raise her little bundle.
All seven had to lift it before they could put it on her head.
When they reached home the others put their bundles in the house.
But the seventh bundle stuck to the girl's head and they all had to pull it down.

The youngest girl put her bundle in the pigsty.
All the pigs died and the Partabi wondered why.
Then she put it with the hens and the hens all died.
She put it in the cattle-shed and the cows all died.
She put it with the buffaloes and the buffaloes died.
At last she threw it into the buffalo pond and the Partabi went to ask the Siraha.
'What is this thing that troubles us? Why are my cattle dead?'

[1] Literally, 'the warrior who was like gum so that anyone who touched him stuck to him'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

773

The Siraha said, 'The mark of Lingo Mudial Pen is here;
You must worship Lingo Pen'.
When the Siraha said this, the Partabi said,
'When my animals come to life, I will worship Lingo Pen'.

The Siraha bade him go and look at his animals.
The Partabi went and saw that the ears of the dead were quivering.
He went again and now each pig and hen and cow and buffalo
Spoke to him in its own tongue, bidding him worship Lingo Pen.
He went a third time and now they were all alive.
The Partabi thought then that what the Siraha said was true.
'This is a true Pen, for the cattle are alive.'
Since that day the Partabi clan offer sacrifice to Lingo.
'This is no ordinary Pen, this is a true Pen.
He taught us songs and stories,
He taught the girls and boys to live together in the ghotul,
He is still there in Semurgaon.
We take his name and give him the sevenfold Johar.'

VIII. The Story of Usarengi Palli

This version of the Lingo legend is not known to all the Muria, and in Randhna, a village to the north-east of Kondagaon, I recorded a curious variant in which the foundation of the ghotul is ascribed to a hero with a Telugu name—Usarengi Palli.[1] But in this version also Lingo plays a heroic and sacrificial part. He comes down to earth to save man from the death that Mahapurub was planning to send to the world; he bears in his own body the heavy blows of the divine wrath—although, with a characteristically primitive touch, he escapes before he is actually killed and allows Usarengi Palli to suffer death instead.

When the world was created, there was a city in the Middle World, such a city that on one needle's point nine lakhs of roofs could stand; it was twelve kos long and twelve kos broad. Here lived seven score chelik and seven score motiari; they were all of one mind—if one went somewhere they all went there, if one came home they all returned. There was great love among them all. One day they said to one another, 'Here are many of us, boys and girls together, and we regard everyone as equal. But we need a leader'. Now in the house of Usarengi Palli there was always food to eat and liquor to drink. The boys made him their chief. Among the motiari was one called Shri Belosa; she was made the leader of the girls.

These boys and girls used to sleep together; they went to work together. One day Usarengi Palli thought, 'Here are all these boys and girls, but we have no house to sleep in'. So thinking, he made a house. Its door-frame was a lizard, its walls were made of *chipa* fish, its door was of *dandai* fish, its pillars were the horns of the great sambhar, the cross-beams were the bones of *bhui* fish tied with prawns, and instead of grass the roof was covered with peacocks' feathers. In this house the boys slept in one long line, the girls slept in another long line. Only Usarengi Palli and Shri Belosa slept together.

[1] The story used also to be told by an old man in Barbatta, but he has died and no one has inherited it.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

● 113 In the Upper World, the twelve brothers Lingo and the thirteen brothers Bhimul danced and sang and played; the sound came down to the Middle World and Usarengi Palli heard it. When he heard it, he made a fiddle and a tambourine, and when the twelve brothers Lingo and thirteen brothers Bhimul danced and sang in the Upper World, Usarengi Palli listened and played the same tunes on his instruments in the Middle World. So passed many days.

One day Shri Belosa said to Usarengi Palli, 'Brother, here are seven score chelik and seven score motiari. We do not know how to dance or sing. Teach us so that we too may have happiness'. Usarengi Palli said, 'All these days I have never left you. I have never gone anywhere. How could I learn anything that you do not know?' Shri Belosa replied, 'Every day you play on your instruments; certainly you know how to dance and sing'. Usarengi Palli said, 'Well, if you would really learn to dance and sing, you must be ready to go where I tell you'. Shri Belosa and the seven score chelik and seven score motiari replied, 'Where you tell us there we will go'. Usarengi Palli said, 'Well, tomorrow we will go'. They all got ready and went outside the village to a fig tree. Shri Belosa bathed and put on a silk sari sixteen hands long, and garlands, rings, and bracelets. Each girl brought a *guppa*-basket, and each boy a *dhuti*-basket.

Usarengi Palli wore a *pitambar*-cloth,[1] and a turban of sixteen hands tied *bail-bāwar*;[2] he had a *dhuti*-basket under his arm, in one hand his fiddle and in the other his tambourine. Singing and playing Usarengi Palli danced his way to the fig tree, where the chelik and motiari saluted him.

When they were all ready Mahapurub let down a thread of silk from the Upper World on to the fig tree, and they climbed up the thread into the Upper World. There was a banyan tree, and they made their camp under its shade. But Usarengi Palli went on alone to find the twelve brothers Lingo and the thirteen brothers Bhimul; they had been dancing so long that they had sunk into the ground up to their waists. Usarengi Palli saluted them and they called him to dance with them. He asked, 'Whose hand shall I take? Who will teach me?' The youngest brother Lingo took him by the hand and taught him what to do.' As they began to dance the seven score chelik and seven score motiari came to that place and saluted them. Shri Belosa gave tobacco to everyone. When the dance was over, the twelve brothers Lingo and thirteen brothers Bhimul said to Usarengi Palli, 'Now you must dance and sing'. When Lingo began to dance he went fifteen paces forward and fifteen paces back, and he danced so that they were not hungry by day or sleepy by night.

Now the songs Usarengi Palli sang went into the *guppa*-baskets of the girls and the *dhuti*-baskets of the boys. The girls' baskets had no holes and so the songs remained in them—and to this day the songs of the girls are strong and true. But the boys' *dhuti*-baskets had a hole and the songs escaped, and still the singing of boys is bad.

When the dance was over, and they had saluted their hosts, Usarengi Palli took the chelik and motiari back to their camp beneath the banyan tree. They went down the silken thread back to the Middle World.

[1] *Pitambar*—The Maharaja wears this red or yellow silk dhoti at Dussera. It costs from two to three hundred rupees. It is also spread over his body after death.
[2] Tied as bullocks go round the pole on the threshing-floor, anti-clockwise.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

There they prepared every kind of instrument of music. Shri Belosa said to Usarengi Palli, 'So far we haven't given you a name. Today we are going to make you our Kotwar'. He said, 'No, I don't want a name', but all the boys and girls said, 'We are going to give you a name'. Shri Belosa sent two or three boys for liquor to Badaur Kalarin. She was sitting on a golden seat pouring water into the still, and the boys bought three rupees worth of liquor from her. Shri Belosa thought in her mind, 'Now today we are going to give Usarengi Palli his new name. He must have a turban for his head and a new sleeping-mat'. So thinking she went to a Ganda's house, and bought a cloth twelve hands long. She made a mat for him. She called the elders of the village, and when they came she said, 'Today we have made Usarengi Palli our chief and have given him the name of Kotwar'. She made Usarengi Palli sit on his new mat, tied the turban round his head, and gave him liquor to drink saying, 'From today our elder brother's name is Kotwar'. They all drank and then the elders said, 'Show us the new dances that you have learnt'. They danced and from that day these dances spread throughout the world and the ghotul was begun.

Now so long as Usarengi Palli was alive, there was no death in the world. But when Mahapurub saw that the seven score chelik and seven score motiari were learning all his art from Usarengi Palli, and no one was dying and no souls came to him, he began to consider how he could bring about the death of men. But the youngest of the Lingo brothers discovered what Mahapurub was planning to do, and filled with desire to save Usarengi Palli and all men, he came down to earth and went secretly to live with Usarengi Palli to protect him.

Mahapurub sent Dhurban, the arrow that kills with earth, to destroy Usarengi Palli. This arrow pierces the body and its evil spreads inside so that the man swells and dies. But Lingo stood in the way and received the arrow in his own body. Then Mahapurub sent one arrow after another, he sent a flight of arrows, and Lingo received them all in his own body. After that Mahapurub sent Aginban, the arrow of fire, but Lingo caught this also in his own body and saved Usarengi Palli. At last Mahapurub sent his messenger with a great stick to beat Usarengi Palli. But Lingo caught as many of the blows as he could bear on his own body, until he thought that if he suffered any more he too would die, so he escaped and the messenger fell upon Usarengi Palli and beat him to death. As Usarengi Palli lay dying he called the seven score chelik and seven score motiari to him and said, 'Now I must leave you' and so died.

The chelik and motiari took up his body and carried it dancing and singing to the burial ground. After they had buried it and were going to bathe in the river, Shri Belosa lingered behind. She had always looked after Usarengi Palli; she had cooked his food and spent her days and nights with him. On this day she had brought haldi from her house tied in a corner of her sari. When she was alone she put a haldi mark above the grave where the head of her lover was, and another mark on her own forehead, saying, 'We two were yoked together. I will never marry now. We lived as if we were married, and now with this mark we are truly married'.

On the day of the funeral feast when they should have taken food and the feet of the pig and goat they ate to the grave, they forgot to take the feet. After a few days the seven score girls went to kill fish; as

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

• 773 they were busy at the work, evening came on, and they bathed in the river. As they began to walk home, night fell, and they had to pass by the grave of Usarengi Palli. When they reached the place, they put down their *guppa*-baskets and sat down. Shri Belosa said, 'All your queens have come!' At that word, suddenly Usarengi Palli came out of the earth and took the girls into the grave with him. That night every one of the seven score motiari became pregnant.

The next day, Shri Belosa said, 'Come, let us go to sell our fish in the bazaar and buy ourselves things with the money'. Usarengi let them out of the grave, and when they reached the bazaar they found that their fish were large and fine and they soon sold them. Some bought necklaces, some bought rings, and as they busied themselves with their purchases, night fell. They could not find their way back to the grave, so they went into the village. There Usarengi Palli's mother was weeping, remembering her son. Shri Belosa said to the other girls, 'Look, our mother-in-law is weeping. Come, let us go to her and comfort her'. The girls went to the old woman and greeted her. The old woman said, 'Where have you been all this time? Your parents are looking for you everywhere'. Shri Belosa said, 'We just went to the bazaar'.

Now Usarengi Palli, finding himself lonely in his grave, said in his mind, 'The seven score boys surely went to that bazaar, and are dancing and making merry with the girls'. He took a great stick and got out of the grave and went to the bazaar. But it was too late; there was no one there. So he went thence to his mother's house, and found the seven score girls sleeping, and his mother and Shri Belosa watching by them. When he saw his mother he embraced her. She begged him to stay with her. But he was angry and said, 'What have you ever done for me? No one cares for me. I will not stay'. As he said this, there came into the mind of his mother and the seven score girls that they had forgotten to take the trotters of the pig eaten at the funeral feast to Usarengi Palli's grave. They got up and went hastily to the grave but there was no sign. The old mother returned home weeping loudly, and Usarengi Palli took the seven score girls with him into the grave and they were not seen again.

IX. Lingo and the Ghotul

883 773 To the Muria perhaps the most significant thing about Lingo was his foundation of the ghotul system; this was the greatest treasure he has given mankind; neither the discovery of fire,[1] the gift of mahua liquor,[2] nor the invention of music can compare with this. The ghotul is an integral part of the Lingo legend; even in the Betul version there is a hint of it in the oft-repeated statement that Lingo could not attend to his brothers' wives because he was always playing with the village maidens.

The significance of the ghotul for the legend is this, that it explains why Lingo was 'chaste', why he achieved so supererogatory a virtue as to turn a 'joking-relation' into one of avoidance, why he did not let himself be seduced by his brothers' wives. Like any good chelik his attention was absorbed by the ghotul, not only—be it noted—by its erotic delights, but by the eighteen instruments played there, by the songs and dances, the discipline, the fellowship.

Every version of the Bastar legend stresses Lingo's association with the ghotul. The Alor version ends: 'From the days of Lingo the ghotul is built

[1] See p. 262. [2] See p. 263.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

in every village, and the boys and girls live there together without sin. So long as a girl wears combs in her hair she may play and laugh with the chelik, but when we see a girl without a comb, we say nothing to her, for she must be a man's wife. And as Lingo was twice in the fire and no evil touched him, so it is with the boys and girls in their ghotul.'

The Karikhodra story concludes: 'When Lingo died, they made ghotul everywhere in his memory and to make him happy. For as the children dance and play he rejoices.'

And the Bennr tale ends: 'Lingo lived in the ghotul, and the magic of his music drew the boys and girls to him. Because of Lingo no evil can come to the ghotul; no witch can enter there, or fever or disease; and for three years from the blossoming of her flower no girl can conceive.'

The first ghotul, where Lingo lived after his elder brothers married (the boys, it will be remembered, had no parents but it was equally necessary that the youngest should not witness his elder brothers' relations with their wives) and which was called *dinda-makāl*, or palace of the unmarried, was a beautiful place.

> Lingo's ghotul was beautiful as the horns of bison, beautiful as a horse's throat. Its central pillar was a python, the poles of the roof were *nakkimundal* snakes, the beam was a *dōmas* snake, the cross poles were cobras. The bamboo framework of the roof was made of kraits tied together with vipers and covered with the tails of peacocks. The verandah roof was made of bulbul feathers. The walls were of bod-fish bones, the door was made of the crimson *silyāri* flowers, the door-frames of the bones of ogres, the fastening were *silar-malom* snakes. The floor was plastered with the flour of urad pulse. The *kutul*-seats were crocodiles. There was an Anga there of saja wood swung from the roof by *pirpiti* snakes.
>
> Lingo himself wore a turban like a white gourd flower; his dhoti was coloured silk; his shirt shone in the sun; his clogs were made of sandal wood, his stockings of mongoose fur, his belt was a *gidarra* snake; as he walked he sparkled. He carried a crooked stick in his hand; he walked as if he were husking rice.[1] That is why we dance so slowly and carry an axe over the shoulder.
>
> Every day Lingo used to go hunting, and every night to the ghotul. His gun was an ebony branch, his bullets were wild berries, he sat in the nest of the *rela* bird above a salt-lick. When he had shot enough, he would return to the ghotul. Belosa and Manjharo would welcome him, and take his mat. Malko and Jalko spread it on the ground, Dulosa was his blanket. Because of the love-charms in his eighteen instruments all the unmarried boys and girls would come running to the ghotul. Lingo's ghotul name was Manjhi; it was given him by Belosa and Manjharo. He himself gave the girls their names. Belosa and Manjharo sat by Lingo and combed his hair, they scratched his arms with their combs and massaged him with oil. Belosa gave him ganja—there was no tobacco then. Lingo's comb was made of dhaman wood. After massaging Lingo, the girls got up and saluted him with Johar,[2]

[1] In Old Calabar, when a man passed the sacred objects of Egbo he walked as if he were lame.—Hutton Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies* (New York, 1908), p. 116. Compare the limping dance of the priests of Baal.

[2] The Johar was the supreme achievement of Rajput chivalry. A besieged garrison, surviving its fate hopeless, prepared for the Johar as for a wedding: the women threw themselves into a furnace, and the men sallied out to die in battle with the enemy.—

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Maria

813
713

then danced to the music of his eighteen instruments until they were weary, when they lay down and slept.

The traditional names of the first motiari differ from place to place. In Jhakri, they gave the following list:

Godakare Mode, whose navel was long as the axle of a cart, the leader, who collected the girls and gave them their orders.
Belosa, her assistant.
Kurumtuse Buke, whose duty was to distribute things—tobacco, parched rice, liquor.
Hinahibe Bire, who made the bamboo pins for leaf-cups and plates.
Akintare Jare, who spread the leaves which served as mattresses at bedtime.

Among the names of the first chelik are:

Mankor Singa, the leader.
Jiha Guta Soma, whose duty was to bring wood.
Karata Guta Soma, who had to make the fire.

At first things did not go altogether smoothly. The boys stole wood from the village houses, they relieved themselves on the paths, they neglected their work for their dancing. There was even an attempt to stop the ghotul. 'At first', so runs a Masora account, 'there were twelve score motiari and twelve score chelik who came to listen to the music of the eighteen instruments. Lingo caught them by the hands and they danced and danced and danced. Soon the children's parents grew angry and said, "Here is a man ruining our children" and they forbade them to go to the ghotul. At that Lingo was angry and he changed his form and went from house to house bringing death and disease. The people went to the Siraha, who discovered the cause and told the villagers to let their children go again to the ghotul.'

After this Lingo began to teach the chelik and motiari ideals of discipline and service. One night he came leaning on his stick, and when the girls and boys heard it tapping on the ground they kept very quiet. He sat down and taught them never to relieve themselves on the village paths, not to have anything to do with married women, not to steal wood from the villagers. Then in order that they should not spend too much time on dancing, he allotted them certain seasons when they should dance all day. During the rest of the year they should dance only at night. At Jhakri, Raunu gave other details:

> The first fire was lit by Lingo in the ghotul. It was the Pus Kolang fire. Lingo taught the boys how to go from village to village dancing in his honour. The boys tried; Lingo became Gain and showed them their mistakes. The next morning, they looked at the ashes of the fire, and there were the marks of a bullock's hoofs. Three days this happened and Lingo declared it a good omen. He called his tiger and they went out to dance, leaving the girls behind. 'This is in honour of Lingo', they said, 'and whoever goes to a girl will die.'
>
> Lingo took the boys outside the village and made them stand facing it. He put seven little heaps of rice, seven aonla rings and seven bits

J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (London, 1920), Vol. I, p. 333. The expression is now used as a greeting by many tribes. Tod describes it as a salutation sent by a Rajput chief to an inferior landholder (*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 163). For the Muria it is a greeting between equals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of slag on the ground before them, and prayed to Tallur Muttal, 'Look after these children. Keep them safe from other gods'. Lingo gave fire to Mankor Singa, and bade him tend it so that it did not go out till they returned. Then they went to dance in seven villages.

After seven days Godakare Mode and the three score motiari brought a bamboo and decorated its shoots with gold. 'If they have been faithful to us and if all is going well, it will stand up of its own accord and no one will be able to pull it up.' So thinking they welcomed the boys home. The boys hung their sticks on the tree and sat down to smoke. The bamboo stood of its own accord and none could uproot it.

Then came Lingo and was pleased with the stick. He tried to pull it up, but it would not move. Then he cut it down, at the bottom, near the ground. From the stump grew a semur tree; ever since, the semur tree has had thorns like the small branches of a bamboo.

Then the motiari said, 'We too must go to dance with you'. So Lingo took them for the Chait Dandar and the Hulki dances. At Diwali, the girls said to the boys, 'You go off by yourselves in Pus; we will go to dance by ourselves at Diwali'.

The tradition of Lingo's association with the ghotul is still very much alive. Every year thousands of boys take great pains to perfect a complicated and rather tedious dance and set out on a pilgrimage in his honour, which must be marked by accurate performance and complete chastity. In some ghotul, as at Masora, a dhol drum hangs near the door in honour of Lingo. Lingo in his turn protects the ghotul which he has founded; no evil dream can approach, no sin can be committed, and no girl will become pregnant for three years after puberty.

The chelik remember Lingo, with their ancestors and the Earth, whenever they drink liquor; they offer him a few drops of mahua spirit whenever they play their drums at a marriage; even in eastern Kondagaon, they invite him to weddings saying, 'This is your marriage, your haldi-oil, not ours but yours'; they still sing many songs in his honour. Most of these are inexpressibly boring, consisting as they do of a long and largely inaccurate recital of Lingo's relations. This poetic and romantic figure has not inspired much poetry in his worshippers. The following song is typical.

Lingo Pata

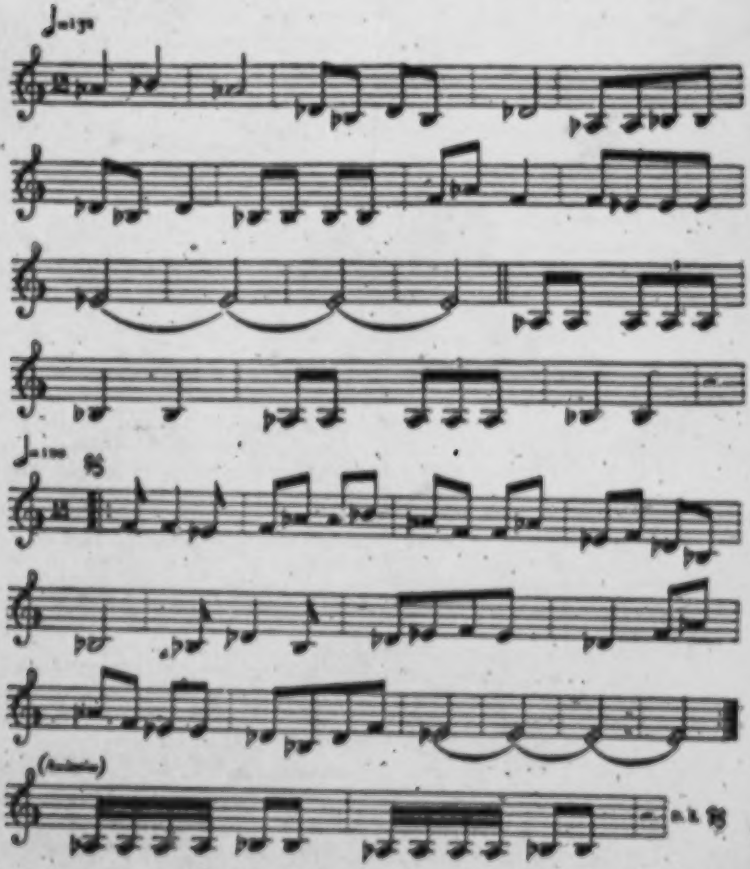
Re re loyo re re la rela
Re re loyo re re la re re la rela

Bêra lhai lingo ra layer,	O twelve Lingo brothers,
Pinding hambding nêya ra layer.	There's haldi and flour for you.
Dêy ra lingo dêyu ra lingo!	Come, Lingo, come!
Pinding hambding yehti ra lingo.	With haldi and flour we anoint you.
Wêyura pâta wai ra lingo.	May songs unknown come to us.
Wêyura dâha wai ra lingo.	May steps unknown come to us.
Pahili pâta nêya ra lingo,	The first song is yours,
Maria pâta mama ra lingo.	The Maria song is ours.
Pahili dâha nêya ra lingo.	The first steps are yours,
Maria pâta layer ra lingo.	The Maria song is the chelik's.
Wêy ra lingo wêyu ra lingo!	Come, Lingo, come!
Nawa wêyla parron ra layer,	I can't come, chelik.
Nêwa kuto manda ra layer.	I've got work to do, chelik.
Kudâr holâng bodong ra layer.	I've got to fix the handle of my hoe.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883
533
539
973

At Masora, the chelik sing in Halbi to Lingo before a wedding.



Lingo, balam, Lingo!
Kây kêe ây chalikman?
Bila dhare bila ucuta parli bila dhare jao.
Macho buda dse.
Tucho kây buda Ise?
Macho korbi dhata bharto dse.
Tucho bigur nâtey gil gobind tucho.
Pahilo tucho nigcho mand.
Aru nigcho kardi.
Tucho ây nibnato gil hanu ây.

Lingo, say, Lifigo!
Why have you come, chelik?
We've come to invite you to the wedding.
I have work to do.
What work have you to do?
I must make a handle for my hoe.
Without you nothing can be done.

To you liquor must first be given.
The haldi must first be put on you.
Only with you the song goes well.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

In Penjori, near Semurgaon, the Gaita explained how Tallur Muttai (who is no other than Mother Earth) and Kadrengal her consort (who is lord of the forest and the *dahi* clearing) are connected with the ghotul.

> In a saja tree were born a girl Tallur Muttai and a boy Kadrengal. They gave a dream to Lingo and told him 'We have been born in a saja tree: give us a place to live'. So Lingo made them a small hut and they lived there. To please them he used to play eighteen instruments at once. In these were love-charms which drew all the boys and girls of the village to listen.

In many ghotul, Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal are honoured as well as Lingo and with him protect the children from harm.

X. Lingo and Creation

The creation stories of the Muria are on the same pattern as similar stories throughout the central portion of peninsular India.[1] The main difference is that Lingo, at least in the older stories, takes the place either of Bhimsen or the other cult-heroes which various tribes exalt as the chief actors in their mythology; and that Kadrengal, a rather mysterious figure, vaguely regarded as a forest-god, and his wife Tallur Muttai (Mother Earth) play the parts that in other areas are allotted to Mahadeo and Parvati. The following story was recorded in Kokori in east Kondagaon.

> In the old days there was an earth. At the time when Lingo and his brothers were born Mahapurub turned the world topsy-turvy and it was eaten by the earth-worm, so the Middle World became nought but water. There were two young children on the earth. God put life into their bodies by poking them in the back: the marks of his fingers still remain. They hid inside a gourd which grew up out of the water as a great creeper and reached the heavens.
>
> Presently the worm excreted the earth and some of it fell on a siari leaf. That earth began to weep, 'Who is there to serve me, for all mankind are drowned?' When Lingo heard that weeping he went to see what was the matter. Meanwhile Mahapurub had plucked the gourd growing from the great creeper in the heavens and found inside the two small children. 'Where can these children live?' So thinking he sent his crow to search for it. The crow flew and flew across the ocean until at last it saw Lingo and his brothers driving their harrow over the sea. Wherever the harrow went there was land, where it went crooked or missed a place there was water and a river, where the earth was piled up at the side there was a mountain. When the crow saw this it flew back and told Mahapurub that the earth was made again, and the two children were sent to live there.
>
> Mahapurub told the boy and girl that they should marry each other but they refused saying, 'We are brother and sister'. So the smallpox goddess came and separated them and each got smallpox.[2] Afterwards when they met they did not know who they were, for their faces were

[1] Compare Roy, *The Mundas*, App. I, pp. 377; Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 420–24; A. Campbell, 'The Traditions of the Santals', *JBORS*, Vol. II (1916), pp. 158.; Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 262; D. D. Agarwal, 'Ethnographical Notes on the Chenus', *Man in India*, Vol. IX (1929), p. 205; W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXIV-VI (1940-1), passim. *The Baiga*, p. 309; *The Agaria*, pp. 888.

[2] I have recorded this idea among the Juang, Kond, Gadaba and Bondo of Orissa: it is probably very common.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

773 covered with the marks of disease, and they got married. Now these two, man and woman, had no knowledge of sex. They lived together working in their fields, but the man never went to his wife. Presently Mahapurub sent Lingo to see how they were getting on. 'They know nothing of love or copulation, they are living as brother and sister', so said Lingo. This made Mahapurub anxious about the peopling of the world. So he gave Lingo two pills filled with his love-charms to give them.

When Lingo reached the house, he found the man had gone to hunt but the woman was bathing. He gave her the two pills and told her to eat one of them after the bath and to give the other to her husband when he returned. Having done this, Lingo went away. The woman ate one pill but was so pleased with it that she ate the second also, leaving nothing for her husband. Directly she swallowed the pills she was filled with excitement and passion and ran into the forest to seek her man.

At last when he returned from hunting, instead of giving him his food she took him into the house and pulled him down to the ground beside her. But for all her caresses there was no desire in him and he did nothing. He ate a heavy meal but she could not eat. All night she tried to rouse him, but without success. Then once again Lingo came to see how they were. He peeped through the door and saw the woman trying to rouse her husband. So he brought two more pills and this time gave them one each. Now at last the husband's desire was awakened and he went to his wife again and again, but since the woman had a greater number of pills she was much the more passionate. That is why the Muria say women remain more passionate than men unto this day.

So strong was their passion that the very next morning a child was born. After this, children were born throughout the world and men and women increased in number.

The stories go on to tell how Lingo brought the Muria to Bastar from Lanjhi-Dhamda and how the different clans came into being as they tried to cross over the great ocean that separated Dhamda from Bastar. He also taught the Muria how to worship Mother Earth.

The Muria was thinking, 'How am I to worship the earth for I have nothing to give her'. He had one daughter. He covered her whole body with soot to make her black and forced her to walk on all fours like a black cow. Then he went to the jungle to worship Mother Earth. On the way he met Lingo driving a cow. Lingo said, 'O man, where are you going?' 'I am going to worship Mother Earth.' 'What are you going to sacrifice?' 'I have nothing to give but my own daughter and I am going to sacrifice her.' Then Lingo said, 'Give me your daughter, and I will give you my cow'. From that day the Muria have not offered human beings to the Earth Mother but, taught by Lingo, have sacrificed their cattle.[1]

XI. Lingo and the Sun and Moon

773 821 Lingo is also, in some legends, connected with the creation of the sun and moon and the disposal of other heavenly bodies. In what appears to be the

[1] Nanga Baiga was also taught to substitute animal for human sacrifice.—*The Baiga*, p. 315.

378

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

eldest Muria thought, Lingo, unlike such exclusively mundane cult-heroes as Nanga Baiga, has much to do with the heavens. Later on, he is often displaced by Bhimul Pen or Bhimsen. In Ulera the Muria told the following story.

When this world was first made there was neither sun nor moon and the clouds and the earth were like husband and wife, they lay so close together.[1] Men were very small and had to move between them. They ploughed with rats and to pick brinjals they had to reach up as though they were getting mangoes from a tree. As they walked to and fro they used to knock their heads against the clouds.

Then Lingo and his brothers raised the clouds into the sky and there was room for men on earth, but there was no sun or moon and everything was dark. There was a tree called Huppe Piyer. When this tree blossomed it was day, when it dried up it was night. The twelve Lingo brothers and the thirteen Bhimul brothers thought and thought how they could bring more light to the world. 'Where can we find something which will make light and darkness?' So thinking they came to the tree Huppe Piyer. 'This is what we want', they said and began to cut it down. It was so big that the twelve Lingo brothers and the thirteen Bhimul brothers could cook their food and sleep in the space cut by their axes. When it was nearly cut through, it still did not fall for on the top of the tree sat the bird called Gara-surial-pite holding it up. Said Lingo to his brother, 'We must kill this bird', and Kosa Kana took his axe and killed it. Then the tree fell to the ground.

When the tree came down it fell on the thirteen Bhimul brothers and they shouted with fear. Lingo picked it up with one hand and threw it aside. Now this tree stood in the kingdom of twelve Rajas, and when these heard the noise they sent their police to see if the tree was safe. The police reported that someone or other had cut it down and the Rajas sent their soldiers to arrest the culprits. Lingo said to the soldiers, 'We have come to make two lanterns so that there may be light by day and light by night. We have done no evil'. So said Lingo. But the soldiers took no heed of what he said and attacked the brothers with their spears and swords. Lingo took all the blows in his own body and saved his brothers. Then he himself took his sword and fought and killed the soldiers. With their blood the tree became red, for its roots drank it up. Then the brothers stripped off the bark and cut the wood into two great circles.

They made the lower circle into the sun and the upper circle into the moon. The sun was as big as the kingdoms of the twelve Rajas, but the moon was smaller. When they were ready, the brothers wondered how to put into them a living soul. Mahapurub had a son. 'Only by killing Mahapurub's son and giving his blood to the sun and moon to drink will they become alive and be man and woman', so said Lingo. The brothers thought and thought how to catch Mahapurub's son, but at last Lingo said, 'I will catch him' and went to Porrobhum.

[1] The same idea of the proximity of earth and sky has been recorded among the Santal—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 405; the Bana—M. N. Basu, *The Banars of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 84; the Birhor—Roy, *The Birhors*, p. 436; the Gond—R. V. Russell, *Census of India, 1901*, Vol. XIII, p. 94; and the Khasi—Gurdon, *op. cit.*, p. 195. Frazer quotes similar stories from Africa—J. G. Frazer, *The Worship of Nature* (London, 1926), pp. 96 and 109. The legend is probably widely distributed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

773
821

Mahapurub was working in his fields. His wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. There he sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon. The sun, who is a man, drank a lot of the blood and that is why he is always red. The moon, who is a woman, only drank a little and is always pale.

When Mahapurub's wife returned and could not find her son, she ran to tell her husband and they were full of sorrow. But next morning when the sun rose red into the sky, Mahapurub cried to his wife, 'Look, there's your baby in the sky; don't weep, for you will always be able to look at him'.

821 In many villages the Muria know the widely-dispersed story of how the moon tricked the sun into swallowing his children.[1] They generally say that the moon is subject to a menstrual period and when her time comes she hides herself, thus accounting for the dark nights of the month. The sun works all day. We cannot see him at night because every evening he goes to his wife, but the Muria are not quite clear or consistent about this because some of them think that on account of the stealing and sacrifice of Mahapurub's child, sun and moon were cursed to remain for ever apart. Some Muria say that the sun's wife is Sukko, who is the daughter of the moon and it is she who [524] keeps him company during the night. In Muria riddle the moon is 'the fat bullock that loses its horn in its old age'.

The stars are explained in many different ways. In Ulera they said that they were the shavings of the great tree Huppe Piyer. In Aturgaon they said that they were the babies of the moon. In Berma they said they were the moon's servants. The moon brings her children out at night and plays with them. Everyone believes that the stars are alive. 'The stars are looking at us', they sometimes say, and it is almost uncanny to hear them speaking of sun and moon and stars as though they were actual living people. Riddles [524] about the stars are common: '*Mesel kadang pendh*: the whetstone is covered with *mung*-grains.' 'The dish is so full of areca nuts that you cannot count them.' 'Take a stick in your hand and count the cowries.'

The eclipse is not explained otherwise than by the usual stories current in central India,[2] but the Muria have their own way of observing the event. It is regarded as a very good time for snaring animals or catching fish. Women dig holes in their yards and pretend to throw out water with a basket crying, 'Now we are clearing the stream for fish'. This little rite will result in good fishing expeditions later on. Boys make their *gulel*-slings, for as the moon catches the sun so will the pellet from the sling hit its mark. They also begin making nets and traps of every kind for the same reason, and put the bamboo baskets and platforms in the fields to catch and dry fish. Nets for birds are set and traps for animals arranged.

Thunder and lightning is explained in several different ways. Some say that lightning is the great *dandai* fish which leaps out of the ocean of universe into the sky, its scales flashing in the sun. In other villages they say that thunder and lightning comes from the smithy of the heavenly Lohar who is working iron in Porrobhum. The thunder is the sound of his heavy hammer;

[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 331f. for references to Uraon, Santal and Turi legends.
[2] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 21; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 232 and 290; *The Baiga*, p. 334; Enthoven, op. cit., pp. 58f.; J. J. Modi, 'A Few Ancient Beliefs about the Eclipse', *J. Anth. Soc. Bom.*, Vol. III (1894), pp. 346ff. Penzer has a useful summary in *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. II, pp. 8ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

821 I have heard hail described as 'the bones of the rain'. The rainbow is the great snake, Bhumtaras, that rises from its ant-hill to stop the rain.[1]

XII. Lingo and the Discovery of Fire

773 In Bastar, as in Hislop's version of the legend, Lingo is associated with the discovery of fire. In some villages it is said that the first fire to be kindled was that made by Lingo at the original Pus Kolang dance. At Kanhargaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana the Jhoria Muria told this story:

> At the beginning of the world, when the earth sank beneath the great waters, there were no men left but the seven Koroho-Lingo brothers. When the water went down again, they set out to find fire to warm themselves and cook their food. Presently they saw a Maharin whose name was Parajunge; she had a fire. They made their camp near her house and went to get fire from her. The girl gave the eldest brother some fire in a bundle of grass but it went out. Then the next brother went, and the next, but every time the fire went out. At last Lingo himself went. When she offered him fire in the grass he hit her twice and picked up a burning log from her fire and took it to his camp.
>
> The brothers went away, but the girl soon found that she was pregnant from the two blows which Lingo had struck. The boy grew up, and when he was old enough he went with the other boys and girls to dance in Lingo's ghotul. Parajunge, his mother, followed him. Now Lingo was leading the dance with a tuft of palm leaves in his turban. When the dancers got tired they sat down to smoke and the boy said to his mother, 'All these other children have fathers, but where is my father?' Parajunge said, 'It is the one who is wearing leaves in his hair, go and catch him'. The boy caught him by the leg and cried, 'You are my father'. When the brothers heard it they were very angry with Lingo and said, 'We would have given you a kingdom, but he who makes a Maharin pregnant becomes a Mahara'. Lingo said, 'I never went to her, I only hit her and she became pregnant of her own accord'. They disputed this for many days and at last Lingo said, 'You may test me by oil and fire; make a great iron vessel and fill it with twelve pots of oil; put me in it and boil me on a hearth lit with twelve cart-loads of wood; if I am unhurt it will prove me innocent'. The brothers carried out the test and Lingo was unharmed; he sat in the fire playing his eighteen instruments. The brothers then believed Lingo and gave him the kingdom. The name of the boy was Son Kuar and he was admitted into the ghotul as a Muria, but they would not accept his mother.

In this account of how Lingo brought fire to the tribe, we may note the tradition that he got it from a woman and that the incident is vaguely connected with impregnation. Frazer has collected myths from many parts

[1] The Hill Maria have the same idea. So have the Kol, who call the rainbow Larbang, the serpent—Dalton, op. cit., p. 177. The Pardhan of Mandla say it is the raised head of Basuk, the cobra who supports the world. The Bison-horn Maria call it Bhimul-wil, the bow of Bhimul.—Grigson, op. cit., p. 290. The Baiga call it the horse of Bhimsen—*The Baiga*, p. 356. Hindus generally call it the bow of Ram or of Indra, though they too speak of it as a snake. 'The rainbow is connected with the snake, being the name of a gigantic serpent blown up from underground. In Persia, it was called the "celestial serpent".'—Crooke, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 144.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

113

of the world, Australia, the Murray Islands, Melanesia, the Caroline Islands, South America, which represent women as being in possession of fire before men.[1]

We also see very clearly that the attempt to kill Lingo in the iron vessel was really, as I have already suggested, an ordeal of a type to which frequent reference is made in the literature of Indian antiquity.

XIII. Lingo and the Discovery of Liquor

In the east of the State, where Lingo's cult is weakest, he is still imagined as a simple, kindly, generous peasant. He is the giver of happiness; he is the honest ploughman working for his family, making furrows three miles long, guiding his plough with his son Netturgundi tied below his neck. He eats anything, stones or trees, rice or pulse, birds or monkeys. His hair reaches to heaven and his tail goes down to hell.

Once Lingo gave a great feast to mankind. As the guests were going home he sent a Nahar servant to listen to what they were saying about him. The servant heard them complaining that though the food was all right, they had been given 'nothing coloured to make them happy'. When Lingo heard this he said, 'Is there nothing in the jungle to make men happy?' This preyed on his mind and he went everywhere in the forest to search for happiness until he came at last to a great hollow mahua tree. The corollas had fallen into the hollow, rain had filled them with water, and they had fermented. Many maina birds gathered round to drink, and Lingo saw them 'cry loudly and dance'. So he took some of this drink home, and at his next feast gave it to his guests. This time they went home saying, 'Today Lingo has given us happiness'.

Nanga Baiga is said to have discovered liquor in almost exactly the same way.[2] The Bondo have a similar tale; so have the Savara of Koraput who attribute the great discovery to Bhimsen. The Sondi tradition is that Brahma created Suka Muni from the dirt between his eyebrows and authorized him to distil spirit from the *ippa* (mahua) flowers, which had hitherto been eaten by birds.[3]

Mahua spirit does not seem to be associated with the sexual passion, but there is a common belief that rice-beer and toddy were invented to ensure a proper increase of population. Tallur Muttal is said to have created the sago-palm so that its juice might stir the sluggish desires of Kadrengal.[4] In Ho tradition, the first man and woman never came together 'from their extreme simplicity' until Sing Bonga the Creator 'taught them the art of making rice-beer, the use of which caused them those sensations which were in due time the means of peopling the world'.[5] The Kol have the same belief.[6] The Santal say it was Lita, a traditional hero whose bow is the rainbow, who taught the first man and woman to make rice-beer (and thus introduced sexual congress to the world.[7]

[1] J. G. Frazer, *Myths of the Origin of Fire* (London, 1930), p. 206.
[2] *The Baiga*, p. 312. 'There is a common belief that on occasions bears become intoxicated as a result of eating fermented flowers.' A. A. Dunbar Brander, *Wild Animals in Central India* (London, 1931), p. 7.
[3] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 396. [4] See p. 54.
[5] Tickell, 'Memoir on the Hodesum' in *JASB*, New Series, Vol. IX, Part II (1840), p. 797. Compare Dalton, op. cit., p. 183, who observes that the old Manki are fond of telling this story with all sorts of indecent details.
[6] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 508.
[7] *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part IIIA, p. 209.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

It is probable that further investigation might discover the cult-heroes of several other tribes credited with this achievement.

XIV. The Coming of Death

Death is a stranger in the world, alien and unnatural. The first men did not die. For long ages Lingo kept death away. But at last it came and the Muria have several legends to explain how. According to one story, it was a boon to counteract the misery of living for ever.

> In the old days the Muria did not die, yet could not keep their youth.
>
> They sat in the courts of their houses propped up with bits of wood; they could not use their hands or feet, and their gruel had to be poured into their mouths by their relatives. At last they went to Mahapurub and asked him to give them the gift of death. 'Do you want death for everyone', he asked, 'or only for yourselves?' 'For everyone', they replied. From that day both young and old have died.

Another tale attributes the coming of death to Mahapurub's need of souls to people his kingdom, an idea common also among the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces.[1]

> In Nadumbhum (the Middle World) no man died, and Mahapurub wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He had a son. He killed him and prepared to carry him out for burial. But when his wife heard of it, she ran weeping to the place and, taking her son from him, sat with the corpse in her lap. Mahapurub said, 'We must bury the child, don't be foolish'. But she cried, 'No, I'll never give him to you'.
>
> Mahapurub then planted a jamun tree behind her. When it fruited, some of the plums fell to the ground. She picked them up and ate and her mouth was reddened with the juice. Mahapurub came again and said, 'Give me the boy. You are a witch, you are eating his flesh'. He brought a mirror and when she saw her reddened mouth, she thought she really was eating the boy. She wept bitterly, but gave the body to Mahapurub. He buried it, and from that day death has been in the world.

A different version of the same theme, from Palari, gives some interesting details about the creative process.

> At the beginning of the world men were very small; they ploughed with rats and had to pull down brinjals as if they were getting mangoes. The ground was so soft that you could fall through it down to Adibhum (the Lower World). In those days men could remove the tops of their heads, examine them for lice, and put them back again.[2]
>
> When the first men died, their neighbours took them out to burial, but the corpses got up and came back and sat in front of their houses. When the neighbours came in, they asked, 'Where have you been?' 'We've been out burying you.' 'What sort of folk are you? We were just sleeping and you carried us here and there. When we awoke we returned home.'[3]

1 *The Baiga*, p. 329.
2 For a similar tradition among the Santal, see Bompas, *op. cit.*, p. 401.
3 The theory that death was originally of a temporary character is held by the Birhors—Roy, *The Birhors*, pp. 253f., and I have recorded it among the Juang and Bhuiya of Keonjhar State.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

When Mahapurub heard of this, he wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He thought, 'I must stick the tops of their heads on; then they will certainly die'. He ground flour, mixed it with water into a paste and hid it. Then he went to see the first man and woman. 'What have you got inside your heads?' he asked. 'Do show me.' They removed the tops of their heads, and Mahapurub quickly smeared the edges with paste, muttering, 'Never come unstuck again'. When the first man and woman put the tops of their heads back, they stuck and soon afterwards people began to die.

And now for fear that the dead might come back again to their houses, the neighbours burnt their bodies and they never returned to life.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC

I

THE ORIGIN OF MAGIC

754 713 The origin of black magic has been described by the Maria in a number of villages and the reports generally agree. 'The first man in the world to practise magic was Nandraj Guru.' All the gods[1] and the Dead went to him to learn the art. At one time seven gods were being taught by him daily. One day a Maria of the Maja clan was digging roots in the jungle when he heard voices and went stealthily to see what was happening. From behind a tree he saw Nandraj Guru teaching the seven gods. Every day the Maria went to the place and overheard everything that was said. On the last day the pupils brought offerings of pigs and chickens for their Guru. He sacrificed them and divided the meat into seven equal shares. But to his surprise after a few moments he noticed that the number of shares had grown to eight. He called his disciples and said, "Search the jungle around, for there must surely be a ghost or an animal hiding near". The search revealed the presence of the Maria on the branch of a tree and he was brought before the Guru.

'Nandraj said, "Listen, everyone here is a god and you are the only human being who has learned our magic. Unless you give an offering as the gods have done, your son will die". "What offering should I give?" asked the Maria. "In your house" said the Guru, "there is a pigeon. Offer that to me". Now by the word "pigeon" the Guru meant the Maria's only son and the reason why he demanded him was that his knowledge could only be imparted to immortal beings who would use it in the proper way. But the Guru feared that now that a human being had discovered the secret, he would make use of the magic at all times. There would be no deaths. Pain would be banished, and the gods would have

[1] God, spelt without a capital, represents the Hindi *deo*. The Gondi *pen* is translated 'clan-god'. A *deo* is little more than what the Middle Ages called a 'demon'.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

no Dead to people their kingdom. But if this human being were to eat a bit of the liver of his own son, then there would be deaths in the world and the Maria himself would have learned the knowledge of evil and death and would become a magician.

'The Maria, little knowing that when Nandraj Guru said "pigeon", he meant his son, asked one of the gods to go to his

A typical Anga Pen, a clan-god. Carried by four men, it is sometimes used to detect witches.

house and fetch the bird. The god killed the boy, removed the liver, and the Maria and the seven gods ate it together. As the Maria unwittingly ate the liver of his own son, he was filled with the knowledge of death and evil, and became the first sorcerer. Before he died, he taught his own disciples the art and today many men know how to harm and kill their enemies. But in every case the liver must be obtained, for the liver is the *jiwa* (soul) of all beings.'

In Khutepal the Maria said that they began learning magic in the month of June. The young disciples must go to the jungle and set up a small stone which represents an urnakal menhir. To the left of the pillar they place another stone flat on the ground to represent a danyakal. Then between the urnakal and the danyakal a number of small stones are placed in line from right to left. This line of stones represents one kind of magic, say the magic for curing the sick. Parallel to this they place a second line of small stones. This represents another kind of magic, say doing injury to an enemy.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

under the thatch by the door of his house. The palm of 783
his right hand was placed below the Lamhada's right hand. On the ground, below their hands, a pile of rice was made, and an arrow placed in it. Then the Waddai climbed on to the roof and poured down water which fell through the thatch on to their hands, and thence to the rice. After this a pig and two chickens were given to the Lamhada to be offered to his ancestors. The Waddai as clan-priest officiated [769]
since the Dead of the clan were to be appeased.

A curious story related by Oyami Harma of the same 539
village illustrates the manner in which the Maria expect 773
supernatural punishment to fall upon the criminal. 'Long ago', said Oyami Harma, 'my ancestors, who were a family of seven brothers and one sister, were living beyond Bailadila. A youth of the Uika clan came as Lamhada for the girl, and in due time she was married to him. Twin boys were born, but after a few days one of them died. During Dassara the husband went to Jagdalpur at the invitation of the eldest brother and while he was away his wife together with the wives of the seven brothers went to reap the harvest, taking their two hunting-dogs. The surviving twin was taken with them, and as they were working, he was put to sleep in a swing. While the women were busy in the field, a hare jumped out of a bush and ran towards the baby. The two hunting-dogs chased it, and mistaking the baby for the hare bit him and killed him.

'When the husband returned he asked for his baby, and his wife said, "He has been taken out by our neighbour. First eat your food and then you can play with the child". The husband sat down and ate, and his wife told him what had happened. In the meantime the other brothers told their eldest brother of the child's death, and he was afraid that the bereaved father would revenge himself on him, because it was at his invitation that he had gone to Jagdalpur. So they all decided to run away. The father pursued them saying that it was they who were responsible for the death of his child. They went to Gadapal closely pursued by the angry father. In Gadapal there was a shrine for Kas Pona Pen which was in the form of a bird. This god hid the eldest brother under its wings, and when the father arrived at the shrine, he could find no trace of him. But as he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

539 773 had seen him entering, he knew that he was hiding somewhere and so he set fire to the building and went away. The fire did not harm the man, but some of the bird's feathers were burnt. The soul of the clan-god in Gadapal is in that bird, and to this day the bird can be seen, though now it is made of iron, and on its body the marks made by the burns remain.

'The eldest brother then went to Mailawada and lived there. He consulted the Waddai about the death of his sister's child, and it was revealed to him that the girl had been committing adultery with another man, and that on the very day she had bathed after her menstrual period, she [845] had had intercourse both with her husband and her lover. The result of this was twins. But the Departed were offended at her conduct, and as a result one of the twins died after a few days and the second was killed by the Departed who first took the form of a hare and excited the dogs, and then possessed the dogs and killed the child in the swing'.

Such stories are not mere fairy-tales. They are part of the actual life of the people, vividly believed and actually experienced. To aboriginals who live in such an atmosphere and depend so entirely on the supernatural, the cumbersome and vulgar machinery of human courts of justice seems comparatively unimportant. It is said that many murderers find a sort of relief in going to jail, since they believe that this earthly punishment may save them from the vengeance of the Departed.

782 937 But as often in the aboriginal world there are regular methods of evading these dangers. If a man wishes to commit adultery, he makes offerings to the Departed and prays, 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on the husband of this girl and not on me', and then he addresses his ancestors, 'Away with you. Go to water and to wind. Go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me whatever happens'.

684 There is no doubt, however, that many Maria are not satisfied with such ceremonies, and that they consider themselves entirely justified in killing a wife who is disloyal. In particular, the discovery of a woman actually in the arms of her lover appears to have so overwhelming an emotional effect that the husband is almost bound to strike

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER TEN

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: ALCOHOL

THE special and characteristic drink of the Bison-horn Maria 273 is rice-beer. Mahua spirit and the surem that is made from mahua[1] flowers, and the fermented sap of the toddy,[2] sago[3] and date[4] palms is also drunk. But landa rice-beer is not only obligatory on most festival occasions; it is also the favourite drink of boon companions. The Maria regards it both as an intoxicant and as a food—which indeed it is. It accompanies him from birth to death. It is drunk first at the ceremonies when he is named, again at his betrothal, again in large quantities at his marriage, and it is finally poured over his memorial stone after he is dead. At every great festival and at every point of the agricultural year, this nourishing and potent drink is made and enjoyed.

Mahua spirit, which is the ceremonial drink of the northern Gond, is also offered by the Bison-horn Maria at the time of sacrifice, and in small quantities on most ceremonial and domestic occasions. The juice of the toddy and sago palms is used almost entirely for happiness—as a stimulant and for recreation—though gourds full of the refreshing juice are often supplied at weddings and funerals to supplement the supply of rice-beer. A poor man who cannot provide sufficient mahua spirit or landa for his son's betrothal or marriage, may provide toddy instead. When Muka went to ask for the hand of the beautiful Kume in marriage, he took with him a gourdful of this juice. Surem, which is made by boiling the mahua flowers, is sometimes taken as a substitute for the properly distilled spirit.

All these drinks are gifts of the gods. Liquor comes 273 from heaven, and who could resist so gracious a blessing? 273 Mahua was discovered much as in Muria and Baiga tradition. An ancient hero went out to find some means of entertaining his guests. He came to a mahua tree with a hole full of water beneath it, into which many of the flowers had fallen.

[1] *Bassia latifolia*, Roxb. [2] *Borassus flabellifer*, Linn.
[3] *Caryota urens*, Linn. [4] *Phoenix sylvestris*, Roxb.

[p. 131]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 All round the little pond were sitting rame birds singing,
773 wagging their heads to and fro and flapping their wings in great excitement. The hero tasted the water and soon he too was singing, dancing and flapping his arms in company with the birds.

The recipe for rice-beer was given to the Maria by the Supreme Being for no other purpose apparently but to cheer them up.

273 The origin of sago and toddy juice is more elaborately
773 described.
539 Long ago there was a Maria called Iro Kawachi who had two beautiful daughters, Ilo and Palo. He made a seat of mahua wood and covered it with the skins of lice. He proclaimed that anyone who could first lift it up and put it where he could bathe upon it, and who could say what kind of wood it was made of, and what skin covered it, would get his daughters. All the boys of the neighbourhood came to try but none could tell what the seat was and none could lift it up. At last came a lame boy called Mad Moda from the Irma Raj with an open sore upon his leg. He too was unable to guess what the seat was made of until a fly came and said, 'Let me sit on your sore and eat it and then I will tell you what the wood is'. The boy let the fly settle upon him and after it had taken its fill it told him that the seat was of mahua wood and covered with the skins of lice. Then the boy was able to lift up the seat and put it where Iro Kawachi could bathe.

Now Mad Moda was lame and ugly and covered with hideous sores. When the two girls Ilo and Palo saw him, they ran away in terror but the boy went stumbling along after them and dropped his dancing-stick. He went on and at last caught the girls by the strings with which they tied their hair into a bun. He pulled the cloth off their shoulders and tore out some of their hair. Then he threw them down in the bed of the Indaltom River and enjoyed them. Afterwards the river divided and flowed onwards in two streams.

The boy's bell-stick turned into a toddy tree; the strings from the girls' hair became sago palms; the hair itself grew up as a date palm; the cloth became the broad-leaved plantain tree. Because on that day the girls' cloth fell from their shoulders they now do not cover their breasts.

This is the story as it was told in Garmiri village. It is known in its main outlines in many other places, though

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

with small variations. In Dualkarka it was Ira Dhurwa who made the seat and its covering was of cloth. In Muskel it was Gaja Bhimul who made it and the end of the story is that Ilo and Palo jumped into the river at Dantewara and were drowned.

A few stories resemble the tales of the northern Muria. The Pen Kaina come down to bathe in the Godaveri river; they come singing to eat jamun fruit; or they simply come to dance. They sing, 'Whoever can tell what our names are, we will go with him'. When the village boys find they cannot tell their names they get angry and try to catch them. As the girls run away their bell-sticks fall and become toddy trees. The boys throw their sticks at them and these become sago palms. As the girls run away the kardan-belts round their waists break and turn into the date palm. The knots on these belts are its fruit. The god cuts off the testicles of the boys and sticks them on to the end of the dancing-sticks and these become toddy fruit. That is why, the Maria say, their women beat the sticks so vigorously as they dance. This version of the story is from Bara Harmamunda. In Palnar the situation is reversed. When the boys begin to flirt with the girls, the girls beat them with their bell-sticks and it is the boys who run away. Here they add that the toddy trees said, 'We won't stay here', and went down below the hills. But the sago palms remained on the Dantewara plateau.

Another completely different type of story is told in the neighbourhood of Bailadila. Long ago a group of Maria were hunting on the Bailadila Hills. They grew very thirsty and went searching for water. A rat had nibbled at the peduncle of a sago palm and a jungle cock had scratched a hole in the ground at its foot. The juice dropped into this hole and filled it. When the hunters came to the place they found a hole full of refreshing juice and drank it and thus learnt to tap the tree.

The comparative strength of these drinks is given in Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual*. The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number

3; Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Death comes into the world by the treachery of the gods. 000
The Baiga describe how Bhagavan grew tired of men, but did not know how to kill them. So he gave Nanga Baiga itch and the old man began to scratch. But he was unable to reach the small of his back, and one day when he picked up a stick to scratch himself there, Bhagavan turned it into a cobra and it bit him and he died.[1] The Juang say that formerly men did not die because they did not sleep, and Bhagavan had to send a woman to sell them curds mixed with sleep-medicine. When they ate the curds, they slept and died. The Bhuiya story describes how so long as Jug Budha and his wife were living, no one died and the world was becoming over-populated. So the Supreme Being sent a centipede to bite them, and thus introduced death into the world.

The Muria too, in the north of Bastar, associate the coming of death with the murder of a son. 761 773

In the Middle World no man died, and Mahapurub wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He had a son. He killed him and prepared to carry him out for burial. But when his wife heard of it, she ran weeping to the place and, taking her son from him, sat with the corpse in her lap. Mahapurub said, 'We must bury the child, don't be foolish'. But she said, 'No, I'll never give him to you'.

Mahapurub then planted a jamun tree behind her. One day some of the berries fell to the ground before her. She picked them up and as she ate her mouth was reddened with the juice. Mahapurub came again and said, 'Give me the boy. You are a witch, you are eating his flesh'. He brought a mirror and when she saw her reddened mouth, she thought she really was eating her son. She wept bitterly, but gave the body to Mahapurub. He buried it and from that day, death has been in the world. 539

A similar sacrifice accounts for the origin of the sun and moon. The Muria, in a story which is known in a slightly different version to the Bison-horn Maria, describe how after the great wooden circles for the sun and moon were made, there was the problem of how to put life into them. Mahapurub had a son, and Lingo declared that only by killing him and giving his blood to the sun and moon to 821 773

[1] Verrier Elwin, The Baiga (London, 1939), p. 322.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

drink, would they become alive and be man and woman. One day while Mahagurub was working in his fields, his wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. He sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon and they became alive.

Both the Baiga and Muria have stories to account for the disappearance of human sacrifice.

> Now Nanga Baiga and Nanga Baigin had nothing to sacrifice for the steadying of the world. So they took their own three sons and daughters, and were carrying them along. Then they met a jungle hen. 'Where are you going?' she asked. And when she heard, 'You musn't kill your own children. Take two pairs of mine. Offer one pair, and keep the other for breeding'. So said the jungle hen. Then Nanga Baiga lifted one son and daughter out of the kawar and left them with the hen, and put the chickens in instead.
>
> A little later they met a sow. She also begged them not to sacrifice their children, and gave two pairs of sucklings in exchange for two more of the children. Then they met a barking deer, and made a similar exchange.[1]

The Muria story runs as follows:—

> The Muria was thinking, 'How am I to worship the earth for I have nothing to give her?'. He had one daughter. He covered her whole body with soot to make her black and forced her to walk on all fours like a black cow.

[1] *The Baiga*, p. 315. 'At Nasik, in the Deccan, when cholera appears, a woman of the Marg (menial tribe) is solemnly led out of the city as a scapegoat. She remains outside the city bounds till the next day, when she bathes and returns. The ceremonial, which closely resembles that of bringing a victim to a shrine, doubtless implies an earlier rite of human sacrifice.

'Another rite resembles that of the self-immolation of pilgrims, who used, in former times, to fling themselves, in the name of Siva, over the cliff known as Bhairava Jhamp, near the famous shrine of Kedar Nath in the lower Himalayas. This rite has now been commuted into the paying for the service of a bedi or rope dancer, who slides on a wooden saddle upon a cable hung over a precipitous cliff as a means of propitiating Siva.

'In the form of the "Bihunda" rite the same custom prevails in the Punjab, on the River Sutlej.

'In Baroda also, at the worship of Vagh Deo, the tiger god, a man is covered with a blanket; he bows to the image and walks round it seven times. During this performance the worshippers slap him on the back. He then tries to escape to the forest, pursued by children, who fling balls of clay at him, and finally bring him back, the rite ending with feasting and drinking. The above are instances of attenuated forms of the custom of human sacrifice and immolation which has become intolerable under the conditions of modern society.' Haikerwal, op. cit., pp. 66 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Then he went to the jungle to worship Mother Earth. 782
On the way he met Lingo driving a cow. Lingo said, 539
'O man, where are you going?' 'I am going to worship 773
Mother Earth'. 'What are you going to sacrifice?' 'I have nothing to give but my own daughter and I am going to sacrifice her'. Then Lingo said, 'Give me your daughter, and I will give you my cow'. From that day the Muria have not offered human beings to the Earth Mother but, taught by Lingo, have sacrificed their cattle.

A Bison-horn Maria account of creation tells of the great 773
deluge and how the earth came into existence from mud that dropped from the hairs of the great boars that then lived in the world. There were two deities, Irisirma and Markaraja. They had two daughters, Iro and Palo. The girls both wanted to marry Koyabhimul, but the parents were unwilling and tried to kill the boy. They first sent a great snake to bite him as he returned from the jungle. But the girls warned him in time, and told him to invoke the name of their father and the snake would be unable to harm him. The parents then tried to kill him by asking him to sacrifice a chicken, planning to behead him as he bent down to do so. But the girls again warned him, and the boy said to Markaraja that he must first show him how the sacrifice was to be performed. As the older man bent down, the boy picked up a sword and beheaded him. 'In those days there were few gods and so there were few deaths on earth. The mortality on earth has increased because of the great increase in the number of deities.'

We have already seen how the origin of magic among men is connected with a human sacrifice and cannibalism. The Maria are acquainted with similar stories of the origin of the sun and moon through the sacrifice of a living being. Some of the Maria iron-smelters describe how at the beginning they were unable to extract iron from the ore. They killed a Maria and put his body into the furnace, after which their craft prospered.

Maria folk-tales are full of the usual murders, treacheries 539
and deceits. But it is worth noting that generally these are attributed to outsiders and members of other castes. The Maria themselves usually appear virtuous and honourable.

I do not suppose anyone was ever incited to murder by 007
these stories and legends. I doubt if anyone would ever

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

eyes; it throws down grass from the roof. But no one need ever be afraid of the ghost of a chelik or motiari.'

During the bazaar ceremonies in the east of the State (when these are performed for a dead chelik or motiari) the villagers say, 'Mahapurub sent you into this world only for a little while; he did not intend you to live with us for long; so don't be angry and don't trouble us'. The parents are led round the shops and then go home leaving the Uriya-bhut in the bazaar. The dead boy or girl is not mingled with the Departed as are the married, and no menhir is erected for them.

Sometimes the ghost of a chelik may be dangerous. In the compound of the Khutgaon ghotul there was formerly a great stone. One of the boys died and the ghost came to sit on it bringing an epidemic with him. Many boys and girls died and the ghotul had to be destroyed and rebuilt in another place. But the stone remained where it was and when the villagers tried to move it sickness broke out again and so they left it alone.

Many Muria say that when an unmarried girl dies her ghost is dangerous because if a witch can get hold of it, she gives it the form of a pretty girl and sends her to rob men of their seed. Such a girl may appear as a man's mother or sister and torment him.

A dead motiari may also continue to visit her old friends of the ghotul. This only happens, however, when the boys sleep outside, for it is believed that Lingo protects the actual building from the invasion of any witch or spirit. The Sirdarsingh of the Chargaon ghotul told me how he once had an encounter with such a ghost. 'She visited me and I went to her; for many days she was with me; I could not get rid of her. I often went to her and my clothes were spoilt with my discharges. At last I gave her a comb and necklace and she went away, but for fear she may return I sacrifice a pig every year.' So too motiari complain of visits from some old lover's ghost: 'he comes to us, pressing us'.

III. The Soul and its Fate

The belief in immortality, or at least in some kind of survival after death, is bound up with the idea of the soul. The Muria theologians say explicitly that a man has two or even three souls (*jiwa*). In Bakulwahi the villagers said that after death one of these souls[1] went to Mahapurub, one became a Hanal and lived in the Pot of the Departed, and the third became a Chhaiya or Shade, a ghost that visited his relatives in dreams and often made himself a nuisance. The word Hanal, as Grigson has pointed out, is literally translated 'The Departed', for it is a past participial form of the Gondi verb *handāna*, to go.[2] Whenever I speak of the Departed, therefore, it may be taken as translating Hanal in original. In Randhna the people said that,

> Every man has two souls: one lives in his mouth and one in his body—you can feel it going *dub-dub* in the chest. The first soul goes from the mouth direct to Mahapurub; the other remains in the corpse and goes with the mourners to the grave. It watches the body being burnt or buried from a tree nearby, then goes to the nearest stream and lives there until the people come and catch it in the form of a fish and take it home. Then it lives in the house as a god (*deo*).

So also in Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria of the Abujhmar foothills said that,

> A man has two souls: one always remains with him; the other, a smaller one, leaves him in sleep and its adventures are what we call

[1] Throughout, when I use the word 'soul' it represents *jiwa* in the original.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 223.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

774 [775] dreams. When a man dies the soul remains near the house and when a child is born we say 'A visitor has come' meaning that the soul has returned to its own place.

The ability of the soul to leave the body and its power of independent movement is illustrated by a significant story, told by a middle-aged Muria, Dalsai of Kerawahi.

> When I was about fourteen years old I died of small-pox and my soul was taken to Mahapurub. I watched my parents sitting round my body weeping in their grief. Mahapurub was sitting on a cot: my soul said to him, 'I'm hungry, give me something to eat'. Mahapurub replied, 'What do you want to eat?' My soul said, 'Ripe mangoes, ripe figs and plenty of salphi juice to drink'. Mahapurub said, 'There's nothing to eat here: go back to Manjhpur [the Middle World or earth] and have it there'. So my soul returned to its body and the corpse sat up. I said to my family, 'What are you weeping for?'
>
> I then asked for ripe mangoes, ripe figs and salphi juice, and my parents gave me everything I wanted. But the Mata [goddess of small-pox feared by Hindus and aboriginals alike] said, 'You have escaped from Mahapurub, but you can't escape from me. Give me one of your eyes'. Since then I have been blind in one eye.

Kotla Muria of Kuntpadar describes how in his youth he 'died' during a cholera epidemic.

> Everyone fled from the village leaving me senseless in the house. I died and my soul went to Adibhum, the Lower World. There I saw a world just like ours, but the men were of small stature, and the cows and bullocks were the size of pigs. When I went among them, the inhabitants said, 'Who is this man? Why has he come here? We have no room for him'. They gave me some food and asked me to leave immediately. My soul returned to earth and entered my body. The food I had taken in Adibhum was enough for me to move my legs a little, and presently I recovered.

The effect of such stories on the simple aboriginal mind is to impress upon it the belief that the soul can exist apart from its bodily integument. Even when that has been shed for ever, dreams prove that the soul continues to exist, though it is only possible to see the Dead for a few years, up to the time when they are finally mingled with the Hanal. It is generally supposed that there is no need to tend or placate a man's soul more than twenty years after his death.

715 After death, the soul goes to Mahapurub and, when a sufficient time has passed, returns to the 'warmth and comfort' of its own family. Though the Muria believe in rebirth, they have no idea of Karma and their picture of life after death is quite unmoralized. There are no words in Gondi for sin or virtue: a man may be ruined, here and hereafter, for breach of a taboo, but the notion of retribution for sinners is an alien importation.

772 Have the Muria any idea of Hell or Heaven? Their myths and folk-tales
715 are full of references to the three worlds—Porrobhum or Uparpur, the abode of Mahapurub or Ispural; Nadumbhum or Manjhpur, the Middle World, the earth on which we live; and Adibhum or Tarpur, the Under World. This typically Hindu conception has the advantage of giving the story-teller three stages or levels to work on and greatly extends the possible range of a hero's adventures. There is frequent communication between these worlds by

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Muria

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

DREAMS

OFFICIALLY it is not possible to dream inside the ghotul, for Lingo and the other ghotul gods protect those who sleep there, and indeed I believe that in many places the boys and girls dream very little, enjoying sound and satisfying sleep in the security, warmth and delight of their peculiar realm.

But not all ghotul are equally happy. In Binjhli for example, where there was a strange atmosphere of jealousy and frustration, I heard a great deal about dreams. And in all villages there are official and standardized dreams which are believed to be the normal means of receiving communications from gods or ancestors.

It is not possible, I think, to provide material on this subject which will be of much value to the psycho-analyst. It is very difficult to obtain the Muria's associations to their dreams; their memory is poor and they are so timid that too prolonged an inquiry is likely to make it impossible to obtain any information at all. But it is possible to discover various ideas and attitudes of the Muria through an examination of their dreams, especially since the most important are of the official type.

What is the Muria theory of dreams? Where do they come from and why do we see them? Some say that all sleep is a dream; sleep is the food by which man's life is recreated and 'the dream is the chutney of sleep'. As with other Indian aboriginals the Muria theory of dreams is closely related to the idea of the soul or *jiwa*. The *jiwa* leaves the body in sleep, goes here and there and what it sees during its adventures is the dream.[1] The power of the *jiwa* to leave the body is described in a significant tale from Ulera:

> One day long ago two men went to a blacksmith's shop to rest. One fell asleep, the other sat by his side watching. Presently from the sleeper's mouth there came out his *jiwa* in the form of a lizard and went to feed. A dog saw it and chased it into an ant-hill. There it saw a pot full of rupees.
>
> The other man covered the sleeper's face with coal-dust for a joke. When the *jiwa* returned it did not recognize its body with the blackened face, and went away seeking for it elsewhere. By and by the second man noticed a lizard going to and fro, and soon realized what had happened. He quickly cleaned the sleeper's face, and the lizard, recognizing the body, entered it, and became a *jiwa* again.
>
> When the sleeper awoke he told his friend what he had seen in his dreams, and they went to the ant-hill and found the rupees. This is a true tale of what actually occurred.[2]

[1] Compare *The Baiga*, p. 308.

[2] The literature of the 'separable soul' is considerable. It appears in folk-tales as the useful motif of 'entering another's body' which, as Penzer rightly insists, must not be confused with the quite distinct 'life-index' motif. Crooke observes that 'in Bombay it is considered most reprehensible to play jokes on a sleeping person, such as painting the face in fantastic colours, or giving moustaches to a sleeping woman. The absent soul may not be able to find its own body, the appearance of which has been thus changed, and may depart altogether, leaving the body a corpse'.—*Religion and Folk-Lore*, Vol. I, p. 232. For the subject generally see *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. I, p. 37, n. 2; A. E. Crawley, 'Doubles', Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. IV, pp. 853f.; M. Bloomfield, 'On the Art of Entering Another's Body', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. LVI, pp. 1ff.;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Another tale, from Atargaon, points the same moral.

> Dream and Wealth were disputing which was the greater. When they could not agree they decided that each should hide in turn and whoever could find the other, yet not be found himself, would win the contest. Wealth hid himself first. He took the shape of a pot of rupees and hid in an ant-hill. Dream went to a very poor boy who was lying asleep and called his soul to come out. When the *jiwa* came Dream sent it to the ant-hill. It returned, and when the boy awoke he went to the ant-hill and dug up Wealth in the shape of the pot. Then Dream hid in the wind, and was blown here and there about the world. Wealth could not find him and when they met again he admitted that Dream was the greater.

In this other world into which the *jiwa* can enter during sleep, the gods and the Departed are familiar figures and the *jiwa* can talk with them and learn their will. Often, however, the Muria speak as though the gods and the dead had come to them in sleep, that the approach was, as it were, from the other side. Obviously the ordinary Muria, any more than the ordinary Englishman, has no consistent theory. One thing which has puzzled him, and which he explains by a fantastic tale, is the 'falsity' or symbolism of dreams. In Berma I was given a story which accounts for this.

> Long ago men could read the future in their dreams. An owl heard of it and said, 'If men can see the future in dreams, they will never die'. The owl waited till the gods were holding a darbar and then fell with a bang into the midst of them. The gods said, 'What is the matter?' The owl replied, 'I have had a dream, and in that dream I was marrying a Raja's daughter. We had done eleven rounds of the Lagir; had it been twelve she had been mine; but I awoke and fell to the ground. Now I must marry this girl. What am I to do?' The gods were concerned and said to one another, 'How can a red-eyed bird marry a Raja's daughter?' The owl replied, 'But all the world gets what it sees in dreams; how can it be that only my dreams are false?' At that the gods cursed men saying, 'From now on, let all dreams be false'.

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Dreams, therefore, are symbolic. They are code messages from the other world and only the wise can decipher them. There is a fairly extensive system of dream-interpretation, on the whole consistently maintained throughout the Muria area, though with a few variations from place to place. I will tabulate these interpretations for the reader's convenience.

787

Good Dreams

One's dead parents ..	.. Lucky, for it shows they have retained their affection for one.
Drowning in a river ..	.. Very good. The Yer Kanyang so loves the dreamer that she wants to marry him.

Sir J. G. Fraser, *Taboo and Perils of the Soul*, pp. 37 and 49; *Punjab Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 166 (which gives a tale with a similar motif to that in the text); W. A. Clouston, *Popular Tales and Fictions* (Edinburgh, 1887), Vol. I, p. 437.

For a Santal story of a soul which slipped out of a man's sleeping body in the form of a lizard and was prevented from returning, see B. Bonnerjea, 'The Social and Ceremonial Life of the Santals', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LIX (1930), p. 100.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

301 from behind, it makes her appear very thick-, in fact bull-necked, and creates a false impression of her often slender build.

304 What beauty the girls have they mar to Western eyes by excessive tattooing over all the face and forehead, and often the breasts also. Mothers begin to tattoo their daughters when they are eight or nine years old, using lengths of the brass wire used for the rings in the helix of the ear, sharpened into rough needles, and black charcoal powder. The girl lies on her side with one cheek flat on the ground while the mother operates on the other cheek. Sometimes only one breast is tattooed, often neither. They seem never to tattoo legs or arms, though Glasfurd speaks of their arms and thighs being covered with tattooing. A swastika with the corners slightly rounded and not right-angled, and a pair of very small parallel vertical lines between each arm is a common motive, on face and breast. On the centre of the forehead, vertically one below the other, are usually tattooed a circle with a dot in the centre, for the sun, a circle and a crescent for the full and crescent moon respectively. Thence fairly symmetrically vertical hatching alternates with horizontal round and round the face, becoming oblique at the corners and down the sides of the nose ; and over the corners of the cheekbones three dots are made triangle-wise. This is only one common pattern. The only tattooing on men is single, double or treble horizontal rows of dots, varying in number from three to nine, over the glabella. I did not ascertain at what age or by whom these marks are made. There are no special tattoo marks for the different clans. There seems to be no significance behind tattooing ; it is considered merely an adornment. The Nagpur Gonds speak of tattooing as marks by which ancestors and clan-gods can identify [775] persons in the next world ; but the Marias have no formulated idea of another world.

292 The dancing dress of the Hill Maria men is completely different from that of the Bison-horn Marias and most other tribes. The 535 women have no special dancing dress. The young men wear on their heads either red and white turbans, or, more often, curious Chinese fig-box head-dresses which they call by the Hindi word *topi*, covered with red or blue cloth, and piped at the edges and centre with peacock feather quills. Often a peacock, jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo's feather is stuck in the *topi*, or spiral coils of feather quill fastened on both sides of a stick ; or scarlet 'Scissors' cigarette packets found empty at the bazaars, lead seals from petrol tins, old brass cog-wheels from watches, little tins, cheap mirrors, the round of bright tin-foil cut out when an airtight cigarette tin is opened ; dried snipe or woodcock neck and skull ; or anything bright-coloured or interesting to the Maria.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [834] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *hanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *hanal*. The *hanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *hanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common 776 use of the expression *pen-hanal* has already been mentioned. As the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this 614 association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *uraskal* be the last thing that an individual *hanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only 775 around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip. All Marias agree that the dead are somewhere underground; men, animals, trees, and perhaps rivers and streams have in them *jiwa*, a principal of life, and some say that when a man dies his *jiwa* goes to Pogho Bhum, the sky, while that part which is cremated or buried goes below the earth and is his *hanal*. There is a belief that the menhirs erected at the *kotokal* or *uraskal* increase in size if the *hanal* commemorated by it is happy. There are traces of an embryo belief in reincarnation in the practice among Hill Marias of examining a new-born baby to see if it has the same birth-marks as a dead ancestor and, if so, of naming it after the ancestor if of the same sex, or his spouse if of the other sex. Hindu ideas are beginning to influence Bison-horn Marias; tombs are erected sometimes by the side of the menhir in the *uraskal*, thatched over to protect the dead from the heat of the sun, and with a pot of cold water, replenished from time to time, hung over the memorial to drip through a small hole in the pot to cool him further. But, like their ideas about the earth and the gods, the Marias' ideas about the Departed and the after-life are very indefinite and vary from place to place; it is safe only to go on their actual practice, and not on what some of them will say by way of generalization or theory; the latter are certain to be those who have had most contact with the outer world and persons of other faiths. There is one practical way in which old Bison-horn men show their belief in some future existence. They often choose before death the cow or bullock to be sacrificed when their menhir is erected in the *uraskal*; and it is alleged that if the heir thinks it better to slay some other animal, the animal chosen by the dead man always pines to death. The graves of Hill and Bison-horn Marias are adorned with strips of cloth, spears, fishing-rods and other things they may need hereafter, and their ornaments are buried often with them.

B. Magic and Witchcraft

We have seen before that such is the ignorance of the local Hindus about the Marias that, in the words used by Glasfurd in 1862,[1] 'the simple and unsophisticated Gond tribes are believed to be expert necromancers, and on the most intimate footing with evil spirits'; and that the Marias have a totally undeserved reputation as physicians, although their general idea of sickness

[1] Report, p. 52.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

553 Yete Mura, the headman of Hoinar, was born hare-lipped and was therefore named after his hare-lipped paternal grandfather; and Jugho Dallu, the headman of Hitulnar, recognized on his son the birth-marks of his dead mother Pora'i and therefore gave him the name of her dead husband Dugha. This practice is a sign of some [775] sort of belief in the reincarnation of the Departed. The second exception is the practice of giving a name immediately after birth when birth has coincided with some natural phenomenon or incident. Usendi Ippo of Orcha was called Ippo because born when the *mahua* tree (*ippa marra* in Maria) was in flower; Usendi Irka was born when the cucumbers (*irka*) were ripening in the *penda* fields; Usendi Ghasi was so named because, just before he was born, a *patwari* rode into Orcha and ordered his father Moda to go and cut grass (*ghas* in Halbi) for his pony. Oyami Gursha, headman of Komu, was born when his father and uncles were making a wicker-work bin (*gursha*) for storing grain. Yete Mura named his daughter Reko because she was born when the *reka marra* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) was in fruit. The third exception, which, like the first, indicates some belief, if not in reincarnation, at least in a previous existence, is the practice when a new-born baby cries loudly for three or four days of reciting to it all the names that the parents can remember and giving it the last name uttered before it stops crying, on the theory that it has stopped crying on recognizing its name. Normally, however, the name is not given till the child is two or three, and then depends on such things as whether it is fat or thin, slow or smart, learnt to walk or speak quickly, and so on. Thus a boy was named Morlel or 'hare' because he used to double suddenly like a hare when running about the village; Bunge is a name given to a boy with a huge stomach; Baiyya or 'mad' to a harum-scarum boy; Banga to a shy, untalkative child; and U'ile or 'thin' to a child thin through much illness in his early years.

551 177 Russell and Hiralal state (III, p. 87) of the Gond race as a whole that names derived from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and, on this assumption, actually suggest that perhaps the Gonds had not advanced to the stage of having individual names before they came into contact with the Hindus! This is certainly not true of either Hill or Bison-horn Marias. Of 103 male and 38 female Hill Maria names collected from 215 men and 107 women, and 103 male and 23 female Bison-horn Maria names collected from 236 men and 68 women, very few, not 5 per cent., were Hindu, the proportion of Hindu names being, as might be expected, slightly higher among the Bison-horn Marias. Only about 27 per cent. of the Hill Maria men's names and 8 per cent. of their women's names occur also, in the same or a modified form, in the lists of Bison-horn

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*ketul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

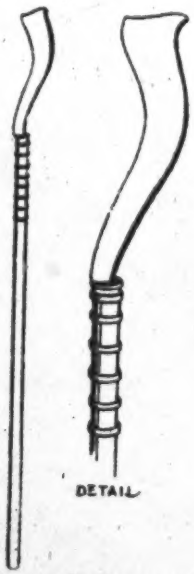

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brush-wood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchadar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

But this name is important because of its connexion with the theory of rebirth, and before it is given it is necessary to discover which of the family ancestors has returned in the young child. Many different methods of divination are adopted. At Bandopal they tied up some rice into a little bundle of siari leaves and put it on the child's head. Then the Siraha took the names of all the family ancestors that he could remember one by one: if the child drops the bundle on its shoulder as the medium is repeating a name, they know who it is. In the Sonawal Pargana I found the Muria placing a lighted lamp in a leaf-cup of sarai above the pit where the placenta was buried, while they waved a second lamp round the child reciting names. The child shows its recognition of its name by putting its hands out towards the lamp. In Karikhodra they put a chicken-bone in the child's hand and give the name that is used when the child drops it. At Gorma, they made a ball of siari leaves, put it in front of the child and waited till it touched it. Sometimes, the child refuses to drink its mother's milk. Then the medium is called and he recites names as usual; they give the one that coincides with the child's turning to the breast. In Aturgaon, they wave rice in a leaf-cup round the child, put it down before it, stick a scrap of rice on a siari stalk and place it in the child's hand. When the child throws the rice over its shoulder, they give the name.

The names are, as we might expect, slowly becoming Hindu in character, though this tendency should not be exaggerated. Out of 2000 names, only 85 were specifically Hindu and such names as Ram, Ganesh, Govind, Sita, Indira, were comparatively rare. Girls and boys are sometimes named after the Hindu months in which they were born—Asaru, Baisakhu, Bhadru or Phagu—and after the day of the week—Aitu, Mangal and Sani.[1]

As always, events at the time of birth influence a child's name.

Akalsai or Kangalu	Born in a famine year
Barat or Bartiya	Born during a marriage procession
Dera	Born in a hut
Duwaru	Born in the yard
Irpa	Born at the time of picking mahua flowers
Sataru	A seven-months child

The usual derogatory names are given with the idea of depreciating a child's value in the eyes of hostile spirits.

Amlu	Sour	Burjaha	Dirty
Apoti	Stinking	Chamra	Shoemaker
Banda	Naked, or dock-tailed	Dhondu	Useless
Barko	Thin	Ganda	A despised weaver
Barra	Crack-brained	Gatharu or Gatti	A little bundle, or undersized
Baya or Baihi	Mad	Hoche	Drunkard
Bhondu	Stupid	Jakari	Madman
Bhoska	A dunce	Lardhu	Useless
Bhuka	Hungry	Sukiu	Wizened
Bohbor	Stinking		

A remarkable name in this class is Duma, the Halbi word for the dead.

Yet on the other hand, there are just as many names calculated to flatter the child. The derogatory names are generally only given when calamity

[1] In the text I have mostly given the names of men: in many cases a feminine form of the same word is used for women, thus Bhuki, Sukli, Sugrin.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

that girls should be tattooed before marriage and if possible before they are betrothed. If a girl is not done till after marriage, her parents-in-law can demand the cost from her own parents. There is some idea that the marks are a sort of passport to heaven. 'If she dies without being tattooed, Mahapurub will punish her. But if she brings him beautiful drawings from the Middle World, he will keep her with him and look after her.'

In the western parganas the tattooing is often done by a girl's own mother or by some elderly woman of the tribe. A crude needle is made out of the brass wire used for an ear-ornament and charcoal dust is mixed with til or mahua oil. In the central and eastern areas, however, most of the tattooing is done by wandering Ojha women.[1] These are the wives of semi-aboriginal professional musicians. They have various stories to account for the origin of tattooing which, as we should expect, are generally Hindu in tone. In Narayanpur the Ojha described how

> At the beginning of the world there was no caste distinction among mankind. Mahapurub decided to divide men up into castes by giving them appropriate presents. A man who was given a net became a fisherman; a man who was given a plough became a Gond; a man who was given a pen became a Brahmin. At last Mahapurub found that he had given away everything except a drum, and he looked round to see who would take it. A number of men were passing along the road and one of them was lagging behind the others. Mahapurub gave him the drum telling him that his name was henceforth to be Ojha, and thus the caste began.
>
> The Ojha now began to earn his living by wandering from village to village beating his drum, telling stories and begging. One day when he went home in the evening his food was not ready and he beat his wife saying, 'All day I go from place to place earning our living; you stay at home doing nothing and yet you cannot even cook my food'. The woman replied, 'I go to the tank for water, I fetch wood from the forest, I clean the house, I cook the food. What other work am I supposed to do?' In the manner of women she began to sulk, saying to herself that she would only eat what she earned. After she had fasted for eight days Budi Matal's carpet began to shake and she sent her messenger to find out what was the matter. The messenger took the Ojha woman to the goddess. 'I have no work to do and so my husband beats me', said the Ojha woman. Budi Matal replied, 'Very well, I will give you special work to do, provided you always worship me'. She took the Ojha woman to the forest and found a sarai tree; she removed some of the gum and put it on a bit of earthenware, covering it with another bit. Then she smeared both pieces with cow-dung and put them on a fire. After a little while she removed the lid and found a black deposit there. She scraped this off with a bit of wood and put it in the broken half of a coconut shell. Into this she put some water and stirred it well. She fixed three needles in the knot of a bamboo and made the Ojha woman lie down with one cheek to the ground. So she tattooed her. Afterwards she washed the place with cow-dung and rubbed in oil and haldi.

[1] In their article 'Ojha' Russell and Hiralal do not mention tattooing as one of the Ojha's activities.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 296ff. The name is applied to the soothsayers and minstrels of several tribes, but the Ojha of Bastar are probably of Gond origin. There were 137 Ojha in Bastar in 1941.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal; the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose of it.

All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatisfied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the loveliest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away. They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Kuara-bhut, revealing his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain. In Palnar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy. When the Siraha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

eyes; it throws down grass from the roof. But no one need ever be afraid of the ghost of a chelik or motiari.'

During the bazaar ceremonies in the east of the State (when these are performed for a dead chelik or motiari) the villagers say, 'Mahapurub sent you into this world only for a little while; he did not intend you to live with us for long; so don't be angry and don't trouble us'. The parents are led round the shops and then go home leaving the Uriya-bhut in the bazaar. The dead boy or girl is not mingled with the Departed as are the married, and no menhir is erected for them.

Sometimes the ghost of a chelik may be dangerous. In the compound of the Khutgaon ghotul there was formerly a great stone. One of the boys died and the ghost came to sit on it bringing an epidemic with him. Many boys and girls died and the ghotul had to be destroyed and rebuilt in another place. But the stone remained where it was and when the villagers tried to move it sickness broke out again and so they left it alone.

Many Muria say that when an unmarried girl dies her ghost is dangerous because if a witch can get hold of it, she gives it the form of a pretty girl and sends her to rob men of their seed. Such a girl may appear as a man's mother or sister and torment him.

A dead motiari may also continue to visit her old friends of the ghotul. This only happens, however, when the boys sleep outside, for it is believed that Lingo protects the actual building from the invasion of any witch or spirit. The Sirdarsingh of the Chargaon ghotul told me how he once had an encounter with such a ghost. 'She visited me and I went to her; for many days she was with me; I could not get rid of her. I often went to her and my clothes were spoilt with my discharges. At last I gave her a comb and necklace and she went away, but for fear she may return I sacrifice a pig every year.' So too motiari complain of visits from some old lover's ghost: 'he comes to us, pressing us'.

III. The Soul and its Fate

The belief in immortality, or at least in some kind of survival after death, is bound up with the idea of the soul. The Muria theologians say explicitly that a man has two or even three souls (*jiwa*). In Bakulwahi the villagers said that after death one of these souls[1] went to Mahapurub, one became a Hanal and lived in the Pot of the Departed, and the third became a Chhaiya or Shade, a ghost that visited his relatives in dreams and often made himself a nuisance. The word Hanal, as Grigson has pointed out, is literally translated 'The Departed', for it is a past participial form of the Gondi verb *handāna*, to go.[2] Whenever I speak of the Departed, therefore, it may be taken as translating Hanal in original. In Randhna the people said that,

> Every man has two souls: one lives in his mouth and one in his body—you can feel it going *duk-duk* in the chest. The first soul goes from the mouth direct to Mahapurub; the other remains in the corpse and goes with the mourners to the grave. It watches the body being burnt or buried from a tree nearby, then goes to the nearest stream and lives there until the people come and catch it in the form of a fish and take it home. Then it lives in the house as a god (*deo*).

So also in Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria of the Abujhmar foothills said that,

> A man has two souls: one always remains with him; the other, a smaller one, leaves him in sleep and its adventures are what we call

[1] Throughout, when I use the word 'soul' it represents *jiwa* in the original.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 223.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

774 775 dreams. When a man dies the soul remains near the house and when a child is born we say 'A visitor has come' meaning that the soul has returned to its own place.

The ability of the soul to leave the body and its power of independent movement is illustrated by a significant story, told by a middle-aged Muria, Dalsai of Kerawahi.

> When I was about fourteen years old I died of small-pox and my soul was taken to Mahapurub. I watched my parents sitting round my body weeping in their grief. Mahapurub was sitting on a cot: my soul said to him, 'I'm hungry, give me something to eat'. Mahapurub replied, 'What do you want to eat?' My soul said, 'Ripe mangoes, ripe figs and plenty of salphi juice to drink'. Mahapurub said, 'There's nothing to eat here: go back to Manjhpur [the Middle World or earth] and have it there'. So my soul returned to its body and the corpse sat up. I said to my family, 'What are you weeping for?'
>
> I then asked for ripe mangoes, ripe figs and salphi juice, and my parents gave me everything I wanted. But the Mata [goddess of small-pox feared by Hindus and aboriginals alike] said, 'You have escaped from Mahapurub, but you can't escape from me. Give me one of your eyes'. Since then I have been blind in one eye.

Kotla Muria of Kuntpadar describes how in his youth he 'died' during a cholera epidemic.

> Everyone fled from the village leaving me senseless in the house. I died and my soul went to Adibhum, the Lower World. There I saw a world just like ours, but the men were of small stature, and the cows and bullocks were the size of pigs. When I went among them, the inhabitants said, 'Who is this man? Why has he come here? We have no room for him'. They gave me some food and asked me to leave immediately. My soul returned to earth and entered my body. The food I had taken in Adibhum was enough for me to move my legs a little, and presently I recovered.

The effect of such stories on the simple aboriginal mind is to impress upon it the belief that the soul can exist apart from its bodily integument. Even when that has been shed for ever, dreams prove that the soul continues to exist, though it is only possible to see the Dead for a few years, up to the time when they are finally mingled with the Hanal. It is generally supposed that there is no need to tend or placate a man's soul more than twenty years after his death.

775 After death, the soul goes to Mahapurub and, when a sufficient time has passed, returns to the 'warmth and comfort' of its own family. Though the Muria believe in rebirth, they have no idea of Karma and their picture of life after death is quite unmoralized. There are no words in Gondi for sin or virtue: a man may be ruined, here and hereafter, for breach of a taboo, but the notion of retribution for sinners is an alien importation.

772 775 Have the Muria any idea of Hell or Heaven? Their myths and folk-tales are full of references to the three worlds—Porrobhum or Uparpur, the abode of Mahapurub or Ispural; Nadumbhum or Manjhpur, the Middle World, the earth on which we live; and Adibhum or Tarpur, the Under World. This typically Hindu conception has the advantage of giving the story-teller three stages or levels to work on and greatly extends the possible range of a hero's adventures. There is frequent communication between these worlds by

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.[1] I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.[2] The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. The Intervention of the Departed in Human Affairs

But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are particularly interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or grievous hurt peace can only be made between the two families if peace is made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery with another man.

The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead. Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall, to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing, to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 96.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubstantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, op. cit., p. 141.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Guddūng oda hādu ra,	It came hiding in the grass,
Hupe lekha poyāndu ra.	It caught him like a rat.
Hajār rupiya ta jiwa ra.	The soul is worth a thousand rupees.
Jiwā nukśān kiti ra.	You have destroyed the soul.
Āde jiwa putto ra.	The soul cannot return again.
Bade diya ta puja ra?	What offering did he fail to give?
Puja badu barah mator ra?	Did he fail to give what he had promised?
Adenk ise titi ra?	Was that why you ate him?
Nima gala tinwi ra.	But it wasn't you who ate him.
Nikune ijor ilan ra.	I said it was you (but I was wrong).
Hongu dāpu āyma ra:	Don't be angry:
Sāte berāng johār ra.	I give you a sevenfold greeting.

Use Mudial Pen is acquitted, and now Hirto Mudial Pen is accused in exactly the same words. He too is found innocent and the singers, afraid that they may have angered him, beg him not to be offended and greet him seven times with their Johar. Then in the song as I have it recorded, Muyang Waddai is accused—presumably of black magic—then Lingo Mudial Pen, Kara Harra Pen, the Rau of Tipagarh, the Kandra Kaniya, the Rau of Raughat, the Mata of the man's own home, and finally Ispural. Of Ispural, which is a variant on Mahapurub or Bhagavan, the Supreme Being in whose hands are the issues of life and death, it is said,

Nimāy ise titi ra.	It was you who ate him.
Hēyna hago awtu ra;	The time of his death had come;
Adenk ise oti ra.	That was why you took him.

But even Ispural is proved innocent, and at last the singers decide that it was the dead man's own ancestors, the Departed of his own house, who desired his company and sent the tiger to bring him.

Lota ise mudiyālor ra,	The ancient of the house,
Abo ise tātur ra,	It was he who ate him,
Jori pandila otung ra.	To gain a companion for himself.
Māhun jori tāstur ra,	He left our companion behind,
Tauko ise otung ra.	That was why he took him.[1]

XVII. The Danger of the Abnormal: The Ondar Muttai

Throughout India the ghost of a woman who has died in pregnancy, in child-birth or immediately after child-birth is feared and dreaded.[2] The

[1] Russell and Hiralal have many accounts of the precautions taken by various tribes after a man has been killed by a tiger, some of which resemble those of the Muria. They describe the rites of the Baiga (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 84), Bhattra (II, p. 274), Dumal (II, p. 536), Gond (III, p. 81 and III, p. 95), Halba (III, p. 274), Kalanga (III, p. 306), Kawar (III, p. 398), Kurmi (IV, p. 79), Panwar (IV, p. 346), Sansia (IV, p. 490) and Savara (IV, p. 483). There is no particular reason in most cases why the customs recorded should be peculiar to the various tribes, nor why they should be recorded for some tribes and not for others. Probably very similar rites are common throughout the Central Provinces and indeed most of aboriginal India.

S. C. Roy has described the rites of the Uraon and I have described a Baiga ceremony that I personally witnessed in the Pandaria Zamindari (*The Baiga*, pp. 298ff.). According to Russell and Hiralal, the Gond and Halba resemble the Muria in suspending a ring over a pot of water, which they watch till it falls. The Bhattra, Kawar, Uraon and others dress a man as a tiger and either tie him up, banish him or force him to release his prey, with the idea that what is done in symbol will be achieved in effect.

[2] The Churelin or Chunni, as this ghost is called elsewhere, is a familiar figure in Indian ethnographic literature. One of the earliest accounts is by Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

●775 reason for this may be that just as the ghosts of virgins and the unmarried are dangerous because they have missed the most delightful, the most exciting, the most interesting thing in life and are therefore supposed to be anxious after death to revenge themselves on mankind, so also the woman who dies during the process of parturition is suddenly deprived of the chief privilege and wonder of womanhood—the joy of being a mother. Bitter and disappointed she seeks an appalling vengeance upon men.

In Bastar this fearful being is known in Halbi as Churlin or Bandrin and sometimes as Raksin or Banra-raksin. The Muria, however, know her as Ondar Muttai. This means the Old Bee Woman, implying I think that she comes upon a man with the ferocity and speed of a swarm of bees.

The Ondar Muttai is described with every circumstance of fear and horror.[1] She has only one breast, so long that it is usually slung over her shoulder. She has teeth long as the palm of your hand, an enormous head, great round eyes, a bulbous nose and ears like winnowing-fans. Her feet are red as fire, but curiously enough are not described as turned back to front as in the rest of India. She dances with her breast flung across her back and calls to men to come to her. When they hear her voice their legs tremble and fail beneath them. She lives in the forest or on the bank of a lake, and on the day the cuckoo first sings you can see her eyes across the water. In some villages, there is a belief that you are safe as long as you are in the company of buffaloes.

The Ondar Muttai appears to human beings in several different forms. Towards women and children she nearly always displays her dangerous and terrifying aspect. When a child is born and the placenta is not expelled, the ghost of the mother after death pursues young children. She catches them and carries them about, holding them against her breast. This is so terrible that the children weep and weep and cannot be consoled.

When the Ondar Muttai catches a man, sometimes she tickles him until he is so weak and exhausted that she can do her will upon him. Sometimes she says to him, 'Will you eat black *gur* or white *gur*?' If he answers, 'I'll

171 pp. 269ff., who stresses her reversed feet and her power of destroying young men. Russell and Hiralal describe Churel superstitions and precautions among the Gurao who bury a lemon under the corpse, and the Kurmi who place thorns above it. Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 180f. and IV, p. 78.

The Uraon believe that the Churel destroys men by tickling them—S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), p. 96—and Dehon describes how they prevent the return of the ghost by twisting round the feet of the corpse and driving long thorns into them. They bury the body face downwards with the bones of a donkey.—P. Dehon, *The Religion and Customs of the Uraons, Mem. ASB*, Vol. I (1905–7), pp. 139f. The Birhor, like the Muria, do not admit the Churel to the company of the ancestral dead and only women may bury the corpse.—S. C. Roy, *The Birhors* (Ranchi, 1925), pp. 267ff. The Santal Churin licks the flesh from a man's bones. At burial long thorns are driven into her feet to prevent her running after her victims.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 411. The Chenchu appear almost unique in burying such women 'in the usual manner'.—C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Bombay, 1943), p. 154.

Frazer has collected many references to similar beliefs for the Lushai, Kachin, Shan, Palaung as well as for the Malays, the Kayan of Borneo and the Kiwai of British New Guinea among others. Similar ideas are found again among the peoples of Northern Nigeria and Rhodesia and even among the ancient Mexicans. Possibly the fears and superstitions gathering about this ghost are world-wide. See, for full references, J. G. Frazer, *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (London, 1936), Vol. III, pp. 182ff.

[1] The Kharia believe that her malignant power 'is believed to be foreshadowed by the trouble she gave to her people in her last days of life, the degree of deformity and fearfulness that her features assume on death and the trouble that her corpse, by the violent contortions of its limbs on its way to the grave, gives to the pall-bearers'.—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), p. 302.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

eat black *gur*' she fills his mouth with black stones and so kills him, then removes his brain and eats it. 115

She is said to be most powerful on the night of the anniversary of her death.

Sometimes, however, the Ondar Muttai approaches men in very different guise. In her enchanting aspect, one is tempted to describe her as the personification of the erotic dream. Thus the headman of Ulera village described how once in a dream a lovely girl came to him. Her hair beautifully combed, her neck adorned with necklaces, many combs in her head, she sat down beside him and smiled at him. 'Seeing her my mind was for her and I wondered if I could get her. Then she came and sat very close to me. She seemed to have large and lovely breasts. I caught them with my hand but there was nothing there. Then I went to her but found she had no vagina. All my power went from me and then I saw that she was a hideous ghost with one long breast across her shoulder and I awoke. All the next day I felt very ill.' This dream is typical of scores of similar experiences. 115 154

There is another very curious type of encounter with this ghost. All over Bastar (and I have found the same tradition in the Central Provinces) there is the belief that a man can capture an Ondar Muttai, 'bind' her with his charms and keep her as a wife.[1] I will give a few examples of this: 115

> In Patlabera, near Keskal, a Halba was sitting in his field playing on his *chikkāra*. A Churlin came and sat on his instrument. As he sang he closed his eyes and she danced invisible upon it. He did this for many days until at last he opened his eyes and saw her. Then he 'bound' her with his charms and married her. She lived with him for twenty years and several children were born to them. But on the day of the marriage of their youngest child she rose into the air with a cry and disappeared.

A similar story, this time of a Ganda called Khokoya, comes from Bakrabera; another of a Rawat or Ahir from Chingnar, another of a Marar in Kolur, yet another of a Rawat from Milkulnar. A realistic tale comes from Kumli village:

> One day a Rawat was playing his flute as he sat in the fields grazing cattle. As he played a Raksin came and danced to the music. When the Rawat saw her he 'bound' her by his charms to the ground and drove iron nails into her head, thus destroying her power of evil. He married her and had seven daughters from her. He married them all. One day he brought the youngest daughter to his house. Her mother said to her, 'Clean my hair and catch the lice that are tickling my head'. The girl began to clean the hair; she found the nails that had been driven into the skull and pulled them out. The woman immediately became a Raksin again and disappeared.

It will be noticed that in every case the man who keeps the ghost is not an aboriginal but a member of one of the lower Hindu castes living in an aboriginal village. These people are generally credited by the aboriginals

[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 367ff. Enthoven, whose reports are sometimes to be received with caution, says that in Bombay there are three classes of 'Chudels'. The Poshi Chudel, a woman who has not enjoyed the pleasures of life, fondles children and renders good service to her bereaved husband. The Soshi Chudel was persecuted in life: she dries up the blood of men and revenges herself upon her family. The Toshi Chudel was a woman who loved her husband and still, as a ghost, brings him pleasure.—R. E. Enthoven, *The Folklore of Bombay* (Oxford, 1924), p. 196.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

115 with a particular knack of achieving connexion and intercourse with supernatural beings and, at the great festivals of the State, scores of Ganda and Halba mediums fall into a trance and dance ecstatically before the gods. It will be noticed also that in every case the Churlin dances, that she is 'bound' by charms, cohabits with her captor for many years, bears him seven children and finally disappears on recovering her original garments. It is impossible to say what is at the bottom of this widely distributed tradition.

115 166 In order to avoid the danger of the Ondar Muttai special precautions are taken at the time of her disposal. The Muria, in common with everyone in Bastar, believe that she cannot cross water, so they cremate her body between two streams. The priest makes four iron nails and drives these into each corner of the pyre. Sometimes nails of kassi wood are used. Thorn-bushes are placed above the body. It is considered very important to bury the body immediately. Even if the woman dies at midnight, she must be taken out. They bury the corpse, and only unmarried boys are allowed to handle it. They carry it quickly to the grave, throw the earth upon it and run away. On the day the body is buried, the earth round the grave trembles.

In many villages the Gaita or Waddai goes round the grave throwing mandia grain upon it with the idea that the ghost will be so busy picking up and counting the small grains that she will not have time to do anything else.

The Dorla of Dubatota tie bundles of thorns round the wrists and ankles of the corpse. The Dhurwa of Netanar said that the Gaita drives iron nails through the hands and feet. The Muria of Phunder described how once when a pregnant woman died, the chelik tied her body to the bier with a very strong rope and after lowering it into the grave the Gaita drove four nails into the ground at its four corners. This protection, however, was not successful and so a herd of she-buffaloes was taken to the grave and made to trample upon it. This is another example of the belief that there is some special protection against the Ondar Muttai in the buffalo. The Hill Maria round Chota Dongar said that when a pregnant woman died only women could dispose of the corpse. Women dig the grave on the far side of the village boundary and on the four corners put bits of iron slag and young shoots of the cotton tree. If they put a memorial stone for her, which, in any case, will be a small one, they put a cotton tree pole there also. The Muria sometimes lay an ebony bough over the grave.

115 The Ondar Muttai or Churlin, however, returns to her own country after a certain time. For example, the Muria say that in Jeth (July) at the time of violent wind and rain, the Ondar Muttai goes to her own land, the Rakasgarh, and mingles with her own people. The Hill Maria said the same thing, that after three years she goes to her own country, and I have found a similar tradition among the Bison-horn Maria. What happens to her there is not revealed.

XVIII. Summary

[161] Perhaps the most striking thing in the Muria attitude to death is their emphasis on the continuity of all existence, their belief that death is but an incident in a vital process which continues after the soul has shed its temporary physical integument. But the Muria have not been able to take the further step forward from this into a serene faith and hope in the happiness of the dead, and their desire to help and serve the living. The dead appear rather as dissatisfied, mischievous and wayward, deeply interested in human life but anxious to interfere, to display their power, almost to show off, rather than to assist mankind.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947. AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The Departed and the ancestors are a sort of perpetual old guard keeping a sharp watch upon their descendants. They are a strictly orthodox and conservative body ever ready to take offence, always on their dignity, suspicious, revengeful, unsympathetic. The honour of the tribe is very dear to them and they are determined to see that it is not betrayed by their unworthy heirs. Any breach of tribal law, any change, any heterodoxy in thought or worship is immediately and drastically punished. 775 769

The Departed are, to some extent, associated with the fertility[1] of the land, but I have not anywhere found the belief that the menhirs can improve the crops and the soil. The Departed are remembered at sowing and harvest, at winnowing time and when the crops are brought to the granary. The Pot of the Departed is indeed often kept among the grain, and the soul brought home to live in the granary. But such remembrance is no more than is paid to the Departed at every chance and turn of mortal life. They are equally remembered when a man drinks liquor or marries his daughter or goes to a dance and, as I say, they are remembered not so much to ensure their blessing as to prevent their interference. 769

The aim, therefore, of the Muria cult of the dead is above all things to put the Departed in their place, to keep them in order and to keep them quiet. Menhirs are set up, sacrifices are offered, endless pains are taken to ensure that the dead are not offended and in their spleen bring disaster upon the world. For the dead suffer an unfortunate change of character after they have left the earth. The kindest, friendliest, gentlest nature becomes warped through death, and in a sense it may be true to say that human beings who are still alive should feel a deep pity for their unfortunate companions who have gone before them into what is very truly a land of shadows. Perhaps this is why the Muria are so anxious to bring their dead back into their own families 'where they will find warmth and love' and where they will receive the comfort that they need.

[1] I have frequently noticed that traps are set in the graveyards and near the memorial stones. At Maghada I saw an ingenious peacock-trap within a few yards of the graves. At Raghbera there was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs. At Markabera there was a tiger-trap similarly placed. It would be tempting to suggest that there is some deep connection here but I think it is more likely that the traps are set in the graveyards because animals are attracted by the offerings of grain and roots that are made both to the menhirs and on the graves.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummmation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 primitive opinion is that the soul goes to dwell with the ancestral Dead with whom it is mingled by appropriate ceremonies. These Dead are imagined as being in close touch with their kinsfolk living still on earth and are able to influence their affairs.

But side by side with this belief is a rudimentary theory of transmigration and rebirth, and at every funeral there are special rites to ensure that the soul will be reborn in the same family and will not go elsewhere. This theory is not necessarily inconsistent with the first, though it is not easy to see how once a soul is reborn again on earth it can continue to hold the office and perform the functions of an Ancestor. But the third theory is contradictory of the others. It is borrowed from the graveyard traditions of popular Hinduism. After death the soul is pictured as turning into a dangerous malignant ghost who has to be kept away from the house at all costs and be appeased from time to time with small offerings. We thus have the ridiculous situation that at a funeral some of the rites are directed to bringing the dead man's soul back to the house and settling him there in the Pot of the Departed while others are directed at keeping him at a distance, if possible beyond the village boundary. After death, in fact, the dead man becomes both soul and ghost, and suitable but different arrangements have to be made for each of these aspects of his personality.

769 775 We have seen that in the inner room of every Maria house there is kept an earthen pot specially dedicated to the Dead; in the same room is the Hearth of the Departed. It is round this little shrine that there centres an extensive cult of the ancestral Dead. At the end of the funeral ceremonies the soul of the deceased is mingled with the other Dead through ceremonies connected with this Pot. Into it the woman of the house puts a little flour in honour of the Dead when she grinds, and here she cooks new grain at the harvest festivals. The Dead are very touchy and excitable. If the soul of a murdered man or a suicide or anyone who has died by tiger, snake, cholera, small-pox, drowning or a fall from a tree is sent to keep them company, there will be quarrels and in their annoyance they may cause great trouble to the living. They are specially sensitive to any infidelity on the part of the wife whose special duty it is to tend their shrine. They

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

indicate their will to the living through the Siraha or Waddai 769
and by appearing to them in dreams, and it is considered 775
highly dangerous to ignore their behests.

The necessity for their propitiation has affected every aspect 769
of Maria life. Offerings are made to them at every festival and at every domestic or village ceremony. They are remembered as a matter of routine in every magic formula along with the Earth Mother, Danteshwari and other deities. A few drops of liquor are offered to them every time a Maria drinks. Fire from the hearth of the Pot of the Departed in the Gaita's house is used to light the first fire in the forest clearings and the sacred fires at festivals. The importance of the Ancestors, who remain as a sort of conservative society to safeguard the traditions of the tribe, will appear throughout this book and need not be elaborated now.

VII

Women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried, so are 764
the victims of small-pox and of such other diseases as the 766
Siraha may from time to time direct. All others are cremated, a fact which often makes police investigation difficult and even impossible.

At one time (I am not sure how far the custom survives) 766
the Waddai was buried naked and in an upright posture. The first child of a house, if it dies under five years old, is buried in the same erect posture, with face to the east—as [787]
there is light there, and beneath a mahua tree—for it is fertile of flowers and fruit, a good omen for the family.

In a funeral the chief actors are the Hanagunda or Hanal- 764
gaita, who is the master of ceremonies, and the sister's son or son-in-law of the deceased. The Hanagunda has to tie a thread round the corpse and hang the cow's-tail on the menhir. It is his wife's duty to wash the body, and to take cooked rice and haldi to the pyre. The sister's son has to climb on the roof to beat a drum to summon the relatives: he sits on the uraskal while it is being carried to its place; he makes the appointed offerings before the stone: he kills the sacrificial and festal cow.

After death the dead man is laid with his head to the east in the living room of his house. His sister's son takes a stick

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 Once again the party went to the stream, but the Gaita and the Waddai stayed behind and addressed the saja stick: 'For one month more you will get nothing, don't go to your house, but stay here'. After a bath they all (with the exception of the drummers) went to the deceased's house. The drummers, who are regarded as unclean for the duration of the ceremony, bathed and washed their drums. They applied and placed some rice on the drums. To them they also sacrificed a chicken and offered the blood and some liquor. The drummers were then given rice, which they cooked separately, and a shoulder of the cow. After eating their food they went to their own houses.

789 The conclusion of the story is worth recording. A month later, the Waddai went with the villagers to the boundary of the village carrying a chicken, a pig, an egg, egg-shells, a bamboo bow and arrow, burnt earth from below the hearth, charcoal powder, rice, pulse and haldi. All these things were taken in separate leaf-cups. The Waddai arranged them in seven rows and made a chicken eat the rice, calling on Markami Bando's magic to go away. The chicken ate the rice quickly. But this was not sufficient proof that the black magic had really been driven away, 'because every hungry creature will naturally feed upon what it can get'. The Waddai, therefore, tortured the chicken, first by breaking one leg, and still it ate; he broke another leg, and again it ate; then he broke the wings and the fowl though in pain and agony went on eating. It was now beyond doubt that Bando's magic had been dealt with successfully and the chicken was thrown away, still alive, and not sacrificed. The pig was then sacrificed and the Waddai drew a line on the boundary of the village where the seven rows were arranged, spat there and said, 'Away from this line' and they all departed without looking back. In this ceremony the household members did not take part.

The next day the Waddai sacrificed under a mahua tree near the house a white chicken and broke an egg in honour of the ancestral ghost of Kosa's father. After this he entered the house and sprinkled it with a mixture of milk, saja bark,
769 and dab grass to purify it and sacrificed a black chicken for the Ancestors of the family.

775 Special precautions must, of course, be taken when anyone

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
'Bison Horn Maria

775 dies a violent death. The ghost of a man killed by a tiger may possess the animal and drive it to take vengeance on other members of the community: the victim of snake-bite dwells in the snake's tail and drives it to homicidal fury.[1]

775 789 Women dying in pregnancy and childbirth become very dangerous after death and their ghosts must be laid by special ceremonies which include the driving of nails into the knees and elbows of the corpse and at the four corners of the grave, over which a herd of buffaloes may sometimes be driven.

VIII

764 In the neighbourhood of almost every Maria village will be found a row of menhirs erected in memory and for the appeasement of the Dead. Sometimes these stones are very large; sometimes they are quite small and are expected to grow bigger in course of time. The majority of clans erect an upright pillar which is called uraskal. But a number of them place instead a danyakal, a large flat stone supported on four smaller ones.

In the ceremonies attending the bringing of a menhir, the sister's son again plays a leading part. Led by him a party of three drummers and a man beating a gong and twenty or thirty men go out to the quarry where the stone has already been cut out or to some hill where a suitable rock has been observed. The sister's son touches the stone and addresses the dead man. 'In your name', he says, 'we are bringing this stone; let it be light, let not the burden be too heavy'. They place poles below and above the stone, lashing them together with rope. Then the sister's son with a drum in his hand climbs on to the stone and begins to drum with a new rhythm which goes *gul-gucha, gul-gucha, gul-gucha*. Some twenty men lift up the stone whistling loudly, *soor, soor, whee, whee*, and swing it to and fro. Then they move towards the place where the menhir is to be erected, the drummers dancing and drumming in

[1] Such accidental deaths are far from uncommon. In 1938, in the whole State 53 persons were killed by tigers, 10 by panthers, 4 by bears, 53 by drowning, 102 by snake-bite, 53 by falling from trees (chiefly the tall toddy and sago palms). The great majority of these accidents were to aboriginals and every one involved the relatives in complex and hazardous ceremonies for their protection.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754A third line is put for making women barren, a fourth line for destroying crops and cattle, and so on.

Then the Guru begins to teach the young men in the name of Nandraj, Bodhraj, Kirkod, Markod, Indor and Bandor. He holds a bamboo stick in his hand and as he recites his mantra he beats the stones in turn, beginning with the uraskal and striking each stone from left to right. He must not, however, touch the danyakal with his stick. The disciples chant the mantra after him, and then one by one they stand up and strike the stones with the stick. By December the whole art of black magic is acquired.

At the beginning of the course of study, the disciples subscribe to buy a pig and chicken for their Guru. At the end they also bring offerings and a pot of rice-beer. On the last day a little rice is placed on the danyakal stone and the chicken brought by the disciples is made to eat it. Then it is killed and the boys feast with their Guru.

674 754 One homicide not in our list, which occurred at Dhurli, was connected with such a school of magic. A youth named Telami Dhurwa used to go daily to Dogi Para to learn magic from an older man of the same name. The rule here was that from time to time the students should subscribe for a pig and that each should take their instructor a pot of rice-beer. One day Dhurwa and his fellow-students took the required pig and rice-beer, and after their class was finished they feasted with their Guru. On their way home the boys began to quarrel, and Dhurwa and another boy killed a third boy named Hunga. The people at Dhurli said that Hunga's soul [775] was not mingled with the dead because he was learning black magic, and a memorial stone was not erected for the same reason. Hunga in fact became a very dangerous ghost, a Rau [682] Bhut. The two boys were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment as no intention to murder was proved. When [783] Dhurwa was released he had to offer, in addition to the usual ceremonies, a special and expensive sacrifice to his clan-god.

II

THE SORCERER'S METHODS

754 The Maria sorcerer goes about his business in much the same way as elsewhere in India or the world. He may attack

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 Witches seem to prefer the direct attack. At Mokhpal I was given a vivid description of how a witch performed her hideous rites. 'She goes out of her house at night and finds an ant-hill. She takes off all her clothes and removes even the waist-band. Seven times she goes round the hill. She appears more like a ghost than a human being. Anyone who looks at her goes blind at the sight. She goes to her victim's house, places a bit of grass on his breast and sucks his blood through it. She takes it back to the ant-hill and mixes the blood with milk. Then she can tell by looking at it whether that man will be lucky or unlucky. If the milk is red, he will die, but if it is white wealth will come to his house. If a man dies the witch goes to the grave, revives him and cuts off his head'.

At Tikanpal I was given another account. 'A witch sees a youth and desires him, but she is not content to lie with him as a lover. She must devour his whole body. She goes to him at night and turns his liver over inside his body. After he has been buried, she takes the body out of the grave. She eats the flesh and drinks the blood and puts the bones back into the grave. Sometimes when she robs a man of his blood, she puts it in a bit of broken pot and cooks it on a fire which must be made of a single piece of wood'.

Thirdly, and most sinister, a sorcerer is able to employ the services of a ghost or an evil spirit. Here the danger to the intended victim is, of course, twofold, for there is not only the malice of the magician but also the power of a supernatural
● [775] being who has become his ally. It is notable that the ghosts of executed murderers are specially liable to be so used by the magicians.

Witches also have the power of affecting the domestic life of their victims. At Samgiri the Maria described how the witch could destroy a man's seed and, even though he were not impotent, he would never be able to have a child. This happened at Kuchepal where a man was in love with a widow who was a witch. After a time he left her, and in revenge she destroyed his seed. When after a long time he found

The Kunbin stripped herself and her patient and then overwhelmed with frenzy thrust a burning log into her unfortunate victim's belly and killed her. She removed all the internal organs of the thorax and abdomen and offered them to Nagoba, claiming that in this way the hostile spirits had been destroyed.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 he murdered. The stone next to his is for Marvi Buta who was also sentenced for this murder and also died in jail. But there was nothing at all in honour of the murdered man.

764 532 The erection of a carved memorial pillar is probably the greatest honour that the Maria can pay to the dead. It is the equivalent of being buried in Westminster Abbey. Masa's pillar is a very fine one. It shows him as a Siraha sitting on a swing: a streamer of untidy hair blows out from his head. Another carving shows him mounted on an elephant. Another portrays him riding on a horse attended by his wives. All round him are the symbols of his life; deer and tigers represent his love of the chase; axes, swords and knives symbolize his valour and enterprise; two men carry a pot of rice-beer in memory of his drinking prowess.

775 789 The business of keeping the ghost of the murderer or his victim quiet naturally greatly exercises the minds of the village medicine-men and priests. There is danger either that the ghost will cause trouble among the other ghosts of the family, and thus by annoying the ancestors may bring trouble upon the living: or it may inspire another member of the family also to commit a murder; or it may return and simply make itself troublesome. At Phulpar, after Pandu had been hanged and the usual ceremonies performed, the village priest sacrificed a hen near the pyre saying, 'Now we make your home here: live here with your ancestors peacefully'. If they fail to do this, they said, they think someone else in the house will also commit a murder. Then they erected a saja pole and after sacrificing a cow to appease the ghost of the dead man, each relative in turn picked up the cow's tail, saluted it and hung it on the pole. The Waddai went to a corner of the room where the Pot of the Departed was kept, sprinkled liquor there and addressed the ghost: 'Live now with your sons. Do not go to your daughters. Care for the people of your house. See that your children prosper'.

Often, after the ceremony of burning the clothes and ornaments, a man sits in the house of the deceased and the ghost comes upon him. He is led out to the pyre, and there he buries a *bhut kukri*, a ghost hen, to ensure that the ghost will not come to the house and trouble its relatives.

The ghost of the murderer or his victim becomes a Mirchuk.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Sometimes it is supposed that this Mirchuk possesses a man and makes him commit a murder. At Gudra, when Kawachi Linga returned from jail after serving a homicide sentence, a black chicken was sacrificed to the Mirchuk of his victim. But the chicken refused to eat the rice that is always offered to test it before it is killed, and the people thought that this meant that Linga would be possessed by the spirit of his first victim and thus be driven to commit another murder. To avert this danger they sacrificed a pig and a cow, and only then readmitted him to their society.

The Mirchuk, whatever its origin may be, may be employed by a witch as her familiar and servant. She gets control over it and uses it to assist her in her wicked designs.

The Mirchuk is very quarrelsome, and the spirit of a man who has been hanged must not be mingled with the other ancestors in the Room of the Departed, for it is sure to cause trouble. So the Mirchuk is generally located outside the village under a large stone, in an ant-hill or in a mahua tree. At Dhurli we were told that, when Telami Hunga was murdered, his ghost was kept apart, for he was a student of magic and such persons turn into Rao Bhut. For such no uraskal should be erected, nor should the ghost be mingled with the other Departed.

Indeed it is often held that the ghosts of the slain and of executed criminals should not be 'mingled with the Departed' and nothing should be put for them in the sacred Pot in the ordinary way.[1] When the boy Ando was murdered by his uncle Irma, this precaution was taken. Ando's ghost still roams the village, an axe in its hands, seeking vengeance. Irma's ghost is said to have possessed itself of the rope with which he was hanged and people were afraid it might use it to hang the other Departed of his clan or to steal their cows.

It is very dangerous for a murderer to see the ghost of his victim while he is in jail, perhaps because it is impossible there to perform the proper ceremonies of protection. Pandu

[1] Mateer reported that in Travancore the ghosts of executed murderers were regarded as specially dangerous and were believed to haunt the place of execution. To prevent this the executioner used to cut off the criminal's heels with a sword or hamstring him as he was thrown off. S. Mateer *The Land of Charity* (London 1871), pp. 203 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 of Chichari described how this happened to three of his
753 fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

768 In several places I found that a house or a village had been
146 moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

764 The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the
762 same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death,
[787] and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

762 In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pide committed
766 suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

for this is your home'. When the chicken had pecked at the rice, he twisted its neck and threw it on the still-burning pyre. A pig and a cow were then sacrificed and an uraskal erected the same day. After returning to the house they made a rough drawing with flour of the garden and of the house with its various rooms on the floor. On this pattern they again offered rice to a hen saying, 'We have now made a house for you; don't stay outside any longer, but remain here'.

The ghost of the suicide, like that of a murderer, becomes a Mirchuk and lives in an ant-hill. If the Mirchuk gets angry, it may possess a member of the family, and he too may commit suicide unless the proper offerings are not made at once. The suicide's ghost may also come to the village and cause trouble in a variety of ways. As we have seen elsewhere, the Mirchuk is often used as a familiar by witches. It is most important that the soul of a suicide should not be 'mingled with the Dead'. In some villages they say that this prohibition is absolute. In Dugeli, they said that they should wait a year. A menhir should not be erected. A remarkable double suicide at Khutepal illustrates the danger of ignoring these rules. Bandi, the headman of this village, had two wives. One day they quarrelled, and the elder wife hanged herself in a rage. Her funeral ceremony was performed as though the death had been a natural one. Her soul was mingled with the Dead, and an uraskal memorial pillar was erected for her in the place used by other members of the clan. It is believed that, when this is done, the suicide's ghost quarrels with the other ghosts of the clan and annoys them. In this case the angry Dead so troubled the wife of Bandi's younger son, who was living in the same house, that she too committed suicide after a quarrel with her mother-in-law. This second suicide was regarded by the villagers as the immediate result of having erected a memorial pillar and mingled the soul of the older woman with the ancestral Dead. When the girl's ceremonies were performed, therefore, they carefully burnt her clothes in a place away from the usual crematorium and, although they gave her an uraskal, they did not sacrifice a cow or hang its tail in the usual manner round the stone.

At Dualkarka, however, they said that an uraskal should

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

105 The remaining 'Murias' are those of the Paralkot-Kalpatti, Bandadesh, Kirangal, Kalpatti, Surebahi, Bhomra, Antagarh and Amabera *parganas* and the larger part of the Kolar *pargana* of Antagarh tahsil, and of all Kondagaon tahsil except the Mardapal *pargana* and that portion between Kondagaon and the Jagdalpur border already mentioned as peopled by Koitor of the Jagdalpur Muria type. All these Murias have traditions of migration into Bastar from the north, from the ancient kingdom of Dhamda, on the downfall of which their god Bhera Pen (Hinduized, Budha Deo) led them in safety from the modern Raipur district into Bastar; the latter story is told in Kondagaon tahsil, but I have not heard it in Antagarh, though Antagarh certainly knows Bhera Pen, the ordinary Great God[1] of the Gonds throughout the British districts of the Central Provinces. In the Amabera *pargana* alone in Bastar is recorded the knowledge of the great Lingo epic of the Gond race, from the Bastar version of which certain extracts were printed by Russell and Hiralal (Vol. III, pp. 49, 61-2). It is likely that north Kondagaon, Amabera, and north Antagarh represent separate streams of migration, and that north Antagarh contains a larger strain of the previous inhabitants, very likely the same stock as that now living in the Abujhmar hills. The Koitor inhabitants of the Kanker State that borders Antagarh and Kondagaon tahsils on the north, though called Gonds in the 1931 census report, are of exactly the same kind, intermarrying still with their Bastar Muria neighbours, and often called Murias by Hindu residents of Kanker; thus it is observed in para. 76 of the *Chhattisgarh Feudatory States Gazetteer*:—

Gotul Murias, or Murias of north Kondagaon and Antagarh

> 'The aboriginal population live in much the same style and have much the same customs as the aborigines of the adjoining State of Bastar, but it is said that they are gradually coming into line with their Hindu neighbours and abandoning their old beliefs. At present, however, in the more remote villages the Gonds adhere to the worship of godlings and to their old social customs. The girls and boys have their separate sleeping barracks outside the village, and meet near them nightly to play and dance and sing.'

Nearly all of the 80,003 Gonds returned from Kanker State at the 1931 census must be of the same stock as the Murias of north Bastar.

If any particular feature is to be singled out as the distinguishing mark of this 'Muria' group of the Koitor of north Bastar and Kanker, it must be their *gotul* system for the training of the young. The *gotul* is much the same as the Bachelors' House found in

[1] Even in British districts I believe the *Bhera Pen* to be merely the 3-, 4-, 5-, 6- or 7-fold god of the clan as distinct from the 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 *Chuddur Pens* or small gods kept by each family.

[776]

[See cat. 116, p. 418. - Awa(75)]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

582 hand some Hill Marias say that there is no theoretic obstacle to intermarriage, but that actually 'it isn't done', though they occasionally take part in each other's festivals. The Bison-horn 177 style of dancing with long *dol* drums is gradually spreading among 535 the lower villages just north of the Indrawati. Hudala Karka, for example, some eight miles from Barsur and on the northern bank of the river, now dances entirely in Bison-horn style, and claims to be a Bison-horn village, the claim being admitted by the Bison-horn Maria *pargana* headman in theory, and in practice by intermarriage with undoubted Bison-horn villages: but in several houses I found old Hill Maria dancing shields (*moghi*) and buttock-bells, and the older men admitted that when they were young they 177 danced in the Hill Maria style. Another sign of this is that Hurra Gunda, the log-god of the Tamo clan at Tumirgunda, near Hudala ●[176] Karka, is also the log-god of the Atami clan of Hudala Karka and of two other Atami villages south of the Indrawati. The clan-priest of the god is a Tamo, and the Tamo villages of Tumirgunda and Padmeta still dance in Hill Maria style. In a few years, therefore, the Bison-horn Marias will have adopted the valley villages north of the Indrawati; the *pargana* headman already virtually claims them as such, since they are under his direct jurisdiction and not that of the Hill Maria *chalki* or assistant appointed to help him manage the eight Hill Maria villages of his *pargana*. In speech, too, [197] they are approximating more and more to the Bison-horn Marias, as there is a marked absence of the harsh guttural sounds so characteristic of the Hill Maria language, and they use the Bison-horn technical social and religious terms.

101 Westward along the valley, as observed above, Bison-horn Maria influence gets less. For a few miles, roughly from Nelasnar 177 to Jegur on the Matawara-Kutru road, and in the village of Ketulnar beyond Jegur, the people are now known as Murias but are really Hill Maria stock, and still dance in Hill Maria style. Ketulnar still intermarries with the hill villages of the Kutru Mar *pargana*. The villagers of Bheriabhum, on the south bank opposite their former village of Pali, five or six miles north of Bhairamgarh, are of the Hill Farsal clan, and cannot be distinguished from Farsalor of the hills. In the hill villages above the valley I verified occasional marriages with girls from the valley villages and vice versa.

101 The tract west and south-west of Kutru, marked by the letter L on the ethnographic map, contains a very scanty population, which appears to be Hill Maria in origin, much modified by contact with the Telugu-influenced Dorla Koitor from the south, who are shown by the letter K. These mixed elements also were returned

2 [See cat. 116, p. 418. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

and many a marriage arises from the first meeting of lad and girl in these dances.

The land, as has been seen, is the land of the clan-god (if not even, in some sense, the clan-god himself). It is natural, therefore, that before any of these festivals are held in the individual villages of the clan the main ceremony for the whole clan should take place before the clan-god, either in or near the parish where his permanent hut-temple is situated. When the new grain of the crop concerned has been garnered, the *kasyeq-gaita* of each village sends word to the *pen-waddai* or clan-priest. The clan-priest consults the clan-god personally if himself a medium, or else through a medium, and announces a date for the celebration before the clan-god. On the night before leaving their village to attend the celebration, the *kasyeq-gaita* and all the men who are to go with him next day observe sexual continence, and sleep in the dormitory. The *kasyeq-gaita* is fed that night on fish, at the expense of the village, in some clan-areas. In a few villages a separate *bhum-gaita* exists, whose sole function seems to be to lead the villagers in visits of this kind to the clan-god. Before dawn, each wife grinds about 4 lb. of the new grain for her husband to take to the clan-festival. No women may attend the new-eating ceremonies. Besides supplies of new grain, the *kasyeq-gaita* and men take on behalf of the whole village a cock or two (there is no rule as to the colour of the victim), and perhaps, when the village is large or prosperous, a young boar (*not* a gelded pig) or a barren sow.

The deputations from the various villages assemble at the *pen-rawar* or shrine of the clan-god. The god, which in form is always a framework of logs criss-crossed with bamboos and bedecked with peacock feathers, spirals of quills, brass bells and other simple finery, is then taken out of his hut by four men of the clan-priest's family or village, and borne to the traditional place of sacrifice, which may be near the shrine or even outside the main village of the clan, three or four miles from the shrine. There they set the god down on stones under a *saja* tree, and the four bearers have a ceremonial wash. Sometimes the clan-priest again, either himself if a medium, or through mediums, consults the wishes of the god, who always permits the festival to continue, but generally suggests that they should first offer worship to the Village Mother of the village where the assembly has gathered. All adjourn to her shrine, and there the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village places a grain or two of the new crop on the table-stone or cleft stick representing the Mother, cuts the throat of a small chicken, sprinkles its blood on the Mother, and throws it down, still alive, on the ground. All watch the chicken eagerly; if after a convulsive leap or two it falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter X

The Earth, the Clan-God and the Village Mother

771 In the scanty literature dealing with Bastar, few things have received briefer attention than the religion of the Marias. Russell and Hiralal try in twenty-one pages (III, 97-118) to summarize the religion, magico-religious ideas and festivals of all the Gonds of the Central Provinces; their account, therefore, necessarily must be vague about the Marias, and on Bastar generally is in many respects misinformed; there is a tendency to prefer the picturesque to the unvarnished facts, as in the accounts of the alleged human sacrifices at Dantewara and of *Doctor Deo*. I have already stated that there has never been the slightest proof that the former ever took place, and pointed out that, if they did, they were semi-State Hindu ceremonies under the aegis of the Raja and the hereditary Rajput high-priest of his tutelary goddess Danteshwari. *Doctor Deo* is represented as a principal god of 'north Bastar'; actually the Mohammedan sub-assistant surgeon 'deified' as *Doctor Deo* died of cholera on the Keskal pass as he was returning to Raipur from Bastar, and his spirit has been attached by the surrounding Murias as a peon or servant to the shrine of Bhangaram at the head of the pass, where from generations past the final scene of disease-riddance or *bohorani* ceremonies among the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur and Kondagaon tahsils and the adjacent Bastar Irredenta tracts of Jeypore had taken place; here the scapegoat from Jagdalpur is at last driven forth into the wilderness, and hundreds of litters or model *rath* chariots have been deposited in front of Bhangaram with scape-doves and the sweepings of houses visited by epidemics. *Doctor Deo's* cult is a later and very minor accretion of this ancient cult.

General: previous writers

776 618 Glasfurd in his Report correctly noted that, like the Jhoria and other surrounding Murias, the Marias of the Abujhmar hills had in several villages Log-gods which they called *pen* (plural, *penk*); but he did not realize that there was one of these *penk* for each clan. This was pointed out on page 42 of the *Gazetteer*, though the clans are spoken of there as 'tribes' or by the Hindu term *gotra*; the suggestion there made that the system of each clan in its own area worshipping its own *pen* was even then breaking down, was at least premature, considering that it is still in full force in the Antagarh

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

77h
618

parts of the Abujhmar hills, if, as will be seen, it is weaker on the Kutru side and has been modified among the Bison-horn Marias.

Even among the Gonds of the British districts of the Central Provinces bordering on the Nagpur District, the special godlings such as Pharsi Pen, Matiya, Ghangra, Chawar and Palo (see Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 99) seem to be only incidental and later additions to their religion. There the clans are divided into groups or phratries according to the number of Little Gods or Chuddur Penk kept as domestic godlings in a pot inside the house of the head of the family; and for each clan there is, or was, somewhere in the Province, a Holy Circle or *Pen-kara* beneath a sacred *saja* tree, in the fork of which would be tied a grass bundle containing for the whole clan a set of godlings of the same number as the Chuddur Penk in the houses of members of the clan; this set is in reality the Big-God or Bhera Pen (a name commonly Hinduized as Bura Deo or even Mahadeo) of the clan. Just as the Chuddur Penk pot in the house not infrequently contains, besides the actual Chuddur Penk, a vermillioned shell or pebble or knot of wood representing the 'Chuddur (small) Mahadeo' or Narayan Deo or some other godling from whom the family may believe itself to have received some past help, so too the grass bundle at the Holy Circle may contain representations of Bara (big) Mahadeo, Narayan Deo, Pharsi Pen, Matiya, Ghangra, Palo, etc. But it is hopeless to expect the householder or the *Pen-gadwa* custodian of the Holy Circle to name each of the Chuddur Penk or their Bhera Pen counterparts; they have no individual names, but collectively are the clan-god. Apart from these Chuddur Penk *penates*, many houses in British districts have, in a recess in the wall or in the corner of the room, corresponding to the corner of the *lonu* where the Maria keeps the Pot of the Departed, a row of little plaster mounds representing the souls of the Departed, unless these have been taken to the *Pen-gadwa* priest at the Holy Circle and there re-united by him in the *gadwa* marriage ceremony to the clan.

Gond religion outside Bastar; the Chuddur Penk

Lucie-Smith and others record of the Marias of the Chanda District that they also have these Chuddur Penk, with phratries or groups of clans differentiated according to the number of the Penk. When, finding definitely no trace of them among the Hill or Bison-horn Marias of Bastar, I suggested to Dr. Wood, the present Bishop of Nagpur, who worked as a missionary for years in Chanda, that the information about the Chanda Marias was wrong, he very kindly had further enquiries made by the Rev. S. G. Patwardhan, an Indian Christian missionary with an intimate knowledge of

The Chuddur Penk not known in Bastar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chanda Gonds, who reported definitely that in the Chanda Maria villages of Bidri, Yemla, Burgi, Uddera and Kandodi the Marias had one three-god, six four-god, eight five-god, eight six-god and eight seven-god clans. The difficulty is, of course, that the word 'Maria', as we have seen, is not a Gondi word and may cover more than one ethnic group, as in Bastar; there certainly are differences between the plains and Hill Marias of Chanda, and the point needs to be cleared by verification in definite hill villages in the Chanda portion of the Abujhmar hills. My enquiries from some of these villagers who visited my camps in Bastar along with Bastar relatives never produced any Chanda Maria who admitted belonging to a god-group or having Chuddur Penk in his house. Admittedly even in Nagpur District, Gonds are reluctant to show their Chuddur Penk, and Koitor everywhere have to be handled delicately before they will talk of the other domestic cult, that of the Departed. Nevertheless, I have known many Marias intimately, and have had them talking freely on these questions; and I have seen the contents of every pot, gourd, packet or other receptacle in many a Hill and Bison-horn Maria house: but I never found any domestic godling, and they have always denied having them, or god-groups founded on them. So likewise did adjacent Jhoria and Gotal Murias, though some of them knew of Gonds who had immigrated into Bastar from the Central Provinces with domestic godlings and god-groups. The only Bastar Gonds of whom it has ever been reported that they have domestic gods in addition to the clan-god are the 'Telugu Gonds' towards Konta (by which is probably meant the Dorla), stated on page 42 of the *Gazetteer* to have for each family a separate god represented by a few pieces of *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) wood; but the Dorla villages that I visited near Jaggergonda had no such family gods.

It may, therefore, be taken as certain that neither Hill nor Bison-horn Marias of Bastar have the cult of the Chuddur Penk, and that their clan-groups are not founded on them. If they are to be fitted into the traditional scheme of god-groups by persons who dislike exceptions to a rule apparently so universal among other Gonds, they must come in as the missing one-god group!

Much has been said in the preceding chapters, particularly the chapter on agriculture, on the cults of Bhum (the earth), the Clan-god and the Village Mother. In some sense, all three are the same, all Marias, Hill and Bison-horn, being the children of Bhum. They will tell you sometimes that the Pen clan-god and the Village Mother are also Bhum; and in some places the cairn or table-stone below the sacred *soja* tree does duty

General nature of Bastar Maria cult of Earth, Clan-god and Village Mother

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the clan; often the same man is both religious headman and secular headman (*gaita*, *pelja*), and these functions were probably always combined before the growing interference of the State with village life and the excessive demands for forced labour and supplies began to make the secular headmanship a burden to be avoided by the true leader of the village and put on to the village simpleton.

The Village Mother is always dealt with in Hill and Bison-horn villages through the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* respectively; but she neither enters into the body of a medium nor can be consulted through one like the clan-god. Though it be through her that the *kasyeq-gaita's* eggs are addled or other omens of ill or indications that the village should shift are sent, yet to make plain her will the medium of the clan-god, that is the clan-priest (the *waddai* or *modul-waddai*), is sent for, and through his mouth the clan-god expounds the will of the Unseen Powers. It is tempting to regard her as the personification of the female and the clan-god as that of the male element in the reproductive powers of the Earth or Bhum; needless to say, there are no Maria theologians to worry themselves over such distinctions, and it is not a clear-cut one, since some clans have a clan-goddess, not a god; e.g. Oghal Muttai, goddess of the Dhurwa clan, and Gumtuli, goddess of the Padali clan of Padalibhum at Adnar. This conception, nevertheless, does to a considerable extent clarify the fundamental relation between the Earth, the clan-god and the Village Mother. The other point to be remembered is that the clan-god is the Earth in its dealings with the clan, and the Mother the Earth in its dealings with the village. No woman or girl may take part in the festivals, public sacrificial meals, worship and intercession of either clan-god or Village Mother.

The Earth, then, as clan-god, is the god of nourishment and reproduction, and of life itself; the Marias are his children, fed by him. For them to raise their sustenance he divided up the land among the clans, and the clan-area among the villages, and in each clan and village he appointed priests or headmen who alone might communicate with him, and to whose first ancestor he revealed the clan and village boundaries, which knowledge has been handed down from father to son. The Maria leaves his *penda* slope for another after two or three years because the god is suffering from having too much nourishment extracted from that slope, but he will return to it when the god has recovered from his exhaustion. Children are but one of the god's crops.

The Clan-god

In form, we have seen, the clan-god of Marias of both kinds and of Murias, is a framework of three parallel *saja* logs held together by cross-pieces of bamboo or *saja*, to which they are lashed by cords of *siari* creeper or twisted

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

thongs of the outer rind of bamboos. Where *saja* trees are scarce, he may be made entirely of bamboos, but will be lodged in a hut under a *saja* tree. The junctions of the logs and the cross-pieces are adorned with bunches of peacock and jungle-cock feathers, and the ends of the logs with rupees or spirals of peacock quill or bands of brass and silver. At the first-fruits ceremonies his shed is adorned with plaited fringes of the stalks and ears of the new grains, or bunches of bean and pulse pods; and he is brought forth to have the blood of the sacrificed victims sprinkled upon him.

Halbas, Telangas and Murias have precisely similar gods; if the logs composing them are more elaborately adorned and sometimes carved. Their generic name in Bastar is Anga Deo or Pat Deo, 'Log-God'. The central log is the essential part, for the other two logs are added primarily to enable the god to be borne on the shoulders of four men when he goes forth to a festival or a witch hunt. The Jhorin log-god at Narainpur had a special nose for witches, and the late Raja Bhairam Deo, great-grandfather of the present Maharaja, installed a copy of it in the palace at Jagdalpur; for witch hunts the god used to be brought in from Narainpur while the palace copy was sent to Narainpur during his absence. I found that the palace copy was in 1927 being used generally without reference to the Narainpur prototype for detecting witchcraft around Jagdalpur, a fee of Rs. 5 being paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the Temple Court of Wards whenever surrounding Murias requisitioned its services.

As has been observed on page 51, there is a tradition among the Hill Marias (of Chhota Dongar, Mangnar and Barsur Mar *parganas*) that the great log-god Pat Raja of the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana* with the help of his wife's brother, Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan of the Bison-horn village of Ghotpal, near Barsur, divided up both Hill and Bison-horn Marias into clans, in the old days when there was regular intermarriage between the Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The legend does not appear to be known to the latter, who have only vague traditions of having at some remote date descended to their present lands from the Abujhmar hills, where occasionally they say that their clan-god still resides.

It is certain that most of the Hill Maria clan-gods have relationship claimed for them with Pat Raja of Mohnar. The Usendi clan of Orcha has his younger brother Wikir Hunga at Japgunda, the Deda clan of Kurmer have another younger brother, Nule Harma, the Dhurwa clan of Gomagal have his sister Oghal Mutta'i, the Hill Maria Marvi clan of Toqtoli in Mangnar *pargana* have his sister's son Mara-Magh, while the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

pargana not only acquired a yet younger brother of Pat Raja, Verma Mo'itto Pen, as their clan-god, but also a family of Pat Raja's clan, the Jaterom,[1] as hereditary clan-priests because, the Jaterom being *ahomame*[2] (wife-clan) to the Gumelor, the new god was related to them as *mama* or maternal uncle and had to have a priest or *waddai* of his own clan or one *dadabhai*[3] (brother-clan) to it. They say in fact that all clan-gods are mutually related, if they are sometimes very hazy as to the actual relationship; and they add that the gods, being Koitor, must have a full set of brother-clans and wife-clans like any other Koitor. Memories are, however, so poor that it is often difficult to ascertain the name of a man's dead father and quite impossible to ascertain the name of his grandfather and the clan and village of his grandmother, if, indeed, even of his mother; and it would be altogether out of the question to disentangle the descents and relationships of the clans by deduction from the traditional kinship of the clan-gods to Pat Raja and each other.

That old clans split up into new clans is clear, especially among the Hill Marias, from the fact that several of the larger clans have attached to them smaller clans which have no separate clan-god of their own, but attend the celebrations of the god of the large and presumably parent clan; certain other clans, though they have new clan-gods of their own, acknowledge their origin from another clan by taking the permission of the god of that clan before holding their own clan festivals. The way in which these clans split up is a matter belonging rather to the chapter in Part V, where the clan and phratry organization is dealt with as a matter of social organization, than to this chapter on religion. Here the point is that new clans are breaking off, and that their separation from the parent clan is signalized by the birth of a son or daughter (a son in the cases that I have seen) to the god of the parent clan. Thus Tumirgunda, in the plains between Handawada, still a true Hill Maria village, and the river Indrawati, near Barsur, belongs to the Tamo clan, and is the seat of their god Hurra Gunda Mo'itto[3] Pen. The *modul-waddai* of this clan-god was in 1930 still the *modul-waddai* of neighbouring villages of the Atami clan; and of the Tamo and Atami villages in his 'see' some were, like Tumirgunda itself, still mainly Hill Maria in culture, dancing in Hill Maria style, and some had changed to Bison-horn culture and dancing, and were recognized as Bison-horn

[1] Jāterom is the plural of Jāte; the clan is distinct from the Jāti, plural Jātiār, and the Jāti clan of Jātwara *pargana*.

[2] Clans are *ahomame* to clans with which they may intermarry, but *dadabhai* to all others.

[3] '*Mo'itto*' ('old man') or '*mutta'e*' ('old woman') is always added to the clan-god's name.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776
618

villages by the headman of the Bison-horn Pharaspal *pargana*. The god had long ago produced a son worshipped as clan-god in the Atami village of Chudala Karka, now a Bison-horn village. But the son's dependence on the parent was shown by the practice of the Tumirgunda clan-priest every third year making a new network of peacock's quills for encasing the front cross-piece of the Chudala Karka son. The *modul-waddai* shaves his beard only when he has to start to make a new quill network, and lets it grow after that till it has again to be replaced three years later. Chudala Karka pays Tumirgunda for this network a pig, a *khandi* of 164 lb. of husked rice and a pot of *mahua* spirit. In the *pen-rawar* hut of the god at Tumirgunda was yet another son, already named Hunga Gunda Mo'itto Pen, who was being made for another Atami village in the 'see', and was to be taken to it as soon as he was a year old; he then consisted only of one bamboo pole tipped with a silver cone and adorned with bunches of peacock feathers. Here perhaps the need for separation was arising because the Atami villages were adopting or had adopted Bison-horn ways, while the village for which the new god was being 'born' was some way from Chudala Karka, and effectively separated from it by the Indrawati river. So at Kurmer at the end of 1929 Nule Harma, god of the Deda clan, was producing a 'son' for some distant villages of the clan; and we have already seen how the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar *pargana* acquired from the Jaterom of Mohnar not only a younger brother of their god, but a Jate family to be his clan-priest.

The *Gazetteer* has been quoted as suggesting that the system of separate areas and separate gods for each clan was breaking down. Among the Hill Marias the remark is justified to the following extent only. Many of the old villages of the Bhairamgarh Mar and Kutru Mar *parganas* of the Kutru zamindari have disappeared, including indeed the two which Glasfurd gave as the seats of the chief Hill Maria clan-gods of his time. Many clans have disappeared or are reduced to one or two households. There are various causes; maladministration leading to exodus to the tahsils of the plains or the Chanda district, the great 1918 influenza epidemic, and the ravages of yaws. The total disappearance of clans is evidenced by the presence in villages now settled by other clans of *kotokal* rows of menhirs erected for the Departed of forgotten clans, quite distinct from those erected by the present clan, which can give no information at all about its predecessors. Clans greatly diminished in numbers soon find that they cannot economically manage to keep even one village going on their traditional clan-area, much less keep effective control and user of all the alternative *penda* slopes of the area. The dregs, therefore, of three or four clans may settle

[764]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

together in a village in the area of the largest dreg, and abandon claim to the other clan-areas; for example, Aipur in Kutru Mar had in 1931, one Hoyami, one Telam, one Micha and two Bardi clan houses, while Malahanar had four Hoyami, two Pungati and one Diwa. Both were originally Hoyami clan villages; the clan has also still the villages of Komu and Kalhaza in Bhairamgarh Mar, but has since the census deserted Malahanar, as the headman and all but one Hoyami householder died suddenly, and the remaining Hoyami shifted to Kalhaza. In adjacent parts of the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* there are big clans like the Usendi and the Jugho already needing fresh lands, and the obvious fields for expansion are the empty lands of dwindling or extinct clans in Kutru Mar and Bhairamgarh Mar. Often big clans have just thrown off parties of squatters who have founded fresh villages in such places; the large Gume clan of Barsur Mar has, for example, long occupied Dunga, Goti and Kunjewada in Bhairamgarh Mar. Where there is still a remnant of a clan strong enough to raise some opposition to squatters from other clans coming in to their areas, but not to retain effective cultivating occupation, the *kasyeq-gaita* of the chief village (the clan being always too small to have retained an area big enough to become a *pargana*, and seldom having even a clan-god in its days of adversity) has sold some of the clan land for a few rupees to another clan; thus comparatively recently the Ark clan, now of Korowaya village only, sold the lands of their deserted village of Itulnar for Rs. 30 to the overflowing Jugho clan of the adjacent Chhota Dongar Mar village of Adeq and other large villages. When the sale took place, the *kasyeq-gaita* of the Arkalur showed the *kasyeq-gaita* of the Jughalor the traditional village sites, and the cairns marking former shrines of the Village Mother, and extracted a sworn promise of reverence for her. The Arkalur themselves could not have long been in occupation, as they said that the *kotokal* menhirs at Itulnar had not been erected by them but by some other forgotten clan which had died out before their occupation of the village.

Not only have hardly any of these dying clans clan-gods and clan-priests, but also the colonizers, having left their hereditary clan-area, consider themselves outside their clan-god's jurisdiction, and 'under no need' therefore to attend his Koqsar or to get his permission to hold festivals before the Village Mothers of their new villages. So the Gumelor of Dunga, Goti and Kunjewada are seen no more at the Gume Koqsar of Verma Mo'itto Pen at To'inar in Barsur Mar, and the Jughalor settlers of Itulnar do not join their fellow Jughalor of Adeq and other villages of Chhota Dongar Mar at the Koqsar of the Usendi and allied clans' god Wikir Hunga at

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

618 Orcha. Ultimately the new colonies may spread, and they may feel the need of clan-gods and petition the clan-priests of the areas 776 from which they migrated to give them a son of the old clan-god; but meanwhile the majority of them get on quite well without him and his clan-gatherings, and find the Village Mother and village ceremonies quite enough for their needs. If in time they ask for a clan-god of their own, they are likely to get some additional name to distinguish them from the main section of their clan, and ultimately all mention of the original clan name will be omitted.

It was remarked on page 194 that for each clan of the Gonds of the British India districts bordering on Nagpur there is or was a *Pen-kara* or Holy Circle under a *saja* tree somewhere in the province. If he has not become detribalized, every Gond should visit this once a year with offerings, or at least should pay sacrificial fines there on the birth of a child, on being released from handcuffs, on readmission to the community after some social lapse, and so on; and there ultimately his soul should be brought after death, to be united to the clan Departed. The villages are there no longer the *bhum* of particular clans, and many clans and god-groups may be represented in one village. Members of the clans are scattered far and wide over the province, and in one Nagpur Gond village you may find representatives of clans with the *Pen-kara* of their gods at places so far apart as Berar, Chhindwara, Lanji or Chanda. Many have settled far from their *Pen-kara* for so many generations that the fatigue of the long journey has been avoided more and more by each new generation till in the end it has been given up, and many of the present time cannot even say where it is.

Special features of the Clan-god among the Bison-horn Marias

776 To this kind of attitude some of the Bison-horn Marias are 618 beginning to come. There are many clan-areas[1] in Bijapur and 615 Dantewara tahsils and in Kutru zamindari on both sides of the river Indrawati which, as indicated in the ethnic map on page 40, are peopled by clans once purely Hill Maria in language and culture, but now modified in both by contact either with Bison-horn Maria

[1] Examples are Chikatraj Pen of Kutru, the god of the Gota clan of Kutru, Borje, Bhirabhatti, Pillur, Sappimarka, Kakler, Gattapalli, Mendri, Udru villages; Kuwo-Gundo Pen, god of the Majje and Wadde clans of Bodametta, Kodepalli, Majje-Mendri, Kungler, Madhepar, Dudepalli, and Rengawaya in Kutru zamindari and of Kounde (where the god is kept and the clan-priest lives) and other villages in Chanda District; Wachami Mo'itto Pen, of Markanar in Kutru zamindari, god of the Wachami clan of Markanar, Irkapal, Karkelli, Kumbarmeta and Bodeli in Kutru Zamindari and some adjacent Wachami clan villages in Ahiri zamindari; Wange Muri Pen, of Dhanora in Bijapur tahsil, god of the Kuriyami clan of several villages around Dhanora and Thoinar and Pharsegarh sub-zamindaris of Kutru.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

or with Dorla neighbours. The clearest sign these retain of their Hill Maria origin is the retention of separate clan-areas, clan-gods and *modul-waddai* clan-priests for each large clan (*pari* or *hatta*) or pair or trio of closely related clans, as distinct from the Bison-horn Maria institution of one *pen* or clan-god for each of the five groups of clans or phratries (*tarr* or *kutmara*) and every clan (*hatta*) included in it, without any fixed phratry-area. On the other hand, each village in the true Bison-horn tracts is said to be the *bhum* of the clan (*hatta*) of the *perma* who originally founded it, and, as it is the *bhum* of his clan, he alone can officiate for the village at the ceremonies and sacrifices before the Village Mother, the Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo, Bhu-deo and Bhu-Devi, and the other forms under which the Earth is worshipped at the different agricultural ceremonies.

The Bison-horn country is extensive and, compared to the Hill Maria country, well populated. The villages forming the *bhum* of even individual *hatta* clans may be miles apart, while a village that is the *bhum* of a clan in phratry A may be surrounded by villages that are the *bhum* of clans in phratries B, C, D and E for miles before there is another village of a clan of phratry A. Further, though a village may be the *bhum* of the *perma's* clan, he may easily have only a few other householders of his clan in the village, but several of other kindred and affine clans. At Aranpur, most members of the big and small Marvi, the Hemla and the Oyami clans, all of which are included in the Marvi phratry, did not know the name of the clan-god of their phratry, but suggested vaguely that his *pen-rawar* might be in the Abujhmar hills or in Padar-raj, their name for the plateau around Jagdalpur. Some knew that the god's name was Handa Kosa Pen, and a few said that his *pen-rawar* was at Killepal, nearly sixty miles away, where the great western road from Jagdalpur to Bhopalpatnam approaches the passes descending to the Dantewara valley. At Killepal, however, I had not been shown Handa Kosa Pen; the village is the *bhum* of the Kuhrami clan, which gives its name to the Kuhrami phratry, and the clan members stated that they had no *pen-rawar* of their clan at Killepal, but that Hermraj Pen, their god, was, they had heard, in some village near Orcha in the Abujhmar hills. It was often agreed that a Maria should visit his Pen or clan-god every year in Aghan or Pand month (November-December) and offer a pig or a cock to the god at this annual *pen-jatra* or festival of the *pen*. At Aranpur a few of the older men said that they had long ago visited the Marvi clan-god Handa Kosa Pen at Killepal in their youth, but in recent years no one seemed to have been near. It was agreed that certain social offences could only be expiated by a visit and penal offering to the clan-god.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 614 615 The elders of the villages can actually often give the names of each of the gods whom they say that each of the five Bison-horn phratries worships: the Markami phratry worships Harma Pen; the Kuhrami phratry give varying names for their god, Hermraj Pen, Perambhoi (the name applied by the Dorlas to their corresponding Perambhoi phratry) or Banian Muttai; the Kawasi phratry worships Babo Herma Pen; the Marvi phratry Handa Kosa Pen; and the Sodi phratry Tul-Muttai Pen, whose *pen-rawar* is at Kamkanar in the Gangalur *pargana* in Bijapur tahsil, where Sodi Harma the *modul-waddai*, was regarded as the headman of all the surrounding Bison-horn villages. But other names are also given, such as Hirangraj, Hingaraj and Belraj for the Kartami clan, Hirmaraj for the Kawasi, Sodi, Markami and Marvi clans, and Hing-hunga and Mundaraj for the Beko and Kalmu clans. I have used the word 'clan' advisedly, because in this list some gods are shared by clans belonging to different phratries; thus Hirmaraj is shared by the Markami and Kartami clans of the Markami phratry and by the Sodi and Marvi clans of the Sodi and Marvi phratries, while of the worshippers of Hing-hunga and Mundaraj the Beko clan belongs to the Kuhrami phratry and the Kalmu clan to the Markami. Use Modia Pen of Ghotpal is restricted to the Lekami clan of that and surrounding villages, which is now considered part of the Kuhrami phratry. Other local log-gods will be found in the heart of the Bison-horn country at such places as Dugeli; some may be the true *pen-rawars* of the phratries, but I have been unable to verify this.

614 615 173 The whole position is, it must be admitted, somewhat confused, but it would be wrong to expect to systematize it. The same confusion will be found again over the totems of the phratries and clans; there are two phratries with the tortoise as totem, and inside the same phratry will be found clans with totems of their own or the totem of other phratries, or no totem at all. The traditions of the Bison-horn Marias all point to their having descended southwards from the Abujhmar hills to colonize their present country, and the presence in their midst of ruined Hindu cities at Dantewara, Barsur, and Bhairamgarh, of traces of forgotten kingdoms at Tirathgarh and Kuakonda, and of isolated villages of Jhari Telangas descended from the subjects of early medieval Telugu kings, point to the truth of the traditions. We have seen how new clans are forming to-day on the southern fringes of the Abujhmar hills, and how the Bison-horn culture is gradually absorbing the southernmost Hill Maria clans, which have, however, not fitted themselves fully as yet into the five-phratry organization, but retain their own clan-gods. The five phratries are named after five principal clans,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the names of which recur not only among Murias in north Bastar, but also among all the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Possibly strong bodies of these clans were the original colonizers, and with the growth of population in their new surroundings have either thrown off sub-clans or absorbed clans newly descending from the hills or acquiring their culture. It is not surprising that settlers in the tracts farthest from their first settlement should find it difficult to worship at the original shrines of their *pen*, and should either forget them, or here and there make fresh log-gods for themselves, perhaps sharing them with other adjacent clans not necessarily of their own phratries, just as they have learnt, unlike the Hill Marias, to share with other brother-clans and wife-clans village lands which are the *bhum* of their own clan.

The cult of the *pen* log-god of the clan is thus, as may be expected, considerably weaker among the Bison-horn than among the Hill Marias. Often he is neglected almost entirely in the annual feasts, or vaguely associated with the Departed in the expressions *pen-hanal* or *dhuma-deo* used of the ancestors. Where there is a log-god, he tends to be regarded merely as one of the local godlings that are becoming as numerous among the Bison-horn Marias as among the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Where there is none, occasionally at festivals before the Village Mother or other manifestations of the Earth a stone or two may be set up in his name under a *saja* tree and receive its share of the sacrificial blood and libations. It is not surprising that, therefore, the *waddai* of the clan-god is more purely a medium among the Bison-horn Marias, and less of a clan-priest than he is among the Hill Marias, and that most Bison-horn villages have at least one *waddai* who may be possessed not only by the clan-god but by other godlings also; even when he is attached definitely to a log-god at a festival, he may be possessed by him and give oracle on his behalf, but the *perma* of the village is the principal celebrant, and the *waddai*, when not possessed, degenerates into a mere *mantram*-reciting assistant of the *perma*.

Often there is no hut-temple for any deity among the Bison-horn Marias except one for Danteshwari Mai or Maoli or Mata, whose cults have spread from the Hindu temple of Dantewara, and in time will reach every village of Bastar. The Earth cult, however, remains, as among the Hill Marias, the essential cult. Its chief form is thus the cult of the Village Mother, called Tallin Ochur in the Bison-horn dialect. For all the village ceremonies there is a fixed plot of land in a field belonging to the *perma* and known as the *bhum-jaga*, *hadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu*; *bhum-jaga*

The Village Mother and other gods among the Bison-horn Marias

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

means 'the earth-place'; *kadri* is the Bison-horn word for *kasyeq*, the knife carried in the loin-cloth, and the *perma* is sometimes called the *kadri-gaita*. *Wijj-erhu* means 'seed-*mahua*'; in most Bison-horn villages there is a sacred *mahua* tree, instead of the *saja* tree that is the rule in hill villages, in the middle of the sacred field, and the tree is the 'seed-*mahua*' because beneath it are held the ceremonies of the important '*Wijja* (seed) *Pandum*'. The *saja* tree remains equally sacred, as will be observed from the way in which its leaves are used in the ceremonies described in the next chapter. Under or near the *mahua* tree is often a wooden post or an upright cube of stone with a sloping top, known generally as Bhimul, which is made as occasion demands to serve as Bhimul Deo, Tallin Uchur, Dongar Deo, Mata, or any other god required; near this the *perma* will clean and plaster a flat piece of ground, known as *khari-mundi*, for sacrificing the victims. Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo and Bhu-deo combined with Bhu-devi and called generally by the Bison-horn Marias of Sukma zamindari Polamraj and Polam-muttai, are all really forms of the Village Mother, or at least of the Earth; there are several other such forms, and, though all are fundamentally the same, they tend gradually to be vaguely differentiated in the minds of the villagers, and soon, no doubt, will be individual godlings, each with his own functions. Bhimul is the rain-giver, who has been Hinduized amongst Central Provinces Gonds and the Murias of the north of Bastar as Bhimsen or Bhima, one of the five Pandava brothers; besides his annual *pandum* in the early spring, he is liable to be treated roughly if the rains are late or scanty. His wooden or stone post is then pelted with dung and filth by abusive females, who challenge him to show his powers by sending his rain to wash himself clean.

Demons

The Bison-horn Marias go much farther than the Hill Marias in deifying the forces of nature. There are the Ban Devi spirits of the forest, Jalkamani the spirit of rivers, and, for nearly every mountain pass, pile of boulders, or precipice, some spirit, all of whom may need propitiation, and some of whom are becoming godlings with a cult. The Hill Marias have a vague dread of evil spirits of the mountains, which they call *rau*; amongst the Murias and Bhattras there are other demons such as Uran Rau who blows away the grain with the chaff at winnowing, and Chitkar Rau who brings wild animals to trample down the crops; but the only *rau* to whom I have heard a name given by Hill Marias is Raja Rau, the demon of the Raughat pass in Antagarh tahsil, held to be a very Raja of the *rau* because he caused mountain-sickness to the first European surveyor seen in Bastar. All Marias also speak with fear of a water-witch in the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

form of a great serpent, known as *Tondetaras*, haunting river rapids and waterfalls, the mere sight of whom is fatal. 776 781

The traces of totemism amongst Hill and Bison-horn Marias will be described in the chapter on social organization. It may briefly be stated here that there appears to be no connexion between the totems and the clan-god, and that at no ceremony, either clan or village, or domestic, is the totem ever mentioned or worshipped. It gets a vague respect, perhaps an occasional *salaam*, from members of the totem, and they do not touch, kill or eat it if they can avoid doing so.

Totems

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [834] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *hanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *hanal*. The *hanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *hanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common use of the expression *pen-hanal* has already been mentioned. As 776 the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this 614 association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *uraskal* be the last thing that an individual *hanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far 775 as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip. All Marias agree that the dead are somewhere underground; men, animals, trees, and perhaps rivers and streams have in them *jiwa*, a principal of life, and some say that when a man dies his *jiwa* goes to Pogho Bhum, the sky, while that part which is cremated or buried goes below the earth and is his *hanal*. There is a belief that the menhirs erected at the *kotokal* or *uraskal* increase in size if the *hanal* commemorated by it is happy. There are traces of an embryo belief in reincarnation in the practice among Hill Marias of examining a new-born baby to see if it has the same birth-marks as a dead ancestor and, if so, of naming it after the ancestor if of the same sex, or his spouse if of the other sex. Hindu ideas are beginning to influence Bison-horn Marias; tombs are erected sometimes by the side of the menhir in the *uraskal*, thatched over to protect the dead from the heat of the sun, and with a pot of cold water, replenished from time to time, hung over the memorial to drip through a small hole in the pot to cool him further. But, like their ideas about the earth and the gods, the Marias' ideas about the Departed and the after-life are very indefinite and vary from place to place; it is safe only to go on their actual practice, and not on what some of them will say by way of generalization or theory; the latter are certain to be those who have had most contact with the outer world and persons of other faiths. There is one practical way in which old Bison-horn men show their belief in some future existence. They often choose before death the cow or bullock to be sacrificed when their menhir is erected in the *uraskal*; and it is alleged that if the heir thinks it better to slay some other animal, the animal chosen by the dead man always pines to death. The graves of Hill and Bison-horn Marias are adorned with strips of cloth, spears, fishing-rods and other things they may need hereafter, and their ornaments are buried often with them.

B. Magic and Witchcraft

We have seen before that such is the ignorance of the local Hindus about the Marias that, in the words used by Glasfurd in 1862,[1] 'the simple and unsophisticated Gond tribes are believed to be expert necromancers, and on the most intimate footing with evil spirits'; and that the Marias have a totally undeserved reputation as physicians, although their general idea of sickness

[1] *Report*, p. 52.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Appendix II

618
632
621
776

Lists of Hill Maria Clans and Bison-horn Maria Clans and Phratries, and Pedigree of the Hill Maria Family holding the Hereditary Headmanship of Chhota Dongar Pargana and Orcha Village

[(d) Signifies that the village was deserted in 1934]

Hill Maria Clans

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Usendi	Chhota Dongar	Orcha Japgunda Hoinar (d) Juwada Dugarli Bagom Thadur Machan Duseli Kejang (d) Uragonda (d)	Wikir Hunga (kept at Japgunda, but brought to Orcha for festivals)	Goat
	Kutru Mar	Michwada	None	
	Kirangal (*not Hill Maria but Gotul Muria*)	One or two villages	?	
	Chanda District	?	?	
Wadder	Chhota Dongar	Dhanora Jori Hikpulla Kodeli Perilmeta Rengabera (d)	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda	None
	Bhomra (Muria)	Kurselhur	Use Dokra of Kurselhur	
	Chanda District, and Kutru S. of Indrawati	Kaunde and others, and Madhepar and a few more in Kutru	Kuwo-Gundo of Kaunde	
Korami	Chhota Dongar	Hirangai Verma	Worship the Usendi god of Japgunda	None

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dodi	Do.	Jhara Rajpur Idnar	Do.	None
Deda	Chhota Dongar	Kurmer Dedalur	Nule Harma or Eram Mo'itto of Kurmer	None
Parsal	Do.	Chalcheghi	Do.	None
Katlami	Do.	Jhori Hikpulla (shared with Wadder)	Pandu Hunga of Jhori, elder brother of Wikir Hunga, the Usendi god	None
Jugho, *alias* Karme (plural, Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar Bhairamgarh Mar	Adeq Karanmeta (d) Akmeta (d) Maspur (d) Nelanar Makawada Gomagal Hasnar Rainar Gapa (d) Itulnar	Worships the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda Say would worship Wikir Hunga if still in Chhota Dongar *pargana*, but no need as now in Kutru zamindari	None; the name Karme said to mean 'sunset', the ancestor of clan having been born then
Dhurwa (almost a branch of Jughalor)	Chhota Dongar	Share Gomagal and Hasnar with Jughalor	Worship the Usendi god Wikir Hunga of Japgunda but have also his sister Oghal Muttai as their own god	None; clan says it is elder brother of Jughalor

618
632
621
776

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Dol ('younger brothers' of Jughalor)	Do.	Kohkapaghai	Worship Usendi god Wikir Hunga	Called Dol because members started making *dol* drums
Matami	Do.	Teknar	Do.	None
Dugher	Do.	Maramnar	Do.	None
Potawi	Do.	Almost extinct; one house in Orcha	Do.	None
Poyami	Do.	Kundali (one house)	Do.	None
Gecha	Do. Mangnar	Udala Tondawada Wetekal (d)	Do.	None. Name means 'sluggard' clan
Neghal	Chhota Dongar	Bhera Tondawada	Do.	Panther
Ahkal	Do.	Gudadi	Do.	None
Ete[1]	Do.	Kondakoti	Nule Harma of Kurmer	? Crab
Boka	Do.	Dondrewada Bokalur		None
Kohla	Chhota Dongar	Mandali Kushnar Batwada Kostari Gumter Hoinger Devanar Kerinar Irpenar	Mu'ima Kohla Pen of Batwada	?
Padāl	Padalibhum	All the *pargana*	Gumtuli Muttai, of Adnar	None
Kumoti	Chhota Dongar	Almost extinct; 2 houses in Hamar, 1 in Rainar	None	None
Jāti	Jātwara	Most of the *pargana*	?	?

[1] Ete is probably the same as Yete, a Kutra Mar clan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
632
621
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Boter	Kutru Mar	Boter	None	None
Wachami	Kutru Mar and Ahiri (mostly Indrawati valley)	Kumharmeta Markanar Irkapal Karkelli Bodeli and some Ahiri villages	Wachami Moitto Pen of Kumharmeta	?
Mohanda	Kutru Mar	Lakka Hingmeta Bhuri Puslakka	A god at Lakka	?
Oyâmi	Bhairamgarh Mar	Komu Kalhaza Malahanar (d)	None	None
Mohke	Do. Chhota Dongar	2 houses in Kalhaza Albera (d)	None	None
Yete	Bhairamgarh Mar	Hoinar	None	Crab
Pungati	Do.	2 houses in Ader (Kutru)	None	?
Bardâl	Bardal Tapalibbum	Whole *pargana* Ranimarka	Hurra Mu'iya of Kornâr	None
Farsâl	Farsâl Bhairamgarh	Whole *pargana* (13 inhabited villages) Bheriabbum	Kodo Mo'itto of Dhurwada None	None
Gôtâl	Hukkagotal Tulagotal Farsigotal	Whole *pargana* (9 inhabited villages) Whole *pargana* (9 inhabited villages) Whole *pargana* (5 inhabited villages)	Pâhanleya Muttari of Toinar in Tulagotal Do. Top Mudya of Mohandi, said to be younger brother of Pahanley's husband	None None None

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
621
632
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Tapa	Tapálibhúm (Chhote Mar)	Nearly all the villages of the *pargana*	Riksa Pen of Dodrimarka in Tapalibhum	None
Nughoti, *alias* Nuroti	Nurbhum játwara Tapalibhum	All *pargana* but Turko Kohkameta Markawada Hachekote	?	None
Hichami	Nurbhum	Turko	The Nughoti god	?
Parlio	Kutru Mar	Dodmarka Karangul Nugur Ader (Kutru) Padmeta	Koruk Pen of Karangal and Nugur	Goat
Játi	Kutru Mar Chhote Dongar	Játalur Akdum (d)	None	?
Kohka	Bhairamgarh Mar	Kakowada, or Kakawoki	None	Kohka-marra the marking-nut tree
Ark	Do.	Korowaya; sold Itulnar to Jughalor	None	None
Játe (plural, Játerom)	Mangnar	Mornar	Pat Raja	The Játe grass used for making brooms to sweep the god's shrine
Tokalor	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The *toka* or flap of loincloth left to hang behind like a tail
Hukur	Mangnar	Erpanar	Do.	The *huk* or basketry ladle used to stir rice cooked at the god's shrine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

618
621
632
776

Clan	Pargana	Villages	Clan-god	Totem
Marvi	Mangnar	Tōkhtōli Kuwer Modangwada Moghori	Mārā-māgh, Pat Raja's sister's son or *bārenjal*. They get leave from Pat Raja to hold his nephew's festivals	?
Tamo	Dantewara Mar	Tumirgunda Padmeta	Hurra Gunda Moitto of Tumir-gunda	None
Atami[1]	Barsur	Chhota Karka Palawaya	Do.	?
Lekami[1]	Barsur	Batawada Ghotpal	Use Modia of Ghotpal	?

There were one or two Lekami houses in the Hill Maria villages of Handawada and Dunga.

Gume	Dantewara or Barsur Mar	Toinar Handawada Hikul Thakawada Paralnar Prinkapal Kodokal Hitawada	Verma Mo'itto Pen of Toinar. The *waddai* is Jātē by clan	None
	Bhairamgarh	Kunjewada Goti Dunga Pariakot	None	
Alami	Mangnar	Nendur Gatla	Attend festivals of Pat Raja, god of Jāt-erom at Mornar	Chameleon (alām)
Nonde	Mangnar	Rotad	Do.	Rope

[1] Now, in culture, Bison-horn clans; but the Lekami intermarries with the Gume clan, and the Atami still worships the Hill Maria *pen* of the Tamo clan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of the Abujhmar, I was told, Grigson once encountered an ancient woman completely naked. She had never seen a white face before and, believing the visitor to be a Rakshasa, fell at his feet begging to be allowed to go for a few moments to her village to bid farewell to her little grandson, after which she would return to be devoured. 114

There is no end to these stories, many of them tales of generosity and kindness that would embarrass Grigson to have repeated. The result has been that Bastar is a very pleasant place to tour in. I have had trouble enough in Provinces and States, where there has been no one like Grigson to precede me, to realize vividly the difference that he has made. He is not the only one; Bastar has long been fortunate in her officers; but he set the pace.

When it was decided to issue an Indian edition of this book and Grigson asked me to write a sort of Comment to go with it, I was puzzled to know what to put in. I have done a certain amount of writing[1] about Bastar and the Bison-horn Marias, among whom I spent a good deal of time, and I did not want to repeat here what I had already written. In the end, at the risk of being very scrappy, I decided to give all my unpublished notes on the Marias, rather on the principle of the Abbot's order at the sack of Beziers: 'Kill them all; God will know his own.'

I deal first, therefore, with a few larger subjects, where my material supplements Grigson's, such as magic and the tragedies to which its practice leads, Bison-horn Maria ideas and taboos with regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, the dormitory and funerary customs. It seemed worth while to describe in some detail a marriage ceremony and the Ghotpal Marhai which I had witnessed personally. After that I proceed to give brief notes on points in the book which appear to need amplification. Short of reprinting a large amount of already published material, I do not know what other plan was possible.

II

Do the Marias believe in a Supreme Being? Grigson was not able to assemble any very definite evidence on this point. 'Only around Orcha', he says, 'and a few neighbouring Chhota 776

[1] For convenience of reference I shall give a list of my publications on Bastar and the Murias or Marias. 'Ceremonial Cross-Dressing among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 163; 'Suicide among the Aboriginals of Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII, p. 207; 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLII, p. 121; 'The Sago Palm in Bastar State', *J.R.A.S. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII, p. 69; 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, p. 97; *Maria Murder and Suicide* (Bombay, 1943); 'Stilt-Walking among the Murias of Bastar State', *Man*, Vol. XLIV, p. 38; *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944); *The Muria and their Ghotul* (Bombay, 1947); 'Funerary Customs in Bastar State', *Man in India*, Vol. XXV. [113]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 Dongar Pargana Hill Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural, who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip.' Koppers, who is perhaps a little too obviously anxious to discover belief in a Supreme Deity everywhere for the demands of strict science, protests at this vagueness. 'In the light of the many facts known to-day', he says, 'this effort at explanation is not satisfactory. Apart from other difficulties it seems more than improbable that aboriginals would in such a case quickly and easily find a new word to express a meaning which (according to Grigson's assumption) would be foreign to their mental vocabulary. The word Ispural appears to be genuinely Dravidian.'[1] But Grigson could hardly be expected to improve on his evidence, and actually nothing is more characteristic of the aboriginal ecstatics than their invention of new words. I too have heard vague references to Ispural—far away from Chhota Dongar in the east of Kondagaon as well as in the Jhoria foothills. In a Muria song, Ispural is described as having daughters, the youngest of whom is Phulsundri Rani. In a Burkul Pata, a song used when a man has been killed by a tiger, Ispural appears as one of many gods who is accused of having caused the tragedy. Among the Bondos of Jeypore (who do not speak a Dravidian language), I found Ispur as the name of a sky god who is invoked at the time of winnowing the grain if there is no wind to blow away the chaff. This, and the fact that he has daughters, suggests that Ispural is a variant of Indra or Indal, a sky god who sends the rain and whose daughters often visit the earth. The actual word 'Ispural' may have been born in trance. A wizard hears the names Ishwar, Indal, Purub (Lord); they sink into his mind and are forgotten; then one day as he is raving in trance a new word comes into his head, and a new god is made.

But although Ispural is only doubtfully a name of the Supreme Being, the evidence appears to me overwhelming that all the aboriginals of central India and Orissa believe in some sort of Creator or Supreme Deity. Some of them, identifying him with the Sun, call him by a special tribal name and very generally they use the honorific terms Bhagavan or Mahapurub[2] and their dialectical variants. The most convincing proof that this belief is not a

[113]

[1] W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV and XXXVI, p. 307.

[2] Bhagavan is the classical Hindu term for the adorable object of *Bhakti* worship; Mahapurub or Mahaprabhu is a Sanskrit word meaning 'great master' and may be applied to any eminent person, human or divine; in Bengal it is especially used of Chaitanya

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

modern Hindu or missionary accretion is to be found in a study of the myths of origin which in many tribes have all the marks of antiquity. In these a Supreme Being is firmly established. He is not omnipotent, he is not omniscient, his character is ambiguous, his morals are uncertain and his language coarse. But he is exalted far above all others and he is the prime mover in the creative process as well as the goal of the human spirit after death. 776

My collection of Maria myths is incomplete, but the Bison-horn Maria story of Creation leaves no room to doubt the tribe's belief in a Supreme Deity. 776 773 539

There was a great rain and the world was drowned. But Gajabhimul put a brother and sister—their names were Kawachi and Kuharami—in a gourd. This gourd drifted to and fro until it ran aground on a great rock. Mahapurub sent a crow to search for men. The crow found the gourd, pecked it open and released the boy and girl who began to cry. Mahapurub told the crow to stop the noise, but it wanted the children to die so that it could feed on their bodies and it did nothing. Mahapurub sent an eagle, but it too did nothing. Then he sent a tiger, but it too did nothing. At last he sent a monkey. The monkey sat on a rock and asked the children what was the matter. The rock was so hot that it burnt its buttocks and it jumped on to a tree. 'We have nowhere to go,' said the children, 'and there is no food.' The monkey returned to Mahapurub and told him.

Mahapurub now sent a boar. 'Near the rock is a tortoise,' he said. 'It has made itself a home of mud and clay. Take off the mud and spread it on the rock.' 'But how am I to live without food?' asked the boar. 'These children will sow seed,' said Mahapurub. 'There will be a harvest on the rock, and you will be the first to eat it.' That is why the wild boar always ravages the crops before men can reap them.

The boar found the tortoise and rolled itself in the mud. It came to the rock and shook itself violently. The mud flew in all directions and there was the world again.

This story was recorded at Rewali and was repeated with small variants in other villages. But at Killepal, the Marias said that the children were put in the gourd by the gods Andalkosa, Patraj, Pirusi and Tuldokarj. It was Mahapurub who wanted to destroy the children and he himself tried to cut the gourd open and so let them drown. But the gods got hold of the gourd in time and threw it into the water and it drifted away out of Mahapurub's reach. If this is a Supreme Being, it is a singularly imperfect one. And 776 773

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

indeed it must be confessed that the Maria belief in Mahapurub is weaker than in other tribes. The Sun and Moon were created, not by him, but by human beings. Fire was not given—as in so many legends—to the world by God, but was discovered by man in a more or less natural way in a broken stone or a split bamboo. In only one of the folk-tales does Mahapurub play a part. In this he teaches the hero how to make a hearth and gives him a magic bel stick. He refuses to answer the prayer of a bird which begs him to restore its mate to life.

On the whole, we may conclude that while the Marias undoubtedly believe in some kind of Supreme Deity, he is not vividly imagined by them, and his cult is overlaid by the interest and excitement aroused by the earth-bound deities like Danteshwari and the clan-gods and by the attention that must be given to the Departed.

III

The general pattern of Maria magical beliefs has been traced by Grigson and his picture may be supplemented by my chapter on 'Witchcraft and Magic' in *Maria Murder and Suicide*. A few additional notes may be of interest.

The dread of witchcraft and black magic seems to me to be stronger among the Marias than in the other primitive populations of Middle India. Among the neighbouring Bondos, for example, it is comparatively weak and hardly troubles the deeply religious Saoras whose attention is concentrated on pacifying the Dead.

In Maria opinion, the practitioner of black magic is frequently a widow, often a riggish widow. Her chief delight is to interfere with other people's pleasures; she sends grubs into the spathe of the sago palm and thus checks the supply of the refreshing juice; she loves to rob a fresh young girl of her rightful joys by prolonging her menstrual periods; she frustrates men's happiness by making them impotent; she blights the marriage-bed with barrenness. These wanton and jealous widows are a great nuisance in Maria society. Oyami Anda of Bara Harmamunda told me how he was pestered by one of them but, since he had two wives already, did not want to be involved in a scandal and in any case was not attracted, he rejected her advances. In revenge she nearly killed him with black magic. Another old Oyami Maria insisted that it was only a widow who could perform this magic; as a young man such a woman had begged him to lie with her and when he refused had made him impotent. At Kuchepal I met a man who had once engaged himself in that most dangerous of erotic adventures, a love-affair with a widow. After a time he wearied of her and in

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

224 796 787 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonra rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 796 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khamma Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate. [782]

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 841 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt. As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long. 226 227

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Netânch horinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'. [524]

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes. 226 278

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden. 226 776 782

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first. 273

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2] 273 824

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election 273 883

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Koya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 92.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

841 515 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria [842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?' In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their [833] lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

841 522 When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

841 787 As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

841 776 Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendra-wandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

the motiari Hidde who died for love. Unhappily, when the girl committed suicide, she was in her catamenial period. The result is that she is regarded in some places as an untouchable goddess. Some ten years ago, her symbol was taken to the great festival at Keskal, and her Siraha went into the shrine of Bangaram, consort of Danteshwari. The Siraha of Bangaram and Hinglajin Matal stopped them. There was a great quarrel, and Pendrawandin's Siraha took the case to the court at Kondagaon, whence it went in appeal to the Maharaja. He ruled that the goddess was banned from visiting the shrines of Kuar Pat (son of Kanda Dokara), Danteshwari, Bangaram and Hinglajin Matal, but that she might be taken elsewhere.

All over the State there are stories of the unhappy fate which has befallen those who have broken the menstrual taboos. In the Karikhodra ghotul I was told of a shocking incident in Jatabera (Kanker State) where two menstruous women went to a *dahi*-clearing, picked a cucumber and ate it. A tiger attacked them and killed them both.[1] At Tarabera, Lati quarrelled with his wife when she was in her period and struck her twice. Soon afterwards he hanged himself in his field. 'The Departed were angry with him for touching an unclean woman and drove him to kill himself.'

[1] This rigorist attitude towards the menstruating woman is by no means confined to the aboriginal in India. Thus, to give but one example, M. N. Srinivas describes the traditional outlook of the highest Hindus of Mysore. 'The menstruum is nothing but the sin of Brahmin-killing in liquid form.' The degree of defilement varies from day to day. For the first day's impurity a woman will be punished by being reborn as an untouchable, for the second day's as a Brahmin-killer, for the third day's as a washerwoman. The daughter of the sage Udanka was nightly transformed into a mass of worms because seven lives earlier she had touched some cooking-vessels while in her period.—M. N. Srinivas, *Marriage and Family in Mysore* (Bombay, 1942), p. 129.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

II. The Origin of the Gods

A Hindu lives by ceremonies; a Muria lives by his gods.—Muria proverb

Muria religion is a blend of the tremendous and the homely; at one moment the peasant trembles before a display of overwhelming dynamic energy, at the next he is abusing his god for flirting with a goddess of his own clan. The Muria take a great interest in the domestic affairs of their gods; they are much better acquainted with divine than human genealogies; they are proud of the vast confusion and multiplicity of the Bastar deities.

For there are, they say, 'more gods in Bastar than anywhere in India'. Many legends describe their immigration, their birth, their movements from place to place. 'Long ago'—the story comes from Benur—

before the Bastar Raj had come into being, Raja Dokára lived in Warangal.[1] His younger brother was Gotal Dokara. When Danteshwari Mai came to Bastar, Raja Dokara followed her as the Lamhada of Budha Dokara's sister, Pat Rani. Gotal Dokara accompanied them, but he went to live in the Marian Raj in order to avoid his brother. Raja Dokara settled in Bara Dongar and was married to Pat Rani. From them were born Hunga Dokara, Pahedunga, Waikirunge, Guttehunge and Lingo Dokara.

In Bara Dongar, Budha Deo and Samrat Dokara his brother had many daughters. Four of these were carried off by the four elder sons of Raja Dokara. Budha Dokara and Samrat Dokara had seven score sons and seven score daughters. They said to Lingo Dokara, 'These are for you'. But Lingo was very pure. He said, 'No, I do not desire to marry'. So the four brothers said, 'Well, you stay at home and we'll give these girls villages instead'. So the four brothers put the rest of the girls into a fish-basket and sat on the back of a tortoise. By their magic the tortoise turned into an elephant. Seated on the elephant the brothers rode slowly round the Bastar Raj. As they went they gave one girl to four villages, another to seven, and each girl became the Mata Devi of her village.

The tortoise moved very slowly and the brothers put *bhilwa* oil under its tail. So passed many days. The four brothers' wives took red cucumbers and put them in swings and rocked them to and fro, saying 'These are our children'. Now their servant was Kadrengal. They sent him to find their husbands. There was only one girl left in the fish-basket. Her name was Tallur Muttai. The brothers threw her with the basket into Paramwar village and went home, for they could hear from afar the singing of their wives. But Kadrengal met Tallur Muttai and said to her, 'Let us live here together'. They were not married, but lived there as mistress and servant. She used to send him to make people ill, and thus they got food-sacrifice and made a scanty living.

There follows an account of the brothers' return home, their suspicion of their wives—'Who is the father of these children?'—the testing of Lingo and his vindication. In this version of the tale it is Tallur Muttai who goes with Kadrengal to bring Lingo out of the iron bin in which he is being roasted

[1] In Motewand, the villagers told us that 'the gods used to live in Warangal. Thence they climbed by a red thread into the Upper World. Looking down they saw Bastar and charmed with the sight descended by the silkworm's thread into the Bastar hills and lived there'.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

to death.[1] Tallur Muttai asks him to marry her, but he refuses and runs away to Semurgaon, where 'being weary' he turns into a stone, and has ever since been worshipped.

This rather tedious account yet gives an exact picture of the working of the Muria's mind when he turns it to theology The distribution of the gods probably represents very ancient migrations of the tribe. As the different Muria families moved here and there, it was necessary that their gods also should move and, in order to emphasize the unity of the tribe, should be related to one another. A Pus Kolang chant sung by the chelik of Phulpar gives a good picture of the multiplicity, variety and confusion of the Muria pantheon.

Aho vereloyo verela ver loyo ver loyo eke verela!

O the sixteen divisions of the earth,
The nine divisions of the sky!
Who is lord of the earth?
The lord of the earth is Tallur Rai.
Give him a good Johar.

O the hoar-frost and Pati Pen!
Give him a good Johar.

O the tiger and Kadrengal!
Give him a good Johar.

Oho the red Sun like a blazing log
Oho the haldi-coloured Moon!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in a corner is the bed,
In the midst is the ocean
Nearby is the Kutela.
Oho the many baby stars!
Give them a good Johar.

Oho in the ghotul Madan Matal Rai!
In the village Jamedarin Mata!
Oho Nelo Maria Rai!
Give him a good Johar.

[1] For a full account of the Lingo legend, see Chapter VIII.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

776
539

In the banyan is the cat,
In the pipal Mirchuk Rai,
In the deep gully Bhutuk Rai,
In the Hutang stream is Kaniyal Rai,
Give them a good Johar.

Near Ranghat is Talachetang Rai,
In Jabkastang stream is Kaniyal Rai,
Give him a good Johar.

To the Ran of the pass, Johar.
To Tipagardha Ran Rai, Johar.
To Hitagardha Ran Rai, Johar.
To Kodagardha Ran Rai, Johar.

Below the pass is Maoli Rai,
Below the hill is Maoli Rai,
In Dantegarh is Maoli Rai,
In Antagarh is Maoli Rai.
Give, give a good Johar.

Salute them all with good Johar—

Kana Mudial Pennur Rai [Lingo's brother Bechor's son]
Bechor Kodor Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Budha Mudial Penur Rai [*Akomāna* to Lingo]
Guta Mudial Penur Rai
Dewan Mudial Penur Rai
Kada Hural Penur Rai
Kokor Mudial Penur Rai
Oche Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kola Koso Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Halel Dokari Muttai Penur Rai
Halai Dokari Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's sister]
Hirgiri Penur Rai [son of Halai Dokari]
Son Kumar Penur Rai [son of Kanda Dokara]
Nettergundi Penur Rai [son of Lingo]
Lingo Mudial Penur Rai.

Oho the eighteen instruments of Lingo Rai!
The hunting horn hanging from his shoulder,
The Madan Parai drum at his loins,
The Paijna Rai (anklets) on his feet,
The Dhumir Rai (fiddle) across his chest,
The Jhikar Rai (Jew's harp) with the wind passing through his nose,
The Sulur Rai (flute) played with his mouth.
Give him a good Johar.

Salute them all with good Johar—

Dandki Dokari Penur Rai,
Sunga Deo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]

22

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Paik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's father's brother's son]
Aik Saral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Tograjdeo Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Perma Mudial Penur Rai [Lingo's mother's brother]
Bhumrandari Penur Rai [Lingo's elder brother's wife]
Pordegumal Penur Rai [Lingo's daughter's husband]
Nulemuttai Penur Rai [Lingo's sister]
Poche Dokara Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Maria Moghraj Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kokal Bidral Penur Rai [Lingo's brother]
Kurumtala Penur Rai [Lingo's brother [1]]

By this time the reader probably feels that he has had enough. But he need not fear that I propose to take him much further into the intricate and often contradictory relationships of the Muria gods. The subject needs a book to itself and an investigator deeply interested in the theology of primitive peoples. All I wish to do here is to impress on the reader the great complexity of the Muria pantheon, and the intimate human way in which its various members are interrelated.

The gods then come into being by migration from outside and by the division of the tribe into various clans. Many of the gods named in the song are clan-gods, and as the clans split up new gods come into being. But this is not the only way that gods are born. We already have a hint of a fundamental Muria belief in the statement that Tallur Muttai sent her servant to trouble men with disease in order to get food-sacrifice to keep her quiet. The gods are troublesome and expensive, and the more troublesome they are the more they are honoured. This is, of course, the normal Gond method of attracting attention. A Gond wife, who is devoted to her husband, sulks and makes a nuisance of herself, not because she is in a temper, but simply because she judges that to be the best way of getting herself noticed.

Some of the gods, however, have come into being as a result of actual incidents, no doubt greatly magnified by the course of time. I have only room for a few examples of this tendency. In a village near Bisbrampuri there is the shrine of Pendrawandin Pen, a goddess about whom there has been much controversy. Long ago, so runs the local legend, a Muria of the Naitami clan had a daughter called Hidde for whose hand a Poyami boy called Kuria was serving as Lamhada. Hidde's father made a dam across a stream, but the water kept breaking through. Then one day a dream came to him, 'Worship me and I will stop the water'. The Muria thought in his heart 'Whom shall I sacrifice?' He decided to offer the Lamhada boy, Kuria. He took him to the stream, pushed him in and piled earth above his body. At once the dam became firm and strong. But now Hidde began to search for her lover, and when she came to the dam she saw one finger sticking out of the earth. When she saw this she jumped into the stream and was drowned also.[2] After a few days, her ghost began to trouble her father, and when he asked who it was, she replied, 'I am Pendrawandin, your daughter; worship me and I will trouble you no more'. Then began the cult of Pendrawandin and her consort Kuria Pen. Unfortunately, at the time of her death Hidde was in

[1] The word 'brother' is used in both its actual and classificatory senses: the Muria are very confused over these relationships.

[2] With this story compare the legend of Ganga and Beni, who are associated with the source of the Wainganga river at Mundara.—R. V. Russell, *Seoni District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1907), p. 170.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

her catamenial period, and so Pendrawandin is considered by many an untouchable goddess.

The famous Kanda Dokara, father of Lingo, came into being in a very simple way. This is the story they tell at Kuntpadar.

> There were seven brothers and their wives. One day the women went to the jungle for grass to make brooms. Six of them made big bundles and put them on their heads to carry home, but the youngest wife only made a very small bundle and was unable to lift it. She called the others and they could not lift it either. Then she said, 'Whether you are god or devil, let me lift this bundle and when I get home I'll give you food-sacrifice'.
>
> When she reached home she was afraid that her husband would be angry with her for bringing such a small bundle, so she threw it into the pigsty. When her husband asked her where her grass was, she said, 'Who knows what was the matter; there was some god or ghost in it; I threw it into the pigsty'. The husband went laughing to get it, but when he too could not lift it up, he said, 'If you are really a god, give me a son'. Then he undid the grass and found inside a root, and they all worshipped it. Afterwards the Muria had twelve sons, the eldest of whom was Kanda Dokara and the youngest Lingo. He used to carry the root with him as a weapon. This is why we swear by the grass in a broom and use it to find out why we are ill and where our cattle have strayed.

Such is a typical account of the origin of the gods. There is a difficulty; sometimes it is an epidemic, sometimes it is some lighter matter as in the story I have just recounted. But always the god manifests himself by causing some hitch in the smooth working of human life. In Adner in 1940, there was an outbreak of cattle disease and the Siraha-mediums declared that a new god had been born, and was not receiving his due honour. A great festival, which I will presently describe, was held to appease the affronted deity and stop the disease.

Any strange or inexplicable event may bring a new god into being; the subdivisions of clans, the migration of peoples, the desire to imitate the Hindus are equally potent in the creation of gods. We must now consider the nature of these gods and who they are.

III. The Nature of the Gods

There is only one tree, but it gives many kinds of leaves—
A god (deo) that causes many kinds of trouble.—Muria riddle.

The gods of the Muria, as we have seen, are many and varied. The majority of them are, I think, comparatively modern. Some have been imported, some are the result of Hindu influence, some have come into being as a result of dreams, some at a magician's whim. It is only the Earth, the Dead, the clan-god and the Maharaja which are ancient and fundamental to Muria worship and belief.

But many other gods are worshipped, the extent of their cult and the notice they receive depending on the instructions given by the Siraha from time to time. For just as Muria ceremonies are not arranged in a precise formulary but rather make up a repertory from which the priest on the instructions of the Siraha will draw what he requires, so also the vast pantheon of the Muria may be regarded as a sort of repertory of deities out of which, from

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

time to time, the Siraha selects one or two for special worship and attention. The cult of the gods, therefore, moves to and fro, now illuminating a forgotten deity, now strengthening the influence of the more powerful. There is nothing fixed, definite, logical or formulated about Muria religion, for here the power of the prophet and magician is greater than that of the priest. Muria religion is thus dynamic and essentially modernist. It can always adapt itself to new conditions. There is nothing traditional or orthodox in its temper.

The Supreme Being

The Muria have a belief, which is probably very old, in a Supreme Being, whom they call variously Mahapurub, Ispural and Bhagavan. Mahapurub, which may be literally translated the 'Great East', perhaps has reference to the Sun. Bhagavan is, of course, the common Hindu name for the adorable god of Bhakti worship. Mahapurub and Bhagavan are not distinguished in Muria thought: the difference between them is linguistic, Mahapurub being used in the exclusively Halbi-speaking areas. Ispural presents more of a problem. Grigson found the word in use in a few Hill Maria villages bordering the Muria country. 'Ispural would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was. . . It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip.'[1] But to Koppers 'this effort at explanation is not satisfactory'. The word Ispural, he thinks, is 'genuinely Dravidian' and suggests a very old belief in a Supreme Being.[2] Like Grigson, I was unable to discover anything about Ispural, though he appears in the song given on p. 169 as one of the deities accused of having caused a man to be killed by a tiger. He is, however, acquitted of the charge and the death is ascribed to the jealousy of the Departed. But the word is known right across northern Bastar and I agree with Koppers that it probably represents an ancient element in Muria theology.

Mahapurub, to call him by what is his common name, is the creator of Nadumbhum or the Middle World. He lives in Porrobhum, or Upper World, attended by his seven daughters, the divine motiari, and from this post of vantage exercises a rather sketchy control over human affairs. He created the world, but only with the help of Lingo and Bhimul. He made mankind, but so carelessly that many people turned into witches and warlocks. It took him a long while to discover how to ensure that men and women would die and thus provide him with a sufficient supply of *jiwa* or living souls. He appears to exercise no control at all on the daily life of mortals; he does men no good, but neither does he do them any harm. As a result there is not a single shrine for him throughout the Muria country. He receives no sacrifices and in ordinary thought is largely ignored. As the originator of death, however, it is supposed that when a man dies it may be at his command.

Both Bhagavan and Mahapurub appear in Muria folk-tales though I am not sure how far the picture given there is to be taken in a theological sense. Each deity has seven daughters, though we hear nothing of wives.[3] Every evening the seven daughters go in their flying chariot to visit Mahapurub and to dance before him.[4] In one tale the seven daughters get annoyed with the hero and build a dam to stop the rain falling on his fields. He climbs up a

[1] Grigson, op. cit., pp. 244f.
[2] W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV/XXXVI (1940-1), p. 307.
[3] The Bhil, however, 'are all of one opinion that Bhagwan has no wife and no children'. Koppers, op. cit., p. 292.
[4] Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), p. 8.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

776 silken thread to ask Bhagavan himself for water. On the way he discovers the dam and destroys it: the girls beat him. Bhagavan intervenes and tells his daughters not to give trouble to human beings.[1]

Mahapurub is shown living in the Upper World and curious about conditions of life elsewhere. He sends a crow to tour the three Worlds and discover where the greatest happiness is to be found. The crow reports that it is in the Middle World. The youngest daughter insists on going to see, so Mahapurub calls a spider and makes it spin a thread to connect the Upper and the Middle Worlds.[2]

In the tales the Supreme Being appears far more accessible than we should imagine from a study of the theology. A hero goes to Mahapurub's palace to ask a boon and a magic goat and the seven daughters are given with a father's blessings.[3] Another hero goes on pilgrimage to Mahapurub and has all his problems solved.[4]

Bara Pen

The Great God of the Gond, it has always been said, is Bara Deo, Bhera Pen, Budha Deo. He is supposed to live in the sacred saja tree and to be more honoured by the Gond than any other. In Bastar, however, this deity is not specially worshipped by the Muria.[5] Among them the name Bara Pen or Budha Dokara is the name of a very ancient clan-god, and nowadays, whenever the Muria are at a loss to give a name to a clan-god, they call him Bara or Budha Pen. There are indeed a bewildering number of Anga, flags and Gutal with these names. At Chingnar there is an Anga who is worshipped by the Naitami, Tekami, Maravi, Poyami and Parchapi. He is called Budha Dokara. At Kharkagaon there is another Anga with the same name connected with the Duga, Kalo, Halami, Dhurwa, Buyi and other clans. At Kursai Budha Pen is the god of the Komra and Kaudo clans. At Kokori he is the god of the Uika and Wadde clans; at Metawand of the Partabi and Ori; at Lanjora of the Poyami. I have no doubt that there are other shrines in his honour in many other villages.

The extent of the cult of Bara Pen in Bastar might be supposed to indicate his importance, but he is not one of those deities who is constantly remembered at festivals or funerals. I think that his cult is extensive largely because his name is convenient. Bara Pen, a great god, Budha Deo, a venerable god; it is an obvious and useful title.[6]

The Earth Mother

The earth or *Mum* is the ultimate source of life and power who manifests herself in all the other deities. Men are the children of earth, fed and loved by her. She is personified in Tallur Muttai who appears frequently in legends and songs. She is one of the gods living in the ghotul to protect the children;

[1] Verrier Elwin, *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 31-2.
[2] Ibid., pp. 139f. [3] Ibid., p. 10. [4] Ibid., pp. 283ff.
[5] 'As far as I have ascertained the Marias and Murias do not worship Burra Deo.' —W. H. Shoobert in *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 75. This is going too far.
[6] 'The Gonds are, however, found to have one common object of worship called according to the linguistic peculiarities of the locality, Bura Deo, Bada Deo, or Badial Pen. Pen and Deo mean the same, but the signification of Bura or Bada I am not sure of. Major Macpherson tells us that Bura Pen, the Kandh god, means "the god of light". Mr Hislop no doubt rightly conjectures that Badial Pen, whom he also calls Badhal Pen, and the Kandh god is the same; but he translates Badhal in one place (page 14) as "the old god", though in a note to the same page he quotes as if affirming the *Calcutta Review* in translating the word "Sun-god". If Bura Deo means "old god" it should, I suppose, be written "Burha", but in the way the word is pronounced, I do not detect the aspirate.' —Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

she has a special concern for the success of the crops; according to some legends, she invented the sago-palm. The Muria offer sacrifices to her on all the chief occasions of their lives.

Nowadays, however, the Muria have got into a great muddle about Mother Earth and her associated deities. She is now often identified with the goddess Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of Bastar. Tallur Muttai, under Hindu influence, turns into Mati Deo, then she changes her sex back again to Danteshwari Matal. She is also often mixed up with the Gaon Devi, or any other Matal or Maoli who may be worshipped in the village. It is impossible to expect any kind of consistency, for the Muria are not trained theologians, but it is fairly safe to say that when the Muria worships either Gaon Matal, Jimmedarin Matal, Thakurain, Danteshwari Matal, Maoli or indeed any other Matal, he is really thinking of Tallur Muttai or the Earth. In the prevailing Shaivite atmosphere of Middle India, all nature deities are inevitably personified as female.

The Earth Mother, in whatever form she takes, generally has a special shrine in her honour. She may be represented by a wide variety of symbols. Her special priest is the Kaser-Gaita, who makes offerings to her on every occasion affecting the life or honour of the village.

The association of this goddess with the ghotul is not perhaps very close, but in some places she is believed to live there with Kadrengal, her official consort, and with Lingo. There is indeed a story that Tallur Muttai was in love with Lingo and, after murdering one of his wives, tried vainly to win him to herself. Before going out on any dancing expedition and at their return to the village, the girls and boys make suitable offerings at the shrine of the Earth Mother. They remember her also when they go to hunt or fish, when they make a new drum, when they worship the drums before a marriage and when they accompany a corpse to its grave.

The Earth Mother in the form of Danteshwari Mai or Matal is rapidly growing in importance and distinction throughout Bastar. In almost every village now there is some shrine or symbol in her honour. The arrival of her litter at a festival is the signal for a special demonstration. She excites the same vague but patriotic sentiment that the Church of England arouses in many Englishmen. She is a national institution, and though few Muria of the North can have visited her temple at Dantewara, a good many must have seen her coming in her panoply and attended by her priest on his elephant for the Dassera festival at Jagdalpur.

To enable the reader to understand the feeling of the Bastar Hindus towards this goddess I will quote from a communication made to me by the late Rai Sahib Niranjan Singh, Assistant Administrator of the State.

> Danteshwari is the family goddess of the Ruler. She is the Adi Shakti, the origin of all creation. She has no beginning or end and is not limited by space. She is the creative faculty of Brahma. When the whole creation is annihilated, she remains in Brahma, as a plant remains in a seed and other creations reappear through her. That power is symbolized as feminine since the generative function is a woman's attribute. She is all powerful and has a dazzling beauty. Her eight hands and the lion on which she rides are symbols of her power. She takes shape to rid the world of sinners and make it happy for the pious. She appeared when Mahishasur had spread terror in the world and killed him. She showers power, strength and happiness on her devotees. Sacrifices of goats and buffaloes are made in her name. The flesh of sacrificed goats is taken by men of the upper and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

lower castes and that of buffaloes only by Shudras. This flesh is of special sanctity as through it men who worship her get power. She is the special Goddess of the warring class—the Kshatriyas. Being the family goddess of the Ruler, she is recognized as the ruling goddess by all classes of Hindus and aboriginals of the State. 776

The Divine Right of Kings

The Maharaja is regarded as divine by all the Muria and Maria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and by some of the northern Muria. Each ruler appends the word Deo to the end of his name, the other male members of his house calling themselves Singh, though to distinguish them from other Kshatriya the prefix Lal is added, as in Lal Kalindar Singh. 776 648

The *gadi* or throne is held sacred and no one but the actual ruler may sit upon it. Should anyone break the rule, he would die. [778]

The ruler has special powers of intercession. 'His sacrifices, fasts, and oblations during the Dassera and Chaitrai festivals benefit not only himself but the members of the royal family and the people of the State. All the important deities of the State are brought to Jagdalpur during Dassera and worshipped on behalf of the ruler, his own worship being confined to the family goddess Danteshwari, Maoli and a few other gods. This worship keeps away disease from the people and cattle and results in good crops and universal happiness, as the deities remain pleased.'[1]

So strongly do the aboriginals believe this, that they greatly resent the Maharaja leaving the State even for a short time. His absence means a withdrawal of divine protection from cattle, crops and people.

Kadrengal

Kadrengal is the consort of Tallur Muttai, as Bangaram is the consort of Danteshwari. A story which I quote elsewhere[2] links him with the forest and the chase, and he is generally worshipped by the Muria before they set out on a ceremonial hunt. In some villages, however, Pati Deo takes his place. 776

His name occurs from time to time, generally in association with Tallur Muttai, in the songs and legends. In the oldest mythology he plays the part which more modern people ascribe to Mahadeo.

With Tallur Muttai and Lingo, he lives in the ghotul and protects the boys and girls. Along with other deities he is worshipped and remembered at festivals and on most of the major occasions of Muria life.

Dulha Deo

Jahn chulha taha Dulha.—Where there is a hearth, there is Dulha Deo.

Dulha Deo is the marriage god and is supposed to preside not only over the wedding but over the marriage bed, its happiness and its fertility.

Dulha Deo is not an original Muria god. He is an immigrant from the Central Provinces, where he receives very much more attention than in Bastar. In Bastar he has a certain nuisance value as causing trouble during marriages, a rather expensive addition to the pantheon who must be placated for fear that he will make himself objectionable. His ill temper can easily be explained

[1] Private communication from Rai Sahib Hiralal Singh.
[2] See page 40.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

by the tragic circumstances of his origin. According to universal legend he is the ghost of a young bridegroom who, on the way to his wedding, was killed either by lightning [1] or by a tiger. Frustrated at the moment of achieving happiness, he lives on, soured and bitter, to trouble mankind.

For this reason Dulha Deo is regarded as particularly touchy and there are many stories about his quick temper and his readiness to take an insult and notice a slight. For example, at Silati the Muria described how he interrupted a Kalar marriage at Bara Dongar. A Muria neighbour had dedicated a pig to Dulha Deo. On the morning of the marriage the pig wandered over to the Kalar's house and the Kalar exclaimed, 'Alas! I have seen a pig's face early in the morning'. When Dulha Deo in the form of the pig heard this, he was very angry and stood snorting with rage in front of the house, refusing to allow the marriage to proceed. At last the Kalar had to touch the pig's feet and promise a goat in honour of Dulha Deo.

A practical reason for Dulha Deo's bad reputation may be the fact that at a marriage everybody is very excited, more or less drunk, and hitches in the procedure and quarrels between relations are always likely to occur. Whenever anything goes wrong, the blame is put on the god who must then be properly appeased. Dulha Deo serves a useful purpose as the divine whipping-boy.

Bhimul Pen

In many Muria villages there is a small shrine of four wooden pillars and some cross-poles, but no roof, round one or two stones that may be anything from one to three feet high. These represent the deity who is called variously Bhimul Pen, Bhima or Bhimsen and his wife Bhimsenin or Gorondi Dokari.

I think it probable that there was a very ancient aboriginal deity, a rain-god called Bhimul, whose cult has been assimilated to that of the mightiest of the Pandava brothers, Bhimsen. The Muria expect both Lingo and Bhimul to provide them with rain in due season. If there is a drought, Bhimul's stone is covered with cow-dung with the idea that he will quickly send rain to wash himself clean.[2]

But the Muria Bhimul has many other functions. In eastern Kondagaon, he takes the place of Lingo as the founder of the ghotul and its protector. He is regarded as having a special interest in drums and must be worshipped when a mandri drum is made and when it is used at a wedding. He and his wife are associated with stilt-walking. He appears as the cause of thunder and the fertilizer of the crops.

Bhimul has a special festival to himself in order to ensure a good rainfall. The villagers bring in March a little of whatever seed or vegetable is available and throw it over Bhimul's stone. The Gaita makes the usual offerings. Chelik and motiari dance all night.[3]

[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 119; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73.

[2] To get rain, Bombay Hindu villagers 'besmear the phallus of Shiva with cooked rice and curds'.—Enthoven, op. cit., p. 321. The Parja of Bastar are described as fixing a piece of wood into the ground in the name of Bhimsen over which they pour water when they are in need of rain.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 377.

[3] For the widespread cult of this 'heroic godling' both among Hindus and aboriginals, see Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 66, 89, 290 and Vol. II, p. 182; Grigson, op. cit., pp. 206, 215, 219; S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Calcutta, 1912), p. 98; *The Baiga*, p. 59 and *passim*; *The Agaria*, p. 93; *The Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 76 (for the cult among the Nagpur Gond); ibid., p. 236 (for the Urali's idea that thunder is the result of a duel between the two Bhimas in heaven); Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. IV, pp. 56 and 71 (for the Koyi tradition that traces the origin of the tribe to Bhimadev who while hunting in the jungle met a wild woman of the woods and married

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

The Gods of the Home

Among the Muria, specially those towards the east and round Kondagaon, there is a definite belief that certain gods are attached to men and women and go about with them sharing their life and helping when help is needed. At Kanera the Muria said that Dokara Deo lives with men and aids them in distress, while Kondi or Lagar Deo lives with women. At Dongrigura the Pujari said that the gods themselves do not accompany men everywhere but 'their shadows come to them on the wind' always ready to help in danger. At Karanji the people said that whatever god receives special honour rewards his worshippers by living with them but that Budha Deo, Kondi Deo and Lagar Deo, who came with the Raja of Bastar from Warangal to protect him, are the special gods who go here and there to guard human beings.

The fact that this belief is mainly confined to the more sophisticated (though still truly Muria) villages near Kondagaon suggests that it is a Hindu importation along the main road from the Central Provinces.

Kondi Deo goes with a girl [1] to her husband's house on the day she is married. After the birth of the first child, any misfortune that comes is attributed to this god and the family has to promise to worship him on condition that he troubles them no more. They wait for a year and then the woman's married sisters come to visit her and subscribe sufficient money to buy a pig.

On a Saturday the house is cleaned and the next morning a *chok* pattern is made in the compound with rice-flour, in the middle of which some rice is placed. A small earthen pot is put there and a knife. The head of the family offers incense and makes the pig eat the rice saying, 'O Kondi Deo, protect and preserve my family and children. It is for their sake that this offering is made to you, and we will repeat it every second year'. When the pig has eaten the rice, the husband of either the eldest or the youngest sister kills it. They cook the pig and invite the village elders to the feast. A pit is dug inside the house into which, when the feast is over, the leaf-plates, the pig's bones and even the water in which the cooking-pots are washed, must be thrown. They then hang the earthen pot and the knife near the Pot of the Departed.

The worship of Lagar Deo is not unlike that of Narayan Deo to whom the Larn pig is dedicated in the Central Provinces.[2] Lagar Deo is also a special god of women and is indeed often identified with Kondi Deo. He first lives with the mother of a household, but after the marriage of the eldest daughter he goes with her to her new home. When her child is born he first troubles the mother and then goes to each of her married sisters and troubles their female children. When they decide to appease him they ask all the female members of the family, sisters, sister's daughters, grand-daughters, all of them, and

her. The Koyi dance is an imitation of Bhimador's pursuit of his enemies); R. B. Bainbridge, 'The Sacrias of the Rajmahal Hills', *Mem. ASB.* Vol. II, pp. 46ff.

Other legends about Bhimsen may be found in *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, pp. 99 and 135 (for Bhimsen's romance with a Devi); A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Reports*, Vol. XXII, p. 53 (the pillar of Aaoka near Bettiya locally regarded as Bhimsen's walking-stick); ibid., Vol. XVI, p. 16 (the lion pillar at Bakhra known as the pole of the bedstead of Bhimsen); an interesting and well-told story in R. A. Sterndale, *Seonee* (Calcutta, 1887), p. 97.

[1] Among the Uraon, Achrael and her companion Joda are the special deities of women. Once in a generation, every family must perform a ceremony for the well-being of its female children. As in Bastar, all female relatives and their husbands attend. For a full description, see S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 65ff.

[2] See *The Baiga*, pp. 405ff. and articles by Shamrao Hivale and Durga Bhagwat in *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 91–119.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

776 dedicate a pig by castrating it and removing a bit of the ear and tail. They wash its legs and throw rice at it saying, 'If you are a true god, give us prosperity, keep us safe and after so many years we will give you gifts'. Then the pig is set free and allowed to go where it will. The rice which was thrown at it is carefully divided and given to each of the husbands of the woman's younger sisters. They are to sow this every year, and at the end of three years to bring whatever has been produced. The men sow this seed in a special patch of ground, harvest it and store it separately, repeating the process every year. When they are ready they appoint a certain member of the family as the Kotwar for this special duty and he goes round to the houses of all those relations who three years before had shared in the ceremony. Once again all the female members of the family must come. Every household invited must bring a chicken.

On the appointed day each of the husbands comes with the rice that he has grown. They dig a pit and bring the dedicated pig. After making it eat rice as usual, they beat it over the head with a rice-husker and so kill it. The men invited to the feast may eat the pork, but the only women who may do so are those who were present at the original ceremony. Sometimes an interval of five years is allowed between the dedication of the pig and its sacrifice.

In some places the earthen pot with rice, pulse and a small knife is always kept near the House of the Departed to satisfy Kondi Pen.

The Divine Motiari

776 Throughout India the villagers dread and take endless trouble to placate the
171 Matal or Village Mothers.[1] These dangerous and malignant beings are the cause of disease, domestic tragedy and accident. It would be an interesting subject for psycho-analytic research to discover why the beautiful name 'Mother' should be given to these bloodthirsty deities.

But beside the Mothers there are the Maidens. These too are known in other parts of India.[2] In northern Bastar at least, as we might expect in a country populated by charming and graceful motiari, the Maidens or Kanyang are generally regarded as benevolent though, like the motiari, they expect to receive proper attention. It is not, I think, fanciful to call these the 'Divine Motiari' and indeed the seven chief Kanyang Sisters have the names Belosa, Dulosa, Alosa, Sulki, Lahari, Jalko and Malko, all of which are the titles of motiari. It is said that in the ghotul these titles are specially treasured and fortunate since they are the names of the Kanyang in whose honour the girls dance the Diwali dances.

776 There are Naiads, Kanyang, Divine Motiari—call them what you will—of the forest and of the water. One Kanyang lives in the sago-palm; another flashes across the sky in the shape of lightning; another presides over the salt-lick. In all they number seven score.

Let us examine some of them and their character more carefully. Perhaps the most important of the Kanyang is the Yer Kanyang, the rather lonely maiden who lives in streams and rivers. When she hears the music of the dance floating across at night from the nearest ghotul, she grows very sad and goes to find some motiari living wretched and ashamed because of the menstrual contagion that is on her. Then the two dance together in the world of dreams all night. This maiden is honoured by the Muria when they go to fish. Gifts are promised before they begin and if the catch is good they always remember her. When Gadru of Chaniyagaon was nearly drowned as a child, the Siraha

[1] See Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 111ff.
[2] See Dalton, op. cit., p. 188; Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 11a.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

diagnosed the reason in the failure of the boy's father to sacrifice a pig to the Yer Kanyang as he had promised to do after a good catch of fish.

A bride going from Amasara to Nayanar to be married gave the Water Maidens in a river she crossed two rings: 'As we give rings to our motiari she gave, for the Maidens of the Water are also motiari.' What is called the Neyi Maur or the first wedding crown, worn when haldi is put on the body of bride and bridegroom, is thrown into the river after the marriage, for the Kanyang of the water. After the cowhide for a drum has been soaked in water, offerings are made to her for fear she has been defiled. This Kanyang, who is called Yer Kanyang, Julan Kanyang and sometimes Bisran Kanyang, like all such beings is sometimes touchy and may attack men in the form of a crocodile. When this happens, the villagers must give her large gifts, a pig, eggs, seven rings of aonra, red powder for her forehead and bangles for her wrists. In Matawal they said that when they went to fish they always remembered the Bisran Kanyang and when they got a good catch gave her such feminine finery as they thought she would like. Bisran Kanyang is said to give special help to witches.

Another Kanyang of the water, called Ghat Kanyang, lives in the place where people bathe and draw water. When they take an Anga to bathe it at its annual festival they make offerings to this Kanyang saying, 'Be with us to help us. Here we drink water, here our children bathe. Let there be no disease, let no witch overlook the water; protect us and we will worship you every year'.

Bahi Kanyang lives in very small streams and is offered bangles made of weeds and other gifts to ensure good rain and plenty of water in the rice-fields. Chapar Kanyang, the Maiden of the salt-lick, lives in the place where cattle go to lick the salty earth, and there every year the Bhum-Gaita goes with the villagers to make the usual offerings in order to free the cattle from disease.

Kanyang of the fields, such as Berha Kanyang, preside over the crops. When the rice is ripening the Muria offer a pig for the village and a chicken for each house so that the grain may be good, undamaged by wild animals and not destroyed by witches. In Gudla people said that there were two Kanyang in the fields; one called Wujri is benevolent and ensures a good crop; the other, Bagri Kanyang, is responsible when the crop fails. In Matawal, the Maiden of the field was called Ras Kanyang and at Binjhli, Dhand Kanyang. Here they said that at harvest time the Gaita went to every field with chickens, vermilion and the new rice and offered it to Dhand Kanyang and Dhand Rau. Only when this had been done could they cut the crop.

In the forest lives Sukhli Kanyang in her little hut. Should a cow wander near, Sukhli Kanyang catches it and sucks the milk.

The Kanyang of the sago-palm, which was originally a feather-tuft in a motiari's hair, is described elsewhere.[1] This Mur Kanyang, as she is sometimes called, gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul'. Then she 'marries' and the juice ceases to flow. This Kanyang is subject to a menstrual period during which no one should drink the juice. Regular offerings are made to her when a tree is tapped for the first time.

Local Gods

In addition to the gods whose cult is more or less universal throughout the Muria country, there are many local gods who have generally come into being as a result of a dream or some magician's diagnosis of the cause of a calamity.

[1] See p. 55.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

Round Kondagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

IV. The Clan-God

We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods' *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halba, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

614 776 Today when the process of god-making in Bastar has burst all bounds, when the clans have been scattered, when new clans have come into existence and old clans divided, there is no longer the neat and tidy arrangement of former days. But there is still a deep attachment to the idea of the clan-territory and the clan-god. Every clan still has its spiritual headquarters, still has the clan-god who is regularly worshipped at the great festivals, still maintains a clan-priest (Pen-Dhurwa or Pen-Waddai) to perform that worship, and still in many cases takes its dead to mingle with the clan-ancestors. What has happened in modern times is that each clan may have several places whither it will go for worship or for the disposal of its dead, and this has confused the picture. But the clan-gods are still of great authority.

778 776 614 The Anga is in form and character unique among the aboriginal gods of India. In form it is an arrangement of three parallel poles of saja,[1] bel or ira wood, over which are tied by siari rope cross-pieces of bamboo or saja. The central pole is the actual god, the two side-poles being simply intended to enable his two or four bearers to raise him and carry him about. This central pole has a curious head called *koko* which resembles that of a snake or bird. At the junctions of the logs and cross-bars there are tufts of peacock feathers. Silver ornaments, symbols of the sun and moon and sometimes plain rupees, are nailed to the ends of the poles. *Bands of silver may be hammered round* them. Bells are hung round the 'neck'. Sometimes the Anga is two-headed: husband and wife live together. The clan-god of the Maravi at Phunder, who is called Karati Dokara, has two heads each with a hooded cobra nailed to it. So too the Anga at Bhanpuri, Son Kuar, is two-headed. Sometimes the Anga's wife is made in the form of a pole and placed upon him.

The Anga is kept in a special shrine apart from the other gods and is either suspended by ropes from the roof or placed on a bamboo support a couple of feet above the ground. When it is taken abroad or goes to live for a time in someone's house, a special stand must be made for it. The Anga usually has a *jiwa* or soul. At Phunder it is a piece of iron carefully preserved under the sacrificial stone in front of the shrine. In Semurgaon the soul of Lingo is a bit of iron wrapped in a grass bundle and hung above its body. Sometimes the soul goes abroad of its own accord and has to be replaced with appropriate offerings. At Chingnar, the soul of Son Kuar goes to hunt at night and in the morning feathers are found scattered about his shrine.

When in use, the Anga is kept sometimes very casually. In Dongrigura, I saw one hanging from the roof in a corner of the granary belonging to the Gaita. At Magbeda, it was lying crookedly in a broken-down hut in the Gaita's garden. The two-headed Anga, Son Kuar-Maoli, at Bhanpuri, is kept in the Gaita's *bari*-enclosure in a little shed. At Karanji the Naitami Anga, Pila Kuar, is kept in the Gaita's house.

The Anga often has one or more attendants in the form of wooden horses slung from the roof beside it. These horses are taken out at the clan festivals and the mediums dance wildly with them. There are two horses attending the Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon. The shrines may be adorned with the skulls of animals killed in the latest ceremonial hunt, with decorated poles or sticks used by the god at festivals, and with symbols of the god's children.

For the Anga is very like a human being. It marries and has children. It has relations both inside and outside the clan. Some of the older gods have very large families. Lingo Pen's brothers, nephews and other relatives are enshrined and worshipped all over the north of the State. The process of

[1] The famous Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon is made of saja, for it was this tree he kicked as he escaped unhurt from his great ordeal.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

778 776 614

multiplication is accelerated by the Anga's polygamous habits. The son of an Anga may itself be an Anga, or it may take the form of a Gutal—a long pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the top, or a Lath—a decorated flag attached to a bamboo staff.

The manufacture of an Anga is an elaborate and dangerous business. It is a necessary one because new gods are born from time to time, and the old gods wear out. There is a general idea that an Anga 'dies' every three or four generations. When this happens it leaves its mortal frame and troubles its clansmen until they make it a new one. Sometimes it expresses its will by burning down its shrine—when this happens everything is consumed, but the god itself is unharmed. Sometimes it attacks the village cattle in the form of a tiger. Sometimes it plagues the Gaita with appalling dreams.

The actual making of the god is unusual and interesting; it reveals the logical and straightforward working of the Muria mind. Once it is admitted that the Anga is a sort of person with like passions to ourselves, the rest follows. I will give some typical accounts from villages in the north of the State.

In Kokori the clan-priest told me that when an Anga gets very old and tired, it is taken to a river and 'cooled' by being thrown into the water. The clan-priest prays to the Yer Kanyang, 'Now it is in your charge, you must care for it'. After a time the old Anga sends a dream to the priest and the villagers decide to make a new one. They have to go to another priest of a clan which stands in a marriageable relationship to the Anga's clan and he takes them to a suitable tree. He embraces it, and if his hands meet round the trunk it is a good omen, and an engagement is celebrated.

The following year in the month of Magh they again go to the same priest who offers rice to the tree and says, 'Now we are going to take you away'. He goes round it with a thread, winding it seven times, and then cuts it down. As he is cutting it, he gives the tree liquor from time to time 'in case it should get tired'. They take the wood home, and induce some old man to make the Anga. When it is ready they take it to the river and make offerings to the Yer Kanyang. Every Anga has an umbilical stump with a cord attached and the father's sister of the clan-priest must cut this cord and throw it into the water. Then they bathe the god to purify it after the cutting of the cord. At last it is taken to its temple and a young bull is sacrificed.

Another interesting account comes from Korenda, where the Anga of Budha Dokara and Dokari Deo, the clan-gods of the Partabi and Wadde clans in that area, are made every few generations. The preliminary rites are performed as elsewhere, but later, just before the visiting clan come to fetch the wood for their Anga, the Gaita of the Bhatgaon Mana (whence the wood must be taken) goes to the path by which they will come and buries seven eggs at intervals along it.

After the visitors have cut and dressed the wood, and are preparing to go home, they whistle loudly. The Gaita and villagers of Bhatgaon are waiting for the signal, and at once come out to catch them in a sort of game of hide-and-seek. The visitors dash for home, but if one of them is unlucky enough to break one of the buried eggs, it turns into a tiger which destroys their cattle.

When the Korenda people get home, they cut the tree into two, the upper half to be used for Budha Dokara and the lower for Dokari Deo. A special enclosure is made near the shrine of the now exhausted clan-god, and the wood is left there until someone comes forward who is willing to make the Anga. There is no limit to the interval; it may last any time from a few weeks to several years. When one or two very old men, who are not likely

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in any case to live much longer, come forward for the work, they set them to make the frames. When they are ready they put an egg on each Anga and make the old men sit 'to hatch them'. They have to sit there until their *jiwa* (souls) pass from their bodies into the gods. They know when this happens because the Anga begin to shake and tremble of their own accord. Directly this happens, the members of both clans bring a cow or bull and sacrifice it. The old men climb down from their perches and the Gaita breaks the eggs before the gods.

Both Anga now start swinging and are carried on the shoulders of four Siraha-mediums. After the usual dance they are placed in their shrines.

But the two old men who made them, and whose souls have passed into their frames, die within a few days.

It is obvious, therefore, that it is highly dangerous to make an Anga. In Korenda at the present time the process of god-making has been delayed, although long overdue; for there is no old Partabi or Wadde willing to take the risk. It is generally said that such men will die within a year; if they do not they are regarded as exceptionally lucky. But their life thereafter is blind and shrunken, miserable to themselves and a heavy charge on their relations. Thus in Kabonga, Malsai made a new Anga and lived for four years before he died. But it is said that for the last three years of his life, he was a senile and helpless figure, longing for the death that was denied him.[1]

Repairs to the Anga, which are made every twelve or fifteen years, are less dangerous, but they too should only be undertaken by old men.

The Anga has various functions. Its primary function, of course, is that of god of the clan, keeping its scattered members together and attracting them to its worship. It is honoured at the great clan festivals held once a year in the *pen-ravar* and it may also be taken out to visit the shrines of related clan-gods. At a big clan-festival and at the great Mandai commercial festivals at Jagdalpur, Dantewara, Kondagaon and elsewhere sometimes a dozen or more of these Anga may be present. The procedure is generally the same. The Anga is worshipped with various offerings; it is taken down to the river and immersed in water, it is then anointed with oil and carried on the shoulders of its bearers; it is 'exercised' by dancing and playing with the other gods. At these festivals I have often watched the Anga attended by a dozen lesser gods, a crowd of drummers and gong-beaters and a vast company of boys and girls, men and women, going round and round the sacred clearing in procession. This is the Pen Karsita or Sport of the Gods.

Incest within the clan is regarded as specially insulting to the Anga and before the guilty can be forgiven offerings must be made to it. If they do not do this the offenders' bodies will swell and their eyes burst. They will be buried apart from the other members of the family or clan, and their children will be given to the despised Lohar in marriage.

As god of the clan the Anga is specially interested in marriages, and in many villages the Muria place one of the marriage crowns upon it or in its shrine. Often too it is concerned in death ceremonies. The memorial menhirs of

[1] An old report, by Captain MacPherson, on the Kond refers to one of their destructive deities. 'It is firmly believed that the tree under which the deity is placed must die; that the water in which he is laid must be dried up; that the priest in his service cannot expect to survive four years.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 20. When the Kiwai Papuans erect a man's house (*darima*), an old couple perform the proper ceremonies and die soon after. 'There seems to be an understanding that the endowment of the house with its various magical properties has consumed their vitality.' —G. Landtmann, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 22.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

members of the clan should be erected, if possible, in its neighbourhood. At Phunder there is a bamboo bundle containing a small earthen pot hanging above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any Maravi dies his relatives carry his *jiwa* there, open the bamboo bundle and sacrifice a chicken above it, allowing the blood to fall into the pot. This means that the soul of the dead man will henceforth live in the pot hanging above his clan-god.

Another important function of the Anga is to serve as a means of detecting witches, breach of tribal taboo, theft or even to discover loss of property. At the end of 1940 I witnessed an interesting witch-hunt at Palki in the Narayanpur Tahsil.

On 16 November 1940, Aitu, the Muria headman of Palki, bought eight annas worth of Court Fee stamps and affixed them to an application to the Tahsildar of Kondagaon, complaining that in his village the animals were dying, people were falling sick and crops were failing, and asking for the services of the Anga Deo at Bara Dongar to discover what witch, magician or malignant ghost or deity was responsible. On his paying five rupees into the Treasury the Tahsildar issued *parwāna* instructing the priest in charge of the god to take it to Palki (but to no other village) in order to discover and thus cure the trouble.

On the 18th, Aitu reached the shrine at Bara Dongar, and almost immediately the party set out. There was Deo Singh, the hereditary Halba priest of the god, four Muria bearers to carry it and a 'Dhurwa' priest, a Muria specially attached to the god's service. In two days they reached Palki and camped in a little shed of branches outside the village, placing the god on a rough bed of logs and branches in a separate hut.

There Deo Singh told me about this famous Anga. His name was Narsingnath Deo and he was born at Amgaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana. His father was Morg Raj, who now lives at Paralkot, his mother Devni Dokari of Antagarh. His younger brother is the Pat Deo who now lives at Jagdalpur and was taken there in the time of Raja Bhairon Deo to hunt witches. Here, of course, Deo Singh was talking in theological language: actually the Raja, hearing of the fame of the Anga in the wilds, had a copy made and installed in the palace at Jagdalpur. For some time the custom was to bring the original god from Jagdalpur and send the copy to take its place; but in time this custom was dropped and today the Anga in the palace acts independently of its prototype.

Raja Bhairon Deo, continued my informant, at one time had both Angas at Jagdalpur. There was a great epidemic, and none of the gods was able to help, so the Raja ordered them all to be thrown into the Indrawati river. But only Anga Deo and his young brother Pat Deo floated on the surface and drifted to the shore. This made them very famous, but the Raja felt that it was wrong to keep two such gods in Jagdalpur and he sent the Anga Narsingnath to Bara Dongar, where he has since resided.[1]

This Anga is made of bel wood. Every three generations it is remade. It is decorated with a silver snake and a sun and moon in silver. The old worn-out images are thrown into a deep pond at Amgaon.

On the 20th of November the witch hunt at Palki began. It was only with great difficulty that I was able to be present, for the villagers concealed both the time and place of the ceremony, and in fact were sending me off in the

[1] For another account see W. V. Grigson's Introduction to my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), pp. x f. According to Grigson's information the Jagdalpur god was copied from the Narayanpur god.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

opposite direction. Once I had made an offering of silver to the god, however, they became very friendly and I was able to witness all that happened 776

Carried by four men, and accompanied by the village elders, the Anga Deo was carried from house to house round the village. The god stopped before each house, and the women had to come out with an offering of a leaf-cup of rice and a copper coin, and walk under the god and away the other side. If all was well the Dhurwa placed a ring of aonra leaf on the threshold and a bit of iron slag and hammered it with an axe. 778 754

But in two houses the Anga scented trouble; he refused to accept the offerings of the householders, swinging round indignantly, then rushing to and fro, whirling and turning in an alarming manner. He pointed out an old man and woman in one house, and the householder in another as specially affected by the evil. The priests hastily poured liquor in front of the god 'for he becomes thirsty when there is some mischief in his presence'.

At last they took the Anga back to his hut outside the village and everybody sat round to discuss what had happened and to consider what was to be done. On this occasion the mediums proclaimed that it was not a magician or witch, but a number of deities affronted at not receiving sufficient honour—Pendrawandin, Pardeshin, Koriya Pat, Garba Rau and the local ancestors—who were causing the trouble. That day and the next day were spent in sacrifice to the Anga and divinations by the local mediums. On the morning of the third day diagnosis having been fully established, they went to effect a cure.

The bearers carried the Anga to the first house which had been shown as 'infected'. They stood before the door and a Sirahā-medium sat down before it. The god 'climbed' on him and he revealed what things were needed to appease the angry gods. He made two little images of black wax to represent the *kan* digging-bar of Koriya Pat and the axe of Pendrawandin. The owner of the house brought out a basket of rice and many little leaf-packets of parched gram, rice, lamp-black, rice-flour, haldi. The medium danced and postured before the god, and the Dhurwa took two chickens for the Rau, a pig for Pendrawandin, and a goat for Koriya Pat and made them eat a little rice. Each householder present put a rice-mark on the goat saying, 'Whatever evil disease, ghost or god is troubling us, take to yourself and carry away'. 776 778 754 787

After this the bearers were suddenly impelled to take the Anga out into the jungle and we all followed. The Anga wandered about erratically, but at last came to a halt at a point where two paths crossed, before an ant-hill. The medium fell into a trance again and called out instructions in a high clear voice. The Dhurwa cleared the ground and made a criss-cross pattern of black and white. He placed seven little piles of rice in a row. He made the sacrificial animals eat, and then killed them, dropping the blood on every pile of rice. With his knife he made a circle to enclose the god, and nailed a piece of slag into the ground.

Then the old man and woman who had been proclaimed as 'infected' came to the front and, holding bunches of *chir* grass (the grass from which brooms are made) behind them, broke them in their hands, threw them away with a gesture of finality, spat and walked hurriedly home without looking round, and by another way. The Anga also was taken home by another route back to its camp. 776 778 754

I was not able to see the ceremonies for the purification of the other house. The Anga demanded an offering of the fur of a wild squirrel, and this took some time to find. Two days later, however, the rites were performed and the village was cleared of its supernatural dangers.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice, returned home the next day.

Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2] At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Lord of Anga and the body. Vasubhuta 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shamefaced pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga) ", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'. —Nundolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 317.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.

2: Elwin E-5 (1939-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The similarity between this description and the account which I have just given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mân to pen nahi to pâthar.—*If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.*—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under asja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

1 See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
2 Dey, *op. cit.*, p. 328.
3 Ibid., p. 344.
4 J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

I. The Shrine of Lingo Pen

IN the wild wooded country at the top of the hills, as you go up from Antagarh towards Amabera, is the little village of Semurgaon, and in the forest that surrounds the village, on a cliff overlooking a tiny stream, is the shrine of Lingo Pen who was once honoured by the Gond and Pardhan all over the Central Provinces. Today, as a living force, his cult is probably confined to the north of Bastar, and to the Muria, to whom he has given many deities and the most cherished of their institutions.

In Semurgaon, Lingo's shrine, a substantial thatched hut, is maintained by the Muria, but his priest is a Pardhan—Deo Singh of the Koreti Nang sept—who sings and plays before him on the dhusir-fiddle which is also Lingo's dwelling-place. The shrine is not unworthy of this venerable deity, the lord of all the aboriginal godi of Bastar. Under a spacious roof lies the Anga of Lingo suspended on a swing and sheltered by a great screen of peacock's feathers. At the four corners of the swing are bunches of the same feathers, and at the Anga's side is Lingo's *jiwa* or soul, a piece of iron like a ploughshare wrapped in grass. Round Lingo's neck is a bell, his son Nettungundi. To the right is his throne, a large cup-shaped stone. Above hangs an iron drum and a hunting-horn. From the roof are suspended pots containing Palo, the sacred cloth, and Lingo's two horses, crooked sticks adorned with feathers on which the mediums ride in ecstasy before him.

Every three years there is a great festival at Semurgaon, when Lingo is brought out of his shrine and is worshipped with pigs, goats and bulls. From all over the Jhorian, Amabera and Antagarh Parganas and from Kanker State come the pilgrims bringing their gods with them, 'for Lingo is Raja and Bastar is his kingdom'. At Alor also, in a clearing in the heart of the jungle, is a four-foot pillar of mahua wood in honour of Lingo, and every three years there is a festival. Indeed throughout northern Bastar you may find Lingo's relatives and hear his legend, a token of the strength and distribution of his cult.[1]

II. The Lingo Legend in the Central Provinces

Later in this chapter I present several versions of the Lingo legend as it is current among the Muria of Bastar, where its outstanding feature is its account of the founding of the ghotul. But first let us consider some other versions of the story which have been recorded in the Central Provinces.

The first of these versions was taken down by the Rev Stephen Hislop from a 'Pardhan priest of the Gond at Nagpur' in the Gondi tongue, and was later edited, translated and published by Sir Richard Temple, in 1866.[2] Unfortunately we have no indication of the distribution of the legend, nor indeed whether—in the form recorded by Hislop—it was known to any other

[1] There is a shrine to Lingal Pen at Cherpal in the Dantewara Tahsil, but I do not know whether the Maria here identify him with the Lingo of the north.

[2] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*. Edited by R. Temple, 1866. Large extracts from Temple's translation were reproduced by Bishop Eyre Chatterton in his *The Story of Gondwana* (London, 1916) and many of Temple's notes used without acknowledgement. A brief summary is given by Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 47ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY

DANCE AND SONG

I

DANCE and song, games, stories and riddles should not be regarded as mere recreation; in the Muria's eyes they are serious and important business. A ghotul's reputation largely depends on the excellence of its dancing; the motiari's ability to sing may make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful wedding. Even the games, many of them, serve an educational purpose. The younger boys and girls are carefully trained in the ghotul, and the others practise night after night, repeating the same steps and rhythms again and again till they get them right, before they set out on a dancing expedition. The complicated stick-dances need special training and practice, for once an expedition has started mistakes are regarded as ill-omened.

The first musician was Lingo himself, and the practice of music is not held, as so often in India, to be discreditable, but is honourably rooted in the history and mythology of the tribe. Many of the songs and dances have a religious purpose, and often begin with an invocation to Lingo and other gods. Before the Mandri dances at a wedding, worship should be performed before a pile of drums.

It is refreshing to go to Bastar from the reform-stricken [1] and barren districts of the Central Provinces. As you climb the Keskal Ghat the whole countryside bursts into song about you. The Muria have a short way with 'reformers', as I was fortunate enough to see at Telenga village on 26 March 1941. There was a marriage that day in the village, and the chelik and motiari from eleven villages came to attend it. But when they arrived they did not begin to dance as usual, but went out into the jungle for a consultation. They had seen among the wedding guests the sinister figure of Chainu, the headman of Maragaon. A month earlier this Chainu had attended a marriage at the house of Guma in his own village. Chelik and motiari had come as usual and danced till noon. Then according to custom they asked for liquor to offer to the drums and food for themselves. Chainu, who had been under a good deal of Hindu influence, refused to let them have either liquor for the drums or food for themselves, and declared that he would 'stop this dancing throughout the pargana'. The chelik and motiari left the marriage in protest and for a month the matter was the subject of heated discussion in their ghotul.

Now in Telenga the boys saw their chance. After a long discussion, they came back, a large and formidable crowd, and told the Pargana Manjhi (of Chalka) that they wanted a panchayat and that Chainu must be there. Near the marriage-booth the boys assembled in a great circle, and almost all the wedding guests joined to see what would happen. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom were left sitting in their places, entirely forgotten.

[1] It is very hard to understand the mentality of the 'reformers' who would deprive the aboriginal of his beautiful and innocent recreations, and would impose on him a 'Shiv-raj' (as it is often called) at which the great dancer Natarajan would have shuddered. It is interesting to compare the attitude of the American Negro towards the 'Spirituals' which have done as much as anything else to establish him throughout the world. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were considered fit only for uneducated 'country niggers'. 'As late as 1909, Negro students at Howard University rebelled and refused to sing them. By the more progressive and aggressive elements in the race the Spirituals were frowned upon as a reminder of slavery and ignorance.'—N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 3. Then suddenly, they became the fashion, and the Negroes found that nothing gave them more credit and prestige.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

if they catch them relieving themselves. There is nothing very subtle or witty in any of this. In fact, since there are so few taboos on sex in the ghotul it is rather difficult to be funny about it.

It is worth noting that even the gods are not above a bit of horse-play. In Adnar I watched the young deity Chelik Sai, who was after all a chelik and conveniently represented by a long erect pole, amusing himself with a group of motiari. In the hands of his medium he pranced about, poking himself at the girls, chasing them about, pretending to catch them and ride upon them. Another medium carrying an iron chain amused everybody by his absurd gestures; he would dance round and round a line of girls, bend down and peer up into their faces in the most ridiculous manner. In Metawand, one of the horses of the gods was chased about the field, and roars of laughter greeted the divine sport.

A common type of funny story finds its humour in an absurd and indecorous situation. In Metawand I was told the tale of the woman who is going along the road in the rains. Some of the mud gets into her vagina and when she stops at a stream to wash it, a crab catches hold of her clitoris. She calls a man to help, but hard as he pulls at the crab he cannot make it let go. At last he tries to bite it off, but it gets hold of his nose with its spare claw, and there they all are—on a public highway, the respectable Muria with his nose stuck in the vagina of an unknown woman. After a while along comes a Lohar and gets the crab out with his tongs, but only on condition that the woman will give him 'tobacco' whenever he wants it. Some days later he comes to her house to claim his reward. She is busy cooking and asks him to lie down on a cot until she is ready. He lies on his face, but he is so excited that his erect penis goes through the strings of the cot and protrudes below. A cat thinking it a bit of meat, catches it. The situation is now reversed. The woman comes out and refuses to release the Lohar unless he declares her quit of her debt to him.

Another tale, from Aturgaon, which is known in Bengal and to the Uraon, but is given an entirely fresh and vivid turn by the Muria, again gets its effect from the sticking together, in public and deplorable juxtaposition, of incongruous things: a man and woman cannot get apart, a midwife finds her hands stuck to her head and nothing on below, a magician discovers a bullock's horns sticking to his bottom. Personally I think this tale is really funny, even in its bare and literal form.

There was a Muria Raja with one son. In his village was a barber who also had an only son. The two boys were always playing together, they would never do their work. The Raja used to tell his son to go and plough in the fields, but he always refused. At last the Raja got very angry and turned him out. The boy put on his ornaments and took a bag of money, mounted his horse and rode away. As he went he met the barber's son and told him that he was going to his future father-in-law's house. The barber's son said he would go with him.

Presently, the Raja's son said he wanted to relieve himself. There were no leafy trees at hand so the barber's son said, 'You had better take off your clothes and ornaments and go to the jungle in your loin cloth'. While the Raja's son was away, the barber's son put on his clothes and ornaments and rode off on the horse.

When the boy returned and found his things gone, he wept so loudly that Bara Deo heard his crying and came to him in the shape of an old

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

according to Mr Elwin's categories. Apart from the five intoxication murders, two were prompted by belief that crops had been bewitched, one was a fatigue crime and one was caused by a dispute as to property, one by resentment over being dunned for a debt of one anna and one by a quarrel over failure to repair the skins of a drum broken by a friend who had borrowed it, while three were the result of conjugal infidelity. There were three cases in which the villagers agreed to conceal the crime to avoid the trouble of police and court investigation. The means employed included assault with an axe, a sword, a fencing pole, a stick, a wooden stool and fists, kicking, throttling, shooting with bow and arrow, twisting of neck and stabbing with a knife. In one case the accused committed suicide to avoid the disgrace attendant on the revival of an old scandal caused by his son's association with a blacksmith girl whose murder he and the villagers had hushed up for three years.

Of witchcraft and magic as factors in crime Mr Elwin has written fully in Chapter V, and has illustrated at page 61 a typical clan-god, Anga Pen or Pat Deo (log-god), sometimes used to detect witches in the manner described at page 17, while at pages 185-6 he deals with the Maria view that a witch or a sorcerer should be killed. That view is undoubtedly widely held outside tribal circles, and the power of tribal log-gods to detect black magic is equally strongly believed in by Hindu and Muslim subjects of the State. The reaction of tribal beliefs and practices on the local Hindu rites and ceremonies is very marked, and an example of this is the way in which Raja Bhairon Deo, the great-grandfather of the present Maharaja of Bastar, installed in Jagdalpur a log-god which was either a copy of a famous log-god from Narayanpur in the north-west of the State, or, according to its present Halba Pujari, was brought by a former ruler from Dongar, the old capital, to Narayanpur, and shifted thence by Raja Bhairon Deo. This god is now the Pat Deo of Bastar *par excellence*, and four ceremonies are held in his honour during the Maharaja's Dassara celebrations. His witch-finding function strongly survives, and I well remember my amused astonishment when in 1927 during an inspection of the accounts of the Jagdalpur Temples managed by the State Court of Wards I found

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

that the villagers around Jagdalpur frequently requisitioned his services for this purpose, paying for them a fee of Rs 5 into the State Treasury. When I wondered whether by lending the log-god the Court of Wards had not been accessory to the killing or beating of witches, the Pujari thus explained the god's conformity to modern law: 'Pat Deo is worshipped to save men from *bhut* and *pret*, and detects *bhut*, *churel* and witches. If a village needs his detective services, the villagers pay into the Treasury a fee of Rs 5, and then the Manager lets me take the god out. I walk behind Pat Deo, who is carried on the shoulders of four men, none of whom must come from the village which needs his help. Starting from the east side, we take him round the village widdershins, and then enter the village, Pat Deo himself impelling the bearers and then knocking against the house where the evil is hidden or against the actual magician. He will not leave the house till the guilty one comes out. Then in these days the offender kneels before Pat Deo and cries for forgiveness, which is given before Pat Deo goes home; he is not even outcasted now. In my grandfather's time he would have been set on an ass with his face towards the tail and taken in procession round the village; his head would then have been shaved, his front teeth pulled out by a Ghasia, and his hair and teeth buried in an ant-hill, while he would have been excommunicated and driven out of his village. They pulled out his teeth to stop him using them to suck blood and because without them he could not pronounce his spells.' One may be pardoned for scepticism as to the affair even in modern days being closed with Pat Deo kindly forgiving the magician!

This fear of magic as the source of illness and all troubles is strong in many parts of India. Here in Hyderabad belief in the power of *bhanamatti* or black magic is widespread, even among some persons of the highest education and social standing. A detailed investigation was made in 1916 by Mr L. B. Goad, an experienced officer of the Indian Police, then in charge of the State Criminal Investigation Department. His conclusion was that *bhanamatti* was so absolute a scourge in parts of Hyderabad and so utilized as a form of blackmail by its practitioners that special measures were

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make
285 baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 565 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 614 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is

[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. 771
Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should 776
be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan- 614
priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of 615
phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other 614
tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken [177] down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series 796
of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

843 such as, in other parts of India, of the use of a knife or the cutting of anything; but ordinary enquiry elicited no clue to them.

844 It was said on page 106 that children are born in the menstruation hut or room. This is certainly the case so far as the private huts and rooms are concerned; but in my notes it is not clear whether births ever take place in the communal menstruation hut. They probably do not, because obviously it may be needed at any time for other women of the village, and I have notes of children in Hikpulla and Nugur, where there are communal menstruation huts, being born in a corner of the veranda of the house specially walled off for the purpose.

[777] Cases are known of a mother being delivered of a child in the fields or the forest, but this is considered very unlucky, and as soon as the mother knows that her hour is upon her, she must make every effort to get in time to the menstruation hut or room. During delivery she may have the comfort of the presence of her mother-in-law or some woman from the village; but there are no midwives, and the woman with her must not touch her or assist the delivery; the mother is expected to do everything for herself, and it is regarded as very wrong if she is unable to do so. They pray to the clan-god during a difficult delivery, but appear to do nothing else to assist the mother by either medicine or ceremony. The mother herself has to cut the navel-cord of her baby either with her husband's ordinary knife or with an arrow-head. She cuts it about three or four inches from its junction with the stomach, and binds it close to the junction with a ligature of cord, the portion between the cut and the ligature being left to dry and fall off; and she is expected to bury the placenta (*wodi*) immediately after this under the house rubbish-heap outside the back of the house. If the child is born [845 dead, the mother has to bury it somewhere in the forest, going there 766] alone and digging the grave without assistance; it may not be buried in the regular village graveyard. Around Handawada a mother is expected to stay in the menstruation room for a full month after delivery; but the general rule in the interior of the Abujhmar hills is for her to remain there for eight days or until the navel-cord dries and falls off.

846 Everywhere it is taboo for the father to do any field or other work during this period of eight days before the navel-cord falls. No medicine is given to him. He must not sleep in the house during the period in most parts of the hills, but in the dormitory; around Handawada he sleeps in the portion of the *kala* room separated from the woman's portion by the *binda* mud threshold. He must not cook his own food during this period, and has to get a man friend to cook food for him in another house and bring it to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honeycomb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitha ondār* and the *lokti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognize four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mohu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sattapuri mohu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nihiti mohu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'In a golden box bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 450.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

844 Until the stump falls the father is in a state of taboo. He must not cook, he must not leave the house to visit his friends, he cannot go to the ghotul. No one will accept his tobacco and he cannot share in a sacrificial feast.

843 Certain attempts are made to influence and to diagnose the sex of unborn children. If a motiari, after fasting for twelve hours at her first menstruation, eats a dish of *khichri*, a mixture of pulse and rice without salt, her children will likewise be a mixture of boys and girls. If she goes to the jungle on this day and brings home a bundle of leaves on her hip, she is likely to bear girls.

Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman.

[524] *Chipta upre jai phar,* There is fruit inside the basket,
Jāna bābu kai phar? How can you know what fruit it is?

845 Abnormal births are not common but are not unknown. Twins are called *jānwar jiya* and are not regarded as either particularly lucky or unlucky. Twins with a single placenta are born if the mother eats a double fruit such as a double plantain or tendu or uses double leaves as a plate. Sensible women are careful to avoid doing this but sometimes accidents happen. In Rengagondi, there are twins, named Joga and Jogi, who were born because the mother ate off a double leaf at the end of her period. Such twins may also be due to a woman's passing between two men on her way back to the house from her menstrual bath. The shadows of both men fall upon her and the twins resemble them. In some places, it is thought if she passes at this time a man holding a baby she will have twins—if it is a boy, she will have male twins; if a girl, male and female. If the woman lies on her back after intercourse so that the man's seed divides into two streams, twins may result. When there are two placentae it is often supposed that the woman has been to two men and the twins, therefore, have different fathers. The woman may also have had intercourse with a ghost or spirit on the day following intercourse with her husband. Where this is suspected, the twins (if boy and girl) are called Dukhalu and Dukhali and are vaguely regarded as unlucky.

● [777]

Pandru of Bermakot twice had twins, from different wives. The first were from the Manjaro whom he made pregnant in the ghotul and were both girls: the second were from the Nirosa, another of his ghotul lovers, and were both boys. Pandru thinks he had twins because he went to each of the girls twice on the night following the post-catamenial bath. If this is done during the rains, girls will be born: if during the hot weather, there will be boys.

[777] A foot-presentation is called in Gondi *tāli-janamta* or 'cow-birth', for the child is born like a calf. This is regarded as very unlucky indeed and the family must immediately protect the child by waving round it a bundle of burning grass. Such births are generally expected to be fatal to the mother. A *kera bānjh* is a woman with only one child; 'she is like a plantain which gives fruit once on a stalk and never again'.

II. Name-giving

559 After about six weeks the mother stops her ritual bathing and resumes her domestic duties inside the house. It is now time to give the child a name, a name—it must be remembered—which the little chelik or motiari will hardly use during the period of childhood, which will never be taken by husband or wife after marriage, and will be uttered only with reluctance after death. Even then a later nickname may supplant this *mur-podor* or original name.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

764 The Muria cremate the bodies of those who die of yaws, leprosy and dropsy, so a party of chelik went ahead to prepare the pyre. When the bearers reached the place, which was in thick jungle, on the far side of a stream, away from the usual crematorium, they carried the corpse round the pyre, which was below a great mahua tree, three times anti-clockwise, and then laid it on the ground to the south-west of the pyre with the feet to the west.

Each of the relatives present came forward and laid a small piece of cloth on the body. Dhako's father-in-law (a father-in-law or an elder brother is often the chief actor at a funeral) poured out some mahua spirit by the head of the corpse saying, 'Today accept this from our hands; after today how will you get it again?' They then removed most of the clothes, but tied one piece to a branch of the mahua tree. The rest they took home to distribute among the children.

The chelik lifted the corpse on to the pyre and the old Wadder woman placed a little earth on saja leaves at either side of the head. She took a stone and broke Dhako's bangles 'for now she is separated from her husband, she is a widow'. They put a little jawa-gruel and water by the head, leaving the pot there. The chelik piled wood and dry grass round the pyre, but none was actually laid on the body. They rested the bier against the pile of wood and one of the boys broke it with his axe, then struck the ground all round—to represent the driving of nails 'to close the house' and prevent the ghost walking, and then two of them threw the axe to and fro over the pyre three times.

Now the same chelik who had carried the bier lit bundles of grass from a coil of paddy-straw rope which had been brought slowly smouldering from the hearth of Genjru's house, and ran quickly two by two round the pyre in opposite directions kindling the dry grass. The flames shot up and the women broke into a loud and moving lamentation. The men threw twigs (of any tree) onto the burning corpse, muttering, 'God to whom we vowed gifts has failed us. Let him take these twigs instead, for it's all he'll get'.

The people stayed for a while, some of them looking up fearfully at the smoke to see if it would go straight into the air or no, then returned slowly and sorrowfully to Genjru's house. The father-in-law met us and distributed oil which was rubbed on face, hands and legs instead of a bath. He gave tobacco and liquor to those who had brought pieces of cloth to cover the corpse, but not to others. The people then slowly and quietly dispersed.

When the corpse is buried, similar customs are observed. On 12 November 1941 I attended the funeral of Bhaira, a middle-aged man of the Halami clan, at Gorma. Here the bier was covered with plantain leaves[1] and the corpse bound firmly to it with cord. Here it was the dead man's daughter-in-law who, with hair untied, followed the bier. When they reached the grave, which was about five feet deep, the village Siraha put a little cow-dung at the bottom, placed plantain leaves above and on the leaves some sticks. After the corpse had been lowered into the cavity, it was covered with plantain leaves, and the Gaita let a few drops of liquor fall by its head saying, 'When you were alive, I could give you nothing, but at least take this now'. After the grave had been filled in, large stones were placed upon the mound. The men went to bathe, but the women remained. The widow brought a pot containing all that was left of the food that had been cooked for the dead man on the day of his death, and emptied it near the grave. She was persuaded by the other women to sit down above her husband's

[1] Plantain leaves, which are sacred to the Hindus, are regarded as unlucky by the Muria because of their use in funerals.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

in his house, pulling himself up by a rope tied to the roof. 762
But at last he could bear it no longer and managed to hang himself with the very rope that had been so long his friend.

Menstrual troubles are always due to the magic of a jealous 762
woman, usually a frustrated and malicious widow. The 841
catamenial period in any case is regarded as a time of contagious danger and taboo, and any irregularity is sufficient to cause a strong psychotic disturbance.[1] Karti Sukri, a young girl of only fifteen years, apparently suffered from menorrhagia; she bore it for six months and then hanged herself with her own cloth from a mahua tree near her home. Markami Kosi had been married for twenty years, but she suffered acutely during menstruation—'the pain was so great she behaved as if she were mad'—and she too committed suicide. As is often the case when a woman suffers from menstrual troubles, the husband had married a second wife and I have little doubt that the jealousy and annoyance inevitable in a polygynous household played its part in hastening Markami Kosi's death. The younger wife, however, did her best to save the other woman; she cut her down while still breathing and tried to revive her.

In all these cases, matters were made worse by the failure 762
of the magicians to effect a cure. This naturally added fear and depression to the physical suffering of the patient. Whenever the Siraha is found helpless, an atmosphere of deep gloom and apprehension is created: the supernatural powers arrayed against the sufferer take on a new majesty and horror.

VII

CRIME AND SUPERSTITION

I have not found many superstitions about crime, probably 777
because there are so few professional criminals among the Maria. We have already seen how valuable blood is as a fertilizer. In one case I heard of women throwing their rings on a murdered man's memorial stone as it was being carried to the grave. Afterwards they picked up these rings and wore them believing them to be extremely lucky. But

[1] Havelock Ellis goes so far as to say that 'whenever a woman commits a deed of criminal violence it is extremely probable that she is at her monthly periods', but Stanley Hall assembles evidence to show that this view is over-stated. Hall, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 500.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

7771 am not sure that a ring associated with any kind of death is not equally useful.

787 844 The Maria magicians believe themselves able to foretell a child's destiny by certain signs at birth. If, at the place where the placenta is buried, there appear the footprints of a tiger or the marks of a snake, they declare that the child will be either killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. If the water in the pot that is placed above the placenta-pit runs out of its own accord, it means that the child will be drowned. If a baby is born with a strangulating cord, it means that, when it grows up, it will either be hanged or will commit suicide by hanging.

000 But there is nothing to compare with the superstitions in Europe; the belief, for example, that the heart of a still-born child eaten while yet warm renders the eater invisible, thus aiding him to steal. Adam gives a number of beliefs from the Western world that equal the most bizarre of those recorded in Asia. He describes the soporiferous candles made of the fat of virgin children and used to see whether anyone was still awake in a house about to be burgled. The left thumb of a corpse nine weeks in the grave enables a thief to enter a house at night without rousing the occupants. In Poland the right hand of the corpse of a suicide may be used to discover stolen goods. In Italy, especially in Sicily, it is still believed that treasure can be unearthed with the assistance of the blood of innocent children.[1]

826 [1] Adam, op. cit., pp. 261 ff. In Mandla District I have met Gond who believe that when a man is hanged a few drops of *jiu-tel*, or "life-oil", fall from his body. If this oil can be obtained and applied to a dying man, he will be restored to life. At one time Mr Hivale was believed to possess a few drops of this precious liquid. The 'Hand of Glory' idea has its parallel in India. In Chittagong it was at one time customary for dacoits (mostly Mohammedan) to spread a shroud stolen from a corpse over the roof of a house to prevent the inhabitants from waking. See E. O. Sherborne, *Man*, Feb. 1934.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Aranpur I saw a large pile of ashes and half-burnt logs of 764
wood in front of the uraskal stones erected in memory of members of the Barse clan. These were the remains of the pyre for Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged. In this case it was considered of ill omen that, although two attempts were made to burn the pyre, a lot of the wood remained unburnt. In other villages, however, we were told that such ceremonies must not be performed in the neighbourhood of the menhirs.

There seems to be no objection to erecting an uraskal or danyakal stone either for murderers or for their victims. At Palnar an uraskal was mounted for Mulami Bella. At Dugeli an uraskal was erected for a murdered man. In other villages such as Metapal (where there is no uraskal for Banjami Irma who was murdered by his own son) or at Gandarguda (where there is no danyakal for Rawa Hirma) the absence of these memorials is said to be due to the fact that the deceased were poor men and their relatives could not afford them. But at Dugeli, Kunjami Pandu told us that an uraskal for a murdered man can only be erected after the case against the murderer is settled. When his own brother was murdered, he did not at first erect a stone for [767] him, and he was continually troubled by the restless ghost who came in dreams to reproach him for not 'mingling his soul with the dead, and for his failure to give him a stone'. Once Pandu did this, he had no more bad dreams.

The ceremonies of erecting a menhir for a murderer are exactly the same as for anyone else. When the villagers were carrying the stone for Mulami Bella at Palnar, they halted and put it on the ground, and the women of the house threw rings on to it. Afterwards the women eagerly collected these [777] rings, for it is considered very lucky to wear them.

On the forest road between Palnar and Jabeli there is a row of the flat memorial stones called danyakal, and at one end a tall carved wooden pillar and a large earthen tomb. The tomb, the pillar and one of the stones are in honour of Marvi Oyami Masa who died in jail while serving a sentence for the murder of his uncle. Masa was a very important man in Jabeli. He was rich, he was the Waddai of the village and he was a Siraha medicine-man. His death seemed to be far more important to the villagers than that of the man

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

the bed of the stream; these are held in position between upright poles set V-wise in the boulders, to which are fastened horizontal bamboo poles as railings. As they have no saws, the 'plank' is a tree trunk with one side trimmed flat with the axe. Even more elaborate bridges are sometimes made at high levels over streams liable to flood, from tree-fork to tree-fork on opposite banks.

Though, as has been said above, agricultural conditions nowadays determine village sites, hill-tops or rocky slopes remain favourite sites, and become commoner as you penetrate farther into the Abujhmar hills. The traditional arrangement is a street some twenty-five yards wide between parallel lines of long-houses; at one end of the street is the *gotul-lon* or village dormitory, generally within a rounded bamboo fence, and sometimes in front of this dormitory will be seen the *udam-garia* or seat of honour of the *kasyeq-gaita* and possibly also of the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*), as well as the stones on which the other village elders sit around with them in conclave; but the *udam-garia* custom is not found in all parts of the hills. Sometimes the shrine of the *Nar-Talughi* or Village Mother is actually inside the dormitory fencing, and she is often housed there for a while when a village is being shifted. There are, as a rule, no *bari* (vegetable gardens) attached to each house as amongst most Gonds, including the Bison-horn Marias and the Murias of Bastar; but sometimes the *kasyeq-gaita* has a small tobacco *bari* attached to the dormitory in the centre of the main street. The *Gazetteer* (p. 50) speaks of the 'common granary' as standing in the broad street; but with one partial exception, Nugur village in Kutru Mar in the Indrawati valley, I have never seen this. The villagers generally construct a row of granaries (*manda* or *wijja-dodi*) on piles at the side or rear of the main village street, sometimes nearer the *penda* fields than the village; this row can hardly be called a 'common granary', as each villager has his own granary in the row for his own private food and seed store, the granaries being built together only for convenience, as they can then be watched at night by one watchman for the whole village, sleeping in a special hut at the side of the granaries or under a granary. At Nugur there were big matting bins in the main street in which all the rice seed of the village was stored; but here the village had come under the economic thraldom of some Teli tradesmen, who for years had advanced rice to the cultivators. The bins were left in the collective charge of the headman and elders, and any villager could help himself to seed on the understanding that at harvest he would replace it with 50 per cent. interest, the Teli owners being also free to remove the surplus from time to time.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 other minor grains. Where timber is not available, these sties are
231 made from bamboos, or even from stones. Similar but, of course, far smaller structures are made to serve as hen-coops, resting generally against the side or front of the houses.

778 The shrine of the Village Mother, as has been stated above, is sometimes actually inside the village dormitory, sometimes just
361 outside it, and sometimes at a considerable distance from the actual
[824] village, in a grove, if possible of *saja* (*Terminalia tomentosa*—everywhere the sacred tree of the Gond) trees. Sometimes there is also in the village, often at the end of the street opposite the dormitory, the hut-temple of the *pen* or clan-god, containing the log-frame image of the god. This will normally be found only in the village of the *pen-wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god; but sometimes, where the villages of the clan are far apart, there may be two copies of the clan-god, or the god may go to visit other villages, and have a resting-shed in each; or he may have begotten a son to deputize for him in the distant village; I have seen in a *pen-rawar* (clan-god's temple) both the *pen* himself and an embryo 'son' in the second of his three years' 'gestation'. The *pen* is always covered by a shed; but the Village Mother sometimes is just a cairn or a basket-cylinder filled with stones, or a low table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree, and close by there is a small shed of grass thatch with open sides in which are kept the cooking pots, ladles and sacrificial knife used at ceremonial feasts. The sacred grove may in very rare cases, in villages near the edge of the lowlands, have also a hut-temple of Danteshwari Mai or Maolai, the most revered or feared Hindu deities of Bastar.

343 There will be found well apart from the houses and the rest of
841 the village a menstruation hut in many villages, known as *pedawo'-gha'i* to the Hill Marias, or sometimes as *dola-lon*. Here all menstruating women are secluded from the village for a week every month. Sometimes the hut has a single room, about 6 by 5 feet, with walls 3 feet high, with no windows and only a small door little bigger than the entrance to an English kennel; sometimes there are two rooms separated from each other by a partition, so that when a girl is afraid of being secluded by herself a duenna may sleep within sound of her without actual contact. The door of the seclusion room always opens away from the village, so that the affected woman may get out at night to answer the call of nature without overlooking the village or being visible to any villager. Special cooking pots and utensils are kept in the seclusion room, or else
[589 the woman's food is cooked outside and left by her door for her.
824] The roof is often covered with seed-bearing twigs of castor-oil plants, in all parts of India regarded as very efficacious against magic.

[text continues on p. 106]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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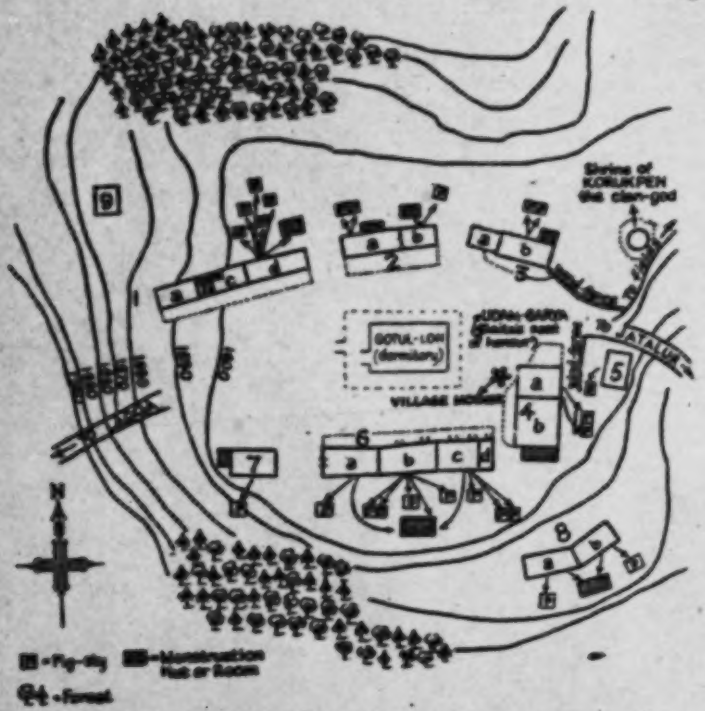


FIGURE 5

MAP OF KARANGAL VILLAGE OF THE PARLLO HILL MARIA CLAN, as occupied in February 1930. (Contours approximate.)

House-group 1 (*a*) Empty; built for Deda HUNGA, when serving for MURRA's niece; since marrying her, lives in KURMER. (*b*) P. BAIYVA's mother. (*c*) P. BAIYVA, wife and son. (*d*) P. MURRA, brother of BAIYVA, his wife, his son P. BANDE, wife and daughter.

2. (*a*) P. DOGA and wife. (*b*) P. KUTTA, wife, son. DOGA and KUTTA are elder and younger brothers, but separate in cultivation.
3. (*a*) Empty, since death of P. MURRA's elder brother's widow. (*b*) P. MURRA and wife.
4. (*a*) P. BAIYVA, karyeq-gaita, and wife. (*b*) his son P. GURRA, wife and son.
5. Ruined house of P. KUTTO, who had left village.
6. (*a*) P. MURRA and wife. (*b*) P. KUTA, 2 wives, 1 son. (*c*) P. KEYE, wife and 2 sons. (*d*) KEYE's mother. KUTA, MURRA and KEYE regard themselves as brothers, KUTA being the eldest; they are paternal third cousins. Their fields and pigs are separate, but menstruation hut common.
7. P. PANDA, wife, 1 son, 2 daughters, widowed mother.
8. (*a*) P. HEDDA, wife and son. (*b*) P. MASA (his wife had eloped). HEDDA is the elder, MASA the younger brother.
9. The house of a Rawat (herdsman), well apart from Maria houses.

The wind-fence is a stockade of thick poles.
The dotted lines are bamboo wickerwork fences.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 84i [784] But in many villages instead of a communal *palawo'gha'i* there is a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *palawo'gha'i* room known generally as *hala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *hala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

485 There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable attached.

361 [35] The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The ● [778] Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *kasyap-gaita's* house, near the latter's *adam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-rawar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parllo clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal 361 624 [194] the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street;

[1] Or *ala*; the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

166 361 787 791 ●778 When shifting is to begin, all the parish lands being lands of the clan, the *wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god is usually consulted; he is generally himself the *leshi* or medium whom the god possesses, and if the god through him directs that the village should be shifted, he leads the villagers to the new site; sometimes the *wadda'i* himself is not a medium, but keeps a *leshi* as an assistant. At the new site the *kayaq-gaita* clears a small patch of ground in honour of the Village Mother, and on this offers an egg, some grain and flowers in her name, over which he places stones in a basketry cylinder or as a cairn. This will remain as her shrine in the new village, sometimes, as we have seen, inside the dormitory fencing, sometimes outside it but in the main village street, or sometimes right outside the village in a grove, a shed being erected over it. The removal of the cairn would be an omen of disaster, only to be avoided by shifting the village. The Orcha villagers had only a small table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree in a grove to mark their Village Mother. Handawada, besides a cairn, had a forked stick of *saja* wood oiled and polished, and whipped round the fork with *kosa* silk whipping, with a leaning thatched roof to protect her from the elements. Whatever form her shrine or representation may take, it is left behind when the village is deserted, and not shifted to the new village; for it is regarded as valuable evidence of the clan or parish property in the land. The only things removed are the pots in which grain, etc., is cooked at the Mother's feasts, [184] the cooking utensils and the knives, which the *kayaq-gaita* or religious headman must himself carry under his arm, *not* on his head, which is taboo, to the shed erected to house them near the Mother's shrine in the new village.

361 166 In the villages which I have seen being shifted, the earliest buildings to be erected have been the village dormitory, the houses of the 'advance guard', the religious and the secular headmen, and the menstruation hut. Villagers often put up their pig-sties before their own houses. A temporary dormitory is often put up to house the bachelors, and replaced after the houses have been built by a more permanent and elaborate structure.

The villagers remove all their utensils and household goods from their old to their new houses when the village is shifted. But they move no building materials; they leave the deserted houses to the mercy of the elements, which means that they are soon choked in the mass of high grass and scrub jungle that immediately springs up on the deserted site, and probably burnt down when the forest undergrowth is fired in the following spring.

[text continues on p. 112]

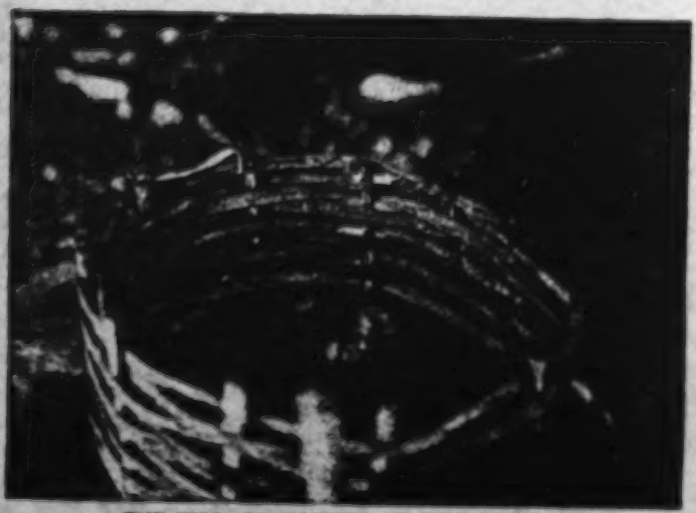
1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE X

778 ●
343

THE VILLAGE MOTHER'S SHRINE AT ORCHA

The stone at the foot of the *saja* tree trunk on the right is the Village Mother; the shed contains her cooking pots, utensils, etc.



THE VILLAGE MOTHER AT HANDAWADA

consisting of an oiled forked *saja* stick, bound with *kosa* silk. The lean-to thatched roof was removed to enable the photograph to be taken

[Facing p. 110]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

are made either of similar but lighter pole stockading, or of what the Hill Marias call *tum*, that is, fencing of grass fastened in vertical bundles between pairs of horizontal bamboo struts, which themselves are fastened at intervals to poles planted in the ground. The floors, walls and partitions are plastered with mud, the walls on the inside, and the partitions on both sides; the women do the plastering, while their men look on. They often do not plaster the veranda wall at all. They sometimes make the side walls of bamboo wattlework instead of pole stockading. They do not char or otherwise treat the bases of the poles before fixing them in the ground. The first post of the house is almost always of the sacred *saja* tree; I have not seen this adorned with bundles of thatching grass in the manner of other Gonds (cf. Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 122), but I have seen two *saja* trees near a house under construction so adorned. The youths sometimes paint the plastered partitions in white with rows of dots, with swastikas like those tattooed on girls' faces (see p. 74 above), or with crude crocodiles or tigers; I have seen women's breasts represented in relief.

The grass (rarely palm) thatch rests on bamboos tied across the roof beams, and is secured against wind by bamboos criss-crossed outside the thatch. The grass generally used is *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) which appears in the *penda* fields after the first harvest has been reaped, and in the second or third year covers them so thickly that they have to be abandoned. In March, after the harvest has been finished, you will see near all the recently abandoned *penda* clearings extensive *dab* cuttings, the grass being stacked on rough log platforms about a foot and a half above the ground in readiness for re-thatching the houses just before the break of the monsoon. The men re-thatch houses, granaries, pig-sties and temples every year.

The usual form of door is a rectangle of split bamboo wickerwork sliding between two pairs of upright wooden posts. The doorway has often a wicker-work threshold from one to two feet high, over which the sliding door fits. There are always doors in the doorways leading from outside into the veranda, from the veranda to the *angadi*, and at the back of the menstruation room; generally also in the doorways leading into the *lotus*; but I have never seen a door in the front doorway of the menstruation room. Sometimes the whole of this room is not taboo to men, the *binda* or mud threshold that marks the limit of the tabooed ground (see p. 106) being constructed across the floor of the room some two feet beyond the front entrance. Occasionally more elaborate doors will be seen, made of a small hewn wooden plank with tangs of wood left

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949,
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the clan; often the same man is both religious headman and secular headman (*gaita*, *peda*), and these functions were probably always combined before the growing interference of the State with village life and the excessive demands for forced labour and supplies began to make the secular headmanship a burden to be avoided by the true leader of the village and put on to the village simpleton.

The Village Mother is always dealt with in Hill and Bison-horn villages through the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* respectively; but she neither enters into the body of a medium nor can be consulted through one like the clan-god. Though it be through her that the *kasyeq-gaita's* eggs are addled or other omens of ill or indications that the village should shift are sent, yet to make plain her will the medium of the clan-god, that is the clan-priest (the *waddai* or *modul-waddai*), is sent for, and through his mouth the clan-god expounds the will of the Unseen Powers. It is tempting to regard her as the personification of the female and the clan-god as that of the male element in the reproductive powers of the Earth or Bhum; needless to say, there are no Maria theologians to worry themselves over such distinctions, and it is not a clear-cut one, since some clans have a clan-goddess, not a god; e.g. Oghal Muttai, goddess of the Dhurwa clan, and Gumtuli, goddess of the Padali clan of Padalibhum at Adnar. This conception, nevertheless, does to a considerable extent clarify the fundamental relation between the Earth, the clan-god and the Village Mother. The other point to be remembered is that the clan-god is the Earth in its dealings with the clan, and the Mother the Earth in its dealings with the village. No woman or girl may take part in the festivals, public sacrificial meals, worship and intercession of either clan-god or Village Mother.

The Earth, then, as clan-god, is the god of nourishment and reproduction, and of life itself; the Marias are his children, fed by him. For them to raise their sustenance he divided up the land among the clans, and the clan-area among the villages, and in each clan and village he appointed priests or headmen who alone might communicate with him, and to whose first ancestor he revealed the clan and village boundaries, which knowledge has been handed down from father to son. The Maria leaves his *penda* slope for another after two or three years because the god is suffering from having too much nourishment extracted from that slope, but he will return to it when the god has recovered from his exhaustion. Children are but one of the god's crops.

The Clan-god

In form, we have seen, the clan-god of Marias of both kinds and of Murias, is a framework of three parallel *saja* logs held together by cross-pieces of bamboo or *saja*, to which they are lashed by cords of *siari* creeper or twisted

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

thongs of the outer rind of bamboos. Where *saja* trees are scarce, he may be made entirely of bamboos, but will be lodged in a hut under a *saja* tree. The junctions of the logs and the cross-pieces are adorned with bunches of peacock and jungle-cock feathers, and the ends of the logs with rupees or spirals of peacock quill or bands of brass and silver. At the first-fruits ceremonies his shed is adorned with plaited fringes of the stalks and ears of the new grains, or bunches of bean and pulse pods; and he is brought forth to have the blood of the sacrificed victims sprinkled upon him.

Halbas, Telangas and Murias have precisely similar gods, if the logs composing them are more elaborately adorned and sometimes carved. Their generic name in Bastar is Anga Deo or Pat Deo, 'Log-God'. The central log is the essential part, for the other two logs are added primarily to enable the god to be borne on the shoulders of four men when he goes forth to a festival or a witch hunt. The Jhoria log-god at Narainpur had a special nose for witches, and the late Raja Bhairam Deo, great-grandfather of the present Maharaja, installed a copy of it in the palace at Jagdalpur; for witch hunts the god used to be brought in from Narainpur while the palace copy was sent to Narainpur during his absence. I found that the palace copy was in 1927 being used generally without reference to the Narainpur prototype for detecting witchcraft around Jagdalpur, a fee of Rs. 5 being paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the Temple Court of Wards whenever surrounding Murias requisitioned its services.

As has been observed on page 51, there is a tradition among the Hill Marias (of Chhota Dongar, Mangnar and Barsur Mar *parganas*) that the great log-god Pat Raja of the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana* with the help of his wife's brother, Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan of the Bison-horn village of Ghotpal, near Barsur, divided up both Hill and Bison-horn Marias into clans, in the old days when there was regular intermarriage between the Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The legend does not appear to be known to the latter, who have only vague traditions of having at some remote date descended to their present lands from the Abujhmar hills, where occasionally they say that their clan-god still resides.

It is certain that most of the Hill Maria clan-gods have relationship claimed for them with Pat Raja of Mohnar. The Usendi clan of Orcha has his younger brother Wikir Hunga at Japgunda, the Deda clan of Kurmer have another younger brother, Nule Harma, the Dhurwa clan of Gomagal have his sister Oghal Mutta'i, the Hill Maria Marvi clan of Toqtoli in Mangnar *pargana* have his sister's son Mara-Magh, while the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

778
796

PLATE XVI

THE SACRIFICE BEFORE THE *WIJJA-WETA*
The offerings before the altar of bows

[facing p. 210]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *hadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *hadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *hadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwaris or Forest-maidens, and on each

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 heap offers an egg and a tooth-stick (*datun*), sometimes also a miniature bow and arrow; he then takes up each tooth-stick in turn, splits it and throws down the split halves to test the omens in the way already described, after praying with folded hands to the Forest-maidens for success in the hunt and protection from wild beasts. Then he takes an arrow off the altar, and, holding it by the shaft just above the feathering, cuts the top of each egg with the sharp edge of the arrow-head.

796 The omens having thus been taken, and the bows and arrows of the altar, if any, reclaimed by their owners, all the men go off 224 with their weapons in the *weta* ritual hunt to beat the forest for game. The women appear with pots full of cow-dung and water, into which they dip sprays of leaf and shower the foul water with fouler abuses on any laggards. If any animal is slain, the shedding of much blood on the ground is regarded as foreshadowing plentiful rainfall and a rich harvest; on the spot where it falls they cut little bits off the tips of its ears, nose, tongue, feet and tail, place each bit on a separate *saja* leaf on the ground in the name of the Forest-maidens or of Karenga Deo, and pray for a continuance of this good fortune. At the end of the hunt they take the carcasses of the animals back to the *mahua* bough erected in the name of the Village Mother in the *kadri-bera* field, and leave them there. They then go home for supper.

796 Towards midnight each man returns to the *kadri-bera* with his bow and arrows, a small packet of *kulthi* and other grain seeds wrapped up in leaves, a little *mahua* liquor and a white cock; a pig is also brought for all the villagers. Some villages do not expect each man to bring a cock, but purchase a number of cocks by *sari-bori* subscription. The men hand over the packets of seed to the *perma*, who piles them on the ground in front of the *mahua* bough and places his sacrificial knife beside them. He then prostrates himself before the *mahua* bough and prays to the Village Mother for good and timely rain and bumper crops. He then puts each cock and the pig through the *tokana* rice-eating test, and sacrifices them one by one, cutting their heads off from the throat upwards, piling the heads all together near the *mahua* bough, and holding each body over the pile of seed-packets and the *mahua* bough to soak them well with blood; he then throws the bodies aside. Next he breaks with his knife in the Mother's name the egg which he had set up in the morning, and pours some *mahua* spirit on the ground before the *mahua* bough. The *perma* and the men of his family then roast and eat the heads of the cocks and the pig, and each other family the body of the cock contributed by it; when cocks have been bought by subscription, the *perma* slices

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

a table-stone with a white pebble on it may be erected in the name of the clan-god under a *saja* tree. The *pərma* sacrifices cocks and a pig or goat on behalf of the village in the usual way, and washes some new husked rice and *kuthi* and offers it to the god. The men cook and eat the sacrificial meat then and there. The wife-clan relatives may be present, but in most villages are not allowed to participate in the sacrificial rice and meat and are supplied with other rice and meat which they cook separately. The usual remains-eating feast takes place in the houses next day.

The Jata Pandum

At the Jata Pandum, held somewhere near the full moon of Pus (December-January), they celebrate the eating of the first new beans, pulses, and the latest ripening grains. There is the usual public sacrifice for the men before the log-god or the Village Mother. In the south, towards the Doria border, the festival is known as Chikur Pandum, and the sacrifices are always to a table-stone beneath a *saja* tree known as Dhania Deo, which, like the Bhattra Dhani, appears to be only another form of the earth-god. The only special feature of this *pandum* is that the domestic sacrifice and libations to the Departed in the house are often followed by a ceremony for weaning suckling children, the first food given being some of the rice and sacrificial meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed.

The Kare Pandum

This takes place in Magh (January-February), soon after the Jata Pandum, and, as already observed, is preceded by the *Kare Wata* in which fields and open spaces are beaten for small game. I was unable to ascertain what other special features, if any, the festival has, or whether new grass and new bamboo are offered to the gods. Until the festival has been held it is *mulo* or taboo to cut grass or bamboos or to start felling timber for *erka*, *parka* and *penda* cultivation.

The Bhimul Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum comes very soon after the Kare Pandum. I have no detailed information. But it is a ceremony for ensuring a good rainfall in the coming monsoon. It takes place by the Bhimul post in the *kudri-bara*, over which a booth of boughs is erected. Men and women attend. The booth is decorated with strings of mango leaves. The *pərma* sacrifices a white cock and an egg, and pours *landa* over the Bhimul post; and men and women then empty over the post baskets containing a little of every kind of field produce. Men and women then sit in the open, and consume *landa*. All night the village women dance, led by the *pərma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head or in her arms.

The Bhimul Pandum is really the last of the *pandum* held in all villages. It only remains to mention the Mandai or Deoguri

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

563 Pendri is now mainly a Marar village, its 451 inhabitants including only some forty Marias and sixty Halbas. They seem able to live in easy symbiosis with all Gonds, to whom they impart much of their agricultural skill. Their intrusion into these tribal areas, provided it is controlled, is therefore not a bad thing.

• 178 At Jharapapra there was a once familiar sight, the Halba log-god of the zamindari family, in type precisely similar to the clan-gods of the Hill Marias and the Halba log-gods at Chingnur near Bare Dongar and at other Halba centres in Bastar. The *Kutumb-Naik* headman of the Bare Dongar Halbas had told me in 1929 how some years before the then zamindar of Jharapapra had sent a party of Halbas to carry off the Chingnur log-god to Jharapapra, and how the god had resented this and 'flown' back to Chingnur from the first halting place of the god-snatchers.

000 Of the visits to Aundhi[1] and, next day, to Manpur[2] in Koracha zamindari and some way along the Manpur-Panabaras road, there is little to say except that, generally speaking, the Drug Court of Wards regime in Panabaras and Aundhi seemed to be progressive, and the Drug District Council to do more for the Partially Excluded Areas than its Chanda counterpart.

[162] In the four Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug the aboriginals form well over sixty per cent. of the population. The worst feature of these estates is that there is a *thekadari* system, originally akin to that once prevalent in Bastar, and that many of the *thekadars*, especially those on whom the semi-permanent 'protected' status has been conferred, are non-aboriginal oppressors of the local Gonds and Marias, while comparatively few aboriginal headmen, except in Panabaras and Ambagarh-Chauki zamindaris, have been declared protected. The whole original conception was wrong in that it involved conversion of the tribal headman or *gaontia* into a lessee or *thekadar* of his village. Various examples have been given in *The Aboriginal Problem*[3] of the way in which these Maria headmen were thus transformed into *thekadars*, and then lost their villages in the great famines, or for other causes, to non-aboriginal intruders, who now rack-rent and oppress the surviving aboriginal tenants. We may give here one example, that of the village of Dokhla in Panabaras zamindari. This village was settled before 1861 by a Maria headman and ten other Marias. The headman absconded during the great famines at the turn of the century. Another Gond was then given the lease, but ultimately could not pay the lease-money and had to surrender the village.

427

[1] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. MQ5340.
[2] Ibidem, Sheet 64D, ref. MQ8306.
[3] Pp. 79-82.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

532
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[Verrier Elwin

Tati Mundra of Tikanpal, with the ' wooden ' horse or ' vehicle ' of the Tati clan-god Hunga

[End Plate Z]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

778

Sirahu's swing at Ahor

[p. 180(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

lower castes and that of buffaloes only by Shudras. This flesh is of special sanctity as through it men who worship her get power. She is the special Goddess of the warring class—the Kshatriyas. Being the family goddess of the Ruler, she is recognized as the ruling goddess by all classes of Hindus and aboriginals of the State. 776

The Divine Right of Kings

The Maharaja is regarded as divine by all the Muria and Maria of the Jagdalpur Tahsil and by some of the northern Muria. Each ruler appends the word Deo to the end of his name, the other male members of his house calling themselves Singh, though to distinguish them from other Kshatriya the prefix Lal is added, as in Lal Kalindar Singh. 776 648

The *gadi* or throne is held sacred and no one but the actual ruler may sit upon it. Should anyone break the rule, he would die. [778]

The ruler has special powers of intercession. 'His sacrifices, fasts, and oblations during the Dassera and Chaitrai festivals benefit not only himself but the members of the royal family and the people of the State. All the important deities of the State are brought to Jagdalpur during Dassera and worshipped on behalf of the ruler, his own worship being confined to the family goddess Danteshwari, Maoli and a few other gods. This worship keeps away disease from the people and cattle and results in good crops and universal happiness, as the deities remain pleased.'[1]

So strongly do the aboriginals believe this, that they greatly resent the Maharaja leaving the State even for a short time. His absence means a withdrawal of divine protection from cattle, crops and people.

Kadrengal

Kadrengal is the consort of Tallur Muttai, as Bangaram is the consort of Danteshwari. A story which I quote elsewhere[2] links him with the forest and the chase, and he is generally worshipped by the Muria before they set out on a ceremonial hunt. In some villages, however, Pati Deo takes his place. 776

His name occurs from time to time, generally in association with Tallur Muttai, in the songs and legends. In the oldest mythology he plays the part which more modern people ascribe to Mahadeo.

With Tallur Muttai and Lingo, he lives in the ghotul and protects the boys and girls. Along with other deities he is worshipped and remembered at festivals and on most of the major occasions of Muria life.

Dulha Deo

Jahe chulha taha Dulha.—Where there is a hearth, there is Dulha Deo.

Dulha Deo is the marriage god and is supposed to preside not only over the wedding but over the marriage bed, its happiness and its fertility.

Dulha Deo is not an original Muria god. He is an immigrant from the Central Provinces, where he receives very much more attention than in Bastar. In Bastar he has a certain nuisance value as causing trouble during marriages, a rather expensive addition to the pantheon who must be placated for fear that he will make himself objectionable. His ill temper can easily be explained

[1] Private communication from Rai Sahib Niranjan Singh.
[2] See page 41.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

776 by the tragic circumstances of his origin. According to universal legend he is the ghost of a young bridegroom who, on the way to his wedding, was killed either by lightning [1] or by a tiger. Frustrated at the moment of achieving happiness, he lives on, soured and bitter, to trouble mankind.

For this reason Dulha Deo is regarded as particularly touchy and there are many stories about his quick temper and his readiness to take an insult and notice a slight. For example, at Silati the Muria described how he interrupted a Kalar marriage at Bara Dongar. A Muria neighbour had dedicated a pig to Dulha Deo. On the morning of the marriage the pig wandered over to the Kalar's house and the Kalar exclaimed, 'Alas! I have seen a pig's face early in the morning'. When Dulha Deo in the form of the pig heard this, he was very angry and stood snorting with rage in front of the house, refusing to allow the marriage to proceed. At last the Kalar had to touch the pig's feet and promise a goat in honour of Dulha Deo.

A practical reason for Dulha Deo's bad reputation may be the fact that at a marriage everybody is very excited, more or less drunk, and hitches in the procedure and quarrels between relations are always likely to occur. Whenever anything goes wrong, the blame is put on the god who must then be properly appeased. Dulha Deo serves a useful purpose as the divine whipping-boy.

Bhimul Pen

[778] In many Muria villages there is a small shrine of four wooden pillars and some cross-poles, but no roof, round one or two stones that may be anything from one to three feet high. These represent the deity who is called variously Bhimul Pen, Bhima or Bhimsenin and his wife Bhimsenin or Gorondi Dokari.

I think it probable that there was a very ancient aboriginal deity, a rain-god called Bhimul, whose cult has been assimilated to that of the mightiest of the Pandava brothers, Bhimsen. The Muria expect both Lingo and Bhimul to provide them with rain in due season. If there is a drought, Bhimul's stone is [789] covered with cow-dung with the idea that he will quickly send rain to wash himself clean.[2]

But the Muria Bhimul has many other functions. In eastern Koudagaon, he takes the place of Lingo as the founder of the ghotul and its protector. [534] He is regarded as having a special interest in drums and must be worshipped when a mandri drum is made and when it is used at a wedding. He and his wife are associated with stilt-walking. He appears as the cause of thunder and the fertilizer of the crops.

[796] Bhimul has a special festival to himself in order to ensure a good rainfall. The villagers bring in March a little of whatever seed or vegetable is available and throw it over Bhimul's stone. The Gaita makes the usual offerings. Chelik and motiari dance all night.[3]

[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 119; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73.

[2] To get rain, Bombay Hindu villagers 'besmear the phallus of Shiva with cooked rice and curds'.—Enthoven, op. cit., p. 321. The Parja of Bastar are described as fixing a piece of wood into the ground in the name of Bhimsen over which they pour water when they are in need of rain.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 377.

[3] For the widespread cult of this 'heroic godling' both among Hindus and aboriginals, see Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 66, 89, 250 and Vol. II, p. 182; Grigson, op. cit., pp. 206, 215, 219; S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Calcutta, 1912), p. 98; *The Baiga*, p. 59 and *passim*; *The Agaria*, p. 95; *The Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 76 (for the cult among the Nagpur Gond); ibid., p. 236 (for the Urali's idea that thunder is the result of a duel between the two Bhimas in heaven); Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. IV, pp. 56 and 71 (for the Koyi tradition that traces the origin of the tribe to Bhimadev who while hunting in the jungle met a wild woman of the woods and married

Plate XXXVIII

●778

Siraha carrying Anga and Gotal at Adner

Litter of the Village Mother outside her shrine at Mawra

[p. 188(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

Today when the process of god-making in Bastar has burst all bounds, when the clans have been scattered, when new clans have come into existence and old clans divided, there is no longer the neat and tidy arrangement of former days. But there is still a deep attachment to the idea of the clan-territory and the clan-god. Every clan still has its spiritual headquarters, still has the clan-god who is regularly worshipped at the great festivals, still maintains a clan-priest (Pen-Dhurwa or Pen-Waddai) to perform that worship, and still in many cases takes its dead to mingle with the clan-ancestors. What has happened in modern times is that each clan may have several places whither it will go for worship or for the disposal of its dead, and this has confused the picture. But the clan-gods are still of great authority.

The Anga is in form and character unique among the aboriginal gods of India. In form it is an arrangement of three parallel poles of saja,[1] bel or ira wood, over which are tied by siari rope cross-pieces of bamboo or saja. The central pole is the actual god, the two side-poles being simply intended to enable his two or four bearers to raise him and carry him about. This central pole has a curious head called *koko* which resembles that of a snake or bird. At the junctions of the logs and cross-bars there are tufts of peacock feathers. Silver ornaments, symbols of the sun and moon and sometimes plain rupees, are nailed to the ends of the poles. Bands of silver may be hammered round them. Bells are hung round the 'neck'. Sometimes the Anga is two-headed: husband and wife live together. The clan-god of the Maravi at Phunder, who is called Karati Dokara, has two heads each with a hooded cobra nailed to it. So too the Anga at Bhanpuri, Son Kuar, is two-headed. Sometimes the Anga's wife is made in the form of a pole and placed upon him.

The Anga is kept in a special shrine apart from the other gods and is either suspended by ropes from the roof or placed on a bamboo support a couple of feet above the ground. When it is taken abroad or goes to live for a time in someone's house, a special stand must be made for it. The Anga usually has a *jiwa* or soul. At Phunder it is a piece of iron carefully preserved under the sacrificial stone in front of the shrine. In Semurgaon the soul of Lingo is a bit of iron wrapped in a grass bundle and hung above its body. Sometimes the soul goes abroad of its own accord and has to be replaced with appropriate offerings. At Chingnar, the soul of Son Kuar goes to hunt at night and in the morning feathers are found scattered about his shrine.

When in use, the Anga is kept sometimes very casually. In Dongrigura, I saw one hanging from the roof in a corner of the granary belonging to the Gaita. At Magbeda, it was lying crookedly in a broken-down hut in the Gaita's garden. The two-headed Anga, Son Kuar-Maoli, at Bhanpuri, is kept in the Gaita's *bari*-enclosure in a little shed. At Karanji the Naitami Anga, Pila Kuar, is kept in the Gaita's house.

The Anga often has one or more attendants in the form of wooden horses slung from the roof beside it. These horses are taken out at the clan festivals and the mediums dance wildly with them. There are two horses attending the Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon. The shrines may be adorned with the skulls of animals killed in the latest ceremonial hunt, with decorated poles or sticks used by the god at festivals, and with symbols of the god's children.

For the Anga is very like a human being. It marries and has children. It has relations both inside and outside the clan. Some of the older gods have very large families. Lingo Pen's brothers, nephews and other relatives are enshrined and worshipped all over the north of the State. The process of

[1] The famous Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon is made of saja, for it was this tree he hitched to he usurped walkari from his great ordeal.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

778
T76
614

multiplication is accelerated by the Anga's polygamous habits. The son of an Anga may itself be an Anga, or it may take the form of a Gutal—a long pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the top, or a Lath—a decorated flag attached to a bamboo staff.

The manufacture of an Anga is an elaborate and dangerous business. It is a necessary one because new gods are born from time to time, and the old gods wear out. There is a general idea that an Anga 'dies' every three or four generations. When this happens it leaves its mortal frame and troubles its clansmen until they make it a new one. Sometimes it expresses its will by burning down its shrine—when this happens everything is consumed, but the god itself is unharmed. Sometimes it attacks the village cattle in the form of a tiger. Sometimes it plagues the Gaita with appalling dreams.

The actual making of the god is unusual and interesting; it reveals the logical and straightforward working of the Muria mind. Once it is admitted that the Anga is a sort of person with like passions to ourselves, the rest follows. I will give some typical accounts from villages in the north of the State.

In Kokori the clan-priest told me that when an Anga gets very old and tired, it is taken to a river and 'cooled' by being thrown into the water. The clan-priest prays to the Yer Kanyang, 'Now it is in your charge, you must care for it'. After a time the old Anga sends a dream to the priest and the villagers decide to make a new one. They have to go to another priest of a clan which stands in a marriageable relationship to the Anga's clan and he takes them to a suitable tree. He embraces it, and if his hands meet round the trunk it is a good omen, and an engagement is celebrated.

The following year in the month of Magh they again go to the same priest who offers rice to the tree and says, 'Now we are going to take you away'. He goes round it with a thread, winding it seven times, and then cuts it down. As he is cutting it, he gives the tree liquor from time to time 'in case it should get tired'. They take the wood home, and induce some old man to make the Anga. When it is ready they take it to the river and make offerings to the Yer Kanyang. Every Anga has an umbilical stump with a cord attached and the father's sister of the clan-priest must cut this cord and throw it into the water. Then they bathe the god to purify it after the cutting of the cord. At last it is taken to its temple and a young bull is sacrificed.

Another interesting account comes from Korenda, where the Anga of Budha Dokara and Dokari Deo, the clan-gods of the Partabi and Wadde clans in that area, are made every few generations. The preliminary rites are performed as elsewhere, but later, just before the visiting clan come to fetch the wood for their Anga, the Gaita of the Bhatgaon *khoot* (whence the wood must be taken) goes to the path by which they will come and buries seven eggs at intervals along it.

After the visitors have cut and dressed the wood, and are preparing to go home, they whistle loudly. The Gaita and villagers of Bhatgaon are waiting for the signal, and at once come out to catch them in a sort of game of hide-and-seek. The visitors dash for home, but if one of them is unlucky enough to break one of the buried eggs, it turns into a tiger which destroys their cattle.

When the Korenda people get home, they cut the tree into two, the upper half to be used for Budha Dokara and the lower for Dokari Deo. A special enclosure is made near the shrine of the now exhausted clan-god, and the wood is left there until someone comes forward who is willing to make the Anga. There is no limit to the interval; it may last any time from a few weeks to several years. When one or two very old men, who are not likely

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in any case to live much longer, come forward for the work, they set them to make the frames. When they are ready they put an egg on each Anga and make the old men sit 'to hatch them'. They have to sit there until their *jiwa* (souls) pass from their bodies into the gods. They know when this happens because the Anga begin to shake and tremble of their own accord. Directly this happens, the members of both clans bring a cow or bull and sacrifice it. The old men climb down from their perches and the Gaita breaks the eggs before the gods.

Both Anga now start swinging and are carried on the shoulders of four Siraha-mediums. After the usual dance they are placed in their shrines.

But the two old men who made them, and whose souls have passed into their frames, die within a few days.

It is obvious, therefore, that it is highly dangerous to make an Anga. In Korenda at the present time the process of god-making has been delayed, although long overdue; for there is no old Partabi or Wadde willing to take the risk. It is generally said that such men will die within a year; if they do not they are regarded as exceptionally lucky. But their life thereafter is blind and shrunken, miserable to themselves and a heavy charge on their relations. Thus in Kabonga, Malsai made a new Anga and lived for four years before he died. But it is said that for the last three years of his life, he was a senile and helpless figure, longing for the death that was denied him.[1]

Repairs to the Anga, which are made every twelve or fifteen years, are less dangerous, but they too should only be undertaken by old men.

The Anga has various functions. Its primary function, of course, is that of god of the clan, keeping its scattered members together and attracting them to its worship. It is honoured at the great clan festivals held once a year in the *pen-rawar* and it may also be taken out to visit the shrines of related clan-gods. At a big clan-festival and at the great Mandai commercial festivals at Jagdalpur, Dantewara, Kondagaon and elsewhere sometimes a dozen or more of these Anga may be present. The procedure is generally the same. The Anga is worshipped with various offerings; it is taken down to the river and immersed in water, it is then anointed with oil and carried on the shoulders of its bearers; it is 'exercised' by dancing and playing with the other gods. At these festivals I have often watched the Anga attended by a dozen lesser gods, a crowd of drummers and gong-beaters and a vast company of boys and girls, men and women, going round and round the sacred clearing in procession. This is the Pen Kanuita or Sport of the Gods.

Incest within the clan is regarded as specially insulting to the Anga and before the guilty can be forgiven offerings must be made to it. If they do not do this the offenders' bodies will swell and their eyes burst. They will be buried apart from the other members of the family or clan, and their children will be given to the despised Lohar in marriage.

As god of the clan the Anga is specially interested in marriages, and in many villages the Muria place one of the marriage crowns upon it or in its shrine. Often too it is concerned in death ceremonies. The memorial menhirs of

[1] An old report, by Captain MacPherson, on the Kond rubes to one of their destructive deities. 'It is firmly believed that the tree under which the deity is placed must die; that the water in which he is laid must be dried up; that the priest in his service cannot expect to survive four years.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 20. When the Kiwai Papuans erect a man's house (*darima*), an old couple perform the proper ceremonies and die soon after. 'There seems to be an understanding that the endowment of the house with its various magical properties has consumed their vitality.' —G. Landtmann, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 22.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

members of the clan should be erected, if possible, in its neighbourhood. At Phunder there is a bamboo bundle containing a small earthen pot hanging above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any Maravi dies his relatives carry his *jiwa* there, open the bamboo bundle and sacrifice a chicken above it, allowing the blood to fall into the pot. This means that the soul of the dead man will henceforth live in the pot hanging above his clan-god.

Another important function of the Anga is to serve as a means of detecting witches, breach of tribal taboo, theft or even to discover loss of property. At the end of 1940 I witnessed an interesting witch-hunt at Palki in the Narayanpur Tahsil.

On 16 November 1940, Aitu, the Muria headman of Palki, bought eight annas worth of Court Fee stamps and affixed them to an application to the Tahsildar of Kondagaon, complaining that in his village the animals were dying, people were falling sick and crops were failing, and asking for the services of the Anga Deo at Bara Dongar to discover what witch, magician or malignant ghost or deity was responsible. On his paying five rupees into the Treasury the Tahsildar issued *parwana* instructing the priest in charge of the god to take it to Palki (but to no other village) in order to discover and thus cure the trouble.

On the 18th, Aitu reached the shrine at Bara Dongar, and almost immediately the party set out. There was Deo Singh, the hereditary Halba priest of the god, four Muria bearers to carry it and a 'Dhurwa' priest, a Muria specially attached to the god's service. In two days they reached Palki and camped in a little shed of branches outside the village, placing the god on a rough bed of logs and branches in a separate hut.

There Deo Singh told me about this famous Anga. His name was Narsingnath Deo and he was born at Amgaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana. His father was Morg Raj, who now lives at Paralkot, his mother Devni Dokari of Antagarh. His younger brother is the Pat Deo who now lives at Jagdalpur and was taken there in the time of Raja Bhairon Deo to hunt witches. Here, of course, Deo Singh was talking in theological language: actually the Raja, hearing of the fame of the Anga in the wilds, had a copy made and installed in the palace at Jagdalpur. For some time the custom was to bring the original god from Jagdalpur and send the copy to take its place; but in time this custom was dropped and today the Anga in the palace acts independently of its prototype.

Raja Bhairon Deo, continued my informant, at one time had both Anga at Jagdalpur. There was a great epidemic, and none of the gods was able to help, so the Raja ordered them all to be thrown into the Indrawati river. But only Anga Deo and his young brother Pat Deo floated on the surface and drifted to the shore. This made them very famous, but the Raja felt that it was wrong to keep two such gods in Jagdalpur and he sent the Anga Narsingnath to Bara Dongar, where he has since resided.[1]

This Anga is made of bel wood. Every three generations it is remade. It is decorated with a silver snake and a sun and moon in silver. The old worn-out images are thrown into a deep pond at Amgaon.

On the 20th of November the witch hunt at Palki began. It was only with great difficulty that I was able to be present, for the villagers concealed both the time and place of the ceremony, and in fact were sending me off in the

[1] For another account see W. V. Grigson's Introduction to my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), pp. x f. According to Grigson's information the Jagdalpur god was copied from the Narayanpur god.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

opposite direction. Once I had made an offering of silver to the god, however, they became very friendly and I was able to witness all that happened.

Carried by four men, and accompanied by the village elders, the Anga Deo was carried from house to house round the village. The god stopped before each house, and the women had to come out with an offering of a leaf-cup of rice and a copper coin, and walk under the god and away the other side. If all was well the Dhurwa placed a ring of aonla leaf on the threshold and a bit of iron slag and hammered it with an axe.

But in two houses the Anga scented trouble; he refused to accept the offerings of the householders, swinging round indignantly, then rushing to and fro, whirling and turning in an alarming manner. He pointed out an old man and woman in one house, and the householder in another as specially affected by the evil. The priests hastily poured liquor in front of the god 'for he becomes thirsty when there is some mischief in his presence'.

At last they took the Anga back to his hut outside the village and everybody sat round to discuss what had happened and to consider what was to be done. On this occasion the medium proclaimed that it was not a magician or witch, but a number of deities affronted at not receiving sufficient honour—Pendrawandin, Pardenhin, Koriya Pat, Garha Rau and the local ancestors—who were causing the trouble. That day and the next day were spent in sacrifice to the Anga and divination by the local mediums. On the morning of the third day diagnosis having been fully established, they went to effect a cure.

The bearers carried the Anga to the first house which had been shown as 'infected'. They stood before the door and a Siraha-medium sat down before it. The god 'climbed' on him and he revealed what things were needed to appease the angry gods. He made two little images of black wax to represent the *kus* digging-bar of Koriya Pat and the axe of Pendrawandin. The owner of the house brought out a basket of rice and many little leaf-packets of parched gram, rice, lamp-black, rice-flour, haldi. The medium danced and postured before the god, and the Dhurwa took two chickens for the Rau, a pig for Pendrawandin, and a goat for Koriya Pat and made them eat a little rice. Each householder present put a rice-mark on the goat saying, 'Whatever evil disease, ghost or god is troubling us, take to yourself and carry away'.

After this the bearers were suddenly impelled to take the Anga out into the jungle and we all followed. The Anga wandered about erratically, but at last came to a halt at a point where two paths crossed, before an ant-hill. The medium fell into a trance again and called out instructions in a high clear voice. The Dhurwa cleared the ground and made a criss-cross pattern of black and white. He placed seven little piles of rice in a row. He made the sacrificial animals eat, and then killed them, dropping the blood on every pile of rice. With his knife he made a circle to enclose the god, and nailed a piece of slag into the ground.

Then the old man and woman who had been proclaimed as 'infected' came to the front and, holding bunches of *chir* grass (the grass from which brooms are made) behind them, broke them in their hands, threw them away with a gesture of finality, spat and walked hurriedly home without looking round, and by another way. The Anga also was taken home by another route back to its camp.

I was not able to see the ceremonies for the purification of the other house. The Anga demanded an offering of the fur of a wild squirrel, and this took some time to find. Two days later, however, the rites were performed and the village was cleared of its supernatural dangers.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice, returned home the next day.

Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2] At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Land of Anga and the body. Yasahketu 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shamelessness pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga) ", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'. —Nundolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 317.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

The similarity between this description and the account which I have just given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Muria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mân to pen nahi to pâthar.—*If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.*—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under saja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

[1] See *Muria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
[2] Dey, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
[3] Ibid., p. 344.
[4] J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The buildings vary greatly. Some are solid mud houses with strong doors, others are open sheds, a few stand in substantial compounds of their own with pillars and swings before the entrance. The furniture and symbols inside vary as greatly. In the solid buildings there is generally something that might be damaged by cattle or blown away in a storm—little brass images of horses, elephants and bulls, elaborate litters for Danteshwari, bunches of peacock feathers. Flags and very small images are wrapped up and put into an earthen pot hung from the roof. The long Gutal poles (with a big bunch of peacock feathers at the top) are slung from the roof, and the Anga Deo are hung on ropes from the roof or placed resting on bamboos. Other symbols of the gods are chains, spears, axes, digging tools, whips of cow-hair, shields.

Fig. 24. Brass horse, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines *Height* 9½"

In the more open sheds, the symbols of the gods have to be slung high up very near the roof. At the foot of the central pillar there is generally a flat stone which serves as the seat of the god, and there are several big stones placed together to form a hearth for the cooking of the new grain and pulses or sacrificial animals. The gods are often taken out of their temples to be worshipped, at least on all major festivals, but the sacramental cooking is done inside. So you may often see big wooden spoons stuck in the roof. Outside the temple, there may be a swing with a spiked seat on which the mediums can prophesy; there is often a row of wooden pillars, each with a stone seat before it, to which certain visiting gods can be tied, and there may be a stone for special offerings to the dead.

On the wooden pillars, there are often phallic symbols. At Metawand I saw an elaborately carved vagina showing the clitoris and labia; there are similar carvings at Markabera and Bayanar.

I will describe one or two representative shrines, for this will give a better idea of them than any general account. At Markabera is the *pen-rawar* of the Wadder clan, and near the temple is a row of menhirs erected for members of the clan who have died in the neighbourhood. But Markabera is not the original *pen-rawar* of this clan. That is at Kakori, where the clan-god, the Anga Bope Harma, has his residence. Many years ago, Bope Harma had a son at Kakori who was named Bhumiriya; two brothers of the Wadder clan lived there as the Dhurwa Pujari. After a time Bope Harma ordered one of the Wadder brothers to go to Markabera and make a new *pen-rawar* there with a temple to Bhumiriya.

The temple is built with nine wooden pillars, fixed in place by the clan-priest who put iron slag at the bottom of each hole. Bundles of grass called *gubba* were prepared by a Karanga, a clan *akwalwa* to the Wadder clan; mahua flowers and water were offered them and they were tied to the top of the pillars before thatching. The roof was then thatched, but no walls were made. Every ten years, the *pen-rawar* building is renewed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

825
171

horseback; so do the Korku on their carved memorial tablets.[1] The Muria often offer horses of clay or brass (Fig. 24) at their shrines. Sir Lewis Fermor

[532
778]

After a photograph by G. F. Ramsden

FIG. 28. Gond shrine near Naghir, Chanda District

discovered a remarkable iron horse among clay horses offered to a village god on the top of a hill of manganese-ore in the Chhindwara District, which he thought might be compared with the horse offered to the Southern Indian deity Iyenar.[2]

One of the oldest of Indian sacrifices is the *asvamedha*, or horse-sacrifice, which has been traced to Scythia. 'There has always', says Penzer, 'been a close connexion between horses and the sea-god, and also with the sun. The latter connexion is due not merely, I think, to the fact that the horse was the "vehicle"—of the sun-god, but because, through its swiftness, strength and activity, it was itself a symbol of the sun.' Penzer gives an account of the rite, which included the horse's consecration and its release for a year's wandering before the actual sacrifice. After its death, the queen lay with the animal so that its great powers of fertility might be transferred to her.[3] Fraser describes rites for the horse among the Russians and Chinese.[4] The Greeks sacrificed horses to the sea-god.

This association of the horse with magic, worship and sacrifice provides a background to its connexion with divination and ecstatic trance among the

[1] See W. Koppers 'Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils and Other Primitive Tribes in Central India', *Annali Lateranensi*, Vol. VI (1942), passim; D. H. Gordon, 'Korku Memorial Tablets', *Man*, 1936, Vol. XIX.

[2] L. Fermor, 'An Iron Horse from the Central Provinces', *JRASB*, Vol. II (1936), pp. 211–14.

[3] *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. IV, pp. 14–16.

[4] *Pausanias*, Vol. IV, pp. 197f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

But I was able to see it at Almer a few days later on 23 April. This hunt is mainly the business of the chelik directed by the Kaser-Gaita, but other and more experienced hunters join in, for success in the hunt is the best of omens, not only for a plentiful supply of wild fruit but later for a fine harvest. A crowd therefore of chelik and older men led by the Kaser-Gaita with their axes and bows and arrows, some with gourds of gruel to refresh them on the way, gathered on the path leading towards the jungle. 196

The Gaita laid his own bow and arrows and axe together with a chelik's bow and arrows and axe across the path. He made a small doll out of dub grass and a grass bow and arrow and placed these in front. He made three piles of earth and on each of these placed a ring of aonra leaf and a branch of tendu. He made fire with a fire-drill (not a saw) and lit a little incense which he offered to Tallur Muttai the Earth Mother, Mundri Dokari the wife of Budha Deo, and the Departed, crying to the earth to give good hunting. He waved the fire over the arrows, pressed his right hand hard on the ground, then carried away the grass doll and bow and arrow towards the village and threw them to the side of the path. At the same time the ghotul Sirdar picked up the bows and arrows and axes with a cry of triumph, crossed the line and went quickly down the path without looking back. [372]

That day in Almer they got nothing, but the following evening, in Bandopal, the chelik returned with a jungle-fowl and a young chital. As they cut the chital up, they removed the tip of the ears, the tongue, the hoofs and liver; these bits were done up in three leaf-packets and cooked separately. The Kaser-Gaita took these packets and offered them to the local gods; a little was left over and put aside for himself. The flesh was cooked where it was cut up—in the fields outside the village—and a little wrapped up in leaves was given to every household.

We now return to Masora for the Marka Pandum. The different clans in this village kept the festival in different places, each with their own clan-gods; I went with the Poyami people and their Anga Deo to a sacred grove near a small stream in the jungle about a mile from the village. Here we found the gods—the Anga Deo whose name was Lal Sai, the Gutal pole called Lalu, and the tall flag-staff and flag of white cloth, with sun and moon and nine little men worked on it in red which represents Budha Deo—placed in position under a saja tree. A brass horse for the Rau was under another tree, and a broken sword and shield for ancestors who had died in battle long ago. [718]

Not far from the gods the chelik had cleared and cow-dunged a patch of ground and were busy cooking rice and kosra. There were baskets of mangoes, char and karmata fruit ready for the pot. In front of the gods also 'these three sisters, mango, char and karmata', had been placed.

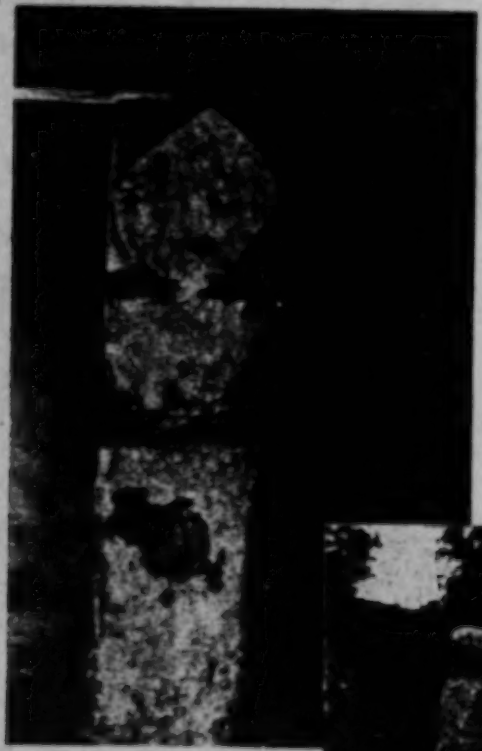
Presently three of the chelik took their hunting-horns and blew them as a sign that the proceedings were to start. The mediums obtained leave to begin and the gods were taken up and carried to the stream. There the Gaita first offered eggs, liquor and aonra rings to the Water Maidens and took the gods down into the stream and washed them thoroughly. The Gaita crossed the stream and offered eggs and rings and liquor to the Forest Maidens for the safety of the cattle that might graze there.

After the bathing the gods were brought back and anointed with mahua oil. Then two of the Siraha-mediums sat in trance before the gods and discussed with them in a curiously intimate and homely way what offerings were to be made and what the gods would do in return. The clan-priest took chickens that were brought for every Poyami household and two pigs and persuaded them to eat a little of the rice that was piled in small heaps before the gods.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

778

Plate XLVIII



The dhangar's 'mistress' at Borhambey

The punishment-pillar at Agra

[p. 224(D)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

I. The Shrine of Lingo Pen

IN the wild wooded country at the top of the hills, as you go up from Antagarh towards Amabera, is the little village of Semurgaon, and in the forest that surrounds the village, on a cliff overlooking a tiny stream, is the shrine of Lingo Pen who was once honoured by the Gond and Pardhan all over the Central Provinces. Today, as a living force, his cult is probably confined to the north of Bastar, and to the Muria, to whom he has given many deities and the most cherished of their institutions.

In Semurgaon, Lingo's shrine, a substantial thatched hut, is maintained by the Muria, but his priest is a Pardhan—Deo Singh of the Koreti Nang sept—who sings and plays before him on the dhusir-fiddle which is also Lingo's dwelling-place. The shrine is not unworthy of this venerable deity, the lord of all the aboriginal gods of Bastar. Under a spacious roof lies the Anga of Lingo suspended on a swing and sheltered by a great screen of peacock's feathers. At the four corners of the swing are bunches of the same feathers, and at the Anga's side is Lingo's *jiwa* or soul, a piece of iron like a ploughshare wrapped in grass. Round Lingo's neck is a bell, his son Netturgundi. To the right is his throne, a large cup-shaped stone. Above hangs an iron drum and a hunting-horn. From the roof are suspended pots containing Palo, the sacred cloth, and Lingo's two horses, crooked sticks adorned with feathers on which the mediums ride in ecstasy before him.

Every three years there is a great festival at Semurgaon, when Lingo is brought out of his shrine and is worshipped with pigs, goats and bulls. From all over the Jhorian, Amabera and Antagarh Parganas and from Kanker State come the pilgrims bringing their gods with them, 'for Lingo is Raja and Bastar is his kingdom'. At Alor also, in a clearing in the heart of the jungle, is a four-foot pillar of mahua wood in honour of Lingo, and every three years there is a festival. Indeed throughout northern Bastar you may find Lingo's relatives and hear his legend, a token of the strength and distribution of his cult.[1]

II. The Lingo Legend in the Central Provinces

Later in this chapter I present several versions of the Lingo legend as it is current among the Muria of Bastar, where its outstanding feature is its account of the founding of the ghotul. But first let us consider some other versions of the story which have been recorded in the Central Provinces.

The first of these versions was taken down by the Rev Stephen Hislop from a 'Pardhan priest of the Gond at Nagpur' in the Gondi tongue, and was later edited, translated and published by Sir Richard Temple, in 1866.[2] Unfortunately we have no indication of the distribution of the legend, nor indeed whether—in the form recorded by Hislop—it was known to any other

[1] There is a shrine to Lingal Pen at Chanpal in the Dantewara Tahsil, but I do not know whether the Maria here identify him with the Lingo of the north.

[2] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*. Edited by R. Temple, 1866. Large extracts from Temple's translation were reproduced by Bishop Eyre Chatterton in his *The Story of Gondwana* (London, 1916) and many of Temple's notes used without acknowledgement. A brief summary is given by Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 478.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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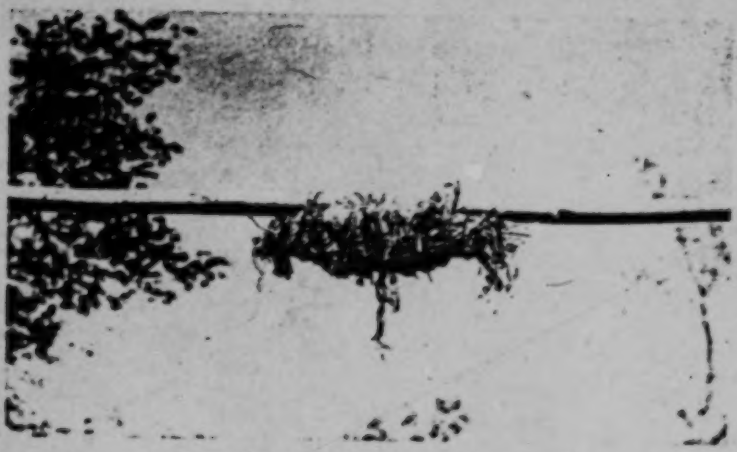

Rubbish hung over the road to purify a village

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778

Plate LXXXIX

Leader of the Diwali dance

Cheik with sacred fire

[p. 464 (a)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 X 484 796

words. From this shrine he took a bunch of peacock's feathers which he handed to the Gain—the leader of the singers.

The chelik now assemble outside the Gaita's house and the Gain takes the spear in his hand and they dance the stick-dance for the first time. After that they dance before the ghotul. Then they go with the Gaita and a Siraha along the road to their first point of call. When they reach the village boundary, the Gaita draws a line across the path and places on it seven rings of aonra leaf, seven bits of iron slag and makes seven little piles of rice. The Gaita and Siraha squat down by the side of the path, and the boys step across the line one by one, exclaiming 'Let us return safely'. Should any magical or supernatural danger be threatening one of the boys, the Siraha will immediately react by falling into a trance or jerks, and the expedition will be halted until the danger is discovered and removed.

[791]

X 883 X 484 796 784

Once the boys have crossed the line, they have definitely passed out of the ordinary world. They are dedicated to Lingo Pen and must be about his business. They are charged with spiritual power and open to spiritual attack. The rules and taboos of the expedition must be rigorously observed. Some of these rules seem to be intended to segregate the boys from all the associations of sex; others to protect them from catching the spiritual infection of strange villages.

I have already noticed the rule of chastity. Reinforcing this are rules forbidding the chelik to enter the compound of any ghotul or even to touch its fence. Except for the six leaders, the other boys may dance with the motiari, but they must not touch them. They dance in separate rows. They must not pass under the Diwali decorations in any house—for to these boys Diwali has no associations with the Feast of Lights, but is rich with memories of erotic adventure with the girls who have visited their villages for the Diwali dance. Nor may the boys enter any door or touch the thatch of any roof; they must not eat from the hands of a married woman; they must be careful that not even the shadow of a woman in her menses falls upon them. Such regulations remind the boys of their separation for the time being from all domestic ties.

Should a boy's ghotul-wife begin her period while he is on the expedition, the fact is shown him in a dream, and he must make or promise an offering to Lingo. The boys are generally warned of danger by dreaming about tigers.

[778]

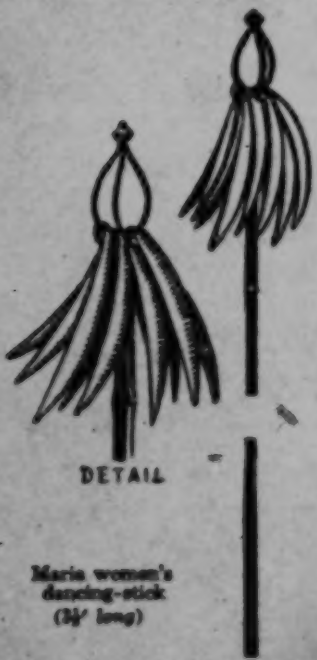
In order to protect the chelik from the infection of a strange village, there is a rule that the fire with which they cook their food must always be lighted from the need-fire smouldering on the point of the sacred spear. On the other hand they are allowed to eat from the motiari of the village they visit—but their own boys must serve the food. Two boys are appointed cooks, one to see to rice, one to the pulse and salt. The chelik and motiari of the village visited may bring food, even cooked food, but they should not talk much and must soon go away. When they lie down to sleep round the fire in their little camps under trees near the ghotul, the boys must light this fire also with the need-fire.

They are not allowed to cross over a fallen tree. They must keep to the same order and pairs with which they started. At the first dance of all, the Gaita cries 'Make up your pairs' and henceforth they must never change partners. They must always dance in the same order. A boy must always sleep with his partner, and with no other. If they break this rule they will die, and it is said that in Talabera this did actually happen. If one member of a pair dies, his *jori* or mate will die also. Probably a quite sensible rule to ensure the technical perfection of the dancing has been exalted into a

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.



Maria woman's dancing-stick (3½' long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

no Dead to people their kingdom. But if this human being were to eat a bit of the liver of his own son, then there would be deaths in the world and the Maria himself would have learned the knowledge of evil and death and would become a magician.

'The Maria, little knowing that when Nandraj Guru said "pigeon", he meant his son, asked one of the gods to go to his

A typical Anga Pen, a clan-god. Carried by four men, it is sometimes used to detect witches.

house and fetch the bird. The god killed the boy, removed the liver, and the Maria and the seven gods ate it together. As the Maria unwittingly ate the liver of his own son, he was filled with the knowledge of death and evil, and became the first sorcerer. Before he died, he taught his own disciples the art and today many men know how to harm and kill their enemies. But in every case the liver must be obtained, for the liver is the *jiwa* (soul) of all beings.'

In Khutepal the Maria said that they began learning magic in the month of June. The young disciples must go to the jungle and set up a small stone which represents an urasakal menhir. To the left of the pillar they place another stone flat on the ground to represent a danyakal. Then between the urasakal and the danyakal a number of small stones are placed in line from right to left. This line of stones represents one kind of magic, say the magic for curing the sick. Parallel to this they place a second line of small stones. This represents another kind of magic, say doing injury to an enemy.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

means 'the earth-place'; *kadri* is the Bison-horn word for *kasyeq*, the knife carried in the loin-cloth, and the *perma* is sometimes called the *kadri-gaita*. *Wijj-erhu* means 'seed-*mahua*'; in most Bison-horn villages there is a sacred *mahua* tree, instead of the *saja* tree that is the rule in hill villages, in the middle of the sacred field, and the tree is the 'seed-*mahua*' because beneath it are held the ceremonies of the important '*Wijja* (seed) *Pandum*'. The *saja* tree remains equally sacred, as will be observed from the way in which its leaves are used in the ceremonies described in the next chapter. Under or near the *mahua* tree is often a wooden post or an upright cube of stone with a sloping top, known generally as Bhimul, which is made as occasion demands to serve as Bhimul Deo, Tallin Uchur, Dongar Deo, Mata, or any other god required; near this the *perma* will clean and plaster a flat piece of ground, known as *khari-mundi*, for sacrificing the victims. Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo and Bhu-deo combined with Bhu-devi and called generally by the Bison-horn Marias of Sukma zamindari Polamraj and Polam-muttai, are all really forms of the Village Mother, or at least of the Earth; there are several other such forms, and, though all are fundamentally the same, they tend gradually to be vaguely differentiated in the minds of the villagers, and soon, no doubt, will be individual godlings, each with his own functions. Bhimul is the rain-giver, who has been Hinduized amongst Central Provinces Gonds and the Murias of the north of Bastar as Bhimsen or Bhima, one of the five Pandava brothers; besides his annual *pandum* in the early spring, he is liable to be treated roughly if the rains are late or scanty. His wooden or stone post is then pelted with dung and filth by abusive females, who challenge him to show his powers by sending his rain to wash himself clean.

Demons

The Bison-horn Marias go much farther than the Hill Marias in deifying the forces of nature. There are the Ban Devi spirits of the forest, Jalkamani the spirit of rivers, and, for nearly every mountain pass, pile of boulders, or precipice, some spirit, all of whom may need propitiation, and some of whom are becoming godlings with a cult. The Hill Marias have a vague dread of evil spirits of the mountains, which they call *rau*; amongst the Murias and Bhattras there are other demons such as Uran Rau who blows away the grain with the chaff at winnowing, and Chitkar Rau who brings wild animals to trample down the crops; but the only *rau* to whom I have heard a name given by Hill Marias is Raja Rau, the demon of the Raughat pass in Antagarh tahsil, held to be a very Raja of the *rau* because he caused mountain-sickness to the first European surveyor seen in Bastar. All Marias also speak with fear of a water-witch in the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

form of a great serpent, known as *Tondetaras*, haunting river rapids and waterfalls, the mere sight of whom is fatal.

The traces of totemism amongst Hill and Bison-horn Marias will be described in the chapter on social organization. It may briefly be stated here that there appears to be no connexion between the totems and the clan-god, and that at no ceremony, either clan or village, or domestic, is the totem ever mentioned or worshipped. It gets a vague respect, perhaps an occasional *salaam*, from members of the totem, and they do not touch, kill or eat it if they can avoid doing so.

Totems

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

either by Madras Presidency officials or by the special staff deputed for this purpose to the Orissa hill tracts of the prevalence of this practice in Bastar. In consequence, at the instance of the British Resident at Nagpur Lal Dalganjan Singh was summoned to Nagpur in 1842 and examined, and a guard of Nagpur Raj police was stationed at Dantewara to prevent human sacrifices in the temple of the State goddess Danteshwari. But it was never proved that such sacrifices had ever taken place. Writing in 1862 after a prolonged tour in Bastar and after special enquiries into this matter in both Kalahandi and Bastar States, of which as Deputy Commissioner of Sironcha he was then in political charge, Captain C. Glasfurd stated that the guard had continued to be posted at Dantewara ever since 1842, and that 'even if the abominable rite ever existed, which is doubtful, it has altogether fallen into disuse'. The matter is not really relevant to the subject of this book, save that to these suspicions were due the first visits of British officials to the State, and the ultimate decision to insist on Raja Bhairon Deo accepting officials from British India as his Diwans. I personally doubt whether such sacrifices ever took place; if they did they were semi-State ceremonies connected with the Raja's yearly Dasehra celebrations, the celebrants were Telangas, and the Marias had nothing to do with them.[1] In actual fact, despite many past

[1] It is so commonly asserted that these sacrifices were prevalent in Bastar at Dantewara that it is of interest to note the evidence. The 1842 action of the Nagpur Raj was based merely on a few hearsay reports collected through the Agency for the Orissa Hill Tracts, to the effect that victims were kidnapped from outside Bastar, that in Bastar often twenty men were sacrificed at a time, the worst case being said to have been the sacrifice in 1826 of twenty-five or twenty-seven men by the Bastar Raja before setting out on a visit to His Highness the Raja of Nagpur, which was still referred to in 1838 as 'the great sacrifice'; the latter report, however, goes on in the usual *cause ignotum pro magnifico* strain that then and now distinguishes outside Hindu statements about the 'wild jungles' of 'Kankeri-Bastar', to suggest that the practice was rife also in Kanker and adjoining tracts north of Bastar, and that 'in some of the wilder jungles bordering on Chhattisgarh the Gonds add cannibalism to this horrid deed and eat the flesh by sacrifice'. Captain J. MacVicar, the Agent in the Orissa Hill Tracts, in 1855 visited Bastar, saw the Raja and the Lal and visited Dantewara to test the truth of various reports. Beyond the grovelling terror which the goddess Danteshwari inspired throughout the parts visited by him, and the assertions of a man in his camp that sacrificers had recently tried to kidnap him, and of a woman that six years before a man had been sacrificed during some disturbances by the Lal Sahib's orders, he left nothing on record to justify his conclusion that it was beyond all doubt that human sacrifices had never ceased to be offered in spite of the orders of the Nagpur Darbar and successive British Residents at Nagpur. Had he found any real evidence, it is scarcely conceivable that action would not have been taken against the Raja and the Lal Sahib. Actually, all that was done was a visit late that year from Lieut. C. Elliot, the Deputy Commissioner of Raipur, who made no further enquiries, but substituted for the old police guard guards of entirely Mussalman police at Jagdalpur and Dantewara, and straitly warned the Raja that he must do his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

175 assertions to the contrary, and although it was almost an article of faith with the Political Department of the Central Provinces that Danteshwari was the chief and most dreaded goddess of all the peoples of Bastar and that her high priest the Jia of Dantewara was the one man who could influence the 'wild Maria tribes', yet she is almost unknown to the Marias of the Abujhmar hills save in a village or two on the Dantewara edge of the hills, while even the more sophisticated Bison-horn Marias of the Dantewara tahsil pay only nominal respect to the goddess in villages where a thatched temple has been erected in her name by non-Maria settlers. The Jia may have influence over the Jhari Telanga and Halba residents of Dantewara tahsil; over the Marias he has none. Hindu State

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782 utmost to suppress the rite and to establish a more just system of administration. In 1859 the same officer, now Captain Elliot, informed the Raja of the intention of the Commissioner of the Nagpur Province to recommend the extension to Bastar of the operations of the Agent for the Orissa Hill Tracts for enquiring into the prevalence of human sacrifice; but the Raja protested again, as always before, that no such thing had ever occurred; and Captain Elliot stated that he had never had any report of any sacrifice, nor had anything ever come to his notice by rumour or otherwise to lead him to believe that such a thing had happened since the province had come under British rule. No action seems to have been taken, and in 1862 Captain Glasfurd, whose personal opinion has been quoted above to the effect that it was doubtful if such sacrifices had ever taken place, reported that no special agency was necessary for this purpose in Bastar beyond the temple guard. Even this police guard was discontinued in 1863, and five years later the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces reported to the Government of India that there had been no practice of human sacrifice in the Central Provinces 'of late years, if indeed within the memory of man'.

There was thus never a single authenticated instance of human sacrifice in Bastar. Nearly all the stories emanated from Jeypore, the Maharaja of which was at bitter enmity with the Chief of Bastar. In fact, the latter frequently protested that the Jeypore Maharaja was the source of these slanders.

In 1885-6 the whole question was revived in consequence of alarming reports emanating from the Madras police in Jeypore of gangs of Bastar kidnappers being abroad in Jeypore looking for victims for sacrifice at Dantewara. Initial enquiries by Sardar Rattan Singh, the Raipur District Superintendent of Police, suggested that the reports were fabrications and that there was not the slightest particle of evidence to implicate the Bastar authorities. While the enquiries were in progress, the Madras authorities were scared by a further report that an excise peon had been kidnapped near the Bastar border, and urged the immediate despatch of police and troops into Bastar. The Jeypore District Superintendent of Police with some Jeypore police, and the Political Agent of the Chhattisgarh States with fifty military police, proceeded at once to Bastar. Masses of statements were taken implying the existence of a regular organization to kidnap victims and keep them in various hiding-places till wanted for sacrifice; it was suggested that in twelve villages the ryots held their land free of land revenue for the service of kidnapping victims. No proof could be obtained of these allegations, and not one of the alleged hiding-places was traced. Though Raja Bhairon Deo was removed from the State during the enquiry, nothing was found to implicate him. There was not any evidence of Bastar having caused the disappearance of the persons alleged to have been kidnapped from Jeypore. In consequence of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

officials incline to claim the aboriginals as Hindus and to deprecate census classification of their religion as animistic or tribal. It has always been easy for such persons to identify the Maria's cult of the Earth or *Bhum* in its aryanized form Mati Deo with Mata or Mai, of whom Danteshwari is the Bastar incarnation; and another source of confusion has been the presence in every aboriginal village of a *gudi* (hedge-temple) or other rough shrine of the *Nar Taluri* ('Village Mother'), known to the Hindus as Gāon Devī, and easily identified with Mata Devi or Maoli. Actually the Marias, whether of the Abujhmar hills or Bison-horn, do not even know Dantewara by that name, but by its older and pre-Danteshwari name of Jatawada.

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various statements made, Shamsundar, the Jia or hereditary high priest of the Dantewara temple, the representative of a Rajput family that by tradition had come from Warangal with Raja Annam Deo, was committed for trial on a charge of murdering a Parja who was proved to have disappeared from a Bastar village in 1883, and it was alleged that the Jia had confessed that he had sacrificed him. The Commissioner of Chhattisgarh, Mr. Chisholm, tried the case as Sessions Judge. The Jia had all along refused to sign the confession and stated that he had only said what he did to avoid the indignity of handcuffs. The other witnesses alleged that the statements made in the enquiry had been false, and inspired by fear of the Jeypore police, who had grossly ill-treated them. The Judge held that the witnesses had deliberately made false and tutored statements under the influence of threats, and that the prosecution case completely failed. The Jia was therefore acquitted. In his report to the Chief Commissioner, he said that he considered that the Raja had been wrongly accused, that there was no proof that any human sacrifices had been offered in recent years in Bastar, and that there was scarcely anything tangible enough to justify even suspicion. This view was accepted by the Chief Commissioner, though he was still doubtful about the Jia's confession, which had contained new details of the alleged sacrifice not given by other witnesses, since he considered the Jia too intelligent to be thrown off his balance by a threat of being handcuffed. The kidnapping scare, he pointed out, could be paralleled by various examples in other parts of India, and it was natural for popular rumour to attribute the several disappearances to agents kidnapping victims for Danteshwari because of the old tradition of such sacrifices, while there was nothing strange about disappearances in a country swarming like Bastar with tiger; but there was bound to remain some suspicion over the purpose of attempts that were proved to have been made to kidnap various persons.

In Dantewara they will still show you where the police dug in vain near the temples for the skeletons of the alleged victims, but found not a bone to substantiate the stories of the informers. There were no villages held revenue-free, and no cages for the destined victims. So far as the older inhabitants remember the enquiry, they think the Raja was badly treated. There is no one who even now can give any information about human sacrifices in former days; they deny that there ever were any. Certainly the Meriah rite was never celebrated in Bastar.

Old rumours die hard: in 1913 the Madras police interested themselves in the matter once again, when an Inspector reported his personal belief that the sacrifices still took place at the occasional visits of the late Raja Rudra Pratap Deo to Dantewara, and that a sacrifice was likely at his then impending visit, as he had no son to succeed him! This was at a time when the Raja had lost his powers after the 1910 rebellion and had to follow the advice of a resident European Diwan.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *parma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Telam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

Houses

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lons*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

thongs of the outer rind of bamboos. Where *saja* trees are scarce, he may be made entirely of bamboos, but will be lodged in a hut under a *saja* tree. The junctions of the logs and the cross-pieces are adorned with bunches of peacock and jungle-cock feathers, and the ends of the logs with rupees or spirals of peacock quill or bands of brass and silver. At the first-fruits ceremonies his shed is adorned with plaited fringes of the stalks and ears of the new grains, or bunches of bean and pulse pods; and he is brought forth to have the blood of the sacrificed victims sprinkled upon him.

Halbas, Telangas and Murias have precisely similar gods, if the logs composing them are more elaborately adorned and sometimes carved. Their generic name in Bastar is Anga Deo or Pat Deo, 'Log-God'. The central log is the essential part, for the other two logs are added primarily to enable the god to be borne on the shoulders of four men when he goes forth to a festival or a witch hunt. The Jhoria log-god at Narainpur had a special nose for witches, and the late Raja Bhairam Deo, great-grandfather of the present Maharaja, installed a copy of it in the palace at Jagdalpur; for witch hunts the god used to be brought in from Narainpur while the palace copy was sent to Narainpur during his absence. I found that the palace copy was in 1927 being used generally without reference to the Narainpur prototype for detecting witchcraft around Jagdalpur, a fee of Rs. 5 being paid into the State Treasury to the credit of the Temple Court of Wards whenever surrounding Murias requisitioned its services.

As has been observed on page 51, there is a tradition among the Hill Marias (of Chhota Dongar, Mangnar and Barsur Mar *parganas*) that the great log-god Pat Raja of the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana* with the help of his wife's brother, Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan of the Bison-horn village of Ghotpal, near Barsur, divided up both Hill and Bison-horn Marias into clans, in the old days when there was regular intermarriage between the Hill and Bison-horn Marias. The legend does not appear to be known to the latter, who have only vague traditions of having at some remote date descended to their present lands from the Abujhmar hills, where occasionally they say that their clan-god still resides.

It is certain that most of the Hill Maria clan-gods have relationship claimed for them with Pat Raja of Mohnar. The Usendi clan of Orcha has his younger brother Wikir Hunga at Japgunda, the Deda clan of Kurmer have another younger brother, Nule Harma, the Dhurwa clan of Gomagal have his sister Oghal Mutta'i, the Hill Maria Marvi clan of Toqtoli in Mangnar *pargana* have his sister's son Mara-Magh, while the Gume clan of the Barsur Mar

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

continue their old habit (shared by the Baigas and most of the Orissa tribes) of wiping themselves with leaves after defecation. This custom, along with beef-eating and the breeding of domestic pigs, appears to worry that slightly ludicrous figure, the pious social reformer, far more than more obvious social evils. In Orissa, for example, earnest attempts have been made to induce the Bondos, of all people, to use water after defecation. A few have begun to do so, using the village stream (sole source of water-supply) as a latrine: the only result of these rather pathetic endeavours at 'improvement' has been to make the water-supply of a few aboriginal villages as filthy as that of many 'advanced' areas. As a comment on this curious belief that a change in defecatory habits indicates an advance in culture, I note that in a famous Indian Public School, new boys are greeted with the question, 'Do you wash or wipe?' If a boy 'washes' he is regarded as coming from a definitely inferior social stratum.

Page 69, *line* 31. The multiple cord belt is not worn by Gadaba women, as Glasfurd says, nor by the Bondos, as Hutton says at page xiv of his Introduction to this book; it is a certain class of Kond women, notably the Kuttia Konds and the Konds round Nimgiri, who wear it. Gadaba women wear, not a belt, but a bustle made of many separate cords lashed together; this certainly gives them 'a strange appearance'. Juang women formerly wore belts made of a great number of little earthen cubes strung on cords. Cowrie belts are still common among the northern Murias.

Page 80, *line* 35. Cowries seem to have come back on the market again; I have seen them on sale in the bazaars and have noticed many new cowrie belts and fringes for the bison-horn head-dress. For notes on the use of the cowrie, see Grigson's communication to *Man* (Vol. XL, p. 159) on the subject, and my article, 'The Use of Cowries in Bastar State' in the same journal (Vol. XLII, pp. 121ff).

Page 81, *line* 11. Marias have told me that they distinguish two kinds of bison horn. Those of inferior quality are all-black in colour. The better type are white from the root to the middle and then dark to the tip; nowadays such horns fetch anything up to twenty rupees—sometimes a bullock is given in exchange for a fine pair. Marias go all the way from Dantewara into the Jeypore zamindari to obtain them.

Before leaving their village for a dance Maria youths often promise a fowl to Mahaprabhu, the Village Mother and the Departed saying 'Save us from hostile magic and the evil eye, and see that no feathers fall from our head-dresses. Let the drums give a good sound; let them not be broken'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

782
516

After the Census, the Marias took the house-numbering boards outside their villages and sacrificed pigs to them in order to avert the danger of numbering the people

[End Plate Y]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Raughat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle.

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhārni*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'.

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari pudo*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths.

FIG. 1. Kuvi digging-stick of iron
Length 1' 7"

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*.

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the rains. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] The other villagers come and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *korlat* or *balla* (*dhosna* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *karpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes called *katwah* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun at the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

[1] The Juang keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandagarh* dormitory, and usually ignite their clearings from it.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

224 796 787 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonra rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurab, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 796 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khamma Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate.

[782] At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 841 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt. As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long. 226

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Natânak korinta murwus tagat ke pashinta*: It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'. 227 [524]

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes. 226 278

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden. 226 776 782

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first. 273

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2] 273 824

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election 273 883

[1] R. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Koya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 52.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

824 538 buried by their mother. Almost immediately the seven sisters ran away, and when the mother could not find them, she went to the place where the placenta was buried and let the milk from her breasts fall upon it. As the days went by there gradually grew up from the placenta a tree which was full of milk. This was the sago-palm that was born from milk and always [524] gives milk. There is a riddle—'Milk comes from the horns of the buffalo'.

Another story comes from Pharasgaon. Long ago there were eleven brothers and one day as they went hunting in the jungle they grew very thirsty. They came to a group of palm trees and rested in their shade. The youngest brother looked up at the tree and said, 'This is a very fine tree. Surely there is water hidden in its branches! I can see a pot tied there. Who can climb up and get it?' Each of the brothers tried to climb the tree and failed, for when they were nearly at the top they saw that the pot was full of blood. But the youngest boy made a rope of siari fibre and climbed up and when he looked in the pot the juice appeared to him as milk. He brought it down and they all drank of it. The ten elder brothers fell senseless but the youngest boy was intoxicated with pleasure. But he grew afraid thinking that his brothers would die. Then his god said to him, 'Offer a pig to the Gorga Kanyang and they will recover'. He sacrificed a pig and his brothers sat up again.

•[782] This is the origin of the sacrifices that are made to the tree before it is tapped. It is believed that if no offerings are made the juice turns into blood and makes the people ill. If offerings are withheld for a long time, the tree dries up.

In the Chota Dongar area, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar and the Muria of their immediate neighbourhood trace the palm to Tallur Muttai or Mother Earth herself. At the beginning of the world, Tallur Muttai came with Kadrengal (whom some call her brother and some her husband) to the forest of Bastar. Kadrengal was innocent of sexual desire, and so Tallur Muttai created sago-palms with the hope that their juice would excite him. When Kadrengal first went to tap the trees, he tied a thread from the cut peduncle down to a hole which he dug below, but the wind blew it to and fro and the juice was scattered. Then Tallur Muttai taught him how to tie a gourd to catch the juice and place a leaf to guide it safely. Kadrengal drank a great quantity; desire came to him; and he went to Tallur Muttai.

But the Hill Maria of Jhargaon and Nalnar say that the palms originated when the seven Kanyang, daughters of Bhagavan, came down to Singardip (the world) to bathe. They combed their hair, and wherever their hairs fell the trees sprang up. They give the names of three of the Maidens of the sago-palm—Fuse Kanyang, Ganganangi Kanyang and Kondakalbuli Kanyang.

245 The palms are carefully guarded. Sometimes a large bamboo mat is tied round the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree.

This is the method of extracting the juice. The ends of the flowering spadices are cut and hollow bamboos, gourds or earthen pots are fixed where they can catch the flow of sap. Bamboos or gourds are simply tied to the tree, but a pot may be fixed in position with a couple of poles below it tied round the trunk and fixed together supported by a string tied to a bough above. The pot is placed inside a basket and its mouth tied to the spadix, to the end

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

The Gods of the Home

Among the Muria, specially those towards the east and round Kondagaon, there is a definite belief that certain gods are attached to men and women and go about with them sharing their life and helping when help is needed. At Kanera the Muria said that Dokara Deo lives with men and aids them in distress, while Kondi or Lagar Deo lives with women. At Dongrigura the Pujari said that the gods themselves do not accompany men everywhere but 'their shadows come to them on the wind' always ready to help in danger. At Karanji the people said that whatever god receives special honour rewards his worshippers by living with them but that Budha Deo, Kondi Deo and Lagar Deo, who came with the Raja of Bastar from Warangal to protect him, are the special gods who go here and there to guard human beings.

The fact that this belief is mainly confined to the more sophisticated (though still truly Muria) villages near Kondagaon suggests that it is a Hindu importation along the main road from the Central Provinces.

Kondi Deo goes with a girl[1] to her husband's house on the day she is married. After the birth of the first child, any misfortune that comes is attributed to this god and the family has to promise to worship him on condition that he troubles them no more. They wait for a year and then the woman's married sisters come to visit her and subscribe sufficient money to buy a pig.

On a Saturday the house is cleaned and the next morning a *chok* pattern is made in the compound with rice-flour, in the middle of which some rice is placed. A small earthen pot is put there and a knife. The head of the family offers incense and makes the pig eat the rice saying, 'O Kondi Deo, protect and preserve my family and children. It is for their sake that this offering is made to you, and we will repeat it every second year'. When the pig has eaten the rice, the husband of either the eldest or the youngest sister kills it. They cook the pig and invite the village elders to the feast. A pit is dug inside the house into which, when the feast is over, the leaf-plates, the pig's bones and even the water in which the cooking-pots are washed, must be thrown. They then hang the earthen pot and the knife near the Pot of the Departed.

The worship of Lagar Deo is not unlike that of Narayan Deo to whom the Lara pig is dedicated in the Central Provinces.[2] Lagar Deo is also a special god of women and is indeed often identified with Kondi Deo. He first lives with the mother of a household, but after the marriage of the eldest daughter he goes with her to her new home. When her child is born he first troubles the mother and then goes to each of her married sisters and troubles their female children. When they decide to appease him they ask all the female members of the family, sisters, sister's daughters, grand-daughters, all of them, and

her. The Koyi dance is an imitation of Bhimadev's pursuit of his enemies); R. B. Bainbridge, 'The Saoras of the Rajmahal Hills', *Mem. ASB.* Vol. II, pp. 468.

Other legends about Bhimsen may be found in *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, pp. 29 and 133 (for Bhimsen's romance with a Devi); A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Reports*, Vol. XXII, p. 53 (the pillar of Asoka near Betiya locally regarded as Bhimsen's walking-stick); ibid., Vol. XVI, p. 16 (the Iron pillar at Rakhra known as the pole of the bullocks of Bhimsen); an interesting and well-told story in R. A. Stamdale, *Scenes* (Calcutta, 1887), p. 97.

[1] Among the Uraon, Asherad and her companion Jeda are the special deities of women. Once in a generation, every family must perform a ceremony for the well-being of its female children. As in Bastar, all female relatives and their husbands attend. For a full description, see S. C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs* (Ranchi, 1928), pp. 65ff.

[2] See *The Baiga*, pp. 409ff. and articles by Shamrao Hivale and Durga Bhagwat in *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 92–129.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

diagnosed the reason in the failure of the boy's father to sacrifice a pig to the Yer Kanyang as he had promised to do after a good catch of fish. 776

A bride going from Amasara to Nayanar to be married gave the Water Maidens in a river she crossed two rings: 'As we give rings to our motiari she gave, for the Maidens of the Water are also motiari.' What is called the Neyi Maur or the first wedding crown, worn when haldi is put on the body of bride and bridegroom, is thrown into the river after the marriage, for the Kanyang of the water. After the cowhide for a drum has been soaked in water, offerings are made to her for fear she has been defiled. This Kanyang, who is called Yer Kanyang, Julan Kanyang and sometimes Bisran Kanyang, like all such beings is sometimes touchy and may attack men in the form of a crocodile. When this happens, the villagers must give her large gifts, a pig, eggs, seven rings of aonra, red powder for her forehead and bangles for her wrists. In Matawal they said that when they went to fish they always remembered the Bisran Kanyang and when they got a good catch gave her such feminine finery as they thought she would like. Bisran Kanyang is said to give special help to witches. [782]

Another Kanyang of the water, called Ghat Kanyang, lives in the place where people bathe and draw water. When they take an Anga to bathe it at its annual festival they make offerings to this Kanyang saying, 'Be with us to help us. Here we drink water, here our children bathe. Let there be no disease, let no witch overlook the water; protect us and we will worship you every year'.

Bahi Kanyang lives in very small streams and is offered bangles made of weeds and other gifts to ensure good rain and plenty of water in the rice-fields. Chapar Kanyang, the Maiden of the salt-lick, lives in the place where cattle go to lick the salty earth, and there every year the Bhum-Gaita goes with the villagers to make the usual offerings in order to free the cattle from disease.

Kanyang of the fields, such as Berha Kanyang, preside over the crops. When the rice is ripening the Muria offer a pig for the village and a chicken for each house so that the grain may be good, undamaged by wild animals and not destroyed by witches. In Gudla people said that there were two Kanyang in the fields; one called Wujri is benevolent and ensures a good crop; the other, Bagri Kanyang, is responsible when the crop fails. In Matawal, the Maiden of the field was called Ras Kanyang and at Binjhli, Dhand Kanyang. Here they said that at harvest time the Gaita went to every field with chickens, vermilion and the new rice and offered it to Dhand Kanyang and Dhand Rau. Only when this had been done could they cut the crop.

In the forest lives Sukhli Kanyang in her little hut. Should a cow wander near, Sukhli Kanyang catches it and sucks the milk.

The Kanyang of the sago-palm, which was originally a feather-tuft in a motiari's hair, is described elsewhere.[1] This Mur Kanyang, as she is sometimes called, gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul'. Then she 'marries' and the juice ceases to flow. This Kanyang is subject to a menstrual period during which no one should drink the juice. Regular offerings are made to her when a tree is tapped for the first time.

Local Gods

In addition to the gods whose cult is more or less universal throughout the Muria country, there are many local gods who have generally come into being as a result of a dream or some magician's diagnosis of the cause of a calamity.

[1] See p. 55.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

796 As they did so they all yelled at the animals, 'Don't trouble us or we'll give you nothing next time'. One pig refused to eat—it had been offered as a fine: the donor's wife was a witch—and this showed the enormity of the offence which it was expected to condone. But the people did not take it back; they cried, 'We offered it willingly, but you refused, yet we give it all the same'. One man asked for a son, but they shouted to the gods, 'No, give him a daughter'.

[411]

[531]

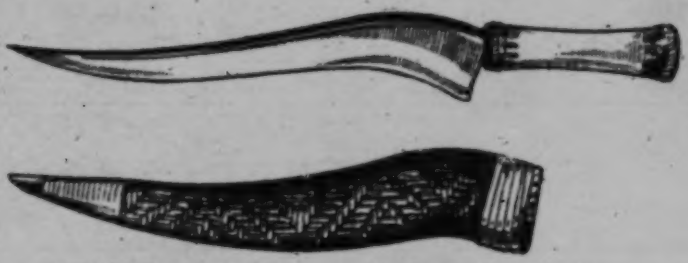

FIG. 32. Muria knife and sheath, of a type often used in sacrifice

796 After the animals had been fed, the priest offered three brass rings for three men who had died during the past year, saying 'Let them now be mingled with
782 the Departed'. Then the animals were killed. The priest put his knife upright between the toes of his right foot, plucked some of the feathers, cut off the head of the chick and sprinkled the blood over the rice and the gods. He killed the pigs by holding them down firmly and sawing off the heads, which he placed facing outwards before the line of rice. As the first pig was killed the worshippers stood with folded hands crying, 'Let the village folk be well; let there be good crops this year; let our animals, cows, pigs, goats and hens be well.' As they killed the second pig, they cried, 'Though it didn't eat, show whether you accept it or no'. They watched eagerly to see how many times the automatic action of the muscles would open the mouth of the decapitated head. Slowly the mouth opened and shut three times and the people were pleased, for this was a sign that the penalty pig had been accepted and all was well.

Similar offerings were made to all the gods, or at least a little blood was sprinkled on them. After a pause, the priest offered the mango, char and karmata fruits, cutting them in half, and removing the stones.

796 Now the women and motiari approached and the Anga went dancing to meet them. He stood before them, and they offered him liquor—'When a Gondi god drinks even one cup of liquor, he talks and dances very well', said one of my guides. Then the chelik picked up their big dhol drums and danced in a long straight line, shuffling to and fro, drumming very vigorously and crying loudly as they changed their direction. The women and girls also danced in a line, and all the Sirsha-meditatis began to throw themselves about and play and dance, generally carrying one of the gods in their hands. A Naitami boy had come to the wrong place and he picked up the Gutal Lalu and was dancing with it. But the Poyami people resented this, and took it from him with loud abuse.

The dancing, drumming and drinking continued till sundown, when the meat with the fruit and rice was cooked. Then the people—men and women—

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLVI

196
187
182

Hivale, prophesying above the dedicated bull

[p. 224 (8)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLVII

796
782

The sacrifice

Priests [illegible] other
deities fill their
hands with blood

[p.224(c)]

DREAMS

your mat to sleep on'. So I had to get up and give him the mat on which we were sleeping together. I was very sorry, but when I came back, she took off her sari and spread it for me to lie on, and I covered her with my blanket. 154

In Markabera the head of the chelik said, 'If my ghotul-wife is away, I dream of sleeping with her. I chase her and often have her'. He sometimes experienced orgasm during such dreams. 'I once dreamt that I was going to dance in another village. I walked along the road with a girl I had always wanted. That night I was able to sleep with her in the other village.'

A chelik at Chandabera said, 'We generally dream of our earliest loves in the ghotul, for these are girls whom we never forget. We dream that they are sleeping by our side or running away from us. Sometimes we dream that we have gone out fishing with them or that we are on our way to a marriage dance'.

The seriousness with which the Muria treat their dreams and the reality they ascribe to them is clearly shown in the precautions taken the following day. I have already referred to various cures for nightmare. I will add a few more. At Bhopna a Muria said, 'If I dream that I have gone down under the water, I consult the Siraha and he says that it means that an evil ghost is coming. This once happened to me, so I got seven different kinds of wood and made a bonfire of them by the bank of a stream. I put some gur and ghee on the fire. Then I and my wife went round it three times, entered the water and ducked below it. We took off our old clothes and left them there on the bank, dressed in new clothes and went home without looking round.' This was rather a drastic and expensive cure. An easier means of averting the possible danger of a dream is this from Chingnar: 787 782

A dream of a fight between two people suggests danger from black magic. To avert this the figure of a man with a bow and arrow should be made with grass and a bad egg, a pig or a chicken should be offered to it. The little image should be thrown away outside the village and the danger will disappear. [154]

Gaitru of Chaniyagaon once dreamt,

A beautiful woman came to my children and said to them, 'I am going to devour you, because your parents give me nothing to eat'. The next day my children fell ill, and the Siraha declared that their sickness was due to Lagar Deo, who was angry because the customary offering to him three years after the first child had not been made, and he therefore wanted to kill all my children. So I dedicated two pigs to Lagar Deo to be allowed to wander freely and killed three years later. Once I had done this my children recovered. 787 753 782

At Palaar, the Suel once dreamt that he was climbing up a huge stone. Suddenly he saw a chaprasi, he was frightened and tried to run away. He fell down and broke his teeth. When he awoke he found he had fever and only recovered after he had sacrificed a pig and made other offerings.

In Chandabera, a Muria jealous of the happiness of the chelik performed hostile magic against the ghotul. The Sirdar dreamt that one of the boys had died and his corpse was being carried away for burial. Soon afterwards he himself got an attack of fever. 'He was sleeping at home and dreamt that a chelik came to him saying, 'Come, let us go to dance at a wedding'. The Sirdar replied, 'I am suffering from fever and cannot go'. The chelik said, 'The fever has been sent you by such and such a person, you must drive it

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

back again'. Then the boy awoke and the following day sent for the Siraha, who agreed that his illness was due to magic. They then took a pig and chicken outside the village and sacrificed them saying, 'Are you going away or not?' Both pig and chicken ate the rice offered them, and this was taken to mean that the danger from the magic was averted. The boys feasted on the pig and chicken and the Sirdar recovered from his fever. It was generally believed that the chelik who visited him in his dream was Lingo Pen himself.

Naitami Dole, a Muria of Kokori, described an experience when he was the Sirdar of his ghotul.

> One night I dreamt that I was having intercourse with a motiari. The next morning I found myself suffering from fever, so I called the Siraha to ask what was the matter. He told me that an enemy had sent the motiari to me by his magic. So I went down to the bank of the river and made seven circles on the bank putting rice, powdered egg-shells and ashes in them with an egg in the middle circle for the Yer Kanyang. Then I recovered.

To see one's house burning in a dream means that black magic, particularly in its very dangerous form of the *agindaw*, or arrow of fire, is going to be sent against one. To avert it a chicken should be sacrificed and a small image made of *dab* grass carried out across the village boundary and thrown away.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32 Muria

boys and girls. They dance clasped in each other's arms; they go about together, chelik with his arm round the neck of motiari. How revealing are Plates LXXV and XCI. In one a chelik lies on a cot with his arm on his motiari's shoulder, while she sits almost on top of him making leaves. They were not posed for the photo, and they showed no embarrassment at my approach with the mysterious camera, even though they were from a village I did not know well. In the other Plate two chelik and a motiari are listening to the gramophone outside my tent. They are completely absorbed in it and in each other. One of the boys embraces the girl with both his arms. You would not see this natural innocence in the more 'advanced' parts of aboriginal India.

But this refreshing freedom never degenerates into immodesty in public. It would be unthinkable for a chelik to dance naked—as I have seen older men do—in the presence of women or of his elders. The motiari never indulge in the cheerful vulgarity of the old women at a wedding. A chelik never catches hold of a girl immodestly in general company, though he will embrace her and walk with his arms about her. The great festival dances, though the air is full of romantic suggestion and the older men dance with the greatest licence, are conducted by chelik and motiari with complete decorum.

The sympathetic reader will realize how hopeless it is to bring our cut-and-dried judgements of sexual morality to bear upon a situation such as this. But he will also realize that even on his own standards the ghotul cannot be called immoral in the sense that it has no rules or laws or that it ignores those it has. Its regulations are as far-reaching and as strict as our own, and they are often better kept. For the rules are not imposed from without, but have been made by the ghotul-members themselves. Thus they are reasonable, adapted to the actual situation, and so easy to obey.

It is curious that while a Western visitor to a Muria village, if he is of a Puritan turn, will probably be chiefly concerned about the pre-nuptial relations of the children, the Hindu visitor—who is, of course, by far the more frequent—will be scandalized by the casual attitude of the Muria towards cows. Many years ago earnest efforts were made by Hindu reformers in the State to stop cow-sacrifice, and still today—though the majority of State officials preserve an admirable restraint in interfering with tribal customs—landlords, merchants, schoolmasters and travellers do what they can to put an end to the practice. But, except for a few centres where Hindu influence is strong, bulls and cows continue to be sacrificed and eaten all over the northern part of the State. The Muria cannot believe that this is wrong, for the gods demand it. There is nothing in their culture or mythology to forbid it—and indeed we here have a good example of the difficulty of importing a new idea into a system that has no provision for it. Yet if the Muria ever does ponder about 'moral' problems it is this that perplexes him and not any question about pre-nuptial chastity.

Stealing is generally condemned, but it is licensed on some special occasions. The chelik are expected to steal a cock when they take the newly-wedded bride and bridegroom to bed; they appear to have similar licence when they perform ceremonial dances round the village.

The incidence of crime is very low. An experienced police officer, who had served in the ghotul area for twelve years, told me that in all this time there had been no case of murder, riot, assault, hurt, or rape in connexion with the ghotul. There has not been a single case of rape against a Muria, though non-aboriginals have been arrested for raping Muria women. It is a remarkable thing that most of the crime in the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils occurs

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

brass rings and beads and placed them on the corpse; the men brought bits of cloth. The members of the household fasted from the time of the old man's death until he was cremated. The ceremonies were marked by violent manifestations of grief. When the bamboo bier was brought to the house, the wives of the Waddai, Gaita and Hanagunda fell upon it and lay there. They said that this meant that they too wanted to be taken out and burnt, a curious echo of the Sati tradition. Straw was spread on the bier and when the corpse had been placed there, bits of cloth were laid on it by the male relatives present. The women gathered round the corpse again, kissing it and weeping bitterly. It had been lying with its legs towards the door of the house, but now it was lifted up by the bearers and its position changed so that the head was pointing to the door. They touched the door thrice with it saying, 'You made this house, come here again in your next birth'.

Then, led by the drummers, the corpse was carried out to the cremation-ground. The grand-daughter with her hair undone followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice upon it as she went along. As they passed a path that crossed theirs, they dropped a little rice so that if any other ghost came he would eat it and go away. Everyone went to the funeral. Menstruating women are not normally allowed to attend, though sometimes they may come if they stand at a little distance.

When the party reached the pyre, they went round it anti-clockwise once and placed the bier on the ground. Once again the women fell upon the corpse weeping and kissing it. They lay down beside the pyre and had to be pushed away before the business of the funeral could proceed.

Then one of the women put a little tobacco in the mouth of the corpse. The body was placed upon the pyre. Some of the bits of cloth with which it was covered were left there; the rest was distributed between the drummers and the relatives by marriage. The Hanagunda removed the packets of rice which had been tied to the waist of the corpse and threw them to left and right. The body was entirely covered with a cloth and the Hanagunda ripped this open just over the mouth. A piece of grass which had been brought from the roof of the house was put into the mouth of the corpse and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

possession of a dancing outfit that led Wango to murder his betrothed Paike. But when Alami Mata had his splendid bison-horn head-dress, which he loved and cared for with devotion, stolen he did not seek out and kill the thief but was so miserable that he hanged himself. In several cases disputes about the right of a girl to visit her mother's house led to murder. In as many others it led to suicide. Sometimes a girl hangs herself because she is not allowed to go home. Sometimes the husband hangs himself out of loneliness and misery when his wife deserts him for her parents. A public insult caused Marvi Hinga to murder his mother-in-law. Had he been of a different temperament like Markami Pandu, who was abused and insulted by his wife for not working properly, he would have hanged himself. Fatigue drives some Maria to murder in a fit of exhausted rage, but others hang themselves instead.

Some sick people murder the magician who they believe has sent affliction upon them. Others commit suicide in order to escape from him. The Maria themselves identify homicide and suicide in so far that both lead to a violent disturbance of village life. Both involve them in various supernatural dangers, and the ghosts of both can be dealt with in much the same way.

R. S. Cavan discusses the relations of widow suicide and human sacrifice. The voluntary sacrifice of widows at the funerals of their husbands has been recorded in India and China, throughout the central portion of Negro Africa and among certain aristocratic American Indian tribes. These areas are also the areas of human sacrifice.

> In the Orient the sacrifices are a matter of history and are often recorded as accompanying the widow suicide. Among the preliterates, the sacrifices were noted in conjunction with the suicides by early white observers. Moreover, in few parts of the world was human sacrifice found except in the groups which also had Sati. Human sacrifice and Sati went hand in hand.[1]

The Maria do not have the custom of widow suicide, and human sacrifice is equally rare among them.

I will begin, as in the case of the homicides, with general statistics about suicide in Bastar during the last 10 years.

[1] R. S. Cavan, *Suicide* (Chicago, 1928), p. 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Grigson quotes an interesting example reported by the police from Madder in the Bhopalpatnam Zamindari. On the night of 13 June 1937, a Mohammedan woman asleep in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a sharp instrument, and woke to see what she believed to be two Maria running away. 'The police enquiry elicited information that many Maria in Kutru Zamindari before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice seed before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot'.[1]

Cases of human sacrifice are not common, and in the whole of Bastar only 3 have been proved in the last 10 years, though there is reasonable ground to suppose that in 2 other cases, which did not proceed to a conviction, such sacrifice was the real motive of the crime.[2]

The most notorious example of human sacrifice occurred in 1940. The Raj Gond Zamindar of Bhopalpatnam had been removed from office because he was insane, and his nephew wanted to succeed him. He made a number of representations to the Darbar which were rejected. As a last resort, he decided to offer a sacrifice to the family deity, Bhumsaria Deo, whose temple is situated in a remote part of the Zamindari. A fatherless child about five years old was kidnapped and taken to the shrine. The usual worship was performed and red powder applied to the image of the god. A chicken was killed. The boy's hands and feet were washed, and the Zamindar's nephew himself applied red powder to the child's forehead and put into his mouth rice that had been offered to the deity. He prayed with folded hands that he should be given the Zamindari. He then, with the help of his assistants, laid the child on the ground before the

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 221.
[2] The memory of the Meriah sacrifices is preserved in a game played by the Maria and Muria of North Bastar. In this Meriah Karsana, a gang of boys kidnap their victims and 'sacrifice' them to an imaginary goddess.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond·AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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image, and with a long sharp knife cut his throat until the head was completely severed from the body. This is the normal method of sacrificing a pig or chicken. The crime was discovered and the would-be Zamindar and two of his assistants were hanged.

The second case, which occurred among the Bison-horn Maria, I will describe immediately. The third example was in 1934 when a Muria of the north, who had not been getting good harvests, was accused of vowing to the goddess of his irrigation tank that, if the winter crops were good, he would offer her a child. That year he had unusually good crops, and in fulfilment of his vow he is said to have killed his nephew, an orphan boy of fourteen years, whom he had reared from infancy. The accused was sentenced to death by the Sessions Judge, but was acquitted by the Appellate Court, and the murder went undiscovered.

A very mysterious crime occurred in Jhoriabadhan in 1923. A little boy named Sukra about two-and-a-half years old disappeared and was never seen again. An elderly Maria of the village was accused of his murder, but was acquitted for lack of evidence. I have little doubt that this was a case of human sacrifice. It was proved in Court that about a month before the child's disappearance the accused told some friends while they were crossing over his embankment that he had promised to sacrifice a male child if the dam did not burst. He warned them that they should not allow their children to pass that way for fear they should fall in. At this stage he was probably thinking that the deity of the tank would herself push a child into the water. But later when this did not happen, he himself probably drowned the child.

IV

THE HUMAN SACRIFICE AT MARDUM

X 674 782 241

Kuhrami Guddi of Mardum near Katakalian had built a tank for irrigating his fields. Finding that he was not getting such good crops as he wanted, he plotted to find a pregnant woman[1] and sacrifice her to the spirits presiding over the

[1] Crimes against pregnant women are probably always motivated by superstition. Some extraordinary examples are found in *A Hangman's Diary*, edited by Albrecht Keller (London, 1928).
In 1577 at Bamberg (Germany) Nicklaus Stuller of Aydtafeld was

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

tank, Mirchuk Deo and the Yer Kanyang or Water Maiden.

On Wednesday, 20 April 1938, the usual ceremonies for the newly-born daughter of Guddi's nephew, Hirma, were being celebrated at Guddi's house. About midday a Mahara woman named Bote, who was four months pregnant, came to the house and joined the party. It was suggested later that Guddi had met the woman that morning while he had been engaged on repairs to the village Rest-house. She had been working there and when she left with her axe and crowbar, Guddi followed her and persuaded her to come home with him. Whether it happened just like this or not, it certainly seems probable that Guddi had already determined that Bote was to be his victim. He made her drink rice-beer and when the other visitors prepared to leave, persuaded her to stay on and take some food. The food (since, as a Mahara, Bote would not have eaten from the Maria's hands) was probably more rice-beer and it looks as though Guddi succeeded in making the woman more or less fuddled, for she stayed on in the house till evening and Guddi persuaded her not to go away by promising presents for her children.

Early in the evening Guddi left the house and found his brother Nari, who was joint owner with him of the tank, and his nephew Hirma sitting in a small open shed outside. He told them that he had decided to make a sacrifice of a foetal child, and that Bote was to provide it. It will be noted that the important part of the sacrifice was not the mother so much as the unborn child. Nari later claimed that he tried to dissuade Guddi from this plan, but Guddi, who was the head

drawn out on a sledge and his body was torn thrice with red-hot tongs before he was executed on the wheel. He and two associates had committed eight murders. First he shot a horse-soldier; secondly he cut open alive a pregnant woman in whom was a dead child; thirdly he cut open a pregnant woman in whom was a female child; fourthly he cut open a pregnant woman in whom were two male children. One of his associates said they had committed a great sin and that he would take the infants to a priest for baptism but the other associate, saying that he would act as priest and baptise them, took them by the legs and dashed them to the ground.

In 1530 at Nuremberg Hans Muller aged 60 was executed on the wheel for the murder of his sister who was pregnant. After the murder he "dealt lustfully" with her and buried the body in a field.

In 1661 at Nuremberg Bastian Griibl, a thief, was executed. He confessed to twenty murders and among his victims were five pregnant women. These he had caused to live in debauchery with his companions, then cut them open and cut off the hands of the infants and made candles of the hands to be used in burglaries.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

of the family, said that he would take all responsibility and that he had already prepared the woman by making her drunk.

When it became dark Bote picked up her axe and crowbar, and at last insisted on going home. Guddi said that, as it was dark, he would go with her for part of the way. He took a knife and an axe and persuaded Nari to accompany them. After they had gone some two hundred and fifty yards, Guddi caught hold of the woman and when she began to scream, pressed her throat to silence her. The two men then dragged her about half a mile to the tank. They took her into the water and Guddi pushed her head under and held her there until she was drowned. He then cut open her belly with his knife, half removed the foetus and slit its neck. Nari's nerve seems to have failed him at this point and he ran away home.

Maria knife (Length of blade 10")

Shortly after Nari's return Bote's husband came with a party of neighbours searching for her. He asked Nari if his wife had been there, and he said she had not. Very late at night Guddi returned. His wife asked him where he had been, and he beat her. In spite of his late night, however, Guddi got up very early before dawn, and abused his nephews Hirma and Rainu for over-sleeping. He told them to get up quickly and plough the field by the tank. He went ahead with his bullocks, and the two boys and Nari followed. After ploughing for a little while, Guddi left his bullocks and took the others to the tank. There he showed them the body of Bote floating in the water, and told them that he had killed her as a sacrifice. He pulled the corpse to the bank, and the others saw how the belly had been cut and the foetus partly pulled out and its neck slit. Guddi then persuaded the others to help him carry the corpse to a place nearby called Ital Lata where there was thick undergrowth. That night the four men went again and took the corpse to a hillside in the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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782

Koder forest some miles away, dragging it along so that it should appear as if a tiger had killed it.

The search for Bote continued. The husband went to everyone in authority in the neighbourhood, and called the villagers to help him, continuing distractedly to search all Friday and Saturday. A Sub-Inspector of Police was touring nearby and his aid was also enlisted. For three days more they searched. On 27 April, a week after the murder, Hirma and Rainu went to the Koder jungle ostensibly to get bamboos, probably really to see what had happened to the corpse. When they returned they said that it had not yet decomposed, and Guddi suggested that they should report that they had noticed a very unpleasant smell in the forest. The next day the villagers went to the place and found the body. It was, however, considerably decomposed and was only identified by the ornaments and combs.

By 1 May the police were in full charge. It is not quite clear what happened, but it seems to me probable that Nari immediately gave his brother away. In the first fright and confusion, Guddi also lost his head. He took the Sub-Inspector to the place where he had hidden Bote's basket, axe and crowbar. He brought from his house some thread, which the woman had given him on the day of her death, and the knife that he had used to kill her. The Sub-Inspector found stains on his loin-cloth and on Nari's cloth, and seized them. The Imperial Serologist later established that the stains on Guddi's clothes were of human blood; those on Nari's could not be determined owing to disintegration.

After his first fright, however, Guddi denied everything, but Nari, who all along seems to have been an unwilling participant in the crime, turned approver. At the trial Guddi declared that on the day of the Chatti ceremony after drinking a great deal of rice-beer, he had become unconscious and had slept till morning. He denied that he went out at dawn; denied that he ever ploughed the land or made the sacrifice. He claimed that the stains on his loin-cloth were due to the red earth of his field, and declared that he showed the Sub-Inspector the woman's possessions, the knife and the thread, only because he was beaten and forced to make a false confession.

There can be no doubt whatever of Guddi's guilt. The

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

evidence of Nari alone would have hardly been sufficient, but Guddi's two nephews corroborated it and Hirma was present when Guddi declared his decision to sacrifice his unfortunate victim.

All the circumstantial evidence was against Guddi. There was the blood on his loin-cloth; the condition of the corpse was consistent with death by drowning; none of the bones were fractured and there were no signs that the woman had been killed by a wild animal. Unless Guddi had been concerned in the matter, how did he know where Bote's axe and crowbar were hidden? It may well be that he was forced by the police to reveal their hiding-place, but it is equally clear that what he showed was true. Evidence was led to show that on the day of her death Bote took some thread which she had spun to Guddi's house.

This crime is notable for two things. First the motive is a very deep and ancient one. Nari described at the trial how, as Guddi was drowning the woman, he called on the Mirchuk and the Yer Kanyang by name, telling them that he was fulfilling his vow by sacrificing a pregnant woman, and praying to them to bless his fields and give them increase. Some of the blood was scattered on the ground, and this blood-stained land was ploughed before dawn the following morning in order to ensure its fertility.

The second remarkable point about the case is the extraordinary stupidity of Guddi which cost him his life. He had a whole week in which to wash his loin-cloth, yet he left it marked with the most damaging evidence against him. He could not leave the body alone, but sent his nephews off to inspect it and then told them to make a report. Had he said nothing, it would have been comparatively easy to dispose of the bones so that they would never have been discovered. When the police arrived, he immediately went to pieces and implicated himself so thoroughly that his later protestations of innocence were of no avail. He was sentenced to death and hanged on 5 September 1938.

Westermarck suggests that the ultimate reason of human sacrifice is to effect a sort of life-insurance.

> A comparative study of the practice of human sacrifice shows that human victims are frequently offered in war, before a battle, or during a siege: for the purpose of

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

stopping or preventing an epidemic; in order to put an end to a devastating famine; when the earth fails to supply the people with water; with a view to averting perils arising from the sea or from rivers; and in order to prevent the death of some particular person, especially a chief or a king. From these facts I have thought it justifiable to draw the conclusion that human sacrifice is, largely at least, a method of life-insurance, based upon the idea of substitution; and though the human sacrifice offered as a means of putting an end to or averting a ravaging famine and securing an abundant crop has been explained as serving as a magical manure, it may be asked why this particular gruesome kind of manure was chosen if not because human life was in danger.[1]

But in the Bastar cases, there was no danger to life: the sacrifices seem to have been motived by a straightforward desire of gain and to have depended for their efficacy on the power of blood which as the source of life is also a cause of fertility. The connection with irrigation tanks is noteworthy.

V

THE SIRAHA AND HOMICIDE

It is a curious fact that the leaders of the powers of good against the forces of black magic, especially the Siraha and Gunia, seem to cause quite as many murders as the witch or sorcerer.

The Siraha with his magic winnowing-fan and lamp and broomsticks appears in case after case, not always, of course, as the criminal or victim, but as an influential force in the background.

For example, it is the Siraha who diagnoses the cause of death or disease and who, by naming some living person as the author, directly incites to crime. Equally, by his failure to treat a sick person who believes that he is suffering from witchcraft, he may drive him to despair and suicide.

The Siraha is very proud of his position and his connection with the gods. He is extremely touchy, and immediately resents the least hint of criticism. When Markami Ganga

[1] E. Westermarck, 'Methods in Social Anthropology', *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LXVI (1936), p. 232, and *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (London, 1912), Vol. I, p. 440. See also R. Karsten, *The Civilization of the South American Indians* (London, 1926), p. 408.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

539 had seen him entering, he knew that he was hiding some-
773 where and so he set fire to the building and went away. The fire did not harm the man, but some of the bird's feathers were burnt. The soul of the clan-god in Gadapal is in that bird, and to this day the bird can be seen, though now it is made of iron, and on its body the marks made by the burns remain.

'The eldest brother then went to Mallawada and lived there. He consulted the Waddai about the death of his sister's child, and it was revealed to him that the girl had been committing adultery with another man, and that on the very day she had bathed after her menstrual period, she
[845] had had intercourse both with her husband and her lover. The result of this was twins. But the Departed were offended at her conduct, and as a result one of the twins died after a few days and the second was killed by the Departed who first took the form of a hare and excited the dogs, and then possessed the dogs and killed the child in the swing'.

Such stories are not mere fairy-tales. They are part of the actual life of the people, vividly believed and actually experienced. To aboriginals who live in such an atmosphere and depend so entirely on the supernatural, the cumbersome and vulgar machinery of human courts of justice seems comparatively unimportant. It is said that many murderers find a sort of relief in going to jail, since they believe that this earthly punishment may save them from the vengeance of the Departed.

782 But as often in the aboriginal world there are regular
837 methods of evading these dangers. If a man wishes to commit adultery, he makes offerings to the Departed and prays, 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on the husband of this girl and not on me', and then he addresses his ancestors, 'Away with you. Go to water and to wind. Go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me whatever happens'.

684 There is no doubt, however, that many Maria are not satisfied with such ceremonies, and that they consider themselves entirely justified in killing a wife who is disloyal. In particular, the discovery of a woman actually in the arms of her lover appears to have so overwhelming an emotional effect that the husband is almost bound to strike

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

821 drink, would they become alive and be man and woman.
773 One day while Mahapurub was working in his fields, his wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. He sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon and they became alive.

000 Both the Baiga and Muria have stories to account for the disappearance of human sacrifice.

> Now Nanga Baiga and Nanga Baigin had nothing to sacrifice for the steadying of the world. So they took their own three sons and daughters, and were carrying them along. Then they met a jungle hen. 'Where are you going?' she asked. And when she heard, 'You musn't kill your own children. Take two pairs of mine. Offer one pair, and keep the other for breeding'. So said the jungle hen. Then Nanga Baiga lifted one son and daughter out of the kawar and left them with the hen, and put the chickens in instead.
>
> A little later they met a sow. She also begged them not to sacrifice their children, and gave two pairs of sucklings in exchange for two more of the children. Then they met a barking deer, and made a similar exchange.[1]

782 The Muria story runs as follows:—
539
773 The Muria was thinking, 'How am I to worship the earth for I have nothing to give her?'. He had one daughter. He covered her whole body with soot to make her black and forced her to walk on all fours like a black cow.

[1] *The Baiga*, p. 315. 'At Nasik, in the Deccan, when cholera appears, a woman of the Marg (menial tribe) is solemnly led out of the city as a scapegoat. She remains outside the city bounds till the next day, when she bathes and returns. The ceremonial, which closely resembles that of bringing a victim to a shrine, doubtless implies an earlier rite of human sacrifice.

'Another rite resembles that of the self-immolation of pilgrims, who used, in former times, to fling themselves, in the name of Siva, over the cliff known as Bhairava Jhamp, near the famous shrine of Kedar Nath in the lower Himalayas. This rite has now been commuted into the paying for the service of a bedi or rope dancer, who slides on a wooden saddle upon a cable hung over a precipitous cliff as a means of propitiating Siva.

'In the form of the "Bihunda" rite the same custom prevails in the Punjab, on the River Sutlej.

'In Baroda also, at the worship of Vagh Deo, the tiger god, a man is covered with a blanket; he bows to the image and walks round it seven times. During this performance the worshippers slap him on the back. He then tries to escape to the forest, pursued by children, who fling balls of clay at him, and finally bring him back, the rite ending with feasting and drinking. The above are instances of attenuated forms of the custom of human sacrifice and immolation which has become intolerable under the conditions of modern society.' Haikerwal, op. cit., pp. 68 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Then he went to the jungle to worship Mother Earth. 782
On the way he met Lingo driving a cow. Lingo said, 539
'O man, where are you going?' 'I am going to worship 773
Mother Earth'. 'What are you going to sacrifice?' 'I have nothing to give but my own daughter and I am going to sacrifice her'. Then Lingo said, 'Give me your daughter, and I will give you my cow'. From that day the Muria have not offered human beings to the Earth Mother but, taught by Lingo, have sacrificed their cattle.

A Bison-horn Maria account of creation tells of the great 773
deluge and how the earth came into existence from mud that dropped from the hairs of the great boars that then lived in the world. There were two deities, Irisirma and Markaraja. They had two daughters, Iro and Palo. The girls both wanted to marry Koyabhimul, but the parents were unwilling and tried to kill the boy. They first sent a great snake to bite him as he returned from the jungle. But the girls warned him in time, and told him to invoke the name of their father and the snake would be unable to harm him. The parents then tried to kill him by asking him to sacrifice a chicken, planning to behead him as he bent down to do so. But the girls again warned him, and the boy said to Markaraja that he must first show him how the sacrifice was to be performed. As the older man bent down, the boy picked up a sword and beheaded him. 'In those days there were few gods and so there were few deaths on earth. The mortality on earth has increased because of the great increase in the number of deities.'

We have already seen how the origin of magic among men is connected with a human sacrifice and cannibalism. The Maria are acquainted with similar stories of the origin of the sun and moon through the sacrifice of a living being. Some of the Maria iron-smelters describe how at the beginning they were unable to extract iron from the ore. They killed a Maria and put his body into the furnace, after which their craft prospered.

Maria folk-tales are full of the usual murders, treacheries 539
and deceits. But it is worth noting that generally these are attributed to outsiders and members of other castes. The Maria themselves usually appear virtuous and honourable.

I do not suppose anyone was ever incited to murder by 000
these stories and legends. I doubt if anyone would ever

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

An ingenious attempt to hoodwink the police occurred at Jhoriabadhan in 1923. After the mysterious disappearance of a little boy aged two-and-a-half years the police came to investigate, and the villagers took the constable to the thrashing-floor whence the child had disappeared, and there showed him a boy about six years old. They told him that this was the missing boy and that he had been found wandering in the fields. Even the child's own mother declared that this was the lost boy, and since all the members of the family as well as the villagers supported her, the police went away. There is no doubt, however, that a child did disappear and it is probable that he was offered as a human sacrifice.

In one case, but only one, a prosecution witness was so troubled by his family that he committed suicide. On the whole, however, the Maria appear to co-operate with the police very well. In 88 cases out of 100, they assisted in some way or other. Sometimes they reported the matter at the police station. Sometimes they themselves arrested the murderer and kept him in custody until the police arrived. They co-operated by assisting at the inquest which is held in a village when the police arrive to investigate a suspicious death. In one case the villagers took an active and dangerous part in pursuing a convict who had escaped from jail with the result that one of their number was killed.

TABLE TWENTY-ONE

Illustrating the kind of assistance given to police in 100 cases

Information withheld from police	...	...	12
Homicide reported by villagers	...	...	79
Accused arrested by villagers	...	...	25
Accused gives himself up to police	...	...	9

This was the exciting pursuit of Markami Mundra in 1934. Mundra was convicted in 1933 and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for an act of violence. On 3 May 1934, he escaped from jail with another convict and a proclamation was issued for their arrest. A Sub-Inspector of Police went at once to Gudra, Mundra's own village, and told the people that a reward of fifty rupees had been offered for his

4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

compliance with Hindu customs, and "Raj-Gond" reform movements have made their appearance in the Central Provinces.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the distinction between Raj Gonds and the other sections of the Gond peoples. C. B. Lucie-Smith writing of the Raj Gonds of Chanda suggested that either "the epithet Raj was originally applied to royal and noble Gond families, from which the distinction spread to their followers and the governing class generally; or it may describe the leading Gond tribe which in ancient days conquered the land from other aboriginal clans."[1] But Captain Forsyth believed that Raj Gonds are in many cases the descendants of alliances between Rajput adventurers and Gonds, and R. V. Russell quotes this view with qualified approval.[2]

W. V. Grigson on the other hand lays emphasis rather on the social than the historical causes for the distinction and suggests that such names as Raj Gond arose from "the tendency, familiar throughout India, of local groups of primitive races which are gradually being Hinduized to regard themselves and to be accepted by their Hindu neighbours as separate Hindu castes under new names."[3] The situation in Adilabad seems rather to accord with the second suggestion advanced by Lucie-Smith; for here the Raj Gonds do not form a ruling class or even a class of privileged economic status, but an entire tribal group comprising all strata of society from the feudal chiefs down to the poorest labourer. We will see in a later chapter that the once powerful Gond Kings of Chanda belonged to this group, and their kinsmen in the Adilabad hills were as early as the 17th century referred to as Raj Gonds in patents of the Emperor Aurangzeb.

Here the Raj Gonds, far from aspiring to inclusion in the Hindu fold, consider themselves the true exponents of Gond culture and Gond language, and above all of the traditional Gond religion which involves the sacrifice of cows at the rites for the clan-gods. Many of them have never met a Dhurwe Gond, but those who have come in contact with the few groups of Dhurwe Gonds who have recently drifted across the Chanda border, look down upon them as speaking a corrupt form of Gondi intermixed with much Marathi, and as following different customs; somewhat sweepingly and apparently unjustly they assert that the Dhurwe Gonds have no cult of clan deities "only worshipping Bhimana like Kolams."

It seems indeed that the Raj Gonds of Adilabad, who have lived for almost a century and a half under Muslim rule, and have in consequence been less exposed to the influence of the more intolerant exponents of Hinduism, have retained more of their old culture than

1. *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Chanda District. Central Provinces. 1869.* Nagpur 1870, p. 46.
2. *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India.* London 1916. Vol. III. p. 63.
3. W. V. Grigson. *The Maria Gonds of Bastar.* London. 1938 p. 36.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

CHAPTER VI

VILLAGES, HOUSES AND THEIR CONTENTS

A. Hill Maria Villages, Houses and their Contents

361 THE site of the Hill Maria village is in these days almost entirely determined by its convenience as a centre from which to cultivate the *penda* slopes of the year. Peace has reigned in the Abujhmar hills from time immemorial, and no question of defence arises when a village is built. A possible relic of former unsettled times [349] is the custom of building stone cairns and seats as look-outs at the head of passes or the summits of hills on the paths leading to villages; but these are convenient watching places for herdsmen when their cattle are grazing around the hill-tops, and serve also to mark the line of the paths which, in the rains, are overgrown with rank grass, or fall into disuse when villages or *penda* slopes are abandoned for alternative sites. Certain well-defined tracks 487 through the hills are cleared annually by the villagers; these often avoid the actual village sites, to which side tracks connect them. There are no carts in the hills, and therefore the tracks are only foot-paths, generally wide enough only for a party to walk in single file, though at the periodic clearings the grass is cut down to a width of two or three feet on each side of the path. The village 361 boundary is usually marked by a cairn of stones, in the centre of which may be planted a pole ornamented at the top with bunches of grass or peacock or jungle-cock feathers, the pole being further adorned by peeling off bands of bark at intervals throughout its length. The boundary itself is usually a stream, and the cairns of the two villages are usually twenty or thirty yards apart, so that [783] when the annual *pira-mansha* (called by the Bison-horn Marias *rog-burria* and by Halbi-speakers *boharani*) ceremony of ridding the village of disease takes place, the old winnowing-fans with the sweepings of each house can be hung up beyond the boundary on this no-man's-land without leaving them on the lands of the neighbouring village.

These paths cross streams by stepping-stones, by logs felled 487 across the stream, by small raised embankments pierced by hollowed 491 tree trunk pipes for the passage of the water and revetted with horizontally laid logs, or by bridges consisting of a plank supported by bamboo wicker-work cylinders filled with boulders resting on

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

622 kingdoms or *garhs* of forgotten chiefs, or divisions of the early
623 medieval Telanga kingdoms of Barsur, Dantewara or Bhajramgarh.
632 The Marias there are perhaps later arrivals, spread over a land once ruled by comparatively civilized and organized Telanga princes. There are *pargana* headmen, with wide influence and authority; but their authority possibly does not derive in the same sense from the clan, and may have been conferred in the not very distant past by the State because of the obvious advantages of having such central intermediaries between the State and the tribes. They have to deal with villages of many different clans, and far larger villages at that than those of the Hill Marias. These villages are still throwing off new *para* or hamlets, which often become bigger than the parent village, and soon for practical reasons have to have their own *peda* and *perma*, though these will be called the *chudala*, or small, in contrast to the *birya*, or big, *peda* and *perma* of the parent village. Among the Bison-horn Marias, therefore, it is natural to find the village *panchayat* exercising a more real authority and greater independence of the *pargana* headman and *panchayat* than among the Hill Marias. Nevertheless the formal recognition under the recent State orders of the *pargana* headman and his *panchayat* as a court of appeal from the judicial decisions of the village elders is bound to strengthen his position. The Bison-horn Maria has always been more in contact with and more ready to learn from the outside world than the Hill Maria, and there are many village and *pargana* headmen who show real leadership and force of character.

689 Social offences involving exclusion from tribal ceremonies and
564 feasts are very similar in these days to those of neighbouring Hindu
684 castes. The worst offences are to get maggots in wounds, to take
688 food from or have sexual relations with persons of the despised Ghasia, Malaw or Lohar castes, and to break the rules of exogamy by having sexual relations with a girl of a brother-clan. Another offence, which among the Bison-horn Marias may lead to considerable trouble, is the eating of any new crop or the cutting of grass or bamboo before the appropriate *pandum* has been celebrated; this form of sacrilege is believed to be avenged by the earth or clan-god sending tigers to carry off cattle or men, and in a case which came before me in which such a visitation had followed the cutting of grass by two villagers before the Kare Pandum the *panchayat* had ordered them to compensate the owner of each cow or bullock killed by the avenging tigers. The way in which breaches of the rules of exogamy are dealt with has already been described (pages 245-6 above). Any form of social relations with Ghasia, Malaw or Lohar, however unwitting, entails penalties not only on the actual offender, but also often on his near kinsmen. In the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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1913 case (see page 283 above) in which two Hill Marias murdered a Maria Lohar girl with whom they had been cohabiting, their parents and brothers all had to be purified by the *pargana* headman, and the actual murderers were purified by him a year after the murder; one of the main reasons for the villagers hushing up the crime was the belief that greater harm might have resulted to the clan if the Lohar girl had borne a child to the murderers than from them killing her. In 1926, Oyami Masa of Malhanar in the Kutru Mar hill *pargana*, an orphan boy six years old, was outcasted for taking some food from a Ghasia who was spending the night in the village *kos-gotul*[1] (strangers' rest-house) and found the child half-starved. As soon as the villagers heard of this they regarded him as outcasted. They realized, however, that he could not be expected to pay the expenses of the purification ceremony, and as they themselves had had poor harvests and were not in a position to meet the cost just then, they built a hut for the child at some distance from the rest of the village, and there he had to live for two years, till they could pay to purify him; meanwhile they provided food for him, leaving it for him at some distance from his hut. After two years had elapsed they subscribed eight annas cash as remuneration to Arki Burga of Jegur, the *Sendhia*, ten *paili* of rice and a *paili* of pulse, and invited the *Sendhia* to come and purify the boy. The men of the neighbouring villages of the clan were also asked to attend. At the bidding of the *Sendhia* the villagers built seven small huts in a row, and the boy had to pass through each in turn, each being burnt down as soon as he had passed through it. The *Sendhia* himself then shaved the whole of the boy's head, including even his crown-tuft. This done, the boy was taken to the river, made to bathe thrice and brought back to the village, where the *Sendhia* burnt his tongue with a *karra* (*Odsa marra*) twig, made him drink a little from a cup of milk into which he had dipped a piece of gold, and sprinkled the rest of the milk over the boy and the onlookers. The boy then fetched water, and in this the *Sendhia* boiled the rice and pulses, and served the cooked food to the boy and all the clansmen present. This incident typifies the way in which Marias combine to relieve each other's difficulties. The postponement of the caste feast until the offender has had time to collect all that is necessary is almost a rule of tribal life, and one that might with advantage be copied by the pharasaical elders of Hindu castes in British India. The social offence may offend the clan-god, and so its expiation is the concern of the whole clan, which therefore must help the offender gradually to raise the cost of the expiation ceremonies.

[1] See page 106 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Ma'ria
Bison Horn Maria

a woman at this time. At the menarche (for which the word used is *kumor utta*, 'the blossoming of the flower'), however, a special hut is built for the girl by women outside the village. A woman of the household brings her food and sleeps with her at night; she must bathe whenever she returns to the house. In some villages, the Marias still make a platform up a tree for the girl, who during the day must hide herself in the forest.

It is very dangerous for anyone to see, let alone to touch, a girl at her menarche. At Tikanpal I was told that if a man saw such a girl as he went through the jungle he should slap her and then go to her parents and after rebuking them, demand a fowl which he should sacrifice; then he should bathe and anoint himself with oil. At Gadapal they said that a man should throw a lump of earth between his legs at the girl, or a stick over his shoulder, and then go home and bathe. Neglect of these precautions might lead to blindness.

At the end of the period—all this refers only to the first period—the girl destroys her hut or platform during the night, throws away her cloth,[1] bathes and returns home before cockcrow. In some villages she is expected to remain for a day or two longer on the veranda of her house: if she has a married elder brother, it is the special duty of his wife to attend to her. Then she puts oil and turmeric on her body—an act which is said to symbolize her formal re-admission into caste, for during the previous days she has been regarded as excommunicated. In many Maria villages, however, the ceremonial use of turmeric is still unknown, and the elder brother's wife carries a pot of water round the house and sprinkles everyone saying, 'Now you are back again in caste'. After this the girl fetches water in an earthen pot and cowdungs the floor. In the evening her father invites some of the elders to a bottle of liquor and says, 'My daughter who was unclean all these days is now clean again'. He sacrifices a fowl to the Departed and they feast on its flesh.

There is not nearly so much fuss about the later periods. The woman has to keep out of the way, but there is no danger in looking at her, and when it is over she just has a bath and resumes her ordinary duties. But even so her daily programme is considerably disturbed. She must not sleep inside the house and, of course, sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden. She must not cook or fetch water or go to work in the fields. She must not touch cattle, pigs

[1] There do not seem to be any special taboos associated with this cloth. But the leaf-cups from which the girl eats at this time are charged with magical potency and if a witch can get hold of them she can afflict the girl with palsy.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

case was not stolen, but was given by the husband in compensation for taking a girl away from the ghotul. 585

As they escort the newly married pair to bed the boys and girls sing a characteristic song.

Dulka cho māndo dulka cho māndo,	In the bridegroom's booth,
Parwāto jhulena.	Swings the pigeon.
Dulki cho māndo dulki cho māndo,	In the bride's booth,
Tendhu lotna lot baba lot.	The lizard copulates and copulates.
Pillak bhāji mane re loka bhāji humāty jai re loka.	Spinach is drying on a leaf.
Jora jora tenda hane ai re loka tenda pāni nāhin tiru re loka.	There is a pair of weighted balances (of a well), but he won't use them.
Pulāriguon cho jaliya gānja,	The long-tailed cock of Palari,
Dongriguru cho kāri koma,	The black hen of Dongrigura,
Dandik chalki abhich dahi.	Every moment they want to copulate.

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831

When everything was over, at Sidhawand the headman and the village elders purified the village from any possible evil introduced by the many visitors. They sprinkled liquor round the houses and offered a chick to the Village Mother. 585 783

V. The Nayanar Marriages: a Different Procedure

Such was the marriage ritual at Sidhawand and Malakot. I believe that a very similar procedure is followed all over eastern Bastar. We must now take a brief glance at the other type of marriage, where the main ceremony takes place at the bridegroom's house and where a number of minor details differ. 585

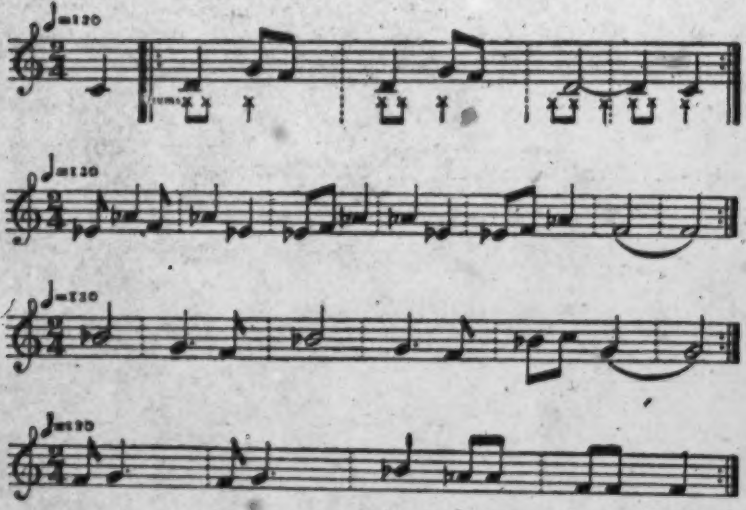
The marriage I am now to describe was celebrated at Amasara and Nayanar on 25 April 1941 and the following days. On the first evening the bride was prepared as at Sidhawand. Her motiari sat round her all night, weeping and consoling her. The next morning the bridegroom, escorted by his chelik and motiari, came to Amasara to fetch her. On the way, at the village boundary, the Gaita made the usual line of ash and offered liquor in three saja leaves, saying, 'Let there be no trouble and no quarrels. Let us return in safety'. They stepped over the line and went on their way, none looking back.

The Farewell Ceremonies

Both parties cooked separately out-of-doors in the fields. During the day there was the usual application of haldi, weeping, exchange of presents and some heavy drinking. When I reached Amasara on the afternoon of this second day, I found a scene of great animation. Several groups of boys were dancing with mandri drums; in another part of the field rows of girls were dancing and singing Reko. Another group of motiari in boy's clothes, with waistcoats and turbans, were preparing for the Jhoria Rudanna when the bridegroom has to recognise his bride amidst a group of dancing motiari disguised as boys, an incident which I study fully in Chapter XVI. In the middle sat a row of old women, sensible to each other, their bodies covered with haldi-water and singing drunkenly.

It was getting late and presently the bride's parents went to the boy's people and said, 'Now you are our daughter's mother and father; we are giving her

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL



XI. Purifying the Village

Throughout the year ceremonies, called in Halbi *bohorani*, are performed to purify the villages of disease and evil. Old brooms and baskets are collected and carried to the village boundary, and a scapegoat may be consecrated and sent away into the jungle.

Such ceremonies are performed before the Wijja Pandum in May, when the nearest stream or river first comes down in flood in July or August, before the Puna Pandum in September and before the Jata or Pupul Pandum in January. If necessary, it may be repeated before the Marka Pandum. All the year round, in fact, these protective ceremonies continue; apparently they cannot confer permanent immunity.

I will give a detailed description of one of these purificatory rites, the Nartate Kiyana for the purification and protection of Bandopal, which I witnessed on 25 April 1942. We were woken at dawn by the blowing of hunting-horns, at the sound of which the village assembled. The people went first to the shrine of the Village Mother and offered incense there; the mediums took Kusri, Marin Dokari and Hoche Muria, each represented by a bundle of date-palm leaves, out of the shrine. Others carried gourds, aonra rings, iron slag, parched gram, wheat cakes, eggs, chickens, the root of a date-palm, a pig, rice and liquor.

A long procession went round the village boundaries. At every point where a path went out of the village, the Gaita put three bits of iron slag, hammered them into the ground, and touched the place with the palm root. This, by a pleasant fiction, represented the sacrifice of a pig. At the four points of the compass he offered eggs to the Rau or demon of the forest. As they went round the boundaries, the mediums caught the ghosts and spirits of the surrounding jungle—the Bhut and Mirchuk—on the trees with palm leaves and popped them into a gourd which they then shut with a leaf-cup.

MURIA RELIGION

At last the party found a suitable ant-hill, and made seven piles of rice before it, which the Gaita forced the chickens to eat. When their eating had signified that the god had accepted the offering, he killed them. He presented the root representing a pig, two eggs, parched gram and wheat cakes, and buried the gourd full of little demons and the leaves with which they had been caught in the hole of the ant-hill. This isolated and destroyed the evils threatening the village, and closed it with a magic wall against hostile sorcerers.

Later in the morning a Muria, followed by a Muria-Lohar carrying a basket, went with his hammer and some iron slag round the village. He put three 'nails' in every doorway, and each householder gave him two pice worth of mahua flowers for his services.

Such is the Muria method (which has many points of resemblance to Baiga and Pardhan custom) of closing the magic boundaries of a village, and removing its supernatural dangers.

XII. The Birth of a God

On 31 March 1941 there was a very special occasion at Adnar village. The Pupal Korta Tindana was to be celebrated with the delight and pomp which this festival always excites. But an even more important event was the birth of a young god, so young that he had not yet been even named, but was now to be called Chelik Sai.

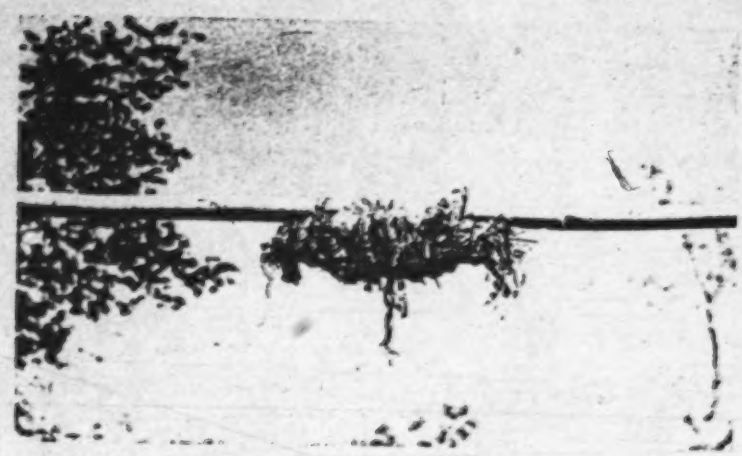
During the whole of 1940 the people of Adnar had suffered constantly from fever and other diseases. When the Siraha were consulted, the Adnar gods spoke through them saying that a new god had been born and was angry that he was receiving no worship. They were told to go to Bargaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana where they would hear from the god Doko Mudial what they must do. The Kaser-Gaita and the people of Adnar therefore went to visit the Kaser-Gaita of Bargaon. He brought Doko Mudial out of his shrine, and the local mediums asked what was to be done. The god replied that a younger brother of his own had been born, the father being Maria Dokara who lives in the Abujhmar, a god of the Kuhrami clan. He said that the people of Adnar must make the god at once and honour him with a *Poroy-tasna* (name-giving) festival. Doko Mudial, who is an Anga, was then carried out into the jungle on the shoulders of two mediums and he showed where the bamboo for making his younger brother was to be cut. The Gaita of Bargaon offered eggs and liquor to the tree and cut it with a single blow of his axe. He handed it over to the Gaita of Adnar, who took it home.

On the morning of the festival day two members of the Naitami clan, which stands in the *akomdma* relation to the Kuhrami, took the bamboo into the jungle near the Adnar temples and made the new god. They offered eggs and liquor, spun some cord on a takli, and prepared a large bunch of peacock feathers with a special arrow made of virgin iron. There was also a new knife of virgin iron provided by the Muria-Lohar of Rengagondi. Others erected a pole of saja wood and placed a flat stone before it in front of the new temple—a simple open shed—which had been built for the young god. When all was ready the Kaser-Gaita brought the new god and placed him against the pole in front of his house.

Adnar is a *pen-ravar* of no fewer than three separate clans, the Naitami, Kuhrami and Kawasi. Outside the village, about a quarter of a mile from the river, in the forest is a group of seven temples, each a thatched open shed, with the usual flat stone, cooking apparatus and the god slung high against the roof. Before each temple were poles or frames against which the gods

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

783



Rubbish hung over the road to purify a village

535
292
778

Leader of the Diwali dance

Chelik with sacred tree

[p. 464 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

what she was really like, so I went to the house and asked her to lie with me. She asked me what I was doing outside and I said I was drinking in honour of her marriage to me. Although she had been very sweet to me up to that moment, she suddenly cried, 'No, you are simply drinking my urine'. I was drunk and got very angry, and though she tried to prevent me I forced her. But it gave me no pleasure.

Next morning I found the girl was ill. There was no fever or anything we could see, but she lay sick on the ground. I took her to a Siraha and we had to stay with him for a fortnight. I used to give her food and do everything for her, but she got no better. One day I tried to have her again, but she said, 'Wait a moment while I go outside' and she slipped out of the house and ran for her life to her own village. I am sure that my elder wife did some magic to turn this girl's heart away from me. Later I tried to marry another girl, my elder brother's widow, and my wife drove her away also.[1]

VI. Adultery

The Muria have the reputation of observing a very high standard of marital fidelity, and all my observations go to confirm popular report. The incidence of divorce, less than 3 per cent, suggests that they regard marriage as something to persevere in, and while obviously no statistics can be supplied for individual infidelities, social tradition and religious belief are directed towards making adultery both difficult and dangerous.

The Muria, usually so tolerant and gentle, are here exceptionally rigorist. Adultery brings the swift vengeance of heaven not only on the guilty individuals, but on the tribe. A woman's sin can ruin the ritual hunt and in consequence endanger the year's harvest. The vision of priest or medium can be dimmed by the infidelity of a wife, children may suffer and die, tigers may assail the village herds. The guilty pair themselves are visited with a shocking punishment; their bodies become covered with sores and swellings, and a watery dropsy brings a wretched death.

This is no empty danger, as is proved by actual examples. The Solia of Munjmeta told me how his grandfather died of this cause; in Sidhawand, when a man eloped with a married woman, his father died of dropsy and he himself became a permanent invalid. In Lihagaon, one Badru died after an act of adultery. This vengeance comes from the Departed who are the guardians of the purity of family and clan. In Kongera an outraged husband 'set the Departed on the guilty' and wife and lover fell very ill. At Netanar a Muria said that he was only able to preserve his wife's virtue by the help of the Departed whom he constantly invoked for this purpose.

Adultery is suspected when cattle die suddenly, especially if the tongue protrudes and there is a certain kind of watery discharge. The Siraha then

[1] In Indian tradition and folk-lore, the majority of heroes are successfully polygamous—Ramachandra being a notable exception. In the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, the first wife is represented as welcoming her new companions. Suryaprabha married seven wives on seven consecutive days: by his magic powers he was able to divide his body and live with them all at once.—W. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924-5), Vol. I, p. 429. Naravahanadatta had a similar power of self-multiplication (*Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 477. See also Vol. I, p. 451). Folk-lore wives usually agree—unless they all combine against a youngest favourite. Among Gulela Shah's happy co-wives, Paaj Phul helps her husband to obtain his fourth.—J. H. Knowles, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir* (London, 1888), pp. 466 and 483 and compare M. Frere, *Old Deccan Days* (London, 1929), p. 324. There is an amusing note on the subject in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 318*f*.

has to divine who is the guilty party in order that peace may be made and danger averted.

Adultery therefore is not only the betrayal of tribal fellowship, the infringement of another's right to property, a breach of sexual tradition, but it is highly dangerous. A sort of public apology has to be made to the betrayed husband and a ceremony of purification performed.

In order to avert their fate, once the matter has become public, the guilty pair go to the Gaita with a pig or goat which he offers to the local deities and the Departed. Then he goes with witnesses to the nearest tank. On a stone he puts two bits of broken earthenware and some dub grass. Everyone present puts one foot on the stone; the Gaita throws water and liquor over the guilty pair who cry, 'Let us not now swell with water. May the Yer Kanyang living in the midst of this water make an end of our sin (*pāp*)'. The seducer then greets the woman's husband and all is forgiven.[1]

A similar ceremony is performed in the *jodidār* ghotul if a chelik goes off with another boy's motiari, or if he sleeps with her in his absence. At Atargaon, where a chelik eloped with another's ghotul-wife, but was brought back after a few days, the ghotul Manjhi took the two 'husbands' out of the village to a place where two paths crossed. He made them stand on either side of the path and put a knife on the ground and above the knife a stone. He made the boys put their right feet on the stone and gave them each seven leaf-cups of water. Seven times they exchanged the cups of water and seven times cups of liquor, and swore to preserve friendship with one another. The seducer promised to pay a heavy fine if it happened again.

There is one type of adultery, however, which does not seem to be taken too seriously. 'Suppose a girl has a ghotul lover.' So they put it at Markabera. 'She elopes with him. They are brought back and she is quickly married to her betrothed. After a few weeks she runs away again to her lover. She is again brought back, again accepted by her husband, though he knows she has slept with her old lover. And then she is happy at last and settles down.' 'It is like getting a new cow,' said the chelik at Nayanar. 'She does not at first like her new home. She runs back to the herd and her former pastures. But we don't beat her for that; we are rather doubly kind.'

In dealing with a motiari-wife, that is not only kind; it is intelligent.

VII. Divorce

Throughout tribal India divorce is easy and generally the wife has the same rights as her husband. Among the Muria divorce on either side is possible, but the stability of their marriage tradition makes it a comparatively rare event. I have already described how divorce can be effected in a *jodidār* ghotul. Similar ceremonies can release a woman from her partner in adult life. These ceremonies, it must be observed, are essentially rites of purification; they are retrospective, having reference to an already existing state of affairs. The actual union with a new partner and the paying of compensation effects the divorce; now husband and wife have to be free, not of each other—for they are that already—but of the dangers that cling to the conduct of one or both.

The ceremonies are the same as those by which a couple taken in adultery are cleared of their fault. Whether the woman returns to her own husband

[1] A similar ceremony is performed to purify a boy who sleeps with a near relative in the ghotul, but in this case a root or cucumber is used instead of a goat for sacrifice.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754A third line is put for making women barren, a fourth line for destroying crops and cattle, and so on.

Then the Guru begins to teach the young men in the name of Nandraj, Bodhraj, Kirkod, Markod, Indor and Bandor. He holds a bamboo stick in his hand and as he recites his mantra he beats the stones in turn, beginning with the uraskal and striking each stone from left to right. He must not, however, touch the danyakal with his stick. The disciples chant the mantra after him, and then one by one they stand up and strike the stones with the stick. By December the whole art of black magic is acquired.

At the beginning of the course of study, the disciples subscribe to buy a pig and chicken for their Guru. At the end they also bring offerings and a pot of rice-beer. On the last day a little rice is placed on the danyakal stone and the chicken brought by the disciples is made to eat it. Then it is killed and the boys feast with their Guru.

*674 754 One homicide not in our list, which occurred at Dhurli, was connected with such a school of magic. A youth named Telami Dhurwa used to go daily to Dogi Para to learn magic from an older man of the same name. The rule here was that from time to time the students should subscribe for a pig and that each should take their instructor a pot of rice-beer. One day Dhurwa and his fellow-students took the required pig and rice-beer, and after their class was finished they feasted with their Guru. On their way home the boys began to quarrel, and Dhurwa and another boy killed a third boy named Hunga. The people at Dhurli said that Hunga's soul [775] was not mingled with the dead because he was learning black magic, and a memorial stone was not erected for the same reason. Hunga in fact became a very dangerous ghost, a Rau [682] Bhut. The two boys were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment as no intention to murder was proved. When [783] Dhurwa was released he had to offer, in addition to the usual ceremonies, a special and expensive sacrifice to his clan-god.

II

THE SORCERER'S METHODS

754 The Maria sorcerer goes about his business in much the same way as elsewhere in India or the world. He may attack

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

837 get offended, and in their anger kill the cattle and other livestock. When an animal dies for this cause, its tongue protrudes and a watery discharge issues from its mouth. In Dhurli the Maria said that the guilty person might go blind, and in Mathadi we were told how an old woman did actually become blind as a result of betraying her husband. If a wife commits adultery when her husband is absent on a hunting expedition, her act will 'defile the earth' and the hunt will be ruined. The arrows will fly crookedly, and the husband himself may trip over a stump. He may be bitten by a snake or hit with an arrow. If the deceived husband is a magician, his vision will be clouded. If the proper ceremonies are not performed, he may be afflicted with a watery swelling that may cause death.

674 783 If a murder is committed on account of adultery, the families both of the murderer and his victim may suffer from this swelling. To prevent the danger, the elders of each house gather together; they mix milk and water in a leaf-cup of mahua leaves and say, 'These sinned; but let not their sin be on us'. Then a representative of each house drinks a little. The family of the murdered man gives a present (which is called in Halbi *bhul-karcha*) to the family of the murderer. A measure of rice is put under the eaves of the victim's house. In the rice there is placed some thread, a ring and an arrow. The two families feast together on pork and rice, and swear friendship with each other. The arrow remains as witness to their oath. Then the murderer's family [769] take the *bhul-karcha* home, and offer it to the Departed in their own house.

578 787 Quarrels are always dangerous, for they disturb tribal solidarity and may earn the vengeance of the Departed. Indeed it is dangerous even to dream of a quarrel; if you do, you should sacrifice to the Earth the next morning. If husband and wife are known to be constantly at odds with one another, a panchayat is held and one or both may be fined.

783 When Oyami Anda of Harmamunda carried off and married a girl for whom another youth was serving as Lamhada, he not only had to pay compensation for the work done by the other boy, but a ceremony was performed to purify both parties of enmity. Anda stood with the Lamhada

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

under the thatch by the door of his house. The palm of his right hand was placed below the Lamhada's right hand. On the ground, below their hands, a pile of rice was made, and an arrow placed in it. Then the Waddai climbed on to the roof and poured down water which fell through the thatch on to their hands, and thence to the rice. After this a pig and two chickens were given to the Lamhada to be offered to his ancestors. The Waddai as clan-priest officiated since the Dead of the clan were to be appeased.

A curious story related by Oyami Harma of the same village illustrates the manner in which the Maria expect supernatural punishment to fall upon the criminal. 'Long ago', said Oyami Harma, 'my ancestors, who were a family of seven brothers and one sister, were living beyond Bailadila. A youth of the Uika clan came as Lamhada for the girl, and in due time she was married to him. Twin boys were born, but after a few days one of them died. During Dassara the husband went to Jagdalpur at the invitation of the eldest brother and while he was away his wife together with the wives of the seven brothers went to reap the harvest, taking their two hunting-dogs. The surviving twin was taken with them, and as they were working, he was put to sleep in a swing. While the women were busy in the field, a hare jumped out of a bush and ran towards the baby. The two hunting-dogs chased it, and mistaking the baby for the hare bit him and killed him.

'When the husband returned he asked for his baby, and his wife said, "He has been taken out by our neighbour. First eat your food and then you can play with the child". The husband sat down and ate, and his wife told him what had happened. In the meantime the other brothers told their eldest brother of the child's death, and he was afraid that the bereaved father would revenge himself on him, because it was at his invitation that he had gone to Jagdalpur. So they all decided to run away. The father pursued them saying that it was they who were responsible for the death of his child. They went to Gadapal closely pursued by the angry father. In Gadapal there was a shrine for Kas Pona Pen which was in the form of a bird. This god hid the eldest brother under its wings, and when the father arrived at the shrine, he could find no trace of him. But as he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 578 595 Section 323, I.P.C. for what he admitted, voluntarily causing hurt to his wife.

At Dugeli I met Bugori and his senior wife Jimme. Bugori, a most attractive young man, had been able to win the affection of two women both of whom appear to have loved him devotedly. Unfortunately Jimme's jealousy knew no bounds, and one day, when the two women were out together working in the jungle, Jimme, who was robust and powerful, tried to kill the younger girl with her axe. But she survived, and Jimme went to jail for three years. During [626] her absence the younger wife remained with Bugori. But when Jimme was due for release, the village held a panchayat and decided that the younger wife must go to live at her mother's house for fear that Jimme might try to kill her again. When Jimme came home, therefore, after Bugori had [783] given the usual feast to the villagers and had purified her of jail defilement, he took her to his house where she has lived very happily and borne him children. He visits his younger wife in her mother's village from time to time, but does not allow her to come to his house for fear of another tragedy.

Markami Handa had two wives, but does not seem to have been able to keep the affection of the younger, an attractive girl about twenty-four years old. She fell in love with another man and he killed the husband to prevent him taking revenge. Marvi Kesa had three wives, and ill-treated the youngest. One day, after he had beaten her, she ran away to her father's house. There was a quarrel there, and Kesa killed his father-in-law. Poyami Masa had two wives, and a Dhobi tried to seduce the elder. The younger discovered the intrigue, and probably thought it was an excellent opportunity to get rid of her rival. She told her husband, and he was so angry that he stabbed the older woman with an arrow and was himself sentenced to life imprisonment.

Tati Harma had three wives. At the time of the tragedy which brings his name into this record, only two were living. The younger wife had borne him four children, but Harma used to beat her constantly saying that she did not work properly and ate too much. So serious were the disputes in the home that a panchayat fined husband and wife four

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

about ten years ago. 'It was the mahua season and the Chenchu were in the process of distilling liquor when two policemen arrived in the village and arrested the *peddamanchi* and three other men for illicitly distilling liquor. Unused to dealing with aboriginals they failed to reassure the other people that nothing very serious would happen to the four offenders, and apparently even made them believe that more policemen would come and arrest all the villagers. This threat caused, probably much to their own surprise, a general and immediate stampede, and so terrified were the Chenchu that they did not even stop to pick up their small children, but left them wherever they happened to be, and fled into the jungle. The whole day they dared not return to the village, and when they stole back in the evening they found that several of the smallest infants had died from exposure to the burning sun. Yidgaru (Tokal) says that altogether eight children perished on that occasion, and though this may be an exaggeration, it is certain that the child of his brother, who was one of the arrested men, died at that time. Only two of the four men were found guilty and condemned to one month's imprisonment, and strangely enough both died of fever within eight days of their return from jail'.[1]

IV

BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE RELEASED CONVICT

When a murderer comes out of jail, before he is admitted to the ordinary privileges of tribal life and sometimes even before he is allowed to enter his house, ceremonies of purification must be performed. These are of two kinds. The first is a straightforward ceremony to purge a man from the defilement of having been in jail and in the hands of the police. This is probably a Hindu idea,[2] and is connected with the fact that in jail prisoners must take food from members of any caste. It is likely that they may be beaten by

[1] C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Chenchus* (Hyderabad, 1943), pp. 287 f.

[2] It is said of a Hindu Sessions Judge in the Central Provinces that after passing sentence of death he would break the pen with which he wrote the judgement and destroy the clothes he wore. He would not eat till he had bathed and undergone a ceremony of purification.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

constables, who again may be men of low caste, and they are almost certainly forced at some time to wear handcuffs which is regarded by most Hindus as degrading. A term of imprisonment involves, of course, culture-contact in its most concentrated form, and we need not be surprised to find aboriginal prisoners bringing back from the capital of the State Hindu notions of this kind.

The ceremony, it is interesting to note, bears no relationship at all to the kind of crime that has been committed. For stealing a cow or for the illicit distilling of mahua liquor a man has to undergo the same purification as if he had committed a brutal murder. Even if he is acquitted, the jail contagion is on him and he must free himself of it.

The ceremonies vary from place to place. At Jabeli, where they have had a lot of experience of this sort of thing, the Maria told me that when a man returns from jail he is not at first allowed to enter his house, but must remain outside and the family gives him his food at a distance. He must then go to his Waddai and give him five rupees for some of the water in which his clan-god has been bathed. The priest sprinkles him with this and gives him a little to drink. He sprinkles some of it over the house. Then the released prisoner gives a feast of beef or pork to the village, he is allowed to go into his house, and from that day 'everybody forgets all about it'.

Sometimes the water must be brought from Dantewara. [823] Hemla Bakka, for example, had to get from the Jia water in which the goddess Danteshwari had been bathed. When Doga came out of jail, the Gaita heated a bit of gold in the fire and touched his forehead, mouth, wrists, knees and toes. He dipped the gold in water and sprinkled it over the body. In Pogu Bheji, the priest burnt with a bit of gold the murderer's tongue, the back of his neck and the upper part of his left arm. He made a fire above the gold with branches of the mango, dumar, karanji and mahua trees and sprinkled the hot ashes over his head. Then the people washed him with ghee, milk and haldi water. When he had given a feast he was free of the contagion of the jail.

When Nendi Muya of Dhanikarka was flogged for stealing a cow, he had to sacrifice a pig and a white chicken to Mati Dea, and bring water from the shrine of Lakshmi Devi at

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Kuakonda. When Telami Dhurwa returned from jail after killing a man in a drunken quarrel, he offered his clan-god Uru Maru, a pig, a cow and a hen, and had to undergo the usual ceremonies of purification. 783

Apart from these ceremonies, however, the fact that a man has served a sentence for murder has singularly little influence on his social position and domestic happiness. It is true that imprisonment, if it is for a very long term, sometimes acts as an automatic divorce, and women feel that they are at liberty to marry again. But generally wives wait for their husbands to be released, as I found Deve, the wife of Kawasi Borga, waiting for her husband at Doriras. Borga, ten years before, had gone to jail with a life-sentence for killing his uncle. His wife had all the time been well looked after by the villagers, and I found her house substantial and prosperous. Her two sons had been successfully married and were carrying on the business of their home with the help of their wives. 554 558 [586] [593]

People, however, are sometimes afraid to marry a released murderer. Doga of Jabeli must be one of the luckiest young men alive, for after being sentenced to transportation for one murder he was released after three years; whereupon he is said to have killed his wife, was sentenced to death and again got off on appeal. He came to see me armed with a ferocious-looking axe, which had actually been put in evidence at one of his trials as the weapon with which he had committed murder. He was trying to get a new wife, but without success. 'They are all afraid of me', he said, 'for fear I might kill them as well'. But he thought he might possibly get a widow. Another youth who found it very difficult to get a new wife was Hemla Bakka, who killed his wife for committing adultery, and got three years' imprisonment for it. At Aranpur all the girls were frightened of the charming Gutte, who had been in jail for killing a man in a drunken quarrel after a cock-fight. They thought if they displeased him, he might murder them too. 554 582

At Khutepal, Oyami Masa, who was imprisoned for killing his junior wife, seems to have suffered no loss of prestige on account of it. He is a Waddai, and when I was there he 554 558

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 This dress was in regular use in every village in Metabhum until a year or two ago. At my last visit in March 1934, I was 535 amazed to find that, almost as in obedience to some decree that had 178 gone forth, the youth of the hills had abandoned the rib-dress, the shield and the gaily-coloured head-dress and skirt, sometimes wearing in lieu cheap bazaar singlets and a *dhoti*, retaining, however, the buttock-bells, the songs and the dance-steps. The older men all said that it was a spontaneous decision of the younger generation, decided upon because of the cost of buying the expensive yards of cloth needed for the dress; but this would not account for the abandonment of the shield, which they make themselves, and for which peacock tails are better than cloth streamers. Many have actually thrown away their cloth and shields. But some still think it necessary to hang them up round fresh graves, and I found that all the youths still know how to make them, and were willing to make them in camp. In 1932 a rumour went through all the tribes 203 of Jeypore and spread thence into Bastar that a god had descended ●784 on one of the mountains of the Eastern Ghats and commanded all men to give up keeping black poultry and goats, wearing clothes or 178 using umbrellas or blankets with any black in them, and using beads or articles made of aluminium alloy. The message was rapidly bruited abroad, and everywhere villages had '*bohorani*' ceremonies for purifying themselves from disease, and cast out black goats, cocks, hens, umbrellas, blankets, 'waskats', beads, aluminium ornaments and domestic utensils on the village boundary. Mohammedans began to make a good thing out of slaughtering the goats or exporting them. Strenuous propaganda by the State soon stopped this impoverishing rumour, and some of the villagers in the end recovered much of their property from the police, who had been ordered to take charge of it. At the time, the Bison-horn Marias seemed to have been only a little affected and the Hill Marias not at all; possibly this sudden abandonment of the most picturesque features of their dancing costume may be a late repercussion. Such sudden moves amongst Indian primitive tribes are not uncommon; the Gonds of Nagpur and adjacent districts a few years ago suddenly decided to give up keeping poultry and pigs as a measure of social uplift.

292 The *taghali* or bark cloak used by the Hill Maria for warmth or, primarily, protection against heavy dew and rain, has already been mentioned as deputizing occasionally for the sleeping-mat. Hutton speaks of the Angami Nagas making 'a large hat of leaves and basket work . . . as well as a rain-coat of plaited grass, the ends of which hang out loose, to-

Rain-clothes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

But in many villages instead of a communal *padawo'gha'i* there is a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *padawo'gha'i* room known generally as *hala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *hala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable attached.

The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *kasyeq-gaita's* house, near the latter's *udam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-rawar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parllo clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street;

[1] Or *ala*; the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

166 361 787 791 778 When shifting is to begin, all the parish lands being lands of the clan, the *wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god is usually consulted; he is generally himself the *leski* or medium whom the god possesses, and if the god through him directs that the village should be shifted, he leads the villagers to the new site; sometimes the *wadda'i* himself is not a medium, but keeps a *leski* as an assistant. At the new site the *kasyeq-gaita* clears a small patch of ground in honour of the Village Mother, and on this offers an egg, some grain and flowers in her name, over which he places stones in a basketry cylinder or as a cairn. This will remain as her shrine in the new village, sometimes, as we have seen, inside the dormitory fencing, sometimes outside it but in the main village street, or sometimes right outside the village in a grove, a shed being erected over it. The removal of the cairn would be an omen of disaster, only to be avoided by shifting the village. The Orcha villagers had only a small table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree in a grove to mark their Village Mother. Handawada, besides a cairn, had a forked stick of *saja* wood oiled and polished, and whipped round the fork with *kosa* silk whipping, with a leaning thatched roof to protect her from the elements. Whatever form her shrine or representation may take, it is left behind when the village is deserted, and not shifted to the new village; for it is regarded as valuable evidence of the clan or parish property in the land. The only things removed are the pots in which grain, etc., is cooked at the Mother's feasts, the cooking utensils and the knives, which the *kasyeq-gaita* or religious headman must himself carry under his arm, *not* on his head, which is taboo, to the shed erected to house them near the Mother's shrine in the new village.

[184]

361 166 In the villages which I have seen being shifted, the earliest buildings to be erected have been the village dormitory, the houses of the 'advance guard', the religious and the secular headmen, and the menstruation hut. Villagers often put up their pig-sties before their own houses. A temporary dormitory is often put up to house the bachelors, and replaced after the houses have been built by a more permanent and elaborate structure.

The villagers remove all their utensils and household goods from their old to their new houses when the village is shifted. But they move no building materials; they leave the deserted houses to the mercy of the elements, which means that they are soon choked in the mass of high grass and scrub jungle that immediately springs up on the deserted site, and probably burnt down when the forest undergrowth is fired in the following spring.

[text continues on p. 112]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

342 Rough ground-plans of three typical Hill Maria houses are given in the illustration on page 111. The Nugur house was the end house of a long-house, and faced south on to the main village street. It differs from the other two in having no partition wall between the veranda (*algi*) and the *angadi*, or women's kitchen and sleeping room; the *angadi* in this case is in fact almost a continuation of the veranda round the eastern side of the *lonu*. The husband actually slept in the veranda and his wife in the *angadi* in warm weather, but in the *lonu* in winter and rains. This house had no *hala* or menstruation room, because the village had a communal menstruation hut; so also the house had no back door.

Houses

The Kurmer house faced north on to the main street, and was the central house of a long-house of three houses; its western and eastern walls were thus only partitions separating it from the other two houses. It was itself almost two houses, as the widowed mother [592] of Dedha Keye, the occupant, had the eastern *algi*, *angadi* and *lonu* for her exclusive use; but there was no door between her portion of the *algi* and Keye's portion, only a partial continuation across the veranda of the partition wall between her and Keye's rooms. The widow was too old to need a *hala*, and so there was only one for Keye's wife in his part of the house, and this had a back door. Like the Nugur house, this house had no *agha* room.

The Handawada secular headman's (*peda's*) house was at the north end of a long-house containing three houses and facing west on to the village street; the other two houses had their verandas (*algi*) and entrances on the street side, facing west. His *algi* was therefore very small, and only nominally walled off from the open [351] ground to the north of the house by a bamboo wicker-work fence about 3½ feet high, being thus useless for keeping property. Where, as in the other houses illustrated, the veranda is in front of the house and parallel to the roof-tree, it is easy to construct a front wall as high as the roof, which is there barely 3½ feet above the ground.

342 513 784 The *agha* is the husband's living and sleeping room, and it is taboo (*polo*) for his wife, a mature daughter or any woman to sleep in it; but boys too small to sleep in the bachelors' dormitory and immature daughters may sleep there. In hot weather the males of the family often sleep under the granary, which is built on piles, and when houses have no *agha* this is the usual sleeping place at all times for the men of the family, and for male guests except when the latter can be accommodated in the village dormitory 342 (*gotal-lon*). It is strictly taboo for any female to enter a granary, 513 or to sleep under one. Every *agha* has a large *alpanji* or sleeping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*ahki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[a] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[a] [see cat. 116) p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the midst of the grain crops to support them. The cut crops which are to be threshed are stacked on the wooden platforms prepared before sowing, in beehive shaped stacks, called *paki* by the Hill Marias and *kupa* in Halbi.

The women prepare the threshing-floor (*karanu* in the hill dialect), clearing a piece of ground near the stacks of grain, and plastering it with mud. In the centre of this the men erect a thick bamboo railing on posts. It is *polo* for women to take part in the actual threshing. Oxen are never used. For each cultivator in turn, beginning with the *kasyaq-gaita*, all the men and boys in the village combine to thresh (*wisna*). They range themselves in two rows facing each other, with the bamboo railing between them.[1] Holding this with both their hands and supporting themselves by it, they dance up and down, rubbing the ears of corn between their feet. They thresh in this way only *kodon*, *kutki*, rice, *ghatka*, *chikma* and *hikka*; the women pick the ears of grains like *kang* and *bajra* in baskets, and rub them in their hands to extract the grain. The cultivator whose grain is being threshed is expected to feed all the villagers helping him for that day, and if possible to give them a good drink of *salphi*, the fermented sap of the sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*), which is raised from cuttings in large numbers all over the Hill Maria country. The threshed grain is winnowed by men only, winnowing being as taboo to women as sleeping in the fields or threshing. One man stands on a rough wooden platform and pours the grain from a basket held above his head, while another, if there is not wind enough, winnows the falling grain with a basketry winnowing fan of the usual Indian type (*het* in Maria). All the men and women of the village combine to carry the threshed and winnowed grain of each cultivator to his compartment in the long granary. They never measure their produce, but there is no taboo on this account; it simply is that they grow crops for their own sustenance, and not for sale, and it is easy to see whether the grain garnered is adequate for the coming year or not. They do indeed understand something of bazaar measures, for some of their pulses and oil seeds are sold annually to raise the money needed to pay their poll-tax; they make their own measures of basketry, with different traditional shapes for each kind of produce that they sell; and at the bazaar you may see them measuring out their produce in these in front of the Hindu tradesmen to whom they are selling it. Their measures are very accurate, and need never be challenged. If they make them a little too large, they plaster a little mud over the bottom to reduce the capacity.

[1] I have since seen *kodon* and *kutki* threshed in the same way by Korkus on the Betul border of Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

796 one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyeq-gaita* obtains the permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman sweeps out her house, and the *kasyeq-gaita* goes to each house and collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan, or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up [481] on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some ● [184] reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought from Japgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots kept at his *pen-rawar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The [535 *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that 834] follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual [533] intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

796 Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana* 622 before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially where the *udam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

534 attached by criss-cross thongs of the same material to rings of the same material tied round the outside of the bowl in its centre and just above its base. The thongs are passed through holes pierced in the overlap of the membrane with the point of the knife or of an arrow, and pulled taut without anything being done to guard the edge of the membrane from tearing. Occasionally pottery bowls [177] are used instead of *salphi* or *bija* wood, a practice learnt both from the Teluguized Gonds of the south and the northernmost Murias of Antagarh tahsil.

533 The *turam* drum is placed on the ground between the outspread legs of the player, who sits on his buttocks with legs bent at the knee. The drum-sticks are held lightly between the index and middle fingers, the right stick being somewhat larger than the left. [784] It is taboo to beat a *turam* except at Koqsar and weddings, though nowadays most of them regard the taboo as lifted for a dance at a high official's camp. The ordinary rhythm at Koqsar and weddings is :— .

The rhythm thus begins and ends on a long beat with the right hand, with six short left hand and five short right hand beats alternately in between.

534 I saw once at Nugur a small drum of the *turam* shape made with a hollow gourd bowl.

When it is taboo to use the *turam* drums, boys use what are called by them *pak-dol* or *veddur-dol*, literally 'bamboo-drums', which are really split-stringed instruments. They are made of two-foot lengths of the thick bamboo called *noli-veddur* by the Marias, or *bendri-bans* in Halbi. The outer rind of the bamboo is prised apart from the rest of the bamboo for a length of about eighteen inches, three inches being left joined at each end. The prised rind is about one-eighth of an inch thick and an inch and a half wide. It is raised from the body of the bamboo by two small bridges (*barga*) of bamboo inserted at each end as near its junctions with the body of the bamboo as possible, and is made into three 'strings' by two longitudinal cuts. The drum is laid on the ground and rubbed firmly into position in the dust, and dust is poured along its sides; the 'strings' are then struck with light drum-sticks in the same way as the *turam*. The Bison-horn Marias do not make this.

Brass dish-shaped gongs (*gatta*) struck with sticks used, till a few years ago, to be an indispensable part of the bride-price or

[See cat. 116, pp. 421-422, - Anal-ysi]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinia argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwarin or Forest-maidens, and on each

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

pig, sprinkles their blood over the goddess and over each of the *saja* leaves, and breaks the top of each of the eggs with his knife. Then he offers the goddess ears of *chikma*, other early millets, and mountain rice; if the latter is not yet in ear, he offers a flowering rice stalk. He then prostrates himself with the palms of his hands flat on the ground, belches, and prays the goddess as their mother to accept these first-fruits, to grant them grace to have their new-eating feast, and to save her witless children from all troubles and adversity. He then hands each man one of the bloodstained *saja* leaves, and, leaving someone to watch over the slain victims, all go and bury the leaves in their fields. Each man then brings a handful of old rice from his house to the *kadri-bera* field, and hands it over to the *perma*, who cooks the bodies of the victims and the rice separately, and distributes them to the men, who eat their share there.

Meanwhile the women, for whom it has been taboo to attend the ceremony in the *kadri-bera* field and the burial of the leaves, will have prepared meal from the new millets and mountain rice; the grains are still rather green, and are roughly threshed, parched in a broken earthen crock held over the fire, pounded with the *uspal* husker, winnowed free of husks, and ground between two hand mill-stones with a quantity of salt; some mix in a little *gur* sugar. The wife of each head of a family cooks the new flour in a Hanal Kunda or Pot of the Departed (not, of course, that in which oil, etc., is placed in the name of the newly dead), along with new vegetables from the *bari*, other than gourds, beans and cucumbers. When the head of the family returns from the sacrificial meal already described, he brings with him the junior members of his family, but *not* his wife-clan relatives, and some of them bring small chickens. He sacrifices these to the Departed, offers them some of the new flour and vegetables, and pours a libation of *mahua* spirit and *landa* on the floor of the corner of the *wijja-lon* room that is dedicated to the cult of the Departed. The new flour and vegetables are then eaten in his house by them, their wives and their unmarried children; but no one of any other clan may participate, and on that day no one must give anything out of his house, not even fire from his hearth, to anyone of another clan.

On the next day, however, there is the usual remains-eating feast (*Hara Tindana*) in their houses, to which they are free to invite friends, brother-clan and wife-clan relatives, whom they regale on *mahua* spirit and on *landa*. In the evening they dance the *korlam* dance without their bison-horn head-dresses, but with men and women dancing separately in their usual way.

In villages where there is a log-god and a *Mataguri* or hut-shrine of Mata, the sacrifices on the first day are made before each, the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

a table-stone with a white pebble on it may be erected in the name of the clan-god under a *saja* tree. The *pərma* sacrifices cocks and a pig or goat on behalf of the village in the usual way, and washes some new husked rice and *kuthi* and offers it to the god. The men cook and eat the sacrificial meat then and there. The wife-clan relatives may be present, but in most villages are not allowed to participate in the sacrificial rice and meat and are supplied with other rice and meat which they cook separately. The usual remains-eating feast takes place in the houses next day.

The Jata Pandum

At the Jata Pandum, held somewhere near the full moon of Pus (December-January), they celebrate the eating of the first new beans, pulses, and the latest ripening grains. There is the usual public sacrifice for the men before the log-god or the Village Mother. In the south, towards the Dorla border, the festival is known as Chikur Pandum, and the sacrifices are always to a table-stone beneath a *saja* tree known as Dhania Deo, which, like the Bhattra Dhani, appears to be only another form of the earth-god. The only special feature of this *pandum* is that the domestic sacrifice and libations to the Departed in the house are often followed by a ceremony for weaning suckling children, the first food given being some of the rice and sacrificial meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed.

This takes place in Magh (January-February), soon after the Jata Pandum, and, as already observed, is preceded by the *Kare Weta* in which fields and open spaces are beaten for small game. I was unable to ascertain what other special features, if any, the festival has, or whether new grass and new bamboo are offered to the gods. Until the festival has been held it is *malo* or taboo to cut grass or bamboos or to start felling timber for *erka*, *parka* and *penda* cultivation.

The Kare Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum comes very soon after the Kare Pandum. I have no detailed information. But it is a ceremony for ensuring a good rainfall in the coming monsoon. It takes place by the Bhimul post in the *kadri-bera*, over which a booth of boughs is erected. Men and women attend. The booth is decorated with strings of mango leaves. The *pərma* sacrifices a white cock and an egg, and pours *landa* over the Bhimul post; and men and women then empty over the post baskets containing a little of every kind of field produce. Men and women then sit in the open, and consume *landa*. All night the village women dance, led by the *pərma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head or in her arms.

The Bhimul Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum is really the last of the *pandum* held in all villages. It only remains to mention the Mandai or Deoguri

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [834] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *hanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *hanal*. The *hanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *hanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common 776 use of the expression *pen-hanal* has already been mentioned. As 614 the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *wrakal* be the last thing that an individual *hanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only 775 around Orchha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

615 618 Poriami clan of the Kuhrami or Cuckoo phratry has the buffalo, which has supplanted the tiger as the totem of the Sodi or Tiger phratry, since tigers so far forgot themselves as to kill and eat some men of the phratry. In the Cuckoo phratry two clans, the Kartami and the Kuhrami (which gives its name to the phratry), have the *karot* or hornbill as totem, while the Kunjami clan has the *kunje* or screech-owl. In all these cases it is the clan totem that matters, not the phratry totem; the Hemla clan will kill goat or cobra, the Kartami and Kuhrami the cuckoo, and the Kalmu the goat. Some clans have no totem of their own, but have no scruples about touching, killing or eating the totem of their phratry; examples are the Tamo clan in the Goat phratry, the Oika clan in the Tiger or Buffalo phratry, and the Birya or Big Markami, the Gonche, the Miriyami, the Nupo and the Tati clans in the Markami Tortoise race. Two conclusions follow. The first is that certain clans in the phratry, those with different totems, probably did not split off from the parent clan of the phratry, but were independent clans grouped into the phratry at a later stage, probably owing to contiguity. The second thing is that the association of the totemic animal or plant with phratries and clans is so far from universal and plays so small a part in the life of the whole tribe that it is either something new, borrowed from another culture, but not really assimilated, or else a relic of something that has decayed with antiquity. It is remarkable that the Birya or Big Markami clan should not have any scruples about the tortoise, the totem of the Markami or Tortoise phratry, while the Chudala or Small Markami clan is very particular about it. Yet it is only of the tortoise totem that there is any [773] legend; there is said long ago to have been a great flood, which the brothers Markam and Kawasi were unable to cross until a tortoise came and took them on its back.[1] Some, however, do go ● [784] out of their way to avoid touching or harming their totem, particularly the Kawasi Tortoise phratry; blindness is the punishment which eating the totem is said to involve. I was told by a Kawasi

[1] This legend of the origin of the tortoise totem is one of the very few traces (the only trace that I have met) among Bastar Marias of the Ramcharsa legend of the origin of the Gonds. In the version of this given in Trench's *Gondi Grammar*, Vol. II, all the ancestors of the Gonds were stopped on their way to worship the Great God by a great flood, 'whereupon in haste they plunged into the river, and one caught hold of a Tendu log, another a Sirras, another a palm tree, another a teak tree, another an iguana, another a tiger, thus each seizing something or other, they forded the river. Having crossed the river, they assembled near a Saj tree, and ate the new rice that ripens in hollows, and drank, and asked each other, "What did you catch hold of when you crossed?" They said, "I for my part seized a palm tree and forded on it, I a teak tree, and I a tiger." Addi-rawan-pariol says, "Then your *pari* will be the Palm tree, yours the Teak, and yours the Tiger." Thus *paris* were found for all of them'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*ketul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

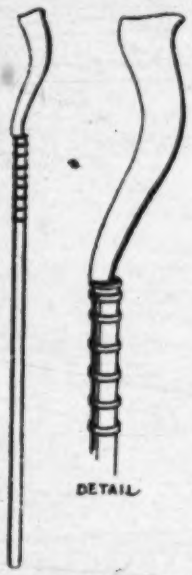

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchedar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

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Muria

241 they still make a small *parha* plot somewhere in their fields so that some of the grain will mature quickly and they will have enough to eat at home.

Their big fields are generally embanked, often irrigated with some ingenuity. They are distinguished according to the soil and location—*dhar neli* or *gabhār* is a low-lying rice-field, a *tikra* is a field on a slope, a *dobha* or *mal* is an ordinary level field—and they are often given names, the Cat-stone Field, the Field of the Frogs, the Field of the Ghost.[1]

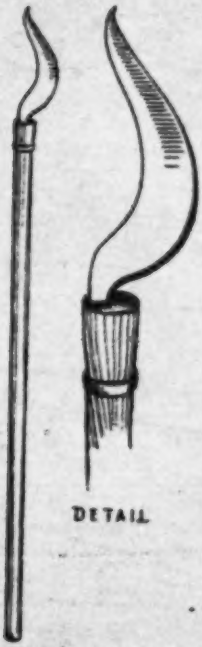


FIG. 4. Yerk used in the same way as the gagra, but of a different pattern
Length 3' 10"

Perhaps the most treasured thing, and often actually the most profitable, in a Muria's agricultural life is the *bāri* or garden enclosure near his house. This is carefully fenced with a stockade or with bamboo wattle-work, and is manured and enriched with the sweepings of the house and the droppings of the cattle throughout the year.

Here the Muria sows the profitable oil-seeds, sarson, til or arsi; here he sets beans by the fence, and a broad patch of red *jira* spinach. Often he plants some castor trees, or a sago-palm, sometimes plantain and papaya. One specially guarded patch contains his tobacco supply for the year.

Once the seed is sown, the attention of chelik and motiari is largely diverted from the ghotul to the fields. Ghotul life is almost suspended, though the smaller children go and solemnly imitate the habits of their elders. Little fires twinkle in the fields and the sweet music of the flute comes through the darkness.

When the first grain appears on the shoots, the Gaita offers an egg to Tallur Muttai to ensure its safety.

During the season, in the permanent fields there is a lot to be done. The embankments must be constantly repaired. The sprouting rice must be puddled with a board dragged by bullocks. The girls must go to weed. The boys set fish-traps where the water escapes through the embankments. It is a time of danger and taboo: an act of adultery may blight the grain, a quarrel discourage its growth.

[226]
[184]

Everybody goes to reap the crop. They use the ordinary iron sickle. Before thrashing, the bundles are piled up on wooden platforms, heaped into rough bins, sometimes just stacked in neat circles on the ground.

The first sheaf cut is tied to a tree overlooking the field or clearing.

252 The *hara* thrashing-floor is prepared by men, for in many villages it is taboo for women to do this, and so the men clear the ground in or near the field, plaster and cow-dung it. In the middle they place a pole (*mer-gutta*) to the top of which they often tie a sheaf (Plate X). If they are going to use oxen, they attach a pole to the *mer-gutta* and drive the animals round in the usual way. Often, however, the Muria thrash with their feet (Plate X). If there

[1] For an account of names of fields in India, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1892), pp. 115 and 141.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 462 the embankment of a field, both can join in spreading brushwood over a clearing.

883 462 A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. But she must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife, or thrust the plunge-traps into the water.

● 784 [412]

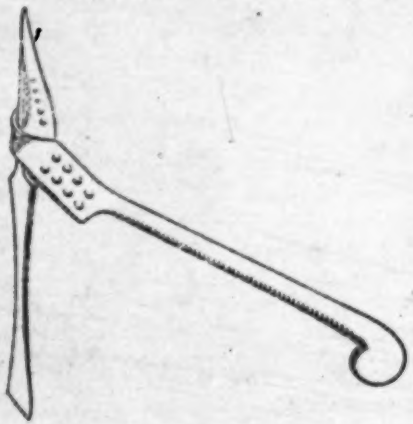


FIG. 14. *Baras* or *tatli* used for cutting up meat and planing wood
Length of upright 9"

A motiari, once she is mature, must not sleep on a machan to watch the fields. She must never go with a boy to sleep there—if she does a tiger will shake it and perhaps kill them both. In some villages, she may cow-dung the thrashing-floor, provided it is of her own clan, but she cannot thrash with her feet, or winnow the grain from a fan though she may do it with her hands. She must not sow seeds of rice or millet, though she does sometimes sow beans and vegetables.

883 462 The motiari gather mahua flowers with the boys; they collect myrabolams, and extract oil. Very important, they take food to the boys while they are working in the fields. This is a constant motive of romance in folk-tales.

883 [791] The motiari may attend a funeral and most of the festivals. At the New Eating ceremonies they prepare the plates and cups for the feast, and are eager spectators of the ceremonies. They dance at most festivals with the boys. But I know of no Muria women Siraha-mediums or Gunia-diviners, though these are not unknown in Chhattisgarh. I am told, however, that there is a female Siraha of Pendrawandin in Gudabera, and there is a tradition that in former times it was the women who sacrificed to the gods. 'In those days, they used to cut the tail instead of the head and the bird or animal instead of dying would escape. Men soon got annoyed at this and said, " You women do not know how to do it; from now we will sacrifice ". Men then began to cut off the heads of the birds and animals and the sacrifices were complete. This is why women do not eat the head of any bird or animal offered to the gods. They said to their husbands, " Now the head is yours, ours is the tail ".'

[784]

462 784 There are not many absolute taboos. A man must not husk grain or grind it. He must not wash women's clothes or wear them—except at night. Girls must not wear boys' turbans and clothes except on ceremonial occasions.

883 On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

I. Dress and Fashions

THE chelik and motiari, as we have seen, pay a lot of attention to their charming persons, so much attention indeed and of such a varied nature that it is not easy to describe their fashions in a single chapter. But the task is made somewhat easier by the tradition of ghotul solidarity. To be in the fashion, according to Muria ideas, it is essential that all the girls of any one village should look exactly alike. They must have the same coloured cloth round their loins, the same ornaments in their ears, the same bangles on their wrists, the same kind of beads about their necks. The Belosa sets the fashion and all her subjects follow it. There is a little more latitude allowed to boys, especially to the leaders. The Malik of Jungani can wear a wonderful comb fashioned with a chelik and motiari on horseback; the Kotwar of Chandabera can have a tobacco-pouch shaped like a fish in his turban; the Manjhi of Kabonga can go about with a beautifully-carved wooden bird perched on the comb in his hair. But girls cannot do that sort of thing; for them originality is bad taste.

There are five main fashion areas—the villages along the northern border, the Jhoria of the south and centre, the Muria of the north-west near the Abujhmar, the villages round Kondagaon and along the main road and the eastern forest approaching the Jeypore boundary. Each of these areas has its own special style.

There are, however, certain general observations that may be made of Muria everywhere. All Muria wear the same kind of cloth. It is taboo for a Muria to weave, and most of their cloth comes from the local Ganda and Mahara weavers. The cloth is good, but unenterprising, generally plain white with a red stripe or band. The chelik rarely wear a dhoti; all they can usually afford is a loin-cloth tied round the waist, passed between the legs and allowed to hang down in front. Well-to-do boys use a broader cloth that covers the buttocks, but most leave them bare and only conceal the private parts with a narrow strip that forms a sort of bag.

Girls wear a small cloth, supported back and front by their waist-string, to cover the private parts. Over it they wind round the loins a small strip of cloth like a very short skirt, carrying the end up and over one shoulder so as somewhat to conceal the breasts, and tucking it in again behind. In the Jhoria and north-western parganas, both breasts are often left exposed when no stranger is near, and nearly always one breast is visible—a fact that gives point to the riddle: 'The cow-shed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get inside.'

Muria boys and men usually wear a turban, and this varies not so much from a desire to be in the fashion but according to what one can afford. The classical Muria turban is tied round and round to form a sort of box on the head; in eastern Kondagaon the overhanging flaps are carefully decorated with coloured fringes. This box is rightly so named, for it not only covers the head, but serves as a receptacle for combs, mirrors, leaf-pipes and anything else that a boy may wish to take about.

Neither motiari nor married women cover their heads in conventional village fashion. It is a mark of a Muria girl that her head should be proudly free.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

In some villages of the Bomra Pargana, if a comb falls down, it must be left where it is for a whole day. No one else may pick it up, and the owner should say nothing to anybody.

FIG. 90. Wooden hair-pins from the Jhoria area
Longest pin 4¼″
(*See p. 386*)

In most places, there is a rule that when a motiari marries she should remove her combs within a certain time. Naturally if she has a dozen or more in her hair, the presents of a ghotul lover, it is only proper for her to return them to him when she marries someone else. But suppose it was her own husband who gave them to her, or another girl? Then she continues to wear them. It is not safe to say that a girl with combs is a motiari, one without combs a wife. I have seen women with three children wearing them. But usually the smart silvered ones are removed within a year of marriage.[1]

IV. CLEANLINESS

The Muria are, on the whole, a clean and tidy people. The chelik and motiari especially are devoted to their toilet, wash their clothes frequently,

[1] The Lakher and Lushai share the Muria objection to other people using their combs. 'They fear that if a man who is subject to headaches or who has a vampire soul uses another's comb', the owner may suffer in the same way.—Parry, op. cit., p. 34.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

words. From this shrine he took a bunch of peacock's feathers which he handed to the Gain—the leader of the singers.

The chelik now assemble outside the Gaita's house and the Gain takes the spear in his hand and they dance the stick-dance for the first time. After that they dance before the ghotul. Then they go with the Gaita and a Siraha along the road to their first point of call. When they reach the village boundary, the Gaita draws a line across the path and places on it seven rings of aonra leaf, seven bits of iron slag and makes seven little piles of rice. The Gaita and Siraha squat down by the side of the path, and the boys step across the line one by one, exclaiming 'Let us return safely'. Should any magical or supernatural danger be threatening one of the boys, the Siraha will immediately react by falling into a trance or jerks, and the expedition will be halted until the danger is discovered and removed.

Once the boys have crossed the line, they have definitely passed out of the ordinary world. They are dedicated to Lingo Pen and must be about his business. They are charged with spiritual power and open to spiritual attack. The rules and taboos of the expedition must be rigorously observed. Some of these rules seem to be intended to segregate the boys from all the associations of sex; others to protect them from catching the spiritual infection of strange villages.

I have already noticed the rule of chastity. Reinforcing this are rules forbidding the chelik to enter the compound of any ghotul or even to touch its fence. Except for the six leaders, the other boys may dance with the motiari, but they must not touch them. They dance in separate rows. They must not pass under the Diwali decorations in any house—for to these boys Diwali has no associations with the Feast of Lights, but is rich with memories of erotic adventure with the girls who have visited their villages for the Diwali dance. Nor may the boys enter any door or touch the thatch of any roof; they must not eat from the hands of a married woman; they must be careful that not even the shadow of a woman in her menses falls upon them. Such regulations remind the boys of their separation for the time being from all domestic ties.

Should a boy's ghotul-wife begin her period while he is on the expedition, the fact is shown him in a dream, and he must make or promise an offering to Lingo. The boys are generally warned of danger by dreaming about tigers.

In order to protect the chelik from the infection of a strange village, there is a rule that the fire with which they cook their food must always be lighted from the need-fire smouldering on the point of the sacred spear. On the other hand they are allowed to eat from the motiari of the village they visit—but their own boys must serve the food. Two boys are appointed cooks, one to see to rice, one to the pulse and salt. The chelik and motiari of the village visited may bring food, even cooked food, but they should not talk much and must soon go away. When they lie down to sleep round the fire in their little camps under trees near the ghotul, the boys must light this fire also with the need-fire.

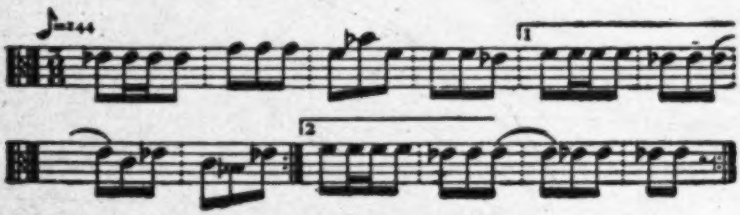
They are not allowed to cross over a fallen tree. They must keep to the same order and pairs with which they started. At the first dance of all, the Gaita cries 'Make up your pairs' and henceforth they must never change partners. They must always dance in the same order. A boy must always sleep with his partner, and with no other. If they break this rule they will die, and it is said that in Talabera this did actually happen. If one member of a pair dies, his *jori* or mate will die also. Probably a quite sensible rule to ensure the technical perfection of the dancing has been exalted into a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

taboo. It is very dangerous to make mistakes in the dancing or stick-beating, and any kind of error is heavily penalized.[1] If one of the boys makes a mistake the Gaita of the village visited removes the turban of the Gain and the boys have to pay a fine of two bottles of liquor before he will return it. Should a boy drop his stick or if his dhoti gets loose, he has to pay a similar fine. Anything dropped must be picked up with the teeth.

Special rules control the conduct of the three leading pairs, the Gain and Jokta or Roche-sela and two other couples. They must talk to no one; they must not dance with the motiari of the villages they visit; they may only sing the special Pus Kolang songs.

The dancing party from Phulpar in 1941 visited Sarandi, Kurse, Kutgaon and Tursani. When they reached Sarandi, they went straight to the Gaita's house and danced before it. As they entered the village they sang,



Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.

Show us the Gaita's house, chelik.
Don't you know the Gaita's house, chelik?
Where have you come from, chelik?
We have come from the land of hills.
If we show you, what will you give us, chelik?
We will give you a cloth for your loins.
It's the house with a cart in the yard, chelik.
There is a pond for the buffaloes in front, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.
On a bamboo pole there's a monkey, chelik.
There's an elephant tied to the pillar, chelik.
There's a horse tied in the shed, chelik.
On the roof there sits a peacock, chelik.
There's a gun against the fence, chelik.
A sword against the wall, chelik.
A parrot on its perch, chelik.
A maina in a cage, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.

The boys sing this song to a circular stick-dance rather slowly and reverently as if their words were charged with deep spiritual meaning. Then while two boys take a basket into the house to beg for rice, pulse and salt, the others begin their programme of dances.

[1] For similar beliefs in the danger of making a mistake during a ceremonial dance, see J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. III, p. 518. Compare also A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1890), p. 95.

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Muria

second after a time. In 6 other cases a plural marriage was in progress, but was unhappy and disturbed by constant quarrels. 595

Polygyny is not socially disapproved—though an incidence of only 2 per cent might suggest it was. The Muria's attitude is rather that a man has undertaken more than he is likely to be able to manage, and is more to be pitied for his difficulties than to be condemned for impropriety.

For example, at Berma, a Muria said, 'Two wives are like two drums with the player in between; he beats one or he beats both according to the rhythm required. But a good drummer does his best with a single drum'. Or again at Kanhargaon they said, 'You will always hear the noise of pots clashing and breaking in a house with two wives; nothing is done properly, not even rice is cooked in time'. And the Kandki of Bunagaon said, 'I am dried up even by one wife. How could I manage another?' But elsewhere I have heard it said that a clever man can keep two wives happy 'just as two hands beat the two ends of a drum in rhythm'.

It is everywhere said that the wives quarrel, not through sexual jealousy or about prestige, but because each thinks the other shirks her due share of work. As I show later in the chapter this question of the distribution of work is very important to the Muria mind and is indeed the cause of most of the quarrels and a high percentage of the suicides in Muria society. [578 762]

For example, in the following record of a quarrel it is the dispute about work that is really important. A husband has been neglecting his senior wife. 'Is my vagina bitter and hers so sweet?' she says and then turns on the junior. 'You *bāploti*, it is I who made this man what he is today: everything in the house is mine; all you should eat is my leavings.' The younger girl replies, 'I didn't come here of my own accord: he is as much my husband as yours, for it is he who brought us both here'. Then the husband says to the elder, 'Don't be angry. I have brought this girl, not because I love her more than you, but so that she can help you in your work'. 'But that is what she never does. When I am cooking, she should fetch wood, when I am defiled, she should cook. But she refuses.' The younger wife, in some villages, has to observe various vital taboos. She cannot approach the Pot of the Departed at will. She can only go at the New Eating Festivals after an offering has been made and a feast enjoyed. Before this she should not take any grain to the place where the Pot is kept. [784] ●

In the sexual sphere it is supposed to be comparatively easy to manage two or even three wives.[1] The headman of Chandabera, a charming man with the body of an athlete, told me how he arranged that he himself and each of his two wives slept in three different places. Then he made love to one or the other according to his desire, not much caring whether the other was awake and watching or no. On this point, he said, he never had trouble. In Badgaon, a Muria said that he had to have his senior wife three times a day and the junior twice in order to stop them fighting over his body—but this was doubtless an exaggeration.

I will quote some of the remarks made by these sexual athletes during the statistical inquiry.

A Sirdar of Kejang: 'I did not care for my first wife: I married her at my parents' wish, and they were more interested in marrying a rich man's daughter

[1] In many tribes, leading 'characters' take pride in keeping a number of wives. A Maria of the Oyami clan in Kesapur had six wives; in Kerlapal another Maria had seven. I found a Juang in Keonjhar State with seven. The famous Yogi Baiga of Mandla had six, with twenty-six children. A Pardhan of Balaghat had a similar number and used to take them all, walking behind him in a file, when he went to a bazaar.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

793 There are also in most villages one or more Pujari, as they are now called, who are the priests of the more Hinduized deities, such as Danteshwari and her consort Bangaram. In most villages there are many minor deities and each of these may have its special Pujari.

These men do not form in any sense a special priestly class. Only in very rare instances could you recognize a Gaita or Pujari by his bearing or appearance. They are simple, decent, kindly men who spend most of their lives in the field and forest, but they have been chosen, as their parents were chosen, to mediate between men and the unseen mysterious gods. They are invariably, so far as I know, men of good character and never abuse their position unless the dark fate of supernatural power comes upon them and they turn to black magic. They often have to discipline themselves and to exercise a restraint which is not common among the Muria. All village priests must [785] fast and be chaste on the day and night preceding any major ceremony. In some places the period of abstinence may extend to a week.

In some villages, not all, of the Chota Dongar Pargana the Kaser-Gaita is only able to hold his office until he is married. He is thus usually a boy of about sixteen. He is not allowed to go to the ghotul; he must have as little as possible to do with women; even a woman's shadow must not fall on his body. He should not take tobacco from anyone's hands for fear his wife might be in her period. He should not go to a bazaar for fear he unwittingly touch such a woman. He must not talk to a man whose wife is menstruating. In his own home, his cooking-pot is separate from the others. Few boys could endure so rigorous a regime for long, and the Gaita is only made to hold office for three years. Then the god reveals in a dream which of the chelik should take his place. If the old Gaita returns to the ghotul before he is married, he gives the chelik and motiari a feast of pork and liquor.

793 When a Gaita dies his successor is not immediately appointed. In eastern Kondagaon, although the eldest son inherits the Gaitaship automatically, he 787 cannot exercise his functions until he has had a certain recognized and official dream appointing him and authorizing him to act. In other parts of the State a ceremonial hunt is held before the son or brother of the dead Gaita can take his place. In the name of the dead man, the whole village goes out to hunt and they take the omens from the animals they get. If they kill a hare it means that the dead man disapproves of his son or brother and that the inheritance must pass out of the family. If they get a male animal it means that the dead Gaita does not want a successor at all. If, however, they shoot a female sambhar, chital or barking-deer, they accept this as meaning that the late Gaita's son or brother may be appointed. Should they fail to get one of these animals, they fast the whole day, cook and eat outside their houses in the evening and sleep away from their wives and go out daily to hunt for three days. If within this period they succeed in shooting one or other of the three female animals required, the new Gaita begins his duties forthwith; otherwise they wait for a year and then repeat the test.

793 Throughout tribal India the influence of the priest is greatly modified by that of the seer. Often these functions are combined in the same person, and 791 his influence is thus greatly increased. But at every ceremony, every festival, in all cases of sickness, at the last rites of the dead, the priests have to consult the prophets for their instructions. There is not, in fact, anything like a definite system of ritual which must always be performed in the same manner. There is rather a great repertory of rites and customs from which many possible combinations can be drawn. The prophet or medium of the gods has to explain

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

I. The Ghotul Festivals

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THROUGHOUT this book we have seen the important part that the chelik play in the religious life of the tribe. Their success in hunting is the best of omens for the coming harvest; their drumming and dancing adds excitement and delight to the dreariest routine. They serve very much the function of a choir, a choir, moreover, which contains a rather high proportion of theological students. For many of these boys are already training to be clan-priests, Kaser-Gaita or Siraha mediums. At the time of sacrifice the Gaita may take his son and make him perform the actual rite, anxiously watching to see that there is no mistake. At Masora, Lakmu and his son Phirtu carried the Anga on their shoulders together and were moved to and fro by a divine inspiration that came equally to both. I have often seen young chelik dancing in trance, beating themselves with iron scourges, and tossing their dark beautiful hair into wild disorder.

But in addition to being choir-boys and acolytes for their elders, the chelik have festivals of their own which are closely connected with the ghotul. At Diwali, before the motiari go out on their dancing expeditions,[1] the boys and girls collect parched rice and have a feast in the ghotul, at which they admit new members and give them their titles.

At Jhakri, they described how at Diwali the motiari bring parched rice and gur for Tallur Muttai who, in this ghotul, lives in one of the pillars. They offer it first to her, and then all feast together. At Gorma, there was a stone by the village boundary where the children went for this feast. Decorations, sometimes elaborately made with ears of rice and flowers, are strung over the ghotul door.

At Dassera, which is not observed in the villages, the chelik dress one of their number as a Raja, put him on a throne, sometimes even on a wooden chariot; the 'ghotul ryots' bring him presents and he gives gifts to the Diwan, Tahsildar and other State servants. Every boy and girl brings two cucumbers which, in ghotul currency, represent two goats. They stick wooden legs into them and sacrifice them to Danteshwari. They invite a few of the village elders and have a feast in the ghotul.

In some villages—I have noted the custom in the Chalka Pargana—the chelik and motiari have their own version of the Irpu Pandum. At the end of the mahua season they spend three days collecting the flowers—this must be done at the end of the season, for it is believed that after these three days the flowers stop falling—and make liquor for themselves, boiling the flowers in water with slices of mango. If there is a Kalar out-still contractor in the

[1] Such ceremonial parades are not unknown elsewhere. The Chherta and similar dances are common throughout Middle India. 'It is a well-known practice', so C. R. Krishnamacharlu informs me, 'in the Tamil, Telugu and Kanara areas of Southern India for village schoolmasters and their students to go to the several households of the villages singing laudatory songs and receiving presents during the Dassera holidays.' The boys carry decorated bows and shoot sandal powder at their hosts. Krishnamacharlu compares this to the Chelidonia festival of ancient Rhodes, when boys went singing and begging from door to door. See also *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II, p. 53 and Vol. III, p. 63.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

brass rings and beads and placed them on the corpse; the 764
men brought bits of cloth. The members of the household fasted from the time of the old man's death until he was cremated. The ceremonies were marked by violent manifestations of grief. When the bamboo bier was brought to the house, the wives of the Waddai, Gaita and Hanagunda fell upon it and lay there. They said that this meant that they too wanted to be taken out and burnt, a curious echo of the Sati tradition. Straw was spread on the bier and when the corpse had been placed there, bits of cloth were laid on it by the male relatives present. The women gathered round the corpse again, kissing it and weeping bitterly. It had been lying with its legs towards the door of the house, but now it was lifted up by the bearers and its position changed so that the head was pointing to the door. They touched the door thrice with it saying, 'You made this house, come here again in your next birth'.

Then, led by the drummers, the corpse was carried out to the cremation-ground. The grand-daughter with her hair undone followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice upon it as she went along. As they passed a path that [792 crossed theirs, they dropped a little rice so that if any other 785] ghost came he would eat it and go away. Everyone went to the funeral. Menstruating women are not normally allowed [841] to attend, though sometimes they may come if they stand at a little distance.

When the party reached the pyre, they went round it anticlockwise once and placed the bier on the ground. Once again the women fell upon the corpse weeping and kissing it. They lay down beside the pyre and had to be pushed away before the business of the funeral could proceed.

Then one of the women put a little tobacco in the mouth of the corpse. The body was placed upon the pyre. Some of the bits of cloth with which it was covered were left there; the rest was distributed between the drummers and the relatives by marriage. The Hanagunda removed the packets of rice which had been tied to the waist of the corpse and threw them to left and right. The body was entirely covered with a cloth and the Hanagunda ripped this open just over the mouth. A piece of grass which had been brought from the roof of the house was put into the mouth of the corpse and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

This traditional arrangement of the Hill Maria villages is far from being always observed. I have seen a village constructed in this way on one of its traditional sites (*pagh* or *pagha'i*; Murias say *pare*, while Bison-horn Marias generally use the Halbi word *padar*), and then four years later found it reconstructed on one of the alternative sites with little sign of the traditional grouping; and I have also seen the converse occur. In fact, the configuration of the site may make the traditional arrangement difficult. It is also being gradually abandoned in the villages on the edges of the hills into which the individualism of surrounding plains villages is creeping, and in the few villages such as Orcha and Hikul which have good permanent rice cultivation; in the latter villages there is a growing tendency not to shift the sites when the surrounding *penda* slopes are exhausted, but to cultivate even remote slopes from the village site in the vicinity of the permanent rice fields. As the old feeling of village community weakens, houses are no longer built as long-houses, each containing groups of three or four houses occupied by brothers or near paternal cousins, but are built detached, each with its own granary close to it, instead of the householder having one compartment in the long granary row; even then, however, the detached houses tend to group themselves roughly into lines flanking a central open space, at one end of which is the village dormitory (*gotul-lon*), in its usual position. Even when a village site is becoming permanent, as at Orcha and Hikul, any sudden calamity, such as crop failure, epidemic or epizootic, will probably induce the villagers to shift. In several villages the *kasyeq-gaita* always keeps a hen sitting on eggs inside his house, and the addling of an undue proportion of these is frequently a signal for the shifting of the village; but a wise *gaita* does not let his eggs get addled unless there is really sound economic or religious reason for shifting, when the omens can be made to suit the occasion.

Behind each line of houses will be found rows of pig-sties, at least one for each house; and the pigs often seem better housed than their masters. Where, as around Orcha, sal (*Shorea robusta*) or other timber is plentiful, the pig-sties are generally made of sections of tree trunk or large boughs laid horizontally between vertical stays, with an opening in front which can be closed by dropping vertical posts over it between horizontal stays at the top and bottom of the opening. These sties are sheltered from the sun by grass-thatched roofs sloping back from two or more vertical posts about 6 feet high to similar posts about 4 feet high in the rear. Dug-out troughs of sal wood are kept outside or just inside the sties for water and food for the pigs; the commonest food is a mash made from the chaff or husks of *kosra* (*kutki*; *Panicum miliaceum*) and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

166 When shifting is to begin, all the parish lands being lands of
361 the clan, the *wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god is usually consulted;
● 787 he is generally himself the *leski* or medium whom the god possesses,
791 and if the god through him directs that the village should be shifted,
778 he leads the villagers to the new site; sometimes the *wadda'i* himself is not a medium, but keeps a *leski* as an assistant. At the new site the *kasyeq-gaita* clears a small patch of ground in honour of the Village Mother, and on this offers an egg, some grain and flowers in her name, over which he places stones in a basketry cylinder or as a cairn. This will remain as her shrine in the new village, sometimes, as we have seen, inside the dormitory fencing, sometimes outside it but in the main village street, or sometimes right outside the village in a grove, a shed being erected over it. The removal of the cairn would be an omen of disaster, only to be avoided by shifting the village. The Orcha villagers had only a small table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree in a grove to mark their Village Mother. Handawada, besides a cairn, had a forked stick of *saja* wood oiled and polished, and whipped round the fork with *kasa* silk whipping, with a leaning thatched roof to protect her from the elements. Whatever form her shrine or representation may take, it is left behind when the village is deserted, and not shifted to the new village; for it is regarded as valuable evidence of the clan or parish property in the land. The only things removed are the pots in which grain, etc., is cooked at the Mother's feasts, the cooking utensils and the knives, which the *kasyeq-gaita* or [784] religious headman must himself carry under his arm, *not* on his head, which is taboo, to the shed erected to house them near the Mother's shrine in the new village.

361 In the villages which I have seen being shifted, the earliest
166 buildings to be erected have been the village dormitory, the houses of the 'advance guard', the religious and the secular headmen, and the menstruation hut. Villagers often put up their pig-sties before their own houses. A temporary dormitory is often put up to house the bachelors, and replaced after the houses have been built by a more permanent and elaborate structure.

The villagers remove all their utensils and household goods from their old to their new houses when the village is shifted. But they move no building materials; they leave the deserted houses to the mercy of the elements, which means that they are soon choked in the mass of high grass and scrub jungle that immediately springs up on the deserted site, and probably burnt down when the forest undergrowth is fired in the following spring.

[text continues on p. 112]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paih-gotul* or lodging-hut for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *padas* (headmen) and *permas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

Shifting villages

The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

Houses

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Telam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

and many a marriage arises from the first meeting of lad and girl in these dances.

The land, as has been seen, is the land of the clan-god (if not even, in some sense, the clan-god himself). It is natural, therefore, that before any of these festivals are held in the individual villages of the clan the main ceremony for the whole clan should take place before the clan-god, either in or near the parish where his permanent hut-temple is situated. When the new grain of the crop concerned has been garnered, the *kasyeq-gaita* of each village sends word to the *pen-waddai* or clan-priest. The clan-priest consults the clan-god personally if himself a medium, or else through a medium, and announces a date for the celebration before the clan-god. On the night before leaving their village to attend the celebration, the *kasyeq-gaita* and all the men who are to go with him next day observe sexual continence, and sleep in the dormitory. The *kasyeq-gaita* is fed that night on fish, at the expense of the village, in some clan-areas. In a few villages a separate *bhum-gaita* exists, whose sole function seems to be to lead the villagers in visits of this kind to the clan-god. Before dawn, each wife grinds about 4 lb. of the new grain for her husband to take to the clan-festival. No women may attend the new-eating ceremonies. Besides supplies of new grain, the *kasyeq-gaita* and men take on behalf of the whole village a cock or two (there is no rule as to the colour of the victim), and perhaps, when the village is large or prosperous, a young boar (*not* a gelded pig) or a barren sow.

The deputations from the various villages assemble at the *pen-rawar* or shrine of the clan-god. The god, which in form is always a framework of logs criss-crossed with bamboos and bedecked with peacock feathers, spirals of quills, brass bells and other simple finery, is then taken out of his hut by four men of the clan-priest's family or village, and borne to the traditional place of sacrifice, which may be near the shrine or even outside the main village of the clan, three or four miles from the shrine. There they set the god down on stones under a *seja* tree, and the four bearers have a ceremonial wash. Sometimes the clan-priest again, either himself if a medium, or through mediums, consults the wishes of the god, who always permits the festival to continue, but generally suggests that they should first offer worship to the Village Mother of the village where the assembly has gathered. All adjourn to her shrine, and there the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village places a grain or two of the new crop on the table-stone or cleft stick representing the Mother, cuts the throat of a small chicken, sprinkles its blood on the Mother, and throws it down, still alive, on the ground. All watch the chicken eagerly; if after a convulsive leap or two it falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

off, and eat them raw. The men gather the edible bean-pods of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper when cutting its stems for rope fibre and gathering its leaves for plates, rain hats and shields, but generally light a fire then and there in the forest and roast the beans in the pods, when it is easy to extract them to eat.

B. Hunting and Trapping

The Hill Maria is as omnivorous as all Gonds, and it is difficult to discover what he will not eat if he can get it. But there is little game left in the Abujhmar hills, except where the hills descend to the Indrawati, Gudra and Kotri valleys. The *shikaris par excellence* of Bastar are the Murias of the northern plateaux and the Bison-horn Marias of the *parganas* around Barsur and the Indrawati valley, where there is still fairly plentiful game. The Hill Maria is therefore not an expert beater, though twenty-four hours spent by any would-be sportsman in Kutru territory in training Hill Marias to beat will be amply rewarded, not only by the quick way in which they learn, even if taught only by pantomime, but by the fun and humour with which they will take their lesson. They have memories of hunting tiger, panther, bison, buffalo, deer of all kinds, and even, very shadowy, of rhinoceros.[1] But the appearance in the hills of one or two tiger after the 1931 census for the first time within human memory was interpreted as a sign of divine displeasure, and all the census house numbers painted by the enumerators on little squares of wood prepared *ad hoc* by the Marias and preserved in many houses for each census from 1911 onwards were collected together and burnt on the village boundaries to placate the Departed. Outside Tondawada village a panther was shot by the village lads with arrows thirty years or more ago; three small stone menhirs about twenty inches high were driven then into the ground at the spots where its head, the root and the tip of its tail had lain when it fell dead; the feat is still spoken of as a deed of prowess. Orcha is the only Hill Maria village, so far as I am aware, that follows the practice of the spring hunt before sowing the crops, which is so marked and important a feature of tribal life among the Bison-horn Marias, the Parjas and Bhattras; but the Orcha people seem to have copied the hunt from the Bison-horn Marias without its religious significance; there is no sprinkling of blood on the first seeds sown, no ceremony before and after the hunt, women take no part in the proceedings to drive unwilling men out to the hunt, and no portion of the slain quarry is offered to the clan-god, the

Hill Marias

[1] Compare *Gazetteer*, p. 32. The rhinoceros tradition still existed in 1938.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

nostrums like the use of red-ants for fever or python-flesh for pot-belly already mentioned, and cauterization is the only treatment he knows for simple injuries or foot-crack (just as he brands the flanks of ailing cattle). A Maria bitten by a rabid dog at His Excellency Sir Montagu Butler's Christmas camp at Kondagaon in 1927 refused point blank to be sent out of Bastar to Raipur for Pasteur treatment, but ultimately as a concession to the general anxiety asked to be given the body of the dog, and ate its liver.[1] To Marias illness is generally a manifestation of something malignant, either the magic of a human enemy or the ill-will of a god or spirit. At funerals, steps are taken to ascertain whether magic was the cause of death; in illness a medium is called in, or a *wade* or *gunia* with knowledge either of spells to defeat the spirits of evil or of the white magic means of blowing away illness, *jhara phukna*; epidemic or epizootic disease may be defeated either by palisading the village after sweeping it clean, and posting guards with bows and arrows to shoot the demons of illness, as was done by Hill Marias in the great influenza epidemic of 1918, or by special disease-riddance ceremonies like the annual ceremony described on page 140. Yet such is the Hindu's faith in their 'medicine' that in 1930 the late zamindar of Sukma hastened his death when in the last stages of diabetes by taking the advice of Bison-horn Maria 'doctors' or *gunia* to the effect that he had two intestines, one of which had withered like a dead plant, while the other, though withering, was still partly green and could be revived if the patient fed it with lumps of black earth.

Maria treatment of disease

B. Manufactures

In the preceding chapters frequent mention has been made of basketry, for Maria measures, grain bins, walls of houses and fences, dancing shields and so on. The Hill Marias are great basket workers, men and women. The men make all the big basketry bins for storing grain and the large baskets sold at the markets, as well as dancing shields and fencing and matting; the women make the basketry measures, basketry plates and the smaller domestic baskets, as well as brooms of various grasses, which are generally plaited together at the top by basketry methods. In camps, Hill Maria youths almost invariably employ any spare time in basket-making. Bison-horn Marias on the contrary leave it almost entirely to their women, except that the men make the basketry caps that are the basis of the *tallagulla* bison-horn dancing headdress, and fencing.

1. Basketry

1 [See cat. 116, p. 421. - Awalgaf]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwarin or Forest-maidens, and on each

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

to the shed where the animals killed in the second ritual hunt were kept and cut up, and there they are cooked along with the head, intestines and lower legs of those animals, and eaten by the men of the village.

This should be followed on the next Sunday by the *Jur-weta* for the whole *pargana* at the chief village of the *pargana*, the *perma* of that village acting as the officiant before the altar of bows and arrows erected in the name of the Forest-maidens, and the *perma* and elders of each village offering an egg and a tooth-stick to be placed by the officiating *perma* in the bran-heap of each of the three Forest-maidens. The *weta* is sometimes followed by worship of the clan-god and the *Pen-karsita* festival, except in villages where that takes place at the Mandai or Deogudi Jatra on or about the full moon day of Magh. It has already been said that the *Jur-weta* is now abandoned in most *parganas* because nearly all except small game has been exterminated. Actually, however, the photograph illustrating the sacrifice to the Forest-maidens, facing page 211, was taken at a *Jur-weta* and not at the *wijja-weta* of the preceding week.

It remains to state what each man does with the packet of consecrated seed which he takes back from the Wijja Pandum to his house. Before seed-time, he calls in a medium (*wadde*), through whom he consults the oracle as to the propitious day and hour for the field sowing ceremony. At the appointed time, taking care to be overlooked by no one, he takes to his field a sowing basket containing the consecrated seed mixed with other seed, a little cooked rice and a cock. In the field he clears a little plot of ground, spreads rice on it and, as soon as the cock starts to eat it, cuts its head off from the throat upwards in the name of the Earth-god, and sprinkles its blood on the ground and on the seed in the basket. He prepares a small piece of the field for sowing, and on it sows three handfuls of the blood-sprinkled seed. He then cooks and eats the body of the cock in the field, leaving the head there, and makes his way back to his house, still trying to avoid being seen. After this ceremony he is free to complete his sowing when he likes.

Hareli

Hareli is not observed by all Bison-horn Marias, but is universal among Parjas and Bhattras and the Jagdalpur Murias, and, under its common local name of Amavas, amongst Halbas and other Hindus of the State. The Dantewara and Barsur temples have spread its observance among the Bison-horn villages of Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils, and the villagers generally wait till the temples have celebrated the festival before celebrating it in their villages. On the morning of the day on which they have decided to hold it, the village elders assemble at the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

753 is that it is caused by magic and best cured by detection of the magician, or by white counter-magic.

761 Black magic is still suspected as the cause of death by all
754 Marias. Bison-horn Marias consider it proved if, when they return next day to the pyre where they left a corpse burning, they find part of the body unburnt. Hill Marias, through a *waddai* clan-priest
[787] or his medium assistant, call on the corpse to impel its bearers to one of seven leaves that represent the possible causes of death; three of these leaves represent the magic of a fellow-villager, the magic of a *waddai* or medium, and the magic of a man at enmity with the deceased owing to a quarrel. All log-gods, whether Maria clan-gods or the various Anga-deo and Pat-deo of the Halbas and Murias, have the power of detecting witchcraft, either by impelling their bearers to the offender (the usual way among non-Marias) or through their oracles the *waddai* (or *wedde* or *wadde*). In previous chapters we have seen witchcraft regarded as the cause of the blacksmith's iron ore[1] failing to produce good iron when smelted, and of the spoiling of the flowering peduncles of the *salphi* tree[2] by worms and grubs. In fact, again to quote Glasfurd[3]:—

> 'The people invariably impute their misfortunes to witchcraft. If a man's bullock dies, it is caused by witchcraft; if his crops fail, it is because the land has been bewitched by someone who is at enmity with the owner; a lingering sickness or painful disease is laid at the door of an enemy, and, in short, from the most common affairs of everyday life to the most serious, every evil that befalls a family is imputed to witchcraft.'

674 Suspected witchcraft was the cause of eight out of the eighteen
754 murders committed between 1917 and 1923 by Bison-horn Marias and of the two murders committed by Hill Marias; it was the
683 alleged cause in the one Hill Maria and six of the eleven Bison-horn Maria murder cases which I tried between 1927 and 1931 as *ex-officio* Sessions Judge. Glasfurd[3] went on to give details of the cruel treatment meted out in his day to persons suspected of witchcraft; the final test applied to a suspect, even if the preliminary test had been in his favour, was to sew him up in a sack, and duck him in waist-deep water, adjudging him guilty if in his struggles for life he managed to raise himself above the water; he was then beaten by the crowd, his head shaved, and his front teeth knocked out with a stone, to prevent him muttering his incantations. He was pelted with all kinds of filth, made to eat degrading food, and driven out of the country. But, with one exception, in none of the many murder and assault cases arising out of suspected witchcraft which occurred while I was in Bastar and of the previous cases of which I have notes was any action taken by Maria village communities

[1] See p. 176. [2] See p. 168. [3] Report, pp. 52-4.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

755 F187 even Hindu officials educated at colleges outside the State place great trust. The cause of the illness or affliction is discovered by some form of divination (*kal hudatore*), generally by means of rice-grains, unless the case is serious enough to necessitate the actual presence of the log-god. The *waddai* always waits till he is possessed by his god (' the god comes upon him ' or ' sits on him ') to give his decision and advice. He gets rid of illness by ' *jhara phukna* ', blowing it away; as the sun is setting and again as it is rising he, to the accompaniment of long spells (*guni*), pretends to B24 charm a patient's illness by brushing it with a spray of leaves of *amaltas* (*Cassia fistula*), a tree with various magic uses, down from the head or the affected part to the toes, where he blows it away. The spells consist mainly of long lists of godlings; here are three specimens acquired from Telami Dhurwa, a *waddai* of Dhurli in Dantewara tahsil :—

(*a*) ' *Haranjuvo, Jurjapo, Panduvo-Parokhanda, Kosurabir, Bhumandra, Modarabir, Kosrapitho, Lonkjugo, Pa'inpaye, Hurrumara, Ligoni, Munsputali, Munj-huvo, Wirsputali, Bhimaraj, Karanja-putali, Karwaraj, Rupkhanda, Jangabela, Mudara, Yerhama, Akalkuvo, Mandkola, Wormar, Yekanath, Nai-taras, Mor-khanda, Nstur-khanda, Gurrakom, Gópanath, Gurja ! Widse him.*'

This is just a catalogue of names said to be of godlings, but almost all of them unknown even to Telami Dhurwa, and ending with the adjuration ' *Widse him* ' or ' Let it go ! ', after saying which the *waddai* lets out a puff of breath from his mouth.

(*b*) ' *Dhanbenu, Arra-barra, Thakur Deo, Unasha'i, Chhewatin, Dhobin, Chandarin, Bhandarin ! Hat ke bandh* (close the hands), *tónd ke bandh* (close the mouth), *kan ke bandh* (close the ears) ! *Guru, bandh !* (Close, oh Guru) *Gwta, Tolisar ! Rukh-cho rukh-jat, ban-cho ban-jat, dongur-cho dongur jat !* (literally, " Of trees, tree-kind, of forest forest-kind, of ant-hill ant-hill-kind ! ") *Kud-mon bhed-mon ilis* (You came by enmity) *Pongon mon ilis* (You came by witchcraft), *par bahare udun-ja* (but get out !).'

This is a Halbi formula, starting with names of godlings, telling them to close the hands, mouth and ears of the illness, and then ordering the illnesses of tree, forests and ant-hill to get out, whether they came through enmity or witchcraft.

(*c*) ' *Chinoni, Bisrama, Boyoni, Polago, Nangago, Idulo, Tulwala, Kowalnago, Irpadmo, Wano-Poriya, Koyondo-Hunga, Ar-Iriya, Podemala, Ar-bunga, Deo-nanda, Hurbura, Nur-Guru, Path-guru, Path-chola, Gurujan !* '

This is a meaningless jingle of words, mostly names of godlings or demons (*rau*).

000 I have not attempted here to speak of the various magico-religious ceremonies, for their magical aspect is commented on when the ceremonies themselves are described under agriculture, religion or other subjects.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

C. *Omens*

We have seen how the addling of the eggs of the *kasyeq-gaita's* hens may lead to the abandonment of a village site[1]; how the siting of a new Bison-horn village is affected by the finding of roots or stones when the *perma* digs a hole for the first *saja* post, and how even when these omens have allowed the hole to be dug, they have further to be confirmed by the villagers waiting till the next day to see whether two heaps of rice have been disturbed[2]; and how before the ceremonial *weta* hunts of the Bison-horn Marias begin, the *perma* consults the omens with two split pieces of a tooth-stick.[3] The Bison-horn Maria often calls in the *waddai* to examine the omens and fix auspicious days for sowing or other occasions. Omens are particularly important in connexion with betrothals and weddings, but among Bison-horn Marias only; the Hill Marias, except those living in contact with the Bison-horn Marias, seem not to worry over them, and in fact to be ignorant of the whole practice. But the Bison-horn Maria likes everything done on an auspicious day, and then only if no adverse omen is met. Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 78) write:—

> 'In Bastar an omen is taken before the wedding. The village elders meet on an auspicious day as Monday, Thursday or Friday, and after midnight they cook and eat food, and go out into the forest. They look for a small black bird called Usi, from which omens are commonly taken. When anybody sees this bird, if it cries "*Sus, Sus*" on the right hand, it is thought that the marriage will be lucky. If, however, it cries "*Chi, Chi*", or "*Fis, Fis*", the proposed match is held to be of evil omen, and is cancelled. The Koya Gonds of Bastar distil mahua liquor before arranging for a match. If the liquor is good, they think the marriage will be lucky, and take the liquor with them to cement the betrothal; but if it is bad they think the marriage will be unlucky, and the proposal is dropped.'

The *usi* bird is a common source of omens; the Marias of the Kutru zamindari below the Abujhmar hills, who are really Hill Marias influenced greatly by contact with Bison-horn Marias and Teluguised Dorlas, when they select a new *modul wadde* as clan-priest and social arbiter, consult the omens before confirming their selection; they go to the forest, and if they hear an *usi* twittering on their left as they go and on their right as they return, consider that the omens favour their selection, but make a fresh selection if the bird twitters on the other sides. Among Bison-horn Marias the *usi* is not the usual source of marriage omens; if the party on its way to ask for a girl's hand in marriage meets a tiger, panther, sambhur, chital, jackal or snake crossing their path from left to right, it is a good omen; if it crosses the path from right to left, the omen is bad, but merely shows that the expedition has started on a bad day and must

[1] See p. 103. [2] See pp. 122-3. [3] See p. 211.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. *Beliefs about Natural Phenomena*

To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-wil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garhar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

836 II. His sister married Gecha Harma of Udala Tondawada, and at the wedding he met Harma's sister Gecha Kowe, and danced with her. They liked each other, and met at other weddings and at koqsar dances, and had sexual intercourse two or three times, which Moda said was necessary in order to ascertain that they were both physically capable. Everyone saw that they were in love, and their wedding followed as soon as the necessary betrothal ceremonies could be completed. But if pre-marital intercourse results in pregnancy, there can be no formal marriage, which the Hill Marias call *marmi* and the Bison-horn *pendul*; the girl states the name of the man responsible, and goes to live in his house without any ceremony, the union being described as *ottur* ('taken away'). A child born to a girl without even *ottur* would be considered as belonging to the clan of the man whom the mother names as the father; and this putative father would be expected to take the mother and child to his house, the union being known to the Hill Marias as *ahene-hattu* ('thus-went'). No stigma attaches to such unions, and the children have exactly the same position and rights as the children of a formal marriage.

588 848

584 Hill Maria parents do not try to interfere in their children's choice of wives and husbands. When a youth and his girl know their minds, each tells his or her parents. Then the youth's parents, with the elders of the village, go, without the youth, with about a rupee's worth of *mahua* spirit (or five bottles) to the girl's parents, taking care to arrive at their house at about four or five o'clock in the afternoon. The father of the youth opens the door of the girl's house, places the liquor bottles inside the threshold and rejoins his party, all of whom sit silent outside the door. The girl's parents then call in some of the elders of their village, and in their presence tell the girl that this liquor has been brought on her account, and ask her if she is willing to go and live with the youth in the village from which the liquor has come. If the girl agrees, the liquor is at once drunk by the parties from the two villages, and the girl's parents entertain the visiting party to supper; if she refuses, the youth's parents take the liquor back to their village. This ceremony is called *talq-da'ina* ('going to ask'). It may take place on any day of the year, Hill Marias recking nothing of auspicious days or omens.

Hill Maria regular betrothal and marriage

● [787]

There is a second *talq-da'ina*, generally after an interval of about a year; it sometimes takes place sooner, but it is considered bad form to be too importunate. The youth does not go with his parents even this time; he does not, indeed, meet his betrothed between the first *talq-da'ina* and marriage, as, once a girl's hand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

584 contract; they therefore attach less importance to the consent of the girl, and even if a father or his son agree to the *gudapal* girl marrying some other husband, the latter has to compensate the *gudapal* cousin. If a girl's father raises objections to the proposed match, whether a *gudapal* match or not, bitter quarrels often follow; but generally the boy and girl have learnt their own minds before this first formal demand for the girl (*talpana* in the Bison-horn dialect), or there has been previous informal discussion between the two families. Normally, therefore, the youth and girl both being mature, the girl's father gladly agrees to give his girl, and then the youth's father gives him the *paili* of rice and the large and the small pots of *mahua* liquor. The girl's father takes the small pot into [769] the *narma-lon* room of his house, and pours a small quantity on the ground in front of the Pot of the Departed as a libation, the rest being drunk by him and the members of his family. The liquor in the large pot is divided among the relatives and friends of both families who have come to witness the *talpana*, and all disperse except the youth's father and his companions; the rice which he has brought is cooked and served to them and the girl's family. Her father then invites the youth's father to come again for the formal declaration of the betrothal to all his relatives and friends from near and far. The visitors then return to their village.

Some time later the father of the youth in consultation with [797] his friends, and often with the aid of a medium, fixes a day for this second visit, and sends word to the girl's father in good time for him to invite all his relatives and friends. This time he and his party take with them a small pig, two *paili* of rice, a very large pot of *landa* and a large and a small pot of *mahua* spirit. On arrival at the girl's house they are greeted by her father and the assembled guests, and the former announces the betrothal to the company and asks for their formal approval. This given, the girl's father as [769] before pours a libation to the Departed from the small pot of *mahua*, and he and his household drink the rest of its contents. The large pots of *landa* and *mahua* spirit are consumed by all the assembled guests, *barbatti* beans being fried by the girl's mother and served along with the *landa*; and the rice and pork are cooked and served to all present. All then go.

Yet a third preliminary visit to the girl's father follows, the date being arranged as before by the youth's father, and word being sent to the girl's father. This time the former and his party take and deliver to the latter two large pots of *landa*, two large and one small pots of *mahua* spirit, five *paili* of rice or *kutki*, and a large pig. The youth's father tells the girl's father that he intends to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

763 for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

764 When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the [533] mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *uraskal*.

• [781 On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion 761] remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *uraskal* menhir. There are *uraskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs.[4] On the Jagdalpur side, however, and [778] around Paknar, though every village has its *uraskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kutki*, *urad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of 764 *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at 177 weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. 554 The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[4] [See cat. 116, p. 426. — Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *bauhinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bhimul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

844 seat above it. Near by he drives the arrow or knife into the ground. He brings a pot of water and puts it inside the hut ; should the water [787] decrease of its own accord it is regarded as a very bad omen and the child is expected to die. This hut is now used constantly by the mother who comes five or six times a day to bathe herself and the baby. She always takes water from the pot kept inside the enclosure and it is refilled each time with warm water heated elsewhere. The mother regularly pours warm water over the child's umbilical stump, for so long as it does not drop off she is in a state of taboo and can do no work.

In some villages the placenta is buried under a *bassia latifolia* tree and a large stone is placed above, ' for this tree does every kind of work for us '. Very small babies are sometimes buried in the same place so that they can suck the milky sap.

When the stump falls off, it is buried in the placenta-pit ; should it be dug up and eaten, for example, by a dog, the child would cease suckling and die. After a year has passed the Perma comes to offer compensation of a fowl and rice-beer to the Earth Mother because they have offended her by burying the placenta and cord in the ground.

846 Once the stump has dropped the mother is free of the restrictions on her and when she feels ready—' when her body is dry and 852 clean '—she has a final bath, cowdungs the house and begins to cook and live normally again. The father shaves the child's head. The mother herself destroys the little bathing-hut. The father smears the arrow with oil and puts it in the roof of the house. When a boy grows up it is shown to him and he can use it for hunting, though no special virtue seems to attach to it.

852 On the day of the mother's ceremonial entry into the house, there is a little feast, cooked by the woman herself, on the veranda. 553 The Perma and a few neighbours are invited and they have a pot of rice-beer. Before they drink, each of the visitors dips his finger into it and gives it to the child to suck. The mother presents oil and a ring to each of the women who helped her and to the Waddai and Perma. The child is often, though not always, named on this occasion. A chicken is dedicated by being fed on rice and is set free. A year later it is sacrificed and a bit of the liver is given to the child. If a baby cries continually it is supposed that it has been given the wrong name and the Waddai renames it and dedicates another chicken. In Gadapal I was told that if the gods disapprove a child's name, they send Hidmaraj to make it itch and Markaraj to make it cry.

845 The Marias do not seem to have made up their minds about twins. One village thinks them lucky, another disastrous. There

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Little boys practise the bison-horn dance with head-dresses made of bamboo rings which have bamboo 'horns' sticking up in front and at the back a spike ornamented with feathers. They beat their stomachs or use bits of wood instead of drums.

Page 189, *line* 31. But I found everywhere that both kinds of Marias were also accustomed to use the fire-drill. The fire-saw of the Hill Marias can easily be worked by two men; there is no difference between it and the Baiga or Juang saw, which is always handled by two persons.

When Bison-horn Marias go to fire their clearings, they should as far as possible approach them with their faces towards the east. The Perma and Gaita break two small branches, the Perma a dry and the Gaita a green or 'living' branch, and drive them into the ground. They light these with a burning log from the Hearth of the Departed in one or other of their houses. If both branches burn well, it is a sign that the clearing also will burn properly; but if one burns and the other does not, it means that the clearing will only burn in patches and will thus be insufficiently manured. Special offerings must then be made.

Page 225, *line* 9; *page* 278, *line* 25. In one village—but only one—at Mokhpal, I found scepticism about the tradition that the menhirs grow in size. Here the Bison-horn Marias laughed at the idea and said that, if—for example—a stone grew smaller, it was probably because the ground was damp and it sank down.

Page 225, *line* 11. The Bison-horn Marias believe that the Dead are reborn, if at all, in their own homes; they generally deny that they ever reappear as animals. Yet an animal may be born in, or have a powerful influence over, a human being. A girl at Mokhpal was born with the left side of her face covered with a sort of fur; the Marias said that an ancestor who was killed by a bear had been reborn in the child. As a result the wearing of dancing-masks covered with bear-fur has been abandoned, for fear that the wearers should be affected in some future birth. A man killed by a tiger may reappear in one of his descendants with marks of the claws on the neck. It may be that to people who live so near to nature rebirth in animal form does not seem specially distasteful. Marias and Murias live close to their animals and love them. At Lakhopal there is a small menhir in memory of a faithful dog.

Page 227, *line* 12. In 1939, Soma Ganda-Maria of Gomagal killed a man, who had seduced his wife, in the most brutal manner by squeezing his testicles till they burst. He then seized his penis saying, 'It was with this that you copulated with my wife,' and tore the skin from it. Finally he throttled him. Anyone who

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

538 not far distant from the Abujhmar. The Kuruk stories are almost certainly current also among the Bison-horn Maria. Two of the five specifically Bison-horn Maria tales, like one of the two Maria tales, are about monkeys. The first describes a helpful monkey which is treated with great ingratitude by human beings; in the second—as in Grigson's tale—a monkey marries a human girl and does not make a very great success of the union. In neither case, however, is there any reference to the dispareunia which the Baigas delight to emphasize in stories of the 'Beast Marriage' type. Two of the other tales, 'The Magic Eyes' and 'The Loving Ghost' are exceptionally charming and, while full of conventional folk-lore clichés, strike a note of some originality. In my *Myths of Middle India*, I give Bison-horn Maria legends of the creation of the world, the making of the sun and moon, the origin of fire and several stories of the Vagina Dentata cycle.

Page 280, *line* 34. In the country round Gidam and Barsur, 178 many clans that follow the megalithic tradition elsewhere have abandoned the practice of erecting menhirs, though the Barse, Kalmu and Kunjami clans continue it and erected twenty-six menhirs within the limits of the Gidam Revenue Circle in the years 1938-42. In the Jagdalpur tahsil, though the custom is less well maintained here than elsewhere, the Poyami, Vetti, Bekor, Kuharami, Marvi Padami and Muchaki at least continue to erect *uraskal* stones. Near Jagdalpur, however, and in the neighbourhood of Paknar, there has been some falling off of the practice.

Whatever may be the reason for the abandonment of megalithic customs—and I am rather sceptical about the influence of the Hindu taboo on beef-eating—certain clans have been affected by the warnings of their priests. In Vagriguda, for example, a village in the heart of an area where these customs flourish undisturbed, no menhirs are erected now because once when the village was overwhelmed by an epidemic, the Siraha declared that it was because the Village Mother was annoyed at the practice. The ●[187] Telami clan have abandoned the practice in the Dhurli area because once when they were quarrying a stone to serve as a menhir, a snake wriggled out of the crack, and this was taken as a sign of the divine displeasure. I believe that many culture changes in India are not due to the spread of civilization but are caused by incidents like these.

Page 281, *line* 24. The upper stone is called *danya-kal* and its 000 supports *odiyal*. In the Kutru zamindari, the Akri clan calls the upper stone *gariyakal*. The Chudala Marvi clan erects both *uraskal* and *danyakal* stones throughout the Konta tahsil and in such villages as Gogonda, Mankapal and Koya Vekur. So do the

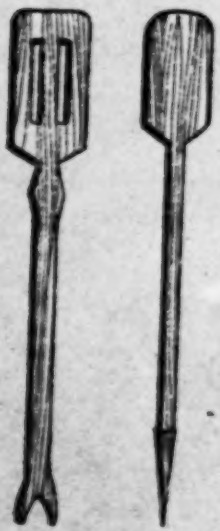
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

241 When this is done and the ground is cooled, the bullocks are brought and chelik and motiari with their ploughs drive the ashes deep into the soil.

The plough is 'the lizard that runs into its hole in the dry tree': it has 'three heads and ten legs': the cowhide reins of the oxen are described as 'the dead bullocks that go before a living man'.

[796] Before the seed can be sown, the Wijja Pandum must be celebrated. This festival, which is preceded by a ceremonial hunt, is held at any time from April to June. Essential to the festival, one version of which I describe in detail in Chapter VII, is the hunt which foretells the success or [787] failure of the crops, the feast on the animals killed, and the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the seed—some of which is taken away by every householder. In some villages, at the end of the ceremonies, the chelik roll the Gaita in mud from an ant-hill.

The night before the actual sowing, which is sometimes fixed when new leaf-shoots appear on the bhoir tree, all the men again sleep in the ghotul and the motiari stay at home to ensure chastity and thus avoid any possible infection of menstrual blood. On their way to the fields in the morning, they put a small heap of seed at any cross-roads they pass. Each householder has a leaf-cup of the seed that was consecrated with blood at the Wijja Pandum, and sows this after the Gaita has sacrificed a chicken in his field.



417 Fig. 2. *Dayi* wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking. Length 1′ 9″

The Muria, unlike the Hill Maria, sows different kinds of seed in different places, but like the Hill Maria he sows them at different times. In the west and central areas there are three main sowings.

The first sowing, immediately after the first rains, is of small millets—*turo kokala* or *kosra*, *kiltusa* and *mandia*. *Rahar dāl* is sown with the *mandia*. Gourds and pumpkins are sown at the same time.

The next sowing is in early July of rice, *kuthi* and *urad dāl* as well as beans.

The last sowing, of what is called *os kosra*, is done in August, though not on ground that has already been used that year. Rice is again sown and *mung* and *kulthi* pulses.

Before the actual sowing of the seed, the Muria prepare their fences, and the field-huts and watching-platforms for the guarding of their crops. The fences are not, of course, as in civilised areas, to keep out their fellow-men but to protect the crops against wild animals: bison and deer are plentiful in north Bastar, especially in the Makri area, and can do much damage to the fields.

There are many kinds of fencing. Sometimes there is none at all; in the jungle clearings a line of poles is enough, in the permanent fields the embankments make a clear division. Sometimes a strong *gawao* stockade is made by placing hundreds of logs upright in the ground. Fences of bamboo wattle are also made.

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Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *ongrām*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats.

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongara* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hāyna mānjhi*).

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachār*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

FIG. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

224 796 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be ●787 found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonla rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 796 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khamma Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every [782] three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate.

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 841 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt. As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

full figure and the child is 'fine as a young tiger'. The Hare Birth, however, occurs after only eighteen months, and the child is weak and sickly. The Frog Birth, after twelve months, is also bad for the child. In the Lizard Birth, when the child resembles a lizard, there is an interval of three years, but the mother is herself weak and her breasts secrete insufficient nourishment. 843 844

When a girl suffers from menorrhagia she has a Green Lizard Birth, and the child is weak, but the offspring of Mother Birth, when the period begins and ends punctually, is vigorous.

Once the mother is pregnant she is subject to the usual routine and taboos, though generally I think an increase of restrictions at this time is due to Hindu influence.[1] The Muria woman's movements are not greatly controlled, but she must not climb a tree and should stay indoors during an eclipse. She must be very careful not to steal anything; if she takes bread, she will bear a male child with his ear bent over; if she steals haldi, garlic, or ginger, the child will be born with six fingers. In one village my wife was recommended to tie a mango in her sari; then, when she had a child, it would never be ill, 'even its nose wouldn't run'. But it is dangerous to eat a mango, for it may cause abortion. 843

The husband is also subject to taboos. He must not cross the blooded path of a hunted and wounded animal. He has to eat separately at festivals. Neither he nor his wife may eat the head or legs of any animal killed for sacrifice or in a ceremonial hunt.

The scene of birth is generally on the verandah or in a cattle-shed. A child must not be delivered in the kitchen or the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept. There are no professional midwives and assistance is given by the women of the family and sometimes by the Gaita's wife. Few precautions are taken. The mother is given ordinary food and often begins to work on the third day. 844

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife in a few villages (in Temrugaon, for example), but more generally with an arrow-head, whether the child be a boy or girl, by the mother, sister, elder brother's wife or Gaita's wife.

The placenta is wrapped in a siari leaf and buried in a pit behind the house, and a small screen of branches is erected round it. Until the umbilical stump falls off, this pit is not filled in; it is covered with a stone or a wooden seat on which the mother sits to bathe once or twice a day for about six weeks. During this period, she must not go into the house but must stay on the verandah. The digging-stick with which the pit was dug and the arrow with which the cord was cut are driven into the ground beside the pit. A pot of water is kept near by. When the stump falls, they throw it into the pit and fill it up with rubbish and earth. When the mother stops bathing and resumes her ordinary domestic duties, they wash the digging-stick and arrow, offer liquor and apply haldi to them. The stick is put back in the house, and the arrow is stuck into the roof or given away. It is not regarded as having any special significance or value after its work is done. 844 787

If the 'signs' of a tiger or a snake appear in the soil above the buried placenta, the child is expected to be killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. Should the water in the pot leak out of its own accord, the child will meet its death by drowning. A strangulating umbilical cord suggests that the child will die by hanging, either in jail or through suicide.

[1] Compare with the very simple Maria tradition the elaborate regulations of the more sophisticated tribesmen of the Central Provinces described in my article, 'Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills', *JASB*, Vol. IX (1943), pp. 99–148.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

841 515 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria [842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?' In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their [833] lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

841 522 When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

841 787 As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

841 776 Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendrawandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FIVE

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

I. Betrothal

584 THE next critical moment in the life of a Muria is the betrothal. This may be done at any age, before puberty or after it, but it is generally arranged later rather than sooner. It is followed, after a number of years, by the marriage, which is still nearly everywhere adult.

I propose to give in this chapter an account of the ceremonies of betrothal and marriage so that our picture of the course of Muria life may be complete, but I will reserve a discussion of the broader aspects of marriage to Part Two of the book so that they can be considered, where they ought to be considered, in relation to the ghotul.

The betrothal ceremony is called in Gondi *pungār mikchna*, the 'plucking of the flower', *pungār kurhi*, 'looking at the flower' and *talk dēyna*, 'going to beg'. These expressions indicate the chief features of the ceremony: the boy's parents make two or even three visits to the house of the future bride, the 'flower' whom the boy will pick and put in his turban.

On the first occasion, before setting out, the boy's father offers liquor in siari leaf-cups to the Departed, one for the boy, one for the girl and one for the Departed themselves. They wait for a time, and if they find one of the leaves has fallen or curled up, they take it that the omens are unfavourable, and either abandon the project or postpone it. In fact, this is the time when the greatest attention is paid to omens.

584 Muria omens are specially important before an engagement, on the way to the forest for a hunt and before setting out on a journey. These
● 787 'symbols of the future seen in the present'[1] do not influence events, but declare what is about to happen. If the members of a betrothal party see a bad omen on the way they return home because they know it will be a sheer waste of time to proceed; their visit simply cannot be successful.

787 It is through animals especially that the Departed and clan-ancestors warn or encourage the living about the future. 'The Departed', they said at Palli, 'speak through animals telling us to go or not to go.' On a ceremonial hunt, if one of the party fails in some ritual duty to the dead, an offended ancestor may take the form of an animal and attack him as a warning.

Muria omens can be divided quite simply into good and bad.

GOOD OMENS

An usir bird cries *sing-sing* on the left.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the left, saying 'Go, go, your business will succeed'.

A jackal going from left to right. 'The left side is regarded as a centre of greater vitality than the right. Hence the jackal going from left to right means that the animal is going away from the life centre, and thus that a death symbol is being removed.'[2]

A monkey cries *hoop-hoop*. It might be supposed that it was the reference to Hanuman and the sacred monkeys that made this lucky

[1] W. G. Archer, *The Blue Grove* (London, 1940), p. 159. [2] Ibid., p. 161.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

but for the fact that the omen can also be bad. If the members of a betrothal party hear a monkey cough, they return home. 787

A tiger or leopard. A symbol of power.

A mango tree. This is lucky because mango leaves are used to decorate the marriage-booth.

A bear. Another symbol of power. The bear is generally looked on as very potent, and its male member is used as an aphrodisiac. [832]

A blue sambhar.

A woman carrying a full pot—though in some villages it is thought unlucky to see any kind of pot.

When a sparrow says *pihik pihik* it means the carriers of officials on tour are coming; if it says *pichu pichu*, it means they are going somewhere else and all is well.

BAD OMENS

An usir bird crying *kichir-kichir* on the right.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the right, saying '*Kiddarr*, don't go, don't go'.

A crow crying *kaw kaw*, eat, eat! Its tail points towards something dead for the vultures to eat.

A snake across the path. A very natural warning of danger.

A woman carrying an empty pot or going to the river with a bundle of dirty clothes.

Anyone throwing away ashes or rubbish.

A plantain tree, for its leaves are placed on a bier and in a grave.

A peacock.

A mongoose.

A rat.

A lizard. If one crosses your path, you should catch it and burn it to ashes.

In some villages, a cat.

A hare.

Thursday and Saturday are unlucky days, on which important work should not be started.

If the omens are favourable, the father of the bridegroom, with two or three relatives carrying several bottles of the best liquor, set out for the bride's house. When they reach their destination they sit down in the court, and presently the girl's father says, 'Have you come on any business?' They answer, 'We hear that a flower has blossomed in your house; we have come to pluck it'. 'Why do you want to pluck it?' asks the girl's father. 'So that we may stick it in our hair.' 'Have you seen the omens on the way?' asks the girl's father. 'Yes, and they were good to us.'[1] 584

If the parents are willing they now usually ask the girl her opinion. If she refuses, they tell the visitors that the flower is not for plucking, but if she

[1] W. G. Archer has made a careful study of these symbolic dialogues during marriage negotiations (*op. cit.*, pp. 147ff and *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 147ff.). The flower symbolism does not seem to be used by the Uraon, but Russell and Hiralal notice it for the Kond (*op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 467f) and give some charming sentences used by the Turi. 'I hear that a sweet-scented flower has blossomed in your house and I have come to gather it.' To which the bride's father may reply, 'You may take my flower, if you will not throw it away when its sweet scent is gone'. (*Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 590.) The same symbolism is known to the Kharia and I have recorded its use among the Bison-horn Maria, the Kawar and the Dhurwa in Bastar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Sai le le bo bo bo! Sai le le bo bo bo!

585
539

O young darling, whence have you come,
Have you come for the play of love,
With an ox-goad under the mango tree?
Why have you come, big-breasted love?
I will catch you and enjoy you.
Saikobai, why have you come?
Your pubic hairs are like a shrub in Amgaon.
We were yoked together in the ghotul.
Now you are going, and I bid you farewell.
Now you are leaving the ever-thrilling ghotul.
I took you under the pipal tree and shook you to and fro.
By the ant-hill I tumbled you.
Your ghotul lover has come for you,
But no longer are you there to welcome him.

Taking the Omens

585
787

Now the final omens must be taken. The Gaita placed an earthen pot full of water on the verandah of the headman's house, and dropped grains of rice two by two into it. For a successful marriage the grains must meet tip to tip. If they meet crosswise, there will be quarrels; if they both sink, the married pair will die together in a year; if they do not meet at all, the girl will elope with someone else. On this occasion, the two grains sank to the bottom, and the headman sent round an inquiry whether any of the near relatives of the bride had just begun to menstruate—a calamity which had previously been known to disturb the omens. At about the same time the bridegroom fell into a trance, twitching, shivering, stretching himself and then falling inert to the ground. Apparently none of the women were in the tabooed condition and the bridegroom's mother—a managing woman with an enormous bun of hair on the top of her head which caused some to regard her as an incarnation of the Hindu god Mahadeo—thought quite obviously that it was I with my camera who was causing all the trouble, but did not like to say so. After a time, however, when the Gaita had made some extravagant promises to the gods, the boy recovered and the rice grains floated round and hit each other most properly tip to tip.

Filling the Kalsa

585
831

The little kalsa-pitcher, which is to be placed by the mahua tree in the marriage-booth, must be filled with rice. The motiari put a basket before the bride. They place the pot inside and fill the bride's hands with rice, covering them with a cloth. Several of them catch hold of her hands and move them up and down above the kalsa, singing *Rolo*, until all the rice has fallen into the pot. When the pot is full the motiari stand up with a loud cry of *Soto!* (penis).

Songs

1

Nandi kute dotda kurka khilla kotda.	The reeds grow by the river, where the old bear lies.
Killa jilla kotda dulli le kotda.	With whom is he lying? He's lying with the bride.

585
539
831

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Angār mute rāni ra.	Angar Mute is the Rani.
Yer mōyuṭṭi kilandu ra.	Weeping, she is bathing in the water.
Jhāro jhāro kilandu ra.	As she weeps the tears fall.
Pilāmaro dhoti ra!	O her silken cloth!
Dhoti tune kurandu ra.	She looks at her cloth.
Tōna dudong ātska ra?	How can we describe her breasts?
Mākha kāyáng dudo ra.	Her breasts are as the bel fruit.
Ghāṭum tikeda wōndung ra.	From the bathing-place she is coming home.
Lonz tike kandung ra	In the house
Mul gathe māta ra	There are so many relatives
Suju buju kile ra.	That we cannot count them.

The rest of the song describes Angar Mute's court, to which comes the Pargana Manjhi with small legs, his spear over his shoulder, a big-bellied Kotwar and many other officials. The Manjhi delivers judgement, giving a hundred rupees to the Raja and only a pair of bullocks for the Muria. 'One of the bullocks had no tail, the other had no horns.' Then the chelik and motiari who have escorted the corpse to the burial ground are described. There are sixty boys led by Kosi Leyur and sixty girls led by Gara Karre Mode, the Belosa of the ghotul, whose vagina is sixteen cubits long and whose pubic hairs are five cubits long. 'A jungle boar could roll in her vagina.' The boys break her bangles and push the pieces into her navel with a *jharar jharar* noise.

All this, which seems merely coarse to us, is exceedingly amusing to the Muria; the song is really a comic effort intended to relieve the tension of the funeral now that the main rites are done.

VI. Divining the Cause of Death

It is always important at a funeral to discover the cause of so monstrous and unnatural a thing as death. At Binjhli, when magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the Siraha medium recites a string of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty man is mentioned, the bier moves forward violently of its own accord. This method, which resembles the use of an Anga clan-god for divination, is common throughout the State, and Grigson has recorded a similar, though more elaborate, rite in use among the Hill Maria.[1]

At Kehalakot, the Muria remove some locks of the dead man's hair and a little earth from beneath his head. They make a small flag-pole with the hair and the earth and a saja leaf stuck on an ebony stick. They take this to the jungle and a boy holds it while the Siraha recites the names of any suspected causes or people. When the right word is uttered, the flag is said to quiver. At Kokori the villagers go to the boundary and put five heaps of rice in a row, one for Mahapurub, one for witchcraft, one for Mother Earth, one for the ancestors of the house, and one for any local godling who may have been troublesome. The people sit some distance away, and spend the time having their hair done by their relatives-in-law. Presently a crow flies down and pecks at one or other of the piles of rice, thus revealing the cause of death.

The *thumbdari* divination is done with chickens on the second or third day after death. One chicken is taken from the house of the dead and one from

[1] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

761 the house of a samdhi. The chickens are exchanged so that a representative
of the dead person's house holds the samdhi's chicken and vice versa. The
●787 usual piles of rice are made and the chickens held before them while a string
of names is recited. When the chickens peck at the rice, it is believed that
they have revealed the cause of death. The chickens are then sacrificed and
cooked with the rice on the spot.

It is commonly believed all over India, as by the Muria, that the way the smoke rises from the funeral pyre indicates the sort of death the deceased has suffered. If the smoke goes straight up, it indicates a natural death; if it goes crooked, it proclaims the hand of witchcraft.

VII. 'Bringing Back the Soul'

769 The curious rite of 'bringing back the soul' is known to the Hill Maria and the Bison-horn Maria, but is most common among the Muria who practise it in many different forms. Since this rite is performed throughout the Central Provinces, and since some of these Muria probably represent an ancient migration from the north into Bastar, it is not surprising that we should find this cultural link between them.[1]

It is rather difficult to describe the rites because of the bewildering variety of detail to be discovered from village to village, but it is possible to get a fairly clear picture of the main outlines.

After death, on the following day or at any time up to three years, when there is sufficient provision in the house, the relations of the dead man are summoned for a feast. Sometimes the relations are warned by a dream that the spirit of the dead is dissatisfied and that they must do something to comfort and honour him.

The people assemble, both *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relatives, and enjoy a feast in the dead man's house. The next morning they go singing, both men and women, attended by chelik and motiari with their drums and cymbals to the nearest tank or river. In some villages a samdhi makes a small booth on the bank; nine reeds are planted in the ground, mango leaves tied to them and a string run round them seven times. On the top he puts a small mat and on the ground he makes a circle with red and black powder and places an egg in the middle in the name of the Yer Kanyang (the Water Maiden). The Gaita then puts three rings of aonra fibre in the circle and an earthen pot filled with water.

[1] Accounts of bringing back the soul have been given for several tribes by Russell and Hiralal, for the Gond (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 94), Ahir (III, p. 28), Halba (III, p. 195), Kharia (III, p. 450), Kond (III, p. 469), Lohar (IV, p. 124), and Taonia (IV, 341). The practice is probably common to all the tribes in the Central Provinces. It is said that the Gond once buried their dead inside the house in order to ensure re-birth within the family; possibly 'bringing back the soul' has a similar purpose. The Gond customs recorded by Russell and Hiralal resemble those of the Muria. Others, however, differ. For example, the Kharia bring back the soul of the dead by attracting it at night to a lamp placed at a cross-roads. They sit near the lamp calling on the dead man and when the flame wavers in the wind, they break the lamp saying that the soul has returned to them. The Kond are said to have brought home the soul riding on a bow-stick covered with cloth. The Lohar have a custom, which I have myself noted for the Pando of east Bilaspur. Rice-flour is spread on the floor of the kitchen and covered with a brass plate. The mourners go to the village boundary, again spread flour on the ground, call on the dead to come and wait till some worm or insect crawls on to the flour. They catch the creature with a pinch of dough and carry it home and let it loose in the house. The flour under the brass plate is scrutinised and it is said that usually the foot-prints of a man or animal are found; this indicates the body of the man or beast to which the soul has passed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rupee to purchase rings in the bazaar. The Hichami Gaita then dug the hole and they put a saja leaf in the bottom and the stone above it. Soon afterwards a second stone was brought for Birju's mother and this was placed separately, for it is the rule that the memorials for men and women should not usually be together, though this rule, like all rules, is often broken. They bathed the stones and put a *gappa* basket with roots and rice in front of the woman's stone and a dish in front of the man's. Everyone present put a mark of oil and haldi on the stones, just as they might have done at a marriage to the bride and bridegroom. They returned home and sacrificed a bullock and tied the tail to the old man's menhir. On this occasion the souls of the deceased were brought back to the Hanalkot, which stands in the village itself. 769

The cow or bullock is often chosen by old people while they are still alive. Widows, who may reasonably expect to be neglected, are insistent on dedicating such an animal.

XII. General Ideas about the Menhirs

There is a universal belief that the memorial stones grow in size if the soul of the dead is satisfied with the arrangements that are made for him. I have on several occasions spoken to the Muria of the north (who erect very much smaller stones than the Maria of the south) about the great *uraskal* of the Bison-horn Maria. They invariably reply, 'But, of course, these stones are very old and they have grown; they could never have put up such big ones'. They believe that even the small stones of the north will grow in time. Kodu, the very intelligent Malguzar of Khutgaon in the extreme north of the State, told me that in the past twenty years he has definitely seen the stones grow in size. A very small stone is put for a baby and it is believed that it will grow gradually until it has reached the size it should have been had it been placed for a man of twenty.

When a stone grows it is considered fortunate. There is sure to be happiness and good luck for the family. If a stone falls down or goes crooked, the relatives consult the Siraha and then put it straight and offer whatever sacrifices he has recommended. It is generally supposed that when a stone falls, it is an indication that the ghost of the dead is angry or feels neglected. In some places, the collapse of a menhir is regarded as prophetic of disaster, and generally should white ants make a nest over the stone it is considered a bad omen. But in some places there is a belief that there is no need to worry about this after twenty years have passed. After twenty years the Hanal has become completely mingled with his ancestors and no longer exists as a separate entity. When an old stone falls down, therefore, the Muria perform no ceremonies and leave it where it is. [187]

XIII. The Hanal Pata

It is very difficult to persuade the Muria to repeat the songs connected with death at any but the proper time. This is quite natural, for there is to all simple minds something dark and ominous about talking of the dead. I did not find a Hill or Bison-horn Maria who was willing to repeat a single song. It has only been among the more open-hearted and friendly Muria that I have been able to get a few songs, mostly in Gondi, which are used during a funeral and at the time of erecting a menhir. I have already given the funeral songs; I will now quote a few songs used at the later ceremonies. 533 761 769

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

opposite direction. Once I had made an offering of silver to the god, however, they became very friendly and I was able to witness all that happened

Carried by four men, and accompanied by the village elders, the Anga Deo was carried from house to house round the village. The god stopped before each house, and the women had to come out with an offering of a leaf-cup of rice and a copper coin, and walk under the god and away the other side. If all was well the Dhurwa placed a ring of aonra leaf on the threshold and a bit of iron slag and hammered it with an axe.

But in two houses the Anga scented trouble; he refused to accept the offerings of the householders, swinging round indignantly, then rushing to and fro, whirling and turning in an alarming manner. He pointed out an old man and woman in one house, and the householder in another as specially affected by the evil. The priests hastily poured liquor in front of the god 'for he becomes thirsty when there is some mischief in his presence'.

At last they took the Anga back to his hut outside the village and everybody sat round to discuss what had happened and to consider what was to be done. On this occasion the mediums proclaimed that it was not a magician or witch, but a number of deities affronted at not receiving sufficient honour—Pendrawandin, Pardeshin, Koriya Pat, Garba Rau and the local ancestors—who were causing the trouble. That day and the next day were spent in sacrifice to the Anga and divinations by the local mediums. On the morning of the third day diagnosis having been fully established, they went to effect a cure.

The bearers carried the Anga to the first house which had been shown as 'infected'. They stood before the door and a Siraha-medium sat down before it. The god 'climbed' on him and he revealed what things were needed to appease the angry gods. He made two little images of black wax to represent the *kus* digging-bar of Koriya Pat and the axe of Pendrawandin. The owner of the house brought out a basket of rice and many little leaf-packets of parched gram, rice, lamp-black, rice-flour, haldi. The medium danced and postured before the god, and the Dhurwa took two chickens for the Rau, a pig for Pendrawandin, and a goat for Koriya Pat and made them eat a little rice. Each householder present put a rice-mark on the goat saying, 'Whatever evil disease, ghost or god is troubling us, take to yourself and carry away'.

After this the bearers were suddenly impelled to take the Anga out into the jungle and we all followed. The Anga wandered about erratically, but at last came to a halt at a point where two paths crossed, before an ant-hill. The medium fell into a trance again and called out instructions in a high clear voice. The Dhurwa cleared the ground and made a criss-cross pattern of black and white. He placed seven little piles of rice in a row. He made the sacrificial animals eat, and then killed them, dropping the blood on every pile of rice. With his knife he made a circle to enclose the god, and nailed a piece of slag into the ground.

Then the old man and woman who had been proclaimed as 'infected' came to the front and, holding bunches of *chir* grass (the grass from which brooms are made) behind them, broke them in their hands, threw them away with a gesture of finality, spat and walked hurriedly home without looking round, and by another way. The Anga also was taken home by another route back to its camp.

I was not able to see the ceremonies for the purification of the other house. The Anga demanded an offering of the fur of a wild squirrel, and this took some time to find. Two days later, however, the rites were performed and the village was cleared of its supernatural dangers.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

[354] The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice, returned home the next day.

778 Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

776 But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2] At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Land of Anga and the body. Yasahketu 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shameless pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga) ", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'. —Nundolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 317.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.

132

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The similarity between this description and the account which I have just given of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mān ta pen nahi ta pāthar.—If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under saja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

[1] See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
[2] Dey, op. cit., p. 318.
[3] Ibid., p. 344.
[4] J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Good AW32
Muria

781
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1 The 'horse' of Lingo Pen at Semurgaon
2 A Dhurwa hobby-horse
3 Hobby-horse at the Malakot wedding
4 The 'horse' of Lingal Pen at Cherpal

[p. 196 (A)]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

793 There are also in most villages one or more Pujari, as they are now called, who are the priests of the more Hinduized deities, such as Danteshwari and her consort Bangaram. In most villages there are many minor deities and each of these may have its special Pujari.

These men do not form in any sense a special priestly class. Only in very rare instances could you recognize a Gaita or Pujari by his bearing or appearance. They are simple, decent, kindly men who spend most of their lives in the field and forest, but they have been chosen, as their parents were chosen, to mediate between men and the unseen mysterious gods. They are invariably, so far a I know, men of good character and never abuse their position unless the dark fate of supernatural power comes upon them and they turn to black magic. They often have to discipline themselves and to exercise a restraint which is not common among the Muria. All village priests must [785] fast and be chaste on the day and night preceding any major ceremony. In some places the period of abstinence may extend to a week.

In some villages, not all, of the Chota Dongar Pargana the Kaser-Gaita is only able to hold his office until he is married. He is thus usually a boy of about sixteen. He is not allowed to go to the ghotul; he must have as little as possible to do with women; even a woman's shadow must not fall on his body. He should not take tobacco from anyone's hands for fear his wife might be in her period. He should not go to a bazaar for fear he unwittingly touch such a woman. He must not talk to a man whose wife is menstruating. In his own home, his cooking-pot is separate from the others. Few boys could endure so rigorous a regime for long, and the Gaita is only made to hold office for three years. Then the god reveals in a dream which of the chelik should take his place. If the old Gaita returns to the ghotul before he is married, he gives the chelik and motiari a feast of pork and liquor.

793 When a Gaita dies his successor is not immediately appointed. In eastern Kondagaon, although the eldest son inherits the Gaitaship automatically, he ● 787 cannot exercise his functions until he has had a certain recognized and official dream appointing him and authorizing him to act. In other parts of the State a ceremonial hunt is held before the son or brother of the dead Gaita can take his place. In the name of the dead man, the whole village goes out to hunt and they take the omens from the animals they get. If they kill a hare it means that the dead man disapproves of his son or brother and that the inheritance must pass out of the family. If they get a male animal it means that the dead Gaita does not want a successor at all. If, however, they shoot a female sambhar, chital or barking-deer, they accept this as meaning that the late Gaita's son or brother may be appointed. Should they fail to get one of these animals, they fast the whole day, cook and eat outside their houses in the evening and sleep away from their wives and go out daily to hunt for three days. If within this period they succeed in shooting one or other of the three female animals required, the new Gaita begins his duties forthwith; otherwise they wait for a year and then repeat the test.

793 Throughout tribal India the influence of the priest is greatly modified by that of the seer. Often these functions are combined in the same person, and 791 his influence is thus greatly increased. But at every ceremony, every festival, in all cases of sickness, at the last rites of the dead, the priests have to consult the prophets for their instructions. There is not, in fact, anything like a definite system of ritual which must always be performed in the same manner. There is rather a great repertory of rites and customs from which many possible combinations can be drawn. The prophet or medium of the gods has to explain

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in each case what kind of worship, what special offerings, what peculiar rites will be acceptable to the god.

These mediums are known in Bastar by the Halbi word Siraha. A Leski is sometimes the Siraha's assistant; sometimes the words are used synonymously. The Siraha does not offer sacrifice, indeed he is not a priest at all; he is simply a medium through whom the gods make known their will. He has the power of falling into trance, of dancing ecstatically and of diagnosing disease and interpreting the divine commands while in this condition. Scores of these men may be seen at any of the great festivals in the State. With their long hair flying wildly about them as they shake their heads, with scourges and whips in their hands and their drunken, drugged, besotted look, they are a distinctive feature of every Muria religious assembly. Yet, in ordinary life, they are completely normal, sensible, hard-working men and no one would suppose that they were capable of such remarkable transformations.

The Gunia, who understands *guni* or magical charms, is simply a medicine-man. He is called in to cure the sick, to recover lost property and to discover the culprit when goods or cattle are stolen. The Panjiyar is a diviner who works by measuring bits of grass which he questions until he obtains the correct answer. The Gunia tends rather to work with a winnowing-fan or a lamp. Both use grain for divination.

Another common form of divination in Bastar is by eggs. Among the Hill Maria, the Kaser-Gaita watches the eggs hatched in his house; if these get addled it may be a sign that the village site should be changed. The Muria test the omens by egg-throwing at the time of breaking stilts.[1] All the Bastar tribes use eggs in worship, and offer them before going out to hunt and fish, 'for they are greatly loved by the gods'.

Eggs are liked by the gods because 'an egg is like a virgin whom no one has touched, or a pregnant woman who holds two souls at once'. A curious tale explains the origin of poultry.

> There was an entirely dark village twelve *kos* long. Once the people went out with a widow's son to search for light. They went a long long way until they lay down weary to sleep. When they awoke they found the sun in the sky. The widow's son declared that he had not slept and had seen a one-legged man put the sun there. The others were jealous that he should have seen this sight and killed him. They divided the flesh among themselves and gave some to the boy's mother, who took it not knowing what it was. She put it aside for him to eat when he should return. But next day, early in the morning as the sun came into the sky, the boy's flesh turned into a cock and began to crow. So when a hen lays an egg it is only a lump of flesh; it is when it hears the cock crow that life comes into it. That is why gods and men love eggs—for they are a sign of strength and life.

For this reason, it is said, gods and ghosts are not often responsible for addling eggs; this is done by human enemies. If a setting of eggs is thus spoilt by black magic, it should be lifted up together with its straw and placed on a piece of an earthen pot. It should be taken to a cross-road, where the priest must say, '*Thu thu, mailotia*, go back to whoever sent you'. He throws away the eggs and the party returns home without looking back. Elsewhere when

[1] Divination by egg-throwing is recorded of the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. In 1942 I found the Juang of Pal Lahara employing the virgin son of the village priest to test the omens, before a festival, by egg-throwing. The use of eggs in worship is widespread in Bastar and Orissa.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

154 The fear of magic is a prominent cause of the few murders committed by Muria in the last ten years. Manga of Kodoli believed that his uncle had
674 caused the death of two of his sons by magic as a sacrifice to the Yer Kanyang of his tank. One day the supposed sorcerer said to him, 'I ate up your sons and now I will devour you', whereon Manga killed him. At the Diwali festival in 1938, Boga killed the Pujari of Katagaon because he was a sorcerer and did not do his worship properly with the result that the crops failed.

In Padnar (Mardapal Pargana)—a village where there is no regular ghotul—a man called Kana suspected a whole family of practising black magic. His accusations were so serious that several of them went to live elsewhere. But one by one they returned, and by Dassera of 1939 they were all back in Padnar. One day during the festival Kana, thoroughly drunk on rice-beer, took the opportunity of telling them they were wizards, accused them of relieving themselves on the village gods, and threatened to turn them out of the village. This drove four men of the suspect family to desperation and they assaulted and killed their enemy.

154 The methods of black magic and the attempts to counter it may be studied in the interesting case of the long struggle for magic supremacy between Gurgu, the Gaita of Almer, and his enemy Singlu. The quarrel started when Singlu, who belonged to the Karanga clan, said to Gurgu, who is a Kaudo, 'I have lived many years in this village. Let me erect *kutukul* here and then my ancestors will live here and help me'. But the Gaita pointed out that the clan-territory (*bhum*) of the Karanga was at Kokori and Singlu should have his menhirs erected there. 'If you bring your gods and ancestors here, our gods will be neglected.' And he refused to give him land.

Singlu began his campaign by making a *kapād*, a magic door, which was represented by cutting wood into three pieces and burying them. The intention of this was that Gurgu's door (symbolizing his house) would be broken and his family ruined. But Gurgu did counter-magic and survived.

Then Singlu cast a spell over Gurgu's speech. Previously Gurgu had prided himself on being able to talk fluently in Halbi with visiting officials, but now he found that he could only talk in Gondi, and there was a general belief that as a result he would be deprived of his position as village headman. But Gurgu 'cured' this also and when I saw him was speaking excellent Halbi-Chattisgarhi.

[787] Singlu's next move was to send a white owl every night to the village. This bird, which is a sort of Ondar Muttai,[1] is very ill-omened. When it cries someone is sure to die. The villagers began to fall ill, but Gurgu managed to 'cure' this also. I was not able to get many details about these 'cures'; I gathered that Gurgu did not perform any symbolic acts of sympathetic magic, but rather by making generous sacrifices obtained the assistance of the local gods. The sacrifices, however, included a doll of dub grass which may have been a means of devoting Singlu to the deity. Gurgu also put nails of iron slag round the village boundary to 'close' it against magic, but as Singlu was already inside this precaution was not of much value.

When I visited Almer, Singlu had recently caused great consternation by taking a hare to the village boundary and sacrificing it to some unknown deity. Now only the Kaser-Gaita may offer such sacrifices and this breach of religious etiquette was believed to have offended the gods greatly, for they drove away all wild animals from before the village hunters. This was the time of the Marka Wijja Pandum, before which the chelik go out on a ceremonial hunt, on the result of which depends the success or failure of the crops. But

[1] See pp. 169f.

MURIA RELIGION

754 Singlu brought disaster this year on the hunt. For a whole month the chelik were taken by Gurgu to the forest, but they got nothing. One day they did shoot a young sambhar but it ran away to another village with their arrows sticking into it, and another village got the meat and the omen. All round other villages were returning triumphant from their hunts, but on 22 April 1941 when I was there the Almer boys returned yet once again empty-handed and Gurgu exclaimed with tears in his eyes, 'I am defeated'.[1]

Here the magician was acting, as it were, at a distance. There is also among the Muria a tradition of the Parat Bagh or were-tiger where a man is metamorphosed into a tiger and attacks his enemy directly. He kills but does not eat him. To become a tiger, a man must go to an ant-hill and circle round it seven times clockwise repeating the necessary charm. It is the charm that matters, and somewhat naturally I have been unable to get hold of it. The man then becomes a tiger, and goes to kill his enemy. When he returns he goes round the ant-hill again, this time anti-clockwise, and is restored to his own shape.

While magicians are very dangerous, but seem to live quite respectably at home, the witch is surrounded in the popular mind with every circumstance of horror and disgust. She goes out naked as a cow; before her go the *mohini*—soothing charms of love—to lull her victims asleep; her spittle is like fire falling to the ground; she drinks the blood of her victims, vomits it and cooks and eats her vomit; she feeds on excrement.

VIII. The Ecstatic Trance

754 How are these evils countered? We have to remember that not all human
791 ills are regarded as of supernatural origin; there are many which are 'natural' and are met by natural remedies. But many other types of disaster are not explicable on natural grounds, and to deal with these the Siraha-medium or
781 the Gunia-diviner is consulted for a proper diagnosis. This diagnosis is generally obtained in trance. The Siraha sits by his patient, some burning coals before him, coughs and belches, and shakes his head till his whole body is in motion with rapid rhythmic movements. These gradually increase in violence, the hair streams out and is thrown to and fro, saliva trickles from the mouth and the tongue protrudes. After a time, the medium gives a loud cry and falls forward, placing the palms of his hands on the burning coals. The smoke curls up between his fingers. He then sits back on his heels, and his companion asks him questions; it is believed that now the god speaks through his lips and the questioner will hear the truth of his perplexities.

791 These mediums also prophesy in a general way at festivals, when they play and posture with a complete forgetfulness of the outside world. Some of them
781 scourge themselves violently with iron chains, others catch hold of the symbol of a god and rush violently about with it, others roll in the dust, hurl themselves on the ground, sit on the spiked seat of a swing, turn somersaults, or simply jog up and down on their toes for lengthy periods.

[1] There was a similar war between a sorcerer and a whole village which he reduced to terror at Sulanga in 1938. Sonu Muria, an ex-convict and a quarrelsome, angry man, was the Pujari of Bhatti Pen. To quarrel with Sonu meant, almost as a matter of routine, that someone would die in your house. From this cause Jaggu, a Halba, lost two of his sons on one day and left the village. Another Halba, Jubi, lost three members of his family in a year. Sonu had a row with a settlement of Ganda: several died: and they all migrated. The Muria and Halba of Sulanga took the matter to the police and urged that the Angs should be sent from Jagdalpur for their protection.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When these mediums carry a clan-god or the litter of a Matal (Village Mother) on their shoulders, they seem to act quite involuntarily and in an astonishing unison. I have seen four men bearing an Anga perform the most complicated evolutions, twisting and turning in every direction, and all in

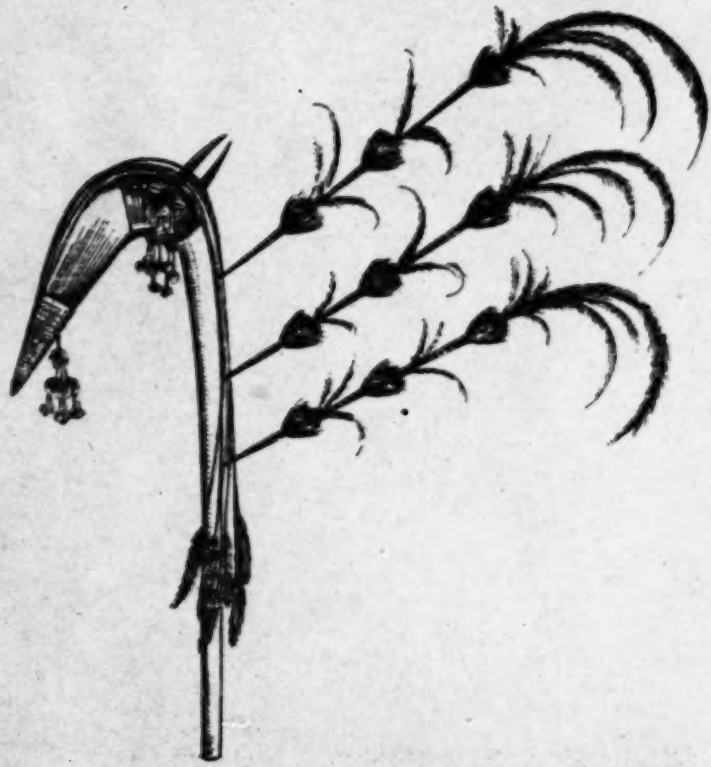

FIG. 27. Decorated wooden 'horse', with horns of the barking deer, used for ceremonial dances
Length of wooden section 3' 4"

unison without a word of command or hint where they are to go next. It is little wonder that the Muria place implicit faith in the movements of these men and accept the divinations of the Anga as final.

What is the explanation of this trance? It is well known that in the condition of 'ligature', as Pratt observes, the 'voluntary control of the muscles is

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Muria

considerably weakened and the sensations become very dull and dim. The higher centres of the brain seem to be partially split off from the incoming sensory currents, on the one hand, and from the motor centres, on the other'.[1] At the same time, the mental state becomes more and more simple and the many objects of normal consciousness gradually tend to give way to a state of monoideism. These mediums are undoubtedly out of their wits; they can hurl themselves about and fall with a force that would injure men in an ordinary state of consciousness.[2]

It is interesting to find that in Bastar as elsewhere throughout the world this ecstatic condition is associated with the horse. 'It is not only in Java and Bali', writes Beryl de Zoëte, 'that the hobby-horse is associated with trance. The wonderful Roumanian Calusari, the little horsemen, the Good Fairies who dramatically fight the Wicked One in their ecstatic dance, have as one of their principal functions the exorcism of evil spirits who bring disease, just like the Koeda Kepand (rattan horses) of Java and the Sanghyang Djaran of Bali. And this function is exercised through an abnormal state of consciousness which at a certain degree of intensity we call trance, and in some cases through the medium of a wooden or rattan horse, or merely the head and tail of a horse united by some kind of rod . . . Perhaps there is no continent in which the hobby-horse is unknown. In England he seems innocent enough, ambling along among the mysterious antlered figures of Abbot's Bromley, or through many a French folk-dance.'[3]

The horse has long been used in magic. Tacitus and Camden referred to augury by the horse in the ancient world. It has been said that the Wooden Horse of Troy was 'an instrument of magic rather than military tactics'.[4] Armed horsemen in Arabia in more recent times are quoted as riding round the tent in which a child is to be born and showing clearly by their arms, horses and movements that they are trying to frighten away evil spirits at a vitally important time.[5] In India the worship of the horse has been recorded for certain aboriginal tribes. For example, Hislop says that throughout the Nagpur District at his time (*circa* 1860) everyone worshipped Koda Pen, and a god named Kola Sur was worshipped with an offering of earthen horses on the top of a hill near Great Ambora.[6] The mare-headed goddess, Basali, represented with a horse's head or as a wooden horse, is worshipped by the Keots and allied tribes in Orissa.[7] The Bhil represent their dead as riding on

[1] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1923), p. 424.

[2] With the Bastar trance we may compare the 'jerks' which have been described by a contemporary in a revival in South Carolina in 1803. Persons would 'suddenly fall to the ground, and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backwards and forwards with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a woman's head might be heard to crack . . And then there was the jumping exercise in which several persons might be seen standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies.' —N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 43, quoting Bishop Capers. This would be a good description of the Muria trance.

[3] W. Spies and B. de Zoëte, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London, 1938), p. 78.

[4] W. F. J. Knight, 'Myth and Legend of Troy' in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVI, p. 98, who cites L. Malten in *Jarkb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.*, Vol. XIX (1915), pp. 179ff. as authority for 'the dangerous and demoniac associations of the horse in early times'.

[5] Ibid., p. 109.

[6] Hislop, op. cit., Part IV, p. iii. See also V. Ball, *Jungle Life in India* (London, 1880), p. 23.

[7] P. Sen, 'A Basali Folk-Song', *Man in India*, Vol. XII, pp. 175ff. and S. C. Mitra, 'On a Curious Cult of Orissa', *JASB*, Vol. XXX, p. 19.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

825 171 Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Gurusala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

825 532 787 791 I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite home for spirit-influence.'[3]

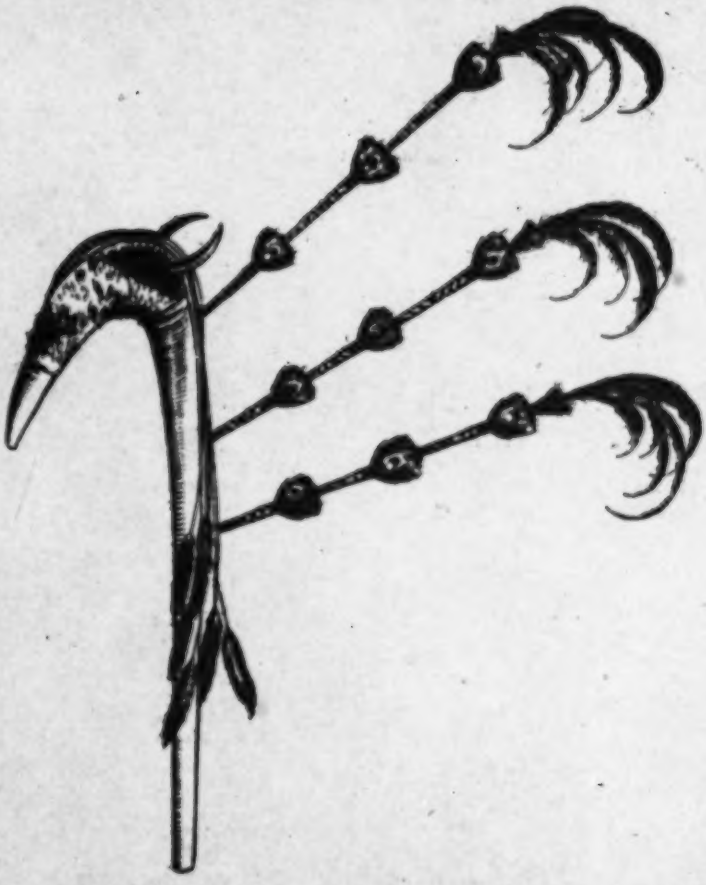
IX. The Cure of Disease

155 Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 122.
[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agapitoff and Khangaloff.
[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 100.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

755 Manjhi told me that he knew of an expert Siraha in the neighbourhood, and I determined to try his treatment. I must say that I found it very



[781]

FIG. 92. A wooden 'horse', with horns made of the tusks of the wild boar and decorated with feathers of the peacock and the recket-tailed drongo
Length of wooden section 3' 3"

soothing and comforting. The Siraha paid three visits to my tent. He began with diagnosis, by inducing a state of trance while his assistant, the Manjhi

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

755 himself, offered incense on a dish of red-hot coals. When the god came on him, the Siraha fell forward with his hands on the fire, then stood up and came directly to my bed and laid his hands on my head. He bent over me

781

Fig. 30. Wooden horse, attendant on Hunga and Hirme, gods of the Tati clan, at the Bison-horn Maria village of Tikanpal
Length 3'

and blew rice—with which he had filled his mouth—all over my face three times and made passes over my body from head to feet. He clapped his hands and standing upright poured rice on my head.

At the second visit he repeated the process, except that this time he blew twice in my ears. The third time, he again went through the same routine, but brought a garland of flowers which he placed round his neck in the name of the Village Mother. He had previously discovered that the cause of my illness was the Rau of Markabera, where I had just been in camp, so he now brought an egg, a small grass image of myself, and a grass bow-and-arrow on a saja leaf. He waved these over me, and outside the tent offered them to the Rau, picked them up and carried them hastily away into the jungle. As he went he picked a bit of chir grass, broke it and threw it away behind him.

When I recovered, as I did after a few days, I was told that I had been treated in the strictly conventional manner and that no variations had been made for me because I was a stranger. The main points of the treatment are obvious enough—the blowing away of the evil spirit, the lucky rice on the head, the passes down the body to take the illness out into the toes and beyond, the offering of symbols of the patient and carrying them away. Everything was aimed at taking something away from the sick man. At the same time the cause of the disease, in this case a Hill Spirit, had to be amused with the toys and placated by a ceremonial egg.

755 Other methods of diagnosing disease are those common among the aboriginals and even the village Hindus of the Central Provinces—and no doubt elsewhere.
781 I have fully described methods of divination by the measuring-stick and the winnowing-fan in *The Baiga*; the Muria have the same technique.

Divination by rice, by water, and by chickens is, in essence, similar to European table-turning. The Gunia makes a pile of rice in the name of a god. He asks a question and removes a few grains. These he counts—an odd number means yes, an even number no. For each question he has to repeat the process seven times. Another method of augury is to place a small pot of water by the sick man's side. The Gunia makes several piles of rice, one for the sick man, one for witchcraft, one for the gods and so on. He drops a grain from the patient's pile into the water, and then one from the witch's pile. If the witch's grain 'catches' the man's, he declares his disease due to witchcraft. If not, he removes it and tries with a grain from the god's pile. And so on.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

755 To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and
787 tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Anga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

755 When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thus* is performed.

A *thus* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahapurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

751 Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means.
755 Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescription of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have
278 recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833] *For impotence.* The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *toj-rāl* and *bhoj-rāl* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753] *For dropsy.* This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLVI

196
187
182

Sirsha prophesying above the dedicated bull

[P. 224 (B)]

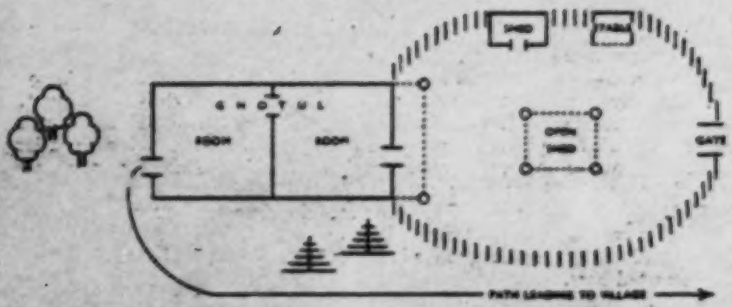
THE GHOTUL BUILDINGS

finely-constructed round roof, and two large houses with thick mud walls. One of these is the Thana-gudi, the other has an inner and an outer room for the boys and girls. The Telenga, Temrugaon and Chureng ghotul are of the same pattern, like Palli Barkot; a big house with a small or deep verandah, a central open hut with often a rounded roof and two small open sheds, the whole surrounded by a high wooden fence.

In the north of the State, on the Amabera plateau and generally to the north of the forest road from Berma to Antagarh and up to the Kanker border are to be found the least attractive ghotul—and ghotul members—in Bastar. The buildings are mean, dilapidated and draughty. The dormitory actually used by the boys and girls rarely has a door and thus loses its intimacy and coziness. My memories of Pupgaon, Chikhli, even Penjori, are not happy.

It remains to mention a few special dormitories. Semurgaon is traditionally the site of the first ghotul, built there by Lingo himself. He could hardly have chosen a lovelier or more charming spot. But the ghotul today is small and almost unique in having unplastered walls made of bare logs. On a pillar in the centre are carvings of chelik and motiari, horses and combs. From the door you look out over a wild expanse of forest and *dippa* clearings.

No visitor to Nayanar can ever forget the ghotul there—the long building with its little windows and two doors, at one end like a hatch, at the other large and dignified, its carved pillars, its charming site at the edge of the village among great trees. This is its general plan—



One of the most delightful and original of all the ghotul is at the Budakasa Para of Malakot. Here outside the village, in the woods, shadowed by tall sago-palms, is a house lifted well above the ground on pillars eight feet high. Above the wooden floor is a low wall two feet high all round, then an open space to the roof. This platform is reached by a ladder. Both the upper room and the space below it are used; there are fires kept burning in each.

The ghotul is built by the chelik themselves, though the boys often get the help of the older men by promising to help in their fields at sowing-time or harvest. The motiari bring grass for the roof, stones and earth for the floor and, when the walls are ready, plaster them with mud. Before they begin the work, the boys mark out on the ground the proposed plan of the building and put there a little pile of rice covered with a leaf-cup. They leave it all night and in the morning go to examine it, sometimes only for one day, sometimes for three days running. Should the rice be scattered, it is taken as a bad omen and they build the ghotul elsewhere. But if the rice remains just

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the four corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chakh-bairag* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central parganas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and no one would steal from it.

As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The chelik desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Koher and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has ciddari birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidha*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidha* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.

Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

[1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bhuiya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of hearts right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. Hutton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of sexual excitement' in Naga morung.—Hutton, *Diaries*, op. cit., p. 48.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

in 1940-1 were the Salya of Binjhli, the Sirdar of Sidhawand and Malakot, the Hikmi of Almer, the Likhen of Kanhargaon, the Kotwar of Kabonga.

When the old leader, the Sirdar, decides finally to lay down his office, there is a small ceremony for the appointment of his successor. The following is the custom in villages of the Chalka Pargana. The old Sirdar, after giving due notice to the elders of the village and the ghotul members, comes on an appointed day wearing a new turban which he has bought himself, five to eight hands long. The ghotul members collect money in the village and purchase liquor. When everyone has assembled in the ghotul, the elders ask the members, 'Whom do you want for Sirdar?' They give the name of the boy they want and the elders remove the turban from the old Sirdar and tie it round the head of his successor, saying, 'From today the ghotul is in your hands. Whatever you command must be done'. The members reply, 'We will do whatever he says'. Then the elders say, 'Look, boy, these children are in your care. If you take them to another village, yours is the responsibility. When they are sleeping, look to see that every child is there. You may go hungry, but don't let the children starve. When there is a marriage, you must arrange the work. When anyone dies, you must see to it. When a visitor comes, you must arrange wood and water. See that the ghotul is always clean and the children are also clean. For if they are happy, it is your credit; if they are ruined, it is your fault.' At this point, in some villages, the girls present the new Sirdar with a new sleeping-mat; in Binjhli, they give him three rings, which he wears throughout his time of office and returns when he resigns; in Markabera, they give him a leaf-pipe of honour. Finally the girls formally give him his new name, hitting him on the back with clenched fists, and his 'subjects' salute him with Johar and place *tika*-marks of rice on his forehead. They give him liquor to drink, and celebrate his appointment with a dance.

In Khutgaon village, I found that the turban ceremony had been abandoned. Some years ago a dog urinated on it. This was regarded as a very bad omen, and when the Siraha was consulted he declared that they must no more tie the turban on the leader's head nor must the motiari any longer touch the heads of the boys with their combs. The disappearance of old customs is not always due to alien influence.

On 1 November 1941 I was present at Bhanpuri when a new Diwan (as the head of the ghotul is called there) was appointed. The girls and boys assembled shortly after nine for what was called the *Diwali nark*, or eating of parched rice in honour of the Diwali festival. Each member had to bring a contribution to the feast: big boys and girls brought one seer each, somewhat younger children brought half a seer and the little probationers a quarter. The rice was collected on mats spread on the ground in the compound and carefully measured. Part was put aside for the villagers—in fact for the children's own parents; part was allocated to a neighbouring village with whom the ghotul was on friendly terms; the rest was for the present company.

Then the elder boys retired inside the ghotul and deliberated about the appointment of their new Diwan. This was only a formality, since the matter had been settled long before. They came out and declared that they had chosen Gando the Sirkil. The Belosa and Dulosa, the two leading girls, then went to Gando, pulled him to his feet and thumped him hard on the back crying 'Diwan Diwan'. After the Belosa had put a ring on his finger, he went round and saluted everyone with Johar. After a few days he would, he promised, treat them to eight annas' worth of liquor.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

is a part of the regular ceremonial of a festival or marriage; sometimes it is due to 'supernatural' inspiration.[1]

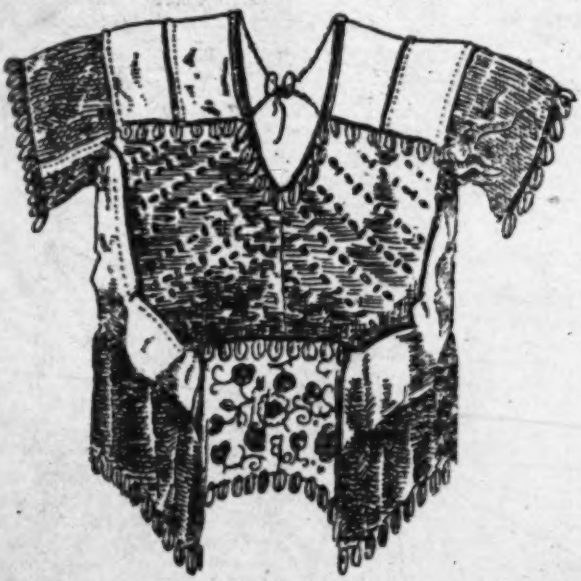


FIG. 115. Lamana woman's jacket adorned with cowries and used by Muria men for the purposes of divination

In Bastar I have noted two forms of this cross-dressing. Men sometimes put on women's jackets adorned with cowries when they go to prophesy in trance before a god and reveal his will to their fellows. At the bigger clan-festivals you may see a dozen or more mediums dancing and gesticulating in a state of ecstatic excitement, all wearing round their bodies these gaily-coloured and rather incongruous blouses.

But this is the only occasion, I think, where the male aboriginals of Bastar put on women's dress. It is more common for women to dress up as men. Bison-horn Maria women of Dantewara sometimes put on male garments at the great Wijja Pandum and drive their men-folk out to the hunt which precedes the main business of the festival. The Muria have the same custom, and the unmarried girls, dressed up as boys, dismiss the men of the tribe for a ceremonial hunt on the success of which will depend the value of the annual harvest.[2]

[1] For the 'Change of Sex' motif in Indian fiction, see Penzer, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 231ff. and W. N. Brown, 'Change of Sex as a Hindu Story Motif' in *JAOS*, Vol. XLVII (1927), pp. 1ff.

[2] Thurston speaks of a similar custom among the Koyi, where the women 'dressed in their lords' clothes' drive the men out to hunt at the Bhudevi Pandaga or Festival of the Earth Goddess. He describes a procession held before such a hunt: 'About the middle of the day, we saw a procession approaching as on the previous day, but it consisted entirely of women, the drummers and swordsmen being women dressed up as

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

828 539 774

Another tale, from Atargaon, points the same moral.

> Dream and Wealth were disputing which was the greater. When they could not agree they decided that each should hide in turn and whoever could find the other, yet not be found himself, would win the contest. Wealth hid himself first. He took the shape of a pot of rupees and hid in an ant-hill. Dream went to a very poor boy who was lying asleep and called his soul to come out. When the *jiwa* came Dream sent it to the ant-hill. It returned, and when the boy awoke he went to the ant-hill and dug up Wealth in the shape of the pot. Then Dream hid in the wind, and was blown here and there about the world. Wealth could not find him and when they met again he admitted that Dream was the greater.

In this other world into which the *jiwa* can enter during sleep, the gods and the Departed are familiar figures and the *jiwa* can talk with them and learn their will. Often, however, the Muria speak as though the gods and the dead had come to them in sleep, that the approach was, as it were, from the other side. Obviously the ordinary Muria, any more than the ordinary Englishman, has no consistent theory. One thing which has puzzled him, and which he explains by a fantastic tale, is the 'falsity' or symbolism of dreams. In Berma I was given a story which accounts for this.

> Long ago men could read the future in their dreams. An owl heard of it and said, 'If men can see the future in dreams, they will never die'. The owl waited till the gods were holding a darbar and then fell with a bang into the midst of them. The gods said, 'What is the matter?' The owl replied, 'I have had a dream, and in that dream I was marrying a Raja's daughter. We had done eleven rounds of the Lagir; had it been twelve she had been mine; but I awoke and fell to the ground. Now I must marry this girl. What am I to do?' The gods were concerned and said to one another, 'How can a red-eyed bird marry a Raja's daughter?' The owl replied, 'But all the world gets what it sees in dreams; how can it be that only my dreams are false?' At that the gods cursed men saying, 'From now on, let all dreams be false'.

828 ● 787

Dreams, therefore, are symbolic. They are code messages from the other world and only the wise can decipher them. There is a fairly extensive system of dream-interpretation, on the whole consistently maintained throughout the Muria area, though with a few variations from place to place. I will tabulate these interpretations for the reader's convenience.

787

	Good Dreams
One's dead parents ..	.. Lucky, for it shows they have retained their affection for one.
Drowning in a river ..	.. Very good. The Yer Kanyang so loves the dreamer that she wants to marry him.

Sir J. G. Frazer, *Taboo and Perils of the Soul*, pp. 37 and 49; *Panjab Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 166 (which gives a tale with a similar motif to that in the text); W. A. Clouston, *Popular Tales and Fictions* (Edinburgh, 1887), Vol. I, p. 437.

For a Santal story of a soul which slipped out of a man's sleeping body in the form of a lizard and was prevented from returning, see B. Bonnerjea, 'The Social and Ceremonial Life of the Santals', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LIX (1930), p. 100.

DREAMS

Sinking under water ..	.. When seen by a man, means his wife is pregnant and will bear a son.
A river in flood ..	.. When seen by a woman, means her period will begin next day. Seen by a man it warns him that his wife's period is about to begin.
A boat	.. A long journey. A good omen.
An Anga (clan-god) ..	.. Lucky.
An elephant ..	.. Good. A symbol of prosperity.
A bear	.. Good. A potency symbol.
People quarrelling ..	.. Good, for since dreams go by contraries no one will actually quarrel.
A kotri fish	.. The dreamer will get money.
Drinking liquor ..	.. The dreamer will get meat to eat in two or four days.
Eating mangoes under a tree	.. The dreamer will get meat the next day.

Bad Dreams

A motiari	.. A Kanyang will attack you.
A horse	.. A horse is a spirit or Rau, and the dream is therefore bad.
People fighting ..	.. Black magic is in the air.
Fire	.. Someone will die in the house.
A tiger	.. The dreamer will be hungry, or a witch is plotting to attack him.
Anything burning ..	.. Unlucky.
A fire	.. Black magic.
Climbing a tree ..	.. Bad.
Falling	.. Certain death.
Flying in the air ..	.. Certain death.
Rain	.. The dreamer will weep.
A bullock-cart laden with wood	.. Someone will be carried on wood to his grave.
A cot	.. Someone will be carried on a cot to his grave.
A pile of rice ..	.. The dreamer will fall ill.
A sago-palm	.. Someone will be burnt to death.
Raw meat	.. Witchcraft.
A marriage	.. Death.
To lose one's teeth ..	.. Unlucky.
Excrement	.. Unlucky.
Fish	.. Dropsy.
Taking one's plough to a field	.. Black magic—a member of the family will fall ill.

But these interpretations are not universally given. Thus, in Palli (Kondagaon), Badgai, round Parakot and in Kolibera, the tiger dream is unlucky: in Gorma and Markabera it is good, a 'light dream'. And to see a bear is believed in Gorma and Markabera to be a 'dark dream' after which nothing will succeed, though in Alor it is very good, and in Badgai it simply means that you are going to meet some old man like your dead father. A marriage dream is held to be unlucky in Palli and lucky in Kolibera. Falling

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

• 787 from a tree is very bad at Kokori and Gorma, but good elsewhere, though it is always bad to dream of climbing.

The reason for this divergence may be that in some cases dream-interpretation does not depend on any manifest or latent symbolism, but has been worked out pragmatically: a marriage dream did in fact one day precede a death at Palli or luck in the hunt at Koilibera, and ever afterwards it has been associated with failure or success.

The interpretations are in any case not very clear. The association of fish with dropsy is interesting, so is that of flying with evil spirits and of raw meat with witches. But I cannot see the connexion between a kotri fish and money, or liquor and meat, or a tiger and hunger. It is remarkable, in view of the hobby-horse dances,[1] that the horse should be regarded as a spirit and so unlucky.

These interpretations are taken quite seriously and often guide a man's conduct. The chelik may refuse to go on a Pus Kolang expedition if one of them has a dream of a tiger shortly before they set out. A motiari will be wise if she avoids visiting the ghotul the day after she has dreamt of a river in flood, for this suggests that her menstrual period is imminent.

We must turn now to the official or standardized dream by which the Muria receive communications from the gods and the Departed. Muria social life is, as we have just seen, sometimes guided by a chance dream of a prophetic nature. But the religious and disciplinary side of its life is almost dominated by such dreams. When a god, for example, feels that he is neglected or forgotten he may draw attention to himself either by bringing disease upon a village or by sending dreams. The god does not always come in his own form, but symbolically. For example, a neglected Kanyang may appear as a motiari and will continue to bother the sleeper until offerings are made to her. The Yer Kanyang may appear as a crocodile. If the crocodile seizes you in a dream and you do nothing about it, you will fall ill. To prevent this the dreamer calls the Siraha and goes with him to the river to offer egg-shell ground up with burnt earth from below a hearth, vermilion for the naiad's forehead, bangles for her arms, and coloured wool for her hair.

Dreaming of a horse means that a Rau (or forest-god) is angry, and eggs and parched rice must be offered to him. In Dongrigura the Gaita said that the dream of a horse, buffalo, pig or peacock meant that a Rau was dissatisfied with the attention he was getting. If the Rau appeared in the form of a horse or a buffalo, it was necessary to make an iron image of the animal and offer it to him. For a pig or peacock, however, the sacrifice of a pigeon was sufficient. At Sirsi, if a man dreams that he is caught by a tiger, this is supposed to indicate the displeasure of the Earth Mother and two or three days afterwards the villagers have to assemble and sacrifice a chicken in her honour.

Such dreams represent the whims or spleen of deities according to their mood. More important instructions are given by the clan-gods with regard to the construction of the Anga. As far as I know, every Anga is made or repaired as a result of a dream. For example, at Karanji, there was an Anga of Bara Deo, but no sacrifice was being made to it in 1942 because the Pen-Gaita, Ghenwa, was dead and the god had not yet come in a dream to appoint his successor. The Duma-guru (ancestral-priest) also had failed to appear. In this village it is the custom for Bara Deo to come in a dream saying that offerings are to be made and the Duma-guru directs the place and time. At

[1] See pp. 207ff.

DREAMS

Chandabera the headman of the village had a dream in which Danteshwari Matal appeared to him and told him to cut down a large sarai tree which was obstructing her worship. This tree pleasantly shadowed Danteshwari's own shrine, and the headman thought it was unnecessary to remove it. Later his leg became swollen and the Siraha declared that the reason was his failure to obey the goddess. Even so he took no notice, but when a little later his brother had a fit of madness, he thought it best to obey his dream and cut down the tree. At Padbera, the god Phande Hunga (a grandson of Halayin Dokari) gave a dream to the Gaita of the Durro clan, promising to make him prosper if he would make him an Anga. The dream even showed that mahua wood was to be used and that it must be brought from the Magagaon forest.

The appointment of a Gaita or Gunia often depends upon appropriate dreams. Succession to the priesthood is hereditary, but until the Gaita's son or grandson gets a dream he cannot take up his appointment. In the meantime, somebody else has to perform his functions in his name. The Gaita of Randhna, for example, described how 'six months before I had my dream my father died. Then I dreamt that I went to the bazaar and drank a lot of liquor. As I was coming home, I met Matal Maoli and Danteshwari who said, "Your ancestors served us and never made mistakes; we were pleased with them and never gave them trouble; now you are their son and you are to serve us. Do your work well and whatever you ask we will listen and answer your questions". I awoke frightened but there was no one there. From that day onwards I was the village Gaita.' Once in Alor, when there was extensive crop failure, the Siraha dreamt that the office of Kaser-Gaita should be abolished. In his place one of the Siraha dreamt continually everything that had to be done.

The dead also reveal their wishes through dreams. Sometimes they indicate that they are dissatisfied with the attention that is being paid them. For example, a Muria of Bhopna said, 'If I dream of a tiger rushing to attack me, I recognize it as a Dand-duma, a troublesome ghost. To prevent the danger I must pound up a bit of living coal, take some burnt earth and draw two parallel lines on the ground. I offer a chicken there and throw it away.' In Sirsi the Muria said that a man regards any dream of his dead parents as requiring some sacrifice. It is supposed that the dead appear in a dream if they are intending to cause trouble later on. The dream is a preliminary warning to the living to be careful. The dreamer offers an egg and a chicken saying, 'Since you have come in my dream, I am giving you these things; be content with them and give us no trouble'.

To dream of drowning is a very significant dream that demands instant attention. I describe elsewhere how the Muria believe that adultery is punished by an attack of dropsy. To dream of drowning with its association with water, therefore, means that among your ancestors was an adulterer who died of watery swelling of his body and that the full rites of satisfaction for his crime have not yet been performed.

At Gorma, a Muria dreamt that he was drowning. When he consulted a medium about this, he was reminded of an association with water that had occurred in his family: one of his ancestors had in fact died of dropsy as a penalty for adultery. 'His spirit is uneasy, so he has given you this dream.' To quiet the ghost, the villagers made a man's image of grass and took it to the river. They put it beside a stone with one of its feet upon it, and the Gaita and the ghost's living relatives also put their feet on the stone and made the usual offerings and drank to the honour of the dead. After this there were no more dreams.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

•787 Not only religious functions and duties are revealed in dreams. In Alor a chelik said that he sometimes dreamt the songs and dances that were to be performed on the morrow. Another chelik in Nayanar said that he dreamt once that he was able to do a new kind of dance and sing a song that he had never been able to learn in fact.' After his dream he found that he could do both. At Kabonga, the Village Mother sometimes comes in a dream to tell the boys to dance, and next day they go to a neighbouring village and perform the Hulki.

154 Of the dreams recorded from chelik and motiari the majority were frankly sexual in their manifest content. This was perhaps what was to be expected; although the ghotul is hardly a home of repressed wishes there are some which from time to time pass through periods of stress and tension, and there are boys and girls in both types of ghotul who suffer the frustration of their desires. But where among ourselves such desires express themselves in discreet symbolism, the ghotul's frank and open attitude to sex permits the censor mechanism to lie unused. The most common ghotul dreams are those of 'eating, playing, dancing and sexual congress'.

A very interesting series of dreams were recorded for me by my wife from two motiari in the Binjhli ghotul. At that time (December 1940) this ghotul, which is one of those which does not permit permanent attachments, was passing through a difficult phase. There were about a dozen girls of eighteen years or more who were for various reasons unable to get married; they had been in the ghotul for a long time; young and beautiful motiari were growing up and diverting the attention of the chelik. Angry scenes between the motiari were not uncommon and some of the older girls were restless and unhappy. Such was the situation in which two of the senior motiari had the following dreams. I will give first those of the head girl of the ghotul, a motiari of about nineteen years.

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik I love. I have often wept as I remembered the dream.
>
> I have often dreamt that I was married.
>
> On a dancing expedition I borrowed all the combs of a young and beautiful motiari.
>
> I dreamt I was sleeping with the chelik I loved. He combed my hair. The next morning he gave me eight combs, for he saw I hadn't any.

And these are the dreams of her assistant, a motiari perhaps seventeen years old, a pretty girl.

> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik outside the ghotul. We were caught and I was fined three bottles of liquor.
>
> I dreamt that I was sleeping with a chelik on separate mats side by side. I held him in my hands all night. He never took his hands off my breast.
>
> I often dream of intercourse. When the boy approaches me I say, 'Hush, what's the matter with you?'
>
> A chelik slept with me in my dream. He held my breasts tightly in his hands. I said, 'Don't do that, let me go'. He said, 'How can I help it? I always do it'. I said, 'You chelik have no mercy on us'.

In the Binjhli ghotul, the motiari sleep with their chelik only once a week. On other days, after an evening of strong sexual stimulation, the girls return to their separate house. Several of these dreams appear to show the influence of this. The longing for combs revealed in the first set of dreams and the obvious jealousy of the young girl who had many of them, reflects a common

DREAMS

your mat to sleep on'. So I had to get up and give him the mat on which we were sleeping together. I was very sorry, but when I came back, she took off her sari and spread it for me to lie on, and I covered her with my blanket. 154

In Markabera the head of the chelik said, 'If my ghotul-wife is away, I dream of sleeping with her. I chase her and often have her'. He sometimes experienced orgasm during such dreams. 'I once dreamt that I was going to dance in another village. I walked along the road with a girl I had always wanted. That night I was able to sleep with her in the other village.'

A chelik at Chandabera said, 'We generally dream of our earliest loves in the ghotul, for these are girls whom we never forget. We dream that they are sleeping by our side or running away from us. Sometimes we dream that we have gone out fishing with them or that we are on our way to a marriage dance'.

The seriousness with which the Muria treat their dreams and the reality they ascribe to them is clearly shown in the precautions taken the following day. I have already referred to various cures for nightmare. I will add a few more. At Bhopna a Muria said, 'If I dream that I have gone down under the water, I consult the Siraha and he says that it means that an evil ghost is coming. This once happened to me, so I got seven different kinds of wood and made a bonfire of them by the bank of a stream. I put some gur and ghee on the fire. Then I and my wife went round it three times, entered the water and ducked below it. We took off our old clothes and left them there on the bank, dressed in new clothes and went home without looking round.' This was rather a drastic and expensive cure. An easier means of averting the possible danger of a dream is this from Chingnar: 787 ● 782

> A dream of a fight between two people suggests danger from black magic. To avert this the figure of a man with a bow and arrow should be made with grass and a bad egg, a pig or a chicken should be offered to it. The little image should be thrown away outside the village and the danger will disappear. [754]

Gadru of Chaniyagaon once dreamt,

> A beautiful woman came to my children and said to them, 'I am going to devour you, because your parents give me nothing to eat'. The next day my children fell ill, and the Siraha declared that their sickness was due to Lagar Deo, who was angry because the customary offering to him three years after the first child had not been made, and he therefore wanted to kill all my children. So I dedicated two pigs to Lagar Deo to be allowed to wander freely and killed three years later. Once I had done this my children recovered. 787 753 782

At Palnar, the Suel once dreamt that he was climbing up a huge stone. Suddenly he saw a chaprasi, he was frightened and tried to run away. He fell down and broke his teeth. When he awoke he found he had fever and only recovered after he had sacrificed a pig and made other offerings.

In Chandabera, a Muria jealous of the happiness of the chelik performed hostile magic against the ghotul. The Sirdar dreamt that one of the boys had died and his corpse was being carried away for burial. Soon afterwards he himself got an attack of fever. He was sleeping at home and dreamt that a chelik came to him saying, 'Come, let us go to dance at a wedding'. The Sirdar replied, 'I am suffering from fever and cannot go'. The chelik said, 'The fever has been sent you by such and such a person, you must drive it

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

787 back again'. Then the boy awoke and the following day sent for the Siraha, who agreed that his illness was due to magic. They then took a pig and
753 chicken outside the village and sacrificed them saying, 'Are you going away
782 or not?' Both pig and chicken ate the rice offered them, and this was taken to mean that the danger from the magic was averted. The boys feasted on the pig and chicken and the Sirdar recovered from his fever. It was generally believed that the chelik who visited him in his dream was Lingo Pen himself.

Naitami Dole, a Muria of Kokori, described an experience when he was the Sirdar of his ghotul.

> One night I dreamt that I was having intercourse with a motiari. The next morning I found myself suffering from fever, so I called the Siraha to ask what was the matter. He told me that an enemy had sent the motiari to me by his magic. So I went down to the bank of the river and made seven circles on the bank putting rice, powdered egg-shells and ashes in them with an egg in the middle circle for the Yer Kanyang. Then I recovered.

787 To see one's house burning in a dream means that black magic, particularly in its very dangerous form of the *aginbaṇ*, or arrow of fire, is going to be sent
754 against one. To avert it a chicken should be sacrificed and a small image made of *dab* grass carried out across the village boundary and thrown away.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

II. The Pus Kolang Expeditions

The Pus Kolang expeditions undertaken by boys during the Hindu month of Pus (Jan.-Feb.) are among the more serious of the ghotul's annual diversions. Attired in special costume, the chelik visit a number of villages, dancing and singing in honour of Lingo Pen, who is said to have inaugurated the custom. Their behaviour is strictly regulated by rules and taboos; they carry a god with them and sacred fire. Unlike the girls' Diwali dance, there is no sexual purpose behind these expeditions; indeed the strictest taboos are enforced and there is a general sense of danger; everyone has to be very careful; breach of the rules earns catastrophic punishment. 'The dances are for the gods', said the boys at Phulpur. 'We don't feel inclined for girls; besides, many have died for sex at the Pus Kolang.'

This sense of danger probably accounts for the rather haphazard distribution of the custom. In Udanpur, for example, Kurumtalla Pen ordered the chelik not to dance, but they disobeyed; as they left their village, one of the boys died. In Chiyanar, the boys' dog once bit another dog and when they got home a chelik died. In Bhanpuri, the dancers were once warned by a tiger's print in the ashes of the Pus Kolang fire not to go, but they went and a pair of chelik died. Since then they have abandoned the custom altogether. Generally, south of the Narayanpur-Kondagaon road and east of the Keskal-Kondagaon road the Muria do not dance the Pus Kolang, but everywhere in the north it is common. In the Chota Dongar area they say, 'We don't dance it because we are really Maria'. It is significant that in this part the cult of Lingo is at its weakest.

As the cool refreshing season of Pus approaches, the ghotul leaders consult the Gaita about the time and direction of the expedition. They remember the villages where they were well entertained last year; they recall the food they were given and the omens they saw, and they draw up a programme. In the dark half of Pus, they begin to practise. The dances are difficult and must be carefully taught to the younger boys, for it is dangerous to make mistakes. The chelik prepare their clothes, masks and toys. For weeks they study the rhythm of the sticks and the movements of their feet, but always outside the fence of the ghotul compound.

On the first day of the time decided, the chelik light a fire and dance round it. In the morning they examine the ashes; if these are undisturbed or if they are marked by panther, dog or bullock, all is well; if there is the footprint of a man, tiger, cat or hen, it means that Lingo is warning them not to go. In some villages, however, the ashes should not be disturbed at all. Any mark is regarded as a warning. The boys consult the Siraha, who sometimes forbids the expedition altogether and sometimes allows it on certain conditions. The next day they look again, and again on the third day. If for three days the ashes are well-omened they accept the signs and prepare to go.

During this period they have been deciding who are to be the Gain and Jokta, the leaders of the singing; how they are to pair off; they have been getting their clothes and *Lingo-singār* (ornaments) into order. These clothes and ornaments include feminine elements: the boys wear skirts and many necklaces and neck-bands borrowed from the motiari, but I do not think this involves any element of cross-dressing—it is simply due to a desire to be as ornamental as possible.

When Lingo led the chelik on the first Pus Kolang expedition, he took a tiger with him. In memory of this the boys in many villages now take a dog,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and for this reason the dance is sometimes known as Nei Kolang or Kukur Kolang.

At Phulpar the chelik said that they took with them whatever dog wandered round their fire and sat down near its ashes, but in other villages I have been told that they only take a dog which is carefully trained, for it is essential that it should not bark or bite or have anything to do with other dogs. In Udanpur they said that the dog was taught to dance.

The dog serves both as a mascot and to take the omens. The boys remove a bell from the shrine of the Village Mother and tie it round its neck in the name of Lingo. When they dance in a circle the dog must sit in the middle. At meal-times, the Gain gives it three handfuls of rice before anybody else is fed.

When the dancing party enters a village the chelik wait to see what the dog will do. If all is well, it sits down quietly and they stay. If it wanders off into the village and enters someone's house, it means that a pair of boys will die. If it runs out into the fields even late in the evening, it is a sign that they must move on at once. If it fights with another dog, someone will die. Should the dog leave the party and return home, it is taken as a warning of great danger.

FIG. 117. Ornamental stick carried on dancing expeditions
Full length 2' 7½"

When the chelik return to their village they sacrifice two chickens for the dog, though a boy has to be content with one, and they place stones for it on a cairn. They remove the bell from its neck and replace it in the shrine of the Village Mother. From the time the bell is tied round the dog's neck to the time it is removed, no member of the party may have sexual intercourse. But once the bell is removed, it is a sign that they are free.

In most villages the same dog accompanies the party for three years running, but at the end of that period it is expected to go mad or to be carried away by a tiger. The theory is that for three years Lingo 'possesses' the dog for the brief period of the expedition, but at the end of the time he takes the form of a tiger and carries it away.

When all is ready, about a week before Cherta-puni, the chelik put on their full dress and dance all day. They are rather solemn about this; they talk to no one and take a very superior attitude towards their girls and have nothing to do with them. The next morning, the Gaita takes them to the Village Mother's shrine where the spear of Maria Pen is kept. They dance before the shrine in a straight line, not in a circle; this is the 'Lingo Par'. The Gaita brings fire from his house in a length of smouldering rope spun from paddy-stalk fibre. With the aid of this he offers incense saying, 'These youngsters are going out to dance. Let no disease attack them on the way. Bring them home safely. Let the spear be their aid and Maria Pen go with them. If they return in safety I will give food-sacrifice'. He fixes the smouldering rope on the point of the spear and brings it out.

This was the custom in Phulpar and Kolibera; in the latter village the Gaita went on to the shrine of Thakur Deo and worshipped there with the same

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

N 883
796
241

'as if they were bride and bridegroom' the others said. In another the boys shut the girls in, piling brushwood against the door. In two places the boys were able to steal chickens. One was a Muria chicken, and the owner let it go with a laugh; but the other was taken by way of revenge on a surly Hindu who abused the boys and gave them a stingy contribution of flour. They got the hen and hid it in a basket. The owner followed them round protesting, but he never found it.

From every house the boys took some old basket, broom, bit of matting, broken winnowing-fan, so that by the time they had done their round they looked an extraordinary collection of scarecrows. This, of course, was part of the clearing of the village of disease.

By now the boys had several baskets full of flour and mahua flowers. They took the mahua to the out-still where it was exchanged for liquor, and carried the flour and the two chickens out into the fields. Here they threw down in a corner of the Gaita's field all the rubbish they had collected and their dancing-sticks, and some of them gathered brushwood and a little timber and strewed it over a patch some five yards square.

Other boys brought water and large pipal leaves, and two of them mixed the flour and water and made thin cakes spreading the mixture on one pipal leaf and covering it with another. Then the Sirdar fired the first *parka* of the year with a bit of straw-rope brought from the ghotul fire.

After the wood and rubbish had blazed up, the boys threw three of the mandia-flour cakes into the ashes as an offering to the Kis Kanyang (Fire Maiden) and placed the others in the embers to cook. The Gaita offered the two chickens to the Earth. All looked eagerly to see how the bodies fell; if they fall on one side it is a good omen, if downward, bad. Today one omen was bad. The Gaita sat by the fire with chelik on either side, and offered liquor to the spirits of the dead Gaita of the village, praying, 'Give us good wind and no rain when we fire the *parka*; give us sound sleep in the ghotul with our motiari, and let them not conceive'.

•[187]

Then they all drank. The leaves were pulled out of the fire, the bread was distributed and little bits of roast chicken. I got one of the chickens' heads and a bit of bread. Now this was done, the villagers could cut and fire their *parka*. After the rains began, the Gaita would sow in this spot and after him the other villagers.

In Khutgaon and the villages of that area, this festival does not seem to be kept, but on the eve of the day that they decide to cut the wood for the *parka* or *dippa*, the Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure that all are chaste. After the usual offerings in the village temples, he takes the people to the forest. As the chelik cut the wood they cry *Kiddari pada!* upon which the Gaita says to the other villagers who sit watching, 'Give them something to eat'. They have brought pots with burnt rice at the bottom, water and gourds. They chase the chelik, catch them, smear their faces with black soot from the pots and give them each a little burnt rice to eat. If there is any left it is taken to the ghotul and the motiari are similarly treated in the evening.

The *beharani* ceremonies for the protection of the village must not ignore the ghotul, though theoretically such rites should not be necessary. At Chingnar, every three years the Gaita goes round the ghotul seven times, drives slag 'nails' into the threshold and buries a ring before it to keep off witchcraft. At Surma, they tie seven mokha leaves over the door with the same purpose.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

you'. As they dance, the boys beat the ground with their bursundi branches, as a result of which it is believed that stinging wasps and flies will not bother the village for the rest of the year.[1]

Then the chelik go on their stilts outside the village to where a stone stands on an ant-hill in honour either of Bhimul Pen, Dito Pen or Gorondi Muttai. They go in procession round the stone seven times and the Sirdar winds a string round and round it. He sends one of the boys some distance away and he himself presses his hand down on the ground to crack his fingers and says, 'Now we will see if you have really been helping us'. He picks up one of the eggs that they have begged from the village and throws it to where the other boy is standing. If the god is favourable, the egg does not break and the other boy picks it up and throws it back. They do this three times.[2] If the egg breaks the leader picks up the mess and rubs a little of it on the penis of every member of the party in turn saying, 'May we be free of itch and ringworm'.

Then they break their stilts and arrange them over the stone. Sometimes the stilts are tied in a sort of square and the foot-rests and pegs hung from it. Four stilts are placed upright at each corner and a cord is tied round them. They offer eggs and chickens at the foot of this shrine and tie the egg-shells in a string to the top of the stilts. They kill the chickens by hitting their heads on the ground, not by cutting their throats as usual. Then they cook the chickens and any other food that they have been given and eat the feast and drink as much liquor as they have been able to collect. There is a rule that on this day they must not cook on a stone hearth out of respect for the stone representing the deity, but should cut green pegs of saja wood, drive them into the ground and put their pots on these.

There are various stories to account for the origin of this ceremony. In the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria say that on the festival of Amavas Lingo's brother, Bhimul, went out of his house to give salt to his cattle. His little son wept, crying, 'I want to go too', and as it was very muddy his mother Gorondi made him a pair of stilts and sent him with his father. When the village boys saw Bhimul's son walking on the stilts, they asked their fathers to make them also, but they said, 'No, we don't know how to do it'. So the boys went to Gorondi and persuaded her to make stilts for them. One day a boy fell down; Gorondi ran to him and rubbed the wound with her hands and it healed at once. The boys used to bring their wounds to be cured and their broken stilts for her to mend. At first she refused but afterwards she said, if they brought her eggs and chickens as payment, she would do anything they wanted. So ever since the boys give her presents once a year and she saves them from falling and the stilts from breaking.

Another version of the story attributes the origin of the practice to the notorious jealousy between Bhimul and his wife. There is always supposed to be bitter rivalry between them. In Bhandarsiuni, the Muria once dedicated a bull to Bhimul promising that they would sacrifice it to him if he gave them good rain. This made Gorondi very angry and her Siraha called the villagers and said to them, 'Why have you been so stupid as to give a bull to my husband? Bhimul has gone below to dig roots and he won't be back for six months, so

[1] Russell records a Teli custom at the Pola festival, when women bring branches of a thorny creeper which they call Marbod and sweep their houses saying, 'O Marbod, sweep away all diseases, pains, coughs, bugs, flies and mosquitoes'.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 550. Cf. Hivale, op. cit., p. 123.

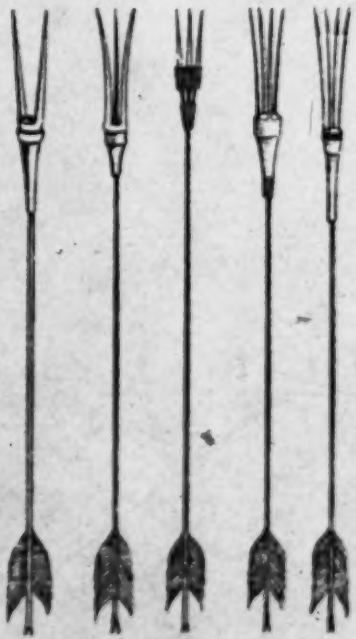
[2] Divination by egg-throwing, though in a different way, is common among the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. For an interesting account of the folk-lore of eggs, see L. F. Newman, 'Some Notes on the Folklore of Poultry', *Folk-lore*, Vol. LIII (1940), pp. 104ff.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there [796 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped 787] and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 262 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangia* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.



Engram arrows
(Length about 3')

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

535 but with a great variety of turns and changes: the 'bison'
585 charge and fight each other, pick up rings or leaves on the points of their horns, and chase the girl dancers. The girls, each with a dancing-stick in her right hand, form a long line and go round and through the men dancers with many different movements and steps. They do not usually sing, and indeed the tune would be lost in the thunder of the drums. As they go, they beat the ground with their sticks *dum-dum-dum, di-dum, dum-dum*. Masked mummers, clowns dressed in straw, naked acrobats with enormous imitation genitalia, add to the gaiety of the scene. There is no finer dance in India.

293 The head-dress of bison horns is the chief treasure of a Maria home. It is kept with the utmost care, dismantled, in closed bamboo baskets, and it takes nearly an hour to assemble it. Horns are rare nowadays in Bastar and have to be imported from Jeypore. A Maria may give a bull in exchange for a pair of good horns; they should be white at the bottom turning to black half way up.

A bamboo frame forms the base of the head-dress. The horns are attached to the front and a great tuft of feathers rises behind. Cloth, often old and costly silk, is tied round and round and a tail hangs down behind. Across the front a fringe of cloth adorned with cowries covers the dancer's eyes.

The feathers used are those of the peacock and of domestic
[237] cocks specially castrated for the purpose. It is considered
● [707] unlucky for a feather to fall to the ground during a dance, and before they begin the dancers address the Earth Mother and the Ancestors: 'Save us from the dangers of magic and let none of the feathers fall'.

428 A man's head-dress passes to his son or brother's son after
682 his death. His bow and arrow and his drum are also heir-
762 looms and are highly valued. The loss of a head-dress drove one Maria youth to suicide, and a dispute about possession of an outfit of buttocks-bells led another to murder.

184 In the north of the area, many Maria dance both with bison
535 horns and in Hill Maria fashion. The latter wear the skirt, decorated cap and streamers, and buttocks-bells characteristic of the Abujhmar Hills.

534 The Maria are not very good at musical instruments. They use a small fiddle called kikir, a Jews-harp made of iron or

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

indicate their will to the living through the Siraha or Waddai 769
and by appearing to them in dreams, and it is considered 775
highly dangerous to ignore their behests.

The necessity for their propitiation has affected every aspect 769
of Maria life. Offerings are made to them at every festival and at every domestic or village ceremony. They are remembered as a matter of routine in every magic formula along with the Earth Mother, Danteshwari and other deities. A few drops of liquor are offered to them every time a Maria drinks. Fire from the hearth of the Pot of the Departed in the Gaita's house is used to light the first fire in the forest clearings and the sacred fires at festivals. The importance of the Ancestors, who remain as a sort of conservative society to safeguard the traditions of the tribe, will appear throughout this book and need not be elaborated now.

VII

Women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried, so are 764
the victims of small-pox and of such other diseases as the 766
Siraha may from time to time direct. All others are cremated, a fact which often makes police investigation difficult and even impossible.

At one time (I am not sure how far the custom survives) 766
the Waddai was buried naked and in an upright posture. The first child of a house, if it dies under five years old, is buried in the same erect posture, with face to the east—as [787] ●
there is light there, and beneath a mahua tree—for it is fertile of flowers and fruit, a good omen for the family.

In a funeral the chief actors are the Hanagunda or Hanal- 764
gaita, who is the master of ceremonies, and the sister's son or son-in-law of the deceased. The Hanagunda has to tie a thread round the corpse and hang the cow's-tail on the menhir. It is his wife's duty to wash the body, and to take cooked rice and haldi to the pyre. The sister's son has to climb on the roof to beat a drum to summon the relatives: he sits on the uraskal while it is being carried to its place; he makes the appointed offerings before the stone: he kills the sacrificial and festal cow.

After death the dead man is laid with his head to the east in the living room of his house. His sister's son takes a stick

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

piece of wood in his hand and lifting it over each pile several times from right to left uttered charms calling on the soul of the deceased to be content. The dead man's son brought a chicken and made it eat the rice, going from right to left three times. The Waddai passed his stick quickly over the chicken each time. However, when the fowl was eating the rice, it did not follow the proper order, but started to eat the sixth pile after the fourth. The Waddai declared that this was because two persons were involved in the fatal magic. After this had been done three times, the dead man's son passed the chicken between his legs backwards and twisted its neck till it was severed from the trunk. This he threw behind him, holding the head in his hands. He ripped open the head by cutting it through the beak and threw it into the fire. If this was not done, the head might turn into what is called in Gondi *vispitte* (a kind of bird which is known as *jiv chirai* in Hindi) and if this came to the village and called 'jiv, jiv' the people would die.

They then dug a hole in the earth close to the leaf-cups with a knife and placed a forked saja stick there. The dead man's son stood in front of the stick with his back to it, holding the cow's tail in his hand. He pointed it first at the sun, then to the four corners of the world and lastly to the place where the dead body had been cremated. He did this thrice and then tied the tail to the stick and poured a little landa on it. The dead man's wife offered some mahua liquor in a leaf-cup, because when her husband was alive one day when they were drinking they had agreed to die together. The Waddai, therefore, said as she was giving the liquor, 'Do not also take her away with you; release her from her promise; let her live for a while and look after the other members of the family'. Then the deceased's son and brother-in-law, who had carried the rice and pulse, threw it down near the stick. The dead man's son who had also taken with him a little thatch from the roof of his house now threw this at the stick saying, 'You built the house, now accept this'. Similarly, all the other things of which the old man had been fond when he was alive were thrown there. His son-in-law, however, picked up his bow and arrow and his knife was taken by one of the drummers. The drummers then threw away their drum-sticks into the ashes of the pyre.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I am not sure that a ring associated with any kind of death is not equally useful.

The Maria magicians believe themselves able to foretell a child's destiny by certain signs at birth. If, at the place where the placenta is buried, there appear the footprints of a tiger or the marks of a snake, they declare that the child will be either killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. If the water in the pot that is placed above the placenta-pit runs out of its own accord, it means that the child will be drowned. If a baby is born with a strangulating cord, it means that, when it grows up, it will either be hanged or will commit suicide by hanging.

But there is nothing to compare with the superstitions in Europe; the belief, for example, that the heart of a still-born child eaten while yet warm renders the eater invisible, thus aiding him to steal. Adam gives a number of beliefs from the Western world that equal the most bizarre of those recorded in Asia. He describes the soporiferous candles made of the fat of virgin children and used to see whether anyone was still awake in a house about to be burgled. The left thumb of a corpse nine weeks in the grave enables a thief to enter a house at night without rousing the occupants. In Poland the right hand of the corpse of a suicide may be used to discover stolen goods. In Italy, especially in Sicily, it is still believed that treasure can be unearthed with the assistance of the blood of innocent children.[1]

[826] [1] Adam, op. cit., pp. 261 ff. In Mandla District I have met Gond who believe that when a man is hanged a few drops of *jio-tel*, or "life-oil", fall from his body. If this oil can be obtained and applied to a dying man, he will be restored to life. At one time Mr Hivale was believed to possess a few drops of this precious liquid. The 'Hand of Glory' idea has its parallel in India. In Chittagong it was at one time customary for dacoits (mostly Mohammedan) to spread a shroud stolen from a corpse over the roof of a house to prevent the inhabitants from waking. See E. O. Sherborne, *Man*, Feb. 1934.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

837 get offended, and in their anger kill the cattle and other livestock. When an animal dies for this cause, its tongue protrudes and a watery discharge issues from its mouth. In Dhurli the Maria said that the guilty person might go blind, and in Mathadi we were told how an old woman did actually become blind as a result of betraying her husband. If a wife commits adultery when her husband is absent on a hunting expedition, her act will 'defile the earth' and the hunt will be ruined. The arrows will fly crookedly, and the husband himself may trip over a stump. He may be bitten by a snake or hit with an arrow. If the deceived husband is a magician, his vision will be clouded. If the proper ceremonies are not performed, he may be afflicted with a watery swelling that may cause death.

674 If a murder is committed on account of adultery, the
783 families both of the murderer and his victim may suffer from this swelling. To prevent the danger, the elders of each house gather together; they mix milk and water in a leaf-cup of mahua leaves and say, 'These sinned; but let not their sin be on us'. Then a representative of each house drinks a little. The family of the murdered man gives a present (which is called in Halbi *bhul-karcha*) to the family of the murderer. A measure of rice is put under the eaves of the victim's house. In the rice there is placed some thread, a ring and an arrow. The two families feast together on pork and rice, and swear friendship with each other. The arrow remains as witness to their oath. Then the murderer's family
[769] take the *bhul-karcha* home, and offer it to the Departed in their own house.

578 Quarrels are always dangerous, for they disturb tribal
787 solidarity and may earn the vengeance of the Departed. Indeed it is dangerous even to dream of a quarrel; if you do, you should sacrifice to the Earth the next morning. If husband and wife are known to be constantly at odds with one another, a panchayat is held and one or both may be fined.

783 When Oyami Anda of Harmamunda carried off and married a girl for whom another youth was serving as Lamhada, he not only had to pay compensation for the work done by the other boy, but a ceremony was performed to purify both parties of enmity. Anda stood with the Lamhada

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Aranpur I saw a large pile of ashes and half-burnt logs of 764
wood in front of the uraskal stones erected in memory of members of the Barse clan. These were the remains of the pyre for Barse Chewa who had recently been hanged. In this case it was considered of ill omen that, although two attempts were made to burn the pyre, a lot of the wood remained unburnt. In other villages, however, we were told that such ceremonies must not be performed in the neighbourhood of the menhirs.

There seems to be no objection to erecting an uraskal or danyakal stone either for murderers or for their victims. At Palnar an uraskal was mounted for Mulami Bella. At Dugeli an uraskal was erected for a murdered man. In other villages such as Metapal (where there is no uraskal for Banjami Irma who was murdered by his own son) or at Gandarguda (where there is no danyakal for Rawa Hirma) the absence of these memorials is said to be due to the fact that the deceased were poor men and their relatives could not afford them. But at Dugeli, Kunjami Pandu told us that an uraskal for a murdered man can only be erected after the case against the murderer is settled. When his own brother was murdered, he did not at first erect a stone for [767] ●
him, and he was continually troubled by the restless ghost who came in dreams to reproach him for not 'mingling his soul with the dead, and for his failure to give him a stone'. Once Pandu did this, he had no more bad dreams.

The ceremonies of erecting a menhir for a murderer are exactly the same as for anyone else. When the villagers were carrying the stone for Mulami Bella at Palnar, they halted and put it on the ground, and the women of the house threw rings on to it. Afterwards the women eagerly collected these [771]
rings, for it is considered very lucky to wear them.

On the forest road between Palnar and Jabeli there is a row of the flat memorial stones called danyakal, and at one end a tall carved wooden pillar and a large earthen tomb. The tomb, the pillar and one of the stones are in honour of Marvi Oyami Masa who died in jail while serving a sentence for the murder of his uncle. Masa was a very important man in Jabeli. He was rich, he was the Waddai of the village and he was a Siraha medicine-man. His death seemed to be far more important to the villagers than that of the man

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 of Chichari described how this happened to three of his
783 fellow-prisoners and they all died. Boti of Telam suffered a similar visitation and was ill for a whole year.

768 In several places I found that a house or a village had been
14 moved from its original site after a murder had been committed there. At Aranpur, for example, the house in which Chewa killed his father-in-law was destroyed, and a new house was built elsewhere for the widow and other members of the family. At Doriras the whole village was shifted from its former site in the year following the murder of Kawasi Boti. Muler village also was shifted after the murder of Rawa Harma.

VI

764 The funeral ceremonies of a suicide are performed in the
762 same way with the clothes and ornaments taking the place of the corpse. When Masa's younger wife hanged herself at Samgiri, her body after the post-mortem examination was buried at Dantewara. Her clothes and ornaments were taken out to a cross-roads and cremated according to the customary ritual. Her scythe, rice-husker and winnowing-fan were placed at the spot, but the scythe was picked up and carried home by one of her husband's relatives. Next morning they went to inspect the ashes and found distinct marks of hanging. A chicken was used to divine the cause of death,
[787] and it indicated that the woman had been angry and committed suicide in a fit of temper. The tragedy was in fact due to the girl's complaint that her husband did not pay her enough attention. The chicken's neck was then twisted, the head removed, split into through the beak and thrown away.

762 In Borgum village, the wife of Markami Pide committed
766 suicide because she was in love with another man and did not care for her husband. The body was taken to Dantewara for the post-mortem and buried there. The clothes were taken back to the village and burnt outside together with her mat, winnowing-fan, rice-husker and sickle. The next day the Priest of the Dead put rice and roots round the pyre. He made seven small piles of rice and brought a chicken saying, 'You were angry and put an end to your life; now become cool and rest in peace here and trouble none of us,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

tics both waking and sleeping, but they form a very small proportion of criminals. On the whole, the dream-life of criminals shows that they are insensitive and unemotional, true imbeciles in feeling and partly so in intelligence.[1]

The dreams of Maria prisoners mainly agree with this. The aboriginal theory of dreams is that the *jiwa* or soul leaves the body in sleep and goes out to seek adventure. The dream is what it sees as it goes to and fro about the world. In prison the soul takes every opportunity to leave the confined and frustrated body, and goes home to visit the family or roams abroad in search of variety. Barse Mata said, 'In my sleep I really feel as though the soul was leaving my body. It runs to the house and sees all my people there'. Another man described how his wife came and slept with him in his dream, and how he would go out and see his family and his dead father whom he had murdered. But, he added, his father never reproached him for what he had done. Boti described how he saw dances, bazaars, his relatives and wife and children. Marvi Kuma said that his soul frequently went home to visit his wife. Muchaki Dasru sees his wife and children at night. He sits up and wants to weep. But on another occasion he finds, as he said, that 'the dream is the chutney of sleep' and by its help he has been able, in spite of imprisonment, to see all that is going on in the outside world. Munda sees girls, fighting-cocks, horses (which are bad), snakes (which are good). His soul constantly seeks rice-beer and tobacco. Vetti Rupe said that he saw his family in dreams, and sometimes a witch or a sorcerer. 'Even now our enemies can trouble us from outside the jail'. He said that he found dreams alarming, for in the ordinary way if a Maria has an inauspicious dream, he can make suitable offerings and free himself of the danger. In the jail there is no shrine and no chaplain for this purpose.

Very tender experiences between husband and wife occur in dreams, and one boy described how his young wife came to him in sleep and gave him the food he loved and slept with him. More moving still, reminding one of a famous incident in Browning's *Ring and the Book*, was the experience of a boy who killed his wife in a drunken rage. 'When I

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 132 f.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

saw her dead, I wept and was very sad. I killed her by mistake. It was not from the heart'. He went on to describe how she still came to sleep with him in dreams. She, his victim, catches him by the hand and says, 'Come. Why do we stay here in this prison?'

But normally it is considered extremely dangerous to see in a dream the ghost of the person you have murdered, or to be visited by the Departed. Pandru of Chichari described how he had a dream in prison in which two people were pressing his shoulders very hard when suddenly a third man came and pushed them aside. These two people represented the Departed, and the man who pushed them away was a friendly ancestor who thus saved him from a serious illness. He said that while he was in jail three of his fellow-prisoners saw in dreams the ghosts of the men they had killed and all three died. Boti of Telam was also visited by the ghost of his victim, and as a result he was ill for a whole year. This suggests a strongly emotional element in dreams about violent crime.

This is a convenient point to refer to the very interesting dream seen by Pandru shortly before the fatal quarrel with his brother which led to murder and imprisonment. In his dream he saw an Anga clan-god and a drum and village trumpet. The clan-god stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested that the people were weeping and mourning. In *The Maria and Their Ghotul* I suggest a close connection between the uses of the Anga clan-god and the corpse for purposes of divination. The Anga, which is carried on the shoulders by four men and in many cases resembles a bier, is a suitable harbinger of doom.

A Jailor of thirty years' experience told me that usually the Maria murderers went to their fate bravely and seldom had to be dragged or forced. They were asked to say *Ram Ram Ram* as they went to their death. The executions have a profound effect on other prisoners. Doga of Jabeli was condemned to death and was confined in a solitary cell next door to Marvi Chewa. He told me how terrified he was when Chewa was hanged, since he knew that the same fate was in store for him. All night before his execution, Doga listened to the unhappy man weeping and heard the struggle as he

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

● 787 was dragged out of his cell by the warders. The Maria from Pinna Bheji described to me how terrified they were when the nephew of the Zamindar of Bhopalpatnam and his two companions were hanged. The Zamindar's nephew went to his death crying *Ram Ram*, but at the gallows he lost control of himself and covered the Magistrate who was present with the foulest abuse.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

pig, sprinkles their blood over the goddess and over each of the *saja* leaves, and breaks the top of each of the eggs with his knife. Then he offers the goddess ears of *chikma*, other early millets, and mountain rice; if the latter is not yet in ear, he offers a flowering rice stalk. He then prostrates himself with the palms of his hands flat on the ground, belches, and prays the goddess as their mother to accept these first-fruits, to grant them grace to have their new-eating feast, and to save her witless children from all troubles and adversity. He then hands each man one of the bloodstained *saja* leaves, and, leaving someone to watch over the slain victims, all go and bury the leaves in their fields. Each man then brings a handful of old rice from his house to the *kadri-bera* field, and hands it over to the *perma*, who cooks the bodies of the victims and the rice separately, and distributes them to the men, who eat their share there.

Meanwhile the women, for whom it has been taboo to attend the ceremony in the *kadri-bera* field and the burial of the leaves, will have prepared meal from the new millets and mountain rice; the grains are still rather green, and are roughly threshed, parched in a broken earthen crock held over the fire, pounded with the *uspal* husker, winnowed free of husks, and ground between two hand mill-stones with a quantity of salt; some mix in a little *gur* sugar. The wife of each head of a family cooks the new flour in a Hanal Kunda or Pot of the Departed (not, of course, that in which oil, etc., is placed in the name of the newly dead), along with new vegetables from the *bari*, other than gourds, beans and cucumbers. When the head of the family returns from the sacrificial meal already described, he brings with him the junior members of his family, but *not* his wife-clan relatives, and some of them bring small chickens. He sacrifices these to the Departed, offers them some of the new flour and vegetables, and pours a libation of *mahua* spirit and *landa* on the floor of the corner of the *wijja-lon* room that is dedicated to the cult of the Departed. The new flour and vegetables are then eaten in his house by them, their wives and their unmarried children; but no one of any other clan may participate, and on that day no one must give anything out of his house, not even fire from his hearth, to anyone of another clan.

On the next day, however, there is the usual remains-eating feast (*Hara Tindana*) in their houses, to which they are free to invite friends, brother-clan and wife-clan relatives, whom they regale on *mahua* spirit and on *landa*. In the evening they dance the *kortam* dance without their bison-horn head-dresses, but with men and women dancing separately in their usual way.

In villages where there is a log-god and a *Mataguri* or hut-shrine of Mata, the sacrifices on the first day are made before each, the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Ranghat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle.

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare-Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhârui*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

FIG. 1. Kuraj digging-stick of iron. Length 1' 7"

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'.

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari pude*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths.

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*.

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the rains. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] The other villagers come and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *harlat* or *balla* (*dhoona* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *harpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes called *kalwak* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun at the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

[1] The Juang keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandagarh* dormitory, and usually ignite their clearings from it.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

Hair-dressing

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *penda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiwa* and making it useless for any magic.

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 231 other minor grains. Where timber is not available, these sties are made from bamboos, or even from stones. Similar but, of course, far smaller structures are made to serve as hen-coops, resting generally against the side or front of the houses.

778 361 [824] The shrine of the Village Mother, as has been stated above, is sometimes actually inside the village dormitory, sometimes just outside it, and sometimes at a considerable distance from the actual village, in a grove, if possible of *saja* (*Terminalia tomentosa*—everywhere the sacred tree of the Gond) trees. Sometimes there is also in the village, often at the end of the street opposite the dormitory, the hut-temple of the *pen* or clan-god, containing the log-frame image of the god. This will normally be found only in the village of the *pen-wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god; but sometimes, where the villages of the clan are far apart, there may be two copies of the clan-god, or the god may go to visit other villages, and have a resting-shed in each; or he may have begotten a son to deputize for him in the distant village; I have seen in a *pen-rawar* (clan-god's temple) both the *pen* himself and an embryo 'son' in the second of his three years' 'gestation'. The *pen* is always covered by a shed; but the Village Mother sometimes is just a cairn or a basket-cylinder filled with stones, or a low table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree, and close by there is a small shed of grass thatch with open sides in which are kept the cooking pots, ladles and sacrificial knife used at ceremonial feasts. The sacred grove may in very rare cases, in villages near the edge of the lowlands, have also a hut-temple of Danteshwari Mai or Maolai, the most revered or feared Hindu deities of Bastar.

343 841 There will be found well apart from the houses and the rest of the village a menstruation hut in many villages, known as *padawo'-gha'i* to the Hill Marias, or sometimes as *dola-lon*. Here all menstruating women are secluded from the village for a week every month. Sometimes the hut has a single room, about 6 by 5 feet, with walls 3 feet high, with no windows and only a small door little bigger than the entrance to an English kennel; sometimes there are two rooms separated from each other by a partition, so that when a girl is afraid of being secluded by herself a duenna may sleep within sound of her without actual contact. The door of the seclusion room always opens away from the village, so that the affected woman may get out at night to answer the call of nature without overlooking the village or being visible to any villager. Special cooking pots and utensils are kept in the seclusion room, or else the woman's food is cooked outside and left by her door for her. [789 824] The roof is often covered with seed-bearing twigs of castor-oil plants, in all parts of India regarded as very efficacious against magic.

[text continues on p. 106]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

procession at Jagdalpur. The Dantewara temple observes several of the local *pandum*, if in a Hinduized form, while the ceremonies of the isolated Telanga villages now surrounded by a sea of Bison-horn Maria villages have become little different from those of the Bison-horn Marias. Hinduization there is, and has long been; but that alone does not account for the differences between the ritual of the Bison-horn Maria and that of the Hill Maria and his Muria neighbours. The physical differences between the two sections of Marias are slight, but their traditions are different, and at least it is clear that they represent different waves of migration. The remarkable differences of dancing, drumming, singing and ritual, and in the intonation, words and inflexions of their dialects, which make them mutually unintelligible, cannot be explained merely by saying that the Bison-horn Marias are 'more advanced' and more in contact with Hinduism and Telugu influences than the Hill Marias.

Note.

Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., has, since this book went to the press, kindly sent me a note of an interesting recent investigation by the police at Madder in Bhopalpatnam zamindari. A Mohammedan woman asleep on the night of June 13th, 1937 in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a knife or arrow over her right ribs, and woke to see what she believed to be two Marias running away. The police enquiry elicited information that many Marias in Kutru zamindari (i.e. Bison-horn Marias or Hill Marias of the plains in long contact with Doria or Bison-horn influence; the true Hill Marias would not venture down to Madder), before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice seed before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter XV

Birth and Childhood

A. Hill Marias

No Marias are unaware of the causal connexion between intercourse and pregnancy, and all women know when they miss their first menstruation that they are probably starting to bear a child. Pregnancy among Hill Marias is attended by no taboo either for man or wife, so far as I could ascertain, and the wife continues performing her ordinary routine work right up to the last day of her pregnancy. Sexual intercourse, however, ceases as soon as pregnancy is known to have begun.

During ordinary menstruation, as we have seen in Chapter VI, the wife, like all young women, is secluded for five or six days either in the communal menstruation hut, or in the *kala* or menstruation room or the separate menstruation hut of the house. The menstruation huts, whether communal or private, are known as *pedawo'gha'i*, or (in the south of the Abujhmar hills) as *dola-low*, or (in the extreme north) as *kurma-low*. The term *pedawo'gha'i* is applied also sometimes to the *kala* room in the houses. These huts and rooms have been described already on pages 104-6. The Hill Marias say that their clan-god and their Departed would be angry if they gave up their immemorial custom of secluding their women during menstruation, and that no man should see a woman's face at such a time; we have seen that they often guard against the magic of women in this condition by placing castor oil plants and seeds on the roof of the hut when it is occupied. The men do not seem to have any clear idea of what happens to a woman at such times; they only know and say that she 'has gone *pedawo'gha'i*'. There is no ceremony of any kind at a girl's first menstruation, or during pregnancy. Though children are generally born in the menstruation room or hut, and for some time after birth the mother has to live there, subject to the same prohibitions as during menstruation, yet during her nine months she is free from the ordinary taboos to which she is subject during menstruation; that is to say, she is free to visit her husband in the fields and to cook his food for him, in fact to do all her ordinary household and field or market tasks. But it is taboo for a pregnant woman to pick or break anything growing. There may possibly be certain prohibitions which I did not discover,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

843 secluded for their first menstruation, known as the *piki-kurma-lon*; but generally speaking, Bison-horn Marias do not seem to hold in the same strength the Hill Maria fear of a woman in this condition.

844 For the birth of a child a separate hut or booth is erected in the compound, generally at the back of the house, known as the *er-nihitana-lon*, or water-washing hut. This is often little more than the roughest of booths, and considerably inferior to even a Bison-horn Maria pigsty. Here the mother remains for a full month, during which her husband is not allowed to go to his work. The delivery is assisted by an experienced woman relative or fellow-villager, who cuts and binds the navel-cord and washes the child immediately after it is born, and gives it to the mother to suckle. No food is given to the mother that day; on the next morning she is made to drink a decoction of the bark of the *kusum* [824] tree (*Schleichera trijuga*), the root of the dwarf *chhind* palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*), and *kulthi* (*Dolichos biflorus*) pulses, pounded to a powder and boiled together, and an hour or two after this dose she is given a meal of warm boiled rice. She is dosed and fed in this way for six or seven days more, until the navel-cord falls off; and then she washes her whole body and is allowed to eat regular meals. At the 852 end of the month the *lon-wa'ina* or Returning to the House ceremony 533 takes place. The child is named with the aid of a medium, though actually names seem to be given for reasons very similar to those actuating Hill Maria choice of names. A pig, a goat or a number of cocks are killed, and the mother, having washed her clothes and her body, cooks the flesh, all the villagers and relatives being entertained to dinner. Thenceforward the mother is free to resume all her normal household and field work, and the father can resume his work.

553 I once witnessed an unusual naming ceremony. A son had been born after three elder brothers had died. It was considered 789 that their deaths had been due to the hostility of some demon or of the familiar spirit of some magician, and on the medium's advice the baby had been suspended in a rough cradle over the rubbish-heap by the fence of the *bari* garden, and all the men present threw cow-dung and filth all round the cradle, shouting out '*Kacharu*' or 'Filth!', which name was given to the child in the hope that thereby the malignant power would be deceived into thinking that the parents set no value on the child.

862 Children are breast-fed for two years or more, as among the Hill Marias. It has been already recorded (page 219) that there is among the Bison-horn Marias a special weaning ceremony during the Jata Pandum at which the first solid food given to the children is a portion of the rice and meat offered to the Departed.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a woman at this time. At the menarche (for which the word used is *kumor utta*, 'the blossoming of the flower'), however, a special hut is built for the girl by women outside the village. A woman of the household brings her food and sleeps with her at night; she must bathe whenever she returns to the house. In some villages, the Marias still make a platform up a tree for the girl, who during the day must hide herself in the forest.

It is very dangerous for anyone to see, let alone to touch, a girl at her menarche. At Tikanpal I was told that if a man saw such a girl as he went through the jungle he should slap her and then go to her parents and after rebuking them, demand a fowl which he should sacrifice; then he should bathe and anoint himself with oil. At Gadapal they said that a man should throw a lump of earth between his legs at the girl, or a stick over his shoulder, and then go home and bathe. Neglect of these precautions might lead to blindness.

At the end of the period—all this refers only to the first period—the girl destroys her hut or platform during the night, throws away her cloth,[1] bathes and returns home before cockcrow. In some villages she is expected to remain for a day or two longer on the veranda of her house: if she has a married elder brother, it is the special duty of his wife to attend to her. Then she puts oil and turmeric on her body—an act which is said to symbolize her formal re-admission into caste, for during the previous days she has been regarded as excommunicated. In many Maria villages, however, the ceremonial use of turmeric is still unknown, and the elder brother's wife carries a pot of water round the house and sprinkles everyone saying, 'Now you are back again in caste'. After this the girl fetches water in an earthen pot and cowdungs the floor. In the evening her father invites some of the elders to a bottle of liquor and says, 'My daughter who was unclean all these days is now clean again'. He sacrifices a fowl to the Departed and they feast on its flesh.

There is not nearly so much fuss about the later periods. The woman has to keep out of the way, but there is no danger in looking at her, and when it is over she just has a bath and resumes her ordinary duties. But even so her daily programme is considerably disturbed. She must not sleep inside the house and, of course, sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden. She must not cook or fetch water or go to work in the fields. She must not touch cattle, pigs

[1] There do not seem to be any special taboos associated with this cloth. But the leaf-cups from which the girl eats at this time are charged with magical potency and if a witch can get hold of them she can afflict the girl with palsy.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

doorway while his parents encouraged him and the old women shouted ribald jokes. At last he plucked up courage and made a dash for the girl. Her companions resisted him but at last, of course, he broke through them, seized the girl and dragged her weeping loudly into the house. The girls rushed after them and pushed and hustled them into an inner room and shut the door on them, the theory being that they would consummate the marriage there and then. The old women stood round the hut trying to look inside and discussing the bridegroom's potency. The cock which is often stolen by the bride's party from the bridegroom's house was here given as a present with a little cloth to the bride's younger sister.

This was the end of one marriage. The other was a surprise. The girls came dancing with the shrouded bride up to the house, the bridegroom put on a new shirt for the occasion, his mother brought water to wash the feet of her new daughter-in-law. Everything was ready, but after the girls had danced round once or twice in front of the house, they made as if to go right round it in honour of the Departed. Everybody waited for them to complete the circuit and return, but their voices grew fainter and fainter, and I went out to see them dancing away into the forest. It was then explained to the unfortunate bridegroom that certain ceremonies had to be performed in Gogonda to protect the bride against magical dangers with which she was threatened and that she would be returned to him in three days' time.

It was then six o'clock and we returned to camp.

VIII

On February 2nd, 1942 there was celebrated at Ghotpal near Barsur the great Marhai and Pen-Karsita of the Lekhami clan. Directly I arrived and made my camp under some trees I was greeted by a little deputation of local priests who told me very politely but quite firmly that though they were delighted to have me there I would not be permitted to take any photographs or write anything down. Later I went with Mr. Sampat Singh to the shrine of the Ghotpal clan-god, the Anga, Usendi Pen, with whom are his sons Hunga and Wella and his daughter Wange. I was at once surrounded by people telling me that I must not go inside. An elderly magician approached me and in a stern voice told me to take my hat off, for I was looking at a god. Such instructions are unusual in aboriginal India.

Nothing happened that day, but people began to assemble and many merchants arrived and set up their booths in a line along the edge of the great open dancing-ground in front of the shrine.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*kotul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

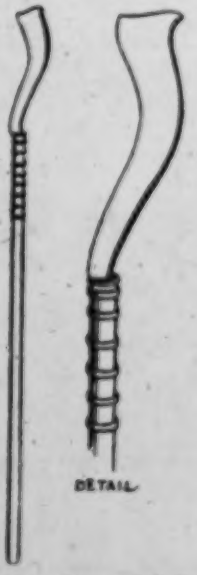


FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
Length 5' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *Ahavisadar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Burka ta jhua undina bedur gutta ti mak dāyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

842 Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead.
●789 A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform spells to stop her supplanter from realizing the fullest joys of marriage. The Constable of Modenar said that Mayakaka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Husband and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

842 578 [586]

A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (intercourse), and *paidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to space confinements properly. After a year, 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months, and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'. But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puerperium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them? But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

843 In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements.
844 The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

776 by the tragic circumstances of his origin. According to universal legend he is the ghost of a young bridegroom who, on the way to his wedding, was killed either by lightning[1] or by a tiger. Frustrated at the moment of achieving happiness, he lives on, soured and bitter, to trouble mankind.

For this reason Dulha Deo is regarded as particularly touchy and there are many stories about his quick temper and his readiness to take an insult and notice a slight. For example, at Silati the Muria described how he interrupted a Kalar marriage at Bara Dongar. A Muria neighbour had dedicated a pig to Dulha Deo. On the morning of the marriage the pig wandered over to the Kalar's house and the Kalar exclaimed, 'Alas! I have seen a pig's face early in the morning'. When Dulha Deo in the form of the pig heard this, he was very angry and stood snorting with rage in front of the house, refusing to allow the marriage to proceed. At last the Kalar had to touch the pig's feet and promise a goat in honour of Dulha Deo.

A practical reason for Dulha Deo's bad reputation may be the fact that at a marriage everybody is very excited, more or less drunk, and hitches in the procedure and quarrels between relations are always likely to occur. Whenever anything goes wrong, the blame is put on the god who must then be properly appeased. Dulha Deo serves a useful purpose as the divine whipping-boy.

Bhimul Pen

[778] In many Muria villages there is a small shrine of four wooden pillars and some cross-poles, but no roof, round one or two stones that may be anything from one to three feet high. These represent the deity who is called variously Bhimul Pen, Bhima or Bhimsen and his wife Bhimsenin or Gorondi Dokari.

I think it probable that there was a very ancient aboriginal deity, a rain-god called Bhimul, whose cult has been assimilated to that of the mightiest of the Pandava brothers, Bhimsen. The Muria expect both Lingo and Bhimul to provide them with rain in due season. If there is a drought, Bhimul's stone is [789] covered with cow-dung with the idea that he will quickly send rain to wash himself clean.[2]

But the Muria Bhimul has many other functions. In eastern Kondagaon, he takes the place of Lingo as the founder of the ghotul and its protector. [534] He is regarded as having a special interest in drums and must be worshipped when a mandri drum is made and when it is used at a wedding. He and his wife are associated with stilt-walking. He appears as the cause of thunder and the fertilizer of the crops.

[796] Bhimul has a special festival to himself in order to ensure a good rainfall. The villagers bring in March a little of whatever seed or vegetable is available and throw it over Bhimul's stone. The Gaita makes the final offerings. Chelik and motiari dance all night.[3]

[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 119; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73.

[2] To get rain, Bombay Hindu villagers 'besmear the phallus of Shiva with cooked rice and curds'.—Enthoven, op. cit., p. 321. The Parja of Bastar are described as fixing a piece of wood into the ground in the name of Bhimsen over which they pour water when they are in need of rain.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 377.

[3] For the widespread cult of this 'heroic godling' both among Hindus and aboriginals, see Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 66, 89, 250 and Vol. II, p. 182; Grigson, op. cit., pp. 206, 215, 219; S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Calcutta, 1912), p. 98; *The Baiga*, p. 59 and *passim*; *The Agaria*, p. 93; *The Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 76 (for the cult among the Nagpur Gond); ibid., p. 236 (for the Urali's idea that thunder is the result of a duel between the two Bhima in heaven); Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. IV, pp. 56 and 71 (for the Koyi tradition that traces the origin of the tribe to Bhimadeo who while hunting in the jungle met a wild woman of the woods and married

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in each case what kind of worship, what special offerings, what peculiar rites will be acceptable to the god.

These mediums are known in Bastar by the Halbi word Siraha. A Leshi is sometimes the Siraha's assistant; sometimes the words are used synonymously. The Siraha does not offer sacrifice, indeed he is not a priest at all; he is simply a medium through whom the gods make known their will. He has the power of falling into trance, of dancing ecstatically and of diagnosing disease and interpreting the divine commands while in this condition. Scores of these men may be seen at any of the great festivals in the State. With their long hair flying wildly about them as they shake their heads, with scourges and whips in their hands and their drunken, drugged, besotted look, they are a distinctive feature of every Muria religious assembly. Yet, in ordinary life, they are completely normal, sensible, hard-working men and no one would suppose that they were capable of such remarkable transformations.

The Gunia, who understands *gusi* or magical charms, is simply a medicine-man. He is called in to cure the sick, to recover lost property and to discover the culprit when goods or cattle are stolen. The Panjiyar is a diviner who works by measuring bits of grass which he questions until he obtains the correct answer. The Gunia tends rather to work with a winnowing-fan or a lamp. Both use grain for divination.

Another common form of divination in Bastar is by eggs. Among the Hill Maria, the Kaser-Gaita watches the eggs hatched in his house; if these get addled it may be a sign that the village site should be changed. The Muria test the omens by egg-throwing at the time of breaking stilts.[1] All the Bastar tribes use eggs in worship, and offer them before going out to hunt and fish, 'for they are greatly loved by the gods'.

Eggs are liked by the gods because 'an egg is like a virgin whom no one has touched, or a pregnant woman who holds two souls at once'. A curious tale explains the origin of poultry.

> There was an entirely dark village twelve *kos* long. Once the people went out with a widow's son to search for light. They went a long long way until they lay down weary to sleep. When they awoke they found the sun in the sky. The widow's son declared that he had not slept and had seen a one-legged man put the sun there. The others were jealous that he should have seen this sight and killed him. They divided the flesh among themselves and gave some to the boy's mother, who took it not knowing what it was. She put it aside for him to eat when he should return. But next day, early in the morning as the sun came into the sky, the boy's flesh turned into a cock and began to crow. So when a hen lays an egg it is only a lump of flesh; it is when it hears the cock crow that life comes into it. That is why gods and men love eggs—for they are a sign of strength and life.

For this reason, it is said, gods and ghosts are not often responsible for addling eggs; this is done by human enemies. If a setting of eggs is thus spoilt by black magic, it should be lifted up together with its straw and placed on a piece of an earthen pot. It should be taken to a cross-road, where the priest must say, *'Thu ihu, manlotia*, go back to whoever sent you'. He throws away the eggs and the party returns home without looking back. Elsewhere when

[1] Divination by egg-throwing is recorded of the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. In 1942 I found the Juang of Pal Lahara employing the virgin son of the village priest to test the omens, before a festival, by egg-throwing. The use of eggs in worship is widespread in Bastar and Orissa.

the eggs go bad, the priest plucks the feathers of the hen and puts them with the eggs. Broken egg-shells (which are usually preserved on bits of stick and kept under the roof) are added and all are taken to a cross-road. The priest cries, '*Thu thu*, you wanted to injure my hen. Take this and go away'. After this, the hen grows new feathers and the next lot of eggs will be good.

In the north-west of the State, the son of the village Gaita has a position of privilege in the ghotul and is often appointed its leader, but in the rest of the State the boys of the priestly families have no special privileges and can claim no special office; they are treated exactly the same as any other boys. But the Gaita's and Siraha's sons begin their training as priests or mediums while they are still boys, and many chelik have the power of falling into trance and prophesying. In Masora I saw chelik being taught how to bathe the gods and carry them about. In Kollibera I watched the Gaita teaching two of the chelik how to sacrifice chickens and offer egg-shells to the gods at the end of the Pus Kolang expedition. Parents often take their sons to special festivals so that they can learn what to do by imitation. The chelik usually attend ceremonies as acolytes and prepare the sacrificial food, wash the vessels, and make ready the sacrificial hearth. In this way the future Gaita or Pujari learns his business. The function of Siraha or Gunia is not always hereditary, but boys are chosen and trained when it is found that they are of an unusually sensitive temperament.

VII. White and Black Magic

Hitherto we have been dealing with Muria religion mainly in its relation to the gods; we must now take a brief glance at its prophylactic and protective measures on behalf of man against his natural and ghostly enemies. Chelik and motiari are protected against black magic by the divine power of the ghotul fence, but they are only safe while they are inside the ghotul. Evil powers cannot enter the building, but they camp all round, and the Muria boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of battle in the unseen world.

Black magic entered the world through an insufficiency. Bhagavan had seven daughters. He had prepared flour with which to create man, but his daughters stole and ate a little from some of the heaps of flour. In these there was thus not enough material for them to become real human beings and they became magicians and witches. Because of their lack of flesh and blood, they try to steal flesh and drink the blood of men. The warlock and witch are thus sub-human, not fully created. In the untouched Muria tradition, the enemy of mankind is usually a man; belief in female witches and the evil eye of woman is generally a later and Hindu accretion to the old beliefs.

The story comes from Karikhodra. In it we see that the warlock and witch are sub-human, not fully created. In other stories witchcraft originates in disobedience and cannibalism. In Matawal in the Mardapal Pargana we were told the following tale:

> A Muria and his sister left their parents' house and went out to seek for work. After a time they returned home and wished to make an offering to Mother Earth. They went to the shrine of the goddess and the boy said to his sister, 'Whatever you do, do not eat any of the flesh sacrificed here'. They found that the Gaita had put some flesh on a saja leaf in the name of the goddess before her shrine. As they approached a crow flew down, ate some of the flesh and scattered the rest. The boy picked it up and put it back again on the leaf. Behind the shrine a lot of blood from the animals offered and sacrificed had

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 Once again the party went to the stream, but the Gaita and the Waddai stayed behind and addressed the saja stick: 'For one month more you will get nothing, don't go to your house, but stay here'. After a bath they all (with the exception of the drummers) went to the deceased's house. The drummers, who are regarded as unclean for the duration of the ceremony, bathed and washed their drums. They applied and placed some rice on the drums. To them they also sacrificed a chicken and offered the blood and some liquor. The drummers were then given rice, which they cooked separately, and a shoulder of the cow. After eating their food they went to their own houses.

789 The conclusion of the story is worth recording. A month later, the Waddai went with the villagers to the boundary of the village carrying a chicken, a pig, an egg, egg-shells, a bamboo bow and arrow, burnt earth from below the hearth, charcoal powder, rice, pulse and haldi. All these things were taken in separate leaf-cups. The Waddai arranged them in seven rows and made a chicken eat the rice, calling on Markami Bando's magic to go away. The chicken ate the rice quickly. But this was not sufficient proof that the black magic had really been driven away, 'because every hungry creature will naturally feed upon what it can get'. The Waddai, therefore, tortured the chicken, first by breaking one leg, and still it ate; he broke another leg, and again it ate; then he broke the wings and the fowl though in pain and agony went on eating. It was now beyond doubt that Bando's magic had been dealt with successfully and the chicken was thrown away, still alive, and not sacrificed. The pig was then sacrificed and the Waddai drew a line on the boundary of the village where the seven rows were arranged, spat there and said, 'Away from this line' and they all departed without looking back. In this ceremony the household members did not take part.

The next day the Waddai sacrificed under a mahua tree near the house a white chicken and broke an egg in honour of the ancestral ghost of Kosa's father. After this he entered the house and sprinkled it with a mixture of milk, saja bark,
769 and dab grass to purify it and sacrificed a black chicken for the Ancestors of the family.

775 Special precautions must, of course, be taken when anyone

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 dies a violent death. The ghost of a man killed by a tiger may possess the animal and drive it to take vengeance on other members of the community: the victim of snake-bite dwells in the snake's tail and drives it to homicidal fury.[1]

775 789 Women dying in pregnancy and childbirth become very dangerous after death and their ghosts must be laid by special ceremonies which include the driving of nails into the knees and elbows of the corpse and at the four corners of the grave, over which a herd of buffaloes may sometimes be driven.

VIII

764 In the neighbourhood of almost every Maria village will be found a row of menhirs erected in memory and for the appeasement of the Dead. Sometimes these stones are very large; sometimes they are quite small and are expected to grow bigger in course of time. The majority of clans erect an upright pillar which is called urakal. But a number of them place instead a danyakal, a large flat stone supported on four smaller ones.

In the ceremonies attending the bringing of a menhir, the sister's son again plays a leading part. Led by him a party of three drummers and a man beating a gong and twenty or thirty men go out to the quarry where the stone has already been cut out or to some hill where a suitable rock has been observed. The sister's son touches the stone and addresses the dead man. 'In your name', he says, 'we are bringing this stone; let it be light, let not the burden be too heavy'. They place poles below and above the stone, lashing them together with rope. Then the sister's son with a drum in his hand climbs on to the stone and begins to drum with a new rhythm which goes *gul-gucha, gul-gucha, gul-gucha*. Some twenty men lift up the stone whistling loudly, *soor, soor, whee, whee*, and swing it to and fro. Then they move towards the place where the menhir is to be erected, the drummers dancing and drumming in

[1] Such accidental deaths are far from uncommon. In 1938, in the whole State 55 persons were killed by tigers, 10 by panthers, 4 by bears, 53 by drowning, 102 by snake-bite, 53 by falling from trees (chiefly the tall toddy and sago palms). The great majority of these accidents were to aboriginals and every one involved the relatives in complex and hazardous ceremonies for their protection.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 has been specially hollowed out for this purpose. Usually
273 there is no stock of rice-beer at hand and it cannot be made so quickly. The Maria then mix a little mandia flour with water and give this instead.

If for any reason in the course of the ceremony some rite or custom is omitted the spirit of the dead man may attack one or other of the mourners in order to show his displeasure. For example, at Gadapal, Burka Peda told me that they once forgot to give landa to the old menhirs and the insulted Dead attacked his father's sister and she fell down in a fit. They quickly gave both landa and mahua liquor to all the menhirs and she recovered. Again in Mahara-Karka one Kuhrami Eriya was hurled into the fire by the angry ghost and his leg was burnt. If this happens it is a good plan for the victim to run and catch
● [189] hold of the bamboo poles with which the stone was carried. The Gaita pours water upon him and the angry ghost leaves him alone.

IX

322 When a very well-known or wealthy man dies his family
766 sometimes erects a carved wooden pillar to his memory.
554 There are very few of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

322 These pillars are called by Grigson uragatta, a word that
766 is obviously formed on the same plan as uraskal, from *urasna* meaning 'to bury' and *gatta*—'a pillar'. I have not myself found any Maria using the word or even recognizing it when it has been put to them. It may be that its use has died out. The Maria to whom I have spoken call these pillars either *munde* (Gondi) or *kambha* (Halbi or Hindi).

The pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. It should simply be near any road or path that is constantly used by the people. The pillars are usually made of saja or sarai wood and are erected with ceremonies very similar to those for a stone.

There are not many of these pillars, but they are worth looking at. There is a very fine one near Dilmilli

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 he murdered. The stone next to his is for Marvi Buta who was also sentenced for this murder and also died in jail. But there was nothing at all in honour of the murdered man.

764 532 The erection of a carved memorial pillar is probably the greatest honour that the Maria can pay to the dead. It is the equivalent of being buried in Westminster Abbey. Masa's pillar is a very fine one. It shows him as a Siraha sitting on a swing: a streamer of untidy hair blows out from his head. Another carving shows him mounted on an elephant. Another portrays him riding on a horse attended by his wives. All round him are the symbols of his life; deer and tigers represent his love of the chase; axes, swords and knives symbolize his valour and enterprise; two men carry a pot of rice-beer in memory of his drinking prowess.

775 789 The business of keeping the ghost of the murderer or his victim quiet naturally greatly exercises the minds of the village medicine-men and priests. There is danger either that the ghost will cause trouble among the other ghosts of the family, and thus by annoying the ancestors may bring trouble upon the living: or it may inspire another member of the family also to commit a murder; or it may return and simply make itself troublesome. At Phulpar, after Pandu had been hanged and the usual ceremonies performed, the village priest sacrificed a hen near the pyre saying, 'Now we make your home here: live here with your ancestors peacefully'. If they fail to do this, they said, they think someone else in the house will also commit a murder. Then they erected a saja pole and after sacrificing a cow to appease the ghost of the dead man, each relative in turn picked up the cow's tail, saluted it and hung it on the pole. The Waddai went to a corner of the room where the Pot of the Departed was kept, sprinkled liquor there and addressed the ghost: 'Live now with your sons. Do not go to your daughters. Care for the people of your house. See that your children prosper'.

Often, after the ceremony of burning the clothes and ornaments, a man sits in the house of the deceased and the ghost comes upon him. He is led out to the pyre, and there he buries a *bhut kukri*, a ghost hen, to ensure that the ghost will not come to the house and trouble its relatives.

The ghost of the murderer or his victim becomes a Mirchuk.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Sometimes it is supposed that this Mirchuk possesses a man and makes him commit a murder. At Gudra, when Kawachi Linga returned from jail after serving a homicide sentence, a black chicken was sacrificed to the Mirchuk of his victim. But the chicken refused to eat the rice that is always offered to test it before it is killed, and the people thought that this meant that Linga would be possessed by the spirit of his first victim and thus be driven to commit another murder. To avert this danger they sacrificed a pig and a cow, and only then readmitted him to their society.

The Mirchuk, whatever its origin may be, may be employed by a witch as her familiar and servant. She gets control over it and uses it to assist her in her wicked designs.

The Mirchuk is very quarrelsome, and the spirit of a man who has been hanged must not be mingled with the other ancestors in the Room of the Departed, for it is sure to cause trouble. So the Mirchuk is generally located outside the village under a large stone, in an ant-hill or in a mahua tree. At Dhurli we were told that, when Telami Hunga was murdered, his ghost was kept apart, for he was a student of magic and such persons turn into Rao Bhut. For such no uraskal should be erected, nor should the ghost be mingled with the other Departed.

Indeed it is often held that the ghosts of the slain and of executed criminals should not be 'mingled with the Departed' and nothing should be put for them in the sacred Pot in the ordinary way.[1] When the boy Ando was murdered by his uncle Irma, this precaution was taken. Ando's ghost still roams the village, an axe in its hands, seeking vengeance. Irma's ghost is said to have possessed itself of the rope with which he was hanged and people were afraid it might use it to hang the other Departed of his clan or to steal their cows.

It is very dangerous for a murderer to see the ghost of his victim while he is in jail, perhaps because it is impossible there to perform the proper ceremonies of protection. Pandu

[1] Mateer reported that in Travancore the ghosts of executed murderers were regarded as specially dangerous and were believed to haunt the place of execution. To prevent this the executioner used to cut off the criminal's heels with a sword or hamstring him as he was thrown off. S. Mateer *The Land of Charity* (London, 1871), pp. 203 f.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

166 361 787 791 778 When shifting is to begin, all the parish lands being lands of the clan, the *madda'i* or priest of the clan-god is usually consulted; he is generally himself the *leski* or medium whom the god possesses, and if the god through him directs that the village should be shifted, he leads the villagers to the new site; sometimes the *madda'i* himself is not a medium, but keeps a *leski* as an assistant. At the new site the *kasyeq-gaita* clears a small patch of ground in honour of the Village Mother, and on this offers an egg, some grain and flowers in her name, over which he places stones in a basketry cylinder or as a cairn. This will remain as her shrine in the new village, sometimes, as we have seen, inside the dormitory fencing, sometimes outside it but in the main village street, or sometimes right outside the village in a grove, a shed being erected over it. The removal of the cairn would be an omen of disaster, only to be avoided by shifting the village. The Orcha villagers had only a small table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree in a grove to mark their Village Mother. Handawada, besides a cairn, had a forked stick of *saja* wood oiled and polished, and whipped round the fork with *kosa* silk whipping, with a leaning thatched roof to protect her from the elements. Whatever form her shrine or representation may take, it is left behind when the village is deserted, and not shifted to the new village; for it is regarded as valuable evidence of the clan or parish property in the land. The only things removed are the pots in which grain, etc., is cooked at the Mother's feasts, the cooking utensils and the knives, which the *kasyeq-gaita* or religious headman must himself carry under his arm, *not* on his head, which is taboo, to the shed erected to house them near the Mother's shrine in the new village.

[784]

361 166 In the villages which I have seen being shifted, the earliest buildings to be erected have been the village dormitory, the houses of the 'advance guard', the religious and the secular headmen, and the menstruation hut. Villagers often put up their pig-sties before their own houses. A temporary dormitory is often put up to house the bachelors, and replaced after the houses have been built by a more permanent and elaborate structure.

The villagers remove all their utensils and household goods from their old to their new houses when the village is shifted. But they move no building materials; they leave the deserted houses to the mercy of the elements, which means that they are soon choked in the mass of high grass and scrub jungle that immediately springs up on the deserted site, and probably burnt down when the forest undergrowth is fired in the following spring.

[text continues on p. 112]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

771 on one occasion for the Pen and on another for the Village Mother; even at the annual village festival of the Mother following the clan harvest-home and Koqsar of the Hill Marias the Pen, if honoured, is sometimes honoured on the same stones as the Mother, and not at a separate cairn. It is useless to expect to get any clear-cut distinction between the three conceptions out of a Maria, whose religious ideas are vague and inchoate. He knows only that there are factors which may bring trouble or which may benefit, and that the wise clan and village duly propitiate them, though, if in their turn these unknown factors fail to reciprocate, they will get no further meed of sacrifice for the same immediate object unless the desired benefit is at once granted. An example of this attitude has already been given in the mention in Chapter VII of the deputation that went to see the Gume clan's god to protest against rain preventing the firing of the *penda*, and to promise him a cock if and when he stopped the rain. In the actual formulae pronounced by the village *kasyeq-gaita* in the hills and the *perma* in the Bison-horn country at the sowing and other ceremonies, however, I have never heard the clan-god's name mentioned; they start almost invariably with '*Bhum kenji, Talugh kenji!*' 'Earth hearken, Mother hearken!', sometimes addressing similarly '*Nel*' or fields and '*Jimma Jaga*', all that is around. Here *Bhum* and the clan-god appear to be identical; in the villages where there are both a *kasyeq-gaita* and a *bhum-gaita* in the Abujhmar country, it is the latter who has to preside over the village deputations to the clan-god. The distinction, however, is not clear-cut. In most hill villages there is no separate *bhum-gaita*, and the *kasyeq-gaita* not only performs his work, but is sometimes called *bhum-gaita* or *bhumia*, while in Bison-horn villages the *perma* is *bhum-gaita* and addresses himself in some tracts to the Earth both as Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi, earth-god and earth-goddess, besides being the priest of the Village Mother and the other forms which the earth takes in Bison-horn cults, such as Dongar Deo or Kodo Deo. The *waddai* or *modul-waddai* I have 791 referred to as the clan-priest, and it has been seen how in the Hill Maria clan-areas each village goes to him for the celebration of the clan festival and for obtaining the clan-god's permission to hold the village festival. But the clan-priest is generally not the clan headman even in the Abujhmar hills tracts where the clan-area has become the modern *pargana*. He may or may not be a person of ability and influence. He should be the medium, into whose body the clan-god enters and through whose mouth the god makes his will known to his clan. The secular *pargana* headman is a man of 622 791 far more influence; and in the villages the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* are religious headmen in a way that the clan-priest seldom is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the clan; often the same man is both religious headman and secular headman (*gaita*, *peda*), and these functions were probably always combined before the growing interference of the State with village life and the excessive demands for forced labour and supplies began to make the secular headmanship a burden to be avoided by the true leader of the village and put on to the village simpleton.

The Village Mother is always dealt with in Hill and Bison-horn villages through the *kasyeq-gaita* and the *perma* respectively; but she neither enters into the body of a medium nor can be consulted through one like the clan-god. Though it be through her that the *kasyeq-gaita's* eggs are addled or other omens of ill or indications that the village should shift are sent, yet to make plain her will the medium of the clan-god, that is the clan-priest (the *waddai* or *modul-waddai*), is sent for, and through his mouth the clan-god expounds the will of the Unseen Powers. It is tempting to regard her as the personification of the female and the clan-god as that of the male element in the reproductive powers of the Earth or Bhum; needless to say, there are no Maria theologians to worry themselves over such distinctions, and it is not a clear-cut one, since some clans have a clan-goddess, not a god; e.g. Oghal Muttai, goddess of the Dhurwa clan, and Gumtuli, goddess of the Padali clan of Padalibhum at Adnar. This conception, nevertheless, does to a considerable extent clarify the fundamental relation between the Earth, the clan-god and the Village Mother. The other point to be remembered is that the clan-god is the Earth in its dealings with the clan, and the Mother the Earth in its dealings with the village. No woman or girl may take part in the festivals, public sacrificial meals, worship and intercession of either clan-god or Village Mother.

The Earth, then, as clan-god, is the god of nourishment and reproduction, and of life itself; the Marias are his children, fed by him. For them to raise their sustenance he divided up the land among the clans, and the clan-area among the villages, and in each clan and village he appointed priests or headmen who alone might communicate with him, and to whose first ancestor he revealed the clan and village boundaries, which knowledge has been handed down from father to son. The Maria leaves his *penda* slope for another after two or three years because the god is suffering from having too much nourishment extracted from that slope, but he will return to it when the god has recovered from his exhaustion. Children are but one of the god's crops.

The Clan-god

In form, we have seen, the clan-god of Marias of both kinds and of Murias, is a framework of three parallel *saja* logs held together by cross-pieces of bamboo or *saja*, to which they are lashed by cords of *siari* creeper or twisted

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the names of which recur not only among Murias in north Bastar, but also among all the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Possibly strong bodies of these clans were the original colonisers, and with the growth of population in their new surroundings have either thrown off sub-clans or absorbed clans newly descending from the hills or acquiring their culture. It is not surprising that settlers in the tracts farthest from their first settlement should find it difficult to worship at the original shrines of their *pen*, and should either forget them, or here and there make fresh log-gods for themselves, perhaps sharing them with other adjacent clans not necessarily of their own phratries, just as they have learnt, unlike the Hill Marias, to share with other brother-clans and wife-clans village lands which are the *bhum* of their own clan.

The cult of the *pen* log-god of the clan is thus, as may be expected, considerably weaker among the Bison-horn than among the Hill Marias. Often he is neglected almost entirely in the annual feasts, or vaguely associated with the Departed in the expressions *pen-hanal* or *dhenu-deo* used of the ancestors. Where there is a log-god, he tends to be regarded merely as one of the local godlings that are becoming as numerous among the Bison-horn Marias as among the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Where there is none, occasionally at festivals before the Village Mother or other manifestations of the Earth a stone or two may be set up in his name under a *saja* tree and receive its share of the sacrificial blood and libations. It is not surprising that, therefore, the *waddai* of the clan-god is more purely a medium among the Bison-horn Marias, and less of a clan-priest than he is among the Hill Marias, and that most Bison-horn villages have at least one *waddai* who may be possessed not only by the clan-god but by other godlings also; even when he is attached definitely to a log-god at a festival, he may be possessed by him and give oracle on his behalf, but the *pursa* of the village is the principal celebrant, and the *waddai*, when not possessed, degenerates into a mere *mantram*-reciting assistant of the *pursa*.

Often there is no hut-temple for any deity among the Bison-horn Marias except one for Danteshwari Mai or Maoli or Mata, whose cults have spread from the Hindu temple of Dantewara, and in time will reach every village of Bastar. The Earth cult, however, remains, as among the Hill Marias, the essential cult. Its chief form is thus the cult of the Village Mother, called Tallin Ochur in the Bison-horn dialect. For all the village ceremonies there is a fixed plot of land in a field belonging to the *pursa* and known as the *bhum-jaga*, *kudri-bara* or *wiji-erhu*; *bhum-jaga*

The Village Mother and other gods among the Bison-horn Marias

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

674 754 683 to molest suspects. There were cases from Muria and Bhattra villages where the community inflicted degrading punishments only somewhat less cruel than those of Glasfurd's day; but in all but one of the Maria cases the man who believed himself wronged acted entirely on his own, often after consulting the god through a *waddai* medium, and killed or tried to kill the suspect with any weapon that came handy. The exception was the 1916 Hill Maria murder at Orcha, in which many villagers combined against the *pargana* headman, who, like his father before him, was said to have been expert in the black art, and to have used it and his position as headman to set up a '*raj*' over the *pargana*. They combined to seize him at night, crushed his testicles and hanged him from a creeper. Nor were women ever suspected in Maria cases, although in three cases among Jagdalpur Murias and Bhattras women suspects were very roughly handled. In two Bison-horn murders it was clear that the murdered man had threatened his murderer to bewitch him, and one of these blackmailers was himself a *waddai*. In fact, the *waddai* is generally believed by the Bison-horn Marias to know black magic as well as white magic and divination, and is apt to be feared accordingly.

[191]

754 It is naturally difficult to ascertain the methods believed to be used by the black magician; those who imagined they had suffered judged the fact solely from the nature of their sufferings, the word of the *waddai* consulted as to their source, and, perhaps, the known enmity of the suspect towards them, while naturally no practitioner of black magic cared to admit it or to describe his methods. Black magic is commonly referred to as *pangan*; and popular talk confirms the methods described at page 43 of the *Gazetteer*:—

> 'Whenever an enemy's life is to be taken, a bit of his cloth or hair is offered to a god with some incantations consisting of a string of names of godlings, and the victim should then pine away, unless he in turn calls in a magician. This practice is locally called *kuds marna*. Another plan is for the magician to put up two bits of grass tied in the form of a cross to represent his client's enemy, and, after going through incantations, shoot at the little figure with a miniature bow and arrow made of grass. If the arrow hits the mark it is believed that the enemy will surely die, unless he has recourse to magic to avert the spell.'

The information on which this was based came from the mixed Hill and Bison-horn Maria country around Barsur, and the word 'magician' is a translation of '*waddai*'.

755 The white magic in vogue is merely the counter-magic used by a friendly *waddai* to avert or cure illness and disease. Of actual Hill Maria methods I obtained no notes; but certain *waddais* or *leshis* have a much greater reputation than others. I gather that Hill Maria methods do not differ from those in vogue among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, in which

White Magic

[See cat. 116, pp. 423-424. — Ed.]

-1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The civil matters ordinarily decided by the *panchayats* would be marriage cases, such as settling the compensation to be awarded to a husband when his wife had eloped with another man. But tahsildars would entertain complaints under the sections of the Indian Penal Code punishing adultery from a husband dissatisfied with the *panchayat's* decision, and thereby undermine yet further the authority of the *panchayat*. I have in an earlier chapter referred to the effect of the unconscionable demands for forced labour and supplies on the position of the village headmen, and shown how in consequence the tendency was to put forward a dummy as the headman for secular matters, the real leadership of the village remaining with the religious headman, that is to say, the *hasyaq-gaita* in the case of the Hill Marias, and the *perma* in that of the Bison-horn Marias, but the dummy being available to bear the brunt of official wrath, though powerless to effect anything without the consent of the village elders. Formerly, there seems little doubt, the *hasyaq-gaita* and the *perma* also discharged the functions of the secular headman; the differentiation of the two functions was the result of the State officials' treatment of the aboriginal. In many Abujhmar villages the functions are still combined, or are held by members of the same family, because State officials were always loath to penetrate into the interior of the Hill Maria country. With the revival of the authority of the headmen and *panchayats* that is now the policy of the State, it may be expected that gradually the religious headmen will resume the secular headmanship also.

It is not surprising that, as the result of these methods of dealing with the aboriginals, their *panchayats* tended to co-operate as little as possible with the State; their object became to conceal crime from the police and in general to comply with State requirements only so far as was necessary in order to avoid trouble, and, above all, visits of subordinate State officials to their villages. The records of murder and other trials show many cases of the village elders meeting and deciding to hush up a crime, especially if it had occurred at harvest or any other busy agricultural season, rather than have the whole life of the village community disorganized by police investigation, committal proceedings and Sessions trial. Such crimes may have come to light later through the *panchayat* reporting them at their own convenience, or through the widow or other relative of a murdered man being dissatisfied with the compensation which the murderer had been ordered to give, while in some *parganas* informers arose who subsequently used their supposed prestige with the police to become petty local tyrants. Conversely on occasions *panchayats*, disgusted with the failure of the police to investigate thefts or with the acquittal of guilty persons by the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

565 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally
177 therefore, on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 The Allapilli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills
466 attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen,
166 etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

[1] For example, the suppression of *podu* cultivation, or the deliberate
622 curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the
791 *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

> The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village; sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*. Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official, and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

883 462 the embankment of a field, both can join in spreading brushwood over a clearing.

883 462 784 A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. But she must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife, or thrust the plunge-traps into the water.

[412]

FIG. 14. *Baras* or *talti* used for cutting up meat and planing wood
Length of upright 9"

A motiari, once she is mature, must not sleep on a machan to watch the fields. She must never go with a boy to sleep there—if she does a tiger will shake it and perhaps kill them both. In some villages, she may cow-dung the thrashing-floor, provided it is of her own clan, but she cannot thrash with her feet, or winnow the grain from a fan though she may do it with her hands. She must not sow seeds of rice or millet, though she does sometimes sow beans and vegetables.

883 462 The motiari gather mahua flowers with the boys; they collect myrabolams, and extract oil. Very important, they take food to the boys while they are working in the fields. This is a constant motive of romance in folk-tales.

883 The motiari may attend a funeral and most of the festivals. At the New Eating ceremonies they prepare the plates and cups for the feast, and are eager spectators of the ceremonies. They dance at most festivals with the boys. But I know of no Muria women Siraha-mediums or Gunia-diviners, though these are not unknown in Chhattisgarh. I am told, however, that there is a female Siraha of Pendrawandin in Gudabera, and there is a tradition that in former times it was the women who sacrificed to the gods. 'In those days, they used to cut the tail instead of the head and the bird or animal instead of dying would escape. Men soon got annoyed at this and said, "You women do not know how to do it; from now we will sacrifice". Men then began to cut off the heads of the birds and animals and the sacrifices were complete. This is why women do not eat the head of any bird or animal offered to the gods. They said to their husbands, "Now the head is yours, ours is the tail".'

[791] [784]

462 784 There are not many absolute taboos. A man must not husk grain or grind it. He must not wash women's clothes or wear them—except at night. Girls must not wear boys' turbans and clothes except on ceremonial occasions.

883 On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

793 There are also in most villages one or more Pujari, as they are now called, who are the priests of the more Hinduized deities, such as Danteshwari and her consort Bangaram. In most villages there are many minor deities and each of these may have its special Pujari.

These men do not form in any sense a special priestly class. Only in very rare instances could you recognize a Gaita or Pujari by his bearing or appearance. They are simple, decent, kindly men who spend most of their lives in the field and forest, but they have been chosen, as their parents were chosen, to mediate between men and the unseen mysterious gods. They are invariably, so far as I know, men of good character and never abuse their position unless the dark fate of supernatural power comes upon them and they turn to black magic. They often have to discipline themselves and to exercise a restraint which is not common among the Muria. All village priests must [785] fast and be chaste on the day and night preceding any major ceremony. In some places the period of abstinence may extend to a week.

In some villages, not all, of the Chota Dongar Pargana the Kaser-Gaita is only able to hold his office until he is married. He is thus usually a boy of about sixteen. He is not allowed to go to the ghotul; he must have as little as possible to do with women; even a woman's shadow must not fall on his body. He should not take tobacco from anyone's hands for fear his wife might be in her period. He should not go to a bazaar for fear he unwittingly touch such a woman. He must not talk to a man whose wife is menstruating. In his own home, his cooking-pot is separate from the others. Few boys could endure so rigorous a regime for long, and the Gaita is only made to hold office for three years. Then the god reveals in a dream which of the chelik should take his place. If the old Gaita returns to the ghotul before he is married, he gives the chelik and motiari a feast of pork and liquor.

793 When a Gaita dies his successor is not immediately appointed. In eastern Kondagaon, although the eldest son inherits the Gaitaship automatically, he 787 cannot exercise his functions until he has had a certain recognized and official dream appointing him and authorizing him to act. In other parts of the State a ceremonial hunt is held before the son or brother of the dead Gaita can take his place. In the name of the dead man, the whole village goes out to hunt and they take the omens from the animals they get. If they kill a hare it means that the dead man disapproves of his son or brother and that the inheritance must pass out of the family. If they get a male animal it means that the dead Gaita does not want a successor at all. If, however, they shoot a female sambhar, chital or barking-deer, they accept this as meaning that the late Gaita's son or brother may be appointed. Should they fail to get one of these animals, they fast the whole day, cook and eat outside their houses in the evening and sleep away from their wives and go out daily to hunt for three days. If within this period they succeed in shooting one or other of the three female animals required, the new Gaita begins his duties forthwith; otherwise they wait for a year and then repeat the test.

793 Throughout tribal India the influence of the priest is greatly modified by that of the seer. Often these functions are combined in the same person, and ● 791 his influence is thus greatly increased. But at every ceremony, every festival, in all cases of sickness, at the last rites of the dead, the priests have to consult the prophets for their instructions. There is not, in fact, anything like a definite system of ritual which must always be performed in the same manner. There is rather a great repertory of rites and customs from which many possible combinations can be drawn. The prophet or medium of the gods has to explain

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in each case what kind of worship, what special offerings, what peculiar rites will be acceptable to the god.

These mediums are known in Bastar by the Halbi word Siraha. A Leski is sometimes the Siraha's assistant; sometimes the words are used synonymously. The Siraha does not offer sacrifice, indeed he is not a priest at all; he is simply a medium through whom the gods make known their will. He has the power of falling into trance, of dancing ecstatically and of diagnosing disease and interpreting the divine commands while in this condition. Scores of these men may be seen at any of the great festivals in the State. With their long hair flying wildly about them as they shake their heads, with scourges and whips in their hands and their drunken, drugged, besotted look, they are a distinctive feature of every Muria religious assembly. Yet, in ordinary life, they are completely normal, sensible, hard-working men and no one would suppose that they were capable of such remarkable transformations.

The Gunia, who understands *gunî* or magical charms, is simply a medicine-man. He is called in to cure the sick, to recover lost property and to discover the culprit when goods or cattle are stolen. The Panjiyar is a diviner who works by measuring bits of grass which he questions until he obtains the correct answer. The Gunia tends rather to work with a winnowing-fan or a lamp. Both use grain for divination.

Another common form of divination in Bastar is by eggs. Among the Hill Maria, the Kaser-Gaita watches the eggs hatched in his house; if these get addled it may be a sign that the village site should be changed. The Muria test the omens by egg-throwing at the time of breaking stilts.[1] All the Bastar tribes use eggs in worship, and offer them before going out to hunt and fish, 'for they are greatly loved by the gods'.

Eggs are liked by the gods because 'an egg is like a virgin whom no one has touched, or a pregnant woman who holds two souls at once'. A curious tale explains the origin of poultry.

> There was an entirely dark village twelve *kos* long. Once the people went out with a widow's son to search for light. They went a long long way until they lay down weary to sleep. When they awoke they found the sun in the sky. The widow's son declared that he had not slept and had seen a one-legged man put the sun there. The others were jealous that he should have seen this sight and killed him. They divided the flesh among themselves and gave some to the boy's mother, who took it not knowing what it was. She put it aside for him to eat when he should return. But next day, early in the morning as the sun came into the sky, the boy's flesh turned into a cock and began to crow. So when a hen lays an egg it is only a lump of flesh; it is when it hears the cock crow that life comes into it. That is why gods and men love eggs—for they are a sign of strength and life.

For this reason, it is said, gods and ghosts are not often responsible for addling eggs; this is done by human enemies. If a setting of eggs is thus spoilt by black magic, it should be lifted up together with its straw and placed on a piece of an earthen pot. It should be taken to a cross-road, where the priest must say, '*Thu thu, mailotis*, go back to whoever sent you'. He throws away the eggs and the party returns home without looking back. Elsewhere when

[1] Divination by egg-throwing is recorded of the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226ff. In 1942 I found the Juang of Pal Lahara employing the virgin son of the village priest to test the omens, before a festival, by egg-throwing. The use of eggs in worship is widespread in Bastar and Orissa.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

789 the eggs go bad, the priest plucks the feathers of the hen and puts them with the eggs. Broken egg-shells (which are usually preserved on bits of stick and kept under the roof) are added and all are taken to a cross-road. The priest cries, '*Thu thu*, you wanted to injure my hen. Take this and go away'. After this, the hen grows new feathers and the next lot of eggs will be good.

791 In the north-west of the State, the son of the village Gaita has a position of privilege in the ghotul and is often appointed its leader, but in the rest of the State the boys of the priestly families have no special privileges and can claim no special office; they are treated exactly the same as any other boys. But the Gaita's and Siraha's sons begin their training as priests or mediums while they are still boys, and many chelik have the power of falling into trance and prophesying. In Masora I saw chelik being taught how to bathe the gods and carry them about. In Koilibera I watched the Gaita teaching two of the chelik how to sacrifice chickens and offer egg-shells to the gods at the end of the Pus Kolang expedition. Parents often take their sons to special festivals so that they can learn what to do by imitation. The chelik usually attend ceremonies as acolytes and prepare the sacrificial food, wash the vessels, and make ready the sacrificial hearth. In this way the future Gaita or Pujari learns his business. The function of Siraha or Gunia is not always hereditary, but boys are chosen and trained when it is found that they are of an unusually sensitive temperament.

VII. White and Black Magic

751 Hitherto we have been dealing with Muria religion mainly in its relation to
754 the gods; we must now take a brief glance at its prophylactic and protective measures on behalf of man against his natural and ghostly enemies. Chelik and motiari are protected against black magic by the divine power of the ghotul fence, but they are only safe while they are inside the ghotul. Evil powers cannot enter the building, but they camp all round, and the Muria boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of battle in the unseen world.

754 Black magic entered the world through an insufficiency. Bhagavan had
113 seven daughters. He had prepared flour with which to create man, but his daughters stole and ate a little from some of the heaps of flour. In these there was thus not enough material for them to become real human beings and they became magicians and witches. Because of their lack of flesh and blood, they try to steal flesh and drink the blood of men. The warlock and witch are thus sub-human, not fully created. In the untouched Muria tradition, the enemy of mankind is usually a man; belief in female witches and the evil eye of woman is generally a later and Hindu accretion to the old beliefs.

The story comes from Karikhodra. In it we see that the warlock and witch are sub-human, not fully created. In other stories witchcraft originates in disobedience and cannibalism. In Matawal in the Mardapal Pargana we were told the following tale:

> A Muria and his sister left their parents' house and went out to seek for work. After a time they returned home and wished to make an offering to Mother Earth. They went to the shrine of the goddess and the boy said to his sister, 'Whatever you do, do not eat any of the flesh sacrificed here'. They found that the Gaita had put some flesh on a saja leaf in the name of the goddess before her shrine. As they approached a crow flew down, ate some of the flesh and scattered the rest. The boy picked it up and put it back again on the leaf. Behind the shrine a lot of blood from the animals offered and sacrificed had

MURIA RELIGION

754 Singlu brought disaster this year on the hunt. For a whole month the chelik were taken by Gurgu to the forest, but they got nothing. One day they did shoot a young sambhar but it ran away to another village with their arrows sticking into it, and another village got the meat and the omen. All round other villages were returning triumphant from their hunts, but on 22 April 1941 when I was there the Almer boys returned yet once again empty-handed and Gurgu exclaimed with tears in his eyes, 'I am defeated'.[1]

Here the magician was acting, as it were, at a distance. There is also among the Muria a tradition of the Parat Bagh or were-tiger where a man is metamorphosed into a tiger and attacks his enemy directly. He kills but does not eat him. To become a tiger, a man must go to an ant-hill and circle round it seven times clockwise repeating the necessary charm. It is the charm that matters, and somewhat naturally I have been unable to get hold of it. The man then becomes a tiger, and goes to kill his enemy. When he returns he goes round the ant-hill again, this time anti-clockwise, and is restored to his own shape.

While magicians are very dangerous, but seem to live quite respectably at home, the witch is surrounded in the popular mind with every circumstance of horror and disgust. She goes out naked as a cow; before her go the *mohini*—soothing charms of love—to lull her victims asleep; her spittle is like fire falling to the ground; she drinks the blood of her victims, vomits it and cooks and eats her vomit; she feeds on excrement.

VIII. The Ecstatic Trance

754 How are these evils countered? We have to remember that not all human
791 ills are regarded as of supernatural origin; there are many which are 'natural' and are met by natural remedies. But many other types of disaster are not explicable on natural grounds, and to deal with these the Siraha-medium or
787 the Gunia-diviner is consulted for a proper diagnosis. This diagnosis is generally obtained in trance. The Siraha sits by his patient, some burning coals before him, coughs and belches, and shakes his head till his whole body is in motion with rapid rhythmic movements. These gradually increase in violence, the hair streams out and is thrown to and fro, saliva trickles from the mouth and the tongue protrudes. After a time, the medium gives a loud cry and falls forward, placing the palms of his hands on the burning coals. The smoke curls up between his fingers. He then sits back on his heels, and his companion asks him questions; it is believed that now the god speaks through his lips and the questioner will hear the truth of his perplexities.

791 These mediums also prophesy in a general way at festivals, when they play and posture with a complete forgetfulness of the outside world. Some of them
781 scourge themselves violently with iron chains, others catch hold of the symbol of a god and rush violently about with it, others roll in the dust, hurl themselves on the ground, sit on the spiked seat of a swing, turn somersaults, or simply jog up and down on their toes for lengthy periods.

[1] There was a similar war between a sorcerer and a whole village which he reduced to terror at Sulanga in 1938. Sonu Muria, an ex-convict and a quarrelsome, angry man, was the Pujari of Bhatti Pen. To quarrel with Sonu meant, almost as a matter of routine, that someone would die in your house. From this cause Jaggu, a Halba, lost two of his sons on one day and left the village. Another Halba, Jubi, lost three members of his family in a year. Sonu had a row with a settlement of Gonds: several died: and they all migrated. The Muria and Halba of Sulanga took the matter to the police and urged that the Ange should be sent from Jagdalpur for their protection.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

791 787. When these mediums carry a clan-god or the litter of a Matai (Village Mother) on their shoulders, they seem to act quite involuntarily and in an astonishing unison. I have seen four men bearing an Anga perform the most complicated evolutions, twisting and turning in every direction, and all in

[293 787]

FIG. 27. Decorated wooden 'horns', with horns of the barking deer, used for ceremonial dances
Length of wooden section 3' 4"

unison without a word of command or hint where they are to go next. It is little wonder that the Muria place implicit faith in the movements of these men and accept the divinations of the Anga as final.

What is the explanation of this trance? It is well known that in the condition of 'ligature', as Pratt observes, the 'voluntary control of the muscles is

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Muria

considerably weakened and the sensations become very dull and dim. The higher centres of the brain seem to be partially split off from the incoming sensory currents, on the one hand, and from the motor centres, on the other'.[1] At the same time, the mental state becomes more and more simple and the many objects of normal consciousness gradually tend to give way to a state of monoideism. These mediums are undoubtedly out of their wits; they can hurl themselves about and fall with a force that would injure men in an ordinary state of consciousness.[2]

It is interesting to find that in Bastar as elsewhere throughout the world this ecstatic condition is associated with the horse. 'It is not only in Java and Bali', writes Beryl de Zoëte, 'that the hobby-horse is associated with trance. The wonderful Roumanian Calusari, the little horsemen, the Good Fairies who dramatically fight the Wicked One in their ecstatic dance, have as one of their principal functions the exorcism of evil spirits who bring disease, just like the Kòeda Kepand (rattan horses) of Java and the Sanghyang Djaran of Bali. And this function is exercised through an abnormal state of consciousness which at a certain degree of intensity we call trance, and in some cases through the medium of a wooden or rattan horse, or merely the head and tail of a horse united by some kind of rod . . . Perhaps there is no continent in which the hobby-horse is unknown. In England he seems innocent enough, ambling along among the mysterious antlered figures of Abbot's Bromley, or through many a French folk-dance.'[3]

The horse has long been used in magic. Tacitus and Camden referred to augury by the horse in the ancient world. It has been said that the Wooden Horse of Troy was 'an instrument of magic rather than military tactics'.[4] Armed horsemen in Arabia in more recent times are quoted as riding round the tent in which a child is to be born and showing clearly by their arms, horses and movements that they are trying to frighten away evil spirits at a vitally important time.[5] In India the worship of the horse has been recorded for certain aboriginal tribes. For example, Hislop says that throughout the Nagpur District at his time (*circa* 1860) everyone worshipped Koda Pen, and a god named Kola Sur was worshipped with an offering of earthen horses on the top of a hill near Great Ambora.[6] The mare-headed goddess, Basali, represented with a horse's head or as a wooden horse, is worshipped by the Keots and allied tribes in Orissa.[7] The Bhil represent their dead as riding on

[1] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1923), p. 424.

[2] With the Bastar trance we may compare the 'jerks' which have been described by a contemporary in a revival in South Carolina in 1803. Persons would 'suddenly fall to the ground, and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backwards and forwards with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a woman's head might be heard to crack . . . And then there was the jumping exercise in which several persons might be seen standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies.' —N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 43, quoting Bishop Capers. This would be a good description of the Muria trance.

[3] W. Spies and B. de Zoëte, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London, 1938), p. 78.

[4] W. F. J. Knight, 'Myth and Legend of Troy' in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVI, p. 98, who cites L. Malten in *Jahrb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.*, Vol. XIX (1915), pp. 179ff. as authority for 'the dangerous and demoniac associations of the horse in early times'.

[5] Ibid., p. 109.

[6] Hislop, op. cit., Part IV, p. iii. See also V. Ball, *Jungle Life in India* (London, 1880), p. 23.

[7] P. Sen, 'A Basali Folk-Song', *Man in India*, Vol. XII, pp. 175ff. and S. C. Mitra, 'On a Curious Cult of Orissa', *JASB*, Vol. XXX, p. 19.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLIII

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292
755

Siraha medium at Adner, scourging himself

Siraha treating the author for fever, at Mefawand

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

825 Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Gurasala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the
171 Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

825 I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two
532 horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of
787 trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's
791 head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite home for spirit-influence.'[3]

IX. The Cure of Disease

755 Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 122.
[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agaphoff and Khangaloff.
[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 100.

DREAMS

Chandabera the headman of the village had a dream in which Danteshwari Matal appeared to him and told him to cut down a large sarai tree which was obstructing her worship. This tree pleasantly shadowed Danteshwari's own shrine, and the headman thought it was unnecessary to remove it. Later his leg became swollen and the Siraha declared that the reason was his failure to obey the goddess. Even so he took no notice, but when a little later his brother had a fit of madness, he thought it best to obey his dream and cut down the tree. At Padbera, the god Phande Hunga (a grandson of Halayin Dokari) gave a dream to the Gaita of the Durro clan, promising to make him prosper if he would make him an Anga. The dream even showed that mahua wood was to be used and that it must be brought from the Magagaon forest. 787

The appointment of a Gaita or Gunia often depends upon appropriate dreams. Succession to the priesthood is hereditary, but until the Gaita's son or grandson gets a dream he cannot take up his appointment. In the meantime, somebody else has to perform his functions in his name. The Gaita of Randhna, for example, described how 'six months before I had my dream my father died. Then I dreamt that I went to the bazaar and drank a lot of liquor. As I was coming home, I met Matal Maoli and Danteshwari who said, "Your ancestors served us and never made mistakes; we were pleased with them and never gave them trouble; now you are their son and you are to serve us. Do your work well and whatever you ask we will listen and answer your questions". I awoke frightened but there was no one there. From that day onwards I was the village Gaita.' Once in Alor, when there was extensive crop failure, the Siraha dreamt that the office of Kaser-Gaita should be abolished. In his place one of the Siraha dreamt continually everything that had to be done. 787 791

The dead also reveal their wishes through dreams. Sometimes they indicate that they are dissatisfied with the attention that is being paid them. For example, a Muria of Bhopna said, 'If I dream of a tiger rushing to attack me, I recognize it as a Dand-duma, a troublesome ghost. To prevent the danger I must pound up a bit of living coal, take some burnt earth and draw two parallel lines on the ground. I offer a chicken there and throw it away.' In Sirsi the Muria said that a man regards any dream of his dead parents as requiring some sacrifice. It is supposed that the dead appear in a dream if they are intending to cause trouble later on. The dream is a preliminary warning to the living to be careful. The dreamer offers an egg and a chicken saying, 'Since you have come in my dream, I am giving you these things; be content with them and give us no trouble'. 787

To dream of drowning is a very significant dream that demands instant attention. I describe elsewhere how the Muria believe that adultery is punished by an attack of dropsy. To dream of drowning with its association with water, therefore, means that among your ancestors was an adulterer who died of watery swelling of his body and that the full rites of satisfaction for his crime have not yet been performed.

At Gorma, a Muria dreamt that he was drowning. When he consulted a medium about this, he was reminded of an association with water that had occurred in his family: one of his ancestors had in fact died of dropsy as a penalty for adultery. 'His spirit is uneasy, so he has given you this dream.' To quiet the ghost, the villagers made a man's image of grass and took it to the river. They put it beside a stone with one of its feet upon it, and the Gaita and the ghost's living relatives also put their feet on the stone and made the usual offerings and drank to the honour of the dead. After this there were no more dreams.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 X 884 796 words. From this shrine he took a bunch of peacock's feathers which he handed to the Gain—the leader of the singers.

The chelik now assemble outside the Gaita's house and the Gain takes the spear in his hand and they dance the stick-dance for the first time. After that they dance before the ghotul. Then they go with the Gaita and a Siraha along the road to their first point of call. When they reach the village boundary, the Gaita draws a line across the path and places on it seven rings of aonra leaf, seven bits of iron slag and makes seven little piles of rice. The Gaita and Siraha squat down by the side of the path, and the boys step across the line one by one, exclaiming 'Let us return safely'. Should any magical or supernatural danger be threatening one of the boys, the Siraha will immediately react by falling into a trance or jerks, and the expedition will be halted until the danger is discovered and removed.

[791]

X 883 X 884 796 784 Once the boys have crossed the line, they have definitely passed out of the ordinary world. They are dedicated to Lingo Pen and must be about his business. They are charged with spiritual power and open to spiritual attack. The rules and taboos of the expedition must be rigorously observed. Some of these rules seem to be intended to segregate the boys from all the associations of sex; others to protect them from catching the spiritual infection of strange villages.

I have already noticed the rule of chastity. Reinforcing this are rules forbidding the chelik to enter the compound of any ghotul or even to touch its fence. Except for the six leaders, the other boys may dance with the motiari, but they must not touch them. They dance in separate rows. They must not pass under the Diwali decorations in any house—for to these boys Diwali has no associations with the Feast of Lights, but is rich with memories of erotic adventure with the girls who have visited their villages for the Diwali dance. Nor may the boys enter any door or touch the thatch of any roof; they must not eat from the hands of a married woman; they must be careful that not even the shadow of a woman in her menses falls upon them. Such regulations remind the boys of their separation for the time being from all domestic ties.

Should a boy's ghotul-wife begin her period while he is on the expedition, the fact is shown him in a dream, and he must make or promise an offering to Lingo. The boys are generally warned of danger by dreaming about tigers.

[778] In order to protect the chelik from the infection of a strange village, there is a rule that the fire with which they cook their food must always be lighted from the need-fire smouldering on the point of the sacred spear. On the other hand they are allowed to eat from the motiari of the village they visit—but their own boys must serve the food. Two boys are appointed cooks, one to see to rice, one to the pulse and salt. The chelik and motiari of the village visited may bring food, even cooked food, but they should not talk much and must soon go away. When they lie down to sleep round the fire in their little camps under trees near the ghotul, the boys must light this fire also with the need-fire.

They are not allowed to cross over a fallen tree. They must keep to the same order and pairs with which they started. At the first dance of all, the Gaita cries 'Make up your pairs' and henceforth they must never change partners. They must always dance in the same order. A boy must always sleep with his partner, and with no other. If they break this rule they will die, and it is said that in Talabera this did actually happen. If one member of a pair dies, his *jori* or mate will die also. Probably a quite sensible rule to ensure the technical perfection of the dancing has been exalted into a

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

to perform the worship of the Village Mother. The Pen-793
Waddai or Waddai is the priest of the clan who fulfils spiritual duties for its members. There may be more than one Waddai in a village or, on the other hand, one Waddai may have jurisdiction over several villages. Everything depends on the distribution of the clan members in the locality. The Waddai is of great importance because of his association with the Ancestors and the Dead. He has to purify offenders against the clan rules, and those who have done anything which might conceivably offend the Dead. The Hanagunda may be the Waddai or some lesser personage. His duty is to act as master of ceremonies at a funeral and to perform the special rites of appeasement for the ghost. He becomes of great importance when anyone has met an unnatural death such as being killed by a tiger or has been executed.

In addition to these regular priests, there are a large 791 ●
number of men who are regarded as being in a special way the servants and interpreters of the gods. These men have the power of falling into ecstacy and in this condition divine the will and proclaim the wishes of unseen beings. They are called Siraha or Gunia. They are chiefly in demand for the cure of disease. Since disease is believed to be the result of supernatural activity on the part of some ghost or demon, it is by supernatural means that it must be diagnosed and cured. The Siraha often has houses round his compound for in-patients, and a celebrated medicine-man may attract sick and anxious people from a wide area.

These men, civil or religious, are the real rulers of the 623
Bastar village. Their influence is more far-reaching, their 674x
word is of greater effect than that of the most popular officials. Only the Maharaja, from whom they derive their power, is greater. Today their power is greatly circumscribed, but, as we will see, it has not altogether disappeared. They can still make unbearable the life of witch or sorcerer; they can still ostracize the social rebel; they can still fine the domestic tyrant and subdue the village bully. The ordeal by fire or burning oil still remains a weapon in their hands, and the threat of excommunication is a greater deterrent than many of the provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

The religious leaders insist on the supernatural dangers of crime, the defilement of jail or handcuffs, the painful death

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

stopping or preventing an epidemic; in order to put an end to a devastating famine; when the earth fails to supply the people with water; with a view to averting perils arising from the sea or from rivers; and in order to prevent the death of some particular person, especially a chief or a king. From these facts I have thought it justifiable to draw the conclusion that human sacrifice is, largely at least, a method of life-insurance, based upon the idea of substitution; and though the human sacrifice offered as a means of putting an end to or averting a ravaging famine and securing an abundant crop has been explained as serving as a magical manure, it may be asked why this particular gruesome kind of manure was chosen if not because human life was in danger.[1]

But in the Bastar cases, there was no danger to life: the sacrifices seem to have been motived by a straightforward desire of gain and to have depended for their efficacy on the power of blood which as the source of life is also a cause of fertility. The connection with irrigation tanks is noteworthy.

V

THE SIRAHA AND HOMICIDE

It is a curious fact that the leaders of the powers of good against the forces of black magic, especially the Siraha and Gunia, seem to cause quite as many murders as the witch or sorcerer.

The Siraha with his magic winnowing-fan and lamp and broomsticks appears in case after case, not always, of course, as the criminal or victim, but as an influential force in the background.

For example, it is the Siraha who diagnoses the cause of death or disease and who, by naming some living person as the author, directly incites to crime. Equally, by his failure to treat a sick person who believes that he is suffering from witchcraft, he may drive him to despair and suicide.

The Siraha is very proud of his position and his connection with the gods. He is extremely touchy, and immediately resents the least hint of criticism. When Markami Ganga

[1] E. Westermarck, 'Methods in Social Anthropology', *J.R.A.I.*, Vol. LXVI (1936), p. 222, and *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (London, 1912), Vol. I, p. 440. See also R. Karsten, *The Civilization of the South American Indians* (London, 1926), p. 408.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 abused his brother who had recently taken up his sacred duties,
791 criticizing him as an economic liability to the family, the latter seized the trident in the village temple and killed his critic with it.

Another incident of the same kind occurred in Kosalnar. An old man Hemla Mukka had a leprous wife. He used to call the Siraha, Jhoria Hunga, to his house to treat her. One day when she was feeling specially ill, she asked her husband to go and fetch him. He went for him, but found him asleep. He woke him up and told him what he wanted. But Jhoria, who was tired after watching his fields was annoyed at being woken, and got up and hit the old man saying he was not going to give up his own work in order to treat other people. Mukka went away, but just outside the house he said loudly that his wife could be cured without the help of any Siraha. This Siraha, he said, was a *chor mailotia* (a thief who lay with his mother). When Hunga heard this insult to his profession, he came out of the house with a heavy bamboo stick and beat Mukka till he died.

Iron trident

791 One of the features of any
343 Siraha's house is the little hut for 'in-patients' built a short distance away in the garden or under trees. Especially when a Siraha gets some kind of reputation for diagnosis and cure, he is visited by patients from many different villages. These come laden with dark and unknown infections and must not be admitted into his house. Little huts of leaves and branches are made for them outside, where they

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

791 [349]

live in some discomfort and under unnatural and strained conditions. These abnormal strains have resulted, more than once, in murder being committed.

674X 791

Barse Chappe was a polygamous invalid. After suffering for some time from giddiness and trouble with his heart and eyes, he went to the village Siraha named Pocha for treatment. He became an 'in-patient' and was accommodated in a little hut. After Chappe had spent three days there, he felt better and went to Jagdalpur to give evidence in a police case. Here again he got ill and fell to the ground in a fit, and the Public Prosecutor was compelled to give him up. He returned to his own house, but when he reached it he had to spend the night outside on the verandah, as his wives told him that he would have to offer certain sacrifices in gratitude for his previous recovery before he could enter the house. The following day he again went to the Siraha for treatment and camped under a mango tree nearby. He was accompanied by his senior wife Sukhi and his little daughter Bode. From time to time his junior wife Chule, who remained in charge of the home, came to see him. After a week, one afternoon when Chule had brought food, Chappe asked both his wives to have intercourse with him in the hut. They refused saying that the place was too open, and that it was daytime and everyone would see them. Chappe got angry and beat both the women.

A few days later, at about 5 o'clock in the evening, Chappe again asked his senior wife to have intercourse with him in the hut. But Bode and two women were sitting only a few paces away on the verandah of the Siraha's hut—whence the hut was in full view—again they were able to overhear Chappe's conversation. Sukhi again refused and told her husband that he ought to be ashamed of himself for suggesting such a thing in the hearing of three other women, especially when one of them was his own daughter.

At this Chappe lost his temper. He picked up a heavy bamboo stick and beat his wife so heavily that she died.

674X 158

In his defence Chappe gave evidence of delusions. He denied that his reason for beating Sukhi was that she refused to have intercourse with him. He said that for the past week she had been giving him contaminated food. He had asked her not to cook in the Siraha's house where anybody might

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

793
292

Gaita of Almer in trance, wearing cowrie jacket

Priest of Pendrawandin at the Kondagaon Marhai

[188a]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and in front of the shrine a pile of old clay elephants, bulls and horses. And indeed I was told that the Anga used to live up on the hillside but was offended by the rough Muria habits and moved down to the plain where he

346

[532]

FIG. 26. A typical carved wooden pigeon often found in Muria shrines
Length 9½"

would not be offended by the sight of his worshippers eating beef. Here, in vivid symbol, was the god leading the hillmen down into the plains, from the open free hut to the enclosed house, to a reform of diet and a change of religious custom and the use of ephemeral images made by low-caste Hindu artisans.

There are two other small temples, both open sheds, to visit; both are for the Naitami clan. The first is for Paknabundin Matai, who is represented by a big stone, and the other for Tallur Muttai, the Village Mother, also represented by a stone. These four temples of the plain are not without their charm; set among great trees they look towards the grim rocks of the hills above them. But they have not the hard clear light and freedom of the shrines that brave the rocks and mountain.

VI. THE MURIA PRIESTHOOD

Who are the priests that officiate at these temples? In a sense every Muria is a priest; for the head of each family tends the dead of his house and can make offerings to his personal gods, but there are priestly families of greater or less influence which have performed the worship of the gods for generations.

793 ●

Notable among these is the priest of the clan-god or Anga, often now called the Pen-Pujari or Pen-Gaita. In the Chota Dongar and Partabpur areas, he is called the Pen-Waddai. He is also known as the Dhurwa, which is the name of a tribe in the south of the State and possibly has associations with the Dhur Gond. This use of a tribal name as a priestly title is paralleled by the use of the word Baiga to denote a village-priest. It suggests that the Dhurwa tribe like the Baiga is regarded by the people as of great antiquity.

[614]

Then there is the priest of the *bhum* or earth. The Kaser-Gaita (knife-priest), also known as the Bhum-Gaita or Mati-Gaita (earth-priest), has the duty of offering sacrifices to the earth and keeping the village free of disease. It is he who must go to the fields and clearings when they are prepared and must make offerings at sowing time and harvest.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

793 There are also in most villages one or more Pujari, as they are now called, who are the priests of the more Hinduized deities, such as Danteshwari and her consort Bangaram. In most villages there are many minor deities and each of these may have its special Pujari.

These men do not form in any sense a special priestly class. Only in very rare instances could you recognize a Gaita or Pujari by his bearing or appearance. They are simple, decent, kindly men who spend most of their lives in the field and forest, but they have been chosen, as their parents were chosen, to mediate between men and the unseen mysterious gods. They are invariably, so far as I know, men of good character and never abuse their position unless the dark fate of supernatural power comes upon them and they turn to black magic. They often have to discipline themselves and to exercise a restraint which is not common among the Muria. All village priests must [785] fast and be chaste on the day and night preceding any major ceremony. In some places the period of abstinence may extend to a week.

In some villages, not all, of the Chota Dongar Pargana the Kaser-Gaita is only able to hold his office until he is married. He is thus usually a boy of about sixteen. He is not allowed to go to the ghotul; he must have as little as possible to do with women; even a woman's shadow must not fall on his body. He should not take tobacco from anyone's hands for fear his wife might be in her period. He should not go to a bazaar for fear he unwittingly touch such a woman. He must not talk to a man whose wife is menstruating. In his own home, his cooking-pot is separate from the others. Few boys could endure so rigorous a regime for long, and the Gaita is only made to hold office for three years. Then the god reveals in a dream which of the chelik should take his place. If the old Gaita returns to the ghotul before he is married, he gives the chelik and motiari a feast of pork and liquor.

793 When a Gaita dies his successor is not immediately appointed. In eastern Kondagaon, although the eldest son inherits the Gaitaship automatically, he 787 cannot exercise his functions until he has had a certain recognized and official dream appointing him and authorizing him to act. In other parts of the State a ceremonial hunt is held before the son or brother of the dead Gaita can take his place. In the name of the dead man, the whole village goes out to hunt and they take the omens from the animals they get. If they kill a hare it means that the dead man disapproves of his son or brother and that the inheritance must pass out of the family. If they get a male animal it means that the dead Gaita does not want a successor at all. If, however, they shoot a female sambhar, chital or barking-deer, they accept this as meaning that the late Gaita's son or brother may be appointed. Should they fail to get one of these animals, they fast the whole day, cook and eat outside their houses in the evening and sleep away from their wives and go out daily to hunt for three days. If within this period they succeed in shooting one or other of the three female animals required, the new Gaita begins his duties forthwith; otherwise they wait for a year and then repeat the test.

793 Throughout tribal India the influence of the priest is greatly modified by that of the seer. Often these functions are combined in the same person, and 791 his influence is thus greatly increased. But at every ceremony, every festival, in all cases of sickness, at the last rites of the dead, the priests have to consult the prophets for their instructions. There is not, in fact, anything like a definite system of ritual which must always be performed in the same manner. There is rather a great repertory of rites and customs from which many possible combinations can be drawn. The prophet or medium of the gods has to explain

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in each case what kind of worship, what special offerings, what peculiar rites will be acceptable to the god.

These mediums are known in Bastar by the Halbi word Siraha. A Leski is sometimes the Siraha's assistant; sometimes the words are used synonymously. The Siraha does not offer sacrifice, indeed he is not a priest at all; he is simply a medium through whom the gods make known their will. He has the power of falling into trance, of dancing ecstatically and of diagnosing disease and interpreting the divine commands while in this condition. Scores of these men may be seen at any of the great festivals in the State. With their long hair flying wildly about them as they shake their heads, with scourges and whips in their hands and their drunken, drugged, besotted look, they are a distinctive feature of every Muria religious assembly. Yet, in ordinary life, they are completely normal, sensible, hard-working men and no one would suppose that they were capable of such remarkable transformations.

The Gunia, who understands *guni* or magical charms, is simply a medicine-man. He is called in to cure the sick, to recover lost property and to discover the culprit when goods or cattle are stolen. The Panjiyar is a diviner who works by measuring bits of grass which he questions until he obtains the correct answer. The Gunia tends rather to work with a winnowing-fan or a lamp. Both use grain for divination.

Another common form of divination in Bastar is by eggs. Among the Hill Maria, the Kaser-Gaita watches the eggs hatched in his house; if these get addled it may be a sign that the village site should be changed. The Muria test the omens by egg-throwing at the time of breaking stilts.[1] All the Bastar tribes use eggs in worship, and offer them before going out to hunt and fish, 'for they are greatly loved by the gods'.

Eggs are liked by the gods because 'an egg is like a virgin whom no one has touched, or a pregnant woman who holds two souls at once'. A curious tale explains the origin of poultry.

> There was an entirely dark village twelve *kos* long. Once the people went out with a widow's son to search for light. They went a long long way until they lay down weary to sleep. When they awoke they found the sun in the sky. The widow's son declared that he had not slept and had seen a one-legged man put the sun there. The others were jealous that he should have seen this sight and killed him. They divided the flesh among themselves and gave some to the boy's mother, who took it not knowing what it was. She put it aside for him to eat when he should return. But next day, early in the morning as the sun came into the sky, the boy's flesh turned into a cock and began to crow. So when a hen lays an egg it is only a lump of flesh; it is when it hears the cock crow that life comes into it. That is why gods and men love eggs—for they are a sign of strength and life.

For this reason, it is said, gods and ghosts are not often responsible for addling eggs; this is done by human enemies. If a setting of eggs is thus spoilt by black magic, it should be lifted up together with its straw and placed on a piece of an earthen pot. It should be taken to a cross-road, where the priest must say, '*Thu thu, mailotia*, go back to whoever sent you'. He throws away the eggs and the party returns home without looking back. Elsewhere when

[1] Divination by egg-throwing is recorded of the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 220ff. In 1942 I found the Juang of Pal Lahara employing the virgin son of the village priest to test the omens, before a festival, by egg-throwing. The use of eggs in worship is widespread in Bastar and Orissa.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

623 lay to the Pargana Manjhi and his panchayat which consisted [633] of four headmen chosen from his group of villages.

In the ten years since these panchayats were established, they have done a great deal of work, and on the whole may be said to have functioned very well. A few headmen have abused their positions; there has been a certain amount of diversion of fines to uses for which they were not intended; probably a number of less influential people have not always had the justice that they might have expected. But this might have happened even in the ordinary Courts, and there is no doubt whatever that the establishment of these panchayats has done a great deal to build up the self-respect of Maria and Muria, and has developed leadership among them.

622 The importance of the panchayat for our subject is 623 obvious. In the first place, it provides a body of semi-official elders in every village whose duty it is to assist the police, and indeed whenever a suspicious death occurs in a village, the investigating officer calls the panchayat for a sort of inquest to which he acts as coroner and they as jury. On the other hand, the establishment of the village elders in a position of considerable authority makes it easy for them, when they wish to do so, to conceal a crime or deal with it themselves. Where a headman is himself the culprit, he may force the people to hush up his guilt; and the solidarity that is created by allowing the village under its own elders to settle many of its own affairs helps the headman to attain this end. This is no argument against the establishment of the panchayat. But it does mean that it is important for the authorities to hold the confidence of the headmen, and to inspire them constantly with a sense of their civic duties.

793 Side by side with the secular leaders are the religious elders of the village, though there is no reason why spiritual and secular functions should not be, as they often are, combined in the same persons. The priests and medicine-men naturally have more influence than the official headmen, the most powerful combination being when the headman himself is a Waddai or Siraha.

Chief among the religious elders is the Bhum-Gaita or Perma, the priest of the soil whose duty it is to see to all the sacrifices concerned with the village and its festivals, and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

to perform the worship of the Village Mother. The Pen-793
Waddai or Waddai is the priest of the clan who fulfils spiritual duties for its members. There may be more than one Waddai in a village or, on the other hand, one Waddai may have jurisdiction over several villages. Everything depends on the distribution of the clan members in the locality. The Waddai is of great importance because of his association with the Ancestors and the Dead. He has to purify offenders against the clan rules, and those who have done anything which might conceivably offend the Dead. The Hanagunda may be the Waddai or some lesser personage. His duty is to act as master of ceremonies at a funeral and to perform the special rites of appeasement for the ghost. He becomes of great importance when anyone has met an unnatural death such as being killed by a tiger or has been executed.

In addition to these regular priests, there are a large 791
number of men who are regarded as being in a special way the servants and interpreters of the gods. These men have the power of falling into ecstacy and in this condition divine the will and proclaim the wishes of unseen beings. They are called Siraha or Gunia. They are chiefly in demand for the cure of disease. Since disease is believed to be the result of supernatural activity on the part of some ghost or demon, it is by supernatural means that it must be diagnosed and cured. The Siraha often has houses round his compound for in-patients, and a celebrated medicine-man may attract sick and anxious people from a wide area.

These men, civil or religious, are the real rulers of the 623
Bastar village. Their influence is more far-reaching, their 674x
word is of greater effect than that of the most popular officials. Only the Maharaja, from whom they derive their power, is greater. Today their power is greatly circumscribed, but, as we will see, it has not altogether disappeared. They can still make unbearable the life of witch or sorcerer; they can still ostracize the social rebel; they can still fine the domestic tyrant and subdue the village bully. The ordeal by fire or burning oil still remains a weapon in their hands, and the threat of excommunication is a greater deterrent than many of the provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

The religious leaders insist on the supernatural dangers of crime, the defilement of jail or handcuffs, the painful death

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

I. The Shrine of Lingo Pen

IN the wild wooded country at the top of the hills, as you go up from Antagarh towards Amabera, is the little village of Semurgaon, and in the forest that surrounds the village, on a cliff overlooking a tiny stream, is the shrine of Lingo Pen who was once honoured by the Gond and Pardhan all over the Central Provinces. Today, as a living force, his cult is probably confined to the north of Bastar, and to the Muria, to whom he has given many deities and the most cherished of their institutions.

In Semurgaon, Lingo's shrine, a substantial thatched hut, is maintained by the Muria, but his priest is a Pardhan—Deo Singh of the Koreti Nang sept—who sings and plays before him on the dhusir-fiddle which is also Lingo's dwelling-place. The shrine is not unworthy of this venerable deity, the lord of all the aboriginal gods of Bastar. Under a spacious roof lies the Anga of Lingo suspended on a swing and sheltered by a great screen of peacock's feathers. At the four corners of the swing are bunches of the same feathers, and at the Anga's side is Lingo's *jiwa* or soul, a piece of iron like a ploughshare wrapped in grass. Round Lingo's neck is a bell, his son Netturgundi. To the right is his throne, a large cup-shaped stone. Above hangs an iron drum and a hunting-horn. From the roof are suspended pots containing Palo, the sacred cloth, and Lingo's two horses, crooked sticks adorned with feathers on which the mediums ride in ecstasy before him.

Every three years there is a great festival at Semurgaon, when Lingo is brought out of his shrine and is worshipped with pigs, goats and bulls. From all over the Jhorian, Amabera and Antagarh Parganas and from Kanker State come the pilgrims bringing their gods with them, 'for Lingo is Raja and Bastar is his kingdom'. At Alor also, in a clearing in the heart of the jungle, is a four-foot pillar of mahua wood in honour of Lingo, and every three years there is a festival. Indeed throughout northern Bastar you may find Lingo's relatives and hear his legend, a token of the strength and distribution of his cult.[1]

II. The Lingo Legend in the Central Provinces

Later in this chapter I present several versions of the Lingo legend as it is current among the Muria of Bastar, where its outstanding feature is its account of the founding of the ghotul. But first let us consider some other versions of the story which have been recorded in the Central Provinces.

The first of these versions was taken down by the Rev Stephen Hislop from a 'Pardhan priest of the Gond at Nagpur' in the Gondi tongue, and was later edited, translated and published by Sir Richard Temple, in 1866.[2] Unfortunately we have no indication of the distribution of the legend, nor indeed whether—in the form recorded by Hislop—it was known to any other

[1] There is a shrine to Lingal Pen at Chorpal in the Dantewara Tahsil, but I do not know whether the Maria here identify him with the Lingo of the north.

[2] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*. Edited by R. Temple, 1866. Large extracts from Temple's translation were reproduced by Bishop Eyre Chatterton in his *The Story of Gondwana* (London, 1916) and many of Temple's notes used without acknowledgement. A brief summary is given by Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 478.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The Bison-horn Marias (and, I believe, many of the Murias also) have similar ideas of it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to thresh or winnow. They are not so particular about the cessation of conjugal life between the sowing and sprouting of the crops, and between their coming into ear and being garnered. They use bullocks to tread out the grain on a threshing floor. Each cultivator has to take the help of his fellow villagers to carry his corn, but it is a service for which he hires them, and not a routine piece of communal village service in gathering the village crop as in the Abujhmar hills.

The new-eating festivals of the Hill Marias

It is taboo to eat any of the new crops until the appropriate new-eating festival has been celebrated.[a] These are very similar to the *pandum* festivals of the Bison-horn Marias, which will be described in the chapter on religion; but they are less elaborate and are fewer in number; the Bison-horn Maria seems to have a *pandum* as an essential preliminary to almost every act of gathering the produce of field or forest. The Hill Maria has only three, or, in villages where the last festival is held as late as March or early April, four of these festivals. The first is known either as *Tur Korta Tindana* or *Amu Korta Tindana*, according as the chief of the early ripening rains crops is *Panicum miliare* (*turya-kohala*) or *Panicum frumentaceum* (*amu*), and is held at the end of Hagh, that is about the middle of August. In Eranj (September) comes *Hikka Korta Tindana* in villages, like Handawada, where there is no rice cultivation, and *hikka* (see p. 134 above) is the chief crop ripening next after the August crops; where much rice (*wanj*) is grown, *Wanj Korta Tindana* is celebrated instead at the end of Eram (middle of October). This is followed in Pusi (January) in the villages where the final festival is celebrated after February by *Kohala Korta Tindana*, the first eating of the main *Panicum miliaceum* (*kutki*) crop. The last and greatest festival, held on dates varying from the end of January till early April in different clan-areas, is *Pupal Korta Tindana*, combined with *Koqsar*, the clan-god's festival; when this takes place early enough in the year to be economically convenient, it is the new-eating festival not only of *urad* (*pupal*; *Phaseolus radiatus*) and other pulses and beans, but also of *kutki* and the other late ripening hill grains. '*Korta Tindana*' is Hinduized literally as '*nawa khana*', 'new eating'. A main reason for the varying dates of this last festival is that dancing is permissible only at it, at weddings and at the camps of touring officials. The round of festivities after the final harvest-home is prolonged by celebrating the festival clan after clan; all the youths of neighbouring clans go to dance at each other's *Koqsar*,

[a] [see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

796 and many a marriage arises from the first meeting of lad and girl in these dances.

796 The land, as has been seen, is the land of the clan-god (if not even, in some sense, the clan-god himself). It is natural, therefore, that before any of these festivals are held in the individual villages [614 of the clan the main ceremony for the whole clan should take place 776] before the clan-god, either in or near the parish where his permanent hut-temple is situated. When the new grain of the crop concerned has been garnered, the *kasyeq-gaita* of each village sends word to the *pen-waddai* or clan-priest. The clan-priest consults the clan-god personally if himself a medium, or else through a medium, and announces a date for the celebration before the clan-god. On the night before leaving their village to attend the celebration, the *kasyeq-gaita* and all the men who are to go with him next day observe sexual continence, and sleep in the dormitory. The *kasyeq-gaita* is fed that night on fish, at the expense of the village, in some clan-areas. In a few villages a separate *bhum-gaita* exists, whose sole function seems to be to lead the villagers in visits of this kind to the clan-god. Before dawn, each wife grinds about 4 lb. of the new grain for her husband to take to the clan-festival. No women may attend the new-eating ceremonies. Besides supplies of new grain, the *kasyeq-gaita* and men take on behalf of the whole village a cock or two (there is no rule as to the colour of the victim), and perhaps, when the village is large or prosperous, a young boar (*not* a gelded pig) or a barren sow.

796 The deputations from the various villages assemble at the *pen-ranar* or shrine of the clan-god. The god, which in form is always a framework of logs criss-crossed with bamboos and bedecked with peacock feathers, spirals of quills, brass bells and other simple finery, is then taken out of his hut by four men of the clan-priest's family or village, and borne to the traditional place of sacrifice, which may be near the shrine or even outside the main village of the clan, three or four miles from the shrine. There they set the god down on stones under a *saja* tree, and the four bearers have a ceremonial wash. Sometimes the clan-priest again, either himself if a medium, or through mediums, consults the wishes of the god, who always permits the festival to continue, but generally suggests that they should first offer worship to the Village Mother of the village where the assembly has gathered. All adjourn to her shrine, 796 and there the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village places a grain or two of 787 the new crop on the table-stone or cleft stick representing the Mother, cuts the throat of a small chicken, sprinkles its blood on the Mother, and throws it down, still alive, on the ground. All watch the chicken eagerly; if after a convulsive leap or two it falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen. When making his offerings, the *kasyeq-gaita* adjures the Mother to remain favourable to the village.

All return then to the clan-god, and here the clan-priest offers for each village some of the new grain and cuts the throat of the cocks and pigs brought by each *kasyeq-gaita*, sprinkling blood from each victim on the clan-god, on whom he calls to be ever present to help them, in weal or woe, in field or forest, at home or abroad. In the less important new-eatings, if the practice among the Bardal clan observed in August 1930 at Kutul is universal, the flesh of the sacrificed animals is not then eaten in a communal feast, but divided among the men present, each of whom takes it to his home, where the male members of the family alone eat it with new grain. Some liquor is drunk in the houses by the men and the unmarried girls, but this is not an essential part of the proceedings. The fermented rice gruel, *landa*, which is always freely consumed at Bison-horn Maria *pandums*, is never even manufactured by Hill Marias, who say that it is taboo to them. After the return of each village delegation to its village, the local *kasyeq-gaita* (whether there is a *bhum-gaita* or not) performs a similar ceremony on a smaller scale before his Village Mother; this in some clan-areas is attended by the clan-priest also, as a guest, but not as a celebrant except in a few large villages to which the clan-god is brought for the occasion; in some other villages a cairn or table-stone is set up near the Village Mother's shrine, and, like her shrine, sprinkled with blood. Nor are the Departed forgotten, for they, too, can harm the garnered crops or the next harvest. The housewife pounds the new grain before the festival in a specially made mortar hole with a pestle (*uspal*) washed in water newly drawn from a running stream. She cooks it in the *lonu* room on the Hearth of the Departed (see p. 114 above), and the ashes of this fire are never swept away. In the evening, before the new food is eaten, she places a little as an offering on the floor just in front of the Pot of the Departed, with some appropriate adjuration; and some she places in three *siari* leaves, which in the early morning her husband deposits outside the village by the side of some path (never, apparently, at the cemetery or the Stones of the Dead (*kotokal*)), saying, '*Kopa-kopi munata tado-papi kisor mator, ade kintoram*,' meaning, 'We give what our grandfathers and great-grandfathers used to give to their ancestors of old.'

The association of the clan-god with the three first new-eatings is not so marked as at the last, which is the harvest-home celebration. The tendency is to regard them more as domestic than even village ceremonies. No dancing or drumming is allowed at them, and no

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyeq-gaita* obtains the permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman sweeps out her house, and the *kasyeq-gaita* goes to each house and collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan, or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought from Japgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots kept at his *pen-rawar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana* before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially where the *udam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

important, for then the *kasyeq-gaita* and, in a minor degree, the secular headman have their hour of glory, and something of the honour that might be paid to real chieftains. The *kasyeq-gaita* as intermediary between the Village Mother and her children sacrifices to her a pig and a cock, and sets before her a basket of new *hutki*, pulses and beans. A feast similar to that before the clan-god follows. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* proceeds to his *udam-garia* or seat-of-honour, next to which may be a smaller seat for the secular headman (*gaita* or *peda*); it is either a long, flat boulder, or a flat stone supported on stone legs, as in Plate XXIII. He wears no insignia, and is to all appearance as naked and poor a Maria as all his villagers. The men seat themselves around in a circle on little stone cromlechs. Then the *kasyeq-gaita* formally announces the programme for the next year, what *penda* slope is to be cultivated, what arrangements are to be made to meet State or zamindari demands for land revenue or labour, and so on; the announcements, it is true, are the results of previous informal village discussions, and not the *kasyeq-gaita's* orders independently conceived by him, but his formal promulgation is needed before they can be brought into effect.

After *Koqsar* they are free to cut grass and bamboos, and to collect forest produce, or to hunt; it is true that in most villages there is little game but hares and field-mice, but a Maria thinks a field-mouse the rarest of delicacies, and will stop any occupation to chase a mouse or dig them out.[1] But the long year is over at last, and till the next sowing, though there is ahead the labour of felling, spreading and firing the wood for the *penda*, taboos are lifted, and there is no fear of harm to growing things from the queer magic inherent in sex. So now is the season of new marriages and of conjugal life in the home, and the seed is sown for the raising of the human crop.

Assessment and payment of land revenue among the Hill Marias

It has been indicated that there are the beginnings of permanent cultivation among the Hill Marias. As a matter of fact, several villages have traces of old rice embanked fields. Two things long effectively checked the spread of permanent cultivation. One, before the 1910 rebellion, was the presence of a police station at Kutul, the headquarter village of the Bardal clan and *pargana* in the very heart of the Abujhmar hills. This meant a constant demand from the Kutul police for rice as *bisaha*,[2] and

[1] I had a carefully arranged beat for a family of man-eating tigers at Kutru ruined because the Hill Maria beaters rushed in wild enthusiasm to catch two or three mice disturbed by the beat.

[2] See p. 14 above.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XI

The Annual Religious Ceremonies of the Bison-horn Marias

796 In Chapter VII, on Maria agriculture, which was treated chiefly from the point of view of Hill Maria agriculture as being far less advanced than Bison-horn Maria agriculture, the Hill Maria festivals and ceremonies were described. The Bison-horn Marias have many more ceremonies and a much more elaborate ceremonial, and though these are as closely connected with the agricultural calendar of the year as those of the Hill Marias, they are best described here in a separate chapter than in Chapter VII where a description of them would have wrecked the balance of the description of agriculture.

It would, from the agricultural point of view, perhaps be logical to start the account of the *pandum* festivals and *weta* ceremonial hunts from the Kare Pandum of Magh month, held early in February, because until it has taken place it is *melo* or taboo to cut timber for *erka* and *parka* cultivation; in another sense, however, it is one of the last festivals of the year, for its holding also signalizes the lifting of the taboo against the reaping of the forest grass crop and of bamboos, and it follows soon after the Jata Pandum at which new *urad*, beans and pulses are eaten for the first time. The Bhimul Pandum that comes next, in the middle of February, is also designed to secure satisfactory rain for the coming year, but is not described first because it makes the account of all the *pandum* clearer and briefer to begin with those on which there is the fullest information. The Irpu or Idu Pandum, or *mahua* flowers first-fruits ceremony, which is held soon after the Bhimul Pandum, is therefore taken as the first ceremony of the year. In some parts it is combined with the Marka Pandum, the mango first-fruits ceremony; but, at all events to the south of the Bison-horn country, it is quite separate and more important, as the *mahua* tree plays a more important part than the mango in not only the economic but also the religious life of the people. The *perma* of the village fixes the day, which is always a Friday in the bright half of the month, in consultation with the headman (*pedā*) and elders about a week beforehand. On the night before the ceremony all the men observe sexual continence,[1] and in the morning assemble at the *mahua* tree in the *perma's*

The Irpu Pandum

B34

[1] Sexual continence is the rule on the night before every *pandum*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

field, the *perma* bringing a cock and a little milk and husked rice. The *perma* cleans a small rectangle at the foot of the tree, sets the egg upright on it, and strews the rice in front of the egg. The cock is set down on its feet, and as soon as it pecks up a grain or two of the rice, the *perma* cuts its throat in the name of the Village Mother, whom he prays to accept the egg and the cock offered by the village, and to bless them with a bumper crop of *mahua* flowers and fruit. He then pours milk over the trunk of the tree and some of the clusters of *mahua* flowers, and prays to the milk-spirits Pal-mu'ito and Pal-mutta'i (Milk-old-man and Milk-old-woman) to shower upon them *mahua* flowers fat with milk. Next he throws the egg over the tree, calling on Nus-mu'ito and Nus-muttai (Insect-old-man and Insect-old-woman; *nus* is a grub or insect that attacks the ends of the twigs from which burst the *mahua* flowers) not to damage the flowers. Then all the men present quickly gather up dead *mahua* leaves lying around beneath the tree and put them into the baskets that they use for collecting *mahua* flowers, pretending that they are flowers; the idea, of course, is to act the gathering of a crop of flowers as thick as the carpet of dead leaves, and to persuade the trees in sympathy with this magic to yield a generous crop. The *perma* then takes the sacrificed cock as his portion, and all disperse to their homes. Before this ceremony has been held it is taboo to collect *mahua* flowers.

The Marka Pandum

The mango first-fruits ceremony is held generally a little later, in March, the *perma* convening a similar meeting of the elders to fix the day as soon as he sees that the young fruit has formed on the trees, and to arrange either for a *sari-bori* village subscription for buying the sacrificial victims or for getting the victims from those whose turn it is to give them at this *pandum*. We have seen already (pp. 165-6) that this is sometimes preceded by a ceremonial fishing beat or *weta*, and by pouring of water in the name of the Departed. All the males of the village assemble on the morning of the *pandum* by the *perma's kadri-bera* field, the head of each family bringing a pig or a cock, a pot of *landa* or *mahua* spirit, cooking pots, and a pound of husked rice or *kulthi* for each member of his family present. For this festival sometimes instead of using the *kadri-bera* field they resort to a mango grove, a grove of trees by a stream, or a clump of forest trees thickly covered with creepers, often on a hill-top, and known as a *deo-kot*; the site is always reserved for such ceremonies, and it is taboo to pluck even a leaf in them. There should be a sacred *saja* tree there. At the foot of this tree a space is cleaned and smeared with cow-dung and water, over which a table-stone is set up on three or four small stones, to serve as the *gadi* or throne

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

796 of the god, in this *pandum* generally known as Kodo Pen. The *perma* puts a round white stone on this throne in Kodo Pen's name, strews wet rice on the ground in front of the stone, and arranges eggs at the side of the rice. The *perma* then puts his own cock down to see if it will eat the rice, as in the case of the sacrificial victims at the Irpu Pandum, and then in turn the cock produced by each head of a family is put through the test; the process is called the *tohana* of the cocks. If any cock refuses to touch the rice, the *perma* asks its owner whether he has promised the god any other sacrifice, and if the owner says he has no recollection of having done so, the *perma* turns to the cock, and says, 'If he promised an egg, I command you to pick up the rice; if he promised a pig, I command you, etc.' and so on, suggesting further victims; and the owner is expected to provide the last victim suggested before the cock picks up the rice. When all have been through the *tohana*, the *perma* with the sacred knife cuts off the heads of the cocks and pigs, cutting them from the throat upwards, and sprinkles the blood of each victim over the god, the rice and the eggs. He heaps the heads together, and hands the bodies back to the owners of the victims. He then pours a little *landa* and *mahua* spirit on the white stone representing the god, places two or three unripe green mangoes on the 'throne' beside him, bends to the earth before him with his palms pressed flat on the earth, belches, and prays to the god to save them from all sickness and adversity, now that they have offered him the new mangoes. He then bows his head to the ground, rises and stands facing the sun, whom, with folded hands, he calls on to be a witness that the *pandum* has been performed. When the *mahua* first-fruits ceremony is combined with the *Marka Pandum*, *mahua* flowers are offered along with the green mangoes, and cooked and eaten at the feast that follows. After addressing the sun, the *perma* gives back to each family the head of its cock, and these are fried and eaten with *landa* or *mahua* spirit. The men of each family then cook the rice and the bodies of their sacrificed pigs or cocks in the cooking pots that they have brought with them, along with some green mangoes and *mahua* flowers; and they sit in a circle and eat the food, washing it down with more liquor, before returning with their cooking pots to their houses. The *perma* cooks and eats his own sacrificial meat with his brothers and sons apart from the rest, and hangs his cooking pot with the sacred knife inside it on some tree in the sacred grove before going home. On the next day, as after most of these *pandum* feasts, the head of each family observes in his house the *Hara Tindana* (Halbi, *Basi Tihar*) or 'remains-eating' feast, to which he bids his womenfolk and his friends, and brother-clan and wife-clan relatives from

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

[illegible] 778
796

PLATE XVI

THE SACRIFICE BEFORE THE *WIJJA-WETA*
The offerings before the altar of bows

[facing p. 210]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinia argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwaria or Forest-maidens, and on each

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AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

heap offers an egg and a tooth-stick (*datun*), sometimes also a miniature bow and arrow; he then takes up each tooth-stick in turn, splits it and throws down the split halves to test the omens in the way already described, after praying with folded hands to the Forest-maidens for success in the hunt and protection from wild beasts. Then he takes an arrow off the altar, and, holding it by the shaft just above the feathering, cuts the top of each egg with the sharp edge of the arrow-head.

The omens having thus been taken, and the bows and arrows of the altar, if any, reclaimed by their owners, all the men go off with their weapons in the *weta* ritual hunt to beat the forest for game. The women appear with pots full of cow-dung and water, into which they dip sprays of leaf and shower the foul water with fouler abuses on any laggards. If any animal is slain, the shedding of much blood on the ground is regarded as foreshadowing plentiful rainfall and a rich harvest; on the spot where it falls they cut little bits off the tips of its ears, nose, tongue, feet and tail, place each bit on a separate *saja* leaf on the ground in the name of the Forest-maidens or of Karenga Deo, and pray for a continuance of this good fortune. At the end of the hunt they take the carcasses of the animals back to the *mahua* bough erected in the name of the Village Mother in the *kadri-bera* field, and leave them there. They then go home for supper.

Towards midnight each man returns to the *kadri-bera* with his bow and arrows, a small packet of *kutki* and other grain seeds wrapped up in leaves, a little *mahua* liquor and a white cock; a pig is also brought for all the villagers. Some villages do not expect each man to bring a cock, but purchase a number of cocks by *sari-bori* subscription. The men hand over the packets of seed to the *perma*, who piles them on the ground in front of the *mahua* bough and places his sacrificial knife beside them. He then prostrates himself before the *mahua* bough and prays to the Village Mother for good and timely rain and bumper crops. He then puts each cock and the pig through the *tokana* rice-eating test, and sacrifices them one by one, cutting their heads off from the throat upwards, piling the heads all together near the *mahua* bough, and holding each body over the pile of seed-packets and the *mahua* bough to soak them well with blood; he then throws the bodies aside. Next he breaks with his knife in the Mother's name the egg which he had set up in the morning, and pours some *mahua* spirit on the ground before the *mahua* bough. The *perma* and the men of his family then roast and eat the heads of the cocks and the pig, and each other family the body of the cock contributed by it; when cocks have been bought by subscription, the *perma* slices

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

them up and distributes them. The pig, cooked with rice, is next apportioned among all present and eaten. 796

Meanwhile some boil the rice brought by each villager, and the carcasses of the animals killed in the afternoon ritual hunt are skinned, cut up and roasted, after the head and the legs below the knees and hocks have been cut off, taken to the hut-temple of Mata and tied with ropes to wooden roof-posts in front of the goddess. The *perma* and all the men, when the meat is cooked, drink liquor and eat the meat; by that time, however, many have had enough, and carry off their share to their houses to eat later.

Women take no part in this feast and may not be present, except that they are expected to meet the successful huntsmen on their return and dance and sing in front of the bodies of the animals killed in the hunt as they are taken to the *kadri-bera*.

When the eating is over, the *perma* takes up his own packet of blood-stained seed, and hands each man his packet. They take them off to their houses, and place them carefully on the storage platform inside the *wijjalon* room of their houses.

By this time it is daylight, and they must all start out on another ritual hunt after the usual preliminary offerings to the Forest-maidens and omen-taking. If any animal is slain, the usual portions are then and there offered to the Forest-maidens on *saja* leaves in the forest, and at the end of the hunt the bodies are brought back, greeted as before by dancing women, and taken, not to the *kadri-bera*, but to a shed prepared in the village for that purpose. Sexual intercourse is no longer taboo, and the dancing that follows ends in the men getting their own back for the abuses with which the women drove them out to the hunt. [834]

The next day they cut up the carcasses left in the shed overnight, and divide the meat; first the head, intestines and the legs below the knees and hocks are set on one side; then the man who killed the animal in the hunt is given the rest of the off hind leg and sometimes some meat from each side of the backbone, the *pala* (not in all villages), the saddle, and the *waddai*, if any, or the *kanal-gaita*[1] (again in some villages only), the liver; and lastly the balance is divided among all the men, including those who have already received privileged portions. Each takes off the meat to his own house, for the *Hara Tindana* remains-eating feast for his women, and brother-clan and wife-clan relatives. But before they start this feast, one of the villagers on behalf of the village takes a cock and an egg to the priest of Mata's hut-temple. The priest sacrifices them to her, and in return restores the heads and legs tied up in the temple after the first ritual hunt. The villager brings them back

[1] Priest of the Departed, alias *pitar-gaita*. See p. 217 below.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

to the shed where the animals killed in the second ritual hunt were kept and cut up, and there they are cooked along with the head, intestines and lower legs of those animals, and eaten by the men of the village.

This should be followed on the next Sunday by the *Jur-weta* for the whole *pargana* at the chief village of the *pargana*, the *perma* of that village acting as the officiant before the altar of bows and arrows erected in the name of the Forest-maidens, and the *perma* and elders of each village offering an egg and a tooth-stick to be placed by the officiating *perma* in the bran-heap of each of the three Forest-maidens. The *weta* is sometimes followed by worship of the clan-god and the *Pen-karsita* festival, except in villages where that takes place at the Mandai or Deogudi Jatra on or about the full moon day of Magh. It has already been said that the *Jur-weta* is now abandoned in most *parganas* because nearly all except small game has been exterminated. Actually, however, the photograph illustrating the sacrifice to the Forest-maidens, facing page 211, was taken at a *Jur-weta* and not at the *wijja-weta* of the preceding week.

It remains to state what each man does with the packet of consecrated seed which he takes back from the Wijja Pandum to his house. Before seed-time, he calls in a medium (*wadde*), through whom he consults the oracle as to the propitious day and hour for the field sowing ceremony. At the appointed time, taking care to be overlooked by no one, he takes to his field a sowing basket containing the consecrated seed mixed with other seed, a little cooked rice and a cock. In the field he clears a little plot of ground, spreads rice on it and, as soon as the cock starts to eat it, cuts its head off from the throat upwards in the name of the Earth-god, and sprinkles its blood on the ground and on the seed in the basket. He prepares a small piece of the field for sowing, and on it sows three handfuls of the blood-sprinkled seed. He then cooks and eats the body of the cock in the field, leaving the head there, and makes his way back to his house, still trying to avoid being seen. After this ceremony he is free to complete his sowing when he likes.

Hareli

Hareli is not observed by all Bison-horn Marias, but is universal among Parjas and Bhattras and the Jagdalpur Murias, and, under its common local name of Amavas, amongst Halbas and other Hindus of the State. The Dantewara and Barsur temples have spread its observance among the Bison-horn villages of Jagdalpur and Dantewara tahsils, and the villagers generally wait till the temples have celebrated the festival before celebrating it in their villages. On the morning of the day on which they have decided to hold it, the village elders assemble at the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796

perma's house and take him to the hut of the log-god, if there is one in the village, or to Mata's hut (the Mata-guri). No animal is sacrificed, but the *perma* lights a fire in front of the god or goddess, burns a little ghee or sal (*Shorea robusta*) resin in the fire, and bows before the deity; each elder does the same. The *perma* then fixes in the thatched roof of the shrine a leafy spray of the marking-nut tree (*Semecarpus anacardium*) and a spray of the *sitawari* creeper, and sends the congregation out to the forest to get *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) branches to stick in the centre of each of their fields. They adorn the *tendu* branches at the top with a leafy marking-nut twig and a spray of *sitawari*, and fix them upright in the centre of each rice, *erka* and *penda* field, sometimes pouring a little milk over them; the idea seems to be to indicate by the branch a tall and well-branched plant such as each rice or *kutki* seed sown in the field should produce. They then bathe in the nearest pool or river, and fix a spray of marking-nut and of *sitawari* in the thatch of their houses. They then eat roast pork or fowl in their houses, and drink *landa*, entertaining those too poor to afford a dinner of their own, and giving salt to their cattle. Nothing is offered to the Departed at this festival.

The Kurum Pandum

The Kurum Pandum is observed towards the end of August, and is the earliest of the new-eating or first-fruits ceremonies of the cultivated crops, in this case the early-ripening millets off the *erka* and *penda* fields, especially *chikma* (*Panicum miliare*). It is sometimes called Kadi Pandum. In ordinary villages where there is no log-god the first part of the celebrations takes part at the *kadri-bera* field before the Bhimul post, which for this ceremony is regarded as the Village Mother. Early in the morning of the appointed day the women clean the ground in front of their houses, wash their floors with cow-dung and water, and then go to a pool to bathe and wash their husbands' and children's clothes. Those who can afford it get new clothes for the *pandum*. Towards noon the men assemble at the *kadri-bera* field, and the usual rectangle is cleared and cleaned by the *perma* around the Bhimul post; but for this ceremony they make a dwarf fence of *saja* twigs stuck in the ground on three sides of the rectangle, and carpet the rectangle with *saja* leaves. The *perma* stands to the west of the Bhimul post, and, facing the east, addresses it as the Village Mother, praying to her and bowing before her. The villagers subscribe for a pig, a white cock and eggs for a sacrifice; sometimes even now a young bull or heifer is stolen for this purpose. The *perma*, as usual, brings wet rice for the *tohana* test of the victims, and spreads it on the *saja* leaves, laying the eggs in a row before the goddess. He sacrifices the cock and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

pig, sprinkles their blood over the goddess and over each of the *saja* leaves, and breaks the top of each of the eggs with his knife. Then he offers the goddess ears of *chikma*, other early millets, and mountain rice; if the latter is not yet in ear, he offers a flowering rice stalk. He then prostrates himself with the palms of his hands flat on the ground, belches, and prays the goddess as their mother to accept these first-fruits, to grant them grace to have their new-eating feast, and to save her witless children from all troubles and adversity. He then hands each man one of the bloodstained *saja* leaves, and, leaving someone to watch over the slain victims, all go and bury the leaves in their fields. Each man then brings a handful of old rice from his house to the *kadri-bera* field, and hands it over to the *perma*, who cooks the bodies of the victims and the rice separately, and distributes them to the men, who eat their share there.

Meanwhile the women, for whom it has been taboo to attend the ceremony in the *kadri-bera* field and the burial of the leaves, will have prepared meal from the new millets and mountain rice; the grains are still rather green, and are roughly threshed, parched in a broken earthen crock held over the fire, pounded with the *uspal* husker, winnowed free of husks, and ground between two hand mill-stones with a quantity of salt; some mix in a little *gur* sugar. The wife of each head of a family cooks the new flour in a Hanal Kunda or Pot of the Departed (not, of course, that in which oil, etc., is placed in the name of the newly dead), along with new vegetables from the *bari*, other than gourds, beans and cucumbers. When the head of the family returns from the sacrificial meal already described, he brings with him the junior members of his family, but *not* his wife-clan relatives, and some of them bring small chickens. He sacrifices these to the Departed, offers them some of the new flour and vegetables, and pours a libation of *mahua* spirit and *landa* on the floor of the corner of the *wijja-lon* room that is dedicated to the cult of the Departed. The new flour and vegetables are then eaten in his house by them, their wives and their unmarried children; but no one of any other clan may participate, and on that day no one must give anything out of his house, not even fire from his hearth, to anyone of another clan.

On the next day, however, there is the usual remains-eating feast (*Hara Tindana*) in their houses, to which they are free to invite friends, brother-clan and wife-clan relatives, whom they regale on *mahua* spirit and on *landa*. In the evening they dance the *kortam* dance without their bison-horn head-dresses, but with men and women dancing separately in their usual way.

In villages where there is a log-god and a *Mataguri* or hut-shrine of Mata, the sacrifices on the first day are made before each, the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

perma with three or four mediums officiating at the former, and the priest of Mata (*Mata-pujari*) at the latter. In some villages there is a separate hut close to the shrine (*pen-rawar*) of the log-god or clan-god and to the *Mataguri*, and a separate priest of the Departed called generally *Pitar-gaita*, but sometimes *Dhuma-gaita* or *Hanal-gaita*, the use of the Hindu term *pitar* for the local terms *dhuma* and *hanal* being significant of the way in which Hinduism is gradually modifying tribal religion. At the Ghotpal Kurum Pandum, for example, on the 9th September 1930, the men assembled with the *perma* outside the *pen-rawar* of Use Modia Pen along with the men of two adjacent Lekami villages. The *pen* log-god was brought out and set down on four stone slabs set up as posts. The proceedings started with the *Pitar-gaita* bringing two new earthen pots and about half a pound each of new *chikma* and new mountain rice to a separate shed at the side of the *pen-rawar*. He kindled a fire, and in one pot cooked small quantities of the new *chikma*, set this out on three *mahua* leaves as an offering to the Departed, and attached a fringe of rice plants in ear to the roof of the shed. He then started to cook the rest of the new *chikma* and new rice in the other pot, sitting in the shed, while the others present went to attend the sacrifices in front of the log-god. These were conducted in much the same way as those already described as made usually before the Village Mother; but there was no sprinkling of blood on *saja* leaves or burial of the leaves in the fields, the *perma*, who acted as clan-priest, washed the mouths and feet of the pigs and cocks before applying the *tokana* test, and a *wadde* medium sat by the side of the log-god reciting '*mantram*' as the *perma* sacrificed each cock and pig. The *perma* then poured three libations each of *mahua* spirit and *landa* in front of the log-god. All the men then returned to the *Pitar-gaita's* shed, and sat in a circle round it, while the *Pitar-gaita* stuck a pinch of the cooked *chikma* and rice on the centre of each man's forehead, just as Hindus apply the *tika*. Thereafter all went back to the *pen-rawar*, and first the *perma*, then the *Pitar-gaita*, then the *pedā* headmen of the three villages taking part in the ceremony, and last eleven or twelve village elders saluted everyone present and drank a leaf-cupful first of *mahua* spirit and then of *landa*. Then the sacrificed cocks and pigs were cooked, and all the men sat in a circle and were given each two leaf-cupfuls of *landa* to drink and two pieces of the cooked meat. All ended by drinking some *mahua* spirit and the whole feast was over by 9 p.m., when they dispersed to their houses without dancing. No females had been present. They had the usual family new-eating next day, with offerings to the Departed inside the house. Ghotpal and some other villages have no dancing at this *pandum*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 Nowhere, so far as can be ascertained, are any offerings made at the *wraskal* menhir stones for the Departed.

After this *pandum* everyone is free to eat the new early millets and garden vegetables other than gourds, cucumbers, beans and pulses. The practice as to mountain rice varies, for there is still the Korta Pandum or rice first-fruits ceremony to follow. In some places people are free to use and cook the new mountain rice in any way they like after the Kurum Pandum. In others it must be cooked or roasted without being first washed in water until the Nuka Nordana Pandum has been held, which coincides roughly with Diwali.

The Korta Pandum

The Korta Pandum comes about a month after the Kurum Pandum, and celebrates the first eating of the new rice of the main crop, and of new cucumbers, pumpkins and gourds. Unlike the Kurum Pandum, it is a purely domestic ceremony with no public offerings, though the date for it is fixed for the whole village by the usual elders' meeting. It takes place in the first or second week of Kuar, i.e. in early October. Before dawn of the day before the festival the head of each family tries to get to his fields without being seen and reaps enough of the new rice for the morrow's ceremony, for which it is threshed, parched, husked and winnowed in readiness. *Landa* is prepared, and *makua* spirit bought. On the appointed morning the new rice is cooked in the Pot of the Departed by the housewife, along with the flesh of the goat, cock or pig sacrificed to the Departed by the head of each family, and eaten by the men and women of the family (affines being excluded) in the way already described for the domestic ceremony of the Kurum Pandum. All take *landa* and liquor, and then in most villages the men don their dancing head-dresses, and sing and dance from house to house, exchanging visits and drinking *landa* with all their neighbours. There are the usual remains-eating feasts given next day for brother-clan and wife-clan relatives from other villages, with more singing and dancing.

[764]

The Nuka Nordana Pandum

The literal meaning of '*nuka nordana*' is 'husked-grain (*indica, chawal*) grinding'. The festival is not universal among the Bison-horn Marias, and is held at about the beginning of the third week of Kartik month (November). It is sometimes spoken of as Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights; but no Maria houses are illuminated for it. Other local names are Pit Phorni (Halbi) and Deuthni. The ceremony should be held before the clan-god or log-god, but in villages where there is none it takes place in the *kadri-bera* by the usual Bhimul post, and, as for the Marka Pandum,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

a table-stone with a white pebble on it may be erected in the name of the clan-god under a *saja* tree. The *perma* sacrifices cocks and a pig or goat on behalf of the village in the usual way, and washes some new husked rice and *kuthi* and offers it to the god. The men cook and eat the sacrificial meat then and there. The wife-clan relatives may be present, but in most villages are not allowed to participate in the sacrificial rice and meat and are supplied with other rice and meat which they cook separately. The usual remains-eating feast takes place in the houses next day.

The Jata Pandum

At the Jata Pandum, held somewhere near the full moon of Pus (December-January), they celebrate the eating of the first new beans, pulses, and the latest ripening grains. There is the usual public sacrifice for the men before the log-god or the Village Mother. In the south, towards the Dorla border, the festival is known as Chikur Pandum, and the sacrifices are always to a table-stone beneath a *saja* tree known as Dhania Deo, which, like the Bhattra Dhani, appears to be only another form of the earth-god. The only special feature of this *pandum* is that the domestic sacrifice and libations to the Departed in the house are often followed by a ceremony for weaning suckling children, the first food given being some of the rice and sacrificial meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed.

The Kare Pandum

This takes place in Magh (January-February), soon after the Jata Pandum, and, as already observed, is preceded by the *Kare Weta* in which fields and open spaces are beaten for small game. I was unable to ascertain what other special features, if any, the festival has, or whether new grass and new bamboo are offered to the gods. Until the festival has been held it is *mulo* or taboo to cut grass or bamboos or to start felling timber for *erka*, *parka* and *penda* cultivation.

The Bhimul Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum comes very soon after the Kare Pandum. I have no detailed information. But it is a ceremony for ensuring a good rainfall in the coming monsoon. It takes place by the Bhimul post in the *kadri-bera*, over which a booth of boughs is erected. Men and women attend. The booth is decorated with strings of mango leaves. The *perma* sacrifices a white cock and an egg, and pours *landa* over the Bhimul post; and men and women then empty over the post baskets containing a little of every kind of field produce. Men and women then sit in the open, and consume *landa*. All night the village women dance, led by the *perma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head or in her arms.

The Bhimul Pandum is really the last of the *pandum* held in all villages. It only remains to mention the Mandai or Deoguri

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

796 Jatra, which is held generally about the full moon of Magh, but in some villages is part of the round of festivities and hunting connected with the Wijja Pandum in the month of Chait. The Mandai is a Hinduization of the old Pen-karsita. Throughout Northern Bastar a Mandai Jatra is held at all big centres at about this time, culminating in the great Mandai in the open space called Kodo Bhata in Jagdalpur, which the Chief should attend in state, processing on elephant seven times round the fair, accompanied by innumerable mediums leaping and dancing possessed by their gods. The Hill Maria counterpart is the Koqsar on the day after the Pupal Korta Tindana. The Bison-horn Pen-karsita tends to resemble the Mandai of the bigger villages of the north, all the local gods being brought out and the *waddo* mediums, possessed by their godlings, leaping and dancing wildly about. The special Pen-karsita drum rhythm and dance have already been referred to.

The Mandai

These are the main festivals, though here and there there are further *pandum*, such as the sacrifice offered at the base of the first toddy-palm to be tapped among the southern Bison-horn Marias. Nor must it be expected that in every *pargana* or village the local *pandum* will conform exactly to the descriptions in this chapter, which represent the principal features of *pandum* actually seen in Dugeli, villages around Kuakonda, Aranpur, Ghotpal and villages in Sukma zamindari. The festivals are far more numerous and more elaborate than those of the Hill Marias. It is an obvious suggestion that if the Bison-horn Maria tradition of migration from the Abujhmar hills be correct, the accretions to the hill cults represent entirely the influence of the old Telanga Hindu centres of Dantewara, Barsur and Bhairamgarh. But this does not account for such features as the soaking of the first seeds to be sown in the coming harvest in the blood of the animals sacrificed in the Wijja Pandum, or the burial of the blood-stained *soja* leaves in the fields during the Kurum Pandum, which have suggestions of connexion with the Khond Meriah ritual; or for such magico-religious pieces of ritual as the gathering of *mahua* leaves in the baskets used for collecting *mahua* flowers, the dancing of the *pherma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head, or the spilling of milk on the *mahua* buds. Primitive cults are influenced by Hinduism, but also react on it; and it seems to have been part of the policy of the Bastar Chiefs to identify themselves as much as they could with the religious life of their primitive subjects, save those in the inaccessible Abujhmar hills. Much of the long Dasehra ritual at Jagdalpur is elaborated from primitive ideas. Tribal gods have been recognized, and many are allowed to join in the Mandai

Conclusion

796 177

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

procession at Jagdalpur. The Dantewara temple observes several of the local *pandum*, if in a Hinduized form, while the ceremonies of the isolated Telanga villages now surrounded by a sea of Bison-horn Maria villages have become little different from those of the Bison-horn Marias. Hinduization there is, and has long been; but that alone does not account for the differences between the ritual of the Bison-horn Maria and that of the Hill Maria and his Muria neighbours. The physical differences between the two sections of Marias are slight, but their traditions are different, and at least it is clear that they represent different waves of migration. The remarkable differences of dancing, drumming, singing and ritual, and in the intonation, words and inflexions of their dialects, which make them mutually unintelligible, cannot be explained merely by saying that the Bison-horn Marias are 'more advanced' and more in contact with Hinduism and Telugu influences than the Hill Marias.

Note.

Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., has, since this book went to the press, kindly sent me a note of an interesting recent investigation by the police at Madder in Bhopalpatnam zamindari. A Mohammedan woman asleep on the night of June 13th, 1937 in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a knife or arrow over her right ribs, and woke to see what she believed to be two Marias running away. The police enquiry elicited information that many Marias in Kutru zamindari (i.e. Bison-horn Marias or Hill Marias of the plains in long contact with Dorla or Bison-horn influence; the true Hill Marias would not venture down to Madder), before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice seed before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

VII

I found it very difficult—and I suspect that Grigson had the same experience—to see Marias in action. Tribes vary greatly in their willingness to allow a visitor to be present at their ceremonial. The Murias used to invite me to marriages or festivals, sending information about them long beforehand. The Saoras are delighted to have visitors at their celebrations and more than once the ghost of a long dead headman has come upon the priest and admonished the people to treat me right. But the Bondos do their utmost to keep the stranger away; during the great summer festival they pile the paths leading to their villages with thorn bushes and not even a fellow Bondo, if he belongs to another village, is admitted. The Marias do not go so far as that, yet I found them singularly unwilling to let me watch them do anything. When I was camping at Borgum I heard that the Wijja Pandum was to be celebrated in two days' time and rather unwisely announced my intention of being present. On the morning of the festival a delegation arrived in camp to say that the proceedings had had to be postponed because the Perma's wife was in her period—though I darkly suspect that the old lady had in fact passed the climacteric. I had to dodge round the country for weeks before I saw a wedding, and to witness the Ghotpal Marhai I had to come sixty miles on an elephant down from the Abujhmar because the dates were changed at the last moment.

But since a page of personal observation is worth a whole chapter of hearsay I will describe the wedding at which I assisted and the great festival at Ghotpal in 1942.

On March 15th, 1942 I was camping in Gogonda at the edge of the hills overlooking the great southern plain. That evening, I was told, two girls were to be taken to Sirsitti, a village some two thousand feet below, to be married. At about five o'clock therefore married and unmarried women collected and began to dance with one of the brides. She had her head and aboulders completely covered with a shawl and wailed loudly all the time. Three pots of rice-beer were distributed to the dancers and a large number of onlookers, and then the dancers took the bride round the village. This was a very pretty sight. The circle of dancers would suddenly elongate into a line and then curl up again in a ring. As they danced from house to house, men and women would come out and put a ring on the bride's finger or a necklace round her neck and embrace her by raising her hands twice to their foreheads and then clasping her in their arms. As they did so, the dancers sang the names of the people who were giving presents and their exact relationship to the bride. At other times they sang how the girl had hitherto been going to and fro freely in the jungle, getting wood, husking grain,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

doorway while his parents encouraged him and the old women shouted ribald jokes. At last he plucked up courage and made a dash for the girl. Her companions resisted him but at last, of course, he broke through them, seized the girl and dragged her weeping loudly into the house. The girls rushed after them and pushed and hustled them into an inner room and shut the door on them, the theory being that they would consummate the marriage there and then. The old women stood round the hut trying to look inside and discussing the bridegroom's potency. The cock which is often stolen by the bride's party from the bridegroom's house was here given as a present with a little cloth to the bride's younger sister.

This was the end of one marriage. The other was a surprise. The girls came dancing with the shrouded bride up to the house, the bridegroom put on a new shirt for the occasion, his mother brought water to wash the feet of her new daughter-in-law. Everything was ready, but after the girls had danced round once or twice in front of the house, they made as if to go right round it in honour of the Departed. Everybody waited for them to complete the circuit and return, but their voices grew fainter and fainter, and I went out to see them dancing away into the forest. It was then explained to the unfortunate bridegroom that certain ceremonies had to be performed in Gogonda to protect the bride against magical dangers with which she was threatened and that she would be returned to him in three days' time.

It was then six o'clock and we returned to camp.

VIII

On February 2nd, 1942 there was celebrated at Ghotpal near Barsur the great Marhai and Pen-Karsita of the Lekhami clan. Directly I arrived and made my camp under some trees I was greeted by a little deputation of local priests who told me very politely but quite firmly that though they were delighted to have me there I would not be permitted to take any photographs or write anything down. Later I went with Mr. Sampat Singh to the shrine of the Ghotpal clan-god, the Anga, Usendi Pen, with whom are his sons Hunga and Wella and his daughter Wange. I was at once surrounded by people telling me that I must not go inside. An elderly magician approached me and in a stern voice told me to take my hat off, for I was looking at a god. Such instructions are unusual in aboriginal India.

Nothing happened that day, but people began to assemble and many merchants arrived and set up their booths in a line along the edge of the great open dancing-ground in front of the shrine.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 Next morning large parties of Marias and Murias came from every direction, some of the Murias from the Mardapal Pargana and the villages round Chhota Dongar. A little rain fell and there was a lot of blowing of horns. At midday the Anga and other symbols of the gods were taken down to a stream for a bathe and during the afternoon many Sirahas fell into trance and postured and danced in ecstasy. A little shrine was set up in the middle of the clearing and as more and more people arrived and other gods came to visit Usendi Pen, the Sirahas danced wildly round and round it. A procession was formed, the Anga leading it, with tall poles decorated with peacocks' feathers following, and a crowd of children carrying [534] gongs and various substitutes for gongs—bits of painted wood, the lids of old kerosene oil tins, anything that could be banged to make a noise.

Gradually the place filled up and by four o'clock there were three or four thousand people present—a small attendance, I was told. The Marias and Murias showed little interest in the shops which were mostly attended by local Hindus and officials, and there was very little drinking, though many a boy brought a gourd or a bottle of rice-beer or palm wine hanging under his arm. Then the dancing began, and hundreds of boys and girls in the full Hill Maria dancing attire (though no Hill Marias were present) and carrying decorated sticks and axes over their shoulders, formed lines and processions and great circles, until the entire ground was alive with slowly circulating movement.

As evening fell little fires sprang up under every tree where groups of people made their camps. The older people drank, cooked and gossiped with their relatives. Like all bazaars the Marhai is a great occasion for repairing friendships. During the night the boys and girls continued dancing, and from time to time the Sirahas brought out the Anga-gods and danced with them.

The moon rose at midnight and turned the scene into one of extraordinary majesty and beauty. The festival was decorous and restrained, but very happy. There was no orgy and practically no drunkenness. At dawn the dancing stopped and in a few minutes the whole great assembly melted away back into the forest.

IX

764 On page 281 Grigson refers briefly to the Bison-horn Maria custom of erecting carved wooden pillars in memory of well-known or wealthy tribal leaders. There are not many of these pillars, though the custom of making them is far from moribund, but the expense is great and only the most important people are considered worthy of them.

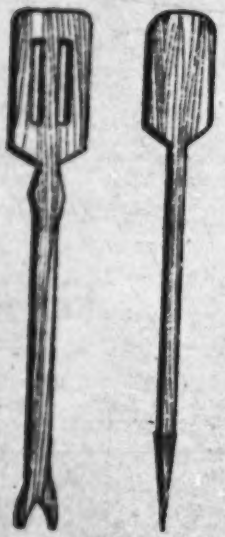
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

241 When this is done and the ground is cooled, the bullocks are brought and chelik and motiari with their ploughs drive the ashes deep into the soil.

The plough is 'the lizard that runs into its hole in the dry tree': it has 'three heads and ten legs': the cowhide reins of the oxen are described as 'the dead bullocks that go before a living man'.

●[796] Before the seed can be sown, the Wijja Pandum must be celebrated. This festival, which is preceded by a ceremonial hunt, is held at any time from April to June. Essential to the festival, one version of which I [787] describe in detail in Chapter VII, is the hunt which foretells the success or failure of the crops, the feast on the animals killed, and the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the seed—some of which is taken away by every householder. In some villages, at the end of the ceremonies, the chelik roll the Gaita in mud from an ant-hill.

The night before the actual sowing, which is sometimes fixed when new leaf-shoots appear on the bhoir tree, all the men again sleep in the ghotul and the motiari stay at home to ensure chastity and thus avoid any possible infection of menstrual blood. On their way to the fields in the morning, they put a small heap of seed at any cross-roads they pass. Each householder has a leaf-cup of the seed that was consecrated with blood at the Wijja Pandum, and sows this after the Gaita has sacrificed a chicken in his field.



417 FIG. 2. *Dayi* wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking
Length 2' 9"

The Muria, unlike the Hill Maria, sows different kinds of seed in different places, but like the Hill Maria he sows them at different times. In the west and central areas there are three main sowings.

The first sowing, immediately after the first rains, is of small millets—*turo kohala* or *hosra*, *hikma* and *mandia*. *Rahar dāl* is sown with the *mandia*. Gourds and pumpkins are sown at the same time.

The next sowing is in early July of rice, *kulthi* and *urad dāl* as well as beans.

The last sowing, of what is called *os hosra*, is done in August, though not on ground that has already been used that year. Rice is again sown and *mung* and *kulthi* pulses.

Before the actual sowing of the seed, the Muria prepare their fences, and the field-huts and watching-platforms for the guarding of their crops. The fences are not, of course, as in civilised areas, to keep out their fellow-men but to protect the crops against wild animals: bison and deer are plentiful in north Bastar, especially in the Makri area, and can do much damage to the fields.

There are many kinds of fencing. Sometimes there is none at all; in the jungle clearings a line of poles is enough, in the permanent fields the embankments make a clear division. Sometimes a strong *gannao* stockade is made by placing hundreds of logs upright in the ground. Fences of bamboo wattle are also made.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do. 252

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing. [464]

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it. [462]

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath. [585]

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground. 251

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'. 415

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bāri*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals. 796 ●

Irpu Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Kurum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Kerta or *Pusa Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

241 539

Dhusir jâki wâyhom sângo — We will come to press the grain into the bin.

Miya wây wây jâhlorom sângo. — Before you came we had pressed the grain.

III. The Muria's Year

221 196

It is very difficult to give any sort of general time-table, for events vary in their incidence and in their order from place to place and from year to year. Everything depends on the orders of the Gaita and Siraha, and dreams, economic factors and 'inspirations' combine to disturb the course of events. However, the following table may be taken as giving a rough picture of a normal year:

January .. Bhimul Pandum, the festival of the rain-god. Pupul Korta Tindana and Pen Karsita, the New Eating Festival of pulses, also known as Jata Pandum. Chelik go from village to village dancing the Pus Kolang or Chherta. The people reap the til oil-seed.

February .. Kare Pandum, after which the people may cut grass, bamboos and may begin felling trees for their *dippa* and *parka* clearings. The chelik begin collecting wood and grass for the ghotul. The Marhai festivals, great semi-religious commercial fairs, begin now and continue in various places until April.

March .. Irpu Pandum, the festival of the mahua tree, Marka Pandum, the festival of the new mangoes, and Til Khani, the festival of oil-seed, are held about this time. The marriage season begins and continues until May. Boys and girls go out dancing the Chait and Mahua Dandar. The people are busy collecting mahua flowers, tendu leaves and wood.

April .. Wijja Pandum, the seed festival, preceded by a ceremonial hunt. Ceremonies to purify and protect the villages. People begin breaking myrabolams. Hot weather begins. Many marriages everywhere.

May .. Timber spread over *parka* clearings. Local ceremonies to ensure a good harvest and rainfall.

June .. Timber in clearings fired. Rains begin. Ploughing and sowing. Fencing of gardens and repairs to houses, thatching and protection against rain.

July .. Amawas or Hareli festival. Chelik make stilts.

August .. Heavy rain during the month. Tur Korta Tindana or Kurum Pandum, when the first millets are eaten.

September Rains are clearing. At the end of the month is the Korta Pandum, the first eating of the new rice, cucumbers and gourds. On the day after this festival, the chelik break their stilts and pile them on the stone of Dito or Bhimul Pen.

October .. Cheru or Nuka Nordana Pandum, before which the new rice must not be washed. The Dussera festival attracts thousands to Jagdalpur and Bara Dongar, and is celebrated in a few ghotul. Diwali comes a little later:

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

221
796

the Muria do not illuminate their houses for it, but tie ears of grain in long strings over their doors. Road work begins, and everybody is busy reaping.

November.. A busy month in the fields. Since September the ghotul have been almost deserted by the chelik, who spend their time in little huts watching the crops. Reaping, thrashing, winnowing and storing grain occupies everyone. From the end of October the motiari have been going out dancing the Diwali and, where this practice is unknown, boys and girls go together for the Hulki dances.

December.. In some villages the Jata Pandum is held in this month. People cut their sarson crops and store them. They collect myrabolams till the end of January.

IV. Cultivation and the Ghotul

883 241 At Padbera and a number of villages in the neighbourhood of Antagarh the ghotul has its own property. The villagers give the chelik a piece of land for cultivation which is known as *chelik-parka*. The boys bring the wood from the neighbouring forest, spread it on the field, burn it and sow the seed. The girls see to the weeding and when the crop is ready all join in the harvest. The girls husk the rice in the ghotul itself and when it is ready give a feast to the village. The following day they offer an egg, red and black powder and liquor to the Kanyang and Rau of the field for the protection of the ghotul.

The chelik and motiari sometimes go to work as a ghotul. Should a party of visitors arrive from another village for a dance and there is no food or liquor for their entertainment, the boys approach one of the wealthier villagers (who of course may have several of his own children in the ghotul) and ask him to advance them rice and pulse, some liquor and a pig, promising they will go to work for him when he needs help in weeding his fields, gathering his harvest or mending a broken embankment. At other times villagers who are in urgent need of help employ the ghotul children and pay them with gifts of grain and pulse. I am told that money is rarely given. Sometimes the boys and girls only receive their food, though this food at least in the evening must be good and should include pork and liquor. When the children receive gifts of grain they save it up, storing it in the house of the leader, till there is enough for a big feast. This is prepared and eaten near the ghotul, or helps to augment the feast at the end of a dancing expedition. The parents are also invited; since the mothers may not go inside the ghotul, the feast is enjoyed outside.

V. The Muria's Food

Kare ahār ta pele pahār. If you get enough to eat you can push a mountain aside.—Muria proverb

883 In addition to work in the fields, chelik and motiari are kept busy all day long, in and around their homes. The motiari must fetch water from the well or stream, collect leaves from the jungle for leaf-cups and plates, nurse the babies, clean and cow-dung the buildings, husk rice and grain, help in the cooking, feed goats, pigs and cattle. The boys must fetch firewood from the forest, make string from hemp and bark, prepare the ploughs and carts, keep the buildings in repair, and look after the cattle and other animals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and for killing small birds there is the club-arrow. The Muria do not seem to know the *angrâu*, the three- or four-pointed wooden arrow used by the Bison-horn Maria for killing snakes and rats.

The Muria use traps extensively. Sometimes they dig a deep pit on a path where they have seen the tracks of animals, cover it with grass and then drive the game towards it. If any animal falls in, they beat it to death with clubs. They hunt the mongoose with dogs. For catching crocodiles, they make a noose with a slip-knot and attach it by a cord to a tree by the river. For a porcupine, 'the old woman bringing her load of fuel from the hill', they make what they call a *thongara* trap, a cage of wood with a heavy block suspended above which, when the animal releases it by treading on a bit of bamboo below, falls down and crushes it. Similar fall-traps are used to catch small leopards and panthers. For larger animals they also use a trap with a door. The trap is divided into two parts. It looks rather like a pigsty, and a pig is actually kept as bait in an inner room carefully shut off from the main trap. When the leopard enters, it dashes towards the pig and so treads on an ingenious arrangement of bamboo and cords which releases a string attached to a long pole balanced above. At the other end of the pole hangs the door, which then slides down and the animal is caught. Of these traps, the Muria riddle—'The horse is kicking its feet in someone else's shed' and 'The Manjhi dies eating, eating' (*Tinjor tinjor hâyna mânjhi*).

Spring-traps, called in Gondi *ahachâr*, corresponding to the Hindi *thonga*, are made to catch rabbits. A long bamboo is bent over and attached to the ground by a cord ending in a noose, inside which rice or other food is sprinkled. When the hare goes to eat, it releases the catch, the bamboo springs into the air and the unlucky creature is caught in the noose.

Bird-lime is used to catch birds and ingenious arrangements of nooses set in bamboo frames are set over a nest or on a path known to be used by birds. To catch the Goggle-eyed Plover, for example, the Muria make a line of ashes across a path with a small bamboo loop and a noose in the middle. The bird avoids the ashes and makes for the loop and so is caught.

I have noticed in several places that traps are set in or near the burial ground. There was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs at Baghbera. At Markabera, a leopard-trap was only a few yards from the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap in the graveyard. A small hole in the ground was filled with grain. A noose was laid round it and hidden with earth; the end of the cord was held by a man concealed in a hide some distance off. When the peacock came to eat, he jerked the cord and caught it.

FIG. 9. Powder-pouch of gaur horn covered with chital scrotum
Half actual size

While the individual Muria is a keen hunter all the year round, whole villages go out for ceremonial hunts before the greater festivals. Hunting is almost a religious exercise and is very sensitive to magic; in Almer the chelik hunted every day for a month without success, although the neighbouring villages got plenty of game, as a result of a sorcerer's enchantments. Such

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

224 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success
796 or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha
787 medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonra rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahaparub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new
796 Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.
776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khamna Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every [782] three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate.

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt.
841 As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

776 by the tragic circumstances of his origin. According to universal legend he is the ghost of a young bridegroom who, on the way to his wedding, was killed either by lightning [1] or by a tiger. Frustrated at the moment of achieving happiness, he lives on, soured and bitter, to trouble mankind.

For this reason Dulha Deo is regarded as particularly touchy and there are many stories about his quick temper and his readiness to take an insult and notice a slight. For example, at Silati the Muria described how he interrupted a Kalar marriage at Bara Dongar. A Muria neighbour had dedicated a pig to Dulha Deo. On the morning of the marriage the pig wandered over to the Kalar's house and the Kalar exclaimed, 'Alas! I have seen a pig's face early in the morning'. When Dulha Deo in the form of the pig heard this, he was very angry and stood snorting with rage in front of the house, refusing to allow the marriage to proceed. At last the Kalar had to touch the pig's feet and promise a goat in honour of Dulha Deo.

A practical reason for Dulha Deo's bad reputation may be the fact that at a marriage everybody is very excited, more or less drunk, and hitches in the procedure and quarrels between relations are always likely to occur. Whenever anything goes wrong, the blame is put on the god who must then be properly appeased. Dulha Deo serves a useful purpose as the divine whipping-boy.

Bhimul Pen

[778] In many Muria villages there is a small shrine of four wooden pillars and some cross-poles, but no roof, round one or two stones that may be anything from one to three feet high. These represent the deity who is called variously Bhimul Pen, Bhima or Bhimsen and his wife Bhimsenin or Gorondi Dokari.

I think it probable that there was a very ancient aboriginal deity, a rain-god called Bhimul, whose cult has been assimilated to that of the mightiest of the Pandava brothers, Bhimsen. The Muria expect both Lingo and Bhimul to provide them with rain in due season. If there is a drought, Bhimul's stone is [789] covered with cow-dung with the idea that he will quickly send rain to wash himself clean.[2]

But the Muria Bhimul has many other functions. In eastern Kondagaon, he takes the place of Lingo as the founder of the ghotul and its protector. [534] He is regarded as having a special interest in drums and must be worshipped when a mandri drum is made and when it is used at a wedding. He and his wife are associated with stilt-walking. He appears as the cause of thunder and the fertilizer of the crops.

● [796] Bhimul has a special festival to himself in order to ensure a good rainfall. The villagers bring in March a little of whatever seed or vegetable is available and throw it over Bhimul's stone. The Gaita makes the usual offerings. Chelik and motiari dance all night.[3]

[1] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 119; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 73.

[2] To get rain, Bombay Hindu villagers 'besmear the phallus of Shiva with cooked rice and curds'.—Enthoven, op. cit., p. 321. The Parja of Bastar are described as fixing a piece of wood into the ground in the name of Bhimsen over which they pour water when they are in need of rain.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 377.

[3] For the widespread cult of this 'heroic godling' both among Hindus and aboriginals, see Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 66, 89, 250 and Vol. II, p. 182; Grigson, op. cit., pp. 206, 215, 219; S. C. Roy, *The Mundas and their Country* (Calcutta, 1912), p. 98; *The Baiga*, p. 59 and *passim*; *The Agaria*, p. 95; *The Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 78 (for the cult among the Nagpur Gond); ibid., p. 236 (for the Urali's idea that thunder is the result of a duel between the two Bhima in heaven); Thurston, *Castes and Tribes*, Vol. IV, pp. 56 and 71 (for the Koyi tradition that traces the origin of the tribe to Bhimador who while hunting in the jungle met a wild woman of the woods and married

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

Round Kondagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

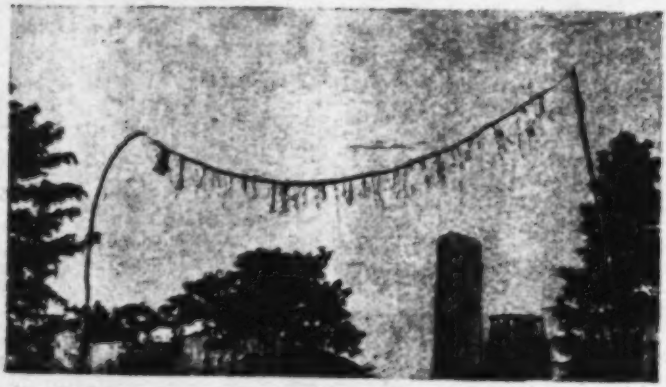
IV. The Clan-God

We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halbas, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

Plate XL

●196



Grain strung across ghotul gate at Ulera

Muria camp, with village flags, during the Dussera festival

[p. 196 (B)]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

346 New Eating ceremonies and made ceremonially every ten years, and a large gourd kept for pouring water. Piled round one of the pillars is a heap of dancing-sticks of dhaman wood called Bhumiriya Kolang; these are kept in the shrine for the Pen Kolang dances and at the end of three years are taken to the village boundary and hung up on a rope across the road. There is a *hakum* hunting-horn, not a brass one, but the real horn of a wild buffalo.

883 This description is not irrelevant to a book on the ghotul. The spoons and gourd are used by the chelik, who have the responsibility for cooking at the festivals. The dancing-sticks are made by the chelik and used for their ceremonial dances. The hunting-horn is sounded by chelik to summon the people for festivals. Every visiting deity means a corresponding visit from the chelik and motiari of its village: Markabera is thus in close touch with several villages—Timnar, Metawand, Kokori, Kasabahi, Tadopal, Garhbangal and Suhnar. The Markabera god visits Metawand and Kokori, and possibly other villages. The visits of the gods with their attendant chelik and motiari, many of them of clans different to the Markabera Wadder clan, play a very important part in bringing boys and girls of these villages into touch with one another.

346 In Markabera there was only one temple. In Bayanar there are eight grouped together round a wooded hill covered with fantastic rocks amid which the little shrines are built. A narrow path leads steeply up the hill to the first shrine standing up sharply on a rocky mound of its own. This shrine is the home of Pandi Dokara Gutal (represented by a pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the end) and his two sons Mundi Kuar Gutal and Lalit Kuar Gutal. The three poles are slung high up beneath the roof, for the shed is an open one. At the foot of the centre pillar of the hut is a stone seat, with gongs and an iron lamp. This is a Naitami shrine and there are two stone hearths at either end of it, one for the clan-priest of the Naitami and the other for the husbands of women in their menstrual periods and women who have very recently given [831] birth to a child. On one pillar is a carving of the vagina, on another the sun and moon and a crude horse.

By the little path along the hillside are two sets of pillars with flat stones in front of them to support Pandi Dokara at festivals. A little further on is a small temple for Hinglajin Dokari. This goddess is represented by a closed litter, and there is the usual stone and hearth for her worship.

A little way down the hill is a temple of the Sori clan which houses two more Gutal (poles)—Dawdi Dokara and Lalsai Dokara. Going still further down the hill we reach a large rock on which is a fourth shrine which is empty save for a stone representing Mundi Kuar; this is in charge of a Hindu (Kalar) Pujari from Mungwal.

These little temples on the hillside were curiously impressive; old gods of hill and forest seemed very present there. Down the hill in a shed was a bamboo pole and a flag in an earthen pot representing Son Kuar, the son of the Anga Deo at Narayanpur—another Naitami shrine. One of the most interesting things I saw on this visit was in the temple to Son Kuar. Here was a very small earthen pot tied up in dub grass, in which the *jiva* of a dead priest was dwelling. For a long time even the Pargana Manjhi hesitated to tell me his name, especially in that potentially dangerous spot, but at last I got it—it was Tota Muria.

We went on towards a great grove of mango trees till we came to a closed temple, again of the Naitami, in which was a characteristic Anga Deo, Baiha the mad god, a stone to represent Bangaram consort of Danteshwari, and two other stones for Kotgudin Matal and Dulardei Matal. Here we were in a definitely Hindu atmosphere. There was a large clay elephant for Bangaram,

[Description of temple buildings see pp 196-197, cat. 116—Analyst]

796

Bathing the gods at Adner

Plate XLII

Bathing the gods at Masora

[p. 204 (B)]

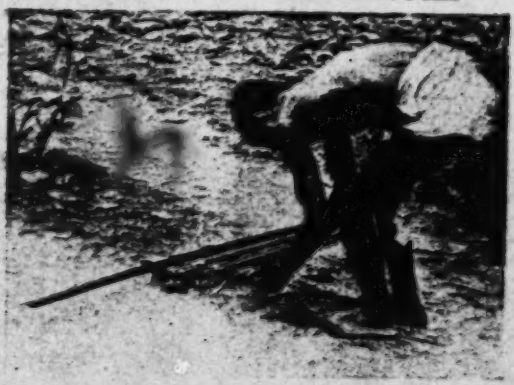
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XLIV

796
411
224

The Hikmi strings his bow in the ceremonial hunt

The Almer Gaita worships axe, bow and arrows before a hunt



[p. 208(B)]

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Muria

527 is present but not obtruded. The Kondagaon Marhai lasts four or five days, but only on one of these is there any serious spiritual business. Then clan-gods from the surrounding villages attend, scores of Siraha fall into ecstasy, and a great procession goes round the booths of the fair. In the Muria country, similar Marhai are held in Keskal, Narayanpur and Antagarh.

[41]

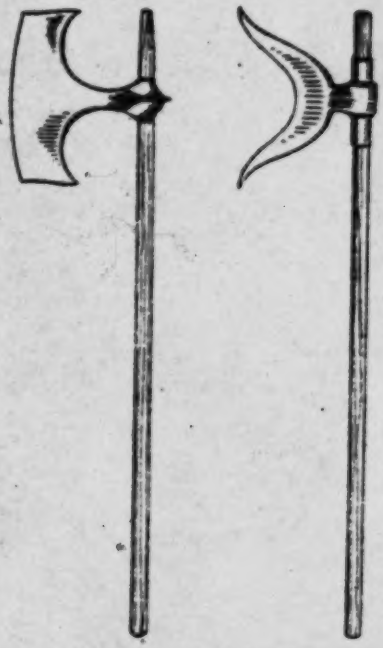

FIG. 31. Axes of a type used to kill sacrificial animals

Dassera is a national festival. If the Marhai corresponds to St Giles Fair or the Lord Mayor's Procession, Dassera is for the people of Bastar the King's Birthday, the Aldershot Tattoo and Primrose Day combined. Pargana headmen from all over the State assemble at Jagdalpur to pay tribute to the Maharaja and attend the Muria Darbar. The ceremonies last a fortnight and the aboriginals play a major part in them; among other things they kidnap the Maharaja and have the right to pull his ceremonial car. Central in the Dassera ritual is the royal worship of Danteshwari: her priest and litter come all the way from Dantewara; and no Muria who sees the regal attention the goddess receives at Jagdalpur but wants to introduce her to a shrine in his own village.

The great Jatra may be classified as tribal festivals. These are the religious pilgrimages to the shrines of the clan-gods and to notable gods in celebrated temples. They are sometimes celebrated annually and sometimes every three years. They are very great and exciting occasions; gods are brought by their devotees from surrounding villages; hundreds of chelik and motiari come to dance; and scores of Siraha enliven the scene by their antics. In villages where there is no clan-god, there is usually a small Deo-jatra, an assembly of the villagers to do honour to the local gods. These are brought out of their shrines, bathed, exercised and worshipped. Such ceremonies often occur shortly before the Wijja Pandum in April or May.

796 I have already given an outline of the agricultural festivals which, with the festivals of the clan-gods, are the most important events of the year. All these festivals are of the same pattern; at one the first pulses are eaten; at another the freshly reaped millets; at a third mangoes and other fruits. It will be sufficient, therefore, to describe in detail one of these celebrations, and I will now give an account of the Marka Pandum, or the ceremonial eating of the first mangoes of the year, which I saw at Masora on 17 April 1941. This feast is preceded by a ceremonial hunt. I missed this at Masora, arriving only in time to see the chelik return with a fine hare slung over a boy's shoulder.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

But I was able to see it at Almer a few days later on 23 April. This hunt is mainly the business of the chelik directed by the Kaser-Gaita, but other and more experienced hunters join in, for success in the hunt is the best of omens, not only for a plentiful supply of wild fruit but later for a fine harvest. A crowd therefore of chelik and older men led by the Kaser-Gaita with their axes and bows and arrows, some with gourds of gruel to refresh them on the way, gathered on the path leading towards the jungle. 196

The Gaita laid his own bow and arrows and axe together with a chelik's bow and arrows and axe across the path. He made a small doll out of dub grass and a grass bow and arrow and placed these in front. He made three piles of earth and on each of these placed a ring of aonra leaf and a branch of tendu. He made fire with a fire-drill (not a saw) and lit a little incense which he offered to Tallur Muttai the Earth Mother, Mundri Dokari the wife of Budha Deo, and the Departed, crying to the earth to give good hunting. He waved the fire over the arrows, pressed his right hand hard on the ground, then carried away the grass doll and bow and arrow towards the village and threw them to the side of the path. At the same time the ghotul Sirdar picked up the bows and arrows and axes with a cry of triumph, crossed the line and went quickly down the path without looking back. [372]

That day in Almer they got nothing, but the following evening, in Bandopal, the chelik returned with a jungle-fowl and a young chital. As they cut the chital up, they removed the tip of the ears, the tongue, the hoofs and liver; these bits were done up in three leaf-packets and cooked separately. The Kaser-Gaita took these packets and offered them to the local gods; a little was left over and put aside for himself. The flesh was cooked where it was cut up—in the fields outside the village—and a little wrapped up in leaves was given to every household.

We now return to Masora for the Marka Pandum. The different clans in this village kept the festival in different places, each with their own clan-gods; I went with the Poyami people and their Anga Deo to a sacred grove near a small stream in the jungle about a mile from the village. Here we found the gods—the Anga Deo whose name was Lal Sai, the Gutal pole called Lalu, and the tall flag-staff and flag of white cloth, with sun and moon and nine little men worked on it in red which represents Budha Deo—placed in position under a saja tree. A brass horse for the Rau was under another tree, and a broken sword and shield for ancestors who had died in battle long ago. [378]

Not far from the gods the chelik had cleared and cow-dunged a patch of ground and were busy cooking rice and koera. There were baskets of mangoes, char and karmata fruit ready for the pot. In front of the gods also 'these three sisters, mango, char and karmata', had been placed.

Presently three of the chelik took their hunting-horns and blew them as a sign that the proceedings were to start. The mediums obtained leave to begin and the gods were taken up and carried to the stream. There the Gaita first offered eggs, liquor and aonra rings to the Water Maidens and took the gods down into the stream and washed them thoroughly. The Gaita crossed the stream and offered eggs and rings and liquor to the Forest Maidens for the safety of the cattle that might graze there.

After the bathing the gods were brought back and anointed with mahua oil. Then two of the Siraha-mediums sat in trance before the gods and discussed with them in a curiously intimate and homely way what offerings were to be made and what the gods would do in return. The clan-priest took chickens that were brought for every Poyami household and two pigs and persuaded them to eat a little of the rice that was piled in small heaps before the gods.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

796 As they did so they all yelled at the animals, 'Don't trouble us or we'll give you nothing next time'. One pig refused to eat—it had been offered as a fine: the donor's wife was a witch—and this showed the enormity of the offence which it was expected to condone. But the people did not take it back; they cried, 'We offered it willingly, but you refused, yet we give it all the same'. One man asked for a son, but they shouted to the gods, 'No, give him a daughter'.

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[531]

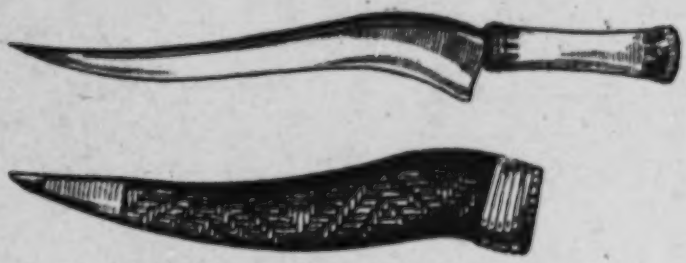

FIG. 32. Muria knife and sheath, of a type often used in sacrifice

796 After the animals had been fed, the priest offered three brass rings for three men who had died during the past year, saying 'Let them now be mingled with
782 the Departed'. Then the animals were killed. The priest put his knife upright between the toes of his right foot, plucked some of the feathers, cut off the head of the chick and sprinkled the blood over the rice and the gods. He killed the pigs by holding them down firmly and sawing off the heads, which he placed facing outwards before the line of rice. As the first pig was killed the worshippers stood with folded hands crying, 'Let the village folk be well; let there be good crops this year; let our animals, cows, pigs, goats and hens be well.' As they killed the second pig, they cried, 'Though it didn't eat, show whether you accept it or no'. They watched eagerly to see how many times the automatic action of the muscles would open the mouth of the decapitated head. Slowly the mouth opened and shut three times and the people were pleased, for this was a sign that the penalty pig had been accepted and all was well.

Similar offerings were made to all the gods, or at least a little blood was sprinkled on them. After a pause, the priest offered the mango, char and karmata fruits, cutting them in half, and removing the stones.

796 Now the women and motiari approached and the Anga went dancing to meet them. He stood before them, and they offered him liquor—'When a Gondi god drinks even one cup of liquor, he talks and dances very well', said one of my guides. Then the chelik picked up their big dhol drums and danced in a long straight line, shuffling to and fro, drumming very vigorously and crying loudly as they changed their direction. The women and girls also danced in a line, and all the Siraha-mediums began to throw themselves about and play and dance, generally carrying one of the gods in their hands. A Nattami boy had come to the wrong place and he picked up the Gutal Lalu and was dancing with it. But the Poyami people resented this, and took it from him with loud abuse.

The dancing, drumming and drinking continued till sundown, when the meat with the fruit and rice was cooked. Then the people—men and women—

MURIA RELIGION

796 ●

796
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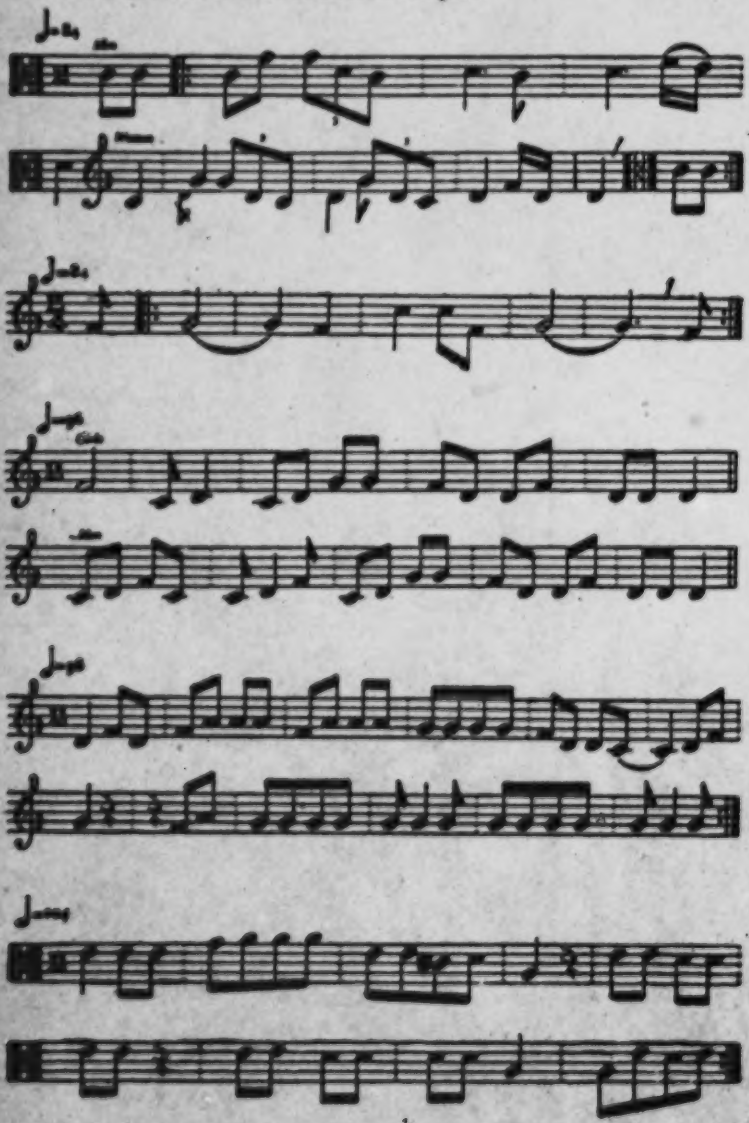
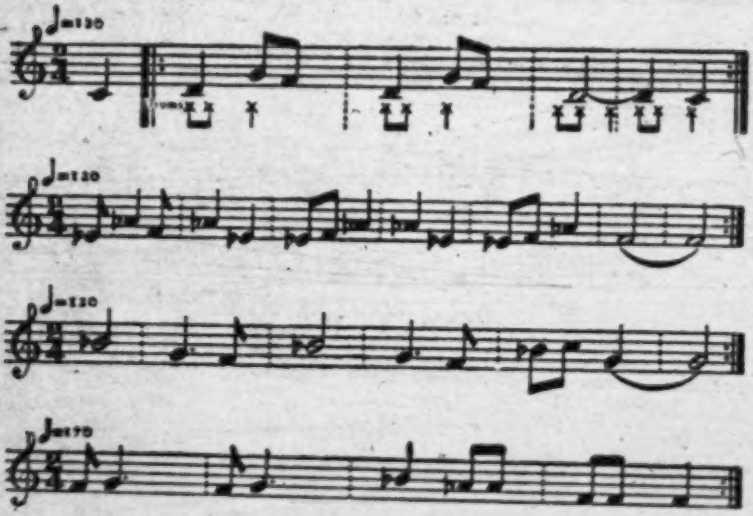
sat and ate, and returned home for an all-night dance by the chelik and motiari.

During a festival the Muria sing to a large variety of tunes, of which Walter Kaufmann recorded a number of samples:



THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL



XI. Purifying the Village

Throughout the year ceremonies, called in Halbi *bohorani*, are performed to purify the villages of disease and evil. Old brooms and baskets are collected and carried to the village boundary, and a scapegoat may be consecrated and sent away into the jungle.

Such ceremonies are performed before the Wijja Pandum in May, when the nearest stream or river first comes down in flood in July or August, before the Puna Pandum in September and before the Jata or Pupul Pandum in January. If necessary, it may be repeated before the Marka Pandum. All the year round, in fact, these protective ceremonies continue; apparently they cannot confer permanent immunity.

I will give a detailed description of one of these purificatory rites, the Nartate Kiyana for the purification and protection of Bandopal, which I witnessed on 25 April 1941. We were woken at dawn by the blowing of hunting-horns, at the sound of which the village assembled. The people went first to the shrine of the Village Mother and offered incense there; the mediums took Kuari, Marin Dokari and Hoche Muria, each represented by a bundle of date-palm leaves, out of the shrine. Others carried gourds, aonra rings, iron slag, parched gram, wheat cakes, eggs, chickens, the root of a date-palm, a pig, rice and liquor.

A long procession went round the village boundaries. At every point where a path went out of the village, the Gaita put three bits of iron slag, hammered them into the ground, and touched the place with the palm root. This, by a pleasant fiction, represented the sacrifice of a pig. At the four points of the compass he offered eggs to the Rau or demon of the forest. As they went round the boundaries, the mediums caught the ghosts and spirits of the surrounding jungle—the Bhut and Mirchuk—on the trees with palm leaves and popped them into a gourd which they then shut with a leaf-cup.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

At last the party found a suitable ant-hill, and made seven piles of rice before it, which the Gaita forced the chickens to eat. When their eating had signified that the god had accepted the offering, he killed them. He presented the root representing a pig, two eggs, parched gram and wheat cakes, and buried the gourd full of little demons and the leaves with which they had been caught in the hole of the ant-hill. This isolated and destroyed the evils threatening the village, and closed it with a magic wall against hostile sorcerers. 196 ● 183

Later in the morning a Muria, followed by a Muria-Lohar carrying a basket, went with his hammer and some iron slag round the village. He put three 'nails' in every doorway, and each householder gave him two pice worth of mahua flowers for his services.

Such is the Muria method (which has many points of resemblance to Baiga and Pardhan custom) of closing the magic boundaries of a village, and removing its supernatural dangers.

XII. The Birth of a God

On 31 March 1941 there was a very special occasion at Adnar village. The Pupal Korta Tindana was to be celebrated with the delight and pomp which this festival always excites. But an even more important event was the birth of a young god, so young that he had not yet been even named, but was now to be called Chelik Sai. 196

During the whole of 1940 the people of Adnar had suffered constantly from fever and other diseases. When the Siraha were consulted, the Adnar gods spoke through them saying that a new god had been born and was angry that he was receiving no worship. They were told to go to Bargaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana where they would hear from the god Doko Mudial what they must do. The Kaser-Gaita and the people of Adnar therefore went to visit the Kaser-Gaita of Bargaon. He brought Doko Mudial out of his shrine, and the local mediums asked what was to be done. The god replied that a younger brother of his own had been born, the father being Maria Dokara who lives in the Abujhmar, a god of the Kuhrami clan. He said that the people of Adnar must make the god at once and honour him with a *Poroy-tasna* (name-giving) festival. Doko Mudial, who is an Anga, was then carried out into the jungle on the shoulders of two mediums and he showed where the bamboo for making his younger brother was to be cut. The Gaita of Bargaon offered eggs and liquor to the tree and cut it with a single blow of his axe. He handed it over to the Gaita of Adnar, who took it home.

On the morning of the festival day two members of the Naitami clan, which stands in the *akondwa* relation to the Kuhrami, took the bamboo into the jungle near the Adnar temples and made the new god. They offered eggs and liquor, spun some cord on a takli, and prepared a large bunch of peacock feathers with a special arrow made of virgin iron. There was also a new knife of virgin iron provided by the Muria-Lohar of Rengagondi. Others erected a pole of saja wood and placed a flat stone before it in front of the new temple—a simple open shed—which had been built for the young god. When all was ready the Kaser-Gaita brought the new god and placed him against the pole in front of his house.

Adnar is a *jaw-renaar* of no fewer than three separate clans, the Naitami, Kuhrami and Kawasi. Outside the village, about a quarter of a mile from the river, in the forest is a group of seven temples, each a thatched open shed, with the usual flat stone, cooking apparatus and the god slung high against the roof. Before each temple were poles or frames against which the gods

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

could be rested, and flat stones for sacrifice. In one temple is Visir Mark, son of Kati Dokari, clan-god of the Kuhrami; in another is Udum Kuar, his *akomima*, clan-god of the Naitami; in a third is Soma Dokara, clan-god of the Kawasi, and *akomima* to Visir Mark. On this occasion there was a fourth Anga present, the elder brother of the young Chelik Sai, Doko Mudial, who had been brought from Bargaon.

In the other temples were long Gutal poles, each with its bundle of feathers at the top—Kati Dokari (Kuhrami), Samrat Dokara (Naitami), Desh Matra (Naitami), Bhale Dokari (Kawasi). Samrat had his wife with him—Iyadai, represented by a very long pole. Outside the group of temples was a separate shrine for Budhi Matal represented by a closed litter. Such were the gods, and when I arrived on the early morning of 31 March they were being brought out of their temples while chelik gathered with large dhol drums. Visitors came from the Chota Dongar, Mardapal and Chalka parganas, but only the Bargaon people brought their gods. A hut of leaves was erected for those visitors who did not belong to the three clans, and from this hut also the husbands of women in their periods and pregnant women could get their food. But I was told that the husbands and mothers of newly delivered babies got nothing at all before the umbilical stump had fallen.

The proceedings opened with some vigorous drumming on the dhol drums, and several mediums fell into their customary trance and asked the gods for permission to begin the festival. When the gods had declared that everything was in order, the Kaser-Gaita of Adnar, a tall lanky man wearing a woman's coloured jacket adorned with cowrie shells, danced round the temples telling every god to get ready.

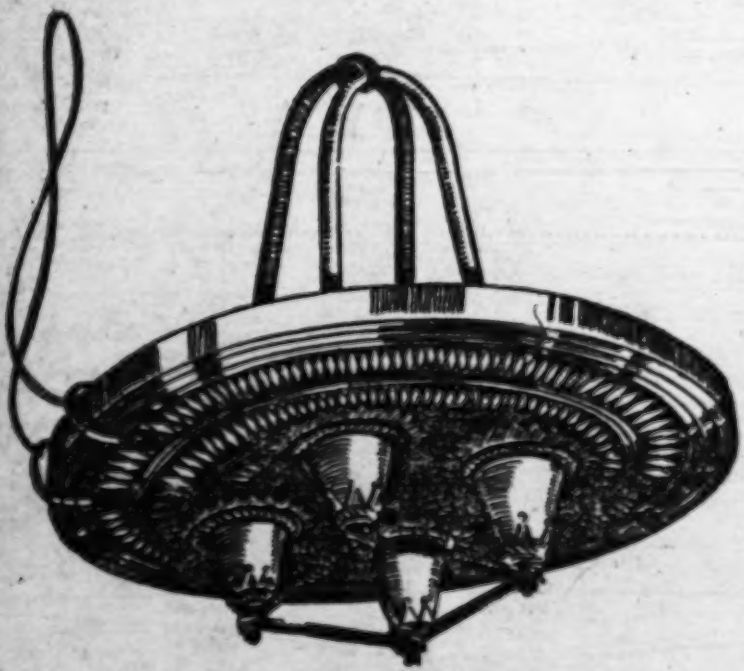
Then a long procession started for the river. Each god was taken on the shoulders of a member of its own clan and carried through the jungle. As we went, we reached a place where a Rau, or demon of the forest, lived, and rice was offered to him. A little later we came to Bhimul Pen in the shape of a round stone—he was given a brass ring; at the river-bank rice was offered to the Yer Kanyang. Then the priests of every clan offered egg-shells and kosra to the gods, and after that they were thrown into the river for a bath. They were thoroughly washed, and most of their worshippers also took the opportunity of a refreshing plunge. After the gods had been carried back dripping and bedraggled, they were anointed with sesamum oil (for this was also the Til Tindana, the first use of the fresh oil).

The rest of the day was occupied with three chief activities. The gods themselves, borne on the shoulders of their mediums, played and danced before their temples. The clan-priests, helped by the chelik, busied themselves in cooking a large feast, in which the new oil and pulses were freely used. Women gathered and the motiari brought piles of leaves and sat in the shade of trees making them into plates and cups. Mediums stood before their deities asking questions and delivering oracles to any who came with private troubles. After the midday meal which the members, both men and women, of each clan ate separately, the usual offerings of chickens and pigs were made to the different gods.

At about four o'clock there was a concentration of mediums round the new god Chelik Sai, and it became known that he had asked for the sacrifice of a young bull (it is only at a funeral that a bullock is used). A party of mediums went for it and it was presently brought in slung to a pole carried by two strong chelik. It was laid before Chelik Sai and blindfolded. Everyone gathered round, the motiari specially pushing to the front. The bull's ribs were touched with the end of the god's Gutal pole. Then with an axe, the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

clan-priest of the Kalrami struck the throat of the animal and killed it with a single blow. The Gaita of every god pressed forward with hands outstretched, 796 ●



[535]

FIG. 33. Dancing-shield used by cheliks during the festivals of the clan-gods

crying to the bull to have pity on them and not to be angry, then dipped their hands in the blood and carried it to offer to their own deities. The clan-priest of the Kalrami made an incision in the bull's side and removed part of the liver and offered it to Chelik Sal. After this they carried the carcass away into the jungle and cut it up.

For the evening meal, the meat was boiled in a score of pots, and rice mixed with sesamum oil, urad pulse and some green vegetables was cooked for each clan separately by the clan-priests in their respective temples.

As evening fell, the chelik and motiari, gorgeous in their festival attire, came from Bargaon and Taragaon, Atargaon and Esalnar, Kajen and Kongera, from Chalka, Temrugaon and Chinari. Each party made a little camp under the trees, lit a fire and cooked some food. About ten o'clock they began to dance, pargana by pargana, in large circles lit by the light of torches. The gods were brought and placed in the middle of the dancing-field. All night the boys and girls danced and at dawn the gods awoke, and danced and gestured. About seven o'clock the visitors went away and the gods were taken home. Chelik Sal, who after all is a chelik, danced with the motiari;

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Muria

he could not keep away from motiari; he chased them round and round the field. A Siraha-medium collected a brass ring from every woman present to offer to the gods; this may have been a token of compensation for the presence of women at the festival, for in strict Muria tradition no woman should have been there.

XIII. Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the theological and ceremonial aspects of Muria religion. This is far from being the whole story, for religion is for the Muria a very wide thing, consecrating every aspect of life, inspiring a comprehensive ethical system and linking gods and men, living and dead into a single family that even the intrusion of death cannot destroy.

Muria religion is not unlike that of other tribes—Bison-horn Maria, Raja Muria, Halba, Bhattra—in Bastar (though it has an advantage of the others in possessing a noble hero-god whose example is an inspiration), but it is very different from that of its neighbours. Its elaborate, rich and picturesque character is in striking contrast to the drab and languid faith of the Central Provinces Gond. The tribes of western Orissa near the Bastar border—Kond, Bondo, Gadaba—fully endowed as to personal culture, have a less developed and satisfying religion. The rites of the Maria of the Abujhmar and Chanda are stark and austere beside those of the Muria.

Muria religion, like Muria institutions, has probably reached the peak of its development. In its action on the Muria mind, Hinduism has had a fertilizing and energizing effect, far different from the Puritan destructiveness of its influence to the north. So long as the tribe and its institutions hold together, so long as they remain free from external interference, there is hope that this religion may continue to satisfy Muria needs and interpret Muria aspirations. Otherwise, I fear, now that the peak is reached, change will only bring decline.

Muria religion today is not without dignity and power. It has its distortions and abuses—many have been noted in the present chapter—but we must not confound the corruptions of a religion with religion itself. Even its superstitions may have their value. George Tyrrell once suggested that the superstitions of Catholicism provided 'harmless and healthy outlets for humours otherwise dangerous and morbid'.

Religion must fulfil and answer human needs. There is hardly a greater need among aboriginals than freedom from fear, and Muria ceremonial by aiming at the placation of god and ghost (the ultimate source of all fears) brings the great gift of solace. The desire for continuity is met by the elaborate funerary rites which bring the Departed home. The marriage ceremonial consecrates the Muria's passionate interest in the family. The fundamental longing for tribal unity and solidarity is expressed and strengthened by the great festivals when many villages dance together, share a common meal and unite in the worship of the gods. The gods intermarry and are related just as men are.

To the Muria, is God the rewarder of them that seek him? There is little that can be called love in the Muria's attitude to any of his gods. But there is gratitude often and sometimes a belief that a god takes a special interest in a man, furthers his cause and goes about with him. There is pride too; a powerful and important clan-god is a source of credit to a village, a fine litter of Dantewari awakes feelings of patriotic delight. But generally the gods are feared; like the Departed they are dangerous and must be kept in their place. There is many a god who is never noticed except when he makes a nuisance of himself.

Plate XLVI

● 796
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782

Siraha prophesying above the dedicated bull

[p. 224 (8)]

Plate XLVII

796 ●
782

The sacrifice

Priests of other deities fill their hands with blood

[p.224(c)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

I. The Shrine of Lingo Pen

IN the wild wooded country at the top of the hills, as you go up from Antagarh towards Amabera, is the little village of Semurgaon, and in the forest that surrounds the village, on a cliff overlooking a tiny stream, is the shrine of Lingo Pen who was once honoured by the Gond and Pardhan all over the Central Provinces. Today, as a living force, his cult is probably confined to the north of Bastar, and to the Muria, to whom he has given many deities and the most cherished of their institutions.

In Semurgaon, Lingo's shrine, a substantial thatched hut, is maintained by the Muria, but his priest is a Pardhan—Deo Singh of the Koreti Nang sept—who sings and plays before him on the dhusir-fiddle which is also Lingo's dwelling-place. The shrine is not unworthy of this venerable deity, the lord of all the aboriginal gods of Bastar. Under a spacious roof lies the Anga of Lingo suspended on a swing and sheltered by a great screen of peacock's feathers. At the four corners of the swing are bunches of the same feathers, and at the Anga's side is Lingo's *jiwa* or soul, a piece of iron like a ploughshare wrapped in grass. Round Lingo's neck is a bell, his son Netturgundi. To the right is his throne, a large cup-shaped stone. Above hangs an iron drum and a hunting-horn. From the roof are suspended pots containing Palo, the sacred cloth, and Lingo's two horses, crooked sticks adorned with feathers on which the mediums ride in ecstasy before him.

Every three years there is a great festival at Semurgaon, when Lingo is brought out of his shrine and is worshipped with pigs, goats and bulls. From all over the Jhorian, Amabera and Antagarh Parganas and from Kanker State come the pilgrims bringing their gods with them, 'for Lingo is Raja and Bastar is his kingdom'. At Alor also, in a clearing in the heart of the jungle, is a four-foot pillar of mahua wood in honour of Lingo, and every three years there is a festival. Indeed throughout northern Bastar you may find Lingo's relatives and hear his legend, a token of the strength and distribution of his cult.[1]

II. The Lingo Legend in the Central Provinces

Later in this chapter I present several versions of the Lingo legend as it is current among the Muria of Bastar, where its outstanding feature is its account of the founding of the ghotul. But first let us consider some other versions of the story which have been recorded in the Central Provinces.

The first of these versions was taken down by the Rev Stephen Hislop from a 'Pardhan priest of the Gond at Nagpur' in the Gondi tongue, and was later edited, translated and published by Sir Richard Temple, in 1866.[2] Unfortunately we have no indication of the distribution of the legend, nor indeed whether—in the form recorded by Hislop—it was known to any other

[1] There is a shrine to Lingal Pen at Cherpal in the Dantewara Tahsil, but I do not know whether the Maria here identify him with the Lingo of the north.

[2] S. Hislop, *Papers relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces*. Edited by R. Temple, 1866. Large extracts from Temple's translation were reproduced by Bishop Eyre Chatterton in his *The Story of Gondwana* (London, 1916) and many of Temple's notes used without acknowledgement. A brief summary is given by Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 478.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

is a part of the regular ceremonial of a festival or marriage; sometimes it is due to 'supernatural' inspiration.[1]

FIG. 115. Lamana woman's jacket adorned with cowries and used by Maria men for the purposes of divination

In Bastar I have noted two forms of this cross-dressing. Men sometimes put on women's jackets adorned with cowries when they go to prophesy in trance before a god and reveal his will to their fellows. At the bigger clan-festivals you may see a dozen or more mediums dancing and gesticulating in a state of ecstatic excitement, all wearing round their bodies these gaily-coloured and rather incongruous blouses.

But this is the only occasion, I think, where the male aboriginals of Bastar put on women's dress. It is more common for women to dress up as men. Bison-horn Maria women of Dantewara sometimes put on male garments at the great Wijja Pandum and drive their men-folk out to the hunt which precedes the main business of the festival. The Muria have the same custom, and the unmarried girls, dressed up as boys, disguise the men of the tribe for a ceremonial hunt on the success of which will depend the value of the annual harvest.[2]

[1] For the 'Change of Sex' motif in Indian fiction, see Penzer, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 231ff. and W. N. Brown, 'Change of Sex as a Hindu Story Motif' in *JAOS*, Vol. XLVII (1927), pp. 36.

[2] Thurston speaks of a similar custom among the Koyi, where the women 'dressed in their lords' clothes' drive the men out to hunt at the Bhoodevi Pandaga or Festival of the Earth Goddess. He describes a procession held before such a hunt: 'About the middle of the day, we saw a procession approaching us on the previous day, but it consisted entirely of women, the drummers and swordsmen being women dressed up as

29

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate XC

Pus Kolang dances: two movements in the Lingo Pata at Pholpar

[p. 464(B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XCII

535
196

The semur tree at Phulpar, hung with dancing sticks

[p. 480(E)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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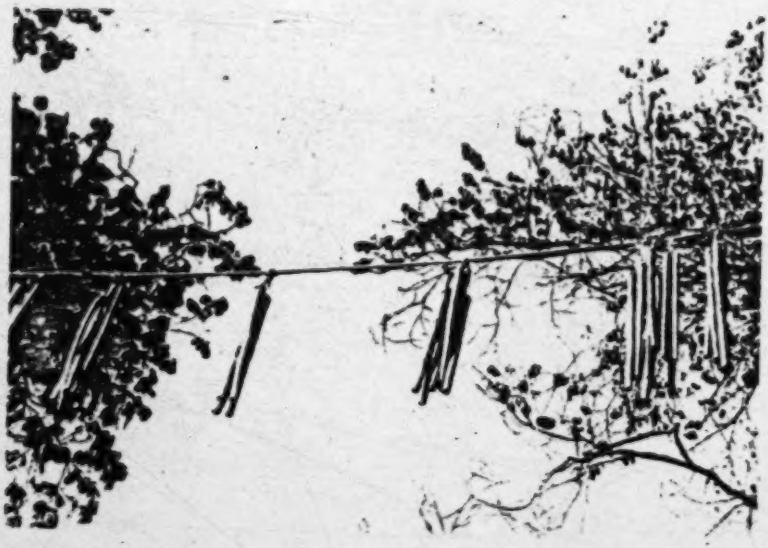

Dancing sticks strung across the road near the village boundary at Koubera

Chelik preparing to hoist their sticks across the road

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate XCIV

Chait Dandar dances: two movements in the Stick Dance at Malakot

[p. 484 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER NINETEEN

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

I

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DELIGHTFUL and enlivening features of ghotul life are the expeditions which are made throughout the year to other villages.[1] I will consider here only those visits which are made by the ghotul officially, under the command of the leaders and with appropriate discipline and rules. Such expeditions are made for marriages, for the festivals of the clan-gods and the Marhai fairs, and—in the cold weather—for ceremonial dancing from village to village. Sometimes the chelik and motiari go together, sometimes separately. Although every trip has a definite and serious purpose it is transformed by the spirit of youth and love into a holiday adventure. Now girls and boys of different villages meet one another and fall in love; now chelik and motiari can go out together on the freest and happiest of picnics far away from the drudgery of everyday life.

Every marriage attracts the neighbouring ghotul; early in the morning of the marriage day the chelik and motiari of a dozen villages are up, decorating themselves, preparing their drums, collecting their few necessities. When they reach their destination, they camp under trees or by a stream. They go to the wedding to help in the making of the booth, to dance before the house and above all to share in the splendid display of the Lagir. They are entertained by the bridegroom's family; they get their food and some liquor. For the rest they roam about together, playing, laughing, flirting or talking and resting in their little outdoor camps. Marriages usually occur in the warm weather and provide a perfect picnic-holiday for everyone.

The great festivals of the clan-gods provide another opportunity for amorous adventure or recreation. The Muria mind does not confuse piety with religion. The gods are to be satisfied and honoured; they must be bathed, fed, humoured, coaxed, caressed; but there is no reason why their worshippers should not enjoy themselves. The Canterbury Pilgrims would have been quite at home at a clan-festival. I have witnessed these at Adnar and Metawand. Hundreds of boys and girls attend them—a magnificent sight with their finery and ornaments. Here again, each ghotul makes a separate camp under trees, but the chelik and motiari dance together and there is more mixing with other villages than in a marriage.

Many a boy arrives with a bottle of mahua liquor half hidden beneath his arm. He has come with a definite purpose of meeting and attracting a girl from another village. At night he may be seen with a torch searching everywhere for his sweetheart. Even married men are allowed licence on these occasions. The gods themselves, carried about by mediumistic Siraha, assault the girls and chase them about. The festal dancing begins about nine o'clock in the evening and goes on till dawn; it is a splendid and moving spectacle. All round are little camp fires, and as the night wears on more and more boys and girls slip away together into the jungle or retire to sit by the fire and drink their liquor.

X 883
X 484
796

There are finally the ceremonial expeditions, which we will now consider.

[1] Similar expeditions are made by the Orissa tribes, the Bhuiya, Juang, Bondo and Gadaba, though these generally have a serious matrimonial purpose alien to Muria tradition.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

II. The Pus Kolang Expeditions

The Pus Kolang expeditions undertaken by boys during the Hindu month of Pus (Jan.-Feb.) are among the more serious of the ghotul's annual diversions. Attired in special costume, the chelik visit a number of villages, dancing and singing in honour of Lingo Pen, who is said to have inaugurated the custom. Their behaviour is strictly regulated by rules and taboos; they carry a god with them and sacred fire. Unlike the girls' Diwali dance, there is no sexual purpose behind these expeditions; indeed the strictest taboos are enforced and there is a general sense of danger; everyone has to be very careful; breach of the rules earns catastrophic punishment. 'The dances are for the gods', said the boys at Phulpar. 'We don't feel inclined for girls; besides, many have died for sex at the Pus Kolang.'

This sense of danger probably accounts for the rather haphazard distribution of the custom. In Udanpur, for example, Kurumtalia Pen ordered the chelik not to dance, but they disobeyed; as they left their village, one of the boys died. In Chiyanar, the boys' dog once bit another dog and when they got home a chelik died. In Bhanpuri, the dancers were once warned by a tiger's print in the ashes of the Pus Kolang fire not to go, but they went and a pair of chelik died. Since then they have abandoned the custom altogether. Generally, south of the Narayanpur-Kondagaon road and east of the Keskal-Kondagaon road the Muria do not dance the Pus Kolang, but everywhere in the north it is common. In the Chota Dongar area they say, 'We don't dance it because we are really Maria'. It is significant that in this part the cult of Lingo is at its weakest.

As the cool refreshing season of Pus approaches, the ghotul leaders consult the Gaita about the time and direction of the expedition. They remember the villages where they were well entertained last year; they recall the food they were given and the omens they saw, and they draw up a programme. In the dark half of Pus, they begin to practise. The dances are difficult and must be carefully taught to the younger boys, for it is dangerous to make mistakes. The chelik prepare their clothes, masks and toys. For weeks they study the rhythm of the sticks and the movements of their feet, but always outside the fence of the ghotul compound.

On the first day of the time decided, the chelik light a fire and dance round it. In the morning they examine the ashes; if these are undisturbed or if they are marked by panther, dog or bullock, all is well; if there is the footprint of a man, tiger, cat or hen, it means that Lingo is warning them not to go. In some villages, however, the ashes should not be disturbed at all. Any mark is regarded as a warning. The boys consult the Siraha, who sometimes forbids the expedition altogether and sometimes allows it on certain conditions. The next day they look again, and again on the third day. If for three days the ashes are well-omened they accept the signs and prepare to go.

During this period they have been deciding who are to be the Gain and Jokta, the leaders of the singing; how they are to pair off; they have been getting their clothes and *Lingo-singār* (ornaments) into order. These clothes and ornaments include feminine elements: the boys wear skirts and many necklaces and neck-bands borrowed from the motiari, but I do not think this involves any element of cross-dressing—it is simply due to a desire to be as ornamental as possible.

When Lingo led the chelik on the first Pus Kolang expedition, he took a tiger with him. In memory of this the boys in many villages now take a dog,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and for this reason the dance is sometimes known as Nei Kolang or Kukur Kolang.

At Phulpar the chelik said that they took with them whatever dog wandered round their fire and sat down near its ashes, but in other villages I have been told that they only take a dog which is carefully trained, for it is essential that it should not bark or bite or have anything to do with other dogs. In Udanpur they said that the dog was taught to dance.

The dog serves both as a mascot and to take the omens. The boys remove a bell from the shrine of the Village Mother and tie it round its neck in the name of Lingo. When they dance in a circle the dog must sit in the middle. At meal-times, the Gain gives it three handfuls of rice before anybody else is fed.

When the dancing party enters a village the chelik wait to see what the dog will do. If all is well, it sits down quietly and they stay. If it wanders off into the village and enters someone's house, it means that a pair of boys will die. If it runs out into the fields even late in the evening, it is a sign that they must move on at once. If it fights with another dog, someone will die. Should the dog leave the party and return home, it is taken as a warning of great danger.

When the chelik return to their village they sacrifice two chickens for the dog, though a boy has to be content with one, and they place stones for it on a cairn. They remove the bell from its neck and replace it in the shrine of the Village Mother. From the time the bell is tied round the dog's neck to the time it is removed, no member of the party may have sexual intercourse. But once the bell is removed, it is a sign that they are free.

In most villages the same dog accompanies the party for three years running, but at the end of that period it is expected to go mad or to be carried away by a tiger. The theory is that for three years Lingo 'possesses' the dog for the brief period of the expedition, but at the end of the time he takes the form of a tiger and carries it away.

FIG. 117. Ornamental stick carried on dancing expeditions
Full length 2' 7½"

When all is ready, about a week before Cherta-puni, the chelik put on their full dress and dance all day. They are rather solemn about this; they talk to no one and take a very superior attitude towards their girls and have nothing to do with them. The next morning, the Gaita takes them to the Village Mother's shrine where the spear of Maria Pen is kept. They dance before the shrine in a straight line, not in a circle; this is the 'Lingo Par'. The Gaita brings fire from his house in a length of smouldering rope spun from paddy-stalk fibre. With the aid of this he offers incense saying, 'These youngsters are going out to dance. Let no disease attack them on the way. Bring them home safely. Let the spear be their aid and Maria Pen go with them. If they return in safety I will give food-sacrifice'. He fixes the smouldering rope on the point of the spear and brings it out.

This was the custom in Phulpar and Kollibera; in the latter village the Gaita went on to the shrine of Thakur Deo and worshipped there with the same

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Muria

words. From this shrine he took a bunch of peacock's feathers which he handed to the Gain—the leader of the singers.

The chelik now assemble outside the Gaita's house and the Gain takes the spear in his hand and they dance the stick-dance for the first time. After that they dance before the ghotul. Then they go with the Gaita and a Siraha along the road to their first point of call. When they reach the village boundary, the Gaita draws a line across the path and places on it seven rings of aonra leaf, seven bits of iron slag and makes seven little piles of rice. The Gaita and Siraha squat down by the side of the path, and the boys step across the line one by one, exclaiming 'Let us return safely'. Should any magical or supernatural danger be threatening one of the boys, the Siraha will immediately react by falling into a trance or jerks, and the expedition will be halted until the danger is discovered and removed.

Once the boys have crossed the line, they have definitely passed out of the ordinary world. They are dedicated to Lingo Pen and must be about his business. They are charged with spiritual power and open to spiritual attack. The rules and taboos of the expedition must be rigorously observed. Some of these rules seem to be intended to segregate the boys from all the associations of sex; others to protect them from catching the spiritual infection of strange villages.

I have already noticed the rule of chastity. Reinforcing this are rules forbidding the chelik to enter the compound of any ghotul or even to touch its fence. Except for the six leaders, the other boys may dance with the motiari, but they must not touch them. They dance in separate rows. They must not pass under the Diwali decorations in any house—for to these boys Diwali has no associations with the Feast of Lights, but is rich with memories of erotic adventure with the girls who have visited their villages for the Diwali dance. Nor may the boys enter any door or touch the thatch of any roof; they must not eat from the hands of a married woman; they must be careful that not even the shadow of a woman in her menses falls upon them. Such regulations remind the boys of their separation for the time being from all domestic ties.

Should a boy's ghotul-wife begin her period while he is on the expedition, the fact is shown him in a dream, and he must make or promise an offering to Lingo. The boys are generally warned of danger by dreaming about tigers.

In order to protect the chelik from the infection of a strange village, there is a rule that the fire with which they cook their food must always be lighted from the need-fire smouldering on the point of the sacred spear. On the other hand they are allowed to eat from the motiari of the village they visit—but their own boys must serve the food. Two boys are appointed cooks, one to see to rice, one to the pulse and salt. The chelik and motiari of the village visited may bring food, even cooked food, but they should not talk much and must soon go away. When they lie down to sleep round the fire in their little camps under trees near the ghotul, the boys must light this fire also with the need-fire.

They are not allowed to cross over a fallen tree. They must keep to the same order and pairs with which they started. At the first dance of all, the Gaita cries 'Make up your pairs' and henceforth they must never change partners. They must always dance in the same order. A boy must always sleep with his partner, and with no other. If they break this rule they will die, and it is said that in Talabera this did actually happen. If one member of a pair dies, his *jori* or mate will die also. Probably a quite sensible rule to ensure the technical perfection of the dancing has been exalted into a

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

taboo. It is very dangerous to make mistakes in the dancing or stick-beating, and any kind of error is heavily penalized.[1] If one of the boys makes a mistake the Gaita of the village visited removes the turban of the Gain and the boys have to pay a fine of two bottles of liquor before he will return it. Should a boy drop his stick or if his dhoti gets loose, he has to pay a similar fine. Anything dropped must be picked up with the teeth.

Special rules control the conduct of the three leading pairs, the Gain and Jokta or Roche-sela and two other couples. They must talk to no one; they must not dance with the motiari of the villages they visit; they may only sing the special Pus Kolang songs.

The dancing party from Phulpar in 1941 visited Sarandi, Kurse, Kutgaon and Tursani. When they reached Sarandi, they went straight to the Gaita's house and danced before it. As they entered the village they sang,

Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.

Show us the Gaita's house, chelik.
Don't you know the Gaita's house, chelik?
Where have you come from, chelik?
We have come from the land of hills.
If we show you, what will you give us, chelik?
We will give you a cloth for your loins.
It's the house with a cart in the yard, chelik.
There is a pond for the buffaloes in front, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.
On a bamboo pole there's a monkey, chelik.
There's an elephant tied to the pillar, chelik.
There's a horse tied in the shed, chelik.
On the roof there sits a peacock, chelik.
There's a gun against the fence, chelik.
A sword against the wall, chelik.
A parrot on its perch, chelik.
A maina in a cage, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.

The boys sing this song to a circular stick-dance rather slowly and reverently as if their words were charged with deep spiritual meaning. Then while two boys take a basket into the house to beg for rice, pulse and salt, the others begin their programme of dances.

[1] For similar beliefs in the danger of making a mistake during a ceremonial dance, see J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. III, p. 518. Compare also A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1890), p. 95.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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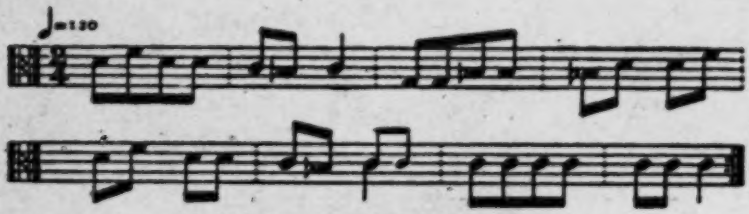
796
535

There are four of these, quite distinct from those danced at any other time. Indeed it is often considered dangerous to dance the Pus Kolang dances even for show at a visitor's camp.

The first, which is the Pus Kolang dance proper, is a stick-dance. The sacred spear is stuck in the ground and the boys circulate round it rather solemnly, each boy attached to his neighbour by dancing-sticks which both hold.

[533]

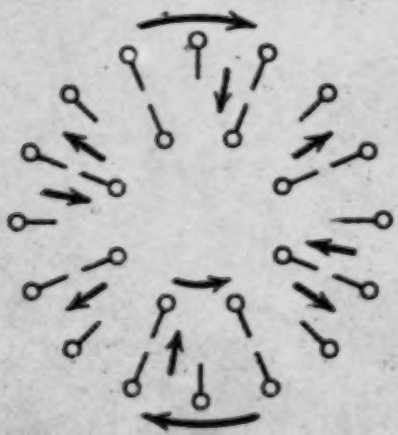


Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.

[539]

Old man Lingo Pen, Johar to thee,
After Lingo what god was there?
After him was Budha Pen.
Johar to him!
After Budha Pen, who was there?
After him was Mudial Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!
After him who comes?
After him comes Mudial Use Pen.
To him Johar, give him a good Johar!

And so through a long list of gods, Gundi Pen, Sonkuari Pen, Phulkuari Pen, Kurumtulla Pen, Balkuari Pen, Naturgundi Pen.



To all these gods we fold our hands,
We beg them not to be angry,
Not to forget us.
We will give incense, cock and pig.
To all we give Johar!

Then the dance changes, and improves. The boys form two circles facing each other. These two rings circulate antagonistically and at the same time the boys of the inner circle change places, with a hop and a jump and three taps of the sticks, with those of the outer circle. This goes on continually, so that the two circles are in constant movement against each other and always alternating. The flourishing and beating of the sticks is very pleasing.

A special variety of the stick-dance is called Kappu Daka. *Kappu* is a bird and *daka* means to lift the feet. So this dance imitates the rapid movement

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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535

of a bird picking up its feet. The step changes to a much more lively and bouncing movement; the boys swing their buttocks and tinkle their bells with greater vigour; they sing with more zest and clash their sticks merrily. The song is long and tedious.

[533]

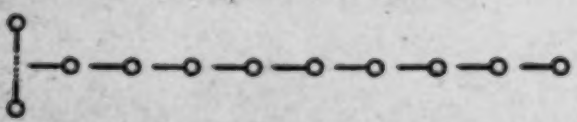
In what *gavh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Raigarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
A cloth for the loins,
To make the loins beautiful, chelik.
In what *gavh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Sarangarh we will buy, chelik.
What shall we buy, chelik?
Ornaments for the body,
To make the body beautiful, chelik.
In what *gavh* shall we buy, chelik?
In Delhigarh we will buy, chelik.

[539]

And so on, until head and ear and waist ornaments have been bought for the adornment of the handsome chelik.

A rather serious dance is the Lingo Endanna, which is also called Pen Endanna. For this the boys form up in two long lines facing inwards. At the head of the line, two boys face each other holding their sticks across the gap. The leader stands behind these sticks and beats them. The boys move slowly forward and back, singing. After a time they sit down and do the same thing, but without moving. Then they rise and the line turns in on itself, the leader going down and stepping over the sticks; then the boys return with the sticks held above their heads. This movement is known as Hichelbar Pata. The songs are conventional, referring to Lingo Pen and his relatives.

There is another movement, which I saw at Pupgaon.



The two leaders face each other holding a stick between them; the line of boys forms up headed by the Ghotul Manjhi. They stand quite still singing slowly and sadly; the Manjhi gently taps the cross-stick in front of him.

Now the dancing-sticks are carefully piled round the sacred spear. For the Monkey dance, three or four small boys mount on the shoulders of a circle of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

their elders and are raised into the air with a whistle and a shout.[1] This pyramid slowly gyrates, and the other boys form a procession and march round and round singing.

Songs

1

Re reloyo re rela re rela rela re reloyo re rela rela
Sayrela re rela rela.
At the boundary the monkey sits on a pile of stones.
Get up, monkey, get up, monkey.
My horse is speaking to you, monkey.
You are sitting on a long pole, monkey.
You are eating the raw ebony fruit, monkey.

2

Whose is this temple, girl?
It is the shrine of the Kolang boys, girl.
This is their temple, girl.
Come out to see it, girl.
Bring a lamp in the left hand, girl,
Water in the right, girl.
Give them greeting, girl.
Bring rice in the fan, girl,
Rice in the basket, girl,
Rice in the leaf-cup, girl,
Bring salt in the leaf-bundle, girl.
Give us something to drink from your hand, girl.

The last dance is the Kokotar Daka Endanna. The chelik form a line, each boy holding in his right hand the stick of the one in front and in his left the stick of the one behind. They go round in a rambling line, while the boys at the end hop about and waggle like the tail of the *mundo-pilo* bird. Others say that the head of the line is a dog and the tail a hare; the purpose of the dance then becomes a game in which the head of the line must turn round and catch the tail. In Kollibera, the boys at the tail imitated the copulation of goats.

[1] Thurston describes a similar dance performed by Koyi women. 'The older ones stood in a circle with their arms intertwined and the younger girls perched aloft, straddle on their shoulders.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 72. I have seen similar dances of this kind performed by the Dhurwa-Parja of southern Bastar, the Kond of Koraput District and the Bhil of the Dangs.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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The Wotis Karsana

A Chait Dandar dancer

A straw man

[p. 492 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Song

Whose sticks are these, mother-in-law?
The sticks of our clan, mother-in-law.
The sticks shine in the sun, mother-in-law.
Come out to see the sticks, mother-in-law.
In your left hand bring a lamp, mother-in-law.
In your right hand bring water, mother-in-law.
Quickly, quickly give us greeting, mother-in-law.

Probably to the Muria mind the constant repetition of 'mother-in-law' is amusing; a second song is also humorous.

On Kachgudgud Hill is a hare, chelik.
The hare has teeth as big as a chopper, chelik.
Its moustaches are like spear grass, chelik.
Its hairs are like a pile of bamboo shavings, chelik.[1]

From the Gaita's house the chelik move round the village, dancing before each house in turn and collecting a little rice. Meanwhile the motiari are busy collecting rice themselves; they cook this in the ghotul, and later serve it to the boys in their camp. At night boys and girls dance together, but without their sticks.

In the morning, the boys give the girls two or four pice and try to hit them when they accept it. When they reach the village boundary on their way to the next village, the little rite of crossing over a sacred line is repeated. Before reaching the new village, they halt somewhere by a stream and cook the food that they have just collected, lighting the fire from the need-fire on their spear. Then they go on and repeat the same programme.

At last the expedition is over; the days of taboo will soon be at an end; the boys approach once more their own village. News of their coming has preceded them and their motiari have not been idle. In Khutgaon I was told that they went out with the rest of the village to catch hares for the boys' feast. But everywhere the girls take the Gaita out into the jungle and make him cut one or two small semur trees. The semur tree is chosen because it was a semur which grew up out of the stump of the gold-covered

[293]

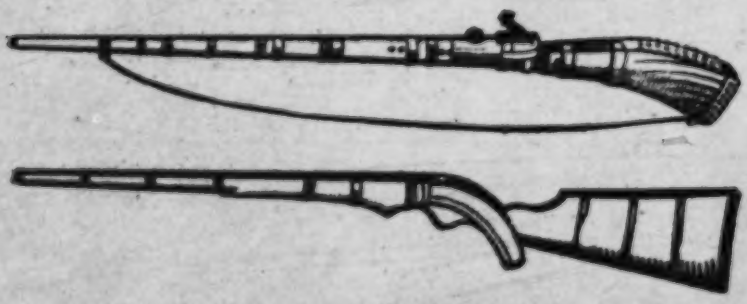

FIG. 118. Dummy guns carried on dancing expeditions

bamboo which Lingo himself cut down at the end of the first Pus Kolang expedition. In some villages the boys say that the semur is chosen because Lingo

[1] For similar humour, see my *Folk-Songs of Chhattisgarh*, pp. 150f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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used to shelter beneath it when he was alive. Obviously there is a reference to Semurgaon, the village where Lingo is said to have turned into a stone and now has his shrine. The semur has the added advantage that its spikes frighten off magic and demons. A small semur is chosen because a bigger one might be inhabited by the ghost of some dead chelik. The bare branches of the tree that suddenly blossom with bright red flowers may symboline the menarche or nuptial fertility.

[293]

The semur must be cut very carefully. The motiari offer rice and pulse before it saying, 'As our boys went out well and happy, so well and happy may they return'. As the Gaita cuts it the girls stop it falling to the ground, for should it do so, it is believed that a pair of dancers will die on the way and not return.

They then tie a saja leaf round the stumps of the trees and carry them back either to the ghotul compound, or to an open space in the middle of the village, wherever the ashes of the fire by which the omens were originally tested are to be found. If the trees, after being planted, do not stand up straight it is believed that disaster is in store for the boys. The motiari make small mud platforms, whiten them with clay and sometimes decorate them with drawings of the chelik. These platforms are to be left for three years, though I doubt if this is often done, but it is important that at the end of the proceedings the semur trees should be pulled up. Should they sprout with renewed life it means that the Gain and his mate will die. In Ghotulbera this actually happened and now the trees are always pulled up and thrown away.

FIG. 119. Dancing-sticks from Remawand

After the platforms have been made, the motiari prepare a lot of leaf-pipes, bundles of tobacco and toilet-twigs. Where there are two trees, one is for the leaders of the party, the Gain and Jokta, the other for the rest. This is an anxious and exciting day for the motiari; their chelik have been away amidst unknown dangers to the heart and spirit; they must do all they can to please them. This evening they cook in the ghotul or near the boys' camp in an enclosure of branches.

When the boys reach home, they go first to the Gaita's house and dance there. They then proceed to the ghotul or to their camp, where they put the spear into the ground near the semur trees and dance round them. After a time they gather about the trees and suddenly all cry *Hurrî* and hang their dancing-sticks on the branches. They remove their special clothes and hang these too on the branches. They take the pipes and tobacco from the trees and smoke them. The next morning they clean their teeth with the toilet-twigs which the motiari have provided. They are home again.

In Kollibera in 1941, the boys reached the village in the morning and spent the day dancing and collecting grain. In the evening, after they had danced round the semur trees, the Kaser-Gaita made little squares with coal-dust, rice-flour and haldi at the foot of each tree, and offered incense with the aid of the need-fire that the boys had now brought home. The chelik gathered round him and their leader offered him the sacred bunch of peacock's feathers and after exchanging this three times, the priest hung it on the first tree. Then the boys hung up their dancing-sticks and turbans. The rest of their attire was packed in little baskets and put under a tree.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

The boys then sit down and the motiari feed them. They must not, however, go to the ghotul that night; there are still ceremonies to be performed.

The next morning the motiari husk in the ghotul the grain that the chelik have brought home. On the verandahs of some ghotul there are permanent mortars for this purpose. In the evening boys and girls will cook this together. The boys then begin to dance; they go to the Gaita's house—at Koilibera they came to my camp; but fairly soon they go home to collect chickens and pigs for sacrifice. When they have all re-assembled they set off in a ragged procession, led by the Kaser-Gaita, towards the village boundary. On the way every boy picks up a stone and carries it along with him.

FIG. 120. Anklet of bells worn on dancing expeditions

When they reach the boundary, the Kaser-Gaita goes for water; others clear a space under a tree by the roadside; the boys make a pile of stones in honour of Lingo Pen near by. In some villages, each pair of boys put down two stones and one above them. The Gaita's stones are put first and then all the others in a line with finally three stones for the dog. The chickens are sacrificed before the appropriate stones. The following day the boys go to inspect the stones and if any of them have fallen over it is regarded as a fatal omen and that particular pair of dancers will die. When the Gaita returns he sprinkles a little water on the cleared space, smooths it over, makes seven piles of rice and offers incense.

The chelik stretch a rope of siari creeper across the road and tie their dancing-sticks to it. The sacred bundle of peacock feathers is tied at one end. Two chelik climb trees on opposite sides and haul up the rope until it stretches taut across the road.

Now the Gaita offers chickens, eggs and two small pigs in the usual way. At Koilibera I was interested to see how he taught two of the boys, allowing them to practise with a few of the chickens and a pig. When this was over, the boys went to the road and rather formally stripped themselves of the *Lingo-singār*, the dress worn in honour of Lingo, packing the turbans, skirts and bells into little bamboo baskets.

The Pus Kolang is almost over. The chelik return home to the village and the Gaita goes with a few of the leading boys to the shrine of the Village Mother and replaces the sacred spear of Maria Pen. Everyone has returned safely, so the priest offers a goat. The rest of the day is spent preparing for the evening feast, which is taken at about five o'clock. At Koilibera, on 25 January 1941, I attended this feast; it was a very pleasant affair. A great crowd of people sat round in a half-circle, mothers with their children, old men, little boys. The older boys served the food; the motiari saw to arrangements behind the scenes. There was an excellent meal of rice (of several different kinds collected on the trip), pork, goat and pulses. My wife and I sat with the Chowkidar and Kalingsai. Presents of meat were sent to the whole village, to Kalar, Halba and Mahara without distinction. Last of all the older chelik and the motiari got their food, and that evening they went to sleep in the ghotul.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Pen Kolang Expeditions

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Between the ordinary Pus Kolang expedition and the Chait Dandar, which I will describe immediately, there is a sort of intermediate dance called the Pen or Deo Kolang. This is danced by boys only, but girls accompany them to do the cooking and keep an eye on them. Just as in the Pus Kolang, the chelik practise their dances, light a fire to test the omens and go to the shrine of the Village Mother to get fire and a spear or axe or bell. When this is done the Gaita buries a ring in front of the shrine.

The boys follow very much the same rules as are observed on the Pus Kolang expeditions and have to observe chastity even with the motiari of their own village. When they return they dance before the Gaita's house and he digs up the ring and returns it to their leader. At Esalnar they said that it was essential that the dancing party should make a complete circle of villages right round their own village. Every boy must dance for at least three years or the gods will be angry with him. At Esalnar, as also in villages south of Narayanpur such as Bakulwahi and Markabera, the dancing-sticks are not slung up across the road but are placed in the Deo-gudi.

The distinctive features then of the Pen Kolang are that girls accompany the party, that a ring is buried, and that the dancing-sticks are placed in the Deo-gudi at the end of the performance.

At Bakulwahi there was a rule that on the last day when the last dance was finished every boy had to throw his stick down at the same time, or they would fall ill.

IV. The Chait Dandar Expeditions

Throughout the east-central and south-eastern villages of the Muria territory the Chait Dandar, Kati Dandar or Mahua Dandar dances take the place of the Pus Kolang. I have already pointed out that as we move east and south from the Jhoria area the cult of Lingo grows progressively weaker and there is thus less inducement to perform the Pus Kolang, which is essentially a dance performed in his honour. The Chait Dandar is a much happier and freer dance than the Pus Kolang. It is not hedged about by a score of taboos and the dread sanctions that enforce them. The essential feature, indeed, of this dance is that boys and girls go out together and that there is no rule forbidding sexual intercourse between members of the same or of different ghotul.

Apart from this the general procedure of the Chait Dandar is not unlike that of the Pus Kolang. Before the chelik and motiari start, they practise for many days in the ghotul—for here too mistakes are dangerous and have to be atoned for. When all is ready they first dance in the ghotul; they then go to the shrine of the Village Mother where they offer liquor to Tallur Muttal saying, 'O Mother Earth, we are but children, teach us to dance well, save us from mistakes'. Then in front of the Gaita's house they dance again and the Gaita digs a hole into which he puts a ring, planting a semur tree above it. In some villages he offers liquor here in the name of Bhimul Pen.

When the boys and girls set out, they cross over a line of aonra rings as usual and promise to give Mother Earth and the Departed offerings if they protect them from magic and evil spirits. In each village they go first to the Gaita and then collect mahua and food from every house. The visitors are entertained in the ghotul; sometimes they are made to dance at once and the ordinary procedure of the evening is omitted; sometimes, however, hosts and visitors interchange their girls for combing and massaging. I doubt if

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Muria

this exchange goes so far as to include the sleeping arrangements, but I have no real information about this. Food is provided by the hosts. If the Irpu Pandum, the festival of the eating of the new mahua flowers, has not been celebrated, there is a strict taboo on the drinking of mahua spirit. If this taboo is broken the supply of flowers will fail. In Jungani there was a rule that the dance must not be performed at all until the flowers were gathered in. Here it was supposed that the noise of the stick-dance has a bad effect on the crop.

At the end of the expedition the boys and girls return to their own village and dance before the Gaita's house round and round the semur tree. The Gaita offers liquor to it, then pulls it up and throws it away. The ring is given to the leader of the dance. Finally the boys tie their sticks to a rope across a path near the village boundary in the usual way.

If there is a bazaar in the neighbourhood the boys visit it and dance in its four corners.

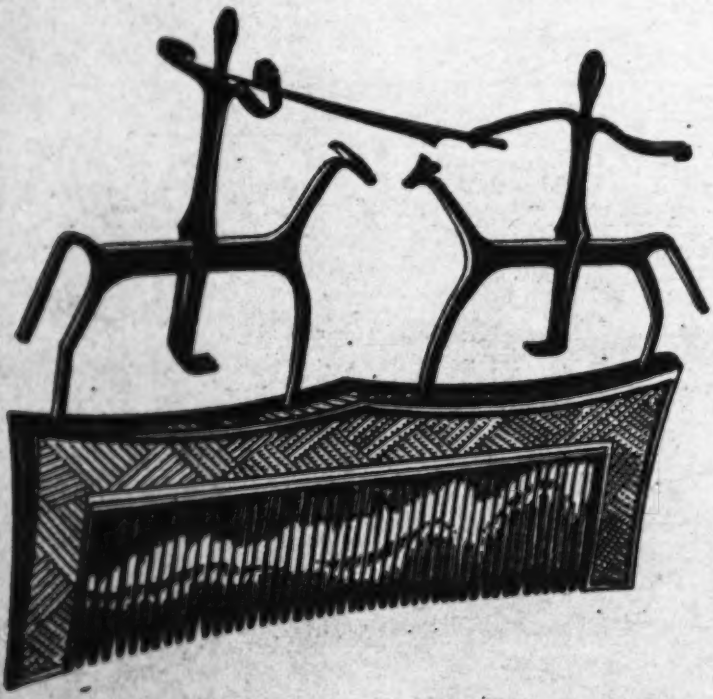

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FIG. 121. Comb with chelik and motiari on horseback

The sticks used in this dance are called either *dandār* or *kāti* and are usually made of surtali wood. Before the Gaita pulls up the semur tree the boys hang their sticks upon it.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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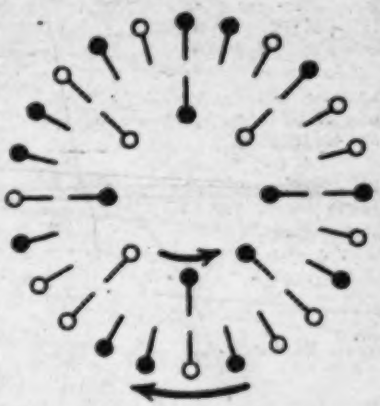
The dances and songs differ slightly from those of the Pus Kolang. In April 1941, I saw the Chait Dandar dancers of Jungani when they visited Malakot. The girls had no special dress, but the boys wore the dancing skirt, turbans and bells loosely hung above the buttocks. The leader of the party, the Gaita, wore the elaborate comb illustrated in Fig. 121 and a gaily coloured bag round his neck.



The dancing resembled the Pus Kolang dancing, but was much enlivened by the presence of the girls. The sticks used were much longer, about three feet with a notch at one end. In the big stick-dance with which they began the boys and girls mixed freely, forming two antagonistic circles. Each boy and girl held a stick in either hand, the right pointing upwards and the left down. As the circles revolved, they struck each other's sticks and passed on. They danced on their toes, with a light and easy step, right foot to right, left foot to left, the left foot up and down, then across to the right. The circles moved in both directions, reversing with a loud cry of *Ow-ha*. As usual among Muria, the boys shook their buttocks horizontally to ring the bells; this gave a very ragged effect in comparison with the strict timing and unison of the vertical jerk of the Hill Maria.

Songs

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1

Hun hun hun hun jām huy

The peacock has a long tail.
Where is the long-tailed peacock?
The peacock's in the Gaita's house.
How much does the peacock drink?
The peacock takes five sips.
Come down, O long-tailed peacock!
Where will it come down?
In the Pujari's house,
In his house come down.
O long-tailed peacock!

2

Roy wāyo jām huy

Don't think about your lover, she won't come now.
You'll miss your step in the dance if you think of her.
You won't sing properly.
Where has the Pujari gone?
He has gone with a knife to sacrifice.

302

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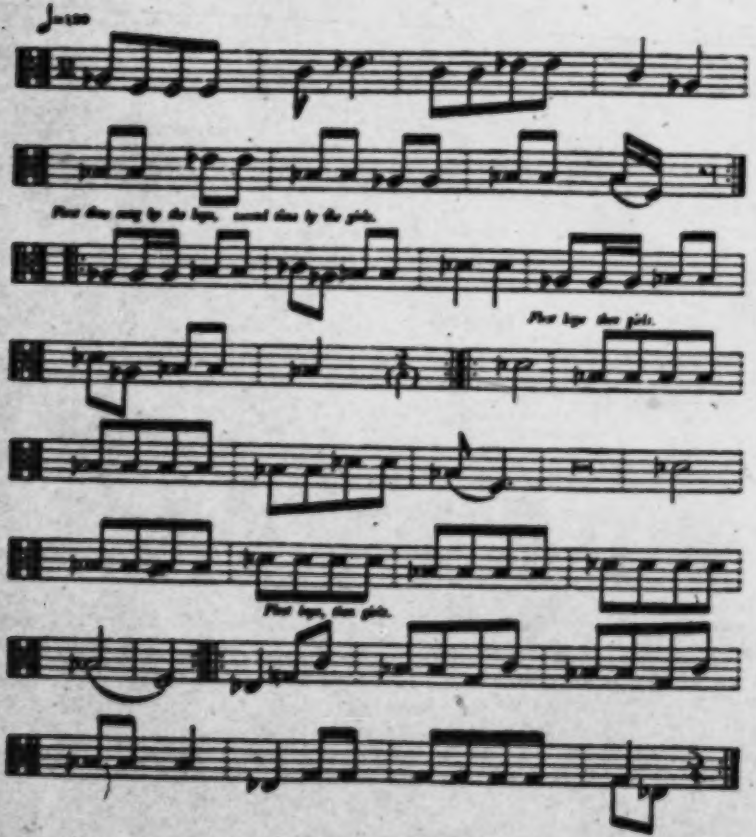
GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Ask the Gaita's wife where the
Gaita has gone;
He has gone to his village holding
an umbrella.
Ask the Manjhi's wife where the
Manjhi has gone.
He has gone to give judgement
holding his stick.



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The second dance corresponded to the Lingo dance of the Pus Kolang. Boys and girls made two long lines facing each other; each pair held two sticks between them and beat them in unison. After a time the line turned in on itself, the leaders taking it down under a roof of sticks; then they turned round and the sticks were held low down near the ground and the line this time stepped over them.

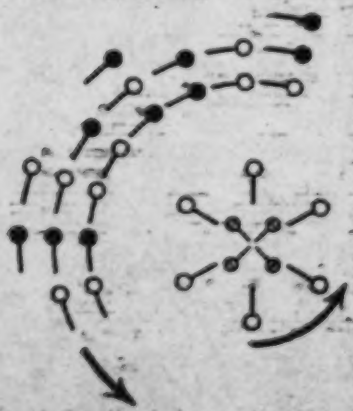
THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Song

Tari nāna na nāre nāna tari nānāre

Oho maina ho Lālsai baitho danda ho.	O maina bird, O Lalsai! Sit down with a stick.
Oho kāhen he danda ho Lālsai maina kāhen ho danda ho tari?	What is the stick made of, O Lalsai maina?
Ye bāts paltu ho rāja maina ho Lālsai ye bāte paltu ho!	Let us turn this side, O Raja maina, O Lalsai!
O ho chait dandar ho rāja maina ho Lālsai ho teri.	This is the Chait Dandar.
Uthun dakhu ho rāja maina Lālsai ho teri.	Let us stand and watch it.

Lalsai means a prince. The young Maharaja used to be called Lalpila. The third dance was called the Bendri (or Monkey) Endanna, very like the usual pyramid dance, but with a brighter note in the procession where boys and girls marched round with their arms about each other's necks. Four little boys mounted on the backs of half-a-dozen seniors, who rose up with a loud whistle. The rest of the party formed the procession and went round the pyramid beating their sticks, with quick hopping movements. They advanced three paces, paused, swung back a little and then advanced again. From time to time they made excellent *hoop-hoop* monkey noises. When they descended, the younger boys saluted their elders with Johar, apparently in gratitude for their safe return from so perilous an elevation.



The last dance was performed in a slow and solemn line. Boys and girls, embracing one another about the shoulders, formed a long row, sticks in hand. They advanced two steps, retired two steps and at the same time moved a little to the right. After the line had thus travelled some distance, it moved back to the left. The movement was slow and tedious and the singing rather flat.

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Muria

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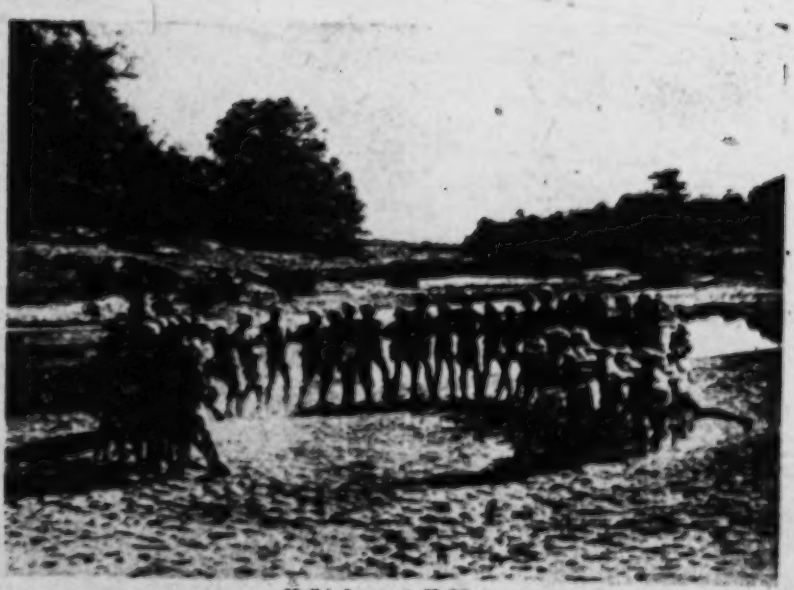
Hulki dance at Alur



Hulki dance at Kollibera

[p. 500(A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate XCVIII

Hulki expedition mask
(From Sirpuri)

Chait Dandar masks representing man and wife (From Kachora)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Songs

1

Tare nare nare na nare

Porre mettia dippa tendera lālsai.	Cut the clearing on the top of the hill, Lalsai.
Dippa tendsi bāra hewerār lālsai?	Why is the clearing to be cut?
Dippa tendsi bāra bitirār lālsai?	What will be sown in that clearing?
Dippa tendsi ganga parbat bitirār lālsai.	In that clearing *ganga parbat* seed will be sown.
Ganga bitsi bāra hewerār lālsai?	What shall we do with that seed?
Ganga pungār jhela jewerār lālsai.	We will put its flower in our turbans, Lalsai.

The *ganga parbat* is a specially profitable seed.

2

Tari na hari na morey, nāna hari nāna ho, ye na hari na morey na, hanhaiya morey ye na, hari na morey na

Bhala kaise rowen more pandki parewān ho?	How does my wood-pigeon cry, and my dove?
Kaise rowen manjur?	And how does my peacock cry?
Bhala ghutru ghutru more pandki parewān ho;	O *ghutru ghutru* cries my wood-pigeon and my dove;
Dhoke dhoke manjur.	O *dhoke dhoke* cries my peacock.
Bhala kay chāra charen more pandki parewān ho?	O what food has my wood-pigeon and my dove?
Kāy chāra charen manjur?	What food has my peacock?
Bhala gotin charen more pandki parewān ho;	My wood-pigeon and my dove eat small pieces of stone;
Dhānen charen manjur.	My peacock eats rice.
Bhala kaisen sowen more pandki parewān ho?	And how sleeps my wood-pigeon and my dove?
Kaise sowen manjur?	How sleeps my peacock?
Bhala gura me sowen more pandki parewān ho;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove sleep in their nests;
Jhāre me sowen manjur.	And my peacock sleeps in the tree.
Bhala kahān pāni piwen more pandki parewān ho?	O where do my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water?
Kahān pāni piwen manjur?	And where does my peacock drink?
Bhala ghare pāni piwen more pandki parewān ho;	O my wood-pigeon and my dove drink water in the house;
Bane pāni piwen manjur.	My peacock drinks water in the forest.

There are evidently no chastity taboos in the Mahua Dandar expeditions. Girls and boys went about with free and natural embraces that were a delight to watch. During the stick-dance, when a boy approached a girl he fancied, he waggled the bells on his buttocks furiously and laughed and flirted with her as she passed. In our camp a party of dancers stood for a long time watching us. Every boy had his arms round a girl, and the Belosa stood with two boys; they were all embracing each other (see Plate XCI). There was no self-consciousness or shyness, no fear either of the stranger or the gods.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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535

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

You would not see that sort of thing on a Pus Kolang expedition. As a chelik described it at Chandabera, 'We all go together for the Mahua Dandar and have great fun. No one has a right over any girl and all play with each other'. Occasionally boys and girls of different villages fall in love and run away together.

V.. The Diwali Dances

But of all the opportunities for romantic adventure so liberally provided by Muria society, none is more exciting than the girls' Diwali dance. The word 'Diwali' is here simply an indication of date; the dances have nothing to do with the Hindu festival. Even the dates are usually wrong; I saw Diwali dances on 18 November 1940 at Binjhli, on 24 November at Remawand and on 27 November at Bandopal. The actual Diwali that year was on 24 October. I saw it again at Sirpur on 30 October 1941, though the real festival was a fortnight earlier.

[531
293]

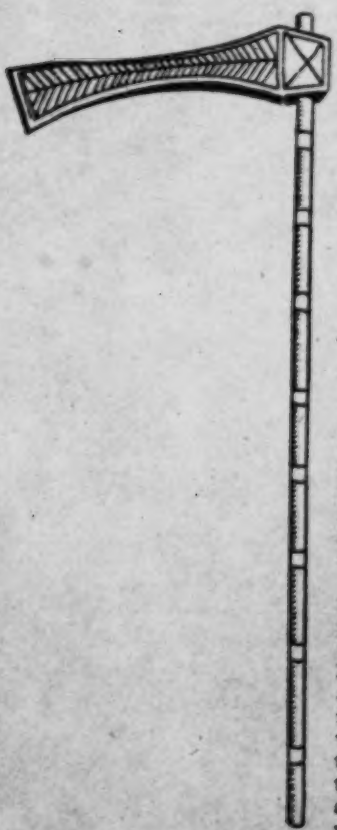

Fig. 122. Ornamented wooden axe carried by the leader of the girls on a Diwali expedition

During this season the motiari go from village to village, singing and dancing. But to the east of the main road, the Diwali is only danced in a few villages; to the south of Kondagaon it is almost unknown. Instead boys and girls go together for the Hulki.

Sometimes, the Diwali is abandoned for a time because of a scandal, sometimes on supernatural grounds. In Talabera, the girls cannot dance or sing at all, for if they do a god (*deo*) attacks them. He makes the girls tremble and fall to the ground: the Gaita has to spit and beat them with a stick to get rid of him.

There does not seem to be any special religious or magical purpose in these expeditions; they are simply for enjoyment and amorous adventure. Only girls go, led by their Belosa, and when they visit any village, only the boys of that village may be present to entertain them. The visitors dance first at the Gaita's house, then through the village; they camp in the ghotul; the local boys cook for them and entertain them. In the evening, the visiting girls and the local boys dance and play together and the dancing often lasts all night. During those long hours every one of the visitors is taken away into the jungle; the more attractive ones may be taken several times. The evenings are fruitful of love-affairs and sometimes a chelik now meets his future wife. A boy from Kapsi told me that he met

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

his bride when she came from Markabera to dance. He took her three times to the jungle.

I will now trace the experiences of a party of these dancers as they go out from their village.

For days discussions in the ghotul have centred round the girls' programme. Some of the girls have definite villages in mind; there is a handsome boy glimpsed for a moment at a last year's wedding: here is a famous drummer and singer whom they all admire. The chelik are more concerned that their motiari will be properly fed and cared for. 'Last year such and such a village was very mean; don't go there this time,' they say. 'But that village gave you pork and a little ghee, it is worth a second visit.' The girls too have their memories, different ones. They have to consider too the prevailing clans, and the blues of the places they propose to see. At last the programme is settled. The motiari are to go to seven villages and return home on the eighth day.

On the morning of their departure, the girls go to the shrine of the Village Mother, and the Gaita offers incense and promises food-sacrifice if they return safely. The girl leader, carrying an ornamented axe over her shoulder, takes fire from the shrine in a coil of rice-straw. She must preserve this fire throughout the tour. Other girls must not touch either the axe or fire, for they represent the village god. Then the Gaita takes the party to the boundary of the village and makes a line across the path, on which he puts little piles of rice, and seven rings of aonra leaf with some iron slag. Over this the girls step in single file while the Gaita prays, addressing all the gods of that part and the Departed, 'Our girls go out to dance the Diwali dance. Let them go well, let them come well. Let there be no fever, cough or cold. If they come unharmed, we will give you liquor, incense, eggs, a cock. They are going to a strange country; let them have no trouble. It is your duty to see to this'. And then with a sudden change of tone, 'If they return with fever, cough or cold, I will piss in your face'.

By now the girls have passed and the Gaita says no more to them, for they must go on their way without once looking round.

Presently they reach the first village on their tour programme. They go straight to the Gaita's house, pile their belongings, their extra wraps, their big baskets for collecting food, under a tree, and begin to dance. The Diwali dance takes several forms. One is a slow, monotonous dance, in a circle, clapping the hands and singing, mostly Relo. In another the girls form themselves into two rows and move round quickly with four steps forward and to the right, two back, then four to the right again.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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535
[539]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

In Sidhāwand, the girls danced in two lines following each other. Each girl had her left hand on her neighbour's shoulder and her right hand hung straight down. They took two steps to the right, right, left, right, then slid the left foot along the ground.

When they first arrive, the Diwali dancers sing:

1

Thākur ghar kon ây re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's house, brothers?
Jora kukur bhuke re bhai rām,	Where a pair of dogs are barking, brothers,
Tehi thākur gharu re bhai rām.	There is the Thakur's house, brothers.
Thākur beta kon ây re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's son, brothers?
Jora kardhan pahire re bhai rām.	He has a double silver belt, brothers.
Tehi thākur beta re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's son, brothers.
Thākur bohāri kon ây re bhai rām?	Which is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers?
Jora sula pahire re bhai rām.	She has two bands round her neck, brothers.
Tehi thākur bohāri re bhai rām.	That is the Thakur's daughter-in-law, brothers.

2

Mulir mulir intoni hāri gurti!	You are crying army, army, O blackbird!
Aga baga da mulir hāri gurti?	Where has the army come from, blackbird?
Rainigarh da mulir dāda.	The army has come from Rainigarh, brother.
Hurrig lekha mulir dāda.	The army comes like a line of black ants, brother.
Dondera kayang talwār dāda.	The sword is long as the dondera fruit, brother.
Tormend tormend puja roy hāri gurti;	They are killing people *tormend*, blackbird;
Mindāk tora reyandu roy hāri gurti;	The blood is flowing up to the knees, blackbird;
Luuur minu kubcāh roy hāri gurti;	*Luuur* fish are swimming in it, blackbird;
Nāri minu targandh roy hāri gurti.	*Nāri* fish are swimming against the stream, blackbird.

A crowd soon gathers, attracted not so much by the dance as by the desire to see who has come. The local chelik are very excited and bustle to and fro making arrangements. They send their own girls to clean the ghotul, but once that is done forbid them to come near. Their own girls are planning to go out themselves in two days' time, so they do not really mind.

In Remawand, when the girls from Markabera came, the Remawand boys went round the village collecting rice, pulse and salt, and cooked it under a tree near the Gaita's house. When the girls had finished singing they camped in the ghotul, taking complete possession of it, spreading their things everywhere; some of them lay down and slept at once, tired with the journey and

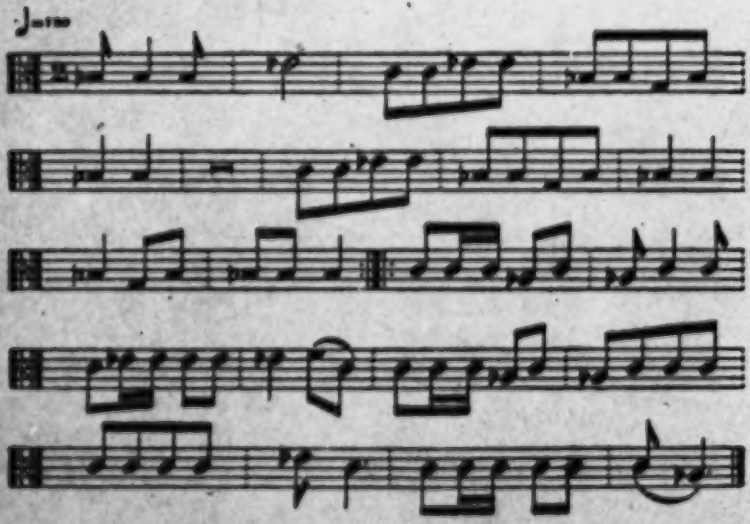
GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

in preparation for an exhausting night. When the food was ready the boys brought it to the ghotul and they all ate from leaf-plates, seated on logs of wood placed in a rough circle. There were about a dozen visiting girls and as many hosts.

After supper a great fire was lit in the ghotul court and some of the girls began to dance in a small circle with the boys in another group, a slow and mournful dance, wholly unsuited to the spirit of the moment. None of the older people came near; it was the hour of youth. Presently they wearied of the dance, and sat down round the fire, the girls in a half-circle on one side, the boys facing them. They began to talk very delightfully to each other. I do not think I have ever heard a group of people talk with such gentle and natural charm. The girls began by asking the clan of every boy; the boys asked the same question of the girls. This was significant—a necessary preparation for later assignations and even marriages. Then the two parties exchanged names, ghotul-names, and this caused a lot of merriment, for of course the girls' lovers in Markabera had often the same names as the boys of Remawand. Then the boys began to call themselves by the girls' titles and the girls took the boys' names, causing roars of laughter and some embarrassment. This was probably a form of proposal and assignation. When the Sirdar called himself Malko and she replied by calling herself Kotwar, he knew that her attentions were engaged elsewhere. But if she said 'I am the Sirdar', he knew that his advances at midnight would not be rejected.

Songs

I



Banda rola pungĕr wo ãya.
Pungĕr mĭlĭchĭla dãhĭgo ãya.
Nĭma ĭcho hamma wo nunĭ.
Bona suda dahĭ wo nunĭ?

In the lake there is a flower.
I go to put it in my hair.
Don't go, little daughter.
Who will go with you there?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

	Māmān marri mantor go āya;	There is my *māma's* son:
	Ona suda dāka wo āya.	I will go with him.
	Tāra nāwa sandra go āya.	Give me my *sandra* cloth.
	Sandra nana ukka go āya.	I will wear my cloth.
	Kosa wāri polka go āya;	The *polka* jacket is made of silk;
	Tāra nāwa polka go āya.	Bring me that jacket.
	Wāler igāda tukil wo āya;	The basket was made by the Nahar;
	Tāra nāwa tukil wo āya.	Give me my basket.
	Muyāng end-leng kocha go āya;	The measure has little bells round it;
	Tāra nāwa kocha go āya.	Bring me the measure.
	Kawāng end-leng humār go āya;	The *gundri* is adorned with cowries;
	Tāra nāwa humār go āya.	Bring me the *gundri*.
	Hupe lolor wati go āya!	O the jungle clearing of the rats!
	Hupe lekkā dāka go āya.	Like a rat I will go.
	Nana waronāy atona āya.	I will go all alone.
	Saboy tāskun dāynur go āya.	For everyone has left me.
	Kape kanhār bera go āya,	Over the field of the *kapu* bird,
	Kape lekka parriya ka āya.	Like a bird I will go.

2

Aga baga pārewāng roy dele?	Whence are these pigeons?
Dongur bhum tāng pārewāng roy dele.	The pigeons have come from the highlands.
Aga baga raiya nung roy dele?	Where have the pigeons settled?
Gāita dāda duār re roy dāda.	In the Gaita's court.
Kile re koru rachāte roy dele,	In front of his fence,
Agāye ise raiytāng roy dele.	There they have settled.

3

Kumda phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the pumpkin, boys.
Tuma phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the gourd, boys.
Kākri phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the cucumber, boys.
Mogra phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the *mogra*, boys.
Keonra phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the *keonra*, boys.
Chameli phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the *chameli*, boys.
Gulāp phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the rose, boys.
Āma phul sitārām kayde layor.	Salute the flower of the mango, boys.

4

Dāda le waiya munke re korha hiton;	In front you have built a cow-shed, brother;
Perke ne purka hiton, dāda.	Behind you have made a grain-bin, brother.
Murwias pāi jaliyal, dāda.	The peacock is on the roof, brother.
Pinjora te maina hiton, dāda.	The maina is in its cage, brother.
Rachāte gāda hiton, dāda.	The cart is in the courtyard, brother.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Latile howe hilon, dāda.	The monkey is on the pole, brother.
Nawchāre pāt le chidral, dāda.	The rat is in the rafters, brother.
Kena ye mawdin āywin, dāda!	What a rich man you are, brother!
Dalate heza himun, dāda,	Give us a basketful, brother,
Kāwir le hilāp āyār, dāda.	A full load, brother.
Jiwa tun kami hema, dāda.	Don't give less than that, brother.
Niyare poroy poyhom, dāda.	Then we will throw [praises] on you, brother.

5

Muda muda intoni dāda!	Ring, Ring, say Ring, brother!
Guru pehih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a blacksmith girl,
Kachi muda heyerom dāda.	She would have given an iron ring.
Sonār pehih āyerom dāda,	Had she been a goldsmith girl,
Soni muda wālerom dāda.	She would have given a gold ring.
Kauro pehih āyerom dāda,	Had she been of the Kauro clan,
Kawra muda heyerom dāda.	She would have given a cowrie ring,
Kudum dāka wālerom dāda.	And she would have walked stamping her feet.
Dinda layor ātekroy dāda,	Had you been an unmarried boy, brother,
Kudum dāka wāta roy dāda,	You too would have walked stamping your feet,
Māte muth ha heyerom dāda.	And we would have beaten you with our fists.

From time to time girls would jump up and try to run into the ghotul to sleep, but the boys were generally quick enough to catch them. This went on all night, alternating dance and pleasant talk. Every now and then a boy pulled a girl out of the ghotul and away into the fields. No one took any notice, though there was a little laughter when they returned. The girls took it in turns to get a little sleep; there were generally three or four girls sleeping at any one time.

In the morning, the girls first sang outside the Gaita's house and the boys went round the village collecting a basket of rice for their journey and the midday meal which they would eat beside a stream half-way to their next village. When the boys returned, suddenly the girls ran to the ghotul leaving four of their number standing in line. These put two pice on the ground. Two of the boys ran to pick up the money and as they bent down the girls thumped them on the back. Then the boys took the baskets of rice down to the ghotul, put it on the ground, and the girls had to pull it away without getting hit. They emptied the basket and put it outside the gate; the boys made a dash for it, but were again caught and beaten. Then the girls, accompanied by the Gaita, went again to the boundary; a line was drawn across the path, they stepped over it and went their way.

This programme was repeated every night for a week, and then the girls went home. I witnessed their return at Binjhli and Bandopal. On the 18th of November, 1941, the chelik of Binjhli were very excited and busy. They took a whole cartload of wood into the jungle. They dug a pit in the ground, long and deep but narrow enough to bear a row of pots full of rice and pork. They lit the fire and prepared the feast. About 6 p.m. came the news that the motiari were approaching, and the boys ran through the forest towards a footpath some two hundred yards away.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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535

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Here were sitting the Gaita and a Siraha; across the path was the usual line of ash, a row of tiny green-rings of aonra leaf, bits of egg-shell.[1] We sat and waited. Suddenly out of the jungle came the line of motiari, eighteen of them, bearing themselves most proudly, their rows of silvered combs and ornaments shining in the evening light. The chelik smiled in welcome and delight. It was an unforgettable moment.

The first girl reached the line across the path and squatted down before it. The Siraha fell into trance asking the gods if all was well. The leader of the chelik waved two chickens round her head and she was allowed to pass. The other girls stepped directly over the line, one by one in single file. They put their bundles in the ghotul, then went to the Gaita's house and began to dance and sing. They were weary and hoarse after their week's continual singing, but they danced for half an hour, and then made an end.

Now night was falling, and the boys in great excitement went back to the jungle and finished cooking the feast. Two big girls, who had been in their menstrual period—as the boys informed me at the top of their voices—and so could not go on the trip, were making leaf-plates and cups. Soon the motiari came and sat in a long line; boys ran to and fro with torches. The chelik first served palm wine, then bits of highly chillied pork and rice on leaf-plates. My wife sat and ate with the girls; I had a place to myself near the fire, and enjoyed the feast as much as anyone. The flavour of the food was excellent and it was well cooked; at least it did me no harm.

The elders of the village also came and even some of the Ganda and Kalar. When they and the girls had eaten, the chelik were able to sit and take their supper. At last all went to the ghotul. They were too tired and excited to dance; they lay down together and slept.

On the evening of the following day, the girls gave a feast to the boys in the same place, using the rice and pulse that they had collected on their expedition.

At Bandopal, the chelik made a feast for the girls in a shed on the edge of a field near the village. They cooked rice, pulse and fish, crabs and frogs that the boys had caught specially for the feast. When the motiari assembled, they were given liquor. Then, holding the leaf-cups in one hand, they saluted the chelik with the other. After this the Jhoria, head of the chelik, asked the girls where they had been, what food they had been given, what entertainment they had received, and whether there had been any trouble or sickness on the way. The girls gave a lively account of everything that had happened, describing how they had been given here a chicken, there a pig, and here had been meanly received. The Jhoria declared that when girls or boys came from those villages they would be treated as they had treated them.

In Bandopal, the purification ceremony was not held on arrival but the following morning. The girls were taken outside the village by the Gaita and the boys. The Gaita made the usual line of ash, and sacrificed liquor, eggs and chickens. Some branches were placed across the path and the girls told to step over them and go home. As they went the chelik hit them on the back 'to drive away disease'.

[1] When Juang return from similar expeditions, at a cross-roads near the village boundary a line of date palm leaves, bhoir thorns, and an ebony branch is made across the path. The leader says, 'Whatever devils are dancing after us, let them return hence and follow us no more'. Each dancer in turn spits and steps across the line and so goes home without looking round. The Juang do this even on ordinary occasions when they return after a visit to another village. The Savara, and I have no doubt many other tribes also, take similar precautions whenever they visit other villages for a ceremonial purpose.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Plate XCIX

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532

Mask used in Chherta dances (From Berma)

[p. 508 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

VI. The Hulki Dances

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As we move east, the custom of allowing girls to go to dance by themselves from village to village at Diwali gradually weakens. Indeed the Diwali dance of the girls is almost co-terminal with the Pus Kolang dance, although in isolated villages like Surma in eastern Kohdagaon the Diwali is still kept up. Where it has died out, its place is often taken by the Hulki expedition. Just as the Chait Dandar has replaced the Pus Kolang and boys and girls go together instead of boys only, so the Hulki replaces the Diwali dance and boys and girls go together instead of girls only. The Hulki expedition is sometimes made in the ordinary way and boys and girls go out for a week's tour; sometimes they simply go out for the day or for a long evening to neighbouring villages and return to their own ghotul to sleep. There is no special decoration worn, except that boys put on all the clothes they have and the girls adorn themselves with their prettiest ornaments.

When they start, the dancers perform the same sort of ceremonies for their protection and success as is done in the other dances. A line of rings is made and the Gaita promises suitable offerings if the party returns safely. The leader of the party, who is still called the Gain, prays, 'May our song and dance be good, may the rhythm keep time, may the tune not be spoilt, let no witch or magician injure us, let us not be attacked by Arjatta Parjatta, Bhut, Massan, Jurelin, Mirchuk, Matia of other villages. May the gods of the villages we visit not trouble us'.

The visitors dance and collect food and liquor as usual and are generally joined by the boys and girls of the village they are visiting. Hosts dance in one line, visitors in another. At Bhandarsiuni they sang a song in honour of Lingo. When the Bhandarsiuni party, which included many big boys but only very little girls, visited Sirpuri on 28 October, 1941, it was amusing to note how bored the Sirpuri *boys* were with the visit, though the Sirpuri girls bustled about with great excitement to arrange entertainment for their visitors.

When the boys go for Hulki, with perhaps only a few girls, the members of the two ghotul dance against each other till one party becomes exhausted.

Often the members of the two ghotul dance together. It was at such a time that the Jholer of Morenga—and many another—met his bride. 'I went to dance at Mundpal and a girl pushed her way through the crowd and danced beside me. I put my arm round her and rested my hand on her breast. Later I gave her liquor to drink and we slipped away into the jungle. After a few months, we ran away together and were married.'

The actual dance, which is called Hulki or Kokti, is a serpentine promenade in which boys and girls, clasped in each other's arms, combine a rhythmic movement with all sorts of fun. It is a quick and jolly dance, delightful to watch and, I suspect, entrancing (provided the circumstances are right) to dance.

Boys and girls form a long line all facing one way. They hold each other by placing the right arm lightly across the right-hand neighbour's bottom, while the left hand holds the right arm of the left-hand neighbour but one which is, of course, resting across the immediate left-hand neighbour's back. The method is most easily understood by looking at Plate CXIII. The dance often begins with only boys holding each other rather loosely with a wide inviting space between each pair. Girls one by one burrow in, pushing their heads down under the boys' arms. The dance is so intimate that girls have to see who their neighbours are; they ought not to have on either side of them a member of their own clan or a relative of some forbidden degree.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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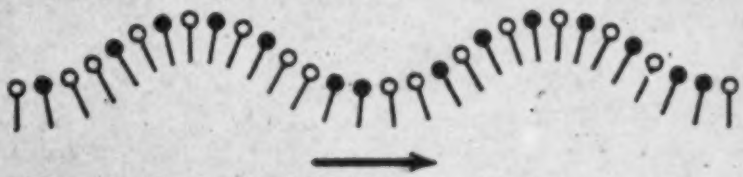
535

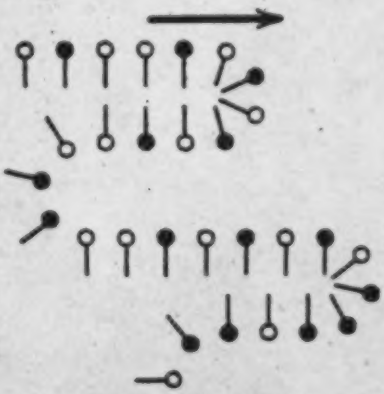
THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The line moves to left or right with a very simple, rapid step sideways. The dancers generally keep perfect step, and all the legs come over together in a delightful way. The line reverses its direction with a loud cry of *Jai hoowra jai mongra* (as if we were to cry 'Victory to the lily and the rose!') or *Hurā hurā hurā, Sālā sālā sālā*, or even a sharp barking noise.

Now the line that began like this—

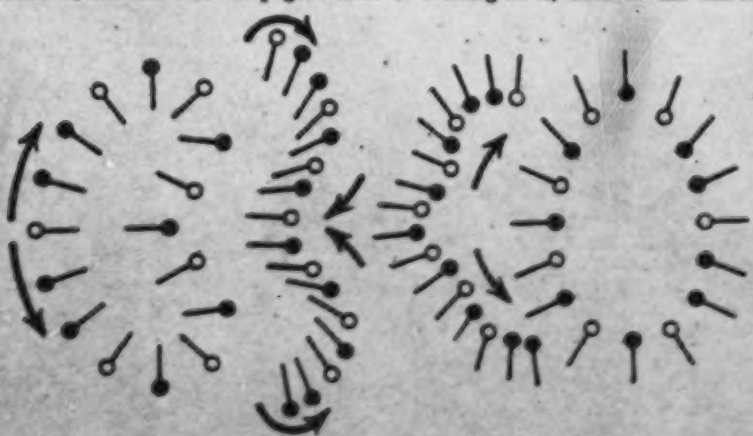


winds round and back on itself, like this—



This, of course, is great fun; when the line winds back the dancers all bump their behinds against each other; the leader suddenly ducks under a gap in the line and makes it thread through itself; he begins to go very fast or tries to pull the line over, and there is a regular tug-of-war; they form into a big circle, head and tail of the line joining hands, first facing inwards, then with a movement like pulling a glove inside out they turn themselves into a circle facing outwards

All the time the quick, fresh, even step never changes—so long as the song remains the same. But at last the dancers change to a *Nāna nāna rā* motif, and then the step gets more of a swing in it, until at the end it



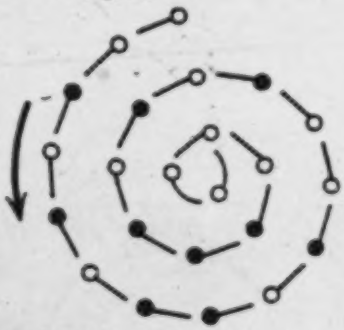
2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

develops into a new movement—three steps to the left with a skip on the third step, then one step back to the right on the right foot with a good swing, half-left with the left foot which then goes back directly to the left. This is a pleasant change. Finally the line spaces itself out; the boys and girls resign their happy intimacy and stretch out hand in hand, whereon they repeat the same steps and movements.

In Pupgaon the head and the tail of the line each held sticks; at one point they met and held each other's sticks; the rest of the line had first to pass over them and then below, after which they worked round again into a complete circle.

Some of the best Hulki dancing I have seen, vigorous, precisely regular, dramatic, exciting, was at Alor. The boys and girls stood in line facing forwards, each with the left hand on the shoulder of the one in front, thus giving a slightly 'half-right' inclination. The steps were five paces forward, right foot up to left and half back; five paces back, left back to right and half forward; five paces forward and so continue; reverse at a shout; five paces back, left foot swung in and out.

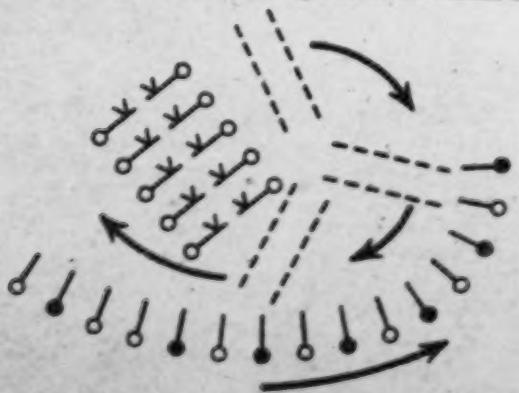
Sometimes the Hulki line rolls itself up like a centipede—



In fact there is no limit to what the Hulki dancers cannot do. It is the liveliest and happiest of all the dances and the boys and girls hate to leave off once they have begun.

In the north of Kondagaon Tahsil (I have seen it at Sidhawand and Amgaon, but only there) the Hulki is danced with drums, small *hulki-mândri* which the boys grasp with the left hand and beat very fast with the right. The drummers form two lines facing each other, while the girls and the rest of the boys form the usual Hulki line (see below).

The Hulki songs bear little relation to the dance. Those sung in the earlier stages have the refrain *Silip rêlê role*



rolo; those sung later have the refrain *Arê tina nâmur nâmo re.*

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Songs

1

Sora dhāru dharti nawu khandu pirthi ho!
O the sixteenfold earth and the ninefold heaven!

Dharti mālik boru lariyo pirthi mālik boru ho?
Who is the master of earth and who is the master of heaven?

Dharti mālik lingo lariyo pirthi mālik rājāl ho.
Lingo is master of earth and Rajal is master of heaven.

Lingona wehle pāta lariyo lingona wehle dākān ho!
O the songs that Lingo taught us, O the steps that Lingo taught us!

Pahili pāta lingo lariyo pahili dākān lingona ho.
The first song is Lingo's, and the first step is Lingo's.

Maria pāta layora lariyo maria dākān layora ho.
The last song is the boys', and the last step is the boys'.

Nadum narka diya lariyo nike poroy poytom ho.
At midnight burns a lamp, we have taken your name.

Hongu dāpu dyma lariyo nike johar lāgi ho.
Don't be angry with us, we salute you with Johar.

2

Aring koring bāder roy.
Clouds are over heaven.

Poron bāder poyndu roy.
The sky is overcast with clouds.

Darka pirru dar dar roy,
The rain comes pouring down,

Jimti piru jim jim roy.
Then drizzles drop by drop.

Dori usa kandu roy,
Towards the sunset flows a flood,

Dakka pehchor kandu roy.
Forcing its way along.

3

Gugti gugti māri māri kokore.
Let us play *dudu* in the dust.

Kum dudu dudu roy he hai?
Are you coming to play *dudu*?

Dud harni wayeni he hai,
I would like to come, but I can't,

Wāyon āyo wāyena he dāda;
Mother is in the house;

Lone dai manta roy he dāda.
She will be angry with me.

Niya dai matek roy he hai.
Don't bother about her.

Sura weri jhāpi roy he hai;
The basket has seven chains;

Jhāpite sondra kitona he hai.
I have put cloth into the basket.

Basko wane kitoni he dāda?
When did you give it?

Konow wadur joli roy he hai;
When you were in your cradle;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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Pus Kolang: the Monkey dance

Pus Kolang: the Kohothar dance at Kolibera

[p. 512 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Nakta mask used for Chhorta dance

Plate CII

Masked chelik representing a frog or leopard, at Phunder

[p. 512 (a)]

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

883
484
796
535
539

Jolit nima mandi roy he bai,
Ashe nana hilona he bai.
Sondra ise hiteh roy he dāda,
Nana ise wāyha roy he dāda,
Jori ise ãyhāt roy he dāda.

You were swinging in your cradle,
Then I put the cloth for you.
If you have given cloth, brother,
Then I will come, brother,
And we will live as yoke-fellows, brother.

4

Bhālur beti rāni hai men lure jāy ho?
Bhālur beti rāni dongri men lure jāy ho.
Bhālur beti rāni kahān pāni jāy ho?
Bhālur beti rāni tariya men pāni jāy ho.
Bhālur beti rāni kahān sutela jāy ho?
Bhālur beti rāni dorgi men sutela jāy ho.

Where is the bear's queenly daughter?
She is playing on the hill.
Where is she drawing water?
She is drawing it from the tank.
Where does she sleep?
The bear's queenly daughter sleeps in the little stream.

5

Miti bolo mitiyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.
Mai ni jāno dāhar bābu mai ni jāno hor ho;
Pāni ghāt me jābe bābu paniyārin la puchbe re ho.
Ye bai paniyārin dāhar bāta debe re ho.
Kor me khele hor larka larka la puch lebe ho.
He bābu leroko thākur ghar kon re ho?
Yewni jewni chor debe jābe manja gali re ho,
Rang pote chuhi pote tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Jawra bawnra kukur bhuke tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Kama me to āti bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Ala me to ghora bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Lawa me to bainsa dube tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Kota me to gaiya bānde tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Dāng me to bandra jule tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Chhāni me to manjur nāche tehi thākur ghar re ho,
Pinjora me to mena bole tehi thākur ghar re ho,

O sweet-spoken coolie girl, show me the way.
I don't know the way, brother;
Go to the water-place and ask the water-girls.
O water-girl, tell me the way.
O boy, ask the boys playing in the road.
Where is the house of the Thakur, O boy?
Turn neither left nor right, and go straight on,
Where the walls have been washed in colour and white,
Where the dogs Jawra Bawra are barking,
Where an elephant is tied to a pole,
Where a horse is tied in the shed,
Where the buffaloes are tethered in the yard,
Where the cows are shut in the shed,
Where a monkey swings on a bamboo pole,
Where a peacock is dancing on the roof,
Where a maina sings in its cage,

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kat me to suwa bole tehi thākur ghar re ho,	Where a parrot talks on a wooden perch, that is the Thakur's house.
He bai thakurain thākur kahān gais re ho?	Where is the Thakur, O Thakurain?
Hāt me tenga daris bhaiya rāja ke sewa gais re ho.	With a stick in his hand he has gone to serve the Raja.
Kaiya tere kaiya bhāji nadi tir ke kaiya re ho.	The *kahuwa* tree is on the river bank.
Amor thākur la to rāja ghar le maya re ho;	Our Thakur has the love of the Raja's house.
Arri thākur parri jo chong bharela dewe re ho.	The Raja gave him tobacco to smoke.
Keni tere keni bhāji bāri tir ke keni re ho.	The *keni-bhāji* grows near the fence.
Amar thākur ke bālak beti son ke beni gāte re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden plait.
Airi tere airi bhai tarai ke airi re ho.	The ducks live in the tank.
Amar thākur ke bālak beti son ke peri pinde re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter wears golden anklets.
Amar thākur ke bālak beti son ke paniya konche re ho.	Our Thakur's little daughter has a golden comb in her hair.

6

Meta porro tingi te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the top of the hill?
Meta porro tingi te bodāl gore lāta ho.	The bison is swinging on the top of the hill.
Gora lariyo boda di nihun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O bison!
Bodāl da tohār te bātāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the bison's tail?
Bodāl da tohār te chachi gore lāta ho.	The *chachi* bird is swinging on its tail.
Kene dor dhamki te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging under the hill?
Kene dor dhamki te yekta gore lāta ho.	Under the hill the pig is swinging.
Gora lariyo yekli di nihun sobhe māta ho!	Your swing looks very fine, O pig!
Turjing arta bharri te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging in the field of thick grass?
Turjing arta bharri te korwal gore lāta ho.	In the grass-field the sambhar is swinging.
Pāwur marra tonda te bārāng gore lāta ho?	What is swinging on the siari tree?
Pāwur marra tonda te munj gore lāta ho.	The monkey is swinging on the siari tree.
Gora lariyo munj di nihun sobhe māta ho.	Your swing looks very fine, O monkey!

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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Fig. 123. Toy used on Chhatis expedition
Length 6' 6"

Fig. 124. Toy used on Pus Kolang and other expeditions
Length 4' 0"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

VII. The Chherta Dance

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As we have seen, many ghotul do not perform the Pus Kolang dances. Some do not even go to dance the Mahua Dandar. In such places, the chelik concentrate on the Chherta festival. In many other villages, however, the Chherta is danced side by side with the older dances.

The Muria say that at the marriage between Kadrengal and Tallur Muttai the supplies of food and liquor for the visitors ran out, and the chelik assisting at the ceremony were sent to beg for food and liquor from neighbouring villages. They did so, and the marriage was happily completed. The more Hinduized Muria villages and the Hindus of Bastar generally have the same tradition, but they say that the marriage was between Mahadeo and Parvati. I doubt whether the Chherta dance is a genuine Muria dance or very long established in their culture; it is common throughout Chhattisgarh and in the Central Provinces, whence it has probably been imported.

Its attractiveness to the Muria is that it is great fun. In enables them to get a little liquor and have a feast. It is not overshadowed by the catastrophic penalties that come upon those who break the taboos of the serious, dangerous Pus Kolang. For this reason the Chherta has spread widely throughout the centre and east of the Muria territory.

On a Chherta expedition boys and girls go together. They dance in the ghotul of the villages they visit and sleep there. Hosts and visitors entertain one another. The visiting party salutes the elders of the ghotul at night and they then exchange girls for massaging. The visitors, however, take fire from their own village and are supposed to cook for themselves.

During the day the visiting party goes round the village dancing and begging. The leader of the dance is a boy whom they call the Nakta.[1] He is dressed up, sometimes in tattered clothes, sometimes in finery, and wears a grotesque gourd mask. The gourd is generally decorated: two rings are put for eyes, a nose is made of wax, a mouth is cut and a number of grains are stuck in it to look like teeth. A beard of the hair of nilgai or bear is attached below. A bunch of peacock feathers is tied to the top. I saw one mask with a small wax bullock placed above the nose. As the dancers go through the village they stand in a line before each house, and beat the ground with long sticks while the Nakta capers about before them with the most grotesque gestures and antics. Two or more boys carry baskets, and while the others dance these go into the house and beg for liquor, rice, pulse or other food. When they have been round the village the girls who have accompanied them take what has been collected and cook their meal.

On return from the expedition the boys and girls take the Nakta to the nearest stream, roll him in the mud, duck him in the water, and give him *mandia roti*, making him eat it with his head under water.

Besides the Nakta, other diversions enliven the Chherta festival. In Remawand I saw an ingenious toy—a stout bamboo pole was decorated with some excellently carved monkeys climbing up towards a bird perched on the top. An arrangement of strings kept both monkeys and bird in motion (Fig. 123). At Kollibera, there was a similar toy which was taken also on Pus Kolang and other expeditions. At the bottom of the bamboo pole the wood was serrated to make a 'musical rasp', and at the top was a little man.

[1] Nakta is an abusive term meaning 'noseless'. It probably refers to the custom of cutting off an erring wife's nose, for it is usually applied to sexually loose persons. It can also be used in an affectionate playful sense. A Nakti Devi is worshipped in parts of Chhattisgarh.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Here the chelik said that the animals represented were lizards and they were climbing the tree to catch a wood-pigeon (Fig. 124). At the top of each toy were cymbals that clanged whenever its strings were pulled.

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FIG. 125. Gonga from Alor
Cf. Plate CV

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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In Alor Shamrao Hivale found some very elaborate gongs. They are illustrated in Plate CV and Fig. 125. Each gong is a single piece of wood hollowed out in the middle with a carved beak at one end and at the other a flat strip with a hole in the centre. Into this slot there fits a 4″ peg projecting from a small support on which stands the wooden figure. Through the peg there is a small hole to take a wooden pin which fixes the figure firmly in position. The figures are male and female. The male is slightly taller, standing 15½″ from the base. The female is ½″ shorter. The two figures are differentiated by the shape of the genital organs and by small breasts in the female and a lozenge-shaped pattern on her body, probably intended to represent the womb. The hair is roughly indicated by carved lines and is different in the two images. The man has the five fingers of each hand carved on either side of his thighs where he is supposed to be holding his hands. This feature is absent in the female image. The male rectum is shown but not the female. The entire length of each gong is 2′ 6½″ from end to end. The slot in the middle is 10½″ long, ½″ broad and 2″ deep.

[243]

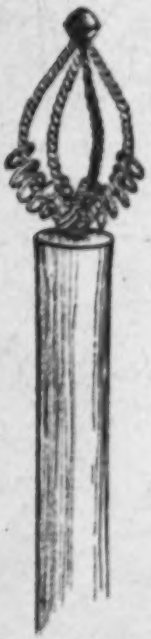

FIG. 126. Dancing-stick from Remawand

Among other things taken out for the Chherta and Pus Kolang expeditions, I have seen masks[1] of various kinds (illustrated in Plates XCIX, CII, CIII) and dancing-sticks. At Gorma I saw a *Chherta-gujir*, very like the dancing-sticks of the Bison-horn Maria, made of an old umbrella rod, with a bunch of iron bells at the top. At Remawand was a stick called *jarar-bargar*; it had an iron crown fitted with rings.[2] Decorated wooden guns are also carried.

The songs used during the Chherta are confused and obscure, a series of disconnected images and symbols, though there is always one song concerned with straightforward begging. I will give examples of both kinds.

Songs

I

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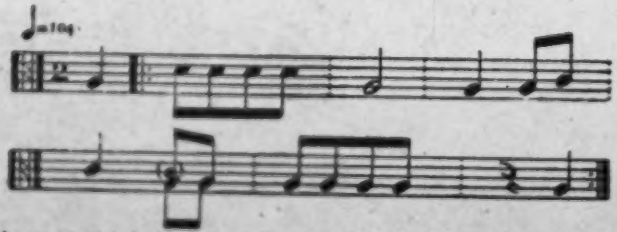

[1] Masks are associated with the *ravi* of the Purari Delta and 'masked dances or ceremonial parades are a common institution in New Guinea'. In the *ravi* masks are worn during the initiation of boys, when there is a taboo upon garden produce and in a mortuary ceremony in which a masked figure represents the spirit of the dead revisiting his home.—R. Firth, *Art and Life in New Guinea* (London, 1936), p. 26.

[2] This type of musical stick is similar to that carried by postal runners in the neighbouring Jeypore Zamindari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL EXPEDITIONS

Ban bhainsa āna tāna khāye lasun pāna pāna jām kuy.
Chari buli āo bhainsa rupa bera thāna thāna jām kuy.
Khat kurha cho hānia kuda; 'kalār gharo bhātti bhātti;

Bhātti cho mundi he āg lage; pinda he chābli chāti chāti.
Bhukute bhuku hai kuwāri dengur cho bhuku ho ho.
Pila rāja bairamgarh jora chawar duku ho ho.
Kar karāti karāti pipar pān cho deti deti.
Chirak charak mand beche jāti kalāring bati ho ho;
Tan tan rupaiya gine kalāring bai ho ho jām kuy.

The jungle buffaloes go here and there eating garlic leaves.
Come buffaloes and graze in the silver field.
There are thorns in the pile of rubbish; there is an outstill in the Kalar's house;
The top of the still caught fire, the ant bit the buttocks.
There are maggots in the new ant-hill.
The baby Raja of Bairamgarh is fanned with a pair of fans.
The pipal leaf has nipples.

The Kalarin's daughter is selling liquor drop by drop;
She is counting her rupees *tan tan*.

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2

Jhirliti jhirliti pandki māra liti.

Dokara dokari jhagra hola chāpun dila luthi.
Ao dokari chhandaiyla tola dehun roti.
Roti pitha hai karhun? Bare bāp he beti.
Gāda upar garli chonda upar khila.

Gāra cheghi hākdela sidhāwandiya pila.
Amli boti tingāli pur duwāre mācha.

Mācha cheghi hākdela duyi māma bhācha.
Naya nāngār bāri bāri juna nāngār bāri.
Ye gaon cho lehimanke kolepa nilo ari,
Kolepa cho bata beti amhe balla dādi.

Chher chherta hi mer mera, bāman dorgoda.
Donga dāda yete rala pauli adgada.

Nāni lāwa guri guri bade lāwa guri.

Jhatko bida des kāka tucho mai cho pudi.

Jhirliti jhirliti, the pigeon killed the sparrow.
The dotard quarrelled with his dame and burnt her with a fire-brand.
Come, old woman, and I will give you bread.
What am I to do with your bread? I am the daughter of a rich man.
On top of a big cart is a little cart, and the poles are joined with a nail.
To ride on this cart a chelik from Sidhawand is invited.
The tamarind fruit is very sour; the platform is in the yard.
The uncle and his nephew are called to sit on the platform.
On the new plough is tied a strap, on the old plough is a strap.
The children of this village were carried away by a fox,
And its children will call us grandfather.
Chher chherta hi mer mera, bāman dorgoda.
A tall man was coming along, and his foot was caught.
The little quail is sweet, so is the big quail.
Quickly give us alms, uncle, or your mother's vagina.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Pāni suna pāni suna lendi barli duna.	A water dog with a cup full of excreta.
Ayele pār cho hokoda paile paile jayse.	Cranes from here go to the other side.
Paile pār cho rāut leka mārun mārun khāyse.	The Rawat boy there kills and eats them.
Sipi sipi dongri kosa cho dori.	The hill of shells, the cord of silk cocoons.
Tucho beta ke dakhle māma sānjh bera.	I saw your son, at evening time.
Adan lasa dhaura lasa pondhke dharli kasa.	The gum of saja, gum of dhaura, like holding someone's buttocks.
Aware bai chikan khosa, bhelwān tel ke ghasa.	O come, girl with hair well-done, I'll cover you with *bhelwa* oil.
Kāri āma lure lure, pandri āma lure.	O the black mangoes, O the white mangoes, are hanging down in heavy clusters.
Mahādeo ke parsād me pandri baile mile.	By the grace of Mahadeo we will get a light-coloured girl.

3

Come out, girls, to see what boys have come.
They have come from the Upper World.
Give us our present quickly, for it is growing very late.
Tie up a pair of bullocks:
Kill a fat hen: bring rice out of the granary.

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Chelik dancing at the Kokoko festival

Plate CXLII

Chelik collecting offerings at the Kokoko festival

[p.626 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

I. The Ghotul Festivals

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THROUGHOUT this book we have seen the important part that the chelik play in the religious life of the tribe. Their success in hunting is the best of omens for the coming harvest; their drumming and dancing adds excitement and delight to the dreariest routine. They serve very much the function of a choir, a choir, moreover, which contains a rather high proportion of theological students. For many of these boys are already training to be clan-priests, Kaser-Gaita or Siraha mediums. At the time of sacrifice the Gaita may take his son and make him perform the actual rite, anxiously watching to see that there is no mistake. At Masora, Lakmu and his son Phirtu carried the Anga on their shoulders together and were moved to and fro by a divine inspiration that came equally to both. I have often seen young chelik dancing in trance, beating themselves with iron scourges, and tossing their dark beautiful hair into wild disorder.

But in addition to being choir-boys and acolytes for their elders, the chelik have festivals of their own which are closely connected with the ghotul. At Diwali, before the motiari go out on their dancing expeditions,[1] the boys and girls collect parched rice and have a feast in the ghotul, at which they admit new members and give them their titles.

At Jhakri, they described how at Diwali the motiari bring parched rice and gur for Tallur Muttai who, in this ghotul, lives in one of the pillars. They offer it first to her, and then all feast together. At Gorma, there was a stone by the village boundary where the children went for this feast. Decorations, sometimes elaborately made with ears of rice and flowers, are strung over the ghotul door.

At Dassera, which is not observed in the villages, the chelik dress one of their number as a Raja, put him on a throne, sometimes even on a wooden chariot; the 'ghotul ryots' bring him presents and he gives gifts to the Diwan, Tahsildar and other State servants. Every boy and girl brings two cucumbers which, in ghotul currency, represent two goats. They stick wooden legs into them and sacrifice them to Dantesbwari. They invite a few of the village elders and have a feast in the ghotul.

In some villages—I have noted the custom in the Chalka Pargana—the chelik and motiari have their own version of the Irpa Pandum. At the end of the mahua season they spend three days collecting the flowers—this must be done at the end of the season, for it is believed that after these three days the flowers stop falling—and make liquor for themselves, boiling the flowers in water with slices of mango. If there is a Kalar out-still contractor in the

[1] Such ceremonial parades are not unknown elsewhere. The Chherta and similar dances are common throughout Middle India. 'It is a well-known practice', so C. R. Krishnamacharlu informs me, 'in the Tamil, Telugu and Kanara areas of Southern India for village schoolmasters and their students to go to the several households of the villages singing laudatory songs and receiving presents during the Dassera holidays.' The boys carry decorated bows and shoot sandal powder at their hosts. Krishnamacharlu compares this to the Chelidonia festival of ancient Rhodes, when boys went singing and begging from door to door. See also *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II, p. 53 and Vol. III, p. 65.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

village, they give him a fowl and some rice in compensation. They offer some of this liquor to the village gods, the boys and girls dance from house to house, and they eat and drink in honour of the mahua tree.

In Palli-Barkot, and other villages of that neighbourhood, when the villagers first cut the rice crop, each householder thrashes a handful of grain in his hands and takes it to the ghotul. There the Gaita ties it up in a bundle with paddy string—to imitate the usual household grain-bin—and hangs it up in the roof. In the month of Magh, a little of this grain is taken out, husked on a stone, and offered to Thakur Deo for the protection of the village. There is a feast that night in the ghotul, and the whole village comes for it, only the married women sitting outside. Here they say that it is not the presence of Lingo that keeps the married women out of the ghotul, but the blessed rice-seed which might otherwise be ruined. Later, at the first fall of the rains, the Gaita distributes a little of the seed to every householder.

II. Ceremonial Axe-cultivation

Everywhere the chelik are specially associated with the cutting of timber for *parka* or *dippa* cultivation. For *parka*, it will be remembered, wood is cut at a distance and brought and strewed over a field and then fired for manure. In *dippa* the trees and undergrowth are cut on the spot and fired there, and the seed is sown in the ashes. In Bandopal, in April 1941, and in Nayanar two days later I saw a ceremony that combined the cleaning of the village with the consecration of the first *parka* plot. At dawn the chelik assembled in the ghotul. The four leading boys carried large baskets and were unadorned; the rest were fantastically attired with turbans of old rope, fronds of broom-grass stuck in the hair, smeared with ash, and already hung about with old baskets, winnowing-fans and scraps of matting. When they were ready, the party set out waving long sticks in the air. They visited every house in the village, including those of non-Muria. Outside each house, the boys formed into a long line and began to push their sticks along the ground, digging it up a little and clearing the ash and leaves in one direction. When possible they dug up the neatly-plastered courtyards to the great annoyance of the housewives. As they danced they sang,

Reka pindi kokko kokko.
Marka pindi kokko kokko.
Irpu pindi kokko kokko.

And so on with every sort of variation. The meaning of this was 'Break up and grind the char, mango, mahua' and then in the various changes—*Mao pindi* (grind the bison), *Dudo* (grind the breasts) or *Puda pindi* (grind the vagina). *Kokko* is said to represent the pounding and breaking of myrabolams against a stone; the elder dancers tapped their sticks on the ground 'as if they were breaking harra'.

While this demonstration was in progress before the house, the elder boys went inside with their baskets and were given mandia flour, mahua flowers, perhaps a copper coin. In some houses the people were far from friendly and threw dirty water and abuse at the boys. In every house where a motiari was living there was tremendous fun. The girls, some of whom ran round from house to house ahead of the boys, hid behind the door and when the boys approached jumped out with dirty water and threw it over them. In one house the two leaders were shut up inside with the Belosa and Dulosa,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

'as if they were bride and bridegroom' the others said. In another the boys shut the girls in, piling brushwood against the door. In two places the boys were able to steal chickens. One was a Muria chicken, and the owner let it go with a laugh; but the other was taken by way of revenge on a surly Hindu who abused the boys and gave them a stingy contribution of flour. They got the hen and hid it in a basket. The owner followed them round protesting, but he never found it.

From every house the boys took some old basket, broom, bit of matting, broken winnowing-fan, so that by the time they had done their round they looked an extraordinary collection of scarecrows. This, of course, was part of the clearing of the village of disease.

By now the boys had several baskets full of flour and mahua flowers. They took the mahua to the out-still where it was exchanged for liquor, and carried the flour and the two chickens out into the fields. Here they threw down in a corner of the Gaita's field all the rubbish they had collected and their dancing-sticks, and some of them gathered brushwood and a little timber and strewed it over a patch some five yards square.

Other boys brought water and large pipal leaves, and two of them mixed the flour and water and made thin cakes spreading the mixture on one pipal leaf and covering it with another. Then the Sirdar fired the first *parka* of the year with a bit of straw-rope brought from the ghotul fire.

After the wood and rubbish had blazed up, the boys threw three of the mandia-flour cakes into the ashes as an offering to the Kis Kanyang (Fire Maiden) and placed the others in the embers to cook. The Gaita offered the two chickens to the Earth. All looked eagerly to see how the bodies fell; if they fall on one side it is a good omen, if downward, bad. Today one omen was bad. The Gaita sat by the fire with chelik on either side, and offered liquor to the spirits of the dead Gaita of the village, praying, 'Give us good wind and no rain when we fire the *parka*; give us sound sleep in the ghotul with our motiari, and let them not conceive'.

Then they all drank. The leaves were pulled out of the fire, the bread was distributed and little bits of roast chicken. I got one of the chickens' heads and a bit of bread. Now this was done, the villagers could cut and fire their *parka*. After the rains began, the Gaita would sow in this spot and after him the other villagers.

In Khutgaon and the villages of that area, this festival does not seem to be kept, but on the eve of the day that they decide to cut the wood for the *parka* or *dippa*, the Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure that all are chaste. After the usual offerings in the village temples, he takes the people to the forest. As the chelik cut the wood they cry *Kiddari pude!* upon which the Gaita says to the other villagers who sit watching, 'Give them something to eat'. They have brought pots with burnt rice at the bottom, water and gourds. They chase the chelik, catch them, smear their faces with black soot from the pots and give them each a little burnt rice to eat. If there is any left it is taken to the ghotul and the motiari are similarly treated in the evening.

The *bohorani* ceremonies for the protection of the village must not ignore the ghotul, though theoretically such rites should not be necessary. At Chingnar, every three years the Gaita goes round the ghotul seven times, drives slag 'nails' into the threshold and buries a ring before it to keep off witchcraft. At Surma, they tie seven mokha leaves over the door with the same purpose.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Plate CXLVIII

Stilt-fighting

[p.650 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

III. The Stilt Festival

883 X
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The use of stilts during the rains is a semi-religious practice common throughout Middle India and no doubt elsewhere.[1] It has been suggested that it has some magical significance aimed at encouraging the crops to grow.

'The Geeree', says Colonel Ward, describing the custom in Mandla, 'can hardly be called a festival: it is remarkable more for its absurdity than anything else, and is left to the children to celebrate. This they do by walking about the place on stilts for some days, praising the institution of the Geeree, or stilts, as placing them above the necessity of walking in the mud; and finally, proceeding in procession to the Nerbudda, they throw the stilts in and return to their homes.'[2]

The chelik have similar, but more fully developed, customs. The stilts are made of two poles of either ghotiya or sarai about 6' high, to which foot-rests are attached 2' from the ground. These are made of hollowed bits of char wood which are filled with pebbles and fixed together round the poles either by nails or small wooden pegs. The stilts are made early in the rains at the Amavas Pandum which corresponds to the Hareli festival of the Hindus. During the rains, the chelik constantly walk about on their stilts making a great deal of noise as the pebbles inside the hollowed foot-rests rattle about. The only game they play on the stilts is stilt-fighting when they attack each other and try to bump each other off.[3] They become expert in lifting one of the stilts off the ground and hitting another boy with it. They are also able to do very clever solo dances, hopping on one leg with the other raised from the ground.

[524]

Stilt-walking is permitted for a couple of months during the rains from the time of the Amavas Pandum until after the first New Eating ceremony in the middle of August or a little later. This is called the Korta Tindana in Gondi and on the second day of the festival, which is known as the Hara Tindana or the day on which the people eat the leavings of the food that remained after the big day of the festival, a special ceremony takes place in connexion with the stilts. After this day it is taboo to use stilts at all. Grigson adds that among the Hill Maria there is a rule that stilt-walking is not only taboo during the rest of the year but also every fourth year.[4]

On the second day of the Korta Tindana the chelik assemble and go round the village on their stilts holding bursundi plants in their hands. They dance in front of each house in turn begging for rice, eggs, liquor and money and sing,

Lāya dāya loo loon thi,
Rai hada hada tha
Nīwa daha dharthe,
Gaudri bursundi pāra pāra.

This may be freely translated, 'O stinking mosquitoes, run away to the fields of rai before our feet touch the threshold, for with branches we are hunting

[539]

[1] As, for example, by the Angami and Ao Nagas, the Kuki and Kachari, and the Marquesans. See Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 155 and J. G. Frazer, *Belief in Immortality* (London, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 339f. Russell gives photographs of Hindu boys on stilts (op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 42 and 46) and describes the custom briefly at Vol. IV, p. 111.

[2] R. C. R. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mandlah District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 62. Compare E. M. Gordon, 'Notes concerning the People of Mungeli Tahsil, Bilaspore District' in *JAS Beng.*, New Series, Vol. I (1905), p. 293.

[3] The Angami Nagas, like the Marquesan Islanders, play a game on stilts in which the combatants try to balance on one stilt and trip up their opponents with the other. See J. H. Hutton, 'Assam and the Pacific', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 6.

[4] Grigson, op. cit., p. 150.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

you'. As they dance, the boys beat the ground with their bursundi branches, as a result of which it is believed that stinging wasps and flies will not bother the village for the rest of the year.[1]

Then the chelik go on their stilts outside the village to where a stone stands on an ant-hill in honour either of Bhimul Pen, Dito Pen or Gorondi Muttai. They go in procession round the stone seven times and the Sirdar winds a string round and round it. He sends one of the boys some distance away and he himself presses his hand down on the ground to crack his fingers and says, 'Now we will see if you have really been helping us'. He picks up one of the eggs that they have begged from the village and throws it to where the other boy is standing. If the god is favourable, the egg does not break and the other boy picks it up and throws it back. They do this three times.[2] If the egg breaks the leader picks up the mess and rubs a little of it on the penis of every member of the party in turn saying, 'May we be free of itch and ringworm'.

Then they break their stilts and arrange them over the stone. Sometimes the stilts are tied in a sort of square and the foot-rests and pegs hung from it. Four stilts are placed upright at each corner and a cord is tied round them. They offer eggs and chickens at the foot of this shrine and tie the egg-shells in a string to the top of the stilts. They kill the chickens by hitting their heads on the ground, not by cutting their throats as usual. Then they cook the chickens and any other food that they have been given and eat the feast and drink as much liquor as they have been able to collect. There is a rule that on this day they must not cook on a stone hearth out of respect for the stone representing the deity, but should cut green pegs of saja wood, drive them into the ground and put their pots on these.

There are various stories to account for the origin of this ceremony. In the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria say that on the festival of Amavas Lingo's brother, Bhimul, went out of his house to give salt to his cattle. His little son wept, crying, 'I want to go too', and as it was very muddy his mother Gorondi made him a pair of stilts and sent him with his father. When the village boys saw Bhimul's son walking on the stilts, they asked their fathers to make them also, but they said, 'No, we don't know how to do it'. So the boys went to Gorondi and persuaded her to make stilts for them. One day a boy fell down; Gorondi ran to him and rubbed the wound with her hands and it healed at once. The boys used to bring their wounds to be cured and their broken stilts for her to mend. At first she refused but afterwards she said, if they brought her eggs and chickens as payment, she would do anything they wanted. So ever since the boys give her presents once a year and she saves them from falling and the stilts from breaking.

Another version of the story attributes the origin of the practice to the notorious jealousy between Bhimul and his wife. There is always supposed to be bitter rivalry between them. In Bhandarsinsi, the Muria once dedicated a bull to Bhimul promising that they would sacrifice it to him if he gave them good rain. This made Gorondi very angry and her Sirsha called the villagers and said to them, 'Why have you been so stupid as to give a bull to my husband? Bhimul has gone below to dig roots and he won't be back for six months, so

[1] Russell records a Teli custom at the Pola festival, when women bring branches of a thorny creeper which they call Marbod and sweep their houses saying, 'O Marbod, sweep away all diseases, pains, coughs, bugs, flies and mosquitoes'.—Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 530. Cf. Hivale, op. cit., p. 123.

[2] Divination by egg-throwing, though in a different way, is common among the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 16 and 226f. For an interesting account of the folk-lore of eggs, see L. F. Newman, 'Some Notes on the Folklore of Poultry', *Folk-lore*, Vol. LIII (1942), pp. 104ff.

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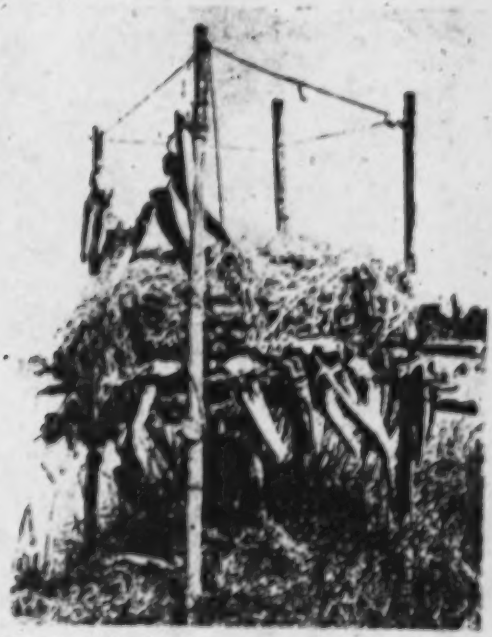
Stilts piled up outside
Phunder village

Plate CXLIX



2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CL

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Ceremonial axe-cultivation: preparing the Gaita's field

Cooking in the Gaita's field

[p. 652 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria.

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how can he do anything for you? Give me the bull and I'll do whatever you want'. So they sacrificed the bull to her and even before they had finished cooking it, before they had time to eat it, down came a torrent of rain. 'This is a grand old woman', said the villagers, 'we must not forget her.' When the villagers again began to honour Bhimul at the Amavas festival Gorondi got very angry but the villagers said, 'Don't trouble us; go and knock over any boys you may find walking about on stilts and break their bones and hurt them'. So Gorondi went out and bothered the boys by knocking them over and injuring them wherever she could until they went to consult the Siraha. He told them that if they promised to honour Gorondi as well as Bhimul on the second day of the Korta Tindana Pandum she would give them no more trouble. Since then the boys of every village have honoured Gorondi in their festival and it is said that they never fall from their stilts or hurt themselves.

That this story is not universally known is shown by the fact that in some villages the broken stilts are piled up over the stone of Bhimul rather than of Gorondi and sometimes on a stone called Dito Pen which means literally the 'Stilt God'. But in most places stilt-walking is connected with Bhimul and his wife.

IV

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A discussion of the ghotul and religion was obviously necessary. Here as in every other aspect of Muria life the dormitory plays a dominant part. These boys and girls are consecrated to service; the consecration may seem to Western eyes primitive and crude, but it is real enough; it is very real to them. They live in a temple dedicated to the service of gods and men: the chelik and motiari fulfil that dedication admirably, at marriage and funeral, at festival and in the fields.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32

796

Ancient stone of Mariah Sarifar at Goomar, Rhodesia
(From J. Campbell, 'A Personal Narrative of Thirteen Years Service', 1864)

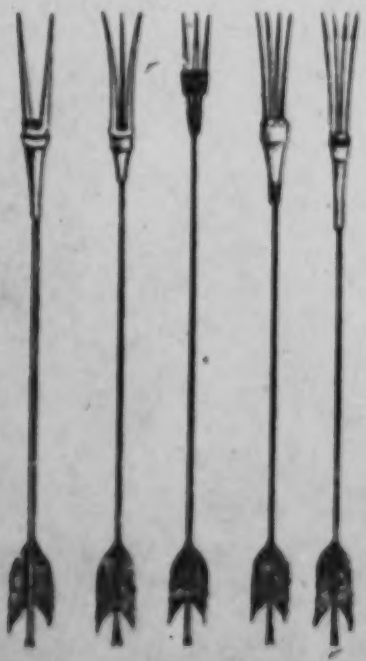
[facing p. 2]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

224 The older people are keen hunters and trappers, though much of the game has disappeared. Simple thorn-traps are placed round the mahua trees to catch bats, and more substantial snares are set for birds, hares and larger animals. Before the great Seed Festival at the end of the hot weather, there 196 is a ceremonial hunt at which bows and arrows are worshipped 78 and all the able-bodied men go out to get what game they can, their success or otherwise being regarded as an omen for the coming harvest.

226 262 The Maria fish with nets and traps, by baling out water from pools or by poisoning the streams. Small fish, prawns, crabs and frogs are very popular roasted with spices and taken with the refreshing juice of the toddy or sago palms.

411 The tools and weapons of the Maria naturally figure frequently in their acts of violence. The most common implement of murder is the ordinary *godel* axe which corresponds to the *tangie* in universal use throughout central India. The Maria also use, chiefly for ceremonial purposes, a *pharsi* battle-axe with a crescent blade.



Engram arrows
(Length about 3')

The *banda* or *gagra* is the Maria dao. The *banda* is a large knife with a broad end and rather a short handle used to cut bamboos and young trees. The *gagra* has a much longer handle and sometimes a point and a curved blade. It is not only very useful in the forest; it is a powerful weapon of assault. No spears feature in any of the murders described

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. 771
Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should 776
be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan- 614
priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of 615
phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other 614
tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken [177]
down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series 796
of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

776 in praise of the mahua tree, before which the new mahua flowers must not be eaten or used for liquor. Then comes a similar ceremony in honour of the mango. This generally falls in March. It may be preceded by a ceremonial fishing expedition. In April, preceded by a ritual hunt, comes the great Seed Festival, the Wijja Pandum, at which the seed then to be sown is consecrated.

At the beginning of the rains many of the Maria now observe the Halba festival of Hareli or Amavas. As the crops ripen, there begins a series of Harvest Festivals or (as a literal translation of their Gondi name would have it) 'New Eating' Festivals. The first of these is for the small millets that ripen early. The next is for the new gourds and cucumbers. It is followed, at about the beginning of November, by the Nuka Nordana Pandum, a festival which falls at about the time of Diwali and is concerned with the new rice. Before this ceremony, the rice of the new harvest must not be husked or washed.

Towards the end of the year comes the Jata Pandum for new beans and pulses, and the Kare Pandum before which no one is allowed to cut grass or bamboo, or begin making clearings for cultivation in the forest.

In addition to this round of celebrations there are the festivals of the clan-gods, the Pen Karsita or Divine Games, which may be held at any time, and the commercial Mandai which are often combined with the clan festivals but are mainly great bazaars.

Dassara is the chief official festival of the State. It lasts fifteen days and is attended by elaborate ceremonies in which each of the aboriginal tribes has its special part to play. All the Maria headmen attend the celebrations in their official capacity, and there is a special Darbar at which they have the opportunity to place their grievances before the administration.

IV

585 The great dance that has given the Bison-horn Maria their
535 name is really a marriage dance. At its best it is a superb spectacle. The men, in their splendid head-dresses of bison horns and carrying their long drums, move in a large circle

1: Koppers--215 E-5 (1938-1939) 1948 AW25 Bhil AW25
Gond AW32

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171

The Kali Durga Novena (Jawara) among the Gonds

Among the Gonds who live in the Maikal Mountains (about 100 miles east of Jubbelpur), the Zwārā ceremony enjoys special popularity. This is less the case among the Baiga, as Elwin declares. (434) This

434. (Footnote 215), p. 64.

is significant because the Baigas, contrary to the Gonds, represent the more primitive and older population on the spot. Instead of Zwārā, the Hindi word Jawārā (barley) is used among the Gonds.

A sorcerer (called panda in this region) named Phulsa and living in the village Batondha, promulgated a Jawārā festival there in May of the year 1939. With regard to all essentials, the novena of the Gonds is comparable to that of the Bhils. Nevertheless the ceremony has its own coloring among the Gonds.

The magician (panda) of the Gonds, at least nowadays, only sows wheat although the ceremony bears the name Jawārā (barley). Thus he does not also sow wheat and barley as the Bhil magician does. Our panda Phulsa had gotten the wheat in earthen jugs (kaltsa) and in bamboo stands (chatura), which previously had been filled with dirt naturally. In this case one pot and one bamboo stand came from Phulsa himself; about 10 more had been contributed by other families. When the Panda is consulted in cases of illness, he frequently gives the direction that participation is necessary at the time of the next Jawārā festival. For this, the panda receives a goat or a chicken as a sacrificial offering. Panda Phulsa, to be sure, asserted that his Mata, who is naturally identical with Kālī Durgā, desires no bloody sacrifice from [182] him, but requires instead only the offering of coconuts. But that is by no means the case with all Gond pandas. With Phulsa there is only a greater degree of Hinduization recognizable, for he himself also explained that he had directly implored the mother goddess to demand no bloody sacrifices from him, but to be satisfied with coconuts.

The bamboo stands mentioned show two or even three "stories" (Plate XIV/2) to a certain extent. This is attained by splitting in various places, the strong bark of a bamboo pole which is as thick as an arm. These sections are then made into the shape of a funnel,

1:Koppers--216 E-5 (1938-1939) 1948 AW25 Bhil AW25
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in which other, and specifically thinner, bamboo splices are used. The basket-weaver does this job for a negligible compensation. Panda Phulsa had pots and bamboo stands standing in a little building supplementary to his house which was his cult place in general, as was demonstrated by the trident and other things.

The bamboo stands show a striking similarity to that remarkable structure over which the "unicorn" steer often extends his head in the well-known representations of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa. Already much effort has been expended in order to interpret this representation. Up to this point no one has been able to offer a satisfactory explanation. (435) The bamboo stands used at the Jawārā festival of the

435. Last treated by H. Mode, Indische Frühkulturen und ihre Beziehungen zum Westen (Basel, 1944), p. 54 f.

Gonds caused me immediately and on the spot to think of the puzzling implements of the Indus culture. Meanwhile, I believe that in a special study, "Zentralindische Fruchtbarkeitsrieten und ihre Beziehung zur Indus-Kulture," (436) I have determined more closely the relations

436. Appeared in Geographica Helvetica, Vol. I (Zürich, 1946), p. 165-177.

between the complexes named, and in any case have made their reality rather probable. The possibility is not excluded that the funnel-shaped sacrificial baskets, which are made of bamboo, and which are widespread from Assam to Eastern Indonesia, belong to the same group. (437)

437. Heine-Geldern in G. Buschan, Illustrierte Völkerkunde Vol. II (Stuttgart, 1923), p. 860. "The funnel-shaped sacrificial baskets are widespread from Assam to Eastern Indonesia which they make by cutting lengthwise incisions into one end of a bamboo pole, bending these slits outward, and weaving bamboo strips or rotang through them horizontally. Planted in the ground at the other end, they serve as a sort of altar. Among the Was in Burma, the Kalingas

1: Koppers--117 E-5 (1938-1939) 1948 AW25 Bhil AW25 Gond AW52
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and Tinggian in North Luzon and the Bataks in Sumatra, it also serves as a temporary or permanent receptacle for the skulls acquired headhunting."

/183/ Let us return to our Panda Phulsa himself. During the nine Jawārā days he wears an iron ring around his neck. He does this because the Kālī Mātā of Calcutta is also decked out with such a ring. At the same time Phulsa has a pierced fruit hanging on a neck cord. The sādhu (438), he claims, placed it there. On the eighth day of

438. Sādhu = pious man ("saint").

the novena, the sacrifice of breads is carried out. The main celebration takes place on the ninth day. I had the opportunity to attend just this one on the spot.

The final celebration began around four o'clock in the afternoon. In front of the door of Panda Phulsa's house a so-called chauk (a magic square) was drawn on the ground with meal. In the vicinity stand three, four or up to five poles one meter tall. They represent the mother goddesses (Kālī Mātā and so forth). As a matter of fact, seven poles should be standing here, for seven mata's. But since Panda Phulsa has been living here only for a short time, this is explained by the fact that his arrangements are still incomplete, as was stated. At the feet of those mata's and, at the same time facing the chauk, lies the son of the Panda on his knees and ("possessed" by a mata) rotating his head back and forth. He is obviously supposed to succeed his father in office some day. Let it be mentioned here also that, according to the statement of the Gonds, the sorcerer is always "possessed" by only one deity, hence never by several deities. The baskets and bamboo stands are fetched out of the sanctuary and placed on the chauk.

In the procession which then takes place, the Panda's sister plays a chief role. If necessary she can also be represented by some other female. The Panda's sister carries the pot of wheat which he himself has prepared. (439) Previously the sister has already rubbed her

439. The Panda's sister naturally reminds one of the girls among the Bhils who carries the water jug on which the wheat of the "little evil

1; Koppers--218 E-5 (1938-1939) 1948 AW25 Bhil AW25
Gond AW32

spirits" stands or stood.

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171

brother thoroughly with milk and turmeric dye (440); this mitigates,

440. The reddish-yellow color plays a significant role in the life of the Bhils, as well as other primitive tribes of India. We encounter its use especially in the wedding (footnote 230), p. 25 ff. and at the Tdoe (further below, p. 256 f.).

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as they say, the otherwise easily aroused deities.

A younger man carries the pole fashioned after a standard, which represents the Marhai (441)-Mātā. In order to cause the /184/ bearer

441. The Marhai-Mātā is one of the seven mātā's of the panda. It seems that precisely her pole is gladly decorated with peacock tail feathers. As far as she is concerned, the Marhai-Mātā is considered a good goddess.

of this pole to be "possessed" by the Marhai-Mātā, the Panda has previously thrown rice kernels at the pole. The bearer of the Marhai-Mātā pole then rather rapidly shows that he is restless and runs jerkily here and there with it, as though a secret power were driving him. The end of the pole threatens several times to come into contact with the ground—it looks as if an invisible power were driving it. At such moments it is the wife of the Panda especially who raises a great hue and cry. Such contact actually may not take place. Otherwise all sorts of misfortune would have to come especially to the Panda's house.

The procession now proceeds to the nearest watering place, about 1,000 meters away. Apart from the pot which the Panda's sister carries, the other jugs and bamboo stands are distributed to a number of persons. The young people especially are there with hands ready to help. All at once the Panda swings up onto the shoulders of a strong and still younger man. He rides him as a horse (Plate XIV/3). As he told later, the Mātā suddenly suggested that to him. To the question what would have happened if her choice had fallen upon a weaker person, he answered quickly and certainly that nothing would

have happened; for in such a case the Mātā would surely have come to his aid with the necessary strength. This bearer, incidentally, is afterwards paid for his effort with a coconut. Fortunately for him, the Panda Phulsa is a slight and light person.

On the way, the procession has to pass the house of the somewhat more respected Gond, Churaman by name. At the suggestion of the Mātā, as he says again, Phulsa causes the procession to halt here. Actually everything had certainly been agreed upon previously with the pious Churaman. Churaman wears the Brahman band, and thus shows he is relatively greatly Hinduized. In his house everything is well prepared. Churaman has two wives: the first is barren, and the second presented him with a son who is sickly. On a brass dish, the first wife brings the following gifts to the Panda who is sitting in the foreyard of the house: a coconut, two pineapples, milk and greens, on which holdi (turmeric) is sprinkled. The Panda accepts these gifts, but they are intended for the mātā. Over the head of the childless woman the Panda swings his scourge made of cowtail hair and says: "I will give you children." In this way the evil spirits (bhūts) are supposed to be driven out, and thus the barrier in the way of children made to disappear. Above the sickly boy of the second wife Phulsa makes similar motions and says: "I will make you healthy!"

/-185/ The stop at Churaman's house lasted about one-quarter of an hour. Immediately afterwards the procession is continued. About 200 meters before the watering place there is again a pause for three to five minutes, and a smoke sacrifice is quickly offered.

Having arrived at the watering place, all participants stick a few of the delicate wheat plants behind their ears. Everything else—hence the plants along with the dirt sticking to them—is sunk in the water, but to be sure the earthen jugs are carefully spared; they are taken home in order to make them serviceable again for practical life. But since no profane usuage is known for the bamboo stands, they are simply left lying on the spot after they have been emptied. No difficulties were encountered when I picked them up and took them along for my collections. A general greeting (embrace) forms the conclusion of the Jawārā celebration.

In summary, the following is given as the purpose of the exercise: the Mātā is supposed to protect everyone and everything and to allow them to grow and thrive in health and prosperity.

1: Koppers--220 E-5 (1938-1939) 1948 AW25 Bhil AW25
Gond AW32

Jawārā Song

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539
T96
171

1. Behind the bar (tree) stands the pipal tree.
   By the door stands the fruit-bearing nim tree.
   Ho Mata, you are good.
2. Under the nim tree hangs a swing.
   Who is to be swung?
   Ho Mata, you are good.
3. The Dewi (mata) sits on the swing,
   And the servant swings.
   Hanuman (the monkey) speaks: Swing to (i.e., he murmurs hm, hm).
   Ho Mata, you are good.
4. Swinging, swinging, she (Dewi) became unconscious,
   And the neckband tore apart.
   Ho Mata, you are good.
5. Who will pick up the beads (which have fallen on the ground)?
   Who will put the string of beads back together?
   Ho Mata, you are good.
6. The goddess has picked them up.
   And the servant helped her.
   The gardener put it (the string of beads) back together.
   Ho Mata, you are good.

/186/ 7. Well, well, Mata, I have sung this song.
O goddess Hinglaj (442), bless (us)!

442. "Hinglaj, said to be derived from Sanskrit hingula, a preparation of mercury with sulphur, vermilion: possibly, on account of the smearing of a sacred stone with red pigment, . . ." W. Crooke, ERE, Vol. VI, p. 715. Under the name Hinglaj the great mother goddess is venerated in Baluchistan, west of the Hingol River, near its mouth. The Hinglaj Māta is widely known in India.

Ho Mata, you are good.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

584 agrees, they accept the liquor brought and drink it together. If the parents are unwilling, but the girl desires the match, it is said that they usually have to give in to her.

Here too they offer liquor on leaves to the Departed inside the house and watch the leaves to see whether the omens are favourable or not.

At the next visit, the boy's parents bring four baskets of rice and more liquor. The boy's mother washes the girl's feet with liquor and offers a ring. In some villages they drop liquor in the rice-husking cavity; in others they make an offering of cowries or their equivalent to the Pot of the Departed. As they do so, the boy's father says, 'O Departed, accept this offering. We take this girl into our clan and give you cowries in her stead'. At Esalnar the people said that in the old days the Duga sept used to give five cowries, and now give fifteen pice, and the Sori sept used to give three cowries and now nine pice.[1] These are put into the Pot of the Departed. From this day the girl is regarded as belonging to the clan of her betrothed, and must obey its rules and taboos. In some places it is considered proper that a girl should go, even before marriage, for New Eating ceremonies to her future husband's house.

At Chimri I was told that as the boy's parents go home, the motiari stop them and demand 'ring-cowrie', a small present of rings or cowries to compensate the ghotul for the loss that it will suffer when the girl is married. In other places, this is done during the marriage ceremony.

[301]

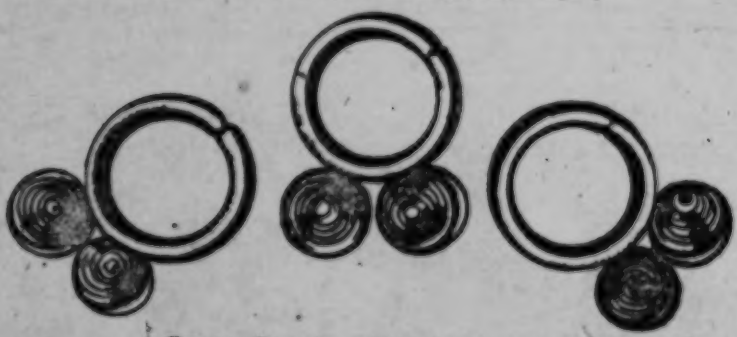

FIG. 17. Brass rings with small bells attached
Actual size

At this second visit, the bride-price is fixed. If the engagement is made many years before marriage the boy's parents generally pay an annual visit to the girl's house, taking her presents of liquor and ornaments.

[801] The bride-price should be in terms of odd numbers, three, five, seven or eleven. Even numbers are *jori ki jori* and so unlucky: you must have something over a pair. The number nine is also unlucky: a man may die of it.

There are many games about this betrothal ceremony and it is often mentioned in the songs; during their slow tedious dance round the marriage-booth the chelik sing a mixed Gondi and Halbi song about it.

[1] The Muria clans do not now appear to worship different numbers of gods, but the above practice suggests that perhaps they once did. Ward says that the Gond marriage contract was generally to the effect 'that the father of the bridegroom elect should give the father of the bride as many rupees as he worships Devs (the latter never exceed nine in number, but vary from that number to five)'.—H. C. E. Ward, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Mandlai District* (Bombay, 1870), p. 136.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

perpendicular slopes two or three miles from the village have to be cleared; the wood and scrub spread over the ground, which, in the Bison-horn country, has beforehand been dug over with the hoe or, perhaps, on the lower and less steep slopes, ploughed with great difficulty; field-houses, sheds and watching platforms have to be built on the *penda* slopes. The firing of the *penda* is particularly arduous; the stumps have to be cleared of the shoots that spring up when the rains have set in; and where deer or bison are numerous the clearings have to be fenced with heavy timber fencing. Man and woman here have unaided to do all that regular plains cultivators do with the aid of ox and plough, and much more besides. They do not weed their crops, and they broadcast their seed; here alone they save labour which falls to the regular cultivator, not out of laziness, but from ignorance.

For convenience the names which the Hill Maria gives to the months may here be stated:—

	English	*Maria*
The cultivator's year	December-January	Pusi
	January-February	Mah
	February-March	Phagur
	March-April	Chaita
	April-May	Mur
	May-June	Na
	June-July	Ha'i
	July-August	Hagh
	August-September	Eranj
	September-October	Eram
	October-November	Orma
	November-December	Pa, or Pand

The Bison-horn Maria uses generally the local Hindu names for the months. The calendar is, of course, lunar, the word *lenj* meaning either moon or month. Of the above names the first four are obvious corruptions of the Hindu names Pus, Magh, Phalgun and Chait. Mur is explained as meaning 'beginning'; 'to begin' is *mur kiyana*. Na is a shortened form of *nalung*, the numeral 4, Ha'i of *ha'ingu* (5), Hagh of *argu* (6), while the other four names are derived from forms akin to the Telugu words for 7, 8, 9 and 10, namely *eru* (7), *ermori* (8), *ormadu* (9) and *padu* (10); it is interesting to note that although ordinarily the Hill Maria, except on the southern edge of the Abujhmar hills, has Gondi forms only for numbers 1 to 6, and after that uses the Hindi numerals, in the nomenclature of the months he remembers Dravidian forms for numbers 7 to 10. He counts the year as beginning in Mur, though some will say Na. (The Bison-horn Maria uses the local Hindu names for the months.) But as the actual round of agricultural operations begins with the felling of trees for the coming *penda*

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the midst of the grain crops to support them. The cut crops which are to be threshed are stacked on the wooden platforms prepared before sowing, in beehive shaped stacks, called *puki* by the Hill Marias and *kupa* in Halbi.

The women prepare the threshing-floor (*karanu* in the hill dialect), clearing a piece of ground near the stacks of grain, and plastering it with mud. In the centre of this the men erect a thick bamboo railing on posts. It is *polo* for women to take part in the actual threshing. Oxen are never used. For each cultivator in turn, beginning with the *kotyaq-gaita*, all the men and boys in the village combine to thresh (*wisna*). They range themselves in two rows facing each other, with the bamboo railing between them.[1] Holding this with both their hands and supporting themselves by it, they dance up and down, rubbing the ears of corn between their feet. They thresh in this way only *kodon*, *kutki*, rice, *ghatka*, *chikma* and *kikka*; the women pick the ears of grains like *kang* and *kajra* in baskets, and rub them in their hands to extract the grain. The cultivator whose grain is being threshed is expected to feed all the villagers helping him for that day, and if possible to give them a good drink of *salphi*, the fermented sap of the sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*), which is raised from cuttings in large numbers all over the Hill Maria country. The threshed grain is winnowed by men only, winnowing being as taboo to women as sleeping in the fields or threshing. One man stands on a rough wooden platform and pours the grain from a basket held above his head, while another, if there is not wind enough, winnows the falling grain with a basketry winnowing fan of the usual Indian type (*hat* in Maria). All the men and women of the village combine to carry the threshed and winnowed grain of each cultivator to his compartment in the long granary. They never measure their produce, but there is no taboo on this account; it simply is that they grow crops for their own sustenance, and not for sale, and it is easy to see whether the grain garnered is adequate for the coming year or not. They do indeed understand something of bazaar measures, for some of their pulses and oil seeds are sold annually to raise the money needed to pay their poll-tax; they make their own measures of basketry, with different traditional shapes for each kind of produce that they sell; and at the bazaar you may see them measuring out their produce in these in front of the Hindu tradesmen to whom they are selling it. Their measures are very accurate, and need never be challenged. If they make them a little too large, they plaster a little mud over the bottom to reduce the capacity.

[1] I have since seen *kodon* and *kutki* threshed in the same way by Korkus on the Betul border of Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The favourite basketry material is bamboo, in thin strips varying from half an inch to three-quarters in width. Occasionally the wefts are of reed, coloured twine, or bamboos pared down to the thickness of twigs. Patterns are produced by using warps of dry bamboo strips from the heart-wood, and wefts of green strips from the outer rind. Nearly all the Hill Maria basketry is twilled, with each weft passing over and then under two or three warps, the topmost edge or rim being twilled-twined with a weft of thin bamboo pared to the size of twigs; and sometimes an ornamental plaited ring is worked around the central circumference. The measure baskets made by the Hill Marias and brought by them to the markets for sale or for measuring out the grain which they sell or the salt which they buy are of different shapes and sizes for each commodity. The grain measure is a *bhurki*, eight of which make a *seli*[1] or half a seer, i.e. a measure containing about a pound's weight of rice. There are slightly different sizes for rice, *kuthi*, mustard and pulses, according to the size of the different grains; all *bhurki* measures are little round baskets with slightly convex bottoms and uniform in diameter at top and bottom. For salt, a rather similar basket called a *kochli* is made, sufficient to hold one pice worth of salt, of roughly the same capacity as a *bhurki*; they are graduated for smaller quantities by being plastered inside with varying quantities of mud or cow-dung. *Mahua* flowers are measured by being heaped on shallow dishes called *kurli*, shaped like inverted cones or Annamese hats; each should contain 4 *pailis*, or 128 *bhurkis*, and those that I tested were remarkably accurate. The Hill Marias sell also the flat basket dishes already referred to, but rather larger than those they use for their own plates; they are called *badiya*.

2. Iron-work

Frequent mention has already been made of the Maria blacksmiths, and some of their tempering and manufacturing methods have been described in the section dealing with weapons and tools. These blacksmiths appear to be of Maria stock, speaking the Maria language, indistinguishable physically, having the same phratries and clans, and following the same customs. Enquiry in the big blacksmith settlements at Bagmundi Pasera in Jagdalpur tahsil, at Kamargudem below the Arampur ghat in Konta tahsil (both Bison-horn blacksmith villages), and from the Hill Maria blacksmiths at Nugur in Kutru zamindari, showed in every case that some of the blacksmiths either had themselves once been cultivators or had fathers who were originally

[1] 5 *tola* or Government rupees' weight of rice is contained in one *bhurki*: 8 *bhurkis* = 1 *seli*, 4 *seli* = 1 *paili*, 2 *paili* = 1 *ori*, 2 *ori* = 1 *kuri*, 20 *ori* = 1 *khandi* = 40 *paili*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

perpendicular slopes two or three miles from the village have to be cleared; the wood and scrub spread over the ground, which, in the Bison-horn country, has beforehand been dug over with the hoe or, perhaps, on the lower and less steep slopes, ploughed with great difficulty; field-houses, sheds and watching platforms have to be built on the *penda* slopes. The firing of the *penda* is particularly arduous; the stumps have to be cleared of the shoots that spring up when the rains have set in; and where deer or bison are numerous the clearings have to be fenced with heavy timber fencing. Man and woman here have unaided to do all that regular plains cultivators do with the aid of ox and plough, and much more besides. They do not weed their crops, and they broadcast their seed; here alone they save labour which falls to the regular cultivator, not out of laziness, but from ignorance.

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 cultivation, it will be convenient to start this account from the new
●805 moon of Phagur, that is to say, the new moon nearest to the end of February, before which it is not considered right to start cutting forest for *penda*, though the work is started two or three weeks earlier for *dippa* cultivation. The choice of the *haghai* site (see p. 107 above) for the *penda* will have been made beforehand, either in informal discussion among the village elders or at the ceremony after *Koqsar*, the great concluding harvest festival, at which the *hatyeq-gaita* seated on his *udam-garia* seat of honour with the villagers seated around him, confirms by formal pronouncement the decisions probably already reached in informal discussions with the elders about the village arrangements for the coming year.

241 Before the felling of the forest may begin, a further ceremony takes place. I attended the ceremony at Orcha on March 11th, 1934, when the moon of Phagur was nearly full. At about 1 p.m. the *hatyeq-gaita* with the elders proceeded to the selected *haghai*, which was covered with a dense growth of sapling sal trees; the oldest villager present, a man of about fifty, said that he was a small child when it had last been cultivated. There Usendi Delu, the *hatyeq-gaita*, cleared a small piece of ground at the foot of a *saja* tree, set up a stone on it against a root of the tree, and placed an egg upright on its pointed end in front of the stone. He then squatted on the ground before the stone to the right of the egg, and Usendi Moda, the *gaita* or secular headman, to the left of the egg. Both put their hands together, palm to palm, touched the ground below the egg with them and raised them to their foreheads, uttering in unison the formula, '*Bhum kenji! Talugh kenji! Jimme jaga kenji! Anam pirka a'i, nehna nehna manna a'i! Kohla pandi! irka gumur hadi!*' (Earth hearken! Mother hearken! All that is here and around hearken! Let our crops and vegetables grow here, let them grow and yield full increase! Let our *kuthi* ripen! Let our cucumbers and pumpkins mature!) They repeated the formula in unison, again saluted the earth in front of the egg, and then arose. The congregation of elders which had squatted around them and kept silence all through the ceremony also arose, and everyone returned to the village, leaving the egg there unbroken. There was no formal felling of the first tree, and no allotment of the different plots of *penda* land.

241 From this ceremony onwards all are free to start felling.
423 There is no formal allotment, but villagers divide up the land by mutual discussion, the size of each plot depending on the number of persons in the household to be fed and capable of doing a full day's work with axe and hoe. It is largely a matter of one man volunteering to clear one plot and another man the next, and so on;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

involve considerable physical exertion and have proved excellent material for the physical training of the boys in the State schools; at the Muria *gotul* dormitories these games often take the place of dancing and singing. But the only Hill Maria villages which have anything of the kind appear to be those of the Padalibhum and Tapalibhum *pargunas* which are gradually adopting the dormitory organisation of their Muria neighbours; and some Bison-horn villages on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country are beginning to copy the Murias and Bhattras. Early to bed is the rule for old and young in Maria villages, and the child from the beginning learns to copy his father's activities; his playthings soon become small bows and arrows, fishing-rods and snares, skill in the use of which will make him an asset to the community. Stilt-walking in the early monsoon, occasional use of bull-roarers and bamboo drums, crude ornamentation of the walls of houses or the carving of ornamental combs and beadwork seem to be the only other recreations of Hill Maria youth.

F. Reckoning Time

The Hill Maria names for the months have already been given (page 129), and it has been said that in general the Bison-horn Marias know and use the local Hindu names. They call a month *lowj*, the word used for the moon; but all, even Bison-horn Marias, have to think hard before they can tell you what month it is, and there may be a certain amount of argument on the point. Throughout Bastar there is something of this uncertainty; the local Hindu months are named after festivals such as Goncha, Dasehra and Diwali; and the Bastaria, even if he adopts these, does not like to observe them on the same date in every village, because that would deprive him of the chance of taking part in the celebrations at the surrounding villages.

Though the Bison-horn Maria knows the Hindu names for the days of the week, and uses them in his conversation, the Hill Maria does not. If word comes to a Hill Maria headman that in thirteen days' time he and his villagers have to go to the tahsil court, or to work on the annual road repairs, he will make a tally string with thirteen knots and undo one every day, leaving to keep the appointment on the morning of the last knot. These tally strings are also kept by those who attend markets at fairly regular intervals; and in a murder case, of which the villagers had decided to suppress or postpone informing the police because it was the harvest season, the wife of the murdered man, determined to get justice, had kept a tally string on which she tied a fresh knot every

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

805 morning after the murder, ultimately going to the police when there were fifty-four knots on it.

The Maria names for the times of day belong to this sub-chapter, but as they follow so closely the daily routine, I give them in the next sub-chapter.

G. Daily Routine

512 805 The following list of times of day was taken from Bison-horn Marias. It is more comprehensive than the Hill Maria nomenclature but the latter understand or have similar expressions in their own dialect for the Gondi expressions used by the Bison-horn Marias, though phrases dealing with ploughing or buffaloes, and Halbi expressions, unless corruptions of Gondi expressions, are not current in the hills. In the list, Ha. stands for Halbi, Hi. for Hindi and G. for Gondi.

Hāchahuṇḍā (G.)	2 or 3 a.m., the time when the *kāch-pitta* or king-crow calls '*Thākur-jī, thākur-jī!*' in the forest.
Kōrrh-kuṇḍā (G.) *Kukra-baṭan* (Ha.)	Cock-crow.
Pal-kōrr-tuṇḍā (G.) *Hal-joṭo-berā* (Ha.)	5 a.m., time to put the yoke or *hal* on the oxen.
Pharphar-berā (Ha.)	When the darkness is fleeing; *pharphar* is Gondi, the Nagpur Gonds saying *phalphal-dēṅ* for this time.
Narhōm (G.)	Just before sunrise.
Tirtir-pōrrā (G.) *Tirtir-berā* (Ha.)	The time when the sun is rising 'tir-tir' above the horizon.
Eh-pōrrā (G.) *Pānhāri-berā* (Ha.)	7 a.m., when the women go to fetch water (*eh*).
Hāṭ-pōrrā (G.) *Hāṭo-berā* (Ha.)	9 to 10 a.m., time to go to the market (*hāṭ*); sometimes they say '*hāṭi-pej-berā*', the time to have *pej* gruel before leaving for the market.
Jāṇā-pōrrā (G.) *Pej-berā* (Ha.)	About 10.30 a.m., the time for the morning meal of gruel (*jāṇā* or *pej*).
Tallā-pōrrā (G.) *Munḍ-berā* (Ha.) or *Āḍ-pōrrā* (G.)	12 noon, when the sun is directly over the head '(*tallā* or *muṇḍ*), or when the day is half (*āḍ*, corruption of the Hindi *āḍhā*) over.
Aṛhāī-berā (Ha.)	2.30 p.m.; literally '2½-time'; though Halbas do not know the clock, yet they use the expression, and so do nearly all Bison-horn Marias.
Hirri-pōrrā (G.) *Kaiki-berā* (Ha.)	About 4 p.m., when flocks of green parrots (*hīrri, kaiki*) invade the fields, and the women return from the fields.
Rafraf-berā (Ha.) or *Rātohaṇḍā-berā* (Ha.)	When the sun is half below the horizon. '*Rafraf*' is probably Gondi. Sunset in Maria is '*pōrrā digmāṭā*'.
Kōṇḍāng-tōkṭāṇā (G.) *Gai-goru-berā* (Ha.)	Time for tying up cattle.
Mas-mas (G.) *Masmas-berā* (Ha.)	When the light is fast going.
Jhul-pul-berā (Ha.)	About 7.30 p.m., when the flowers all shed their
Phul-cnadrī (Hi.)	greatest fragrance.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Bhaisul-andhyár (Ha.)		'Buffalo-darkness', when the evening has become as dark as a buffalo's hide.
Tindil-tindlná (G.)	}	9.30 p.m., the time of eating (*tindlná*) the supper of boiled rice (*bhát*).
Bhát-kerd (Ha.)		
Bhát-nind-kerd (Ha.)	..	The time when drowsiness (*nind*) comes over one after supper.
Nerját (G.)	..	Midnight. The Hill Marias say *nerjám*.

The routine of the Bison-horn family's day is roughly as follows. The woman rises at cock-crow, and arranges her hair, but does not wash. She then pounds grain with the *uspal* husker. Her husband gets up when it is time to yoke the bullocks, and goes off to plough. She then sweeps out the house and its surroundings, and goes to the river to fetch water, and on her return cooks the *pej* gruel for her husband's meal; any spare time is occupied in basket-making. He generally comes home for this meal, but when the field-work is heavy, she takes it to him there. If they have had their meal in the house (the women always eat after their men have been satisfied), they return together to the field, where the wife works as hard as the husband, often even ploughing. She stays in the field till 'parrot-time' and then goes back to the house to prepare the evening meal, bathing naked on her way in a river pool. Her husband comes back at dusk, and ties up the cattle in the *bari* or in the byre; the children bring them home, calling stray animals with a kind of shrill yodelling. He then bathes naked in the men's pool, and returns for his supper and sleep.

I have not attempted to recapitulate the daily routine of the Hill Maria, most of which, including his four meals, has been detailed in the preceding pages, which have generally dealt primarily with him rather than the Bison-horn Maria.

H. Fire-Making

All Marias and most Murias make fire by means of a fire-saw.[1] A piece of bamboo about 1¼ or 1½ inches in diameter and about 16 inches long is split down the centre for about half its length, and wedged open with a pebble or a bit of stick at the split end. This 'hearth' stick is called by Hill Marias a *negbo*, and is explained by them as the 'mother' of the fire. Another length of bamboo, perhaps a little longer than the 'hearth', is split in half, and one half is trimmed along the top of the split to a clean, sharp edge; this trimmed half they call the *kanda*. A flat boulder is selected and firmly planted on the ground. On top of this are placed dry leaves, or a bit of old rag, if available; and two men hold the 'hearth' down by its ends on the stone and the leaves, so that the leaves are under the V formed by the wedged split. The third man then saws

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 423. – Ed.]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

104

harpunj	Sandals of sambhar-hide worn while treading the hot fields of axe-cultivation. **Katwāk** are wooden clogs.
kara	The **kothār** or threshing-floor.
ketul	A field-hut, **lāri** (Ha).
kopir (ragra)	A soil-leveller.
kor-lāt	Also **balla** (GN) and **dhoona** (Ha). A rake used to spread the ashes evenly about a clearing or field.
koyāna (katal)	Reaping.
mariyāna (duhrayi)	The second ploughing.
mer-gutta	The winnowing-pole.
munda (Ha)	An artificial pond. In GN called **neling** and **katta**.
nangel (nāngar)	Plough.
pāhāna (khapai)	The first ploughing. This and similar Gondi words are the infinitives of verbs.
parha urāna (ropa)	Transplanting.
parka	Also **dahi** (H). Brushwood is brought and spread over the fields, then burnt and the ashes are ploughed into the ground.
pārum (phār)	Ploughshare.
pehchna (biyāsi)	Puddling.
penda	The hillside axe-cultivation of the Maria and wilder Muria.
tondi, tond	A **mācha**-platform for watching the crops.
weda, bera (Ha)	A field.
wiāna (mindai)	Threshing.
witāna (bunai)	Sowing.

Daily Programme

104
805

ād pāhar (adhu-pāhar)	'Shade time.' Late afternoon.
bāhat erta	'It is bent.' Afternoon.
gai gohdi bera (Ha)	'Time of the return of the cows,' or **godroki** (Ha) 'Time of tying up the cattle'.
gānda lote bera (Ha)	'Time when the Ganda goes to his wife.'
hikāt (bhainsa andhiyar)	Dark, 'dark as a buffalo'.
hirri pord	When green parrots fly to the fields and the women come home.
jāwa pord, pite karu pāhar (pej bera)	Time for **jāwa**, 'time when the birds are hungry'. 10 a.m.
jāwa undāna pahār	Time for drinking gruel.
kaimal huskār, gudin pahār	Time of the first sleep.
korkusāna pāhar (kukrabasi)	Cock-crow.
mulpo	Sunset.
nadum narka (manjhar rāti)	Midnight.
narki pāhar (bara bihān)	Early morning. 6 a.m.
nekniti pord, talla pord (munde bera)	'Sun-standing' or 'head-time'. Noon.

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

palvi viyinta, wiytu (raja karan bera)	Dawn: the time when Raja Karan rose and bathed.
pharphar bera	The flight of darkness.
phulsundri (Ha)	Evening when the flowers give out their fragrance.
tirtir pord	The sun rises **tir-tir** into the sky.
yer pord (panihāri bera)	Time for fetching water. 8 a.m.

Dancing Dress

chāpi, mogiya	Dancing-shield.
gathurta, karhāna	Cloth tied criss-cross over the chest.
gheri	Skirt, called **koch!** by the Hill Maria.
guba	Tuft of feathers.
irna, ghāti	Buttock-bells.
jela	Streamers attached to the cap.
kauda-hār, koya-kaudāng	Cowrie decorations.
kokti	Wooden 'horse' carried on shoulder.
lolita, puring, toka	Different parts of the 'horse'.
muyang, ghulghuli, ghungru	Small bells worn on arms or ankles.
topi (H)	Dancing-cap.

Death

bagmeri bhut (Ha)	Ghost of a man killed by a tiger.
bisrān itāna	The ceremony of touching a dead fish at the end of a funeral. In Halbi **bisram** means the bad smell of a dead fish.
burkāl pāta	Song sung when a man is killed by a tiger.
erramtogh	A wife's elder brother or younger sister's husband, who have special duties at a funeral.
hanāl, muriyalor (duma)	The dead, the departed. *Hanāl* is a past participial form of the verb **handāna**, to go; and thus 'the departed' is a literal translation (W.V.G.).
hanāl gaita	Priest of the Departed.
hanāl gariya	Pot of the Departed.
hanāl gata (khama)	Wooden memorial pillar.
hāt hamur (marni)	Funeral.
hātur dhōl (marni dhol)	The drum for the dead.
jiwa (Ha)	The soul.
jiwa tatāna, yer niyāna (dasnāhan)	Ceremonies on the tenth day.
jiya bitāl	Any relative, but not a *saga*, of the deceased.
kal ursana, kamk ursana	To erect a menhir.
kutukal, ursakal	Memorial menhir, from Gondi **kal**, a stone and **ursana**, to bury.
kishiyāna (agi deto)	Cremation.
nelānj jurāl, nelānjur	Ghost of a motiari.
nirkor kotāna (tijnāhan)	Ceremonies on the third day.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. *Beliefs about Natural Phenomena*

To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sokra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-wil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garkar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garkar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garkar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *bauhinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bhimul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

539
223

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.'
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill.
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Mîlo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Mîlo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Mîlo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

226

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish that live in tanks and flooded fields.

825
821
614

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *kurangra*, *ndri* (or *bhun*), *bots* (or *khoka*), *dundum*, *lawe* (or *turu*) and *bigum*.

278

The gall-bladder of the *bigum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake-bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by filling it with the small kosra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions, is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient to drink.

227
226

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

773 covered with the marks of disease, and they got married. Now these two, man and woman, had no knowledge of sex. They lived together working in their fields, but the man never went to his wife. Presently Mahapurub sent Lingo to see how they were getting on. 'They know nothing of love or copulation, they are living as brother and sister', so said Lingo. This made Mahapurub anxious about the peopling of the world. So he gave Lingo two pills filled with his love-charms to give them.

When Lingo reached the house, he found the man had gone to hunt but the woman was bathing. He gave her the two pills and told her to eat one of them after the bath and to give the other to her husband when he returned. Having done this, Lingo went away. The woman ate one pill but was so pleased with it that she ate the second also, leaving nothing for her husband. Directly she swallowed the pills she was filled with excitement and passion and ran into the forest to seek her man.

At last when he returned from hunting, instead of giving him his food she took him into the house and pulled him down to the ground beside her. But for all her caresses there was no desire in him and he did nothing. He ate a heavy meal but she could not eat. All night she tried to rouse him, but without success. Then once again Lingo came to see how they were. He peeped through the door and saw the woman trying to rouse her husband. So he brought two more pills and this time gave them one each. Now at last the husband's desire was awakened and he went to his wife again and again, but since the woman had a greater number of pills she was much the more passionate. That is why the Muria say women remain more passionate than men unto this day.

So strong was their passion that the very next morning a child was born. After this, children were born throughout the world and men and women increased in number.

The stories go on to tell how Lingo brought the Muria to Bastar from Lanjhi-Dhamda and how the different clans came into being as they tried to cross over the great ocean that separated Dhamda from Bastar. He also taught the Muria how to worship Mother Earth.

The Muria was thinking, 'How am I to worship the earth for I have nothing to give her'. He had one daughter. He covered her whole body with soot to make her black and forced her to walk on all fours like a black cow. Then he went to the jungle to worship Mother Earth. On the way he met Lingo driving a cow. Lingo said, 'O man, where are you going?' 'I am going to worship Mother Earth.' 'What are you going to sacrifice?' 'I have nothing to give but my own daughter and I am going to sacrifice her.' Then Lingo said, 'Give me your daughter, and I will give you my cow'. From that day the Muria have not offered human beings to the Earth Mother but, taught by Lingo, have sacrificed their cattle.[1]

XI. Lingo and the Sun and Moon

773 821 Lingo is also, in some legends, connected with the creation of the sun and moon and the disposal of other heavenly bodies. In what appears to be the

[1] Nanga Baiga was also taught to substitute animal for human sacrifice.—*The Baiga*, p. 315.

178

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

773
821

oldest Muria thought, Lingo, unlike such exclusively mundane cult-heroes as Nanga Baiga, has much to do with the heavens. Later on, he is often displaced by Bhimul Pen or Bhimsen. In Ulera the Muria told the following story.

When this world was first made there was neither sun nor moon and the clouds and the earth were like husband and wife, they lay so close together.[1] Men were very small and had to move between them. They ploughed with rats and to pick brinjals they had to reach up as though they were getting mangoes from a tree. As they walked to and fro they used to knock their heads against the clouds.

Then Lingo and his brothers raised the clouds into the sky and there was room for men on earth, but there was no sun or moon and everything was dark. There was a tree called Huppe Piyer. When this tree blossomed it was day, when it dried up it was night. The twelve Lingo brothers and the thirteen Bhimul brothers thought and thought how they could bring more light to the world. 'Where can we find something which will make light and darkness?' So thinking they came to the tree Huppe Piyer. 'This is what we want', they said and began to cut it down. It was so big that the twelve Lingo brothers and the thirteen Bhimul brothers could cook their food and sleep in the space cut by their axes. When it was nearly cut through, it still did not fall for on the top of the tree sat the bird called Gara-surial-pite holding it up. Said Lingo to his brother, 'We must kill this bird', and Kosa Kana took his axe and killed it. Then the tree fell to the ground.

When the tree came down it fell on the thirteen Bhimul brothers and they shouted with fear. Lingo picked it up with one hand and threw it aside. Now this tree stood in the kingdom of twelve Rajas, and when these heard the noise they sent their police to see if the tree was safe. The police reported that someone or other had cut it down and the Rajas sent their soldiers to arrest the culprits. Lingo said to the soldiers, 'We have come to make two lanterns so that there may be light by day and light by night. We have done no evil'. So said Lingo. But the soldiers took no heed of what he said and attacked the brothers with their spears and swords. Lingo took all the blows in his own body and saved his brothers. Then he himself took his sword and fought and killed the soldiers. With their blood the tree became red, for its roots drank it up. Then the brothers stripped off the bark and cut the wood into two great circles.

They made the lower circle into the sun and the upper circle into the moon. The sun was as big as the kingdoms of the twelve Rajas, but the moon was smaller. When they were ready, the brothers wondered how to put into them a living soul. Mahapurub had a son. 'Only by killing Mahapurub's son and giving his blood to the sun and moon to drink will they become alive and be man and woman', so said Lingo. The brothers thought and thought how to catch Mahapurub's son, but at last Lingo said, 'I will catch him' and went to Perrobhum.

[1] The same idea of the proximity of earth and sky has been recorded among the Santal—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 406; the Bunu—M. N. Basu, *The Bunus of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1930), p. 84; the Birhor—Roy, *The Birhors*, p. 436; the Gond—R. V. Russell, *Census of India, 1901*, Vol. XIII, p. 94; and the Khasi—Gurdon, *op. cit.*, p. 193. Fraser quotes similar stories from Africa—J. G. Fraser, *The Worship of Nature* (London, 1926), pp. 96 and 100. The legend is probably widely distributed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

773
821

Mahapurub was working in his fields. His wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. There he sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon. The sun, who is a man, drank a lot of the blood and that is why he is always red. The moon, who is a woman, only drank a little and is always pale.

When Mahapurub's wife returned and could not find her son, she ran to tell her husband and they were full of sorrow. But next morning when the sun rose red into the sky, Mahapurub cried to his wife, 'Look, there's your baby in the sky; don't weep, for you will always be able to look at him'.

821

In many villages the Muria know the widely-dispersed story of how the moon tricked the sun into swallowing his children.[1] They generally say that the moon is subject to a menstrual period and when her time comes she hides herself, thus accounting for the dark nights of the month. The sun works all day. We cannot see him at night because every evening he goes to his wife, but the Muria are not quite clear or consistent about this because some of them think that on account of the stealing and sacrifice of Mahapurub's child, sun and moon were cursed to remain for ever apart. Some Muria say that the sun's wife is Sukko, who is the daughter of the moon and it is she who keeps him company during the night. In Muria riddle the moon is 'the fat bullock that loses its horn in its old age'.

[524]

The stars are explained in many different ways. In Ulera they said that they were the shavings of the great tree Huppe Piyer. In Aturgaon they said that they were the babies of the moon. In Berma they said they were the moon's servants. The moon brings her children out at night and plays with them. Everyone believes that the stars are alive. 'The stars are looking at us', they sometimes say, and it is almost uncanny to hear them speaking of sun and moon and stars as though they were actual living people. Riddles about the stars are common: '*Mesej hadang pesdh*: the whetstone is covered with *mung*-grains.' 'The dish is so full of areca nuts that you cannot count them.' 'Take a stick in your hand and count the cowries.'

[524]

The eclipse is not explained otherwise than by the usual stories current in central India,[2] but the Muria have their own way of observing the event. It is regarded as a very good time for snaring animals or catching fish. Women dig holes in their yards and pretend to throw out water with a basket crying, 'Now we are clearing the stream for fish'. This little rite will result in good fishing expeditions later on. Boys make their *gulel*-slings, for as the moon catches the sun so will the pellet from the sling hit its mark. They also begin making nets and traps of every kind for the same reason, and put the bamboo baskets and platforms in the fields to catch and dry fish. Nets for birds are set and traps for animals arranged.

Thunder and lightning is explained in several different ways. Some say that lightning is the great *dandai* fish which leaps out of the ocean of universe into the sky, its scales flashing in the sun. In other villages they say that thunder and lightning comes from the smithy of the heavenly Lohar who is working iron in Porrobhum. The thunder is the sound of his heavy hammer;

[1] See *The Baiga*, pp. 331f. for references to Uraon, Santal and Turi legends.

[2] Crooke, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 21; Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 230 and 550; *The Baiga*, p. 354; Enthoven, op. cit., pp. 58f.; J. J. Modi, 'A Few Ancient Beliefs about the Eclipse', *J. Anth. Soc. Bom.*, Vol. III (1894), pp. 346ff. Penzer has a useful summary in *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. II, pp. 6ndf.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

821

the lightning is the flash from his anvil. The thunderbolt is the hot slag he throws away.[1]

In Badgul the Muria said that the lightning was the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden) playing in the sky. As she laughs, her teeth flash. When she laughs in the north, then comes the rain.

Lightning is useful to the world. Lightning warns us of rain and even brings the rain. When it strikes a plant or a tree the Muria collect the bark and burn it in their houses as a remedy against bugs and lice. The bark of a tree struck by lightning is a valuable medicine in cases of delayed delivery. [278]

Thunder is even more useful. It is caused either by the noise of the heavenly smithy or by Lingo or Bhimul dragging their water-skins across the sky. At Atargaon the Muria said that thunder is the noise made when Mahapurub sits on one of the bullocks made by potters at the Pola festival and rides on it across the sky. In Dongrigura they said that 'Mahapurub goes out to work in his fields or to fetch wood. He sees a storm coming and jumps into his cart and drives hard for home. The rumble of the wheels is the thunder.[2] Mahapurub's iron axe or sickle falls down to the earth with a great crash. If people can find it, it is an invaluable cure for rheumatism or headache.' In Kokori the Muria added the detail that Mahapurub's cart is dragged by sterile women. There is generally the idea that thunder has a beneficial effect on sterility.

For the Muria call the thunderbolt, 'the seed'. In Palari they said, 'Thunder is very useful, it means that the heavenly semen is falling to earth; all the small sprouts of rice and the small vegetables on which this seed falls become pregnant and so bear good fruit.' In Karanji also the Muria said that rice, vegetables and trees only bear fruit after hearing thunder. If there is no thunder the crop is always poor. 'We know this must be so, for it is the same with hens. The hen must hear the cock crow, otherwise its eggs will not be fertile.' It is said that if a thunderbolt falls or lightning strikes the earth near a barren woman, she will soon become pregnant.

Here is another account, from Kokori. 'Bhimul is man; Earth is woman. When Bhimul is on heat, he tries to approach Earth. But there is no road or path, and he rushes about trying to find the way, he hurls rocks and mountains to and fro—and this makes the thunder. At last he can contain his seed no longer: it spurts out—and a thunderbolt falls. From this seed man gets his food. Unless Bhimul gets on heat there is no rain or harvest.'

Rain is described as the chaprasi of Mahapurub who goes ahead of him when he sets out on tour. The rainbow is Lingo's *arishan*, or magic arrow of fire. The rain-giver is either Lingo or Bhimul. The people of the north-west generally beg rain from Lingo, for it is here that Lingo's cult is strongest. In the east they approach Bhimul. In Chikhli village at a time of drought in 1941, the Muria went to Lingo and offered him a bull, but he only gave them three days' rain. When they asked him why this was he said, 'In the old days the Raja himself honoured me with sacrifice, but now I am forgotten and so I am not giving rain'. In Markabera they had the curious notion that the first rain is the marriage of Mother Earth and the frogs come to make music for it. Frogs fall from the sky: if they fall into the water they remain frogs; if they fall into a field they turn into tortoises; if they fall under ebony trees they turn into hares.

[1] In Easter the Hindus say that during a thunderstorm the *Sui* bird lies on its back with its feet in the air in order to protect the earth. Many Muria say the same.

[2] This is a common Hindu notion. Thunder is the voice of Indra, or the roar of the wheels of Bhagavan's chariot. See Rathoven, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

821 I have heard hail described as 'the bosses of the rain'. The rainbow is the great snake, Bhumtaras, that rises from its ant-hill to stop the rain.[1]

XII. Lingo and the Discovery of Fire

773 In Bastar, as in Hislop's version of the legend, Lingo is associated with the discovery of fire. In some villages it is said that the first fire to be kindled was that made by Lingo at the original Pus Kolang dance. At Kanhargaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana the Jhoria Muria told this story:

> At the beginning of the world, when the earth sank beneath the great waters, there were no men left but the seven Koroho-Lingo brothers. When the water went down again, they set out to find fire to warm themselves and cook their food. Presently they saw a Maharin whose name was Parajunge; she had a fire. They made their camp near her house and went to get fire from her. The girl gave the eldest brother some fire in a bundle of grass but it went out. Then the next brother went, and the next, but every time the fire went out. At last Lingo himself went. When she offered him fire in the grass he hit her twice and picked up a burning log from her fire and took it to his camp.
>
> The brothers went away, but the girl soon found that she was pregnant from the two blows which Lingo had struck. The boy grew up, and when he was old enough he went with the other boys and girls to dance in Lingo's ghotul. Parajunge, his mother, followed him. Now Lingo was leading the dance with a tuft of palm leaves in his turban. When the dancers got tired they sat down to smoke and the boy said to his mother, 'All these other children have fathers, but where is my father?' Parajunge said, 'It is the one who is wearing leaves in his hair, go and catch him'. The boy caught him by the leg and cried, 'You are my father'. When the brothers heard it they were very angry with Lingo and said, 'We would have given you a kingdom, but he who makes a Maharin pregnant becomes a Mahara'. Lingo said, 'I never went to her, I only hit her and she became pregnant of her own accord'. They disputed this for many days and at last Lingo said, 'You may test me by oil and fire; make a great iron vessel and fill it with twelve pots of oil; put me in it and boil me on a hearth lit with twelve cart-loads of wood; if I am unhurt it will prove me innocent'. The brothers carried out the test and Lingo was unharmed; he sat in the fire playing his eighteen instruments. The brothers then believed Lingo and gave him the kingdom. The name of the boy was Son Kuar and he was admitted into the ghotul as a Muria, but they would not accept his mother.

In this account of how Lingo brought fire to the tribe, we may note the tradition that he got it from a woman and that the incident is vaguely connected with impregnation. Fraser has collected myths from many parts

[1] The Hill Maria have the same idea. So have the Kol, who call the rainbow Lurbeng, the serpent—Dalton, op. cit., p. 177. The Pardhan of Mandla say it is the raised head of Basuk, the cobra who supports the world. The Bison-horn Maria call it Bhimul-wil, the bow of Bhimul—Grigson, op. cit., p. 230. The Baiga call it the house of Bhimsen—*The Baiga*, p. 336. Hindus generally call it the bow of Ram or of Indra, though they too speak of it as a snake. 'The rainbow is connected with the snake, being the fume of a gigantic serpent blown up from underground. In Persia, it was called the "celestial serpent".'—Crooke, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 144.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

Death comes into the world by the treachery of the gods. The Baiga describe how Bhagavan grew tired of men, but did not know how to kill them. So he gave Nanga Baiga itch and the old man began to scratch. But he was unable to reach the small of his back, and one day when he picked up a stick to scratch himself there, Bhagavan turned it into a cobra and it bit him and he died.[1] The Juang say that formerly men did not die because they did not sleep, and Bhagavan had to send a woman to sell them curds mixed with sleep-medicine. When they ate the curds, they slept and died.' The Bhuiya story describes how so long as Jug Budha and his wife were living, no one died and the world was becoming over-populated. So the Supreme Being sent a centipede to bite them, and thus introduced death into the world.

The Muria too, in the north of Bastar, associate the coming of death with the murder of a son.

In the Middle World no man died, and Mahapurub wondered how he was to get souls for his kingdom. He had a son. He killed him and prepared to carry him out for burial. But when his wife heard of it, she ran weeping to the place and, taking her son from him, sat with the corpse in her lap. Mahapurub said, 'We must bury the child, don't be foolish'. But she said, 'No, I'll never give him to you'.

Mahapurub then planted a jamun tree behind her. One day some of the berries fell to the ground before her. She picked them up and as she ate her mouth was reddened with the juice. Mahapurub came again and said, 'Give me the boy. You are a witch, you are eating his flesh'. He brought a mirror and when she saw her reddened mouth, she thought she really was eating her son. She wept bitterly, but gave the body to Mahapurub. He buried it and from that day, death has been in the world.

A similar sacrifice accounts for the origin of the sun and moon. The Muria, in a story which is known in a slightly different version to the Bison-horn Maria, describe how after the great wooden circles for the sun and moon were made, there was the problem of how to put life into them. Mahapurub had a son, and Lingo declared that only by killing him and giving his blood to the sun and moon to

[1] Verrier Elwin, The Baiga (London, 1939), p. 229.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

drink, would they become alive and be man and woman. One day while Mahapurub was working in his fields, his wife put the child in a swing and went for water. Lingo stole the child and brought him down to earth. He sacrificed him and offered his blood to the sun and moon and they became alive.

Both the Baiga and Muria have stories to account for the disappearance of human sacrifice.

> Now Nanga Baiga and Nanga Baigin had nothing to sacrifice for the steadying of the world. So they took their own three sons and daughters, and were carrying them along. Then they met a jungle hen. 'Where are you going?' she asked. And when she heard, 'You musn't kill your own children. Take two pairs of mine. Offer one pair, and keep the other for breeding'. So said the jungle hen. Then Nanga Baiga lifted one son and daughter out of the kawar and left them with the hen, and put the chickens in instead.
>
> A little later they met a sow. She also begged them not to sacrifice their children, and gave two pairs of sucklings in exchange for two more of the children. Then they met a barking deer, and made a similar exchange.[1]

The Muria story runs as follows:—

> The Muria was thinking, 'How am I to worship the earth for I have nothing to give her?'. He had one daughter. He covered her whole body with soot to make her black and forced her to walk on all fours like a black cow.

[1] *The Baiga*, p. 315. 'At Nasik, in the Deccan, when cholera appears, a woman of the Marg (menial tribe) is solemnly led out of the city as a scapegoat. She remains outside the city bounds till the next day, when she bathes and returns. The ceremonial, which closely resembles that of bringing a victim to a shrine, doubtless implies an earlier rite of human sacrifice.

'Another rite resembles that of the self-immolation of pilgrims, who used, in former times, to fling themselves, in the name of Siva, over the cliff known as Bhairava Jhamp, near the famous shrine of Kedar Nath in the lower Himalayas. This rite has now been commuted into the paying for the service of a bedi or rope dancer, who slides on a wooden saddle upon a cable hung over a precipitous cliff as a means of propitiating Siva.

'In the form of the "Bihunda" rite the same custom prevails in the Punjab, on the River Sutlej.

'In Baroda also, at the worship of Vagh Deo, the tiger god, a man is covered with a blanket; he bows to the image and walks round it seven times. During this performance the worshippers slap him on the back. He then tries to escape to the forest, pursued by children, who fling balls of clay at him, and finally bring him back, the rite ending with feasting and drinking. The above are instances of attenuated forms of the custom of human sacrifice and immolation which has become intolerable under the conditions of modern society' Haikerwal, *op. cit.*, pp. 68 f.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

695 There was a disputed boundary between the village of Kurmer in the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* and the adjacent Kutru Mar village of Jatalur; the Jata clan asserted possession over a strip of land belonging to the Parllo clan of Kurmer. I suggested, on the strength of a tale I had heard of former Chiefs' methods of justice, that the head of each village should come with a cock to the land, and that the land should go to the clan whose cock crowed first. This was hailed by both sides as a sound solution, and off we went to the land; but just before we reached it the Jata headman began to hang back, and finally backed out of the test; I awarded the land to the Parllo clan to the approval of men present from other clans, and on going over the land found that it contained a *pagh'ai* or alternative village site of the Parllo clan besides the cromlech left to mark the site of the Village Mother's 'temple', the *kasyaq-gaita's udam-garia* or seat of honour, and the *kotokal* or line of menhirs erected in the name of the Parllo dead. Here the Jata clan finally abandoned their claim when challenged by the Parllo *kasyaq-gaita* to eat earth from under the Village Mother's cromlech.

181 To be left to live the free life of the hills, untrammelled by restrictions on his user of forest, earth and water or his right to shift his village and his *penda* cultivation, is the unconscious ideal of the Hill Maria. If he is sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, he will beg to be hanged rather than be confined within walls; and few of them or of the wilder Bison-horn Marias survive long imprisonment.

517 The Hill Maria shows great artistry in his bead-work, and is never at fault in his discrimination between colours and shades, though he uses for all shades of green and blue the one word *kagarondla*. He has general terms also for red, white, black and yellow, but none for intermediate shades. In his houses he draws 532 rude cup-marking patterns, *swastikas* and strange creatures in white earth on his mud plaster, or makes rough clay representations of women's breasts. His songs are low and rather melancholic in 533 sound, the youths' voices verging on contralto; but they are far easier for an English ear to understand than Hindu music, and have often a haunting refrain. Both he and the Bison-horn Maria love to hear European records on a gramophone, especially a good soprano or contralto, sea shanties, and violins or trios and quartets playing light chamber music; but operatic fireworks merely provoke laughter, Chaliapin singing the 'Song of Prince Igor' making them [534] ache with laughter, but being often encored. The Marias as a whole have no musical instruments except drums. Though the 517 Bison-horn Maria does not show the Hill Maria's artistry and 153

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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I do not in any way emphasize it, but it seems to me curious that many crimes connected with sorcery are associated with water; they are performed on the banks of ponds or rivers and in several instances the body has been thrown into the water afterwards. Does a murderer who has killed a sorcerer believe that there is some spiritual antiseptic for him in throwing his victim's body into water?

IV

841

Grigson has studied in detail the custom of the Hill Marias in regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, but his notes on the Bison-horn Marias need, as he says, 'considerable supplementing'. The Bison-horn Marias have the curious belief that men, not women, were originally subject to a menstrual period. They used to tie hollow bamboos to their organs to catch the discharge. Once—according to one legend—a girl was laughing at a man in this distressing and inconvenient condition, and he lost his temper and threw the bamboo at her; in another story a sister wanted to help her brother, who could not cut his clearing properly on account of the bamboo tagged on in front of him, and offered to take it instead.

841 826

Yet other legends ascribe the origin of menstruation to a wound. There were formerly teeth in the vagina and when these were removed, the wound was not wholly healed. Once the vagina was in the crick of the leg behind the knee—you can still see its shape—but a hen pecked at it and the frightened organ jumped for safety to its hiding-place between the thighs. But it was hurt and it still bleeds every month at the recollection.

841

All the Gond tribes are very strict about the menstrual taboos, in this contrasting sharply with the Orissa Bondos, Gadabas, and Saoras, who are at a similar stage of culture and live not very far away. Grigson has described the extreme rigorism of the Hill Marias and has rightly suggested that the Bison-horn Marias are somewhat less apprehensive of the dangers of menstruation. But they too, like the Murias and the Gonds generally, are strict enough in their application of the taboo and breach of it may be punished by the Departed through the bite of a snake or the destruction of the harvest. They do not usually build special menstruation huts, but sometimes where there is a girls' dormitory, menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and unmarried girls on the other. In such villages, no married woman may go near the dormitory nor should youths enter it. Not all dormitories however are used in this way.

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Elsewhere part of the veranda of the ordinary living-house is screened off or a little hut is built in the compound for the use of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

000 would condemn the savagery of the Maria, however, would do well to ponder Michael Angelo's painting of the Last Judgement which portrays those who have died in lust being dragged down to hell by demons clinging to their private parts.

Page 235. Koppers ('India and Dual Organization', *Acta Tropica*, Vol. I, No. 1-2, 1944, pp. 89ff.) discusses the problem of a dual classification among the Marias. He rightly emphasizes that the 'dual division of the Gonds of Bastar has nothing whatever to do with dual classification in the ethnological sense'; in any case, though there is a dual division of Marias, there is no dual division of the Gonds of Bastar who fall into several groups. Russell believed that he had found traces of a dual classification system. Grigson denied the validity of this, 'and with good reason', as Koppers says. The fact that the Bison-horn Maria phratries as such are not exogamous, 'taken in conjunction with the occurrence that the Hill Marias have almost nothing to do with phratries, leaves little doubt as to the relatively recent and secondary character of phratry organization among the Gonds of Bastar. We cannot do otherwise than agree with Grigson who refuses to see any connection between a dual classification system and these phratries as presented to us.' On the other hand, the relationships between wife-clans and brother-clans are somewhat reminiscent of 'the triple, circulative organization of the tribe described by Held'. Koppers concludes that although it is impossible to speak with anything like certainty of the existence of dual classification among the Gonds of Bastar and of the Central Provinces, 'it is another question whether in the light of future research some of the fragmentary evidence may not after all prove to be a remnant of a former dual classification system, which, in this case need not necessarily have been indigenous to the Gonds. It is at all events interesting to note that even Grigson finds himself unable to reconstruct the earlier stages of social organization among the Bison-horn Maria on any other basis than that of an "original two-moiety system". From his general impression of all the material to hand Grigson considers himself justified in concluding that all the rest must have developed out of this. For the moment his conclusion can be regarded only as a hypothesis but it is one which may well contain a certain amount of truth.'

Page 258, *line* 31. The custom of pouring water from the 823 eaves of a house is not confined to marriages. In some Bison-horn Maria villages, a girl is given this treatment at the menarche. When her first period is over, the girl bathes and stands below the eaves in front of her house. Her elder brother's wife or, if she is married, her husband's sister or elder brother's wife, pours water

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

over her from the roof, and she has to catch some and drink it. In some villages, again, if a man marries a widow or another man's wife, the woman must stand below the eaves with a *bassia latifolia* leaf on her head. The Waddai pours water and rice-beer from the roof, all over her, and after this she can enter her new home. When Oyami Anda of Bara Harmamunda married a girl for whom a Lamana'i youth had already been engaged, he had to stand with his rival's brother under the eaves of his house for a ceremony 'to make them forget enmity'. Anda's right hand was placed below the other's right hand, both having the palms upward. In front of them the Waddai made a heap of rice and set an arrow upright in it. He climbed on the roof and poured water over the hands of the two men who allowed it to flow down the arrow and over the rice. Afterwards Anda gave a pig and two fowls to the dispossessed Lamana'i as an offering to the latter's *hanal*. Had this ceremony not been performed, Anda—so he believed—would have suffered from a watery swelling of the body. 823 ●

Page 262. Marias of both kinds are exceptionally virtuous in their sexual lives. Venereal disease is almost unknown, except in the vicinity of the few schools. Several old men have assured me—and I believe them—that since marriage they had had no other woman than their own wives. Love-charms and erotic stimulants are not much in demand and are not approved. At Molasnar there was a Naiko who was said to be making some sort of living by selling love-potions to the Marias; he used to administer them in liquor or tobacco and once a woman took one of them she would follow her lover everywhere 'like a pet dog'. But a Maria said, 'If I bring a girl in this way, my store of rice will grow less for such a union is not a yoking of the house of Mahapurub, and the girl will probably leave me after a time.' Vetti Muda of Dhurli described how when he was a young man (he must have been born about 1870), he used to take a regular diet of monkey's flesh. 'As a result I became very strong and active and could hop from tree to tree like a monkey. Once when I was going through the forest a monkey slipped from the overhanging branch of an ebony tree and was killed by the fall. I cut off its organ and roasted and ate it, with the result that I became so potent that I needed four wives at once.' But it is characteristic of the Maria—as against, for example, the ordinary Gond, Pardhan or Baiga—that he should have used the word 'wives'. 832

Page 269, *line* 27. Grigson has recorded 2 Hill Maria folk-tales. In my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* I give 5 Bison-horn Maria, 37 Muria and 13 Kuruk stories, some of which are probably known also to the Hill Marias, for they were recorded in villages 838

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

733 constables, who again may be men of low caste, and they are almost certainly forced at some time to wear handcuffs which is regarded by most Hindus as degrading. A term of imprisonment involves, of course, culture-contact in its most concentrated form, and we need not be surprised to find aboriginal prisoners bringing back from the capital of the State Hindu notions of this kind.

The ceremony, it is interesting to note, bears no relationship at all to the kind of crime that has been committed. For stealing a cow or for the illicit distilling of mahua liquor a man has to undergo the same purification as if he had committed a brutal murder. Even if he is acquitted, the jail contagion is on him and he must free himself of it.

The ceremonies vary from place to place. At Jabeli, where they have had a lot of experience of this sort of thing, the Maria told me that when a man returns from jail he is not at first allowed to enter his house, but must remain outside and the family gives him his food at a distance. He must then go to his Waddai and give him five rupees for some of the water in which his clan-god has been bathed. The priest sprinkles him with this and gives him a little to drink. He sprinkles some of it over the house. Then the released prisoner gives a feast of beef or pork to the village, he is allowed to go into his house, and from that day 'everybody forgets all about it'.

Sometimes the water must be brought from Danteswara. [123] Hemla Bakka, for example, had to get from the Jia water in which the goddess Danteshwari had been bathed. When Doga came out of jail, the Gaita heated a bit of gold in the fire and touched his forehead, mouth, wrists, knees and toes. He dipped the gold in water and sprinkled it over the body. In Pogu Bheji, the priest burnt with a bit of gold the murderer's tongue, the back of his neck and the upper part of his left arm. He made a fire above the gold with branches of the mango, dumar, karanji and mahua trees and sprinkled the hot ashes over his head. Then the people washed him with ghee, milk and haldi water. When he had given a feast he was free of the contagion of the jail.

When Nendi Muya of Dhanikarka was flogged for stealing a cow, he had to sacrifice a pig and a white chicken to Mati Dea, and bring water from the shrine of Lakshmi Devi at

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

keep off the water'.[1] The Maria cloak is made from long, thin strips of the bark of the *wara marra* (*Kydia calycina*); when this bark has been well retted in a stream it is pounded, and the long strips peel off like blades of a broad dry grass. They are gathered round the neck into a close plaited yoke over twine strings used for tying it in front, under the chin, and the ends hang loose. It is known as *tarali* to the Bison-horn Marias, some of the remoter of whom also use it. Besides these, the Hill Maria has a large hat of a very flat conical shape, like the Annamese headgear, made of leaves on a bamboo framework, called *reking* (it is almost an umbrella, with the head used as the stick, rather than a hat), and a similar leaf waterproof shield called *deda'ixo* for his back and shoulders, in shape like an elongated winnowing fan, or an English dustpan, the enclosed end resting on his shoulders. Similar rain-hats and shields are worn by Gonds and others in various parts of the Central Provinces, though the Maria shapes are distinctive.

292 [824]

The account in paragraph 87 of Glasfurd's report obviously refers more to the Marias living 'in the wilder and more unfrequented parts, such as among the valleys of the Baila Deelas and towards the Indrawutty and Kootroo Talook' than to the Bison-horn Marias of the Jagdalpur and Dantewara plateaux; the description which follows the words quoted applies far more to the Hill Maria styles of dress and ornamentation than to those in vogue among the Bison-horn Marias either now, or when the *Gazetteer* was prepared in 1907-9, or at the time of certain earlier photographs taken at the end of the nineties when Colonel Fagan was administering the State. Even so far as Glasfurd's remarks apply to Kutru and the Indrawati valley, they strengthen the contention already advanced in this book of the steady spread of Bison-horn culture among villages in the valley once Hill Maria in culture. He notes, however, that towards Bhopalpatnam and Bijapur the Bison-horn Marias are better clad, but gives no details.

291

Dress and ornaments: (b) Bison-horn Maria

Their loin-cloth is more ample than that worn in the Abujhmar, and, except when girded up for hunting or work in jungle and field, completely covers their buttocks. It is gathered up into a knot just below the navel, and usually a fold is left, varying in length, to hang down over the piece that has, as with the Hill Marias, been passed tightly over their private parts and between their legs. There is no *toqa* or tail behind, consequently, as in the Abujhmar. Towards the Godavari valley the front flap gets very long. The Bison-horn Maria of to-day often wears a mill-made singlet of cotton mesh or gauze, or a '*waskat*', and a coat of some cheap

[1] J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 26.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

use very powerful staves of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood, the bow when strung measuring 6 feet from horn to horn. Of the Hill Maria staves measured by me, the thickest circumference varied from 6·5 to 9 cm. All the bows which I have seen are plain bows, used for spear-arrows and club-arrows; I have never seen any compound, composite or pellet bows. The back of the stave is the natural curved exterior of the bamboo; the belly is pared flat. The string is a carefully sliced piece of the outside of a green bamboo cut with a portion of the natural knots at each end trimmed into knobs, round which loops of twine[1] made from the fibre of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper are tied in notches (*kiddi* in both dialects) 25 to 40 mm. from the tips of the horns. One loop is permanently bound to the notch of the lower horn, the free loop being only sprung into the upper notch when the bowman strings the bow by resting the lower horn on the ground and bending the stave by holding his knee in its belly and pulling the upper horn towards him. The *lower* horn is called *modol* or *talla*, i.e. head, and the *upper* horn *kodi* ('point') or *toga* ('tail').

In the Abujhmar mountains the longest bowstring which I measured was 135 cm. from notch to notch, and the shortest, a child's bow, 110 cm. The greatest distance from the belly of the stave to the string of a bow strung but not drawn was 10 cm.

Arrows are called *handi* by the Hill and *kar* by the Bison-horn Marias; this refers to spear-arrows only. *Kar* strictly means the arrow-head only, the Bison-horn Marias having no separate word for the whole arrow. The other terms used are:—

Term	Hill Maria	Bison-horn Maria
Arrow-head	*kani*	*kar*
Barb	*kewu*	*kew*
Shaft	*kand-meri*	*kara*
Shaft-nock	*ihsal*	*pissl*
Feathering	*kand-toqoshu*	*kar-gerring*
Club-arrow	*bito*	*mitom-kara*
Head of club-arrow	*bonka*	*mitom*

The Hill Maria spear-arrows have a total length of 56 to 59 cm., that of their club-arrows varying from 51 to 64 cm. The Bison-horn arrows are longer in shaft and head, like their bows. Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, Figure 2, on page 86, are full-size representations of typical Abujhmar arrow-heads. The wings curve convexly or concavely from point to tips of barbs. The Bison-horn Maria arrows are similar in shape, but are far larger, often measuring 15 cm. or more from the point of the blade to the head of the tang, have longer barbs, and are therefore slenderer in both blade and barb. All

[1] Used in the technical sense of the word.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 231 other minor grains. Where timber is not available, these sties are made from bamboos, or even from stones. Similar but, of course, far smaller structures are made to serve as hen-coops, resting generally against the side or front of the houses.

778 361 [824] The shrine of the Village Mother, as has been stated above, is sometimes actually inside the village dormitory, sometimes just outside it, and sometimes at a considerable distance from the actual village, in a grove, if possible of *saja* (*Terminalia tomentosa*—everywhere the sacred tree of the Gond) trees. Sometimes there is also in the village, often at the end of the street opposite the dormitory, the hut-temple of the *pen* or clan-god, containing the log-frame image of the god. This will normally be found only in the village of the *pen-wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god; but sometimes, where the villages of the clan are far apart, there may be two copies of the clan-god, or the god may go to visit other villages, and have a resting-shed in each; or he may have begotten a son to deputize for him in the distant village; I have seen in a *pen-rawar* (clan-god's temple) both the *pen* himself and an embryo 'son' in the second of his three years' 'gestation'. The *pen* is always covered by a shed; but the Village Mother sometimes is just a cairn or a basket-cylinder filled with stones, or a low table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree, and close by there is a small shed of grass thatch with open sides in which are kept the cooking pots, ladles and sacrificial knife used at ceremonial feasts. The sacred grove may in very rare cases, in villages near the edge of the lowlands, have also a hut-temple of Danteshwari Mai or Maolai, the most revered or feared Hindu deities of Bastar.

343 841 There will be found well apart from the houses and the rest of the village a menstruation hut in many villages, known as *pedawo'-gha'i* to the Hill Marias, or sometimes as *dola-lon*. Here all menstruating women are secluded from the village for a week every month. Sometimes the hut has a single room, about 6 by 5 feet, with walls 3 feet high, with no windows and only a small door little bigger than the entrance to an English kennel; sometimes there are two rooms separated from each other by a partition, so that when a girl is afraid of being secluded by herself a duenna may sleep within sound of her without actual contact. The door of the seclusion room always opens away from the village, so that the affected woman may get out at night to answer the call of nature without overlooking the village or being visible to any villager. Special cooking pots and utensils are kept in the seclusion room, or else the woman's food is cooked outside and left by her door for her. [789 824] The roof is often covered with seed-bearing twigs of castor-oil plants, in all parts of India regarded as very efficacious against magic.

[text continues on p. 106]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*ahki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[1] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see cat. 116, p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

are made either of similar but lighter pole stockading, or of what the Hill Marias call *tum*, that is, fencing of grass fastened in vertical bundles between pairs of horizontal bamboo struts, which themselves are fastened at intervals to poles planted in the ground. The floors, walls and partitions are plastered with mud, the walls on the inside, and the partitions on both sides; the women do the plastering, while their men look on. They often do not plaster the veranda wall at all. They sometimes make the side walls of bamboo wattlework instead of pole stockading. They do not char or otherwise treat the bases of the poles before fixing them in the ground. The first post of the house is almost always of the sacred *saja* tree; I have not seen this adorned with bundles of thatching grass in the manner of other Gonds (cf. Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 122), but I have seen two *saja* trees near a house under construction so adorned. The youths sometimes paint the plastered partitions in white with rows of dots, with swastikas like those tattooed on girls' faces (see p. 74 above), or with crude crocodiles or tigers; I have seen women's breasts represented in relief.

The grass (rarely palm) thatch rests on bamboos tied across the roof beams, and is secured against wind by bamboos criss-crossed outside the thatch. The grass generally used is *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) which appears in the *penda* fields after the first harvest has been reaped, and in the second or third year covers them so thickly that they have to be abandoned. In March, after the harvest has been finished, you will see near all the recently abandoned *penda* clearings extensive *dab* cuttings, the grass being stacked on rough log platforms about a foot and a half above the ground in readiness for re-thatching the houses just before the break of the monsoon. The men re-thatch houses, granaries, pig-sties and temples every year.

The usual form of door is a rectangle of split bamboo wickerwork sliding between two pairs of upright wooden posts. The doorway has often a wicker-work threshold from one to two feet high, over which the sliding door fits. There are always doors in the doorways leading from outside into the veranda, from the veranda to the *angadi*, and at the back of the menstruation room; generally also in the doorways leading into the *lonu*; but I have never seen a door in the front doorway of the menstruation room. Sometimes the whole of this room is not taboo to men, the *binda* or mud threshold that marks the limit of the tabooed ground (see p. 106) being constructed across the floor of the room some two feet beyond the front entrance. Occasionally more elaborate doors will be seen, made of a small hewn wooden plank with tangs of wood left

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

342 projecting about two inches at the top and bottom of the inner edge, to work in the eyes of staples cut out of wood and fastened into the door-post; the other end has a roughly squared strip of wood six inches long, which rests in a slot in the opposite door-post and is fastened to it by a horizontal peg passing through holes in the door-post and the strip of wood.

422 The contents of the Kurmer house represented in ground-plan (b) on page 111 were typical of Hill Maria houses; the list that follows enumerates the contents only of the rooms occupied by Dedha Keye himself, his wife and children; his mother had her own property in her own *angadi* and *lonu* :—

VERANDA

1 sambar horn used as a peg.
1 *taghali* bark overcoat.
4 bundles of firewood.
[824] 1 broom of *phulbehari* (*Thysanolaena agrostis*) grass.

ANGADI

2 earthen cooking pots.
10 gourd ladles.
5 gourds for making bottles.
2 earthen pots full of drinking water.
1 bow.
2 arrows.
3 axes.
1 broken axe.
1 bamboo tobacco tube.
1 pair wooden clogs.
3 small wooden sitting stools.
4 coils of dried *siavi* bark for twisting into twine.
1 bundle of peacock's feathers, and 2 cock feathers.
4 *rahing* bamboo and leaf rain-hats.
1 *dedaʻino* leaf rain-shield for the back.
3 small iron sickles.
2 baskets of leaves for plates, etc.
29 baskets of various types, mostly empty, but some containing meal, grain and forest fruits.

MENSTRUATION ROOM

(a) *Outside the taboo limit*

2 *uspal*, or grain pestles.
2 winnows.
1 shouldered digging iron (*pulu*).
1 *gudari* hoe.
2 arrows.

(b) *Inside the taboo limit*

1 hearth.
1 cooking pot.
1 axe.
1 *uspal*.
2 gourd water-bottles.
1 *phulbehari* broom.
2 bamboo tubes of oil.
6 baskets of different sizes, used for storing food, leaves, etc., when the room is in occupation.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Telam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

Houses

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the preparation of the *kaghai* site is a task to be accomplished by the whole village. Disputes are practically unknown, owing to this strong feeling of community of interest. There is, moreover, in the Abujhmar hills ample land for all, and any man is free to work harder than others if he likes to cultivate a larger plot; but he seldom does so unless he either is a newly married newcomer to the village, bent on building up a reserve of grain, or has a large number of dependents. There is no guarantee that a man will have the same plot as that allotted to him when the *kaghai* was last previously cultivated, or even a plot of the same area; but in villages where land is not so ample as in others, and a *kaghai* may be cultivated therefore at shorter intervals, each man as far as possible is allowed the same plot that he occupied at the previous cutting, though he may have to contribute a part of his former land to accommodate newcomers or newly married youths. There are villages where either the *kasyeq-gaita* or the *gaita* is a strong man and has arrogated to himself a right to allot the *penda* plots; but he would get short shrift if he were unfair in his allotting: he is not a chief, but only *primus inter pares* among the village elders.

Plots once allotted and cultivated are for the time the private property of the householder who cultivates them, and he marks the limits of his cultivation either by leaving certain tree stumps to serve as boundary marks (the Bison-horn Marias who retain permanent rights over their *penda* plots are especially careful about this, the boundary trees often being left intact and not even lopped, save in so far as necessary to keep birds off the *penda*), or by planting lines of roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) or of *til* (*Sesamum indicum*) along the edges of his plot; roselle with its crimson seed-vessels and *til* with its deep yellow blossoms make very vivid boundaries.

Each family fells its own *penda* plots, and the villagers do not combine to clear each plot in turn as they combine in threshing. The work takes two or three weeks, and the men do all the heavy work, though women and children assist in cutting small trees and undergrowth and in arranging them for firing. Any fruit trees are carefully spared. If any of the ground is dug up with *gudari* hoes, men do most of the work, though they leave it to women on the flat *dippa* lands or on the gentler *penda* slopes. The iron *pulu* digging stick is used for grubbing up roots large enough to be a serious impediment. Much timber, when the growth is heavy, is reserved for fencing the *penda* against wild animals, where any herds of deer survive. The wood is left to dry through the heat of April and May, which are holiday months.

When the wood is dry, the *kasyeq-gaita* calls a meeting in the village dormitory to fix a day for firing. All the villagers combine

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

there is no need to describe their processes in this book. The potter, like the Gharwa, expects immediate payment for his goods and is not a tribal servant remunerated with a retainer of grain at harvest like the blacksmith; but he often takes payment in grain. For a Bison-horn Maria marriage, the potter will make and supply as many pots as are required, but after the marriage is paid a bullock, cow or calf for his work. 326

C. *Musical Instruments*

1. Drums

The Bison-horn Marias use the large double-membrane drums called *birya-dol*, of which typical specimens are shown in the illustrations in Plates VIII and IX. The hollow cylindrical body of these drums is a section of the trunk of a *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) or a *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*) tree up to sixteen or seventeen inches in diameter. The right hand membrane is made of goat-skin, even by those who have the goat as totem, and this is struck by the finger-tips of the open right hand. The other membrane is of cow- or bullock-hide, and this is struck with a bamboo stick carried in the left hand, and sometimes adorned at the end with a bunch of the pea-pod iron pellet-bells that are attached to the *tirdudi* bamboo dancing-sticks of their women. The membranes are stitched to each other by thongs of cow-hide criss-crossed over the outside of the wooden cylinder. That cylinder is sometimes as much as three feet long, and the weight is very considerable. The drum is slung over the right shoulder by a sling of hide or cord, sometimes adorned with cowries, and is carried obliquely across the stomach, the right end being the higher. There is no season among them when drum-beating is taboo or *melo* (their term for the Hill Maria *polo*). They have different drum rhythms for different dances, for weddings, for success in the chase, and a dactylic beat, for the drum beaten from the roof of the house to announce death; for the *pen-harsita* dance at their festival corresponding to the Hill Maria Koqsar they use the drum-stick only, and not their right hands, the rhythm being seven short beats followed by two long beats. 534 [824] [533]

These *dol* drums are occasionally found in Hill Maria villages also, but are a sign of cultural contact with the Bison-horn Marias. The essential Hill Maria drum is the single-membrane *turam* drum. The body is a wooden bowl, generally the rounded base of the hollow trunk of an exhausted *saiphi* (*Caryota urens*) tree, trimmed with the waist-knife to bowl-shape; sometimes a section of *bija* (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) trunk is similarly whittled into bowl-shape. The membrane is dried untanned cow-hide, hair outwards, and this is [824]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

755 [187] even Hindu officials educated at colleges outside the State place great trust. The cause of the illness or affliction is discovered by some form of divination (*kal hudatore*), generally by means of rice-grains, unless the case is serious enough to necessitate the actual presence of the log-god. The *waddai* always waits till he is possessed by his god (' the god comes upon him ' or ' sits on him ') to give his decision and advice. ' He gets rid of illness by ' *jhara phukna* ', blowing it away; as the sun is setting and again as it is rising he, to the accompaniment of long spells (*guni*), pretends to [824] charm a patient's illness by brushing it with a spray of leaves of *amaltas* (*Cassia fistula*), a tree with various magic uses, down from the head or the affected part to the toes, where he blows it away. The spells consist mainly of long lists of godlings; here are three specimens acquired from Telami Dhurwa, a *waddai* of Dhurli in Dantewara tahsil :—

(*a*) ' *Haranjuro, Jurjapo, Panduro-Parokhanda, Kosarabir, Bhumandra, Modarabir, Kosrapitho, Lenkjugo, Pa'inpaye, Hurremara, Ligoni, Munsputati, Munj-huro, Wirsputati, Bhimaraj, Karanje-putati, Karwaraj, Kuphkanda, Jangabela, Mudara, Yerkama, Akalharo, Mandkola, Wermar, Yekanath, Nai-taras, Mor-khanda, Netur-khanda, Gurrahom, Gõpanath, Gurja ! Widse-him.*'

This is just a catalogue of names said to be of godlings, but almost all of them unknown even to Telami Dhurwa, and ending with the adjuration ' *Widse him* ' or ' Let it go ! ', after saying which the *waddai* lets out a puff of breath from his mouth.

(*b*) ' *Dhanbawe, Arra-barra, Thakur Deo, Unasha'i, Chhewatin, Dhobin, Chandarin, Bhandarin ! Hat ke bandh* (close the hands), *tõnd ke bandh* (close the mouth), *kan ke bandh* (close the ears) ! *Guru, bandh !* (Close, oh Guru) *Guria, Telisar ! Rukh-cho rukh-jat, ban-cho ban-jat, dengur-cho dengur jat !* (literally, " Of trees, tree-kind, of forest forest-kind, of ant-hill ant-hill-kind ! ") *Kud-mon bhed-mon ilis* (You came by enmity) *Pangon mon ilis* (You came by witchcraft), *par bahar udun-ja* (but get out !).'

This is a Halbi formula, starting with names of godlings, telling them to close the hands, mouth and ears of the illness, and then ordering the illnesses of tree, forests and ant-hill to get out, whether they came through enmity or witchcraft.

(*c*) ' *Chinoni, Bisrama, Boyani, Polago, Nangoro, Idwalo, Tulwala, Kowalnago, Irpadmo, Wano-Poriya, Koyendu-Hunga, Ar-Iriya, Podemala, Ar-hunga, Deo-manda, Hurkura, Nur-Guru, Path-guru, Path-chela, Gurujan !*'

This is a meaningless jingle of words, mostly names of godlings or demons (*rau*).

000 I have not attempted here to speak of the various magico-religious ceremonies, for their magical aspect is commented on when the ceremonies themselves are described under agriculture, religion or other subjects.

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

843 secluded for their first menstruation, known as the *piki-kurma-lon*; but generally speaking, Bison-horn Marias do not seem to hold in the same strength the Hill Maria fear of a woman in this condition.

844 For the birth of a child a separate hut or booth is erected in the compound, generally at the back of the house, known as the *er-nihitana-lon*, or water-washing hut. This is often little more than the roughest of booths, and considerably inferior to even a Bison-horn Maria pigsty. Here the mother remains for a full month, during which her husband is not allowed to go to his work. The delivery is assisted by an experienced woman relative or fellow-villager, who cuts and binds the navel-cord and washes the child immediately after it is born, and gives it to the mother to suckle. No food is given to the mother that day; on the next morning she is made to drink a decoction of the bark of the *kusum* tree (*Schleichera trijuga*), the root of the dwarf *chhind* palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*), and *kulthi* (*Dolichos biflorus*) pulses, pounded to a powder and boiled together, and an hour or two after this dose she is given a meal of warm boiled rice. She is dosed and fed in this way for six or seven days more, until the navel-cord falls off; and then she washes her whole body and is allowed to eat regular meals. At the 852 end of the month the *lon-wa'ina* or Returning to the House ceremony 533 takes place. The child is named with the aid of a medium, though actually names seem to be given for reasons very similar to those actuating Hill Maria choice of names. A pig, a goat or a number of cocks are killed, and the mother, having washed her clothes and her body, cooks the flesh, all the villagers and relatives being entertained to dinner. Thenceforward the mother is free to resume all her normal household and field work, and the father can resume his work.

553 I once witnessed an unusual naming ceremony. A son had been born after three elder brothers had died. It was considered 789 that their deaths had been due to the hostility of some demon or of the familiar spirit of some magician, and on the medium's advice the baby had been suspended in a rough cradle over the rubbish-heap by the fence of the *bari* garden, and all the men present threw cow-dung and filth all round the cradle, shouting out '*Kacharu*' or 'Filth!', which name was given to the child in the hope that thereby the malignant power would be deceived into thinking that the parents set no value on the child.

862 Children are breast-fed for two years or more, as among the Hill Marias. It has been already recorded (page 219) that there is among the Bison-horn Marias a special weaning ceremony during the Jata Pandum at which the first solid food given to the children is a portion of the rice and meat offered to the Departed.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

These pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. They are usually made of the wood of *terminalia tomentosa* or *shorea robusta* and are erected with ceremonies similar to those used for a menhir.

As far as I know, the pillars are always made by non-aboriginals, but since the Marias give their instructions to the carpenters about the patterns they want carved, they do thus throw some light on Maria psychology even if they do not illustrate their sense of art. For example, the pillar in memory of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar was made by Bharto, an Oriya carpenter of Jagdalpur. The pillars for Barse Marka at Barrem and for Marvi Masa at Jabeli were both made by Anda Kalar of Potali. For Barse Marka's pillar his sister's son gave a bull calf worth twenty rupees, cloth worth five rupees, two rupees in cash and daily rations for the fifteen days while the carpenter was working.

There was a fine pillar to a wealthy Maria named Muchaki Hunga near Dilmilli on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. It is a fat, thick pillar, carefully squared, standing some fifteen feet high with elaborate carvings round the base and a decoration of crocodiles and pigeons at the top. The whole is surmounted by a trident, obviously suggested by the carpenter, and on this again is a small bird. On the west face of the pillar there are carvings of dancers wearing bison horns and six girls who are realistically portrayed with breasts and genitalia. Below them is a tiger, a crane and a peacock. On the south side is a picture of the dead man riding an elephant, an umbrella in his hand and bags of money at the saddle. Five women follow him with pots of rice-beer and spoons. Below them are rats. At the foot are men ploughing, deer and tigers. On the east side is a man riding a horse and fish, horses and a tortoise. To the north is a man and wife with their children, a gourd for taking beer from a pot and representations of snakes and birds. Below this are two pairs of dogs apparently copulating, and at the very bottom some men are carrying a pot of rice-beer.

Near the pillar is a grave built up in the modern Hinduized fashion and protected by a little shed.

Near Massenar, at the end of a long row of *uraskal* menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa. This is much more slender than the one at Dilmilli and is not so well carved. But it has carvings of Kopa himself on his elephant with the inevitable umbrella, a gun and a tobacco pouch. On his chest is a small circle which I was told represented his Jubilee Medal. The pillar is further decorated with carvings of men dancing with the bison-horn head-dress, boys and girls dancing with a pot of rice-beer, a man trying to drag away a girl by the hand, crocodiles,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 21 feet long. 226

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Netānek horinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'. 227 [524]

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes. 226 278

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden. 226 776 782

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first. 273

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2] 273 824

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy aspiring to chelikhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election 273 883

[1] R. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Koya put a mahua leaf in the hand of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 52.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

XII. The Sago-Palm

273 137 Another very popular drink is the juice of the sago-palm, and since the Muria have developed many legends round it I will give the subject a section of its own.[1]

The sago-palm (*Caryota urens*, Linn.), which is known as *gorga marra* in Gondi and as *salpi rukh* in Halbi, is widely distributed over the greater part of the State. It is an erect monoecious tree, with axillary spadices, which sometimes grows to the height of sixty or eighty feet. Its long bipinnate leaves with their fish-tail ends are sometimes twenty feet long. The aboriginals, whether Hill Maria, Bison-horn Maria or Muria,[2] regard the trees primarily as a source of liquor, though they use the inner tissues of the stem and the wood for other purposes. The popularity of the tree is shown in the riddle, [524] 'Above sits the parrot, below is the thrashing-floor', suggesting that under the beautiful sago-palm a great crowd of people gather, and in such songs as '*Waliya uklo gorga ale mámále*—O uncle, the sago-palms are everywhere you go'. Unlike mahua spirit, however, salpi juice is not usually used in worship or on other ceremonial occasions.[3] It is rather a drink for one's private and friendly hours, though it may often supplement a failing supply of mahua at a marriage or funeral.

● 824 538 As always, legends and stories gather about anything that is intimately connected with the life of the people. There are several different accounts of the origin of the sago-palm, but all agree in connecting it with youth and gaiety. It came into being when maidens danced together or when boys pursued their loves. In the north of the State the most common legend traces its origin to an expedition of boys and girls from the house of Bhagavan, which came down to earth to dance and bathe.[4] One such party came to Chikhli village on the northernmost plateau of the State and after bathing, the girls left behind the cowrie ornaments of their hair. These ornaments are very popular among the motiari; sometimes a mass of cowries covers the whole of the back of their heads. When the girls found they had lost their ornaments they were angry and cursed the cowries saying, 'Now turn into sago-palms and we will always live with you and will never lose you again.' For this reason it is said that the cowrie is the tuft of feathers that fell from Lingo's turban. Yet again it is said that the tree was a feather stuck in the hair of a motiari which fell off as she was going to Penjori village to dance the Diwali dances, and turned into a tree when she got angry with it. But everywhere it is agreed that the tree springs up in all those places where the girls either from the house of Bhagavan or from some earthly ghotul used to go to dance. In the forests above the Raughat and all along the northern plateau there are a great many of these trees and these were the very parts where the girls went for their dancing in the dawn of the world.

There are, however, some other versions of the origin of the palm. In Mule village the Muria say that when the seven salphi maidens (Gorga Kanyang) were born they only had one placenta between them. This was cut off and

[1] For a fuller account see my article 'The Sago-Palm in Bastar State', *JRAS. Bom.*, Vol. XVIII (N.S. 1942), pp. 69–78.

[2] Grigson is not quite correct in saying that Hill and Bison-horn Maria 'almost alone in Bastar use salphi liquor'.—Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. The Muria of the north are among the most enthusiastic drinkers of salphi juice in the whole State.

[3] According to Thurston, the fermented juice is used ceremonially at marriages and festivals by the Pooja and Savara.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VI, pp. 216, 322.

[4] The seven heavenly damsels who came down to dance and bathe on earth is a common motif in Indian folk-tales. See Thurston, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 100.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

buried by their mother. Almost immediately the seven sisters ran away, and when the mother could not find them, she went to the place where the placenta was buried and let the milk from her breasts fall upon it. As the days went by there gradually grew up from the placenta a tree which was full of milk. This was the sago-palm that was born from milk and always gives milk. There is a riddle—'Milk comes from the horns of the buffalo'.

Another story comes from Pharasgaon. Long ago there were eleven brothers and one day as they went hunting in the jungle they grew very thirsty. They came to a group of palm trees and rested in their shade. The youngest brother looked up at the tree and said, 'This is a very fine tree. Surely there is water hidden in its branches! I can see a pot tied there. Who can climb up and get it?' Each of the brothers tried to climb the tree and failed, for when they were nearly at the top they saw that the pot was full of blood. But the youngest boy made a rope of siari fibre and climbed up and when he looked in the pot the juice appeared to him as milk. He brought it down and they all drank of it. The ten elder brothers fell senseless but the youngest boy was intoxicated with pleasure. But he grew afraid thinking that his brothers would die. Then his god said to him, 'Offer a pig to the Gorga Kanyang and they will recover'. He sacrificed a pig and his brothers sat up again.

This is the origin of the sacrifices that are made to the tree before it is tapped. It is believed that if no offerings are made the juice turns into blood and makes the people ill. If offerings are withheld for a long time, the tree dries up.

In the Chota Dongar area, the Hill Maria of the Abujhmar and the Muria of their immediate neighbourhood trace the palm to Tallur Muttai or Mother Earth herself. At the beginning of the world, Talíur Muttai came with Kadrengal (whom some call her brother and some her husband) to the forest of Bastar. Kadrengal was innocent of sexual desire, and so Tallur Muttai created sago-palms with the hope that their juice would excite him. When Kadrengal first went to tap the trees, he tied a thread from the cut peduncle down to a hole which he dug below, but the wind blew it to and fro and the juice was scattered. Then Tallur Muttai taught him how to tie a gourd to catch the juice and place a leaf to guide it safely. Kadrengal drank a great quantity; desire came to him; and he went to Tallur Muttai.

But the Hill Maria of Jharagaon and Nalnar say that the palms originated when the seven Kanyang, daughters of Bhagavan, came down to Singardip (the world) to bathe. They combed their hair, and wherever their hairs fell the trees sprang up. They give the names of three of the Maidens of the sago-palm—Fuse Kanyang, Ganganangi Kanyang and Kondakalbuli Kanyang.

The palms are carefully guarded. Sometimes a large bamboo mat is tied round the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree.

This is the method of extracting the juice. The ends of the flowering spadices are cut and hollow bamboos, gourds or earthen pots are fixed where they can catch the flow of sap. Bamboos or gourds are simply tied to the tree, but a pot may be fixed in position with a couple of poles below it tied round the trunk and fixed together supported by a string tied to a bough above. The pot is placed inside a basket and its mouth tied to the spadix, to the end

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of which a folded leaf of the date palm is attached to ensure that the juice trickles down into the pot. A small gourd with a hole at either end is kept in the pot, which is finally protected with a bamboo cover to guard it from wind and birds.

When the climber has reached the pot, he removes the leaf and scrapes the end of the cut spadix with a knife that is kept among the branches. Sometimes he rubs it with a little marking-nut juice. Then he removes the sap from the pot and puts it in a gourd tied round his waist. Sometimes if the tree is very high, he lowers this gourd down to the ground with a cord. Then he replaces the leaf at the end of the spadix, puts the cover over the pot and descends.

There are various rules and customs about the use of the juice. It is not considered good to drink it when it is too sweet, as it has a laxative effect. For this reason a little of the old juice is always left in the pot to ferment it. To increase its power a little of the root of the danbaher tree is added. When the weather is cloudy it is considered that it will not be good. The juice of a newly tapped tree should not be given to a pregnant woman or she may abort. In fact, at the beginning, when a new tree is tapped only men drink. The Hill Maria do not give the juice at any time to a woman in her menstrual period.

There is a curious idea that the sago-palm itself is subject to a menstrual period.[1] Every month there is a space of two or three days during which the juice does not flow properly and it is not considered safe at this time to drink even what little there is. So, too, for the first week or so after a new tree is tapped the juice should be avoided, for it is then, they say, like semen. At Phunder, the Muria said that the end of the tree's menstrual period is indicated by the presence of a lotus leaf in the pot.

In some villages, the Muria believe that two Kanyang visit the palms. One is Jal Kanyang, and is a motiari; the other, Kaudo Kanyang, is regarded with characteristic inconsistency as a chelik. When Kaudo Kanyang comes to play in a tree, the juice is scanty but good; when Jal Kanyang comes, the juice flows like a river but it is less potent. Sometimes then a little sand and even fish are found in the pot.

This belief in the fish that get into the pot is widespread. Once in the days of Chaitu Gaita of Alor, a chelik climbed a sago-palm and found two *turu* fish and some sand at the bottom of the gourd. At Palli I was told that such fish were 'sometimes caught by the Salphi Maiden and taken up into the tree'. I have recorded the same idea among the Hill Maria.[2]

When a tree is tapped for the first time offerings are made to the Gorga Kanyang. In some villages a hollow bamboo full of water is brought from a stream and leant against the foot of the palm. It is believed that a Kanyang lives in this water and probably there is an idea that the tree will give as much juice as there is water in the bamboo. In order to improve the flow of juice the villagers sometimes promise the Gorga Kanyang a pig or a chicken.

At Adnar on the day they first tapped a new tree the village Gaita, followed by all the villagers, came to its foot. With red and black powder he made a row of three circles, inside each of which he drew a cross. Rice was piled on these crosses and two leaf-cups full of salphi juice were placed by them. One pile of rice was for the Gorga Kanyang, one for Kaudo Kanyang, and one for

[1] This idea is widespread: I have found it among Juang, Kond, Gadaba, Bondo and, in Bastar, among the Bison-horn Maria.

[2] Compare S. L. Hora, 'Rains of Fishes in India', *JRASB.*, Vol. XXIX (1933), pp. 95ff.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

245 Mother Earth. The Gaita offered eggs and chickens, first making the chickens eat the rice and then killing them. The juice in the leaf-cups was offered to the Earth Mother and the Kanyang and then everyone drank a little. After this the owner was free to tap the tree in the ordinary way.

● 824 Failure of the sago-palm may be due either to black magic and witchcraft or to the hostility of one of the Gorga Kanyang. The Kanyang, if she is not happy in a particular village, may twist the branches at the top of the tree and cause them to wither. It is generally believed that the tree gives juice for three years 'just as a girl can enjoy herself for three years protected by Lingo in the ghotul. Then she marries and the juice ceases to flow. The motiari of the palm tree is afraid of marrying too soon. If we touch the tree with a cloth yellowed by haldi it will stop giving juice till the new shoots come, for the shadow of haldi (that is, of marriage) is upon it.'

755 For gonorrhoea, a very rare disaster among these aboriginals, the sufferer stands below holding a leaf-cup into which a friend pours a little of the juice 164 from the top of the tree. The patient offers a few drops to the Gorga Kanyang and then drinks it without allowing it to touch the ground.

824 The wood of the palm is not usually used for building in Bastar but the Hill Maria make their *turam* drums out of its hollow dried-up trunk. The Muria also make combs and drum-sticks out of the dry wood. Some of the Muria in the Abujhmar foothills make necklaces of the fibre. The leaves are often used as hair-ornaments or to decorate the village dormitories. Sometimes the flowers are pounded into flour, mixed with water and drunk as a sort of gruel. When it is evident that the tree will give no more juice, it is cut down [262] and the pith is removed. This is pounded into a sort of flour and steamed in the usual way into cakes which are popular eaten with honey or sugar. This practice is common across the whole of the sago-palm country. I have found it among Hill Maria, Bondo, Gadaba, and Juang and it has been recorded for the Kadir and Khasi.[1]

273 The salphi juice is either brought back to the house and stored there until by fermentation it becomes much more intoxicating than in its fresh condition or it is drunk immediately at the foot of the tree. Little groups of people, generally men, go out to the trees, taking with them roasted crabs or frogs, little bits of chicken, various kinds of chutney, carefully wrapped in leaf-cups. The liquor is drunk from leaves, generally simply folded to make a sort of cup, and it is sometimes poured direct into the mouth. Many delightful hours are thus spent by the villagers out among the woods or on the hills.

245 When a tree is specially planted by seeds or cuttings it is very carefully tended. A fence of wood is built round it and it is watered regularly. Sometimes a tree is associated with the memory of a particular person. In Kanhargaon, a village in the Chota Dongar area, a Muria planted salphi and mango trees fifty years ago and they still preserve his memory. When the people go in the evening to drink the juice, they offer a few drops in the name of Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal to the sago-palm and a few drops in the name of the dead man who planted the trees to the mango, 'so that as we drink you can drink also'.

245 Generally speaking the tree belongs to the man in whose field or garden 423 it is growing. Where the trees are out in the jungle, or standing in the common land of the village, disputes sometimes arise. The headman or the more influential priests generally claim these trees as their own, but there is also a

[1] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 176.; P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), p. 52. See also Grigson, op. cit., p. 152.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

The Muria wash their houses with a solution of cow-dung and water. When this has dried they apply a whitewash of clean mud from the jungle. A good housewife should do this every day. The motiari must keep the ghotul spotlessly clean—'This is how she learns to keep her husband's house clean when she leaves us', explained the boys at Berma.

FIG. 91. Carved wooden blocks from Markabera used by the motiari as supports for their hair
(See p. 386)
Two-thirds actual size

Chelik and motiari wash their clothes frequently, almost as often as they bathe; the older people, naturally less concerned about their personal appearance, more anxious about economy, wash them less. The clothes are put in a pot with the ash of saja, dhaura, wesamum, siari-creeper or rice-chaff, and are boiled. When ready the pot is carried to the river, the clothes removed and washed by being beaten with the hands on a stone and rinsed again and again in the water. The clothes of a woman in her period, and especially her pubic cloth, are boiled on the river bank. At Tamragaon I saw many empty pots lying on the bank and even floating in the pools which were used for this purpose, for they cannot of course be taken back to the house.

FIG. 92. Boys' hair-retainer made by a local blacksmith out of the ribs of an old umbrella
(See p. 387)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

514 For defecation, the Muria go into the fields or jungle. Their villages are always clean of human excreta; if a child relieves itself in the house, the mother immediately cleans the place and sprinkles ash over it. One of the instructions given by Lingo in the first ghotul was that the boys and girls should never relieve themselves on the paths. Moreover since they do not wash themselves with water after defecation, the banks of streams or rivers are usually clean—in striking contrast to the horrible condition of streams near many a more 'advanced' village.

After defecation the Muria clean themselves with leaves, but they do not use siari, saja, char, sarai, tendu or karmata leaves for this. The saja is, of course, sacred; the tendu also is connected with Lingo. Sarai, karmata and siari leaves are used as leaf-plates.

A strict rule against urinating in the ghotul greatly helps to preserve its cleanliness and freshness. The rule is not, however, universal. In a few ghotul there are little holes in the wall down near the floor which are used as urinals. In others, though the children are not allowed to urinate inside the building, they may do so against the fence. Generally both boys and girls stand to urinate—a fact which gives point to the riddle: 'Shoot the arrow with all your might, yet it still falls beneath your feet.'[1]

V. Tobacco

276 In many ghotul, the distribution of tobacco is an important part of the evening ritual. As the girls go round for Johar, the Belosa and her assistant put a few pinches of finely-powdered tobacco into the chelik's hands. One of the boys has the special duty of seeing that there is a proper supply and that the girls prepare it daily.

The legendary origin of tobacco is described in a story from Kachora.

> Long ago a party of Muria went to visit the Maharaja during Dassera. On their way they came to a spot where a barren woman had been cremated. This woman had been very beautiful, but no one cared for her—for who goes to a withered tree for shelter from the sun? She complained to Nandraj and he said, 'Though they take no notice of you now, once you are dead they won't be able to get on without you.' So after her death, a beautiful plant sprung from her ashes.
>
> One of the party went to relieve himself and saw the plant. He picked a leaf and began to chew it. He found it sweet and distributed it to the others. On his way home, he went to get more leaves, but found the plant had dried. So he took the seeds and planted them in his garden. When the leaves were ready he chewed them and felt a little drunk. The feeling was so pleasant that whenever he had no leaves in his mouth he longed for them. This is why tobacco is called *surti* [after the Chhattisgarhi word *surta*, longing or remembrance].
>
> Every morning tobacco plants give off a sort of smoke because of the dew that settles on the leaves during the night. So the tobacco used in a leaf-pipe is called *dungya*, or smoke.[2]

The chelik, and still more their elders, suffer to the full this *surta*, or longing for tobacco, which they either chew or smoke in small tightly rolled leaf-

[1] The Muria ghotul is generally much less odorous than the Uraon dhumkuria I visited. A writer has described the inner room of the Ao Naga morung which is used as a urinal as 'emitting such an obnoxious smell that it makes even the second room unfit for entrance'.—S. N. Majumdar, 'The Ao Nagas', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), p. 53.

[2] Cf. the Kond story on p. 308.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

Songs and Dances

buting-ting	A mask dance.
dāka	Dance-step.
endanna	Dance.
hatto	Riddle.
kahka	Proverb.
kolān mudiyāl, kolān guru, gāyān, jokta	Leaders of the Pus Kolang dances.
lakna	Theme of a song.
lang	Tune.
pār	Drum-rhythm.
pāta	Song.
pāta oywāl	Singers.
pito	Story.
roche	Chorus, generally a variation on the relo motif.

Stilt-festival

bād	Pile of old stilts placed over the stone of Bhimul.
dito	Stilts.
dito-dandi	Stilt-pole.
dito-palk	Foot-rests attached to the stilt-poles.
jabān	Wooden pegs to keep the foot-rests in place.

Synonyms

aking-making	An 'echo-word' on **aking**, leaves; meaning any kind of jungle produce.
iruh-na-yer	'Water of mahua' for liquor.
kota sāmbar	'The long-tailed one' is used for **thāli**, a cow.
moras	'A rope' is used instead of **tās**, a snake.
warreatu	'The fear' is used for **burkāl**, a tiger.

Tattooing

hale hawar (saliya dass)	Resin of *boswellia serrata* sometimes used to make the ink.
huji, uji	Needles.
jaddān perek (jāda bija)	Castor seed used to make the ink.
kājar	Black tattoo ink.
khopa (kondi or thekra)	The small pot to hold the ink.
nung neyi (tilli tel)	Oil of *sesamum indicum*, also used to make the ink.
singār katle, sujaia, dessika (H, godna)	Tattoo.

Trees, Shrubs and Creepers

ais (salai)	*Boswellia serrata*, Roxb. The Muria use the fragrant gum-resin as an incense in sacrifice.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

amarbel (Ha) — *Cuscuta reflexa*, Roxb. In Hindi, **akāshbel**, a clinging creeper used as an emblem of close friendship.

berel (bar) — The banyan, *ficus bengalensis*, Linn.

bor-renga (bhoir) — *Zizyphus jujuba*, Lamk. The Muria use its wood for fuel and sometimes to make agricultural implements. The thorny branches are used for fencing. The fleshy drupe is eaten. Hence the riddle—'The daughter is beautiful, but the mother bites'.

chil, hikum — *Acacia concinna*.

dumel bito (polai) — *Alstonia veneriata*. The bark and roots are used to poison animals.

dundipipar — A variety of *ficus religiosa*, Linn.

garānj (karanji) — *Pongamia glabra*, Vent. Oil for lighting is expressed from the seeds; the waste is used in the ghotul for massage. The fruit is rather like a comb, whence the riddle—'A tree full of combs'.

gorga (salpi) — *Carycta urens*, Linn. For a full account, see pp. 53ff.

gunj (H) — *Abrus precatorius*, Linn. The bright red seeds are used as beads and as goldsmith's weights; crushed, they poison arrows.

harangi (sargi, sal) — *Shorea robusta*, Gaertn. The splendid **sāl**, one of the most valuable of India's timber trees, used everywhere for building, railway sleepers, tools. The Muria earn money by sawing and carting the wood. They eat the seeds and young leaves and use its resin as incense.

hindi (chhind) — The wild date-palm, *phoenix sylvestris*, Roxb. The leaves are used for mats and baskets, and for marriage-crowns. The fermented sugary sap is drunk.

iru, irpu (mahua) — *Bassia latifolia*, Roxb. See p. 33.

ita (imli) — *Tamarindus indica*, Linn. The pods are used in making condiments.

jadda (aranda) — *Ricinus communis*.

kadam, kāreka (H) — *Anthocephalus cadamba*, Miq. The fruit is eaten by human beings as well as by birds and cattle.

kaka (harra) — *Terminalia chebula*, Retz. The myrabolams are used for tanning and many Muria get work collecting and preparing them for contractors.

kaner — *Nerium odorum*, the oleander, a poisonous shrub. The seeds were used to murder an unwanted husband in southern Bastar in 1940.

karandi (mokha) — *Schrebera swietenioides*, Roxb.

karāt (kāru) — *Sterculia urens*, Roxb. The ghost tree, so called because of its gaunt white trunk with branches leafless half the year.

kasi (khassi) — *Bridelia retusa*, Spreng.

kehia (dhāman) — *Grewia tilliaefolia*, Vahl. The tough elastic wood is used by the Muria for their carrying-poles and bows.

khairi, khair kuta (Ha) — *Acacia catechu*, Willd.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CLASSIFIED GLOSSARY

104
824

kingeri (harsingri) *Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*, Linn. Widely used in medicine by the aboriginals. Buffaloes like scratching themselves against the scabrous leaves. The fragrant flowers are popular with the motiari.

koboka (bhilwan) *Semecarpus anacardium*, L.F. The marking-nut tree. The Muria eat the seeds. For the use of the juice as a counter-irritant see Codrington.

kumur (kumi) *Celastrus paniculata*, Willd.

kurru, kalmodia (kurlu) *Gardenia latifolia*, Ait. A small shrub of xerophytic habit.

kural (siuna) *Gmelina arborea*, Linn. The fruit, a succulent ovoid drupe, is eaten by chelik and motiari.

mahka (bel) *Aegle marmelos*, Correa. The tree is sacred to Hindus. The Muria use the fruit ceremonially as a substitute for the coconut.

mang (kahu) *Terminalia arjuna*, Bedd.

mard (adan, saja) *Terminalia tomentosa*, W. & A. The tree sacred to the Gond throughout central India.

marka (ām) *Mangifera indica*, Linn. The mango.

mughori (palās or pharsa) *Butea frondosa*, Roxb. The 'Flame of the Forest'. Rope is spun from its root fibres; plates and cups are made from the leaves; important in the lac industry.

nali (aonra) *Phyllanthus emblica*, Linn. The handsome wax-like fruit, which is very astringent, is valued as a stomach medicine. The leaves and branches are important demon-scarers.

samum (shisham) *Dalbergia latifolia*, Roxb. Indian rosewood.

nendi (jāmun) *Eugenia jambolana*, Lam. The black plum.

pahur (siāri) *Bauhinia vahlii*, W. & A. The camel's-foot creeper. The large leaves of this gigantic creeper are used as plates and for thatching. The Muria make rope from the fibre.

phusdar *Calotropis gigantea*, R.Br. A shrub with a milky juice.

pipi, ali (pipar) *Ficus religiosa*, Linn. The most sacred tree in India, but not specially honoured by the Muria.

reka (chār) *Buchanania lanzan*, Spreng. The fruit, which is like a plum, is coated with sugar and sold as the chironji sweet.

sumaltas (Ha) *Cassia fistula*, Linn. A beautiful tree bearing clusters of golden flowers.

hka (behera) *Terminalia belerica*, Roxb. The fruit is rapidly devoured by animals.

sāgon (Ha) *Tectona grandis*, Linn. The teak, the most important timber tree in India, famous in ship construction and for many other uses.

tirka (mākar tendu, mauju) *Diospyros embryopteris*, Pers. The fruit, which is rich in tannin, is eaten by monkeys.

toya (dumar) *Ficus glomerata*, Roxb. The wild fig.

tumir (temru, tendu) *Diospyros melanoxylon*, Roxb. The ebony tree, important in magic. The berries are a useful food.

turmura, tongondia (tilai) *Wendlandia exserta*, D.C.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

104
894

vedur (bāns) The bamboo, *dendrocalamus strictus*, Ness. The young shoots are a great delicacy. The seeds are also eaten and the pith, **vedur-jiwa** or 'soul of the bamboo', is valued.

walek (semur) *Bombax malabaricum*, D.C. The cotton tree, used ceremonially by many tribes in peninsular India.

wengor (bija) *Pterocarpus marsupium*, Roxb. The Sanskrit **asana** tree. Very important for timber. The red gum-resin is mentioned in the Lingo legend.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

female suicides prefer drowning.[1] But this is not so among the Maria. One woman preferred to hang herself even on the very banks of the Indrawati, though the deep waters of the river were at hand.

In the 50 cases of which I have detailed information, 19 suicides were committed inside a building, 16 of them inside the dwelling-place of the family. In 7 other cases death occurred near the house. In the other 24 cases the suicide took place in the jungle, a rope or cloth being attached to the branch of a tree. Among trees the mahua (*Bassia latifolia*, Roxb.) was the most popular with 6 cases, and after it the mango with 3. Otherwise there is a very great variety in the trees selected for this gloomy purpose; there do not seem to be any taboos observed, though I notice the sacred saja (*Terminalia tomentosa*, W. & A.) is not used—but this may be for the entirely practical reason that it does not have suitable overhanging branches.

The method of self-execution seems to be to climb up the tree, to attach and arrange the cord and then jump down. When the suicide occurs inside a house, the person stands on a fish-trap or basket and kicks it away. In many cases, the rope consists of the victim's own loin-cloth, turban or sari, but several different kinds of rope are also used. Rope made of the twisted siari (*Bauhinia vahlii*, W. & A.) creeper is perhaps the most common. Jute cords for tethering cattle, and ropes made of various kinds of bark are also used.

TABLE ELEVEN

Analysis of 50 Maria suicides by sex

Men	26
Women	24

The contrast between homicide and suicide in respect of the sex-ratio is very striking; 5 per cent stands against 48 per cent. There may be many reasons for this, chiefly that

[1] R. Ranchhodas and D. K. Thakore, *The Law of Crimes* (Bombay, 1911), p. 601, in the author's comment on Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code. But in the U.S.A., the order is said to be—for men—firearms, hanging, poisonous gas, corrosives, and—for women—gas, corrosives, firearms, drowning. In Japan, hanging first and then drowning are the favourite methods for both sexes.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273
481
824

Maria climbing toddy tree to extract the juice

[Facing p. 97]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 her back. Then he would beat her ferociously and helped by his relatives would rub into the wounds the juice [824] of the marking-nut (*Semecarpus anacardium*, Linn.). This juice is a powerful irritant and when applied to the skin desiccates strongly, raising black blisters. Months after Mundra's death the marks of injuries were clearly visible on the unfortunate woman's body.

The last week of Mundra's life was fully occupied in chasing his wife. It appears as though he was really fond [839] of her or at least really desired her in a sadistic manner, and he probably got considerable pleasure out of torturing her. On 20 October he went with his father to Lakhopal where they had heard Pande was hiding. They sent a villager ahead to call the girl, and she came trembling out of the house and hid below a tree. Mundra and his party then forcibly took her home to Tikanpal. That same night she ran away again. On the third day Mundra set out once more in search of her. They heard that she had again gone to Lakhopal and this time, when Mundra found her, he decided not to go home but to take her to a Siraha at Killepal in order to get her exorcized of the evil spirit which, he had decided, was the real cause of her continually leaving him. This is sometimes done when a cow refuses to stay with the herd or fails to return to its own shed at night. The Siraha is called in and divines what ancestor or godling is causing the trouble, whereupon suitable remedies are adopted. Sometimes these remedies may be unpleasant, including the burning of chillies under the nose, beating with an old shoe or making the patient drink urine.[1] It is little wonder that poor Pande regarded this suggestion with alarm.

On the evening of that day a witness remembered meeting an unknown man and woman on the boundary of Kaklur

[1] How severe these remedies sometimes are may be seen in the circumstances of a case at Mandla in 1925. A Rajput youth became strange in his manner after witnessing a melodrama and his trouble was diagnosed as spirit-possession. He was first tied to a pole in the courtyard. Then his elder sister fell into a frenzy; she swallowed a live bit of coal, declared she was possessed by Kali, and sacrificed her little daughter to that goddess in an attempt to restore her brother's sanity. This remedy failing, the unfortunate youth's hands were burned and he was tied naked in a place generally used by a harmless lunatic with a local reputation for sanctity. Here he died of exposure.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

saw her dead, I wept and was very sad. I killed her by mistake. It was not from the heart'. He went on to describe how she still came to sleep with him in dreams. She, his victim, catches him by the hand and says, 'Come. Why do we stay here in this prison?'

But normally it is considered extremely dangerous to see in a dream the ghost of the person you have murdered, or to be visited by the Departed. Pandru of Chichari described how he had a dream in prison in which two people were pressing his shoulders very hard when suddenly a third man came and pushed them aside. These two people represented the Departed, and the man who pushed them away was a friendly ancestor who thus saved him from a serious illness. He said that while he was in jail three of his fellow-prisoners saw in dreams the ghosts of the men they had killed and all three died. Boti of Telam was also visited by the ghost of his victim, and as a result he was ill for a whole year. This suggests a strongly emotional element in dreams about violent crime.

This is a convenient point to refer to the very interesting dream seen by Pandru shortly before the fatal quarrel with his brother which led to murder and imprisonment. In his dream he saw an Anga clan-god and a drum and village trumpet. The clan-god stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested that the people were weeping and mourning. In *The Muria and Their Ghotul* I suggest a close connection between the uses of the Anga clan-god and the corpse for purposes of divination. The Anga, which is carried on the shoulders by four men and in many cases resembles a bier, is a suitable harbinger of doom.

A Jailor of thirty years' experience told me that usually the Maria murderers went to their fate bravely and seldom had to be dragged or forced. They were asked to say *Ram Ram Ram* as they went to their death. The executions have a profound effect on other prisoners. Doga of Jabeli was condemned to death and was confined in a solitary cell next door to Marvi Chewa. He told me how terrified he was when Chewa was hanged, since he knew that the same fate was in store for him. All night before his execution, Doga listened to the unhappy man weeping and heard the struggle as he

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

C. *Omens*

We have seen how the addling of the eggs of the *kasyeq-gaita's* hens may lead to the abandonment of a village site[1]; how the siting of a new Bison-horn village is affected by the finding of roots or stones when the *perma* digs a hole for the first *saja* post, and how even when these omens have allowed the hole to be dug, they have further to be confirmed by the villagers waiting till the next day to see whether two heaps of rice have been disturbed[2]; and how before the ceremonial *weta* hunts of the Bison-horn Marias begin, the *perma* consults the omens with two split pieces of a tooth-stick.[3] The Bison-horn Maria often calls in the *waddai* to examine the omens and fix auspicious days for sowing or other occasions. Omens are particularly important in connexion with betrothals and weddings, but among Bison-horn Marias only; the Hill Marias, except those living in contact with the Bison-horn Marias, seem not to worry over them, and in fact to be ignorant of the whole practice. But the Bison-horn Maria likes everything done on an auspicious day, and then only if no adverse omen is met. Russell and Hiralal (III, p. 78) write:—

> 'In Bastar an omen is taken before the wedding. The village elders meet on an auspicious day as Monday, Thursday or Friday, and after midnight they cook and eat food, and go out into the forest. They look for a small black bird called Usi, from which omens are commonly taken. When anybody sees this bird, if it cries "*Sus, Sus*" on the right hand, it is thought that the marriage will be lucky. If, however, it cries "*Chi, Chi*", or "*Fis, Fis*", the proposed match is held to be of evil omen, and is cancelled. The Koya Gonds of Bastar distil mahua liquor before arranging for a match. If the liquor is good, they think the marriage will be lucky, and take the liquor with them to cement the betrothal; but if it is bad they think the marriage will be unlucky, and the proposal is dropped.'

The *usi* bird is a common source of omens; the Marias of the Kutru zamindari below the Abujhmar hills, who are really Hill Marias influenced greatly by contact with Bison-horn Marias and Teluguized Dorlas, when they select a new *modul wadde* as clan-priest and social arbiter, consult the omens before confirming their selection; they go to the forest, and if they hear an *usi* twittering on their left as they go and on their right as they return, consider that the omens favour their selection, but make a fresh selection if the bird twitters on the other sides. Among Bison-horn Marias the *usi* is not the usual source of marriage omens; if the party on its way to ask for a girl's hand in marriage meets a tiger, panther, sambhur, chital, jackal or snake crossing their path from left to right, it is a good omen; if it crosses the path from right to left, the omen is bad, but merely shows that the expedition has started on a bad day and must

[1] See p. 103. [2] See pp. 122-3. [3] See p. 211.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. Beliefs about Natural Phenomena

To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-vil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garhar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

222 had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save
539 char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honey-comb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

222 The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big
[125] trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitka ondār* and the *lokti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the
[417] tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

[263] The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

[771] Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

524 The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognize four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mohu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sattapuri mohu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nikiti mohu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[171] [2] 'It *is* considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 52. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'In a golden box bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 450.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

● 825 The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that [152] the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *taranh taranh tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

[411]

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tila*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tila de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking pude*, *peking pude* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, [261] some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

224 For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though
411 some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligundi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dassera festival in Jagdalpur.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.' 539
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill. 223
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jīhgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon 226
the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make
every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish
that live in tanks and flooded fields.

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally 825
that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps 821
into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem 614
of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a
dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *karangra*, *māri*
(or *bāns*), *bots* (or *khoksi*), *dundum*, *luwa* (or *turu*) and *bāgum*.

The gall-bladder of the *bāgum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake- 278
bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the
State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by
filling it with the small kosra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is
needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions,
is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient
to drink.

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a 227
hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 226

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

781
825

1 The 'horse' of Lingo Pen at Semargaon
2 A Dhurwa hobby-horse
3 Hobby-horse at the Malshot wedding
4 The 'horse' of Lingal Pen at Chorpal

[p. 196 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in each case what kind of worship, what special offerings, what peculiar rites will be acceptable to the god. 791 793

These mediums are known in Bastar by the Halbi word Siraha. A Leski is sometimes the Siraha's assistant; sometimes the words are used synonymously. The Siraha does not offer sacrifice, indeed he is not a priest at all; he is simply a medium through whom the gods make known their will. He has the power of falling into trance, of dancing ecstatically and of diagnosing disease and interpreting the divine commands while in this condition. Scores of these men may be seen at any of the great festivals in the State. With their long hair flying wildly about them as they shake their heads, with scourges and whips in their hands and their drunken, drugged, besotted look, they are a distinctive feature of every Muria religious assembly. Yet, in ordinary life, they are completely normal, sensible, hard-working men and no one would suppose that they were capable of such remarkable transformations.

The Gunia, who understands *guni* or magical charms, is simply a medicine-man. He is called in to cure the sick, to recover lost property and to discover the culprit when goods or cattle are stolen. The Panjiyar is a diviner who works by measuring bits of grass which he questions until he obtains the correct answer. The Gunia tends rather to work with a winnowing-fan or a lamp. Both use grain for divination. 791 787

Another common form of divination in Bastar is by eggs. Among the Hill Maria, the Kaser-Gaita watches the eggs hatched in his house; if these get addled it may be a sign that the village site should be changed. The Muria test the omens by egg-throwing at the time of breaking stilts.[1] All the Bastar tribes use eggs in worship, and offer them before going out to hunt and fish, 'for they are greatly loved by the gods'. 787 825

Eggs are liked by the gods because 'an egg is like a virgin whom no one has touched, or a pregnant woman who holds two souls at once'. A curious tale explains the origin of poultry.

> There was an entirely dark village twelve *kos* long. Once the people went out with a widow's son to search for light. They went a long long way until they lay down weary to sleep. When they awoke they found the sun in the sky. The widow's son declared that he had not slept and had seen a one-legged man put the sun there. The others were jealous that he should have seen this sight and killed him. They divided the flesh among themselves and gave some to the boy's mother, who took it not knowing what it was. She put it aside for him to eat when he should return. But next day, early in the morning as the sun came into the sky, the boy's flesh turned into a cock and began to crow. So when a hen lays an egg it is only a lump of flesh; it is when it hears the cock crow that life comes into it. That is why gods and men love eggs—*for* they are a sign of strength and life.

For this reason, it is said, gods and ghosts are not often responsible for addling eggs; this is done by human enemies. If a setting of eggs is thus spoilt by black magic, it should be lifted up together with its straw and placed on a piece of an earthen pot. It should be taken to a cross-road, where the priest must say, '*Thu ihu, sunlatia*, go back to whoever sent you'. He throws away the eggs and the party returns home without looking back. Elsewhere when 789

[1] Divination by egg-throwing is recorded of the Khasi.—P. R. T. Gurdon, *The Khasis* (London, 1914), pp. 76 and 216ff. In 1942 I found the Juang of Pal Lahara employing the virgin son of the village priest to test the omens, before a festival, by egg-throwing. The use of eggs in worship is widespread in Bastar and Orissa.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

791 considerably weakened and the sensations become very dull and dim. The higher
781 centres of the brain seem to be partially split off from the incoming sensory currents, on the one hand, and from the motor centres, on the other'.[1] At the same time, the mental state becomes more and more simple and the many objects of normal consciousness gradually tend to give way to a state of monoideism. These mediums are undoubtedly out of their wits; they can hurl themselves about and fall with a force that would injure men in an ordinary state of consciousness.[2]

●825 It is interesting to find that in Bastar as elsewhere throughout the world
171 this ecstatic condition is associated with the horse. 'It is not only in Java and Bali', writes Beryl de Zoëte, 'that the hobby-horse is associated with trance. The wonderful Roumanian Calusari, the little horsemen, the Good Fairies who dramatically fight the Wicked One in their ecstatic dance, have as one of their principal functions the exorcism of evil spirits who bring disease, just like the Koeda Kepand (rattan horses) of Java and the Sanghyang Djaran of Bali. And this function is exercised through an abnormal state of consciousness which at a certain degree of intensity we call trance, and in some cases through the medium of a wooden or rattan horse, or merely the head and tail of a horse united by some kind of rod . . . Perhaps there is no continent in which the hobby-horse is unknown. In England he seems innocent enough, ambling along among the mysterious antlered figures of Abbot's Bromley, or through many a French folk-dance.'[3]

The horse has long been used in magic. Tacitus and Camden referred to augury by the horse in the ancient world. It has been said that the Wooden Horse of Troy was 'an instrument of magic rather than military tactics'.[4] Armed horsemen in Arabia in more recent times are quoted as riding round the tent in which a child is to be born and showing clearly by their arms, horses and movements that they are trying to frighten away evil spirits at a vitally important time.[5] In India the worship of the horse has been recorded for certain aboriginal tribes. For example, Hislop says that throughout the Nagpur District at his time (*circa* 1860) everyone worshipped Koda Pen, and a god named Kola Sur was worshipped with an offering of earthen horses on the top of a hill near Great Ambora.[6] The mare-headed goddess, Basali, represented with a horse's head or as a wooden horse, is worshipped by the Keots and allied tribes in Orissa.[7] The Bhil represent their dead as riding on

[1] J. B. Pratt, *The Religious Consciousness* (New York, 1923), p. 424.

[2] With the Bastar trance we may compare the 'jerks' which have been described by a contemporary in a revival in South Carolina in 1803. Persons would 'suddenly fall to the ground, and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backwards and forwards with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a woman's head might be heard to crack . . And then there was the jumping exercise in which several persons might be seen standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies.' —W. T. White, *American Negro Folk-songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 43, quoting Bishop Capers. This would be a good description of the Muria trance.

[3] W. Spies and B. de Zoëte, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London, 1938), p. 78.

[4] W. F. J. Knight, 'Myth and Legend of Troy' in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. XLVI, p. 98, who cites L. Malten in *Jarbb. d. deutsch. arch. Inst.*, Vol. XIX (1915), pp. 179ff. as authority for 'the dangerous and demoniac associations of the horse in early times'.

[5] Ibid., p. 109.

[6] Hislop, *op. cit.*, Part IV, p. iii. See also V. Ball, *Jungle Life in India* (London, 1880), p. 23.

[7] P. Sen, 'A Basali Folk-Song', *Man in India*, Vol. XII, pp. 175ff. and S. C. Mitra, 'On a Curious Cult of Orissa', *JASB*, Vol. XXX, p. 19.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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horseback; so do the Korku on their carved memorial tablets.[1] The Muria often offer horses of clay or brass (Fig. 24) at their shrines. Sir Lewis Fermor

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778]

After a photograph by G. F. Ramadier

FIG. 28. Gond shrine near Naghir, Chanda District

discovered a remarkable iron horse among clay horses offered to a village god on the top of a hill of manganese-ore in the Chhindwara District, which he thought might be compared with the horse offered to the Southern Indian deity Iyenar.[2]

One of the oldest of Indian sacrifices is the *asvamedha*, or horse-sacrifice, which has been traced to Scythia. 'There has always', says Penzer, 'been a close connexion between horses and the sea-god, and also with the sun. The latter connexion is due not merely, I think, to the fact that the horse was the "vehicle"—of the sun-god, but because, through its swiftness, strength and activity, it was itself a symbol of the sun.' Penzer gives an account of the rite, which included the horse's consecration and its release for a year's wandering before the actual sacrifice. After its death, the queen lay with the animal so that its great powers of fertility might be transferred to her.[3] Frazer describes rites for the horse among the Russians and Chinese.[4] The Greeks sacrificed horses to the sea-god.

This association of the horse with magic, worship and sacrifice provides a background to its connexion with divination and ecstatic trance among the

[1] See W. Koppers, 'Monuments to the Dead of the Bhils and Other Primitive Tribes in Central India', *Anuali Lateranensi*, Vol. VI (1942), *passim*; D. H. Gordon, 'Korku Memorial Tablets', *Man*, 1936, Vol. XIX.

[2] L. Fermor, 'An Iron Horse from the Central Provinces', *JRASB*, Vol. II (1936), pp. 211–14.

[3] *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. IV, pp. 14–16.

[4] *Pausanias*, Vol. IV, pp. 197f.

MURIA RELIGION

Garo at their great annual festival of the ingathering of the harvest called the *Wangala* or *Gurenala*. At the climax of the Gond-Pardhan ceremony of the Laru Kaj in Mandla the 'horses of the god' perform an ecstatic dance.[1]

This custom of making horses to dance with may be compared to that of the Buryat shamans of Baikal (Siberia) who use horse-staves made of wood or iron, the upper part being bent with a horse-head carved on it, while the middle part of the stick forms the knee-joints of the horse, and the lower end is fashioned into a hoof. Bells are tied to the horse-staves and 'to make it look more realistic' miniature stirrups are added. They represent the horses on which the shaman rides to the Upper and Lower Worlds. In its power of inducing trance the horse-stave appears to be connected with the drum which is often covered with horse-hide.[2]

I have noticed very similar customs among the Muria. Lingo Pen has two horses always kept in his shrine at Semurgaon. These are decorated roots of trees which have been chosen because their shape resembles that of a horse's head. At the festivals of the god, these 'horses' are carried about by the mediums and are used both for divination and to stimulate trance. Decorated staves representing horses are carried by many of the chelik when they attend the clan festivals in the Abujhmar foot-hills. In one village, Kanher, members of the Gandu sept have a special relation with the wooden horse of Bara Pen. At Metawand I watched for several hours the antics of a medium who was carrying on his shoulders the wooden horse of his clan-god and at Bandopal a medium carrying an imaginary horse on his shoulder 'ambled, caracoled, pranced and plunged' for two miles before my slow-moving car as we made our way into the jungle for the Marka Pandum. 'The god rides upon him', they told me, 'and he cannot stop dancing for days at a time.' At a wedding in Malakot, I saw a medium riding on a characteristic hobby-horse; and again in the Dhurwa country to the south, I saw a man dancing astride a similar wooden hobby-horse. In both cases the rider would fall into trance if anything went wrong with the proceedings and would be able to diagnose the supernatural cause of the trouble.

This association of the horse with trance may be due to the dignity and beauty of the animal or to its swiftness, or possibly because it is regarded as a fertility offerings symbol.

'Three experiences', says Campbell, 'combine to make the horse a leading guard against the Evil Eye. To horse-owning peoples, his willing strength, intelligence, spirit and devotion make the horse the guardian of the higher or self-sacrificing type. Among tribes to whom the horse is strange, his size, power and fury make him a friend requiring and rewarding the process of squaring. To all who have dealings with the horse, his nervousness, his delicacy, his liability to strange sweatings and other sudden sicknesses shew that the horse is a favourite home for spirit-influence.'[3]

IX. The Cure of Disease

Where the trouble is sickness, there seems to be what would be regarded elsewhere as a definite element of 'suggestion' in the Siraha's treatment. In December 1940, I was lying very ill in my camp at Metawand. The Pargana

[1] Cf. Shamrao Hivale, 'The Laru Kaj', *Man in India*, Vol. XXIV (1944), p. 122.
[2] M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia* (Oxford, 1914), p. 224, quoting Agapitoff and Khangaloff.
[3] J. M. Campbell, 'Notes on the Spirit Basis of Belief and Custom', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXX (1901), p. 100.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Kokora Karsana

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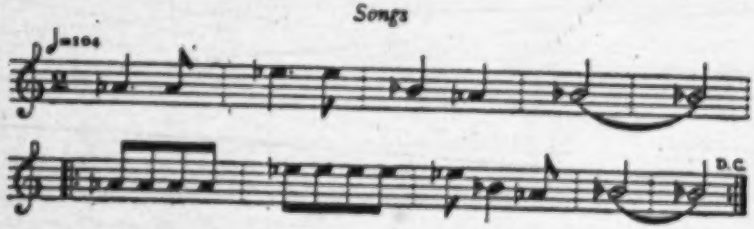
This is called Kokora (Crane) Karsana at Remawand, Mindachna Pata at Markabera, and Tutumri Karsana at Kuntpadar. It may have other names elsewhere. The girls form a circle; each puts her hands on her neighbour's knees, that is, her right hand on her right-hand neighbour's left knee while her right-hand neighbour puts her left hand on her right knee, so that all round the circle arms are crossed and the girls bending forward. They dance very vigorously, standing stationary, but jerking their buttocks inwards. Presently they swing round and face outwards, and now their buttocks knock against each other to the amusement of all. In Sidhawand, when the girls faced outwards they lifted their hands from their knees and clapped them together. But the essence of this dance is its frankly sexual imitations.

Songs

[533]



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[539]

Kon pāra jābe re kokoda, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kalār pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Kewta pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.
Māhara pāra jābe re, durun ruchu durun ruchu.

Where are you going to, O crane? *Durun ruchu durun ruchu.*
Go to the Kalar hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Kewta hamlet, O crane.
Go to the Mahara hamlet, O crane.

[845]

The names of the hamlets are those of low Hindu castes. The refrain *ruchu ruchu* is reminiscent of the noise *ruchmuch ruchmuch* which a bed is supposed to make when intercourse occurs on it. The crane is everywhere a sexual symbol, the devotion of these birds to one another being proverbial.

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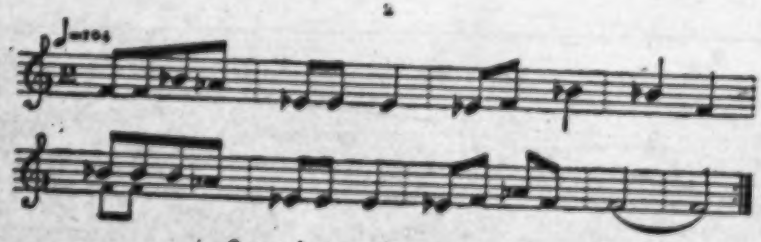

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O re re loyo re rela re re loyo oy!

O lu tumri parheli ātin! O toilet-twig from the ebony tree!

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

piece of wood in his hand and lifting it over each pile several times from right to left uttered charms calling on the soul of the deceased to be content. The dead man's son brought a chicken and made it eat the rice, going from right to left three times. The Waddai passed his stick quickly over the chicken each time. However, when the fowl was eating the rice, it did not follow the proper order, but started to eat the sixth pile after the fourth. The Waddai declared that this was because two persons were involved in the fatal magic. After this had been done three times, the dead man's son passed the chicken between his legs backwards and twisted its neck till it was severed from the trunk. This he threw behind him, holding the head in his hands. He ripped open the head by cutting it through the beak and threw it into the fire. If this was not done, the head might turn into what is called in Gondi *vispitte* (a kind of bird which is known as *jiv chirai* in Hindi) and if this came to the village and called 'jiv, jiv' the people would die.

They then dug a hole in the earth close to the leaf-cups with a knife and placed a forked saja stick there. The dead man's son stood in front of the stick with his back to it, holding the cow's tail in his hand. He pointed it first at the sun, then to the four corners of the world and lastly to the place where the dead body had been cremated. He did this thrice and then tied the tail to the stick and poured a little landa on it. The dead man's wife offered some mahua liquor in a leaf-cup, because when her husband was alive one day when they were drinking they had agreed to die together. The Waddai, therefore, said as she was giving the liquor, 'Do not also take her away with you; release her from her promise; let her live for a while and look after the other members of the family'. Then the deceased's son and brother-in-law, who had carried the rice and pulse, threw it down near the stick. The dead man's son who had also taken with him a little thatch from the roof of his house now threw this at the stick saying, 'You built the house, now accept this'. Similarly, all the other things of which the old man had been fond when he was alive were thrown there. His son-in-law, however, picked up his bow and arrow and his knife was taken by one of the drummers. The drummers then threw away their drum-sticks into the ashes of the pyre.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

his enemy directly by blowing something at him, by putting 754
a charm into his food, by performing certain rites or by the evil eye. He may turn into an animal and attack his foe in wild and bestial guise. He may obtain the services of a ghost or a godling to do his work for him.

Stories illustrating all these different methods are common in the Maria villages. At Khutepal I was told 'how a man there could transform himself into a tiger. He would then lie hid in the jungle and when any human being or cow came by, he used to kill and devour him. He then took his human form again and came home and lay with his wife'. After he had killed five or six people in this way, the villagers finally summoned up courage to track down the 'tiger' and kill it. A watch was kept and one day to their surprise and horror they saw the man actually changing into a tiger and then back to human form. They rushed at him and killed him instantly. Similar stories were told me in Dhurli, but here they said that it was most common for such things to happen in the great Zamindari of Jeypore. It is generally believed that if a were-tiger is injured, similar marks will appear on the human body of the man who has possessed it.

Sometimes instead of turning into an animal the sorcerer 754
sends an animal to do his business for him. There are many 825
stories of how people have been attacked by bears and tigers on this account. Indeed many Maria believe that no animal or snake will ever attack a human being unless it is incited to do so by magic. Once on the way from Pordem to Rewali I saw the funeral pyre of a snake. A little while previously a very long snake marked with alternate black and yellow bands had been sent to Rewali by a magician to kill one of his enemies, Nupo Bira. Bira, however, was able to kill the snake in time, and its body was then carried out of the village and cremated beyond the boundary-line. Four pegs of tendu wood were driven into the ground at the four corners of the pyre, and the people claimed that the ritual cremation together with the pegs would effectively protect Bira from any further attack.[1]

[1] An extraordinary case occurred at Bhandara in 1929. A Kunbin (Hindu) woman was bitten by a snake and to avoid further trouble installed the image of Nagoba (the cobra god) in her house. This deity used to possess her and she gained a wide reputation as a healer. One day a fisherwoman, haunted by evil spirits, came for treatment.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

larger and higher, generally with a separate cooking hut; and he is learning the Hindu habit of periodic re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung.

It was observed above that a Hill Maria's head with a round patch of hair on the crown drawn back into a top-knot and the rest shaved, but often stubbly or only less long than the crown patch, resembles in appearance a hill-crest with a clearing all around for *penda* cultivation and a grove of trees left standing on the summit. This is the old style of coiffure for men in the Abujhmar mountains, but the younger men incline to imitate Muria or Bison-horn Maria fashions. There are no recognized barbers among them; every man keeps his own razor and shaves his friends, who return the compliment. The razor blade is made by the nearest blacksmith from locally collected ore, and is shaped like a little single-edged *dao*, the edge being convexly curved, and the blade fitted into a small cylindrical wooden handle by a pointed tang heated and then worked into the round end of the handle; the greatest length of the blade varies from 7 to 8·5 cm., the greatest breadth is about 2 cm., and the handle is generally about 6 to 6·5 cm. long. They are kept wrapped in a dirty rag to prevent rust, and tucked into the loin-cloth near the small of the back. The barber grasps his patient's crown-tuft in his left hand, tilts his head forward, pours water over the hair to be removed, and pushes the razor-blade downwards from the crown through the hair, stropping the blade at intervals on his own calves or thigh, and wiping off any hair adhering to it on the patient's head. He first shaves the back of the head and neck, measuring the length of the crown patch to be left unshaved by the length of the crown-tuft as it hangs down unknotted; he then shaves the sides behind the ears and above the cheeks, including side-whiskers if any, and ends with the front of the skull. He shaves efficiently and quickly. There is seldom need to trim beard or moustache. The old and middle-aged have their heads shaved only once or twice a year, if as often; but it is thought slack for a younger man not to do so every month. There are no religious or social occasions, such as births, weddings, funerals, or visits to the clan-god, when shaving is obligatory. It is dangerous to leave your hair where your enemy or some witch or wizard may get hold of it; so you gather it, take it well into the jungle, hold it to your lips and puff it away, so depriving it of your personality or *jiwa* and making it useless for any magic.

Hair-dressing

Many of the younger men imitate the Bison-horn fashion of coiffure. A straight fringe or *witto* is left, varying from 4 cm. in length over the centre of the forehead to 2·5 cm. over the temples

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. *Beliefs about Natural Phenomena*

To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any underworld or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*poraś*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ha*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-vil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with a hare-lip '*garhar-kandya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

674 754 823 I do not in any way emphasize it, but it seems to me curious that many crimes connected with sorcery are associated with water; they are performed on the banks of ponds or rivers and in several instances the body has been thrown into the water afterwards. Does a murderer who has killed a sorcerer believe that there is some spiritual antiseptic for him in throwing his victim's body into water?

IV

841 Grigson has studied in detail the custom of the Hill Marias in regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, but his notes on the Bison-horn Marias need, as he says, 'considerable supplementing'. The Bison-horn Marias have the curious belief that men, not women, were originally subject to a menstrual period. They used to tie hollow bamboos to their organs to catch the discharge. Once—according to one legend—a girl was laughing at a man in this distressing and inconvenient condition, and he lost his temper and threw the bamboo at her; in another story a sister wanted to help her brother, who could not cut his clearing properly on account of the bamboo tagged on in front of him, and offered to take it instead. 841 Yet other legends ascribe the origin of menstruation to a wound. There were formerly teeth in the vagina and when these were 826 removed, the wound was not wholly healed. Once the vagina was in the crick of the leg behind the knee—you can still see its shape—but a hen pecked at it and the frightened organ jumped for safety to its hiding-place between the thighs. But it was hurt and it still bleeds every month at the recollection.

841 All the Gond tribes are very strict about the menstrual taboos, in this contrasting sharply with the Orissa Bondos, Gadabas, and Saoras, who are at a similar stage of culture and live not very far away. Grigson has described the extreme rigorism of the Hill Marias and has rightly suggested that the Bison-horn Marias are somewhat less apprehensive of the dangers of menstruation. But they too, like the Murias and the Gonds generally, are strict enough in their application of the taboo and breach of it may be punished by the Departed through the bite of a snake or the destruction of the harvest. They do not usually build special menstruation huts, but sometimes where there is a girls' dormitory, menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and unmarried girls on the other. In such villages, no married woman may go near the dormitory nor should youths enter it. Not all dormitories however are used in this way.

841 881 Elsewhere part of the veranda of the ordinary living-house is screened off or a little hut is built in the compound for the use of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

Although the Muria do not analyse the parts of the body or the face with the care given to this pleasant task by the more sophisticated Indian communities, they have a fully developed aesthetic tradition of the breast. This is natural in a people who but yesterday learnt to cover the upper part of their bodies with a cloth. Even now I have seen in many Muria houses girls husking rice or grinding grain without any upper cloth. When no strangers are about, they still, in the western areas, discard as many clothes as possible. The breasts, so often seen, are always admired. A boy, asked the age of a girl, will answer by showing with his open hands the size of her breasts. 'She may have breasts as big as a coconut, or they may be small as a lemon, but they are beautiful and we love them', said a chelik at Masora. 'A girl's beauty is in her breasts. But'—and this is an interesting point—'the breasts do not remain. After a child is born their loveliness departs. But always there are the shoulders; they never betray us.' In other words, sexual congress demands something to hold—'from holding comes joy indescribable'; in youth a chelik holds the breasts; later he holds the shoulders, and these never betray him, but go with him all his life.

There are many vivid similes for the breast, a whole vocabulary and system of classification, reminding one a little of Jayle's famous distinction of nine mammary types. As we might expect, several of the chelik's classifications are of small and immature breasts—the *paras dudo*, like half-formed gourds; the *benjri dudo*, like small brinjals at which the boys laugh saying, 'When will the brinjals in your garden be ripe?'; the *bondo-kukh dudo*, like little mushrooms; the *thaka dudo*, like small pots. The *kosa dudo* are compared to cocoons; they are the breasts of a girl only just mature; and the *urang kashla dudo* are also immature and 'flat as dog-fleas'.

The breasts of the older motiari are finely developed. Such are the *gutta dudo*—'their youthful strength stands up like pega'; the *kapa dudo*, the 'ripe brinjal which is fresh and firm'; the *kindri dudo*, of which it is said that 'even if she has five children they will keep their shape'; the *burka dudo*, the large hemispherical breasts of a faithful wife and loving mother; the *marka dudo*, or mango breasts; the magnificent *siral dudo*, 'tiger breasts', the best of all, hemispherical with well-marked areolae and a beautiful conical-tipped nipple, whose milk nourishes a child into a young tiger.

Less admired are the *kurbin dudo*, small with long nipples, called 'monkey breasts' in Mandla; the *dhodka* or *torka dudo*, another gourd breast but elongated and weaker which gives poor thin milk; the *chimni dudo*, with long nipples 'like the funnel of a country lamp'; and the *kind dhati dudo*, the nipples of which are 'like the berries of the chhind shrub'. It is notable that in this group the breasts are classified according to the nipples.

The breasts of older women are the flat *hulta dudo*, the *harpunj dudo*, long as country shoes and the *tiblo dudo* which 'flop down like dripping water', a description which recalls the expression in Betul Gondi—*dudukh ding-dong ailing*: 'her breasts are dangling like a blanket behind a cart'.[1]

'beauty', but this seems to mean simply 'good to see'. Ugliness is described with more animation. *Sika-arjil* means, in Betul, 'a shock-headed untidy person looking like a savage bear'. *Bukril koruingna mai* is a 'fat-faced woman'. To call a man *kalkur* in Gondi means he is 'thin as a stick'. Mitchell gives *ofo* as meaning 'ugly' among the Bison-horn Maria.

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 36. Muria similes for the breast, which may be paralleled by those current among the Baiga (see *The Baiga*, pp. 343ff) must be almost unique for detail and imagination. The Greeks had their *dura fastidiosa*; the Arabs admired the pomegranate breast; the medieval German ideal was 'that the breasts should be high and rounded, like apples or pears, small and soft' (Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection*,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

no Dead to people their kingdom. But if this human being were to eat a bit of the liver of his own son, then there would be deaths in the world and the Maria himself would have learned the knowledge of evil and death and would become a magician.

'The Maria, little knowing that when Nandraj Guru said "pigeon", he meant his son, asked one of the gods to go to his

A typical Anga Pen, a clan-god. Carried by four men, it is sometimes used to detect witches.

house and fetch the bird. The god killed the boy, removed the liver, and the Maria and the seven gods ate it together. As the Maria unwittingly ate the liver of his own son, he was filled with the knowledge of death and evil, and became the first sorcerer. Before he died, he taught his own disciples the art and today many men know how to harm and kill their enemies. But in every case the liver must be obtained, for the liver is the *jiwa* (soul) of all beings.'

In Khutepal the Maria said that they began learning magic in the month of June. The young disciples must go to the jungle and set up a small stone which represents an uraskal menhir. To the left of the pillar they place another stone flat on the ground to represent a danyakal. Then between the uraskal and the danyakal a number of small stones are placed in line from right to left. This line of stones represents one kind of magic, say the magic for curing the sick. Parallel to this they place a second line of small stones. This represents another kind of magic, say doing injury to an enemy.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

7771 am not sure that a ring associated with any kind of death is not equally useful.

787 The Maria magicians believe themselves able to foretell a 844 child's destiny by certain signs at birth. If, at the place where the placenta is buried, there appear the footprints of a tiger or the marks of a snake, they declare that the child will be either killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. If the water in the pot that is placed above the placenta-pit runs out of its own accord, it means that the child will be drowned. If a baby is born with a strangulating cord, it means that, when it grows up, it will either be hanged or will commit suicide by hanging.

000 But there is nothing to compare with the superstitions in Europe; the belief, for example, that the heart of a still-born child eaten while yet warm renders the eater invisible, thus aiding him to steal. Adam gives a number of beliefs from the Western world that equal the most bizarre of those recorded in Asia. He describes the soporiferous candles made of the fat of virgin children and used to see whether anyone was still awake in a house about to be burgled. The left thumb of a corpse nine weeks in the grave enables a thief to enter a house at night without rousing the occupants. In Poland the right hand of the corpse of a suicide may be used to discover stolen goods. In Italy, especially in Sicily, it is still believed that treasure can be unearthed with the assistance of the blood of innocent children.[1]

[826] [1] Adam, op. cit., pp. 261 ff. In Mandla District I have met Gond who believe that when a man is hanged a few drops of *jiv-tel*, or "life-oil", fall from his body. If this oil can be obtained and applied to a dying man, he will be restored to life. At one time Mr Hivale was believed to possess a few drops of this precious liquid. The 'Hand of Glory' idea has its parallel in India. In Chittagong it was at one time customary for dacoits (mostly Mohammedan) to spread a shroud stolen from a corpse over the roof of a house to prevent the inhabitants from waking. See E. O. Sherborne, *Man*, Feb. 1934.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

DREAMS

OFFICIALLY it is not possible to dream inside the ghotul, for Lingo and the other ghotul gods protect those who sleep there, and indeed I believe that in many places the boys and girls dream very little, enjoying sound and satisfying sleep in the security, warmth and delight of their peculiar realm.

But not all ghotul are equally happy. In Binjhli for example, where there was a strange atmosphere of jealousy and frustration, I heard a great deal about dreams. And in all villages there are official and standardized dreams which are believed to be the normal means of receiving communications from gods or ancestors.

It is not possible, I think, to provide material on this subject which will be of much value to the psycho-analyst. It is very difficult to obtain the Muria's associations to their dreams; their memory is poor and they are so timid that too prolonged an inquiry is likely to make it impossible to obtain any information at all. But it is possible to discover various ideas and attitudes of the Muria through an examination of their dreams, especially since the most important are of the official type.

What is the Muria theory of dreams? Where do they come from and why do we see them? Some say that all sleep is a dream; sleep is the food by which man's life is recreated and 'the dream is the chutney of sleep'. As with other Indian aboriginals the Muria theory of dreams is closely related to the idea of the soul or *jiwa*. The *jiwa* leaves the body in sleep, goes here and there and what it sees during its adventures is the dream.[1] The power of the *jiwa* to leave the body is described in a significant tale from Ulera.

> One day long ago two men went to a blacksmith's shop to rest. One fell asleep, the other sat by his side watching. Presently from the sleeper's mouth there came out his *jiwa* in the form of a lizard and went to feed. A dog saw it and chased it into an ant-hill. There it saw a pot full of rupees.
>
> The other man covered the sleeper's face with coal-dust for a joke. When the *jiwa* returned it did not recognize its body with the blackened face, and went away seeking for it elsewhere. By and by the second man noticed a lizard going to and fro, and soon realized what had happened. He quickly cleaned the sleeper's face, and the lizard, recognizing the body, entered it, and became a *jiwa* again.
>
> When the sleeper awoke he told his friend what he had seen in his dreams, and they went to the ant-hill and found the rupees. This is a true tale of what actually occurred.[2]

[1] Compare *The Baiga*, p. 408.

[2] The literature of the 'separable soul' is considerable. It appears in folk-tales as the useful motif of 'entering another's body' which, as Penzer rightly insists, must not be confused with the quite distinct 'life-index' motif. Crooke observes that 'in Bombay it is considered most reprehensible to play jokes on a sleeping person, such as painting the face in fantastic colours, or giving moustaches to a sleeping woman. The absent soul may not be able to find its own body, the appearance of which has been thus changed, and may depart altogether, leaving the body a corpse'.—*Religion and Folk-Lore*, Vol. I, p. 232. For the subject generally see *The Ocean of Story*, Vol. I, p. 37, n. 2; A. E. Crawley, 'Doubles', Hastings' *E.R.E.*, Vol. IV, pp. 853f.; M. Bloomfield, 'On the Art of Entering Another's Body', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. LVI, pp. 1ff.;

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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Another tale, from Atargaon, points the same moral.

> Dream and Wealth were disputing which was the greater. When they could not agree they decided that each should hide in turn and whoever could find the other, yet not be found himself, would win the contest. Wealth hid himself first. He took the shape of a pot of rupees and hid in an ant-hill. Dream went to a very poor boy who was lying asleep and called his soul to come out. When the *jiwa* came Dream sent it to the ant-hill. It returned, and when the boy awoke he went to the ant-hill and dug up Wealth in the shape of the pot. Then Dream hid in the wind, and was blown here and there about the world. Wealth could not find him and when they met again he admitted that Dream was the greater.

In this other world into which the *jiwa* can enter during sleep, the gods and the Departed are familiar figures and the *jiwa* can talk with them and learn their will. Often, however, the Muria speak as though the gods and the dead had come to them in sleep, that the approach was, as it were, from the other side. Obviously the ordinary Muria, any more than the ordinary Englishman, has no consistent theory. One thing which has puzzled him, and which he explains by a fantastic tale, is the 'falsity' or symbolism of dreams. In Berma I was given a story which accounts for this.

> Long ago men could read the future in their dreams. An owl heard of it and said, 'If men can see the future in dreams, they will never die'. The owl waited till the gods were holding a darbar and then fell with a bang into the midst of them. The gods said, 'What is the matter?' The owl replied, 'I have had a dream, and in that dream I was marrying a Raja's daughter. We had done eleven rounds of the Lagir; had it been twelve she had been mine; but I awoke and fell to the ground. Now I must marry this girl. What am I to do?' The gods were concerned and said to one another, 'How can a red-eyed bird marry a Raja's daughter?' The owl replied, 'But all the world gets what it sees in dreams; how can it be that only my dreams are false?' At that the gods cursed men saying, 'From now on, let all dreams be false'.

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Dreams, therefore, are symbolic. They are code messages from the other world and only the wise can decipher them. There is a fairly extensive system of dream-interpretation, on the whole consistently maintained throughout the Muria area although with a few variations from place to place. I will tabulate these interpretations for the reader's convenience.

787

	Good Dreams
One's dead parents ..	.. Lucky, for it shows they have retained their affection for one.
Drowning in a river ..	.. Very good. The Yer Kanyang so loves the dreamer that she wants to marry him.

Sir J. G. Frazer, *Taboo and Perils of the Soul*, pp. 37 and 49; *Panjab Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 166 (which gives a tale with a similar motif to that in the text); W. A. Clouston, *Popular Tales and Fictions* (Edinburgh, 1887), Vol. I, p. 437.

For a Santal story of a soul which slipped out of a man's sleeping body in the form of a lizard and was prevented from returning, see B. Bonnerjea, 'The Social and Ceremonial Life of the Santals', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LIX (1930), p. 100.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE GHOTUL AND RELIGION

I. The Ghotul Festivals

THROUGHOUT this book we have seen the important part that the chelik play in the religious life of the tribe. Their success in hunting is the best of omens for the coming harvest; their drumming and dancing adds excitement and delight to the dreariest routine. They serve very much the function of a choir, a choir, moreover, which contains a rather high proportion of theological students. For many of these boys are already training to be clan-priests, Kaser-Gaita or Siraha mediums. At the time of sacrifice the Gaita may take his son and make him perform the actual rite, anxiously watching to see that there is no mistake. At Masora, Lakmu and his son Phirtu carried the Anga on their shoulders together and were moved to and fro by a divine inspiration that came equally to both. I have often seen young chelik dancing in trance, beating themselves with iron scourges, and tossing their dark beautiful hair into wild disorder.

But in addition to being choir-boys and acolytes for their elders, the chelik have festivals of their own which are closely connected with the ghotul. At Diwali, before the motiari go out on their dancing expeditions,[1] the boys and girls collect parched rice and have a feast in the ghotul, at which they admit new members and give them their titles.

At Jhakri, they described how at Diwali the motiari bring parched rice and gur for Tallur Muttai who, in this ghotul, lives in one of the pillars. They offer it first to her, and then all feast together. At Gorma, there was a stone by the village boundary where the children went for this feast. Decorations, sometimes elaborately made with ears of rice and flowers, are strung over the ghotul door.

At Dassera, which is not observed in the villages, the chelik dress one of their number as a Raja, put him on a throne, sometimes even on a wooden chariot; the 'ghotul ryots' bring him presents and he gives gifts to the Diwan, Tahsildar and other State servants. Every boy and girl brings two cucumbers which, in ghotul currency, represent two goats. They stick wooden legs into them and sacrifice them to Danteshwari. They invite a few of the village elders and have a feast in the ghotul.

In some villages—I have noted the custom in the Chalka Pargana—the chelik and motiari have their own version of the Irpu Pandum. At the end of the mahua season they spend three days collecting the flowers—this must be done at the end of the season, for it is believed that after these three days the flowers stop falling—and make liquor for themselves, boiling the flowers in water with slices of mango. If there is a Kalar out-still contractor in the

[1] Such ceremonial parades are not unknown elsewhere. The Chherta and similar dances are common throughout Middle India. 'It is a well-known practice', so C. R. Krishnamacharlu informs me, 'in the Tamil, Telugu and Kanara areas of Southern India for village schoolmasters and their students to go to the several households of the villages singing laudatory songs and receiving presents during the Dassera holidays.' The boys carry decorated bows and shoot sandal powder at their hosts. Krishnamacharlu compares this to the Chelidonia festival of ancient Rhodes, when boys went singing and begging from door to door. See also *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II, p. 53 and Vol. III, p. 63.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

tics both waking and sleeping, but they form a very small proportion of criminals. On the whole, the dream-life of criminals shows that they are insensitive and unemotional, true imbeciles in feeling and partly so in intelligence.[1]

The dreams of Maria prisoners mainly agree with this. The aboriginal theory of dreams is that the *jiwa* or soul leaves the body in sleep and goes out to seek adventure. The dream is what it sees as it goes to and fro about the world. In prison the soul takes every opportunity to leave the confined and frustrated body, and goes home to visit the family or roams abroad in search of variety. Barse Mata said, 'In my sleep I really feel as though the soul was leaving my body. It runs to the house and sees all my people there'. Another man described how his wife came and slept with him in his dream, and how he would go out and see his family and his dead father whom he had murdered. But, he added, his father never reproached him for what he had done. Boti described how he saw dances, bazaars, his relatives and wife and children. Marvi Kuma said that his soul frequently went home to visit his wife. Muchaki Dasru sees his wife and children at night. He sits up and wants to weep. But on another occasion he finds, as he said, that 'the dream is the chutney of sleep' and by its help he has been able, in spite of imprisonment, to see all that is going on in the outside world. Munda sees girls, fighting-cocks, horses (which are bad), snakes (which are good). His soul constantly seeks rice-beer and tobacco. Vetti Rupe said that he saw his family in dreams, and sometimes a witch or a sorcerer. 'Even now our enemies can trouble us from outside the jail'. He said that he found dreams alarming, for in the ordinary way if a Maria has an inauspicious dream, he can make suitable offerings and free himself of the danger. In the jail there is no shrine and no chaplain for this purpose.

Very tender experiences between husband and wife occur in dreams, and one boy described how his young wife came to him in sleep and gave him the food he loved and slept with him. More moving still, reminding one of a famous incident in Browning's *Ring and the Book*, was the experience of a boy who killed his wife in a drunken rage. 'When I

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 152 f.

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Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

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The Muria belief in equality is illustrated by a characteristic story. 'Raja Dokara ruled in Tulsidongri. It was thick jungle: there was no Brahmin to cook his food. So he went to Bhagavan to ask for one. Bhagavan said, "Certainly take one if you can recognize him. They all look alike to me". Bhagavan told everyone to wear a dhoti, and when they came, Brahmin and Ganda, Muria and Dhakar, Halba and Maria, the Raja found it impossible to tell which was which. So he sent Idur Kola Pen to see what he could do, but he also failed. At last a fly came and said, "Give me something to eat, and I'll get you a Brahmin". Idur Kola Pen offered it gold and silver and many tax-free villages. "No", said the fly, "I don't want these. There's a sore on your leg. Let me sit and feed there." Idur Kola Pen allowed it, and when it had fed, the fly settled on a Brahmin's head. Thus the man was recognized and he became Raja Dokara's cook.'

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This conception of complete democracy affects the position of the leaders. Their power is not absolute; they can be, and sometimes are, removed from office. They can be punished by a meeting of the other members. At Palari, the three leaders—Diwan, Tahsildar and Jamadar—abused their position, and the boys and girls met and fined them. In any case, the rule of the ghotul is not that of a dictator, but of a council. Associated with the chief boy or girl is a company of two or three who advise them on all important matters.

These leaders do, of course, have their privileges. The little boys fag for them and massage them if the girls are absent. Little girls do the Belosa's hair and run her errands. In ghotul where partners have to be constantly changed, the leaders are sometimes allowed to have girls of their own. In Banjora, for example, the Kotwar, who is there the leader, and the Belosa always sleep together, though the others must change every two or three days.

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Are members of other tribes and the Hindu castes admitted to the ghotul? This is the sort of question that is usually met with an indignant denial from the Muria elders, who explain that they never admit outsiders for fear of possible matrimonial complications, and equally indignant denials from Hindus and others who claim that the ghotul is a degraded institution to which they would never send their children. Neither is true.

Throughout the Muria area may be found examples—not many examples, but some—of Muria-Lohar, Rawat, Nahar and even the despised Ganda and Ghasia being admitted as members of the dormitory. Such children receive titles; they are allotted duties and allowed all ghotul privileges. In Palli Barkot the people said that Muria-Lohar boys and girls were given the fullest privileges but that there was a ban on Mahara, Rawat and Kuruk. The Lohar children could sleep with the Muria children, but must not marry them. In Nayanar I discovered to my astonishment that two of the girls who were taking the leading part at a Muria wedding were Lohar—the Alosa and Dulosa of the ghotul. In Markabera, the most popular girl in the entire company, the Saile who had a Muria ghotul-partner, was a Lohar. The Belosa of the Mule ghotul was a Lohar, so was the Salya; in 1941 the Jamadar of Kokori, the Jamadar of Phunder, the Jalaru (a girl) of Phunder, the Jhoria of Modenga were all Lohar.

The leading drummer of Hatipakna was a Nahar and two of his brothers and a sister were also prominent members of the ghotul. At Junganar a Ganda boy was made the Suel, and a Ghasia was the Kotwar at Modenga. In Phunder there was a Kalar boy. Rawat are commonly admitted.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

535 by a few men with kettle-drums and more with clanging brass gongs; to this babel of sound must be added the clatter of the innumerable iron neck-rings and the bracelets of the girls, and the clangour of the great bunches of bells on the buttocks of the male dancers. The whole scene is lit up by blazing torches and log fires.

535 831 Often a slight element of obscenity is introduced by one or two men dressed as tiger-men with large imitation *membra virilia* which they brandish at each other and at the women, girls and youths, rushing ludicrously here, there, and everywhere, and provoking such laughter that often the dancers have to break off their singing to join in.

535 868 There is no formal dancing teaching. Boys are allowed to join in the dances when they are about six, and girls when nine or ten. They learn simply by imitating their elders.

535 574 Men of all ages, married and unmarried, youths, boys, young wives and girls join in the Bison-horn Maria dances. There appears to be no time of year at which they are forbidden to dance, though naturally the spring and the summer, when they are freest from field-work, see most of their dancing. If at this time of year you invite villagers to dance at your camp, the throb of the drums attracts more and more men and girls from surrounding villages; for the tradition is that no invitation is needed, and that open house should be kept at a wedding or any other occasion when there will be dancing.

2. Bison-horn Maria

535 292 There is no mixing of men and girls as in the Abujhmar hills. The girls, in their ordinary finery of beads and iron and brass neck-rings, and wearing their head snoods and fillets of polished brass, have no special dancing apparatus except the *tirdudi* dancing-sticks ornamented with iron bells which they hold upright in their right hands, clashing the bells in unison by striking the ground with the butts of the sticks on their left front as they bring their left foot across in front of their right; each girl rests her left arm on the back of the left shoulder of the girl on her left. They gyrate to the right, like the Hill Marias, but the Bison-horn women have a far more rapid step; the right foot is moved to the right and slightly to the rear, and the left foot is then brought across the right leg to the right front, while the ground is struck with the butts of the jingling dancing-sticks. The girls in this way dance fast around the outside of the dancing men, sometimes singing as they go; but the unceasing throb of the men's great drums drowns their song.

535 The women's step never varies, whatever the dance; but the men have many different dances and steps, and can improvise a dance on practically any theme, such as asking for pork or *landa*. Their *pen-karsita* or Koqsar dance is a very fast, side-stepping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

535 dance, which makes everyone laugh, while all the mediums of neighbouring villages attend, and, possessed by their godlings, leap wildly to and fro, carrying bunches of *saja* leaves in their hands or holding them over their matted hair, to the general merriment. The chief wedding dance is the bison dance, every male turning at intervals in his paces to smile and 'glad-eye' the next dancer, and each then pretending to butt the other with his bison-horns; in another figure they similarly mimic two cocks fighting. The greatest sign of skill is to be able to impale on the tip of the horns a piece of grass twisted into a ring and thrown on the ground; the dancer may before this pretend to be a young and frisky bull, butting at wisps of grass or trees, or hurling them into the air to toss them on his horns. I have seen a dancer pick a small finger ring off the ground on the tip of his horns. As among the Hill 535 Marias, and indeed most Central Provinces Gonds, there is always 831 a comic and obscene element; men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear or goat fur, and carrying clubs, nets and dummy guns, rush in and out amongst the dancers, making obscenely suggestive gestures with their clubs at the dancing or onlooking girls, and provoking roars of laughter.

[273] There is generally a pause for *landa* or *mahua* spirit sooner or later, after which the girls sometimes, before resuming the dance, sit in a bunch swaying from their hips and singing short catchy refrains, with either frankly sexual meaning or no meaning at all; and often the lads opposite make the whole company laugh by imitating them in falsetto.

The dancing and singing, it need hardly be said, lead on frequently to love-making, couples retiring into the darkness, or else starting an affair ending in experimental union and perhaps, later, in matrimony.

E. Other Amusements

524 The Bison-horn Marias' favourite pastime of cock-fighting has already been described (see page 162 above). Small wooden toys are made for the children, very crude representations of tigers or [764] other animals; and a pathetic sight at the graves of children are these toys left there for the *kasal*[1] of the children to play with. I have never found any Marias making string figures; and they have 526 shown no interest in attempts to demonstrate them. The Murias and Bhattras have innumerable games in which all the village youth takes part in the cold weather and spring nights, many of which

[1] Literally the 'Gone' used of the spirits of the dead.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 house, and are given *landa* to drink. At the meal in the Place of the Departed the couple are exhorted by the bridegroom's father to live together in unity and concord, and to be faithful. All night the drums roll and guests pour in to dance and drink *landa* or sing around the bride and bridegroom, the men wearing their bison-horn dancing head-dresses. Ultimately next morning the couple are made to stand on a hurdle under the eaves of the hut constructed for them, and a kinsman of the girl's father climbs on the roof and tips a pot of water over them. The boy then drags the girl into the hut, both pushed by willing hands, and the door is fastened on [353] them and a bamboo-matting curtain hung over it. After a while they emerge, and the bride takes a ceremonial farewell of the girls of her village, and the guests disperse. Finally in the evening she is thrust into the bridal hut by her husband's younger brothers and his friends, her husband being already inside awaiting her.

In the account of the Ganjenar-Massenar wedding which follows, naturally no description can be given of the scenes in the *narma-lon* rooms of the bride's and bridegroom's fathers, to which outsiders are not admitted, or of other parts of the wedding ceremonies which I did not actually see. The bridegroom was the son of Atrami Hunga of Massenar, the younger brother of Atrami Kopa Dhurwa, a very influential headman who was decorated by the late Raja of Bastar for keeping that *pargana* quiet during the 1910 rebellion, and the bride was the daughter of Kunjami Harma, the headman of Ganjenar. When I reached the latter's house, which was about two miles from my camp at Massenar, the bridegroom and his party had arrived, and the relatives' dinner was over. The bride had gone to a tank to be bathed by her elder sister and her brother's wife; the bridegroom and his father were walking about talking to the guests and the bride's male relatives. There were not many persons present, perhaps 150 all told; a few men were beating their dancing drums, but none were wearing their bison-horn head-dresses. Around the door of the separate sleeping hut used [533 by Kunjami Harma's daughters and other womenfolk, some thirty ●831 women were standing shoulder to shoulder, swaying to and fro and 195] singing a choral refrain of '*Koholis-waya*' to obscene verses sung by a laughing woman in the centre of the group. Another band of women hurled abuse at them at intervals, when the leader of each band tried to out-Billingsgate the other.

535 When the bride had been bathed, she emerged from the sleeping 585 hut with a cloth wrapped over her shoulders, and was dragged into a chain of dancing and singing girls with their arms closely linked, while the bridegroom, also with a cloth over his shoulders, was [illegible] into another chain. These chains of girls circled and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

elder brother touched the old man's feet, and the old man touched his, and then each placed his hands on the other's shoulders, standing face to face, and leaned his head forward first on the other's right, then on his left shoulder; finally each salaamed the other with both hands held in front of his face, palm to palm, and said '*Johar!*' Each of them then exchanged similar salutations with all their near relatives present and the leading guests, including myself and the other State officials present.

The girls now started singing again, telling the bride that she must leave them and go to her man, that her lot would be hard, and that if she did not like her man she should make up her mind to leave him. Meanwhile the bridegroom slipped off over the fields to his father's house at Massenar to be ready there to receive the party escorting the bride.

The bridal procession then formed up, led by some thirty women, singing and side-stepping along the narrow jungle path in the gathering darkness. After them walked the elders, then a party of drummers, followed by the bride, pretending to struggle against a cluster of laughing girls pushing her to Massenar. All danced as they went, beating their jangling dancing sticks on the ground in time with the drums and the steps of the dance. It took them two and a half hours to cover the two miles to the bridegroom's father's house in Massenar.

There a multitude of other girls and men received them, the men all in the traditional dancing costume, with a thundering roll of drums, while dozens of bombs of gunpowder and rice chaff were exploded. The full moon beat down on a sea of tossing plumes, or shone back from the glistening bison-horns of the head-dresses, till the whole courtyard was full of rampaging and fantastic movement. The bride and bridegroom were seized by fifty girls, and made to sit in their midst in front of the house where they were later to live, all packed as closely as sardines, swaying to and fro on their hips as they sat, and singing obscene marriage songs in full-throated chorus, while all prodded and plucked at every part of the bodies of the bride and bridegroom, whose heads were muffled in cloths.

After watching this for some time I went off to my tent for dinner, but returned towards midnight. The bride and bridegroom were still where I had left them, surrounded by the swaying and singing girls. Some of these had babies sleeping in their laps as they sang, and many, tired out, were sleeping, hemmed in by their companions. The crowds had swollen, and every forest path was thronged with men and women hastening with drums and dancing kit to join the dance. Some came from villages twenty-five or

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

585 535 thirty miles away, but showed no sign of fatigue. Around the dance many were lying already drunk, for sixty large pots of *landa* had been provided for the guests. Now and again an excited youth and girl would leave the dance and disappear in the trees. But there must always have been over two thousand men dancing; and those who had been overcome by the *landa* would return to the dance as soon as they had slept off their intoxication.

All night the drumming and dancing went on, though when I returned to the scene at 7.30 a.m. many men were lying asleep or drunk or merely resting, with piled drums and head-dresses. Now many men wearing black gourd masks with thick hair and beards of black bear's fur and carrying thick bamboo sticks, dummy guns and nets, rushed in and out among the dancers, making obscene [831] gestures with their sticks at the dancing and watching girls, to the general merriment. Looking for the bride and bridegroom, I found them, their heads still covered with the same cloths, riding on the shoulders of their sisters' husbands in the middle of a ring formed by a long chain of girls with arms outstretched and hands clasped, who headed off all the efforts of the 'steeds' to break out of the ring with their riders.

585 The fathers of the couple now decided that the time had come for the final ceremonies; the sun was getting hot, and the *landa* supplies low, for the dancers continued at intervals to leave the dance for a drink and a nap before the maddening beat of the drums called them out once again. A bamboo wicker-work hurdle was placed on the ground in front of the door of the hut where the couple was to spend its married life. To this the bride and bridegroom were led, and when they were standing on it they were at last freed from the cloths in which their heads had been enveloped for the last twelve hours. As they stood there hand in hand, the girl's father's brother climbed on to the eaves of the hut[1] with a large pot of cold and dirty water, and suddenly tipped its contents over the bride and bridegroom, whereupon, amid general laughter, the bridegroom seized the bride, and both rushed into the hut, the door of which was closed and curtained upon them. But they were allowed only ten minutes' privacy 'to discuss what they would do that night', as the bridegroom's old father explained; and even then they cannot have heard each other speak for the din of the drumming and dancing, which had not ceased for a moment even when the water was poured from the roof.

After ten minutes the bride emerged, and was surrounded by the girls of her own village, who in unison sang to her advice on a wife's duties and rights, urging her to return to them if her

[1] This is illustrated in Plate XIX. [See cat. 116, pp. 424-25, this]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

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Dewar: O Ange, the gruel is made of broken rice.
Ange: O my Dewar, where are you going today?
Dewar: Today I am not going anywhere
For I have to load my bullocks.
Tomorrow I go to another land to trade.
Ange: I too will go with you to drive the laden bullocks.
Dewar: Don't come with me, for all know how we stand to one another.
Those who do not know us will call us brother and sister.
And when they call us that we shall be ashamed.

602 522 [831]

The relations between *samdhi* and *samdhin* are generally of an amiable, coarse and humorous nature. For men this is a drinking rather than a joking relationship, and all their lives whenever they meet they regard it as an excuse for a bottle. The women, specially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breasts, stick feathers into the private parts and exchange the coarsest jokes.

The place where this joking and fun most commonly occurs is at a marriage. 'There is no purdah in a house of marriage.' Everybody feels free to fool about; no one is going to be offended; everyone is slightly drunk.

V. Summary

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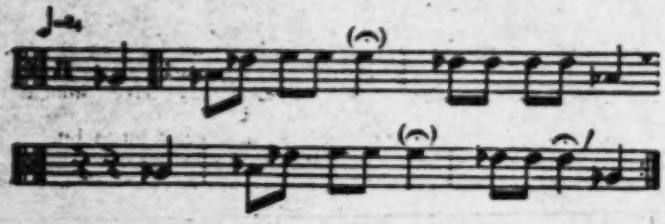
The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. Nothing reveals more clearly the extent of this domination than the fact that out of 2000 marriages examined no fewer than 1799 were of the cross-cousin type and, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, 1884 out of 2000 boys married according to their parents' wishes. This could only happen in a society which had a strong regard for its own organization and laws.

The clan system retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. Clan festivals remain great and notable occasions. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. The *samdhi* relationship, as may be seen in every song and story, continues to be of the first importance. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs. Totemism is less important, but is still far from moribund. The whole complex of ideas and customs is greatly confused, but the very confusion is perhaps a sign of its vitality.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH



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Chhind ṭāṛi ke mauṛ dai,	Of palm leaves is the crown, mother.
Main mauṛ bāndho dai?	May I wear the crown, mother?
Kāy mola debe bābu?	What will you give me, son?
Gaḍuri ke rupiya dai,	I'll give you a bundle of money, mother,
Kotha ke baila dai,	I'll give you a bullock in the stall, mother.
Wahi baila debe bābu.	Give me that bullock, son.

Here is a rather charming little song, which was recorded at Palari.

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Bāri hata chhind buda rati rati kande	The palm grows near the fence and cries all night.
Na kānd re chhind bata bābu mauṛ pinde,	Don't cry, O palm, my son will wear you as a crown,
Bāndo le bāndo ṭujāri chatuk mauṛ bāndo.	Tie O tie it, priest, carefully tie the crown.

Bringing in the Manda Wood

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Now the chelik of Sidhawand, assisted by visiting chelik from other villages, went out with the Gaita to fetch wood for the marriage-booth. The Gaita cut a small mahua tree with a single blow of his axe, and the boys cut the other poles and leafy branches of sarai wood. Presently the party returned, drumming, dancing and singing, with loud shouts of *Pude* (vagina).[1] It was now nearly sunset. The boys piled the wood in the place where they were going to build the booth, and danced round it holding each other's hands. The sutiari came and picked up the mahua tree. They stood in a bunch very close together, everyone held the tree and banged it up and down, singing vigorously.

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While the wood was being brought in the girls sang taunt-songs at the boys, most of them obscene. The first, for example, has the refrain *Kerad kāying barka mahing ferlatuk chete ner layor*, 'The chelik's testicles are like the fruit of a dried-up tree and the root of a gourd; his penis is like a snake'.

[1] Risley describes a festival of Dharti Mai among the Mal Paharia. 'The dancing party shout continually *kur, kur* (*pudendum muliebre*), a mode of invocation believed to be especially acceptable to the goddess. In this somewhat indelicate cry we may perhaps see a barbarous and undisguised reference to the *vis genetrix naturae* so prominent in many early forms of belief.'—H. H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1891), Vol. II, p. 72.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Songs

585
539

Layor tatle manda ri sango;	The boys are bringing the boughs on their heads;
Maksi manda tator ri sango,	Secretly they have brought the wood,
Buching poynāh kāhlor ri sango.	They have cut it bit by bit.
Māke marsi hewer ri sango,	If they would give us axes,
Chhak ne mando haderāl sango.	We'd cut the wood with a single blow,
Mamāl manda tawerāl sango.	And we would bring the wood in.

In the next song, the boys sing the first three lines and the girls answer.

Mando deri kokoti wākoti soy bai.	The pole of the booth is crooked, girl.
Tumcho vati chepati roy soy bai.	Your vagina is like a chapati, girl.
Jhelun dānka netu roy soy bai.	We will dance jumping up and down, girl.
Tumcho asan vatu roy soy dāda.	If we were to do it instead of you, brother.
Jhelun dānka netu roy soy dāda.	We would dance jumping up and down, brother.
Gāra phāndun netu roy soy dāda.	We would yoke the cart and take it away, brother,
Kukra bāsti netu roy soy dāda.	At cock-crow we would take it away, brother.
Kānde tangia dhartu roy soy dāda.	We'd put axes on your shoulders, brother.
Bāchun deri mārtun roy soy dāda.	We'd bring a straight pole, brother.
Kokta bāhta deri roy soy dāda.	We'd never cut a crooked pole, brother.

585
[831]

There are other songs which I need not quote, in which there is much play about crooked wood and the crooked penis, and the penis which can dig well in intercourse but cannot dig a hole for the pillar of the booth.

The boys had hidden a pice somewhere in the wood, and the girls spent a long time looking for it. Finally, about 7-30 p.m., the Gaita put some rice on the spot where the motiari had danced with the mahua tree, and dug a hole with his iron digging-stick. If white-ants or stones are found there, they move to another spot, offering an egg and chicken to whatever god the Siraha decides was responsible for the ill omen. But all was well today. The Gaita broke a coconut on his digging-stick, and the chelik planted the centre-pole of the booth and the mahua tree in the hole that the Gaita had made. After drinking a little liquor, the chelik then proceeded to make the booth (*manda*).

This was a very simple affair. Nine sarai poles were placed in a rough square, in the middle of which was the centre-pole and the mahua tree.[1] On the centre-pole a small representation of the vagina is often carved. A roof

[1] A number of tribes put the mahua in the marriage-booth. The Omanaito do (Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 444), so do the Birjhia (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 332), the Sonkar of Chhattisgarh (ibid., Vol. III, p. 316), and the Bathya or Rithya (Dalton, op. cit., p. 148). Mock marriages to the tree are performed by the Bagdi, the Kurmi, the Mahli and no doubt others (*Census of India, 1911. Report for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, pp. 328ff). The Gond of Mandla put a mango tree in the centre of the booth, but elsewhere use a post made of mahua wood (Wand, op. cit., p. 138).

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
539

Hēna duma la hēna duma la dosi.	Put it for the Departed, Dosi.
Māta māuli la māta māuli la dosi.	For Mata Maoli, Dosi.
Jan bisarbe jan bisarbe dosi.	Do not forget, Dosi.
Tore dharam jo tore dharam jo dosi.	It is your duty, Dosi.

Further Anointing of the Bridegroom

585 Now his own motiari carried the bridegroom out again and brought him to the *manda*. They danced round the booth, one of them carrying him on her back, till they were tired. Then they made him sit on a motiari's lap on a bamboo fan to the west of the booth and outside it, and put a fan between his hands which he held folded before his face. Again they put haldi, making it 'climb' up his body. The bride's brother's wife came and wept loudly, saying, 'Never forget us and the love we've had for you. Come and see us often. Don't trouble our poor girl. She is ignorant and foolish, but you will be able to teach her. Let her come and see us often'.

This tedious and exasperating ritual continues during the whole ceremony. Every relative in turn must perform it over and over again.

Songs

585
539

1

Dāda indān he dāda!	Cry brother, brother!
Dharmu telu chaga wo dāda.	Anoint with holy oil, brother.
Tuhe dharam lāge de dāda.	This is your gift, brother.
Bai indān he bai!	Cry sister, sister!
Dharam telu chaga wo bai.	Anoint with holy oil, sister.
Tuhe dharam lāge de bai.	This is your gift, sister.

And so on, interminably, through the entire table of affinity.

2

Tiloke telo telo wo dai!	O the oil of til, mother!
Mola re telu chada wo dai.	Let me rub the oil, mother.
Tola re telu charēten wo beta,	I would rub you with oil, son,
More re buta kaney jo beta.	But I have work to do, son.
Sagore din he buta wo dai,	You can work every day, mother,
Yehe re din he tele wo dai.	But this oil is just for today, mother.
Tore re buta rahe wo dai.	Leave your work, mother.
Mola re telu chada wo dai.	And rub me with oil, mother.

3

[831]

Kis koce kowe layon eh he.	The chelik is a little monkey.
Kene porro targa kowe eh he!	Climb up, O little monkey!
Gokāle dudo kowe eh he!	Her breasts will fill your fists!
Kene dor raiya kowe eh he!	Come down again, O little monkey!
Rāpāle pudo kowe eh he.	Her vagina is big as a spade, O little monkey!

4

This song is from Bayanar village, a Paskana Pata for the anointing. The refrain imitates the noise of a goat in heat.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Sai lo lo bo bo bo! Sai lo lo bo bo bo!

585
539

O young darling, whence have you come,
Have you come for the play of love,
With an ox-goad under the mango tree?
Why have you come, big-breasted love?
I will catch you and enjoy you.
Saikobai, why have you come?
Your pubic hairs are like a shrub in Amgaon.
We were yoked together in the ghotul.
Now you are going, and I bid you farewell.
Now you are leaving the ever-thrilling ghotul.
I took you under the pipal tree and shook you to and fro.
By the ant-hill I tumbled you.
Your ghotul lover has come for you,
But no longer are you there to welcome him.

Taking the Omens

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Now the final omens must be taken. The Gaita placed an earthen pot full of water on the verandah of the headman's house, and dropped grains of rice two by two into it. For a successful marriage the grains must meet tip to tip. If they meet crosswise, there will be quarrels; if they both sink, the married pair will die together in a year; if they do not meet at all, the girl will elope with someone else. On this occasion, the two grains sank to the bottom, and the headman sent round an inquiry whether any of the near relatives of the bride had just begun to menstruate—a calamity which had previously been known to disturb the omens. At about the same time the bridegroom fell into a trance, twitching, shivering, stretching himself and then falling inert to the ground. Apparently none of the women were in the tabooed condition and the bridegroom's mother—a managing woman with an enormous bun of hair on the top of her head which caused some to regard her as an incarnation of the Hindu god Mahadeo—thought quite obviously that it was I with my camera who was causing all the trouble, but did not like to say so. After a time, however, when the Gaita had made some extravagant promises to the gods, the boy recovered and the rice grains floated round and hit each other most properly tip to tip.

Filling the Kalsa

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The little kalsa-pitcher, which is to be placed by the mahua tree in the marriage-booth, must be filled with rice. The motiari put a basket before the bride. They place the pot inside and fill the bride's hands with rice, covering them with a cloth. Several of them catch hold of her hands and move them up and down above the kalsa, singing *Rolo*, until all the rice has fallen into the pot. When the pot is full the motiari stand up with a loud cry of *Sai!* (penis).

Songs

I

Nanki kata dotola barka Mallu latola.	The reeds grow by the river, where the old bear lies.
Kike jillo latola dulhi le latola.	With whom is he lying? He's lying with the bride.

585
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831

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

585
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Kai pila holi bhālu pila hole.
Whose was the child? It was a bear's child.

Kāke buba balede dulha ke buba balede.
Whom will he call father? The bridegroom.

Kāke āya balede dulhi ke āya balede.
Whom will he call mother? The bride.

Kai rāg men gāge de hur hur balede.
To what tune will she weep? *Hur hur.*

Ama pān chiro chāro.
The mango leaf sounds *chiro charo.*

Dulha chotli kira paro ach.
There are maggots in the bridegroom's penis

Mande pude kurri.
Loudly cry 'Vagina'.

2

Goti roy dodon banjāra aya!
O the Banjara's bullock, mother!

Noni bona roy sudha dāki noni?
With whom will you go, girl?

Māma na marri mantor go āya.
There is my *māma's* son, mother.

Noni miya jori pobe roy noni.
He's not fit to be your mate, girl.

Ona roy sudha hanma roy noni.
Do not go with him, girl.

Gere mara jori roy ade jori pibo.
He is as bad as a pair of gere trees.

Ona re suda hanon roya āya.
I will not go with him, mother.

Aich mande pude kaudi bandhla.
Under the booth is a vagina tied with a cowrie.

Dudhe handi bhurza.
And breasts like a brown pot.

Leka cho chotli bhurza!
O the penis of the brown boy!

Ama pān siro sāro.
The mango leaves sound *siro sāro.*

Leki cho pudi kira paro kurri.
The girl's vagina is full of maggots.

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Before the kalsa-pitcher is put in its place by the central pillar of the booth, it is decorated, sometimes beautifully and with great elaboration. Red, yellow and black grain is stuck with cow-dung in varied patterns, or stars and lines of dots are made in white and black. While two of the older women are doing this, the motiari stand by and sing.

Song

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Riri loyo ri ri lo rilo ri ri loyo ri ri lo ri ri lo ri ri loyo ri ri lo

Ursa wenjing karsa wo dai.
The pot is decorated with rice, mother.

Nena karsa kotikān dai.
I place a mark on the pot, mother.

Bāti wenjing kotikin bābu?
With what kind of rice will you decorate it, boy?

Hinga wenji kotikān dai.
I will use *hinga* rice, mother.

Bona suda kotikin bābu?
With whom will you decorate it, boy?

Atin miyār manta roy dai.
With my *māmi's* daughter, mother.

Tāna suda kotikān dai.
I will decorate the pot for her, mother.

Tāna suda parwin roy bābu.
You won't be able to do it for her, boy.

Tāna jorti āyuri roy bābu.
She is no fit mate for you, boy.

Tāral tamor biti roy bābu.
She has brothers, boy.

Hedār bhai biti roy bābu.
She has sisters and brothers, boy.

Awa bābo biti roy bābu.
She has a mother and father, boy.

Nāhun erik wāla wo dai.
But I am willing, mother.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Midday Dance

585 Then the chelik gathered round the booth and began to dance, holding
539 each other's hands swinging backwards and forwards to a rather dismal tune, as they circled slowly round.

Songs

1

Têra wo dai nâwa sono pungâri.	Give me my golden flower, mother.
Nâwa iga to hile nuni niya bubân nigâdu.	I haven't got it, your father has it, son.
Têra wo buba nâwa sono pungâri.	Give me my golden flower, father.
Nâwa iga to hile nuni niya dâdân igâdu.	I haven't got it, your brother has it, son.
Têra wo dâda nâwa sono pungâri.	Give me my golden flower, brother.

—and so on, taking the names of every relative present.

2

Walâldâti koliyâl walâlta?	Where are you going, fox, where are you going?
Chilhodâl wayâl hilu jo têna toka tun hopur pandhal.	Make a broom of a squirrel's tail.
Walâldâti nirâl wâlâlta?	Where are you going, leopard, where are you going?
Chilhodâl wayâl têna tâlla tun hudwo pandarâr.	Make a measure of the head of a rat.

585 It was now midday and the visiting motiari brought food to the booth as reward for the boys who had gone to fetch the wood the previous day. The boys sat down in a wide circle round the booth and the girls served them with rice and vegetables on leaf-plates. When they had finished the chelik got up and down three times shouting 'Penis!', and so dispersed.

When darkness fell everyone went home for the evening meal. The headman provided pork for his visitors: the pig was knocked over the head with a rice-pounder and the Gaita offered the carcass mahua-spirit saying, 'Let there be enough flesh for us all and some left over'.

Throughout the night there was singing and dancing; every now and then the weary bride and groom were brought out to be anointed, from the feet upwards to the head.

[533 The company drank, and made merry with feminine songs, for 'there
● 831] is no purdah in a house of marriage'. Much of the dancing during the night and a large part of the day was done without drums in almost Hill Maria style. Boys, or boys and girls, held hands and moved slowly round the marriage-booth in a wide circle. The singing was monotonous, but the songs themselves are often more interesting than those concerned merely with details of the ritual.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

585 with the water, caught her and spat again in her mouth. Motiari gave him another gourd of water and he passed it on to his bride; she twice filled her mouth and spat all over him.

Now the motiari gathered round and undid the plaits of hair that had been tied during the wedding.

Song

585 *Sura beri sakāli sakāli he buba,* There are seven links in my plait,
Nana sakal lehika lehika he buba. I am going to undo the links.
539 *Bona lārne lehika lehika he buba?* For whose love will you undo it?
Sātu jor dāda lor dāda lor he buba; I have seven brothers;
Dādān lārne lehika lehika he buba. For love of my brothers I will undo it.
Bārāng his lehika lehika he buba? What will you give before you undo it?
Dobir bhainsi hiyāka hiyāka he buba, I'll give a buffalo from my herd.
Tāne yise hema roy hema roy he buba, Don't give a buffalo,
Dobir hinja poyor roy poyor roy he buba. Or the herd will be desolate.

585 When the hair was undone, the motiari combed it, and then bride and groom threw water and rubbish over each other. They needed a bath and the motiari poured water over them.

Then two motiari sat down presenting little laps for ritual occupation. The boy sat down, and the bride came to sit in his lap. She stayed there a moment, then jumped up and hit him on the back. Then she sat down, and he prepared to sit in her lap. But at the right moment she wriggled aside and he tumbled to the ground amid roars of laughter. But he jumped up and hit her two or three times with his clenched fist.

The fun now became general. Chelik filled their mouths with water and blew it over the motiari. The girls filled leaf-cups with cow-dung and spilled it over the chelik. Meanwhile the Gaita's wife collected the haldi-stained clothes of bride and groom; someone brought out a pot and went round begging for fire. He pushed handfuls of rubbish against private parts saying, 'Set them on fire!' At last they put the pot on the fire and boiled the clothes. But they were soon brought out and tied in a bundle. The Gaita poured a little liquor on the four corners and they lifted up the bundle seven times. Bride and groom undid the wet clothes and threw them over each other. [831] Someone pretended to be a Ganda with a large imitation penis and went round trying to sell the clothes.

At last the Gaita caught hold of the married pair and dragged them into the house for a well-earned meal, which they took together in ceremonial state.

The Last Rites

The marriage is over but a curious and interesting rite remains. Bride and bridegroom go for one last visit to the ghotul. The bride first massages her husband and then every boy in turn. The chelik send the husband off to his house, and a little later tell the girl to follow him. When she refuses three or four of them take her by force, push her into the room with her husband and shut them in. I have seen this done at Malakot and Nayanar. I will describe the Malakot incident here.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

cane was not stolen, but was given by the husband in compensation for taking a girl away from the ghotul.

As they escort the newly married pair to bed the boys and girls sing a characteristic song.

Dulha cho māndo dulha cho māndo,	In the bridegroom's booth,
Parewāo jhulete.	Swings the pigeon.
Dulhi cho māndo dulhi cho māndo,	In the bride's booth,
Tondha lotesa lō buha lō.	The lizard copulates and copulates.
Pillah bhāji mane re laka bhāji hundāy jai re laka.	Spinach is drying on a leaf.
Jore jora tenda bane se re laka tenda pāni nāhin tire re laka.	There is a pair of weighted balances (of a well), but he won't use them.
Palārigaon cho jaliya gānja,	The long-tailed cock of Palari,
Dongrigura cho kāri koni,	The black hen of Dongrigura,
Dandik chathi abbick dahi.	Every moment they want to copulate.

When everything was over, at Sidhawand the headman and the village elders purified the village from any possible evil introduced by the many visitors. They sprinkled liquor round the houses and offered a chick to the Village Mother.

V. The Navanar Marriages: A Different Procedure

Such was the marriage ritual at Sidhawand and Malakot. I believe that a very similar procedure is followed all over eastern Bastar. We must now take a brief glance at the other type of marriage, where the main ceremony takes place at the bridegroom's house and where a number of minor details differ.

The marriage I am now to describe was celebrated at Amasara and Nayanar on 15 April 1941 and the following days. On the first evening the bride was prepared as at Sidhawand. Her motiari sat round her all night, weeping and consoling her. The next morning the bridegroom, escorted by his chelik and motiari, came to Amasara to fetch her. On the way, at the village boundary, the Gaita made the usual line of ash and offered liquor in three saja leaves, saying, 'Let there be no trouble and no quarrels. Let us return in safety'. They stepped over the line and went on their way, none looking back.

The Farewell Ceremonies

Both parties cooked separately out-of-doors in the fields. During the day there was the usual application of haldi, weeping, exchange of presents and some heavy drinking. When I reached Amasara on the afternoon of this second day, I found a scene of great animation. Several groups of boys were dancing with mandri drums; in another part of the field rows of girls were dancing and singing Reis. Another group of motiari in boy's clothes, with moustaches and turbans, were preparing for the Jhoria Bindanna when the bridegroom has to recognise his bride amidst a group of dancing motiari disguised as boys, an incident which I study fully in Chapter XVI. In the middle sat a row of old women, mandhi to each other, their bodies covered with haldi-water and singing drunkenly.

It was getting late and presently the bride's parents went to the boy's people and said, 'Now you are our daughter's mother and father; we are giving her

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 to you'. At this the girl went weeping to her friends and gave them little keepsakes. As evening fell, the party left the village. Bride and bridegroom walked most of the way, but whenever they came to a field the chelik carried them across, and they threw pulse and rice onto the ground in honour of the Earth Mother. In Telanga, the bride had to cross a stream. She brought two aonra rings and threw them left and right as she went over in honour of the Water Maiden (Yer Kanyang) for she too was still a maiden.

The bride was brought to her new house rather late at night, but her mother-in-law received her, washing her feet and giving her a kindly welcome. In Telanga, the boy's motiari made the girl stand on a new mat covered with peacock's feathers for this greeting.

Bringing in the Manda Wood

At about 10 p.m. the chelik of Nayanar and visiting villages went to bring the boughs for the marriage-booth. After the Gaita had cut the mahua tree, food was given to the boys and they had supper there in the jungle. They returned to the village, dancing and drumming, shouting *Kiddar-pude* continually. A number of women waiting in the court of the house tried to stop them entering, but the manda branches were full of red ants, and the boys scattered these over the women and dispersed them. Then they danced banging the branches on the ground till the courtyard and road was alive with the ants; they chased any girl they saw, and rained a stinging shower over her.

The booth was hastily erected; there were only four poles and no brooms tied at the top. A rope of paddy straw was tied round and a string of mango leaves. The important thing to notice is that this booth was put up inside the courtyard of the house—I saw the same thing at Telanga—and this completely altered the whole ceremony: the grand procession of the Lagir became obviously impossible.

Now weary and bitten all over with red ants I went to bed. I am told that the party danced and drank all night; I can well believe it, they looked jaded enough next day.

Early the following morning, the Rawat's wife as usual dug up a little earth, [331] but here there was no chasing of a motiari. An old woman put the earth in her sari and tied it over her buttocks, afterwards letting it fall in a very vulgar manner. As they returned the girls took grass from the thatch of a house and put it in their hair; later they stuck it in the centre pole of the booth.

The Worship of the Drums

This rite, which does not seem to be known in eastern Bastar, is very important in the central parganas. Before beginning to dance, the chelik put three mandri and a wooden gong together on the ground. The two leaders of the ghotul removed their turbans, made a small pattern of rice-flour and offered liquor to Tallur Muttai, Lingo and the Departed. Then four other boys caught hold of the drums and at a given signal picked them up all together with a loud cry, while other boys pulled the 'priests' over backwards. Only after this could the chelik dance. As visiting villages arrived the chelik marched up the road, with grand and triumphant drumming, and worshipped their drums in the same place.

The usual rites are now performed; the interminable application of haldi, the taking of omens, the tying of the plaits, the bathing of bride and groom.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 towards the end, I did not once see them strained or quarrelsome. Their
883 tremendous vitality kept the thing on the move and made everyone cheerful and happy.

In return for all this work, the chelik and motiari seem to get very little, one meal a day and a little liquor. The bride and bridegroom distribute small keepsakes, rings and beads. The motiari of the bride's ghotul demand and receive four annas as *mundi*-cowrie. The chelik also demand a new mandri drum from the bridegroom in compensation for the loss of one of their girls. They are generally given eight annas instead. This present is called *sakta*. The boy also has to give *chitkul*-cymbals, or four annas, to his own chelik.

People treat the chelik and motiari with great respect, for there is great fear of offending them—a strike, which is not unknown, can upset the entire proceedings. It is

[301]

DETAIL

Fig. 23. *Chapali-mundi* necklace, from Kuntpadar, of red, white and blue beads
Length 3' 5"

[831] noteworthy also that there is no exchange of obscenities between the older people and the ghotul members. When the old women smear their dirty hands on all available male faces, catching hold of their private parts or pouring haldi over their buttocks, they never do it to the chelik. It would be considered equally shocking for a married man to poke his stick at a motiari

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 182 importance of the Muria bath is emphasized by the use of the winnowing-fan (universally important in magic) to fan and drive away all risk of evil.

The red ants scattered over the marriage party are perhaps intended merely as a joke; they may, however, represent a survival of some former custom of ordeal. In British Guiana a man before marriage had to show his fitness for it by allowing himself to be sewn into a hammock full of fire ants.[1]

Yet to the participants in the marriage it is probable that its financial and social aspect is of even greater importance than the supernatural atmosphere into which they have projected themselves. The alliance of the two families is emphasized by the little rite of *samdhi-bhet* at the very beginning and by the farewell of the new relations-in-law at the end. Their prayer—'Let there be no quarrels. Let there be many children. As the root is below and branches above, so may we be united'—and again—'See, from of old was our relationship ordained. May the Departed guard and continue it'—indicates the importance of the ceremony for the family, the clan and the ancestors. This is still further shown by the presents made to various relatives and, above all, by the gifts offered to the Departed—to the Pot in the old home to compensate the ancestors for the loss of a girl, to the Pot in the new family to indicate that the bride has left her old clan and joined that of her husband.

But it is not only family and village that the motiari must now desert; she has to leave her ghotul. So gifts and compensations are given: there is a feast, a farewell massage, and marriage-crowns are often put up on the ghotul pillar. Bride and groom bid ceremonial farewell to their old companions as they set out for their new home.

So far we have dealt mainly with rites of parting and separation: other ceremonies stress the social and sexual union of bride and groom and attempt to ensure its natural fertility. The giving of the bridal ring is a world-wide symbol of union, so is the ceremony of eating together. At the end of the Lagir circumambulation (itself a rite of aggregation with a subsidiary cathartic or prophylactic purpose[2]), bride and groom are tied together and water is poured over them. On two occasions, the bridegroom or his friends carry off the bride; this may be a survival of an older tradition of marriage by capture or may merely be intended to stress the emphatic break with the old life and entry into the new.

582 182 ●831 The sexual interest is both manifest and latent. There is little concealment or symbolism about the ceremonial bedding of the married pair, the vagina carved on the main pillar of the booth, the obscene horseplay between relatives, the constant cries of 'Penis' and 'Vagina', the songs, the jokes, the abuse. In such sexual jokes, says W. G. Archer, 'is a release of repressed energy which when applied to the marriage must necessarily make it fertile'.[3]

Other of the incidents and objects in the ritual are of a symbolic character. Some are directly sexual: thus the motiari bang the mahua branch up and down on the site of the booth just as Bison-horn Maria girls use their dancing-sticks, professedly in imitation of sexual intercourse. The pouring of water over bride and groom is a symbol of world-wide distribution, and the breaking of wooden poles links up with many examples given by Westermarck,[4] where

[1] Sir E. F. Im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana* (London, 1883), p. 221.
[2] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 513ff.
[3] *The Wedding of the Writers*. And Westermarck says, 'The sexual indulgence of the wedding guests may, on the principle of homœopathic magic, be a means of assisting bride and bridegroom in achieving the reproductive aims of their union'.—Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 502.
[4] Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 437.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585 182 things are broken to ensure or facilitate the consummation of the marriage. The Berber blow a cane to pieces. The Zulu bride breaks a spear. Among the Yakut dry rods are broken and burnt.

● 831 Haldi, with its yellow colour, is both a ghost scarer and a sex-symbol. It is significant that one of its forty-six ancient synonyms is *kamala*, 'lustful' and others refer to it as 'night'.[1] The oil with which it is mixed is, to the Muria mind at least, another sex-symbol, recalling the oil used in massage and that traditionally put on a lover's mat 'to make it slippery'.

Other objects are concerned more with the fruit of intercourse, for the fertility so carefully avoided in the ghotul is now passionately desired. The kalsa-pitcher is an obvious symbol of the womb: it is filled with fertile grain and a lamp (which stands for the act of love in folk-poetry as in Pahari paintings) covers its mouth. The arrow is another obvious sex-symbol[2]; the very interesting song on p. 119 connects the marriage arrow with the arrow used to cut the umbilical cord of the first child: here too the kalsa-pitcher becomes the pot from which the mother is bathed during the ceremonial uncleanness of the puerperium. The decorations of the booth, the strings of mango leaves so green and fertile, the coconut, the grain, the burning lamps, all hint at love and love's fruit. Even the curious rite where the bride and groom throw away their toilet-twigs and spit at each other may aim at ensuring union and productiveness. Most obvious of all the symbols are those connected with earth, for woman is everywhere the earth whom man must plough and sow.

585 182 The incidents and furniture of a Muria marriage, therefore, have not come together by chance. They are purposeful and charged with meaning. They express in vivid and dramatic form the working of the Muria mind. There could hardly be a more emphatic means of bringing home to a young couple their social, sexual and domestic union.

[1] See *N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 39.
[2] Westermarck gives many examples, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 490; so does Archer, *The Blue Grass*, pp. 172ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

887 goes to the market and attends the festivals, though there is not so much for her in these as for the men. But her real hour of happiness is at a marriage. Here she may lay aside restraint and recapture the abandon of youth. Now she may drink heavily and for a few hours in blissful intoxication free herself of inhibitions and forget all that is tiresome and weary in her life. If the older men enliven the marriage scene with their buffoonery, [522 the older women divert it with their obscenity. There is nothing that they ● 831] may not say, little they may not do. Their songs and their dance movements are outrageous and never fail to rouse laughter in the crowd.

888 In a very few cases Muria women grow riggish in old age. They adorn themselves with many ornaments and wear bright-coloured saris. This behaviour is not approved.

You are an old woman,
Forget your dances.
You are an old woman,
Yet on your buttocks is a tiny cloth
And flowers are in your hair.

Although there is a rule that women should never use their ghotul titles after marriage, when a group of old women who have grown up together in the same ghotul meet in later life, they usually use the old names in order to awaken happy memories of the past. I am told that then they exchange reminiscences through half the night and that such times are among the happiest of their lives.

886 As elsewhere in aboriginal India, the climacteric does not appear to be dreaded or even to be specially noticed. In India, women are old at 45 and they greet the cessation of the menstrual period with relief that they are now saved from its embarrassments. I have not been able to find any myth about the climacteric; there does not seem to be any rule about it or any desire to avert it. It is a purely natural phenomenon. 'The stream that flowed so long is dry', 'the old tree has begun to wither'. Some people believe that the tree withers because 'no one goes to an old woman,[1] so her vagina has no grain to eat; no rain falls in her stream, so how can it flow?'

II. Death and the Ghotul

761 The ghotul is a place of separations. But when a chelik or motiari dies
883 there is a special feeling of sorrow, a sense of outrage, the conviction that something exceptional and abnormal has occurred. Sometimes the ghotul is closed for three days; where it is not closed the children gather sadly and there is no singing and there should be no intimacies. When older people die the dormitory is not closed. 'The ghotul is the *Dinde-mahdl*, the Palace of the Unmarried. As the Raja's Palace is not shut when people die in the town, neither is ours. But if two or three of the chelik and motiari die, then we shut it.' At Dongrigura, they said that when a chelik died, the motiari wept and next day initiated one of the younger boys and gave him the dead chelik's title, so that there might be no gap in their fellowship. When the Subedar died, they made his little brother Subedar next day and gave him as 'husband' to the Subedarin, his *anga*, or elder brother's 'widow'.

The death of a chelik or motiari is always abnormal. The death of a little child or of a child in the womb is no less unnatural. 'Just as in a field, rice

[1] A rather cynical proverb runs: 'How disgusted is a man who eats stale food in the morning and goes to bed with an old woman at night.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Angār mute rāni re.	Angar Mute is the Rani.
Yar muyuli kilandu re.	Weeping, she is bathing in the water.
Jhāro jhāro kilandu re.	As she weeps the tears fall.
Pitāmaro Dhoti re!	O her silken cloth!
Dhoti tune kavandu re.	She looks at her cloth.
Tōna dudong āteka re?	How can we describe her breasts?
Mākha kāyāng dudo re.	Her breasts are as the bel fruit.
Ghāttam tikeda wāndung re.	From the bathing-place she is coming home.
Lonz tike kavdung re	In the house
Mul gathe mānā re	There are so many relatives
Sanju banju kile re.	That we cannot count them.

The rest of the song describes Angar Mute's court, to which comes the Pargana Manjhi with small legs, his spear over his shoulder, a big-bellied Kotwar and many other officials. The Manjhi delivers judgement, giving a hundred rupees to the Raja and only a pair of bullocks for the Muria. 'One of the bullocks had no tail, the other had no horns.' Then the chelik and motiari who have escorted the corpse to the burial ground are described. There are sixty boys led by Kosi Leyur and sixty girls led by Gara Karre Mode, the Belosa of the ghotul, whose vagina is sixteen cubits long and whose pubic hairs are five cubits long. 'A jungle boar could roll in her vagina.' The boys break her bangles and push the pieces into her navel with a *jharar jharar* noise.

All this, which seems merely coarse to us, is exceedingly amusing to the Muria; the song is really a comic effort intended to relieve the tension of the funeral now that the main rites are done.

VI. Divining the Cause of Death

It is always important at a funeral to discover the cause of so monstrous and unnatural a thing as death. At Binjhli, when magic is suspected, they halt the bier before it reaches the burial ground and the Siraha medium recites a string of names of suspected persons. When the name of the guilty man is mentioned, the bier moves forward violently of its own accord. This method, which resembles the use of an Anga clan-god for divination, is common throughout the State, and Grigson has recorded a similar, though more elaborate, rite in use among the Hill Maria.[1]

At Kelalakot, the Muria remove some locks of the dead man's hair and a little earth from beneath his head. They make a small flag-pole with the hair and the earth and a saja leaf stuck on an ebony stick. They take this to the jungle and a boy holds it while the Siraha recites the names of any suspected causes or people. When the right word is uttered, the flag is said to quiver. At Kakori the villagers go to the boundary and put five heaps of rice in a row, one for Mahapurub, one for witchcraft, one for Mother Earth, one for the ancestors of the house, and one for any local godling who may have been troublesome. The people sit some distance away, and spend the time having their hair done by their relatives-in-law. Presently a crow flies down and pecks at one or other of the piles of rice, thus revealing the cause of death.

The *thumkakri* divination is done with chickens on the second or third day after death. One chicken is taken from the house of the dead and one from

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

778 346 [532]

The buildings vary greatly. Some are solid mud houses with strong doors, others are open sheds, a few stand in substantial compounds of their own with pillars and swings before the entrance. The furniture and symbols inside vary as greatly. In the solid buildings there is generally something that might be damaged by cattle or blown away in a storm—little brass images of horses, elephants and bulls, elaborate litters for Dantesliwari, bunches of peacock feathers. Flags and very small images are wrapped up and put into an earthen pot hung from the roof. The long Gutal poles (with a big bunch of peacock feathers at the top) are slung from the roof, and the Anga Deo are hung on ropes from the roof or placed resting on bamboos. Other symbols of the gods are chains, spears, axes, digging tools, whips of cow-hair, shields.

Fig. 24. Brass horse, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines *Height 9½"*

In the more open sheds, the symbols of the gods have to be slung high up very near the roof. At the foot of the central pillar there is generally a flat stone which serves as the seat of the god, and there are several big stones placed together to form a hearth for the cooking of the new grain and pulses or sacrificial animals. The gods are often taken out of their temples to be worshipped, at least on all major festivals, but the sacramental cooking is done inside. So you may often see big wooden spoons stuck in the roof. Outside the temple, there may be a swing with a spiked seat on which the mediums can prophesy; there is often a row of wooden pillars, each with a stone seat before it, to which certain visiting gods can be tied, and there may be a stone for special offerings to the dead.

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On the wooden pillars, there are often phallic symbols. At Metawand I saw an elaborately carved vagina showing the clitoris and labia; there are similar carvings at Markabera and Bayanar.

346

I will describe one or two representative shrines, for this will give a better idea of them than any general account. At Markabera is the *pen-rawar* of the Wadder clan, and near the temple is a row of menhirs erected for members of the clan who have died in the neighbourhood. But Markabera is not the original *pen-rawar* of this clan. That is at Kakori, where the clan-god, the Anga Bope Harma, has his residence. Many years ago, Bope Harma had a son at Kakori who was named Bhumiriya; two brothers of the Wadder clan lived there as the Dhurwa Pujari. After a time Bope Harma ordered one of the Wadder brothers to go to Markabera and make a new *pen-rawar* there with a temple to Bhumiriya.

The temple is built with nine wooden pillars, fixed in place by the clan-priest who put iron slag at the bottom of each hole. Bundles of grass called *gubbi* were prepared by a Karanga, a clan akin[illegible] to the Wadder clan; mahua flowers and water were offered them and they were tied to the top of the pillars before thatching. The roof was then thatched, but no walls were made. Every ten years, the *pen-rawar* building is renewed.

MURIA RELIGION

346 Just inside the gate of the enclosure there is a line of pillars and four stone seats. These poles are for the convenience of such visiting deities as are

[533]

Fig. 25. Brass swing, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines
Breadth 8½"

represented by poles or flags and can be tied to the pillars; the stones also are seats for those gods who have a traditional or family right to come to the temple. Such are Kustirmago Pen, a cousin of Bhumiriya, an Ulka god from Kasabahi; Lath Kuar, Bhumiriya's son, a Wadder god from Tadopal; Inde Muitar, a Karanga god of Suhnar and Son Kuar, son of Kanda Dokara, a Maravi god from Garhbangal. Near the gate of the enclosure is another stone of sacrifice where black hens are offered to the dead. One of the pillars is used to tie the buffaloes and bulls which are to be sacrificed to Bhumiriya.

[74]

Entering the temple, we find a clean open shed with broad wooden pillars on which are carved crude representations of the sun and the vagina. Here too are four stone seats. The chief is, of course, for the lord of the temple Bhumiriya himself. The second is for his father Bope Harma who is brought every ten years to sit with his son. The third is for Dhursai Kuar, a son of the Pat Deo in Jagdalpur, who comes at festivals from Timnar, and the fourth is for Lalsai Kuar of Metawand.

[531]

From the roof hangs an earthen pot containing little bells and a bundle of peacock feathers. Another pot has in it a piece of cloth used as a flag at festivals. In the roof are ten large wooden spoons, which are used for the

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

346 New Eating ceremonies and made ceremonially every ten years, and a large gourd kept for pouring water. Piled round one of the pillars is a heap of dancing-sticks of dhaman wood called Bhumiriya Kolang; these are kept in the shrine for the Pen Kolang dances and at the end of three years are taken to the village boundary and hung up on a rope across the road. There is a *kakam* hunting-horn, not a brass one, but the real horn of a wild buffalo.

883 This description is not irrelevant to a book on the ghotul. The spoons and
796 gourd are used by the chelik, who have the responsibility for cooking at the festivals. The dancing-sticks are made by the chelik and used for their ceremonial dances. The hunting-horn is sounded by chelik to summon the people for festivals. Every visiting deity means a corresponding visit from the chelik and motiari of its village: Markabera is thus in close touch with several villages—Timnar, Metawand, Kokori, Kasabahi, Tadopal, Garhbangal and Suhnar. The Markabera god visits Metawand and Kokori, and possibly other villages. The visits of the gods with their attendant chelik and motiari, many of them of clans different to the Markabera Wadder clan, play a very important part in bringing boys and girls of these villages into touch with one another.

346 In Markabera there was only one temple. In Bayanar there are eight grouped together round a wooded hill covered with fantastic rocks amid which the little shrines are built. A narrow path leads steeply up the hill to the first shrine standing up sharply on a rocky mound of its own. This shrine is the home of Pandi Dokara Gutal (represented by a pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the end) and his two sons Mundi Kuar Gutal and Lalit Kuar Gutal. The three poles are slung high up beneath the roof, for the shed is an open one. At the foot of the centre pillar of the hut is a stone seat, with gongs and an iron lamp. This is a Naitami shrine and there are two stone hearths at either end of it, one for the clan-priest of the Naitami and the other for the husbands of women in their menstrual periods and women who have very recently given
● [931] birth to a child. On one pillar is a carving of the vagina, on another the sun and moon and a crude horse.

By the little path along the hillside are two sets of pillars with flat stones in front of them to support Pandi Dokara at festivals. A little further on is a small temple for Hinglajin Dokari. This goddess is represented by a closed litter, and there is the usual stone and hearth for her worship.

A little way down the hill is a temple of the Sori clan which houses two more Gutal (poles)—Dawdi Dokara and Lalsai Dokara. Going still further down the hill we reach a large rock on which is a fourth shrine which is empty save for a stone representing Mundi Kuar; this is in charge of a Hindu (Kalar) Pujari from Mungwal.

These little temples on the hillside were curiously impressive; old gods of hill and forest seemed very present there. Down the hill in a shed was a bamboo pole and a flag in an earthen pot representing Son Kuar, the son of the Anga Deo at Narayanpur—another Naitami shrine. One of the most interesting things I saw on this visit was in the temple to Son Kuar. Here was a very small earthen pot tied up in dub grass, in which the *jiwa* of a dead priest was dwelling. For a long time even the Pargana Manjhi hesitated to tell me his name, especially in that potentially dangerous spot, but at last I got it—it was Tota Muria.

We went on towards a great grove of mango trees till we came to a closed temple, again of the Naitami, in which was a characteristic Anga Deo, Baiha the mad god, a stone to represent Bangaram consort of Danteshwari, and two other stones for Kotgudin Matal and Dulardei Matal. Here we were in a definitely Hindu atmosphere. There was a large clay elephant for Bangaram,

*[Description of temple buildings see pp 196-197, cat 116—Andyal]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it was under its leaf-cup, they proceed to dig holes to take the four corner pillars of the house. If, as they dig, they come across white ants they move the site. They put four pillars into the holes and tie a garland of mango leaves round them. After this they proceed to build in the usual way.

At Phunder the boys put a grass 'top-knot' on the roof and a small flag, the *chelik-bairag* or Palo Pen, so that 'all might know it was a ghotul'.

Such are the main types of building; what of the decorations and the furniture? These vary greatly from place to place. They are least ornate to the north and east, most carefully imagined and executed in the west central parganas, in the typical Jhoria area.

Doors are sometimes very small, sometimes large and heavy, occasionally of light bamboo, sometimes carved as at Bandopal; sometimes there is no door at all. Often there is an arrangement for shutting the door from inside—a latch falls into a wooden hook attached to the door. But it is interesting that there is no means of shutting the house from outside: the ghotul is never locked up. It is a shrine and so one would steal from it.

As you move west across the centre of the Muria country you find more, and more elaborate carving. The ghotul has stimulated artistic creation, not only in the realm of personal adornment but also in wall-painting and wood-carving. The chelik desire that their ghotul really should be 'lovely as a bison's horns'. In many of the Jhoria ghotul there are excellently carved pillars. These may be seen at Almer, Nayanar, Remawand, Amgaon, Bandopal, Malinar, Kober and elsewhere. At Almer, one of the pillars has *siddari* birds at the top, another has tortoises. On the body of the pillars are carvings of the moon, boys and girls dancing the Hulki, elephants. Down the pillar there are three *pidha*, the seats that are supposed to hold it up. At Amgaon also, each of the pillars has four of these *pidha* 'for the roof to sit on'. At Nayanar, one of the pillars is decorated with tortoises and another has hooded snakes projecting from all four corners. In Malinar, there are carvings on all the pillars—combs beautifully fashioned, a boy with a large phallus, a realistic bow and arrow, a snake. Outside, as at Remawand, there are pillars in the fence with remarkable designs clearly illustrated in Plate LXXII. At Jhakri I saw a fine pillar ingeniously carved to make a wooden ball inside with no way of putting it in or taking it out. At Binjhe too the Sirdar had carved some good pillars and had made windows in the ghotul with serrated bars.

Phallic symbols are very common.[1] In nearly every ghotul there is somewhere the representation of the vagina, often about two feet from the ground

[1] Similar phallic symbols occur in the Juang and Bhuiya and in some Uraon dormitories. The Juang often make a row of breasts right across the main beam of the roof. So do the Kond. Hutton describes carvings of men and women 'in a condition of sexual excitement' in Naga morung.—Hutton, *Diaries*, op. cit., p. 46.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

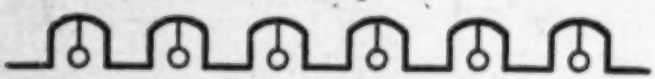
883 X
342
353
31
831

on the central pillar. In the small Kolur ghotul there is one slender pillar covered with carvings of the vagina, as always showing the clitoris, but here there was a double clitoris and a clitoris upside down.

At Markabera there were similar carvings of the vagina with the clitoris.

Often a chelik may be seen with an enormous penis, a motiari in his arms. The boys say that these carvings are very useful as an approach to girls. It may be that the vagina in the central pillar is the relic of a custom now forgotten of initiating smaller boys by pressing them against it.[1]

The walls of the ghotul are often decorated with drawings and paintings. In 1940 there was a fine display in the Remawand ghotul. The following year I saw a frieze of fantastic paintings (illustrated in Plate LXVIII) at More Berma. At Netagaon there were models of motiari, tigers and a monkey. In Urdabera there was a model of a chelik with his motiari, and over the door a mud model of a horse. In Deogaon, there were modellings of a chelik and motiari riding on a horse. At Kuntpadar, one wall was well decorated with drawings of a boy, a vagina, a girl, a bow and arrow and the sun and moon. At Palki there was the representation of a bird trap:



But this might equally well be a sexual symbol, similar to the design of the phallus within the vagina that I noted at Metawand:

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352
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The day-time visitor to a ghotul will find little enough there by way of furniture. Cots are never used; everyone sleeps on the ground. Seats and stools are rare, but in many ghotul are to be found long narrow pieces of wood raised some two inches from the ground. These are the *kutul* which may be used either as seats or pillows. Some are very long and suggest the custom of several boys and girls sleeping together. They are often carved with geometric designs, figures of boys and girls, crude representations of the vagina. I have one with four breasts carved on its under-side. Occasionally you may see a *kutul* with a little drawer hollowed out below for storing necklaces or other ornaments during the night. As far as I know these head-rests are the corporate property

FIG. 54. *Kutul* from Talabera showing small drawer for keeping ornaments. *Length 1' 7"*

[1] A remarkable parallel from an English Public School (Repton) is provided in Denton Welch's *Maiden Voyage* (London, 1943), p. 48. The author is describing the House dormitory. 'Two lips had been painted on one of the beams and all new boys had to

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Belle marrāte pungār puy ānta

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

[1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The bearers lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'

[2] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 276.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAS* (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 396ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poesy* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, op. cit., p. 180.

[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Muduvar.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—Ibid., Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, op. cit., p. 47.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

276
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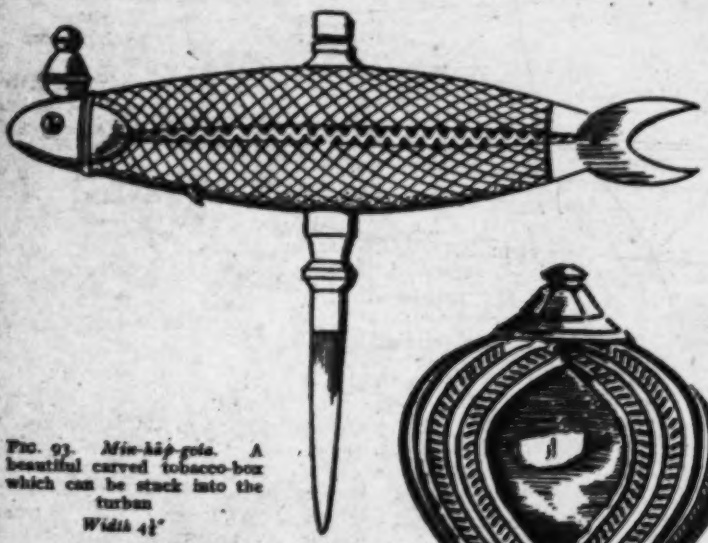

FIG. 93. *Mīn-kāp-gola.* A beautiful carved tobacco-box which can be stuck into the turban
Width 4½"

[831]

FIG. 94. *Puda-gola*, with an obvious representation of the vagina
Height 3½"

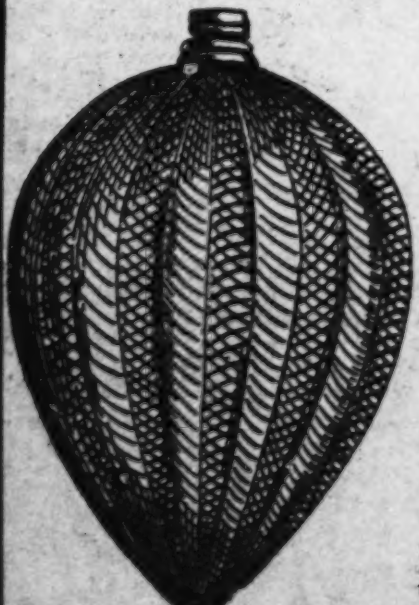

FIG. 95. Tobacco-box from Panjori decorated with carvings supposed to represent the bones of the *mīn* fish
Height 4½"

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pipes. These are lit with little bits of glowing coal picked from the fire, and when half-smoked or not in use are generally kept tucked into the turban or hidden in a hole in the ghotul wall.

But the chelik do not rely only on the tobacco supplied them in the ghotul. Any enterprising boy has tucked into his loin-cloth or hanging (sometimes with a bunch of bells or cowries) at his waist a specially-made tobacco-pouch. These *gota* are, as a glance at the illustrations in Figs. 82-4, 93-5, 99, 103-4, and 109-14 will show, elaborate and varied. They are of every size and shape. One is like a fish, another carved like a wheel, a third resembles a mango. Some are of garud, moda or koraya wood, others are cut from the kernel of a fruit, a few are of brass. The stoppers are fitted tightly with a little lac. Some are covered with the testes of a goat or sambhar. Most are elaborately carved.

Many of the *gota*-pouches are named. There is the *dudong-gota*, round as a girl's breast; the *chakka-gota* (Fig. 77), a beautifully carved wheel; the *hemul*, or tortoise pouch (Fig. 79) with its elaborate designs; the charming *marka-batta-gota* (Fig. 112) shaped like a mango; the *kalāri-gota* (Fig. 83); the *min-hīp-gota*, with its decoration of fish bones; the *tumur-gota*, whose carving resembles the flowers of the ebony tree; the *girna* or lizard *gota* (Fig. 82); and the *damera-āching-singār gota* (Fig. 110) with its elaborate silver decorations. Some of the *gota* have a deliberately sexual purpose; the *pude-gota* (Figs. 94 and 99) has small representations of the vagina carved on it and the *dudo-muri* (Fig. 101) has marks that are supposed to resemble the pimples round the nipples of a woman's breast. The chelik show these to girls to excite them. But, indeed, as I show in another chapter, to ask for tobacco is itself a polite way of asking a girl for sexual congress.

The Muria grow tobacco in specially fenced gardens near their houses and sometimes in enclosures made on the banks of stream or river. When it is ready, it is cut and allowed to dry in the garden. Then it is placed between layers of kodon straw 'which turns it red in a few days'. After this it is dried again, this time on the roof of the house, and finally tied up in bundles with home-made string.

VI. The Sleeping-mat

The *gik* or *masni*-mat is an important piece of ghotul furniture. When a boy joins the ghotul for the first time he is expected to bring a mat which is usually made for him by his mother or an aunt. Later on, especially in the *jodidār* ghotul, a girl ought always to make a mat for her special chelik, but elsewhere the mats seem to be made by a boy's mother, sister or some other female relative. At a marriage a new mat is usually presented to the bridegroom.

The mat is not difficult to make. A rectangle is marked out and pegs driven into the ground at its four corners. Bits of bamboo are tied between the pegs at opposite ends of the rectangle and a dozen or more strings of hemp or grass are tied from one end to the other so as to form the warp. Before they are attached, they are threaded through the holes of the *ārh*, a wooden instrument illustrated in Fig. 96 which is used to beat the grass into place. The woman sits down with the *ārh* before her and threads bits of reed or grass over and under the strings. After she has threaded two or three she sprinkles them with water and pulls the *ārh* sharply towards her several times, thus pressing the grass into position. This is done over and over again until finally the mat is complete.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

These mats are kept at home and boys or girls bring them rolled up under their arms at night to the ghotni. In some villages this is the special duty of the girls. When they arrive they go round saluting the boys and presenting them with their mats. This is known as *Masni-johar*.

Fig. 96. The wooden dish used for making a *masni*-mat
Length 2' 10"

The mat is very definitely a sexual symbol and many ribald jokes are connected with it. The new mat given to a bridegroom at his marriage is generally smeared with oil 'to make it slippery'. Once when I was sitting down in the village of Angaon a chelik brought me a *masni* but an old man said, 'Don't sit on it, it is covered with semen', and everyone thought it very amusing. It is supposed to be a great honour to be given a mat by the chelik, probably just because it is a symbol of so much excitement and romance.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
539

At midnight the umagaji bird cried *Ha hubu*. The girl shrieked with fright and said, 'O Lakari, let me sleep near you, for I am afraid'. Then the bird cried again and the girl said, 'What is the bird saying?' Lakari replied, 'It says "Drive on, drive on!"'. So now there was no mother, no father, there was no one in the world, and he went to her. From the bird's talk came the boy's copulation. Every time the bird cried, the girl clung again to Lakari.

In this way Lakari took each of the girls in turn, and at last every one was pregnant and he had seven score sons. When the boys were old enough to earn their living, Lakari got bullocks for them. In this way family life began and villages were formed, because a girl was frightened of a bird.

II. The Anatomy and Mythology of Sex

831
192

The Muria seem to have a rather sketchy knowledge of the sexual organs and their functions. They have no idea of the purpose of the testes or of the existence of the hymen. They do, however, recognize the clitoris and understand its function. Their vocabulary is limited, but sufficient to cover the main points of the external genitalia.[1] They have half-a-dozen words for the penis, three or four for the vagina (the most popular simply means 'the lower part of something'), and words for the labia majora (*pude adawing*, vagina flesh), the urethra (*urkul bukha*, urine hole) and the clitoris (*titigute*, a word which like its Graeco-English equivalent probably has reference to the organ's power of erection and excitement). The Muria word for orgasm is *pusi* or *wijja pesina*, 'the coming out of the seed'.

There is no word for love in Gondi. The Muria use the Chhattisgarhi word *mâya* and sometimes *pirit* or *parem*, which are simply corruptions of the ordinary Hindi words. But neither do they have any words for lust or desire, and for erotic excitement use expressions that are only descriptive of the physical sensations of sex—*penda hohalta* said of a girl means that her 'vagina is itching'; *bondę dohalta* that the 'penis is quivering'. The expression *girda hiyâna* is sometimes used for 'making love'; *girda* means 'pleasure' or 'liking'. *Girda ator* can be used in the sense of 'being in love'. But abstract and emotional terms are rare in Gondi, as in most primitive languages.

831
524

Sexual riddles are interesting as showing how direct and forthright are the Muria's references to the genitals and sexual intercourse.

Chapti pakna gohivailaiteh.
The flat stone itches.

—The vagina.

Sulung dandi bundle burna.
The pole is long, its bottom is black.

—The penis.

Kondâng lawa boteng.
The fish that has no eyes.

—The penis.

[1] I notice that our authorities often confuse the names of the genitalia, perhaps because the tribes themselves, like the British and French, use a bewildering variety of synonyms for them. Ward gives as Gondi words *prest* or *munchelna* for the 'affections', *mujâ halatur* for 'beloved', and *mahilla* for 'to kiss'. There are no such words in Trench's vocabulary.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

831 ●
534

Itwa lewa patwa tado.
Touch it and up it goes.
—A mat, or the penis.

Mela aur jela bahir jhula
Mantor kach kutile lopa narey kiyāntor.
Mela and Jela swing to and fro outside;
The iron rice-husker is at work within.
—Sexual congress.

Three are dancing in a thick jungle.
—Sexual congress.

There are two witnesses to this thief's escapades.
—The testes and penis.

But if their anatomical knowledge of the genitalia is slight, the Muria compensate for it by an extensive mythology of sex, which is, I think, even more elaborate than that of the Bison-horn Maria and the Orissa tribes. 831

It is remarkable that the Muria seem to regard the sexual organs, whether male or female, as living things with an independent life of their own.[1] For example, one of the reasons given for forbidding urination inside the ghotul is that the girls' urine would smell abominably because her labia majora are always chewing her urine as she walks about—just as a goat chews its food, and therefore a girl's urine smells as strongly as a goat's.

There are several stories about the vagina, though the Vagina Dentata legend, known throughout the Central Provinces and Orissa, is comparatively rare. The following story is from Masora. 831 539

Long ago the vagina had the power of leaving its body at night and going out to feed in the fields. It had teeth with which it could eat; it would stay out all night grazing in the fields and return satisfied in the morning.

By and by the village people began to say, 'What is this thing that comes at night and eats up our crops? Let us set traps and catch it'. So they set traps in their fields, and that night when the vaginae came to feed they were caught and the villagers collected them and took them to the Gaita's house in a big basket. They shut them up in an inner room and went to report the matter to the Raja. The Raja sentenced the vaginae to be hanged.

When they heard this, the villagers were frightened, for they said, 'How are we to live with our wives if their organs are destroyed?' So they went to the Raja asking him to forgive them and promising to repay the owners of the fields for whatever damage had been done.

The Raja said, 'First of all the teeth must be broken and removed from the vaginae. Whoever can do this will be rewarded'. No one knew how to do it until at last a one-eyed policeman, who himself had a knife growing from his penis, declared that he would deal with the matter. With his knife he removed the teeth and then with hammer and nails fixed every vagina back in its place. The nail he used is the clitoris which stands above the vagina to hold it steady. The vaginae then cursed the man who had done them this injury and turned him

[1] A similar idea is found in the Crow Indian tale *Montsla Lequesa*, where a man's penis begins to talk and refuses to stop.—R. H. Lowie, 'Myths and Traditions of the Crow Indians', *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. XXV (1922), p. 225.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

931
539

into a pig. Even today the pig's virile member is shaped like a knife.[1]

A rather similar tale from Palari (Kondagaon Tahsil) connects the incident with Bhimul and his wife.

> The vagina used to creep out of the body where it lived and go in search of maize and cucumbers. It would nibble its way through a fence and steal from the field. The farmers made fences of iron and now when the vagina tried to get through, its teeth were knocked out by the iron. A small bit of iron stuck in the vagina's mouth and became the clitoris. When the teeth came out, blood flowed from the mouth and the vagina went to Bhimul for help.
>
> Now the penis of Bhimul was five hands long and he cut it into several pieces, each four fingers long. He put one piece into the vagina's mouth and said, 'Don't eat cucumbers or maize any more: from today this will be your food'. But the bleeding did not stop, and Bhimul said, 'It will stop soon and then after a month it will bleed again'. Such was the beginning of women's menstruation.
>
> There was blood at the end of Bhimul's penis where he had cut it. It went into the belly of the woman to whom the vagina belonged and she conceived. This is how the birth of children began.
>
> In those days men had no genitals. One day they went to Bhimul to complain about this. He fixed a bit of his own penis with wax between the thighs of a man. Such was the beginning. But the penis fell off as the wax melted. They went to Gorondi Dokari (Bhimul's wife) and she put two small chickens under the penis to support it. Such is the origin of the testes.[2]

Another Vagina Dentata story comes from Koelari.[3]

> There was a Rakshasa's daughter with teeth in her vagina. She used to live mostly as a tigress and kept ten or twelve tigers always with her. When she saw a man, she would turn into a pretty girl, seduce him, cut off his penis, eat it herself and give the rest of his body to her tigers.
>
> One day she met seven brothers in the jungle and married the eldest so that she could sleep with them all. After some time she took the eldest boy to where her tigers lived, made him lie with her, cut off his penis, ate it and gave his body to the tigers. In the same way she killed six of the brothers till only the youngest was left.
>
> When his turn came, the god who helped him appeared in a dream saying, 'If you go with this girl, make an iron tube, put it into her vagina and break her teeth'. The boy acted according to his dream, and when the tigers came for his body, he climbed into a mango tree

[1] Similar stories among the Bison-horn Maria relate how a man once caught a vagina eating his gram and knocked its teeth out with a pestle; in another tale, from Kamell, people used to feed the wandering vagina out of charity. When it was satisfied it would open its mouth and do men no harm. Even now the vagina has not forgotten its old habit of eating *gur* and gram and still tries to 'bite' the male member by its muscular contractions.

[2] Elsewhere the Muria said, 'The testes are the children of the penis and have sapped their father's strength. Only when the children restore the strength can their father work'.

[3] I present a large number of similar legends recorded from the Gond and Pardhan of the Central Provinces, the Bison-horn Maria of Bastar, and the Juang, Gadaba and Savara of Orissa in my forthcoming book *Myths of Middle India*.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

and made himself very small. The tigers chased him and the girl too became very angry. He cursed her; 'Let nothing but your face remain'. And so it was; she became a bat which eats, excretes, urinates and copulates through one and the same hole. One of the mangoes opened and the boy crept inside. A parrot carried off the mango to the Raja's palace.

831 ●
539

The parrot dropped the fruit, it broke open, out came the boy and after various adventures married the Raja's daughter. The hero of an Agaria story was similarly saved by the use of an iron condom.[1]

Sometimes it is said that originally the vagina was situated below the knee of the left leg. One day a chicken pecked at it, and it jumped up to a place of safety between the thighs where it has remained ever since. But it was wounded and blood still flows from it every month. From Bara Dongar comes the tale of the vagina which died.

One day a vagina died and its companions were wondering what to do with it. 'Shall we cremate it or bury it?' said some, but others said, 'Let us divide it among us'. They cut it up and each stuck a portion on itself. This is the origin of the lips [labia majora]. The woman whose vagina died was the first hermaphrodite.

In the same style is a story from Alor, which has the familiar competition-motif.

The breasts and the vagina had a quarrel. 'I am the greater,' said the vagina. 'It is for my sake that men go mad and die.'

'No,' said the breasts. 'We are greater. It is our beauty that men come to see. If there were no breasts, who would come to you?'

'If there was no vagina, who would bother about you? Do men chase a flower or a lovely stream?'

'Men see us from afar and excited by our beauty draw near. It is only then that they notice you; first they touch us, then you.'

'But no one gets pleasure from touching you.'

'But if they didn't see and touch us, how would they be excited? You would be neglected entirely.'

So quarrelling, the vagina and the breasts parted and went their ways. As they went along, the breasts met a man and he took them aside and began to fondle them. But when he looked down and saw nothing there, he went disappointed away.

Then the breasts went to the vagina and said, 'Come, sister, you have won the battle; you are the greatest of all'.

There are also legends about the penis. Originally it was of gigantic size.

Once the penis was so long that as a man lay in bed it could get out of the house and penetrate a woman a hundred yards away. When he went abroad, a man would wind it round and round his waist and tuck in the end.

One day a penis broke through the wall of the house, entered a woman, came out of her mouth, dipped its head into a cooking-pot and ate all the supper, and in withdrawing killed the woman. Then all the women

[1] For a discussion of this legend, see my article 'The Vagina Dentata Legend', *The British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. XIX (1943), pp. 439–53. For accounts of its distribution in North America, see W. Boggess, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. IV (New Series), p. 667 and R. H. Lowie, 'The Test-Theme in North American Mythology', *The Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Vol. XXI (1908), p. 110.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

§31 §39

came to cut it off. The man grasped his penis with his hand, but that was all he could save. The women cut it off and it is now only a hands-breadth long.[1]

Another version of the tale, however, connects the disappearance of the long penis with the Vagina Dentata legend.

> In the old days there were teeth far back in the vagina. One day when the long penis went in, the teeth cut it and all that remained was a stump of its present length. Angry at this, the man brought a rice-husker and broke off the teeth. In those days the penis itself was covered with thorns; it stood up like a semur tree. But there were no thorns at the root. The thorny part was cut off, and the smooth part remains to this day.[2]

In this mythical past it was man, not woman, who was subject to a menstrual period.

> Formerly men had to live outside their houses every month. They used to tie hollow bamboos over the penis to catch the blood. One day a girl saw this and laughed at the man. He pulled the bamboo off and threw it at her.[3] Since then women have suffered this flowing of the blood instead of men.

III. Erotic Attractiveness

§32

I found it very difficult to get the Muria to give any clear account of what they meant by beauty. They are always moved by the loveliness of natural scenery, but they are not very articulate and find it hard to express themselves except when the words of a song or proverb provide them with a ready means of utterance. The following Chitkul Pata from Amakot, for example, reveals not a little aesthetic appreciation.

Jilāng jāpar bandār!	How beautiful the lake!
Bandār soba bīrāng?	Why is the lake so beautiful?
Bandār soba pāri,	Lovely are the banks of the lake,
Bandār soba yero.	Lovely the waters of the lake.
Yero soba mīnur.	Lovely are the fish in the water.
Mīnur soba bīrāng?	To the fish what is lovely?
Mīnur soba sila.	To the fish the water-reeds are lovely.
Pārar soba bīrāng?	On the bank what is lovely?
Pārar soba marka.	On the bank the mango trees,
Kāndi udo marka,	The mango's spreading branches,
Waliya mātō gorga.	And the palm trees everywhere.

In human beings the Muria seem to admire liveliness, animation, vigour more than perfection of colour or feature. They apply their universal test of hard work not only to assess a person's morals, but even his erotic attractiveness. 'However beautiful the face, one's eyes turn aside disgusted from a loafer.'

[1] The Bison-horn Maria attribute this incident to a man named Baikesa and say that he himself cut off his long penis through shame when it touched a woman not his wife by mistake. He died to death and was buried in a sitting posture. He is still honoured as Baikesa Pen with a pile of stones in many villages.

[2] But the Bison-horn Maria of Dugali said that the penis became short because in olden times the Mahara had none at all and went to Gaja Bhimal to beg for one. He cut off the long part from the Maria, but they held the stems in their fists. This is why the Maria have nothing to do with the Mahara for fear they lose the rest of the organ.

[3] For this reason, it is said, the Bison-horn Maria pelt a girl with mud at her first menstruation.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

and in their maturity reveal new opportunities. Chelik and motiari are then disturbed, devastated, broken just like anyone else; they fall in love. 'The best love is the first; that is the work of a madman. The rest is the result of an arrangement.' How do boys set about satisfying their passion? And even when it is far less intense than this, how do they approach a new girl whom they desire to win? How do they even persuade the girl with whom they regularly sleep to allow them consummation—for in most ghotul, though a girl is bound to sleep with one of the chelik, she need not have congress with him unless she wants to.

Love-making begins, said a chelik at Bandopal, 'with laughing, smiling and dancing together. Then we arrange to meet in the fields or forest, perhaps by a stream. The boy gives her a carved comb. She steals a little money from her parents, and buys beads to make him a necklace. When it is dark she gives it to him. He wears it at night, but in the day he keeps it carefully hidden.'

In the remote approach to the beloved, gifts play an important part. The chelik make hair-pins, wooden blocks for the back hair, pretty little combs and small tobacco-pouches. The motiari respond with bead-necklaces, head-bands, ear-pendants, and even mats. Mirrors are popular gifts on either side. The gift of a comb is regarded as a sign that one's intentions are really serious; in some ghotul it may not be given directly, but must pass through the Kotwar's hands so that he may keep a check on ghotul romance. Some girls accumulate a great number of these ornaments; it does not necessarily mean that they have many, but rather that they have devoted, lovers. The Likhen of Kanhargaon made twelve combs for his beloved Surtao; when she danced, she used to remove them and give them to him for safe keeping.

[831] Many of these gifts promote a chelik's suit not only by pleasing the girl, but by a more direct solicitation. The boys carve tiny symbols of the vagina or of a penis in erection, they draw breasts and even the pimples round the areola. They make these drawings or carvings on combs or tobacco pouches, and on the walls or pillars of the ghotul and on trunks of trees in the forest. Sometimes they carve breasts on the wooden pillows they use at night. These symbols, they say, often make it easier to open a conversation.

When girls fall in love with boys, they show their devotion by doing things for them. They take their dirty clothes to the stream for washing. They do their hair with special attention. They carry their drums. They bring secret presents of liquor or tobacco from their homes. They go to the jungle for little gifts of fruit. Such attentions quickly win the chelik's heart.

The pangs and sorrows of frustrated love are rarely, I think, experienced. Even where desire is strong, it is tempered by the great range of sexual opportunity. 'Is there a lack of tigers in the jungle?' A girl who is attracted by a boy but who, for some reason, cannot win him, says philosophically enough, 'What is the use of rice in someone else's grain-bin?' and finds another lover. A boy says, 'If not today, I will plough the field tomorrow'.

VI

Such is the remote approach to what the Muria regard as the really important thing in human relations, sexual congress. We must now consider the more immediate approach to this critical and definite expression of love, without which no friendship can be real.

Motiari are often shy and unwilling; they are afraid of pregnancy; sometimes they are just not interested in that particular boy; they are well aware

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

So thinking, he tied a sickle to his nose as a beak, bound a winnowing-fan on each arm, put a broom on his bottom. There he was, a bird. He mounted his wife from behind, flapping his wings and crying *kar-kar-kar*. But he knocked over a lamp, set fire to the house and was burnt to death.

A chelik and motiari generally agree to have congress at the time of the massage. When the girl lays the chelik's hand on her shoulder so that she can massage his arm, he squeezes it in a certain manner. This is how the Kotwar of Chandabera described it.

They have agreed on it. They lie down together on the mat. He has his hand on her breast, but that means nothing. When all are asleep, he makes the sign. I cannot tell you what it is, but we all know it. She says 'Go away' but he knows she means yes. He doesn't kiss her or touch any part of her, save her breasts and shoulders. He raises himself and separates her legs. She at once unties her cloth. When he is on her, she puts his organ in its place with her hand. She says nothing, nor does he. They are very quiet. He must do it hard; unless you sweat, unless your rut (*masti*) leaves you, you are not satisfied. She says, 'Push on, push on (*alena, alena*)'. She won't let him go till she is satisfied. At last the word *Hai* comes from both their lips. They are no more drunken. *Eho lela hewde raiyār aske hong dayār*. When it goes out through her ears, her temper is cooled.

Bindo, the old Muria of Benur, recalled a love affair of sixty years ago.

I used to sleep with the Malko in the ghotul. Though she would be lying by my side, I did not go to her at first, for I was the head of the ghotul and thought I oughtn't to. But after two or four days, Malko caught hold of my penis and put it between her thighs. Even then I did nothing. Then the girl got very angry and refused to sleep with me for some days. But at last she came again to my mat and this time I went to her. After that we often had intercourse together.

This elementary form of masturbation by girls is known as *dinga-dinga* and seems to be common. But it must be noted that it is a preparation for normal intercourse and not (as so often in Africa) a substitute for it. In Masora the chelik said that 'when a motiari wants a boy, she catches hold of his penis and plays with it till he goes to her'.

The function of the clitoris is not unknown. It is usually prominently portrayed in drawings or carvings of the vagina. Its history is traced in the myths. To the male storyteller, it is a slightly ludicrous object, a parody of the penis, and a mention of it never fails to raise a laugh. In intercourse, said a Muria at Sirpuri, 'the clitoris becomes violently agitated when it sees the penis approaching'. The Antar of Masora said, 'When it sees the penis coming, the clitoris smiles'.

The Muria believe it is the woman who takes the lead and sets the pace. A curious illustration of this is the fact that, contrary to what I believe to be the almost universal practice in village India, the girl herself undoes her pubic cloth.[1] Elsewhere this is considered immodest in a girl and unmanly in her

[1] 'The folds of the sari which are tied in the front are called *tirani*, which is a very significant word in Indian love-making. The knot of the sari is to be untied by the man when the lovers unite.'—D. Bhagwat, *Folk-songs from the Satpura Valleys* (Bombay, 1940), p. xx.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

In Kuntpedar, the people stressed the virtue of a democratic outlook, the estimating of everyone as equal to yourself. In Metawand, they thought more of generosity. To help a man in need and be kind to those who come to you in trouble is the sign of a good man. Courage is also admired, but not specially so. Yet it is said of Kurwal Kumoti of Palki that 'where the English only venture into the jungle armed with guns and protected by many people, he goes anywhere without a weapon and has no fear of bears or tigers'.

Is sexual morality in our Western sense an ingredient of the good man's character? When I have raised this point in conversation, the reply has always referred to forbidden relations. 'The greatest sin'—this is the view of Lakmu of Masora—'is to have something to do with your younger brother's wife. Or for a girl to have intercourse with a Ganda.' Elsewhere, in several villages, I was told how serious it was to break the laws of exogamy, to have intercourse with a forbidden relation and to commit adultery. In Masora, when I asked if they thought it wrong for the unmarried to have intercourse with each other, for a long time they could not understand the question. When they did, they answered, 'Only if he sleeps with the same girl too often: he must change'.

Here then we have a general picture of the moral qualities that are considered desirable and the vices that are deplored. Let us now come nearer to the ghotul. 'In the ghotul no sin can be committed.' This is not strictly true, but it is sufficiently true to explain the wonderful innocence and simplicity of the chelik and motiari. There is no sin in sex, provided—as I have said before—sexual relations are enjoyed with the right people, at the right time, in the right place and in the right way.

Chelik and motiari must choose the right partner. They must strictly avoid the inner circle of forbidden relatives. Intercourse within the clan is forbidden, but is not regarded as very serious so long as no one knows about it and it does not result in pregnancy. In the *jodidār* ghotul, chelik and motiari must be faithful to one another; in the other, they must avoid too great attachments to special individuals. It is practically unknown for a motiari to have an affair with someone outside the tribe. One of the first lessons taught to a young girl in the ghotul is that she must avoid Ghasia, Ganda, Mahara and Lohar. It is probably safe to say that no European has ever had anything to do with a Muria girl, and I am told by State officials that in the old days when, in the more 'advanced' areas round Jagdalpur, it was the custom for the village headman to bring women for touring subordinates, this was never done in the ghotul villages of the north. I am told that chaprasis, forest guards and constables, who are sometimes such a menace to rural virtue, are never able to seduce the motiari of the ghotul, where the village dormitory remains to protect tribal honour. This opinion is confirmed by the fact that venereal disease is almost unknown among the Muria. In fact, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, has told me that in thirty years' service he had never seen a straight case of venereal disease among the Bastar aboriginals.

The rules governing the sexual life of the ghotul are strict and appear to be generally observed. Breaches of the rules are sufficiently rare to be talked of for many years and to be severely punished.

But sexual intercourse must not only be with the right people: it must be at the right time. It is tabooed before the greater festivals, before a hunting expedition, during the Pus Kolang dance and, most important of all, during a girl's menstrual period.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883 834 It is also tabooed in certain places. Intercourse should occur within the ghotul walls, within the supernatural fence that protects from evil. It is often considered wrong, however, for a boy to have intercourse in the presence of a relation whom he is supposed to avoid. In the ghotul where they 'pair off', for example, an elder brother should not have intercourse in the presence of his younger brother's motiari. He should do it in one of the other huts. It would also be very wrong indeed, and be likely to attract tigers to the village, for a chelik and motiari to sleep together on the platform from which the boys watch the ripening crops. Moreover one must always be careful to choose a place which is not haunted by a god or ghost. In Kajen the boys and girls of the ghotul go every year at the Pupul Pandum sacrifice to what is now known as the Chelik-tarni Dongar. Long ago they went there to practise the Cherta and camped beneath a great rock. One of the chelik took a motiari apart and had intercourse with her. They knew it was dangerous, for they immediately offered a small sacrifice to the demon of the hill. When they rejoined the party, an orphan boy (whom the others were treating unkindly by refusing to let him join them) cried, 'You take care, the rock will fall on you'. They laughed saying, 'What does he know?' 'Then one rock spoke to another rock, "These children have done wrong; let us fall upon them".' The orphan boy climbed on one of the rocks and sat on the top. Suddenly it fell and covered all those chelik and motiari.' When the people came, called by the orphan boy, they found nothing but a banyan tree already growing from the foot of a motiari which was sticking out of the debris.

Lastly, sexual relationships must be conducted in the proper manner. 'When there is consent and love there is never sin.' But it is considered very wrong to force a girl to the act against her will. Such cases of ghotul-rape are not common. It must be remembered that for a motiari to sleep with a boy does not mean that she is prepared to have sexual intercourse with him. The younger girls sleep for years in the arms of boys with nothing more than a little erotic play. Only after the menarche do they begin to have regular sexual congress. If then a boy forces a girl against her will, and the others hear of it, he is fined.

X883 839 838 Sexual deviations are almost unknown. Bestiality is regarded as a crime of civilization, unworthy of a Muria. The devious course of modern European sexuality would seem horrible to so straightforwardly heterosexual a tribe. Homosexuality, which Stekel has called 'the insoluble problem of modern civilized man'[1] is no problem to the uncivilised Muria. 'Jealousy and homosexuality are the two primary causes of the disorder of our passions',[2] says this same scientific observer of the European scene. Will not even the reformer admit the advantage of a tribe which is so largely free from these two evils?

X883 831 So long as sexual relations do not overstep these boundaries of good taste and morals, there is nothing wrong in them. Sex is a good thing, healthy, beautiful, interesting, the crown and climax of love. Love indeed is meaningless, inconceivable without it. It is right and good for a chelik to love his motiari and to lie with her. Such is the simple Muria philosophy.

This accounts for the delightful freedom from self-consciousness that is one of the most remarkable things about ghotul life. When after a visit to the Kongera ghotul, Walter Kaufmann exclaimed 'This is the cleanest place I've ever been in' I think he meant that. There is no sniggering, there is nothing cheap or nasty, there is nothing furtive about the relations of these

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy' in Psychoanalysis, op. cit., p. 361. [2] Ibid., p. 366.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond A W32
Muria

boys and girls. They dance clasped in each other's arms; they go about together, chelik with his arm round the neck of motiari. How revealing are Plates LXXV and XCI. In one a chelik lies on a cot with his arm on his motiari's shoulder, while she sits almost on top of him making leaves. They were not posed for the photo, and they showed no embarrassment at my approach with the mysterious camera, even though they were from a village I did not know well. In the other Plate two chelik and a motiari are listening to the gramophone outside my tent. They are completely absorbed in it and in each other. One of the boys embraces the girl with both his arms. You would not see this natural innocence in the more 'advanced' parts of aboriginal India.

But this refreshing freedom never degenerates into immodesty in public. It would be unthinkable for a chelik to dance naked—as I have seen older men do—in the presence of women or of his elders. The motiari never indulge in the cheerful vulgarity of the old women at a wedding. A chelik never catches hold of a girl immodestly in general company, though he will embrace her and walk with his arms about her. The great festival dances, though the air is full of romantic suggestion and the older men dance with the greatest licence, are conducted by chelik and motiari with complete decorum.

The sympathetic reader will realize how hopeless it is to bring our cut-and-dried judgements of sexual morality to bear upon a situation such as this. But he will also realize that even on his own standards the ghotul cannot be called immoral in the sense that it has no rules or laws or that it ignores those it has. Its regulations are as far-reaching and as strict as our own, and they are often better kept. For the rules are not imposed from without, but have been made by the ghotul-members themselves. Thus they are reasonable, adapted to the actual situation, and so easy to obey.

It is curious that while a Western visitor to a Muria village, if he is of a Puritan turn, will probably be chiefly concerned about the pre-nuptial relations of the children, the Hindu visitor—who is, of course, by far the more frequent—will be scandalized by the casual attitude of the Muria towards cows. Many years ago earnest efforts were made by Hindu reformers in the State to stop cow-sacrifice, and still today—though the majority of State officials preserve an admirable restraint in interfering with tribal customs—landlords, merchants, schoolmasters and travellers do what they can to put an end to the practice. But, except for a few centres where Hindu influence is strong, bulls and cows continue to be sacrificed and eaten all over the northern part of the State. The Muria cannot believe that this is wrong, for the gods demand it. There is nothing in their culture or mythology to forbid it—and indeed we here have a good example of the difficulty of importing a new idea into a system that has no provision for it. Yet if the Muria ever does ponder about 'moral' problems it is this that perplexes him and not any question about pre-nuptial chastity.

Stealing is generally condemned, but it is licensed on some special occasions. The chelik are expected to steal a cock when they take the newly-wedded bride and bridegroom to bed; they appear to have similar licence when they perform ceremonial dances round the village.

The incidence of crime is very low. An experienced police officer, who had served in the ghotul area for twelve years, told me that in all this time there had been no case of murder, riot, assault, hurt, or rape in connexion with the ghotul. There has not been a single case of rape against a Muria, though non-aboriginals have been arrested for raping Muria women. It is a remarkable thing that most of the crime in the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils occurs

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 killed his wife, and of Marvi Kuma who described how much he missed his wife and children and was always wondering whether they got enough food to eat. Vetti Rupe told me that he was continually thinking of his family. Dasru, himself a magician, was worried because in prison there was no Siraha to consult about the various untoward things that happened. The three men who had been sentenced from Pinna Bheji and whom I met after their release said, 'The worst thing was we always were thinking of our cattle and our homes, and to feel that we had got into prison by accident. We could hardly eat for the memory of our children'.

697 836 839 These aboriginal prisoners are remarkable in not finding sex a problem while they are in jail. This statement will probably be received with incredulity by many of my readers. I can only say that I have gone into the matter as fully as anyone could who was not himself a jail official or a prisoner setting out to investigate this particular point. The jail officials, who know their people at least as well as officials elsewhere, some of whom have had very long experience, have told me that cases of homosexuality are unknown and that even masturbation is not practised by the aboriginal prisoners. When I have discussed the same matter with released convicts they have all said the same thing, and I am inclined to believe them, because they have shown no reticence in speaking freely and even coarsely about other sexual matters. I think it is possible that the Maria who in his natural state is, as far as I can discover, completely innocent of any kind of sexual deviation simply would not think it possible that any substitute could give him satisfaction or indeed could be practised. The thing just would not occur to him.[1]

697 831 What is generally believed is that medicine is put in the food. I do not suggest this is so, but it is what is supposed. One after another has described how he never got any erection at all while in jail, and several people have found themselves impotent for a time after their release. Barse Mata of Gamawada declared that he had never even felt

[1] It would be hard to imagine a greater contrast to this than, for example, the conditions described by J. F. Fishman in his *Sex in Prison* (London, 1935).

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 desire while in jail. Boti of Telam declared that the doctor
831 had made them all impotent by medicine put in the food. On the other hand, Pandru of Chichari said that he frequently suffered from erections in jail and from nocturnal emissions. Naturally, however, the worst thing about jail-life is the deprivation of the company of women, though many Maria would modify this by saying that it is rather the whole family atmosphere, houses, children, cattle as well as the wife, that was missed. When I asked one youth what jail-life was like, he said, 'No wife, no bazaar, no children, no family'. But the thing that most oppressed him in jail was the silence.

697 The food in jail is excellent, far better than the prisoners get in their own homes. Since 1935, a special effort has been made to improve the health of the prisoners among whom at one period there had been a rather heavy mortality. The result has been highly satisfactory. There was only 1 death in 1938, 2 in 1939 and 4 in 1940. Accommodation in the jail is for 308 prisoners and the daily average is between 210 and 230. Special measures are taken against respiratory diseases, notably influenza. Phyrnoderma (toad-skin), which was one of the chief causes of reduced vitality among aboriginal prisoners, has been practically banished by the prophylactic administration of meat and cod liver oil. The ex-convicts generally grumble at the food and declare that they are continually unwell, but all reports agree in saying that they actually eat heartily and keep very fit. I think the real fact is that the food is unfamiliar to them and tha' many of them suffer from nervousness and a general psychic depression which makes them feel wretched, even though their actual bodily health is excellent. Several prisoners have declared how they long for roots and the gruels prepared in the ordinary way at home.

697 The work given to the prisoners varies. Some of the
564 Maria work in the kitchens, and it is interesting that the Hindu prisoners respect their social status and agree to eat from them. Ghasia and Panka are not admitted into the jail kitchen. Maria and Muria do not do sweepers' work in the jail,[1] though when a man is hanged Maria prisoners deal

[1] But I believe that Gond prisoners in the Central Provinces are made to work as sweepers, a thing that should never be allowed.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

over her from the roof, and she has to catch some and drink it. In some villages, again, if a man marries a widow or another man's wife, the woman must stand below the eaves with a *bassia latifolia* leaf on her head. The Waddai pours water and rice-beer from the roof, all over her, and after this she can enter her new home. When Oyami Anda of Bara Harmamunda married a girl for whom a Lamana'i youth had already been engaged, he had to stand with his rival's brother under the eaves of his house for a ceremony 'to make them forget enmity'. Anda's right hand was placed below the other's right hand, both having the palms upward. In front of them the Waddai made a heap of rice and set an arrow upright in it. He climbed on the roof and poured water over the hands of the two men who allowed it to flow down the arrow and over the rice. Afterwards Anda gave a pig and two fowls to the dispossessed Lamana'i as an offering to the latter's *kanal*. Had this ceremony not been performed, Anda—so he believed—would have suffered from a watery swelling of the body. 823

Page 262. Marias of both kinds are exceptionally virtuous in their sexual lives. Venereal disease is almost unknown, except in the vicinity of the few schools. Several old men have assured me—and I believe them—that since marriage they had had no other woman than their own wives. Love-charms and erotic stimulants are not much in demand and are not approved. At Molasnar there was a Naiko who was said to be making some sort of living by selling love-potions to the Marias; he used to administer them in liquor or tobacco and once a woman took one of them she would follow her lover everywhere 'like a pet dog'. But a Maria said, 'If I bring a girl in this way, my store of rice will grow less for such a union is not a yoking of the house of Mahapurub, and the girl will probably leave me after a time.' Vetti Muda of Dhurli described how when he was a young man (he must have been born about 1870), he used to take a regular diet of monkey's flesh. 'As a result I became very strong and active and could hop from tree to tree like a monkey. Once when I was going through the forest a monkey slipped from the overhanging branch of an ebony tree and was killed by the fall. I cut off its organ and roasted and ate it, with the result that I became so potent that I needed four wives at once.' But it is characteristic of the Maria—as against, for example, the ordinary Gond, Pardhan or Baiga—that he should have used the word 'wives'. 832

Page 269, *line* 27. Grigson has recorded 2 Hill Maria folk-tales. In my *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* I give 5 Bison-horn Maria, 37 Muria and 13 Kuruk stories, some of which are probably known also to the Hill Marias, for they were recorded in villages 538

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

but for the fact that the omen can also be bad. If the members of a betrothal party hear a monkey cough, they return home. 787

A tiger or leopard. A symbol of power.

A mango tree. This is lucky because mango leaves are used to decorate the marriage-booth.

A bear. Another symbol of power. The bear is generally looked on as very potent, and its male member is used as an aphrodisiac. [832]

A blue sambhar.

A woman carrying a full pot—though in some villages it is thought unlucky to see any kind of pot.

When a sparrow says *pitik pitik* it means the carriers of officials on tour are coming; if it says *picku picku*, it means they are going somewhere else and all is well.

BAD OMENS

An usir bird crying *kichir-kichir* on the right.

The cry of the kiddari bird on the right, saying '*Kiddarr*, don't go, don't go'.

A crow crying *kaw kaw*, eat, eat! Its tail points towards something dead for the vultures to eat.

A snake across the path. A very natural warning of danger.

A woman carrying an empty pot or going to the river with a bundle of dirty clothes.

Anyone throwing away ashes or rubbish.

A plantain tree, for its leaves are placed on a bier and in a grave.

A peacock.

A mongoose.

A rat.

A lizard. If one crosses your path, you should catch it and burn it to ashes.

In some villages, a cat.

A hare.

Thursday and Saturday are unlucky days, on which important work should not be started.

If the omens are favourable, the father of the bridegroom, with two or three relatives carrying several bottles of the best liquor, set out for the bride's house. 584 When they reach their destination they sit down in the court, and presently the girl's father says, 'Have you come on any business?' They answer, 'We hear that a flower has blossomed in your house; we have come to pluck it'. 'Why do you want to pluck it?' asks the girl's father. 'So that we may stick it in our hair.' 'Have you seen the omens on the way?' asks the girl's father. 'Yes, and they were good to us.'[1]

If the parents are willing they now usually ask the girl her opinion. If she refuses, they tell the visitors that the flower is not for plucking, but if she

[1] W. G. Archer has made a careful study of these symbolic dialogues during marriage negotiations (op. cit., pp. 147ff and *Man in India*, Vol. XXIII (1943), pp. 147ff.). The flower symbolism does not seem to be used by the Uraon, but Russell and Hiralal notice it for the Kond (op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 467f) and give some charming sentences used by the Turi. 'I hear that a sweet-smelled flower has blossomed in your house and I have come to gather it.' To which the bride's father may reply, 'You may take my flower, if you will not throw it away when its sweet scent is gone'. (Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 392.) The same symbolism is known to the Kharia and I have recorded its use among the Bison-horn Maria, the Kuruk and the Dhurwa in Bastar.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

301 The cowrie belt is almost unknown, but the chelik carry strings of cowries, bells, beads and tobacco-pouches at the waist.

In this area, the girls have either floppy brass *pairi* slipping down over the heels, or the thick heavy brass *tin-kor* above the ankles.

Finally, in the extreme east of Kondagaon, the chelik recapture something of the aesthetic attractiveness of the Jhoria. Once more elaborate necklaces of small red and blue beads appear; a head-band of cowries and black sago palm fibre is often worn (Fig. 89). The chelik's turban is specially attractive: 291 it is tied straight round into a box with one flap hanging over the top, the other falling behind. The boys themselves attach pretty fringes of pink, mauve and red tassels to these flaps.

For protection against rain, all the Muria make large round hats of leaves placed between a double bamboo framework, and long shields of the same material to hang from their shoulders. In a few villages near the Abujhmar they make the *lavali*-cloak of strips of retted bark characteristic of the Hill Maria.

II. Hair-dressing

302 The hair has the greatest emotional and artistic significance for the Muria. You may have the most beautiful features, the fairest colour, the finest figure, ●832 but if the hair is badly dressed you will not be thought attractive.

Care of his hair is the first and simplest service that a motiari can render 302 to a chelik; it is during the hair-combing in the evening that friendships become 515 intimate and proposals are made; wherever she is, in camp for a marriage or festival, resting in the heat of the day while working on the roads, or just 524 sitting in the house, a girl takes any chance she can of cleaning a boy's head, and examining it for lice. 'the thousand babies housed in a dry tree', 'the black cows that live in the thick forest, bothering everyone and drinking red water', 'the tigers that breed so quickly in the jungle'. She catches them with the end of her comb, or with her fingers, and kills them with thumb and forefinger. 'Ten went to hunt', says the riddle, 'but two did the killing.'

302 The chelik keep their hair fairly long. A straight fringe is cut across the forehead, and from the parting above it the hair is brushed back and tied in a bun usually covered by the turban. Some of the Muria living under the shadow of the Abujhmar follow the Hill Maria custom of shaving the whole head except for a patch on the crown which is carefully combed back and tied in a knot.

The chelik cut and trim their hair once every month or so, when the motiari who comb it tell them to. They cut and shave each other's heads with small razors made by the village Lohar. The motiari keep their boys closely shaven as to their chins, but they seem to like a good moustache. There is no other reason for shaving: the Muria, except those who have begun to imitate Hindu customs, do not shave at funerals or other religious occasions.

Girls do not cut their hair. They part it down the centre, and very carefully smooth it down and back. Behind the head they wind it over the small wooden blocks called *kunjar halla* (Fig. 91) which are carved for them by the chelik, and tuck it in underneath, fixing it in place with the *kunjar kota*, beautifully made wooden pins (Fig. 90)—also the gifts of chelik—to which are often attached bunches of cowries, coloured wool or strings of beads.

Both boys and girls treat their hair with oil, generally oil specially expressed by a motiari, a mother or sister. Many Muria now carry little bazaar mirrors which they constantly use.

250

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

§31 §39 came to cut it off. The man grasped his penis with his hand, but that was all he could save. The women cut it off and it is now only a handsbreadth long.[1]

Another version of the tale, however, connects the disappearance of the long penis with the Vagina Dentata legend.

> In the old days there were teeth far back in the vagina. One day when the long penis went in, the teeth cut it and all that remained was a stump of its present length. Angry at this, the man brought a rice-husker and broke off the teeth. In those days the penis itself was covered with thorns; it stood up like a semur tree. But there were no thorns at the root. The thorny part was cut off, and the smooth part remains to this day.[2]

In this mythical past it was man, not woman, who was subject to a menstrual period.

> Formerly men had to live outside their houses every month. They used to tie hollow bamboos over the penis to catch the blood. One day a girl saw this and laughed at the man. He pulled the bamboo off and threw it at her.[3] Since then women have suffered this flowing of the blood instead of men.

III. Erotic Attractiveness

§32 I found it very difficult to get the Muria to give any clear account of what they meant by beauty. They are always moved by the loveliness of natural scenery, but they are not very articulate and find it hard to express themselves except when the words of a song or proverb provide them with a ready means of utterance. The following Chitkul Pata from Amakot, for example, reveals not a little aesthetic appreciation.

Jiläng jäpar bandär!	How beautiful the lake!
Bandär soba bäräng?	Why is the lake so beautiful?
Bandär soba päri,	Lovely are the banks of the lake,
Bandär soba yero.	Lovely the waters of the lake.
Yero soba minur,	Lovely are the fish in the water.
Minur soba bäräng?	To the fish what is lovely?
Minur soba sila.	To the fish the water-reeds are lovely.
Pärar soba bäräng?	On the bank what is lovely?
Pärar soba marka,	On the bank the mango trees,
Kändi udo marka,	The mango's spreading branches,
Waliya wäto gorga.	And the palm trees everywhere.

In human beings the Muria seem to admire liveliness, animation, vigour more than perfection of colour or feature. They apply their universal test of hard work not only to assess a person's morals, but even his erotic attractiveness. 'However beautiful the face, one's eyes turn aside disgusted from a loafer.'

[1] The Bison-horn Maria attribute this incident to a man named Baikesa and say that he himself cut off his long penis through shame when it touched a woman not his wife by mistake. He died to death and was buried in a sitting posture. He is still honoured as Baikesa Pen with a pile of stones in many villages.

[2] But the Bison-horn Maria of Dugali said that the penis became short because in olden times the Mahara had none at all and went to Gaja Bhimal to beg for one. He cut off the long part from the Maria, but they held the stems in their fists. This is why the Maria have nothing to do with the Mahara for fear they lose the rest of the organ.

[3] For this reason, it is said, the Bison-horn Maria pelt a girl with mud at her first menstruation.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

832

The Muria do not seem able to analyse a face and say whether, for example, thick lips or a snub nose is repugnant to them. I have often showed them the frontispiece of Grigson's *Maria Gonds of Bastar*, which depicts a handsome Maria youth sitting with his wife. Everywhere the comment was the same; the couple had beautiful ornaments, but they were not sitting properly. Nothing was said about their features. And in fact, whenever I have discussed this subject, both chelik and motiari talk of the clothes and ornaments of a person rather than of feature or carriage. Here, for example, are some typical descriptions of attractive chelik given by motiari to my wife. 'He is always washing and doing his hair; his clothes are white and clean; he knows how to stand and sit [that is, he has good manners]. Even though he is thirty years old, we all love the Mansai, for he is never dirty.' That was in Palki; at Binjhli the favourite chelik was the Belumdar. 'He is of fair colour, his hair is curly, his face is always clean, he has beautiful ear-rings, his clothes are always white.' Not, it will be noted, 'he has beautiful ears' but 'he has beautiful ear-rings'. The Saliya of the same ghotul was also greatly admired; he was indeed a most handsome and charming youth. 'He is as clean as a State servant.'

In Markabera the motiari said: 'It's the ornaments that matter. It's the hair and the necklaces and the combs that matter. He must have all the ornaments, round his head, at his ears, about his neck, at his waist: how beautiful he looks then! He must have combs in his hair, and clean clothes. Let the nose be as it is, let the eyes be as they are, let the mouth be as it is; they were made by God and will be what they are. But we make the ornaments and with them a chelik can make himself as handsome as he wills.'

And indeed how handsome and delightful the chelik—especially the Jhoria chelik—can make themselves! When a boy is in love he borrows all he can, sticks feathers in his hair, covers himself with coloured beads, ties bunches of little bells at his waist. 'Then as he goes along, the bells jingle, and we motiari run out to see who is coming. "It's the Kotwar." "No, it's the Diwan." When she sees how beautiful he is, a motiari's mind rises for a boy.'

Nowhere do the chelik display their manly vigour, their agility, their sexual attractiveness to better advantage than in the Mandri dances. Some of the movements have a definitely sexual meaning, but all reveal the strength and energy of the drummers. It is said that the best lovers are those who use homemade wooden drums and not earthenware drums bought in the bazaar. It is considered that only a very ardent lover would go to the trouble of making a drum out of wood. 'Such men are strong and can break the horns of a deer.' Any girl will go to them rather than to those who are content with mere bazaar products. 'A chelik who can beat a wooden drum knows well how to beat a girl in love.'

In girls the chelik admire vitality and beauty, but expect them to be well-dressed and decorated. In Masora they said that the Malko was very pretty for 'she wears her cloth carefully, and always looks at her shadow to see if she is bearing herself well'. 'When we hear the *chalak-chalak* of a girl's anklets, we run to see who it is and whisper to each other, "Look, there she goes, how pretty she looks".' But they also expect a girl to be pretty in the Western and Hindu sense. I have noticed that the girls I myself thought worth photographing were those who received most attention from the chelik. The two favourite girls in Binjhli were the Silo and the Samaro; they were both small, slender, with rather delicate hands and feet, light-coloured, with bright attractive features, well-dressed hair ornamented with many combs, and plenty of necklaces. 'Their faces are always "ready" and their hair well-dressed.'

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

●§32 In Markabera the most beautiful girl was considered to be the Malko, whose photograph appears in Plate CXII. She won her fame, I think, by her vitality and carriage rather than for any loveliness of feature. The Kotwarin of Kachora, who was universally acclaimed as the most attractive girl there, and who may also be seen in Plate CXII,[1] could hardly be called beautiful. But she was bubbling over with life and energy, and her dancing was wonderful.

Other girls, very beautiful to Western eyes, whose photographs adorn this book, the Jhelo of Pupgaon, the Nero of Tarhalli, the Malko of Koilibera, the Salko of Munjmeta, were obviously the ruling queens of their youthful courts. I noticed that each of them was a vigorous and active worker, a fact that contributed not a little to the chelik's admiration.

In Kokori the Muria gave what is very rare, a detailed description of a beautiful girl.

> Her legs and feet should not be too long; they should be neither thin nor fat. The toes must not be big or crooked. She should have a slim waist so that when she ties her cloth round it, buttocks and waist will be level. A long stomach is ugly; so are buttocks that stick out behind. The nose may be small, but not snub. A big head or ears, or fat cheeks, are ugly. When the hair is combed it should lie flat on the head. A girl must not be very tall. Her eyes should not be black, and she should never put lamp-black in them or she would look like a witch. The most important thing is that she should dress well and work well. If a girl wears a good cloth she looks sweet, but with lots of ornaments she is entrancing. Even an ordinary girl can be beautiful with proper ornaments. But, however sweet her face may be, if she is idle or slovenly, we think her ugly.[2]

In the songs there are not so many references to feminine beauty as one would expect. Indeed many of the songs, being sung antiphonally between chelik and motiari, indulge in taunts rather than flattery. Thus Gadakare Mode of Lingo's ghotul hardly sounds attractive to modern ears. 'She had a navel as big as a cart-wheel and a wild boar could roll over and over in her vagina. She looked like a sack of salt from Nandgaon.' The chelik are often described in equally unflattering terms.

But the songs do sometimes make reference to a quality in woman which they call *sapota*, meaning that all her physical characters are balanced and in proportion. Such a girl is neither tall nor short, fat nor thin; 'she has a straight nose without too long a space between its tip and her lips; she has straight hands and feet, a slim waist, round breasts that are not too large. Her eyes are dark and bright'. The songs also refer to a type of girl they call *jalmalko*, which seems to describe the way a girl carries herself. 'She struts about like a peacock with tail erect'—many motiari resemble the male rather than the female bird. A Tutumri Pata refers to a girl as *jalhena neha jalhenaina*, one who goes swinging her hips to attract the eyes of men. A *bai chikan khosa*, a girl with hair parted and combed with care, is always beautiful.[3]

[1] The caption in Plate CXII incorrectly gives this girl's village as Kongera.

[2] It will be of interest to compare these ideas with the estimate of classical Indian beauty made by Coomaraswamy. In the Rajasthani and Pahari paintings, he points out, are all the Hindu woman-ideals, both physical and spiritual. 'The heroine's eyes are large as any lotus flowers, her tresses fall in heavy plaits, her breasts are firm and high, her thighs are full and smooth, her hands like rosy flowers, her gait as dignified as any elephant's and her demeanour utterly demure.'—A. Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting* (Oxford, 1916), p. 8.

[3] Trench gives the expression *singri-mingri* for a well-dressed and ornamented girl; *kosamna* means 'pretty' and *sobhin* 'buxom'. Mitchell gives *sobano-kuvva* as meaning

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

Although the Muria do not analyse the parts of the body or the face with the care given to this pleasant task by the more sophisticated Indian communities, they have a fully developed aesthetic tradition of the breast. This is natural in a people who but yesterday learnt to cover the upper part of their bodies with a cloth. Even now I have seen in many Muria houses girls husking rice or grinding grain without any upper cloth. When no strangers are about, they still, in the western areas, discard as many clothes as possible. The breasts, so often seen, are always admired. A boy, asked the age of a girl, will answer by showing with his open hands the size of her breasts. 'She may have breasts as big as a coconut, or they may be small as a lemon, but they are beautiful and we love them', said a chelik at Masora. 'A girl's beauty is in her breasts. But'—and this is an interesting point—'the breasts do not remain. After a child is born their loveliness departs. But always there are the shoulders; they never betray us.' In other words, sexual congress demands something to hold—'from holding comes joy indescribable'; in youth a chelik holds the breasts; later he holds the shoulders, and these never betray him, but go with him all his life.

There are many vivid similes for the breast, a whole vocabulary and system of classification, reminding one a little of Jayle's famous distinction of nine mammary types. As we might expect, several of the chelik's classifications are of small and immature breasts—the *paras dudo*, like half-formed gourds; the *benjri dudo*, like small brinjals at which the boys laugh saying, 'When will the brinjals in your garden be ripe?'; the *bondo-kukh dudo*, like little mushrooms; the *thaka dudo*, like small pots. The *kosa dudo* are compared to cocoons; they are the breasts of a girl only just mature; and the *urang kaskle dudo* are also immature and 'flat as dog-fleas'.

The breasts of the older motiari are finely developed. Such are the *gutta dudo*—'their youthful strength stands up like pegs'; the *kopa dudo*, the 'ripe brinjal which is fresh and firm'; the *kindri dudo*, of which it is said that 'even if she has five children they will keep their shape'; the *burka dudo*, the large hemispherical breasts of a faithful wife and loving mother; the *marka dudo*, or mango breasts; the magnificent *niral dudo*, 'tiger breasts', the best of all, hemispherical with well-marked areolae and a beautiful conical-tipped nipple, whose milk nourishes a child into a young tiger.

Less admired are the *kurbin dudo*, small with long nipples, called 'monkey breasts' in Mandla; the *dhodka* or *turka dudo*, another gourd breast but elongated and weaker which gives poor thin milk; the *chimni dudo*, with long nipples 'like the funnel of a country lamp'; and the *hind dhoti dudo*, the nipples of which are 'like the berries of the chhind shrub'. It is notable that in this group the breasts are classified according to the nipples.

The breasts of older women are the flat *hulta dudo*, the *herpunj dudo*, long as country shoes and the *tilko dudo* which 'flop down like dripping water', a description which recalls the expression in Betul Gondi—*dudukh ding-dong ailing*: 'her breasts are dangling like a blanket behind a cart'.[1]

'beauty', but this seems to mean simply 'good to see'. Ugliness is described with more animation. *Sika-arjal* means, in Betul, 'a shock-headed untidy person looking like a savage bear'. *Bahrdi kurusipen* mai is a 'fat-faced woman'. To call a man *Akkur* in Gondi means he is 'thin as a stick'. Mitchell gives *ojo* as meaning 'ugly' among the Bisonhorn Maria.

[1] Trumk, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 38. Muria similes for the breast, which may be paralleled by those current among the Baiga (see *The Baiga*, pp. 343ff) must be almost unique for detail and imagination. The Greeks had their *dolia fabulosa*; the Arabs admired the pomegranate breast; the medieval German ideal was 'that the breasts should be high and rounded, like apples or pears, small and soft' (Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection*,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

●832 It is possible for an unattractive motiari to make herself beautiful by magic. She must go all alone in the middle of the night and fetch home the charred bone of a barren witch who has died on a Sunday and has been cremated on the same day. She must then sacrifice a chicken before the bone on seven successive Sundays, saying 'I have brought you to make me beautiful'. On the seventh Sunday she touches every part of her body with the bone 'and her beauty then knows no bounds'. It is not surprising that the majority of girls prefer to leave their natural charms as they are.

IV. The Approach to Tumescence

X883 832 Contrary to what the Peeping Tom, be he chaprasi or social reformer, supposes, the real difficulty of ghotul life is not an excess of libido, but a deficiency that might well wreck it. For the essence of such a life is that it should be, as Milton defined poetry, 'simple, sensuous and passionate', that it should be redeemed from mediocrity and degradation by enthusiasm and a fine sexual vitality. But not only does Muria libido appear to be generally rather weak, but the special conditions of life in the ghotul tend still further to depress it. On this point, Havelock Ellis has the final word.

> Courtship, he says, 'is the process by which powerful sensory stimuli proceeding from a person of the opposite sex gradually produce the physiological state of tumescence, with its psychic concomitant of love and desire, more or less necessary for mating to be effected. But between those who have been brought up together from childhood all the sensory stimuli of vision, hearing, and touch have been dulled by use, trained to the calm level of affection, and deprived of their potency to arouse the erethistic excitement which produces sexual tumescence.'[1]

Havelock Ellis is here discussing the origin of the horror of incest, and arguing against Westermarck's theory of a special instinct that makes sexual intercourse between near kin an impossibility. But his words are equally applicable to the ghotul, where boys and girls grow up together under conditions of far greater intimacy than do most brothers and sisters. Chelik and motiari, like brothers and sisters, 'in relation to each other have at puberty already reached that state to which old married couples by the exhaustion of youthful passion and the slow usage of daily life gradually approximate'.[2] This would, of course, be somewhat overstated as applied to the ghotul, but it is not altogether wide of the truth. In any one ghotul the boys and girls have lived

p. 147); Chaucer describes a beautiful woman 'with bettokes breds and brestes roundo and hye'; the *Song of Songs*, through the Authorised Version, popularised among English readers two lovely similes—'Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies'; 'Thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine'—echoed by Sidney with his 'O breast in which two white sheep swell in pride'. Wycherley (*The Country Wife*) uses the orange simile, but a modern poet, Dylan Thomas, speaks, less romantically, of 'bagpipe-breasted ladies'. We must be content with one more comparison from a Lao poem, translated by E. Powys Mathers.

> Whether the breasts be as slight as citrons
> We would make love,
> Whether the breasts be as great as pumpkins
> As wrinkled as elephants,
> As soft as cooked rice.

See also Verrier Elwin, *Folk-songs of Chhattisgarh* (Bombay, 1946), pp. 388.

[1] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., pp. 206f. Compare Westermarck, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 192ff.

[2] Havelock Ellis, op. cit., p. 208.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883λ
832●

together all their lives and their capacity for erethistic excitement is naturally dulled.

But the Muria have the wit to put this fact to the best of uses and yet preserve their psychic capacity for sexual happiness. The calm level of affection—almost as of mature experience—which they achieve while yet in their teens, expresses itself in the wonderful harmony and fellowship of the best ghotul, the general diffused affection which leaves no room for jealousy and possessiveness. As anyone who has stayed for a time in a good ghotul must notice, the boys and girls form a compact, loyal, friendly little republic; they are all evidently very fond of each other; there is a large, generous, corporate romance uniting them. They do really seem to live in a sort of glow; the superb light of cleopatrine passion is absent, but so is the harsher glare of excited grasping lust. In the soft diffused glow of corporate affection, a girl decorates herself not only for one boy, but for all the boys and for the ghotul's honour and delight. The boys drum and dance to please their special lovers, it is true, but also to excite and gratify the entire company of motiari.

But ideal as it may sound, such a situation has its dangers. A diffused affection does not promote sexual potency. And Muria, and indeed all aboriginal tradition, sets little value on unconsummated love. Without it there would be no harmony or content; everything would deviate. The very thing that the reformers and puritans most deplore in the ghotul is what keeps it clean and healthy. But to preserve this superbly natural life is not easy.

The ghotul routine might have been planned by some great erotic genius, so admirably is it devised to ensure tumescence whenever that may be desired. So apt is the ghotul method, so finely adapted to its purpose, so stimulating and tonic in its effect that were it possible to send jaded husbands and wives away from civilisation for treatment to the Muria, I do not believe one of them would return uncured.

'So far', says Havelock Ellis again, 'from the instinct of tumescence naturally needing to be crushed, it needs, on the contrary, in either sex to be submitted to the most elaborate and prolonged processes in order to bring about those conditions which detumescence relieves. A state of tumescence is not normally constant, and tumescence must be obtained before detumescence is possible. The whole object of courtship, of the mutual approximation and caresses of two persons of the opposite sex, is to create the state of sexual tumescence.'[1]

How then is tumescence achieved under the rather unfavourable circumstances of ghotul life? The buildings and surroundings of the dormitory are a powerful stimulant. These little huts, rich with tender and romantic association, the waving forest trees around, the stillness of the night, perhaps a moon, the bright fire in the courtyard, the tinkling bells tied to a chelik's waist, the distant song of motiari on their way—cannot fail to make the hearts of boy and girl beat faster.

The routine of a ghotul evening is a carefully devised preparation for intercourse, a tonic to deficient libido. First of all, the sense of touch is vividly stimulated by the combing and massaging. Havelock Ellis quotes Bain as saying that 'touch is both the alpha and omega of affection', and he stresses 'tenderness' as the characteristic 'quality of affection which is founded directly on sensations of touch'.[2] This exactly describes what I have often noticed about the motiari's technique of massage. Beginning with great vigour,

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 33.
[2] Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection*, p. 6.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883 ●832

almost roughly, it grows gentler and gentler until at last the girl's hands are moving caressingly, tenderly over the arms and bodies of their boys, rousing affection and stirring with every gesture new desire.

The use of the comb to titillate the skin has a similar effect: Muria boys and girls are susceptible to tickling, which has been described as 'the most intellectual mode of touch sensation and that with the closest connexion with the sexual sphere'. As the motiari dresses her chelik's hair and with her comb gently tickles and stimulates his back and arms, he responds by fondling her breast, by stroking her legs (which are usually placed round his body; as she massages, the girl often grips the boy's waist between her knees) or by boldly tickling her. Certain types of massage are specially exciting. The girl stands above the boy, bending over him, and rubs downwards, passing her hands over the stomach down to the specifically erogenous region which thus receives a powerful tonic; sometimes she massages the legs, pushing her hands right up to the groin.

It is curious that with all this, the kiss as a means of sensory excitement is but little used.[1] It is not unknown—far from it—but it is something that goes in fashions; a ghotul discovers it, as at More Berma, and then everybody kisses. But even then the kiss does not appear to be on the lips, nor does the tongue play any part; for the Muria the kiss is a highly concentrated form of massage with the lips upon the skin. Boys kiss the face and breasts; I have never heard of *fellatio* being practised, but it may be—the description of it causes no offence.

After touch, smell is a powerful stimulant. Charming is the freshness of the open hill and forest, but more charming still, say the chelik, is the smell of perspiration, oil, wet earth, a suggestion of urine, all tempered by the bitter-sweet wood-smoke, which is regarded as the peculiar aroma of the ghotul.[2] The ghotul smell is unforgettable; it is not unpleasant even to a stranger's nostrils; and boys have told me that they have found it a strong sexual stimulant. 'The smell of the wood-smoke in a girl's hair, how exciting it is!' exclaimed a chelik at Markabera. So is the smell of the cow-shed clinging to boy or girl, a clean healthy smell with good associations. At Temrugaon the boys loved the scent of the marigolds that the motiari put in their hair and declared them to be their favourite flower.

[515]

No artificial scents are used, and this means that both boys and girls have to be very careful about bodily cleanliness; an unpleasant vaginal odour is mentioned as specially inhibiting to desire; there is a saying—*muh sundri gând gandri*—however beautiful the face, if a girl has a dirty body, she will not be admired.

X883 832 535

But 'the most usual method of attaining tumescence', says Havelock Ellis, 'a method found among the most various kinds of animals, from insects and birds to man—is some form of the dance'.[3] 'It is everywhere the instinctive object of the male, who is very rarely passive in the process of courtship, to assure by his activity in display, his energy or skill or beauty, both his own

[1] It is a commonplace of anthropology that primitive peoples do not kiss; I have always wondered how investigators can be so sure of this. The ordinary word in Gondi is *kutydon*, 'to kiss'. Trench says that the word as used in Betul—*kurdna*—means 'to kiss, of humans, to nose of dogs'. Ward gives *nahilla* as a Gondi word for kiss used in the Mandla District (*nâhâna* means 'to lick'). I also found the Muria using a word *kosnâ* which was said to mean 'kiss', but I am doubtful about this.

[2] The Uraon *dhumkuria* have a quite different smell, in which the odour of urine is much more prominent. The Bison-horn Maria again have a strong, and rather attractive, smell, not unlike the Savara but quite distinct from the Muria.

[3] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 53.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

passion and the passion of the female. Throughout nature sexual conjugation only takes place after much expenditure of energy.'[1] And so the ghotul evening usually begins with vigorous dances and games, many of them frankly provocative of the sexual emotions. The splendid parade of the Mandri dance, the intimacies of the Hulki, the suggestiveness of some of the games are invaluable as a preparation for tumescence. There is a proverb *Rela rela bonde pela*—'If you start with singing Rela you end with the satisfaction of desire'. It must be noted that it is not only the chelik who by the energy of their display excite the motiari; the girls' games and dances are equally powerful stimulants. In one of these games, the girls bend forward, each holding a stick in her hand to represent a penis, and dance with jerky movements of the buttocks that closely simulate the sexual process. As they dance they sing,

Nân nân chingro,	Little little prawn hairs,
Bare lân hînia,	Very long thorn,
Kaha gai ho,	Where has he gone,
Nandpurihâr Râja?	The Nandpurihar Raja?

The 'little prawn hairs' are the pubic hairs and the long thorn is the penis of the chelik. In the Jhoria Endanna, the girls also sing songs about sexual congress.

V

We have already seen, particularly in Chapter XI, something of the scope of sexual opportunity offered by the ghotul as also the limitations it imposes on the normal process of sexual selection. Under these conditions do the chelik and motiari really 'fall in love'? What happens to the tenderness of devotion, the tensions and despairs of passion, the idealizing of the adored object which is still, to the majority of Europeans, essential to any proper relationship between the sexes? Or does life in the ghotul, as Dalton said of the Uraon dormitory, 'sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'?

It is possible that the Muria, in the diffused tenderness of corporate affection, in their simple and natural view of sexual congress, in their rational and realistic attitude to one another, have achieved something better than the sentimental raptures of the lover in the novelette 'sighing like furnace' for an impossible ideal.

Many chelik and motiari seem to pass through their ghotul period without any very passionate love-affairs, content and happy with the ghotul tradition of love. Others, in the course of their seven or eight ghotul years, experience one or two vivid and exciting adventures which may last only a few months and which interrupt but illuminate the general course of their less intense amours. Others again, of a different temperament, are always falling in love and out of it, coveting other cheliks' 'wives', arranging to meet girls outside in the forest or visiting them when the others are asleep. 'Love often makes us break the rules,' said a chelik at Kuntpadar.

For across the calm sea of unstrained, unfrustrated affection, there blow sudden gales and storms. A new girl comes to the village; a boy suddenly awakes to the charm of a motiari he has known for years; a chelik displays himself as a popular hero and draws every heart; little girls and boys grow up

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 52. The sex-dance of the subhuman primates 'consists of an erect swaggering waddle quite different from the usual mode of locomotion. No doubt its function is to intimidate and prepare the female for sexual submission to the dominant male.'—Clifford Allen, *The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities* (Oxford, 1940), p. 27. See also H. Bingham, *The Sex Development in Apes* (Baltimore, 1928).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pregnancy, intercourse should cease after the fifth month: there is unanimous testimony on this point. After childbirth—so many Muria claim—a husband does not approach his wife for one, or even two, years. 'He must not go to her till the child is weaned.' This may possibly be true of a few villages under strong Hill Maria influence, but even there it seems to me doubtful. There is certainly a desire, however, to space confinements properly and 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain'. But the ground dries long before this. 834

Elsewhere I have heard it said that 'when the *wife* feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'—an important point, in that it places the responsibility for resuming intercourse on the woman. In Alor, the Muria said that a period of six months was sufficient, in Chandabera that intercourse was resumed when the child first smiled. In Chameli the villagers spoke of a case where a child had died because the mother gave birth to another during the lactation period of the first. 'The child drank the milk of blood.'

These 'holidays' serve a valuable psychological, as well as a physiological, purpose. In the ghotul, where their close and constant contact might easily make chelik and motiari utterly weary of one another, life is frequently broken up. For months the chelik go to watch in the fields, and the motiari are alone in the ghotul. The menstruating girl is not only sexually taboo; she does not come to the ghotul at all—and is all the more welcome when she reappears. The arrangement that chelik and motiari should go on separate dancing expeditions is psychologically sound, as is proved by the enthusiastic welcome they receive on their return. 883X 833

VIII. Love-charms

In an atmosphere like that of the ghotul, where frustration and sexual anxiety are comparatively rare, the use of love-charms is less common than among other aboriginal people. But the Muria are acquainted with such charms and sometimes use them, though the results may not always be permanent. 'If I get a girl in this way,' said a Muria at Remawand, 'my store of rice grows less, for such a union is not a yoking of Mahapurub's house. The true yoking comes of its own accord.' It is said that 'girls won by magic run by deceit'. 883X 837

The charms are generally based on simple principles of sympathetic magic. For example, at Alor the Gaita said that the way to win a reluctant lover was to pursue a pair of sarus cranes. These cranes, as is well known, always go about in pairs, and it is said that if one of them dies its mate will quickly follow suit.

> When the cranes fly up into the air one or two feathers may fall. One of these must be caught before it reaches the ground. Then offer it liquor and a black chicken, burn it, tie the ashes in a little bundle to your waist and somehow or other touch the girl with it. Then you will love each other like a pair of cranes. But this is a dangerous charm for as the two cranes always die together so if the girl dies you will die too.

Another curious charm comes from Gorma.

> When you go to relieve yourself, wait till a pig comes along to eat your excreta. Leaving your cloth undone, jump on the pig and pull out a little hair from the back of its neck or forehead. Tie the hair in your cloth and do yourself up. Wait till a Sunday, and then push the

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
●832

girl you want with your left arm and she will follow you as a pig follows your excreta.

Here are some other charms.

Go to the Siraha and ask his help. Beg some of the ashes of the incense he has offered to the gods and some blessed rice. When you get a chance give this to your girl to eat and she will never leave you.

Catch a pair of sparrows and on a Sunday take them to a cross-roads and sacrifice them by cutting off their heads. Make two little holes in the ground side by side, put a head in each and cover them with earth. Leave them all night and the following morning go to examine them. If the female head has moved into the male hole, you will be successful. Now remove the heads and offer them liquor and a black chicken. Burn them and tie up the ashes in a bundle at your waist. Next Sunday, somehow or other touch your girl with the bundle without her knowing and she will come to you as the sparrow's head went to its mate.

On a Saturday go to the jungle and invite a *kari-bhulan* shrub to help you by sprinkling rice and liquor over it. Go next day and dig it up. If the roots are stuck together, you will know that all will be well. Take the roots home and get some aromatic leaves. Promise a goat to Lingo if you succeed.[1] Fry the roots and the leaves together, pound them up and mix a little in your girl's food without her knowing.

A similar charm is made of parasites growing on the bhansuli, bantga, kolicha-buta, gawai and phunder trees. They are collected and burnt. A black chicken is killed and its blood dropped upon them with the words, 'I give thee life to win me such and such a girl'. Then the ashes are tied up and the girl is touched with them in the usual way.

In Kolur village there was a Muria who claims that the tobacco in his pouch is so full of love-charms that he can win any girl he wants with it.

Two special types of charm must be mentioned. In Padbera there are stones which represent historic Muria who died fighting. These stones are regarded as very potent and boys or girls scrape a little of the stone to make charms. Once the Munshi (Mainu Uika) of the Bakulwahi ghotul got a little of this stone and offered it rice and liquor saying, 'I have brought you a gift, fulfil my desire and I will give you yet more'. Then he gave the scrapings in some tobacco to the Jhalko and the girl became so entranced that she eloped with him and they were married.

A similar custom attaches to the stone remains of Neng Mudial, about whom the Muria tell a romantic story:

Long ago there lived two brothers, Tande and Gunshi, at Chaurang village. Between them these two brothers had eight wives. They had an old servant called Neng Mudial. One night this old man by his love magic carried off all eight wives. He took them first to Kotpar village, then to a very beautiful spot near the junction of Bongapal, Badgai and Bandopal where he dug three tanks and prepared bricks to build a fort.

Now when the brothers Tande and Gunshi awoke in the morning and found their wives and their servant missing, they were filled with fury

[1] In Mandla, a lover promises a white goat to the Rai Lingo Hill if his suit succeeds.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

and went out to find them. They searched for many days and at last when they were almost weary of their chase, they discovered Neng Mudial near the pile of bricks for the great fort he hoped to make. Neng Mudial was sitting at his food and asked them to wait a moment; he would discuss matters when he had finished. But they were so angry that they cut off his left hand. Then they threw him on the ground and cut off his testicles and penis. They threw the testicles to Chandabera, where they turned into stone and may still be seen. They threw his penis to Ban-Chapai and it is there to this day. The old man himself turned into a stone. Then the brothers found their wives and killed them all and returned sadly to Chaurang, where they died and are worshipped even now.[1]

The cult of Neng Mudial is still maintained at Chandabera, Bandopal and Bongapal, and annual offerings are made to his stones. The chelik believe that if after offering sacrifices they scrape a little from the stone testicle or penis and give it to their girls, these will be as certainly enticed as were the wives of Tande and Gunahi.

Closely allied to the use of love-charms is that of some sort of aphrodisiac. The Muria generally believe that a meat diet is useful for this, and especially the virile organs of the bear or goat.

It sometimes happens that when a motiari has succeeded in humbling a boy, taunted him with his lack of vigour and rather conspicuously bestowed her favours elsewhere, he wants to be revenged upon her. In order to do this, he prepares a very powerful tonic according to this prescription:

> Find a two- or three-year-old *dodka* cucumber plant with a parasite on it. Climb up without throwing your shadow on it and pick a bit without using your nails. Burn it and tie the ashes in a little bundle. Keep it in the house where the shadow of a menstruous woman or witch will not fall on it. Then at the time of intercourse tie it on your wrist or elbow and your thing will be as large as the cucumber and you can humble any girl who has scorned you.

An interesting use of a love-charm was recorded at Kabonga. The Sirdar told us that shortly after marriage, he was planning to elope with the Salki whom he had loved as a chelik. 'But my wife made a love-charm, and I fell in love with my own wife, and forgot the Salki.'

IX. Impotence

Stekel begins his great work on *Impotence in the Male* with a solemn warning. 'In men love-inadequacy is increasing to an alarming degree, and impotence has come to be a disorder associated with modern civilization ... The percentage of relatively impotent men cannot be placed too high. In my experience, hardly half of all civilised men enjoy normal potency. Nowadays ejaculatio praecox is no longer a disorder; it is the regular accompaniment of civilization.'[2] Among the Muria, however, cases of impotence of any kind are extremely rare. It is, I think, possible to affirm this with confidence,

[1] For a somewhat similar legend of Nakti turned into stone, cf. *JBORS*, Vol. II, p. 214.

[2] W. Stekel, *Impotence in the Male* (English Translation, New York, 1930), p. 1. Compare also Dickinson's judgement. 'Our most grievous male problem of maladjustment is premature ejaculation and it is only second in disastrous effect to blundering technique'. —R. L. Dickinson, *Human Sex Anatomy* (London and Baltimore, 1933), p. 82.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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682 Not in Maria practice to ask a woman
674 for tobacco is a symbolic way of inviting her to sexual inter-
332 course, and when the boy asked his elder brother's widow to have congress with him, he was only demanding his right and when she refused it, he found the provocation, both to his pride and his desire, so great that he killed her.

000 Research, both by medical science and by anthropology, may in time reveal how far the apparently motiveless homicides of aboriginals can be explained as crimes of exhaustion and fatigue. Again and again a man kills his loved wife in a sudden explosion of temper and for no apparent cause. It is probable that in many cases the real reason is not alcoholic intoxication, but extreme fatigue.

A point that often troubles the Courts is the time-element in cases where provocation is pleaded as an excuse. It is often found that there is a lapse of some hours between the actual incident that gave provocation and the subsequent act of violence. It has too often been held that this lapse of time should deprive the accused of gaining the benefit from Exception 1 of Section 300 of the Indian Penal Code. But there can be little doubt that an aboriginal's intelligence does not work so quickly as that of a more sophisticated person, and even in matters of everyday life it often takes an appreciable time for an idea to take root and effect a result in his mind. Laubscher's analysis of the psychology of the Tembu Negroes of South Africa is of some importance here. The Tembu, he says,

> Is not by nature blood-thirsty, but his aggressive instinctive or pugnacious propensities are excitable, easily roused and explosive. His aggressive libido flows outwards, becomes readily externalized, and sudden impulsive assaults, often fatal, are not uncommon. Careful study of the emotional reactions of the participants in stick fights, of course initially playfully performed for my benefit, has shown me how quickly and explosively the native loses his temper and retaliates with death-dealing blows at his opponent. Fatal blows are only avoided by the defensive skill of the opponent. Aggressive impulses are quickly evoked, although there is no apparent bad feeling after such a stick fight. I came to the conclusion that once an emotional impulse is aroused and the stimulus continues to be present, the native just drifts along with the impulse and exercises little or any inhibitory power, unless this inhibition is brought about by the evocation of another

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

515

Cleanliness

It is generally asserted that all Marias are dirty, and object to washing. It is true that Maria women dancing late at night after lying on ground covered with the ashes of camp-fires, or men and women in the *ponda* fields or after a long march, are dirty; and anyone who has tried to dress a Maria's wounds knows how dirt-encrusted they can be. Sleeping between fires, or over fires in an enclosed and low-roofed hut, does not promote cleanliness. But the real reason for the idea is the fact that the Hill Maria seldom washes his loin-cloth. On this, Russell and Hiralal say (III, p. 124):—

'In Bastar they seldom wash their clothes, as they think this impious, or else that the cloth would wear out too quickly if it were often washed. Here they set great store by their piece of cloth, and a woman will take it off before she cleans up her house, and do her work naked. It is probable that these wild Gonds, who could not weave, regarded the cloth as something miraculous and sacred, and, as already seen, the god Palo is a piece of cloth.'

This passage is all wrong. Palo is unknown to Maria or Muria Murias and Bison-horn Marias wash their clothes, and there are occasions when even a Hill Maria is bound to do so. He may not weave, himself, but he makes nets and baskets and twine, and always accepts the manufacturing processes of Kumhar potters, Kammar blacksmiths, Gharwa brass founders or Mahra weavers in a commonsense, rational way; he sees the work done quite often, and indeed there are many Marias who, in jail for homicide, have themselves become expert weavers of cloth or carpets. The reasoning processes of the savage are not unlike our own, and it is always safe to reject any such explanation as that he does not wash his cloth because he regards it as impious to wash something so sacred and miraculous, when there is available the commonsense economic explanation that he himself gives, that cloth costs money, of which he has never much, and that the oftener it is washed the sooner it wears out. So ordinarily, when a Hill Maria has his dip in a pool or river he takes off his filthy and inadequate loin-cloth and hangs it on a bush or rock while he washes his limbs, fastening it again all dirty on his clean body when he emerges. The women remove their loin-cloth, but not their *mudang*[1] and the cloth attached to it. Both husband and wife, however, must bathe in the morning after sexual intercourse and wash their loin-cloths; and a woman must invariably bathe and wash her loin-cloth, beating it out well on a stone, on leaving the menstruation hut or room at the end of her courses and of the four weeks following the birth of a child. Generally men and women wash or bathe every morning, and more often than not in the evening also. There are separate pools in

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[1] The *mudang* is explained below, under dress.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32.
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*ahki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *kala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[1] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see cat. 116, p. 420 – Russell]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal hunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

586 732 no difficulty in getting wives to stay with them. Dwarfs, on the other hand, not only find it hard to get wives except their elder brothers' widows, but are passed over in the succession to a post of responsibility or the management of a family. Madness is particularly dreaded, and would certainly involve the elopement of a wife. But husbands, though they would divorce a mad [833] woman *a thovo*, would still maintain them; sexual intercourse with a mad woman is believed to result in complete loss of virility. 586 I have heard of no case in which a husband has divorced his wife; she may be frigid or barren or in other ways unsatisfactory, but so long as she is not unfaithful her husband is expected to maintain her, and his remedy is to seek another co-wife, often getting her younger sister or parallel-cousin as compensation for her falling [674] short of expectations. The murder of wives in sudden fits of temper for petty shortcomings is unfortunately common among the Bison-horn Marias, though almost unknown in the hills. Nor must it [837] be assumed that because Bison-horn wives often elope, their husbands tamely submit to infidelity; the detection of an intrigue often results in the husband killing the wife or her paramour, though once a wife has made good her escape to another man's house the [593] husband usually accepts the *fait accompli*. The beating or ill-treatment of wives is strongly condemned by all Marias.

[see cat. 116, p. 425. – Analyst]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

841 515 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria [842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?'. In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their ● [833] lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

841 522 When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

841 787 As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

841 776 Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendra-wandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: YOUTH

Rerela rerela rela rerela

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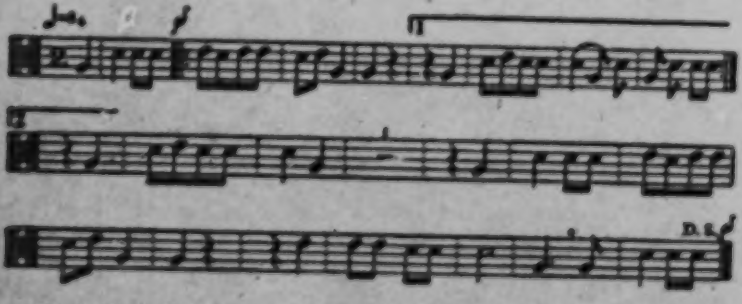
They remind the motiari of her former lovers:

Niya jorta leyur halo adere,	He was your yoke-fellow,
Kotal juri leyur halo adere,	He was your lover,
Ore leyur hunjdi halo adere,	You used to sleep with him,
Narka dhuinga talbindi halo adere,	At night he craved tobacco,[1]
Dhuinga hila indur halo adere.	You said you had none.
Adere dhuinga ãyo halo adere.	But that was not his real desire.
Hawan injur wilindi halo adere.	You denied him and tried to run away.
Leyon tani dilhi halo adere.	But now forever you are leaving him.

They also remind the bridegroom (if he is in the same ghotul) of what he too is going to lose.

How good it would have been had the Raja stayed, O Rani!
He would have been lord of this kingdom;
We would have served him as his servants;
We would have brought our ploughs for his field;
We would have carried his loads without charge.
We would have been given rice as our wages.
We would have carried home his bundles of rice.
We would have brought them from the fields, lifting up our loads.
We would have taken them to the Raja, and he would have paid us our wages, O Rani!

This song is specially appropriate to one of the leaders of the ghotul: other songs have a more general application.



[533]

Dindurãjo jurãjo nona.	The kingdom of the free, lad.
Ido rãjo jnão nona.	You'll never see it more, lad.
Niya wãyna ghotul nona.	You came to the ghotul, lad.
Purudhoro ghotul nona.	Fair as bison-horns, lad.
Ido ghotul do wandir nona.	You used to come here always, lad.
Dãna haido gibi nona.	A sleeping-mat in the left hand, lad.
Tina haido kerga nona.	In the right hand a stick, lad.

[1] To ask for tobacco is the conventional way of inviting a girl to sexual congress.

[133]

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

755 To divine by chickens, the Gunia brings a chicken to the piles of rice and
787 tries to make it eat, asking it questions all the time. The point where the chicken eats is, of course, the answer to the question.

In matters of great moment and urgency, the Anga Deo from Bara Dongar may be sent for, but this is expensive and wastes a lot of time.

755 When a diagnosis has been made, steps must be taken to avert the evil. There are many different methods. The most common is the sacrifice of animals, rice, spices and smaller offerings. The village may be protected with bits of iron slag hammered into the doors of houses or round the borders. A scapegoat may be consecrated and driven away into the jungle. If a witch or warlock is discovered, he may be persuaded to undo the damage done. If the cause of disaster is some buried image or bone, it is essential that it should be found and properly destroyed. Often what is called in Hindi a *thua* is performed.

A *thua* is a ceremonial act based on the principles of contagious magic. It aims at concentrating the disease or danger in some material object which it then removes beyond the sphere within which a person can be affected: it takes the evil, for example, outside the village boundary, beyond the patient's *bhum*. Thus the Gunia may get a flea or a pubic hair from the patient, concentrate the disease in it and carry it away. Or to cure fever the Gunia takes one leaf-cup of cold and one of hot water and seven different kinds of flowers. He waves these seven times in front of the patient and throws them away.

A form of treatment recorded in Masora sounds like a combination of suggestion and prayer. To cure a headache on one side of the head, the patient should find a tree with cross-branches, go there on a Sunday, offer rice and pulse to the tree and bang his head seven times against it saying, 'O Mahapurub, be my friend today and drive away my pain'.

751 Medicines may be used, either alone or in association with magical means.
755 Some of the medicines are probably magical in origin, gaining their power from some fancied resemblance to the thing to be cured, such as the prescrip-
278 tion of the white milky sap of certain plants to promote lactation. I have recorded the following prescriptions:

For epilepsy. Take the feathers, and in some cases the flesh and bones, of a sparrow and offer them to whatever Rau or ghost is believed to be causing the trouble. At the time of an actual seizure, water in which the feathers have been dipped should be given to the sufferer.

For round-worms. The horn of a bison is scraped with a knife and the scrapings put in water which is allowed to stand for a time. When the water is drunk it is believed that the worms are either vomited or thrown out in the stool.

[833] *For impotence.* The genitalia of a bear are universally believed to be a cure for impotence, and Hindu subordinates and others try to obtain these from the Muria, who do not generally require them themselves. Another cure is to drink the powdered roots of the *tej-oli* and *bhej-oli* plants in milk and abstain from intercourse for a week.

[753] *For dropsy.* This is usually regarded as a sign of the divine displeasure and is a punishment for adultery. It can be cured by the appropriate ceremonies described elsewhere. But the liver of a bear is also useful, if it is found that the disease is due to natural causes.

For venereal disease. This is almost unknown among the Muria. They sometimes confuse gonorrhoea with the burning urine caused by the heat of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

With reference to those parts of the human body which, because of their intimate conjunction with organs of drainage, suffer an opprobrium both unwarranted and psychologically dangerous, I think much trouble and misunderstanding can be avoided if we observe the world of flowers. Exactly as 'Roses and lilies fair on a lawn' display the sexual parts of the rose and the lily, so, in literal fact, our sexual parts are our flowers, and that is a decent and salutary and sweetening way in which to regard them. . . Prudence is necessary, but not error, and nursery prejudices should not cloud our reason.—Eric Gill, *Drawings from Life* (London, 1940), p. xv.

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THE Muria has a simple, innocent and natural attitude to sex. In the ghotul this is strengthened by the absence of any sense of guilt and the general freedom from external interference. The Muria believe that sexual congress is a good thing; it does you good; it is healthy and beautiful; when performed by the right people (such as a chelik and motiari who are not taboo to one another), at the right time (outside the menstrual period and avoiding forbidden days), and in the right place (within the ghotul walls where no sin can be committed), it is the happiest and best thing in life.

This belief in sex as something good and normal gives the Muria a light touch. Nari's saying that the penis and vagina are *kanni hi sali*, in a 'joking relationship' to each other, admirably puts the situation. Sex is great fun; it is the best of ghotul games; it is the dance of the genitals; it is an ecstatic swinging in the arms of the beloved. It ought not to be too intense; it must not be degraded by possessiveness or defiled by jealousy. It is believed that the best and most successful sex relations are to be had in the modern ghotul where partners often change.

The very idea of a Platonic attachment is ridiculous. Young chelik and motiari may sleep together for a long time without congress, but consummation is the end and goal. 'Thirst is not quenched by licking dew.' Let us consider a remarkable document that was given Shamrao Hivale by the villagers of Palli. A newly-married boy found himself impotent—he had not experienced this embarrassment in the ghotul; it was supposed to have been brought upon him by the hostile magic of a former lover—yet however caused it threatened to destroy his happiness. This is how the other chelik described his wife's attitude—she was only a few weeks out of the ghotul, still practically a motiari. Some of the phrases used are probably traditional, for they occur in songs.

'I didn't come to your house', she is supposed to have said, 'just to eat rice. I could have got rice anywhere. I'm not going to stay here just looking at your face. You may have money, but that can only fill my stomach, not my heart. I could fill my stomach myself by going out to work. Well, now I'm off—anywhere, anywhere in the world so long as my heart can be filled. Where the heart is not filled what girl will stay? God made man and woman for this very work. It was to fill each other's hearts that he made ants, worms, birds, rats, pigs, tigers and every other thing. They all live with their mates and copulate. They all marry and love comes from their copulation. But I don't find love by just looking at your face. If your cart-pole was not in place, what did you marry for?

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When you saw me and knew that your heart was not captured, why did you ruin me? What am I to do now? Tell me. Where am I to go?'

Inside the ghotul sexual anaesthesia is known, but it is uncommon and is regarded as a sort of deviation. I have met a few Muria who have never been to the ghotul or who have never shared its sexual activities. Dhansingh Pandu of Palki is a man of some forty years and still unmarried. He has never been to a ghotul. His father used to say to him, 'These boys talk in front of their sisters as if they were their lovers. You don't know what gods there are in the ghotul; many gods live there; you might unwittingly offend one of them and be destroyed. No one knows what people may have in their hearts when all sleep together.' But it was not only his father's exaggerated fears of the supernatural that stopped Dhansingh from attending the ghotul; he himself had no desire to go. But now he regrets it. 'I am a very lonely man', he told me. 'I might now be happily married. But at that time I was very poor and I had no passion.' The real reason for his abstinence seems to have been a dread that he would be forced into sexual intercourse for which he had neither power nor inclination.

Another Muria who has never been a chelik is Hagru of Masora. In his youth he lived in the Hindu potters' quarter of Kondagaon town where there was, of course, no ghotul. 'I used to feel very lonely when I heard how happy the other boys were, but what could I do?'

Early marriage sometimes brings ghotul life to a premature close. In Malakot, I found the people arranging their children's marriages as early as possible 'to prevent copulation in the ghotul'. Old Sukali of Masora was married so young that 'she never even learnt to sing a Relo'. But child-marriage is not common and young married girls are generally allowed to attend the ghotul till puberty or until they are sent to live with their husbands.

Although the Muria insist on abstinence from sexual congress before the ceremonial hunts and require their priests to remain celibate on various occasions, the rule does not seem to be due to any special regard for celibacy as such or belief in its power; it is rather connected with the dread of the menstruous woman. On the eve of a festival all the males of a village must sleep in the ghotul—which for that night is cleared of motiari—to ensure that none of their wives or other relatives will infect them with the defilement of a catamenial period that might begin during the night. So too the very strict rules governing a young Gaita's relations with women in the Chota Dongar Pargana appear to be based mainly on a desire to isolate him from the dreaded menstrual contact.

Celibacy is not admired, and it is dangerous to be unmarried, for a man or woman who dies in this condition lives for ever restless and frustrated, and a nuisance to the friends he has left behind on earth. It should be noted that it is marriage and not sexual experience that is important. The Hindu sadhu is rarely respected, though he may be feared for his supposed supernatural powers. The state *of sannyds* is everywhere associated in the aboriginals' mind with idleness and beggary rather than with chastity. In Alor the chelik spoke very scornfully of celibacy: 'It is a way of life for loafers.' And of boys and girls who stand aside from the main life of the ghotul, they say 'they will get children directly they begin'. 'There may be one in a thousand girls who tries to keep her water, but she will get a child in her *haldi-dhoti*', while her clothes are still stained with the marriage turmeric. It is dangerous to store up power, for when it is released it may prove too potent.

In order to enforce this attitude, the chelik tell a number of stories illustrating the danger of breaking the ghotul tradition. One such tale, from

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

832 Although the Muria do not analyse the parts of the body or the face with the
876 care given to this pleasant task by the more sophisticated Indian communities, they have a fully developed aesthetic tradition of the breast. This is natural in a people who but yesterday learnt to cover the upper part of their bodies with a cloth. Even now I have seen in many Muria houses girls husking rice or grinding grain without any upper cloth. When no strangers are about, they still, in the western areas, discard as many clothes as possible. The breasts, so often seen, are always admired. A boy, asked the age of a girl, will answer by showing with his open hands the size of her breasts. 'She may have breasts as big as a coconut, or they may be small as a lemon, but they are beautiful and we love them', said a chelik at Masora. 'A girl's beauty is in her breasts. But'—and this is an interesting point—'the breasts do not remain. After a child is born their loveliness departs. But always there are the shoulders; they never betray us.' In other words, sexual congress demands something to hold—'from holding comes joy indescribable'; in youth a chelik holds the breasts; later he holds the shoulders, and these never betray him, but go with him all his life.

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There are many vivid similes for the breast, a whole vocabulary and system of classification, reminding one a little of Jayle's famous distinction of nine mammary types. As we might expect, several of the chelik's classifications are of small and immature breasts—the *gras dudo*, like half-formed gourds; the *benjri dudo*, like small brinjals at which the boys laugh saying, 'When will the brinjals in your garden be ripe?'; the *bondo-bukh dudo*, like little mushrooms; the *thaka dudo*, like small pots. The *'hosa dudo* are compared to cocoons; they are the breasts of a girl only just mature; and the *wrang kashle dudo* are also immature and 'flat as dog-fleas'.

The breasts of the older motiari are finely developed. Such are the *gutta dudo*—'their youthful strength stands up like pegs'; the *kapa dudo*, the 'ripe brinjal which is fresh and firm'; the *kindri dudo*, of which it is said that 'even if she has five children they will keep their shape'; the *burka dudo*, the large hemispherical breasts of a faithful wife and loving mother; the *marka dudo*, or mango breasts; the magnificent *mirzi dudo*, 'tiger breasts', the best of all, hemispherical with well-marked areolae and a beautiful conical-tipped nipple, whose milk nourishes a child into a young tiger.

Less admired are the *kurbin dudo*, small with long nipples, called 'monkey breasts' in Mandla; the *dhodka* or *torka dudo*, another gourd breast but elongated and weaker which gives poor thin milk; the *chimni dudo*, with long nipples 'like the funnel of a country lamp'; and the *kind dhoti dudo*, the nipples of which are 'like the berries of the chhind shrub'. It is notable that in this group the breasts are classified according to the nipples.

The breasts of older women are the flat *kulta dudo*, the *kurpunj dudo*, long as country shoes and the *tiblo dudo* which 'flop down like dripping water', a description which recalls the expression in Betul Gondi—*dudukh ding-dong ailing*: 'her breasts are dangling like a blanket behind a cart'.[1]

'beauty', but this seems to mean simply 'good to see'. Ugliness is described with more animation. *Sika-arjil* means, in Betul, 'a shock-headed untidy person looking like a savage bear'. *Bukrik korwinga mai* is a 'fat-faced woman'. To call a man *Akilur* in Gondi means he is 'thin as a stick'. Mitchell gives *ojo* as meaning 'ugly' among the Bisonhorn Maria.

[1] Trench, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 58. Muria similes for the breast, which may be paralleled by those current among the Baiga (see *The Baiga*, pp. 343ff) must be almost unique for detail and imagination. The Greeks had their *dora fistikonna*; the Arabs admired the pomegranate breast: the medieval German ideal was 'that the breasts should be high and rounded, like apples or pears, small and soft' (Havelock Ellis, *Sexual Selection*,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

her off his mat. When that happens she soon becomes sorry and flings her arms round him saying, 'Why are you angry? We are always together; we will meet tomorrow'. Later, when all are asleep, she opens her cloth and lets him have his way.

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that just as it is the motiari who rule the sexual side and make the sleeping arrangements in the modern type of ghotul, so in both types it is the motiari who take the lead in actual congress. 'When a girl first goes to the ghotul,' said a motiari at Binjhli, 'she is sent to a chelik. She sits down by his mat and says, "Won't you give me a camping-site?" The chelik answers, "Lie down and sleep". The girl is always frightened at first, but she should make no fuss even if it hurts her, for then everyone would hear and laugh. A boy must never ask a girl to sleep with him. It is we who make the arrangements.' 'At first', I was told, 'it is the boy who is shy. But the first long steady look of the motiari encourages him, and afterwards he takes the lead.'

I will give finally a charming record, recorded at Phanda by Shamrao Hivale, of the way a chelik and motiari in love talk to one another.

'All day you were in my eyes,' says the chelik. 'You went to that village, and I kept on looking at it and saying to myself, "She is there".'

'Yes, I went away,' responds the motiari, 'but I felt as if you were just behind me. I could see your shadow by me all the time.'

'All day long I felt as if you were actually talking to me.'

'I said to myself, "Now the sun stands overhead; he must have returned from the jungle with his wood; perhaps he is resting, perhaps he is drinking his *jāwa*".'

'I felt as if I should take you away, and talk to you alone, and never hear anyone else's voice again.'

'I never want to hear anyone else either.'

'Do you know what I did in the afternoon, when you had come home and then gone out fishing? I was ploughing, but I felt I must look at you, so I left my plough and hid under a bush by the river. There I could see you fishing and I felt very happy. After a little while I went back to my plough.'

VII. The Sexual Act

Kosra ke kāte asan Muria ke lote. *As is the reaping of millet, so is the intercourse of the Muria.*—Muria proverb

In the ghotul there is no ceremony of sexual initiation, no formal rite of defloration, no permission (save in a few ghotul) is needed from the leaders for the first or any other intercourse. 'Desire is not controlled by rules, nor is our copulation.'

From their earliest days in the ghotul the little chelik and motiari play together until gradually, imperceptibly the vaginal entrance is enlarged and the hymen disappears without a tear. 'We used to behave,' said Nari, 'exactly like little bulls and cows, sporting together till the bull could penetrate.' 'When you sleep with a girl night after night,' said the Antar of Jamkot, 'however small you may be, as long as flesh becomes wood, you try to beat her with it.' And the Budhker of Kapsi described how he quarrelled with his parents and eloped with his still immature wife. 'She was too young, and for a long time I only played with her and was quite happy with that till she was mature.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

For it is not considered proper for the older boys to have congress with a motiari till she has passed the menarche. 'Real happiness only comes when you are both mature. Of course the kids do it, but without the falling of water there's little pleasure. It is like eating a raw fruit. There is no sweetness in it. It is like rice without salt.' This judgement comes from Kajen; another is from Kabonga. 'To try to have a girl before she is mature is as hard as for a pig to dig up roots. Sometimes it manages it; it gets the root up and enjoys it. But it prefers its ordinary food.' The Kotwar of Temrugaon said, 'The first time I did it was with a little girl and it was very painful. She didn't like it either. One ought not to dig in the field of an immature girl, for one's *pulu* (digging-stick) may get damaged.'

But after a girl's first menstruation, said Raunu of Jhakri, 'everyone plans to be the first'. Even now, however, the girl must not be forced or hurried; she must be wooed, persuaded, loved into yielding. Sometimes girls who are afraid of intercourse succeed in resisting the chelik for a long time. Often the first serious sexual experience of a girl is during a marriage, when everyone is excited and perhaps a little drunk, and no one asks questions or notices what is going on.

The ghotul leaders do not interfere unduly with the young children, but they see that they receive proper sexual training and instruction. 'As a young bullock is broken to the plough, so a young boy is taught.' The evidence for this sort of statement is best presented in actual 'documents'. Here is one from Kapsi.

> A big girl teaches a little boy by letting him fondle her breasts and hug her. Then she opens and spreads her legs and makes the little boy lie on her breasts. She shows him how to open her clothes and insert the little penis with his hand. The first time the boy doesn't know what to do and the juice comes out too soon. But the next day she says, 'You only pressed me last night, nothing was done properly. I had no pleasure'. The boy replies, 'Today I'm really ready; now I know what to do'.

In Munjmeta, the Melia recalled how he learnt to perform the sexual act from the very descriptions of the older boys. And in Markabera, the Diwan said,

> A little boy doesn't need to be taught anything. Does a young crab have to be taught how to dig earth? But the elder boys generally tell them how to do it. When the little boys tell them their secrets and how they tried but failed, the older chelik show them the best way. The older girls do the same for the little girls. Sometimes older girls who get fond of little boys teach them themselves. But we learn everything by being in the ghotul. How can the little boys check themselves? Who doesn't feel a desire to eat when he sees people enjoying a feast in his presence?

Thus from a very early age the young chelik and motiari are trained in sexual technique, both by example and by actual instruction. A boy does not approach his marriage bed a virgin, but neither does he go to it a fool.

The immediate sexual approach and the technique of copulation practised by chelik and motiari are conditioned by the circumstances of ghotul life. Normal sexual congress should take place within the ghotul. It is believed that this precaution lessens the chances of conception (there is a 'safe region' rather than a 'safe period'); it protects boy and girl from the calamitous interference of magic; and it imposes a certain degree of restraint and discipline.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883 836 833 Naturally there are many breaches of the rule; at marriages and festivals, on dancing expeditions and during everyday work in field and forest, chelik and motiari unite in intercourse—but this is regarded as irregular, not exactly condemned, but accepted as outside the routine.

This fact alone is sufficient to make the ghotul tradition almost unique. For here is a company of boys and girls, many of them close relatives, who perform the sexual act in public, often in a single room. For it is public, even though veiled by the mask of darkness and a convention that no one should watch his neighbour. In some of the bigger ghotul, of course, the boys and girls are able to thin out a little; they can scatter in the different huts; in the hot weather they can sleep out in the compound. But during a large part of the year chelik and motiari sleep together in one small smoky room. They do not care to leave the warmth and security of their cosy ghotul for the dangerous and inconvenient discomfort of field or jungle. So we find brothers performing the sexual act before their sisters, and elder brothers in the forbidden presence of their younger brothers' 'wives'. Sometimes they are so crowded together that they have great difficulty in achieving coitus without waking up their neighbours.

For this reason, because intercourse must be with all the secrecy possible, without display and without disturbance, the normal method of copulation inside the ghotul is not unlike the characteristic European method—the girl lies prone on her back, and the boy stretches himself upon her, forcing her legs apart and often raising them to place them round his thighs.

But when the lovers meet outside the ghotul, they are able to indulge more varied postures. At Jhakri the chelik knew of four—the girl prone on her back and the youth kneeling or squatting before her; both sitting and facing one another; the youth prone and fully extended above the girl who sometimes raises her legs and sometimes extends them; and both standing, the girl supported against a tree or wall. At Palari, a chelik said, 'Usually we lie flat, but when a boy is very happy he sits above her.'

X883 833 A former Sirdar of Singarpuri described the difference between intercourse with a motiari in a crowded ghotul and with one's own wife in a private room. 'To have a motiari is like living on borrowed money; you are always anxious, and afraid someone will notice what you're doing. But with your own wife at home, you can have her lying down, you can have her standing up, you can have her from the front, you can have her from behind. She is like a good crop which you can eat till you can eat no more.'

But copulation *a posteriori* is generally considered improper. There still linger stories probably imaginary, that the soldiers who raped Muria women during the Rebellion of 1911 took them in this way. There is a ribald story current in the Bara Dongar Pargana of a married couple who wearied of the constant publicity and monotony of intercourse in a crowded home.

> So one day the man took her to the jungle and said they would copulate like horses. He persuaded her, though with great difficulty, to become completely naked. He said, 'Now you lean forward and when I come to you from behind, making love-noises like a horse, you must kick me with one leg'. But they had both forgotten that she was wearing heavy anklets with sharp edges, and when she kicked, one of these cut his lip open, and it has not yet completely healed.

A more tragic, though equally ribald, tale comes from Gorma.

> A husband saw a pair of cranes copulating as he was going home drunk from the liquor-shop. He said in his mind, 'That's how I'll do it tonight'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

So thinking, he tied a sickle to his nose as a beak, bound a winnowing-fan on each arm, put a broom on his bottom. There he was, a bird. He mounted his wife from behind, flapping his wings and crying *kar-kar-kar*. But he knocked over a lamp, set fire to the house and was burnt to death.

A chelik and motiari generally agree to have congress at the time of the massage. When the girl lays the chelik's hand on her shoulder so that she can massage his arm, he squeezes it in a certain manner. This is how the Kotwar of Chandabera described it.

They have agreed on it. They lie down together on the mat. He has his hand on her breast, but that means nothing. When all are asleep, he makes the sign. I cannot tell you what it is, but we all know it. She says 'Go away' but he knows she means yes. He doesn't kiss her or touch any part of her, save her breasts and shoulders. He raises himself and separates her legs. She at once unties her cloth. When he is on her, she puts his organ in its place with her hand. She says nothing, nor does he. They are very quiet. He must do it hard; unless you sweat, unless your rut (*mast*) leaves you, you are not satisfied. She says, 'Push on, push on (*alena, alena*)'. She won't let him go till she is satisfied. At last the word *Hai* comes from both their lips. They are no more drunken. *Eko lala hewde raiyār asko hong dayār.* When it goes out through her ears, her temper is cooled.

Bindo, the old Muria of Benur, recalled a love affair of sixty years ago.

I used to sleep with the Malko in the ghotul. Though she would be lying by my side, I did not go to her at first, for I was the head of the ghotul and thought I oughtn't to. But after two or four days, Malko caught hold of my penis and put it between her thighs. Even then I did nothing. Then the girl got very angry and refused to sleep with me for some days. But at last she came again to my mat and this time I went to her. After that we often had intercourse together.

This elementary form of masturbation by girls is known as *dinga-dinga* and seems to be common. But it must be noted that it is a preparation for normal intercourse and not (as so often in Africa) a substitute for it. In Masora the chelik said that 'when a motiari wants a boy, she catches hold of his penis and plays with it till he goes to her'.

The function of the clitoris is not unknown. It is usually prominently portrayed in drawings or carvings of the vagina. Its history is traced in the myths. To the male storyteller, it is a slightly ludicrous object, a parody of the penis, and a mention of it never fails to raise a laugh. In intercourse, said a Muria at Sirpurl, 'the clitoris becomes violently agitated when it sees the penis approaching'. The Ahtar of Masora said, 'When it sees the penis coming, the clitoris smiles'.

The Muria believe it is the woman who takes the lead and sets the pace. A curious illustration of this is the fact that, contrary to what I believe to be the almost universal practice in village India, the girl herself undoes her pubic cloth.[1] Elsewhere this is considered immodest in a girl and unmanly in her

[1] 'The fobbs of the sari which are tied in the front are called *tirasi*, which is a very significant word in Indian love-making. The knot of the sari is to be untied by the man when the lovers unite.'—D. Bhagwat, *Folk-songs from the Satpura Valleys* (Bombay, 1949), p. xx.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

833 partner; but here, so far from being thought improper, it is not unknown for a girl to attract a chicken-hearted chelik in this way.

Woman is indeed regarded as insatiable. 'Woman is earth; man cannot plough her.' The proverb means that as a single plough cannot break up the universal earth, so no man can really satisfy a woman. Here we have the opposite view to that commonly held in Europe, that sex is the man's privilege and the woman's duty; in aboriginal India, sex is the man's duty and the woman's right. It is her compensation for the embarrassments of menstruation and the pains of child-bearing. She has no more powerful means of dominating and subjugating the male.

It is difficult to say what a Muria regards as the normal frequency of intercourse. Among adults it is often said that a Muria woman insists on a daily connexion until the first child is born; after that twice a week is enough.' A wife is very passionate until she gets a child, but then the child takes her passion and her strength away.' Yet when a husband is more ardent it gives great satisfaction to his partner. 'If he goes to her three times during the night she beams with happiness and tells her friends, "I saw no sleep tonight. He gave it all to me His life was in me all night".'

[595] This tradition imposes a great strain on the polygamous husband and may explain why multiple marriage is so rare. A former Chalki of Bayanar had two wives. 'We never quarrelled so long as I went daily to both. I didn't mind for I was strong enough. After all, it is only your land, and every man tills as much as he can. All you need is a pair of strong bullocks and a plough.'

833 A childless couple are often driven to excess in a vain attempt to stir the mysterious forces that cause conception. A Daroga of More Berma told me, 842 'My penis has been worn out by seven years' hard work, just as a bit of cloth is torn to bits after months of heavy wear, but still I cannot get a child'. And a man at Alor said, 'You may work night and day, but unless God fills the womb with hair, it is all of no avail'.

X883 In the ghotul sexual practice varies. In places where there has recently been a pregnancy, the leaders insist on restraint as a contraceptive measure, 833 and sometimes demand that their permission be taken before indulgence. But this is emergency legislation, and the ghotul soon slips back into freer ways. In the stricter ghotul, the chelik and motiari do not have congress more than two or three times a week. At Esalnar, they claimed that they did not exceed once a week—for here they were much concerned to prevent conception.

But elsewhere I have heard the chelik laugh at such moderation. 'The penis is the *datun* (toilet-twig) of the vagina and should clean it every day.' In Binjhli, where chelik and motiari only sleep together once a week, on Fridays, they said that they had intercourse outside the ghotul every day, and at least three times on Fridays.

In most ghotul, the motiari expects her chelik to approach her sexually every day. 'If the boy does nothing, then the following evening when she is combing his hair she says, "Was it a day or a night yesterday? You forgot it was night. Why were you lying beside me like a corpse?" The boy feels very ashamed and says that he had a bad head or was very tired after working in the fields. "But I'll tire you out tonight", he says.'

'A night without intercourse', said a motiari at Chandabera, 'seems twelve years long.'

834 The Muria tradition, which is always wise and sane in sexual matters, interrupts the routine with many holidays. The regular monthly rest during the catamenial period of wife or motiari is a boon alike to husband and chelik. During pregnancy and after it there is a fairly long period of abstinence. During

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pregnancy, intercourse should cease after the fifth month: there is unanimous testimony on this point. After childbirth—so many Muria claim—a husband does not approach his wife for one, or even two, years. 'He must not go to her till the child is weaned.' This may possibly be true of a few villages under strong Hill Maria influence, but even there it seems to me doubtful. There is certainly a desire, however, to space confinements properly and 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain'. But the ground dries long before this.

Elsewhere I have heard it said that 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'—an important point, in that it places the responsibility for resuming intercourse on the woman. In Alor, the Muria said that a period of six months was sufficient, in Chandabera that intercourse was resumed when the child first smiled. In Chameli the villagers spoke of a case where a child had died because the mother gave birth to another during the lactation period of the first. 'The child drank the milk of blood.'

These 'holidays' serve a valuable psychological, as well as a physiological, purpose. In the ghotul, where their close and constant contact might easily make chelik and motiari utterly weary of one another, life is frequently broken up. For months the chelik go to watch in the fields, and the motiari are alone in the ghotul. The menstruating girl is not only sexually taboo; she does not come to the ghotul at all—and is all the more welcome when she reappears. The arrangement that chelik and motiari should go on separate dancing expeditions is psychologically sound, as is proved by the enthusiastic welcome they receive on their return.

VIII. Love-charms

In an atmosphere like that of the ghotul, where frustration and sexual anxiety are comparatively rare, the use of love-charms is less common than among other aboriginal people. But the Muria are acquainted with such charms and sometimes use them, though the results may not always be permanent. 'If I get a girl in this way,' said a Muria at Remawand, 'my store of rice grows less, for such a union is not a yoking of Mahapurub's house. The true yoking comes of its own accord.' It is said that 'girls won by magic run by deceit'.

The charms are generally based on simple principles of sympathetic magic. For example, at Alor the Gaita said that the way to win a reluctant lover was to pursue a pair of *sarus* cranes. These cranes, as is well known, always go about in pairs, and it is said that if one of them dies its mate will quickly follow suit.

> When the cranes fly up into the air one or two feathers may fall. One of these must be caught before it reaches the ground. Then offer it liquor and a black chicken, burn it, tie the ashes in a little bundle to your waist and somehow or other touch the girl with it. Then you will love each other like a pair of cranes. But this is a dangerous charm for as the two cranes always die together so if the girl dies you will die too.

Another curious charm comes from Gorma.

> When you go to relieve yourself, wait till a pig comes along to eat your excreta. Leaving your cloth undone, jump on the pig and pull out a little hair from the back of its neck or forehead. Tie the hair in your cloth and do yourself up. Wait till a Sunday, and then push the

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

and went out to find them. They searched for many days and at last when they were almost weary of their chase, they discovered Neng Mudial near the pile of bricks for the great fort he hoped to make. Neng Mudial was sitting at his food and asked them to wait a moment; he would discuss matters when he had finished. But they were so angry that they cut off his left hand. Then they threw him on the ground and cut off his testicles and penis. They threw the testicles to Chandabera, where they turned into stone and may still be seen. They threw his penis to Ban-Chapai and it is there to this day. The old man himself turned into a stone. Then the brothers found their wives and killed them all and returned sadly to Chaurang, where they died and are worshipped even now.[1]

The cult of Neng Mudial is still maintained at Chandabera, Bandopal and Bongapal, and annual offerings are made to his stones. The chelik believe that if after offering sacrifices they scrape a little from the stone testicle or penis and give it to their girls, these will be as certainly enticed as were the wives of Tande and Gunshi.

Closely allied to the use of love-charms is that of some sort of aphrodisiac. The Muria generally believe that a meat diet is useful for this, and especially the virile organs of the bear or goat.

It sometimes happens that when a motiari has succeeded in humbling a boy, taunted him with his lack of vigour and rather conspicuously bestowed her favours elsewhere, he wants to be revenged upon her. In order to do this, he prepares a very powerful tonic according to this prescription:

> Find a two- or three-year-old *dodka* cucumber plant with a parasite on it. Climb up without throwing your shadow on it and pick a bit without using your nails. Burn it and tie the ashes in a little bundle. Keep it in the house where the shadow of a menstruous woman or witch will not fall on it. Then at the time of intercourse tie it on your wrist or elbow and your thing will be as large as the cucumber and you can humble any girl who has scorned you.

An interesting use of a love-charm was recorded at Kabonga. The Sirdar told us that shortly after marriage, he was planning to elope with the Salki whom he had loved as a chelik. 'But my wife made a love-charm, and I fell in love with my own wife, and forgot the Salki.'

IX. IMPOTENCE

Stekel begins his great work on *Impotence in the Male* with a solemn warning. 'In men love-inadequacy is increasing to an alarming degree, and impotence has come to be a disorder associated with modern civilization . . . The percentage of relatively impotent men cannot be placed too high. In my experience, hardly half of all civilized men enjoy normal potency. Nowadays ejaculatio praecox is no longer a disorder; it is the regular accompaniment of civilization.'[2] Among the Muria, however, cases of impotence of any kind are extremely rare. It is, I think, possible to affirm this with confidence,

[1] For a somewhat similar legend of Nakti turned into stone, cf. *JBORS*, Vol. II, p. 214.

[2] W. Stekel, *Impotence in the Male* (English Translation, New York, 1939), p. 1. Compare also Dickinson's judgement. 'Our most grievous male problem of maladjustment is premature ejaculation and it is only second in disastrous effect to blundering technique'. —R. L. Dickinson, *Human Sex Anatomy* (London and Baltimore, 1933), p. 82.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

because nobody has any reticence in discussing the subject. It is in fact one of the things the people rather enjoy telling you, it is something unusual and interesting—a rather cruel joke, but still a joke. Out of 2000 married men, only 3 were absolutely impotent and only 9 relatively impotent—these admitted that their wives had betrayed them because 'they could not satisfy them', almost certainly a reference to ejaculatio praecox.

In view of this it is strange to read in Stekel: 'One may attempt to solve this question by studying the erotic life of primitive races. It is erroneous to think that primitive peoples experience a richer sexuality and possess a stronger sexual appetite than civilized man. On the contrary, exhaustive research proves that sexuality in primitive races is subject to numerous limitations and reveals a more rut-like (periodic) character. Their erotic life is poor in comparison with the ecstasies of civilized man. The psychic component of love is almost unknown to them.' When we turn to the footnote to see what Stekel means by 'exhaustive research' we find references to only two books—Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and Buschan's *Die geschlechtlichen Aeusserungen der Naturvölker im Handbuch der Sexualwissenschaften*. As a matter of fact, there has hardly been any research at all, let alone any 'exhaustive research', into the sexual life of primitive man. Such intimate knowledge as we have is far from supporting Stekel's generalizations, which appear to be based on the opinions of missionaries, officials and travellers, the most untrustworthy of all informants.

Muria libido, I agree, is somewhat weak, but since Muria institutions are well adapted to correct this deficiency, the matter is of little practical importance. The essential point remains. Out of 2000 marriages, only 12 were ruined by impotence. Had they been in civilization, according to Stekel the figure might have been in the neighbourhood of 1000.

In Muria society impotence is rare as a fact; it is very common as an accusation. This will account for the comparatively large vocabulary of terms, mainly Halbi and Chhattisgarhi, used to describe it, for to a Muria girl a sexual failure of twenty-four hours merits the charge. The words, however, are not really very unkind or scornful. *Tersa* means 'crooked', *thotha* means 'blunt', *baila* means 'a bullock' and, after all, a bullock *is* a very useful animal. Other words are *harba* (small), *langa* (crooked) and *murda* (a corpse). *Thât si ute* means that 'the cart pole does not rise into position'. The only Gondi word for this condition is the interesting *doko*, which is a negative form of *dokina* or *tokhna*, meaning 'to peck'. This word is often used of chickens which refuse to eat consecrated rice at a festival and *doko*, therefore, seems to imply the inability to peck at one's proper food. The fact that only one of these expressions is in Gondi still further emphasizes the absence of impotence among the unsophisticated aboriginals. Moreover the rather tolerant attitude implied in these terms of abuse suggests that the condition is sufficiently rare for no one to trouble himself very much about it.

In the ghotul, however, an impotent boy may have rather a bad time. 'God was making a woman but forgot what he was doing and stuck a bit of skin by mistake in front of the corpse,' said one pert motiari at Binjhli. 'If I were a man and like that, I would drown myself in the river,' said another. 'She is angry, for *he* keeps her dry as ashes: if he says a word, she is on fire.' 'A tree cannot grow without water, nor can love.' I have given at the beginning of this chapter the remarkable document that was recorded at Palli in which a girl who was unfortunate enough to be married to an impotent youth expressed her feelings. I have a taunt song on similar lines from Chikhli.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

883X
833
539

Here's a twig of the ebony tree,
Here's the twig you were telling me of.
No one can use it at either end.
I have offered water in a brass pot,
I have offered gruel in a leaf-cup,
I have served him rice in a dish,
I have given him curry in a leaf-cup,
But he does not speak to me.
He doesn't know what to do.
I cannot live just looking at his house,
I cannot live just to fill my belly.
I can only live if my heart is filled.
I will go away to my father's house.
How can I live so long without my proper work?

The symbols in this song are sexual. The brass pot, the leaf-cup, the dish offered by the girl to her husband, and his useless toilet-twig are recognized symbols of the female and male genitalia. In the concluding lines the girl declares, as she did at Palli, that life is something more than just looking after a house or filling one's stomach with food. The word in the eighth line which I have translated 'He does not speak to me' also means 'He does not have intercourse with me' and thus gives the key to the whole song.

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'An impotent chelik's life in the ghotul is not altogether intolerable, for there are nearly always more boys than girls, and it does not matter very much if one of them has to sleep alone. But once the boy has got married, his position becomes desperate. A former Kotwar of the Kapsi ghotul was impotent. To cover his embarrassment he used to leave his wife at home and go to sleep in the ghotul. Naturally he was not very popular there, and after a time the motiari began to try to turn him out. They escorted him dancing and singing home to his wife, made him take her by the hand and said to her, 'Here's your husband. Sleep with him, beat him, do something with him; we don't want him in our ghotul'. Then they took a chicken from the house and went away, thus suggesting that they had again performed the final marriage rite when bride and bridegroom are put to bed together. After this had happened two or three times, the unfortunate youth gave up going to the ghotul—for he could not afford the continual loss of chickens—and went to sleep in any empty verandah or disused shed.

Boys who are married to older girls are accused by their wives of sexual inadequacy. A boy at Jamkot said, 'My wife was much older; how could my little penis please her? She used to go to her mother's house, and when I went to fetch her back, would say, "Do you think I can be happy sleeping with your pots and dishes? I want a man to live with".' At Karanji, the Mukhwan was also married to an older girl. 'My first wife was always dissatisfied because of my small penis. She used to leave me at home and go to dance the Chait Parab dances, for she came from the lowlands, and loved them. At last she met a man there who could please her, and left me. But my next wife was very happy.'

Such impotence is, of course, merely a symptom of immaturity. So also may be the cases reported of cheliks who, though fully potent in the ghotul, find themselves impotent with their wives. This is usually attributed to a jealous motiari who resents her chelik being married to someone else. Ghasia, a very old Muria of Garha, recalls how in his youth the Pissa of the ghotul was in love with him, and when he refused to marry her, made him impotent

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

by magic on his wedding-night with the result that his bride left him the next morning. But after the usual sacrifices, he was cured and claims that he was able to embrace his wife three or four times every night. At Karagaon a chelik was married when he was very young, but continued to live in the ghotul (which was *jodiddr*) and was paired off with a much older motiari. When the time came for the boy to live with his wife, this motiari made him impotent by her magic so that he would always come to the ghotul and not stay with his wife. Unfortunately the charm was so powerful that the boy was impotent in the ghotul as well as in his house and both girls deserted him. After the Siraha had diagnosed the trouble, his parents offered food-sacrifice, and the boy recovered.

X. Sexual Deviations

'Investigation among a number of primitive peoples,' says Seligman, 'fails to discover any cessation of overt heterosexual interests during the years of the alleged latent period.'[1] This seems to be a sounder view than that expressed by older writers on the subject who, drawing much information from travellers' reports, ascribed to the aboriginal every form of sexual perversion. 'Among a large number of primitives,' says Muller-Lyer,[2] 'vices are to be observed which rank with those of Babylon and London . . . running the whole gamut from shameless eroticism through masturbation, tribadism, pederasty, and sodomy to the most obscene perversions.' 'Primitive men,' says Briffault,[3] 'exhibit no greater delicacy in regard to the satisfaction of their sexual instincts than in their diet. The objects that gratify the former are often as disgusting to us as those which satisfy their appetite'; and he goes on to speak of 'homosexual atrocities unknown to European vice and Nasamonian rites, the disgusting character of which passes all conception'. Most of the writers who so freely attribute to primitives the vices of Babylon and London have never themselves lived in primitive society; they are content to accept the biased views of missionaries and the highly-coloured exaggerations of travellers. It is remarkable that those who have lived among primitives with an open and scientific mind are generally of another opinion. Without question Seligman's view is true, probably of all Indian aboriginals, certainly of the Muria.

It is only where an imported prudery has disturbed the even course of ghotul life that there may be found an occasional deviation from the normal. In the Kalpatti Pargana, where the influence of Chhattisgarhi Gond has succeeded in sending the motiari home after spending an hour or two rousing the chelik to a high degree of unsatisfied tumescence, masturbation is not uncommon. I do not know what else the 'reformers' would expect. At Khutgaon a chelik said, 'After the girls have gone we feel lonely and dissatisfied, so we catch hold of the *khairkuta* [a tree which shakes - the penis] and milk it like a cow till the seed comes out. This is our pleasure'. In a few other ghotul also, where the girls go home for the night, I have been told that masturbation is practised as a measure of relief.[4]

[1] Seligman in *JRAI*, Vol. LXII, p. 213. Compare B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, p. 53.

[2] F. Muller-Lyer, *The Evolution of Modern Marriage* (London, 1930, translation of the Munich edition of 1913), p. 37.

[3] Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 398. Another writer taking the same view is Bloch, *The Sexual Life of our Times*, pp. 512ff.

[4] This kind of deviation, temporary and compensatory in character, has been observed for various animals. Allen quotes Bate who observed frogs that, unable to find suitable partners at mating-time, attempted to copulate with pieces of floating wood. Allen, op. cit., p. 10. Jenkins found that if rats were segregated sexually, homosexual

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

40 of the divorces were due to the women. To these we might perhaps add another 9 cases where divorce followed a polygynous marriage.

It is noticeable that in no case has childlessness been put forward as a reason for divorce, though I have found this outside the circle of informants examined for statistical purposes. It is also notable that out of 2,000 men only 11 were suffering from some kind of impotence. It is possible to assert this since it is almost axiomatic that divorce should follow impotence. 'As soon as the penis weakens, the vagina runs to the jungle.'

In this particular set of divorces no case of witchcraft is mentioned. But this too I have found elsewhere, and the legends tell how Lingo himself had to drive away five of his seven wives because they were suspected of being witches.

The 25 cases of wives who 'ran away' are probably to be classed as love-affairs. There is no case of a man driving out his wife for adultery. 'A Muria never gets angry with his wife unless with his own eyes he sees her in the arms of another man.' Nor does the Muria husband listen to scandal. 'All the village knows where the cow is at pasture—except the cowherd.'

The paucity of material makes a study of divorce difficult. Generally the Muria husband and wife remain together through all vicissitudes. I heard of a beautiful example of fidelity at Bargaon. A former Chalki described how after he had been married a year, his wife's 'privates came out' and he was unable to have intercourse with her. His friends advised him to marry someone else. 'But I considered how she had given me great happiness for that year. How could I leave her then? What would she have done? Who would give her happiness? So I stayed with her, and married no one else, but sometimes visited the ghotul.'

If there is any possible excuse for forgiveness, the Muria forgive a sexual lapse—not because they are complacent but because their philosophy forces them to tolerance. If there is any kind of doubt in an accusation, they give their partner the benefit of it. Through poverty and sorrow, despite the malice of witch and warlock or the mysterious hostility of the unseen gods, through doubt and temptation, heedless of the swift death of beauty and the passing of desire, they stand by one another and in their old age are not without reward. Muria domestic life might well be a model and example to the whole world.

VIII. JEALOUSY

Jealousy, which was defined by Descartes as 'a kind of fear related to a desire to preserve a possession', is generally used in a much wider sense and covers, as Westermarck says, such different emotions as rage at a rival, revenge for stolen property and anguish at the knowledge or suspicion of violated chastity and outraged conjugal affection.[1] Hartland in his study of jealousy among 'savages' considered that the sense of ownership was the seed-plot of jealousy,[2] but Westermarck rightly points out that this is not enough: 'If jealousy has anything to do with the sense of ownership the reason is that it is primarily connected with the desire of possession, which is something different. Moreover sexual jealousy springs from sexual love.' One of the best recent descriptions is by Stekel. Jealousy, he says, is 'the expression of the desire to possess an object wholly. It is primordial, is born with man and dies with him. It is still a tragic characteristic of all people, to be unable

[1] Westermarck, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 302.
[2] E. S. Hartland, *Primitive Paternity* (London, 1910), Vol. II, p. 102.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

before he could catch him. He took his wife home and tried to force her to give him the name of her lover. When she refused, he took his axe and struck his little daughter who was standing by and crying with fright, and killed her instantly. He then tried to kill his wife who was carrying her baby in a cloth passed round her shoulder, but she managed to escape. Deva picked up the body of his dead child and carried it into the jungle where he left it under a tree covered with a cloth. The Court was sceptical about Deva's accusations of his wife's unchastity, particularly because he could not give the names of her lovers. But this seems to me entirely in keeping with a Maria's pride, particularly if Deva knew that the seducer was someone in a forbidden relationship or someone whom he disliked. Although some aboriginals have no shame in these matters, others are very reluctant to admit the actual names of men who have seduced their wives.

There is the curious point that, according to one version of the incident, Deva asked his wife to give him tobacco or, in other words, to have sexual intercourse with him, and her refusal to do so was the final spark that caused the explosion. This again is, I think, in line with primitive psychology. The husband would have been powerfully excited sexually by the thought of his wife being possessed by another man; he would desire to reassert his rights over her and perhaps to test her. Her refusal to do what he wanted proved to him that his suspicions were well founded.

A very influential man named Nanda, who was the Siraha of Killepal, met his death on the night of the festival of the Village Mother in April 1932. Nanda and Poyami Panda had married two sisters and both families lived in one compound with the old father-in-law. For some time past Panda had suspected Nanda of an intrigue with his wife Hirme. He had been foolish enough to go to the Tea Gardens leaving her behind in too close an association with the exciting and important personality of the Siraha. When he returned he displayed many of the symptoms of pathological jealousy. He was continually asking his wife whether she had had intercourse with Nanda, and he tried hard to get her to leave the village, where she lived in such

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 approached, and that in a fit of rage at his wife's infidelity he had killed her; and then later admitted that he had gone to the cave, but denied that he ever approached Jimme sexually. He said that he had been sitting on the rocks above when his wife threw a stone at him. He slapped her, and she fell accidentally from the rocks and was killed.

There can be little doubt, however, that the prosecution story was true. When the police searched the cave, they found on the dust of the floor the clear signs of a woman lying on her back and a pair of footprints on either side [833] of the marks made by the woman's buttocks. This clearly shows that intercourse practised according to the normal aboriginal technique had been in progress, and Jimme confirmed the fact.

Paklu, when I saw him in jail, was still young, a man of [697] fine physique and good-looking. He has behaved well in jail, for he has been made a Lambardar and wears the tall yellow cap which indicates his office.

762 578 Nine cases of suicide were due to disputes between wife and husband. Thus Kome is said to have been quick-tempered, a person who always exaggerated things. She was a young wife, only twenty years old, and when her husband came in one day tired and wet from the fields, and found no food ready, and abused her, she took a rope and slipped out of the house. Her husband, also young, found some stale food and took it back to the field. When he came home in the evening his wife was dead.

Mate had a row with her husband over lighting the fire. He was drunk and beat her, and she attacked him. But her [607] husband's elder brother, to whom she was strictly taboo and who had no business to touch her, intervened and beat her also. During the night, she left the house and tried to get across the Indrawati River in order to reach her mother's house. But there was no ferry and she hanged herself with her clothes. It is worthy of note that although there was a deep river at hand, the girl preferred to end her life by hanging.

An unusually tragic incident occurred at Metapal in February 1937. Kuhrami Hurra returned one day from the bazaar and found that one of his calves had been killed by a panther. Rightly or wrongly he considered that this was

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

from the fresh cultivation site, postponed till after the first harvest has been raised on the latter. This is inconvenient only to the women, as from the time when the new *kosra* comes into ear till the harvest is over all the men sleep apart from their wives in their fields, while their womenfolk have to sleep in the village, it being taboo for women to sleep in the fields and to have sexual intercourse during this period. As it was inconvenient for the bachelors to sleep in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) on the hill-top village in Ahekele *paghai*, a temporary dormitory had been made near the river, actually in Ahekele *kaghai* no. 10, but close to the bridge by which the villagers crossed the river to their *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai*; and there were also four houses there, and a row of granaries, that site having been more convenient for some of the villagers whose fields had been on the lower slopes of *kaghai* no. 10 when that was being cultivated. Handawada is a village of the Gume clan; and all the houses in the village on Ahekele *paghai*, those by the river in *kaghai* no. 10, and the one advance-guard house in Kawar *paghai*, as well as all the *penda* fields in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1, belonged to members of the Gume clan: but in the small Irpmeta *kaghai* no. 3 three families of the Tamo clan, with which the Gume clan may intermarry, had been allowed to have *penda* cultivation and to build houses and granaries; the wives had all been Gume girls. In the new village site, Kawar *paghai*, one villager had already built his house, to which I referred above as the advance-guard house, because he had been sent to make an experimental *penda* field in Kawar *kaghai* no. 1 a year in advance of the rest of the villagers, in accordance with custom; on the success of this experimental cultivation depends the villagers' decision whether to migrate *en masse* in the following year. There was also a newly made cairn close by where a ceremony in honour of the Village Mother had been performed as an essential preliminary to the shifting of the village. When I next camped in the parish in March 1934, the villagers had for three years occupied Kawar *paghai*, and the houses were dirty and smoke-blackened; the villagers had found the site feverish and unhealthy owing to its proximity to the river, there had been several deaths, and Kawar *kaghai* nos. 1 and 2 had each been exhausted in two years. Their Tamo relatives had exhausted Irpmeta *kaghai* and left the parish. The *Bhum-gaita* and another villager had been sent ahead to make experimental *penda* plots in Hitangpal *kaghai* (no. 4), and the villagers proposed to shift the village during 1935 to the village site in that *kaghai* or the adjacent Kurmelnar *kaghai* (no. 5); the experiments in Hitangpal had succeeded, and the villagers were to start their *penda* felling in a few days.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*mazni*) or a bark-cloak (*tagkali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lowa*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*akki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[1] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[2]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[see cat. 116, p. 120. – Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate
342 cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in
513 various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian
241 wigwams, known as *panambakska*. They may also erect big and
343 small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

241 Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

● [834] **Sowing** From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory.

241 Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the
769 forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-akk*). These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit kenjat! Miku kar kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemati mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

241 On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyap-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 The people of Bastar are apt to use the Halbi word *kosra* as a generic term for all grains raised by *penda* cultivation. Strictly speaking, it applies only to *kutki*, *Panicum miliaceum*, which the Marias and Murias call *kohala*, to which they also give the same wider meaning as *kosra*. The early sown grains are called generically 'small *kosra*', and those most sown are *Panicum frumentaceum*, known as *sawa* or *ghatia* or, to the Hill Marias, as *amu*, and *Panicum miliare*, known as *sika* or *chikma*, which seems also to be the grain known to the Hill Marias as *turya-kohala*; others sown are *kodon* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) and *hikka*, a Hill Maria word which I have not been able to identify; the Bison-horn Marias, and, to a much smaller extent, some Hill Marias, also sow much *karuna* or light mountain rice. All these are sown generally without any pulses, but cucumbers, marrows and gourds are sown early near the field-houses. *Panicum frumentaceum* and *Panicum miliare* ripen generally in time for their New Eating festivals to take place at the end of Hagh (July-August); the mountain rice and other early grains are reaped a little later, at the beginning of Eranj (August-September).

Crops

The second main sowing is of the later crops known collectively as 'big *kosra*', chief of which is the true *kosra* or *kutki* (*Panicum miliaceum*), with which will be met *kodon*, *kang* (*Setaria italica*) and *bajra* (*Penicillaria spicata*). These are sown in Ha'i (June-July), to be harvested in Pa (November-December). No attempt is made to keep the different crops separate, and the confusion is made worse by broadcasting with them seeds of various pulses, especially *urad* (*Phaseolus radictus*; Maria, *pupal*), *arhar* (*Cajanus indicus*), and *sem* (*Dolichos lablab*; Maria, *jata*).

The third sowing is the '*Os kosra*' sowing of a second crop in August-September on the land from which the 'small *kosra*' harvest has already been reaped. About a quarter of this is sown with '*os kosra*' millets, the remaining three-quarters being devoted to pulses, including not only varieties of the 'big *kosra*' pulses, but also *mung* (*Phaseolus mungo*) and *kulthi* (both *Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*). This crop is harvested in Pusi (December-January).

241 834 513 The rains bring out a plentiful crop of shoots from the stumps of the trees felled for the *penda*, and before these get too big a day is appointed for all the villagers to cut and get rid of them. As soon as the ears form on the growing crops it is taboo for the men to have sexual intercourse or to sleep in the village. This taboo remains in force until the final combined New Urad and Koqsar festival, when it is held at the end of Pusi

After sowing

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyeq-gaita* obtains the permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman sweeps out her house, and the *kasyeq-gaita* goes to each house and collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan, or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought from Jaṛgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots kept at his *pen-ravar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana* before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially where the *udam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XI

The Annual Religious Ceremonies of the Bison-horn Marias

796 In Chapter VII, on Maria agriculture, which was treated chiefly from the point of view of Hill Maria agriculture as being far less advanced than Bison-horn Maria agriculture, the Hill Maria festivals and ceremonies were described. The Bison-horn Marias have many more ceremonies and a much more elaborate ceremonial, and though these are as closely connected with the agricultural calendar of the year as those of the Hill Marias, they are best described here in a separate chapter than in Chapter VII where a description of them would have wrecked the balance of the description of agriculture.

It would, from the agricultural point of view, perhaps be logical to start the account of the *pandum* festivals and *weta* ceremonial hunts from the Kare Pandum of Magh month, held early in February, because until it has taken place it is *melo* or taboo to cut timber for *erka* and *parka* cultivation; in another sense, however, it is one of the last festivals of the year, for its holding also signalizes the lifting of the taboo against the reaping of the forest grass crop and of bamboos, and it follows soon after the Jata Pandum at which new *urad*, beans and pulses are eaten for the first time. The Bhimul Pandum that comes next, in the middle of February, is also designed to secure satisfactory rain for the coming year, but is not described first because it makes the account of all the *pandum* clearer and briefer to begin with those on which there is the fullest information. The Irpu or Idu Pandum, or *mahua* flowers first-fruits ceremony, which is held soon after the Bhimul Pandum, is therefore taken as the first ceremony of the year. In some parts it is combined with the Marka Pandum, the mango first-fruits ceremony; but, at all events to the south of the Bison-horn country, it is quite separate and more important, as the *mahua* tree plays a more important part than the mango in not only the economic but also the religious life of the people. The *perma* of the village fixes the day, which is always a Friday in the bright half of the month, in consultation with the headman (*pedā*) and elders about a week beforehand. On the night before the ceremony all the men observe sexual continence,[1] and in the morning assemble at the *mahua* tree in the *perma's*

The Irpu Pandum

B34

[1] Sexual continence is the rule on the night before every *pandum*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinia argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwarin or Forest-maidens, and on each

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

them up and distributes them. The pig, cooked with rice, is next apportioned among all present and eaten.

Meanwhile some boil the rice brought by each villager, and the carcasses of the animals killed in the afternoon ritual hunt are skinned, cut up and roasted, after the head and the legs below the knees and hocks have been cut off, taken to the hut-temple of Mata and tied with ropes to wooden roof-posts in front of the goddess. The *perma* and all the men, when the meat is cooked, drink liquor and eat the meat; by that time, however, many have had enough, and carry off their share to their houses to eat later.

Women take no part in this feast and may not be present, except that they are expected to meet the successful huntsmen on their return and dance and sing in front of the bodies of the animals killed in the hunt as they are taken to the *kadri-bera*.

When the eating is over, the *perma* takes up his own packet of blood-stained seed, and hands each man his packet. They take them off to their houses, and place them carefully on the storage platform inside the *wijjalon* room of their houses.

By this time it is daylight, and they must all start out on another ritual hunt after the usual preliminary offerings to the Forest-maidens and omen-taking. If any animal is slain, the usual portions are then and there offered to the Forest-maidens on *saja* leaves in the forest, and at the end of the hunt the bodies are brought back, greeted as before by dancing women, and taken, not to the *kadri-bera*, but to a shed prepared in the village for that purpose. Sexual intercourse is no longer taboo, and the dancing that follows ends in the men getting their own back for the abuses with which the women drove them out to the hunt.

The next day they cut up the carcasses left in the shed overnight, and divide the meat; first the head, intestines and the legs below the knees and hocks are set on one side; then the man who killed the animal in the hunt is given the rest of the off hind leg and sometimes some meat from each side of the backbone, the *peda* (not in all villages), the saddle, and the *waddai*, if any, or the *kanal-gaita*[1] (again in some villages only), the liver; and lastly the balance is divided among all the men, including those who have already received privileged portions. Each takes off the meat to his own house, for the *Hara Tindana* remains-eating feast for his women, and brother-clan and wife-clan relatives. But before they start this feast, one of the villagers on behalf of the village takes a cock and an egg to the priest of Mata's hut-temple. The priest sacrifices them to her, and in return restores the heads and legs tied up in the temple after the first ritual hunt. The villager brings them back

[1] Priest of the Departed, alias *pitar-gaita*. See p. 217 below.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [804] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *kanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *kanal*. The *kanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *kanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common 776 use of the expression *pen-kanal* has already been mentioned. As 614 the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *urakal* be the last thing that an individual *kanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only 775 around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Penda is not common among the Muria; it is practised only by those living in the hilly country near the Raughat and in the Abujhmar foothills of the south. *Dippa* and *parka* are the special Muria methods. They are, of course, transitional forms of cultivation from the very primitive *penda* to ordinary plough-agriculture, for they require the use of cattle.

In a *dippa* clearing the trees and bushes are cut in February after the Kare Pandum, when Tallur Muttai is offered a hollow bamboo split down the middle, before which cutting is taboo. The wood is spread over the clearing and left to dry. For *parka*, the wood is cut elsewhere and carried to the field in a shouldered carrying-pole called *asur* or *bhārni*; it is thrown onto the ground and spread fairly evenly across the field.

FIG. 1. Kunj digging-stick of iron. *Length 1' 7"*

Before cutting the first *parka*, the Kaser-Gaita spends the night with all the men of the village in the ghotul to ensure that none of them approach their wives who, as menstruating creatures, are always potentially dangerous. He himself cooks and eats apart. In the morning they go to the village shrine and offer sacrifice to all the deities connected with the village, especially remembering Mother Earth and the Departed, saying, 'Let the harvest be good, and let no ill befall us'.

The Gaita then cooks the head of the goat or pig that was sacrificed before the shrine, and small portions are distributed. He sends the chelik to cut the wood. As they first swing their axes they cry *Kiddari pude*—referring to the genitals of the well-omened kiddari bird. The villagers bring burnt rice, soot from the bottom of their cooking-pots, water and gourds. When the wood has been cut the Gaita says, 'Give the chelik some food', and the villagers smear the boys' faces with soot and force a little burnt rice into their mouths.

All are now free to cut the wood for their fields. From this point we may treat the two types of cultivation together. Indeed *dippa* often shades off into *parka*, for where there are not enough trees in a *dippa* clearing, a supplementary supply has to be cut elsewhere and brought as for *parka*.

In some villages there is a ceremonial burning of a small patch of *parka* at the time of the Wijja Pandum; I describe this in detail in Chapter XXIV. In other places, the ritual of the first firing is done at the time just before the rains. The Kaser-Gaita sleeps as usual in the ghotul and then goes with the chelik to his own field. He offers liquor to the local gods, and starts the burning with a smouldering bit of paddy rope taken from the ghotul fire.[1] The other villagers cope and all light their own fires from this.

To spread the ashes evenly over the field, the Muria use a long rake called the *harlat* or *balla* (*dhonna* in Halbi). This is simply a very long pole with a board attached to the end. It is, in Muria riddle, 'the snake that wriggles all over the field'. They wear *harpunj* sandals of sambhar hide or wooden shoes called *katuak* to protect their feet from the hot ground, none the less bearable for the burning sun at the hottest time of the year. The urine turns dark and burns and for a few days the whole tribe endures a sort of urethritis. 'The town people suffer for sex, but we for our field-work', as a man at Phulpar explained.

[1] The Juang keep a fire burning night and day in their *mandapa* dormitory, and annually ignite their clearings from it.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When you saw me and knew that your heart was not captured, why did you ruin me? What am I to do now? Tell me. Where am I to go?'

Inside the ghotul sexual anaesthesia is known, but it is uncommon and is regarded as a sort of deviation. I have met a few Muria who have never been to the ghotul or who have never shared its sexual activities. Dhansingh Pandu of Palki is a man of some forty years and still unmarried. He has never been to a ghotul. His father used to say to him, 'These boys talk in front of their sisters as if they were their lovers. You don't know what gods there are in the ghotul; many gods live there; you might unwittingly offend one of them and be destroyed. No one knows what people may have in their hearts when all sleep together.' But it was not only his father's exaggerated fears of the supernatural that stopped Dhansingh from attending the ghotul; he himself had no desire to go. But now he regrets it. 'I am a very lonely man', he told me. 'I might now be happily married. But at that time I was very poor and I had no passion.' The real reason for his abstinence seems to have been a dread that he would be forced into sexual intercourse for which he had neither power nor inclination.

Another Muria who has never been a chelik is Hagru of Masora. In his youth he lived in the Hindu potters' quarter of Kondagaon town where there was, of course, no ghotul. 'I used to feel very lonely when I heard how happy the other boys were, but what could I do?'

Early marriage sometimes brings ghotul life to a premature close. In Malakot, I found the people arranging their children's marriages as early as possible 'to prevent copulation in the ghotul'. Old Sukali of Masora was married so young that 'she never even learnt to sing a Relo'. But child-marriage is not common and young married girls are generally allowed to attend the ghotul till puberty or until they are sent to live with their husbands.

Although the Muria insist on abstinence from sexual congress before the ceremonial hunts and require their priests to remain celibate on various occasions, the rule does not seem to be due to any special regard for celibacy as such or belief in its power; it is rather connected with the dread of the menstruous woman. On the eve of a festival all the males of a village must sleep in the ghotul—which for that night is cleared of motiari—to ensure that none of their wives or other relatives will infect them with the defilement of a catamenial period that might begin during the night. So too the very strict rules governing a young Gaita's relations with women in the Chota Dongar Pargana appear to be based mainly on a desire to isolate him from the dreaded menstrual contact.

Celibacy is not admired, and it is dangerous to be unmarried, for a man or woman who dies in this condition lives for ever restless and frustrated, and a nuisance to the friends he has left behind on earth. It should be noted that it is marriage and not sexual experience that is important. The Hindu sadhu is rarely respected, though he may be feared for his supposed supernatural powers. The state of *sannyās* is everywhere associated in the aboriginals' mind with idleness and beggary rather than with chastity. In Alor the chelik spoke very scornfully of celibacy: 'It is a way of life for loafers.' And of boys and girls who stand aside from the main life of the ghotul, they say 'they will get children directly they begin'. 'There may be one in a thousand girls who tries to keep her water, but she will get a child in her *haldi-dhoti*', while her clothes are still stained with the marriage turmeric. It is dangerous to store up power, for when it is released it may prove too potent.

In order to enforce this attitude, the chelik tell a number of stories illustrating the danger of breaking the ghotul tradition. One such tale, from

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

833 partner; but here, so far from being thought improper, it is not unknown for a girl to attract a chicken-hearted chelik in this way.

Woman is indeed regarded as insatiable. 'Woman is earth; man cannot plough her.' The proverb means that as a single plough cannot break up the universal earth, so no man can really satisfy a woman. Here we have the opposite view to that commonly held in Europe, that sex is the man's privilege and the woman's duty; in aboriginal India, sex is the man's duty and the woman's right. It is her compensation for the embarrassments of menstruation and the pains of child-bearing. She has no more powerful means of dominating and subjugating the male.

It is difficult to say what a Muria regards as the normal frequency of intercourse. Among adults it is often said that a Muria woman insists on a daily connexion until the first child is born; after that twice a week is enough.' A wife is very passionate until she gets a child, but then the child takes her passion and her strength away.' Yet when a husband is more ardent it gives great satisfaction to his partner. 'If he goes to her three times during the night she beams with happiness and tells her friends, "I saw no sleep tonight. He gave it all to me. His life was in me all night".'

[595] This tradition imposes a great strain on the polygamous husband and may explain why multiple marriage is so rare. A former Chalki of Bayanar had two wives. 'We never quarrelled so long as I went daily to both. I didn't mind for I was strong enough. After all, it is only your land, and every man tills as much as he can. All you need is a pair of strong bullocks and a plough.'

833 A childless couple are often driven to excess in a vain attempt to stir the mysterious forces that cause conception. A Daroga of More Berma told me,
842 'My penis has been worn out by seven years' hard work, just as a bit of cloth is torn to bits after months of heavy wear, but still I cannot get a child'. And a man at Alor said, 'You may work night and day, but unless God fills the womb with hair, it is all of no avail'.

X883 In the ghotul sexual practice varies. In places where there has recently been a pregnancy, the leaders insist on restraint as a contraceptive measure,
833 and sometimes demand that their permission be taken before indulgence. But this is emergency legislation, and the ghotul soon slips back into freer ways. In the stricter ghotul, the chelik and motiari do not have congress more than two or three times a week. At Esalnar, they claimed that they did not exceed once a week—for here they were much concerned to prevent conception.

But elsewhere I have heard the chelik laugh at such moderation. 'The penis is the *datun* (toilet-twig) of the vagina and should clean it every day.' In Binjhli, where chelik and motiari only sleep together once a week, on Fridays, they said that they had intercourse outside the ghotul every day, and at least three times on Fridays.

In most ghotul, the motiari expects her chelik to approach her sexually every day. 'If the boy does nothing, then the following evening when she is combing his hair she says, "Was it a day or a night yesterday? You forgot it was night. Why were you lying beside me like a corpse?" The boy feels very ashamed and says that he had a bad head or was very tired after working in the fields. "But I'll tire you out tonight", he says.'

'A night without intercourse', said a motiari at Chandabera, 'seems twelve years long.'

● 834 The Muria tradition, which is always wise and sane in sexual matters, interrupts the routine with many holidays. The regular monthly rest during the catamenial period of wife or motiari is a boon alike to husband and chelik. During pregnancy and after it there is a fairly long period of abstinence. During

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

pregnancy, intercourse should cease after the fifth month: there is unanimous testimony on this point. After childbirth—so many Muria claim—a husband does not approach his wife for one, or even two, years. 'He must not go to her till the child is weaned.' This may possibly be true of a few villages under strong Hill Maria influence, but even there it seems to me doubtful. There is certainly a desire, however, to space confinements properly and 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain'. But the ground dries long before this.

Elsewhere I have heard it said that 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'—an important point, in that it places the responsibility for resuming intercourse on the woman. In Alor, the Muria said that a period of six months was sufficient, in Chandabera that intercourse was resumed when the child first smiled. In Chameli the villagers spoke of a case where a child had died because the mother gave birth to another during the lactation period of the first. 'The child drank the milk of blood.'

These 'holidays' serve a valuable psychological as well as a physiological purpose. In the ghotul, where their close and constant contact might easily make chelik and motiari utterly weary of one another, life is frequently broken up. For months the chelik go to watch in the fields, and the motiari are alone in the ghotul. The menstruating girl is not only sexually taboo; she does not come to the ghotul at all—and is all the more welcome when she reappears. The arrangement that chelik and motiari should go on separate dancing expeditions is psychologically sound, as is proved by the enthusiastic welcome they receive on their return.

VIII. Love-charms

In an atmosphere like that of the ghotul, where frustration and sexual anxiety are comparatively rare, the use of love-charms is less common than among other aboriginal people. But the Muria are acquainted with such charms and sometimes use them, though the results may not always be permanent. 'If I get a girl in this way,' said a Muria at Remawand, 'my store of rice grows less, for such a union is not a yoking of Mahapurub's house. The true yoking comes of its own accord.' It is said that 'girls won by magic run by deceit'.

The charms are generally based on simple principles of sympathetic magic. For example, at Alor the Gaita said that the way to win a reluctant lover was to pursue a pair of sarus cranes. These cranes, as is well known, always go about in pairs, and it is said that if one of them dies its mate will quickly follow suit.

> When the cranes fly up into the air one or two feathers may fall. One of these must be caught before it reaches the ground. Then offer it liquor and a black chicken, burn it, tie the ashes in a little bundle to your waist and somehow or other touch the girl with it. Then you will love each other like a pair of cranes. But this is a dangerous charm for as the two cranes always die together so if the girl dies you will die too.

Another curious charm comes from Gorma.

> When you go to relieve yourself, wait till a pig comes along to eat your excreta. Leaving your cloth undone, jump on the pig and pull out a little hair from the back of its neck or forehead. Tie the hair in your cloth and do yourself up. Wait till a Sunday, and then push the

MORAL STANDARDS IN THE GHOTUL

In Kuntpadar, the people stressed the virtue of a democratic outlook, the estimating of everyone as equal to yourself. In Metawand, they thought more of generosity. To help a man in need and be kind to those who come to you in trouble is the sign of a good man. Courage is also admired, but not specially so. Yet it is said of Kurwal Kumoti of Palki that 'where the English only venture into the jungle armed with guns and protected by many people, he goes anywhere without a weapon and has no fear of bears or tigers'.

Is sexual morality in our Western sense an ingredient of the good man's character? When I have raised this point in conversation, the reply has always referred to forbidden relations. 'The greatest sin'—this is the view of Lakmu of Masora—'is to have something to do with your younger brother's wife. Or for a girl to have intercourse with a Ganda.' Elsewhere, in several villages, I was told how serious it was to break the laws of exogamy, to have intercourse with a forbidden relation and to commit adultery. In Masora, when I asked if they thought it wrong for the unmarried to have intercourse with each other, for a long time they could not understand the question. When they did, they answered, 'Only if he sleeps with the same girl too often: he must change'.

Here then we have a general picture of the moral qualities that are considered desirable and the vices that are deplored. Let us now come nearer to the ghotul. 'In the ghotul no sin can be committed.' This is not strictly true, but it is sufficiently true to explain the wonderful innocence and simplicity of the chelik and motiari. There is no sin in sex, provided—as I have said before—sexual relations are enjoyed with the right people, at the right time, in the right place and in the right way.

Chelik and motiari must choose the right partner. They must strictly avoid the inner circle of forbidden relatives. Intercourse within the clan is forbidden, but is not regarded as very serious so long as no one knows about it and it does not result in pregnancy. In the *jodidār* ghotul, chelik and motiari must be faithful to one another; in the other, they must avoid too great attachments to special individuals. It is practically unknown for a motiari to have an affair with someone outside the tribe. One of the first lessons taught to a young girl in the ghotul is that she must avoid Ghasia, Ganda, Mahara and Lohar. It is probably safe to say that no European has ever had anything to do with a Muria girl, and I am told by State officials that in the old days when, in the more 'advanced' areas round Jagdalpur, it was the custom for the village headman to bring women for touring subordinates, this was never done in the ghotul villages of the north. I am told that chaprasis, forest guards and constables, who are sometimes such a menace to rural virtue, are never able to seduce the motiari of the ghotul, where the village dormitory remains to protect tribal honour. This opinion is confirmed by the fact that venereal disease is almost unknown among the Muria. In fact, the Chief Medical Officer of the State, Dr W. P. S. Mitchell, has told me that in thirty years' service he had never seen a straight case of venereal disease among the Bastar aboriginals.

The rules governing the sexual life of the ghotul are strict and appear to be generally observed. Breaches of the rules are sufficiently rare to be talked of for many years and to be severely punished.

But sexual intercourse must not only be with the right people: it must be at the right time. It is tabooed before the greater festivals, before a hunting expedition, during the Pus Kolang dance and, most important of all, during a girl's menstrual period.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

It is also tabooed in certain places. Intercourse should occur within the ghotul walls, within the supernatural fence that protects from evil. It is often considered wrong, however, for a boy to have intercourse in the presence of a relation whom he is supposed to avoid. In the ghotul where they 'pair off', for example, an elder brother should not have intercourse in the presence of his younger brother's motiari. He should do it in one of the other huts. It would also be very wrong indeed, and be likely to attract tigers to the village, for a chelik and motiari to sleep together on the platform from which the boys watch the ripening crops. Moreover one must always be careful to choose a place which is not haunted by a god or ghost. In Kajen the boys and girls of the ghotul go every year at the Pupal Pandum sacrifice to what is now known as the Chelik-tarni Dongar. Long ago they went there to practise the Cherta and camped beneath a great rock. One of the chelik took a motiari apart and had intercourse with her. They knew it was dangerous, for they immediately offered a small sacrifice to the demon of the hill. When they rejoined the party, an orphan boy (whom the others were treating unkindly by refusing to let him join them) cried, 'You take care, the rock will fall on you'. They laughed saying, 'What does he know?' 'Then one rock spoke to another rock, "These children have done wrong; let us fall upon them". The orphan boy climbed on one of the rocks and sat on the top. Suddenly it fell and covered all those chelik and motiari.' When the people came, called by the orphan boy, they found nothing but a banyan tree already growing from the foot of a motiari which was sticking out of the debris.

Lastly, sexual relationships must be conducted in the proper manner. 'When there is consent and love there is never sin.' But it is considered very wrong to force a girl to the act against her will. Such cases of ghotul-rape are not common. It must be remembered that for a motiari to sleep with a boy does not mean that she is prepared to have sexual intercourse with him. The younger girls sleep for years in the arms of boys with nothing more than a little erotic play. Only after the mesarche do they begin to have regular sexual congress. If then a boy forces a girl against her will, and the others hear of it, he is fined.

Sexual deviations are almost unknown. Bestiality is regarded as a crime of civilization, unworthy of a Muria. The devious course of modern European sexuality would seem horrible to so straightforwardly heterosexual a tribe. Homosexuality, which Stekel has called 'the insoluble problem of modern civilized man'[1] is no problem to the uncivilized Muria. 'Jealousy and homosexuality are the two primary causes of the disorder of our passions',[2] says this same scientific observer of the European scene. Will not even the reformer admit the advantage of a tribe which is so largely free from these two evils?

So long as sexual relations do not overstep these boundaries of good taste and morals, there is nothing wrong in them. Sex is a good thing, healthy, beautiful, interesting, the crown and climax of love. Love indeed is meaningless, inconceivable without it. It is right and good for a chelik to love his motiari and to lie with her. Such is the simple Muria philosophy.

This accounts for the delightful freedom from self-consciousness that is one of the most remarkable things about ghotul life. When after a visit to the Kongera ghotul, Walter Kaufmann exclaimed 'This is the cleanest place I've ever been in' I think he meant that. There is no sniggering, there is nothing cheap or nasty, there is nothing furtive about the relations of these

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy' in Forbush, *op. cit.*, p. 361. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 366.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

bhai, the Hindi word for all brothers; in both cases, of course, 601
'brother' is not used in our narrow sense, but includes paternal cousins of the same generation in any degree. The son of any father related to me as my *pepi* or father's elder brother counts as my *dada* or elder brother, and the son of any father related to me as my *kaka* or father's younger brother counts as my *tamo* or younger brother. *Akomama*, the word used to designate affine or wife-clans, is a combination of *ako* and *mama*; the Hill Marias call their mother's father *ako*, and a man uses the same term for both his daughter's son and his daughter's daughter, who, of course, would be his affines and not his kindred; a Hill Maria man applies the term *mama* not only in the ordinary Hindi way to his mother's brother (or parallel cousin), but also to his wife's father and to her brother's son.

In theory, therefore, marriage is permissible between a man 582
and any woman of any wife-clan, with, however, certain definite 607
exceptions. The chief of these is the strict rule prohibiting a man marrying his wife's elder sister, which is stressed at Bison-horn marriages by the bridegroom putting the ring which he gives her in a cloth which she holds out, and not on her finger, as he does with the ring he gives to his wife's younger sister, and by the elder sister when she receives the ring in her cloth telling the bridegroom that thenceforth he must neither touch her nor utter her name. A man may not marry his mother-in-law or her co-widow or any woman related to them as a 'sister',[1] or any of his aunts[1] or nieces,[1] even though of an *akomama* or wife-clan. In theory, there is nothing to prevent him marrying his daughter's daughter, a young widow of his father's father, his father's mother's sister or his mother's father's sister; in practice, however, disparity of age usually rules out such unions, and in all the villages in which I have investigated Hill and Bison-horn Maria marriages I have never come across an actual example of any of them; I found one case, however, in which a man had married his elder brother's daughter's daughter. Lastly, just as a man may not touch or marry his wife's elder sister, so a widow may not marry her dead husband's [587] elder brother, though she can, and frequently does, marry his younger brother.

Offences against the rules of exogamy occur, but very rarely 684
among the Hill Marias, and only slightly less rarely among the Bison-horn. A youth of the Gunse hill clan at Toinar was accused in 1929 of 835

[1] Using 'aunt' and 'niece' like 'brother' in the extended sense, to cover not only actual aunts and nieces, but also female cousins once removed. 'Sister' similarly includes paternal female cousins of the same generation in any degree.

W. Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

684
835

illicit intercourse with a young widow who had been born a Gume, and had a child by her dead husband. This was regarded as incest. The youth was put to the ordeal of plunging his hand into boiling cow-dung and water, and as he was very severely scalded the couple were adjudged guilty. The youth was ultimately received back into the community after a penal feast to the clan, and has since married legitimately; but the widow and her child were driven out of the *pargana*, and in 1934 were said to be living in a village some forty miles away near the Chanda border of Kutru. This was the only definite example of a breach of the rules of exogamy among Hill Marias that came to my notice. In Padalbhum and Tapalibhum *parganas*, however, there were said to have been one or two cases within memory in which both the man and the woman had been received back into the clan after recovery of heavy penalties from them and their parents and after they had sworn to separate and never repeat the offence. It was stated that a child born of such an incestuous union would never be admitted to social or religious ceremonies, or given a wife. Among the Bison-horn Marias connexions between men and women of the same clan appear never to occur, but cases are by no means unknown of affairs between men and women of the same phratry, and it was stated that these are regularized by a visit to the clan-god of the man, with the child, if any, of the union, and by the payment of a heavy fine. I had to try the son of a *waddai* clan-priest who had killed his father because the latter, after first seducing the wife of the accused's younger brother, had raped the accused's wife and driven both his sons out of the house. In this case the two women were not of the same phratry as their father-in-law, and he could have married them had they not been married to his sons. Tribal feeling against the dead man was extremely bitter, and, though it was recognized that the son was justified in slaying his father, this alone was not sufficient to purify the two sons from the guilt of their father's incest; a heavy fine was imposed on them, to collect which took them three years, though in the meantime the elder son was allowed to succeed his father as clan-priest and to officiate as such, and both were admitted to the *pandum* and other feasts. In two other murder cases there was a remarkable hostility displayed by witnesses towards husbands, in one case the accused and in the other the brother of the murdered man, whose wives were suspected of incestuous love affairs; but it was not possible to ascertain exactly what had happened. The general idea seems to be that such incest will bring upon the community the special wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, in the form of visitations of man-eating or cattle-lifting tigers, or famine or pestilence.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

614 menhirs erected. This belief in the clan-*bhum*, whether original or adopted as a result of immigration and settlement, is still sufficiently alive to excite serious quarrels. It was a dispute over the rights to a clan-*bhum* that began the deadly feud between the sorcerer Singlu and the people of Almer.[1] Most of the inhabitants of Almer belong to the Kaudo clan (which has its *pen-ravar* at Kharkagaon) and they consider that the place is Kaudo-*bhum* since they first settled there. But Singlu is a Karanga. One day he said to the Kaudo priest, 'Let me erect memorial stones in your village; then my ancestors will live here and will help me and my family'. But the priest pointed out that the headquarters of the Karanga clan was at Kokori. 'If you bring your ancestors to this village, our gods will be neglected,' he said and refused to give him any *bhum*.

There was a similar conflict at Bandopal. The *bhum* here also belongs to the Kaudo clan which has erected a number of menhirs. Members of the Gaude clan, which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kaudo, demanded a share of the *bhum*, probably because it was more convenient for them than to go to Kharkagaon. After many quarrels and a long dispute, the Kaudo people agreed to let the Gaude clan erect its menhirs within their *bhum* territory, and they even made a Gaude Gaita assistant to the chief Kaudo Bhum-Gaita (priest of the soil). But many of the Kaudo clansmen objected to this and stopped erecting menhirs at Bandopal, going instead to Kharkagaon (where indeed they ought always to have gone). In the end the Gaude people decided to give up erecting menhirs at all because of the expense, and gave back the land to the Kaudo clan.

615 The clans fall roughly into five phratries, which are generally called by the Hindi word for 'race', *vans*. There is the Nagvans or Serpent Race, which includes a number of brother-clans, most of which have the cobra as their totem and cannot marry among themselves; the Kachhimvans or the Tortoise Race, the Bakravans or the Goat Race, the Baghvans or the Tiger Race and the Bodminkvans or the Fish Race.

All the clans within one phratry are *dādābhai*, or brothers, to one another, and all the members of each clan are *dādābhai* to each other. The word used to describe the relation of a clan into which you can marry your daughter is *akomāma*, a combination of the words *ako*, which means a man's mother's father, daughter's son and daughter's daughter (all of whom will belong to a different clan in a different phratry) and *māma*, which means a man's mother's brother, his father-in-law and his wife's brother's son (who will again, of course, be members of different clans).

[582 A chelik or motiari, therefore, who is seeking either amorous adventure
● 835] or permanent domestic relationship, has to turn to members of the *akomāma* clans. Fortunately, owing to the wide distribution of the population, there are nearly always members of such clans in one's own ghotul or near at hand.

614 Before going on to describe the origin of the clans and the special rules that govern them, I will give in tabulated form a list of clans with their totems. It is not worth while adding to this an account of the *bhum* territory as this is too scattered and disorganized; the same is true of the clan-gods and *pen-ravar*.

[615] It will be noticed that in addition to the phratry totem each clan has its own totem which is sometimes different. The Sori clan has three different totems.

[1] See p. 204.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

582 fullest freedom to joke and even to intrigue; with yet others marriage is almost obligatory.

A boy obviously cannot marry relatives of the inner circle or any of his classificatory 'aunts' or 'nieces'. He is strictly forbidden to marry his wife's elder sister, his mother-in-law, his younger brother's wife or widow and any other woman in a parallel relation to them. There is no objection to his marrying his grandmother or granddaughter even when they are in the direct line of relationship. A few cases are known of men marrying their great-aunts or grand-nieces.

As we shall see presently, the great majority of Muria marriages are of the cross-cousin type and are celebrated between a boy and his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter, or with girls in the same classificatory relationship to him as these.

Throughout India certain relations are regarded as standing in a privileged position to each other. They have licence to laugh and joke with each other, generally in a rather vulgar manner, and in some cases sexual relations between them are not very severely condemned.

605 The Muria have their own system of joking relationships. As a result of the common cross-cousin marriages, a chelik has special licence to joke and flirt with his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter (both *manāri* in Gondi). A motiari can be equally free with her father's sister's son or her mother's brother's son (both *manriyo* in Gondi). This freedom, however, only lasts so long as they are not engaged to be married. Should such an arrangement be made the joking relationship changes into one of avoidance, for a girl must never have anything to do with her betrothed.

[835] So long as these cousins are not engaged, however, they have many jokes together. A boy is at liberty to catch hold of the girl's breasts and he may have intercourse with her. If he sees her going to the river to wash her clothes at the end of her catamenial period, he is free to shout to her, 'Are you off to polish it and take off the rust? What are your plans for tonight?' Or again 'How long was the bank of the lake broken?' The girl in turn often teases her boy-cousin by accusing him of having relations with his own sister: 'I saw you with her; you'll have to pay a fine, or if you don't you'll have to marry her'.

604 An uncle stands in a joking relationship to all his nieces except the daughters of his own sister. For example, a man and his uncle's daughter's daughter are in this relationship.

607 As elsewhere in India, a woman and her husband's younger brothers or a man and his wife's younger sisters are specially privileged. So are grand-
603 mother and grandson or grandfather and granddaughter. A boy may say to his grandmother, 'Once you are dead I will eat beef in your honour; I will go dancing in front of you with a drum; why don't you die quickly so that I can get a good feast?' And she replies, 'If I die you will have to spend a lot of money, you will have to get rice, you will have to bring several tins of liquor, so what good will it be?' A grandfather always flirts and jokes with his granddaughter. Sometimes he says to her husband, 'How dare you sleep with my wife? You will have to give me the bride-price for her', and so on.

607 The connexion between a man (*dewar*) and his elder brother's wife (*anga*) is the central theme of the Lingo legend. This kinship is more than a mere joking relation; it is often one of deep romance. A Ghotul Pata illustrates the kind of humour that passes between them.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in any case to live much longer, come forward for the work, they set them to make the frames. When they are ready they put an egg on each Anga and make the old men sit 'to hatch them'. They have to sit there until their *jiwa* (souls) pass from their bodies into the gods. They know when this happens because the Anga begin to shake and tremble of their own accord. Directly this happens, the members of both clans bring a cow or bull and sacrifice it. The old men climb down from their perches and the Gaita breaks the eggs before the gods.

Both Anga now start swinging and are carried on the shoulders of four Siraha-mediums. After the usual dance they are placed in their shrines.

But the two old men who made them, and whose souls have passed into their frames, die within a few days.

It is obvious, therefore, that it is highly dangerous to make an Anga. In Korenda at the present time the process of god-making has been delayed, although long overdue; for there is no old Partabi or Wadde willing to take the risk. It is generally said that such men will die within a year; if they do not they are regarded as exceptionally lucky. But their life thereafter is blind and shrunken, miserable to themselves and a heavy charge on their relations. Thus in Kabonga, Malsai made a new Anga and lived for four years before he died. But it is said that for the last three years of his life, he was a senile and helpless figure, longing for the death that was denied him.[1]

Repairs to the Anga, which are made every twelve or fifteen years, are less dangerous, but they too should only be undertaken by old men.

The Anga has various functions. Its primary function, of course, is that of god of the clan, keeping its scattered members together and attracting them to its worship. It is honoured at the great clan festivals held once a year in the *pen-rawar* and it may also be taken out to visit the shrines of related clan-gods. At a big clan-festival and at the great Mandai commercial festivals at Jagdalpur, Dantewara, Kondagaon and elsewhere sometimes a dozen or more of these Anga may be present. The procedure is generally the same. The Anga is worshipped with various offerings; it is taken down to the river and immersed in water, it is then anointed with oil and carried on the shoulders of its bearers; it is 'exercised' by dancing and playing with the other gods. At these festivals I have often watched the Anga attended by a dozen lesser gods, a crowd of drummers and gong-beaters and a vast company of boys and girls, men and women, going round and round the sacred clearing in procession. This is the Pen Karsita or Sport of the Gods.

Incest within the clan is regarded as specially insulting to the Anga and before the guilty can be forgiven offerings must be made to it. If they do not do this the offenders' bodies will swell and their eyes burst. They will be buried apart from the other members of the family or clan, and their children will be given to the despised Lohar in marriage.

As god of the clan the Anga is specially interested in marriages, and in many villages the Muria place one of the marriage crowns upon it or in its shrine. Often too it is concerned in death ceremonies. The memorial menhirs of

[1] An old report, by Captain MacPherson, on the Kond refers to one of their destructive deities. 'It is firmly believed that the tree under which the deity is placed must die; that the water in which he is laid must be dried up; that the priest in his service cannot expect to survive four years.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 20. When the Kiwai Papuans erect a man's house (*darimo*), an old couple perform the proper ceremonies and die soon after. 'There seems to be an understanding that the endowment of the house with its various magical properties has consumed their vitality.' —G. Landtman, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 22.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

'Men who are now middle-aged say that when they first entered the *morung* they were very severely disciplined, not to say bullied. They were, for instance, held over the fire and compelled to endure the heat without a cry. Or they were made to show their pluck by being sent alone on a dark night to fetch a bamboo from a certain clump. The boy sent was allowed no torch or weapon, and had to gnaw the bamboo through with his teeth or hack it off with a sharp stone. Or, again, a boy would be sent to leave a torch at some particular spot far away in the jungle and come back alone in the dark without a light. In the morning the older boys would go and see if the burnt remains of the torch were in the proper place. Nowadays boys have an easier time, but a considerable number of duties falls to their lot, and for the first three years a boy's life is very like that of a fag at an English Public School. Boys of the lowest class must keep a supply of torches in the *morung* for travellers passing through the village late in the evening; they have to massage the bigger boys' legs when they come in tired from the fields; they are responsible for the wood and water needed for cooking; they must make pipes and sharpen *daos* for their seniors. In fact, for three years they have to do what they are told, and do it quickly—a most excellent system.' [1]

VIII

Hitherto we have considered only the trivialities of ghotul discipline. The sexual relationships of chelik and motiari give rise to far more serious problems. I discuss the large question of ghotul pregnancies in a separate chapter: here we must consider how far life in the dormitories encourages breach of the clan-laws or leads to incest between near kin.

There are the strictest rules against clan-incest. Do they work? It is not easy to give an answer. That clan-incest is possibly not uncommon may be gathered from such sayings as 'When the door is shut there are no clans, we are only chelik and motiari'; 'Once the door is shut and the fire dies down, all relationships are levelled out'; 'Our tribal rules extend to the border of the sleeping-mat; we watch the youngsters as far as that; what happens inside that country no one knows'. It was the opinion of an educated Muria that the chief danger of the ghotul was that it promoted intimacy between members of the same clan and even exposed near relatives to unnecessary temptation.

It is impossible to say. Even if I filled pages with village gossip it would prove nothing. Only an exact statistical inquiry could answer the question whether the Muria chelik was prone to incest or no. And that could never be obtained. But certain things may be affirmed.

At first sight, considerable freedom appears to be allowed. A motiari may comb the hair of a boy of her own clan, and may massage him. Even a close relation like an 'own sister' may do this. In Kabonga the Muria said that girls and boys of the same clan might sleep together, but must not have sexual intercourse. At Kajen in 1940, all the boys and girls were of the Halami sept, except one girl who was a Kuhrami. Yet they went daily to the ghotul and slept together there. They denied that they had sexual intercourse. This may be true, but no reliance can ever be put on a denial in Bastar. In the Metawand ghotul I found the following pairs 'married' to each other—Partabi and Maravi, Wadder and Maravi, Maravi and Maravi, Maravi and Katlami, Maravi and Wadder, Maravi and Maravi, Kuhrami and Maravi. In Dongrigura, in 1940, nearly all the ghotul members were Sori, save one or two Naitami and Kuhrami. The Pahardar and Pahardarin were 'married':

[1] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, pp. 179f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

both were Sori. So were the Beldar and Beldarin, the Sirdar and Sirdarin and the Supedar and Supedarin. If members of the same sept could be 'married' to each other, the feeling against clan-incest *inside the ghotul* cannot be very strong. So long as the relation does not result in pregnancy it does not seem to matter greatly. No one knows except the chelik and motiari—and they never tell.

FIG. 113. Carved tobacco-box from Markabera
Height 2½"

But if there is a pregnancy it is a serious matter. In such a case, I was told at Kabonga, the members of the ghotul assemble and pass judgement. 'Look, brother, look, sister, you are both of the same clan; you are brother-sister to each other, yet you have done this evil. If the elders hear of it, we can give them no answer. We ourselves do not think it sin; it was the lust of youth, you were mad with love; but the elders will think it sin.' And they insist that the boy should bring an abortifacient. In Munjmeta when a Katlami boy fell in love with a girl of the Wadder clan—these are forbidden to one another—the ghotul members held a meeting and solemnly warned them that they would be fined if they continued to sleep together and that if the girl became pregnant it would be most serious for them both. But I heard that they took no notice.

The offence is usually condoned by a heavy fine, anything from six to twelve rupees to the panchayat and a calf or pig to the clan-god. But so long as the lovers are willing to separate, they are not barred from marrying in the usual

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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way, though not always with the full ceremonial. Indeed a girl should be married to the boy she is engaged to—if he will have her—as soon as possible. At Kibi Belanga, for example, a Maravi boy, the Panda of the ghotul, used to have intercourse with a Maravi girl, and she became pregnant. The matter became known to the elders of the village who fined him and married the girl quickly to a Naitami boy of Kidir village to whom she was engaged. The child was born three months after marriage and was accepted by the husband. A few years ago in Hathipakna there was a scandal when the Malko, 'a daughter of Naitami', was made pregnant by the Jamadar, also a Naitami. They attempted an abortion, without success, but after the boy's father had paid twelve rupees, the Malko was married, by the reduced ceremonies, to a boy at Sodma.

The kindly, gentle Muria makes things as easy as possible for the young. 'Even an elephant with four legs sometimes stumbles.' 'What can you do to one who has missed the road?' But if the girl refuses to leave her lover, the matter becomes very serious, and both are outcasted. In Metawand, I was told that such people were never re-admitted into the tribe, and after death only the chelik would touch their bodies and take them to the pyre. If a *kutuhal* was erected it would have to be apart from the others.

A few years ago, at Alor, a member of the Kuhrami clan eloped with a Kuhrami girl. They were condemned by the panchayat, but took no notice. For 'the mouth that desires its fill and the genitalia that are excited never listen to advice'. They are now living together at Hirri. No Muria will eat with them, and at festivals of the clan-god they get no share of the consecrated meat. If a son is born, he will be called Bhula Huwa, but he will not be regarded as outcaste. He will have all the tribal privileges denied his parents. 'For he was tied up in the bundle; he knew nothing of what was done.'

This rigorist attitude is not so much one of moral condemnation as due to a fear of the supernatural vengeance that may descend upon the whole clan. In some cases, the guilty pair are forgiven if they perform an elaborate ceremony and pay sufficient fines. For two years they have to wait. Then if the Gaita approves he takes them to a tank or stream. Near the bank they make a ring of stakes and build a little bamboo wall, covering it with grass and thatch, inside which the boy and girl are made to stand together. The grass is set on fire and as it blazes up they jump through the flames into the water. After bathing, they put on new clothes and throw the old ones into the water. They make suitable offerings to the gods and are henceforth free of their guilt.

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The general atmosphere of kindly tolerance probably accounts for the fact that so few tragedies have occurred. In the police records of the last ten years there are only two cases of suicide which arose out of clan-incest. The first was in January 1932. Chime and Kule of the Timri ghotul were of the same clan and in love with one another. The girl's parents married her to a boy called Jhola, from Supbeda, who had a wife already. She left him and it is said that she returned to the Timri ghotul and began to sleep there again. If this is true, it is remarkable in view of the normally strict taboo on married girls entering the ghotul. But all such rules are broken sometimes. After a time she was found to be pregnant but only after several months did the matter come to the ears of the village elders. When they questioned Chime about it, she took the hand of Kule and named him as the father of the unborn child. This was too much for him and on the night of 18 January, though he went to the ghotul as usual, when all were asleep he went quietly out and hanged himself.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

For months everyone must have known all about it. Before the girl's marriage Kule's breach of the clan laws was complete and open; it must constantly have been discussed in the ghotul, and the elders must have known of it. Yet until the day of the 'trial' it had never been openly proclaimed in the village that he had offended against the laws of the tribe. That was too much for him, he saw his girl lost to him, a life-long shame, and heavy penalties. So he killed himself.

FIG. 114. Carved tobacco-box from Metawand
Height 2¼"

There was another case in 1936 in Kerawahi when a chelik and motiari[1] who belonged to the same clan fell in love with one another. They often used to slip outside the ghotul at night and sleep together. After a time the girl found herself pregnant. When the matter became known, there was a great scandal and the elders announced that they would hold a panchayat. The boy was so ashamed and so afraid of paying the fine that was certain to be inflicted, that he hanged himself. The girl was afterwards married to another boy, but was punished—the people said—by excessive menorrhagia. She grew thinner and thinner, and after a year her husband left her and married someone else.

IX

I have heard of very few cases of incest between near relatives. In spite of all the joking, in spite also of the close proximity in which near relatives grow up together in the ghotul, I think that the rules are kept. On the rare occasions that they are broken, the act is regarded with severe censure. At Sahimunda a girl was made pregnant by her own *mâma*, her mother's brother. She publicly accused him and he was fined. In Adenga, a Muria kept his own father's junior wife. He was excommunicated and banned from all tribal privileges. He and the woman were not even allowed to get water from the usual place. I am told that he is never to be admitted into the tribe. In the same village the Gaita kept his mother's sister, and was excommunicated.

A tale of incest from Kapai is obviously satirical and hardly suggests approval of what was done.

> Long ago there lived an old man who married his son to a very lovely girl. When she came to his house the father at once fell in love with her. He sent his old wife and son to another village to get rice, and that evening he himself pretended to get high fever and lay groaning on his bed. The poor daughter-in-law came to him and said, 'What can I do for you?' He said, 'Ask the Departed in the granary what they want you to do'. She went to them and asked, 'What can I do for my

[1] According to the police report, the chelik was Leti, son of Dhanaji, and the motiari was Koli, daughter of Bidarsau. Leti was Koli's paternal uncle. I do not know their ghotul titles.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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father-in-law?' The old man crept out of bed and stood behind the wall. When the girl asked the question, he replied in a loud, strange voice, 'Your father-in-law is going to die; there is only one way to save him; lie with him and his fever will be cured'. At this the girl was frightened and said to the Departed, 'But the marriage haldi is still on my body, how can I do such wickedness? The marriage booth is yet green, how can I betray my husband?' But the old man replied, 'If you want your father-in-law to live, do as we say; the sin will not be yours, but that of the Dead'. Then the poor daughter-in-law went back to the old man and told him what the Departed had said, and he asked her what she thought of it. She said she was willing to do what they ordered and she lay with him. When all was over, she asked whether his fever had left him, and he told her that it had, and praised her devotion to the Departed.

279

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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Cross-cousin marriage

It has already been said (page 234) that a very high proportion of marriages are cross-cousin marriages, and that such unions formed 54 per cent. of the Hill Maria marriages into which I enquired. The proportion is not much less among the Bison-horn Marias. Such marriages are considered the most seemly, both because the family which has given a daughter to another family in marriage in one generation should have this obligation repaid by getting her daughter back as a wife for a son of the next generation, and because such family arrangements obviate the necessity of paying the much heavier bride-price required for getting a bride from a new and unrelated family. Such marriages are known as *gudapal* or 'tribe-milk' marriages. The commonest form is marriage between a daughter and her mother's brother's son (brother being again used in the extended sense). But it has also been extended to cover marriages between a girl and her father's sister's son and a son and his mother's brother's daughter, which merely mean the borrowing of a wife from the same family for two successive generations; in such cases the predominant consideration, apart from the wishes of the bridegroom and bride, is the smaller bride-price which will be demanded by relations so close in affinity. Moreover, it is a reflection on parents if, when a girl is mature, no marriage is arranged for her and no one asks for her; in such cases it is a recognized right of the parents to ask either the mother's brother's son or the father's sister's son to carry her off and make her his wife, even though he be already married to some other woman. Similarly a man, especially among the Bison-horn Marias, often acquires as second and third co-wives the younger sisters of his first wife. When a Bison-horn Maria girl marries a man other than her mother's brother's son, the latter, unless he has forfeited his prescriptive right to her by previously marrying another girl, is entitled to compensation from her husband, usually Rs. 5. But the Hill Marias do not observe this. For to them the free choice of the youth and girl is far more important, and when a girl is never compelled to marry against her will, it obviously is unnecessary to compensate anyone if she refuses to marry him. In a similar way Bison-horn Marias consider that a younger brother has a prescriptive right to an elder brother's widow, and he therefore gets Rs. 5 compensation if any other man marries her.

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No value is set on pre-marital chastity, and it is doubtful whether any girl preserves her virginity until her marriage. The typical attitude was thus expressed by Usendi Moda, the headman of Orcha, already mentioned as one of the men sentenced for the 1916 Orcha murder, and whose family pedigree is given in Appendix

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

836 II. His sister married Gecha Harma of Udala Tondawada, and at the wedding he met Harma's sister Gecha Kowe, and danced with her. They liked each other, and met at other weddings and at koqsar dances, and had sexual intercourse two or three times, which Moda said was necessary in order to ascertain that they were both physically capable. Everyone saw that they were in love, and their wedding followed as soon as the necessary betrothal ceremonies could be completed. But if pre-marital intercourse results in pregnancy, there can be no formal marriage, which the Hill Marias call *marmi* and the Bison-horn *pendul*; the girl states the name of the man responsible, and goes to live in his house without any ceremony, the union being described as *ottur* ('taken away'). A child born to a girl without even *ottur* would be considered as belonging to the clan of the man whom the mother names as the father; and this putative father would be expected to take the mother and child to his house, the union being known to the Hill Marias as *ahene-hattu* ('thus-went'). No stigma attaches to such unions, and the children have exactly the same position and rights as the children of a formal marriage.

588 848

584 Hill Maria parents do not try to interfere in their children's choice of wives and husbands. When a youth and his girl know their minds, each tells his or her parents. Then the youth's parents, with the elders of the village, go, without the youth, with about a rupee's worth of *mahua* spirit (or five bottles) to the girl's parents, taking care to arrive at their house at about four or five o'clock in the afternoon. The father of the youth opens the door of the girl's house, places the liquor bottles inside the threshold and rejoins his party, all of whom sit silent outside the door. The girl's parents then call in some of the elders of their village, and in their presence tell the girl that this liquor has been brought on her account, and ask her if she is willing to go and live with the youth in the village from which the liquor has come. If the girl agrees, the liquor is at once drunk by the parties from the two villages, and the girl's parents entertain the visiting party to supper; if she refuses, the youth's parents take the liquor back to their village. This ceremony is called *talq-da'ina* ('going to ask'). It may take place on any day of the year, Hill Marias recking nothing of auspicious days or omens.

Hill Maria regular betrothal and marriage

[787]

There is a second *talq-da'ina*, generally after an interval of about a year; it sometimes takes place sooner, but it is considered bad form to be too importunate. The youth does not go with his parents even this time; he does not, indeed, meet his betrothed between the first *talq-da'ina* and marriage, as, once a girl's hand

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

883 quite understood why—but once they realize that the enquirer is not prepared to be deceived they talk fairly freely about them.

883 485 In all these villages there are commodious rest-houses for the use of visitors and officials on tour and when they are unoccupied —and they are but seldom used officially—the boys sleep in them as their dormitories. The boys, however, are not fully organized as among the Murias, but a leader may be appointed—in Mokhpal he was called the Sian, in Chote Timnar the Peda. Sometimes an older man sleeps with them and imposes a rough sort of discipline, fining those who are absent without cause. An old Maria, Sodi Mukha, is said to have been very proud of his management of the dormitory at Mokhpal. 'Originally', I was told in this village, 'the boys used to make their house in the middle of the place and it was theirs. But when Government ordered us to make a rest-house we had to build it not as we wanted it, but as the officers wanted it.'

883 841 The girls sometimes sleep together in the house of a lonely widow, but often have their own building. This is occasionally combined with the corporate menstruation hut. The menstruating women sleep on one side and the unmarried girls on the other. It is more common, however, for such women to sleep at home and to leave the unmarried girls to themselves. They too are not organized as in the Muria ghotul, but they are fined for quarrelling and for non-attendance. Both boys and girls have regular duties. They must all bring wood for the dormitory fire. At marriages and funerals they must collect wood and make leaf-plates. In the evening the boys and girls often meet in some central place or in front of the boys' house and dance and play games.

883 836 The relations between the boys and girls are not organized and disciplined as among the Murias. At marriages the members of the two dormitories may slip away together and sleep in some secluded place. At Penta the boys described how a girl would make a hole in the wall near which she slept. 'Then a boy creeps up and pokes a stick through the hole to wake her, and she creeps out to join him.' At Bara Harmamunda, the boys said that they actually went into the girls' house, though I fancy this is exceptional.

883 The Bison-horn Maria dormitory does not seem to play an important part in the social or religious life of the tribe. It is not established in the mythology; it does not serve as a school of dancing or as a place for initiation into sexual experience; there is no need in these pacific hills for village guard-rooms. Whether at any time the institution existed in a more flourishing form it is now impossible to say.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER ELEVEN

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

I

BEFORE proceeding further it is essential that we distinguish carefully between two different types of ghotul, for these are so sharply differentiated by rule and custom and the psychological conditions of each are so distinct that until this is done we can get no clear picture of the intimate relations between chelik and motiari.

The fundamental principle of the first type of dormitory, which is sometimes called the *jodidār*[1] or 'yoking' ghotul, is that of fidelity to a single partner during the whole of the pre-marital period. Each chelik is paired off with a motiari; he is formally 'married' to her; she may even take the feminine form of his title as her own. Divorce is allowed, though infidelity is punished.

In the second type of ghotul, which is probably a later development of the classic model, any kind of lasting attachment between chelik and motiari is forbidden. No one can say that such and such a motiari is *his* girl; if anyone sleeps with a particular girl for more than three days at a time, he is punished.

In all other matters, whether of discipline, routine, social duty or recreation, there is no difference between the two types of ghotul. We must, however, carefully distinguish them for their sexual customs and psychological conditions.

The *jodidār* ghotul is, I think, the original form of the Muria dormitory. In the first place, it is most widely distributed in the more primitive parganas—the Chota Dongar, Dugal and Karangal—and in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar Mountains. It has retained its place most successfully among the Jhoria, who are undoubtedly the oldest of the Muria groups. Secondly, the Muria themselves describe the other type of ghotul as a modern improvement intended to eliminate scandals and the danger of pregnancy. The change from one type to the other is still going on. At Karagaon, which was formerly

FIG. 57. Carving on the pillars of the ghotul at Almer

[1] A *jodi* or *jori* is the word used for a life-long friend, yoke-fellow or husband and wife. A *jodi* is something definitely more than a temporary lover. It is the person yoked to whom one will pull the heavy plough of life. See V. Elwin and S. Hivale, *Folk-Songs of the Maikal Hills* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 240f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

a *jodidār* ghotul, a pregnancy scandal caused the chelik and motiari to adopt the other rule of partnership. Twenty years ago, Masora was a *jodidār* ghotul; today its members insist on change. I believe that originally all over the ghotul area the dormitories were of the older type; then in order to avoid the scandals and elopements that naturally arose from such intense and lasting attachments, and as a result of the belief that conception was less likely when the cycle of coitus was frequently broken, the rules were changed.

The ghotul, therefore, gives no support to those who believe in what Westermarck called the 'hypothesis of primitive promiscuity'. Promiscuity is the last thing permitted in the *jodidār* ghotul. It might even be argued that it is the result of culture-contact, for the ghotul in the neighbourhood of towns and schools, or along the roads, are generally of the modern, promiscuous, type.

This gradual change from one tradition to another probably accounts for the very haphazard distribution of the two types at the present time. The old tradition persists in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar and among the Jhoria; elsewhere there is no rule. Here and there throughout the whole area, *jodidār* ghotul survive in the midst of dormitories which, as the result of scandal or example, have changed their rules. In the Kongur Pargana, for example, More Berma, Kanhargaon and Gorma are ghotul of the old type surrounded by others, as are Chimri and Morenga in the Bangoli Pargana. At the present time, the newer type of ghotul seems to be in the majority; out of the 2000 married men examined, 720 had grown up in *jodidār* dormitories, and 1280 in the others, while out of 347 dormitories of which I have information on this point 269 have adopted the new rules, 78 retaining the older customs.

II

In the *jodidār* ghotul, the pairing-off of chelik and motiari in a more or less permanent relationship, only to be dissolved by the marriage or death of one partner, is taken very seriously. In most villages there is a custom of the ghotul marriage, which is celebrated after the children have attained ghotul maturity and received their titles. In Metawand the chelik gave me a detailed description of the ceremony.

The members of the ghotul are allotted their various parts in the marriage. First of all, the boy's 'parents' go to the girl's 'parents' for the betrothal ceremony, carrying two leaf-pipes to represent bottles of liquor. The girl's parents say—in strict accordance with tradition—'Why have you come, samdhi?' 'O there's nothing special, we were going this way and looked in for a few moments.' 'No, no, there must be some reason.' 'Well, we did hear that a flower had blossomed in your house; we would pick it to adorn our hair.' 'Ah, how truly they say that a dog is fed many years only to be taken by a panther in the end, and a daughter is cherished only to be carried off by the samdhi.' There follows the usual dispute about the bride-price and, when that is agreed, the two parties sit together and smoke.

The following day comes the 'marriage'. Ashes are used instead of haldi. A little booth is made in the ghotul court. The marriage ritual is briefly recapitulated. Water is poured from the roof over the two children. Eager hands catch them and shut them up in an inner room. The bride screams, 'Open the door, let me out'. The others, shouting with laughter, at last let them go. That night the two sleep together, and will probably continue to do so until one of them is married.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

But 'divorce' is allowed. I was given a vivid account by a chelik of the Kapsi ghotul of how this is arranged. If a motiari has intercourse with another boy, her own chelik reports the matter to the Sirdar saying, 'My wife has left her house and made another; for many days she lived and fed with me, but now she has run away and my honour is ruined. How can I live in a broken house, how can my work prosper in a field of weeds?'

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FIG. 58. Ghotul carvings at Nayanar
Slightly enlarged

Then the Sirdar calls the girl and says, 'Well, girl, why have you left your husband? Do you really want to forsake him and live with this other boy?' If the girl has made up her mind, she may answer, 'Yes, I want to live with this boy. My honour has gone to him'. The Sirdar then says to the second boy, 'How can you live with another chelik's wife? Think well, are you going to keep her, or will you send her away again?' The boy replies, 'I didn't fetch the girl; she came to my mat of her own accord. Now how can I quarrel with her or drive her away? Her husband must have neglected her or beaten her'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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At this the Sirdar turns to the first boy and says, 'Yes, tell us, you must have abused her and driven her away by your unkindness'. But he replies, 'I never abused her for rice or for work or for lying together. She left by her own desire, straying like a cow. I want her no more. But I must have her price'.

This leads to a long haggle about the compensation to be paid and at last a hundred rupees is settled, and another chelik stands bail. After a few days the second boy brings a hundred siari seeds, and five leaf-pipes representing five bottles of liquor for the panchayat. The money is paid, the pipes are smoked, some ashes are sprinkled over the newly-assorted pair, and the readjustment is complete.

After a few days the deserted boy goes to the Sirdar and says, 'Have you any widows in your pargana, master?' The Sirdar says, 'Well, perhaps—in such and such a village there is a widow, or she may be a virgin, I really forget'. Once again parents are appointed, there is a betrothal and a new marriage. In Kapsi they said that the Tussaro had the task of seeing that the bridegroom fulfilled his duties to his new wife.

I have recorded a curious custom in several ghotul of this type. At Chimri, when the young chelik first gets his 'wife' he has to pay a sort of rent or tribute for her to the ghotul. She is a 'new field' and he must give five score pieces of green wood every year for it. Later, when his girl passes her menarche, the boys say that 'the field is well ploughed and manured'; its value has increased and he must pay ten score. Still later, when the land is fully developed, he must give twenty score. At Mundpal, the rule was that for a young girl, described as a *banghar* field unbroken by the plough, the boy had to give ten score siari seeds. When the girl became mature, she was described as the fruitful ploughed land known as *gabhar*, and the boy had to pay the ghotul fifteen score. Three years after the menarche, a girl was known as a *munda* or embanked field, and now the chelik had to pay twenty score.

And further, if a girl had a great many ornaments, she was described as a rich woman with a large herd of cows and goats, and the chelik had to pay a super-tax of ten score seeds for her. At Rengagondi the boys counted the number of reeds in a girl's sleeping-mat and estimated her importance and the tax to be paid on her accordingly.

Like the 'police work' of the ghotul, this taxation is a sort of game; yet it is taken perfectly seriously, and it impresses on everyone the 'right' that a cheiik has over his ghotul-mate. Many a feast has been enjoyed by the ghotul company out of the public taxes.

Another example of the importance of the 'ghotul marriage' is to be found in the entirely serious creation of a whole set of 'ghotul relatives'. In ordinary life, the Muria (like most of the rest of India) regard certain people as standing in a relationship of taboo. Such are a boy's wife's elder sister (*akoin*), his younger brother's wife (*koryār*), and his father's younger brother's wife (*kuchi*). He must not sit alone in the same room with any of these; he must not touch their heads; in his presence they must not 'lift their legs'—that is, they should not sit or climb over a fence before him and must not walk in front of him.

These rules are observed, at least officially, in the ghotul. Thus a young chelik must not have anything to do with the elder sister of the motiari who is his special partner; an older boy must not sit on his younger brother's sleeping-mat for fear he may be led into an improper familiarity with his '*koryār*'. In Metawand and Markabera there was even a rule that two brothers should not sleep in the same room of the ghotul, for it is essential that the younger brother's 'wife' should avoid the elder brother. She must not be

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

found alone in the ghotul with him. A Muria girl never covers her head,[1] but at least she must not undo her hair in his presence. When the elder brother is away from the ghotul his 'wife' is allowed to sleep with her '*dewar*', the younger brother.

A chelik does not seem to have to avoid entirely his brother's daughters; in the ghotul he may abuse them or flirt with them, but he ought not to sleep with one of them. But they can massage him, as indeed his own sisters can. They call him *māma* in the ghotul. This leads us to the interesting provision that close relations should not address each other by their ghotul titles, but by terms of relationship, thus continually reminding themselves and one another how they are related and that they must behave.

What is the reason for these rules of avoidance? The ban on the younger brother's wife is probably to safeguard the position of the younger brother, always in jeopardy as a hundred folk-tales show. In the ghotul certainly it serves as a valuable protection to a younger boy, whose brother might well be the all-powerful Sirdar or Diwan. Similarly, the rule of avoidance between a boy and his motiari's elder sister, who might be the almost equally powerful Belosa or head of the girls, prevents her from taking advantage of her position to seduce a boy away from his 'lawful wife'.

FIG. 59. Wall-decoration from the Remavand ghotul
Height 6"

There does not appear to be any taboo on brothers and sisters witnessing each other's erotic adventures in the ghotul, provided they do not discuss them with each other and, of course, strictly avoid any relations between themselves. It is not, however, considered improper for a brother to have full knowledge of and to hear all about his sister's love affairs. Once in Binjhli a boy told me in Gondi how he had dreamt that he was having intercourse with a certain girl. The girl's own brother interpreted for me without embarrassment.

A sister sleeps every night with a boy in the presence of her brother. A brother flirts and makes love and sleeps with girls before his sister. They seem to be quite unembarrassed and both behave naturally.

[1] What Hoffmann said so charmingly of the Munda is true also of the Muria girl: 'Nothing but a load or a flower is ever seen on the head of a Munda woman.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

In many ghotul a sister may comb and massage a brother, but in Kabonga there was a rule that she must not salute him with Johar nor comb his hair.

Many coarse jokes are made about the relation of brothers and sisters when everyone is drunk at a marriage. There are many obscene songs about it, for it is regarded as a licensed subject for humour. As in other societies, however, it is probable that such humour only exists against a background of very strict propriety. The suggestion that a brother is sleeping with his sister is amusing simply because he never does.

Generally it is said that brothers and sisters live together very happily. When they do quarrel a boy may say to his sister: 'You *potsa* (big-bellied one), you *chipri* (you've got dirty eyes), *saladri* (murderess).' It is said that a girl on her marriage remembers these delightful animosities and weeps bitterly saying, 'No one will be able to quarrel with me so sweetly in future'. The brother may threaten to turn his sister out of the house, but she has the ready retort available that 'in any case I am not going to stay in your house, I can easily make a living somewhere else'.

III

How far is the rule of fidelity to a single partner kept? This is a matter on which there can be no possible statistical evidence; one can only give a general impression and quote a few examples. The temptation to break the rules must be very great. Ghotul routine aims at stimulating the sexual passion. The boys and girls live in the closest contact, and enjoy sexual intimacy in one another's presence. Certain relatives, such as the younger brother, have traditional privileges. The chelik are often absent in the fields, and their motiari sleep accessible and alone. In every 'memoir' that I have collected, the narrator has described how he or she evaded the ghotul rules.

From these memoirs I will give a few quotations. My first is from the experiences of Budhu, a Poyami of Kanera in the Sonawal Pargana of Kondagaon, in a *jodidār* ghotul forty years ago.

> In those days there were about twelve boys and ten girls in the ghotul, and a boy used to sleep with his partner until his marriage unless he changed his name. I was married to the Malko and loved her very much. I was then Sepahi. But after two years, I was made Kotwar, and I had to leave Malko and sleep with the Kotwarin, for that was the rule. Yet my thoughts were always for Malko, and at night when everyone was asleep I would leave the mat where I was sleeping with Kotwarin and creep over to Malko to make love to her.
>
> My parents knew nothing of this, yet to my delight they told me one day that they were going to arrange my marriage with Malko, which was just what we wanted.
>
> A few days after this good news, I went to Sonawal for work and stayed there for a week. During this time I slept in the Sonawal ghotul with the Jamadarin. On the last night this girl took the comb from my hair as a keepsake. From Sonawal I went to Kokori and danced in the ghotul there. One of the motiari fell in love with me and constantly offered me tobacco. After a few days I started home, but three of the girls met me in the jungle and begged me to stay with them, but I had to go home.
>
> Soon afterwards I was married to Malko and we were very happy. We have always done everything together and have never quarrelled.

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TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

A year after my marriage, the Maharaja came to Bara Dongar and I went with my father-to see him enthroned. Afterwards we went to Malakot, and I slept in the ghotul for two nights. While all were asleep one of the girls came secretly to me.

Here we have a picture of a situation where a boy who is a member of a *jodidār* ghotul and thus supposed to be faithful to his official partner, yet continues his romantic attachment to the girl he really loves and whom he ultimately marries. Budhu was also able to evade the rules by visiting ghotul of the other type. Had the Sonawal and Kokori ghotul also been of the *jodidār* pattern, they could not have extended to him such privileges.

It will be noted that these temporary encounters with other girls did not in any way interfere with the boy's devotion to his Malko and the happiness of his married life with her. He says, and I have no doubt that it is true, that he has never had an affair with a married woman, or indeed with any other woman after the early incident in the Malakot ghotul. 'After a year my wife stopped me going to the ghotul.'

Here is another significant record of life in a *jodidār* ghotul at the time of the Bastar rebellion (1911). The narrator is Gadru, a Muria of the Kunjami clan from Chaniyagaon.

After I had been in the ghotul a year I was given the name of Silledar at the time of the Chait Dandar, and six months later I was paired off with the Jhalaro and began to sleep with her. The Mukhiya warned us both not to have too frequent intercourse and to take every care that there was no scandal [i.e. pregnancy]. I slept with the Jhalaro daily, but I only went to her twice a week or even less. The girl who really loved me in the ghotul was the Alosa, my mother's brother's daughter. Her partner was the Jhoria and she had to sleep with him every night. But when he was asleep, she often used to crawl over to my mat and I would turn my back on the Jhalaro and make love to her.

An old woman of about seventy years of age, Koili of Berma village, gave some interesting reminiscences of her ghotul life.

For six months after I joined the ghotul, until I got a title, I slept with the little boys. When I was made Nirosa I was too poor to give the usual feast of parched rice and liquor, but the chelik collected money for me and got a rupee's worth of liquor so I was not shamed. That night everyone was very drunk, and the Kotwar who slept with me had intercourse with me for the first time. The next day the Kotwar ordered that henceforth I was to sleep every day with the Sirdar. The Sirdar was related to me, though distantly, as a parental uncle, and I did not like it at all, but I had to do what the Kotwar said. We were both very shy and never spoke to one another and slept back to back with faces turned away. It was a long time before we had intercourse, but when there was a marriage in the village, everyone got drunk and excited and that night we went to each other. After that our shyness disappeared, and we used to have congress every night.

Soon afterwards my betrothal ceremony took place. Among those who came for it was the Kapatdar of the Veleknar ghotul. The Sirdar had gone away somewhere, and that night the Kapatdar slept with me. When the others knew of it, they laughed at us and teased us; I was so embarrassed that for a whole week I stayed away from the ghotul.

When I was married, the motiari brought me to the ghotul compound

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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and gave me liquor to drink. I made Johar to all the chelik and motiari and never entered the ghotul again.

Three years after marriage I gave birth to a male child, but with great difficulty, for the Sirdar who loved me very much after all the years we were together in the ghotul and who had wanted me to run away with him, was angry at my marrying someone else and sent magic to trouble me. When I recovered, the Sirdar made my husband ill instead, but the Siraha cured him.

Another old woman over sixty years old, Kachari of Kanhargaon, remembers the ghotul of that village while it was still *jodidār*; a few years later the rules were changed on account of a scandal.

My ghotul husband was the Likhen; I was the Chaiko. But the boy I really loved was the Salya. One day while I was going to the ghotul, I met the Salya and went with him to a field. The Sirisdar and Beldar saw us and reported the matter to the Kotwar. That night the chelik refused to let me enter the ghotul, and the Kotwar and some others questioned me outside the door, accusing me of having had intercourse with the Salya in the field.

The Diwan said that as a punishment every chelik would have me that night, but just then a constable came to the Paik-gudi and the Diwan had to go and fetch him wood, so I escaped. But the Kotwar tried to have intercourse with me during the night. I resisted him, and in the morning he was very angry and told the Diwan what had happened. The next evening five of the chelik had me one after another, and in spite of all my cries and struggles I could not get free. The other motiari watched, but did nothing to help me.[1]

When I was sixteen years old I was betrothed to a chelik at Bara Dongar, but I eloped with the Salya. We were about to get married at Bandopal, when a search party caught us, and I was taken home and immediately married to my betrothed. Later I left him for a very handsome chelik from my old ghotul whom I met in the bazaar. Four years later I went mad as a result of the magic of my first husband, but the Siraha cured me.

IV

Yet in spite of such occasional breaches of the rules, the *jodidār* ghotul remains a school of marital fidelity. Severe penalties attach to the discovery of the cloth of a girl other than your own on a mat or to the taking advantage

[171]

[1] Roy describes a similar act of corporate violation as a punishment inflicted on a girl in the Oraon *dhumkuria*. 'Should a girl refuse to come when sent for, a number of young boys are dispatched to bring her by force. When she is brought, should she refuse to elect a mate, a number of older boys violate her one after the other, until she names the boy she would have for her mate.'—S. C. Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 246. Sir E. A. Gait wrote: 'I have been told that if an Oraon girl is thought unduly coy all the youths of the village combine against her and get her deflowered by one or more of their number.'—J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, Vol. II, p. 287n. In the Kondabera ghotul, there was once a 'strike' and the girls, so the chelik told me, 'decided not to let us have them. We all decided to take them by force one night, and so we did'. But I doubt if this often happens either in Bastar or Chota Nagpur. I have, however, found parallel incidents among the Gond and Pardhan of Mandla. It is perhaps worth noting that if a Bororo Indian suspected his wife of infidelity, he put her at the disposal of the young men in the *bakito*-dormitory.—V. Fric and P. Radin, 'Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians', *JAI*, Vol. XXXVI (1906), p. 290.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of a chelik's absence from the ghotul to seduce his motiari. These things happen, but they are condemned. 883X

The chelik themselves consider that this type of ghotul has several great advantages. The first, characteristically, is the very practical one that if a girl becomes pregnant 'they know the thief'. Elsewhere it is naturally often difficult to fix the responsibility of fatherhood. Again, the chelik say that a great deal of trouble is saved. 'We know what to do; there is no jealousy or dispute; everything is settled, and there is no more to be said.' I think it is true that there is less strain and anxiety in these ghotul; and there is room for the development of deep intimacy and romantic attachment. In the pre-nuptial period, however, it may be argued that these things are not altogether desirable. 836

They certainly lead to greater conflict with the parents over marriage. Many chelik and motiari look forward with misery to separation from the partner who has shared with them the happy days of youth, and occasionally—but only occasionally—ghotul partners elope together rather than face a separation. Statistics here are striking. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 1884 were celebrated according to the wishes of the parents and the great majority of cases were of the cross-cousin type. Of the 116 irregular marriages, 77 were those of chelik who married their 'ghotul-wives'. Only 39 irregular marriages were reported from the other type of ghotul. In view of the smaller number of men from the *jodidār* ghotul, these figures indicate a proportion of about 1 in every 9 of chelik in this type of ghotul who had conflict with their parents, and only 1 in about 32 from the other type of ghotul. 883X 936 583

Of those who married their 'ghotul-wives', 9 out of 77 divorced them later, giving a proportion of 11·6 per cent against a proportion of 2·9 per cent of divorces for the whole 2000 marriages. It is interesting that the proportion of divorces among Lamhada—the other type of chelik who live in close contact with their future wives before marriage—is almost exactly the same, 11·5 per cent. And although 77 and 113 cases respectively are not sufficient for us to draw far-reaching conclusions, it is undoubtedly striking that there should be so high an incidence of divorce among these and only among these two classes of people. 883X 836 586

Yet even though a passionate ghotul attachment is not the best preparation for a life-long union, at the time separation seems tragic indeed. A girl especially, whose chelik marries someone else, is a pathetic figure. 'Her life has left her'—so they put it in Munjmeta—'she lies alone on her mat and pines for him; she has no heart to take another lover.' Often she sleeps with a girl friend who is herself in the arms of a boy, but she lies with her back to them, turning away from all that happiness. In Ulera they said that when a girl's lover leaves her, she cannot sing for many days. When the Mukhwan of Banjora died, the Mukhwanin's face was 'destroyed by sorrow'. 883X 836- 152

Boys are often, but not always, more philosophical. 'Yes, for a month you feel wretched', said a chelik in Markabera. 'Then you forget all about it. One may be able to meet her again, but that is difficult and dangerous. But at least you can always get another girl in the ghotul.' Yet at Bopna the Silledar was called a 'widower', so miserable was he after his 'wife's' marriage last year. At Markabera, Dasru took to drink after his ghotul wife was married and Gurti, who was deeply attached to the beautiful and vivacious Malko, looked very lonely and miserable when I saw him nearly a year after her marriage to a boy in another village.

It is remarkable, however, how few actual tragedies there have been from this cause. In the last ten years, only one case of suicide has been registered 883X 836 762

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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762

as due to the separation of a chelik from his motiari. This occurred in 1932 and was, as we should expect, in a *jodidār* ghotul, at Amgaon in the Karangal Pargana. Chaitu and Munga—I do not know their ghotul titles—the boy about twenty years old and the girl about eighteen—were greatly attached to each other and dreaded the thought of separation. They each begged their parents to let them marry, but Munga's father was adamant and married her to Dasru of the Markabera ghotul, a different Dasru, of course, from the one

[531]

Fig. 60. Carving in the ghotul at Nayanar
Height 44"

I have just mentioned. After the marriage she was taken to Markabera, where the chelik diverted themselves as usual by shutting her up with the new husband whom she did not love. Before she left Amgaon, she was taken round the village to say good-bye and every household made their contributions for the ghotul feast that would be held a week after the marriage.

When the time came, chelik and motiari went singing through the pretty wooded country that separates Amgaon from Markabera and invited Munga to the feast. Her husband could not refuse, though he must have known there was danger in Amgaon, but it was so near—only two miles away—that he let her go. When she reached her old home, she went to meet Chaitu in the lonely corner of a field; he had brought some liquor for her, and they sat down to have a farewell drink together. But a little girl, Chaitu's younger sister, followed them and ran to tell her father. He hurried to the spot, caught the two lovers

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

together, and beat the boy, telling him that the girl was no longer his, and that such meetings would bring scandal upon them all. Behind those slaps how much one can see of parental exasperation over a long and troublesome intrigue, almost certainly parental envy of a son entranced by love, and the usual Muria dread of adultery—a very genuine sentiment.

Boy and girl ran away—I can see their quick Muria nature dissolved in tears and anger—and returned to the ghotul for the feast that sealed their separation. Munga had to massage every chelik after supper as a farewell rite, but then, when all was quiet, they crept together out of the ghotul to the woods. That night—it was 20 May 1932—they climbed onto the great branch of a mango tree, tied and adjusted ropes, and facing one another fell to death. When they were found, Chaitu had his hand upon his motiari's shoulder.

V

Although outwardly both types of ghotul are the same and often only the most careful investigation can distinguish them, the customs and atmosphere of the modern type are entirely distinct. Here everything is arranged to prevent long-drawn intense attachments, to eliminate jealousy and possessiveness, to deepen the sense of communal property and action. No chelik may regard a motiari as 'his'. There is no ghotul marriage, there are no ghotul partners. 'Everyone belongs to everyone else' in the very spirit of *Brave New World*. A chelik and motiari may sleep together for three nights; after that they are warned; if they persist they are punished. If a boy shows any signs of possessiveness for a particular girl, if his face falls when he sees her making love to someone else, if he gets annoyed at her sleeping with another chelik, should he be offended if she refuses to massage him and goes to someone else, he is forcibly reminded by his fellows that she is not his wife, he has no *hag* or right over her, she is the *mál* or property of the whole ghotul, and if he looks like that he will be punished.

This type of ghotul is sometimes called the *mundi-badalna* because in it you change from girl to girl just as you change your rings from finger to finger.

How is it that this type of ghotul has so widely displaced the classical *jodidér* dormitory? Why is the process of change from one type to the other continuing today? There are many reasons.

In the Benur Pargana and at Koilibera I heard the phrase 'so that they will not be ruined by love'. This is certainly a genuine consideration. Too much love before marriage will mean too little after it. Sexual romance is not the best preparation for a life-long union. A strong and lasting attachment to a girl in the pre-nuptial period may lead to an elopement and an irregular marriage. Such a marriage disturbs the serenity of the home—which ultimately depends on the parents; it destroys the old alliances of families and prevents the repayment of ancient debts; it often turns out unsuccessful. In villages where several such elopements have occurred within a short time, the rules of the ghotul have been changed.

The modern rules are also intended as a contraceptive measure. The Muria believe that conception only occurs when the male and female remain together for a long period and enjoy an uninterrupted series of acts of coition with no divergence of interest. Both psychological and physical concentration in fidelity to a single partner is required for pregnancy.

A former Chalan of Golawand, for example, described how he consistently changed his ghotul partners and never made anyone pregnant; but two friends of his in the same ghotul slept every day with the same girls and impregnated

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

them both. The Gaita at Koilibera said that a chelik could have congress three times a night and it would do no harm, but if he went to the same girl more than three days running he would fall ill and she might conceive.

The modern type of ghotul breaks up the coital sequence and is thus supposed to lessen the danger of conception. Statistics, however, show that this is not so. Among 2000 men, 80 made motiari pregnant during their ghotul period; of these 25 or 1 in 28·8 belonged to *jodidār* ghotul, and 55 or 1 in 23·2 to the modern type.

FIG. 61. Carving on the door of a private house at Bandopal
Slightly enlarged

A more genuine reason for the prevalence of the newer rules is the Muria temperament which is fundamentally hostile to individualism, to exclusiveness, and to any kind of 'possessiveness'. The Muria believe that if everyone belongs to everyone else in the ghotul there will be no room for jealousy. I am not at the moment thinking whether this is true or not, but it is certainly what

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

883X
836

they think. 'If we get jealous of each other', they said at Nayanar, 'we exchange lovers.' At Esalnar a chelik said, 'We change partners because we want everyone to be happy; if one boy and one girl are always together as if they were man and wife, then some would be happier than others; the best boys and the best girls would be the property of individuals instead of being the property of the ghotul, and the rest would be miserable'. When someone told the chelik at Kabonga that they were behaving like a lot of goats, they indignantly explained that 'if a girl always sleeps with one boy, we feel that the unity of our life is being destroyed; in a ghotul all the girls should be the wives of all the boys'. In Bhanpuri they used a similar phrase that 'all the girls are the wives of the Kotwar', meaning that since the Kotwar is in charge of them and has the task of distributing them among the chelik, they must all be regarded as his wives in his capacity as a representative of the ghotul.

The result of this arrangement is—according to Muria theory—that everybody in the ghotul is in love with everybody else. 'Boys and girls in a ghotul love each other as brothers love sisters, as parents love children, as husbands love their wives.' It is remarkable that this general diffused love and affection among chelik and motiari should lead them to identify parental, family and romantic love.

In Masora the boys gave as a reason for changing their partners the very human liking for change, 'love's sweetest part, variety'. One of them said, 'You don't want to eat the same vegetable every day'. The change of object undoubtedly stimulates the sexual instinct and makes ghotul life more exciting. But since the whole tendency of Muria society is towards stability, I doubt if the desire for variety has played a very important part in the development of the ghotul rules.[1]

Another reason for the change of rules, given this time by the chelik of Sidhawand, was that if a chelik was always going about with the same motiari, the elders of the village would notice it and suspect that they had sexual relations. Yet at Chandabera, where there is a *jodidār* ghotul, the Muria claimed that the boys and girls behaved with so much discretion that no one could ever guess how they were paired off. Here we come up against the strange convention that the elders of the village have no idea of what goes on in the ghotul, where they all spent their own childhood, but suppose it to be, as they said again at Sidhawand (where some had been to school), 'a sort of Boy Scouts Club, whose members meet together for social service and for nothing else'.

The extent of this convention should not be exaggerated. The elders are often equally prepared to make the most indecent comments on the sexual activities of the younger generation. But in the presence of outsiders at least, there is a general tendency to make a show of the decorum of village life.

Of this type of ghotul, Evelyn Wood has asked how its ideal can be achieved 'without a sense of universal futility and frustration caused by such lavish dissipation of libidal power'. The answer to this is, I think, that we must

[1] The ghotul evidence hardly supports Bloch, who has based his belief in an original state of promiscuity largely on the human desire for change. 'It is perfectly clear', he says, 'that the human need for sexual variety, which is an established anthropological phenomenon, must in primitive times have been much stronger and more unbridled. Since even in our time, in a state of the most advanced civilization, this natural need for variety continues to manifest itself in almost undiminished strength, we can hardly regard it as necessary to prove that in primitive conditions sexual promiscuity was a more original, and, indeed, a more natural state than marriage.'—I. Bloch, *The Sexual Life of Our Time* (London, 1908), p. 192. But the history of the ghotul shows that it is the desire for permanence that is original; it is only the modern type of dormitory that attempts 'to do justice to the human need for sexual variety'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 823
836

not overestimate the extent of ghotul promiscuity. There is no kind of orgy or licence; everything is strictly regulated and conducted with the utmost decorum. The average ghotul is small, with not more than twenty members. Of these twenty, several are bound to be closely related or of the same clan. In Palli, for example, which is a large ghotul, only three clans were represented, in Kajen only two. Moreover these boys and girls have grown up together from babyhood. When, therefore, we read that a chelik has to sleep with a new girl every three days, we are not to think of him as being able to pick and choose from an endless procession of new and exciting girls. He is going to spend his time in rotation among a little group of girls every one of whom he knows very well indeed. There is no doubt a certain dissipation of libidal energy, but I do not think that, except perhaps in the very large ghotul, it is excessive.

And further, a boy is not generally able to choose his partner at will. It is the Kotwar, in consultation with the Belosa, who decides how the chelik and motiari are to couple and when they are to change their partners. For example, at Kabonga the Kotwar himself told me, 'I am the Raja of the motiari and every two or three days I rearrange them and tell the Belosa who is to sleep with whom'. In Dongrigura, the Kotwar himself had the privilege of a permanent partner, and he and his 'wife' made arrangements for the rest. There was the same custom in the neighbouring Palari. In Binjhli, it was the leading girls who made these arrangements.[1]

The rules differ from place to place. At Bakulwahi, where the girls slept in the ghotul only on Sundays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and where there were in 1941 more chelik than motiari, the following procedure was adopted. Suppose there were thirty chelik and ten motiari, then on Sunday the motiari would comb the hair of all the chelik, but they would leave their combs in the hair of only ten as a sign that on that night those boys would have partners on their sleeping-mats. On Wednesday the girls would leave their combs in the hair of another ten; so also on Thursday. In this way every chelik was able to sleep with one of the motiari once a week. Should a girl not distribute her affections equally, she was punished, and should she leave her comb in the hair of the same boy two nights running she was heavily fined.

The typical Muria emphasis on equality is shown by an explanation given by the chelik of this ghotul when I raised the point that it was surely unusual that the number of girls could be divided so conveniently into the number of boys. If that were impossible, they pointed out, if for example there were twelve girls to the thirty boys, then twelve boys would sleep with twelve girls on Sunday and another twelve boys with the twelve girls on Wednesday. By Thursday only six boys would remain unpartnered for that week. On that night only six girls would leave their combs in the hair of these boys, and the other six girls and the other twenty-four boys would sleep alone. Any other arrangement would destroy the unity of the ghotul.

[1] With this we may compare the very interesting arrangements of the Masai *manyatta*-dormitory. When the warriors feel like it, which is 'very, very often', they go in a group to stand outside the village and call to the girls. These approach and the warriors then say 'Tasiuliu!' whereupon each girl selects one of the men; by her choice she binds herself to sleep with him that night. 'It is a point of honour and etiquette that no girl so called upon to choose a man may refuse to do so, but she may make her choice from any of those men who were in the group that called to her.' The Masai also have a system of selecting permanent lovers, though these can still sleep with other partners—but the permanent lovers can sleep together without formality whenever they desire.—L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *JRAI*, Vol. LX, pp. 192ff.

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Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

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836●

At Esalnar there is a different arrangement. Here a motiari sleeps with a chelik for two months and during this period she takes as her title the feminine form of his name. Thus a girl who is temporarily sleeping with the Tahsildar is temporarily Tahsildarin. When she changes her partner and goes to sleep with the Kotwar, then for two months she is called Kotwarin. This arrangement is formally announced in the ghotul, and the girl and boy exchange rings which they return to each other when their period of partnership is ended.

'Does not this arrangement', I asked, 'destroy one of the chief reasons for changing partners, namely, that conception is less likely when a boy and girl do not sleep together for too long a period?' In order to avoid this danger, the boys explained, the rule at Esalnar is that no one may have intercourse without special permission from the council of elder boys. During the two months, they said, this permission was only given about once a week. When the bigger boys decide on it they tell the Kotwar. He goes to the girls and says, 'Today, girls, you may eat tobacco and lime'. Then he says to each in turn, 'Are you going to eat your tobacco or not?' and each is expected to say 'Yes'. If a girl says 'No', he replies, 'Then why did you come to the ghotul? If you behave like this, we will turn you out'.

The following morning the Tahsildar and Kotwar sit by the door and ask each girl in turn as she goes out, 'Did you eat your tobacco last night or no?' If the girl says 'Yes' she is allowed to go, but if anyone says 'No' then her chelik is fined a pice for loss of prestige.

A remarkable thing about these arrangements is that they interfere with the normal course of sexual selection. The beautiful girl and the ugly or even deformed girl has exactly the same sexual opportunity, exactly the same sexual privilege. So with the boys. In Bhanpuri the Daroga was blind; in Chandabera the Kotwar was a cripple; elsewhere I have seen boys with hare-lips, deeply pitted with small-pox, repulsive with yaws, but every one of them officially had the same privileges as the most handsome and adorable chelik. The Chandabera Kotwar, indeed, was 'married' (for it was that kind of ghotul) to the prettiest girl in the whole company. A girl must be prepared to go to any member of the ghotul fellowship. For example, in Sirpuri, the rather mediocre Sirdar was very much in love with a beautiful girl, the Malko, who treated him with disdain. When he tried to talk to her, she abused him and drove him away. Although she was more than once told to sleep with him, she managed to arrange to exchange him for another boy. After this had happened for a little while, the Sirdar reported the matter to the Diwan who said, 'Try for a few days more and let's see what happens'. When she still refused, the Diwan called for the Kotwar and told him to adjust the matter. The Kotwar went to the Malko and said, 'What did you come to the ghotul for? Did you come for your own pleasure or for ours? Did you come to play with us or to sulk? If you want to sulk you had better sleep at home.'

Still the Malko refused to have anything to do with the Sirdar and at last the boys expelled her from the ghotul. We must remember that she was a beautiful girl and was giving her affection freely to the very boys who expelled her, but she was breaking the integrity and fellowship of the ghotul, so she had to go. After a little while, however, she gave in. She paid a fine of two annas' worth of liquor, was readmitted and that night slept with the Sirdar.

I recorded a similar incident in Kabonga, where the Belosa disliked the Kotwar and preferred to be expelled from the ghotul rather than sleep with him, but in the end she too gave in.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 983
836

It is equally offensive to the ghotul spirit for a chelik and motiari to fall openly in love and to insist on sleeping together to the exclusion of the rest. When they do this the others get jealous and irritated. If a girl, who has thus given way to her feelings, then goes to comb the hair of another boy, he says, 'Don't touch my head, go and do your lover's; I am not a boy, you never take any notice of me'. None of the chelik will let her massage them. If this treatment is not successful they catch the offenders by the hand and drag them out of the ghotul saying, 'Come no more to our ghotul, sleep in your own houses, have a lonely marriage without us, for we won't come to it'. In Kabonga, where such an incident occurred in 1941, the Kotwar said that after they had expelled the boy and girl, the boy very quickly repented, paid a fine of liquor and was readmitted. The girl was more obstinate. After a time the Kotwar went to her house and said that if she would sleep with each of the three leading boys on three successive nights, he would let her return. In the end she agreed to this and was accepted back into the ghotul. A similar incident occurred at Sirni where a girl insisted on trying to sleep always with the same boy. The others said, 'Is there only one chelik? Aren't we chelik too?' and at last turned them both out. They were only readmitted when they gave a rupee's worth of liquor to the company.

[531]

FIG. 62. Carving on a pillar in the ghotul at Almer

In a number of ghotul this system of complete equality has broken down and the three leading boys, the Sirdar or Diwan and his counsellors, including probably the Kotwar, have the right either to have a permanent partner just as in the older type of ghotul, or to choose their own partner whenever a change is made, without reference to the Kotwar. When this is done, and it happens generally in the bigger ghotul where there may be as many as sixty or seventy members, the leaders still insist on the rule of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

883 X
836

change being rigorously observed by all the others. Sometimes the three leading boys allot to themselves the three leading girls and exchange them between themselves, but do not allow them to go to the others. This is recognised as hostile to genuine ghotul tradition, for it does indeed offend against the ideal of equality.

In Banjora, the Kotwar, who there is the head of the ghotul, must always sleep with the Belosa or leader of the girls. The other chelik and motiari must change their partners every three days. The rule is that the Kotwar's mate must be the head of the girls and be called Belosa. Supposing the Kotwar gets married, then the new Kotwar must take the Belosa as his partner, but if both are of the same clan or closely related then the new Kotwar gets a new girl as his permanent partner and she calls herself Belosa while the old Belosa changes her name and loses her position. In this way Kotwar and Belosa always sleep together and rule the ghotul.

Another way in which the rules are broken is by simple evasion. In his memoirs, Bindo, who was head of the Benur ghotul sixty years ago, describes how he formed an attachment for the Malko.

> For a whole year we slept together. But the rule was that Malko could not sleep daily with the same boy. So what did we do? I used to sleep alone in a corner, and she would lie down with some other boy. When all were asleep she would get up and come to me. There was another beautiful girl in our ghotul, the Dulosa, who also loved me. She often came to me. So I used to sleep with Malko some nights and with Dulosa other nights. The chelik and motiari knew about it, but they were afraid to say anything as I was their leader.

In Binjhli also, I was told that lovers would arrange to meet earlier in the evening before going to the ghotul. The experiences of Konda, the secular headman of Kanhargaon, are worth recording.

> Formerly in the Kanhargaon ghotul, it was the custom to exchange partners. Before I was made Joliya, little girls used to sleep with me, afterwards I slept with the big girls. The Jhalaro, who was related to me as a distant cousin, loved me, so did the Piosa, who was in a joking relationship with me. The Piosa used to sleep with me every night, but secretly, and when she had no partner the Jhalaro also crept stealthily to my mat when all the others were asleep. These two girls used to make necklaces for me and in return I made them combs, and often gave them a few pice when they went to the bazaar. If at any time I was absent from the ghotul, the Jhalaro and Piosa would come to my house and by some means or other would drag me there. When the Sirdar discovered that the Jhalaro was sleeping with me, he fined her two annas' worth of liquor and I was warned that if I let her sleep with me again I would be fined a rupee and would be responsible to the elders of the village if anything happened. Unfortunately, the Jhalaro became pregnant, and when I learnt that the fact was known to everyone I got frightened and ran away to Malakot. In my absence Jhalaro's parents hurriedly had her married to her betrothed. I then returned to Kanhargaon and the next day went with the other ghotul boys to Phunder to dance the Pus Kolang. On our way home we were all drunk and the other boys quarrelled with me. They accused me of disgracing the ghotul's name and would not let me return with them. But I offered them eight annas for liquor and we became friends.

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Muria

X883
836

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

One day when I met the Piosa in the Dhanora bazaar I gave her some gur and parched rice and we planned to elope to another village. But when the Piosa returned home she fell ill, and after a few days she died.

VI

It will be convenient to consider here some other deviations from the classic ghotul model. In a number of villages, although the girls attend the ghotul every evening for singing, dancing and games, and even comb the chelik's hair and massage their limbs, they do not sleep in the dormitory, but go away late at night either to a house of their own or to the verandah of some old widow's house.

In such ghotul there is generally a rule that the girls may sleep in the dormitory once or twice a week and at festivals and marriages. An absolute ban on cohabitation is unusual. For example, in Binjhli, where the ghotul life is highly developed, there is massage once a week on Fridays and that night the chelik and motiari sleep together. On other nights the girls go home to any convenient house. But they stay in the ghotul for a very long time, and the boys say that they often have intercourse with them before they go away. The girls also told my wife the same. In the neighbouring village of Palki, there is a similar custom, but here there are two ghotul in one compound. Girls and boys sleep separately all the week except on the bazaar day, Wednesday. In both ghotul this rule of separation is relaxed on festivals, before marriages and when girls or boys return from dancing expeditions. In the Kalpatti Pargana and in Kanker State, the motiari generally go home about midnight after games and massage (though they often lie down for a time with the boys before they go), but at festivals and for eight days before a marriage chelik and motiari sleep together. In Tarbaili, in the Paralkot area, the boys said that they saw the girls home after dancing and had intercourse with them on the way. In Palli, near Kondagaon, where the girls and boys sleep in different rooms of someone's house, they meet every fifth day for massage and to sleep together. In the Nayanar ghotul, they said that they slept together for one week in every month, but for the other three weeks the girls went home in the evening. I doubt, however, if this was true—of Nayanar.

The reason for this arrangement, which is generally a temporary one, is almost always some scandal that has agitated the elders of the village. In Karagaon it is said that two boys combined to make a girl pregnant. They had to pay five rupees fine between them and the girl was married at once to her Lamhada. The motiari found that they had got a good deal of discredit out of this incident and after a time went to the village headman and said that it was not their fault, for the boys forced them to have intercourse. So the elders ordered that the boys and girls were only to sleep together every third day: for two days they must be separate; on the third day they could come together, but even then they must change their partners every time. In Kerawahi four or five years ago the ghotul Kotwar eloped with the Suliyaro. Since then the girls have only been allowed to sleep in the ghotul one day a week. Similar stories come from Bokrabera, Kokori, where two years ago three or four girls became pregnant, and Bakulwahi.

The aim of this rule is not so much to punish the boys and girls or to educate them in self-restraint as to avert conception, and is based on the Muria belief that pregnancy only occurs as a result of regular cohabitation night after night over a long period. By breaking up the acts of intercourse and lessening their frequency the chances of conception are supposed to be diminished.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

In a certain number of ghotul, particularly those all round the boundary of the Muria area, where the villagers have come under strong Chhattisgarhi and Oriya or Jagdalpur influence, the girls probably never sleep in the ghotul, but this is the sort of thing about which it is impossible to be sure. In some Hindu villages also, where there is only a small Muria population, the motiari return home regularly in order to avoid the ridicule of their Hindu neighbours. This is particularly true of the north and east of the Kondagaon Tahsil.

In some villages the ghotul has been abandoned altogether. The reasons for this vary. In the south-east of Kondagaon, where many of the Muria in villages approaching the borders of Jagdalpur Tahsil are becoming Bhattra, they naturally have given up the ghotul as an institution. In Kanera, for example, where the Bhattra movement is strong, there is no ghotul building though the boys sleep together in somebody's house and the girls still come to dance and to massage them. In the Amrati and Makri Parganas a number of villages have gone Bhattra with a consequent closing of the ghotul.

Then throughout the Mardapal Pargana, except in one or two villages, Esalnar for example, there have been no ghotul within living memory. This is more curious because the Mardapal Pargana is closely linked to the Chota Dongar and other Jhoria Parganas. The boys and girls dress and dance in Jhoria fashion; they have the same games; they go to the same festivals as the chelik and motiari of the villages to the north and west of them, but they do not have the ghotul system.

Sometimes magic or the fear of it is the cause of a dormitory being abandoned. There is no ghotul in Barbatta, for at one time many of the chelik and motiari died of an epidemic. It is said, however, that they still sleep together in a private house in the village. In Barkai a jealous Kalarin witch made black magic against the ghotul and many of the boys and girls were taken ill. They made the necessary sacrifices and all was well for two months. They fell ill again and this time they built a new ghotul, but there was still trouble. So now the dormitory is closed altogether. At Lihagaon continued epidemics, which naturally spread quickly in the confined conditions of the dormitory, combined with several scandals, resulted in the abandonment of any special building, though the chelik and motiari continue much of their life without it. At Morohnar, the Malik made his motiari pregnant and went to live in Kanera. At Kanera he eloped with another girl and married her. 'This angered the gods, and the chelik and motiari of Morohnar fell ill.' The ghotul was shut for two months, re-opened, the members fell ill again, and it was finally closed.

Sometimes outside interference is the cause. At Dahikonga, the Hindu landlord forced the Muria to destroy their ghotul. At Selnar, where there is a primary school, the teachers have succeeded in driving the ghotul life underground and all that clean, healthy, happy existence has yielded to furtive meetings on verandahs and in the fields. In Pendrawand, the ghotul was closed under the influence of outsiders from across the border, but the boys and girls use a dilapidated Thana-gudi when it is unoccupied.[1]

[1] Somewhat similar causes have led to the abandonment of the *dhumkuria* dormitories in several Uraon villages. In Kumbhar Tola, a Hinduized Uraon village only four miles from Ranchi, there was no *dhumkuria*. In a village near the Jashpur border, where there was a large Church, and in another village near Lohadaga, the people professed that they had not even heard the word *dhumkuria* and an elderly Uraon became quite offensive at the suggestion that there was such a thing in his village. At Agru I saw the ruined building of a dormitory which had been abandoned, because they could not afford, so they said, to replace the roof. But since at Agru there was a fine dancing-floor, there was probably some other reason—a mysterious death, or a scandal—which accounted for the *dhumkuria's* collapse. Roy says that 'in one village we were told that long ago a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The pubic hairs, reference to which can be made the most inflammatory of insults, are entirely removed by girls. They are supposed to smear the hairs with wood-ash and pull them out. 'If a woman uses a razor for this', we were told at Phauda, 'she will become very heavy after death, and the men who carry out her body will laugh and say, "She's one of those who used a razor".'[1]

III. Combs

Belle marrāte pungār puy ānta

On a dry tree blossoms a flower—A comb

In the intimate life of chelik and motiari the comb plays a most important part. It is used every night by the motiari when they tidy the hair of the boys. It is used to titillate the skin of back and arms. In many places it is one of the most popular forms of personal adornment. Both boys and girls wear it but it is essentially a girl's possession and a girl's decoration. In Binjhli I remember seeing a row of girls walking in file; each of them had ten or fifteen combs arranged in lines on the left side of the head. But there is no rule about this. Sometimes the combs are in the back hair, sometimes on both sides. Boys wear one or two combs in the turban, or stuck in the back hair.

Different types of comb are illustrated in Figs. 67-70, 74-5, and 80-1. I believe the patterns are simply for decorative purposes and have no magical significance. Thurston has an interesting passage, which unfortunately he does not illustrate, about the strikingly similar designs of the combs of the Negritos of Malacca and the Kadir of the Anaimalai Hills.[2] Preuss had worked out a theory that the patterns were not geometrical, but consisted of a series of hieroglyphics.[3] Thurston, however, believed that the Kadir comb decorations were only conventional. The bamboo combs worn by Semang women are said to be talismans against disease,[4] but neither Kadir nor Muria combs seem to have this meaning. The Muria combs are often carved with phallic symbols—but their aim is not magical, but the very practical one of arousing sexual interest.[5]

For a girl to possess a large number of combs does not necessarily mean that she is specially popular; more probably it implies that she has a very

[1] With this may be compared a Gond proverbial saying recorded in Mandla. 'The bearers lifted up the pubic hairs to make the corpse lighter, but found it made no difference.'

[2] Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 27f.

[3] K. T. Preuss, 'Die Zauberbilder Schriften der Negrito in Malaya' in *Globus*, 1899. Schebesta, however, considers that this, like the flower-pattern theory of Vaughan Stevens, is 'entirely baseless'. P. Schebesta, 'The Decorative Art of the Aborigines of the Malay Peninsula', *JRAS* (1929), p. 749. (See Fig. 76)

[4] W. W. Skeat and C. O. Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (London, 1906), Vol. I, pp. 396ff. For the magical significance of the comb, see also J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales* (London, 1890), Vol. I, p. lxxi; L. Garnett, *Greek Folk Poesy* (London, 1896), Vol. II, p. 437. The occurrence of the comb on early Celtic monuments points to the value set on it. See Macculloch, op. cit., p. 180.

[5] In several tribes, the gift of a comb is an essential part of the marriage ceremony. This is so among the Muduvar.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. V, p. 93. The Kadir bridegroom should always make a comb and present it to his future wife just before marriage or at the end of the ceremony.—Ibid., Vol. III, p. 28. At a Kuki marriage, the priest presents husband and wife with small combs. 'Combs, perhaps these particular combs, are very sacred things. It is very unlucky to lose them, and man and wife only may use the same comb. When a man dies, his comb is buried with him, and his near relations break their combs and must roam with dishevelled hair for a few days before they renew them.'—Dalton, op. cit., p. 47.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

[381]

FIG. 87. Head-band of sago palm fibre from Malakot (*see p. 385*)
Length 23"

FIG. 88. Neck-band of date palm fibre from Bayanar (*see p. 385*)
Length 16"

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devoted lover. Every comb, however, is a gift. When a girl wants a new one she brings two annas' worth of silver metal from the bazaar and that

[301]

DETAIL

FIG. 89. Cowrie head-band from Ulera. The cowries are attached to a cord made of carefully woven sago palm fibre
(*See p. 386*)

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X883 431 836 412 301

night goes to comb the hair of the boy from whom she desires a present. She does his hair with special care and whispers in his ear, 'Look, boy, I have brought some silver, make me a nice comb'. The boy says, 'I don't know how to'. The girl says, 'But of course you know'. Then the boy says, 'Well, what will you give me? Will you....?' The girl says, 'Never', meaning 'Yes', and the boy makes the comb.

In well-disciplined ghotul a boy cannot give a comb to a motiari without the permission of the Kotwar; sometimes it has actually to pass through the Kotwar's hands. For such a gift seems to be regarded as a very definite and important step in the love relations between a boy and girl, and it is considered necessary by the ghotul authorities to keep a check on such intimacies in case there is any scandal or trouble. To this witness some lines in a Paskna Pata from Bandopal:

> Where did you get a comb like that?
> You got it from the embrace of a chelik.
> One comb for once, two combs for twice.

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If a comb is lost or broken, the chelik must make a new one. Otherwise his motiari says, 'How can I comb his hair?' If the Kotwar hears about it, he orders the boy to make one, and he does so at once.

Most combs are made of mahua or karraha wood. Implements used in their manufacture are a small saw, ¾" broad and 6" long, rather like a fret-saw; a *hadri* knife; a *hujji* chisel and a *tatti* adze.

The Kotwar of the Phunder ghotul made a comb for me. He took a piece of mahua wood 2' long and 3" broad, supported one end on a bit of wood and gradually planed down one end, first with the adze and then with his knife. He stood it on end and trimmed the top; then with the saw cut a number of slits 1" deep, measuring them with a twig to ensure that they were even He cut them again and again to enlarge the slits, leaving on either side of the wood a space uncut.

Now another boy came and held the wood firmly, and the Kotwar cut off 1½" from the top with his saw, first cutting half through on one side, then turning the wood over and doing it from the other. Finally he broke the piece off and trimmed it with his knife. So far the process had taken half an hour, but the small piece of wood had taken shape as a comb. The boy now spent fifteen minutes shaping the sides, then with his chisel he enlarged the slits again and carefully cleaned the apertures between the spikes. After this, he held the comb in the hollow of his left hand and grasping the chisel firmly in the right and pressing it down hard began to decorate the comb with various patterns. By the time he had finished, he had spent two-and-a-half hours on the work, the greater part of the time being spent on the decoration.

[314]

The next morning the Kotwar went to a wild fig tree to extract its sticky, milky gum. He struck a branch with the blunt end of his axe and caught some drops of gum in a leaf-cup. He brought this back and sat down by a fire. He spread the gum on either side of the comb with a bit of straw, warmed it on the fire, applied more gum, laid the silver paper over it and rubbed it in hard with the handle of his chisel till the pattern showed. He repeated the process on the opposite side toasting the comb before the fire by sticking it on the end of his chisel. Finally he brought out the pattern clearly by pressing in the silver paper with his own finger-nails, and washed it with a straw dipped in water.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

in his place. The Belosa of Berma was removed because she was too slack to control the girls.

I have only once heard of a boy being removed from office for abusing his sexual privileges. In Sonawal the Diwan seduced another chelik's 'wife'. The others fined him, but he refused to pay, saying, 'I am your master, I am not going to pay a fine to my "subjects"'. He and his own wife, the Diwanin, or head of the girls, were both degraded and made 'subjects'.

IV

We now turn to breaches of the sexual conventions of the ghotul. Here, according to the type of ghotul, two opposite types of offence are recognized.

In those ghotul where there is a rule against 'pairing off', boys and girls are punished if they sleep together too often. The Subedar and Silo of the Binjhli ghotul were fined four annas each for sleeping together every day. In these ghotul too it is considered very bad form for a boy to be 'possessive' about a girl, to be jealous over her and claim her as his. 'We must change every two or four days, or we are fined.'

But in the other type of ghotul, boys and girls are fined for committing what may be called 'ghotul adultery'. A case of this has already been described in Chapter XI. If a chelik sleeps with another boy's motiari during her 'husband's' absence, he is fined. If the Kotwar 'finds the cloth of a girl' who is not the boy's 'mate' on his mat, he reports the matter and the boy is punished.

In villages where there are separate ghotul for boys and girls, they may be fined for visiting one another on days when this is taboo. In Lihagaon, where there were separate dormitories for boys and girls, some years ago the Likhen of the boys was Lamhada to the Mularo of the girls. One night she came to the boys' ghotul and slept with him—a double impropriety since engaged couples are not supposed to sleep together in the ghotul. He was fined a rupee by the chelik, but refused to pay, and on the third day ran away with the girl whom he had already made pregnant. They were brought back and fined two rupees. This time they paid up, and the ghotul members agreed to the marriage and said they would attend it.

With all the freedom of the ghotul, there is a strict insistence on decorum and modesty. It is remarkable that at weddings when the older women and men behave with a complete lack of restraint, abusing each other and catching hold of each other in the most obscene manner, the motiari are never molested. The chelik are sometimes punished for showing an indecent interest in the girls even in the ghotul. Once at Palari the girls were dancing the Durpa Dandi, or Lotus Stalk Dance, when each girl rests one leg on her neighbour's waist. It is considered a rather risky dance and the girls rarely perform it in public. The Kandki of the ghotul sat down near the dancers and tried to peep up in a rather unpleasant manner. The girls stopped dancing and took him inside the ghotul. 'What were you sitting down for?' 'Nothing.' 'You wanted to look at us, you dirty little beast, so we're going to punish you.' They tied his hands together and bound them to the roof for fifteen minutes. When he was released, he had to salute each of the girls in turn and beg forgiveness.

V

How does the machinery of ghotul justice work? How are its punishments inflicted? I will give one or two actual examples before proceeding to tabulate the penalties.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

passion and the passion of the female. Throughout nature sexual conjugation only takes place after much expenditure of energy.'[1] And so the ghotul evening usually begins with vigorous dances and games, many of them frankly provocative of the sexual emotions. The splendid parade of the Mandri dance, the intimacies of the Hulki, the suggestiveness of some of the games are invaluable as a preparation for tumescence. There is a proverb *Rela rela bonde pala*—'If you start with singing Rela you end with the satisfaction of desire'. It must be noted that it is not only the chelik who by the energy of their display excite the motiari; the girls' games and dances are equally powerful stimulants. In one of these games, the girls bend forward, each holding a stick in her hand to represent a penis, and dance with jerky movements of the buttocks that closely simulate the sexual process. As they dance they sing,

Nān nān chingro,	Little little prawn hairs,
Bare lām hinta,	Very long thorn,
Kaha gai ho,	Where has he gone,
Nandpurihār Rāja?	The Nandpurihar Raja?

The 'little prawn hairs' are the pubic hairs and the long thorn is the penis of the chelik. In the Jhoria Endanna, the girls also sing songs about sexual congress.

V

We have already seen, particularly in Chapter XI, something of the scope of sexual opportunity offered by the ghotul as also the limitations it imposes on the normal process of sexual selection. Under these conditions do the chelik and motiari really 'fall in love'? What happens to the tenderness of devotion, the tensions and despairs of passion, the idealizing of the adored object which is still, to the majority of Europeans, essential to any proper relationship between the sexes? Or does life in the ghotul, as Dalton said of the Uraon dormitory, 'sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'?

It is possible that the Muria, in the diffused tenderness of corporate affection, in their simple and natural view of sexual congress, in their rational and realistic attitude to one another, have achieved something better than the sentimental raptures of the lover in the novelette 'sighing like furnace' for an impossible ideal.

Many chelik and motiari seem to pass through their ghotul period without any very passionate love-affairs, content and happy with the ghotul tradition of love. Others, in the course of their seven or eight ghotul years, experience one or two vivid and exciting adventures which may last only a few months and which interrupt but illuminate the general course of their less intense amours. Others again, of a different temperament, are always falling in love and out of it, coveting other cheliks' 'wives', arranging to meet girls outside in the forest or visiting them when the others are asleep. 'Love often makes us break the rules,' said a chelik at Kuntpadar.

For across the calm sea of unstrained, unfrustrated affection, there blow sudden gales and storms. A new girl comes to the village; a boy suddenly awakes to the charm of a motiari he has known for years; a chelik displays himself as a popular hero and draws every heart; little girls and boys grow up

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Analysis of the Sexual Impulse*, p. 32. The sex-dance of the sub-human primates 'consists of an erect swaggering waddle quite different from the usual mode of locomotion. No doubt its function is to intimidate and prepare the female for sexual submission to the dominant male.'—Clifford Allen, *The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities* (Oxford, 1940), p. 27. See also H. Bingham, *The Sex Development in Apes* (Baltimore, 1928).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and in their maturity reveal new opportunities. Chelik and motiari are then disturbed, devastated, broken just like anyone else; they fall in love. 'The best love is the first; that is the work of a madman. The rest is the result of an arrangement.' How do boys set about satisfying their passion? And even when it is far less intense than this, how do they approach a new girl whom they desire to win? How do they even persuade the girl with whom they regularly sleep to allow them consummation—for in most ghotul, though a girl is bound to sleep with one of the chelik, she need not have congress with him unless she wants to.

Love-making begins, said a chelik at Bandopal, 'with laughing, smiling and dancing together. Then we arrange to meet in the fields or forest, perhaps by a stream. The boy gives her a carved comb. She steals a little money from her parents, and buys beads to make him a necklace. When it is dark she gives it to him. He wears it at night, but in the day he keeps it carefully hidden.'

In the remote approach to the beloved, gifts play an important part. The chelik make hair-pins, wooden blocks for the back hair, pretty little combs and small tobacco-pouches. The motiari respond with bead-necklaces, head-bands, ear-pendants, and even mats. Mirrors are popular gifts on either side. The gift of a comb is regarded as a sign that one's intentions are really serious; in some ghotul it may not be given directly, but must pass through the Kotwar's hands so that he may keep a check on ghotul romance. Some girls accumulate a great number of these ornaments; it does not necessarily mean that they have many, but rather that they have devoted, lovers. The Likhen of Kanhargaon made twelve combs for his beloved Surtao; when she danced, she used to remove them and give them to him for safe keeping.

[831] Many of these gifts promote a chelik's suit not only by pleasing the girl, but by a more direct solicitation. The boys carve tiny symbols of the vagina or of a penis in erection, they draw breasts and even the pimples round the areola. They make these drawings or carvings on combs or tobacco pouches, and on the walls or pillars of the ghotul and on trunks of trees in the forest. Sometimes they carve breasts on the wooden pillows they use at night. These symbols, they say, often make it easier to open a conversation.

When girls fall in love with boys, they show their devotion by doing things for them. They take their dirty clothes to the stream for washing. They do their hair with special attention. They carry their drums. They bring secret presents of liquor or tobacco from their homes. They go to the jungle for little gifts of fruit. Such attentions quickly win the chelik's heart.

The pangs and sorrows of frustrated love are rarely, I think, experienced. Even where desire is strong, it is tempered by the great range of sexual opportunity. 'Is there a lack of tigers in the jungle?' A girl who is attracted by a boy but who, for some reason, cannot win him, says philosophically enough, 'What is the use of rice in someone else's grain-bin?' and finds another lover. A boy says, 'If not today, I will plough the field tomorrow'.

VI

Such is the remote approach to what the Muria regard as the really important thing in human relations, sexual congress. We must now consider the more immediate approach to this critical and definite expression of love, without which no friendship can be real.

Motiari are often shy and unwilling; they are afraid of pregnancy; sometimes they are just not interested in that particular boy; they are well aware

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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of the seductive power of modesty. None of the evidence suggests that congress in the ghotul is readily achieved. It is not a place where girls are 'easy'; a chelik has no harder work than this.

A very important ghotul tradition is that a chelik must not rush a girl. It is considered improper to have intercourse with a motiari the first time you sleep with her—though doubtless there are offenders against this exacting code. A boy must approach a girl carefully and with respect; he must ensure that she is emotionally prepared for him; it is a sin to have intercourse before the girl is 'ready'. How many civilized people regulate their lives with such wisdom?

A chelik in Atargaon was in love with a girl for months, but she always repelled him. He took her to the Dhawadai bazaar and on the way begged her to be kind. She still refused, fearing he would make her pregnant. At last he gave her two bottles of liquor, and even then she only yielded when he solemnly swore to accept the responsibility if there was a child. A former Chalki of Telanga had a similar experience. He was in love with the girl he slept with, but she would never yield to him. He too took her to a bazaar and treated her to liquor and parched rice. She said, 'Your heart and mine are one; surely I will give you all you want. But now if I become pregnant, I shall have to carry a load that should be borne by two bullocks, not by one. If you promise to share the load, you can do what you will.' The Chalki promised; she gave herself to him; within a year she had conceived; and the boy kept his word and married her.

I will now quote a few documents, which are so much more valuable than general statements, about the immediate approach to intercourse. Each describes the first contact of the boy with that particular girl. At Munjmeta a chelik described how,

> If a peasant leaves his village and comes to another, his sons and daughters enter the new ghotul. If the new chelik can find a girl who has no partner [this is one of the ghotul where boys and girls are 'married'], he sleeps with her, taking her in his arms but doing no more. The next day he touches her breasts, and that day and the next he plays with her, tickling, stroking, fondling till he is sure she will not mind. She may still stop him doing anything for a day or two more. Then after a time, he excites her greatly; when all are asleep, he touches her knees, he pushes them a little; if she doesn't cry out, he opens them, he undoes her pubic cloth, and goes to her.

Another account comes from Kapsi, a beautiful village under the shadow of the Abujhmar Hills.

> We never try to have a girl the first day we sleep with her. We play with her first, and only when she is ready and excited do we go to her. It happens like this. After some days of sleeping together the chelik says to his motiari, 'We have slept together for such a long time now; won't you let me eat your tobacco?' The motiari replies, 'But I haven't any tobacco; how can I give you what I haven't got?' He says, 'O yes you have, only you're hiding it somewhere'. She says now, 'I've never done it; I don't know what to do'. If she goes on refusing, he gets angry and says, 'For so many days you have slept on my mat; you have warmed yourself with my blanket; I have given you combs and rings, and all the world knows I love you. But after tonight don't sleep with me again. My life is hurt. Yet for many days my life was in you.' Then he turns his back on her and pushes

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●836

her off his mat. When that happens she soon becomes sorry and flings her arms round him saying, 'Why are you angry? We are always together; we will meet tomorrow'. Later, when all are asleep, she opens her cloth and lets him have his way.

There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that just as it is the motiari who rule the sexual side and make the sleeping arrangements in the modern type of ghotul, so in both types it is the motiari who take the lead in actual congress. 'When a girl first goes to the ghotul,' said a motiari at Binjhli, 'she is sent to a chelik. She sits down by his mat and says, "Won't you give me a camping-site?" The chelik answers, "Lie down and sleep". The girl is always frightened at first, but she should make no fuss even if it hurts her, for then everyone would hear and laugh. A boy must never ask a girl to sleep with him. It is we who make the arrangements.' 'At first', I was told, 'it is the boy who is shy. But the first long steady look of the motiari encourages him, and afterwards he takes the lead.'

I will give finally a charming record, recorded at Phauda by Shamrao Hivale, of the way a chelik and motiari in love talk to one another.

'All day you were in my eyes,' says the chelik. 'You went to that village, and I kept on looking at it and saying to myself, "She is there".'

'Yes, I went away,' responds the motiari, 'but I felt as if you were just behind me. I could see your shadow by me all the time.'

'All day long I felt as if you were actually talking to me.'

'I said to myself, "Now the sun stands overhead; he must have returned from the jungle with his wood; perhaps he is resting, perhaps he is drinking his *jāwa*".'

'I felt as if I should take you away, and talk to you alone, and never hear anyone else's voice again.'

'I never want to hear anyone else either.'

'Do you know what I did in the afternoon, when you had come home and then gone out fishing? I was ploughing, but I felt I must look at you, so I left my plough and hid under a bush by the river. There I could see you fishing and I felt very happy. After a little while I went back to my plough.'

VII. The Sexual Act

Kosra ke kāte asan Muria ke lote. As is the reaping of millet, so is the intercourse of the Muria.—Muria proverb

X883
833

In the ghotul there is no ceremony of sexual initiation, no formal rite of defloration, no permission (save in a few ghotul) is needed from the leaders for the first or any other intercourse. 'Desire is not controlled by rules, nor is our copulation.'

836

From their earliest days in the ghotul the little chelik and motiari play together until gradually, imperceptibly the vaginal entrance is enlarged and the hymen disappears without a tear. 'We used to behave,' said Nari, 'exactly like little bulls and cows, sporting together till the bull could penetrate.' 'When you sleep with a girl night after night,' said the Antar of Jamkot, 'however small you may be, as long as flesh becomes wood, you try to beat her with it.' And the Budhker of Kapsi described how he quarrelled with his parents and eloped with his still immature wife. 'She was too young, and for a long time I only played with her and was quite happy with that till she was mature.'

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

For it is not considered proper for the older boys to have congress with a motiari till she has passed the menarche. 'Real happiness only comes when you are both mature. Of course the kids do it, but without the falling of water there's little pleasure. It is like eating a raw fruit. There is no sweetness in it. It is like rice without salt.' This judgement comes from Kajen; another is from Kabonga. 'To try to have a girl before she is mature is as hard as for a pig to dig up roots. Sometimes it manages it; it gets the root up and enjoys it. But it prefers its ordinary food.' The Kotwar of Temrugaon said, 'The first time I did it was with a little girl and it was very painful. She didn't like it either. One ought not to dig in the field of an immature girl, for one's *pulu* (digging-stick) may get damaged.'

But after a girl's first menstruation, said Raunu of Jhakri, 'everyone plans to be the first'. Even now, however, the girl must not be forced or hurried; she must be wooed, persuaded, loved into yielding. Sometimes girls who are afraid of intercourse succeed in resisting the chelik for a long time. Often the first serious sexual experience of a girl is during a marriage, when everyone is excited and perhaps a little drunk, and no one asks questions or notices what is going on.

The ghotul leaders do not interfere unduly with the young children, but they see that they receive proper sexual training and instruction. 'As a young bullock is broken to the plough, so a young boy is taught.' The evidence for this sort of statement is best presented in actual 'documents'. Here is one from Kapsi.

> A big girl teaches a little boy by letting him fondle her breasts and hug her. Then she opens and spreads her legs and makes the little boy lie on her breasts. She shows him how to open her clothes and insert the little penis with his hand. The first time the boy doesn't know what to do and the juice comes out too soon. But the next day she says, 'You only pressed me last night, nothing was done properly. I had no pleasure'. The boy replies, 'Today I'm really ready; now I know what to do'.

In Munjmeta, the Melia recalled how he learnt to perform the sexual act from the very descriptions of the older boys. And in Markabera, the Diwan said,

> A little boy doesn't need to be taught anything. Does a young crab have to be taught how to dig earth? But the elder boys generally tell them how to do it. When the little boys tell them their secrets and how they tried but failed, the older chelik show them the best way. The older girls do the same for the little girls. Sometimes older girls who get fond of little boys teach them themselves. But we learn everything by being in the ghotul. How can the little boys check themselves? Who doesn't feel a desire to eat when he sees people enjoying a feast in his presence?

Thus from a very early age the young chelik and motiari are trained in sexual technique, both by example and by actual instruction. A boy does not approach his marriage bed a virgin, but neither does he go to it a fool.

The immediate sexual approach and the technique of copulation practised by chelik and motiari are conditioned by the circumstances of ghotul life. Normal sexual congress should take place within the ghotul. It is believed that this precaution lessens the chances of conception (there is a 'safe region' rather than a 'safe period'); it protects boy and girl from the calamitous interference of magic; and it imposes a certain degree of restraint and discipline.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Naturally there are many breaches of the rule; at marriages and festivals, on dancing expeditions and during everyday work in field and forest, chelik and motiari unite in intercourse—but this is regarded as irregular, not exactly condemned, but accepted as outside the routine.

This fact alone is sufficient to make the ghotul tradition almost unique. For here is a company of boys and girls, many of them close relatives, who perform the sexual act in public, often in a single room. For it is public, even though veiled by the mask of darkness and a convention that no one should watch his neighbour. In some of the bigger ghotul, of course, the boys and girls are able to thin out a little; they can scatter in the different huts; in the hot weather they can sleep out in the compound. But during a large part of the year chelik and motiari sleep together in one small smoky room. They do not care to leave the warmth and security of their cosy ghotul for the dangerous and inconvenient discomfort of field or jungle. So we find brothers performing the sexual act before their sisters, and elder brothers in the forbidden presence of their younger brothers' 'wives'. Sometimes they are so crowded together that they have great difficulty in achieving coitus without waking up their neighbours.

For this reason, because intercourse must be with all the secrecy possible, without display and without disturbance, the normal method of copulation inside the ghotul is not unlike the characteristic European method—the girl lies prone on her back, and the boy stretches himself upon her, forcing her legs apart and often raising them to place them round his thighs.

But when the lovers meet outside the ghotul, they are able to indulge more varied postures. At Jhakri the chelik knew of four—the girl prone on her back and the youth kneeling or squatting before her; both sitting and facing one another; the youth prone and fully extended above the girl who sometimes raises her legs and sometimes extends them; and both standing, the girl supported against a tree or wall. At Palari, a chelik said, 'Usually we lie flat, but when a boy is very happy he sits above her.'

A former Sirdar of Singarpuri described the difference between intercourse with a motiari in a crowded ghotul and with one's own wife in a private room. 'To have a motiari is like living on borrowed money; you are always anxious, and afraid someone will notice what you're doing. But with your own wife at home, you can have her lying down, you can have her standing up, you can have her from the front, you can have her from behind. She is like a good crop which you can eat till you can eat no more.'

But copulation *a posteriori* is generally considered improper. There still linger stories probably imaginary, that the soldiers who raped Muria women during the Rebellion of 1911 took them in this way. There is a ribald story current in the Bara Dongar Pargana of a married couple who wearied of the constant publicity and monotony of intercourse in a crowded home.

> So one day the man took her to the jungle and said they would copulate like horses. He persuaded her, though with great difficulty, to become completely naked. He said, 'Now you lean forward and when I come to you from behind, making love-noises like a horse, you must kick me with one leg'. But they had both forgotten that she was wearing heavy anklets with sharp edges, and when she kicked, one of these cut his lip open, and it has not yet completely healed.

A more tragic, though equally ribald, tale comes from Gormi.

> A husband saw a pair of cranes copulating as he was going home drunk from the liquor-shop. He said in his mind, 'That's how I'll do it tonight'.

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

So thinking, he tied a sickle to his nose as a beak, bound a winnowing-fan on each arm, put a broom on his bottom. There he was, a bird. He mounted his wife from behind, flapping his wings and crying *kar-kar-kar*. But he knocked over a lamp, set fire to the house and was burnt to death.

A chelik and motiari generally agree to have congress at the time of the massage. When the girl lays the chelik's hand on her shoulder so that she can massage his arm, he squeezes it in a certain manner. This is how the Kotwar of Chandabera described it.

They have agreed on it. They lie down together on the mat. He has his hand on her breast, but that means nothing. When all are asleep, he makes the sign. I cannot tell you what it is, but we all know it. She says 'Go away' but he knows she means yes. He doesn't kiss her or touch any part of her, save her breasts and shoulders. He raises himself and separates her legs. She at once unties her cloth. When he is on her, she puts his organ in its place with her hand. She says nothing, nor does he. They are very quiet. He must do it hard; unless you sweat, unless your rut (*masti*) leaves you, you are not satisfied. She says, 'Push on, push on (*alena, alena*)'. She won't let him go till she is satisfied. At last the word *Hai* comes from both their lips. They are no more drunken. *Eko lela hende raiyār ashe hong dayār*. When it goes out through her ears, her temper is cooled.

Bindo, the old Muria of Benur, recalled a love affair of sixty years ago.

I used to sleep with the Malko in the ghotul. Though she would be lying by my side, I did not go to her at first, for I was the head of the ghotul and thought I oughtn't to. But after two or four days, Malko caught hold of my penis and put it between her thighs. Even then I did nothing. Then the girl got very angry and refused to sleep with me for some days. But at last she came again to my mat and this time I went to her. After that we often had intercourse together.

This elementary form of masturbation by girls is known as *dinga-dinga* and seems to be common. But it must be noted that it is a preparation for normal intercourse and not (as so often in Africa) a substitute for it. In Masora the chelik said that 'when a motiari wants a boy, she catches hold of his penis and plays with it till he goes to her'.

The function of the clitoris is not unknown. It is usually prominently portrayed in drawings or carvings of the vagina. Its history is traced in the myths. To the male storyteller, it is a slightly ludicrous object, a parody of the penis, and a mention of it never fails to raise a laugh. In intercourse, said a Muria at Sirpuri, 'the clitoris becomes violently agitated when it sees the penis approaching'. The Antar of Masora said, 'When it sees the penis coming, the clitoris smiles'.

The Muria believe it is the woman who takes the lead and sets the pace. A curious illustration of this is the fact that, contrary to what I believe to be the almost universal practice in village India, the girl herself undoes her pubic cloth.[1] Elsewhere this is considered immodest in a girl and unmanly in her

[1] 'The folds of the sari which are tied in the front are called *tirani*, which is a very significant word in Indian love-making. The knot of the sari is to be untied by the man when the lovers unite.'—D. Bhagwat, *Folk-songs from the Satpura Valleys* (Bombay, 1940), p. xx.

837 has to divine who is the guilty party in order that peace may be made and danger averted.

783 Adultery therefore is not only the betrayal of tribal fellowship, the infringement of another's right to property, a breach of sexual tradition, but it is highly dangerous. A sort of public apology has to be made to the betrayed husband and a ceremony of purification performed.

In order to avert their fate, once the matter has become public, the guilty pair go to the Gaita with a pig or goat which he offers to the local deities and the Departed. Then he goes with witnesses to the nearest tank. On a stone he puts two bits of broken earthenware and some dub grass. Everyone present puts one foot on the stone; the Gaita throws water and liquor over the guilty pair who cry, 'Let us not now swell with water. May the Yer Kanyang living in the midst of this water make an end of our sin (*pāp*)'. The seducer then greets the woman's husband and all is forgiven.[1]

X983 A similar ceremony is performed in the *jodidār* ghotul if a chelik goes off with another boy's motiari, or if he sleeps with her in his absence. At Atargaon, ●836 where a chelik eloped with another's ghotul-wife, but was brought back after a few days, the ghotul Manjhi took the two 'husbands' out of the village to 783 a place where two paths crossed. He made them stand on either side of the path and put a knife on the ground and above the knife a stone. He made the boys put their right feet on the stone and gave them each seven leaf-cups of water. Seven times they exchanged the cups of water and seven times cups of liquor, and swore to preserve friendship with one another. The seducer promised to pay a heavy fine if it happened again.

X883 There is one type of adultery, however, which does not seem to be taken too seriously. 'Suppose a girl has a ghotul lover.' So they put it at Markabera. 836 'She elopes with him. They are brought back and she is quickly married to her betrothed. After a few weeks she runs away again to her lover. She 837 is again brought back, again accepted by her husband, though he knows she has slept with her old lover. And then she is happy at last and settles down.' 'It is like getting a new cow,' said the chelik at Nayanar. 'She does not at first like her new home. She runs back to the herd and her former pastures. But we don't beat her for that; we are rather doubly kind.'

In dealing with a motiari-wife, that is not only kind; it is intelligent.

VII. Divorce

586 Throughout tribal India divorce is easy and generally the wife has the same rights as her husband. Among the Muria divorce on either side is possible, but the stability of their marriage tradition makes it a comparatively rare event. I have already described how divorce can be effected in a *jodidār* ghotul. Similar ceremonies can release a woman from her partner in adult life. These ceremonies, it must be observed, are essentially rites of purification; they are retrospective, having reference to an already existing state of affairs. The actual union with a new partner and the paying of compensation effects the divorce; now husband and wife have to be free, not of each other—for they are that already—but of the dangers that cling to the conduct of one or both.

The ceremonies are the same as those by which a couple taken in adultery are cleared of their fault. Whether the woman returns to her own husband

[1] A similar ceremony is performed to purify a boy who sleeps with a near relative in the ghotul, but in this case a root or cucumber is used instead of a goat for sacrifice.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER SIX

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: MARITAL INFIDELITY

I

§36 [157] The Maria allow their women a great deal of freedom in their pre-nuptial period, but for matrimonial relationships they have a strict regard. They are jealous and possessive by temperament, passionate as lovers,[1] suspicious and

[301]

Maria girls' neck-band

exacting husbands. Divorce is rare; adultery is dangerous, a crime the end of which cannot be foreseen.

§37 Adultery is dangerous, for unless proper precautions are taken the ancestors of the household and the clan-god may

[1] But as elsewhere in India 'lust-murder' does not occur. 'Lust-murder, as one of the phenomena of psychopathia sexualis, appears to be better known in the more highly cultured countries of the West than in the East, where capital offences have their basis in less recondite mental processes'. S. M. Edwardes, *Crime in India* (Oxford, 1924), p. 28.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Murin

674 Murders committed on account of an unwelcome and
336 unexpected pregnancy are not common, because of the
[348] high standard of domestic morals among the Maria and because if an unmarried girl is found pregnant, she is immediately married and the child is thus legitimized. But there is one authentic case in which a man was driven to kill his lover, though it may be said that it was her stupidity rather than her pregnancy that caused the tragedy. Mase was the wife of a man who deserted her for the Tea Gardens, leaving her alone and unsupported with three little children. She used to make some sort of living as a coolie. But presently Poriami Hirma fell in love with her and used constantly to visit her in her house, although he never officially kept her as his wife. In time she became pregnant and a panchayat was called to consider the matter. The elders decided to send information to Mase's husband's elder brother, an ex-convict and a harsh violent man, of whom the girl was greatly afraid.

Early in the morning of Tuesday, 21 February 1933, Mase left her three children in the house and went to tell Hirma what had happened. She expected that her husband's elder brother would come that day and beat her and she suggested that Hirma should run away with her and hide. Hirma agreed and they went some way into the jungle and sat down under a tamarind tree. The weather was cold and they lit a fire, beside which they sat and talked. Mase was very frightened and depressed. She wept and threatened to kill herself. Hirma very properly asked her to come and live with him as his wife, and promised to look after her and the children. But the girl, who was obviously in

[674 seduced Kande's first wife, and the proper ceremonies of purification
684] had been conducted. But when Kande took another wife, the father again attempted or, as some say, succeeded in seducing her, and this time there was a violent quarrel between father and son while they were catching birds in the jungle. The father actually complained to his son that the girl did not respond properly to his advances. Kande was assaulted by his father and killed him in return. When I saw this boy in jail a year later, the extraordinary sadness of his face contrasted strikingly with the expression of many of the more regular criminals. The villagers concealed the crime and when it was by chance discovered five months later, were very backward in co-operating with the police. Obviously as in the Mundra case, they considered it a very proper murder. But Kande was not so fortunate as Mundra and was sentenced not to a month, but to five years' imprisonment. This was later reduced to three years, and he was released in 1943.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

674 With these cases we may compare the tragic destiny of
583 Dome, a young unmarried Dhurwa girl aged about seventeen. A youth called Joga had been living as her Lamhada for the past five years, and their marriage had been arranged to take place at the next harvest. Dome did not care for Joga, but like any other Maria girl she was prepared to follow her parents' wishes in regard to her marriage and become his wife.

[513] One night the girl found herself alone in her house. Joga was not supposed to sleep indoors, but outside in the courtyard. The girl went to bed and shut the door of her room. Late that night Joga went to her and asked her to have sexual intercourse with him. She refused, saying that, if she did, the gods would be angry with her and her cattle would die, and Joga went away. Fearing that the boy might ravish her, she got her axe and kept it by her side. Presently she fell sleep and again Joga came into the house and caught hold of her. She started up and struck him a violent blow with her axe, making a deep wound from which he died in a few minutes.

The Court held that Dome had acted according to her right of self-defence when she was unprotected in the house at dead of night. It is not known why Dome rejected her [834] future husband, for it is not really a very common habit among girls for whom Lamhada are serving. It is possible that she was in her menstrual period, a thought that is suggested by her saying that the gods would be angry and the cattle die if she had intercourse. On the other hand, it may merely be that she disliked the boy and did not wish to have anything to do with him until she had to after marriage.

Another Lamhada, who is now serving a sentence of life imprisonment in Jagdalpur, is Khuja, a Muria boy from Esalnar. He is a cheerful and rather stupid youth who, when he described his crime to me, laughed heartily at what he considered the amusing bits. Khuja was living with his father-in-law and though the girl was very young had already been married to her. One day a Ghasia beggar woman came to the house and said to him, 'Come along boy'. He asked her what she wanted him for, and she replied, 'For your wife's head'. A fortnight later she came again and complain-

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

586 732 no difficulty in getting wives to stay with them. Dwarfs, on the other hand, not only find it hard to get wives except their elder brothers' widows, but are passed over in the succession to a post of responsibility or the management of a family. Madness is particularly dreaded, and would certainly involve the elopement of a wife. But husbands, though they would divorce a mad [833] woman *a thoro*, would still maintain them; sexual intercourse with a mad woman is believed to result in complete loss of virility. 586 I have heard of no case in which a husband has divorced his wife; she may be frigid or barren or in other ways unsatisfactory, but so long as she is not unfaithful her husband is expected to maintain her, and his remedy is to seek another co-wife, often getting her younger sister or parallel-cousin as compensation for her falling [674] short of expectations. The murder of wives in sudden fits of temper for petty shortcomings is unfortunately common among the Bison-horn Marias, though almost unknown in the hills. Nor must it [837] be assumed that because Bison-horn wives often elope, their husbands tamely submit to infidelity; the detection of an intrigue often results in the husband killing the wife or her paramour, though once a wife has made good her escape to another man's house the [593] husband usually accepts the *fait accompli*. The beating or ill-treatment of wives is strongly condemned by all Marias.

[See cat. 116, p. 425, – Analyst]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Benur, Dansa Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sambhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered.

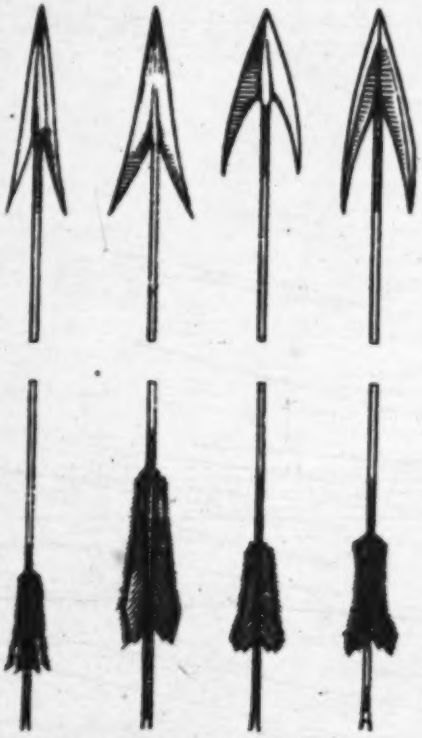

FIG. 10. Arrows and arrow-heads
Length 1' 5"

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chaniyagaon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection.

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul.

I

Chikkal mâti kariya mâma kâri-gir kârigir shikâri shikâri!
Tupak sâja kiwa mâma.
Mâli gondi tupâk mâwa.

Gojar kawar sora mâma.

O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!
Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
The name of the gun is Maligondi, uncle shikari.
Make gunpowder with gun from the mode tree, uncle shikari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.[1] I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.[2] The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. The Intervention of the Departed in Human Affairs

But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are particularly interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or grievous hurt peace can only be made between the two families if peace is made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery with another man.

The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead. Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall, to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing, to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

[1] Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 96.
[2] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubstantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

X983
936
[37]

TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

A year after my marriage, the Maharaja came to Bara Dongar and I went with my father-to see him enthroned. Afterwards we went to Malakot, and I slept in the ghotul for two nights. While all were asleep one of the girls came secretly to me.

Here we have a picture of a situation where a boy who is a member of a *jodidār* ghotul and thus supposed to be faithful to his official partner, yet continues his romantic attachment to the girl he really loves and whom he ultimately marries. Budhu was also able to evade the rules by visiting ghotul of the other type. Had the Sonawal and Kokori ghotul also been of the *jodidār* pattern, they could not have extended to him such privileges.

It will be noted that these temporary encounters with other girls did not in any way interfere with the boy's devotion to his Malko and the happiness of his married life with her. He says, and I have no doubt that it is true, that he has never had an affair with a married woman, or indeed with any other woman after the early incident in the Malakot ghotul. 'After a year my wife stopped me going to the ghotul.'

Here is another significant record of life in a *jodidār* ghotul at the time of the Bastar rebellion (1911). The narrator is Gadru, a Muria of the Kunjami clan from Chaniyagaon.

> After I had been in the ghotul a year I was given the name of Silledar at the time of the Chait Dandar, and six months later I was paired off with the Jhalaro and began to sleep with her. The Mukhiya warned us both not to have too frequent intercourse and to take every care that there was no scandal [i.e. pregnancy]. I slept with the Jhalaro daily, but I only went to her twice a week or even less. The girl who really loved me in the ghotul was the Alosa, my mother's brother's daughter. Her partner was the Jhoria and she had to sleep with him every night. But when he was asleep, she often used to crawl over to my mat and I would turn my back on the Jhalaro and make love to her.

An old woman of about seventy years of age, Koili of Berma village, gave some interesting reminiscences of her ghotul life.

> For six months after I joined the ghotul, until I got a title, I slept with the little boys. When I was made Nirosa I was too poor to give the usual feast of parched rice and liquor, but the chelik collected money for me and got a rupee's worth of liquor so I was not shamed. That night everyone was very drunk, and the Kotwar who slept with me had intercourse with me for the first time. The next day the Kotwar ordered that henceforth I was to sleep every day with the Sirdar. The Sirdar was related to me, though distantly, as a parental uncle, and I did not like it at all, but I had to do what the Kotwar said. We were both very shy and never spoke to one another and slept back to back with faces turned away. It was a long time before we had intercourse, but when there was a marriage in the village, everyone got drunk and excited and that night we went to each other. After that our shyness disappeared, and we used to have congress every night.
>
> Soon afterwards my betrothal ceremony took place. Among those who came for it was the Kapatdar of the Veleknar ghotul. The Sirdar had gone away somewhere, and that night the Kapatdar slept with me. When the others knew of it, they laughed at us and teased us; I was so embarrassed that for a whole week I stayed away from the ghotul.
>
> When I was married, the motiari brought me to the ghotul compound

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942, 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

It is definitely considered a sign of degeneration that children should be married young.

Sometimes the girl is older than the boy and then until the boy is grown up he continues to live in the ghotul and his wife stays at home. The Gurti of Kapsi, for example, was married to an older girl when he was quite a little boy. 'I always slept in the ghotul', he said. 'I never spoke to my wife except to ask for food. She would try to flirt with me, but I used to feel shy and look away. One night when I slept alone in the house she came and slept by my side. She held me fast and forced me to go to her. After that I always went to sleep in the ghotul.' The Ranger of Moroskoro had a similar experience. His wife was mature when he was still a little boy. She used to say, 'I will look after him, I will hatch him like an egg, till he is grown up'. She did so and now, says the Ranger, 'we are very happy. She looked after me so well that at last we got a fine home of our own'.

A chelik does not leave the ghotul immediately after marriage. He retains his membership for some months until he can afford to give a farewell feast. At Palari, when I was there, the three leaders were all married; so was the Diwan of Bhanpuri and the Manjhi of Berma. When I went to Pupgaon in 1940, I found the four leaders, though all married, still sleeping regularly in the ghotul. Sometimes, as we shall see, a man remains as a sort of senior member for many years. But normally a few months after his marriage, a chelik gives a farewell feast to his old friends and bids a formal farewell. When Bindo, after his marriage, resigned his position as head of the ghotul, he called the elders of the village, gave them liquor and parched rice and returned the ring they had given him. The headman said, 'Now you are a married man, come no more to the ghotul and mix no more in the dance and song of the children. Look after your own house and property. Eat and live and have many children of your own'.

VIII. Married Men in the Ghotul

Once the chelik or motiari have left the ghotul, there is a rather strict rule against their returning. As we have seen, this rule is absolute in the case of wives and widows and, indeed, no husband would permit his wife to revisit the scene of her youthful loves. There are a few cases where married girls have slipped into the ghotul at night. There was one at Chimri who visited her lover there, and he was heavily fined. I saw a married girl going to the ghotul at Nayanar and another at Markabera, but at Markabera the girl was seduced by two chelik and there was a great scandal. Such incidents are rare and meet with emphatic social disapproval.

In the case of men, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between those who are invited and who are, in fact, given definite appointments, and those who come in casually. The latter are far from popular. Their presence leads to complications. Their wives quarrel with the girls and complain to the parents. They are a check on the gaiety of the youngsters. They demand motiari for themselves. Yet married men are often very anxious to come, and make any excuse to spend an evening or even to sleep in the ghotul. When the wife is in her period, for example, her husband may urge that it is necessary for him to sleep far removed from the danger of her contagion, and this excuse is generally accepted.

But otherwise if a man persists in coming to the ghotul when he is not invited, the boys go to his house and steal first a cock, then a pig and at last even a goat. An effective method of putting such an unwanted visitor to shame is for a party of boys to escort him home singing and beating their drums.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

When they reach his house they call for his wife and shut them up together in a room just as they did once before at their marriage. To make it more realistic, they steal a cock and scatter its feathers along the road. This suggests that the couple were not properly married before. Very few people are sufficiently hardened to persist in their visits after this.

But when a man who is popular among the younger people and trusted by them is invited to the ghotul, or is allowed to retain his appointment, things are very different. Such a man may even be allowed to sleep with a motiari occasionally, or one of his friends will slip out at night and give him place. It is remarkable that in many cases married men continue to act for years as leaders of the ghotul. Such a man is the very popular Lakmu, who is still at the age of forty the Diwan of Masora. His own son, Phirtu, is the Chowkidar of the same ghotul. The Diwan of Kabonga was married five years ago and attends the ghotul when visitors come or a judgement has to be given. 'Whenever I sleep there', he said, 'the boys give me a motiari to keep me company.' He also goes out with the boys on their dancing expeditions. At Hathipakna, Maru, the Sirdar of the ghotul, married again after the death of his first wife. He is still continuing his duties after his marriage. Ghasi, the Diwan of this ghotul, has been married for ten years; Gaglu, the Mukhwan, has been married for eight; they continue to hold office, though they only rarely sleep in the dormitory.

Indeed a popular boy, especially a Kotwar, sometimes has great difficulty in leaving the ghotul. At Margaon the Kotwar said, 'They refused to let me go, and my wife used to quarrel with me every night. At last I gave a bottle of liquor to the chelik and motiari, and begged them to free me from my duties. They did so and since then there have been no more quarrels in my home.' In 1941 at Kabonga there were no fewer than three Kotwars, none of whom was allowed to leave. At last the eldest found it very difficult to continue coming to the ghotul and told the chelik so at the Mahua Dandar. He was fined four annas and then excused.

There are other reasons besides popularity for this. Sometimes big boys are married to very little girls and the boys naturally remain in the ghotul until their wives are mature. Sometimes widowers return to their ghotul and decide not to marry again. The leader of the Markabera ghotul, Dasru, is a widower. After his wife's death he returned to the ghotul and resumed his duties. In Padbera a widower with his little son both come regularly. Then again there are men who never marry. It is not unusual to see men of thirty or forty years still unmarried, still wearing all the ornaments of the chelik and continuing as ordinary members of the ghotul. Kodiya, for example, the Diwan of Malakot, now about 45 years old, is still unmarried. Here the working head of the dormitory is the Sirdar, a charming youth, who uses his Diwan as a sort of appellate court in cases of difficulty and dispute.

The association of older men with the ghotul is far from harmful. They are able to supervise the life of the children, to prevent bullying and unkindness, to look after their health, to hush up scandals and to settle serious disputes.

But it is never approved by their wives. The attitude of the wife of the Malik of Chikdongri is typical. 'You are always going to the ghotul', she said. 'well, why not get some nice boy to sleep with me. You provide amusement for yourself, why not for me?' The Baidar of Kameri said, 'After I was married, I couldn't stop going to the ghotul. The elders complained, and my father got me a second wife thinking that would keep me at home. At last the village panchayat fined me three rupees, and I stopped going.'

242

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

what she was really like, so I went to the house and asked her to lie with me. She asked me what I was doing outside and I said I was drinking in honour of her marriage to me. Although she had been very sweet to me up to that moment, she suddenly cried, 'No, you are simply drinking my urine'. I was drunk and got very angry, and though she tried to prevent me I forced her. But it gave me no pleasure. 595

Next morning I found the girl was ill. There was no fever or anything we could see, but she lay sick on the ground. I took her to a Siraha and we had to stay with him for a fortnight. I used to give her food and do everything for her, but she got no better. One day I tried to have her again, but she said, 'Wait a moment while I go outside' and she slipped out of the house and ran for her life to her own village. I am sure that my elder wife did some magic to turn this girl's heart away from me. Later I tried to marry another girl, my elder brother's widow, and my wife drove her away also.[1]

VI. Adultery

The Múria have the reputation of observing a very high standard of marital fidelity, and all my observations go to confirm popular report. The incidence of divorce, less than 3 per cent, suggests that they regard marriage as something to persevere in, and while obviously no statistics can be supplied for individual infidelities, social tradition and religious belief are directed towards making adultery both difficult and dangerous. 837

The Muria, usually so tolerant and gentle, are here exceptionally rigorist. Adultery brings the swift vengeance of heaven not only on the guilty individuals, but on the tribe. A woman's sin can ruin the ritual hunt and in consequence endanger the year's harvest. The vision of priest or medium can be dimmed by the infidelity of a wife, children may suffer and die, tigers may assail the village herds. The guilty pair themselves are visited with a shocking punishment; their bodies become covered with sores and swellings, and a watery dropsy brings a wretched death. 837 753

This is no empty danger, as is proved by actual examples. The Solia of Munjmeta told me how his grandfather died of this cause; in Sidhawand, when a man eloped with a married woman, his father died of dropsy and he himself became a permanent invalid. In Lihagaon, one Badru died after an act of adultery. This vengeance comes from the Departed who are the guardians of the purity of family and clan. In Kongera an outraged husband 'set the Departed on the guilty' and wife and lover fell very ill. At Netanar a Muria said that he was only able to preserve his wife's virtue by the help of the Departed whom he constantly invoked for this purpose.

Adultery is suspected when cattle die suddenly, especially if the tongue protrudes and there is a certain kind of watery discharge. The Siraha then 837 783

[1] In Indian tradition and folk-lore, the majority of heroes are successfully polygamous—Ramachandra being a notable exception. In the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, the first wife is represented as welcoming her new companions. Suryaprabha married seven wives on seven consecutive days: by his magic powers he was able to divide his body and live with them all at once.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924-5), Vol. I, p. 429. Narsvahanadatta had a similar power of self-multiplication (*ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 477. See also Vol. I, p. 451). Folk-lore wives usually agree—unless they all combine against a youngest favourite. Among Gullala Shah's happy co-wives, Panj Phul helps her husband to obtain his fourth.—J. H. Knowles, *Folk-Tales of Kashmir* (London, 1888), pp. 466 and 483 and compare M. Frere, *Old Deccan Days* (London, 1929), p. 324. There is an amusing note on the subject in W. McCulloch, *Bengali Household Tales* (London, 1912), pp. 318*f*.

837 has to divine who is the guilty party in order that peace may be made and danger averted.

783 Adultery therefore is not only the betrayal of tribal fellowship, the infringement of another's right to property, a breach of sexual tradition, but it is highly dangerous. A sort of public apology has to be made to the betrayed husband and a ceremony of purification performed.

In order to avert their fate, once the matter has become public, the guilty pair go to the Gaita with a pig or goat which he offers to the local deities and the Departed. Then he goes with witnesses to the nearest tank. On a stone he puts two bits of broken earthenware and some dub grass. Everyone present puts one foot on the stone; the Gaita throws water and liquor over the guilty pair who cry, 'Let us not now swell with water. May the Yer Kanyang living in the midst of this water make an end of our sin (*pāp*)'. The seducer then greets the woman's husband and all is forgiven.[1]

X883 A similar ceremony is performed in the *jodidār* ghotul if a chelik goes off with another boy's motiari, or if he sleeps with her in his absence. At Atargaon, 836 where a chelik eloped with another's ghotul-wife, but was brought back after a few days, the ghotul Manjhi took the two 'husbands' out of the village to 783 a place where two paths crossed. He made them stand on either side of the path and put a knife on the ground and above the knife a stone. He made the boys put their right feet on the stone and gave them each seven leaf-cups of water. Seven times they exchanged the cups of water and seven times cups of liquor, and swore to preserve friendship with one another. The seducer promised to pay a heavy fine if it happened again.

X883 There is one type of adultery, however, which does not seem to be taken too seriously. 'Suppose a girl has a ghotul lover.' So they put it at Markabera. 836 'She elopes with him. They are brought back and she is quickly married to her betrothed. After a few weeks she runs away again to her lover. She 837 is again brought back, again accepted by her husband, though he knows she has slept with her old lover. And then she is happy at last and settles down.' 'It is like getting a new cow,' said the chelik at Nayanar. 'She does not at first like her new home. She runs back to the herd and her former pastures. But we don't beat her for that; we are rather doubly kind.'

In dealing with a motiari-wife, that is not only kind; it is intelligent.

VII. Divorce

586 Throughout tribal India divorce is easy and generally the wife has the same rights as her husband. Among the Muria divorce on either side is possible, but the stability of their marriage tradition makes it a comparatively rare event. I have already described how divorce can be effected in a *jodidār* ghotul. Similar ceremonies can release a woman from her partner in adult life. These ceremonies, it must be observed, are essentially rites of purification; they are retrospective, having reference to an already existing state of affairs. The actual union with a new partner and the paying of compensation effects the divorce; now husband and wife have to be free, not of each other—*for* they are that already—but of the dangers that cling to the conduct of one or both.

The ceremonies are the same as those by which a couple taken in adultery are cleared of their fault. Whether the woman returns to her own husband

[1] A similar ceremony is performed to purify a boy who sleeps with a near relative in the ghotul, but in this case a root or cucumber is used instead of a goat for sacrifice.

THE GHOTUL AND MARRIAGE

626 Quarrels are equally dangerous. They not only destroy one of the chief of the Muria's treasures—his sense of tribal solidarity—but like adultery they bring the vengeance of heaven upon the village that indulges in them. They must, therefore, be avoided and if they do occur peace must be made at once. In Binjhli Tetku and his brother Maria had a row over a field and beat each other. Their *saga*-relatives hurried to the village, they got salphi and mahua liquor, and held a panch. The Gaita dipped a gold ear-ring in water and sprinkled it over the two offenders; he dipped the ear-ring also in the liquor. Each brother gave the other a drink and peace was established. When Dandu and Aitu quarrelled in Masora, everyone was afraid that some epidemic would attack the village. They both did indeed fall ill, their bodies swelling mysteriously. They called the Gaita and gave him a pig, five measures of rice and a rupee's worth of liquor to sacrifice. He did so, praying, 'O Mahapurub, you are the earth, you are our mother. We have made a mistake. Even an elephant with four feet sometimes slips; what can we men with only two feet do? We give you this offering, let there be no more trouble.' And he warned the quarrellers that next time it would cost them ten rupees to make peace.

152 Everything in Muria society is thus calculated to render jealousy unnecessary, dangerous and undignified. Its absence is further proved, not only by a mass of statements and absence of the criminal cases that would certainly arise from it, but by concrete instances of social practice. For example, the Muria does not insist on his wife coming to him as a virgin, nor does she expect that her husband should find in her the first girl he has ever loved. When we consider the vast number of peoples who have required an exactly opposite state of things, we see how free the Muria must be from jealousy affecting the period before marriage.

593 After marriage, says the best Muria opinion, husband and wife should never refer to their lives in the ghotul, still less should they rebuke each other with 152 their old love-affairs. The very fact that exceptions to this are so carefully noted shows how rare they are. A Saidar of Botha is said to have forced his wife to swear that she never slept with any boy in her ghotul. The Diwan of Nayanar is said to have constantly nagged his young wife about a former lover till she stopped him by saying, 'Very well, if it is true—as you say—that I love him so much, I will go and live with him'. At Alor the Gaita said, 'A boy may try to get his wife to confess what she did in her ghotul, but he has no right to, and she can always say "Whatever I did, you did the same or more" '. It was considered a very severe rebuke indeed when the Kotwar of Almer shouted at his lazy wife, 'Why don't you get up earlier to work? Didn't your parents teach you how to work, or did they only train you to sleep with the chelik night and day?'

593 A husband is generally very good to a wife who as a motiari got a child by another man. He takes the child as his own and the convention is that no reference should ever be made to the matter. This would not be so astonishing 152 if it only happened when a girl conceived in the ghotul, for any sensible man 337 would regard it as the logical conclusion of what he had already accepted, that his wife was sleeping with other youths throughout the period of their engagement. But it is remarkable, I think, when a boy accepts a girl who has run away with another man whom she obviously loves and is going to have a child who will constantly remind her of this former lover. An incident at Samalpur is typical of scores of others which I have recorded. In this village the Sirdar of the ghotul made a girl pregnant and ran away with her. They were brought back and he was fined five rupees and the girl was married to her betrothed.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

593 A month later, the girl left her husband's house and again eloped with the Sirdar. They were again pursued, caught and brought back. The Sirdar
152 was fined five rupees, and the girl's father had to pay five rupees to her husband who then accepted his wife back again without demur. In a similar case at
● 837 Garhbangal, the villagers said that 'the boy was so angry that he did not sleep with her for two nights'. 'But', they added, 'he had her four times on the third night.' I cannot believe that this shows a very high degree of domestic jealousy, especially as it was suggested that the real cause of the husband's temper was the fact that he had to pay two rupees compensation to the panch, the usual fine for allowing yourself to be cuckolded. I know of one case, but only one, where a girl could not bear the thought that her husband had made another girl pregnant, even though the girl was safely married to someone else. A former Nakedar of Binjhli described how she quarrelled with him for a whole year about the baby he had by the Piosa. 'Why didn't you marry her, if you were so fond of her as to give her a baby? Why don't you bring the child to the house? Then you can turn me out', and so on. At last he gave her a good beating and 'since then', he said, 'we have been very happy together'.

This general absence of the often discussed *jalousie du passé* is the more remarkable in that a really serious cause of domestic friction exists in a husband's continued visits to the ghotul after marriage. A wife never has this privilege, but a husband may continue to go every night if he wants to and certainly during his wife's periods for at least six months and sometimes for several years. Young wives feel this to be unfair, and they naturally hate the thought of their husbands returning to their old lovers. One would have expected scores of marriages to have been wrecked in the first few months for this cause alone, but it is not so. It is said that the wife always forces her husband to have intercourse with her before he goes to the ghotul, thus immobilizing him to some extent.

587 We must note finally that the Muria does not insist on his wife remaining
152 faithful to his memory by continuing a widow. Far from it, he insists that she should marry again as soon as possible. A dying man actually knows whose arms will embrace his wife within a month or two of his death, for his younger brother has a natural claim on her. In this also we see a remarkable absence of marital jealousy.

Looking through the great number of examples assembled by Westermarck and Briffault, the most remarkable thing about the Muria's attitude to jealousy is their recognition of it as a problem and a danger, and their deliberate attempt to educate it out of their lives. I think it more than probable that if their neighbours, the Bison-horn Maria, had the ghotul system fully developed, they would commit fewer murders.

IX. Quarrels and their Causes

152 For all this absence of jealousy, it would be absurd to suppose that Muria life is an idyll undisturbed by quarrel or dispute. Yet on the whole Muria
578 families live together very happily; quarrels are not common, and their cause is usually some breach of the law of equality which is so firmly instilled into the mind of every chelik and motiari during the ghotul period. Jealousy about food is said to be the most primitive expression of that passion. In the ghotul, and at all tribal feasts, the food is divided with meticulous exactitude: every piece of meat is counted; leaf-cups are made to a standard size; everyone gets exactly the same amount of liquor or parched rice. So too work must

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

CHAPTER SIX

THE CAUSES OF CRIME: MARITAL INFIDELITY

I

[836] [157] The Maria allow their women a great deal of freedom in their pre-nuptial period, but for matrimonial relationships they have a strict regard. They are jealous and possessive by temperament, passionate as lovers,[1] suspicious and

[301]

Maria girls' neck-band

exacting husbands. Divorce is rare; adultery is dangerous, a crime the end of which cannot be foreseen.

837 Adultery is dangerous, for unless proper precautions are taken the ancestors of the household and the clan-god may

[1] But as elsewhere in India 'lust-murder' does not occur. 'Lust-murder, as one of the phenomena of psychopathia sexualis, appears to be better known in the more highly cultured countries of the West than in the East, where capital offences have their basis in less recondite mental processes'. S. M. Edwardes, *Crime in India* (Oxford, 1924), p. 22.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

837 get offended, and in their anger kill the cattle and other livestock. When an animal dies for this cause, its tongue protrudes and a watery discharge issues from its mouth. In Dhurli the Maria said that the guilty person might go blind, and in Mathadi we were told how an old woman did actually become blind as a result of betraying her husband. If a wife commits adultery when her husband is absent on a hunting expedition, her act will 'defile the earth' and the hunt will be ruined. The arrows will fly crookedly, and the husband himself may trip over a stump. He may be bitten by a snake or hit with an arrow. If the deceived husband is a magician, his vision will be clouded. If the proper ceremonies are not performed, he may be afflicted with a watery swelling that may cause death.

674 If a murder is committed on account of adultery, the 783 families both of the murderer and his victim may suffer from this swelling. To prevent the danger, the elders of each house gather together; they mix milk and water in a leaf-cup of mahua leaves and say, 'These sinned; but let not their sin be on us'. Then a representative of each house drinks a little. The family of the murdered man gives a present (which is called in Halbi *bhul-karcha*) to the family of the murderer. A measure of rice is put under the eaves of the victim's house. In the rice there is placed some thread, a ring and an arrow. The two families feast together on pork and rice, and swear friendship with each other. The arrow remains as witness to their oath. Then the murderer's family [769] take the *bhul-karcha* home, and offer it to the Departed in their own house.

578 Quarrels are always dangerous, for they disturb tribal 787 solidarity and may earn the vengeance of the Departed. Indeed it is dangerous even to dream of a quarrel; if you do, you should sacrifice to the Earth the next morning. If husband and wife are known to be constantly at odds with one another, a panchayat is held and one or both may be fined.

783 When Oyami Anda of Harmamunda carried off and married a girl for whom another youth was serving as Lamhada, he not only had to pay compensation for the work done by the other boy, but a ceremony was performed to purify both parties of enmity. Anda stood with the Lamhada

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

539 had seen him entering, he knew that he was hiding some-
773 where and so he set fire to the building and went away. The fire did not harm the man, but some of the bird's feathers were burnt. The soul of the clan-god in Gadapal is in that bird, and to this day the bird can be seen, though now it is made of iron, and on its body the marks made by the burns remain.

'The eldest brother then went to Mailawada and lived there. He consulted the Waddai about the death of his sister's child, and it was revealed to him that the girl had been committing adultery with another man, and that on the very day she had bathed after her menstrual period, she
[845] had had intercourse both with her husband and her lover. The result of this was twins. But the Departed were offended at her conduct, and as a result one of the twins died after a few days and the second was killed by the Departed who first took the form of a hare and excited the dogs, and then possessed the dogs and killed the child in the swing'.

Such stories are not mere fairy-tales. They are part of the actual life of the people, vividly believed and actually experienced. To aboriginals who live in such an atmosphere and depend so entirely on the supernatural, the cumbersome and vulgar machinery of human courts of justice seems comparatively unimportant. It is said that many murderers find a sort of relief in going to jail, since they believe that this earthly punishment may save them from the vengeance of the Departed.

782 But as often in the aboriginal world there are regular
837 methods of evading these dangers. If a man wishes to commit adultery, he makes offerings to the Departed and prays, 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on the husband of this girl and not on me', and then he addresses his ancestors, 'Away with you. Go to water and to wind. Go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me whatever happens'.

684 There is no doubt, however, that many Maria are not satisfied with such ceremonies, and that they consider themselves entirely justified in killing a wife who is disloyal. In particular, the discovery of a woman actually in the arms of her lover appears to have so overwhelming an emotional effect that the husband is almost bound to strike

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

The Gondi words used to describe masturbation, *bonde karsāna* for the male, *penda karsāna* for the female, meaning 'penis game' and 'vagina sport', do not suggest any high degree of social condemnation. *Bonde karsāna* is in contrast to *bonde endanna*, the 'penis dance'; as I show elsewhere, *karsāna* and *endanna* do not differ so much in form as in occasion. *Bonde karsāna* then is the satisfaction gained out of due order, in the wrong way perhaps, yet only a game. *Bonde endanna* is the legitimate, sanctioned, dutiful performance of the penis on the dancing-ground of the vagina at the festival of sex. Sex is a holy thing, a marriage or a festival, and you do not play games at a festival.

Homosexual practices are very rare. There is the usual coarse play among boys; they catch hold of each others' genitals; they sometimes ride on each other in imitation of the normal sexual act; in Nayanar little boys were taught to massage the legs of their elders. There was a story in Dongrigura of two chelik who practised mutual masturbation, and in the same ghotul two little girls were caught 'lying together like man and wife'. Boys often embrace, set in one another's arms, sleep together on their narrow mats under a single blanket—but this is all part of the general affection and intimacy of ghotul life. An experienced police official has told me that he has never known a case of sodomy from the ghotul, and the jail authorities in Jagdalpur, some of whom have had from twenty to thirty years' experience, say that homosexual intercourse are never manifested by the aboriginal prisoners.[1]

Erotic zoophilia is less common, as we might expect, than among other peasants, for at least in its more bestial forms it is, as Havelock Ellis says, 'the sexual anomaly of dull, insensitive and unfastidious peasants ... the vice of the clod-hopper who is unattractive to women or inapt to court them'.[2] But the chelik are not dull, insensitive and unfastidious, still less are they inapt to court women. Both boys and girls, however, enjoy the mixoscopic aspect of zoophilia, though Bindo's statement that 'fish copulate like snakes, winding round each other' does not seem to reveal very accurate observation. The chelik often dress up as animals and simulate their copulation.

There is no specific word in Gondi for bestiality, which is regarded as ludicrous and unnecessary rather than repulsive. Like all deviations, it is supposed to belong to the civilized world rather than to the Muria Raj. The chelik recall how it was a Gond of Kanera who was jailed for going to a she-goat and a Rawat of Bayanar who was caught with his cow. At Ulera they talk about a Ganda who went to his mare. Members of these castes can hardly perhaps be called 'civilized', but the Muria regard them as Hindus and representative of a different culture.

Allen points out that 'many animals are unsuitable for sexual approach except sadistic ones, but no doubt whole hecatombs of animals have perished for this reason'.[3] The Muria are kind and gentle to animals, though a drunken priest may sacrifice a pig or cock with some cruelty.

behaviour began after a time and developed in proportion to the period of segregation. M. Jankins, *Genetic Psychological Monographs* (London, 1928), Vol. III, pp. 457ff.

[1] 'Writing of the Ho, Majumdar has suggested that their low fertility rate may be due to sterility induced by a "homosexual fixation". "The institution of village dormitories definitely fosters homosexuality. There is a system of fagging in these dormitories. The smaller boys serve those of larger growth, shampoo their limbs, comb their hair, and play the part of girls."—D. N. Majumdar, *A Tribe in Transition* (London, 1937), p. 72. Unfortunately we know nothing about the Ho dormitories, and without knowing Majumdar's evidence, which he does not present, it is difficult to discuss his suggestion. But from a very brief investigation, it was evident that in the Ho dormitories the girls were segregated, and there is thus a different situation from that in Bastar.

[2] Havelock Ellis, *Psychology of Sex* (London, 1934), p. 154.

[3] Allen, op. cit., p. 65.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

839 An unusual case of cruelty, with a possibly sadistic basis, occurred in 1934. Chaitu was then a young Muria of Khuregaon, and had been the Silledar of the ghotul there. He lived with his wife, a son and a small sister called Sukti who was an idiot child, aged about seven, deaf and dumb from birth and physically incapable. Chaitu was apparently always very cruel to this child and used to beat her for not helping in the house or playing with his baby. On 3 March 1934 he moved all his household goods from his village in order to take them to Pahurbel, where he wanted to live. The goods went in a cart and the family followed on foot. Poor little Sukti was unable to keep up with the rest and several times fell down crying. Chaitu was angry at this and beat the child with an axe, striking her on the right hand, thigh and foot. He dragged her along the ground some yards, struck her on the top of the head and on the left forearm with the axe and twisted her neck till she died. They left the body there and went on their way.

Chaitu was a young man when he did this cruel deed and did not seem to think he had done anything wrong, for the dead girl—he said—was an idiot and he killed her in a fit of temper. He was sentenced to transportation for life.

839 Exhibitionism and scoptophilia are unknown as *substitutes* for normal sexuality. Chelik and motiari are continually enjoying sexual congress in company; every night a boy can watch his neighbours if he wants to, he can show off his sexual prowess if he feels so inclined. Actually there is a strong tradition against 'peeping', except on the night when the chelik shut up in a room the newly-married pair. Then they may listen and try to peep through cracks in the wall.

Older men and women often indulge in 'indecent exposure' at weddings. I once saw a leading—and normally most respectable—Muria at Nayanar strip off his loin-cloth and dance naked at a wedding in front of a large company of women, including his own daughters. Shamrao Hivale witnessed a similar incident during a festival at Masora. Old women imitate the sexual act and fondle each other's wrinkled breasts.

None of these exhibitions can be classed as psychopathic or abnormal; it is worthy of note that I have never heard of chelik and motiari exposing themselves; in the senile it is probably a simple method of attaining tumescence.

XI. Ceremonial Cross-dressing

838 Ceremonial cross-dressing has been recorded of a number of primitive peoples and many different explanations of the custom have been advanced. 'Among the lower races', says Havelock Ellis, 'the manifestations of Eonism may occur not only, as in civilization, in a sporadic and isolated way, but also sometimes endemically in groups' and he suggests that possibly this tendency may represent not, 'as we might have been tempted to suppose, a corrupt or over-refined manifestation of late cultures, but the survival of an ancient and natural tendency of more primitive man'.[1]

Seligman used the expression 'ceremonial cross-dressing' to describe what he observed in dances of the Marshall Bennet Islanders in Melanesia and among the Lotuko in Africa.[2] Similar customs have been reported of the Sea-Dyaks of Borneo and the Omaha; and from other parts of the world a long list of examples has been given by Crawley.[3] Sometimes the change of dress is inspired by a dream and occurs occasionally and in emergency: sometimes it

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Eonism*, p. 33. [2] Ibid., p. 35.
[3] E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. I, pp. 318ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

is a part of the regular ceremonial of a festival or marriage; sometimes it is due to 'supernatural' inspiration.[1]

FIG. 113. Lamani woman's jacket adorned with cowries and used by Muria men for the purposes of divination

In Bastar I have noted two forms of this cross-dressing. Men sometimes put on women's jackets adorned with cowries when they go to prophesy in trance before a god and reveal his will to their fellows. At the bigger clan-festivals you may see a dozen or more mediums dancing and gesticulating in a state of ecstatic excitement, all wearing round their bodies these gaily-coloured and rather incongruous blouses.

But this is the only occasion, I think, where the male aboriginals of Bastar put on women's dress. It is more common for women to dress up as men. Bison-horn Maria women of Dantewara sometimes put on male garments at the great Wijja Pandum and drive their men-folk out to the hunt which precedes the main business of the festival. The Muria have the same custom, and the unmarried girls, dressed up as boys, dismiss the men of the tribe for a ceremonial hunt on the success of which will depend the value of the annual harvest.[2]

[1] For the 'Change of Sex' motif in Indian fiction, see Penzer, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, pp. 251ff. and W. N. Brown, 'Change of Sex as a Hindu Story Motif' in *JAOS*, Vol. XLVII (1927), pp. 3ff.

[2] Thurston speaks of a similar custom among the Kayi, where the women 'dressed in their lords' clothes' drive the men out to hunt at the Bhudevi Pandaga or Festival of the Earth Goddess. He describes a procession held before such a hunt: 'About the middle of the day, we saw a procession approaching us on the previous day, but it consisted entirely of women, the drummers and swordsmen being women dressed up as

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

838 585 292 535 On the third day of a marriage, the motiari retire to the ghotul or their camp and dress up as chelik. They put on turbans, waistcoats and loin-cloths. They borrow boys' armlets for their arms, put knives in their waist-bands, and approach the marriage-booth carrying axes, branches of mango leaves and bunches of *dab* grass. They dance up to the marriage-booth, under which the bridegroom is seated, and ceremonially sweep it. Among the dancers is the bride disguised as a boy. All the dancers are in fact disguised, for they wind their turbans round and round their faces to make it as difficult as possible to tell them apart. As the girls go round and round the booth, they challenge the bridegroom to pick out his bride. He is supposed to be unable to do this, so at last, as the girls draw closer and closer to him, the bride suddenly darts out from among them and hits him on the back with her clenched fist. He jumps up and attempts to hit her back but she escapes and her fellow motiari do their best to protect her. After this the girls continue dancing for some time, then retire to their homes and remove their male disguise.[1]

This practice is called the Nemuldwar, the 'army of the bride and bridegroom', and the dance is the Choli Endanna or the Jhoria Endanna. The name Choli Endanna simply means 'the waistcoat dance' and refers to the male disguise. The word Jhoria probably means lowlander[2] and has been fully explained in Chapter I. It is now no longer used as the title of the tribe, which has become merged with the Muria. There is, however, a Jhorian Pargana or sub-division and it is said that the dance is so called because it originated here. Although the word Jhoria means 'lowlander' in comparison with the Maria of the Abujhmar Mountains, to the Muria and Gond of eastern Bastar it is the name of an older and more primitive people. The expression Jhoria Endanna, therefore, suggests a dance of old time and ancient tradition. It is the most primitive of all the marriage dances.

838 585 535 539 As the motiari approach and dance round the marriage-booth, which they do very slowly in a long straight line, each girl clutching her left-hand neighbour round the neck with one arm, while with the other she waves her bunch of grass and mango leaves to and fro as if she were sweeping a floor, they sing a number of songs. There is a considerable variety of these and I will give a few examples of different kinds. The first song refers to the ceremonial sweeping of the marriage-booth.

Diwān mīyār kilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Wāyu dewa wāyu roy dewo!	Come girl, come Dewo!
Wiyār hayyu wāyu roy dewo!	Come to sweep, girl, come Dewo!
Naling coo gording roy dewo.	The mandia is like aonra fruit.
Gording wori ola roy dewoni.	She went to grind the mandia.

men. The ensemble and dance were as before, except that the pantomime abounded in the most indecent gestures and attitudes, all illustrative of sexual relations. One girl slipped (or pretended to) and fell. Whereupon, one of those playing a man's part fell upon her to ravish her. A rescue ensued amidst roars of merriment, and the would-be ravisher was in process of being stripped when our modesty compelled us to call an interval.'—Thurston, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, pp. 66ff.

According to Santal tradition, witchcraft began through a transvestite expedition. Marang Puru had decided to teach men witchcraft, but the women made them drunk and then 'put on pagris and dhoties and stuck goats' beards on their faces' and went to learn the magic art instead.—C. H. Bompas, *Folklore of the Santal Parganas* (London, 1909), p. 422.

[1] At Pardhan marriages in Mandla, the bride is sometimes disguised as a boy and her future husband is challenged to find her. I found a similar test among the Binjhwar of Chhattisgarh. The custom is doubtless widely distributed.

[2] See pp. 19–25.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

838 ●
585
539

Diwān mäyār hilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Hirpong ichok wejing roy dewo.	The rice is like chips of wood.
Wejeng usi ola roy dewo.	She went to husk the rice.
Diwān mäyār hilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!
Purka pila wätteroa dewo,	She went with her baby on her back,
Diwān mäyār hilinta dewo!	Diwan's daughter is crying, Dewo!

The next song is about the girls' disguise. The bridegroom cannot recognize the bride now, but he will recognize her all too well when the marriage is consummated.

Burga chodi layor.	The boy is getting old.
Bāha kohors hors!	
Nandy layor intor.	Yet he calls himself a youth.
Layāh ondsh hitor,	He collects the young girls,
Layah tadla hewong.	He won't let them go.
Murka portāna intor.	He calls himself an orphan.
Ona chodo mäyndr	He says he'll see what happens
Mānna here wäyor.	If we come near.
Mähe ise wariyāntor.	He frightens us away.
Dulhin chinha mäyor,	He can't recognize the bride,
Mulnāh chinha mäntor	But he'll know her tonight
Layor ise ātak.	If he really is a youth.
Wāni muthka hewor.	We are going to hit him.
Nāndy āri inor.	He says, 'This is my wife'.
Bāha kohore hors!	

The next song explains itself. It must be remembered that each of these songs is being sung by girls led by the bride herself who insists over and over again that she is a boy.

Mutha hilly wäl lowa,	I come to beat him,
Nana jhoriydn layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Nāka hurai marintu,	Seeing me he is afraid,
Nana jhoriydn layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Pichāl tangiya kānj lowa,	I have a small axe on my shoulder,
Nana jhoriydn layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Kaviya kot karlowa,	I am wearing a black coat,
Nana jhoriydn layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.
Mandu kai wāndowa,	I have come to clean the marriage-booth,
Nana jhoriydn layor.	I am the Jhoria boy.

Another song seems simply to describe the various clothes and ornaments that the girls are wearing:

Aga haga ding parsing saiya sona?	Whence is the drum that sounds so bravely?
Arra nāding parsing saiya sona.	From Arra comes the drum.
Aga haga ding hundring saiya sona?	Whence is the *hundring* that sounds so well?
Kohka nāding hundring saiya sona.	From Kohka comes the *hundring*.
Aga haga ding chitharing saiya sona?	Whence are the cymbals that clash so loudly?
Gawan haiyadding chitharing saiya sona.	The blacksmith made the cymbals.

2. Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

938
585
539

Aga baga da dhoti roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the dhoti that looks so smart?
Gūnaon kaiyada dhoti roy saiya sona.	The Ganda made the dhoti.
Aga waga dāng muyāng roy saiya sona ?	Whence came the bells that tinkle so merrily?
Kaser kaiyadāng muyāng roy saiya sona.	The Kaser made the bells.
Aga baga dāng paniya saiya sona ?	Whence came the comb that looks so fine?
Layen kaiyada paniya roy saiya sona.	The chelik made the comb that looks so fine.

Finally, I will give two examples of the many obscene songs that are sung during this dance, for otherwise it is impossible to get a clear picture of the meaning and atmosphere of the rite.

Nana jhoriyāna waiwoy gāto tinwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will not eat half-cooked rice.
Nana jhoriyāna dais dudo poywāna.	I am Jhoria: jumping up and down I hold her breast.
Nana jhoriyāna podoh monde dehwāna.	I am Jhoria: I break the girdle round her waist.
Nana jhoriyāna hārspoche tendwāna.	I am Jhoria: I quickly pull off her cloth.
Nana jhoriyāna pudete bonde nehyāna.	I am Jhoria: into her I press myself.
Nana jhoriyāna teks bura mi-kachwāna.	I am Jhoria: I will pluck out my pubic hairs and throw them away.

In the same style is a Halbi Jhoria Git.

Go to sweep the booth, Belosa.
Where has the bridegroom gone?
He is nowhere in the house.
What can he be frightened of?
He is dying for his penis.
He is going to have his sister.
Where has he taken her?
He has taken her to the river bank.
What leaves has he spread for her?
He has made a bed of *jam* leaves.
Jham-jham he swings to and fro.
Bathing, bathing, he inserts it.
Get off, get off, brother, she cries.

These songs are sung by the bride herself and by a party of unmarried girls. They have changed their sex for the occasion and imagine themselves performing the sexual act as men. The significance of this will be seen when we discuss the ultimate basis of the rite.

938
171
182

Various reasons have been advanced by scholars to explain this custom in different parts of the world. Frazer has emphasized the difficulty of the problem. 'The religious or superstitious interchange of dress between men and women is an obscure and complex problem, and it is unlikely that any

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

838 ●
171
182

single solution would apply to all the cases.'[1] He has suggested that the custom of the bride dressing as a male may be a magical means of ensur-

From a photograph in *Natural Man* by Charles Hose, by kind permission of the publishers, Macmillan & Co., Ltd

FIG. 116. Klemantan women dressed as men

ing a male heir. Certainly it is possible that cross-dressing has something to do with fertility. In Sarawak the Klemantan women dance in turbans and a sort of dhoti at a harvest festival which has been described as 'a celebration of cult of the principle of fertility and vitality—that of the women no less than that of the rice grain'.[2] Zulu women dress in men's clothes and go to herd their cattle to save them from disease.[3] Crawley refers to a custom of the Ngemte of Assam when men dressed as women dance in honour of the children

[1] J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1911–15), Vol. VI, p. 260. See also J. Abercromby, 'An Amazonian Custom in the Caucasus', *Folk-Lore*, Vol. II (1891), pp. 179ff.

[2] Hose, *Natural Man* (London, 1926), p. 128. Hose gives a charming photograph, upon which Fig. 116 is based.

[3] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 320.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

838
171
187

born during the year.[1] In the Mandla District of the Central Provinces of India, Gond and Baiga women from time to time dress up as men and go from village to village with spears and axes on a sort of ceremonial hunt. In each place they catch and kill a pig, an act normally taboo to women. That this is a fertility rite is indicated partly by the fact that it is practised in times of dearth and also by the songs used for the occasion. One of these is as follows:

Kutki kodon ke bharti hoe!	May kutki and kodon increase!
Kukra bilai ke jharti hoe!	May dogs and cats decrease!
Gai garua ke bharti hoe!	May cows and cattle increase!
Kukra bilai ke jharti hoe!	May dogs and cats decrease!

This is called Stiria-raj[2]; the custom is also known among the Maria and Muria. At Toskapal I was told how women made moustaches of lamp-black, put on dhoti and turban and went armed from place to place sacrificing goats and pigs. Kond women also dress as men and sacrifice fowls.

Frazer again suggested that the wife wears husband's garments in order to transfer to him her future pains at child-birth.[3] But there is no tradition of the couvade among the Muria, and it seems rather far-fetched to suppose that the young bride will already be so anxious about her pains as to wish to be rid of them even on her marriage day.

Another suggestion is that the marriage disguise is aimed at averting danger from the evil eye at a moment when the bride is particularly susceptible to the influence of hostile magic.[4] The marriage disguise has been noted for different peoples in Africa and India as well as in antiquity; sometimes it is carried so far as to substitute a mock bride for the real one. This was the view of Crooke,[5] after a survey of the Indian evidence, and the final opinion of Frazer.[6] Westermarck, however, who gives many examples of the marriage disguise, doubts whether all these practices can be explained as attempts to deceive evil spirits. 'Facts of this sort seem better to agree with Mr Crawley's theory of "inoculation", according to which the bride or bridegroom assumes the dress of the opposite sex in order to lessen the sexual danger by wearing the same kind of clothes as "the loved and dreaded person", and the greatest possible assimilation between them would best serve the purpose of neutralizing that danger'.[7]

But the Muria practice of not only disguising the bride, but also her companions, so that not even the husband can tell which is which, does appear to aim in some way at averting hostile magic or the enmity of the dead or evil spirits.

[1] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 103.

[2] There was a similar custom among the Kol. 'In October, 1880,' says Haldar, 'I witnessed at Ranchi a curious sight of bands of Munda girls, wearing turbans, going about in procession armed with sticks, spears and axes. All the girls of a village so equip themselves and make a descent upon the next village to the east, carrying off whatever fowls, kids, pigs, and lambs they can secure. The village thus devastated takes its chance by sending a similar expedition of Amazons to the next village eastwards and so on. Retaliation is forbidden, nor is any resistance offered; and, moreover, it is quite legitimate for the invaders to seek their booty wherever they may be concealed. This festival, called *Jani-shikar*, takes place once every twelve years, and is supposed to have been started by a Raja of the Nag-bansi family, named Ganes Sahi, in the twelfth year of his reign.'—S. Haldar, 'A Curious Kol Festival', *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. III, p. 98.

[3] Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. III, p. 216.

[4] Crawley, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 498f. and 318ff.

[5] Crooke, op. cit., p. 8.

[6] Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. IV, pp. 255ff.

[7] E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. II, pp. 312ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

In an interesting account of the women's hunt in the Ranchi District of Chota Nagpur, W. G. Archer has traced the mythological basis of the custom, but he points out that it also fulfils a psychological need. 'We shall only be grasping its real value if we regard it not as fact but as poetry, as the expression of a need rather than a statement of a truth.'

> This need may be defined as follows. In Uraon society, the principles of succession are male, the method of government is male, the salient offices are male. The men are by convention and tradition the social superiors of the women. But if this is the convention, it is only partly the fact. In Uraon villages, the actual relation is one of equality. It is as equals that the men and women dance. It is as equals that a wife and her husband order their family affairs. And it is as equals that they work and live together. There is thus a stress between the formal structure of tribal life and the actual feelings and emotions that thrust upon it. To relieve this stress is the function of the hunt and the myth.
>
> The myth shows that although the men may rule, it is the women who are also men. In its reliance on the success of a simple trick, it expresses Uraon pleasure in naive cleverness and under this typically Uraon cover, it mildly pokes fun at male incompetence. The balance is therefore righted. The women are recognized to be the equals of men.[1]

It is possible that we may have to connect the custom very deep down with the same tendency that has produced the eonist deviation. The last Jhoria songs that I have quoted give some point to the supposition that cross-dressing is an expression of 'penis-envy'. I have only given two songs of this nature, but there are many on the same lines which suggest that for once the motiari are able to assert themselves against the chelik who so constantly establish their sexual domination in normal times.

Probably several different reasons have combined to produce the rite. The Muria girls dance disguised at the marriage partly to protect the bride, partly to avert hostile magic or the evil eye, partly to restore the sexual balance of the tribe and partly too, simply because they love dressing up and get a lot of fun out of it. It is very amusing to see the unfortunate bridegroom trying to guess which of the many girls before him, all looking exactly alike, is his own wife. If he chooses the wrong girl everyone is delighted; when the right girl darts out of the group and beats him it is an occasion not to be forgotten.

But such cross-dressing is always ceremonial. There are strict taboos on men and women wearing each other's clothes on ordinary occasions, and this makes the rite, when it does occur, all the more exciting and impressive.[2]

[1] W. G. Archer, 'The Women's Hunt' in *Essays in Anthropology Presented to S. C. Roy* (1942), pp. 187ff. The same feeling is revealed in the widespread myth of the Island and Country of Women, which goes back to the *Mahabharata* and was recorded by Hiuen Tsang. For an account of this interesting subject and full references to the literature, see W. Crooke, 'The Land and Island of Women', *Man in India*, Vol. II (1942), pp. 216ff; J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 263 and my *Myths of Middle India*.

[2] In an account of prophylactic disguises for averting evil in the Bombay Presidency, J. J. Modi gives three types of sex disguise—

(1) Proclaiming the birth of a boy as that of a girl.
(2) Perforating the nose or the ear of a boy like a girl's.
(3) Allowing the growth of long hair in a boy so as to make him appear like a girl.

See J. J. Modi, 'Prophylactic Disguise for Averting Evil', *Man in India*, Vol. IV (1924), pp. 282ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

It is also tabooed in certain places. Intercourse should occur within the ghotul walls, within the supernatural fence that protects from evil. It is often considered wrong, however, for a boy to have intercourse in the presence of a relation whom he is supposed to avoid. In the ghotul where they 'pair off', for example, an elder brother should not have intercourse in the presence of his younger brother's motiari. He should do it in one of the other huts. It would also be very wrong indeed, and be likely to attract tigers to the village, for a chelik and motiari to sleep together on the platform from which the boys watch the ripening crops. Moreover one must always be careful to choose a place which is not haunted by a god or ghost. In Kajen the boys and girls of the ghotul go every year at the Pupul Pandum sacrifice to what is now known as the Chelik-tarni Dongar. Long ago they went there to practise the Cherta and camped beneath a great rock. One of the chelik took a motiari apart and had intercourse with her. They knew it was dangerous, for they immediately offered a small sacrifice to the demon of the hill. When they rejoined the party, an orphan boy (whom the others were treating unkindly by refusing to let him join them) cried, 'You take care, the rock will fall on you'. They laughed saying, 'What does he know?' 'Then one rock spoke to another rock, "These children have done wrong; let us fall upon them". The orphan boy climbed on one of the rocks and sat on the top. Suddenly it fell and covered all those chelik and motiari.' When the people came, called by the orphan boy, they found nothing but a banyan tree already growing from the foot of a motiari which was sticking out of the debris.

Lastly, sexual relationships must be conducted in the proper manner. 'When there is consent and love there is never sin.' But it is considered very wrong to force a girl to the act against her will. Such cases of ghotul-rape are not common. It must be remembered that for a motiari to sleep with a boy does not mean that she is prepared to have sexual intercourse with him. The younger girls sleep for years in the arms of boys with nothing more than a little erotic play. Only after the menarche do they begin to have regular sexual congress. If then a boy forces a girl against her will, and the others hear of it, he is fined.

Sexual deviations are almost unknown. Bestiality is regarded as a crime of civilization, unworthy of a Muria. The devious course of modern European sexuality would seem horrible to so straightforwardly heterosexual a tribe. Homosexuality, which Stekel has called 'the insoluble problem of modern civilized man'[1] is no problem to the uncivilised Muria. 'Jealousy and homosexuality are the two primary causes of the disorder of our passions',[2] says this same scientific observer of the European scene. Will not even the reformer admit the advantage of a tribe which is so largely free from these two evils?

So long as sexual relations do not overstep these boundaries of good taste and morals, there is nothing wrong in them. Sex is a good thing, healthy, beautiful, interesting, the crown and climax of love. Love indeed is meaningless, inconceivable without it. It is right and good for a chelik to love his motiari and to lie with her. Such is the simple Muria philosophy.

This accounts for the delightful freedom from self-consciousness that is one of the most remarkable things about ghotul life. When after a visit to the Kongera ghotul, Walter Kaufmann exclaimed 'This is the cleanest place I've ever been in' I think he meant that. There is no sniggering, there is nothing cheap or nasty, there is nothing furtive about the relations of these

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy' in Forbath, op. cit., p. 362. [2] Ibid., p. 366.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 killed his wife, and of Marvi Kuma who described how much he missed his wife and children and was always wondering whether they got enough food to eat. Vetti Rupe told me that he was continually thinking of his family. Dasru, himself a magician, was worried because in prison there was no Siraha to consult about the various untoward things that happened. The three men who had been sentenced from Pinna Bheji and whom I met after their release said, 'The worst thing was we always were thinking of our cattle and our homes, and to feel that we had got into prison by accident. We could hardly eat for the memory of our children'.

697 These aboriginal prisoners are remarkable in not finding
●136 sex a problem while they are in jail. This statement will
539 probably be received with incredulity by many of my readers. I can only say that I have gone into the matter as fully as anyone could who was not himself a jail official or a prisoner setting out to investigate this particular point. The jail officials, who know their people at least as well as officials elsewhere, some of whom have had very long experience, have told me that cases of homosexuality are unknown and that even masturbation is not practised by the aboriginal prisoners. When I have discussed the same matter with released convicts they have all said the same thing, and I am inclined to believe them, because they have shown no reticence in speaking freely and even coarsely about other sexual matters. I think it is possible that the Maria who in his natural state is, as far as I can discover, completely innocent of any kind of sexual deviation simply would not think it possible that any substitute could give him satisfaction or indeed could be practised. The thing just would not occur to him.[1]

697 What is generally believed is that medicine is put in the
831 food. I do not suggest this is so, but it is what is supposed. One after another has described how he never got any erection at all while in jail, and several people have found themselves impotent for a time after their release. Barse Mata of Gamawada declared that he had never even felt

[1] It would be hard to imagine a greater contrast to this than, for example, the conditions described by J. F. Fishman in his *Sex in Prison* (London, 1935).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

by magic on his wedding-night with the result that his bride left him the next morning. But after the usual sacrifices, he was cured and claims that he was able to embrace his wife three or four times every night. At Karagaon a chelik was married when he was very young, but continued to live in the ghotul (which was *jodidār*) and was paired off with a much older motiari. When the time came for the boy to live with his wife, this motiari made him impotent by her magic so that he would always come to the ghotul and not stay with his wife. Unfortunately the charm was so powerful that the boy was impotent in the ghotul as well as in his house and both girls deserted him. After the Siraha had diagnosed the trouble, his parents offered food-sacrifice, and the boy recovered.

X. Sexual Deviations

'Investigation among a number of primitive peoples,' says Seligman, 'fails to discover any cessation of overt heterosexual interests during the years of the alleged latent period.'[1] This seems to be a sounder view than that expressed by older writers on the subject who, drawing much information from travellers' reports, ascribed to the aboriginal every form of sexual perversion. 'Among a large number of primitives,' says Muller-Lyer,[2] 'vices are to be observed which rank with those of Babylon and London . . . running the whole gamut from shameless eroticism through masturbation, tribadism, pederasty, and sodomy to the most obscene perversions.' 'Primitive men,' says Briffault,[3] 'exhibit no greater delicacy in regard to the satisfaction of their sexual instincts than in their diet. The objects that gratify the former are often as disgusting to us as those which satisfy their appetite'; and he goes on to speak of 'homosexual atrocities unknown to European vice and Nasamonian rites, the disgusting character of which passes all conception'. Most of the writers who so freely attribute to primitives the vices of Babylon and London have never themselves lived in primitive society; they are content to accept the biased views of missionaries and the highly-coloured exaggerations of travellers. It is remarkable that those who have lived among primitives with an open and scientific mind are generally of another opinion. Without question Seligman's view is true, probably of all Indian aboriginals, certainly of the Muria.

It is only where an imported prudery has disturbed the even course of ghotul life that there may be found an occasional deviation from the normal. In the Kalpatti Pargana, where the influence of Chhattisgarhi Gond has succeeded in sending the motiari home after spending an hour or two rousing the chelik to a high degree of unsatisfied tumescence, masturbation is not uncommon. I do not know what else the 'reformers' would expect. At Khutgaon a chelik said, 'After the girls have gone we feel lonely and dissatisfied, so we catch hold of the *khairkuta* [a tree which shakes - the penis] and milk it like a cow till the seed comes out. This is our pleasure'. In a few other ghotul also, where the girls go home for the night, I have been told that masturbation is practised as a measure of relief.[4]

[1] Seligman in *JRAI*, Vol. LXII, p. 213. Compare B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, p. 55.

[2] F. Muller-Lyer, *The Evolution of Modern Marriage* (London, 1930, translation of the Munich edition of 1913), p. 37.

[3] Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 398. Another writer taking the same view is Bloch, *The Sexual Life of our Times*, pp. 512ff.

[4] This kind of deviation, temporary and compensatory in character, has been observed for various animals. Allen quotes Bata who observed frogs that, unable to find suitable partners at mating-time, attempted to copulate with pieces of floating wood. Allen, op. cit., p. 10. Jenkins found that if rats were segregated sexually, homosexual

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

The Gondi words used to describe masturbation, *bonde harsāna* for the male, *penda harsāna* for the female, meaning 'penis game' and 'vagina sport', do not suggest any high degree of social condemnation. *Bonde harsāna* is in contrast to *bonde endanna*, the 'penis dance'; as I show elsewhere, *harsāna* and *endanna* do not differ so much in form as in occasion. *Bonde harsāna* then is the satisfaction gained out of due order, in the wrong way perhaps, yet only a game. *Bonde endanna* is the legitimate, sanctioned, dutiful performance of the penis on the dancing-ground of the vagina at the festival of sex. Sex is a holy thing, a marriage or a festival, and you do not play games at a festival. 839

Homosexual practices are very rare. There is the usual coarse play among boys; they catch hold of each others' genitals; they sometimes ride on each other in imitation of the normal sexual act; in Nayanar little boys were taught to massage the legs of their elders. There was a story in Dongrigura of two chelik who practised mutual masturbation, and in the same ghotul two little girls were caught 'lying together like man and wife'. Boys often embrace, sit in one another's arms, sleep together on their narrow mats under a single blanket—but this is all part of the general affection and intimacy of ghotul life. An experienced police official has told me that he has never known a case of sodomy from the ghotul, and the jail authorities in Jagdalpur, some of whom have had from twenty to thirty years' experience, say that homosexual interests are never manifested by the aboriginal prisoners.[1] 838

Erotic zoophilia is less common, as we might expect, than among other peasants, for at least in its more bestial forms it is, as Havelock Ellis says, 'the sexual anomaly of dull, insensitive and unfastidious peasants . . . the vice of the clod-hopper who is unattractive to women or inapt to court them'.[2] But the chelik are not dull, insensitive and unfastidious, still less are they inapt to court women. Both boys and girls, however, enjoy the mixoscopic aspect of zoophilia, though Bindo's statement that 'fish copulate like snakes, winding round each other' does not seem to reveal very accurate observation. The chelik often dress up as animals and simulate their copulation. 839

There is no specific word in Gondi for bestiality, which is regarded as ludicrous and unnecessary rather than repulsive. Like all deviations, it is supposed to belong to the civilized world rather than to the Muria Raj. The chelik recall how it was a Gond of Kanera who was jailed for going to a she-goat and a Rawat of Bayanar who was caught with his cow. At Ulera they talk about a Ganda who went to his mare. Members of these castes can hardly perhaps be called 'civilized', but the Muria regard them as Hindus and representative of a different culture.

Allen points out that 'many animals are unsuitable for sexual approach except sadistic ones, but no doubt whole hecatombs of animals have perished for this reason'.[3] The Muria are kind and gentle to animals, though a drunken priest may sacrifice a pig or cock with some cruelty.

behaviour began after a time and developed in proportion to the period of segregation. M. Jenkins, *Genetic Psychological Monographs* (London, 1928), Vol. III, pp. 457ff.

[1] Writing of the Ho, Majumdar has suggested that their low fertility rate may be due to sterility induced by a 'homosexual fixation'. 'The institution of village dormitories definitely fosters homosexuality. There is a system of fagging in these dormitories. The smaller boys serve those of larger growth, shampoo their limbs, comb their hair, and play the part of girls.'—D. N. Majumdar, *A Tribe in Transition* (London, 1937), p. 72. Unfortunately we know nothing about the Ho dormitories, and without knowing Majumdar's evidence, which he does not present, it is difficult to discuss his suggestion. But from a very brief investigation, it was evident that in the Ho dormitories the girls were segregated, and there is thus a different situation from that in Bastar.

[2] Havelock Ellis, *Psychology of Sex* (London, 1934), p. 154.

[3] Allen, op. cit., p. 85.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

●839 An unusual case of cruelty, with a possibly sadistic basis, occurred in 1934. Chaitu was then a young Muria of Khuregaon, and had been the Silledar of the ghotul there. He lived with his wife, a son and a small sister called Sukti who was an idiot child, aged about seven, deaf and dumb from birth and physically incapable. Chaitu was apparently always very cruel to this child and used to beat her for not helping in the house or playing with his baby. On 3 March 1934 he moved all his household goods from his village in order to take them to Pahurbel, where he wanted to live. The goods went in a cart and the family followed on foot. Poor little Sukti was unable to keep up with the rest and several times fell down crying. Chaitu was angry at this and beat the child with an axe, striking her on the right hand, thigh and foot. He dragged her along the ground some yards, struck her on the top of the head and on the left forearm with the axe and twisted her neck till she died. They left the body there and went on their way.

Chaitu was a young man when he did this cruel deed and did not seem to think he had done anything wrong, for the dead girl—he said—was an idiot and he killed her in a fit of temper. He was sentenced to transportation for life.

839 Exhibitionism and scoptophilia are unknown as *substitutes* for normal sexuality. Chelik and motiari are continually enjoying sexual congress in company; every night a boy can watch his neighbours if he wants to, he can show off his sexual prowess if he feels so inclined. Actually there is a strong tradition against 'peeping', except on the night when the chelik shut up in a room the newly-married pair. Then they may listen and try to peep through cracks in the wall.

Older men and women often indulge in 'indecent exposure' at weddings. I once saw a leading—and normally most respectable—Muria at Nayanar strip off his loin-cloth and dance naked at a wedding in front of a large company of women, including his own daughters. Shamrao Hivale witnessed a similar incident during a festival at Masora. Old women imitate the sexual act and fondle each other's wrinkled breasts.

None of these exhibitions can be classed as psychopathic or abnormal; it is worthy of note that I have never heard of chelik and motiari exposing themselves; in the senile it is probably a simple method of attaining tumescence.

XI. Ceremonial Cross-dressing

838 Ceremonial cross-dressing has been recorded of a number of primitive peoples and many different explanations of the custom have been advanced. 'Among the lower races', says Havelock Ellis, 'the manifestations of Eonism may occur not only, as in civilization, in a sporadic and isolated way, but also sometimes endemically in groups' and he suggests that possibly this tendency may represent not, 'as we might have been tempted to suppose, a corrupt or over-refined manifestation of late cultures, but the survival of an ancient and natural tendency of more primitive man'.[1]

Seligman used the expression 'ceremonial cross-dressing' to describe what he observed in dances of the Marshall Bennet Islanders in Melanesia and among the Lotuko in Africa.[2] Similar customs have been reported of the Sea-Dyaks of Borneo and the Omaha; and from other parts of the world a long list of examples has been given by Crawley.[3] Sometimes the change of dress is inspired by a dream and occurs occasionally and in emergency: sometimes it

[1] Havelock Ellis, *Eonism*, p. 33. [2] Ibid., p. 35.
[3] R. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose* (London, 1927), Vol. I, pp. 318ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883 834 It is also tabooed in certain places. Intercourse should occur within the ghotul walls, within the supernatural fence that protects from evil. It is often considered wrong, however, for a boy to have intercourse in the presence of a relation whom he is supposed to avoid. In the ghotul where they 'pair off', for example, an elder brother should not have intercourse in the presence of his younger brother's motiari. He should do it in one of the other huts. It would also be very wrong indeed, and be likely to attract tigers to the village, for a chelik and motiari to sleep together on the platform from which the boys watch the ripening crops. Moreover one must always be careful to choose a place which is not haunted by a god or ghost. In Kajen the boys and girls of the ghotul go every year at the Pupul Pandum sacrifice to what is now known as the Chelik-tarni Dongar. Long ago they went there to practise the Cherta and camped beneath a great rock. One of the chelik took a motiari apart and had intercourse with her. They knew it was dangerous, for they immediately offered a small sacrifice to the demon of the hill. When they rejoined the party, an orphan boy (whom the others were treating unkindly by refusing to let him join them) cried, 'You take care, the rock will fall on you'. They laughed saying, 'What does he know?' 'Then one rock spoke to another rock, "These children have done wrong; let us fall upon them". The orphan boy climbed on one of the rocks and sat on the top. Suddenly it fell and covered all those chelik and motiari.' When the people came, called by the orphan boy, they found nothing but a banyan tree already growing from the foot of a motiari which was sticking out of the debris.

Lastly, sexual relationships must be conducted in the proper manner. 'When there is consent and love there is never sin.' But it is considered very wrong to force a girl to the act against her will. Such cases of ghotul-rape are not common. It must be remembered that for a motiari to sleep with a boy does not mean that she is prepared to have sexual intercourse with him. The younger girls sleep for years in the arms of boys with nothing more than a little erotic play. Only after the menarche do they begin to have regular sexual congress. If then a boy forces a girl against her will, and the others hear of it, he is fined.

X883 839 838 Sexual deviations are almost unknown. Bestiality is regarded as a crime of civilization, unworthy of a Muria. The devious course of modern European sexuality would seem horrible to so straightforwardly heterosexual a tribe. Homosexuality, which Stekel has called 'the insoluble problem of modern civilized man'[1] is no problem to the uncivilized Muria. 'Jealousy and homosexuality are the two primary causes of the disorder of our passions',[2] says this same scientific observer of the European scene. Will not even the reformer admit the advantage of a tribe which is so largely free from these two evils?

X883 831 So long as sexual relations do not overstep these boundaries of good taste and morals, there is nothing wrong in them. Sex is a good thing, healthy, beautiful, interesting, the crown and climax of love. Love indeed is meaningless, inconceivable without it. It is right and good for a chelik to love his motiari and to lie with her. Such is the simple Muria philosophy.

This accounts for the delightful freedom from self-consciousness that is one of the most remarkable things about ghotul life. When after a visit to the Kongera ghotul, Walter Kaufmann exclaimed 'This is the cleanest place I've ever been in' I think he meant that. There is no sniggering, there is nothing cheap or nasty, there is nothing furtive about the relations of these

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy' in Forbath, op. cit., p. 361. [2] Ibid., p. 366.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

We may then consider how the ghotul boys and girls are almost completely free from those furtive and unpleasant vices that so mar our Western civilization. There is hardly any masturbation, the scourge of the English Public Schools; where it is practised, it is due to the mistaken efforts of reformers to improve the ghotul. Prostitution is unknown, unthinkable. No motiari has ever given her body for money. Homosexuality, sodomy, bestiality are shocking things, unworthy of chelik or motiari and never indulged by them. Nor does Muria society know the thin frustrated spinster or the male neurotic so prolific in the modern Indian 'ashram', with his desiccated outlook and censorious judgements.

These are great gains. At the same time we must not forget that there are many things in our own society which would shock and offend the Muria. A chelik would be scandalized by the Public Schools in England—the atmosphere of competition, the corporal punishment, the bullying, the petty tyranny of senior boys, the segregation with its attendant vices, the common homosexual interests, the furtiveness of association with girls, the worship of sport which has no connexion with real life. The prostitution in our cities would seem to him an abomination, and he would be filled with pity for the unmarried together with a dread of what would happen to them after death.

He would find a wholesale disregard of right and proper taboos. The missionary probably kisses his mother and sister, and certainly allows his wife to cook and touch water during her menstrual period—things which would horrify the Muria. The Hindu is often criticized by the Muria for allowing his children to sleep in the same room as their parents, which the Muria thinks far more immoral than sending them to sleep with other children in the ghotul. The sanitary arrangements of many a Brahmin home offend the Muria and he considers the Hindu attitude to untouchables, widow-remarriage and purdah as unworthy and degrading. If he is reflective enough, he will equally insist that the Westerner whose civilization is characterized by all the anti-social vices, violence, jealousy, adultery, and war, is not in a position to criticize his quiet, peaceful, happy, useful ghotul.

Although observers of similar institutions in other cultures have generally been impressed by their virtues and social value, there have been exceptions. In an early work S. C. Roy called the Uraon dormitory an 'abomination',[1] though I believe his opinion altered later. Dalton thought that intercourse in a dormitory 'must sadly blunt all innate feelings of delicacy'.[2] In a very early account of the Seneca Indians of Canada, Cartier says, 'They have a very bad custom with their daughters, for as soon as they are of age to go to man, they put them in a bawdy-house, and abandon them to anyone who will take them, until they meet with a suitable party. And this we have seen by experience, for we saw those houses as full of girls as a school in France is full of children'.[3]

In the Marianne Islands, the missionaries found themselves opposed by the Uritoi *maisons des célibataires* and, regarding only the sexual relations of the girls and boys, declared that '*le Démon a établi icy des Seminaires de débauche*', while another writer described the purpose of the Uritoi societies of Guam as '*un épicurisme grossier*'.[4]

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 211.
[2] Dalton, op. cit., p. 248.
[3] J. Cartier, *Briefz récit de la navigation faict en MCDXXXV et MCDXXXVI*, first published in Paris in 1654. Quoted by Briffault, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 34.
[4] Quoted from Le Gobien, *Histoire des Iles Marianes*, p. 61, and L. de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du Monde* (Paris, 1826–44). Vol. II, p. 369 by Hutton Webster, op. cit., p. 169.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

her back. Then he would beat her ferociously and helped by his relatives would rub into the wounds the juice of the marking-nut (*Semecarpus anacardium*, Linn.). This juice is a powerful irritant and when applied to the skin desiccates strongly, raising black blisters. Months after Mundra's death the marks of injuries were clearly visible on the unfortunate woman's body.

The last week of Mundra's life was fully occupied in chasing his wife. It appears as though he was really fond of her or at least really desired her in a sadistic manner, and he probably got considerable pleasure out of torturing her. On 20 October he went with his father to Lakhopal where they had heard Pande was hiding. They sent a villager ahead to call the girl, and she came trembling out of the house and hid below a tree. Mundra and his party then forcibly took her home to Tikanpal. That same night she ran away again. On the third day Mundra set out once more in search of her. They heard that she had again gone to Lakhopal and this time, when Mundra found her, he decided not to go home but to take her to a Siraha at Killepal in order to get her exorcized of the evil spirit which, he had decided, was the real cause of her continually leaving him. This is sometimes done when a cow refuses to stay with the herd or fails to return to its own shed at night. The Siraha is called in and divines what ancestor or godling is causing the trouble, whereupon suitable remedies are adopted. Sometimes these remedies may be unpleasant, including the burning of chillies under the nose, beating with an old shoe or making the patient drink urine.[1] It is little wonder that poor Pande regarded this suggestion with alarm.

On the evening of that day a witness remembered meeting an unknown man and woman on the boundary of Kaklur

[1] How severe these remedies sometimes are may be seen in the circumstances of a case at Mandla in 1925. A Rajput youth became strange in his manner after witnessing a melodrama and his trouble was diagnosed as spirit-possession. He was first tied to a pole in the courtyard. Then his elder sister fell into a frenzy; she swallowed a live bit of coal, declared she was possessed by Kali, and sacrificed her little daughter to that goddess in an attempt to restore her brother's sanity. This remedy failing, the unfortunate youth's hands were burned and he was tied naked in a place generally used by a harmless lunatic with a local reputation for sanctity. Here he died of exposure.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

697 killed his wife, and of Marvi Kuma who described how much he missed his wife and children and was always wondering whether they got enough food to eat. Vetti Rupe told me that he was continually thinking of his family. Dasru, himself a magician, was worried because in prison there was no Siraha to consult about the various untoward things that happened. The three men who had been sentenced from Pinna Bheji and whom I met after their release said, 'The worst thing was we always were thinking of our cattle and our homes, and to feel that we had got into prison by accident. We could hardly eat for the memory of our children'.

697 838 839 These aboriginal prisoners are remarkable in not finding sex a problem while they are in jail. This statement will probably be received with incredulity by many of my readers. I can only say that I have gone into the matter as fully as anyone could who was not himself a jail official or a prisoner setting out to investigate this particular point. The jail officials, who know their people at least as well as officials elsewhere, some of whom have had very long experience, have told me that cases of homosexuality are unknown and that even masturbation is not practised by the aboriginal prisoners. When I have discussed the same matter with released convicts they have all said the same thing, and I am inclined to believe them, because they have shown no reticence in speaking freely and even coarsely about other sexual matters. I think it is possible that the Maria who in his natural state is, as far as I can discover, completely innocent of any kind of sexual deviation simply would not think it possible that any substitute could give him satisfaction or indeed could be practised. The thing just would not occur to him.[1]

697 831 What is generally believed is that medicine is put in the food. I do not suggest this is so, but it is what is supposed. One after another has described how he never got any erection at all while in jail, and several people have found themselves impotent for a time after their release. Barse Mata of Gamawada declared that he had never even felt

[1] It would be hard to imagine a greater contrast to this than, for example, the conditions described by J. F. Fishman in his *Sex in Prison* (London, 1935).

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

It is generally asserted that all Marias are dirty, and object to washing. It is true that Maria women dancing late at night after lying on ground covered with the ashes of camp-fires, or men and women in the *penda* fields or after a long march, are dirty; and anyone who has tried to dress a Maria's wounds knows how dirt-encrusted they can be. Sleeping between fires, or over fires in an enclosed and low-roofed hut, does not promote cleanliness. But the real reason for the idea is the fact that the Hill Maria seldom washes his loin-cloth. On this, Russell and Hiralal say (III, p. 124):— 515

Cleanliness

'In Bastar they seldom wash their clothes, as they think this impious, or else that the cloth would wear out too quickly if it were often washed. Here they set great store by their piece of cloth, and a woman will take it off before she cleans up her house, and do her work naked. It is probable that these wild Gonds, who could not weave, regarded the cloth as something miraculous and sacred, and, as already seen, the god Palo is a piece of cloth.'

This passage is all wrong. Palo is unknown to Maria or Muria Murias and Bison-horn Marias wash their clothes, and there are occasions when even a Hill Maria is bound to do so. He may not weave, himself, but he makes nets and baskets and twine, and always accepts the manufacturing processes of Kumhar potters, Kammar blacksmiths, Gharwa brass founders or Mahra weavers in a commonsense, rational way; he sees the work done quite often, and indeed there are many Marias who, in jail for homicide, have themselves become expert weavers of cloth or carpets. The reasoning processes of the savage are not unlike our own, and it is always safe to reject any such explanation as that he does not wash his cloth because he regards it as impious to wash something so sacred and miraculous, when there is available the commonsense economic explanation that he himself gives, that cloth costs money, of which he has never much, and that the oftener it is washed the sooner it wears out. So ordinarily, when a Hill Maria has his dip in a pool or river he takes off his filthy and inadequate loin-cloth and hangs it on a bush or rock while he washes his limbs, fastening it again all dirty on his clean body when he emerges. The women remove their loin-cloth, but not their *mudang*[1] and the cloth attached to it. Both husband and wife, however, must bathe in the morning after sexual intercourse and wash their loin-cloths; and a woman must invariably bathe and wash her loin-cloth, beating it out well on a stone, on leaving the menstruation hut or room at the end of her courses and of the four weeks following the birth of a child. Generally men and women wash or bathe every morning, and more often than not in the evening also. There are separate pools in [285 286] [833] [841 846]

[1] The *mudang* is explained below, under dress.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

343 231 other minor grains. Where timber is not available, these sties are made from bamboos, or even from stones. Similar but, of course, far smaller structures are made to serve as hen-coops, resting generally against the side or front of the houses.

778 361 [824] The shrine of the Village Mother, as has been stated above, is sometimes actually inside the village dormitory, sometimes just outside it, and sometimes at a considerable distance from the actual village, in a grove, if possible of *saja* (*Terminalia tomentosa*—everywhere the sacred tree of the Gond) trees. Sometimes there is also in the village, often at the end of the street opposite the dormitory, the hut-temple of the *pen* or clan-god, containing the log-frame image of the god. This will normally be found only in the village of the *pen-wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god; but sometimes, where the villages of the clan are far apart, there may be two copies of the clan-god, or the god may go to visit other villages, and have a resting-shed in each; or he may have begotten a son to deputize for him in the distant village; I have seen in a *pen-rawar* (clan-god's temple) both the *pen* himself and an embryo 'son' in the second of his three years' 'gestation'. The *pen* is always covered by a shed; but the Village Mother sometimes is just a cairn or a basket-cylinder filled with stones, or a low table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree, and close by there is a small shed of grass thatch with open sides in which are kept the cooking pots, ladles and sacrificial knife used at ceremonial feasts. The sacred grove may in very rare cases, in villages near the edge of the lowlands, have also a hut-temple of Danteshwari Mai or Maolai, the most revered or feared Hindu deities of Bastar.

343 ● 841 There will be found well apart from the houses and the rest of the village a menstruation hut in many villages, known as *pedawo'-gha'i* to the Hill Marias, or sometimes as *dola-lon*. Here all menstruating women are secluded from the village for a week every month. Sometimes the hut has a single room, about 6 by 5 feet, with walls 3 feet high, with no windows and only a small door little bigger than the entrance to an English kennel; sometimes there are two rooms separated from each other by a partition, so that when a girl is afraid of being secluded by herself a duenna may sleep within sound of her without actual contact. The door of the seclusion room always opens away from the village, so that the affected woman may get out at night to answer the call of nature without overlooking the village or being visible to any villager. Special cooking pots and utensils are kept in the seclusion room, or else the woman's food is cooked outside and left by her door for her. [589 824] The roof is often covered with seed-bearing twigs of castor-oil plants, in all parts of India regarded as very efficacious against magic.

[text continues on p. 106]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Good AW32
Hill Maria

But in many villages instead of a communal *pedawo'gha'i* there is a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *pedawo'gha'i* room known generally as *kala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *kala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable attached.

The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *kasyeq-gaita's* house, near the latter's *udam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-rawar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parllo clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street;

[1] Or *ala*; the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria
364 villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is
177 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-
361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page 121) must have their *bari* opposite them across the street. Each [351] *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many [231] pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among
● 841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Piki-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

that there was no custom of segregating menstruating girls or women.

There is in every Bison-horn village a *paik-gotul* or lodging-hut for State officials, but I have never seen a *gotul-lon* dormitory for bachelors. I was once told that there are such dormitories in a few big villages such as Ghotpal, Karli, Tumnar, Massenar and Dugeli, but could not find one in these villages; nor did the State officials who gathered information for me in various parts of the Bison-horn country ever report their existence. The *padas* (headmen) and *pormas* (village priests) whom I saw at Aranpur and other camps stated that such dormitories were a degraded institution found only among Hill Marias and Murias. They are not mentioned by Madras writers on the Koyas and Dorlas.

Bison-horn villages are not found on the tops of hills and isolated spurs like Hill Maria villages. They are located in positions convenient for communications, water supply or cultivation, like lowland villages in all countries. Many of them, especially in the Jagdalpur tahsil, have cart tracks leading to them, though these are used mainly by the Hindu and Mohammedan traders who bring their wares to the various weekly markets already established in their bigger villages. Though, however, some Bison-horn Marias have carts, and more keep cattle and do not always leave it to the Rawat herdsman servant to milk them, while many use ploughs, yet the majority of them still think it not the thing for Koitor to drive carts, or that they could never manage them; and there are, therefore, very many villages approachable only by footpaths. They make bridges very similar to those of the Hill Marias, often on a more elaborate scale.

Shifting villages

The only Bison-horn Maria village where I could find memory of a fairly recent shifting was Bare Gudra, in the Kuakonda *pargana* of Dantewara tahsil. My informant was Kartami Mukka, the old village priest (*perma*) of the village, who said that when he was young the village was settled in the now abandoned Mundi *padar* (village site); there was heavy mortality from epidemic and epizootic outbreaks for some years, and a series of crop failures. Then the eggs in his father's house began always to get addled, and his father, the *perma*, interpreting this as a final intimation that the village had to be shifted, called up the elders to see the eggs, and they agreed that the village must be shifted. They had then, on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, to go at noon with the *perma* to select the *padar* for the new village; and to test the omens at the new *padar* the *perma* dug a small hole in the ground. In the first hole he found a root growing across the hole, and so changed to another position

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter XV

Birth and Childhood

A. Hill Marias

No Marias are unaware of the causal connexion between intercourse and pregnancy, and all women know when they miss their first menstruation that they are probably starting to bear a child. Pregnancy among Hill Marias is attended by no taboo either for man or wife, so far as I could ascertain, and the wife continues performing her ordinary routine work right up to the last day of her pregnancy. Sexual intercourse, however, ceases as soon as pregnancy is known to have begun.

During ordinary menstruation, as we have seen in Chapter VI, the wife, like all young women, is secluded for five or six days either in the communal menstruation hut, or in the ***kala*** or menstruation room or the separate menstruation hut of the house. The menstruation huts, whether communal or private, are known as ***pedawo'gha'i***, or (in the south of the Abujhmar hills) as ***dola-lon***, or (in the extreme north) as ***kurma-lon***. The term ***pedawo'gha'i*** is applied also sometimes to the ***kala*** room in the houses. These huts and rooms have been described already on pages 104-6. The Hill Marias say that their clan-god and their Departed would be angry if they gave up their immemorial custom of secluding their women during menstruation, and that no man should see a woman's face at such a time; we have seen that they often guard against the magic of women in this condition by placing castor oil plants and seeds on the roof of the hut when it is occupied. The men do not seem to have any clear idea of what happens to a woman at such times; they only know and say that she 'has gone ***pedawo'gha'i***'. There is no ceremony of any kind at a girl's first menstruation, or during pregnancy. Though children are generally born in the menstruation room or hut, and for some time after birth the mother has to live there subject to the same prohibitions as during menstruation, yet during her nine months she is free from the ordinary taboos to which she is subject during menstruation; that is to say, she is free to visit her husband in the fields and to cook his food for him, in fact to do all her ordinary household and field or market tasks. But it is taboo for a pregnant woman to pick or break anything growing. There may possibly be certain prohibitions which I did not discover,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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I do not in any way emphasize it, but it seems to me curious that many crimes connected with sorcery are associated with water; they are performed on the banks of ponds or rivers and in several instances the body has been thrown into the water afterwards. Does a murderer who has killed a sorcerer believe that there is some spiritual antiseptic for him in throwing his victim's body into water?

IV

841

Grigson has studied in detail the custom of the Hill Marias in regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, but his notes on the Bison-horn Marias need, as he says, 'considerable supplementing'. The Bison-horn Marias have the curious belief that men, not women, were originally subject to a menstrual period. They used to tie hollow bamboos to their organs to catch the discharge. Once—according to one legend—a girl was laughing at a man in this distressing and inconvenient condition, and he lost his temper and threw the bamboo at her; in another story a sister wanted to help her brother, who could not cut his clearing properly on account of the bamboo tagged on in front of him, and offered to take it instead.

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Yet other legends ascribe the origin of menstruation to a wound. There were formerly teeth in the vagina and when these were removed, the wound was not wholly healed. Once the vagina was in the crick of the leg behind the knee—you can still see its shape—but a hen pecked at it and the frightened organ jumped for safety to its hiding-place between the thighs. But it was hurt and it still bleeds every month at the recollection.

841

All the Gond tribes are very strict about the menstrual taboos, in this contrasting sharply with the Orissa Bondos, Gadabas, and Saoras, who are at a similar stage of culture and live not very far away. Grigson has described the extreme rigorism of the Hill Marias and has rightly suggested that the Bison-horn Marias are somewhat less apprehensive of the dangers of menstruation. But they too, like the Murias and the Gonds generally, are strict enough in their application of the taboo and breach of it may be punished by the Departed through the bite of a snake or the destruction of the harvest. They do not usually build special menstruation huts, but sometimes where there is a girls' dormitory, menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and unmarried girls on the other. In such villages, no married woman may go near the dormitory nor should youths enter it. Not all dormitories however are used in this way.

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Elsewhere part of the veranda of the ordinary living-house is screened off or a little hut is built in the compound for the use of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a woman at this time. At the menarche (for which the word used is *kumor utta*, 'the blossoming of the flower'), however, a special hut is built for the girl by women outside the village. A woman of the household brings her food and sleeps with her at night; she must bathe whenever she returns to the house. In some villages, the Marias still make a platform up a tree for the girl, who during the day must hide herself in the forest.

It is very dangerous for anyone to see, let alone to touch, a girl at her menarche. At Tikanpal I was told that if a man saw such a girl as he went through the jungle he should slap her and then go to her parents and after rebuking them, demand a fowl which he should sacrifice; then he should bathe and anoint himself with oil. At Gadapal they said that a man should throw a lump of earth between his legs at the girl, or a stick over his shoulder, and then go home and bathe. Neglect of these precautions might lead to blindness.

At the end of the period—all this refers only to the first period—the girl destroys her hut or platform during the night, throws away her cloth,[1] bathes and returns home before cockcrow. In some villages she is expected to remain for a day or two longer on the veranda of her house: if she has a married elder brother, it is the special duty of his wife to attend to her. Then she puts oil and turmeric on her body—an act which is said to symbolize her formal re-admission into caste, for during the previous days she has been regarded as excommunicated. In many Maria villages, however, the ceremonial use of turmeric is still unknown, and the elder brother's wife carries a pot of water round the house and sprinkles everyone saying, 'Now you are back again in caste'. After this the girl fetches water in an earthen pot and cowdungs the floor. In the evening her father invites some of the elders to a bottle of liquor and says, 'My daughter who was unclean all these days is now clean again'. He sacrifices a fowl to the Departed and they feast on its flesh.

There is not nearly so much fuss about the later periods. The woman has to keep out of the way, but there is no danger in looking at her, and when it is over she just has a bath and resumes her ordinary duties. But even so her daily programme is considerably disturbed. She must not sleep inside the house and, of course, sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden. She must not cook or fetch water or go to work in the fields. She must not touch cattle, pigs

[1] There do not seem to be any special taboos associated with this cloth. But the leaf-cups from which the girl eats at this time are charged with magical potency and if a witch can get hold of them she can afflict the girl with palsy.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

841 or fowls. She must not take grain from the bins or approach the Hearth of the Departed. Except at the menarche, however, she may fetch wood and leaves which may be used by other members of the household; she may fish so long as it is not in a pond; she may even dance so long as it is not at a Penkarsita and she does not touch any man.

When I was taking photographs in Maria villages I frequently came up against these taboos. At Mokhpal I was unable to photograph a girl with strikingly Mongolian features because she was in her period—the people seemed genuinely afraid that the menstrual exhalations would break the lens. At Tikanpal, where I wanted to stage a group of girls making leaf-cups, I was not permitted to do so because one of them was in her period and must not sit on a mat. At Doriras a married girl refused to be photographed standing in front of the girls' dormitory because menstruating women were accustomed to sleep there.

During a wife's period a husband is subject to the laws of a 'little couvade'. No one will eat from his hands; no one will accept tobacco from his pouch. He must not cook or fetch water. He too must not go to the grain bins or approach the symbols of the Departed. He may go to a shrine, but he must not enter it; he may cut his clearing, but he must not fire it or sow seed. He may not hunt, carry a *kawar*-pole, climb a tree, cut grass or reap a crop. If he is a Penna or Gaita he may not perform any religious rite, and if he is a Gunia he cannot divine the cause of sickness.

842 It is generally believed by the Marias, as by the rest of India, that a woman is most likely to conceive if she has intercourse on the day she has her ceremonial bath at the close of the period.

886 As by other aboriginals the climacteric is accepted by the Marias as a matter of course. 'As it appears, so it disappears.' If an elderly woman or her husband dreams of a dried-up tank or stream, it means that this crisis is approaching.

V

843 Pregnancy is diagnosed by the cessation of the menses, vomiting, swelling of the breasts and a darkening of the nipples. 'The face dries a little.' It is generally supposed that a boy is more exacting and makes the mother look fragile and exhausted, while a girl keeps her fresh and well.

843 177 During pregnancy, Bison-horn Maria taboos are not exacting and my suspicion is that originally they were as few and as casual as those of the Hill Maria, and that any elaboration is due to the influence of the local Hindus who, on the whole, pay more attention to the pregnancy than to the menstrual taboos. In other words,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

883 quite understood why—but once they realize that the enquirer is not prepared to be deceived they talk fairly freely about them.

883 485 In all these villages there are commodious rest-houses for the use of visitors and officials on tour and when they are unoccupied —and they are but seldom used officially—the boys sleep in them as their dormitories. The boys, however, are not fully organized as among the Murias, but a leader may be appointed—in Mokhpal he was called the Sian, in Chote Timnar the Peda. Sometimes an older man sleeps with them and imposes a rough sort of discipline, fining those who are absent without cause. An old Maria, Sodi Mukha, is said to have been very proud of his management of the dormitory at Mokhpal. 'Originally', I was told in this village, 'the boys used to make their house in the middle of the place and it was theirs. But when Government ordered us to make a rest-house we had to build it not as we wanted it, but as the officers wanted it.'

883 841 The girls sometimes sleep together in the house of a lonely widow, but often have their own building. This is occasionally combined with the corporate menstruation hut. The menstruating women sleep on one side and the unmarried girls on the other. It is more common, however, for such women to sleep at home and to leave the unmarried girls to themselves. They too are not organized as in the Muria ghotul, but they are fined for quarrelling and for non-attendance. Both boys and girls have regular duties. They must all bring wood for the dormitory fire. At marriages and funerals they must collect wood and make leaf-plates. In the evening the boys and girls often meet in some central place or in front of the boys' house and dance and play games.

883 836 The relations between the boys and girls are not organized and disciplined as among the Murias. At marriages the members of the two dormitories may slip away together and sleep in some secluded place. At Penta the boys described how a girl would make a hole in the wall near which she slept. 'Then a boy creeps up and pokes a stick through the hole to wake her, and she creeps out to join him.' At Bara Harmamunda, the boys said that they actually went into the girls' house, though I fancy this is exceptional.

883 The Bison-horn Maria dormitory does not seem to play an important part in the social or religious life of the tribe. It is not established in the mythology; it does not serve as a school of dancing or as a place for initiation into sexual experience; there is no need in these pacific hills for village guard-rooms. Whether at any time the institution existed in a more flourishing form it is now impossible to say.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

224 796 787 ceremonial hunts are held before most of the greater festivals, and their success or failure augurs a good or a bad harvest. The Muria generally take a Siraha medium with them to discover with divine assistance where game is to be found, and before starting they worship their bows and arrows. They gather under a saja tree on the path leading to the jungle, and place the bows and arrows across the way. They offer aonra rings and stand praying, 'Look Mahapurub, look Kadrengal, look Tallur Muttai, look all ye Departed, we go hunting, will we get anything?' To this the Siraha medium replies for the god, 'Unless I help, you won't get even a squirrel'. Then they say again, 'Let us not return empty; if we get anything, we will reward you with an egg or chick; if we fail, we will abuse you. If we cannot trust you for so little, how can we trust you to give us rice and kodon?'

Then the Gaita plucks a tendu or saja leaf, and puts on it a spider's web. He goes to every member of the party and wipes his face of dirt or sweat, smearing it on the leaf and saying, 'With this we remove all evil of witch or ghost; so may we have good hunting'. When he has thrown the leaf away, the hunters pick up their bows and arrows and go towards the jungle without looking back.

224 796 The Muria also go for a ceremonial hunt before the appointment of a new Gaita, who can only be appointed if they succeed in killing a female deer.

776 The god of hunting is generally called Kadrengal, the husband of Tallur Muttai. The same story is told in the Central Provinces of Mahadeo and Parvati.

> Long ago Kadrengal went into the jungle to make a plough. Tallur Muttai prepared the midday meal, but her husband was absorbed in his work and did not return. Tallur Muttai got very angry; she made a tiger out of straw, putting a wooden spoon as tail and a cooking-pot for the head. She covered it with a blanket and with lamp-black made stripes all over it. Then she said to the creature, 'Go and find my husband'. The tiger went to the place where Kadrengal was working and roared at him, but Kadrengal was not afraid and threw chips of the wood from his plough at it saying, 'Go, dogs, and drive that thing away'. The chips of wood turned into wild dogs and chased away the tiger. Since then hunters have worshipped Kadrengal and have held the jungle dog as sacred.

At Phunder the Muria said that before hunting they worshipped one or other of the Rau of the neighbouring forests. Here live Khotela Rau, Markhund Rau, Khamna Rau and Durga Rau. Each hunter worships the god that was chosen long ago by his ancestors, but should at any time his ancestors not help him then he changes and worships one of the other three. Every three years a hunter should make sacrifices to his god. If he fails to do so the god will take the form of some wild animal and attack him. It is said that those who worship Markhund Rau and Durga Rau are generally the most fortunate. [782]

At the end of a successful hunt, especially when it is a ceremonial hunt, certain parts of the animal must be removed and offered to Kadrengal, the Departed, and any other local gods whose assistance has been invoked. The Gaita sacrifices a small bit of the liver, the tip of the tail and tongue, and the man who made the kill places his bow and arrows or gun in front of the Pot of the Departed in his house and makes similar offerings to his ancestors.

224 841 A man must observe chastity and fast the night before he goes to hunt. As he goes he must carefully watch the omens. He must meticulously observe the prescribed taboos. Hunting is particularly sensitive to the contagion of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

menstruous women. When the hunters go out into the jungle they must not walk across the footprints of such a woman nor should they see her shadow or cross it. They often suppose, when a hunt is a complete failure, that they must have walked across the footprints of a menstruous woman as they were going out. In Benur, Dansa Muria walked over the shadow of such a woman as he was going to the jungle. Soon afterwards he saw a sambhar, but as he was taking aim his bow broke and he got a swelling on his body. He went home, and when the Siraha had diagnosed the cause of the trouble, he made offerings to Kadrengal and the jungle dogs and so recovered.

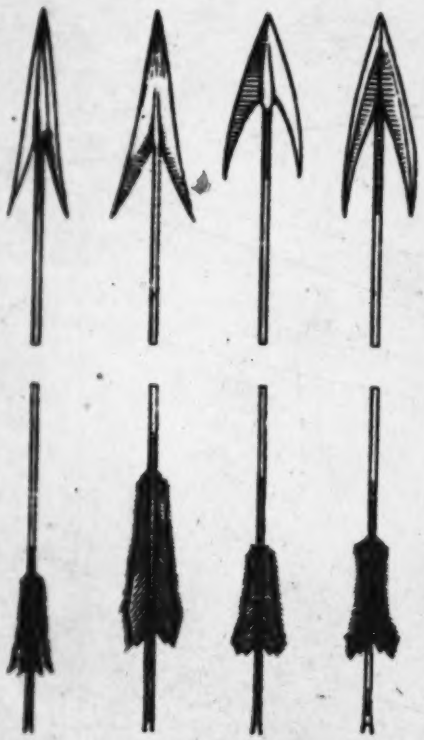

FIG. 10. Arrows and arrow-heads
Length 2' 5"

Should a woman enter her period during the absence of her husband on a hunt, he ought to return home, or if he does accompany the party he must not go near any traps or across the tracks of any animal; nor should he carry the animal when it is killed nor, since Kadrengal and the Departed live in them, should he hold a bow and arrow or a gun.

Adultery on the part of one of the hunters' wives also can ruin a hunt. This has happened in Remawand, in Bandopal, Chaniyagaon and no doubt in other places. The hunter not only loses the game but falls ill, and many kinds of misfortune befall his household; his cattle die and the outraged Dead withdraw their protection.

There are many songs about hunting, sung during the Hulki dances and in the ghotul.

I

Chikkal mitti kariya mama kiriyo kiriyo shikari shikari!
Tupak sajo kima mama.
Milli gondi tupak mama.

Gojir kanar aura mama.

O the mud of the salt-lick, uncle shikari!
Make your gun ready, uncle shikari.
The name of the gun is Maligondi, uncle shikari.
Make gunpowder with gum from the mode tree, uncle shikari.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of which a folded leaf of the date palm is attached to ensure that the juice trickles down into the pot. A small gourd with a hole at either end is kept in the pot, which is finally protected with a bamboo cover to guard it from wind and birds.

When the climber has reached the pot, he removes the leaf and scrapes the end of the cut spadix with a knife that is kept among the branches. Sometimes he rubs it with a little marking-nut juice. Then he removes the sap from the pot and puts it in a gourd tied round his waist. Sometimes if the tree is very high, he lowers this gourd down to the ground with a cord. Then he replaces the leaf at the end of the spadix, puts the cover over the pot and descends.

There are various rules and customs about the use of the juice. It is not considered good to drink it when it is too sweet, as it has a laxative effect. For this reason a little of the old juice is always left in the pot to ferment it. To increase its power a little of the root of the danbaher tree is added. When the weather is cloudy it is considered that it will not be good. The juice of a newly tapped tree should not be given to a pregnant woman or she may abort. In fact, at the beginning, when a new tree is tapped only men drink. The Hill Maria do not give the juice at any time to a woman in her menstrual period.

There is a curious idea that the sago-palm itself is subject to a menstrual period.[1] Every month there is a space of two or three days during which the juice does not flow properly and it is not considered safe at this time to drink even what little there is. So, too, for the first week or so after a new tree is tapped the juice should be avoided, for it is then, they say, like semen. At Phunder, the Muria said that the end of the tree's menstrual period is indicated by the presence of a lotus leaf in the pot.

In some villages, the Muria believe that two Kanyang visit the palms. One is Jal Kanyang, and is a motiari; the other, Kaudo Kanyang, is regarded with characteristic inconsistency as a chelik. When Kaudo Kanyang comes to play in a tree, the juice is scanty but good; when Jal Kanyang comes, the juice flows like a river but it is less potent. Sometimes then a little sand and even fish are found in the pot.

This belief in the fish that get into the pot is widespread. Once in the days of Chaitu Gaita of Alor, a chelik climbed a sago-palm and found two *turu* fish and some sand at the bottom of the gourd. At Palli I was told that such fish were 'sometimes caught by the Salphi Maiden and taken up into the tree'. I have recorded the same idea among the Hill Maria.[2]

When a tree is tapped for the first time offerings are made to the Gorga Kanyang. In some villages a hollow bamboo full of water is brought from a stream and leant against the foot of the palm. It is believed that a Kanyang lives in this water and probably there is an idea that the tree will give as much juice as there is water in the bamboo. In order to improve the flow of juice the villagers sometimes promise the Gorga Kanyang a pig or a chicken.

At Adnar on the day they first tapped a new tree the village Gaita, followed by all the villagers, came to its foot. With red and black powder he made a row of three circles, inside each of which he drew a cross. Rice was piled on these crosses and two leaf-cups full of salphi juice were placed by them. One pile of rice was for the Gorga Kanyang, one for Kaudo Kanyang, and one for

[1] This idea is widespread: I have found it among Juang, Kond, Gadaba, Bondo and, in Bastar, among the Bison-horn Maria.

[2] Compare S. L. Hora, 'Rains of Fishes in India', *JRASB.*, Vol. XXIX (1933), pp. 95ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

V. MENSTRUATION

561 Neither in the ghotul nor outside are the age-grades of Muria children very strictly defined. There are, for example, no rites of transfer from one age-grade to another, but generally four different stages in a child's growth to maturity are recognized. The first stage for a boy or girl is babyhood; the boy is called *pila*, the girl *pili* or *noni* (daughter). This stage lasts a year. The child then becomes a *tākna peka* or *peda* (feminine *tākna peki* or *pedi*), the word *tākna* meaning 'a toddler'. This stage lasts for two or three years till the child begins to play about the house and perform little tasks, when it is known as a *leka* or *leki*. At the age of seven or eight the boy becomes a *lāyor peka* or *nangriya*, the second word implying that he is now able to go along with his father behind the plough. A girl of the same age is known as *lāya peki*, *norwa lāya* (meaning 'immature', a girl who does not yet have to wash after her menstrual period) or in Halbi *tāndak pāni ānu leki*. Finally a girl on passing her menarche becomes a *lāya*, *torita*, *tarni*, *dhāngri*. She is now *juwān* or *mast juwān*, mature. A boy too is now called *lāyor*, *dhāngra*, *dinda* (meaning unmarried) or *juwān* (meaning mature).

841 The significant moment in these stages of growth is obviously a girl's first menstruation. This is a crisis of enormous importance to her both socially and psychologically. The fact that she is subject to this monthly cycle sets her as woman in an entirely different category to man. Menstrual blood makes her dangerous, infectious while alive; it may turn her into a ghost of dread and horror after death. A dozen names and expressions for this condition testify to the importance it has in the Muria mind. It will be most convenient to give them in tabular form: all, except the last three, are Gondi.

Pendawoghai	'Her private parts are flowing.'
Kata pongta	'The bank of the field is broken.'
Netur danta	'Blood is flowing.'
Tora pongta	'Blood is flowing.'
Ārro āta	'She is taboo.'
Atāna āyo	'She is not cooking.'
Arka chhande kita	'She's in the position of one who may not touch cooking-pots.'
Pirila	'She is wrung out like a dhoti.'
Ghāt utaris	'She can't go to the water-place.'
Bhāta me hona	'To be outside,' i.e. she cannot enter the house.
Dhār bohis	'Blood is flowing.'

The first menstruation is called *yete arta* ('the call to water') in Gondi and *phulsundri* ('the blossoming of the flower') in Halbi.

841 343 In many villages, especially those to the west where the influence of the Abujhmar Maria is strong, the Muria build separate huts where their women can be segregated at this period.[1] Sometimes they make one communal hut for the whole village; sometimes there is one hut for a group of houses; occasionally a big house with a large family has a hut to itself. The Muria do not generally build such huts outside the village, but in some isolated spot within its borders. The huts are usually wretched little buildings with small doors. Inside may be seen a bed, a cooking-hearth, a few pots, some strips of cloth, a little firewood. The hut is built by the chelik—no married man may help—who are paid by the village women with liquor for their services. Every year at

[1] Among many other villages may be mentioned Sarandi, Chingnar, Kaleparas, Hochur, Dadarra and Talabera. The huts are called in Gondi *vitār-kurma* (the hut that must not be touched) or *yer nejāna-loa* (the hut for bathing in water).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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the beginning of the rains only the young chelik in the *nangriya* age-grade may re-thatch the roof. When they have finished, they have to pay a 'fine' of seeds or liquor to the ghotul. Girls must never touch the roof.

The motiari's life in this hut is miserable enough. At Padbera a girl exclaimed, 'You feel as if you were in jail; why has God sentenced us girls to such a punishment as this?' While she is segregated in the hut a girl must not go to a well for water, though she may go to the nearest stream. She must not go about the village for fear that her shadow may fall on a man and destroy him. She may, however, go to the forest for wood or leaves. Another girl at Talabera said, 'When we stay in the hut we always feel very hungry; sometimes we cook for ourselves, but generally the family brings it for us. Someone puts it down outside and runs away. If it is not enough, we cannot ask for more. My knees always ache, my stomach hurts, I feel lazy and unhappy, my head is heavy and in my breast is that *dak dak dak* feeling.' She went on to describe how at night they were very frightened lest some Ondar Muttai attacked them. 'We sit up together comforting one another for many hours. When we dream, we see ourselves singing and playing with the chelik and motiari. When at last we have a dream of the embankment of a tank being repaired, we know that the period is over and we will be able to return home.'

In the centre and east of the State, segregation huts are not erected. Their distribution seems to depend not only on the strength of Maria influence, but also on the style of village architecture. As we move east, we find the houses built with very large and deep verandahs where there is plenty of room for a girl to feed and sleep without coming into contact with the rest of the family. It will generally be found that where special menstruation huts are made, the village houses are small and without adequate verandah space. This is one of the reasons why the Hill Maria make a special menstruation room in their houses, even where they do not make a special hut.

But although the girls are less strictly isolated and their lot is thus less wretched than where they have to spend their days and nights away from everyone, the taboos controlling their work and movements are very strict and are enforced by stringent sanctions. These rules indeed are common throughout India,[1] though adapted to the special circumstances of Muria life. The motiari during her period may not cook or fetch water or touch the grain-bins or approach any cultivated field or clearing for shifting cultivation. If she goes into a field where the rice is sprouting it will never reach maturity. She must not step across even the mark of a plough on the ground. She cannot attend a marriage or festival. She must not go near the shrine of the Village Mother. If she is present at any occasion where liquor is being distributed, she must not accept it from the hands of a man; another girl takes it for her and hands it to her in a leaf-cup. She must not take part in any games or dances, particularly in any ceremonial dances.

The most stringent taboo is on her relations with men. Sexual intercourse is absolutely forbidden; though the woman does not seem to be affected, the man who goes to a menstruating woman will die. There is no cure for him, magician and priest are alike helpless. He is lost. The woman must not even touch a man or let her shadow fall upon him. Should a man be accidentally touched he is excommunicated and must be purified by passing through 'a ring of fire' before anyone will accept food or tobacco from him.

[1] For a full account of these, see my paper, 'Primitive Ideas of Menstruation and the Climacteric', *Essays in Anthropology Presented to S. C. Roy* (Calcutta, 1942), pp. 141–57.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

841 [688] In Chandabera the Muria described how once when a man had touched a menstruating woman the Gaita heated gold and touched his forehead, tongue and shoulders, sprinkled him with rice-water and water in which gold had been dipped, made him drink it in the name of the Earth Mother who had been insulted, and imposed upon him a heavy fine.

This is the same penalty as that extracted from a murderer on return from jail. It does not necessarily mean that the Muria regard the two offences as morally equal, but it does suggest that they regard them as equally dangerous in the supernatural field.

A woman's husband also is subject to the strictest rules. During his wife's period, he must not dig the ground, visit his fields, either to sow or reap, thatch the roof, go to the thrashing floor, touch the grain-bins in the house, or visit the village shrines. If he visits his thrashing floor the quantity of his grain is reduced by half. But he may go to the ghotul and sleep there, though no one will take tobacco from his hands. He is allowed to fetch water and cook; [520] indeed he generally has to do this work when his wife is barred from it, and many are the ribald jests that greet a young husband caught carrying pots from the well.

841 539 If he is a priest, he cannot conduct any religious ceremony during his wife's period, and festivals often have to be postponed on this account. A curious story from Korenda illustrates the special difficulties that may trouble a polygamous Gaita.

> At the beginning of the world, there was no god of the Wadder clansmen, though they were numerous enough, while on the other hand there was a god of the Partabi though there was only one solitary male member of the clan. He was the Gaita and he had seven wives. Since one or other of his wives was in her period all the month round, he was never able to perform his priestly duties properly. They were due to eat the new rice on Monday: on Sunday night his eldest wife began her period. They postponed the festival till Friday: but no sooner had the eldest wife bathed on Wednesday than the youngest began on Thursday. And so on, he could never keep the festival, till Dokara Deo began to trouble the Gaita and he gave both his gods, Budha Deo and Dokara Deo, to the Wadder clan.

841 How do these taboos affect the ghotul? The great majority of Muria girls experience the crisis of the menarche while they are still motiari. Only in a few villages like Malakot do the people try to get girls married before maturity. Even where they are married, the little wives may sleep in the ghotul till they are mature. At her first period, a girl-wife gives *jori-darango* or a gift of liquor to the boys and girls 'to show her companionship with them is ended'.

841 522 The ghotul members take a great interest in the menarche. Everybody knows all about it at once and there is a lot of joking and laughter. 'Our new pot is broken, where can we go and clean it?' 'She has trodden on dirty leaves.' 'The embankment of the field is leaking.' When the chelik see the girl sitting plaintive and embarrassed behind her house or in the segregated hut they call to her, 'Have you got a baby, or what is the matter with you? Which is it, a girl or a boy?'

841 I describe elsewhere the special precautions that are taken at the menarche to ensure freedom from conception. A girl must be careful not to throw away her cups and plates for if a witch can get hold of them, she can cause her a great deal of trouble. She should, on this occasion, take these vessels and the ash in which she has cleaned her pots to the river for the Yer Kanyang or

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

841 Nahani Deo. In some villages, however, the older women do not allow the girl to go to a stream or tank at all. They bring her water and let her bathe and wash her clothes on a stone in the compound.

We can understand how the rules affecting the menstruating motiari must be particularly strict when we remember that the ghotul is a shrine built by Lingo Pen, still sacred to him, and that the children within its walls are not only specially protected from marauding ghost or evil nightmare, but are also subject to the taboos and disciplines of *le monde sacré*. The girl therefore is forbidden for a period varying from four to seven days to enter the ghotul or even touch its fence. She must never, of course, touch a chelik at this time. If she did, they told us at Kajen, he would go mad. Even if her shadow fell on him while he was drinking, he would fall senseless to the ground. Should a girl go into the ghotul concealing her condition, the ashes of the ghotul fire would scatter in all directions and might continue to do so for two or three days, a sure sign that Lingo Pen is offended. When the culprit is discovered, she must offer a bottle of liquor to the insulted deity.

There is naturally considerable risk that a girl may begin her period during the night or evening while she is in the ghotul. A chelik in Munjmeta described what is done. 'She feels the warm blood, she shows it to her chelik and goes away at once.' 'Once', he said, 'his motiari did not realize what had happened and spent the night in the ghotul. When it was discovered in the morning, he himself was fined three long pieces of wood.'

The motiari is not, of course, allowed to go on the Diwali, Chherta and Mahua Dandar excursions while she is in this condition. If the period only begins after she has started out, she must make an offering to the local god and return home. Should any motiari begin her period at the moment when the chelik are about to start for their Pus Kolang dances, they abandon the trip. If during a boy's absence on this expedition his 'ghotul wife' should menstruate, he is warned of the fact by a dream and must make offerings to Lingo Pen. A chelik may go to the ghotul even while his special partner is in her period, but no one may take tobacco from him. The others tease him, saying, 'Don't worry, she'll be all right in two or three days. Perhaps you dug a little too deeply last night'.

If a girl is to be married, and her period begins on the eve of her marriage, this is postponed for a day; then she takes a bath and declares that officially all is well. Once when I went to Borgaon for a wedding, the bride entered her period on the critical day and the ceremony was postponed. On another occasion, when the omens did not come right, the people made a search through the wedding party to see if any relative was concealing this condition.

841 A girl does not bathe her whole body until the flow of blood ceases, but she does change and wash her pubic cloth, though she has to be very careful where 515 she puts it to dry for fear a witch should steal it. This cloth must never be touched by a man. It is either thrown away after every period or hidden 291 in a safe place outside the house. Along the banks of the Boroda river near Temrugaon I noticed many earthen pots, some floating in a backwater, others hidden in bushes. These were the pots in which the menstrual cloths were boiled to get them clean.

841 At the end of the period the girl goes as secretly as possible to a stream for her bath. She must be careful not to meet any man on this day, for should 515 his shadow fall upon her, her first child will resemble him. In some villages the girl must take two baths, in others she must take three. After the first bath she cleans and cow-dungs the room where she will sleep, washes all her clothes and sprinkles oil and haldi in the house and on her body. She then

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

841 515 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria [842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?' In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their [833] lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

841 522 When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

841 787 As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

841 776 Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendra-wandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

the motiari Hidde who died for love. Unhappily, when the girl committed suicide, she was in her catamenial period. The result is that she is regarded in some places as an untouchable goddess. Some ten years ago, her symbol was taken to the great festival at Keskal, and her Siraha went into the shrine of Bangaram, consort of Danteshwari. The Siraha of Bangaram and Hinglajin Matal stopped them. There was a great quarrel, and Pendrawandin's Siraha took the case to the court at Kondagaon, whence it went in appeal to the Maharaja. He ruled that the goddess was banned from visiting the shrines of Knar Pat (son of Kanda Dokara), Danteshwari, Bangaram and Hinglajin Matal, but that she might be taken elsewhere.

All over the State there are stories of the unhappy fate which has befallen those who have broken the menstrual taboos. In the Karikhodra ghotul I was told of a shocking incident in Jatabera (Kanker State) where two menstruous women went to a *dahi*-clearing, picked a cucumber and ate it. A tiger attacked them and killed them both.[1] At Tarabera, Lati quarrelled with his wife when she was in her period and struck her twice. Soon afterwards he hanged himself in his field. 'The Departed were angry with him for touching an unclean woman and drove him to kill himself.'

[1] This rigorist attitude towards the menstruating woman is by no means confined to the aboriginal in India. Thus, to give but one example, M. N. Srinivas describes the traditional outlook of the highest Hindus of Mysore. 'The menstruum is nothing but the sin of Brahmin-killing in liquid form.' The degree of defilement varies from day to day. For the first day's impurity a woman will be punished by being reborn as an untouchable, for the second day's as a Brahmin-killer, for the third day's as a washerwoman. The daughter of the sage Udanka was nightly transformed into a mass of worms because seven lives earlier she had touched some cooking-vessels while in her period.—M. N. Srinivas, *Marriage and Family in Mysore* (Bombay, 1942), p. 129.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

brass rings and beads and placed them on the corpse; the men brought bits of cloth. The members of the household fasted from the time of the old man's death until he was cremated. The ceremonies were marked by violent manifestations of grief. When the bamboo bier was brought to the house, the wives of the Waddai, Gaita and Hanagunda fell upon it and lay there. They said that this meant that they too wanted to be taken out and burnt, a curious echo of the Sati tradition. Straw was spread on the bier and when the corpse had been placed there, bits of cloth were laid on it by the male relatives present. The women gathered round the corpse again, kissing it and weeping bitterly. It had been lying with its legs towards the door of the house, but now it was lifted up by the bearers and its position changed so that the head was pointing to the door. They touched the door thrice with it saying, 'You made this house, come here again in your next birth'.

Then, led by the drummers, the corpse was carried out to the cremation-ground. The grand-daughter with her hair undone followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice upon it as she went along. As they passed a path that crossed theirs, they dropped a little rice so that if any other ghost came he would eat it and go away. Everyone went to the funeral. Menstruating women are not normally allowed to attend, though sometimes they may come if they stand at a little distance.

When the party reached the pyre, they went round it anticlockwise once and placed the bier on the ground. Once again the women fell upon the corpse weeping and kissing it. They lay down beside the pyre and had to be pushed away before the business of the funeral could proceed.

Then one of the women put a little tobacco in the mouth of the corpse. The body was placed upon the pyre. Some of the bits of cloth with which it was covered were left there; the rest was distributed between the drummers and the relatives by marriage. The Hanagunda removed the packets of rice which had been tied to the waist of the corpse and threw them to left and right. The body was entirely covered with a cloth and the Hanagunda ripped this open just over the mouth. A piece of grass which had been brought from the roof of the house was put into the mouth of the corpse and

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 that his wife did not bear him a child, he went to the Waddai who discovered the real reason, performed the proper rites and soon a large family came into being.

754 755 841 Witches can injure women by prolonging their menstrual periods. The Siraha can counter this by offering sacrifices to the Dead and to the Mirchuk. In Kameli a woman who was suffering from mennhorragia was cured by this means. [762] But sometimes the Siraha can do nothing, and in despair the unhappy woman may hang herself.

754 At Borgum I was told that only widows can perform black magic and that they usually call on the ghosts of the dead to help them in their wicked deeds. Here they gave me an interesting account of how a witch can take precautions against discovery. She takes her familiar, say the ghost of a murderer or suicide, with her to an ant-hill and there she 'binds its mouth' by removing some of the earth from the hill and uttering charms. She says to the ghost, 'When the Siraha questions you, do not disclose my name'. Then she replaces the earth. It is believed that, just as any earth that is removed from an ant-hill is automatically filled up the next day, so misfortune will enter the house of the ghost she has bound if it betrays her.

[751] 754 683

Charm against disease, made of small bits of chicken-bone.

Dread of this witchcraft or enchantment is a very powerful factor driving men to violence, for the fear is still a live one and the dangers are supposed to be great. Guma Hunga left his home and village because he believed that his family was being bewitched by a man called Burgi. A year afterwards he saw his enemy in the new village to which he had moved, and murdered him in a sudden access

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

in his house, pulling himself up by a rope tied to the roof. But at last he could bear it no longer and managed to hang himself with the very rope that had been so long his friend.

Menstrual troubles are always due to the magic of a jealous woman, usually a frustrated and malicious widow. The catamenial period in any case is regarded as a time of contagious danger and taboo, and any irregularity is sufficient to cause a strong psychotic disturbance.[1] Karti Sukri, a young girl of only fifteen years, apparently suffered from menorrhagia; she bore it for six months and then hanged herself with her own cloth from a mahua tree near her home. Markami Kosi had been married for twenty years, but she suffered acutely during menstruation—'the pain was so great she behaved as if she were mad'—and she too committed suicide. As is often the case when a woman suffers from menstrual troubles, the husband had married a second wife and I have little doubt that the jealousy and annoyance inevitable in a polygynous household played its part in hastening Markami Kosi's death. The younger wife, however, did her best to save the other woman; she cut her down while still breathing and tried to revive her.

In all these cases, matters were made worse by the failure of the magicians to effect a cure. This naturally added fear and depression to the physical suffering of the patient. Whenever the Siraha is found helpless, an atmosphere of deep gloom and apprehension is created: the supernatural powers arrayed against the sufferer take on a new majesty and horror.

VII

CRIME AND SUPERSTITION

I have not found many superstitions about crime, probably because there are so few professional criminals among the Maria. We have already seen how valuable blood is as a fertilizer. In one case I heard of women throwing their rings on a murdered man's memorial stone as it was being carried to the grave. Afterwards they picked up these rings and wore them believing them to be extremely lucky. But

[1] Havelock Ellis goes so far as to say that 'whenever a woman commits a deed of criminal violence it is extremely probable that she is at her monthly periods', but Stanley Hall assembles evidence to show that this view is over-stated. Hall, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 500.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter XV

Birth and Childhood

A. Hill Marias

No Marias are unaware of the causal connexion between intercourse and pregnancy, and all women know when they miss their first menstruation that they are probably starting to bear a child. Pregnancy among Hill Marias is attended by no taboo either for man or wife, so far as I could ascertain, and the wife continues performing her ordinary routine work right up to the last day of her pregnancy. Sexual intercourse, however, ceases as soon as pregnancy is known to have begun.

During ordinary menstruation, as we have seen in Chapter VI, the wife, like all young women, is secluded for five or six days either in the communal menstruation hut, or in the *kala* or menstruation room or the separate menstruation hut of the house. The menstruation huts, whether communal or private, are known as *pedawo'gha'i*, or (in the south of the Abujhmar hills) as *dola-lon*, or (in the extreme north) as *kurma-lon*. The term *pedawo'gha'i* is applied also sometimes to the *kala* room in the houses. These huts and rooms have been described already on pages 104-6. The Hill Marias say that their clan-god and their Departed would be angry if they gave up their immemorial custom of secluding their women during menstruation, and that no man should see a woman's face at such a time; we have seen that they often guard against the magic of women in this condition by placing castor oil plants and seeds on the roof of the hut when it is occupied. The men do not seem to have any clear idea of what happens to a woman at such times; they only know and say that she 'has gone *pedawo'gha'i*'. There is no ceremony of any kind at a girl's first menstruation, or during pregnancy. Though children are generally born in the menstruation room or hut, and for some time after birth the mother has to live there, subject to the same prohibitions as during menstruation, yet during her nine months she is free from the ordinary taboos to which she is subject during menstruation; that is to say, she is free to visit her husband in the fields and to cook his food for him, in fact to do all her ordinary household and field or market tasks. But it is taboo for a pregnant woman to pick or break anything growing. There may possibly be certain prohibitions which I did not discover,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

841 or fowls. She must not take grain from the bins or approach the Hearth of the Departed. Except at the menarche, however, she may fetch wood and leaves which may be used by other members of the household; she may fish so long as it is not in a pond; she may even dance so long as it is not at a Penkarsita and she does not touch any man.

When I was taking photographs in Maria villages I frequently came up against these taboos. At Mokhpal I was unable to photograph a girl with strikingly Mongolian features because she was in her period—the people seemed genuinely afraid that the menstrual exhalations would break the lens. At Tikanpal, where I wanted to stage a group of girls making leaf-cups, I was not permitted to do so because one of them was in her period and must not sit on a mat. At Doriras a married girl refused to be photographed standing in front of the girls' dormitory because menstruating women were accustomed to sleep there.

During a wife's period a husband is subject to the laws of a 'little couvade'. No one will eat from his hands; no one will accept tobacco from his pouch. He must not cook or fetch water. He too must not go to the grain bins or approach the symbols of the Departed. He may go to a shrine, but he must not enter it; he may cut his clearing, but he must not fire it or sow seed. He may not hunt, carry a *kawar*-pole, climb a tree, cut grass or reap a crop. If he is a Perma or Gaita he may not perform any religious rite, and if he is a Gunia he cannot divine the cause of sickness.

● 842 It is generally believed by the Marias, as by the rest of India, that a woman is most likely to conceive if she has intercourse on the day she has her ceremonial bath at the close of the period.

886 As by other aboriginals the climacteric is accepted by the Marias as a matter of course. 'As it appears, so it disappears.' If an elderly woman or her husband dreams of a dried-up tank or stream, it means that this crisis is approaching.

V

843 Pregnancy is diagnosed by the cessation of the menses, vomiting, swelling of the breasts and a darkening of the nipples. 'The face dries a little.' It is generally supposed that a boy is more exacting and makes the mother look fragile and exhausted, while a girl keeps her fresh and well.

843 177 During pregnancy, Bison-born Maria taboos are not exacting and my suspicion is that originally they were as few and as casual as those of the Hill Maria, and that any elaboration is due to the influence of the local Hindus who, on the whole, pay more attention to the pregnancy than to the menstrual taboos. In other words,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Burha te jäwa unddna bedur gatta te mak dāyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

•842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

842 789 Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead. A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform spells to stop her supplanter from realizing the fullest joys of marriage. The Constable of Modenar said that Mayakaka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

842 578 [586] Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Husband and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

843 A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (intercourse), and *paidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to space confinements properly. After a year, 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months, and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'. But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puerperium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them? But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

843 844 In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements. The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

841 sleeps at home for a day, still subject to most of her taboos. On the following
515 day she bathes again and anoints herself, or allows her mother or sister to anoint her. In most villages she is free after the second bath. She may go again to the fields and in the evening to the ghotul. In Binjhli, however, and in a few other villages, I have found the rule that she must have three baths: the Deer Bath on the fifth day after the beginning of her period, the Lizard Bath on the sixth and the Hare Bath on the seventh. Only on the evening of the seventh day may the girl return to the ghotul. This is partly a hygienic measure—the Muria consider that a girl who finishes her bathing on her fourth day is 'as dirty as a Hindu' but one who takes three baths is 'white as a Raja'—partly a measure of birth control. The Muria
• [842] share the universal Indian belief that conception is most likely to occur on the day the menstrual flow ceases.[1] This is commonly on the fourth day, and so by segregating the motiari for the dangerous period the Binjhli chelik consider that the risk of pregnancy is lessened. Even so, when a girl returns to the ghotul after her menses, she warns the boy with whom she is sleeping: 'I have just bathed my head; if there is a baby, it will be yours: will you be responsible for it?' In Binjhli the chelik told us that the girls make their
[833] lovers promise to practise *coitus interruptus* on this day, and it is the duty of the Belosa to warn the girls about it. In Markabera, however, the girls returned to the ghotul directly their flow stopped, and no special precautions were observed.

841 When the girl returns to the ghotul after her period the boys rag her. 'O
522 Tiloka, the bank was broken, the water was pouring out like a river, we were tired of mending it. But now all the water has run out and the field is dry.' Or sometimes the boys say, 'Your pot had a hole in it, but today you mended it with lac'. And again, 'Who dug the hole and let the water out?' And that evening they pretend she is still unclean and cry, '*Chi chi chi*; don't touch me!' And they may say to her special chelik, 'What a lucky man you are: your rice has ripened quickly: tonight you can cut the crop'. But it is said that after the first menstruation, in those ghotul where there are ghotul mates, the chelik treats his girl with special tenderness. 'There is no end to his love for her; he doesn't let her sleep all night.' In a mysterious way, his motiari has become a woman; she is different, mature, and doubly precious.

As we would expect, the girls often suffer from dreams at this time. In
841 Padbera they said that the Yer Kanyang who lives in the river feeds on the
787 blood of washed-out menstrual cloths. This naiad is very lonely with no one to keep her company; so she visits the motiari in the menstruation hut and plays with them in their dreams. Because these girls dance with her all night, they are slack and weary during the day. The girls at Padbera can tell when they are about to begin their periods because they dream of the Yer Kanyang and see the river. The river-dream is everywhere prophetic of the period, especially if husband and wife or chelik and his ghotul mate dream of a river in flood. This is an important dream, for it enables the women who are favoured with it to beware of going to tabooed places where their period might begin unexpectedly. If girls dream of fire or of flying up into the sky, it is a warning that they will suffer from irregular menstruation. The end of the period is heralded by a dream of a dried-up pond.

841 Breach of the menstruation rules is very serious. The importance attached
776 to them may be seen by the interesting and curious case of the goddess Pendrawandin. This goddess, whose story is given on page 178, was originally

[1] Cf. J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. II, p. 368

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

a *jodidār* ghotul, a pregnancy scandal caused the chelik and motiari to adopt the other rule of partnership. Twenty years ago, Masora was a *jodidār* ghotul; today its members insist on change. I believe that originally all over the ghotul area the dormitories were of the older type; then in order to avoid the scandals and elopements that naturally arose from such intense and lasting attachments, and as a result of the belief that conception was less likely when the cycle of coitus was frequently broken, the rules were changed.

The ghotul, therefore, gives no support to those who believe in what Westermarck called the 'hypothesis of primitive promiscuity'. Promiscuity is the last thing permitted in the *jodidār* ghotul. It might even be argued that it is the result of culture-contact, for the ghotul in the neighbourhood of towns and schools, or along the roads, are generally of the modern, promiscuous, type.

This gradual change from one tradition to another probably accounts for the very haphazard distribution of the two types at the present time. The old tradition persists in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar and among the Jhoria; elsewhere there is no rule. Here and there throughout the whole area, *jodidār* ghotul survive in the midst of dormitories which, as the result of scandal or example, have changed their rules. In the Kongur Pargana, for example, More Berma, Kanhargaon and Gorma are ghotul of the old type surrounded by others, as are Chimri and Morenga in the Bangoli Pargana. At the present time, the newer type of ghotul seems to be in the majority; out of the 2000 married men examined, 720 had grown up in *jodidār* dormitories, and 1280 in the others, while out of 347 dormitories of which I have information on this point 269 have adopted the new rules, 78 retaining the older customs.

II

In the *jodidār* ghotul, the pairing-off of chelik and motiari in a more or less permanent relationship, only to be dissolved by the marriage or death of one partner, is taken very seriously. In most villages there is a custom of the ghotul marriage, which is celebrated after the children have attained ghotul maturity and received their titles. In Metawand the chelik gave me a detailed description of the ceremony.

The members of the ghotul are allotted their various parts in the marriage. First of all, the boy's 'parents' go to the girl's 'parents' for the betrothal ceremony, carrying two leaf-pipes to represent bottles of liquor. The girl's parents say—in strict accordance with tradition—'Why have you come, samdhi?' 'O there's nothing special, we were going this way and looked in for a few moments.' 'No, no, there must be some reason.' 'Well, we did hear that a flower had blossomed in your house; we would pick it to adorn our hair.' 'Ah, how truly they say that a dog is fed many years only to be taken by a panther in the end, and a daughter is cherished only to be carried off by the samdhi.' There follows the usual dispute about the bride-price and, when that is agreed, the two parties sit together and smoke.

The following day comes the 'marriage'. Ashes are used instead of haldi. A little booth is made in the ghotul court. The marriage ritual is briefly recapitulated. Water is poured from the roof over the two children. Eager hands catch them and shut them up in an inner room. The bride screams, 'Open the door, let me out'. The others, shouting with laughter, at last let them go. That night the two sleep together, and will probably continue to do so until one of them is married.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942).1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

together, and beat the boy, telling him that the girl was no longer his, and that such meetings would bring scandal upon them all. Behind those slaps how much one can see of parental exasperation over a long and troublesome intrigue, almost certainly parental envy of a son entranced by love, and the usual Muria dread of adultery—a very genuine sentiment.

Boy and girl ran away—I can see their quick Muria nature dissolved in tears and anger—and returned to the ghotul for the feast that sealed their separation. Munga had to massage every chelik after supper as a farewell rite, but then, when all was quiet, they crept together out of the ghotul to the woods. That night—it was 20 May 1932—they climbed onto the great branch of a mango tree, tied and adjusted ropes, and facing one another fell to death. When they were found, Chaitu had his hand upon his motiari's shoulder.

V

Although outwardly both types of ghotul are the same and often only the most careful investigation can distinguish them, the customs and atmosphere of the modern type are entirely distinct. Here everything is arranged to prevent long-drawn intense attachments, to eliminate jealousy and possessiveness, to deepen the sense of communal property and action. No chelik may regard a motiari as 'his'. There is no ghotul marriage, there are no ghotul partners. 'Everyone belongs to everyone else' in the very spirit of *Brave New World*. A chelik and motiari may sleep together for three nights; after that they are warned; if they persist they are punished. If a boy shows any signs of possessiveness for a particular girl, if his face falls when he sees her making love to someone else, if he gets annoyed at her sleeping with another chelik, should he be offended if she refuses to massage him and goes to someone else, he is forcibly reminded by his fellows that she is not his wife, he has no *haq* or right over her, she is the *māl* or property of the whole ghotul, and if he looks like that he will be punished.

This type of ghotul is sometimes called the *mundi-badalna* because in it you change from girl to girl just as you change your rings from finger to finger.

How is it that this type of ghotul has so widely displaced the classical *jodidār* dormitory? Why is the process of change from one type to the other continuing today? There are many reasons.

In the Benur Pargana and at Koilibera I heard the phrase 'so that they will not be ruined by love'. This is certainly a genuine consideration. Too much love before marriage will mean too little after it. Sexual romance is not the best preparation for a life-long union. A strong and lasting attachment to a girl in the pre-nuptial period may lead to an elopement and an irregular marriage. Such a marriage disturbs the serenity of the home—which ultimately depends on the parents; it destroys the old alliances of families and prevents the repayment of ancient debts; it often turns out unsuccessful. In villages where several such elopements have occurred within a short time, the rules of the ghotul have been changed.

The modern rules are also intended as a contraceptive measure. The Muria believe that conception only occurs when the male and female remain together for a long period and enjoy an uninterrupted series of acts of coition with no divergence of interest. Both psychological and physical concentration in fidelity to a single partner is required for pregnancy.

A former Chalan of Golawand, for example, described how he consistently changed his ghotul partners and never made anyone pregnant; but two friends of his in the same ghotul slept every day with the same girls and impregnated

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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them both. The Gaita at Kollibera said that a chelik could have congress three times a night and it would do no harm, but if he went to the same girl more than three days running he would fall ill and she might conceive.

The modern type of ghotul breaks up the coital sequence and is thus supposed to lessen the danger of conception. Statistics, however, show that this is not so. Among 2000 men, 80 made motiari pregnant during their ghotul period; of these 25 or 1 in 28·8 belonged to *jodidār* ghotul, and 55 or 1 in 23·2 to the modern type.

[531]

FIG. 61. Carving on the door of a private house at Bandopal
Slightly enlarged

X 883
836

A more genuine reason for the prevalence of the newer rules is the Muria temperament which is fundamentally hostile to individualism, to exclusiveness, and to any kind of 'possessiveness'. The Muria believe that if everyone belongs to everyone else in the ghotul there will be no room for jealousy. I am not at the moment thinking whether this is true or not, but it is certainly what

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

833 partner; but here, so far from being thought improper, it is not unknown for a girl to attract a chicken-hearted chelik in this way.

Woman is indeed regarded as insatiable. 'Woman is earth; man cannot plough her.' The proverb means that as a single plough cannot break up the universal earth, so no man can really satisfy a woman. Here we have the opposite view to that commonly held in Europe, that sex is the man's privilege and the woman's duty; in aboriginal India, sex is the man's duty and the woman's right. It is her compensation for the embarrassments of menstruation and the pains of child-bearing. She has no more powerful means of dominating and subjugating the male.

It is difficult to say what a Muria regards as the normal frequency of intercourse. Among adults it is often said that a Muria woman insists on a daily connexion until the first child is born; after that twice a week is enough.' A wife is very passionate until she gets a child, but then the child takes her passion and her strength away.' Yet when a husband is more ardent it gives great satisfaction to his partner. 'If he goes to her three times during the night she beams with happiness and tells her friends, "I saw no sleep tonight. He gave it all to me. His life was in me all night".'

[595] This tradition imposes a great strain on the polygamous husband and may explain why multiple marriage is so rare. A former Chalki of Bayanar had two wives. 'We never quarrelled so long as I went daily to both. I didn't mind for I was strong enough. After all, it is only your land, and every man tills as much as he can. All you need is a pair of strong bullocks and a plough.'

A childless couple are often driven to excess in a vain attempt to stir the 833 mysterious forces that cause conception. A Daroga of More Berma told me, ●842 'My penis has been worn out by seven years' hard work, just as a bit of cloth is torn to bits after months of heavy wear, but still I cannot get a child'. And a man at Alor said, 'You may work night and day, but unless God fills the womb with hair, it is all of no avail'.

X883 In the ghotul sexual practice varies. In places where there has recently been a pregnancy, the leaders insist on restraint as a contraceptive measure, 833 and sometimes demand that their permission be taken before indulgence. But this is emergency legislation, and the ghotul soon slips back into freer ways. In the stricter ghotul, the chelik and motiari do not have congress more than two or three times a week. At Esalnar, they claimed that they did not exceed once a week—for here they were much concerned to prevent conception.

But elsewhere I have heard the chelik laugh at such moderation. 'The penis is the *datun* (toilet-twig) of the vagina and should clean it every day.' In Binjhli, where chelik and motiari only sleep together once a week, on Fridays, they said that they had intercourse outside the ghotul every day, and at least three times on Fridays.

In most ghotul, the motiari expects her chelik to approach her sexually every day. 'If the boy does nothing, then the following evening when she is combing his hair she says, "Was it a day or a night yesterday? You forgot it was night. Why were you lying beside me like a corpse?" The boy feels very ashamed and says that he had a bad head or was very tired after working in the fields. "But I'll tire you out tonight", he says.'

'A night without intercourse', said a motiari at Chandabera, 'seems twelve years long.'

834 The Muria tradition, which is always wise and sane in sexual matters, interrupts the routine with many holidays. The regular monthly rest during the catamenial period of wife or motiari is a boon alike to husband and chelik. During pregnancy and after it there is a fairly long period of abstinence. During

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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171

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

RECENT controversies about the sex life of primitive peoples, which have centred mainly on such questions as the extent of their ignorance of physiological paternity and the pre-marital licence they permit, have tended to obscure the equally interesting and important problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity.

This problem, which arises in an acute form among the Muria, has often puzzled anthropologists. They have observed that many societies allow the unmarried complete freedom of sexual opportunity, that 'illegitimate' births are rare, but that after marriage the women generally prove remarkably fertile. It is to writers on the Pacific area that we are indebted for a clear statement of this problem. African observers have tried to find some solution in the contraceptive practices and restraints of their peoples and have generally, I think, evaded the main issue.[1] In India there is little evidence of value to illustrate the sex life of its aboriginals. It is astonishing that none of the writers on the village dormitories or men's houses throughout the world have seriously tackled a question so fundamental to any discussion of the institutions they have described.

One of the first to draw attention to the question was Seligman, who wrote in 1910 that a puzzling feature of the licence undoubtedly permitted throughout the Massim area of British New Guinea was the very small number of illegitimate births which took place.

> Wherever the confidence of the natives was gained it was admitted that abortion was induced, but the most careful inquiries failed to produce evidence that the practice was as frequent as might be expected considering the prevailing liberty. In fact, with every *a priori* reason for expecting abortion to be commonly produced I came to the conclusion that in fact it was a somewhat infrequent event.[1]

Rivers noticed the same thing among the Eddystone Islanders.

> The very free relations existing before marriage might have been expected to lead to the birth of many children and to the existence of definite regulations for assigning such children to their proper place in society. Such births seemed, however, to be extremely rare, and in the whole of the pedigrees collected by us only one such case was given, and that many generations ago.[2]

Writing in *Oceania* on the culture of the people of Wogeo, one of the New Guinea islands, Hogbin says that,

> Single girls do sometimes have children, but illegitimacy is not nearly so common as one might have expected. Just why this is so it is impossible to say. I observed one fact that bears directly upon the problem, namely that it is extremely rare for women to have children until they are, I judge, more than twenty-one years of age, by which time most of them are safely married. I have noticed that even when a girl is married directly after her first menstruation, which does not

[1] C. G. Seligman, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (Cambridge, 1910), p. 500.
[2] W. H. R. Rivers, *Psychology and Ethnology* (London, 1926), p. 76.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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regularly take place until almost certainly after the seventeenth year, it is most unusual for her to have a child for several years.[1]

Barton notes that in the Ifugao *agamang* 'conception results less frequently than one would expect. The surprising intensity of the sex life of the *agamang* period seems to create physiological conditions unfavourable to conception: possibly the excessive intercourse keeps the female organs in a state of hyperemia'.[2]

The classical statement of the problem is by Malinowski. In his great study of the Trobriand Islanders—who have in their *bukumatula* an institution for pre-marital congress not wholly unlike the ghotul—he says,

> Since there is so much sexual freedom, must there not be a great number of children born out of wedlock? If this is not so, what means of prevention do the natives possess?
>
> As to the first question, it is very remarkable to note that illegitimate children are rare. The girls seem to remain sterile throughout their period of licence, which begins when they are small children and continues till they marry; when they are married they conceive and breed, sometimes quite prolifically. I express myself cautiously about the number of illegitimate children, for in most cases there are special difficulties even in ascertaining the fact... so that only an approximate estimate can be made even in a community with which one is very well acquainted.
>
> I was able to find roughly a dozen illegitimate children recorded genealogically in the Trobriands, or about one per cent.[3]

Malinowski goes on to say that contraceptive methods are completely unknown in the Trobriands. Two years later Rentoul, in a communication to *Man*, declared that the Trobriand women were 'specially endowed or gifted with ejaculatory powers, which may be called upon after an act of coition to expel the male seed'.[4] Though Malinowski poured scorn on Rentoul's suggestion, describing it as 'one of the typical myths which circulate among the semi-educated white residents', Himes is not prepared to reject it altogether.

> What is undoubtedly the same technique, seminal expulsion by violent bodily movements, is reported as used by Australian natives. Therefore its occasional use by some Trobriand women is a possibility. Other circumstances being equal, a positive declaration of use seems more credible than a denial by natives in conversation with an anthropologist.[5]

Yet even if some of the Trobriand women do practise this means of contraception, as some of them undoubtedly limit the number of their offspring by abortion, the problem still remains—the extreme disparity between the extent of the sexual licence allowed and what is usually regarded as its inevitable sequence. Malinowski says again,

> Can there be any physiological law which makes conception less likely when women begin their sexual life young, lead it indefatigably, and mix their lovers freely? This, of course, cannot be answered here,

[1] H. I. Hogbin, 'The Native Culture of Wogeo', *Oceania*, Vol. V (1935), pp. 320f.
[2] R. F. Barton, *Philippine Pagans* (London, 1938), p. 11.
[3] B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, third edition (London, 1932), pp. 166ff.
[4] A. C. Rentoul, 'Physiological Paternity and the Trobrianders', *Man*, Vol. XXXI (1931), p. 153.
[5] N. E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception* (London, 1936), p. 33.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it is a purely biological question; but some such solution of the difficulty seems to me the only one, unless I have missed some very important ethnological clue.[1]

The problem thus posed presents itself in a peculiarly acute form when we consider conditions of life in the ghotul. For here, boys and girls—in spite of various checks and disciplines—cohabit from the period of their first tentative experiments, through full sexual maturity, for five to eight years until their freedom is ended by marriage. Yet here too pregnancies are comparatively rare and, though various contraceptive means are practised, few of them have physiological properties.

The incidence of pregnancy, however, is higher than that discovered by Malinowski in the Trobriands. Out of 2000 cases, 80 men admitted to having made their ghotul partners pregnant, and in the 220 ghotul examined, I found a history of 327 pregnant girls.

I believe that these figures are reasonably accurate. Although there is a strict rule against any member of the ghotul revealing even to the elders of the tribe, let alone to an inquisitive outsider, the fact that a motiari is pregnant at the moment, this reticence is no check on the loquacity of older men about matters long since past. As we shall see, there is no moral or social stigma attaching to pre-marital pregnancy; it is rather a matter of business, a complicated financial transaction. Everyone in the ghotul hushes it up rather as one might hush up a friend's mistakes or follies, anxious only to get him off. But once it is all over, the bills paid, the girl married, the child accepted as a full member of its legal father's family and clan, the real father allows himself the pleasures of retrospection; he recalls the potency of former days and finds it not ungratifying to remember what a lad he was.

Eighty pregnancies out of 2000 is 4 per cent, much more than Malinowski's figure, astonishingly more than Rivers'—and this in spite of the fact that the Muria admit to contraceptive practices that are denied in the Trobriand and Eddystone Islands. It is possible that a statistical, instead of a genealogical, inquiry would have yielded higher figures, at least in the Eddystone Islands. The genealogical method is not the best way to discover 'illegitimate' births among primitive people, for the whole trend of primitive society is to legitimatise births wherever possible.

Yet although the older Muria are not unwilling to admit the scandals of long ago, it is regarded as vitally important for a Muria girl to avoid conception. Pre-nuptial intercourse is socially recognised, and even tacitly approved, yet pre-nuptial pregnancy is at the moment of its occurrence a major social disaster, the chief anxiety of ghotul life, the one cloud upon its dreamland. It brings disgrace upon the ghotul, it endangers the girl's normal marriage prospects, it imposes a heavy financial burden upon the boy's parents and it casts a momentary shadow over the whole village. It is sometimes believed that a youth who has 'wasted his seed'[2] in making a motiari pregnant will be sterile later in life. On joining the ghotul the little chelik and motiari are solemnly warned both by their parents and by the ghotul leaders of the risks of pregnancy and are told how to avoid it.

For the Muria have a vivid appreciation of the fact of physiological paternity. The answer to the riddle 'Out of water, bones' is 'Semen and a child'.

[1] Malinowski, op. cit., p. 168.

[2] The expression used for a girl is *was bigad gaya*, 'her nerve is broken', if she conceives out of due time.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

842 Conception, they say, is due to 'the conflict of two waters'. 'It is a kind of urine that makes a baby.' 'The child is formed in the womb just like the chicken in the egg, first the white, then the yolk, then the bones and flesh, and at last the life.' But some Muria say that it is not possible to have any exact knowledge about the conception of a child. 'It is not as though we were just tying up a bundle and could say exactly what we had put inside it.'

But the place of the father, the male, in the procreative process is fully recognized in folk-tale, song and the talk of every day. The Muria even have their theories about the physiological conditions necessary for conception. The first and most important of these is that the climax of the male and female should occur simultaneously. If the woman reaches her climax before the man's orgasm, his seed will be destroyed by her discharge. If the woman fails to reach a climax at all, conception will not occur. The Muria illustrate this by pointing out that if rice is sown in too much water, or if the rainfall is excessive, the seed will rot and there will be no harvest. If there is no rain after the seed is sown, it will wither. For a good crop there must be moderate showers.

883 842 Chelik and motiari then are well aware that conception normally follows sexual congress—'If you excrete in a stream, the mess will rise to the surface'; they are strictly warned that conception must not occur; at the same time they are given every opportunity, and indeed encouragement, to copulate. It is evident, therefore, that they must at least believe—in spite of a 4 per cent figure to the contrary—that conception can be avoided. What methods are adopted to achieve this end?

The first, and possibly to the Muria mind the most important, is a supernatural one. The ghotul is protected by Lingo Pen and the Earth Mother. It is a shrine, a *thirustân*, as the more Hinduized Muria call it. Within its walls no sin can be committed. No evil dream can harm the sleepers; no hostile magic can draw near. Conception cannot occur within the ghotul walls; a pregnancy is believed to be the result of furtive extramural activity.

For three years after the menarche, say the Muria, Lingo Pen saves the motiari from conceiving. There must be centuries of observation behind this faith in a sterility interval. Prayers and offerings are made to ensure the god's protection.

When a girl at her first menstruation goes to bathe in the stream, she prays to the Nahani Kanyang (Bathing Maiden) saying, 'So long as I live in the ghotul, see that my blood flows by the moon, and that I do not conceive. If you grant my desire I will make you an offering at my wedding'. If the prayer is granted, the girl offers an egg, some coconuts, ornaments, a little slag from the smithy, rice and an aonra ring to the Kanyang. I am told that the motiari have a great faith in this prayer, which they believe has prevented thousands of conceptions.

Sometimes the girl offers to the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden) the leaf-cup and plate from which she has eaten on the morning of the first day of her menarche, and prays, 'As you dance and play in the water, so let me dance and play. Let me not be pregnant till I am married, and on my wedding-day I will give you gifts'.

When a chelik and motiari fall in love with each other, especially if they belong to the type of ghotul that frowns upon such attachments and thus forces them to have congress outside its walls, they sometimes go to the jungle and, standing before a saja tree, offer an egg to Lingo Pen, saying, 'Protect us

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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from scandal [that is, pregnancy]; if anyone's name is to be ruined, it will be yours and not ours'.[1]

A curious story comes from Aturbera. On the Tongar Mountain, the son of a Rau (hill-demon) died and that night there was a great wind and all the spirits wept. A chelik of the Uika clan heard the sound and its horror drove him mad. He went out onto the mountain-side and there in a high wind found the burning body of the Rau. He pulled the corpse from the flames and cut off its little finger. When he came to his senses he returned home, and put the Rau's finger in a hollow bamboo which he buried in front of the ghotul. Since then, it is said, no girl in that ghotul has ever become pregnant. At her menarche each motiari digs up the bamboo, removes a tiny scrap of the finger and offers it to the Rau saying, 'Let me not conceive'.

The chelik too are equally concerned to avoid the social and financial embarrassments of a conception for which they may be held responsible. At the Kokoko Festival, when the first patch of axe-cultivation is ceremonially fired, the Sirdar prays, 'Give us sound sleep with our motiari and let them not conceive'. This is how I heard them say it in Bandopal, and again a few days later I heard, at the same festival at Nayanar, the chelik pray, 'Give us daily congress with our motiari, sound sleep in the ghotul and let not the girls conceive'.

But the Muria do not rely entirely upon such supernatural contraceptives; they have faith also in physical means. They believe that the most favourable period for conception is immediately after the catamenial period; after the menstrual flow has stopped, a little blood remains in the vagina; this catches the seed and causes pregnancy. 'The woman's blood and water sucks at the man's water; she has been alone for days, now she is very excited; in this way conception occurs.'

Chelik and motiari must, therefore, avoid intercourse at this time. In most ghotul they are very strict about this. In some there is a rule that the girls should not come to sleep with the chelik till the sixth or seventh day. Even then it is the rule in Binjhli for boys to practise *coitus interruptus* on the seventh day, and a motiari is appointed to give the girls instructions to insist upon it. In other villages, although the girls may be allowed to return to the ghotul immediately after the close of the period, they are not permitted to sleep with the chelik, still less to have intercourse with them.

Another practical method of birth control is based on the belief that if a girl frequently changes her partners she is less likely to conceive. This idea, as we have seen, has led to far-reaching changes in the organization of the ghotul. The old rule of absolute fidelity to a single partner has been changed into one which forbids chelik and motiari to sleep together for more than three days at a time. A constant change of partners, it is believed, renders conception less likely.

Statistics, however, hardly bear this out. Of the 2000 married men examined, 720 had grown up in the *jodidār* ghotul and 1280 in ghotul where partners had to be changed. Of the 80 who made a girl pregnant during their ghotul period, only 25 were living in the *jodidār* ghotul, and 55 in the others, giving a figure of 1 pregnancy in 23·2 for the 'modern' ghotul and 1 in 28·8 for the *jodidār*, in exact contradiction of Muria tradition.

Members of the *jodidār* ghotul, however, say that they achieve some kind of limitation by 'spacing' their copulations. There is often a rule that the chelik

[1] On the other hand, a jealous girl or boy watching a beloved in the arms of another may offer a little rice and an egg to the Departed in the name of Lingo saying, 'Let so-and-so become pregnant, and be forced to face the scandal of a panchayat inquiry'.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

must not have intercourse with their 'wives' more than once or twice a week. They sleep together daily, but the ghotul leaders do not permit sexual congress; in such a close-knit society, control is not difficult. It is interesting that the natural sequence of a 'scandal' is the adoption of a rule that the motiari must not stay in the ghotul all night, or that they may only remain there before festivals and marriages, or on certain days of the week. This indicates the Muria belief that by breaking up the cycle of intercourse, conception is less likely to occur.

The Muria believe strongly that conception cannot follow an act of casual intercourse. A woman must remain with the same partner for at least a month, and during this time congress must be frequent.[1]

Coitus interruptus is known, but I have recorded it as practised in only two ghotul, Binjhli and Padde. I would not ordinarily pay much attention to the negative evidence in such a case, but in this matter inquiries have been made widely and with great care. There does not seem to be any reason why people who are prepared to discuss freely the most intimate sexual matters, even those that are taboo, should deny the method unless it really did not exist. In the majority of ghotul, it had not even been heard of, and a description of it was greeted with astonishment and even mirth. 'How should anyone withdraw at the very moment we want it to stay longer and go deeper?' asked a chelik at Kabonga, and at Markabera the comment was, 'After you have entered with so much trouble, how can you leave before your work is over?' Even at Binjhli the girls said that they disliked it and tried to prevent the boys' doing it except immediately after menstruation.[2]

Certain supposedly contraceptive herbs are taken orally. In Siuni the Muria Gaita prescribed as follows:

'Get an anagondri [the white garlic tied to the tall festal poles used by the Rawat at a Marhai bazaar]; let it dry; powder it and give it to a girl at her first menstruation in a little tobacco. This will keep her infertile for several years.'

Another remedy comes from Kuntpadar. The creeper called *keksa* is carefully watched until one is found which gives flowers but no fruit. The chelik goes to this 'barren creeper' on a Saturday and offers a little rice and *urad* pulse to it saying, 'I give you this: now come to help me'. The next day, early in the morning before cock-crow, he sacrifices a black chicken and coconut to the creeper. He sprinkles some of the blood over it and lets a little fall on the kernel of the coconut, a small bit of which he burns.

Now comes a delicate and difficult moment. He must uproot the creeper with a single jerk. If he is hesitant and fumbles with it, the root may turn into a snake and bite him. But if all is well, he takes the root home and waits until his girl's post-catamenial bath falls on a Sunday. On this day she must fast till evening when she is given a bit of the root mixed with the coconut and rice. After this, she will not conceive, just as the creeper, though it gave flowers (menstruation), bore no fruit. It is important, however, to

[1] The Gadaba of Orissa also believe that occasional intercourse in the dormitory cannot lead to conception; 'the field must be tilled for a long time before it can bear a crop'.

[2] It is curious that *coitus interruptus* is not practised more commonly by primitive people. The Baiga take the same attitude as the Muria: 'the sowing of the seed is the happiest moment in one's life—how should one resist it?—*The Baiga*, p. 221. But the Tikopia practise it freely.—R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia* (London, 1936), pp. 490f. It has also been recorded for the Thonga (Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. I, p. 55), the Maori and generally in Africa (Himes, op. cit., pp. 5ff.). Himes quotes Margaret Mead for its existence among the Samoans (ibid., p. 23).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

see that the root of the creeper has no side-shoots, for these impair its efficacy.

Another orally administered drug is supposed to confer permanent sterilization.

'On a Sunday pick a few pieces of a parasite growing on a tilai tree. Dry them and heat in the fire till they can be powdered easily. Make into small pills with gur and give them to the woman—without her knowing—to eat with parched rice.' This is sometimes given by a chelik to his motiari. 'When there is great love between a boy and girl, he gives it to her so that they can love one another without danger.'

I do not know how commonly these remedies are used, but there is no doubt that chelik and motiari are expected to avoid conception somehow. A pregnancy is regarded as a gross piece of carelessness. There is a general belief that no one need conceive unless they want to, that a definite psychological factor is involved. If a boy and girl do not give themselves to one another with too oblivious a passion, if they hold back a little, if they are careful not to love too constantly or too long, conception need never follow. We have seen that too much love is not approved in the ghotul; conception is the punishment of an over-passionate attachment.

But when all precautions fail, and a girl finds herself pregnant, what happens? Directly she finds that 'the moon has come again, but the stream of blood is dry', she tells her chelik. There is no difficulty in the old type of ghotul; her ghotul-husband will look after her. In the newer type, where during the course of the month the girl may have been sleeping with a dozen different boys, she chooses either the one she likes best or the one with whom she first had congress after her last period. His immediate duty is to bring abortifacients.

Abortions are probably fairly common. In one village I was told that they mixed gur, ashes and the strongest mahua spirit available and gave it to the girl to drink. In another place the Muria said that they used gunpowder [1] mixed with mahua spirit. In Kokori, the Gaita recommended the obviously magical remedy of taking a bit of bark from a mahua tree which had been struck by lightning. This was burnt and the ashes mixed with liquor. In Berma, an eighty-year-old Muria recalled how when he was Nengi of the ghotul he made the Nirosa pregnant. He first dosed her with *keksa* root, but without success, apparently because he did not know the correct ritual of obtaining it, and then on a Monday he bought a bottle of *phuli* liquor. 'On that day we both fasted and in the evening, after bathing, I offered an egg and some liquor to Lingo Pen saying, "O Mahapurub Lingo, if you are a true god, let this girl abort; if you don't, the sin is yours and not mine. You founded the ghotul and if you truly live there till this day, show proof of it and I will offer you another egg". I then made the girl drink the rest of the liquor and in her drunkenness she aborted. As I had promised I gave the second egg to Lingo Pen.'

In one ghotul, about which I believe I have entirely authentic information, six of the girls had procured abortions; one had achieved it three times, twice in the third month and once in the fourth; another girl had achieved it twice. But the motiari do not like using abortifacients, for they believe that they lead to sterility later on, and this ghotul was probably exceptional. There

[1] Hinsa (op. cit., p. 8) quotes an unpublished report by W. B. Cline that 'it is the custom among the natives of the Oasis of Siwa in the Lybian Desert to drink infusions of gunpowder' as a contraceptive measure.

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

Sometimes, indeed, the chelik actually try to make a girl pregnant. In Kanhargaon, two very popular motiari were betrothed to boys at Nayanar. The Kanhargaon chelik did all they could to make them pregnant so that they could force them into marriage and keep them in their own village. But they were unsuccessful, and in the end one of the girls was seduced by her own betrothed at a marriage, became pregnant and was hastily married to him. It is not uncommon, though I have no statistics on the point, for engaged couples whose parents unduly delay their marriage to force the issue either by eloping together or by trying to achieve a pregnancy.

But on the whole, the admirable ghotul rule that engaged couples should have nothing to do with one another before marriage is carefully observed. Out of 113 Lamhada boys serving for their wives and in close proximity for several years to the girls they were going to marry, only 5 made them pregnant.

Pre-nuptial pregnancy does not seem to injure the couple's relationships in marriage, provided a youth marries the girl himself. Of the 26 chelik who married the motiari they made pregnant, not one made a failure of his domestic life. At the time of my inquiries every one of them was living with his original partner and very happy with her. But those who had infertile sexual connexion with their wives before marriage showed a comparatively high divorce rate. Of the 316 who admitted to this, 14 had unsuccessful marriages. Of these 77 were the regular ghotul-wives of my informants and 68 of them were still living together when I inquired.

In only three cases during the last twenty years has a pregnancy been taken so seriously as to lead to tragedy. Two of these were the suicides which I have already described in Chapter XV. But here it was not so much the pregnancy itself as the fact that the pregnancy was the result of a connexion between chelik and motiari of the same clan that mattered. The third tragedy appears to have been due largely to a chelik's fear of the disgrace and expense, especially as it was his second experience of the kind.

At the beginning of April 1942, Birjhu, a chelik of the Aturbera ghotul, discovered with dismay that his motiari, Mori, was pregnant. Only a year before he had made another girl pregnant in the ghotul, had refused to marry her and had forced his parents to pay compensation. They did so, but they made many threats as to what they would do if it occurred again. Mori, who seems to have been in love with the boy, said that he must marry her, but Birjhu refused and said that if she told anybody that it was through him that she had conceived, he would kill her. After a little while, however, the poor girl told her brother's wife about it. When Birjhu heard she had done so, he planned to carry out his threat. On the night of the 14th of April, he told Mori he would do what she wanted and they had better elope together and get married in another village. Late at night they crept stealthily out of the ghotul and made their way through the forest. But suddenly, before they had gone very far, Birjhu caught hold of the girl and strangled her. Then he dragged her body below a tree and tied a rope round the neck to make it look as though the girl had committed suicide.

The following day a report was made at the Narayanpur police station that Mori had committed suicide. When Birjhu heard that the matter had gone to the police, he was frightened but possibly even more he was overwhelmed with sorrow and misery at what he had done. He disappeared, and two days later hanged himself from a tree in the jungle.

But this is the only incident of the kind that has yet been recorded.

Such is the general picture, familiar to students of pre-marital freedom everywhere. How are we to explain the fact that through all the years of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
842

eager youth and splendid physical vigour the chelik and motiari cohabit, employing few precautions worth the name, and yet achieve so low a pregnancy rate as 4 per cent? What explanations have been advanced to solve the problem in other cultures?

X883
842
171

Our first point must be to insist that there really is a problem. When chelik and motiari sleep together, do they really have sexual intercourse, or do they seek some other form of sexual gratification that does not involve the penetration of the male seed into the vagina? This question has been raised for the Bantu by Torday who believes that he has solved the problem of infertile pre-marital promiscuity by showing that it is not promiscuity at all.

> It is scarcely credible that Bantu parents and elders should be devoid of common sense to such an extent as to permit their children to have promiscuous intercourse and yet visit them with dire penalties when the natural consequence, pregnancy, follows. When this question has been fully investigated (an extremely delicate task) it will be found, no doubt, that what is generally described as free sexual intercourse between unmarried youngsters is nothing more than one form or another of mutual masturbation.[1]

African tradition undoubtedly favours some form of unconsummated sexual excitement. Laubscher has described the practice of *meisha* among the Tembu and Fingo peoples. This is performed by the boy facing the girl and placing his penis between her thighs, but penetration must be avoided and every three days the girls are examined to ensure that they remain virgins. Laubscher says that this early erotic form of hetero-sexual adaptation does not, at the pre-pubertal period, replace masturbation.[2] Leakey describes a somewhat similar practice of the Masai warriors in their *manyatta*-dormitories. Although a girl cannot refuse an invitation to sleep with the men, 'she is not necessarily expected to allow a man full sexual intercourse, and, in fact, often does not do so. Thus—strange as it may seem—Masai girls do sometimes go to their husbands as virgins in the physical sense of the word, although they have slept with men in the *manyattas* countless times.'[3] Similar sexual play without consummation is known as *ngwiko* by the Wakikuyu[4] and as *umba* by the Akikuyu. Driberg describes Lango intrigues with unmarried girls as 'platonic' in so far that, although a couple may spend a whole night together, they must not enjoy full sexual relations.[5]

Such practices must involve considerable strain, both physical and psychological, and it is notable that Leakey says that in the dormitory Masai girls 'usually have no objection to full intercourse' except on certain days. The Muria certainly seek to limit the amount of intercourse. Some ghotul send their girls to sleep at home or in a separate house; in these the boys sometimes practise masturbation after the girls have gone, but far more often have intercourse with them on their way home. As in the Masai dormitory, a girl is not bound to have intercourse with the boy she sleeps with on any particular day, but—unlike the Masai tradition—she cannot refuse to have intercourse with him at all. A few girls manage to avoid intercourse for several years, but they are not approved, and the very fact that they are discussed and criticized indicates their rarity. Chelik and motiari do, however,

[1] E. Torday, 'The Principles of Bantu Marriage', *Africa* (London, 1929), Vol. II, p. 256.
[2] H. J. F. Laubscher, *Sex, Custom and Psychopathology* (London, 1937), p. 72.
[3] L. S. B. Leakey, 'Some Notes on the Masai of Kenya Colony', *JRAI*, Vol. LX, p. 194.
[4] C. Dundas, 'Native Laws of some Bantu Tribes', *JRAI*, Vol. LI, p. 246.
[5] J. H. Driberg, *The Lango* (London, 1923), p. 133.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 842 171

often sleep together without sexual congress. The girls have a practice, called *dinga-dinga*, of playing with the penis, and the great prominence given to the clitoris in drawings suggests that they indulge in some form of clitoridical stimulation. But full sexual intercourse is everywhere the rule, and is normal through all divergences and for every type of ghotul.

How far does infanticide and abortion solve the problem? Hutton suggests this for the Angami Naga.

> The licence allowed to unmarried girls raises another question. What of their children? Here accurate information is exceedingly difficult to obtain. Illegitimate children are very rare, and Mr Davis remarks that 'it is impossible to resist the conclusion that they are made away with immediately after birth, or that abortion is procured before the birth of the child'.[1]

Yet few cases come to the courts, and even Hutton with his great experience was unable to find examples. For the Muria I have described an attempt at abortion as a routine measure in cases of ghotul pregnancy, but its ineffectiveness is shown not only by definite statements to that effect, but also by the number of children actually born. Infanticide is, I am certain, unknown.

883 842

The Muria themselves, as we have seen, place considerable reliance on a frequent change of partners. Pitt-Rivers suggested that promiscuity sterilizes by mixing the sperms of different males.[2] Westermarck considered that promiscuity resulted in a pathological condition of the vagina that resulted in barrenness.[3] But the theory of a spermotoxin has not been endorsed by any responsible scientist, and is not supported by the Muria statistics, for there are more pregnancies in the ghotul where partners are frequently changed than in those where each motiari remains faithful to a single partner.

Not altogether unsound is the Muria belief that contraception is secured by spacing acts of congress and that pregnancy cannot follow single or casual coitus. 'Conception often in the writings of novelists', says Zuckerman, 'results from an isolated sexual act, but in real life this is probably exceptional',[4] and he quotes Meaker as saying that:

> Undoubtedly there are human matings in which a single act of coitus, or at most coitus repeated at intervals throughout one menstrual month, would infallibly produce conception, but these are exceptions. Most couples who succeed in reproducing do so in spite of certain imperfections in the conceptive mechanism . . . most people are relatively and not absolutely fertile.[5]

The Muria belief has naturally arisen from an observation of what actually happens. A girl who remains infertile in the ghotul quickly conceives after marriage. 'A motiari', said a chelik at Bhanpuri, 'is an unenclosed clearing; a wife is fenced and irrigated land. As you care for it, it soon bears a harvest, and becomes more and more easy to plough.' And the Jholer of Moroskoro said, 'We had a child within a year of our marriage, for we loved each other and had congress without fear'.

883 842 171

This belief seems to be common in the Pacific. Of the Melanesians of British New Guinea, Seligman says,

1 J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, p. 171.
2 G. H. L. Pitt-Rivers, *The Clash of Cultures* (London, 1927), p. 148.
3 E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. I, p. 334.
4 S. Zuckerman, 'The Physiology of Fertility in Man and Monkey', *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XXVIII (1936), p. 48.
5 S. R. Meaker, *Human Sterility* (London, 1934), p. 41.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
842
171

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

> I believe that . . . Papuasian girls are less easily impregnated than the women of the white race. Whether this is in any degree due to early coitus, early and strenuous work in the gardens, or is a racial peculiarity I do not venture to surmise, but the point of view taken becomes perhaps more comprehensible when it is remembered that the Sinaugolo hold that a single act of coitus is insufficient to produce conception, so that a Sinaugolo girl does not expect to have a child unless visited fairly regularly for a comparatively lengthy time, perhaps not less than a month.[1]

The Tikopia also believe that,

> A child cannot be conceived by a single act of impregnation, but only by a repeated series of acts. This is in line with the view that the child is formed by the coagulation of semen, hence several deposits at close intervals are necessary. The habit of young people of copulating once then missing some days before the next time of intercourse is a corollary of this.[2]

The Muria belief in a safe, or rather unsafe, period is widely shared by other communities. Ancient Indian tradition regarded the *ritu*, or the period extending from the fourth to the twelfth day after the beginning of the menses, as particularly favourable to conception. A husband must approach his wife at this time; if he does not he will suffer the pains of hell.[3] The same belief is universally distributed in modern India, with an emphasis on the first or the first two days after the close of the period. Many aboriginal tribes insist on their women behaving with special restraint and care on these days.

Hollis reports that the Nandi girls are careful not to visit the huts of the warriors for some days after their period 'for fear of becoming pregnant after intercourse with the men'.[4] Himes quotes a report on the Isleta Indians of New Mexico that 'if a woman does not wish to conceive she will not have intercourse for nine days after menstruation'.[5] The great gynaecologist Soranos warned his readers to abstain from coitus directly before and after menstruation.[6] Aetios of Amida, a Greek physician of the sixth century, gave the same advice.[7]

The Muria belief that conception is a girl's own fault and that it can be avoided by the proper psychological attitude during coitus—'Let her not want it, let her not give herself, let her be quiet and not respond—and there will be no danger'—resembles the ancient Chinese practice known as Kong-fou, a sort of self-hypnosis by which the thoughts during intercourse were directed elsewhere. Kisch quotes Riedel as authority for a statement that the women of the island of Buru often had intercourse with strange men, 'but maintained a passive and indifferent state, for the purpose of avoiding conception', and adds that 'it is well known' that

> An active participation on the part of the woman in the sexual act, by increasing her voluptuous sensations, gives rise to certain reflex actions—descent of the uterus, rounding of the os uteri, induration of the portio vaginalis, and, finally, ejaculation of the secretion of the cervical

[1] Seligman, op. cit., p. 500.
[2] J. J. Meyer, *Sexual Life in Ancient India* (London, 1930), Vol. I, pp. 215ff., where references to the classical texts are given.
[3] A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi* (Oxford, 1909), p. 82.
[4] Himes, op. cit., p. 23, quoting R. C. Parsons in *47th Ann. Rep. B.A.E.*, p. 213.
[5] Ibid., p. 90.
[6] Firth, op. cit., p. 492.
[7] Ibid., p. 94.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883X
842
171

glands and of the glands of Bartholin; these changes accelerate the entrance of the semen into the cavity of the uterus, and increase the motility of the spermatozoa.[1]

But Kisch considers that sufficient dependence cannot be placed on this belief that the uterine reflexes are under the conscious will. Himes thinks that the idea simply 'proceeds from a sense of guilt in coitus; if it is not enjoyed, the consequences will not be so unfortunate'.[2] This might well apply to European women, but it is rare to find this sense of guilt among the Muria, though once a cheik at Moroskoro admitted that when, after marriage, he copulated without fear of the consequences his wife quickly became pregnant.

883X
842

We may note finally that the Muria are not exceptionally fertile. Out of the 2000 marriages examined, 150 were infertile, though some of these may have been fruitful later. Of these 150, only 1 husband had previously caused a ghotul pregnancy, and his subsequent sterility was regarded by his wife (who was probably the real person at fault) as a punishment. This infertility may be due to dietary factors; but it is interesting that the inflammatory diseases, such as mumps and epididymitis, which usually cause sterility in the male, are practically unknown among the Muria.

All these different factors have probably contributed to the low conception- and birth-rate in the Muria ghotul. A certain number of abortions are procured by not very efficient means; *coitus interruptus* is occasionally practised; certain disciplines and restraints undoubtedly play their part. But the Muria have no form of contraception, that is sufficiently widely practised, that can account for only 80 pregnancies caused by 2000 males copulating at least twice a week (to give the lowest figure for the most disciplined ghotul) for the period between the ages of 12 and 17.

The most satisfactory general explanation is to be found in the theory, usually associated with the name of Hartman, of a period of adolescent sterility. This explanation was first promulgated by Crew in his Presidential Address on 'Puberty and Maturity' before the Second International Congress for Sex Research held in London in 1930. From experiments conducted on 100 female mice at the first oestrous Crew found that while 20 refused to mate, only 24 of the 80 who did mate became pregnant. But three or six months later, the fertility rate rose to 80 or 90 per cent. 'It is seen, therefore', says Crew, 'that though pregnancy can occur at the time of the first oestrous, it is relatively uncommon.'[3] The following year Hartman developed this theory as a result of his observations on the sex life of rhesus monkeys, and in a number of important publications[4] has since established the fact that there is not only a 'very high incidence of non-ovulatory cycles in young mammals but that human beings also have an infecund period for some years after the menarche'. Ashley-Montagne has given an admirably lucid summary of this and subsequent literature on the subject. 'It has long been known', he points out, 'that puberty is by no means coincident with the development of the reproductive powers, that in the girl menstruation may long precede the

[1] R. H. Kisch, *The Sexual Life of Woman*, Eng. trans. by M. H. Paul (New York, 1926), p. 403.

[2] Himes, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[3] F. A. E. Crew, 'Puberty and Maturity' in *Proceedings of the Second International Congress for Sex Research* (London, 1930), p. 9.

[4] C. G. Hartman, 'On the Relative Sterility of the Adolescent Organism', *Science*, Vol. LXXIV (1931), pp. 226-7; *Contributions to Embryology*, No. 134 (Washington, 1932), pp. 1-164; *Time of Ovulation in Women* (Baltimore and London, 1936); *Sex and Internal Secretions* (Baltimore, 1932).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883
842

more important function of ovulation, and that in the youth ejaculation may long precede the process of spermatogenesis.' The experiments of Mills and Ogle on mice, and of Yerkes and others on the chimpanzee have confirmed this belief. Ashley-Montague quotes investigations made by Mondiere on the women of Cochin China, by Maxwell on Chinese women from South Fukien, by Mills and Ogle on white and negro mothers of illegitimate children, and by Chau and Wright on a very large number of Chinese women living in sub-tropical Canton.[1] Among the latter, the mean age at menarche was 14·5 years, the mean age at marriage 17·6 years and the mean age at the birth of the first child 20·5 years—which suggests a sterility interval of 6 years.

> It seems probable that in the human female, and in the mammals, which have thus far been studied, there is generally an interval of anything up to five years or more between menarche and the ability to procreate, during which the female is functionally sterile and unable to reproduce. This sterile interval has been shown by Hartman to be due, in the monkey at least, to the non-ovulatory character of the adolescent menstrual cycle. And as Hartman has pointed out, puberty, which is signalized by the onset of the first menstruation, merely marks 'the early manifestation of a train of events (adolescence) which only after three or four years on the average lead to ovulation and conception, the proof of maturity'. It is such facts as these, as Hartman has also suggested, which may possibly explain the infertility of the unmarried women in primitive societies.[2]

Zuckerman, in an article wherein he prophesied that both puberty and the menopause will one day become controllable events, has adopted and discussed the theory.

> Only the first phase of the full ovulation cycle is experienced for a long period after the process of reproductive maturation (puberty) sets in both in man and monkeys. The anterior lobe of pituitary presumably undergoes waves of activity during which it elaborates only a follicular-maturation hormone, or only enough of a general gonadotropic hormone, to cause development of the ovarian follicles. The hormone produced by the developing follicles causes growth of the uterine mucosa, and when the wave of pituitary activity comes to an end, the wave of follicular growth it stimulated also ceases, so that the uterus no longer comes under the influence of the follicular hormone. As a result, a retrogressive uterine phase sets in and menstruation occurs. The first menstrual cycles after puberty probably always follow this course, i.e. the first menstrual cycles experienced by women are usually unaccompanied by ovulation.
>
> Hence it was that the Trobriand Islanders studied by Malinowski never conceived in their early youth in spite of unrestricted sexual

[1] M. F. Ashley-Montague, *Coming into Being among the Australian Aborigines* (London, 1937), pp. 236ff., and 'Adolescent Sterility' in *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, Vol. XIV (1939), pp. 13–34, 192–219. Dr Ashley-Montague was good enough to communicate his conclusions to me from America during the war, and I am greatly indebted to him for the light he has thrown on a problem which, to everyone who lives in the aboriginal world, is of great interest and importance.

[2] R. T. Mondiere, 'Sur la Menographie de la Femme de la Cochinchine', *Bull. de la Soc. d'Anthrop.*, T.3, Ser. 3 (1880), pp. 250–61; C. A. Mills and C. Ogle, 'Physiologic Sterility of Adolescence', *Human Biology*, Vol. VIII (1936), pp. 607–15; K. T. Chau and J. M. Wright, 'Gynaecological Notes: Canton Hospital', *China Medical Journal*, 1923, pp. 664–7.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883
842

licence. Hence, too, births rarely occur before the third year of effective marital relationship in Indian 'child marriages'.[1]

Let us now turn to a consideration of the Muria statistics. I give below a table showing the number of births of a first child at varying ages. It may be said with a good deal of confidence that effective marriage never or rarely begins before a year after the menarche, and in many cases not for two or three years.[2] It never occurs in the pre-pubertal period.

Table I, then, gives the number of births for each period of months or years after effective marriage. The total number of cases examined was 2000, of which 150 were infertile.

TABLE I

Length of time after effective marriage	Number of births
Within a month	1
After 2 months	2
3 months	6
4 months	3
5 months	1
6 months	17
7 months	10
8 months	4
9 months	3
1 year	187
1 year and a half	50
2 years	463
2½ years	93
3 years	603
4 years	180
5 years	116
Uncertain	112

I have some confidence in the accuracy of these figures because the length of time before a child is born is a matter of the greatest interest to both wife and husband. It is probably one of the few things in Muria life about which accurate calculations are made.

I have less confidence in my other tables, but I give them because they are interesting and suggestive. They represent the result of an inquiry in which men belonging to 220 different ghotul were consulted about the conception-problem during their own chelik periods. Each man may be assumed to have spent at least 5 years in the ghotul. Few of them showed any reluctance to talk about the affairs of their youth: the statements of those who did were

[1] A. Zuckerman, 'The Physiology of Fertility in Man and Monkey', *The Eugenics Review*, Vol. XXVIII (1936), p. 39.

[2] The average age of menarche in the Indian girl has been given as 14·21 ± 1·66 years.—Cuyjol, 'The Reproductive Life of Indian Women', *The Indian Journal of Medical Research*, Vol. VIII (1920), pp. 396ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

checked by separate inquiries from other members of the same ghotul. In the 220 ghotul there were histories of 327 pregnancies. The Muria were consulted about the ages of the girls who became pregnant, and the number of years which had passed in each case between menarche and pregnancy. Muria calculations are obviously rough and ready, but it is hard to see how we can get more accurate figures for a primitive society. I give them for what they are worth.

TABLE II

Ages of girls at first pre-marital pregnancy in 327 cases	
15	1
16	26
17	49
18	68
19	63
20	46
21	25
22	18
23	23
24	8

TABLE III

Number of years between menarche and pregnancy in the above 327 cases	
1	2
2	61
3	99
4	82
5	30
6	28
7	3
Uncertain	22

Even though these figures cannot be regarded with the confidence one would give to laboratory material, they are strikingly suggestive of the sterility interval. Table I, which refers to the post-marital period, is confirmed by the two other Tables which describe pre-marital conceptions.

I have little doubt that here we have the real solution of our problem.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter XV

Birth and Childhood

A. Hill Marias

No Marias are unaware of the causal connexion between intercourse and pregnancy, and all women know when they miss their first menstruation that they are probably starting to bear a child. Pregnancy among Hill Marias is attended by no taboo either for man or wife, so far as I could ascertain, and the wife continues performing her ordinary routine work right up to the last day of her pregnancy. Sexual intercourse, however, ceases as soon as pregnancy is known to have begun. 842 843

During ordinary menstruation, as we have seen in Chapter VI, the wife, like all young women, is secluded for five or six days either in the communal menstruation hut, or in the *kala* or menstruation room or the separate menstruation hut of the house. The menstruation huts, whether communal or private, are known as *pedawo'gha'i*, or (in the south of the Abujhmar hills) as *dola-lon*, or (in the extreme north) as *kurma-lon*. The term *pedawo'gha'i* is applied also sometimes to the *kala* room in the houses. These huts and rooms have been described already on pages 104-6. The Hill Marias say that their clan-god and their Departed would be angry if they gave up their immemorial custom of secluding their women during menstruation, and that no man should see a woman's face at such a time; we have seen that they often guard against the magic of women in this condition by placing castor oil plants and seeds on the roof of the hut when it is occupied. The men do not seem to have any clear idea of what happens to a woman at such times; they only know and say that she 'has gone *pedawo'gha'i*'. There is no ceremony of any kind at a girl's first menstruation, or during pregnancy. Though children are generally born in the menstruation room or hut, and for some time after birth the mother has to live there subject to the same prohibitions as during menstruation, yet during her nine months she is free from the ordinary taboos to which she is subject during menstruation; that is to say, she is free to visit her husband in the fields and to cook his food for him, in fact to do all her ordinary household and field or market tasks. But it is taboo for a pregnant woman to pick or break anything growing. There may possibly be certain prohibitions which I did not discover, 841 [789] [881] [844] 843

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

843 such as, in other parts of India, of the use of a knife or the cutting of anything; but ordinary enquiry elicited no clue to them.

844 It was said on page 106 that children are born in the menstruation hut or room. This is certainly the case so far as the private huts and rooms are concerned; but in my notes it is not clear whether births ever take place in the communal menstruation hut. They probably do not, because obviously it may be needed at any time for other women of the village, and I have notes of children in Hikpulla and Nugur, where there are communal menstruation huts, being born in a corner of the veranda of the house specially walled off for the purpose.

[777] Cases are known of a mother being delivered of a child in the fields or the forest, but this is considered very unlucky, and as soon as the mother knows that her hour is upon her, she must make every effort to get in time to the menstruation hut or room. During delivery she may have the comfort of the presence of her mother-in-law or some woman from the village; but there are no midwives, and the woman with her must not touch her or assist the delivery; the mother is expected to do everything for herself, and it is regarded as very wrong if she is unable to do so. They pray to the clan-god during a difficult delivery, but appear to do nothing else to assist the mother by either medicine or ceremony. The mother herself has to cut the navel-cord of her baby either with her husband's ordinary knife or with an arrow-head. She cuts it about three or four inches from its junction with the stomach, and binds it close to the junction with a ligature of cord, the portion between the cut and the ligature being left to dry and fall off; and she is expected to bury the placenta (*modi*) immediately after this under the house rubbish-heap outside the back of the house. If the child is born dead, the mother has to bury it somewhere in the forest, going there alone and digging the grave without assistance; it may not be buried in the regular village graveyard. Around Handawada a mother is expected to stay in the menstruation room for a full month after delivery; but the general rule in the interior of the Abujhmar hills is for her to remain there for eight days or until the navel-cord dries and falls off.

[845 766]

846 Everywhere it is taboo for the father to do any field or other work during this period of eight days before the navel-cord falls. No medicine is given to him. He must not sleep in the house during the period in most parts of the hills, but in the dormitory; around Handawada he sleeps in the portion of the *kala* room separated from the woman's portion by the *binda* mud threshold. He must not cook his own food during this period, and has to get a man friend to cook food for him in another house and bring it to

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AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

village dormitories were present. All were Padali by clan from Padali villages. Their dormitory mates were respectively Lahari, a Nuroti girl, Jaliaru, an Usendi girl, and Nirosa, a Nuroti girl; and despite their different designations, these girls were the head-girls of their villages in virtue of their boys' ranks. Another Usendi village in Padalibhum called its head boy Silledar, and his mate was Jhelo, a Padali girl. All four stated freely that they expected ultimately to marry their mates, and that they and all the other dormitory boys often had sexual intercourse with their girls.

The dormitory in these *parganas*, as among the neighbouring Murias, is really a school for training the youth of both sexes in conjugal and social duties and in the lore of the clan; the dormitory office-bearers are practically prefects and monitors. The headman and other elders of the villages frequently call on the head-boy for the help of his boys and girls in field-work; but here they are not paid wages, as among the Murias, but are only fed by those for whom they are working. They are also asked to help in thatching houses and building granaries. In weddings the girls are expected to sing, and boys to collect fuel and leaves for cups, and both have to dance; they have similar functions at the various new-eating festivals. The head-boy imposes fines for unjustifiable absence from the dormitory, or from weddings and festivals, or general disobedience of his orders or those of other office-bearers, a bottle of *mahua* spirit being the usual penalty, the cost of which falls upon the parents. The head-boy's mate has similar powers of fining other girls. At the nightly meetings of boys and girls at the dormitory there are dancing in season, tale-telling, singing and games, and from an early age boys are given practical lessons in sexual intercourse.

B. Bison-horn Marias

The information which I was able to collect on this subject among the Bison-horn Marias is much less full than that given above for the Hill Marias, and needs further testing and considerable supplementing.

During pregnancy the mother carries on her ordinary work. The only note which I have of any disability attaching to pregnancy is that when the flesh of animals slain in the *mela* ceremonial hunts is divided up and eaten, no share may be given to the husband of a wife who either is pregnant or has her monthly period. In most Bison-horn villages there is no menstruation hut, and in their houses there is no menstruation room. A few villages near the foot of the Abujhmar hills have a hut where young girls are

[See cat. 116, pp. 425-426. - Ravi Vyas]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

843 secluded for their first menstruation, known as the *piki-kurma-lon*; but generally speaking, Bison-horn Marias do not seem to hold in the same strength the Hill Maria fear of a woman in this condition.

844 For the birth of a child a separate hut or booth is erected in the compound, generally at the back of the house, known as the *er-nihitana-lon*, or water-washing hut. This is often little more than the roughest of booths, and considerably inferior to even a Bison-horn Maria pigsty. Here the mother remains for a full month, during which her husband is not allowed to go to his work. The delivery is assisted by an experienced woman relative or fellow-villager, who cuts and binds the navel-cord and washes the child immediately after it is born, and gives it to the mother to suckle. No food is given to the mother that day; on the next morning she is made to drink a decoction of the bark of the *kusum* [824] tree (*Schleichera trijuga*), the root of the dwarf *chkind* palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*), and *kulthi* (*Dolichos biflorus*) pulses, pounded to a powder and boiled together, and an hour or two after this dose she is given a meal of warm boiled rice. She is dosed and fed in this way for six or seven days more, until the navel-cord falls off; and then she washes her whole body and is allowed to eat regular meals. At the 852 end of the month the *lon-wa'ina* or Returning to the House ceremony takes place. The child is named with the aid of a medium, though 533 actually names seem to be given for reasons very similar to those actuating Hill Maria choice of names. A pig, a goat or a number of cocks are killed, and the mother, having washed her clothes and her body, cooks the flesh, all the villagers and relatives being entertained to dinner. Thenceforward the mother is free to resume all her normal household and field work, and the father can resume his work.

553 I once witnessed an unusual naming ceremony. A son had been born after three elder brothers had died. It was considered 789 that their deaths had been due to the hostility of some demon or of the familiar spirit of some magician, and on the medium's advice the baby had been suspended in a rough cradle over the rubbish-heap by the fence of the *bari* garden, and all the men present threw cow-dung and filth all round the cradle, shouting out '*Kacharu*' or 'Filth!', which name was given to the child in the hope that thereby the malignant power would be deceived into thinking that the parents set no value on the child.

862 Children are breast-fed for two years or more, as among the Hill Marias. It has been already recorded (page 219) that there is among the Bison-horn Marias a special weaning ceremony during the Jata Pandum at which the first solid food given to the children is a portion of the rice and meat offered to the Departed.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

841 or fowls. She must not take grain from the bins or approach the Hearth of the Departed. Except at the menarche, however, she may fetch wood and leaves which may be used by other members of the household; she may fish so long as it is not in a pond; she may even dance so long as it is not at a Penkarsita and she does not touch any man.

When I was taking photographs in Maria villages I frequently came up against these taboos. At Mokhpal I was unable to photograph a girl with strikingly Mongolian features because she was in her period—the people seemed genuinely afraid that the menstrual exhalations would break the lens. At Tikanpal, where I wanted to stage a group of girls making leaf-cups, I was not permitted to do so because one of them was in her period and must not sit on a mat. At Doriras a married girl refused to be photographed standing in front of the girls' dormitory because menstruating women were accustomed to sleep there.

During a wife's period a husband is subject to the laws of a 'little couvade'. No one will eat from his hands; no one will accept tobacco from his pouch. He must not cook or fetch water. He too must not go to the grain bins or approach the symbols of the Departed. He may go to a shrine, but he must not enter it; he may cut his clearing, but he must not fire it or sow seed. He may not hunt, carry a *kawar*-pole, climb a tree, cut grass or reap a crop. If he is a Perma or Gaita he may not perform any religious rite, and if he is a Gunia he cannot divine the cause of sickness.

842 It is generally believed by the Marias, as by the rest of India, that a woman is most likely to conceive if she has intercourse on the day she has her ceremonial bath at the close of the period.

886 As by other aboriginals the climacteric is accepted by the Marias as a matter of course. 'As it appears, so it disappears.' If an elderly woman or her husband dreams of a dried-up tank or stream, it means that this crisis is approaching.

V

843 Pregnancy is diagnosed by the cessation of the menses, vomiting, swelling of the breasts and a darkening of the nipples. 'The face dries a little.' It is generally supposed that a boy is more exacting and makes the mother look fragile and exhausted, while a girl keeps her fresh and well.

843 177 During pregnancy, Bison-horn Maria taboos are not exacting and my suspicion is that originally they were as few and as casual as those of the Hill Maria, and that any elaboration is due to the influence of the local Hindus who, on the whole, pay more attention to the pregnancy than to the menstrual taboos. In other words,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *bauhinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bhimsul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

262 The children, as well as older people, kill and eat frogs when they can. In
222 the rains they creep up to any small pond and with their sticks kill the frogs
252 before they are able to escape into the water. They remove the skin and stomach and roast the rest. Many people, however, only eat the hind legs, regarding the rest as dangerous. Frog's flesh is believed to be a useful [278] remedy for swollen glands.[1] Various kinds of lizards are eaten the same way. In most of the less sophisticated villages red ants are valued both for food and as a febrifuge. A party of chelik go through the forest until they see the ants' nests high up in the branches of a tree. Then one of them climbs up and breaks off or cuts all the branches on which the nests are and throws them to the ground. The others quickly prepare leaf-cups and one of them plunges his hands into the nests and fills the cups with the ants and their eggs. They brush off the eggs and tie up the ants in the cups. They bring the little bundles home and put them straight into the fire. When they have been roasted for some minutes they remove the cups, open them and squeeze the ants into a paste. They add salt and chilli and put the mixture back into the fire to bake. This chutney, which is very tasty, with a sharp clean taste, is generally eaten with liquor. At the beginning of the rains the Muria also catch the flying white ants, pull off their wings and fry the bodies.[2]

Other delicacies are the grubs which are found in the date-palm. These large white grubs are sought after by many others beside the Muria, and are bought even by high-caste Hindus in the bazaars for as much as two pice apiece. They are fried and eaten and sometimes oil is extracted from them.

262 The Muria also enjoy catching and eating the river crab, 'the blacksmith
226 that takes his pincers and hammer about with him', 'the Raja who has hands
524 and feet but lacks a head'.[3] Shrimps and prawns are common in the streams; a prawn is described as 'the boy with eight feet, twelve shoulders and sixteen horns'.

262 Most of these delicacies, fried with a little chilli, are used as 'savouries' when the people go to drink salphi juice or other liquor. Men and boys going in the evening towards the sago-palms may be seen carrying little leaf-bundles containing fried frogs, grubs and a chutney of red ants. These relieve the sweetness of the salphi juice and the unpleasant taste of the mahua spirit.

262 Beef is still eaten in all parts of Bastar, even by the sophisticated Raja
● 843 Muria who are so loud in their protests that they have abandoned it. An interesting story connects the practice with the *dohada* cravings of pregnancy. The Muria theory, which is the old Hindu theory, is that it is the child in the womb who is responsible for the mother's irrational desires. 'A Brahmin woman six months pregnant had a craving for beef and went to a Ganda to get some. For fear of the husband he refused, but his wife gave her two

[171] [1] Crooke has an interesting note on frog-eating. 'The Musahar of Mirzapur, he says, eat two kinds, a small and a large, at marriages. "The Burmese certainly eat them and boiled frogs are said to be exposed for sale in their bazaars. I hear that the Burmese prisoners in the Benares jail have been caught eating them alive. Mr Bower tells me that he knows of Salees in Oudh fattening frogs for food in earthen jars."—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II, p. 78.

[171] [2] In South India ants are believed to be a tonic; there is a Tamil proverb that 'If you eat a thousand ants, you will get the strength of an elephant'. A paste made with ants is recorded as being used with curry in Kanara. Winged termites are widely eaten, and sometimes their bodies are sun-dried and stored. The queen termite is considered a special delicacy, fried or raw; Tamil athletes are said to keep themselves in trim by swallowing it raw and then sprinting a couple of miles. See S. T. Moses, 'Ants and Folk-Beliefs in South India', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, pp. 10ff.

[278] [3] The viscous substance adhering to the carapace of a crab is believed to be good for ear-ache.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chelik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of which a folded leaf of the date palm is attached to ensure that the juice trickles down into the pot. A small gourd with a hole at either end is kept in the pot, which is finally protected with a bamboo cover to guard it from wind and birds.

When the climber has reached the pot, he removes the leaf and scrapes the end of the cut spadix with a knife that is kept among the branches. Sometimes he rubs it with a little marking-nut juice. Then he removes the sap from the pot and puts it in a gourd tied round his waist. Sometimes if the tree is very high, he lowers this gourd down to the ground with a cord. Then he replaces the leaf at the end of the spadix, puts the cover over the pot and descends.

There are various rules and customs about the use of the juice. It is not considered good to drink it when it is too sweet, as it has a laxative effect. For this reason a little of the old juice is always left in the pot to ferment it. To increase its power a little of the root of the danbaher tree is added. When the weather is cloudy it is considered that it will not be good. The juice of a newly tapped tree should not be given to a pregnant woman or she may abort. In fact, at the beginning, when a new tree is tapped only men drink. The Hill Maria do not give the juice at any time to a woman in her menstrual period.

There is a curious idea that the sago-palm itself is subject to a menstrual period.[1] Every month there is a space of two or three days during which the juice does not flow properly and it is not considered safe at this time to drink even what little there is. So, too, for the first week or so after a new tree is tapped the juice should be avoided, for it is then, they say, like semen. At Phunder, the Muria said that the end of the tree's menstrual period is indicated by the presence of a lotus leaf in the pot.

In some villages, the Muria believe that two Kanyang visit the palms. One is Jal Kanyang, and is a motiari; the other, Kaudo Kanyang, is regarded with characteristic inconsistency as a chelik. When Kaudo Kanyang comes to play in a tree, the juice is scanty but good; when Jal Kanyang comes, the juice flows like a river but it is less potent. Sometimes then a little sand and even fish are found in the pot.

This belief in the fish that get into the pot is widespread. Once in the days of Chaitu Gaita of Alor, a chelik climbed a sago-palm and found two *turu* fish and some sand at the bottom of the gourd. At Palli I was told that such fish were 'sometimes caught by the Salphi Maiden and taken up into the tree'. I have recorded the same idea among the Hill Maria.[2]

When a tree is tapped for the first time offerings are made to the Gorga Kanyang. In some villages a hollow bamboo full of water is brought from a stream and leant against the foot of the palm. It is believed that a Kanyang lives in this water and probably there is an idea that the tree will give as much juice as there is water in the bamboo. In order to improve the flow of juice the villagers sometimes promise the Gorga Kanyang a pig or a chicken.

At Adnar on the day they first tapped a new tree the village Gaita, followed by all the villagers, came to its foot. With red and black powder he made a row of three circles, inside each of which he drew a cross. Rice was piled on these crosses and two leaf-cups full of salphi juice were placed by them. One pile of rice was for the Gorga Kanyang, one for Kaudo Kanyang, and one for

[1] This idea is widespread: I have found it among Juang, Kond, Gadaba, Bondo and, in Bastar, among the Bison-horn Maria.

[2] Compare S. L. Hora, 'Rains of Fishes in India', *JRASB.*, Vol. XXIX (1933), pp. 93ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Burha ta jāwa undāna bedur gatla te mak dāyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

842 Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some
789 evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead. A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform spells to stop her supplanter from realizing the fullest joys of marriage. The Constable of Modenar said that Mayakaka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Hus-
842 band and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of
578 Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and
[586] still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

● 843 A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (intercourse), and *poidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to space confinements properly. After a year, 'when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months, and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'. But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puerperium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them? But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

843 In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is
844 interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements. The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

full figure and the child is 'fine as a young tiger'. The Hare Birth, however, occurs after only eighteen months, and the child is weak and sickly. The Frog Birth, after twelve months, is also bad for the child. In the Lizard Birth, when the child resembles a lizard, there is an interval of three years, but the mother is herself weak and her breasts secrete insufficient nourishment.

When a girl suffers from menorrhagia she has a Green Lizard Birth, and the child is weak, but the offspring of Mother Birth, when the period begins and ends punctually, is vigorous.

Once the mother is pregnant she is subject to the usual routine and taboos, though generally I think an increase of restrictions at this time is due to Hindu influence.[1] The Muria woman's movements are not greatly controlled, but she must not climb a tree and should stay indoors during an eclipse. She must be very careful not to steal anything; if she takes bread, she will bear a male child with his ear bent over; if she steals haldi, garlic, or ginger, the child will be born with six fingers. In one village my wife was recommended to tie a mango in her sari; then, when she had a child, it would never be ill, 'even its nose wouldn't run'. But it is dangerous to eat a mango, for it may cause abortion.

The husband is also subject to taboos. He must not cross the blooded path of a hunted and wounded animal. He has to eat separately at festivals. Neither he nor his wife may eat the head or legs of any animal killed for sacrifice or in a ceremonial hunt.

The scene of birth is generally on the verandah or in a cattle-shed. A child must not be delivered in the kitchen or the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept. There are no professional midwives and assistance is given by the women of the family and sometimes by the Gaita's wife. Few precautions are taken. The mother is given ordinary food and often begins to work on the third day.

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife in a few villages (in Temrugaon, for example), but more generally with an arrow-head, whether the child be a boy or girl, by the mother, sister, elder brother's wife or Gaita's wife.

The placenta is wrapped in a siari leaf and buried in a pit behind the house, and a small screen of branches is erected round it. Until the umbilical stump falls off, this pit is not filled in; it is covered with a stone or a wooden seat on which the mother sits to bathe once or twice a day for about six weeks. During this period, she must not go into the house but must stay on the verandah. The digging-stick with which the pit was dug and the arrow with which the cord was cut are driven into the ground beside the pit. A pot of water is kept near by. When the stump falls, they throw it into the pit and fill it up with rubbish and earth. When the mother stops bathing and resumes her ordinary domestic duties, they wash the digging-stick and arrow, offer liquor and apply haldi to them. The stick is put back in the house, and the arrow is stuck into the roof or given away. It is not regarded as having any special significance or value after its work is done.

If the 'signs' of a tiger or a snake appear in the soil above the buried placenta, the child is expected to be killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. Should the water in the pot leak out of its own accord, the child will meet its death by drowning. A strangulating umbilical cord suggests that the child will die by hanging, either in jail or through suicide.

[1] Compare with the very simple Muria tradition the elaborate regulations of the more sophisticated tribesmen of the Central Provinces described in my article, 'Conception, Pregnancy and Birth among the Tribesmen of the Maikal Hills', *JASB*, Vol. IX (1943), pp. 99-142.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

844 Until the stump falls the father is in a state of taboo. He must not cook, he must not leave the house to visit his friends, he cannot go to the ghotul. No one will accept his tobacco and he cannot share in a sacrificial feast.

843 Certain attempts are made to influence and to diagnose the sex of unborn children. If a motiari, after fasting for twelve hours at her first menstruation, eats a dish of *khichri*, a mixture of pulse and rice without salt, her children will likewise be a mixture of boys and girls. If she goes to the jungle on this day and brings home a bundle of leaves on her hip, she is likely to bear girls.

Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman.

[524] *Chipta upre jai phar,* There is fruit inside the basket,
Jāna bābu kai phar? How can you know what fruit it is?

845 Abnormal births are not common but are not unknown. Twins are called *jānwar jiyo* and are not regarded as either particularly lucky or unlucky. Twins with a single placenta are born if the mother eats a double fruit such as a double plantain or tendu or uses double leaves as a plate. Sensible women are careful to avoid doing this but sometimes accidents happen. In Renga-gondi, there are twins, named Joga and Jogi, who were born because the mother ate off a double leaf at the end of her period. Such twins may also be due to a woman's passing between two men on her way back to the house from her menstrual bath. The shadows of both men fall upon her and the twins resemble them. In some places, it is thought if she passes at this time a man holding a baby she will have twins—if it is a boy, she will have male twins; if a girl, male and female. If the woman lies on her back after intercourse so that the man's seed divides into two streams, twins may result. When there are two placentae it is often supposed that the woman has been to two men and the twins, therefore, have different fathers. The woman may also have had intercourse with a ghost or spirit on the day following intercourse with her husband. Where this is suspected, the twins (if boy and girl) are called Dukhalu [777] and Dukhali and are vaguely regarded as unlucky.

Pandru of Berimakot twice had twins, from different wives. The first were from the Manjaro whom he made pregnant in the ghotul and were both girls: the second were from the Nirosa, another of his ghotul lovers, and were both boys. Pandru thinks he had twins because he went to each of the girls twice on the night following the post-catamenial bath. If this is done during the rains, girls will be born: if during the hot weather, there will be boys.

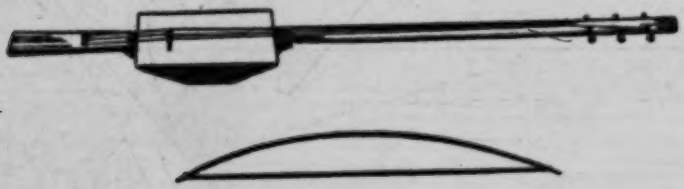
A foot-presentation is called in Gondi *idli-janawla* or 'cow-birth', for the [777] child is born like a calf. This is regarded as very unlucky indeed and the family must immediately protect the child by waving round it a bundle of burning grass. Such births are generally expected to be fatal to the mother. A *kera bānjh* is a woman with only one child; 'she is like a plantain which gives fruit once on a stalk and never again'.

II. Name-giving

559 After about six weeks the mother stops her ritual bathing and resumes her domestic duties inside the house. It is now time to give the child a name, a name—it must be remembered—which the little chelik or motiari will hardly use during the period of childhood, which will never be taken by husband or wife after marriage, and will be uttered only with reluctance after death. Even then a later nickname may supplant this *mar-podor* or original name.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32 .
Bison Horn Maria

534 bamboo and the usual flute. They are fond of gongs, but these are not now so common as they were. At the great Pen Karsita at Ghotpal in 1942, the dancers used slabs of



Kikir Fiddle
(*Length 2'*)

coloured wood, bits of old tin and indeed anything that would make a noise instead of the traditional gongs. Like the Muria, at festivals and even for amusement the Maria use a hunting horn, either a real horn or one made of brass.

541 Besides dancing, the chief Maria relaxation is the cock-fight. At the conclusion of all the bigger bazaars, the men retire to a grove of trees and set their cocks against each other. The cocks are armed with sharp and deadly little knives tied to their feet and fights are to the death. The victor has the privilege of taking the defeated bird, but the real excitement comes from the betting.

V

844 The ceremonies attending birth and marriage are very [843] simple. The pregnant mother is not hampered by many restrictions on her movements. After the birth of the child the placenta is buried in a pit behind the house. Logs are placed above it and the arrow with which the cord was cut is driven into the ground near by. A small shed is made and the 846 mother lives here for some weeks with her child, taking a daily bath above the placenta-pit. At the end of this period of segregation, the husband gives a feast to the neighbours, [551] the child is named and the mother is permitted to return to her household duties. It was to such a feast that the unhappy victim of the Mardum sacrifice was enticed.[1]

881 There are no ceremonies of initiation at puberty, though a

[1] Case No 31.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

Chapter XV

Birth and Childhood

A. Hill Marias

No Marias are unaware of the causal connexion between intercourse and pregnancy, and all women know when they miss their first menstruation that they are probably starting to bear a child. Pregnancy among Hill Marias is attended by no taboo either for man or wife, so far as I could ascertain, and the wife continues performing her ordinary routine work right up to the last day of her pregnancy. Sexual intercourse, however, ceases as soon as pregnancy is known to have begun. 842 843

During ordinary menstruation, as we have seen in Chapter VI, the wife, like all young women, is secluded for five or six days either in the communal menstruation hut, or in the *kala* or menstruation room or the separate menstruation hut of the house. The menstruation huts, whether communal or private, are known as *padawo'gha'i*, or (in the south of the Abujhmar hills) as *dola-lon*, or (in the extreme north) as *kurma-lon*. The term *padawo'gha'i* is applied also sometimes to the *kala* room in the houses. These huts and rooms have been described already on pages 104-6. The Hill Marias say that their clan-god and their Departed would be angry if they gave up their immemorial custom of secluding their women during menstruation, and that no man should see a woman's face at such a time; we have seen that they often guard against the magic of women in this condition by placing castor oil plants and seeds on the roof of the hut when it is occupied. The men do not seem to have any clear idea of what happens to a woman at such times; they only know and say that she 'has gone *padawo'gha'i*'. There is no ceremony of any kind at a girl's first menstruation, or during pregnancy. Though children are generally born in the menstruation room or hut, and for some time after birth the mother has to live there subject to the same prohibitions as during menstruation, yet during her nine months she is free from the ordinary taboos to which she is subject during menstruation; that is to say, she is free to visit her husband in the fields and to cook his food for him, in fact to do all her ordinary household and field or market tasks. But it is taboo for a pregnant woman to pick or break anything growing. There may possibly be certain prohibitions which I did not discover, 841 [789] [881] [844] 843

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

843 such as, in other parts of India, of the use of a knife or the cutting of anything; but ordinary enquiry elicited no clue to them.

844 It was said on page 106 that children are born in the menstruation hut or room. This is certainly the case so far as the private huts and rooms are concerned; but in my notes it is not clear whether births ever take place in the communal menstruation hut. They probably do not, because obviously it may be needed at any time for other women of the village, and I have notes of children in Hikpulla and Nugur, where there are communal menstruation huts, being born in a corner of the veranda of the house specially walled off for the purpose.

[777] Cases are known of a mother being delivered of a child in the fields or the forest, but this is considered very unlucky, and as soon as the mother knows that her hour is upon her, she must make every effort to get in time to the menstruation hut or room. During delivery she may have the comfort of the presence of her mother-in-law or some woman from the village; but there are no midwives, and the woman with her must not touch her or assist the delivery; the mother is expected to do everything for herself, and it is regarded as very wrong if she is unable to do so. They pray to the clan-god during a difficult delivery, but appear to do nothing else to assist the mother by either medicine or ceremony. The mother herself has to cut the navel-cord of her baby either with her husband's ordinary knife or with an arrow-head. She cuts it about three or four inches from its junction with the stomach, and binds it close to the junction with a ligature of cord, the portion between the cut and the ligature being left to dry and fall off; and she is expected to bury the placenta (*modi*) immediately after this under the house rubbish-heap outside the back of the house. If the child is born [845 766] dead, the mother has to bury it somewhere in the forest, going there alone and digging the grave without assistance; it may not be buried in the regular village graveyard. Around Handawada a mother is expected to stay in the menstruation room for a full month after delivery; but the general rule in the interior of the Abujhmar hills is for her to remain there for eight days or until the navel-cord dries and falls off.

846 Everywhere it is taboo for the father to do any field or other work during this period of eight days before the navel-cord falls. No medicine is given to him. He must not sleep in the house during the period in most parts of the hills, but in the dormitory; around Handawada he sleeps in the portion of the *kala* room separated from the woman's portion by the *binda* mud threshold. He must not cook his own food during this period, and has to get a man friend to cook food for him in another house and bring it to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

843 secluded for their first menstruation, known as the *piki-kurma-lon*; but generally speaking, Bison-horn Marias do not seem to hold in the same strength the Hill Maria fear of a woman in this condition.

844 For the birth of a child a separate hut or booth is erected in the compound, generally at the back of the house, known as the *er-nikilana-lon*, or water-washing hut. This is often little more than the roughest of booths, and considerably inferior to even a Bison-horn Maria pigsty. Here the mother remains for a full month, during which her husband is not allowed to go to his work. The delivery is assisted by an experienced woman relative or fellow-villager, who cuts and binds the navel-cord and washes the child immediately after it is born, and gives it to the mother to suckle. No food is given to the mother that day; on the next morning she is made to drink a decoction of the bark of the *kusum* tree (*Schleichera trijuga*), the root of the dwarf *chhind* palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*), and *kulthi* (*Dolichos biflorus*) pulses, pounded to a powder and boiled together, and an hour or two after this dose she is given a meal of warm boiled rice. She is dosed and fed in this way for six or seven days more, until the navel-cord falls off; and then she washes her whole body and is allowed to eat regular meals. At the 852 end of the month the *lon-wa'ina* or Returning to the House ceremony takes place. The child is named with the aid of a medium, though 533 actually names seem to be given for reasons very similar to those actuating Hill Maria choice of names. A pig, a goat or a number of cocks are killed, and the mother, having washed her clothes and her body, cooks the flesh, all the villagers and relatives being entertained to dinner. Thenceforward the mother is free to resume all her normal household and field work, and the father can resume his work.

[834]

I once witnessed an unusual naming ceremony. A son had 553 been born after three elder brothers had died. It was considered 789 that their deaths had been due to the hostility of some demon or of the familiar spirit of some magician, and on the medium's advice the baby had been suspended in a rough cradle over the rubbish-heap by the fence of the *bari* garden, and all the men present threw cow-dung and filth all round the cradle, shouting out '*Kachara*' or 'Filth!', which name was given to the child in the hope that thereby the malignant power would be deceived into thinking that the parents set no value on the child.

Children are breast-fed for two years or more, as among the 862 Hill Marias. It has been already recorded (page 219) that there is among the Bison-horn Marias a special weaning ceremony during the Jata Pandum at which the first solid food given to the children is a portion of the rice and meat offered to the Departed.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *bauhinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bhimul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

844 [787] seat above it. Near by he drives the arrow or knife into the ground. He brings a pot of water and puts it inside the hut; should the water decrease of its own accord it is regarded as a very bad omen and the child is expected to die. This hut is now used constantly by the mother who comes five or six times a day to bathe herself and the baby. She always takes water from the pot kept inside the enclosure and it is refilled each time with warm water heated elsewhere. The mother regularly pours warm water over the child's umbilical stump, for so long as it does not drop off she is in a state of taboo and can do no work.

In some villages the placenta is buried under a *bassia latifolia* tree and a large stone is placed above, 'for this tree does every kind of work for us'. Very small babies are sometimes buried in the same place so that they can suck the milky sap.

When the stump falls off, it is buried in the placenta-pit; should it be dug up and eaten, for example, by a dog, the child would cease suckling and die. After a year has passed the Perma comes to offer compensation of a fowl and rice-beer to the Earth Mother because they have offended her by burying the placenta and cord in the ground.

846 852 Once the stump has dropped the mother is free of the restrictions on her and when she feels ready—'when her body is dry and clean'—she has a final bath, cowdungs the house and begins to cook and live normally again. The father shaves the child's head. The mother herself destroys the little bathing-hut. The father smears the arrow with oil and puts it in the roof of the house. When a boy grows up it is shown to him and he can use it for hunting, though no special virtue seems to attach to it.

852 553 On the day of the mother's ceremonial entry into the house, there is a little feast, cooked by the woman herself, on the veranda. The Perma and a few neighbours are invited and they have a pot of rice-beer. Before they drink, each of the visitors dips his finger into it and gives it to the child to suck. The mother presents oil and a ring to each of the women who helped her and to the Waddai and Perma. The child is often, though not always, named on this occasion. A chicken is dedicated by being fed on rice and is set free. A year later it is sacrificed and a bit of the liver is given to the child. If a baby cries continually it is supposed that it has been given the wrong name and the Waddai renames it and dedicates another chicken. In Gadapal I was told that if the gods disapprove a child's name, they send Hidmaraj to make it itch and Marisaraj to make it cry.

845 The Marias do not seem to have made up their minds about twins. One village thinks them lucky, another disastrous. There

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

I. Pregnancy and Birth

[524] *Burha ta jäwa undäna bedur gatta te mak däyna. It drinks gruel from a gourd, but hides among the bamboos.* A baby, drinking at the breast and swinging in a bamboo basket.—Muria riddle

842 PREGNANCY so dreaded in the ghotul is desired at home. Sterility does not seem to be very common—out of the 2000 cases studied only 150 were childless—but a married couple without children are always miserable.

The Muria attribute sterility to various causes. One is a purely physical one. 'I have no child', said the Chalki of Korenda, 'though I go to my wife every day. There may be plenty of rain, but unless there is warmth in the ground to help the seed to grow, there is no harvest.' A former Sirdar of Pupgaon attributed his sterility to the fact that 'perhaps I do not know how to copulate properly'. Wives sometimes say their childlessness is because their husbands have 'wasted all their seed by scattering it in the ghotul fields'.

842 Others give a supernatural reason. At a marriage a witch may slip some
789 evil magic into the bride's dress or hair when she puts tika on her forehead. A jealous motiari whose 'husband' has been married to another girl may perform spells to stop her supplanter from realizing the fullest joys of marriage. The Constable of Modenar said that Mayakaka Deo or Kondi Deo was the cause of the trouble. 'He stopped my wife having a child for four years. Then we promised him a pig, a goat and five chickens and a child was born.'

842 Sterility is always a cause of quarrels and disagreements in the home. Hus-
578 band and wife each accuse the other of being at fault. A former Sirdar of Sodma said, 'We went to each other for seven years till we were weary, and still there was no child; every time my wife's period began, she abused me saying, "Are you a man? Haven't you any strength?" And I used to feel
[586] miserable and ashamed.' On the other hand, out of the 2000 marriages examined, none of the few divorces were attributed to this cause.

843 A girl is born in nine months, a boy in ten. 'A girl takes a great deal out of the mother.' Yet women love suffering—*godan* (tattooing), *chodan* (intercourse), and *paidan* (child-bearing). But Muria men seem to do all they can to spare the mother. During pregnancy intercourse must cease after the fifth month. Intercourse is not generally resumed for a year after child-birth, for 'if you sow seed in wet ground, a harvest is certain' and it is important to space confinements properly. After a year,' when the wife feels an itching for it, she herself goes to lie with her husband'. But in some places, in Alor and Berma for example, I was told that intercourse began again after six months, and at Kabonga that 'a man goes to his wife when their child first smiles'. But most Muria regard a woman as physically unattractive during the puerperium. 'Her breasts and privates are *gilgila*: who would care for them? But once the child can walk, the mother is again lovely in our eyes.'

843 In Masora I was given a catalogue of the various kinds of birth and it is
●844 interesting to note that these are largely based on the spacing of confinements. The Sambhar Birth occurs after a space of three years and the child is strong and healthy. The Tiger Birth also comes after three years to a woman of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: CHILDHOOD

full figure and the child is 'fine as a young tiger'. The Hare Birth, however, 843
occurs after only eighteen months, and the child is weak and sickly. The
Frog Birth, after twelve months, is also bad for the child. In the Lizard Birth 844
when the child resembles a lizard, there is an interval of three years, but the
mother is herself weak and her breasts secrete insufficient nourishment.

When a girl suffers from menorrhagia she has a Green Lizard Birth, and the child is weak, but the offspring of Mother Birth, when the period begins and ends punctually, is vigorous.

Once the mother is pregnant she is subject to the usual routine and taboos, 843
though generally I think an increase of restrictions at this time is due to Hindu influence.[1] The Muria woman's movements are not greatly controlled, but she must not climb a tree and should stay indoors during an eclipse. She must be very careful not to steal anything; if she takes bread, she will bear a male child with his ear bent over; if she steals haldi, garlic, or ginger, the child will be born with six fingers. In one village my wife was recommended to tie a mango in her sari; then, when she had a child, it would never be ill, 'even its nose wouldn't run'. But it is dangerous to eat a mango, for it may cause abortion.

The husband is also subject to taboos. He must not cross the blooded path of a hunted and wounded animal. He has to eat separately at festivals. Neither he nor his wife may eat the head or legs of any animal killed for sacrifice or in a ceremonial hunt.

The scene of birth is generally on the verandah or in a cattle-shed. A child 844
must not be delivered in the kitchen or the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept. There are no professional midwives and assistance is given by the women of the family and sometimes by the Gaita's wife. Few precautions are taken. The mother is given ordinary food and often begins to work on the third day.

The umbilical cord is cut with a knife in a few villages (in Temrugaon, for example), but more generally with an arrow-head, whether the child be a boy or girl, by the mother, sister, elder brother's wife or Gaita's wife.

The placenta is wrapped in a siari leaf and buried in a pit behind the house, 844
and a small screen of branches is erected round it. Until the umbilical stump 787
falls off, this pit is not filled in; it is covered with a stone or a wooden seat on which the mother sits to bathe once or twice a day for about six weeks. During this period, she must not go into the house but must stay on the verandah. The digging-stick with which the pit was dug and the arrow with which the cord was cut are driven into the ground beside the pit. A pot of water is kept near by. When the stump falls, they throw it into the pit and fill it up with rubbish and earth. When the mother stops bathing and resumes her ordinary domestic duties, they wash the digging-stick and arrow, offer liquor and apply haldi to them. The stick is put back in the house, and the arrow is stuck into the roof or given away. It is not regarded as having any special significance or value after its work is done.

If the 'signs' of a tiger or a snake appear in the soil above the buried placenta, the child is expected to be killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. Should the water in the pot leak out of its own accord, the child will meet its death by drowning. A strangulating umbilical cord suggests that the child will die by hanging, either in jail or through suicide.

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THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

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Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman.

[524] *Chipta upre jai phar,* There is fruit inside the basket,
Jāna 'bābu kai phar? How can you know what fruit it is?

845 Abnormal births are not common but are not unknown. Twins are called *jāmwar jiya* and are not regarded as either particularly lucky or unlucky. Twins with a single placenta are born if the mother eats a double fruit such as a double plantain or tendu or uses double leaves as a plate. Sensible women are careful to avoid doing this but sometimes accidents happen. In Rengagondi, there are twins, named Joga and Jogi, who were born because the mother ate off a double leaf at the end of her period. Such twins may also be due to a woman's passing between two men on her way back to the house from her menstrual bath. The shadows of both men fall upon her and the twins resemble them. In some places, it is thought if she passes at this time a man holding a baby she will have twins—if it is a boy, she will have male twins; if a girl, male and female. If the woman lies on her back after intercourse so that the man's seed divides into two streams, twins may result. When there are two placentae it is often supposed that the woman has been to two men and the twins, therefore, have different fathers. The woman may also have had intercourse with a ghost or spirit on the day following intercourse with her husband. Where this is suspected, the twins (if boy and girl) are called Dukhalu and Dukhali and are vaguely regarded as unlucky.

[777]

Pandru of Bermakot twice had twins, from different wives. The first were from the Māhjaro whom he made pregnant in the ghotul and were both girls: the second were from the Nirosa, another of his ghotul lovers, and were both boys. Pandru thinks he had twins because he went to each of the girls twice on the night following the post-catamenial bath. If this is done during the rains, girls will be born: if during the hot weather, there will be boys.

A foot-presentation is called in Gondi *tāli-janamta* or 'cow-birth', for the child is born like a calf. This is regarded as very unlucky indeed and the family must immediately protect the child by waving round it a bundle of burning grass. Such births are generally expected to be fatal to the mother. A *hera bānjh* is a woman with only one child; 'she is like a plantain which gives fruit once on a stalk and never again'.

[777]

II. Name-giving

559 After about six weeks the mother stops her ritual bathing and resumes her domestic duties inside the house. It is now time to give the child a name, a name—it must be remembered—which the little chelik or motiari will hardly use during the period of childhood, which will never be taken by husband or wife after marriage, and will be uttered only with reluctance after death. Even then a later nickname may supplant this *mul-pador* or original name.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

844

The arrow and stone above the pit in which a child's placenta is buried

Plate XXI

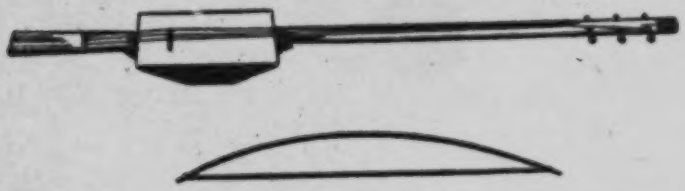
854
291

Mother with her two children at Phauda

[p. 82 (A)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

534 bamboo and the usual flute. They are fond of gongs, but these are not now so common as they were. At the great Pen Karsita at Ghotpal in 1942, the dancers used slabs of



Kikir Fiddle
(*Length* 2')

coloured wood, bits of old tin and indeed anything that would make a noise instead of the traditional gongs. Like the Muria, at festivals and even for amusement the Maria use a hunting horn, either a real horn or one made of brass.

541 Besides dancing, the chief Maria relaxation is the cock-fight. At the conclusion of all the bigger bazaars, the men retire to a grove of trees and set their cocks against each other. The cocks are armed with sharp and deadly little knives tied to their feet and fights are to the death. The victor has the privilege of taking the defeated bird, but the real excitement comes from the betting.

V

844 The ceremonies attending birth and marriage are very [843] simple. The pregnant mother is not hampered by many restrictions on her movements. After the birth of the child the placenta is buried in a pit behind the house. Logs are placed above it and the arrow with which the cord was cut is driven into the ground near by. A small shed is made and the 846 mother lives here for some weeks with her child, taking a daily bath above the placenta-pit. At the end of this period of segregation, the husband gives a feast to the neighbours, [551] the child is named and the mother is permitted to return to her household duties. It was to such a feast that the unhappy victim of the Mardum sacrifice was enticed.[1]

881 There are no ceremonies of initiation at puberty, though a

[1] Case No 31.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

I am not sure that a ring associated with any kind of death is not equally useful.

The Maria magicians believe themselves able to foretell a child's destiny by certain signs at birth. If, at the place where the placenta is buried, there appear the footprints of a tiger or the marks of a snake, they declare that the child will be either killed by a tiger or bitten by a snake. If the water in the pot that is placed above the placenta-pit runs out of its own accord, it means that the child will be drowned. If a baby is born with a strangulating cord, it means that, when it grows up, it will either be hanged or will commit suicide by hanging.

But there is nothing to compare with the superstitions in Europe; the belief, for example, that the heart of a still-born child eaten while yet warm renders the eater invisible, thus aiding him to steal. Adam gives a number of beliefs from the Western world that equal the most bizarre of those recorded in Asia. He describes the soporiferous candles made of the fat of virgin children and used to see whether anyone was still awake in a house about to be burgled. The left thumb of a corpse nine weeks in the grave enables a thief to enter a house at night without rousing the occupants. In Poland the right hand of the corpse of a suicide may be used to discover stolen goods. In Italy, especially in Sicily, it is still believed that treasure can be unearthed with the assistance of the blood of innocent children.[1]

[1] Adam, op. cit., pp. 261 ff. In Mandla District I have met Gond who believe that when a man is hanged a few drops of *jiu-tel*, or "life-oil", fall from his body. If this oil can be obtained and applied to a dying man, he will be restored to life. At one time Mr Hivale was believed to possess a few drops of this precious liquid. The 'Hand of Glory' idea has its parallel in India. In Chittagong it was at one time customary for dacoits (mostly Mohammedan) to spread a shroud stolen from a corpse over the roof of a house to prevent the inhabitants from waking. See E. O. Sherborne, *Man*, Feb. 1934.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

843 such as, in other parts of India, of the use of a knife or the cutting of anything; but ordinary enquiry elicited no clue to them.

844 It was said on page 106 that children are born in the menstruation hut or room. This is certainly the case so far as the private huts and rooms are concerned; but in my notes it is not clear whether births ever take place in the communal menstruation hut. They probably do not, because obviously it may be needed at any time for other women of the village, and I have notes of children in Hikpulla and Nugur, where there are communal menstruation huts, being born in a corner of the veranda of the house specially walled off for the purpose.

[777] Cases are known of a mother being delivered of a child in the fields or the forest, but this is considered very unlucky, and as soon as the mother knows that her hour is upon her, she must make every effort to get in time to the menstruation hut or room. During delivery she may have the comfort of the presence of her mother-in-law or some woman from the village; but there are no midwives, and the woman with her must not touch her or assist the delivery; the mother is expected to do everything for herself, and it is regarded as very wrong if she is unable to do so. They pray to the clan-god during a difficult delivery, but appear to do nothing else to assist the mother by either medicine or ceremony. The mother herself has to cut the navel-cord of her baby either with her husband's ordinary knife or with an arrow-head. She cuts it about three or four inches from its junction with the stomach, and binds it close to the junction with a ligature of cord, the portion between the cut and the ligature being left to dry and fall off; and she is expected to bury the placenta (*modi*) immediately after this under the house rubbish-heap outside the back of the house. If the child is born dead, the mother has to bury it somewhere in the forest, going there alone and digging the grave without assistance; it may not be buried in the regular village graveyard. Around Handawada a mother is expected to stay in the menstruation room for a full month after delivery; but the general rule in the interior of the Abujhmar hills is for her to remain there for eight days or until the navel-cord dries and falls off.

[845 766]

846 Everywhere it is taboo for the father to do any field or other work during this period of eight days before the navel-cord falls. No medicine is given to him. He must not sleep in the house during the period in most parts of the hills, but in the dormitory; around Handawada he sleeps in the portion of the *kala* room separated from the woman's portion by the *binda* mud threshold. He must not cook his own food during this period, and has to get a man friend to cook food for him in another house and bring it to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *bauhinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bimsul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

844 seat above it. Near by he drives the arrow or knife into the ground. He brings a pot of water and puts it inside the hut, should the water
[787] decrease of its own accord it is regarded as a very bad omen and the child is expected to die. This hut is now used constantly by the mother who comes five or six times a day to bathe herself and the baby. She always takes water from the pot kept inside the enclosure and it is refilled each time with warm water heated elsewhere. The mother regularly pours warm water over the child's umbilical stump, for so long as it does not drop off she is in a state of taboo and can do no work.

In some villages the placenta is buried under a *bassia latifolia* tree and a large stone is placed above, 'for this tree does every kind of work for us'. Very small babies are sometimes buried in the same place so that they can suck the milky sap.

When the stump falls off, it is buried in the placenta-pit; should it be dug up and eaten, for example, by a dog, the child would cease suckling and die. After a year has passed the Perma comes to offer compensation of a fowl and rice-beer to the Earth Mother because they have offended her by burying the placenta and cord in the ground.

846 Once the stump has dropped the mother is free of the restric-
852 tions on her and when she feels ready—'when her body is dry and clean'—she has a final bath, cowdungs the house and begins to cook and live normally again. The father shaves the child's head. The mother herself destroys the little bathing-hut. The father smears the arrow with oil and puts it in the roof of the house. When a boy grows up it is shown to him and he can use it for hunting, though no special virtue seems to attach to it.

On the day of the mother's ceremonial entry into the house,
852 there is a little feast, cooked by the woman herself, on the veranda.
553 The Perma and a few neighbours are invited and they have a pot of rice-beer. Before they drink, each of the visitors dips his finger into it and gives it to the child to suck. The mother presents oil and a ring to each of the women who helped her and to the Waddai and Perma. The child is often, though not always, named on this occasion. A chicken is dedicated by being fed on rice and is set free. A year later it is sacrificed and a bit of the liver is given to the child. If a baby cries continually it is supposed that it has been given the wrong name and the Waddai renames it and dedicates another chicken. In Gadapal I was told that if the gods disapprove a child's name, they send Hidmaraj to make it itch and Markaraj to make it cry.

845 The Marias do not seem to have made up their minds about twins. One village thinks them lucky, another disastrous. There

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

is a vague idea that monozygotic twins are more likely to be fortunate than dizygotic. Thus when Tati Buta's wife gave birth to female twins at Palnar, it was observed that they had but one placenta and the people declared them to be lucky and expected them to survive—which they did. But at Phulpar, where Sodi Mandra's wife gave birth to dizygotic twins, a boy and a girl, both died within a fortnight, and at Bara Harmamunda, where Oyami Kama's wife had male twins of the same order, both parents and the children died soon afterwards. 845

The Marias believe that the cause of such births may be physical, magical or supernatural. When Gangu of Koriras had male twins it was believed to have been due to her eating off a leaf-plate made of double leaves. It was the indiscretion of eating a double cob of maize that gave Oyami Kama's wife her twins. The Marias, therefore, are generally careful not to pick double leaves or fruit—double plantains, ebony fruit, maize and so on. Even a husband should be careful about this. For even though twins are not specially unlucky nobody wants them, and it is hard for the mother to nourish two children properly. If a young girl has twins, it is generally assumed that she has been lying with more than one man. At Gogonda a woman had intercourse both with her husband and a lover on the day of her post-menstrual bath. The result was twins and such grievous offence to the Departed that they killed both children within a few weeks.

The Marias also believe that twins may be the result of intercourse with a supernatural being. At Gudra I was told how Hunga Nupo's wife was visited by a Rau: 'He laughed and went to her. The next day her husband lay with her and in due time she gave birth to twins.' A similar story is told of the wife of Sodi Mandra.

Maria twins, like twins all over India, are named after the inseparable couple Rama and Lakshman. Two boys are Rama and Lakha, two girls Rame and Lakhe. The after-birth, whether double or single, of both children is buried in one pit and only one arrow is put above it. In the same way the twins are supposed to remain very close to each other throughout their lives. 845 553

VI

Grigson was unable to find any trace of the dormitory among the Bison-horn Marias; the people always denied that they existed, and even said that they were a degraded institution. Grigson was rightly suspicious of these denials, for in fact a simple form of dormitory exists in most of the bigger Bison-horn Maria villages. Even to-day the headmen deny their existence—I have never 883

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

844 Until the stump falls the father is in a state of taboo. He must not cook, he must not leave the house to visit his friends, he cannot go to the ghotul. No one will accept his tobacco and he cannot share in a sacrificial feast.

843 Certain attempts are made to influence and to diagnose the sex of unborn children. If a motiari, after fasting for twelve hours at her first menstruation, eats a dish of *khichri*, a mixture of pulse and rice without salt, her children will likewise be a mixture of boys and girls. If she goes to the jungle on this day and brings home a bundle of leaves on her hip, she is likely to bear girls.

Sometimes Muria women try to discover the sex of the next child by examining the colour and number of the knots on the umbilical cord of the first, but that no one takes these forecasts very seriously is seen in the riddle about a pregnant woman.

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II. Name-giving

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3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

539 had seen him entering, he knew that he was hiding some-
773 where and so he set fire to the building and went away. The fire did not harm the man, but some of the bird's feathers were burnt. The soul of the clan-god in Gadapal is in that bird, and to this day the bird can be seen, though now it is made of iron, and on its body the marks made by the burns remain.

'The eldest brother then went to Mallawada and lived there. He consulted the Waddai about the death of his sister's child, and it was revealed to him that the girl had been committing adultery with another man, and that on the very day she had bathed after her menstrual period, she had had intercourse both with her husband and her lover. [245] The result of this was twins. But the Departed were offended at her conduct, and as a result one of the twins died after a few days and the second was killed by the Departed who first took the form of a hare and excited the dogs, and then possessed the dogs and killed the child in the swing'.

Such stories are not mere fairy-tales. They are part of the actual life of the people, vividly believed and actually experienced. To aboriginals who live in such an atmosphere and depend so entirely on the supernatural, the cumbersome and vulgar machinery of human courts of justice seems comparatively unimportant. It is said that many murderers find a sort of relief in going to jail, since they believe that this earthly punishment may save them from the vengeance of the Departed.

782 But as often in the aboriginal world there are regular
937 methods of evading these dangers. If a man wishes to commit adultery, he makes offerings to the Departed and prays, 'Let me not swell with water. Let the sin be on the husband of this girl and not on me', and then he addresses his ancestors, 'Away with you. Go to water and to wind. Go beyond the boundary-line. Do not trouble me whatever happens'.

684 There is no doubt, however, that many Maria are not satisfied with such ceremonies, and that they consider themselves entirely justified in killing a wife who is disloyal. In particular, the discovery of a woman actually in the arms of her lover appears to have so overwhelming an emotional effect that the husband is almost bound to strike

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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It is generally asserted that all Marias are dirty, and object to washing. It is true that Maria women dancing late at night after lying on ground covered with the ashes of camp-fires, or men and women in the *ponda* fields or after a long march, are dirty; and anyone who has tried to dress a Maria's wounds knows how dirt-encrusted they can be. Sleeping between fires, or over fires in an enclosed and low-roofed hut, does not promote cleanliness. But the real reason for the idea is the fact that the Hill Maria seldom washes his loin-cloth. On this, Russell and Hiralal say (III, p. 124):— 515

Cleanliness

'In Bastar they seldom wash their clothes, as they think this impious, or else that the cloth would wear out too quickly if it were often washed. Here they set great store by their piece of cloth, and a woman will take it off before she cleans up her house, and do her work naked. It is probable that these wild Gonds, who could not weave, regarded the cloth as something miraculous and sacred, and, as already seen, the god Palo is a piece of cloth.'

This passage is all wrong. Palo is unknown to Maria or Muria Murias and Bison-horn Marias wash their clothes, and there are occasions when even a Hill Maria is bound to do so. He may not weave, himself, but he makes nets and baskets and twine, and always accepts the manufacturing processes of Kumhar potters, Kammar blacksmiths, Gharwa brass founders or Mahra weavers in a commonsense, rational way; he sees the work done quite often, and indeed there are many Marias who, in jail for homicide, have themselves become expert weavers of cloth or carpets. The reasoning processes of the savage are not unlike our own, and it is always safe to reject any such explanation as that he does not wash his cloth because he regards it as impious to wash something so sacred and miraculous, when there is available the commonsense economic explanation that he himself gives, that cloth costs money, of which he has never much, and that the oftener it is washed the sooner it wears out. So ordinarily, when a Hill Maria has his dip in a pool or river he takes off his filthy and inadequate loin-cloth and hangs it on a bush or rock while he washes his limbs, fastening it again all dirty on his clean body when he emerges. The women remove their loin-cloth, but not their *mudang*[1] and the cloth attached to it. Both husband and wife, however, must bathe in the morning after sexual intercourse and wash their loin-cloths; and a woman must invariably bathe and wash her loin-cloth, beating it out well on a stone, on leaving the menstruation hut or room at the end of her courses and of the four weeks following the birth of a child. Generally men and women wash or bathe every morning, and more often than not in the evening also. There are separate pools in [285 286] [833] [841 846]

[1] The *mudang* is explained below, under dress.

1; Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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[845 766]

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Hill Maria

him. He has, however, to cook food for his wife. The latter during ordinary menstrual periods stays, in villages where there are menstrual rooms or private and not communal menstruation huts, on her side of the mud threshold and keeps there special water-pots and cooking pots; her husband brings food and water in the regular pots, and, standing on his non-taboo side of the mud threshold, pours their contents into the menstruation water and cooking pots. But as he may never touch the latter, he cannot use them for preparing food for his wife after child-birth, and so has to buy a special set of pots for cooking her food then, which are destroyed at the end of her period of seclusion. Nor is the husband permitted to enter the ordinary rooms of the house until the child's navel-cord has fallen off; he has to build a temporary room at the back of the house near the menstruation room or hut, and cook there. It is taboo for him to give any other person any fire from the hearth in this temporary kitchen. Breach of the taboos attaching to child-birth by either parent is believed to entail the wrath of the Village Mother. During the period of seclusion the mother is permitted to leave the room only to bury the placenta or to answer the call of nature. As it is taboo for her to pick or break anything growing during the period, she has before her delivery to lay in enough leaves for cleaning herself after defecation to last for the full period. She wears nothing but the *mudang* until the end of the period.

After the navel-cord has fallen off or at the end of the period of seclusion, the mother goes out at night to the river, immerses herself, and cleans her old loin-cloth and the cloth of her *mudang*. In the early morning she emerges wearing her loin-cloth and carrying her baby, which in most villages her husband then sees for the first time; around Handawada, however, he is allowed to see it in the menstruation room on the morning after it is born. The mother has to sprinkle every part of the house with water.

From birth to death there is no age ceremony of any kind, neither at birth, naming, weaning, ear-boring, hair-cutting, puberty, first shaving, nor on any other occasion. Normally

Naming

the child gets no name until it is two or three years old, when its parents know its physique and something of its character. But there are three exceptions to this. When the child is brought out from the place where it was born at the end of the initial period of seclusion, it is examined for birth-marks; and if these are considered to be the same as those of a dead ancestor it is given that ancestor's name, or, if, for example, the child is a boy and has his father's mother's birth-marks, it gets her husband's name. Thus Usendi Moda, the headman of Orcha, was called after his dead grandfather because he had the same mole on his hip as he;

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

844 seat above it. Near by he drives the arrow or knife into the ground. He brings a pot of water and puts it inside the hut; should the water [787] decrease of its own accord it is regarded as a very bad omen and the child is expected to die. This hut is now used constantly by the mother who comes five or six times a day to bathe herself and the baby. She always takes water from the pot kept inside the enclosure and it is refilled each time with warm water heated elsewhere. The mother regularly pours warm water over the child's umbilical stump, for so long as it does not drop off she is in a state of taboo and can do no work.

In some villages the placenta is buried under a *bassia latifolia* tree and a large stone is placed above, 'for this tree does every kind of work for us'. Very small babies are sometimes buried in the same place so that they can suck the milky sap.

When the stump falls off, it is buried in the placenta-pit; should it be dug up and eaten, for example, by a dog, the child would cease suckling and die. After a year has passed the Perma comes to offer compensation of a fowl and rice-beer to the Earth Mother because they have offended her by burying the placenta and cord in the ground.

846 Once the stump has dropped the mother is free of the restrictions on her and when she feels ready—'when her body is dry and 852 clean'—she has a final bath, cowdungs the house and begins to cook and live normally again. The father shaves the child's head. The mother herself destroys the little bathing-hut. The father smears the arrow with oil and puts it in the roof of the house. When a boy grows up it is shown to him and he can use it for hunting, though no special virtue seems to attach to it.

852 On the day of the mother's ceremonial entry into the house, there is a little feast, cooked by the woman herself, on the veranda. 553 The Perma and a few neighbours are invited and they have a pot of rice-beer. Before they drink, each of the visitors dips his finger into it and gives it to the child to suck. The mother presents oil and a ring to each of the women who helped her and to the Waddai and Perma. The child is often, though not always, named on this occasion. A chicken is dedicated by being fed on rice and is set free. A year later it is sacrificed and a bit of the liver is given to the child. If a baby cries continually it is supposed that it has been given the wrong name and the Waddai renames it and dedicates another chicken. In Gadapal I was told that if the gods disapprove a child's name, they send Hidmaraj to make it itch and Markaraj to make it cry.

845 The Marias do not seem to have made up their minds about twins. One village thinks them lucky, another disastrous. There

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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515

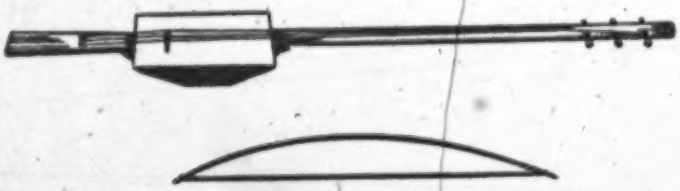
Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria mother with her newly-born child at Maranda. Note the arrow driven into the ground where the placenta is buried, and the stone for bathing

[End Plate P]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

534 bamboo and the usual flute. They are fond of gongs, but these are not now so common as they were. At the great Pen Karsita at Ghotpal in 1942, the dancers used slabs of



Kikir Fiddle
(*Length 2'*)

coloured wood, bits of old tin and indeed anything that would make a noise instead of the traditional gongs. Like the Muria, at festivals and even for amusement the Maria use a hunting horn, either a real horn or one made of brass.

541 Besides dancing, the chief Maria relaxation is the cock-fight. At the conclusion of all the bigger bazaars, the men retire to a grove of trees and set their cocks against each other. The cocks are armed with sharp and deadly little knives tied to their feet and fights are to the death. The victor has the privilege of taking the defeated bird, but the real excitement comes from the betting.

V

844 [843] The ceremonies attending birth and marriage are very simple. The pregnant mother is not hampered by many restrictions on her movements. After the birth of the child the placenta is buried in a pit behind the house. Logs are placed above it and the arrow with which the cord was cut is driven into the ground near by. A small shed is made and the 846 mother lives here for some weeks with her child, taking a daily bath above the placenta-pit. At the end of this period of segregation, the husband gives a feast to the neighbours, [551] the child is named and the mother is permitted to return to her household duties. It was to such a feast that the unhappy victim of the Mardum sacrifice was enticed.[1]

881 There are no ceremonies of initiation at puberty, though a

[1] Case No 31.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

see that the root of the creeper has no side-shoots, for these impair its efficacy.

Another orally administered drug is supposed to confer permanent sterilization.

'On a Sunday pick a few pieces of a parasite growing on a tilai tree. Dry them and heat in the fire till they can be powdered easily. Make into small pills with gur and give them to the woman—without her knowing—to eat with parched rice.' This is sometimes given by a chelik to his motiari. 'When there is great love between a boy and girl, he gives it to her so that they can love one another without danger.'

I do not know how commonly these remedies are used, but there is no doubt that chelik and motiari are expected to avoid conception somehow. A pregnancy is regarded as a gross piece of carelessness. There is a general belief that no one need conceive unless they want to, that a definite psychological factor is involved. If a boy and girl do not give themselves to one another with too oblivious a passion, if they hold back a little, if they are careful not to love too constantly or too long, conception need never follow. We have seen that too much love is not approved in the ghotul; conception is the punishment of an over-passionate attachment.

But when all precautions fail, and a girl finds herself pregnant, what happens? Directly she finds that 'the moon has come again, but the stream of blood is dry', she tells her chelik. There is no difficulty in the old type of ghotul; her ghotul-husband will look after her. In the newer type, where during the course of the month the girl may have been sleeping with a dozen different boys, she chooses either the one she likes best or the one with whom she first had congress after her last period. His immediate duty is to bring abortifacients.

Abortions are probably fairly common. In one village I was told that they mixed gur, ashes and the strongest mahua spirit available and gave it to the girl to drink. In another place the Muria said that they used gunpowder [1] mixed with mahua spirit. In Kokori, the Gaita recommended the obviously magical remedy of taking a bit of bark from a mahua tree which had been struck by lightning. This was burnt and the ashes mixed with liquor. In Berma, an eighty-year-old Muria recalled how when he was Nengi of the ghotul he made the Nirosa pregnant. He first dosed her with *keksa* root, but without success, apparently because he did not know the correct ritual of obtaining it, and then on a Monday he bought a bottle of *phuli* liquor. 'On that day we both fasted and in the evening, after bathing, I offered an egg and some liquor to Lingo Pen saying, "O Mahapurub Lingo, if you are a true god, let this girl abort: if you don't, the sin is yours and not mine. You founded the ghotul and if you truly live there till this day, show proof of it and I will offer you another egg". I then made the girl drink the rest of the liquor and in her drunkenness she aborted. As I had promised I gave the second egg to Lingo Pen.'

In one ghotul, about which I believe I have entirely authentic information, six of the girls had procured abortions; one had achieved it three times, twice in the third month and once in the fourth; another girl had achieved it twice. But the motiari do not like using abortifacients, for they believe that they lead to sterility later on, and this ghotul was probably exceptional. There

[1] Himes (op. cit., p. 8) quotes an unpublished report by W. B. Cline that 'it is the custom among the natives of the Oasis of Siwa in the Lybian Desert to drink infusions of gunpowder' as a contraceptive measure.

X 883 ● 847 were a number of older girls there; in other places, where only a few motiari exceed three years from the menarche, such large-scale abortifacient practices appear to be unnecessary. In any case the practice is not approved by the elders of the tribe. In Hathipakna, the Malko was made pregnant by the Jamadar, both being of the same clan. An older man tried to procure an abortion, but failed; the matter became known and he was fined five rupees by the clan panchayat.

X 883 848 If all their efforts fail, the chelik and motiari report the matter to the ghotul leaders, who keep it dark as long as possible. There is no greater ghotul crime than to reveal such a secret in the village.

In the meantime the girl may elope with the same or another lover, and get married quietly elsewhere. If the marriage season is at hand, it is not uncommon for the parents to hurry on the marriage with the girl's original betrothed, and for no one to say anything about it. When this happens it is whispered that 'the girl has a baby in her *haldi-dhoti*', that is, while she is still wearing the clothes stained with the marriage oil.

If neither of these solutions are possible, the headman and elders of the village hold a panchayat in the ghotul, at which all the chelik and motiari must be present. The headman says, 'By whose hand is this? Whose is this belly?' The girl says nothing but goes to the boy responsible and takes him by the hand. If the parents of her betrothed are present, the headman says, 'Look, your goods are damaged; do you still want them or no?' He turns to the girl and says, referring to her betrothed, 'Do you still want this boy or no?'

One of two things thus can happen. If the girl's betrothed is willing to have her, and she has no objection, the marriage is performed as soon as possible. The chelik who caused the pregnancy has to pay some compensation to the husband as well as a fine to the panchayat. This happens more commonly than one would expect; if a girl is pregnant, even by another boy, it is at least a proof that she will not be barren. Out of the 80 pregnancies to which I have referred already, in only 26 cases did the girl marry her lover; in the other 54 cases she married her betrothed.

Where the girl refuses to marry her betrothed or he decides that he does not want her, as happened in the 26 cases, she declares in the panchayat. 'This boy has given me this belly. I will go with him and never leave him.' When she says this, her parents abuse her, for it will mean financial loss to them, and the elders give everyone a lecture, pointing out that such things never happened in their day and that with a little care all such scandals could be avoided. When the Kotwar of Atpal made a girl pregnant, the elders fined him and reproved him with the words, 'When a mare has an itch for it, she allows the horse to mount her, but she knows she cannot stop the seed from entering her. You too knew it, so why were you not careful?'

A long discussion, generally entirely financial, follows. Fines are imposed and compensation decided. The village elders demand their share. The marriage is arranged as soon as possible.

In either case, the child is accepted by its real or legal father, and the origin of its birth is soon forgotten. It carries little stigma, and once the financial side of the incident is settled, little more is said. For the disgrace and danger of a pregnancy is not a moral one. A pregnancy is dreaded because everyone makes a fuss, the routine of daily life is upset, the matrimonial arrangements so carefully devised to unite families and repay old debts are disturbed, there is a general feeling that someone has blundered. The chelik and motiari are embarrassed, but they are not ashamed.

308

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

836 II. His sister married Gecha Harma of Udala Tondawada, and at the wedding he met Harma's sister Gecha Kowe, and danced with her. They liked each other, and met at other weddings and at koqsar dances, and had sexual intercourse two or three times, which Moda said was necessary in order to ascertain that they were both physically capable. Everyone saw that they were in love, and their wedding followed as soon as the necessary betrothal ceremonies could be completed. But if pre-marital intercourse results in pregnancy, there can be no formal marriage, which the Hill Marias call *marmi* and the Bison-horn *pendul*; the girl states the name of the man responsible, and goes to live in his house without any ceremony, the union being described as *ottur* ('taken away'). A child born to a girl without even *ottur* would be considered as belonging to the clan of the man whom the mother names as the father; and this putative father would be expected to take the mother and child to his house, the union being known to the Hill Marias as *ahene-hattu* ('thus-went'). No stigma attaches to such unions, and the children have exactly the same position and rights as the children of a formal marriage.

588 848

584 Hill Maria parents do not try to interfere in their children's choice of wives and husbands. When a youth and his girl know their minds, each tells his or her parents. Then the youth's parents, with the elders of the village, go, without the youth, with about a rupee's worth of *mahua* spirit (or five bottles) to the girl's parents, taking care to arrive at their house at about four or five o'clock in the afternoon. The father of the youth opens the door of the girl's house, places the liquor bottles inside the threshold and rejoins his party, all of whom sit silent outside the door. The girl's parents then call in some of the elders of their village, and in their presence tell the girl that this liquor has been brought on her account, and ask her if she is willing to go and live with the youth in the village from which the liquor has come. If the girl agrees, the liquor is at once drunk by the parties from the two villages, and the girl's parents entertain the visiting party to supper; if she refuses, the youth's parents take the liquor back to their village. This ceremony is called *talq-da'ina* ('going to ask'). It may take place on any day of the year, Hill Marias recking nothing of auspicious days or omens.

Hill Maria regular betrothal and marriage

[787]

There is a second *talq-da'ina*, generally after an interval of about a year; it sometimes takes place sooner, but it is considered bad form to be too importunate. The youth does not go with his parents even this time; he does not, indeed, meet his betrothed between the first *talq-da'ina* and marriage, as, once a girl's hand

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

as it is a purely biological question; but some such solution of the difficulty seems to me the only one, unless I have missed some very important ethnological clue.[1]

The problem thus posed presents itself in a peculiarly acute form when we consider conditions of life in the ghotul. For here, boys and girls—in spite of various checks and disciplines—cohabit from the period of their first tentative experiments, through full sexual maturity, for five to eight years until their freedom is ended by marriage. Yet here too pregnancies are comparatively rare and, though various contraceptive means are practised, few of them have physiological properties.

The incidence of pregnancy, however, is higher than that discovered by Malinowski in the Trobriands. Out of 2000 cases, 80 men admitted to having made their ghotul partners pregnant, and in the 220 ghotul examined, I found a history of 327 pregnant girls.

I believe that these figures are reasonably accurate. Although there is a strict rule against any member of the ghotul revealing even to the elders of the tribe, let alone to an inquisitive outsider, the fact that a motiari is pregnant at the moment, this reticence is no check on the loquacity of older men about matters long since past. As we shall see, there is no moral or social stigma attaching to pre-marital pregnancy; it is rather a matter of business, a complicated financial transaction. Everyone in the ghotul hushes it up rather as one might hush up a friend's mistakes or follies, anxious only to get him off. But once it is all over, the bills paid, the girl married, the child accepted as a full member of its legal father's family and clan, the real father allows himself the pleasures of retrospection; he recalls the potency of former days and finds it not ungratifying to remember what a lad he was.

Eighty pregnancies out of 2000 is 4 per cent, much more than Malinowski's figure, astonishingly more than Rivers'—and this in spite of the fact that the Muria admit to contraceptive practices that are denied in the Trobriand and Eddystone Islands. It is possible that a statistical, instead of a genealogical, inquiry would have yielded higher figures, at least in the Eddystone Islands. The genealogical method is not the best way to discover 'illegitimate' births among primitive people, for the whole trend of primitive society is to legitimatize births wherever possible.

Yet although the older Muria are not unwilling to admit the scandals of long ago, it is regarded as vitally important for a Muria girl to avoid conception. Pre-nuptial intercourse is socially recognized, and even tacitly approved, yet pre-nuptial pregnancy is at the moment of its occurrence a major social disaster, the chief anxiety of ghotul life, the one cloud upon its dreamland. It brings disgrace upon the ghotul, it endangers the girl's normal marriage prospects, it imposes a heavy financial burden upon the boy's parents and it casts a momentary shadow over the whole village. It is sometimes believed that a youth who has 'wasted his seed'[2] in making a motiari pregnant will be sterile later in life. On joining the ghotul the little chelik and motiari are solemnly warned both by their parents and by the ghotul leaders of the risks of pregnancy and are told how to avoid it.

For the Muria have a vivid appreciation of the fact of physiological paternity. The answer to the riddle 'Out of water, bones' is 'Semen and a child'.

[1] Malinowski, op. cit., p. 168.

[2] The expression used for a girl is *was bigad gaya*, 'her nerve is broken', if she conceives out of due time.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

were a number of older girls there; in other places, where only a few motiari exceed three years from the menarche, such large-scale abortifacient practices appear to be unnecessary. In any case the practice is not approved by the elders of the tribe. In Hathipakna, the Malko was made pregnant by the Jamadar, both being of the same clan. An older man tried to procure an abortion, but failed; the matter became known and he was fined five rupees by the clan panchayat.

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THE PROBLEM OF GHOTUL INFERTILITY

Sometimes, indeed, the chelik actually try to make a girl pregnant. In Kanhargaon, two very popular motiari were betrothed to boys at Nayanar. The Kanhargaon chelik did all they could to make them pregnant so that they could force them into marriage and keep them in their own village. But they were unsuccessful, and in the end one of the girls was seduced by her own betrothed at a marriage, became pregnant and was hastily married to him. It is not uncommon, though I have no statistics on the point, for engaged couples whose parents unduly delay their marriage to force the issue either by eloping together or by trying to achieve a pregnancy.

But on the whole, the admirable ghotul rule that engaged couples should have nothing to do with one another before marriage is carefully observed. Out of 113 Lamhada boys serving for their wives and in close proximity for several years to the girls they were going to marry, only 5 made them pregnant.

Pre-nuptial pregnancy does not seem to injure the couple's relationships in marriage, provided a youth marries the girl himself. Of the 26 chelik who married the motiari they made pregnant, not one made a failure of his domestic life. At the time of my inquiries every one of them was living with his original partner and very happy with her. But those who had infertile sexual connexion with their wives before marriage showed a comparatively high divorce rate. Of the 316 who admitted to this, 14 had unsuccessful marriages. Of these 77 were the regular ghotul-wives of my informants and 68 of them were still living together when I inquired.

In only three cases during the last twenty years has a pregnancy been taken so seriously as to lead to tragedy. Two of these were the suicides which I have already described in Chapter XV. But here it was not so much the pregnancy itself as the fact that the pregnancy was the result of a connexion between chelik and motiari of the same clan that mattered. The third tragedy appears to have been due largely to a chelik's fear of the disgrace and expense, especially as it was his second experience of the kind.

At the beginning of April 1942, Birjhu, a chelik of the Aturbera ghotul, discovered with dismay that his motiari, Mori, was pregnant. Only a year before he had made another girl pregnant in the ghotul, had refused to marry her and had forced his parents to pay compensation. They did so, but they made many threats as to what they would do if it occurred again. Mori, who seems to have been in love with the boy, said that he must marry her, but Birjhu refused and said that if she told anybody that it was through him that she had conceived, he would kill her. After a little while, however, the poor girl told her brother's wife about it. When Birjhu heard she had done so, he planned to carry out his threat. On the night of the 14th of April, he told Mori he would do what she wanted and they had better elope together and get married in another village. Late at night they crept stealthily out of the ghotul and made their way through the forest. But suddenly, before they had gone very far, Birjhu caught hold of the girl and strangled her. Then he dragged her body below a tree and tied a rope round the neck to make it look as though the girl had committed suicide.

The following day a report was made at the Narayanpur police station that Mori had committed suicide. When Birjhu heard that the matter had gone to the police, he was frightened but possibly even more he was overwhelmed with sorrow and misery at what he had done. He disappeared, and two days later hanged himself from a tree in the jungle.

But this is the only incident of the kind that has yet been recorded.

Such is the general picture, familiar to students of pre-marital freedom everywhere. How are we to explain the fact that through all the years of

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria
Muria

674 336 [348] Murders committed on account of an unwelcome and unexpected pregnancy are not common, because of the high standard of domestic morals among the Maria and because if an unmarried girl is found pregnant, she is immediately married and the child is thus legitimized. But there is one authentic case in which a man was driven to kill his lover, though it may be said that it was her stupidity rather than her pregnancy that caused the tragedy. Mase was the wife of a man who deserted her for the Tea Gardens, leaving her alone and unsupported with three little children. She used to make some sort of living as a coolie. But presently Poriami Hirma fell in love with her and used constantly to visit her in her house, although he never officially kept her as his wife. In time she became pregnant and a panchayat was called to consider the matter. The elders decided to send information to Mase's husband's elder brother, an ex-convict and a harsh violent man, of whom the girl was greatly afraid.

Early in the morning of Tuesday, 21 February 1933, Mase left her three children in the house and went to tell Hirma what had happened. She expected that her husband's elder brother would come that day and beat her and she suggested that Hirma should run away with her and hide. Hirma agreed and they went some way into the jungle and sat down under a tamarind tree. The weather was cold and they lit a fire, beside which they sat and talked. Mase was very frightened and depressed. She wept and threatened to kill herself. Hirma very properly asked her to come and live with him as his wife, and promised to look after her and the children. But the girl, who was obviously in

674 684 seduced Kande's first wife, and the proper ceremonies of purification had been conducted. But when Kande took another wife, the father again attempted or, as some say, succeeded in seducing her, and this time there was a violent quarrel between father and son while they were catching birds in the jungle. The father actually complained to his son that the girl did not respond properly to his advances. Kande was assaulted by his father and killed him in return. When I saw this boy in jail a year later, the extraordinary sadness of his face contrasted strikingly with the expression of many of the more regular criminals. The villagers concealed the crime and when it was by chance discovered five months later, were very backward in co-operating with the police. Obviously as in the Mundra case, they considered it a very proper murder. But Kande was not so fortunate as Mundra and was sentenced not to a month, but to five years' imprisonment. This was later reduced to three years, and he was released in 1943.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

a table-stone with a white pebble on it may be erected in the name of the clan-god under a *saja* tree. The *perma* sacrifices cocks and a pig or goat on behalf of the village in the usual way, and washes some new husked rice and *kuthi* and offers it to the god. The men cook and eat the sacrificial meat then and there. The wife-clan relatives may be present, but in most villages are not allowed to participate in the sacrificial rice and meat and are supplied with other rice and meat which they cook separately. The usual remains-eating feast takes place in the houses next day.

The Jata Pandum

At the Jata Pandum, held somewhere near the full moon of Pus (December-January), they celebrate the eating of the first new beans, pulses, and the latest ripening grains. There is the usual public sacrifice for the men before the log-god or the Village Mother. In the south, towards the Dorla border, the festival is known as Chikur Pandum, and the sacrifices are always to a table-stone beneath a *saja* tree known as Dhania Deo, which, like the Bhattra Dhani, appears to be only another form of the earth-god. The only special feature of this *pandum* is that the domestic sacrifice and libations to the Departed in the house are often followed by a ceremony for weaning suckling children, the first food given being some of the rice and sacrificial meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed.

The Kare Pandum

This takes place in Magh (January-February), soon after the Jata Pandum, and, as already observed, is preceded by the *Kare Weta* in which fields and open spaces are beaten for small game. I was unable to ascertain what other special features, if any, the festival has, or whether new grass and new bamboo are offered to the gods. Until the festival has been held it is *melo* or taboo to cut grass or bamboos or to start felling timber for *erka*, *parka* and *penda* cultivation.

The Bhimul Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum comes very soon after the Kare Pandum. I have no detailed information. But it is a ceremony for ensuring a good rainfall in the coming monsoon. It takes place by the Bhimul post in the *kadri-bera*, over which a booth of boughs is erected. Men and women attend. The booth is decorated with strings of mango leaves. The *perma* sacrifices a white cock and an egg, and pours *landa* over the Bhimul post; and men and women then empty over the post baskets containing a little of every kind of field produce. Men and women then sit in the open, and consume *landa*. All night the village women dance, led by the *perma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head or in her arms.

The Bhimul Pandum is really the last of the *pandum* held in all villages. It only remains to mention the Mandai or Deoguri

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

him. He has, however, to cook food for his wife. The latter during ordinary menstrual periods stays, in villages where there are menstrual rooms or private and not communal menstruation huts, on her side of the mud threshold and keeps there special water-pots and cooking pots; her husband brings food and water in the regular pots, and, standing on his non-taboo side of the mud threshold, pours their contents into the menstruation water and cooking pots. But as he may never touch the latter, he cannot use them for preparing food for his wife after child-birth, and so has to buy a special set of pots for cooking her food then, which are destroyed at the end of her period of seclusion. Nor is the husband permitted to enter the ordinary rooms of the house until the child's navel-cord has fallen off; he has to build a temporary room at the back of the house near the menstruation room or hut, and cook there. It is taboo for him to give any other person any fire from the hearth in this temporary kitchen. Breach of the taboos attaching to child-birth by either parent is believed to entail the wrath of the Village Mother. During the period of seclusion the mother is permitted to leave the room only to bury the placenta or to answer the call of nature. As it is taboo for her to pick or break anything growing during the period, she has before her delivery to lay in enough leaves for cleaning herself after defecation to last for the full period. She wears nothing but the *mudang* until the end of the period.

After the navel-cord has fallen off or at the end of the period of seclusion, the mother goes out at night to the river, immerses herself, and cleans her old loin-cloth and the cloth of her *mudang*. In the early morning she emerges wearing her loin-cloth and carrying her baby, which in most villages her husband then sees for the first time; around Handawada, however, he is allowed to see it in the menstruation room on the morning after it is born. The mother has to sprinkle every part of the house with water.

From birth to death there is no age ceremony of any kind, neither at birth, naming, weaning, ear-boring, hair-cutting, puberty, first shaving, nor on any other occasion. Normally the child gets no name until it is two or three years old, when its parents know its physique and something of its character. But there are three exceptions to this. When the child is brought out from the place where it was born at the end of the initial period of seclusion, it is examined for birth-marks; and if these are considered to be the same as those of a dead ancestor it is given that ancestor's name, or, if, for example, the child is a boy and has his father's mother's birth-marks, it gets her husband's name. Thus Usendi Moda, the headman of Orcha, was called after his dead grandfather because he had the same mole on his hip as he;

Naming

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

843 secluded for their first menstruation, known as the *piki-kurma-lon*; but generally speaking, Bison-horn Marias do not seem to hold in the same strength the Hill Maria fear of a woman in this condition.

844 For the birth of a child a separate hut or booth is erected in the compound, generally at the back of the house, known as the *er-nihitana-lon*, or water-washing hut. This is often little more than the roughest of booths, and considerably inferior to even a Bison-horn Maria pigsty. Here the mother remains for a full month, during which her husband is not allowed to go to his work. The delivery is assisted by an experienced woman relative or fellow-villager, who cuts and binds the navel-cord and washes the child immediately after it is born, and gives it to the mother to suckle. No food is given to the mother that day; on the next morning she is made to drink a decoction of the bark of the *kusum* [824] tree (*Schleichera trijuga*), the root of the dwarf *chhind* palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*), and *kulthi* (*Dolichos biflorus*) pulses, pounded to a powder and boiled together, and an hour or two after this dose she is given a meal of warm boiled rice. She is dosed and fed in this way for six or seven days more, until the navel-cord falls off; and then she washes her whole body and is allowed to eat regular meals. At the ● 852 end of the month the *lon-wa'ina* or Returning to the House ceremony takes place. The child is named with the aid of a medium, though 553 actually names seem to be given for reasons very similar to those actuating Hill Maria choice of names. A pig, a goat or a number of cocks are killed, and the mother, having washed her clothes and her body, cooks the flesh, all the villagers and relatives being entertained to dinner. Thenceforward the mother is free to resume all her normal household and field work, and the father can resume his work.

553 I once witnessed an unusual naming ceremony. A son had been born after three elder brothers had died. It was considered 789 that their deaths had been due to the hostility of some demon or of the familiar spirit of some magician, and on the medium's advice the baby had been suspended in a rough cradle over the rubbish-heap by the fence of the *bari* garden, and all the men present threw cow-dung and filth all round the cradle, shouting out '*Kacharu*' or 'Filth!', which name was given to the child in the hope that thereby the malignant power would be deceived into thinking that the parents set no value on the child.

862 Children are breast-fed for two years or more, as among the Hill Marias. It has been already recorded (page 219) that there is among the Bison-horn Marias a special weaning ceremony during the Jata Pandum at which the first solid food given to the children is a portion of the rice and meat offered to the Departed.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

844 seat above it. Near by he drives the arrow or knife into the ground. He brings a pot of water and puts it inside the hut; should the water [787] decrease of its own accord it is regarded as a very bad omen and the child is expected to die. This hut is now used constantly by the mother who comes five or six times a day to bathe herself and the baby. She always takes water from the pot kept inside the enclosure and it is refilled each time with warm water heated elsewhere. The mother regularly pours warm water over the child's umbilical stump, for so long as it does not drop off she is in a state of taboo and can do no work.

In some villages the placenta is buried under a *bassia latifolia* tree and a large stone is placed above, 'for this tree does every kind of work for us'. Very small babies are sometimes buried in the same place so that they can suck the milky sap.

When the stump falls off, it is buried in the placenta-pit; should it be dug up and eaten, for example, by a dog, the child would cease suckling and die. After a year has passed the Perma comes to offer compensation of a fowl and rice-beer to the Earth Mother because they have offended her by burying the placenta and cord in the ground.

846 Once the stump has dropped the mother is free of the restrictions on her and when she feels ready—'when her body is dry and 852 clean'—she has a final bath, cowdungs the house and begins to cook and live normally again. The father shaves the child's head. The mother herself destroys the little bathing-hut. The father smears the arrow with oil and puts it in the roof of the house. When a boy grows up it is shown to him and he can use it for hunting, though no special virtue seems to attach to it.

852 On the day of the mother's ceremonial entry into the house, there is a little feast, cooked by the woman herself, on the veranda. 553 The Perma and a few neighbours are invited and they have a pot of rice-beer. Before they drink, each of the visitors dips his finger into it and gives it to the child to suck. The mother presents oil and a ring to each of the women who helped her and to the Waddai and Perma. The child is often, though not always, named on this occasion. A chicken is dedicated by being fed on rice and is set free. A year later it is sacrificed and a bit of the liver is given to the child. If a baby cries continually it is supposed that it has been given the wrong name and the Waddai renames it and dedicates another chicken. In Gadapal I was told that if the gods disapprove a child's name, they send Hidmaraj to make it itch and Markaraj to make it cry.

845 The Marias do not seem to have made up their minds about twins. One village thinks them lucky, another disastrous. There

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Group of Maria girls from Lahiri, Chanda district

W. V. Grigson

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Hill Maria mother and child

[Verrier Elwin

[End Plate H]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Life of Young Children

In youth the spider's web is the sky.—Muria proverb

[853] Muria babies, who are suckled for at least two years and then often weaned at the Jata Pandum, seem to be happy and contented. The Muria are good parents, proud of their children, tolerant towards them in many ways, anxious to teach them things, delighted as they see them grow. 'When a young child walks for the first time, the earth trembles for two-and-a-half days.' But directly a child is old enough to play, he is regarded as old enough to work. The early stage of 'eating while playing and playing while eating' is soon over and the little girls and boys have to take their share of the work of the house. Tiny girls may often be seen staggering about with the youngest baby in their arms or helping their mothers to cow-dung the house. Sometimes you may see a line of boys and girls following their elders back from the jungle, each with a tiny basket of fruit or a minute bundle of leaves on their heads. During this period the children are very dependent on their parents and go everywhere with them. A boy takes his little axe and follows his father to the jungle. A girl takes a pot and goes with her mother to the well.

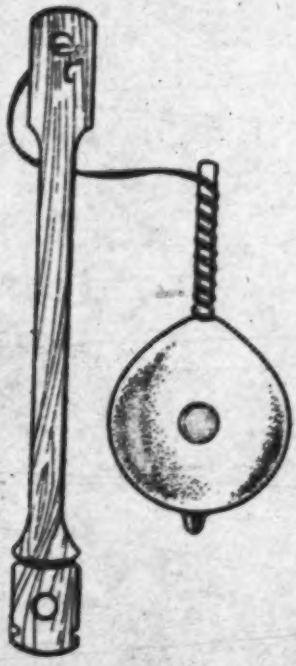

Fig. 16. Spinning-top
Length of upright wooden stick, 8½"

It is now that the parents, and especially the fathers, enjoy the happiest relations with their children. You may often see a father carrying his baby son to the ghotul and sleeping with him there, or taking him to a festival, sometimes even encouraging him to dance as a medium before the clan-god. The father may give a boy a tiny drum or axe, toys that are just like the real thing, or he may make his children little wooden carts or ploughs.

From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. Tattooing

The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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'Rice in the mouth and curry in the hand.'
Mother and child figure in several murder cases

[Facing p. 65]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

292 garments as soon as possible. In their youth they had been sent with a party of men and women as exhibits to the Allahabad Exhibition, where Boranga had celebrated his marriage *coram publico Indico*; they brought back with them from Allahabad a bigger suspicion of the *Kosor*, as they, like Gonds all over the Central Provinces, call all Hindus, a coat and waistcoat and blankets, and a taste for *kappu* or opium which luckily was not inherited by Baranga's son, the present headman, or any of the villagers.

291 As in Glasfurd's day, the women go with breasts uncovered. Very old women occasionally hobble about inside their huts completely naked. The square patch of cloth suspended between the legs from a waist-cord on which bamboo rings were strung, which Glasfurd saw as the sole garment of some children and elderly women, is the garment known as *mudang*, worn only by females. It is to-day definitely intimate underwear, to be seen by no one save the husband, except in the case of very little girls who, when six or so, wear it for the first time as their only garment. Brass rings made by the Ghasia (Gharwa) brass-workers in bazaar places in the plains such as Gidam, Dhaurai and Narainpur, have replaced the bamboo rings of Glasfurd's time. The cord on which they are strung is sometimes a thin piece of cane. A mother buys a few rings for her little girls whenever she has a pice or two to spare at her visits to the markets; and the cord becomes nearly full of rings when the girl is nubile. The *mudang* cord is never removed, even at child-birth. The cloth attached to it is usually a strip of old rag torn off a worn-out loin-cloth. It has already been stated that women keep it on when bathing. The *mudang* is buried or burned with the woman.

The cord full of rings is obvious under the top of every woman's loin-cloth, as a sort of ridge. The cloth itself is folded over the rings, and hangs down all round over the loins and buttocks, without being passed between the legs. It is therefore not revealing like the men's cloth. Occasionally women wear a small sheet thrown [117] carelessly across the breasts and over the left shoulder in imitation of the custom gradually spreading in the Bison-horn country; and ● [854] a cloth of this kind is used for supporting a baby, who rides on his mother's right or left hip with the cloth drawn tight over his little buttocks and up to his armpits and thence fastened over her other shoulder. Even for dancing a woman has no other clothes.

301 Glasfurd noted in 1862 that few of the Hill Marias possessed the beads that other Marias liked so much. The older men still wear little of this kind; a few have a single necklet of dirty yellow beads made of small chopped sections of pea-fowl's lower leg-bone about 5 mm. in length. Occasionally

Ornaments

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Group of Maria girls from Lahiri, Chanda district

W. V. Grigson

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Hill Maria mother and child

Verrier Elwin

[End Plate H]

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Verrier Elwin

Jugho Chero, of Ituiaar, shown in Plate VI (*facing p. 70*), photographed ten years later

[End Plate Q]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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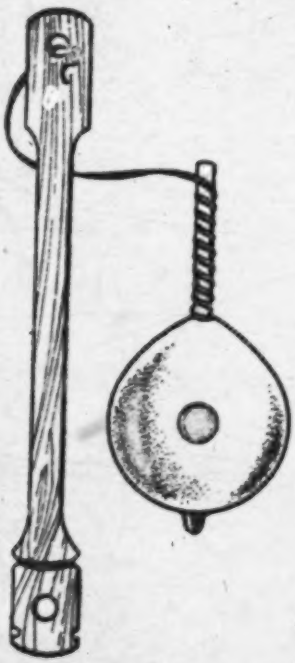

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

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The arrow and stone above the pit in which a child's placenta is buried

Plate XXI

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Mother with her two children at Phauda

[p. 82 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

Round Koudagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

IV. The Clan-God

We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halba, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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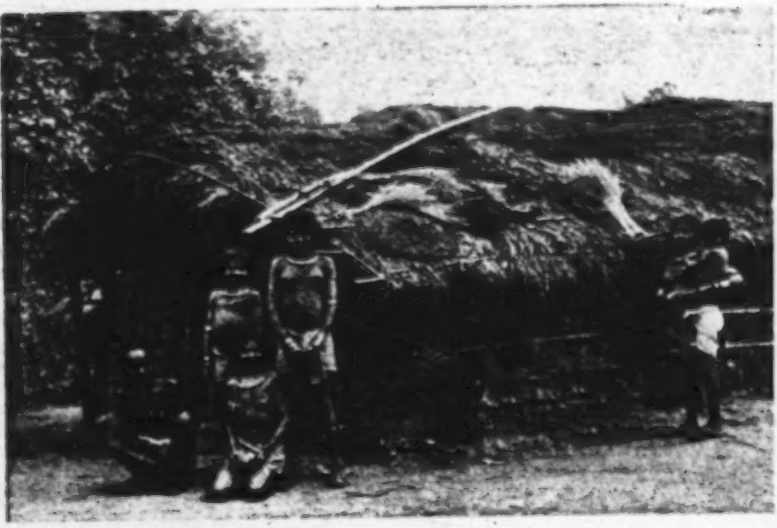

Oyami Masa with famil; on the scene of the death of the younger wife

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Oyami Masa with his surviving wife

[Facing p. 15]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

861 The complete *gotul* organization is a feature of Muria and not of Hill Maria culture. But as it has extended to Padalibhum and Nurbhum (possibly also to parts of Tapalibhum and Behra Mar) among the Hill Marias, a brief account of its salient features will not be out of place; it may be expected to spread into the hills with the gradual improvement of communications. A fairly full account from my notes on the Murias has been printed in the *Census of India* 1931 *Report*, Vol. I, Part III B., pp. 81-3. It may be added that it is easier for the Marias of Padalbhum to copy their Muria neighbours because Padalibhum not only has two or three villages which are not Padali villages but belong to the Nuroti and Usendi clans, but even in Padali villages has settlers of these two clans, which are *akomama* (wife-clan) to them.

[858] Boys and girls of an age to visit the *gotul* dormitories are known as *leyur* and *leyas* respectively. All the boys assemble at the 857 dormitory in the evening for dancing, games and social and sexual 571 training, sleeping on there after the departure of the girls to their homes late in the night. The girls attend at the dormitory in the 864 evening, each girl being paired off with a boy of an *akomama* clan. The girls have to comb their boys' hair and massage their arms and legs, to dance with them, and to be initiated into the mysteries of sex with them. Marriage frequently follows these dormitory unions, but by no means always does. Children are expected to attend the dormitory from the age of eleven or twelve, and the parents may be fined for not sending them. Every boy and girl has a special dormitory name or rank; the smaller children have designations which are little more than names, but those of the elder boys change as they are promoted, and involve special duties. The Hill Marias seem to have adopted the ranks for the boys only, the girls retaining the name given them on their entry until they leave the dormitory organization on marriage, but taking among their fellows the precedence of their boy-mates in the dormitory. In Padalibhum the head boy of the dormitory is always known as [177] the *leyur-gaita*, and below him the *gotul* officials are the *leyur-majhi*, the *silledar*, the *jaliarsi*, the *laharu*, the *baiddar* and the *kamdar*; of these, *silledar*, *baiddar* and *kamdar* are Hindi terms copied from the titles of State or zamindari servants; in many a Muria dormitory all the office-holders have such designations instead of the old native names. Besides these names or designations to which [551] special duties and privileges are attached, they have for the boys the names Jalka, Jolsai and Joria, and probably others. The girls' dormitory names ascertained were Jaliaru, Lahari, Manjaro, Nirosa, Jhelo, Gujaro, Piyosa and Belosa. At a camp at Partabpur attended by Hill Marias from Padalibhum, the *leyur-gaita* of three

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

village dormitories were present. All were Padali by clan from Padali villages. Their dormitory mates were respectively Lahari, a Nuroti girl, Jaliaru, an Usendi girl, and Nirosa, a Nuroti girl; and despite their different designations, these girls were the head-girls of their villages in virtue of their boys' ranks. Another Usendi village in Padalibhum called its head boy Silledar, and his mate was Jhelo, a Padali girl. All four stated freely that they expected ultimately to marry their mates, and that they and all the other dormitory boys often had sexual intercourse with their girls.

The dormitory in these *parganas*, as among the neighbouring Murias, is really a school for training the youth of both sexes in conjugal and social duties and in the lore of the clan; the dormitory office-bearers are practically prefects and monitors. The headman and other elders of the villages frequently call on the head-boy for the help of his boys and girls in field-work; but here they are not paid wages, as among the Murias, but are only fed by those for whom they are working. They are also asked to help in thatching houses and building granaries. In weddings the girls are expected to sing, and boys to collect fuel and leaves for cups, and both have to dance; they have similar functions at the various new-eating festivals. The head-boy imposes fines for unjustifiable absence from the dormitory, or from weddings and festivals, or general disobedience of his orders or those of other office-bearers, a bottle of *mahua* spirit being the usual penalty, the cost of which falls upon the parents. The head-boy's mate has similar powers of fining other girls. At the nightly meetings of boys and girls at the dormitory there are dancing in season, tale-telling, singing and games, and from an early age boys are given practical lessons in sexual intercourse.

B. Bison-horn Marias

The information which I was able to collect on this subject among the Bison-horn Marias is much less full than that given above for the Hill Marias, and needs further testing and considerable supplementing.

During pregnancy the mother carries on her ordinary work. The only note which I have of any disability attaching to pregnancy is that when the flesh of animals slain in the *weta* ceremonial hunts is divided up and eaten, no share may be given to the husband of a wife who either is pregnant or has her monthly period. In most Bison-horn villages there is no menstruation hut, and in their houses there is no menstruation room. A few villages near the foot of the Abujhmar hills have a hut where young girls are

[see cat. 116, pp. 425-426. - AW1951]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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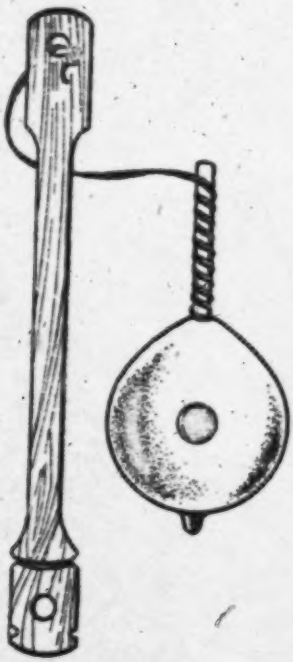

Fig. 16. Spinning-top
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It is now that the parents, and especially the fathers, enjoy the happiest relations with their children. You may often see a father carrying his baby son to the ghotul and sleeping with him there, or taking him to a festival, sometimes even encouraging him to dance as a medium before the clan-god. The father may give a boy a tiny drum or axe, toys that are just like the real thing, or he may make his children little wooden carts or ploughs.

From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. Tattooing

The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

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Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

village dormitories were present. All were Padali by clan from Padali villages. Their dormitory mates were respectively Lahari, a Nuroti girl, Jaliaru, an Usendi girl, and Nirosa, a Nuroti girl; and despite their different designations, these girls were the head-girls of their villages in virtue of their boys' ranks. Another Usendi village in Padalibhum called its head boy Silledar, and his mate was Jhelo, a Padali girl. All four stated freely that they expected ultimately to marry their mates, and that they and all the other dormitory boys often had sexual intercourse with their girls.

The dormitory in these *parganas*, as among the neighbouring Murias, is really a school for training the youth of both sexes in conjugal and social duties and in the lore of the clan; the dormitory office-bearers are practically prefects and monitors. The headman and other elders of the villages frequently call on the head-boy for the help of his boys and girls in field-work; but here they are not paid wages, as among the Murias, but are only fed by those for whom they are working. They are also asked to help in thatching houses and building granaries. In weddings the girls are expected to sing, and boys to collect fuel and leaves for cups, and both have to dance; they have similar functions at the various new-eating festivals. The head-boy imposes fines for unjustifiable absence from the dormitory, or from weddings and festivals, or general disobedience of his orders or those of other office-bearers, a bottle of *mahua* spirit being the usual penalty, the cost of which falls upon the parents. The head-boy's mate has similar powers of fining other girls. At the nightly meetings of boys and girls at the dormitory there are dancing in season, tale-telling, singing and games, and from an early age boys are given practical lessons in sexual intercourse.

B. *Bison-horn Marias*

The information which I was able to collect on this subject among the Bison-horn Marias is much less full than that given above for the Hill Marias, and needs further testing and considerable supplementing.

During pregnancy the mother carries on her ordinary work. The only note which I have of any disability attaching to pregnancy is that when the flesh of animals slain in the *weta* ceremonial hunts is divided up and eaten, no share may be given to the husband of a wife who either is pregnant or has her monthly period. In most Bison-horn villages there is no menstruation hut, and in their houses there is no menstruation room. A few villages near the foot of the Abujhmar hills have a hut where young girls are

[see cat. 116, pp. 425-426. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Maria names, though, of course, very few Bison-horn women's names were collected. A noticeable difference is the absence from the Hill Maria of names given according to the day of the week on which the person named was born, such as Budhi (Wednesday), Mangru (Tuesday) and Lakhmu (Thursday); it has already been noted that the Hill Marias have no names for the days of the week. 551 177

Weaning

A child is breast-fed until it can both walk and take its own food by hand, sometimes as long as three years. Unlike the Bison-horn Marias, the Hill Marias have no weaning ceremony. 862

Education

There is no system of training Hill Maria children corresponding to the Gotul or Dormitory system of the Murias, except in the northernmost Hill Maria *parganas* of Padalbhum and Nurbhum. In the greater part of the Maria country, children learn simply by accompanying and imitating their parents and the elder boys of the village. At night the boys who are old enough to leave their mothers sleep in the communal dormitory, and in the evenings they sit outside the dormitory round the fire with the men of the village. When the corn is ripening and the men sleep in the field-houses, in many villages the dormitory is closed, and the boys sleep with their fathers or elder brothers in the fields. Thus from his earliest days the child learns the routine of village and tribal life from constant association with his elders. He is made to do his share of the field work, and taught the use of the bow and arrow and the setting of snares. Children of six and seven of both sexes join in the village and clan dances, very quickly mastering the steps. We have seen how they use bamboo *pak-dol* drums to master the rhythm of drumming. In the ordinary hill village there is nothing corresponding to the Muria custom of the dormitory owning and cultivating a field or fields and applying the proceeds either to dormitory feasts or to the purchase of beads; but in the Barsur Mar villages and, therefore, probably elsewhere in the Abujhmar hills fathers encourage children to keep their own pigs, which they sometimes sell to procure money or grain for buying beads and knives. Girls similarly soon learn domestic routine from their constant association with their mothers. They cannot associate with boys in the manner of the Murias, among whom every girl must attend the boys' dormitory every night and has her own *gotul* 'boy-friend' to serve, since these *gotul* unions must be between couples who could legitimately marry under the rules of exogamy, and in nearly all Hill Maria villages all the boys and girls are of the same clan and therefore kindred. Yet the girls make bead fillets, ear-tassels and necklaces for the boys, and the latter carve wooden combs for the girls. 861

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[See cat. 116, pp. 425-426. - Aug 1951]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

even her kicks are sweet.' A study of ghotul offences and the type of punishment awarded, therefore, may be expected to throw some light on Muria notions of morality and the inner life of chelik and motiari.

Their offences, of course, cannot be understood properly except against the background of the general moral and social life of the tribe. To the Muria, as to most aboriginals, tribal solidarity is the supreme good, and anything that breaks this precious unity and fellowship must be condemned. Individualism is the great sin. For this reason, quarrelling and homicide are rare, theft is almost as uncommon. There are few who refuse to share the common work and interests of the community. Adultery is bad, not only because it infringes the rights of another Muria, but because it breaks up the carefully regulated domestic system of the people, and threatens to disrupt it by jealousy and hatred.

We have already seen the stress laid by the Muria on work. Slackness and laziness are very severely regarded, and are the commonest sources of friction between wife and husband. Cleanliness, decency, decorum and modesty are virtues much prized. A quiet and kindly attitude is expected of the tribal leaders; the bully and the coward are equally disliked.

Against this background, what sort of actions are condemned by ghotul opinion and punishable in ghotul law? Let us first consider those actions that are held to betray the common interest. They are doubly important, for in the highly specialized and concentrated fellowship of the ghotul, the general tribal instinct for unity becomes intensified.

II

Quarrels in the dormitory are strongly condemned. They are disturbing to the peace of ghotul life and specially offensive to so gentle and uncontentious a people. Children are fined for this, and may even be expelled. In Khutgaon there was once a very quarrelsome chelik. After a time, the leaders of the ghotul called him and said, 'Do you want to be in the ghotul or outside it?' The dreaded threat of expulsion brought him to his senses and he gave no more trouble.

The betrayal of the ghotul fellowship by repeating outside anything that happens within its walls, especially any stories of the intimate relations of chelik and motiari or some scandal about a pregnancy, is one of the greatest of ghotul crimes, for 'that which comes from the mouth bears fruit throughout the world'. Once at Gorma, the Kotwar and Belosa revealed to the village that a girl was pregnant; they were expelled and told that they would never be readmitted. Only when they brought a lot of liquor and fell at the feet of each chelik in turn, promising never to offend again, were they allowed to return.

Ghotul solidarity is constantly emphasized by the use of the ghotul title, and proper names may never be used between members. If a young child forgets this and addresses, say, his elder brother by the name that is always used at home, the others explain the custom to him; but if he offends again, he is punished.

The dormitory has to be kept clean. Though spitting is permitted, anyone who urinates inside the building is punished. This prohibition extends, in some places, to the court outside. To break wind is not a very serious offence; the children laugh at the offenders and call them *padra* or *padri*. Only a light punishment is imposed. At Rasbar the culprit had to salute

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

every boy in turn saying, 'Johar, *mahārāj*, I have farted'. An interesting rule prohibits the other boys and girls from laughing at the offender too much. The name *padva* may be used three times but not more; anyone who carries the joke too far is fined.

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FIG. 103. A brass tobacco-box made by the local Ghasia
Actual size

A bed-wetter is punished with the *khoda-pahara* described below; if incurable, he may be expelled.

Most ghotul are actually kept beautifully clean; occasional lapses are severely penalised. It is the special duty of the girls to sweep and cow-dung the building, but often the Kotwar in charge of them is punished instead. At Kabonga, when the Diwan found that the ashes of the previous day's fires had not been cleared away, he reported the matter to the Inspector who called the Kotwar and threw ash all over him. The Kotwar insisted that it was the girls' fault, not his, and so the girls were called and ash was thrown over them and pushed into their private parts. At Kokoti also, two girls were tied to the roof by their feet and ashes put into their vaginae. 'As you've let the ghotul be dirty, we are making your privates dirty', said the boys.

It is generally the *chelik* who have to see to the surroundings of the ghotul. At Palari in 1941, the Munshi, Sipahi and Likandar were told to clear a space in front of the building for a dance, but they failed to do so. They were hung together from the roof until they begged forgiveness and promised to do the work at once. The younger boys are often punished for failing to bring their daily tribute of wood—a task they all dislike. In the Jamkot

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2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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ghotul there was a boy called Antar (from a hunter-whip) who had the duty of 'whipping' boys who failed in this task.

Chelik and motiari are insistent that everyone must take an equal share (though not always the same share) in the common labour and common recreations. Failure to attend the ghotul regularly is punished; an absence of two or three days, unless there is a very good excuse, means a fine. It is specially bad for the motiari to absent themselves. This is regarded as a really serious offence, an infringement of the chelik's rights, a breach of ghotul fellowship; it raises the suspicion that the girl is having an affair with a married man or a member of another caste. On the other hand, if a girl enters the ghotul during her menstrual period she must provide liquor and perhaps a more substantial sacrifice to appease Lingo Pen whom she has offended.

A girl's conduct is controlled when she visits another village. She may go to the ghotul to dance and even perhaps massage and comb the boys but she is expected to return home before bedtime. If she does not, and the boys of her own ghotul discover that she has betrayed them, they punish her with a heavy fine.

The motiari are often obstinate and troublesome—at least in male opinion—and have to be disciplined. Sometimes they get sulky and refuse to join the games and dances; the Jnlaro of Sarandi was fined an anna for failing to attend a dance. Sometimes they refuse 'to let a boy play with them on the ground'; sometimes they fail to comb or massage properly. At Kajen the ghotul Kotwar reports every Tuesday whether any of the girls have lost their combs, or have refused to do the chelik's hair.

It is regarded as very offensive for a chelik to force a girl against her will: in Markabera a chelik once forced the Alosa, who was the ghotul-wife of another boy, and was fined as much as two rupees. But if a girl refuses—once she is mature—to have intercourse with at least one of the chelik, there is consternation, and if she persists, both boys and girls may refuse to attend her wedding.

Boys also may be punished for failing to fulfil their social obligations. At Palari, the Baidar and Dafedar refused, on account of some private spite, to attend the Captain's marriage and each was fined four annas. At Gorma the headman's son, who went to school and learnt there to despise the ghotul and its ways, found when the day of his marriage approached that the boys and girls would not attend it. 'All these years', they said, 'you have despised us. You have not joined our dances or helped us in our work. Now you can get married without us.' The boy had to dress in all the Muria ornaments, change his little cap for a turban, and sleep in the ghotul for a week before he was forgiven.

III

Ghotul officers who fail to perform their duties are punished. No one is privileged and no one is exempt. This is an important point. Were an older man, like the Diwan of Masora who still holds office at the age of forty, to try to protect his own son or daughter, he would himself be fined even though he was the leader and a final court of appeal in all disputes. If the head of the chelik tried to protect his own special motiari or his ghotul-wife, he might be turned out of office. Bindo had no hesitation in punishing the Dulosa, who was his lover, for failing to clean the ghotul.

Mangru of Masora told us how when he was Pahardar it was his duty to punish people. But he could never bring himself to do it, so he himself was punished. His legs were tied to the roof and he had to hang there while boys and girls sang one Relo song. A former Chalki of the Jamkot ghotul

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

was similarly punished for failing in his duty to make the chelik and motiari work at a wedding. As a boy Bindo punished the ghotul Kotwar for disobeying his orders to fetch the motiari in the evening; fifty years afterwards he still remembers the incident with satisfaction.

When the head of the ghotul is penalized, it is a convention in some ghotul that the motiari should beg to be punished in his stead. This happened at Chandabera when I was there, and the Sirdar was fined for not making proper arrangements for his visitors. The girls implored to be allowed to suffer for him.

FIG. 104. A sun and moon tobacco-box
Height 2¾"

FIG. 105. Boy's necklace, from Kajan, of cowries strung together with red and 'silver' beads

Should the head of the ghotul turn out a bully or a slacker, the chelik and motiari take the help of the village headman and remove him. This does not happen very often because there is plenty of time to test a boy before he is appointed. But it is not always possible to judge how far power is likely to corrupt character, and scandals do occur. I have recorded a number of cases from the history of the last few years. In Mannegaon, the Leyur-Gaita was removed for bullying and abusing the children. The Malik of Esalnar was once degraded for bullying. The Kotwar of the Berma ghotul a few years ago got very much above himself and used 'to punish for four hours instead of one' until the members rebelled. They fined him a rupee, deprived him of office, made him a 'subject' with the name of Silledar, and appointed the Kandiki in his place. Recently in Kehalakot the Kotwar gave so much trouble to the girls that he was fined eight annas and removed.

Laziness also disqualifies a boy from holding high office. In Atargaon the Manjhi was dismissed 'for not working properly'. The Kokori Chalki was degraded to the rank of Kotwar for laziness and the Kotwar was appointed

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in his place. The Belosa of Berma was removed because she was too slack to control the girls.

I have only once heard of a boy being removed from office for abusing his sexual privileges. In Sonawal the Diwan seduced another chelik's 'wife'. The others fined him, but he refused to pay, saying, 'I am your master, I am not going to pay a fine to my "subjects"'. He and his own wife, the Diwanin, or head of the girls, were both degraded and made 'subjects'.

IV

We now turn to breaches of the sexual conventions of the ghotul. Here, according to the type of ghotul, two opposite types of offence are recognized.

In those ghotul where there is a rule against 'pairing off', boys and girls are punished if they sleep together too often. The Subedar and Silo of the Binjhli ghotul were fined four annas each for sleeping together every day. In these ghotul too it is considered very bad form for a boy to be 'possessive' about a girl, to be jealous over her and claim her as his. 'We must change every two or four days, or we are fined.'

But in the other type of ghotul, boys and girls are fined for committing what may be called 'ghotul adultery'. A case of this has already been described in Chapter XI. If a chelik sleeps with another boy's motiari during her 'husband's' absence, he is fined. If the Kotwar 'finds the cloth of a girl' who is not the boy's 'mate' on his mat, he reports the matter and the boy is punished.

In villages where there are separate ghotul for boys and girls, they may be fined for visiting one another on days when this is taboo. In Lihagaon, where there were separate dormitories for boys and girls, some years ago the Likhen of the boys was Lamhada to the Mularo of the girls. One night she came to the boys' ghotul and slept with him—a double impropriety since engaged couples are not supposed to sleep together in the ghotul. He was fined a rupee by the chelik, but refused to pay, and on the third day ran away with the girl whom he had already made pregnant. They were brought back and fined two rupees. This time they paid up, and the ghotul members agreed to the marriage and said they would attend it.

With all the freedom of the ghotul, there is a strict insistence on decorum and modesty. It is remarkable that at weddings when the older women and men behave with a complete lack of restraint, abusing each other and catching hold of each other in the most obscene manner, the motiari are never molested. The chelik are sometimes punished for showing an indecent interest in the girls even in the ghotul. Once at Palari the girls were dancing the Durpa Dandi, or Lotus Stalk Dance, when each girl rests one leg on her neighbour's waist. It is considered a rather risky dance and the girls rarely perform it in public. The Kandki of the ghotul sat down near the dancers and tried to peep up in a rather unpleasant manner. The girls stopped dancing and took him inside the ghotul. 'What were you sitting down for?' 'Nothing.' 'You wanted to look at us, you dirty little beast, so we're going to punish you.' They tied his hands together and bound them to the roof for fifteen minutes. When he was released, he had to salute each of the girls in turn and beg forgiveness.

V

How does the machinery of ghotul justice work? How are its punishments inflicted? I will give one or two actual examples before proceeding to tabulate the penalties.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

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In the first week of November, 1940, the older boys of the Masora ghotul were away watching the field-crops and the Chalan was in charge. For several

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FIG. 106. The ghotul Kotwar's wooden spears
Lengths 6' 1" and 5' 1"

FIG. 107. Iron spears used by the chelik in hunting
Lengths 6' 6" and 5' 5"

days five of the girls—Belosa, Tiloka, Piosa, Janka and Alosa—had reported to him that they too were going to watch the crops. Actually, however, they went to sleep at home. Probably they found the ghotul dull without

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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the bigger boys; possibly they simply wanted a rest. On 4 November the Kamdar who, in the absence of the older boys, was attending to the girls' behaviour, reported to the Sipahi (ghotul 'policeman') his suspicion that the girls were deceiving them. That night they watched and found their belief well founded. They returned to the ghotul and told the Chalan. The Chalan issued orders that when the girls next came to report, they should be arrested and given the stick-punishment.

The next evening, when the Janka and Piosa came to say they were very sorry but they must go to watch in their fields, the Kamdar and Sipahi stopped them. But the girls abused them violently—'You can drink our urine, but you won't punish us, *mailotia*'—and ran away. When this was reported to the Chalan, he went to consult the Diwan, an older married man who exercised general supervision over this ghotul. The Diwan said, 'Call all the girls tomorrow night, and certainly punish them'.

On the afternoon of the 6th, therefore, the Kamdar went round the village telling all the boys and girls that they must attend, for 'tonight there will be a judgement in the ghotul'. But when the time came, Belosa, Tiloka and Piosa refused to come. The Chalan sent the Kamdar and Sipahi to bring them by force.

When they were at last assembled inside the ghotul—and it is noteworthy that neither the Diwan nor the older boys thought it necessary to attend: they were content to leave it to the juniors—the Chalan asked the Belosa whether it was true that she had been sleeping in her house, and why. She replied, 'There was no wood for the ghotul fire; it was cold; so I slept one night at home'. This retort, which implied that the boys had been failing in their duty of providing wood, and was probably true, was hardly tactful. The Chalan became abusive and pointed out that there was plenty of wood. 'You slept at home every night; you are all sleeping with married men.' Then he examined the other girls, but they refused to answer. At last the Alosa cried, 'It was only one night; all the other nights we were sleeping in the fields'.

No witnesses were called; everyone knew the girls were guilty. The Chalan said, 'What punishment will you have? Choose!' The motiari made no reply, so the Sipahi said, 'Why not make them get up and down a hundred times holding their ears?' 'No', said the Chalan. 'The stick-punishment would be better.' Hearing this, the Belosa broke out, 'Why should you punish us at all? We haven't done anything.' The Chalan replied, 'Well, why didn't you come to the ghotul? Why don't you answer our questions? We'll certainly punish you if you don't speak properly.'

But the girls were still silent, so the boys pushed them out of the ghotul and shut the door. The girls were now really frightened and did not dare to run away. They crouched against the wall in the cold, while the boys discussed their fate round the fire. At last the Chalan said to the Sipahi, 'Bring in those *bōploti*, and give them the stick-punishment'.

So the door was opened and five very subdued girls were brought in. The Chalan asked if they were ready for punishment and they said they were. The Kamdar brought in five thick logs, and put them between their legs, making them squat on the ground, away from the wall, their arms folded. They were sentenced to 'two Relo'. This meant they were to sit like this, and very uncomfortable it is, while the boys sang through two Relo songs. During the second song the Alosa touched the ground with her hand and was immediately slapped and pushed over by one of the boys. The Janka began to cry, and the boys roared with laughter. When the Relo songs were

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

X883
861

finished, the Chalan asked the girls one by one if they would offend again. When each promised to be good in future, he let her get up. The girl who slept was forgiven last. Each girl had to go round the circle of boys and salute them with a smile. Then said the Chalan, 'That's finished. Now comb our hair and massage us, and we'll go to sleep'.

Less severe treatment was given to the girls at Bandopal, when I was sleeping in the ghotul on 25 April 1941. At about 10 o'clock at night, as the dancing and games came to an end, I was surprised to see all the girls filing out of the courtyard and sitting by the gate. The Manjhi had discovered that the verandah of the main building, where he and the other leaders slept, had not been properly cleaned. He sent for the Belosa and Dulosa and ordered them to take their girls out of the compound. They did so, no one took any notice of them, the boys lay down and slept as usual, and for a time the girls sat quietly outside the gate. Presently a subdued and penitent voice called, 'Silledar, let us come in'. There was no reply. Then very seductively and sweetly, 'Kotwar, do let us come in'. Still no reply. There was a pause, and then two or three girls at once cried, 'Manjhi, let us in and we'll do anything you want'. This went on for half an hour, and then the Manjhi sent the Kotwar with four other boys to interview the girls. The panchayat squatted down on the near side of the gate and there was a long consultation. At last, the girls promised never to neglect their work again and the Kotwar went to report to the Manjhi who was sleeping on the verandah with a few of the senior boys. He told him to bring the girls in. They filed in and went to the Manjhi. He again made them promise to keep the ghotul clean, then forgave them and told them to massage him and the other senior boys as a penance before they went to sleep.

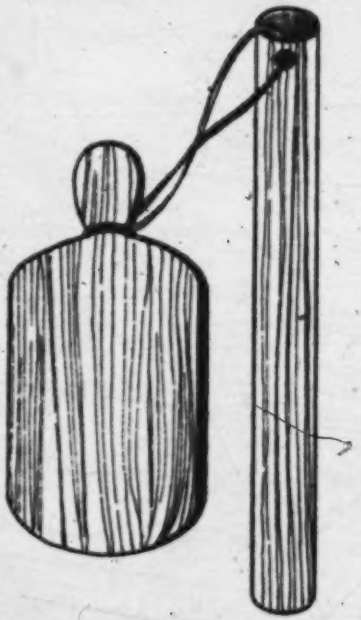

FIG. 108. Toy wooden records used by the Kotwar of the Naria ghotul
Length of upright cylinder 1'

In the Chalka Pargana, in such villages as Kajen, Chimri and Temrugaon, the chelik imitate very closely the ordinary police procedure of the State. The ghotul Kotwar has a wooden spear (Fig. 106) in imitation of the State Kotwar's spear, and a wooden tablet (Fig. 108) which corresponds to the village report-book. It is his duty to report once a week (just as in fact the village watchman reports once a week) to the Inspector of Police, who records the information and if necessary takes it to the Diwan. Fines are paid in pieces of wood or siari seeds, a piece of wood representing a rupee. The thing has the semblance of a game but it is taken very seriously, and a fine of fifty 'rupees' means quite a lot of work.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 983
● 861

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The following incident is typical. At Palari the Jhalko went to Banjora for a week in January 1942 and while she was away the Nirosa and Jhankai stayed away from the ghotul for five days. The Kotwar inquired into the matter, and made his usual report to the Havaldar who in turn referred it to the Inspector. The Inspector went to the Sirdar, the head of the ghotul, and reported that three girls had been absent.

'Have you examined them?' asked the Sirdar. 'What was their excuse?'

'I questioned them, but they had nothing to say.'

The girls were brought before the Sirdar and in cross-examination it came out that Jhankai had a sore place, and Jhalko claimed that she had been away in another village.

'Did you get the Kotwar's permission to go?'

'I asked him, but he didn't say anything. What was I to do? My parents told me to go.'

Witnesses were called to show that Jhalko stayed away for two days more after she had returned.

The Sirdar then pronounced sentence. The Jhalko would get up and down twenty times holding her ears. The Nirosa, who had no excuse at all, would do it eighty times, and the Jhankai fifteen times. This sentence was carried out, but the Nirosa managed to get hers reduced in appeal to ten. 'But I will count very carefully', said the Sirdar.

Afterwards the Sirdar asked the girls, 'Now you've been punished. Was it fair or are you angry with us?' Each of the girls in turn said, 'No, it was perfectly fair; I was guilty'.

On 25 March 1941, one of the boys at Chimri pretended to be a visiting official; he came into the ghotul and complained that it was dirty, there was no wood or fire. He sent for the Kotwar and Manjhi, who came with folded hands, and he abused them, fining them ten 'rupees' each. Another day the Kajen Kotwar reported to the Inspector that he had noticed on a boy's mat a cloth which belonged to a girl who was not his ghotul-wife. The Inspector pretended to write this down in his 'book', and sent the Constable who handcuffed the two lovers with lengths of siari twine and brought them to the Tahsildar. He lectured them and fined them five 'rupees' each. They appealed to the Diwan who enhanced the sentence to twenty-five 'rupees' or bits of green wood.

VI

These examples will be sufficient to show how the machinery of ghotul justice works and which officials are involved. It sounds like a game, but is taken very seriously. We have seen how the Kotwar or other boy with similar duties first discovers and reports an offence. It is investigated by the Thanedar or Inspector, who in turn brings the culprits before the Tahsildar. Finally the leader of the ghotul considers the case, pronounces judgement and inflicts punishment. In those ghotul which have some older man still holding office an appeal may lie to him. There is often a boy whose special duty it is to carry out the sentence.

The punishments inflicted are of some variety. We have already seen the *khotla pahara*, or stick-punishment, in operation. Sometimes the stick is put through both legs and arms and the hands are tied in front. In Kajen it was the Tahsildar's special duty to see that the victims did not support themselves against the wall or ground.

The *porokal werhana* or *pahara erator* is more severe. Hands and feet are tied and the victim is slung from the roof by his feet, remaining topsy-turvy while the others sing one, two or three Relo songs.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

883X
861

Kanna taliyana is the very common Indian punishment of making someone squat down on the ground and get up and down holding his ears with his

[276
531]

FIG. 109. Tobacco pouch with bell and tusk ornaments
Height of pouch 3½"

hands. It is difficult, exhausting and undignified. But it is not very painful and it leaves no trace, which probably accounts for its popularity among subordinate officials. In Lihagaon, pebbles were held to the ears while the culprit was pushed up and down twenty-five to fifty times. This was how the Manjhi punished Dursal Rani in the song recorded at p. 608.

At Nanipodar, the chelik connected this punishment with a story of a Raja and a dancing girl of the Mirdangiya caste—whose girls are famous for their wit and beauty.

> There was a Mirdangiya. She danced before a Raja. He was so pleased that he said, 'Ask what you will and I'll give it to you'. She said, 'Spit on the floor and then lick up the mess'. The Raja said, 'How can a Raja do such a thing?' Then the Mirdangiya said, 'Very well then, give me the turban from your head'. He did so and she wore it herself and went away well pleased.

The movements of a girl jumping up and down holding her ears are supposed to resemble the Mirdangiya dancing before the Raja, and the chelik taunt the girls saying, 'Ho re Mirdangiya! Today you've become Mirdangiya'. To which the girls reply, 'We are Kanchnin [good and beautiful] girls. If we were Mirdangiya we would be dancing and you'd have to give us your turbans.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●861

The boys laugh and say, 'Then it was the Raja who was punished, now it is the Mirdangiya'.

Nit mandana or *kal nilana pahara* is a simple punishment of expulsion and endurance. A boy or girl is made to stand outside the ghotul fence on one leg with the other leg pressed against it, while the others sing a number of Relo songs.

The *nagil puhana pahara* or plough-penalty is fairly common as a punishment for breaking wind. One chelik pulls the legs of the victim and two push down his shoulders; legs are pushed and shoulders pulled until he is exhausted.

In the *porokal karhana* the culprit is made to spread-eagle himself from the roof and to hang there till permitted to come down.

The *korit pahara* is simply a 'pushing about' punishment. Everybody pushes and smacks and pulls the victim about till he cries for mercy.

In Masora they sometimes tie the culprit's hair to the roof and make him stand like that for so many songs. Sometimes his hands are tied together up to the roof.

It will be noted that these punishments can be described, shall we say, as chronic rather than acute. The sharp, abrupt sting of corporal punishment so familiar to the European schoolboy is unknown. The punishments, in so far as these are physical at all, involve the endurance of discomfort and distributed pain, and above all the loss of dignity. This is perhaps what we would expect of so gentle a people to whom the catastrophic decisiveness of a flogging would appear intolerable. Even the punishments must be associated with something beautiful; they are endured to the sound of music, the rhythmic movements of the Relo songs.

A fine is a very common form of penalty. In the ghotul the fines are almost always interpreted in terms of bits of wood or siari seeds. A fine of ten rupees probably means ten bits of green wood (dry wood is brought by the younger boys in the daily routine), a fine of a hundred means a hundred siari seeds. This type of substitution is not confined to the ghotul. In Bandopal I once saw a root sacrificed instead of the pig the villagers could not afford, and elsewhere I have seen sticks given in place of chickens—sacrificed and treated exactly as if they really were chickens.

The seed-fines are collected until there is enough to invite the whole village to a party. Any monetary fines are usually put in charge of the village headman for safety, and used to buy liquor. The seeds are fried as a relish; liquor is distributed; and it is said that during this party the chelik and motiari recount the history of the fines and penalties of the past year to the amusement and benefit of all.

The most dreaded punishment is expulsion from the ghotul. A foretaste of this is given to very small boys who fail to bring their daily wood, when their elders refuse to accept their Johar in the evening. The little boy goes round the circle saying Johar, but each chelik looks through him and refuses to answer. This soon reduces the child to penitence and he promises never to offend again. If he does, or if the little girls fail to clean the building, they may be sent to sit outside the door for two or three hours. This is regarded as equivalent to excommunication. It is a rather pathetic sight to see a little boy or girl, in the cold winter or the rains, crouching lonely by the door while the others enjoy the warmth and company inside. Occasionally a boy or girl is forbidden to join the ghotul expeditions or go to a marriage. Sometimes members are actually expelled—incurable laziness, obstinate refusal to submit to ghotul discipline, a quarrelsome temperament, the breach of

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

X883
●861

clan and relationship rules may lead to this extreme penalty. It is indeed extreme, for it means the death of youth, the loss of company and the shame of a wedding without dancers.

[276
531]

FIG. 110. Carved tobacco-box from Nayanar
Actual size

That is, in fact, the final sanction of the ghotul rules—the fear that the chelik and motiari will refuse to attend one's wedding. It is no idle threat; it has been done; it has been still more often threatened, and the parents have had to pay a fine. Once at Jhakri the Piosa failed to do her share of bringing leaves at someone's marriage, and the boys said, 'This girl is too great for us. She evidently likes to be alone. Well, she shall marry alone'. When her marriage day arrived there was a great disturbance and the elders of several villages had to pacify the offended boys. But at last, after her parents had given a gift of liquor, they agreed to assist.

No reader of Chapter V can fail to see the importance of this threat. No wedding can proceed without chelik and motiari. Their absence would mean that on the greatest day of one's life there was drabness, mockery and disgrace. So long as this ultimate sanction remains, the youngsters submit cheerfully to all the penalties, harsh as they may sometimes seem, that the leaders of the ghotul may inflict.[1]

[1] Anyone who thinks the ghotul discipline too hard should read a curious paper by Thurston on 'Corporal Punishment in Vernacular Schools' in India, in which forty-two different manifestations of pedagogic sadism are listed.—*Ethnographic Notes*, pp. 433–40.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

VII

X883
●861
171

It may be of interest to compare these penalties with the disciplinary measures taken in other village dormitories. There is a curious account in an old book on the Chittagong Hill Tract by Captain Lewin, who was Deputy Commissioner of this area and seems to have been a man of considerable sympathy and knowledge.

> In the village communities, even as the adults have a recognized head, so also is there a head boy appointed to control the boys of the village. This head of the juvenile community is called the *goung*. I shall give here, as illustration of their village customs, a recital which I heard told at the camp fire one night in the jungles, by one of our policemen of the Palaingtsa clan. He said: 'I was formerly *goung* over the unmarried lads of Hmraphroo village; this was when I was about seventeen years old. At night all who were unmarried, and weaned from their mothers, used to sleep in the *khiong*. One night Ougjyn, and Reyphaw, and Chaindra, came to me and got leave to go and sleep with their sweethearts. The girls were named Aduhbyn, Hlapyn, and Aduhsheay. I remember their names quite well; they are married now, and two of them have children. Our lads went by stealth, of course: if the parents had known it there would have been a row. Next day a little girl told me that Pynhla, another of our lads, who had not got leave to sleep out, had passed the night with her sister. This was quite contrary to rule, and it was therefore determined to punish him. Next day we all went to the Raja's *joom* to help to build his house, and in the evening, when we returned, we made a big fire on the bank of the stream that runs through the village; and I sent and called Pynhla, but he was afraid, and would not come; he stayed in his father's house, and said he had fever. I knew this was only an excuse; so I sent three lads to bring him forcibly, and they went and brought him, although his mother abused them much; but the father and mother could not hurt them, as they were acting by the *goung*'s order. When he came, I called upon him to say why he had slept away from the *khiong* without leave. At first he denied all about it, and then I brought forward the little girl, and he asked her, 'How did you know it was I? It was dark'; and she said, 'The moon shone on your face in the early morning when you opened the door to go away'. When he heard this he saw there was no escape, and he fell at my feet and asked forgiveness; but I fined him three rupees on the spot for the sake of discipline.[1]

In the Uraon *dhumkuria*, as in Bastar, many different punishments are inflicted. In Mandar the boys described the penalty for not keeping the dormitory clean; if any animal or bird dirtied the place they had to make the excrement into little balls with their own hands and throw it away. If a boy wet his bed, they said, the others stuck a pin into the ground and spat on it; the offender had to pick it up with his own teeth. In the middle of the ruined dormitory at Agru I saw a fine stone pillar. Boys who failed to attend the dances were forced to hop round this five times with two bits of bamboo tied tightly to their legs. Fines were also inflicted.

Roy has described the 'slit' in the central pillar of 'some of the *dhumkuria*' and connects it with a fertility ceremony in which the boys insert their 'penile

[1] T. H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India* (London, 1870), pp. 118ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

313 V
661
171

organs' into a slit in a sal sapling.[1] In *Oraon Religion*[2] he says that this is to be found 'in most *dhumkuria* houses'. He only mentions the name of one village, however, Borhambey. We saw the slit there, but did not find it in any of the other dormitories we visited, nor has W. G. Archer been able to find any trace of the custom elsewhere.

[276
531]

FIG. 111. A tortoise tobacco-box
Height 4¾"

FIG. 112. *Mavka-batta-gota* or mango tobacco-box
Height 2½"

It is probable that the 'dormitory slit' was chiefly used for punishing refractory boys. According to the *dhangăr* who talked to Shamrao Hivale at Mandar, it was used as a punishment for boys who were shy or sulky and refused to join in the communal games and dances. 'A lump of red earth is put on the pillar, and the Mahato stands by with a stick, and hits us on the legs and tells us to push our penis into the earth, and then he pushes us against it again and again till we become red. If a boy is sulky, we bring him at night to the *dubri* (mistress) and we push his penis into the slit until he cries and promises not to offend again. We all hit him and push him to and fro against the pillar till his penis hurts and he cries.'

Discipline in the Naga morung is, as we might expect, more rigorous and the punishments more drastic. 'Among the boys of the village', says Mills,

> there is a certain amount of rough play, and a bumptious or obnoxious youngster is taught his place exactly as he is in an English Public School. He may sit down in the dark and find stinging leaves have been put ready for him. Or a more elaborate punishment may be inflicted which many a mother in England would not approve of for her darling. A plank is laid like a see-saw over a log. One end is weighted down with a wooden pillow. The boy has to jump on the other end and the wooden pillow flies up and hits him on the back of the neck.[3]

There is nothing in Bastar to compare with the Naga bullying, a process by which young boys are hardened to face every kind of danger and difficulty.

[1] Roy, *The Oraons*, p. 243. [3] p. 33.
[2] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 32.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

X 883
861
171

'Men who are now middle-aged say that when they first entered the *morung* they were very severely disciplined, not to say bullied. They were, for instance, held over the fire and compelled to endure the heat without a cry. Or they were made to show their pluck by being sent alone on a dark night to fetch a bamboo from a certain clump. The boy sent was allowed no torch or weapon, and had to gnaw the bamboo through with his teeth or hack it off with a sharp stone. Or, again, a boy would be sent to leave a torch at some particular spot far away in the jungle and come back alone in the dark without a light. In the morning the older boys would go and see if the burnt remains of the torch were in the proper place. Nowadays boys have an easier time, but a considerable number of duties falls to their lot, and for the first three years a boy's life is very like that of a fag at an English Public School. Boys of the lowest class must keep a supply of torches in the *morung* for travellers passing through the village late in the evening; they have to massage the bigger boys' legs when they come in tired from the fields; they are responsible for the wood and water needed for cooking; they must make pipes and sharpen *daos* for their seniors. In fact, for three years they have to do what they are told, and do it quickly—a most excellent system.'[1]

VIII

X 883
835

Hitherto we have considered only the trivialities of ghotul discipline. The sexual relationships of chelik and motiari give rise to far more serious problems. I discuss the large question of ghotul pregnancies in a separate chapter: here we must consider how far life in the dormitories encourages breach of the clan-laws or leads to incest between near kin.

There are the strictest rules against clan-incest. Do they work? It is not easy to give an answer. That clan-incest is possibly not uncommon may be gathered from such sayings as 'When the door is shut there are no clans, we are only chelik and motiari'; 'Once the door is shut and the fire dies down, all relationships are levelled out'; 'Our tribal rules extend to the border of the sleeping-mat; we watch the youngsters as far as that; what happens inside that country no one knows'. It was the opinion of an educated Muria that the chief danger of the ghotul was that it promoted intimacy between members of the same clan and even exposed near relatives to unnecessary temptation.

It is impossible to say. Even if I filled pages with village gossip it would prove nothing. Only an exact statistical inquiry could answer the question whether the Muria chelik was prone to incest or no. And that could never be obtained. But certain things may be affirmed.

At first sight, considerable freedom appears to be allowed. A motiari may comb the hair of a boy of her own clan, and may massage him. Even a close relation like an 'own sister' may do this. In Kabonga the Muria said that girls and boys of the same clan might sleep together, but must not have sexual intercourse. At Kajen in 1940, all the boys and girls were of the Halami sept, except one girl who was a Kuhrami. Yet they went daily to the ghotul and slept together there. They denied that they had sexual intercourse. This may be true, but no reliance can ever be put on a denial in Bastar. In the Metawand ghotul I found the following pairs 'married' to each other—Partabi and Maravi, Wadder and Maravi, Maravi and Maravi, Maravi and Katlami, Maravi and Wadder, Maravi and Maravi, Kuhrami and Maravi. In Dongrigura, in 1940, nearly all the ghotul members were Sori, save one or two Naitami and Kuhrami. The Pahardar and Pahardarin were 'married':

[1] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, pp. 179f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in the Mardapal Pargana and along the north-eastern border in just those areas where the dormitory system is moribund. The ghotul has almost disappeared from the Mardapal Pargana, and the system is rapidly decaying along the border. A policeman told me that in his opinion ghotul-education was a most valuable preventative of crime, for boys and girls learnt to share everything and to scorn acquisitiveness and the lust of possession.

To lie and cheat is reprehensible, but does not seem to be taken very seriously. It all depends on whom you are deceiving. It may well be a positive virtue to give an inquisitive ethnographer a false date for a ceremony or direct him to the wrong village when he wants to see a funeral. To break an oath or take a false oath is not so much an offence against morality as to do something very dangerous. In Binjhli I was told of a former Pargana Manjhi who stole a lot of rice during a famine. He was put on his trial, but took a powerful oath that he was innocent. As he walked out of the court, 'his eyes broke' and he became blind.

Muria ethics, therefore, combine a firm belief in taboos and the danger of breaking them, with a faith in the value of certain amiable and social virtues. The Muria are a closely knit tribe; as their culture is still living they are bound together by many ties. They therefore regard as most reprehensible those faults and crimes that would break the solidarity of the tribe—anger, jealousy, assault, adultery that leads to these things, the practice of magic that divides a community with hatred and suspicion, the breach of tribal laws of relationship which destroy its unity, and the breach of the laws of endogamy which destroy its integrity. Those virtues are most admired which bring men together in peace and happiness—a gentle tongue, an open hand and house, the love of wife and children, loyalty to tribal law.

In conclusion, let us for a moment look at the ghotul from our own Western standpoint, and try to assess the value of the Muria attitude to life and especially to sex not by their standards but by ours. It is not the business of the ethnographer to pass moral judgements, but he may perhaps imagine himself talking to a Christian missionary or a devout Hindu reformer, both of whom take so different a view to the Muria's, regarding sex as bad and dangerous in itself and any form of 'unchastity' as the worst of sins. Is there anything to be said for the Muria way of life?

In the first place it must be said that the chelik and motiari are wonderfully happy. Their life is full, interesting, exciting, useful. The ghotul is, as they often say, 'a little school'. The chelik are 'like Boy Scouts', as I was told in a village which had a troop in the local school. There is no comparison between these children and the sad-eyed, dirty ragamuffins of villages at a similar cultural level elsewhere. In the ghotul the children are taught lessons of cleanliness, discipline and hard work that remain with them throughout their lives. They are taught to take a pride in their appearance, to respect themselves and their elders; above all, they are taught the spirit of service. These boys and girls work very hard indeed for the public good. They are immediately available for the service of State officials or for work on the roads. They must be ready to work at a wedding or a funeral. They must attend to the drudgery of festivals. In most aboriginal villages of the Central Provinces the children are slack, dirty, undisciplined, and with no sense of public spirit. Even those who attend school generally only develop a strong desire to advance their own interests at the expense of their fellows.

With all this our missionary and Hindu friends will be in agreement. 'But', they will say, 'that is not the point. Our complaint is that these youngsters

422

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883 X
861

sleep together.' It is at least one point in their favour that this sleeping together does not seem to do them a great deal of harm.[1] There are no signs of corruption or excess; these bright-eyed, merry-faced boys and girls do not give you the impression of being the victims of bestial lust. They are living a life of fulfilment and it seems to do them good.

They do sleep together, but—as we have seen—under conditions of discipline and some restraint. Children in other aboriginal villages also have sexual congress but without discipline and restraint. The aboriginal and semi-aboriginal boys whom I have known for the past ten years in the Mandla District all too often begin their sexual life before the age of twelve and indulge in it freely till they are married and after. It is notorious that venereal disease is rampant throughout aboriginal India, and some of the most pathetic sights I have seen have been cases of young boys and girls with syphilis. Reports from other parts do not suggest that customs vary greatly in this respect. I have no hesitation in saying that for the areas that I know intimately, there is more sexual excess among young people in ordinary villages than in ghotul villages.

Another interesting and curious point is that there are few people with a stronger sense of domestic morality and conjugal fidelity than the Muria. Adultery is very rare, and is visited with supernatural punishment when it does occur. You could not find happier or more united families. One of the reasons for this is that the ghotul system discourages the custom of child-marriage which is rapidly spreading through aboriginal India. Among romantically-minded people, child-marriage means, inevitably, domestic infidelity. Boys or girls find themselves tied to partners in whom they have no interest and naturally leave them and seek others. Another reason for this remarkable fidelity among the Muria is that in many ghotul boys and girls are 'married' and are taught the necessity of fidelity to their partners. In the other type of ghotul, they grow up from their earliest years to believe that though change is the mark of the unmarried, stability must characterize the married. Once a girl is in your *haq* or 'right' she must stay there and you must stay with her.

Now one of the great evils of semi-aboriginal India is domestic infidelity. Divorce is universal, elopement common, adultery an everyday affair. The ghotul villages have a much higher moral standard in this respect. Figures are startling. The incidence of divorce in Bastar is under 3 per cent. An examination of 50 marriages in Patangarh village in Mandla District showed 23 divorces or 46 per cent.[2]

[1] "This early promiscuous intercourse does not appear, as far as I can see, to affect these races prejudicially, many having a fine physique and contrasting as a rule favourably with the Aryan races of the plains."—S. E. Peal, 'On the Morong' in *JAI*, Vol. XXII (1893), p. 248. Peal was for 26 years resident in east Assam. And Dr Clifford Allen in an important book published by the Oxford University Press says, 'It is essential for the health of the individual that normal sexual contacts should be made as early as possible. It should be noted that all savage tribes living in a state of nature encourage their young people to marry as soon as possible. . . . We have been told *ad nauseam* by cleric and moralist that continence does no harm to anyone; that the moral character is strengthened by abstinence and so on. This we do not believe. The sexual organs consist of gland and muscle co-ordinated with the nervous system. No other organs are improved by disuse, so why should these be exceptions? Again, the nervous system does not improve if some instinctual urge is obstructed, and indeed we know for certain that the obstruction of strong instinctual urges leads only to their breaking out in some abnormal channel, as when the starving man chews bits of wood and leather to allay his hunger. We believe the same is true for the erotic instincts.'—Allen, *The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities* (Oxford, 1940), p. 167.

[2] See my article, 'The Duration of Marriage among the Aboriginals in the Maikal Hills', *Man in India*, Vol. XXII (1942), pp. 111.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The *bakito*, the highly organized men's house of the Bororo of Brazil, has been described as 'a public school where the children are taught spinning, weaving, the manufacture of weapons, and above all singing'.[1]

Stack and Lyall deplore the fact that the boys' club—the *deka*—of the Mikir, which is such a 'useful form of co-operation', is falling into desuetude. Villagers like having *deka*, they say. They help greatly in cultivation, practise dancing and singing, and keep alive the village usages and tribal customs. They are in great request at funerals, which are the celebrations in which most spirit is shown.[2]

Parry speaks with approval of the discipline maintained in the Lushei dormitories. 'A young Lushei as soon as he is six or seven years old is no longer allowed to sleep in his father's house, but is sent off to the *zawlbuk* and becomes the fag of the older boys. Very strict discipline is maintained; the younger boys are obliged to work for the older, are taught to wrestle, are punished when disobedient, and generally are imbued with a sort of public school spirit, with excellent effect on their character in after-life.'[3]

He regrets the absence of the institution among the Lakher. To this fact he traces the lack of discipline in a Lakher village. 'A young Lakher when ordered to do something by an elder will argue, where a Lushei would obey at once . . . I ascribe much of the indiscipline among the Lakhers to the fact that they have no bachelors' house.'[4] Their morals also suffer. Bachelors do not sleep in their parents' houses, nor even, as among the Paithes, in the verandah of the chief's house, but in the house of the girl they happen to prefer at the moment. As soon as a boy reaches a certain age, 'he is no longer allowed to sleep in his parents' house, but is sent off to join the young men in some house where there are unmarried girls. This arrangement is not conducive to morality, and has the further disadvantage that the boys lose the disciplinary training of the bachelors' house'.[5] Mills also praises the *morung* discipline among the Ao Naga. For three years the boys 'have to do what they are told, and do it quickly—a most excellent system'.[6]

Indrajit Singh, a Hindu writer from the Central Provinces, in spite of some inaccuracies in his general account, well summarizes the function of the ghotul in Muria society:

> It is an institution that has manifold uses. It teaches social habits to the youths of both the sexes. It trains them in post-marital behaviour and makes them useful members of society. It inculcates a feeling of tribal discipline, provides a focus for the sentiments of the people and prepares the younger generation to discharge those social and economic obligations without which collective life of any kind can neither grow nor thrive.[7]

All external interference in tribal custom is risky: it is fatal when it is based on ignorance and prejudice. I have already quoted Mills' warning to the American Baptist Mission in Assam: 'In forbidding their converts to use the *morung* and in undermining it as an institution the Mission are taking a very dangerous step, from which they would surely have shrunk if they had

[1] V. Fric and Paul Radin, 'Contributions to the Study of the Bororo Indians', in *JAI*, Vol. XXXVI (1906), p. 388.
[2] E. Stack and C. J. Lyall, *The Mikirs* (London, 1908), p. 12.
[3] N. E. Parry, *The Lakhers* (London, 1932), p. 28.
[4] Ibid., p. 28.
[5] Ibid., p. 247.
[6] Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. 180.
[7] Indrajit Singh, *The Gondwana and the Gonds* (Lucknow, 1944), p. 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummmation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Maria names, though, of course, very few Bison-horn women's names were collected. A noticeable difference is the absence from the Hill Maria of names given according to the day of the week on which the person named was born, such as Budhi (Wednesday), Mangru (Tuesday) and Lakhmu (Thursday); it has already been noted that the Hill Marias have no names for the days of the week. 551 177

Weaning

A child is breast-fed until it can both walk and take its own food by hand, sometimes as long as three years. Unlike the Bison-horn Marias, the Hill Marias have no weaning ceremony. 862

Education

There is no system of training Hill Maria children corresponding to the Gotul or Dormitory system of the Murias, except in the northernmost Hill Maria *parganas* of Padalbhum and Nurbhum. In the greater part of the Maria country, children learn simply by accompanying and imitating their parents and the elder boys of the village. At night the boys who are old enough to leave their mothers sleep in the communal dormitory, and in the evenings they sit outside the dormitory round the fire with the men of the village. When the corn is ripening and the men sleep in the field-houses, in many villages the dormitory is closed, and the boys sleep with their fathers or elder brothers in the fields. Thus from his earliest days the child learns the routine of village and tribal life from constant association with his elders. He is made to do his share of the field work, and taught the use of the bow and arrow and the setting of snares. Children of six and seven of both sexes join in the village and clan dances, very quickly mastering the steps. We have seen how they use bamboo *pak-dol* drums to master the rhythm of drumming. In the ordinary hill village there is nothing corresponding to the Muria custom of the dormitory owning and cultivating a field or fields and applying the proceeds either to dormitory feasts or to the purchase of beads; but in the Bastar Mar villages and, therefore, probably elsewhere in the Abujhmar hills fathers encourage children to keep their own pigs, which they sometimes sell to procure money or grain for buying beads and knives. Girls similarly soon learn domestic routine from their constant association with their mothers. They cannot associate with boys in the manner of the Murias, among whom every girl must attend the boys' dormitory every night and has her own *gotul* 'boy-friend' to serve, since these *gotul* unions must be between couples who could legitimately marry under the rules of exogamy, and in nearly all Hill Maria villages all the boys and girls are of the same clan and therefore kindred. Yet the girls make bead fillets, ear-tassels and necklaces for the boys, and the latter carve wooden combs for the girls. 861

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

secluded for their first menstruation, known as the *piki-hurma-lon*; but generally speaking, Bison-horn Marias do not seem to hold in the same strength the Hill Maria fear of a woman in this condition.

For the birth of a child a separate hut or booth is erected in the compound, generally at the back of the house, known as the *er-nihitana-lon*, or water-washing hut. This is often little more than the roughest of booths, and considerably inferior to even a Bison-horn Maria pigsty. Here the mother remains for a full month, during which her husband is not allowed to go to his work. The delivery is assisted by an experienced woman relative or fellow-villager, who cuts and binds the navel-cord and washes the child immediately after it is born, and gives it to the mother to suckle. No food is given to the mother that day; on the next morning she is made to drink a decoction of the bark of the *kusum* tree (*Schleichera trijuga*), the root of the dwarf *chhind* palm (*Phoenix sylvestris*), and *kulthi* (*Dolichos biflorus*) pulses, pounded to a powder and boiled together, and an hour or two after this dose she is given a meal of warm boiled rice. She is dosed and fed in this way for six or seven days more, until the navel-cord falls off; and then she washes her whole body and is allowed to eat regular meals. At the end of the month the *lon-wa'ina* or Returning to the House ceremony takes place. The child is named with the aid of a medium, though actually names seem to be given for reasons very similar to those actuating Hill Maria choice of names. A pig, a goat or a number of cocks are killed, and the mother, having washed her clothes and her body, cooks the flesh, all the villagers and relatives being entertained to dinner. Thenceforward the mother is free to resume all her normal household and field work, and the father can resume his work.

I once witnessed an unusual naming ceremony. A son had been born after three elder brothers had died. It was considered that their deaths had been due to the hostility of some demon or of the familiar spirit of some magician, and on the medium's advice the baby had been suspended in a rough cradle over the rubbish-heap by the fence of the *bari* garden, and all the men present threw cow-dung and filth all round the cradle, shouting out '*Kacharu*' or 'Filth!', which name was given to the child in the hope that thereby the malignant power would be deceived into thinking that the parents set no value on the child.

Children are breast-fed for two years or more, as among the Hill Marias. It has been already recorded (page 219) that there is among the Bison-horn Marias a special weaning ceremony during the Jata Pandum at which the first solid food given to the children is a portion of the rice and meat offered to the Departed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883 867 even her kicks are sweet.' A study of ghotul offences and the type of punishment awarded, therefore, may be expected to throw some light on Muria notions of morality and the inner life of chelik and motiari.

X 883 867 183 Their offences, of course, cannot be understood properly except against the background of the general moral and social life of the tribe. To the Muria, as to most aboriginals, tribal solidarity is the supreme good, and anything that breaks this precious unity and fellowship must be condemned. Individualism is the great sin. For this reason, quarrelling and homicide are rare, theft is almost as uncommon. There are few who refuse to share the common work and interests of the community. Adultery is bad, not only because it infringes the rights of another Muria, but because it breaks up the carefully regulated domestic system of the people, and threatens to disrupt it by jealousy and hatred.

We have already seen the stress laid by the Muria on work. Slackness and laziness are very severely regarded, and are the commonest sources of friction between wife and husband. Cleanliness, decency, decorum and modesty are virtues much prized. A quiet and kindly attitude is expected of the tribal leaders; the bully and the coward are equally disliked.

Against this background, what sort of actions are condemned by ghotul opinion and punishable in ghotul law? Let us first consider those actions that are held to betray the common interest. They are doubly important, for in the highly specialized and concentrated fellowship of the ghotul, the general tribal instinct for unity becomes intensified.

II

X 883 867 861 Quarrels in the dormitory are strongly condemned. They are disturbing to the peace of ghotul life and specially offensive to so gentle and uncontentious a people. Children are fined for this, and may even be expelled. In Khutgaon there was once a very quarrelsome chelik. After a time, the leaders of the ghotul called him and said, 'Do you want to be in the ghotul or outside it?' The dreaded threat of expulsion brought him to his senses and he gave no more trouble.

The betrayal of the ghotul fellowship by repeating outside anything that happens within its walls, especially any stories of the intimate relations of chelik and motiari or some scandal about a pregnancy, is one of the greatest of ghotul crimes, for 'that which comes from the mouth bears fruit throughout the world'. Once at Gorma, the Kotwar and Belosa revealed to the village that a girl was pregnant; they were expelled and told that they would never be readmitted. Only when they brought a lot of liquor and fell at the feet of each chelik in turn, promising never to offend again, were they allowed to return.

[551] Ghotul solidarity is constantly emphasized by the use of the ghotul title, and proper names may never be used between members. If a young child forgets this and addresses, say, his elder brother by the name that is always used at home, the others explain the custom to him; but if he offends again, he is punished.

X 883 ●863 861 The dormitory has to be kept clean. Though spitting is permitted, anyone who urinates inside the building is punished. This prohibition extends, in some places, to the court outside. To break wind is not a very serious offence; the children laugh at the offenders and call them *pudra* or *pudri*. Only a light punishment is imposed. At Realnar the culprit had to salute

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

every boy in turn saying, 'Johar, *mahārāj*, I have farted'. An interesting rule prohibits the other boys and girls from laughing at the offender too much. The name *padru* may be used three times but not more; anyone who carries the joke too far is fined.

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FIG. 103. A brass tobacco-box made by the local Ghasia
Actual size

A bed-wetter is punished with the *khotla-pahara* described below; if incurable, he may be expelled.

Most ghotul are actually kept beautifully clean; occasional lapses are severely penalised. It is the special duty of the girls to sweep and cow-dung the building, but often the Kotwar in charge of them is punished instead. At Kabonga, when the Diwan found that the ashes of the previous day's fires had not been cleared away, he reported the matter to the Inspector who called the Kotwar and threw ash all over him. The Kotwar insisted that it was the girls' fault, not his, and so the girls were called and ash was thrown over them and pushed into their private parts. At Kokori also, two girls were tied to the roof by their feet and ashes put into their vaginae. 'As you've let the ghotul be dirty, we are making your privates dirty', said the boys.

It is generally the chelik who have to see to the surroundings of the ghotul. At Palari in 1941, the Munshi, Sipahi and Likasdar were told to clear a space in front of the building for a dance, but they failed to do so. They were hung together from the roof until they begged forgiveness and promised to do the work at once. The younger boys are often punished for failing to bring their daily tribute of wood—a task they all dislike. In the Jamkot

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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

861 The complete *gotul* organization is a feature of Muria and not of Hill Maria culture. But as it has extended to Padalibhum and Nurbhum (possibly also to parts of Tapalibhum and Behra Mar) among the Hill Marias, a brief account of its salient features will not be out of place; it may be expected to spread into the hills with the gradual improvement of communications. A fairly full account from my notes on the Murias has been printed in the *Census of India* 1931 *Report*, Vol. I, Part III B., pp. 81-3. It may be added that it is easier for the Marias of Padalbhum to copy their Muria neighbours because Padalibhum not only has two or three villages which are not Padali villages but belong to the Nuroti and Usendi clans, but even in Padali villages has settlers of these two clans, which are *akomama* (wife-clan) to them.

[858] Boys and girls of an age to visit the *gotul* dormitories are known as *leyur* and *leyas* respectively. All the boys assemble at the 857 dormitory in the evening for dancing, games and social and sexual 571 training, sleeping on there after the departure of the girls to their homes late in the night. The girls attend at the dormitory in the 864 evening, each girl being paired off with a boy of an *akomama* clan. The girls have to comb their boys' hair and massage their arms and legs, to dance with them, and to be initiated into the mysteries of sex with them. Marriage frequently follows these dormitory unions, but by no means always does. Children are expected to attend the dormitory from the age of eleven or twelve, and the parents may be fined for not sending them. Every boy and girl has a special dormitory name or rank; the smaller children have designations which are little more than names, but those of the elder boys change as they are promoted, and involve special duties. The Hill Marias seem to have adopted the ranks for the boys only, the girls retaining the name given them on their entry until they leave the dormitory organization on marriage, but taking among their fellows the precedence of their boy-mates in the dormitory. In Padalibhum the head boy of the dormitory is always known as [171] the *leyur-gaita*, and below him the *gotul* officials are the *leyur-majhi*, the *silledar*, the *jaliarsi*, the *laharu*, the *baiddar* and the *kamdar*; of these, *silledar*, *baiddar* and *kamdar* are Hindi terms copied from the titles of State or zamindari servants; in many a Muria dormitory all the office-holders have such designations instead of the old native names. Besides these names or designations to which [551] special duties and privileges are attached, they have for the boys the names Jalka, Jolsai and Joria, and probably others. The girls' dormitory names ascertained were Jaliaru, Lahari, Manjaro, Nirosa, Jhalo, Gujaro, Piyosa and Belosa. At a camp at Partabpur attended by Hill Maria from Padalibhum, the *leyur-gaita* of three

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

village dormitories were present. All were Padali by clan from Padali villages. Their dormitory mates were respectively Lahari, a Nuroti girl, Jaliaru, an Usendi girl, and Nirosa, a Nuroti girl; and despite their different designations, these girls were the head-girls of their villages in virtue of their boys' ranks. Another Usendi village in Padalibhum called its head boy Silledar, and his mate was Jhelo, a Padali girl. All four stated freely that they expected ultimately to marry their mates, and that they and all the other dormitory boys often had sexual intercourse with their girls.

The dormitory in these *parganas*, as among the neighbouring Murias, is really a school for training the youth of both sexes in conjugal and social duties and in the lore of the clan; the dormitory office-bearers are practically prefects and monitors. The headman and other elders of the villages frequently call on the head-boy for the help of his boys and girls in field-work; but here they are not paid wages, as among the Murias, but are only fed by those for whom they are working. They are also asked to help in thatching houses and building granaries. In weddings the girls are expected to sing, and boys to collect fuel and leaves for cups, and both have to dance; they have similar functions at the various new-eating festivals. The head-boy imposes fines for unjustifiable absence from the dormitory, or from weddings and festivals, or general disobedience of his orders or those of other office-bearers, a bottle of *mahua* spirit being the usual penalty, the cost of which falls upon the parents. The head-boy's mate has similar powers of fining other girls. At the nightly meetings of boys and girls at the dormitory there are dancing in season, tale-telling, singing and games, and from an early age boys are given practical lessons in sexual intercourse.

B. Bison-horn Marias

The information which I was able to collect on this subject among the Bison-horn Marias is much less full than that given above for the Hill Marias, and needs further testing and considerable supplementing.

During pregnancy the mother carries on her ordinary work. The only note which I have of any disability attaching to pregnancy is that when the flesh of animals slain in the *weta* ceremonial hunts is divided up and eaten, no share may be given to the husband of a wife who either is pregnant or has her monthly period. In most Bison-horn villages there is no menstruation hut, and in their houses there is no menstruation room. A few villages near the foot of the Abujhmar hills have a hut where young girls are

[see cat. 116, pp. 425-426. - Analyst]

THE MURIA'S ATTITUDE TO SEX

For it is not considered proper for the older boys to have congress with a motiari till she has passed the menarche. 'Real happiness only comes when you are both mature. Of course the kids do it, but without the falling of water there's little pleasure. It is like eating a raw fruit. There is no sweetness in it. It is like rice without salt.' This judgement comes from Kajen; another is from Kabonga. 'To try to have a girl before she is mature is as hard as for a pig to dig up roots. Sometimes it manages it; it gets the root up and enjoys it. But it prefers its ordinary food.' The Kotwar of Temrugaon said, 'The first time I did it was with a little girl and it was very painful. She didn't like it either. One ought not to dig in the field of an immature girl, for one's *pulu* (digging-stick) may get damaged.'

But after a girl's first menstruation, said Raunu of Jhakri, 'everyone plans to be the first'. Even now, however, the girl must not be forced or hurried; she must be wooed, persuaded, loved into yielding. Sometimes girls who are afraid of intercourse succeed in resisting the chelik for a long time. Often the first serious sexual experience of a girl is during a marriage, when everyone is excited and perhaps a little drunk, and no one asks questions or notices what is going on.

The ghotul leaders do not interfere unduly with the young children, but they see that they receive proper sexual training and instruction. 'As a young bullock is broken to the plough, so a young boy is taught.' The evidence for this sort of statement is best presented in actual 'documents'. Here is one from Kapsi.

> A big girl teaches a little boy by letting him fondle her breasts and hug her. Then she opens and spreads her legs and makes the little boy lie on her breasts. She shows him how to open her clothes and insert the little penis with his hand. The first time the boy doesn't know what to do and the juice comes out too soon. But the next day she says, 'You only pressed me last night, nothing was done properly. I had no pleasure'. The boy replies, 'Today I'm really ready; now I know what to do'.

In Munjmeta, the Melia recalled how he learnt to perform the sexual act from the very descriptions of the older boys. And in Markabera, the Diwan said,

> A little boy doesn't need to be taught anything. Does a young crab have to be taught how to dig earth? But the elder boys generally tell them how to do it. When the little boys tell them their secrets and how they tried but failed, the older chelik show them the best way. The older girls do the same for the little girls. Sometimes older girls who get fond of little boys teach them themselves. But we learn everything by being in the ghotul. How can the little boys check themselves? Who doesn't feel a desire to eat when he sees people enjoying a feast in his presence?

Thus from a very early age the young chelik and motiari are trained in sexual technique, both by example and by actual instruction. A boy does not approach his marriage bed a virgin, but neither does he go to it a fool.

The immediate sexual approach and the technique of copulation practised by chelik and motiari are conditioned by the circumstances of ghotul life. Normal sexual congress should take place within the ghotul. It is believed that this precaution lessens the chances of conception (there is a 'safe region' rather than a 'safe period'); it protects boy and girl from the calamitous interference of magic; and it imposes a certain degree of restraint and discipline.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

'Now that you have begun to come to the ghotul, you must come every day. You must bring one bit of wood every day. You must first salute me and then all the other chelik and you must do what they tell you to do.' To a girl he says, 'You must obey the Belosa and Dulosa, and clean the ghotul every day'. 883X

A little boy must bring a *gik*-mat with him. This is usually made for him by his mother or an elder sister. But a girl is allowed to beg for a 'camping site' on someone else's mat.

The children are now called *nona* or *noni* till they get proper titles. They do not join the dances, unless they are being specially instructed; they generally play and sleep together. At bedtime they have to salute the full members with Johar. Every evening they must bring a bit of wood for the ghotul store. In some places they have to hand round the tobacco which nowadays takes the place of the ganja which was provided in Lingo's ghotul. When girls are few, the boy probationers massage the elder boys, but not as the girls do it—they massage the legs and thighs. Both boys and girls have to act as ghotul fags and are made to work hard enough. Old Sukali of Masora described how as a little girl, the Piosa of the ghotul, 'I used to carry little bundles for the others at dances and marriages. I was always ordered about by everyone'.

The older boys and girls take a lot of trouble over these children. They teach them manners and to keep their mouths shut. They instruct them in dancing and the ghotul games. They watch them closely and punish any failure or slackness. They specially watch a child's regularity of attendance, and whether a boy brings his wood properly and the girl does her cleaning. Regularity, obedience and habits of work are taught and tested. 883X 867

When a sufficient time has passed, and the leaders see that the children have grasped the ghotul rules and customs, they decide to give them a title at the next Dassera or Diwali. To the Muria these festivals are simply dates; they do not observe them in a religious sense; and the date is nearly always wrong. In some ghotul, children are given names at any time of the year; in others, boys are named at Dassera and girls at Diwali; in others again, boys and girls are named together at Diwali. In some ghotul, in Pandripani, for example, and Bandopal, girls are given their titles at the menarche. 'When a girl first puts water on her head, then we give her a name.' But this cannot be a general rule, for I have seen dozens of little girls with ghotul names. 883X 553

Titles are given at a simple and pleasant ceremony. I was present at Sidhawand on 5 November 1940 at the naming of five children. At the beginning of the evening, the boys and girls assembled, each bringing a seer of parched rice. The Sirdar and Kotwar measured each contribution to see that the quantity was right, and then poured it onto a cloth spread on a mat in the middle of the ghotul compound. Presently the Belosa brought three leaf-cups and the Sirdar filled one for Lingo Pen, one 'for the Diwali' and one for the Village Mother and her consort. The rest of the rice was divided into four parts, for men, for women, for Kokameta (a neighbouring ghotul with which the Sidhawand ghotul was on very friendly terms) and for the boys and girls of Sidhawand. These last, it may be observed, only got a quarter of the feast.

This done, the Belosa and Dulosa held a formal consultation, came forward and called out three diminutive boys, Tuna, Gando and Dorga. They caught hold of each in turn, lifted him up, hit him twice and announced his name. To Tuna they gave the title Tel-dundi, to Gando the name Hardi-garbo and

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

I

'We obey our ghotul laws more faithfully than the laws of Government; for we ourselves made the ghotul laws, and so we love them.'

—Common Muria saying

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THE life of the chelik and motiari is strictly regulated, and when a leader is appointed one of the powers with which he is entrusted is that of judging and punishing offenders against the ghotul code. It is surprising how important a place these punishments hold in the minds of the

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[276]

FIG. 97. Comb from Palari. The two horns are of bees-wax
Width 2½"

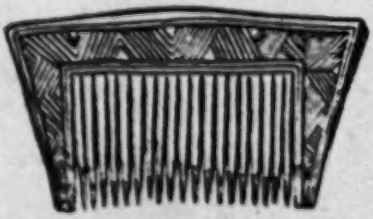

FIG. 98. Comb from Antagarh
Width 5"

FIG. 99. The *Pude-gota*
Actual size

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

children. When they are initiated, the little boys are told—'You must come every day, or you'll be punished'. The girls are likewise told—'You must

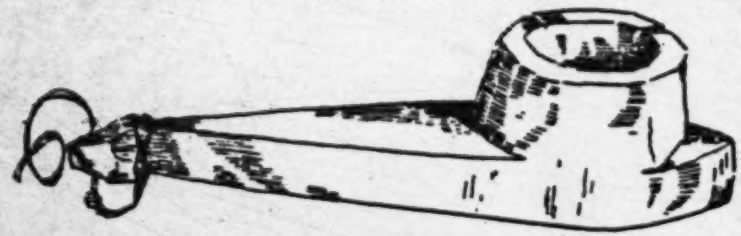

FIG. 100. Tobacco pounder
Length 15"

come every day, or you'll be punished. You must massage the chelik, or you'll be punished.' And when a girl leaves the ghotul at marriage, her

FIG. 101. The *Dudu-muri-gota*
Height 6"

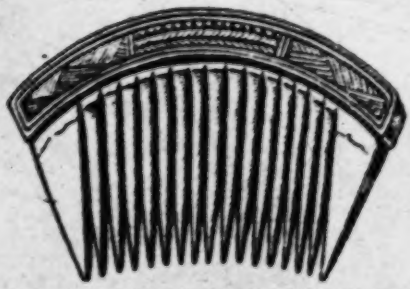

FIG. 102. A Jhoria comb from Markabera
Width 3½"

most tender memories, as revealed in the farewell songs, seem to be connected with punishments. *'Dudhär gai ke lät mäthai*—The cow that gives milk:

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

even her kicks are sweet.' A study of ghotul offences and the type of punishment awarded, therefore, may be expected to throw some light on Muria notions of morality and the inner life of chelik and motiari.

Their offences, of course, cannot be understood properly except against the background of the general moral and social life of the tribe. To the Muria, as to most aboriginals, tribal solidarity is the supreme good, and anything that breaks this precious unity and fellowship must be condemned. Individualism is the great sin. For this reason, quarrelling and homicide are rare, theft is almost as uncommon. There are few who refuse to share the common work and interests of the community. Adultery is bad, not only because it infringes the rights of another Muria, but because it breaks up the carefully regulated domestic system of the people, and threatens to disrupt it by jealousy and hatred.

We have already seen the stress laid by the Muria on work. Slackness and laziness are very severely regarded, and are the commonest sources of friction between wife and husband. Cleanliness, decency, decorum and modesty are virtues much prized. A quiet and kindly attitude is expected of the tribal leaders; the bully and the coward are equally disliked.

Against this background, what sort of actions are condemned by ghotul opinion and punishable in ghotul law? Let us first consider those actions that are held to betray the common interest. They are doubly important, for in the highly specialized and concentrated fellowship of the ghotul, the general tribal instinct for unity becomes intensified.

II

Quarrels in the dormitory are strongly condemned. They are disturbing to the peace of ghotul life and specially offensive to so gentle and uncontentious a people. Children are fined for this, and may even be expelled. In Khutgaon there was once a very quarrelsome chelik. After a time, the leaders of the ghotul called him and said, 'Do you want to be in the ghotul or outside it?' The dreaded threat of expulsion brought him to his senses and he gave no more trouble.

The betrayal of the ghotul fellowship by repeating outside anything that happens within its walls, especially any stories of the intimate relations of chelik and motiari or some scandal about a pregnancy, is one of the greatest of ghotul crimes, for 'that which comes from the mouth bears fruit throughout the world'. Once at Gorma, the Kotwar and Belosa revealed to the village that a girl was pregnant; they were expelled and told that they would never be readmitted. Only when they brought a lot of liquor and fell at the feet of each chelik in turn, promising never to offend again, were they allowed to return.

[551]

Ghotul solidarity is constantly emphasized by the use of the ghotul title, and proper names may never be used between members. If a young child forgets this and addresses, say, his elder brother by the name that is always used at home, the others explain the custom to him; but if he offends again, he is punished.

The dormitory has to be kept clean. Though spitting is permitted, anyone who urinates inside the building is punished. This prohibition extends, in some places, to the court outside. To break wind is not a very serious offence; the children laugh at the offenders and call them *padra* or *padri*. Only a light punishment is imposed. At Esalnar the culprit had to salute

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

every boy in turn saying, 'Johar, *mahārāj*, I have farted'. An interesting rule prohibits the other boys and girls from laughing at the offender too much. The name *padra* may be used three times but not more; anyone who carries the joke too far is fined.

X 883
863
861

E276
531J

FIG. 103. A brass tobacco-box made by the local Ghasia
Actual size

A bed-wetter is punished with the *khotla-pahara* described below; if incurable, he may be expelled.

Most ghotul are actually kept beautifully clean; occasional lapses are severely penalized. It is the special duty of the girls to sweep and cow-dung the building, but often the Kotwar in charge of them is punished instead. At Kabonga, when the Diwan found that the ashes of the previous day's fires had not been cleared away, he reported the matter to the Inspector who called the Kotwar and threw ash all over him. The Kotwar insisted that it was the girls' fault, not his, and so the girls were called and ash was thrown over them and pushed into their private parts. At Kokori also, two girls were tied to the roof by their feet and ashes put into their vaginae. 'As you've let the ghotul be dirty, we are making your privates dirty', said the boys.

It is generally the chelik who have to see to the surroundings of the ghotul. At Palari in 1941, the Munshi, Sipahi and Likandar were told to clear a space in front of the building for a dance, but they failed to do so. They were hung together from the roof until they begged forgiveness and promised to do the work at once. The younger boys are often punished for failing to bring their daily tribute of wood—a task they all dislike. In the Jamkot

883 X
867 ●
861

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
● 867
861

ghotul there was a boy called Antar (from a hunter-whip) who had the duty of 'whipping' boys who failed in this task.

Chelik and motiari are insistent that everyone must take an equal share (though not always the same share) in the common labour and common recreations. Failure to attend the ghotul regularly is punished; an absence of two or three days, unless there is a very good excuse, means a fine. It is specially bad for the motiari to absent themselves. This is regarded as a really serious offence, an infringement of the chelik's rights, a breach of ghotul fellowship; it raises the suspicion that the girl is having an affair with a married man or a member of another caste. On the other hand, if a girl enters the ghotul during her menstrual period she must provide liquor and perhaps a more substantial sacrifice to appease Lingo Pen whom she has offended.

A girl's conduct is controlled when she visits another village. She may go to the ghotul to dance and even perhaps massage and comb the boys but she is expected to return home before bedtime. If she does not, and the boys of her own ghotul discover that she has betrayed them, they punish her with a heavy fine.

The motiari are often obstinate and troublesome—at least in male opinion—and have to be disciplined. Sometimes they get sulky and refuse to join the games and dances; the Jularo of Sarandi was fined an anna for failing to attend a dance. Sometimes they refuse 'to let a boy play with them on the ground'; sometimes they fail to comb or massage properly. At Kajen the ghotul Kotwar reports every Tuesday whether any of the girls have lost their combs, or have refused to do the chelik's hair.

It is regarded as very offensive for a chelik to force a girl against her will: in Markabera a chelik once forced the Alosa, who was the ghotul-wife of another boy, and was fined as much as two rupees. But if a girl refuses—once she is mature—to have intercourse with at least one of the chelik, there is consternation, and if she persists, both boys and girls may refuse to attend her wedding.

Boys also may be punished for failing to fulfil their social obligations. At Palari, the Baidar and Dafedar refused, on account of some private spite, to attend the Captain's marriage and each was fined four annas. At Gorma the headman's son, who went to school and learnt there to despise the ghotul and its ways, found when the day of his marriage approached that the boys and girls would not attend it. 'All these years', they said, 'you have despised us. You have not joined our dances or helped us in our work. Now you can get married without us.' The boy had to dress in all the Muria ornaments, change his little cap for a turban, and sleep in the ghotul for a week before he was forgiven.

III

Ghotul officers who fail to perform their duties are punished. No one is privileged and no one is exempt. This is an important point. Were an older man, like the Diwan of Masora who still holds office at the age of forty, to try to protect his own son or daughter, he would himself be fined even though he was the leader and a final court of appeal in all disputes. If the head of the chelik tried to protect his own special motiari or his ghotul-wife, he might be turned out of office. Bindo had no hesitation in punishing the Dulosa, who was his lover, for failing to clean the ghotul.

Mangru of Masora told us how when he was Pahardar it was his duty to punish people. But he could never bring himself to do it, so he himself was punished. His legs were tied to the roof and he had to hang there while boys and girls sang one Relo song. A former Chalki of the Jamkot ghotul

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

GHOTUL DISCIPLINE

was similarly punished for failing in his duty to make the chelik and motiari work at a wedding. As a boy Bindo punished the ghotul Kotwar for disobeying his orders to fetch the motiari in the evening; fifty years afterwards he still remembers the incident with satisfaction.

When the head of the ghotul is penalized, it is a convention in some ghotul that the motiari should beg to be punished in his stead. This happened at Chandabera when I was there, and the Sirdar was fined for not making proper arrangements for his visitors. The girls implored to be allowed to suffer for him.

Fig. 104. A sun and moon tobacco-box
Height 2½"

Fig. 105. Boy's necklace, from Kajua, of cowries strung together with red and 'silver' beads

Should the head of the ghotul turn out a bully or a slacker, the chelik and motiari take the help of the village headman and remove him. This does not happen very often because there is plenty of time to test a boy before he is appointed. But it is not always possible to judge how far power is likely to corrupt character, and scandals do occur. I have recorded a number of cases from the history of the last few years. In Mannegaon, the Leyur-Gaita was removed for bullying and abusing the children. The Malik of Esalnar was once degraded for bullying. The Kotwar of the Berma ghotul a few years ago got very much above himself and used 'to punish for four hours instead of one' until the members rebelled. They fined him a rupee, deprived him of office, made him a 'subject' with the name of Silledar, and appointed the Kandki in his place. Recently in Kehalakot the Kotwar gave so much trouble to the girls that he was fined eight annas and removed.

Laziness also disqualifies a boy from holding high office. In Atargaon the Manjhi was dismissed 'for not working properly'. The Kokori Chalki was degraded to the rank of Kotwar for laziness and the Kotwar was appointed

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in his place. The Belosa of Berma was removed because she was too slack to control the girls.

I have only once heard of a boy being removed from office for abusing his sexual privileges. In Sonawal the Diwan seduced another chelik's 'wife'. The others fined him, but he refused to pay, saying, 'I am your master, I am not going to pay a fine to my "subjects"'. He and his own wife, the Diwanin, or head of the girls, were both degraded and made 'subjects'.

IV

We now turn to breaches of the sexual conventions of the ghotul. Here, according to the type of ghotul, two opposite types of offence are recognized.

In those ghotul where there is a rule against 'pairing off', boys and girls are punished if they sleep together too often. The Subedar and Silo of the Binjhli ghotul were fined four annas each for sleeping together every day. In these ghotul too it is considered very bad form for a boy to be 'possessive' about a girl, to be jealous over her and claim her as his. 'We must change every two or four days, or we are fined.'

But in the other type of ghotul, boys and girls are fined for committing what may be called 'ghotul adultery'. A case of this has already been described in Chapter XI. If a chelik sleeps with another boy's motiari during her 'husband's' absence, he is fined. If the Kotwar 'finds the cloth of a girl' who is not the boy's 'mate' on his mat, he reports the matter and the boy is punished.

In villages where there are separate ghotul for boys and girls, they may be fined for visiting one another on days when this is taboo. In Lihagaon, where there were separate dormitories for boys and girls, some years ago the Likhen of the boys was Lamhada to the Mularo of the girls. One night she came to the boys' ghotul and slept with him—a double impropriety since engaged couples are not supposed to sleep together in the ghotul. He was fined a rupee by the chelik, but refused to pay, and on the third day ran away with the girl whom he had already made pregnant. They were brought back and fined two rupees. This time they paid up, and the ghotul members agreed to the marriage and said they would attend it.

With all the freedom of the ghotul, there is a strict insistence on decorum and modesty. It is remarkable that at weddings when the older women and men behave with a complete lack of restraint, abusing each other and catching hold of each other in the most obscene manner, the motiari are never molested. The chelik are sometimes punished for showing an indecent interest in the girls even in the ghotul. Once at Palari the girls were dancing the Durpa Dandi, or Lotus Stalk Dance, when each girl rests one leg on her neighbour's waist. It is considered a rather risky dance and the girls rarely perform it in public. The Kandki of the ghotul sat down near the dancers and tried to peep up in a rather unpleasant manner. The girls stopped dancing and took him inside the ghotul. 'What were you sitting down for?' 'Nothing.' 'You wanted to look at us, you dirty little beast, so we're going to punish you.' They tied his hands together and bound them to the roof for fifteen minutes. When he was released, he had to salute each of the girls in turn and beg forgiveness.

V

How does the machinery of ghotul justice work? How are its punishments inflicted? I will give one or two actual examples before proceeding to tabulate the penalties.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

to share: and each development, each advance on the part of mankind can be traced back to the opposite formula: ability to share'.[1] 152

The absence of jealousy among primitive people has often been noticed and Hartland has given a long list of tribes remarkable for this amiable trait. Since he connects it, however, with general promiscuity, indifference to the marriage tie and a fundamental belief that primitive man is incapable of real love, his study does not throw very much light on Muria conditions. Westermarck and Briffault have also each filled a chapter with rather dubious evidence on the subject from all parts of the world, which would have had greater value had there been an agreed definition of jealousy among their authorities.

As with the problem of pre-nuptial chastity, so with jealousy, our evidence is confused, contradictory and little of it would be admitted in a court of law. The result is that it is possible to produce equally imposing lists both of those peoples who are temperamentally jealous and of those who are not.

Even in Bastar two tribes living side by side present a notable contrast in this matter; the Bison-horn Maria of Dantewara and Sukma are notorious for the violence of their jealous and suspicious temperament which fills the jail at Jagdalpur with homicides; the Muria are no less remarkable for an almost complete absence of this passion. I do not think it is possible to lay down a rule; doubtless some tribes are more attached to possession, dignity, prestige than others. Jealousy always has its roots in something else.

But what is so interesting about the Muria is that they recognize jealousy as a problem, accept it as a danger to marital happiness, and direct the education of their children towards eliminating it from their psychology.

The ghotul trains its members in a strict equality; on the whole, just as in a big family, it manages fairly successfully to laugh out of countenance dignity and prestige; it sets its face against possessiveness and the desire for the exclusive enjoyment of anything; it insists on things being shared. Even the *joditdr* ghotul, where girls are allotted to their partners in a fairly permanent relation, achieves this in no small measure; and the newer type succeeds in an unusual degree in eliminating jealousy. Undoubtedly, as I have said already, there is a very remarkable general diffused affection among the boys and girls. The sense of property and possession is certainly lessened; policemen have told me that they believe the small amount of crime in the north of Bastar is due to the fact that Muria children learn while still in the ghotul to share things with everybody else and not to grab them for themselves. As the chelik said at Ulera, 'There is equal love for all, just as in a family'. 883x 152 867

Naturally there will be moments of strain, particularly when there are a few boys and girls of outstanding physical attraction in the ghotul; yet sexual jealousy between boys is certainly lessened. An old Muria of Jaitpuri, recalling his ghotul days, said that there was a girl in the ghotul whom he loved very much. 'When she slept with other boys I used to feel a little jealous, but I said to myself, "This ghotul life is only for four days and in any case if I don't have her today, I'll have her tomorrow".' In the ghotul two friends will lie down with a girl between them, and sometimes—as at Sidhawand—a group of boys occupies a corner of the ghotul with a group of girls, every one of whom is shared among them. Several of my chelik friends have told me that they have slept again and again with every girl in the ghotul.

There are, of course, exceptions. Ghotul differ from one another, a few deviating widely from the classical model. The younger boys are sometimes jealous of their seniors; I have noticed this at Masora and Markabera. As 883x 152

[1] W. Stekel, 'Jealousy', Forbath, op. cit., p. 159.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

535 by a few men with kettle-drums and more with clanging brass gongs; to this babel of sound must be added the clatter of the innumerable iron neck-rings and the bracelets of the girls, and the clangour of the great bunches of bells on the buttocks of the male dancers. The whole scene is lit up by blazing torches and log fires.

535 831 Often a slight element of obscenity is introduced by one or two men dressed as tiger-men with large imitation *membra virilia* which they brandish at each other and at the women, girls and youths, rushing ludicrously here, there, and everywhere, and provoking such laughter that often the dancers have to break off their singing to join in.

535 868 There is no formal dancing teaching. Boys are allowed to join in the dances when they are about six, and girls when nine or ten. They learn simply by imitating their elders.

535 574 Men of all ages, married and unmarried, youths, boys, young wives and girls join in the Bison-horn Maria dances. There appears to be no time of year at which they are forbidden to dance, though naturally the spring and the summer, when they are freest from field-work, see most of their dancing. If at this time of year you invite villagers to dance at your camp, the throb of the drums attracts more and more men and girls from surrounding villages; for the tradition is that no invitation is needed, and that open house should be kept at a wedding or any other occasion when there will be dancing.

2. Bison-horn Maria

535 292 There is no mixing of men and girls as in the Abujhmar hills. The girls, in their ordinary finery of beads and iron and brass neck-rings, and wearing their head snoods and fillets of polished brass, have no special dancing apparatus except the *tirdudi* dancing-sticks ornamented with iron bells which they hold upright in their right hands, clashing the bells in unison by striking the ground with the butts of the sticks on their left front as they bring their left foot across in front of their right; each girl rests her left arm on the back of the left shoulder of the girl on her left. They gyrate to the right, like the Hill Marias, but the Bison-horn women have a far more rapid step; the right foot is moved to the right and slightly to the rear, and the left foot is then brought across the right leg to the right front, while the ground is struck with the butts of the jingling dancing-sticks. The girls in this way dance fast around the outside of the dancing men, sometimes singing as they go; but the unceasing throb of the men's great drums drowns their song.

535 The women's step never varies, whatever the dance; but the men have many different dances and steps, and can improvise a dance on practically any theme, such as asking for pork or *landa*. Their *pen-karsila* or Koqsar dance is a very fast, side-stepping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

involve considerable physical exertion and have proved excellent material for the physical training of the boys in the State schools; at the Muria *gotul* dormitories these games often take the place of dancing and singing. But the only Hill Maria villages which have anything of the kind appear to be those of the Padalibhum and Tapalibhum *parganas* which are gradually adopting the dormitory organization of their Muria neighbours; and some Bison-horn villages on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country are beginning to copy the Murias and Bhattras. Early to bed is the rule for old and young in Maria villages, and the child from the beginning learns to copy his father's activities; his playthings soon become small bows and arrows, fishing-rods and snares, skill in the use of which will make him an asset to the community. Stilt-walking in the early monsoon, occasional use of bull-roarers and bamboo drums, crude ornamentation of the walls of houses or the carving of ornamental combs and beadwork seem to be the only other recreations of Hill Maria youth.

F. *Reckoning Time*

The Hill Maria names for the months have already been given (page 129), and it has been said that in general the Bison-horn Marias know and use the local Hindu names. They call a month *lawj*, the word used for the moon; but all, even Bison-horn Marias, have to think hard before they can tell you what month it is, and there may be a certain amount of argument on the point. Throughout Bastar there is something of this uncertainty; the local Hindu months are named after festivals such as Goncha, Dasehra and Diwali; and the Bastaria, even if he adopts these, does not like to observe them on the same date in every village, because that would deprive him of the chance of taking part in the celebrations at the surrounding villages.

Though the Bison-horn Maria knows the Hindu names for the days of the week, and uses them in his conversation, the Hill Maria does not. If word comes to a Hill Maria headman that in thirteen days' time he and his villagers have to go to the tahsil court, or to work on the annual road repairs, he will make a tally string with thirteen knots and undo one every day, leaving to keep the appointment on the morning of the last knot. These tally strings are also kept by those who attend markets at fairly regular intervals; and in a murder case, of which the villagers had decided to suppress or postpone informing the police because it was the harvest season, the wife of the murdered man, determined to get justice, had kept a tally string on which she tied a fresh knot every

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWENTY

DANCE AND SONG

I

DANCE and song, games, stories and riddles should not be regarded as mere recreation; in the Muria's eyes they are serious and important business. A ghotul's reputation largely depends on the excellence of its dancing; the motiari's ability to sing may make the difference between a successful or unsuccessful wedding. Even the games, many of them, serve an educational purpose. The younger boys and girls are carefully trained in the ghotul, and the others practise night after night, repeating the same steps and rhythms again and again till they get them right, before they set out on a dancing expedition. The complicated stick-dances need special training and practice, for once an expedition has started mistakes are regarded as ill-omened.

The first musician was Lingo himself, and the practice of music is not held, as so often in India, to be discreditable, but is honourably rooted in the history and mythology of the tribe. Many of the songs and dances have a religious purpose, and often begin with an invocation to Lingo and other gods. Before the Mandri dances at a wedding, worship should be performed before a pile of drums.

It is refreshing to go to Bastar from the reform-stricken [1] and barren districts of the Central Provinces. As you climb the Keskal Ghat the whole countryside bursts into song about you. The Muria have a short way with 'reformers', as I was fortunate enough to see at Telenga village on 26 March 1941. There was a marriage that day in the village, and the chelik and motiari from eleven villages came to attend it. But when they arrived they did not begin to dance as usual, but went out into the jungle for a consultation. They had seen among the wedding guests the sinister figure of Chainu, the headman of Maragaon. A month earlier this Chainu had attended a marriage at the house of Guma in his own village. Chelik and motiari had come as usual and danced till noon. Then according to custom they asked for liquor to offer to the drums and food for themselves. Chainu, who had been under a good deal of Hindu influence, refused to let them have either liquor for the drums or food for themselves, and declared that he would 'stop this dancing throughout the pargana'. The chelik and motiari left the marriage in protest and for a month the matter was the subject of heated discussion in their ghotul.

Now in Telenga the boys saw their chance. After a long discussion, they came back, a large and formidable crowd, and told the Pargana Manjhi (of Chalka) that they wanted a panchayat and that Chainu must be there. Near the marriage-booth the boys assembled in a great circle, and almost all the wedding guests joined to see what would happen. The unfortunate bride and bridegroom were left sitting in their places, entirely forgotten.

[1] It is very hard to understand the mentality of the 'reformers' who would deprive the aboriginal of his beautiful and innocent recreations, and would impose on him a 'bhiv-raj' (as it is often called) at which the great dancer Natarajan would have shuddered. It is interesting to compare the attitude of the American Negro towards the 'Spirituals' which have done as much as anything else to establish him throughout the world. At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these were considered fit only for uneducated 'country niggers'. 'As late as 1909, Negro students at Howard University rebelled and refused to sing them. By the more progressive and aggressive elements in the race the Spirituals were frowned upon as a reminder of slavery and ignorance.'—N. I. White, *American Negro Folk-Songs* (Harvard, 1928), p. 3. Then suddenly, they became the fashion, and the Negroes found that nothing gave them more credit and prestige.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

The boys then sit down and the motiari feed them. They must not, however, go to the ghotul that night; there are still ceremonies to be performed.

The next morning the motiari husk in the ghotul the grain that the chelik have brought home. On the verandahs of some ghotul there are permanent mortars for this purpose. In the evening boys and girls will cook this together. The boys then begin to dance; they go to the Gaita's house—at Koilibera they came to my camp; but fairly soon they go home to collect chickens and pigs for sacrifice. When they have all re-assembled they set off in a ragged procession, led by the Kaser-Gaita, towards the village boundary. On the way every boy picks up a stone and carries it along with him.

FIG. 120. Anklet of bells worn on dancing expeditions

When they reach the boundary, the Kaser-Gaita goes for water; others clear a space under a tree by the roadside; the boys make a pile of stones in honour of Lingo Pen near by. In some villages, each pair of boys put down two stones and one above them. The Gaita's stones are put first and then all the others in a line with finally three stones for the dog. The chickens are sacrificed before the appropriate stones. The following day the boys go to inspect the stones and if any of them have fallen over it is regarded as a fatal omen and that particular pair of dancers will die. When the Gaita returns he sprinkles a little water on the cleared space, smooths it over, makes seven piles of rice and offers incense.

The chelik stretch a rope of siari creeper across the road and tie their dancing-sticks to it. The sacred bundle of peacock feathers is tied at one end. Two chelik climb trees on opposite sides and haul up the rope until it stretches taut across the road.

Now the Gaita offers chickens, eggs and two small pigs in the usual way. At Koilibera I was interested to see how he taught two of the boys, allowing them to practise with a few of the chickens and a pig. When this was over, the boys went to the road and rather formally stripped themselves of the *Lingo-singār*, the dress worn in honour of Lingo, packing the turbans, skirts and bells into little bamboo baskets.

The Pus Kolang is almost over. The chelik return home to the village and the Gaita goes with a few of the leading boys to the shrine of the Village Mother and replaces the sacred spear of Maria Pen. Everyone has returned safely, so the priest offers a goat. The rest of the day is spent preparing for the evening feast, which is taken at about five o'clock. At Koilibera, on 25 January 1941, I attended this feast; it was a very pleasant affair. A great crowd of people sat round in a half-circle, mothers with their children, old men, little boys. The older boys served the food; the motiari saw to arrangements behind the scenes. There was an excellent meal of rice (of several different kinds collected on the trip), pork, goat and pulses. My wife and I sat with the Chowkidar and Kalingsai. Presents of meat were sent to the whole village, to Kalar, Halba and Mahara without distinction. Last of all the older chelik and the motiari got their food, and that evening they went to sleep in the ghotul.

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Muria

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how can he do anything for you? Give me the bull and I'll do whatever you want'. So they sacrificed the bull to her and even before they had finished cooking it, before they had time to eat it, down came a torrent of rain. 'This is a grand old woman', said the villagers, 'we must not forget her.' When the villagers again began to honour Bhimul at the Amavas festival Gorondi got very angry but the villagers said, 'Don't trouble us; go and knock over any boys you may find walking about on stilts and break their bones and hurt them'. So Gorondi went out and bothered the boys by knocking them over and injuring them wherever she could, until they went to consult the Siraha. He told them that if they promised to honour Gorondi as well as Bhimul on the second day of the Korta Tindana Pandum she would give them no more trouble. Since then the boys of every village have honoured Gorondi in their festival and it is said that they never fall from their stilts or hurt themselves.

That this story is not universally known is shown by the fact that in some villages the broken stilts are piled up over the stone of Bhimul rather than of Gorondi and sometimes on a stone called Dito Pen which means literally the 'Stilt God'. But in most places stilt-walking is connected with Bhimul and his wife.

IV

X 983 869

A discussion of the ghotul and religion was obviously necessary. Here as in every other aspect of Muria life the dormitory plays a dominant part. These boys and girls are consecrated to service; the consecration may seem to Western eyes primitive and crude, but it is real enough; it is very real to them. They live in a temple dedicated to the service of gods and men: the chelik and motiari fulfil that dedication admirably, at marriage and funeral, at festival and in the fields.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the *Sendhias* and the zamindars also denied it. The allegation possibly arises from the fact that the zamindar appoints or confirms the succession of the *Sendhia*, and may arbitrate in a case involving parties from the *patti* of two or more *Sendhias*. Moreover the zamindars themselves have probably often descended from the tribal headmen of old, and so it is easy for them to perform the function of ultimate arbitration in social matters which is so characteristic of the chiefs of the ancient semi-feudal organization of the province from whom they descend or derive. Obviously it would be easy to apply to all the Chanda Maria country the Bastar *panchayat* system.[1]

From Jarawandi our route took us six miles to Pendri, the largest village and virtual headquarters of Jharapapra zamindari, thence six miles to Jharapapra and back; on fifteen miles to Aundhi in Drug district, and thence seven miles to Murumgaon, the headquarters of the Chanda zamindari of that name; the last mile was at long last on made road, the third-class road running east from Garchiroli through Khutgaon, Dudhmala, Dhanora, Rangi, Murumgaon and Koracha zamindaris to Dondi-Lohara and Drug. We were, however, to have trouble on this road next day, when heavy rain flooded unbridged streams between Murumgaon and the twenty miles distant Manpur, the *de facto* headquarters of the Koracha zamindari of Drug. The very long delay in bridging this road and raising it in class is only too typical of the neglect by Government and District Councils of aboriginal areas.

Similarly the District Council had not opened a single school in Jharapapra zamindari. The late zamindar, a Halba by tribe, and amongst the most intelligent and progressive landholders of the two districts, had opened a private school at Pendri[2] which at the time of my visit was being run by a Gondi-speaking teacher of the Marar agricultural caste, and his pupils were six Marar, six Halba and two Pardhan boys. Marias and Halbas are the chief elements in the small population of the zamindari, dwindling steadily by the drift in recent years of Marias across into Bastar for the sake of *podu*.

All along this route there had been frequent pockets of Marar cultivators, especially near the streams. These industrious, progressive, dark-skinned agricultural pioneers have pushed up the valley of every substantial river in the backward areas of Balaghat, Bhandara, Chanda, Drug, Raipur and doubtless other aboriginal districts of the Central Provinces. They have been the chief factor in such increase as there has been of permanent, especially irrigated, cultivation in these Garchiroli and Drug Partially Excluded Areas.

[1] See pp. 295-7.
[2] *Ordnance Survey of India*, Sheet 64D, ref. 3(5)22[2]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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High hopes were placed by the first Congress Ministry of the province in the *Vidya Mandir* Act, which provided for a new type of school in villages, intended to pay its way from the produce of lands attached to the school as endowments, and from the yarn to be spun by the pupils whose basic crafts were to be spinning and perhaps agriculture. I saw two of these, for which the zamindars had provided land, at Erka and Chatgaon. The attendance at both was very small, and they were in all ways utterly alien to the Maria way of life. Erka was typical. The *Vidya Mandir* fields were over a mile from the *Mandir*, which in outward appearance was indistinguishable from any ordinary plains village school, even down to the faded Congress flag on the roof. The masters of these institutions bear the time-honoured designation of *guru*. Here,

[1] *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 377-8.

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4: Fürer-Haimendorf E-5 (1942-1945) 1948
AW32 Gond AW32

Scheme under which instruction in reading and writing Gondi and later Marathi and Urdu was to be provided for both children and adults. On my return to Marlavai we started work on a small scale with a school where adult Gonds were to be trained as teachers and village-officers. The work on this Scheme kept us in Marlavai until the end of January 1944, and it was there that most of the chapters contained in Book I were written. After an absence of five months in Assam, we returned in the rains for a short period and this gave me the opportunity of checking my Gondi texts with the help of the Headmaster of the Marlavai Training Centre Mr. S. B. Jogalkar and the Gond teachers, some of whom had meanwhile opened schools in their own villages.[1]

The division of the present work into two books was necessitated by its bulk and by the fact that a sudden opportunity for two expeditions into one of the least known tribal areas of the North-East Frontier prevented us from concentrating on the completion of the second part.

In the presentation of facts we have departed from the usual order of a straight monograph; instead of grouping them under such headings as material culture, agriculture, or religion, we have attempted an arrangement which, we hope, will give a better idea of Gond life as an organic entity. After the introductory chapters, which describe the physical and cultural environment, we have set a section outlining the mythical background of Gond culture and the cult of the clan-deities; for in this cult and the sacred myths lies the mainspring of the social order. Then follows a section describing the economic and ritual activities of a village community throughout the cycle of the year, and the three chapters of this section contain also most of the information on agriculture, the basis of Gond economics. Book II will open with an account of the phases of life, from childhood to death, and this will set the stage for a general discussion of the social organization and the principles of Gond religion, all details of ritual having been described already in their proper setting. The old feudal system looms still in the background of the social order, and I am attempting a reconstruction based on the existing remnants and local traditions contained mainly in the stories and songs of Pardhans. Read together with Wills' history of the Gond States of the Central Provinces this will perhaps give a certain idea of political and social life prevailing in Gondwana throughout the greater part of mediæval times.

The final chapters of the book will be concerned with the developments of the last fifty years, when increased contact with other populations broke up the Gonds' feudal organization and land-hungry immigrants drove many families from the lands where they had lived since the times of their ancestors. It is a dismal tale of the decline of a once proud and happy people, the loss of economic freedom, and the birth

[1] Cf. my article 'Aboriginal Education in Hyderabad.' *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, Vol. V, 1944.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hill Maria
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874 [815] too, no caste Hindu had been forthcoming and the authorities had had to draw on the Depressed Classes to find a *guru*, who was a town-bred Mahar, knew no language but his Marathi mother-tongue and was utterly ignorant of aboriginal life and customs, though twenty-two of his thirty-three boys were Maria-speaking aboriginals. The boys were doing some listless spinning, a useless craft in an area where no cotton is grown. The raw cotton for spinning has to be carted from Chanda, miles away: not one of the boys will spin in after-life. I asked if they could sing: the *guru* switched them from spinning on to droning out in a dreary, nasal tone a Marathi song which meant nothing to them. Helped by their parents, I tried to get the boys to sing a Maria song and dance a Maria dance, but their spontaneity had been so quenched by the alien ideas of the *Vidya Mandir* that even with their parents' help they were too shy or shamefaced to attempt their own wonderful tribal songs and dances. There was nothing in their whole curriculum which bore any relation to their tribal culture or appealed to the tribal imagination. Even the *Vidya Mandir* fields were so far from the village that the boys never visited them or learnt modern agricultural methods from the *jamadar* in charge, who merely grew rice to meet the cost of this useless institution. It was worse than useless, for it was detribalizing the boys, making them ashamed of their own way of life, and giving them nothing in return: it was no surprise that in this village all were peculiarly reticent as to the existence of a *gotul*, and that the latter was a moribund affair.

114 This completes the picture of my tour to Chanda Maria country, so far it has been possible to reconstruct it from the printed record of *The Aboriginal Problem* and from memory. Ethnologically the Note is somewhat meagre in its information. The impression, however, that I carry in my mind of the Chanda Marias is of a tribal culture still vigorous in its institutions and its arts, still knitting together the ways of life of a vigorous tribe closely akin on the one side to the Marias and Murias of Bastar, on the other side to the Raj-Gond and other tribes of northern and western Chanda, and of Milabad. What differences there are between the Chanda Marias and the Hill and other Marias of Bastar and the Murias of north Bastar and Kanker, only detailed field-work can define. It is an admirable theatre for such field-work, and the time for it is running short, since the Marias of Chanda are exposed, in a way that no Bastar tribes are exposed, to the impacts of modern Indian civilization. Of particular interest would be an investigation of my theory that the social organization of the plains Marias of Chanda was fundamentally similar to that of the Hill Marias and Murias of Bastar but has been overlaid with god-grouping and other ideas inherent in the social organization of

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Chapter XV

Birth and Childhood

A. Hill Marias

No Marias are unaware of the causal connexion between intercourse and pregnancy, and all women know when they miss their first menstruation that they are probably starting to bear a child. Pregnancy among Hill Marias is attended by no taboo either for man or wife, so far as I could ascertain, and the wife continues performing her ordinary routine work right up to the last day of her pregnancy. Sexual intercourse, however, ceases as soon as pregnancy is known to have begun.

During ordinary menstruation, as we have seen in Chapter VI, the wife, like all young women, is secluded for five or six days either in the communal menstruation hut, or in the *kala* or menstruation room or the separate menstruation hut of the house. The menstruation huts, whether communal or private, are known as *pedawo'gha'i*, or (in the south of the Abujhmar hills) as *dola-lon*, or (in the extreme north) as *kurma-lon*. The term *pedawo'gha'i* is applied also sometimes to the *kala* room in the houses. These huts and rooms have been described already on pages 104-6. The Hill Marias say that their clan-god and their Departed would be angry if they gave up their immemorial custom of secluding their women during menstruation, and that no man should see a woman's face at such a time; we have seen that they often guard against the magic of women in this condition by placing castor oil plants and seeds on the roof of the hut when it is occupied. The men do not seem to have any clear idea of what happens to a woman at such times; they only know and say that she 'has gone *pedawo'gha'i*'. There is no ceremony of any kind at a girl's first menstruation, or during pregnancy. Though children are generally born in the menstruation room or hut, and for some time after birth the mother has to live there subject to the same prohibitions as during menstruation, yet during her nine months she is free from the ordinary taboos to which she is subject during menstruation; that is to say, she is free to visit her husband in the fields and to cook his food for him, in fact to do all her ordinary household and field or market tasks. But it is taboo for a pregnant woman to pick or break anything growing. There may possibly be certain prohibitions which I did not discover.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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I do not in any way emphasize it, but it seems to me curious that many crimes connected with sorcery are associated with water; they are performed on the banks of ponds or rivers and in several instances the body has been thrown into the water afterwards. Does a murderer who has killed a sorcerer believe that there is some spiritual antiseptic for him in throwing his victim's body into water?

IV

841 Grigson has studied in detail the custom of the Hill Marias in regard to menstruation, pregnancy and birth, but his notes on the Bison-horn Marias need, as he says, 'considerable supplementing'. The Bison-horn Marias have the curious belief that men, not women, were originally subject to a menstrual period. They used to tie hollow bamboos to their organs to catch the discharge. Once—according to one legend—a girl was laughing at a man in this distressing and inconvenient condition, and he lost his temper and threw the bamboo at her; in another story a sister wanted to help her brother, who could not cut his clearing properly on account of the bamboo tagged on in front of him, and offered to take it instead.

841 826 Yet other legends ascribe the origin of menstruation to a wound. There were formerly teeth in the vagina and when these were removed, the wound was not wholly healed. Once the vagina was in the crick of the leg behind the knee—you can still see its shape—but a hen pecked at it and the frightened organ jumped for safety to its hiding-place between the thighs. But it was hurt and it still bleeds every month at the recollection.

841 All the Gond tribes are very strict about the menstrual taboos, in this contrasting sharply with the Orissa Bondos, Gadabas, and Saoras, who are at a similar stage of culture and live not very far away. Grigson has described the extreme rigorism of the Hill Marias and has rightly suggested that the Bison-horn Marias are somewhat less apprehensive of the dangers of menstruation. But they too, like the Murias and the Gonds generally, are strict enough in their application of the taboo and breach of it may be punished by the Departed through the bite of a snake or the destruction of the harvest. They do not usually build special menstruation huts, but sometimes where there is a girls' dormitory, menstruating women sleep on one side of the hut and unmarried girls on the other. In such villages, no married woman may go near the dormitory nor should youths enter it. Not all dormitories however are used in this way.

841 881 Elsewhere part of the veranda of the ordinary living-house is screened off or a little hut is built in the compound for the use of

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
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a woman at this time. At the menarche (for which the word used is *kumor utta*, 'the blossoming of the flower'), however, a special hut is built for the girl by women outside the village. A woman of the household brings her food and sleeps with her at night; she must bathe whenever she returns to the house. In some villages, the Marias still make a platform up a tree for the girl, who during the day must hide herself in the forest.

It is very dangerous for anyone to see, let alone to touch, a girl at her menarche. At Tikanpal I was told that if a man saw such a girl as he went through the jungle he should slap her and then go to her parents and after rebuking them, demand a fowl which he should sacrifice; then he should bathe and anoint himself with oil. At Gadapal they said that a man should throw a lump of earth between his legs at the girl, or a stick over his shoulder, and then go home and bathe. Neglect of these precautions might lead to blindness.

At the end of the period—all this refers only to the first period—the girl destroys her hut or platform during the night, throws away her cloth,[1] bathes and returns home before cockcrow. In some villages she is expected to remain for a day or two longer on the veranda of her house: if she has a married elder brother, it is the special duty of his wife to attend to her. Then she puts oil and turmeric on her body—an act which is said to symbolize her formal re-admission into caste, for during the previous days she has been regarded as excommunicated. In many Maria villages, however, the ceremonial use of turmeric is still unknown, and the elder brother's wife carries a pot of water round the house and sprinkles everyone saying, 'Now you are back again in caste'. After this the girl fetches water in an earthen pot and cowdungs the floor. In the evening her father invites some of the elders to a bottle of liquor and says, 'My daughter who was unclean all these days is now clean again'. He sacrifices a fowl to the Departed and they feast on its flesh.

There is not nearly so much fuss about the later periods. The woman has to keep out of the way, but there is no danger in looking at her, and when it is over she just has a bath and resumes her ordinary duties. But even so her daily programme is considerably disturbed. She must not sleep inside the house and, of course, sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden. She must not cook or fetch water or go to work in the fields. She must not touch cattle, pigs

[1] There do not seem to be any special taboos associated with this cloth. But the leaf-cups from which the girl eats at this time are charged with magical potency and if a witch can get hold of them she can afflict the girl with palsy.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

III. The Life of Young Children

In youth the spider's web is the sky.—Muria proverb

[853] Muria babies, who are suckled for at least two years and then often weaned at the Jata Pandum, seem to be happy and contented. The Muria are good parents, proud of their children, tolerant towards them in many ways, anxious to teach them things, delighted as they see them grow. 'When a young child walks for the first time, the earth trembles for two-and-a-half days.' But directly a child is old enough to play, he is regarded as old enough to work. The early stage of 'eating while playing and playing while eating' is soon over and the little girls and boys have to take their share of the work of the house. Tiny girls may often be seen staggering about with the youngest baby in their arms or helping their mothers to cow-dung the house. Sometimes you may see a line of boys and girls following their elders back from the jungle, each with a tiny basket of fruit or a minute bundle of leaves on their heads. During this period the children are very dependent on their parents and go everywhere with them. A boy takes his little axe and follows his father to the jungle. A girl takes a pot and goes with her mother to the well.

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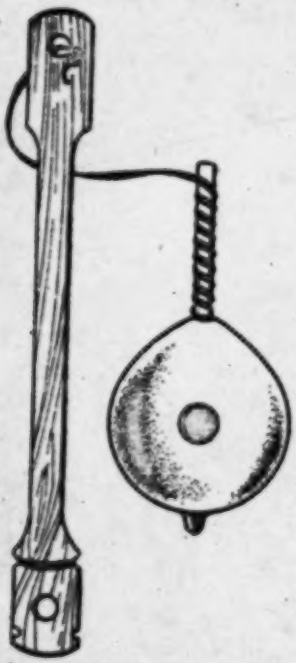

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[524]

Fig. 16. Spinning-top
Length of upright wooden stick, 8¾"

It is now that the parents, and especially the fathers, enjoy the happiest relations with their children. You may often see a father carrying his baby son to the ghotul and sleeping with him there, or taking him to a festival, sometimes even encouraging him to dance as a medium before the clan-god. The father may give a boy a tiny drum or axe, toys that are just like the real thing, or he may make his children little wooden carts or ploughs.

857 From an early age, however, the children begin going to the ghotul in the evenings and sharing as much as they possibly can in the life of the older boys and girls. The whole trend of Muria society is directed towards transferring the parent-child relation into the ghotul-child relation, and the little boy or girl soon finds the Sirdar and Belosa taking the place of father and mother.

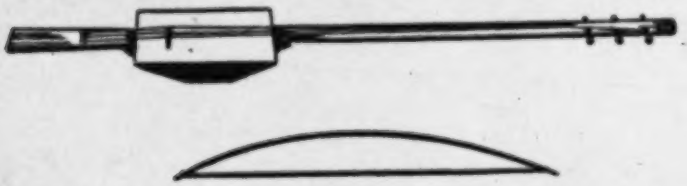
●881 The growth of a boy and girl towards maturity is not marked by any special ceremonies: there are no initiatory rites. But for a girl there are two notable occasions which deeply influence her life during this period. The first of these is the painful experience of being tattooed, the second is the onset of menstruation. To a consideration of these we will now turn.

IV. Tattooing

304 The day when she is tattooed is an important moment in the life of a young Muria girl, a real step towards maturity. It is generally considered desirable

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

534 bamboo and the usual flute. They are fond of gongs, but these are not now so common as they were. At the great Pen Karsita at Ghotpal in 1942, the dancers used slabs of



Kikir Fiddle
(*Length 2'*)

coloured wood, bits of old tin and indeed anything that would make a noise instead of the traditional gongs. Like the Muria, at festivals and even for amusement the Maria use a hunting horn, either a real horn or one made of brass.

541 Besides dancing, the chief Maria relaxation is the cock-fight. At the conclusion of all the bigger bazaars, the men retire to a grove of trees and set their cocks against each other. The cocks are armed with sharp and deadly little knives tied to their feet and fights are to the death. The victor has the privilege of taking the defeated bird, but the real excitement comes from the betting.

V

844 [843] The ceremonies attending birth and marriage are very simple. The pregnant mother is not hampered by many restrictions on her movements. After the birth of the child the placenta is buried in a pit behind the house. Logs are placed above it and the arrow with which the cord was cut is driven into the ground near by. A small shed is made and the 846 mother lives here for some weeks with her child, taking a daily bath above the placenta-pit. At the end of this period of segregation, the husband gives a feast to the neighbours, [551] the child is named and the mother is permitted to return to her household duties. It was to such a feast that the unhappy victim of the Mardum sacrifice was enticed.[1]

881 There are no ceremonies of initiation at puberty, though a

[1] Case No 21.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

girl's first menstruation is marked by special rites of purification. There is little conscious education of the young who grow up in natural freedom and learn by imitation. Marriage is generally adult, but is arranged by the parents and the cross-cousin marriage is common. Betrothal ceremonies are simple. The boy's father goes with gifts and a traditional formula is used—'We have heard there is a flower growing in your garden. We have come to pluck it and put it in our hair'. If a boy's family cannot afford the bride-price required, they may send him to serve as a Lamhada in the house of his future wife. His period of service is for three or five years, and the marriage is often celebrated before it is complete. Marriage by capture, which was probably the traditional method, has not yet died out, and occasionally there is a case of the reverse tradition when a girl comes as a Paitu and forces herself upon a man who is bound to marry her. Widow-remarriage is permitted and indeed enjoined, the husband's younger brother having the first claim on the person and property of the widow. Divorce is rare but is available to either husband or wife. The wife usually achieves it by eloping with another man and the husband in most cases accepts a *fait accompli*.

The actual marriage ceremony is also simple. There is no annointing with turmeric or oil, no perambulation of the sacred pole. Customs vary from place to place, but the traditional marriage has probably only three elements—a celebration which includes feasting, drinking and dancing, the pouring of water from the roof of a house or shed onto the bridal pair and the ceremonial consummmation of the marriage at which bride and bridegroom are forcibly shut up in a room together.

VI

Funeral ceremonies are more elaborate, and since this book is concerned with death, we will consider them in greater detail.

Maria thinking about the destiny and state of the soul after death is as confused as that of more sophisticated people. At least three contradictory views of the subject are held at the same time. I think that the oldest and characteristically

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

involve considerable physical exertion and have proved excellent material for the physical training of the boys in the State schools; at the Muria *gotul* dormitories these games often take the place of dancing and singing. But the only Hill Maria villages which have anything of the kind appear to be those of the Padalibhum and Tapalibhum *pargannas* which are gradually adopting the dormitory organization of their Muria neighbours; and some Bison-horn villages on the borders of the Jagdalpur Muria country are beginning to copy the Murias and Bhattras. Early to bed is the rule for old and young in Maria villages, and the child from the beginning learns to copy his father's activities; his playthings soon become small bows and arrows, fishing-rods and snares, skill in the use of which will make him an asset to the community. Stilt-walking in the early monsoon, occasional use of bull-roarers and bamboo drums, crude ornamentation of the walls of houses or the carving of ornamental combs and beadwork seem to be the only other recreations of Hill Maria youth.

F. Reckoning Time

The Hill Maria names for the months have already been given (page 129), and it has been said that in general the Bison-horn Marias know and use the local Hindu names. They call a month *lenj*, the word used for the moon; but all, even Bison-horn Marias, have to think hard before they can tell you what month it is, and there may be a certain amount of argument on the point. Throughout Bastar there is something of this uncertainty; the local Hindu months are named after festivals such as Goncha, Dasehra and Diwali; and the Bastaria, even if he adopts these, does not like to observe them on the same date in every village, because that would deprive him of the chance of taking part in the celebrations at the surrounding villages.

Though the Bison-horn Maria knows the Hindu names for the days of the week, and uses them in his conversation, the Hill Maria does not. If word comes to a Hill Maria headman that in thirteen days' time he and his villagers have to go to the tahsil court, or to work on the annual road repairs, he will make a tally string with thirteen knots and undo one every day, leaving to keep the appointment on the morning of the last knot. These tally strings are also kept by those who attend markets at fairly regular intervals; and in a murder case, of which the villagers had decided to suppress or postpone informing the police because it was the harvest season, the wife of the murdered man, determined to get justice, had kept a tally string on which she tied a fresh knot every

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

is a vague idea that monozygotic twins are more likely to be fortunate than dizygotic. Thus when Tati Buta's wife gave birth to female twins at Palnar, it was observed that they had but one placenta and the people declared them to be lucky and expected them to survive—which they did. But at Phulpar, where Sodi Mandra's wife gave birth to dizygotic twins, a boy and a girl, both died within a fortnight, and at Bara Harmamunda, where Oyami Kama's wife had male twins of the same order, both parents and the children died soon afterwards. 845

The Marias believe that the cause of such births may be physical, magical or supernatural. When Gangu of Koriras had male twins it was believed to have been due to her eating off a leaf-plate made of double leaves. It was the indiscretion of eating a double cob of maize that gave Oyami Kama's wife her twins. The Marias, therefore, are generally careful not to pick double leaves or fruit—double plantains, ebony fruit, maize and so on. Even a husband should be careful about this. For even though twins are not specially unlucky nobody wants them, and it is hard for the mother to nourish two children properly. If a young girl has twins, it is generally assumed that she has been lying with more than one man. At Gogonda a woman had intercourse both with her husband and a lover on the day of her post-menstrual bath. The result was twins and such grievous offence to the Departed that they killed both children within a few weeks.

The Marias also believe that twins may be the result of intercourse with a supernatural being. At Gudra I was told how Hunga Nupo's wife was visited by a Rau: 'He laughed and went to her. The next day her husband lay with her and in due time she gave birth to twins.' A similar story is told of the wife of Sodi Mandra.

Maria twins, like twins all over India, are named after the inseparable couple Rama and Lakshman. Two boys are Rama and Lakha, two girls Rame and Lakhe. The after-birth, whether double or single, of both children is buried in one pit and only one arrow is put above it. In the same way the twins are supposed to remain very close to each other throughout their lives. 845 553

VI

Grigson was unable to find any trace of the dormitory among the Bison-horn Marias; the people always denied that they existed, and even said that they were a degraded institution. Grigson was rightly suspicious of these denials, for in fact a simple form of dormitory exists in most of the bigger Bison-horn Maria villages. Even to-day the headmen deny their existence—I have never 883

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

883 quite understood why—but once they realize that the enquirer is not prepared to be deceived they talk fairly freely about them.

883 485 In all these villages there are commodious rest-houses for the use of visitors and officials on tour and when they are unoccupied —and they are but seldom used officially—the boys sleep in them as their dormitories. The boys, however, are not fully organized as among the Murias, but a leader may be appointed—in Mokhpal he was called the Sian, in Chote Timnar the Peda. Sometimes an older man sleeps with them and imposes a rough sort of discipline, fining those who are absent without cause. An old Maria, Sodi Mukha, is said to have been very proud of his management of the dormitory at Mokhpal. 'Originally', I was told in this village, 'the boys used to make their house in the middle of the place and it was theirs. But when Government ordered us to make a rest-house we had to build it not as we wanted it, but as the officers wanted it.'

883 841 The girls sometimes sleep together in the house of a lonely widow, but often have their own building. This is occasionally combined with the corporate menstruation hut. The menstruating women sleep on one side and the unmarried girls on the other. It is more common, however, for such women to sleep at home and to leave the unmarried girls to themselves. They too are not organized as in the Muria ghotul, but they are fined for quarrelling and for non-attendance. Both boys and girls have regular duties. They must all bring wood for the dormitory fire. At marriages and funerals they must collect wood and make leaf-plates. In the evening the boys and girls often meet in some central place or in front of the boys' house and dance and play games.

883 836 The relations between the boys and girls are not organized and disciplined as among the Murias. At marriages the members of the two dormitories may slip away together and sleep in some secluded place. At Penta the boys described how a girl would make a hole in the wall near which she slept. 'Then a boy creeps up and pokes a stick through the hole to wake her, and she creeps out to join him.' At Bara Harmamunda, the boys said that they actually went into the girls' house, though I fancy this is exceptional.

883 The Bison-horn Maria dormitory does not seem to play an important part in the social or religious life of the tribe. It is not established in the mythology; it does not serve as a school of dancing or as a place for initiation into sexual experience; there is no need in these pacific hills for village guard-rooms. Whether at any time the institution existed in a more flourishing form it is now impossible to say.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

to be a definite infiltration of Bison-horn Maria influences from Bastar. The illustration in this Supplement shows some of the Lahiri Maria girls and gives some indication of the quantity and Bison-horn style of the ornaments.

Before climbing to Kuvakodi I had sent some Marias up the valley to Nugur village in Kutru Mar, on the Indrawati banks, to invite to my camp the Kuruk boatmen who had taken Dr. Mitchell and myself in their canoes in November 1927, down the river from Nugur to the Jitam rapids.[1] Tati Ogha and Rajintappa, the leaders of our 1927 ' fleet ', and several of the boatmen arrived at Lahiri that evening, and recognized me, after thirteen years, with tears of joy. They were received and made at home with the utmost courtesy—that almost stately courtesy so characteristic of the Gond, whether of Marias at a feast or of Betul Gonds receiving the bride's party at the bridegroom's village; although the Bastar Hill Marias look down on Kuruks or ' Jharaman ' (netters), the Lahiri headmen could not do enough for these Kuruks, giving them the best of the food, refilling their leaf-cups with *mahua* spirit, and showing a real delight when I tied a *pagri* on each Kuruk's head, and presented them with cloth and beads, while they insisted on the strangers getting the best places from which to watch the dancing.

The motor journey from Lahiri to Surjagarh, about 59 miles in all, involved a return on our outward tracks through Bhamragarh to a point three miles east of Pirmeli, thence roughly north or north-west through Kandar, Burgi and Markel villages to Chukmitapalli, and thence due east through Hitawara to Surjagarh; despite a very early start we reached Surjagarh after dark, thanks to ' receptions ' in every intervening village and, above all, to delays for treating yaws patients. All these Maria villages have excellent human material, and some surprises for the visitor. At Burgi, for example, a boy dashed off to his house to emerge as a uniformed boy scout! Some years before an attempt to start a boy scout movement in Ahiri zamindari had met with some initial success, but had apparently died out. Yet this boy had carefully preserved his uniform in a leaf-box, and, more hopeful, he and some other boys had preserved the memory of the lessons they had had on cleanliness and hygiene and in a minor way were still influencing the villages to carry out what they had learnt. It is often assumed that the Marias and similar men of the backwoods have never seen anything of the outer world. Comparable with the visit of a party of Bastar Hill Marias to the Allahabad Exhibition mentioned on page 71, was the fact that this boy and some other Maria youths had been taken two or three years before to a scout jamboree at Delhi. When I asked

[1] See p. 164.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

[88] 177 him his chief impression of Delhi, he spoke of the Kutb Minar, which he told me was almost as fine and tall as the factory chimney of the Allapilli saw-mills! Either at Burgi or the next village another phenomenon was a Maria in a good tweed coat above khaki shorts and stockings with flashes, wearing over all an excellent fawn Curzon topi with a dark brown pugaree, far smarter than I have ever owned. I discovered that his clothes had all been given him by the zamindari of Ahiri, when he had become a member of the Sironcha Independent Local Board. That night, still in his fine feathers, he came to see the dancing in my camp at Surjagarh: but as the drumming swelled and the dances warmed up he found himself unable to keep up the detachment appropriate to his pseudo-*sahib* status, and gradually divested himself of topi, coat, shirt and shoes, finally peeling off his shorts to reveal beneath them the usual abbreviated loin-cloth of the Maria, seizing a drum, and joining in the dance: he was then indistinguishable from any other Maria but for his air of authority as a headman, and his 'undress' was typically Maria, as described in the *Gazetteer*[1]:—

291 304 'Their dress is scanty, consisting of a compromise between a *langoti* and a *dhoti*, a strip of cloth wound tightly round the waist in rope-like folds and passed between the legs with the spare end hanging down in front below the knees. Often this garment diminishes to the scantiest rag. They adorn their necks with handsome strings of beads and their arms occasionally with metal and glass bangles. Their ears are pulled out of shape by the weight of numerous brass rings with which they are usually garnished, and occasionally they wear *pagris*.'

632 This Independent Local Board for the Sironcha taluq consisted then of eighteen members, of whom only six were aboriginals, although there were 3,354 aboriginal to 2,850 non-aboriginal voters. The aboriginal members were almost all returned unopposed, and were *de facto* the nominees of the zamindar, who had had to use his full influence to persuade them to join this peculiar body! It was in the circumstances no surprise discovery that the open, mainly non-aboriginal, country around Sironcha and Ahiri got far more benefit from the Board's expenditure and services than the wild interior of Ahiri zamindari. But the Maria members were utterly illiterate and at sea in the Board meetings. It was the zamindar's influence alone that secured for the Maria areas such services as the Board gave them. Nevertheless, the mere fact that there is an independent local authority for Sironcha tahsil secures that at least this tahsil does get spent on it all that it pays in cesses and other local taxes, and a fair share of Government grants to local bodies, in marked contrast to the fate of the zamindaris of Garchiroli tahsil, who come under the tender mercies of the Chanda District Council

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

unchallenged. I emphasize the word sympathy: the method of threatening and punishing the headmen must be given up, and every effort made to win their understanding support for the new measures and even to entrust them with their execution.

The walks and talks at Surjagarh delayed the start on the 32 miles journey to Jawarwandi, and the car and lorry were more than once bogged on the way, so that once again we arrived in camp long after dark. It was on this journey that we crossed the tongues of Bastar territory mentioned on page 378 of this Note: in the southern tongue, in fact, we were bogged for an hour or more, but, as in Bastar, were readily helped to extricate ourselves. I noticed and stopped in *gotul* or bachelors' dormitories in several villages before and after Surjagarh. Many of these are treated by touring officers as though they were rest-huts built for their special convenience, like the *chauri* of Hyderabad or Berar villages. They use them also for posting up legal notices, and in two I found nailed to the wooden posts copies of the *Yudda Samachar* or War News in the Marathi edition published by the provincial War Purposes Fund for dissemination of accurate war information in all villages; this showed singular lack of intelligence on the part of those who controlled such propaganda in Chanda district, for in these Maria villages not a person was literate and very few could speak Marathi. The *gotul* culture here must be similar to that among the Murias just across the Bastar border in North Antagarh, but in the short time available I did not overcome the Marias' natural reluctance to discuss this intimate social organization, a reluctance heightened, I suspect, by the fact that here on the fringes of the *gotul* country the institution is the butt of Hindu ridicule or prurient curiosity. But there certainly are *gotul* in these villages, at least for the youths, and I found one, with some difficulty owing to the reticence of the local Marias in these mixed villages, at Erka in Rangi zamindari. So far as I could make out, they are still to be found in the Partially Excluded zamindaris of Drug.

Jarawandi is the headquarters of a sub-zamindar holding under Ahiri a taluq of twenty-three villages: the rival claims of Ahiri and Jarawandi to the seignorial dues have been a nuisance to the local Marias. Here there was a large gathering of headmen and *Sendhias* of *patti* groups of villages. Enquiries from them and later at Murumgaon showed that the *panchayat* system described in the extract on pages 286-8 of this book is not only as vigorous as ever, but is more widespread than previously recorded, there being *Sendhias* in almost every Chanda zamindari. It had been stated to me that the zamindars outside Ahiri had usurped the authority of the *Sendhia* and his *patti panchayat*, but I doubt the truth of this, and

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the later waves of Gonds and Raj-Gonds which set up the kingdom of the Gond Maharajas of Chanda. It would be very interesting also to see whether anything survives of the peculiarly Hill Maria and Muria cult of the clan-god as distinct from the more developed religious system of the Raj-Gonds, with its wonderful foundation of myth, the full richness and religious and cultural significance of which the world will begin to realize when Haimendorf's epoch-making book on the Raj-Gonds of Adilabad is published in the near future, and when it is followed up by similar detailed investigation of Gond life and custom in all parts of Gondwana. How far there is any common mythological basis of Raj-Gond and Maria culture would be a factor of great significance. I am conscious that the weakest side of this book has been its failure to probe into the mythology and folk-songs of the Bastar Marias. I do not believe Hill Maria culture to be nearly as rich in that respect as Muria culture is shown to be by Verrier Elwin's book, *The Muria and their Ghotul*. Yet there must be more to be said of the folk-tales and mythology of the Marias of Bastar than has appeared in the first edition of this book; indeed the second section of Elwin's Comment in this edition gives some indication of the wealth of Maria myth awaiting record in Bastar.

Another question clearly needing investigation is the extent to which the *gotul* as an institution is a real factor in Chanda Maria life. I have implied in this Note that it survives, but is gradually being relegated into obscurity as a result of the impact of Hindu ideas and of Hindu ridicule. That would, however, apply more in the northern zamindaris than in the country along the Bastar border from the River Indrawati north to Jharapapra. This part of Ahiri zamindari is landlocked and largely protected from the influx of Hindu ideas save in so far as these are brought in by zamindari and government subordinates. The fact moreover that the *Sendhia* and *patti panchayat* organization is still vigorous in Ahiri zamindari should be an indication that there has been no psychological inhibition on these Marias preserving their tribal life and cultural inheritance unimpaired. It would be interesting, however, to trace the outer boundaries of the *gotul* system and to see what has happened to it, when, and why, in these outer fringes.

This Note is stronger in its picture of economic conditions. Here the most significant fact has been the banning of *jalapod* or shifting cultivation during and after the Great War of 1914-18. One would like, given the time and opportunity, to get at the psychological reaction of the Maria to this as expressed in his folk-songs; one would like also to be able to go through the records of criminal

2: Elwin
883

AW32 Gond AW32

[For information on the ghotul and the activities of its members, see category 116, pp. 269-682.]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

PREFACE

THE subject of this book is the ghotul, the village dormitory, the bothie, the bachelors' hall—*Jünglingshaus* is an attractive German word used recently by Ruben—of the Muria of Bastar State. Similar institutions are widely distributed among communities of the Austro-Asiatic cultures, though none have been studied in sufficient detail for full comparison. But on the existing evidence it seems probable that the Bastar ghotul is one of the most highly developed and carefully organized in the world. For what is a village guardroom for the Naga, a boys' club among the Uraon, a refuge for temporary sexual association in Indonesia, is for the Muria the centre of social and religious life.

The study of an institution that is related functionally to every aspect of a tribe's life presents certain technical difficulties of presentation. The culture pattern must be developed in due order; but this means that there will be many references in the earlier chapters that can only be explained later on. A book of this kind, where everything fits in, which describes a culture that is integrated and intelligible, has to be read in bulk—as it were—rather than in sequence. For the reader's convenience, therefore, I give here a brief introductory account of the ghotul in the light of which Part I must be read.

The Muria ghotul is an institution, tracing its origin to Lingo Pen, a famous cult-hero of the Gond, of which all the unmarried boys and girls of the tribe must be members. This membership is carefully organized; after a period of testing, boys and girls are initiated and given a special title which carries with it a graded rank and social duties. Leaders are appointed to organize and discipline the society; throughout this book I call the boys' leader the Sirdar and the girls' leader the Belosa. Boy members are known as chelik and girl members as motiari. The relations between chelik and motiari are governed by the type of ghotul to which they belong. Two distinct types of organization are recognized. In the older, classical, type of ghotul, boys and girls pair off in a more or less permanent relationship which lasts till marriage. They are often 'married' and cohabit in the dormitory for several years. In the more modern form of ghotul, such exclusive associations are forbidden and partners must constantly be changed.

Chelik and motiari have important duties to perform on all social occasions. The boys act as acolytes at festivals, the girls as bridesmaids at weddings. Both dance before the clan-god and at the great fairs. They form a choir at the funerals of important people. Their games and dances enliven village life and redeem it from the crushing monotony that is its normal characteristic in other parts of India.

The intimate association of the ghotul with every aspect of Muria life means, of course, that we must study the whole of that life in less or greater detail. The ghotul must be put in its place. For this reason I have divided this book into two Parts. Part I gives the setting and background, Part II describes the life of the chelik and motiari in detail.

In Part I, I begin with a description of the geopolitical background of the tribe, and give a brief account of the three elements that compose it—the Jhoria, who are Hill Muria now settled in the plains, the Muria immigrants from the north, and the very old aboriginal population of eastern Kondagaon. In Chapter II, I describe the economic life of the Muria; the ghotul is only a night club; all day its members are engrossed in the quest for food and drink. The chelik are kept busy in both axe- and plough-cultivation, hunting, fishing,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

221
196

the Muria do not illuminate their houses for it, but tie ears of grain in long strings over their doors. Road work begins, and everybody is busy reaping.

November.. A busy month in the fields. Since September the ghotul have been almost deserted by the chelik, who spend their time in little huts watching the crops. Reaping, threshing, winnowing and storing grain occupies everyone. From the end of October the motiari have been going out dancing the Diwali and, where this practice is unknown, boys and girls go together for the Hulki dances.

December.. In some villages the Jata Pandum is held in this month. People cut their sarson crops and store them. They collect myrabolams till the end of January.

IV. Cultivation and the Ghotul

883 241 At Padbera and a number of villages in the neighbourhood of Antagarh the ghotul has its own property. The villagers give the chelik a piece of land for cultivation which is known as *chelik-parha*. The boys bring the wood from the neighbouring forest, spread it on the field, burn it and sow the seed. The girls see to the weeding and when the crop is ready all join in the harvest. The girls husk the rice in the ghotul itself and when it is ready give a feast to the village. The following day they offer an egg, red and black powder and liquor to the Kanyang and Rau of the field for the protection of the ghotul.

The chelik and motiari sometimes go to work as a ghotul. Should a party of visitors arrive from another village for a dance and there is no food or liquor for their entertainment, the boys approach one of the wealthier villagers (who of course may have several of his own children in the ghotul) and ask him to advance them rice and pulse, some liquor and a pig, promising they will go to work for him when he needs help in weeding his fields, gathering his harvest or mending a broken embankment. At other times villagers who are in urgent need of help employ the ghotul children and pay them with gifts of grain and pulse. I am told that money is rarely given. Sometimes the boys and girls only receive their food, though this food at least in the evening must be good and should include pork and liquor. When the children receive gifts of grain they save it up, storing it in the house of the leader, till there is enough for a big feast. This is prepared and eaten near the ghotul, or helps to augment the feast at the end of a dancing expedition. The parents are also invited; since the mothers may not go inside the ghotul, the feast is enjoyed outside.

V. The Muria's Food

Kare ahār ta pele pahār. If you get enough to eat you can push a mountain aside.—Muria proverb

883 In addition to work in the fields, chelik and motiari are kept busy all day long, in and around their homes. The motiari must fetch water from the well or stream, collect leaves from the jungle for leaf-cups and plates, nurse the babies, clean and cow-dung the buildings, husk rice and grain, help in the cooking, feed goats, pigs and cattle. The boys must fetch firewood from the forest, make string from hemp and bark, prepare the ploughs and carts, keep the buildings in repair, and look after the cattle and other animals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

Their interest in these household occupations may be seen in scores of homely riddles, which describe them in vivid symbol.

Drumming, drumming, what is that drum?
At cock-crow she is drumming.

A motiari is expected to be back from the ghotul by dawn and should be busy husking grain before her parents are awake.

A broom is 'the thing that licks quickly and then falls flat'; a leaf-plate is 'the little tank full of thorns' or 'the boy that morning and evening gives a share to all'; a pot of curds hawked round the village is described as 'the white cock going from house to house'.

But the main interest of chelik and motiari—for after all they are still only boys and girls—is in food. *'Bhaio bikān kandiya ma dhyān.* As soon as morning comes, his mind is in the cooking-pot.' Of things to eat the Muria have a considerable variety, much more than would be available to people of similar economic status in a town. All the rich and varied produce of the great Bastar jungles is open to them; the State has not yet interfered with their right to natural roots, fruit and leaves—they may take what they want so long as they do no damage.

As Grigson says of the Maria: 'The difficulty is not so much to say what they collect and eat as what they do not; in fact, if one were to take one of the lists of trees, shrubs and herbs compiled by the Central Provinces Forest Department and copy from it the names of all edible forest products, one would not even then produce an exhaustive list.'[1] I do not propose to give such a list here; but I will briefly mention the things that chelik and motiari like best. Meat and fish probably stand first in popularity—I will describe them later.

FIG. 5. Uspal rice husker. Length 5'9"

Among fruit trees, the mahua is supreme. When the flowers begin to fall, the cattle are kept tied up until the women and children have gathered them. They spread them in bright yellow patches swiftly turning brown on rocks before their houses, in specially-made enclosures. When dry enough, the flowers are beaten with heavy sticks, sometimes with the wooden doors of a pigsty. The pulp is made into chutney with dried khamer fruit and tamarind kernels, and eaten with rice or gruel. The oil is used for cooking and lighting. The flowers are stored in baskets, and make one of the most eagerly demanded gifts when the chelik make a dance tour of a village.

Another popular fruit is, of course, the mango. The motiari fetch baskets of wild mangoes from the forest where the trees grow in profusion, cut them up in the ghotul and give them with chilli and salt to the chelik.

Aonra fruit is liked, and there are many riddles about it. 'A green pigeon came from Porrobhum and laid its eggs on a leaf.' 'The white bird hides its eggs under its wings.' Other popular fruits are those of the thorny bhoir—'Mother bites, but daughter invites'; the kurlu—'The little sparrow's liver is sweet'; the aimra, the char, the jamun and the tamarind. Tendu fruit is picked while still unripe and put in kodon chaff to mature. Sometimes it is buried in the ground and a fire is lit above it. When ripe, it is eaten raw. Wild figs are eaten ripe or dried and ground up with flour.

[1] Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 .AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

times be of very great length. In Kuntpadar there were two measuring over 226
21 feet long. 227

The *dhir* is an elaborate and beautifully constructed trap, from four to eight feet long and one and a half feet high. The bamboo slats are very fine and set close together. Entrance to the trap is by a series of small doors with spiral staircases going inwards and upwards with bamboo points facing in to prevent egress. When the fish have entered—and the *dhir* is only used for the smallest creatures—they are shaken out of a small hole at the top left-hand corner. In a riddle this trap is described, '*Netânek korinta murwus tagat ke peshinta*: [524]
It goes in behind and comes out through the roof', or 'It eats with four mouths and relieves through the fifth'.

A special arrow with a detachable head is sometimes used (Fig. 12). The arrow-head after sticking in the fish is pulled out of its socket but remains attached to the shaft by a cord. The shaft remains as a float, and is easily recovered.

Ceremonial beats for fish are held before the eating of the new mangoes. 226
The chelik gather poisonous leaves and roots from the forest and throw them 278
into the water. The fish are stupefied and float to the surface and are then easily collected. They are distributed among the villagers, who eat them with the new mangoes.

Many different roots and leaves are used as fish-poison. At Phunder they gave us the names of the fruit of the mode tree, the khuni plant and kurra bark. These three are powdered, mixed together and thrown into the water. Women are not supposed to go into the water when this is done.

Before fishing the Muria invoke the Yer Kanyang (Water Maiden), asking 226
for success and promising a token present. When the first fish is caught 776
they say, 'Whatever ill may be, from widow, witch, from squint or evil eye, 782
be on you'. They spit on it and throw it back into the water. If there is a very successful catch, they may sacrifice a goat or pig on the bank of the river in honour of the Water Maiden.

XI. Liquor

To the Muria liquor-drinking is both a duty and a pleasure. Mahua spirit 273
is a duty because it must be offered to the gods at every festival, at the naming of a child, at a marriage, at a funeral. But the juice of the sago-palm, and even landa rice-beer (where that is taken), is only for pleasure. I will consider duty first.

The mahua tree is a source of food and oil as well as of liquor, and for this 273
reason is greatly honoured. The tree, says Dalton, 'is held sacred by the 824
Gonds, and truly no product of nature has greater claims on their gratitude'.[1] The Muria place a branch of the tree in the centre of the marriage booth; they lay the dead to rest beneath its shade; it is taboo to cut it in a clearing for shifting cultivation; as a source of alcoholic refreshment it was discovered by Lingo himself. Like the Gond and Baiga, the Muria are bound to offer it on every ceremonial occasion; the clan-god demands it, the Village Mother can never have enough, there is no better means of keeping the Departed content and quiet.[2]

In the ghotul, a donation of mahua spirit must be brought by a young boy 273
aspiring to childhood; its consumption is a necessary feature of an election 883

[1] E. T. Dalton, *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1872), p. 281.
[2] The Kaya put a mahua leaf in the head of a new-born child.—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 52.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

273 of ghotul leaders; it is distributed when a boy or girl leaves the ghotul after marriage; it is a convenient and compendious means of paying a fine. The [883] chelik offer it to their drums before a wedding, and drink it in honour of Lingo at the end of the Pus Kolang dance.

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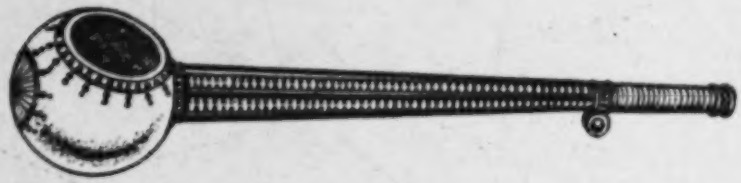

FIG. 13. Brass *orhi* used for ladling liquor
Length 8"-9"

273 This homely drink, so intimately connected with every aspect of their lives,
656 so accessible to the forest-dwellers, so readily and cheaply prepared, may not be distilled by the Muria in Bastar or by the aboriginals anywhere. Its profits must be divided between the State and the middleman. Home-distillation is everywhere forbidden, and the privilege of the manufacture and sale of the spirit is farmed out to contractors in open auction. The business has thus passed into the hands of the most degenerate type of Hindu and Mussalman adventurer, for few aboriginals have either the means or the enterprise to compete with the sophisticated aggression of the outside world in the open market. These adventurers rob both the aboriginals and the State. They dilute the spirit; they put soda in it to cover the fact of their tampering; they make false returns; they use filthy water in unclean pots;[1] their shops are centres of the most degraded type of alien immigrant into tribal territory.

When the National Congress came into power in 1938, they declared that they would not apply their Prohibition laws to Europeans or aboriginals. It would have been more consistent had they allowed the aboriginal to distil his own liquor and had thus ceased to draw revenue from his drinking habits. The real evil of the present system is not that the aboriginal gets drunk, but that in order to get his liquor he is forced into contact with the worst type of alien and outsider.

In this respect conditions in Bastar are better than in many other parts of India. The Excise Department is efficient and understanding; the State controls the mahua trade, but allows the aboriginal great freedom in the use of toddy and salphi. But nothing can atone for the evil of depriving a primitive people of a natural right.

439 However, once that has been done, the arrangements in Bastar are as good
[435] as can be imagined. The spirit is cheap, only two annas a bottle,[2] and passes are freely granted to the Muria and Maria to purchase whatever is needed for
[674] ceremonial and social occasions. As a result there appears to be very little illicit distillation in either Kondagaon or Narayanpur. The figures of prosecutions for the five years, 1937–41, are these:

[1] The riddle 'Man and wife piss in the same lane', to which the answer is 'The two pipes of the still', probably hints at the dirt of the Kalar's out-still.
[2] This was in 1941.

42

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

custom that the man who goes to the trouble of tapping the tree, protecting it with thorns, and making a bamboo ladder, has a right over it, especially when it is growing far away in the forest. The trees are not taxed but the villagers are not allowed to sell the juice. Disputes simply arise over the right to take the liquor for personal use.

The salphi juice, however, is not generally so intoxicating as to cause quarrels in the same degree as landa rice-beer or mahua spirit. Bedford's *Technical Excise Manual* (par. 263) gives some account of the comparative alcoholic strengths of these drinks. 'The alcoholic strength of toddy varies according to the nature of the palm tapped, the season of the year, the time for which it has been drawn and other circumstances. The average results of a number of tests made with toddy from all parts of the Madras Presidency were:

		Percentage by Volume
Coconut ..	.. 85·7° U.P.	8·1
Palmyra ..	.. 90·8° U.P.	5·2
Date ..	.. 91·4° U.P.	4·9
Sago ..	.. 89·6° U.P.	5·9

Toddy exposed for sale in Bengal in 1909 was found generally to range in alcoholic strength from about 93° to 94° U.P. When reasonably fresh it has a food value somewhat comparable with that of well-made malt beer.' The average strength of landa rice-beer may be taken at about 85° U.P. (8·6% by volume). Mahua spirit is much stronger—*rasi* may be sold at strengths of 50° to 70° U.P. and *phuli* of 5° to 35° U.P. The average for *rasi* is 60° U.P. (22·8% by volume) and for *phuli* 25° U.P. (42·8%).

XIII

With all these varied economic and social activities how far do chelik and motiari meet one another during the day? Does tribal custom allow them to share the same tasks or are the functions of men and women sharply differentiated?

The girls, of course, have the major part of the house-work to see to. They cook, bring water, clean the buildings with cow-dung and whitewash, husk the grain, grind wheat or spices. They generally make the *mussni* mats, tie grass into brooms, prepare leaf-plates and cups. In the house a woman must not climb on the roof and she must not take grain out of the dhusir grain-bin, although it may only be removed at her command. A motiari before the menarche may go into the room where the Pot of the Departed is kept, but not afterwards—for she is going to join another clan and has no part with these ancestors; her spirit will mingle with those of her husband's family.

The chelik, on the other hand, have comparatively little to do in the house. They may cook and bring water when the womenfolk are in their periods; they have the business of erecting the framework of the building which the girls will later plaster with mud, and they thatch the roof.

But their main work is outside. In male hands is all the business of the fields and forest. They make and use the ploughs; they cut wood for fuel or cultivation; they embank the fields; they tend the cattle, make and drive their carts; they go to hunt and fish; they watch the crops and thrash and winnow them.

Yet there remain many chances for sharing of labour between chelik and motiari. A boy does not always see his motiari in the dark. Both can repair

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

the embankment of a field, both can join in spreading brushwood over a clearing.

A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. But she must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife, or thrust the plunge-traps into the water.

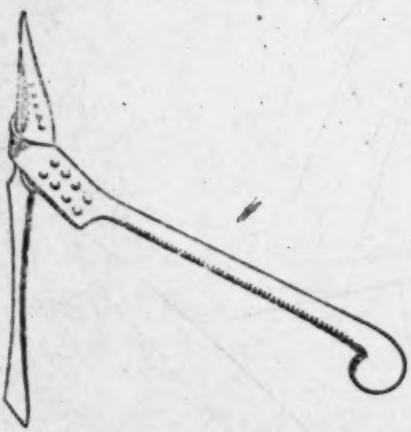

FIG. 14. *Baras* or *tatli* used for cutting up meat and planing wood
Length of upright 9"

A motiari, once she is mature, must not sleep on a machan to watch the fields. She must never go with a boy to sleep there—if she does a tiger will shake it and perhaps kill them both. In some villages, she may cow-dung the thrashing-floor, provided it is of her own clan, but she cannot thrash with her feet, or winnow the grain from a fan though she may do it with her hands. She must not sow seeds of rice or millet, though she does sometimes sow beans and vegetables.

The motiari gather mahua flowers with the boys; they collect myrabolams, and extract oil. Very important, they take food to the boys while they are working in the fields. This is a constant motive of romance in folk-tales.

The motiari may attend a funeral and most of the festivals. At the New Eating ceremonies they prepare the plates and cups for the feast, and are eager spectators of the ceremonies. They dance at most festivals with the boys. But I know of no Muria women Siraha-mediums or Gunia-diviners, though these are not unknown in Chhattisgarh. I am told, however, that there is a female Siraha of Pendrawandin in Gudabera, and there is a tradition that in former times it was the women who sacrificed to the gods. 'In those days, they used to cut the tail instead of the head and the bird or animal instead of dying would escape. Men soon got annoyed at this and said, "You women do not know how to do it; from now we will sacrifice". Men then began to cut off the heads of the birds and animals and the sacrifices were complete. This is why women do not eat the head of any bird or animal offered to the gods. They said to their husbands, "Now the head is yours, ours is the tail".'

There are not many absolute taboos. A man must not husk grain or grind it. He must not wash women's clothes or wear them—except at night. Girls must not wear boys' turbans and clothes except on ceremonial occasions.

On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
522

with a pleased recognition that the marriage at which they had so earnestly assisted had been consummated.[1]

VI. The Ghotul's Share in the Ceremony

Nāg nāgin he bihao ma dondiya he salmal. The little fish are kept busy at the cobras' wedding.—Muria saying

585
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No wonder that there is no greater threat to a Muria boy or girl than that the ghotul members will not attend their marriage. For from beginning to end the smooth progress of the rite depends on the chelik and motiari. For a week beforehand the motiari instruct the bride in the ghotul. Chelik and motiari accompany the bridegroom when he goes to fetch his bride; they sing and dance at every point of the ceremony; the chelik go to bring in the wood for the booth and the girls direct them to its site by dancing on the spot with a mahua tree. Boys and girls go together to fetch the earth for the manda-platform, and dance round it when it is ready. The motiari attend through all the long-drawn business of anointing, they carry the bridal pair about on their backs; they bathe them, do their hair, feed them and weep with them. At the central moment of the rite, it is the drumming of the chelik and singing of the motiari that provides dignity, colour and excitement. Chelik and motiari again assist at the concluding ceremonies in the bridegroom's house, and it is the chelik who ultimately arrange the consummation of the marriage.

But these ritual duties are only the beginning of their task. They have to see to the entertainment of a large number of guests. The Sirdar arranges for wood and organizes the dances; the Belosa sees to the supply of water and leaves. She and her motiari have to make leaf-cups and plates for the male visitors (they only give leaves to women visitors, considering that they should be able to make their own). This in itself is a very considerable task, but in addition nearly all the cooking is done in the ghotul camp, and chelik and motiari have to serve food at meals. I have never seen girls work so hard as at Nayanar, where there were three weddings one after another: as the chelik were leading one husband and his bride to bed, the motiari were preparing the next bride for her fate. The girls never seemed to stop working; they were engaged day and night; yet though they began to look very tired

[1] Similar customs are observed by other tribes. In Siriti, I watched Bison-horn Maria girls escort the bride to bed, though here the groom had to drag her into his house. Then a jovial party stole a cock and scattered its feathers along the path. The Juang boys escort the bridegroom from the *dorbar* (dormitory), sometimes tying him hand and foot, to where his bride is waiting. They make him sit with her and say, 'See, here is your house: look to it. Here is a new girl, big-breasted and young. Do not disappoint her.' The boys piss inside the house, throw rubbish over the floor, then tie the door and run away. Bride and groom must clean the house before the marriage is consummated. I have witnessed a similar ceremony in a Bondo village.

For the Kota of the Nilgiri Hills consummation was in the nature of a test, like the custom of 'bundling' in Wales. In the morning, the girl was questioned whether she liked her husband: if she did, the marriage was confirmed, if not, it was annulled.—E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes in Southern India* (Madras, 1907), p. 62. Here, as with the Hill Maria and other very primitive tribes, the payment of bride-price and consummation was the marriage: there was little more to it.

By Hindus of Western Bengal, the third night after the wedding is called Phulsajya, or the flower bed. 'Revealdropping goes on freely.'—S. N. Roy, 'Straw-Achar in West Bengal', *Man in India*, Vol. VIII, p. 190. In Mysore, the Brahmins observe the beautiful garbhadana ceremony, when the husband in a room filled with flowers pours fruit into his wife's lap and the priest prays 'May a male embryo enter thy womb as an arrow the quiver'.—M. N. Srinivas, op. cit., pp. 134f.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585
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towards the end, I did not once see them strained or quarrelsome. Their tremendous vitality kept the thing on the move and made everyone cheerful and happy.

In return for all this work, the chelik and motiari seem to get very little, one meal a day and a little liquor. The bride and bridegroom distribute small keepsakes, rings and beads. The motiari of the bride's ghotul demand and receive four annas as *mundi*-cowrie. The chelik also demand a new mandri drum from the bridegroom in compensation for the loss of one of their girls. They are generally given eight annas instead. This present is called *sakta*. The boy also has to give *chitkul*-cymbals, or four annas, to his own chelik.

People treat the chelik and motiari with great respect, for there is great fear of offending them—a strike, which is not unknown, can upset the entire proceedings. It is

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DETAIL

Fig. 23. *Chapali-mundi* necklace, from Kanipadar, of red, white and blue beads
Length 5' 5"

[831] noteworthy also that there is no exchange of obscenities between the older people and the ghotul members. When the old women smear their dirty hands on all available male faces, catching hold of their private parts or pouring haldi over their buttocks, they never do it to the chelik. It would be considered equally shocking for a married man to poke his stick at a motiari

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

or to abuse her as he may do freely to the married women. There is no doubt about it: these girls and boys are set apart. They must not be touched by sophisticated adult hands.

VII. The Significance of the Marriage Ceremony

Where both boy and girl belong to the same village and come from the same ghotul, the procedure is simplified and shortened, but otherwise follows the same lines as in the foregoing accounts. It will be seen that, in spite of various differences, the essentials of the rite are everywhere the same. The fundamental things seem to me to be these—the preparation and instruction of the bride in the ghotul, the ceremonial fetching of the bride by the bridegroom and his party, the building of a marriage-booth with its associated magical materials and patterns, the exchange of gifts and payment of a bride-price, the liberal use of oil and haldi to consecrate the bride and bridegroom, the procession round a marriage pole or booth seven times (the last two items are obvious borrowings from Hinduism), the tying together of the bridal pair, the pouring water over them (probably a development of a Maria custom), minor rituals designed to emphasize the unity of the couple and to ensure the potency of the bridegroom, the last visit to the ghotul and the official bedding of the couple by the chelik.

Let us consider the meaning of these essentials in more detail. In a brilliant analysis of the marriage ritual of the Bihari Kayasth, W. G. Archer takes a comparison from modern art. 'If we are to find an analogy for this wedding ritual, the nearest would be a surrealist poem, ballet or novel. In a surrealist work the action has a strange power and a mysterious charm. Strange persons develop their intriguing contacts and the action has an air of irrational urgency. On analysis it is seen that many of the actions are symbolic and the poem, novel or the ballet generates its power from the semi-conscious associations which its dialogue, gestures, scenery and action evoke. In the ritual of a Kayasth wedding, there is a similar use of irrational action, a similar use of persons with a strangely inflated power, and a similar use of semi-conscious symbols. The meaning of the ritual may be submerged and, for many, may be scarcely comprehended but its basis is in a symbolic system and its total effect is overpowering.'[1]

This will apply also to a Muria wedding, though the meaning here is sometimes more obvious; the Kayasth is a highly developed community and naturally resorts more to symbolic concealment of its real interests and desires. The different elements in a Muria marriage can be easily distinguished. There are first the many rites that emphasize the break with the old life and the entry to the new. There are the symbolic actions and materials to express the sexual aspect of the marriage and to ensure its fertility. There are the symbolic or overt arrangements to protect bride and bridegroom at this critical moment of their fortunes. The social and business aspect of the union of the two families is always prominent.

The length, complexity and extravagance of the marriage ritual is necessary to impress on boys and girls who are so used to love and sex the importance of the step they are now taking. Marriage here does not, as in so many other cultures, mark an initiation into the mysteries of sex. It is not, usually, the binding together of two people who have fallen in love with each

[1] From *The Wedding of the Writers*, the manuscript of which I have been privileged to see before publication.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

887 goes to the market and attends the festivals, though there is not so much for her in these as for the men. But her real hour of happiness is at a marriage. Here she may lay aside restraint and recapture the abandon of youth. Now she may drink heavily and for a few hours in blissful intoxication free herself of inhibitions and forget all that is tiresome and weary in her life. If the older men enliven the marriage scene with their buffoonery, the older women divert it with their obscenity. There is nothing that they may not say, little they may not do. Their songs and their dance movements are outrageous and never fail to rouse laughter in the crowd.

888 In a very few cases Muria women grow riggish in old age. They adorn themselves with many ornaments and wear bright-coloured saris. This behaviour is not approved.

You are an old woman,
Forget your dances.
You are an old woman,
Yet on your buttocks is a tiny cloth
And flowers are in your hair.

Although there is a rule that women should never use their ghotul titles after marriage, when a group of old women who have grown up together in the same ghotul meet in later life, they usually use the old names in order to awaken happy memories of the past. I am told that then they exchange reminiscences through half the night and that such times are among the happiest of their lives.

886 As elsewhere in aboriginal India, the climacteric does not appear to be dreaded or even to be specially noticed. In India, women are old at 45 and they greet the cessation of the menstrual period with relief that they are now saved from its embarrassments. I have not been able to find any myth about the climacteric; there does not seem to be any rule about it or any desire to avert it. It is a purely natural phenomenon. 'The stream that flowed so long is dry', 'the old tree has begun to wither'. Some people believe that the tree withers because 'no one goes to an old woman,[1] so her vagina has no grain to eat; no rain falls in her stream, so how can it flow?'

II. Death and the Ghotul

761 The ghotul is a place of separations. But when a chelik or motiari dies
883 there is a special feeling of sorrow, a sense of outrage, the conviction that something exceptional and abnormal has occurred. Sometimes the ghotul is closed for three days; where it is not closed the children gather sadly and there is no singing and there should be no intimacies. When older people die the dormitory is not closed. 'The ghotul is the *Dinda-mahâl*, the Palace of the Unmarried. As the Raja's Palace is not shut when people die in the town, neither is ours. But if two or three of the chelik and motiari die, then we shut it.' At Dongrigura, they said that when a chelik died, the motiari wept and next day initiated one of the younger boys and gave him the dead chelik's title, so that there might be no gap in their fellowship. When the Subedar died, they made his little brother Subedar next day and gave him as 'husband' to the Subedarin, his age, or elder brother's 'widow'.

The death of a chelik or motiari is always abnormal. The death of a little child or of a child in the womb is no less unnatural. 'Just as in a field, rice

[1] A rather cynical proverb runs: 'How disgusted is a man who eats stale food in the morning and goes to bed with an old woman at night.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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sometimes grows properly and sometimes fails, so a child may die or rust or wither for lack of rain and so die in the womb.'

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The Muria do not hide the facts of death from their children or restrain them from witnessing the gloomy rites by which they dispose of their dead. Indeed, as at marriages, chelik and motiari have their special duties at a funeral. The chelik generally carry the corpse out to the place of disposal; the motiari accompany them there and afterwards make leaf-plates and cups for the funeral feast. If a pregnant woman or a mother with a very young baby dies, only the chelik may take the body out beyond a stream and dispose of it.

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All over India it is believed that those who die unmarried turn into unsatisfied and petulant demons. They have been frustrated in obtaining the loveliest things in life and for all time they are miserable. It is curious that it is not usually virginity but the fact that the dead boy or girl has not passed through the marriage ceremony that matters. A married boy who has not consummated the marriage is said to live in some saja tree on his property to protect it. Women may go near, but not menstruous or pregnant women or their husbands. The Muria take special precautions when a chelik or motiari dies. The Gaita drives nails into the four corners of the grave and the ghotul members make a special offering to the ghost begging it not to trouble them. In some villages it is believed that the ghost of a motiari lives under a mahua tree and the cooking for the funeral feast therefore is done in its shade. In Padbera, the Muria believe that when a motiari dies she becomes a Mirchuk and lives in a pipal tree, and a chelik becomes a Matia and lives in a banyan. The usual Gondi word for the ghost of a motiari is Nelang-jural; occasionally she occupies an old ant-hill. Very young children live in a banyan and drink its milky sap. In Bakulwahi twelve years ago a motiari died and the Gaita drove nails into the four corners of the ghotul building and went round it with the chelik in procession in order to protect it against ghostly invasion. They sacrificed a pig saying, 'Are you going to stay here, or will you go away?' When the pig ate the rice which was as usual offered to it the Muria understood that the motiari was ready to go away. They carried the pig to the boundary of the village and killed it there and thus freed the ghotul from any danger from the ghost of that girl. In Palari the Muria said that when a chelik was killed by a tiger he turned into a Baghmeri-bhut. When he died of ordinary illness he became a Knara-bhut, revealing his presence in a whirlwind. When a very young chelik died he became an Arajatta-bhut and entered into people's stomachs, giving them a lot of pain. In Palnar the ghost of the chelik or motiari attacks whichever member of the ghotul is the first to get married after the death, presumably out of jealousy. When the Siraha diagnoses what is the matter he offers the usual sacrifices and, making a little man out of straw, asks the bhut to leave its victim and possess the straw-man instead. This is then carried to the boundary of the village and thrown away. Where a chelik or motiari has died in a village during the previous year, on the eve of any wedding the Gaita goes to a small date palm and ties it round and round with string saying, 'Go away from here, don't come near the boundary of our village'. He puts a large stone on the tree and the wedding can take place in safety. After the wedding he removes the stone, unties the string and offers an egg and chicken.

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In Kabonga it was said that when a chelik or motiari died, the ghost became what they called an Uriya-bhut. But they said that there was nothing very dangerous about it. 'The Uriya-bhut plays and dances just like the chelik and motiari. In fun it throws leaves and dust into the air; it blows in people's

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SEVEN

MURIA RELIGION

I. Introductory

ALTHOUGH this book does not profess to be a study of Muria culture as a whole, it is necessary to give an outline of the religion of the tribe because the ghotul is itself a religious institution and has its share in the worship of the gods, while many of the chelik are already being trained as mediums and priests.

The ghotul is a *thirtha-sthān*, a holy place, as a Hinduised Muria explained to me; you cannot commit sin within its walls. It was founded by Lingo Pen, noblest of Gond cult-heroes, and no evil dream or power of witch or warlock can invade its sanctuary. Chelik and motiari undertake dancing expeditions in honour of the gods; they visit the great clan festivals and dance at them; at the New Eating ceremonies chelik are employed as cooks and motiari gather leaves for plates and cups. In the ceremonial hunts before certain festivals, the chelik play a major part, and they have special duties in connexion with the first ritual cutting of forest clearings. In some villages it is the chelik who roll the Gaita in mud at the Wijja Pandum and carry him home on their shoulders.

The ghotul also is itself the scene of occasional religious activities. In Palli-Barkot and neighbouring villages the blessed seed collected at harvest-time is hung up in the ghotul until it is needed for the first sowing. On the eve of many festivals the Kaser-Gaita sleeps in the ghotul to ensure chastity for himself and the chelik. Dassera and Diwali are observed by the ghotul members in their own way, and they keep other special festivals which I will describe in detail later when I return to a fuller discussion of the ghotul's part in the religious life of the tribe.

Muria religion is undoubtedly a religion of the Hindu family with special affinities to its Shaivite interpretation, yet at the same time it is but little 'Hinduized'. It remains a special and characteristic faith, a logical entity which can be described and recognized. It acknowledges a large number of deities whom it pictures in a simple and homely manner. It has a definite priesthood and a body of mediums who communicate with the gods while in a state of trance. It erects shrines and temples to the gods and builds small huts for the tendance and placation of the dead. It consecrates every rural activity by sacrifice and a sacramental meal. It purifies and protects the village by a series of ceremonies, and it directs its beneficial power against the energies of witch and warlock.

The subject is a large one, and I cannot hope to treat it fully here. But I will give a brief account of the Muria gods, the Muria priesthood and the shrines in which worship is performed. I will describe the customary methods of worship and sacrifice and consider the trance in which the gods make their wishes known. Certain phallic elements in the worship must also be described. I will then give a brief outline of the festivals and ceremonies by which the whole of Muria life is brought under the sway of religion, and conclude by giving detailed descriptions of festivals I have myself observed. We shall then be in a position to see more fully how the ghotul fits in to this great complex of belief and practice.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

New Eating ceremonies and made ceremonially every ten years, and a large gourd kept for pouring water. Piled round one of the pillars is a heap of dancing-sticks of dhaman wood called Bhumiriya Kolang; these are kept in the shrine for the Pen Kolang dances and at the end of three years are taken to the village boundary and hung up on a rope across the road. There is a Ankus hunting-horn, not a brass one, but the real horn of a wild buffalo.

This description is not irrelevant to a book on the ghotul. The spoons and gourd are used by the chelik, who have the responsibility for cooking at the festivals. The dancing-sticks are made by the chelik and used for their ceremonial dances. The hunting-horn is sounded by chelik to summon the people for festivals. Every visiting deity means a corresponding visit from the chelik and motiari of its village: Markabera is thus in close touch with several villages—Timnar, Metawand, Kokori, Kasabahi, Tadopal, Garhbangal and Suhnar. The Markabera god visits Metawand and Kokori, and possibly other villages. The visits of the gods with their attendant chelik and motiari, many of them of clans different to the Markabera Wadder clan, play a very important part in bringing boys and girls of these villages into touch with one another.

In Markabera there was only one temple. In Bayanar there are eight grouped together round a wooded hill covered with fantastic rocks amid which the little shrines are built. A narrow path leads steeply up the hill to the first shrine standing up sharply on a rocky mound of its own. This shrine is the home of Pandi Dokara Gutal (represented by a pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the end) and his two sons Mundi Kuar Gutal and Lalit Kuar Gutal. The three poles are slung high up beneath the roof, for the shed is an open one. At the foot of the centre pillar of the hut is a stone seat, with gongs and an iron lamp. This is a Naitami shrine and there are two stone hearths at either end of it, one for the clan-priest of the Naitami and the other for the husbands of women in their menstrual periods and women who have very recently given birth to a child. On one pillar is a carving of the vagina, on another the sun and moon and a crude horse.

By the little path along the hillside are two sets of pillars with flat stones in front of them to support Pandi Dokara at festivals. A little further on is a small temple for Hinglajin Dokari. This goddess is represented by a closed litter, and there is the usual stone and hearth for her worship.

A little way down the hill is a temple of the Sori clan which houses two more Gutal (poles)—Dawdi Dokara and Lalsai Dokara. Going still further down the hill we reach a large rock on which is a fourth shrine which is empty save for a stone representing Mundi Kuar; this is in charge of a Hindu (Kalar) Pujari from Mungwal.

These little temples on the hillside were curiously impressive; old gods of hill and forest seemed very present there. Down the hill in a shed was a bamboo [illegible] and a flag in an earthen pot representing Son Kuar, the son of the Angas Dewat Narayanpur—another Naitami shrine. One of the most interesting things I saw on this visit was in the temple to Son Kuar. Here was a very small [illegible]en pot tied up in dub grass, in which the *jiwa* of a dead priest was dwelling. For a long time even the Pargana Manjhi hesitated to tell me his name, especially in that potentially dangerous spot, but at last I got it—it was Tota Muria.

We went on towards a great grove of mango trees till we came to a closed temple, again of the Naitami, in which was a characteristic Angra Deo, Bailha the mad god, a stone to represent Bangaram consort of Dantesbwari, and two other stones for Kotgudin Matal and Dulardei Matal. Here we were in a definitely Hindu atmosphere. There was a large clay elephant for Bangaram,

[Description of temple buildings see pp 196-197, cat 116—Andpk]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond AW32
Muria

But I doubt if the necessity of ancestral worship devolving on the youngest son accounts for the Lingo legend. In Bastar, it is a sister's son or a son-in-law who generally performs the funerary rites. Lingo was—in most versions of the tale—miraculously born and the parents play no part in the sequence of events. The Lingo legends fit into the common folk-tale formula: probably all the elements suggested by Macculloch had their part in its construction: but I believe it is the custom of the Levirate (to which Macculloch does not refer) that gives it its real point. 773

The legend, especially in its Bastar form, cannot be understood apart from the foundation of the ghotul and the horror of adultery so characteristic of Muria society. Here is a very practical reason for the village dormitory—it insulates the elder brothers' wives from the dangerous, legitimate, seductive younger brothers. The youth of the tribe, so distracting to business with its fun and music, is concentrated away from home. The figure of Lingo stands out as the ideal younger brother, who denies himself even his legitimate claims and is absorbed in the ghotul and the motiari. It is not impossible that the legend was composed by a jealous elder brother, once cuckolded and turned reformer, who desired to abolish the disruptive influence of the *sage-doseur* relationship.

There remains the character of Lingo which reminds Bishop Eyre Chatterton 'so strangely' of Jesus Christ. The impropriety of comparing the two figures becomes evident when we remember that Sir Richard Temple had to omit nearly half the poem describing Lingo because it was 'frivolous, improper and objectionable'. I greatly doubt whether either Hislop's or Trench's version represents the original legend as it was told normally to village people. The Pardhan priest in Nagpur was obviously a Hindu convert and would not be likely to repeat passages that would too greatly offend a missionary. I suspect too the hand of the Reverend Baba Pandurang. I doubt also whether Mr Trench's petition-writer would have been likely to have risked any improper elements in the story of Rai Linga. This may sound rather hypercritical, but I have never been able to understand how it was that a cult-hero with a phallic name—Lingo means the phallus—should have become the embodiment of purity. Nor could I understand why the supposed embodiment of the Gond virtues should have been a celibate. The Gond despise celibacy; they believe that a man who dies unmarried turns into an especially unpleasant ghost after his death; the sadhus and other celibates in their folk-tales are without exception presented as the greatest rascals. [589]

The Bastar version of the legend suggests a solution of this problem. Lingo is a phallic deity, as the origin of his name given in the legend on page 241 clearly shows. He does not ascend into heaven, but marries seven wives and has children who people the Bastar shrines with gods. He is the founder of the ghotul, where he has his motiari. This is the true Gond picture of the character of Lingo. Hislop's and Trench's versions are undoubtedly nobler to Western and Brahmin eyes, but they are unreal in a Gond setting.

VI. The Lingo Legend in Bastar

Not all the Muria know the legend of Lingo, though all worship him and regard him as the founder of the ghotul. His cult is more or less coterminous with the Pus Kolang, which is danced in his honour. Different versions of the legend have, however, been recorded in the Antagarh, Bemur, Amabera, and Ghat Jhorian Parganas of the Narayanpur Tahsil, and at Alor and Kanharpara in the Kondagaon Tahsil. In north and east Kondagaon, though 773 [883]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

773 they were busy at the work, evening came on, and they bathed in the river. As they began to walk home, night fell, and they had to pass by the grave of Usarengi Palli. When they reached the place, they put down their *guppa*-baskets and sat down. Shri Belosa said, 'All your queens have come!' At that word, suddenly Usarengi Palli came out of the earth and took the girls into the grave with him. That night every one of the seven score motiari became pregnant.

The next day, Shri Belosa said, 'Come, let us go to sell our fish in the bazaar and buy ourselves things with the money'. Usarengi let them out of the grave, and when they reached the bazaar they found that their fish were large and fine and they soon sold them. Some bought necklaces, some bought rings, and as they busied themselves with their purchases, night fell. They could not find their way back to the grave, so they went into the village. There Usarengi Palli's mother was weeping, remembering her son. Shri Belosa said to the other girls, 'Look, our mother-in-law is weeping. Come, let us go to her and comfort her'. The girls went to the old woman and greeted her. The old woman said, 'Where have you been all this time? Your parents are looking for you everywhere'. Shri Belosa said, 'We just went to the bazaar'.

Now Usarengi Palli, finding himself lonely in his grave, said in his mind, 'The seven score boys surely went to that bazaar, and are dancing and making merry with the girls'. He took a great stick and got out of the grave and went to the bazaar. But it was too late; there was no one there. So he went thence to his mother's house, and found the seven score girls sleeping, and his mother and Shri Belosa watching by them. When he saw his mother he embraced her. She begged him to stay with her. But he was angry and said, 'What have you ever done for me? No one cares for me. I will not stay'. As he said this, there came into the mind of his mother and the seven score girls that they had forgotten to take the trotters of the pig eaten at the funeral feast to Usarengi Palli's grave. They got up and went hastily to the grave but there was no sign. The old mother returned home weeping loudly, and Usarengi Palli took the seven score girls with him into the grave and they were not seen again.

IX. Lingo and the Ghotul

● 883 773 To the Muria perhaps the most significant thing about Lingo was his foundation of the ghotul system; this was the greatest treasure he has given mankind; neither the discovery of fire,[1] the gift of mahua liquor,[2] nor the invention of music can compare with this. The ghotul is an integral part of the Lingo legend; even in the Betul version there is a hint of it in the oft-repeated statement that Lingo could not attend to his brothers' wives because he was always playing with the village maidens.

The significance of the ghotul for the legend is this, that it explains why Lingo was 'chaste', why he achieved so supererogatory a virtue as to turn a 'joking-relation' into one of avoidance, why he did not let himself be seduced by his brothers' wives. Like any good chelik his attention was absorbed by the ghotul, not only—be it noted—by its erotic delights, but by the eighteen instruments played there, by the songs and dances, the discipline, the fellowship.

Every version of the Bastar legend stresses Lingo's association with the ghotul. The Alor version ends: 'From the days of Lingo the ghotul is built

[1] See p. 260. [2] See p. 263.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

in every village, and the boys and girls live there together without sin. So long as a girl wears combs in her hair she may play and laugh with the chelik, but when we see a girl without a comb, we say nothing to her, for she must be a man's wife. And as Lingo was twice in the fire and no evil touched him, so it is with the boys and girls in their ghotul.'

The Karikhodra story concludes: 'When Lingo died, they made ghotul everywhere in his memory and to make him happy. For as the children dance and play he rejoices.'

And the Benur tale ends: 'Lingo lived in the ghotul, and the magic of his music drew the boys and girls to him. Because of Lingo no evil can come to the ghotul; no witch can enter there, or fever or disease; and for three years from the blossoming of her flower no girl can conceive.'

The first ghotul, where Lingo lived after his elder brothers married (the boys, it will be remembered, had no parents but it was equally necessary that the youngest should not witness his elder brothers' relations with their wives) and which was called *dinda-mahāl*, or palace of the unmarried, was a beautiful place.

> Lingo's ghotul was beautiful as the horns of bison, beautiful as a horse's throat. Its central pillar was a python, the poles of the roof were *mahāmandal* snakes, the beam was a *dāman* snake, the cross poles were cobras. The bamboo framework of the roof was made of kraits tied together with vipers and covered with the tails of peacocks. The verandah roof was made of bulbul feathers. The walls were of bod-fish bones, the door was made of the crimson *silphi* flowers, the door-frames of the bones of ogres, the fastening were *ular-malom* snakes. The floor was plastered with the flour of urad pulse. The *kidul*-seats were crocodiles. There was an Anga there of saja wood swung from the roof by *pirpitti* snakes.
>
> Lingo himself wore a turban like a white gourd flower; his dhoti was coloured silk; his shirt shone in the sun; his clogs were made of sandal wood, his stockings of mongoose fur, his belt was a *gidarra* snake; as he walked he sparkled. He carried a crooked stick in his hand; he walked as if he were husking rice.[1] That is why we dance so slowly and carry an axe over the shoulder.
>
> Every day Lingo used to go hunting, and every night to the ghotul. His gun was an ebony branch, his bullets were wild berries, he sat in the nest of the *rala* bird above a salt-lick. When he had shot enough, he would return to the ghotul. Belosa and Manjharo would welcome him, and take his mat. Malko and Jalko spread it on the ground, Dulosa was his blanket. Because of the love-charms in his eighteen instruments all the unmarried boys and girls would come running to the ghotul. Lingo's ghotul name was Manjhi; it was given him by Belosa and Manjharo. He himself gave the girls their names. Belosa and Manjharo sat by Lingo and combed his hair, they scratched his arms with their combs and massaged him with oil. Belosa gave him ganja—there was no tobacco then.' Lingo's comb was made of dhaman wood. After massaging Lingo, the girls got up and saluted him with Johar,[2]

[1] In Old Calabar, when a man passed the sacred objects of Egbo he walked as if he were lame.—Hutton Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies* (New York, 1908), p. 116. Compare the limping dance of the priests of Baal.

[2] The Johar was the supreme achievement of Rajput chivalry. A besieged garrison, considering its fate hopeless, prepared for the Johar as for a wedding: the women threw themselves into a furnace, and the men rolled out to die in battle with the enemy.—

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

883
773

then danced to the music of his eighteen instruments until they were weary, when they lay down and slept.

The traditional names of the first motiari differ from place to place. In Jhakri, they gave the following list:

Godakare Mode, whose navel was long as the axle of a cart, the leader, who collected the girls and gave them their orders.
Belosa, her assistant.
Kurumtuse Buke, whose duty was to distribute things—tobacco, parched rice, liquor.
Hinahibe Bire, who made the bamboo pins for leaf-cups and plates.
Akintare Jare, who spread the leaves which served as mattresses at bedtime.

Among the names of the first chelik are:

Mankor Singa, the leader.
Jiha Guta Soma, whose duty was to bring wood.
Karata Guta Soma, who had to make the fire.

At first things did not go altogether smoothly. The boys stole wood from the village houses, they relieved themselves on the paths, they neglected their work for their dancing. There was even an attempt to stop the ghotul. 'At first', so runs a Masora account, 'there were twelve score motiari and twelve score chelik who came to listen to the music of the eighteen instruments. Lingo caught them by the hands and they danced and danced and danced. Soon the children's parents grew angry and said, "Here is a man ruining our children" and they forbade them to go to the ghotul. At that Lingo was angry and he changed his form and went from house to house bringing death and disease. The people went to the Siraha, who discovered the cause and told the villagers to let their children go again to the ghotul.'

After this Lingo began to teach the chelik and motiari ideals of discipline and service. One night he came leaning on his stick, and when the girls and boys heard it tapping on the ground they kept very quiet. He sat down and taught them never to relieve themselves on the village paths, not to have anything to do with married women, not to steal wood from the villagers. Then in order that they should not spend too much time on dancing, he allotted them certain seasons when they should dance all day. During the rest of the year they should dance only at night. At Jhakri, Raunu gave other details:

> The first fire was lit by Lingo in the ghotul. It was the Pus Kolang fire. Lingo taught the boys how to go from village to village dancing in his honour. The boys tried; Lingo became Gain and showed them their mistakes. The next morning, they looked at the ashes of the fire, and there were the marks of a bullock's hoofs. Three days this happened and Lingo declared it a good omen. He called his tiger and they went out to dance, leaving the girls behind. 'This is in honour of Lingo', they said, 'and whoever goes to a girl will die.'
>
> Lingo took the boys outside the village and made them stand facing it. He put seven little heaps of rice, seven aonra rings and seven bits

J. Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (London, 1920), Vol. I, p. 355. The expression is now used as a greeting by many tribes. Tod describes it as a salutation sent by a Rajput chief to an inferior landholder (Ibid., Vol. I, p. 163). For the Muria it is a greeting between equals.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

983
342

Hill Maria boys in front of the Ituimar ghotul

Bison-horn Maria girls in the court of the Dugeli ghotul

[p.254(a)]

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

773 883

of slag on the ground before them, and prayed to Tallur Muttai, 'Look after these children. Keep them safe from other gods'. Lingo gave fire to Mankor Singa, and bade him tend it so that it did not go out till they returned. Then they went to dance in seven villages.

After seven days Godakare Mode and the three score motiari brought a bamboo and decorated its shoots with gold. 'If they have been faithful to us and if all is going well, it will stand up of its own accord and no one will be able to pull it up.' So thinking they welcomed the boys home. The boys hung their sticks on the tree and sat down to smoke. The bamboo stood of its own accord and none could uproot it.

Then came Lingo and was pleased with the stick. He tried to pull it up, but it would not move. Then he cut it down, at the bottom, near the ground. From the stump grew a semur tree; ever since, the semur tree has had thorns like the small branches of a bamboo.

Then the motiari said, 'We too must go to dance with you'. So Lingo took them for the Chait Dandar and the Hulki dances. At Diwali, the girls said to the boys, 'You go off by yourselves in Pus; we will go to dance by ourselves at Diwali'.

The tradition of Lingo's association with the ghotul is still very much alive. Every year thousands of boys take great pains to perfect a complicated and rather tedious dance and set out on a pilgrimage in his honour, which must be marked by accurate performance and complete chastity. In some ghotul, as at Masora, a dhol drum hangs near the door in honour of Lingo. Lingo in his turn protects the ghotul which he has founded; no evil dream can approach, no sin can be committed, and no girl will become pregnant for three years after puberty.

883 539 773

The chelik remember Lingo, with their ancestors and the Earth, whenever they drink liquor; they offer him a few drops of mahua spirit whenever they play their drums at a marriage; even in eastern Kondagaon, they invite him to weddings saying, 'This is your marriage, your haldi-oil, not ours but yours'; they still sing many songs in his honour. Most of these are inexpressibly boring, consisting as they do of a long and largely inaccurate recital of Lingo's relations. This poetic and romantic figure has not inspired much poetry in his worshippers. The following song is typical.

Lingo Pata

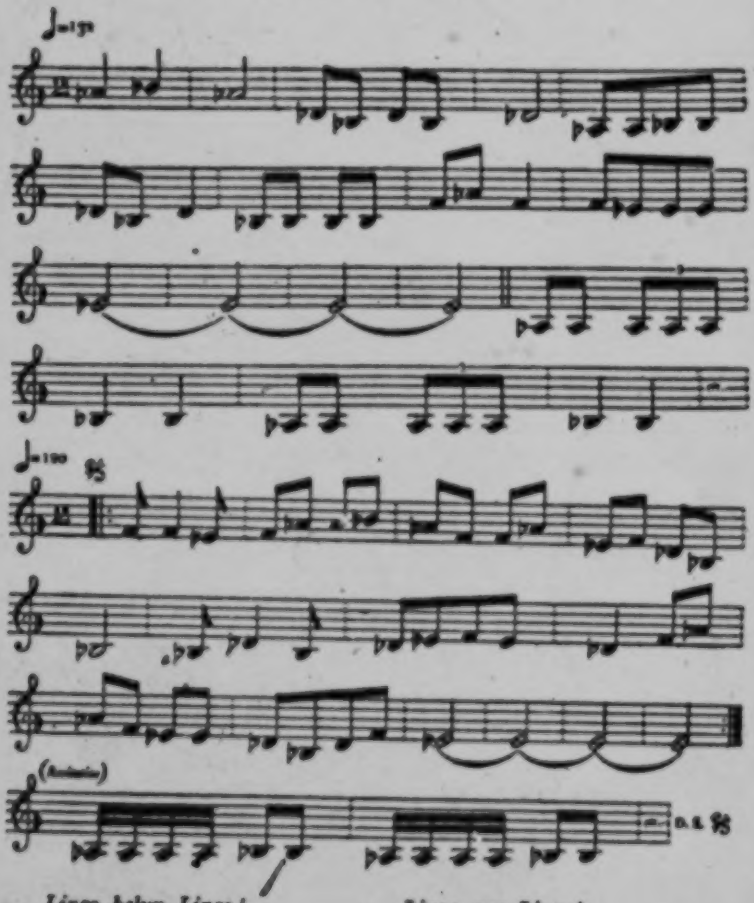
Re re loyo re re la rela
Re re loyo re re la re re la rela

Bāra bhai lingo ra layor,	O twelve Lingo brothers,
Pinding hamkāng niya ra layor.	There's haldi and flour for you.
Dāy ra lingo dāyu ra lingo!	Come, Lingo, come!
Pinding hamkāng yokti ra lingo.	With haldi and flour we anoint you.
Wāyura pāta wai ra lingo.	May songs unknown come to us.
Wāyura dāha wai ra lingo.	May steps unknown come to us.
Pahili pāta niya ra lingo,	The first song is yours,
Maria pāta mawa ra lingo.	The Maria song is ours.
Pahili dāha niya ra lingo.	The first steps are yours,
Maria pāta layor ra lingo.	The Maria song is the chelik's.
Wāy ra lingo wāyu ra lingo!	Come, Lingo, come!
Nana wāyla parron ra layor.	I can't come, chelik.
Nāna bato manta ra layor.	I've got work to do, chelik.
Kuddi holāng bulong ra layor.	I've got to fix the handle of my hoe.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

883
533
539
973

At Masora, the chelik sing in Halbi to Lingo before a wedding.



Lingo, balun, Lingo!
Kây kâie ây chalikman?
Bila dhare bita urwta parli bita dhave jao.
Macho buta âse.
Tucho kây buta âse?
Macho korki dheta bharto âse.
Tucho bigur nitoy gil gobind tucho.
Pahilo tucho nigcho mand.
Aru nigcho karki.
Tucho ây nibnato gil banu ây.

Lingo, say, Lingo!
Why have you come, chelik?
We've come to invite you to the wedding.
I have work to do.
What work have you to do?
I must make a handle for my hoe.
Without you nothing can be done.

To you liquor must first be given.
The haldi must first be put on you.
Only with you the song goes well.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE LEGEND OF LINGO PEN

883 ●
773

In Penjori, near Semurgaon, the Gaita explained how Tallur Muttai (who is no other than Mother Earth) and Kadrengal her consort (who is lord of the forest and the *dahi* clearing) are connected with the ghotul.

> In a saja tree were born a girl Tallur Muttai and a boy Kadrengal. They gave a dream to Lingo and told him 'We have been born in a saja tree: give us a place to live'. So Lingo made them a small hut and they lived there. To please them he used to play eighteen instruments at once. In these were love-charms which drew all the boys and girls of the village to listen.

In many ghotul, Tallur Muttai and Kadrengal are honoured as well as Lingo and with him protect the children from harm.

X. Lingo and Creation

773

The creation stories of the Muria are on the same pattern as similar stories throughout the central portion of peninsular India.[1] The main difference is that Lingo, at least in the older stories, takes the place either of Bhimsen or the other cult-heroes which various tribes exalt as the chief actors in their mythology; and that Kadrengal, a rather mysterious figure, vaguely regarded as a forest-god, and his wife Tallur Muttai (Mother Earth) play the parts that in other areas are allotted to Mahadeo and Parvati. The following story was recorded in Kokori in east Kondagaon.

> In the old days there was an earth. At the time when Lingo and his brothers were born Mahapurub turned the world topsy-turvy and it was eaten by the earth-worm, so the Middle World became nought but water. There were two young children on the earth. God put life into their bodies by poking them in the back: the marks of his fingers still remain. They hid inside a gourd which grew up out of the water as a great creeper and reached the heavens.
>
> Presently the worm excreted the earth and some of it fell on a siari leaf. That earth began to weep, 'Who is there to serve me, for all mankind are drowned?' When Lingo heard that weeping he went to see what was the matter. Meanwhile Mahapurub had plucked the gourd growing from the great creeper in the heavens and found inside the two small children. 'Where can these children live?' So thinking he sent his crow to search for it. The crow flew and flew across the ocean until at last it saw Lingo and his brothers driving their harrow over the sea. Wherever the harrow went there was land, where it went crooked or missed a place there was water and a river, where the earth was piled up at the side there was a mountain. When the crow saw this it flew back and told Mahapurub that the earth was made again, and the two children were sent to live there.
>
> Mahapurub told the boy and girl that they should marry each other but they refused saying, 'We are brother and sister'. So the smallpox goddess came and separated them and each got smallpox.[2] Afterwards when they met they did not know who they were, for their faces were

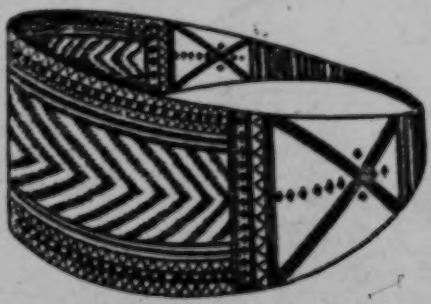
[1] Compare Roy, *The Mundas*, App. I, pp. 2-7; Roy, *The Birhor*, pp. 400-24; A. Campbell, 'The Traditions of the Santals', *JBORS*, Vol. II (1916), pp. 158.; Roy, *The Hill Bhuiyas*, p. 262; D. D. Agarwal, 'Ethnographical Notes on the Cheros', *Man in India*, Vol. IX (1929), p. 205; W. Koppers, 'Bhagwan, the Supreme Deity of the Bhils', *Anthropos*, Tome XXXV-VI (1940-1), *passim*. *The Baiga*, p. 308; *The Agaria*, pp. 8ff.

[2] I have recorded this idea among the Juang, Kond, Gadaba and Bondo of Orissa: it is probably very common.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

State Medical Department has done much to check the spread of the disease. Malaria, as everywhere in the Indian forests, is endemic, but few suffer from enlarged spleen. Leprosy and the venereal diseases are very rare. Skin diseases are also much less common than among the more elaborately clothed and thus dirtier people of the north.

Men wear a small loin-cloth and sometimes a little turban. The women tie a sort of skirt, very short, round their waists: it hangs down to the knees. The breasts are covered only with ornaments; when visiting a bazaar girls may tie a small piece of cloth round their shoulders. They often wear a thin brass fillet round the hair, and the older women use a large snood which is most becoming. Round the neck are masses of bead-necklaces, and iron or brass torcs. The bright colours of the beads and the shining brass fillets against the rich brown skin make a sight of unforgettable beauty.



Brass fillet worn by Maria women

The Bison-horn Maria village is laid out on the same lines as the Gond village of the Central Provinces, unlike the communal settlements of the Hill Maria, Baiga or Juang. Each house stands in its own garden which is sometimes a substantial field, and a village may cover a very large area in consequence. Often a village is composed of anything from six to twelve small hamlets, each of which represents the grouping of a family round its patriarchal head. The little huts stand among woods, on rocky hill-sides, in the shade of spreading trees. Sometimes they appear almost submerged by waves of yellow sarson flowers or red jhira vegetable. Each village has a substantial building for the accommodation of travellers and this is used by the unmarried boys as a dormitory. The unmarried girls also sleep together, some-

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.

Maria women's dancing-stick (3½' long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

841 or fowls. She must not take grain from the bins or approach the Hearth of the Departed. Except at the menarche, however, she may fetch wood and leaves which may be used by other members of the household; she may fish so long as it is not in a pond; she may even dance so long as it is not at a Penkarsita and she does not touch any man.

When I was taking photographs in Maria villages I frequently came up against these taboos. At Mokhpal I was unable to photograph a girl with strikingly Mongolian features because she was in her period—the people seemed genuinely afraid that the menstrual exhalations would break the lens. At Tikanpal, where I wanted to stage a group of girls making leaf-cups, I was not permitted to do so because one of them was in her period and must not sit on a mat. At Doriras a married girl refused to be photographed standing in front of the girls' dormitory because menstruating women were accustomed to sleep there.

During a wife's period a husband is subject to the laws of a 'little couvade'. No one will eat from his hands; no one will accept tobacco from his pouch. He must not cook or fetch water. He too must not go to the grain bins or approach the symbols of the Departed. He may go to a shrine, but he must not enter it; he may cut his clearing, but he must not fire it or sow seed. He may not hunt, carry a *kawar*-pole, climb a tree, cut grass or reap a crop. If he is a Perma or Gaita he may not perform any religious rite, and if he is a Gunia he cannot divine the cause of sickness.

842 It is generally believed by the Marias, as by the rest of India, that a woman is most likely to conceive if she has intercourse on the day she has her ceremonial bath at the close of the period.

886 As by other aboriginals the climacteric is accepted by the Marias as a matter of course. 'As it appears, so it disappears.' If an elderly woman or her husband dreams of a dried-up tank or stream, it means that this crisis is approaching.

V

843 Pregnancy is diagnosed by the cessation of the menses, vomiting, swelling of the breasts and a darkening of the nipples. 'The face dries a little.' It is generally supposed that a boy is more exacting and makes the mother look fragile and exhausted, while a girl keeps her fresh and well.

843 177 During pregnancy, Bison-horn Maria taboos are not exacting and my suspicion is that originally they were as few and as casual as those of the Hill Maria, and that any elaboration is due to the influence of the local Hindus who, on the whole, pay more attention to the pregnancy than to the menstrual taboos. In other words,

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

887 goes to the market and attends the festivals, though there is not so much for her in these as for the men. But her real hour of happiness is at a marriage. Here she may lay aside restraint and recapture the abandon of youth. Now she may drink heavily and for a few hours in blissful intoxication free herself of inhibitions and forget all that is tiresome and weary in her life. If the older men enliven the marriage scene with their buffoonery, [522 the older women divert it with their obscenity. There is nothing that they 831] may not say, little they may not do. Their songs and their dance movements are outrageous and never fail to rouse laughter in the crowd.

888 In a very few cases Muria women grow riggish in old age. They adorn themselves with many ornaments and wear bright-coloured saris. This behaviour is not approved.

You are an old woman,
Forget your dances.
You are an old woman,
Yet on your buttocks is a tiny cloth
And flowers are in your hair.

Although there is a rule that women should never use their ghotul titles after marriage, when a group of old women who have grown up together in the same ghotul meet in later life, they usually use the old names in order to awaken happy memories of the past. I am told that then they exchange reminiscences through half the night and that such times are among the happiest of their lives.

886 As elsewhere in aboriginal India, the climacteric does not appear to be dreaded or even to be specially noticed. In India, women are old at 45 and they greet the cessation of the menstrual period with relief that they are now saved from its embarrassements. I have not been able to find any myth about the climacteric; there does not seem to be any rule about it or any desire to avert it. It is a purely natural phenomenon. 'The stream that flowed so long is dry', 'the old tree has begun to wither'. Some people believe that the tree withers because 'no one goes to an old woman,[1] so her vagina has no grain to eat; no rain falls in her stream, so how can it flow?'

II. Death and the Ghotul

761 The ghotul is a place of separations. But when a chelik or motiari dies
883 there is a special feeling of sorrow, a sense of outrage, the conviction that something exceptional and abnormal has occurred. Sometimes the ghotul is closed for three days; where it is not closed the children gather sadly and there is no singing and there should be no intimacies. When older people die the dormitory is not closed. 'The ghotul is the *Dinda-mahāl*, the Palace of the Unmarried. As the Raja's Palace is not shut when people die in the town, neither is ours. But if two or three of the chelik and motiari die, then we shut it.' At Dongrigura, they said that when a chelik died, the motiari wept and next day initiated one of the younger boys and gave him the dead chelik's title, so that there might be no gap in their fellowship. When the Subedar died, they made his little brother Subedar next day and gave him as 'husband' to the Subedarin, his *anga*, or elder brother's 'widow'.

The death of a chelik or motiari is always abnormal. The death of a little child or of a child in the womb is no less unnatural. 'Just as in a field, rice

[1] A rather cynical proverb runs: 'How disgusted is a man who eats stale food in the morning and goes to bed with an old woman at night.'

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER SIX

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

I. Old Age and the Climacteric

THE place of the aged in Muria society is not unenviable. The training in the ghotul instils into the minds of boys and girls the idea of respect for older people and, for all its stress on equality, a sense of the dignity of position and achievement. This attitude remains with the children all their lives. An older man, therefore, often enjoys a very favoured position. In time he becomes a member of the village, and even of the pargana, panchayat. The system of cross-cousin marriage, so largely prevalent in the tribe, ensures that he is surrounded by a large number of relatives and dependants. Among these he gradually rises to a position in which flattering attention is paid to his judgement and it is considered essential that he should be consulted in everything to do with the welfare of the tribe, the clan, the family, and the ghotul.

Nor is there any loss of the variety and colour of life. He still occasionally visits the scene of his youthful happiness and, if he is wise and tactful, the children will consult him about their affairs. If he has the art of music or story-telling he will command absorbed attention. He still goes to the great tribal festivals and the commercial Marhai in the larger villages. At these, if he is a Siraha he will dance and beat his drum as lustily as any chelik; he will meet scores of old friends and drink with them. At marriages, which he invariably attends, he has a special licence to play practical jokes and to indulge the coarsest behaviour. There are certain to be present many men and women who stand to him in the 'joking relationship', and a marriage is the stage whereon the Table of Relationship comes to dramatic life. Nobody is likely to think less of him for his pranks. Indeed the antics of the old men are an enlivening and picturesque feature of most marriages.

But, of course, the varied scenes he has witnessed and the bereavements he has suffered generally tend to make the old Muria at other times somewhat sad and meditative. Disease sometimes hampers his movements, though many old Muria are remarkably hale and hearty. A proverb runs: 'When a child he plays; when a boy he displays his beauty; in age his head shakes and he meditates.' This comparison of youth and age is a favourite one among the Muria. 'The baby has no hair; the youth dresses it; the old man's curls behind.'

The old village woman, Muria, Gond, Pardhan or Baiga, deserves the world's most profound respect. Her wrinkled face and bent indomitable form, which is so familiar a sight in every Muria village, is the symbol of the courage, devotion and the will to persevere characteristic of her race. Upon her falls the heavy burden of the work of an ever-growing household. She is expected to be present and to help at the confinements of every one of her descendants. She constantly has to care for her grandchildren and may even be called on to provide milk for them from her withered breasts. Should she be relieved of the burden of a family, her lot is no less arduous, and I have often seen the pitiful little huts in which some lonely, childless widow spends the evening of her days.

But the old woman's lot is not unbroken drudgery. The scheme and pattern of Muria life is well devised to break up the monotony of village existence with bright and vivid colours and gay bursts of song. The old woman too

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